

# Washington State University Klickitat County Extension

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION

AGRICULTURE

YOUTH & FAMILIES



**W**ashington State University Klickitat County Extension is part of the world-class outreach and engagement enterprise of the university. We partner with businesses and citizens to expand the problem-solving capacity of communities within the county; to promote the wise use of natural resources and the environment; to develop economic opportunities for agriculture; and to eliminate barriers to success of youth and families.

We leverage every dollar we receive from Klickitat County with federal, state, grant, and private funding to maximize our reach and effectiveness. For every \$1 invested by Klickitat County in 2007, WSU Extension and county faculty and staff provided \$2.95 in state and federal resources and extramural funding. That's a 295 percent return on the county's investment in Klickitat County Extension.

## Impacts

### Community Development

Poverty is an issue in every corner of the state, including Klickitat County where about 17 percent of the population lives in poverty (2000 U.S. Census). WSU Klickitat County Extension is addressing this issue through Horizons, a community leadership program funded by the Northwest Area Foundation. The 18-month education and training program provides local residents with tools to reduce poverty and improve their quality of life.

Five communities in Klickitat County—Trout Lake, White Salmon/Bingen, Klickitat, Glenwood, and Goldendale—participated from 2006–2008. Local leaders who graduated from the program are now leading their neighbors as they take steps to improve their communities. They have created gardens, a non-profit education organization, weekend food programs for children, newsletters, and beautification programs. White

### KLICKITAT COUNTY QUICK FACTS

- *County seat: Goldendale*
- *Land area, in square miles: 1,872 (state rank: 16)*
- *Median household income (2004): \$37,416*
- *Population (2007): 19,900 (state rank: 30)*
- *Incorporated Communities (3): Goldendale, Bingen, White Salmon*

### CONTACT

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## REDUCING POVERTY

*Horizons participants have spoken enthusiastically about the program:*

*“Horizons was an opportunity for new voices to be heard in our community.”*

— Glenwood Steering Committee member

*“We’re showing that we’re loving our community. We still need to reach others—they have skills to bring.”*

— Klickitat Steering Committee member

*“I am overwhelmed by all the things that have been accomplished in 18 months.”*

— Horizons Coach

Salmon’s Humboldt Community Garden contributed 1,062 pounds of their produce to the local food bank for distribution. Horizons participants continue to work on complex issues such as affordable housing, transportation, and telecommunication.

The WSU Learning Center—Klickitat County and WSU Extension continue to provide resources and facilitation for many of the poverty-reduction activities and training that arose, including grant writing, entrepreneurship, and green building, to name a few.

Three more communities—Lyle, Wishram, and the Big River Native American Community—were chosen to participate in the program for 2008–2010.

## Access to Higher Education

One reason young people leave rural counties is a lack of local educational opportunities beyond high school. This problem is especially acute in Klickitat County, where only 14 percent of the county’s population falls in the 20-to-34 age range, compared with 21 percent for the rest of the nation. Since 1997, WSU Learning Center—Klickitat County has been helping break down barriers to higher education access. More than 20 students have received Associate of Arts degrees from Yakima Valley Community College. Others have transferred to the WSU Distance Degree Program with 18 having earned Bachelor’s degrees, thereby qualifying for better employment while staying in the area.

Take Chris Twohy, who now is the Youth Treatment Coordinator for Klickitat County with Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health. The Goldendale resident turned to the Learning Center when the aluminum plant, his previous employer, shut down several years ago. Twohy earned an AA from Yakima Valley Community College and a BA in Social Sciences through WSU’s Distance Degree Program via the Learning Center.

The ability to advance his education locally was important to him. “If the Learning Center locally wasn’t an option...I would not have returned to school and [would] not be doing the work I do now.”

The Learning Center also has helped hundreds of adults earn their GED and qualify for college, employment, or the military. In addition to providing access to higher education, the Learning Center regularly offers non-credit classes requested by area employers on topics ranging from traffic flagging to specific computer programs.

Over the past several years, the Learning Center has emphasized economic development through partnerships with the county’s Economic Development Department and the regional Small Business Development Center. An annual Renewable Energy (RE) program provides education on residential wind and solar power, Washington State’s RE incentives, and local net metering options. More than 15 Klickitat PUD customers are taking advantage of net metering; most of those people have participated in at least one of the Learning Center’s annual seminars.

Recently, the Learning Center partnered with the Klickitat Public Utility District (PUD) to conduct a financial education series for PUD customers with significant account deposits. After successfully completing the series of three classes, \$4,650 was released to 21 participants by the PUD. These participants could then open a bank savings account for their funds when they were otherwise unable to open one. Many saw this program as a chance to improve their credit history. One woman said, “I’m going to use my \$500 check to pay my PUD bill in advance for the winter. This way, I know I won’t get behind.”

## Youth Development

Through a variety of activities, the WSU Klickitat County Extension 4-H program helps young people develop life skills that enable them to become self-directed, productive, and contributing members of society. In 2007, a total of 655 youth—about 20 percent of 4-H-eligible youth in the county—took part in a broad range of activities, including traditional market livestock clubs, Know Your Government, Culture Camp, Teen Conference, Summer Horse Camp, Project-in-a-Day, shooting sports, after-school robotics, and more.

One example of Extension’s effective youth-adult partnerships is the annual Northwest Lamboree, held at the Klickitat County Fairgrounds, with over 100 youth and adults attending in May 2008. The Lamboree is an excellent opportunity for participants to gain leadership and other life skills as they learn more about how to raise, care for, and breed market sheep successfully.

More than 200 adult volunteer leaders provide direct support and guidance to 4-H youth. The Leaders’ Council determines the direction and emphasis of the county program with support and guidance from county faculty and staff. The Council conducts fundraising activities and provides scholarships for educational pursuits by both youth and leaders.

## Agriculture

Agriculture has always been an important sector of Klickitat County’s economy. Its 700 farms and ranches generate more than \$52 million in sales (2002 Census of Agriculture) and employ 17.4 percent of the county’s workers (2000, Washington Employment Security Department).

WSU Klickitat County Extension partners with Oregon State University-Wasco County Extension to conduct national award-winning programming in farm financial management and farm succession planning. Farm financial management educational materials developed in the mid-Columbia area have been adapted for use in Wyoming and Louisiana; the “Farm and Ranch Survival Kit” program was featured on the *Successful Farming Radio Magazine* program, which is broadcast to 1.25 million listeners in 22 midwestern states.

Feedback from financial management outreach revealed that program participants have taken crucial and decisive actions because of their involvement in the program. Many report starting or completing business plans, marketing plans and/or farm succession plans. Others have reviewed and/or changed their business structure, insurance coverage, and farm management/family



## LEARNING LIFE SKILLS

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## SUSTAINABLE FARMING

*Feedback from farm financial management outreach revealed that program participants have taken crucial and decisive actions because of their involvement in the program including completing business, marketing, and/or farm succession plans.*

communication strategies. One participant said, “I feel like I went from knowing nothing to [being] able to make intelligent decisions.”

Annual WSU variety trials provide valuable information to the county’s small grain producers and help them decide which crop varieties are most likely to be profitable. “The WSU small grain trials definitely give us an opportunity to see what does well in our area,” said one local grain grower.

County Extension faculty also are engaged in regional and national educational outreach to livestock producers, particularly small ruminant producers.

## Master Gardeners

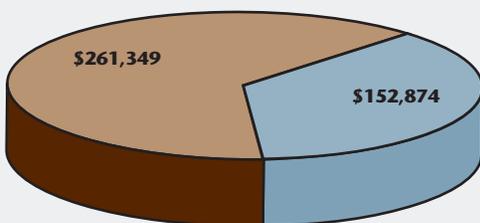
More than 65 volunteer WSU Klickitat County Master Gardeners have been trained and now advise home gardeners how to select and care for the right plants for a given purpose and area. The Master Gardeners conduct walk-in plant clinics and answer telephone inquiries about gardening, thus magnifying the outreach of the local Extension office with no additional staffing costs. Their advice results in less indiscriminant use of pesticides and herbicides, less destruction of beneficial or harmless insects, increased plant viability due to proper horticultural practices, reduced economic losses due to improper plant selection and care, and improved quality of life for county residents due to the benefits of gardening.

WSU Klickitat Master Gardeners have obtained grants to develop school gardens and greenhouses in five communities. A dedicated cadre of these volunteers teaches children how to plant vegetable and flower seeds, propagate plants, and harvest vegetables. The children delight in having the fresh and nutritious vegetables they have grown included in their school lunch program. The children also enter their garden products in the county fair and many go on to the state fair as well; the ribbons and premium checks they earn create feelings of accomplishment and positive life-long memories.

## Overview of Funding for WSU Klickitat County Extension Programs

**WSU Support for County Extension Programs**

- WSU Support in County
- Other WSU Support



**Direct Funding Sources for County Extension Programs**

- Total WSU Support
- Grants and Contracts
- County Support



**Total Funding Supporting County Extension Programs**

- WSU Support in County
- Other WSU Support
- Grants and Contracts
- County Support

