

CSU Extension Activity Report Montezuma County 2016

Administrative

- Tonya Yates, 4-H Program Coordinator, resigned effective August 12. Applications have been received by the office and are currently in review. Hiring for the position is planned for January 2017.
- The vacant 4-H/Family Consumer Agent position in the Extension Office remains on hold. It currently occupies the number one spot in priority among vacant positions in Western Colorado. 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.
- Tom has been elected to the San Juan Farm Bureau Board of Directors as of the Annual Meeting on December 2, 2016. He is looking forward to be of service to the agricultural community of Montezuma County.
- Lou Swanson, VP for Engagement and Director of Extension at CSU, visited SW Colorado counties Dec. 12-14. He visited Montezuma County for breakfast on Dec. 13 with Tom, Kathy (Administrative Assistant), and four Advisory Committee members. Topics included: 4-H (Record books in particular), Horticulture, Budget concerns, and the current open agent position in the county. Lou emphasized that Extension has been “flipped” starting several years ago and is no longer a “top-down” organization but is “bottom-up.” Local Extension offices exist to respond to and address local issues and concerns and programs are to be locally driven.

Agriculture/Horticulture

- Five students took part in the Colorado Master Gardener training for Montezuma County in 2016. Sixteen CMG volunteers continued with the program from previous years for a total of 21 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, the Montezuma School to Farm Project, and other community projects. Volunteer reports are still coming in, but it is expected that at least 700 hours of service will be contributed 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) for most of the year.
- Gus Westerman (Dolores County Extension Director) manages the Extension R & D Orchard in Yellow Jacket. Tom continues to assist with his experience and knowledge. The annual u-pick had a huge supply of fruit due to optimal conditions. Three u-pick events were conducted. About 200 people attended the main u-pick on Saturday, Sept. 17. The events sold 6,700 pounds in total of fruit at 90 cents a pound and raised \$6,030.00. 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.
- Three Agriculture workshops were held during the year: The Annual Beef Symposium in Cortez, a Weed Symposium in Farmington (CECs were offered), and a Specialty Crops Workshop (also in Farmington).

- The annual Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop took place in early March at the Extension orchard site at SWCRC in Yellow Jacket. Gus Westerman presented the workshop. Tom and Gus both worked with organizing the workshop and the on-site 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 2016.
- Tom gave a presentation on Pasture Management for the Master Land Steward Program sponsored by the High Desert Conservation District on April 28. About 35 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 and is in year two. Tom also assists with reorganizing the Advisory Committee for SWCRC.
- It has been identified that Montezuma County has potential for wine grape development but the climate presents some challenges. In cooperation with the Colorado State Wine Board and the Colorado Climate Center at CSU, about 20 temperature sensors were placed in 6 locations in the county during late December to help identify suitable micro-climates for wine grape production. Tom assisted with identifying suitable areas, with placing some of the sensors, and will also help with collecting the data.
- Tom presented a station session on “The Value of Agriculture” at the Children’s Agricultural Learning Facility at the Four States Ag Expo in Cortez from March 17-19. Elementary school students from around the area were brought to the Ag Expo for the educational experience. Over 175 students and 51 adults (including teachers) were reached.
- Tom presented a class on pest management for Extension’s Backyard Food Production Program in Durango on June 14. About 20 participants were in the class.
- 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).
- Tom continues to assist with the Montezuma County Weed Program whenever necessary.
- Rangeland monitoring by the U.S. Forest Service often results in decisions made by the U.S.F.S. to reduce stocking rates and times on cattle producers’ allotments, directly affecting their livelihoods and leading to mistrust of the federal agency. To assist with this important local issue, Tom enlisted the help of the new CSU Extension Rangeland Specialist, Retta Bruegger, to serve as an unbiased third party. Retta, Tom, and Jim Dietrich (Montezuma County Public Lands Coordinator) met with the Rangeland Stewardship Committee, the Montezuma Board of County Commissioners, and the U.S. Forest Service to begin working on resolutions and co-ordinations. The U.S.F.S. agreed to share monitoring data collected over many years and Retta is working on assisting local interested parties to understand the meaning of the data. This is only a first step and much more work will remain to be done in the coming years.
- The current economic situation for agricultural producers is difficult at best and for the majority of farmers and ranchers in Colorado, the ability to breakeven is barely possible. Costs of production are high, and with market prices being low for farmers and ranchers, financial impacts in the near future could be significant for some producers. Recognizing the need for help and assistance with this issue, a workshop is being planned for January

24, 2017 at the Lewis-Arriola Community Center. This workshop is a cooperative effort between CSU Extension, the Farm Service Agency, NRCS, local Ag Business Leaders, and local Ag Banking Partners. It is also planned that this issue will be continually addressed throughout 2017 and will be driven by local agricultural producers' needs.

4-H

- Tom serves as partner with the Montezuma County Fairboard that organizes and conducts the annual Montezuma County Fair. The 2016 County Fair was very successful due to a number of new events initiated by the Fairboard. Tom transported nearly 50 exhibits to the Colorado State Fair and many 4-H members participated in contest events such as Fine Arts and Shooting Sports.
- The 4-H Shooting Sports Council for Montezuma County continued to develop under the guidance of Tonya Yates, 4-H Program Coordinator. A Second Bull's-Eye Classic competition was held in June as well as a State Certified Shooting Sports Leader Training in March.
- Tom continued to support the 4-H Program in Montezuma County as a major priority after Tonya's resignation and with limited available resources. He continued with Club Leader meetings, Stakeholders' meetings, and County Council meetings. He emphasized financial accountability and stressed the importance of 4-H in contributing to youth development in Montezuma County.
- Many programs were held in 2016, 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 with over 300 people in attendance at the Montezuma County Fairgrounds.
- 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 235 members and 49 volunteer leaders for 2016. The County's 4-H project completion rate was a little over 95%.
- Tom organized and held many public outreach events in the Fall of 2016 including 4-H Day on November 5 at the Montezuma County Fairgrounds, the IFA Pet Palooza at the IFA Country Store, visits to 3 Elementary Schools in Montezuma County, and supplying enrollment materials to local schools.
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities continued in Montezuma County over 2016. The "Ute Mountain Ute Community Satellite Project" continued 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, etc.) were held over Spring and Summer Breaks in Towaoc and were very successful with many children participating. 18 STEM kits with "hands-on" resources were utilized by local teachers in 2016 including: Lego Robotics, Newton's 2nd Law with Air Cannons, Basic Electricity, Solids Liquids and Gases, and Basic Biology. 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.” Tom continued to help with reorganizing and development of the Board, and the Leadership Montezuma Program in general, until Tonya’s resignation when he resigned from the Board to commit more time to the 4-H Program.
- Tom is certified in ICS (Incident Command System) 100, 200, 300, and 700. ICS is highly regarded as the most effective means of coordinating multiple agencies in an emergency response. Tom gave a presentation on Animal Emergency Management Planning at a monthly meeting of the Montezuma County Emergency Management Teams. Development of an Animal Emergency Management Plan was put on hold until the County 4-H Program is solidified.
- 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 several workshops on Radon detection and mitigation and a community meeting for training to fulfill the Colorado Cottage Foods Act.