



research, the project will identify unique challenges facing SED communities along with the capacity of the 1890 Extension Service to respond. Extension will develop and pilot SED-responsive approaches to building digital capacity in partnership with 1890 Extension.

SRDC's **Rachel Welborn** and **Dr. John Green** are pleased to be partnering with **Dorothy Brandon**, Alabama A&M University; **Travella Free**, Kentucky State University; **Roberto Gallardo**, Purdue University; **Sanjun Gu**, North Carolina A&T State University; **Jimmy Henry**, Prairie View A&M University; and **Terrence Wolfork**, Fort Valley A&M University.

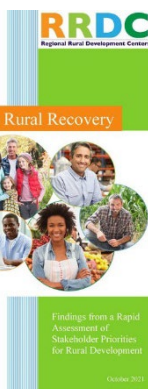
## Recently Published: Rural Population Health and Aging: Introduction to the Special Issue

The *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, the official peer-reviewed publication of the Southern Rural Sociological Association, has published a special issue on rural aging.

The collection of four articles and an introduction/commentary essay highlight innovative research to inform education, outreach/Extension, and policy. The special issue was produced in collaboration with the [Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging \(INRPHA\)](#) with guest editors from The Pennsylvania State University, Syracuse University, University of Colorado Boulder, and the Southern Rural Development Center.

[READ THE SPECIAL ISSUE HERE](#)

## Listening Sessions Report: Investing in Rural Recovery



The nation's four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) released *Investing in Rural Recovery: Findings from a Rapid Assessment of Stakeholder Priorities for Rural Development* from a national survey.

The survey, conducted in the fall of 2021, is part of an ongoing Listening Session Initiative aimed to identify key priorities, capacities, expansion, and valued programming that resulted in the [eight critical topic areas](#) for rural communities. This initial report marks the close of the first stage in the consultative feedback process. The second phase, in March and April of 2022, will provide a basis for a series of facilitated dialogues.

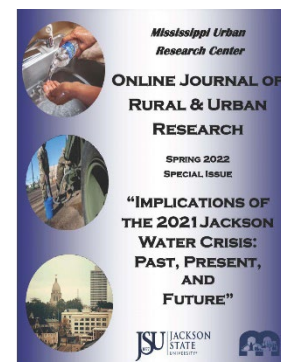
[READ THE FULL REPORT HERE](#)

## Special Issue: Online Journal of Rural and Urban Research

Connecting community and regional development topics that cut across the rural-urban continuum, John J. Green co-authored an article with several colleagues focused on the connections between population change and the capacity to address public water system needs.

Previously presented at the virtual conference on the Jackson Water Crisis, this study appears in a special issue of the *Online Journal of Rural and Urban Research*.

[READ THE SPECIAL ISSUE HERE](#)



## NIFA Seeks Hall of Fame and Partnership Award Nominees

For action no later than April 1, 2022. Winning nominations will be recognized at the NIFA Day of Appreciation in either June or July 2022. NIFA invites nominations for the following:

Inductees into the USDA-NIFA Hall of Fame have worked, coordinated, or supported activities exemplifying NIFA's synergy of excellence in any combination of research, education, and Extension approaches on local, regional, national, or international levels. Inductees have also demonstrated a measurable and positive impact on the lives of citizens and NIFA's mission to invest in and advance agricultural research, education, and Extension to solve societal challenges. Nominations will be evaluated based on three weighted areas: measurable impact on NIFA; synergy of research, education, and/or Extension; and endorsements/letters of support. Nominations must consist of a completed [nomination form](#) and up to three endorsements/letters of support. To learn more, visit the [NIFA Hall of Fame Awards website](#).

NIFA also invites all Land-grant Universities, cooperating institutions, and organizations supported by NIFA to submit nominations for the 2022 NIFA Partnership Awards Program. Nominations can be submitted for individuals or teams of up to 20 members. Complete details, instructions and [the form](#) are found [NIFA Partnership Award webpage](#).

## Regional Spotlight

### University of Tennessee Initiative Aims to Improve Transportation and Digital Equity

A new [National Science Foundation](#)-backed initiative led by the [University of Tennessee \(UT\)](#) plans to provide a solution to transportation and digital disparities in underrepresented populations. This project is a collaborative effort between [Knoxville Community Development Corporation](#), [United Way of Greater Knoxville](#) and University of Tennessee that addresses racial, ethnic and wealth inequality that were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The capacity for communities to use intelligent systems to bridge spatial and technical mismatches in the built environment and expand equitable access to resources is predicated on the ability to coordinate data systems

efficiently and share information securely and easily. This project engages the community at the front-end, ensures a broader group of stakeholders is invested, and considers multiple perspectives in the development, deployment, and scaling up of any prototype. Replicated across other communities, this will lead to development of more relevant intelligent systems and successful uptake among communities. Over time, this will lead to greater technical capacity across communities which they can leverage emerging transportation data to make smarter, more resilient, and adaptable transportation and communications infrastructure-planning decisions.

This project is led by UT Tickle College of Engineering Associate Professor **Micah Beck**. Other team members at UT are UT Institute of Agriculture Assistant Professor **Sreedhar Upendram**, College of Social Work Associate Professor **Courtney Cronley**, Tickle College of Engineering Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs **Ozlem Kilic**, and Center for Transportation Research Interim Director **Jerry Everett**.

### Employee Highlight: Walter Battle, University of Tennessee-Tennessee State University Extension



Walter Battle is an Extension Area Specialist with an expertise in Community Economic Development in western Tennessee. His Extension programs focus on economic prosperity while addressing racial and cultural issues. Walter has worked with University of Tennessee Extension for over 32 years and expanded the award-winning Homebuyer Education program from a county-based program to 21 counties. He also serves as the Real Colors certified facilitator working with organizations regarding staffing and leadership initiatives by identifying and managing various personality types. He is currently serving on the University of Tennessee Extension LEAD95 team that trains county directors and supervisors.

Walter is a recipient of many awards, the most recent Epsilon sigma Phi Diversity Team award (2020) for his Homebuyer Education program which also topped the 2020 University of Extension programs. National Association of County Agricultural Agents recognized Walter for Distinguished Service in 2007 and awarded a Communication Award at the national level in 2004.

Walter is a native of Nashville, received his B.S. in Animal Science (1987) and M.S. Agricultural Science (1992) from Tennessee State University. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Learning and Leadership at UT-Chattanooga.

In his free time, Walter enjoys gardening, cooking and jazz. He is married to the former Doris Scott, who directs facilitation for a Washington, D.C. based educational leadership development training firm. They are the proud parents of Max, an accounts specialist with a distribution company, and Paige, a senior associate at a company that design achievement strategies for public education systems.

## Job Opportunities

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### Assistant Research Scientist / Rural Social Scientist, University of Georgia

#### Open until filled

The position supports the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FR-SAN) grant. The purpose of FR-SAN is to establish a network to connects individuals engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations to stress assistance programs. Establishing a network to assists farmers and ranchers in times of stress can offer a conduit to improving behavioral health awareness, literacy, and outcomes for agricultural producers, workers, and their families. The USDA/NIFA established four regional centers across the US. This position will serve in the Southern FR-SAN Region. The regional center is headed by the University of Tennessee. [Click here to apply](#)

#### [LEARN MORE](#)

### Applied Economist/ The Institute of Government, University of Georgia

#### Position closes April 1, 2022

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government at The University of Georgia invites applications for a Public Service Faculty position in the State Services and Decision Support Division's Workforce and Economic Analysis Unit. This position carries rank in the public service faculty career ladder of the University.

The successful candidate will have primary responsibilities in conducting economic analysis, fiscal analysis, economic impact studies, research and providing professional services for state agencies and local governments. The applied economist will also work on collaborative projects with the Institute's applied demographer, workforce development team, and data analytics teams. The position monitors and interprets economic, labor, demographic, and government administrative data indicators. The position analyzes developments in Georgia's labor market, state tax and revenue, and other area effecting Georgia's economy and considers the impacts on the state's economic outlook.

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

### Associate Dean and Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension

#### Open until filled

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) at Virginia Tech are recruiting its next Associate Dean and Director of VCE. The Associate Dean and Director provides primary leadership for all aspects of Virginia Cooperative Extension. The Director reports to the Dean of CALs, and serves with the associate deans for Academic Programs, Research and Graduate Studies, and CALs Global as a member of the dean's executive team. The director is also one of the voting members of the University's Administrative Council for Extension and Experiment Station Research. The director collaborates closely with the Extension Administrator at Virginia State University to ensure a shared vision and to promote a state-wide joint Extension program. The director will also represent VCE at the state, regional and national levels, as well as build strong relationships with stakeholders, partners, and funders.

## Grant Connections

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### STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT: USDA Seeks Applications to Advance Equity and Expand Regional Economies in Distressed Rural Communities

**The deadline to submit applications is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, April 19, 2022.**

**Applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Potential applicants may submit a concept proposal for review by the agency to [SM.USDA-RD.RISE@usda.gov](mailto:SM.USDA-RD.RISE@usda.gov) no later than February 18, 2022.**

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small announced the Department is accepting grant applications that will advance equity in rural America by creating new opportunities in distressed communities. USDA is offering [priority points](#) to projects that advance key priorities under the Biden-Harris Administration to help communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, advance equity, and combat climate change. These extra points will increase the likelihood of funding for projects seeking to address these critical challenges in rural America. The [Rural Innovation Stronger Economy \(RISE\)](#) grant program encourages a regional, innovation-driven approach to economic development by funding job accelerator partnerships in low-income rural communities. If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit [our GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

[LEARN MORE](#)

## Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

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### Food Systems Leadership Institute Accepting 2022 Applications

[FSLI](#) is accepting applications for Cohort #18 for the fall of 2022. The Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) offers leadership development to upper-level leaders in higher education, government, and industry. The Fellows will learn strategies to handle the leadership challenges and opportunities for the future. The review for all completed application packets will be on March 28, 2022. Full details and the link to the nomination form are found at <https://fsl.org/apply>.

### SERA-47 March Informational Meeting

**Virtual: March 15, 2022 • 11 AM PT/12 PM MT/1 PM CT/2 PM ET**

Join us for the March General/Informational Meeting as we discuss the work of SERA-47 and highlight ways that you can become involved in SERA-47.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference

**In-person: April 3-6, 2022; Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Washington, DC**

PILD 2022 is your opportunity to bring the issues of your hometown to Washington, DC. Program Highlights Include: how to best to engage your representatives in your mission, communicate your message effectively, and the “new” National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and why it matters to you.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## National Extension Energy and National Sustainability Joint Summits

**In-person: May 15-18, 2022**

The Summit is the best, single venue to learn about the latest in sustainability and energy research, share innovative Extension programs, update your program toolbox, and cultivate new communities of practice.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## NACDEP Annual Conference: Creating Connections at Every Crossroad

**In-person: June 5-8, 2022, Indianapolis, Indiana**

The 2022 NACDEP Annual Conference will be held at the Alexander Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana. Registration begins March 1, 2022.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW MORE](#)

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.