Strengthening Rural Communities

Rural America encompasses 72% of the Nation’s land area and is home to 46 million people.
Strengthening Rural Communities

Rural voters are a minority but have a disproportionate influence in state and local politics.
**U.S. rural and urban employment**

Index (1970=100)

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis. Employment is measured as number of jobs; rural/urban status is based on 2013 metropolitan designations. Gray bars indicate recessions.
15.2% of rural counties (more than 300 counties) are considered ‘persistently poor’ by the U.S. Census.
Strengthening Rural Communities

Rural counties have been hit harder by the opioid crisis and see higher rates of suicide than their urban neighbors.
OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY
CONSUMER SPENDING TOP 10

1. CA
   - $92.0B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 691,000 DIRECT JOBS

2. FL
   - $59.6B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 485,000 DIRECT JOBS

3. TX
   - $52.6B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 411,000 DIRECT JOBS

4. NY
   - $41.8B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 313,000 DIRECT JOBS

5. PA
   - $29.1B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 251,000 DIRECT JOBS

6. CO
   - $28.0B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 229,000 DIRECT JOBS

7. NC
   - $28.0B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 260,000 DIRECT JOBS

8. GA
   - $27.3B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 238,000 DIRECT JOBS

9. MI
   - $26.6B CONSUMER SPENDING
   - 232,000 DIRECT JOBS

10. WA
    - $26.2B CONSUMER SPENDING
    - 201,000 DIRECT JOBS
Strengthening Rural Communities

The number of people living in rural counties has declined 200,000 between 2010 to 2016.
Urban-Rural Population Divide

Only four states have greater rural than urban populations.

Legend:
- Mostly rural
- More urban than rural
- Mostly urban

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015
States with the largest number of rural residents:

Ohio
Pennsylvania
North Carolina
Texas
Rural communities lack access to health care providers, especially behavioral health providers and dentists, and struggle to attract insurers.
30 million Americans live in small towns with populations of fewer than 25,000 residents.
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86 rural hospitals have closed since 2010.
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Rural areas have 37% more residents without broadband access, compared to their urban counterparts.
Urban-Rural Broadband Access Divide
In all states, broadband access is higher in urban areas than rural.

Percent difference between urban and rural broadband access by state
- Slightly higher urban access
- Higher urban access
- Much higher urban access
- No data
- States with broadband access higher than the average state access rate (86%)

Source: Federal Communications Commission, 2016
Home Internet Use by Population Density

Source: National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Digital Nation Data Explorer
Urban-Rural Education Divide
States with less than average educational attainment also have greater urban-rural divides.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015
53% of school districts in the U.S. are rural.
Urban-Rural Prosperity Growth Divide

States with stronger prosperity growth have narrower urban-rural divides.

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Career and technical education (CTE): Rural high school students take more credits of CTE than urban, suburban or town-based students.
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Rural employment has not returned to its pre-recession level.