



Items of Interest

2022 Broadband Issue Brief Webinar Series



Are you interested in learning more about bridging the digital divide by advancing digital access and literacy? The [Southern Rural Development Center](#) is hosting a [webinar series](#) to share research that can help to inform Extension efforts. Presenters will discuss recently published Broadband Issue Briefs and the Regional Rural Development Center’s recent Listening Sessions initiative.

The webinars will be hosted in three parts, to view more information and to register for the webinars, [review the flyer](#).

Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Member Universities Contribute to Knowledge About What Works for Rural Broadband Access



A recently published Theme issue of the Journal [Choices](#) features faculty from APLU member universities and describes how they are working in their communities to expand access to rural broadband, evaluate broadband efforts, and scale approaches that work.

The publication, entitled “Making it Count: Applying Science to Support Universal Broadband” was edited by APLU Strategic Advisor for Economic and Community Development Sheila Martin. It includes articles from faculty of APLU member universities including Oklahoma State University, Washington State University, Purdue University,

Webinars:

Broadband Issues Briefing, Part One

Monday, October 31
11:00 AM CT/12:00 PM ET

- *A Granular Look at internet Speeds and Demographic Groups: Implications for Digital Equity*
- *Broadband Availability vs. Adoption: Which Matters More for Economic Development?*

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

Broadband Issues Briefing, Part Two

Monday, November 21
11:00 AM CT/12:00 PM ET

- *State Policies that Impact Rural Broadband Availability*
- *Broadband Impact on Education and Workforce during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

Broadband Issues Briefing, Part Three

Monday, December 5
11:00 AM CT/12:00 PM ET

- *Investing in Recovery: Key Findings from the Broadband Listening Session Report*

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

University of Missouri, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Georgia Tech, University of Tennessee Knoxville, Clemson University, and Penn State University.

Expanded investments in rural broadband will only be effective if guided by accurate data, community-driven planning, engaged research, and successful models. This issue explores how to apply the best information and processes to guide effective investments of limited resources to expand access.

The issue is the result of two virtual conferences supported by a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture that intentionally paired university faculty with Cooperative Extension to ensure connectivity between research and extension in the area of rural broadband. The content was guided by an advisory committee including Monica Babine, Wendy Fink, Robert Gallardo, Sascha Meinrath, Rachel Welborn, Brian Whitacre, and Milan Ephraim.

Regional Spotlight

North Carolina (NC) Extension: CREATE BRIDGES



The North Carolina (NC) Extension team is moving forward with the implementation of multiple strategies under the CREATE BRIDGES initiative in Western, NC. Backed by research conducted in 2021, this region has identified the tourism sector as its primary economic driver and is now focused on delivery of trainings in support of both employers and employees. In Spring 2022, it held a face-to-face Got Your Back Business Summit covering a number of different topics related to employee retention and recruitment. This training is currently being converted to an online format and will be made available to all businesses in the retail, accommodation, entertainment, and tourism sectors. Employees in this sector will soon be incentivized to participate in online soft skills trainings and certifications in retail management and Servsafe trainings. Employers are also being encouraged to dig deeper into the talent pool to meet current labor shortages.

Employee Highlight: Olivia Antonio-Ventura, North Carolina (NC) Cooperative Extension Service



Olivia Antonio-Ventura has served as a Regional Educator for the Farmworker Health & Safety Program with NC Cooperative Extension since 2020. Not only does she present workshops for farmworkers in two counties in Eastern North Carolina, she is involved in the ongoing development of educational materials and helping with various Extension projects focused on the Agricultural Community. Ms. Antonio-Ventura is a tremendous resource to her county offices as well as the entire community.

Olivia's family migrated from a small town right outside Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, Mexico, in search of an opportunity for a better life. Growing up, Olivia and her family traveled up and down the east coast following the picking season. The family settled in Naples, Florida, where Olivia was born, and then moved to North Carolina and

New Jersey. During the time that her parents were migrant farmworkers, Olivia would sometimes help them pick blueberries or chop off tobacco flowers. Ms. Antonio-Ventura always dreamed about being a teacher. She pursued a degree at Fayetteville State University and received a Bachelor of Science in Birth-Kindergarten, with a minor in Social Work. Combining both her personal life experience and her educational background, Olivia is a perfect member of NC State's Farmworker Education Team. Over the past two years, she has done an excellent job connecting with growers, Farm Labor Contractors, farmworkers, and community partners. Ms. Antonio-Ventura frequently expresses that she enjoys helping her community and making sure they have the resources they need. When Olivia talks to the farmworkers, she identifies with them. Her future plans are continuing to help provide resources and information to her community.

Grant Connections

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT: USDA Accepting Applications to Spur Job Growth and Economic Development in Rural Areas

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31, 2022

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) is accepting applications for funding to help create jobs and economic growth in rural communities. USDA is making loans and grants available under the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. Through this program, USDA provides zero-interest loans and grants to current and former Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Electric Program and Telecommunications Program borrowers and utilities that are eligible to receive assistance from the RUS Electric or Telecommunication Programs.

Applicants will use the funds to help local businesses finance projects that will create and retain jobs or finance community facility projects. Projects must be located in rural areas or towns with a population of 50,000 or less.

Applications must be submitted to the USDA Rural Development State Office where the project is located no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on the following dates: Second Quarter: Dec. 31, 2022; Third Quarter: March 31, 2023; Fourth Quarter: June 30, 2023.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact their local USDA Rural Development State Office well in advance of the application deadline to ask questions about their project, the program or the application process. Additional information is available on page 53443 of the [Aug 31, 2022, Federal Register](#). If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit our [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

Job Opportunities

Oklahoma State University (OSU) Assistant Director/State Program Leader for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Community Economic Development

Applications review began September 9, 2022. Position is to be filled by January 1, 2023.

OSU seeks an innovative and creative leader to identify, plan, implement, coordinate, evaluate and report statewide Extension Agriculture, Natural Resources and Community Economics Development programs with campus and field staff to address critical needs of Oklahomans. The Assistant Director/Program Leader is reports to the Associate Vice President, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service (OCES). The tenure track professor position is to be filled by January 1, 2023, or as soon thereafter as a suitable candidate is available. Interested applicants must apply via [OSU's online applicant tracking system](#) for the position labeled **req12058**.

Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist: Food Systems Communication at North Carolina State University

Open until filled

The Department of Agricultural and Human Sciences at North Carolina State University (NCSU) are recruiting its future Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist in Food Systems Communication. The specialist will contribute to the expanding undergraduate agricultural sciences major with a specific focus on developing and teaching courses in agricultural communication. The specialist will provide mentorship and advising to students in the agricultural and human sciences graduate program. Additionally, the specialist will collaborate directly with the Plant Sciences Initiative (PSI) and Plants for Human Institute (PHHI) to research and present findings to a broad audience. The specialist will partner with a dynamic team of Agricultural and Human Sciences specialists and across NCSU working in agricultural, life sciences, and food system communications. The specialist will partner with the internal College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) Departments and colleges across the university as well as serve as a member on departmental, college, and university committees.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Assistant Administrator, Community Development and Outreach at Fort Valley State University

Open until filled

The assistant Administrator for Community Development and Outreach will develop, coordinate and facilitate programming through the Cooperative Extension Program designed to assist communities to realize their long-term goals; through provision of education, technical assistance and opportunities to secure grants that support strategic planning and community visioning in order to provide a foundation for economic development. Coordinate or assist in the coordination of programs through outreach efforts with USDA Agencies, State, private and public and nonprofit entities. Master's degree in Agricultural Economics, economics, business administration or other business disciplines is required. Preference will be given to applicants with extension and strong community development experiences. Applicants with degrees in closely related disciplines with community development experiences may also apply.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Course

In-person: November 1-2, 2022, University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus; Registration deadline: October 26, 2022

University of Minnesota is providing a BRE course that will discuss interview techniques at real businesses; tips and stories; networking with economic developers; and a special focus on business succession and transition research, methods, and case studies. The course is designed for economic and community development professionals and stakeholders, community leaders, and others who want to conduct a community led BRE effort. For more information or to register, visit the [University of Minnesota Extension webpage](#).

Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention (SFLR) Free Outreach Meetings

Virtual: November 10 and December 8 each at 1PM – 4PM CT / 2PM – 5PM ET.

The Prairie View A&M University and the Agriculture and Natural Resources are hosting the SFLR Free Outreach Meetings to discuss how landowners can turn forestry into a generational source of revenue, provide information to landowners relating to their heirs' property, and provide technical and financial resources available to landowners through USDA.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC)

In-person: November 13-15, 2022, Renaissance Montgomery Hotel and Spa, Montgomery, Alabama

The Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC) is a forum committed to a world that values and promotes equal opportunity equitable access to information and technology for sustainable development of communities and natural resources. The conference began in 1942 mainly with Tuskegee University and local and state support and participation. It is now national in scope including representatives from the national land grant community, and from the state, federal, and private sectors.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Rural Workforce Innovation Network Regional Virtual Workshops

Virtual workshops will take place regionally. The Southern Workshop will be held Thursday, November 17, 2022, 1-3 PM CT/2-4 PM ET.

Join representatives from USDA Rural Development, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Economic Development Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response to learn about federal funding opportunities.

[REGISTER FOR THE WORKSHOP](#)

Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level: Train the Trainer Workshop

In-person: November 28-29, 2022, Atlanta, Georgia

More information will be shared soon.

Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention (SFLR) Reckoning Program Workshops

Virtual: December 14 at 1PM – 3PM CT / 2PM – 4PM ET.

The Prairie View A&M University and the Agriculture and Natural Resources are hosting the SFLR Reckoning Program to inform and help landowners with a general understanding relating to their heirs' property.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention (SFLR) Legal Clinic Workshops

Virtual: December 15 at 1PM – 3PM CT / 2PM – 4PM ET.

The Prairie View A&M University and the Agriculture and Natural Resources are hosting the SFLR Legal Clinic to provide legal information to help landowners with estate planning, Wills, trust agreements, title clearing, and more.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

The Southern Rural Sociological Association (SRSA) 2023 Conference

In-person: February 5-6, 2023, Oklahoma City, OK

Meeting concurrently with the broader Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (February 2-7), the Southern Rural Sociological Association will be holding the annual conference in Oklahoma City. More information to follow.

Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Extension Leadership Conference (ELC)

February 7-9, 2023, Kansas City, Missouri

The Joint Council of Extension Professionals is hosting their 2023 ELC Conference. The conference is to engage and inspire individuals to lead the way to a bright future. Accommodations and reservation details will be released soon. For hotel and airport information, please visit the [JCEP webpage](#).

Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference

In-person: April 16-19, 2023, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia

The Joint Council of Extension Professionals is requesting presentation proposals for the 2023 PILD Conference. The conference is to enhance education and advocacy skills to positively affect federal, state, and local resources available for Cooperative Extension. The **proposal submission deadline is October 15, 2022.**

[LEARN MORE](#)

The National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) 2023 Conference

In-person: April 30 – May 3, 2023, Couer D’Alene, Idaho

Mark your calendars: NACDEP has set conference dates for their 2023 conference. More information and registration will be available later.

The Rural Sociological Society (RSS) 2023 Conference

In-person: August 2-6, 2023, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

SRDC Director and current Rural Sociological Society President John J. Green invites you to mark your calendars for the 2023 conference with the theme “Pursuing Equity and Access in Development”. The call for abstracts and registration will be released in the coming months.

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