



Items of Interest

Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level

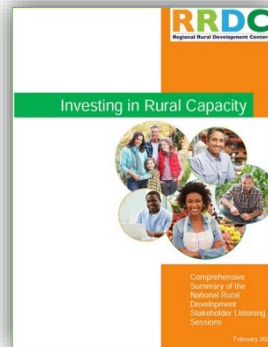
Through funding from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and in partnership with colleagues working with the Southern Rural Development Center on heirs' property, the team finalized the curriculum "Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level" last spring. During this past November, SRDC was joined by the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center at Alcorn State University and the Southern Risk Management Extension Center to pilot a train-the-trainer workshop for Extension professionals. Two more trainings have taken place since the first of this year, and more will soon be scheduled. To keep up with future training opportunities, you can visit the [Heirs' Property landing page](#). To be added to the Heirs' Property listserv and learn more about this topic, please email Rachel Welborn at rachel.welborn@msstate.edu.

Final Listening Sessions Report: Investing in Rural Capacity

The four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) conducted a rapid assessment of priorities for investments in rural community development. The overarching purpose was to identify the critical resources needed to build community capacity and improve quality of life in rural America. Conducted via an iterative process from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022, the assessment is from the perspective of stakeholders working in the rural development spaces.

This process was divided into two phases:

- **Phase I:** In Fall 2021, an online survey was distributed to stakeholders, which focused on eight topical areas that often impact rural recovery. Survey findings informed the development of the second phase.
- **Phase II:** In Spring 2022, eight virtual listening sessions focused on identifying what is needed to fill the gaps between rural communities' assets and opportunities. These facilitated dialogues, which included interactive technologies, asked participants to think about Extension/education, research, and other investments that were needed, and to prioritize them by the most pressing areas for intervention.



Webinars:

In summary, the combination of findings from the survey and listening sessions underscore stakeholder priorities as those efforts that will advance organizational capacity, as well as funding and development opportunities, especially through research and Extension efforts. While these issues have been explored through the Rapid Assessment of Stakeholder Priorities conducted by the RRDCs throughout 2021-2022, additional work is needed to build upon this work and to activate positive impacts in the field of rural development.

Read the full report via the [Rural Regional Development Center website](#).

Regional Spotlight

Florida's High Ridge Initiative Leads to Collaboration and Innovative Community Development Work

High Ridge Estates is a low-income neighborhood in an isolated, rural part of Clay County, Florida. The neighborhood is large, spanning 1,070 acres and 1.67 miles with 1683 platted parcels of land with 509 dwellings. The neighborhood, originally developed in the 1970s as a 55+ community, but the development failed. Since then, there have been minimal improvements to the neighborhood's roads or utilities. Carey Morford, Pastor of the Mission of the Dirt Road Church and director of the Community Center, has been working with the High Ridge Neighborhood for more than ten years. Recognizing that the scope of this community development project would require help from key community players, she developed and engaged partners to launch the High Ridge Initiative project, which seeks to address the neighborhood's many issues. Clay County government, Impact Clay, and the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Clay County are the project's primary partners. The High Ridge Initiative aims to improve the health and vibrancy of the High Ridge Estates neighborhood through civic engagement and participation. The objectives for the initiative include hosting and facilitating community discussions through the deliberative dialogue process, identifying high-priority areas that require attention in the neighborhood, and gaining support from the Clay County Board of County Commissioners to improve the neighborhood's roads and utilities.

As a part of Florida Extension's Community Voices, Informed Choices (CIVIC) program, Clay County Extension assisted with deliberative dialogues to help the community members discuss the issues impacting the community. Deliberative dialogue is based on research by the Kettering Foundation to address problems that negatively impact communities. During deliberation, participants use issue guides that list three solutions, and for each solution, there are actions and tradeoffs for each action. To develop issue guides, organizers learned from the community members how much they knew about the issue, what concerned them most about it, and what they perceived as possible solutions. During this project, the partners modified the deliberative dialogue process to allow for the development of a more specific issue guide. This process yielded three potential solutions or approaches: community safety, people power, and caring for neighbors, and three to four specific actions for each approach.

Ten deliberative dialogue discussions were held with neighborhood residents and other community members (i.e., teachers, realtors, city leadership, etc.). Separate dialogues were hosted with teachers, county leadership, and local organizations. A moderator guided participants through a discussion of each approach for about 10 minutes. At the end of the discussion, participants answered a survey to vote for the three actions they wanted to be taken and those they could live without. The results were presented to the Clay County Board of County Commissioners with a request to implement the actions. The five commissioners unanimously approved the High Ridge Initiative as a county community development project. This approach to community development has significantly strengthened the

relationship between the county, Extension, and community members. The High Ridge Initiative formed key partnerships that led to collaboration and innovative community development work.

Oklahoma hosts First Multicultural Event as part of ‘Coming Together for Racial Understanding’ to Highlight Diversity of Cultures

Food, artistic and cultural traditions were uniquely showcased at the multicultural event, “Coming Together for Racial Understanding,” in the Oklahoma State University’s Student Union Theater on February 17. The first cultural event of its nature, the OSU community joined members of the event’s committee and leadership representatives from Oklahoma’s three Land-Grant institutions: The College of the Muscogee Nation, Langston University, and Oklahoma State University. The program included each of the institutions discussing their historic Land-Grant missions and contributions, videos highlighting cooking of traditional cultural meals, and diverse artistic representations including song and dance.

FULL NEWS RELEASE

Staff Spotlight: Shane Barton, Community and Economic Development Initiative, University of Kentucky



Introducing Jonathan “Shane” Barton, Downtown Revitalization Coordinator with the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) at the University of Kentucky. Shane is a 9th generation Appalachian resident, a first-generation college graduate, and has deep family roots in the mountains of central Appalachia. He holds a bachelor’s degrees in environmental science and in Urban Studies and Geography, as well as a Master’s of Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University’s L. Douglas Wilder School of Public Policy and Administration.

Shane has been at the University of Kentucky since 2009 and served as the Assistant Director of the University of Kentucky Appalachian Center before joining the CEDIK team in 2017 as the Downtown Revitalization Coordinator. He has a long-term commitment to inclusive and representative community development strategies with a particular focus on rural and under resourced communities.

As CEDIK’s Downtown Revitalization Coordinator, Shane played a vital role and was responsible for several essential functions foundational to the implementation of the Promise Zone Downtown Revitalization project. In this role, he served as the principal contact for an eight-county region providing coordination, information, technical assistance, and strategic support to partner organizations and downtown stakeholders. In response to the pandemic and devastating flooding events in ’21 and ’22, Shane was a critical partner in local philanthropic disaster responses. He utilized his experience and networks in the region to help direct locally driven grant responses in partnership with the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky (FAKY) and others.

Through CEDIK, Shane has served as facilitator for community and organizational strategic planning, coordinated communities through Business Retention and Expansion assessments, and most recently, was responsible for creating a new five year partnership between CEDIK and Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet’s Department for Environmental Protection’s Brownfield program to provide expanded access to education, technical assistance and redevelopment coaching to traditional underserved communities that haven’t historically utilized the brownfield

program to their benefit. Throughout the five-year project, CEDIK will provide training supporting community planning, redevelopment tools and work to increase awareness about the brownfield program, and available funding opportunities.

Grant Connections

Webinar: Community Connect Notice of Funding Opportunity

A new funding window has opened for the Community Connect Grant Program. The Community Connect Program provides financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible applicants that will provide, on a “community-oriented connectivity” basis, broadband service that fosters economic growth and delivers enhanced educational, health care, and public safety benefits.

The USDA Rural Development's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is hosting two webinars to provide information about the Community Connect Program and will cover the recently published [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#).

The webinar will be presented April 11, 2023 from 12 PM CT/1 PM ET to 1:30 PM CT/2:30 PM ET.

Registration for the [April](#) webinar is open now.

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

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](#).

Job Opportunities

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 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.

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Assistant Professor, Nutrition and Food Safety, Family & Consumer Sciences Department, University of Tennessee

Open until filled.

The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Department is looking to fill the position of Assistant Professor, Nutrition. The position will work to develop and teach effective, research-based nutrition programs across the state, which enhance the lives of Tennesseans. will work collaboratively with cross-functional teams within and outside of the FCS department and the university to contribute to the mission of the FCS department, UT Extension, and the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA).

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Associate Professor, Community Health, Family & Consumer Sciences Department, University of Tennessee

The position of Associate Professor in Community Health, Family & Consumer Sciences Department is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing research-based adult and you Extension programs in nutrition to promote safe food handling practices, healthy dietary habits, and to improve health and nutritional status among Tennesseans, including, but not limited to, Extension programs for diet-related disease prevention and management, food safety, and food preservation.

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Non-Tenure Track Assistant Research Professor, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

Open until filled.

The NERCRD seeks applications for a one-year Non-Tenure Track Assistant Research Professor, with good chances of renewal, subject to funding. The Non-Tenure Track Assistant Research Professor will be responsible for conducting economic and statistical analyses on a wide range of rural development topics, as determined by the Center's emerging needs and priorities. There is a strong expectation that this research will contribute both to the science base as well as to informing U.S. rural economic development policy. Importantly, the opportunity exists to work with Penn State's Census Data Center. Examples of topics to be studied range from policy impact assessments (including the impact of farm subsidies, agritourism activities and extension education); to the interdependence of rural and urban

areas, as well as agricultural and non-agricultural industries; to the determinants of local economic well-being and health.

Candidates should upload a letter of application, names, and addresses of three professional references, curriculum vitae, and official transcripts at the time of application. Questions can be directed to Stephan J. Goetz, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education, The Pennsylvania State University at sjg16@psu.edu. Screening of applications will begin March 8, 2023, and the position will remain open until filled.

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Director of Agricultural Research & Extension Communications, West Virginia State University

Open until filled; first consideration given to applications submitted before March 24, 2023

The Director of Agricultural Research and Extension Communications is responsible for the production and dissemination of information via written, video-graphic, online and spoken means with emphasis on graphic design and new media management. The position reports directly to the Vice President and Dean and Director of Agricultural Research and Extension. Duties include coordination and production of organizational publications; social media management; website content management; assisting staff with programmatic marketing needs; representation at campus and community events; and maintaining a catalog of published materials and photographs.

Information accepted as emailed in a Microsoft Word or PDF format to rdemployment@wvstate.edu. Qualified candidates may submit a cover letter, resume, unofficial transcript and contact information for three professional references (name, title, address, phone number, and email address).

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Research Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education, Virginia Tech

Open until filled.

The Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education (ALCE), in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) at Virginia Tech, invites applications for a Research Assistant Professor with a focus on interdisciplinary and community-based food systems research. This is a 12-month, non-tenure track position with full benefits and the opportunity for promotion. The position will support the Virginia Tech (VT) Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation, which is housed in CALs as an Extension and outreach center with community-based programming, research, and teaching aims and activity. Through its community-based and participatory work, the Center asserts the importance of epistemic justice and inclusion by valuing and uplifting diverse forms of knowledge and ways of knowing. As such, we encourage those committed to the promotion of justice and equity as core values in their scholarship to apply.

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

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

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 Summit on State Planning for Digital Equity and Economic Inclusion

In-person: April 27-28, 2023, Atlanta Community Food Bank, Atlanta, Georgia

States are invited to participate in a two-day hands-on summit to develop their Digital Equity Plans in preparation for upcoming federal funding. Extension can play an important role in this work. The summit focuses on both digital access (including literacy) as well as financial literacy and resources.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

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

In-person: 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, Vermont

RSS President, John J. Green, SRDC Director

Theme: Pursuing Equity and Access in Development: Roles for Rural-Focused Public Scholars.

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National Extension Tourism (NET) 2023 National Conference

In-person: September 24-27, 2023, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

This year’s conference theme is “Envisioning the Future of Extension in Tourism.” Abstracts will be accepted through April 24, 2023. Award nominations will be accepted through April 30, 2023.

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