

2020 MSU EXTENSION HIGHLIGHTS

Roosevelt County



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Roosevelt County Complex, Culbertson by Ann Newhouse.

All universities engage in research and teaching, but land-grant universities like Montana State University have a third critical mission – Extension. Extension means reaching out and “extending” resources, solving public needs with university resources through non-formal, non-credit programs. Montana State University Extension is an educational resource dedicated to improving the quality of people’s lives by providing research-based knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of families, communities, and agricultural enterprises. The Roosevelt County MSU Extension staff provides services in the following areas:

- 4-H Youth Development
- Agriculture and Horticulture
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Community and Economic Development

Roosevelt County was founded in 1919. It encompasses 2,385 square miles of Montana’s land and has a population of approximately 11,305. The county seat is Wolf Point, and other incorporated cities include: Bainville, Culbertson, Froid and Poplar; other communities include Brockton and Fort Kipp.

International Program for Young Adults

Randee Shannon, an International Program for Young Adults representative, shared her experiences while living in Finland and Germany to Roosevelt County students, senior citizens and 4-H members. Shannon was an active 10-year Prairie County 4-H member, graduated from Terry public schools, and in 2019 spent close to six months experiencing a deeper level of culture by living and interacting with six different host families through the Montana 4-H International Program for Young Adults.

The basis of the exchange program is to implement the 4-H “learning by doing” model. Shannon was able to live with host families and actively participate in family life that is not possible through a directed tour visit to another country. An appreciation of the social, economic, political and cultural contributions of the country was developed while living in central, northern and southern Finland. While staying with German families in the north along the North Sea and the Elbe River and in the southeast along the Czech Republic border, Shannon acquired specific subject matter skills and knowledge that prepared her to share the international experience through presentations.

Over 140 Roosevelt County adults and youth were able to grow their cultural awareness, gain knowledge about Finland and Germany, and have a better understanding of how culture influences values, beliefs and attitudes. The presentations were a great opportunity for community members to learn about another culture without traveling.

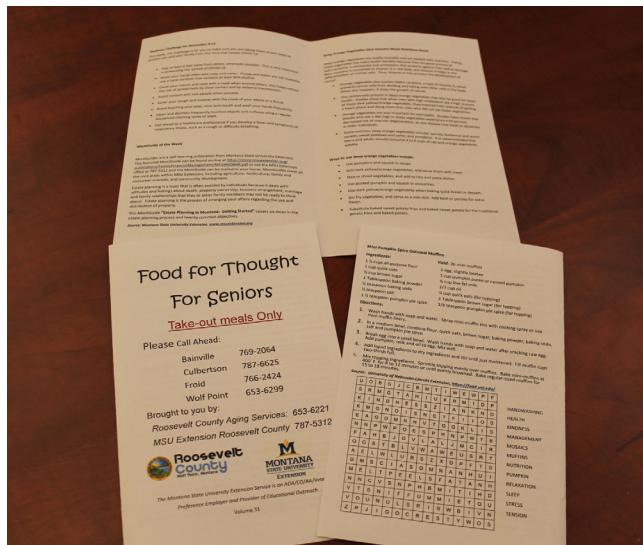
Food for Thought for Seniors

A newsletter "Food for Thought for Seniors" was developed for senior citizens who could no longer meet in person for lunch at the congregate meal sites throughout Roosevelt County due to the coronavirus pandemic. The newsletter is a cooperative effort between MSU Extension and Aging Services in the county. The intent of the newsletter is to provide educational and uplifting information, resources, and activities for those who could no longer be together and socialize during congregate meals. Since April 1, cooks and assistants have been placing a newsletter with each of the meals that are picked up from sites in Bainville, Culbertson, Froid and Wolf Point. A total of 34 volumes and 3740 copies of the newsletter have been written and distributed to the senior population in Roosevelt County.

A survey to gather information for future editions was included in recent newsletters. Fifty percent of the people indicated they would like to receive the newsletter four times per month and indicated that 1 -10 wellness challenges were completed. Survey participants unanimously recommended that the Exercise Your Brain – Word Search activity continue to be included in the newsletter. Ideas for recipes and future topics were also determined from the survey results. One person stated they would like to receive recipes that can be made for one or two people and another person called the Extension office and indicated they read through the MontGuides on wills that had been referenced in a newsletter and the MontGuides were sent to their home. The "Food for Thought for Seniors" newsletter keeps seniors informed, educated, and connected to resources that are available to read at their leisure in the comfort and safety of their home during the pandemic.

Virtual Story Time

Storybook reading is a great way to connect with children during stressful events. Using children's literature in an interactive way may help parents and caregivers understand children's experiences and improve their coping skills. The Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent was invited as a guest reader for the Culbertson Public Library Virtual Story Time and read the book "What is Coronavirus?" by Christine Borst, PhD, LMFT. This book gives a simple explanation of the coronavirus and the disease of COVID-19 and provides





Previous Page: (top) Wash Away Germs visual, by Judy Heupel; **(center)** Example of the 'Food for Thought for Seniors' newsletter, by Ardis Oelkers ; **(bottom)** Roosevelt County Extension Agent, Ardis Oelkers, by Judy Heupel; **This Page:** Randee Shannon, International Program for Young Adults representative, by Ardis Oelkers

suggestions for things children can do while they are practicing physical distancing. A reading guide accompanies the book and provides adults with suggested activities and probing questions to help children personally connect with the experiences of the characters in the book.

The book suggested to children to keep their body healthy by drinking lots of water, eating a rainbow of foods and getting a good night's sleep. The book also elaborates that doctors and scientists are learning more about the coronavirus every day and that children don't need to worry about this because it is the job of the grown-ups. The book also suggests to journal and write down feelings and to draw or color a picture for others. Hopefully a few of the 580 families that viewed the Facebook post related with this virtual storybook and it helps children and families through the stressful pandemic.

Practicing Good Hand Hygiene is Important

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), handwashing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading germs, and to prevent both infectious diseases and foodborne illnesses. During the coronavirus pandemic, keeping hands clean is especially important to help prevent the virus from spreading. When the virus gets onto hands and is not washed off, it can be passed from person to person. Germs from unwashed hands can get into the body through the mouth, nose, and eyes and make people sick. Good hand hygiene – regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – reduces the spread of germs that can cause illness.

The Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent educated 40 Culbertson fourth and fifth grade students and teachers about regularly washing hands. This key preventive

action along with using an alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (if soap and water are not readily available) are important steps in stopping the spread of viruses. Teaching students and faculty about handwashing helps them and their community stay healthy. Since the handwashing lessons at the beginning of the school year, teachers have established a culture of hand hygiene by reinforcing the importance of handwashing, building time into daily routines for students to wash hands, placing hand sanitizers throughout the classroom and near frequently touched surfaces, and promoting hand hygiene in their classroom with visual posters.

Roosevelt County Staff

Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EQ/AE Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.



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