

rural life in Oklahoma and Arkansas

Economics of Rural Life

Employment

“A lot of families do struggle with money. Some just have to do without.” Most worry about how the poverty affects their children. *“That’s what’s hard—telling your child ‘no’ when you know they desire that. That’s like really hard.”* Rural Oklahomans and Arkansans want better for their children and families. *“My dad passed away when I was six, so whenever I would ask for something [my mother] would say, ‘Your turn is next week’. And I don’t want my children to have to go through that.”* *“I want [my family] to live without depending on anyone for money.”*

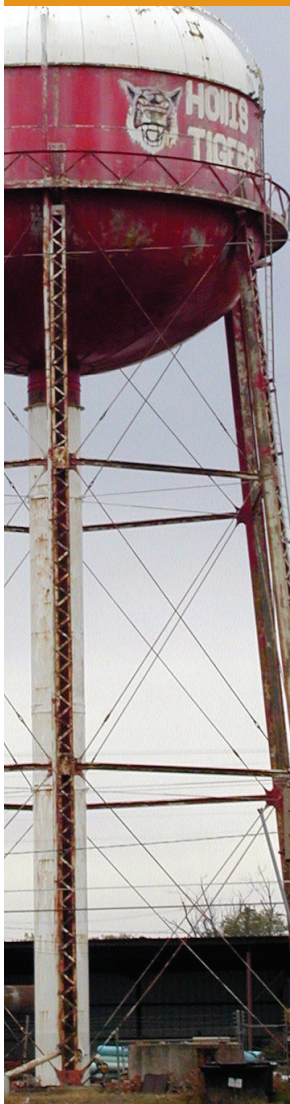
Focus group participants in both Oklahoma and Arkansas lamented about employment in rural areas. A lack of jobs, low wages and no training headed the long list of concerns that many felt prevented them from earning their way out of poverty. Rural residents found it difficult to locate any work. *“There are no*

jobs—have to go out of town to work—only farming if there was a job opening.” Work was frequently far away, adding an additional obstacle to those without transportation and an additional cost for those with transportation. *“I am looking for a job, and I would be glad to walk to work.”*

Fortunately, the cost of living, as measured by the amount of income it takes for a family to be self-sufficient, is lower in the rural counties of Oklahoma and Arkansas. Unfortunately, the cost of living is not low enough to make up for insufficient wages, which average under \$400 a week for workers in rural Oklahoma and Arkansas. *“... farm laborers are paid less than minimum wage.”* *“There [are] a few places you can go to get more than the minimum wage, but not really—the nursing home is about the only place.”* Many rural residents see the real problem

“You can't be self-sufficient in a job. I'll go apply for a job, put six dollars as a minimum amount of wanting money, and they will say five twenty-five. You can't raise your family on that. If you worked 40 hours a week, you can't raise your family on that.”





as a lack of good paying jobs.

“No, to be honest with you, it's not a problem of not having jobs. It's a problem with having a job that's going to pay you enough to pay your bills.” Parents remained focused on their children even when discussing their own wages. *“If we had better paying jobs, that would give a little bit of extra where we don't have to turn around and tell our children, ‘No, I don't have the money this week.’”* *“As far as groceries goes, my kids are going to eat. I'm going to provide for them regardless. Anything else, I'm going to do without. I'm not going out and ask for money.”* Key informants also understood that low wages impacted the children. *“[In] most families both husband and wife work because of [the] low pay scale [and their] children don't have benefit of parents being in the home.”*

“There is not enough training available.” Rural job seekers find themselves needing to improve their skills in order to compete for better paying jobs. Some have taken all *“the courses offered, but it was not enough.”* People seeking work in rural Oklahoma and Arkansas *“need workshops to teach computer skills, how to answer the phone, welding, mechanics for men....”* *They can't get a job because they don't know how to speak or write good or comprehend what to do, what they need to do.”*

Wages are low in Oklahoma and Arkansas. The average income per person is lowest in each state's rural counties. Median incomes for families with children fall about \$10,000 a year below such incomes for the United States, placing both states near the bottom in national income rankings. For families with children living in rural counties it is worse yet, with earnings falling more than \$6,000 per year under incomes earned by families in other parts of Oklahoma and Arkansas.

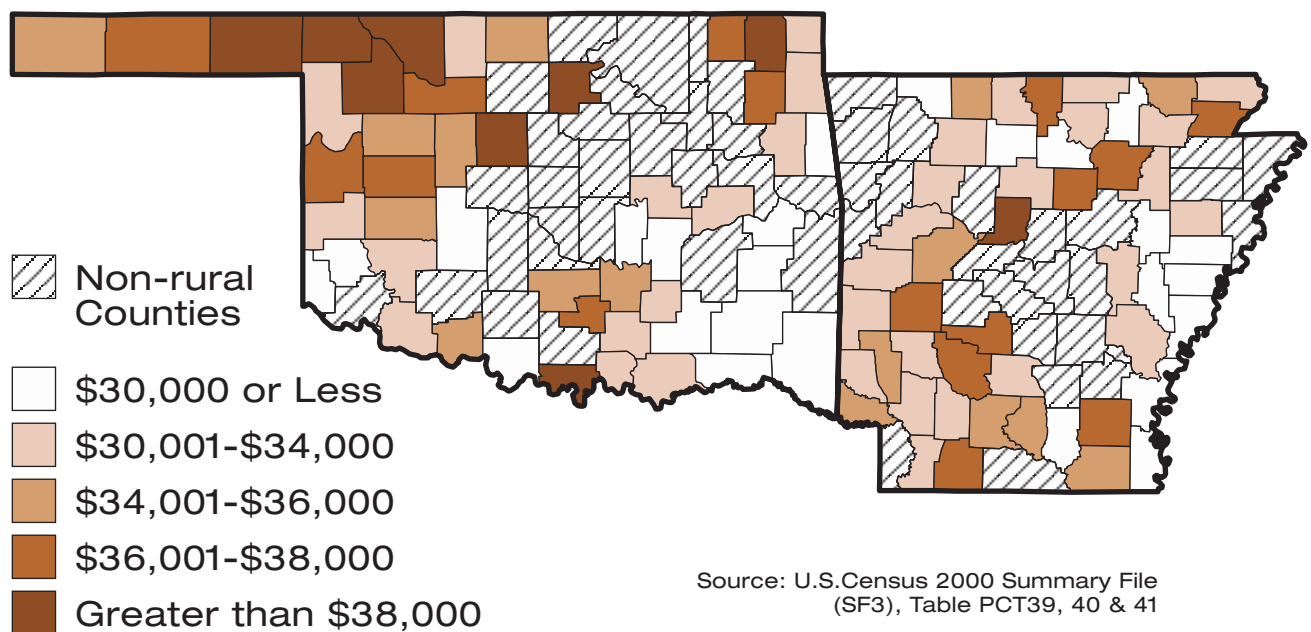
A high proportion of men in the rural areas of Oklahoma and Arkansas are not in the labor force at all. For men and women seeking work, unemployment is high and increasing. In Oklahoma, unemployment is about the same in rural and non-rural areas alike. Unemployment in rural Arkansas is substantially higher than it is in the rest of that state.

Almost everyone in the rural areas in both states blamed unemployment on a lack of jobs. *“There are hardly any jobs here.”* A few key informants, however, expressed concern about the work ethic of people in their communities. Some focused on welfare recipients. *“We have a high percentage of people who receive financial assistance, but who don't really want to work. If they do work, it*

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Everyone agreed that the rural areas of Oklahoma and Arkansas needed more jobs. Attracting jobs that paid enough to become self-sufficient dominated the concerns expressed by adults. Adults were concerned about the lack of employment opportunities for their youth and for people of color. *"There are no jobs for kids."* *"Jobs are limited, so it is difficult for minorities and young people to get jobs."* Youth focused on the amount and type of employment brought in, hoping that the benefits of rural life were not abandoned to the effort of attracting jobs. *"Try to bring new industry and stuff like that, but don't bring so much industry that we still lose the effect of a small town."* Youth appreciated the difficulties associated with attracting industry with small numbers of workers in the community. *"I think we need to bring in a lot more industry, but before they bring in more industry, we need to up the population so they'd have a reason to bring in more industry. It's kind of a mutual thing—it needs to coincide and all happen at once."* Key informants in both states prioritized employment as essential to

the future of their small communities. *"... before this area can change, have to have some jobs."* *"Economic Development [provides] opportunities for kids to come back."* *"... if we don't [create jobs] we are going to die."* They understood the obstacles to attracting industry to rural areas. *"Barriers to [business] coming in here: railroads - none; buildings - no buildings available; rental property - some, but not inhabitable. Family of new business could not find an adequate home."* *"It is hard to find an industry that wants to come to the middle of nowhere."* Some key informants expressed doubts about how to proceed, *"[We need] some way [to] create JOBS in rural America — don't know exactly how [we] can do that."* Some wanted outside help. *"Maybe the government can come up with a plan that would help rural communities."* *"Legislators have to figure out how to generate revenue back into the small rural community."* Others listed ideas: *"offer incentives through tax breaks," "create an environment where small business people want to come to rural America," "have a community development plan," "[attract] small [manufacturing] jobs ... something that draws the people in ... 15-20 jobs would begin the process of expansion," "... diversify their economy — different kinds of jobs available."*

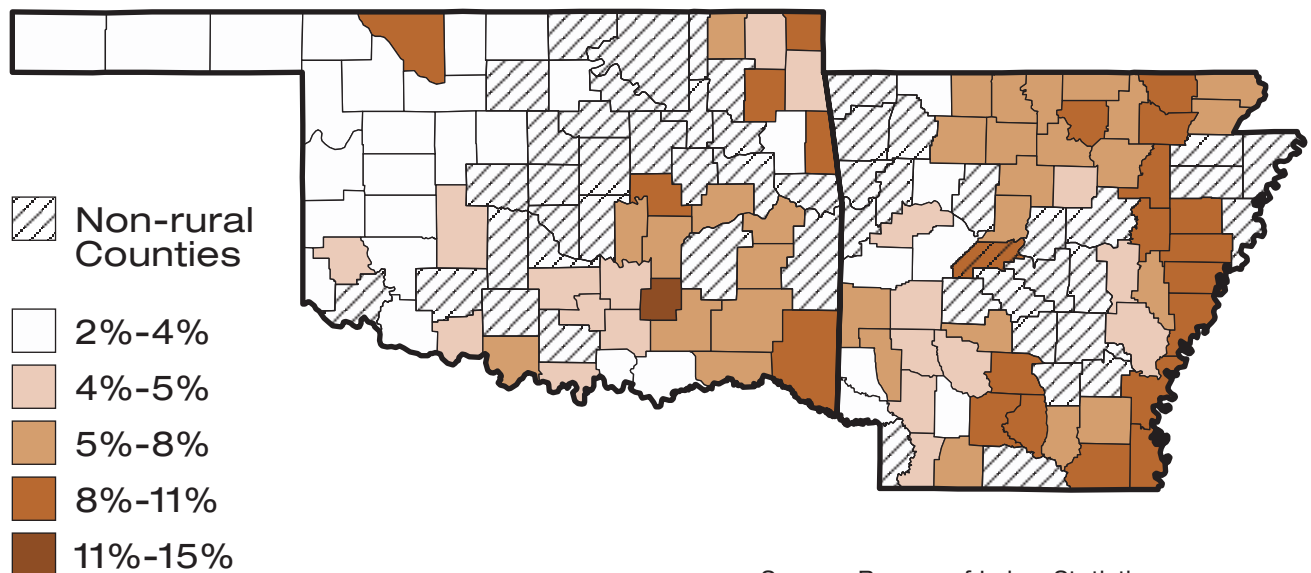
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Agricultural and forestry employment in rural Oklahoma and Arkansas is rapidly changing for the worse. At an age when most people are thinking about retirement, people working the land and forests are laboring harder than ever. Farmers are getting older and fewer family members are available to take over the work load. Reflecting the national trend, the average age of an Oklahoma farmer is 53. Agriculture now fails to economically support farm families as it once did. Fewer young people turn to farming as a voca-

tion. *“Agriculture is down. Farmers are not making a lot of money. There are not the opportunities that might have been there 40 or 50 years ago. At that time, the people who owned their farms made a pretty good living and could help support a family — not that ability now. It is getting worse.”* Key informants placed much responsibility on federal farm policies, explaining that it was *“hard to keep farmers making money when you lose it to Brazil, China and other agricultural producers. [Farmers] become the servant down the road.”* There is no dispute that

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Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

farmers feed the people in the cities. Key informants tried to help explain why people in the cities needed to be concerned about the declining farm economy in their rural communities. *“When corporate farms overtake the small farmer he ends up in the big city and unemployed.”*

Corporate agricultural ventures were perceived as employment for workers from outside the community. *“Hog farms are not considered acceptable – outsiders are employed there and it does not support the community.”* “[Hispanics] are doing the

menial jobs on the poultry farms, the hog farms and the timber industry.” Such ventures were described as creating additional burdens on the local health system.

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Retail Services

“All of the conveniences are elsewhere.” There is not much in rural Oklahoma and Arkansas in the way of commerce. *“There are no businesses—can’t hardly get one to come in.”* Stores have left Oklahoma and Arkansas rural areas. Many storefronts are boarded up, buildings are abandoned, sidewalks are empty. *“We used to have grocery stores. They closed down ...”*

Prices in rural communities are higher than other places. *“Only one [grocery store] is left, and it is too high. Only one*

little store that people don’t go to any more.”

“Gas is higher, groceries higher, utilities just as high, cable high — just houses the only thing cheaper.” Rural residents have to go to another town to buy anything. *“If kids need materials for school (home-economics), parents have to drive out of town to get that kind of stuff.”* *“You have to drive an hour or so for a clothing store or to buy shoes for your children. Basically, anything you need you have to drive off to get it. You can’t get it around here ...”*

“Have to go 30 miles to buy groceries.”



“There is no place to shop. There is no business to go to. We [don’t have] a Wal-Mart. We [don’t have] a mall.”

The long drives required to get to any shopping or retail business bothered the youth focus group members more than it did the adults. “[For] medical, dental, getting services, shopping, [people] have to go to another town, also for any kind of entertainment.” Even after driving long distances or when shopping is available locally the “choices may be limited.” Key informants understood that “kids ... see this as more of a problem,” resulting in a dissatisfaction which fueled a reluctance among youth to remain in rural communities when they become adults themselves.

Transportation

Rural people with a job and a car travel a long way to get to work. Almost fifty thousand people in rural Oklahoma and Arkansas have a commute to work lasting at least one hour, with another hour or more to return home. A greater proportion of rural workers have longer drives to their jobs than do workers residing in non-rural Oklahoma and Arkansas counties. Others are not so lucky. A disproportionate rate of rural households don’t even have a vehicle.

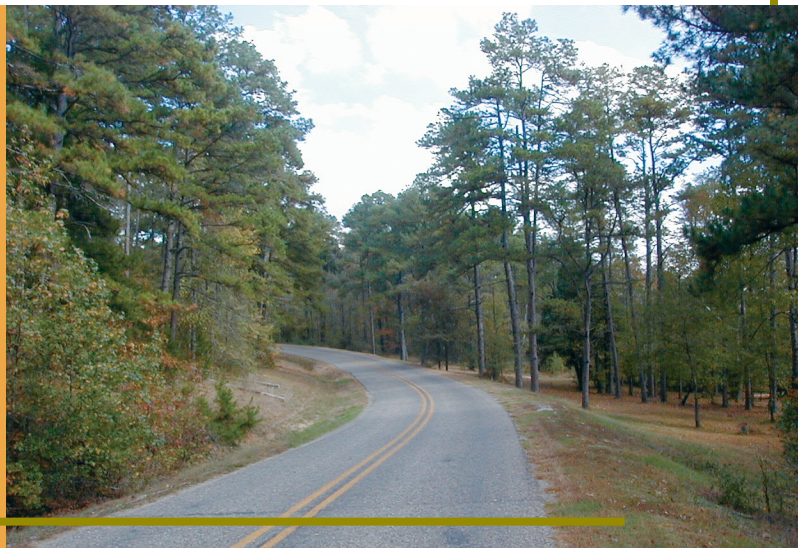
Key informants also understood the connection between the lack of retail establishments and the ability to attract desperately needed professionals to their small community. “[We] have trouble bringing in new doctors because [their] wives don't like to drive 45 miles to ... a Wal-Mart.”



Families need ... “*Transportation!*” Lack of transportation creates an additional obstacle interfering with everything adults, youth or children in rural areas need to do outside of their homes — access health care, get to work, attend school, participate in recreation, shop, vote, volunteer, attend community meetings or find services.

The cost of gasoline, currently averaging around \$1.90 a gallon, is burdening

“... it’s hard driving thirty to thirty-four miles twice a day. That’s having to take my children with me. That’s taking part of their playtime.”





	Commute to Work		Occupied housing units without a vehicle available
	30 minutes or more	One hour or more	
Oklahoma	381,629 25.6%	74,870 5.0%	94,293 7.0%
Rural counties	85,568 28.2%	23,674 7.8%	21,223 7.1%
Non-rural counties	296,061 24.9%	51,196 4.3%	73,070 7.0%

Arkansas	300,683 26.6%	59,477 5.3%	84,225 8.1%
Rural counties	100,984 27.6%	25,151 6.9%	33,828 9.1%
Non-rural counties	199,699 26.1%	34,326 4.5%	50,397 7.5%

everyone who drives a vehicle. Jobs are far from the homes of rural workers, who are pouring much of their take-home pay into their gas tank. Continuously high and increasing gas prices function like a repetitive pay-cut. Trying to pay all of the costs associated with driving — gasoline, vehicle payments, insurance premiums, repairs — creates a crisis in the cost of transportation for vehicle-owning rural residents who must drive far for everything.

Mass transit in rural communities is discarded as a solution because of inadequate population density and a lack of centralized destinations for work, shopping or medical care. *“I ... wish there was a taxi. There are no buses. [I] have to go [approximately 30 miles] to catch a bus.”* Key informants suggested public transportation would benefit young people with *“exposure to*

other influences — positive — and cultural experiences.” They lamented that *“some don't get out of the county [because of] no transportation.”*

Those without a vehicle *“have to arrange transportation.”* Getting anywhere requires extraordinary, and often costly, effort. *“I have to pay \$20 to get someone to take me to [a town 35 miles away] and bring me back.”* Getting anywhere requires imposing on friends and family.

Long commutes in rural areas steal valuable time from parents and their children. One young person explained, *“my mom is an RN and she works in [a city] which is two hours away, because [that's] the nearest thing that's going to pay her enough money”* to support her family.

Housing

Rent is considered affordable when the fair market value of a two-bedroom house or apartment is equal to or less than forty percent of a county's median family income. Oklahoma and Arkansas rural counties are less likely to have affordable rental properties than are non-rural counties. Relatively fewer rental properties are available. About one in four residential units in a rural community is for rent, a smaller proportion than is found in non-rural communities.

Many rural residents in Oklahoma and Arkansas reside in mobile homes. More than twice the proportion of Oklahoma residents live in mobile homes in rural areas than do in other parts of the state. Trailer homes provide some of the only affordable housing in rural communities. Focus group participants expressed concern about the related cost of insuring mobile homes and their increased potential for loss due to fire or tornados.

"There is no low rent housing available." Most adults agreed that the cost of purchasing a home is more reasonable in

rural communities, but rental units were scarce. *"You can't get into a house now—my dad is blind, but he can't get in."* Key informants agreed that it was *"hard to find anything to rent."* When a rental property was located, it was rarely affordable. *"I was calling to try to find somewhere for me and my children to stay, you know...and when I called they said they were low-income, but you still have to pay your water, gas and lights and I couldn't afford all of that right now."*

To stretch available housing and funds, adult children with children of their own often shared residences with their parents. If a rental property was affordable, it was rarely in good condition. Renters with landlords willing to make repairs consider themselves fortunate. *"I am lucky to find this. The landlord is good to make repairs."* Most renters wanted more help and understanding from their wealthy landlords. *"The rich people need to give us a break. I'm not saying that they are mean or anything, but it is the people who have money who own the houses that we rent."*

"Usually, if you get a house that's cheap that means you've got about a hundred cockroaches to live with."



Much rural housing was abandoned and dilapidated. Young people felt that the poor condition of abandoned housing in their communities reflected poorly on their town. *“Change—the houses. I’m talking about empty houses with broken out windows that nobody uses. Like, when*

you drive in ... and the first thing you see is an old house run down. It’s just sitting there. I feel like that really says something about our town. Our town is like old houses that are run down and nobody uses them.”

	Rental Property		Population living in mobile homes
	Counties without affordable rent	Occupied housing that is rental property	
Oklahoma	79.0%	31.6%	10.3%
Rural counties	80.0%	26.3%	17.0%
Non-rural counties	77.8%	33.1%	8.4%
Arkansas	73.3%	30.6%	15.0%
Rural counties	76.5%	26.6%	18.8%
Non-rural counties	66.7%	32.9%	12.9%

Rural Society

Quality of Life

People simply like living in the country.

“Urban areas get a lot of attention, but people who do not live in a rural area do not know how grand it is and how good a life people can have in a small community.” “Well, it’s small and it’s quiet.” “It’s a good place to live, good place to raise a family.” Rural residents like the natural environment. They like the friendliness. They feel safer. *“...you can leave the keys in your car all night and not worry.”*

“Kids feel like they’re safer here.” “[There is] a feeling of security [here].” Rural parents believe their children are safer. *“... I don’t usually have to worry too much when [my children] go outside and play.” “[You] pretty much know what kids you want your children to run around with...” “... here it’s a community with a family type atmosphere — less chance kids can slip through the cracks.”* They feel rural areas are a good place to raise children. *“Children can confide in adults in the community.” “... your next door neighbor knows your child and you don’t feel like you’re raising*



your kids alone.” “Much prefer raising children here than in a large city.” “Rural America can provide an experience in raising a child that is second to none because of the family sense you get here.” This attitude makes staying in rural communities attractive to some youth. One stated, “I’d like to stay here. I wouldn’t want to live in a big city because if I had a kid, I’d want it to be raised in a small town.” Family is close by. Rural residents like their quality of life.

What might be perceived as being noseyp in other areas is viewed as support in rural communities. *“Everyone looks out for everyone else. A lot of people from cities [think] that is noseyp, but I think that is a safety net.”* Rural people know each other. *“I live in a community where everybody knows me and I know everybody.”* They trust their neighbors. *“In a larger area, I know that you’ve got your certain circle of community that you trust, but I think it’s probably a little larger in the rural community because over a period of time, if my parents knew somebody, they knew their parents and their children...”* They expect help when something goes wrong in their lives. *“If I was stranded on the side of the road and had no jumper cables, somebody*

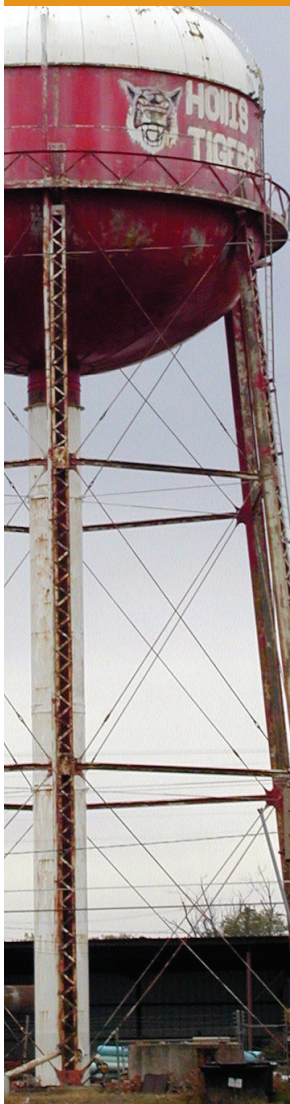
would see me who would know me and stop and help me and I wouldn’t have to be afraid of who was driving by because I know who’s driving by.” One rural resident explained that her husband *“was in a car accident and he is in a wheelchair now and this community has been really a blessing to all of us, so I love the people here very much.”*

Rural people consider their neighbors to be extended family. *“I know that if something were to happen to me and my husband that this community would take care of my child. I’ve got so many friends that my child would be taken care of.”* *“...everybody may be ‘shirttail,’ but it is like a large, extended family.”* They feel comfortable being involved with their neighbors. *“I know most of the kids around here. I know their parents. And if I see them doing something, you know, that they really think is a little questionable, I don’t mind going over and saying something to them, or saying something to their parent.”*

Many are attracted to small town values where people are *“taught about hard work from an early age — taught honesty and integrity.”*

“It’s not like you are raising your kids. It’s more like the whole community. Pretty well, everybody knows everybody. I like that.”





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“No, to be honest with you, it's not a problem of not having jobs. It's a problem with having a job that's going to pay you enough to pay your bills.” Parents remained focused on their children even when discussing their own wages. *“If we had better paying jobs, that would give a little bit of extra where we don't have to turn around and tell our children, ‘No, I don't have the money this week.’”* *“As far as groceries goes, my kids are going to eat. I'm going to provide for them regardless. Anything else, I'm going to do without. I'm not going out and ask for money.”* Key informants also understood that low wages impacted the children. *“[In] most families both husband and wife work because of [the] low pay scale [and their] children don't have benefit of parents being in the home.”*

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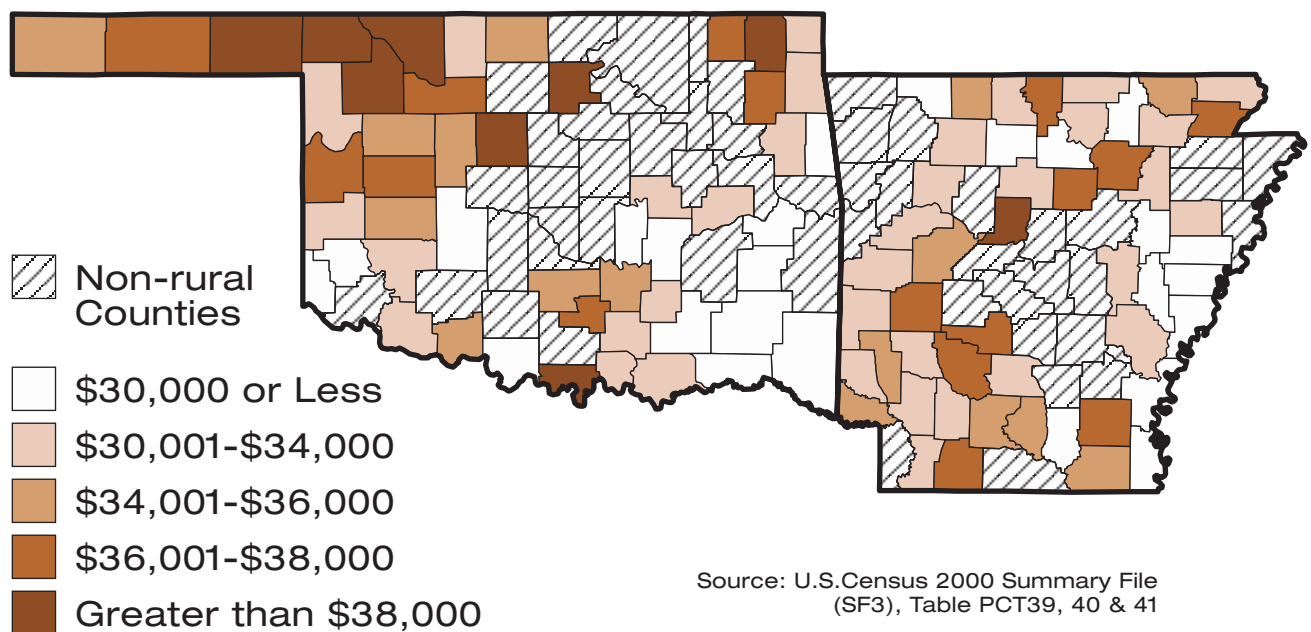
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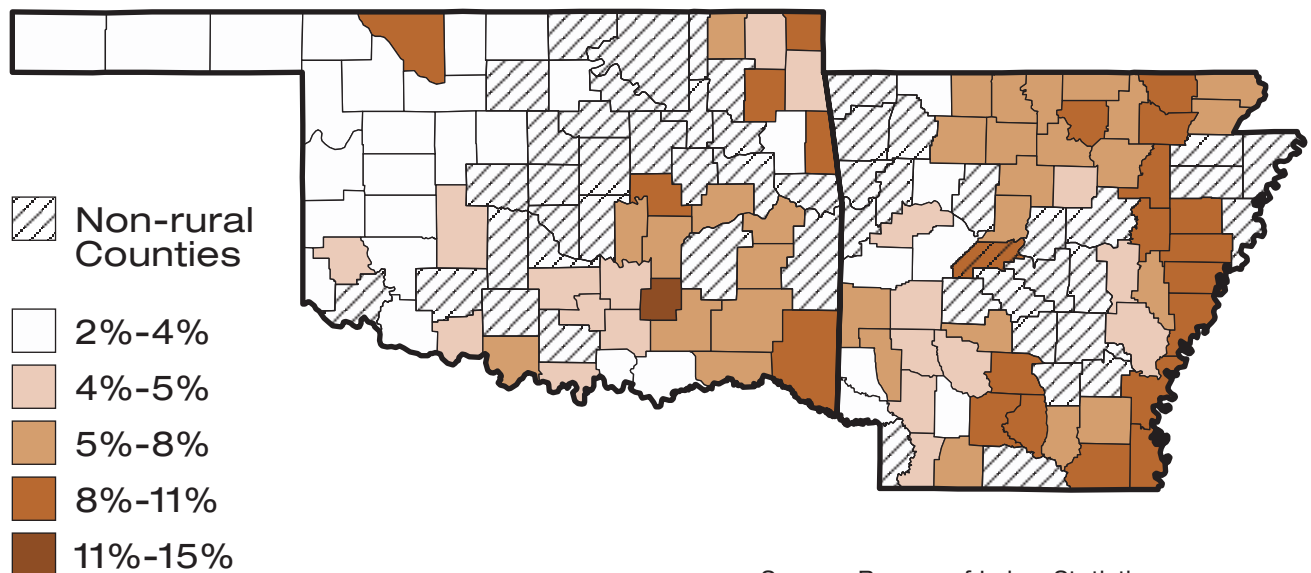
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“Have to go 30 miles to buy groceries.”



“There is no place to shop. There is no business to go to. We [don’t have] a Wal-Mart. We [don’t have] a mall.”

The long drives required to get to any shopping or retail business bothered the youth focus group members more than it did the adults. “[For] medical, dental, getting services, shopping, [people] have to go to another town, also for any kind of entertainment.” Even after driving long distances or when shopping is available locally the “choices may be limited.” Key informants understood that “kids ... see this as more of a problem,” resulting in a dissatisfaction which fueled a reluctance among youth to remain in rural communities when they become adults themselves.

Transportation

Rural people with a job and a car travel a long way to get to work. Almost fifty thousand people in rural Oklahoma and Arkansas have a commute to work lasting at least one hour, with another hour or more to return home. A greater proportion of rural workers have longer drives to their jobs than do workers residing in non-rural Oklahoma and Arkansas counties. Others are not so lucky. A disproportionate rate of rural households don’t even have a vehicle.

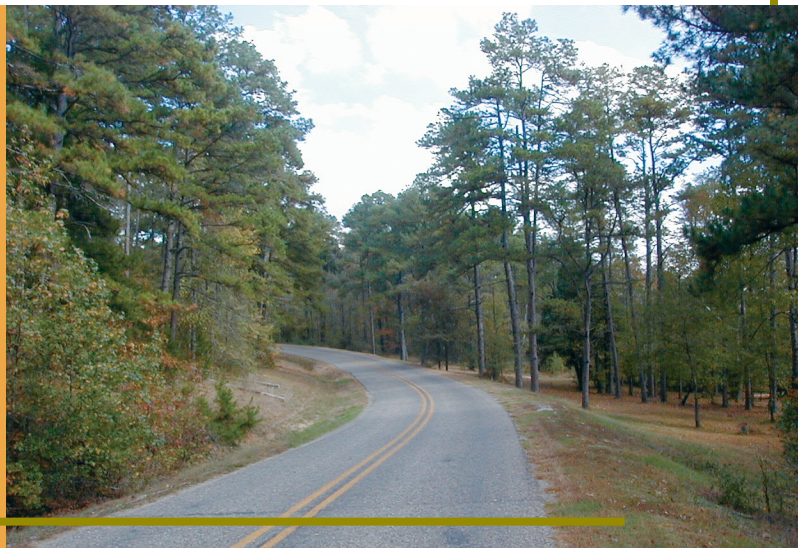
Key informants also understood the connection between the lack of retail establishments and the ability to attract desperately needed professionals to their small community. “[We] have trouble bringing in new doctors because [their] wives don't like to drive 45 miles to ... a Wal-Mart.”



Families need ... “*Transportation!*” Lack of transportation creates an additional obstacle interfering with everything adults, youth or children in rural areas need to do outside of their homes — access health care, get to work, attend school, participate in recreation, shop, vote, volunteer, attend community meetings or find services.

The cost of gasoline, currently averaging around \$1.90 a gallon, is burdening

“... it’s hard driving thirty to thirty-four miles twice a day. That’s having to take my children with me. That’s taking part of their playtime.”





	Commute to Work		Occupied housing units without a vehicle available
	30 minutes or more	One hour or more	
Oklahoma	381,629 25.6%	74,870 5.0%	94,293 7.0%
Rural counties	85,568 28.2%	23,674 7.8%	21,223 7.1%
Non-rural counties	296,061 24.9%	51,196 4.3%	73,070 7.0%

Arkansas	300,683 26.6%	59,477 5.3%	84,225 8.1%
Rural counties	100,984 27.6%	25,151 6.9%	33,828 9.1%
Non-rural counties	199,699 26.1%	34,326 4.5%	50,397 7.5%

everyone who drives a vehicle. Jobs are far from the homes of rural workers, who are pouring much of their take-home pay into their gas tank. Continuously high and increasing gas prices function like a repetitive pay-cut. Trying to pay all of the costs associated with driving — gasoline, vehicle payments, insurance premiums, repairs — creates a crisis in the cost of transportation for vehicle-owning rural residents who must drive far for everything.

Mass transit in rural communities is discarded as a solution because of inadequate population density and a lack of centralized destinations for work, shopping or medical care. “I ... wish there was a taxi. There are no buses. [I] have to go [approximately 30 miles] to catch a bus.” Key informants suggested public transportation would benefit young people with “exposure to

other influences — positive — and cultural experiences.” They lamented that “some don’t get out of the county [because of] no transportation.”

Those without a vehicle “have to arrange transportation.” Getting anywhere requires extraordinary, and often costly, effort. “I have to pay \$20 to get someone to take me to [a town 35 miles away] and bring me back.” Getting anywhere requires imposing on friends and family.

Long commutes in rural areas steal valuable time from parents and their children. One young person explained, “my mom is an RN and she works in [a city] which is two hours away, because [that’s] the nearest thing that’s going to pay her enough money” to support her family.

Housing

Rent is considered affordable when the fair market value of a two-bedroom house or apartment is equal to or less than forty percent of a county's median family income. Oklahoma and Arkansas rural counties are less likely to have affordable rental properties than are non-rural counties. Relatively fewer rental properties are available. About one in four residential units in a rural community is for rent, a smaller proportion than is found in non-rural communities.

Many rural residents in Oklahoma and Arkansas reside in mobile homes. More than twice the proportion of Oklahoma residents live in mobile homes in rural areas than do in other parts of the state. Trailer homes provide some of the only affordable housing in rural communities. Focus group participants expressed concern about the related cost of insuring mobile homes and their increased potential for loss due to fire or tornados.

"There is no low rent housing available." Most adults agreed that the cost of purchasing a home is more reasonable in

rural communities, but rental units were scarce. *"You can't get into a house now—my dad is blind, but he can't get in."* Key informants agreed that it was *"hard to find anything to rent."* When a rental property was located, it was rarely affordable. *"I was calling to try to find somewhere for me and my children to stay, you know...and when I called they said they were low-income, but you still have to pay your water, gas and lights and I couldn't afford all of that right now."*

To stretch available housing and funds, adult children with children of their own often shared residences with their parents. If a rental property was affordable, it was rarely in good condition. Renters with landlords willing to make repairs consider themselves fortunate. *"I am lucky to find this. The landlord is good to make repairs."* Most renters wanted more help and understanding from their wealthy landlords. *"The rich people need to give us a break. I'm not saying that they are mean or anything, but it is the people who have money who own the houses that we rent."*

"Usually, if you get a house that's cheap that means you've got about a hundred cockroaches to live with."



Much rural housing was abandoned and dilapidated. Young people felt that the poor condition of abandoned housing in their communities reflected poorly on their town. *“Change—the houses. I’m talking about empty houses with broken out windows that nobody uses. Like, when*

you drive in ... and the first thing you see is an old house run down. It’s just sitting there. I feel like that really says something about our town. Our town is like old houses that are run down and nobody uses them.”

	Rental Property		Population living in mobile homes
	Counties without affordable rent	Occupied housing that is rental property	
Oklahoma	79.0%	31.6%	10.3%
Rural counties	80.0%	26.3%	17.0%
Non-rural counties	77.8%	33.1%	8.4%
Arkansas	73.3%	30.6%	15.0%
Rural counties	76.5%	26.6%	18.8%
Non-rural counties	66.7%	32.9%	12.9%

Rural Society

Quality of Life

People simply like living in the country.

“Urban areas get a lot of attention, but people who do not live in a rural area do not know how grand it is and how good a life people can have in a small community.” “Well, it’s small and it’s quiet.” “It’s a good place to live, good place to raise a family.” Rural residents like the natural environment. They like the friendliness. They feel safer. *“...you can leave the keys in your car all night and not worry.”*

“Kids feel like they’re safer here.” “[There is] a feeling of security [here].” Rural parents believe their children are safer. *“... I don’t usually have to worry too much when [my children] go outside and play.” “[You] pretty much know what kids you want your children to run around with...” “... here it’s a community with a family type atmosphere — less chance kids can slip through the cracks.”* They feel rural areas are a good place to raise children. *“Children can confide in adults in the community.” “... your next door neighbor knows your child and you don’t feel like you’re raising*



your kids alone.” “Much prefer raising children here than in a large city.” “Rural America can provide an experience in raising a child that is second to none because of the family sense you get here.” This attitude makes staying in rural communities attractive to some youth. One stated, “I’d like to stay here. I wouldn’t want to live in a big city because if I had a kid, I’d want it to be raised in a small town.” Family is close by. Rural residents like their quality of life.

What might be perceived as being noseyp in other areas is viewed as support in rural communities. *“Everyone looks out for everyone else. A lot of people from cities [think] that is noseyp, but I think that is a safety net.”* Rural people know each other. *“I live in a community where everybody knows me and I know everybody.”* They trust their neighbors. *“In a larger area, I know that you’ve got your certain circle of community that you trust, but I think it’s probably a little larger in the rural community because over a period of time, if my parents knew somebody, they knew their parents and their children...”* They expect help when something goes wrong in their lives. *“If I was stranded on the side of the road and had no jumper cables, somebody*

would see me who would know me and stop and help me and I wouldn’t have to be afraid of who was driving by because I know who’s driving by.” One rural resident explained that her husband *“was in a car accident and he is in a wheelchair now and this community has been really a blessing to all of us, so I love the people here very much.”*

Rural people consider their neighbors to be extended family. *“I know that if something were to happen to me and my husband that this community would take care of my child. I’ve got so many friends that my child would be taken care of.”* *“...everybody may be ‘shirttail,’ but it is like a large, extended family.”* They feel comfortable being involved with their neighbors. *“I know most of the kids around here. I know their parents. And if I see them doing something, you know, that they really think is a little questionable, I don’t mind going over and saying something to them, or saying something to their parent.”*

Many are attracted to small town values where people are *“taught about hard work from an early age — taught honesty and integrity.”*

“It’s not like you are raising your kids. It’s more like the whole community. Pretty well, everybody knows everybody. I like that.”

