

NACDEP Awards News Release

TITLE: Winners Named for National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals Awards

DATE: July 15, 2021

The CREATE BRIDGES national team was recently recognized as a regional and national award runner-up by the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) at their 2021 Annual Conference, held virtually on May 15-19. Team members include Rachel Welborn, Grace Langford, and Russ Garner (Southern Rural Development Center [SRDC]); Alison Davis, Daniel Kahl, and Mercedes Maness (Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky at University of Kentucky); Stacey McCullough, Julianne Dunn, Brandon Mathews, Hazelle Whited, and Murriel Wiley (University of Arkansas); Sara Siems and Mike Woods (Oklahoma State University); Becky Bowen, Susan Jakes, and Chanel Nestor (North Carolina State University); Susan Odum and Zachary Kennedy (University of Illinois); Michael Patrick, Patrick Vanderpool, and Tim Hagaman (New Mexico State University, Greater Tucumcari Economic Development Corporation, and New Mexico Economic Development Department [respectively]). Funding for CREATE BRIDGES is provided by Walmart.

The award, Innovation & Creativity (Team), creates a platform for community development work to be showcased in a professional setting beyond the state level and creates a pathway toward national distinction.

"One of the benefits of NACDEP membership is an opportunity to be recognized for outstanding work by your peers," said NACDEP President Adam Hodges of West Virginia State University Extension Service. "The long-term benefit to Extension Community Development is an opportunity to learn from our peers. These award winners that are being recognized represent the best of the best and will provide new ideas for expanding our work across the nation."

Rachel Welborn, Associate Director at the SRDC and principle investigator on the project, noted this, "The CREATE BRIDGES team has demonstrated incredible innovation and creativity in addressing rural retail concerns in the trenches of the COVID-19 pandemic which threatened these businesses on an unprecedented scale. I am so pleased to be a part of such a dedicated team of Community Development Specialists."

Created in 2003, The National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals is an organization dedicated to improving the visibility, coordination, professional status and resource base of community and economic development Extension programs and professionals.

NACDEP has over 350 individual memberships, representing more than 40 states and territories. Active members are currently employed as Extension professionals with at least a 25% extension appointment with responsibilities or strong interests in community and economic development.