

Forming an Extension District

Introduction

Increased efficiency and effectiveness were major forces when the 1991 Kansas Legislature passed the extension district act. The merger of county extension councils can result in increased efficiency of resources and greater effectiveness of personnel through specialization, resulting in higher quality educational programming for Kansas citizens.

Establishing a District

Two or more county extension councils may establish a district by entering into an operational agreement to combine programs. Each county commission and extension council, as well as the director of K-State Extension, must approve the agreement. County extension councils may join existing districts by following the same agreement and approval process.

The extension district is a taxing subdivision of the State of Kansas and has the power to contract and to acquire, hold, and convey real and personal property.

The agreement entered into by the parties in forming the extension district must be submitted to the state attorney general for approval. The district becomes operational on July 1 after approval of the attorney general.

Resolution

Each county commission within the proposed district must adopt a resolution stating their intent to approve the agreement to form an extension district. The resolution must be published once each week for two consecutive weeks in each official county newspaper.

If, within 60 days, a petition in opposition is signed by at least five percent of the county's qualified electors and filed with the county election officer, the board of commissioners may not approve the agreement until it is approved by a majority of qualified electors at a primary, general, or special election.

Composition of District Governing Body

The governing body of each extension district consists of four representatives from each county. To create the first governing body, each county commission appoints four members. Thereafter, district governing body members are elected in November of each odd year for four-year terms. The district governing body is responsible for appointing members to fill the unexpired term for any vacancy that may occur.

The district governing body organized annually in January by electing from its members a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.

Appointment of Program Development Committee

The governing body is responsible for planning and conducting the district's educational program. The governing body appoints program development committees to plan educational programs based on extension work in agricultural pursuits, in family and consumer sciences work, in 4-H youth development work, and in community vitality initiatives. Each program development committee consists of at least six members from each county. An elected member of the governing body serves as chair of each program development committee.

Adoption of Budget

The extension district governing body develops a budget and holds a public budget hearing. The extension district makes an annual tax levy for the purpose of raising funds to be used to plan and conduct the educational extension programs of the extension district.

Kansas State University Policy

The director of K-State Extension has adopted policies related to funding, staffing, personnel educational requirements, and the organizational structure of extension councils and districts. An operational agreement and memorandum of understanding is developed with each district.

Staffing Plan

The regional extension director and district governing body develop a staffing plan to meet the district's educational needs for agriculture, families, youth, and communities.

Withdrawing From a District

A county may withdraw from an extension district by a majority vote of the board of county commissioners, the district's governing body, and approval by the director of K-State Extension.

Why District?

- Specialized agents resulting in higher quality, more in-depth programming
- Opportunity for greater emphasis on areas of program focus
- Pooling of both personnel and organizational resources
- Greater reach, as agents work with larger audiences across multiple counties
- Potential for increased efficiency in time dedicated to programming
- Enhanced enthusiasm and professional growth through redefinition of agent responsibilities and expectations

Formed Extension Districts in Kansas State University

Fifty-nine counties have joined to form twenty-one districts:

- **Post Rock Extension District #1;** Lincoln, Mitchell – July 1, 1994
Post Rock expanded to include Jewell and Osborne July 1, 2005; Smith July 1, 2012
- **Walnut Creek Extension District #2;** Lane, Ness, Rush – July 1, 1996
- **Central Kansas Extension District #3;** Ottawa, Saline - July 1, 2004
- **River Valley Extension District #4;** Clay Cloud, Republic, Washington – July 1, 2005
- **Phillips-Rooks Extension District #5;** Phillips, Rooks – July 1, 2005
- **Sunflower Extension District #6;** Sherman, Wallace – July 1, 2005
Sunflower expanded to include Cheyenne – July 1, 2006
- **Meadowlark Extension District #7;** Jackson, Jefferson, Nemaha – July 1, 2006
- **Rolling Prairie Extension District #8;** Chautauqua, Elk – July 1, 2008
- **Twin Creeks Extension District #9;** Decatur, Norton – July 1, 2009
Twin Creeks expanded to include Sheridan – July 1, 2011; Graham – July 1, 2018

- **Southwind Extension District #10;** Allen, Neosho – July 1, 2010
Southwind expanded to include Bourbon – July 1, 2011; Woodson – July 1, 2018
- **Frontier Extension District #11;** Franklin, Osage – July 1, 2010
Frontier expanded to include Anderson – July 1, 2014
- **Golden Prairie Extension District #12;** Trego, Logan – July 1, 2010
Golden Prairie expanded to include Gove – July 1, 2011
- **Flint Hills Extension District #13;** Chase, Morris – July 1, 2010
- **Wildcat Extension District #14;** Crawford, Montgomery, Labette – July 1, 2011
Wildcat expanded to include Wilson – July 1, 2017
- **Midway Extension District #15;** Ellsworth, Russell – July 1, 2013
- **Marais des Cygnes Extension District #16;** Linn, Miami – July 1, 2014
- **Cottonwood Extension District #17;** Ellis, Barton – July 1, 2017
- **Wild West Extension District #18;** Haskell, Seward, Stevens – July 1, 2018
- **West Plains Extension District #19;** Finney, Scott – July 1, 2020
- **Chisholm Trail Extension District #20;** Dickinson, Marion – July 1, 2020
- **21 Central Extension District #21;** Edwards, Stafford – July 1, 2021