

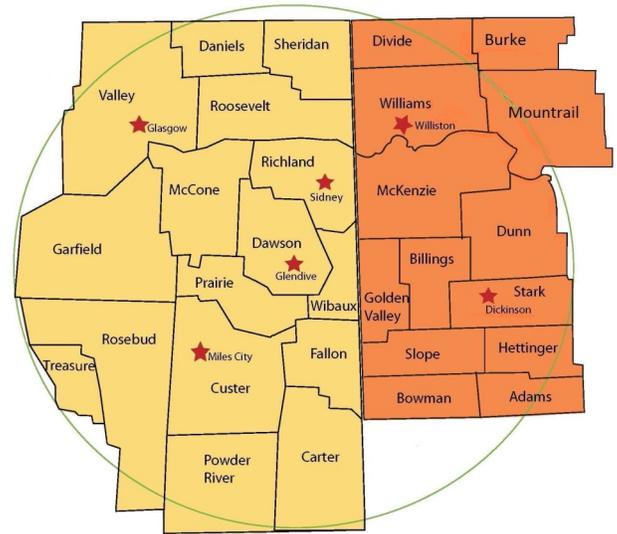


# MSU Extension: The Region's Partner in Agricultural, Community, and Youth Development

The Dawson County Extension office has a long and successful history of providing ongoing support for the community's efforts to maintain and grow a sustainable, healthy environment for its diverse population. Over the past 18 years, Dawson County Extension has been instrumental in developing the social and natural resources of the county.

As the region continues its transition back toward a pre-oil boom economy, Dawson County Extension remains the county's one-stop shop for agricultural, horticultural, community development, 4-H, and family and consumer science information. It is the community's portal to the multitude of resources available across the state and nation through MSU Extension, Montana State University, and the national land grant university system.

Dawson County Extension's continued development activities have resulted in the recognition of efforts at the local, state, national, and international levels. Speaking engagements throughout the region and Canada; appearances on statewide television and radio programs; and stories featured in local, state, and national publications have promoted MSU Extension and the development work being achieved by the Dawson County Extension office in eastern Montana and western North Dakota.



### Targeted Development Region

The Dawson County Extension office looks forward to a continued positive and constructive relationship to make Glendive, the surrounding county, and the whole northern Great Plains region the most productive and favorable environment possible for current residents and future generations to come.

### Welcome to Dawson County

Dawson County straddles the Yellowstone River in eastern Montana. Interstate 94 runs through the center of the county which is 30 miles from North Dakota and 150 miles south of the Canadian border. The county encompasses 1,523,387 acres with 1.38 million acres in farmland, growing mainly dryland wheat and barley, irrigated corn and sugarbeets, and cattle. With a total population of 9,518, it has a population density of less than four people per square mile. Glendive is the county seat with the city of Glendive and unincorporated West Glendive making up 7,396 or 78% of the county's population. Due to the increase in oil activity within the region, Glendive has seen a 9.4% increase in population in the last five years. The main employers include the Glendive Medical Center, BNSF Railway, and Glendive Public Schools. Dawson County is home to Montana's largest state park, Makoshika, Dawson Community College, and the Makoshika Dinosaur Museum. The county offers excellent recreational activities and outstanding tourist attractions.



**Good People Surrounded by Badlands**

# Community Development Projects Score Big

## Community Gardens Makes Triumphant Return

After a 5 year hiatus, the community garden made its return at the new Highland Park site. Over 20 plots were situated on a small piece of unused, county-owned property. For a \$10 per plot fee, participants had access to a 10' x 20' chunk of tilled ground, gardening tools, hoses, and free water. Scholarships were available to those who could not afford the \$10 fee.



This first year many chose to garden more than one plot. As time goes by, we expect garden participation to grow to the point where we will have to limit the number of plots to one per

family. It may be a couple of years before we get there, but we are already scouting for other spots within the community that could provide sites for additional community gardens once the current garden location becomes full.

Benefits to the community extended beyond garden participants. Local residents who helped set up the garden also planted and tended a pumpkin patch and then donated the pumpkins to a local grade school.

The garden was surrounded by a deer-proof fence with a solar fence charger. We managed to keep the deer out but the raccoons considered the sweet corn too tempting to pass up. We are planning on adding an extra wire or two to the fence to prevent the varmints from ravaging the garden next year.



Cross-Pollination Tour participants ranged in age from 8 to 68

## Harvest Fest and Junkapalooza Combine for a Mega Event

Over 2,000 people participated in the combined Harvest Fest / Junkapalooza event October 16 at the Dawson County Fairgrounds. This was the first year that organizers determined that combining events, typically held on the same day in October, would benefit both parties. It appears that they were right, attendance topped all expectations.



Events included hayrides, a Farmers Market, a haybale maze, musical entertainment, and featured a variety of food vendors and antique dealers hawking their wares.

## Cross-Pollination Tour

A recent keynote address at a local foods conference in Minot, ND, resulted in a group of interested producers and food system developers from throughout North Dakota visiting the FTT Project. The "The Cross-Pollination Tour" in March 2015 stated purpose was "*Just like cross-pollination creates stronger plants; the exchanging of ideas and knowledge creates stronger local food systems and healthier, brighter communities.*"

A blog created by participants about the trip stated "*eleven North Dakota local food leaders set out on a local food education trip to learn about light processing and what it takes to build a thriving local food system. Funded by the NC-SARE Leadership for Local Foods project, the trip was dubbed "The Cross-Pollination Tour." Like bees carrying pollen from plant to plant, this group travelled across North Dakota to Montana carrying their various experiences in local food systems and returned loaded with the pollen of ideas they'll use to expand local foods across the state.*"

The group toured the Western Trails manufacturing facilities, the Farm-to-Table Store, the shared-use community kitchen, and the future site of the Farm-to-Table restaurant. The tour culminated with a local foods meal prepared and served by local producers.

# 4-H: Building America's Leaders Today

## 4-H Program Enrollment up 55%

Enrollment for the 2015-2016 4-H year is up 55% from 2014-15 levels. Two new clubs were created over the past year and 44 new faces have been added to our program. At the beginning of the last program year there were 60 youth and 20 Certified Adult Leaders enrolled in the Dawson County 4-H program.

Through increased outreach efforts at the beginning of the 2015-16 program year, we have 90 youth and 34 certified adult leaders for a total enrollment of 124. We are continuing to ramp up our outreach and enrollment efforts through school presentations and the expanded support of a wider range of projects more applicable to non-rural youth. We expect to have additional members signed up by the beginning of 2016.



4-H offers young and old new and exciting ways to learn and serve.



The winning equine judging team, left to right: Alexis Canen, Angela Magalsky, Kristy Cullinan, and Tienna Canen

## Winning Dawson County 4-H Judging Team makes Plans for Denver

After winning the state judging competition at Montana's 4-H Congress in July, the four member team made up of Alexis Canen, Angela Magalsky, Kristy Cullinan, and Tienna Canen are making plans to compete in the national competition to be held during the Western National Roundup in Denver in January 2016. This event will be held in conjunction with the National Western Stock Show, which is perhaps the largest stock show in the world.

This competition is designed to provide an opportunity for all youth enrolled in 4-H and FFA horse projects to demonstrate the skills they have developed in visually evaluating horses at halter and in performance classes. In addition, youth will demonstrate their knowledge of equine-related equipment and subject matter in a competitive setting where attitudes of friendliness and fairness prevail.

## Dawson County Fair was a Hot Affair!

With temperatures hitting 104° F during weigh-in and 100° F heat during the livestock judging, the 2015 Dawson County Fair was the hottest in recent memory. Animals and people seemed to handle the weather with grace and poise in spite of the weather.

Seventy-six 4-Hers exhibited 767 projects, for an average of just over 10 project exhibits per 4-Her. There were 74 market animals exhibited at the fair and the livestock sale brought in over \$128,304. The majority of this money will be used by members to continue their education and support other educational activities that will enhance the hands-on, experiential

learning they receive by participating in 4-H at the county, state, and national level.

Plans are already underway to make next year's fair bigger and better than ever with expanded livestock facilities and

an additional silent auction that will allow 4-H members with indoor projects to benefit from their work throughout the year.



# County Projects Continue to be “Way ahead of the pack....”

A recent article in a regional news magazine stated that the activities we have been promoting are “way ahead of the pack in food sustainability” the article went on to say “Several years ahead of the big ‘USDA local foods push’ the Farm-to-Table Project “was busy expanding and growing, promoting local foods and food sustainability since the mid-2000s.”



Albert Schweitzer said “I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve”

Recent development activities have combined agricultural production, farm risk management, local foods production, and economic development into a comprehensive and wide-ranging approach to grow and improve the region’s economic and agricultural sustainability. The hands-on, ground level approach utilized in these projects puts the power into the hands of the participants while finding financial support for the activities from outside sources.

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 communities more food secure. Dawson County Extension has been coordinating the efforts of all these groups while developing infrastructure to facilitate the local development of profitable and sustainable ag-based food systems.

Continued support and leadership for the Farm-to-Table Store, the Farm-to-Table Cooperative, the Glendive Food Development Center, the Prairie Development

Center business incubator, and Western Trails Foods will ensure that the residents of this region will have access to the resources they need to sustain themselves and their families.

From keynoting a local foods conference in North Dakota to a high tunnel production presentation in Lewistown to talking to the local Mothers of Pre-Schoolers group, people are becoming more interested nationwide about where their food comes from and how to grow their own food in unique and non-traditional ways. The Dawson County Extension office has been leading the charge by facilitating the development of local food systems that meet the needs of this diverse and ever-growing segment of the population.

## Contact Us



**EXTENSION**

**Dawson County**

[www.msuextension.org](http://www.msuextension.org)

Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran’s Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

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