



Photo by Jed Owen

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Camden County 2025



Annual Report

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Camdenton, Missouri 65020
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**SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**

 **Extension**
University of Missouri
an equal opportunity/ADA institution

Dear County Commissioners, Elected Leaders, and Friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by the remarkable progress we have made together. MU Extension continues to deliver on its mission of linking the University of Missouri with every community across our state, ensuring that Missourians have access to the knowledge, resources, and partnerships they need to thrive.

Through the dedication of our faculty, staff, councils, partners, and advocates, MU Extension continues to make a measurable difference across Missouri. Last year, we had more than 1.5 million educational contacts and generated more than \$1 billion in economic impact. Building on that momentum, your support also helped secure a \$5 million recurring increase in state funding. This important milestone is already being invested in people, programs, and facilities to strengthen agriculture, improve health and well-being, support local economic development, and prepare youth for leadership through 4-H.

We have also adapted to new realities. Even as the sunset of federal SNAP-Ed funding forced hard choices, our commitment to delivering nutrition and health programs to families in need has not wavered. We are expanding investments in rural health, civic leadership and community development to address the priorities Missourians tell us matter most. We are also aligning our work with university, state, and federal priorities to maximize impact, whether in rural healthcare, agricultural innovation or workforce development.

Our strengths remain clear: people, programs, and partnerships. From nearly 6,000 4-H volunteers to county council members, master gardeners, and master naturalists, Extension thrives because of the dedication of those who serve. Our trusted, research-based content was accessed nearly 2 million times and downloaded more than 76,000 times last year, and innovative programs, from soil testing to urban revitalization initiatives, continue to meet Missouri's evolving needs.

Thank you for your continued partnership. MU Extension belongs to all Missourians, and together we will keep building resilient communities, fostering innovation, and preparing our state for the future.

With appreciation,

Chadwick C Higgins

Chad Higgins, PhD
Vice Chancellor, MU Extension and Engagement
Chief Engagement Officer, UM System

Faculty and Staff

Wayne Prewitt - retired
West Central Regional Director

Elaine Anderson
Interim West Central Regional Director

Allison Gunter
Extension and Engagement Specialist

Aleisha Campbell
Office Manager

Jodie Leifer
Youth Program Associate

Sherry Combs
Nutrition and Youth Program Associate

Dr. Ashley Allen Brown
Regional Economic Development Specialist

Andy McCorkill
Livestock Specialist

Terry Halleran - retired
Agronomist

Wesley Tucker
Agriculture Business Specialist

Ramon Arancibia
Commercial Horticulture Specialist

Landon Bax
Youth Development Specialist

Della Miller
Human Development and Family Science Specialist

Joni Harper
Natural Resources Specialist

Mitchell Moon
Labor and Work Force Development Specialist

Todd Lorenz
Field Specialist in Agronomy

Council Members

Mark Webb, Chair

Nancy Masterson, Vice-Chair

Laura Neely, Secretary

Jamee Rugen, Treasurer

Ray Little, Farm Bureau Rep

James Gohagan, County Commissioner

Jeff Hooker, Camdenton City Rep

Jennifer Bethurem

Angie Richardson

Shayla Viele

Dylan Morgan

Butch Miller

Lee Dobbs

Sandy Nelson

County executives

Ike Skelton, Presiding Commissioner

James Gohagan, 1st District Commissioner

Steve Dougan, 2nd District Commissioner

Jordan Stanton, Administrative Assistant

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income

County Appropriations 76,288.00

Total Income 76,288.00

Expenses

Salaries/Benefits 56,441.38

Liability Insurance 2,226.62

Postage and Mailbox Fee 300.00

Telephone 600.00

Maint, Copier, Supplies & Copies 800.00

Subscriptions & Memberships 500.00

Office Supplies, 1,600.00

Travel 5,120.00

Council Expenditures 2,700.00

County Program Development 6,000.00

Total Expenses 76,288.00

Camden County partners

Camdenton High School

Margaritaville

COMO Connect

The Lodge of Four Seasons

Porta Cima

Baxter's Bar and Grill

Camdenton 4-H

Camdenton Schools

Macks Creek Schools

Osage Beach Schools

Forget Me Not Horse Rescue

Camden County Sheriff's Shooting Range

Progressive Agriculture Safety Day Foundation

Camdenton Library District

Kradle to Krayon – Camdenton

I Wonder Y Preschool

United Methodist Church

Camdenton Head Start

American Legion

Oak Ridge Intermediate

Macks Creek School

Hurricane Deck School

Climax Springs School

Stoutland Library

Camden County Farm Bureau

Osage Beach Library

Dogwood Elementary

Stoutland Schools

Hawthorn Elementary

MU Extension is a unique funding partnership.

Extension funding is a three-way partnership of federal, state and county government. Federal and state money, through the University of Missouri system, pay professional staff salaries, training costs, computers and communication equipment. County funds support the local office, secretarial and youth assistant salaries, staff mileage and council expenses.

The Camden County Extension Council, faculty and staff would like to express our appreciation to the Camden County Commissioners for their continued support of extension programs.



Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to Camden County Extension with a gift to be used immediately or as an endowment contribution for long term efforts. Monies put into the endowment are left forever to earn interest with the county office benefiting each year. You can also direct your donation to a specific program such as 4-H or Master Gardeners.

UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in Camden County Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts Camden County, showcasing the meaningful ways local engagement supports residents. It includes data on the number of students, employees, retirees and alumni affiliated with the University of Missouri System, along with the healthcare and extension services provided over the past year.

In addition, the report highlights the broader contributions of the UM System across Missouri in key areas such as education, research, healthcare, economic development and public service. It features metrics like job creation, financial aid distribution, research investment, healthcare access and broadband expansion.

This report is a valuable resource for understanding the measurable benefits the UM System brings to Missouri communities. It supports informed decision-making, advocacy efforts and strategic planning by illustrating the tangible impact of university-driven initiatives at both the local and statewide levels.

[Access your county's Impact Report.](#)



GRAND CHALLENGES

Grand Challenges

The Grand Challenges — Economic Opportunity, Educational Access, Health and Well-being, and Agricultural Stewardship — represent the most pressing issues facing Missouri communities. They are important because:

By focusing on these challenges, MU Extension in Camden County can better leverage university resources, data and partnerships to empower people to improve their lives, businesses and communities.

This report presents localized data and insights in how MU Extension in Camden County is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.

[Access your county's Grand Challenges Report.](#)





MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18



4-H's Leadership and Civic Engagement programs foster understanding, confidence, and decision-making skills to empower young people to become informed and active citizens. These initiatives prepare youth to become future leaders by engaging them in programs where they have voice and influence.

Statewide programs such as the **Missouri State 4-H Council** and **Civic Engagement Ambassadors** give youth opportunities to represent their peers, advocate for issues that matter, and build connections with leaders across Missouri. These experiences help young people grow as confident communicators and thoughtful problem solvers, ready to lead wherever life takes them.



Missouri 4-H Natural Resources programs engage youth in hands-on learning across climate science, environmental sustainability, renewable energy, sportfishing, and wildlife conservation. Programs like the **4-H Sportfishing Contest** and **Sportfishing SLAM** give young people practical experience while building teamwork, problem-solving skills, and a love of the outdoors.

The **4-H Shooting Sports** program teaches marksmanship, safe firearm use, hunting, and archery principles, demonstrating how 4-H encourages holistic youth development and responsible citizenship. Supported by caring adult leaders, these programs help youth cultivate life skills, self-worth, and conservation ethics while exploring the natural world around them.



Missouri 4-H Agriculture programs give youth hands-on experiences in areas such as animal science, veterinary science, plant science, and agronomy. Members explore the biology, care, and management of animals and crops while developing problem-solving, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Youth can also put their knowledge into practice through statewide competitions, including **Livestock Judging**, **Meat Judging**, **Hippology**, the **Missouri 4-H Equine Tour** and more. These experiences help participants apply what they've learned, gain confidence, and prepare for future careers in agriculture and related fields.



Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being

Local Impact

Number of Camden County 4-Hers and Volunteers

- 59 Community club 4-H members
- Camden County 4-H members were supported by twelve enrolled, screened and oriented adult volunteers supporting the development of youth in the 2024-2025 4-H Year.
- Volunteers contributed 2100 hours to the Camden County 4-H program valued at \$73,059.00.
- 21 volunteers participated in volunteer development efforts including the Club Leader Summit and Project Leader Summit offered by 4-H Professionals to learn and be equipped for the leadership roles in which they serve.
- 135 Participating in 4-H Special Interest / short-term Programs
- 112 participating in after-school programming

Clubs

- Lazy Lopers
- Easy Riders
- Camdenton 4-H Shooting Sports
- Camdenton 4-H club

Jodie Leifer, Youth Program Associate

Camden County 4-H host Progressive Agriculture Safety Day

We partner with Progressive Agriculture Safety Day Foundation, Climax Springs School, and Macks Creek School.

- 300 youth participants from both schools.
- 20 volunteers from the Camden County community
- 20 youth volunteers from each of the high schools

Safety Sessions offered: Electrical safety, farm equipment safety, disability awareness, animal safety, hearing awareness.

Thank you, Camden County Farm Bureau, for providing lunch.

Horse Camp

- Camden County hosted its inaugural horse camp in partnership with Forget Me Not Horse Rescue, where our Easy Rider 4-H Club regularly meets. The rescue graciously provided horses for participants who did not have their own. We were excited to welcome 15 4-H campers from across the state!

Camden County 4-H partnered with four schools and libraries in the Camden County.

Programs Provided:

Eating from the Garden	Macks Creek Elementary, Camdenton Library
Illinois Jr. Chef, Robotics, Crafts, Wind Power, and Stem	Osage Beach Elementary, Stoutland Library, Camdenton Library level B & C, Osage Beach Library
Illinois Jr. Chef	Oak Ridge Intermediate
Career Pathways	Camdenton High School



Profiles and stories



The Best Way to Learn is to Teach: Our Level C 4-H leaders (ages 13—15) took center stage today at the Camdenton Library, mentoring our Level B class (ages 10—12) on advanced kitchen techniques they've mastered.



Sprouting Success: These 4-H'ers are officially "green thumbs" in training.

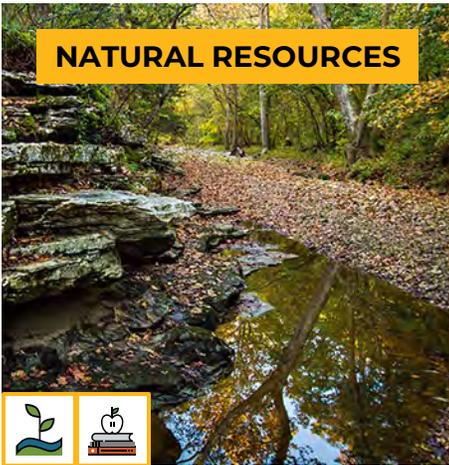
The Best Kind of Teamwork: Grooming and tacking up for a day of learning! We are so proud of our 4-H campers for the care and respect they show these rescued horses.





MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Agriculture and Environment



The Missouri Master Naturalist program is a community-based initiative for adults, supported by the Missouri Department of Conservation and MU Extension. It aims to create a group of knowledgeable volunteers who can offer education, outreach and service for the responsible management of natural resources in Missouri communities.

Additionally, the **Missouri Woodland Steward program** offers a short course that equips private landowners with knowledge of woodland management, helping them identify wildlife habitats, develop plans and connect with local natural resource experts.



The **Missouri Master Gardener** program enables people of all ages to get in-depth horticultural training and apply what they've learned to improve their communities and educate others about gardening.



In 2023, almost 4,000 Missouri Extension Master Gardeners completed over 149,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS throughout the state.



The Missouri AgrAbility Project provides practical education, on-the-farm assistance and agency referrals to farmers and ranchers with disabilities and their families to promote agricultural and rural independence. National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), administers the AgrAbility project.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Todd Lorenz, Field Specialist in Agronomy

Those who chose to fill out a 2025 survey at the Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings in counties that I serve represented over 50,000 acres from in and around central Missouri. Of those reporting, 100% believe Extension educational programs are important in their community. Also, 100% stated that the information provided will make them a better applicator. There were 50 of producers from Camden who attended the Pesticide Applicator Program this year in either Private or Commercial.



As a result of our Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings crop producers and their advisers will not only be aware of the latest research related to pest and pesticide management but will also learn appropriate techniques of using that information to build efficient integrated pest management systems. The goal is to sustain an economically viable crop production industry in Missouri while diminishing potential negative impacts of crop production systems on the environment. This will enhance the economic and social viability of rural and urban Missouri while protecting the environment. #2xAg2030; #ExtendMU

Soil testing is utilized by both gardeners and homeowners as well as agriculture forage and livestock production. Any production, from back yard gardens and lawn to full scale agriculture, that is attempted with insufficient information may result in crop losses, crop failure, wasted money, physical injury and environmental degradation from soil erosion or misuse of pesticides. Through our offices, the University of Missouri Soil Testing Laboratory provide accurate analysis of your soil and provide research-based recommendations on the crop that you are producing. There were 26 of producers from Camden County who submitted soil samples through our laboratory this year.

The impact of weather extremes where both livestock and row crop production sustained challenges for the entire year of 2025. The 2024 season ended with less than average fall precipitation in the central Missouri area, which in turn set the 2025 growing season in a moisture deficit deep into the soil profile. Our 2025 spring started wet and cooling which delayed green up and spring growth. The abundance of spring moisture allowed producers to stock up again on hay reserves after experiencing some shortages in 2022-24. However, this moisture did not overcome the previous moisture deficiency in the soil profile. The late season drought provided weather patterns where much of the state was abnormally dry to moderate, and many areas were even dryer causing many to start feeding hay in August. Water sources for livestock were extremely stressed as well



The University of Missouri Extension serves Missouri by extending research-based information and high-quality programming to address the high priority needs of citizens at the local level. Our program support includes agriculture and environment, business and community, health and safety, and youth and family. For further information please contact our office at (address, phone number)

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Joni Harper, Natural Resources Specialist

Winter Tree Identification Hike

- 64 participants
- Participants learned how to identify common trees in Missouri's forests in the wintertime using bark, buds, and twigs. The event targeted individuals interested in natural resources.



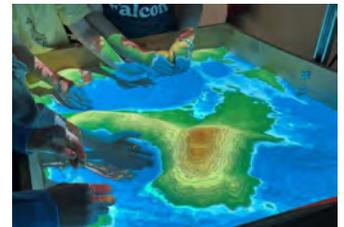
Winter Tree Identification Hike

- 64 participants
- Participants learned how to identify common trees in Missouri's forests in the wintertime using bark, buds, and twigs. The event targeted individuals interested in natural resources.



Experience Earth's Surface for 4-H Youth Summer Camp

- 195 youth participants
- Program taught youth all about topographic maps and watersheds. Participants learned about what makes a healthy watershed, conservation, topographic map symbols, and practiced reading topographic maps with hands-on activities and lessons. Students used an augmented reality sand table to support learning.



Women Owning Woodlands Fall Field Trip (October 2025)

- 13 participants
- This field trip started with a tour of Pioneer Forest, with stops at an active timber sale, a timber stand improvement treatment, and a virgin pine forest. We then camped out at Round Spring campground and had a casual evening of dinner and s'mores. The next day we went on a hike of the Devil's Well and Cave Spring Loop, where we practiced tree identification and discussed the different ecosystems we hiked through.



Invasive Plant Control Workshop

Ten woodland owners who participated in the Invasive Plant Workshop increased their ability to identify priority invasive plant species and understand their impacts on forest health. As a result of the training, participants were better prepared to select and apply appropriate invasive plant management strategies on their own properties, supporting improved woodland condition, enhanced wildlife habitat, and reduced spread of invasive species across the landscape.



Chainsaw Safety Training

Participants in the Beginner Chainsaw Safety Training increased their ability to safely operate and maintain chainsaws through hands-on instruction and field practice. As a result of the training, participants demonstrated improved awareness of workplace and woodland safety hazards, proper use of personal protective equipment, and correct cutting techniques—reducing the risk of injury and supporting safer land and woodland management activities.

Agriculture and Environment

Annual Dinner



Farm Family

The Meads Family farm was selected as the Farm family for Camden County.



Century Farm

The Mauss Farm was selected as the Century Farm for Camden County. Mr. Mauss shared photos that were taken early on working with Extension.

2025 Camden County Annual Dinner

Photographed below are some of the MU Extension Camden County Council members at the annual dinner. From the left to right: Sandy Nelson, Jamee Rugen; Treasurer, Shayla Viele, Ray Little; Farm Bureau Representative, Angie Richardson, Laura Neely; Secretary; Nancy Masterson, Co-Chair.



Master Gardener Program

Local Impact

Lake Area



Fifteen Lake Area Master Gardeners (LAMG) contributed numerous service hours in the Lake Area during 2025. These hours reflect work done in both Camden and Miller Counties. During 2025 LAMG volunteers worked in LAMG local garden projects, did spring planting at two Central Bank locations in the Lake Area, and shared advice and resources at booths (Westlake Aquatic Center's 25th Anniversary Celebration in Laurie, MO; Farmers Market in Eldon, MO and local festivals - Osage Beach Fall Festival and Camden County Historical Museum's Fall Apple Butter Festival). Plants and garden gloves were sold at Festivals to raise money for the LAMG Scholarship Program. A few LAMG volunteered with the Lake Ozark Watershed Alliance (LOWA) on two of their projects (Community Cleanup for Camden County-Recycling and LOWA Native Plant Sale) held in Sunrise Beach, MO.



A Garden Festival was hosted by LAMG at Faithbridge Church on May 3, 2025. In the Conference Room were presentations related to various gardening topics.

* "Bluebirds and Other Cavity Nesters" – Regina Garr, Birds-I-View, Jefferson City

* "Propagating Cactus and Succulents" – Dean Thiemann, MO Cactus & Succulent Society

* "Monarchs" – Joann Billington, Ozark Prairie Master Gardeners

Activities in the lobby area included an Information Booth with free publications/information on various gardening related topics, gardening gloves for sale, cookies and bottled water available, and an opportunity to visit with local artists from the Lake Arts Council and view some of their work.

In the parking lot, LAMG had a Plant Sale and the Miller County Soil and Water Conservation District gave away bare-root tree seedlings. Any funds raised at the Garden Festival went toward the LAMG Scholarship Program. Garden Festival participants had the opportunity to see the garden beds outside the Church.

Master Gardener Program

Local Impact

Lake Area



Monthly meetings were held February 11, 2025 through November 11, 2025. Meeting started with an educational program followed by their business meeting. Continuing Education topics and speakers during the year were the following:

- * "Growing Roses" – Lorna Earnest, Ozark Prairie MG
- * "Home Mushroom Production" – Dan Britton, Ozark Prairie MG
- * "Improving Soil for the Garden" – Dhruba Dhakal, MU Extension
- * "Leaf Sandcasting" – Jan Mitzel, Master Gardener Emeritus
- * "Seed Cleaning" – Amy Lynn Tyler and Michael Hoyle, MO Wildflower Nursery
- * "Nature of Oaks" video – Doug Tallamy, Author & Professor at University of Delaware
- * "The Truth about Pesticides" – Sam Polly, MU Extension
- * Seed Exchange and Secret Plant Buddies - LAMG

LAMG awarded three scholarships in 2025. Two scholarships were renewals. One scholarship went to a 2022 School of the Osage graduate, who will be a senior at the University of Missouri-Columbia majoring in Agribusiness Management. The second scholarship was awarded to a 2024 School of the

Osage graduate for her sophomore year at University of Missouri-Columbia. She is majoring in Agribusiness Management. The third scholarship was awarded to a 2025 graduate of School of the Osage. She will be majoring in Environmental Sciences at the University of Central Missouri.

Citizens from Camden and Miller Counties attended the MO Master Gardener Core Course held on Monday evenings March through June at the Lake Ozark Fire Protection District Training Room on Bagnell Dam Blvd. The various topics covered were taught by MU Extension Specialists, Master Gardeners and a Missouri Conservation Forester.

In September ten LAMG and one guest toured the Happy Hollow Farm outside of Jamestown, MO. On this fieldtrip owner Liz Graznak explained about organic vegetable gardening requirements, her Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and the Farmers Markets in KC and Columbia where she sells her produce and cut flowers.





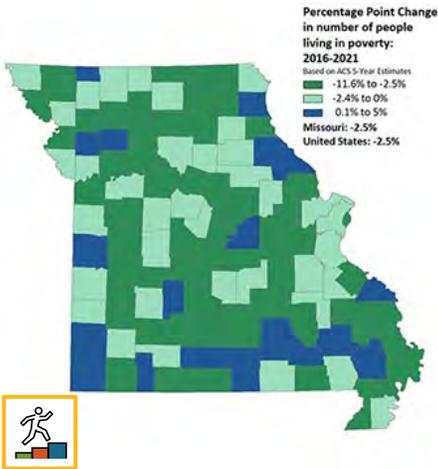
MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Business and Community



Missourians from all walks of life celebrated the **2023 Missouri Good Neighbor Week** Sept. 28 to Oct. 4 by completing and reporting neighboring acts and nominating others as the most engaged neighbors in their counties.

In 2023, the goal was to document 15,000 acts of neighboring. That goal was surpassed with 19,752 Missourians being positively affected during MISSOURI GOOD NEIGHBOR WEEK.



The **Missouri Economy Indicators (MEI)** series explores business, industry and workforce topics that affect Missouri's economy. The data is shared through newsletters and on social media. MU Extension faculty and staff receive talking points and collateral to share with local stakeholders.

In 2022, MEI published 15 issues, and MEI online resources were accessed MORE THAN 5,000 TIMES. Two out of five MEI newsletter recipients reported using the information to help guide policy or decision-making in their work.



The annual **Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities** conference is designed for stakeholders, economic developers, businesses, local government, educators and nonprofits interested in increasing their communities' potential for entrepreneurship. In 2023, the conference offered breakout sessions in Benton County's shops and businesses, providing firsthand insight into the world of entrepreneurial communities.

The conference drew 104 ATTENDEES, generating an estimated initial economic impact of around \$33,000 for Benton County.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Regional Economic Development (RED) 2025 SUMMARY

2025 was a strong and productive year for economic development efforts in Camden County, marked by meaningful engagement, measurable impact, and a growing understanding of local priorities. Through extensive collaboration and program delivery focused on entrepreneurship, workforce and youth development, agribusiness, and professional education, Extension programming responded directly to the needs of Camden County’s businesses, employers, and communities.

This work reinforced the value of relationship-driven, accessible, and practical approaches that meet people where they are and lead to action. As a result, 2026 programming is positioned to be more targeted, responsive, and impactful—supporting economic vitality, workforce readiness, and long-term community capacity across Camden County.



Ashley Allen-Brown, Ed.D.
Regional Economic
Development Specialist
allen-browna@missouri.edu

Business and Community

Total Direct Contacts
1726

Total Program Participants
2809

Total Indirect Reach
157,413

Regional Economic Development (RED) Programming Impact: Depth and Reach (2025) Camden County



Direct Contacts: 614 residents interacted or contacted MU Extension B&C RED in Camden County for assistance.



Program Participants: 1,849 of which **1,359** were Youth ages 13 - 18 through the Resilient Economies and Community Health (REACH) for Camden County Youth Mentoring and Workforce Development Program



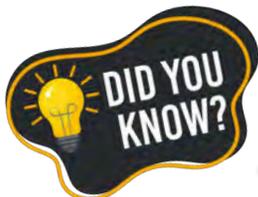
Indirect Reach: 37,767 residents reached through articles, hard copy educational materials, community events, and social media engagement

“ Youth workforce development is not a **side outcome**— it is the **core driver** of engagement. ”



Youth Workforce Development Leads Extension Engagement

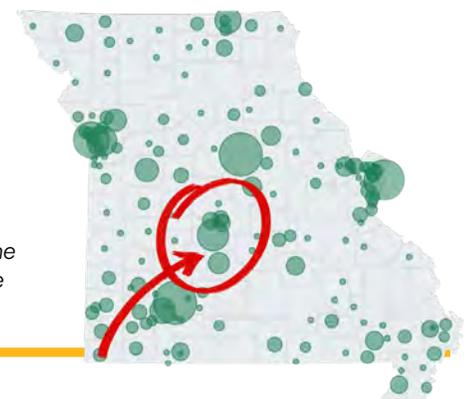
Ashley Allen-Brown



With strong support from the Camden County Council of MU Extension, the Camden County Commission, and community partners, Camden County exceeded the Business & Communities (B&C) annual program engagement goal by nearly four times—achieving 370% of the anticipated target.

MU Extension Business and Communities’ Economic and community development programming for the Lake of the Ozarks region is led by one Regional Economic Development Specialist, yet the region continues to exceed engagement goals and deliver measurable impact across multiple counties.

*The image to the right demonstrates B&C-specific activity heatmap across all Missouri counties. The red circle with arrow denotes heavy concentration of activity in Camden County and the Lake of the Ozarks Region.



Business and Community

Tackling the Grand Challenges through Regional Economic and Community Development Programming

Camden County



Growing Our Camden County Workforce From Within

In answer to the workforce shortage looming over Camden County, MU Extension B&C RED launched in the Camdenton R-III School District in 2024 with the support of the Camden County Commission and MU Extension Council, and 4-H, the MU Extension Resilient Economies and Community Health (REACH) for Camden County Youth Mentoring and Workforce Development Program introduces students ages 14–18 to local businesses, employers, and professional networks. The program emphasizes that opportunities exist right here at home—even for young people who do not plan to pursue a four-year college degree.

In 2025, REACH engaged:

- ★ 1,359 + Camdenton High School students and their teachers and counselors
- ★ 40+ Camden County employers and community partners supported this initiative through career fairs, employer site visits, mentoring, and workforce readiness activities.

Meaningful Outcomes for Youth

- ✓ 100% of the participants reported increased awareness of local career opportunities and reasons to remain in their community after graduation
- ✓ 95% of participants reported increased understanding of essential 21st Century workforce skills

REACH strengthened workforce pipelines by connecting youth directly to viable career pathways within their home communities—supporting both individual success and long-term regional economic sustainability through:

- ✓ **Workforce Development:** Increased youth readiness aligned with regional labor needs
- ✓ **Youth Development:** Expanded career awareness, skills, and confidence
- ✓ **Economic Vitality:** Supported talent retention and sustainable workforce systems



Above left: Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown presents a session on developing key 21st Century workforce skills to find and maintain employment. Above right: Youth visit Layla Thurman, HR director of Margaritaville Resort, to learn about employment opportunities.



Shown left: Participants in the December 2025 REACH visit to The Club at Porto Cima for a tour and holiday lunch sponsored by the Camden County Extension Council.

JOB Shadowing 2024/2025

HOSTED BY CHS, LCTC, 4H, & MU EXTENSION

TRANSITIONING to your future!

MEET FIELD PROFESSIONALS!
Learn about your future and meet employers from the local community. Job shadowing allows you to experience possible employment opportunities.

Job Shadowing Dates:

- 9/24: Margaritaville
- 10/22: Lake Regional Hospital
- 11/19: Lodge of Four Seasons
- 1/28: Co-Mo Connect
- 2/25: ITW EAE's Electrovert
- 3/25: Big Thunder Marine
- 4/15: Job Panel at CHS
- 5/6: Natural Resources Agriculture

job shadowing

"I really liked the job shadowing trips because it opened my mind for what path I could take in the future. They made me realize how many paths I could go down for a steady career."
~ female, sophomore REACH participant

A very special THANK YOU to everyone who has hosted, helped, and supported this pilot program for Camdenton High School Students since the program's launch in 2024!

Business and Community Tackling the Grand Challenges through Regional Economic and Community Development Programming

Camden County

Crisis to Collaboration: Tackling the Child Care Challenge

Held November 12 in Sunrise Beach, this meaningful program addressed the region's childcare shortage as a critical workforce, economic development, and community sustainability issue. Organized by Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown and hosted by the Camden County Council of MU Extension in partnership with CO-MO Connect, the Community Foundation of Lake of the Ozarks, the Lake West Chamber, and Lake TV, the solutions-focused panel and asset-mapping workshop moved the conversation from awareness to action. Forty-five participants from across Missouri—including educators, community leaders, and practitioners—engaged in identifying root causes, sharing promising practices, and mapping local assets to support collaborative, community-driven solutions for strengthening the Lake of the Ozarks workforce and economy. **There were 45 in attendance from across the state.**



University of Missouri
Presents

Crisis to Collaboration Tackling the Childcare Challenge

Expert Panel Discussion - Luncheon - Asset Mapping Workshop
A FREE Community Service in partnership with






bit.ly/ChildcareSummit25



Left: An expert panel moderated by Jennifer Presberry, Economic Development Specialist for CO-MO Connect, kicked off this day of meaningful engagement.

Photo courtesy of Lake TV.



Above right: Camden County Council of MU Extension member and childcare expert, Shayla Veile, listens as Good Shepherd Learning Center director, Cyndy Andrews shares her experience as a childcare provider.

Photo courtesy of Lake TV.

Camden County attendees = 16 Morgan County attendees = 3
Miller County attendees = 1 Laclede County attendees = 1
Hickory County attendees = 1

Four-County Recovery Friendly Workplace Learning Luncheon 2025

Organized by Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown and co-hosted by the Laclede and Camden County Councils of MU Extension. The Four-County Recovery Friendly Workplace Learning Luncheon was underwritten in part by a grant from the Community Foundation of Lake of the Ozarks, and the program allowed employers, decision-makers, healthcare practitioners, and concerned community members the chance to hear from labor and workforce development experts regarding the Recovery Friendly Workplace program. This was designed to approach the workforce crisis topic currently plaguing Missouri. Dr. Doug Swanson and Dr. Rob Russell presented strategies to reduce stigma and provide recovery resources. In addition to the program, attendees will enjoy a delicious buffet lunch and interact with key resource providers. **There were 24 individuals in attendance from across the state.**



RECOVERY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

LEARNING LUNCHEON AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

MEET YOUR LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS



DR. DOUG SWANSON



DR. ROB RUSSELL

11:30 AM UNTIL 2:00 PM

WEDNESDAY APRIL 9, 2025

THE LODGE OF FOUR SEASONS VALENCIA ROOM
315 FOUR SEASONS DRIVE - LAKE OZARK, MO

The Recovery Friendly Workplace Learning Luncheon is part of the MU Extension Regional Economic and Community Health & Wellbeing Workforce Development Collaborative, and is underwritten in part by the Camden and Laclede County Councils of MU Extension, and the Community Foundation of the Lake of the Ozarks.



Above: Dr. Doug Swanson provides key information while community leaders and stakeholders listen and engage.

Camden County attendees = 8
Laclede County attendees = 4
Miller County attendees = 5
Hickory County attendees = 1

Business and Community Other Regional Economic and Community Development Programs of Significance

Camden County

Lake Area Regional Agribusiness Expo 2025

The **Lake Area Regional Agribusiness Expo 2025** was developed by University of Missouri Extension in direct response to producer feedback calling for greater visibility, networking, and direct-to-consumer opportunities for small agribusinesses. Hosted on March 29, 2025, at The Exchange at Wall Street Cattle Company, the cost-free event reduced barriers to participation and created meaningful engagement between local producers, consumers, and MU Extension partners. With agriculture contributing nearly \$395 million in output and supporting more than 3,000 jobs in Laclede County, the Expo strategically strengthened the region's agribusiness ecosystem by increasing visibility of small and value-added enterprises, facilitating peer-to-peer collaboration, and anchoring agribusiness activity locally. Through coordinated promotion, vendor support, and on-site management, MU Extension positioned itself as a catalyst for rural agribusiness growth—helping producers connect, collaborate, and expand in ways that strengthen the regional economy and long-term sustainability. **There were nearly 200 attendees.**



Laclede County Extension Council Chair, Ed O'Connor and his wife, Leslie, participated in the Lake Area Regional Ag Expo.

Camden County attendees = 3 Laclede County attendees = 54

Build Your Board Online Training

Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown hosted a Build Your Board live Zoom to help nonprofit professionals gain essential board leadership skills, covering topics like board operations, fundraising, conflict resolution, and marketing—all in engaging, one-hour sessions. **There were 24 in attendance from across the state.**

Camden County attendees = 2 Dallas County attendees = 1
Laclede County attendees = 1 Miller County attendees = 1
Morgan County attendees = 1

Reimagining Economic Development at Lake of the Ozarks: From Getaway to Groundbreaker

Economic vitality in rural regions like the Lake of the Ozarks is often driven not by large employers, but by local entrepreneurs already embedded in the community. Dr. Ashley Allen-Brown partnered with state and local leaders to co-present on reimagining the region's economic strategy through entrepreneurial intelligence. These mini-sessions piloted a new framework designed to help communities recognize and activate their existing assets—students, veterans, retirees, creatives, and small business owners—as a pathway to sustainable economic growth.. **Total session attendance was 98.**

Camden County attendees = 50



NONPROFIT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

INFORMATION, REFERRALS, AND SUPPORT FOR MISSOURI'S NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Our regional economic and community development team will answer introductory-level questions and make referrals to other programs, services, and organizations, when applicable. Ashley Allen—Brown, West Central Region, provides expertise in fundraising, marketing, membership development and communication, legislative and grassroots advocacy training.

There were 13 NPTA inquiries from the West Central Region in 2025.

Counties and number of individuals assisted through NPTA:

Camden County = 5
Dallas County = 3
Hickory County = 1
Laclede County = 1
Miller County = 1
Morgan County = 2

Building Momentum: The 2025 CEC Conference Strengthens Missouri's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Business and Community

The **Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference**, hosted annually by University of Missouri Extension, delivers immediate and long-term economic benefits to Missourians and host communities alike. By drawing entrepreneurs, business leaders, and civic stakeholders from across Missouri and beyond, the conference generates direct local economic activity as attendees invest in lodging, dining, shopping, and unique attractions not available in their home communities. **In 2025, the conference brought 164 attendees from 48 Missouri counties and four states to Excelsior Springs**, significantly increasing visitor spending while showcasing local businesses, venues, and cultural assets. Beyond short-term tourism impacts, CEC strengthens Missouri's economic development pipeline by equipping participants with practical tools, peer networks, and actionable strategies they take back to their communities—multiplying the conference's impact through improved entrepreneurship support, workforce development, and civic capacity across the state.



Ashley Allen-Brown, Ed.D.
2025/2026 CEC Conference Chair
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MEASURABLE IMPACT

The 2025 CEC Conference demonstrated measurable learning impact and intense participant satisfaction:

- ✓ **Pre-conference understanding:** 77% rated their knowledge as average to high.
- ✓ **Post-conference understanding:** 91% rated high to very high — an **18% gain in applied learning effectiveness.**
- ✓ **Educational relevance:** 55% reported they could apply what they learned directly in their communities.
- ✓ **Value perception:** 67% rated the conference a good value for the cost.
- ✓ **Presenter effectiveness:** 100% of respondents rated presenters as Effective or Highly Effective.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Communities across Missouri—rural, micropolitan, and urban—continue to seek practical tools and strategic insights to strengthen local economies. The CEC conference delivers both **tactical, ready-to-use frameworks** paired with the **inspiration and storytelling** that build momentum and civic muscle. Participant feedback confirmed that this blend is essential to moving from ideas to implementation, especially for communities working to diversify their economies, support small businesses, and grow their workforces.

49 Missouri Counties and 4 States Represented

Andrew = 2	Cole = 2	Johnson = 3	Phelps = 1	Worth = 1
Atchison = 1	Cooper = 1	Lafayette = 1	Platte = 2	
Barton = 2	Dade = 1	Lincoln = 2	Putnam = 1	
Bates = 2	Dekalb = 2	Macon = 3	Saline = 2	
Boone = 14	Douglas = 1	Marion = 2	Scott = 2	
Butler = 5	Gasconade = 1	Mississippi = 4	St. Charles = 4	
Callaway = 2	Gentry = 2	Moniteau = 2	St. Clair = 1	
	Greene = 3	New Madrid = 1	St. Louis City = 4	
Cass = 2	Grundy = 1	Nodaway = 4	St. Louis County = 8	
Chariton = 1	Howard = 1	Osage = 1	Taney = 2	
Clay = 22	Jackson = 14	Perry = 1	Vernon = 2	
Clinton = 1	Jefferson = 2	Pettis = 2	Washington = 1	



Above: Members of the MU Extension and Excelsior Springs 2025 CEC Conference Planning Committees with several conference attendees.



Above: Conference attendees enjoyed 25 Breakout Sessions held in the quaint storefronts located in Downtown Excelsior Springs.



Connecting
Entrepreneurial Communities
University of Missouri Extension

Join us in Maryville – Sept. 15-17, 2026



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Continuing Education



The programming from the **MU Fire and Rescue Training Institute** (MU FRTI) is available to all qualified fire and emergency first responders. Seventy percent of courses are held at the local departments or agencies. With most of the state's fire service personnel considered volunteer or part-time, this local access and flexibility assures training opportunities for all firefighter and emergency responders.



The **Missouri Extension Disaster Education Network** provides education and technical assistance to individuals and families, local governments, schools and organizations so they can prepare for and respond to natural and man-made disasters. Because of the unique relationship it maintains with each community, MU Extension is a key resource for the public, emergency services and public officials.



The Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI) has provided basic and advanced training for law enforcement since 1948. LETI's **Basic Peace Officer Academy** exceeds the 600 hours of training required for licensure in Missouri. From 2019 through 2025, the basic academy has licensed almost 400 peace officers, more than any other academy in the state. During that time, all but one graduate became employed by a law enforcement agency. LETI graduates come from around the state and return to their communities to serve and protect.



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being



MU Extension **Serves MISSOURI and Delivers MIZZOU**
through credible statewide programs

Health and Human Sciences



Policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes encourage residents to improve community health by making healthy choices easier and more accessible. Residents design strategies around local needs, assets, and interests.

HELPING HANDS FOUR PANTRY leaders decided pantry clients needed access to healthier foods. Review of food procurement and display practices led to a new policy allocating \$1,000 of pantry discretionary spending for **LOW-FAT DAIRY OR FRESH PRODUCE**



Stay Strong, Stay Healthy supports older adults in maintaining strength, balance, and mobility to fully engage in the activities that matter most to them. The program combines safe, effective exercises with practical information on nutrition and wellness, helping participants build confidence, connection, and **well-being** for lifelong health.

After eight weeks, participants in the Stay Strong, Stay Healthy program showed significant improvement in their STRENGTH, BALANCE and SLEEP QUALITY.



Strengthening Families Program: for Parents and Youth 10-14, is a seven-session series for parents or caregivers and their young teens to attend together to improve family communication, resolve conflict and improve parental skills.

A research study conducted by the Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute found a RETURN OF \$9.60 for every dollar spent implementing the Strengthening Families Program.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

Sherry Combs, Nutrition Program Associate

Combined SNAP-Ed and EFNEP Public Value Statement 2025

Missouri's **Family Nutrition Education Program** oversees two programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (**SNAP-Ed**) and Expanded Family Nutrition Education Program (**EFNEP**). Together, these programs brought over \$13 million in federal funds to Missouri in 2025. MU Extension's Family Nutrition Education Program engaged with 970,000+ Missourians with low income. Over 74,000 Missourians participated in nutrition education classes.

Participants in SNAP-Ed and EFNEP learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, are more willing to try new foods, increase their physical activity, and make healthier food choices. Those who practice healthy eating and are physically active are **more likely to contribute to a healthy labor force** and **enjoy a high quality of life** throughout the lifespan.

This vital programming effort **reduces healthcare costs** over the participant's lifetime and **saves taxpayer money** in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.

Schools and Agencies	
Camdenton Library	Kradle to Krayon
Camdenton Head Start	Macks Creek Elementary
Camp Clover Point	Oak Ridge Intermediate
Children's Learning Center	Osage Beach Elementary
Climax Springs Elementary	Share the Harvest Food Pantry
Dogwood Elementary	Stoutland Elementary
Hawthorn Elementary	Stoutland Library
I Wonder Y Preschool	United Methodist Church

Health and Human Science

Profiles and stories



-Eating from the Garden Delivering 8-week nutrition & Gardening Course at Camdenton Library.



-Eating from the Garden Delivering 6-week nutrition & Gardening Course at Macks Creek Elementary.

-Kids in the Kitchen delivers an encouraging healthy food habits. 8-week nutrition course at the Camdenton Library.



-Eating from the Garden at the Camdenton Library

As we were walking through the garden beds at the end of our class, one of the students turned to me and said, "I love coming here, it is so peaceful." This statement came from a 10-year-old. He was so excited to return to the garden each week to see what had grown and what we were able to pick to taste. He always wants to work more in the garden, weeding and watering. He never wanted the lesson to end. He truly enjoyed his time in the garden. I had to agree; it is very peaceful in the garden.

Camden County Community

Local Impact

MU Extension Camden County Council



-Camden County Back-to-School Fair

The MU Extension Camden County Council donated school supplies that were handed out by MU Extension Camden County staff to students participating in Camden County's Back-to-School Fair in August. Photographed above left to right are Sherry Combs; Nutrition Program Associate and Jodie Leifer; 4-H Youth Program Associate.

-Good Neighbor Week

MU Extension Camden County Council members, staff, and along with local schools and businesses came together for Good Neighbor Week in Missouri by doing a local food drive. The collected donated food at the Camdenton and Macks Creek school systems stayed within those schools. The other donated items were provided to Hurricane Deck School in Camden County. The participating local businesses were Camdenton Library, Porta Cima, and Baxter's Bar & Grill. The MU Extension Camden County Council are interested in broadening the food drive for next year.



Photographed above are some of MU Extension Camden County Council and office staff. Left to right: Sandy Nelson, Mark Blair; Chair, Jodie Leifer; 4-H Youth Program Associate, Laura Neely; Secretary.