Traveling from all four corners of the state, between 60-75 women (and a few husbands) are expected to be in Holyoke June 11-14 as the local FCE Jolly Dozen Club hosts the 78th Annual State FCE Conference.

Most of the meetings and workshops will take place in the Peerless Center. The workshops are open to the public and locals are also welcome to stop by and take a look at the cultural arts projects that will be on display.

This year's theme is "Birds of a Feather Flock Together," and most of the programs and activities are based on this. Time is also set aside in the afternoons for the ladies to tour Phillips County Museum, Heginbotham Library and to do some downtown shopping.

Following the initial registration and entering of cultural arts projects on Thursday afternoon, June 11, the festivities will kick off at 7 p.m. with a banana split social in the Peerless gym.

On Friday, June 12, Mayor David Nygaard will give a welcome speech during the opening ceremony at 9 a.m. A flag presentation, folding and etiquette will then be performed by Gene Daise and other local veterans.

Workshops and programs taking place on Friday include: "Going Green," 9:30 a.m., taught by state FCE president Victoria Schmidt; "Earth Links" program, 10:30 a.m., Bette Ann Jester; "Going Green, Eating Green," 1 p.m., Yuma County extension agent Joy Akey; and "Community Gardens," 2 p.m., Phillips County extension horticulturist Linda Langelo. A tour of the Holyoke Community Garden will follow Langelo's workshop at 3 p.m.

An "FCE Forever Dinner" will take place Friday night as well at the Sunset View Community Center. Holyoke Marketplace will cater the meal, and Holyoke High School Select Choir will provide the entertainment.

The agenda for Saturday, June 13, calls for members to spend much of the morning attending the annual state FCE business meeting. Lunch in the Peerless gym at 12 noon will feature local humorist Karin Kramer.

In the afternoon, Jack Wieland will give a Department of Wildlife presentation at 1 p.m. This will be followed by a Family Community Leadership Workshop from 2-4 p.m. The public is encouraged to attend this workshop to learn more about FCE and how individuals can become certified Family Community Leaders (FCL).

Another banquet catered by Holyoke Marketplace will take place again at Sunset View Community Center on Saturday night at 6:30 p.m. During the banquet, numerous awards, including FCE Member of the Year and Honorary Life Member of the Year, will be handed out. Awards for 50 and 60-year members will also be handed out. Holyoke resident Viola Colglazier will be one of these recipients. She will be honored as a 60-year member of FCE.

Activities will wrap up on Sunday, June 14, with an inspirational devotion to be given by Rita Kleve at the Peerless Auditorium at 8:30 a.m.

According to state conference coordinators Joyce Harms and Mary Tomky, this year's conference was planned by clubs in District 1, which includes Wray, Idalia, Burlington and Akron. The planning commmittee came to Holyoke in February and March to check out the facilities.

"They raved and raved again about Holyoke," said Tomky.

March 20-21, the FCE State Board also visited Holyoke and was impressed by the layout of the community, the unique stores and all that Holyoke has for its size. Noted Tomky, "I was at the conference last year in Creede and we are several notches above in facilities and meals this year."

FCE stands for Family and Community Education. Its mission is to strengthen individuals,

families and communities through continuing education, leadership and community action.

The National Association for Family and Community Education was established in 1936 as the National Home Demonstration Council. The organization has evolved with the times and changed its name throughout the century, but the basic mission has remained the same: To educate individuals and community members for the improvement of family and society.

The local Holyoke chapter of FCE developed in 1930. At the time, it was called the Extension Homemakers Club. In 1950 the club re-organized and changed its name to the current title, Jolly Dozen Club.

Over the years, FCE Jolly Dozen Club has contributed to the community in many ways. They remain active to this day by making favors for residents and patients at Regent Park and Melissa Melissa Hospital, sponsoring the annual Holly Daze event and providing baby books to newborns born at MMH and Haxtun Hospital.

The club also donates to several other organizations including Holyoke Volunteer Fire Dept., Dragon’s Wagon Preschool, Baby Bear Hugs and County Express.

Membership is open to individuals who meet the local requirements and by paying dues through the FCE affiliated state association.

Individuals may join as supporting members by paying dues directly to National FCE Headquarters when they choose not to belong through a state affiliate. However, they are not represented by vote at National FCE meetings.