



Items of Interest

Message from the SRDC Director



Holiday greetings from the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC)! Celebrating the transition from one year to the next and the many faith-based and cultural traditions woven through our diverse society, there is so much for us to be thankful for during this holiday season. The SRDC focuses on building capacity for research and Extension in the Land-Grant System to enhance the quality of life in rural communities. This can only be realized through engagement with a wide network of partners coming together across personal, organizational, and territorial boundaries to work together. Building on a foundation of mutual respect and support, we celebrate our work and look forward to an even brighter future.

In Peace,

John J. Green, Director

[National Digital Education Extension Team/ECOP Broadband Program Action Team Participate in the BEAD Broadband Navigator Meeting](#)

On November 13th, Penn State University's (PSU) new mapping tool was showcased at the BEAD Broadband Navigator: Empowering Data-Driven Local Projects workshop. This event served to increase the awareness of how broadband access can have far-reaching impacts including telehealth access, agricultural technology utilization, enhanced geospatial intelligence, and climate smart development. Representing PSU, Harry Crissy, James R. Ladlee, Thomas Beresnyak, Dana Ollendyke, Carla Snyder, and Daniel Brockett demonstrated their powerful new mapping tool which provides real-time data to help communities with broadband access planning.

Webinars:



Pictured: Pennsylvania State University Extension Team members (left to right), Thomas Beresnyak, James Ladlee, Dana Ollendyke, Carla Snyder, Daniel Brockett, and Harry Crissy.

In addition to the PSU team, Dr. Alison Copeland, Gail Huycke, Nick Pappin, and Dr. Roseanne Scammahorn represented the National Digital Education Extension Team (NDEET)/Extension Committee on Organization & Policy Broadband Program Action Team on the Local Project Creation Panel at the event. Dr. Copeland presented the keys to success to creating local projects to help broadband plan development start off with a good foundation. Mr. Pappin addressed how to engage and empower communities. Mrs. Huycke shared the key elements necessary to create strong and sustainable community partnerships. Dr. Scammahorn shared the purpose and mission of the Regional Rural Development Centers, and the unique and significant role Extension can play in educating communities across the country on the challenge and opportunities of the digital age.

The panelists were honored to share their insights and experiences of developing successful local broadband initiatives to industry leaders, Extension professionals, and community leaders. A special thank you to the PSU team for its ground-breaking work and the Rockefeller Foundation whose generous support enabled the development of national geospatial intelligence tools for local broadband project development.



Pictured: NDEET members Gail Huycke, Dr. Alison Copeland, Nick Pappin, and Dr. Roseanne Scammahorn at the BEAD Broadband Navigator Meeting in New York City, New York.

Regional Spotlight

Innovative Community Development Program Leader, Becky Bowen to Retire from North Carolina State Extension

The North Carolina State Extension system is bracing itself for a huge loss due to the retirement of Becky Bowen at the end of 2023. Bowen has provided critical technical assistance, strategic planning, and ripple mapping to many community-led projects in the last few years. A sampling of her diverse work includes formation and development of the Piedmont Farmers' Cooperative, nonprofit leadership advice to Western North Carolina Communities, evaluation of the NC AgVETS training programs, and capacity assessment of Communities Supporting Schools of Wayne County. Her most comprehensive recent impact has been in the leadership of North Carolina's CREATE BRIDGES Project.

Beginning in late 2020, the CREATE BRIDGES project had to gain momentum and identity in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the initial identification of 40 steering committee participants and strong shared leadership from Western NC University's Office of Economic Development and Regional Partnerships and the Southwestern Commission, the project entered into over a year of community research and planning. It was very difficult to maintain the steering committee's energy and enthusiasm during this time with the cumulative challenges of all the work being virtual, the action-orientation of business owners waiting for research-led planning, and the distance (the project site is closer to 10 other land grant universities than NC State University). However, with Bowen's strong backbone support, the steering committee persevered through this stage and gathered the data needed as the foundation of a strong project. The great turnaround in enthusiasm and innovation happened when she was finally able to meet in person with community members. At that time a local coordinator was also hired who brought new energy and connections, and the project moved into more action and strategy implementation.

The success, new partners, and sustainability of CREATE BRIDGES bring powerful lessons in community engagement. This project addressed a need in the community and is now known as WeSpeakWNC. Becky was able to keep local leadership and capacity front and center while steering the project from behind the scenes. This style of leadership assured relevance which catalyzed local leadership's ownership and resultant sustainability of the work. Western North Carolina University's (WNCU) Business Department involved students in a way that helped spur innovation in teaching and learning they will continue in future years. Additionally, WNCU's faculty-led curriculum development has many applications for the CREATE BRIDGES project as well as their ongoing faculty work. While business owners are often the most difficult group to involve in community development because of the many demands on their time and attention, WeSpeakWNC has brought businesses and employees together to learn and experience how regional brand identity and knowledge of local tourism opportunities were powerful drivers for regional economic and workforce development. This project also highlighted how businesses can work to support their employees to build wellness, retention, and a cohesive regional CREATE-sector (retail, tourism, hospitality, and entertainment) environment.

Over the past 10+ years, Becky has brought about connections, concrete impacts, and innovation that the NC State Extension's Community Development Program that will be appreciated for years to come as well as miss her incredible skill in community development. The team looks forward to ongoing friendship and hearing how she continues to benefit the community in retirement.



Becky Bowen with Elaine Marshall, the NC Secretary of State, and other conference leaders at the 2023 WeSpeakWNC Conference.

Job Opportunities

Assistant Extension Professor of Community and Leadership Development, University of Kentucky

[The Department of Community and Leadership Development](#) in the [Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment](#) at the University of Kentucky seeks applications for a 12-month, tenure eligible Assistant Extension Professor. Review of applications will begin 1/12/2024, and applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The position is available 7/1/2024 (start date is negotiable). To apply visit, <https://ukjobs.uky.edu/postings/498020>

Extension Leadership Specialist, University of Georgia Extension

The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES) seeks a dynamic and innovative professional for the position of Extension Leadership Specialist with primary responsibilities in leading the national faculty leadership development program, LEAD21, which is sponsored by the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) and administered through a contract with the University of Georgia. This is a full-time Faculty appointment home-based in Athens, Georgia. The position reports to the Director for the Office of Learning and Organizational Development.

Applications received by Dec. 15, will be assured full consideration, but the position is open until filled. Applicants must submit their application via the UGAJobs website (<https://www.ugajobsearch.com/postings/349481>) and will require the following documentation: (1) a letter of application; (2) curriculum vitae; and (3) contact information for three letters of reference. Please contact Michael Toews, Search Committee Chair, mtoews@uga.edu with questions.

Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist in Tourism Economic Development, Auburn University

Auburn University is seeking a 12-month tenure track assistant professor and Extension specialist to provide statewide leadership in tourism economic development. This position is housed within the Horst Schulze School of Hospitality Management at Auburn University in the College of Human Sciences. This position is designed to assist the College of Human Sciences and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System in developing the state's full economic tourism potential. The selected applicant will provide strategic and inclusive leadership in tourism economic development in the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Required qualifications include an earned doctorate in Hospitality and Tourism Management, Tourism Economics, Sustainable Tourism Development, Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources, Economic Development, or a related field when employment begins.

Applicants should also have evidence of, or strong promise in, building a record or scholarship, grantsmanship, and multi-disciplinary collaborations. The candidate selected for this position must also be able to meet eligibility requirements to work in the United States when the appointment is scheduled to begin and continue working legally for the proposed term of employment.

Apply online using the link: <https://www.auemployment.com/postings/40771>. Provide application letter, complete CV, transcripts from all universities attended, research and educational interests, and three (3) professional references (names, email addresses, and phone numbers). For more information about the position, contact Dr. Alecia Douglas, Ph.D., Chair- Search Committee, at acd0011@auburn.edu.

Assistant Administrator, Community Development and Outreach, Fort Valley State University

Open until filled.

The assistant Administrator for Community Development and Outreach will develop, coordinate, and facilitate programming through the Cooperative Extension Program designed to assist communities to realize their long-term goals; through provision of education, technical assistance, and opportunities to secure grants that support strategic planning and community visioning to provide a foundation for economic development. Coordinate or assist in the coordination of programs through outreach efforts with USDA Agencies, State, private and public and nonprofit entities. Master's degree in Agricultural Economics, economics, business administration or other business disciplines is required. Preference will be given to applicants with extension and strong community development experiences. Applicants with degrees in closely related disciplines with community development experiences may also apply.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

Associate Director, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD)

The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD) seeks applications for an Associate Director position, which is renewable annually conditional on funding. The individual will lead the Center's outreach-oriented activities in consultation with the Director by:

1. fostering relationships among Northeast land grant universities and rural development partners;
2. identifying and responding to opportunities for cross-state collaborations and sharing of extension programs;
3. developing and implementing educational programs, including translating scientific findings into practice; and,
4. securing grants and conducting nationally recognized outreach activities consistent with the Center's mission.

The mission of the NERCRD is to work on a range of issues with land grant universities and other Northeast partners as well as nationally in support of regional economic growth and rural development.

Questions can be directed to Stephan J. Goetz, NERCRD Director, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education, The Pennsylvania State University at sjg16@psu.edu.

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Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

2024 Southern Rural Sociological Association (SRSA) Meeting

In-person: February 4-5, 2024, Atlanta, Georgia

Theme: Rural Livelihood Stories: Past, Present, and Future

The 2024 SRSA meeting will showcase papers, posters, and panels to discuss the importance of rural livelihoods stories across time, capturing snapshots of communities, struggles, and actions to pursue pathways to resilience that taken together will form a gallery exhibiting rural lives and landscapes.

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

2024 Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) Research Symposium

In-person: April 6-9, 2024, Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee

Awards Nomination Due Date- January 19, 2024; **Registration-** February 23, 2024

Save the date for the 2024 Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) Research Symposium.

Theme: Climate, Health, and Cultivating the Next Generation of Agriculture Leaders: Creating Solutions in Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources.

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2024 Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference

In-person: April 15-17, 2024, Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport, Arlington, Virginia

The Joint Council of Extension Professionals' Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD) Conference brings together Extension professionals, elected officials, and volunteers to learn how to communicate Extension's value, increase understanding of our federal partnerships, and build experience and confidence in engaging with elected leaders. PILD is open to all Extension professionals in 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions and invites proposals from a wide array of disciplines that reflect the themes of the conference. Mission: Enhance education and advocacy skills to positively affect federal, state, and local resources available for Cooperative Extension.

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

2024 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) Conference

In-Person: June 17-20, 2024, Marriott Marquis Houston, Houston, Texas

Save the date for the 2024 National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals (NACDEP) conference.

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