



Items of Interest

Award Winners Named for National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP)

The National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) at their 2021 Annual Conference was held virtually on May 15-19. Regional and national winners were recognized at the conference. The South had six regional team winners, two regional team runner ups, three regional individual winners, and one regional individual runner-up. Nationally the South had two team winners, three national team runners-up, two national individual winners, and two national individual runners-up.

NACDEP has over 350 individual memberships, representing more than 40 states and territories. Active members are currently employed as Extension professionals with at least a 25% extension appointment with responsibilities or strong interests in community and economic development.

To learn more about NACDEP, [CLICK HERE](#)

Regional Spotlight



U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Joins Elected Officials at Fort Valley State University to Announce Debt Relief Plan for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

Georgia's socially disadvantaged farmers will soon benefit from a \$4 billion debt relief plan that supports minority farmers.

Webinars:

SERA-47 Learning Communities Workgroup Seminar Series:

"Marketing Strategies to Help a Food Business Grow in 2021"
9/13/2021: 2:30 PM CT/3:30 ET

[REGISTER HERE](#)

To announce this historic news, Sen. Rev. Raphael Warnock, Sen. Jon Ossoff, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Congressman Sanford Bishop recently visited Fort Valley State University's Agricultural Technology Conference Center (ATCC) to host an Agriculture Town Hall. The dignitaries first met with a small group of African American farmers for a roundtable discussion before kicking off the town hall meeting on the ATCC's lawn.

This visit emphasized Warnock's mission to be a vocal advocate for all Georgia farmers and his commitment to ensure the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is swiftly administering this critical relief in a way that is equitable and considers the input of Georgia farmers who have been left behind.

"Everything we are accomplishing in this Congress, know it is because of you," Warnock told the crowd of farmers. "The pandemic both illuminated and exacerbated longstanding disparities. We are here to announce that help is on the way. This is the beginning of the work we must continue."

Bishop said one of his main goals is securing funding for all rural America. "We are committed to using this platform of working with the Secretary of Agriculture, our senators and our members of the House and the Senate to make sure that rural America and rural Georgia have the resources to enjoy the same quality of life as any place else in the United States," he said. Ossoff praised Warnock's committed efforts to deliver the debt relief bill. "We have delivered over \$1 billion for HBCUs through the American Rescue Plan," he proclaimed. "We can confirm today that FVSU will receive \$11.9 million in direct support through the American Rescue Plan, which a full \$6 million will go directly to student aid."

[FULL PRESS RELEASE](#)

Bridging Digital Divide through Community Broadband Initiatives

Digital Divide is defined as the gap between underserved communities that have limited internet access and the communities that have relatively better access to broadband internet (25 megabits per second download/3 megabits per second upload speeds). While the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) claims that broadband internet is not available to 24.7 million people in the United States, data from Microsoft indicated that [162.8 million](#) (almost half the population of the United States) do not use internet at broadband speeds nationally. The disparity between these calculations may be because the FCC considers an entire census-block connected if one household or business has access to broadband, producing incomplete results.

Broadband internet is still out of reach for many rural communities in Tennessee. As of 2019, only 53.4% of [Tennessee residents](#) had adopted broadband. The State of Tennessee's [broadband initiative](#) as well as other federal funding opportunities are commendable efforts to improve broadband access, but it may take years before the infrastructure is in place to provide reliable and affordable internet to rural residents. With the shift to digital technology and widespread applications, access to broadband internet has become critical for economic development, specifically for improvements in education, workforce, healthcare, and recreation. Impacts of the digital divide have been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic with employees shifting to working at home and K-12 schools, colleges and universities offering classes online. Alongside that, with lockdowns and stay-at-home guidance, many residents are choosing online methods to order retail goods and services. Additionally, people need broadband internet to access up-to-date healthcare, prescriptions, and health services information about COVID-19 from news and media outlets, as well as the state and federal government.

These community projects are two efforts to bridge the Digital Divide in Tennessee. The Digital Divide impacts the everyday life of Tennesseans, and through collaborative actions like these, we can improve broadband access across the state.

To read more about the projects that faculty of the University of Tennessee, the state of Tennessee, and collaborators are working on please click to [READ MORE](#)

Grant Postings

Appalachian Regional Commission Evaluation of Our Education and Workforce Development Grants

Closes: August 9, 2021

The Appalachian Regional Commission is seeking proposals from qualified consultants for a program evaluation of our education and workforce development grants.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Job Postings

Community Health Post-Doctoral Associate

Open until filled

The position is a two-year appointment located in southwest part of the state in Tifton, Georgia. The faculty will be expected to support, implement, and evaluate community health capacity building initiatives related to vaccine education with partner institution Morehouse School of Medicine.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Courses

Online: August 4 - October 5, 2021

In-person: October 12 - October 13, 2021 (St. Paul, MN)

For inspiration, new skill development, or brushing up existing skills, we encourage individuals or teams to take the course. The course gives you the opportunity to prepare a new or updated BRE plan. It allows you to think through the right approach for your situation including two fundamental approaches to business outreach and follow-up action:

- The community-led, volunteer-intensive approach
- The staff-driven, continuous approach

What's new?

We're all learning how things are changing in the post-pandemic period. This includes BRE methods. Thus, we will discuss both new and traditional ideas and methods. We welcome discussion of new ways of doing the work. One thing hasn't changed; however, retaining and expanding businesses will continue to be the lion's share of local ED work for Minnesota communities.

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

Rural Renewal Symposium

In-person: October 12, 2021

The Rural Renewal Symposium and Prize are designed to raise awareness, attract resources and stimulate research toward solving grand challenges facing rural communities. This symposium will provide a unique opportunity for faculty, students and rural community members from across the U.S. and around the world to connect with others

and learn about the latest discoveries, trends and approaches for rural renewal. These awards and cash prizes, to be presented in person at the Rural Renewal Symposium in Stillwater, Oklahoma. **Nominations are due August 13, 2021.**

[LEARN MORE](#)

2021 National Extension Tourism Network Biennial Conference

November 7 – 11, 2021 – Savannah, GA

The National Extension Tourism Network's conference theme this year is "Navigating the Uncharted" which will reflect on how Extension and other tourism professionals have been responding and adapting to the challenges and changes facing the communities we serve. It also will serve to catalyze future Extension programming that best serves our stakeholders' needs.

[LEARN 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.