



## Washington

### Working for a Prosperous and Sustainable Future in Rural WA

Partners for Rural Washington (PRWA) is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that advocates for locally identified rural priorities in the state of Washington. The mission statement for PRWA reads as follows: *“Working with rural communities to develop their capacity to create a prosperous and sustainable future.”* Our goals of elevating the rural voice in our state, advocating for rural priorities and seeking to provide capacity where needed to rural areas, remained our top priorities in 2018.

#### **Rural Broadband**

In 2018, rural broadband was PRWA’s program priority and we focused on providing rural broadband planning and technical assistance to three distinct rural regions in Washington state. These were the Olympic Peninsula, the Methow Valley region in Okanogan County and Stevens County, in partnership with the Spokane Tribe. This was accomplished by working with Tribes, local stakeholders, industry experts and private and public leaders to convene a broadband forum in September 2018 in Port Angeles, WA to discuss regional broadband needs. We assisted local leaders to create a Broadband Action Team (BAT) to develop a broadband action plan for the Methow Valley, Okanogan County, and we provided technical assistance to stakeholders and public and private community leaders to develop a draft broadband action plan focused on improving broadband service in selected areas of need in the Methow Valley, Okanogan County. We also worked with the Stevens County/Spokane Tribe Broadband Action Team (SC/ST BAT) to secure funding to provide additional support for the Two Rivers Resort Pre-positioned Fire Camp (TRR PPFC) project to help address the communications needs for use by public safety responders.

#### **Additional Achievements**

2018 was also a year in which we continued to meet PRWA’s rural mission by communication, collaboration, and convening. In 2018, we utilized current partnerships with the Association of Washington Cities, the Department of Commerce and other entities represented by our Board of Directors, to market the availability of the Rural Resource Directory to more rural areas. We helped facilitate a convening of the Rural Development Councils from WA, OR and ID in May 2018 in Portland, OR. All three councils shared their current priorities, best practices, funding strategies and sought ways to mutually support our common missions, which was the purpose of the meeting. Finally, In partnership with other community and economic development stakeholders, such as the State Housing Finance Commission and the Communities of Concern (C of C) Commission, we testified before the state legislature several times this past year in support of policy and funding strategies for rural broadband, affordable housing, community facilities and Tribal priorities in rural areas around the state.