



PUEBLO COUNTY
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Pueblo County PATHWAYS

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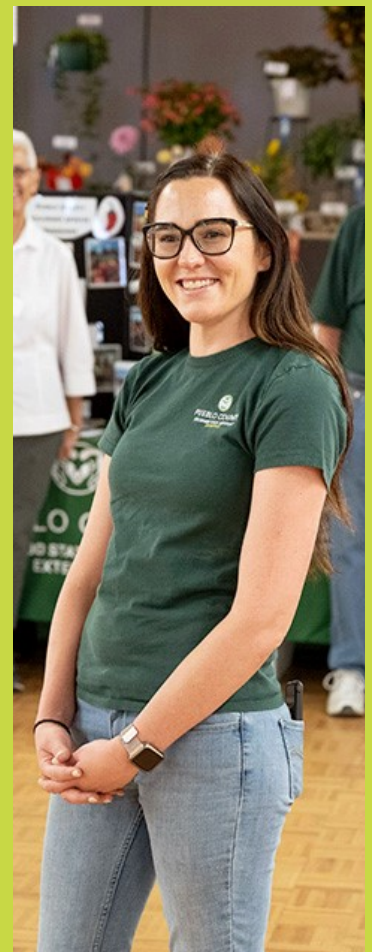


CSU Extension-Pueblo County Director Named

On November 1, 2022, Sherie Shaffer started as the Director for CSU Extension in Pueblo County. Sherie had been the Horticulture Agent at CSU Extension in Pueblo County since 2015. She also served as the Assistant County Director for the past couple of years.

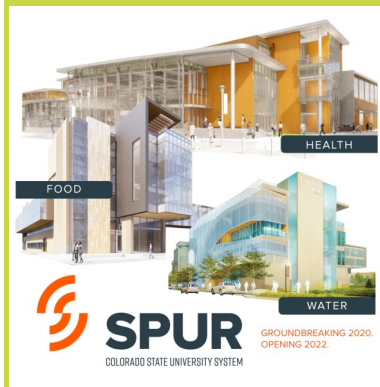
Born and raised right here in Pueblo, Sherie has a passion for community and providing research-based programming to all of its residents. “I am excited about taking on this new role and the opportunity to lead the CSU Extension office in Pueblo to reaching more people with our quality educational programming”.

The Pueblo County staff is excited to have Sherie at the helm. Her program assistants says “Her energy and excitement are contagious. She tackles issues head-on and gets the job done. We are excited for the future of Pueblo County Extension.”



Sherie Shaffer takes the helm as Pueblo County Extension Director

Pueblo Produce Highlighted at CSU Spur



In conjunction with many partners, contributors and collaborators, the Colorado State University System has opened an educational complex collectively called CSU Spur. The Spur campus hosts three buildings, Terra, Vida and Hydro, as a place for research and education, that is free and open to the public. CSU's Soil Testing and plant diagnostics clinic are housed there along with a fully functional veterinarian clinic and research lab. The state-of-the-art commercial kitchen is used for cooking demonstrations and research to verify the safety of various cooking and food preservation methods and strategies. The Hydro building has a highly efficient water-testing lab ensuring water quality for human consumption and in agriculture is a top priority.

This past fall and early winter, 2022, Pueblo County Extension Agronomy Agent Kristi Bartolo participated in two Spur "Second-Saturday" events, bringing science-based information to the public and other participants visiting the campus on those days.



In promotion of the Pueblo Chile and Frijoles Festival, Spur held a "Pueblo Chile Day" for one of the Second Saturday events. At the event, information about Pueblo Chile was given out to participants including the plant's stages of growth, pepper breeding and how the Pueblo Chile came to be along with various fun facts. Kids were able to dissect Chile peppers, getting a better look at the different parts, while experiencing the delightful aroma of a ripe pepper. Many bushels of Chile peppers were given out to participants and community members for taste testing and to bring home. Chile pepper recipes were tested out in the Spur kitchen, showing the pepper's versatility in the culinary world.



At another Second Saturday event, Bartolo provided information on soils as part of the "Potato Day" at Spur. Approximately 50 participants, children and adults, learned about the living components of soil, held live worms, and determined soil texture by feel. Participants compared soil from Pueblo farmland to soil of other areas. This aspect allowed them to understand that different areas have different soils, and some soils are more suitable for growing crops than other soils. Participants held and touched live worms and saw living roots, which helped them to realize that soil is not stagnant and must be cared for; the living creatures in the soil can do marvelous things to make plants tastier and healthier, when well cared for.

Pueblo County Extension will be participating in more Spur Second-Saturday events in 2023, bringing more knowledge and aspects of Pueblo agriculture to Denver and the surrounding areas.



Halloween Carnival a Spooktacular Success for Pueblo County 4-H

The annual Pueblo County 4-H Leadership Society Carnival and Dance was a springtime staple, a beloved event by 4-H members and the community alike. Both a public outreach event and a Club fundraiser, the annual carnival filled a niche within the jam-packed yearly 4-H Calendar.

After being shelved for a few years after the COVID pandemic, the Pueblo County 4-H Leadership Society decided a change was needed to increase the relevance and accessibility for the Pueblo community. Their solution? The annual springtime Carnival would become a Halloween Carnival and Dance. The date was set for Saturday, October 29, 2022.

All was far from certain. Some of the youngest members in Leadership Society had never even attended the Carnival, let alone planned it. Adult advisors were new in their positions. Clubs had to shuffle their schedules to attend amidst a flurry of events for Horse leaders and Shooting Sports leaders.

The solution lay in utilizing social media. CSU Staff posted the event on Facebook, and volunteers shared it within their friend networks. The event reached over 12 thousand people, with 1.3 thousand stating their intention to attend. Folks were tagging friends and family members, making plans to come support our Pueblo County 4-H program.

The First Annual Halloween Carnival and Dance was a smashing success. Over 400 attendees played games, bought concessions, won prizes, and raised funds for our Pueblo County 4-H Clubs and Members. The costume contest was particularly popular, with over 50 children participating across all age ranges. From a spot-on Rip Wheeler to an adorable baby gnome, kids got to strut their stuff for the chance to win candy.

There were over 4600 tickets collected by the six Clubs running booths at the event, totaling just over \$930 in funds for Pueblo County 4-H Leadership Society and Clubs. The average ticket collection per club was 17% higher than the previous Carnival in 2020; furthermore, several children who attended the Carnival decided to enroll in 4-H as members for the 2022-2023 year!

The Second Annual Halloween Carnival and Dance is scheduled for October of 2023. Everyone is thrilled to build on this year's success and deliver a bigger, better Carnival next year, not just for the members of 4-H but for all the little ghosts and ghouls of Pueblo County.

Editor's Note: Special thanks to CSU Extension program assistant Lexi Deary for her contributions to the carnival and for writing this article. She filled in when 4-H Agent Jen Loewen was on vacation and organized the marketing and logistics of the carnival. Way to go, Lexi!





PUEBLO COUNTY

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Upcoming Events

For details, call 583-6566 or visit
<http://pueblo.extension.colostate.edu>

Family and Consumer Programs

- Foods Safety Training for Cottage Foods Producers, 3-year certification, fee \$50.00. Various online webinar dates are available. Register at Eventbrite.com
- Monthly webinars on Aging and Caregiving. Call for details and topics. 719-583-6574.
- Free pressure gauge testing. Call 719-583-6566 for appointment.
- Follow the FCS program on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/PuebloFCS/>

Horticulture Programs

- Chickens & Composting, March 9, 3:00-5:00 p.m., free, register at eventbrite.com
- Western Landscape Symposium, April 1, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., \$30.00, register at Eventbrite.com
- All Pueblo Grows Seed Library, collecting and packaging seeds. Look for neighborhood seed boxes. Visit: allpueblogrows.org
- <https://www.facebook.com/PuebloCountyHorticulture>

4-H/Youth Development

- Ongoing Club and County Programs
- Follow us on Facebook and YouTube

Agronomy/Ag/Range/Natural Resources

- Chickens & Composting, March 9, 3:00-5:00 p.m., free, register at eventbrite.com
- Sun, Soil, Water Ag Summit, March 17-18, register at eventbrite.com
- <https://www.facebook.com/PuebloAg>

Follow Pueblo County Extension on Social Media

Instagram page at: <https://www.instagram.com/pueblountyextension/> If you are using the app, you can find us at: @PuebloCountyExtension

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Ag Homeschool Enrichment

The fall of 2022 was a special time for the Pueblo County Ag team of Kristi Bartolo and Beth De Lair. They were able to share educational experiences with a wonderful group of



homeschool students and their families. The learning opportunities focused on agricultural topics geared toward non-traditional Ag youth ranging in age from 2-years all the way to 19-years-old. Topics taught included local farm-to-table production, the importance of dairy products, the use of grains in everyday food, the importance of healthy soil and worms, and finally an overall view of insects and their role in our ecosystem. All the topics included various hands-on activities that engaged the students and allowed them to make critical connections to larger topics. The youth were able to make their own ice cream in a bag, grind up grain, make fresh tortillas from both corn and flour, handle real worms, and build bugs out of pipe cleaners. Some of the younger children who attended the soil and worm class were able to relate the information they learned to the insect class the following week. Children as young as four were able to understand how different insects could act as decomposers and help bring nutrients to plants.



The way the lessons were modified for each age group made them very impactful. The team strived to teach these topics to all youth at their individual levels of understanding. They hope youth take this knowledge and apply it to concepts they interact with daily.

Bartolo and De Lair were thrilled to have the opportunity to work with such a vast group of youth. The future of agriculture rests with the younger generations and to see their eyes light up with excitement when they learned each new topic was truly amazing. The team looks forward to continuing these educational opportunities and appreciates the community support from organizations such as Nola Naturals that have made these teaching sessions possible.