

DRAFT

Meeting Highlights: Rural Communities Committee
Robert Monk, Chair
Bardstown Ag Extension Office
2/3/09

The Chair thanked members who were in attendance, given extremely adverse weather conditions that are persisting.

Approximately 15 – 17 persons have indicated an interest in participating on this Committee; the Chair and staff are still in the process of confirming the interest of several prospective members or identifying the representative who will be appointed by their parent organizations. Committee members are encouraged to recommend additional persons or organization whom they think would provide additional resources for the Committee's deliberations.

The Chair and Staff led participants through a high level overview of the 7 Goals in this section of the KAC Strategic Plan.

The Committee focused first on **Goal 5**, pertaining to leadership development and "strengthening the engagement of rural people and organizations in the civic life of their communities. Several immediate action steps were identified including:

- A formal request should be sent from the KAC to the Kentucky Agricultural Extension Service requesting Agents in each county to work in collaboration with their respective County Councils and Farm Bureau offices to conduct a forum to which local civic leaders would be invited, in order to address agricultural issues as recommended by the Strategic Plan.
- A similar request should be sent in coordination by the GOAP to the County Council in each state;
- and by the Farm Bureau to each of its County or District offices to participate in the proposed forums.
- This initiative would seek to address the benchmark goal of implementing such local government forums in 75% of Kentucky counties within the coming year.

Additionally, Committee members will work with the Professional Staff to compile an inventory of all known "leadership programs" within the state, including those specifically geared to Agriculture, in order to create a data base for a survey of leadership programs to determine if they have an agricultural component and/or an "Ag Day" within their programs. It was noted that the host organizations for such programs vary considerably; not all are operated by Chambers of Commerce, some are free-standing.

Finally, Dr. Will Snell agreed to convene a meeting of Ag Leadership program representatives, to address the Action and corresponding Benchmark seeking to improve coordination among such programs.

The Committee then addressed **Goal 1**, relating to developing a focus on agricultural-related issues by the *Regional Stewardship Program*. The Regional Stewardship Program was established by state statute and is operated by the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), with centers based at five universities. Mr. Dan Flanagan of the Poultry Producers is a member of the KAC and also serves as Vice Chairman of the CPE. Accordingly, a letter is being sent from the Chair of the KAC to the Chairman of the CPE, inviting their participation on the KAC; and a meeting will be set with Mr. Flanagan to be briefed on the Regional Stewardship Program, to invite its staff to participate in the KAC and/or its Rural Communities Committee, and to explore how Agricultural representatives can become more involved in this program.

Goal 2 calls on the Agricultural Development Board to strengthen the efforts by County Councils to collaborate in identifying multi-county, regional projects and seek funding for at least two such projects on a demonstration basis in the coming year. The Committee was briefed on efforts by the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy to address this Goal that already are underway. Further reports from the GOAP will be forthcoming.

Regarding Goal 3, calling for engagement of the Ky Economic Development Cabinet and planning and promoting Ag-related economic development efforts and rural community development, the Committee Chair and Professional Staff will seek a private meeting with Mr. Don Goodin of the Cabinet, who also has been invited to be a member of the Committee.

Regarding Goal 4, calling for efforts to address urban development issues and conflicts in rural communities, the Committee Chair and Professional Staff will seek a private meeting to gather additional information on this issue with Ms. Libby Jones of the PACE program, who also is a member of the Committee.

Regarding Goal 6, related to the cost of healthcare insurance and its impact on Kentucky farm families, the Chair and Professional staff agreed to set a meeting with the Kentucky Farm Bureau, in order to gather additional information regarding their efforts to address this issue, and their recommendations for ways in which the KAC could be supportive.

Regarding Goal 7, calling for efforts to improve access to medical care in rural communities through telemedicine techniques and networks, Committee members and the Professional staff are in the process of identifying subject experts at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville who may be invited at a future date to brief the Committee.