



Kansas State University®

Dean of Agriculture
Director of Agricultural
Experiment Station and
Cooperative Extension Service

113 Waters Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-4008

785-532-6147

Fax: 785-532-6563

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu>

February 21, 2007

Testimony to the Commerce Committee on Senate Bill 12

Given by Fred A. Cholick, Dean/Director 
College of Agriculture/K-State Research and Extension

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with the Committee regarding the language change to Senate Bill 12. Today my goal is to provide you examples of how Kansas State Research and Extension is engaged with communities as they determine ways to enhance their economic well-being. Attached are examples across the state of where our county agents have served as facilitators and coordinators for economic development activities.

In addition, I will describe the relationship between Kansas State Research and Extension and Kansas State University's Center for Engagement and Community Development.

Kansas State Research and Extension has and will continue to serve as a vehicle to enhance the standard of living and quality of life for the citizens of Kansas as portrayed by our motto "Knowledge for Life."

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with the Committee this morning, and I will gladly entertain any questions.

*"Knowledge
for Life"*

Economic Development Examples from Local Extension Agents - October 2006

– Jennifer Wilson, Riley County

Roads & Bridges--Public Policy Education. Extension staff helped to develop an education program on the conditions of local roadways and the funding necessary to make needed improvements. Collaborators included Riley County Commission, Riley County Public Works and Planning & Development.

Wind Energy--Extension staff assisted with the development of an educational program to look at the pros and cons of harnessing wind energy in the Flint Hills. Extension's role included bringing the appropriate parties to the table, helping to structure the educational program and secure appropriate speakers.

Land-Use Planning in Riley County--This is our most recent project. Extension has been asked to help with the process of updating the Riley County Land Use Plan. We are working closely with Riley County Planning & Development to develop an educational process for a committee of local citizens who have been charged with examining the issue of public vs. personal property rights as that pertains to land-use planning in the county. Our role has included identifying resources at KSU and elsewhere that might help with the process, helping to identify the stakeholders to serve on the committee and facilitating committee meetings.

Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Zones--Extension, working again with the Riley County Commission and Planning & Development, organized an educational meeting for local land owners to find out more about ACUB and the concept of land trusts. Other partners included the US Army, Natural Resources Conservation Service & the Kansas Land Trust.

County Officials-- Extension staff have played a role in professional development and strategic planning activities for county officials for several years. This has included planning and facilitating yearly retreats for county department heads. In the spring of 2006, staff was involved in planning and facilitating a strategic planning retreat which was focused on refining the current Riley County Strategic Plan to account for changes occurring in the community as a result of the influx of troops at Ft. Riley. Extension was charged with all aspects of planning the retreat, including securing a qualified facilitator from KSU and working with that facilitator to plan for the process. Other retreats, where Extension has played a similar role, have focused on professional development and teambuilding among department heads.

– Trudy Rice, Douglas County

Trudy Rice serves on the ECO2 Commission to represent the agriculture sector. The ECO2 Commission is an 8 member commission jointly appointed by the City of Lawrence and Douglas County to create a plan for Industrial Development and Open Space Preservation in Douglas County. It has representatives from Open Space, Industry and Agriculture. The Commission has met for 3 years and has created the final draft of the plan. In the research, this is a very unique concept that has not been developed anywhere else in the country. The plan will be presented to the commissions in 2007 for their approval and funding. Extensions involvement in the process was critical in facilitating the development of the plan through wide spread public involvement.

Extension served as chair of the Public Education and Outreach workgroup. Next year the ECO2 Commission will be chaired by Extension.

Bill Wood, Douglas County Ag Agent, has been instrumental in organizing the Kaw Valley Farm Tour the past two years. This is a group with representation from the Chamber of Commerce Convention and Visitors Bureau, Community Mercantile, Farm Credit Services, local farmers and K-State Research and Extension. The purpose of the tour is to increase the sales of farm produce to local consumers and to increase tourism in our community. Last year over 300 car loads of people visited 16 farms that produce locally grown food. Extension has provided the technical assistance to make this possible in Douglas County. Bill also co chaired the Guided Exploration Committee of the Chamber of Commerce Agribusiness Network. This group secured a grant from the Department of Commerce to explore the feasibility of a bio-diesel plant in or around Douglas County. The result was that it was not feasible. A plant will not be built. However, the community engaged in a process to explore economic development opportunities and there feasibility.

– **Carl Garten, Central Kansas District**

Over the years I have been involved with numerous meetings with the Chamber on different agriculturally related industry wanting to come to this area. In the past few months, feedlot, methane, ethanol, and packing plant operations were looking to locate in this area. Other industries and businesses have been related to swine, dairy, and packing plant. Over the years, Extension has worked with a hard white wheat milling operation that was recently sold to another group but still operating in the county. The individual in this operation is working on milling sorghum. The Master food volunteers have gotten involved to develop some recipes. The horticulture agent has worked with several business developments in the hort area.

– **Chuck Otte, Geary County**

From 1997 to 2005 I was on the city/county metropolitan planning commission, the last five years as chairman. During that time I also served as chairman of a subcommittee that drafted regulations for commercial wind farm developments. This was at the request of the county commissioners.

For the past three years I've been working with a multi-county group who has developed a birding festival hosted at Wakefield at the upper end of Milford Lake. This event is held every other year and in 2006 there were 50 people attending from as far away as Mississippi, Massachusetts, Washington and Texas. This serves not only as CD but also as volunteer and leadership development - this group has grown from me running the meeting to the group being self sufficient and I just help out in certain capacities.

A company recently announced that Junction City will be their headquarters for a GMO rice production enterprise. As rice production is not a normal ag activity in Kansas I have been quite involved in supplying information to local government and local farmers to help them understand rice production. This is a just developing situation with a long ways to go. I've already been in contact with one bank about providing capital to producers if there are land/equipment improvements that need to be made. Many people are joking around about this and don't understand/believe we can actually grow rice in Kansas.

– Rick Miller, Johnson County

Extension has offered educational classes for the last six years on helping individuals identify resources to help them start and grow a small business. We refer to other existing small business groups like the SBDC's, Kauffman group, KS Dept. of Commerce and others. We serve as the facilitator and also bring in small business owners to share their examples. It has been very successful in helping individuals thinking about starting a small business know where to turn for educated answers. They make good decisions as a result. We have probably worked with close to 400 people during this time.

One example individual benefitting from our classes is Jeff Cunningham. Jeff attended two of our classes as well as some others. After researching his business using the resources we introduced him to, he started up and still operates a store front business called Today's Chalet. It is a home interior store. As a matter of fact, I asked Jeff to run for my community development PDC and he was elected a few years back.

– Jessica Beebe, Sheridan County

Alternative Energy Task Force

In early 2006 Sheridan County Extension met with Sheridan County Economic Development to create an Alternative Energy Task Force. A committee was created from Sheridan County Extension and Sheridan County Economic Development. Several community members were also selected to sit on the task force. Members of the task force met several times to discuss potential alternative energy projects that could be implemented in Sheridan County to boost the economy. Potential ideas included, wind energy, bio-diesel plants, and serving as a hub for a wind energy network. Potential economic development from these ideas includes; increased county revenue and increased population due to short term and long term employment.

Northwest Kansas Rural Experience: Agri-Tourism Plus

An Agri-tourism collaborative effort has developed among the nine northwest Kansas counties; Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, Wallace, Logan, and Gove, to promote tourism, and tourism based businesses. The committee is comprised of extension agents from each county, Chambers of Commerce's, Economic Development programs, Convention and Visitors Bureau's, Conservation Districts, Thomas County Community Foundation, and Western Prairie Resource Conservation & Development.

The committee began meeting in the winter of 2005 to discuss a two-day conference on agri-tourism in northwest Kansas. The conference was held April 4-5, 2006 in northwest Kansas. The conference traveled to several cities and counties. There were a total of 23 presenters at the conference, and 90 conference participants.

Topics for the conference included:

- Kuhrt Ranch tour
- History of the ranch and business
- History of the business of the Cole Family Farm Corn Maze
- History of the business of Buffalo ranching, production, marketing, and sales of buffalo meat
- Panel discussion of Beds & Breakfast and Hunting Lodges in northwest Kansas

- Tour of the historic Beaver Creek Watershed
- History of the business of the Aberdeen Steak House
- History of the early northwest Kansas settlements

Breakout Sessions for the conference included:

- “Agri-tourism – Liability and State Assistance”
- “Marketing Your Tourism Business”
- “Accessing the Local Resources in Tourism Planning”
- “Historical Registration”
- “Developing Tourism Business Structures and Business Planning”

– Jan St. Clair, Comanche County

RECYCLING: Several years ago, the county engineer, Extension groups and individuals in Comanche county were interested in getting a recycling program started in our county. We put together a committee composed of the county engineer, FCS agent, and several interested volunteers. With the help of the county commissioners, the county road and bridge department, and local city officials, we wrote a grant which was funded through KDHE for facilities to house recyclables, baling equipment for cardboard, public education, and much more. Since that time, the program has expanded. We have received help from the Sunflower RC&D group through additional grants that have benefitted the entire area. A regional recycling center has been created in Pratt. The RC&D markets the recyclables that are received in county facilities and is able to get more for the product due to the quantity from the 8 counties. A new grant is being developed to get some needed equipment for the program.

LEADERSHIP: I have been involved in getting the leadership program started in Comanche county. In the beginning, the school counselor, economic development director and I attended a leadership training using servant leadership. We have successfully written small grants and have had additional support from businesses in the county. Our "Vision" program involves a class of equal numbers of youth and adults. The adults and youth have worked well together and learned from each other. The Economic Development director attended sessions with the Kansas Health Foundation and a \$100,000 endowment has been set up to fund leadership programs and projects of the classes each year. The first project that was completed by the Vision group was meningitis immunizations for all seniors planning to attend school away from home. An education campaign was conducted to make parents and youth aware of the need for these immunizations. The immunizations were partially funded by their \$1000 grant.

SMALL BUSINESSES: Extension worked with the Department of Commerce representative from Garden City to organize a program to help small businesses in the county learn more about starting or improving their business. I have also helped a couple of women who were starting their own food businesses to get their products approved by the lab at KSU. Fadi Aramouni has been helpful. Sessions on marketing, etc. that are held at KSU have also been helpful for one of these women. There have been others who have looked to Extension for advice, also. Our small county has several small business owners who benefit from K-State Research and Extension's assistance.

– Jenell Smith, Sedgwick County

Part of the Senior education program for Sedgwick County is the Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas Program (SHICK). Last fall and spring all Medicare beneficiaries were faced with a major health care decision. The implementation of the Medicare Prescription Drug program was the largest change to Medicare since the inception of the Federal Health Insurance program. Sedgwick County Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) counselors and the SHICK coordinator reached over 14,000 through presentations and one-on-one counseling.

Our challenge was to reach these individuals to educate them regarding the program, help them determine their need for the program based on other insurance they may have, and assist them with shopping and understanding the 41 plans. We also educated the public on the availability of the extra help for those that had lower incomes and resources. Those choosing not to enroll would suffer an economic impact at enrollment time by paying a penalty for each month that they delayed enrollment.

Those qualifying for extra help would save an average monthly premium of approximately \$25 (\$300 per year), the yearly deductible of \$250, and would only have to pay minimal co-pays for each medication. The individual who saved these monthly premiums and the yearly deductible would have a minimum of \$550 per year that could be used for food, housing, and other expenses.

We also trained area professionals to prepare them to assist their clients. These included physicians, nurses, pharmacists, mental health workers, social workers from hospitals, home health care agencies, and Social Rehabilitation Services.

Another portion of this program guides people through the process of appealing Emergency Medical Services that are frequently denied by Medicare. Five hundred twenty eight individuals received this help and would save between \$500 and \$700 if Medicare re-determined their claim to be payable. $528 \times \$600 =$ savings of \$316,800

NOTE: Extension is the sponsoring organization for the SHICK program in Sedgwick County.

– Marilyn Toellner, Sedgwick County
Women's Investment Education Program

The Women's Investment Education Program is a series of classes that includes information on saving and investing, government securities, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and investment scams. It offers face to face investor education using research based and unbiased information. Investment Basics is written and produced by K-State Research and Extension at Kansas State University.

Three hundred sixteen participants have attended the Women's Investment Education Program and they have indicated that they understand more investment terms, have made changes in the way they handle their investment dollars, ninety-seven per cent said they are more confident enough now to interview and work with financial advisors. Course evaluations indicate that approximately thirty per cent have begun saving and investing for the first time and many others

have diversified their investments using the knowledge they gained in the classes. Many ethnic groups were represented and some men attended the classes.

Advanced classes and classes for men have been requested.

Kansas Saves

As a result of the Kansas Saves campaign in Sedgwick County, two hundred seventy nine have committed to become Kansas Savers and have said they would save a total of \$14,329 per month. Kansas Saves is presented at all classes and programs that are given on personal financial management. The Kansas Saves campaign is targeted at diverse low income families and the working poor.

Counseling and Personal Finance Classes for those filing Bankruptcy

During the past year counseling has been given to sixty-two people who were considering filing Bankruptcy. This counseling is required before bankruptcy can be filed and a certificate of completion must be presented at the time of filing. Debtor education classes are also provided and are required before a bankruptcy can be discharged. These classes are offered monthly and have been attended by thirty seven people.

Application must be made and approved by the U. S. Trustees Department in order to offer these educational opportunities.

– Bob Neier, Sedgwick County

Two years ago I helped with soil texture and nutrient analysis and irrigation water quality analysis for a commercial client who was investigating putting in a sod farm. The results of the tests came out favorable and they work directly with our Extension Turf Specialist for sod production information. The result is that 3 circle irrigation systems of new sod is in production in Sedgwick County with harvest that started late this summer. This converted farmground to a higher value crop to supply the needs in an urban area. This local sod is now replacing the need to ship in sod from out of state.

– From Amy Collins, Stafford County

Glenn and I have been facilitating a Healthworks committee called Stafford County Rural Health Care Steering Committee. It was formed to explore our communities thoughts on where we are headed with our healthcare in Stafford County. This program was brought to us through the Rural Health Options Project of Kansas and Aaron Lusby, Extension Associate under the direction of John Leatherman.

As confusing as that may all seem, we have been able to meet with our community once a month for the past year to discuss everyone's thoughts and feelings on healthcare in our county. It has provided us with a way to have a phone survey conducted and then distribute, in book form, results from that survey. From there we were able to put together an Economic Impact of the Health Care Sector in Stafford County too. We have been able to narrow down what community members find most helpful, what their needs are or will be in the future. It has enabled us in Extension to work directly with our hospital administrator, schools, community doctors and nurses, and the general public.

We are still in the process of determining what to do with the information we have uncovered and are currently in the second stage of this effort. Only three counties in Kansas have been able to utilize this process and I truly think ALL counties would benefit from it. Funding is provided through a grant from the office of Rural Health Policy Health Resources and Services Administration and was brought to us through Aaron Lusby and K-state.

– Sandra Wick, Smith County

FARMERS' MARKET - First year for the program that was implemented through a grant from Jana Beckman's office in Sustainable Ag. The FCS and Community Development PDC came up with the idea that we needed to start one here in the county. Representatives from each of the PDC's attended a workshop last February in Wichita and gained a better understanding of the process of starting a Farmers' Market. We then formed a steering committee and held a workshop by Jerry Jost on "How to get Started". The group was off and running and we kicked off the event June 24 and are running through September 30. It is held every Saturday morning in the roadside park right on Highway 36 starting bright and early at 7a.m. We have approximately 6-8 vendors per week with primarily garden produce and baked goods. Other items include jams, jellies and crafts. We even had fresh homemade eggrolls being sold almost every Saturday that goes toward a project from one of our Rotarians for a Phillipines project. It has really actually become a social event for some who are the early risers.

SMITH COUNTY HEALTH FAIR. -- This is actually the 5th year for this event. We work in cooperation with the Smith County Memorial Hospital and have over 40 exhibitors. The date for 2006 is October 28 which usually is the corresponding date of the last Saturday in October. It has brought approximately 200-250 people. Some of the success stories from this event from the testing is one gentlemen received the corroded artery test and found estreme blockage that could have been fatal if not treated. Another success is a radon kit was picked up and done and extremely high levels were found in the household which explains the health problems with some of their young children.

– Susie Latta, Marshall County

Habitat for Humanity Thrift Shop

Marshall County had a need to create housing, jobs, and retail businesses to create revenue and reduce the solid waste going into the land fill. K-State Research and Extension played an active role 8 years ago in the creation of the Habitat for Humanity Thrift Shop. It continues today with myself as an active board member and current chair of the board. The Thrift Shop was a way to encourage recycling in an non traditional way which was a project of mine.

The Thrift Shop promotes the idea of recycling to reduce the amount of items going into the landfill. It truly is a win/win situation for all involved, as the old saying goes, some people's junk is another person's treasures, and so is true at the Thrift Shop. This Thrift Shop is also a form of economic development for the county. It provides jobs and collects sales tax. The profit from the shop goes toward building houses for families within our community. It is also a great place for people to volunteer, get positive support from others, and shop.

The Habitat for Humanity Thrift Shop has completed seven years of business. The Thrift Shop has celebrations to recognize the business' anniversary, recognize volunteers during National Volunteer Week, and various holidays. It is important to have these celebrations in order to acknowledge those who donate to the shop, either items or volunteer hours, as well as those who purchase items from the shop. There are monthly clothing bag sales and specials are offered on certain merchandise regularly. We have recently started a senior citizen discount day.

The Thrift Shop has a constant flow of people coming in and out. The Thrift Shop is a host site for two Senior Community Service Employment Program persons, who are working out well. The Thrift Shop also serves as a place for people to go for support and to find out about various resources that our county has to offer. The business has been a win-win situation for everyone in the community, and is an excellent way to raise money to build or remodel houses with people in need.

The Thrift Shop has enhanced the economic development in our community. It provides citizens a place to buy reasonably priced clothes and other used items. It also provides a place for others to take things that are no longer needed. The Thrift Shop continuously accepts clothing, as well as other items. Over 2,900 people have donated items to the Thrift Shop so far this year.

This year, the Thrift Shop has had over 60 volunteers donate approximately 3,000 hours of service to the Thrift Shop. Some of the volunteers have been volunteering on a regular basis for several years.

The Habitat for Humanity Thrift Shop has also built 5 homes in Marshall County with one on the way and remodeled two homes. It currently employs nine people. The Thrift Shop serves as an important place in our community for people to go to shop for items and it is a place for them to donate unwanted goods keeping these items from going into the land fill.

In the past seven years, the shop has had a net profit of more than \$100,000 that is contributed to the Habitat for Humanity Building Fund. This year, we transferred \$15,000 to the building fund. Since the shop has opened, it has grossed \$500,000. It is amazing, as many of the things we sell cost less than \$1.00.

– Linda Mirt, Sumner County

Johnny has been working on two areas that I think relate very well to the economic development issue. One is he has been the go between with KDHE and Elk Horn Packing Plant on environmental issues that impact the plant and keep it open rather than putting it out of business.

The second area is he is working with a committee of local producers in both Sumner and Cowley county that are exploring the best place to put an ethanol plant between these counties. They are making great progress in setting up a board and financial issues related in opening it up for investors as well as feasibility studies.

– Ben Allen, Chautauqua County

Probably the most important thing I did was being part of our Enterprise Facilitation Group. We are a 5 county group and jumped thru all of the hoops to get it going....state funding, county and

private. Hired a facilitator and went to work. An excellent program and we are fighting to continue and keep the funding going. It is tough....all was done on soft money. I feel extension could really reach out in this area and better serve the public.

– **Cheri Nelson, Wilson County**

I am currently working with the Fredonia Economic Development committee and a group looking at Fredonia for a Bio Fuel plant. I really have not done much but do some facilitation but that might be something they need.

– **Mary Sullivan, Grant County**

The head of Economic Development for Grant Co. is Gene Pflughoft. He is on my FCS PDC. We have worked together on community projects. One example is the Grant Co. Leadership program he taught. We supplied the conference room, materials, projectors, etc. and aided in the teaching on occasion. We also took the course.

He attempted to aid us in getting an office on Main Street, but the commissioners decided to build us a building of our own on the fairgrounds in 2004. Gene is a great supporter of Extension and helped me several times with my graduate work in my Masters Degree. He also served as a reference in getting me an adjunct position with Garden City Comm. College teaching Nutrition. So far, my class has not filled, so no teaching yet.

I have helped the Economic Development Office with information they needed for Grants they were writing.

– **From Mark Schuler, Linn County**

the two biggest issues of economic importance here in Linn county is the Sugar Mound Arts and Crafts festival which currently has over 550 booths not counting food vendors which brings over 10,000 people to the festival annually. It is a two day event. Linn County Extension has worked with this group each year since I have been on board 15 years.

The other is the Linn County Fair Association, above normal fair/extension items, I work with them on evening entertainment as a economic development issue. Linn County Fair Association has 8 nights of evening entertainment. 2 nights of PRCA rodeo, Branson style gospel music show, Sanctioned Outlaw Truck and Tractor pull, Draft horse pull, Sanctioned Arena Truck Competition, Demo Derby, and a headline Nashville Country music show with recent appearances by Reba McEntire, Doug Stone, Garth Brooks, Trick Pony and this years group the Low Cash Cowboys.

I have also 2 helped local producers with marketing their products into local retail grocery stores. An economic value added item.