



Items of Interest

Back by Demand: Who Will Fill My Shoes? Virtual Succession Planning Series

If you missed it in the spring or you are interested in refreshing your memory, we are pleased to announce an upcoming virtual workshop series, [Who Will Fill My Shoes: Succession Planning for Landowners, Farmers, Forest Owners, and Family Businesses](#). This five-part series is designed to help landowners and family enterprises navigate the complex process of succession planning with clarity and confidence.

Session Schedule (All sessions held at 3:00 PM ET / 2:00 PM CT / 1:00 PM MT / Noon PT):

- November 10: Module 1 – Communication and Conflict in Succession
- November 12: Module 2 – Key Players in Succession: Who Should Be Involved?
- November 14: Module 3 – Legal and Business Structures
- November 17: Module 4 – Roadmapping and Goals in Succession: Who, When, and How to Transfer?
- November 19: Module 5 – Meeting Planning and Coordination for Succession

Who will fill my shoes?
Succession Planning for Farmers, Forest Owners, & Family Businesses



To register, please scan the QR code:



Dates:
November 10: Communication and Conflict in Succession
November 12: Key Players in Succession-Who Should Be Involved?
November 14: Legal and Business Structures
November 17: Roadmapping and Goals in Succession-Who, When, and How to Transfer?
November 19: Meeting Planning and Coordination in Succession

Webinar sessions begin at
3:00 PM ET/2:00 CT/1:00 MT/12:00 PT

Presenters:
Renee Wiatt
Purdue University

Dr. Kurt Smith
North Carolina State University

Dr. Rebecca Smith
Mississippi State University Extension





Knowing where to begin with succession planning often leaves many landowners, farmers, forest owners, and family businesses feeling overwhelmed and stuck. This research-based curriculum provides a practical roadmap for taking those first steps. Participants will explore essential components of the process, including communication strategies, identifying key players, understanding legal and business structures, and developing a clear transfer plan.

Succession planning involves emotional as well as financial considerations, often making progress difficult. Through this course, participants will gain both the soft and technical skills necessary to create and implement a successful succession plan for their property or business.

We look forward to your participation in this valuable learning opportunity.

Join us for one session or all of the sessions!

[Register Now](#)

SRDC Partners with Delta Regional Authority, Southern University Ag Center, and LSU AgCenter to Provide Resources and Opportunities to Communities in Louisiana



these communities for sustained growth.

The PROPEL initiative (funded through the Delta Regional Authority, DRA) in collaboration with the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC), is advancing workforce and economic development in Ville Platte and Lake Providence, Louisiana. This work is being implemented by a strong technical assistance team that includes the Community and Economic Development of the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center in partnership with the LSU AgCenter. Together, they are providing hands-on support to strengthen local capacity, drive economic resilience, and prepare

these communities for sustained growth. By investing in leadership, skills, infrastructure and local planning capacity, the PROPEL initiative, powered by the Southern University Ag Center, LSU AgCenter, SRDC and DRA, is creating a foundation for sustainable economic opportunity and community advancement in Louisiana's rural Delta.

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA), a federal regional commission promoting economic development within an eight-state service region, has partnered with the Southern Rural Development Center and the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development through the PROPEL initiative, working with pilot community efforts in multiple states.

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 or fordl@fvsu.edu.

INRPHA Webinar Recap: Publishing on Rural Health and Aging Panel



On Friday, October 3, the [Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging](#) hosted a webinar with a panel of journal editors from across the country who will share their insights and tips for publishing research related to rural population health and aging.

Panelists include:

- Elizabeth Crouch (University of South Carolina), *Journal of Rural Mental Health*
- Ty Borders (Texas Christian University), *Journal of Rural Health*
- Joseph Gaugler (University of Minnesota), *The Gerontologist*
- Leif Jensen (Pennsylvania State University), *Rural Sociology*

The moderator was John Green from the Southern Rural Development Center and editor of the *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*.

[Publishing on Rural Health and Aging Webinar](#)

ACES Accolades: Johnson Receives Royrickers Cook Endowed Engagement Award

The Alabama Cooperative System congratulates Portia Johnson, Extension specialist and assistant professor in Auburn University's College of Human Sciences, for receiving the 2025 Royrickers Cook Endowed Engagement Award. Johnson was recognized at the Outreach and Engaged Scholars Recognition Ceremony. The award is named after Royrickers Cook, Auburn's vice president of University Outreach. It honors a faculty or staff member who demonstrates a continued and intentional commitment to outreach.



Pictured are Portia Johnson, Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor, Auburn University (left), and Royrickers Cook, Vice President of University Outreach, Auburn University.

"Johnson exemplifies the mission of Extension through her outstanding leadership in programming and scholarship," said [Laura Downey](#), assistant director of Human Sciences Extension. "Her dedication to translating research into impactful programs reflects a deep commitment to Alabamians as she seeks practical ways to help families make informed decisions and positive changes."

Her development of the [Alabama FAST: FAFSA Application Survival Toolkit](#) is stated as a reason for Johnson's selection. Since its launch in 2022, this program has served as a resource for thousands of Alabama families and high-school professionals to navigate the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process.

"I am humbled and energized by this recognition," Johnson said. "Helping families make informed financial decisions and access higher education is not just my job, it's my mission."

This article, [Johnson Receives Royrickers Cook Endowed Engagement Award](#), originally published by the [Alabama Cooperative Extension System's](#) blog [ACES Accolades](#) on October 1, 2025.

SERA 47 Local Foods: Tea & Coffee Hour Webinar Recap

On Thursday, September 11, [SERA 47 Local Foods](#) hosted a webinar with three presentations on topics that include "The Rural Renewal Symposium", "Controlled Environment Agriculture Summit East", and "The Local Catch Network" and "The Local Seafood Summit".

[September 2025 Tea & Coffee Hour Webinar](#)

Each network or event focuses on an area of interest that overlaps with local and regional food systems.

- The [Local Catch Network and Local Seafood Summit](#) cultivate vibrant community-based seafood systems.
- The [Rural Renewal Symposium](#) is part of a mission to catalyze the renewal of rural communities through interdisciplinary engagement.
- The [CEA Summit East](#) is designed to bring the Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) industry and academia together to share research, business strategies and build partnerships.



Call for Abstracts: Special Issue on Local and Regional Food Systems, *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*

Local and regional food systems have received renewed interest in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated supply chain problems along with concerns over extreme weather events and farm community vitality. Furthermore, there have been efforts in the southern region of the U.S. to build local and regional food systems as part of development efforts across the rural-urban continuum. Thus, there is a need for scholarship on these and related issues to expand knowledge, guide practice, and inform policy.

In partnership with the SERA-47 Local and Regional Food Systems Multistate Project and the Southern Rural Development Center, the Journal of Rural Social Sciences will publish a special issue on these and related topics. Submissions are welcomed and encouraged from a wide range of disciplines, as this is a multidisciplinary field of work. Authors should keep in mind the general social science (sociology, economics, geography, etc.) and Extension professional audiences, as they are the most common readers of this publication. Those writing from other disciplines can use this special issue as an avenue to present their work to these scholars and practitioners to advance multidisciplinary engagement. Manuscripts on general topics related to local and regional food systems are invited, especially those addressing original research, systematic research reviews, and development practices, including outreach and education. Papers should include some connection to/focus on the southern region of the U.S.

Authors are asked to submit abstracts (not to exceed 150 words) by November 7, 2025, for consideration. Following initial desk-review by the special issue editorial team, authors of selected abstracts will be invited to submit full-length papers (not to exceed 9,000 words) by January 23, 2026. After a second desk-review, selected manuscripts will be sent out for the journal's regular double-blind peer review process.

The Local and Regional Food Systems Special Issue Editors include John J. Green and Grace Langford (Southern Rural Development Center/Mississippi State University), Kenrett Jefferson-Moore (North Carolina A&T State University), Kaylee South (Virginia Tech), and Courtney Brown (Oklahoma State University).

Abstracts should be submitted as Word document in an email attachment to John J. Green, JRSS Editor (<mailto:jjg8@msstate.edu>) and Elizabeth Sweeney, JRSS Managing Editor (eyoung@go.olemiss.edu).

The Journal of Rural Social Sciences (JRSS) is the official peer-reviewed publication of the Southern Rural Sociological Association, a member of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists. It is an open-access journal published in collaboration with Clemson University Press. For more information, including style requirements and submission processes, visit: <https://open.clemson.edu/jrss/>.

It is also recommended that authors submit an abstract for presentation of their work at the annual meeting of the Southern Rural Sociological Association, to be held jointly with the Southern Association of Agriculture Sciences, February 1-2, 2026 in Louisville, KY. Abstracts are due to the SRSA by November 21, 2026, but authors submitting to the special issue should go ahead and submit their conference abstract at the same time as submitting for this special issue of the Journal of Rural Social Sciences (November 7). ([Annual Meeting | Southern Rural Sociological Association](#)).

Job Opportunity

Director, Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Auburn University invites nominations and applications for the position of Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, who serves as Alabama Extension's chief academic and administrative officer, providing vision and leadership to enhance the system's tradition of excellence in education, research, service, and educational outreach. The director reports directly to the presidents of Auburn University and Alabama A&M University.

View more information and access the application for the director's position at

<https://ssl.acesag.auburn.edu/posannc/files/Alabama-Extension-Director-20250604.pdf>

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

2025 Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Annual Meeting

In-person: November 9-11, 2025, Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[VIEW ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION](#)

2025 Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC)

In-person: November 16-18, 2025, Renaissance Montgomery Hotel and Spa, Montgomery, Alabama

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

2026 Southern Rural Sociological Association (SRSA) Conference

In-person: February 1-2, 2026, Omni Louisville Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky

[VIEW ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION](#)

2026 Extension Leadership Conference (ELC)

In-Person: February 4-5, 2026, Savannah, Georgia

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

2026 Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference

In-person: April 20-21, 2026, in Bethesda, Maryland

[CONFERENCE INFORMATION COMING SOON](#)

2026 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Conference

In-person: June 15-18, 2026, in Wichita, Kansas

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

2026 Community Development Society (CDS) Annual Conference

In-person: July 19 – 22, 2026, Georgia Southern University, Savannah, Georgia

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

2026 Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) Summit East

In-person: September 15-16, 2026, IALR Conference Center, Danville, VA

[ACCESS SUMMIT INFORMATION](#)

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