

## **RURAL BROADBAND FACTS**

### **Rural Broadband: No One Does it Better Because No One is More Committed**

Every day NTCA members work hard to deliver for the country's rural communities. Their steadfast and longstanding commitment to serving the communities they call home makes them rural America's trusted communications solution providers.

- NTCA advocates on behalf of nearly 850 independent, community-based telecommunications companies that are leading innovation in rural and small-town America.
- Small rural telcos serve rural customers in 47 states, covering 37% of the nation's landmass.
- Population density in most member service areas is generally in the 1-5 customers per square mile range.

### **Rural Broadband: Moving America Forward**

NTCA members have worked for decades to invest in our nation's future by deploying state-of-the-art, advanced communications infrastructure in the most rural, hard-to-reach areas of the country. These dedicated telecom providers ensure rural Americans have access to affordable, reliable and robust broadband services to connect their homes, businesses and communities to the rest of America and the world.

- One hundred percent of respondents to a 2016 survey of NTCA members offer broadband to their customer bases, compared with 58% of respondents in 2000.\*
- More than three-quarters (87%) of respondents' customers have access to broadband service at speeds in excess of 10 Mbps.\*
- Approximately 70% of NTCA members offer video services to their customers, with another 4% committed to doing so by the end of 2019.\*
- NTCA recognizes 126 rural, community-based telecommunications companies as Certified Gig-Capable Providers in more than 600 communities across 31 states.
- Since 2013, 43 rural broadband providers have been recognized as Smart Rural Communities for their collaboration with local leaders on broadband-enabled solutions.

### **Rural Broadband: Benefiting Rural and Urban America**

Small, community-based rural telecom companies believe that universal access to affordable, reliable and robust broadband services is critical to sustaining and enhancing American leadership in innovation, technology and economic development. Investments in rural broadband benefit all consumers, including those living and working in urban America.

- Rural broadband companies contributed \$24.1 billion to the U.S. economy in 2015 through investments and operations, with 66% of that economic activity benefitting urban rather than rural communities. \*\*
- The rural broadband industry supported nearly 70,000 jobs in 2015.\*\*
- Over \$100 billion in e-commerce was supported by rural broadband, with the largest share drawn from the manufacturing sector.\*\*

## **Rural Broadband: Overcoming Challenges to Connect Rural America**

While advancements have been made in technology and innovation, many challenges still exist for the small, community-based rural telecom providers. NTCA members are finding solutions to build upon what has worked to date, while incorporating innovative ways to overcome the continuous challenges of operating in rural areas.

- The cost to deploy fiber networks was cited by 89% of survey respondents as the No. 1 barrier to its widespread availability.\*
- Nearly all survey respondents (98%) cited access to reasonably priced programming as the biggest challenge to providing video service.\*

*\* Based on results from the “NTCA 2016 Broadband/Internet Availability Survey Report”*

*\*\* Based on the report, “The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband,” released by the Hudson Institute and commissioned by the Foundation for Rural Service*