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As the end of 2009 approaches, we want to take time to wish all of you a great holiday season. Despite the hardships that many of our land-grant university colleagues and rural development partners faced over the past year, these difficulties never interfered with their unwavering commitment and support for the SRDC. For that, we are thankful and appreciative.

While we know that 2010 will remain financially challenging for many of us, the SRDC is excited about the important rural development work that we'll be continuing and launching next year. We look forward to joining forces with our land-grant university faculty and administrators, our federal, regional and state government colleagues, and our philanthropic and nonprofit organizations, in advancing the well-being of people and communities that are part of the rural South. Best wishes to all of you in 2010.

The SRDC Staff

SRDC ITEMS OF INTEREST

e-Commerce Mini-Grants Applications Due January 15, 2010

The Southern Rural Development Center is pleased to announce the continuation of its initiative to foster implementation of one of its new e-commerce curricula. U.S. Land-Grant Extension educators or teams are invited to submit proposals outlining how they propose to implement one of the FOUR new e-commerce educational curricula that the SRDC is scheduled to release by this fall as part of the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative. The maximum amount allowed for any proposal is \$3,000. To view the call for proposal and learn more about the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative, visit <http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce>.

Rural Unemployment Lower than City Rates

The unemployment rate in rural America rose slightly in October as the rate dipped slightly in urban counties, according to a Daily Yonder analysis with the SRDC's Roberto Gallardo. The urban unemployment rate remains higher than the rate in rural counties, as it has been since August. That national rate was heavily influenced by unemployment in a few large cities, however. In 30 of the 48 states with rural counties, rural unemployment rates are higher than rates in urban counties. Unemployment rates in exurban counties peaked in June and have been falling ever since. In October, the national unemployment rate was 9.5 percent. In rural counties, the unemployment rate was 9.4 percent in October, up from 9.3 percent in September. The urban unemployment rate in October was 9.5 percent, and the exurban rate

was 9.1 percent. Read the full article at <http://www.dailyyonder.com/rural-unemployment-lower-city-rates/2009/12/07/2485>.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Two Southern States among 11 States Emerging from Recession

As the national economy starts its slow recovery, 11 states and the District of Columbia are showing signs of emerging from the recession, according to a new report. Alaska, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Washington, D.C., are in recovery, according to Moody's Economy.com, an economic forecasting firm. It determines where a state is in the recession based on employment rates, home prices, residential construction and manufacturing production figures. Some or all of these indicators were stable or improving in these states. Find the full Stateline article at http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=435215&mc_cid=3b447bb606&mc_eid=5d0771113e.

Food Stamp Use Soars, and Stigma Fades

With food stamp use at record highs and climbing every month, a program once scorned as a failed welfare scheme now helps feed one in eight Americans and one in four children. It has grown so rapidly in places so diverse that it is becoming nearly as ordinary as the groceries it buys. More than 36 million people use inconspicuous plastic cards for staples like milk, bread and cheese, swiping them at counters in blighted cities and in suburbs pocked with foreclosure signs. Read the rest of the article and see a map of food stamp usage by county across the country at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/29/us/29foodstamps.html>.

Poverty Rate Jumps in Rural America

The number of Americans living below the poverty line increased by more than 3.2 million between 2003 and 2008 — and a disproportionate number of those newly poor people live in rural America. Newly released figures from the U.S. Census Bureau show that 13.2 percent of Americans were living in poverty in 2008, the highest rate since 1997. In rural counties, however, that rate had climbed to 16.3 percent. The increase in the number of poor Americans was heavily weighted in rural communities. Rural counties were home to just over 16% of the nation's population in 2008, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. But 33 percent of the increase in the number of poor Americans from '03 to '08 — more than one million people — was found in rural counties. As a result, the gap between the poverty rates in urban and rural America widened, doubling between 2003 and 2008. See the full article at <http://www.dailyyonder.com/poverty-rate-jumps-rural-america/2009/11/23/2466>.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

SRDC's Grant Connections: Rural Development Funding Opportunities

http://srdc.msstate.edu/funding/grant_connections.html

The SRDC staff compiles Grant Connections primarily for the faculty of land-grant colleges and universities in the South to provide funding information in support of activities in agricultural economics, education, human sciences, rural sociology, youth development and other related disciplines

CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. South: Immigration, Integration, and Identity

February 19-20, 2010

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

<http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=170520>

Community Development Society / International Association for Community Development Joint Annual International Conference

July 24-28, 2010

New Orleans, Louisiana

http://comm-dev.org/inside/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=63&Itemid=7

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Assistant Dean and State 4-H Program Leader, University of Tennessee Extension

View announcement:

<http://ext1.ag.utk.edu/Employment/Jobs.nsf/391A69A9E21691508525695800526330/787249D11A80F431852575D600713BE7?OpenDocument>

Associate Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, ANR, Virginia Tech

View announcement:

<http://listings.jobs.vt.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=190968>

Center Director, East Tennessee Research and Education Center, Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station

View announcement:

<http://taes.utk.edu/upload/AgRsch/ETRECDirectorAnnouncementandProspectus.pdf>

Center Director, Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center, Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station

View announcement:

http://agresearch.tennessee.edu/position/MTREC_Director.pdf

Dean, College of Agriculture and Director, Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station

View announcement:

<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/adm/dean-dir/search/>

**Director, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Michigan State University,
National Institute for Food and Agriculture, USDA**

View announcement:

http://srdc.msstate.edu/newsletters/documents/11-09-ncrcrd_director_position_announcement_09.pdf

Director, Missouri Research Corporation, Southeast Missouri State University

View announcement:

<http://www4.semo.edu/humanresources/JOBS/Director-MRC.htm>

Regional Director (2 positions), Northeast Region and Southeast Region, LSU Ag Center

View announcement:

http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/administration/about_us/Human_Resources/Job_Opportunities/nonclassified/REGIONAL-DIRECTOR-2-POSITIONS--NORTHEAST-REGION-AND-SOUTHEAST-REGION.htm

Research Agricultural Economist, Economic Research Service/USDA

View announcement:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/AboutERS/Employment/OpportunitiesPage.htm>

Research Social Science Analyst, Economic Research Service/USDA

View announcement:

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/AboutERS/Employment/OpportunitiesPage.htm>