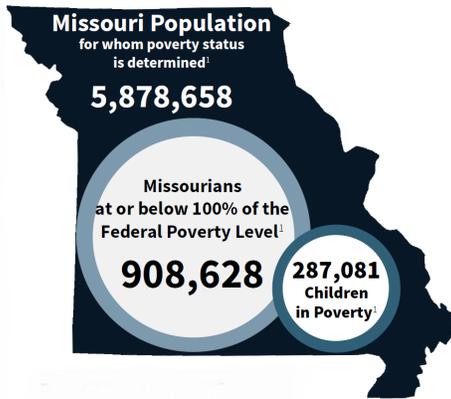


Our word "economy" finds its origin in the Greek word "oikonomia" meaning "household management." To have a good "economy" in this original sense, then, is to provide for healthy households. In 2016, the Missourians to End Poverty coalition released its State of the State: Poverty in Missouri report – an update on how we are managing our collective house here in Mis-



From the desk of Chris Thompson, President and CEO

souri. Unfortunately, in our collective home, too few Missourians have access to quality, affordable housing.



From 2019 to 2014, Missouri suffered a 71.7% increase in the number of homeless children. From 2001 to 2014, energy costs to heat and cool a house increased by an average of

10%, and accounted for nearly 26% of



the household budget for Missourians. From 2000 to 2013, housing deemed to be overcrowded (meaning dwellings

with more than one person per room) increased 118.49% (no, there is no typo in that number).

Nearly ¼ of all renters apply more than 50% of their household income to rent, creating situations in which households are

"overburdened" by housing costs. Adding to (or creating, as the case may be) the household burdens of Missouri families referenced here is the fact that 28.3% of all jobs in Missouri pay wages below the federal poverty guideline (which at the time of the report's release was \$24,250 for a family of four).

We need to put our Missouri house in order. To do so, we must ensure that every Missourian has access to quality,

affordable, energy-efficient housing that does not overburden our families economically. Our economy not only depends on this, but is, indeed defined by this, given the word's

origins. Here at West Central Missouri Community Action Agency, we are committed to better homes filled with people earning better, living, wages. Please join us in our effort to build better homes in this place we call home.

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Rural Roots Anchor West Central's New Community Development Work

By Patty Cantrell

Here in west central Missouri, we live on the edge of what was once the great tallgrass prairie. Lewis and Clark in 1804 reported

grasses nearly as tall as a man. We know now that those grasses were so



tall because they had roots that were even longer, made possible by the soil-building work of moles, microbes, fungus, worms and more.

I've been thinking about the prairie's bounty and underlying ecology this summer as I drive along our rural roads in my new job as Community Wealth Building Director at West Central Missouri Community Action Agency. Elderberries waving in the wind, turtles traveling between ponds, lightning bugs dancing in the hay-fields. All remind me how life grows from life.

This understanding is core to the wealth building work

of West Central's new Community Development Corporation (CDC). Wealth building is like soil building. It's about helping people and places stretch into their

potential by making it easier for households, small business-

es, and communities to operate and grow strong.

At the household level, community wealth building ranges from promoting energy-efficient homes so families save hard-earned money on utilities to helping people repair and build credit histories so they avoid payday loan sharks and get on with their dreams.

At the small business level, CDCs help entrepreneurs get started and stay afloat

as independent local enterprises. This includes technical assistance and low-cost loans that get them up, running, and ready for banks and investors. It includes respect and support for supplemental income and self-employment opportunities, too.

At the community level, CDCs again partner with others in the region to identify and explore how we connect our businesses with larger market opportunities, such as agriculture and tourism. Here we

focus on building local commerce through these market opportunities, on bringing money and ownership back to Main Street for long-term health and wealth.

The fact is, jobs and employers come and go. Farm prices rise and fall. Our ability to survive and thrive depends on securing and strengthening our economic roots: The rural families, small businesses, and communities that make up life out here on the edge of the prairie.



Upcoming Events

June 29- 10:30 am-12:30 pm- Cyber Seniors @ Nevada Housing Authority

July 5- 9:00 am-12:00 pm - Cass-Belton Food Pantry Monthly Pickup Day

July 6- 9:00 am- 12:00 pm - Cass-Belton Food Pantry Monthly Pickup Day

July 10- 5:30-7:30 pm Cyber Seniors @ Walnut Estates

July 11- 9:00 am-12:00 pm- Cass-Belton Food Pantry Monthly Pickup Day

July 11- 11:30 am-1:00 pm- Belton Chamber of Commerce Meeting @ 801 W. North Ave. (58 Hwy) Curriculum Center at Southwick Stadium @BHS

July 18- 9:00 am-12:00 pm- Cass-Belton Food Pantry Monthly Pick Up Day

July 19-6:00-8:00 pm Cyber Seniors Graduation TBA Raymore

July 19- West Central's 52nd Birthday!

July 20- 6:00-8:00 pm West Central/Head Start Birthday Carnival @ Appleton City Park, Appleton City

July 27- 3:00-6:00 pm - Henry County Back-to-School Fair

Aug 3- 10:00 am-12:00 pm Cedar County Back-to-School Fair

If You're Not Using Community Commons...



Welcome!

You Should Be.

What is Community Commons?

“Community Commons is a place where data, tools, and stories come together to inspire change and improve communities. We provide public access to thousands of meaningful data layers that allow mapping and reporting capabilities so you can thoroughly explore community health.

As a mission driven organization, the technology and resources that we develop directly provide innovation for the future. We aim to make our custom tools publicly available whenever possible and our partners understand and support this public-good mission.”

What is the Community Commons Goal?

“The goal of Community Commons is to increase the impact of those working toward healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities. We believe this

happens when Commons users access our tools to

gain a deeper understanding of community assets and opportunities and then use data visualizations to convey that knowledge through partnerships and collaboration. The Commons works best when those collaborations then create and implement plans of action and return the knowledge of what works and what doesn't back to the greater

Commons' community. This is why we created Community Commons — to bring change-makers together to connect with thought-leaders and peers, share stories and strategies, and use the latest technology and tools to make lasting change.”

Get inspired

You can watch videos that give a quick overview of what Community Commons is all about. Go to the homepage to see the latest featured stories and strategies or visit the blog to search for specific topics that interest you. All of our features illustrate how you can use the Commons tools to bring these changes to your own community.

The main topics are organized into six Chan-

(Events, cont'd. from pg. 2)

Aug 4- 3:00-6:00 pm
Cass-Belton Back-to-School Fair @ Mill Creek Upper Elementary, Belton

Aug 7- 3:30-6:30 pm
Harrisonville Back-to-School Fair

Aug 15- 10:00-11:00 am
Henry County Meeting Antioch Hills

Aug 31- 3:00-6:30 pm
@TBD Energy Conservation Life Skills

nels that capture the breadth and depth of community issues by highlighting stories, maps, and data that speak to the topic. After you enroll, you are encouraged to explore Channels from the top navigation bar. The Map Gallery is a great place to browse and open maps created by users of the Commons.

To find out more about Community Commons, please visit them at: <https://www.communitycommons.org/>



The Rainbow's "Pot of Gold"

By Katie Nixon

“Have a rainbow on your plate” is what my grandma always told me. Having been a Home Economics teacher for decades and having lived to be 100, I think she knew what she was talking about.

This is the perfect time of year to start “beefing-up” that portion of your plate containing fruits and vegetables.

Farmers who planted their crops in the spring are now getting the first taste of the summer harvest. At the farmers market and in grocery stores you will find in-season mouth-watering delectable and taste-bud activators like sweet corn, heirloom tomatoes, melons, summer squash, blueberries, and much more.

If fresh veggies and fruits are not exciting enough, try adding an extra layer of flavor and boosting the health benefits of your meal by adding fresh culinary herbs. For example, when making a fruit salad try adding some

fresh chopped mint. In addition to tasting good, mint aids in digestion, is super high in antioxidant, contains vitamins and minerals, and (bonus) gives you fresh breathe!

Fresh rosemary

sprinkled on potatoes before you roast them in the oven not only makes them taste amazing, it gives you the health benefits that come along with that herb. Rosemary is high in antioxidants, an anti-inflammatory, and adds a depth of sophisticated flavor to any dish.

If you are buying herbs direct from the farmer, they usually have some good tips for you on how to incorporate them into a meal. Otherwise, you can find all kinds of infor-

mation online about the subject (try and find a reputable source like University Extension) or check out some cook-books that highlight herbs at the local library.



Figure 2. From Left to right top to bottom- Italian basil, cilantro, mint, lavender, oregano, thyme, and sage

Culinary herbs in

general are a great source of antioxidants, extra vitamins and minerals, and they can add more color to the plate-grandma will be very impressed!

(Hot tip- if you can make it to Appleton City, you can buy your herbs directly from AC’s very own herb farmer and guru, April Collins from Show Me Herbs. Check out her Facebook page for some great information on herbs: <https://www.facebook.com/showmeherbs/>)

Question? Comments?

Contact me, Katie Nixon, knixon@wcmcaa.org or 660-476-2185



Figure 1. Some of the harvest from the West Central Community Farm in Appleton City (from left to right top to bottom, cherry tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, romaine lettuce, broccoli, beets, and eggplant.)

1965-2017

They ~~WHY IT~~ **MATTERS**



Time to Celebrate!

This year, West Central Missouri Community Action Agency will celebrate 52 years of serving families most in need, within our region.

It's hard to imagine the lives that have been changed due to the countless interventions that have occurred since our inception in 1965. It's truly Inspiring!

So why do we do what we do?

The work matters.

The programs matter; and most importantly...

Every face matters.

They are the reason.

They are the change.

They are survivors of this war on poverty.

They are why we innovate.

They are why we rally and advocate.

They are our hope.

They are our reason!

We hope that you are able to join us at our birthday carnival this year, as we come together with our community to celebrate.

When: July 20, 2017

Place: Appleton City Park, Appleton City, Missouri

Time: 6:00-8:00 PM

Everyone is invited!!

(More information about the carnival located on page 6)



STEP RIGHT UP JOIN US AT THE

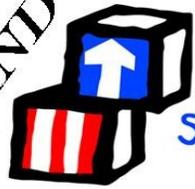


BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



FOR

AND



Head Start

CELEBRATING
52
YEARS

Music
Food*
PETTING ZOO
PRIZES

BOUNCY HOUSE
WATER CURTAIN
DUNK BOOTH
FACE PAINTING
GAMES

Date: July 20, 2017

Place: Appleton City Park

Time: 6:00-8:00 PM

Everyone is
Welcome!

FREE FAMILY FUN!



**Guests will receive complimentary cupcakes and water
Food vendors will be on site for all other food purchases*



Free Child Identification Cards