



\*\* This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/rural-grocery-summit-alabama>

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### **Travel support available for Kansans attending National Rural Grocery Summit**

K-State's Rural Grocery Initiative urging rural store owners to sign up now

*By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service*

MANHATTAN, Kan. – A Kansas State University program that helps to sustain locally owned rural grocery stores has announced that travel support is available to help Kansans attend the [National Rural Grocery Summit](#) this summer.

Erica Blair, a program manager of K-State Research and Extension's [Rural Grocery Initiative](#), said this is the first time that the summit has ever been held outside of Kansas. The Rural Grocery Initiative is co-hosting the event June 24-25 in Montgomery, Alabama with the [Hunger Solutions Institute](#) at Auburn University.

"The summit is a chance for Kansans to learn directly from others across the country who are developing innovative solutions to improve food access and sustain independent grocery stores," Blair said. "Attendees can take these ideas back home and start implementing them in their own local stores and rural communities."

Blair added that the summit is "an opportunity to make lifelong connections with like-minded individuals who care deeply about rural food access."

Topics include best practices for sustaining rural grocery stores; innovative food access solutions; funding opportunities; community engagement; local sourcing; and more.

"Rural Kansas communities face many unique challenges, including food access," said Rial Carver, program leader for the Rural Grocery Initiative. "Locally-owned grocery stores provide critical access to affordable, healthy food options, but they face steep challenges with razor thin profit margins and fierce competition. Unfortunately, like much of the country, we have seen a decline in the number of locally owned grocery stores in Kansas. This makes the summit even more important for grocers to attend."

[Registration for the National Rural Grocery Summit is available online.](#) Early bird registration is due by April 30.

To inquire about travel support or to donate to help others attend this year's National Rural Grocery Summit, interested persons are urged to contact staff of the Rural Grocery Initiative at [rgi@ksu.edu](mailto:rgi@ksu.edu).

More information about K-State Research and Extension's Rural Grocery Initiative is [available online](#).

-30-

**FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS:** Links used in this story  
National Rural Grocery Summit, <https://www.ruralgrocery.org/summit>

Rural Grocery Initiative, <https://www.ruralgrocery.org>

Hunger Solutions Institute, <https://hsi.auburn.edu>

National Rural Grocery Summit registration, <https://www.ruralgrocery.org/summit/registration>

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