Reinvigorating local economies

Since 2000, the Old North St. Louis Restoration Group, University of Missouri Extension and University of Missouri-St. Louis have partnered to develop a set of initiatives that have contributed to creating a healthy, dynamic and sustainable community.

- Projects have included development of home ownership and housing revitalization tools, a bike/walking tour, neighborhood DVD and community museum, and capacity building and strategic planning support for the local development corporation.

- With increased capacity and partnerships, the Old North St. Louis Restoration Group has overseen recent community revitalization comprised of new home construction and a $35 million redevelopment project.

- Residents have gained access to locally grown fruits and vegetables through the development of a farmers market, a community garden and a new grocery cooperative. The new co-op has provided one full-time and two part-time jobs and contracts with about 10 small businesses to supply local coffees, ice cream, fresh produce and other products — adding vendors monthly.

Graduates of the MU Extension Community Development Academy are involving citizens in planning and implementing community programs such as increasing school funding; leveraging local foundation funding for county extension programs; creating new economic development partnerships; developing and financing infrastructure projects; and increasing volunteer commitments. Students participating in CDA report finding jobs with the skills acquired.

For more information on any of the programs listed above, please contact your local extension office, Mary Simon Leuci (leucim@missouri.edu, 573-882-2937), or visit the University of Missouri Extension website at http://extension.missouri.edu/.

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