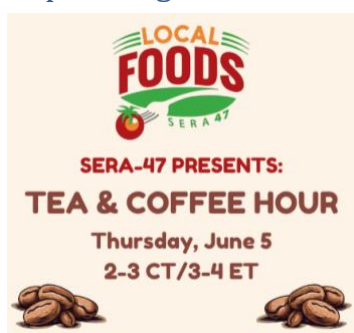




## Items of Interest

---

### Upcoming SERA-47 Tea & Coffee Hour



Save the date for the summer SERA-47 Tea & Coffee Hour to be held  
**Thursday, June 5, 2025, from 2-3 PM (Central)**

**Register to receive the Zoom Link:**

<https://msstateextension.zoom.us/meeting/register/7011Lw5ES8SdhTDbfuS-EQ>

*For accommodations, please contact Grace Langford at*  
[Grace.langford@msstate.edu](mailto:Grace.langford@msstate.edu) or 662-325-3207.

To learn more about SERA-47, access their website at <https://sera-47.extension.org/>

### Webinar Video from Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging



**Interdisciplinary  
Network on  
Rural Population  
Health and Aging  
(INRPHA)**

The webinar, **Associations between Behavior-Opportunity Gaps and Dementia Risk: Leveraging Data from a Large Longitudinal Study of Aging**, took place virtually on Friday, May 9, 2025, with presenter Dr. Olivia E. Atherton from the Department of Psychology at the University of California Riverside. Atherton's research was funded in part by the Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging (INRPHA) (NIA grant R24-AG065159) and is currently funded by an R21 from the National Institute on Aging (R21AG088948). This webinar was offered by the Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging (NIA grant 1R24AG089064-01).

To learn more about INRPHA, please visit <https://www.sph.umn.edu/research/projects/inrpha/>

To access this and previous INRPHA webinars, please visit <https://srdc.msstate.edu/training/webinars>

## Addressing Community Needs in Weather Disaster Vulnerable Kentucky

Kentucky is uniquely vulnerable to weather disasters, especially rural Eastern Kentucky. In the past five years, Appalachian Eastern Kentucky has experienced a flood event about every 2.5 years, with some areas experiencing historic levels of flooding more than once a year. In the most vulnerable counties, median annual household income is about \$30,000 a year, over \$50,000 less than the US average. In areas where robust economies, diverse resources, and infrastructure contribute to community resilience, floods can have long-term impacts; in communities like rural Eastern Kentucky where resources are scarce, disasters have a multigenerational impact.



Image of recent flooding in Eastern Kentucky, sourced from Louisville Public Media, captured by Justin Prater.

<https://www.lpm.org/news/2025-02-16/a-thousand-water-rescues-in-24-hours-widespread-flooding-douses-kentucky>



Image of recent flooding in Eastern Kentucky, sourced from Louisville Public Media, captured by Justin Prater.

Although many think disaster survivors are most likely to experience psychological disorders and symptoms of anxiety, depression, or PTSD, the most common responses to disasters are increased risky health behaviors and distress reactions. This chronic or long-term stress may lead to increased substance misuse, numbing and avoidance activities, increased risk of family violence or child maltreatment, or other unhealthy behaviors that result in shorter life expectancies and lower quality of life. Kentucky State University (KSU) offered Disaster Mental Health programming to address the impact that long-term stress can have. Funded by a USDA NIFA Rapid Response

grant, programming supported both community mental health and community-based professionals through disaster mental health education and preparedness training. In partnership with the University of Florida and University of Kentucky Cooperative Extensions, KSU presented disaster mental health and recovery training to community-based professionals. Three trainings, offered in person and virtually, gave professionals the tools to respond to flood events in their community through *Cleaning Up After a Flood and Disasters & Mental Health*. Twelve community Disaster Mental Health Workshops offered community members a basic understanding of mental health and wellness, available to residents of the thirteen counties in Kentucky most impacted by recent flooding. Community members received financial assistance for participating. When held in person, workshops also offered materials to build preparedness kits and additional disaster preparedness materials.

## Extension Today: N. C. A&T Extension Uses \$25M Google Grant to Boost AI Education

The Extension Today stories from the Association of Extension Administrators are published by the 1890 Land-Grant Communications Committee. To join the mailing list, contact [communications@1890aea.org](mailto:communications@1890aea.org) or [fordl@fvsu.edu](mailto:fordl@fvsu.edu).

Artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly plays a role in our lives. Mark Light, PhD, wants to ensure that North Carolina 4-H agents and youths have the opportunity to understand AI and put it to use as a tool for learning and discovery.

Light is the 4-H STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) specialist with North Carolina Agricultural & Technical (N.C. A&T) State University Cooperative Extension and the statewide lead of a new, two-year \$225,000 grant from Google. The grant is part of an overall \$25 million Google initiative to develop AI literacy among educators and students, teaching them to use AI in the classroom and beyond.

The Google initiative targets 10 states and five youth organizations, including 4-H. Its overall goal is to equip more than half a million educators and students across the U.S. with foundational AI skills through the development of AI curricula, training and meaningful, inclusive AI learning experiences for youth audiences.

"You hear so much about AI and a lot of times we think of the negative," said Light. "What we want to do is turn this dialogue around and look at AI from a positive standpoint and say, 'How can we use AI in everyday life to improve things and help ourselves?'"



Rather than each state providing an AI curriculum, educators from the 10 states supported by the grant (Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah, and Pennsylvania) have formed a National AI Curriculum Committee, co-chaired by Light, that will develop 4-H curricula and best practices for using AI.

Access the full article at <https://caes.news/n-c-at-extension-using-25m-google-grant-to-boost-ai-education/>

## Regional Pulse: Insights from the 2024 Multi-Region Household Surveys Webinar

On May 9, 2025, three of the Regional Rural Development Centers presented on the groundbreaking 2024 baseline household surveys conducted across three major U.S. regions that cover essential topics related to household, business, and community well-being. This webinar explored key findings from the NCR-Stat, NER-Stat, and SR-Stat surveys — comprehensive open access data initiatives developed by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development in collaboration with the Southern Rural Development Center and Auburn University.

Learn how this valuable data establishes an important baseline for future research and how it can inform policy decisions, community development strategies, and targeted interventions to address regional challenges and opportunities. Access the webinar recording [Regional Pulse: Insights from the 2024 Multi-Region Household Surveys](#) and [view the presentation slides from the webinar](#).

## Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) News

### Welcome Morghan Thornton, SRDC's New Administrative Assistant



The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) is excited to welcome Morghan Thornton as our new Administrative Assistant, officially joining the team on May 1, 2025.

Morghan comes to SRDC from a local Department of Human Services office, where she built a strong foundation in public service and organizational support. Her experience makes her a valuable addition to SRDC as we continue our mission of strengthening rural communities.

SRDC is thrilled to have Morghan on board and look forward to the energy and dedication she brings to the team!

### Searching for a Previous Southern Rural Development (SRDC) Curriculum or Publication?

In 2023, the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) launched an updated website to better serve visitors and partners. With this exciting refresh, we've received several questions regarding the location of previously published curricula such as **Stronger Economies Together (SET)**, **Turning Lemons into Lemonade**, **Leaders in Economic Development (LEAD)**, and others.

If you are also looking for these or any other of SRDC's training resources, you can access archived curricula directly at: <https://srdc.msstate.edu/training/curricula>

### Need help finding a specific publication or accessing something from our archives?

Please contact Communications Coordinator, **Carmen Kelly** at [carmen.kelly@msstate.edu](mailto:carmen.kelly@msstate.edu)

### SRDC Repository Readership Snapshot Update



In April 2025, the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) Repository collection had a total of **192 downloads from 32 different institutions in 21 different countries**.

The repository is hosted on Mississippi State University Library's platform, Scholars Junction, which allows users to explore published content from the SRDC and its partners. [View the SRDC's repository](#).

## Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

---

### 2025 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Conference

**In-Person: June 9-12, 2025, The Embassy Suites, Charleston, West Virginia**

Join the West Virginia State University Extension Service and West Virginia Extension Service in Charleston for the 2025 NACDEP Conference: Country Roads, Connecting the Farm to the Country.

[REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE](#)

### 2025 Community Development Society (CDS) Conference

**In-Person: July 6-9, 2025, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York**

The conference theme is *Innovative Pathways to Thriving Communities: People, Technology, and Place-based Collaboration*.

[REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE](#)

### 2025 Rural Sociological Society (RSS) Annual Meeting

**In-Person: July 30 – August 2, 2025, Hilton Salt Lake City Center, Salt Lake City, Utah**

Theme: *Nourishing the Future of Rural Sociology: Using Sociological Insights and Interventions to Secure Our Legacy*.

[VIEW ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION](#)

### 2025 Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) National Conference

**In-Person: October 6-9, 2025, Sheraton Fort Worth Downtown, Fort Worth, Texas**

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

### 2025 NETtra Conference

**In-person: October 7-10, 2025, Mill Falls at the Lake Resort, Meredith, New Hampshire**

Tourism is all about making connections – between people, places, cultures, and time. The 2025 NETtra Conference will connect two organizations comprised of tourism researchers, educators, and practitioners in a first-time collaboration between the [Northeast Chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association](#) (NETTRA) and the [National Extension Tourism \(NET\) Network](#), hosted by the University of New Hampshire.

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.