

An introduction for **David L. Burton**



David L. Burton, civic communication specialist for University of Missouri Extension in Springfield, Mo., has responsibilities throughout the 16 counties of southwest Missouri.

University of Missouri Extension improves people's lives with education and research from the four campuses of the University of Missouri System that focuses on high-priority needs of people throughout the state. Each county extension center, with oversight by locally elected and appointed citizens, is your local link to these unbiased resources.

As civic communication specialist, Burton assists the members of the news media, individuals and communities in gaining a better understanding of local issues and approaches available to citizens for public decision making to address those issues. Burton also writes and manages the Southwest Region News Service (<http://extension.missouri.edu/swregion/news>), which serves media outlets throughout the area by providing free news content. During 2005, Southwest Region News Service has had newspaper and radio coverage valued in excess of \$1.75 million. His articles also reached a readership in excess of 70 million people during 2005.

David is a frequent speaker on current issues facing journalists, moderator of a program called "YOU Are the Editor!" and moderator of various national public issue forums, including a forum entitled, "The News Media and Society: How to Restore the Public Trust" and a new forum entitled, "Should We Ban Fireworks" that he wrote for local use but is now being distributed and used nationwide.

Born and raised in Ash Grove, Mo., David is proud to call the Ozarks home. He has a master's degree in communication from Drury University that he earned in 2001. That degree compliments his 1984 graduation from Ash Grove High School and his 1988 Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and communication/journalism from Drury University.

David's past work experience includes: two years as a law clerk (while pursuing a law degree at Missouri University), five years as the managing editor of *Cross Country Times*, an award-winning weekly newspaper in Willard, three years as the Assistant Director of Development in the Office of Development and Alumni Relations at Southwest Missouri State University and six years as public relations specialist for Associated Electric Cooperative Inc. of Springfield, Mo. He began as field faculty (specialist) with University of Missouri Extension in Nov. 2001.

David and his wife live near Republic, Mo., with their son Matthew and daughter Lauren. Most of their family time is spent at their church, Second Baptist Church of Springfield, Mo., where they are active members. David's hobbies and interests include golf, woodworking, civil war history, historical preservation and Ozarks folklore.

Burton has received numerous writing awards from the National Cooperative Communicators Association, the Missouri Press Association and the Springfield Writer's Guild. In 1992, he was the American recipient of Hazel Brannon Smith Scholarship for journalism excellence from the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors. Since joining University of Missouri Extension David has been honored as "Rookie of the Year" (2003), a member of Extension's "Team of the Year," (2003), honored for the "Innovative Program of the Year" (2004) and recognized for leading extension's "Team of the Year" in 2004.

David is the author of numerous non-fiction and fiction short stories that have been published in both local and regional magazines. He is also the author of two self-published books: "A History of the Rural Schools of Greene County, Mo." and "Official Guide to the Registered Historic Sites of Greene County, Mo." David also had, from 1989 to 2000, a syndicated weekly newspaper column. Since 2001, David has also written a weekly column, *Agriculture in the Ozarks*, for the Springfield News-Leader.

David's writings on the news media and other current civic issues have appeared in numerous magazines and professional journals, including the *Grass Roots Editor*, International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editor and *The Bulletin*, Missouri Press Association. David has also spoken on these topics in front of numerous organizations and been featured on local radio talk shows and the Jim Bohannon Show (nationally syndicated talk radio show).

David is also an active member in the following professional organizations: Southwest Missouri chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, the Missouri Press Association and the Ozarks Press Association.

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