

**Western Extension Directors'  
Awards of Excellence**



**Presented July 18, 2007  
Snow King Resort  
Jackson, Wyoming**

## State Program Winner

**Nevada:** Family Storyteller, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

**Team Members:** Sally Martin, Jo Anne Kock and Dan Weigel



Before they ever get to school, we can predict which children are likely to have trouble learning to read. We can prevent many reading problems by empowering the parents of preschoolers to help their young children gain a strong literacy and language foundation. The University of Nevada Cooperative Extension developed the Family Storyteller to improve the literacy skills of both parents and children. This collaborative program involves innovative workshops for parents and their preschoolers and has been amplified through train-the-trainer efforts. Designed for English-speaking, Spanish-speaking, and Native American families, the Family Storyteller has made substantial impacts. Evaluations indicate significant increases in parent's and children's literacy skills, the frequency of reading in the home, children's motivation to read, and English vocabulary for Spanish-speaking families. These gains have continued over three and six months. The program has since been used by Extension systems in 29 other states.

## State Program Winner

**Montana:** Undaunted Stewardship, Montana State University Extension

**Team Members:** Jeff Mosley, Jim Peterson, Steve Pilcher and Errol Rice, Howard Lemm, Cindy Staszak, Merrita Fraker-Marble, Cindy Hogemark, Lisa Schmidt, Stephanie Sever, Brent Roeder, Eric Wickens, Nico Cantalupo, Wade Crouch, Marc King, Virginia Knerr, Dan Lucas, Mark Manoukian



Undaunted Stewardship is a multi-faceted, public-private partnership that helps preserve Montana's rural economy, history, and natural resources. Through its Undaunted Land Steward Certification program, Undaunted Stewardship recognizes farms and ranches that practice sustainable environmental stewardship on their private and public grazing lands. The certification program also educates landowners to help them make better resource management decisions. Fifty ranches are now certified, comprising more than one million acres of Montana's rural landscape. Undaunted Stewardship also developed a unique, incentive-based approach that protects historical sites on private agricultural lands without transferring them into public ownership. Eleven sites are currently protected. Kiosks at each site provide historical interpretation and inform visitors that historical site preservation, agriculture, and environmental values can be compatible. This message also is delivered to landowners and the urban public via public service announcements on radio and television, seminars and workshops, newspapers and magazines, and the worldwide web.

## **Honorable Mention**

### **Extension Volunteer Organization for Leadership, Vitality & Enterprise (EVOLVE) -- University of Wyoming**

**Team Members:** Susan James, Rhonda Shipp, Bill Taylor, Mary Martin, Jaime Hunolt, Milt Green and Roger Coupal

The UW CES EVOLVE program is based on the premise that every citizen can and does function as a leader at some level in a community. The future of communities depends on developing individuals' potential to assume leadership roles. EVOLVE is a process that engages communities and counties/regions in creating and customizing their own leadership institutes. It reflects local cultures and builds a critical leadership core to mobilize resources toward opportunities that match the needs of a community and its citizens. EVOLVE empowers participants through leadership institutes that provide civic education to foster an understanding of community decision making, to increase knowledge of the community and issues, and to develop such skills as problem solving, working with groups, enhancing cooperation, and dealing with conflict.

## **Regional Qualifying Programs**

### **Get Smart About Credit --Montana State University Extension**

**Team Members:** Marsha Goetting, Karen Smith, Kelly Bruggeman, Jennifer Anderson, Tara Andrews, Barb Andreozzi, Verna Billedeaux, Corinne Cramer; Paula Enkerud, Shelia Friedrich, Judy Johnson, Rene Kittle, Laurie Lutt, Bernie Mason, Ardis Oelkers, John Phister, Kathy Revello, Julie Riley, Bobbie Roos, Denise Seilstad, Karen Tyra, Jennifer Wells and Jane Wolery

Get Smart About Credit was a program focus by 22 Montana State University (MSU) Extension educators during 2004 – 2006. The goal of the program was to create an awareness of the cost to Montanans of paying the minimum on their credit cards. Program collaborators included: MSU Extension, the Montana Credit Unions for Community Development and the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation. The program was delivered to over 3,940 Montanans. A summary of the evaluation revealed that participants were inspired to take actions to improve their debt situation: 40 percent decided to cut up one or more of their credit cards; 47 percent decided to boost their monthly minimum payments to three percent; 43 percent decided to double the amount of their monthly minimum payment; and 57 percent decided to not charge any more on their credit cards until at least one is paid off.

### **Grazing Noxious Weeds -- University of Idaho College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

**Team Member:** Shannon Williams

Noxious weeds cost Lemhi County thousands of dollars each year in degraded range and recreational opportunities. Existing methods of control are not feasible for all areas. In 2001, a three year project was initiated to learn how we might use goats as a control tool. Results from those trials were used to develop targeted grazing prescriptions for spotted knapweed control and have been adopted by private, city, state and federal landowners. Prescribed grazing was also adopted for control of leafy spurge. In six years of grazing, the leafy spurge infestation has been reduced enough for an herbicide contract to be feasible. Since 2001, eight tours, ten workshops in two states, five state posters and one national poster with abstracts and proceedings have been presented. One impact statement, numerous popular press articles, one CIS and one Journal of Extension Research Brief have been written on the demonstration project, results and implications.

### **The Healthy Diabetes Plate -- University of Idaho Extension**

**Team Members:** Martha Raidl, Rhea Lanting, Marsha Lockard, Shelly Johnson, Marnie Spencer, Laura Sant, Audrey Liddil, Mimi Hartman-Cunningham, Kristina Spain

*The Healthy Diabetes Plate* is a University of Idaho Extension diabetes education program that addresses the increasing incidence of diabetes in Idaho. It uses the Idaho Plate Method to teach individuals how to plan meals in a variety of settings. Eight extension educators in five rural and three urban counties tested the effectiveness of this four lesson curriculum. Throughout the four week program a high percentage of participants (83-99%) were able to plan meals correctly. By the end of the program, participants had significantly increased their fruit ( $P=0.02$ ) and vegetable ( $p=.01$ ) intake. Information on this program has been disseminated at 14 conferences and published in the January 2007 issue of the CDC journal Preventing Chronic Disease.

### **Just Be It! Healthy & Fit Obesity Prevention Program -- New Mexico State University**

**Team members:** Jacqueline Baca, Barbara Chamberlin, Diana DelCampo, Robert DelCampo, Karen Halderson, Desaree Jimenez, Paula Roybal Sánchez and Roberta Rios

Planning for the “Just Be It! Healthy and Fit” Program began in Fall, 2004 and was based on a 1999 diabetes prevention program. The program’s goal is to promote healthy lifestyles by reducing risk factors for childhood obesity. A multi-disciplinary team including Extension personnel and community representatives meets monthly to plan and manage the program process. The group also organized workshops at annual field trips in 2005 and 2006 in 3 counties, which increased knowledge on healthy lifestyle development for over 1,400 fifth graders. To reinforce student learning, teachers and parents were provided resources to use during the school year. The program was successful in achieving its outreach educational goals and was funded as a CYFAR project for 2006-2011. In 2006, the program expanded to provide 150 students with more in-depth nutrition education and physical activity in their classrooms and is using an experimental research design to document program effectiveness.

### **Rural Bridges -- Washington State University Extension**

**Team Members:** Bill Gillis, Monica Babine, Dee Christensen

Rural Bridges is a unique program of Washington State University Extension. With its roots firmly planted in the land-grant tradition of using new knowledge to benefit people of all walks of life, it leverages the power of information technology as well as personal connections and affinities to build vibrant rural communities in Washington and nationwide. Since its beginning seven years ago, the program has impacted communities in 14 counties in Washington to create more than 200 living-wage jobs. It was featured on Comcast Local Edition during CNN Headline News in 2006, featured in a special supplement in the Puget Sound Business Journal in 2005, and honored with the Washington Governor’s Best Practices Award in Workforce Development in 2003. The Rural Bridges team is often asked to speak at national, state and regional conferences and has received interest in their work from several other states including Oregon, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, Nevada, Minnesota and North Dakota.

### **Nutrient Recommendations for Seed Carrots -- Oregon State University**

**Team Members:** Bill Braunworth, Marvin Butler and John M. Hart

Central Oregon produces 85% of the domestic hybrid carrot seed supply. Production practices, and especially nitrogen fertilization, for seed production differ from practices for carrot root production. Requests for information made to France and New Zealand, other carrot seed production areas, went unanswered. A cooperative project was implemented with support and participation of growers, the central Oregon seed grower organization, field representatives, carrot

seed buyers, county extension faculty and an extension specialist, to determine nitrogen levels for maximum seed yields from hybrid carrots. Research determined that seed carrots require less nitrogen than previously supplied, resulting in as much as a 40% reduction in nitrogen application to more than 1600 acres, increased yields related to these recommendations, reduction of nitrogen-associated water quality threats, and wide adoption of these recommendations domestically and internationally. Grower benefits include savings from nitrogen not applied and increased yields of this high value crop.

### **Seniors CAN -- University of Nevada Cooperative Extension**

**Team Members:** Heidi Petermeier and Claudia C. Collins

*Seniors CAN* is a 16-week program designed to promote health and facilitate independent living for older adults. Participants represent diverse ethnic groups and economic levels. The curriculum is currently being utilized in more than 36 states and Canada and is listed on Centers for Disease Control and USDA databases. The key to program success is incorporating wellness information into everyday life, translating abstract concepts into practical application. *Seniors CAN* students demonstrate statistically significant improvements from pre- to post intervention with increased mastery and knowledge and decreased loneliness and stress, constructs associated with better health and a higher quality-of-life for older adults. Minority and low-income participants reflect even greater levels of improvement, suggesting that wellness education can have a stronger impact on those with higher health risk. Interactive community-based education can be an effective Extension strategy to reduce risk and promote both the health and independence of older adults.

### **Small Acreage Conservation Education and Outreach Project -- University of Wyoming Extension**

**Team Members:** Duane Williams, Cole Ehmke, Donna Cuin, Milton Green, Tom Heald, Sandra Frost, Hudson Hill, Scott Hininger, Jennifer Jones, Dallas Mount, Eric Peterson and Lindsay Taylor

The Small Acreage Conservation Education and Outreach Project is creating a culture of stewardship amongst small acreage and exurban resource managers. A diverse project team of Wyoming natural resource professionals created a targeted program to address issues created with the advent of small acreage properties. Project research efforts identified a distinct combination of desired program attributes for this audience. The program approach features media-oriented and hands-on delivery via the popular *Barnyards & Backyards* magazine, workshops, and one-on-one consultations. Evaluations identify the approach as both valid and effective.

### **Strengthening Families Program -- Washington State University Extension**

**Team Members:** Drew Lenore Betz, Laura Griner Hill, Chris Koehler, Diana Castro, Ann Diede, Renee Overath, Jane Lanigan, Vancouver Robert Rosenman, Louise Parker and Angel Cantu

WSU Extension has taken a nationally recognized curriculum called the Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14 to new levels of implementation. A strong partnership with a campus-based prevention scientist has insured a well-integrated research and outreach program, including a process that engages collaborators from three state agencies in joint data collection. WSU Extension invested significant resources in expanding outreach to Latino and tribal families by adapting a Spanish language curriculum for state use, training bilingual/bicultural facilitators, translating evaluation instruments, and seeking stakeholder input through advisory structures and partnerships. SFP practitioners who utilize Extension's evaluation protocols receive individualized outcome reports prepared by faculty and graduate students from the WSU Department of Human Development. Resulting data from over 100 programs and over 2000 parents and youth document

statistically significant positive changes in four family protective factors: clear rules about substance use, positive involvement, family harmony and open communication.

### **Upper Sevier Water Management Project -- Utah State University Extension**

**Team Members:** Kevin Heaton, Wally Dodds, Jim Harris, Kristi Hatch, Dr. Grant Cardon, Dr. Robert Hill and Dr. Nancy Mesner

Through collaboration with several individuals and agencies, Utah State University Extension has been able to conduct an important water management project. Grant funding provided the necessary supplies, equipment, personnel, and travel monies for the following: irrigation efficiency studies, a soil moisture monitoring program, generation of real-time evapotranspiration (crop water use) and water quality sampling on irrigation return flows. Significant irrigation inefficiencies have been documented, published and presented to local and statewide audiences. Findings have influenced for good, irrigation management in the Upper Sevier River Watershed.

### **Utah 4-H Afterschool Programs -- Utah State University Extension**

**Team Members:** Deb Jones, Dave Francis, Mike Johnson, Ann Parkinson, Lorena Thornton, Joanne Roueche

Extension is at the hub of community activity in most counties, particularly rural counties, with active involvement in the planning and implementation of afterschool programs by a variety of community partners. Afterschool activities for youth is a recurring need identified by Extension 4-H advisory committees. The purpose of coordination of the Utah 4-H afterschool program is to provide guidance and support of counties in developing/ maintaining 4-H involvement in afterschool programs. This has been implemented by providing funding, materials, training, and related resources in support of this effort. Because of the large percentage of Utah's population under the age of eighteen, Utah has the unfortunate ranking of having the lowest expenditure per student in the nation. Increasingly, youth and parents look to afterschool and summer programs to supplement and complement the school day. The majority of the schools served are Title I, with 42%-67% of students receiving free or reduced lunch.