

Cooperative Extension Service Southcentral Region

The southcentral region is represented by three Cooperative Extension district offices located in Anchorage, Palmer and Soldotna. These districts serve a combined population of over 300,000, covering over 50,000 square miles. Extension programming in the southcentral region must meet a wide variety of clientele interest, ranging from the agricultural communities of the Mat-Su Valley to the fishing communities of the Kodiak Borough.



Anchorage, Copper River Basin, Glennallen, Homer, Palmer, Soldotna/Kenai, Kodiak and surrounding communities

Cooperative Extension Service Program Highlights in Southcentral:

- Learning how to use a **Global Positioning System** to navigate is fairly easy, but using the GPS for emergency response involves using someone else's maps and coordinates. A Mat-Su agent who has used his expertise with the GPS to recover Space Shuttle Columbia debris is teaching Alaskans how to use a GPS for emergency response. What started as a single class in Soldotna, grew into several for state troopers, 911 dispatchers, the Civil Air Patrol and more. A Palmer class developed into three classes with more than 100 participants.
- Maintaining septic systems properly is both a public health and environmental issue that becomes more important with increasing population densities. Extension's water quality coordinator has expanding programming into **wells and septic system education**. He received a Department of Environmental Conservation grant to educate homeowners and will pilot a program this summer on the Kenai Peninsula.
- Potatoes are the most important vegetable crop in Alaska. **Potato Demonstration Day 2007** in Palmer brought together major potato growers, wholesale buyers and local market gardeners. Wholesale buyers saw more than 150 varieties produced in Alaska that could be available for market. Growers saw yield data and discussed purchasing preferences with the buyers. Market gardeners evaluated varieties for their farmer market sales.
- Involvement with Extension's **4-H programs** remains strong with about 3,000 registered members in Alaska, and more than 7,000 other youth benefit from 4-H sponsored programs. Anchorage 4-H coordinates service projects that involve many other community youth and organizations. Since October 2006, participants in three "Pillow Patrol" events in Anchorage and Palmer sewed more than 1,000 pillowcases for foster children and other area children to call their own.

For questions regarding Extension programs, please contact the director's office:



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Cooperative Extension Service North/Northwest Region

The north/northwest region is represented by the Cooperative Extension district office in Nome, as well as publication points in Barrow and Kotzebue. The Nome office serves a population of over 20,000. This region is subsistence-oriented. The reindeer industry has historically been the focus of the Nome office. However, in recent years the program has expanded to include home and commercial horticulture, community and economic development and resource education.



*Barrow, Fort Yukon, Kotzebue, Nome
and surrounding communities*

Cooperative Extension Service Program Highlights in the North/Northwest:

- Rising transportation and food prices present challenges, particularly to low-income families in rural areas. Nome's nutrition educator helps resident through the federally funded **Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program**. A series of classes covers the basics of food budgeting, nutrition, comparison shopping, menu planning and meal preparation—and offers ideas on how to feed families nutritiously while on food stamps. During her first 18 months on the job, the Nome nutrition educator taught the series of classes to more than 50 residents of the area.
- During the past 17 years, Extension's energy specialist has been teaching **cold climate home-building techniques** across Alaska. With rising energy prices this year, audiences were particularly receptive. Twenty-five Nome residents turned out in January for a two-night workshop. This class was followed by an all-day course in Unalakleet with 12 participants.
- The local Extension agent started teaching a **Strong Women** Class in Nome, which focuses on strength training and health issues for midlife and older women. The program encourages leaders to train community members to run the classes — and residents, who were trained last February, have continued teaching the classes in Nome.
- The Nome Extension agent is partnering statewide to develop high school class offerings for a career pathway to enter the field of **early childhood education**, and prepare a qualified workforce in rural Alaskan communities. This is a collaborative effort sponsored by the Alaska Tech Prep Consortium and University of Alaska Distance Early Childhood Education. Classes have been taught to high school students from Kotzebue, Nome and the Bering Straits region.



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Cooperative Extension Service Interior Region

The interior region is represented by two Cooperative Extension district offices located in Fairbanks and Delta Junction. The interior region covers over 130,000 square miles and serves a population of over 100,000. Many of the villages and towns serviced in the Interior are inaccessible by road. Interior region clientele are very diverse, including 4-H leaders, youth groups, homemaker clubs, private and commercial horticulture, commercial agriculture, local government, military personnel and subsistence families.



Delta Junction, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, McGrath, Nenana, Tok and surrounding communities

Cooperative Extension Service Program Highlights in the Interior:

- Extension's energy specialist has taught cold or marine climate home-building techniques across Alaska for the past 17 years. With rising energy prices, audiences were particularly receptive this past year. More than 500 people attended his **solar or home-building workshops** across the state, including in Fairbanks, Delta and Glennallen, where 42 people signed up. A new workshop this year will focus on retrofitting existing homes to lower energy costs.
- Agriculture remains an important focus in Delta. Producers hear from researchers and scientists at Extension's **Farm Forum** and the **Harvest Wrap-Up** gives farmers a chance to talk about the past season. During 2007, Delta Extension hosted **Agricultural Field Day**, which allowed producers to hear about current area research projects. The Delta agent also acts as a tour guide for the annual **Farm Tour**, an opportunity for agricultural tourists to meet the farmers.
- Extension trained 19 **Master Gardeners** in the Interior during 2007 and also taught gardening to rural residents, who pay a premium for imported produce. Gardening is encouraged as a way to supplement subsistence foods with locally grown, healthy foods. As part of a USDA grant, an agent responded to gardening requests in the **Tanana Chiefs Conference** region, filling orders for seeds, fertilizer and potatoes from Nenana, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Loudon (Galena) and Tetlin. Three communities developed community gardens.
- Preserving game meat and fish remain important past-times for Alaskans supplementing their food supply. Cooperative Extension Service home economists offer step-by-step lessons on canning with cans in Extension's new DVD: "**Canning Meat and Fish In Cans.**"
- The **Alaska Specialty and Foods Conference** in Fairbanks attracted 59 participants interested in the specialty foods. Participants were invited to learn about getting their product from kitchen to market and networking with others to sell their homegrown products.

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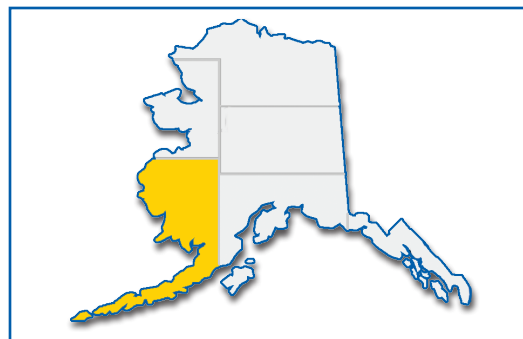
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Cooperative Extension Service Western Region

The western region is represented by the Cooperative Extension district office located in Bethel. The Bethel district covers over 180,000 square miles. Bethel is the trading and governmental hub of the Kuskokwim Delta and serves 46 villages in the area. The region is subsistence-oriented, and Extension programming focuses on safe food handling and preservation, gardening and economic development.



Aniak, Bethel, Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Nulato, Galena, Unalaska and surrounding communities

Cooperative Extension Service Program Highlights in the West:

- Yukon-Kuskokwim communities expressed concern about a **proposed mining development** in their area. During the past three years, Extension has co-sponsored 18 village workshops on mining and community values. Extension also arranged for two one-hour radio shows with a Bethel radio station last spring to address community concerns.
- 4-H hosted a three-day summer camp in Bethel last May for the children of deployed **Alaska National Guard** members who live on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. The kids learned self-defense and emergency preparedness and gun safety, and they carved walking sticks out of willow. Bethel has an active 4-H program. The City of Bethel and Extension fund a person to coordinate the Bethel Youth Center and 4-H program, which is open to youth six days a week all year long. Altogether, 282 youth registered as 4-H members in Bethel in 2007, and most of these kids participate in after-school activities.
- Extension agents must be flexible. On a trip to Unalaska to teach **pesticide safety**, residents asked the agent to teach **gardening and greenhouse techniques**. With the high cost of importing foods, gardening in rural areas has become particularly important.
- Fuel oil costs are the highest in rural Alaska. An Extension economist conducted a **home-heating analysis** in Bethel to determine a firewood market and its size. Residents of Bethel rely on fuel oil and also on driftwood. The economist predicted homes in the area would consume 4,500 to 13,000 cords of firewood annually — and he outlined a plan by which area business could harvest firewood on nearby lands during the winter and transport wood to Bethel area.
- The Cooperative Extension Service developed the **Natural Resources and Community Development program area** in 2007 to meet identified community needs. The program area will provide outreach education regarding forest and mineral resources and mining, water resources and rural communities.



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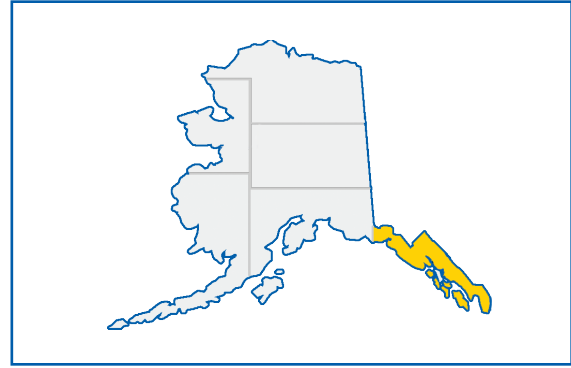
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Cooperative Extension Service Southeast Region

The southeast region is represented by three Cooperative Extension district offices located in Juneau, Sitka and Thorne Bay. These districts serve a combined population of over 60,000 covering over a 50,000 square mile archipelago. As all southeast towns and villages are located off of the road system, agents must travel by ferry or air. Programming centers on subsistence gardening, horticulture business opportunities, secondary processing of forest resources, natural resource education and leadership development.



*Juneau, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Sitka,
Thorne Bay and surrounding communities*

Cooperative Extension Service Program Highlights in the Southeast:

- Responding to a nationwide epidemic of childhood and adult obesity, Extension offered **health, food preparation and nutrition education** to 178 members of Southeast communities, including Craig, Hoonah, Hyder, Juneau, Ketchikan, and Skagway and Sitka. Extension also collaborated with several agencies to teach nutrition education to teens, younger children, families and child care providers. Juneau Extension partnered with the local **AARP Widowed Persons Service** to offer “Cooking for One or Two,” a hands-on cooking class for older adults living alone, singles and pairs of all ages, a program that was duplicated in Haines.
- Many Alaska gardeners want to garden with plants native to Alaska, and federal agencies are required to use native plants to revegetate disturbed federal lands. Finding a source of those plants is difficult. The publication of 10 Extension **fact sheets on growing native plants in Southeast** provided resources to gardeners in that region, and Extension hosted workshops on propagating wild plants. Extension staff will teach a 40-hour Master Gardener course in Sitka and Craig this year with an emphasis on native plants and youth gardening.
- High heating costs call for innovative solutions. A large wood-fired boiler next to the Craig municipal pool will soon heat several buildings and the pool in the Southeast community. The **biomass system** will rely on wood waste generated by two nearby sawmills and is expected to substantially lower heating costs. A Cooperative Extension Service program assistant in Thorne Bay has worked with the City of Craig and other agencies on the project. Other area communities are considering biomass projects.
- Extension 4-H continues to support the Sitka Youth First Responders, an award-winning team of high school emergency volunteers co-sponsored by the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium. Charter members graduated from high school in 2007 and are pursuing health careers. The program recently expanded to Klawock on Prince of Wales Island, where seven youth participate.



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