



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Holt County

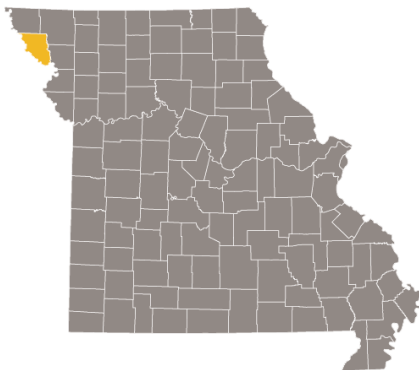
ANNUAL REPORT

2024

101 East Missouri Street

Oregon, MO 64473

660-446-3724





Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

Vice Chancellor's Office
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Columbia, MO 65211
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December 2024

Dear county commissioners, elected leaders and friends of MU Extension and Engagement,

As we reflect on the past year, I want to express my deep gratitude for your support of MU Extension and for your partnership in enhancing the lives of Missourians.

Your support for MU Extension fuels Missouri's agriculture, strengthens families, prepares our youth and promotes the health, well-being and vitality of our communities. Over the past year, our programs have focused on addressing key needs throughout the state:

- **Expanding access to 4-H:** To make 4-H more accessible, we've introduced more in-school and after-school clubs, reducing barriers and creating opportunities for young Missourians to develop essential skills and leadership abilities.
- **Supporting agriculture and land stewardship:** We're addressing critical issues such as succession planning for family farms, rural mental health, agricultural business management and land stewardship. These initiatives are helping Missouri's farmers plan for the future and preserve the health of our land for future generations.
- **Advancing health initiatives:** Our team of community health field specialists, covering every region of the state, works directly with local leaders to assess health needs and bring UM System resources and expertise to these communities, supporting healthier lives and stronger communities.
- **Promoting economic development:** MU Extension is helping to create economic opportunities by working with individuals, supporting businesses in their growth and collaborating with communities to enhance local vibrancy. Through these efforts, we help bring new jobs, skills and possibilities to Missourians across the state.
- **Providing essential training:** Our continuing education programs prepare Missouri's firefighters and health care workers to meet the demands of their roles with the latest skills and knowledge, ensuring they are well-prepared to serve our communities.

As you read through this annual report, I hope you feel as proud as I do of the accomplishments we've achieved together. The dedication and professionalism of MU Extension's faculty and staff are inspiring, and I am grateful to work alongside them—and each of you—as we make Missouri a stronger, healthier and more vibrant place. Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are serving Missouri by delivering the University *for* Missouri.

Warm regards,

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

Who we are

Faculty and Staff



Annette Deering
Field Specialist in 4-H Youth Development

Katie Pemberton
Field Specialist in Human Development

Gina Ripley
Nutrition Program Associate

Kelly Todd
Youth Program Associate

Randa Doty
Extension and Engagement Specialist

Debbie Bennett
Field Specialist in Nutrition and Health

Jim Crawford
Field Specialist in Agricultural Engineering & Director of Graves-Chapple Extension & Education Center

Denice Ferguson
Field Specialist in Agricultural Business

Wayne Flanary
Field Specialist in Agronomy

Gwenlyn Funk
Field Specialist in Horticulture

Amie Schleicher
Field Specialist in Livestock

Jackie Spainhower
Field Specialist in Community Development

Leigh Lade
Holt County Office Manager

Stacey Steffens
Northwest Regional Director

Council Members

Chance Gallagher, Chairman
Rebecca Derr, Vice-chairman
Denise Bechdoldt
Cindy Cox, Treasurer
Stacey Counts
Linda Gocken
Rebecca Kunkel
Dallas Kurtz
Scott Meadows
Beverly Meyer
Richard Meyer, Appointed Commissioner
Barbara Tansey
Beth Varuola
Anne Wales, Secretary



County Commissioners

Presiding Commissioner: *Tom Bullock*

First District Commissioner: *Richard Meyer*

Second District Commissioner: *David Carroll*

Budget and more

2024 Appropriations Budget

Income	
County Appropriations	42,000
Total Income	\$42,000
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	21,007
Payroll Expenses	7,085
YPA Payroll	5,658
Travel	2,857
Postage	149
Telephone	869
Advertising	120
Copier Services	393
Supplies & Service	1,564
Insurance	2,399
Council Election	189
Total Expenses	\$42,293

2024 MU Extension Leaders Honor Roll



Each year, the Holt County Extension staff is given the opportunity to honor outstanding community leaders to the University of Missouri Extension Leader's Honor Roll. These individuals have excelled in supporting, educating, and advancing MU Extension and/or 4-H in their communities and county. In 2024, Linda Gocken and Barbara Tansey were presented with the honor.

University of Missouri Extension in Holt County

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Contact Us:

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



Local Support

Did you know you can donate directly to Holt 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.



Missouri 4-H Positive Youth Development

Holt County 4-H Program

Youth members participating in:

- ✓ Organized 4-H community clubs 16
- ✓ Organized 4-H after-school clubs 2
- ✓ 4-H special interest programs 5
- ✓ School enrichment programs 34
- ✓ After-school programs 14
- ✓ Total youth with duplicates 71

Total Volunteers:

- ✓ Adult 4



South Holt Clover Kids club meeting

Embryology



MU Extension Staff offered Embryology in Spring 2024. The program provides incubators, egg turners, curriculum, and a viable egg supplier, to kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. There is a small fee for the program.

Embryology curriculum brings action and experience to the classroom. Students observe the development of the chick in the egg, hatching and post-hatch care. Each activity is grade-level appropriate and has been correlated to National Science Education Standards.



Atchison-Holt 4-H Shooting Sports Team

4-H Members competed in the Nodaway County Shooting Sports Invitational in June

Results:

- Averie Patterson-Holt County Intermediate-2nd Archery Compound
- Case Sage-Holt County Senior 1st Smallbore and Archery Compound
- Brody Sage-Holt County Senior 2nd Archery Compound
- Riylee Sage-Holt County Junior-2nd Archery Compound
- Tessa Sage-Holt County Junior 3rd Archery Compound

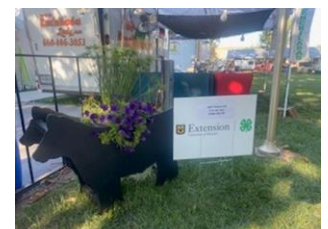


Tessa Sage practices archery at their weekly archery gathering.



Case Sage and Ben Mears of the Atchison-Holt Shooting Sports Club participated at the State Shoot. Case made the State team and will compete in July.

Holt County 4-H hosted a Shooting Sports Safety Clinic in November. It was lead by Jessi and Shawn Sage. There were youth from four counties in attendance. There were 28 youth, 17 adults and 3 leaders. They spent the morning on classroom work and the afternoon on the range.



Holt County Autumn Festival.



Health & Human Sciences

FOCUS ON KIDS

According to the Missouri State Statute 452.600, when parents of children eighteen years and younger split up, they are required to attend a parenting class. Focus on Kids satisfies that requirement. This class is a supportive educational program designed to help individuals navigate the challenges of co-parenting after a separation or divorce. It provides valuable information on how to minimize the emotional impact of divorce on children, encourage healthy communication between parents, and promote effective conflict resolution. The goal is to ensure that both parents are equipped with the tools they need to create a stable, supportive environment for their children, even as they adjust to the changes in their family dynamics. It is estimated that divorce education classes like FOK have a societal return on investment over \$3 for every \$1 invested (Alcaniz et al., 2022; see also Herman et al., 2015; Taskforce on Divorce and Divorce Reform, 1973).

“I learned how to respect the other parent and how to coparent better. The class was very helpful and had a lot of good information.
-Focus on Kids Participant

- Holt County citizens participated in this training in person in-person or online
- Katie Pemberton, Field Specialist in Human Development teaches this course

PONY EXPRESS THERAPY DOGS

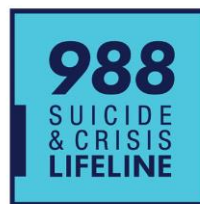
Pony Express Therapy Dogs are going on their seventh year in existence. The group has 25 members and 26 dogs, and they visit many locations within multiple counties. These locations range from nursing homes, libraries, special events and even local universities. Therapy dogs provide numerous emotional and psychological benefits to individuals of all ages. Their presence can significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and depression by promoting a sense of calm and comfort. Interacting with therapy dogs has been shown to lower blood pressure, release feel-good hormones like oxytocin, and create a soothing environment for people facing challenging situations. These dogs can also help improve social interaction, particularly for individuals with autism or social anxiety, by acting as a bridge for communication.



Members of the organization along with their service dogs.

FARM AND RANCH STRESS GRANT

Missouri’s mental health crisis is more challenging for the agricultural community, fueled by growing economic and mental health challenges that are severely affecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of rural families. To address Missouri’s mental health crisis, the University of Missouri Extension provides free mental health workshops, suicide prevention programs, and mental health awareness resources. The program collaborates with the University of Missouri College of Arts & Sciences Psychological Services Clinic to offer free telehealth counseling services.



Holt County community member and council member, and her therapy dogs (Mr. Rossi and Miss Priss) provide services to residents of northwest Missouri.

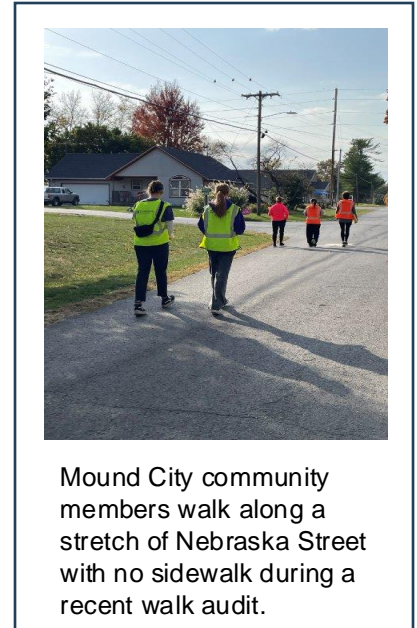


Health & Human Sciences

WALK AUDIT - MOUND CITY

Healthy People 2030 is an initiative promoted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that identifies public health priorities to help individuals, organizations, and communities improve health and well-being. One of the many objectives of Healthy People 2030 is **increasing the proportion of people who walk or bike to get places**. Another objective is **reducing the proportion of people who do no physical activity in their free time**. One recommendation for meeting these objectives is to **change environmental characteristics in a community to make physical activity easier or more accessible**.

- ✓ The **Health and Human Sciences Built Environment Issue Team** conducted a **walk audit in Mound City**, with 33 participants forming five teams to assess the need for **safer and more accessible streets**. They identified key improvements such as crosswalks, traffic signals, better sidewalks, signage, and more lighting. The team compiled their findings into a report, which was shared with Mound City’s Downtown Restoration group to support a grant application. **Discussions with MoDOT about potential changes are underway**.
- ✓ The team has applied to present about walk audits at the **MU Extension in-service education** and the **National Health Outreach Conference** in 2025. They will also seek out grant funding to help implement these changes.
- ✓ The team plans to conduct more walk audits across Missouri, aiming to create safer, more walkable communities that encourage physical activity for everyone.



Mound City community members walk along a stretch of Nebraska Street with no sidewalk during a recent walk audit.

TAI CHI FOR ARTHRITIS & FALL PREVENTION



- Classes were held in Oregon in Fall 2024 by Debbie Bennett, MU Extension Field Specialist in Nutrition & Health
- 8 total participants, 7 first-time participants
- The estimated annual healthcare cost savings for someone who completes Tai Chi for Arthritis & Fall Prevention is \$1,111, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Participants perform the Waving Hands form during a Tai Chi class in Oregon.

STAY STRONG, STAY HEALTHY – LEVEL 1

- Classes were held in Mound City in Fall 2024 by Debbie Bennett, MU Extension Field Specialist in Nutrition & Health
- 6 total participants, 5 first-time participants
- The estimated annual medical cost savings for someone who completes Stay Strong, Stay Healthy is \$1,024, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

“I feel I have improved my strength and flexibility by taking these classes.” – **Holt County program participant**



Participants perform the Seated Row exercise during a Stay Strong, Stay Healthy class in Mound City



Health & Human Sciences

SNAP-Education

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Education or SNAP-Ed) brought \$11,145,237 in federal funds to Missouri. The funds support engagement with 74,864 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients and eligible citizens of Missouri who learned about being active and healthy eating on a budget. This year we had 1,164,143 indirect educational contacts through newsletters, health fairs, food pantries, and the Show Me Nutrition helpline.

A total of 1,877 participants were from Holt County.

Participants in SNAP-Ed 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 also reduces healthcare costs over the participant's lifetime, saving taxpayer money in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.



MU Extension Nutrition Program Associate, Gina Ripley, teaches children about MyPlate at Mound City Elementary

EFNEP

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) brought \$1,624,777 federal funds to Missouri. These funds were used to enroll 589 limited-resource families in nutrition education and meal preparation classes, representing 2,068 family members. Additionally, 2,864 youth were enrolled in EFNEP classes.

Fourteen of these youth participants reside in Holt County.

Participants in EFNEP learn the importance of making healthier meals and snack choices, eating breakfast more often, trying new foods, increasing their physical activity, and making 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 also reduces healthcare costs over the participant's lifetime, saving taxpayer money in reduced public healthcare benefits and insurance premiums.

Participating schools and agencies include:

- ✓ Craig Elementary
- ✓ Mound City Elementary
- ✓ Nodaway-Holt Elementary
- ✓ Holt County Head Start
- ✓ Maitland Head Start
- ✓ Mound City Thriftway
- ✓ Hope House Ministries
- ✓ Community Services, Inc of NWMO - Holt
- ✓ Holt County Health Department
- ✓ Price's Grocery Store

Success Story

Several students attending preschool at Mound City Elementary in Holt County were very reluctant to try new foods. We discussed that they may be offered foods at school that they don't normally have at home. Sometimes these foods may look funny or different, but still taste delicious. The students are encouraged to take a small bite and then decide by showing a thumbs up or thumbs down. The students were often heard encouraging each other to be "brave" and taste the foods. The teacher mentioned that these same conversations were being carried over into lunchtime and more students were now willing to eat what was being offered. It is wonderful that the Family Nutrition Education Program lessons are making such an impact on the lives of these students!!



Agriculture & Environment

Holt County Garden Tour

The Holt County Extension Council **hosted** a garden tour to engage with the community by offering an event to raise awareness of MU Extension programs. In addition, **this event fostered** relationships within their community. The extension council's goal was to highlight the vast amount of resources MU Extension offers to improve lives, businesses, and communities. MU Extension Field Specialists from the Northwest Region representing agriculture, health and human sciences, business and communities, and 4-H youth development were on site to deliver programmatic information at each of the six garden stops. This annual, one-day event connected MU Extension to **more than 70** participants in 2023 and 150 in 2024. Extension council members, community volunteers, and businesses invested their time and resources to make this community event a success. The garden tour provided an opportunity for the community members to engage with MU Extension, learn more about programs, and to meet their local council. This engagement allowed MU Extension to demonstrate their value to participants while offering opportunities for learning.



Artwork by Kelsie Sager



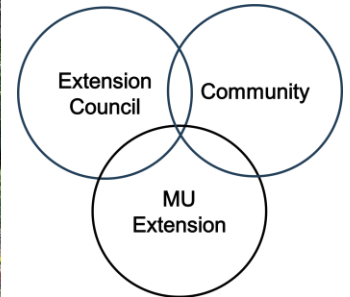
Visitors and volunteers



The Birdhouse Garden



Much of the tour advertising was on Social Media.



Partnership was essential to the success



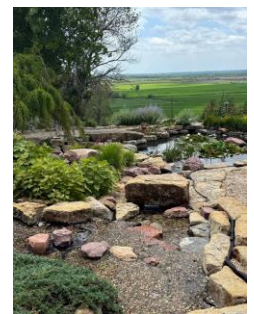
Barb T, Randa D and Gwen F at the end of the tour—Still standing!! At the Shady Lady Garden.



Holt County Extension Council welcoming visitors



4-H members present pollinator gardens at the garden tour



Gardening is essential to communities





Agriculture & Environment

Atchison/Holt/Nodaway County Women in Ag

- The Atchison/Holt/Nodaway County women in ag event, held August 28 in Rock Port at the Memorial Building, delivered another educational and fun opportunity for women in our area. Almost 70 women were in attendance.
- **When asked if they would recommend the program to other women, 100% (28 out of 28) of attendees who filled out an evaluation answered “yes”. Other feedback was overwhelmingly positive.**
- Attendees were able to connect with 13 local women entrepreneurs through the vendor fair. Local sponsors generously donated \$2500, 25 silent auction items, and over 20 door prizes.
- The committee who organized and delivered the program included: Amie Schleicher, Denice Ferguson, and Gwen Funk, all with MU Extension, and program partners from the soil and water conservation district offices, USDA Farm Service Agency, and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.
- The program will rotate to Holt and Nodaway counties in 2025 and 2026.



The committee who organized and facilitated the Atchison/Holt/Nodaway County women in ag event on August 28 in Rock Port included women from MU Extension, soil and water conservation districts, USDA Farm Service Agency, and USDA natural resources conservation service in the three counties.



Participants practice tai chi concepts at the Atchison/Holt/Nodaway women in ag event on August 28 in Rock Port during a demonstration given by Debbie Bennett, MU Extension Field Specialist in Nutrition & Health.



Jackie Allenbrand, founder of P.H.A.R.M. dog, visits with a group of women about the program and shares the emotional stories of how farmers with disabilities have been impacted so positively by the dogs they've received. She was the keynote presenter at the Atchison/Holt/Nodaway women in ag event.



Atchison County Soil & Water Conservation District
Holt County Sol & Water Conservation District
Nodaway County Soil & Water Conservation District



Agriculture & Environment

Weatherization and renewable Energy

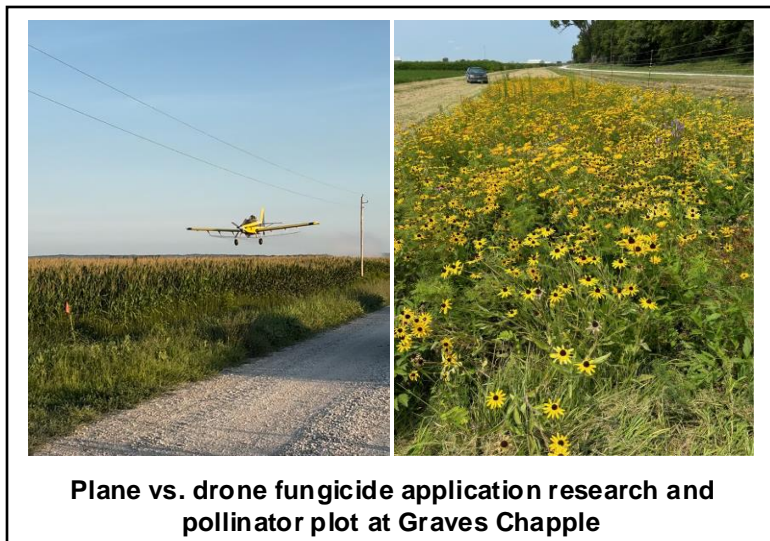
Jim Crawford, MU Extension Field Specialist in Agri Systems Technology works directly with northwest Missourians inquiries regarding:

- Energy conservation /weatherization – Steps and processes people can use to reduce their energy costs at home.
- Renewable energy – home and commercial scale wind and solar energy production systems. People want to know about these systems, can they reduce their electric bills, estimated paybacks and how does a large, commercial scale solar or wind farm being constructed near me affect my property values, my family and my lifestyle.

Unbiased, research-based information is provided to them on both of these, sometimes very complex, topics.



Attendees learn easy, low-cost ways to reduce their energy consumption and thus their energy bills during a workshop on weatherization.



Plane vs. drone fungicide application research and pollinator plot at Graves Chapple

GRAVES CHAPPLE FIELD DAY



More than 170 commercial producers toured plots and listened to MU speakers at the Graves Chapple Field Day.

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

MU Extension Field Specialist in Horticulture, Gwen Funk, managed and collaborated on three Extension Master Gardener courses in northwest Missouri. This “train the trainer” program supports horticulture in many ways and can often be focused to meet the need of the local community. It supports the benefits of horticulture mentioned above and benefits the community with volunteer activity. Gwen coordinated two 30-hour training sessions in the region.

As a result of these activities, northwest Missouri has approximately 30 new Extension Master Gardener trainees that will help problem-solve and teach horticulture-related topics. These volunteers help facilitate other horticulture programs such as the youth Garden-n-Grow program.



Youth Garden-n-Grow participants working in the garden during the Buchanan County course coordinated by the Northwest Missouri Master Gardeners



Agriculture & Environment

PRIVATE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING

This training educated crop producers for safe handling and application of restricted use pesticides. Participants learned about pest identification, economic thresholds and injury levels, emergency planning procedure and the environmental ramification of improper pesticide application with 113 participants. Participants initiated or renewed their license certification. Participants were 19 in Andrew County, 13 in Holt County, 9 in Atchison County, 24 in Buchanan, 6 in Nodaway County, 6 in DeKalb, 6 in Clinton County, 14 in Caldwell County, 7 in Daviess County, 7 in Platte and Clay Counties,

Ag staff then followed Private Applicator Training with “hot topics” in fields of ag in Horticulture, Ag Engineering, Agronomy, Livestock and Ag Business. Further regional Private pesticide applicator training was held monthly in Buchanan County reaching an additional 72 producers.



GRAVES-CHAPPLE EXTENSION & EDUCATION CENTER YOUTH AG DAY

- Two hundred thirty-three students from 7 area schools attended the annual Youth field day held on September 5. This hands-on learning event features 10 learning stations where attendees learn about important topics in agriculture and rural living. Jim Crawford, MU Extension Director of Graves-Chapple Extension & Education Center and Field Specialist in Agri Systems Technology coordinated the event.
- An evaluation is conducted after the event to gauge students change in knowledge on the topics covered from before they attended. In 2024, the evaluations showed a combined net increase in knowledge of 44.2% for all of the learning stations.



Students learned about the impact of temperature on livestock production from Amie Schleicher, MU Extension Field Specialist in Livestock. Concepts such as thermoneutral zone and heat stress were discussed.



Debbie Bennett presented to area agriculture education classes about being more mindful about how much added sugar they consume.



Gwen Funk, MU Extension Field Specialist in Horticulture, introduced students to hydroponic growing.



Wayne Flanary, MU Extension Field Specialist in Agronomy taught weed identification of common weeds to Vo-Ag/FFA students.



Jim Humphrey, MU Extension Field Specialist in Livestock, taught FFA/Vo-Ag students the multiple benefits of incorporating native warm season grasses onto our livestock operations in northwest Missouri.



Business & Community

Overview of MU Extension’s Community Development Programming

Under the guidance of the University of Missouri - St. Louis, MU Extension’s Community Development faculty help to build Civic Muscle, which is defined as the collective strength of people in a place (neighborhood, town, region) to respond to challenges and proactively pursue thriving communities. Community Development specialists coach communities to build four key “muscle groups”: **Belonging, Contribution, Leadership, and Vitality** by providing educational programs and technical assistance. Jackie Spainhower, MU Extension Field Specialist in Community Development has offered the following opportunities to Holt County.

Belonging

Place-based communities building social capital and inclusivity through neighboring, civil dialogue, placemaking, etc.

Extension Express Newsletter Distributed in 2024



Faculty and staff in the Northwest Region came together in late 2024 to create and distribute the monthly Extension Express newsletter, intended to highlight programming, events, and activities happening in the region’s 20 counties. Knowing about Extension programs and class offerings helps create a stronger sense of belonging and connection between faculty, staff, council



members, elected officials, and program participants within the Region. The Extension Express newsletter is currently distributed to over 350 people each month.

MU Extension faculty involved in this program are: Jackie Spainhower, Field Specialist in Community Development; Randa Doty, Northwest Region Extension Engagement Specialist; Jen Osborn, Northwest Region Extension Engagement Specialist; Chelsea Corkins, Northwest Region Extension Engagement Specialist; Gwen Funk, Field Specialist in Horticulture; and Kathy Mecham, Field Specialist in Horticulture.

Contribution

Residents (particularly those at the margins) participating in civic life and engaged in decision making (volunteering, attending public meetings, voting)

NOVA Program and Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile Certification

During the summer, Jackie Spainhower, MU Extension Field Specialist in Community Development, assisted with the facilitation of the first statewide NOVA (Nurturing Original Ventures & Ambitions) Program, which was a virtual entrepreneurial mindset summer camp for neurodivergent high school students. In early August 2024, four students graduated from the course that was designed to help students understand the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs, identify and leverage natural talents, create a strategy to develop entrepreneurial skills, and prepare to lead in environments that value creativity.

Following the course, Spainhower completed the training to become a Certified Practitioner of the Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile (EMP), the program used to develop the NOVA Program. The EMP is a short assessment that measures seven characteristics that distinguish entrepreneurs and seven skills critical to entrepreneurial success. The assessment can be administered to individuals or groups looking to work more cohesively together in creative and innovative settings. As a coach, she can administer the assessment, as well as coach individuals and teams to better individual and group outcomes.

What participants said about NOVA:

“This class has really opened my eyes to how much I can contribute, and it’s changed the way I think about my own abilities.”

“I feel like I can turn my passions into something real, something I can build a future with.”



Business & Community

Leadership

Diverse community leaders (including those who typically have less power and influence) collaborating for action and bridge-building

Neighborhood Leadership Academy

Neighborhood Leadership Academy (NLA) is a 10-week community development leadership program that provides participants with the skills, confidence, and strategies to plan and implement projects in their own communities. Participants come from across the entire state and meet virtually using Zoom. The program provides participants with 30 hours of educational instruction, group and individual coaching that will assist them with completing their project. Participants that complete the program are eligible to apply for mini-grants to support their projects. This year, one person in the region participated in NLA.



What participants said about NLA:

"I enjoyed the breakout sessions. Although we are from all different backgrounds, communities, we all want the same things in our communities."

Vitality

Residents, organizations, governments, co-creating conditions for equitable, thriving, resourceful places

Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities – Conference and Webinars

The Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) Conference took place in Fulton on September 17-19, and we welcomed 122 people for the event. In 2024, the conference focused on youth entrepreneurship, networking and relationship building, removing barriers, and technology and innovation. Attendees had 30 educational breakout sessions to choose from, along with keynote sessions featuring local and national speakers as well as representatives from the University. Next year's conference will take place a little closer to home in Excelsior Springs. As a supplement to the Conference, this year we created a twice monthly webinar to share information about sessions at the upcoming conference and other relevant information about rural economic development and innovation. These webinars will continue in 2025, and the focus will be on stories of collaboration in rural communities across Missouri.

In 2024, eight people from the Northwest Region attended the CEC Conference in Fulton, and 16 people from the region participated in the monthly CEC webinars.



CEC MONTHLY Exchange



What attendees said about the 2024 CEC Conference:

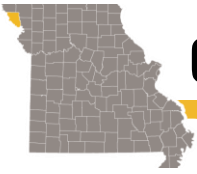
"So empowering to be surrounded by growth minded, problem solving, collaborative individuals for three days. I can't wait to see what we can do with the knowledge we gained over the last three days. Due to the dedication of a few community leaders and advocates our little town was recognized this week in a room of leaders, scholars and advocates from all over Missouri for being an example of positive small town growth and commitment."

Katie Bowles, Director, Savannah Chamber of Commerce



Top: State CEC Planning Team at the Fulton Conference

Bottom: CEC webinar Jackie Spainhower, MU Extension Field Specialist, hosted with the Plattsburg R-3 administration, teachers, and students that work on the Tigers on Main project, a student owned store in downtown Plattsburg



County highlights

MU Extension selects winner, finalists for NW County Council of the Year



The University of Missouri Extension County Council of the Year award is a recognition given during Extension and Engagement Week, held each October, to build relationships between MU Extension, campus, and community partners. The award recognizes the central role Extension Councils have in:

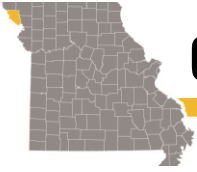
- Identifying local opportunities and challenges around agriculture, economic opportunity, education and health.
- Engaging local communities and representative voices.
- Connecting MU Extension faculty, staff and campus with local partners.
- Supporting initiatives that create measurable, lasting impact.

Holt County was selected as the Northwest Missouri winner for 2024. The council's application showcased how MU Extension in Holt County addressed more than one grand challenge, involved community partners and voices and created a positive impact in the community. Holt County now advanced to the statewide competition in which council members gave a 5–7-minute presentation.

The Holt County MU Extension Council's Garden Tour in July 2023 featured four gardens with educational sessions on soil sampling, composting and stress management. The event raised awareness of MU Extension's services, engaged the community and connected with local businesses and officials. Building on this success, the council organized the "Hidden Gardens of Loess Bluffs" tour for June 22, 2024, showcasing six unique gardens with topics including permaculture and poultry raising. The 2024 tour also included a tai chi demonstration and a 4-H scavenger hunt supported by community partners Friends of Loess Bluffs, Missouri Master Gardeners and MU Extension faculty. Council initiatives have also strengthened relationships with county commissioners, local high schools and high school agriculture teachers. The council also coordinated community projects for the local Hope House and Blessing Boxes, demonstrating the its dedication to community impact through educational and fun activities.

Three other county councils in northwestern Missouri were selected as regional finalists for the 2024 MU Extension County Council of the Year award. Those regional finalists included; Caldwell County, Clinton County, and Lafayette County.

The County Council of the Year Award is a way to honor the community work and elevate council members as powerful advocates for MU Extension as it works to serve Missouri and deliver Mizzou. Clinton County was selected as the Northwest Missouri winner in 2023, with Livingston County recognized as a regional finalist.



County highlights

Meyer Family chosen as Missouri Farm Family for Holt County



Bryson & Kim Meyer and family of Oregon were among the families honored during the 67th annual Missouri Farm Family Day, Aug. 12 at the Missouri State Fair. The Meyer family was selected as the Holt County Missouri Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension in Holt County and the local Farm Bureau. The family includes Garrett, Austyn and Emmett Meyer. Each year, the fair sets aside a day to recognize farm families from across the state that are active in their communities, involved in agriculture, and/or participate in local outreach and extension programs such as 4-H or FFA. The Meyer family operates a 1600-acre Crop and Livestock operation. The annual event is sponsored by five partner agencies: the Missouri Farm Bureau; the Missouri Department of Agriculture; the Missouri State Fair Commissioners; the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; and MU Extension. The event showcases the impact that Missouri farm families have on the economy and heritage of the state, said Missouri State Fair Director Jason Moore. "These families are involved in agriculture activities in their communities and are active participants in local outreach and extension. As the premier showcase for Missouri agriculture, the Missouri State Fair is most certainly the appropriate place to celebrate these families."

