

MINUTES OF THE SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Roger Reitz at 9:30 a.m. on March 2, 2009, in Room 446-N of the Capitol. Senator Faust-Goudeau moved to accept the minutes of February 24, 2009. Senator Kultala seconded the motion. The motion carried.

All Committee members were present.

Committee staff present:

Mike Heim, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Ken Wilke, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Reed Holwegner, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Noell Memmott, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Chris Steineger, Kansas Senator, Sixth District
Melissa Wangemann, Legislative Service Director, General Counsel, KS Association of Counties
Eileen King, Riley County, Treasurer
Marilyn Nichols, Shawnee County Register of Deeds

Others attending:

See attached list.

SB 144 - Subdivisions; blanket easements, void; exceptions. No action taken by the Committee.

Discussion continued on **SB 253-Zoning amendments; protest petitions; mining operations; extraordinary vote not required,** and **SB 254 - Urban area counties; zoning amendments and conditional use permits; protest petitions.** Mike Heim, revisor, reviewed the bills. **SB 253** amends the general city and county planning and zoning law to make an exception for mining operations to current law provisions that require an extraordinary vote to approve an application for a zoning amendment by the governing body of the city or county in cases where the planning commission disapproves of the zoning amendment or in cases where property owners file a petition protesting the amendment. **SB 254** amends the planning and zoning law that applies only to Johnson County.

He introduced wording of a technical amendment dealing with conditional use permits in **SB 253.**

Senator McGinn moved to accept the amendment to SB 253. Senator Faust-Goudeau seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Discussion followed. Senator Marshall moved to pass SB 253 out of committee. Senator Wagle seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Senator Marshall moved to pass SB 254 out of committee. Senator Wagle seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The hearing was opened on **SB 198 - Counties; consolidation commission; reduce number of counties.** Mike Heim, revisor, reviewed the bill.

Senator Chris Steineger, Senator Sixth District spoke in favor the **SB 198**. He outlined the following points: Kansas has too many local units of government; The cost of \$500 million to \$800 million is too much; We should study the issue of consolidation; and **SB 198** does not mandate consolidation; it merely creates a study commission to look into it.

Written testimony in supporting **SB 198** was submitted by: Americans for Prosperity Kansas (Attachment 1); Art Hall, Center for Applied Economics, KU School of Business (Attachment 2); County Reorganization in Kansas: Possible Configurations; Dept of Geology, Joseph A. Aistrup, Political Science, Kansas State University (Attachment 3); and Dave Trabert, Flint Hills Center for Public Policy (Attachment 4).

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Local Government Committee at 9:30 a.m. on March 2, 2009, in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

Melissa Wangemann, General Counsel, Kansas Association of Counties, spoke in opposition to **SB 198** stating that consolidation needs to originate at the local level. (Attachment 5)

Eileen King, Riley County Treasurer, testified in opposition to **SB 198** citing legislation passed in 2006 allows counties to consolidate when they feel there is a need. (Attachment 6)

Marilyn Nichols, Shawnee County, Register of Deeds, testified in opposition to **SB 198**. She also stated that local governments should decide for themselves what is best for their communities concerning consolidation. (Attachment 7)

Written testimony in opposition to **SB 198** was submitted by Linda M. Buttron, Jefferson County Clerk/Election Officer. (Attachment 8)

The next meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT GUEST LIST

DATE: March 21 2009

NAME	REPRESENTING
Melissa Wangerman	KAC
Doug Smith	Pineson, Smith & Associates
J DeSimone	D. Schmidt
Ron Gaches	Gaches Braden



Testimony SB 198
Establishment of County Consolidation Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 198. This legislation would 1) form a county consolidation commission that would 2) look into the feasibility of consolidating Kansas' 105 counties into 13. The commission would study this plan and come up with cost savings/efficiency gains that the plan would bring. The commission's report would be published for legislative review on 1/1/2011.

Is Kansas in need of county consolidation?

- Kansas has .8% of the U.S. population, but 3.5% of the Counties in the U.S.
- Kansas has the 5th highest number of counties of any state in the union.
- 1) Texas 2) Georgia, 3) Kentucky, 4) Missouri 5) Kansas
 - Surrounding States
 - Colorado: 62
 - Nebraska: 93
 - Missouri 114
 - Oklahoma 77
 - Kansas 105
- Idaho is the state closest in size to Kansas (83,570 SQ.M Idaho vs. 82,277 SQ.M Kansas), yet Idaho only has 44 Counties.
- Utah is very similar to Kansas in population (UT: 2.73 vs. KS 2.80), yet Utah only has 29 Counties.

Costs

- Local Government is expensive for Kansas taxpayers, with just the local government payroll coming in at over \$400 million.
- All 105 Counties have buildings, staff and SGA costs regardless of the population of their respective county and regardless of whether the county is shrinking in population. Fact: from 2000 - 2005, 83 counties have lost population.
- Local government is the area where public sector job growth has been the most dramatic. This must be tied to our expansive number of local government units (3887 in all: 5th highest in the Country!)
- From Horse to Car to Internet. When getting to the County Courthouse meant riding your horse, a courthouse in close proximity made a lot of sense. Once the car was invented, it made less so. Now, in the internet age, 105 counties in a state where 83 of those counties are losing population, does not make good taxpayer economic sense.

Derrick Sontag
State Director

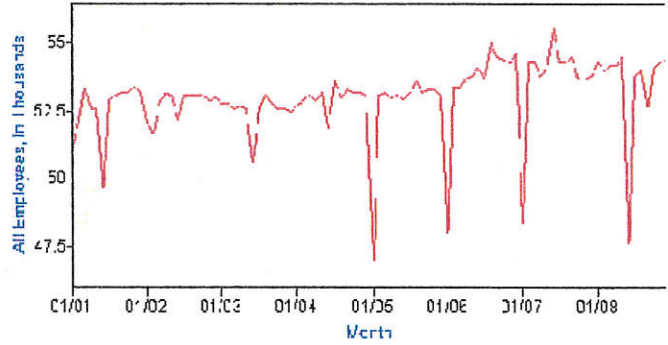
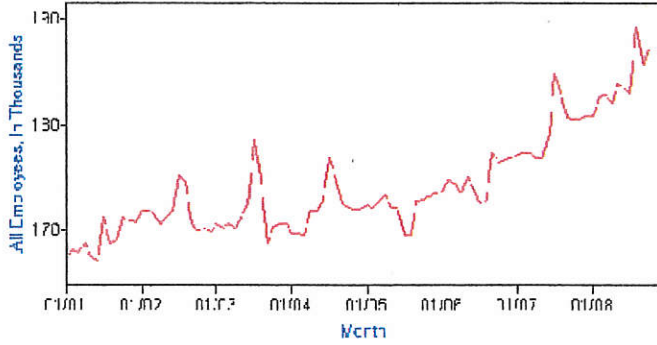
Senate Local Government
03/02/09

Attachment 1

Local Government Employees (1/01 - Present)

State Government Employees (1/01-Present)

bls.gov



Testimony related to SB 198
Consolidation of Kansas Counties

Presented to the Senate Committee on Local Government
Art Hall, Center for Applied Economics, KU School of Business
March 2, 2009

- SB 198 envisions consolidating the current 105 Kansas counties into 13 counties. It establishes a study commission to evaluate the feasibility of the plan; the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative operations of the consolidated county plan; and the costs, savings, and benefits of the consolidated county plan.
- At the request of Senator Chris Steineger, the Center for Applied Economics at the KU School of Business undertook a preliminary analysis of the potential for budgetary cost savings that could result from SB 198.
- The county consolidation plan in SB 198 creates the potential to save Kansas taxpayers between \$700 million and \$800 million annually.
- The savings come from a rationalization of the local government personnel in counties, cities, townships, and special districts. The estimates exclude personnel related to public education.
- The estimates were calculated by evaluating more than 3,000 U.S. counties along two dimensions: (1) the number of full-time-equivalent government employees (FTEs) per capita and (2) FTEs per population density (i.e., people per square mile).
 - Many Kansas counties rank significantly above average with regard to FTEs per capita. In fact, 21 Kansas counties rank in the top 100 among all U.S. counties (excluding Alaska). When evaluated based on counties with similar rural or urban characteristics, 83 Kansas counties rank within the top-two quintiles of all U.S. counties.
 - The county structure envisioned by SB 198 offers the potential for local governments to better optimize services delivery across regions with different population densities.
 - Reducing Kansas local government FTEs per capita to be more in line with national averages in a way that takes advantages of efficiencies related to service delivery across different population densities offers the potential to generate savings.
 - Based on average local government salaries (and benefits) across Kansas, the estimated potential savings of \$700-\$800 million implies a reduction of local government FTEs in the range of 33 percent to 45 percent.

Senate Local Government

3/02/09

Attachment 2

County Reorganization in Kansas Possible Configurations

Based on MA Thesis of
Rorik Ford Peterson (2008)
Powerpoint by Rorik F. Peterson, John Harrington, Shawn Hutchinson
Department of Geography
and
Joseph A. Aistrup
Political Science
Kansas State University

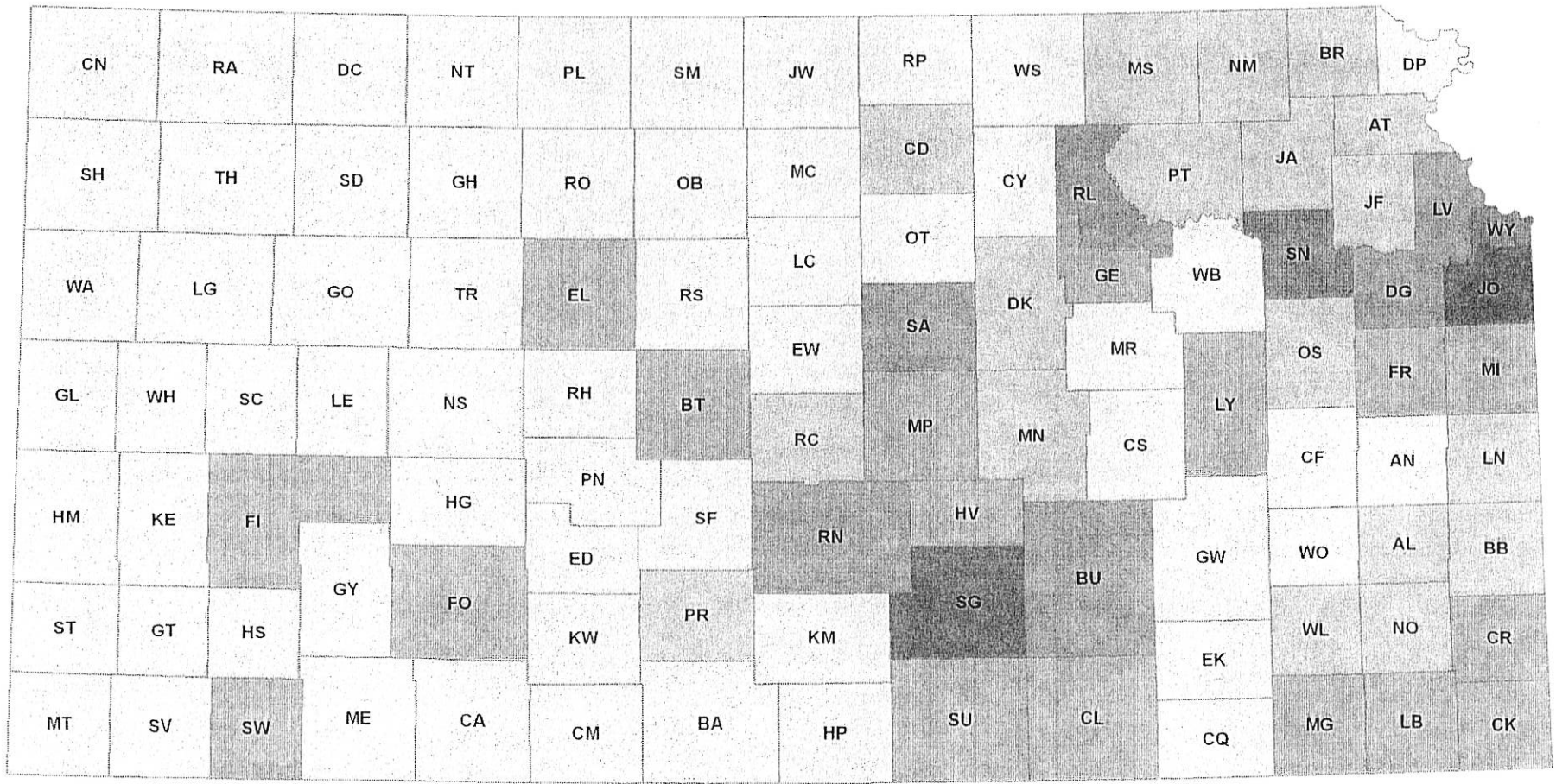
Local Government Committee, Kansas State Senate

Introduction

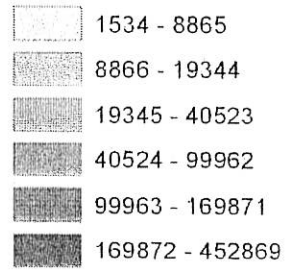
- Reducing the cost of government is a major theme in society today
 - Difficult to strike a balance between service provision and lower taxes
- Government and service consolidation is a familiar phenomena in the United States geared at government savings
 - For example: School district consolidations of the 1960s in U.S.
 - However, county consolidation has been rare in the past 100 years

Counties: A Relic of the Past

- Origin of the county
 - Based on English counties
 - Created by states to be their administrative arms
 - Current structure is a 19th Century construct
 - Horse and buggy rule of thumb
 - Small town agrarian
 - Populist – Many elected officials and power dispersed among these elected officials
- There are 105 counties in KS, with populations that range between over 450K to less than 2K



Existing Kansas county population,
2000 U.S. Census



Possible Bases of Reorganization

- Goal: To develop scenarios for county reorganization in Kansas
 - NOT to propose consolidation or reorganization
- Possible Criteria for Reorganization
 - “Test of Area”
 - Consolidation by size of the new county
 - Population
 - New counties must meet a minimum population requirement
 - “Adequacy of the economic base”
 - Economic sufficiency
 - Valuations, tax assessment, per capita wealth, etc.
 - Huber Self (1978): Environment and Man in Kansas proposed 25 counties instead of 105

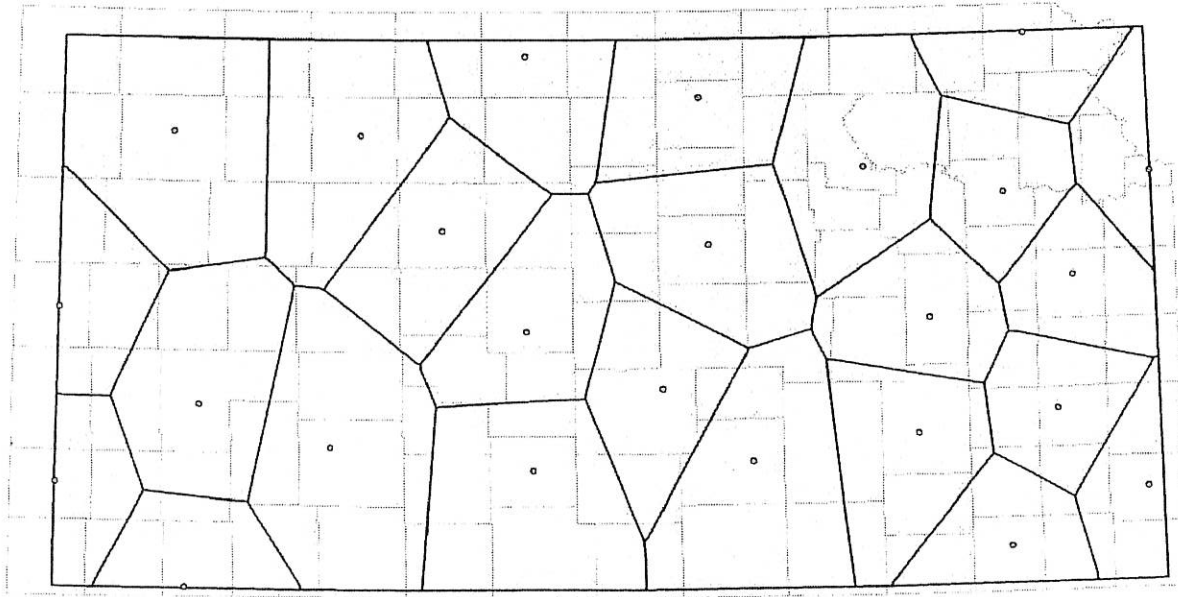
Scenario 1: Counties Defined by Ecological Regions

- 25 existing county seats selected as new county seats based on location
 - Semi-arbitrary selection process - relatively even spacing across the state
 - Distance between county seats set to approximately 100 km (62 miles)
 - Maximum drive time to county seat about an hour for resident living on outer border

Scenario 1: Counties Defined by Ecological Regions

- Ecological regions defined by aggregating Hydrological Units (Hydrological Unit Codes) as defined by USGS
 - Hydrological Unit Codes – 14 (HUC-14) assigned to each county seat based on proximity to each of the 25 county seats

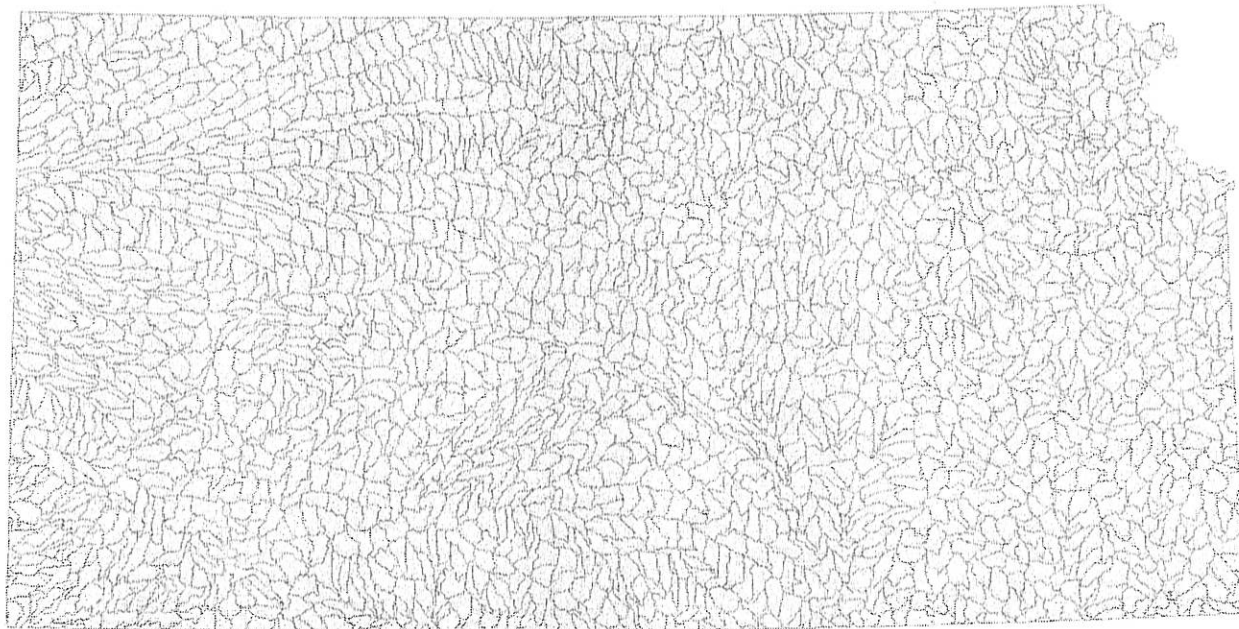
Grid to Select 25 County Seats



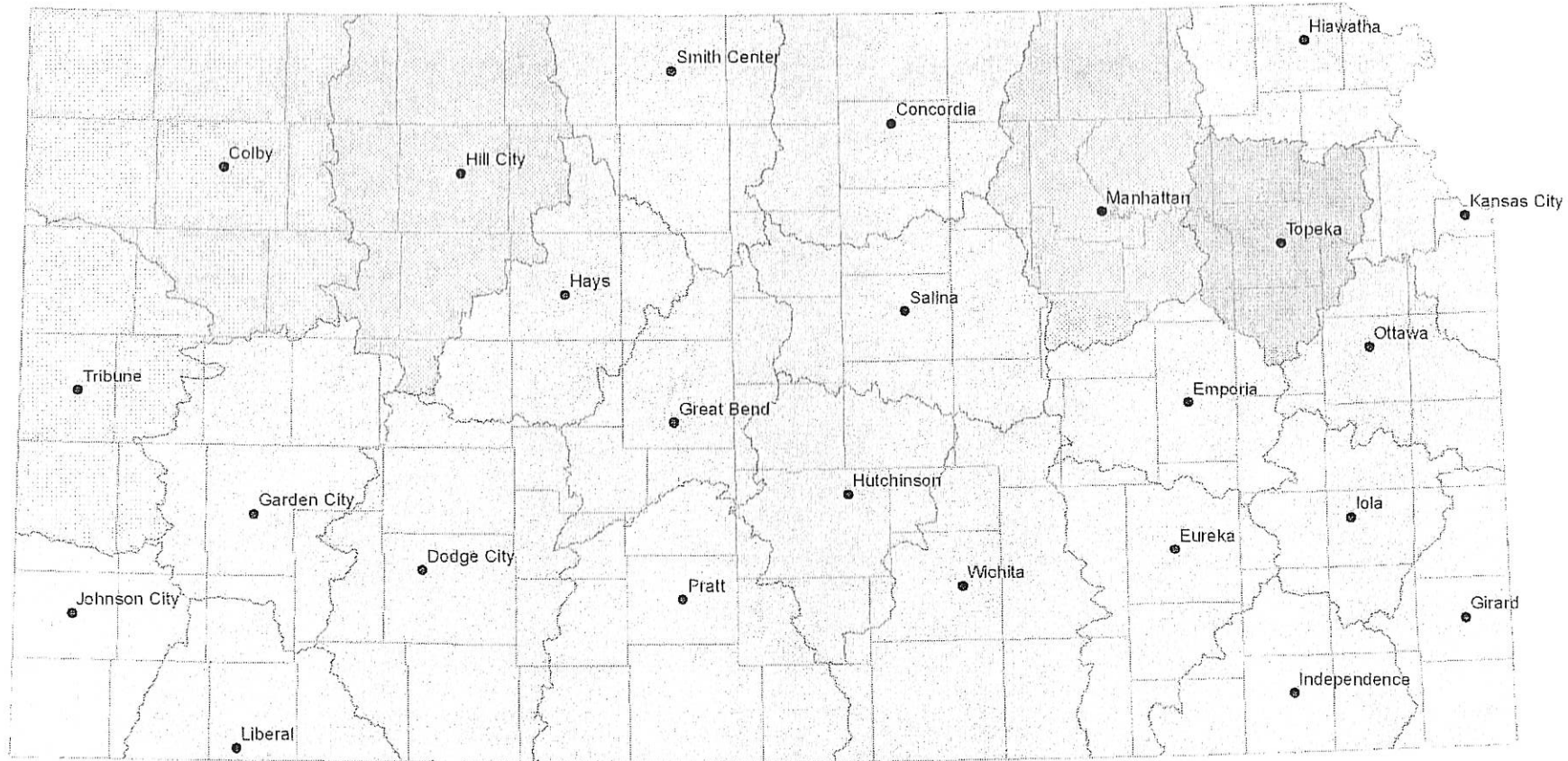
Distance between county seats is about
100 km or 62 miles

Hydrological Units in Kansas

HUC-14



Source: United States Geological Survey



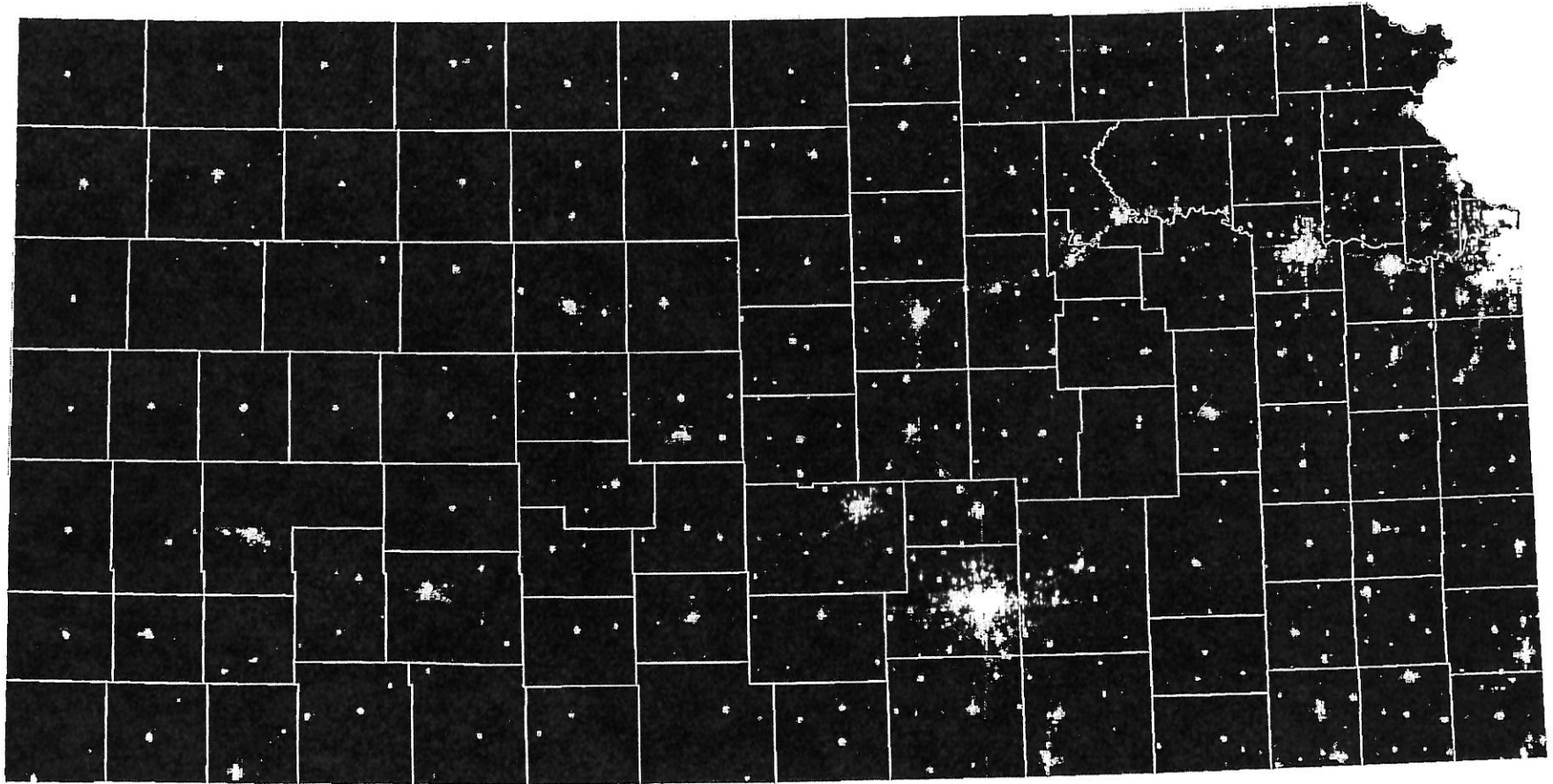
Scenario 1 – Ecologically Defined Counties (HUC-14)

Summary Statistics for 25 Ecological Counties

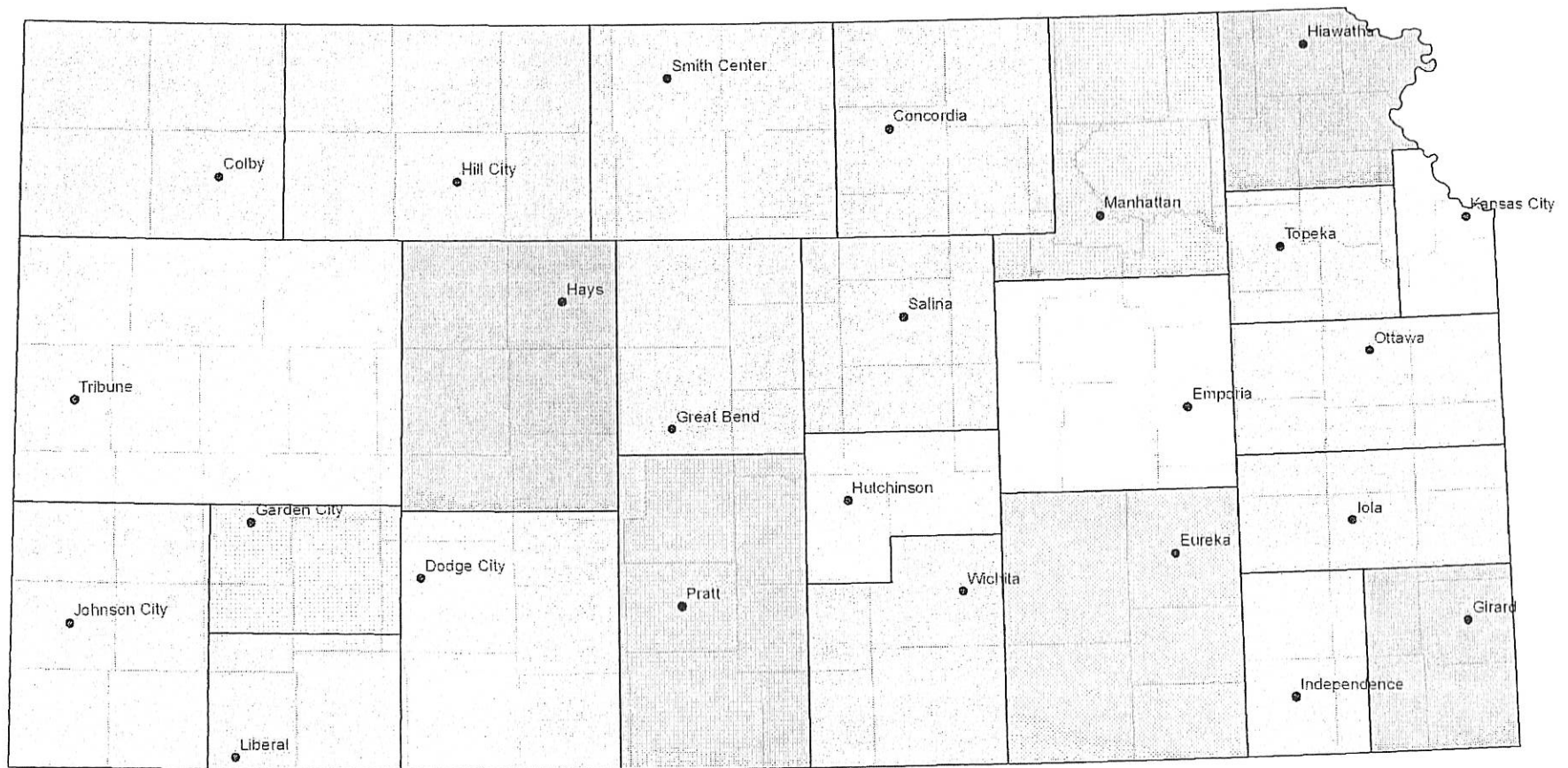
County	Area (Km2)	Area (Pct. Total)	Perimeter (Km)	Population	Population (Pct. Total)
Colby	16592	7.8%	723	27207	1.0%
Concordia	9861	4.6%	558	32682	1.2%
Dodge City	13889	6.5%	740	49073	1.8%
Emporia	6738	3.2%	519	48702	1.8%
Eureka	7783	3.7%	621	16729	0.6%
Garden City	10490	4.9%	742	52205	1.9%
Girard	5339	2.5%	423	79105	2.9%
Great Bend	7367	3.5%	677	42487	1.6%
Hays	7664	3.6%	625	43046	1.6%
Hiawatha	5588	2.6%	443	46516	1.7%
Hill City	12863	6.0%	724	18533	0.7%
Hutchinson	7659	3.6%	618	110695	4.1%
Independence	6051	2.8%	436	68751	2.5%
Iola	5566	2.6%	498	42427	1.6%
Johnson City	6113	2.9%	394	13746	0.5%
Kansas City	3682	1.7%	407	762201	28.0%
Liberal	5483	2.6%	405	34107	1.3%
Manhattan	11105	5.2%	609	128738	4.7%
Ottawa	5736	2.7%	490	126057	4.6%
Pratt	12281	5.8%	662	31583	1.2%
Salina	9186	4.3%	660	91522	3.4%
Smith Center	8200	3.8%	509	15820	0.6%
Topeka	5953	2.8%	478	218063	8.0%
Tribune	9599	4.5%	578	8299	0.3%
Wichita	12342	5.8%	719	613774	22.5%
SUM	213131	100.0%		2722068	100.0%
AVERAGE	8525		570	108883	
STD. DEV.	3218		118	181790	

Scenario 2: Population based Reorganization

- Three county seat selection schemes
 1. Seats from Scenario 1 with each county's minimum population set to about 20,000
 2. 25 most populated county seats with each county's minimum population set to about 30,000
 3. 25 most populated county seats with each county's minimum population set to about 45,000
- Used Landscan population data (2003) to estimate reorganized county populations



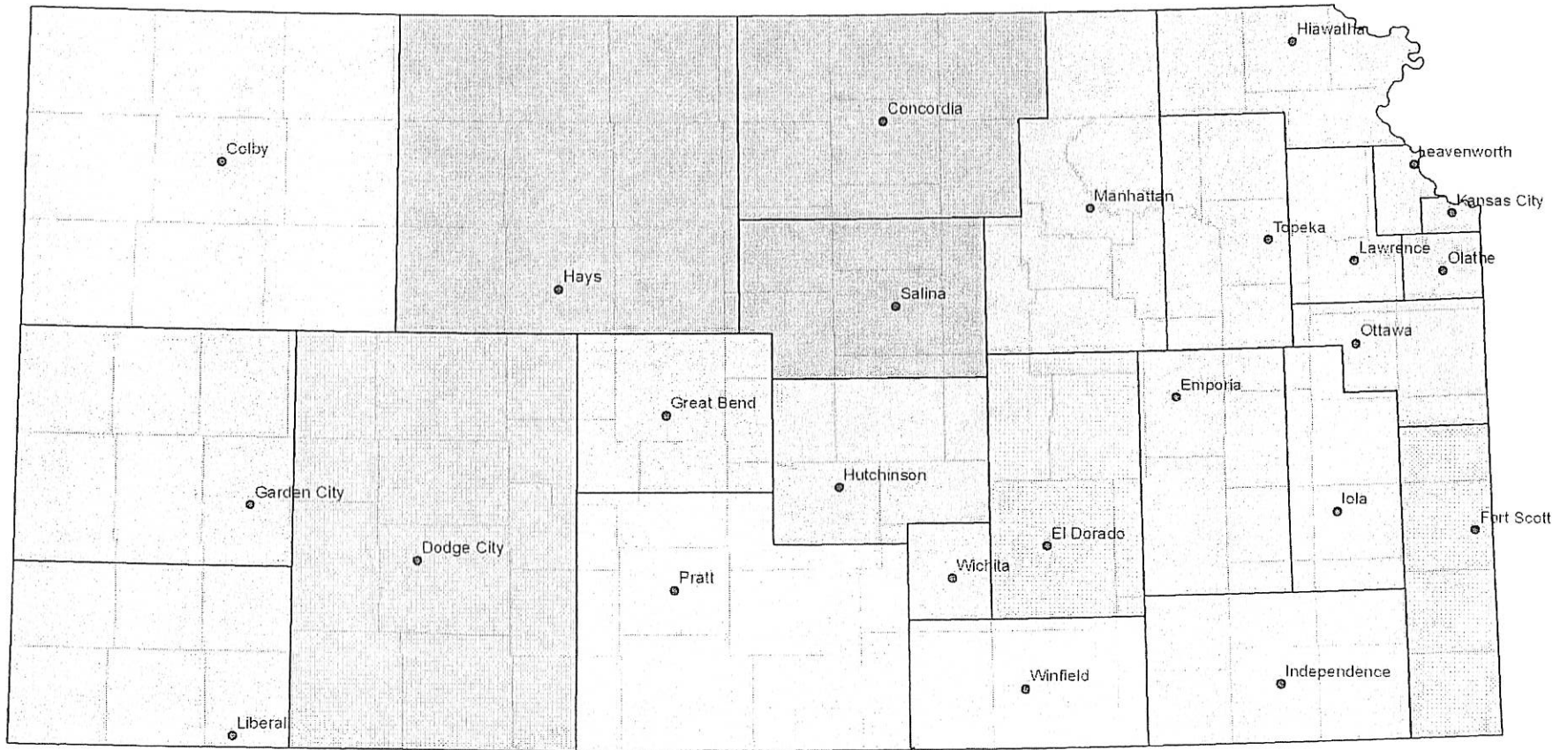
Landscan population, 2003



Scenario 2.1 – Minimum
Population about 20K using 25
County Seats from Scenario 1

Scenario 2.1: Minimum Population about 20,000

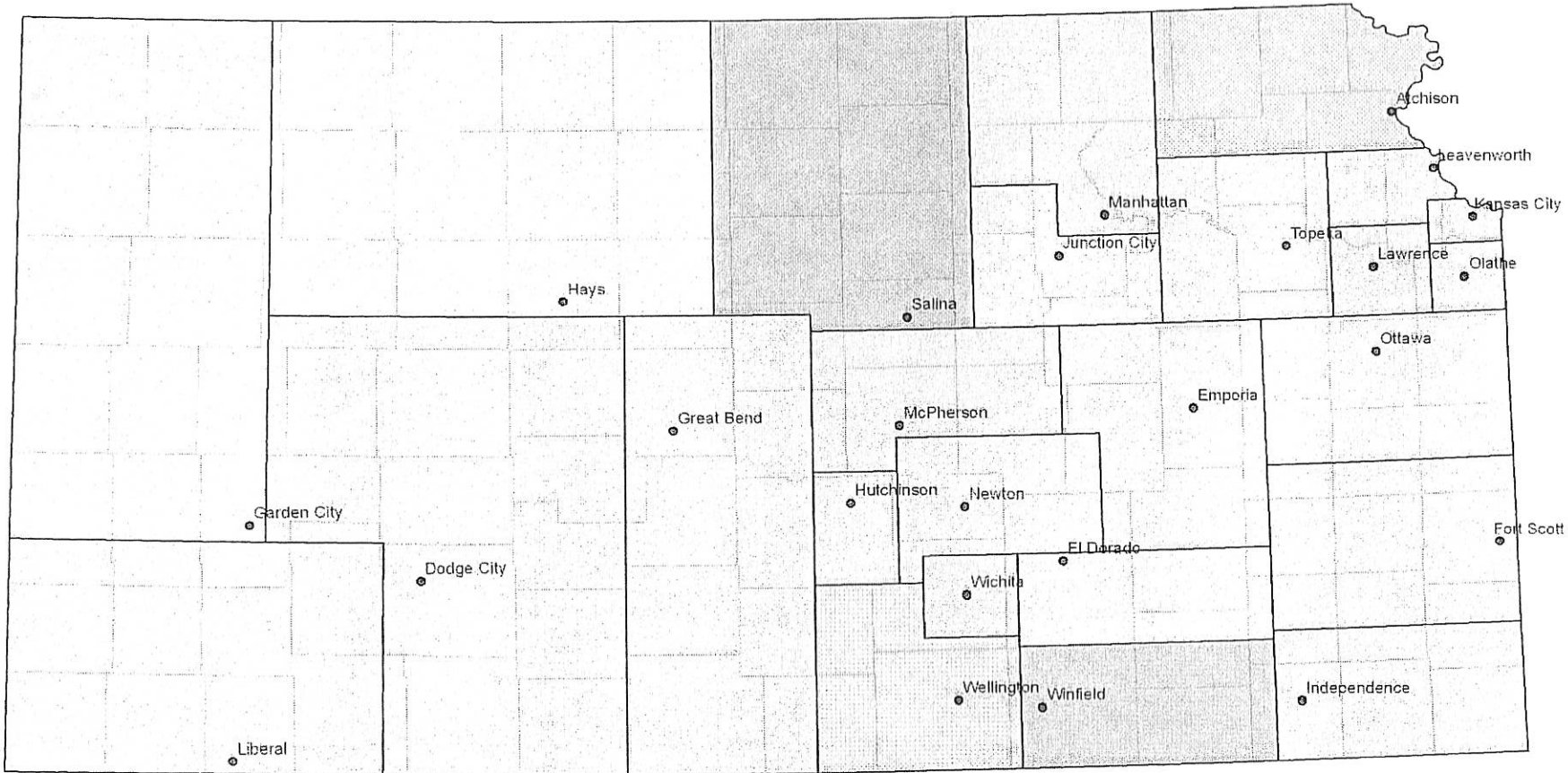
County	Area (Km2)	Area (Pct. Total)	Perimeter (Km)	Population	Population (Pct. Total)
Colby	10954	7.8%	420	20018	0.7%
Concordia	9092	4.6%	381	33751	1.2%
Dodge City	10889	6.5%	419	43669	1.6%
Emporia	9836	3.2%	397	60656	2.2%
Eureka	12582	3.7%	450	110499	4.1%
Fort Scott	6273	4.9%	343	43896	1.6%
Garden City	4755	2.5%	281	45476	1.7%
Girard	5359	3.5%	295	85121	3.1%
Great Bend	7881	3.6%	357	49224	1.8%
Hays	11429	2.6%	431	44503	1.6%
Hiawatha	6313	6.0%	379	55850	2.1%
Hill City	12807	3.6%	459	24821	0.9%
Hutchinson	4743	2.8%	305	102022	3.7%
Independence	4393	2.6%	271	59597	2.2%
Johnson City	10177	2.9%	409	25872	1.0%
Kansas City	2641	1.7%	238	716746	26.3%
Liberal	5019	2.6%	287	31602	1.2%
Manhattan	9349	5.2%	439	127723	4.7%
Ottawa	7010	2.7%	355	79146	2.9%
Pratt	11502	5.8%	444	30453	1.1%
Salina	7384	4.3%	344	98933	3.6%
Smith Center	10259	3.8%	406	19499	0.7%
Topeka	4408	2.8%	267	294609	10.8%
Tribune	19963	4.5%	574	19189	0.7%
Wichita	7955	5.8%	375	499201	18.3%
SUM	212973	100.0%		2722076	100.0%
AVERAGE	8519		373	108883	
STD. DEV.	3745		77	163518	
STD. DEV. (1)				32121	



Scenario 2.2 – Minimum Population about 30,000 using the 25 Most Populated County Seats

Scenario 2.2: Minimum Population about 30,000

County	Area (Km2)	Area (Pct. Total)	Perimeter (Km)	Population	Population (Pct. Total)
Colby	23618	11.1%	616	33405	1.2%
Concordia	12138	5.7%	460	39582	1.5%
Dodge City	23643	11.1%	628	63752	2.3%
El Dorado	8092	3.8%	375	68849	2.5%
Emporia	7226	3.4%	352	54811	2.0%
Fort Scott	5711	2.7%	363	80506	3.0%
Garden City	13102	6.2%	459	55113	2.0%
Great Bend	6195	2.9%	316	37401	1.4%
Hays	21652	10.2%	589	67646	2.5%
Hiawatha	5709	2.7%	393	45640	1.7%
Hutchinson	6913	3.2%	343	133702	4.9%
Independence	7843	3.7%	367	77609	2.9%
Iola	5030	2.4%	322	39865	1.5%
Kansas City	388	0.2%	87	145746	5.4%
Lawrence	3063	1.4%	240	124767	4.6%
Leavenworth	882	0.4%	145	66422	2.4%
Liberal	10085	4.7%	411	46153	1.7%
Manhattan	10076	4.7%	467	129243	4.7%
Olathe	1051	0.5%	130	489888	18.0%
Ottawa	3693	1.7%	286	71482	2.6%
Pratt	15652	7.3%	527	54849	2.0%
Salina	7584	3.6%	363	83318	3.1%
Topeka	5911	2.8%	324	201485	7.4%
Wichita	1597	0.7%	160	441256	16.2%
Winfield	6119	2.9%	329	69407	2.5%
SUM	212972	100.0%		2721897	100.0%
AVERAGE	8519		362	108876	
STD. DEV.	6620		143	114825	
STD. DEV. (1)				32864	



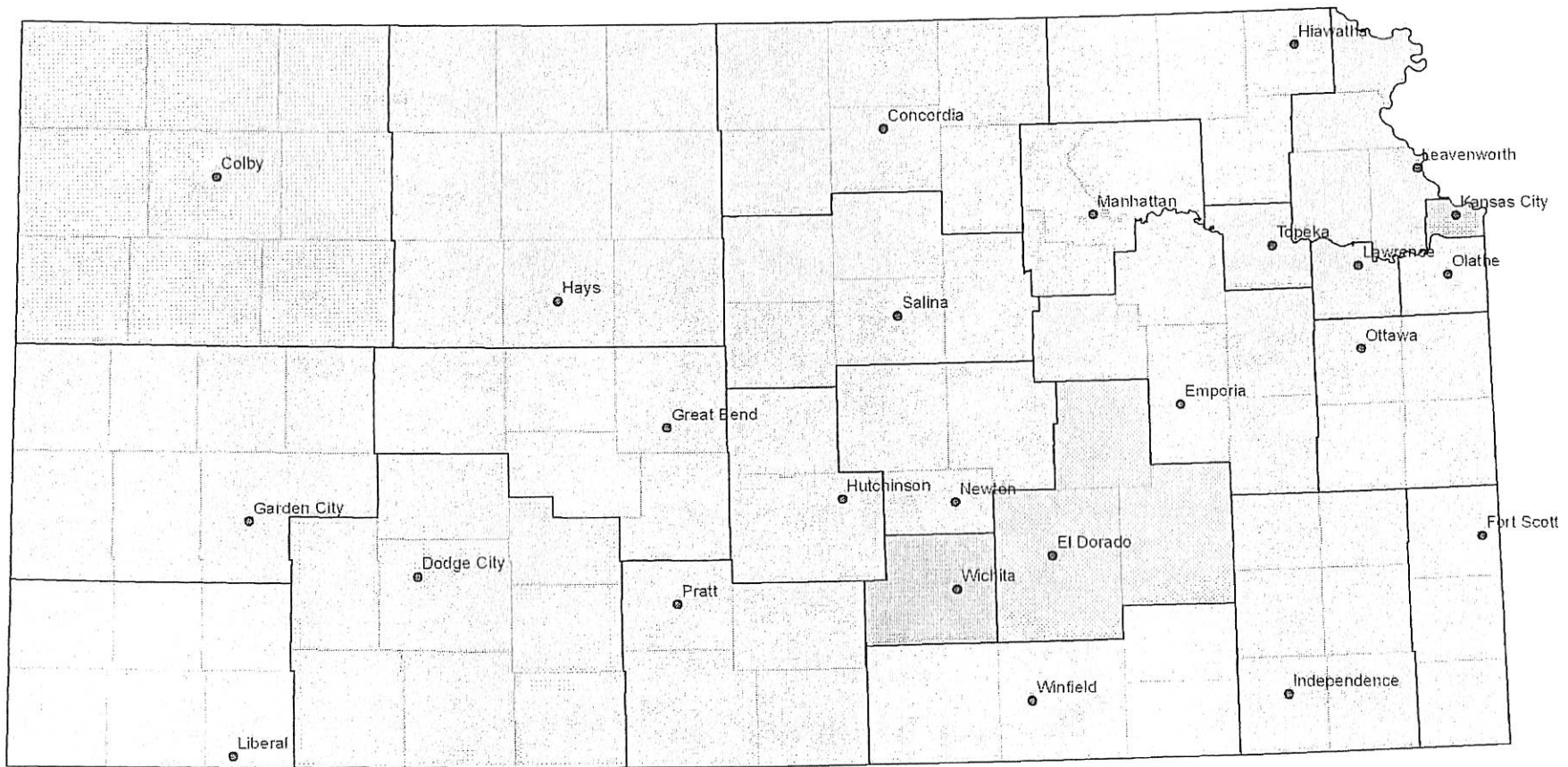
Scenario 2.3 – Minimum Population about 45,000 using the 25 Most Populated County Seats

Scenario 2.3: Minimum Population about 45,000

County	Area (Km2)	Area (Pct. Total)	Perimeter (Km)	Population	Population (Pct. Total)
Atchison	7184	3.4%	410	54962	2.0%
Dodge City	26270	12.3%	715	63999	2.4%
El Dorado	4489	2.1%	302	46411	1.7%
Emporia	8050	3.8%	378	48494	1.8%
Fort Scott	7899	3.7%	362	63580	2.3%
Garden City	25337	11.9%	682	76714	2.8%
Great Bend	16469	7.7%	568	72396	2.7%
Hays	24793	11.6%	641	70608	2.6%
Hutchinson	1828	0.9%	173	60837	2.2%
Independence	6244	2.9%	333	114143	4.2%
Junction City	4113	1.9%	289	50542	1.9%
Kansas City	559	0.3%	103	194331	7.1%
Lawrence	1728	0.8%	166	116854	4.3%
Leavenworth	1623	0.8%	179	66985	2.5%
Liberal	16551	7.8%	529	57975	2.1%
Manhattan	7072	3.3%	358	83511	3.1%
McPherson	5746	2.7%	342	43126	1.6%
Newton	4787	2.2%	306	50204	1.8%
Olathe	974	0.5%	125	448618	16.5%
Ottawa	6963	3.3%	345	86771	3.2%
Salina	15121	7.1%	500	92314	3.4%
Topeka	5432	2.6%	295	204712	7.5%
Wellington	6301	3.0%	342	55221	2.0%
Wichita	1484	0.7%	154	453800	16.7%
Winfield	5956	2.8%	330	44938	1.7%
SUM	212973	100.0%		2722046	100.0%
AVERAGE	8519		357	108882	
STD. DEV.	7726		169	110966	
STD. DEV. (1)				33988	

Scenario 3: Economic Composition

- Analysis done using tangible assessed valuation in 2005
- Whole Counties are Consolidated
- Five counties with over \$1 billion in assessed valuation are not reorganized
- Remaining 100 counties consolidated into 20 counties
 - Minimum \$300 million in tangible assessed valuation
- New county seat is the most populated existing county seat in the new county



Scenario 3 - Economic Composition
based on minimum assessed valuation
of \$300 million

Scenario 3: Minimum Tangible Assessed Valuation of \$300 mil

County	Area (Km2)	Area (Pct. Total)	Perimeter (Km)	Population	Population (Pct. Total)	TanVal
Colby	23495	11.0%	618	35219	1.3%	381.2
Concordia	11976	5.6%	504	42131	1.6%	325.2
Dodge City	17912	8.4%	575	56162	2.1%	612.0
El Dorado	8749	4.1%	443	70185	2.6%	538.2
Emporia	9672	4.5%	524	74501	2.8%	911.2
Fort Scott	4738	2.2%	314	76266	2.8%	435.9
Garden City	15810	7.4%	534	59064	2.2%	1001.6
Great Bend	10982	5.2%	504	47232	1.8%	403.6
Hays	20859	9.8%	583	67769	2.5%	637.8
Hiawatha	7397	3.5%	426	45063	1.7%	323.3
Hutchinson	5175	2.4%	312	75551	2.8%	562.4
Independence	8997	4.2%	390	104589	3.9%	585.1
Kansas City	404	0.2%	101	157882	5.9%	1094.2
Lawrence	1231	0.6%	160	99962	3.7%	1037.7
Leavenworth	4819	2.3%	430	112140	4.2%	802.4
Liberal	10184	4.8%	414	46091	1.7%	1443.4
Manhattan	4893	2.3%	350	108999	4.1%	871.1
Newton	6202	2.9%	348	75784	2.8%	607.3
Olathe	1247	0.6%	152	451086	16.8%	7170.3
Ottawa	6119	2.9%	314	70815	2.6%	719.8
Pratt	9166	4.3%	397	30163	1.1%	331.0
Salina	9679	4.5%	457	89207	3.3%	751.1
Topeka	1443	0.7%	175	169871	6.3%	1427.5
Wichita	2613	1.2%	213	452869	16.8%	3583.9
Winfield	9358	4.4%	462	69857	2.6%	411.7
SUM	213121	100.0%		2688458	100.0%	26969.0
AVERAGE	8525		388	107538		1078.8
STD. DEV.	6001		144	109120		1428.3

The Question of Reorganization

- By examining these questions, this does not mean we are proponents of consolidation
 - We are in fact, skeptical of consolidation
 - Academic studies show that expected saving generally don't materialize
 - Why? Politicians seek to minimize political externalities of consolidation via compromises that drive up the costs
 - But E-Government provides new option for service delivery that may make these compromises less necessary

Future Research and Conclusions

- Additional studies must
 - Take into account economies to assure new counties can support service delivery
 - Estimate economic impact of final consolidation scenario: Does it save money or merely cost jobs?
 - Take into account the politics of reorganization and communities of interest
- Another consideration of reorganization is to consider moving county governments toward professional managerial system (Commission-Administrator Model)

Testimony Related to SB 198
Presented to the Senate Committee on Local Government
March 2, 2009

Chairman Reitz and Esteemed Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on Senate Bill 198, which calls for the creation of a County Unification Study Commission to examine the feasibility of consolidating the 105 counties in Kansas into 13 counties. I am Dave Trabert, President of Flint Hills Center for Public Policy, a Kansas-based non-profit organization that researches and pursues public policy solutions in the primary fields of fiscal policy, education and health care.

We support the general concept of government consolidation and believe there is ample opportunity to do so in Kansas. Our research shows that Kansas has nearly six times the national average of local governments. According to the U. S. Census Bureau 2007 Census of Governments and the 2007 Population Estimate, Kansas has 2,084 general purpose governments (counties, cities, townships, etc.) serving 2,775,997 residents. The average general purpose government therefore serves 1,332 Kansans. The national average is 7,725 residents per government, as shown on Attachment 'A'. Kansas would only have 359 general purpose governments at the national average.

Kansas therefore ranks 49th (out of 51, including the District of Columbia) in residents-per-government efficiency. Only North Dakota and South Dakota have fewer residents per general purpose government than Kansas. While some may point to the sheer size of Kansas, with approximately 82,000 square miles, and its relative population as a factor, it should be noted that other states with greater land mass and similar or smaller populations have better efficiency measurements. Idaho, for example, has slightly larger land mass but only a little more than half Kansas' population but ranks #30, with only 244 general purpose governments and 6,145 residents per general purpose government. Alaska is seven times larger than Kansas with only 25% of our population, yet is four times more efficient on residents per general purpose government. Comparisons to these and other states are included as Attachment 'B'.

We offer no opinion at this time on how many counties or other general purposes governments there should be in Kansas, but do believe that considerable opportunities exist for consolidation and that doing so should generate significant savings for taxpayers.



FLINT HILLS CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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Senate Local Government

3/02/09

Attachment 4

Local Governments by Type and State: 2007

Attachment 'A'

Geographic area	General purpose					July 2007 Pop. Est.	Residents Per Entity	Rank
	Total	County ¹	Subcounty					
			Total	Municipal	Town or township			
United States	39,044	3,033	36,011	19,492	16,519	301,621,157	7,725	
District of Columbia	1	-	1	1	-	588,292	588,292	1
Hawaii	4	3	1	1	-	1,283,388	320,847	2
Nevada	35	16	19	19	-	2,565,382	73,297	3
California	535	57	478	478	-	36,553,215	68,324	4
Arizona	105	15	90	90	-	6,338,755	60,369	5
Florida	477	66	411	411	-	18,251,243	38,263	6
Maryland	180	23	157	157	-	5,618,344	31,213	7
Rhode Island	39	-	39	8	31	1,057,832	27,124	8
Virginia	324	95	229	229	-	7,712,091	23,803	9
Washington	320	39	281	281	-	6,468,424	20,214	10
Connecticut	179	-	179	30	149	3,502,309	19,566	11
Massachusetts	356	5	351	45	306	6,449,755	18,117	12
Texas	1,463	254	1,209	1,209	-	23,904,380	16,339	13
New Jersey	587	21	566	324	242	8,685,920	14,797	14
New Mexico	134	33	101	101	-	1,969,915	14,701	15
Colorado	332	62	270	270	-	4,861,515	14,643	16
Delaware	60	3	57	57	-	864,764	14,413	17
South Carolina	314	46	268	268	-	4,407,709	14,037	18
Tennessee	439	92	347	347	-	6,156,719	14,024	19
North Carolina	648	100	548	548	-	9,061,032	13,983	20
Georgia	689	154	535	535	-	9,544,750	13,853	21
Oregon	278	36	242	242	-	3,747,455	13,480	22
New York	1,604	57	1,547	618	929	19,297,729	12,031	23
Louisiana	363	60	303	303	-	4,293,204	11,827	24
Utah	271	29	242	242	-	2,645,330	9,761	25
Alabama	525	67	458	458	-	4,627,851	8,815	26
Kentucky	537	118	419	419	-	4,241,474	7,898	27
Mississippi	378	82	296	296	-	2,918,785	7,722	28
West Virginia	287	55	232	232	-	1,812,035	6,314	29
Idaho	244	44	200	200	-	1,499,402	6,145	30
Michigan	1,858	83	1,775	533	1,242	10,071,822	5,421	31
New Hampshire	244	10	234	13	221	1,315,828	5,393	32
Oklahoma	671	77	594	594	-	3,617,316	5,391	33
Montana	183	54	129	129	-	957,861	5,234	34
Arkansas	577	75	502	502	-	2,834,797	4,913	35
Ohio	2,334	88	2,246	938	1,308	11,466,917	4,913	36
Pennsylvania	2,628	66	2,562	1,016	1,546	12,432,792	4,731	37
Illinois	2,833	102	2,731	1,299	1,432	12,852,548	4,537	38
Wyoming	122	23	99	99	-	522,830	4,285	39
Missouri	1,378	114	1,264	952	312	5,878,415	4,266	40
Alaska	162	14	148	148	-	683,478	4,219	41
Indiana	1,666	91	1,575	567	1,008	6,345,289	3,809	42
Wisconsin	1,923	72	1,851	592	1,259	5,601,640	2,913	43
Iowa	1,046	99	947	947	-	2,988,046	2,857	44
Maine	504	16	488	22	466	1,317,207	2,614	45
Vermont	296	14	282	45	237	621,254	2,099	46
Minnesota	2,729	87	2,642	854	1,788	5,197,621	1,905	47
Nebraska	1,077	93	984	530	454	1,774,571	1,648	48
Kansas	2,084	104	1,980	627	1,353	2,775,997	1,332	49
South Dakota	1,291	66	1,225	309	916	796,214	617	50
North Dakota	1,730	53	1,677	357	1,320	639,715	370	51

- Represents zero.

¹ Excludes areas corresponding to counties but having no organized governments.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 Census of Governments and July, 2007 Population Estimate

TESTIMONY OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
TO THE SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
ON SB 198

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Association of Counties stands in opposition to SB 198.

The bill directs the Governor to appoint a study commission to study the issue of consolidating counties. Standards for membership are outlined in subsection (a), and do not include anyone with local government experience. The commission members are paid compensation. The commission is also assigned an executive director and additional staff as chosen by the executive director.

The commission is tasked with reviewing the feasibility of reducing 105 counties to 13 counties, and the bill outlines a list of the consolidated counties.

KAC believes a commission created by the governor, funded and staffed with taxpayer money, is not the best approach to the issue of consolidation. The better approach is for local government to work on the issue of consolidation, as they know their needs, their resources and their community interests. Later this week KAC will be testifying in support of SB 75, which allows cities and counties to consolidate. SB 75 removes barriers to consolidation and encourages consolidation between local units of government. We believe SB 75 is the better approach, as it allows local units of government to choose with whom they will consolidate.

During the 2006 Session, KAC supported legislation that allowed voters within a county to petition for consolidation. The bill amended K.S.A. 18-202, which says that county commissions can opt to change their county boundaries, and voters may submit a petition with 5% signatures to require the commissioners to adopt such a resolution.

SB 198 includes a listing of counties that will be consolidated. The basis for the choice of counties for each of the 13 "new" counties is not outlined. How do we know if these particular counties are ones that will work best together? Counties are already sharing services with other cities and other counties -- were these shared services considered in drawing the map?

Local units of government are pressed for money and resources in these trying economic times, and are already considering creative methods to reduce costs and to expand their resources. Greeley County recently consolidated with the City of Tribune. We understand that another city and county are discussing consolidation. Local units of government are already moving that direction and a state mandate is not necessary, and in fact, would likely impede an effective approach to consolidation.

In conclusion, we think consolidation needs to originate at the local level, with the help of enabling legislation, and a "top down" mandate will not ultimately work.

Melissa A. Wangemann
General Counsel
Senate Local Government

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Attachment 5



KANSAS
ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTIES

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Topeka, KS 66603-3912
785•272•2585
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KCOA

Kansas County Officials Association

1200 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66604
Phone: (785) 234-5859
Fax: (785) 234-2433
Web: www.kscountyofficials.org

TO: Sen. Roger Reitz, Chairman and members of the Senate Local Government Committee

FROM: Eileen King, Riley County Treasurer & KCOA Board Member

DATE: March 2, 2009

RE: Senate Bill 198

I am Eileen King, Riley County Treasurer for 24 years and a board member of Kansas County Officials Association for 4 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views on Senate Bill 198. While I am sure, this bill has been proposed with good intentions, it has a multitude of problems. First of all the legislature passed legislation in 2006 that allows counties to consolidate when they feel there is a need. This bill proposes to mandate that the current 105 counties be consolidated into just 13 mega counties. This plan has not had any input from the counties. Isn't it a better idea to let each community decide their own fate and who they should consolidate with? Even though the bill proposes the establishment of a study commission, it lists the specific counties that will be consolidated. In these economic conditions, does the state have the funds to support this commission and is it a priority?

In the 1980, the decision was made to close many of the driver's license offices across the state due to budget constraints. In western Kansas this made citizens drive long distances to get their driver's license renewed or get new ones. After a large public outcry, the Motor Vehicle director approached County Treasurers about providing this service for the citizens in the County offices. The Treasurers were glad to help and offer this service. To date we have 77 counties providing this service. The service is much appreciated by the citizens. After 9/11, Homeland Security proposed eliminating County Treasurers from doing driver's licenses because of security. Our Treasurer's Association presented over 88,000 signatures opposing the change to Rep Jerry Moran and the entire Kansas Congressional delegation. With the proposed consolidation of counties, it could lead to traveling long distances for driver's license services, renewal of license plates, titling vehicles and paying taxes. Some of these commutes could be 2 hours one way. With the new RealID, it will be impossible to renew driver's license by mail or over the internet. If the plan were to leave offices in each of the existing counties for convenience, where would the savings be?

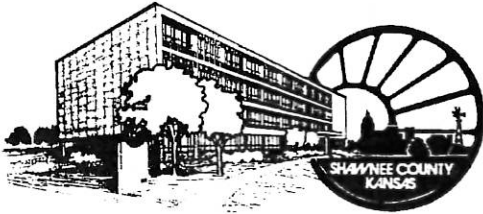
Many of the smaller Kansas communities would see a negative impact to their economy without citizens traveling to their towns to do government business. This is not the direction that I feel Kansas

Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials As
Kansas County Treasurer's Association
Kansas Register of Deeds Association

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should be embarking at this time. I have heard it said that Kansas has too many government entities, but who should make the decision to reduce the number, the local citizens that it affects or the state? I have always had confidence in the local people making the decision. Having the people make decisions rather than politicians or bureaucrats is what America was founded on and I would hate to see that be diminished in Kansas.

Bigger isn't always better, just look at the condition of some of the largest companies in the United States. I urge you to not pass this bill out of this committee and allow the decisions be left to the local citizens. Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.



Shawnee County
Register of Deeds

200 East 7th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603-3932
COURTHOUSE ROOM 108 785-233-8200 Ext. 4020
MARILYN L. NICHOLS
REGISTER

March 2, 2008

Senate Local Government Committee
The Honorable Senator Reitz, Chairman
Distinguished Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity for me to offer you my testimony as an opponent of SB 198, for myself as the Shawnee County Register of Deeds as well as in representation of the Kansas Register of Deeds Association, in which I am a current board member and serve as Legislative Advisor. I also currently serve as a board member of the Kansas County Officials Association (KCOA).

It is my understanding that the intent of SB 198, is to direct the Governor to appoint a County Unification Study Commission consisting of 12 members. The duties of the Unification Study Commission would be to hold public hearings to consider the feasibility of creating a plan for the consolidation of counties from 105 to 13, under the assumption that should such a plan be adopted, duplications of governmental functions would be reduced, therefore resulting in tax savings.

My first point of opposition concerns the ability of the State General Fund to withstand the funding of a 12-member commission complete with travel compensation and administration fees. Since you Senators are in a much better position to recognize the limitations of available funds, my comments are but an observation given as a taxpayer of this great state of Kansas and specifically Shawnee County. No matter the vision or the noble expectations of possible savings for the future, the practicalities of the expenditures may not be appropriate at this time of financial struggle.

Secondly, if counties were consolidated to 13, the prospect of the applicability of services to the taxpayers boggles my mind. The difficulty in determining the level of compensation for law enforcement and fire fighters, for example, between those serving a small community now, being born into a large population will be difficult. Do we lower or raise salaries? Does "consolidation" pay play fair with the workers? I am sure the various unions involved would have a problem with that. What happens to KPERs contributions and those funds that help insure our citizens a standard of living expected for every Kansan serving their state or local government?

Thirdly, what about those Kansans we currently serve at the local county courthouse? If their county seat is moved an unreasonable amount of miles from

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March 2, 2009

RE: Opposition to S.B. 198

Written Testimony Only-

Honorable Senator Reitz & Committee Members,

My name is Linda M. Buttron. I am the Jefferson County Clerk and Vice-President of the Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Association. This testimony is in opposition to S. B. 198.

Consolidation of 105 Kansas Counties in 13 Counties CANNOT result in any cost savings. The workload in County government will always be the same whether there are 13 or 105. This study would be an unnecessary use of money and time in an economy when both are at a premium. Consolidation of County government on that scale would only result in adding a layer of administration. Administration never comes cheap. Please do not support the advancement of this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Linda M. Buttron

Jefferson County Clerk/Election Officer

Senate Local Government

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