



NREDA News Brief | December 2025

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Rural Proud & At the Table: Closing Out an Incredible Year with NREDA

By Lisa Hurley, Outgoing President, National Rural Economic Developers Association



As we close out another year at the National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA), I am filled with gratitude, pride, and excitement for what lies ahead. Serving as President this past year has been an incredible honor, and it reinforced what I already knew to be true: rural economic developers are some of the most innovative, collaborative, and committed professionals in our field.

Our 2025 Annual Conference in Nashville was nothing short of incredible. From powerful keynote conversations to hands-on sessions and meaningful peer connections, the energy in the room was unmistakable. We tackled the issues that matter most to rural communities—housing, workforce, infrastructure, entrepreneurship, and leadership—and we left better equipped and inspired to move our work forward. The Annual Conference is always a reminder that when rural professionals come together, progress happens.

[Click Here to Read More about Upcoming Webinars, the Regional Conference, and the 2026 Annual Conference in Salt Lake City](#)

Join one of NREDA's Committees

If you have any interest in being a part of an NREDA Committee, please complete the Committee Interest Form below and select one committee from the options listed below, and the committee chairperson will reach out to you for further discussion.

NREDA Committees

- Annual Conference Planning Committee
- Awards Committee
- Membership Committee
- Professional Development Committee
- Publications & Marketing Committee
- Rural Issues Committee
- Sponsorship Committee

To learn more about each committee, please [CLICK HERE](#)
Industry Update: Rural Issues Committee

Farm Bill expiration: What counties need to know

By Owen Hart, Legislative Director, Agriculture & Rural Affairs - Rural Action Caucus and Rachel Yeung, Legislative Assistant

On September 30, 2025, the 2018 Farm Bill, officially known as the *Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018* ([P.L. 115-334](#)), expired. While this does not mean an immediate halt to all programs authorized in the Farm Bill, the expiration begins a period of uncertainty for counties and rural residents who rely on resources authorized in the Farm Bill.

Why the Farm Bill matters to counties

The Farm Bill is the nation's most significant legislative package for rural America, shaping food security, agricultural stability, natural resource conservation and rural infrastructure investment. All Farm Bill programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which directly partners with county governments to deliver services provided by many Farm Bill programs. Nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are essential county-administered or county-supported services that ensure county residents have access to healthy food. Rural counties also rely on the Farm Bill to support farmers through crop insurance and commodity safety nets, to fund broadband and water infrastructure, and to sustain conservation and resilience efforts through Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. In many rural regions, Farm Bill programs represent a critical lifeline for both families and local governments.

[Read More About How Counties are Impacted by the Farm Bill](#)



Rural Issues Committee Update

The Rural Issues Committee is working with Senator Barrasso on upcoming legislation, to require short form applications for Economic Development Administration grants. You can [read the 2024 version of the bill here](#).

For more information, please contact the Rural Issues Committee Chairs, [Brandon Lane](#) or [Friday Otuya](#).

New Member Spotlight

Learn more about NREDA's new members, and welcome **Charles Jackson** to the NREDA community!

Charles Jackson is an Innovation Development Manager at Alabama Power, where he leads efforts to strengthen tech-based economic development across the state. In this role, he recruits and supports startup companies, fosters collaboration with tech accelerators, and manages corporate and stakeholder engagement. His team builds strategic partnerships that expand innovation initiatives throughout Alabama, enhancing efficiency and competitive advantage for existing industry.



Before joining Alabama Power, Charles served on the faculty at Auburn University at Montgomery, where he taught Marketing and Entrepreneurship and directed Graduate Programs for the College of Business.

A proud veteran of the United States Air Force, Charles is deeply committed to advancing education, innovation, and economic opportunity.

NREDA 2025 Annual Conference!



Thank you for joining us in Nashville, TN this November for the 2025 NREDA Annual Conference!

This year, NREDA joined together with rural economic development peers in Nashville to “Kick Up” your skills, knowledge and networking for success! We put together a great slate of learning opportunities and dynamic speakers for this year’s conference. In addition to the always popular site selection panel, we tackled new challenges and opportunities facing rural developers and their communities including crisis communications, policies and geopolitics, cyber security, applying AI, next generation board development/leadership, future utility needs and issues (e.g. grid security, generation, politics). That’s not all! Our mobile classrooms had opportunities for every interest, from manufacturing to downtown development to entrepreneurship.

[**Click Here for More Highlights and Conference Materials**](#)

NREDA's New Podcast

**Keep your eyes open for NREDA's new Podcast, coming in 2026!
More information to come - stay tuned!**

NREDA Retiree Recognition

NREDA would like to recognize our members for their service! If you will be retiring this year, or know someone who is retiring from the industry, please complete the form below by October 16, 2026 to be recognized during the NREDA Annual Conference November 4-6, 2026 in Salt Lake City, Utah! (Annual Conference registration will open Summer 2026, so be sure to look for that information and register to attend the conference).

[Retiree Recognition Form](#)

Job Listings

Did you know you can view and post job listings right to the NREDA website?
Current Job Listings:

- Executive Director, Carroll County Growth Partnership

[View NREDA Job Postings](#)

Newsletter Submissions

Call for Newsletter Articles

NREDA would love to share your unique stories, industry trends, best practices, white papers, and - of course - your successes in our bi-monthly e-newsletter!

Guidelines:

- You must be a current NREDA member to submit an article.
- Please email your article to Sydney Spears at sydney@assnoffices.com by the 15th of each e-newsletter month. Please include the subject line **NREDA Newsletter Article Submission**
- Please submit your article in an editable format (Microsoft Word or text in the body of an email preferred). Feel free to include a photo with your article.
- Please send information, educational, and/or newsworthy items. Please no ads or sales/marketing articles. NREDA reserves the right to exclude submitted articles as deemed necessary by the leadership.

[Submit a Newsletter Article](#)

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#NREDA Don't forget when posting on social media to use the hashtag #NREDA when sharing your stories! This way we can spread it to all of our members!



Contact Info:

National Rural Economic Developers Association

400 West Wilson Bridge Road, Ste 120

Worthington, OH 43085

Phone: (614) 228-4706

Email: nreda@assnoffices.com