



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Monroe County 2025



Annual Report

229 N. Washington
Paris MO 65275

**SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**

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



Office of Extension
and Engagement
University of Missouri

VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

108 Whitten Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

PHONE 573-882-2394

EMAIL cchiggins@missouri.edu

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



Kathy Hasekamp
Youth Program Associate,
Office Admin
Amanda Lehenbauer
Nutrition Program Associate
Mike Krauch
Regional Director
Jim Meyer
Extension and Engagement
Specialist
Daniel Mallory
Livestock Specialist
Mary Sobba
Ag Business Specialist
Jeremiah Terrell
Health and Human
Development Specialist
Carrie Elsen
Nutrition and Health
Specialist
Justin Keay
Horticulture Specialist
Nick Wesslak
Agronomy Specialist

Council Members

Chairman Shelby DeOrnellis
Vice-chairman Bill Coleman
Secretary Ethan McNeill
Treasurer Margaret Wilkerson
Shirley Ensor
Bob Mitchell
Michaela Henry
Kim Mitchell
Wendy Beard



County executives

Curt Wheeler, Presiding
Commissioner
Justin Edwards, Western District
Commissioner
David Hays, Eastern District
Commissioner
Beth Whelan, County Clerk

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	42,460
Total Income	42,460

Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	39,356
Rent	4,800
Travel	2,694
Telephone	193
Postage	129
Utilities	2,578
Insurance	488
Misc.	854
Total Expenses	51,092
	-8,632

Return on investment

University System	100,000
Donations	14,000
Program Revenue	4,087

Monroe County partners

Monroe County Extension is happy to call the following our partners



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



Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to Monroe 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 Monroe County Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts Monroe 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 Monroe 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 (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 Monroe county's Grand Challenges Report.](#)



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

Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18

Monroe County 4-H Facts:

- 6 Community Clubs
- 4 SPIN Clubs
- 7 County Wide Meetings
- 160 members
- 100 campers
- 43 State Fair Projects sent
- 18 classrooms served with Embryology program
- 32 kids served with SNAC



State Contests participated in:

- Teen Conference
- State Congress
- Meats Evaluation Contest
- State Fair (4-H building, hams, bacons, cattle, swine, sheep, goats, horses)
- State Shoot
- National Shoot participant



Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being



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Agriculture and Environment

SHOW-ME-SELECT HEIFER PROGRAM

MU Extension's Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Program teaches beef cattle producers to successfully adopt research-proven reproductive and genetic technologies developed at the University of Missouri which add value to heifers in beef herds across the state. This leads to improved profitability and sustainability of family-owned operations, positively benefitting Missouri's economy by over \$150 million since its inception in 1997.

On December 13, 2025 the Northeast Region held its 29th Annual sale. Selling 304 heifers for \$4,545



PERFORMANCE TESTED BULL SALE

The Missouri Beef Cattle Testing program is designed to help improve Missouri beef cattle in both quality and growth through breeding and selection. The northeast region is one of three remaining programs in the state to hold performance tested sales. The first sale was held in 1973, while the most current sale was held in March of 2025 and sold 33 bulls for an average price of \$6,221.



Legend



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& Well-Being

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Pesticide Applicator Training:

Nick Wesslak taught 87 total applicants for PPAT licensing in the Northeast Region.

Nick presented at the 2025 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training Recertification in Columbia, Missouri to 953 individuals over a 9-day period, with 68 of those individuals being online.

Nick also conducted Non-Certified Restricted Use Applicator (NRUP) Training for area agribusinesses. All total, 66 individuals employed by agribusinesses in the Northeast region were able to receive the necessary training to conduct commercial application operations

Engagement and Stakeholder Relations:

Hannibal Middle School hosted a career day and Nick presented for the ag career session and focused on his career in Extension. Special emphasis was made on discussing real world scenarios Nick encounters and how STEM knowledge and education help to resolve the issues Nick and producers face. Nick saw 200 students that day. Nick also participated in the Lewis County Progressive Farm Safety Day, where he taught 125 5th graders about pesticide and household chemical safety.

Nick saw a successful event with the Northeast Missouri Old Threshers Ag Safety Day, with 538 participants. Attendees focus was placed on learning valuable safety minded practices when working around the farm.



Northeast Region Master Programs

Profiles and stories



Mississippi Hills Master Naturalists Presenting at the Teen Health Fair on Nature Connections

MHMN participated in the Hannibal Chart Teen Task force Health Fair with 5 members staffing a booth on the benefits of spending time in nature.



Mississippi Hills Master Naturalists Presenting at Hannibal Eagle Days

650 visitors enjoying a live eagle show, several educational nature booths, crafts and activities for children, a nature story time, and conservation education opportunities.

Audrain County Master Gardeners were the relocation and establishment of the Community Garden at the Community Shelter and the seed distribution at the Mexico, Missouri Food Bank. The Community garden serves to help educate and feed between home individuals in Mexico, Missouri.



Business and Community

Local Impact

Agriculture Lender Seminar

Mary Sobba

Sixty-five lenders from 20 Missouri counties and Illinois attended an ag lender seminar in Mexico. Lenders learned about crop and livestock outlook, agriculture & tax policy, rental rates & land values, input costs and enterprise budgets and regulatory updates. The average tenure of agricultural lender was 12 years with a range of 1 to 38 years. On average, lenders had 207 agricultural loans in their portfolio with an average loan size of \$33,526. Given this information, it is estimated the Mexico Agricultural Lenders Seminar reached 13,455 loans valued at 4,487.6 million dollars. Attendees drove an average of 49 miles to attend the program with a range of 5 to 95 miles.

By attending University of Missouri's Agricultural Lenders' seminars, lenders gain knowledge to help their clients make better decisions based on objective education and resources. More information and better decisions benefit their portfolio of producers, landowners, and agribusinesses through enhanced understanding of enterprise budgets, market expectations, and other decision-influencing factors affecting families' and businesses' financial health. Participants described the seminar as informative, well-organized, and enjoyable. Several complimented the quality of the presentations and expressed appreciation for the event overall. In addition to the ag lender seminar in Mexico, there were seminars in Chillicothe, Jefferson City, Springfield and Warsaw. The total statewide attendance was 198 ag lenders.





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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.



Monroe County volunteer fire personnel
Utilize the FRTI program for the training
And certifying of their members.



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& Well-Being

Health and Human Sciences

Local Impact

SSSH

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy (SSSH) aims to provide inactive middle-aged and older adults with access to a safe, structured, and effective exercise program capable of building muscle and increasing bone density, thus decreasing frailty, osteoporosis and the risk of falls. SSSH helps participants meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's physical activity recommendations. SSSH challenges participants through incremental increases in exercise volume and intensity. A SSSH Level 1 and Level 2 classes are offered in partnership with the Monroe County Health department and Paris Senior Center. The SSSH courses were provided for Monroe County residents face to face. The 16-session program consisted of 24 participants. I also offered a SSSH Online as an additional resource for the county.



Nutrition and Health Education Specialist, Carrie Elsen and Nutrition Program Associate, Amanda Lehenbauer were awarded The SOAR Award from their collaborating Partnership with Learning Opportunities/Quality Works, Inc. for their outstanding program.

Profiles and stories

Carrie Elsen

Nutrition Education Offered in Monroe County

Beef Month

During May's National Beef Month, the second annual community beef distribution initiative provided **708 pounds of ground beef** to **708 households** across Monroe and Shelby counties through four local food banks, directly addressing food access for families facing rising grocery costs. Valued at **\$3,801.96**, the distribution delivered nutrient-dense beef containing **essential amino acids, iron, zinc, and key vitamins** that support energy, immune health, and physical development. In addition to supporting households, the initiative reached students in **seven school districts** by providing **160 beef sticks** to third graders during state testing periods, reinforcing healthy snacking and sustained energy for learning

Through strong partnerships among cattlemen's associations, MU Extension, producers, food banks, and schools, this effort combined immediate food relief with nutrition education, helping families not only eat well today, but build healthier habits for the future.



With Healthy Proteins!
Best of Luck on your MAP Testing!



Health and Human Sciences

Improving Community Health one vegetable at a Time

Community gardens play a vital role in improving both individual and community health by addressing multiple dimensions of well-being at once such as nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and social connection. By increasing access to fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables, these shared spaces encourage healthier eating habits and help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

The act of gardening itself promotes regular physical activity, improving strength, mobility, and cardiovascular health for participants of all ages, while also supporting mental and emotional well-being by reducing stress, improving mood, and fostering a sense of purpose.

In 2025, Monroe County Extension and Learning Opportunities expanded this impact by establishing new community gardens, creating additional spaces for hands-on education, skill-building, and local food production. These gardens strengthen relationships across generations, reduce social isolation, and build community resilience as residents work together toward a common goal. Through education, collaboration, and increased access to healthy food, Extension-supported community gardens are helping residents grow not only fruits and vegetables, but also knowledge, confidence, and stronger, healthier communities

