

Domestic violence service ends with vote

(KAIR)--If the goals of the former Executive Director of the now disbanded Atchison based Domestic Violence Services organization proceed as planned, a new organization will be formed to fill the void created by the decision to do away with DoVES.

Debbie Duncan tells MSC News the Board of Directors for the non-profit agency voted Tuesday to end the long-running program. "I think that they feel like the funds are not here, and we're not getting any government grants."

DoVES Board President John Fresh has not yet offered comment on the board's decision, with a telephone message left by MSC News Thursday not immediately returned.

However, Duncan said she talked to Fresh early Thursday afternoon and he offered to support her plan of establishing a replacement to DoVES. "He thought that it would be a good idea. I told him that I want to change the whole entity, the name, everything. He said that that would be great, and that he is willing to file the proper paperwork."

Duncan said her plans would also include retaining the Atchison shelter house used for those in need, with those details to be pursued as she moves forward with her goal. "I will put a board in place," Duncan said. "I really already have some names of new board members that said they would be willing to come aboard."

DoVES provided services to the counties of Atchison, Doniphan, Brown and Nemaha counties. "There are so many people out there that care about this program because they know that we need it for the battered women and children. Let's say, suppose, a woman comes to me she's ready to go [to a shelter], and if they don't have any openings in Topeka or Kansas City, where is she going to go? I can tell you where she's going to go. She's going to go right back home, and that may be her last time where she takes in a breath."

After receiving word of the board's decision, Brown County Sheriff, and former board member John Merchant, voiced his concerns to MSC News, saying the assistance offered by DoVES was integral to the safety of domestic abuse victims.

Duncan has worked on behalf of the program for 13 years, serving as it's Executive Director for around five.

In March, 2017, MSC Radio News [reported](#) about the financial struggles of the organization, with Duncan at that time making a push for community support to

keep it in operation.

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