

## NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, Oklahoma Farm Service Agency  
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### FARM SERVICE AGENCY SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETINGS IN FIVE OKLAHOMA COUNTIES

**Stillwater**– April 10, 2007 - Jim Reese, State Executive Director for the Oklahoma Farm Service Agency (FSA) and members of his management team have scheduled public meetings in five Oklahoma Counties to solicit public comment on FSA’s proposed plan to consolidate county offices in Oklahoma. The FSA offices slated for consolidation are Seminole, Cleveland, Haskell, Delaware and Pushmataha.

According to Reese, declining staff numbers and reduced budgets have required FSA to re-evaluate the way the Agency conducts business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; thereby necessitating closure or consolidation of FSA county offices in Oklahoma.

“Oklahoma FSA’s restructuring proposal is relatively modest in that it only affects five counties which are already operating under a shared management structure and are unable to provide full-service, permanent staffing,” said Reese. “Three of these offices have no permanent employees and are open limited hours – Our proposal insures the combined office is better-staffed, better-equipped and open 40 hours a week.”

These public meetings will provide the only opportunity for public comment on FSA’s plan to restructure the Agency in Oklahoma. All public comments will be taken into full consideration prior to development or implementation of a final restructuring plan.

**Tuesday, April 24**

Seminole County, 1 p.m., Seminole County Fairgrounds – HCE Building, 800 Sasakwa Ave., Wewoka.

**Wednesday, April 25**

Cleveland County, 1 p.m., Cleveland County Fairgrounds, 603 E. Robinson, Norman.

**Friday, April 27**

Haskell County, 1 p.m., Kiamichi Technology Center - Auditorium, 1410 Old Military Rd., Stigler.

**Tuesday, May 1**

Delaware County, 1 p.m., OSU County Extension Center, 38267 US Hwy. 59, Jay.

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**Thursday, May 3**

Pushmataha County, 1 p.m., Pushmataha County Community Bldg., 202 SW B St., Antlers.

Reese emphasized the proposal to close an office is in no way reflective of personnel performance or county committee contributions and in no way minimizes the importance of the agricultural producers who conduct business with FSA counties slated for closure.

“Again, we believe that properly-equipped, better-trained, fully-staffed offices that are open throughout normal business hours will help us maintain our goal – quality customer service,” said Reese. “Our employees do an outstanding job under our current structure with the resources available to them, but I believe that realigning our agency will, in the end, prove beneficial to both our employees and our customers.”

FSA’s meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Jim Reese at (405) 742-1131.

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