

**Newsletter**  
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***How Small Towns Are Responding to The Global  
Pandemic***

*Small towns have the advantage of being more nimble and responsive to crisis than cities*

*PUBLISHED ON June 30, 2020*

WASHINGTON (THE CONVERSATION) — Before the global pandemic hit, small towns across America were dealing with struggling economies, aging roads and bridges, and declining populations.

The coronavirus added new challenges, like additional demand for [limited hospital beds for an aging population](#), many of whom have chronic health conditions.

Fortunately, as I've seen in my work at the [Small Town Center at Mississippi State University](#), small towns have the advantage of being [more nimble and responsive to crisis than cities](#), largely because they have fewer regulations and more opportunities to be creative about problem-solving.

The pandemic has increased local leaders' attention to their residents' health — not just in terms of doctors and hospitals but also identifying new ways to help people get fitter, spend more time outdoors, eat healthier and boost local economies. Here are some ways people in small communities are adapting existing plans and creating new ways to keep their towns active and vibrant.

*Paths and parks*

Many small towns are now looking to invest in sidewalks and bike paths. Communities like my own in Starkville, Mississippi, have done some work already, but are seeing an enormous increase in interest in walking [and cycling](#), for both recreation and commuting.

*There is plenty of evidence that extensive networks of bike paths and sidewalks [create healthier communities](#). They offer [more recreation space](#) for people looking for activities that are outdoors and close to their homes. But more than that, these routes are useful for people who need to visit local businesses or medical offices but are no longer willing or able to take a bus or get a ride from a friend, neighbor or ride service. Mississippi State University is installing additional bike racks around campus, to help people get to work and class without using public transit, which may be limited because of social distancing requirements.*

*With [gyms closed](#) and [vacation travel more limited](#), residents and their communities are also [placing new value on parks](#) and open spaces. Unfortunately, [many small towns do not have ample parks and green spaces](#) for recreation. Nor do many rural towns have sidewalks.*

#### *Food options*

*Many people around the country are limiting their trips to grocery stores, and are exploring buying [directly from local farmers](#) for the first time. The [farmers make more money](#) by cutting out the middleman, and consumers can get fresh local produce at affordable prices.*

*Small towns are also seeing more of the [urban phenomenon of food trucks and carts](#). Those businesses can be cheap to start – making them [well suited for small towns](#) with fewer potential customers.*

*In urban areas, food trucks often set up in designated areas, but in small towns, I'm seeing that the food trucks travel to customers' neighborhoods or businesses – much like ice cream trucks make the rounds. They are also using digital technology to [reach customers in new ways](#). In Starkville, Mississippi, for instance, people can [use Facebook to request](#) that the Mom and Pop breakfast-and-lunch truck visit their neighborhood.*

*Starkville also has several food carts that set up outside a local factory to [offer workers easy lunch options](#).*

#### *Boosting tourism*

*Small-town industries and manufacturing businesses are mostly gone, leaving the communities looking for ways to diversify their economies. Some places have invested in cultural tourism, which encourages travelers to visit particular communities and learn about their local culture.*

*Many forms of tourism are suffering from social distancing and other travel limitations, but in-state visitors are still welcome across the country. Some states are welcoming tourists from other states [without asking them to self-quarantine](#).*

*Since 2015, the Quitman County Economic Development Foundation, the*

Marks Historical Society and local officials in Marks, Mississippi, have been working to grow the town's tourism base. Marks is the home of a [cultural trail honoring the starting point](#) of Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic 1968 [Poor People's Campaign](#).

It's a self-guided tour for cars, bicycles and pedestrians that includes both local historical sites and local restaurants and businesses. It's an example of how communities can promote history and the local economy while encouraging biking and walking in an obesity-ridden region. The trail has [improved the local economy](#), benefits that can continue despite the pandemic because it's a form of tourism that easily allows social distancing.

Shopping

Like communities of all sizes, small towns are looking at the [physical layouts of their public spaces and businesses](#). Some are too small to accommodate many visitors while still observing social distancing. For instance, one small-town coffee shop in Starkville has opened a walk-up window to serve patrons who can remain outside in a well-spaced line.

Many towns are expanding restaurants' sidewalk seating areas for outdoor dining, even taking over parking spaces on nearby streets or [closing roads entirely](#) – something cities are doing as well. My center is involved in developing one of these new “[streateries](#)” which can not only accommodate social distancing measures but make downtown businesses more visible to community members and passersby. As opposed to urban streateries, our design is specifically geared to small towns with limited budgets and quick assembly using volunteers with minimal expertise.

In these efforts, small towns are continuing to adapt to adversity. To do so, they may take lessons from elsewhere – even large cities, like Singapore's idea to have fun by [creating art as a way to mark proper social distancing](#) in public spaces – while adapting them to local needs. Some of these temporary adjustments to meet short-term problems may even turn into longer-term ways to address the needs of small towns and the people who live in them.

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here: <https://theconversation.com/how-small-towns-are-responding-to-the-global-pandemic-141016>.

–Leah Kemp Mississippi State University  
The Conversation

**USPOULTRY Announces Environmental Award**

## **Competition**

### *Nominations sought for the 2021 Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award*

*PUBLISHED ON June 30, 2020*

*TUCKER, Ga. — U.S. Poultry & Egg Association (USPOULTRY) is now accepting nominations for the 2021 Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award. The award recognizes exemplary environmental stewardship by family farmers engaged in poultry and egg production. Those eligible for the award include any family-owned poultry grower or egg producer supplying product to a USPOULTRY member or an independent producer who is a USPOULTRY member. Nominations are due Oct. 31.*

*In January of this year, the award was presented to six outstanding family farmers in various regions of the country: Central, South Central, North, Northeast, Southeast and Southwest. In addition, a new State Poultry Association nomination was presented. The winners were Marvin and Colleen “Coke” Anderson, M&C Anderson Pullets, Sioux Rapids, Iowa, nominated by the Iowa Poultry Association; Michael and Heather Lewis, Michael and Heather Lewis Farm, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania, nominated by Tyson Foods; Wayne, Jason and Logan Lambertson, Lambertson Family Farms, Pocomoke, Maryland, nominated by Tyson Foods; John and Carla Mishler, Mishler Turkey Farm, Seymour, Missouri, nominated by Cargill; Chad Blake, Blake Farms of North Carolina, LLC, North Wilkesboro, N.C., nominated by Tyson Foods; and Jamie and Sherri Chmelar; Boelden and Leann Chmelar, and Natalie Chmelar Zgaba, C3 Farms & Poultry, LLC, Caldwell, Texas, nominated by Sanderson Farms.*

*Six finalists were also recognized in 2020. They were Matthew and Colby Gray, Gray Poultry Company, Union City, Tennessee, nominated by the Tennessee Poultry Association; Stephen Purlee, Stephen Purlee Farm, Salem, Indiana, nominated by Tyson Foods; David and Spring Tribbett, Twin Maples Farm, LLC, Ridgely, Maryland, nominated by Amick Farms; Dalen Bell, Dalen Bell Farm, Tuscumbia, Missouri, nominated by Cargill; Mike and Karen Hill, Hillcrest Farm, Hanceville, Alabama, nominated by Tyson Foods; and Terry and Robin Fisher, R&T Farm, Mulberry, Arkansas, nominated by Cargill.*

*Nominations for the 2021 competition may be made by a USPOULTRY member, an affiliated state poultry association or by a poultry or egg producer that grows poultry or produces eggs for a USPOULTRY member.*

*Each integrator or egg processor may nominate two growers or producers for each processing facility in each state that they operate.*

*“Best management practices are consistently utilized by poultry growers to enhance environmental stewardship on their farms. The commitment and resourcefulness that our award winners and finalists exhibit each year through their environmental management practices is admirable,” said Greg Hinton, vice president of sales, Rose Acre Farms, and USPOULTRY chairman.*

*Winners of next year’s awards will receive a trip that covers travel expenses and hotel accommodations for two nights to attend the 2021 International Poultry Expo, part of the International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE), in Atlanta, Georgia. Each will also receive a Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award sign to display near the entrance of their farm.*

*The winner for each region will be named at a special award ceremony that will take place at the end of the Animal Agriculture Sustainability Summit, held in conjunction with IPPE, on Jan. 26, 2021. Each regional winner will also receive a \$1,000 cash award. In addition, the farm for each regional winner will be spotlighted on USPOULTRY’s website, and the Association will assist in publicizing the farm’s award in local, regional and national media.*

*The application and competition details are available on the USPOULTRY website at [www.uspoultry.org/environment](http://www.uspoultry.org/environment).*

*For more information on the 2021 Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award competition, contact: Lisette Reyes, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, 1530 Cooledge Road, Tucker, GA, 30084-7303; phone: (678) 635-9053; fax: (770) 493-9257; e-mail: [lreyes@uspoultry.org](mailto:lreyes@uspoultry.org).*

*—U.S. Poultry & Egg Association*

## ***Outdoor Workers Advised to Minimize Heat-Related Illnesses***

*Workers are encouraged to take precautions against heat-related illnesses*

*PUBLISHED ON July 9, 2020*

*BEDFORD, Va. — Often exposed to Virginia’s sweltering summers, farmers and other outdoor workers are encouraged to take precautions against heat-related illnesses.*

*“Farmers are frequently working in the hottest times of the day, and the immediate concerns are heatstroke, heat exhaustion and dehydration,” said Dr. Amy Johnson, a nurse practitioner with Centra Medical Group, farmer and Bedford County Farm Bureau president. “In the long term, we worry about sunburns and sun exposure leading to the risk of skin cancer.”*

*To protect skin from harmful rays that increase the risk of developing skin cancer, it’s recommended that outdoor workers wear long-sleeved clothing with built-in ultraviolet protection.*

*Workers also should wear wide-brimmed hats to protect against skin cancer on their ears, noses and necks, and sunglasses to protect against eye cancer. Any exposed skin should be covered with sweat- and water-resistant sunscreen rated SPF 15 or higher. Sunscreen should be applied 30 minutes before going outside and every 2 hours thereafter.*

*As well as providing UV protection, clothing and hats create a cooler environment for the body. In times of excess humidity, Johnson said it’s harder for the body to cool down, leading to increased risk for heat exhaustion and heatstroke.*

*Symptoms of heat-related illnesses may include dizziness, nausea, headache, altered mental status, cool or cold skin and a lack of perspiration.*

*To prevent symptoms, workers should take regular breaks between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to cool down and rehydrate. In addition to drinking plenty of water, sports drinks can help replenish potassium and sodium lost through perspiration.*

*Most importantly, Johnson said, farmers and outdoor workers should have someone available to help in case of an emergency.*

*“It’s important to be cognizant of how others are acting and making sure everyone’s not dizzy or stumbling around,” Johnson said. “If you’re concerned somebody is having a heatstroke, the most important thing to do is to remove them from the heat, and get them into a cooler area.*

*“If you have the ability, cool them down with cool rags or ice packs. Place them in the groin, armpits and around the neck to cool them down quickly. Or, if they’re not responding well, call 911 to assist you and get them the help they need.”*

*—Virginia Farm Bureau*

## ***Education for Farm Women***

**WOODLAWN, Ill. ([AgPR](#))** — The most recent Ag Census showed a 27% increase in the number of women managing or operating farms and

ranches. Coupled with this, more women than ever are involved in other agricultural careers or studying agriculture in post-secondary institutions. As the number of women involved in agriculture increases Annie's Project is taking a closer look at agricultural women's involvement with its new survey, the Agriculture Women's Community & Leadership Survey. The survey is sponsored by Annie's Project and Farm Credit and the results will be used to help design educational programs to expand women's involvement in their communities and agricultural organizations.

Annie's Project empowers farm and ranch women and growers to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information. Farm Credit is a nationwide network of 72 customer-owned financial institutions.

"Our interest is to strengthen rural and agricultural communities by tapping into the talents of the women living and working there", says Doris Mold, Annie's Project Co-CEO. Dr. Karisha Devlin, Annie's Project Co-CEO adds, "It is critical for us to also develop an understanding of the tools that they need to become more effective leaders in their communities."

Anyone with an interest in women's agricultural leadership is encouraged to take the survey. The survey is open through August 20 and may be found using the following link:

[https://umn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bpVDmVIC9jGz4mp](https://umn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bpVDmVIC9jGz4mp)

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes and all responses are anonymous.

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**About Annie's Project – Education for Farm Women (APEFW)**

APEFW is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing educational programs – Annie's Project, Managing for Today and Tomorrow, and inspired by Annie's Project programming designed to strengthen women's roles in modern farm, ranch and growing enterprises. The mission is to empower farm and ranch women and growers to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information. APEFW is governed by a national board of directors and is recognized across the United States as a key organization in enhancing the well being of women in agriculture. Annie's Project features state coordinators and facilitators to carry out of working with women across the

United States. For more information visit [www.anniesproject.org](http://www.anniesproject.org).

### **About Farm Credit**

*Farm Credit is a nationwide network of 72 customer-owned financial institutions. Across all 50 states and Puerto Rico, we provide loans and related financial services to U.S. farmers and ranchers, farmer-owned cooperatives and other agribusinesses, rural homebuyers and rural infrastructure providers. For more information visit [www.FarmCredit.com](http://www.FarmCredit.com).*

— Annie's Project  
via AgPR.com the news release distribution service for agriculture

## **Sales Fell for 76% of Local Farms Due to COVID-19**

*Weekly sales dropped for three-quarters of local farms in the Carolinas*

*PUBLISHED ON July 1, 2020*

*PITTSBORO, N.C. — COVID-19 has caused massive economic disruptions for small and medium-sized farms in the Carolinas.*

*The Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA) surveyed farms in North and South Carolina to quantify those impacts this spring. [Results show](#) that small and mid-scale farms selling in local food markets are suffering greatly.*

***Weekly sales dropped for three-quarters of local farms in the Carolinas as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including one third that lost more than \$1,000 per week.*** *These sales declines are consistent across almost all local food marketing channels, sizes of farms, and types of crops and products. About 48% of the farms that responded have annual revenues between \$25,000 and \$250,000, and another 41% have sales of less than \$25,000 per year, so consistent weekly losses at this scale are devastating to these businesses. Many farmers said they will be out of business if COVID-19's effects last through the summer.*

*Restaurants and agritourism were two of the top five sales channels for local farms, both of which were cut off by social distancing measures: 87% of farms with restaurant customers had declines in restaurant sales, and 79% of farms with agritourism saw that income drop. Farmers markets have been closed, delayed, and otherwise altered to implement social distancing, leading to drops in farmers market sales for 68% of farmers market vendors. "The small farms that are the backbone for local food networks are hurting and need support," says CFSA Executive Director, Roland McReynolds. "Existing federal COVID-19 relief programs have failed to address the*



*unique needs of these local farms.”*

*Relief payments to farmers under the USDA’s Coronavirus Food Assistance Program pay farmers pennies per pound of unsold crops, which doesn’t cover small farms’ costs to produce them.*

*“Large numbers of small and mid-scale local farms will go out of business if any next round of COVID-19 relief for agriculture does not include targeted support for the local food sector,” says McReynolds.*

***About Carolina Farm Stewardship Association*** *The Carolina Farm Stewardship Association is on a mission to bring local, organic food to your table from a farmer who shares your values. After 40 years, we continue to have a vision of a vibrant, sustainable food system that is good for consumers, farmers, and the land.*

*To view the report please [click here!](#)*

*–Ashley See, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association*

## ***Secretary's Corner***

*What can be said? These are trying times we have never experienced in our life times. We can only hope for the development of a safe and effective vaccine. Remember the polio pandemic back in the 1950's? A vaccine came out too early that killed children. Let's hope a safe and effective vaccine for Covid-19 will become available in early 2021 if not sooner. I hope everyone will stay safe and healthy.*

*Happy Hunting,*

*Dr. Gary S. Davis  
Executive Secretary, SEGB&HPA*

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*Southeastern Game Bird Producers  
and Hunting Preserve*

*Association: [www.segamebirds.us](http://www.segamebirds.us)*

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