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*UNH Media Relations*

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## Media Relations

# Strafford County Cooperative Extension Closing Office, Eliminating Five Positions

April 25, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – A recent vote by the legislative delegation to cut \$725,326 from the Strafford County budget resulted in a decision by county commissioners to cancel county support for Cooperative Extension. As a result, the Extension office in Strafford County will be closed, ending a 100-year era of cooperation between the county and UNH Cooperative Extension.


The four Extension educators and an administrative assistant in the county office will be laid off and the office will close. This cut means residents of Strafford County will no longer have local access to Extension programs and resources.


County legislative delegates voted 18-16 on March 26 to set the amount to be raised by county taxes in 2011 at \$26.8 million, an amount representing a zero percent increase over the current year. The initial Extension budget request of \$124,296 was 37 percent below the previous fiscal year. Considering the vote by the legislative delegation to reduce the overall budget by \$725,326, the County Commissioners voted to eliminate funding for Cooperative Extension.


“Extension’s work in Strafford County has had a direct impact on many of the county’s residents,” said John Pike, dean and director of Cooperative Extension in the state. “Services will necessarily be curtailed given the decision by county government to provide no funding”.


Elimination of funding means there will no longer be local county-based programming in the major areas of Extension activity: 4-H youth development, forest and agricultural resources, and family and consumer resources.

“For almost a century, the Strafford County Legislative Delegation and County Commissioners have supported the important work of Cooperative Extension in the county,” said UNH President Mark W. Huddleston. “This partnership ensured that Strafford County residents retained local access to the expertise of Cooperative Extension and that will no longer be the case. We were very disappointed to learn of the decision.”

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