

## EXTENSION'S PUBLIC VALUE

### What Extension can do for you

*Investing in University of Missouri Extension programs benefits not only the direct participants, but local communities and society as a whole. County and state dollars invested in MU Extension can bring in matching federal funds, grants and contracts that would otherwise be inaccessible. MU Extension programs, using unbiased research-based information, focus on preventing problems, which is much less expensive to taxpayers than trying to fix problems after they are created.*

Here are a few examples of what can happen in communities throughout Southwest Missouri **when you support MU Extension's programs.**

### Value-Added Agriculture

Participants form producer-owned businesses, which allows them to create something new or compete in an existing agricultural sector business. Producers then enjoy increased commodity prices, and other community members benefit from an increased flow of money in the community.

### Building Strong Families Program

Family members improve family functioning through healthier relationships, increased positive communication, greater family satisfaction and the accomplishment of shared goals. When stronger families more effectively engage with others at home, work and school, communities benefit from a higher level of household and workplace productivity.

### 4-H Program

4-H project work helps youth explore interests from animal science to aerospace, resulting in increased interest in science at a rate three times that of non-4-H peers. Interest in science is a predictor for young people to choose science-related careers. This interest in science, along with 4-H members' 70 percent greater likelihood to go to college than youth participating in other out-of-school programs, is



helping grow future scientists. Future scientists are critical to our state, national and global economy; three-quarters of Missouri's \$10.6 billion in products and services exported in 2005 were science, engineering and technology-based industries (Lerner and Lerner, Wave 6; MERIC).

### MU High School

Fewer Missouri students drop out of school and more qualify to apply for colleges. As a result, Missouri's high schools enjoy a higher student graduation rate. Increases in graduation rates benefit Missouri communities by broadening young people's career and educational alternatives and their subsequent chances for success.

# Southwest Region's Public Value

## Community Development Program

Citizens determine what is best for their community. The planning process results in buy-in from the community, adoption of policies, implementation of plans, sound proposals put before voters, and increased economic activity. Communities benefit from wise use of public and private resources.

## Business Development Program

Enterprising Missourians receive information and training to successfully start, run and expand businesses. This increased business activity creates jobs, increases consumer demand, promotes economic development and generates tax revenue for the public's welfare.

## Family Financial Education Program

Individuals spend and borrow responsibly, save more and gain control over their financial health. These behaviors benefit other community members by reducing predatory lending, reliance on public assistance programs and crime.

## Community Emergency Management

Communities, businesses, schools and residents reduce a community's disaster recovery period. This action saves lives and countless dollars in emergency recovery operations and avoids job loss. Additionally, the whole community builds a greater sense of cohesion.



## Food and Nutrition Education Program

Participants in the Family Nutrition Program become more aware of nutrition, make healthier meal and snack choices, eat breakfast more often, are more willing to try new foods, increase both their physical activity and make healthier food choices. Those who practice healthy eating and physical activity are more likely to enjoy a high quality of life as adults and in to old age. A healthy labor force is critical to attracting and keeping jobs in Missouri. This important programming reduces healthcare costs over the participant's lifetime, saving taxpayers money in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.