County Combination Feedback Request
INTERNAL OSU Extension message – responses due by November 30, 2017

Dear friends,

One of the primary and critical tasks for **designEXT** is the identification of smaller administrative units (county combinations). Per the decisions released on Oct 18: "OSU Extension will transition from five regions to approximately 20 multi-county administrative units (referred to as areas). Each unit will be led by an area leader who will be responsible for the hiring, coaching, mentoring, and performance of personnel. Regional director (RD) and county Extension director (CED) positions will be phased out and eliminated."

Cabinet has taken some time to consider various factors that would go into the identification of county areas. Various factors included, but were not limited to the following:

Quantitative Factors:
• Population projections (2020)
• Total FTE (with and without community nutrition personnel)
• Sum of FY16 Finances
• Sum of FY16 Expenses
• Sum of RUCC_2013 (rural-urban continuum)

Qualitative Factors:
• Levy counties
• Research stations
• Regional campuses
• Commissioner partnerships
• County collaborations
• Geographic ease of access
• Rural/urban
• Primary partnering agency maps/regions/districts

Also, a few motivated and inquisitive employees have shared their ideas with Cabinet about how to map the county administrative units. These have been very thoughtful and insightful; and this input is appreciated.

Our request to you:
We would like to invite the staff in each county to spend some time during the next two weeks to discuss the factors (quantitative and organic) that you think should be considered in finalizing a map that delineates smaller administrative units. This is not a requirement; rather, it is a chance to engage in the conversation. We want to make sure that we are not missing some very important considerations.

There are a few parameters that need to be followed, including:
• No more than 26 administrative units (county combinations)
• No more than five counties per unit
• Each urban county with a full-time CED will become its own area
• Must be geographically close in proximity
• Comparable number of total staff supervised (includes educators, program staff, and support staff) in each administrative unit

Also, please remember that the smaller administrative units will be focused on operations and the administrative work within counties and are not intended to reflect programming. Please approach this exercise looking through this lens. You can, for the purposes of this feedback, ignore any existing boundaries (e.g. EERA, regions, etc.).

We also have included a table with county-level data to assist as background info while you are reviewing and determining suggested county combinations.

We are attaching a blank map for you to work off of, as well as a DRAFT map that was developed as part of very preliminary initial conversations in Cabinet using these parameters. The DRAFT map is not intended to be viewed as a final map, but rather as a beginning point for discussion. You can offer feedback on the DRAFT map, design your own map(s), or both.

An important reminder: this is an INTERNAL discussion only. Please do not share information in this message, any draft map(s), or other details with external stakeholders or clientele. Also, please do not ask for feedback from external audiences at this time.

Please send your feedback, maps (send as many as you would like), **and your specific rationale** for each map **NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 30 to**: wilkins.201@osu.edu.
[From the original email, DO NOT hit "reply all" to send a response.]

We look forward to your continuing participation in this process as we work diligently to move forward OSU Extension via the **designEXT process**. Together, we can build a system that meets the needs of our employees and clientele now and well into the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact Roger Rennekamp (rennekamp.3@osu.edu) or Jackie Kirby Wilkins (wilkins.201@osu.edu) with any questions about this feedback request.