

## **A Season of Change**

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No doubt we are living in a season of change, and the fresh autumn weather is likely the very best of times for many. The virus that has taken over our world and everyday lifestyles is hard enough to cope with, but add heated local and national political battles, school safety and mask debates to the dynamics and the chaos can be overwhelming.

The Southwind Extension District is also going through a season of reorganization, but I am optimistic for a bright future because of these changes. Christopher Petty, Livestock Production & Forage Management Agent for the Southwind District resigned in May. Then in September, Kathy McEwan, Foods & Nutrition Agent and who was also the SNAP Education Coordinator for the Southwind District retired. Without a full-time Agent to manage the SNAP program, the federal SNAP grant was regretfully ceased for FY21. The bad news is that K-State Research & Extension is in a hiring freeze for an indefinite time, and although replacing our agents will certainly happen, it just won't be soon. Let's choose to focus on the good news because the Southwind Extension District has a diverse and talented pool of staff who will see to it that all of your questions are answered.

Southwind Agents Barbara Stockebrand and Joy Miller continue to provide a broad base of expertise to help solve complicated problems by teaching essential living skills including finances, aging well, caring for your home, food preparation skills, strengthening family relationships and raising your children. We are coming into the open enrollment season for Medicare, and Joy can help you navigate Medicare and Market Place Insurance, too. Krista Harding is actively engaged in educating adults and youth in the science and art of growing fruits, vegetables, flowers, ornamental plants, and trees through her Horticulture role in the Southwind District. Whether you have a question about lawns, vegetables, flowers, or landscape maintenance, Extension information is created for use by everyone, including homeowners, lawn services and nurseries.

Our 4-H program is going strong with Jennifer Terrell, 4-H/Youth Agent leading our team of professional 4-H staff as we transition into the new 4-H year. MaKayla Stroud and Cassidy Lutz serve as our 4-H program assistants and their activity on the Southwind District 4-H Facebook page is energizing and a fun way to engage youth and families in 4-H project learning. If you want your kids to be involved in something that will teach them skills for a lifetime, then you should consider joining 4-H!

Dale Lanham and James Coover are actively managing our Extension Agriculture programming and answering questions about pastures, weed control, pesticide management, cropping systems and livestock production. Dale is our resource for livestock related concerns and James is knowledgeable in issues related to agronomy. Farm management is vital to the success of our rural communities, so don't overlook their availability for your ag-related questions.

In addition to my role as the Southwind District Director, I have educational programming responsibilities related to Community Vitality. I am available to facilitate strategic planning for community groups or businesses, foster skills in board leadership for all organizations, assist with community needs assessments through First Impressions, and I will be offering a Grant Writing Workshop in Yates Center on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

Even though we are down a couple of Agents, it is my opinion there is new level of energy and excitement across our staff and offices. We have high expectations for the future by expanding opportunities for all our programs, and look forward to providing trusted, research-based information in Allen, Bourbon, Neosho and Woodson Counties for years to come.

If you haven't already, you can find more information about the Southwind District on our website, [www.southwind.ksu.edu](http://www.southwind.ksu.edu) or our Facebook page: Southwind Extension District.