RURAL ECONOMIES SESSION
NCSL SUMMIT NASHVILLE

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PERCEPTION OF RURAL AMERICA

News Analysis

The Hard Truths of Trying to ‘Save’ the Rural Economy

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Can rural America be saved?

There are 60 million people, almost one in five Americans, living on farms, in hamlets and in small towns across America.
CHANGING THE MINDSET IN STATE GOVERNMENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER
BY THE GOVERNOR

No. 1

AN ORDER REQUIRING A STATEMENT OF RURAL IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BETTER SERVING RURAL TENNESSEANS FROM ALL EXECUTIVE BRANCH DEPARTMENTS

WHEREAS, this Administration recognizes that Tennessee’s economic growth and prosperity has reached historic levels; and

WHEREAS, despite such growth and prosperity, Tennessee’s rural citizens face challenges unique to their geography that often require a unique response, including:

15 of Tennessee’s rural counties qualify as economically distressed, ranking among the nation’s 10% most distressed counties based upon an annual index of unemployment, income, and poverty; and

Health outcomes remain a challenge for rural communities, including shortages in access to primary care; and

Educational attainment and labor force participation are continuing to lag within our rural communities; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Administration to ensure that all Tennesseans are efficiently and effectively served by their government; and

WHEREAS, this Administration recognizes that achieving this policy will require a continued focus on the unique challenges and responses for rural Tennesseans.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Tennessee Constitution and the laws of Tennessee, do hereby declare that it is the unavering policy of the Executive Branch to remain accountable for how its policies impact rural Tennesseans. Accordingly, I hereby direct and order that:
ADDRESSING CAPACITY ISSUES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL
RURAL HOSPITAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM
WORKFORCE & EDUCATION
FREE TUITION TO TECHNICAL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOR ALL TENNESSEANS
GOVERNOR LEE’S
WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

GOVERNOR’S INVESTMENT IN
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (GIVE)

- Focus on work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities
- Funding for four, fully-funded dual enrollment credits in high school

FUTURE WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

- Increase K-12 access to STEM training
- 100 new middle school programs by 2022
- Increase # of qualified teachers
- Increase high school student access to dual credit, AP, and dual-enrollment
CREATING ENERGY AND ECONOMIC DYNAMISM
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & RURAL JOB RECRUITMENT

- Since 2015: 317 New Rural Projects Landed
- 35,000+ New Rural Jobs Announced Since ‘15
- Nearly $8 Billion in Capital Investment into Rural TN Counties
- Targeting High-Quality, Family Wage Jobs
- 2013 = 26 Economically Distressed Counties
  Now = 15 Economically Distressed Counties
ACCESS TO BROADBAND
ACCESS TO CAPITAL
THANK YOU

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