Demographic realities affecting rural housing

• Slower population growth, switching to overall population decline since 2010

• Older population age structure, caused by two very different demographic trends.

• Higher poverty rates, especially for children

• Lower percentage of minority populations, but extensive regions of entrenched poverty with distinct racial-ethnic contexts
Nonmetropolitan and metropolitan counties, 2013

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
What happened to long-term drivers of rural population growth, and will they return?

1. *Suburbanization*—nonmetropolitan counties adjacent to metro areas stopped growing, 2010-15

2. *Amenity migration*—consistently high population growth in retirement destinations and recreation counties diminished substantially

3. *Manufacturing*—new patterns of population loss in rural parts of the eastern U.S. correspond in large part with loss of manufacturing jobs
Percent of population 65 years old or older, 2014

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
Percent of population 65 years old or older, 2014

Population 65 or older
- 20 percent or higher, retirement destinations
- Other 20 percent or higher
- Less than 20 percent
- Urbanized areas

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
Percent of population 65 years old or older, 2014

Population 65 or older
- Green: 20 percent or higher, retirement destinations
- Blue: 20 percent or higher, persistent population loss
- Orange: Other 20 percent or higher
- Light tan: Less than 20 percent
- Gray: Urbanized areas

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
High poverty counties, 5-year average, 2010-14

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
Total population change, 2010-14

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
Total population change and Hispanic contribution, 2010-14

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.
Summary

• First-ever period of nonmetro population loss shows signs of ending, but similar periods are likely in the future due to lower levels of natural change.

• Housing needs in counties with older populations differ depending on underlying demographic processes.

• The increase in rural child poverty is a priority issue with clear ties to housing issues.

• Hispanic growth and changing household composition continue to reshape hundreds of rural communities across the country.
Thank you!

John Cromartie

jbc@ers.usda.gov

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