

Many local newspapers and broadcast stations in rural America have played a role in bringing jobs to their communities, both with stories and editorials and with civic leadership. Today, they and their communities face new challenges. For example, globalization has made it more difficult for American communities to attract and retain jobs, and many rural communities face technological obstacles in keeping up with the rest of the country and the world. To help your journalism and your civic leadership, the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues is presenting "Covering and Guiding Rural Economic Development," at Murray State University on April 7, as the program for the annual spring meeting of the West Kentucky Press Association. WKPA is co-sponsoring this regional conference, which is open to journalists and economic developers from anywhere. The registration fee includes lunch, continental breakfast and background materials.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Job title _____

Media _____

Address _____

City/St/ZIP _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

West Ky. Press Assn. members \$25

Pay by check to WKPA, on site

Others, by March 31, **\$50**; afterward, **\$60**

Make check payable to University of Kentucky, with "Murray conference" on memo line and **mail to:**
Institute for Rural Journalism & Community Issues
122 Grehan Bldg., University of Kentucky
Lexington KY 40506-0042

Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues
UK School of Journalism and Telecommunications
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0042

Your job, their jobs:

Covering and Guiding Rural Economic Development

A conference for journalists
in the middle of rural America

April 7, 2006

Presented by
**Institute for Rural Journalism
and Community Issues**

at
Murray State University

In conjunction with the
West Kentucky Press Association
Spring meeting

COVERING AND GUIDING RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A conference for non-metropolitan journalists

Presented by the
Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues
in cooperation with the
West Kentucky Press Association

April 7, 2006

Murray State University, Curris Center, third floor
Directions: From US 641, turn west at Chestnut Street light;
center will be on the left

8:30 Welcome and Introductions

(coffee and doughnuts available throughout morning)
C.D. Bradley, The Paducah Sun, president, WKPA
Al Cross, director, Inst. for Rural Journalism & Comm. Issues

9:00-10:15

Developing Entrepreneurs: The migration of factory jobs to other countries has increased the importance of local initiatives to create and retain jobs, and the demise of the federal tobacco program has increased the need for entrepreneurship in rural areas. **Ron Hustedde**, right, of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, who runs an Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute that uses tobacco-settlement money to develop



and encourage entrepreneurs in 19 tobacco-dependent counties in northeastern Kentucky, will present "Ten Things Journalists Should Know About Entrepreneurship." **Mickey Johnson**, left, district director of Murray State University's Small Business Development Center, will discuss entrepreneurship in Western Kentucky and adjoining areas.



10:15-10:30 Break

10:30-11:30

Access to Technology: The Internet could be the great equalizer for rural America, allowing communities to leapfrog

the isolation that has hampered their economic development. But we have come to learn that the size of your Internet "pipe" is critical, and high-speed broadband is slow in coming to rural areas — just as electricity was in the first third of the 20th Century. **Brian Mefford**, left, president and CEO of ConnectKentucky, a business-government alliance that promotes technology development, will present.



11:30-1:00 Lunch

From Goods to Services: For years, towns in the region courted manufacturers. Now, with manufacturing being squeezed, there may be more opportunities in services and technology-related firms. Rural Sourcing, an information-technology firm in nearby Jonesboro, Ark., offers rural America as an alternative to offshore outsourcing of IT work. After a luncheon speech by **Henry Torres**, right, of Rural Sourcing, there will be a brief business meeting of the **West Kentucky Press Association**, a co-sponsor of the conference.



1:00-2:15

Alternative Avenues in Agriculture: The end of the tobacco program means there will be fewer growers, larger crops, lower prices and a gradual migration of production from Eastern and Southern Kentucky into the Bluegrass and Western Kentucky, where larger, flatter plots of land are available. But for those who choose to get out of tobacco farming yet remain in agriculture, what are the best alternatives for investing their buyout money, and in some



cases the tobacco-settlement money that the state is spending for agricultural diversification? There has been relatively little news coverage of how the money has been spent. Its biggest cash outlay was for an ethanol plant; what is the future of that industry? Speakers are **Keith Rogers**, right, executive director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, and **Laura Skillman**, above, who runs the University of Kentucky agricultural news service and was often the state's



best farm writer when she was at the Messenger-Inquirer in Owensboro.

2:15-2:30 Break

2:30-3:45

How Low Can You Go? The old line from "Limbo Rock" is a question rural communities and their elected representatives must ask themselves as they try to maintain local economies. The incentive-driven competition for jobs often leads to a race to the bottom between states and even between communities in the same state. **J. R. Wilhite** of the state Cabinet for Economic Development, **Justin Maxson**, left, of the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, and state Sen. **Dorsey Ridley**, right, a banker in Henderson, will discuss incentives.



3:45-5:00

An Arm's-Length Transaction? In many towns, local media work hand-in-glove with officials and civic leaders to attract jobs, and in some cases, help make the difference. **Al Smith** did in Russellville. But in a video, he will voice some regrets about his handling of the issue (the National Labor Relations Board threw out two union elections at Russellville plants because of inflammatory stories he did), and tell a cautionary tale about a publisher's involvement compromising the coverage that an important issue like economic development deserves. There are times when a newspaper has to measure the possible risk of economic damage to the community against the public's right to know. Attendees will discuss the topic with **Paul Monsour**, upper right, former Union County Advocate editor who now heads the county economic development foundation, and **Al Cross**, lower right, director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues, based at the University of Kentucky.

