



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

St. Charles County 2025

Annual Report

260 Brown Rd
St. Peters, MO 63376
636-970-3000

**SERVE MISSOURI.
DELIVER MIZZOU.®**

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

Dear County Commissioners, County Executives, 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



Brittney Bird
4-H Youth Program Associate



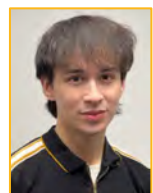
Brenda Doll
Bookkeeper



Deana Dothage
Extension Engagement Specialist



Eli Isele
Field Specialist in Horticulture



Brandon Yn
Media and Office Support Coordinator

Council Members

Officers

John Goings: Chairman
Hank Hedges: Vice-chairman
Gary Wester: Treasurer
Kathleen Thompson: Secretary

Community Partners

Fay Aubuchon
James Cummings
Stephen Thompson
Roy Zirges
Nancy Fulton
Kaycie Hollrah

Elected Members

Jamil Jackson
Melissa Reimer
Amanda Templer
John Griesenauer
Fred Banks
Ryan Foster
Gabriele Griffiths
Mary Horner
Steve Martin

Appointed Members

Linda Ragsdale
Mike Lueck
Dr. Gregg Sartorius
Kathleen Thompson
Katie Lyons
Mark Johnson
Amy Lewis
Laura Steimel
Matt Swanson

County Executive's Office

Steve Ehlmann: County Executive
Joann Leykam: Director of Administration
Bryan Ludwig: Assistant Director of Administration
Bob Schnur: Intermittent Assistant Director of Administration
Rob Wylie: Assistant Director of Administration

COUNCIL CHAIR JOHN GOINGS

2025 Reflections



John Goings - 2025 was such an exciting year for the St. Charles County Extension Office. We expanded our primary mission and reach by engaging residents through workshops, field days, 4 H youth activities, and community collaborations. Continuing our support of the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist program, we provide value programming to St. Charles County residents. I'm so grateful I had the opportunity to personally go through the Master Gardener training program and get a firsthand perspective of the dedication this group has to the betterment of our community. The Extension Office faculty, staff and Extension Council volunteers reflect our commitment to ensuring every community member has access to lifelong learning opportunities that support personal growth and enhance the well-being of St. Charles County. I cannot wait to see what 2026 has in store.

2025 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting is held to inform elected officials, community leaders, and stakeholders about MU Extension resources, programs, and specialists that serve St. Charles County. Extension Council members, local government leaders, faculty, and staff attended.



Above: Urban East Regional Director, Jody Squires
Below: Top - St. Charles County Council Chair Mike Elam Bottom: Guests enjoying dinner



BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	100,000
Special Appropriation	15,000
Total Income	115,000
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	73,025
Payroll Expenses	13,453
Travel	4,406
Telephone & Postage	3,846
Office Supplies/Service	4,783
Utilities	11,322
Contract Services	13,079
Insurance	10,528
Capital Repairs	9,886
Furniture/Equipment	80
Total Expenses	149,023

MU Extension's core areas generated \$1.2 billion for Missouri's statewide economy, representing a return of about \$13 on every public and private dollar invested in MU Extension.

St. Charles County partners

All cities, towns and municipalities in St. Charles County
Boys and Girls Club of St. Charles County
County and Municipal School Districts
Community Council of St. Charles County
Forest ReLeaf of Missouri-St. Louis
Great Southern Bank
Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County
Heroes to Hives Missouri
Missouri Botanical Garden
Missouri Department of Agriculture
Missouri Department of Conservation
Orchard Farm VFW Post 4219
Shaw Nature Reserve
St. Charles Community College
St. Charles County Fair Board
St. Charles County Government
St. Charles County Parks
St. Charles Parks and Recreation
St. Louis Audubon Society
St. Peters Stream Team Cleanup
Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service
ThinkFirst Missouri
Three Rivers Beekeepers
USDA NRCS
Weldon Springs Interpretive Center
Wentzville Parks and Recreation

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 St. Charles County Extension Council, faculty and staff would like to express our appreciation to the St. Charles County Executive and Council members for their continued support of extension programs.



Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to St. Charles 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.

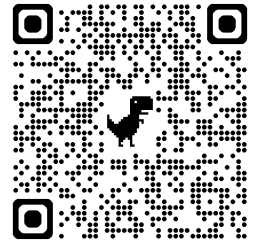
UM SYSTEM COUNTY IMPACTS

MU Extension in St. Charles County Community Impact Report

This report offers a detailed overview of how MU Extension positively impacts St. Charles 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.



[St. Charles County 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 St. Charles 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 St. Charles County is addressing these challenges. Each section breaks down county-specific statistics compared to state averages.

[St. Charles County Grand Challenges Report](#)



St. Charles County

Missouri 4-H



What is 4-H?

4-H is where Missouri's young people find their spark and learn by doing. Whether raising animals, coding robots, growing gardens, or giving back to their neighbors, 4-H members gain real-world skills with the help of caring mentors.

Rooted in University of Missouri Extension, 4-H connects classrooms, communities, and families to create learning that sticks—building confident, capable leaders who are Beyond Ready for life. In 4-H, youth discover their strengths, practice resilience, and learn to lead with heart—preparing them not just for what's next, but for anything that comes their way.



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

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



4-H brings hands-on learning directly into schools through in-school and afterschool programs that extend classroom lessons. **Teachers**, **4-H professionals**, and **volunteers** guide students through 4-H projects in areas such as science, agriculture, health, and leadership, helping youth connect learning to the real world.

Programs like **Show Me Embryology** give students a front-row seat to science in action as they watch chicks hatch and explore the life cycle of a chicken. These experiences help students grow curiosity, confidence, and critical thinking skills, preparing them to be Beyond Ready for whatever comes next.

St. Charles County

Missouri 4-H



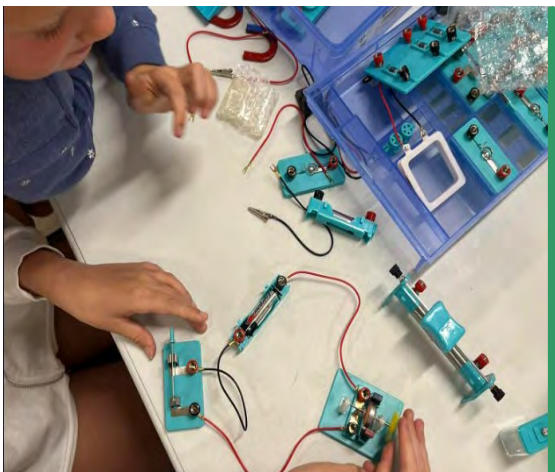
4-H's Leadership and Civic Engagement programs foster understanding, confidence, and decision-making skills to empower young people to become informed and active citizens. These initiatives prepare youth to become future leaders by engaging them in programs where they have voice and influence.

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



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

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



Missouri 4-H is igniting curiosity and cultivating innovation through 4-H Powered STEM. From robotics and coding to environmental science and engineering, youth engage in hands-on learning that makes science come alive.

4-H STEM programs build problem-solving skills, spark discovery, and prepare the next generation of innovators and leaders. Every young person—no matter where they live or learn—has access to high-quality science experiences that open doors to future opportunities and help them become Beyond Ready for the challenges of tomorrow.

St. Charles County

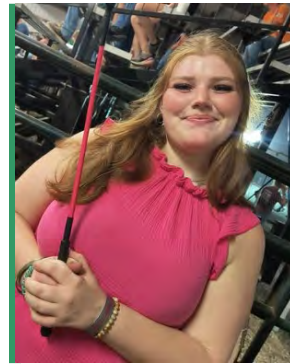
Missouri 4-H

Local Impact: St. Charles County 4-H

In 2025, St. Charles County 4-H had **2,804 youth** actively engaged in meaningful, hands-on learning experiences through 4-H. These young people explored a wide range of project areas including entrepreneurship, public speaking, community service, photography, shooting sports, arts and crafts, horsemanship, livestock management, embryology, camps, and more. Through these programs, youth developed leadership skills, confidence, responsibility, and a strong sense of community while discovering new interests and career pathways. The success and reach of St. Charles County 4-H would not be possible without the dedication of **115 adult volunteers** who serve as mentors, role models, and educators. Together, these volunteers and programs create a safe, supportive environment where youth can thrive, build lifelong skills, and make a positive impact in their communities—today and into the future.



"Every youth should join 4-H because it's an incredibly fun, educational, and a rewarding experience. You make so many friendships and memories that will last a lifetime."
- Libby Wilmes



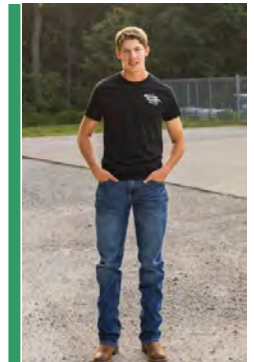
"St. Charles County 4-H has been a huge part of my youth. 4-H teaches responsibility, hard work, and the importance of community involvement."
-Annie Lewis



"I volunteer with 4-H because it's a youth organization I truly believe in. It provides countless learning opportunities for young people in everything from the projects they participate into the community service activities the clubs do."
-Katie Lyons



"4-H teaches you a lot about life and responsibility, and you make memories and friends that last a lifetime."
-Michael Boehmer



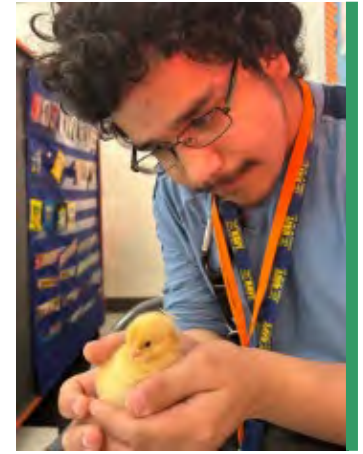
"What I enjoy most is seeing the kids progress from one year to the next, in their speaking skills, in their confidence, in their abilities with their projects, in their maturity when getting constructive criticism and suggestions of how to improve a project, in their communication skills, etc. In essence seeing them mature into a contributing member of society."
-Georganna Krumlinde

Local Impact: Embryology

In the 4-H Embryology Project, Brittney Bird, Youth Program Associate, leads and enhances hands-on learning experiences focused on chicken development and the life cycle of chicks. Through this program, classrooms across St. Charles County use incubators to care for fertilized eggs as they develop and hatch into chicks. Youth take an active role in observing daily changes, learning responsibility, and practicing humane animal care. Brittney's leadership and coordination of the embryology program helped reach 2,286 youth, bringing agricultural science to life in classrooms throughout the county. By combining science education with real-world experiences, the program fosters curiosity, builds empathy, and strengthens students' understanding of biology, agriculture, and stewardship.



"I shared the experience with the whole school. This allowed whole classes to come visit our room that normally does not get many visitors. IT CLOSED A SOCIAL GAP!"
-Kim Gonzales, North Point High School



"It was such a fun and interactive learning experience for the kids. They learned so much in such a short time."
-Taylor Brewing
Boone Trail Elementary

"This is the best day ever!"
- Student at Central Elementary



"All of my students have special needs. I was shocked at the language that came from them. I heard longer sentences than I ever thought possible. Kids were so loving & gentle."
Gina Randolph
Green Tree Elementary

"This is the BEST! So educational for our students."
-Channa Crawford
Central Elementary



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

Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18

4-H at the St. Charles County Fair

At the 2025 St. Charles County Fair, 4-H members showcased projects they spent the program year working on. These projects were in the areas of Engineering and Technology; Environmental Science and Natural Resources; Plant and Animal Science; Leadership and Personal Development; and Expressive Arts; Healthy Living; and Shooting Sports.



4-H Visits Missouri Capitol

Governor Mike Kehoe and First Lady Claudia Kehoe welcomed Missouri 4-H members, recognizing the program's impact in developing confident and capable young leaders. 4-H'ers met their Representatives and Senators, sharing their experiences and highlighting how MU Extension's 4-H programs equip youth with skills for life and careers. St. Charles County members Emily, Skylee, Lacey, KaBella, and Kaycie met with Representative Wendy Hausman who represents District 065 in St. Charles County.



Legend



Agricultural Growth
& Stewardship



Economic
Opportunity



Educational
Access &
Excellence



Health
& Well-Being

St. Charles County

Missouri 4-H

Profiles and stories



Community clubs are at the heart of 4-H. Led by trained volunteers, members come together regularly to learn, lead, and serve. Youth elect officers, enroll in projects, and plan hands-on activities that build leadership, teamwork, and responsibility.

Judging and Achievement Day is a cornerstone 4-H event designed to help youth strengthen essential life skills such as planning, organizing, problem solving, critical thinking, idea expression, and self-motivation. Youth participate in four engaging categories—public speaking, demonstrations, judging classes, and fashion revue—where they apply what they've learned in a supportive, real-world setting. This event is a great opportunity for youth to build confidence, practice decision-making, receive constructive feedback, and showcase their skills while preparing for future leadership roles, careers, and continued success in 4-H and beyond.



Camp Derricotte 4-H Camp is a place of exploration, discovery, and adventure. At this four-day (three-night) overnight camp, located in Cuivre River State Park. Campers will meet new people, have new experiences, and accept new challenges.



Volunteer Family 2025

John and Katie Lyons family was recognized by State Representative Travis Willson, District 106, for being selected as the St. Charles County Extension Volunteer Family of 2025. Katie and John are exceptional 4-H volunteers who consistently go above and beyond to support and inspire young leaders. Their passion for youth development shines through in the countless hours they spend organizing events, mentoring members, and creating a welcoming space where kids can build skills like responsibility, teamwork, and leadership. Their selflessness and enthusiasm have made a lasting impact, helping keep 4-H vibrant and thriving for years to come.

St. Charles County

Missouri 4-H

Profiles and stories



Congratulations to the St. Charles County 2025 Farm Family, Doug & Lori Bauer and family! Their dedication to St. Charles County 4-H is truly unmatched. Their three children have grown up in the program and have gone on to pursue agriculture-related career paths at the University of Missouri—an incredible testament to their commitment to 4-H and agriculture.



As part of her 4-H Summer Scholarship, 4-H Youth Ambassador Kaycie Hollrah assisted Youth Program Associate Brittney Bird with programming during summer 2025. Kaycie prepared resources for Summer STEAM Days, St. Charles County Judging and Achievement Day, and the County Fair.



State Representative Wendy Hausman, and Youth Program Associate Brittney Bird holding a framed resolution recognizing Kaycie Hollrah from Point Prairie 4-H club.



To learn more information about 4-H [download our app.](#)

Follow us on [Instagram](#) to stay up to date on events, photos, and all the fun!
@stcharlescounty4h





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

Agriculture and Environment



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



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

2025 Master Gardener Core Training

The 2025 class of St. Charles County Master Gardeners completed their classroom training in April 2025. The course has 43 participants. This program spreads gardening knowledge through research-based horticulture training and volunteer opportunities. The class is facilitated by various speakers selected by Eli Isele and the St. Charles County Master Gardeners. A new class began January 16, 2026.



Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

St. Charles County

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact



In 2025, the St. Charles County Master Gardener chapter had 246 active members, 177 of whom have completed their initial volunteer requirements and been certified as Extension Master Gardeners. The Master Gardeners volunteered a total of 14,903 hours. Master Gardeners are trained by the University of Missouri to share research-based gardening knowledge. Through demonstration projects, workshops, and our office's HortLine, these volunteers are dedicated to "helping others learn to grow."

Educating the Public

"In The Garden" is the Master Gardeners' winter education program. 2025 was the series' second year in operation and had 84 registrants. Participants learned basic gardening techniques to prepare for spring, including garden design, tool selection and care, soil amendment, and building raised beds.

Garden Tours

188 people attended 23 free tours of our gardens, learning about our area's diverse plant and wildlife. In addition, high schoolers in St. Charles County's CAPS (Career for Advanced Professional Studies) program visited MU Extension. In addition to presentations on public health and community development, the students toured the Extension Office's herb garden, pantry garden, and fruit arboretum.



St. Charles County

Agriculture and Environment

Profiles and stories



The Master Gardeners' help desk, or "HortLine," is where the public can ask any gardening related questions. Master Gardener volunteers provide research-based answers via phone, email, or in-person visit. Visitors are welcome from March until October. During winter months the desk is staffed remotely. In 2025, HortLine volunteers assisted a total of 340 callers.



Master Gardeners donated 2,202 pounds of produce to the Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service Food Pantry. Produce was harvested from the Pantry Garden, other gardens on extension property, and from Master Gardeners home gardens.



Master Gardeners donated 1421 plants to St. Charles County Parks. These included a variety of annuals and native perennials, a truck bed full of daylilies, 4 bags of Lambs Ear, 3 burlap bags of canna lilies, and 5 bags of Soapwort.



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact



Heroes to Hives 2025

St. Charles County Horticulture Specialist Eli Isele expanded veteran participation in the Heroes to Hives program throughout 2025. In the summer, Isele studied accessible beekeeping techniques in Slovenia which he later implemented with the Heroes to Hives Missouri team.

“A lot of veterans come right out of the service and may feel disconnected and may be struggling with finding job opportunities. The Heroes to Hives program offers a diversion as well as opportunities.”

Eric Work, Heroes to Hives participant



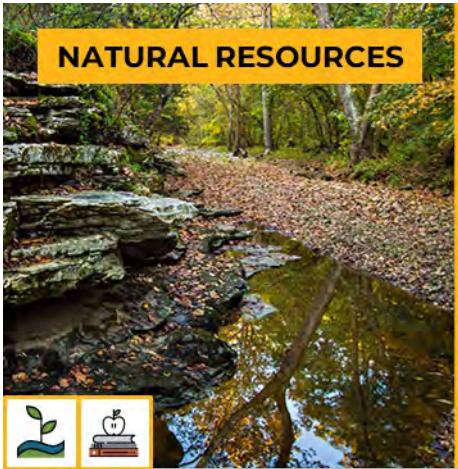
Hydroponics

Hydroponics, a soil-free method of growing plants in nutrient solution, is a practical method for indoor growing. Eli Isele installed a hydroponics station in the Extension building where lettuce plants thrive. Office staff and volunteers enjoy the abundant supply. The lettuce pictured above fed Extension Council members at the June 5 Extension Council Meeting.

Heroes to Hives offers free professional training in beekeeping to veterans, promoting financial and personal wellness through community development. Missouri's Heroes to Hives group has trained more than 1,200 veterans since 2021. It is the nation's largest agriculture training program for U.S. military service members.

St. Charles County

Agriculture and Environment



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

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



Missouri Master Naturalists – Confluence Chapter

The Missouri Master Naturalist Program engages Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and community service. Their Confluence Chapter serves St. Charles County. Volunteers work on conservation projects at parks, Missouri Department of Conservation properties, and other green spaces in the region. In June 2025 the chapter celebrated its 20th anniversary.

2025 Educational Programming Conducted

St. Charles County

Towne Park Nature Explore Classroom
The Meadowlands Assisted Living/Memory Care
Pollinator Palooza

St. Louis County

Wildlife Rich Deer Resistant Garden
Occupants of a Garden Ecosystem



St. Charles County

Agriculture and Environment



MU Extension Specialists quickly respond to **emergencies and disasters** across the state. If a disease outbreak occurs in livestock, specialists are there. If a natural disaster such as flooding occurs, specialists are there. Missouri farmers can count on MU Extension to guide them through emerging issues with knowledge and expertise.

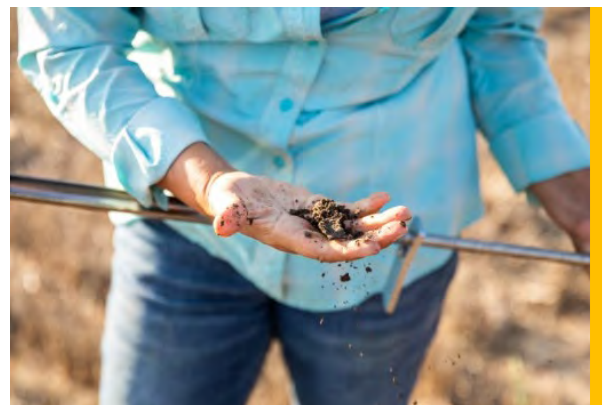


The Missouri Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM), funded by USDA grants, has been an important extension program for more than 30 years. Mizzou IPM distributes articles, pest monitoring data and publications on how to improve the application of integrated pest management strategies and systems in crops. In addition, the new Soybean Growth Monitoring Report is released through IPM every two weeks during the growing season.

The MU Soil Testing Program delivers research-based nutrient and lime recommendations to more than 32,500 customers annually.

Soil Testing

A soil test through the University of Missouri's Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory reveals specific needs in client's soil(s). In 2025 the St Charles County Extension Office processed 337 samples. Soil samples may be dropped off at the St. Charles County Extension Office (260 Brown Road, St. Peters). Two cups of dried soil are required for one test. You may submit your sample in a baggie, box, or other appropriate container. One test costs \$30 in total (\$20 test + \$10 shipping). Results take 10-14 days to process. Test results can be emailed, accessed online, or mailed as hard copies. Questions about soil test results in St. Charles County are directed to Eli Isele, Field Specialist in Horticulture.



Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

MU Soil Lab Fertility Test Samples – St. Charles County – 2025

14,821 soil samples were submitted state-wide to the MU Soil Lab Testing Services in 2025. Soil testing enables farmers to manage their soil fertility by first knowing current levels and which added elements would generate a return on investment.

Test results and recommendations of fertilizer applications were mailed to the customers that had submitted their samples. Follow-up consultations were provided by Field Specialist in Agronomy, Rusty Lee, as customers needed additional assistance interpreting the results and recommendations.

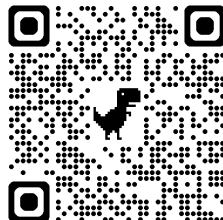
- Increases in grain yield and forage tonnage are expected when elements of fertility are deemed required.
 - 6% required lime for pH corrections.
 - 23% required Phosphorus additions.
 - 8% required Potassium additions.
- Promotes farm sustainability by keeping land productivity at a high level.
- Reduces unnecessary expenses of applying costly fertilizer at a level above what can be utilized.
- Reduces environmental impact from the off-target movement associated with over-application.

Private Pesticide Applicator Training

Twenty-three St Charles County citizens participated in the Private Pesticide Applicator Training facilitated by Rusty Lee, Field Specialist in Agronomy.

PPAT enables farmers to meet the legal requirements mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Missouri Department of Agriculture's Bureau for Pesticide Control on the safe and proper use of agricultural pesticides on their farmlands, including restricted-use pesticides (RUPs). This enables farmers to meet society's demands for lessening agriculture's environmental impact.

[Pesticide Applicator Training](#)



Rusty Lee

Field Specialist in Agronomy
St. Charles County
East Central Region



St. Charles County

Agriculture and Environment



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



The Missouri Agriculture, Food and Forestry Innovation Center (MAFFIC) provides dedicated technical assistance to help value-added agricultural producers launch or expand their businesses. Through personalized support in marketing, product development, business planning and financial analysis, MAFFIC business counselors equip producers with the knowledge and tools needed for success. Each year, these free services reach more than 150 producers, driving innovation and growth in Missouri agriculture.

MISSOURI AGRICULTURE,
FOOD AND FORESTRY
INNOVATION CENTER 



The Agricultural Business and Policy (ABP) program drives the growth of Missouri's agriculture economy by equipping farmers, ranchers, landowners and agribusinesses with the knowledge and tools to make sound farm management decisions. ABP provides interactive programming and tailored resources such as enterprise budgets and farm accounting tools and valuable executive education through its annual Agricultural Lenders School and seminars. These programs deliver key insights, market outlooks, policy updates and practical tools to help lenders and their clientele navigate volatile farm economies. ABP conducts unbiased comprehensive surveys on farmland values, custom farming rates and cash rental rates. These surveys for farm operators, ag lenders, government agencies and industry stakeholders provide valuable insights into trends and indicators of farm financial health.



Business and Community

Local Impact

Nonprofit Technical Assistance

Nonprofit Technical Assistance launched in 2025. This network of statewide MU Extension community development specialists offer:

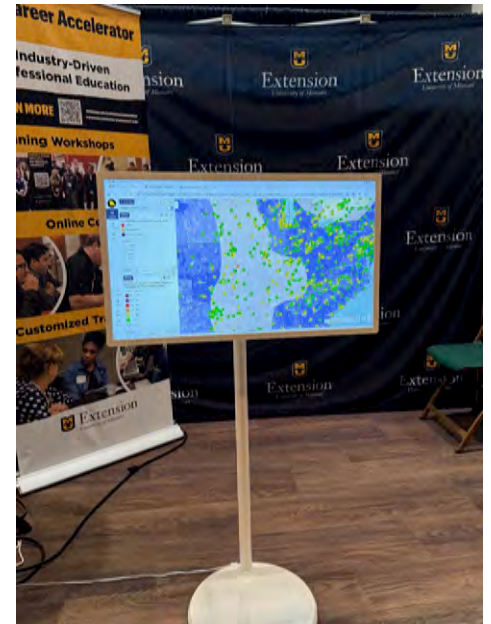
- One-on-one consulting and technical assistance mini-sessions for small nonprofit organizations
- Nonprofit leader skill-building courses
- A resource library with informational resource sheets
- Referrals to other programs, services, and organization

Organization leaders can contact Deana Dothage with questions about insurance, community networking, and stakeholder relationships. Other specialists can help them achieve specific organizational goals.

[Nonprofit Technical Assistance](#)



Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems CARES



CARES

The Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems, or CARES, was established in 1992 with the objective of using data and tools to support better informed decision making. Our staff of professional data experts apply their skills to making maps, developing new data visualizations, and helping individuals and organizations figure out ways to do their work better. Our center complies with industry required data practices, including those that fall under HIPAA and FERPA guidelines, and the data we handle is governed by the University System Data Classification System.

[CARES](#)



Early Childhood Impact 2025 Summary by Sarah Kennedy

MU Extension- Business & Community engaged in a variety of early childhood work across the state of Missouri. Pick and choose any of these pieces to report on in your county reports. County-specific numbers are included as much as possible. I would suggest doing a Ctrl+F and entering a county to see where it shows up. I tried to highlight all the counties in Yellow. I also tried to include background information and links to help with report writing.

Sarah Kennedy: skennedy@missouri.edu



Business and Community

Local Impact

2025 Most Engaged Neighbors

St. Peters resident Dennis Book was honored as one of the state's 20 Most Engaged Neighbors for 2025. These awards highlight everyday Missourians whose commitment to their neighborhoods strengthens community bonds and creates belonging.

The recognition is part of Missouri Good Neighbor Week, celebrated annually from Sept. 28 to Oct. 4. The initiative, led by University of Missouri Extension and The Hopeful Neighborhood Project, encourages acts of neighboring and celebrates those who make a difference where they live

Dennis Book – St. Peters, St. Charles County.

Always ready with a helping hand, Dennis Book is the neighbor you can count on in every circumstance. Whether it's shoveling snow, hauling brush, organizing a block party or stepping up when someone has a need, Dennis models the everyday generosity that makes a neighborhood stronger. His nominator wrote, "Dennis is there to make new neighbors feel welcome and he helped to bring our neighbors together."

Engaged Neighbor Program

The Engaged Neighbor Program arms people with the tools to improve relationships with their neighbors and foster a better sense of community. Deana discusses the mental health and economic value of knowing your closest neighbors. She offers ideas on innovative ways to connect with neighbors and discusses overcoming neighboring challenges. Contact Deana Dothage to schedule a presentation at a location of your choice or the St. Charles County Extension Office at 260 Brown Road, St. Peters.

Show Me Neighborhood Art Week

Show Me Neighborhood Art Week is open to all businesses and residents of Missouri. This outreach effort by University of Missouri Extension and Creating Whole Communities seeks to empower public art made by residents as a contribution to the area's sense of place where they live.

All Missourians are encouraged to participate by creating art using materials available at home to create art (like yard sculptures, chalk art projects, painted stones or murals, etc.) in the front of their residence or shared space in their neighborhood or their business. Deana Dothage is a member of SMNAW planning team.

Voting takes place June 1 through June 15.

[Show Me Neighborhood Art Week for more information.](#)



Strategic Doing is a one-day workshop that guides community stakeholders through an inclusive, problem-solving approach to developing high-impact projects to address local development issues. Deana is a trained Strategic Doing facilitator.

<https://extension.missouri.edu/program/s/strategic-doing-for-thriving-communities>

Business and Community

A Walk in the Park – Promoting Our Parks

**Deana Tucker Dothage, Extension Engagement Specialist
MU Extension in St. Charles County**

Introduction

In 2024 Deana began walking in St. Charles County parks with community leaders, elected officials and friends. “My mission is to explore every park in St. Charles County including city, county and state parks. I capture photos of the parks and the people walking with me.” The photos are shared on social media to showcase these scenic spaces and the connections they foster.

Raising Awareness Through Engagement

Parks are the heart of communities, offering places for relaxation, recreation, and connection. Many parks go unnoticed or underutilized because people don't realize their full potential. Public awareness is key to protecting and maintaining parks.

Walking in parks alongside community leaders is an opportunity to;

- Allow conversation which leads to stronger relationships between decision-makers and the people they serve
- Promote parks and raise awareness
- Help individuals appreciate the beauty and accessibility of parks
- Boost local economies by attracting visitors
- Observe maintenance needs, accessibility challenges, or opportunities for improvement
- Provide safe spaces for families
- See the importance of investing in green spaces for future generations
- Encourage healthier lifestyles among both leaders and residents

If you are interested in seeing Walk in the Park posts on our Extension Facebook page, visit [Facebook - MU Extension St. Charles County](#)

If you would like to promote your community parks by a Walk in the Park, please reach out to Deana Dothage, 636-970-3000.



Mayor Keith
Widaman, Barat
Haven Park,
Dardenne Prairie



Recreation
Specialist, Mariah
Davis, Fort Zumwalt
Park, O'Fallon



State Representative,
Colin Wellenkamp in
Webster Park, St.
Charles



State Representative
Terri Violet, Spencer
Creek Park, St. Peters

Business and Community

A Walk in the Park – Promoting Our Parks

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St. Peters Alderman Nick Trupiano and Officer, Brown Road Park, St. Peters



O'Fallon City Council member Linda Ragsdale, at Dames Park, O'Fallon



Park Ranger Ashley Maue at Quail Ridge Park, St. Charles County



State Representative Wendy Hausman and 4-H Youth member Kaycie Hollrah at Hide A Way Harbor in Portage des Sioux



St. Charles City Council member Denise Mitchell and St. Charles Park Ranger at Schaefer Park.

Business and Community

Profiles and Stories



Extension Office Visit

State Representatives Mark Matthiesen (L) and Collin Wellenkamp (R) with Extension Engagement Specialist Deana Dothage. Matthiesen and Wellenkamp visited the Extension office to learn more about Resources available to Missourians from Horticulture, 4-H, and Community Development Extension Specialists.



Christmas Cards for Soldiers Serving Overseas

A series of card-signing events were held throughout 2025 to support troops stationed abroad. Approximately 6,000 cards were signed and delivered to H.E.R.O.E.S. Care, where they were included in care packages shipped overseas.



Show Me Neighborhood Art Week Awards

EES, Deana Dothage, delivering Show Me Neighborhood Art Week awards to Amanda Lovell (Judge's Choice) and Laura Birk, representing Crossroads Art Council (Urban East Region winner) at a Wentzville City Council meeting.

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

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



Deana Dothage
CEC Planning Team
Member 2025

MEASURABLE IMPACT

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

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

WHY THIS MATTERS

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

49 Missouri Counties and 4 States Represented

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

Business and Community



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



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



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

Health and Human Sciences



Home Food Preservation

Preserve the season's bounty in a safe and delicious way.

Learn safe techniques for pressure canning, boiling water bath canning, steam canning, dehydration, and freezing.

Understand the importance of using safe food preservation and storage methods to avoid cross-contamination and food-borne illnesses.

"This course made me more self-sufficient and improved my family's access to quality food."



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

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



The **Diabetes Prevention Program** is recognized as "Full Plus," the highest status given by the CDC and is provided by licensed lifestyle coaches to prevent type 2 diabetes. Through lifestyle changes participants can achieve sustainable weight loss, increase in physical activity and learn coping skills to manage stress.

More than 1 IN 3 PARTICIPANTS have reached the 5-7% WEIGHT LOSS GOAL.

Legend



Agricultural Growth & Stewardship



Economic Opportunity



Educational Access & Excellence



Health & Well-Being

Local Impact

Janelle Azmy, *Community Health Field Specialist – Urban East Region*, partnered with St. Charles County Department of Public Health Community Health Assessment. Janelle serves as a member of Steering Committee for the Community Health Assessment. The St. Charles County Department of Public Health (DPH) is facilitating a county-wide effort to identify public health issues within the community and develop strategies to address those concerns. The St. Charles Community Health Assessment process kicked off in late 2024 by forming the St. Charles Community Health Collaborative. Collaborative members represent community partners from many sectors that provide services to St. Charles County residents. The health assessment framework outlines three phases.



Phase 1: Build a Community Health Improvement Foundation

Phase 2: Tell the Community Story

This phase focuses on collecting quantitative & qualitative data on the health & well-being of St. Charles County.

The three assessments are:

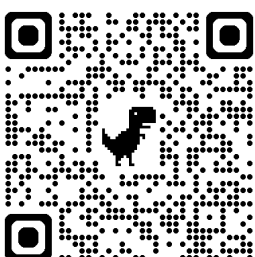
Community Partner Assessment – gain information on partner capacity & services

Community Status Assessment – analyze quantitative data & identify strengths, preventable health differences, & opportunities for improvement

Community Context Assessment – collect qualitative data from residents & community partners, typically thru focus groups & interviews

Phase 3: Continuously Improve the Community

[Community-Health-Assessment](#)



Local Impact

First Impact, a program offered by the University of Missouri School of Medicine, Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation and ThinkFirst Missouri, provides a free 90-minute session for parents, grandparents, and guardians of new teen drivers. Facilitators share strategies to help adults monitor, coach, and support their teens in reducing crash risks. Eight First Impact programs were delivered in St. Charles County in 2025. MU Extension partners with First Impact health educators Allyn Workman and Carol Hoormann to promote events across Missouri.

[First Impact Events](#)



St. Charles County Police Department Traffic Safety Officer Zack Koch delivers First Impact programs throughout St. Charles County.

Missouri Extension Education Foundation of St. Charles County

The Missouri Extension Education Foundation of St. Charles County is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation. As a donor, you receive the satisfaction of supporting Extension's efforts and the opportunity to claim your donation as a tax deduction. 100% of your gifts stays to support extension efforts within St. Charles County.

Extension Foundation Board

Anne Zerr – Chairperson
Sharon Hedges – Vice Chairperson
Fay Aubuchon – Treasurer
Mary Medina – Secretary
Deana Dothage – Executive Director
Fred Banks, Nancy Fulton, Melissa Knoll, Matt Swanson

Extension Foundation Brick Fundraiser for Scholarship and Professional Development

Commemorate a meaningful person, organization, or pet with an engraved brick. The bricks will be installed in walkways throughout our garden. The brick path and surrounding gardens are open to the public from dawn to dusk. Bricks are available to purchase for \$100.

The Foundation supports one annual \$1,000 scholarship for a St. Charles County graduating high school senior accepted into a trade school, private college, or state university. Tess Bauer, Orchard Farm High School, was the recipient of the 2025 scholarship.

To customize and pay for your brick, contact the Extension office: 636-970-3000; stcharlesco@missouri.edu or visit in person.



You may also send your payment online at this link:

[Education Foundation, St. Charles County](#)

Please comment that you are paying for a brick purchase.

You will be contacted to submit the information you would like engraved on the brick.



Brick path in Extension garden



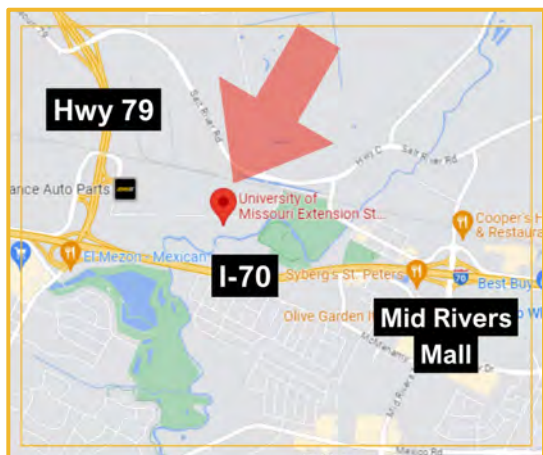
Commemorative brick

Venmo link to purchase a brick or to donate to Extension Education Foundation in St. Charles County



Contact Us

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