

Through the guidance of the Food Systems Indicator 1.1c (Colorado food system stakeholders will have a better understanding about linkages between natural resources, production methods, market structure and access, food safety and nutrition and public health.), I have worked tirelessly to establish a cohesive working group related to food systems. This group, which is working very well with a tremendous amount of cross-participation, encompasses multiple counties in SW CO and northern NM. These organizational methods have helped to secure significant levels of resources (grants totaling over \$100k annually) with the hope for potentially much more coming in the next 5 years. The local food movement was very disorganized prior to 2009. With my assistance, and the assistance of others in the community, we have developed strong local, regional, and even statewide working groups. Attendees at programs aimed at increasing awareness and access to local and healthy food have numbered in the 100's; we have established a well-organized Food Policy Council; and also have a regional food alliance that meets quarterly to discuss food and agricultural issues.

A woman called me re financial guidance. She has been divorced for 25 years from a physician (received virtually no settlement), never remarried, is now almost 67 years old, has virtually no Social Security available to her, plans on working for another 3-4 years and trying to feather her retirement account. I advised her to contact Social Security to check on possibility of making claim on ex-husband's Social Security number. When she went to Soc Sec office they told her it wasn't possible. I then basically hand guided her thru the process and yes she did qualify. Not only will she draw \$1000 per month in addition to her current salary until she retires (and begins draining her pension) but she also received \$8000 lump sum for back pay. Women more often than not (especially divorced raising children) are financially stressed during working career and more in harms way after retirement. This woman was given an excellent boost to her ability to retire in better shape financially. We talked of opportunities that were now open to her to take the best advantage of her situation.

As the saying goes, "Think globally, Act locally", I would like to start off this article with a unique community service announcement from one of our La Plata County 4-H Clubs.

Looking for a way to get rid of all that leftover baling twine? The Rockin Riders 4H Club is recycling baling twine.

“We hope to reduce the amount of polypropylene going into our landfills. La Plata County uses tons of baling twine every year. After it’s used, it is either thrown away, burned, or buried,” says Emma Van Dyck, president of the Rockin Riders. “Basin Co-op and La Plata County Fairgrounds are our current drop-off locations, but we are looking for more locations as well.”

Starting March 5, you may drop off your used baling twine at Basin Co-op or the fairgrounds. If your business would like to volunteer as a drop-off location, please contact Emma Van Dyck at 970-903-5741 or Lisa Marie Jacobs at 970-903-6818. 4H is strongly supported by La Plata County and we would like to give back to our community.

So, instead of just bunching up your bailing twine and throwing it into the trash, please take the time and separate it into its own box or bag and then bring it to a drop-off location. 4-H members are learning to be the next environmental stewards of the land, water and air. Community engagement in this initiative will help them towards this goal.

This is also a great example of how positive youth-adult partnerships are making a difference in our community. Many 4-H community service and service-learning projects require the commitment and dedication from both adults and youths. Many service activities require adults (parents) to assist youths in the process of planning, organizing and implementing an activity. Through these activities both adults and youths can gain practical skills on how to work together across generational differences for a good cause.