

# RuralCONNECTIONSMONTHLY

A newsletter of the Western Rural Development Center

## A Look Back at 2014

Join us this month to reminisce about 2014

This month on Facebook the Western Rural Development Center will be taking a look back at 2014. Join us on our [Facebook page](#) as we reminisce about 2014 and share with us your favorite moments from the past year.



[Click here to read the posts and join the discussion!](#)

## CENTER NEWS

### Phase V of SET Launching in January 2015 Informational webinar December 5th

**Stronger Economies Together (SET) is launching Phase V and we would like to invite you and the appropriate staff to attend a webinar on December 5th at 12:00 PM Mountain/11:00 AM Pacific to learn more about this opportunity. [Visit the website to learn more about SET.](#)**



#### Project Partners

Stronger Economies Together is a partnership between Cooperative Extension Service, USDA RD, the four Regional Rural Development Centers, NIFA, and Purdue Center for Regional Development.

#### Eligibility

All states will be eligible to join SET as part of Phase V, including those in previous phases. Note that applications need to be jointly developed and submitted by USDA Rural Development (working with the respective State Director) and Extension Service.

#### About Stronger Economies Together

SET enables communities and counties in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint for their multi-county region that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of that region. Creating, attracting and retaining jobs as a single rural county, in isolation from other nearby counties, is becoming increasingly ineffective. In today's global marketplace, economic development progress is more likely to be realized when rural and metro counties work together as a region to assess, design, and implement plans that build on their assets and comparative economic strengths.

#### New for Phase V

SET V is taking a brand new approach based on an extensive review of the program. Significant improvements to engage participants has been made; a civic engagement module added which will increase stakeholder involvement and buy-in; and a more streamlined approach which reduces the number of modules to six, and gives greater flexibility to adapt to the capacity of that region. Most importantly, significant time will be devoted to launching the plan into implementation.

#### How to Apply

Applications are due January 31, 2015 (the application packet will be released before the December 5th webinar). The regional applications will be due later. Stronger Economies Together is a partnership between Cooperative Extension Service, USDA RD, the four Regional Rural

Development Centers, NIFA and Purdue Center for Regional Development. The partners work together to help SET regions (that are three or more counties) to work, learn, plan, and implement together the region's plan.

If your state joins SET Phase V, it will require a commitment of staff time from both Rural Development and Extension. Extension Service will receive a subcontract for the regions it serves in the amount of \$26,400 per region for up to two regions. This funding can cover staff time, travel, and program delivery expenses (printing, supplies, meeting expenses, etc).

### **Join the Webinar**

To join the Webinar (which will be recorded):

1. Go to <https://rurdev.webex.com/rurdev/k2/j.php?MTID=t2fe8a9f49f8f73c698f95e8d5c673266>
2. Enter your name and email address.
3. Enter the session password: SET and click "Join Now".
4. Follow the instructions that appear on your screen.
5. For audio call: 1-800-981-3173 3665#

We look forward to working with you on a new and improved SET.

Questions can be directed to Rachel Welborn at [rachelw@srcd.msstate.edu](mailto:rachelw@srcd.msstate.edu) or 662.325.5885.

[Learn more about SET.](#)

## **National Extension Energy Summit**

### **Call for Abstracts 2015**

*Deadline: December 5, 2014*



The National Extension Energy Summit (NEES) 2015 is an opportunity for Extension professionals to share experiences and information, learn from successes and challenges, and build new partnerships for energy programs. The Summit will bring together expertise from Extension supporting: sustainable and renewable energy, home and farm energy efficiency, biomass energy programs, and other exciting energy areas.

We invite you to submit an abstract for the 2015 National Extension Energy Summit. Abstracts for oral presentations, posters, interactive activities, and discussion groups are currently being solicited that will make the Summit an interactive and engaging experience. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging audiences
- New technologies
- Energy literacy
- Energy conservation
- Energy efficiency
- Curriculum development
- Energy outreach resources

Complete submission guidelines are available on the [NEES 2015 website](#).

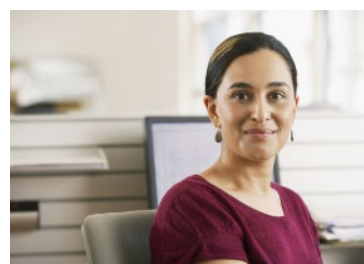
Conference registration will open in January. The room block at the Motif Seattle is now open. Reserve your room early and lock in the conference rate! Questions? Please contact Nora Haider, Extension Coordinator at Washington State University Extension [nora.haider@wsu.edu](mailto:nora.haider@wsu.edu) 425-741-9962.

[Visit the NEES website.](#)

## Understanding Communities

### Online course offers tools for community development

Register by December 19th and save \$25!



Would you like to understand how communities work? Are you curious about why good ideas sometimes fall flat? Do you watch groups struggle to make decisions without adequate data? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions we invite you to register for *Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics*, a unique online course presented jointly by the four Regional Rural Development Centers and a team of nationally recognized Community Development professionals. [Register now!](#)

The seven-week series begins January 15, 2015 and concludes February 26, 2015. Each week features a 90-minute webinar focusing on topics including demographics, economic development, strategic planning and power structures. Supplemental resources and online discussion opportunities will be available on the course website. Participants will have the opportunity to log in at their convenience during the week to explore these topics further, pose questions, investigate additional resources and visit with colleagues in similar situations.

"The course covered a lot of topics, giving us concrete information as well as a lot of food for thought," said a recent course graduate. "I have a new understanding of community dynamics, leadership structures and best practices for collaboration."

*Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics* is a Level 1 introduction for the Foundations of Practice Program. It is appropriate for individuals working with community groups in any subject area. Past participants have included those working across a broad spectrum of areas including agriculture, economic development, youth development, entrepreneurship, energy and natural resource-related issues. If you find yourself called upon to facilitate community-based initiatives, or you just want to better understand how communities function, this course is for you!

#### How To Register

Registration is \$100 per person but you can save \$25 by registering before 5:00pm on December 19, 2014! [Click here to register!](#)

To learn more about *Foundations of Practice and Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics* [visit the website.](#)

## Preparing for Wildfires

### Moving from Crisis to Opportunity

A Workshop for Extension Educators and Community Leaders

March 10-12, 2015  
Tucson, AZ



Mark your calendars for the Western Rural Development Center's wildfire workshop being held March 10-12, 2015 in Tucson, Arizona. The workshop, *Preparing for Wildfires: Moving from Crisis to Opportunity*, will equip Cooperative Extension professionals and other community leaders with the tools needed to successfully face the challenges of living in wildfire-prone environments. National-level scientists and experts will help attendees think through all aspects and stages of fire - before, during, and after - in both urban and rural landscapes. Extension personnel will be invited to share their challenges and success stories. Information will be shared about the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and its goal of developing fire-adapted communities.

The workshop will include two days of presentations and interactive discussions, a poster session, and an optional scenic and educational field trip to a community and forest recovering from wildfire.

### Who should attend?

All Cooperative Extension personnel and their local partners: e.g., elected officials, planning commissioners, Firewise and fire safe leaders, fire chiefs, and anyone else working together at the local level to prepare for wildfires.

[Visit the website for more details!](#)

## CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, TRAININGS

### National Rural Housing Conference

2-5 December 2014

Washington, DC

[Details.](#)

### JCEP Leadership Conference

11-12 February 2015

Las Vegas, NV

[Details.](#)

### Preparing for Wildfires

10-12 March 2015

Tucson, AZ

[Details.](#)

### National Extension Energy Summit 2015

7-10 April 2015

Seattle, WA

[Details.](#)



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