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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Tax check-off supports Meals on Wheels**

Again this year, Kansans filing their state income tax returns have an opportunity to help ensure their elderly neighbors continue to receive warm, nutritious meals through the Meals on Wheels programs.

In 2009, nearly \$138,000 was donated to the Kansas Meals on Wheels Fund through the income tax check-off. The Kansas Department on Aging distributed those funds to the local senior nutrition programs according to a formula based on the number of meals served by each program.

“Those funds helped fill a gap that could have otherwise crippled many meal services across the state because of the State’s budget constraints,” Martin Kennedy, Secretary of the Kansas Department on Aging, said. “Federal stimulus funds were used to supplant some of the State support, but the stimulus dollars will run out this year, so the check-off contributions are even more important this year.”

Of the nearly 3.4 million meals served last year, more than 69,000 were made possible by stimulus funds, and those additional meals could be in jeopardy when the stimulus funds run out.

The meals help the elderly and people with disabilities remain independent and living at home, Kennedy said. The check-off is a simple way to make a difference in the lives of Kansans in need and prevent them from having to move to more expensive institutionalized care.

The Senior Citizen Meals on Wheels Contribution Program was created in 2002 by the Kansas Legislature to allow taxpayers to make voluntary donations to support home-delivered meals. Last year, of the 3.4 million meals served, 1.8 million were home-delivered and 1.6 million were served at congregate meals sites. (For an area breakdown of home-delivered meals, see listing at the end of the release.) Of those receiving home-delivered meals, 72% were age 75 or older, 68% were women and more than 50% lived alone.

Individuals receiving a state income tax refund can indicate in the designated space on the tax form an amount of their refund they would like to contribute to the Meals on Wheels program. Contributions can range from \$1 to all of their refund.

Individuals who owe state taxes also can contribute by indicating the amount they want to donate in the designated space and writing a check for the tax balance due plus the amount contributed to the Senior Citizen Meals on Wheels Contribution Program.

The contributed money supplements client donations and local, state and private funds that are leveraged by the federal Older Americans Act funds to support Meals on Wheels, as well as voluntary support for these programs.

The federally funded Nutrition Program for the Elderly, which provides meals to older adults in senior centers, nutrition sites and in their own homes, began more than 30 years ago.

Here is a list of the meal programs and the number of home-delivered meals served in the 11 Area Agency on Aging (AAA) areas.

**Wyandotte-Leavenworth AAA**, Kansas City, KS: Leavenworth County Council on Aging, 48,784; Wyandotte County MOW, 144,478.

**Central Plains AAA**, Wichita: El Dorado MOW, 23,646; Good Neighbors Nutrition Program, 72,607; Newton MOW, 23,805; Senior Services Inc. of Wichita MOW, 209,040.

**Northwest Kansas AAA**, Hays: HOMESTEAD Nutrition Project, 77,249.

**Jayhawk AAA**, Topeka: Douglas County Senior Services Inc., 35,681; Lawrence MOW, 13,146; MOW of Shawnee and Jefferson Counties, 95,984.

**Southeast Kansas AAA**, Chanute: Southeast Kansas Nutrition Program, 224,149.

**Southwest Kansas AAA**, Dodge City: Elder Care Inc., 111,191.

**East Central AAA**, Ottawa: Mid-America Nutrition Program, 92,906.

**North Central-Flint Hills AAA**, Manhattan, 243,323.

**Northeast Kansas AAA**, Hiawatha: Doniphan County Project, 19,663; Jackson County Project, 6,206; Marshall County Project, 18,412; Nemaha County Project, 6,543; Project Concern, 15,532; Washington County Project, 9,127.

**South Central Kansas AAA**, Arkansas City: Aging Projects Nutrition, 151,655; Harper County Department of Aging, 3,192; MOW of McPherson, 5,510.

**Johnson County AAA**, Olathe: Johnson County Nutrition Program, 143,126.