



Items of Interest

Recent Workshops Conducted to Build Capacity for Racial Understanding and Broadband Access

Recently, workshops were conducted in support of national initiatives that help to build capacity for inclusiveness and economic vibrancy.



(Photo from Coming Together 2022 Spring Workshop)

Coming Together efforts have materialized in three new states being trained, West Virginia, Nebraska, and South Dakota, as well as expanding existing state teams.

To view the 2021 Coming Together impact video and previous team photos, as well as learn more about the project, please visit [the Coming Together landing page](#).



(Photo from Advancing Digital Access Workshop)

Another workshop, Advancing Digital Access, provided training on broadband access and digital literacy. This workshop engaged participants from across eight states. Groups will be piloting materials to help refine for a national rollout in the coming months.

To stay connected with upcoming efforts, consider joining the [Broadband Access & Digital Skills community of practice](#).

Webinars:

Coming soon!

Center Staff Attend the Southern Region Mini-Land Grant Meeting

Reflections from Southern Rural Development Center Director, John J. Green



In mid-May, Rachel Welborn (SRDC Associate Director) and I had the opportunity to attend the Southern Region Mini-Land Grant meeting held in College Station, TX. Hosted by Texas A&M University AgriLife and Prairie View A&M University College of Agriculture and Human Sciences, this event brought together representatives from Land-Grant institutions, including regional administrative, academic, research, and Extension leaders, along with national partners from associated organizations. Participants strengthened and expanded networks, shared insights for mutual benefit, and had business meetings amongst their respective associations. We were able to participate in several of the latter, including engaging sessions with the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors, Association of 1890 Research Directors, Association of Southern Region Extension Directors, and the 1890 Association of Extension

Administrators. Additionally, we attended plenary presentations, and I presented information on regional population change and implications for research and Extension as part of the panel entitled, "Who Is Our Audience". All told, it was a great conference. Having started in this position with the SRDC last summer amid the pandemic, it was refreshing to see people in person, renew connections with past colleagues, and meet new partners that I look forward to working with for years to come. We left the meeting with input on how the SRDC can help to strengthen rural development capacity in the Southern Region.

SRDC's History: Social Media Series in Celebration of the RRDCs' 50th Anniversary



Reflecting on the 50th anniversary of the Rural Development Act setting the foundation for the Regional Rural Development Centers, we have been exploring the SRDC's archives, including the initiatives described in the past annual reports. Here is an example from 2014.

To view this annual report as well as others, please visit:

www.srdc.msstate.edu/publications/annual/

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Regional Spotlight

The Kentucky State University Community and Resource Development team takes care of its own backyard— like the local businesses in Frankfort.



The City of Frankfort's economic recovery grants were made available to businesses that fit certain criteria to help mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on small businesses. A total of 97 grants were awarded for a total amount of \$966,600.

Kentucky State's CRD team got involved to make sure businesses outside of the city's typical communication network. Gill Finley Jr. and Chris Cribbs reached out to business owners they knew and knocked on the doors of those they didn't. They reached people who often miss communications from the City of Frankfort, said Rebecca Hall, Community Engagement and Grants Manager.

Without the efforts of Kentucky State's CRD team, "we would have probably had half the amount of successful applicants that we had," Hall said.

Finley was like a "little angel" when he showed up, told her about the grant, and helped her fill out the application, said Leticia Pecina, owner of Quality Nutrition, one of several businesses in the Grandview area of Frankfort that received a grant. Other recipients were A'Maysing Ink Tattoos and Piercings, Hairport Salon, Blys Barbershop, and Nuwine Barbershop, and all these business owners said the grant helped them catch up on bills, and several were able to renovate and improve their spaces.



Upon hearing about the grant opportunity for the first time from Finley, Eric Nyantaki, owner of Hairport Salon, thought: "It sounds too good to be true".

Cribbs said this is the purpose of Cooperative Extension and aligns with the mission of Kentucky State University to help people with limited resources. "We're supposed to reach out," he said. "Small commerce is the economic heartbeat of a community."

Finley said they made sure business owners know that the CRD team is available for future partnerships. He also stated: "This is just the beginning of additional services and trying to build a partnership with them that's sustainable".

County Government Personnel Education and Training, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University

The OSU of the South is proud to highlight the “County Training Program” (CTP). Oklahoma law calls for education and training of county elected officials and their personnel and this assignment is given to the Cooperative Extension Service. The purpose is to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and professionalism of the public services provided by these public officials. This fiscal year (2021-2022) CTP provided 81 short courses and provided credit hours for additional training to more than 3,400 participants. Credit hours and specific short courses count toward three level of certification. 118 certificates were earned and awarded.



Courses range from the specific (Court Clerk Juvenile Procedures) to the general (Managing Personnel). So, courses vary from specific duties of specific offices to administrative duties applicable to all offices, even all people. “Customer Service” and “Effective Work Skills” for example, are widely applicable. Short courses are also provided in a variety of formats: live in-person, Zoom, and hybrid. An increasing number of courses are provided online as “stand alone, take them at your own pace” trainings.

CTP also provides one on one assistance to county officials. Phone calls, emails, and face to face conversations are opportunities for CTP staff to answer specific questions applicable to specific situations. Frequently asked questions are with regard to purchasing procedures applicable to expenditure of public funds. CTP also generates custom reports upon request such as requests for projection of sale tax revenue.

An assortment of annual reports and Extension Fact Sheets, as well as a growing FAQ page, provide additional information to county government officials and the public. A county government financial database supports delivery of statewide reports, as well as custom reports. Such efforts are aided by contract work for the State Auditor and Inspector. CTP helped the State Auditor set up a uniform chart of accounts plus standard operating procedures for the accounting of public funds. In turn, this uniformity and standardization helps OSU CTP provide better reports for state and county government.

CTP operates on a million-dollar budget. CTP has five full-time staff, five part-time staff, several contract instructors, and several student workers. Funding comes both from State funds (86%) and from course registration fees (14%).

Impact is measured by regular anonymous evaluation questions sent a month after a training. Thirty-one percent of respondents said they made changes in procedures and practices as a result of the training. Seventy-eight percent of respondents said the training was “beneficial” or “very beneficial.” Eighty-seven percent say they refer to the materials in the course of their duties. Ninety-eight percent said the course was a good value relative to the cost of the course. There is anecdotal evidence from the State Auditor’s office saying there is a reduction in county purchasing procedure violations and they attribute this to the training.

For additional information contact Dr. Notie Lansford at notie.lansford@okstate.edu or 405-744-8792 or see the CTP webpage: <https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/county-government-training-program/index.html>.

Grant Connections

Southern SARE Releases 2023 Education Grant Call for Proposals

The deadline for submitting proposals is August 5, 2022, at 12 p.m. (noon) EST. Grants will be announced in February of 2023. Projects begin April 1, 2023.

The [Southern region of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\) program](#) has released its [Call for Proposals](#) for the 2023 Education Grants program.

Southern SARE's Education Grant, falling under the [Research & Education Grant Program](#), is a broader education and outreach effort. Education Grants are open to organizations, institutions, and individuals who are interested in conducting education and outreach activities for the benefit of the greater sustainable ag community, and promote efforts in farmer innovations, community resilience, business success, agricultural diversification, and best management practices.

[DOWNLOAD THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS](#)

Job Opportunities

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 VCE. 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.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

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](#)

Delta Regional Forum

In-person: June 23-24, 2022, Coahoma County Higher Education Center in Clarksdale, Mississippi

The annual Delta Regional Forum engages community and regional development practitioners and scholars working in and with partners in the multistate Delta region to learn from each other in pursuit of population health and

wellbeing, economic renewal, and resilience. Held at the Coahoma County Higher Education Center in Clarksdale, Mississippi, the conference includes presentations, panels, workshops, and poster sessions. The event will take place June 23-24, 2022. For more information on the Delta Regional Forum, please visit the [landing page](#).

The Delta Regional Forum is organized by the Southern Rural Development Center in collaboration with the Delta Directions Consortium (DDC), an interdisciplinary network of individuals, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and foundations that work together to create positive social change in the multi-state Mississippi Delta Region.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER HERE](#)

2022 Rural Sociological Society Meeting

In-person: August 4 – 7, 2022, Westminster, Colorado

The 2022 RSS Annual Meeting will be titled “Including Diverse Voices for Equitable Community Choices”. Registration is now open.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

International Workshop on Agritourism

In-person: August 30 – September 1, 2022, Burlington, Vermont

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.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

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