

Dawson County

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Local youth assisting their parents with fixing fence, by Kari Granmoe.

Dawson County is in central-eastern Montana. In between Sidney and Miles City, Dawson County is a common stopping location for many traveling between the Midwest and the west. The population of Dawson County is approximately 9,000 and is comprised of the communities of Richey, West Glendive, and county seat, Glendive. Dawson County is home to the largest state park in Montana, drawing many tourists to the area for recreation, hunting, and attractions such as the dinosaur museum. Agriculture is a major enterprise in the county with an even split between livestock and cropping systems. Horse and sheep operations are also common within the area. MSU Extension in Dawson County provides services for the 4-H program, agriculture, horticulture, and community development.

Fair Challenges in 2021

With no previous experience in the Montana 4-H program, the new administrative 4-H assistant for Dawson County took on the full responsibilities for the 2021 Dawson County Fair. With no agent, Tessa Burman took charge of the fair this year with the assistance of Dawson County 4-H volunteers and parents. While she had only been on the job since early spring, Burman took on the roles of both the agent and 4-H

administrative assistant, organizing livestock shows, getting 4-Her's entered in the fair, and helping put on the small animal show day. This fair was extra special to Dawson County as the 4-H program and the county fair were held at the same time for the first time in year. The fair went off without a hitch, with many looking forward to fair again in 2022. Burman is both excited and relieved to be putting on another fair with the county's new MSU Extension agent.

Dawson County's New Extension Agent

As the new agent and a new resident of Dawson County, I have already made myself at home here in eastern Montana. I am Trestin Benson-Feagler, and I recently started as the new agent in September 2021, originally coming from western Montana. My 11-year career in the 4-H program, plus being the child of an MSU Extension agent, really drew me towards a career in the Extension service. I was very active in my county's 4-H program, taking projects such as market lamb, horse, cowboy poetry, and range science. I went on to hold a state officer position. I completed my Bachelor of Science degree in natural resources and rangeland ecology in 2018 at Montana State University. My involvement in undergraduate research led me to obtain a Masters of Science in animal and

range sciences from Montana State University as well. My graduate research focused on the effects of integrating livestock into small-scale horticulture systems. After graduation, I moved to Colorado, where I managed an alpaca farm. It didn't take long for me to miss the great state of Montana and move back, where I currently reside in Glendive with my daughter and husband. The work has been a wonderful experience so far and I look forward to learning more about Dawson County and the residents in it.



Top: Harper Thorson receiving an award from Layne Meek for her cat showing at the 2021 fair, by Layne Meek; **Bottom:** Trestin Benson-Feagler holding a newborn alpaca, by Trestin Benson-Feagler

Dawson County Staff



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