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University Responds On County Ag Job

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*By Annabeth Miiler,
ShowMe Times Editor*

BLOOMFIELD - Stoddard County won't be getting a new University of Missouri Extension agronomy specialist anytime in the near future.

The Stoddard County Commission learned Monday that the University Extension does not intend to fill the position open due to the recent retirement of David Guethle in the near future. The commission received a letter from Vice Provost Michael D. Quart concerning the position.

The commission wrote Quart concerning the opening earlier in the summer, stressing the need for an extension agronomist in agriculture-based Stoddard County. However, Quart informed commissioners the University of Missouri Extension is still operating under a hiring freeze.

“Hopefully, if the economy shows further improvement, we will have another opportunity later this year to fill additional open positions,” Quart wrote. “At this time, we cannot predict when the next review process of open positions will occur. When that process does begin, the Stoddard County position will be on the list for review and prioritization.”

Quart informed the commissioners that until the university is able to refill the position,

other area agronomy extension faculty members will be available to “answer questions and provide programming” in the county.

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis said he was at a recent Farm Bureau gathering in the county, and the open agronomy position was a concern to area farmers.

Commissioner Frank Sifford announced there would be a presentation on Tuesday, Aug. 2, from USDA Rural Development to the First Baptist Church in Puxico. The church was instrumental in obtaining a grant for \$18,000 for the purchase of an emergency generator for the congregation’s Family Life Center to be used in times of community emergency. The church is also a designated Red Cross Shelter.

“I wish we could get [a generator] in the Advance, Essex, and Dudley areas,” Mathis said. He noted that Bernie already has generators on hand in case of emergency.

Commissioners also announced that a ribbon-cutting celebration would be held for the road project on County Road 702 that leads to the Union Pacific center in Stoddard County.

Because of the importance of the railroad to the county, the commission will adjust its meeting on Aug. 8.

“Union Pacific brings a lot of revenue to Stoddard County,” Sifford said. Therefore, Sifford proposed the commissioners attend the ribbon cutting celebration at 9 a.m. on Aug. 8, and the regular weekly commission meeting begin at 10 a.m. Presiding Commissioner Mathis and Commissioner Carol Jarrell both concurred.

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