



Governor Cooper's budget invests \$134.7 million dollars in rural economic development, expanded Internet access, and affordable housing to strengthen rural communities statewide.

### **Developing Rural Economies**

Establishes the Rural Investments Strengthening Economies (RISE) Program, a program authorized for \$10 million per year in grants for economic revitalization and for offsetting the costs of locating or expanding private companies.

Invests \$8 million for grants to support rural economic development projects such as building reuse, infrastructure, and demolition; \$5 million for the NC Ready Sites program to develop publicly-owned rural sites to attract industry; and \$2 million to bolster local government capacity in rural counties.

Invests \$55 million for specific economic development projects, including: \$14.75 million to develop a Marine Industrial Park in Perquimans County; \$8 million to develop the "The Rock Speedway and Entertainment Complex" into a world class venue; \$5.8 million for economic development projects in Lenoir County and the City of Kinston; and \$26.4 million for locally identified projects in communities across North Carolina.

Provides \$2 million to offer early-stage technology development grants for small businesses to match federal awards. Allocates \$1 million in funds to assist with the transition to a knowledge and innovation based economy, and invests \$700,000 in the Regional Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline-East (RAMP-East) partnership to enhance recruitment in advanced manufacturing.

### **Expanding Internet Access to Underserved Areas**

High-speed internet access is crucial for economic and educational opportunity. Provides \$35 million in grants to bring broadband Internet service to areas without service or where service is below accepted minimum speeds.

- To encourage private providers to bring broadband service to underserved areas, allocates \$30 million for the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) program.
- Creates a grant program to help close the homework gap for students without home internet access by investing \$5 million in grants to provide mobile hotspots and devices such as laptops or tablets.

### **Investing in Affordable Housing**

Lack of good-quality, affordable housing is a challenge for many rural communities. The budget adds an extra \$2.3 million to the Housing Trust Fund, the state's most flexible source of funding for affordable housing.

Invests \$7.2 million in the Community Living Housing Fund to increase access to permanent, community-based, integrated housing for people with disabilities.

Provides \$6.5 million to the Rural Neighborhood Revitalization Program, a grant program that promotes neighborhood sustainability, resiliency, and equitable access to housing.