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Agricultural Outlook Forum
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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MAKING RURAL TOWNS MORE VIABLE: A LOOK AT BROADBAND,
HEALTHCARE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Thomas Dorr
Under Secretary for Rural Development, USDA



Committed to the future of rural communities.

- *Improving the quality of life of all rural Americans*
- *Increasing economic opportunity in rural America*

Bush Administration Investments

Invested over \$76 Billion in six years – Creating or Saving over 1.5 million jobs

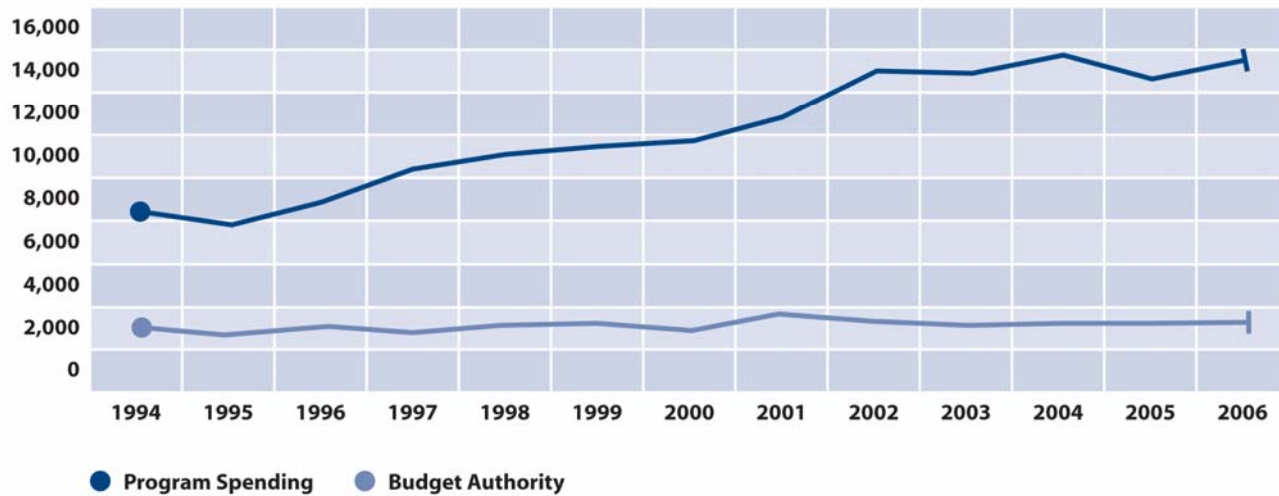
Through the delivery of over 40 Rural Development Programs:

- Housing
- Utilities
- Business



Investments Trends

ACTUAL PROGRAM SPENDING AND BUDGET AUTHORITY



Rural Housing Programs

\$24.7 Billion – 353,000 single-family homes

\$1.7 Billion - 3,537 fire, rescue, and public safety vehicles, buildings, equipment

\$1.28 Billion – Healthcare facilities Serving 8.2 million rural residents and providing telemedicine capabilities to 2,226 rural health institutions.



Rural Utilities Programs

\$22 Billion - Electric

- Over 1 million new customers receiving electric service

\$9.1 Billion - Community Infrastructure

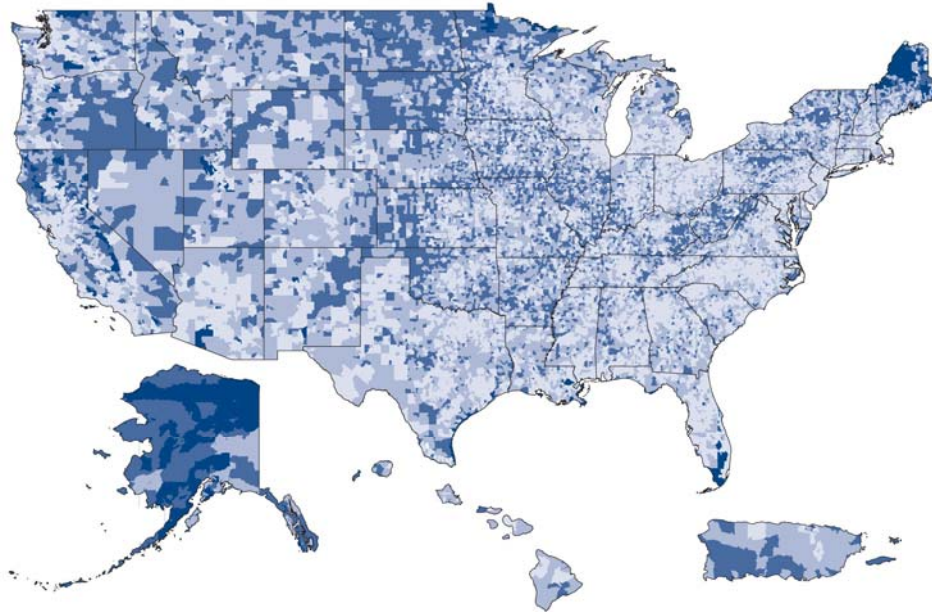
- Over 7,403 water/wastewater projects

\$5.7 Billion - Telecommunications

- Over 1.9 million new broadband capable subscribers



Broadband in Rural America



EXISTING BROADBAND
ACCESS COVERAGE IN
THE UNITED STATES



Access to over 40 Percent of rural America

Rural Business and Cooperative Programs

\$5.9 Billion -- Business Loans

\$482.1 Million – renewable energy/energy efficiencies – over 1,000 projects. Leveraged \$1.5 billion in private investments.



2007 Farm Bill

Rural Development

- Consolidate Rural Development programs to increase flexibility and efficiency
- Provide \$1.6 billion in loans to complete the rehabilitation of all 1,283 certified rural Critical Access Hospitals



2007 Farm Bill

Rural Development

- Provide an additional \$500 million to reduce the backlog of rural infrastructure projects.
 - Water/wastewater loans and grants
 - Emergency water assistance grants
 - Community Facilities loans and grants – first responders
 - Distance learning and telemedicine grants



2007 Farm Bill

Energy

- Provide \$500 million for rural alternative energy and energy efficiency grants
- Provide \$2.1 billion in loan guarantees to support cellulosic ethanol projects in rural areas
- Provide \$150 million for biomass research competitive grants, focusing on cellulosic ethanol
- Provide \$500 million to create a Bioenergy and Bioproducts Research program



Summary

- USDA Rural Development is the leading Advocate for rural America
- USDA Rural Development has an unmatched program distribution system

