

Update on Lafayette Extension District Facility

The Lafayette County Extension District Council has made significant progress over the past year. Since the extension district tax levy was approved in April 2023, plans have started to take shape. In 2024, the Extension Council made important decisions, including hiring All State Consulting to assist with the steps needed to design a new educational facility. Mock plans were drafted and presented across Lafayette County. To ensure the new facility meets the community's needs, a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted from July to October. "Our goal is for this facility to reflect the county's needs, and we wanted to gather as much feedback as possible," said Extension Chair Clyde Burchett.

The planned education center will feature an event space capable of hosting several hundred people. Community members emphasized the importance of creating a multi-use space, with the flexibility to divide the area when necessary. Accessibility is a key concern, with level entrances and ample parking being prioritized. The facility will also honor the county's agricultural heritage with modern livestock show spaces, including a covered arena for multiple species. Additional features may include walking paths, a fishing pond, and outdoor classrooms.

To fund the project, the Council is looking into grant opportunities. Once completed, the Lafayette Extension Education Facility is expected to have a significant impact on both economic and community development. It will attract regional events, fairs, and livestock shows to the area.

The Council has now shifted its focus to evaluating potential sites for the facility. Due diligence is being conducted to assess different site options, ensuring the chosen location will best meet the needs of the community. They estimate the site will need to be between 20 and 30 acres. "Our goal is to create a facility that will serve the community for the next 50 years and beyond, leaving a lasting legacy for future generations," said Burchett.