Seward County Sharp Shooters member Jacob Ricks lines up a clay target last Sunday during trap shooting practice of the Seward County 4-H Shooting Sports Spin Club. L&T photo/Larry Philips

Local youth learn self-confidence, self-esteem in 4-H Shooting Sports Club

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Leader & Times

Youth all across the nation have a chance to participate in shooting sports through organizations such as Boy Scouts, and recently, a new opportunity was created for some young people to take part in aiming at targets through the Seward County K-State Research and Extension's 4-H Shooting Sports program.

A special interest, or SPIN, club was created for younger gun enthusiasts, and volunteer Larry Phillips, who recently became a certified shooting sports coordinator, said the club is for kids who do not necessarily want to take part in other 4-H activities.

“Shooting sports is kind of separated on its own,” he said. “Of course, they can always get into other 4-H activities if they wish.”

Phillips said Extension officials asked him to volunteer to train to become a coordinator in March, a chance he gladly accepted.

“I spent a couple of days over in Rock Springs,” he said. “It was pretty intense training. I came back and got started with our two instructors, Tracy Gutierrez and Greg Standard. They’re 4-H certified instructors.”

Phillips said program rules state a shooting sports club must have a county coordinator to keep it going, and he gets to help out with lining up shoots and schedules working with Standard and Gutierrez.

Phillips said when he returned from his training, the club had six children shooting BB guns. Since then, Standard has started up a trap shooting program, and through a little advertising, the club grew to 14 shooters presently, with ages ranging from 9 to 15.

“There’s three girls involved,” Phillips said. “Several of them started off who haven’t had really shot shotguns or shot trap. A few of them have experience.”

Phillips recalled the path of one of the young ladies who initially felt a little nervous about hitting a flying target.

[redacted]