Impact of Closing the Greene County Extension Center Headquarters

Assumes Complete Loss of Services From Five Specialists and Clerical Support Positions

Greene County Extension Center Specialists and Staff 2011

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Office Operations

- Support personnel would not be available to answer various questions from an estimated 65 callers per day during the summer months and 30 callers per day other times of the year.
- Citizens would no longer receive useful information and publications sent to them by mail.
- Plant analysis and entomology services would not be available to Greene County citizens.
- There would be no facility or personnel to proctor tests for home school students, people completing their GEDs, and individuals working on their Master degrees.
- Private Applicator training would not be available to over 50 Greene County farmers and commercial growers to instruct them on the proper application and storage of pesticides and herbicides.
- Over 500 farmers, home owners, commercial growers and commercial businesses (i.e. MoDOT, engineering firms, agriculture vendors, etc.) would not be able to submit soil samples for analysis.

Children and Youth

- Almost a third (about 72 providers representing around 3,500 children) of all Greene County childcare operations would not receive childcare training from the Greene County Extension Center.
- Greene County Extension Center training for the Foster Grandparent Program, that provides mentors and assistants in local schools, would cease to exist.
- Both rural and urban 4-H clubs and afterschool 4-H clubs would be in jeopardy.
- Annual programming for about 320 4-H youth (ages 8-18) in 996 projects guided and lead by 127 adult volunteers would be greatly diminished or lost.
- About 1,500 4-H exhibits (household, livestock and companion animals) would be drastically reduced or eliminated at the Greene County 4-H Fair, the Ozarks Empire Fair and Missouri State Fair.

Studies Show

Youth who participate in 4-H are 70 percent more likely to enter college than non-participants.

Children who participate in 4-H for at least one year by eighth grade are 3.5 times more likely to contribute to their families, themselves and their communities.

Youth involved in 4-H are 41 percent less likely to engage in risky/problem behaviors such as smoking, drinking and bullying.
• Programming for more than 25 4-H Clover Kids (ages 5-8) could be discontinued.

• Summer camp for over 46 4-H members and about 23 Clover Kids would be greatly diminished or lost.

• Without a Greene County Extension Center, there would be no place to store 4-H resources and curriculum; no place for adult leaders and/or teen members to meet; and no place to accept club enrollments, trip applications and event entries.

Master Gardeners

• There would be no clerical support for the Master Gardeners of Greene County.

• Receptionist position for the Botanical Center, which has been staffed by MU Extension, would be lost.

• Master Gardener telephone and e-mail services would not be provided by the Greene County Extension Center. This would directly impact the Master Gardener hotline which assists about 2,100 residents annually. Use of office equipment by Master Gardeners to prepare educational materials would also cease.

• Core training for more than 50 new Master Gardeners each year would cease to exist.

• Advanced training for over 250 existing Master Gardeners would not be available.

• Professional horticulture support would not be made available to Master Gardeners who provide over 14,000 hours of volunteer service to our community each year.

Sustainable Living

• Workshops and services related to sustainable living and urban homesteading (energy conservation, recycling, water conservation, food preservation) would be eliminated.

• Greene County Extension Center sustainable living advisory support would be lost to the following organizations, programs and/or committees: Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, The Springfield/Greene County Environmental Collaborative, Community Partnership of the Ozark’s Housing Collaborative, Community Partnership of the Ozark’s Environmental Collaborative, The Springfield Plateau chapter of the Master Naturalists and the Ozark Green Building Coalition.
Community Development

- Greene County Extension Center specialists would not be available to offer group facilitation and team building services to Greene County, the City of Springfield, area nonprofits, and other organizations.

- Training workshops for governmental officials would not be offered through the Greene County Extension Center.

- Greene County Extension Center community development advisory support would be lost to the following organizations, programs and/or committees: Ozarks Technical College turf program, Ozark Empire Fair, Food Policy Coalition, Missouri State University Department of Agriculture, Friends of the Garden, Drury University’s Hammons School of Architecture, Community Partnership of the Ozark’s Homeless Taskforce, Rountree Neighborhood Association, Society of Professional Journalists (Southwest Missouri) and the Ozarks Press Association.

- The Ozarks Country School Association would end its work despite having 60 active members and having also received national attention.

- The Southwest Region News Service would be moved or would cease. Right now, the news service operates out of the Greene County office and uses a variety of techniques and tools to reach over 200,000 urban residents every week with research-based MU Extension information. Some of the tools used include an e-mailed weekly news service that reaches 8,000 plus subscribers, the use of social medias like Facebook, Flickr, Linkedin and Youtube to reach an additional 2,000-plus people per week, three weekly columns in urban newspapers that reach an audience of over 130,000, our website which has nearly 500 visitors per week and regular interviews of MU Extension specialists on Springfield television and radio stations that expand our audience further.

Miscellaneous

- There would be no Greene County Soils and Crops Conference for more than 100 area farmers and land owners.

- Greene County would forfeit about $450,000 in direct MU Extension support that benefits Greene County residents.

- Helpful information would not be distributed by Greene County specialists to an estimated 20,000 people at community events.

- There would be no Greene County Extension Center headquarters at the new Botanical Center, which would be going back on a promise made to voters and benefactors.
The quality of life of over 3,000 Greene County residents would be reduced by losing access to about 120 programs related to healthy living for seniors, professional development for employees, parenting skills, leadership development and community diversity.

Annually around 550 people would not receive about 20 presentations on a wide range of topics related to commercial horticulture and over 50 site visits would be lost.

Over 200 individuals annually would not get questions answered regarding mold, home moisture control, stormwater issues, emerging building technology and energy efficiency.

See next page for a list of red flag areas in the Community Focus 2011 report for Springfield and Greene County, that are impacted by local MU Extension programs.

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**Budget Cuts and Revenue Generation Already Implemented Over the Last Four Years**

Cost cutting and revenue generation ideas have already been implemented over the last three to four years to deal with budget shortages.

- Two full time clerical positions have been cut.
- In 2010, a 4-H Youth Program Assistant was moved to another county.
- Professional development funding has been eliminated; no pay raises were given to clerical support in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.
- The mileage reimbursement rate has been reduced below the IRS recommended amount, the supplies budget has been slashed by 75 percent and three mailed publications have been eliminated.
- The Master Gardener and 4-H groups are picking up more of their own program costs to help reduce financial pressure on the County Council budget.
- Additional effort is also being placed on generating revenue from fees, grants, contracts and other sources of revenue, which sometimes runs counter to our organizational mission.
Based on the “Community Focus 2011” report for Springfield and Greene County, the following “red flag” areas are being, or can be, impacted by MU Extension programs.

Citizenship: 
- Voter turnout in elections continues to be a concern
- Building a sense of community.

Community: 
- Air quality (reduce air pollution)
- Adequate supplies of safe water
- Identification and protection of green/open space for community needs
- Preservation of community waterways
- Disaster preparedness – community, businesses, faith community and families

Health - nutrition: 
- Overweight and obese adults
- Childhood obesity
- Family wellness

Seniors: 
- Adults over age 65 represent nearly 15% of Springfield population

Children/Youth and child care: 
- Increased poverty, higher incidence of child abuse and neglect, and decreased funding for multiple areas related to early childhood - equals less training and support for local childcare providers
- Educating youth of the dangers of illegal drug use

Families: 
- Vacancy rates due to foreclosures
- Homeless children and adolescents
- Shrinking financial resources to address homelessness and housing
- High rates of domestic violence

Financial management: 
- 1:2 single mothers in Springfield is living in poverty and nearly 50% of children in the Springfield R-12 school district qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Affordable housing

Information giving financially to help the Greene County Extension continue to fulfill its mission is available on our local website or by calling the office.

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