



Western Region Update - News from the West!

Mary Ellen Fleming (CO), Western Region Director

I'd like to thank the Utah tri-liaisons who have been working since last year putting together our Annual Session at the Snowbird Resort just outside of Salt Lake City this September. Thank you so much, Teresa Hunsaker and Kathy Riggs from Utah and Sheila Gains from Colorado! You ladies rock!!

The Idaho Affiliate reports their goals as follows:

To 'Inspire Wellness in Idaho', Idaho Extension's Health and Wellness Priority activities are grouped into three categories; Program (Healthy Living, Food Safety, Resource management); Projects (Social/Emotional Wellness, Physical Wellness, Environmental Wellness, Consumer Food Safety, Food Service/Food Safety, Master Food Safety Advisor, Financial Literacy, General Resource Management); and Educational Activities (correspond to above projects).

Challenges faced in Idaho are as follows:

The decrease in the number of FCS Extension Educators in the state and changing state demographics has led to a shift in priorities to ensure that our health and wellness programs are delivered to individuals who need them the most. Nationally, the US government could decrease funding to programs that target low-income and underserved audiences, resulting in a decrease in the size of our Eat Smart Idaho program which is funded by USDA. With the increasing Hispanic population and more refugees coming into Idaho, Extension programs must reach out to these individuals and develop culturally appropriate materials. Kirsten Jensen, Affiliate President.

The Colorado Affiliate shares similar concerns:

One of our goals is to retain and recruit members. Our numbers are dwindling it seems, so we are trying to make sure we get new hires included to be members and retain the ones we have. Our County Budgets are also having issues so many are finding that their membership dues are no longer included in county budgets. For some members, this will be an issue. Hiring FCS agents is also an issue, it seems that the FCS positions are now mostly FCS/4-H combined and we are finding the applicants are not FCS degrees. We've asked our administration to look into the position descriptions and where the position announcements are distributed to try to get more qualified FCS personnel. Mary Snow, Affiliate President