

Impact

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

Management, networking and grants energize rural development

Extension creates new opportunities for business, government and people throughout Dolores County.

Issue

Less than 2,100 people live in Southwest Colorado's Dolores County. Its two main towns, Dove Creek and Rico, are separated by miles of mountains, mesas and small canyons. For decades, potable water, social services, business opportunities and other community amenities were few to non-existent. Dolores County needed management expertise, a network of partners and a steady funding stream to jump-start improvements.

Extension's Response

Dolores County Extension county director, Dan Fernandez, addressed this need when he joined Colorado State University Extension in 1990. The county had been working to bring potable water to its rural residents since the 1970s.

Fernandez developed strategic county relationships with the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), the Southwest Water Conservancy District, and the Montezuma Water Company to develop a rural water project. He applied for a DOLA grant and received over \$200,000 in state and federal funding to construct two 300,000-gallon storage tanks. He then led a three year campaign to complete the project, which resulted in 66 miles of waterlines that serve almost 200 households. According to Fernandez, the success of the water project created a demand for county-wide improvements and prepared Extension for involvement in long term, community development programing.

Fernandez's position is unique compared to most CSU Extension county directors. In addition to providing Extension programming, he also fills gaps in county government by assuming certain responsibilities that county managers and planners typically handle, such as grant writing and economic development. For two decades, Dolores County Extension, through Fernandez, has provided technical assistance and oversight to over 10 boards and agencies.

Since 1990, Fernandez has also written over 140 grants to establish and enhance programs, services and business opportunities throughout the county. Significant community development projects include:

- Dolores County Fairgrounds construction and expansion: 1994-97
- Dove's Nest Early Care and Education Center, the first licensed facility of its kind serving the county: Established 1996, grants ongoing
- DCTV, a public access channel network that provides 4-H evening news, local weather, and educational programming: Established 1996, grants and sponsorships ongoing
- Community Health Clinic construction and improvements: 1998 to present
- Dick & Adele Weber Business Park: Established 2003, grants ongoing



The Bottom Line

- Dolores County Extension has improved the lives of county residents through millions of dollars in grants that support critical community services and programs.
- Dolores County Extension's management and networking expertise created long term community development.

By the Numbers

Dolores County Extension achievements since 1990:

- Number of grants written: 141
- Number of grants awarded: 116
- Amount of funding awarded: \$4,238,413
- Total grant package value: \$5,841,329
- Estimated current value: \$11,582,731

Impact

Since 1990, Dolores County Extension has generated over \$4 million in direct grant funding to support local services, programs, infrastructure and people. These projects have created new opportunities for economic development and improved residents' quality of life. Dolores County Extension also provided significant coordination, management and advisory expertise to ensure grant-funded projects succeeded. As a result, Extension helped generate a wealth of community, environmental and economic impacts, including:

Safe and reliable drinking water

- The rural water project brought potable water into people's homes and increased rural western Dolores County land values from \$100 per acre to \$700 in fourteen years.
- Town of Rico water improvements made town drinking water safe and increased storage capacity three-fold; lot values increased from \$5,000 to \$40,000 in seven years.

Family and individual stability and health

- Dove's Nest Early Care and Education Center allowed both parents to take on full-time jobs and increased the safety and education of children.
- The Dove Creek Community Health Clinic annually sees 1,400 patients, regardless of their ability to pay. It is the medically underserved region's only federally-qualified health center.
- The Senior Center guarantees the county's aging population has access to nutritious meals, safe transportation, and medical care and remains an integral part of the community.

New business opportunities

- The Nonprofit Dolores County Development Corporation established the Dick & Adele Weber Business Park in Dove Creek from 12 acres of donated raw ground. Numerous federal and state rural and economic development grants made the project possible.
- The business park has generated new opportunities for light industry and tourism, including a cement mixing company, a metal salvage operation and an antique tractor display.
- Business anchor San Juan Biodiesel, a 2.5 million gallon oilseed crushing and biodiesel production facility, developed a new dryland cropping rotation for local and regional growers. The business, now closed and for sale, employed 15 people at the height of its operation.

Community connections and a window to the world

- Dolores County Broadcasting Network (DCBN) is a UHF and cable-based public access channel that Dolores County Extension started in 1996. The network now owns one transmitter, manages three, covers Southwest Colorado and Southeast Utah and has a potential viewing audience of 40,000 residents. It broadcasts live and recorded programming via off-air antennae and cable, rebroadcasts a feed of Colorado Public Radio and streams live on the Web.
- Dolores County Extension has acquired over \$230,000 in grants to build a new studio and develop live 4-H evening news programming.
- Live and recorded programming features CSU Extension instructional workshops, church services, music, weather, Web cams, classic movies and more.
- Major contributors include Dolores County, the Southwest TV Translator Association, and Baja Cable.

Colorado State University Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. May 2011. Written by Carol Busch.

County Partners

Anschutz Foundation
Bacon Family Foundation
BOCES
Colorado Advanced Technology Institute
Colorado Council of the Arts
Colorado Department of Agriculture
Colorado Department of Transportation
Colorado State University Extension
Colorado State University Extension 4-H Fund
The Colorado Trust
Coutts & Clark Foundation
Daniel's Fund Foundation
Department of Local Affairs
Dolores County
El Pomar Foundation
Farm Services Agency
GOCO
Job Training Partners Act
Montezuma Water Company
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Region 9 Economic Development District
Social Services
Southwest TV Translator Association
Southwest Water Conservation District
State Historical Society
Town of Dove Creek
Town of Rico
USDA Rural Development
USDA San Juan RC&D
US Forest Service
Workforce Investment Act

Learn More

A complete list of grants made possible by Dolores County Extension since 1991 is available at www.extension.colostate.edu/WR/Dolores/grants.pdf.

Contact Information

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