



Cooperative Extension Introduces Two New County Offices in 2002

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension added two new locations to its statewide educational network last year with the opening of offices in Broomfield and Gilpin counties in the Front Range Region.

Broomfield County

Broomfield is not only the newest location for Cooperative Extension, it's also the newest county in the state. After existing for years with residents split among Adams, Boulder, Jefferson and Weld counties, the City of Broomfield became a county with statewide voter approval in the 2000 election. While putting in place the programs and services the State of Colorado requires of counties was a top priority, creating a Cooperative Extension office for its 45,000 residents was also high on the list for Broomfield officials, said Pat Springer, a member of the



Carol Bylsma (seated right), director of the Cooperative Extension office in Broomfield County, reviews a county open-space plan with some Master Gardener volunteers.

Health & Human Services Task Force for the newly formed county. She said providing gardening information and helping people deal with drought are the top priorities this year.

"We're hopeful we'll add the full scope of Cooperative Extension programming over time, and we're delighted that County Director Carol Bylsma will be able to wear many hats as we work toward that goal," Springer said.

The first tasks for Bylsma include coordinating training and service for Broomfield's first class of Master Gardener volunteers and working with the Parks and Recreation Department to design and install a Xeriscape demonstration garden at the new City and County Building. Bylsma also is working to establish 4-H and Wildlife Master volunteer programs in her county. The Cooperative Extension office in Broomfield County is located with Broomfield Health & Human Services at #6 Garden Center.

- *The City and County of Broomfield became Colorado's 64th county and 2nd combined city and county on November 15, 2001. The previous city/county created was Denver in 1902; the last county was Alamosa created in 1913. Broomfield has approximately 43,000 residents.*
- *In true western pioneer spirit, citizens of Broomfield successfully created a new government structure that detached them from the four counties of which they were a part – Adams, Boulder, Jefferson and Weld.*
- *The 37 square mile county is a mix of residential, industrial, commercial and open space uses. The county currently has 1,700 acres of open space with a plan to set aside 9,700 acres.*
- *Broomfield has a broad employer base with jobs ranging from retail at Flatirons Mall to manufacturing at Hunter Douglas and Geneva Pharmaceuticals. Numerous high-tech communications businesses have their corporate homes there, including Ball Aerospace, Level 3 and Sun Microsystems.*
- *Broomfield has preserved a silo as a historic landmark and will have Colorado's first Xeriscaped cemetery.*

Gilpin County

Gilpin County has a long history in Colorado. The discovery of gold in 1859 prompted the county's early growth. The original stake became known as the "richest square mile on earth." The county retains a strong sense of its origin and history through its architecture, museums and mines. Gilpin County is home to 4,500 permanent residents and its quality natural resources, state and national forest recreation, and low-stakes gambling industry attract many thousands of visitors each year. More recent growth and development in the communities of Central City and Blackhawk led to increased demand for services including Cooperative Extension programs.



Irene Shonle (center), director of the Cooperative Extension office in Gilpin County, meets with members of the county Open Space Committee.

"We're really pleased to have the Cooperative Extension office open and to have Irene Shonle as director," said Gilpin County Commissioner Craig Nicholson. "We worked for several years to make this happen."

Shonle's first priorities are to provide programs and information about small acreage management and noxious weed issues, to train Master Gardener volunteers, and to recruit new 4-H members and volunteer leaders. Gilpin County has two traditional 4-H clubs in place – the Gilpin Gallopers and Mountain Mutts, and more will be added. Keeping noxious weeds such as leafy spurge, yellow toadflax and Canada thistle in check is also a high priority for Director Shonle. "Gilpin County does not have a huge weed problem and we want to keep it that way," she said. The Cooperative Extension office in Gilpin County is currently located in the Justice Center on Highway 46.

- *Gilpin County is located about one hour west of the Denver metro area on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. The county is approximately 150 square miles in size.*
- *Central City became the county seat when Gilpin County was organized in 1861. The Territorial Legislature granted a city charter to the City of Central in March 1864 – twelve years before Colorado became a state in 1876.*
- *Elevation ranges from 6,960 to 13,294 feet. Most of the land is forested below the tree line and about 52 percent is state or national forest.*
- *Golden Gate State Park and access to the Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forests bring many visitors to the area.*
- *Tourism is Gilpin County's main job base. Many of the residents commute out of the county for work, while an even larger number of people commute into the county daily to work at, or enjoy, a thriving low-stakes gambling industry.*
- *Gilpin County considers itself rural and endeavors to retain that environment. Their county fair boasts the world's only team "sheep dressing" event.*