

Silver Bow County



305 W. Mercury St, #303 | 4067230217 | kellie.kahtani@montana.edu | msuextension.org



Butte-Silver Bow Courthouse, by Kellie Kahtani.

Located in Southwest Montana along the Continental Divide in the Rocky Mountains, you will find the “Richest Hill on Earth.” Known for its vast history as a mining town, rich in its Irish heritage, and recognized by the “Our Lady of the Rockies” statue and the Berkley Pit, Silver Bow County is unique in many ways. It is one of two counties with a combined city-county government and is run by an elected Chief Executive and 12 county commissioners. There is a county population of 34,400 with a land area of just over 718 square miles, making it the smallest county in Montana. The county’s economy is driven by health care, education, and mining, with St. James Healthcare and NorthWestern Energy being the top employers. The MSU Extension office is staffed by Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth Development Agent Kellie Kahtani.

Silver Bow County 4-H Adds New Programs

Silver Bow County 4-H added new programs this year to get more community members involved. Most of the programs focused on healthy living activities, but all were fun for all ages. Our first program ran from June to July, as we added

a Running Club. Eight 4-H members and three community members joined the activities, preparing for a 5K at the end of July. They met Tuesdays and Thursdays to train with games and activities provided through the evidence-based BOKS physical activity program. Participant ages ranged from six years old to grandparents. We ended the club with a “Fun Run” right before the county fair.

For the Butte-Silver Bow County Fair, the county 4-H program joined with Butte Cares, a community organization that focuses on drug and alcohol prevention and substance-free community activities, to host a “4K for 4-H Color Run.” In our first year of the event, we had more than 25 participants on Friday night of the fair. 4-H members either participated as runners or had the task of spraying colored chalk on runners throughout the course. Parents also joined in as runners or sprayers. All runners were given a 4-H water bottle at the end of the run as a prize. We will continue this activity at the 2022 Butte-Silver Bow County Fair, adding a longer course and more prizes.

Also at the BSB County Fair, the 4-H program added a Stick Horse Rodeo. This was open to all members of the community and held in the rodeo arena. We had 35 community members ranging from 3-15 years old. Each participant of the

rodeo competed in five events led by junior leaders of the 4-H program. Events included roping, barrel racing, pole bending, bronc riding, and trail riding. Junior leaders learned event coordination and leadership skills, and the event was such a success that we are adding it to the regular fair schedule in 2022.

4-H Camp Makes a Comeback

4-H camp is a time-honored tradition in Silver Bow County. The final weekend of June is spent traveling to the Darrel E. Fenner 4-H Camp at Loon Lake, getting to know more 4-H members, and learning new activities planned by our camp counselors. Last year's cancellation made this year so much bigger. While we still were unable to attend the camp on Loon Lake, we instead visited Camp Watanopa on Georgetown Lake. With our "Hawaiian Luau" theme, members learned how to hula dance, paint tiki's, participate in an obstacle course, make survival kits, and more.

Camp counselors learned new skills to lead workshops and teach new skills to members. With new amenities at our location, the members challenged adult chaperones to a friendly game of volleyball, spent time swimming in Georgetown Lake, and hunted for Big Foot on a nature walk. It was exciting to see teen leaders grow, and to see how everyone at camp worked together to make fun traditions again. To end camp, we added a team competition with each counselor joining their members in fun games. During the team event, they competed in a cornhole game, put together a map of the U.S., competed in tug-of-war, and thawed a frozen, folded t-shirt to fit on one of their team members. Fun was had, friendships were developed, and good memories made by all who attended.



Top: Junior leaders of the Silver Bow County 4-H preparing for the Stick Horse Rodeo, by Andi Struznik, 4-H leader; **Bottom:** Group members attempting to open a frozen shirt during the team competition to end camp, by RuthAnne Shope, 4-H leader

Silver Bow County Staff



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

Kellie Kahtani

4-H Youth Development and Family Consumer Science Agent