

Summary of Priorities:

e-Connectivity for Rural America: In today’s information-driven global economy, e-connectivity is not simply an amenity - it has become essential. **E-connectivity**, or electronic connectivity, is more than just connecting households, schools, and healthcare centers to each other as well as the rest of the world through high-speed internet. It is also **a tool that enables increased productivity for farms, factories, forests, mining, and small businesses**. E-connectivity is fundamental for economic development, innovation, advancements in technology, workforce readiness, and an improved quality of life. **Reliable** and **affordable** high-speed internet connectivity will transform rural America as a key catalyst for prosperity.

Improving Quality of Life: Ensuring rural Americans can achieve a high quality of life is the foundation of prosperity. Quality of life is a measure of human well-being that can be identified through economic and social indicators. Modern **utilities**, affordable **housing**, efficient **transportation** and reliable **employment** are economic indicators that must be integrated with social indicators like access to **medical services, public safety, education** and **community resilience** to empower rural communities to thrive. Focusing and delivering key federal reforms will enable rural Americans to flourish and prosper in 21st Century communities.

Supporting a Rural Workforce: To grow and prosper, every rural community needs job opportunities for its residents, and employers need qualified individuals to fill those needs. This requires **identifying employment needs, attracting available workers** from urban and rural centers alike, and providing the **workforce** with **training** and **education** to best fill the available needs. There are many opportunities to partner with local businesses and organizations to identify gaps, to work with all levels of educational institutions to provide career training and development, to fine-tune existing training programs, and to grow **apprenticeship** opportunities to develop the required workforce. Providing rural communities, organizations, and businesses a skilled workforce with an environment where people can thrive will grow prosperous communities.

Harnessing Technological Innovation: By 2050, the U.S. population is projected to increase to almost 400 million people, and rising incomes worldwide will translate into a historic global growth in food demand. To feed a hungry world, we will need to harness innovation to increase output across American farmlands. In addition to increased crop yields, **technological innovation** can improve **crop quality, nutritional value, and food safety**. Innovations in **manufacturing, mining, and other non-agricultural** industries can enhance **worker efficiency and safety**. At the core of these developments that will further grow the rural economy is the expansion of **STEM education, research, regulatory modernization, and infrastructure**. Leveraging these innovations in an increasingly data driven economy will also require further development of **rural data management** capabilities.

Economic Development: Infusing rural areas with stronger businesses and agricultural economies empowers America. **Expanding funding options** to increase the **productivity of farmers and ranchers** will lead to the enhanced viability and competitiveness of rural America. By promoting **innovative farm technologies, energy security, recreation, agritourism** and **sustainable forest management**, communities will be empowered to leverage the bounties of rural America. Investing in rural **transportation** infrastructure is needed for carrying more “Made in America” products to markets at home and abroad, and boosting our country’s global competitiveness. **Reducing regulatory burdens** and **attracting private capital** will support our ultimate mission of empowering Rural America to feed the world.