



INSTITUTE FOR RURAL JOURNALISM  
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**REWRITES: An Economic Development Conference for Journalism, Business and Government**  
Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, Ala., March 5-6, 2009

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**Registration fees:**

\_\_\_\_ Through January 31: \$50 (**Early Bird**)  
\_\_\_\_ After Jan. 31: \$70  
\_\_\_\_ Breakfast Bonus Session Friday morning, March 6: Share ideas with, and get advice from, venture capitalist Jack Schultz: \$25  
\_\_\_\_ TOTAL

**Method of Payment:**

\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_ Check (Payable to Jacksonville State University) \_\_\_\_ Purchase Order (attached)  
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Jacksonville State University, Office of Continuing Education  
100 Gamecock Drive  
Anniston AL 36205

**A block of rooms for REWRITES has been set aside at:**

The Victoria Inn  
1604 Quintard Ave.  
Anniston AL 36201  
256-236-0503  
\$79 per night plus tax

CHECK FOR PROGRAM UPDATES AT [WWW.RURALJOURNALISM.ORG](http://WWW.RURALJOURNALISM.ORG)

**CONTACTS:**

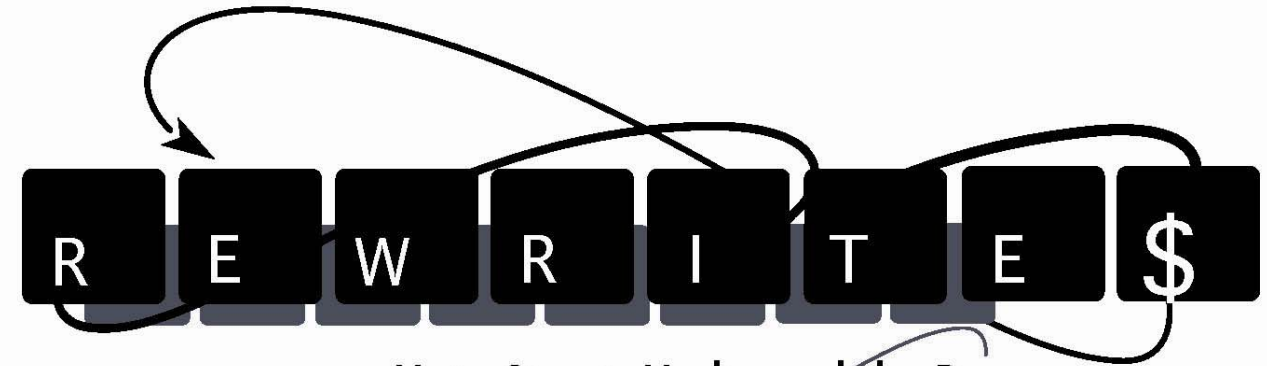
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**Main Street, Media and the Recovery.**

An Economic Development Conference for Journalism, Business and Government  
Presented by the Institute for Rural Journalism & Community Issues and Jacksonville State University  
**Thursday and Friday, March 5-6, 2009, Jacksonville and Anniston, Ala.**

As a president who promised hope and change starts to lead the country out of its worst recession in 50 years, where will your rural communities fit into the recovery? **This unique conference** is designed to answer that question for journalists, business leaders and public officials — sharing facts, tactics and strategies with experts and each other. We have assembled a strong team of presenters, including a public capitalist whose pension fund owns a large community newspaper chain and a big group of television stations; a former mayor and state commissioner of commerce who founded a chain of rural newspapers and ran an Alaska Native Corporation; and a venture capitalist who writes and speaks regularly all over the nation about rural economic development. They exemplify the conference goal: to get journalists and economic developers under the same roof, breaking bread, learning from each other and ultimately improving the economies of their rural communities and rural America as a whole.



**FRIDAY KEYNOTER:** As CEO of the Retirement Systems of Alabama, **David Bronner** is one of America's leading public capitalists and, in effect, one of the largest publishers of community newspapers in the U.S. RSA owns Community Newspaper Holdings Inc. and controls Raycom Media Inc., one of the largest owners of U.S. television stations. His address will be titled "Lessons in Economic Development."



**SPECIAL GUEST:** After a 25-year career in public-policy positions and the newspaper business, **Edgar Blatchford** became an associate professor of journalism at the University of Alaska Anchorage. A lawyer and a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism, he was editor and publisher of the weekly newspaper in Seward, Alaska; founder and president of Alaska Newspapers Inc.; a three-term chairman of the Chugach Alaska Corp.; commissioner of the state Department of Community and Regional Affairs; councilman and mayor of Seward, on the Pacific Ocean south of Anchorage; and commissioner of the state Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. He will speak on covering economic development, and on guiding it through editorial and civic efforts.

**THURSDAY KEYNOTER:** **Jack Schultz** is a researcher of, and an investor in, rural America, including rural Alabama. He is also a promoter of rural America, through his book, *Boomtown USA: The 7½ Keys to Big Success in Small Towns*, and his presentation by the same name. The mission of his Boomtown Institute is "To provoke innovative thinking, encourage leadership and foster investment in communities across the U.S.A." He says, "Vision is the difference between a ghost town and a Boomtown!" In addition to his Thursday evening address in Anniston, **Jack will share more ideas and lend advice at a Breakfast Bonus Session on Friday morning, for registrants who pay an extra fee.**



**REWRITES** is sponsored by Jacksonville State University with support from the **Appalachian Regional Commission** and the **Delta Regional Authority**. For other presenters, and registration and lodging information, see inside.

*Logo design by JSU student Jason Wright*

## A FIRST-EVER OPPORTUNITY for rural journalists and others interested in rural economic development

REWRITES will recognize and enhance the roles rural newspaper publishers and editors, and broadcasters, play in their communities' economic development. They seek expert advice and the best available information to cover the subject. To perform editorial leadership, they need good examples from other rural media. To fulfill their civic role, they need support in dealing with both the opportunities and the conflicts that can result. Business developers in private and public enterprise also need to embrace the role of media in supporting, guiding or blocking developments. Universities hold a key role in moderating the rural development conversation.

**Rural development** and rural media have changed in recent years and will change further. Rural areas once relied on low wages, low taxes and low land costs to attract employers. Globalization removed the wage advantage, so traditional industries such as apparel and furniture largely have disappeared. Extractive industries and heavy manufacturing, where they remain, struggle with environmental and economic issues. Rural communities and small cities struggle to find new approaches that work. Employers want educated and healthy work forces, which may require higher taxes, causing political conflict. Regional business and government and media cannot wait for the federal government or even the state capitals to solve all their problems.

**Rural media** have changed from largely independent ownership to chain ownership. Not too long ago, many rural publishers and station managers — and even editors and news directors — were integral parts of community development efforts. Sometimes that meant keeping information from the public, for what the gatekeepers deemed was the larger public interest. Today's media managers often come from out of town and are less active in civic work, less answerable to neighbors than to national headquarters, much like rural branches of big banks. Yet all owners of local news outlets still have a role to play in building or maintaining their local economies. Media can balance that civic role with the First Amendment's expectation to hold accountable those officials and civic leaders who take responsibility for our economic futures. This conference will explore the tensions and the solutions while helping rural news media do a better job of covering local economic development. It will bring journalists and their employers, and ultimately their audience, the latest thinking about rural development, which emphasizes entrepreneurship, regional cooperation and building on existing community assets.

## PROGRAMS, PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS



**The rural economy, its prospects and key strategies for development:** **Brian Dabson**, president and CEO of the Rural Policy Research Institute, has over 30 years of experience in public, private, and nonprofit sectors on both sides of the Atlantic dedicated to expanding economic opportunity for low-income people and distressed communities. He is recognized internationally for his work on rural entrepreneurship, a key to rural development.

**Regional cooperation and the media role:** Often the biggest obstacles to economic development in a rural region are the county lines. **Joe Rutherford** is editorial page editor of the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, which is owned by a foundation that has as its mission the development of a 16-county region centered on Tupelo. The regional efforts have paid off, most lately in location of a Toyota plant. **Also expected:** Representatives of the National Association of Development Organizations, which promotes regional cooperation, and the Tennessee Department of Economic Development, which has begun pushing cross-county cooperation for development.

**The role of government:** Representatives of the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Delta Regional Authority and the State of Alabama are being invited to discuss federal and state policy.

**The role of technology:** Rural economic development is often hindered by the lack of high-speed Internet access and other technologies. **Brian Mefford**, chairman and CEO of Connected Nation, a non-profit organization that spurs the availability, literacy and use of technology among overlooked populations, primarily in rural areas, will discuss the issue and his work with Connect Kentucky, which became a model for states trying to expand access to broadband Internet.

**Mega-projects and manufacturing:** Toyota has come to Northeast Mississippi, Kia has come to West Georgia, Honda has come to Alabama and Volkswagen is coming to Tennessee. How much more can the auto industry expand in the South? What are the problems rural media face in covering it? **Joe Rutherford** of Tupelo (see previous session) will be joined by **Andrea Lovejoy**, editor of the LaGrange Daily News, a small daily paper that covers Kia, from South Korea to the Chattahoochee.



**Community-based economic development:** When the community is involved in economic development, the results are often better and the people are usually happier. **Vaughn Grisham**, director of the McLean Institute for Community Development at the University of Mississippi, will discuss principles of community-based economic development. He is author of books on leadership development and community development, and producer and director of two films. He helped establish leadership development programs in more than 300 counties in over 20 states. He is writing a leadership development manual and a book on successful community development. **Lionel "Bo" Beaulieu**, director of the Southern Rural Development Center, based at Mississippi State University, will discuss community-based economic development in the context of issues and challenges in the rural economy of the South.



**Small Towns, Big Ideas:** **Will Lambe** of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will present real examples of successful small-town economic development, from his recent research. Lambe is associate director of Community and Economic Development Program in the UNC School of Government. Before going to Chapel Hill in 2006, he worked with the Corporation for Enterprise Development on a wide range of research and advocacy projects. **Mark Fagan**, head of the sociology department at Jacksonville State and author of *Retirement Development: A How-To Guidebook*, will discuss the job opportunities rural areas have through attracting retirees and offering recreation. He has consulted on the topic in many states.



**Financing rural economic development:** Special measures are often needed to bring investment and jobs to poor, rural areas. A leader in that field is Southern Bancorp, a holding company that operates three development banks and three non-profit organizations in Arkansas and Mississippi. Vice President **Dominik Mjartan** will discuss the bank's comprehensive community-development model. He came to the U.S. from the former Czechoslovakia at 16 with hopes of earning the American Dream, which he now strives to make attainable to thousands of



disadvantaged people in the Delta region of Mississippi and Arkansas. In another poor region, Southeastern Kentucky, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corp. invests venture capital, develops entrepreneurship and provides management assistance to create jobs and wealth. President and CEO **Jerry Rickett** will discuss the community development corporation's work, including managing one of the three original rural empowerment zones and becoming the nation's first nonbank lender under the Department of Agriculture's business and industry loan guaranty program.



**Covering and guiding economic development:** Joining Edgar Blatchford and Joe Rutherford (see cover page) for this essential discussion will be **Terri Likens**, editor of the Roane County News in Tennessee, who exposed conflicts of interests among local economic developers. (Photo shows her flying over the TVA coal-ash spill.)



## YOUR HOSTS

**Al Cross** is director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues, based at the University of Kentucky, with academic partners at 25 universities in 16 states. The Institute helps rural journalists define the public agenda in their communities, especially on issues that have local impact but come from outside the community. He is a former weekly newspaper editor and manager who was president of the Society of Professional Journalists and worked more than 26 years at The Courier-Journal, the last 15½ as the Louisville newspaper's political writer.



**Chris Waddle** is Ayers Chair in Journalism at Jacksonville State University, president of the Ayers Family Institute for Community Journalism at The Anniston Star, and Anniston coordinator of the Knight Fellows in Community Journalism, a master's-degree program of the University of Alabama. He was editor and held other news-executive positions at the Star for 20 years, and was managing editor of the Kansas City Times when it won two Pulitzer Prizes. He was a Nieman fellow at Harvard University and a Fulbright professor at American University in Bulgaria.



**THE CONFERENCE BEGINS AT 1 P.M. THURSDAY, MAR. 5, AT THE HOUSTON COLE LIBRARY AT JACKSONVILLE STATE, AND WILL CONCLUDE AT 3 P.M. FRIDAY, MAR. 6.**