



PUEBLO COUNTY

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Pueblo County PATHWAYS

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Generation Wild

By Sherie Shaffer

Kids and families in Pueblo, get ready to get outdoors!

The Generation Wild of the Pueblo Region coalition was awarded a significant \$1,750,000 grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). This substantial funding will support a variety of outdoor recreation and nature programs in the Pueblo area over the next five years.

The grant is part of GOCO's Generation Wild program, which supports coalitions of public, nonprofit, and private organizations dedicated to connecting youth and families to meaningful outdoor experiences and pathways to potential outdoor careers. To date, GOCO has invested \$75.5 million through this program, helping 15 Generation Wild coalitions deliver 9,550 programs and reach over 360,222 participants across Colorado.

CSU Extension-Pueblo County is a proud partnering organization in the Generation Wild coalition, and our team is excited to play a direct role in bringing these opportunities to the community. We will be receiving \$30,000 of the grant funding over five years to launch several new initiatives designed to connect Pueblo families with the region's natural and agricultural heritage. These programs include:

Natural Resources Tours for Families: Guided excursions that will introduce families to the unique ecosystems, wildlife, and conservation efforts across Pueblo County.

Summer Day Camps for Youth: Engaging, hands-on camps designed to get young people actively exploring nature, learning survival skills, and developing an appreciation for the environment.

Family Farm Days: Special events that offer guided tours highlighting local agriculture, giving families an up-close look at where their food comes from. Each event will culminate in a celebratory farm-to-table dinner, allowing attendees to taste and appreciate the fresh bounty of Pueblo's local farms.

This funding ensures CSU Extension can provide enriching, educational, and accessible programs that help strengthen the bond between our community's youth and the great outdoors.



Pueblo Region



Pueblo County Fair Traditions

By Cody Shue

The Pueblo County Fair is a cherished annual tradition that brings together people from all corners of our community to celebrate agricultural excellence and local talent. This year, the fair proudly hosted 1,267 entries across an impressive range of categories, including shooting sports, consumer science, equestrian shows, livestock and breeding competitions, and fashion revue. These diverse events provided participants of all ages with a valuable opportunity to display their skills, creativity, and dedication.

The fair serves much more than a competition. It is a gathering place where camaraderie flourishes, friendships are formed, and lasting memories are made. I, for one, have many fond memories of friendly sportsmanship and creating bonds that last a lifetime.

Novice youth exhibitors and seasoned competitors alike contribute to an atmosphere of encouragement and pride. At the same time, families, friends, and visitors enjoy the festivities, learn from one another, and support the achievements of our local 4-H and FFA youth. Each year, the event underscores the importance of agricultural education and the enduring spirit that makes Pueblo County truly unique and keeps our heritage alive.

This year's livestock sale was a tremendous success, generating a total of \$383,000 in sales. Notably, \$30,800 of this amount came from new add-ons, reflecting increased support from local businesses and community members who are eager to invest in our youth. The strong participation in the sale highlights the value placed on agricultural education and the ongoing commitment to nurturing the next generation of agricultural leaders in Pueblo County.

I look forward to even more success and updated news for our 2026 County Fair!



Pueblo Chile Ristras and Cultural Preservation

By Beth Hayes

The feeling of fall isn't complete in Pueblo without the smell of roasting chiles. Pueblo is known as the hub for Colorado chile production, and the history of this tasty vegetable goes way back. Outside of the option to roast and cook the chiles, the long-standing tradition of chile preservation for both cooking and decoration is making tied chile strands called "Ristras". This process was designed to allow for easy preservation of chiles in the fall with minimal space and very little disruption from pests or diseases as the chiles dried.

In Pueblo this cultural practice has continued throughout the ages with the best tying techniques being passed down from generation to generation. During the annual September Chile and Frijole Festival you can see the massive chile ristras decorating the vendor stalls both to admire and to purchase. The Pueblo CSU Extension honors this unique agricultural tradition and crop by cohosting a ristra making class each year that is always a favorite fall activity for the community. The classes have served over 300 people in the last few years and we look forward to continuing the class.

The workshop consists of an in-depth presentation covering chile history, breeding from retired CSU researcher Dr. Mike Bartolo who created the "Mirasol" variety that is known for Pueblo chiles meaning "towards the sun", a flavor profile and of course the conversation of Pueblo chiles versus hatch chiles which are found in New Mexico. The workshop then ends with the participants getting to sort through bushels of locally grown Mirasol Pueblo chile peppers and then they learn from the tying master of a local farming operation of how to make the best chile ristras. This class is open to all ages and it's truly a fun evening of chile spice, conversation and the honoring of a long-time cultural tradition for our community and our agricultural roots.

To get signed up for the 2026 chile classes be sure to reach out to the Pueblo CSU Extension office at 719-583-6566 in early September to get your spot saved.





PUEBLO COUNTY

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EXTENSION

Upcoming Events

For details, call 719-583-6566 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**
- **Free pressure gauge testing. Call 719-583-6566 for appointment.**
- **Follow the FCS program on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/PuebloFCS/>**

Horticulture Programs

- **All Pueblo Grows Seed Library, collecting, and packaging seeds, and gardening classes throughout the growing season. Visit: allpueblogrows.org**
- **Follow the Horticulture program on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/PuebloCountyHorticulture>**

4-H/Youth Development

- **Ongoing Club and County Programs**
- **Follow us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/PuebloCounty4H/>**

Agronomy/Ag/Range/Natural Resources

- **Pesticide testing proctoring. Sign-up through CDA: <https://ag.colorado.gov/plants/pesticides/pesticide-applicator-certification-and-licensing-program>**
- **Ongoing County Programs**
- **Follow the Ag, Natural Resource and Agronomy Program on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PuebloAg>**

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Master Gardeners at the State Fair

By Amanda Weidner

While the State Fair can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people, including decadent food, rides, livestock shows, entertainment, and tradition, for the Pueblo County Master Gardeners it means GAME ON! The Master Gardeners who volunteer to staff our booth each year in the Creative Arts building relish the opportunity to chat with any and all kinds of people about horticulture. They get to compare garden notes with folks from other corners of the state, answer both common and uncommon questions on topics ranging from weeds to bugs, share great resources with the curious, play garden-themed games with kids, and promote the Colorado Master Gardener Program that helped to turn them into such helpful experts.

This year they totaled right around 980 contacts made during the fair. They handed out fun stuff like seeds and squishies as well as informative handouts on serious topics like fire resistant landscaping and choosing the best plants and trees for Pueblo. Visitors to the booth were challenged to identify various seeds and needed to know how many native bees, 1006 by the way, our state has to fill out their

