

Cottonwood Extension District

K-State Research & Extension News

Cottonwood Extension District #17

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Cottonwood Extension District Begins July 1st

It's official! The Cottonwood Extension District has been approved and began operating as a district July 1st. It was a whirlwind couple of weeks at the end of June getting paperwork together to move forward in making a smooth transition and taking care of business as an Extension District.

Some of you long time Extension supporters may be asking if you will still have access to "my" Extension Agents? Yes, current staff will continue to office in their local counties, and will provide educational programming in both counties. Extension agents will be allowed to specialize, creating a greater focus and depth of expertise.

We have an eight-member District Board comprised of four members from each county. Our first official meeting was held in early July and many of the decisions were made by the transitional board were ratified at that meeting. This first District Board is appointed but in the future District residents may run in elections held in November of odd numbered years.

Of course one of the first orders of business for the Cottonwood Extension District board will be to formulate a budget for 2018. Our board members are taxpayers too, and good stewards of taxpayer money. The trend of Extension districts in Kansas has been to maintain relatively stable tax levels. When our district budget for 2018 is set we will hold a public hearing in mid-August to receive any comments from you.

It's Fair time in both Barton and Ellis County. While our attention turns to this wonderful learning experience for 4-H families and others in the community, you can be sure that the Cottonwood Extension District Board and staff will be working toward providing high quality educational opportunities to all residents now and in the future.

Donna Krug is the District Director with K-State Research and Extension – Cottonwood District. You may reach her at: (620)793-1910 or dkrug@ksu.edu

Meet your District Agents

The Cottonwood District is fortunate to have agents who have specialized knowledge in various areas. All agents welcome you to visit the office locations and look forward to sharing this knowledge with you.

Great Bend Office



Donna Krug is the District Director for the Cottonwood Extension District, handling the administrative duties. She will also provide educational programming related to health, wellness and aging issues. Donna's Extension career spans nearly 32 years with 3 ½ years as a 4-H and Youth Agent in Fort Bend County, Texas, and 28 years as a Family and Consumer Science Agent in Barton County. Donna is an alum of Kansas State University with a Bachelor's degree in Home Economics Education. She has also completed several graduate courses in Adult Education.

Donna's passion in her job is to focus on health and wellness programs. She is certified to lead Stay Strong, Stay Healthy workshops and she also counsels people with Medicare to help enroll them in prescription drug plans. Donna also enjoys teaching life skills to diverse audiences at an alternative learning center and the Migrant Parent Program. Six fact sheets and leaders guides have been written by Donna and published by K-State Research and Extension. She has shared these fact sheets as break out sessions at state and national meetings. A 2007 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award, Donna has also been recognized with the K-State Research and Extension Diversity Award in 2014. Donna is currently serving as President of the Kansas Extension Association for Family and Consumer Science Agents.

A Washington, Kansas native, Donna was a 12 year member of 4-H. Donna and her husband, John, will celebrate their 40th anniversary later this year. They have 3 grown children and 4 grandchildren who they enjoy spending time with. Donna and John have logged more than 50,000 miles on the back of a tandem bicycle. Other hobbies include quilting, playing the piano, and traveling.

Donna is looking forward to being a part of the Cottonwood Extension District and sharing educational programs with everyone.



Alicia Boor is one of the two Agriculture and Natural Resources agents for the newly formed Cottonwood District. Before joining Extension in 2013, Alicia worked as a zookeeper in Sedgwick County, Great Bend and Dodge City. She has a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Agriculture with an emphasis in Animal Science from Fort Hays State University.

As an Agriculture and Natural Resources agent, Alicia's fields of knowledge include crops, livestock, horticulture and forestry. She works with the public to help them with questions they may have using research based information from K-State Research and Extension. Alicia has also worked with community leaders to listen to what the people want from KSRE. She has expanded the use of research and variety plots for producers in the field when it was expressed that they were wanted in the area, and she helped build a community orchard for the City of Great Bend. As of right now, as the district begins to take shape, Alicia will continue to serve the public in her areas of expertise. As the wants and need of the communities in the partnership are assessed and realized, Alicia will work on specialization where the board and the community feel she will be best able to serve.

Alicia originally comes from Dodge City, and went to Fort Hays State University where she met her husband Todd. Alicia, Todd and their son Connor currently live in Hoisington. Todd works as a truck driver for Fed Ex Freight in Great Bend and Connor will be a 2nd grader in Hoisington this fall. They enjoy traveling, spending time with family, and watching sports together.



Berny (Bernadette) Unruh is the 4-H and Youth Development Extension Agent in Great Bend. She has also worked as a Kansas Extension Agent in Atchison, Ellis and Pawnee counties. She graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in Home Economics Education and always had a desire to be an Extension Agent.

Berny says she truly believes in the 4-H and youth program and has tried to find ways to offer a variety of educational activities and events to encourage youth to learn something new every day. She enjoys working with youth of all ages but says the most challenging and rewarding work is with the tween-agers – the 6th through 8th graders who will soon be attending high school and making some big decisions.

Berny served as president of the Kansas 4-H Extension Agent Association in 2011. She was awarded the Distinguished Service Award through the National 4-H Extension Agent Association.

After working in Extension for a few years after college graduation, Berny married Dale Unruh and they have 4 children. Three of their children live in Manhattan. Nicolette is the guest relations director at Rock Springs Ranch, Danette is a radiology tech at Manhattan Surgical Center, and Grant is a student at Kansas State University majoring in Ag Business. Their oldest son Adam farms with Dale and Adam also runs the township road maintainer for Pawnee Rock Township.

Hays Office



Linda Beech is the Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences in Hays. Prior to coming to Hays in January 2012, Linda served as a county agent in Finney, Stevens and Hodgeman Counties. She holds a Bachelors of Science degree from Kansas State University College of Human Ecology with a dual degree in foods & nutrition and consumer economics.

As an Extension agent, Linda's goal is to provide research-based information from the experts at Kansas State University to help people improve their lives, families and communities. Linda is honored to have received numerous awards for her Extension work– including national communication awards in 2013 and 2015, a national program award in 2011, and the Kansas Extension Communicator of the Year award in 2006. Linda is a past-president of the Kansas Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, the statewide professional organization of Extension FCS agents like herself.

Linda grew up on a small farm in southern Saline County where her parents still live. She was an International 4-H Youth Exchange (IFYE) delegate to the Philippines in 1982. She and her husband Doug Beech were married in 2008 and he works as the Planned Giving Officer of the Kansas 4-H Foundation from their home office. Her son John Walter is a teacher at Junction City High School and her daughter Emily Walter is a Neonatal Intensive Care nurse at Wesley Hospital in Wichita. In her free time, Linda likes to cook, read mysteries, garden, travel and spend time with her family.



Stacy Campbell is one of the County Extension Agents for Agriculture and Natural Resources in the Cottonwood Extension District. Prior to coming to Ellis County in May 2000, he served as a county agent in Morton County Kansas. Before that he was a county agent in Childress and Ellis County Texas. He enjoys the variety of work that comes with Extension, “when the phone rings or someone comes through the door you never know what the next question might be”.

Stacy grew up in Dalhart, Texas. He was an active 4-Her and was fortunate enough to compete on Interscholastic Livestock and Wool Judging teams while attending college at Seward County Community College, Liberal KS, and Angelo State University, San Angelo, TX., where he received an Animal Science degree.

Stacy is married to Laura who works as a special investigator for Key Point Government Solutions. His son, Mitchell, graduated this spring and will be attending Kansas State University and his daughter, Bailey will be a senior at Hays High. In his free time, Stacy enjoys hunting, fishing, shooting, grilling and spending time with his family.



Susan Schlichting

Susan Schlichting is the 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent in Hays. A Nebraska native, Susan has served as an Extension Agent in Nebraska, South Dakota and Kansas over her 30+ year career. Through many years in Extension, Susan has served as a Family Consumer Science Agent and 4-H Agent serving in local counties and on regional teams.

4-H has always been an important part of Susan's life, as a member, Collegiate 4-H'er, International 4-H Exchange student to West Germany and Extension staff member. Susan believes in the power of the 4-H experience in empowering youth and adults to build their leadership skills and make our communities a better place to live.

Leadership Development, Camping, Science Engineering & Technology, Character Development, Entrepreneurship, Photography, Food/Nutrition and Public Presentations are some of her areas of expertise.

In her free time, she enjoys bicycling, photography, camping, genealogy, quilting and bread baking.

Susan is looking forward to meeting and working with families in Barton County and linking our two county programs together to bring new opportunities to the youth and families of the Cottonwood Extension District!



Holly Dickman Cottonwood Extension District Horticulture Agent

Farewell to Extension

It is with very mixed emotions that I write this message as my service with K-State Research and Extension comes to a close. As of July 24th I will take on a new chapter in my career as the Water Conservation Specialist for the City of Hays and am therefore resigning my position as Horticulture Extension Agent. While not a decision that was taken lightly, it is one that I feel is best for me and my family at this time.

When I began work as the Ellis County Horticulture Extension Agent, in 2006 (my dream job!), I had no idea what a wonderful experience it would become. I have learned more than I could have ever imagined and have had the wonderful opportunity to work with some of the kindest, most talented, and hardworking people! My co-workers (past and present), Extension Master Gardener volunteers, community partners, and Extension Agents/

Specialists throughout the state have all had an influence on the person I am today and I owe a great deal of my career success to them. I truly loved providing horticultural advice and education to the citizens of Ellis County and beyond, and I know I will miss it dearly.

While I will no longer be employed by K-State Research and Extension, I will continue to be a strong advocate for KSRE and Horticulture programming in the Northwest Area and I plan to use the resources I know, love and trust in both my personal and professional life. I am looking forward to what the future brings, including becoming a 4-H parent this fall as my oldest daughter enrolls in 4-H!

Thank-you for allowing me to "grow" as I served as your Horticulture Extension Agent. My hope is that you will give as much support to a new Cottonwood District Horticulture Extension Agent as you have provided me throughout the years. It really has been an experience that I will treasure forever and for that, I am thankful!

Office Professionals



Brenda Walton is the office professional for Cottonwood Extension District in Barton County. Along with normal office operations and Agent support, Brenda will be responsible for the financials and bookkeeping for the district.

Brenda has been among Barton County staff since April of 2013. While well experienced working in an office setting, she's done a little bit of everything professionally. She has retail sales experience and also worked many years in the service industry.

Though not born, she is Great Bend-raised. She attended Great Bend schools as well as Barton County Community College. Her adult daughter Sarah and seven year-old grandson Roland Jack, reside in Prairie Village. An animal lover, Brenda and her significant other Dirk have 4 cats and two dogs, collectively.

When time allows, Brenda loves spending time with her family in Great Bend, as well as her loved ones in Prairie Village. She fills other free periods with reading, working crosswords, playing word games, crocheting, and maintaining her Pinterest habit.



Theresa Meis is the Office Professional for the Cottonwood District in the Ellis County Office. She joined the staff in December 2006. A lifetime Ellis County resident, Theresa is married to husband Paul and they have two sons, Karl and Jacob. Although she did not participate in 4-H as a child, the boys were quite active and she became a 4-H mom and local 4-H Volunteer.

In her spare time, Theresa enjoys cross-stitching, baking, quilting and gardening. She also loves spending time with family and spoiling her shelter-rescue cat, Ollie and the family dog, Bandit.

Cottonwood District Governing Body

Barton County

Deanna Essmiller

Natalie Fullerton

Kathie Rondeau

Steve Tustin

Ellis County

Rhiannon Corn

Nathan Leiker

Allen Roth

Ramie Wasinger

Welcome to the First Quarterly edition of the Cottonwood Extension District News. This is an introduction of the agents and office professionals in the district offices. Plan to stop by and get acquainted with our staff and the variety of ways research-based information from K-State Research and Extension can be of help to you. Our mission is to share “*Knowledge for Life*” with the citizens of Barton and Ellis Counties.

Cottonwood Extension District Staff

Barton County Office

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Please visit the following link to view a new position announcement for the Cottonwood District Horticulture Agent.
http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/jobs/current_openings/index.html