

Strengthening Rural Places

Southern Region Successes

Throughout the July 2013-June 2014 Fiscal Year, the Community and Resource Development State Program Leaders have been working together in the Southern Region to begin compiling common indicators. While this document represents a first working draft of the year long process, the initial documented impacts are noteworthy. Work will continue on the refinement and collection of appropriate measures proceeding into the coming year.

Regional Impact Indicators	Total	Universities Reporting
Dollar value of grants and dollars leveraged/generated by organizations or communities	\$17,264,830	12
Dollar value of other and in-kind resources leveraged by organizations or communities	\$6,417,506	8
Number of participants who report new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	3,475	10
Number of plans adopted or implemented – Community – Business – Disaster	320	11
Number of businesses created due to Extension program	54	5
Number of jobs created	492	5
Number of jobs retained	998	7
Programs and activities initiated or completed by organizations or communities that reflect participation by a broad base of stakeholders	233	11
Dollar value of programs and activities initiated or completed by organizations or communities	\$250,948	5
Collaborative activities initiated by organizations or communities	180	9
Number of civic engagement events held	216	10
Estimated effort (Number of FTE's)	82.63	12

Universities Contributing Data:

- University of Arkansas
- Fort Valley State University
- Kentucky State University
- University of Kentucky
- Mississippi State University
- North Carolina Extension
- North Carolina State University
- Oklahoma State University
- Prairie View A&M University
- South Carolina State University
- Southern University Agricultural Center
- Texas A&M University
- Virginia Tech

Southern Impacts



Alabama - The Economic & Community Development Institute (ECDI) and Alabama Cooperative Extension System conducted the “Connecting Alabama: Boosting Broadband to Bridge the Digital Divide” project. Through the \$1.2 million project, funded by the US Department of Commerce, the team developed twelve broadband training modules and trained over 6,500 residents in 65 counties using these modules. Broadband training materials were also distributed to all Alabama high school librarians, media specialists, and career tech coordinators.



Arkansas - The Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center (APAC) is operated under a Cooperative Agreement with the Department of Defense (DOD) through a program administered by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). The purpose of the program is to generate employment and improve the economy by assisting business firms in obtaining and performing under federal, state and local government contracts. In 2013, APAC clients reported receiving 523 awards valued at over \$31.7 million in government contracts.



Florida - Community capacity building and post-disaster recovery efforts are major needs of rural communities. Imagine 25+ inches of rain in 24 hours, 80% of your community under water, more than 30 sinkholes, \$5 million in damages, historic downtown buildings destroyed and condemned, business and families displaced. Extension responded by engaging the community in a Visioning Session for city residents and decision-makers, facilitating city staff training in GIS, providing technical expertise at community meetings, identifying an appropriate grant opportunity and helping the community develop the proposal which was, in turn, funded. The community engagement resulted in new external funds, fiscal investment by the community, a downtown area redesign and a community optimistic about the future.



Georgia – Fort Valley State University’s Cooperative Extension Program aided in Georgia being designated as a Stronger Economies Together (SET) state, which resulted in two regions, comprised of 24 Strike Force counties, leveraged approximately \$100,000 from USDA Rural Development to support the development and implementation of their regional activities, outlined in their high quality plans, to improve the competitiveness of their respective regions. The Southwest Georgia SET team successfully implemented their first Rural Commerce Outreach Initiative which provided technical assistance to approximately 50 small businesses owners operating within their 19-county region.

University of Kentucky - The Community and Economic Development initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) is a partner for the new Promise Zone Initiative that originated from the White House. CEDIK led the strategic planning process that included 18 listening sessions for both adults and youth. In addition, CEDIK led 30 Community Health Needs Assessments with hospitals across Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia. Each hospital adopted and implemented its plan of prioritized strategies to address the health needs of communities. Finally, the Kentucky Small Business Development Center (KSBDC) is now within the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky. Within the first year, CEDIK and SKBDC secured funding to implement the state's first Economic Gardening program within the Promise Zone.



Kentucky State University - Kentucky State University (KSU) has been conducting community development outreach activities through its recently funded four major projects; (1) Small Socially Disadvantaged Producers Grant, (2) Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Grant, (3) Risk Management and Farm Safety grant; and (4) Small Farm Diversification, and Aquaculture Capacity Development Grant funded by USDA in 2013-2014. These grants are being successful in generating farm-based additional employment and income, providing one-on-one technical assistance in cooperative marketing, agribusiness and value-added products in the areas of aquaculture, high-tunnel, organic vegetable production, goats and poultry farming and entrepreneurship development. KSU has been serving directly or indirectly to about 430 small farmers and producers from 40 counties in the commonwealth of Kentucky.



Mississippi – Mississippi has the lowest number of physicians per capita in the nation, which contributes to many of the negative health status indicators plaguing the state. Since 1998, MSU Extension has directed the Rural Medical Scholars program with the objective of “growing local docs” for the state by recruiting talented and interested high school students into the summer program during which they take two pre-med courses, shadow physicians and participate in various activities related to rural physicians. To date, 294 students have completed the program. 70% of our graduates have gone on to pursue health-related careers, 34 went to medical school and 20 have graduated and are practicing physicians today.



North Carolina - NC has developed a new program, Cultivate NC TM. Cultivate NC seeks to catalyze Communities Unearthing Local Talent: Inspiring Vibrant and Transformative Economies. Through Cultivate NC TM, communities will build capacity using local talents, resources and assets; provide an opportunity for youth-adult partnerships to strengthen networks, increase civic knowledge, and build leadership capacity; become better acquainted with residents from different sectors; increase the number of citizens engaged in public dialog and /or decision-making on public issues; develop or strengthen regional partnerships or collaborations; and strengthen the relationship between Extension and local economic development professionals.



Oklahoma - Extension facilitated the “Turning Points” program in Cleveland County, which led to one community becoming a Certified Healthy program of the state’s Department of Health. The community is now eligible for grant dollars made available through the Tobacco Settlement endowment Trust (TSET), totaling almost \$100,000.



South Carolina - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development made funding available to the South Carolina State University 1890 Research and Extension Program to provide training, technical assistance and grants to minority small businesses that would result in business expansion, increased revenues and economic development in the County of Orangeburg, SC. The program was implemented through the Northeastern Corridor of Orangeburg Community Development Corporation and the South Carolina State University School of Business and Small Business Development Center. After successfully completing a Small Business Development Workshop Series, each business owner submitted a business plan. A panel of judges reviewed the business plans and selected fifteen (15) business owners who received a \$10,000 grant for a total of \$150,000.00.



Prairie View A&M - CED staff has provided one on one business consulting to 7199 individuals. In working with clientele across the state, 91 new small businesses were started and added to the Texas economy. 41 individuals participated in our Individual Development Account (IDA) financial literacy and savings program. Over \$246,000 will be saved among the 41 low income individuals at conclusion of the program. As a result of our home ownership programs, 28 homes were refinanced that resulted in avoiding foreclosure and reduced monthly mortgage while, 17 homes rehabilitated and upgraded for an approximate total of \$340,000 in upgrades and rehab.

Texas A&M - AgriLife Extension staff partnering with the Roy B. Davis Cooperative Program analyzed economic impacts of the co-op’s business activity within its service territory. One such analysis performed for Pyco in its 29-county region showed it had contributed \$223.4 million in total output and 465 full-and part-time jobs to the regional economy. A recent evaluation from cooperatives that have participated in similar studies revealed 100% of participants report that this project has improved their relationship with their membership, and 25% of participants report that this project has improved their relationship with community leaders.



Virginia - Cooperative Extension leadership in two Stronger Economies Together regions resulted in securing a Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Building Collaborative Communities Grant in both regions, development of a business incubator in one region, rebranding of the economic development organization in south-central region, securing CCDBG, identifying the need for and developing a microloan fund, a regional entrepreneurship plan and microenterprise training initiatives in Virginia's Growth Alliance region.