2013 Audrain County Extension Business Awards

The Audrain County Extension Council presented its 17th annual small business award to Mexico Sewing Center and its large business award to Ben’s Auto Body.

Each year the Audrain Extension Council recognizes two Audrain businesses that have demonstrated a positive impact on Audrain County and have had a close working relationship with University of Missouri Extension programs. Presenting the awards were Virgil Woolridge, County Program Director, and David Schmeling, Extension Council Chairman.

Top picture is at Mexico Sewing Center with Schmeling, Bonnie Janssen, owner, Christi Hoffman and Woolridge.

Below pictured at Ben’s Auto Body are from left, Kevin Shophere, Woolridge, Nick Steinman, Ben Steinman, owner, Schmeling, Debbie Anderson and Wanda Kable.

Photos courtesy of The Mexico Ledger

Allen Fennewald photographer.
Audrain County Extension Review

Audrain County Extension has offered many programs, activities and services to the citizens of Audrain County this past year. University of Missouri Extension is the University of Missouri’s classroom in communities across the state. University of Missouri Extension connects the citizens of Audrain County to research-based education that improves the county’s economy and quality of life. University of Missouri Extension prides itself in being relevant, reliable, and responsive to the citizens of Audrain County. We would like to thank all our stakeholders for their support in 2013. We would especially like to thank the Audrain County Commission for its steadfast support of the Audrain County Extension office. Without the financial support that is provided by the Audrain County Commission, the local office would not be able to provide educational programming to the citizens of Audrain County. With this local financial support, the Audrain County Extension Council provides input and recommendations for what is best for the community in the area of educational programming and the expenditure of Extension funds. As a result, the citizens of Audrain County benefit from this wise use of public and private resources.

Extension is frequently referred to as Cooperative Extension. The term Cooperative Extension comes from the fact that Extension is made up of three components – federal, state, and local resources. Investing in University of Missouri Extension programs benefits not only the direct participants, but local communities and society as a whole. County, state, and federal dollars invested in MU Extension enables local communities’ access to public services that they would not have otherwise. MU Extension programs use unbiased research-based information which helps the citizens of Audrain County to make better more informed decisions.

Extension on the national level is the educational branch for the U.S. Department of Agriculture which cooperates with land grant universities across the nation to develop educational programs needed throughout the United States. Local Extension offices continue to be the local link between the University of Missouri educational system and the citizens of the state. University of Missouri Extension’s land grant mission is to “improve lives, communities, and economies by producing relevant, reliable, and responsive educational strategies that enhance access to the resources and research of the University of Missouri”. Extension is the educational part that is committed to enhancing human potential in a changing social and economic environment, to improve people’s lives thorough education. County extension councils consist of elected and appointed citizens that plan and oversee local extension activities. The 2013 Council Members are listed on the back page. It is through their dedication and devotion to Audrain County that helps Audrain County maintain a high quality of life for our residents.

The Audrain office staff works very hard to provide and support programs for the residents of Audrain County. With dedicated staff, council members, and many volunteers, a wide variety of educational programs are available to all Audrain County residents.

The Audrain University of Missouri Extension Center is located in the Audrain County Courthouse, Room 304. The office is open Monday-Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m.

Extension Month Proclamation
Audrain County Commissioner Steve Hobbs signs a proclamation declaring July as University of Missouri Extension Month. On hand for the signing were from left, (from left) Eastern Presiding Commissioner Roger Young and Western Presiding Commissioner Tom Groves. Back row, Janis Deimeke, Shelley Harvey, Velma Jones, Kathy Nichols, Virgil Woolridge, Mary Sobba and Stephanie Fenmire.

Health Insurance Education Initiative

In 2013, University Extension began training on the new health care law, the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The impact of this new law will be far reaching. Individuals, families and businesses will need to make decisions about their health insurance. As a nonpartisan entity, University of Missouri Extension provides education to ensure that you have the resources and skills you need to make informed health insurance decisions for yourself, your family and your business.

**Extension will provide the facts to help you**
- Better understand the law and clear up confusion,
- Understand your health insurance options, and
- Make informed health insurance decisions.

The Audrain County Extension office has conducted this health insurance training in the county and is a valuable resource for information on the Affordable Care Act. Anyone needing information on the new law should contact the Audrain County Extension Office and ask for Virgil Woolridge at 573-581-3231. Additional information is also available at http://extension.missouri.edu/insure.

(Submitted by: Virgil Woolridge, County Program Director)
The 2013 Audrain County Extension Council Annual Meeting

The Audrain County Extension Council, University of Missouri Extension, held its annual meeting Monday, March 4, 2013 at the Audrain 4-H Center.

The guest speaker was Mike Deering, executive vice president, Missouri Cattlemen’s Association, a position he has held since last fall. After leaving his hometown of Savannah, MO, to study Ag journalism at the University of Missouri and Oklahoma State, and studying abroad in Thailand he worked in Washington D.C. as the director of communications for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association. Deering and his fiancée Julie, live in Montgomery City.

His topic was “Livestock Challenges for 2013.” He talked about a number of changes facing cattle farmers, last year’s drought, and the prediction by some of another drought this year. He stated Audrain County was 60th in the state for cattle production and brings in $31.2 million to the economy.

“Missouri cattle breeders are important and Audrain County is extremely important and we appreciate you,” said Deering to those attending the dinner.

Also at the event, Laura Pitts and Harvey Turner were honored with the Leadership Honor Roll award.

Four farm families were honored for having Century Farms. They include SD Farms, LLC; Gloria Lay; Victor Dubbert Trust, Robert Dubbert Trustee; and Jeffrey T. Griffin.

Joyce Jerman, who has retired from the extension office, was honored for her service, and Sandy Montgomery was presented a plaque for her service to the Audrain County 4-H program while serving as the Audrain County Youth Program Associate from May 2012-March 2013.

New council members were introduced including Dan Kilbourn, Janet Shackelford, Janis Deimeke, Julie Birt and Karen Potter. Those retiring from the council were honored with a certificate. They include Linda Ahmann, Jennifer Benne, Bill Kessler, Beverly Henke and Sara Brown, who served as chairperson for the past three years.

New officers installed were Dave Schmeling, chairman; Karen Potter, vice chairperson; Sherry Sonwalt, secretary; and Josh Hanley, treasurer.

The meal was prepared and served by Audrain Junior Leaders. The meal sponsors were Audrain County Cattlemen’s Association, Commerce Bank, FCS Financial, First National Bank and Martinsburg Bank and Trust.

New 4-H Youth Development Specialist Joins MU Extension

Stephanie Femrite joined University of Missouri Extension in Audrain County as the 4-H Youth Development Specialist on February 11, 2013.

Femrite grew up in Marion County as a ten year 4-H member and has worked for the extension organization since 2007. With a Master’s in Youth Development from the University of Missouri, Femrite has worked for Purdue Extension (2011-2013) as a youth specialist and worked for MU Extension in Boone County (2007-2011) as a youth educator.

University of Missouri Extension Mission Statement

Our distinct land-grant mission is to improve the lives, communities and economies by producing relevant, reliable and responsive educational strategies that enhance access to the resources and research of the University of Missouri.
2013 Audrain County 4-H and Youth Highlights

Audrain Members Excel at National Poultry Contest

Audrain County 4-H members represented Missouri 4-H at the National Poultry Contest in Louisville, KY in November. (from left) Bailey Kemp (Callaway County), Emily Montgomery, Chania Hoffman. The team placed 5th overall, the highest that Missouri has ever done. The team also received 10th high in the egg division, 4th high team in carcass, and 5th high team in laying hens. Emily placed 16th high individual, Chania was 18th high individual. Both Emily and Chania received All American Honors.

Audrain County 4-H creates environments in which young people are valued, contributing members in their community. 4-H provides Audrain County youth with hands-on learning opportunities in a safe environment where they can experiment, innovate, and think independently with the help of caring volunteers.

Audrain County 4-H Community

230 Members and 125 Volunteers

A Community of Youths Learning Leadership, Citizenship and Life Skills

One of every 5 Missourians between the ages of 5 and 18 participated in a Missouri 4-H program in 2013.

Communities reap long-term benefits by supporting programs like 4-H. Youth engaged in the programs are 60% more likely to vote than their non-engaged peers. In addition, 4-H youth are more likely to volunteer and contribute to their communities than youth participating in other youth programs.

Topics (What they learned)

Audrain County 4-H serves youth through eight organized clubs, camps, and more. The youth of Audrain County have demonstrated learning through the following activities:
- Demonstrations (local and state)
- Livestock Judging (local, state, and national)
- 4-H Camp
- Audrain County 4-H & Youth Fair
- 4-H Fashion Revue (local and state)
- Missouri State Fair
- State 4-H Teen Conference

One of every five Missouri youth was involved with 4-H in 2013

How Did Audrain County Participants Benefit?

Learning by doing is the Audrain County 4-H way. Within Audrain County 4-H Clubs youth engage in long-term educational experiences in which members learn life skills such as decision making, public speaking, and working with others. Members learn by doing under the guidance of adult volunteers, who teach projects ranging from robotics and arts to veterinary science and woodworking. Clubs also involve children and teens in community service, camping and educational trips.

4-H members supported by 125 youth and adult volunteers

4-H is a great return on investment. Volunteers create, support, and are part of the 4-H community. Missouri 4-H volunteers responding to a survey report they contribute on average 100 hours per year. Valuing their time at $19 per hour, based on average Missouri incomes, the contribution of Audrain County 4-H volunteers was worth more than $237,500 in 2013! More importantly, these adults serve as mentors for our youth helping them transition into healthy adulthood - priceless.

4-H Connects Kids to College and a Higher Quality of Life

Missouri 4-H Members are twice more likely to have been on a college campus than their non-4-H peers. Being on campus is a predictor of a youth going on to higher education (Hoover, 2006). Audrain County young people ages 5-18 often participate in 4-H events on the MU Campus. These students are more likely to go to college and enjoy increased financial success for themselves and their family, and
- Be better consumers
- Improve quality of life through more opportunities for leisure and hobbies
- Improve health for themselves and children (Porter, 2003)
- More likely to vote as adults
- More likely to contribute to their community (Lerner, 2009; Zaff et al, 2003)

Youth, who earn their bachelor’s degree, increase annual earnings by $2.01 million over their lifetime (Porter, 2003). If 70% of the Audrain members participating in 4-H events on the MU Campus go on to earn their Bachelors, 4-H would help young people earn $323,610,000!

Missouri Show Me Quality Assurance Youth Training

Missouri Show-Me Quality Assurance (SMQA) Trainings are held annually for 4-H and FFA youth in Audrain County, in cooperation with Vocational Agriculture Teachers from Van-Far, Community R-V, Mexico, and Centralia. All 4-H members enrolled in food animal projects including beef, sheep, swine, dairy cattle, meat and dairy goats, rabbits, and poultry must complete the appropriate level of SMQA certification to be considered a 4-H member in good standing in that project, in addition to other local requirements.

To date, over 200 Audrain County youth, plus parents, have attended these sessions, to learn about overall quality assurance with their meat-product related project animals, including animal housing, welfare, and health care. Many have attended two sessions; some have attended three over the years. Daniel Mallory, area Livestock Specialist, and Stephanie Femrite, 4-H Youth Development Specialist, cooperated in conducting these training sessions and support for the program throughout the year.

References:


(Submitted by Stephanie Femrite, 4-H Youth Development Specialist)

State Livestock Teams Excel at National Contest

(from left to right) Andy Mott (Boone Co.), Maddie Grant (Boone Co.), Nathan Martin (coach), Emily Montgomery, Chase Monte

Audrain County 4-H members Emily Montgomery and Chase Monte were members of the Missouri 4-H Livestock Judging Team. The Missouri team competed at the National Livestock Judging contest in Louisville, KY. The team placed 13 out of 31 overall. They were recognized for 10th high in beef, 12th in swine, 17th in sheep/goats, 17th in oral reason, and a top performance of 6th in placing. Emily Montgomery received “All-American” Honors placing 19th high individual.

Kate Robnett shares her rabbit with Cindy Parrish, 4-H volunteer, during the Small Animal Show at the 2013 Audrain County 4-H & Youth Fair.
Taking Care of You: Body-Mind-Spirit

Many people cope with stress by using unhealthy behaviors like overeating, smoking, self-medicating and being inactive. Stress also is a contributing factor in depression and many chronic diseases.

Taking Care of You: Body-Mind-Spirit is an eight-week program that teaches participants practical strategies to manage stress and take care of their physical, mental and spiritual health. When participants use these strategies to cope with life’s challenges, they are better able to manage their stress and engage in healthier lifestyle behaviors that lead to improved health.

In 2013, 4 women and 3 men participated in Taking Care of You: Body-Mind-Spirit held at the Advanced Technology Center in Mexico. At the end of the 8-week program, participants reported:

- 100 percent would recommend the program to others and felt that it met their needs.
- 100 percent increased their knowledge, skills and understanding of how to deal with stress, ranking it “a lot” or “a great deal” after the program.
- 92 percent planned to continue using information learned in the sessions, including: breathing techniques; respond to stress rather than react; focus on mindful eating; and stay in the present moment.
- 67 percent practiced strategies learned in the class daily.
- 67 percent used recommended written or web-based resources.
- 67 percent shared information from the program with others.

Everyone in the class identified one or more ways the program had improved their lives, including:

- “Knowing stress-busting techniques can work for me.”
- “Feel less doubtful of myself.”
- “Believe I can cope with stress better.”
- “Being thankful for what I have.”
- “Simplifying my life.”
- “More aware of my feelings.”
- “Enjoying the moment.”

Participants shared these comments about the program:

- “Enjoyed the class.”
- “Appreciate the calm, user-friendly approach our instructor created for us.”
- “The class was excellent!”

By supporting MU Extension’s Nutrition and Health programming, such as Taking Care of You: Body-Mind-Spirit, people become more active and make healthier lifestyle choices leading to a lower risk for disease and illness. This increases disposable income for families (reduction in medical or pharmacy expenses, fewer days missed from school or work, etc.) and eventually leads to lower long term medical costs for families and communities.

(Submitted by Lynda Zimmerman, Nutrition Specialist)

Business Development Programs

As entrepreneurs and innovators, Missouri’s small businesses are becoming a more diverse group that continues to make the state’s economy productive. There are approximately 500,000 small businesses in Missouri. Nearly 98 percent of all businesses with employees are categorized as small businesses. In assisting the owners and managers of those businesses, MU Extension contributes to a county’s economic development through growth in jobs, sales, innovation, technology development and commercialization.

THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DELIVERY NETWORK INCLUDES

Business Development Specialists headquartered at University of Missouri Extension centers; centers located on the University of Missouri campuses at Columbia, Kansas City, St. Louis and Rolla; and centers at most of the state universities across Missouri. The named programs delivered through this network include:

**Missouri Small Business & Technology Development Centers (MO SBTDC)** – Funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration, this award is matched on the local level by state university hosts and private sector partners. Services include individualized business counseling and a variety of educational opportunities. One of the products offered through those centers is the MoFAS SBIR/STTR assistance. Specialists in this area work with university faculty and other innovators to win awards in support of the commercialization of technology.

**Missouri Procurement Assistance Centers (MO PTAC)** – Funded by the U.S. Defense Logistics Agency, this program helps businesses win government contracts for a wide range of products and services.

**Career Options** – Improving individual capacity is the focus of the MU Extension Career Options program, which is funded through a partnership with the Missouri Department of Economic Development Workforce Development unit. This program assists displaced workers and others in many ways, including through the exploration of business ownership and career repositioning following company closings, layoffs and other employment-related changes.

**Missouri Environmental Program** - Showing businesses how to save money by reducing waste, understanding regulations and using recycled materials.

(Submitted by Charles Holland, Business Development Specialist)

Day Care Provider Training

In 2013, four 1-hour trainings were provided in Fulton. Of the fifty-eight participants, six were from Audrain County. “Eating Well-Basic Nutrition for Kids and for You”; “Childhood Obesity & MO’s Eat Smart Guidelines for Child Care”; “Setting the Stage for Eating Well”; and “Healthy Habits for Life-Teaching Nutrition to Preschool Children” were the titles of the trainings. These workshops were provided at no charge thru a grant from the Division of Health and Senior Services.

Licensed Day Care providers, both those providing care in their own home and centers, are required to participate in 12 hours of training per year. These individuals play a major role in the lives of children by making available a safe and stimulating environment thus allowing parents to be employed.

Quotes from participants stated were: “Enjoyed the training”; “Grateful that we are now focusing on childhood obesity and nutrition”; “Clarification about fats was very helpful”; and “Eating well is wonderful but expensive.” The majority of the participants would recommend the trainings to others and found them worthwhile and helpful.

(Submitted by Kathy Dothage, Human Development Specialist)
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) in Audrain County

The MoTax initiative offers a gateway to financial education through taxpayer assistance. MoTax is supported by University of Missouri Extension along with local community agencies and federal and local partners. The MoTax initiative includes the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program which provides free tax preparation for low-moderate income families ($50,000 or less) and uses this opportunity to emphasize the importance of financial planning management, providing assistance to help families use their tax refund to the greatest benefit for themselves and their families.

Number of tax preparations:
- 270 Total Federal Refunds
- 31 Property Tax Credits
- Collective dollars returned to clients:
  - $403,375 returned to clients for federal refunds
  - $160,989 returned to clients for earned income tax credits
  - $13,085 returned to clients for property tax credits
  - $40,690 returned to clients for state refunds

What did they learn?
Participants learned:
- Participants saved an average of $200 in tax preparation fees per year.
- Avoided high-cost refund anticipation loans
- Learned basic financial management strategies.

What action did they take?
Participants replaced financial stress and worry with positive action solutions that included steps to taking control of their finances and making decisions with their tax refunds.

How is Audrain County and Missouri better?
When you support The University of Missouri Extension’s VITA program, participants learn critical financial strategies to increase cash flow, which allows them to be able to purchase necessities, stay current on bills, reduce family debt, establish or increase emergency savings and make repairs or replace a vehicle. These strategies replace panic and worry with positive action solutions that will improve their financial situation. Getting taxes prepared at a VITA site stimulates the local economy, beginning in the taxpayer’s community, through federal and state refund dollars and dollars from tax credits. Local community benefits from the VITA sites because citizens keep more money in their pockets, which in turn reduces the demand for public assistance and stabilizes the county tax base.

Ag Programs

This past year there was a variety of agriculture related extension programs offered in the county, region, and state. Agriculture reaches many people including producers, business owners, ag retailers, and consumers. Extension tries to offer a variety of agriculture related programs for various individuals with an interest in agriculture. Following are a couple of examples.

Tax Education

Last summer, MU Extension offered for the first time summer tax training in Columbia. Several tax preparers from Audrain County attended the training. The training targeted tax preparers working with agriculture clients. In October, Extension offered the traditional tax training in six locations targeting participants who work with business/farm clients. Again, several from Audrain County attended the training site in Columbia.

The training included new tax legislation, rulings and cases, individual taxpayer issues, and agricultural topics. All trainings offered continuing education credits.

The instructors for the various trainings included: Dr. Roger McEown, Iowa State University Ag lawyer, Dr. Mike Hardin, Ph.D., enrolled agent, retired professor of Ag Economics at Oklahoma State University; Catherine Murphy, Stakeholder Liaison with the Internal Revenue Service; and Parman Green, Ag Business Management specialist with University of Missouri Extension.

The trainings received positive evaluations, and planning is underway to offer trainings again in 2014. Local county residents benefit when local tax preparers have the opportunity to gain knowledge they can use to benefit their clients.

(Submitted by Mary Sobba, Ag Business Specialist)

2013 Audrain County Master Gardener Report

The mission of the Missouri Master Gardener Extension Program is “helping others learn to grow.” The Master Gardener program provides in depth horticultural training to individuals throughout Missouri who then volunteer their time applying what they have learned to help others in their communities to learn about gardening and environmental education. The Master Gardener Program throughout Missouri promotes and raises public awareness of the University of Missouri Extension as a source of unbiased, research based gardening information. Through activities such as Extension hotlines or answer services, workshops, speaker’s bureaus, garden show booths and demonstration projects, Master Gardeners provide gardening information to thousands of Missourians each year. To become trained as a Master Gardener, an individual must attend a 30 hour classroom Core Course training. Then the Master Gardener trainee is required to give 30 hours of volunteer service back to their community in approved University of Missouri Extension activities.

2013 was a very active year for the Audrain County Master Gardeners. Local members participated in horticulture endeavors throughout the county, state and nation. Local Master Gardeners contributed 2,586 volunteer service hours with 308 of those being continuing education to update members’ horticulture knowledge and work toward Advanced Master Gardener certification.

Since the program’s inception in 2005, over 125 local citizens have become Master Gardeners. This year’s training emphasis was conserving water, reducing yard waste in local landfills, and preventing fertilizer and pesticide runoff. Local Master Gardeners amassed over 150 hours of training and community service in these areas.

(Submitted by Geneva Priest, Audrain County Master Gardener)
The last five years has brought about renewed interest in the use of cover crops in a crop rotation. Along with this interest is also increased interest in what goes on in the soil related to soil microbes, fungi, worms, soil fertility and how they interact with plant roots. One of the reasons for looking at cover crops is to provide roots in the soil for these interactions when a cash crop is not being grown. Being able to incorporate cover crops into a corn/soybean rotation can be challenging for several reasons. These include timeliness to get seeding done, time and labor available in the fall, finding compatible cover crops and how to manage the cover crop in the spring.

Reasons for using a cover crop after a cash crop include:
- Erosion Control
- Compaction Reduction
- Improve Soil Quality
- Nutrient Recycling
- Nitrogen Producer (Legumes)
- Forage Production

To assist Missouri producers in incorporating cover crops into their crop rotation, University of Missouri Extension with assistance from Jules Willott, Laddonia crop producer, over 100 cover crop plots have been established for producers to evaluate. This field day incorporated discussions on cover crop species, yield data from the use of cover crops, seeding methods and termination methods. This session was followed by a field tour for participants to see the species in field conditions at two different seeding times.

Attendees included 22 producers from a six-county area covering over 15,000 acres farmed with representation from service providers MFA and Service and Supply Coop. The plots also caught the interest of campus researchers with the potential for future collaboration at this site with them.

Some of the results of the evaluations include:
- 80% of producers attending presently use cover crops.
- 80% of attendees had some to a lot of knowledge of cover crops.
- 100% of attendees agreed the meeting provided them with information on how to incorporate cover crops on their farm.
- 100% stated they plan to continue/begin using cover crops.
- Attendees provided many excellent ideas of future meeting topics and research ideas.

(Submitted by Kent Shannon, Natural Resource Engineer)
Agronomy and Horticulture Programs

This past year agronomy and horticulture programs helped many residents in Audrain County. The county was covered this past year by both Jim Jarman and Max Glover. Jim retired last spring, so the following numbers do not include all contacts. Direct impact included: 668 Audrain County residents through the following programs: • Young farmers/young farm wives • Clark Produce Auction vegetable growers • Soils & Crops Conference participants • Master Gardeners who reported contacting an additional 3,110 people at farmers market, community garden projects, and garden club meetings • Soil test customers • Plant and insect diagnoses customers • Telephone and email requests for publications and questions • Private Pesticide Applicator Training certification recipients.

The agronomy and horticulture programs provided over 1,134 hours of learning by Audrain County residents and over 700 hours of volunteer service by Audrain Master Gardeners.

Evaluation of the various programs shows that participants learned:

- Basic gardening
- Pest identification
- How to apply shallow and damaged forage to cattle
- Soil fertility management to increase fertilizer efficiency and protect the environment
- Pesticide application laws and best practices to safely and effectively apply pesticides deemed by the US EPA as restricted use in order to increase efficiency, reduce human health risks, and improve drinking water quality and wildlife habitat

Participants using the programs have used what they learned to:

- Used proven gardening practices to grow more food
- Used the safest and most efficient method to control the pest identified
- Perform additional testing or mixed feed to ensure drought stressed forage did not pose a nitrate poisoning risk to cattle
- Managed fertilizer applications to row crop fields to maximize return per acre while minimizing loss of fertilizer to the environment
- Applied restricted use pesticides using techniques and equipment that minimize human health risks and negative environmental impacts while providing the most effective pest control possible

By utilizing research proven best practices in gardens and on farms citizens of Audrain County improve their local economy. Using best practices in all types of farming leads to increased efficiency, productivity, and safety. Current and future generations benefit when research proven best practices are used and result in improved productivity and reduced negative environmental impacts.

(Submitted by Max Glover, Agronomy Specialist)

University of Missouri Extension Regional Realignment

On January 1, 2013 University of Missouri Extension realigned its regional administrative structure to focus on high-priority local programs, adjust to uncertain public funding, generate additional revenue, and be programmatically nimble to meet increasing demands for educational programs and services.

"Changes in the economic development needs of Missouri, population demographics, societal changes and funding constraints call for new models for allocating funds and staffing," said Michael Ouart, vice provost and director. "MU Extension’s previous staffing plan of 2007 was based on economic and social factors that are now outdated."

MU Extension has moved to a total resource model for regional programs. Rather than budgeting for a specific number of positions, extension regions will be allocated pools of funds to carry out the highest-priority programs for the area. Priorities are driven by local need and demand as well as campus-based analysis of the greatest impact items coming from research. The total resource model is similar to how colleges are funded for extension work on the MU campus.

"The focus is on program impact, not the position," said Ouart. "Decisions about where to invest in positions will be based on citizens’ greatest opportunities and needs and MU Extension’s available resources to fill those needs."

Regional directors, in collaboration with MU Extension’s program directors and with regional and county extension councils, determine the mix and location of priority programmatic positions.

To maintain support for high-priority programs in the current difficult environment, additional funds must be generated locally and regionally. Faculty and staff and county extension councils are encouraged to develop diverse revenue streams, including contracts, grants, fees and gifts as well as appropriated funds. Revenue generated through contracts, grants, fees and gifts will be allocated to program priorities on the statewide, regional or local level.

Finally, to become more administratively lean, the number of extension regions will be reduced from eight to seven.

"The regions were reorganized taking in consideration the number of faculty and staff to be supervised, geographic distances for travel, and factors specific to each region," said Ouart.

Six rural regions were geographically drawn and titled West Central, East Central, Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast. The Audrain County Extension office is now in the Northeast Region.

The seventh region titled the Urban Region, places more emphasis on Missouri’s increasingly urban population and will consist of six counties surrounding St. Louis and Kansas City plus the City of St. Louis.

MU Extension maintains a long history of providing locally responsive programs that create healthy families, communities, agriculture, businesses and citizens to drive the overall economic well-being of the state.

(Submitted by Virgil Woolridge, County Program Director)