

SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ELEVATING RURAL COMMUNITIES 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Letter from the Director

The theme for the 2022 Annual Report of the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) is “Elevating Rural Communities.” This is an apt title. Over the course of the past year, we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Rural Development Act, under which the nation’s four Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) were established. This report’s cover shares images from several previous reports. Looking retrospectively across multiple decades of work, we identified a common commitment to building the capacity of organizations serving rural communities to improve wellbeing.

This commitment is not just a historical relic. It is demonstrated through contemporary action and a vision for an even brighter future. As shown in the following pages, the SRDC and our many partners have continued and expanded work together to elevate rural communities. Given our partners’ collective diversity – in terms of backgrounds, positions, experiences, and areas of expertise – coupled with support resources from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and numerous agencies and foundations, we have pursued strategic efforts to assist Land-Grant Universities in making substantive

contributions to efforts focused on mutual prosperity. Month by month, you will find summaries highlighting initiatives focused on resource mobilization, coordination, facilitation, and integration of research and Extension.

Looking to the future, even the next 50 years, we will need to continue to strengthen the core foundations and processes required to elevate rural communities. There are numerous challenges and opportunities, and we must be ready to adapt to the many possibilities. SRDC staff look forward to working with the Board of Directors and Technical and Operational Advisory Committee, NIFA, partners in the Land-Grant University system, and our collaborators with other colleges/universities, nonprofit organizations, and foundations to build the capacity in the Southern Region and beyond.

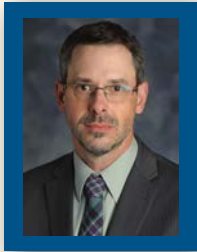
Sincerely,



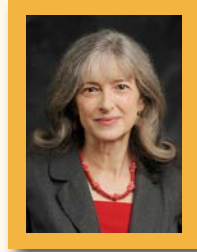
John J. Green

Elevating Rural Communities

MEET THE SRDC TEAM



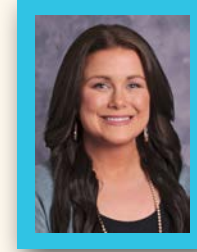
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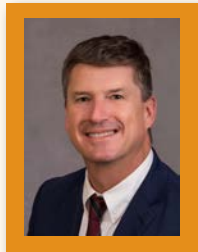
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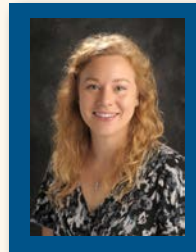
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MISSION

The Southern Rural Development Center seeks to strengthen the capacity of the region's 30 Land-Grant Institutions to address critical contemporary rural development issues impacting the wellbeing of people and communities in the rural South.

Priorities:

- Develop Pathways to Resilient Communities
- Build Strategic Partnerships
- Mobilize Resources around Emerging Issues and Opportunities

To view all the Land-Grant Institutions that we serve, please visit:
srdc.msstate.edu/about/landgrant/

CONTACT US

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Phone: 662.325.3207 | Fax: 662.325.8777

Websites

Southern Rural Development Center | srdc.msstate.edu

Regional Rural Development Centers | rrdc.info



Southern Rural
Development Center



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@so_dev_center



Southern Rural
Development Center

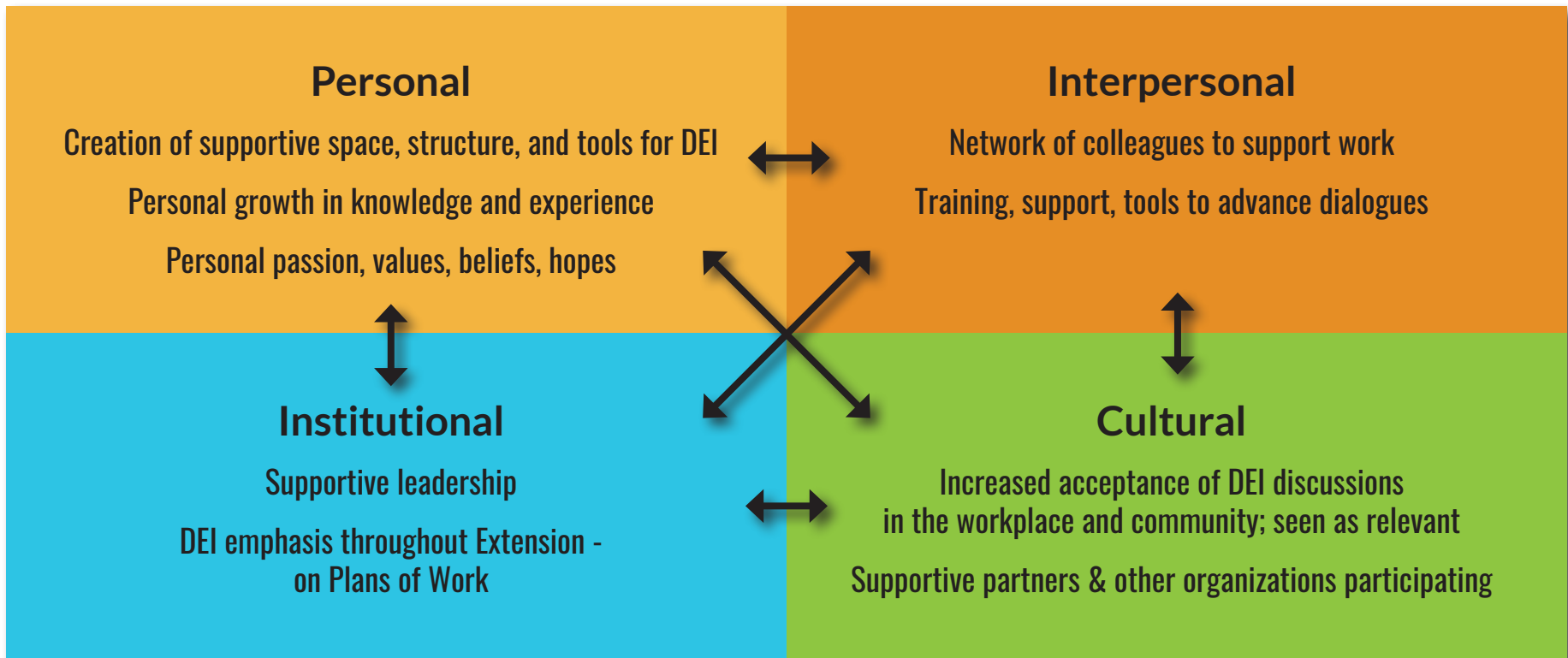
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Coming Together for Racial Understanding



Coming Together for Racial Understanding, now in its fourth year, has impacted the Land-Grant system and communities in many ways. During two recent convenings, Coming Together state teams identified areas where this effort was having the most positive impact across four levels of change, depicted here:



JANUARY 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
New Year's Day						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Martin Luther King Jr. Day					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Delta Scholars & Delta Regional Forum

Delta Scholars

The Delta Scholars undergraduate leadership program is led through the Mississippi State University Shackouls Honors College and diverse institutional partners with the Delta Directions Consortium, including the Southern Rural Development Center. 17 students attending diverse colleges and universities in Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Massachusetts, and New Jersey engaged in:

- Two weeks in Mississippi with a visit to Arkansas, combining university and community experiences (Summer 2022)
- Participation in the Delta Regional Forum
- Boston week check in and educational/professional development experiences (with Harvard University and Brandeis University Fall 2022)



To learn more, visit: <https://www.honors.msstate.edu/delta-scholars/>



The Delta Regional Forum was organized by the Southern Rural Development Center and the Delta Fellow through the Center for Population Studies (University of Mississippi) in collaboration with the many partners and co-sponsors of the Delta Directions Consortium.

- Two-day conference with presentations, panels, and workshops; 14 different sessions
- Combination of research, policy, and community-focused presentations
- 100 participants from the region and beyond



To learn more, visit: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/delta-regional-forum.html>



Delta Regional Forum

Delta Directions Consortium

The Delta Directions Consortium is a multi-state interdisciplinary network of individuals, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, and foundations working to create positive social change in the Mississippi Delta Region. The Southern Rural Development Center helps to connect partners with the Land-Grant Universities system.



To learn more, visit: <https://cfm.org/programs/delta-directions/>

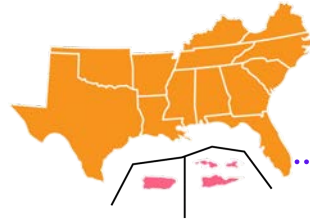


FEBRUARY 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		Valentine's Day				
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Presidents' Day					
26	27	28				



Because of Extension Community Development Efforts...



98,825

Jobs created/retained



437

New alliances/networks formed through formal agreements



3,163

Plans adopted and implemented in communities, agencies, local government, businesses, or disaster



28,181

Participants who reported new leadership roles & opportunities undertaken



6,898

Businesses created, retained, or expanded



\$16,116,506

In-kind resources contributed by organizations/communities



29

Universities reporting

\$107,629,641

Grants acquired by organizations/communities



97

Full Time Equivalents

Southern Region Extension Community Development Impacts



To learn more, visit: http://srdc.msstate.edu/measuring_impact/south-initiatives.html

MARCH 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Daylight Savings Begins					Saint Patrick's Day	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Southern Region Extension Community Development Impact Stories

LEARN MORE



Featured themes and topics were gathered from states in the Southern region to show a collective impact on community development. These notable areas are depicted here.

WORKFORCE TRAINING



- Career exploration
- Soft skills
- Digital literacy
- Elected officials training

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



- Disaster preparation and recovery
- Placemaking
- Housing
- Transportation
- Broadband access
- Farmers market

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT



- Business planning
- Incubators
- Value-added agriculture
- Business profitability
- Agribusiness
- Land use and preservation

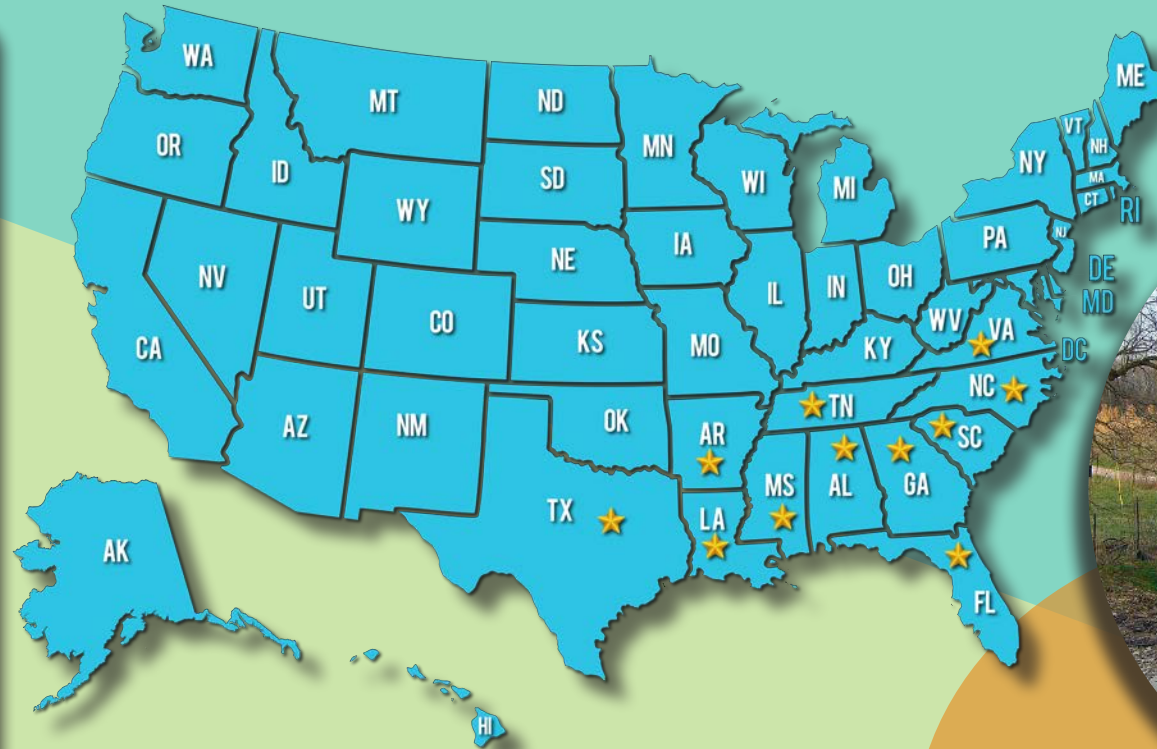


APRIL 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
					Good Friday	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Easter Sunday						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						



Heirs' Property Network



Working Groups:

RESEARCH

Collaborative USDA AFRI project entitled, "The Racial Wealth Gap, Persistent Poverty, and Heirs' Property: Analysis, Connections, Solutions" with research efforts to inform education and Extension programs.

LEGAL & POLICY

Sharing and cross-pollinating policy ideas, considerations, and legal solutions among our different stakeholder groups.

EDUCATION

Developed and piloted "Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level" Curriculum

November 29 & 30, 2022

In partnership with:



To learn more, visit: http://srdc.msstate.edu/heir_property



MAY 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Mother's Day						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
	Memorial Day					





Celebrating Retail, Accommodations, Tourism and Entertainment by Building Rural Innovations and Developing Growth Economies

CREATE BRIDGES is an economic development initiative for rural, multi-county regions to strengthen businesses and workforce within the retail, accommodations, tourism and entertainment sectors. This pilot project is comprised of two pilot phases. Phase 1 began in 2018 and Phase 2 began in 2020.

Below are examples of strategies implemented in 2022.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Community micro-projects (beautification, support for local events) **OK, AR, KY**
- Wayfinding signage initiatives (directing visitors to retail and tourism locations) **AR, KY**
- Retail Strategies program (training and resources for community leaders on economic development strategies) **OK, AR**
- Placemaking training for community leaders **IL**
- Multi-Tool Workshops webinar series for community leaders **ALL STATES**

BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Expanded buy local campaign **IL**
- Employer training and networking opportunities **NC**
- Small business secret shopper reviews **NC**
- Customer courtesy campaign **NC**

TOURISM

- Distributing regional tourism maps in multiple formats **NM**
- Maintaining digital maps and increasing social media presence **NM**
- Regional tourism promotion campaign **KY**

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Customer service and soft skills training **OK, AR, NC**
- Job readiness **OK, AR**
- Upskilling opportunities **OK**
- Workforce training in Spanish **AR**
- ServSafe **OK, AR**
- Remote Worker Certification **KY**
- 2024 solar eclipse training workshops **AR**
- CREATE Career Cafes for pre-college students **NC**

PHASE 1 STATES: Arkansas (AR), Kentucky (KY), Oklahoma (OK)

PHASE 2 STATES: Illinois (IL), New Mexico (NM), North Carolina (NC)

Funding for the project provided by:



To learn more, visit: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/createbridges/index.html>

JUNE 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Father's Day						
25	26	27	28	29	30	



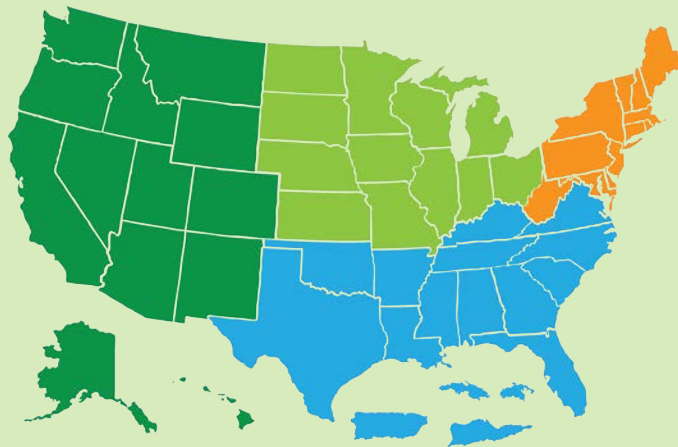
JULY 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Independence Day				
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) 50th Anniversary Celebration

This year the Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) celebrated the 50th Anniversary of their establishment under the Rural Development Act of 1972 to Revitalize and Develop Rural America. Throughout the year, the Southern Rural Development Center highlighted this celebration with social media content and news stories to showcase history of the RRDCs and proclamations from supporting organizations.



Southern Rural
Development Center



Southern Rural
Development Center



@so_dev_center



Southern Rural
Development Center

The Regional Rural Development Centers are funded by the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture and work to strengthen the capacity of Land-Grant University partners to serve rural communities through research and Extension.

Proclamations were released from the following organizations on behalf of the RRDCs: Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP), National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP), and Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (SAAS).



Experiment Station
Committee on Organization
and Policy (ESCOP)



SAAS

Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists



To learn more about the RRDCs, visit: <https://rrdc.info>

AUGUST 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Southern Region Program Leadership Network, Association of Extension Administrators & Association of Southern Region Extension Directors Joint Meeting					
27	28	29	30	31		



Elevating Communities through Networks

SOUTHERN EXTENSION & RESEARCH ACTIVITY (SERA) 47: LOCAL FOODS



SOUTHERN REGION PROGRAM LEADERSHIP NETWORK

The mission of this group is to foster and strengthen Extension education programming throughout the southern region by promoting multiple state cooperation, anticipating emerging program issues and needs, and implementing action processes to address them in a timely manner.

In August 2022, 257 participants representing Extension Service state program leaders from eight committees, the Association of Extension Administrators (AEA), and the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors (ASRED) convened for the annual joint regional planning and collaboration. The number of participants in each group are depicted below.

Current Objectives:

- Determining the most pressing issues in local food systems
- Identifying successful models and standardizing methods for local food system research and Extension
- Developing learning communities, webinars, and resource banks to share best practices and training

4-H Youth Development | 30

AEA | 15

AG & Natural Resources | 26

ASRED | 20

Communications | 23

Community Development | 27

Family & Consumer Sciences | 31

Information Technology | 17

Middle Managers | 44

Program & Staff Development | 24



To learn more, visit: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/foods>

SEPTEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Labor Day					
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging

NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Annual network meeting held virtually

Special issue of the Journal of Rural Social Sciences focused on rural population health and aging

Session at the annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society

Collaborated with the Rural Population Research Network to organize a virtual policy forum and hybrid policy symposium in Washington, D.C.



PennState



University of Colorado Boulder



Syracuse University



To learn more, visit: <https://sites.psu.edu/inrpha/>

YEAR THREE PILOT PROJECTS

Four pilot projects funded in past year on themes including:



Structural factors influencing women and healthy aging



Rural residence and connections with Alzheimer's Disease



Mortality trends and disparities in proximity to shale gas development



Rural-urban disparities in cardiovascular health and with extreme weather events

OCTOBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Columbus Day	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 Halloween				



Southern Region Listening Session Findings

Priority Ranks

	North Central	Northeast	South	West	National Scope	Total
1	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Workforce development, training, and education	Physical infrastructure and public services	Health	Physical infrastructure and public services
2	Workforce development, training, and education	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Economic development
3	Physical infrastructure and public services	Workforce development, training, and education	Health	Health	Economic development	Workforce development, training, and education
4	Community vibrancy	Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather	Economic development	Workforce development, training, and education	Community vibrancy	Health

Recommendations for Future Investments

1 Workforce Development, Training & Education

- Realign incentives to meet the needs of rural communities
- Collaborate across disciplines, communities, organizations, and other stakeholders
- Pursue equitable access to traditional and non-traditional education and training

2 Physical Infrastructure & Public Services

- Inventory current physical infrastructure and public services
- Involve diverse members of communities impacted, meeting them where they are
- Include multi-generational perspectives
- Train government officials on climate-friendly practices
- Incentivize and develop educational programs for green infrastructure workforce
- Use remote infrastructure to share expertise across state lines

4 Economic Development

- Research and respond to workforce interests and needs
- Improve education for basic life skills, parent/school communication, and classroom management
- Offer apprenticeships
- Increase access to resources and infrastructures (housing, broadband, transportation) needed to get to work
- Facilitate community driven networks and resource sharing/Pursue multi-community solutions to achieve scale needed to manage challenges
- Connect tourism to natural resources
- Engage in succession planning for cooperatives, land ownership, and businesses
- Look ahead to technological developments and trends reshaping entrepreneurship

3 Health

- Expand stable broadband access critical to providing telehealth
- Place computers in community spaces (i.e., libraries, churches) for health communication
- Prioritize meeting basic needs such as food access and safe drinking water
- Provide strategic funding for rural communities to address mental health issues
- Take actions simultaneously to be most effective



To learn more, visit: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/>

NOVEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Daylight Savings Ends						Veterans Day
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
				Thanksgiving Day		
26	27	28	29	30		



Bonnie Teater Lifetime Achievement Award

For 30 years, Bonnie Teater was a valued member of SRDC's staff. Her dedication and passion for the rural development research and Extension outreach mission of the region's Land-Grant Universities inspired many. She currently is enjoying retirement in Kentucky.

The Bonnie Teater Lifetime Achievement Award honors the superior lifetime work of an individual who has made an important contribution to the Extension community development area. Below is the 2022 recipient.

2022 BONNIE TEATER AWARD RECIPIENT: Joy Moten-Thomas



Ms. Joy Moten-Thomas, the 2022 recipient, has over 25 years of experience working with diverse minority audiences, inclusive of youth and adults throughout Georgia.

She is a strong community advocate, which has shown brightly through her outreach efforts. Her work to link local government to both financial and non-financial resources like rural and economic programs (for example, Stronger Economies Together), helps to strengthen the community. This is also evident in her spearheading educational efforts in representing the needs of the college and constituents served and supported by the 1890 Land-Grant mission at the nation's capital with Georgia's congressional leaders.

Ms. Moten-Thomas' extensive grantsmanship experience has benefited limited resource clientele she serves, with over \$5 million secured. Within the last two years, amidst the pandemic, she secured more than \$1.4 million to benefit the needs of the state's socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

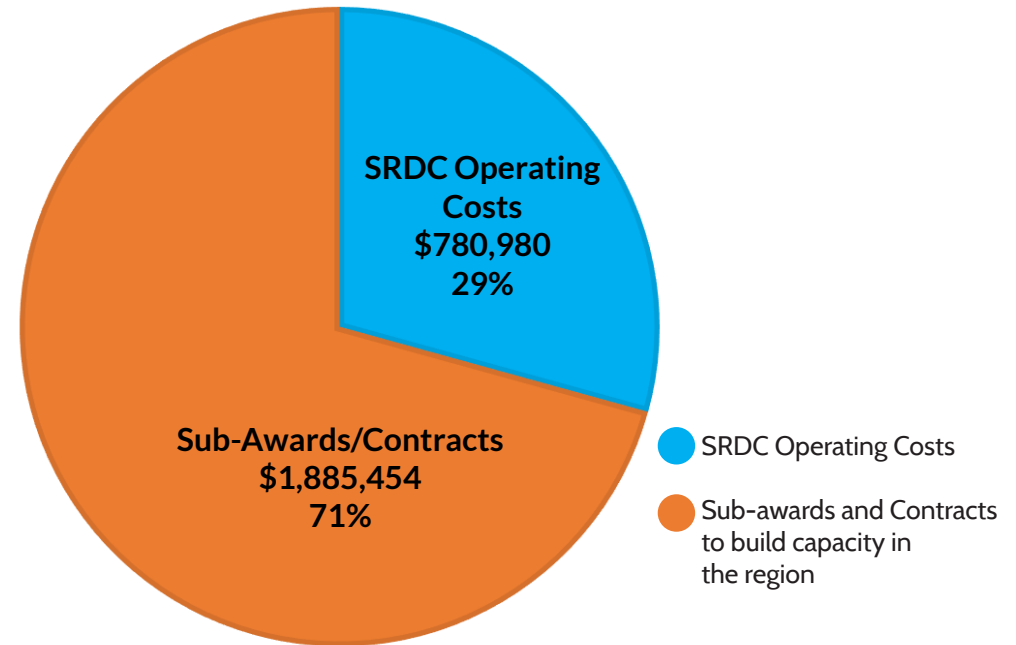
In addition to service to her state, Ms. Moten-Thomas has also been instrumental in providing leadership across the Southern Region and nationally. She has chaired both the Southern Rural Development Center's advisory committee and the Southern Region Community Development Program Leaders' Committee. Nationally, she serves as the 1890 Liaison for the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, as well as a seasoned grant panel reviewer and panel chair for several of the United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture's competitive funding opportunities.



To learn more, visit: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/funding/bonnieateater/>

2022 Expenditures

SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER TRAINING, EVENTS, & INVESTMENTS



By funding received from the Southern Rural Development Center in 2022, 71% went to contracts and subcontracts to partners in the region in order to:

- Form relevant multi-state research teams
- Coordinate the development of educational materials
- Organize and deliver high priority rural development research and educational workshops/conferences
- Provide science based research to inform rural development policy
- Build partnerships that link the South's Land-Grant University system with other key entities committed to rural development activities in the region



To learn more, visit: <http://srdc.msstate.edu>

DECEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						
New Year's Eve	Christmas Day					



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Mississippi State University | 1862 Extension

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Tuskegee University | 1890 Extension

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University of Arkansas | 1862 Research

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Langston University | 1890 Research

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Carolyne Abdullah
Everyday Democracy | Non Land-Grant

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Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ | Non Land-Grant
Land Assistance Fund

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USDA-Economic Research Service | Liaison

Sarah Rocker
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Susan Kelly
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Sarah Rocker
USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture | NIFA Liaison

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Tuskegee University | Board Advisor

SRDC PARTNERS

Association of Extension Administrators
Association of Research Directors
Association of Southern Region Extension Directors
Center for Heirs' Property Preservation
Community Development Society
Delta Directions Consortium
Economic Research Service, USDA
Everyday Democracy
Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
Extension Foundation
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic
Heartland Foundation
Interdisciplinary Network on Rural Population Health and Aging

Joint Council of Extension Professionals
Journal of Rural Social Sciences/Southern Rural
Sociological Association
Kettering Foundation
Land Loss Prevention Project
LIKENknowledge
Local and Regional Food Systems Extension and Research
Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems
National 4-H Council
National Association of Community Development
Extension Professionals
National Digital Inclusion Alliance
National Institute of Civil Discourse
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA
National Institute on Aging
North Central Regional Center for Rural Development

Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
Office of Partnership and Public Engagement, USDA
Purdue Center for Regional Development
Rural Coalition
Rural Sociological Society
Rural Development, USDA
Shackouls Honors College, Mississippi State University
Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy
Research Center
Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment
Station Directors
Southern Extension Risk Management Education
U.S. Forest Service
University of Mississippi Center for Population Studies
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