1991 Annual Progress Report

SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Box 5446 • Mississippi State University • Mississippi State, MS 39762
Staff

Current staff members of the regional center include the following:

H. Doss Brodnax, Director
Jerome L. Burton, Associate Director
Jacqueline F. Tisdale, Writer/Editor
Bonnie Teater, Assistant to the Director
Sandra Payne, Administrative Secretary
David Miles, Printer (Part-time)
AN OVERVIEW

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) is one of four regional rural development Centers in the nation. The Centers conduct integrated programs of research and extension to improve the social and economic well-being of nonmetropolitan communities in the respective regions. While located on the campus of Mississippi State University (MSU), SRDC is jointly sponsored by Alcorn State University and MSU. Other centers are located at Iowa State University, Oregon State University and Pennsylvania State University.

SRDC supports the individual state efforts of the 29 land-grant institutions in 13 Southern states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The Center supports a network of scientists and extension staff from a variety of disciplines across the region who identify relevant research and educational issues and develop strategies for addressing them.

Funding for the center is through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Extension Service and Cooperative State Research Service.

Established in 1974, the Center provides a base for coordinating the academic leadership of rural development faculties from the land-grant institutions in the South. More specifically the Center’s responsibilities include:

- Establishing a public/private resource network by linking and involving research and extension faculty with priority rural development issues in the region.
- Anticipating and establishing regional research and extension priorities for the region.
- Providing competitive grants for applied research and extension project seed monies. Often seed monies are sufficient to complete research and extension projects. However, some projects have become regional research projects or have expanded with funds from foundations or other organizations.
- Establishing task forces on regional issues whose discussions result in the production and dissemination of information about these issues. Conferences are held, and publications are produced and distributed.
- Facilitating interaction between research and extension personnel.
- Publishing and disseminating research findings and extension information.
- Providing visiting faculty opportunities, publications, conferences, interest networks, research projects and program development assistance to encourage professional development of land-grant university and field-based research and extension faculties.

THE ORGANIZATION

Regional participation is a critical factor in the success of the Southern Rural Development Center. The organizational structure is designed to foster active involvement of the states in program determination.
Board of Directors. A board of directors composed of administrators from the region’s 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions and the private sector establishes policies and programming emphases. The nine-member board includes three 1862 extension representatives, one 1890 extension representative, three 1862 research representatives, one 1890 research representative and one representative of the region’s private sector. Ex-officio representatives from Extension Service-USDA, Cooperative State Research Service-USDA, and Farm Foundation serve as advisors.

The 1990-1991 board chair is Charles Laughlin, and Lawrence Carter is vice chair. Members serve a three-year term. The 1990-1991 board includes the following members:

Extension representatives
Lawrence Carter
Florida A&M University

James F. Johnson
Virginia Tech

Hiram D. Palmertree
Mississippi State University

Walter J. Walla
University of Kentucky

Research representatives
Leon G. Chavous
South Carolina State College

Verner G. Hurt
Mississippi State University

Charles Laughlin
University of Georgia

Jacqueline Voss
University of North Carolina-Greensboro

Private sector representative
James M. Bouler
Vanity Fair, Monroeville, Alabama

Advisors
John Vance
Extension Service-USDA

Richard G. Stuby
Cooperative State Research Service-USDA

Patrick J. Sullivan
Economic Research Service-USDA

R. J. Hildreth
Farm Foundation

Program Advisory Committees. An Institutional Rural Development Program Advisory Committee functions at the land-grant campus level to identify current and future program needs in individual states. Their input to the Southern Regional Rural Development Program Advisory Committee (SRRDPAC) aids in identifying regional needs and in turn strategy for meeting these needs. Specific functions of the SRRDPAC include the following:

- Review and advise on current and planned program activities,
- Review, evaluate and recommend priorities for research or extension,
- Advise on policy matters,
Advise on determining resource needs for the Center to support programming efforts and to determine future directions,

Assist in the evaluation of program effectiveness of the Center in accomplishing its approved program of work, and

Assist in the coordination functions between the various institutions and the extension, research and resident instruction program efforts.

**Program Emphasis Areas.** Present program emphasis topics for Center activities as recommended by the program advisory process and approved by the board of directors include the following:

- Economic development (e.g., small business, tourism, cost/benefit, value added, technology development)
- Human capital/education
- Rural and community development
- Environment/natural resources
- Rural health issues
- Small scale/alternative agriculture
- Rural development theory and policy
- Infrastructure

**Clientele.** The Center's primary clientele are the research and extension staff in all program areas who have rural development responsibilities and interests in their respective states or territories. SRDC fosters effective alliances and joint projects with external collaborators such as the Southern Legislative Conference, Southern Growth Policies Board, Farm Foundation and Tennessee Valley Authority. The Center maintains close contact with regional extension and research committees. SRDC staff serve as ex-officio members of several research and extension committees and provide support services for many of their activities.

**EXTENSION AND RESEARCH PROJECTS**

SRDC provides funds and support services to teams of researchers and educators who are working with rural issues and communities in the region. Through its involvement in activities that address critical issues, the Center encourages regional cooperation in conducting multidisciplinary research and extension programs. The Center provides seed money for a limited number of projects. Emphasis is placed on specific issues identified through the advisory process. Work is in varying stages of completion on the following projects:

**Extension of SRDC Task Force on Alternatives to Financing Infrastructure in Rural Communities in the South, task force members.**

**Extension of SRDC Task Force on Strategies for Job Retention and Creation in Rural Communities in the South, task force members.**

**Task Force on Rural Health Services, task force members.**
Improving Rural Tourism Extension and Research in the South: A Task Force to Inventory and Assess Current Programs, Richard Perdue/Larry Gutske/Thomas Wells, North Carolina State University.

Participation of Rural Households in Small Business Employment and Income, David Kraybill, University of Georgia.

Rural Economic Development for Community Self Reliance, James Edwards, Florida A&M; Ron Williams, Alabama A&M University.

Status of Education in the Rural South, David Mulkey, University of Florida.


Effects of Manufacturing Industry on Education in Depressed Rural Areas: A Pilot Study, Eldon Smith/Alan DeYoung, University of Kentucky; Tom Johnson, Virginia Tech.

Community Leadership and Affordable Housing in Rural Communities, Julia Beamish/Savannah S. Day/Rosemary C. Goss, Virginia Tech; Gwendolyn J. Brewer/Margaret J. Weber, Oklahoma State University; Jacquelyn W. McCray, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff; Ben R. Shelton, North Carolina A&T State University; Anne Sweaney, University of Georgia.

Guidebook for Evaluation of Solid Waste Collection, Joseph F. Schmidt, Mississippi State University; Gerald A. Doeksen, Oklahoma State University.

Economic Impact of Attracting Retirees on Ozark Mountain Communities, Wayne Miller/Donald Voth, University of Arkansas; Mike Woods, Oklahoma State University; Lonnie Jones, Texas A&M University.

Marketing Channels and Margins for Slaughter Goats of Southern Origin, Frank Pinkerton/Nelson Escobar, Langston University; Lynn Harwell, Clemson University.

Senior Series: Extension Programs for Older Adults, Southern Rural Development Center staff.

Two projects were recommended by the board and await funding approval from CSRS:


Institutional Structure Influences on Progress in Water Quality Management Across Southern States, Patricia E. Norris, Oklahoma State University; Leon Danielson, North Carolina State University; Roy Carriker, University of Florida.
The following projects have been completed within the past year. Outcomes of the projects are noted. Request full copies of final project reports from the director.

Initiation of Strategic Planning for the Southern Region Family Community Leadership Program (FCL), Lynn White, Texas A&M University.

Outcomes: A regional workshop was held in San Antonio, Texas. The state FCL coordinators and volunteers from the Southern states attended. A multi-issue simulation was used for training in public policy work. Diskettes and printed materials plus instructions and documentation were provided for the individual state representatives’ use in their respective states. An introductory course in strategic planning provided attendees with the basic skills and tools for leading state FCL boards through the process. Forty-nine volunteers and coordinators received the training.

Potential for and Impacts of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Nonmetro Southeast, David Barkley, University of Georgia; Kevin McNamara, Purdue University.

Outcomes: Findings include: rural communities in the South have had some success in attracting foreign manufacturers; foreign-owned manufacturers are a viable source of employment; foreign firms do not differ greatly from domestic branch plants in terms of labor force characteristics, local market linkages, locational determinants and value of government programs. The findings indicate no new state or local programs are necessary to enhance rural communities’ abilities to attract foreign investment; programs specifically targeted at FDI are unwarranted yet additional job training efforts may be beneficial. Otherwise rural communities interested in attracting FDI should continue to assess their attractiveness to both foreign and domestic manufacturers and undertake investments necessary to improve their comparative advantage. The final report is available as SRDC No. 152.


Outcomes: Educational materials were developed to provide small scale farm operators with the process and procedures for evaluating alternative enterprises and to help small scale farmers develop and interpret a family resource inventory. Two workbooks were developed entitled Assessing the Farm/Family Resource Base and Analyzing the Feasibility of Agricultural Enterprises. Video tapes were developed to accompany the workbooks. Camera-ready copies of the workbooks and masters for the accompanying video tapes were distributed to extension administrators. Each state was asked to reproduce and distribute copies to those professionals working with small scale farmers. The system of information provided by this material allows the farm family to compare enterprise requirements with resource availability. The video tapes are available for check out from the SRDC library. Individual copies of the publication are available from SRDC as Nos. 143 and 144.

Extension Tools for Planning Rural Community Infrastructure, Gerald Doeksen/Mike Woods, Oklahoma State University.

Outcomes: A guidebook was developed to help community development practitioners meet some of the challenges of capital improvement planning. The Planning Guide for Infrastructure Development
condenses current budget and planning research into an easy-to-use format, with an illustrative case study. One section presents a brief review of the literature concerning various studies that attempt to link investments in infrastructure to economic development. A second section presents an overview of comprehensive strategic capital improvement planning. The last two sections are the focus of the guidebook and examine the principles of budgeting and benefit-cost analysis in evaluating alternative infrastructure projects, along with an applied hypothetical case study that illustrates each method. The publication is available as SRDC No. 151.

Helping Black Adults Age 35-55 and Youth Age 16-19 Develop Personal Skills to Upgrade Employability, Dorthy Taylor/Lynn White, Texas A&M University; Irene Lee, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

Outcomes: This project was conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service in cooperation with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. A training manual, thirteen publications and four video vignettes were developed and tested with unemployed and underemployed older teens and middle-aged black adults in East Texas and Western Arkansas. The project publications are written on a third-to-fifth grade reading level; seven address job skills related to getting a job, four identify skills needed to keep a job and two deal with career development. A training manual for instructors was developed for each major concept in the 13 publications. Overheads and handouts were produced for lessons. The materials are applicable to other states in the region. The final report of the project is available from SRDC as No. 145.

A Public Domain Microcomputer Property Tax Appraisal System for Rural County Governments, Steve Burnette/Gregg Reese, University of Georgia; Wallace Killcreas, Mississippi State University.

Outcomes: A public domain microcomputer tax appraisal program was developed for county tax assessors and appraisers. The Georgia Appraisal Program (GAP) and the Mississippi Appraisal Program (MAP), fully incorporated into those states, will offer substantial savings to local governments. GAP and MAP save money because the programs offer counties an inexpensive easy-to-use method for appraising land and buildings. The appraisals are very detailed and highly accurate. Estimated savings already gained in Georgia amount to $1.68 million in initial hardware installation savings, plus an additional $126,000 per year in terms of maintenance savings. Georgia counties have a potential savings of $1.2 million in hardware and $94,500 in software maintenance savings per year. MAP has a potential for saving Mississippi taxpayers $1.1 million dollars in initial hardware costs, plus $165,000 in yearly maintenance costs. The final report is available from SRDC. Order report No. 139.

Inventory of Non-Traditional Agricultural Commodity Activities in the Southern Region.

Outcomes: Individuals working on alternative or non-traditional agricultural commodities in the region were identified through a regional survey conducted by SRDC staff. A directory of those persons and enterprises was published and distributed. The inventory is available as SRDC No. 138.
CONFERENCES

The Center promotes increased extension and research communication, dialogue and joint activities to expand the ability of intermediary institutions to help rural communities address their own problems. Because of the focus on regional or multistate approaches to local development, the Center brings together groups from various disciplines in both extension and research to cooperate in solving problems common among the states. Through regional meetings, conferences and networks developed from these associations, regional sharing is improved. This year the Center played major roles in planning, developing, publicizing and implementing the following meetings:

Southern Region FCL Public Policy and Strategic Planning. As a result of an SRCD funded project and with the facilitation and sponsorship of SRDC, a regional workshop was held in San Antonio, Texas. The state FCL coordinators and volunteers from the Southern states attended. A multi-issue simulation was used for training in public policy work. Diskettes and printed materials plus instructions and documentation were provided for the individual state representatives’ use in their respective states. An introductory course in strategic planning provided attendees with the basic skills and tools for leading state FCL boards through the process. Forty-nine volunteers and coordinators received the training.

Economic Development and the Food System in the U.S. Caribbean. The Southern Rural Development Center, Farm Foundation, Caribbean Food Crop Society and the University of the Virgin Islands co-sponsored this meeting. Fifty research and extension professionals from the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Down-Islands met to discuss interdisciplinary research/extension programs which would offer realistic alternatives for addressing microstate development issues and needs. Issues centered around the topics of economic development, leadership and human capital, alternative enterprises and LISA for microstate agriculture, natural resources and infrastructure and strategic planning for development in the U.S. Caribbean. A proceedings was published by SRDC containing ten papers and recommendations from the participants. The report is available as SRDC No. 147.

Agriculture—USDA—Land-grant System—Public: A New Social Contract in a Changing World of Political, Social, Economic and Environmental Influence. More than 100 USDA and state extension professional from all levels of the Extension System participated in this professional development workshop. All extension functions from both 1890 and 1862 institutions were represented. Initial sessions took a broad look at the system’s history, issues confronting the system, and some major social and economic trends that will have a major impact on extension. Extensive discussion focused on sharing “what works and what doesn’t work experiences” in the Managing for the Future session. The concluding session addressed follow-up needed: recommendations to ECOP and ES-USDA. Participants recommended 12 general topics with more specific items listed under the headings. In descending order of importance the topics were: encourage and reward cooperation, marketing extension, programs for agricultural producers, public policy education, increase productivity, cultural diversity, national study, focus on issues, emphasize education, program changes, staffing, and communications.

Implementing an Extension Initiative—Solid Waste Management. A Southern region extension waste management task force, appointed by the Southern Extension Directors, planned this meeting.
SRDC was the facilitator and coordinated the conference. The primary audience was extension staff with states encouraged to bring interdisciplinary teams. The meeting encouraged the implementation of interdisciplinary programs at the state, regional and county levels. Successful county and state extension programs were highlighted throughout the sessions. A notebook was printed by SRDC containing abstracts of presentations, directories of extension resources and of extension expertise available in the Southern region, and 13 factsheets. The factsheets were written or adapted by the task force members for use within the region. Camera-ready factsheets were distributed to the extension waste management state contacts for reprinting within the states.

**Joint Southern Region Program Committee Meeting.** The second joint meeting of Southern extension program leaders of agriculture and natural resources, community development, 4-H youth development, home economics, program and staff development, communications and middle management was coordinated, facilitated and supported by SRDC. The expressed objectives were to increase communication and planning among program leaders, develop a common understanding of the program planning environment in the South, improve extension programs through the sharing of ideas and resources and the planning of regional actions, regionalize national issues, and to identify new issues of importance to the South. Joint sessions were interspersed with individual committee meetings. Roundtable discussions addressed the value of specific topics to building an extension agenda for the South. An agenda was written and will be distributed throughout the region by the Center in the published proceedings.

**TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES**

SRDC frequently supports regional research and extension activity through task forces formed to address specific topics identified by the program advisory committee and the board of directors. During the past three years outcomes from the activities of these regional, interdisciplinary groups have been extensive: five conferences, four publications, an enterprise directory, a compilation of case studies, several informal networks and two regional research groups are some of the results already realized from the task force concept. Three task forces are still in existence.

**Alternatives for Financing Infrastructure Development in Rural Communities in the South.** As a result of a task force proposal, the Southern Experiment Station Directors approved the Southern Research Information Exchange Group-53 (SRIEG-53). Proceedings of the initial symposium of the group was published as SRDC No. 146, *Rural Infrastructure and Economic Development Issues: Information Systems, Transportation and Education*.

Task force members Tom Johnson, Virginia Tech, and Gerald Doeksen, Oklahoma State University, conducted a training session for local government officials at the Government Finance Officers Association meeting in Denver, Colorado. As a result, forty requests were received for task force publications, *Case Studies: Examples of Innovative Infrastructure Financing and Delivery Systems and Community Strategies for Tomorrow’s Local Infrastructure*. 
Strategies for Job Creation and Retention in Rural Communities in the South. A survey was conducted to identify videos available in the region dealing with rural economic development. A summary catalog of those tapes including sources was published as SRDC No. 150, *Results of a Nationwide Survey of Video Technology Used in Rural Economic Development*.

A conference entitled 21st Century Survival of Rural America is scheduled for October 16-18, 1991. The meeting’s sponsors include the Southern Rural Development Center and this task force with the Southern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments, Farm Foundation and the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. Land-grant personnel will attend and complete a needs assessment as a part of the program. A congressional hearing is scheduled at the conclusion of the conference with the U.S. Senate Agricultural Subcommittee on Rural Development and Electrification and its chair, Senator Howell Heflin.

Task Force on Rural Health Services. SRDC sponsored task force members Richard Reinheimer, University of Georgia, and Margaret Moore, Louisiana State University, to attend the National Rural Health Association meeting. During the conference they convened a gathering of the association’s Southern members in an effort to foster cooperation and gain regional support for the activities of the task force. A publication was written by selected members and is in press containing five papers: Emergency Medical Services, Nurse Recruitment and Retention, Physician Recruitment and Retention, Restructuring Rural Hospitals and Extension’s Role in Rural Health.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Newsletter. A regional newsletter has been published since 1980. *Capsules* is distributed to more than 2,400 persons working in rural development or related fields, such as rural sociology, education and economics. *Capsules* is published 10-12 times a year. The newsletter is designed to distribute information pertinent to the interests of rural development practitioners in the Southern region. Activities of the Center, reports of Center funded projects, new literature citations and scheduled events are regularly included. A survey of readers was conducted this year to assess effectiveness and to evaluate the newsletter. The results were positive toward continuation in the current format.

Library. A library of rural development materials is maintained at the Center. Books, periodicals, educational materials and slide sets are available for use and check-out. All historical Center documents are maintained and available for photocopying if the original supply is exhausted. The library provides a focused resource for extension and research personnel as an expansion of the Center’s efforts in information sharing and dissemination.

Conference Materials. Conference materials, including preconference brochures, name tags, banquet tickets, registration folders, press kits, programs and proceedings are prepared and printed in-house. The frequent use of workshops and conferences as an integral part of the Centers information sharing makes this an important service to the Southern region.

Publications. A priority of the Center is information dissemination. In keeping with this priority, there is an ongoing publication effort. The Center has in-house printing capability with the services
of a printer half-time. This facilitates publishing a wide variety of materials with a minimum of expenditure. Center publications are generated by research and extension projects, task forces, seminars, conferences and workshops. Special timely publications are also printed in-house such as joint publications of the four Centers. SRDC publications printed and distributed by Center staff since October 1, 1990, include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title and publication date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>1990 Annual Progress Report, October 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Perspectives on Renewable Natural Resource Issues, SNREC proceedings, November 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>Inventory of Non-Traditional Agricultural Commodity Activities in the Southern Region, November 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>Microcomputer Aided Tax Appraisal for Local Governments, Experiences in Mississippi and Georgia, December 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Joint Southern Regional Program Committee Meeting Proceedings, December 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>Setting the Pace in a Time of Change, Proceedings of an 1890 Cooperative Extension Conference, December 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Role of Education in Rural Community Development, Proceedings of a Regional Conference, January 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>The Family Farm-Planning for Success, Part One: Assessing the Farm/Family Resource Base, June 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>The Family Farm-Planning for Success, Part Two: Analyzing the Feasibility of Agricultural Enterprises, June 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>Minority Job Skills, April 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Economic Development and the Food System in the U.S. Caribbean, June 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>International Trade Leaflets, Nos. 1-17, August 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>Beneficiaries of Information Technologies: The Case of Agriculture and Local Governments, July 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Results of a Nationwide Survey of Video Technology Used in Rural Economic Development, September 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>Planning Guide for Infrastructure, September 1991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STAFF ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT OF EXTRAMURAL ACTIVITIES**

To extend the work of SRDC and to strengthen the network of rural development, the Center supports a variety of activities of extension and research professionals. To foster collaborative working relationships, facilitate regional activities and to network with external groups, SRCD staff members participate in and support sponsored meetings, professional organizations, regional and national committees and state, local and national rural development activities. They take an active part in identifying program participants, coordinating meeting arrangements, identifying funding sources and developing programs. Staff activities and support of other activities include the following:

- Participated in Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS), facilitated presession for Professionals Working in Small Scale Agriculture;
Served as advisory member of Southern Natural Resource Economic Committee (SNREC) and printed one proceedings;
Served as advisory member of National Rural Studies Committee;
Provided financial support to the symposia entitled *Alternative Perspectives on Development Prospects for Rural Areas* at the American Agricultural Economics Association;
Became charter member of Association of Leadership Educators and printed one proceedings;
Participated in program of Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC);
Presented reports for Southern Extension Directors’ meetings;
Presented reports for Southern Experiment Station Director’s meetings;
Printed the *Journal of Southern Rural Sociology*;
Provided a grant to the Southeastern Council on Family Relations for speaker support at a conference, "Building Positive Family Relationships;"
Provided a grant to the Quinstate Economic Development Conference, "Leadership: Key to Economic Development in the 21st Century;"
Displayed the Center’s materials at "Revitalizing Rural America Conference: New Strategies for the Nineties;"
Provided a travel grant for speakers for the National Management Workshop for Agricultural Economics Department Chairs;
Participated on program of U.S. Forest Service workshop: Enhance Forest-Based Economies in Rural America;
Supported a Southern representative to attend a national workshop to consider adoption of the Farmstead Assessment System as a national project;
Provided financial support to the Fourth North American Symposium on Society and Resource Management;
Provided financial support for the development of the USDA *Strategy Guides for Managing Critical Rural Issues*;
Printed program materials for International Trade Conference;
Participated on program of the Oklahoma—Texas Community Resource Development leaders workshop;
Represented Southern region at National Rural Development Workshop of the U.S. Forest Service;
Provided financial support to the Heartland Conference;
Attended meetings of the Southern pilot states, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas, Rural Development Initiative;
Participated in national meeting of President’s Rural Development Initiative;
Participated in pilot presentation of Senior Series at University of Kentucky;
Served on Southern Extension Policy Action Committee (SEPAC) and attended annual meeting;
Served on policy board of the Kellogg Leadership Development Seminar, a multistate leadership development program;
Participated in ECOP and ES-USDA sponsored National Diversity Strategic Planning Conference.
A joint research/extension review of regional rural development centers and special projects relating to rural development was held in mid-July 1991 in Washington, D.C. The justification statement in the review guidelines stated, (The regional rural development centers) "...carry the mantle of leadership and a significant amount of the programmatic efforts in research and extension...therefore, it is an appropriate time to ascertain future directions of these centers or projects in relation to future research and extension initiatives relating to rural economies, rural communities and rural people." This was the first comprehensive review since the centers were established in the early 70s.

In advance of the review, the staff prepared a briefing book for review panel members stating the Center's mission, structure, accomplishments and future plans. Several research and extension directors and many staff members throughout the region had input to that report. At the review, making presentations for SRDC were: Doss Brodnax, director; Charles Laughlin, chair, board of directors; Fred Harrison, chair, program advisory committee; and Tom Johnson, Virginia Tech, representing clientele having worked with the Center.

The following is a synopsis of recommendations given in the final report:

- USDA should forcefully seek additional funding for the Centers.
- The Centers should not be overburdened with complex administrative requirements for recipients of their grants.
- Each Center must undertake rigorous strategic planning to focus their resources on a few areas of critical importance.
- Strategic planning should be designed and conducted on a decentralized, regional basis.
- The Centers should creatively explore substantive topics related to rural development toward which they may want to specialize as the Centers choose a more cohesive focus.
- The Centers should organize and facilitate the active involvement of the many communities and constituencies they directly serve.
- The diversity that exists in these communities should also be reflected in each Center’s Board of Directors.
- The broader set of constituencies referred to above should be actively involved in establishing the strategic directions of the Centers.
- USDA should provide aggressive leadership in coordination across agencies on rural development issues.
- Continued integrative efforts across research and extension are needed. The Centers, USDA and the universities need to work together to expand the funding resources available to the Regional Rural Development Centers.
- To accomplish priority programs, the Centers may need to include a broader university base of scientific research from colleges of business, education, medicine, and humanities as the need and priority requires.
- USDA should establish a regular review pattern with the Centers along the lines of departmental CSRS reviews.
- Benefits derived by institutions, organizations, user groups, and society at large should be systematically identified and measured in order to enhance our understanding of the Centers’ true value to society.
SOUTHERN REGION

States and institutions served by the Southern Rural Development Center include:

Alabama
- Alabama A&M University
- Auburn University
- Tuskegee University

Arkansas
- University of Arkansas
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Florida
- Florida A&M University
- University of Florida

Georgia
- Fort Valley State College
- University of Georgia

Kentucky
- Kentucky State University
- University of Kentucky

Louisiana
- Louisiana State University
- Southern University

Mississippi
- Alcorn State University
- Mississippi State University

North Carolina
- North Carolina State University
- North Carolina A&T State University

Oklahoma
- Langston University
- Oklahoma State University

Puerto Rico
- University of Puerto Rico

South Carolina
- Clemson University
- South Carolina State College

Tennessee
- Tennessee State University
- University of Tennessee

Texas
- Prairie View A&M University
- Texas A&M University

Virgin Islands
- University of the Virgin Islands

Virginia
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- Virginia State University

The major function of the 1991 Annual Progress Report is to disseminate information about the activities of the Center during the previous fiscal year. By design, the report is general in nature. For specific information about any of the activities, contact the Center.

Jacqueline F. Tisdale, Writer/Editor
Sandy Payne, Editorial Assistant

H. Doss Brodhus, director and Bonnie P. Teater, assistant to the director, provided review and input to this report. David Miles was the printer. October 1991.
The SRDC is one of four regional rural development centers in the nation. It coordinates cooperation between the Research (Experiment Station) and Extension (Cooperative Extension Service) staffs at land-grant institutions in the South to provide technical consultation, research, training, and evaluation services for rural development. This publication is one of several published by the Center on various needs, program thrusts, and research efforts in rural development. For more information about SRDC activities and publications, write to the Director.

Southern Rural Development Center
Box 5446
Mississippi State, MS 39762

The Southern Rural Development Center is an Equal Opportunity Organization providing research, educational information, and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or Vietnam era veteran status. SRDC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.