



Items of Interest

SRDC Staff Joins Association of Extension Administrators and Association of Research Administrators Winter Meeting



*Pictured Left to Right: **Dr. Raymon Shange** (SRDC Board Chair representing AEA from Tuskegee), **Dr. John Green** (SRDC Director), **Dr. Albert Essel** (AEA Executive Director), **Rachel Welborn** (SRDC Associate Director), **Dr. Carolyn Williams** (SRDC Board Chair-elect representing AEA from Prairie View A&M University), and **Dr. Alton Thompson** (ARD Executive Director).*

This month, SRDC Director John Green and Associate Director, Rachel Welborn, attended the Association of Extension Administrators (AEA) and Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) 2023 Joint Winter Meeting in Hilton Head, South Carolina. This convening provided opportunities to explore common concerns and opportunities across the Southern Region where collaboration between the 1890 Extension and research efforts align with SRDC's current Plan of Work. SRDC is thankful for the leadership of these two organizations, Dr. Alton Thompson (ARD Executive Director) and Dr. Albert Essel (AEA Executive Director), for allowing us to come alongside their important and impactful efforts.

Webinars:

Research and Extension Associate, Russ Garner, Leaving SRDC

After four years with the Southern Rural Development Center, Russ Garner is transitioning to a new position as a Community Facilitator with [Communities Unlimited](#). The nonprofit, based out of Arkansas, works to bridge racial, economic, and geographical boundaries in communities across seven Southern states. During his time with SRDC, Russ served as a liaison to many networks regionally and nationally, and we wish him well as he continues to do so in this capacity in the South.

Regional Spotlight

Engaging Students in Community Development

Daniel Kahl, Associate Professor and Associate Director CEDIK, University of Kentucky

Applied learning provides invaluable experience for future practitioners and scholars of community development. One of the challenges of university community development education, however, is finding appropriate opportunities to engage undergraduate students in community projects. As a guiding community development philosophy, priorities and initiatives of community development should be identified, guided, and acted upon by members of the community itself. Providing technical assistance through engagement of undergraduate students holds the risk of “drive-by assistance” that can lack a foundation of meaning for community members and can lead to initiatives that lack support and long-term investment.

In an effort to confront these challenges, faculty at the University of Kentucky (UK) set out to design a meaningful student engagement experience that adheres to good practice and supports the advancement of community member priorities. With the support of a USDA NIFA grant funded project through CEDIK, UK faculty supported a summer engagement team. Seven students travelled to Chattanooga, Tennessee in the summer of 2022 to engage with a neighborhood improvement planning project. Working with community partners, the team created a Public Realm Master Plan for the Orchard Knob neighborhood. This master plan was based on established neighborhood priorities and is the product of two intense weeks of student work. The drafted concepts were shared by the students in a presentation with local partners including the Orchard Knob neighborhood association, city council, the Chattanooga Design Studio, Parkridge Hospital, and the Lyndhurst Foundation. Issues identified for action included improved neighborhood signage, improved safety initiatives including crosswalks and lighting, and improving a sense of place identity and pride. As a result of the ideas shared, the Lyndhurst Foundation will support the installation of (student designed) neighborhood signage with a \$35,000 grant. Additionally, the neighborhood association received a \$15,000 placemaking grant to install other elements that were introduced in our student work.

The evaluation responses from the neighborhood partners were very positive. Local partners were appreciative of the student perspectives, their energy and creative investment, and the ideas brought to the neighborhood for consideration. The student evaluations reinforced the value of applied community learning and experience. Project supervisors noted that there were several elements that made this experience successful.

Those include:

- The neighborhood coalition had previously identified and prioritized their goals. Students were working on established neighborhood priorities.
- The students understood their role was to generate alternatives for community consideration.

- The neighborhood association had an existing network of committed organizational partners.
- Student work was visible, timed, and transparent. Students started the experience by introducing themselves to community partners and the neighborhood, held a half-way update to see if they were on track, and presented ideas to the partners and community members for consideration at the end of their involvement.

This neighborhood engagement experience was the first of a UK four-year initiative, and we will build on initial success as we model and implement effective community development initiatives.

Staff Spotlight: Darla Hisey, County Training Program (CTP), Oklahoma State University



Darla Hisey is a Local Government Specialist with the [County Training Program \(CTP\)](#). Her main responsibility is to create and update the online courses for CTP. Darla uses a training software designed with interactive activities to build course content. She exports the course to a learning management system (LMS) where the content is set up in modules. A quiz is also added at the end of each module to check the learner's knowledge and understanding of the course material. Before the online course is released, it is reviewed by a subject matter expert (SME) for accuracy.

County Purchase Card Procedures is an online course developed by Darla to meet the initial training and continuing education requirements for county employees who are issued purchase cards. Darla also created a three-hour online course, *Introduction to County Purchasing*, to aid those involved in county purchasing. Her current project is an online class, *Excise Board Training*, which she is creating to meet the training requirements for those serving on the County Excise Board.

CTP introduced its first, stand-alone, online class in May 2020 and has since added four online courses to the training schedule. These online courses allow county employees to work at their own pace, to take the courses that are needed for their specific certification program. The CTP online courses are also available to educators in county extension offices for their training.



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 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: 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](#).

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT: USDA to Create Plan to Expand Recreation Economies and Help People thrive Across Rural America

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19, 2023

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it will create a plan to expand recreation economies to help people thrive across rural America.

Through a [Memorandum of Understanding, USDA Rural Development](#), the [National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\)](#) and the [U.S. Forest Service](#) will partner to develop an annual plan to expand economic opportunities related to recreation in communities surrounding America's national forests.

The annual plan will outline the ways the agencies will partner to conduct program outreach, host informational sessions and workshops, and develop toolkits to help people access the resources they need to thrive in recreation economies.

To learn more, read the full [Stakeholder Announcement](#).

Job Opportunities

Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist - Community Economic Development - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Position is set to start in 2023.

The Department of Agricultural Economics within the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service seeks an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist for Community Economic Development. This PhD-level position is a permanent, full-time, 12-month, 100% extension appointment to begin in 2023.

The Specialist will provide statewide leadership and coordination of extension education programs enhancing business and community capacity. They will provide subject matter expertise and educational program development related to community and economic development, strategic planning, business planning, disaster resilience, community food system economics, and/or related areas. The position offers ample opportunity to collaborate with other Texas A&M AgriLife faculty in agricultural economics, nutrition and food safety, and hospitality, as well as Texas A&M University System faculty in healthcare, transportation, and other fields. As an Assistant Professor, this Extension Specialist will establish research programs to align with their extension role. Expected outreach includes extension

and peer reviewed publications, train the trainer for county educators, conference presentations, and electronic and mass media releases.

Find more information or to apply at <https://tamus.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/>.

Assistant Administrator, Community Development and Outreach - 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

Southern Rural Sociological Association

February 5-6, 2023, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Theme: Social Justice Praxis, Community Development, and Building Resilient Communities in the Rural South

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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](#).

Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference

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

The JCEP is hosting their 2023 PILD Conference. The conference is to enhance education and advocacy skills to positively affect federal, state, and local resources available for Cooperative Extension.

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

In-person Conference: April 30 – May 3, 2023, Coeur D'Alene, Idaho.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

The Rural Sociological Society (RSS) 2023 Conference

In-person: August 2-6, 2023, Burlington, Virginia

RSS President, John J. Green, SRDC Director

Theme: Pursuing Equity and Access in Development: Roles for Rural-Focused Public Scholars. **Abstract Submission due February 15, 2023.**

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