

Rural CONNECTIONS MONTHLY

A newsletter of the Western Rural Development Center

Poverty in America

Join us this month to explore poverty in the US

This month on Facebook the Western Rural Development Center will be exploring poverty. Join us in **Facebook** as we discuss the demographics of poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, and other topics.



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

National Extension Energy Summit

Registration now open!



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.

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 or by calling 425-741-9962.

[Visit the NEES website.](#)

Southern Region Middle Managers Conference

Open to participation from all regions!



The **2015 Southern Region Middle Managers Conference**

Planning Committee cordially invite you to our biennial conference being held in Charleston, South Carolina, March 16-19, 2015. Even though you may not reside in the Southern Region, we hope you will take advantage of this tremendous professional development opportunity.

Topics

Working with Millennials, Recruiting/retaining workforce, Onboarding techniques, New agent training/mentoring strategies, Agent retention and promotion, Increasing staff engagement, Managing stress in the workforce, Evaluation strategies, Disruption Demography, Community resiliency, Building relationships with urban stakeholders, Extension for the next 100 years.

Who Should Attend?

Questions?

Please feel free to contact:

Blake Lanford blakel@clemson.edu

Jeffery Young jeffery.young@uky.edu

[Click here for more details and to register.](#)

USDA Announces Fellowships for Future Agricultural Scientists Includes Undergraduate Fellowships for the first time!



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced the availability of more than \$15 million for fellowships to train and develop the next generation of scientists who will lead agriculture into the future by solving current and future challenges facing society. NIFA will support pre- and post-doctoral fellowships, and for the first time, undergraduate fellowships.

"As we look to the future and addressing challenges such as food and nutritional security, environmental sustainability, and health, we will need highly skilled scientists to address these concerns," said Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA director. "Fellowships at this level are an excellent way to give tomorrow's leaders the skills, knowledge, and experience they need to be successful and make a difference."

Funded fellowships will span the six AFRI challenge areas (food security, water, climate change, food safety, childhood obesity prevention, and sustainable bioenergy) and the AFRI foundational program areas. The fellowship program also will fund projects that contain well-developed and highly-engaged mentoring and training activities. NIFA will fund single-function and multi-function research, education or extension projects.

This is the first year NIFA has offered funding to academic institutions to promote research and extension experiential learning for undergraduates. Undergraduate fellows will obtain hands-on experience and training and receive strong mentoring to assist them in joining the workforce or for pursuing graduate studies. Additionally, the undergraduate fellowships will provide opportunities for students from underrepresented and economically disadvantaged groups at minority-serving institutions, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities to obtain hands-on experience and training at larger universities and USDA laboratories.

Applications for the pre- and post-doctoral fellows are due on February 11, 2015. Letters of intent for the undergraduate fellowships are due on February 18, 2015, with full applications due May 6, 2015.

[Click here for applications.](#)

[Read the entire press release.](#)

Preparing for Wildfires

Moving from Crisis to Opportunity

A Workshop for Extension Educators
and Community Leaders

March 10-12, 2015
Tucson, AZ



Registration is now open. [Register today!](#)

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 Mt. Lemmon, 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

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.](#)

2015 National Health Outreach Conference

6-8 May 2015
Atlanta, GA

[Details.](#)

17th Annual National Value-Added Agriculture Conference

18-20 May 2015
Austin, TX

[Details.](#)

[Visit our website for more event listings!](#)



STAY CONNECTED



