



## **RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA**

### **Member County Facts**

#### **Focused on California's Rural Communities**

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) is a thirty-six county strong member services organization that champions policies on behalf of California's rural communities.

RCRC works hand-in-hand with our member counties to advocate for rural issues at the state and federal level. We provide legislative and regulatory representation to enhance and protect the quality of life in the state's rural counties.

Since its inception, RCRC has fostered policies and programs that reflect the unique rural heritage and the current conditions and needs of our member counties.

The greater distances, lower population densities, and geographic diversity of RCRC's member counties create unique obstacles. For those reasons, "one-size-fits-all" policies don't work. RCRC provides the rural county perspective on a myriad of issues throughout the state and federal legislative and regulatory processes including land use, water and natural resources, housing, transportation, wildfire protection policies, and health and human services.

The RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected members of the Board of Supervisors from our thirty-six member counties. RCRC staff work in partnership with the Board of Directors to deliver a rural perspective when legislation and regulations are being formulated in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

#### **The RCRC Rural Landscape: More than Half of the State's Land Area**

In a highly diverse state like California, our rural counties range from forested and mountainous landscapes to coastal areas, desert regions, and farm and vineyard land. Rural California provides water, food and recreation to residents and visitors across the state and country.

## **RCRC County Facts**

- RCRC's 36 counties represent more than half of the state's total number of counties (58) and more than half (56 percent) of California's 155,779.22 square miles.
- Nearly 1 in 9 (less than 11%) Californians reside in RCRC's rural counties. RCRC's thirty-six member counties' 4.3 million residents represent a larger population than 24 states: Arkansas, Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.
- More than 75 percent of U.S. Forest Service land in California lies within RCRC member counties (approximately 16 million of the 20 million acres).
- Nearly 75 percent of California's available water originates in the northern third of the state (north of Sacramento) while over 70 percent of the demand occurs in the southern two-thirds of the state and coastal areas.
- Stretching from Oregon to Mexico and Nevada to the Pacific Coast, RCRC's thirty-six member counties include: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Inyo, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba.

## **Rural Counties: The "Face" of Government**

Rural counties are on the front lines as the "face" of government. To our constituents, we provide a full range of services that are the "nuts and bolts" of representative democracy. County governments directly address such issues as clean water delivery, solid and hazardous waste management, maintenance of streets and roads, jails and courtroom security, and health and human services programs.

In today's economy, counties face the conundrum of tighter budgets and increased responsibilities.

## **Why Rural Advocacy?**

The term "rural" may be defined in various ways: population density, population size, demographics or economic data. In some cases, it is viewed subjectively based on a rural "character" or state of mind.

However you define it, rural counties face unique challenges when putting state and federal policies into effect. The core of RCRC's mission is to improve the ability of small, rural California county governments to provide services by reducing the burden of state and federal mandates, and promoting a greater understanding among policy makers about the unique challenges that face California's small population counties.