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Emerson Criticizes USDA Office Closures

JANUARY 11TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

Emerson Criticizes USDA Office Closures

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

WASHINGTON – Southeast Missouri representative in the U.S. House of Representatives is critical of the moves by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to close more than 250 offices and labs across the country, including one in Dexter.

U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson said Wednesday afternoon that a slate of USDA office closings in Missouri will reduce services to producers and communities in a major part of the region's economy.

"These closures should be subject to a thorough review process by Congress, not strong-armed through by an administration seeking to balance its budget on the backs of rural Americans," Emerson said. "I am a strong proponent of smaller, more efficient and more effective government, but I am also wary of any effort to reduce the presence of federal agencies charged with supporting jobs and growth in the private sectors of our economy."

Emerson says rural communities in Southern Missouri want USDA to administer programs like Rural Development with as much first-hand knowledge of the communities they are serving as possible.

"Eliminating USDA employees in Dexter and Jackson does nothing to improve the decision-making of USDA offices in Washington DC. USDA is proposing that they consolidate their cell phone plans at their headquarters and get rid of jobs and services in the rest of the country. This nonsensical bureaucratic logic is not good enough for a federal government which must commit to real and substantive efficiencies without compromising the mission of helping rural communities grow and prosper," Emerson said.

Emerson says the offices are valuable partners for rural communities and producers.

"The bottom line is that these local offices and their few employees each serve a crucial, cost-effective role for agricultural producers – small businesses, essentially – which make up a major proportion of our economy in Southern Missouri," Emerson said. "Eliminating the offices leaves a gap in information for those folks and forces more of them to rely on fewer resources of the USDA. It's downright cynical to call such a plan for action a "Blueprint for Stronger Service" – what they are talking about is eroding services to people and communities which depend on access to the information and assistance of the USDA.

The ten offices scheduled to be closed in Missouri include:

- Farm Service Agency, Hillsboro
- Farm Service Agency, Buffalo
- Farm Service Agency, Versailles
- Food & Nutrition Service, St. Louis
- Food & Nutrition Service, Kansas City
- Natural Resource Conservation Service, Dexter
- Rural Development Office, Hillsboro
- Rural Development Office, Jefferson City
- Rural Development Office, Carthage
- Rural Development Office, Jackson

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Local NRCS Office Among USDA Closures

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Local NRCS Office Among USDA Closures

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

In what it calls a “streamlining” and “cost-cutting measure,” the U.S. Department of Agriculture plans to close nearly 260 offices and labs across the country – including one in Dexter.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Dexter is among the 259 offices across the country that received word it will be closed in USDA’s “Blueprint For Stronger Service.”

The local office in Dexter employs three staff members. An office of Rural Development in Jackson is also scheduled to close; it employs two staff members. The NRCS office in Dexter is the only Stoddard County USDA office slated for closure.

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- Farm Service Agency, Hillsboro
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The announcement was made this week by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in a Washington, D.C. news conference.

"The USDA, like families and businesses across the country, cannot continue to operate like we did 50 years ago," said Vilsack. "We must innovate, modernize, and be better stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. We must build on the record accomplishments of farm communities in 2011 with a stronger, more effective USDA in 2012 and beyond."

As a result of its study, USDA will close the offices, which include Farm Service Agency, Rural Development offices, Food Safety Inspection and Natural Resources Conservation Service offices.

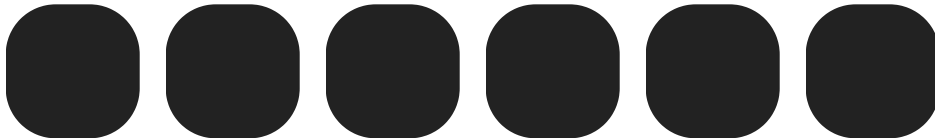
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Bearcats Celebrate Winter Homecoming

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[Bearcats Celebrate Winter Homecoming](#)

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

It's Winter Homecoming Week at Dexter High School, and Bearcats are celebrating and showing their school spirit throughout the week.

A full slate of activities is planned this week at the high school, with the student body enjoying special days and events to celebrate Winter Homecoming.

- **Monday** is a Slumber Party, with pajama attire featured by students, faculty and staff.
- **Tuesday** is Western Party, with western apparel the dress of the day and special square dancing and line dancing during Advisory Class.
- **Wednesday** is Luau Party with Hawaiian Shirts and limbo competition during Advisory.
- **Thursday** features an 80s Party, with 80s apparel featured and a "Name That Tune" contest during Advisory.
- **Friday** follows a Tailgate Party theme, with the school colors of Red & Black featured an a Pep Rally at the end of the day.

Bearcat athletes will be busy throughout the week, as well.

- **Monday:** Lady Bearcat Basketball, @ the BEC against Kennett
- **Tuesday:** Bearcat Basketball @ Bloomfield
- **Thursday:** 9th Grade Bearcats boys basketball vs Poplar Bluff; Lady Bearcats Basketball vs Neelyville @ the BEC
- **Friday:** Bearcat Basketball vs. Bernie @ the BEC

Friday night will also feature the presentation of the Winter Homecoming Queen Court and the crowning the 2012 Winter Homecoming queen. Ten lovely young ladies – two each nominated from the Bearcat Basketball Team, Lady Bearcat Basketball, DHS Dance Dexter, Wrestling Team, and the DHS Cheerleading Squad. Candidates include:

- ***Amanda Cooper:*** Amanda was nominated by the Dance Team and is a Senior at DHS. She is the daughter of Greg and Laurie Cooper. Amanda will be escorted by Stevie Payne. She is a member of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, Future Teachers of America, the DHS Dance Team, Dexter Honors Society, and she attends the First Assembly of God in Dexter.
- ***Stephanie Gee:*** Stephanie is a senior at DHS, was nominated by the Wrestling Team and she will be escorted by Cody Stevens. Stephanie is a member of the DHS Chamber Choir and Student County, as well Rotary Interact, the Dexter Show Choir,

she is active in pageants, attends the Light House Church and is a member of TARs (Teen Age Republicans).

- **Rilee Jones:** Riley was nominated the Cheerleaders, is a senior at DHS, and will be escorted Friday evening by Chase Young. Rilee is a member of the Cheer team, FTA, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, FCCLA, DECA, and the Student County. She is the daughter of Danny and Kathy Jones and she attends Faith Lutheran Church.
- **Taylor Martin:** Taylor was nominated by the boys' Basketball team and will be escorted by Jordan Fitts. Taylor is the daughter of Mike and Amber Martin and is a senior at DHS. She is a member of FCA, FTA, DECA, FCCLA, Student County, the Rowdy Gals, has been a member of the volleyball and football cheerleading squads, and has participated in both basketball cheerleading and track all four years at DHS. She is a member of Risen Church.
- **Chelsey Massey:** Chelsey was nominated by the Wrestling team and will be escorted by Dylan Hefling. Chelsey is the daughter of Allen and Kim Massey and she is a sophomore at DHS. She is a member of Future Farmers of America and a wrestling cheerleading and she is a member of 4H.
- **Hannah Noe:** Hannah was nominated by the Lady Basketball team. She is a sophomore at DHS and is the daughter of Jo and Jonas Noe. Hannah will be escorted Friday evening by Blake Horton. Hannah is a member of the DHS Chamber Choir, the Lady Basketball and volleyball teams, she participates in track, FCA and Student Council. Hannah is active in her church and is a member of the Dexter Show Choir.
- **Sydney Rinehart:** Sydney was nominated by the Cheerleaders and will be escorted Friday by DJ Dowdy. Sydney is a senior at DHS and is the daughter of Vickie and Mark Rinehart. She is active in FCA, Rowdy Gals, the varsity basketball cheer team and Art Club. Sydney also attend First Baptist Church.
- **Megan Twewatha:** Megan was nominated by the DHS Dance Team. She is a senior at DHS and the daughter Deana and Steve Trewatha. She will be escorted by Brad Potts. Megan is a member of the DHS Dance Team, FCCLA, FTA, the DHS Student Council and Rowdy Gals, and is a member of the First United Methodist Church.
- **Miranda Warner:** Miranda was nominated by the boys' basketball team and will be escorted Friday evening by Tyler Miller. Miranda is the daughter of Jenni Zimmerman and is a senior at DHS. She is active in FCA, FTA, varsity basketball cheerleading and the Rowdy Gals. She attends St. Joe General Baptist Church.
- **Mollie Whitehead:** Mollie was nominated by the Lady Bearcat basketball squad and will be escorted this Friday by Cody Neldon. Mollie is the daughter of Kristi and Jonathan Whitehead and she is a sophomore and DHS. She is a member of FCA, FCCLA, Lady Bearcat tennis, basketball and track teams. She attends First Baptist

Church.

The court will be presented and the queen crowned Friday evening at the Bearcat Event Center between the junior varsity and varsity match-ups with the Bernie Mules.

The Winter Homecoming week will culminate with the Homecoming Dance, to be held after the varsity basketball game.

Photo Above: The Homecoming Court for 2012 includes (front row, from left) Stephanie Gee, Rilee Jones, Hannah Jones, and Chelsey Massey; (back row) Mollie Whitehead, Taylor Martin, Sydnie Rinehart, Miranda Warner, Megan Twewatha, Amanda Cooper. (ShowMe Times Photo by Annabeth Miller)

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Moore Trumpets At The GoDaddy.com Bowl

Moore Trumpets At The GoDaddy.com Bowl

Mobile, Ala. - The much anticipated GoDaddy.com bowl begins tonight for many of those who will watch the A-State Red Wolves square off against the Northern Illinois Huskies. However, there is a long list of activities and pageantry that surrounds this event for fans from both schools.

From press conferences, to dinners to pep rallies, the activity list for the weekend is long and filled with great times for the fans. Downtown Mobile was a buzz with activities.

Past Dexter High School football player and band member, Tim Moore, is a major part of the activities. Tim is a member of the A-State Marching Red Wolves and puts his talents on the field for Arkansas State. Tim plays the trumpet and is incredibly talented.

The Red Wolves Marching Band was on hand Saturday night for the Red Wolves pep rally, where thousands gathered to prepare for a victory over the Huskies. The Red Wolf mascot, cheerleaders and the flag corp were all on hand to make sure the event was filled with just the right spirit.

The crowd participated with the festivities with the singing of the Red Wolves fight song and chants for a big win against the Northern Illinois Huskies.

Considered as one of the smaller bowl contests, the GoDaddy.com bowl is slated to be one of the more entertaining and better games with two high powered offenses squaring off against each other tonight.

The game begins tonight at 8 p.m. (Central time) and can be seen on ESPN. Arkansas State is favored by 1 point in the contest.

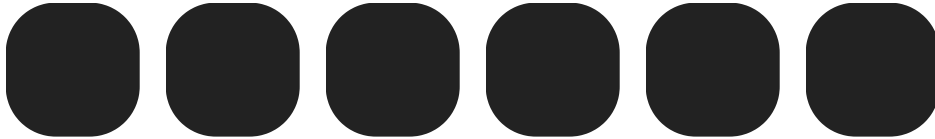
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An Era Ends At Aldermanic Meeting

JANUARY 04TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

An Era Ends At Aldermanic Meeting

By Annabeth Miller, ShowMe Times Editor

An era ended quietly Tuesday night.

After serving the citizens of Dexter for more than 45 years, Tuesday evening's meeting of the Dexter Board of Aldermen was the last meeting for Dexter Fire Chief Al Banken.

"Chief, you've done a good job all these years," said Mayor Joe Weber. In October Banken announced his retirement after nearly 48 years of service to the Fire Department and the city.

"I'm on call if needed," Banken replied.

A reception to honor Banken, his service and his family is planned for Sunday, Jan 15., from 1 until 4 p.m., at the Sacred Heart Parish Hall. The community is invited to attend

and congratulate Banken in his exemplary service and wish him well as he begins a new phase in his life.

A consolidation was approved at Tuesday's meeting of the city liquor licenses. All the licenses were consolidated into one general category, instead of the current two divisions.

"We have two separate categories in our code for liquor by-the-drink. One is just for regular by the drink and the second is for restaurants," explained City Attorney Bud Lawrence. Lawrence said the city had no real way of tracking the differences in the two categories. Therefore, it was suggested to combine the separate categories into one liquor-by-the-drink ordinance.

Aldermen, with Ward One Alderman Ray Pixley absent, approved the ordinance unanimously.

In other business Tuesday evening, aldermen:

- Received a report from City Auditor Eddie Cato on city finances;
- Learned from Water & Wastewater Superintendent Tom Espy of a situation that city workers are trying to resolve on Stoddard Street, between Locust and Elm streets. Espy explained a problem erupted under the street, and machinery and flashing lights are surrounded the problem spot to alert drivers overnight

City Administrator Mark Stidham and Ward One Alderman Ray Pixley were absent from the meeting due to illness.

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of Aldermen is at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 17 at the Dexter Municipal Building on Vine Street. The meeting is moved one day from its regular Monday meeting date due to the Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday.

Action Taken

- Ord. 4663 – consolidation of liquor by the drink ordinances; unanimously approved
- Ord. 4664 – disbursements for December 2011; unanimously approved

Photo Above: Ward One Alderman Kirby Taylor (left) discusses an item with City Attorney Bud Lawrence during City Auditor Eddie Cato's report at Tuesday's meeting of the Dexter Board of Aldermen. (SMT Photo by Annabeth Miller)

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