Message from the Vice Provost of Extension

Dear Members of the County Commission and the Community:

When you invest public funds, you want to know that those funds are making a real difference – that the program has value to the public. And in these tough economic times, you especially are interested in programs that create and retain jobs. Fortunately, that is exactly the case with your investment in University of Missouri Extension programs.

Here are just a few examples:

The **FastTrac NewVenture** course creates new jobs by providing tools to those who want to start their own business. Entrepreneurs determine the economic feasibility of their business concept, design a business model that matches their personal vision, and create a business plan to communicate the opportunity to investors.

**Pasture-based Dairies**, modeled on MU Extension’s rotational grazing systems, have generated 1,100 jobs and added more than $124 million to Missouri’s economy. The Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis works with the Missouri Department of Economic Development to provide an [online career exploration tool](#), which provides information about promising employment arenas.

**Eat Well Be Well with Diabetes** provides practical information and skills to self-manage the disease and promote optimum health. Employees who have better control of their blood glucose levels have reduced rates of job absenteeism.

**4-H science, engineering, math and technology projects**, such as robotics and computing, are preparing youth for jobs of the future. Teens are learning how to be team players, to be lifelong learners, and to approach problem-solving with confidence.

**Leadership education** for steelworkers, pipe fitters and other union workers prepares shop stewards and others to understand how global issues affect today’s workforce and how to secure jobs using practices that reflect joint employer-employee goals.

MU Extension programs are tailored to meet local needs. Visit your local extension center or go online to learn more about the MU Extension programs that create and retain jobs in your community.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Ouart
Vice Provost and Director
Dear Mercer County Residents:

We have ended another busy and exciting year in Extension. 4-H continues to be an integral part of the youth programming in Mercer County. The number of boys and girls enrolling in 4-H programs has been on the rise the past few years. We hope to see this trend continue. Again Extension personnel worked with the students at Princeton and North Mercer schools on various programs including the Water Festival, My LOGO, and the Embryology Program. A new program presented this year was Farm Safety. Princeton junior high students learned about tractor, general farm, livestock, and electrical safety on the farm. This program was presented in cooperation with the ambulance personnel.

The adult education programs have focused on living a healthier lifestyle. The speaker at our annual meeting told about the Healthy Lifestyle Initiative and Wilson Majee has continued to work with this program throughout the year. This program encourages people of all ages to make healthier choices through better nutrition and exercise. We also continue to work to make the community garden a reality, in the hopes that the people of the community may have more access to fresh vegetables. Another program Wilson has been deeply involved with is the Community Empowerment Collaboration with the Green Hills Community Action Agency.

We also continue to have the support of area specialists such as Tim Baker, Kevin Hanson, Heather Benedict, and Shawn Deering with the presentation of programs and answering of consumer questions.

With the support of the County Commission and the cities of Princeton and Mercer, Extension looks forward to another year of informative programming helping the residents of Mercer County to enjoy a better quality of life.

If you have programming requests or questions about agriculture, family, nutrition, or any of the other areas Extension covers, please contact the Extension office.

Sincerely,

Marsha Shew
Mercer County Extension Council Chair
Staff Serving Mercer County Extension

Office Manager: Kelsey Jincks
Ag Business: Kevin Hansen
Agronomist: Heather Benedict
Community Development: Wilson Majee (CPD)
Food and Nutrition: Janet Hackert
Nutrition Program Associate: Debbie Herrold
Horticulturalist: Tim Baker
Human Environmental Specialist: Jessica Trussell
Information Technology: Meridith Berry
Livestock: Shawn Deering
Youth Specialist: Shaun Murphy
Youth Program Assistant: Lisa Delameter

Mercer County Extension Council

Marsha Shew—Council Chair
Jim Rothermich—Vice Chair
Lisa McIntosh—Secretary
Marilyn Hardy*—Treasurer
Shane Grooms
Kiera Pollard
Bill Casey
Daniel Stratmann*
Vickie Girdner*
Shane Whitaclre*
Lisa Byers*
Sheryl Thompson*

Picture to the Right: Swearing in of the new 2010 Council Members. (Please see * above for the names.)

Bottom Left: Betty Bagley and Neil Craft receiving their Outgoing Council Certificates.

Bottom Right: Maureen Funk receiving her award for continue support of Extension Programming.
2010 Financial Expenses

Revenues: $60,678.44
Expenses: $31,152.12

**Income**
Student Fees - $145.00
Governmental Appropriations
  - County - $16,500.00
  - City of Princeton - $5,500.08
  - City of Mercer - $1,500.00
Gifts/Grants/Contracts - $31,558.73
Resales/Educ Services Fees - $1,503.55
Miscellaneous Income - $629.46
Postage Fund - $800.00
Checking Account Balance Carry Over 2009 - $2,541.62

**Expenses**
Payroll Expenses - $15,999.92
Non Payroll Expenses - $1,372.74
Travel - $7,470.68
Postage - $255.00
Telephone Service-Local - $807.80
Rent/Lease Equipment - $450.56
Publishing/Printing - $31.20
Reproduction/Copy Services - $678.95
Supplies/Services - $2,112.64
Other Contract Services - $300.00
Insurance - $100.00
Miscellaneous - $145.00
Extension Council Election Exp. - $147.00
Petty Cash - $128.00
Soil Test Expenses - $530.00
Publications for Resale - $204.00
Repairs/Maintenance - $149.40
Furniture/Equipment - $269.23

Mercer County Extension Council and office would like to thank the Mercer County Commissioners, City of Princeton and the City of Mercer for their continue support of Extension.
County Leadership on Extension

Presiding Commissioner: Mr. Clifford Shipley

“My involvement with the local Extension office spans over a period of 12 years. During that period I was and continue to be invited to Extension programs. I have a lot of respect for the work our local specialist does for this county.”

1st District Commissioner: Mr. Shane Grooms

“I have been commissioner for over 6 years and have been well involved with Extension over the years. I currently serve on the Extension council and I know there is a time when Extension did not engage us as they are today. There has been a new energy in Extension that is refreshing and promises great potential for the future.”

2nd District Commissioner: Mr. Kenneth Wilson

“I have had the opportunity to participate in a few programs and meetings from Extension and I can confidently say the services we receive as commissioners and as a community, have improved in recent years. This has helped to strengthen our relationship with Extension.”
Farm Lease Concerns Still High on People’s Minds

Farm lease questions and disagreements have become the top of the list as far as most asked questions of Agricultural Business Specialists in the last 5 years. There are multiple reasons for this, including high crop prices, a continued higher return for land than other investments and a greater realization of the assistance that University Extension provides in this area. Finally, more and more landowners today are not rural residents and as such are not familiar with traditional Agricultural practices.

65 persons attended the Farm Lease Program via Interactive 2-way Television or ITV on September 14th in 6 locations throughout Northern Missouri. Of the 65, 6 participated in the program in Princeton.

The date was chosen due to the fact that farm leases are typically terminated or re-negotiated in the fall of the year. Six Agricultural Business Specialists throughout the state, 4 of whom developed the program initially, were involved with this program. Attendance continues to be good and people are willing to drive more than 100 miles to receive this information. Evaluations showed that 92% of attendees would recommend the program to others. In addition, 84% now know where to find lease forms and where to get further assistance and 82% understand that a lease is a legal, binding contract. Lease termination continues to cause many conflicts so knowing the law on termination will lessen those conflicts in the long run. Several persons have requested the information that couldn’t attend since the program also.

Farmers purchase Farm Lease Guides

Topics included current rental rates and trends, specific items to include in a farm lease, terminating a farm lease correctly, lease hunting issues and crop and livestock share lease concerns. Farm leases will remain a critical area of concern with the number of absentee landowners growing and so this information is valuable to those folks as well as to our local producers.
Farm Safety Training reduces injury risk among 7th and 8th graders.

The University of Missouri Extension office, working in partnership with the Mercer County Ambulance Services, Grundy Electric Cooperative and Princeton High School, organized a farm safety training for seventh and eighth graders at Princeton school. The program was in response to a need identified by a community member, Doug Devore.

The farm, home to many rural children, is a dangerous place for children because they live where work is performed. It is difficult for children to separate their play from farm hazards. To a child, a grain bin is a fascinating and adventurous place. However, many of these adventures have tragic endings. It is believed that farm injuries are the leading cause of childhood death in the United States. Agricultural studies have shown that farm machinery causes 85 percent of all machinery-related deaths, of which the highest rate of injuries and fatalities occur with children.

Even adults are victims of accidents

Statistics also show that most machinery-related accidents occur due to human negligence suggesting that they can be prevented. Some of the human errors include, improper or lack of machinery maintenance, taking short cuts to save time and money, ignoring warnings, failure to follow safety rules, and ignorance.

Young people on their own cannot recognize farm hazards. They must be taught how to recognize farm dangers and how to avoid them. The farm safety training consisted of four sessions aimed at addressing some of the dangers young people face living and working on the farms: livestock safety, tractor/machinery safety, electricity safety, and general farm safety. Most young people enjoy interactive learning: touching and seeing. To facilitate such learning, tractors and animals were delivered to the school’s Vo-Ag building and live demonstrations with electricity were conducted in one of the activities room at the school. A total of 62 students went through the sessions. True life stories of both adults and children injured and/or killed through farm machinery/animal related activities were shared with the students. Students were given the opportunity to walk around farm equipment and ask questions. Some of the tips students learned were:

- should not be extra riders on equipment, whether with grandpa or dad
- should not play with idle machinery,
- Should not operate machinery until they complete safety training.
- Electrical boxes should be kept locked.
- All livestock should be considered dangerous, even pets.
- Recognize animal behaviors that are not normal
- Keep all guards and shields in place
- Know what the equipment is designed to do and use appropriately
- Be observant of overhead wires
- Use of ladders in a safe area away from overhead wires
- Be cautious when moving farm equipment on the roadways
- Use hand signals to communicate with others around machinery.

Children over the age of seven, particularly in rural areas, participate in farm labor and are more vulnerable to farm injuries. The long term objective of the program is to minimize the risk of injury to young people working at the farm.

The support we received from the Mercer County Ambulance Services, Grundy Electric Cooperative, Princeton High School and community members who volunteered at the program is greatly appreciated.

For more pictures of the Farm Safety Training, please continue to page 6.
2010 Ag Update

2010 was a year of opportunities in the area of agronomy. Residents of Mercer County had the chance to take advantage of private pesticide use training as well as learning about pasture and row crop production. Although the USDA regulates the sale and use of pesticides, it allows each state to regulate the use of restricted pesticides for themselves. Missouri has two classes of pesticide licenses. The commercial license is for those who will use restricted pesticides on others land for profit. Private licenses are available for agricultural producers who intend to use the pesticides on land they own or rent. According to Missouri law, those obtaining private pesticide use licenses, must be trained by Extension personnel. Mercer County residents had the opportunity to receive this training in person rather than by video.

One-on-one training allows residents to ask questions, seek clarification, and get to know extension personnel. This is important in ensuring those using the restricted use pesticides are prepared to comply with the safety precautions and laws that help ensure the applicators and public remain healthy and protected from unexpected consequences. Those residents of Mercer County that attended this training reported that they understood the laws better and were better prepared to apply pesticides safely.

Mercer county residents were able to learn a bit about many subjects at this year’s agricultural update. The topics ranged from weed and pest control to animal legislation and how that will affect livestock producers. These topics were well received by those in attendance. 2010 saw fewer private applicators attending the Mercer County Ag Update than in past years. The low attendance may be due to the large numbers of people needing to renew their licenses in the past years or to the fact that there were other locations to obtain this training.
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.

In Mercer County, during 2010, business development program specialists and business counselors with MU Extension, Missouri Small Business & Technology Development Centers (MO SBTDC), Missouri Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (MO PTAC), Missouri Environmental Program, Missouri Career Options Project, and the Missouri Market Development program served people and their companies with business startup and management counseling, training, and other assistance.

Overall, the University of Missouri’s Business Development Programs (BDP) served 25,096 people and their businesses state-wide. The total impact for all businesses assisted by the BDP was:

- New jobs: 12,939
- Sales increases: $514,599,270
- Government contracts: $467,712,268
- New businesses: 265
- Jobs retained: 3,234
- Loans and investments in business: $204,073,294
- Acquired assets: $88,254,348
- Investment in commercialization: $47,083,591 in SBIR/STTR or research proposals submitted with $8,457,408 awards received
- Clients/companies receiving business counseling: 3,096
- Business training attendees and conference participants 22,000

The business development faculty contributing to these business successes are from the programs identified above. These staff have regional and statewide assignments and work with businesses in all counties across the state.

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 wide variety of educational opportunities. One of the products offered through those centers is the MoFAST 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.

Missouri Market Development Program – This program, which is funded at by the Environmental Improvement and Energy Resources Agency via the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, helps business owners find markets for recycled materials and helps other businesses in securing funding for manufacture of new goods using those recycled materials.

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.
Community Development

Local Government School program, MY-LOGO, engages elementary kids in community understanding and involvement.

For decades, the University of Missouri has been the one-stop source for practical education on almost anything. Since 1914, the University of Missouri Extension has worked in partnership with federal, state and county governments to provide science-based knowledge to all people and engage them in understanding change, solving problems and making informed decisions. However, over the years, and in response to the needs of a changing society, Missouri’s extension program expanded to include programs not only for urban populations but also for young people, rural and urban. Currently, the extension program offers a variety of programs ranging from providing education in youth leadership, citizenship and community service (4-H), protecting Missouri’s environment and natural resources to improve quality of life (Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension), improving the competitiveness and success of small businesses (Business Development), to providing leadership development and enhanced decision-making skills at the local level through building inclusive communities and promoting economic development statewide (Community Development).

One of the community development programs we are highlighting this year is the Local Government program, MY LOGO. MY LOGO is a program designed to teach students about local government in Missouri and involve them in issues confronting their communities. Some of the specific goals of the program include: bringing them into direct contact with local governments and local government officials while teaching them about, and involving them in an understanding of local government. Each year, from January through May, Mercer County Extension offers MY LOGO at the two schools in the county.

Working together with teachers, commissioners, fire and ambulance services and community members, the program provides rich and practical education on local government issues.

In 2010, a total of 36 students, 6th and 7th graders, participated in the program. During the course of the semester, students participated in different activities that enhanced their understanding of local government and community involvement, mathematical, team working and public speaking skills. One of the projects was to work in groups of five each to research on a community issue (economy, heritage, social characteristics, natural resources etc.) and prepare a poster to share with the whole class. The highlights of the program were tours of the cities of Princeton and Mercer. Although the program had hoped to bring students from Mercer to Princeton together for the tour, this was not possible because of financial constraints. Students in Mercer ended up touring the city of Mercer while Princeton school students toured the city of Princeton.

We thank, Commissioner Shane Grooms, Jennie Vertrees, of the Historical Society of Mercer County and Colleen Henshaw of Mercer City Hall, for taking the time to come and talk to students in their classrooms and the Mercer County Fire and Ambulance Services and Courthouse staff for participating in the tours.

The future of our communities depends on how these young people will stay engaged in local communities. There is current and projected general trend of “brain drain” in rural communities which threatens to destroy many small rural communities. It is therefore critical to invest in strategies that will curtail this trend and help communities to stand up and stand out in today’s turbulent global village. MY LOGO is one such educational program.
Healthy Lifestyles: Mercer County Extension Supports Active Living

Rural communities differ from urban communities in many important ways: culturally, economically, and socially. Rural residents face many unique challenges: jobs are declining, incomes are eroding, infrastructure are not only old but insufficient, places for recreational activities are far and apart, the backbone of communities - volunteers, youth, businesses and government services - is deserting rural America. As more individuals leave rural communities, the tax base dwindles and the cycle goes on and on. Because of these conditions, a large number of rural communities are reported in the media as fragmented, dispersed, abandoned, isolated, and stressed. However in the midst of these saddening paint-ings of our communities, the University of Missouri Extension has long been working to turn the tide and create healthy environments for rural residents through research based educational programs that draw businesses, build the necessary leadership and foster the creation of social capital needed to change the physical as well as the socio-economic landscape of these communities.

One area that has increasingly become a focal point is Healthy Living. Health plays a central role in our well-being: our ability to work, our relationships with others, and our participation in community activities are all driven by our health. Yet, our health choices are shaped by our environment. “Where people live, work, and play significantly impacts their health. People thrive when they live in communities with parks and playgrounds, grocery stores selling nutritious food, and neighbors who know one another.” - PolicyLink Institute

In 2010 Mercer County Extension was awarded a grant to build an initiative of community members who would work to develop environmental and policy changes that make the healthy choice the easy choice. In a world full of cars it’s easy to forget that the ability to get around by foot and pedal impacts the health and livability of a city. To date the group, Mercer County Healthy Lifestyle Initiative (MCHLI), has organized nine monthly meetings, conducted a community needs assessment around physical activity and healthy diets, developed project plans and competed in applying for grants to support the projects. These activities have benefited the group and the communities in many ways.

- Increased understanding of the extent of shortages of safe places for physical activity in the county. Following community needs and windshield surveys conducted in the county by Extension, MCHLI and Missouri Livable Streets members, it was evident that current sidewalks in both cities are either broken, start and stop, blocked or are just not in place. This creates a big challenge for community members interested in walking, particularly our youth and seniors.

- Gained knowledge about community, regional and statewide resources available to deal with the issues of physical activity and healthy eating. In November, 2010, the coordinator of the Missouri Livable Streets project gave an educational talk to 14 county residents on livable streets. MO Livable Streets is a new state-wide University of Missouri Extension initiative that hopes to bring about change to roads in both urban and rural areas giving citizens the infrastructure needed to walk, bike and jog safely in their communities.

(Continues on page 12)
(Continued from page 11)

- Increased networking: Mercer County HLI brings together representatives from different sectors of the economy, including but not limited to, health department, local schools, churches, local organizations, community leaders, and the community at large. This has promoted networks between and among community members and local and regional organizations. Following the November meeting MCHLI started working with Green Hills Planning Commission based in Trenton, MO.
- Provision of a platform for young people to be heard.

The initiative has four long term objectives. To help:
- Support “Safe Routes to School” strategies to increase the number of children walking and bicycling to school.
- Facilitate the creation and enhancement of parks, playgrounds and/or recreational facilities.
- Encourage cities to adopt ordinances that promote “complete streets” designed to allow pedestrians and cyclists to share roads safely with motorists.
- Identify and involve young people in healthy living initiatives.

Long term outcome expected from this initiative include: reduction in obesity among children and adults; reduced number of babies born with low birth weight; reduced rates of reported diabetes, increased community social capital and increased economic activity as businesses thrive in a vibrant economy.

Community Empowerment Collaboration Fails to Take Root in Mercer County

In June of 2009, over 400 people from diverse backgrounds gathered in Jefferson City at the 1st annual Missouri Poverty Summit in an effort to discuss why over 800,000 Missourians live under conditions of poverty in the midst of America’s riches. The summit identified 5 issues which were coined the “5 Pillars of Poverty” (Hunger, Health, Education, Energy & Housing, and Economic & Family Security) as key to any strategies aimed at changing the face of poverty in our communities. As a result of this summit, Community Action Agencies across the state turned their focus on grass roots efforts to fight poverty. They started to build Community Empowerment Collaborations (CECs) at county level.

In Northwest Missouri, Mercer County Extension assigned a Memorandum of Understanding with Green Hills Community Action Agency (GHCAA), to educate community members about poverty and facilitate the establishment of CECs in the 9 county region served by GHCAA. In Mercer County, a team of only four people met monthly for six months and collaboratively deliberated on poverty, its causes and solutions. Poverty was understood and defined from the CEC perspectives. Efforts to recruit more members to the CEC proved difficult and at the end of July the project started to fall apart as two of the members were no longer able to continue with the team. Because of this, Mercer County was not able to plan for a project and was did not qualify for further financial assistance from GHCAA. The project was terminated in July. Lessons learnt included increased understanding in:
- Developing a case for change statement.
- Using statistics to strengthen understanding on an issue
- Developing mission and values statements and goals.
- Performing action planning.

In other counties I serve, Community Empowerment Collaborations have taken root and are implementing projects to address poverty in their communities. Projects identified so far include: parenting program for low income earners in our communities, rental resource development targeted at low-income people, programs to
increase the quality of housing for low-income tenants, programs to improve homeowners and tenant relationships, working with city/municipalities to develop low-income housing, and developing county resources directories.

CECs open options, resources, and opportunities for individuals and families living with low-incomes. Mercer County CEC had hoped to bring together representatives from different sectors of the economy to encourage participatory development. Addressing poverty cannot be done in isolation by any one organization or field; it requires coordinated and comprehensive efforts.

Pictures from Local Government School Program on page 10.

Judge Brad Funk talking with kids.

Fire response demonstration.

Princeton School team presenting project findings to colleagues.

Patsy Holt with kids.
2010 Family Nutrition Education Program

University of Missouri Extension’s Family Nutrition Programs (FNEP) reached 235 low-income participants with nutrition education in Mercer County during the 2009-2010 school year. FNEP provides information on schools, community groups and agencies.

Youth from Pre-school to 5th or 6th grade learned through kid-friendly, hands-on lessons and activities. Activities include opportunities for taste-testing healthy foods and practicing skills that lead to good health. Education for adults also includes nutrition, food safety, and physical activity, as well as food resource management.

During the 2009-2010 school year the FNEP team used Show-Me Nutrition Educational Displays to get the message out to teachers and families in a greater way. A variety of posters were used with information on such topics as food safety, the “Supersizing of America,” eating well on a budget, and MyActivity Pyramid. Posters were set up in more than half of the schools FNEP served this year. Teachers garnered information by reading the posters themselves and by reading the associated handouts. The majority of the teachers then took what they had learned to their students. These teachers were not only in the elementary schools where FNEP classes are held, but also in the middle and high schools associated with them, increasing the reach and impact FNEP makes.

Posters and other programming could then also be used in non-matchable circumstances such as Community Action Partnerships and Agencies, Head Start and Parents As Teachers parent groups, library programs, and Back To School and Health Fairs to reach parents and families in a greater way.

Nutrition Program Associates (NPA’s) go into the schools and interact with community members to help them make healthier choices and build healthy habits. They see the difference the program makes in people lives. Debbie Herrold, Nutrition Program Associate, who serves the Princeton R-5 School, reported the following success.

“One of my most exciting success stories for the 4th session came from the second grade in the Princeton R-5 School. It is one of those chaotic classrooms with a large number of students. A girl came up to me and said she had been looking at the nutrition facts on her cereal box to see if it was a healthy choice. She said there was a picture of MyPyramid on the box as well. In a classroom where I was not sure I was getting through, that little girl made my day!”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student changes reported by teachers</th>
<th>Percent of teachers who observed each type of student change</th>
<th>Percent of teachers whose students talked about this change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More aware of nutrition</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make healthier meal and/or snack choices</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat breakfast more often</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More willing to try new foods</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved hand washing</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved food safety other than hand washing</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased physical activity</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extension Donates Books to Mercer County Library

On December 21, 2010, the University of Missouri Extension donated reading books to the Mercer County library. Reading is important for many reasons and is not just for older children. Children who are read to consistently by their parents or caregivers often begin reading earlier than their peers. Parents can also use this time of reading in order to bond with their child while snuggling with a good book. When parents read to their children, it not only helps the parent understand what their children are currently interested in, but also helps children to develop a love of reading which they will carry with them into adulthood. Also, reading is a good way to introduce controversial or difficult conversations with older children or teens. Reading a book is an excellent way to start a conversation either based on the book, the character’s experiences or the ending of the story. With these donated books from University of Missouri Extension focusing on relatives raising children and family, parents or relatives can use these books to start some important conversations with their loved ones about potential living situations.

In the picture, Jessica Trussell (left), University of Missouri Extension Human Development and Family Studies Specialist, presents the books to Marilyn Hardy (center), Children’s & Youth Librarian & Mercer County Extension Council Treasurer, and Marsha Shew (right), Mercer County Extension Council Chair. The books were purchased by University of Missouri Extension with funds from the Brookdale Grant for Relatives as Parents Program and the Relatives as Parents University of Missouri Mini-Grant. There were four books donated to the library: *Uncle Daddy* by Ralph Fletcher, *The Adventures of Nana Cat and Her Children “Moving In”* and *The Adventures of Nana Cat and Her Children “Someone New”* by Maureen Catherine, *The Family Book* by Todd Parr and *Nana’s Getting Married* by Heather Hartt-Sussman.

In the picture to the left, Jessica Trussell (left), University of Missouri Extension Human Development and Family Studies Specialist, presents the books to Marilyn Hardy (center), Children’s & Youth Librarian & Mercer County Extension Council Treasurer, and Marsha Shew (right), Mercer County Extension Council Chair.

In the picture to the right Jessica Trussell (left), University of Missouri Extension Human Development and Family Studies Specialist, Marilyn Hardy (center), Children’s & Youth Librarian & Mercer County Extension Council Treasurer, and Marsha Shew (right), Mercer County Extension Council Chair look over some of the newly donated books.
2010 4-H in Mercer County

A community of 75 4-H youths building life skills, engaging in science and connecting to the community. One in every four Missourians between the ages of 5 and 18 participated in a Missouri 4-H program in 2010.

4-H’ers on Positive Growth Trajectory

In recent years studies have suggested a link between youth development – especially programs that go beyond simple extracurricular activities to offer three foundational features of effective youth-serving programs (Lerner, 2004; Blum, 2003; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). These are:

- Positive and sustained relationships between youth and adults.
- Activities that build important life skills
- Opportunities for youth to use these life skills as both participants and as leaders in valued community activities.

Programs having these features may be termed youth development programs (Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). To better understand how programs for youth contribute to positive youth development, National 4-H Council sponsored the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. To date, over 6,000 adolescents from 34 states responded to surveys assessing positive youth development. Missouri 4-H joined the national study three years ago.

Active 4-H’ers excel

Connecting kids to caring adults

The ground-breaking national study confirmed what we already knew: Kids who are active 4-H members have more caring adults in their lives, are more likely to engage in science programs and excel in leadership and volunteer service.

Missouri active 4-H members over the past three years identify more adult mentors in their lives than non-4-H youth or youth who engage in 4-H opportunities less than two times a month.

Building Important Life Skills

Life skills are defined in a variety of ways. 4-H, in recent years, has given special attention to youth interest, attitudes and engagement in science, engineering and computer technology. Active 4-H members spend almost ten times more of their out-of-school time engaged in science-based activities than their non-4-H peers. Project work builds important life skills.

Building life skills in science for girls is particularly important due to their under-representation in science, engineering and technology fields. Young women active in Missouri 4-H are more interested in science probably because they have hands on experience doing science related programs than their non-4-H female peers.

2010 was another busy year for the Mercer County 4-H youth. The year was filled with opportunities to camp, travel, compete and learn.

Camp

The month of June was busy with annual 4-H camp at Crowder State Park in Trenton, MO. Two hundred counselors and campers attended the “As Green As It Gets” camp. They canoed, swam, did archery, shot paintballs and did leather work. The campfire and dances kept everyone busy from sun up to late night.

Fairs and Achievement Days

4-H members spend a lot of time preparing their animals and projects for show. In January, members had the opportunity to attend a livestock judging class in Columbia, MO. In April, ten members attended the Show Me Quality Program, which is required for 4-H members who show animals at the Missouri State Fair.

On July 11th, the Mercer County Fair kicked off with the Green Hills Circuit Horse Show. Other events in the week long show included livestock shows and judging, a baby show, pedal tractor pull, talent show, side by side mud run, Super Farmer Event, pet show, tractor pull and draft horse pull.

In addition to the Mercer County Fair, 4-H members participated in the North Central Missouri Fair in Trenton and the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia.

Mercer County 4-H held its annual Contest Day in April. Demonstrations, public speaking, judging and personal appearance were held. This is a preliminary to the state fair in August.

Taking the Lead

The 2010 theme for 4-H Week was “Taking the Lead” and all the 4-H clubs celebrated by decorating local business and participating in special activities.

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**Float Trip**
For an outdoor adventure, the region’s 4-H members headed to Arkansas for a three day float trip on the Buffalo River.

**Multi-county Events**
Along with competitions and camp, the 4-H groups in the region get together for fun activities. Mercer and Grundy clubs met at the Stacy Center in Princeton for a swim party.

**Education**
Twenty-three Mercer students and 16 Princeton preschoolers participated in the 4-H embryology project. Extension provided fertilized eggs and incubators along with curriculum to teach students about how chicks are formed and hatched. This remains one of the most popular programs offered to the schools on a yearly basis.
Water Festivals make a Splash with Fourth Graders

Over 120 fourth grade students from Mercer and Harrison Counties attended the 2010 More Than Just a Water Festival held in Princeton on March 8, 2010. The annual event provides a day of science education focusing on water and soil ecology. Learning objectives for each of the 20 minute sessions are based on the State Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for science. Students were given hands-on experience with microscopes, soil erosion, cloud formation, food webs and environment adaptation.

Students were given a pre-test and post test to assess learning. Average scores improved by 2.67 points (27%). Teachers were pleased with the hands-on learning environment. “It teaches so much by using hands on activities in a short amount of time.” Providing a new learning environment and new teaching styles also proved popular. “They (the students) did really listen to the presenters. It is so nice to have different approaches for the kids than just mine”. All of the classroom teachers reported learning by their students. “Thank you for such a wonderful day. My kids really enjoyed it and learned a lot”. 

Along with University of Missouri Extension, teaching partners included NASA, Mercer County Soil and Water District, and Missouri Department of Conservation. Funding and in-kind donors included Mercer County Extension Council, Mercer and Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation, Big G Foodland of Princeton, Casey’s, Wal-Mart of Bethany and Hy-Vee of Bethany. The First Baptist Church of Princeton provided facilities for the festival.
Century Farm Recognition – Mercer County

The University of Missouri is delighted to recognize one century farm in Mercer County this year.

Vera Lee Rowland’s farm got the recognition this year. The farm, established in 1903, measures approximately 80 acres and is located about 10 miles east of Princeton. The farm passed down from R. F. (Mont) Rowland who was married to Rachel Ellis and died in 1923, to William Rowland who was married to Cara Cardle and died in 1964, and then to Clarence Rowland who was married to Vera Lee Williamson and died in 1996.

The barn behind them and their house were built in 1913 while the family lived in a small building on the farm.

The Missouri Century Farm program’s history dates back to 1976 as a result of the Missouri Committee for Agriculture which was co-chaired by James B. Boillot, Director, Missouri Department of Agriculture, and Elmer R. Kiehl, Dean of the College of Agriculture, University of Missouri. This program has been sustained as a yearly event with over 100 farms recognized each year. In 2008, Missouri Farm Bureau became a program co-sponsor.

Third Graders come to Mercer County Extension

Third graders from Princeton R-V Elementary school stopped by the University of Missouri Extension Office on Career Day. Kelsey Jincks and Terralyn Hobbs greeted the students and teachers, talked about their jobs, 4-H, Community Development and other jobs with Extension. The students left with gained knowledge about Extension and treat bags filled with goodies.
We’re On the Web

Just recently, the Mercer County Extension Office along with other Northwest offices have gone through a website conversion. We are now more web friendly. Check out the new Mercer County Extension website: extension.missouri.edu/mercer

Message from the County Program Director

We realize the importance of meeting and exceeding our community's expectations for the educational programming and services Extension provides. In 2010, we believe most county residents’ expectations were met and even exceeded in some areas. Every plan we made, every program we provided, was driven by the desire and commitment to our responsibility of:

- Providing outstanding programs for all people, young and old.
- Being good stewards of resources, financial and otherwise.
- Building, nurturing and preserving a strong partnership with stakeholders: community leaders, community organizations, academic institutions, and the general public.

A vital component in our quest for a better quality of life is the constant investment Extension does in people and their communities. Programming done in 2010, which include but not limited to, Farm Safety, MYLOGO, Water Festival, Farm Lease, Ag Updates, and Healthy Lifestyle Initiative, all had a strong emphasis on helping local residents improve their well-being. I hope this report has strengthened the belief that binds us that Extension Services add value to the lives of residents in our community and beyond.

It truly is an honor for me to serve as the CPD and Community Development Specialist for this county. I’ve enjoyed working with many of you, and remain confident that deeper and stronger working relations will continue to develop over the years. Specifically, I would like to thank the County Commissioners, cities of Mercer and Princeton, the Extension council, local Faith-based organizations and community members for your support without which Extension work would have remained an unaccomplished mission.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Wilson Majee
Wilson Majee - CPD

Mercer County Extension Office
102 S. Broadway
Princeton, MO 64673
(660) 748-3315