Dear MSU Extension Community,

Every day in every county and reservation across Montana, Montana State University Extension faculty are in fields and classrooms working with Montanans to solve problems and strategize about opportunities to enhance and improve quality of life at the local level. Utilizing the vast network of the national Cooperative Extension Service, as well as the resources of Montana State University, these faculty have close relationships with producers, families, youth, and community leaders that allow them to profoundly impact the present and future of our state. We have been doing this work for over 100 years and we look forward to another century of excellence and commitment to our land-grant mission.

It is with great pride that, through the pages of this report, we share some of MSU Extension’s recent accomplishments and impacts. In doing so, please accept my gratitude for your part in each and every story and for your valuable contributions, even behind the scenes. MSU Extension’s success is made possible thanks to the quality of our people throughout this beautiful state.

Thank you for volunteering with our youth organization, Montana 4-H, and other programs. Thank you for reaching out to our faculty and researchers with your knowledge and ideas for improving practices and standards. Thank you for including us in local visioning projects and other community efforts. We recognize that it is the trusting relationship with you that allows us to be both responsive to challenges and aggressive in pursuing strategies that elevate our businesses, enhance our families and strengthen our communities.

Whether you attend a workshop, purchase 4-H livestock, send in an invasive species sample, participate in studies or any number of additional Extension related activities, we thank you for helping us to leverage resources of time and dollars to continue to make Montana an amazing place to be. We look forward to continuing to work together.

Sincerely,

Waded Cruzado
MSU President
Dear friends,

In some way or another, most of you have interacted with MSU Extension in your communities. While we continue to make agriculture and natural resources a priority, we also have strong programs in 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences and community development.

Many of you have visited your county or reservation Extension office to have an insect identified or a pressure canner calibrated, or to attend a financial education workshop or lead a community board meeting. Others have had a local agent visit your property to consult about integrated pest management or balancing feed rations for cattle, or to discuss a forest stewardship plan or analyze drinking water.

Perhaps you’ve shared successful efforts to eradicate invasive weeds or helped a specialist understand the practicalities of new strategies to increase profitability. Maybe you have served on a local committee with your county agent, or utilized food safety instruction from Extension while volunteering in the concession area at a local sporting event. Many of you participated in 4-H as youth, and now shuttle your own kids to 4-H activities such as robotics, range science management, dog agility, cooking or market livestock.

MSU Extension is personal. We offer resources and one-on-one information from early child development to the distribution of your estate – including grandma’s pie plate; to how to keep records for livestock operations and how to help sustain your community through philanthropy, service and financial giving. We have programs to bring people together to get healthier through gentle exercise and nutrition education, and that support families to care for loved ones.

As you read this report, you will see specific examples of how MSU Extension’s successes are a reflection of the people we serve – you. We are proud to be a part of the fabric of local communities, while also calling on the resources of Montana State University and the nationwide Cooperative Extension Service. We are funded by a mix of local, county, state, federal and private dollars and remain fully accountable to you as we do our best to leverage these resources to your advantage. We thank you for your trust in us.

Sincerely,

Jeff Bader
Director, MSU Extension
MSU Extension’s mission is to improve the lives of Montana citizens by providing unbiased, research-based education and information that integrates learning, discovery and engagement to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Montana State University Extension agents in county and reservation offices work with local stakeholders to identify and prioritize the needs and interests of communities.

Identify local needs.

Extension specialists, agents and administrators plan their work based on community needs and goals identified by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Plan and prioritize work.

Extension faculty do research and create programs to serve public needs at local, regional and national levels. They partner with other agencies and a nationwide network of Extension programs.

Create resources.

Extension faculty deliver unbiased information to Montanans. Extension resources and partnerships come in the form of classes, publications, websites and opportunities for people to learn and grow.

Extend resources.

The partnerships in the cycle of Extension work lead to long-term personal and community impacts that create opportunities to fulfill the Extension mission.
We all eat. Whether we live in a rural area where the nearest grocery store is dozens of miles away, or in a bustling community with a choice of markets and restaurants, we eat. Whether we have ample resources, or struggle to make ends meet, we eat. Accessing healthy, nutritious food is a priority for Montanans. And it’s a priority for MSU Extension. From our start, we’ve been committed to helping Montanans learn about growing fruit trees, gardens and crops; raising chickens, pigs, sheep and beef cattle; and safely storing and preserving the bounty. We’ve contributed by helping families with novel ways to stretch their food budget and building community strength through shared gardens and service projects. And we’ve supported agriculture as the central foundation of Montana’s economy. This report demonstrates how every Montanan is part of MSU Extension in a very personal way – namely, through the dinner table.

This report includes highlights from MSU Extension’s four program areas: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, Community Development, and 4-H Youth Development. In addition, it tells a story of how MSU Extension collaborates with individuals, families, businesses and organizations, to increase the accessibility of nutritious food.

Cover photo by Tracy Mosley, MSU Extension in Park County: Community members gather at Three Peaks Ranch in the Paradise Valley during the annual Park County Weed Fair, coordinated by MSU Extension, Park County Weed Control and local watershed groups. Weed infestation can reduce crop yield and decrease the quality of pasture and forages necessary to produce healthy livestock. To learn more on managing weeds on personal property and promptly reporting noxious weeds on public lands, visit: http://ipm.montana.edu/.
Pesticide Education
With 56 MSU Extension agents and one statewide coordinator, the MSU Pesticide Education Program delivered training and licensing to 5,500 private applicators through 144 statewide programs. Topics included sprayer calibration to avoid non-target toxicity and excess cost; pesticide safety and toxicity; pesticide movement in the environment; pesticide performance and water quality; reading, understanding and following the product label; pesticide law; selecting appropriate nozzles; and storing and securing pesticides.

Class evaluations indicated a change in behavior leading to improved outcomes. Before four presentations on pesticide performance and water quality, only 12 percent said they tested their water pH after application, even when using highly susceptible weak acid pesticides. Following the class, 94 percent indicated they would begin testing. Forty-eight percent of 350 private applicators understood how to calibrate sprayers prior to spray application; however following the class, 91% understood sprayer calibration.

Schutter Diagnostic Lab
The Schutter Diagnostic Lab (SDL) serves all Montanans by providing identification services, management advice and education to safeguard Montana agriculture, landscapes and public spaces. The SDL mission includes utilizing the best science-based management options, minimizing pesticide use and quickly detecting new and invasive pests so they don’t become challenges to agricultural production and international trade.

In December of 2015, Yellowstone Evaluation Services completed a comprehensive evaluation of SDL accomplishments, progress and education. The survey revealed that 99 percent of respondents (489) rated SDL services as highly or somewhat valuable; 88 percent received educational information in addition to diagnosis recommendations and 93 percent said the SDL influenced their decisions, increased their knowledge and reduced pest spread. Based on responses, the estimated monetary value of the SDL in 2015 was over $2 million. In addition to sampling services, the SDL is responsive to citizens by providing general information via telephone and email.

The SDL is supported in part by the USDA-NIFA, MSU College of Agriculture, and funding provided by the state of Montana to MSU Extension.

MSU Extension Water Quality
Montana has 60,000 miles of perennial streams which provide irrigation, drinking water and recreation. Approximately 45 percent of those streams are impaired. Non-point sources of pollution from across the landscape are the leading impairment in Montana.
Because all people living in a watershed contribute to non-point source pollution, making improvements means the general public must understand the impact of their actions and make decisions to mitigate damage. MSU Extension Water Quality (MSUEWQ) has worked directly with nine local groups in 13 counties and works statewide through the Montana Watershed Coordination Council to engage citizens in data collection to better understand surface and groundwater issues.

In addition, without government oversight of water quality for private drinking water wells, MSUEWQ provides education and water testing through the Well Educated Program. This is a simple, cost effective way for well owners to test and understand drinking water quality results.

**MSU Extension Forestry**

Montana has 25 million acres of forest, of which 4.4 million are owned by 52,000 private individuals. In addition there are approximately 28,000 farms and ranches, many of which maintain windbreaks and shelterbelts. MSU Extension Forestry provides landowner-focused education and outreach that includes core forest stewardship planning, wildfire hazard reduction, and logging safety, as well as instruction on windbreak planning, planting, and renovation; and tree care. The goal is to empower landowners with personal knowledge and skill to implement sustainable forestry and natural resource management.

Over the past 20 years more than 2,500 forest landowners have completed forest stewardship inventories and implemented plans on over 1.2 million acres, and more than 1,500 producers have attended windbreak workshops. The Montana wood products industry relies on private lands for more than half of their annual production, and thus Extension Forestry also plays an integral role providing advanced natural resources training to service providers such as accredited logging professionals, forestry consultants, DNRC service foresters and NRCS staff.

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15,460 visits were made to the Montana AgAlert website (www.mtagalerts.org) where MSU Extension specialists delivered 67 AgAlerts during 2015.

2,233 people from 33 counties were reached by MSU Extension beef cattle specialists through 44 beef cattle programs on reproduction, industry outlook, weather-impacted forage, and more.

2,689 youth learned about forest stewardship from 54 educators who received Project Learning Tree curriculum through MSU Extension Forestry.

450 youth on the Flathead Reservation received riparian education and participated in hands-on riparian reconstruction experiments through MSU Extension.

500 users shared information on insect emergence and statewide distribution through the MSU Pestweb website (http://pestweb.montana.edu), viewed over 11,000 times.

184 producers learned about animal health, grazing and improving profitability during six seminars hosted by the MSU Extension sheep specialist.

2,979 diagnoses were made by the Schutter Diagnostic Lab through 2107 disease and insect samples, collected from clients in 11 states and 55 Montana counties.
The Montana Heritage Orchard Project is one way MSU Extension has actively worked to increase availability and accessibility of fresh fruit. The long history of growing apples and cherries in Montana began a century ago when homesteaders settled an area and planting fruit trees was one of their first activities. MSU Extension has been working with landowners to identify and map many century-old small orchards across the state so they can be studied.

Heritage Orchard designation requires at least six living trees that are 50 years or more old. When a homeowner registers their orchard, they receive a sign with the planting date, program sponsors and the web address so viewers can find Heritage Orchard locations. In addition, they may participate in the Heritage Orchard tourism program which creates an opportunity for revenue through tourist traffic. Also, if the landowner agrees to participate in propagating trees, he/she receives a portion of the grafted trees, as well as revenue that may be generated through the sale of trees. Another benefit is that each spring, MSU Extension agents, specialists and master gardeners prune the orchard trees.

In addition to individual Heritage Orchards, MSU Extension has 10 fruit tree cultivar research sites where the performance of apple, pear and plum cultivars are being evaluated. The orchards are located in Helena, East Helena, Bozeman, Whitehall, Hinsdale, Power, Columbia Falls, Lodgepole, Shelby and Colstrip. The research will provide Montanans with information on the best apple, pear and plum cultivars for their location, along with the best management practices. The program is funded through a Montana Specialty Crop Block Grant and the Montana Department of Agriculture Growth Through Agriculture Grant.

The Heritage Orchard program is a grassroots program, built from ground level in the most literal sense. MSU Extension depends on Montanans to volunteer their stories so that we can learn from them and transfer that knowledge to others. The partnership is vital to the success of the program and increases access to fruit for neighbors in every part of the state. For more information, visit: www.mtorchards.org.

Fruit is absent from most local food systems across the state. Our hope is that the information we learn through our work with the Montana Heritage Orchard Program will help build more local fruit production across the state. There is much we can learn from these 100-plus year old fruit trees that we can apply to growing fruit trees today.

I am Brent Sarchet, MSU Extension Agriculture Agent in Lewis and Clark County

I am MSU Extension
Traditional commercial agriculture remains a focus of MSU Extension. We assist farmers in mitigating plant disease problems that impact Montana’s $2.2 billion crop industry. Montana Ag Live, a locally-produced public television program, often features Extension faculty who address disease management in Montana crops. Faculty also make site visits and answer phone calls and emails on a regular basis. Additionally, over one year, the MSU Pestweb site was viewed over 11,000 times by 500 users. Last year, Montanans connected more than 34,000 times with MSU Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station faculty through workshops, field days, research plot site demonstration and one-on-one interactions in fields from border to border.

The wheat streak mosaic virus field day in Chouteau County educated 33 producers about wheat streak mosaic virus (WSMV) management. In addition, 57 producers delivered plants to the Chouteau County Extension office. The plants tested positive for WSMV. Educating producers about ramifications of tearing out winter wheat and seeding a spring cereal grain helped save producers 40 bushels per acre in winter wheat yield. If producers would have destroyed their winter wheat and seeded spring cereals, their yields would have been zero. Economic impacts to producers who did not reseed their winter wheat crop to a spring cereal grain prevented $256,000 in yield losses.

By working with producers to immediately identify new pests, discover better “best” practices and share information with others, MSU Extension is vitally connected to Montana’s economic prosperity. And Montana’s producers are better able to feed America and beyond through crops including wheat (some certified organic), barley, dry peas, lentils, seed potatoes, sweet cherries and more.

My best ideas for research and Extension come from our stakeholders. Farmers and consultants use county Extension staff and the Schutter Diagnostic Lab for accurate identification of pests and recommendations for action. We can count on them to share their ideas and concerns and give us critical and constructive feedback. The best part of my job is going to farms, walking fields and sharing information. The stumper questions are hard, but often lead to opportunities to learn more and get creative ideas flowing.

I am Mary Burrows, MSU Extension Plant Pathology Specialist
#IamMSUExtension
Family and consumer sciences programming empowers individuals, families and communities to make informed decisions using unbiased, research-based information to improve life, health and finances in the home and community.

Family and Consumer Sciences

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
The Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Project provides education, support and resources for more than 6,600 grandparents in Montana who are responsible for primary care of their grandchildren. The project offers support group facilitator training and coordinates a network of 34 education/support groups across the state, including on the seven Indian Reservations.

Because grandparents often care for grandchildren informally, the state saves more than $213,000/day in foster care payments. Valuable partnerships with professionals and organizations have increased the number of facilitators and resources for families in this situation.

More than 200 grandparents actively participate in support groups, 650 receive newsletters three times annually. The Montana GRG project has an active Facebook page, listserv and website to remain in close contact with participants. These services helped Montana rank in the top 10 states for providing services and support for grandfamilies.

Housing and Environmental Health
The MSU Extension – Housing & Environmental Health Program (HEHP) offers home environmental health education, outreach and training opportunities. The Healthy Homes Partnership Program provides webinars and hands-on workshops for Extension educators, public health professionals, and tribal housing/health entities to address issues such as mold and moisture, radon gas detection, hazardous waste disposal, home asthma triggers, and more.

The HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS) Program was created to assist people living with HIV/AIDS. There are currently 134 clients receiving annual assistance; 18 households have found income-producing jobs, and sponsors have assisted over 250 individuals with housing-related supportive services.

Through an EPA Environmental Education grant titled PACE (Pursuit of educational Advancement toward Careers in Environmental Fields), MSU Extension HEHP is working to increase Montana Tribal College students’ interest and participation in environmental stewardship and careers. Goals include increasing awareness of local environmental issues identified by the community, environmental literacy and how to find and evaluate information leading to solutions.

Financial Education
MSU Extension economists deliver a variety of programs related to estate planning, as well as specific Solid Finances programs including common-law marriage, financial fads, home buying, using financial apps and websites, why to buy insurance, how to organize financial records and more. In 2015, classes were offered online and in 48 communities.
Following estate planning workshops, 94% of participants planned to talk with family about estate planning, 91% would review their beneficiary designations and 83% would either write a will, review their will or see an attorney about executing a will.

A follow-up survey with Solid Finances participants found that 30% had utilized tools to avoid estate probate; 20% had written listings of tangible personal property for distribution after death; and 15% had started using a financial app or website to manage finances.

When individuals actively manage their financial security, they are less likely to need public assistance, more likely to avoid scams and identity theft, and they are better able to reduce costs for medical care and financing. Additional information is online at: www.msuextension.org/solidfinances/ and www.montana.edu/estateplanning.

**Powerful Tools for Caregivers**

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) is an educational program that provides family caregivers with skills and confidence to better care for themselves while caring for someone with chronic illness. Extension PTC trains instructors to conduct six weekly 90-minute classes to empower caregivers.

Nationwide, AARP estimates that families provide 37 billion hours of care worth an estimated $470 billion to spouses, parents, disabled adult children and others. Montana has an estimated 118,000 unpaid caregivers providing 110 million hours of care to loved ones at a value of $1.4 billion (based on $12.97/hour).

Research indicates that caregivers have increased rates of depression and anxiety and increased vulnerability to health problems. By 2025, it is expected that more than a quarter of Montana’s population will be over 65 years of age. It is important economically and socially that efforts be made to keep caregivers healthy.

$4.50 is generated from every $1 investment in weatherization. The MSU Extension Montana Weatherization Center provides training for contractors, homeowners and businesses.

$530/year (gym savings and discounted or free health screening) was the average reported savings of participants in the Stillwater Healthy Living Program.

More than 11,700 adults and 9,500 youth were directly impacted through MSU Extension programming that encourages healthy lifestyles, improved nutrition, food safety and food preservation.
Access to healthy food is important. MSU Extension programs connect Montanans of all ages with resources to safely preserve and prepare food, as well as education to aid in making healthy, affordable choices.

With an abundance of nutritious, seasonal, wild and homegrown food in Montana, home food preservation continues to be an important and popular activity. MSU Extension has long been recognized as a credible source for science-based, safe information about canning, drying and freezing food. Every Extension office responds to drop-in visitors, phone calls and email questions. MSU Extension publications offers MontGuides and other resources, often free of charge and/or via download.

In January of 2015 the Montana Rule for Retail Food Establishments went into effect, requiring additional training for retail employees and volunteers who serve food. This increased training can reduce food-borne illness.

MSU Extension professionals from at least 15 counties/reservations provided ServSafe (an education program of the National Restaurant Association) training to over 1,400 individuals. Depending on the level of training, these participants learned skills including how to control time and temperature, to ensure proper personal hygiene, to prevent cross-contamination and properly clean and sanitize food preparation areas, as well as the impact of safety management on a food operation.

Statewide, nearly 100% passed Level 1 and Level 2 certifications, while over 90% passed Level 3 Food Safety Manager certification. Certification gives participants an edge in finding employment and also brings about improved safety in places where food is served, including non-profit concession stands, farmers markets and retail establishments.

I am Jennifer Anderson, MSU Extension Agent in Rosebud-Treasure Counties and ServSafe instructor #IamMSUExension
MSU Extension administers Montana’s **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program** (EFNEP) and **Supplemental Nutrition Access Program Education** (SNAP-Ed). EFNEP serves very low-income families who reside in Billings and Missoula and is funded through a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Grant. SNAP-Ed is funded through a USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) grant received through the Montana Department of Health and Human Services. Families who qualify for government benefits are eligible to participate in the educational series. EFNEP and SNAP-Ed directly reached 1,018 adults and 7,055 youth in 2015.

Program lessons include introducing school kids to healthy and delicious food choices and fun physical activities, as well as helping adults learn budgeting and tips for purchasing and preparing healthy food and incorporating more physical activity. After the classes, 80% of adults indicated they were using at least one new food resource management strategy such as comparing prices, using a grocery list and/or planning weekly meals. These tips enabled more than a third to stretch their food budget through the month, while making thoughtful, nutritious choices.

A teen mother who recently graduated from the Eating Smart Being Active series indicated that because of EFNEP, she is more aware of the price of food and how to shop on a budget. She understands how to read labels, and even moving into her own apartment, feels confident in independently making healthy food choices for her and her child. By empowering people, MSU Extension educators improve access to healthy food.

Partnering with MSU Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program helps Family Service INC’s families learn to prepare nutritious, affordable meals while stretching their food budget and improving the health of their family.

I am Stacy Brown, Executive Director, Family Service INC.
#iamMSUExtension
MSU Extension business and community development programs provide resources and expertise to help Montana’s businesses and communities envision, create and sustain successful enterprises and economic development efforts.

Community Development

Local Government Center
The 2015 Montana Legislature awarded the MSU Extension Local Government Center (LGC) with $180,000 in permanent base funding. Previously, funding was dependent on one-time appropriations each session and there was only one permanent employee. This allowed for the hire of a full-time associate director, an associate specialist (.25 FTE), a program assistant (.75 FTE) and a graduate student (.5 FTE).

LGC professionals provide training for over 90 percent of Montana’s clerks of district court and over 70 percent of municipal clerks, treasurers and finance officers. In addition, more than 100 affordable professional development workshops were offered statewide during 2015. These education opportunities help county and city officials responsibly manage more than $1 billion in public funds and more than 11,000 employees.

The LGC also revised and updated the publication *Montana Counties on the Move*. This publication originated in 1974, was first updated in 1990 and contains a full history of county government in Montana.

Community Foundations
MSU Extension, in partnership with the Montana Community Foundation and Anaconda Local Development Corporation, recently concluded a three-year USDA Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) grant. The funds were used to strengthen Montana’s community foundations and build increased capacity for those communities to retain wealth that is vital to their sustainability. Through RCDI, MSU Extension facilitated training including strategic planning, grant writing, leadership and transfer of wealth. The program increased local leadership abilities and improved relationships and trust by engaging community members in critical conversations about their desired future. Many towns across the state have individual examples of how their Community Foundations are helping to secure the future that local community members have envisioned.

Economic Development
MSU Extension’s faculty participate extensively in local economic development efforts. A great example exists in Mineral County where MSU Extension created the Mineral County Office of Economic Development to manage the county’s revolving loan fund and provide assistance to local businesses, and the Mineral County Economic Development Corporation to assist community organizations.

Through these efforts, a new Community Development block grant of $176,376, and total project costs of $352,807, brought 3-Phase power to the Mineral County Airport...
and Superior Meats. This has allowed jobs to be retained and 11 new full time positions to be added; and creates opportunities for future development in industrial and light manufacturing.

Since 1992, the Mineral County Extension Office has written, received and managed over $2.36 million in grant funds and over $3.8 million in total project costs for Mineral County. In 2015, Extension faculty assisted four business start-up clients with planning, marketing and initial projections, worked with three businesses on loan packages and helped 17 businesses with other inquiries.

**Disaster Response**
Montanans are known for self-reliance and resilience. MSU Extension has historically leveraged these qualities to facilitate coordination of community-based disaster preparedness and response plans, particularly those impacting agriculture, food, natural resources and companion animals.

Working with Montana Disaster and Emergency Services and local partners and stakeholders, MSU Extension is conducting training and exercises to deal with livestock emergencies and pets during disasters. Over the next year, MSU Extension will guide and train six local jurisdictions in setting up emergency animal shelters, as required per the Stafford Act, when evacuating people from a disaster area; two communities will also exercise emergency sheltering response.

MSU Extension plans additional training in how to manage a livestock truck accident. Completed for the first time in August 2016, the “Rolling Cow Exercise,” brought together first responders, veterinarians and community volunteers to share information on topics such as humane euthanasia, animal extrication from overturned trailers and temporary confinement, as well as actually handle live cattle.

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**90** community projects were funded by the Community Foundation of Northern Rosebud County, which was founded in 2008 by community partners including MSU Extension. The endowment currently exceeds $380,000.

**49** counties and municipalities received training from the LGC after voting to review their existing form of government during the 2014 Voter Review process, which is mandated by Montana’s constitution.

**591** individuals participated in MSU Extension activities as a part of the Fort Belknap Food Sustainability Project.

**120** kids helped plan and maintain the Northern Cheyenne Boys and Girls Club Garden.

**97** clerks and treasurers and **65** elected officials attended the LGC Municipal Institute.

**216** individuals from at least six states attended the first MSU Extension Climate Science Conference.

**6,100** officials and board members attended one or more of over 100 Local Government Center professional development workshops.

**90** community projects were funded by the Community Foundation of Northern Rosebud County, which was founded in 2008 by community partners including MSU Extension. The endowment currently exceeds $380,000.
Fort Belknap Extension provides hands-on education. They have created a consistent program built on trust. They don’t wait for community members to come, they go to the people.

I am Hannah Has Eagle, Lodgepole Diabetes Prevention Outreach Coordinator #IamMSUExtension

We all eat. MSU Extension’s Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) has been a leading partner in the Fort Belknap Sustainable Foods Program (FBSFP). The Fort Belknap Reservation covers 650,000 acres of mostly rolling plains in North Central Montana and is home to the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre tribes. With only three towns, Hays, Lodgepole, and Fort Belknap Agency, the population of approximately 3,500 is very rural and access to fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains and other staples of a good diet is a real concern.

In cooperation with the tribes, successful community gardens have been developed in Hays and Lodgepole. The Wasay Wapka Community Council sponsors a community orchard in Lodgepole, where MSU Extension assisted in planting 72 new fruit trees. MSU faculty mentor community members and provide tools and resources for creating raised gardens at home.

Through MSU Extension, elders and community partners provide holistic, culturally-based programming that empowers families by going back to traditional ways of eating. Families learn to preserve fruits, vegetables and meats while learning about history and growing relationships. Last year more than 1000 pounds of extra vegetables from the community gardens were provided at no cost to community members.

During 2016, participants in FBSFP indicated they’d like to learn more about how to extend the growing season to produce more fruits and vegetables. As a result, MSU Extension staff applied for and won a First Nations Food Sovereignty Grant to provide classes and support building and utilizing high tunnels and root cellars. The funds will immediately help address these specific needs identified by families.

Similar programs exist on other reservations, as well as in numerous rural communities. In all, food deserts occur across Montana in 30 counties and directly impact nearly 80,000 people, almost one-tenth the population of our state.
Along the eastern border of Montana, efforts to address food accessibility have been underway with Extension since 2005. In Glendive, the Horizon’s program visioning led to the creation of the Farm-to-Table Cooperative, the Farm-to-Table Store, a community garden and a commercial community kitchen. Extension has been central in coordinating resources, manpower, organizations and finances.

Through the Community GATE (Giving Assistance Towards Employment) program, grants were received to help create the Food Development Center commercial kitchen and the Farm-to-Table Store at the Eastern Plains Event Center. These included USDA Rural Development funds, as well as funds from the Growth through Agriculture Program. The commercial kitchen allows entrepreneurs including caterers and small business owners to safely prepare foods and sell their products to stores and restaurants.

Through the Coop, a Montana Department of Agriculture grant was received to purchase a grain cleaner that allows community members to clean grains including wheat, flax, beans and barley that are used in mixes or sold as flour. Products are packaged under two separate labels, Western Trails and Prairie Home Cuisine.

These programs have increased the vitality of the communities within a 150-mile radius of Glendive, including 16 Montana counties and 13 North Dakota counties, by bringing together growers, value-added producers, restaurants, stores, institutional food services, schools, individual consumers and community partners to create an emerging local food system.

MSU Extension has been integral in coordinating all these efforts to facilitate the development of profitable and sustainable ag-based local food systems. Because MSU Extension faculty live in the communities in which they work, they are able to recognize challenges such as food scarcity and, in concert with their neighbors, identify local solutions.

Sustainable local food system projects require a coordinated effort between individuals who have the food resources, those organizations who have the manpower, and other organizations that have the facilities and financial means to make local food communities more secure.

I am Bruce Smith, MSU Extension Agent in Dawson County #iamMSUExtension
Montana 4-H is the largest youth development organization in the state. Focused on citizenship, healthy living and science, 4-H is a trusted source of education, skill building and activities for youth and volunteers.

4-H Youth Development

4-H Week of Service
Annually, the Montana 4-H Teen Ambassador State Officer team promotes a statewide week of service to encourage community involvement. In the spring of 2016, youth and adult volunteers completed 40 projects including community clean-up, gardening, horticulture, food or supply drives, painting, maintenance and more.

The Gallatin County 4-H Shotgun club cleaned up 5000 pounds of hulls and broken clay targets from the Montana Wildlife Association Logan Range. The Montana Mustangs and Lincoln County 4-H Ambassadors weeded, trimmed and raked along the Eureka River Walk, collecting more than 30 bags of debris. Nine members of the Pistols and Ponytails Club collected 150 pounds of trash along an eight-mile stretch of road near Polson.

In Conrad, the 4 Leaf Clovers and Sandrockets 4-H Clubs completed repairs and painted the bleachers at the community baseball complex. The kids and adult volunteers replaced rotted boards, scraped, primed and painted. The City of Conrad supplied paint, boards and other materials.

The Rosebud Adventurers spent an afternoon playing cards and board games at Shipp’s Assisted Living. In Yellowstone County, the ambassadors baked cookies to create gift trays with thank you cards for volunteer firefighters and police.

The Shining Mountaineers 4-H Club in Belgrade partnered with Family Promise to help youth learn about homelessness in Montana. Kids and their families completed spring projects at the day center. Then they prepared, served and enjoyed dinner with guests of the program.

In all, an estimated 2,647 hours were spent in service during the week. Youth worked on teams, gained a better appreciation for the community in which they live and learned that their work made a positive impact personally and in the community. While extra focus was on quantifying the impacts during this week, 4-H clubs spend quality time engaging and improving their communities all year long.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) workers are necessary to generate new companies and industries for the future. STEM workers earn higher wages, are less likely to be unemployed and play a key role in growth and stability of the U.S. economy.

The Montana 4-H Science Team collected STEM curriculum, new teaching supplements and related information in a central location for Extension 4-H agents. In addition, they created a grant process and awarded money to clubs and committees to use in STEM-related projects and...
events. This resource contributes to Montana youth participating in nearly 30,000 STEM projects annually, including animal science, food and nutrition, robotics and more.

In addition, the Natural Resources and STEM Discovery Day Camp at MSU hosted 70 4-H kids who toured campus. They learned how they can use what they are learning in 4-H when they go to college and about possible STEM careers.

**International Programs**

Montana 4-H has a variety of international exchange programs for youth, volunteers and families. The International Program for Young Adults offers the opportunity for 18-30 year-old, former 4-H youth to spend three to six months living and working in a foreign country. Upon return, these individuals visit more than 3,000 Montana youth through schools and community organizations to share their cultural experiences.

Summer Outbound Opportunities provide Montana youth the chance to travel for a month to countries including Japan, Korea, Finland, Norway, Costa Rica, and Argentina.

Additional opportunities exist for Montana families to host foreign students for a month or a year. These families have an in-depth experience, learning and growing with visiting youth as they provide room and board and a loving atmosphere.

International programs impact Montanans by exposing them to other cultures including differences and similarities. This type of experience is personally rewarding and often valuable to youth in future employment.

70+ families each year enjoy unique cultural immersion by hosting international youth in their home for a month or longer.

1,300 fourth graders learned about the five major crops grown in Yellowstone County through NILE Ag in the Classroom.

11 percent of youth involved in 4-H are Native American, compared to 6.7 percent of the general population.

3,648 volunteers contributed 94,217 hours of time to youth at an economic value of $1.9 million.

525 youth and 268 adult volunteers contributed 2,647 hours of service during the 4-H Week of Service, completing 40 projects statewide.

18,761 youth participated in 4-H youth development activities, including after school programming, camps, clubs and more.

8,585 youth participated in 30,000 projects related to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).
Youth have been influential in food production in Montana for over 100 years. Early on, researchers discovered that families utilized new knowledge and skills that kids brought home within their own operations. Youth clubs were created to share the latest research on gardening, growing crops, raising livestock, storing eggs and milk and more. Some of the very first Extension brochures were titled, “Girls Gardening and Canning Club” (1915), “Bread Making Contests for Junior Homemakers” (1917) and “Instructions for Boys’ and Girls’ Dairy and Beef Calf Clubs” (1918).

Today, 4-H youth who participate in market animal projects are required to take classes in Livestock Quality Assurance prior to selling their animal. In 2015-2016, Montana youth completed the following number of market livestock projects: 1,316 beef, 297 goat, 1,136 sheep and 2,587 swine.

Together with their parents, youth learn that as producers, they are part of the human food chain and have the responsibility to raise animals that are safe and wholesome for human consumption. By enrolling in 4-H livestock projects, youth commit to providing their animals with appropriate food, water, shelter and medical care, along with minimizing pain, stress and suffering. They learn to make ethical choices, how to be sure that no drug residues remain when animals are sold at market and how to prevent pathogen contamination and carcass defects. They learn about budgeting, record keeping and marketing. Many families raise livestock on small acreage properties and MSU Extension, including 4-H, is often a primary source of information.

One way youth are recognized for their efforts is through the Steer of Merit program, a statewide beef carcass contest administered by MSU Extension and the Montana Stockgrowers Association. Each year at the Stockgrower convention, a
committee defines standards that meet or exceed industry benchmarks for excellence. FFA and 4-H youth strive to produce animals that reach these high standards. The top five carcasses in both a carcass and ultrasound division are honored annually at the convention. In 2016, 70 beef achieved Steer-of-Merit in the carcass division and 38 in the ultrasound division.

In 2016, for the first time, MSU purchased 4-H pigs to serve in the Miller Dining Commons on the Bozeman campus. MSU has made purchasing Montana products a priority. Jill Flores, production manager and former 4-H member, attended the Gallatin County Fair and purchased nine pigs from local youth. More than 1,000 pounds of bacon, sausage and deli meats have been served to MSU students as a result.

MSU Extension specialists, working with Carmen Byker Shanks in the MSU Department of Health and Human Development and with the National Center for Appropriate Technology, are also part of the Montana Beef to School Project, a three-year collaborative between producers, processors, schools and stakeholders funded through a USDA Western Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant Program. Researchers are looking for common factors that make beef to school programs successful while encouraging the use of local beef in all Montana schools.

One successful example occurs in Dillon where 4-H beef and pork have been purchased for years by local businesses who then donate the meat to the Dillon School District. Local and neighboring facilities in Butte, Dell, and Dillon provide processing. The close relationships between partners has increased donations during times of low meat supply. Since local ranchers are in the loop, they often step in to fill the need at local schools.

In addition to animal projects, youth in Montana 4-H also contribute to increasing accessibility of healthy food through the second most popular project group, food and nutrition; as well as projects in range science, conservation, wildlife, sport fishing, forestry and more. MSU Extension and Montana 4-H empower youth to influence their families to grow and eat healthy food and to serve others.

I volunteer with Montana 4-H’s Gallatin County swine program because I believe that the dignity of a person does not consist in compensation for labor, but rather in the labor itself.

I am Merle Farrier, 4-H volunteer #IamMSUExtension
Small Acreage

Living rurally on a few acres is a dream realized by many people across Montana. Once they settle in, families often have questions including how to manage weeds and wildlife, how much livestock can be adequately supported and how to prepare for potential wildfire danger. Town-dwellers frequently seek information on how to grow fruits and vegetables or create a backyard oasis. Everyone should have a basic understanding about how to protect valuable watershed areas when recreating. MSU Extension is developing new resources and consolidating existing information so that small acreage landowners, as well as all of us who enjoy the great outdoors, can easily access information to help us all be better stewards of our lands.

Mental Health

Many people don’t understand mental illness and how it affects a person’s thinking, feeling and mood; or realize that it impacts 25% of Americans, including 6% with serious mental disorders. People think they can manage issues on their own and/or don’t know there are effective treatment options available. As a result, it often takes years between the onset of mental illness and initial diagnosis and treatment. In Montana, where the suicide rate is nearly double the national rate, many families are impacted.

MSU Extension is working with the MSU Center for Mental Health Research and Recovery, One Montana, Stone Child College and Little Big Horn College to scale-up existing programming. Extension faculty will be trained in Mental Health First Aid, and able to teach their constituents. They will also be trained as facilitators of the Youth Aware of Mental Health program. USDA/NIFA and the Montana Mental Health Trust Fund are funding these projects.

Oil and Gas Development Impacts

During oil and gas development, local economic activity surges dramatically. However little is understood about the extent of the impacts on rural communities and agricultural stakeholders. MSU, MSU Extension, Cornell University, Penn State and the University of Wyoming, with funding by the USDA through an Agriculture and Food Research Initiative competitive grant are evaluating how rural communities and stakeholders in agriculture assess the costs and benefits of shale and coal-bed gas development and identify the local share of the economic benefits of oil and gas. The research includes data collection and semi-structured interviews with landowners, business owners, industry and local government in three shale development areas; the Marcellus (Pennsylvania), Bakken (North Dakota and Montana), and the Powder River Basin (Wyoming).

Volunteer

The Montana 4-H program empowers youth by helping them develop a sense of belonging, skill mastery, independence and generosity. One of the keys to success is having a committed and informed team of trained volunteers who build positive relationships with youth while offering a safe and inclusive environment. The Montana 4-H program is actively seeking volunteers willing to offer their time and expertise. This can range from sharing a hobby such as fishing, leathercraft or others, to being a club leader, to helping with a specific event or many other opportunities. To learn more about volunteering, contact your local MSU Extension office.

Improving Montana’s future

MSU Extension professionals, through trusting relationships with community partners, have plans in place to help move Montana forward. Following are a few examples of upcoming priorities.
What does #IamMSUExtension mean?

You are MSU Extension. Because of the engagement of people of all ages in locations across Montana, MSU Extension finds the support and direction to serve local needs.

Using hashtag #IamMSUExtension is a new effort to celebrate Extension success and show appreciation for the contributions of our partners. As you participate and collaborate with MSU Extension, please share your story or a photo in social media and include the hashtag #IamMSUExtension.

Find us online:

Facebook: https://facebook.com/msuextension/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/MSU_Extension
Instagram: https://instagram.com/msuextension
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/MSUExtensionChannel
email: IamMSUExtension@montana.edu
msuextension.org
Across Montana, there are 92 agents and 32 specialists in Extension who are MSU faculty members, living and working in more than 60 offices and communities statewide. These professionals serve in their local communities and counties, responding to emerging needs of families, producers, businesses and industry.
Montana State University Extension’s nationwide presence

Montana State University Extension has shared the Treasure State with 900+ Extension professionals from across the country through three national conferences in the past two years, and expects 450 more during a fourth in the summer of 2017. These conferences offer professional development opportunities that highlight MSU Extension’s strengths and extend the work of our faculty and impacts nationally. Featuring our outstanding programs, as well as our local museums, culture and gorgeous landscapes, these events bring tourism dollars to our region and demonstrate to some of the nation’s brightest educators and scientists that Montana is a leader in education, outreach and research.

150 National Extension Technology professionals from 40 states

The NETC annual conference supports information technology professionals who work within and on behalf of the Cooperative Extension System and at land-grant universities throughout the U.S. Technology in Extension plays an increasing role in fulfilling the outreach mission of land-grant universities by connecting place-bound citizens, as well as researchers and field faculty, with the most current, unbiased information available.

700 participants from 43 states

The Annual Session of the National Association of Family and Consumer Sciences hosted at Big Sky welcomed educators to take part in many professional development opportunities and network with FCS professionals from across the Unites States.

450 Community Development Extension professionals across the country

Conferences allow for networking and information sharing about our work toward long-term sustainability and well-being of communities. The Montana conference allows us to showcase the unique attributes of the state and our organization, for example, we plan to feature Sarah Calhoun (Red Ants Pants) and Chris Parrish (Supaman), a hip hop artist from the Crow Reservation.

90 Master Gardener coordinators and educators from Rhode Island to Hawaii

The National Extension Master Gardener Coordinator Conference was hosted by MSU Extension and the University of Wyoming Extension. The conference showcased Yellowstone National Park (YNP) as well as shared Master Gardener successes across the country. Attendees interacted with Dr. David Gibby, former Extension Educator of King County Washington, who, in 1972, started the Extension Master Gardener Program.
NEED AN UNBIASED EXPERT?

Montana State University Extension faculty provide information on a wide variety of topics. Find contact information for your local office at msuextension.org.

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<th>County</th>
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<tr>
<td>Beaverhead County</td>
<td>Dillon</td>
<td>59725-2799</td>
<td>(406) 683-3785</td>
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<td>Big Horn County</td>
<td>Hardin</td>
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<td>Judith Basin County</td>
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<td>Eureka</td>
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<td>(406) 296-9019</td>
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<td>Madison-Jefferson Counties</td>
<td>Whitehall</td>
<td>59759-1079</td>
<td>(406) 287-3282</td>
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<td>McConce County</td>
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<td>Meagher County</td>
<td>White Sulphur Springs</td>
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<td>(406) 547-3042</td>
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<td>Mineral County</td>
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<td>(406) 822-3545</td>
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<td>Missoula County</td>
<td>Missoula</td>
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<td>(406) 258-4200</td>
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<td>Musselshell-Golden Valley Counties</td>
<td>Roundup</td>
<td>59072</td>
<td>(406) 323-2704</td>
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<td>Lame Deer</td>
<td>59043-0128</td>
<td>(406) 477-6498</td>
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<td>Park County</td>
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<td>(406) 222-4156</td>
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<td>Phillips County</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>59538-0430</td>
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<td>Pondera County</td>
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<td>Powder River County</td>
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<td>Powell County</td>
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<td>Prairie County</td>
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<td>Ravalli County</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
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<td>Richland County</td>
<td>Sidney</td>
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<td>Roosevelt County</td>
<td>Culberton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosebud-Treasure Counties</td>
<td>Forsyth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanders County</td>
<td>Thompson Falls</td>
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<td>(406) 827-6934</td>
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