



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

# Shannon County 2025



Annual Report

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**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**

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Columbia, MO 65211

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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 – Local Office

## Faculty and Staff



Emily Doosing  
4-H Youth Development



Adrienne Mooney  
4-H Youth Program Associate



Reta Reed  
FNEP Program Manager



Jennifer R. Williams, JD  
Engagement Specialist

## OUR COMMUNITY

Every year Missourians turn to the University of Missouri (MU) Extension for practical knowledge, problem-solving, and guidance in navigating change. As a key resource for informed decision-making, we play a vital role in delivering this knowledge, fostering progress, and empowering individuals and communities to thrive.

## OUR MISSION

As a land-grant institution, our mission is to **Bring Mizzou to YOU**. We bring the University of Missouri's cutting-edge research and expertise to the residents of the county, helping individuals, businesses, and municipalities make informed decisions that improve quality of life. Through our educational programs, we aim to strengthen communities, boost local economies, and promote sustainable growth by offering accessible, relevant, and responsive solutions backed by the resources of the University of Missouri System.

## OUR MAIN PROGRAM AREAS

- › Agriculture
- › Business & Workforce Development
- › Community Development
- › Health and Human Science Initiatives
- › Nutrition & Health Education
- › 4-H Youth Development

# WHO WE ARE

## Faculty and Staff Resources



Eric Meusch  
Livestock Specialist  
Haley Schwantz  
Agronomy Specialist  
Jason Morris  
Ag Business Specialist  
Traven Crocker  
Horticulture Specialist  
Kevin Crider  
Feral Hog Educator  
Cara Carswell  
4-H Youth Development Educator  
Sarah Higgins  
Natural Resources Specialist  
Jan Beazley  
Nutrition Program Associate

## Council Members

Michael Phoenix, Chairman  
Robin Porter, Vice-chairman  
Michael McLaughlin, Treasurer  
Janet Crider  
Tiffany Hayes  
Cathy Hicks  
Sherrie Keeling  
Janet Kile  
Jolie Owens  
Paula Renshaw  
Kathy Michel, Farm Bureau Representative

## County Commission

Beth Long, Presiding Commissioner  
Vester Crider, Northern District Commissioner  
Herman Kelly, Southern District Commissioner



# BUDGET AND MORE

## Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	12,000
Total Income	12,000
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	7,386
Travel	4,392
Telephone	760
Office Supplies/Service	890
Insurance	466
Program Expenses	878
Total Expenses	14,772

## Return on investment

University System 88,650

**For every dollar invested by the county, MU invests \$6.31.**

## Reach

Review the [Reach report](#) for a snapshot of contacts within the county.

## Key Outcomes

- **101 youth** reached through **10 educational 4-H programs**
- **26 attendees (youth and adult)** participated in a hands-on **lamb processing workshop** at Eminence High School
- **9 cattle producers** participated in an educational program to learn more about soil and grazing management.



2025 Shannon County State Fair  
Farm Family - Brett & Lisa Howell  
Family



## Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to Shannon 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 Shannon County's Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts Shannon 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 Shannon 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 Shannon County is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.

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



# Shannon County Farm Family

The **Brett & Lisa Howell Family** represented **Shannon County** at the **2025 Missouri State Fair**. This family was selected through a joint partnership with Shannon County Farm Bureau and MU Extension in Shannon County.

Thank you to the Howell family for representing Shannon County!!!





In honor of Missouri Good Neighbor Week, the Shannon County Extension Council prepared teacher supply baskets for each local school. Supplies included items like pens, pencils, highlighters, dry erase markers, post-it notes, and many other items teachers may run out of unexpectedly and need to grab in a hurry.

We are so thankful for our Shannon County educators!



Winona Elementary and MS/HS



Liberty High School



Liberty Middle School



Eminence Elementary



Birch Tree Elementary



Eminence MS/HS



Tim Tanner assumed the role of director of the Missouri 4-H Center for Youth Development on Sept. 15, 2025.

Missouri 4-H Foundation awards  
**\$101,000**  
in scholarships



Missouri State 4-H Council members. Back row: Caydance Welters, Wyatt Covey, Grady Ruehling, Kaycie Hollrah. Middle row: Alexis Kimani, Morgan Nelson, Sadie Jackson. Front row: Alana Kimmons, Kelsey Carter, Lilliann Gooch, Delaney Duncan.

**56,000**  
youth members are enrolled in Missouri 4-H programs statewide. These young people are learning skills, engaging in hands-on activities, and preparing for careers and leadership roles.

Missouri 4-H is supported by more than  
**5,000**  
volunteers, donors, faculty, and staff around the state.



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

# Shannon County 4-H



**12 volunteers contributed 28 hours of service**, representing an estimated community value of **\$964** in volunteer time (based on \$34.42/hour).



**10 educational programs** delivered in Shannon County, providing hands-on, in-person learning opportunities for youth.

**101 youth participants** engaged across **49 sessions**, totaling **62 hours** of direct educational programming.



# AGRONOMY IMPACT



**Soil testing** with the University of Missouri Extension is a tool that many producers in Shannon County use to monitor fertility and pH levels for forage and crop production. There were **50 interpretations of soil test reports** by the Agronomy Field Specialist for 2025. This represents **7,996.57 acres**.

**2025 Progress** I have made several new connections within Shannon County that can hopefully improve MU Extension presence on an agricultural level. Please let us know if you have any ideas on how to further improve serving the Shannon County farming community.

## Soil and Grazing Management Regional Tour

Haley Schwantz paired up with the Livestock Specialists assigned to Oregon, Ripley, Shannon, Carter, Reynolds, Howell, and Texas Counties to offer a local program in all 7 counties. This program focused on how to collect soil samples, interpret soil test reports, determine lime and fertilizer needs and long-term management, and the importance of nutrient management using rotational grazing and hay feeding. Feedback on surveys were very positive. A total of **57 producers** attended the programs, including **9 producers from Shannon County** and the program was received well.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

## SOIL AND GRAZING MANAGEMENT



**JOIN US...**

Join Agronomy Field Specialist Haley Schwantz and Livestock Field Specialist Elizabeth Picking to discuss:

- How to soil sample & interpret soil test reports
- Manure as a fertilizer source
- Grazing methods

Cost \$10  
Pizza and refreshments will be provided

**EVENT DETAILS**

**LOCATION**  
Victory Freewill Baptist Church

**REGISTER BY**  
**02/26/2025**

## ONE-ON-ONE Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings

\$75 fee to obtain license

Cash or Check accepted at event  
Must be exact change if paying in cash

Category 20 Private Pesticide Applicator  
Required Core Training ONLY

Renewal and new certifications for  
Restricted Use Pesticide Applications



**SCHEDULE A TIME CONVENIENT FOR YOU**

OREGON COUNTY EXTENSION  
HALEY SCHWANTZ  
417-778-7490



Based in partnership of the Cooperative Extension Work Act of May 24th, June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the Extension System, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211. All Extension projects shall require the participation of necessary program and activities within all agencies and agencies for employment on the basis of their distribution within the cooperative effort. Information on the basis of their own, without charge, including: crop, soil, animal husbandry, general health, general extension, crop, general information, liability or product release labels. • 573-102-2118 • extension@missouri.edu

**Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings** certify crop producers for restricted use pesticides. MU Extension provides classes for these certification needs. There were a total of **4 private applicator trainings** in Shannon County in 2025. Shannon County has a total of **30 licensed Private Applicators**. Currently there are **2 that will expire in 2026**.

Two training methods offered:

1. One-on-one's: This personalized training offers an opportunity for the producer to be both trained to use RUPs and take advantage of a farm visit in one day.
2. Online: a total of **13 online PPATs** were offered by Haley Schwantz in 2025 training **83 applicators**.

# Livestock

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Livestock Specialist  
573-729-3196  
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Serving Dent, Phelps, Crawford, Pulaski, Shannon Reynolds, Carter, and Texas Counties

## 2025 AT A GLANCE

In 2025, the MU Extension Livestock Program delivered education and outreach to livestock producers, youth, and communities across Dent, Phelps, Pulaski, Crawford, Shannon, Reynolds, Carter, and Texas counties. Programming emphasized grazing management, livestock nutrition, youth development, value-added enterprises, and herd profitability.

- Grazing Schools held in 4 counties taught approximately 105 livestock producers the fundamentals of Management Intensive Grazing.
- Show Me Quality Assurance events held for Dent, Phelps, Crawford, Shannon and Reynolds Counties trained youth on proper care of livestock. Other youth-oriented activities included Ozark Cattlemen's Beef Day in Salem and the Wurdack Education Day event.
- More than 190 producer consultations were conducted during the year, providing one-on-one information and advice on practical livestock management.
- Attended a National conference (NACAA) in Montana to present work done with the Value Added Meats Team and the Missouri Assisting Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers (2501 program).



Good cow-calf herd management has been important throughout 2025 with cattle prices at record levels.

## KEY SUCCESSSES

21 in-person programs were held across my coverage area including all 8 target counties.

In the Show Me Select Heifer Development Program the state-wide combined totals for the spring and fall sanctioned sales was 1,691 heifers sold with gross receipts of \$7,035,450. I began working with one new producer in 2025.

A total of 1002 youth were reached in direct programming. This includes Show Me Quality Assurance training in 5 counties, the Student Field Day at Wurdack, Ozarks Cattlemen's Beef Day, an urban youth field day, and youth participation in Value Added Meats programming.

Missouri Grazing Schools continue to be an important program in this part of the state with schools held in 4 target counties in 2025.

# Livestock – Meats Team

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Livestock Specialist  
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meusche@missouri.edu



Serving Dent, Phelps, Crawford, Pulaski, Shannon Reynolds, Carter, and Texas Counties

## 2025 Value-Added Meats Team – Lamb Processing Class in Eminence



Special thanks to **Eminence Ag** and the **Redwings Explorers Club** for hosting, and to the Missouri Lamb Merchandising Council for providing the lamb!

## Agriculture and Environment

### Local Impact

### Traven Crocker, Horticulture Field Specialist

**MU Extension's horticulture programming** in the county focused on individual consultation, soil recommendations, and virtual education platforms to deliver horticulture resources.

**Impact:**

**7 participants** engaged with Extension resources and hands-on learning. Direct contacts provided timely problem-solving and technical support to residents, totaling **2 one-on-one interactions**.

**Soil test, horticulture: 11**

**Program Examples:** Individualized consultation

**Direct contact topics: 2, participants**

- Native gardening
- Butterfly gardening
- Blackberry production
- Blueberry production
- Inquiry into Master Gardener program

**Poplar Bluff Extension Master Gardeners**

In 2025, the Poplar Bluff Area Master Gardener chapter contributed 375 volunteer hours and 124 continuing education hours. These efforts are valued at \$13,046.25, based on the Independent Sector's 2025 rate of \$34.79 per hour.

**Chapter Projects**

- Ag Day, 83 participants
- Sierra Girls Garden and Grow, 6 participants
- Popeyes demonstration garden
- Butler County Exhibits and More, 165 participants
- Women Aware event
- Mums fundraising sale

**Extension Master Gardener Training: 2 sessions**

- Spring, 1 participant
- Fall, 2 participants

**Indirect & Virtual Reach**

- Two radio interviews on Show Me Today reached approximately 60,000 listeners statewide.
- The Garden Hour virtual series drew 1488 attendees across 12 sessions through the year and delivered horticulture education.
- Sessions are available through live Zoom and posted on the MU Extension Integrated Pest Management YouTube channel.



**Native Insect Pollinators and Their Habitats**

Humans and wildlife depend on insect pollinators for the production of fruits, flowers and vegetables. Insect pollinators are responsible for the production of one-third of the world's plants. Bees, butterflies, flies, wasps, moths, beetles and some other insects are the most important pollinators. In the United States alone, more than 4,000 species of native bees, 700 species of butterflies, 10,000 species of flies, and thousands of wasps and other insects contribute an estimated \$2 billion to farm systems each year.

Of all the insect pollinators, bees are the only ones that collect pollen for eating. As such, bees are responsible for 90 percent of all the world's pollination. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that of the roughly 100 crop species that provide 90 percent of food supplied for 10 billion, 71 are bee-pollinated, mostly by wild bees and honeybees. Bees, like all other insect pollinators, are the most valuable ecosystem services provided by wildlife.

Bumble bees, carpenter bees, honey bees, mason bees, orchard bees, bumble bees, leaf-cutter bees, mason bees, cuckoo bees, mason bees, yellow-faced bees and others are all effective or more so than honey bees at pollinating fruits and vegetables. For example, one blue orchard bee (*Osmia lignaria*) is more effective than 25 honey bees at pollinating almonds. And for many tomatoes, bumble bees are 40 to 60 times more effective than honey bees, jacking larger fruits. However, with a few exceptions, the contribution to pollination from native and managed bees remains concentrated in the economy.

Butterflies, moths and flies are considered a secondary way to pollinate. The publication discusses their pollinators, as well as native bees. More information on the pollinators of Missouri — including honeybees, bumble bees, wasps and flies — can be found in MU Extension publication #163, *Pollinators: Misconceptions and Plant-Pollinator Relationships*.



**Bumble bees**

Bumble bees (*Bombus* spp.) belong to the family Apidae and comprise a group of about 250 species found primarily in temperate regions throughout the world (Figure 1). They are considered to be generalist foragers and usually feed from a variety of plant species.

Adult bumble bees are typically larger and more robust than other types of bees. Their most noticeable feature is their fuzzy bodies, but they also have a few other distinguishing features. The tip of a bumble bee's abdomen is rounded. The compound eyes are positioned on the sides of the head, so they can sting multiple times. However, bumble bees are generally not considered aggressive and only become a problem when their nests are disturbed or threatened, especially if other bees are located near areas of high human activity.

Bumble bees undergo a complete metamorphosis and have four life stages: egg, larva, pupa and adult. Like most bees, a queen bumble bee lays fertilized and unfertilized eggs. The unfertilized eggs develop into male bees, which are sterile females with 8- to 16-millimeter long bodies, or sex workers, which are

Figure 1. Bumble bee (*Bombus* spp.).

Authors: Bruce Bostert, Division of Plant Sciences, Center for Applied Horticulture, and David R. Rasmussen, Department of Plant Sciences, University of Missouri, Columbia.

Copyright: School of Natural Resources, University of Missouri.

**Youth Gardening Activity**  
**Designing a Butterfly Garden**

By Donna Aufmeyer, Field Specialist in Horticulture

**Attract these butterflies**

- Black swallowtail
- Monarch
- Common buckeye
- Eastern tiger swallowtail
- Painted lady

**How to make a butterfly garden**

- Plant a flower circle or bed 6 to 8 hours of sunlight
- Choose an area equal to 100 square feet (roughly 10 ft x 10 ft). Several smaller areas can be planted but they need to be close together and equidistant to 100 sq. ft.
- Plant lots of flowers!
  - o Different colors.
  - o Different shapes.
  - o Different sizes and heights.
- Combine native and caterpillar food sources.
- Plant at least 10 plants of two different species to increase butterfly numbers.
- Direct seed flowers and use flower transplants.
- Add a small clay saucer or bathtub with sand or small pebbles in the bottom and shallow water for butterflies.
- Add light colored rocks for basking in the sunlight on cool mornings.
- Add fruit peelings like watermelon or cantaloupe to attract some butterflies.

**Fun facts and tips**

- There are 150 recorded species of butterflies in Missouri. Each species is unique and requires various nectar and food sources.
- The role of butterflies is important in nature. As pollinators, they help plants produce fruit and seeds.
- Butterflies live for six weeks. They use it to increase their body temperature, which is necessary for flight.
- Butterflies have food preferences. Flowers with high sugar concentrations are best as a food source.
- Lifecycle of a butterfly is complete metamorphosis: egg, caterpillar, pupa to adult.

**Attract these caterpillars**

- Black swallowtail caterpillar
- Monarch caterpillar
- Common buckeye caterpillar
- Eastern tiger swallowtail caterpillar
- Milkweed for monarch caterpillars

**Food sources for caterpillars**

- Parley for black swallowtail caterpillars
- Milkweed for monarch caterpillars





Serving Dent, Shannon, Pulaski, Phelps, Crawford, Oregon, Ripley, Carter and Texas Counties

## Feral Hog Partnership

Many projects and outreach efforts were completed by the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership Educators this year along with our Elimination Specialists.

End of year numbers of feral hogs removed from the landscape were 6125. Elimination Specialists removed 5105 feral hogs in 2024. That is a 19.98% increase in one year for feral swine removed.

Aerial operations began again in December which include two helicopters and 21 drones. The MFHEP staff includes 21 drone pilots. Aerial operations are planned through March with two USDA helicopters. The additional helicopter utilizes FLIR technology and locates feral swine with the use of the FLIR. In 2025, the helicopter destroyed 2700 feral swine of 5105.

In 2025 I contacted several high schools about presenting our MFHEP power point and video for FFA classes. High schools presented to included Salem and others. I also attended SWCD meetings, Farm Bureau, Cattleman's, and County Commissioners. Requests for Eminence, Summersville, Winona, Mountain View, Cabool, Richland, and Willow Springs High Schools were also submitted.

I also contributed to many ideas for our written publications such as The Hog Herald. Several media and radio interviews were also completed by me in an outreach and education capacity. A presentation was also given for the Shannon County Extension Council.

One of my primary focus areas in 2025 was outreach/education with Walmart, Bass Pro, and at our local state and national park areas. I scheduled events in Shannon, Texas, Oregon, Stone, Howell, Phelps, and Pulaski Counties.



MFHEP presentation with Kevin Crider and Jerry Richards.



MFHEP education event in Rolla



West Plains Walmart booth

# Shannon County

## Business and Community

### Profiles and Stories



In 2025, Jennifer Williams taught an estate planning class at the **Winona Public Library**. Attendees learned the importance of completing and periodically reviewing an estate plan to avoid catastrophic consequences.

**75% of attendees** plan to **visit an attorney** to complete their estate plan in **1-3 months**.



Thanks to a 2024 USDA Broadband Technical Assistance grant, a team of citizens in Shannon County engaged in the **Digitally Connected Communities** project to strategically plan for broadband expansion.

The team continued their work in 2025 by presenting their report to elected officials who serve Shannon County and monitoring the progress of BEAD funds.

An additional opportunity from the 2024 USDA Broadband Technical Assistance grant was the chance to present this project at the **Federal Reserve Bank's Digital Accessibility Forum** in September 2025.

Shown here: MU Extension faculty Alan Spell and Jennifer Williams, with **Shannon County Community Team member Michael Phoenix**, who shared the need to advocate for rural communities on important issues like broadband connectivity.





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

## Health and Human Sciences



### Brain and the Disease of Addiction

provides a foundational understanding of how the brain is affected from substances such as drugs and alcohol and how the disease of addiction develops. The Brain and the Disease of Addiction Program is for individuals, parents, students, healthcare professionals, and groups and organizations who will benefit from an understanding and knowledge of the science of the disease of addiction.



**Chronic Disease Self-Management** programs offer evidence-based information for individuals and their caregivers to boost self-confidence in managing symptoms, enhancing quality of life and even reducing health care expenses.

These programs have undergone rigorous evaluation and are proven to be effective tools for individuals dealing with chronic conditions like arthritis, fibromyalgia, depression and diabetes.



**Rural Immersion Program** is an opportunity for medical students interested in rural practice to gain experience in the rewards and challenges of working and living in a rural community, examining rural health disparities and quality of life concerns within a specific region. Group activities and meetings with community leaders in business, government, education, health care and natural resources give students a preview of life in a rural area.

**Rural Immersion Program participants agree that it has significantly contributed to them FORMING INSIGHTS on the suitability of living and working in a rural community, both personally and professionally.**



Agricultural Growth  
& Stewardship



Economic  
Opportunity



Educational  
Access &  
Excellence



Health  
& Well-Being



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

## Continuing Education



The **Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI)** offers advanced training on a wide variety of topics, including defensive tactics, firearms, use of force and de-escalation. LETI offers customized programs for all required continuing education areas of concentration.



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.



**Agricultural Growth & Stewardship**



**Economic Opportunity**



**Educational Access & Excellence**



**Health & Well-Being**