

Colorado State University Extension Funding in El Paso County Fact Sheet (Including 4-H and Master Gardener Programs)

Currently, Extension programs in El Paso County will only continue past December 31, 2008 with sufficient county funding. Why? Extension services are a collaborative relationship between county, state and federal funds, managed by Colorado State University Extension. Extension Programs meet adult and youth educational needs so that local citizens receive research-based information. This relationship and funding of Extension is defined in federal legislation that creates and defines Land Grant Institutions across the United States. These regulations, coupled with information from CSU and Joel Plath, Interim County Director, leads us to the following conclusions:

Myth: Our county commissioners love 4-H, so they will keep that program alive.

Fact: Due to the federal/state/county collaborative relationship of Extension, a county cannot pick and choose which programs to fund. Either Extension offers educational programs to all citizens, young and adult, or none at all. Programs include not just 4-H, but also nutrition and food safety, management of natural resources (water and land), and others. Without CSU Extension 4-H will not exist in El Paso County.

Myth: We'll just join 4-H in another county.

Fact: If Extension does not exist in El Paso County, youth will not be allowed to register in adjoining counties. To do so would mean that taxpayers in the other county would be paying for programs for youth from El Paso County.

Myth: We own property in another county, so we are eligible to join 4-H in that county.

Fact: 4-H eligibility is defined by one's place of residence.

Myth: If we submit 4-H enrollments as usual, they have to keep 4-H.

Fact: 2009 4-H enrollments will be delayed until after the sustainability of El Paso County Extension has been determined. This same policy will apply for citizens interested in other trainings offered by Extension in El Paso County (such as Master Gardener Training).

Myth: The 1% sales tax increase referendum will fund Extension.

Fact: The 1% sales tax increase will fund public safety initiatives, like the county jail, courts, sheriff, and public safety matters. Thus, money previously spent for these federally and state mandated expenses will be freed-up for expenditure in other areas, like Extension. The El Paso Board of County Commissioners would still have to appropriate sufficient funds to keep the Extension office in El Paso County open.

What does all this mean to the 4-H Community in El Paso County? Essentially, if the proposed tax increase passes in November there is a chance that Extension could regain funding and thus 4-H could continue. If it fails, there is likely little to no chance CSU Extension (which includes 4-H) would continue in El Paso County.

The mission of the **El Paso County Extension Advisory Board** includes informing county residents and relating their feedback to Extension at the county and state levels. Board members represent various Extension programs like Food and Nutrition, Master Gardeners, Agriculture, 4-H and at-large members.

Questions? Concerns? Contact an Extension Advisory Board Member!

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