2015 Annual Report

Cultivating Prosperity In Rural Communities
The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) has been an important catalyst in helping communities change for over forty years. So “Cultivating Prosperity in Rural Communities” is not just this year’s theme but has always been at the heart of the SRDC’s mission. 2015 was a successful year at the SRDC in that we continued to leverage our resources to connect our partners at universities throughout the southern United States with opportunities to improve rural communities. In addition, we added several new staff members to increase the capacity of the SRDC. Matt Capella joined the Center in December 2014 as a Grants and Contracts Specialist, while Julie Capizzi (Web Master) and Miranda Tucci (Office Associate) joined the Center in January and February 2015, respectively. These three employees have helped the Center become more responsive and efficient.

A major thrust of the SRDC in 2015 involved local and regional food systems. One initiative undertaken was the development of a regional and local food systems group of researchers and Extension professionals. Over sixty persons attended a meeting in Washington DC resulting in an effort to create a Southern Extension and Research Activity (SERA) group to address challenges and opportunities associated with the local food movement. In addition, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) funded a project to conduct nationwide grant writing workshops to build community level capacity to successfully access funding for local foods initiatives. A collaboration with the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program (SSARE) resulted in over $100,000 being awarded to support research projects in North Carolina, Mississippi, and Florida to define, evaluate and understand the impacts of local and regional food systems on sustainable agriculture.

The Stronger Economies Together (SET) program continues to be a signature endeavor for the SRDC and is now generating evidence of its effectiveness in stimulating rural development. This program received a USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Partnership Award in 2015 which is a testament to the vision of Dr. Bo Beaulieu, former Director of SRDC, and the tenacity of Rachel Welborn, Project Manager at SRDC. Of course, the success of SET is dependent on the partnership with USDA Rural Development (RD), and the Purdue Center for Rural Development, the leadership and direction from Extension personnel from around the United States, and the initiative of the people in rural communities. It is a prime example of the what and why of not only the Southern Rural Development Center, but the other three Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) as well.

I am excited about the future of the SRDC. Much work remains but the SRDC and the other RRDCs are committed to joining hands with land-grant partners throughout their respective regions to help rural America grow and prosper. Here at SRDC, we are especially grateful for the continued partnership with the South’s 29 Land Grant Universities. Special thanks to our Board of Directors, Technical Operation and Advisory Committee (TOAC), and to USDA’s National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for their continued guidance and support.

Sincerely,
Meet the SRDC Team

STEVE TURNER  
Director  
steve.turner@msstate.edu

RACHEL WELBORN  
Program Manager  
rachel.welborn@msstate.edu

CHANCE MCDAVID  
Senior Extension Associate  
chance.mc david@msstate.edu

MATT CAPELLA  
Contracts & Grants Specialist  
m.capella@msstate.edu

JULIE CAPIZZI  
Webmaster  
j.capizzi@msstate.edu

MIRANDA TUCCI  
Office Associate  
m.tucci@msstate.edu

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.

SRDC PRIORITIES

FOSTERING CIVIC-MINDED COMMUNITIES

Southerners want to have a meaningful voice in shaping the direction of their communities, but many have a tough time finding the right avenue for weighing in on important local matters. In response, the SRDC builds a stronger knowledge base and designs innovative programs that seek to strengthen the civic health of communities across the region.

BUILDING ECONOMICALLY VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Global forces have brought major economic changes to the rural South. As a result, the traditional drivers of many rural economies are in flux. To survive, rural economies must be diversified. The SRDC helps with long term sustainability by finding the right mix of strategies to build on the important strengths and assets of rural communities.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES

The rural South faces a variety of economic and social challenges including high poverty rates, obesity, and low educational attainment. Moreover, the South continues to experience a variety of natural disasters. The SRDC works to create a better tomorrow for these vulnerable communities and people.
One of the 90 regions joining the SET family, The Western Oklahoma I-40 Corridor region includes 108 miles of Interstate Highway 40 paralleling historic Route 66 through Caddo, Custer, Washita and Beckham Counties. The corridor has experienced higher economic stability, while surrounding rural areas farther from the interstate have experienced population declines and lower economic activity.

Vision
The Western Oklahoma I-40 Corridor has strong communities collaborating to build a diversified economy with an aerospace industry, value-added agriculture products, strong energy sector and a high quality lifestyle.

Goals
The Western Oklahoma I-40 Corridor team has actively pursued several of their SET goals. These include reestablishing and expanding the aerospace industry, creating diversified agriculture and value-added products and developing amenities to support strong community lifestyles. Early impacts are already taking shape.

Aerospace
The team sought to attract companies to the region that were involved in the developing, testing and/or manufacturing of Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs).

- An estimated $57.6 million in economic impact created.
- Thousands of potential new jobs by 2025.
- Increased visibility and outside interest from companies.

Agriculture
The agriculture sub-committee developed the “Drying Canola Project” in late May 2014 tested the feasibility of drying canola in a peanut trailer.

- Findings estimated to add $78 per acre of canola, compared to a cost of only $6 per acre.
- Translated to $7.2 million in additional income.

Quality Of Life
The team has been aggressive in pursuing amenities that would enhance the quality of life for residents as well as potential residents. Resulting enhancements include

- 2 New day-care facilities, 1 newly renovated
- 2 Urgent care facilities
- 1 Commercial Driver’s License facility
- 1 Retirement Village
- 1 Event center

Awards
Western Oklahoma I-40 Corridor received the 2015 SET Excellence in Regional Economic Development Work Award.

Stronger Economies Together, one of SRDC’s signature efforts, is helping rural regions gain significant strides in economic growth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New Year’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Association of Extension Administrators Meeting: Savannah, GA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **New Year’s Day**
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday**
- Association of Extension Administrators Meeting: Savannah, GA
Turning the Tide on Poverty in Mississippi

Turning the Tide on Poverty is a community circles initiative that has been taking shape across the South for the last five years. Neshoba County, Mississippi, demonstrated how this civic engagement process could foster community progress. A few significant impacts are noted below.

Feeding the Hungry

Food insecurity is closely tied to poverty. Through Tide, Neshoba County was able to significantly expand capacity of its local food pantry through two new partnerships. Fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs and dairy products previously returned to the local Walmart’s distribution center now stay in the county to provide healthy food for nearly 300 residents each week. These new weekly donations are valued at approximately $1,000. Additionally, the local pantry has increased its distribution by nearly 40 percent after gaining access to the Mississippi Food Network.

Meeting the Calls for Help

Tide organized the Mayor’s Volunteer Corps to work five days a week in the mayor’s office matching needs of residents to appropriate resources.

Callers have their needs met, abilities and talents identified, and voices heard through this innovative approach.

Providing Clothing

Concerned for the clothing need of families in Neshoba County, Tide participants opened a community closet. As a result, the clothing center provided professional clothing for adult job-seekers, basic clothing for distresses families, and school uniforms for over 300 children in low-resource families.

Over 300 students

What is Turning the Tide on Poverty?

Fashioned after the successful poverty fighting efforts of the Horizons initiative in the nation’s northwest region, Turning the Tide on Poverty seeks to involve a wide range of community members in seeking a “place-based” solution to poverty grounded in local talents and concerns, and led by local voices. For more information, visit www.srdc.msstate.edu/tide
1 2 3 4 5 6

7 8 9 10 11 12 13

14 15 16 17 18 19 20

21 22 23 24 25 26 27

28 29

Association of Research Directors Meeting: Atlanta, GA

2016 New Partners for Smart Growth: Portland, OR

Washington's Birthday

12th Annual Tri-State Diversity Conference: Cincinnati, OH
Local and Regional Foods
Addressing Food Concerns: A Southern Priority

Approximately 16 percent of households in the South are food insecure, the highest of all four regions of the United States. A lack of access to healthy, affordable food particularly affects rural, low-income communities for a variety of reasons. Much of what we see in the Southern region is due to low income, no transportation, and an all-around lack of resources to obtain nutritious food. As the map shows, access to supermarkets, where healthy, nutritious foods are often obtained, is limited in the Southern Region.

However, through a true integration of research and Extension across the South, the region is now poised to make significant strides in the battle against hunger. Through a series of collaborative meetings, the SRDC, its land-grant partners, and the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program have taken initial steps toward a more coordinated effort. To date, the partnership has:

- Scanned the research and Extension Land-Grant network to identify expertise across the entire continuum of this work, from farm to consumer across the South
- Generated a subject matter map to begin organizing the effort
- Compiled an initial resource directory and established a website for hosting and expanding the work
- Participated in an initial meeting to establish goals moving forward.

During this collaboration meeting, held in August 2015 with almost all of the South’s states represented, the team determined to pursue the following goals:

- **Form learning communities** around specific topics of interest/high needs that are multi-state/multi-discipline
- **Advance the resource repository** for the region, building on existing work to include materials, innovations, case studies, successes and failures, research, and toolkits
- **Strengthen capacity for gathering impact data** through identification of common measures and shared space for resources and tools, building on the work of the existing group: https://southernlocalfoods.wordpress.com/
- **Explore organizational structure** across the South around foods systems work. Consider what works, best practices, lessons learned, inventory capacity and investment on state level
- **Identify the “Top 10” pressing issues** for foods systems work in the region, looking to county agents, state staff, and federal partners across research, teaching and Extension.

To Learn More:
For more information, visit www.srdc.msstate.edu/foods or email rachel.welborn@msstate.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

2016 National eXtension Conference : San Antonio, TX
Individually lacking basic resources often are less able to respond to and recover from a disaster situation. Fueled by this concern, Prairie View A&M University partnered with SRDC to pilot a revision of ReadyCommunity aimed specifically to address concerns of low resource communities and individuals. Waller County was chosen for the pilot given its positioning as a pass-through county for coastal hurricane evacuations. The purpose was to use the ReadyCommunity process to develop a supplement to the existing Waller County Evacuation Annex. Although intended to be only a pass-through county for coastal hurricane evacuations, Galveston and Harris County residents choose Waller County because they do not wish to travel too far from home. This situation puts a huge burden on the smaller rural county, stretching its resources at a time when its own residents may require additional support.

Under the leadership of Dr. Noel Estwick of Prairie View A&M University, a core team was assembled and ReadyCommunity began to take shape. Through collaboration with over 35 entities on the state, county, and city level, the county was able to identify the actions needed to cope in the event of a mass evacuation from Harris and Galveston Counties. The team determined what was required to satisfy local needs first, and then the resources that would be needed to satisfy needs for evacuees from neighboring counties. To date, a draft of the plan is undergoing final review and has gained wide support not only from the local leadership, but also from community members as the ReadyCommunity team shared relevant plans through an Open House event designed to get feedback from citizens as well as raise individual capacity to respond to disaster events.

When asked what ReadyCommunity had meant to Waller County, Dr. Estwick noted these values. ReadyCommunity:

- Provides a platform to keep disaster preparedness fresh
- Engages the community in discussions with officials and practitioners
- Delivers valuable, timely planning information to local residents
- Organizes volunteers
- Identifies key resources and community players

What is ReadyCommunity?

ReadyCommunity is a partnership between FEMA, the SRDC, other Regional Rural Development Centers, USDA-NIFA, and a team of land-grant university Extension educators. Its six step process guides rural communities in comprehensive emergency management planning. For more information, visit www.srdc.msstate.edu/readycommunity
APRIL 2016

1  2

3  4  5  6  7  8  9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Association of Southern Region Extension Directors and Southern Association of Agriculture Experiment Station Directors Joint Meeting: Virgin Islands, USA

Extension Sustainability Summit 2016: Portland, OR

2016 National Health Outreach Conference: Roanoke, VA
Established in 2006, the Southern Extension and Research Activity 37, or SERA 37, composed of both Extension and research faculty from around the South, formed in order to (1) work collaboratively in understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with the “New Hispanic South”; (2) to strengthen the research, Extension outreach, and public policy work being done on the new Hispanic South by our region’s land-grant university system; and (3) advance the capacity of the region’s land-grant university system to provide timely and high quality educational programs and technical assistance activities to communities that wish to address, in a positive and strategic manner, the diverse needs of their growing Hispanic population.

Continuing this mission, the team engaged in a full-day exploration of some of the region’s major programming targeting Latino audiences in an effort to establish the 2016 priorities. Moving forward, the team plans to:

- Establish a **program resource repository** providing easy access to a wealth of Extension and research resources from within the land-grant system and other important partners.
- Coordinate **staff development** targeting land-grant professionals in order to raise capacity to serve Latinos, with a particular emphasis on cultural sensitivity.
- Research and document **best practices** among Latino programming in order to provide guidance to future resource development
- Provide focused evaluation of and dissemination of **youth focused programming** that demonstrates high impact.

Leadership for this work will be provided by the following team members organized into four committees around the four established goals.

**Program Resource Repository**
- Joe Hunnings (VA)
- Julia Storm (NC)
- Jayne McBurney (NC)
- Karla Shelnutt (FL)

**Staff Development**
- Jorge Atiles (OK)
- Elaine Fries (TX)
- Dreamal Worthen (FL)
- Ruben Saldana (TX)

**Best Practices**
- Terrance Martin (AL)
- Juana Macias-Christian (AL)
- Vianca Solorio (TN)
- Silvia Vaca-Diez (AL)
- Lupe Landeros (TX)

**Youth Programs**
- Laura Valencia (FL)
- Elver Pardo (FL)
- Cintia Aguilar NC
- Rukeia Draw-Hood (TX)

To Learn More:
For more information, visit [www.srdc.msstate.edu/sera37](http://www.srdc.msstate.edu/sera37)
The program began in 2013 as a pilot project with Appalachian Regional Commission and has now expanded to five counties as of August 2015 with five additional counties scheduled to begin in the fall of 2016.

YELP seeks to equip youth with the civic engagement and entrepreneurial skills needed to engage as change agents in their community. Youth learn about state and local government and how to write a business plan. Through their participation in the program, youth demonstrate to their community the importance of youth engagement in the community’s development efforts. Importantly, the program also seeks to connect rural and urban youth with one another to create a shared learning environment.

The program takes place during the school year and includes six modules. Leadership Essentials & Service Learning, Local and State Government, Cultural Amenities, Health & Community, Agriculture and Food Security, and Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development. The program concludes with group presentations on ideas to stimulate the economic growth and improve the quality of life in their community. These ideas can include developing entirely new businesses or adding value to existing sectors, strengthening community capacity, and/or improving infrastructure to help communities achieve their full potential.

The Southern Rural Development Center was honored to facilitate a Ripple Map session to document how YELP participants are making a difference in their community, and to guide the work moving forward.

**What is Ripple Mapping?**
A method for conducting impact evaluation that engages program and community stakeholders to retrospectively and visually map performance resulting from a program or collaboration. For more information, www.srdc.msstate.edu/measuring_impact
For information on YELP, www.cedik.ca.uky.edu/content/yelp
### JUNE 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Annual Cambio de Colores (Change of Colors) Conference: Columbia, MO</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals / Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals Joint Annual Conference: Burlington, VT
Seeking new ways to predict and proactively respond to behavioral (mental) health issues is central to the Community Assessment and Education to Promote Behavioral Health Planning and Evaluation (CAPE). As a CAPE team leader for their state, Virginia Tech is working with one of its communities to reduce prenatal substance abuse and neonatal abstinence syndrome. With prenatal substance abuse four times above the state level, their target community is collaborating for holistic change. Working through a highly involved process, the community is successfully using multiple data points to establish a clear dashboard to guide future efforts.

The focused community partnership is beginning to make inroads into a long established culture. Through intensive discussions with healthcare providers and at risk women, the collaborative is beginning to find meaningful touchpoints to guide the future.

Early wins:
- A scan of the continuum of care available to women in the area. This has also identified gaps in services that the community is now seeking to fill.
- Better understanding of the concerns women may have in seeking help. This new knowledge has led to a more compassionate approach to care and a greater sensitivity to real risks the women might face.
- Increased knowledge of the financial cost of doing nothing versus the potential gains in taking a proactive approach.
- A sense of hope as the community begins to take small steps toward conquering an enormous challenge

Ultimately, the aim of this effort is not just to help women already facing a drug-challenged pregnancy, but to begin to shift attention toward prevention as the critical solution to protecting the little ones and their moms.

This effort is one of several CAPE initiatives, all seeking proactive solutions to challenges related to behavioral health. The Regional Rural Development Centers are grateful for the partnership with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, without which this important community change work would not be possible.

What is CAPE?
Community Assessment and Education to Promote Behavioral Health Planning and Evaluation (CAPE) is dedicated to identifying and sharing best practices for benchmarking community behavioral health. For more information, visit www.healthbench.info
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Society: Bloomington, MN</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During 2015 SRDC sought to identify both Extension and Research Professionals within the region’s land-grant universities working on community development issues. While this work continues, a number of colleagues have been identified as shown in this diagram. In 2016 SRDC will be seeking to identify common themes among these professionals in order to create multi-state groups building capacity to serve communities across the region.

To Learn More:
Contact Rachel Welborn at rachel.welborn@msstate.edu
Increasing access to locally grown foods offers potential benefits to both producers and consumers. Recognizing this, USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Services offers two grant programs to assist local efforts toward this goal. However, many communities lack the expertise to successfully apply for and manage these promising resources. This challenge led to a groundbreaking partnership between AMS and the four Regional Rural Development Centers. In conjunction with land-grant partners throughout the nation, AMSTA workshops were delivered in every state plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The objectives of the AMSTA Initiative were to make local foods grant writing training widely available to interested parties, reduce the time and effort required to apply for USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Services Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program grants, and prepare successful applicants to manage their awards.

The SRDC is grateful for the collaboration with Dr. Stacey McCullough of the University of Arkansas who served as coordinator for the project in the Southern Region as well as co-author on the AMSTA curriculum. Dr. McCullough’s leadership provided seamless coordination both within the region as well as with the other three regions ensuring timely, high quality response to a growing interest in advancing local foods availability.
Awards

Stronger Economies Together Team Honored by NIFA

The SRDC led Stronger Economies Together team was honored by the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) at its annual Day of Appreciation as recipients the NIFA Partnership Award for Multistate Efforts. The partnership includes the four Regional Rural Development Centers, USDA Rural Development, The Purdue Center for Rural Development, and a host of Land-Grant University partners, without whom this work would not be possible. The SRDC is especially thankful for the team members that have significantly shaped this effort.

National Organizational Team
- Suzette Agans, USDA Rural Development
- Lionel (Bo) Beaulieu, The Purdue Center for Rural Development
- Brent Elrod, USDA NIFA
- Dave Sears, USDA Rural Development
- Rachel Welborn, Southern Rural Development Center

Regional Leads (South noted above):
- Don Albrecht, Western Rural Development Center
- Stephan Goetz, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
- Scott Loveridge, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development

Curriculum Team (in addition to those noted above):
- Marion Bentley – Utah State University
- Alison Davis – University of Kentucky
- Sharon Gulick – University of Missouri
- Indraneel Kumar – Purdue University
- Neil Linscheid – University of Minnesota
- Chance McDavid – Southern Rural Development Center
- Michael Patrick – New Mexico State University
- Kenneth Sherin – South Dakota State University
- Dave Shideler – Oklahoma State University
- Jamie Rae Walker – Texas A&M University
- Martha Walker – Virginia Tech University
- Michael Wilcox – Purdue University

Bonnie Teater Community Development Early Career Achievement Award:
Dr. Susan Jakes

The Southern Rural Development Center is proud to honor Dr. Susan Jakes as the 2015 recipient of the Bonnie Teater Community Development Early Career Achievement Award.

Dr. Jakes is a member of the Department of Psychology at North Carolina State University and Associate State Program Leader of Community and Rural Development for the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service at North Carolina State University. She provides the strategic direction for community and economic programming for Extension and is the university’s point person for integration of economic development programming with Extension’s flagship initiatives of agriculture, local foods, and youth development.

Dr. Jakes has shown prominent examples of engaged CRD programming. She has strengthened the university’s connection with the Southern Rural Development Center, USDA Rural Development, as well as six NC counties through the Stronger Economies Together initiative. Specifically in the Eastern Triangle Region, CRD staff continue to provide assistance on the plan’s implementation, including securing a grant for over $1 million.

Clearly, Dr. Jakes’ impressive portfolio of contributions in economic development position her as very deserving of this prestigious award.

Learn More on the Bonnie Teater Award:
In honor of Bonnie Teater’s 30 years of service to SRDC, the Center recognizes expertise in community development work each year. In odd numbered years, early career rising stars are honored while in even years, lifetime achievement is recognized. For more information, visit www.srdc.msstate.edu/funding/bonnieteater

“We place high value on the teams of researchers and other individuals who have enacted positive change on the future of agriculture and science through their work. They, and dedicated NIFA employees, have made contributions to this agency and its mission that will have long-standing impacts on the work we do to help address our nation’s most pressing challenges.”

Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA Director
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Columbus Day
Central to SRDC’s mission is to build capacity within the Land Grant University system to address rural development issues. One way in which SRDC seeks to fulfill this mission is to host workshops and trainings on timely, relevant issues. Some of these events are highlighted below.

**ReadyCommunity**
- **6**
- **7**

ReadyCommunity provides a process to help guide the work of local communities in planning for a disaster.

**SET Multi-State Meetings**
- **10**
- **12**

Stronger Economies Together (SET) regional teams and coaches came together to learn from each other’s work, navigate paths through common challenges, and explore new opportunities.

**South Ag. Marketing Services Trainer Workshops**
- **12**
- **4**

Train the Trainer Workshop prepares Extension professionals to deliver grant writing workshops to local communities.

**SET Coaches’ Training**
- **8**
- **9**

SET Coaches’ Training prepared Extension and USDA Rural Development professionals to lead regions through the process.

**SERA 37: Latinos in the New South**
- **9**

Research and Extension professionals focused on reaching Latinos explored regional priorities and set the course for 2016.

**TIDE/ Horizons**
- **4**
- **6**

Extension and Research professionals from the West and South collaborated to identify common strategies toward advancing civic engagement efforts.

**Local & Regional Foods**
- **12**
- **3**

Extension and Research expertise from across the south convened to explore opportunities surrounding local foods and to strengthen this work through collaboration across states and disciplines.

**2015 Expenditures**
- **$1,101,281**
- **66.2%**
- **$338,110**
- **20.3%**
- **$222,965**
- **13.4%**

Central to SRDC’s mission is to build capacity within the Land Grant University system to address rural development issues. One way in which SRDC seeks to fulfill this mission is to host workshops and trainings on timely, relevant issues. Some of these events are highlighted below.

**ReadyCommunity**
- **6**
- **7**

ReadyCommunity provides a process to help guide the work of local communities in planning for a disaster.

**SET Multi-State Meetings**
- **10**
- **12**

Stronger Economies Together (SET) regional teams and coaches came together to learn from each other’s work, navigate paths through common challenges, and explore new opportunities.

**South Ag. Marketing Services Trainer Workshops**
- **12**
- **4**

Train the Trainer Workshop prepares Extension professionals to deliver grant writing workshops to local communities.

**SET Coaches’ Training**
- **8**
- **9**

SET Coaches’ Training prepared Extension and USDA Rural Development professionals to lead regions through the process.

**SERA 37: Latinos in the New South**
- **9**

Research and Extension professionals focused on reaching Latinos explored regional priorities and set the course for 2016.

**TIDE/ Horizons**
- **4**
- **6**

Extension and Research professionals from the West and South collaborated to identify common strategies toward advancing civic engagement efforts.

**Local & Regional Foods**
- **12**
- **3**

Extension and Research expertise from across the south convened to explore opportunities surrounding local foods and to strengthen this work through collaboration across states and disciplines.

**2015 Expenditures**
- **$1,101,281**
- **66.2%**
- **$338,110**
- **20.3%**
- **$222,965**
- **13.4%**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2015 SET Infographic

Persistently poor counties are counties that have 20% or more of their populations living in poverty over the past 30 years.

Of the 417 counties involved with SET, 103 are persistent poverty counties.

There are currently 353 persistently poor counties in the nation. Nearly 1 in 3 of all persistent poverty counties are engaged in SET.

What role did SET play in helping the region move forward?

“Enormous!”

“The SET process facilitated the region coming together around achievable, universally-accepted goals.”

“SET continues to play a role by bringing regions together to share achievements and challenges so that we can learn from other areas around the country who are facing similar problems.”

-SET Participant

$135,863,877

The amount SET Regions have already leveraged.

In the past three years SET created a 192% increase in number of partners participation in the program.

For every $1 invested in SET programming, regions are leveraging $38 in support of implementation.

31 out of 61 Regions are newly formed to participate in SET.

Learn More About SET:
For more information, visit www.srdc.msstate.edu/set
This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.