



Changing Needs in Changing Times

SRDC

2007 Annual Report
Southern Rural Development Center

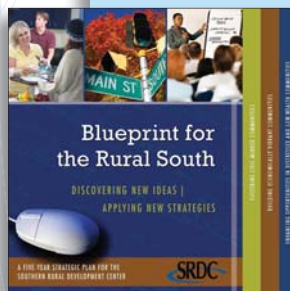


A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR



I AM PROUD TO SHARE with you highlights of the Southern Rural Development Center's accomplishments over the 2007 fiscal year. The core portion of this report showcases five important initiatives that our Center has spearheaded in recent years. These projects represent a good mix of rural development-related research and Extension outreach activities undertaken either on a regional or national basis. Most noteworthy are the important partnerships that were formed during the course of developing and implementing these major activities. These include strong ties with our land-grant colleagues across the region and beyond, the Economic Research Service/USDA, the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, the Ford Foundation, rural community colleges in the South, the national eXtension leadership team and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service. The bottom line is that without these important partners, the quality and effectiveness of our work would have been greatly compromised.

The theme we have embraced for this year's report is "Changing Needs in Changing Times." While we are thankful for all that we have accomplished over the last year, this theme actually represents what lies ahead for our Center. As many of you know, for more than 18 months we have been tackling the issue of setting priorities for the next



few years. In partnership with land-grant administrators and faculty in the region, we sponsored 19 listening sessions across 14 states during which we heard directly from close to 600 Southern residents. As a result of these on-the-ground activities, we were able to develop a new strategic plan for the next five years. Titled "Blueprint for the Rural South," this exciting plan focuses on three core activities: (1) Fostering civic-minded communities, (2) Building economically vibrant communities and (3) Expanding opportunities for distressed and low-wealth communities. In the coming months, you will see a host of new SRDC-supported activities that align with these three key initiatives.

I can say without question that pausing to hear from the people during our strategic planning process helped us to understand and better recognize the changing needs that exist in the rural South. Our stakeholders urged us to expand their opportunities so that they might have a voice in guiding their communities' futures. Others urged us to work with local leaders in finding the right mix of economic development activities to strengthen and sustain communities over the long term. In areas that have suffered from decades of poverty and economic stagnation, local residents came to us for help in finding new ways to create hope for a better tomorrow. All in all, we were encouraged to embrace past strategies that still make sense for the region, but to pursue innovative approaches that are better aligned with the changing times.

We look forward to working closely with our team of land grant university colleagues, our CSREES colleagues and our rural development partners in tackling the important challenges our stakeholders have urged us to address. 2008 is sure to be an exciting year for all of us.

Bo Beaulieu, Director and Professor

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RIDGE

Tackling the Region's Food Assistance and Nutrition Challenges

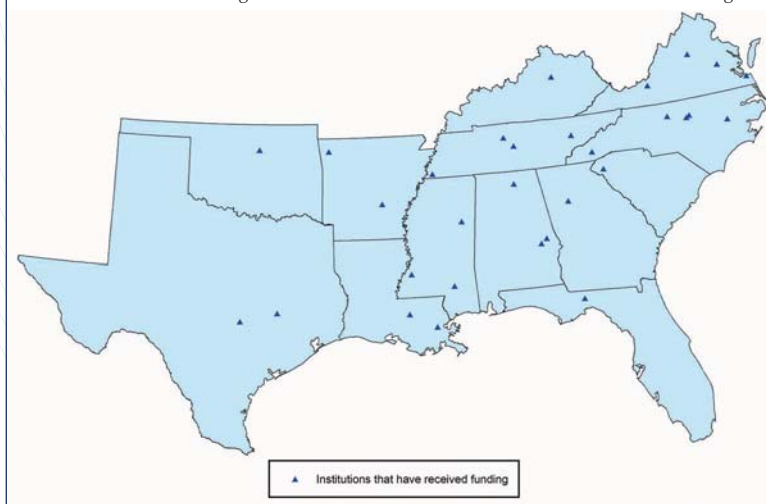
The Research Innovation and Development Grants in Economics Program

Rarely a month goes by without some new report being showcased in the media on the troubling rise of overweight and obesity among our nation's adults and youth. While the problem is alarming, the sad reality is that the situation is even more sobering in the South.

Case in point, overweight and obesity rates in the South are among the highest in the nation. So are the proportion of people who are food insecure, who live in places called "food deserts" where access to nutritionally sound food is hard to come by, or who have to tap food assistance support programs, such as the Food Stamp and School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, to help make ends meet. To say the least, the region's vulnerable populations are sizable and diverse – young, elderly, white, African-American, Hispanic, poor and near poor.

Distribution of RIDGE Investments, 1998-2007

30 Universities and Colleges Across the South Have Benefited from the RIDGE Program

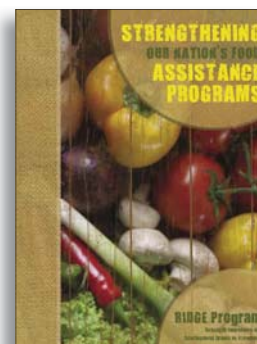


Understanding the unique and critical food assistance needs of low-income people, families and communities depends on sound, sustained research. That's where the SRDC comes in. With the support of the Economic Research Service, the Center has made significant strides over the past decade in strengthening and expanding the quality of social science-based research being spearheaded by the region's higher education institutions. It has done so through its active partnership with the ERS's Research Innovation and Development Grants in Economics, or RIDGE, Program. By providing competitive seed funding to higher education institutions and others across the region, the SRDC has sought to expand our understanding of the myriad of food assistance and nutrition issues facing the South. These investments have paid important dividends including solid contributions to scientific literature, improved strategies for meeting the needs of the region's diversifying population, and better insights on how federal and state food assistance policies and programs can be fine tuned to enhance their effectiveness.

The SRDC has achieved some important milestones in its partnership with ERS. Here are a few highlights of the past year's important RIDGE-related activities:

Prepared National Report on the RIDGE Program Titled "Strengthening Our Nation's Food Assistance Programs"

Science-based studies provide valuable aid to USDA in its efforts to promote and strengthen the 15 food assistance programs that it manages. ERS has invested in the RIDGE Program to provide scientifically grounded work that can inform program administrators, policymakers and policy analysts. A June 2007 report, titled "Strengthening Our Nation's Food Assistance Program," captured the depth and breadth of the RIDGE program's impact. The first of its kind, this report was prepared under the leadership of the SRDC and highlighted the important and practical contributions that researchers associated with the RIDGE Program have made since the program began in 1998.



2007 RIDGE Grantees:

- **Nutrition, Food Security, and Obesity Among Low-Income Residents of the South**
Patricia Duffy, Auburn University
- **Prevalence of Accurately Reconstituted Infant Formula Among WIC and Non-WIC Participants: Exploring Maternal Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Infant Formula Preparation and Associations with Infant Anthropometry**
Katherine Kavanagh-Prochaska, University of Tennessee
- **Understanding Nutrition Challenges Faced by Older Americans in Rural Areas: The Role of the Food Environment and Neighborhood Characteristics**
Joseph R. Sharkey, TAMHSC School of Rural Public Health (Texas A&M)
- **Sociodemographic Factors, Food Stamp Participation and Health: The Case of Low-Income Individuals in Tennessee**
Steven T. Yen, University of Tennessee

Here are some important facts associated with the SRDC's RIDGE Program activities in the region over the past decade:

- Forty-nine projects received funding by the SRDC over this period of time, with funding levels for these competitively awarded grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$35,000. All told, more than \$1.2 million has been invested in food assistance-related research by the SRDC.
- Though only a handful of researchers in the region were engaged in the SRDC RIDGE program at the time of its launching in 1998, the Center now boasts more than 110 social scientists and graduate research assistants who play an active role in SRDC-sponsored food assistance related studies.
- Thirty institutions of higher education in the South have taken part in SRDC RIDGE-supported research, including nine historically black universities.

Continued SRDC Food Assistance Policy Series Reports

From the vantage point of the SRDC, investing in innovative research on food assistance and nutrition issues is vital. Equally important, however, is finding ways to communicate valuable research insights to our customers. As such, the Center has been committed to publishing policy briefs that showcase a handful of the RIDGE studies the Center has funded over the years. Thirteen such briefs have been published since 2000. The most

recent brief details the exciting work conducted by a team of scholars from the University of Southern Mississippi and the University of Florida (Jerome R. Kolbo, Wendy Bounds, Jacquelyn Lee and Amal J. Khoury). The July 2007 publication is titled "Overweight and Obesity in the South: Prevalence and Related Health Care Costs Among Population Groups."

Compiled Highlights of SRDC Funded RIDGE Projects, 2000-2007

In light of the extensive list of RIDGE projects the SRDC has supported since the research program's inception, the SRDC wanted to showcase the scientific richness of the studies undertaken since 2000. Simply put, we wanted to offer our social scientists and others an efficient way to determine the variety of food assistance and nutrition studies we have funded under major thematic areas. The Center was able to complete this important task in 2007, producing six documents that highlight the mix of RIDGE research studies carried out in the South. Six themes capture the valuable social science research carried out under the banner of the SRDC RIDGE program:

- Food Access Quality and Cost
- Food Assistance Challenges
- Food Assistance Participation
- Food Insecurity
- Impacts of Food Assistance Policies
- Nutrition and Obesity





SCIG

Sustainability in the South: Agriculture and Community Working in Partnership

The Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program

Many local leaders have come to realize that preserving the economic, social and environmental health of their rural communities cannot be achieved without a strong working partnership with the farming sector, especially in places where agriculture is a vital part of the local economy. Simply put, actions undertaken by the agricultural sector, involving things such as water quality and quantity, land-use, purchasing of local inputs/services and finance/taxation issues, have important bearing on communities. At the same time, initiatives pursued by local government agencies, economic development institutions and community-based organizations can impinge on the viability of local farm enterprises. As such, agriculture and community must work in tandem so that future generations will be able to meet their economic, social and environmental needs.

In an effort to build these important bonds between the agricultural sector and the broader community in which it is embedded, the SRDC joined hands with Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education more than four years ago to launch the first Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program in the Southern region. This important effort has allowed two land-grant university-based regional organizations to seed the growth of agriculture/community partnerships in a host of rural communities across the region. In this section, we showcase some of the key projects that were funded last year as a part of the jointly funded competitive grants program, as well as share the latest round of competitive grants launched at the very end of FY07. In addition, we have highlighted some of the key findings from a recent evaluation spearheaded by Glenn Israel of the University of Florida. Funded by the CSREES's national SARE program, Israel's report outlines

the key impacts and challenges associated with the Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program in the region.

Highlights of Key Projects Funded in 2007

Since its inception in 2002, the Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program has funded 46 projects. Our Center's resources were involved in the direct funding of 10 of these projects, with the remainder supported through the Southern SARE program. Over the past year, Southern SARE and the SRDC teamed up to fund eight projects that were selected by an advisory panel of faculty drawn from the region.

- **Value-Added Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (Virginia)**
The core focus of this project is to build and support the base of growers and adequately prepare them for the transition to organic.
- **Training for Sustainable Community Development (Alabama)**
This project is focused on three objectives: (1) To provide sustainable economic and community development skills to selected African-American communities created during the New Deal Era, (2) To provide these communities with strategies so that they can best utilize the natural, social/cultural and economic resources inherent in their communities, and (3) To help these communities develop strategies to access local, regional and national resources to address issues critical to sustainable development.
- **Establishing Community/Business Partnerships to Build a Market Identity for Local Seafood (North Carolina)**
The objective of this project is to enhance public recognition of the Carteret Catch logo as a way of building a strong market identity for local seafood products. This proposal seeks funding to generate promotional materials for the program's business partners and advertisements in local media to build greater consumer awareness of the Carteret Catch marketing initiative.
- **Florida FarmLink (Florida)**
The purpose of Florida FarmLink is to connect entrepreneurs in rural areas to resources so they can meet the current demand for local,

sustainably-grown food in nearby population centers. A complementary purpose is to educate community leaders and citizens on the importance of sustainable agriculture practices.

- **Building Sustainable Communities Through Agricultural and Food-Based Entrepreneurship (Virginia)**

This effort is intended to spur entrepreneurial development in the value-added agricultural sectors of a four-county rural area in southern Virginia. The program is providing skills training and building an ongoing network of entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs that will contribute to the building of sustainable agriculture and sustainable communities in the target region. Project activities include a series of 13 workshops, a food-tasting event, a mentorship program and the launching of a network of producers/entrepreneurs to explore ongoing sustainability initiatives.

- **Sustainable Farming: Wedding Regional Agriculture and Community Development in Coastal Georgia (Georgia)**

The focus of this project is to foster community dialogue on needs assessment and conduct a search conference that reflects a multi-stakeholder perspective and strategic action plans around various facets of the local food system. One of the expected outputs is the expansion of local sustainable farming practices for Georgia's McIntosh, Camden, Glynn, Long and Liberty counties. By its very nature, the project will promote a long-term strategy that will be more productive and profitable to local farmers while integrating natural resource protection, cultural preservation and civic engagement.

- **Linking Native Agriculture Community with Tribal Institutional Economic Opportunities (Oklahoma)**

This project will bring together the heads of Native American business and institutional settings, including hospitals, nursing facilities, schools, businesses and casinos, for two meetings in 2007 to lay the groundwork for linking Native agricultural producers, Native American business and institutional food purchasers. The meetings will bring together intertribal agricultural producers from each

of the 38 tribes in Oklahoma with leaders of Native American businesses and institutions.

- **Building Local Food and Local Communities in Western Oklahoma (Oklahoma)**

Ogallala Commons and its partners are teaming up with local county leaders to recruit and train community development teams from Woods, Major and Roger Mills counties in western Oklahoma. The intent is to identify and work with aspiring entrepreneurs having an interest in local and regional food production.

Latest Round of Competitive Grants Launched Fall 2007

A new round of competitive grants was announced by Southern SARE and our Center in September 2007. As in past years, both organizations are interested in efforts that link sound farm and nonfarm economic development activities with agricultural and natural resource management. They are also encouraging proposals from organizations with a focus on entrepreneurship development, and on value-added activities that build on the agricultural and nonagricultural assets of rural communities. These include efforts to establish entrepreneurial-friendly communities that can help support and sustain value-added entrepreneurship endeavors.

Evaluation of the Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program

The Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program underwent an important evaluation in 2007 under the leadership of Glenn Israel, Extension evaluation specialist with the University of Florida. Funds to support this important assessment of the Southern SARE/SRDC partnership were provided by the national SARE/CSREES office. In-depth evaluations were conducted on 12 projects in eight Southern states that were funded by the Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program from 2002 to 2004. Among the core questions addressed in the evaluation were, "What follow up is needed with grant recipients

Bo Beaulieu and Jeff Jordan, directors of the SRDC and Southern SARE, respectively, recently served as co-editors of the Fall 2007 issue of the "Journal of the Community Development Society." The theme of the special issue was "Sustainable Development: Connecting Agriculture and Community" (Volume 38, Number 3).

by the funding agency, what outcomes were accomplished, and how well did the sustainable agriculture and sustainable community concepts and strategies integrate?”

The evaluation involved a mixed methods approach. The initial stage involved a careful study of the activities that grantees planned to carry out as part of their grant activities. During the second stage, logic models were developed based on the information gathered from the proposals as a means of better understanding each project’s design and step-by-step procedures. The logic models were then used as templates for assessing the effectiveness of the each program’s implementation activities. In the third stage of the evaluation process, telephone and personal interviews were conducted with project directors or coordinators. In all, 43 individuals took part in structured interviews with the evaluation team.

Activities being pursued as part of the Southern SARE/SRDC grants program include:

- Community/economic development efforts that benefit all segments of the local population and that promote and protect, in a sustainable manner, the human and natural resources of a community.
- Projects that increase knowledge, build capacity and enhance the connections among on- and off-farm sustainable agriculture activities.
- Civic engagement activities that strengthen the involvement of diverse groups of local individuals, institutions and organizations in developing and implementing a strategic plan that recognizes the economic, environmental and social interdependence between farming and rural communities.
- Local leadership activities that improve the capacity of a broad-based group of local citizens to understand and promote sustainable agricultural/community approaches.
- Local government policy programs that promote balanced discussions of public policy issues addressing sustainable agriculture/community goals or activities that strengthen local decision makers’ knowledge of sustainable practices.
- Initiatives that bring local governments and community organizations together in pursuit of regional planning activities to address sustainable agriculture and community development efforts.

Key findings outlined by the evaluation team will follow in the final report.

Projects in the Sustainable Community Innovation Grants Program evaluation report include:

- Agritourism: A Strategy Toward Sustainable Farm, Business, Family and Community Development (Virginia)
- Downtown Farmer’s Market – Linking the Farm to the Community (Georgia)
- Making the Connection: Enhancing Agricultural Understanding in Urbanizing Area (Virginia)
- Keen on Beans: Establishing Edamame Awareness and Demand for Kentucky Customers and Growers (Kentucky)
- Pioneering the Way to the Future (Oklahoma)
- Test Marketing of New Label in Southwest Florida for USA Grown/Living Wage Produce (Florida)
- Northwest Arkansas Local Food Initiative: Promoting All-Ozark Meals (Arkansas)
- Taylor Community Supported Agriculture Project (Alabama)
- Putting Pike on the Map (Georgia)
- New River Sustainable Agriculture Market Plan (North Carolina)
- A Strategy for Sustaining Henderson County Agricultural Communities (North Carolina)
- Youth as Community Organizers (Florida)

E-COMMERCE



Meeting the E-Commerce Needs of Rural People and Communities

The National E-Commerce Extension Initiative

The presence of what some have called a “digital divide” between rural and urban areas of the United States has prompted policymakers, private and nonprofit sectors to work on expanding broadband access in rural America. While the delivery of broadband to rural areas is critical, it is equally important for local residents, businesses, governments and others to have access to a trusted source of information and education as they consider the best ways to adopt this innovation. That’s where the SRDC, in partnership with the nation’s land-grant system, comes in.

Since 2005, the SRDC has served as the lead entity for the Rural E-Commerce Extension Initiative, a national effort designed to introduce, strengthen and expand the delivery of Extension-based e-commerce programs to small businesses, governments and communities in rural America. SRDC-led investments have resulted in the development of a host of new e-commerce educational resources that Extension educators across the country are able to use to deliver high quality e-commerce programming to their customers. Furthermore, the Center has played an active role in expanding the e-commerce knowledge and skills of Extension educators.

This section highlights the diversity of educational resources completed in 2007 as part of our e-commerce activities, and introduces a few products scheduled for completion in 2008. New grantees selected as part of our 2007 national e-commerce competitive grants program are also showcased, as well as the key e-commerce training activities we launched in 2007.

E-Commerce Educational Curricula Completed in 2007

Five valuable e-commerce educational curricula were produced, tested in the field, peer reviewed and revised in 2007. The products vary in content and are designed to address the e-commerce educational and informational needs of a variety of Extension audiences.

- **Connecting Rural Communities: Developing an IT Strategic Plan**
By William Shuffstall, Pennsylvania State University, and Rae Montgomery, University of Minnesota
This online guide is designed to provide the information and tools community leaders need to identify, develop and implement projects that improve access to broadband connectivity across the community; the ability of organizations in the community to use digital technology to achieve their mission and goals; and the capacity of individuals in the community to use digital technology to improve their social and economic well-being.
- **Strengthening Competitive Advantage of Rural Businesses with E-Commerce and “Experience Economy” Strategies**
By Miyoung Jeong, Ann Marie Fiore, Cheryl O. Hausafus, Linda Niehm and Haemoon Oh, Iowa State University
This e-commerce curriculum improves the competitiveness of small rural retail, hospitality and tourism businesses. This is accomplished through an e-commerce educational program that enhances the understanding of experiential strategies to add customer value for a firm; provides experiential strategies that are deemed appropriate for use by a firm’s bricks-and-mortar location; introduces experiential strategies that are applicable to the firm’s Web site design; and offers ideas on how to enhance and/or align the experiential nature of the firm’s Web site with the brick-and-mortar location as a means of creating a unified firm image.
- **E-Management: Internet Strategies to Improve Farm Businesses Management**
By Sarah A. Roth and Jeffrey A. Hyde, Pennsylvania State University
The e-management curriculum is intended to educate farm managers about the existing Internet-based technologies they can use to

strengthen or complement their managerial skills. The program offers an introduction to a large number of diverse tools that take advantage of the Internet as a communication technology.

- **Rural Food Retailing Through the Internet**
By Stan Ernst and Neal H. Hooker, Ohio State University
This product employs data on rural grocers' use of information technology to develop an assessment and training program for rural food retailers. It helps them decide the most efficient application, if any, of the Internet and computerized tools relevant to their operations.
- **An Economic Niche for Artisan Businesses**
By Pam Brown, Texas A&M Cooperative Extension
Providing educational information to crafters, or artisans, on the benefits and methods of utilizing e-commerce to strengthen their businesses is the central focus of this curriculum. The Web-based resource provides artisans with sound, research-based information to guide their decisions on whether or not to develop a Web page, how to do it, what resources to utilize and which methods to use for evaluating the Web site's effectiveness.

E-Commerce Educational Resources Slated for Completion in 2008

- **Web-Based Training on Electronic Retailing**
By Julie Sexton and Brian McCann, Mississippi State University
This self-paced learning course will introduce potential e-tailers to the concepts that govern conducting business over the Internet.
- **E-Commerce as a Strategy for Improving Business Vitality: Lessons Learned from Small Rural Businesses**
By David Barkley, Clemson University, and Deborah Markley, RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
The project will share lessons learned by small rural businesses that use an e-commerce marketing strategy to increase profits and expand markets. These lessons will be based on in-depth interviews with several rural businesses and related service providers. The

case-study firms will represent a cross-section of industries and regions of the country, and will include different firm types including brick-and-mortar and virtual.

- **Preparing the Rural, Limited-Resource Client for E-Commerce**
By Kimball Marshall, Alcorn State University
For rural, limited-resource clients, the digital divide regarding e-commerce has not been overcome. This curriculum, based on an expectancy theory model, will present success stories with which the target population can identify, and will offer a step-by-step guide to entering the world of e-commerce.
- **E-Commerce Simulation Game**
By Rae Montgomery, University of Minnesota
Primarily for Extension educators, this game is intended for use in workshop settings for small business owners. The online simulation will let small business owners see the economic impact of various decisions they make regarding use of the Internet.

SRDC's E-Commerce Communication Activities

We strive to keep Extension educators and rural development customers aware of new e-commerce products, programs and trends. Our eNews electronic newsletter, published six times a year, is distributed to nearly 900 individuals across the nation. Key topics addressed in recent issues include benefits that blogging offers to small businesses; how businesses can protect themselves from security threats; new possibilities associated with mobile commerce in today's tech-driven world; and Web-based marketing strategies.

E-Commerce Web Site: A Central Source of Valuable Information

We continue to maintain a one-stop site for information on e-commerce resources. The site serves as repository for a variety of e-commerce products, contains proceedings of SRDC-sponsored training workshops and highlights all grants funded by the SRDC as part of our national e-commerce competitive grants program.
<http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/>

New Round of Competitive Grants Program

A new round of competitive grants was announced by the SRDC in January 2007. The call for pre-proposals generated 19 submissions by the March deadline. A national panel of land-grant faculty, having subject matter expertise in e-commerce, reviewed the pre-proposals and recommended that 11 applicants be invited to submit full proposals. Full proposals were submitted in June 2007, and five of those were approved for funding by the advisory panel.

- Guarding Against the Potential: Security and Back Office Concerns
Marilyn Schlake and Connie Hancock, University of Nebraska
- Comercio Electrónico: Developing A Culturally Appropriate Spanish Language E-Commerce Extension Curriculum
Vicky Jones and Dewey Teel, University of Nebraska
- A Guide to Global E-Commerce
Rae Montgomery, University of Minnesota
- E-Commerce Professional Development: Bringing Educators to the Table
Stephan J. Goetz and Walt Whitmer, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
- Hispanic E-Commerce Opportunities: ¡El Tiempo Ahora Está! (The Time is Now!)
Brian Whitacre, Oklahoma State University

Enhancing Extension Capacity Through E-Commerce Training

Organized National E-Commerce Training for Extension Educators

The SRDC hosted a major national workshop at the Lied Conference Center in Nebraska on June 4-6, 2007, titled "E-Commerce Strategies for Small Businesses and Communities: A Rollout of New Extension Educational Curricula." The conference, attended by 65 Extension educators from 28 different states, introduced attendees to a series of new e-commerce educational products developed as part of our Rural E-Commerce Extension Initiative. These new products are available to support the Extension outreach activities of these educators.

Partnered with the NCRCRD to Host Web-Based E-Commerce Training

The SRDC partnered with the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development to offer a series of five online training sessions titled "E-Commerce: An Opportunity Whose Time Has Come." The Web-based series, launched between February and June 2007, focused on a number of key topics, such as the role of the Internet in business and community development, strategies for addressing community-based technology opportunities, e-commerce applications related to online government and expanding business opportunities through e-commerce.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Enhancing Entrepreneurial Opportunities in the Rural South



The eXtension Entrepreneurship Initiative

It's been tough going for many rural communities as a product of declines in manufacturing and agricultural sector jobs over the past decade or so. Just in the manufacturing sector alone, the nonmetro South lost nearly 350,000 jobs from 1998 to 2003. Unfortunately, the chances are slim that these jobs will ever return to the rural South, at least not at the levels experienced during the 1980s and '90s. Welcome to the era of global competition.

Even with these depressing declines, the economic development strategy that continues to dominate the attention of many local leaders and economic development agency representatives is industrial attraction and recruitment. Leaders in rural places often whisper things like, "If we could just capture that firm with its 300 jobs, our community would get back on its feet." Unfortunately, there simply aren't enough 300-job companies looking to locate in the rural South. So, linking the economic hopes and dreams of rural Southerners largely on an industrial recruitment strategy is likely to pay dividends for only a handful of rural areas.

In hopes of expanding the economic development strategies available to rural areas of the South, the SRDC has played a vital role in understanding and developing programs that build on the economic assets of local places. Entrepreneurship and the complimentary activities that are crucial for seeding the growth of entrepreneurial activities in the rural South are among the portfolio of approaches the Center is studying and addressing. Why the focus on entrepreneurship? The reason is simple – it is an ever-increasing component of the rural economy that demands the attention of our land-grant colleagues across the region.

Let's take a look at the facts. In 1990, about 1.2 million people were nonfarm proprietors in the nonmetro South (comprised of both micropolitan and noncore counties/parishes). That number represents self-employed people – an important entrepreneurial sector of the rural South. Since 1990, that number has experienced a steady and impressive increase. The most recent data from 2005 indicates that more than 1.9 million nonfarm proprietors operate in the nonmetro South today. That's an impressive 55 percent increase since 1990. Yes, it's time we pay attention to entrepreneurship in the rural South.

So, what is the SRDC doing to further entrepreneurship in the region? Here are a few steps the Center took in 2007:

Secured Funding from the National eXtension Program to Expand the National "Entrepreneurs and Their Communities" Initiative



Under the leadership of the SRDC, a national team of Extension specialists

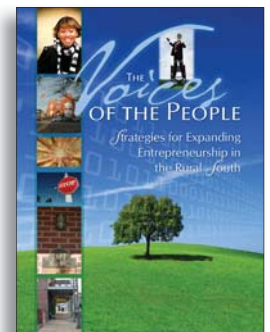
drawn from land-grant institutions across the nation successfully secured funding from the National eXtension Committee to expand its work related to "Entrepreneurs and Their Communities." Over the past year, the team completed the following key activities:

- *Frequently Asked Questions:* More than 250 ready-made responses have been produced covering several topics of interest to current and potential entrepreneurs as well as communities.

- *Information Briefs:* For those wishing to delve more deeply into selected entrepreneurship topics, our team has produced close to 20 information briefs for use by Extension audiences.
- *Research Highlights:* Some of the best research articles on entrepreneurship have been highlighted and included on our Web site. It's a great way to provide our customers with ready access to high quality research on a host of entrepreneurship-related topics.
- *Calendar of Events:* Our calendar helps keep our clientele and Extension educators aware of upcoming entrepreneurship training programs and conferences across the United States.
- *Soft Launch of "Entrepreneurs and Their Communities" Web Site:* The soft launch of the Web site took place in August 2007. The site is now accessible to Extension educators from across the country, and we are receiving valuable input regarding ways to expand and improve the Web site prior to its public release in early 2008.

Published "Voices of the People: Strategies for Expanding Entrepreneurship in the Rural South"

The valuable input and insights of close to 300 Southerners were captured in a special report that the SRDC released in April 2007. With funding provided by the Kellogg Foundation, the document showcases the core set of activities that are critical if the rural places in the South are to promote, nurture and sustain local entrepreneurship activities.



Established the Southern Region Entrepreneurship Resource Team

In an effort to build a strong team of Extension educators engaged in entrepreneurship efforts across the South, the SRDC formally organized the Southern Region Entrepreneurship Resource Team in 2007. The Center prepared a formal Web-based sign-up form and distributed it to land-grant faculty across the region. The response was overwhelmingly positive. To date, 74 individuals have asked to be part of the resource team.

These regional team members are providing input to the national eXtension Entrepreneurship team on various components of the eXtension Entrepreneurship Web site, alerting the SRDC to important research and educational resources they have produced, and informing the Center on the research and educational outreach products they need to further enhance entrepreneurship activities in their states and counties.

Spearheaded Revisions of the “Ca\$hing in on Business Opportunities” Curriculum

As one of the most successful products ever published by the SRDC, the “Ca\$hing in on Business Opportunities” curriculum was in serious need of an update. Under the leadership of the Center, an excellent team of land-grant faculty from across the nation assembled to review and revise the more than 20 modules of this comprehensive curriculum. The bulk of the revisions are complete and an updated version of the document will be released in 2008. Virtually all of the modules are relevant to the needs of entrepreneurs, small firms and home-based businesses.



RCCI

Building Bridges with the South's Rural Community Colleges

The Rural Community College Initiative

Both land-grant universities and rural community colleges have a rich history of addressing important issues and challenges facing their constituents. Through the Cooperative Extension Service, land-grant schools have delivered science-based educational programs and technical assistance activities that address a host of issues facing individuals, families and communities. Rural community colleges, aside from providing formal degrees and certification programs in a wide array of areas, have been valuable assets in supporting sound economic and workforce development activities in the areas they serve.

Given that land-grant schools and rural community colleges share a common commitment to and passion for improving the long-term vitality of rural places, the SRDC partnered with the Ford Foundation in 2002 for the purpose of better linking the community and economic development activities of these two valuable higher education institutions. The Ford Foundation's Rural Community College Initiative funded our Center and the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development to help spur the development of strong, vibrant and sustained partnerships between land-grant schools and rural community colleges. The hope was that their combined community and economic development capabilities would offer local people and communities a powerful set of resources from which they could draw as they tackled the tough challenges face by many rural areas.

Here we showcase some the valuable strides made over the past five years in building bridges between land-grant schools and rural community colleges in the South. In some cases, a strong spirit of collaboration has taken hold and great things are happening. In other instances, the struggle of producing strong, trusting relationships remains a challenge. Though the Ford Foundation-supported RCCI effort came to an end in 2007, we remain committed to the spirit of this important initiative – the continued strengthening of important bridges between land-grant institutions and rural community colleges in the region.

RCCI's Three Main Areas of Work

The SRDC's efforts in the RCCI effort were focused on three principle areas of work:

- Building diverse and equitable economies in rural communities.
- Expanding the engagement of a broad base of people in the civic life of their communities.
- Exploring innovative strategies to extend educational opportunities to local residents.

The following chart provides an overview of the programs and activities that the SRDC and the NCRCD have either provided or helped organize over the past five years that have strengthened the capacity of rural community colleges to address RCCI's three principles. These topics were presented by a variety of individuals, including land-grant Extension educators, community college faculty, nonprofit organizations, private sector firms, government representatives and others. The

desire to build general community development capacity with RCCI schools was the underlying purpose for work in these three areas. Several

topics were introduced to the RCCI schools under the banner of “capacity building.”

Economic Diversity

- Basic Economic Development Strategies
- Energizing Entrepreneurs in Rural Communities
- Entrepreneurial Coaching
- Conducting a Rural Economic Development Summit
- Agritourism as an Economic Development Strategy
- Developing Rural Tourism Businesses
- Cultural-Heritage Tourism
- Industry Cluster Approach To Workforce and Economic Development
- Revitalizing a Rural Economy in a Resort Region
- Aquaculture in the Appalachian Coal Fields
- Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Program
- Grassroots Gold: Microenterprise
- Regional Economic Development Strategies
- Biomass Energy to Develop Rural Economies, Partnerships and Energy Independence
- Building Social Capital for Economic Development
- Entrepreneurship Strategies
- Manufacturing Certification Program
- One-Stops and Rural Community Colleges
- Understanding Your Community’s Economy
- Qualla-T Customer Service Program
- Ca\$hing in on Business Seminar Series

Educational Access

- Digital Inclusion...The Challenges of the Broadband Divide in Rural and Reservation Communities
- Workforce Development
- Lessons Learned in Understanding Rural Job Training Networks and Collaboratives
- If You Build It, They Will Come
- Turnover Reduction
- Online Skills Training for Rural Healthcare Workers
- A Model of Rural Graduate Education: The Community College Leadership Doctoral Program
- College Access Program (CAP)
- Combining the Training and Testing Needs of Industries with the Same Basic Needs
- Expanding Access and Improving Student Learning and Retention: Achieving the Dream (ATD) Pilot Project
- Let’s Build A Computer: Sparking Interest in Math, Science and Technology at an Early Age
- Home Grown Teachers: Teacher Preparation Through Distance Education
- The Retention of Black Male Students: Identifying Best Practices
- Expanding Educational Access for Customers with Disabilities
- Entrepreneurial Youth Camp
- Move Up the PACE (Parent and Child Enrichment)
- The New Farmers Project – Building Partnerships for Educational Outreach

Civic Engagement

- Public Deliberation
- LeadershipPlenty[®]
- Community Choices: Public Policy Education Program
- The Community Sets Its Goals – What Do We Do Now?
- Institutional and Community Capacity Building
- Multicultural Leadership Programs
- Neighborhood Partnership Challenges
- Strengthening Communities Through the Development of Strategic Alliances
- Using Community Issues Forums to Promote Community Action
- Service Learning in Rural Community Colleges
- Using VISTA Volunteers in Community Development
- New Governance for a New Rural Economy
- Developing A Study Circle Project
- Civic Engagement for Dummies
- It’s About the Partnerships, Man, the Partnerships

Capacity Building

- Community Asset Mapping
- Strategic Planning: Vision to Action
- Southern Region Information Toolkit
- Understanding and Using Secondary Data
- Community Coaching
- Using Appreciative Inquiry in the Planning Process
- Facilitating Cross Culturally
- Assessing Community Using the Seven Capitals
- How Do I? Roles of Presidents, Team Leaders and Members and Coaches



RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE INITIATIVE

Evaluation of the RCCI Effort: Strengths and Challenges of the Partnership-Building Effort

The Southern Rural Development Center contracted with Priscilla Salant, coordinator for outreach and engagement at the University of Idaho, to evaluate the Southern region's Rural Community College Initiative. RCCI began as a demonstration effort in the early 1990s and was transferred to the SRDC and the NCRCD in 2002. The overarching question guiding UI's evaluation is whether RCCI's parent funder, the Ford Foundation, succeeded in institutionalizing the initiative within the land-grant university system when it transferred the initiative to the regional centers.

UI's evaluation addressed four specific research questions:

- Did the SRDC succeed in using land grant faculty (whether specialists, educators or district directors) to bridge the university and community college? If yes, will the coaching role "stick" among Extension faculty over the longer term?
- Did RCCI build new and lasting partnerships between land-grants and community colleges in the South?
- Have the RCCI colleges broadened their role beyond providing education to community outreach in the areas of economic development, educational access and civic engagement?
- Has the RCCI positively impacted communities in the southern colleges' service areas?

During the summer and early fall of 2007, Dr. Salant and her UI colleague Stephanie Kane reviewed background documents, met with the SRDC's director and associate director, and personally interviewed individuals from the land-grant schools, community colleges and communities in the five Southern states that took part in the RCCI effort.

Two major preliminary findings emerged from the RCCI evaluation (the final report will be completed in 2008):

1) The limited presence of strong community development Extension programs made it difficult for the Southern land-grants to bring RCCI into their institutions on a long-term basis. Few faculty members in the five states had formal community

development appointments and training. Thus, the RCCI participating land-grants schools were hard-pressed to dedicate the time and skills required to work with colleges on economic development, educational access and civic engagement.

2) Three factors were associated with positive, lasting benefits for RCCI colleges and communities:

- Strong support from the community college president.
- Committed, stable and motivated local partners, such as a tribe or a group of businesses, in the RCCI target communities.
- An emphasis on economic development and educational access over civic engagement.

A Sampling of Important RCCI Success Stories

Despite the major challenges that emerged from the evaluation, there are many excellent examples of the positive outcomes of the SRDC-led RCCI effort in the South.

- [Preparing for the Future: A Guide to Community Based Planning](#)
Our Center partnered with Gene Theodori, formerly of Texas Cooperative Extension, to assist community colleges and rural communities in their economic and social development efforts. A step-by-step manual was developed to help communities create comprehensive strategic plans, and has been used across the region with great success. It was also incorporated as the recommended planning tool by the RCCI coordinating team.
- [Creation of a Regional Commission in East Mississippi and West Alabama](#)
In one of the most comprehensive efforts undertaken in the RCCI program, Mississippi's East Central Community College built on the work initiated by the Commission on the Future of East Mississippi and West Alabama. The RCCI process not only provided a way to implement the strategies developed by the Commission, but also helped refocus the college's outreach to help it become a more vital part of the economic, educational and social processes in its service area. As a result, ECCCC led a coalition of eight community colleges in obtaining a \$15 million Workforce Investment through Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.

- Carteret Catch**

In order to combat increasing regulation and competition in the offshore fishing industry, Carteret Community College in North Carolina partnered with the local fishing community to develop a locally harvested seafood branding program called Carteret Catch. This program included partnerships with local restaurants, wholesalers and others to provide marketing materials aimed at increasing the demand for locally harvested seafood products. The materials included seafood availability calendars, promotional materials and educational programs targeted to local residents and tourists. This program has received widespread attention from state and national entities and governmental organizations with interests in the fishing industry.
- Qualla-T Hospitality Training**

In order to boost the profits of Native American-owned businesses in the Appalachian region of Western North Carolina, the Western Carolina Partnership (Haywood Community College, Southwestern Community College, and Tri County Community College) developed a culturally sensitive customer hospitality curriculum targeted to front-line hospitality industry workers. In partnership with the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, this program has experienced tremendous success and has expanded from the hospitality industry to such sectors as healthcare, banking and retail.
- Coastal Bend College**

In order to address the various needs of its diverse regions, Coastal Bend College in Texas initiated separate programs for each of its branch campuses. The Alice campus partnered with local businesses to develop an entrepreneurship program targeted to at-risk youth ages 15 to 19. Of the 17 students that completed the program, all have either re-enrolled in high school or are enrolled at the college. The Kingsville campus partnered with local social service agencies and area foundations to implement the Moving Up the PACE (Parent and Child Enrichment) program targeted to providing basic education to single parents in the area. This program is in its third year. The Pleasanton campus initiated a leadership and economic development program designed to complement the location of a Toyota automobile plant in San Antonio.
- Comprehensive Strategic Planning Effort in Howard County**

Due to its large geographic service area, Howard College in Texas initially focused on its hometown of Big Spring and developed a comprehensive strategic plan to address the needs of the community. The follow-up to this highly successful effort includes expanding the planning process to the economically distressed communities of Forsan and Lamesa.
- Piedmont Community College's Strategic Planning Initiative**

In North Carolina, Piedmont Community College's two-county service area is one of distinct contrasts. While Persons County has a relatively stable economic infrastructure, Caswell County is lacking many of its neighboring county's foundations. The RCCI team has been instrumental in partnering with universities, government agencies and philanthropic foundations to lead a comprehensive strategic planning process for the county and its sole incorporated city, Yanceyville. RCCI has also been key in the creation of the 21st Century Development Corporation, a non-profit funding mechanism to fund the development strategies outlined in the plan.
- Louisiana RCCI Partnership**

While originally selected as participants in the second phase of the RCCI process, administrative turnover and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita delayed Louisiana Delta Community College's participation in the RCCI program. As conditions stabilized, this college and other Louisiana community colleges were able to initiate the RCCI process. Louisiana Delta Community College, River Parishes Community College, and Southern Louisiana Community College, as well as key administrators from the Louisiana Community and Technical College system, participated in a focused RCCI Institute with faculty and administrators from the Louisiana State University and Southern University AgCenters to establish partnerships and develop action plans designed to increase the access to educational programs and enhance equitable economic development in the state.



ETC.

*Various Projects, Initiatives,
Awards, Publications and
Funding*

Delta Rural Revitalization Project

The major goal of the Delta Rural Revitalization Project is to create and implement innovative strategies that will help advance the long-term economic and sustainable development of the Mississippi Delta region. The project involves the undertaking of applied research and outreach education activities in concert with local practitioners and economic development leaders in the region. Over the past year, the SRDC has worked closely with the Delta Council and Mississippi State University Extension on the following:

- **Upgrade and Expansion of the Delta Data Information Toolkit**
This Web-based resource provides local Delta leaders and economic development agencies with timely data on a variety of labor market and socioeconomic-related conditions and trends in the region.
- **Presence of Extension Economic Development Educators in the Delta**
The role of these educators, who are housed at the Delta Data Center, is to guide and inform the economic diversification efforts of the region, including the pursuit of value-added agricultural activities such as bio-fuels, entrepreneurship/micro-businesses, business feasibility studies and business retention and expansion efforts.
- **Assistance in the Development of Economic Progress Reports on the Delta**
Such reports are valuable sources of information on the current and emerging economic development activities and opportunities in the region.

New Regional Effort Addressing the Growing Hispanic Population

The South has experienced rapid growth of its Hispanic population over the last 15 years. In fact, from 1990 to 2000, the growth of the Hispanic population in the non-metro South surpassed the 60 percent mark, and has grown by an additional 27 percent since 2000. The SRDC has responded to this major demographic shift by working in partnership with Mississippi State University's Social Science Research Center and land-grant colleagues across the region to create a Southern Research and Education Activity, or SERA, titled "The New Hispanic South."

This new SERA, which has now been officially approved by Southern Research and Extension Directors, will:

- Serve as an important vehicle for mobilizing land-grant faculty to work collaboratively in better understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with the current and future growth of Hispanics in the rural South.
- Strengthen the research and Extension outreach work being undertaken by our region's land-grant university system that addresses the growth of Hispanics in the South.
- Advance the capacity of the Southern land-grant schools to provide support and guidance to rural communities that are seeking to respond to the needs of their growing Hispanic population in a positive and strategic manner.

The Farm Foundation's Rural America Tour: Visiting the Mid South Delta Region

In August 2007, the SRDC co-sponsored and assisted with an important regional tour hosted by the Farm Foundation in the Mid South Delta region. Conducted over a three-day period, the tour provided opportunities for approximately 40 policymakers, representatives of community development organizations, non-government organization leaders, production agriculture, agribusiness leaders, university faculty, and state and national media to interact with individuals and organizations on the front line of rural economic development. The participants visited

rural communities in Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi, and saw firsthand the hard work and ingenuity that local people were using in their quest to address the social, economic and environmental/natural resource challenges facing rural areas located in the Delta region.

Farm Bill Roundtables Hosted by the SRDC in the South

In 2006, our Center worked with the Center for Rural Affairs to host Farm Bill Roundtables in Atlanta, Ga., and Jackson, Miss., on October 30 and 31, respectively. The purpose of these meetings was to seek the input and advice of a diversity of rural leaders and constituents on key components of the 2007 Farm Bill, especially those elements dealing with important rural development activities and investments. Approximately 30 key individuals took part in the two regional roundtable sessions.

Delta Geographic Concentration Initiative

The SRDC is providing leadership to an external evaluation team that has been charged with the responsibility of documenting and analyzing the impacts of a major project titled the "Delta Geographic Concentration Initiative." The DGCI has provided resources to two intermediaries to help fund locally-based community improvement activities in three target Delta sites. Over the past year, the evaluation team, made up of the SRDC, the University of Arkansas and Florida Atlantic University research/extension faculty, has monitored the implementation and impacts of the DGCI in the three Delta counties by providing the organization with meaningful and objective assessments of the initiative's progress. Furthermore, the evaluation team has offered ongoing feedback and technical assistance to the two intermediary organizations as a way of strengthening community-based activities in the targeted sites.

The team is employing multiple methods in its quest to monitor the progress in the three target counties. These methods include monitoring changes in county-level quantitative indicators, focus group/roundtable meetings with key stakeholders, one-on-one interviews with community knowledgeable and surveys of county residents. Once the multi-year project

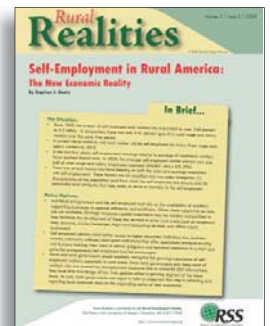
is complete, the team hopes to delineate the factors that played key roles in bringing about meaningful improvements in the overall well-being of communities located in persistently poor Delta counties.

Kettering Foundation's Public Deliberation Initiatives

The SRDC has worked closely with colleagues at the Kettering Foundation in supporting the Foundation's work on civic economics and democratic practice in Extension. Both efforts are designed to explore the role that public deliberation can play in expanding citizen involvement in key community and economic development decisions. The SRDC is part of a national network of institutions that is examining the value of public deliberation as a strategy for promoting a civically healthy and active citizenry in communities across America.

Rural Realities

"Rural Realities," a quarterly publication of the Rural Sociological Society, provides valuable insights on the current and emerging issues impacting people and places in rural America and offers policy and program options that might prove effective in addressing important rural challenges and opportunities. Articles in the series draw upon high quality social sciences-based studies conducted by researchers and practitioners located within universities/colleges, government, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations.



Our Center's director, Bo Beaulieu, has served as editor of the series since its inception in 2006. Four issues were published under his leadership in 2007:

- In Our Own Backyard: Methamphetamine Manufacturing, Trafficking and Abuse in Rural America
- Getting Connected: Broadband Services a Key to a Vibrant Rural America
- Starved for Access: Life in Rural America's Food Deserts
- Community Emergency Response Teams: From Disaster Responders to Community Builders

Issues of “Rural Realities” are available at no cost to people and organizations having an interest in current issues of importance in rural America.

SERA-19 Rural Health

The Southern Extension Research Activities group focusing on rural health issues (SERA-19) has continued its path to prominence as a multi-disciplinary, multi-state consortium of research and Extension professionals examining issues and developing programs to address the challenges of the Southern region’s rural health conditions.

The group’s annual conference was held Sept. 10-12, 2007, in Atlanta, Ga. Conference presenters included not only several of the participants, but also experts in national and international public health programming and evaluation. Formal proceedings of the participants’ papers are currently being published. The conference’s agenda and presentations can be found on the SERA-19 Web site at srdc.msstate.edu/sera19.

Community-Based Planning Curriculum

As part of its ongoing commitment to partnering the land-grant system with rural community colleges in the South, our Center published “Preparing for the Future: A Guide to Community-Based Planning.” Developed by Gene Theodori, associate professor of sociology at



Sam Houston State University, this guide was designated the strategic planning method of choice in the Rural Community College Initiative program due to its comprehensive view of community-based planning, its ability to garner grassroots involvement and support, and its simplicity of implementation.

The curriculum provides a complete set of meeting agendas, presentation slides and notes, and worksheets targeted to determining a community’s strengths and opportunities to excel. The curriculum is available on the SRDC Web site.

Delta Health Initiative

The Delta Health Initiative is a program designed to improve the capacity of educational and delivery programs in 18 Mississippi Delta counties. Characterized by persistent poverty and chronic health conditions such as obesity, diabetes and lack of access to affordable and quality care, the Mississippi Delta continues to be fertile ground for these types of programs.

Our Center, in partnership with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, has worked with small, rural hospitals to develop, implement and manage operational and managerial strategic plans to improve the efficiency and financial position of these firms. Using the Balanced Scorecard framework developed by Kaplan and Norton, the assistance group is also working with the Computer Applications and Services unit of the MSU Extension Service to develop an online Balanced Scorecard reporting system that will be available to firms seeking to monitor strategic plan implementation.

“Friend of NACDEP” Award

At the third annual National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals conference, held April 16-19, 2007, in Philadelphia, Pa., the SRDC received a “Friend of NACDEP” award. The award was in recognition of our Center’s vision, dedication and assistance in the formation and sustainability of NACDEP as a partner in advancing the profession, practice and science of community development within Extension.

RIDGE Summit Award

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, recently presented the 2007 Summit Award for “Outstanding Leadership and Contribution” to SRDC Director, Bo Beaulieu. He was recognized for his extraordinary accomplishments during the past 10 years in the Research Innovation and Development Grants in Economics (RIDGE) Program. The RIDGE Summit Award, given for the first time in the program’s 10-year history, was presented during the 2007 RIDGE Conference held at the Economic Research Service in Washington, D.C., on October 11-12, 2007.

Bonnie Teater Lifetime Achievement Award

The SRDC presents the Bonnie Teater Community Development Educator Lifetime Achievement Award annually to an outstanding Extension educator from the Southern region with innovative accomplishments in community development Extension activities and a commitment to rural people and communities in America.

The 2007 recipient of the Bonnie Teater Award was Dr. George Smith, Professor of Resource Development at the University of Tennessee. Smith's work began with University of Tennessee Extension in 1974. He has conducted successful educational programs in multiple areas, including environmental stewardship, economic development, small business development, leadership, and community facilities and services. He also plays an active role in various tourism projects, serves as an invaluable mentor to numerous agents and specialists, and continues to add to his already stellar list of publications and educational materials.

Web Sites

We continued maintenance and upkeep of our affiliate sites, which include the Rural Community College Initiative, the Southern Region Program Leadership Network and the Rural E-Commerce Extension Initiative.

Presentations

On behalf of our Center, Director Bo Beaulieu made 18 presentations throughout the 2007 fiscal year. Associate Director Alan Barefield made eight presentations.

Other Publications

The SRDC produced and distributed the following publications over the past year:

- **Grant Connections**
Grant Connections is an electronic newsletter compiled bimonthly for the faculty of land-grant colleges and universities in the South to provide funding information in support of activities in agricultural economics, education, human sciences, rural sociology, youth development and other related disciplines.

- **Around the South**
Around the South is distributed electronically each month and communicates timely information to our readers regarding new reports, funding opportunities, conferences and job opportunities relevant to our audience.
- **SRDC Success Stories**
As part of an ongoing effort to share the impact of our regional activities, we unveiled the first of a series of success stories in July 2007. The four success stories released this year, including Texas, Louisiana, Kentucky/Tennessee and Florida, spotlight successful programs and efforts that have roots in the work of our Center.



- **Food Assistance Needs of the South's Vulnerable Populations**
The SRDC released Number 13 in our food assistance policy series, funded in part by the Economic Research Service.

"Overweight and Obesity in the South: Prevalence and Related Health Care Costs Among Population Groups"

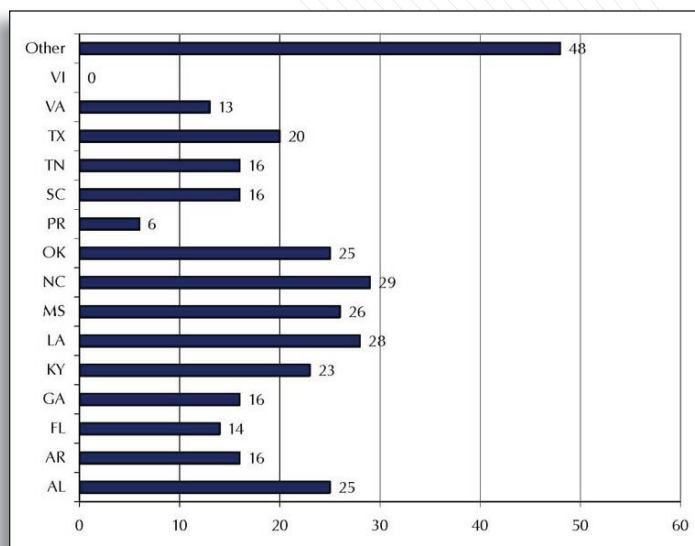
By Jerome R. Kolbo, Wendy Bounds and Jacquelyn Lee, The University of Southern Mississippi; and Amal J. Khoury, University of Florida



Trainings and Conferences

We hosted a total of 321 participants at the following conferences over the past year:

- SERA-19 Rural Health
April 9, 2007, in Kansas City, Kansas
- E-Commerce Strategies for Small Businesses and Communities
June 4-6, 2007, in Nebraska City, Nebraska
- SERA-19 Rural Health
August 28-30, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia
- Joint Meeting of PLN, AEA and ASRED
September 10-12, 2007, in Louisville, Kentucky

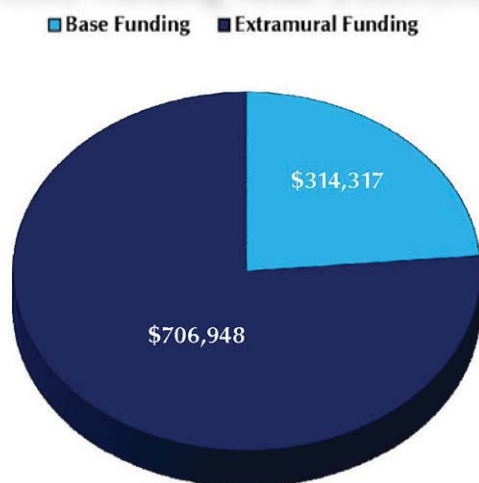


FY07 Conference Participants by State

Fiscal Year 2007 Base and Extramural Funding

We enjoyed another year with sizable levels of funding. In 2007, extramural funding exceeded \$1 million. We are grateful to the agencies and organizations that have made a financial investment in the important work of our Center.

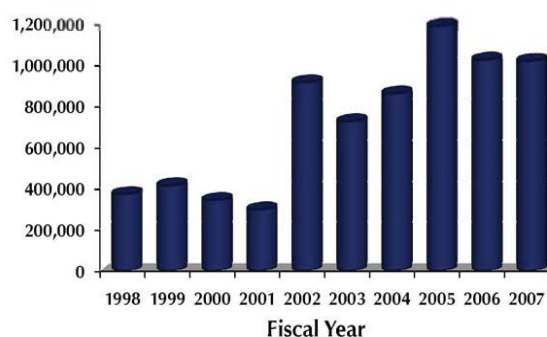
FY2007 Funding Total: \$1,021,265



Trends in Extramural Funding FY1998-2007

The following chart highlights the level of extramural resources that we have been able to secure over the past 10 years. Total extramural funds generated by the Center over this 10-year period have now exceeded \$7.7 million.

Trends in Extramural Funding FY1998-2007





BOARD/TOAC

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*Organizations and Agencies
Committed to Advancing the
Well-Being of the Rural South*

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Association of Extension Administrators

Association of Research Directors

Appalachian Regional Commission

Association of Southern Region Extension
Directors

Center for Rural Affairs

Cherokee Preservation Foundation

Community Development Society

Cooperative State Research, Education,
and Extension Service, USDA

Delta Council

Delta Health Alliance

East Central Mississippi Health Network

Economic Research Service, USDA

Farm Foundation

Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City
(Oklahoma City Branch)

Ford Foundation

Foundation for the Mid South

Frameworks Institute

Hired Pen, Inc.

Kettering Foundation

MDC, Incorporated

Montgomery Institute

National Association of Community Development
Extension Professionals

National eXtension Initiative Leadership

National Rural Funders Collaborative

North Central Regional Center for Rural
Development

Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development

RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

Rural Community College Initiative Participants

Rural Sociological Society

Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment
Station Directors

Southern Financial Partners

Southern Good Faith Fund

Southern Growth Policies Board

Southern Rural Development Initiative

Southern Rural Sociological Association

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and
Education Program

Social Science Research Center's Workforce,
Economic and Community Development Unit

Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship

Texas Rural Community College Network

USDA Rural Development

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Walton Family Foundation

Webz Media

West Arete Computing, Inc.

Western Rural Development Center



SRDC INFO

Staff, Background and Mission of the Southern Rural Development Center

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Mission

The Southern Rural Development Center seeks to strengthen the capacity of the region’s 29 land-grant institutions to address critical contemporary rural development issues impacting the well-being of people and communities in the rural South.

Background

The Southern Rural Development Center is one of four regional centers coordinating rural development research and Extension education programs cooperatively with land-grant institutions regionally and nationally. The Centers are supported by the Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the Center and its authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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SRDC Publication #239



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