

# Cascade County



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*Overlooking Rainbow Falls on the Missouri River by Allyssa Peak.*

Cascade County, located in central Montana, is one of the population centers in the state and is known as the “Electric City” due to its historical significance in regard to the hydroelectric generation plants and smelter activity. The MSU Extension office is located in the county seat, Great Falls, which is on the Missouri River and is one of the pioneer cities in the state. The terrain is primarily gently rolling plains that are dissected by the Missouri River and its numerous coulees and tributaries. The Little Belt Mountains are found in the southeastern portion of the county. Population of the county is approximately 82,300, which includes the rural area, the incorporated city of Great Falls, and the towns of Belt, Cascade, Centerville, Fort Shaw, Monarch, Neihart, Sand Coulee, Simms, Sun River, Ulm, and Vaughn, many of which have complete K-12 school systems.

Cascade County’s economic base includes agriculture, the military, education, small manufacturing, food processing, and many service industries. The majority of agricultural income is derived from crop production. According to 2014 Montana Agricultural Statistics, the county ranks seventeenth in crop production with over \$56 million in cash receipts. Livestock production, primarily beef cattle, is also very important - gen-

erating over \$78 million in cash receipts and ranking ninth in the state.

Great Falls is home to the Benefis Health Care System (one of the premier hospitals and health care organizations in Montana), Malmstrom Air Force Base, and many cultural attractions including the Charles M. Russell Museum/Gallery, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, the Paris Gibson Center, and the First People’s Buffalo Jump. Great Falls is a primary destination point for tourism. Outdoor recreational opportunities include fishing, hunting, boating, golfing, hiking, and historical exploration.

## Achievement Night - The Capstone to an Amazing 4-H Year

Cascade County 4-H Achievement Night is a highly anticipated annual tradition. Youth and adults from all aspects of the program gather to celebrate the year’s successes and achievements. This year, the event was held at Heritage Hall, Great Falls College – MSU. Five youth leaders took center stage to emcee the event. They were naturals. Emceeing the event gave them the chance to show off their public speaking skills

while also showing their appreciation for all award recipient accomplishments.

Awards were given to youth in multiple project areas. Livestock, horse, robotics, cooking, sewing, leadership, and many other projects were represented. Cascade County 4-H Leaders Council awarded multiple youth and adult special achievement awards. Adult awards include Distinguished Leader, Outstanding Alumni, and Outstanding Project Leader. Youth are given awards for excellence in agriculture, leadership, and citizenship.

We also recognized our community partners through the Friend of 4-H Award. This year's award was given to the Celtic Cowboy and Hotel Arvon, located in downtown Great Falls. They have provided tremendous support for the 4-H Horse and Livestock programs in Cascade County. Cascade County 4-H awarded one community award, four adult leader special achievement awards, six youth member special achievement awards, two memorial awards, 72 project awards, and six 4-H club special achievement awards. We also recognized 46 adult leaders and 143 youth members for years of membership in 4-H.

## Pork Producer Webinar Series

Cascade County MSU Extension partnered with the Montana Pork Producers Council (MPPC) to provide small Montana pork producers with five educational webinars. Over 102 pork producers, 4-H youth, and FFA members tuned in each Monday from April 26 through May 24.

"There has been a large need for swine education for those who have a full-time job and raise swine for 4-H and FFA projects," said Rose Malisani with Cascade County MSU Extension. "Many current educational opportunities are during the week and small swine producers and youth are unable to attend. It is our vision to provide a quality educational program virtually, and then in person."

Webinar speakers included John Rauser, MPPC President and small pork producer; Anne Miller, MPPC Executive Director; Erika Schwarz, Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab; Anna Forseth, Montana Department of Livestock; Ernie Barnes, National Pork Board Director of Producer Services; Dinah Peebles, Pork Board Director of Certification Programs; Marc King, Sweet Grass County MSU Extension and small pork producer; Steve Meyer, PhD and Economist of Partners for Production Agriculture; Katrin Finch, Cascade County MSU Extension Family and Consumer Science Agent; and Haley Barker, Stillwater County MSU Extension Family and Consumer Science Agent.

The planning committee selected topics that would benefit small pork producers and youth to understand swine diseases, safely move hogs, discover how the Pork Checkoff benefits





**Previous Page: (top)** Piglets by John Rauser; **(bottom)** Cascade County Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent Rose Malisani presents a Beef Breeding award to a Junior 4-H Member by Allyssa Peak; **This Page:** Cooking in the kitchen, by Courtesy MSU Extension

swine producers, how to report a disease, work with a state agency, qualify for pork quality assurance, develop a vaccination program, understand markets from state to a national level, and how to properly prepare pork to eat.

**Webinar attendees were surveyed after each webinar, some responses were:**

- “I liked the general overview about the organizations and departments that exist for swine, plus the fact that there was information provided by a variety of presenters.”
- “We are new to show pigs and grateful for all information. We want to learn everything we can.”
- “Great information on diseases that could be introduced to your pig based on environment and exposure.”
- “My mom and I are learning a lot. We would like to get our backyard production started soon. This information is great.”
- “The webinar was very informative about feed costs.”
- “I liked the way Katrin and Haley tied cooking pork and food safety together.”

The webinar planning committee is currently planning for a Montana Small Pork Producer conference in the fall of 2022 where small swine producers, 4-H youth, and FFA members can gather in person to learn more about the swine industry and pork products.

## Serving a Safe Future

In partnership with the Cascade City-County Health Department (CCHD), MSU Extension Cascade County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent Katrin Finch has offered 12 Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certification classes using the ServSafe Food Manager curriculum offered by the National Restaurant Association. This curriculum meets the standards set out by the Food and Drug Administration 2017 Food Code, which are then followed up and enforced by CCHD.

Finch collaborated with CCHD to determine a schedule and advertising for classes. During the eight-hour certification class, a variety of topics are covered, including food borne illnesses, cleaning and sanitizing, pest management, development of a management program, Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP), proper cooking, cooling, and reheating temperatures, and risks of food borne illness. At the conclusion of class, a 90-question exam is given. To receive the certification, students must receive a 75% or higher. A total of 111 participants took the class or exam in the year 2021 with a total of 89 participants passing the exam the first time. On average there were 10 participants in each class with an average of 85.85% exam score.

**Class attendees reported the following at the conclusion of the classes:**

- I will be working with my staff on cleaning and sanitizing – some of our practices need to be stronger.
- I feel confident in leading staff through a basic food safety training.
- This information was important for me as a cook, but I will be sharing information with my friends and family about food safety too!
- Because of class, I taught my kitchen staff about the importance of food borne illnesses and the impacts they can have on our business.

With the newly passed Food Freedom Act, the need for food safety education will continue to grow and programs like ServSafe will become increasingly important. As local food businesses continue to grow, the need for education for smaller food producers, restaurants, and grocery stores too, will increase.

## Cascade County Staff



Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

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