



University of Missouri Extension  
Community Development

## **ADDING VALUE TO MISSOURI COMMUNITIES**

**Missouri communities are made up of more than the people who live and work there. Every community is a tight-knit fabric of relationships, woven by the leadership of its citizens and partnerships of local businesses and agencies to build better lives for all residents. The Community Development Program works collaboratively with communities to foster economic development, leadership development, community decision making, community emergency preparedness, and inclusive communities. Volunteers and partners contribute more than 24,988 hours annually to Community Development Program initiatives, valued at \$443,964 (based on a national standard for valuing volunteer hours).**

### **Communities increase capacity to deal with disaster**

With Missouri ranked the eighth most disaster-prone state, the **Community Emergency Management Program** directly supported communities and the state in **planning and recovery from severe ice and rain storms and the first outbreak of H1N1 virus**. MU Extension faculty and staff participated in Multi Agency Resource Centers, providing thousands of individuals, families, businesses and farms with education on food safety, drinking water purification, chain saw safety, consumer fraud, housing, landscape recovery, livestock care, tax consequences of storms and mental health issues. Information also was distributed through print and broadcast media and the Web. In one case, a local extension office provided leadership for coordinating volunteers, who provided more than 13,000 hours of service for chain saw teams, debris removal, wellness checks, and shelter and mass feeding operations. MU Extension faculty also are involved directly in Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC), Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD), Citizen Corps programs, and Long Term Recovery Committees.

**Half of the participants in 11 faith-based workshops conducted by the Community Emergency Management Program reported developing family plans, and 85 percent reported actions taken to make their congregation more prepared for disasters.**

### **Local government, agencies improve uses of tax dollars**

The Missouri Municipal League and Missouri Association of Counties continue to use a study of the **impact of the August sales tax holiday on state and local revenues** in their legislative activity, and local governments used it to make decisions to participate or to opt-out of the holiday.

USDA-Rural Development uses the Socio-Economic Benefit Assessment System developed by the MU Extension **Community Policy Analysis Center** to assess and monitor its business and industry loans and grants across the country.

***The MU Extension Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis' work through a National Governor's Association grant contributed to a \$9.9 million federal grant for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.***

### **Regions reinvigorate local economies**

The MU Extension **ExCEED** program's work in 11 regions over the last four years leveraged nearly \$1.12 million in community endowments and grants, \$235 million in new business investments, and 12,826 hours of volunteer work valued at \$220,488. These communities have experienced **121 business start-ups (51 youth-owned), 299 new jobs, 61 jobs retained, 32 business expansions, 63 new leaders emerging, and new network development.** Each of the 11 regions is using the economic baseline studies developed in collaboration with the MU Extension Community Policy Analysis Center to help guide their decision-making processes. Through the **Old Trails Regional Project**, communities in the Missouri River valley east of Kansas City are promoting economic development and entrepreneurship based on cultural and historic tourism, agriculture and food. Wineries, vineyards and specialty crop production are increasing in the area. Fifty-seven businesses are now participating members in the Extension-incubated Mississippi River Hills Association to develop a sustainable rural regional economy by supporting small businesses and educating the public about the value of locally produced products and cultural assets within the region, thus increasing market demand. Between 2005 and 2007, tourism expenditures **in the Mississippi River Hills region (as measured by 17 tourism related SIC codes) increased by an average of 10.51% per county in six-county region.**

### **Leadership development leaves a legacy**

More than 7,894 youth and adults have graduated from the EXCEL (Experience in Community Enterprise and Leadership) Program since 1984. Results include personal growth; community commitment; shared future and purpose; increased community knowledge; and civic engagement.

**Step-Up to Leadership! is generating a new cadre of local leaders to serve on Community Action Agency boards and effect change** through projects to create food pantries; weatherize homes; and address spousal and child abuse, housing policies and other critical community issues.

**St. Louis area participants in the seventh Neighborhood Leadership Academy developed a community-building project** with ongoing technical assistance from MU Extension faculty. The top three areas in which participants saw the most personal improvement included developing personal leadership skills; applying community-building principles to community work; and obtaining knowledge and skills necessary to effectively lead a community organization or project.

Last year, participants in the **Warren County Youth QUEST conducted a Thanksgiving dinner and provided care packages for 125 homeless or at-risk veterans.** The group also collected and provided toys for foster children, painted the Senior Center, organized a welcome packet for the community, and worked with local officials to address education needs in Warren County.

**Lafayette LEAD has built community leadership capacity for 18 consecutive years.** In 2008, 20 citizens graduated. All participants reported being more knowledgeable about public issues and county government; 89 percent reported increased knowledge and skills for taking leadership to get things done in the community and county; and 74 percent felt the program increased their confidence in leadership abilities. More than 350 LEAD graduates are serving their community, and community collaboration has increased significantly since the program began—yielding increased opportunities and benefits for all county residents.

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## Civic engagement leads to viable communities

Graduates of the MU Extension **Community Development Academy** are involving citizens in planning and implementing community programs. Approximately 60 percent of participants report generating increased financial and volunteer resources for their communities and organizations after one year. Examples include 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.

**Participatory planning** engages citizens to effect change:

- After facilitation by MU Extension, **Herculaneum and Hillsboro implemented their master plans and obtained more than \$10 million in grants** the past two years; Northeast Missouri communities reported obtaining \$420,000 in grants to implement plans this year.
- Work with Sunrise Beach led to **application of a grant for tornado warning sirens and attributed savings of \$100,000 for the community**. Similar work has occurred in Jackson, Johnson, Perry and Jefferson counties. Jefferson County adopted an updated plan for its parks, while the City of Berkeley's Council (in St. Louis County) has a viable strategy to inform the council and city staff.
- **Nine communities cumulatively saved \$550,000 in developing a vision and plan**, working in partnership with Drury University students and MU Extension. As a result of work in Warsaw, the Master Trails project has been developed and presented to citizens.
- Planning programs with nonprofit organizations engaged citizens and leverages resources. Statewide, **small nonprofit organizations reported leveraging over \$2.5 million in resources**.
- The St. Louis **Old North Healthy Community Initiative improved access to healthy foods** by expanding the farmers market and developing a community garden, grocery coop and community-supported agriculture operation.
- For the past five years, program efforts have built infrastructure for local food systems; fostered entrepreneurship; promoted and marketed local foods; and encouraged appropriate policy development. The **Greater Kansas City Food Coalition officially became organized as a result** of recent educational forums and a policy task force facilitated by MU Extension that looked at the intersection between local food systems and the healthy lifestyle movement. Kansas City and West Central Missouri are on the forefront of both efforts in Missouri. Also during the past year: 470 kindergarteners in Jackson County visited farms; 205 Kansas City-area school food service managers participated in the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education "Bringing the Farm to Cafeteria" training; and 150 agricultural producers participated in food safety and food defense training (in the last 18 months). **Jackson County farmers' markets experienced 38 percent growth in the last three years** compared with the national average of 7 percent. More than 15,000 consumers are shopping at the 16 farmers' markets in Jackson County on any given Saturday during the summer.
- Nearly 300 carloads of hazardous waste from homes in Johnson County were collected at the annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection sponsored in partnership with the county commissioners. **Hundreds of gallons of paint, a truckload of tires, and quantities of batteries and chemicals were among the items collected and diverted from unsafe disposal** in rural areas and municipal landfills.
- Extension's engagement with the **Afton First Suburbs Housing Initiative and the Afton Community Betterment Association** involved MU architectural studies students in planning for changing needs in housing. As a result, a community housing forum with more than 60 participants identified key issues and led to a series of four housing clinics, with MU students developing plans for an Afton house.

**Public deliberation programs** help communities deal with difficult and contentious public issues to find common ground instead of polarizing. Through deliberative dialogue in public forums, people find new ways to communicate and come to collective decision making. In a partnership with the Missouri Community Action Network, issue forums were held across the state early in 2009, focused on closing the school achievement gap. The forums increased public dialogue and resulted in development of a policy brief to be used by participants to advocate for local and state policy change.

### **Poll worker training improves polling operations**

Nearly 20,000 poll workers served during the August primaries and the November 2008 presidential election in Missouri. Since 2004, thanks to a curriculum developed by MU Extension and used by local election officials, **poll workers have demonstrated knowledge and increased skills** required by the 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The training helped ensure access for those disabilities, provided voters provisional ballots and made poll workers sensitive to the needs of a diverse population. Project Vote highlighted Missouri's poll worker training as a model program in the nation.

### **Resources support community decision making**

The **Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis** sustained the use of social and economic information across Missouri. During the past year, OSEDA sites supported the download of more than 6.5 million pages of Web information for more than 400,000 unique users. OSEDA built one of the nation's first comparative analysis applications using the Census Bureau's new American Community Survey. OSEDA also gained national and state support for the *Missouri Senior Report*. The report, which received awards from the U.S. Office on Aging and the Centers for Disease Control, has been adopted by the state as an ongoing annual program.

The newly published **Rules for Fourth Class Cities**, the second title in the Ballard Local Government Series, was distributed to every Fourth Class City in the state.

### **Latinos and Hispanics improve their health**

Hispanic households across Missouri continue to increase in both numbers and economic clout. To meet rapidly growing needs for access to high-quality health care and prevention while contributing to overall public health for everyone, the **Alianzas** Program has partnered with the Mexican Consulate to host the **Bi-National Health Week**. The 2008 event in Kansas City, St. Joseph, St. Charles, and Columbia provided health screenings and information. Health care screenings and education were provided to 755 Latino residents in Kansas City regardless of health or immigrant status; nearly 70 percent of the participants indicated they were not insured. Kansas City volunteers included 166 physicians, nurses, medical students and community health advocates. In a concurrent blood drive in the St. Charles County area, 85 percent of the donors were Latinos.

The **Alianzas** program launched the Cultural Competency Academy in 2009. Evaluations indicated substantial increases in knowledge of the Hispanic/Latino culture and competencies to work with Hispanic residents. Alianzas is jointly sponsored with the University of Missouri Kansas City Institute for Human Development.



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

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