Rural prosperity has become a hot topic over the last year, and the United States Department of Agriculture has released a report from the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity that identified five “Calls to Action:" achieving e–connectivity for rural America, improving quality of life, supporting a rural workforce, harnessing technological innovation, and developing the rural economy. The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) has been actively involved in several projects, which are highlighted throughout this annual report, that relate directly to these five “Calls to Action.” Success is possible as we partner with the Land-Grant system which is built to harness and coordinate multiple and diverse research and outreach resources that address both federal and state priorities.

A recent addition to the Land-Grant community in the southern region is the College of the Muscogee Nation in Muscogee, Oklahoma. On a recent visit, I was impressed with the vision and skill of the President, Robert Bible. The College of the Muscogee Nation is the only 1994 Land-Grant Institution in the southern region. Oklahoma is the only state in the United States with an 1862 (Oklahoma State University), 1890 (Langston University), and 1994 (College of the Muscogee Nation) Land-Grant Institution.

I want to mention an initiative that Rachel Welborn, SRDC Associate Director, has spearheaded. In late 2016, Rachel was contacted by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy of the Association of Public Land Grant Universities to coordinate a project on civil discourse focused on racial reconciliation. This project, Coming Together for Racial Understanding, officially launched its first pilot in August 2018 with a train-the-trainer workshop in Washington, D.C. attended by over 70 persons from 20 states, who will expand the training in their states. Although this is a challenging topic and work space, the SRDC is proud to be seen as an organization capable of coordinating such efforts. Community relationships are crucial to community development and respecting diverse perspectives and populations are foundational to a healthy society.

As always, the SRDC thanks its Board of Directors, Technical Operation and Advisory Committee, and USDA’s National Institute for Food and Agriculture for their support and guidance. Additionally, an expanding group of strong partnerships with government, non-government, and non-profit organizations continue to nurture the SRDC’s ability to further the mission of our Land-Grant University partners. The SRDC, along with the other three Regional Rural Development Centers, appreciates what you do to strengthen rural communities in America. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve C. Turner
The Southern Rural Development Center seeks to strengthen the capacity of the region’s 30 Land-Grant Institutions to address critical contemporary rural development issues impacting the well-being of people and communities in the rural South.

Priorities:
- Develop Pathways to Resilient Communities
- Build Strategic Partnerships
- Mobilize Resources around Emerging Issues and Opportunities

To view all the Land-Grant institutions that we serve, please visit: srdc.msstate.edu/about/landgrant/

Mission

Contact Us

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Mississippi State, MS 39762
Phone: 662.325.3207 | Fax: 662.325.8777

Websites
Southern Rural Development Center | srdc.msstate.edu
Regional Rural Development Centers | rrdc.info

Graphic Design:
Katherine Spiering

Photos from:
shutterstock.com, istockphoto.com, unsplash.com
Agriculture and Rural Prosperity Priorities

In April 2017, the President established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity. The purpose and function of this Task Force has been to identify legislative, regulatory, and policy changes to promote agriculture, economic development, job growth, infrastructure improvements, technological innovation, energy security, and quality of life in rural America. With the voice of rural America leading the way, and in close collaboration with local, state, and tribal leaders, more than 21 federal agencies, offices, and executive departments identified over 100 actions the federal government should consider undertaking to achieve this vision. These recommendations were organized around five key indicators of rural prosperity. The SRDC is working on several projects and initiatives that align with these priorities.

**e-Connectivity**

The National Digital Education Extension Team initiative coordinated by SRDC, is working to facilitate connecting communities, promote digital literacy, develop partnerships, and conduct high priority research.

**Economic Development**

The Rural Opportunity Initiative seeks to connect investors and small businesses/entrepreneurs in rural America. SRDC co-hosted one of the pilot workshops with Mississippi State University in June 2018.

**Improving Quality of Life**

Coming Together for Racial Understanding, a pilot initiative led by SRDC in partnership with the Cooperative Extension Service and community partners, fosters dialogue around race and ethnicity issues in order to promote better understanding and equity.

**Harnessing Technological Innovation**

Through the Stronger Economies Together initiative led by the SRDC, the Western Oklahoma I-40 Region was able to reduce the risk of high moisture canola shattering by drying it in a peanut trailer, increasing revenue by approximately $72 per acre.

**Supporting a Rural Workforce**

CREATE BRIDGES, piloted by the SRDC in partnership with the University of Kentucky, Oklahoma State University, and the University of Arkansas, seeks to strengthen retail, accommodation, tourism, and entertainment economic sectors by developing training to support this workforce, often comprising 20-25% of jobs in rural economies, and designing strategies to strengthen these businesses.

To read the full Rural Prosperity report to the President, visit: https://bit.ly/2QOMP3C | To read how the RRDC’s are working with these priorities, visit: https://bit.ly/2MYnCBF
Southern Region Community Development Extension Impacts

- **Number of jobs created/retained**: 83,982
- **Number of new alliances or networks formed through some type of formal agreement or MOU**: 149
- **Number of businesses created, retained, or expanded**: 710
- **Number of participants who report new leadership roles & opportunities undertaken**: 6,999
- **Number of plans adopted and implemented in communities, agencies, local governments, or businesses**: 282
- **Full Time Equivalents Reporting Universities**: 12
- **Value of in-kind resources contributed by organizations or communities**: $7,488,075
- **Grants acquired by organizations or communities**: $77,864,366

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Southern Region Community Development Impact Headlines

Entrepreneurship

**Alabama A&M University**
A Madison County business workshop was conducted to bring together aspiring and local entrepreneurs.

**University of Kentucky**
The Enhancing the Creative Economy program helped to support local art businesses and contributed to increased sales.

**Mississippi State University**
Bricks-To-Clicks™ Extension program helps businesses with online marketing tools and has helped to increase sales.

To read the full stories, visit: https://bit.ly/2pq1oyU

Leadership Development

**North Carolina A&T State University**
The Community Voices program helps to develop youth community members and a shared leadership among groups.

**University of Kentucky**
The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing helped to demolish condemned units, and applied for tax credits to build a senior living development.

**University of Arkansas**
The Moving Forward Manila program uses the Extension process to target aviation, economic development, agriculture, downtown revitalization, and quality of life.

Building Capacity in Agriculture

**University of Tennessee**
Acquired USDA funding to support hops production, launched a dairy consumer perception survey, and started an Internet hotspot lending program.

**North Carolina State University**
The North Carolina Farmworker Health and Safety Project held training sessions, workshops, and events to build farmworker relationships.

**University of Florida**
UF-IFAS Extension Continuing Education units provided training so pesticide applicators/specialists could keep their licenses and earn higher wages.

**University of Georgia**
The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing helped to demolish condemned units, and applied for tax credits to build a senior living development.

**Prairie View A&M University**
Staff continues to aid Hurricane Harvey victims through supply donations, home repair, and resource application.

**Virginia State University & Virginia Tech University**
Virginia launched the PROSPER model for middle-schoolers and their families to prevent opioid and other substance misuse.

Quality of Life
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- **Saint Patrick’s Day** on 17 March
- **Daylight Savings Begins** on 10 March
Overview

In August 2018, teams from 20 states participated in the first cohort group of Coming Together for Racial Understanding. The purpose of the training is to build capacity within Cooperative Extension Service (CES) to help communities engage in civil dialogues around racial issues. The week-long training was designed to prepare participants to build capacity within their home states’ CES, working across the borders of the Land-Grant Universities. Work will then expand to communities ready for dialogues.

Building Capacity at Home

Following the train-the-trainer model, the process for expanding capacity is two-fold:

1. Build capacity within the CES system in the home state
2. Build capacity within at least one community

Participating States

Measuring Impacts

The 20 pilot teams will be working collaboratively to measure impacts from this initiative. Impacts will measure how the effort has built capacity both within CES as well as within the participating communities.

State Teams & Coaches

To learn more, visit: http://srdc.msstate.edu/civildialogue/index.html
### APRIL 2019

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- **April 14:** Public Issues Leadership Development Conference: Arlington, VA
- **April 15:** National Sustainability Summit & National Extension Energy Summit: Tampa, FL
- **April 19:** Good Friday
- **April 21:** Easter Sunday
In 2018, the Community Resource Development (CRD) specialists in the Southern Region continued their successful webinar series aimed at showcasing some of the best community development programs the region has to offer. The series will continue through 2019.

January

How Can I Be of Service? Determining the Best Role for Community Engagement
Dan Kahl, University of Kentucky

Creating a Sense of Community Through the 5 C’s of Social Capital and Cultural Competency
Mark Peterson, University of Arkansas

February

The Opioid Epidemic: Considering Extension’s Role and Virginia’s Multi-Faceted Approach
Crystal Tyler-Mackey, Virginia Tech University

March

Leadership Development: A Process of Un-doing Understanding
Eric Kaufman, Virginia Tech University

April

CPTED, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
Jamie Rae Walker, Texas A&M University

May

Increasing Stakeholder Involvement to Build Capacity and Promote Sustainability of Healthy Communities
Andrea Scarrow, University of Georgia

June

Financial Capability as Community Development
Becky Smith, Mississippi State University

July

October

Citizenship in Action: How Extension Can Engage and Educate Voters on Ballot Issues
Kristin Higgins, University of Arkansas

November

Does Extension Need Highly Visible Educational Programs beyond the Farm, Families and Youth?
Rodney Clouser, University of Florida

December

Community Engagement through Partnership
Bridget Ross, Prairie View A&M University

To view archives and explore the 2019 webinar slate, visit: http://srdc.msstate.edu/trainings/crdwebinars.html
## MAY 2019

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- **Mother’s Day**: 12 May
- **Memorial Day**: 27 May
National Digital Education Extension Team

Nationally, Cooperative Extension Service (CES) has played many roles in communities that are working to step into the technology age more solidly. From initial steps, through planning, and adoption and use, Extension can come alongside community members to aid the transition. A trusted local actor is critical not only to introduce the work, but also to coach the community as it transitions to joining the complex digital world.

**Current Initiatives & Team Leaders**

**Connecting Communities**
helping communities organize and think through options for increasing access

Stacey McCullough
University of Arkansas

Sreedhar Upendram
University of Tennessee

**Strengthening & Establishing Partnerships**
reaching out to partners on the federal, state, and local levels to strengthen our joint efforts to promote e-connectivity and usage in underserved areas.

Monica Babine
Washington State University

Kenny Sherin
South Dakota State University

**Promoting Digital Literacy**
aiding people, businesses, and governments in expanding their abilities to use broadband access once it is available

Roberto Gallardo
Purdue University

Terrence Wolfork
Fort Valley State University

**Research**
seek to identify and address the most pressing research questions around broadband adoption and use

Roberto Gallardo
Purdue University

Brian Whitacre
Oklahoma State University

**Continuum of Support**
- Community Planning & Collaboration
- Awareness of Relevance
- Access & Availability
- Adoption
- Utilization
- E-Connection Benefits
- Policy & Evaluation

To learn more, visit: [http://srdc.msstate.edu/NDEET/index.html](http://srdc.msstate.edu/NDEET/index.html)
JUNE 2019

National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals Conference: Asheville, NC

Father’s Day
Heirs’ Property

The USDA defines heirs’ property as land that has been passed down informally from generation to generation, in most cases, without a will. African American communities in the southern Black Belt have been particularly affected, although similar situations exist in the Mississippi Delta Region, in white communities in Appalachia, with Native Americans living on tribal lands, and in the Hispanic Colonias in South Texas. SRDC is partnering with CES and researchers in the South to explore opportunities for a regional capacity building response. The steps taken to better understand these important issues so far are illustrated below.

October 2017
- Heirs’ property issues added to the SRDC 2018 Plan of Work

December 2017
- Identified 40 individuals from 19 LGUs engaged in this issue

January 2018
- Hosted a webinar to hear current efforts of those identified

February 2018
- Launched a survey to identify research, materials, & partners

March 2018
- Created a listserv to foster sharing among LGU partners

June 2018
- Solidified key partnerships (listed below)

July 2018
- Recruited a steering committee

August 2018
- Submitted an AFRI Seed Grant Proposal

October 2018
- Launched a website of identified resources

December 2018
- Convened steering committee to shape next steps

Partners

Southern SARE
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

Southern Extension Risk Management Education

North Central Extension and Research Activity NCERA2172

To learn more, visit: http://srdc.msstate.edu/heir_property.html
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**Independence Day**

50th Annual Meeting of the Community Development Society: Columbia, MO
CREATE BRIDGES: Celebrating Retail, Accommodations, Tourism and Entertainment by Building Rural Innovations and Developing Growth Economies

Through funding from Walmart, CREATE BRIDGES is an initiative to strengthen retail, accommodations, tourism, and entertainment industries which often make up a large portion of the jobs and businesses that drive rural communities. CREATE BRIDGES was designed to raise awareness of the role these important businesses play in the local economy, determine challenges and barriers negatively impacting those businesses, and develop and implement strategies to strengthen these sectors.

Retail employment ranked 5th industry in rural America
Retail trade, arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services make up over 18% employment in rural America

Steps to be taken in pilot regions:
- Form Regional Steering Committees
- Conduct Asset Mapping
- Host Civic Forum
- Participate in Retail Academy
- Coordinate support for existing businesses
- Streamline existing skill training opportunities
- Implement new goals & strategies to create change

Pilot States
- University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service
- University of Kentucky
- Oklahoma State University

Partnership Leads
- Stacey McCullough, University of Arkansas
- Alison Davis, University of Kentucky
- Dave Shideler, Oklahoma State University

Funding for CREATE BRIDGES provided by: Walmart
To learn more, visit: http://srdc.msstate.edu/createbridges/index.html
Southern Region Program Leadership Network, Association of Extension Administrators & Association of Southern Region Extension Directors Joint Meeting: New Orleans, LA

Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting: Richmond, VA
Bonnie Teater Lifetime Achievement Award

Bonnie Teater is a special individual to friends of the Southern Rural Development Center. For 30 years, she provided valuable support and day-to-day assistance to the Center as a member of its staff. She served as an inspiration to all because of the dedication she brought to her work and her passion for the rural development research and Extension outreach mission of the region’s Land-Grant Universities. She currently is enjoying retirement in Kentucky.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is awarded on even number years and honors the superior lifetime work of an individual who has made an important contribution to the Extension community development area. Below is this year’s recipient.

Dr. Notie Lansford

Dr. Lansford is a Professor and Extension Economist in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University. Since 2006, Dr. Lansford has served as director of Oklahoma State University’s County Training Program, which provides training and technical assistance for county government elected officials and their employees. He also holds leadership roles with the Local Government Extension Training network and the Ag Bank Management Simulation program. As professor of the undergraduate rural appraisal course, Dr. Lansford has been instrumental in leading the department’s efforts to develop an appraisal minor at Oklahoma State University.

Dr. Lansford has generated over $3.8 million in funding to support local Extension programs, coordinated 44 short-courses, and given 32 presentations at professional conferences and meetings. He also has an extensive list of creative works and publications including the “County Government Financial Trends Report.” He also co-authored seven journal articles, reviewed one book, developed 14 manuals/handbooks, and authored/co-authored over 200 other publications.

Dr. Lansford has also been very active with the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP), serving in a variety of capacities including conference planning committee, session proposal reviewer, finance committee member and chair, and Treasurer from 2013-2016.

To learn more, visit: http://srdc.msstate.edu/funding/bonnieteater/

College of the Muscogee Nation
1994 Land-Grant Institution

The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) is Oklahoma’s premier tribal college. Founded in 2004, CMN is an open, public institution with four degree programs and two certificate programs designed to meet the unique needs of students seeking careers in both the tribal sector and global society.

The college is a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and was designated as a 1994 Land-Grant Institution in the 2014 Farm Bill. CMN was granted Initial Accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in November 2016.

Degrees
- Gaming
- Police Science
- Tribal Services
- Native American Studies

Certificates
- Mvskoke Language Studies
- Gaming

- Tribes represented at CMN: 7
- First generation college students: 40%
- Million awarded in Tribal Scholarships: $3.4

To learn more, visit: https://cmn.edu
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SERA 47: Local Foods Work Groups & Leaders

**Chair**
Iris Crosby  
University of Arkansas Pine Bluff

**Vice Chair**
Karen Vines  
Virginia Tech University

**Secretary**
Virginie Zoumenou  
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

**Create Learning Communities**
Leslie Hossfeld  
Clemson University

**Design a Resource Repository**
Jennifer Taylor  
Florida A&M University

Elizabeth Gregory North  
Mississippi State University

**Strengthen Impact Measuring**
Dara Bloom  
North Carolina State University

**Identify Successful Models, processes, collaborative leadership, networking frameworks, creative staffing, and organizational structures of participating universities.**
Joseph Donaldson  
North Carolina State University

**To learn more, visit:**  
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**Stronger Economies Together (SET)**

**7 YEARS OF SUCCESS**

SET engages multi-county regions in a process of identifying common regional economic priorities and implementing a plan.

SET is jointly led by coaching teams composed of Cooperative Extension Service and USDA Rural Development. SET built capacity for the cross-agency partnership through train-the-trainer workshops, monthly calls/webinars, and site visits.

**SET builds professional capacity with...**

- **102** USDA Rural Development professionals
- **195** Cooperative Extension Service professionals

**32 States Served by SET**

There are currently 353 persistently poor counties in the nation. 2 out of 5 of all persistent poverty counties are engaged in SET. SET reaches 42% Persistent poverty counties in the U.S.

**YEARS OF SUCCESS**

For every $1 invested in SET programming, regions have leveraged $200 to support implementation of regional plans.

Total dollar amount SET Regions have leveraged to date: **$799,329,361**

To learn more, visit: [http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/](http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/)
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The mission of the Southern Region Program Leadership Network (SR-PLN) is to foster and strengthen Extension education programming throughout the southern region by promoting multistate cooperation, anticipating emerging program issues and needs, and implementing action processes to address them in a timely manner.

In August 2018, 252 participants representing state program leaders from eight committees, the Association of Extension Administrators (AEA), and the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED) convened for joint regional planning and collaboration. The number of participants in each group are depicted below.

- AEA: 20
- ASRED: 17
- 4-H Youth Development: 34
- Agriculture and Natural Resources: 34
- Communications: 24
- Community Development: 20
- Family and Consumer Sciences: 30
- Information Technology: 14
- Middle Managers: 34
- Program and Staff Development: 25

To learn more, visit: http://srpln.msstate.edu/
# December 2019 Calendar

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- **Christmas Day**
- **New Year’s Eve**
2018 Board of Directors
Ntam Baharanyi
Tuskegee University | 1890 Extension
Rich Bonanno
North Carolina State University | 1862 Extension
Gary Jackson
Steve Martin | Alternate
Mississippi State University | 1862 Extension
Ed Jones, Chair
Virginia Tech University | 1862 Extension

George Hopper
Reuben Moore | Alternate
Mississippi State University | 1862 Research

Lesley Oliver
University of Kentucky | 1862 Research

Christopher Ray
Clemson University | 1862 Research

Fisseha Tegegne
Tennessee State University | 1890 Research

Wesley Whittaker
Langston University | 1890 Research

John Green, Chair Elect
University of Mississippi | Non Land-Grant

Deborah Markley
Center for Rural Entrepreneurship | Non Land-Grant

Brent Elrod
USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture | Liaison

John Pender
USDA-Economic Research Service | Liaison

2018 Technical Operational & Advisory Committee

Eric Bendfeldt
Virginia Tech University | 1862 Extension

Susan Jakes, Chair Elect
North Carolina State University | 1862 Extension

Joy Moten-Thomas
Fort Valley State University | 1890 Extension

Anthony Reed
Alcorn State University | 1890 Extension

Fatemeh Malekian, Chair
Southern University AgCenter | 1890 Research

Subramania Sritharan
Central State University | 1890 Research

Sherry Larkin
University of Florida | 1862 Research

Mike Woods
Oklahoma State University | 1862 Research

Kyle Woosnam
University of Georgia | 1862 Research

Robert Zabawa
Tuskegee University | 1890 Research

Carolyne Abdullah
Everyday Democracy | Non Land-Grant

Savonala Horne
Land Loss Prevention Project | Non Land-Grant

Josh Shumaker
Council of State Community Development Agencies | Non Land-Grant

John Green, Board Advisor
University of Mississippi | Non Land-Grant

SRDC Partners
Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA
Association of Extension Administrators
Association of Southern Region Extension Directors
Community Development Society
Economic Research Service, USDA
Everyday Democracy
Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
Georgetown University
HiredNAg Project
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Joint Council of Extension Professionals
Kettering Foundation

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems
National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals
National Association of Counties
National Association of Development Organizations
National eXtension Initiative
National Institute of Civil Discourse
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
National Urban Extension Leaders
North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

Office of Partnership and Public Engagement, USDA
Purdue Center for Regional Development
Rural Sociological Society
Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center, University of Kentucky
Rural Development, USDA
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
Southern Extension Risk Management Education
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Agency
W. K. Kellogg Foundation
Western Rural Development Center

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.