



Partners

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University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

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University partners help Nevadans survive a financial crisis — *online!*

University of Nevada, Reno faculty are leaders of a groundbreaking new Web site – *eXtension.org* – that brings together the collective expertise of professionals at more than 70 land-grant universities. Entrepreneurship, small business expansion and family financial development are just a few of the topics that address issues in a changing economy:

- Webinars (Web-based seminars) show strained urban and rural Nevada communities how to expand their commercial sectors by increasing employment, wages and income. Leading these efforts are: **Tom Harris**, director of the University’s Center for Economic Development; **Buddy Borden**, southern Nevada extension economist; and **Tom Cargill** and **Glen Atkinson**, professors of economics.
- Nevada’s vulnerable senior citizens are targeted with a train-the-trainer program that helps older adults cope with rising costs of housing, food, health care and transportation during severe budget cuts. **Jeanne Hilton**, state extension aging specialist and professor of social work, is a leader in developing financial security education for *eXtension*.
- Affordable child care is an issue that Nevada families grapple with constantly, but particularly in tough economic times. Extension child development specialist **Dan Weigel** is a national leader in the Better Kid Care America initiative, which will include early childhood education curricula and online workshops for child care providers.
- Supporting children is the goal of Just in Time Parenting, which offers age-paced education online and through the mail, in English and Spanish. **Sally Martin**, state extension specialist and professor of human development and family studies, was assisted by **Shawn Marsh**, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.



Photo: Tyler Keck

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Dean **Karen Hinton** and Administrative Assistant **Chad Waters** review the *eXtension* Web site. Hinton is chair of the Governing Committee for *eXtension*, which received the USDA Secretary’s Honor Award in 2008.

More...

For information on *eXtension*, or any other program in this report, contact **Karen Hinton** at 775-784-7070, or hintonk@unce.unr.edu.



University coalition takes the lead in researching Latino needs

In response to the state's growing population of Latinos, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) partnered with the University's Latino Research Center to conduct the first statewide Latino program needs assessment.

"This study will provide a baseline for Nevada," said **JoAnne Skelly**, Carson City/Storey County extension educator. Skelly and **Loretta Singletary**, Lyon County extension educator, conceived the idea during a Spanish Immersion Institute held in 2007.

Only two other states have published extension program needs assessments focusing on the Latino population.

"We started this project because no primary data existed, and yet our Latino population is a growing and important audience when it comes to outreach programs," Singletary said. In 2006, Latinos comprised 23.5 percent of Nevada's population.

Skelly and Singletary partnered with **Emma Sepúlveda-Pulvirenti**, Latino Research Center director, and UNCE research assistant **Jessica Angle** to develop an assessment instrument distributed at community meetings and events statewide.

The final survey results will be published in 2009. This information will be valuable to the Latino population, Nevada communities and public assistance agencies wishing to better target their services. Educators will also use the report for program development.



Volunteer **Carmen Caldera**, community-based instructor **Zoraida Caldera** and research assistant **Jessica Angle** staff the UNCE Latino booth at the Women's and Family Fair in Las Vegas in 2008.

Meth users take healthy steps to freedom

"I feel I don't need to smoke meth to lose weight," said one young woman, a former abuser of methamphetamine (meth). "Riding a bike or walking or swimming are all great ways to lose weight," she added after she completed the Healthy Steps to Freedom course offered by UNCE in southern Nevada.

UNCE collaborates with the University's **Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies (CASAT)** because of its familiarity with substance abuse disorders and with women who have meth issues. Another partner is

the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

"CASAT has been helpful in disseminating the program and in creating condensed versions of the original Healthy Steps curriculum for substance abuse recovery," said **Anne Lindsay**, UNCE exercise physiology specialist. "CASAT is also instrumental in providing training and continuing education credits for substance abuse counselors who participate in the program."

Meth is the illicit drug of choice among many young women because it's affordable and readily available. Admissions to treatment services in Nevada for substance abuse show meth is the second highest, just behind alcohol, according to a 2006 report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The seductive allure and pleasurable side effects of meth include loss of appetite, increased energy levels and alertness, euphoria and rush, weight loss and elevation of self-esteem.

The Healthy Steps intervention includes physical activity/exercise and nutrition aimed at teaching healthy lifestyle behaviors, weight training and calcium intake, and education that addresses body image disturbances, eating disorders and other poor lifestyle practices.

Evaluations determined that the women maintained their weight throughout the three-month class period, while gaining knowledge about weight-related issues.



Photo: Sara Velasquez

UNCE exercise physiologist **Anne Lindsay** (left) uses a body fat analyzer to determine the percent of body fat with a young woman in the Healthy Steps to Freedom class in Las Vegas.

4-H youth go high-tech — with help from the University

Nationwide, there's a shortage of youth skilled in science, engineering and technology (SET). "As one of the National 4-H initiatives," said UNCE youth specialist **Eric Killian**, "we encourage youth – male and female – to get involved in these areas for future global, competitive careers."

Walter Barker and Killian, administrators of the Nevada 4-H SET program in Clark County, connected with **Rohit Patil**, analyst with the University's geography department, who trained the 4-H staff on the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Global Information Systems (GIS) software and equipment, and provided technical support for the program.

As a result, 60 youth competed as teams, learning how to use a GPS unit, obtain coordinates, log data and take digital images of five recreation and youth-friendly sites around Las Vegas. The youth geocached by locating seven sites (not identified by markers, only coordinates) to uncover "treasures" hidden at each site.



A 4-H student participates in a GPS/GIS activity mapping youth-friendly sites in the Las Vegas Valley.

During the Clark County Fair, 15 youth leaders ran a SET information booth and developed a rocket golf course game. These youth became GPS/GIS leaders during 4-H summer camp where the older leaders and adult staff set up a GPS course for the younger campers. More than 30 middle school youth from military families also participated in a training and GPS course at the Project THUNDER camps during the summer of 2008.

"Both the youth and staff mastered the use of GPS units and discovered the importance of the description of information and of the coordinates (GIS)," said Barker.

"As a result of this project, many of the participants are now a core leadership team that is expanding the project and activities at rural sites outside Las Vegas. We anticipate that more than 150 youth will continue the GPS/GIS project," added Barker.

Coalition trains teachers for youth community engagement

Nevadans have the lowest civic engagement and volunteer participation rates in the nation, according to the 2007 Current Population Survey. UNCE's **Marlene Rebori**, a community and organizational development specialist, has been studying this phenomenon.

"There have been nationwide decreases in citizens' participation in the democratic process and community-oriented groups over the past 25 years," said Rebori. "Studies also show that citizens are less skilled in participating in these activities, and educational materials are also lacking."

So, Rebori wrote a curriculum to get young people engaged. Policy Education and Civic Engagement (PEACE), targeting middle and high school students, consists of six lessons, each taught in a 50-minute class. The curriculum incorporates additional subject matter, such as language arts and history, meeting standards set by the Washoe County School District, state of Nevada and National Council for Social Studies.

"This has really been a collaborative project," said Rebori. She partnered with College of Education faculty **Margaret Ferrara** and **Kim O'Reilly**, who provided a direct link to social studies teachers and workshop opportunities with in-service and preservice teachers. The education faculty reviewed

the curriculum, adding to PEACE's credibility and applicability to a wide teaching audience.

University graduate students **Cinnamon Butler** and **Brittany Russell** helped with curriculum research and identified school district standards that were met or exceeded by PEACE.

"PEACE laid the framework for powerful work that we can continue to design together in the future," said Ferrara. "I look forward to any future collaborations with Cooperative Extension," added O'Reilly.



UNCE's **Marlene Rebori** familiarizes social studies teachers with the new PEACE curriculum.

Medical school collaboration enhances youth nutrition education

Childhood obesity is an increasing concern across the country. But nowhere is the risk greater than in the Native American population. The Strong Heart Study (*Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 2005) reports that Native Americans' intake of fruits and vegetables is significantly less than recommended, the variety is limited, and the use of traditional foods – derived largely from plant sources, fish and lean wild game – is waning.

To address these issues, UNCE created Veggies for Kids, targeting predominantly Paiute second- and third-grade students at Natchez and Schurz Elementary schools. The 10-lesson curriculum includes in-class food tasting, seed sprouting experiences and exposure to traditional Native American foods.

When comparing pre- and post-testing, there was increased preference by youth for specific vegetables, an increased ability to name the grains group on MyPryramid for Kids, an increased ability to name half the vegetables, and an increased number of students who said they had tasted the vegetables.

Barbara Scott, associate professor in the School of Medicine's pediatrics department, was a valuable

consultant, researching new evaluation approaches to better measure impact on food nutrient intake.

"Barbara's collaboration in our programs was invaluable," said UNCE nutrition specialist **Kerry Seymour**. "Her guidance nurtured the decision to add parent focus groups, whose input will strengthen the program by fostering parent participation."

Scott also lent her expertise to the UNCE Team Nutrition "Smart Choices" program, with a goal to increase teachers' and students' awareness and knowledge of the components of a healthful diet.

Seymour added, "Our discussions with Barbara led to changing the lesson delivery model to focus on enhancing teachers' confidence and competence in providing basic nutrition lessons and promoting program sustainability."

After program delivery in only three schools, the program expanded by 53 percent, reaching nearly 900 students and 45 teachers. This dramatic increase was a direct result of teachers' abilities to provide the education themselves.



Photo: Jennifer Mays

Randy Emm, Federal Reservation Tribal Extension Program coordinator, shows wild onions to students at Schurz Elementary School.

Orvis School of Nursing partnership benefits parents of newborns

An extraordinary partnership grew out of challenges in the development of breastfeeding education for Nevada nurses and other health care providers.

Nevada ranks in the lowest quartile, according to the Centers for Disease Control in their report on practices that support infant nutrition and care, primarily breastfeeding. The state has less than one internationally certified breastfeeding consultant for every 1,000 babies born.

To meet this lack of lactation support, southern Nevada nutrition specialist **Madeleine Sigman-Grant** partnered with the Nevada State Health Division and Orvis School of Nursing assistant professor **Melinda Hoskins** to develop a 15-week breastfeeding course via interactive conferencing. Their objective is to educate nurses and other providers from hospitals and clinics across the state to become breastfeeding

experts, known as certified lactation counselors.

This initial training in January 2009 reached 50 people at downlink sites in Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City, Winnemucca and Fallon. Topics included lactation anatomy and physiology, economics and medicalization of breastfeeding, feminist concerns and global impact of the commercial formula industry.

"This collaboration has exceeded our expectations," said Sigman-Grant, "although it took a different direction than we had anticipated. By joining forces, we used our strengths to create opportunities beyond the University setting to meet identified needs across the state.

"We plan on working together for as long as there is a need to educate and support health professionals and pregnant women in terms of breastfeeding."