



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Mississippi County 2025



Annual Report

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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

# WHO WE ARE

## Faculty and Staff Resources



Amber Childers  
Extension Engagement Specialist



Sherrie Crossfield  
Office Assistance



Audrey Johnson  
Human Development



LaKeisha Dugan  
Nutrition Program Associate



Taylor Clark  
Community Development



Jennifer Hall  
4\_H Youth Development



Anthony Ohmes  
Agronomy



Randall Stephens  
Field Specialist in Ag Business



Alexis Stumpe  
Livestock

## Council Members

Jonathan Holley, Chairman  
Kathy Carter, Vice-chairman  
Laura Beth Whittington, Secretary  
Scott Mainord, Treasurer  
Jamie Conn  
Keith Hall.  
Kathy Carter  
Cyndi Norton  
Vanessa Jackson

## County Commission

James D Conn, Presiding Commissioner  
Mitch Pullen, Commissioner 1st District  
Darrell Jones, Commissioner 2nd District



# BUDGET AND MORE

## Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	42,000
Total Income	42,000
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	30,420.95
Travel	3324
Telephone	480
Office Supplies/Service	220
Utilities	4332
Insurance	2022
Publishing	1200
Total Expenses	42,000

## Return on investment

University System	156,140
Donations	500
Program Revenue	450

**For every dollar invested by the county, MU invests \$3.72.**

## Reach



### 4-H Youth Development

132 Participants

3 Community Club Members

129 In-School Participants



## Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to *(name of county)* 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.

## Key Outcomes



### Agriculture and Environment

82 Contacts

44 Plant Production & Technology Contacts

38 Soil testing



### Business and Communities

68 Contacts

3 Business Development Contacts

14 Community Leadership Development Contacts



### Health and Human Sciences

20323 Contacts

74 Nutrition & Health Contacts

20,237 SNAP-ED Contacts

12 Community Health Engagement and Outreach



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

## Health and Human Sciences



**Audrey Johnson**

**Field Specialist in Health and Human Sciences**

Serving - Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Dunklin, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Scott, and Stoddard counties

Extension Health & Human Sciences is dedicated to helping Missourians improve their lives. Using research-based education and proven strategies, Extension professionals work in partnership with communities to improve conditions that help Missourians live better where they live, learn, play and work. Our programs help individuals and families, rural and urban, reaching Missourians of all ages in every county and the city of St. Louis.

### Senior Technology Classes

Five Senior Technology classes were taught, with a total of 41 participants, in the following counties: Mississippi(1), Scott(2), and Stoddard(3). The classes included:

- **AI All Round**
- **All Things Zoom**
- **Finding Information Online**
- **Protecting Your Personal Information Online**
- **Digital Coupon Tools**

Surveys taken after sessions showed that of the 41 participants,

- 15 reported being interested in trying something new because of the program
- 11 reported wanting to learn more about the topic that was covered
- 11 stated it is extremely likely they would attend another Senior Planet program



Participants stated the classes were “Very informative”, “Good to get new knowledge”, “Need to keep up with increasing technology”, “This program (AI All Around) is informative and helpful to the generation we live in”, “Great opportunity to receive information.”



**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 – Audrey Johnson

### Keep Your Keys

Keep Your Keys is a driver-safety program to help seniors stay on the road for as long and as safely as possible. Three Keep Your Keys programs were provided in Cape County (2) and Stoddard County (1) with a total of 19 participants. Surveys conducted after class showed:

- 95% of participants reported the class was informative
- 74% of participants reported if they could not drive (either short or long term) they would feel more prepared to approach driving retirement



**WITS Workout** is a program for seniors with fun, interactive puzzles and games that not only challenge your mind but also help you learn easy ways to keep your brain sharp every day. One two-hour session was taught once weekly for four weeks in Perry County. Six participants attended and completed the class. Participants communicated that the class was very helpful and stated, "I remembered five addresses I lived at from the past", "I remembered the ten commandments", "I enjoyed the comradery."

Additional HHS Programming:

- Alzheimer's Awareness — Cape County**
- Building Strong Families — virtual**
- Mental Health First Aid — Madison County**
- Taking Care of You — Mississippi County**



**Audrey Johnson**  
**Field Specialist in Health and Human Sciences**

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Agricultural Growth  
& Stewardship



Economic  
Opportunity



Educational  
Access &  
Excellence



Health  
& Well-Being

# Mississippi County

## Missouri 4-H Summary

### Local Impact

Mississippi County 4-H had a successful year in 2025. We began a new community club, The INSPIRE 4-H Club, which meets monthly in Charleston. We currently have 9 active members in that club. We have served over 420 youth in the county in many capacities this year including partnership in Camp Soar in East Prairie, Sewing Boot Camps, Discover Nature Fishing, the 4-H Youth Farm Animal Art Show, Art In the Park, The Farm to Table Project, The Pumpkin Carnival for Hearnese Elementary, Santa's Workshop Spin Club, Trunk or Treat in Charleston and East Prairie, Clover Kids Meetings, National 4-H Week, community parades, and a Snowman Party. Along with our adult volunteers, Jennifer Hall,

4-H Youth Development Educator, and Denise Crawford, Youth Programming Associate, comprise 4-H leadership in Mississippi County.

Our community partners for the year include the AmeriCorps Seniors, First Assembly of God Church, the Byrd Family Trust, Caring Communities of Mississippi County, the Missouri Department of Conservation, Warren E. Hearnese Elementary School, East Prairie Elementary School, Vybe Coffeehouse & Café, CHARM, and the City of Charleston. We appreciate each of these entities who have allowed us to use facilities, provided places for programming or assisted with funding for our programs.



# Mississippi County

## Health and Human Sciences

### Stay Strong Stay Healthy Impact – Pemiscot County



Strength training sessions in a fun and supportive environment to help improve participant strength and leave you more energized and connected as you increase your overall fitness, flexibility and balance. Participants build muscle and increase bone density to reduce frailty, osteoporosis and the risk of falls.

Participants improved their strength, flexibility, balance, and auxiliary activity to decrease the risk of falls and improve their overall health. Classes in 2025 led to a **regional savings of \$116,760 in annual healthcare costs.**



Eric Johnson  
Field Specialist in Nutrition & Health

**100%** of participants who agree or strongly agree they are more knowledgeable of how to safely strength train.

**100%** of participants who agree or strongly agree their physical fitness has improved.

**95%** of participants reported fewer falls in the two months during the program.

**100%** of participants who improved or maintained flexibility and balance.



# Mississippi County

## Missouri 4-H

### Profiles and stories

### Jennifer Hall, 4-H Youth Educator



In partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation, Mississippi County 4-H held a Discover Nature Fishing Class for ages 8-18. This was Noka's first time fishing. She learned to use a rod and reel, tie an appropriate knot, and bait a hook. She was hooked on fishing when she caught her first fish!

Mississippi County 4-H Sewing Boot Camp was held during the summer. At this event, the participants made their own apron from start to finish, including the addition of their name, machine embroidered on the front. Most of them were new to sewing and 100 percent of participants asked their parents for a sewing machine of their own!

Our Farm to Table Gardening Project had its second successful year. 4-H youth saw the growing process from start to finish as they helped cultivate, plant, tend, and harvest the Clover Patch Community Garden in Charleston. They braved the hot weather and learned many life skills along the way. Each session was centered around a specific outdoor activity such as planting, watering, insect identification, plants vs. weeds, and harvesting and using the produce in cooking.



# Mississippi County

## Agriculture and Environment

### Profiles and stories



**Market Outlooks & Farm Lease Class:** As a result of the increased market uncertainty, I presented multiple market outlooks, as well as a farm lease class. They included: 2025 Crop Conference, Perry County Farm Bureau Crop Conference, Big River Ag Grower meeting, TRC Beef Market Outlook and in Cape county a farm lease class in July.

**Canola Budget:** New to the MU Extension line-up of crop budgets is a winter canola budget. I worked with industry representatives and other MU faculty to develop a winter canola budget that will be available to producers to view and download. Interest in canola production has grown in Southeast Missouri as a result of new markets that are available as well as profitable contacting options for canola.



**Southeast Missouri Outlook:** I began a newsletter in April that is sent out monthly to 1318 farmers, ag business professionals and ag lenders in the region. The newsletter has been a huge success. Feedback from recipients, as well as data from DotDigital, our email platform, indicates a total open rate of 81%.



# Mississippi County

## Agriculture and Environment - Livestock

### Local Impact

### Alexis Link, Field Specialist in Livestock

In 2025, the Show-Me-Select Heifer Replacement Program marketed 1,689 heifers statewide. Sales conducted in Southeast Missouri generated \$318,350 from fall-calving heifers and \$164,350 from spring-calving heifers. Through the program, producers apply total quality management practices to on-farm heifer development, strengthening herd management, reproductive performance, and genetic quality through retained ownership or by marketing heifers for added income. Buyers benefit from improved herd quality and reduced rates of dystocia and calf or heifer losses.



More than 60 Mississippi County residents were reached through SMQA programming, on-farm visits, FFA Field Day, the Black Vulture Meeting, and direct producer consultations. Educational topics included, but were not limited to, nutrition, reproduction, disease management, heifer quality, herd health, small ruminant production, and youth livestock education. Producers are able to apply this information to strengthen management practices and enhance the productivity and sustainability of their operations.

# UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

## MU Extension in Mississippi County Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts [Your County] 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 — Mississippi County

## 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 (your 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 (your county name) is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.

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

