A Proud Heritage

30 Years of Rural Development in the South

A Publication of the
SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Our Annual Report

In Dedication & Appreciation to Bonnie Teater

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) achieved an important milestone during the 2004 fiscal year — 30 years of investment in the rural development mission of our region’s land-grant institutions! While it is impossible to capture the diversity of efforts that the center has pursued over the past three decades, our annual report seeks to acknowledge these efforts in two simple ways. First, we provide a brief history of the individuals who have served as the directors of the Center over its history, highlighting some of the key contributions each made to the Center during their tenure.

Second, we recognize in a significant way the valuable advice, guidance, support and enthusiasm that Bonnie Teater provided the SRDC during her 30 years of service to the Center. Most who know Bonnie Teater would probably consider her the rock upon which the SRDC was built. Certainly, her commitment and dedication to the Center were far greater than one would expect from an employee. But the fact is, Bonnie never functioned simply as an employee of the SRDC. She was passionate about the mission of the Center and felt it was ideally positioned to expand the rural development capacity of our region’s 29 land-grant institutions. At the same time, she recognized that our land-grant schools needed to embrace partnerships with important rural development entities outside of their institutions, partnerships that help the delivery of timely research and Extension programming to rural people and communities in the South.

I’m sure most would agree that Bonnie Teater is one of those rare individuals who comes to a job and who makes a lasting impression on all who have the good fortune of working with her. Without question, Bonnie has left an important legacy that will be an inspiration for all of us who care deeply about the rural South. We miss her greatly, but are content in knowing that she is enjoying her much deserved retirement.

It is with great pleasure, and with deep appreciation, that we — the SRDC staff — dedicate the 2003-2004 Annual Report to Bonnie Teater.

Bo Beaulieu
Director
An Open Letter from Bonnie Teater . . .

How time flies when you are having fun! People use this phrase frequently when they talk about children growing up, long-lasting marriage, an exciting vacation, or special visits with friends. However, for me, I used it frequently during my 30 years of working at the Southern Rural Development Center.

My 30 years at the SRDC were so exciting and passed so quickly. Time flew, and we were having fun! It was special for me to be at the Center when it started because it was a time when we had to establish the organizational structure, nurture special links to the land-grant universities, and build a network of individuals and organizations interested in the well-being of the rural communities and people of the South.

Those beginning years were full of organizational details such as naming Extension and Research advisory councils, identifying rural development professionals in each state, and getting a handle on the ongoing in-state efforts in rural development. However, those years were enhanced by the special rural development programming efforts. The Center worked with each state in fulfilling those missions outlined by Title V of the Farm Bill (rural development). With Title V, the Center was able to support the special emphasis within each state on rural development programming by capturing some of those state-specific success stories through its publication efforts and sharing them across state lines. This marked the beginning of the SRDC’s emphasis on publications and the need to share.

It was also during these beginning years that the Center began to set regional priorities through its advisory councils and Board of Directors. The SRDC had two advisory councils during the early years. We had an Extension advisory council (CD Leaders) and a research advisory council. Those councils helped set the direction for the Center and throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the SRDC funded many research and Extension projects to support the region’s rural development emphasis. It was always amazing to see how much research and Extension work could be done with small amounts of seed money. These seed projects helped establish regional networks and ties on many emerging issues such as technology transfer in rural areas, health care, small farm crisis and the industrialization of rural areas.

Throughout my 30 years at the SRDC, many changes occurred. Time was flying, and it was still fun. The Center merged the two advisory councils into a single advisory council; we did less paper publishing and posted more on the website; and we funded more focused programming initiatives. However, even with all of these changes, we maintained our close ties to those individuals throughout the Southern region who were involved in rural development programming. In fact, those ties continue to grow stronger.

My life was blessed by spending 30 years at the SRDC. I will always cherish the professional friendships that were made, and I will always admire those colleagues who truly worked to make the South a better place for rural people and communities. Suffice it to say, time truly does fly when you are having fun! 

Bonnie P. Teater
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30 Years at the SRDC . . .

1974

Following the Rural Development Act of 1972, Title V Rural Development and Small Farm Research and Education, the Southern Rural Development Center was established in 1974.

1985 - 1996

H. Doss Brodnax, Jr., becomes the second director of the SRDC.

1974 - 1985

William L. “Bill” Linder is named the first director of the SRDC.

1974

- Establishment of a directory of rural development research and education faculty from across the South
- Establishment of annual reporting to Regional Directors/Administrators meetings
- Development of policies and procedures for the SRDC

1985

- Establishment of Regional Task Force Initiatives
- Reconstitution of the Program Advisory Committee
- Establishment of a monthly newsletter, Capsules
- Introduction of systematic, multi-state community development training
- Establishment of important partnerships and increased funding with the Ford Foundation, the Economic Research Service, rural community colleges, and the national e-commerce initiative
- Establishment of new policy series, including the *Southern Perspectives* newsletter, the *Food Assistance Policy Series*, the *SRDC Policy Series*, and the *Measuring Rural Diversity Policy Series*

1997 - present
Lionel J. “Bo” Beaulieu becomes the fourth director of the SRDC.

1996 - 1997
John E. Lee, Jr., serves as interim director of the SRDC.

- Crafted the proposal which led to increased support by Mississippi State University and Alcorn State University and resulted in the SRDC maintaining its residence on the MSU campus
- Coordinated and facilitated the search for a full-time director
Research

Stimulate the formation of multi-state research teams
**Student Academic Success: A Continued Research Interest of the SRDC**

Maintaining an active engagement in the generation of new knowledge has been a priority effort of the SRDC in the last several years. The Center Director has continued to pursue a research agenda associated with his ongoing examination of rural education-related issues. In this section of our annual report, we outline the research products published or accepted for publication in various professional outlets. In addition, we highlight a document written by Bo Beaulieu, SRDC Director, that he prepared and presented at the August 2004 meeting of the Rural Sociological Society as part of his 2004 RSS Presidential Address. Beaulieu served as President of the RSS over the 2003-04 period, completing his term in August 2004.

† **Journal Articles**


This article explores how the quality of relationships (i.e., social capital) existing in two important community institutions – the family and schools – are useful in developing the human capital of local youth (as measured by the propensity to stay in school). The article also examines how community-level aspects of social capital enhance the academic achievement of youth beyond the contributions made by the family and the school. The study’s findings support the view that the academic success of young people stands on a three-legged stool – families, schools and communities. The research reaffirms the key role that parental socioeconomic status plays in shaping children’s educational outcomes. At the same time, when youth are provided with a nurturing environment and guided with regard to acceptable behaviors (be it in the home, school or community), they are less likely to drop out of school, regardless of their family’s socioeconomic situation.

**Laying the Foundation for Employment: The Role of Social Capital in Educational Achievement.** By Glenn D. Israel (University of Florida) and Lionel J. Beaulieu (Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State University). Forthcoming in the *Review of Regional Studies*.

This article offers a re-formulation of the links between social capital and educational outcomes. It seeks to refine the conceptualization and measurement of social capital attributes that might have bearing on the educational progress of young people. This is realized by controlling for native abilities of students, as well as the pool of resources available to families, schools, and communities that can impact student performance. By so doing, we are better able to isolate the key features of families, schools, and communities that give shape to the level of social capital present within these settings. We argue that the nature and strength of social capital has direct bearing on the educational success of school-aged children.

Using a sample of public school students from the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS), we estimate the unique contributions of family, school, and community social capital attributes on the achievement levels of eighth grade students enrolled in public schools across the United States.

Another new analysis is the examination of test score gains realized by students between their eighth and twelfth grades. This is undertaken to determine if, and to what extent, family, school and community social capital factors contribute to these gains. The final section of this article discusses the implications of our findings, giving special attention to the set of educational policies that can help to improve the social and economic prospects for communities in rural America.

† **Book Chapter**

**Promoting Educational Achievement: A Partnership of Families, Schools, and Communities.** By Lionel J. Beaulieu, Glenn D. Israel, and Ronald C. Wimberley. Chapter 21 in David L. Brown and Louis Swanson (eds.), *Challenges for Rural*
This chapter begins by examining the current state of education in rural America. The intent is to gain some insight into the nature and extent of educational advances among nonmetropolitan and metropolitan adults during the 1990s. This information serves as an important contextual anchor for assessing the local educational environment in which rural youth live. Next, the chapter highlights the important features of social capital, giving special attention to the set of family, school, and community components seen as important in promoting the academic success of youth. The authors then synthesize a number of empirical studies, showcasing attributes of family, school, and community that have emerged again and again as critical elements in helping or hindering the educational achievement of nonmetropolitan students. Finally, options for the policy community are proposed in its effort to delineate strategies for improving the educational achievement of rural youth.

-policy report-

It’s More than Just Schools: How Families and Communities Promote Student Achievement.


As a rule, state and federal policies remain largely focused on schools as the principal vehicle for promoting student achievement. There is no better example of the near singular orientation on schools than the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. While dedicated to the improvement of student achievement, federal and state policy-makers, local education and community leaders, and parents must recognize one important fact: the academic success of young people is not a singular product of what happens in schools. Rather, families and communities are complementary resources that must be utilized to advance the educational progress of local youth.

Beaulieu Offers Future Direction to the Rural Sociological Society: Address Culminates His Year as President

Bo Beaulieu completed his term as the 2003-2004 Rural Sociological Society (RSS) President by offering his views regarding the important steps this professional organization must make to maintain its long-term viability. Titled, “Breaking Walls, Building Bridges: Expanding the Presence and Relevance of Rural Sociology,” Beaulieu’s presentation at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the RSS in Sacramento, CA, offered important suggestions on how the RSS must break the walls of the past, and begin building bridges to the future. In particular, he argued that serious consideration be given to three major shifts that would be timely and necessary to the future vitality of the rural sociology discipline and/or professional organization. The first shift entails modifying the manner in which rural sociologists engage in the production of new knowledge, moving from an over-reliance on traditional disciplinary research to one that actively engages a diversity of stakeholders in giving shape to their research and application activities. The second shift involves taking a conscious series of steps to build creative partnerships with entities whose missions, goals and values are closely aligned with those of our Society. A third shift necessitates RSS taking a more proactive and strategic role in informing and guiding the policy process within federal and state government circles. A revised version of Beaulieu’s presidential address will be published in an upcoming issue of Rural Sociology, the academic journal of the RSS.

According to the report’s findings, there are several factors, working in tandem, which have major impacts on student achievement. They include the following: the natural abilities with which a person is born; the racial and ethnic background of the student, and
his/her gender; the level of financial resources invested by the parents, schools and communities in advancing the educational activities of their children; and the strength of social capital available to young people, especially the nurturing and monitoring activities provided by parents, school teachers, and community members.

**The Mid South Delta Region: A Key Geographic Area for SRDC Research**

The Mid South Delta region remains a critical area of research for the Southern Rural Development Center, particularly in light of the major economic and demographic shifts occurring in the region. Over the past year, the Center has sought to continue its applied research activities in this important area of the South. The following represent some of the research activities engaged over the past year.

**♦ Expanded Statistical Data on the Delta Region**

As part of its work on the Delta Rural Revitalization Initiative, the SRDC completed its statistical profile on the 58 counties or parishes located in the Delta region of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. New information added to the web-based data resources this year include educational attainment of persons 25 years of age in each of the 58 counties/parishes, as well as select educational attainment on the basis of race and ethnicity.

**♦ E-Commerce Survey of Mississippi Delta Business Firms**

The SRDC is completing the design of a survey that will examine the manner in which information technology is being used by business firms located in the northwest region of the Mississippi Delta. The study will be instrumental in helping define the extent to which, and the exact manner in which, e-commerce efforts are being undertaken by firms of varying sizes and sectors. The survey research, to be launched in Winter 2004, will prove invaluable in guiding the e-commerce outreach efforts of the SRDC and the land-grant schools in the region.

**♦ Assessment of the Walton Family Foundation’s Investment in Two Major Projects in the Delta Region of Arkansas and Mississippi**

In partnership with the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville and Tellurian, a private consulting firm, the SRDC is working to better document the work of two intermediary organizations that have had a strong history of engagement in the Delta. These intermediaries are the Foundation for the Mid South (FMS) and Southern Development Bancorporation (SDB). Both entities are introducing innovative intervention activities that are intended to strengthen and expand the economic, educational, infrastructure, and leadership resources of those communities or neighborhoods being targeted. The Walton Family Foundation is supporting their important projects.

Over the past year, the SRDC and its evaluation colleagues have created detailed benchmarks being employed by the two intermediaries to measure their progress. Furthermore, the team has provided technical assistance to these two organizations in terms of the development of logic models to guide the roll out of their activities, to document their outputs and to determine their short, medium and long-term outcomes. Finally, the evaluation team has assisted in the design of several instruments that are being used by the two intermediary organizations to collect important attitudinal and behavioral data on the individuals and organizations taking part in various community capacity-building initiatives that FMS and SDB are launching in target sites.
The Southern Rural Development Center has made numerous contributions over the last year to research activities in the South. This support has been directed at strengthening the capacity of the Center’s research colleagues to carry out rural development activities within their states, counties, parishes and territories. The SRDC remains committed to investing in high quality research, and this year’s investments are outlined below.

**Food Assistance Research Small Grants Program**

Working in partnership with the USDA's Economic Research Service, the SRDC continues to invest in a small grants research program that is designed to fund innovative, scholarly projects that explore food assistance issues among vulnerable populations in the rural South. These vulnerable groups include the elderly, children, minorities, the impoverished and rural places suffering from economic decline or stagnation.

The following projects received funding in October 2003:

- Maternal Employment in Early Childhood and the Risk of Overweight in Adolescence
  *Atsuko Nonoyama, Alcorn State University*

- Understanding the Role of Tiendas (Latino Grocery Stores) in the Nutritional Habits and Obesity Risk of Latino Families
  *Guadalupe X. Ayala and Barbara Laraia, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

- Evaluating Factors Associated with High Nutritional Risk Among Title III Elderly Nutrition Program Participants in Rural Oklahoma
  *Janice R. Hermann, Oklahoma State University*

- Relationship of Child Body Mass Index to Parental Child Feeding Practices, Weight Perceptions and Personal Eating Behaviors Among 3-5 Year Olds Attending Head Start
  *Wendy Bounds, Carol L. Connell, Mary Frances Nettles and Kristi Lofton, University of Southern Mississippi*

Initiated in 1998, this program has funded a total of 41 projects to date. Final reports from these projects are published by the Center. The newest issues are listed on page 31.

Over the six years of the Food Assistance Research Small Grants Program, the following institutions have all received funding, many multiple times:

- Alabama A&M University
- Alcorn State University
- Auburn University
- Clark Atlanta University
- Clemson University
- Cornell University
- Florida A&M University
- Louisiana State University
- Mississippi State University
- North Carolina A&T State University
- North Carolina Central University
- Tennessee State University
- Texas A&M University
- Tuskegee University
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
- University of Kentucky
- University of Memphis
- University of North Carolina
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Southern Mississippi
- University of Tennessee
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University

**Update**

In 2004, two articles authored by Food Assistance grantees were published in professional journals, and three more are forthcoming. This brings the total of professional journal articles published/forthcoming over the past six years to 17.
Sustainable Communities Innovation Grants (A Southern SARE/SRDC Partnership Initiative)

Healthy and prosperous rural communities are a key factor in sustaining the future of U.S. agriculture, and innovations in agriculture are important to the future of many rural communities. Despite this mutual interdependence, agriculture and community development have too often been studied and conducted without regard to one another. The Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education and the SRDC offer a pilot grants program that invests in projects that strengthen both agriculture and Southern communities through explicit linkages between sustainable agriculture and community development and improve understanding of the mutual benefits of such relationships.

The Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program funds projects that pursue local strategies that link sound farm and nonfarm economic development with agricultural and natural resource management. Applications are chosen based on their ability to increase knowledge, build capacity and make connections among on and off-farm sustainable agriculture activities, economic and community development, civic engagement, nutrition and health, and local government policy. The 2003-04 recipients are:

- **Aquaculture Development in the Pine Mountain Region of Southeast Kentucky**
  *Paul Pratt, Southeast Community College*

- **Comer Farmers’ Market**
  *Tina McCullough, Comer Farmers’ Market*

- **Youth as Community Organizers**
  *Quentin Andrews, Diedre Houchen, Ellen Huntley, Laurie Kirchman, Ernest Lee, and Jody Venn, Florida Organic Growers*

- **Linking Small-Farm Agriculture to Community Development Efforts in Northern Louisiana**
  *Elizabeth Higgins, Louisiana Tech University*

- **A Strategy for Sustaining Henderson County Agricultural Communities**
  *Joshua Freeman, Henderson County, North Carolina*

- **Sustainable Agriculture for Future Economics (SAFE)**
  *Wendy Allen, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program*

- **Women Taking the Lead for Kentucky Agriculture**
  *Gae Broadwater, Kentucky State University*

The Value of the Southern SARE/SRDC Partnership

In the three years since Southern SARE and SRDC began collaborating on the Sustainable Community Innovation Grants, 25 projects have been funded. From Southern SARE’s point of view, these partnership grants were designed with three goals in mind: to extend SARE funds to an audience farther removed from the farm than our other six grants allow; to acknowledge and support the growing recognition in the sustainable agriculture movement that farming can’t exist in isolation from the community; and to start making more headway into the social principles of sustainable agriculture, which are often overlooked in deference to the economic and environmental aspects.

The partnership grant program with the SRDC not only surpassed the intended goals, but also opened the door for Southern SARE to address such crucial issues as farmland preservation, fair treatment of farm workers and local food systems in our larger grants. Based on the success of the Southern SARE/SRDC partnership, the Southern Region Administrative Council made research in the social sciences a priority area for all our grant programs, including a special category for women in agriculture.

It has been a personal goal of mine to influence USDA to use the partnership idea as a model for other grant programs. The other three SARE regions are now exploring the potential for similar grants, and I hope they can achieve the close working relationship with their Rural Development Centers that we have begun in the South. Best wishes for your next 30 years.

*Jeffrey Jordan*
*Professor and Director, Southern SARE Program*
Extension

Coordinate the development and revision of educational materials and maintain a centralized repository of educational resources.
The Master Farmer Tri-State Initiative: A Strategy for Promoting Environmental Stewardship

With seed funding provided by the SRDC and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), a team of Extension faculty from Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi has been working in partnership to strengthen the "Master Farmer" program in these three Mid South states. This important effort — targeted toward farmers, ranchers and others directly engaged in agriculture or forestry production — is intended to enhance the environmental stewardship exercised by these farm/forestry sector operations. The tri-state team of Extension specialists are currently developing an eight hour educational component, are spearheading a Model Farms verification and research program, and are focusing on the preparation of a document on how these farm/forestry operations can be used by farm and forestry operations to develop a conservation plan. A team approach to this program is allowing the talent and skills of Extension specialists across the Mid South region to be tapped to assist in this important program.

The Mid South Delta Partnership: Building an Important Working Relationship with the Foundation for the Mid South

The SRDC has played a key role in building a strong working relationship between the Foundation of the Mid South and the Extension leadership in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. With coordination provided by the Center, a number of meetings have been held with the respective organizations for the purpose of coordinating activities in selected counties and parishes in the tri-state area. As a result of these meetings, the following achievements have been realized over the past year:

- A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by the 1862 and 1890 Extension Administrators/Directors in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi with the Foundation for the Mid South (FMS).
- A Mid South Extension Partnership Management Team has been established as a product of the MOU that is designed to provide overall guidance and direction to the partnership.
- A Mid South Education Team has been created that includes representatives of FMS, Mid South Extension educators and the SRDC. The team’s major responsibilities are to identify and build on the unique strengths and capacities that each partner brings to the Mid South region, to build on these unique capacities by facilitating the development of a comprehensive and holistic community and economic development program in each targeted site, and to work in a coordinated fashion in the delivery of educational programs and technical assistance activities to communities targeted by this partnership.
- Working teams have been developed in the following topical areas: Leadership Development, Child Care, Asset Mapping and Strategic Planning, Communication/Marketing, Economic Development and Financial Literacy.
- The Asset Mapping and Strategic Planning Group has prepared and secured a grant from the FMS to provide in-depth training on asset mapping to participants in the FMS sponsored LeadershipPlenty training in two Delta counties. Efforts are underway to tap the expertise of the Child Care and the Financial Literacy teams to deliver educational programs in targeted Delta counties/parishes as well.
- A Mid South Delta Partnership website has been launched by the SRDC for the purpose of capturing the various efforts being undertaken by this partnership and facilitating communication among the various entities involved in this effort. The site...
includes information on the recently signed MOU, the list of participants, the minutes of our meetings, and information on each member of the partnership.

For more information:
http://srdc.msstate.edu/midsouth/partnership.htm

Expanding Extension’s E-Commerce Activities in the United States

The Center has been actively engaged in efforts to expand the involvement of Extension programs in the United States in e-commerce as a viable strategy for improving the economic opportunities for small businesses in the rural South and beyond. The Center’s activities have been linked to two major efforts – the National E-Commerce Extension Demonstration Project, as well as the ECOP Rural Economic Development Task Force. Both are described more fully below.

The SRDC National E-Commerce Extension Demonstration Project

The Southern Rural Development Center has served as the coordinator of the Rural E-Commerce Extension Demonstration Project since its inception in FY03. This important effort is designed to advance the outreach capacity of our nation’s land-grant university system with regard to the delivery of high quality e-commerce educational programming. The SRDC has made significant progress since the awarding of funding fall 2003 on a number of fronts. These include the following:

- **Identification and Cataloguing of Land-Grant University E-Commerce Resources**: The SRDC researched, identified, selected, and catalogued over 400 land-grant based research publications, educational curricula, fact sheets, and PowerPoint presentations that address e-commerce topics relevant to small business firms. This effort required several contacts and discussions with faculty across the country.

- **Creation of the SRDC E-Commerce Website**: The Center provided leadership in the creation of a new e-commerce website offering Extension educators and others easy access to the wide variety of e-commerce products noted above. The website allows users to search for e-commerce documents by state, topic area and format (i.e., research reports, fact sheets, etc.).

- **Awarding of Funds to Three State Demonstration Projects**: The SRDC has invested resources in three land-grant universities that have served as national leaders with regard to their e-commerce work, namely Mississippi State University, the University of Nebraska and New Mexico State University. The states have undertaken a number of important activities in support of the e-commerce demonstration effort. These include: (1) the launching of a multi-state training in the Four Corners region of the United States in spring 2004 involving Extension educators, practitioners and business members from a number of states (described more fully in the next bullet); (2) the delivery of five workshops by the Mississippi State Extension Service focusing on e-commerce start-up issues for small businesses as part of the Mississippi Rural Small Business E-Commerce Project with over 240 small businesses in the state in attendance; (3) the Mississippi Rural Small Business E-Commerce Project’s (under the leadership of Beth Duncan) hosting of the E-BIZ trainings to enable small businesses to learn about the e-commerce market channel and to develop the specialized skills to build, maintain and market their own company web site. Three in-depth e-commerce training curricula/courses for small businesses were developed and piloted in these training activities; (4) the delivery of four e-tailing...
workshops targeted to small businesses in Nebraska under the leadership of Connie Hancock; and (5) the completion of a business study in Nebraska that is intended to provide a greater understanding of the e-commerce needs of rural businesses in the state. The educational curricula being developed and pilot tested in Mississippi and Nebraska are slated to be finalized and made available to support e-commerce education programs in other states in FY05.

- **Facilitating Training Workshops for Extension Educators:** Efforts to broaden the number of Extension educators trained to deliver e-commerce related programming to small businesses in rural areas has begun in earnest. With leadership provided by New Mexico State University and co-sponsored by the SRDC, approximately 35 Extension educators took part in a weeklong training in Farmington, NM, in April 2004. The training program was principally targeted to Extension faculty located in the four corners region of the West (i.e., Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah). In addition, a score of small business (both agriculture and non-agriculture-related establishments), were invited to be part of the training during the latter part of the week. The intent was to provide the newly trained Extension educators will real life e-commerce activities undertaken by these firms. The hope was for these trained individuals to offer the small businesses practical advice on how to improve their future business-to-business and/or business-to-consumer activities.

- **Targeting Investment in Utah Extension Educators:** In response to an appeal received by Utah State University, the SRDC provided travel scholarships to facilitate the involvement of its county-based Extension faculty in the Four Corners training workshop coordinated by New Mexico State University.

- **Communicating with Extension Leaders:** The SRDC prepared and distributed a letter to all Extension leaders in the U.S. to inform them of the rural e-commerce effort being coordinated by the SRDC. The letter outlined the purpose of the project and sought their input and assistance regarding faculty at their institutions that may be involved or interested in e-commerce issues, as well as educational resources that may have been produced by faculty in their institutions that address issues related to e-commerce.

- **Preparing an E-Commerce Informational Brochure:** In order to effectively communicate the work being undertaken by the SRDC and its partners with regard to the subject of e-commerce, the Center designed, developed, printed and distributed a highly attractive brochure that provides a synopsis of the critical goals and activities being undertaken as part of this initiative. The target audiences for this brochure are land-grant research and Extension faculty, land-grant administrators, state/federal legislative leaders and staffers, agency representatives, rural community colleges and organizations/individuals interested in addressing the needs of rural businesses.

- **Initiating an E-Commerce Electronic Newsletter:** As a means of keeping Extension educators and other interested parties apprised of important new research and educational resources, upcoming workshops, and success stories associated with e-commerce, the SRDC launched the e-commerce electronic newsletter in August 2004. The newsletter is being published 4-6 times a year and is being distributed to interested Extension educators and other key audiences throughout the country on an electronic basis. All issues are accessible through the SRDC-managed e-commerce website.

- **Forming a Rural Economic Development Planning Team in the South:** The Center has appointed a team of Extension specialists in the South to help plan a weeklong educational workshop addressing rural economic development and business skills strategies. A central component of this workshop will be e-commerce, with special attention to the needs of rural small businesses.

**Visit the E-Commerce website:**
http://srdc.msstate.edu/e-commerce/
The ECOP Rural Economic Development Task Force

The SRDC Director currently serves as co-chair (along with Bob Coppedge of New Mexico State University) of the ECOP (Extension Committee on Organization and Policy) Rural Economic Development Task Force. This task force is playing a central role in helping explore innovative avenues for expanding the economic health of rural America. The three goals the committee is currently addressing are: (1) to delineate the challenges and opportunities of e-commerce as a viable strategy for rural small businesses to employ for expanding markets, improving their management skills, and competing in a global marketplace; (2) to accelerate the knowledge and capacity of Extension educators to deliver rural economic development training, with specific emphasis on e-commerce; and (3) to seek expanded federal support for an E-Commerce Rural Economic Development Initiative that will allow the nation’s Cooperative Extension Service system to be the major conduit for delivering state of the art e-commerce educational programs and technical assistance to rural small businesses across the United States. The task force is coordinating its efforts with ECOP.

Building the Community Development Competencies of Extension Professionals: The CECP Project

The Cooperative Extension Curriculum Project (CECP) is an exciting opportunity for the Southern region to lead the nation in developing an online system of inservice educational programming for Extension faculty. The impetus for this effort is the decline of resources in the region that makes duplication of effort among various Extension Services in the South an untenable position.

To address this opportunity, the SRDC has taken the lead to identify core competencies for community and economic development Extension professionals and taxonomies from which curricula suited for this online media can be developed.

The SRDC has participated in two major thrusts related to this effort. First, a committee comprised of representatives from the four RRDCs are in the process of developing a description of the competencies that community and economic development Extension faculty should possess. These competencies fall into three main areas:

- Basic competencies related to Extension programming;
- Essential competencies related to community and economic development programming; and
- Specialization competencies which allow faculty to focus on a particular area of emphasis.

It is anticipated that these areas will be recognized on a national basis to further develop community and economic development as an Extension programming area. It also will assist Extension directors, state program leaders, district directors and other administrators in developing job descriptions and performance review standards. Furthermore, the competencies will likely be adopted by state, area, and county faculty to identify and develop programming to fit the needs of their stakeholders.

The second part of this effort involves the development of area taxonomies for the individual competencies listed above, particularly for the specialization competencies. The community and economic development topics of interest are divided into seven main categories that coincide with the classifications developed by the community development leaders and the SRDC approximately five years ago. These areas include:

- Economic Diversity
- Local Government
- Natural Resources and the Environment
- Leadership and Civic Engagement
- Community Services
- Decision Making Tools
- Education and Workforce Development

The individual topic areas in these broad categorizations are currently being revised and submitted to the CECP steering committee and the Southern Region community development program leaders to be used as guidelines for developing new or revamping existing curricula to be used in the CECP program.
Strengthening Businesses from Within: The Business Retention & Expansion Program

One of the most valuable programs in the Community Development toolbox is the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program. This program focuses on retaining and expanding the businesses and industries of the community as opposed to a singular focus on attraction of new industries to the area.

The curricula, originally developed for this program by George Morse (University of Minnesota) and Scott Loveridge (Michigan State University), consists of five curriculum manuals and two video tapes. However, it has been quite some time since this curricula has been updated. Since Extension faculty have developed improved methods used to deliver this program, the manuals and videos have become out-of-date.

The SRDC, in partnership with the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, appointed a multi-state team to begin taking steps to update, strengthen and expand the current BR&E curriculum. Under the coordination of Hank Cothran (University of Florida), a team of Extension professionals provided input to the two Regional Rural Development Centers regarding innovative ways to implement and expand the BR&E curriculum. This team consisted of the following members:

- Alan Barefield (SRDC)
- Michael Darger (University of Minnesota)
- Kathy Tweeten (North Dakota State University)
- Mike Woods (Oklahoma State University)

The initial efforts of this team involved updating the current BR&E curriculum. These revisions were subsequently submitted to the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, the copyright holder of these educational materials. Plans are currently underway to move the BR&E curriculum, a redesign that will make it more comprehensive (from an economic development standpoint) and easier to implement by community and economic development practitioners. Additional members will be added to the team in the near future, including community colleges engaged in the SRDC-coordinated Rural Community College Initiative having expertise with BR&E program implementation.

Expanding Civic Involvement: SRDC’s Support of the LeadershipPlenty Effort

The SRDC currently serves as a national partner with the Pew Partnership for Civic Change in supporting LeadershipPlenty training in the region. Aside from sponsoring multi-state LeadershipPlenty training in the South (reported on page 25), the SRDC supported the launching of this program in various sites in the region. For example, over the past year, the Center compiled information and prepared background statistical reports to support the LeadershipPlenty programs in two multi-county areas of Mississippi (one comprising Carroll, Choctaw, Montgomery, and Webster Counties, and the second involving the counties of Grenada, Issaquena, and Leflore). Beyond this, LeadershipPlenty training modules were presented by SRDC staff in Webster County (as part of the Leadership 82 program) and Oktibbeha County in Mississippi, as well as the leadership program launched in the Tampa/St. Petersburg region of Florida.

The Rural Community College Initiative: Building New Partnerships in Support of America’s Rural Communities

The SRDC has been part of an important partnership effort with rural community colleges over the past two years known as the Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI). Funded through a grant from the Ford Foundation, this program has involved eight community colleges from the states of Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas. The Center’s involvement in this important effort is rooted in a growing demand that land-grant schools and rural community colleges work together in addressing rural community development issues of common interest to their educational institutions. The key role of the SRDC has been to help establish new institutional relationships between land-grant schools and rural community colleges in the pilot sites, with hopes that this partnership will become institutionalized over time. Three thematic areas are being given special attention as part of this partnership building effort:
■ Civic engagement. Community development efforts often are shaped by a selected group of parties within a community. Rarely are the needs of people or organizations that are uninvolved, but that are inherently affected by the development process, given voice in these deliberations. However, engagement of all community residents, workers, and organizations is necessary for an equitable and sustainable process.

■ Educational access. A primary focus of the RCCI is to work with rural community colleges in determining new methods of providing their educational programs to traditionally underserved components of the community.

■ Equitable and sustainable economic development. This type of economic development requires increased civic engagement to provide grass-roots direction for the community’s future and increased educational access to better equip the community residents for participation in increased economic activity within the community. Once these two foundations are achieved, appropriate economic development strategies can be formulated to raise the standard of living for all community residents.

Over the past year, the SRDC (in partnership with the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development), has successfully undertaken the following activities:

■ Preparation and Submission of a New RCCI Proposal to the Ford Foundation. The SRDC developed and submitted to the Ford Foundation a proposal to continue its support of the RCCI program for an additional two-year period (from July 2004 thru June 2006). Formal approval of this second round of funding was received in July 2004.

■ Established a New Governance Structure. In order to develop viable strategies for the institutionalization of the RCCI process into the land-grant university and community college systems, a new RCCI Advisory Council was proposed that would ensure shared decision making among land-grant Extension administrators, rural community college Presidents, and representatives of the Rural Community College Alliance, the professional association of community colleges committed to the principles of the RCCI program.

■ Began Recruiting New RCCI Schools. In light of the current Southern states involved in the RCCI program, the SRDC began to systematically consider other states having the right mix of people to take part in the next round of the RCCI program. Given the increasing interest toward community development in Florida and Louisiana, the receptivity of rural community colleges in these states to be engaged in the RCCI effort, and the diverse audiences that these states would bring to the program, the SRDC opted to invite colleges in these two states to take part in the next two-year phase of the RCCI program. The North Florida Community College and a rural college in Louisiana (yet to be finalized) are now slated to be part of this new round of the RCCI.

■ Strengthened RCCI Coaching Targeted to Extension Professionals. One of the unique innovations in the RCCI program has been the introduction of the coaching technique for use by Extension faculty to assist the RCCI college teams in developing a Vision to Action strategic plan. While this technique represents a substantial departure from the typical educational and technical assistance methods commonly utilized by Extension professionals, the majority of the RCCI coaches have indicated that they are excited about the possibilities that the techniques present for the coaches’ normal Extension programming efforts. A stronger coaching curriculum was developed by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development and presented a RCCI Coaches Training...
Workshop held in August 2004 in Nebraska. The SRDC provided travel support to the land-grant educators serving as coaches for our region’s RCCI schools.

- **Provided Specialized Training to the RCCI Teams and the Coaches.** One of the factors that the Ford Foundation considered in awarding the RCCI contract to the Regional Rural Development Centers in 2002 was the ability of the RRDCs to provide specialized training to the RCCI teams that closely fit their needs as they began to implement their Vision to Action Plans. Over the past year, the SRDC provided the following training to its RCCI schools:

  - Southern Community Development Educators Conference - Tampa, FL (May 19-21, 2004)
  - Civic Engagement Training - Nashville, TN (September 13-17, 2004)
  - LeadershipPlenty Curricula Training - Various Locations and Dates

- **Improved Communication with RCCI Schools and Land-Grant Coaches.** The most critical challenge faced by the RCCI program is communication between the Coordinating Team, the coaches, and the community college teams. While this area continues to need constant attention, a great deal of progress has been made. The following is a list of efforts that the two Regional Rural Development Centers undertook this past year to improve communication among RCCI teams:

  - Enhanced the RCCI website, a website that is managed by the SRDC (http://srdc.msstate.edu/rcci);
  - Developed and continued refinement of the RCCI newsletter, a document distributed to individuals and institutions that are part of this program;
  - Expanded the use of RCCI listservs to facilitate communication within the presidents, team leaders, and coaches user groups;
  - Coordinated monthly conference calls for the team leaders and the coaches and quarterly conference calls for the presidents and the Advisory Council.

- **Supported Research Designed to Assess RCCI Impacts.** The SRDC and the NCRCRD have helped organize a research team of land-grant faculty interested in monitoring the progress and success of the RCCI program. As a result of the research effort, a report will be completed on the coaching process that has been proposed for presentation at the February 2005 meeting of the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP). Also, as colleges complete the planning process, we will collect ex-post assessments on their economic development and educational access outreach efforts, the nature and extent of their connections with their land-grant institutions, and the degree to which targeted service area community capacity has been strengthened. In addition, the New Mexico State University coaches in the College of Education will be conducting a formative evaluation using Appreciative Inquiry.

- **Capturing Resources to Support RCCI Team Efforts: Identifying Grant Opportunities.** The strategic blueprint that RCCI teams are developing as part of their Vision to Action activities will identify the priority issues that they will be addressing. While local resources may be in place to tackle these issues, colleges completing the planning process will often require additional resources. The SRDC has prepared and distributed an electronic newsletter entitled, Grant Connections, to the RCCI colleges. In addition, the RCCI monthly newsletter provides information on grant opportunities. The RCCI listservs also are used to alert teams to upcoming grant opportunities that have short timelines.

- **The Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA) Conference: The SRDC Working Behind the Scenes.** The Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA) is a network and advocacy group that helps build the capacity of member community colleges to improve the educational and economic prospects for rural America. The Alliance seeks to reduce rural isolation and share effective solutions to
problems facing distressed rural communities. Given the fact that RCCA is a relatively young organization, the SRDC and its sister center (the NCRCRD at Iowa State University) has been working hand-in-hand with RCCA to manage its annual conference. Over the past year, the two regional rural development centers provided substantial behind the scenes support to the RCCA conference held in San Antonio, TX, in October 2003 and the October 2004 conference to be held in Myrtle Beach, SC. In particular, the RRDCs provided technical assistance to the RCCA Planning Committees and managed the major logistics associated with the conference. This assistance included:

- Preparation of a “Save the Date” postcard;
- Development of the “Call for Papers” announcement;
- Compilation and development of a master electronic list of community and tribal colleges across the United States;
- Electronic distribution of the “Call for Papers” announcement to the large list of schools;
- Preparation of the conference program;
- Development of an RCCA conference website containing all the vital information on the annual meeting (i.e., registration form, meeting costs, hotel information) as well as the conference proceedings;
- Management of all financial aspects associated with the conferences; and
- Coordination of all logistics at the physical conference location to ensure that audio/visual equipment requirements, refreshments and meals, etc., were completed according to plan.

Conducted the 2004 RCCI Institute. A mainstay of the RCCI program is the annual Institute with a mission of expanding the opportunities available to the community colleges who have previously participated in the program. The Institute also provides an excellent environment for sharing new tools and strategies that the RCCI schools can pursue in their effort to address the priority goals of the program. These goals are equitable economic development, expansion of education access and strengthening of civic engagement. Among the innovations introduced at the 2004 Institute were the following:

- Offering of two separate tracks for Round I and Round II colleges. The Round One teams were provided training on advanced topics such as appreciative inquiry and the identification and development of community capitals that could aid them in the implementation of their previously developed Vision to Action plans. The Round Two schools received a much more intensive grounding in the basic RCCI-related processes that are essential to participation in this program. The centerpiece of this grounding was the introduction of a new Vision to Action planning process developed by Gene Theodori, a curriculum he developed while serving as a Senior Fellow of the Southern Rural Development Center.

- Offering of a “How Do I?” Session. In this session, presidents, team leaders, and coaches from successful Round One schools described the roles they assumed in the process and the rationale for addressing their role in a particular way. While the presidents agreed on the same basic role (keep the Initiative in the forefront, choose effective team leaders and core team members, and do not micro-manage the process), the team leaders and coaches presented a wider variety of options in fulfilling these roles.
The Round Two schools that attended this session expressed a tremendous amount of gratitude for this type of information.

- **Toolkit for Carrying Out the RCCI Program at the Local Level.** Another variation from the 2003 Institute involved the presentation of a large array of tools and programs that both Round One and Round Two schools could use in their identified projects. This information was presented in two distinct formats: standard concurrent sessions and roundtable discussions.

- **Special Session on “What Do I Do When I Get Back Home?” Action Plans.** The RCCI teams taking part in the 2004 Institute were provided ample time to devote attention to the action plans they were expecting to implement upon their return to their home institutions. These plans were then shared with the entire group of attendees, thus allowing the respective RCCI teams to receive valuable input on their plans from other participants.

Visit the RCCI website: [http://srdc.msstate.edu/rcci/](http://srdc.msstate.edu/rcci/)

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**National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals**

The National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) is an organization dedicated to improving the visibility, coordination, professional status and resource base of community and economic development Extension programs and professionals. Some of the organization’s objectives are:

- To bring community and economic development Extension professionals together to discuss issues, needs and opportunities of mutual interest and to facilitate information sharing.

- To promote cooperation on community development issues and educational and training efforts between the various states and regions, as well as between governmental agencies, private communi-

- To discuss, develop, sponsor and promote educational and training programs and activities that advance sound community development practices.

- To provide support and promote activities and programs at the national level that advance community and economic development, education, training and diversity in the workforce.

- To promote the importance of community and economic development through education, advocacy and coordination within the land-grant system.

The SRDC supports the work of NACDEP in the following ways:

- the SRDC director serves on the NACDEP Transition Team;

- the Center maintains the NACDEP website; and

- the Center works in conjunction with the NACDEP treasurer to accept membership applications and dues

**CARE for Your Local Economy**

As 2002-03 Senior Fellows of the Center, Michael Woods (Oklahoma State University) and James Nelson (University of Idaho) received support for a period of one year to undertake a special project that addressed a priority issue of the Center. This curriculum, “CARE for Your Local Economy: Strategies for Local Economic Development,” addresses a holistic concept of economic development (including strategies focusing on creation, attraction, retention and expansion of jobs and income) and how individual communities, and the businesses in those communities, use available resources to accomplish their goals. The Center is now providing major support to adapt this curriculum for the CECP online system (additional information on CECP can be found on page 15) for use as an in-service training tool.
Alcorn State University: Overview of the Critical Issues Initiative

The Alcorn State University Extension Program (ASU/EP) has always endeavored to provide limited resource clientele the educational programs necessary to address issues impacting life in rural communities. To adequately address these issues, an in-depth needs assessment was conducted to assist in organizational strategic planning and to design and deliver appropriate research-based educational programs in a timely manner. ASU/EP implemented Town Hall and Focus Group Meetings. This grassroots information gathering approach will determine how the organization directs or redirects its programming efforts and promotes an action-based team response to the critical areas of concern for the targeted population.

Plan of Action

The Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program held a series of 12 Town Hall Meetings in the Southwestern and the Lower Delta Regions of Mississippi from January 2004 through April 2004. The impetus for these meetings was to identify the critical needs and concerns among residents living in these limited-resource areas. Town Hall Meetings were convened in Adams, Amite, Bolivar, Claiborne, Copiah, Hinds, Jefferson, Lincoln, Pike, Simpson, Walthall and Wilkinson counties. A marketing plan was developed and implemented to create community awareness, stimulate interest and to facilitate broad-based demographic participation. The meetings were organized to accomplish the following objectives:

- Collect data from Town Hall Meeting Groups and subsequent Focus Groups in an effort to create an exhaustive database for identifying the critical needs/issues of the targeted geographical area.

- Identify the limited-resource audiences to which the delivery program efforts will be targeted.

- Utilize the extracted data to plan, design and implement programs customized in response to the findings.

- Assist in the development of the most strategic methods for a rapid program delivery response.

A final Town Hall Meeting report has been compiled to show the specific nature of the cross-county concerns and county-specific issues. The purpose for presenting the data in this two-fold manner is to render a cross-county broader picture and a location-specific representation of issues. This ensuing report on the Town Hall Meeting process was prepared to communicate the findings and the themes that emerged.

Future Actions

The Alcorn State University Extension Program is planning a response in counties where Town Hall and Focus Group Meetings have been conducted. This response will enable ASU/EP to identify programmatic solutions in collaboration with local limited resource clientele, local advisory groups, local officials and other relevant stakeholders and partnering agencies and organizations. This tested Town Hall Meeting process will be utilized by the Alcorn State University Extension Program in partnership with Mississippi State University Extension Service in other counties throughout the state.
SRDC Sowing the Seeds of the Future

Lori Garkovich, Chair, SRDC Technical & Operational Advisory Committee

Five years ago, I wrote a column (“SRDC future bright with promise” Southern Perspectives, Winter 2000: 9, 12) to celebrate the 25th anniversary of SRDC. Today, in honor of the 30th anniversary of SRDC, I want to evaluate some predictions I made as a reference for predicting the future of SRDC.

“What will the next 25 years bring for the SRDC?” I asked 5 years ago. At that time, I said:

“In the next 25 years, with expanded resources, more staff and stronger linkages to a more diverse community of development professionals...”

In the face of stagnant and declining base funding and a constricting grant environment, the SRDC has raised nearly $4 million in external funding during the last five years. These monies have been essential to the growing influence of SRDC in the community economic development arena in the Southern region and the nation. These funds support new SRDC staff who manage a growing array of responsibilities and also underwrite a broad range of new activities and programs. Moreover, the number and diversity of persons participating in SRDC-sponsored conferences, workshops and other activities reflect the success of SRDC in nurturing and mobilizing a growing network of development professionals. From my perspective, in the last five years SRDC has built its capacity to fulfill its mission – to strengthen the capacity of the region’s 29 land-grant institutions to address critical contemporary rural development issues impacting the well-being of people and communities in the rural South.

“...the SRDC will continue to mature into the visionary leader for the rural South...”

During the last 5 years, the SRDC has played a major role in shaping our understanding of the significant issues, emerging trends and new opportunities within the region. SRDC has worked with the Southern Legislative Conference and the Southern Growth Policies Board to foster a vision of a more successful rural South. SRDC has supported ground-breaking publications that have focused public attention on the futures that will or may confront the South (e.g., The Rural South: Preparing for the Challenges of the 21st Century, SRDC Policy Series). And SRDC has brought together people to devise innovative strategies for assisting people, organizations and communities to create and manage their own futures. From my perspective, in the last five years SRDC has established the importance of articulating a vision for the future of the rural South, supported critical thinking about the different futures that might await the rural South, and fostered an understanding of the pivotal importance of asset-based development.

“...and will help pull together the intellectual and economic resources to address the challenges and opportunities in the rural South.”

The SRDC has been successful far beyond our imagining of five years ago in building the community economic development capacity of the region. This has been accomplished in many ways. Through specialized conferences (e.g., E-Commerce, Business Retention and Expansion, Tourism) and both the Southern Region Community Development Institute and the Southern Institute for Rural Development, SRDC has increased the knowledge and skills of Extension and government professionals so that they may engage in community economic development. As participants in these conferences and institutes have gone home, they have shared what they have learned in communities and organizations throughout the South, planting the seeds for a better tomorrow. Through the design and creation of community economic development curricula and resources, as well as the proceedings of specialized conferences, SRDC has provided anyone with access to the Internet a
host of tools and strategies for building sustainable communities for tomorrow. Through its new Fellows Program, SRDC has offered opportunities for professionals to focus on innovative approaches to community economic development. From my perspective, in the last five years the SRDC has played a pivotal role in building the capacity of the people and institutions in the Southern region to identify and capture new opportunities as well as to address long-standing barriers to development.

“...it [SRDC] will be an important source of seed money for path-breaking research and new educational outreach programs that will lay the groundwork for sustainable change.”

Through its support of research initiatives on poverty, health, education and natural resource-based development, SRDC is building a knowledge base that will help us understand better the dynamics of change as well as stimulate new approaches to addressing some of the most critical challenges facing the rural South. What the SRDC has demonstrated over the last five years is that a small amount of seed money and support for research collaborations can grow significant returns in additional research dollars and new knowledge. Programs such as the Food Assistance Research Small Grants Program, which has funded 41 projects since 1998, and the Sustainable Communities Innovation Grants (a partnership of Southern SARE/SRDC), which has funded 25 projects since 2001, encourage attention to critical issues in the rural South and jump-start even larger initiatives.

The SRDC has led the way in the implementation of web-based curricula (e.g., Cashing in on Business Opportunities: A Guide to Building a Home-Based and Micro-Business Program; Turning Lemons into Lemonade: Public Conflict Resolution) that enable professionals throughout the South and the nation to address critical issues in their communities utilizing self–guided learning modules. This approach broadens the impact of SRDC investments in new educational programs by increasing access to valuable resources.

“...the SRDC will be the place where new issues, new challenges and new opportunities in the rural South are identified and defined before they even emerge in the public consciousness.”

SRDC has been on the leading edge of thinking about the future of the rural South. Before home-based and micro-businesses and e-commerce became headlines in newspapers and feature stories on TV, SRDC was supporting workshops, conferences and the development of curriculum resources to enable Extension and other professionals in the South to help their communities find ways to capture the value of these opportunities. Today, SRDC is the host of the National E-Commerce Extension Demonstration Project, leading the thinking on how e-commerce can help America’s rural communities overcome the friction of geography.

Sowing the Seeds of the Future

During the last five years, SRDC has cultivated a new set of development seeds. The Center has experimented with these seeds; evaluated their productivity; identified some of the factors influencing their successful germination and growth; and now, is moving to expand its test fields and markets. From my perspective, SRDC’s seeds for the future include:

New partnerships – During the last five years, the SRDC has worked to strengthen its programmatic ties to the other Rural Development Centers, to re-invigorate its relationships with long-standing partners, and to identify new partners who share an interest in improving the well-being of people and communities in the rural South. From the seed of new partnerships have come two innovative efforts that are now models for the nation.

The Rural Community College Alliance and Rural Community College Initiative seek to build new linkages between the land-grant universities and the rural community colleges of the South “to empower the communi-
ty college, along with its land-grant colleagues to work” with the citizens to build a plan for the future that “embraces the assets and place-based challenges existing in their communities of service.” This innovative seed recognizes the enormous diversity of conditions in rural communities and truly fosters locally-imagined and locally-led development.

The Sustainable Communities Innovation Grants seed is a unique partnership of Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) and SRDC. Together, they are nurturing innovative approaches to integrating agricultural and community economic development. Here, both research and outreach projects seek to enhance our understanding of the linkage between sustainable agriculture and sustainable communities. By combining resources, Southern SARE and SRDC have fertilized a new field of grant opportunities that integrate agricultural and social science research in powerful ways.

The SRDC seed of partnership demonstrates that we can do more and better together than we can do alone.

**New community development resources** – During the last five years, the SRDC has fostered the growth of human and information community development resources in the South. This has not happened through the hiring of new community development faculty or professionals within the region (although this has occurred to a small degree). Instead, SRDC has focused on building the competencies and the confidence of the faculty and professionals in the region to address community development issues on their own or in partnerships with others. This approach has grafted a new base of knowledge and skills onto professionals in fields as diverse as wildlife biology, agricultural engineering, family financial management, agronomy and animals sciences. This approach has grown new training and curriculum resources for use by a wide variety of actors in the region. And, with the recent SRDC-led effort to identify the core competencies for community and economic development, the ground is being worked to plant a “path-breaking on-line system of in-service educational programing for Extension professionals.”

The SRDC seed of new community development resources reflects the BASF advertising slogan – “we don’t make the things you use, we make the things you use better.” Instead of wasting energy fighting to build a new silo called community development on the Southern landscape, SRDC has wisely invested in enhancing the ability of everyone be a cultivator of community economic development.

What does the future hold? Given the tremendous innovation and leadership demonstrated by the staff of the SRDC and the significant impact of its programs over the last five years, I don’t think my speculative powers can match the reality they are creating. What I do know for sure is that during the last five years, SRDC has planted the seeds of understanding that community economic development is integral to the future well-being of the people and the communities of the rural South. Furthermore, the SRDC has fertilized these seeds with knowledge and resources to support community economic development. And finally, I have seen spores of support for community economic development spreading from this field – and they are sprouting new interest in finding ways to integrate an awareness of and support for sustainable community development into everything we do. From this I believe will grow healthy communities that are socially, environmentally and economically sustainable – a rural South of hope and accomplishment.

--Lori Garkovich
Conferences & Trainings

Organize and deliver high priority rural development research and educational workshops/conferences
Over the past year, the SRDC has organized/supported two research-based conferences and seven Extension conferences/trainings (two are described under the RCCI section of this report). These SRDC-sponsored trainings and conferences attracted 730 total participants from across the region (see “Conference Attendance by State” on page 28).

**SERA-19 Rural Health**  
*March 3-5, 2004, Nashville, Tennessee*  
This regional group of research and Extension professionals meets bi-annually to review ongoing research and Extension activities and to determine strategies for improving the health status of individuals and communities through cooperative projects, research and training. The team met in March 2004 to explore a number of key topics including child obesity, agromedicine issues, personal health initiatives and policy education efforts.

The SRDC assists this group by providing important logistical support for conferences/meetings and technical support by maintaining the group’s webpage and minutes on the SRDC website.

**Southern Community Development Educators: New Horizons-New Beginnings**  
*May 19-21, 2004, Tampa, Florida*  
This conference was designed to build on the current momentum of Extension community development programming at the national, state and local levels. It provided individuals an opportunity to network with others from throughout the Southern region on common interests and to partake in additional professional development opportunities. The meeting provided a forum for discussion and pursuit of a national association of community development educators.

This conference attracted 134 participants from 24 states. Presentations were made in seven track areas:

- Leadership and Civic Engagement (12 presentations);
- Economic Development Strategies (9 presentations);
- Education and Workforce Development (9 presentations);
- Natural Resources/Environment (4 presentations);
- Community Services (5 presentations);
- Decision Making Tools (8 presentations); and
- Local Government (6 presentations).

**Amenities and Rural Development**  
*June 18-19, 2004, Madison, Wisconsin*  
Co-sponsored by the four Regional Rural Development Centers and the National Research Initiative of CSREES, this conference showcased papers in the areas of economics, sociology, geography and planning. Participants from several countries and regions of the United States took part in this event. A book contract has been secured by the conference organizer, Gary P. Green from the University of Wisconsin, to publish the conference papers as an edited book titled, *Amenities and Rural Community Development: Theory, Methods and Public Policy.*

**In the Shadows of Poverty: Strengthening the Rural Poverty Research Capacity of the South**  
*July 21-23, 2004, Memphis, Tennessee*  
As one of our nation’s most impoverished areas, the rural South continues to be challenged in its capacity to adjust to the changing economic, social and demographic conditions of the region. Effectively addressing these critical shifts must be rooted in strong applied social science research that can offer guidance on possible strategies for bringing hope to the people and communities that are directly touched by poverty.

Working in partnership with the RUPRI Rural Poverty Research Center, this conference sought to energize and expand the community of social science researchers committed to accelerating the level of attention and investments in poverty-related research in the region. Twenty papers were presented over the course of the two day conference. Moreover, a panel of grassroots representatives offered their insights on the unique challenges facing the people and communities in Appalachia, the Black Belt and the Mississippi Delta.
Joint Meeting of AEA, ASRED and PLN  
August 29-September 2, 2004, Biloxi, Mississippi
For the second year, the Southern Region Program Leadership Network met jointly with the Association of Extension Administrators and the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors. The Center maintains heavy involvement with the SR-PLN as efforts are made to increase communication and planning among Extension program leaders in the South, develop a common understanding among program leaders, improve Extension programs through the sharing of ideas and resources, and identify emerging issues of importance to the South. This year’s meeting boasted a record-breaking 230 participants, with representatives from all 13 Southern states, Puerto Rico and West Virginia.

In support of the PLN and its subcommittees, the SRDC carried out the following activities in FY04:

- Logistical support for the August meeting;
- Logistical support for the PLC’s mid-year meeting;
- Maintenance of the group’s 10 listservs; and
- Maintenance of the PLN website, which archives membership records and minutes for all eight program committees.

Enhancing the Voices: Building Stronger Communities Together  
September 13-17, 2004, Nashville, Tennessee
What is it that makes some communities successful, while others have a tough time getting people to pay attention to the challenges facing their communities? Communities that are better able to develop a solid plan for the future, that are committed to engaging all voices in the process, and that take steps to develop the new leaders of tomorrow, are the ones that are positioned to bring about positive changes in the years ahead.

This regional training was designed to offer participants the skills and tools needed to strengthen and expand the involvement of local residents in the important challenges and opportunities facing their communities. The workshop trainers were drawn from university, government and the nonprofit sectors. Participants had access to a buffet of educational products and resources that can be utilized in their communities of interest, including the following:

- Participants were engaged in two days of training utilizing the LeadershipPlenty curriculum, an innovative leadership development program produced by the Pew Partnership for Civic Change. The individuals who took part in this workshop became certified LeadershipPlenty trainers. Two of the major architects of this curriculum, Suzanne Morse and Gwen Whiting, were part of the training team.

- Participants took part in one of two educational tracks: Public Decision Making through Deliberative Forums, led by Renee Daugherty and Sue Williams at Oklahoma State University, or Community-Based Planning, presented by Gene Theodori at Texas A&M University.

- Participants were encouraged to showcase their resources that related to the theme of the conference during a Curriculum Share Fair, which offered access to information on a host of educational resources and products that can be used to support community-based leadership development/civic engagement activities.

In addition to the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, the SRDC partnered with Southern Growth Policies Board and Tennessee Valley Authority to coordinate this training.

National Extension Tourism Conference  
People, Places and Partnerships: Keys to Success  
September 27-30, 2004, Kissimmee, Florida  
Cancelled due to Hurricane Jeanne
This conference was co-sponsored by the SRDC, the National Extension Tourism Design Team, the University of Florida IFAS Extension and the University of Florida Center for Tourism Research and Development. Registrants represented 34 states and New Zealand, Ontario, Nigeria, St. Lucia and Trinidad. Conference objectives included exploring ways to strengthen and develop partnerships; identifying strategies to work with increasingly diverse communities and publics; sharing techniques for enhancing urban and rural tourism attractions; seeing examples of successful ventures in Central Florida; and identifying strategies to enhance Extension’s capacity to provide technical assistance.
FY05 Conferences

In addition to the previously noted conferences and trainings, the Center staff also participated in planning efforts for the following upcoming conferences:

**Third Annual Rural Community College Alliance Conference**
**Shining a Beacon of Hope on Rural Communities: New Directions for Rural Community Colleges**
*October 3-5, 2004, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina*
RCCA 2004 is a national learning event for rural community colleges and their community partners. This conference will provide an opportunity for participants to learn from the experience of the Ford Foundation’s Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI): what works, and what does not; interact with peers and national experts on challenges facing rural colleges and communities; learn about effective rural strategies to increase educational access, expand college capacity and build the economy; and hear from resource people about funding opportunities. Conference tracks will include enhancing community services, expanding educational access, exploring innovative economic development practices and strengthening community leadership skills.

**SERA-19 Rural Health**
*October 13-15, 2004, New Orleans, Louisiana*
The group’s Fall meeting will continue the conversations of the subcommittees, which were developed at the Spring meeting, to explore childhood obesity, agromedicine issues, personal health initiatives and policy education efforts.

**Economic Diversity Training**
*May 16-20, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*
In addition to an overview of economic development, including a session on the CARE model, this training will have sessions on entrepreneurship, marketing (with field tours) and e-commerce.

**NACDEP Inaugural Conference: Building Our Future Together**
*February 15-18, 2004, Las Vegas, Nevada*
Plenary sessions, workshops, research roundtables and resource fair exhibits will highlight programs and research developed and implemented by Cooperative Extension professionals and their federal, state and local partners. Program tracks will include economic development; community decision-making; education and workforce development; information technology; local government and community services; land use and natural resources; and leadership development.

**Southern Institute for Rural Development**
*September 12-15, 2005, West Monroe, Louisiana*
This is the third installment of the Southern Institute for Rural Development that joins the SRDC in partnership with a number of rural development agencies at the federal and state level. The Louisiana USDA Rural Development Office will be the host site for this 2005 Conference. The conference planning committee is in place and has been meeting on a regular basis to plan for this important event.
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>March 3-5</td>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
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<td>May 19-21</td>
<td>Tampa, FL</td>
<td>Southern Community Educators Conference</td>
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<td>July 2-23</td>
<td>Memphis, TN</td>
<td>In the Shadows of Poverty: Research Capacity</td>
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<td>Tampa, FL</td>
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<td>Aug. 2-5</td>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
<td>Expanding the Voices: Building Stronger Communities Together</td>
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<td>Aug. 29-</td>
<td>Kissimmee, FL</td>
<td>ASERD and PLN Joint Meeting of AEA, AL, FL, AR, OK, IA, MS, TX, VA, SC, TN, NY, NC, WI, OH, OTHER</td>
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Provide leadership for the preparation of science-based rural development policy reports.
The Role of Education: Promoting the Economic and Social Vitality of Rural America

The SRDC is collaborating with the USDA Economic Research Service and the Rural School and Community Trust to produce important research and policy products that address critical rural education issues in the South and the nation. In particular, the SRDC is serving in a key role in co-editing special issues of two academic journals highlighting various rural education-related topics. Additionally, the SRDC is designing, producing and publishing a valuable policy document containing nine articles that address a variety of rural education topics of interest to the rural education policy and research communities. This report is slated for release in January 2005.

The articles showcased in this policy document are as follows:

- How the Returns to Education in Rural Areas Vary Across the Nation
  *Stephan Goetz, Pennsylvania State University*

- Does Human Capital Affect Rural Economic Growth? Evidence from the South
  *David Barkley, Mark Henry and Haizhen Li, Clemson University*

- Measuring Local Economic Impacts of the Education Sector
  *Mike Woods, Oklahoma State University*

- Importance of Schools to Rural Community Viability
  *Tom Lyson, Cornell University*

- Bouncing between Disadvantaged Rural School Districts: The Hidden Problem of Student Transiency
  *Kai Schafft, Pennsylvania State University*

- Employer Participation in School-To-Work Programs in Rural America
  *Gary Green, University of Wisconsin*

- It’s More Than Just Schools: How Families and Communities Promote Student Achievement
  *Lionel J. Beaulieu, SRDC, and Glenn D. Israel, University of Florida*

- Preparing Educators to Teach Students in Rural Schools
  *Sheryl Lazarus, University of Minnesota*

- How Do Rural Schools Fare Under a High-Stakes Testing Regime?
  *Frank Beck, Illinois State University*
This quarterly newsletter features a theme of regional interest in each issue. The hard copy is distributed to nearly 2,750 individuals, and more than 600 additional copies are distributed electronically. The newsletter is also made available on the SRDC website in PDF format. The final theme published during the past year was:

**Smarth Growth**
Volume 7, Number 1, Winter 2004

The SRDC will begin compiling an electronic newsletter in FY05 featuring new research of interest, conference proceedings, a calendar of upcoming conferences and trainings, names in the news, position vacancies and other relevant items for the Southern region.

**SRDC Policy Series**

The SRDC has initiated a new policy series highlighting themes from the Center’s five focus areas: civic engagement, economic and workforce development, rural-urban interface, health/food assistance, and digital access and use. These briefs present, in nontechnical language, information that could be useful to people and organizations outside the academic community. The series is being distributed in hard-copy to land-grant administrators and faculty, federal and state agency personnel, Congressional representatives, and other interested individuals. Electronic versions are also available on the SRDC website. Two reports were published in FY04:

- **Children and Poverty in the Rural South**
  **Thematic area: Economic and Workforce Development**
  November 2003, Number 2
  Rosalind P. Harris and Julie N. Zimmerman, University of Kentucky

- **Population, Employment and Mobility in the Rural South**
  **Thematic area: Rural-Urban Interface**
  February 2004, Number 3
  Mitch Renkow, North Carolina State University

**Food Assistance Needs of the South’s Vulnerable Populations**

The SRDC continued publishing this important policy series in FY04. The purpose of this series is to address a variety of issues associated with food assistance needs in the South. This special series is funded, in part, by the Economic Research Service and the Farm Foundation, in partnership with the SRDC. Issues published in FY04 included the following:

- **Knowledge of Charitable Choice Among Food Pantry Directors in the Deep South**
  Number 7, October 2003
  Suzie Cashwell, Western Kentucky University, John Bartkowski, Mississippi State University, and Patricia Duffy, Joseph Molnar, Vanessa Casanova, and Marina Irimia-Vladu, Auburn University

- **Patterns of Food Stamp Receipt by Noncitizens in Rural Texas Counties**
  Number 8, February 2004
  Steve White, Xinhong You and Steve Murdock, Texas...
Measuring Rural Diversity

This series, begun in November 2003, was inspired by the Measuring Rural Diversity Conference held Nov. 21-22, 2002, at the Economic Research Service in Washington, DC. The series features the current work of researchers on rural conditions such as demographic changes, business trends and local distress. This policy series has been funded by the Economic Research Service in partnership with the Southern Rural Development Center. The following issues were published this year:

- **Persistent Poverty and Place: How Do Persistent Poverty Dynamics and Demographics Vary Across the Rural-Urban Continuum?**
  Volume 1, Issue No. 1, November 2003
  Kathleen K. Miller, Rural Policy Research Institute, and Bruce A. Weber, Oregon State University

- **Exploring Diversity in Rural Canada**
  Volume 1, Issue No. 2, March 2004
  William Reimer, Concordia University

Grant Connections

Despite the difficult financial situation in many universities and colleges, there remains a number of funding opportunities designed to support sound community and economic development research and outreach activities. 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. In addition, grants appropriate for community-based groups to pursue are listed, so that land-grant schools in the region can have working relationships with these types of organizations and can notify them of items of interest. The three issues that were distributed this past year are as follows:

- Volume 6, Number 1, December 2003
- Volume 6, Number 2, February 2004
- Volume 6, Number 3, September 2004

Websites

The SRDC supports and hosts each of the following websites by providing updates, revisions and all necessary changes:

- Southern Rural Development Center
  http://srdc.msstate.edu/

- Rural Community College Initiative
  http://srdc.msstate.edu/rcci/

- Southern Region Program Leadership Network (PLN)
  http://srpln.msstate.edu/

- Cooperative Extension Curriculum Project (CECP)
  http://cecp-online.org/info/

- e-Extension Project Information Site
  http://e-extensionproject.info/

- Rural E-Commerce Extension Initiative
  http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/

- NACDEP
  http://nacdep.net/
Activities by Priority

Five key issues guide the work of the SRDC. Specific initiatives undertaken in support of these priorities over the past year are outlined.
CenTer ActivIties by Priority

Mission

The Southern Rural Development Center seeks to strengthen the capacity of the region’s 29 land-grant institutions to address critical contemporary rural development issues impacting the well-being of people and communities in the rural South.

Goals

- Stimulate the formation of multi-state research teams
- Coordinate the development and revision of educational materials and maintain a centralized repository of educational resources
- Organize and deliver high priority rural development research and educational workshops/conferences
- Provide leadership for the preparation of science-based rural development policy reports
- Build partnerships that link the South’s land-grant university system with other key entities committed to rural development activities in the region

Priority Issues

Priority 1
Strengthen the engagement of rural people and organizations in the civic life of their communities.

Priority 2
Promote sound rural economic and workforce development strategies that improve job quality and the competitiveness of workers in the rural South.

Priority 3
Assist rural communities in developing sound strategies for addressing the challenges associated with the expansion of urban and suburban localities into rural areas.

Priority 4
Expand efforts to improve health care access in the rural South and explore strategies for reducing the prevalence of food insecurity and hunger among the region’s most vulnerable rural populations.

Priority 5
Explore the prevalence of a “digital divide” among various populations and communities in the South and assist in the development of educational programs that advance the information technology capacity of rural people and places.

The following chart outlines the major activities of the SRDC over the past year and delineates the specific priority issues to which these activities relate.
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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Evaluation & Strategic Planning

Implement sound strategies to assess the impacts and benefits of the Center’s activities, and develop a strategic blueprint for the future.
A major effort has been launched by the Center over the past year to examine the impact of its work in the Southern region. At the same time, the SRDC is positioning itself to undertake a new strategic planning activity, one that will provide it with a blueprint of its priority activities in the future.

Evaluation of SRDC Activities Underway

A team of evaluation experts was assembled by the SRDC with the purpose of offering guidance on how an evaluation of the activities of the SRDC could be undertaken. The team provided critical input on what research or Extension activities should be assessed for the purpose of better documenting the benefit of the Center's work in the region. As a result of this meeting, the Center funded a team of evaluation experts at the University of Florida to undertake this assessment. The team, headed by Glenn Israel at the University of Florida, launched its formal evaluation activities during Summer 2004.

Why is the SRDC investing in such an effort? As the evaluation team has noted, publicly-supported organizations face increasing demands to document their value. To maintain and expand its support base, the SRDC must proactively develop and provide accountability information to stakeholders. Moreover, the information must be tailored to the information needs of different groups.

The purpose of the evaluation project is to address the accountability needs of the SRDC via the development of success stories on recent activities conducted by SRDC staff and collaborating land-grant faculty in the region, and by building an accountability database that will facilitate the collection and reporting of quantitative information of outputs and outcomes. The latter product will strengthen the SRDC's ability to retrieve information and provide timely responses to stakeholder queries. In this first year of the evaluation, SRDC program processes and outcomes for three areas of work will be of particular interest to the evaluation team. These three areas are: Rural Business and Economic Development; Food Assistance and Security; and Rural Health.

Frameworks Institute to Evaluate SRDC Publication Products

Providing timely information to land-grant faculty and others on a host of important rural development topics is a principal part of the publication activities of the SRDC. In light of the Center’s active record in producing policy/information briefs, special research reports, and electronic newsletters, it applied for one of the nine slots that the Kellogg Foundation made available to various organizations across the country to secure technical assistance from Frameworks Institute. The SRDC was selected to take part in this important assessment. With financial support provided by the Kellogg Foundation, Frameworks Institute is employing a panel of five evaluators (i.e., linguists, strategists, communication designers, public opinion analysts, political scientists) to undertake an independent assessment of our e-commerce electronic newsletter, and two different policy series published by the Center. The outcome of this analysis will be a user-friendly report that will offer the SRDC a series of practical steps that it can pursue to improve the quality of its communications activities. Once the review is completed in late Fall 2004, the SRDC will work with its Technical and Operational Advisory Committee to determine how the Center can best act on the recommendations/findings offered by the Frameworks Institute.

Dialogue on Policy Challenges in Rural America & the Rural South

The Southern Rural Development Center initiated an active dialogue with the research and Extension leaders in the South on the significant set of rural policy issues facing the region. The guiding framework for these discussions was the recently released volume published by the Rural Sociological Society titled, Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century. Both the SRDC Director (Bo Beaulieu) and one of the volume’s co-editors (Lou Swanson), shared the highlights of the book’s content with 1890 Research Directors, 1890 Extension Administrators, 1862 Research Directors, and 1862 Extension Administrators at the Spring and Summer 2004 meet-
ings. As a result of these meetings, the region’s land-grant administrators encouraged the SRDC to play an active role in assisting the region’s land-grant universities to pursue a more effective and comprehensive rural development program in the areas of research, extension, and policy.

**Blueprint for the Future: Strategic Plan Underway with Support from the Kellogg Foundation**

In order to remain relevant to the needs of the region’s land-grant university system and other rural development stakeholders in the region, the SRDC is launching a strategic plan that will involve key land-grant and non-land grant partners in the South. The intent will be to develop and pursue a rural development research and outreach education activities that are in line with the high priority rural development challenges facing the region. This important effort, supported with seed funding provided by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, is intended to serve as the building block for the Center’s work over the next 3-5 years.

Once the strategic plan is approved by the Center’s Technical and Operational Advisory Committee and Board of Directors, SRDC staff will work closely with Extension community development program leaders, social science research faculty, and non-land-grant partners (i.e., community colleges, nonprofit organizations, foundations) in advancing the capacity of the region’s land-grant schools to carry out key elements of this plan.
Partners

Build partnerships that link the South’s land-grant university system with other key entities committed to rural development activities in the region.
PARTNERS

In addition to the 29 land-grant universities the SRDC works with on an on-going basis, the following represents the host of organizations the SRDC has worked closely with during the past year:

- Association of Extension Administrators
- Association of Research Directors
- Association of Southern Region Extension Directors
- Farm Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Foundation for the Mid South
- Mid-South Center for Rural Community Colleges
- Pew Partnership for Civic Change
- Regional Rural Development Centers
  - North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
  - Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
  - Western Rural Development Center
- Rural Community College Alliance
- Rural Community College Initiative
- Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)
- Rural School and Community Trust
- Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
- Southern Growth Policies Board
- Southern SARE
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
- USDA Economic Research Service
- Walton Family Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Funding

Actively seek extramural resources from public, private and philanthropic organizations for the purpose of advancing the priority activities of the SRDC.
FUNDING

FY04 Funding

The SRDC has enjoyed another year with sizable levels of extramural funding in FY04; extramural funding exceeded $1.6 million. However, the Center’s base funding decreased from $357,421 to $320,114. Major grants/contracts were awarded to the Center from the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, the Ford Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation. The SRDC is grateful to those agencies and organizations for making a financial investment in the work of the Center.

Trends in Extramural Funding, FY98-04

The following chart highlights the level of extramural resources that the SRDC has been able to secure over the past eight years. Outside monies captured in support of the mission of the SRDC have increased significantly over the course of the last three fiscal years. Total extramural funds generated by the SRDC over this eight-year period has now surpassed $4.5 million.
About the SRDC

The SRDC seeks to strengthen the capacity of the region’s 29 land-grant institutions to address critical contemporary rural development issues impacting the well-being of people and communities in the rural South.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The ten-member Board of Directors is composed of four representatives from Extension (three from 1862 institutions and one from an 1890 institution) and four representatives from Research (three from 1862 institutions and one from an 1890 institution). One representative is from the Farm Foundation, and one is selected from the private sector. Each member serves a three-year term. Current members are as follows:

Walter Armbruster  
Farm Foundation

Susan Jenkins  
Cherokee Preservation Foundation

John Jensen  
Auburn University

Joseph McGilberry, Host Representative  
Mississippi State University

Lawrence Carter  
Florida A&M University

Roland Mote, Chair-Elect  
University of Tennessee

Carter Catlin, Jr.  
Tennessee State University

Ken Roberts  
Louisiana State University

Margaret Hale, Chair  
Texas A&M University

Vance Watson, Host Representative  
Mississippi State University

Advisors:

Sally Ward Maggard  
USDA-CSREES

Robert Gibbs  
USDA-ERS
The Technical and Operational Advisory Committee of the Board of Directors advises the SRDC staff in the development of priority goals and strategies for the Center. The committee seeks suggestions and support from the directors and administrators of the various state Extension and research units in the region, from land-grant faculty, and from rural development stakeholders. The committee meets annually to review the proposed direction and activities of the Center and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors. Current members are:

**1862 Extension**
- Hank Cothran 2002-2005
  University of Florida
- Deborah Tootle 2004-2007
  Louisiana State University
- Sam Fowler 2003-2006
  Auburn University

**1890 Extension**
- Claudette Smith 2005-2007
  North Carolina A&T State University
- Charles Shepphard 2004-2006
  Alcorn State University
- Cassandra Steele 2004-2005
  Prairie View A&M University

**1862 Research**
- Mark Henry 2003-2006
  Clemson University
- David Barkley 2004-2007
  Clemson University
- Lori Garkovich, Chair 2002-2005
  University of Kentucky

**1890 Research**
- Fisseha Tegegne 2004-2007
  Tennessee State University
- Vernon Jones 2004-2007
  Langston University
- Dreamal Worthen 2004-2007
  Florida A&M University

**Non Land-Grant**
- William Buster 2002-2005
  Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

**Advisor**
- Roland Mote
  University of Tennessee
## Center Staff

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<tr>
<td>Lionel J. (Bo) Beaulieu</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremy S. Robbins</td>
<td>Editorial Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Barefield</td>
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<td>Vicki Vaughn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mari Shurden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy Ibendahl</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
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The Southern Rural Development Center is one of four regional centers coordinating rural development research and Extension (education) programs cooperatively with the land-grant institutions regionally and nationally. The Centers' are supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.