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# Economics Newsletter

Economics Department

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## Multi-County Planning and Development Districts in South Dakota

On December 4, 1970 South Dakota was divided into six planning and development districts by Executive Order of the Governor. The actions taken since that time by the various districts are the subject of this newsletter.

### What is a Multi-County Planning and Development District?

Multi-county planning and development districts are organizations composed of local governments, city and county, and sometimes townships. Their purpose is to bring an area's government officials and community leaders together to discuss, study and adopt cooperative programs to meet common needs. They concentrate on problems which cross local government boundaries. They do not have the power to tax. Financial support comes from the member governments and various Federal programs. All employ some full time professional planning staff.

### Progress of Districts in South Dakota

District I, a ten-county area in eastern South Dakota, and the first to be organized, became operational on July 1, 1971. The area includes the counties of Grant, Deuel, Codington, Clark, Hamlin, Kingsbury, Brookings, Moody, Lake and Miner. The District has been engaged in several types of area development activities. For example, the planning staff has spent much time gathering technical information for compilation into a comprehensive area development plan. They have assisted lo-

cal governmental and private organizations in attacking such problems as housing, rural water and sewer planning, solid waste disposal, services for the elderly, lake reclamation projects, youth employment and special education services.

District I has also spearheaded a junk-car clean-up program for the ten-county area in which youth organizations, city and county governments and the National Guard are cooperating. They have received a grant of \$150,000 for a survey of the health and welfare needs of the area, which will be used as a guide for health planning and provide baseline data for state and federal agencies to guide future program operations.

District II, a six-county area in southeastern South Dakota, recently expanded from a council of governments which originally included Minnehaha and Lincoln counties and the city of Sioux Falls. The council was formed to deal with problems arising from the expansion of Sioux Falls across the county boundary line. This council now includes the additional counties of Union, Clay, Turner and McCook. It has adopted the name of Southeastern Council of Governments (SECOG).

This district has been divided into two planning units, urban and rural. The urban unit is mainly concerned with the problems associated with the Sioux Falls metropolitan area, while the rural unit deals with the problems common to the remaining area.

Because of the diversity of the area, the district has been involved in a wide array of activities ranging from manpower surveys to land use planning and zoning. Other planning activities include rural water systems, solid waste management, pollution abatement, transportation, criminal justice and economic development.

District VI, in western South Dakota, officially began operation on January 1, 1972 with offices in Rapid City. This district includes the 11 counties of Harding, Butte, Meade, Lawrence, Pennington, Custer, Fall River, Shannon, Jackson, Washabaugh and Bennett.

The district has limited staff and for the time being has relied on private firms to prepare their area-wide plans. Plans are being readied for water and sewer, park and recreation, solid waste disposal and housing. Their studies include an analysis of the rec-

reation-tourist industry with an eye to potential areas of expansion as well as alternative economic potentials.

The June 9 flood abruptly changed the planning program. Additional money was received which expanded their activities in housing, land use and related program planning.

The three remaining districts, III, IV, and V, are not yet organized. Informational meetings have been held in Districts III and V which are located along the Missouri River but no action has been taken.

It has been demonstrated that multi-county districts, while not solving all local problems, can be effective in promoting joint efforts toward solutions to problems that transcend community and county boundaries.

Galen Kelsey -- Extension Resource Development Agent

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\* The Economics Department's Agri-Business Day is April 3, 1972 \*  
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