



Items of Interest

Contribute to the National AI Asset Map for Cooperative Extension

In partnership with the National Digital Extension Education Technology (NDEET) initiative and the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) Broadband Program Action Team, the Extension Foundation is asking for your help in cataloging efforts related to the use and adoption of artificial intelligence across the Cooperative Extension system.

NDEET is leading the development of a National AI Asset Map, a comprehensive inventory of AI-related work happening across Extension.

The survey collects information across a broad range of AI-related activities, including:

- Trainings, workshops, webinars, and presentations
- Publications, papers, and news articles
- Research projects and data sets (e.g., crop data, applied analytics)
- AI specialists and personnel
- Partnerships and collaborative initiatives
- Tools and technologies (e.g., websites, chatbots, applications)
- Governance, ethics, and policy efforts
- Events, videos, and outreach materials

Submissions may serve both internal and external audiences and may span all program areas. [Learn more and complete the survey.](#)

2026 1890 Land-Grant Universities Impact Report Released

This year's report includes stories that pertain to digital access, heirs' property for farmers, and food security in several states in the southern region.

[Access the 2026 1890 Land-Grant Universities Impact Report](#)

Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level: Good News Impacts

The Virginia Caples Lifelong Learning Institute (VCLLI), a program of Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M University, delivered community education sessions using the Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level curriculum to help individuals and families protect their land. The program emphasized the critical importance of proper estate planning in preventing heirs' property issues and increased awareness of agribusiness and land-use opportunities that support generational wealth.

During the 2025 ACES programmatic year, VCLLI facilitated educational sessions across 21 Alabama counties, reaching 550 residents from communities impacted by heirs' property challenges. Of those participants, 312 completed the Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level survey, providing valuable insight into local needs and experiences.

A defining strength of this initiative was the integration of free legal clinics directly into educational programming. Participants met one-on-one with volunteer attorneys for legal advice, document reviews, referrals, and next-step guidance—removing financial and access barriers that often prevent families from addressing property issues.

Over the past year, undergraduate students at Alabama A&M University and law students at Faulkner University Jones School of Law contributed more than 180 hours of pro bono service. They assisted sixteen families with heirs' property cases, six of which were successfully resolved. Guided by experienced faculty and legal mentors, their work reflects a meaningful academic, social, and cultural investment in Alabama communities. Through these clinics, families received estate-planning documents and services valued at \$111,150, enabling them to take concrete steps to prevent future land loss.

This work was made possible through strong partnerships with Faulkner University Jones School of Law, Legal Services Alabama, Gregory Varner & Associates Attorney at Law, Area Agencies on Aging, Alabama A&M University's College of Agriculture, Life, and Natural Sciences/Small Farms Research Center, the Limited Resource Landowner Education & Assistance Network (LRLEAN), local churches, and community organizations. Together, these partners created a seamless pipeline from education to legal support.

As a result, hundreds of families gained clarity about their property rights, learned how to safeguard their land, and accessed professional legal assistance that would otherwise be out of reach. These efforts directly contribute to preventing land loss, reducing family conflict, and strengthening generational wealth and stability across Alabama communities.



Strengthening Housing Resilience in Four Arkansas Rural Communities

Submitted by: Hunter P. Goodman and A. Danielle Watson



In summer 2025, two Experiential Scholars Program Interns through UADA-Extension supported the Strengthening Housing Resilience project. Pictured are students, Mason Mabry and Myah Hudson, along with Danielle Watson, program associate, are pictured with city leaders of Altheimer, AR.

The Center for Rural Resilience and Workforce Development at the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service's (UADA Extension) mission is to equip Arkansans with sustainable, accessible research-based practices and expertise to create vibrant, self-reliant communities where businesses, organizations, and families thrive. Since March 2025, we have been a part of a multi-organization grant through WinRock International called ASPIRE focused on communication, downtown development and leadership, housing, and hazard mitigation to support four extremely rural communities develop realistic, implementable, and sustainable plans.

We have supported housing resilience in four rural communities within Jefferson and Phillips Counties. With a focus on community development, every community member is valued and must be a part of building a strong, vibrant local community. We focus on what is strong and not what is wrong in a community, and we believe relationships and people are critical assets to a community's vitality.

Through ASPIRE, our work has centered on building local capacity: strengthening coalitions, preparing communities for climate and public health challenges, and supporting the development of resilient housing infrastructure. These investments empower residents to shape durable, community-driven solutions that will continue to strengthen Jefferson and Phillips Counties for years to come.

Job Postings

Associate Professor/Professor & Director, Southern Rural Development Center

The Associate Professor/Professor & Director position is a full-time position located on the campus of Mississippi State University.

The Associate Professor/Professor and Director position combines a tenure-track faculty appointment with senior administrative leadership responsibilities. The role provides strategic direction and oversight for an academic unit while maintaining excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. Responsibilities include leading programs and personnel, managing budgets and resources, supporting faculty development, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and advancing research, outreach, and engagement aligned with the university's land-grant mission. The director is expected to provide visionary leadership, strengthen external partnerships, contribute to undergraduate and graduate education, and enhance the unit's regional and national reputation through innovation, impact, and effective governance

[Access more information and apply for the Associate Professor/Professor & Director position with SRDC.](#)

Communications Coordinator, Southern Rural Development Center

The Communications Coordinator position is a full-time position located on the campus of Mississippi State University.

The Communications Coordinator position develops and maintains websites and produce print and electronic publications that support the research and Extension educational programs of the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC). Publication products are targeted to land-grant university administrators and faculty, agencies and analysts, federal and state policymakers, and the general public. A primary responsibility is to manage, strengthen, and enhance SRDC's digital presence and coordinate external communications.

[Access more information and apply for the Communications Coordinator position with SRDC.](#)

Editor/Co-Editor, Local Development and Society Journal

The journal *Local Development & Society (LD&S)* was launched in 2020 as a partnership between the Community Development Society and Taylor and Francis (also branded as Routledge). The journal will begin its 7th year of production with the editing process managed by Rhonda G. Phillips, Ph.D. and Norman Walzer, Ph.D. as founding co-editors with Sofia Kotsiri, Ph.D. as managing editor. LD&S operates independently from *Community Development* and publishes 3 issues per year with an average of 10 articles per issue. It also publishes book reviews with Josh Newton, Ph.D., serving as book review editor along with commentaries that are reviewed by the editorial team. *LD&S* has an editorial board of 16 members located in five countries.

[View more information about the journal, the position responsibilities, and access the application.](#)

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

National Rural Grocery Summit

In-person: May 5-7, 2026, in Fargo, North Dakota

[ACCESS SUMMIT INFORMATION](#)

National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Conference

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

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

Community Development Society (CDS) Annual Conference

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

[ACCESS CONFERENCE INFORMATION](#)

Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting

In-person: July 29-August 1, 2026, Embassy Suites by Hilton, Raleigh, North Carolina

[ACCESS MEETING INFORMATION](#)

Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) Summit East

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

[ACCESS SUMMIT INFORMATION](#)

Southern Region Planning Leadership Network Meeting

In-person: August 17-20, 2026, New Orleans Marriott, New Orleans, Louisiana

[ACCESS MEETING INFORMATION](#)

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