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Site quality is determined by many factors, and the importance of the various factors will vary from one industry to the next. In this study, an index of site quality was developed, based on land area, sewer and water-line diameter, and presence or absence of rail service at the site. As different industries have different site requirements, various combinations of these characteristics may be equally attractive to a number of industries. Site quality was gauged by comparing each site's characteristics with those of sites on which new plants actually located during the survey period. The general pattern found for sites considered to have at least medium quality was: land area of at least 60 acres, water and sewer trunk lines of 8 inches diameter at boundary of sites, and presence of a rail spur. High quality sites required land areas of nearly 200 acres and water and sewer lines of 12 inches diameter. Such quality measures are useful in estimating costs of developing or improving available sites. ■

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## Interstate Highways: Influencing Rural Jobs?

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Development of the interstate highway system has helped expand employment opportunities in rural America. Much of the initial impact occurred near the new roads but, in the ensuing years, employment growth has extended to outlying areas having easy access to the interstates.

During the peak period of interstate construction (1967 to 1971), employment growth was more prominent in counties interstates crossed. Much of the initial job growth along these highways was due to the growth of businesses

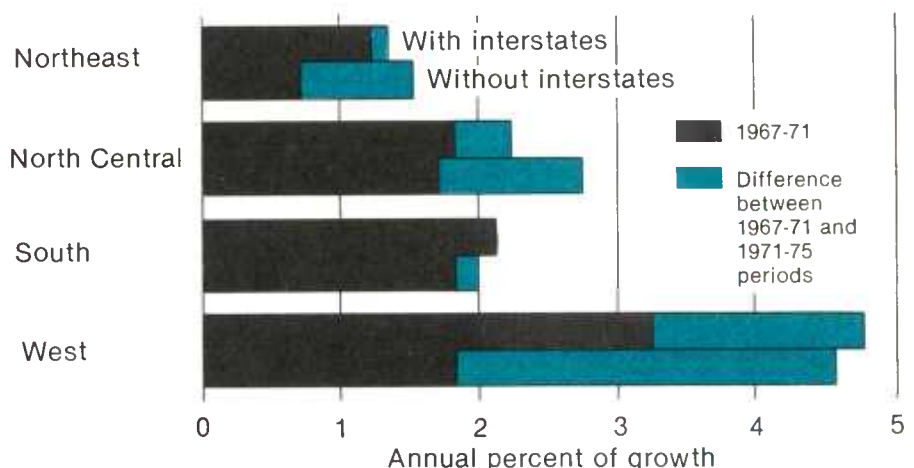
servicing the needs of the users of these highways, such as restaurants, motels, and gasoline stations. In some areas, the growth in service industries along the interstates may have been at the expense of comparable services previously situated along old Federal and State highways. So to some extent there was retarded growth of total job opportunities in such areas.

### Total Employment

Recent research in the Economic Development Division, ESCS, shows that the annual rate of job growth from 1967 to 1971, when the interstate system was nearing completion, was higher in rural counties with interstates than in noninterstate counties (figure 1). This occurred in all regions of the country. After completion of the system, however, a general reversal in the pattern of job growth occurred in favor of counties not directly served by the interstates (table 1). That is, from 1971 to 1975, the rate of job growth in

Figure 1

### Comparison of Rate of Employment Growth in Nonmetro Counties With and Without Interstate Highways, 1967-71 and 1971-75



**Table 1—Average annual change in employment in nonmetropolitan counties with and without interstate highway, U.S. Census Regions, 1967-71, 1971-75**

Item	Northeast		North Central		South		West	
	With highway	Without highway	With highway	Without highway	With highway	Without highway	With highway	Without highway
	<i>Average annual rate</i>							
Total employment								
1967-71 .....	1.2	0.7	1.8	1.7	8.0	6.7	3.2	1.8
1971-75 .....	1.3	1.5	2.2	2.7	9.3	10.4	4.7	4.5
Manufacturing employment								
1967-71 .....	-1.9	-3.1	0.2	0.5	2.2	2.7	2.6	1.4
1971-75 .....	-0.9	0.4	0.2	1.1	0.4	0.6	3.9	1.9
Trade and service employment								
1967-71 .....	3.7	3.3	3.3	2.8	2.5	1.9	3.5	2.8
1971-75 .....	2.9	2.4	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.4	5.1	5.3

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, State and county annual employment series, unpublished, 1967, 1971, 1975.

counties without interstates exceeded that for the interstate counties in all but the Western region. Even in the West, where overall job growth was most rapid, growth during 1971-75 was almost as great in noninterstate counties as in interstate counties.

### Trades and Services

Employment in trades and services expanded more rapidly than in all other industries throughout both time periods. From 1967-71, job growth in trades and services was greater in interstate counties in each of the four regions of the country. This pattern persisted during the 1971-75 period except in the West, where growth in trades and service jobs in noninterstate counties outpaced growth in interstate counties.

### Manufacturing

The interstate highway system helped attract manufacturing to some parts of rural America, particularly in the West. In the South, while the number of manufacturing jobs continued to grow, the rate of growth declined in both interstate and noninterstate counties after completion of the highway system.

In the Northeast region, construction of the interstates contributed to a reversal of the downward trend in manufacturing employment. Nonmetro employment in manufacturing actually declined from 1967 to 1971, most rapidly in noninterstate counties. From 1971 to 1975, however, the rate of decline in interstate counties slowed considerably but a reversal occurred in noninterstate counties as the total number of manufacturing jobs began to increase.

### Effects of Urbanization

The general trend in nonmetro employment was toward more rapid job growth in noninterstate counties, regardless of the size of the urban population or their proximity to metropolitan centers. Only in isolated instances is there any evidence that size of urban population or location near large urban centers influenced the pattern of total job growth either within or outside the counties having interstate highways. An exception to this general pattern occurred in manufacturing, trades, and services. Generally, in these industries, job growth was more rapid in interstate counties located adjacent to Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

## Stimulus of Growth in Outlying Areas

What accounts for the more rapid growth in noninterstate counties in recent years?

First, as construction of the interstate system neared completion in the late 1960's, more State funds were freed for the improvement and expansion of secondary roads. Development of these feeder roads made the interstate system more accessible to areas located outside the interstate corridor, encouraging more rapid growth in commercial and industrial activity.

Second, much of the interstate system was planned along a corridor of nonmetro counties linking major urban centers. Many of these counties had experienced substantial growth prior to construction of the interstate highways. While the new interstate roads initially expanded job opportunities in close proximity to the highways, they later contributed to the growth of jobs outside the immediate areas of the interstates. Improved highway transportation encouraged the growth of industry in outlying rural areas where lower-wage labor was available, where new markets were developing due to population growth and where recreational and mining activities were being developed. ■

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## New Chances To Expand Rural Health Care

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Numerous analysts have called attention to inequities that remain in the geographic distribution of medical care resources. Medical care resources are scarce in rural areas and access is difficult. At least four factors make this situation noteworthy:

- Medical needs are greater in rural areas, partly due to a higher proportion of elderly people—extensive users of medical care.

- The national program of increasing the supply of doctors has met with too little success in rural areas.

- National cost containment guidelines, such as those calling for hospital occupancy levels of 80 percent or higher to receive public support and for no more than four hospital beds per 1,000 population, are difficult to satisfy in rural areas. Rural medical care resources are not a major reason for the national rise in costs; their unit prices are already lower.

Also, reimbursement rates under Medicare and Medicaid are lower in rural areas.

- People in rural communities, long accustomed to economic lags and medical care inequities, need threshold levels of medical

care resources if they are to attract and support industries with associated jobs, and to then move toward their full social and economic potentials.

## New Approaches To Rural Health

New approaches continue to be tried to increase both the supply of and access to primary medical care resources in rural areas. In two notable instances, adjustments involve emphases, not so much on more tangible resources, but on changes in program administration in attempts to get more services from a given number of dollars.

*The Rural Health Initiative—*The first is the Rural Health Initiative (RHI) begun in 1975 by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). The intent of RHI is to assist rural communities in combining existing elements of rural health care into integrated units, demonstrating how comprehensive rural health care systems can be formed. Technical and financial assistance is involved. Emphasis is placed on developing cooperation among existing elements so they may function as a system rather than as fragmented, isolated parts. The RHI is being implemented in areas that are characterized by low population density; high proportions of elderly, poor, or uneducated citizens; poor transportation; and low physician-to-patient ratios.