Improving public decisions

The Community Development Program works collaboratively with communities to foster informed decision making.

The Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis works with the Missouri Department of Economic Development to provide an online “career exploration tool” to focus on new and sustainable “green jobs” in Missouri and to make the wage and labor information more easily available. OSEDA partnered with the Women’s Policy Alliance to produce the Missouri Women’s Report highlighting how women in the state and by county are faring in terms of health, education and economic opportunity.

A new interactive spreadsheet allows third class counties to analyze their budget trends for the past 14 years. The spreadsheet includes assessed values and taxable sales for all counties regardless of class. The spreadsheet was downloaded 149 times, which suggests that local governments are finding it useful; “I am impressed with the information on the extension's website for Third Class County Budget Trends.”

Crawford County used Community Issues Management (CIM) to engage citizens with GIS and Web-based technology to explore its food desert status, map community gardens in the region, and promote healthier eating and exercise options.

Workshops have been held for legislators and local leaders featuring the use of MU Extension technology resources and data (from OSEDA and CIM) to inform decisions and policy making. A follow-up Web-based evaluation conducted with participants in the workshops conducted since 2009 indicated the workshops proved valuable in policy and decision making, writing reports, answering legislative inquiries, targeting messages, planning events and more.

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