



EXTENSION CELEBRATES

100 Years

- ❖ After Extension was founded in Fairbanks, the two Extension agents almost immediately left on a road trip around Alaska to organize 4-H clubs, and teach home economics and agriculture.
- ❖ Extension's first field office opened in Palmer in 1936 to work with the 200 Matanuska Colony farm families and 100 other families that had homesteaded in the area.
- ❖ Extension now has nine district offices with 34 agents in Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Palmer, Anchorage, Nome, Soldotna, Juneau, Bethel and Sitka. 4-H offices are also located in Dillingham, Kodiak and at Eielson Air Force Base.

THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE marked its centennial in 2014.

The Smith-Lever Act established Extension to “aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information,” particularly in the areas of agriculture, home economics and rural energy.

A national network of educators affiliated with land-grant universities extends research-based information on these subjects and a lot more to the people.

Extension came to Alaska in 1930, after Congress amended the Smith-Lever legislation to include the territory. In its early days, Extension helped Matanuska colonists, homesteaders and others thrive in Alaska’s challenging environment. It continues to work with Alaskans today — whether it’s helping them garden, can salmon, use a GPS or season firewood.

Extension provides the “service” in its name in a variety of ways, whether it’s providing advice on food preservation, or, as a Bethel agent did this year, walking through a house with a flashlight looking for bedbugs.

Alaska Extension celebrated the centennial with weeklong information fests in several communities — teaching practical classes on everything from keeping moose out of your gardens to baking bread.

Pioneering Extension agent Lydia Fohn-Hansen, center, worked out of a tent and taught canning to the newly arrived Matanuska colonists in 1935.

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