

CSU Extension Activity Report Montezuma County 2015

Administrative

- Cheryl Young, Administrative Assistant in the Extension Office for nearly six years, retired on December 15. The new Administrative Assistant is Kathy Harris. Kathy arrives at the CSU Extension Office with an excellent background of experience and education. She will be a fine addition to the office team.
- The vacant 4-H/Family Consumer Agent position in the Extension Office remains on hold. However, it has moved up in priority among vacant positions in Western Colorado and is now at the number one spot. Filling the position will depend on available resources.
- Tom serves on the planning committee for the Western Colorado Pest Management Workshop. The workshop provides continuing education credits (CECs) for private, public, and commercial pesticide applicators.
- New members have been added to the local Extension Advisory Committee. The new members will broaden the scope of the committee and will contribute to its greater effectiveness.

Agriculture/Horticulture

- Nine students took part in the Colorado Master Gardener training for Montezuma County in 2015. Eleven CMG volunteers continued with the program from previous years for a total of 18 volunteers (two of the 2015 students were not enrolled as volunteers). They served Montezuma County with various projects such as the R & D Orchard in Yellow Jacket, the Plant Select Gardens at the Anasazi Heritage Center, Gardening training for assistance to seniors, and the School to Farm Project. The volunteers contributed over 900 hours in service to the County.
- Tom performs the “Ag Markets and More” Radio Program on KSJD community radio 3 out of 4 Friday mornings per month (average).
- Gus Westerman (Dolores County Extension Director) was appointed to manage the Extension R & D Orchard in Yellow Jacket. Tom will continue to assist with his experience and knowledge. The annual u-pick had a limited supply of fruit due to weather events. About 400 people attended. The event sold 5,400 pounds of fruit at 50 cents a pound and raised \$2,700. The orchard was also featured in several tours at the Southwestern Colorado Research Center (SWCRC) in Yellow Jacket.
- The Extension Office in Cortez assists the Cortez Farmers’ Market in management, consulting, and operations.
- Four Agriculture workshops were held during the year: The Annual Beef Symposium in Durango, a Rangeland Weed Symposium in Farmington (CECs were offered), a Specialty Crops Workshop in Lewis/Arriola, and a Grape Pruning Workshop in Cortez.
- The annual Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop took place in early March at the Extension orchard site at SWCRC. Dan Fernandez and Jan Sennhenn (both retired) presented the workshop. Tom and Gus Westerman assisted with organizing the workshop and the pruning demonstrations. About 50 people attended.
- The CSU Extension Office in Montezuma County continues to offer Commercial Pesticide Applicator Testing through the internet in cooperation with the Colorado Dept. of Agriculture and Metro Institute. The Extension Office proctored 79 tests in 2015.

- Tom helped to manage the local AgrAbility workshop held in November at the Southwestern Colorado Community College. AgrAbility helps farmers, ranchers, and their families continue to live and work. Although four people attended the workshop, Montezuma County continues to have the greatest number of clients served on the Western Slope due to the support of the County Extension Agent.
- Tom gave a presentation on Weed Identification for the Montezuma County Public Weed meeting held in Pleasant View on April 25. About 40 people were in attendance.
- Tom works closely with the Agricultural Experiment Station (SWCRC) in Yellow Jacket. He is a cooperator with a \$250,000 grant SWCRC received from WSARE. The project is investigating the feasibility of using cover crops in a dryland cropping system. Tom Hooten, Ron Meyer (Golden Plains Area Extension Agent in Agronomy), and Abdel Berrada (Scientist and Manager of SWCRC) wrote and received an internal grant for \$3,550 to conduct a Specialty Crops Field Day at SWCRC. About 60 participants attended The Field Day on August 20. It showcased the research and specialty crops (industrial hemp, malting barley, dry beans, potatoes, sorghum, etc.) along with specialists from around Colorado to interested agricultural producers in the area. Many of the attending producers were very appreciative of the opportunity to meet and hear the specialists connected with the crops they were interested in. This opportunity would not have been possible without the grant support. Tom also assists with reorganizing the Advisory Committee for SWCRC.
- Tom performs pest diagnosis and management consultations to county clients on various topics at the rate of about 30 per month (less during the winter months of course).

4-H

- Tom serves as partner with the Montezuma County Fairboard that organizes and conducts the annual Montezuma County Fair. The 2015 County Fair was very successful due to a number of changes initiated by the Fairboard. 42 exhibits went to the Colorado State Fair and 14 4-H members participated in contest events.
- The 4-H Shooting Sports Council for Montezuma County continues to develop under the guidance of Tonya Yates, 4-H Program Coordinator. It assumed control of the Archery Range at the Fairgrounds and is now selling user cards. A Bull's-Eye Classic competition was held in June.
- Many programs were held in 2015, including 4-H 101 (January) and 4-H 201 (February) for new and returning 4-H families, Club Officer Training, Meat Quality Assurance Trainings, Horse Ethics Trainings, and of course, the Annual Achievement Night Celebration.
- All Extension staff, Fairboard members, and many volunteers worked in helping the Montezuma County Fair a successful community event. The 4-H club program in the County had 251 members and 52 volunteer leaders for 2015. The County's 4-H project completion rate was 87%. 28 youth participated in 4-H school enrichment programs.
- 4-H week (Oct. 4-10) culminated with the 4-H Achievement Celebration on Saturday, October 10, at the County Fairgrounds. This is a great opportunity for 4-H members and their families to be proud of their accomplishments and is also good publicity for the program. Nearly 400 people attended.
- Tonya organized and held many public outreach events including 4-H Day on November 7 at the Montezuma County Fairgrounds, a 4-H Leader Appreciation Dinner, Pet Palooza

and Haunted Halloween at the IFA Country Store, Chamber of Commerce events, and many outreach efforts to local schools and churches.

- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities continue to grow in Montezuma County over 2015. The “Ute Mountain Ute Community Satellite Project” continues with one active high school student. Efforts were focused on building a satellite mock-up for testing and pursuing a Ham radio operator’s license. Several programs (Robotics, Growing Fields, Slime and Gak) were held over Spring and Winter Breaks in Towaoc and were very successful with 44 children participating. The after school Chess Club at the Cortez Middle School reached 13 students. Tom presented a summary of available STEM resources to the RE-1 School District and some teachers in April, 2015. As a result, 27 STEM kits with “hands-on” resources were distributed to teachers in 2015. Montezuma County and Summit County continue to be two of the most active counties in Western Colorado to use the resources of Dr. Barbara Shaw, Regional CSU Extension STEM Specialist.

Community Development

- Leadership Montezuma is a local organization that seeks “to identify, enlighten, and encourage emerging leaders of diverse backgrounds, occupations, and cultures for the purpose of enhancing the quality of leadership in the community.” Early in 2015 the organization suffered a series of weakening setbacks as the Chamber of Commerce withdrew their support and human/financial resources diminished. In June, Tom was asked to join the Board of Directors. Recognizing the value of Leadership Montezuma and its need for assistance, Tom accepted. Tom has helped in reorganizing and developing the Board, interviewing prospective class members for 2015-16, and in hiring the new Program Coordinator. A successful class of 20 members is currently participating in the program, though challenges will remain for 2016.
- Tom participated in the training and certification for ICS (Incident Command System) 300. Currently, he is certified in ICS 100, 200, 300, and 700. ICS is highly regarded as the most effective means of coordinating multiple agencies in an emergency response.
- Tom is also a member of the Southwest Colorado Community College (SCCC) Advisory Board. SCCC has made good steps in meeting the needs of the community.
- Tom serves as the Montezuma County representative on the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs (CCIA). The Commission “provides an official liaison among all persons in both the private and public sectors who share a concern for the establishment and maintenance of cooperative relationships with and among” the Indian tribes of Colorado (C.S.S. 24-44-101).
- Wendy Rice, Family and Consumer Science Extension Agent in La Plata County, delivered a workshop on Radon detection and mitigation and a community meeting for training to fulfill the Colorado Cottage Foods Act.