

Strengthening Rural Places

Southern Region Successes

July 2014 – June 2015

Throughout the July 2014-June 2015 Fiscal Year, the Community and Resource Development (CRD) State Program Leaders have been working together in the Southern Region to compile common indicators. This is the second year for this joint regional effort. Below are summaries of the impacts CRD has generated in the South in the past year.

Regional Set Impact Indicators	Total	Universities Reporting
Dollar value of grants generated by organizations or communities	\$120,670,027	9
Dollar value of other in-kind resources contributed by organization or community	\$590,250	7
Number of plans (new or revised) adopted and that have begun to be implemented in community, agency, local government, business or disaster.	317	9
Number of participants who report new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	3,688	8
Number of businesses created, retained, or expanded	57	7
Number of jobs created/retained	9,619	7
Number of new alliances or networks formed through some type of formal agreement or MOU	48	6
Estimated effort (Number of FTE's)	62.41	9

Universities Contributing Indicator Data:

- Auburn University
- University of Arkansas
- University of Kentucky
- North Carolina State University
- Oklahoma State University
- Prairie View A&M University
- South Carolina State University
- Southern University
- Texas A&M University
- Virginia State University
- Virginia Tech

Southern CRD Impact Stories



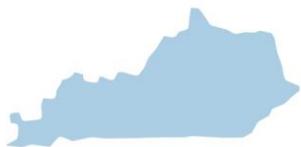
Alabama - The Economic & Community Development Institute (ECDI), a partnership between Auburn University and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, manages Alabama's annual Intensive Economic Development Training Course. In 2015, the Course attracted 54 participants and earned a participant rating of 9.6 (out of 10) for the overall value of the course. The course is accredited by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) as an IEDC "Basic Course" and is available to economic developers from throughout the U.S. In its 31-year history, the Intensive Course has over 1,200 alumni, including most of Alabama's professional economic developers. Participants include city and county elected officials, representatives of utility companies, chambers of commerce, industrial development boards, state agencies, regional planning commissions, and private industry.



Arkansas - Breakthrough Solutions is a next-generation strategic planning and development program supporting rural communities. In Clinton (population 2,602), 7 buildings have been painted, \$10,000 raised, 9 vacant buildings purchased, and 9 new businesses started. In Harrison (population 12,943), over 40 new businesses (net) have come into the CORE district and an entrepreneurship short course has produced 9 new entrepreneurial efforts.



Georgia - Fort Valley State University's Cooperative Extension Program worked with the East Central Georgia Initiative to examine the region's economic opportunities. Using the Stronger Economies Together (SET) process, the region identified a significant portion of their 5 county area that has several food deserts. In response, the region developed a plan to create a community garden within each county to teach individuals how to farm, and insure that fresh produce is being produced locally within their region. Additionally, their short-term goal include the implementation of a mobile regional farmers' market that would travel throughout the region to increase this population's access to fresh produce with the goal of changing existing lifestyles of the region and promote a healthier lifestyle. They are also working to encompass other small producers within the region into the initiative to provide a venue for them to sell their locally grown goods.



University of Kentucky - In addition to work around the state, the University of Kentucky has a substantial commitment to improving economies and addressing community issues in the Promise Zone. The Kentucky Promise Zone was a former Phase I SET region. CEDIK participated in the creation of the Kentucky Promise Zone strategic plan and serves on the Advisory Council. The Kentucky Promise Zone has secured \$190 million in grant funding since early 2014 and \$109 million in 2014-2015.



Southern University - The Community and Economic Development program at Southern University's Building Opportunities through leadership Development project has graduated 19 leaders since 2014. Community plans were developed and implemented focusing on diverse community issues. The CED program also partnered with USDA Rural Development and SRDC to implement Stronger Economies Together Phase V for two regions.



Mississippi - The Mississippi Bricks to Clicks Program helps entrepreneurs and communities start and grow online businesses through the adoption of social media, blogs, websites, mobile applications, and/or e-commerce solutions. An \$86,000 USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant will be used to build a new entrepreneurship center in Natchez that will create a new place to offer small business owners the program. Woodville used the program to help market its Annual Deer and Wildlife Festival using Facebook advertisements. The number of Facebook fans increased by almost 3,500, attendance increased by 20%, and the economic value of its Facebook page increased by \$171,500. The program provided technical assistance and training to more than 40 small businesses in MS. In-service training for Extension agents is being proved with a standardized curriculum to teach local businesses throughout the state.



North Carolina - Growing a Healthy Economy with Local Foods connects NCSU local food system, regional economic development and downtown revitalization initiatives. We're researching the economic impact of local food on small towns, and developing materials to catalyze both agent's conversations with local government and integration of agriculture and food in economic development planning.



Oklahoma - Cleveland County Turning Points is an initiative to enhance health and wellness in communities and schools. By building community-based coalitions to connect different aspects of the community together (often for the first time), communities are addressing substance abuse, suicide prevention, workplace wellness and changing city ordinances and school wellness plans.



South Carolina - In collaboration with the Northeastern Corridor of Orangeburg Community Development Corporation, the 1890 Research and Extension Program at SC State University renovated and weatherized seventeen low-to-moderate income residents' houses of Orangeburg, SC. Funding was received from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.



Prairie View A&M - The Community & Economic Development Unit of the Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M (PVAMU) has partnered with USDA Rural Development to train, counsel, and provide business opportunities to entrepreneurs interested in starting a business in energy auditing and home weatherization. Rural Energy Efficiency Training (REET) and Outreach Initiative, is a program originated from the need for residential and commercial buildings to be more energy efficient, minimize energy consumption, and reduce the strain on nuclear plants to produce energy.

Texas A&M - Extension/SeaGrant faculty and seafood industry representatives are telling the story of Texas Seafood, including its impact on state and local economies. Extension economists provided impact analysis for shrimp harvesting and processing industries estimated to have an economic contribution to the state ranging between \$90.8 million and \$159.1 million, depending on volume and price of shrimp harvested. In 2014, shrimping and processing contributed \$142.7 million and 2,067 jobs.



Virginia - Led jointly by Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, the 27-member Virginia Food Desert Task Force submitted a report identifying the challenges, consequences, strategies, and resources needed to address food deserts, along with specific recommendations for the Virginia General Assembly's consideration and action. The report was accepted by the Virginia General Assembly and recommendations are moving forward. The first recommendation implemented was a formal cooperative agreement between the Commonwealth and the Virginia Food System Council naming the Council as the lead organization to move efforts and recommendations forward. Following the report, a documentary entitled *Living in a Food Desert* was filmed and published on YouTube. <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/VCE/VCE-294/VCE-294.html> Moreover, a symposium with over 100 participants from diverse economic, educational, ethnic, and professional backgrounds attended the first local urban food desert symposium in Richmond, and new partnerships and collaborations are forming as a result.