## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>A Letter from the Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Report Offers Insights on Boosting Emergency Preparedness Among Disadvantaged Populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>New RIDGE Center for Targeted Studies @ the SRDC Established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>STRONGER ECONOMIES TOGETHER BUILDS REGIONAL CAPACITY IN RURAL AREAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Foundations of Practice Expands Partners, Plans Future Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>SERA-37 Develops Regional Domestic Immersion Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Updated C.A.R.E. Provides Quality Curriculum in an Appealing Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cashing Update Provides Valuable Information to Guide Home and Micro-Based Businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>COMMUNITY DATA CENTER PROVIDES A “GO-TO PLACE” FOR COUNTY DATA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>SRDC Partners with Three 1890s Universities to Deliver the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&amp;E) Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Delta Regional Initiatives Address Needs of Low-Wealth Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>SRDC Brings Home Two National Awards from NACDEP 2010 Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>New Resources Added to the eXtension Entrepreneurs and Their Communities Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>SRDC Researcher Partners with Major Source of Rural News</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Expanding Our Reach: Four Program Updates from the National E-Commerce Extension Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Update</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>EXPANDING OUR REACH: FOUR PROGRAM UPDATES FROM THE NATIONAL E-COMMERCE EXTENSION INITIATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>SRDC CONTRIBUTES TO THE EDUCATIONAL BACKBONE FOR STATES’ BTOP GRANTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>REGIONAL E-COMMERCE EXTENSION TEAMS CREATED ACROSS THE U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>NEW E-COMMERCE EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS RELEASED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>MINI-GRA NTS PROGRAM REACHES OVER 350 WITH ‘ON THE GROUND’ DELIVERY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Partnerships Strengthened at the Southern Regional Rural Convening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>SRDC and MSU ES Team Up to Secure Major Federal Broadband Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Sustainable Communities Innovation Grant (SCIG) Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>TURNING THE TIDE ON POVERTY SUPPORTS CITIZEN-LED EFFORTS IN FIVE STATES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28     Williams and Dooley Receive Bonnie Teater Achievement Award

28     SRDC Newsletters and Online Activities Attract Many Visitors

29     SRDC Continues Coordination and Support of Regional Leadership Associations
There is little doubt that the positive work of the Southern Rural Development Center could not be possible without the active engagement of a number of people and organizations. Certainly, the investment and involvement of our federal partner — USDA NIFA — and our land-grant university administrators, faculty and staff across the South constitute key contributors to the work of the Center in the region. So too does the ongoing guidance and insights provided by our Board of Directors and Technical and Operational Advisory Committee. You can add to the list the very talented and highly productive individuals that the Center has been privileged to have serving on its staff. No doubt, these factors continue to help the SRDC mold programs and activities that align with the priority needs and opportunities of people and places in the South.

Our 2010 Annual Report highlights a variety of programs and activities that have been realized as a result of the continued engagement of these important partners. At the same time, our report showcases a number of new relationships that have been established over the past year or so, partnerships that have helped us pursue “new approaches” to our community and economic development work in the region and nation. For example:

- A new partnership with USDA Rural Development has helped launch the Stronger Economies Together (SET) project, a program that advances the capacity of communities and counties to work jointly in the creation and implementation of economic development strategies that build on the region’s comparative economic strengths.

- The Farm Foundation, the Kettering Foundation and Everyday Democracy have joined with the SRDC in development and implementing the Turning the Tide on Poverty initiative, a program that elevates the engagement of a wide array of citizens in tackling the tough and challenging issues associated with poverty in their communities.

- The Economic Research Service/USDA has partnered with the Center to create the RIDGE Center for Targeted Studies @ the SRDC. The new RIDGE Center is investing in innovative research that addresses the food and nutrition assistance challenges facing rural areas and populations and in the U.S.

Without question, this report serves as a testimony of the valuable programs and activities that can be realized when people, universities, agencies, foundations, and communities work together to make good things happen in the rural South.

Sincerely,

Bo Beaulieu
Not everyone has the resources to prepare for and recover from disasters. Factors such as medical challenges, limited financial resources, language barriers, and limited access to transportation impact a disaster's effect.

To gain clarity on how best to provide vulnerable households and communities with needed knowledge, tools and capacity for disaster response, the SRDC, in partnership with land-grant university Extension educators in five key states, MDC, Inc., and FEMA, conducted community-based field assessments in 2009 to explore disaster awareness and preparedness among 10 strategically selected communities in Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

The resulting two reports, an executive summary and a full report, evaluate how well FEMA's Emergency Preparedness Demonstration (EPD) Project (developed by MDC, Inc. in partnership with the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill) successfully prepare communities to address the needs of local vulnerable audiences during times of disasters. The documents offer a brief synthesis of social science-based research previously completed on disasters, outline the step-by-step features of the EPD process, showcase the input gathered from roundtables, and conclude with suggestions on how to advance the capacity of disadvantaged people and communities to prepare for, and effectively respond to disasters.

Results of the SRDC project have been presented in a variety of professional venues, including FEMA's regional catastrophic preparedness team meeting in San Diego, the NACDEP meeting in Minneapolis-St. Paul, the 2010 Community Development Society Meeting, the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, and EDEN national workshops.
NEW RIDGE CENTER FOR TARGETED STUDIES @ THE SRDC ESTABLISHED

USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS) named the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) as the RIDGE Center for Targeted Food and Nutrition Assistance Research in early 2010. Selected by the ERS following a nationwide competition, the SRDC’s new RIDGE (Research Innovation and Development Grants in Economics) Center is coordinating and investing in innovative research that addresses the food and nutrition assistance challenges facing rural residents, Native Americans, immigrants and other key populations in the U.S.

In addition, it will serve as a valuable source of funding for doctoral students who are pursuing promising research that aligns with the priorities of the SRDC RIDGE Center. The doctoral research program will officially launch in 2011.

Bo Beaulieu, the SRDC Director, is serving as director of this new RIDGE Center. According to the ERS, the SRDC’s strong network with land-grant universities across the South, and its links to the nation’s Regional Rural Development Centers, made it ideally positioned to spearhead efforts to examine the changing food assistance and nutrition assistance needs of individuals, families and communities in rural America.

Since launching in January of this year, the RIDGE Center for Targeted Studies @ the SRDC has: (1) organized a new national research advisory committee to guide the work of the RIDGE Center; (2) prepared and released a call for proposals as part of its 2010 competitive grants program; (3) worked with the national advisory committee in the selection four grantees funded as part of this year’s competitive grants cycle (see list of new awardees); (4) redesigned and released two new reports as part of the RIDGE Center’s Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Information Series; and (5) developed the graduate research doctoral research fellowship program for formal release in early 2011.

RIDGE 2010 FUNDED GRANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Collaborator</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamp Program and Food Insecurity Dynamics in the Rural South</td>
<td>Bradford F. Mills</td>
<td>Elton Mykerezi, University of Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct and Comprehensive Measure of Child Food Security: Reliability, Accuracy, and Concordance with Parental Report</td>
<td>Maryah Stella Frain, University of South Carolina</td>
<td>Edward A. Frongillo, Jr., University of South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Influence of Community Retail Food Environment on Household Food Access, Food Choice, and Dietary Intake of Mexican American Children of Colonias along the South Texas Border with Mexico</td>
<td>Maryah Stella Frain, University of South Carolina</td>
<td>Edward A. Frongillo, Jr., University of South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Prenatal WIC Affect Birth Outcomes and School Performance? Examining the Consequences of a Dip in WIC Participation</td>
<td>Sarah Hamersma, University of Florida</td>
<td>David Figlio, Northwestern University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I HAVE REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT WE MUST OVERHAUL OUR APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AMERICA. THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEW EFFORT RECOGNIZES THAT RURAL ECONOMY OF TOMORROW WILL BE A REGIONAL ECONOMY. NO ONE COMMUNITY WILL PROSPER IN ISOLATION.”

Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture, USDA

In many small counties in the South, finding a way to create, attract, and retain jobs is tough work in these challenging economic times. Globalization and changes in the economic make-up of rural places mean that smaller populated counties will have a hard time competing against adjoining counties for the few businesses and industries that might look to relocate. The Stronger Economies Together (SET) project posits that when rural counties work in partnership to assess, plan, and implement an action plan that builds on their comparative economic strengths and advantages as a region, they have a better chance at economic success.

Over the past year, the SRDC and its sister Regional Rural Development Centers have worked in partnership with USDA Rural Development and its team of State RD Directors in selected states to help develop and launch the SET program. The main purpose of SET is pretty straightforward – encourage communities and counties in rural America to work together on a multi-county regional basis to strengthen their regional economies. With the SRDC serving as the coordinator of the SET initiative, the following are some of the important achievements realized over the past year in collaboration with the RRDCs and USDA RD:

- Organized a talented team of Extension faculty from across the U.S. to work with the SRDC/USDA RD in the development of SET training resources. Nine modules, along with companion resources for trainers and SET participants, were completed in 2010.
• Worked with USDA RD in identifying eight target states to be part of the SET pilot effort and designing the process for seeking applicants from these states. In all, over 50 applications were received and 22 were ultimately selected to be part of the SET pilot program. Kentucky and Louisiana are the two chosen southern states.

• Worked with the eight states in the selection of Extension educators and USDA RD state staff to serve as their state’s SET training team. These individuals then took part in SET training held in Kansas City, Missouri in June 2010. The SRDC coordinated this national training event attended by over 45 individuals.

• Guided states in the launching of the SET program in the fall of 2010. SET involves over 20 hours of training and is delivered directly to the 22 regional teams selected to take part in this exciting program.

• Generated a series of demographic and economic profiles tailored for use by the regional teams to inform them of important socioeconomic conditions and shifts occurring in their region, as well as industry clusters that may be present or emerging in their multi-county areas.

• Spearheaded the design of the formal evaluation instruments being used to monitor and assess the success and benefits of the SET program in the pilot regions.

**MODULES**

1. A Snapshot of the SET Program
2. Regional Economic Development 101
3. Building a Strong Regional Team
4. Your Regional Vision & Goals
5. Exploring Regional Assets and Barriers
6. Examining Current Demographic Features of Your Region
7. Exploring the Region’s Economic Foundation and Development Opportunities
8. Planning for Success
9. Measuring for Success
The Foundations of Practice in Community Development program launched an enhanced Level One training this fall, a program designed to introduce basic community development principles to participants. This year’s “Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics” is being coordinated by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development in partnership with the SRDC and its sister regional rural development centers.

While the program is being offered as a Webinar series, a new twist this year is the addition of an eXtension Moodle site, a platform that offers learners the opportunity to interact with one another, including the sharing of information and insights on Webinar topics, collaborating on course assignments, and discussing opportunities and challenges they face in their community development-related work.

Given that this year’s introductory course has expanded to colleagues located outside the of the land-grant system, Moodle is helping build valuable ties between Extension educators and key non-land-grant university partners. As a Webinar presenter, SRDC Director Bo Beaulieu has witnessed firsthand the high level of energy and interactions that took place among participants taking part in his “Community Development Approaches” Webinar.

On the horizon are plans by the four Rural Regional Development Centers to develop and deliver Level Two (advanced skill-building training courses) and Level Three (specialized training for people with an active involvement in CD work). The SRDC’s Cashing in on Business Opportunities launched as a Level Three course in December 2010.
With support from the SRDC, the SERA-37: New Hispanic South hosted its annual meeting in Raleigh, NC and designed a domestic immersion program to help county agents better prepare to serve Hispanic/Latino audiences.

In addition to holding its annual meeting, “The Future of Hispanic/Latino Programming,” on October 6-7, 2010, SERA-37 has developed a domestic immersion program this year to train and strengthen Extension agents’ knowledge and awareness of the Hispanic/Latino culture.

The immersion program is intended to strengthen agents’ understanding of the challenges and complexities that Hispanic/Latino families and individuals confront as they seek to function in a new and unfamiliar settings.

The initial phase of the immersion program is being conducted via a series of Webinars. In 2011, participants will travel to North Carolina to live and work within a Hispanic environment as part of a 10-day immersion program. The experience will culminate with the development of specific programming activities that participants will pursue in hopes of developing relevant and effective Extension outreach activities targeted to their Hispanic/Latino audiences.

**SERERA-37 WEBINAR SERIES TOPICS**

- The 2009 Social Climate for Hispanic Immigration in the U.S.
- Cultural Awareness Begins by Looking Inward–Understanding our Personal Perspectives, Biases, & Assumptions
- Cultural Competence for Extension Professionals: A Second Look Inward
- The Demography of Childhood Immigration and Latino Adolescent Health
- The Demography of Latino Workers and Families in the South
- The DREAM Act and Advocacy Education
- Immigration 101: Policies and Implications for Professionals
Initially released in the 1990s, the “C.A.R.E. for Your Local Economy” curriculum received a significant facelift in 2010. Moving from a dated version to a more contemporary, reorganized look, the new C.A.R.E. materials explore a broad array of local economic development strategies that align with the name of this valuable product: Creation, Attraction, Retention, and Expansion.

Two of the important strengths of the updated product is that it presents a clear roadmap on how to organize and implement a community/economic development strategic plan and a step-by-step process for providing individualized coaching to local business leaders.

In addition, C.A.R.E. allows learners to quickly and easily move to topics that best match their information or education needs. Finally, updated worksheets and new checklists are available to facilitate the quick use of the C.A.R.E. materials by individuals.
Launching a business is no small feat. The licensing, loans, employees relations, accounting – becoming a successful entrepreneur requires nearly equal parts of ambition and know-how. That’s where the *Cashing in on Business Opportunities* curriculum comes in.

As a comprehensive educational curriculum, *Cashing* helps aspiring and existing home-based and micro-businesses owners to address a myriad of common business concerns. Originally developed by a national team of Extension professionals in 1997, *Cashing* has been offering entrepreneurs and the educators who serve them the technical knowledge and skills needed to manage a home-based or micro business. Now, after two years of rewrites and additions, *Cashing* has a new look and is available for free on the SRDC website.

The updates were necessary because many of the financial, management and marketing methods have been refined and, in some cases, dramatically altered from a decade ago. The original document featured overhead projector transparencies and references to now outdated business regulations and requirements. The new curriculum incorporates improved references and PowerPoint files to facilitate the module delivery via face-to-face or online workshops.

Aside from revamping existing modules, new topics have been added to capture new developments in the home-based and micro-business field.

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**REVISION TEAM**

- Alan Barefield, *Mississippi State University*
- Mike Best, *Tennessee Tech University*
- Karen Biers, *Utah State University*
- Rachael Carter, *Mississippi State University*
- Hank Cothran, *University of Florida*
- Jim McConnon, *University of Maine*
- Glenn Muske, *North Dakota State University*
- Katy Williams, *Southern Rural Development Center*
- Kent Wolfe, *University of Georgia*
- Al Wysocki, *University of Florida*
Located at http://srdc.msstate.edu/data/center

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<tr>
<td>Hispanic (%Pop)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Non-Hispanic (%Pop)</td>
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<td>Hispanic (%Pop)</td>
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<th>Components of Population Change</th>
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<td>Natural (Births minus Deaths)</td>
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<td>Domestic Migration</td>
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<td>Bachelor's or more (% Pop 25+)</td>
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<th>Housing &amp; Income</th>
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<td>Housing Units</td>
<td>6,100,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Permits</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Poverty Rate</td>
<td>6,465,586</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civilian Labor Force</td>
<td>7,869,66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>404,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
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The amount of statistical information available online can be overwhelming. Just a quick visit to the U.S. Census Bureau website highlights the volume of data available. For those with limited time or experience, navigating these dense data sources can be difficult.

Responding to this challenge, Research Associate Roberto Gallardo has created and updated the SRDC’s Community Data Center, an online resource that offers users straightforward, statistical profiles for every county and state in the South.
Aimed for use by Extension educators, county leaders, agency representatives, nonprofit organizations, and local residents, the profiles showcase a core set of variables including demographics, education, housing, poverty, unemployment, income, occupation, and number of farms.

Making the profiles especially valuable to local leaders and groups, data are presented at different points in time, allowing users to monitor changes; counties are classified by their metropolitan status, thus making comparisons between counties similar in size and resources easy; and data are routinely updated, ensuring that up-to-date data is readily available.

Hitting their mark, Georgia resident David Hurst found the Community Data Center while searching for information about his county on Google.

“As of January, I’ll be on the school board. These statistics on the county profiles should wake some people up,” said Hurst, who had been unaware of the high child poverty rates and the high rates of people without high school degrees in his county.

Using the data, Hurst said, “What I’m trying to do is recognize the issues that are prevalent and use this as a stepping stone for a better tomorrow.”

The SRDC provides profiles for over 1,200 counties in printer friendly, two-page format. The combination of data is drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Economic Modeling Specialists Inc., and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
### DEMOGRAPHICS

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<td>Black Non-Hispanic (%Pop)</td>
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<td>25-64 Yrs (%Pop)</td>
<td>47.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+ Yrs (%Pop)</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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### EDUCATION

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<td>Less than H.S. (%Pop 25+)</td>
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<td>High School Grad. (%Pop 25+)</td>
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<td>30.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some College (%Pop 25+)</td>
<td>22.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor's or more (%Pop 25+)</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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The Southern Rural Development Center joined with Florida A&M University and Business Retention and Expansion, International partnered in hosting a new round of Business Retention and Expansion Fundamentals Course targeted to Extension professionals in two states. The workshop was held at Tuskegee University on February 2-3, 2010.

The Tuskegee University training was spearheaded with the valuable assistance of Extension administrative and program leaders from the Tuskegee University Cooperative Extension Program. Participants included specialists, program leaders and county agents drawn from Tuskegee University and Alabama A&M University. The content of the training was presented in a practical and hands-on manner, including lectures, participant interaction, small group exercises and "face-to-face" conversations with practitioners from a variety of BR&E programs.

The objectives of the course were threefold — strengthen participants’ understanding of BR&E as a viable economic development strategy, outline steps for establishing and implementing a locally tailored BR&E program, delineating the basic skills and expertise needed by a BR&E Project Coordinator.

The February program culminated with plans being developed for the implementation of the BR&E program in three Alabama communities with distinct socio-economic attributes and challenges.
DELTA REGIONAL INITIATIVES ADDRESS NEEDS OF LOW-WEALTH PLACES

The Center has been engaged in two important projects in the Mississippi Delta Region, an area with a long history of social and economic challenges. As part of its coordination of the Delta Rural Revitalization Initiative, the Center has worked in partnership with the MSU Extension Service Delta Data Center staff and the Delta Council on guiding the development of viable community and economic strategies in the region.

Over the past year, the Delta Data Center’s Extension staff has helped generate key information to retain jobs, grow businesses, and provide quick response data to companies looking to relocate to the Delta Region. Moreover, it has offered services such as assisting businesses with site selection, workforce training and development, population studies, industry growth statistics/reports and unemployment figures.

In support of the work of this center, the SRDC has completed and widely distributed a series of reports that highlight the economic value and impacts of agricultural production and processing in an 18-county Delta area of Mississippi. In addition, it has created county-level data profiles that offer a statistical snapshot of each county in Mississippi on three-dozen variables. These attractive two-page reports are being used as part of the information packet being provided to firms that are exploring the feasibility of locating to this region.

The Center’s second project – the Delta Geographic Concentration Initiative (DGCI) – is engaged in evaluation research supported by the Walton Family Foundation. In 2010, the Center completed a number of important projects, including: (1) shift-share analyses on the three counties that serve as the core of the DGCI effort in Arkansas and Mississippi; (2) analysis and write-up of results of community climate surveys conducted in the three counties; (3) completion of in-depth assessments of a major education-related project funded in one of the counties, including interviews with key informants and an economic impact analysis of the project’s; and (4) development of a DGCI Index that employs key secondary data to monitor important macro-level progress being made in the three counties as a direct and indirect product of the DGCI activities.
SRDC BRINGS HOME TWO NATIONAL AWARDS FROM NACDEP 2010 CONFERENCE

During the 2010 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals conference held in Bloomington, Minnesota, the SRDC was honored in recognition for The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative and the Building Resilient Communities programs.

Receiving the Educational Technology Team Award, the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative was recognized for the use of technology including computers, video, Web pages in delivering and managing educational programs that expand the use of technology in community development work and promote logical problem-solving techniques using educational technologies.

With financial support provided by Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Building Resilient Communities program received the Excellence in Community Development Work Team Award to give recognition to the series of 30 community roundtables held across five states that engaged emergency management personnel and a diversity of local residents on strategies for strengthening the emergency preparedness of disadvantaged populations.

Both award winning initiatives were carried out in partnership with National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA.

NEW RESOURCES ADDED TO THE EXTENSION ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES WEBSITE

As one of the coordinators of the eXtension “Entrepreneurs and Their Communities” national effort, the SRDC has continued to contribute content to the eXtension site in order to keep the information available to the public both informative and timely.

With the valuable help of Stephanie Pink, a doctoral student at Mississippi State who interned at the SRDC during the summer months, two new sets of products are being added to the National eXtension website. The first is a series of 28 abstracts that showcase important entrepreneurship-related research articles released in recent years, with the lion’s share being published in 2009 and 2010.

The second project is a compilation of entrepreneurship-supportive policies and programs that are in place in states across the nation. Information on exciting policies, programs, loans, venture capital, grants, technical assistance, and other related activities relevant to new and potential entrepreneurs, as well as small business operators, are organized on a state by state basis.
Spreading the SRDC’s research activities, research associate Roberto Gallardo has collaborated on 20 articles for the rural news website the *Daily Yonder*.

Bill Bishop, co-editor of the *Daily Yonder* said, “Roberto has been a one-man research institution. He is the reason the *Yonder* is the only publication that has kept up with rural unemployment and employment during this recession.”

For his articles, Gallardo has been interviewed or cited by NET radio, Nebraska’s National Public Radio station, the Economix Blog from the *New York Times*, and the Real Time Economic Blog from the *Wall Street Journal*.

Crediting Gallardo for providing the site’s 1,200 daily visitors with sophisticated analysis dealing with rural issues, Bishop said, “His research is the reason the Secretary of Agriculture has asked for background material from our articles.”

Gallardo’s data driven articles are valuable because they discuss important changes taking place in their rural counties. These reports highlight emerging issues that may need attention and added investments.

All of Gallardo’s *Daily Yonder* articles appear on the SRDC website and newsletters to provide timely information for Extension educators, social science researchers, and key decision-makers.

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**2010 DAILY YONDER ARTICLES**

### FEBRUARY
- Auto Manufacturing Areas Suffer Largest Job Losses (1st)
- Unemployment Continues Rising in Central California (9th)

### MARCH
- A Reason for Higher Rural Unemployment: Education (3rd)
- Rural Unemployment Soars in January (31st)

### APRIL
- Census Response: Politics, Place, Poverty (8th)
- Rural Counties Gain Jobs (21st)

### MAY
- Rural Counties Gain Jobs in March (12th)

### JUNE
- Rates Drop, but Unemployment Still Widespread (9th)

### JULY
- Rural America in the 2000s: Population (14th)
- Rural America in the 2000s: Age (21st)
- Unemployment Dips in May (27th)

### AUGUST
- Health Insurance: Location, Location... (4th)
- Rural Job Picture Finally Better Than ’09 (17th)

### SEPTEMBER
- Are There Jobs? It Depends (7th)
- Cost of Recession: 1.2 Million Rural Jobs (15th)

### OCTOBER
- The B.A. Divide (22nd)

### NOVEMBER
- The Recession Turns (1st)
- Rural Leads in Economic Recovery (29th)

### DECEMBER
- U2: The Real Unemployment Rate (16st)
- Two-Thirds of Rural America See Job Gains Since ’09 (28th)
EXPANDING OUR REACH:
FOUR PROGRAM UPDATES FROM
THE NATIONAL E-COMMERCE EXTENSION INITIATIVE

• SRDC CONTRIBUTES TO THE EDUCATIONAL BACKBONE FOR STATES’ BTOP GRANTS (pg. 23)
• REGIONAL E-COMMERCE EXTENSION TEAMS CREATED ACROSS THE U.S. (pg. 24)
• NEW E-COMMERCE EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS RELEASED (pg. 25)
• MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM REACHES OVER 350 WITH ‘ON THE GROUND’ DELIVERY (pg. 26)
SRDC CONTRIBUTES TO THE EDUCATIONAL BACKBONE FOR STATES’ BTOP GRANTS

In 2009, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and USDA’s Rural Utility Services (RUS) joined forces to build and expand the availability of high-speed Internet access to places across the U.S. landscape, including many parts of rural America. Thanks to their launching of the Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP), there is some hope that an information technology backbone will be in place in the not too distant future, including in areas with a history of being left behind in terms of important community services.

As broadband infrastructure begins to spread to underserved rural communities across the nation, the SRDC – in light of its leadership for the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative – is positioned to work in partnership with Extension educators to provide the educational backbone needed to guide broadband and e-commerce adoption activities of rural households, businesses, farmers, and local governments.

There are three specific examples of how the resources developed as part of the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative have proven to be instrumental in securing major BTOP funding to promote broadband adoption. Working with Mississippi’s Office of the Governor, the SRDC and Mississippi State University Extension Service have captured over $2.4 million to help accelerate the adoption of broadband in high need areas of the state, to advance digital literacy, and to strengthen the application of e-commerce strategies by local businesses in underserved regions of the state.
In an effort to ramp up the delivery of National e-Commerce Extension educational products to Extension educators and stakeholders across the nation, the SRDC (in partnership with its sister Regional Rural Development Centers and NIFA/USDA), organized regional e-commerce teams in the Northeast, North Central, Southern and Western portions of the country.

The inaugural training workshop of the regional teams – each comprised of five Extension educators from that region – took place in June 2010 in Atlanta, Georgia. The four teams were introduced to the Center’s full range of current and soon-to-be-released e-commerce related products. More importantly, each group developed an outreach plan tailored to their region, one
that delineated the e-commerce training they planned to deliver over the course of the next 12 months. The following highlights two of the regional teams’ plans:

In the Northeast Region
The team will take part in the Northeast Regional Entrepreneurship and Community Development Conference to be held in spring 2011 where the following three modules will be showcased: A Beginner’s Guide to e-Commerce, Helping Artisans Reach Global Markets, and Marketing Food Specialty Products Online. Furthermore, regional team members attending the Delaware Ag Week will display promotional and educational materials from National e-Commerce Extension Initiative as well as deliver a presentation.

In the North Central Region
The team met in Minneapolis / St. Paul in October 2010 to work on a unified curriculum based on the Initiative’s current online learning modules. These educational products will be targeted to rural communities that soon will have broadband installed in their localities. In particular, the North Central team will determine and deliver the learning modules that best address the broadband education needs of communities awarded BTOP (Broadband Technology Opportunities Program) funding in their region.

NEW E-COMMERCE EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS RELEASED

For the past seven years, the SRDC’s National e-Commerce Extension Initiative has invested in the development of state-of-the-art educational resources, valuable products that are intended to facilitate community-guided broadband and e-commerce applications by local governments and businesses. Over the past year, the SRDC has added the following two new products to its growing list of Web-based broadband/e-commerce educational curricula.

Going Global: A Guide for e-Commerce Expansion is a worksheet driven learning module developed by
MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM REACHES OVER 350 WITH ‘ON THE GROUND’ DELIVERY

Promoting the field testing of National e-Commerce Extension curriculum products, SRDC’s mini-grant program supports the expansion and improvement of existing learning modules. Through contracting with various land-grant universities across the U.S., a coalition of Extension educators help evaluate the quality of SRDC-led e-commerce materials and assess the outcomes realized by Extension stakeholders taking part in these educational programs.

The following identifies Extension programs that have received mini-grant awards from the SRDC over the past two years, the specific e-commerce programs that were delivered, audiences targeted for the programs, and selected highlights of program outputs/outcomes associated with these efforts.

Rae Montgomery and Stephanie Lott that seeks to familiarize the already e-commerce savvy business owner with the possibility of marketing to foreign-based customers. Each step of the learning process allows for a greater understanding of the payoffs and challenges of doing business with clients outside of the United States. Once completed, the learner should have a good working knowledge of how to proceed with global customer expansion.

Security Squad: Keeping your Equipment and Information Safe is an innovative video series developed to address the main areas of equipment and data security. The goal of the security plan is not to completely eliminate all risks at whatever cost, but to develop a system that helps to minimize the risks and potential losses to the company and its employees. Developed by the University of Nebraska team of Marilyn Schlake, Connie Hancock, Diane Becker, and Mike Hendricks, with video production by Mike Kamm, the new learning module brings together an informative and entertaining video series with practical worksheets that helps create a workable in-house security plan.
MINI-GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

2009 – 2010

Land–Grant Institution: Clemson University and Oklahoma State University  
Curriculum: Connection Rural Communities  
Delivery Method: Webinar Series  
Participants: 15 community groups

Land–Grant Institution: University of Missouri  
Curriculum: Strengthening Competitive Advantage of Rural Businesses with e-Commerce and Experience Economy Strategies  
Delivery Method: Workshops (6)  
Participants: 79

Land–Grant Institution: University of Tennessee  
Curriculum: Helping Artisans Reach Global Markets  
Delivery Method: Workshops (6)  
Participants: 128  
Highlights: Post-workshop reports indicate that participants left with a renewed interest in advancing their computer skills and identifying artisan trends in online sales and marketing. With an emphasis on design for artisan websites, the participants now have a clearer understand of what constitutes good design and content.

Land–Grant Institution: Oklahoma State University  
Curriculum: Strengthening Competitive Advantage of Rural Businesses with e-Commerce and Experience Economy Strategies  
Delivery Method: Workshops (6)  
Participants: 39

Land–Grant Institution: Tuskegee University  
Curriculum: Internet Strategies to Improve Farm Business Management  
Delivery Method: Workshops (2)  
Participants: 15  
Land–Grant Institution: Michigan State University  
Curriculum: Strengthening Competitive Advantage of Rural Businesses with e-Commerce and Experience Economy Strategies  
Delivery Method: Workshops (7)  
Participants: 69  
Highlights: This workshop series helped participants to focus on evaluating their business environment for possible ways in which “experiential value” could help strengthen their current business goals. With a greater understanding of how to create customer experiences, these entrepreneurs planned to focus on building a quality customer environment in both their physical and

2010 – 2011

Land–Grant Institution: Auburn University  
Delivery Method: Workshops (4)  
Participants: 21  
Highlights: Targeted to a county with a high level of unemployment, this learning module was presented in a four workshop series with hands on exercises and intensive overviews of successful e-commerce businesses. By focusing the learners on their already existing talents and marketable skills, each left with a clear understanding of the benefits and responsibilities associated with e-commerce.

Land–Grant Institution: Alcorn State University (Mississippi)  
Delivery Method: Workshops  
Currently scheduled to being in November 2010 and extend into the winter of 2011.
The SRDC honored Sanford B. Dooley and Sue E. Williams as 2010 recipients of the Bonnie Teater Community Development Educator Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dooley, a Professor and Extension Specialist for the Louisiana State University AgCenter, was noted for his 42 years of service, during which he perfected the Community Leadership & Economic Development program and a seminar series targeted to newly elected officials, volunteers, and others.

Pat Witty, Director, Community Outreach Services, and Lewis Smart, III, Director Community Development, said “His hard work and cultivation of partnerships, leveraging assets and resources has been his trademark during his career.”

Focusing on areas of emerging need, Williams, a Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University, has had a long career that spans public deliberation, leadership development, health issues, and more.

“I cannot overstate the importance of Dr. Williams’ efforts,” Sharon M. S. Gibson, Multicultural Extension Specialist said, “not only for the citizens of Oklahoma, but for all of us endeavoring to engage citizens at the grassroots level. Her work is even more important today than when she started.”

Both Dooley and Williams were chosen for their outstanding contributions to communities and the field of community development.

The SRDC website received record numbers of visitors through our electronic newsletters and social networking activities over the past year.

With three regular newsletters, the SRDC reached over 3,000 subscribers interested in rural development news and SRDC opportunities. Boasting 12 issues a year and the largest membership, Around the South has provided timely information on new Center’s activities, important regional and national community and economic development reports, and relevant activities being pursued by land-grant university colleagues and important partners.

Supporting the Center’s National e-Commerce Extension Initiative, eNews sported a new logo and released six issues including program updates, curriculum releases, discussing topics such as women-owned businesses, the Hispanic small business market, and social networking.
Grant Connections provided information on more than 24 grant opportunities that align with the work of land-grant educators and community development professionals. The newsletter also helped promote the SRDC’s series of competitive grants program, including its RIDGE Center for Targeted Studies, the Sustainable Communities Innovation Grant, and the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative.

In addition to its online newsletters, the SRDC maintained a presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr. Sharing photos of trainings, promoting upcoming events, and news and research articles, the SRDC continued to explore the use of new technologies in its quest to broaden its reach to a wider array of clientele.

The Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED) and Southern Region Program Leadership Network (SRPLN) depend on the SRDC to provide administrative support, conference planning, and website design and maintenance.

Thanks to the efforts of the SRDC’s Andy Lewis, a new ASRED website was introduced in 2010 to replace a dated site. Aside from the new website, the SRDC helped update ASRED minutes, agendas, and directories that Extension administrators depend upon to facilitate their communication activities with colleagues across the South.

Advancing multi-state and regional Extension programming efforts, the SRDC not only maintained the Southern Region Program Leadership Network’s website but also planned its 2010 annual joint conference in partnership with ASRED and the Association of Extension Administrators. Under the theme “Affecting a Changing Economy,” the conference had 231 participants taking part in its Memphis, Tennessee event.

Comprised of state program leaders from eight different programmatic and professional staff functions, the SR-PLN promotes collaboration among states and by Extension colleagues within and across Extension Program Committees for the purpose of pursuing multi-pronged approaches for tackling important regional issues.
In an effort to help build cross-state partnerships in key rural development priority areas, the SRDC joined forces with USDA RD, the Rural Virginia Center, Partners for Rural America and others in helping to organize and provide onsite logistical support for this important workshop held May 11-12 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The major themes of the conference were fourfold: (1) Economic Development: Business and Job Creation; (2) Broadband: Global Opportunities and Rural Lifestyles; (3) Energy: Advancing Efficiency, Generation and Fuel Development; and (4) Networks: Strengthening Regional Partnerships.

The SRDC Director presented highlights of the Center’s National e-Commerce Extension Initiative as one of five speakers showcased under the “broadband” workshop track. Approximately 120 individuals took part in the regional convening.

SRDC AND MSU ES TEAM UP TO SECURE MAJOR FEDERAL BROADBAND GRANT

The SRDC and Mississippi State University Extension teamed up with the Office of the Governor/State of Mississippi to secure a federal grant that will advance broadband access and use in underserved/unserved areas of the state.

The SRDC/MSUES portion will be focused on delivering a variety of educational programs that promote digital literacy and strengthen the effective use of broadband and e-commerce strategies by local governments, businesses, farmers, households, and key local institutions. The SRDC/MSUES project, funded at the $2.4M level for a three and a half year period, will officially launch in March 2011.
The SRDC/Southern SARE (Sustainable Agriculture & Research) sponsored a new round of competitive grants program in 2010, resulting in the submission of 67 proposals by an excellent mix of local organizations, agencies and individuals involved in promoting sound community and agriculture sustainability strategies. The SRDC and SSARE invested a good bit of time refining this year’s call for proposals, seeking to improve the chances that submitted proposals would be aligned with those elements that serve as the core of the SCIG program.

Among the improvements introduced in 2010 was the delineation of eight priority areas for applicants to consider including in their proposals (such as integrating agriculture in local economic development plans or linking farmers to local/regional consumers).

Furthermore, the request for proposals document noted the importance of showcasing working partnerships between agriculture and the community, and a need to have a good educational outreach action plan to help showcase the important work being carried out as part of their SRDC/SSARE funded grant. In all, 8 proposals were selected for funding at a level of about $10,000 each.
When it comes right down to it, the purpose of promoting civic engagement is to encourage local citizens to become active change agents in their communities. Over the past year, the SRDC – with support from the Kettering Foundation, the Farm Foundation, and Everyday Democracy – has launched an important program whose goal is to offer local individuals the opportunity to play vital roles in tackling the difficult issue of poverty.

Working in partnership with Extension colleagues in five Southern states (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Mississippi), Turning the Tide on Poverty was officially launched in eight rural counties in early 2010. Nearly 100 volunteer facilitators were recruited and trained to coordinate the work of over 30 Study Circles. In all, more than 250 community members took part in the five-week study circles/deliberative dialogue process carried out during the first half of 2010.
But, participants were eager to go beyond studying and assessing the many dimensions of poverty. They wanted to make positive changes in their communities. So, local study circle members in each site banded together to take part in an Action Forum, sharing their perspectives on poverty and arriving at a consensus on the types of actions they wanted to pursue. Not only were action plans developed, projects emerging from these plans have been put in motion by citizen volunteers.

Aside from the “on the ground” efforts being carried out in the eight Tide pilot sites, the SRDC worked with a team of social scientists to design and implement qualitative and quantitative data gathering strategies as a way of tracking the progress and ultimate outcomes of the Tide project. The first phase of the research was completed in 2010. The researchers hope to determine, in time, if the project is advancing participants’ involvement in community improvement projects, strengthening the civic health of pilot communities, and expanding the level of investments being made by the Cooperative Extension Service on civic-capacity building programs.

“NEARLY 100 VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS WERE RECRUITED AND TRAINED TO COORDINATE THE WORK OF OVER 30 STUDY CIRCLES.”

**PROJECTS HIGHLIGHTS**

**Youth/Family:**
- Raised $1,500 to purchase clothes for low-income children. Established clothing closet to help distribute used clothing to families in need.
- Organized youth Study Circles to explore the issue of youth violence.

**Education:**
- Updated community resource guide to educate residents of important local agencies and organizations.
- Undertook efforts to build stronger working ties between parents living in public housing and local school system administrators/teachers.

**Food Assistance:**
- Started a community garden.
- Placed eight raised bed gardens in the hands of low-income families and educated them on growing their own food.
- Launched a community food bank in a high-need community. Government and faith-based groups partnered with the Tide team to help secure products.
- Established link with Wal-Mart to secure donated food for the local food network.
- Started a farmers’ market to facilitate access to healthy, nutritious foods by local residents.

**Money/Financial Management:**
- Trained local volunteers to deliver educational programs on “Money Matters.”
WEBSITE STATISTICS

Percent of New Visits
58.42% (FIFTY-EIGHT POINT FORTY-TWO PERCENT)

Total Pageviews
78,820 (SEVENTY-EIGHT THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY)

Average Visitors by Month
2,111 (TWO THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN)

Average Time on Website
2:59 (TWO MINUTES AND FIFTY-NINE SECONDS)

Percent of Total U.S. Visitors
89% (EIGHTY-NINE PERCENT)

Percent of Total Mississippi Visitors
20% (TWENTY PERCENT)

Direct Traffic
10,817 (42.70%)

Search Engines
9,377 (37.02%)

Referring Sites
5,137 (20.28%)

Most Visited Section
other than the Home Page
THE NATIONAL E-COMMERCE EXTENSION INITIATIVE

Most Used Keyword Search
SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Data is for year of 2010, January through December, SRDC staff visits are filtered.
FY10 BASE AND EXTRAMURAL FUNDING SURPASSES $1.9 MILLION

In its first year since changing to the Mississippi State University fiscal year of July-June, the SRDC has captured a record amount of funding – $1,941,889 – from a combination of base and extramural funding. This year’s extramural funding is the highest the Center has secured in its 36 year history. The SRDC is thankful and appreciative of the investment that various organizations, agencies, and foundations have made in the work of the Center.

2010 PARTICIPANTS BY REGION FOR MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, WEBINARS, AND TECHNICAL TRAININGS

TRENDS IN EXTRAMURAL FUNDING FROM FY2000-2010

Showcasing the extramural funding amounts from 2000-2010, the above chart highlights the funds the SRDC has garnered over the past 11 years.

*Funds secured between July - September 2008 ($480,778) are reported as part of 2008 as well as part of 2009 in order to reflect a 12-month reporting period. During FY09, the SRDC was in the process of changing its fiscal reporting year from the federal (October - September) to the Mississippi State University fiscal year (July-June).
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 wellbeing of people and communities in the rural South.

**SRDC MISSION**

The Southern Rural Development Center is one of four regional centers coordinating rural development research and Extension education programs cooperatively with land-grant institutions regionally and nationally. The Centers are supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the Center and its authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Agriculture.

**SRDC BACKGROUND**

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Andrew Lewis  
Graphic and Web Designer

Abbie Misso  
Office Associate
SRDC STAFF PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

PUBLICATIONS

*Mobilizing Communities: Asset Building as a Community Development Strategy*
Bo Beaulieu, SRDC Director, has co-written a chapter, “Implementing Community Development in the Mississippi Delta,” for the Temple University Press textbook *Mobilizing Communities: Asset Building as a Community Development Strategy*.

*Book Review: Investing in Democracy: Engaging Citizens in Collaborative Governance*

*Introduction to Community Development*
This Sage Publications textbook features the chapter, “Communities in rural America: Current realities, emerging strategies,” co-written by SRDC Director Bo Beaulieu.

*Choices: The Magazine of Food, Farm and Resource Issues*
Shannon Lane Turner, Coordinator of the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative, had the article, “Can rural America finally get connected to broadband?” published in Volume 25, Issue 4 of the *Choices: The Magazine of Food, Farm and Resource Issues*.

*Economy Watch*
Roberto Gallardo, Research Associate, contributed an article to “Economy Watch” newsletter prepared by the College of Business in Mississippi State University for businesspeople, government officials, and economic developers. His article “Mississippi Population Changes, 2000-2009” appeared in the 2010 Volume 2 Issue 2.

PRESENTATIONS

Bo Beaulieu, SRDC Director, made 23 presentations in 2010 at a host of meetings, conferences, trainings, and Webinars such as the Annual Meeting of the Southern Rural Sociological Association, the Joint Meeting of the Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors and the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Community Development Society, and the Annual Meeting of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities.

Rachel Welborn, SRDC Program Manager, presented at seven different meetings and trainings for 2010 including programs in grant writing, the Turning the Tide on Poverty project, the Stronger Economies Together project, and the Extension Disaster Education Network conference.

Shannon Lane Turner, Coordinator of the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative, made eight presentations to the National e-Commerce Extension Initiative National Training Meeting, National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, and the Strategic Marketing Conference: Improving Your Social Media Marketing Skills for Agribusiness Success by Cornell Cooperative Extension.
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TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SRDC SUPPORTS REGIONAL AND NATIONAL TRAININGS IN 2010

The SRDC provided financial sponsorship and/or logistical support to a number of important conferences and workshops in 2010. The following is a list of these key meetings:

**Southern Regional Rural Convening**
May 11-12 — Charlotte, North Carolina

**Conference on Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural and Agricultural America**
May 27-28 — Washington, District of Columbia

**The International Symposium on Society and Resource Management**
June 6-10 — Corpus Christi, Texas

**National Value-Added Agriculture Conference**
June 27-29 — Biloxi, Mississippi

**Community Development Society International Conference**
July 25-28 — New Orleans, Louisiana

**Miss-Lou Regional Tourism Summit**
August 10-12 — Bay St. Louis, Mississippi

**The SERA-37 Conference on Latinos in the South**
October 6-7 — Raleigh, North Carolina

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

**Community Data Center**
http://srdc.msstate.edu/data:center/

**The Daily Yonder**
http://www.dailyyonder.com/

**Foundations of Practice in Community Development**
http://srdc.msstate.edu/fop/

**The National e-Commerce Extension Initiative**
http://srdc.msstate.eduecommerce/

**The RIDGE Center for Targeted Studies @ the SRDC**
http://srdc.msstate.edu/ridge/

**SERA-37: The New Hispanic South**
http://srdc.msstate.edu/sera37/
http://sera37.wordpress.com/

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

**Southern Rural Development Center Newsletters**
http://srdc.msstate.edu/newsletters

**Turning the Tide on Poverty**
http://srdc.msstate.edu/tide/
## SRDC Partners

| Association of Extension Administrators | Mississippi Farm Bureau |
| Association of Research Directors       | National Association of Community Development |
| Association of Southern Region Extension Directors | Extension Professionals |
| Cherokee Preservation Foundation         | National eXtension Initiative Leadership Team |
| Coastal Bend College                     | National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA |
| Community Development Society            | North Central Regional Center for Rural Development |
| Delta Council                            | Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development |
| Economic Development Administration      | Rural Sociological Society |
| Economic Research Service, USDA          | Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors |
| Everyday Democracy                       | Southern Financial Partners |
| Farm Services Agency, USDA               | Southern Growth Policies Board |
| Farm Foundation                          | Southern Region Risk Management Education Center, |
| Federal Emergency Management Agency      | Southern Rural Sociological Association |
| Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City (Oklahoma City Branch) | Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program |
| Foundation for the Mid South             | USDA Rural Development |
| Hired Pen, Inc.                          | Walton Family Foundation |
| Kettering Foundation                     | West Arete Computing, Inc. |
| MDC, Incorporated                        | Western Rural Development Center |
| Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce | |
The Southern Rural Development Center is one of four regional centers coordinating rural development research and Extension education programs cooperatively with land-grant institutions regionally and nationally. The Centers are 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 Center and its authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.