



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**



StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

TENNESSEE

www.usda.gov/strikeforce

Tennessee Fast Facts - 2014

StrikeForce State Since:	2014
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	17.8%
State's Child Poverty Rate:	17.4%
Number of StrikeForce Counties:	53
Total Outreach Events:	340
Number of Community Partners:	76
Total USDA Projects:	4,416
Total USDA Investment:	\$447 million

Contacts

Contact us to be a partner, or to learn more about StrikeForce opportunities:

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Some of Our StrikeForce Community Partners

Agribusiness Committee of Greene County
AgriCenter International
Centro Hispano de East Tennessee
Greeneville Farmers Market
Landmark Training & Development Corp.
National Exchange Club
Roots Memphis
Rural Resources of Greene County
Southern Foodways Alliance
Tennessee Disabled American Veterans
Urban Farms Memphis/Binghampton
Development Corp.
Monroe County Boys and Girls Club

Currently, 85 percent of our country's persistent poverty counties are in rural America. More than one third of rural Americans, and one in four rural children live in poverty. Kids growing up in families earning twice the poverty threshold are nearly three times as likely as other children to have poor health, are more likely to finish two fewer years of school, and are more likely to earn half as much money in their adult lives.

Growing the economy by investing in rural communities and increasing opportunities for families is key to our Nation's future. In 2010, Secretary Vilsack established USDA's StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity to address the specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Since then, StrikeForce teams have collaborated with more than 500 community partners and public entities to bring targeted assistance to rural areas experiencing chronic poverty.

These efforts have invested more than \$16.5 billion to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources across twenty states. In 2015, StrikeForce expanded to include Oklahoma and Puerto Rico. Now, USDA StrikeForce teams will operate in 880 counties in 21 states and Puerto Rico. Each StrikeForce project is a commitment to America's economic future.

StrikeForce At Work

Tennessee's Upper Cumberland area has some of the country's largest stretches of contiguous forestland, as well as stunning gorges, lakes and rivers. These natural resources are part of the area's beauty and draw. The infrastructure in many of these areas, however, is aging and in desperate need of repair.

Until recently, families living in rural Putnam and White counties were hauling water in jugs from individual wells that had become contaminated due to drought-induced changes in the water table. On Earth Day 2014, the community celebrated USDA Rural Development investments enabling the small town of Monterey to extend its municipal water supply five miles beyond town limits to bring potable water to its neighbors. "The smell of fresh water is wonderful" said local resident Shannon Davis who hand hauled water into her house for 15 years. "There are not enough adjectives to express how much getting public water means to my family."

In the town of Sparta, aging equipment was insufficient to manage rainwater, causing sewage drains and manholes around town to overflow after heavy rains. Even the school football field was wet for days. Rural Development provided the town with funding to fix the sewage problem. Sparta Mayor Jeff Young said, "USDA helped us figure out the best solution and to pay for it in a way we could afford."

