

WVU Extension Commitments: 2006-2010

WVU Extension Service: Taking the people's university to the people

For 2000-2005, WVU Extension operated within the framework of a Strategic Program Plan that reflected our commitments to address five critically important educational needs statewide. Following that period and like each University academic unit, Extension faculty and staff then engaged in helping build the *West Virginia University 2010 Plan*. Extension's *Commitments* for the previous five years were also reviewed to determine their continued relevance.

With clarification of the focus of Extension's major program *Commitments* for the 2006-2010 period, it was determined that the major program areas still represented critical educational needs of West Virginians. Specific ways in which Extension will assist in implementing the University goals were identified. The following represents the current set of strategic *WVU Extension Commitments, 2006-2010* aligned with the *WVU 2010 Plan's five goals*.

Serving West Virginians

As a land-grant, multicampus university with high research activity, West Virginia University was created to help West Virginians make their lives better. To do that, WVU relies on the WVU Extension Service as the "doorway to WVU" in every county. For nearly 100 years, WVU Extension Service has provided research-based, reliable information, education, and problem-solving programs that are timely and relevant. Our roots are deep in West Virginia, where we have a WVU office in each of the state's 55 counties, where we meet the needs of rural and urban residents.

WVU Extension is best known for its strong and historic 4-H program, in which one in every five West Virginia young people (60,000) are developing life skills and becoming leaders in their schools and communities. We are a unique collaboration among federal, state, and local governments, private and nonprofit sectors, volunteers, and the national system of land-grant universities. We are a sought-after partner for many state and local agencies who seek our expertise because of our community connections and track record of commonsense, research-based solutions.

Our people

West Virginians rely on their county WVU Extension agent to deliver educational programs and practical solutions to meet local needs. Local needs are identified by community advisory committees, created by the West Virginia State Code and known as the County Extension Service Committee, and through regular, daily interaction with major stakeholder groups. Examples include: West Virginia Cattleman's Association and other producer and commodity organizations; sister state and federal agencies addressing agriculture and natural resource issues; parents, families, schools, and organizations

focused on successful youth development; health care and nutrition providers and advocates of healthy lifestyles; sustainable community and economic development experts and champions; firefighters and other first responders; employers focused on safe workplaces; and worker advocates.

WVU Extension agents are also WVU faculty members, with a master's or doctoral degree. They receive support from WVU Extension subject matter specialists and staff located primarily on the WVU Morgantown campus. These Extension "state specialists" and other faculty from WVU's 13 colleges and schools provide information and current research that result in proven practices taught by WVU Extension agents. While very focused on the needs of local West Virginia communities, the current research and proven practices that undergird all WVU Extension programs are also derived from multistate collaborative work among the nation's 103 land-grant university faculties that are part of the United States Cooperative Extension System.

The regular WVU Extension workforce of 465 county agents, state specialists, and staff is augmented by an additional 1200 seasonal employees who help deliver our large, statewide summer learning programs. More than 22,000 well-trained volunteers also help design, deliver, evaluate, and improve Extension programs each year. Employees of numerous longtime program partners help in this regard as well: Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) of the West Virginia Department of Education, West Virginia's departments of agriculture and forestry, its conservation service, and its development office; county school professionals and others.

Our programs

Many identify with WVU Extension through our 78 educational programs. Some of the most recognized programs are 4-H, Dining with Diabetes, Master Gardeners, Germ City, Firefighter Training, Community Educational Outreach Service, Family Nutrition Program, Energy Express, Soil Testing, Workplace Safety, Pesticide Recertification Training, Character Education, Beef Quality Assurance, Farm Management, CARDIAC Challenge, Forest Stewardship, and Community Leadership Development.

We offer programs in four areas:

Agriculture and natural resources agents and specialists work with farmers, landowners, and communities to support local agriculture and encourage wise use of natural resources. We are committed to helping small family farmers find ways to increase their profits. We continue to be the trusted local source for answers to home and garden questions. We're committed to ensuring a safe food supply and working with rural landowners to develop alternative enterprises.

4-H Youth Development professionals and programs provide educational, fun, and safe opportunities for young people to make friends, to learn, and to grow. Positive youth development is achieved through weaving essential elements into 4-H programs that promote independence, generosity, and mastery of new skills, all provided in safe and caring environments. The three primary educational areas of emphasis are healthy lifestyles; science, engineering, and technology; and developing good citizenship skills

through leadership development and service learning. We will continue to enhance and strengthen university-level collegiate 4-H clubs and our community club program in every county, expand after-school offerings, and help more children experience the magic of a county or state 4-H camp. Our literacy programs strengthen children's reading skills and promote the benefits of adults and children reading together.

Families and health faculty and paraprofessionals help families thrive by providing researched-based knowledge, skills, and resources for healthier lifestyle choices. Our nutrition and health education programs teach individuals and families ways to improve their diets. Through education, we encourage healthy lifestyle choices and the benefits of being physically active. Our family resource management programs help young people and adults understand successful ways to save, spend, and manage resources. We provide education about food preservation, handling, storage, and safety. Adults working with, caring for, or parenting young children receive education and materials about developmentally appropriate practices for establishing nurturing environments in which children grow and develop successfully. Our faculty work with adults to build leadership and interpersonal skills and provide an ongoing avenue for continued learning and global community involvement.

Community development experts help to promote collaborative community projects and build the capacities of local businesses and governments. We deliver programs that build local leadership capacity; expand and attract employment; improve retail opportunities; and provide information and recommendations on downtown revitalization, tourism, and other aspects of community, economic, and workforce development. In addition, we are helping West Virginia individuals and communities prepare for and cope with disasters.

WVU Extension also operates **WVU Jackson's Mill**, located near Weston, the site of the nation's first state 4-H camp and the current "home" of many state youth camps, heritage and nature education programs, and learning opportunities for people of all ages. The Mill is the new location for WVU's Fire Service Extension and State Fire Academy, a place where emergency responders will receive training that meets national standards.

WVU Extension's Organizational Goals and Link to WVU's 2010 Plan Goals

Through 2010, WVU Extension will work to:

1. Maintain a WVU Extension office in all 55 counties, staffed by one or more WVU Extension agents to serve local needs and be the "doorway to WVU." (*WVU 2010 Plan Goals 3 and 5*)
2. Aggressively address deferred maintenance, fire code, and accessibility issues at WVU Jackson's Mill (\$13.8 million invested to date; \$14-18 million needed). (*WVU 2010 Plan Goal 3*)
3. Strengthen traditional programs and develop new programs to meet emerging community and statewide needs. (*WVU 2010 Plan Goals 4 & 5*)
4. Provide educational programs that are practical, timely, unbiased, and backed by the research of WVU's 13 academic colleges and schools and the cooperating faculty in the national land-grant university-based Cooperative Extension System. (*WVU 2010 Plan Goals 4 & 5*)

5. Make wise, efficient use of limited county, state, and federal funds and work to secure additional sources of funding. *(WVU 2010 Plan Goals 2 & 4)*
6. Make measurable impacts on community and economic development in West Virginia through our programs. *(WVU 2010 Plan Goal 5)*
7. Work with Enrollment Management to implement recruitment efforts that encourage West Virginia 4-H'ers to attend WVU. *(WVU 2010 Plan Goal 1)*
8. Consolidate Extension's 160 employees, computer and other labs, classrooms, and storage facilities in one new modern office and classroom building on or near the WVU Morgantown Campus. *(WVU 2010 Plan Goal 3)*

Our funding

State funding for WVU Extension Service is currently \$9.7 million (32%). WVU Extension uses that \$9.7 million to leverage other funds, for a total annual operating budget of approximately \$30 million. We raise 38 percent of our total budget through competitive grants, fees, and individual, foundation, and corporate gifts. County partners (largely county commissions and boards of education) contribute approximately 13 percent of our total budget. The remaining 17 percent of the budget consists primarily of federal (U.S. Department of Agriculture) funds. Grants and fees have increased from about \$2 million in 1995 to about \$6 million in 2007.

A few facts: WVU Extension

Date of founding: 1915

Total client contacts in 2006: 645,183

Number of county agents: 1996: 129
2006: 108

Number of state specialists: 1996: 71
2006: 73

Number of 4-H youth: 59,984

Number of 4-H adult volunteers: 9,956

Number of youth attending 4-H camps in 2006: 20,308

Value added to agricultural products through WVU Extension programs: \$5.9 million

Master Gardener volunteers: 1,200

Community Educational Outreach Service members: 5,680

For more information: www.ext.wvu.edu