Welcome to Silver Bow County

Silver Bow County is located in Southwest Montana along the Continental Divide in the Rocky Mountains. There is a county population of 34,403 with a land area of just over 718 square miles, making it Montana’s smallest county. It is unique in the government, as Silver Bow County shares a government with the county seat of Butte. The Butte-Silver Bow government is run by an elected chief executive and 12 county commissioners. The commissioners represent both urban and county locations, including Ramsay, Silver Bow, Divide, Melrose and Waterloo. The county’s economy is driven by health care, education, retail and mining, with St. James Healthcare and NorthWestern Energy being the top employers. The MSU Extension office, housed in the Small Business Development Center, welcomed a new Family and Consumer Science/4-H Youth Development agent, Kellie Kahtani, and SNAP-Education agent, Abbie Phillip, in 2017.

MSU Extension Butte-Silver Bow welcomes new agent

After a long search process, MSU Extension Butte-Silver Bow welcomed Kellie Kahtani as the new Family and Consumer Science/4-H Youth Development agent. Kahtani is new to the county as well as the MSU Extension family. She brings extensive experience in youth development, as she had been working as an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor both in Montana and Washington before making the move to Butte. She is excited to have the opportunity to work with Silver Bow County 4-H, bringing with her a background in livestock as well as education.

Kahtani grew up in Washington being a member of 4-H and FFA in her youth. She has a degree in Agricultural Education from Washington State University and taught high school agriculture for over a decade. She also has been a member of the American Dairy Goat Association, having earned her judging license two years ago. She enjoys judging all species of livestock, but has the most experience in judging dairy and meat goats.

MSU Extension brought Kahtani on to serve in the role of 4-H Youth Development as well as adding Family and Consumer Science (FCS) to the office. In her role as the FCS agent, she will be focusing on diabetes education and mental health, but will also be adding more programs such as estate planning, Solid Finances, and other health and fitness programs.
MSU Extension brings diabetes education to Butte

The Diabetes Empowerment Education Program, or DEEP, is a peer-led series of classes offered to help people diagnosed with pre-diabetes or diabetes take control of their diabetes and health. Silver Bow County has a much higher percentage of residents diagnosed with diabetes than in the state of Montana. According to the 2015 Community Health Profile issued by the Public Health & Safety Division of Montana DPHHS, Silver Bow County showed an inpatient administration of 1,284 people with diabetes, compared to the county average of 608 in the rest of Montana.

The training program is offered through Mountain-Pacific Quality Health and funded fully through Medicare. Butte-Silver Bow County MSU Extension agent Kellie Kahtani became trained in August and has offered a series of classes to the Butte community at the Belmont Senior Center. The program focuses six classes on helping those in the class to understand what diabetes is and recognizing important numbers in blood sugar, reducing the risk of high blood pressure through lowering sodium intake and how diabetes affects your body, nutrition and carbohydrate counting, the benefits of exercise, understanding medications, and finishing with a focus on stress management and depression. The members of the class “graduate” the program after completing a minimum of five of the six classes.

The peer-led classes focus on class members participating in various activities, such as reading food labels, categorizing foods with high sodium and/or carbohydrate counts, making a menu following nutrition guidelines, exercising for 30 minutes, as well as coming up with questions they can ask their healthcare provider for a better understanding of diabetes. Participants also walk away with incentives, such as a diabetes book, fitness book, and a water bottle. The purpose of this series is to help members feel more comfortable working with their healthcare provider and to empower them to take control of their diabetes. The first class offered “graduated” five members, all of whom said on the evaluation at the end of the series that they felt better equipped in making healthier life choices, talking with their doctor about diabetes and managing diabetes.

DEEP class essentials empower class participants to take control of their diabetes.
Silver Bow County 4-H “Making the Best Better”

As the summer was in full swing, so were the very active members of the Silver Bow County 4-H program. These members were focusing on true leadership and working hard to prepare their projects for the Butte-Silver Bow County Fair. We started the summer with the “Ultimate Survivor” four-day 4-H Camp held at Loon Lake. This camp, hosted by Silver Bow County, but attended by campers from four different counties, included leadership workshops, adventure, and outdoor learning workshops organized by members and volunteers of our local programs. Everyone had so much fun, learning how to work together and using new skills to better prepare them for life and leadership. Campers from this year are excited to attend the camp again next summer.

Following 4-H camp, members focused on their projects for the county fair. In July, our annual Fit-N-Show program was hosted by a local 4-H family. This event helps prepare our members for safety and excellence during their showmanship classes and the Round Robin to finish out the fair activities. This year, we had 22 members participate in the day-long event, working with animals of all species that are included in the Round Robin. They learned how to show dogs, rabbits, poultry, sheep, goats, pigs, beef cattle, and horses in a hands-on setting. This is a requirement for all members who qualify for competing at the fair.

We finished the summer with the Butte-Silver Bow County Fair. The indoor projects, ranging from cooking to gardening, and from shooting sports to photography, were in abundance, both in number and quality! This year, members competed in over 80 different project areas for indoor exhibits. Members also showed animals in all areas from pocket pets and cats to large livestock, with over 50 animal exhibits brought in to compete. The highlight of the fair was the Round Robin, in which members who won their age group showmanship class compete against the winners from all the species to choose an overall “showman” of the fair. This year, we also added an adult Round Robin, in which parents/volunteers showed the animals and were judged by the winning showman. This opportunity gave the adults the chance to showcase what they have learned as well as the members the chance to judge the adults. Fun was had by all and this will become a new tradition at the Butte-Silver Bow County Fair.
New Snap-Education agent brings programs to Butte-Silver Bow

The “Buy Eat Better” SNAP-Ed programs are nutrition education and obesity prevention designed for individuals and families who are eligible or participating in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps). SNAP-Ed offers adult classes, “Eating Smart Being Active,” and youth classes, “Youth Understanding MyPlate (YUM).”

In October, Butte-Silver Bow and the Montana State University Extension Nutrition Education Program (MSU Extension NEP) welcomed Abbie Phillip in her new position as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) nutrition instructor, a shared position with Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, but housed in the Butte-Silver Bow MSU Extension office.

SNAP-Ed staff provide educational classes to adults and youth, as well as technical assistance on policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change for a healthier community. In 2017, SNAP-Ed partnered with the Butte Public School District on youth classes, the school wellness committee, and The Smarter Lunchroom program. Successful outcomes came with additional partnerships with the Butte Food Bank and Public Housing.

![Kids making yogurt parfaits as part of the YUM class.](image)

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