

Daniels County



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Daniels County Courthouse and The Flower Shop, by Inga Hawbaker.

Daniels County MSU Extension is a non-formal educational program designed to help people use research-based knowledge to improve their lives. Since 1922 MSU Extension has successfully provided a service to the citizens of Daniels County through the availability of resources and by facilitating programming in the areas of agriculture, natural resources, family and consumer science, community health and development, and youth development through 4-H.

The current population in Daniels County is estimated to be 1,737; there is one K-12 school serving the county. With agriculture being the main industry, Daniels County was considered the most rural county in the continental United States as measured by the Index of Relative Rurality in 2000. It is south of the Canada–US border with Saskatchewan.

Established in 1920, Daniels County boasts a variety of small-town community events including Lutefisk dinners, snowmobile races, ranch rodeos, and a county fair. Daniels County is also home to its annual Pioneer Days, a weekend-long celebration in June; at the center of the celebration is the historic “Dirty Shame Show,” a variety show comprised of local talent. Pioneer Days takes place at Pioneer Town, a 20-acre plot just west of Scobey, which houses 35 buildings that have been restored to depict turn of the century homes and businesses.

4-H Members Address Needs & Bring Joy to Nursing Home Residents

In working with Daniels Memorial Healthcare staff, Daniels County MSU Extension and 4-H organized a “Window Parade” in the spring of 2020 for nursing home residents; the parade entailed 4-H members bringing pets and baby farm animals to the nursing home windows to show and interact with residents. This event was not only fun for the 4-H members, leaders, and Daniels Memorial Healthcare staff, but provided some much needed interaction and excitement for nursing home residents that had been unable to see their family or friends for some time due to COVID-19 restrictions. 4-H is a youth organization that is well known by the county nursing home residents as many of their own children and grandchildren were or currently are 4-H members. As described by the local paper, this was a “simple but great” event for the residents that left a lasting impact on 4-H members and adults alike; its success was one that could only be measured by the smiles and joy felt by all involved.

Addressing another need at Daniels Memorial Healthcare, 4-H sewing members set out with a goal to sew multiple adult clothing protectors for the nursing home residents. Facilitated

by a county 4-H sewing leader, the project was timely due to a donation of funds from the local Lions chapter and community members for the purchase of sewing machines for the 4-H sewing program. Utilizing donated fabric, the sewing members met with community volunteers for a project day to test the new sewing machines and continue working on their sewing skills; a total of 75 clothing protectors were sewn and donated to Daniels Memorial Healthcare.

StrongPeople Strength Training Program Impacts Local Residents

StrongPeople is a national, evidence-based community exercise program that has been increasingly popular in Daniels County, having been led by the previous and current Extension agent. While the program is open to individuals of all ages, the curriculum focuses on the aging population, helping participants retain strength, stay independent longer, and avoid chronic illness. The program grew out of research published by Dr. Miriam E. Nelson of Tuft University on bone density in older adults, which became popular through her first book, *Strong Women Stay Young*.

For the current winter session, there are 16 female participants registered. Returning community members attest to the benefits of the exercise curriculum.

The 2019-2020 class participants provided the following statements:

- “My attitude about different things has changed a lot. I feel happier and not alone”
- “This program motivated me to keep exercising at home on my own. There is no charge for the program and it is a blessing to many seniors. Thank you!”

Results from a participant survey found that 100% of participants report feeling stronger, having better balance, increased mobility and stamina, and 80% report sleeping better and feeling less stressed; 60% of participants report less chronic pain, with 100% of participants reporting intent to maintain a similar physical activity routine on their own. Participants value the comraderie the program fosters and depend on it to stay active during northeast Montana’s long winter months.

Pesticide Container Recycling in Daniels County

Daniels County MSU Extension and the county Weed District partner throughout the summer and fall for the Pesticide Container Recycling Program, which is regulated





Previous Page: (top) Daniels County 4-H members, leaders, and volunteers meeting for a sewing project day to work on cloth clothing covers for Daniels Memorial Healthcare, by Inga Hawbaker; **(bottom)** A senior 4-H member and her dog Moose visit with nursing home residents through the window, by Inga Hawbaker ; **This Page:** Daniels County Weed District and Solid Waste Employees prepare pesticide jugs for the Pesticide Container Recycling Program, by Inga Hawbaker

by the Montana Department of Agriculture. The third partner in the project is the local landfill, Daniels County Solid Waste. The county has four recycling bins located in Peerless, Four Buttes, Scobey, and Flaxville. Started in 2009, the focus of the program is to keep HDPE #2 pesticide plastic out of Montana landfills. Individuals from all three departments meet in the spring and fall to sort and prepare containers dropped off by local producers; a total of approximately 14,000 pounds of container plastic was collected by the MDA in Daniels County for the 2020 season.

To generate more awareness and commitment to the project, MSU Extension provided a public update on the pounds of plastic collected and rejected at the different sites in a weekly column in the local newspaper. The update included a reminder to individuals utilizing the sites to triple rinse containers, and remove all lids, foil liners, and pesticide booklets before dropping off containers. The products created from the recycled plastic were highlighted in the newspaper for community members to recognize the resourceful nature of the program.

Daniels County Staff



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