Broadband Needs, Challenges, and Opportunities in Rural America

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Rural and Urban Definitions

- No definition adequately captures rural and urban population dynamics
  - Official Census Bureau definition of urban includes places from 2,500 to several million
  - OMB Core Based Statistical Areas include some very rural counties in metro areas, because of commuting patterns

- Neither categorical definition captures the continuum.
Urban and Rural Areas

• The U.S. Census Bureau defines urban areas:
  – Core blocks and block groups with population density of 1,000 people per square mile.
  – Surrounding blocks with overall density of 500 ppmi²
  – Range in size from 2,500 people to over 18 million people.
  – **Rural** is everything that is not urban.

• Based on the 2010 Decennial Census:
  – 59 million people live in rural areas (19%)
  – 249 million people live in urban areas (81%)
Urban is very diverse, however:

New York-Newark
Population 18 million

Bellevue, IA
Population 2,543
Core Based Statistical Areas

• Defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

• Designed as \textit{functional regions} around urban centers.

• County classification:
  – \textbf{Metropolitan}
  
  – \textbf{Nonmetropolitan} counties are divided into two types:
    • Micropolitan
    • Noncore
Core Based Statistical Areas

Data Sources: Office of Management and Budget. U.S. Census Bureau, February 2013 CPSA Delineations Special Release.

Note: Alaska and Hawaii not shown to scale.

Map created by the Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems, August 2013.
Usually, metropolitan is equated with urban and nonmetropolitan with rural.

But, if metropolitan is urban, then…
This is urban:

Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA Metro Area
Population 12.8 million
And so is this:

Armstrong County, Texas
Population 1,901

Part of the Amarillo Texas Metropolitan Area
And if nonmetropolitan is rural, then...
This is rural:

Loving County, Texas
Population 82
Paducah, Kentucky
Population 48,791
Most Counties are Urban and Rural!

Coconino County, Arizona
Population  134,421
Flagstaff Metro Area
In fact...

Over half of all rural people live in metropolitan counties!
# Population Dynamics, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of U.S. Population by CBSA and Rural/Urban Status, 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urbanized Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micropolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*53.8% of the rural population is in Metropolitan Areas*

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and OMB
## Changes in Population Dynamics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metro Central 2013</th>
<th>Micro Central 2013</th>
<th>Outlying or Noncore 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metro Central 2009</strong></td>
<td>658</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Micro Central 2009</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outlying or Noncore 2009</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1811</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 58 counties became relatively less urban
- 105 counties became relatively more urban
Rural Americans Are Older

- The median age in noncore counties is over 40.

- In noncore counties, 18% of the population is over 65, compared to 13% in metropolitan counties.

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Annual Estimates
Rural Americans Are Less Educated

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Annual Estimates
Therefore, Non-Metropolitan Workers Are Far Less Likely to Work in Technical and Management Occupations

Percent of Employment by Occupation, 2012

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Annual Estimates
So, Rural Americans Earn Less
Farming’s Importance to Rural Employment Is Declining
But the Broader Rural Economy Is Now Very Important to Farm Household Income

Rural Americans Face Challenges in Health Care

- In noncore counties, nearly 18% of the population has a disability, compared to only 11% of the metro population.

- A higher percentage of the noncore population lacks health insurance.

**Percent of People with a Disability**

- Metropolitan
- Micropolitan
- Noncore

**Percent of People without Health Insurance**

- Metropolitan
- Micropolitan
- Noncore

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Annual Estimates
Rural Health Care Challenges

- Rural America contains 20 percent of the population, but only 10 percent of physicians.

- Rural residents have greater transportation difficulties reaching health care providers, often travelling great distances to reach a doctor or hospital.

- Two-thirds of deaths due to vehicular accidents occur in rural areas.

- The suicide rate among rural men is significantly higher than in urban areas.

- Alcohol abuse and smokeless tobacco use is a significant problem among rural youth.

Rural Americans Are Poorer

Poverty Rates Over Time by Current CBSA Category

Sources: ERS, USDA; U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses and ACS

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 Annual Estimates

Poverty Rate

Metro
Micro
Noncore
Rural Children Are Far More Likely to Live In Poverty

Rural child poverty has increased the most since 2008

Note: Rural and urban are defined by metropolitan area definitions.
Deep poverty* for children, 2008-2012

*Deep poverty is defined by income below 50 percent of the Federal poverty level.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-yr estimates, 2008-2012.
Rural Poverty Is Persistent

Number of Measurement Years High Poverty, 1969-2009

Of 347 persistent poverty counties, 299 or 86% are nonmetro.
Poor Rural Americans Face Multiple Challenges

*The Geography of Need*

- An examination of human services needs across the country (8 demographic and 4 economic needs indicators)
- Nearly one-third of noncore counties experience three or more risk factors, compared to only 9% of metro counties
- 10% of noncore counties experience five or more risk factors, compared to only 2 percent of metro counties

**Demographic and Economic Indicators**

- Percent of population age 65 and over
- Percent of population that are racial or ethnic minorities
- Percent of the population living in subfamilies
- Ratio of the working age population to the non working age population
- High fertility areas
- Veterans as a percent of total population
- Areas with low educational attainment
- Percent of population that is foreign born
- Percent of population in poverty
- Percent of households without a vehicle
- Percent of households receiving SNAP benefits
- Percent of county income from transfer payments

Map 3. Combined Risk Factor Index

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2009 Population Estimates, 2005-2009 American Community Survey, and 2009 SAIPE Estimates; Department of Veterans Affairs; Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Economic Information System; Analysis and Mapping by RUPRI; AK and HI are not to scale
Map 4. Counties with Three or More Risk Factors (Combined Index), by CBSA Status

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2009 Population Estimates, 2005-2009 American Community Survey, and 2009 SAIPE Estimates; Department of Veterans Affairs; Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Economic Information System; Analysis and Mapping by RUPRI; AK and HI are not to scale.
Promoting Growth in All Regions
The Framework for Regional Rural Innovation

Critical Internal Considerations

• Wealth Creation and Intergenerational Wealth Retention
• Youth Engagement and Retention
• Social Inclusion and Social Equity