

Extension District Questions Answered

- 1) Why would there not be a mill levy cap on Extension? Why can't one be set?
 - There are currently no set limits to the potential mill levy for Extension, or many other taxing subdivisions. In the original statute from 1991 setting out the Extension District Law (K.S.A. 2-623 thru 2-628), there was a limit of 2.5 mills. Then, according to **K.S.A. 79-5040. Suspension of tax levy limitations**, "In 1999, and in each year thereafter, all existing statutory fund mill levy rate and aggregate levy rate limitations on taxing subdivisions are hereby suspended."
 - Our best forecasts for the future are based on our past experiences. Prior experience in the 14 existing Extension Districts in Kansas over the past 18 years (the first district formed in 1993) has shown the mill levies have often held flat or declined. In those situations where there were slight increases, they often occurred when a new county was added, or any cash reserve funds that came into the district with county extension councils were depleted.
- 2) Will Extension receive an appropriation from the county, as well as their mill levy?
 - No. As in the statutes, if approved Lyon County would join the district on July 1 (all districts start operations on July 1, and new counties can only join on July 1) and bring with them the balance of the remaining year appropriation from the county commission. A new budget with the new counties would be determined, a mill levy set following a public budget hearing, and taxes would first be levied beginning in January following the inception of the district. It would be up to the county commission to determine the fate of the dollars in the budget previously appropriated for Extension.
- 3) Why is this being rushed? Why can't it be voted on?
 - Lyon County Extension has been having discussions on districting for some time – dating back to the late 90's/early 2000's. In 2009, discussions with Chase county were stopped because the Extension Council felt it was not the best time or fit. Chase county has since joined Morris county as the Flint Hills Extension District. The topic of districting has been an agenda item and been discussed at many of our board meetings since 2009. In May and June of 2011, while going thru the budgeting process, we were asked by the county commissioners if we were still investigating potential districting options and encouraged to seek out potential partners. Lyon County Extension has kept our commission involved and aware of this process, and did meet in September with the Coffey County Extension board, three of their five commissioners, and three Lyon County commissioners. At that time, the Coffey County commission and board were not ready to move forward. Shortly after, we were contacted by Frontier District, invited to a board meeting, and received an invitation to join a day later, December 2, 2011.
 - There is a timeline of events that must take place before the district is able to form on July 1. After two publications of the resolution a week apart, there is a 60 day protest period. Then, the Attorney General of Kansas has 90 days to approve the associated paperwork for Lyon County to join the district.
 - The procedure for allowing this to come to a vote is for the commission to pass the resolution and then have those opposed file a petition as outlined in the statutes.
- 4) Why was the agreement not presented as part of the resolution?
 - The agreement is not a part of the resolution, and to date there has been only one county that submitted the operational agreement with the resolution. The statute states that prior to approving an agreement, the commission passes a resolution stating their intent to approve an agreement and naming the counties/district involved. The operational agreement is typically presented to the county commission for approval following the adoption of the resolution.

- The agreement was prepared and provided to the commission and counselor on Tuesday, December 27 for their review. The agreement has been reviewed by the Frontier District, the Lyon County Extension Council Executive Board, representatives of the Director of Extension at Kansas State University and the Lyon County Commission and attorney.
- 5) What checks and balances will be there?
 - Initially, the county commission will appoint four members to the district governing body (board). Two members will be up for election the first Tuesday in April of the first odd-numbered year following their appointment, with the remaining two members up for election the first Tuesday in April in the next odd-numbered year. After that, Extension District Governing Body members will be elected by the public in the April general election where school board members and city commissioners are elected.
 - 6) Is there a way to get out of the district?
 - There are provisions in the Kansas Extension District Law, specifically K.S.A 2-628, that address a county or counties leaving a district. To date, of the 39 counties currently in districts, there have not been any counties leave a district. There have not been any requests by county commissions, district boards, or K-State Research and Extension to consider allowing a county to leave a district. But the provisions are in place.
 - 7) If two-thirds of the board is from outside of Lyon County, how will we have good representation?
 - The board will work together for the good of the entire district, not to further the will or intentions of one entity. That is the case with the current board in the Frontier District as well as the current Lyon County Extension Council Executive Board. The other 13 districts have also operated as one unit and not had problems with a county not having a voice.
 - 8) Why have we not had knowledge of Extension operations?
 - Lyon County Extension Agents have attempted to be very visible and involved with many community activities over the years. Agendas for board meetings are supplied monthly to the local media for them to determine coverage, with stated times and locations along with items for discussion. The meetings are open to the public, and are held in public places. Extension programs are advertised and open to all.
 - 9) How will the services that Extension provide change?
 - The operational agreement states that the current agents, office professionals, and program assistants will be housed in the counties where they are presently located. The majority of agent time will be spent in their respective home counties. Agents will develop program specialization to work throughout the district on specific program areas, but continue with many of the current responsibilities they have in their home counties.
 - 10) Will the Lyon County Extension office continue to be housed in its current location?
 - The operational agreement states, “The District governing body and the authorized representative of the Director of Extension shall attempt in good faith to contract with the county commissioners to provide continued use of present office space and other property provided by the counties for use by the Extension District following approval of the operational agreement.”
 - Most county offices have remained in the same location after joining the district.

For more information review K.S.A. 2-263 through 2-268 from 1991 which can be found under “Links” at www.lyon.ksu.edu. Additional information about Lyon County Extension is also found at that link, and information about K-State Research and Extension can be found at www.ksre.ksu.edu.