

Center for Rural Strategies Summer 2022

The Center for Rural Strategies seeks to improve economic and social conditions for communities in the countryside and around the world through the creative and innovative use of media and communications. We believe that rural America's fate is interrelated to those of metropolitan and urban America. By presenting accurate and compelling portraits of rural lives and cultures, we hope to deepen public debate and create a national environment in which positive change for rural communities can occur.

Rural Strategies helps communities and nonprofit organizations incorporate media and communications into their work in support of strategic goals. We also design and implement information campaigns that educate the public about the problems and opportunities that exist in contemporary rural communities. This includes--but is not limited to--publishing information about rural issues, assisting the local press in the coverage of rural topics, and collaborating with a wide range of partners to build a stronger voice on behalf of rural communities.

Potential tasks for a Robertson intern are numerous, and the Rural Strategies staff is flexible to molding the position in consideration of individual interests.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Specific responsibilities will be determined with the Operations Coordinator before the start of the summer.
- Writing, research, documentary work related to a number of current Center projects
- Development of a specific deliverable to be submitted to the Center at the end of the summer

CURRENT PROJECTS:

Daily Yonder: The Daily Yonder (www.dailyyonder.com) is an online news journal covering rural America. Through original research, reporting, statistical analysis, video, audio, and contributions from rural residents, the Yonder is creating a place where rural Americans can see themselves as part of a single community. Special projects have included analysis of the role of rural voters in the election of President Barack Obama, the disproportionately high death rate of rural American soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq, the increase of rural poverty, and access to broadband. Many Robertson scholars have contributed to this journal.

National Rural Assembly: Rural Strategies is the managing partner and fiscal agent of the National Rural Assembly, a network of 450 organizations in 47 states devoted to building a healthier, more vibrant rural America. The Rural Assembly works across sectors and regions to create a more effective voice for rural communities in national and state policy discussions. The National Rural Assembly has created a consensus agenda in four policy areas (education, healthcare, conservation, and community investment) and is developing similar documents in environmental justice and Native American affairs. The Assembly's goal is to bring its policy

agendas into national discussions working in alliance with other groups and directly with policy makers.

Economic Transition: The central Appalachian region is going through an exacting change. The long-standing coal extraction economy is disappearing. A poor region looks to become poorer. Our work is to use what we do well – communication, coalition building, planning – to improve prospects in the coalfields.

Dividing the work in three baskets:

1. News – We take the lessons from Daily Yonder, our campaigns, and our film work and build out a multi-media platform that gives readers/viewers/practitioners reliable information that fills the information gaps in Appalachia. Solutions, culture, depth.
2. Public Art – We support and produce the kind of creative campaigns that advocate systemic change, new opportunities, and game changing coalitions.
3. Research – We promote and facilitate deep dives into topics that can inform ways to move forward from climate science to addiction studies.

DESIRED ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS:

- *Must have initiative*
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Excellent writing skills
- Attention to detail
- Excellent organizational skills
- Interest in community-building, inter-organizational coalitions, and collaboration
- Must work well independently and as part of a team

NOTE FROM VICKI:

This is one of the original partners for the Robertson Community Summer. You will receive exceptional mentoring and have lots of freedom in choosing the direction of your work.

A car is not needed for this position.