

News Release

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KANSAS FSA MODIFIES OFFICE CONSOLIDATION PLAN

Manhattan, Kansas, April 23, 2007 --- Today, Bill R. Fuller, State Executive Director of the Kansas USDA Farm Service Agency, released the final proposal to consolidate FSA County Offices.

In February, the initial proposal of eleven county office consolidations was announced. Public meetings were held in each of the eleven counties. More than 1,400 people attended those meetings providing recommendations and alternatives. All comments received through the meetings or submitted directly to FSA were carefully reviewed for consideration by Fuller and the FSA State Committee.

"We certainly appreciate those in the communities that provided alternatives and recommendations. This input was very helpful as we modified the initial plan in ways that would improve convenience and better serve our farm and ranch customers," emphasized Fuller.

Kansas FSA Offices submitted for closure and consolidation on the initial proposal that remain on the final proposal are as follows:

- Chase County (Cottonwood Falls) will be consolidated with Lyon County (Emporia).
- Johnson County (Olathe) will be consolidated with Miami County (Paola).
- Geary County (Junction City) will be consolidated with Riley County (Manhattan).
- Woodson County (Yates Center) will be consolidated with Wilson County (Fredonia).
- Wabaunsee County (Alma) will be consolidated with Pottawatomie County (the office in Westmoreland will be relocated to Wamego).

Four of the Kansas FSA Office combinations outlined in the initial proposal have been modified in the final proposal:

- Leavenworth/Wyandotte County (Leavenworth) will be consolidated with Jefferson County (Oskaloosa). Atchison County (Effingham) will be converted from shared management to a stand-alone county office.
- Comanche County (Coldwater) will be consolidated with Barber County (Medicine Lodge). Clark County will remain a stand-alone county office.
- Elk/Chautauqua County (Howard) will be de-combined. Chautauqua County will be combined with Montgomery County (Independence) and Elk County will be consolidated with Greenwood County (Eureka).

The following Kansas FSA Offices, proposed to be closed in the initial plan have been removed from final proposal and will remain open:

- Morton County (Elkhart)
- Gove County (Gove)
- Barber County (Medicine Lodge).

Fuller has submitted the final proposed restructuring plan to the FSA national office. After approval, there will be a 120 day waiting period where no offices can be closed. During those 120 days, producers in affected counties will be sent a letter asking where they wish to conduct FSA business; they may choose their administrative headquarters from any contiguous county office. In addition, the current county committees will determine whether the new combined county committee will have 3 or 5 members, and establish new local administrative area boundaries for the new multi-county area.

"The goal of reviewing Kansas counties was to identify an optimum network of FSA facilities, staffing, training, and technology within existing budgetary resources and staffing ceilings," said Fuller.

An announcement will be issued when the final proposal is approved by the FSA national office.

The final proposed Kansas FSA County Office Restructuring Plan can be obtained at www.fsa.usda.gov/ks.

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