



# Southern Rural Development Center Update 2018

SAAESA meeting  
April 3, 2018  
Tulsa OK

Dr. Steve Turner, SRDC Director





# Overview

- Progress on plan of work
- Rural America Counts
- Task Force on Agricultural and Rural Prosperity





# Plan of Work

## Three Priorities

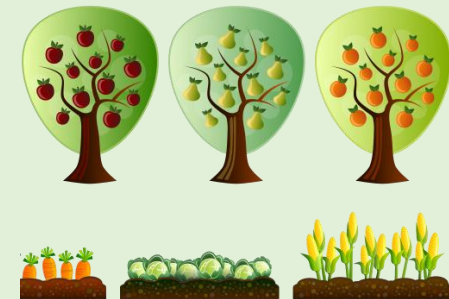


- Developing Pathways to Resilient Communities
- Build Strategic Partnerships
- Mobilize Resources around Emerging Issues and Opportunities



# Developing Pathways to Resilient Communities

- Stronger Economies Together (SET) – Phase VII
- Civil Dialogue
- Broadband Access
- Local Food Systems





## Build Strategic Partnerships

- Walmart Foundation - Retail in Rural America
- Georgetown University - Rural Opportunity Initiative
- Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity



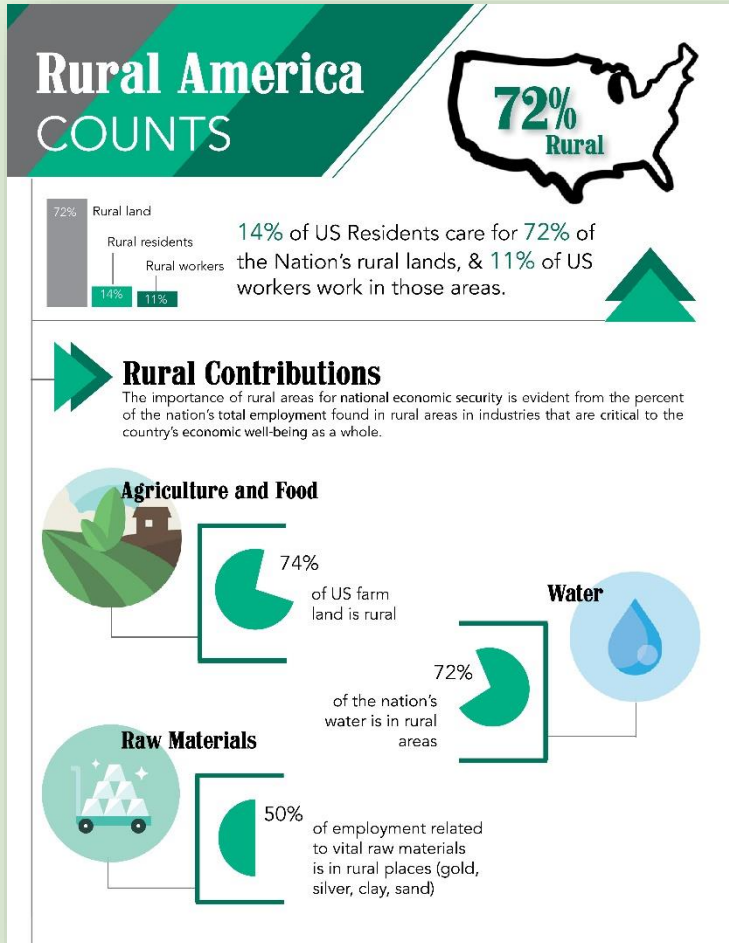


# Mobilize Resources around Emerging Issues and Opportunities

- Community Capacity Building
- Infrastructure – Rural Water & Sewer Emphasis
- Heir Property



# Rural America Counts



- Rural Contributions
- Rural Population Trends
- Rural Challenges
- Future Directions

SRDC Infographic  
[rrdc.info/rural\\_america\\_counts.html](http://rrdc.info/rural_america_counts.html)





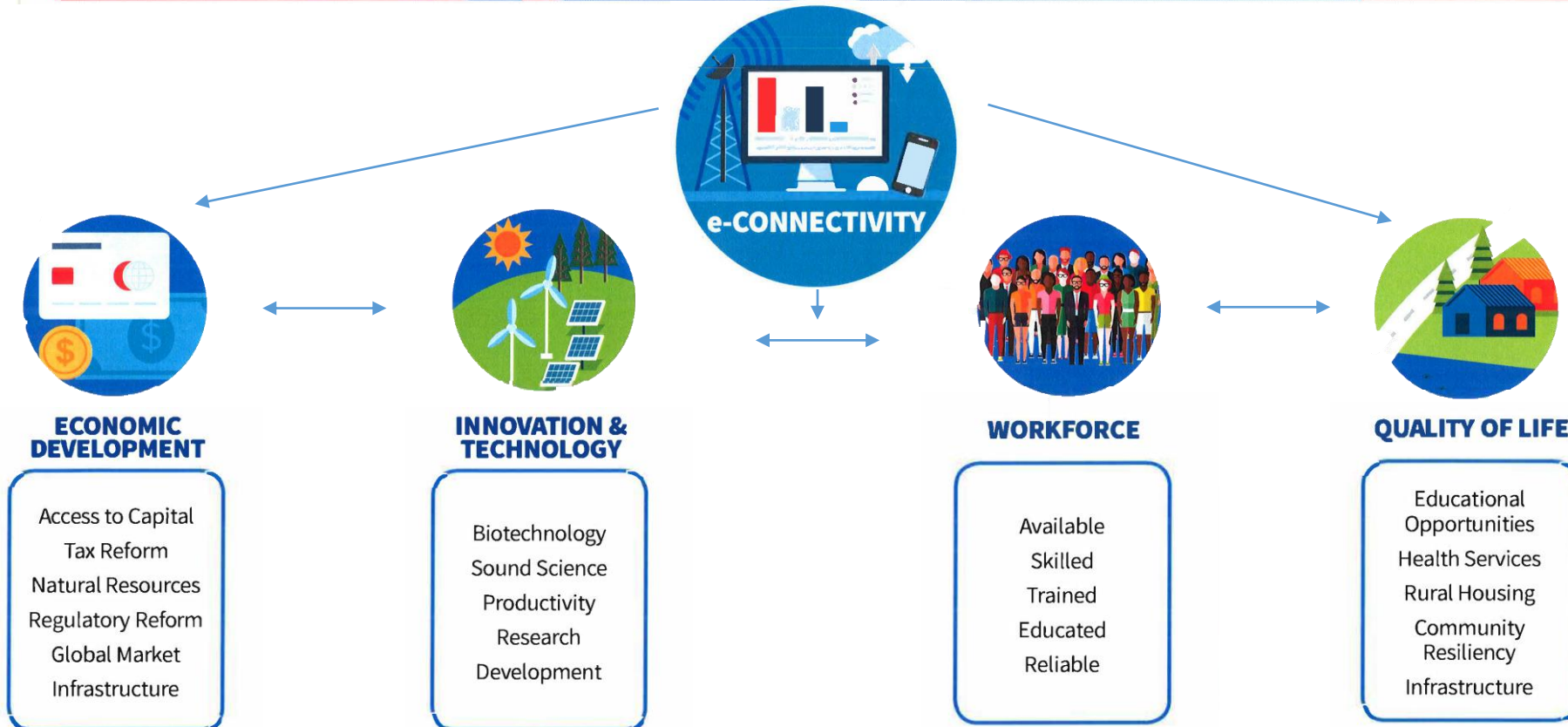
United State Department of Agriculture

Full Report May Be Found at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/rural-prosperity-repot.pdf>



# RURAL PROSPERITY

Rural America can make our country great again.





# RRDC & Land Grant Investments



SRDC's Contributions



# E-Connectivity for Rural America

## High Speed Internet: The Power of Working as a Region

A number of regions engaged in the Stronger Economies Together (SET) initiative identified gaps in broadband access as a significant concern for their regions.

- Kerr Tar Region, North Carolina - working collaboratively to ensure broadband access across the region.
  - Person County - allocated \$4 million to installation of new broadband towers
  - Vance County - surveying for gaps in service.
  - Granville County - established a Digital Infrastructure Committee
- Southwest New Mexico region - received \$150,000 from the New Mexico Broadband Program to help expand broadband access

[srdc.msstate.edu/set/](http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/)





# Improving Quality of Life

## Infrastructure Investments in Rural Regions

SRDC, in strong working partnerships with USDA Rural Development and Cooperative Extension successfully launched the Stronger Economies Together (SET) initiative, with over **100 multi-county regions in more than 30 states.**

To date, regions in the SET process have leveraged the **\$3.9 million USDA investment to over \$754 million**, much of which has gone to support efforts to improve regional infrastructure (including water, energy systems, utilities, and broadband), transportation, and public safety (fire trucks, police cars, and equipment)

[srdc.msstate.edu/set/](http://srdc.msstate.edu/set/)





# Supporting a Rural Workforce

## Workforce Investments with a Regional Lens

Workforce development approaches from 2016 SET regions:

- (1) **Rivers Confluence, Iowa** - completed the Confluence Region Workforce Development Resource Database;
- (2) **Kerr-Tar Region, North Carolina** has incorporated soft skills trainings into all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth workforce programming;
- (3) **Partners for Progress Region, Nebraska** received a USDA Rural Development Rural Business Development Grant to fund a number of projects

## Strengthening Retail in Rural America

SRDC recently secured funding from the **Walmart Foundation** to explore the potential for strengthening rural retail workforce training efforts as a way of strengthening the local economy as a whole. **Cooperative Extension Services** in **Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Kentucky** will participate in this pilot initiative.





# Harnessing Technological Innovation

## Southern Local & Regional Foods Initiative (SERA 47)

SRDC is providing leadership to a team to strengthen support for local and regional food systems efforts. A survey of the regional needs has been completed, and teams are actively developing work teams around the top issues, designing a resource bank, developing common measures and tools, and examining different models for how CES has invested in this work.

## Regional Innovations: Success Stories

- Sandhills region, South-Central North Carolina - through the Green Fields Initiative, established the Sandhills Farm School
- Western Oklahoma I-40 Corridor region - increasing drilling activity and applying improved conservation cropping practices.
- Western Nevada Development District - secured funding to promote energy efficiency and alternate energy production through education and sharing of promising practices





# Economic Development

## Survey on Heir Property Issues in the South

SRDC recently launched a survey of research and Cooperative Extension Service efforts taking place across the region to help families navigate these difficult issues. The survey closed on February 9, 2018 and is currently being analyzed, with plans to convene stakeholders to explore gaps and opportunities for future efforts.



# Research in Rural Community and Economic Development

Big Data

Heir Property

Local Food Systems

Return on Investment

Other

