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The Southern Rural Development Center: Going To Work For The Region

What is the Southern Rural Development Center? What are its goals and plans? What directions is it taking to assist in the improvement of life for rural people?

Answering these questions will introduce the SRDC, its personnel and plans, and its interaction with related groups and agencies in rural development.

History

In response to the Rural Development Act of 1972, the U.S. Department of Agriculture set up centers for the assistance of rural development in four regions of the country. These four centers are now in operation: The Northeast Center at Ithaca, New York; the Western Center at Corvallis, Oregon; the North Central Center at Ames, Iowa; and the Southern Center at Mississippi State, Mississippi.

In the Fall of 1973, the Regional Directors of Experiment Stations and Extension Services appointed the SRDC Board of Directors, with a charge to establish a joint Research-Extension regional center. The SRDC Board of Directors consists of four members each from Research and Extension (including 1890 institutions) and one from the private industry, totalling nine members:

Dr. W. M. Bost, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Mississippi State University
Dr. Sam H. Booker, Vice-President for Marketing, Alabama Power Company
Dr. Charles F. Ellington, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia

The Southern Rural Development Center, sponsored jointly by Alcorn State University and Mississippi State University, is headquartered at Mississippi State, Mississippi, with responsibilities for providing back-up support for rural development research and educational programs at the various land-grant institutions throughout the South. William W. Linder, representing Mississippi State University, is director; William C. Boykin, representing Alcorn State University, is associate director.

Publications, information, and assistance are available without charge from the Center.

This issue of Rural Development Research and Education is largely concerned with introducing the SRDC and its participants and clientele. Future issues will deal in greater detail with related groups and agencies in rural development. Your participation and ideas are always welcome. For more detailed information about specific projects and efforts of the SRDC as briefly outlined here, please contact:

Mr. William W. Linder, Director
Southern Rural Development Center
Box 5406
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Rural Development Research and Education is published at least quarterly by the Southern Rural Development Center. It will report research results and ideas to stimulate thinking and provide information for problem areas of rural development.

Scientists and educators throughout the southern region are encouraged to send research reports appropriate for publication to:

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Rural Development Research and Education
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Box 5406
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Subscriptions or sample copies are free at this time and may be obtained by writing to the editor.
priority orientation of the SRDC.

The SRDC is advised on its programs and policy by the Southern Regional Rural Development Research Council and the Southern Extension Regional Community Resource Development Committee. The SRDC has established three Functional Networks (see article in this issue) to bring specific attention of professionals throughout the region to pressing problems. Six more are currently being established. Scientists and educators with particular interest in regional concerns of rural development serve as Center Associates to develop a base of problem-solving knowledge now.

An interdisciplinary Research Advisory Network has been appointed to counsel the Center Director on selection of rural development areas for consideration as Functional Networks. Its 15 members represent:

- Southern Regional Research Council (3)
- Southern Extension CRD Committee (3)
- Southern Regional Research Council (3)
- Southern Extension CRD Committee (3)
- 1890 Institutions (2)
- Southern Regional Home Economics Administrators (2)
- Southern Regional Rural Sociology Research Committee (3)
- Center Director, Associate Director (2)

Again, the emphasis is on regionalism, Extension-Research interaction, and an interdisciplinary approach. The SRDC (see chart) is organized to report directly to the Assistant Secretary for Conservation, Research, and Education of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, it looks to Extension Service and Cooperative States Research Service offices for guidance and support.

Status of Legislation and Funding

Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972 asks universities to provide research to assist rural development, to assist application of knowledge, and to give priority educational and research assistance to improving the quality of life, increasing job and income opportunities, and improving essential community services and facilities. All privately and publicly supported colleges and universities in each state are eligible to conduct programs; they submit their proposals to the land-grant university.

The Southern Rural Development Center has been established under a three-year pilot program. These are chief concerns: preventing excessive fragmentation of pilot programs; coordinating Title V efforts with existing Research and Extension programs; and building on the strength of these programs to significantly influence the development of rural America.

Research Needs and the Functional Networks

The Functional Networks have become the major focus of the SRDC.

Functional — means practical, useful, accountable.

Network — means cooperation, linkage, communication, and these are precisely the guidelines for the SRDC Functional Networks, which are groups of researchers and educators joined for the purpose of synthesizing available research knowledge in high-priority areas of rural development. They are charged to answer the question, "What does research tell us about —?"

The SRDC coordinates the Functional Networks to serve as a central point for programming and services throughout the region. It hopes to make a regional effort more efficient and effective by offering the expertise of the Functional Networks. That’s the FUNCTIONAL part, churning through past and ongoing research to determine what has been done and what needs to be done, as well as what we know and what we need to know. The NETWORK part involves the mix of:

- Extension-Research capabilities
- 1890 institution expertise
- land-grant and non-land-grant personnel
- university and agency knowledge.

With more than 24 professionals from 9 states involved in the 3 current Networks, the Center is bringing professional attention to rural development research and education priorities.

For further details on the setup, functioning, personnel, and progress of the Functional Networks, see the next article in this issue.

Extension-Research Interaction

A basic, underlying tenet of the Center is promotion of increased Extension-Research communication, dialogue, and joint programming. Title V authorizes this interaction, and the Center has the capacity to bring together experts across state lines and from various disciplines to focus on problems common to the region.

For example, regional groups have long been interested in issues of land use. In August of 1975 the SRDC convened a meeting of representatives from the Southern Land Economics Research Committee, the Southern Extension CRD Committee, the Southern Extension Public Policy Affairs Committee, the ECPON National Committee, Extension Service, USDA, and 1890 institutions to discuss:

- Issues
- Educational programs
- Policy considerations
- Training for professionals
- Joint programming

With each group reporting to its parent group and making recommendations to the Regional Extension and Experiment Station Directors, the SRDC will lead an appropriate regional effort if desired by the participating groups.

Also, in May of 1975 the S-81 Research Technical Committee asked the Center to help acquire action-agencies with the project, establish closer working relationships, and obtain ideas for future research. SRDC provided financial support for a discussion meeting, which led to concrete suggestions for the current and future research projects. Of the 16 persons attending, only one had previously heard of the S-81 committee’s work.

Another area of concern is housing. The Center, in cooperation with the Tennessee Valley Authority and the S-95 Southern Regional Housing Research Committee, sponsored a three-day workshop on "Quality Housing for Low-Income Rural Families." About 150 individuals attended, and again, very few of them had been familiar with the work of the S-95 committee.

Bridging the gap in communication between Research and Extension requires coordination of four sectors: Research, Extension, Industry, and Users. The workshop developed an effort to establish a joint communication network and increased awareness of needs and goals of each of these sectors.

The SRDC, through cooperative conferences and projects such as these, can become a regional gathering point for discussion and solution of rural development problems. As part of its information effort, the Center has compiled several publications available without cost (see News and Notes section in this issue) and will compile upon request information needed on a regional basis.

Can We Help?

This is but a brief scanning of the establishment, purposes, directions, and goals of the Southern Rural Development Center. As emphasized throughout, we desire to offer assistance in coordinating professional expertise, information gathering, and problem solving through-out the southern region.

According to SRDC Director William Linder, "Our future goals lie primarily in a catalyst role of gathering region-wide information and obtaining regional participation. Then we will be getting the information to the users."

"Our major efforts will concentrate on the Functional Networks and on appropriate training efforts. We will constantly play a supporting role — doing only those things that states can’t do better alone."

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Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistant Secretary
Conservation, Research, Education

Administrator
Cooperative States Research Service

State Experiment Stations
Director
Southern Rural Development Center

Board of Directors

Director
Mississippi State University

Associate Director
Alcorn State University

State Rural Development Committee

State Research and Extension Service
SRDC Inaugurates Functional Networks

Professionals in the region have much to contribute to rural development programs of the southern Research and Extension agencies. But how can they be involved in those programs? How can they bring their knowledge and skills to bear on pressing problems? The SRDC’s answer is through its Functional Networks: scientists and educators have been selected to lead groups of cooperating professionals in pooling research expertise.

Three such Networks have already been selected. Details of their projects are given in the next article, “Knowing What We Need to Know.”

By obtaining wide participation of various professionals throughout the region in the Functional Networks, the SRDC promotes a truly regional focus and interaction between Research and Extension personnel. The goal is solving real problems; the work has already begun.

What Are the Functional Networks?

Functional Networks have been formed to give particular attention to one area or subset of the four major areas of rural development identified by the U. S. Department of Agriculture: Community Services and Facilities, People Building, Economic Development, and Environmental Improvement. The Southern Regional Rural Development Research Council has listed a full spectrum of concerns in each of these areas; the list is available in the first annual progress report.

A Network focuses its attention on a limited area in order to produce practical results and recommendations.

Who Are the Center Associates?

Scientists and educators who have a particular interest in the regional concerns of rural development submitted proposals to establish Functional Networks. These are Center Associates. In turn, they have selected colleagues from two or more states to cooperate as members of the Network. Chairmen will be available to serve as consultants and technical advisors to other states in the region.

Appointed without pay for a one-year period, the Center Associates will have SRDC support for their Functional Networks in research assistance, clerical assistance, travel funds, publication funds, and the like.

Research Inventory

The SRDC recognizes that the first priority must be the inventory of the current state of knowledge, as a base for action. Each Functional Network is charged with completing a thorough inventory of research applicable to its particular problem area. Pertinent principles will be extracted and published.

From this beginning, the Network is responsible for preparing information for publication in these forms: (1) a four-page information sheet for general public use; (2) detailed information documents for use by professionals and community leaders; (3) research publications. Similar information, as appropriate, may be prepared concerning Extension programs.

Finally, the Network will disseminate and interpret information to other professionals in the region. This task brings concrete findings to bear on concrete problems to assist rural development programs and policy formulation. Network members will conduct workshops on research techniques, knowledge, opportunities, and other needed information. Thus researchers and educators can be brought up to date on the current state of knowledge.

Functional Networks will be dissolved as soon as specific assignments are completed. However, they may be regrouped to give attention to related problems where their proven expertise can be of value.

A call for proposals was issued by the SRDC in the early summer of 1976, and three functional networks have been funded to begin their work immediately.

Six additional Functional Networks will be funded pending final approval in the winter of 1976. Four of these can be announced with this issue:

Industrialization of Rural Areas
Eldon D. Smith
University of Kentucky

Educational Needs Projection and Rural Development
Gerald C. Wheelock
Alabama A & M University

Health Care and Rural Development
R. David Mustian
North Carolina State University

Small Farms
W. Arden Coletta
University of Florida

A fuller report on these and others which may be approved will appear in the next issue of Rural Development Research and Education.

Knowing What We Need To Know

The Work Of The SRDC Functional Networks

The three SRDC Functional Networks currently in operation involve individuals and institutions spread out across the South. Their separate projects have a common goal—to catalogue the current state of research knowledge. They are working to know what we need to know.

Specifically, each of the Networks is inventorying research in its area of interest for the past five years, extracting concepts and principles which offer common threads, and preparing concrete results for publication. In the future, workshops for professionals and agencies or groups working in these areas of rural development will be held to acquaint them with this base information.

The three Functional Networks currently funded are:

“Land Use Issues”
“Citizen Participation in Rural Development Planning”
“Evaluation in Rural Development”

To give some idea of the scope of their work, they involve 24 professionals, 9 states, 11 disciplines, nine 1862 institutions, five 1890 institutions, and 2 others; 9 researchers, 12 Extension personnel, 14 land-grant institutions, and 2 non-land-grant institutions.

Here is a progress report, an update of the work of each Network.

Land Use Issues

One Functional Network formed in June 1975 is conducting an “Inventory and Appraisal of Research Concepts, Methods, and Results in Land Use Issues.” Dr. Burt F. Long, Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, serves as the Center Associate responsible for organizing the Network and carrying out the work. Other members come from five states:

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<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Research/Extension</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Sandra Barie</td>
<td>Agricultural Economics</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Craig Infinger</td>
<td>Agricultural Economics</td>
<td>Extension</td>
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<td>Dr. Aga Khan</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Teaching/Research</td>
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<td>Dr. J. Paxton Marshall</td>
<td>Public Policy</td>
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<td>Dr. Darrell Mundy</td>
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<td>Dr. Leon Danielson</td>
<td>Agriculture and Rural Sociology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bob Chaplin</td>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Michael Appleby</td>
<td>Environmental and Urban Systems</td>
<td>Teaching/Research</td>
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Dr. Burt F. Long, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Members of the Network have varied experience and expertise in the land policy area. The Network advises the Center Associate and his research assistants on methods and procedures for carrying out project objectives, and provides assistance in conducting analysis.

Purposes and Objectives
Specific objectives of the Network are:
1. To form a Functional Network in Land Use Issues in the Southern Region
2. To inventory and review recent research in land use problems
3. To extract useful concepts, approaches, and results, and present implications and recommendations for Extension and Research programs
4. To prepare publications for use by Extension and Research personnel
5. To plan at least one workshop based on the results.

Accomplishments
Jim Mize, graduate research assistant, has worked with Burt Long to develop a classification and cataloging system for research. This system pulls out specific information such as:
(1) What type of land is involved?
(2) Where?
(3) Who is involved?
(4) How or what type of action is involved?
(5) When? (Or the dynamics of land policy), and (6) Source of materials.

Meetings
To date, approximately 200 publications have been inventoried and evaluated and abstracts of about 600 additional projects have been secured from computerized information sources. All Experiment Station Directors have been contacted for information on projects and personnel, and contact has been made with several regional committees for current information on projects, publications, and educational programs.

A survey of Extension Educational programs is planned.

The Network has held one meeting to discuss:
Defining boundaries of research to be included in inventory — i.e., what is included in land use
Review and modification of procedures being used and proposed in the project
Future publications: content, format, timing
Preliminary planning of workshop to present results of inventory
Sharing of information on land use Research and Extension programs

A second meeting is planned in early 1976.

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH LITERATURE IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The third Functional Network recently initiated deals with "Evaluative Research Literature in Rural Development in the Southern Region." Its Center Associate is Dr. Arthur G. Cosby, Associate Professor of Rural Sociology at Texas A & M University. The project at Texas A & M has three other participants: Mr. G. Richard Wetherill, Extension Assistant, project leader; Myrna Holkens, Graduate Research Assistant, and Marilyn Maggs, undergraduate assistant.

Dr. Donald E. Voth, of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at the University of Arkansas, and William Bonner, Chairman of the Division of Community Affairs at the University of Arkansas Extension Service, are co-leaders of the Network. Mrs. Carron Reddick and Mr. David Gay work on this project at the University of Arkansas.

Focus
The Functional Network has decided to focus primarily upon two types of citizen participation: (1) that sponsored by agencies and organizations (Citizen Advisory Committees, etc.) and (2) that sponsored by formal voluntary organizations, with a secondary emphasis upon political participation. Automated bibliographic search services are being used to identify research materials and these materials are being evaluated using a standard format in order to extract findings and prepare brief annotations, and to classify the materials.

Evaluation of Research Literature in Rural Development

Also under consideration are training or education modules on the role of citizen participation in community development.

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Tatums Takes A Second Step

By James Smith
Area Program Agent
Rural Development Cooperative Extension
Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma

Tatums, Oklahoma, an all-black community located approximately 100 miles south of Oklahoma City in the central part of the state, now has local government again after a lapse of 34 years. Tatums was chartered in 1907 under the Indian Territory Act, and maintained a local government continuously up to 1940. Then the draft of World War II and the impact of economic opportunities town-up in the industrial areas of the Midwest and West began to take the young and middle-aged male population away from Tatums.

Rev. Fred Rushing, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Tatums, requested help from the Community Action Program (CAP) Director in Ardmore in 1973. They invited the Extension representative from Langston University to come to Tatums and meet with the town’s people at the Community Action Agency. More than 100 people attended, out of a total population of 405. The CRD specialist offered an Extension proposal to help eliminate local government.

After a lengthy question and answer period, which emphasized that the Extension program would not duplicate, interfere with, or eliminate the program of the Community Action Agency, the citizens extended a formal invitation to Langston University’s Cooperative Extension component to begin work in the town of Tatums. Temporary officers were elected.

Within a few months, the citizens had established their priorities for immediate, intermediate, and long-range goals. The citizens organized themselves into the Tatums Developmental Council, which was declared the official agent for the people until self-government had been reactivated.

At a meeting of the national T-Okie Club, an organization of persons born in Tatums who lived throughout the country, the president reviewed the county’s program and promised to have local government in Tatums by the time the group would meet in 1975. This promise was fulfilled in August, 1974, by an Executive order of Governor David Hall appointing Cecil Jones and Mrs. Ogiea Hogan as town councilmen and empowering them to select the third council man. The three assumed responsibilities until a regular election was held in April, 1975. The three councilmen were elected by acclamation.

Tatums is now an official Bicentennial community, the second all-black community to receive this recognition in the country. The $5,500 received from the State Bicentennial Authority, plus the town’s local share, has been used to establish an official reception center for the town, develop a youth center, identify historical landmarks, refurbish the gymnasium, and create a history of the town.

The Town Council application for funds for a sewer project has been approved. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BDR) has approved a grant for the acquisition of land to develop a recreational park. A former citizen has given the town a gift of $2,500 to assist in the acquisition of park land.

An application for planning funds is being submitted to the State Division of Economic and Community Development.

The Southern Regional Rural Development Research Council has funded three research projects to examine overall patterns of land use and industrialization to draw conclusions for the most beneficial approaches. Under the direction of experts in the land-grant institutions in the South, the projects are:

- Evaluation of Economic Benefits and Costs of Industrialization in Rural Texas Communities
- Local Public Programs Affecting Metropolitan Industrial Plant Retention and Expansion
- Economic Analysis of Regional Land-Use Policies and Regulations

This is a progress report on the three studies currently underway.

Industrial Impact in Rural Communities in Texas

Rural communities across the South seem to agree on one issue — that the location of a new industrial plant in their community is perhaps the best means of improving local income, employment, and tax base. Research and experience reveal significant benefits from industrializing a rural community. However, these benefits are not without costs, and unless industrialization is properly managed, the net benefits may not be as favorable as expected. One must therefore look at the long-range and overall benefits before leaping into an industrialization program.

Developing useful information on these benefits and costs in rural communities is the objective of research currently underway at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station at Texas A & M University. Dr. Lonnie J. Jones is the Department of Agricultural Economics is providing leadership to this research project, with cooperation from Drs. James Coff and Ronald Lacey. Two research assistants, Lynn Reinschmidt and Chester Ballad, are working on the project.

Using a sample of rural communities that have attracted new manufacturing plants or expanded older ones in 1970, industry plant managers, employers, and community officials are being interviewed to ascertain information on income and employment generated by the plants, living and spending patterns of employees, community investments and services provided to the new industries and their employees.
Local city, school, and county records are being used to determine costs of services to plants and plant employees. This information provides a basis for estimating total benefits and costs to the community and rural area as well as their distribution among groups of residents in the rural area.

In addition to these economic impacts, a study currently underway involves changes in city structures, institutions, leadership, and other factors will yield information on the social impacts of a new industry in rural towns.

While supported by grant funds, this research is closely related to other rural development activities at Texas A & M. The information is being used in industrial development workshops conducted by the Extension Service and other agencies involved in action programs in rural industrialization. Professional publications of research results of this project will be available to rural development specialists throughout the South.

Industrial Development Research: Tennessee and Kentucky Collaborate

Researchers in business and government have long been interested in knowing just how to plan location sites for industries in rural areas. They have asked about the factors that determine location of manufacturing industries and factors that determine how industry grows and thrives--or fails to.

Dr. Bradley Deaton of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at the University of Tennessee and Dr. Eldon Smith of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Kentucky have joined forces to deal with these questions. Their project is the first two-state Hatch Act proposal, and is joined to a companion project funded by a grant from the Southern Regional Rural Development Research Council.

Both of these studies are pioneering; little or no prior research has taken their point of view that the community is the primary action unit for recruitment of industry and public support. Deaton and Smith are looking for answers to specific questions:

1. What kinds of communities get a "payoff" in increased employment when they attract industry?
2. What inducements work best in bringing in new plants?
3. What kinds of industry are most likely to survive and grow in particular types of communities?
4. What community actions encourage and support industrial growth? Do they differ by community types? By classes of industry?

The two-state collaboration on this project overcomes data and manpower restrictions of a limited-area study and brings together the special interests of the two researchers. In a single-state study, the number of new plant locations of significant size would be too small for statistical comparison. The variety of industries and locational and environmental conditions affecting profits made this obvious. From 1970 to 1973 there were only 132 new plants located in Kentucky, and 172 in Tennessee.

So far the researchers agree that their collaboration offers many advantages and is profitable for exploratory studies requiring a broad data base.

After some preliminary data runs, the results suggest that:

1. Diversified industries are locating in Kentucky in all major regions.
2. The number of industrial locations per site owned or optioned by government was much greater than for privately owned sites.
3. Numbers of new plants varied tremendously by region.

They stress that problems of coordinating, gathering, and processing data would make cooperation between remote locations much more difficult. Their kind of regional cooperation, however, has proven its worth.

Land Use Policies and Regulations

What is the impact of existing or alternative public land use regulations upon regional population distributions, resource allocations, and economic growth? The SRRDC research project on "Economic Analysis of Regional Land Use Policies and Regulations" under the direction of Dr. Burl F. Long, Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics and Dr. Sanda S. Batie, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, seeks a concise answer to that question.

Traditionally, economics considers resource allocation as guided by profit, as "buyers" or users compete in the market. Every possible good or service which a landowner could produce requires inputs, and for any given product there will be one optimal mix of inputs to obtain the greatest profits. The nature of the land conditions the nature of markets in land. Efficient allocation of resources is a universally accepted social goal, and at first glance one might expect to find economic efficiency in land use as landowners seek the "best use." That this situation does not exist in fact is well known.

Because of the unique nature of land, activities on one part or parcel depend on the people there and nearby. Costs or benefits are outside of the traditional economic concept of profits and markets, then, since they must take the human factor into account.

Batie and Long's project involves categorizing existing and foreseeable land use regulations and methods of implementation from a review of legislation for all southern states. Also, they are analyzing costs and benefits associated with various types of decisions.

The survey of land use statutes has been completed, and is available as a four-part report on comprehensive programs, alternatives, traditional statutes, air pollution control statutes, and other statutes having indirect impacts on land use.

Showing relationships between land use controls and social benefits or costs, however, requires an extensive review of literature and rigorous economic analysis to identify how land use decisions are made. One section which examines the nature of land and implications for efficient market allocation has already been completed.

As all the parts of the study move to completion, the researchers feel that their results will aid in evaluating public land use controls for their ability to resolve problems experienced in many rural communities. One part of the study, for example, looks at political vs. market decision making as it influences resource allocation.

Dr. Long and Batie have been assisted in their research by David S. Dalong, Washington and Lee University Law School, and Roy R. Carriker, research assistant in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
Living in the rural South — is it better today than it has been? How can such a change be measured? These questions are the basis of research by the S-79 Regional Research Project, which is obtaining, analyzing, and organizing social and economic data useful to leaders in pursuing the goals of rural development.

Data collected for the 1971-1976 study are comparable to data collected for the S-44 Research Project, “Adjustment Potential of Families and Individuals in Low-Income Rural Areas of the South.” The counties studied were designated as low-income in 1950. So the project studies change over several years.

Representatives from land-grant universities in eight states are participating in the current study: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Low-income households, census and other secondary materials, and knowledgeable in the counties are the sources for information which would point to any change in the quality of life. Although the data are still being analyzed, some preliminary findings can be summarized:

1. County residents and the “knowledgeable” feel that the situation in their counties is improved — the “knowledgeable” see the changes more positively, but both groups perceive change about the same.
2. While things that can be easily measured, such as ownership of household items, are on the upswing, satisfaction with society and other subjective measures are declining.
3. More highways, utilities, and other facilities are available, but human services have not improved to the same degree.
4. Objective data and subjective perceptions are not highly related.
5. Open-county respondents are less optimistic than non-open-county respondents.
6. Federal programs are thought to provide greater benefit and local and state programs.

The committee has planned five regional publications to meet the original objectives of the project: a report comparing social indicators for open-county households, a description of how the data were compared across time periods, indicators of change in quality of life from 1960-1972, interpretation of changes for policy implications, and current status of the quality of life in selected southern counties.

In general, the committee hopes to be able to identify what changes have occurred, what counties have improved the most and why, and the current status of the quality of this life.

Members of the S-79 Technical Committee represent Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

By Dr. Carlton R. Sollie
Sociologist, Mississippi Agriculture And Forestry Experiment Station
Mississippi State University
Mississippi
Quality Housing Environment For Low-Income Families: S-95 Regional Research Project

By Dr. James E. Montgomery, Professor of Management, Housing, And Family Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia

It has been documented time and time again in past research that rural housing does not meet the needs of the rural population. Rural housing is inadequate in quantity, quality, affordability cost, and other factors of "livability." To find out just what kinds of housing rural people need and want and what keeps them from having it is the goal of the S-95 Regional Research Project, "Quality Housing Environment for Low-Income Families." The work of the project is planned and executed by a Housing Research Technical Committee, assisted by a regional administrative advisor assigned to the project by participating agricultural experiment station directors.

Objectives of the project are:
1. To identify aspirations, expectations, needs, and satisfactions of rural, low-income families about their housing. To see what barriers keep them from getting what they need.
2. To formulate and evaluate new delivery systems for marketing, production, and financing to improve housing conditions.
3. To develop new ways of transferring housing information.
4. To evaluate how rural people might like or afford new designs for housing components, combinations of materials, and building methods—e.g., peripheral heating systems, modular panels.

The S-95 committee can pursue such far-ranging objectives because project personnel represent many disciplines, including architecture, home economics, engineering, agricultural economics, sociology, environmental planning, and statistics.

Here are some specific activities of the committee:
1. Several members of the research team are looking in depth at more effective methods of production, marketing, and financing of housing for low-income families. They want to know what affects quality and what quantity of housing is available to these families. One question pursued is the feasibility of rehabilitating existing structures for family homes.
2. Getting research results to housing decision makers is of vital importance. At the Regional Housing Workshop held in Atlanta in September, attention was devoted to improving communication among researchers and such decision makers as the Cooperative Extension Service, state and Federal agencies, builders, lending institutions, and planners. The conference was cosponsored by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the landgrant institutions participating in S-95, with assistance from the Southern Rural Development Center. As an outgrowth of this workshop, several state housing conferences are being planned, and a second workshop will be conducted in 1977.
3. Researchers of two participating universities of the Agricultural Research Service are looking at the practical how-to's of housing: solar energy homes, conservation of building materials, housing designs, foundation systems, flooring, water supplies, and waste disposal systems. Prototypes, houses and components, are to be built, tested, and evaluated.
4. Some 3,500 low-income families in certain regions of eight states are being interviewed about what they like and dislike about their present housing, what their present housing is like, how they obtained their houses, housing costs in relation to income, utilities and types of energy used, improvements made and planned, and housing satisfaction and expectations. In a ninth state the questionnaire will be administered to 200 families living in three-bedroom houses financed through the Farmers Home Administration.

Rural Caucus Looks to the South

The Congressional Rural Caucus is a bipartisan group of U.S. Representatives from 35 states, dedicated to the orderly growth and development of thousands of small towns and communities. The National Organization of Counties works closely with the CRC in its efforts for rural development legislation.

Currently the highest priority of the CRC is to take an inventory of the nation's capabilities and needs and then set in motion programs to satisfy those needs, according to Rep. John B. Breckenridge (D-KY), newly elected Chairman of the caucus.

Among the areas needing attention, he stressed, are: rural water and sewage treatment facilities, development, education, health, housing, manpower, public works, transportation, and agriculturally related programs.

The CRC is currently composed of 102 members. Of these, 42 are from the South. Of the 7 Executive Committee members, 4 are from this region. Of 13 committees and subcommittees, 6 are chaired by Southerners.

Leaders' School

Two regional sessions of the National Rural Development Leaders' School will be conducted in FY 1975 by the Rural Development Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The first will be held at the southern region in the Kanuga Conference Center near Asheville, North Carolina, the week of February 8-14. State Rural Development Committees will provide recruiting and selection of participants.

A second session is planned in the northeastern states, April 25-May 1, near Scranton, Pennsylvania.

The IRS also plans to package the school for use by state committees, Cooperative Extension Service, and other groups involved in training rural leaders, according to Walter A. Guntharp, Administrator, IRS.

The school is intended to involve nonprofessional leaders in positions of responsibility for rural development who lack formal educational training in the process.

Participants will be elected and appointed state and local officials, voluntary leaders in state and local public service organizations, and business, industrial, and civic leaders interested in rural development. The program includes a "lecture program," designed to cover basic concepts and procedural steps, emphasizing: the rural setting, the rural development process, rural development leadership, financing rural development, working with organizations, and rural development programming. In addition, a "speakers' program" presents national figures active in rural development. A Rural Resources Fair enables participants to meet with representatives of government and private institutions that provide assistance to local development. Finally, a group project puts participants to work on the problems of a hypothetical community.

The North Carolina session is the sixth for the Leaders' School. A brochure describing the program and application forms are available from state Rural Development Committees.

SDRC Publications Available

The Southern Rural Development Center has published over the past year a number of publications of interest to a varied audience; these are available free upon request from the Center, although not all are available in quantity.

Pamphlets—The Southern Rural Development Center Program of Work Explains origin, funding, programs Personnel in Rural Development A list of Research and Extension personnel in the 13 Southern States and Puerto Rico involved in Rural Development and Title V Rural Development Research at Land Grant Institutions in the South A comprehensive summary of research recently completed and in progress. Individual resumes of about 300 projects.

Community Resource Development Publications List of rural development and CRD publications available in the Southern Region Analyzing Impacts of Community Development Theoretical approach to measuring benefits of community development. Published for ES-USAID Bibliography of Rural Development More than 500 citations of recent publications in seven major areas of rural development which have received little previous attention. For the National Agricultural Library. Not available at this time; copies expected by Spring, 1976.

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