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Rachel Welborn

Mississippi State University

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Rapid Response Team on Civil Discourse: Assessing Extension's Capacity to Respond

Rachel Welborn, Southern Rural Development Center

In September, 2016, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) approved the establishment of a Rapid Response Team on Civil Discourse on Race Relations. Concerns around racial tensions resulting in civil unrest evidenced by riots, arrests, and shootings underscored the need for this important emphasis. Also, this was the first piloting of the Rapid Response Team (RRT) model, a process also approved by ECOP and designed to take a prompt look at Cooperative Extension Services' (CES) capacity to address an emerging issue.

This presentation chronicles both the learnings of this first RRT from a process standpoint as well as specific findings and recommendations on the identified topic. By sharing insights from both aspects, the RRT hopes to strengthen the CES system's ability to respond rapidly to emerging issues and also encourage capacity building specific to the timely concerns of promoting civil discourse in our nation. The RRT gratefully acknowledges contributions from over 150 Extension professionals nationally to help launch this initial work. More details are located at <https://publish.extension.org/civildialogue/>