



## *Working to Save Our Rural Grocery Stores One Challenge at a Time*

### *Challenge Three: Meeting Minimum Buying Requirements*

For many rural grocery stores, meeting minimum buying requirements is the primary barrier to staying in business and providing healthy and nutritious food for rural citizens. National food distributors require that stores purchase a minimum dollar amount of food. If that minimum cost order cannot be paid, food distributors won't stop in your community.

This challenge affects many elements of a rural grocery including: making it difficult to stock specialty items such as ethnic foods or organically grown foods; restricting a grocer's ability to purchase "Land of Kansas" products or even buy locally grown foods.



### *Solutions*

Through networking with grocers across Kansas, CECD has identified several possible options for addressing this issue. Short term solutions include collaborating with other rural grocery stores in your area to combine your purchases together in order to meet the minimum buying requirements. Another solution is to expand business through adding other institutional buyers. Network with other local institutional food buyers (schools, nursing homes, prisons) to explore favorable shared purchasing options. Also, it is always good business practice to assess buying costs, services and options. Please see our website for examples of food distributors across the state. Longer term solutions may require the development of new, innovative food distribution systems. Join us in finding solutions to these challenges at our website: [www.ruralgrocery.org](http://www.ruralgrocery.org).

*K-State's Center for  
Engagement and  
Community  
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#### *Fast Facts:*

- While some food distributors may have a minimum buying requirement, they may also offer a rebate. For example, one food distributor has a \$10,000 minimum purchase requirement but the average rebate is 3.5%.
- Independent rural groceries in Kansas must buy at least \$9,000 per week to avoid paying a weekly surcharge of 5 percent on their purchase amount.

#### *Kansas Best Practices:*

After reopening their local grocery store in 1980, the Gove Community Improvement Association (GCIA) reached out to other rural grocery stores by opening a food redistribution business. Currently, the GCIA, four other grocery stores and two restaurants collaborate to meet their wholesaler's minimum purchasing requirement. If you're interested in learning more, contact Marvin Beesley, a member of the GCIA when they began their redistribution business, at the GCIA Grocery Store (785) 938-4466.