

CHFS Touts Successful First Year of Red Tape Reduction Initiative

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) is working to eliminate numerous regulations reviewed as part of the state government wide Red Tape Reduction initiative that were determined to be outdated, burdensome or unnecessary for the public. An additional 44 percent of the regulations reviewed by the Cabinet have been identified for updates.

Red Tape Reduction is an initiative spearheaded by Governor Matt Bevin to identify regulatory burdens that deter businesses from growing or locating within the state.

“While many of our statutes and regulations are adequately designed to protect the health and safety of Kentuckians, there are many others that serve as a barrier to doing business in Kentucky – and that isn’t good for the public either,” said CHFS Sec. Vickie Yates Brown Glisson. “In order to build a healthier and more successful Commonwealth, we have to evolve our statutory and regulatory frameworks to meet today’s needs and demands.”

The goal of the Red Tape Reduction initiative is to allow businesses to operate in a modernized regulatory system that provides them with the flexibility they need to serve their customers.

As part of its Red Tape Reduction, CHFS collaborated with the Kentucky General Assembly during the 2017 Session to address outdated and ineffective statutes. In this regard, Senator Ralph Alvarado (R-Winchester) sponsored two bills on behalf of CHFS targeting the red tape reduction initiative.

Senate Bill 94 proposed to repeal 13 statutes, which were outdated and no longer necessary.

Senate Bill 95 proposed to repeal 23 outdated statutes and update an additional 31 to eliminated excessive requirements that no longer provide value. For example, the cabinet was given the flexibility to provide information for specific programs upon request rather than through a statutorily mandated report. Several outdated boards or commissions were eliminated or were revised to meet current need.

SB 94 and SB 95 were ultimately incorporated into House Bill 276 and passed by the General Assembly.

“We were able to repeal three dozen outdated statutes and bring almost that many more up-to-date,” said Sen. Alvarado. “We’re working to lift burdensome regulations so we can focus on streamlining services to Kentuckians.”

Representative Kim Moser (R-Taylor Mill) also filed HB 158 on behalf of the cabinet to align the state and federal controlled substance schedules. Prior to this statutory change, state statutes and regulations could not align with federal schedules. This bill incorporates the federal drug schedules into Kentucky statutes while providing the Commonwealth with the flexibility to up-schedule drugs that the state identifies for abuse. This legislation also provided CHFS with a way to consolidate multiple regulations on controlled drug schedules into one regulation.

“As a registered nurse and as the Northern Kentucky Director of the Office of Drug Control Policy, I was proud to sponsor HB 158,” said Rep. Moser. “The simple alignment of state and federal controlled substance schedules, or categories, eliminates confusion and makes it easier for us to detect abuse.”

CHFS recently created the Office of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs within the agency. House Bill 226 from the 2017 legislative session established the new office, which coordinates activities related to the Cabinet’s public policy initiatives and administrative and legislative agendas with other governmental and private agencies. The office will be responsible for coordination and oversight of over 660 regulations in the Cabinet on behalf of the Office of the Secretary, including Governor’s Red Tape Reduction.

“We continue to look for ways to streamline our processes so that the people doing business with our cabinet are not burdened with unnecessary or duplicative requirements,” concluded Sec. Glisson. “We commend all who have partnered with us in these efforts and look forward to continued input on ways to make government more efficient and easier to navigate.”

For more information about CHFS and its programs, log on to chfs.ky.gov.

Speaker Jeff Hoover Leads Bipartisan Effort for Disaster Relief Fund; Donations Aid Hurricane Victims

FRANKFORT, Ky. (September 28, 2017) – The Kentucky House of Representatives, led by Speaker of the House Jeff Hoover, has organized a disaster relief fund to aid victims of the recent hurricanes, which have devastated parts of Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and more.

More than \$4,700 has been raised and all proceeds will go to the American Red Cross.

“Millions of people have been adversely affected by these catastrophic storms,” said Speaker Jeff Hoover. “Victims have lost loved ones, homes, and personal belongings. Establishing a fund to help people rebuild their lives is one small way we can give back to those who are suffering due to these unprecedented natural disasters.”

In a recent letter, Speaker Hoover called on all House members, Republican and Democrat, to participate in the effort. Funds donated by House members will go toward providing disaster victims with food, shelter, supplies, and health services, as well as emotional support.

“Kentucky has a long and proud history of coming together to help those in need, so our members stand ready to add to that legacy as we join with others across the Commonwealth who are sacrificing their time, talents, and resources to getting these hurricane victims back on their feet,” said House Democratic Leader Rocky Adkins. “We’re committed to doing all we can to help.”

An average of 91 cents of every dollar donated to the American Red Cross is used to directly aid victims in recovery. The charity has already distributed 856,000 meals and snacks and nearly 100,000 personal items to hurricane victims.

“As more time passes, the urgency to donate tends to wane,” added Speaker Hoover. “There is much more work to be done and we hope our efforts remind others that a great need is still there for these storm victims.”

To donate to the American Red Cross disaster relief efforts, please visit redcross.org/donate/donation or call 1-800-HELP NOW.

USDA Issues Farm Safety Net and Conservation Payments, Total Exceeds \$9.6 Billion

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3, 2017 - Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue today announced that over \$9.6 billion in payments will be made, beginning this week, to producers through the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Conservation Reserve (CRP) programs. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing approximately \$8 billion in payments under the ARC and PLC programs for the 2016 crop year, and \$1.6 billion under CRP for 2017.

“Many of these payments will be made to landowners and producers in rural communities that have recently been ravaged by drought, wildfires, and deadly hurricanes,” Perdue said. “I am hopeful this financial assistance will help those experiencing losses with immediate cash flow needs as we head toward the end of the year.”

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in revenue or prices for covered commodities. Over half a million producers will receive ARC payments and over a quarter million producers will receive PLC payments for 2016 crops, starting this week and continuing over the next several months.

Payments are being made to producers who enrolled base acres of barley, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, oats, peanuts, dry peas, soybeans, wheat and canola. In the upcoming months, payments will be announced after marketing year average prices are published by USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service for the remaining covered commodities. Those include long and medium grain rice (except for temperate Japonica rice), which will be announced in November; remaining oilseeds and chickpeas, which will be announced in December; and temperate Japonica rice, which will be announced in early February 2017. The estimated payments are before application of sequestration and other reductions and limits, including adjusted gross income limits and payment limitations.

Also, as part of an ongoing effort to protect sensitive lands and improve water quality and wildlife habitat, USDA will begin issuing 2017 CRP payments this week to over 375,000 Americans.

“American farmers and ranchers are among our most committed conservationists,” said Perdue. “We all share a responsibility to leave the land in better shape than we found it for the benefit of the next generation of farmers. This program helps landowners provide responsible stewardship on land that should be taken out of production.”

Signed into law by President Reagan in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation program in the United States. Thanks to voluntary participation by farmers and landowners, CRP has improved water quality, reduced soil erosion and increased habitat for endangered and threatened species. In return for enrolling in CRP, USDA, through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation, provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Participants enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP payments are made to participants who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat.

ARC Awards SKED Funding to Continue Entrepreneurial Training in Southeast KY

SOMERSET, KY – Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED) has been awarded \$168,944 in Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant funds to continue its successful entrepreneurial training program throughout Southeast Kentucky.

Funding will be used to further develop and implement SKED’s SMARTS 2.0 digital marketing training, designed to give the region’s small business owners the skills and tools they need to market their services and products across the region, state and country, via social media and the internet.

The grant, matched with SKED’s own funding, will be used to assist more than 60 entrepreneurs through training and technical assistance that will result in as many as 10 new businesses and lead to the creation of 50 new jobs across the region in the coming years.

Fifth District Congressman Harold “Hal” Rogers supported SKED’s competitive grant application because he believes in small businesses and the people of southern and eastern Kentucky.

“I often hear from local people who dream about opening their own small business or expanding their current operations. Thanks to SKED and the ARC, they will now have the opportunity to bring those dreams to fruition and create jobs right here at home,” said Congressman Rogers. “Small business owners drive our local economy, so I applaud SKED and the ARC for investing in the tools they need to be successful right here in southern and eastern Kentucky.”

ARC funds will also help further develop the 31-year-old nonprofit organizations’ Small Business Development Program.

This program is designed to help entrepreneurs and small business owners access the specific skills and technical assistance needed to give their business a jumpstart using specialized training and enhancement programs. It’s intended to help them develop larger customer bases and form alliances with other business owners that offer comparable and complimentary services and products to “link” small business owners in a cohesive manner creating more economic development impact in communities and across the region.

SKED Small Business Training Specialist Amanda Kelly developed SMARTS 2.0 to give SKED’s Entrepreneurial SMARTS graduates a follow-up course, if you will, to the small business training class. However, SMARTS 2.0 takes the small business owners to a new level of growth and advancement that will give them recognition on a more regional, national and global level.

This 12-hour course is concentrated on utilization of the internet to increase customer base and make online marketing easier and more successful, Kelly said. The program is focused on existing and startup businesses. Topics covered include: getting found online, utilizing Google and social media for advertising, building a website and building an online brand.

“SMARTS 2.0 techniques help product-based businesses to market and sell outside the region and service-based businesses to attract customers from outside the region to their stores,” Kelly explained.

Future SMARTS 2.0 courses are currently being planned to cater to local small business owners’ needs. For more information about the course, contact Amanda Kelly at akelly@centertech.com. For more information about SKED, visit: www.southeastkentucky.com.