



Items of Interest

Rachel Welborn Retires: A Look Back at Her Impact on the Southern Rural Development Center



With this edition of *Around the South* we mark the retirement of Rachel Welborn, Associate Director of the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC). Rachel has been a leading figure in research and Extension efforts across the South and the nation as a whole.

Rachel earned her B.S. in Elementary Education and M.S. in Family Studies. Before coming to the SRDC, she served as a teacher, program director, and community health coordinator.

Over the course of sixteen years with the SRDC, she worked on a wide variety of initiatives. A short yet illustrative list includes Turning the Tide on Poverty, Stronger Economies Together, the National Digital Extension Education Team, Coming Together for Racial Understanding, CREATE BRIDGES (focused on retail and tourism), and multi-state collaboratives on broadband adoption and heirs' property. She also helped to guide development and training deployment of the train-the-trainer curriculum Understanding Heirs' Property at the Community Level in partnership with the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center and Southern Extension Risk Management Education.

Furthermore, she has played critical coordinating roles with the Southern Region Program Leadership Network, comprised of state program leaders and administrators/directors across the southern region in eight program areas with involvement from both 1890 and 1862 Land-Grant Universities. In addition to providing authorship and editorship on numerous curricula, Rachel has published numerous reports, articles, and chapters for broader dissemination of knowledge obtained through this body of work. It is notable that her work has been recognized through individual and team awards at the local, regional, and national levels.

To put it succinctly, Rachel has provided important team-focused leadership to capacity building efforts addressing a broad range of rural development concerns through the integration of research and Extension between institutions and across state lines. She has also provided steady, detailed administrative leadership for the SRDC Board of Directors and Technical and Operational Advisory Committee and to committees with the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals.

Webinars:

Far beyond these few highlights from a long list of contributions and accomplishments, in reflecting on her career, the attributes most notable and likely to have the longest lasting impacts are Rachel's deep commitments to fairness, appreciation for diversity, and pursuit of true collaboration. Her many gifts are rooted in faith and nourished through her love for family and friends. These inform Rachel's approach to work, and we all have benefited so much. In all, as we celebrate Rachel Welborn's retirement and wish her well in the next steps on her life path, we may best honor her by aspiring to the standards she has set.

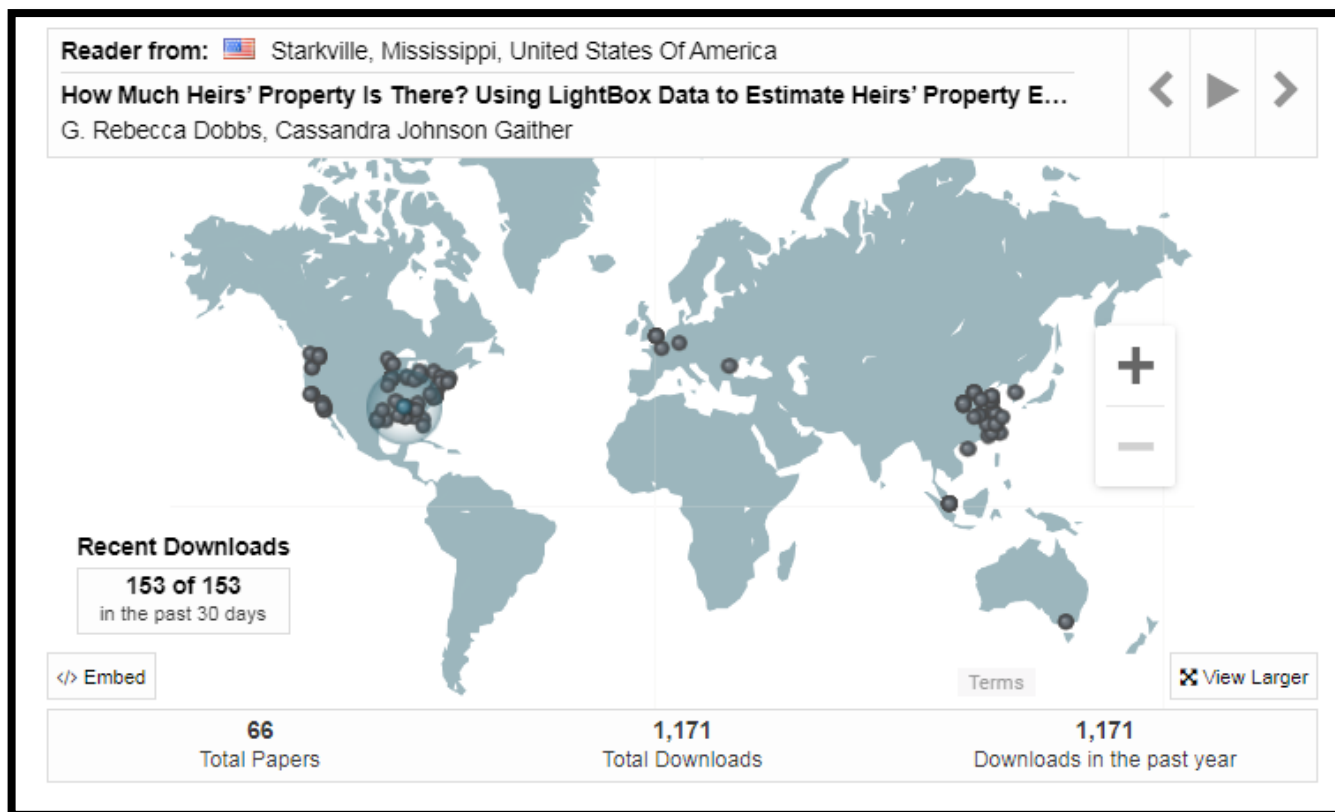
John J. Green, Director

SRDC Repository: Recent Readership Snapshot

The Southern Rural Development Center's archival system, *Scholars Junction*, allows readers to search for, download, and share publications from the Southern Rural Development Center.

Last month, [Heirs' Property](#) had the most full-text downloads at 26; followed by [SRDC annual reports](#), and then [Policy](#) with 18.

The platform includes additional features that allow users to explore a dashboard that monitors the number of views and downloads for the published content. Below is a screenshot of the most recent readership.



Job Opportunities

Associate Director, Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC)

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) seeks applications for an Associate Director position. The individual will lead the Center's outreach-oriented activities in consultation with the Director by:

1. Identifying and coordinating multi-state teams on emerging topics by identifying topics from stakeholders, scanning the region for research and extension collaborators and other rural development partners; convening and facilitating exploration of the topic and related next steps.
2. Working directly with community development stakeholders in the south to address training needs.
3. Garnering extramural funding to support southern region initiatives.
4. Strengthening rural development research efforts in the region.
5. Providing content leadership on SRDC communications and oversee supervision of personnel
6. Facilitating collaboration among the region's 30 land grant university Extension Service State Program Leaders to promote multi-state engagement and efforts.

The mission of the Southern Rural Development Center is to strengthen the capacity of the region's 30 Land-Grant Universities to address critical contemporary rural development issues impacting the well-being of people and communities in the South.

Questions can be directed to John Green, SRDC Director, at john.green@msstate.edu.

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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

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. To learn more and apply, visit <https://fvsu.applicantpro.com/jobs/2568591>.

Conferences, Workshops, Trainings

The Delta Regional Forum

In-Person: June 26-27, 2024, Coahoma County Higher Education Center, Clarksdale, Mississippi

Theme: Population Health, Community Development, and Innovation in Local and Global Contexts

Hosted by the Delta Directions Consortium (DDC), the Delta Regional Forum is intended to engage community and regional development practitioners and scholars working in and with partners in the multistate Delta Region to learn from each other in pursuit of population health and wellbeing, economic renewal, and community resilience.

This year, a wide range of topics applicable to the health and economic renewal of the Mississippi Delta Region will be discussed. Kick-off on day one will include an introduction to the DDC, followed by presentations from the undergraduate Delta Scholars and a networking reception. Day two will include panel sessions focused on collaborations, a networking lunch, and facilitated world café dialogue sessions throughout the afternoon.

To learn more and register, visit <https://srdc.msstate.edu/programs/delta-regional-forum>

2024 Community Development Society (CDS) Creating Capacity for Resilient Communities Conference

In-Person: July 14-17, Omaha, Nebraska

Save the date for the 2024 annual Community Development Society (CDS) Conference.

[LEARN MORE](#)

2024 Rural Sociological Society (RSS) Conference

In-Person: July 24-28, Madison, Wisconsin

The 86th meeting of the RSS will explore the theme “Reconceptualizing Rurality: Toward a More Diverse and Inclusive Understanding.”

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