

IMPACT

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Idaho women are financially empowered at Smart Women, Smart Money Conference

AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension partners with Idaho State Treasurer to bring Smart Women, Smart Money Conference to North Central Idaho women

The Situation

In a 2014-15 Prudential Research Study, researchers found that even though women are feeling more financially secure since the 2008 financial crisis, many still feel no more prepared to make some very important financial decisions. An overwhelming 80% do not feel confident in meeting long-term financial goals like retirement. In many cases, women are the financial decision makers in the household. In order to successfully manage this responsibility and impart financial wisdom to their families, it is imperative that they receive the tools they need.

Our Response

In 2002, the Smart Women, Smart Money Conference was established by the Idaho State Treasurer's office. The Treasurer offered the conferences in several locales across the State but in 2014 the Smart Women, Smart Money (SWSM) Conference was offered in Moscow, Idaho and UI Extension was responsible for encouraging them to come. The goal of this conference is to provide free financial education and tools to the women of Idaho. Topics like budgeting, investing, retirement, and debt management are prominent on the agenda. Enlisting the financial support of multiple businesses and organizations in the community and attending numerous planning meetings and live remotes, the first annual SWSM Conference was ready for participants. The hope was that 250 women would register.



Every table full at the Smart Women, Smart Money Conference. Lewiston Morning Tribune, September 26, 2014 edition

In addition, a UI Extension educator was asked to present at the conference at one of the three breakout sessions. Financial Scavenger Hunt was offered as an all-encompassing program that covered budgeting, credit, debt management, identity theft, predatory lending, organizing financial paperwork, insurance, and retirement in a very interactive format. A bound resource manual and/or travel drive with the materials were provided at the end of the session.

Program Outcomes

An overwhelming 472 participants graced the conference (seating was available for 410). Women came from Idaho, Washington and Montana for this event. Survey data is still being compiled through the Treasurer's office and is not available at this time.

However, comments from participants help show the impact that is already being made on lives:

- “Thank you for whatever you had to do to get the Smart Women, Smart Money Conference to Moscow. I had always thought about driving to Cd’A for the conference, but didn’t get enough motivation. When I saw it was coming to Moscow, I was very excited and I AM SO GLAD I ATTENDED. The conference was fantastic. I was sure to thank every sponsor that was at the conference.”
- “I enjoyed the conference as well! Thanks for all the great information. And thank you for encouraging the State Treasurer to bring this event to Moscow! “
- “You have no idea what you have done here, do you?” Cheryl Crane (Ron Crane’s wife), referring to the number of impacted women in the room.

The entire theme of the conference was to motivate the women to make significant changes personally, financially and emotionally. Two keynote speakers, Nicole Sherman from Columbia Bank and Patty Duke, renowned actress, helped achieve this objective.

In addition, 92 of the participants attended the Financial Scavenger Hunt session offered by UI Extension. All of the manuals and travel drives (over 100 produced) were distributed to the participants. Additional copies quickly disappeared during the session for friends and family that could not make it this year. After the session, other conference participants continued to ask for copies of the materials.

- “Several of my co-workers attended the recent conference in Moscow, Idaho. I was unable to attend. One co-worker mentioned a book handed out in the Financial Scavenger Hunt in one of the break out sessions. My co-workers went to other sessions. Is this book available?”



The goal to get resources that Idaho women would find helpful to their day-to-day financial decision-making was achieved by this conference and by UI Extension.



The Financial Scavenger Hunt

This event is still being talked about by community members who attended and who didn’t get to go. UI Extension is working with the Treasurer’s office and a UI Event coordinator to move next year’s conference to a larger venue so more North Central Idaho women can enjoy and benefit from this experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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