

# Credible Knowledge, Lasting Value: The MU Extension Impact

## Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) A Catalyst for Rural Economic Growth

### Why CEC Matters Now

- Communities need practical tools to grow local economies
- Leaders often need help turning them into action
- Small businesses need support to grow and succeed
- Workforce and economic challenges require local solutions
- CEC helps communities move from ideas to real progress

### What is CEC

- A statewide conference hosted by MU Extension
- Brings together entrepreneurs, leaders, and community members
- Held in rural communities to highlight local success
- Offers hands-on sessions in real businesses and downtown spaces
- Provides tools, connections, and ideas communities can use right away

### Building Stronger Communities

- Connects leaders, businesses, and community partners
- Shares real strategies that work in small towns
- Supports entrepreneurship and small business growth
- Strengthens local leadership and partnerships
- Helps communities take action and build momentum

### Our Impact

- Drives local economies: Brings visitors and spending to host communities
- Builds capacity: Equips leaders with tools and strategies that work
- Creates momentum: Ideas turn into action across Missouri communities

Attend the CEC Conference. Share ideas.  
Take action. Strengthen your community.

2025  
SEPT 30-OCT 2



CONNECTING  
ENTREPRENEURIAL  
COMMUNITIES  
CONFERENCE



M Extension  
University of Missouri

THE CITY OF  
Excelsior  
SPRINGS  
MISSOURI

DEP DOWNTOWN  
EXCELSIOR  
PARTNERSHIP

The Chamber  
Excelsior Springs Area Chamber of Commerce



TO  
EXCELSIOR  
SPRINGS  
MISSOURI

WELCOME

### 2025 CEC Conference Impact by the Numbers

105 %

Increase in attendance  
from 80 in 2021 to 164  
in 2025.

91%

Reported increase in  
understanding post-conference

100%

Speakers ranked as effective  
or highly effective

48

Number of Missouri  
counties represented

4

Number of states  
represented

Estimated \*\$29,800

Total direct spend from  
conference attendees to  
the host economy

\*Conservative estimate based on \$230 per visitor for lodging, food, coffee, and local shopping.

 **Extension**  
University of Missouri

an equal opportunity/ADA institution

Ashley Allen-Brown, Ed.D.  
Regional Economic Development Specialist  
[allen-browna@missouri.edu](mailto:allen-browna@missouri.edu)

**Learn  
more.  
DO MORE.**