UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

Stone County 2025 Annual Report

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SERVE MISSOURI.
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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 sunsetting 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

Tim Schnakenberg
Agronomy

Amanda McCormick
Nutrition Program Associate

JoEtta Bowling
Office Manager

Kyle Whitaker
Extension Engagement Specialist

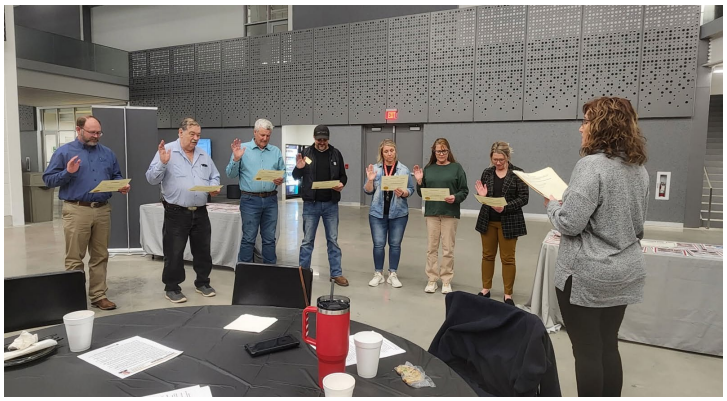
Madison McCord
Youth Program Associate

Council Members

Seth Fortner, Chairman
Tim Hejlek, Vice-chairman
Monica Mueller, Secretary
Mike Kaup, Treasurer
Ashley Copley
Brian Cutbirth
Bryan Evans
John Giebler
Mark Hyde
Jennifer Noriega
Ryan Scammahorn
Steve Stone

Wayne Blades, Commission
Robert Flatness, Farm Bureau
Jerry Harman, City of Kimberling

Jacob Coones, Youth Representative
Colin Hejlek, Youth Representative
Waylon Mease, Youth Representative



County executives

Mark Maples, Presiding Commissioner, January - July
Gordon Weathers, Presiding Commissioner, September - December
Wayne Blades, Northern Commissioner
Hank Smythe, Southern Commissioner

BUDGET AND MORE

Appropriations budget

Income	
County Appropriations	61,800
Total Income	61,800
Expenses	
Salaries/Benefits	46,972
Travel	3.248
Telephone	1,796
Office Supplies/Service	1,638
Council Election	66
Insurance	863
Postage	255
Youth	2,412
Total Expenses	57,250

Return on investment

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

Stone County partners

Stone County Commissioners
Stone County Farm Bureau
Table Rock Community Bank
Simmons Bank
Stockman's Bank
Old Missouri Bank
Early Bird Feed and Fertilizer
FCS Financial
Four State Stockyards
Rocking W Farm and Home
Shelter Insurance – Hammen Agency
Southwest Missouri Cattlemen's Association
Stone County Soil and Water Conservation District
Crane First Baptist Church
Kimberling Area Library
Stone County Library – Galena
Faith Lutheran Church – Branson
New Testament Christian Church
Community Presbyterian Church
Library Center of the Ozarks

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

Local support

Did you know you can donate directly to *Stone* 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 Stone County Community Impact Report

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

Access your county's Grand Challenges Report.

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

Missouri 4-H for Ages 8 – 18

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.

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.

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.

Legend

Agricultural Growth & Stewardship

Economic Opportunity

Educational Access & Excellence

Health & Well-Being

Stone County

Madison McCord
Youth Program Associate

Missouri 4-H

Local Impact

Slowly but surely, 4-H is expanding its presence into the lives of Stone County youth. From Sunny the Dairy Cow making appearances at events such as the Crane Broiler Festival and Galena Elementary Missouri Day to the Nutrition Smoothie Bike featured at several local carnivals, youth were introduced to 4-H in fun, memorable, and educational ways. Similarly, Stone County 4-H offered a wide range of hands-on educational programs designed to help youth develop practical skills and a deeper understanding of agriculture and healthy living. Farm-to-table lessons and “where our food comes from” activities helped participants connect everyday meals to agricultural practices. Youth also gained experience through planting vegetables and participating in garden projects, learning responsibility, patience, and environmental stewardship. In addition, the Crane Library Sewing Club provided opportunities to build creativity and life skills, while Cape Fair Horse Projects encouraged leadership, animal care, and sportsmanship. Together, these programs supported well-rounded youth development and fostered lifelong learning. Looking ahead, Stone County 4-H will continue to expand its impact by strengthening relationships with homeschool groups and additional school districts throughout the county.

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 their communities and educate others about gardening.

Missouri Master Gardener
University of Missouri Extension

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

Missouri Grazing Schools teach management-intensive grazing by dividing large fields into smaller paddocks and systematically rotating livestock among them. Producers who attend the grazing schools learn how to reduce costs through Improved livestock grazing and pasture management while getting insights into fencing, watering systems and grazing system design.

The annual impact of management-intensive grazing is estimated to be $125 MILLION per year in Missouri

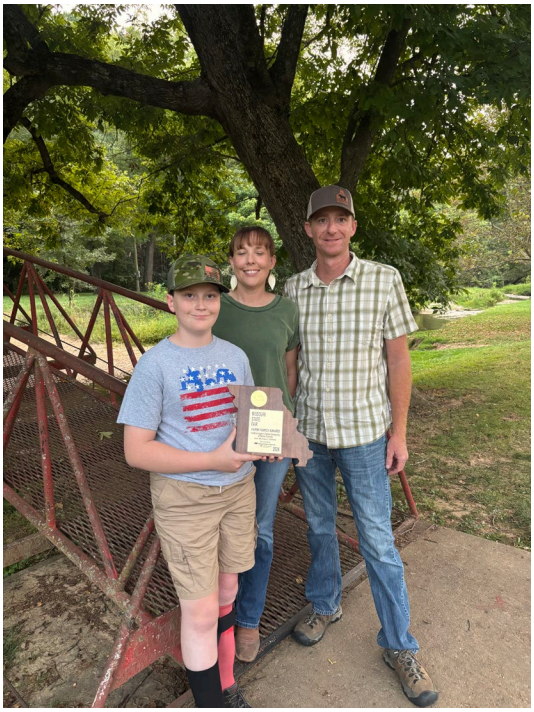
The Missouri Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM), funded by USDA grants, has been an important extension program for more than 30 years. Mizzou IPM distributes articles, pest monitoring data and publications on how to improve the application of integrated pest management strategies and systems in 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.

Legend

- Agricultural Growth & Stewardship
- Economic Opportunity
- Educational Access & Excellence
- Health & Well-Being

Local Impact



Pictured top left is the Lewallen family chosen as Missouri Farm Family for Stone County
Galena, Mo. — The family honored during the 67th annual Missouri Farm Family Day, Aug. 11 at the Missouri State Fair.

Picture top right is the Hetherington Family was selected as the 2024 State Farm Family but was unable to attend the event. The Stone County MU Extension Council recognized the family at their 2025 Annual Picnic held in September.

The Lewallen family was selected as the Stone County Missouri Farm Family by University of Missouri Extension in Stone County and the local Farm Bureau. The annual event is sponsored by five partner agencies: the Missouri Farm Bureau; the Missouri Department of Agriculture; the Missouri State Fair Commissioners; the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; and MU Extension.
The event showcases the impact that Missouri farm families have on the economy and heritage of the state, said Missouri State Fair Director Jason Moore. “These families are involved in agriculture activities in their communities and are active participants in local outreach and extension. As the premier showcase for Missouri agriculture, the Missouri State Fair is most certainly the appropriate place to celebrate these families.”
The Lewallen family was also honored at the Stone County MU Extension Annual Picnic in September. The event was held at the city park in Crane; a meal was served by the extension council members. The event was sponsored by Table Rock Community Bank

Tim Schnakenburg –
Agronomy Specialist

Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Stone County Livestock and Forage Conference - There were 84 participants who attended this 94th annual conference in February. Topics covered included "Matching Cows to Their Environment", "Forage-Based Nutrition for Cows" and "Ag Business Insights for 2025". In the survey at the end of the meeting, 100 percent of the participants ranked the program as either meeting or exceeding their expectations. Stone County farm producers are an economic generator for the local economy. This program addressed ways this sector in the county economy can remain viable.

41st Annual Southwest Missouri Spring Forage Conference - There were around 375 farm producers who participated in the conference in Springfield in February. There were fourteen key presentations and a trade show. This is one of Missouri's largest gatherings of farmers and ranchers and is hosted by a committee made up of extension field specialists and professionals from Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Missouri Department of Conservation.

Private Pesticide Applicator Training - There were 76 participants who attended trainings offered by Tim Schnakenberg. Trainings occurred in Cassville, Springfield, Ozark, Mt. Vernon, Ava and Hollister. This training has direct impact on environmental safety, human safety and the safety of the American food supply. Farmers are retrained every five years in order to maintain a private pesticide license to purchase and use Restricted-Use pesticides.

Farm Fest - Farm Fest is held each year at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds in Springfield and is the largest gathering of the farm community in Southwest Missouri. MU Extension ag specialists staff a booth at this event throughout the entire weekend in October. Thousands of visitors streamed by the booth and hundreds stopped in to visit with regional specialists.

Noncertified Restricted-Use Pesticide (NRUP) Applicator Training - There were 32 participants who attended NRUP trainings offered by Rusty Lee, Micah Doubledee and Tim Schnakenberg. Trainings occurred in Springfield, Nixa and Carthage. This newly required training certifies pesticide users to work under supervisors who have commercial licenses. This often applies to employees of pest control operators, farm chemical applicators, government workers and municipalities.

Tim Schnakenburg –
Agronomy Specialist

Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Warm Season Grass Workshop - There were around 45 farm producers from many counties who participated in the warm season grass workshop at Mt. Vernon in February. With recent droughts, warm season grasses are growing in popularity, and this workshop gave recommendations on species selection, establishment methods and management tactics. One respondent to the survey mentioned, “Very helpful. Completely new to this so I need to hear and re-hear. With each presentation, I learn more, or it sticks with me better.”

Frost Seeding Legumes Workshop - There were 61 attendees that attended this workshop offered by Caleb O’Neal, Tim Schnakenberg, and Terry Halleran at Mt. Vernon in February. Stone County producers were a part of this program. This program thoroughly covered the practice of improving fescue pastures with frost-seeded legumes. Diversifying the cool-season forage base with legumes extends the grazing season of the land resource and creates higher quality forage when compared to cool-season grass monocultures alone. These legumes also fix nitrogen into the soil, which can increase the yield of the surrounding grasses as well, while also diluting the toxicity of species like K31 tall fescue. Increasing the yield and quality of forage of livestock operations, while also reducing the toxic effects of the cool-season grasses can result in increased carrying capacity, better animal performance, and greater net profitability.

Ozark Empire Fair Hay Contest - This year’s contest had outstanding participation with 49 entries submitted (36% increase from the previous year) from ten counties. Several ag specialists traveled to 30 southern Missouri farms to collect samples of the entries. This was a great opportunity to help producers better educate themselves on hay quality. Counties represented this year included Greene, Lawrence, Christian, Stone, Newton, Howell, Ozark, Iron, Webster and Barry counties. The highest-testing entry and champion dry hay came from Glenn and Toni Obermann of Monett. It was a first cutting alfalfa hay entry that was harvested on May 15. It produced a 231 Relative Forage Quality (RFQ). The champion haylage was alfalfa entered by Maple Pass Farm of Billings. It’s cutting date was June 1 and the RFQ was 212. The show has occurred since 1985. Tim Schnakenberg and Reagan Bluel served as Superintendents for this contest.

Tim Schnakenburg –
Agronomy Specialist

Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Missouri Grazing Schools – A grazing school was held in April at Mt. Vernon with 37 participants and one in Clever with 17 students. These schools provide the most in-depth training on how to be successful with Management-intensive Grazing (MiG) practices. These three-day schools are unique to Missouri and have set a standard for teaching and demonstrating the newest grazing concepts. Other schools offered in 2025 occurred in Greene, Newton, Wright, Dade and Ozark counties. The schools allowed farmers to think differently about how they manage their pastures and have become a very effective program. There were over 150 livestock producers who attended the sessions from Southwest Missouri counties this year. Numerous presentations were offered along with on-farm field trips to evaluate pasture grazing systems.

Soybean Cyst Nematode Survey – A survey of soybean cyst nematodes in local soybean fields was conducted by researchers from the MU campus. Farms were identified in Barry, Lawrence, Newton, Stone and Christian Counties for this survey.

Insect Pest Monitoring – This is an ongoing effort by extension agronomists to monitor insect pest movement in Missouri. Counts from traps based in Christian and Barton Counties are recorded weekly on the MU IPM website and alerts are provided for farmers who sign up for the service. The service provides a heads-up for insect invasions in both crops and forages. Insects are monitored including fall armyworm, true armyworm, stinkbug, Japanese beetle, corn leafhopper and black cutworm. In addition, there was an extensive evaluation in Christian and Stone counties this year of soybean stinkbug levels. This was conducted by Dr Ivair Valmordia, state extension entomologist, on four farms.

Tim Schnakenburg –
Agronomy Specialist

Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Applied Forage Research – Agronomists Josh Dunn and Tim Schnakenberg worked under the direction of Caleb O'Neal to conduct forage research at the Southwest Research, Extension and Education Center. At least two studies have developed including a replicated research trial evaluating various establishment methods for crabgrass and teff. Results were shared at the field day in September. Another study that was initiated in December evaluates the best time and practice for establishing Eastern gamagrass. Both dormant seeding and spring seeding is being evaluated. Also included is a biological seed treatment.

Stone & Taney County

Master Gardener Program

Local Impact

Number of Volunteers — 109
Number of Volunteer Hours — 4,521
Dollar Value of Volunteer Hours - $157,285*
(*Independent Sector at $34.79/hour)

Number of New Volunteers — 14
Number of Continuing Education Hours — 890

Number of Chapter-led Education Events — 29
Number of Participants in Education Events — 865

Missouri Master Gardener
University of Missouri Extension

Grounds at the Corps of Engineers Project Office maintained by the Master Gardeners.

Internal Grants - The internal grant program funded eight special projects. The grant committee in 2025 allocated $5,020 for the Ozark Lake Country Senior Center, Kimberling Area Library Children's Garden, Bonniebrook, Pregnancy Life Line, Faith Lutheran Church, Library Center of the Ozarks Gardens, Veterans Memorial Garden and the Veterans Garden entrance project. The committee was chaired by Mary O'Brien. Funds for projects originated from local educational program activities and fund-raisers.

2025 Overview - The impact of the Master Gardeners of the Ozarks based in Stone and Taney Counties was significant. For 2025, the Master Gardeners of the Ozarks fulfilled their commitment to take on high-impact and ambitious projects. A total of 4,521 hours were reported in 2025 by sixty-three master gardeners who served the entire year and reported. The first-year Master Gardeners are expected to provide 30 hours of service and seasoned master gardeners are only expected to provide 20 hours. This year the master gardeners who submitted hours each averaged 72 hours of service! Continuing education is in important part of volunteer service. The master gardeners reported 890 hours of continued education this year. This averages to 14 hours per person. They are expected to submit a minimum of 6 hours of continuing education each year.

The June Master Gardener meeting at Branson West where scholarship recipients were recognized.

As of year-end, there were 109 master gardeners in the Master Gardeners of the Ozarks chapter. Of these, there are 67 who reside in Stone County, 35 in Taney County, two in Christian County, three in Barry County and two who reside in Boone County, Arkansas. The master gardeners were led this year by Tonya Lewis, president, Sandy Best, vice-president, Mary Anne Harwick, secretary, and Chris Witherington, treasurer. Tim Schnakenberg served as advisor for the master gardener activities. The chapter met monthly, alternating between locations in Stone and Taney County and the executive committee met monthly between meetings. The chapter is very proud to report 39 Emeritus members who have served at least ten years and are active in the program. Three of these members have at least twenty years of active service. Eight members were honored this year for ten years of service.

Stone & Taney County

Master Gardener Program

Profiles and Stories

Kimberling Area Library reading program where kids learned about gardening.

Education and Improved Landscapes — These concepts are at the core of our program efforts in our communities. There are many ongoing projects that made a significant impact in local communities including the Veteran's Memorial Garden, Pollinator Event at the Table Rock dam, Speaker's Bureau, Bonniebrook Homestead landscaping, Forsyth Demonstration Garden, Corps of Engineers Project Office Landscaping, Central Crossing Senior Center landscaping, Cape Fair Community Center landscaping, Ozarks Lake Country Senior Center garden, Kimberling Area Library Children's Garden, Harvest Community Garden in Shell Knob, Broiler Festival booth and the Stone County courthouse landscaping. There were many more smaller projects that are too numerable to cover but combined they make a startling impact throughout our region...all by MU Extension volunteers who care about their communities.

A few of our special new Emeritus members recognized in 2025.

Spring Garden Workshop — This workshop in Branson brought in 216 participants in March from 21 counties. "Get Your Green On" was the theme. Eighty-eight percent of participants reported that they plan to make changes in their gardening as a result of attending. A fundraiser and plant sale fetched $4,189, providing funds for grant projects and scholarships. Mary O'Brien served as chair.
"This was absolutely the most informative session! Great speakers, subjects we don't normally learn. Kudos to those who lined this up"; "Everything was first class and really wonderful. One of the best ever"

Fall Gardening Workshop — This workshop in Reeds Spring attracted 155 participants in September from 12 counties. The gardening public enjoys participating in the fall workshop for reliable advice on gardening in the Ozarks. "Fall in Love" was the theme. In the survey, 95 percent of participants indicated they plan to make changes in their gardening practices after attending. $2,699 was raised for grant and scholarship projects through the fundraisers and sales. Joanne Anderson served as chair of this project.
"One of the best"; "Fantastic seminar. Well put together"; "Wonderful team effort"

New Trainees and Transfers Fourteen new master gardeners were trained mostly through the statewide on-line master gardener courses. We also had three Master Gardeners transfer in from other states. A graduation ceremony was conducted at a Master Gardener meeting in December.

Stone & Taney County

Master Gardener Program

Profiles and Stories

Monthly Garden Programs - Twenty garden programs were offered on a regular basis during the growing season in Stone and Taney Counties. These were offered in at Kimberling Area Library in Kimberling City (Kathryn Kufahl — Chair), Library Center of the Ozarks in Branson (Mary O'Brien; Marina Hanson; Shanna Sullivan — Co-Chairs), and at the Taney County Extension Center Demonstration Garden in Forsyth (Marie Ewing — Chair). Master gardeners were the presenters at each of these events. We have a lot of talent in our membership. At the Library Center of the Ozarks, 142 people participated from the community during the season. At the Kimberling Area Library, there were 180 participants. There were 67 participants this year at Forsyth. Some of the topics covered this year included planting in clay soil, salvia, seed saving, raised bed gardening, growing roses, vegetable gardening, preserving herbs, the life of a beehive, seed starting and right plant right place.

Master Gardeners from Shell Knob beautified the senior center in April.

Youth Programming — New for 2025 was the initiation of a Junior Master Gardener group combined with 4-H. Most are home-schooled students. Susan Martin leads this effort with assistance from Kelly McGowan and youth associate, Madison McCord. This group meets every other week in Branson. In addition, Master Gardeners were involved in many of the Kimberling Area Library's reading program for kids. They provided learning opportunities such as decorating flowerpots and planting flowers in them. On another occasion, flower boards were made using real flowers from the gardens.

Flower boards made at the Kimberling Area Library reading program.

Master Gardener Scholarships — Three scholarships were given to high school students in 2025. Education is the primary function of master gardeners and many proceeds from educational events go toward scholarships for college students majoring in horticulture or a similar field. For 2025, the recipients received between $1000 each toward their college education. Recipients were Talon Fronterhouse of Branson who planned to attend College of the Ozarks, Dakota Oster of Hollister who also planned to attend Ozark Technical College, and Isaac Sandrik of Branson who plans to attend the University of Missouri. Tonya Lewis led this effort.

Garden Tour — In June a self-guiding garden tour was offered in Taney County to view seven private gardens. The public would register, receive a map and wristband, then travel to see each garden along the way on the day of the event. Master Gardeners were on hand at each stop to provide educational assistance during the tour. Over 90 people participated. $1,856 was raised for the benefit of scholarships and grants. Kathryn Kufahl led this effort.

Jake Hefley – Agricultural Business Specialist

Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Agriculture Business & Policy

The Agricultural Business and Policy Extension program supports rural Missouri farms, agribusinesses, and communities by providing guidance on decision-making, financial management, taxes, and risk mitigation. The team shares insights on industry trends, market fundamentals, trade policy, and diversification to help stakeholders make informed decisions and explore new opportunities.

Farm Fest at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds in Springfield is the largest gathering of the farm community in Southwest Missouri. MU Extension ag specialists staff a booth at this event throughout the entire weekend in October. Thousands of visitors from dozens of counties stream by the booth and hundreds stopped in to visit with regional specialists.

Decision Tools

The Agricultural Business and Policy program offers helpful tools to support farmers and agriculturalists. **AgSite** provide free land reports to explore production options and assist with land purchases or appraisals. **Intel For Ag** helps evaluate suitable agricultural products through land, marketing, and management guidance. **Feedstuff Finder** is a free online platform connecting buyers and sellers of hay, feed, and byproducts.

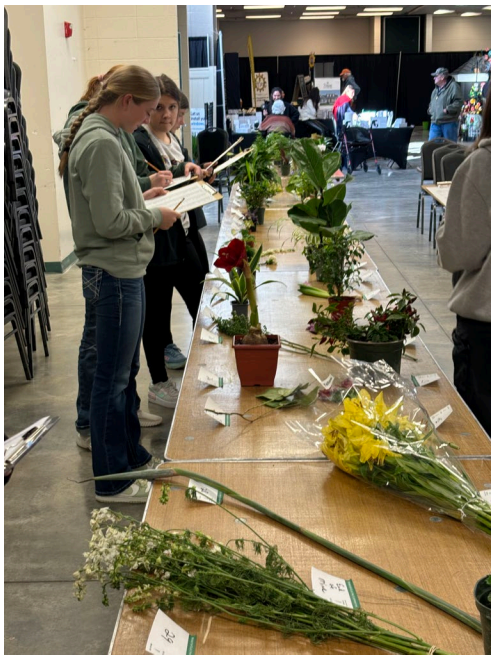
Extension Engagement Specialist
Serving Stone County

Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Regional Impact

Regional Engagement Activities



Extension Engagement Specialist Kyle Whittaker, MU Extension Workforce Development Specialist Amy Patillo, MU Extension Horticulture Specialist Kelly McGowen and Youth Program Associate Bailey Andrews conducted a Career Development Event workshops at the Springfield Lawn and Garden Show on February 21st . The workshops were held in conjunction with the lawn and garden show hosted by the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds. The team provided the workshops for FFA students preparing for district and state competitions. Three workshops were conducted in the areas of Floriculture, Nursery/Landscaping and Entomology.

The Floriculture Career Development Event includes identifying 60 plants from a list of 143 plants. A plant diagnosis and disorders practicum, greenhouse and floral item identification practicum and a written exam.

The Nursery/Landscaping Career Development Event includes 50 plants specimens from a list of 91 shade trees, flowering trees, perennials, evergreen shrubs, vines and ground covers, turf and flowering shrubs. The event also includes a plant disorder and diagnosis practicum, a landscape design practicum and a written exam.

The Entomology Career Development Event includes identifying 40 insects specimens from a list of 114. The event also includes an insect/plant diagnosis practicum, pesticide formulation problem and a written exam.

Extension Engagement Specialist
Serving Stone County

Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Regional Impact

Regional Engagement Activities

Extension Engagement Specialist – Kyle Whittaker conducted the Southwest District Poultry and Meats Evaluation Career Development Events (CDE) held on the campus of Missouri State University. The meats CDE involved 27 teams from schools throughout southwest Missouri and the poultry CDE involved 30 teams, 204 students participated in the events. The District CDE was held April 3rd and 4th and is a qualifying event for FFA teams competing for the state FFA CDE.

Extension Engagement Specialist
Serving Stone County

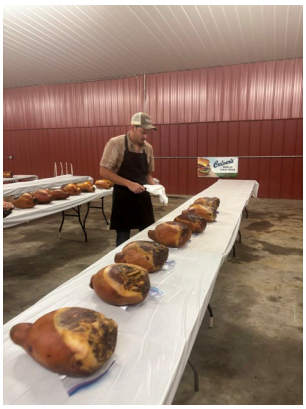
Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Regional Impact

Regional Engagement Activities

Area youth have success at the 2025 Gold Buckle Gala Ham Show. Kyle Whittaker Extension Engagement Specialist serves at the ham show superintendent and hosted several ham curing workshops throughout southwest Missouri. The Gold Buckle Gala is held at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds in mid-July



Extension Engagement Specialist – Kyle Whittaker conducted a country cured ham judging clinic in conjunction the Gold Buckle Gala ham show. The clinic was for ag teachers and 4-H project leaders.

Kyle Whittaker – Extension Engagement Specialist and MU Extension's Value-Added-Meats Team provided a hands-on training to over 300 are FFA members at the Southwest Research Extension and Education Center Field Day in September.

Extension Engagement Specialist
Serving Stone County

Stone County

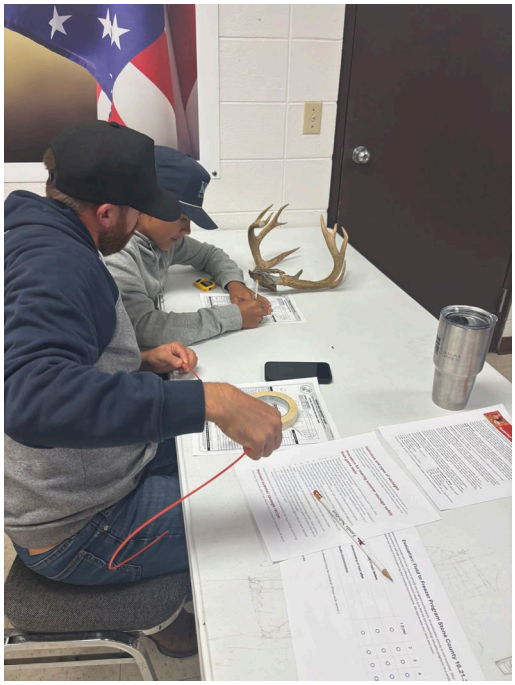
Agriculture and Environment

Local Impact

Engagement Activities in Stone County

Extension Engagement Specialist – Kyle Whittaker conducted a Barn Quilt Class in Stone County on November 22nd. The program was held at the Stone County Justice Center. Mu Extension has conducted several barn quilt classes in Stone County. The program was well attended and the barn quilts turned out fantastic!

Extension Engagement Specialist – Kyle Whittaker conducted a Field to Freezer Program in Stone County on October 21st. Attendees learned how to score whitetail deer antlers using the Boone and Crockett scoring system. In addition, they learned how to make summer sausage from their deer harvest.



Ian McGregor Livestock Specialist

Stone County

Agriculture and Environment

Profiles and stories

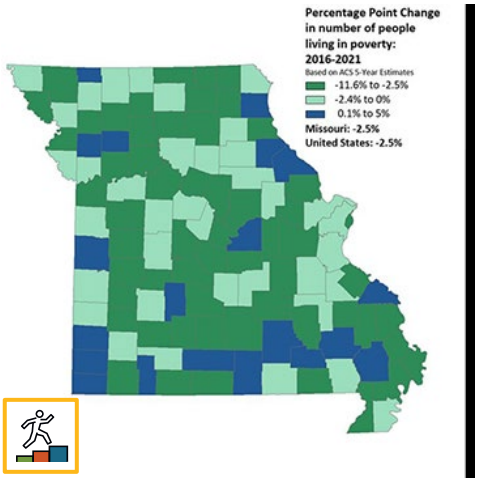
The 100th Annual Lawrence Soils & Crops Conference took place January 14 at the Southwest Research Station. The program was largely drought focused and was attended by 94 participants. Attendees learned about forage, soil, and weed management as it pertains to drought resilience for cattle operations.

The Monnett Beef Conference took place March 11 at the Monett Armory and hosted 32 participants. This program largely focused on cattle nutrition, including presentations on forage-based cow nutrition and finishing cull heifers, but also included a beef industry economic outlook for 2025.

Livestock Specialists partnered with 7 veterinarians in Southwest Missouri to host the Bull Soundness Exam Days on several days in the spring and fall at vet clinics across the region. Cattlemen brought in their bulls to be evaluated for breeding soundness by having veterinarians and livestock specialists observe confirmation, body condition, and semen quality, and were educated on bull management and selection. There were 43 farms that participated and 152 bulls that were evaluated.

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

Business and Community



The **Missouri Economy Indicators (MEI)** series explores business, industry and workforce topics that affect Missouri's economy. The data is shared through newsletters and on social media. MU Extension faculty and staff receive talking points and collateral to share with local stakeholders.

In 2022, MEI published 15 issues, and MEI online resources were accessed MORE THAN 5,000 TIMES. Two out of five MEI newsletter recipients reported using the information to help guide policy or decision-making in their work.

Missourians from all walks of life celebrated the **2023 Missouri Good Neighbor Week** Sept. 28 to Oct. 4 by completing and reporting neighboring acts and nominating others as the most engaged neighbors in their counties.

In 2023, the goal was to document 15,000 acts of neighboring. That goal was surpassed with 19,752 Missourians being positively affected during MISSOURI GOOD NEIGHBOR WEEK.

The **Missouri Small Business Development Centers** (SBDC) provide professional training and customized one-on-one counseling to small business across the state. Working with the Missouri SBDC helps business owners make confident decisions.

FY2020-2022, Missouri SBDC ASSISTED 878 STARTUPS and helped Missouri small businesses earn more than $440 Million.

Legend

Agricultural Growth & Stewardship

Economic Opportunity

Educational Access & Excellence

Health & Well-Being

Labor and Workforce Development

Stone County

Business and Community

Profiles and Stories

North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center, Impact Collaborative, Minneapolis, MN

Missouri Farm Stress team members Amy Patillo, Jendel Wolfe, and Director Karen Funkenbusch participated in the North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center Impact Collaborative to identify opportunities and barriers to expanding telehealth services for veterans, farmers, and ranchers in Missouri. Through this work, the team helped strengthen access to no-cost telehealth therapy provided by licensed clinicians to Missourians working in agriculture. Since its launch in 2023, the program has more than doubled its telehealth services and counseling hours, demonstrating growing need and significant progress in supporting the mental health and well-being of Missouri's agricultural community.

MU Extension's Missouri AgrAbility Program was featured on KOLR-10 to share practical strategies that help individuals with arthritis continue gardening safely and comfortably. The segment highlighted tools, adaptations, and body-mechanics techniques that reduce pain, prevent strain, and support long-term participation in gardening activities. By providing education on pre-planning garden tasks, selecting arthritis-friendly tools, preparing the body for physical activity, and managing discomfort, Missouri AgrAbility is helping Missourians maintain both their health and their quality of life while enjoying a meaningful and beneficial pastime.

KOLR- 10 AgrAbility Arthritis and Gardening

Workforce development is essential for strengthening the resilience of Missouri's agricultural communities. Farm and Ranch stress programs and AgrAbility services support farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers by addressing the physical, behavioral, and economic challenges that directly affect their ability to work safely and sustainably. By expanding access to training, adaptive tools, mental health resources, and problem-solving support, workforce development helps producers remain healthy, productive, and engaged in their operations. These efforts reduce turnover, prevent injuries, and preserve the long-term viability of family farms and rural economies.

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

Continuing Education

Established in 2002, the **Fire Officer Certificate Program** is designed for those who wish to further their professional development without the time and expense of traditional college classes. This program has been developed and evaluated to ensure it provides structured curriculum delivery and academic rigor. The program requires completion of 288 of instruction within three years.

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.

EDEN
EXTENSION DISASTER
EDUCATION NETWORK

The Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI) has provided basic and advanced training for law enforcement since 1948. LETI's **Basic Peace Officer Academy** exceeds the 600 hours of training required for licensure in Missouri. From 2019 through 2025, the basic academy has licensed almost 400 peace officers, more than any other academy in the state. During that time, all but one graduate became employed by a law enforcement agency. LETI graduates come from around the state and return to their communities to serve and protect.

Legend

- Agricultural Growth & Stewardship
- Economic Opportunity
- Educational Access & Excellence
- Health & Well-Being

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

Health and Human Sciences

Cooking Matters

Make quick, tasty, and affordable meals everyone will enjoy.

Learn valuable tips for stretching your food dollars and how to prepare a recipe and sample easy, low-cost, nutritious and delicious dishes.

"We prepared barley jambalaya in class and one participant mentioned she had never tried barley before. She tried the jambalaya and really enjoyed it. A few days later she excitedly said she made the recipe at home and her whole family enjoyed it."

Cooking Matters facilitator about a class participant

A Matter of Balance helps older adults overcome their fear of falling, increase their activity levels and reduce their risk of falls. In eight classes, participants learn fall-prevention strategies, develop personal prevention plans, acquire balance-improving exercises and make lifestyle changes to minimize their fear of falling.

"I have cleanded my house of clutter for safety, put non-slip stickers on my tub floor, I'm getting much more regular exercise and I'm feeling stronger."

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."

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Better Balance in partnership with **Kimberling Area Library**

On Wednesday, January 8th, 14 older adults learned how to improve their balance in four easy steps during a 1-hour presentation as part of the Kimberling Area Library's Learning on Wednesdays educational program series.

Healthy Family Meals in Minutes in partnership with **Harbor House Domestic Violence Center**

Nutrition and Health Field Specialist, Jenni Nevatt, created and implemented a 2-hour hands-on workshop about how to plan for and make easy, healthy, and affordable meals in 30 minutes or less. • Thursday, 11:00-1:00 pm, February 27 • **12 participants**

Senior Resource Fairs in partnership with **4OzarkSeniors**

- Thursday, March 6, Kimberling City • Approximately **65 participants**
- Worked with NPA, Amanda McCormick I to provide a resource table

- **Senior Healthy Living Fair** in partnership with **Stone County Library**
  - > Monday, April 28, Crane High School
  - > Provided a resource table with recipes and educational materials
  - > Nutrition and Health Field Specialist, Jenni Nevatt, conducted two food demonstrations, a tai chi presentation, and led tai chi stretches

Left: Amanda and Jenni at the throwback-themed senior health fair. Right: Jenni conducting a food demonstration.

Better Balance in partnership with **Stone County Library** in **Galena**

Objectives: define balance, share falls data and impact of falls, and discuss four strategies for improving balance. An optional balance assessment was offered afterwards.

- Thursday, June 12, 1:00 pm
- 4 participants, 3 stayed for the balance assessment

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention

- **Objectives**: improve balance and mobility to reduce arthritis pain and stiffness and fall risk through slow, gentle movements

In partnership with **Fordland Clinic & Skaggs Foundation** at the **Kimberling City Community Center**

- Funded by Skaggs Foundation Helping Hands grant, Beyond Balance: Whole-Person Fitness
- Wednesdays & Fridays, 9:30-11:00 am, March 26-May 30
- Total # started/enrolled: 11
- Total # completed at least 16 classes: 3

Impacts: of the 5 participants assessed/surveyed…

- ✓ 4 improved their lower body strength
- ✓ 4 improved agility, ease of walking, and dynamic balance
- ✓ 5 participants improved or maintained balance
- ✓ 4 reported feeling less lonely after taking the class
- ✓ 4 reported a greater sense of connection to others after taking the class
- ✓ 5 plan to apply the skills learned in this class to improve their health in the future

$3,333
in estimated annual medical cost savings

Healthy Eating on a Budget in partnership with **Stone County Library, Galena**

- Adult learning series to help participants reduce food resources when choosing healthy foods
- *Building a Healthy Plate*: 9/9, 1:00 pm, 5 participants
- *Meal Planning*: 9/16, 1:00 pm, 2 participants
- *Stretching Your Food Dollar*: 9/23, 1:00 pm
- 2 participants
- **100% of participants felt more confident about planning and preparing healthy, affordable meals after the presentations.**

Stone County

Health and Human Sciences

Stay Strong, Stay Healthy Strength-Training / Falls Prevention program in partnership with **Fordland Clinic** in **Kimberling City**, funded by **Skaggs Foundation** and Missouri State University Dietetics Program

- Wednesdays & Fridays, 1:30-3:00 pm, June 4-July 30
- Objectives: improve health and quality of life by increasing physical activity and promoting healthy eating habits that reduce frailty and fall risk

Outcomes:

Of the *Stay Strong, Stay Healthy (SSSH)* participants surveyed…

- **8 of 9 improved** or stayed the same in the Chair Stand Test, which assesses **lower-body strength and endurance** needed for activities such as climbing stairs; walking, and getting up from a seated position
- **9 of 9 improved** or stayed the same in the Chair Sit-and-Reach Test, which assesses **lower-body flexibility** important in joint pain control and needed for activities such as putting on socks and shoes, dressing and using stairs
- **8 of 9 improved** or stayed the same in the Back Scratch Test which assesses **upper-body and shoulder flexibility** needed for activities such as combing hair, dressing and reaching
- **9 of 9 improved** or stayed the same in the 10-Foot Up-&-Go Test which assesses the **agility and balance** needed for activities such as standing quickly from a seated position and walking

$10,240
in estimated annual healthcare cost savings

Participant Quotes from *SSSH*:

"I have learned that exercise doesn't have to be boring."

"Enjoyed the snacks and kitchen gadgets!"

"I am aware of better ways to hydrate and eat more fiber."

"I will put these exercises in my routine."

Direct Educational Contacts in Stone County

Participants

1,925

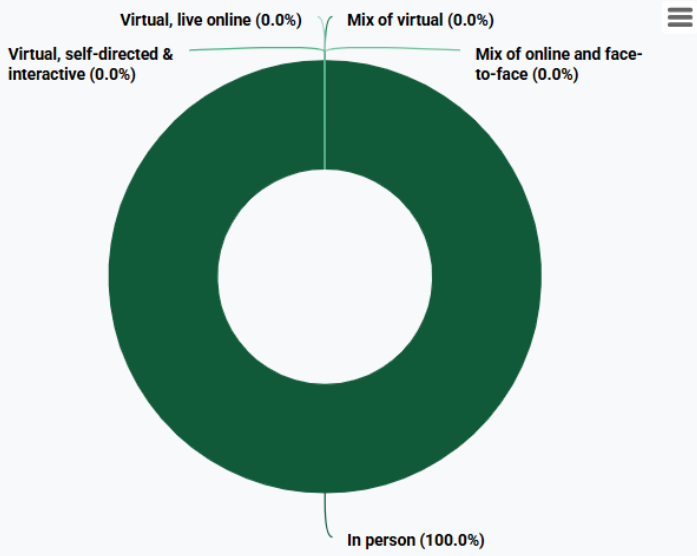
Sessions

409

Hours

356

Delivery Methods



Indirect Educational contacts in Stone County

Intervention Channels and Reach

Category	Total Reach	Channel Count
Hardcopy materials (e.g., calendars, fact sheets, flyers, pamphlets, recipe cards, newsletter for mailings)	7235	51
Community events / fairs - in which participated	350	4
Other, please specify	4	1