

By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader

EDITOR'S NOTE: The statistics provided in this story were provided by Wikipedia. The site noted no references or sources were cited in the numbers.

The International Organization for Migration said there are more than 200 million immigrants around the world today.

Europe hosted the largest number of immigrants, with 70.6 million people in 2005, the latest year for which figures are available.

North America, with more than 45.1 million immigrants, is second, followed by Asia, which hosts nearly 25.3 million. Most of today's migrant workers come from Asia.

After 2000, immigration to the United States numbered approximately 1 million per year. In 2006, 1.27 million immigrants were granted legal residence.

With this large number of people coming to the country, problems, primarily economic, can and have occurred, and this Monday, officials from K-State Research and Extension and other agencies will host an overview in Garden City to provide education about the critical issue.

"I'm calling it an overview because I'm trying to promote an understanding about immigrants that are here, the process they go through to be legalized and the difficulty in that," said Debra Bolton, extension specialist with the Southwest Area Extension office. "I want attendees to learn about the social and economical impacts to the U.S. by Latin American immigrants. I think a lot of times we see those as possibly negative impacts when economically it's a very positive

impact.”

Bolton said visitors will get a look inside the whole process of immigration, including a language aptitude test.

“One of the things we hear a lot is, ‘They just won’t learn English,’” she said. “It’s a very hard process to learn a new language.”

Two members of the Dominican Sisters’ Ministry of Presence will also be on hand in Garden City for Monday’s workshop.

“They have been working closely with these populations, and they’ll answer the who, where, why and how,” Bolton said. “They’ll talk about the jobs that they have they’re not taking away from U.S. citizens.

These are jobs very often U.S. citizens don’t want to have.”

Bolton said Monday’s event will also feature Margaret Anderson from United Way.

“She’ll talk about how most of them give back to the community, especially through United Way,” she said.

Two immigrants from Mexico and El Salvador will be on hand, whom Bolton said have gone through the whole process of immigration.

“We’ll see kind of the naturalizations process – the questions, the interviews, the interview style,” she said. “We’ve gone through a mock interview. Elva Morales, who works at the Colvin Learning Center in Seward County, allowed me to go and film a mock interview. I’ll show that

short film clip.”

Attendees will also get to take the naturalization test, according to Bolton.

“It has just been changed so that a higher percentage of people cannot pass it,” she said. “It was just updated this past fall. Elva Morales actually was on the panel that helped redesign the naturalization test.”

Monday’s session will wrap up with a film clip of a trip to the U.S.

by immigrants, which Bolton said will follow some people as they go through the whole process.

“For example, 60 percent of women crossing the border are sexually assaulted,” she said. “It just kind of uncovers some of those things.

My idea is we’re putting the human back into it. I think a lot of times we forget that these are humans.”

Bolton said immigrants want the same things for children as anyone else, and many times, they have to go through larger barriers than others.

“Hopefully, some learning will take place and some understanding of the population who are immigrating,” she said.

In addition to Latin Americans, Bolton said Monday’s seminar will focus briefly on other immigrant groups.

“We’ll also touch lightly on old colony Mennonites, and we’ll just be introducing the ideas of our new populations such as the Somali and Burmese populations you’re seeing in Finney County,” she said. “We’ll just be talking about some of the challenges, and showing some economic impacts of those groups.”

Due to the high numbers of Latin Americans compared to other demographics in America, Monday will primarily focus on that group.

“Immigrants and Immigration in Southwest Kansas: An Overview” will take place from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday at the Southwest Research and Extension Center in Garden City.

Registration is \$6. To register, call (620) 275-9164 or go to the Web site at [www.oznet.ksu.edu/swao](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/swao)