

Friends

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

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Your help needed now more than ever

Dear Friends,

As chairman of University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Advisory Committee, it gives me a great deal of pride to share with you the information contained in this newsletter. From teaching homeowners about radon and fire safety to all our 4-H programs, Cooperative Extension is having a tremendous impact on our state.



Tom Baker

Despite Nevada's current financial woes, our educators are redoubling their efforts to help people in all corners of Nevada. Ranchers and day care providers, senior citizens and young students – they are all benefitting from the tireless work of our Extension professionals.

However, our faculty is trying to meet growing needs with dwindling resources. There has never been a better time for you to throw your support behind the educational programs and special projects being carried out by Cooperative Extension.

On page two of this newsletter, we've listed people who have found a way to donate to Extension in recent months. We'd like to add your name to our next published list.

We promise that your financial support will be put to work quickly and efficiently by our researchers and educators as they reach out to help the people of Nevada.

Program helps desert farmers sell gourmet produce to Vegas restaurants

A University of Nevada Cooperative Extension program has spawned a lucrative market for desert farmers by promoting locally grown foods and herbs to Las Vegas' finest restaurants and farmers markets.

"Niche Products for Direct Markets: A Sustainable Opportunity for Small Desert Farmers" has established market channels between growers and chefs.

Previously, Las Vegas chefs had produce shipped to them overnight from organic farms around the country. Now they order fruits and vegetables from Caliente, Alamo, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's orchard in North Las Vegas and small "boutique" farms.

"Our research and demonstration orchard showed Las Vegas chefs that they can get quality fruit and vegetables from the hot desert," said Bob Morris, UNCE horticulturist.

UNCE researchers found that chefs were willing to plan seasonal menus around the crops that were available locally, so UNCE taught farmers how to package and market their fresh products to local restaurants and arranged tours of gourmet restaurants for farmers. The farmers learned there is a demand for local, fresh and flavorful products that are reliably available.

Since the produce-to-market program started four years ago, farmers



Alamo garlic grower Jesse Scott now sells his goods to Las Vegas restaurants.

markets in Nevada have expanded from eight to 26 across the state. Eight chefs in Las Vegas and five in Reno purchase from local producers.

"It's so simple to get started," said grower Paula Pudwill. "If you grow something in your backyard, for \$35 the Department of Agriculture will come out and give you a producer's certificate. You can then sell your produce at a farmers market. We made \$8,000 the first year, then doubled that, and by our third year, we made more than \$25,000."

Doug Taylor, executive pastry chef at the B & B Ristorante and Carnevino in Las Vegas, said he started with one farmer two years ago and now buys from 21 farms.

"Each farm offers something different and exciting each season. We are building an agriculture community. The demand is present, the hotels want it and our community wants it."

4-H Club members learn about Legislature

More than 40 students from around Nevada attended the two-day 2009 4-H Capital Days event March 1-2 in Carson City, where they had breakfast with dignitaries, toured government buildings and debated upcoming legislation.

"You are doing a wonderful job representing the youth of this state before our legislature," University of Nevada, Reno

Provost Marc Johnson told the 4-Hers during a Legislative Breakfast held in the foyer of the State Library in Carson City March 2.

The breakfast gave the youth an opportunity to interact with their peers as well as Nevada legislators, university officials and 4-H staff from around the state.

"Capital Days is a great way for these teens to get an idea of how government works, and the role we all play in



government," said State 4-H Youth Development Coordinator Steve Schafer, noting that the youths did much of the planning for the two-day event.

Chris McGaw, president of 4-H State Ambassadors, told attendees during his welcoming speech that his experience with Capital Days has taught him a great deal about how laws can affect his generation.

"Nevada makes it easy for us to voice our opinions," McGaw said.

McGaw, a 17-year-old junior from Tonopah who attended his third Capital Days event, said 4-H has taught him about confidence, character and pride.



Josh Pishnak of Carson City discusses a bill during Capital Days.

Nevada Assemblyman John Hambrick said Capital Days is valuable because participants are able to meet legislators and ask the tough questions.

"They aren't always going to be youth," Hambrick said. "But they'll be part of the community."

4-H youth get taste of university life

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's fourth annual Discover Your Future program is bringing more than 140 high school students from across the state to the Reno campus this year to get a taste of the college experience.

The 4-H program has seen a huge leap in its popularity; the number of participants has nearly tripled from previous years.

Beginning June 21, participating youth will move into the Argenta dorms, eat at the Down Under Café, and climb the rock wall and swim laps at Lombardi gym. They will also realize college life is not all fun and games.

The program also gives participants a broader understanding of responsibility and leadership as they clean up after themselves and walk to campus in time for their classes.

The students choose one of seven available areas of study, participating in such hands-on activities as earthquake tables at the College of Engineering or



Some students learn about mapmaking during "Discover Your Future" in 2006.

taking classes in human development at the College of Education.

Students also learn about college grants and scholarships, and take career-assessment and personality tests to help them discover which field of study would best suit them.

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'Fire' program emphasizes ember dangers

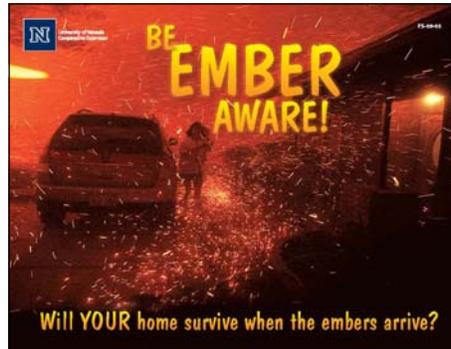
Nevada's fourth annual Wildfire Awareness Week was held in early May with a variety of programs around the state.

The University of Nevada Cooperative Extension-sponsored event started in 2006 with 18 activities in seven counties and has already grown to 78 events in 14 counties.

The event is coordinated by UNCE Natural Resources Specialist Ed Smith and UNCE "Living With Fire" program coordinator Sonya Sistare.

During opening ceremonies for Wildfire Awareness Week, Smith and Sistare were each awarded a Bronze Smokey Bear Award from the U.S. Forest Service for their outstanding work helping homeowners protect their property from wildfires. Fewer than 10 Bronze Smokey Bear awards are handed out each year.

Wildfire Awareness Week is designed to promote understanding and action concerning the risk associated with wildland fires. Nevada has more than



Sonya Sistare, left, and Ed Smith, center, receive their Bronze Smokey Bear awards from Nevada State Forester Pete Anderson.

250 communities that face a wildfire threat, and 68 communities are at extreme and high risk.

This year's goal was to raise awareness of the threat to homes posed by burning embers during a wildfire. Smith and Sistare released their latest publication, "Be Ember Aware: Will your home survive when the embers arrive?" which is available for download at www.unce.unr.edu.

As a wildfire approaches a community, pieces of burning material from twigs, pine cones, wood shakes from a roof, and other materials become embers and are blown by the wind or lofted high into the air and rain down. If these embers land in something easily ignited on or near your house, the home could be in jeopardy of burning. This is the most common reason why homes are destroyed during wildfire, Smith said.

Wildfire Awareness Week events included pine needle pickup programs; community evacuation classes; and tree planting ceremonies.

Radon program second in nation

Thanks in large part to the work of Nevada Radon Education Program Director Susan Roberts, Radon Education Coordinators Megan Long and Laura Au-Yeung, county educators and their administrative assistants, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Radon Education Program was second in the nation for the number of activities publicizing the radon health risk. Nevada improved from fifth place last year, with 351 activities this year compared to 65 last year.



Susan Roberts

"The Nevada Radon Education Program is viewed by the Nevada State Health Division as a tremendous asset to their public health mandate and efforts," Roberts said.

The UNCE program provided more than 4,500 test kits to Nevadans during Radon Awareness Month in January, compared to 1,086 last January.

UNCE's radon team reached more than 9,000 individuals through programs, phone calls, test kit distributing and e-mails, distributing more than 25,000 pieces of information.

The Radon Web site was one of the most popular pages on the UNCE Web site.

"I am overwhelmed by how many people have helped," Roberts said.

"Almost all of the Cooperative Extension offices were a part of our statewide effort and so many people, both UNCE and other UNR employees, as well as several others outside of our organization, stepped in to help.

"Many did so not because they had to do it but because they wanted to."

New aging program planned

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension is launching a pilot program that will train volunteers across Nevada – including librarians, senior-center managers and others – how to most effectively teach our older-adult population to remain self-sufficient.

The program will be tested in Ely, Gardnerville/Minden, Fallon and Hawthorne, and it promises to spread quickly through the state – bringing a powerful, cost-free network of resources to older adults and helping them to quickly and easily find the answers to their questions about medicine, nutrition, finances and other issues.

The training program, spearheaded by Jeanne Hilton, a UNCE aging programs specialist and a professor of social work, springs from UNCE's in-depth 2007 study that showed Nevada needs more resources to assist its rapidly growing older-adult population.

What will tomorrow's Cooperative Extension look like?

You decide. When you make a planned gift to University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, you integrate your financial goals with your personal goals to help shape the future.



Lisa Riley

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If you appreciate how Cooperative

Extension enriches your life, follow the lead of others who have established scholarships or given to the UNCE program of their choice. Your gift will make a difference. Creating better futures for generations to come – it's your legacy.

To learn more, please contact Lisa Riley, J.D., or Bob Eggleston, Directors of Planned Giving at (775) 784-1352, or visit our Web site at giving.unr.edu/planning.aspx.

-- Lisa Riley, J.D.

We need your e-mail address!

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension will soon start publishing our newsletters electronically. If you'd like to continue receiving news about UNCE programs and state activities, please return the enclosed postcard or call **Jim Sloan** at 784-7072 or e-mail him at sloanj@unce.unr.edu with your e-mail address. We promise not to sell your information to those pesky spammers. But your cooperation will help us save money and help you stay better informed. Thanks!



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