



## Items of Interest

## Webinars:

Coming soon!



**YOU ARE INVITED**

**Regional Rural Development Centers  
Listening Sessions:  
Investing in Rural Recovery**

### Invitation to Help Identify Regional and National Investments for Rural Recovery and Development

The four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) are leading an effort to identify the issues diverse rural stakeholders see as top priorities for rural recovery and development. The RRDC's invite research and Extension Directors and Administrators and their community partners to participate in both a Regional Session (broad local context) and National Topic (issues of national importance) Sessions.

Please (1) [register here to participate](#) and (2) **share the invitation to participate** with field Agents/Educators and community-based partners engaged in economic, workforce, and community development activities in rural and coastal areas and small towns. **These 90-minute, free sessions will run from March 22 through April 26, 2022.**

After registering, visit the recently launched a [Data Dashboard](#) to explore outcomes from the national stakeholder survey that drove topics for the Listening Sessions.

**[READ THE FULL REPORT HERE](#)**

### Recently Published: Rural Population Health and Aging: Introduction to the Special Issue

The *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, the official peer-reviewed publication of the Southern Rural Sociological Association, has published a special issue on rural aging.

The collection of four articles and an introduction/commentary essay highlight innovative research to inform education, outreach/Extension, and policy. The special issue was produced in collaboration with the [Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging \(INRPHA\)](#) with guest editors from The Pennsylvania State University, Syracuse University, University of Colorado Boulder, and the Southern Rural Development Center.

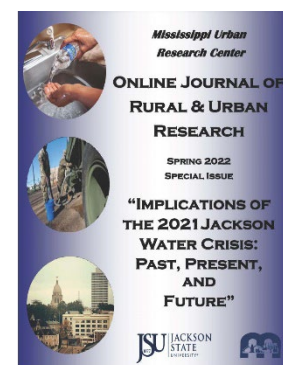
[READ THE SPECIAL ISSUE HERE](#)

## Special Issue: Online Journal of Rural and Urban Research

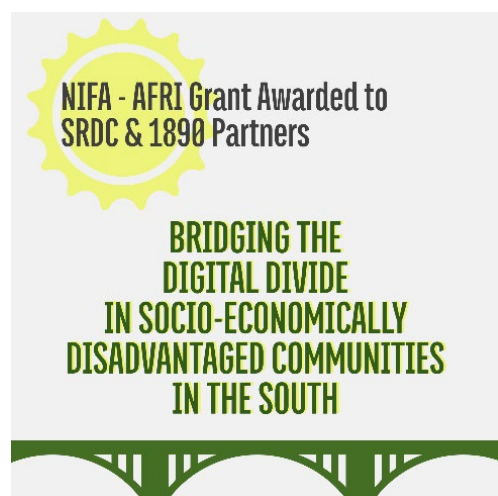
Connecting community and regional development topics that cut across the rural-urban continuum, John J. Green co-authored an article with several colleagues focused on the connections between population change and the capacity to address public water system needs.

Previously presented at the virtual conference on the Jackson Water Crisis, this study appears in a special issue of the *Online Journal of Rural and Urban Research*.

[READ THE SPECIAL ISSUE HERE](#)



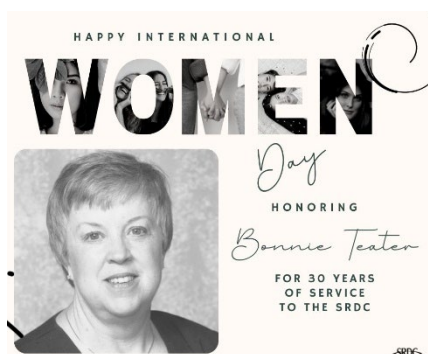
## SRDC and 1890 Partners Receive AFRI Rural and Economic Development Grant Funding for Bridging the Digital Divide in Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Communities in the South Project



Vital to Rural Economic Development (AFRI's Agriculture Economics and Rural Communities priority) is equitable digital access. Digital equity means all individuals have digital (internet) capacity needed for full participation in our society and economy. Digital equity is essential for economic viability and quality of life.

This project's goal is to identify and address digital equity challenges facing socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) communities in the Southern Region. Through research, the project will identify unique challenges facing SED communities along with the capacity of the 1890 Extension Service to respond. Extension will develop and pilot SED-responsive approaches to building digital capacity in partnership with 1890 Extension.

SRDC's **Rachel Welborn** and **Dr. John Green** are pleased to be partnering with **Dorothy Brandon**, Alabama A&M University; **Travella Free**, Kentucky State University; **Roberto Gallardo**, Purdue University; **Sanjun Gu**, North Carolina A&T State University; **Jimmy Henry**, Prairie View A&M University; and **Terrence Wolfork**, Fort Valley A&M University.



## SRDC's History: Social Media Series to Highlight History of the Center in Celebration of the RRDCs' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

March is Women's History Month, and on March 8<sup>th</sup>, International Women's Day, we honored SRDC retiree Bonnie Teater for her 30 years of service to the Center.

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## NIFA Seeks Hall of Fame and Partnership Award Nominees

**For action no later than April 1, 2022.** Winning nominations will be recognized at the NIFA Day of Appreciation in either June or July 2022. NIFA invites nominations for the following:

Inductees into the USDA-NIFA Hall of Fame have worked, coordinated, or supported activities exemplifying NIFA's synergy of excellence in any combination of research, education, and Extension approaches on local, regional, national, or international levels. Inductees have also demonstrated a measurable and positive impact on the lives of citizens and NIFA's mission to invest in and advance agricultural research, education, and Extension to solve societal challenges. Nominations will be evaluated based on three weighted areas: measurable impact on NIFA; synergy of research, education, and/or Extension; and endorsements/letters of support. Nominations must consist of a completed [nomination form](#) and up to three endorsements/letters of support. To learn more, visit the [NIFA Hall of Fame Awards website](#).

NIFA also invites all Land-grant Universities, cooperating institutions, and organizations supported by NIFA to submit nominations for the 2022 NIFA Partnership Awards Program. Nominations can be submitted for individuals or teams of up to 20 members. Complete details, instructions and [the form](#) are found [NIFA Partnership Award webpage](#).

## Regional Spotlight

### Virginia Cooperative Extension Innovates to Foster Resiliency in the Community Leaders in Challenging Times

The circumstances and needs of the last two years have pulled on leaders in unprecedented ways. The demands to pivot quickly, make decisions and manage amidst uncertainty and ongoing changes, and disruptions in systems and routines have been straining as a leader, along with, being able to communicate, encourage and support those they are charged. Often peer networks that may exist in other ranks provide a means of social support, but leaders rarely have the chance to "not be in the leadership role" and to receive support. In response, Virginia Cooperative Extension launched a 6-week, "Building Resilience" virtual program and engaged a cohort-model of leaders representing a wide range of professionals in the fields of: public schools, community colleges, county governments, center for sexual assault survivors, human resources, social services, state department of corrections, mental health, and several areas of VCE and NC Cooperative Extension (FCS, FNP, 4-H, and Master Food Volunteers). With a mental health services provider from Virginia Department of Behavioral Health (Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services) serving as the

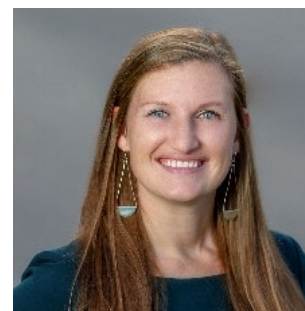
expert presenter and co-facilitator, participants learned skills and built relationships throughout six weekly sessions. Each session consisted of 30 minutes of content, viewed asynchronously, and a one-hour facilitated discussion on the specific topic, such as Effective Communication in Challenging Times, Decision-Making, and Self-Care While Helping Others.

Two distinct cohorts of 25 leaders have completed a 6-week series. Comments throughout the series and post-evaluations revealed that their participation served as a means of professional development to positively impact their workspaces. One leader noted, "I've taken for granted how much my staff feels I appreciate them; I have had to make more intentional efforts now remotely – not only do I need to be resilient, but I need to build that in my staff." Another remarked, "I have already started doing quick individual check-ins with my team based on what we discuss here. I know these sessions have helped me be able to empathize and lead in the area of support for my team."

[Click Here to Read the Full Article](#)

## Employee Highlight: Beka Burton, University of Kentucky

Beka Burton is an Economic Development Specialist at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY. Her work for the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky, CEDIK, focuses on catalyzing positive change to build engaged communities and vibrant economies. Recently, she has led the charge on launching a statewide, web-based BR&E communication platform built specifically for economic developers to improve connectivity between businesses and local leadership, address issues, and to seize on growth opportunities within Kentucky.



Beka's work within the public and private sectors has given her extensive experience in economic development, sales, business growth and development, and community engagement. She has worked with Fortune 500 companies such as Kroger, DaVita, Amazon, and PepsiCo along with a variety of small - mid-sized businesses nationally and internationally. She is passionate about building community capacity and strengthening economic growth in Appalachia.

Beka has spent her professional career in Kentucky and Washington, receiving her bachelor's degree in Marketing from Eastern Kentucky University. She is currently pursuing a Certified Economic Developer certification through the International Economic Development Council.

In her free time, Beka enjoys all outdoor adventure related activities. Having summited the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest peak in the lower 48 states along with multiple summits of Mt. Rainier, Mt. Hood and other peaks across the US, she alongside of her husband created a non-profit to help remove/lower barriers for youth and families to experience the outdoors in a reproducible and low impact way as well. The organizations' mission of addressing the disconnect between our society and the natural world also bleeds into her professional career and desire to help others grow in sustainable ways. She is the proud mother of an adventurous young daughter and an aging dog and enjoys teaching both to be bold and intrepid in all aspects of life.

## Job Opportunities

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### Assistant Research Scientist / Rural Social Scientist, University of Georgia

#### Open until filled

The position supports the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FR-SAN) grant. The purpose of FR-SAN is to establish a network to connects individuals engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations to stress assistance programs. Establishing a network to assists farmers and ranchers in times of stress can offer a conduit to improving behavioral health awareness, literacy, and outcomes for agricultural producers, workers, and their families. The USDA/NIFA established four regional centers across the US. This position will serve in the Southern FR-SAN Region. The regional center is headed by the University of Tennessee. [Click here to apply](#)

#### [LEARN MORE](#)

### Applied Economist/ The Institute of Government, University of Georgia

#### Position closes April 1, 2022

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government at The University of Georgia invites applications for a Public Service Faculty position in the State Services and Decision Support Division's Workforce and Economic Analysis Unit. This position carries rank in the public service faculty career ladder of the University.

The successful candidate will have primary responsibilities in conducting economic analysis, fiscal analysis, economic impact studies, research and providing professional services for state agencies and local governments. The applied economist will also work on collaborative projects with the Institute's applied demographer, workforce development team, and data analytics teams. The position monitors and interprets economic, labor, demographic, and government administrative data indicators. The position analyzes developments in Georgia's labor market, state tax and revenue, and other area effecting Georgia's economy and considers the impacts on the state's economic outlook.

#### [LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

### Associate Dean and Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension

#### Open until filled

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) at Virginia Tech are recruiting its next Associate Dean and Director of VCE. The Associate Dean and Director provides primary leadership for all aspects of Virginia Cooperative Extension. The Director reports to the Dean of CALs, and serves with the associate deans for Academic Programs, Research and Graduate Studies, and CALs Global as a member of the dean's executive team. The director is also one of the voting members of the University's Administrative Council for Extension and Experiment Station Research. The director collaborates closely with the Extension Administrator at Virginia State University to ensure a shared vision and to promote a state-wide joint Extension program. The director will also represent VCE at the state, regional and national levels, as well as build strong relationships with stakeholders, partners, and funders.

## Director of Communications, Strategic Marketing, and Client Relations

**Closes April 14, 2022**

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) ([www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)) seeks a Director of Communications, Strategic Marketing, and Client Relations to serve as a dynamic communicator, strategic collaborator, and member of the ACES Leadership team to execute strategy across the state of Alabama. The position will provide overall leadership and vision for managing and directing the newly organized Communications, Strategic Marketing, and Client Relations Department within the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

This collaborative leader will develop new structures, processes, and practices to enable, train and encourage the team to work together to provide multi-channel communications strategy, creative services and delivery that effectively brings awareness to target audiences. The incumbent will lead a team that leverages an integrated communications approach that incorporates digital and print storytelling, public relations, marketing, graphic design and brand management expertise. Integral components of this leadership role include building and promoting brand awareness and providing efficient communications, marketing, design, editorial, digital, and web services that broaden Extension's reach in providing innovative solutions for our clients.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

## Grant Connections

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### STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT: USDA Seeks Applications to Advance Equity and Expand Regional Economies in Distressed Rural Communities

**The deadline to submit applications is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, April 19, 2022.**

**Applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov). Potential applicants may submit a concept proposal for review by the agency to [SM.USDA-RD.RISE@usda.gov](mailto:SM.USDA-RD.RISE@usda.gov) no later than February 18, 2022.**

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small announced the Department is accepting grant applications that will advance equity in rural America by creating new opportunities in distressed communities. USDA is offering [priority points](#) to projects that advance key priorities under the Biden-Harris Administration to help communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, advance equity, and combat climate change. These extra points will increase the likelihood of funding for projects seeking to address these critical challenges in rural America. The [Rural Innovation Stronger Economy \(RISE\)](#) grant program encourages a regional, innovation-driven approach to economic development by funding job accelerator partnerships in low-income rural communities. If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit [our GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

[LEARN MORE](#)



## Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

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### Food Systems Leadership Institute Accepting 2022 Applications

[FSLI](https://fsl.org/apply) is accepting applications for Cohort #18 for the fall of 2022. The Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) offers leadership development to upper-level leaders in higher education, government, and industry. The Fellows will learn strategies to handle the leadership challenges and opportunities for the future. The review for all completed application packets will be on March 28, 2022. Full details and the link to the nomination form are found at <https://fsl.org/apply>.

### Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference

**In-person: April 3-6, 2022; Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Washington, DC**

PILD 2022 is your opportunity to bring the issues of your hometown to Washington, DC. Program Highlights Include: how to best to engage your representatives in your mission, communicate your message effectively, and the “new” National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and why it matters to you.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### National Extension Energy and National Sustainability Joint Summits

**In-person: May 15-18, 2022**

The Summit is the best, single venue to learn about the latest in sustainability and energy research, share innovative Extension programs, update your program toolbox, and cultivate new communities of practice.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### NACDEP Annual Conference: Creating Connections at Every Crossroad

**In-person: June 5-8, 2022, Indianapolis, Indiana**

The 2022 NACDEP Annual Conference will be held at the Alexander Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana. Registration begins March 1, 2022.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW MORE](#)

### International Workshop on Agritourism

**In-person: August 30 – September 1, 2022**

The International Workshop on Agritourism will take place in person in Burlington, Vermont, USA. This workshop is designed to be a hybrid event to allow those unable to travel to have access to content as well as a variety of other ways for all participants to engage and connect with colleagues in the agritourism community. The conference will feature over 140 presentations, workshops, and posters. Topics cover every aspect of agritourism, including running and marketing an agritourism business, managing farms stays, promoting rural development, creating regional partnerships, and sharing research and case studies. Registration is now open and the early bird rate is available through March 29.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

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