After listening to North Dakotans’ current concerns about issues related to agriculture, energy, natural resources, the economy, children, families and communities during community forums across the state in 2015, the NDSU Extension Service responded by developing a number of new programs as well as strengthening other relevant programs already in place.

These responsive programs are framed around three key areas:

- **Economic Prosperity** — education for informed decisions and profitable economies
- **Community Engagement** — education for involved, productive North Dakotans
- **Healthy Citizens** — education on food production, nutrition and healthful living

Extension state and area specialists and county-based agents in all 53 counties work collaboratively to deliver these and many other educational programs.

Although issues and technologies have changed since the Cooperative Extension Service was created in 1914, NDSU Extension continues to be responsive to people’s needs, and remains committed to extending knowledge and changing lives now and in the future.

Programs in the three key areas, as well as many others, are improving the lives of North Dakotans in all 53 counties.
A sample of current educational programs:

BUILDING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

North Dakotans receive education that helps them make informed decisions, ultimately building profitable farms, businesses and households. For example:

With Extension agent assistance, 4,040 farm operators worked with NDSU Extension's online Farm Bill Decision Aid spreadsheet to make decisions related to the new farm bill, and in a follow-up survey, 90 percent of respondents used the decision aid tool when making their final farm bill decisions.

As a result of more healthful diets and reduced chronic disease, potential savings in long-term health-care costs range from $3.62 to $12.50 for every $1 spent on the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

Soil health café talks, cover crop demonstration sites and salinity management field days give producers opportunities to learn techniques to make soil healthy again and better manage salinity and improve soil health.

One year after the Extension workshop, 75 percent of Design Your Succession Plan survey respondents reported having conversations, making decisions and meeting with professionals to create succession plans to keep their farm/ranch legacies alive.

Providing producers, gardeners and homeowners with strategies for controlling pests, diseases and weeds is a major part of the Integrated Pest Management program. These strategies delivered through a weekly Crop and Pest Report and local Extension agents are aimed at keeping a pest, disease or weed out of an area and showing producers how to monitor their fields, identify pests and determine economic thresholds.

DRIVING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extension specialists and agents provide education and facilitation to encourage citizens to be engaged in their local communities to support agriculture and a positive quality of life. Results include:

- 235 volunteer groups across North Dakota have members and emerging leaders better prepared and more confident to serve on boards, councils or committees because of Extension's one-day Lead Local program. Extension also developed Lead Local for youth to provide them with tools for civic engagement.

- 4-H, the largest and only research-based youth organization in the state, provided hands-on, real-life experience through projects, activities and events to 29,306 youth in 2016. 4-H youth are four times more likely to contribute to their communities than youth not involved in 4-H.

Rural Leadership North Dakota participants have acquired more than $4 million to complete local projects they’ve initiated across the state. This 18-month program has been preparing and developing effective leaders to strengthen North Dakota since 2003.

Youth at 30 North Dakota sites have participated in 4-H National Youth Science Day, the world’s largest youth-led science experience designed to help train youth for the workforce in science, technology, engineering and math topics and issues.

PRODUCING HEALTHY CITIZENS

North Dakotans receive education on food production, nutrition and healthful living. Impacts include:

- More than 12,000 youth are involved annually with Extension farm-to-table programs, including Ag in the Gym, Ag Careers, Ag Literacy and Junior Master Gardener, which are taught by local Extension agents. These programs provide information about local foods and food production to ensure a better understanding of the connection between agriculture and the food we eat.

- 186 individuals from law enforcement, K-12 education and communities participated in Mental Health 101 broadcasts to learn how to recognize signs and symptoms of people dealing with mental health challenges.

- 96 percent of Stepping On program participants reported practicing techniques for standing, walking, and climbing curbs and stairs safely. Stepping On, a national evidence-based program, teaches older adults how to avoid falling, increasing the likelihood of seniors being able to stay in their homes and age in place.

- More than 9,000 elementary school students per year benefit from nutrition and wellness education programs that result in students eating more fruits and vegetables, being more physically active and understanding how food gets from the field to the table.