

Rural County
Representatives
of California

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RCRC staff work with the network of economic development professionals representing our member counties, to support or catalyze programs and projects that result in job creation and investment opportunities. RCRC's Economic Development agenda focuses on three economic development foundational areas of impact and three industry-specific areas of impact.



Economic Development Foundation

Resource Development

Identify or create resources that promote and benefit RCRC member counties, including, but not limited to, identifying public programs that provide financial and/or technical assistance, resource development such as county economic and demographic profiles to support local economic development efforts, and identifying and pursuing funding and private investment opportunities of local or regional infrastructure projects.

Workforce Development

Bring together workforce development partners at the federal, state and local levels, industry partners, and philanthropic organizations to identify and resolve workforce issues and challenges such as training, recruitment, curriculum development, and others that impede opportunities for gainful employment. Partners include all workforce development and training entities, as well as educational representatives from K-12 to higher education.

Business Development

Participate in organizations and attend targeted industry conferences to promote rural California, resulting in both domestic and foreign business retention, expansion and/or location opportunities for RCRC member counties. Participation in these events and programs will be leveraged with RCRC economic development partners to expand presence and network reach.

Industry-Specific Economic Development

RCRC identified three specific areas of focus predicated on the immediate need and greatest benefit to residents, businesses and the economies of member counties.

Forest Resiliency

Prolonged forest mismanagement (primarily on federal lands) and unprecedented levels of tree mortality, in combination with years of drought, has resulted in crises within our forests and watersheds. Catastrophic fires continue to devastate communities, harm the environment and destroy critical wildlife habitat. RCRC is aggressively pursuing opportunities to create funding mechanisms and programs to begin the process of removing excess fuel loads by creating economically viable market opportunities for the utilization of low to no-value biomass. The purpose of these programs is to protect communities and the environment, while revitalizing rural economies through private investment opportunities and job creation. Together with key partners, RCRC convened policymakers, subject-matter experts, and critical organizations to begin solving this crisis.

High Speed Broadband

Broadband deployment in rural California is one of the most critical missing infrastructure components. Its absence precludes unserved and underserved communities from participating in the 21st Century Economy. This absence also puts life and safety at risk, places students behind their urban and suburban peers and adds significant costs to healthcare and other public services. RCRC is pursuing critical partnerships to develop financing opportunities that bring robust, ubiquitous service that provides adequate capacity for residents, industry, educational partners and healthcare providers. In order for rural California to effectively compete, it is imperative that broadband operate at the “speed of commerce” in today’s world.

Infrastructure

Many rural communities are in desperate need of infrastructure rehabilitation, upgrades or new construction to better serve their residents and businesses. However, due to remote locations and limited-user revenues, many of these projects are not economically feasible on an individual basis. RCRC is exploring innovative funding programs and options to accommodate project financing along with the establishment of funding pools to finance initial permitting and feasibility studies. RCRC anticipates these efforts will help reduce barriers and support communities in creating opportunities to finance critical infrastructure needs.