

October 2023 Rural Roundup



From Team New Rural Project <info@newruralproject.org>
To Steve Johnston <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <info@newruralproject.org>
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The New Rural Project's
Rural Roundup
Monthly Newsletter

Dear Steve,

It's election day in North Carolina and across America. We've been deep into canvassing for the last few months, reaching out to Black, Hispanic, Native American, and AAPI residents in our rural communities to make sure they know about the municipal elections being held on November 7, 2023. In many NC cities and towns, early voting ended on November 4, and NRP has been hard at work ensuring folks know where they can vote and that this year, a photo ID will be required to vote. If you don't live in North Carolina, there may be an election in your community, too. **To find out about elections in your area, click [here](#).**

As we look ahead to 2024, our work will be more important than ever since recently redrawn electoral maps may dilute the votes of rural black and brown voters. We had hoped that NC legislators would draw fair maps that reflect the true demographics of North Carolina. Instead, they drew and approved maps that the non-partisan group from Duke University, Quantifying Gerrymandering, says "are significantly less responsive to the changing will of the people as expressed in their votes than the 2022 remedial map they would replace." Despite these unfair maps, New Rural Project will continue to uplift the voices of rural black and brown residents and help them take back their power through civic and electoral engagement.

PLEASE HELP US ON THIS JOURNEY

As always, thank you for your continued support.

With gratitude,

Cynthia Wallace
Executive Director of NRP

LISTENING

Union and Anson Counties

As we've knocked on doors in Union and Anson County, our canvassers have been listening to the folks at the door. People have shared why they plan to vote and what causes them to think their vote doesn't matter. They shared the issues that are important to them like the cost of housing and their challenges making ends meet. We discussed with them how electing a mayor and town/city council members can impact those very issues. We hope we changed a few minds about **their vote being their voice and ultimately their power to solve their issues!**



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

#UniteNC Town Hall: Fairmont

In partnership with the **Araminta Ross Legacy Circle, Seeds of Hope, and Common Cause NC**, we co-hosted another **#UniteNC Town Hall** in Fairmont, Robeson County, on October 5. Program Director Alexa Roberts represented NRP at this well-attended event where many attendees were focused on funding for public education, specifically the historic Leandro court case.

The 30-year-old case highlights inequities in public education across NC counties, particularly rural counties like Robeson. Angus Thompson, one of the original plaintiffs in the Leandro case from Robeson County, commented on the need to hold our state legislature accountable for failing to comply with court-ordered funding for public schools.

The Communities for the Education of Every Child NC, a project of the NC Justice Center, presented a large, symbolic check highlighting the \$86.3 million in Leandro funding that is owed to the children of Robeson County.

Click [here](#) to view the Fairmont Town Hall event.



ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

Deep Canvassing



Rain or shine, each weekend in September and October, our full-time staff members, seasonal canvassers on staff, and amazing volunteers have knocked on over 5,000 doors in Union County (Monroe and Marshville) and Anson County (Wadesboro), encouraging folks to vote in the November 7 municipal election.

Voter Registration Events

On October 4, our regional organizer Nisea Moses helped register voters in collaboration with **InReach NC**. InReach NC, located in Monroe, is a remarkable organization dedicated to providing support and services for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families. Nisea had a chat with the group, telling them how their voices and votes really matter. **This event resulted in two newly registered voters!**



On October 7, our regional organizer Brittany Lowder joined with members of the **Monroe Democracy Center, League of Women Voters of Charlotte/Mecklenburg**, and other community activists in a "**We, the People**" event to register voters in Monroe.

Union County Candidate Forum

Our 2022 polling showed that a critical way for people to feel empowered to vote is to know more about the candidates on their ballot. To reduce this barrier to voting, on October 22, NRP partnered with the **Monroe Democracy Center** and the **Union County NAACP** to host a non-partisan candidate forum. Monroe residents had an opportunity to meet the candidates for Monroe City Council and Mayor.

All 14 candidates on the ballot were invited and nine candidates participated in this event. The attendees posed thoughtful questions to help them make an informed choice when casting their ballots, focusing on issues related to public safety, education, and other community concerns. Click [here](#) to view the Monroe Candidate forum.



OTHER UPDATES

"Paving the Polls" Panel

On October 17, NRP Executive Director, Cynthia Wallace, was part of a panel discussion with friends of NRP Brandon Rivers, Regional Organizing Director of **You Can Vote** and Andrea Miller, Executive Director of **The Center for Common Ground**. This panel was moderated by Rev. Dr. Rodney S. Sadler, Jr. and was co-sponsored by the **Union Presbyterian Seminary's Center for Social Justice & Reconciliation** and **Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership**.

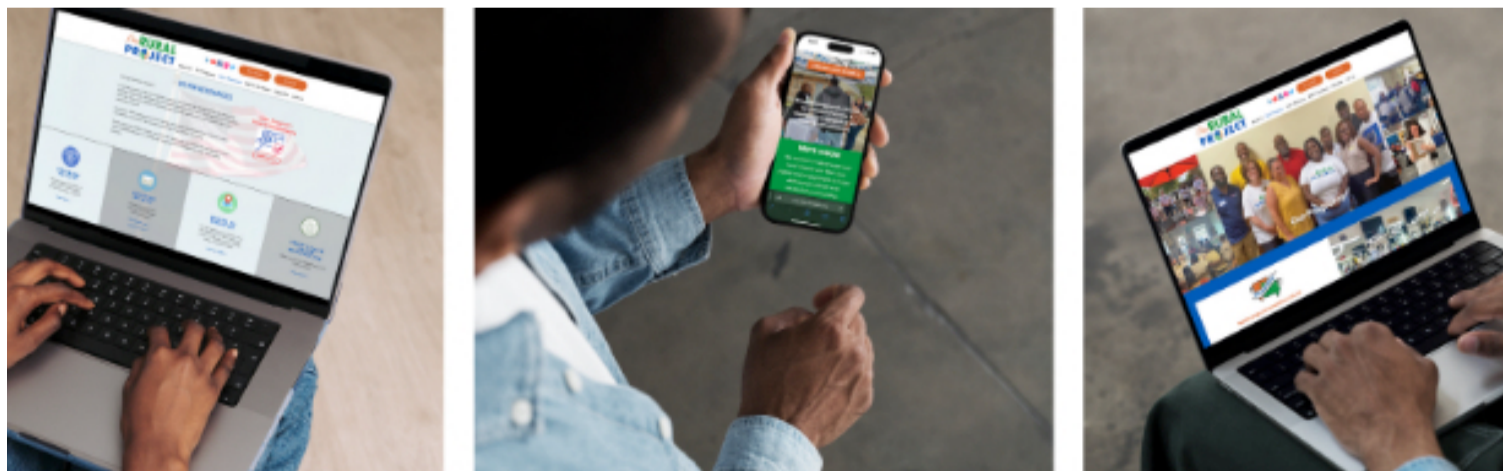


The panel discussed the state of voting rights in the United States, including the impact of the 2013 Shelby v. Holder decision, voter suppression tactics, and the ways to protect the voting rights for all eligible citizens with a focus on the role of race in voter suppression.

Click [here](#) to view the "Paving the Polls Panel."

ICYMI: We Have Refreshed Our Website!

On October 25, we were thrilled to announce that we have refreshed the New Rural Project [website](#), thanks to our amazing team!



Explore our wide range of [programs](#) aimed at enhancing civic and electoral engagement for rural voters at all government levels. Don't miss the chance to meet our dedicated [NRP team](#), the driving force behind these initiatives!

As always, thank you for being on our team.

Team New Rural Project

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