

Vital Signs

Measuring the Vitality of the South Wood County Area

Presented June 2013

2013



incourage
community foundation

Written By:

COWS | BUILDING
THE HIGH ROAD

A NOTE FROM INCOURAGE



A successful team needs **equipment**.

We have the tools and knowledge included in *Vital Signs*, as well as the results of our 2012 Community Survey. With that...

A successful team needs a **game plan**.

Incourage is helping our community use these tools to coordinate efforts focused on community priorities and a shared vision for our future. We need your help, because....

A successful team needs **courageous people with the heart to play the game**.

The information in this report is something everyone needs to know. Help us spread the word. Recruit your family, friends and neighbors to build our community team. Contact us and we'll help you get involved.

As a team, and as individuals who live in and love this community, **we're all in**.

Are you in?



◀ 2012 Community Survey Key Findings Report available at incouragecf.org

inside:

Population Trends 4

Demographics 5

Income & Wages 6-7

Unemployment 8

Economic Support 9

Child Care 10

Homelessness 11

Education 12-13

Workers 14-18

Employers 19-21

Community Engagement 22

Safety 23



SOUTH WOOD COUNTY AREA (SWCA)

Vital Signs covers the south Wood County area of Wisconsin, including the municipalities of Biron, Cranmoor, Grand Rapids, Nekoosa, Pittsville, Port Edwards (Town and Village), Rome (Adams County), Rudolph (Town and Village), Saratoga, Seneca, Sigel, Vesper, and Wisconsin Rapids.

GOOD DATA AND CONVERSATION MAKE STRONG COMMUNITIES

CONVERSATION MATTERS

Our *Vital Signs* conversation continues — it's one that takes all of our hopes, dreams and ideas into account. No voice is too small. Together, we are more than people living near one another. Together, we are a community.

Host your own conversation using *Vital Signs*. Contact Incourage for assistance. We're happy to help.

At Incourage, we see *Vital Signs* as a gauge of our strengths and future opportunities. It also shows us where to focus our attention. And while we see opportunity in our future, there are still challenges to overcome.

Vital Signs is a living document, one that is responsive to the area's residents. And at their request, this year's report contains more data, on more topics, than ever before. Schools use it for staff training and orientation; government and business leaders rely on it for their decision-making; and nonprofit organizations use it to inform their programs and investments.

What does it show?

South Wood County is positioned for opportunity and making progress in the critical work of diversifying our economy. The data in this latest snapshot of the trends and issues affecting our region support this view. Students in our K-12 schools often perform above state averages on mandatory testing. Our high school dropout rate is lower than state and national averages, while the percentage of our residents who've earned an associate degree is higher. Diversity among our youngest is increasing — a proven indicator of economic growth.

We also care about our country and one another. Our region's increasing civic and community engagement is something to be cultivated.

We invite you to read more, lean forward, and learn how this data is shaping conversations. Hopefully, it will influence yours.

AT-A-GLANCE

SOUTH WOOD COUNTY AREA (SWCA)

POPULATION: 45,741

K-12 ENROLLMENT: 7,107

Student DIVERSITY (non-white): 12%

Workers COMMUTING more than 25 miles to work: 35%

SAFETY: less than 20 violent crimes per year

WOOD COUNTY

New Majority Share of the Workforce: 52% **WOMEN**

UNEMPLOYMENT: 6.6%

BUSINESS STARTS last year: 257

SELF-SUFFICIENCY WAGE for one adult supporting two children and benefits: **\$24.79**

Includes most recent and best available data at time of printing, June 2013. See pages 4-23 for explanation of At-A-Glance numbers.



This report is available online at
incouragecf.org

WHO WE ARE POPULATION TRENDS



POPULATION MATTERS

Population is about more than just numbers. It's about the kind of people who comprise a city and region. Are they mostly seniors? College students? Middle-aged? Each of these categories offers opportunities and challenges. In south Wood County we have a population that is both aging and decreasing. This presents challenges for our tax base, job opportunities and federal funding.

In 2012, an estimated 45,741 people lived in the south Wood County area. The largest population center, Wisconsin Rapids, had 18,343 residents while the smallest, Cranmoor, had just 165. With only two exceptions, the communities in our region face declining population.

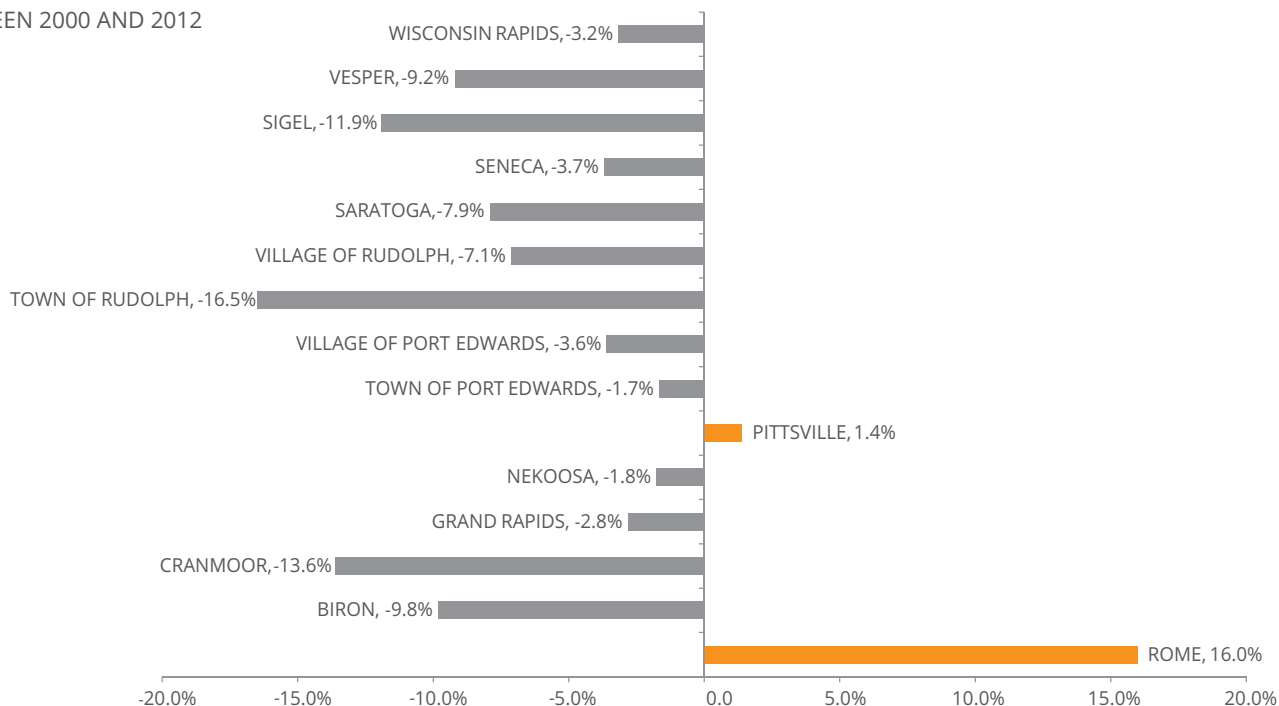
From 2000 to 2012, the region's population fell by 3%. Even as the country and the state continue to grow, our region's population is inching downwards. That spells challenges for the future as fewer people means fewer jobs, smaller tax base, and less population-based federal funding. It is vital for our community to develop strategies that will begin to counter this trend.

One factor to consider is how population varies across our different communities. Wisconsin Rapids, which experienced a 3% decline, dominated the population trend because it accounts for 40% of the area's population. Some of the smaller municipalities experienced much larger declines of 7%, 9%, or even 16%.

A decline in population is a challenge, but our region can still claim relative stability. Although it has switched from modest growth to modest decline, the population has been around 45,000 since 1980.

PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION IN SWCA CITIES

BETWEEN 2000 AND 2012



Source: Department of Administration, Population and Housing Estimates, "Minor Civil Divisions Within Counties, Time Series 1970-2012."

WHO WE ARE

DEMOGRAPHICS

DIVERSITY MATTERS

Diversity is a true asset for a community, bringing population and economic growth, as well as business opportunities – often through increased entrepreneurship, access to new markets and innovation. In an increasingly global society, south Wood County benefits from diversity of population and perspective.

The real population story in the south Wood County area is that the decline is concentrated among young people. Between 2000 and 2010, the population under 30 declined by over 10%, and the prime-working-age population between 30 and 59 years old declined 4%. At the same time, the population 60 years and older increased 20%.

Our region is getting older. This “greying” of the population is similar to the rest of the state. But the state also saw increases in the number of young people.

Given these trends, our region is older than the nation and the state. With a median age in south Wood County of 44 years old (meaning that half of our community is 44 or older), we are clearly older than our neighbors in Marshfield and Stevens Point, as well as Wisconsin and the U.S. An aging population presents real difficulties for businesses as older, experienced workers retire with fewer young people to take their place.

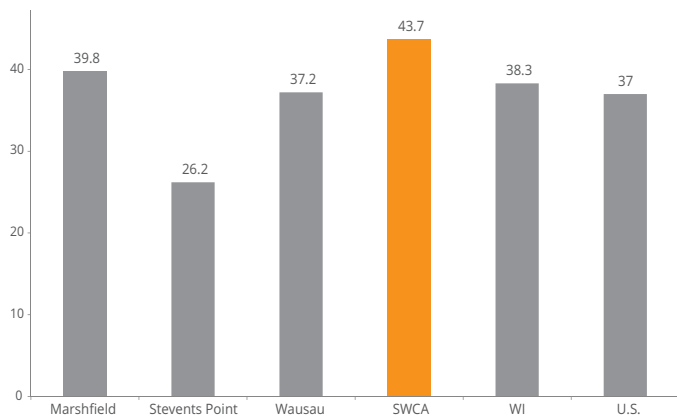
Age is only one way in which the region’s population differs from state and national trends. The area is also significantly less diverse.

In many states, quickly-growing minority populations will soon become majorities. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2060, only 43% of Americans will be white. Today, SWCA’s total population is less diverse (7%) than the state (17%) and the country (37%). Still, our future is very likely to be more diverse than our present. This is clear in our school age population — which at 12% non-white is already more diverse than our overall population. If our children stay in our community after graduation, this community will become more diverse over time.

PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION IN SWCA AND WI BETWEEN 2000 AND 2010

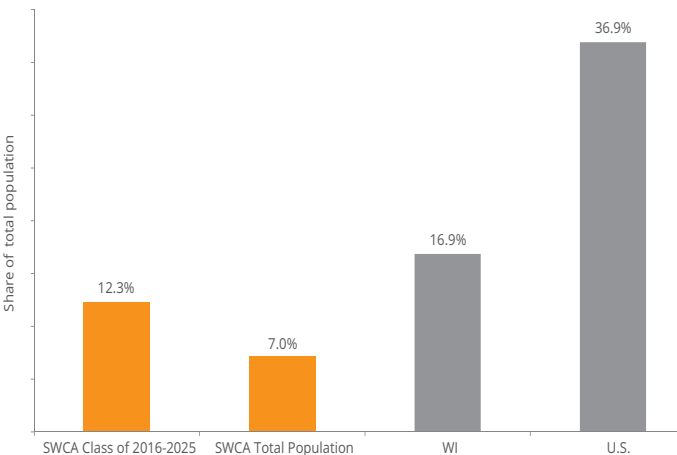
	under 29 yrs old	30-59 yrs old	60 yrs+
SWCA	-10.9%	-4.4%	20.1%
WI	1.7%	4.6%	20.2%

MEDIAN AGE OF THE POPULATION IN SWCA, MARSHFIELD, STEVENS POINT, WAUSAU, WISCONSIN, AND U.S., 2007-2011



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Table DP05 Demographic and Housing Estimates, Five-year Estimates 2007-2011

DIVERSITY IN SWCA, WISCONSIN, AND U.S. IN 2007-2011: SHARE OF THE POPULATION THAT IS BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN, ASIAN, HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER, NATIVE AMERICAN, OR HISPANIC



Note: Share reported in this figure includes those who report two races (including white) and white Hispanics. Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Table DP05 Demographics and Household, Five-year Estimates 2007-2011 and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES INCOME & WAGES

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Social Security is a federal program that provides income to individuals who have worked long enough to earn coverage. It is not a retirement program, but a backstop for older Americans so they can maintain some minimum income and economic independence after they stop working. As more of our residents retire, Social Security will be a vital part of family income and our local economy.

Family income (defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the total cash earnings of income of households with two or more related individuals) suffered in the wake of the 2007 recession in the country, the state, and our community. As a result of job loss and stagnating wages, family income fell 5% in the U.S. and 8% in Wisconsin between 2000 and 2011. For towns in our region, however, the decline was often much steeper, with declines of 10%, 20%, and even 25% in some towns.

Since 2009, the official end of the recession, income fell 2% in both the state and the country. Over that same time period, five of our communities saw family income rise (Rome, Biron, Cranmoor, Grand Rapids, and Rudolph Village). Wisconsin Rapids, the largest city in our region, saw family income fall just under 8%. In the future, family income trends will likely be muted, as more south Wood residents transition into retirement, relying on a mix of savings, social security and pensions from employment.

Family income must cover the cost of living for families. The self-sufficiency standard (next page) is a metric designed to provide information on the cost of living in specific communities across the country. The self-sufficiency standard takes into account family size, benefit structure and ages of children (care for infants is much more expensive than for school-aged children). An adult supporting just herself needs to earn at least \$11.27 per hour to meet the cost of living in Wood County. But to also support two young children, the same worker would need to make \$24.79 per hour (most significantly to cover child care costs).

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME IN 2000*, 2009, 2010, AND 2011

(IN ADJUSTED \$2012) IN SWCA CITIES, WI, AND US

	2000*	2009	2010	2011
Biron	\$71,300	\$57,900	\$62,500	\$62,800
Cranmoor	\$73,700	\$79,900	\$87,500	\$87,200
Grand Rapids	\$91,500	\$81,000	\$85,100	\$84,000
Nekoosa	\$61,400	\$52,200	\$51,200	\$47,800
Pittsville	\$57,800	\$54,300	\$53,200	\$49,900
Port Edwards village	\$75,500	\$66,800	\$65,100	\$64,600
Port Edwards town	\$72,500	\$65,700	\$65,200	\$65,300
Rome	\$64,200	\$54,300	\$58,200	\$59,300
Rudolph village	\$69,800	\$60,800	\$62,600	\$63,800
Rudolph town	\$74,400	\$74,100	\$73,300	\$74,000
Saratoga	\$72,700	\$67,300	\$59,700	\$60,600
Seneca	\$81,000	\$62,500	\$68,600	\$60,400
Sigel	\$73,800	\$64,900	\$65,400	\$64,100
Vesper	\$62,000	\$66,200	\$67,100	\$63,800
Wisconsin Rapids	\$60,100	\$52,500	\$51,700	\$48,200
Wisconsin	\$72,900	\$69,100	\$68,300	\$67,400
United States	\$69,000	\$66,700	\$66,300	\$65,600

* Note: The estimates for the year 2000 are from a separate series and data method than the 2009-2011 estimates. 2000 estimates are from the 2000 census, whereas the 2009-2011 data are from the ongoing American Community Survey sample. They are not directly comparable because they are not an identical and continuous series. However, they are measuring the same indicator, and hence 2000 can serve as a benchmark for the data in the later years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table P-077 from 2000 and Table B19113 from 2009, 2010, and 2011.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD FOR WOOD COUNTY

		One Adult			Two Adults	
	No kids	One child: (infant)	Two children: (infant) (preschooler)	Two children: (school-age) (teenager)	Two children: (infant) (preschooler)	Two children: (school-age) (teenager)
BEST Wages, if the worker has benefits						
• Hourly wage per worker	\$11.27	\$18.53	\$24.79	\$18.61	\$15.01	\$13.64
• Monthly wage per worker	\$1,984	\$3,261	\$4,363	\$3,275	\$2,641	\$2,401
• Annual income for the household	\$23,808	\$39,132	\$52,356	\$39,300	\$63,372	\$57,624
BEST Wages, if the worker does not have benefits						
• Hourly wage per worker	\$12.23	\$19.59	\$26.06	\$19.93	\$16.57	\$12.17
• Monthly wage per worker	\$2,153	\$3,448	\$4,586	\$3,508	\$2,916	\$2,142
• Annual income for the household	\$25,836	\$41,376	\$55,032	\$42,096	\$69,984	\$51,408

Source: Wider Opportunity for Women, Basic Economic Security Tables

SPECIAL NOTE

BEST wages with benefits include employer sponsored health insurance and retirement plan, along with access to unemployment insurance.



What a Family Needs

Income decline in south Wood County has several causes: a retired, aging population; a decline in job quality; and instability in hours of work. Temporary and part-time employment traps workers in jobs that cannot support families.

In the past, historically stable jobs supported south Wood County families. Our community thrived. But many of those jobs were eliminated, leaving the instability of layoffs and the insecurity of work in the lower-wage service sector.

In south Wood County, a two-worker family of four faces this challenge: they must each earn \$15 per hour, plus benefits, to make ends meet, with no need of public or community assistance.

One route to working towards family-sustaining wages can be training. For dozens of residents, *Pathways* has provided the training necessary to break the cycle of poverty. In partnership with Wood County Human Services, Mid-State Technical College and Incourage, *Pathways* provides training to help students with multiple barriers to achieve their educational goals, gain steady employment and increase earnings.

"I don't want to spend the rest of my life working for minimum wage and two or three jobs," said one *Pathways* participant. "I'm really grateful for *Pathways*; I want to take the Pharmacy Tech program in the medical field."



◀ Video of one family's *Pathways* story.

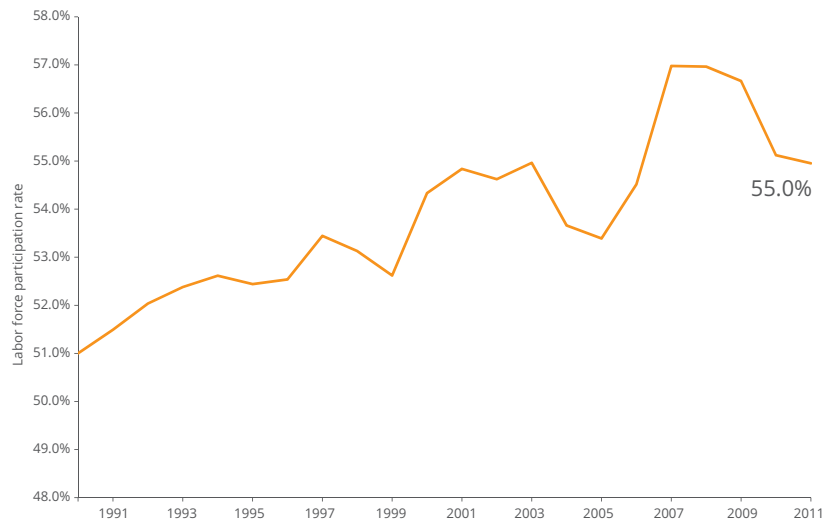
FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate is often used as a primary measure of economic health because it answers the fundamental question: can workers find a job? In Wood County, the unemployment rate tracks closely with the unemployment rate in the state. In the past year the spike in unemployment caused by the recession has started to inch down, reaching 6%, and getting closer to pre-recession rates of 5%.

Unemployment rates fall for good reasons (workers find jobs) and for bad reasons (workers give up looking for work). One way to help correct this is to chart trends in overall labor force participation. This offers a nuanced picture for our region. It is good to see unemployment is inching its way down. But, labor force participation is falling as well, down from 57% to 55% since 2007. Some members of our community are solving their unemployment problem by leaving the labor force altogether.

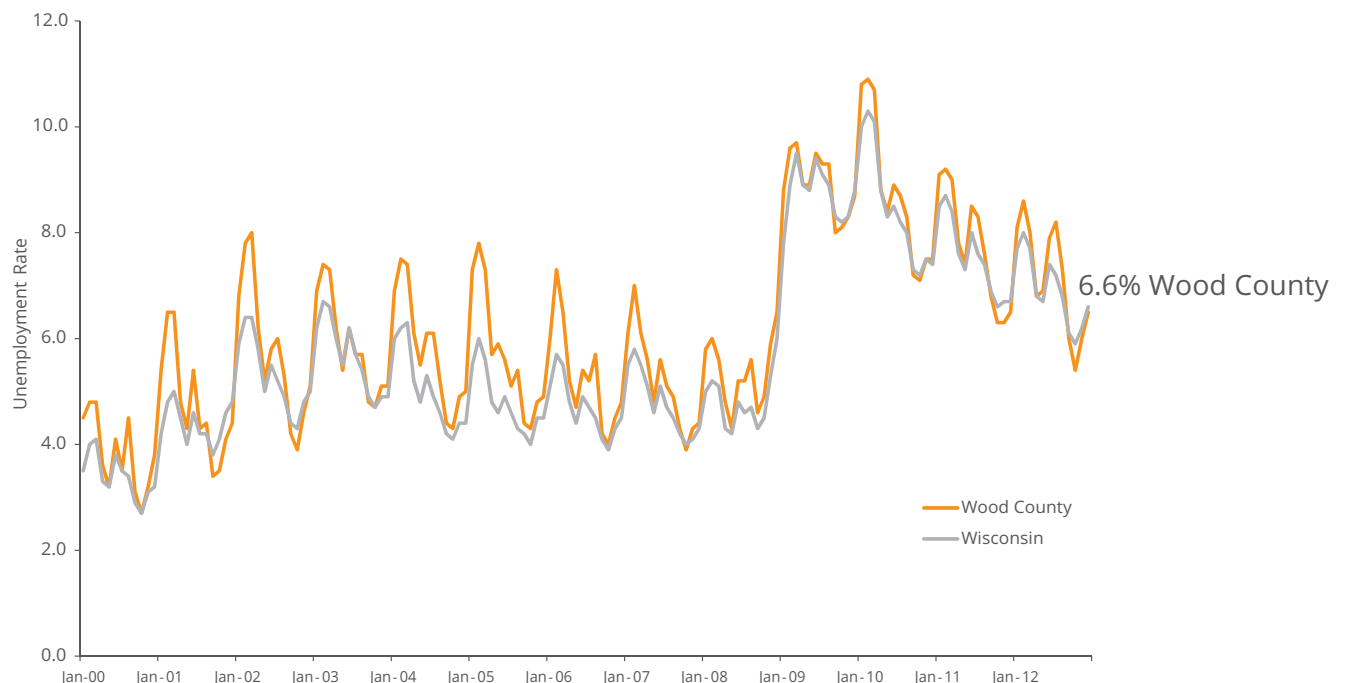
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

WOOD COUNTY 1990-2011



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN WOOD COUNTY AND WISCONSIN 2000-2012, NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Data are not seasonally adjusted.

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ECONOMIC SUPPORT

While income and unemployment describe the health of our local economy and business community, economic support data indicates how our public and community institutions are reaching those who need help.

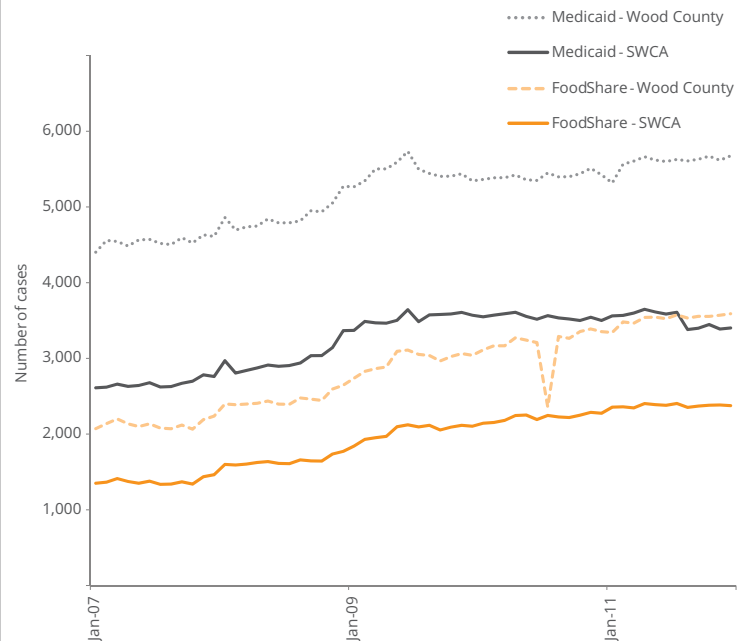
Residents of south Wood County receive significant help from public programs, many because they cannot find work, others because their work does not cover the cost of food or health insurance. At the end of 2011, south Wood County had roughly 2,300 FoodShare and 3,400 Medicaid cases. Since then, the programs have changed and broadened eligibility, as well as modified their data collecting techniques. We are no longer able to obtain caseloads for our south Wood County area. Caseloads will continue to be tracked at the county level. In the last quarter of 2012, Wood County had 5,300 FoodShare and 8,000 Medicaid cases, an increase from over a year ago, suggesting the number of people in need of assistance in the county, and by extension our community, is rising.

The number of students who are economically disadvantaged, meaning they qualify for free or reduced lunch, has increased considerably over the past decade in south Wood County, from roughly one in four children (22%) to nearly half (43%). The increase in the share of students who need nutrition assistance in our community is slightly above the state's trend.

To qualify for free or reduced support in the National School Lunch Program, a student's household income must fall below 185% of the federal poverty line (or \$42,643 in 2012). The increase in lunch assistance signifies an increase in poverty and low-income families in our region, and reflects the declines in family incomes that we have seen over the past decade. Even though the labor market is beginning to recover and unemployment is declining, economic difficulty persists for some of our families. Public assistance to these families stabilizes our community in the wake of job loss and economic upheaval.

SOCIAL SUPPORT CASELOAD

IN SWCA, 2007-2011



AVERAGE FOR WOOD COUNTY

FOR THE 4TH QUARTER OF 2012

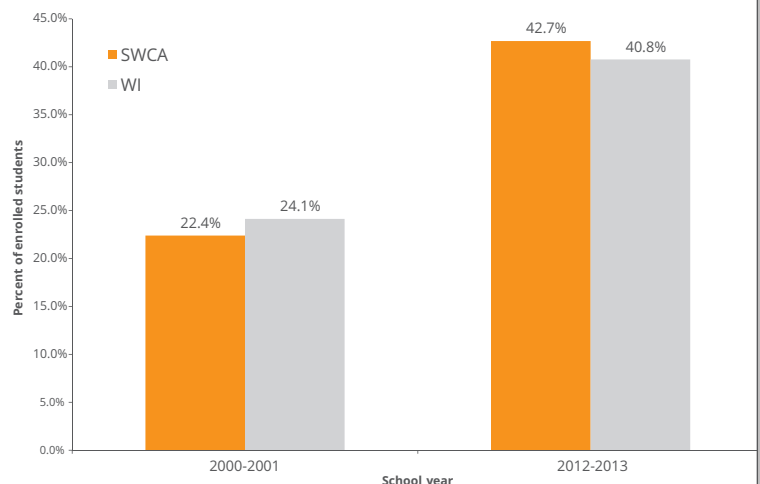
FOODSHARE 5,384 **MEDICAID** 8,066

Note: A new Department of Human Services mandate requires counties to form a consortium, not allowing for sub-county data.

Source: Wood County Human Services Department

SHARE OF ENROLLED STUDENTS WHO ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

SWCA AND WI, 2001-2013



Source: Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools, Demographic Data, Economics Measures.

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES CHILD CARE

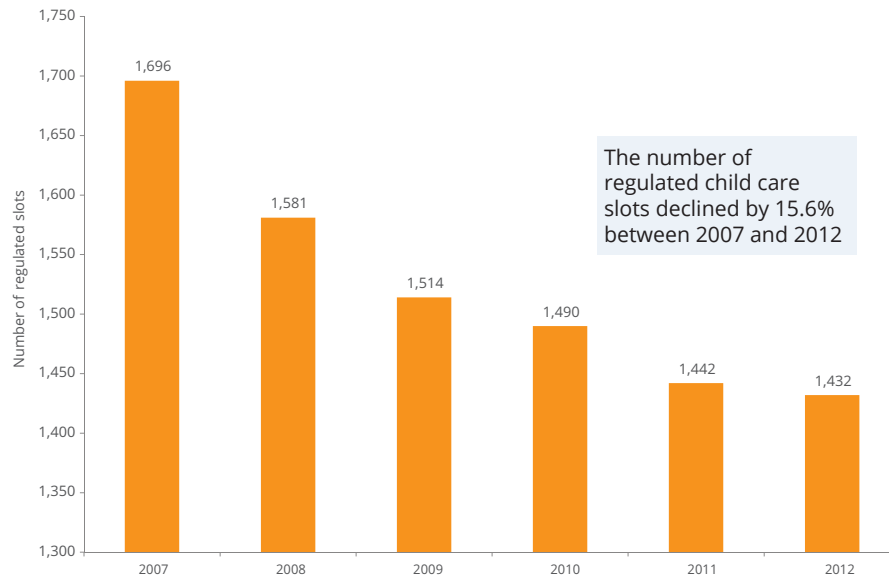
Working parents need safe, reliable, high-quality child care, but it can be a struggle to find, especially at a price that parents can afford. Child care is expensive. The self-sufficiency standard shows that the cost per year to support two children is \$50,000. The cost of child care alone adds \$14,500 to a parent's budget.

Currently, child care costs in the south Wood County area are competitive with neighboring communities. The cost of a year of one non-infant child care slot in our region was just under \$7,000 annually, compared to \$7,100 in Wausau, \$7,300 in Marshfield, and \$8,300 in Stevens Point.

Our region lost over 260 regulated slots between 2007 and 2012, likely due to falling demand from young families as this population group decreased. Still, guaranteeing that there is child care available for all workers who need it is critical to economic growth and development. Not only so workers are free to take jobs, but also to ensure our children have a strong developmental foundation. Early childhood education is a proven investment with important returns — strong, successful adults.



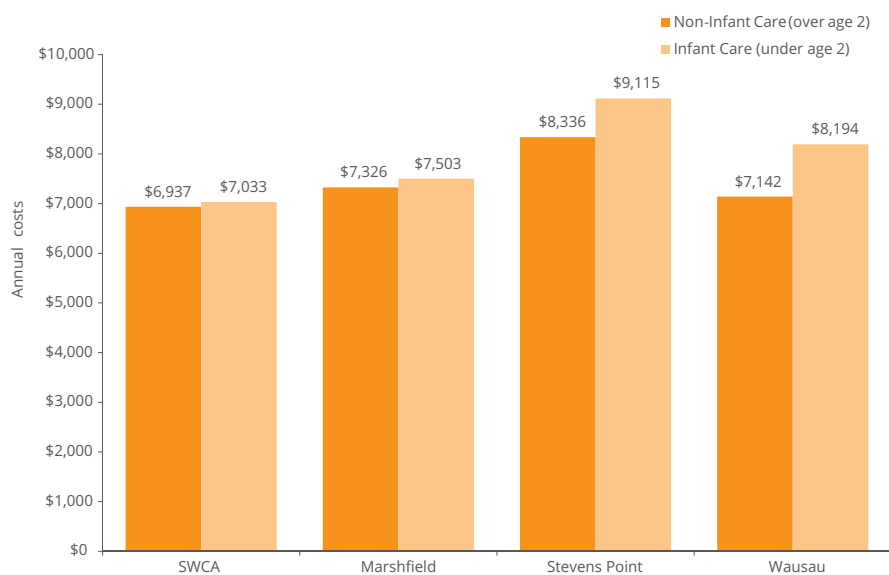
**NUMBER OF REGULATED CHILD CARE SLOTS
IN SWCA**



Source: Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Wisconsin, Inc.

**ANNUAL CHILD CARE COSTS IN 2012
FOR INFANT CARE AND NON-INFANT CARE**

IN SWCA, MARSHFIELD, STEVENS POINT, WAUSAU



Source: Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Wisconsin, Inc.

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is the most acute and severe form of economic deprivation. It is devastating to families, hindering the ability of adults to find work, and harmful to the stability children need to learn and thrive.

The 2010 spike of 384 cases of impending homelessness, or people at risk of losing their homes, seems to have receded. Yet, two-thirds as many members of our community (223) remained at risk of homelessness in 2012.

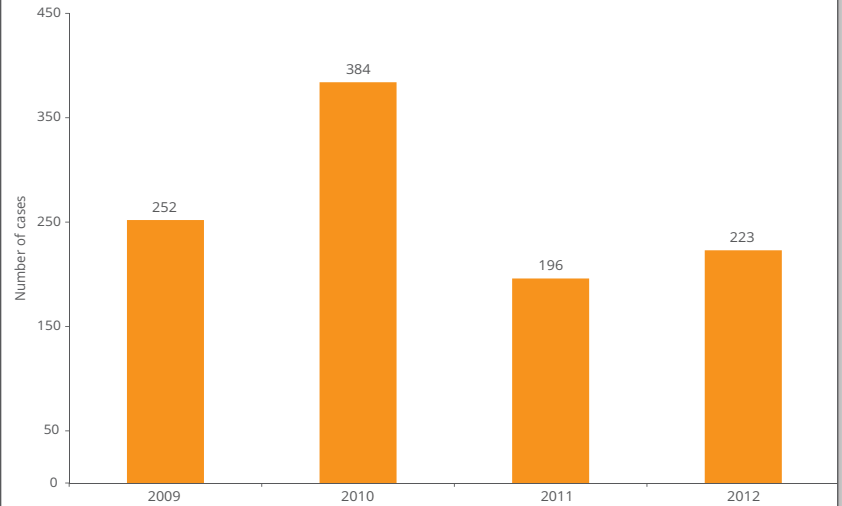
Many of these residents are children. In the earlier part of the decade, the share of the student body in our region classified as homeless averaged around 2%, but this increased to 3% during the recession. We continue to see fluctuations in student homelessness above pre-recession levels.

Wisconsin, over this same time period, never had student homelessness rates above 1.5%. Part of our community's challenge moving forward is to determine why homelessness is more acute for children in our region and how to align business, community, and public support to help those in need.

IMPENDING HOMELESSNESS CASES

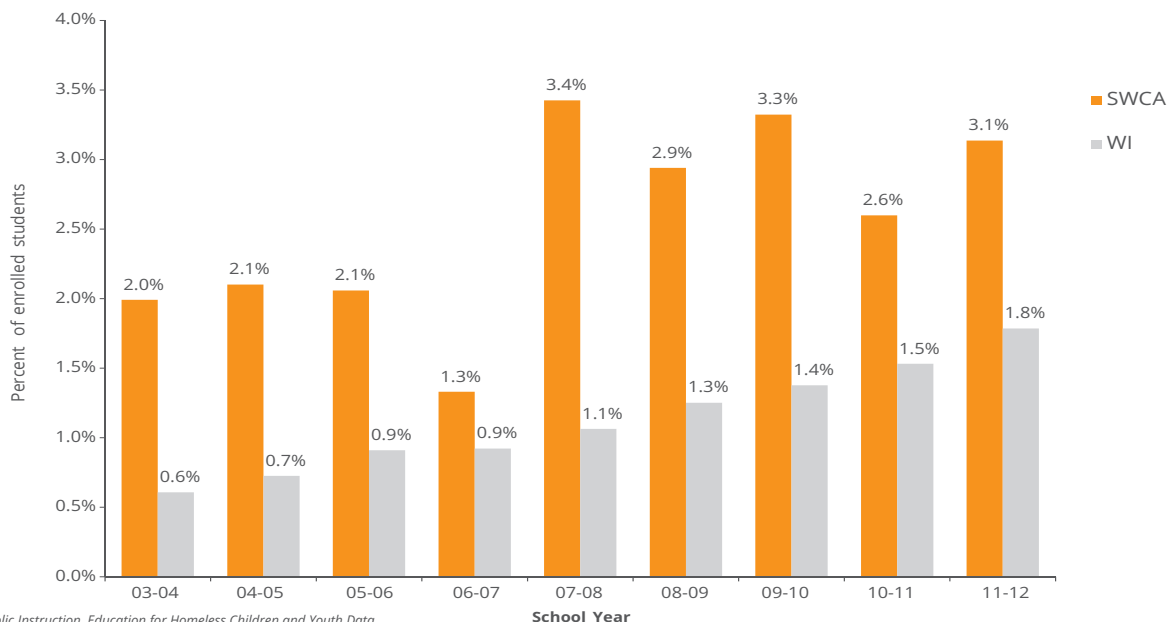
IN SWCA 2009-2012

MEASURED BY THE NORTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM



Source: North Central Community Action Program

SHARE OF STUDENT BODY CLASSIFIED AS HOMELESS IN SWCA AND WI 2003-2012



Source: Department of Public Instruction, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Data.

DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC HEALTH

EDUCATION: K-12



South Wood County's K-12 schools create the foundation for our economic future. Our community thrives when well-educated children become strong community leaders and highly skilled workers.

The number of students in our schools is declining. Over the past twelve academic years, the total number of students enrolled fell by over 1,500 or 18%. Our neighbors also experienced enrollment drops: 7% in Marshfield, 10% in

NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN K-12

IN SWCA, MARSHFIELD, STEVENS POINT, AND WAUSAU
IN SCHOOL YEARS ENDING 2001 AND 2013

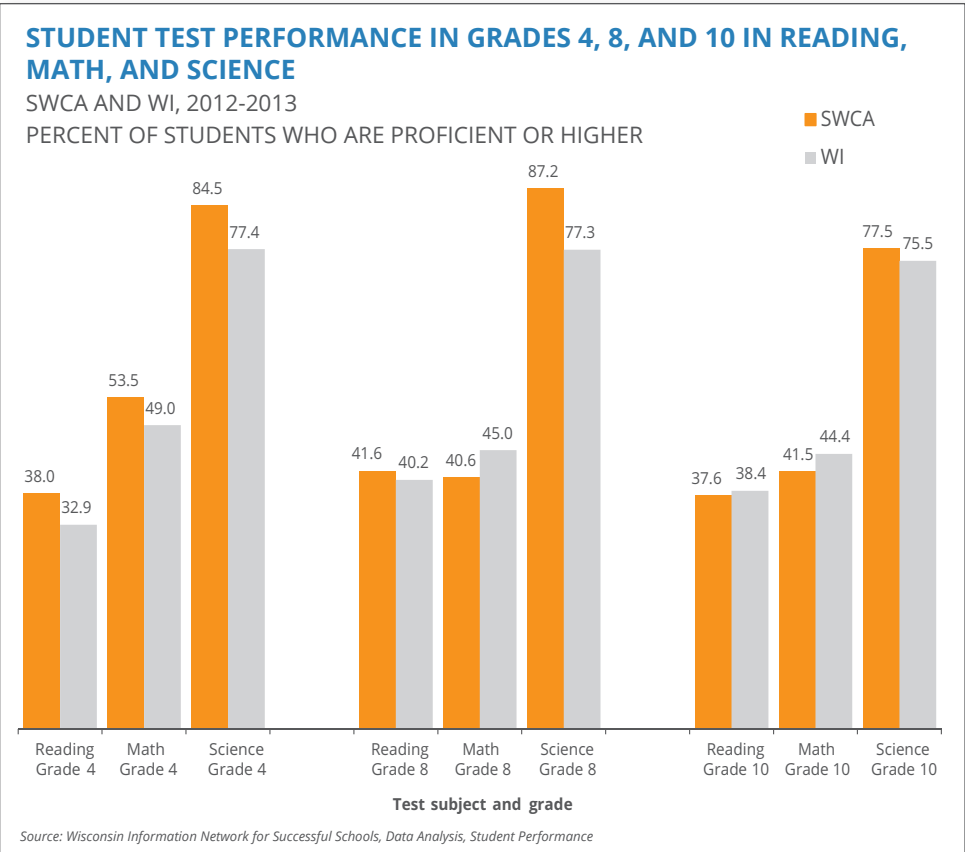
	2000-01	2012-13	% Change
ENROLLMENT:			
South Wood County Area	8,695	7,107	-18%
Marshfield	4,042	3,758	-7%
Stevens Point	7,792	6,828	-12%
Wausau	8,827	7,947	-10%

Source: Department of Public Instruction, Demographics and Enrollment Data.

Wausau, and 12% in Stevens Point. The student population in the state remained stable over this time period.

Academic performance on tests provides both good and challenging news. Our 4th graders outscored the state on Math, Science, and Reading exams this school year, with a higher share of students performing at the "Proficient" or "Advanced" level. Through the high school levels, our students also outperform the state in Science. However,

8th grade scores dropped behind the state in Math, and 10th grade dropped in Math and Reading. High school performance in math and reading are critical not only for our students to remain academically competitive, but also to prepare them for the demands of a 21st Century economy.



SPECIAL NOTE FOR VITAL SIGNS 2013
Last school year, the state of Wisconsin redefined its academic performance standards to make achieving "Proficient" and "Advanced" levels more difficult. As a result, fewer students achieved these levels. This change also means it's impossible to compare previous years to the current one. Under the old standards, established a decade ago, children were measured based upon what they were expected to know at that particular grade level. The new standards were developed to focus on what students need to know to be ready for college and careers. Future editions of Vital Signs will resume tracking student performance based upon the new state standards.



Skill-Building Starts Young

The working world presents a variety of challenges for young adults — challenges that no single organization can anticipate or address alone. To increase the next generation's chances of success, community leaders in education, business, and government joined together to increase student awareness of career opportunities in our area and to promote the skills needed to fill these jobs.

This partnership initiated by Workforce Central's Manufacturing CEO Peer Council, dubbed the Business-Education Partnership Committee, helps provide for additional classes and experiences in science, technology, engineering and math (the STEM skills). They also promote the development of skills like teamwork, visualization and reliability — skills that area employers demand. Committee members have participated in career presentations at local elementary schools, developed new youth apprenticeships, and provided corporate sponsorship for the Race Engineering Camp at Mid-State Technical College.

"The Race Engineering Camp exposes students to real-world applications of STEM and teamwork in a fun competition with local professionals providing support and guidance along the way," said Richard D. Breen, a member of the Business-Education Partnership Committee who also chairs the local inventors and entrepreneurs group.

Plenty of opportunities exist in south Wood County but our students need more than strong classroom preparation to take advantage of them. They need hands-on, experiential learning, guidance about local occupations, and established pathways from entry-level jobs to family-sustaining career positions.

Business-Education Partnership Committee

Coordinated by Incourage, this partnership includes members from south Wood County school districts, workforce and economic development organizations, and local businesses representing four different industries.

Assumption Catholic Schools
Domtar
Farmland Management Systems
Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce
Immanuel Lutheran Church and School
Incourage Community Foundation
Inventor's Workshop of Central Wisconsin
Mid-State Technical College
Nekoosa School District
NewPage
North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
Ocean Spray
Port Edwards School District
Renaissance Learning
Riverview Hospital
Russet Potato Exchange
Sentry Insurance
Solarus
Wisconsin Rapids Public School District

DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC HEALTH

WORKERS

South Wood County's most essential economic asset is our workforce. Workers who have a solid educational foundation combined with relevant skills can build local businesses and help attract new businesses to the area.

Like Wisconsin, our community has a small number of high school dropouts. Only 10% of residents in south Wood County and Wisconsin have less than a high school degree. Nationally, 15% of residents have no high school degree. Over 74% of our working-age residents hold either a high school degree, some college, or an associate degree. This is a very attractive educational base for employers looking for workers to fill middle-skill positions.

Educational attainment of workers in our area is concentrated in the "middle-skill" levels. Only 16% of our community has a bachelor's or graduate degree, which is 10 points lower than Wisconsin's share and almost half the national share. With our high share of workers with associate degrees, we are well-positioned to provide a skilled workforce to diverse sectors. But, our lack of bachelor's and graduate degrees hampers our prospects for firms interested in the most educated workers.

Our neighboring communities of Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wausau look more like the state and country in terms of educational attainment. Predictable perhaps: Marshfield has more hospitals and Stevens Point has a university, employers who require much higher levels of education.

More education generally means higher income. However, south Wood County area workers with advanced degrees actually earn less than their counterparts in the state or country.

WHAT IS A MIDDLE-SKILL JOB?

Low-, middle-, and high-skill jobs refer to the typical educational qualifications required for a position. They do not imply that a worker is good or bad at their job, or that a worker is not specialized in a trade. This is a classification system used to describe the labor supply and corresponding jobs. A middle-skill job is one that requires more than a high school degree but less than a four-year college degree.

MEDIAN EARNINGS IN SWCA, WI AND U.S.

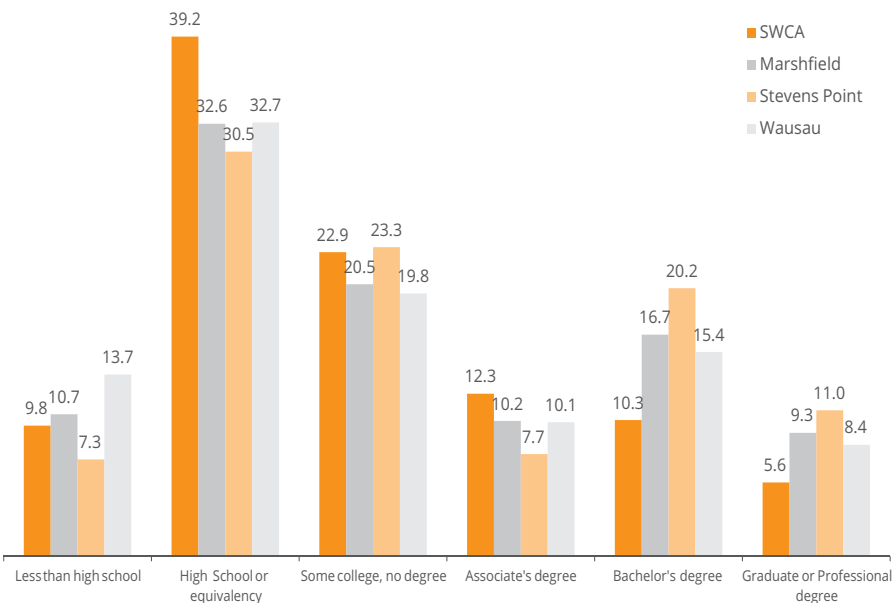
BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2007-2011 (2012 DOLLARS)

	HS degree or equivalency	Some college	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
SWCA	\$27,069	\$33,367	\$40,252	\$56,445
WI	\$29,304	\$34,357	\$46,964	\$60,986
U.S.	\$28,121	\$34,637	\$50,547	\$66,506

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Table S1501 Educational Attainment, Five-year Estimates 2007-2011

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE POPULATION 25 AND OLDER

IN SWCA, MARSHFIELD, STEVENS POINT, AND WAUSAU, AVERAGE BETWEEN 2007-2011
PERCENT OF THE POPULATION 25 AND OLDER



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Table S1501 Educational Attainment, Five-year Estimates 2007-2011

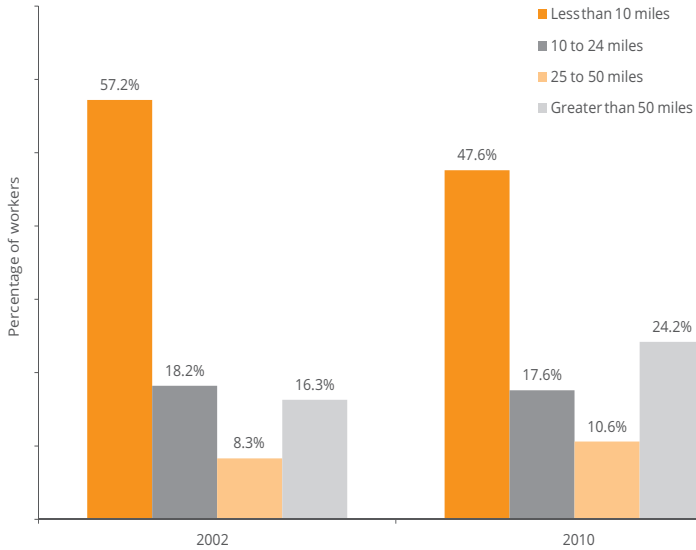
A worker with a high school degree earned \$27,000 in our area, which is comparable to the state and national averages. A worker with a bachelor’s degree earned \$40,000, 48% more than a high school graduate, but much less than the state (\$47,000) or national averages (\$50,500).

Work is also changing in our region. One measure of that change is the increasing time we spend getting to jobs. Between 2002 and 2010, the average commute distance between home and work increased for workers in south Wood County. Just over 24% of workers are traveling more than 50 miles in order to get to work, an increase from 16%. There was also a small increase in workers traveling 25-50 miles. These commute trends reflect the loss of local jobs and better opportunities at some distance.

Manufacturing still has the largest share of our workforce at 20%. Health care and social assistance (12.6%), retail trade (10.7%), and public administration (10.5%) follow. The region stands out for the significant share of our workforce in manufacturing jobs. We also have a strong share of workers in public administration. These two sectors are critical to our job base, but likely to become less dominant over time. While the loss in these sectors over the last decade, especially in manufacturing, is difficult, the increasing economic diversity in its wake will help make our region more resilient in years ahead.

LENGTH OF COMMUTE DISTANCE FROM SWCA
RESIDENCE TO PRIMARY JOB

2002 AND 2010



Between 2002 and 2010, the share of SWCA workers who commuted less than ten miles dropped 9.6 pts, but the share driving 50 or more increased 7.9 pts. About 40% of workers are traveling Northwards.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Quarterly Workforce Indicators.

SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

IN SWCA AND WI, 2010

Industry	SWCA Share of total employment	WI Share of total employment	Difference
Manufacturing	20.0%	17.7%	2.3
Health Care and Social Assistance	12.6%	14.3%	-1.7
Retail Trade	10.7%	10.7%	0.0
Public Administration	10.5%	5.5%	5.0
Educational Services	8.6%	8.9%	-0.3
Accommodation and Food Services	6.4%	7.4%	-1.0
Information	5.6%	1.9%	3.7
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	4.4%	3.0%	1.4

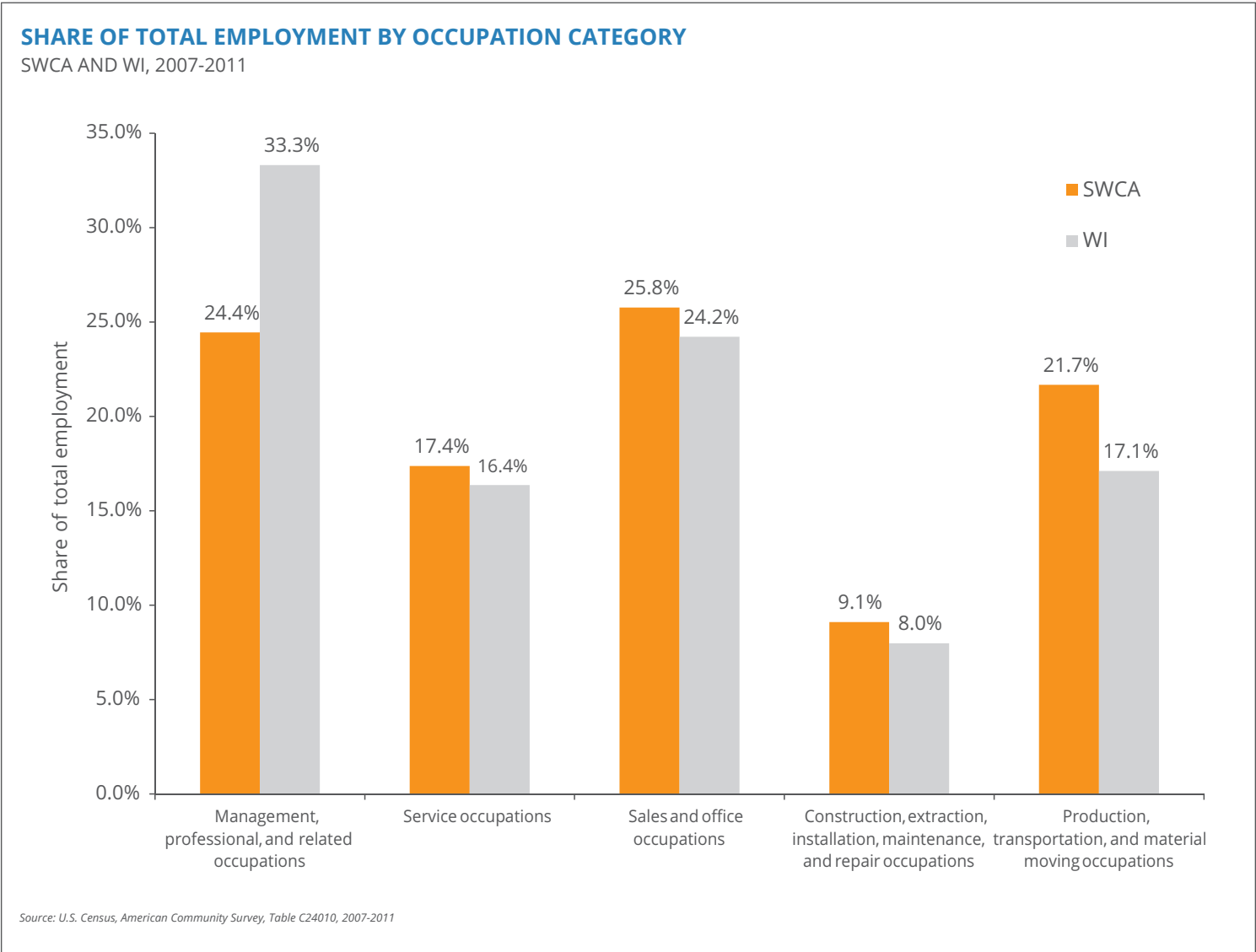
Note: "Other" category is composed of industries in South Wood County Area with less than 5.0% of employment.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap.

DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC HEALTH

WORKERS

Equally important to where people work (industry) is the types of jobs they perform, or their occupations. Compared to Wisconsin, where the professional and service economy garners one-third of all workers, south Wood County area has a higher share of workers in production, transportation, sales, and administrative positions. This occupational composition of workers mirrors our community's educational attainment and aligns with opportunities provided by our key industries.

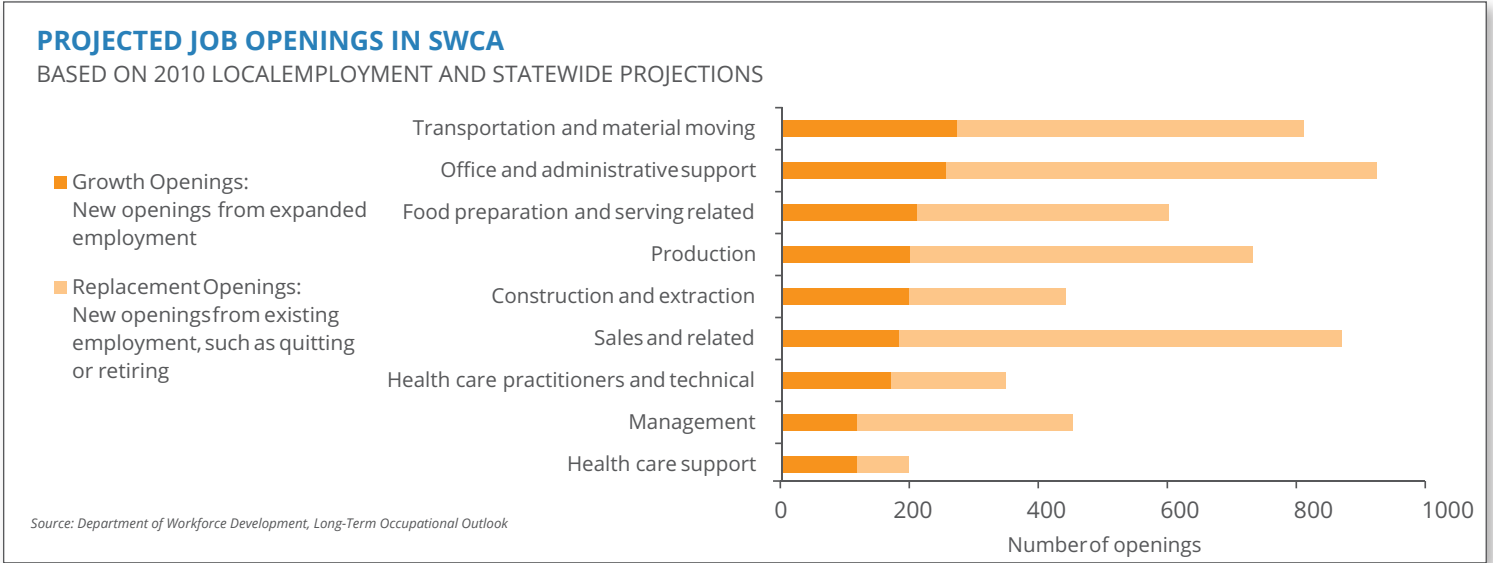
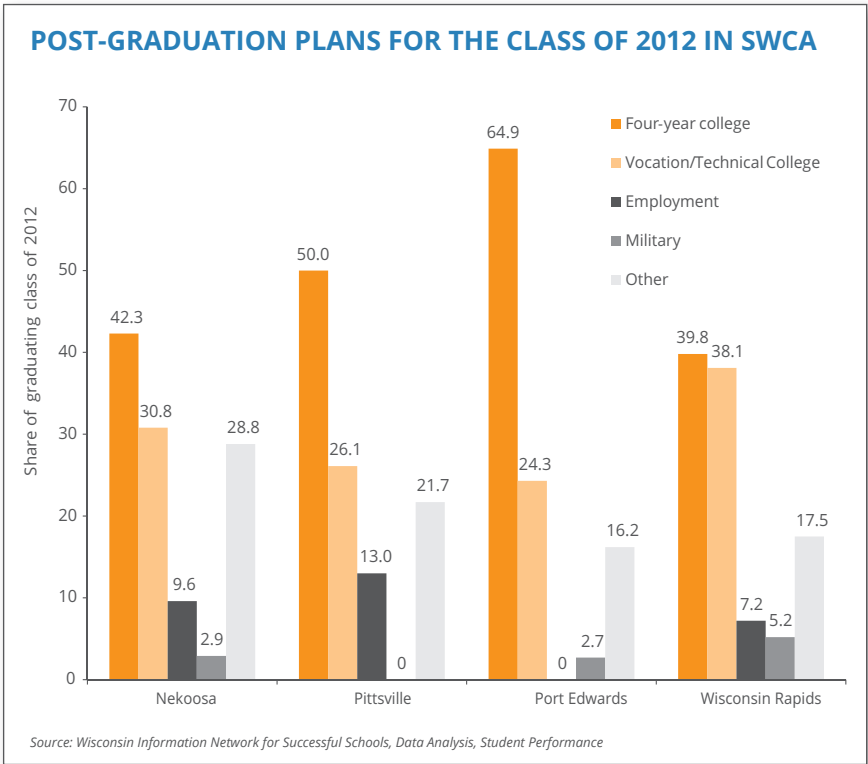


What skills do we need in the future? It is impossible to predict perfectly, but long-term occupational projections from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development indicate a growing number of jobs to replace retiring workers. In fact, retirements will likely generate the vast majority of our job openings over the next ten years. Growth job openings, representing new and expanded employment opportunities, are much harder to project. Given the state's projections of economic growth, transportation, clerical, and food preparation occupations will produce the most new jobs.

This presents both a blessing and a burden for south Wood County. We are a middle-skills population expected to create more middle-skills jobs. But this means that college-educated workers, even from our own area, have fewer opportunities for employment here.

Each year, graduating seniors from our community's high schools are polled about their post-graduation plans. About 44% of last year's graduating class intended to start college in the fall, a share that has remained steady for the past ten years. The only change over time in post-graduation plans is that

more students plan to attend technical or vocational training, which increased from around 28% to nearly 40%. These students will build skills compatible with our current supply of jobs. Yet with an equal share of high school graduates pursuing college, south Wood County risks losing many of its young adults to communities with jobs and wages suitable for workers with a four-year degree.



DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC HEALTH WORKERS



A Gender Milestone

In 2012, the share of workers who are female was 52%, up dramatically from 1990, when 43% of workers were women. This puts into context the consequences of falling wages and income seen in other areas of Vital Signs. Despite their gains, women make on average \$3,000 a month, compared to men earning nearly \$5,000 a month. The gender gap in wages results from gender differences in opportunities for part-time work, employment sectors, and pay within jobs. These disparities leave women-led households substantially behind.

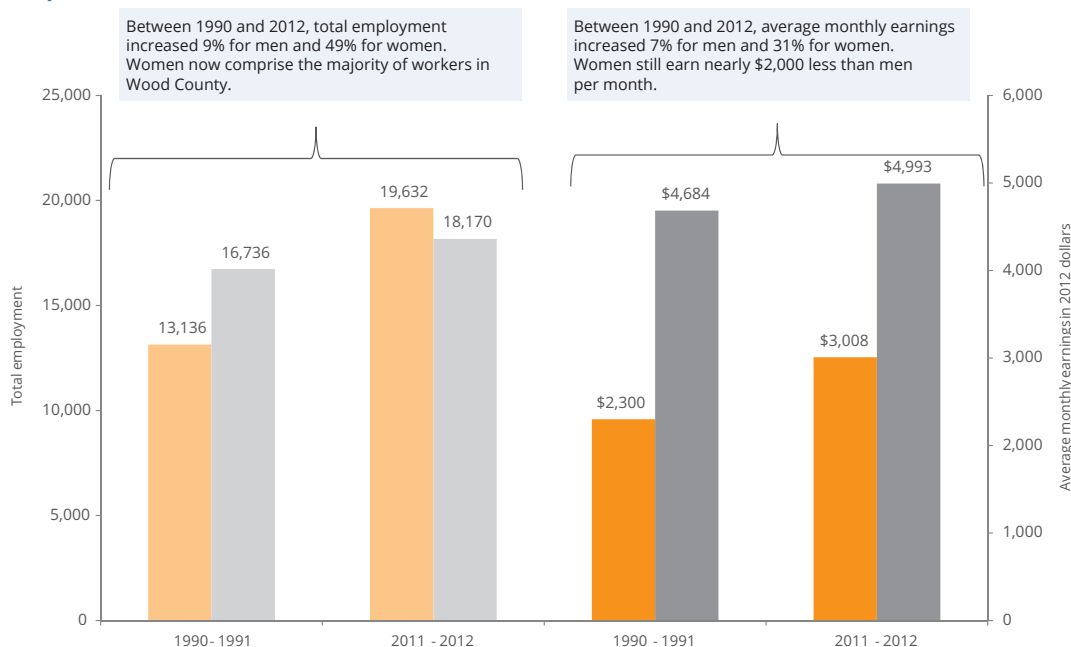
For example, the average monthly wage for women is below the self-sufficiency standard for a worker who supports a single child (\$3,261), and is well below sufficiency to support two children (\$4,363). Wage gaps for women create challenges when considering family well-being. Child care costs drive a significant gap between what women earn on average, and what they need to make ends meet when they have young children. A single child costs \$7,000 a year for child care, roughly 12% of the average annual income of male workers in Wood County, but nearly 20% of income of female workers.

By creating more jobs that support careers and family-sustaining wages and benefits, south Wood County can provide women – as the majority of our workforce – with the means to support their families.

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT (LEFT AXIS) AND AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS (RIGHT AXIS)

FOR MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS
IN WOOD COUNTY, 1990-2012

- Female Employment
- Male Employment
- Female Earnings
- Male Earnings



Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau

DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC HEALTH

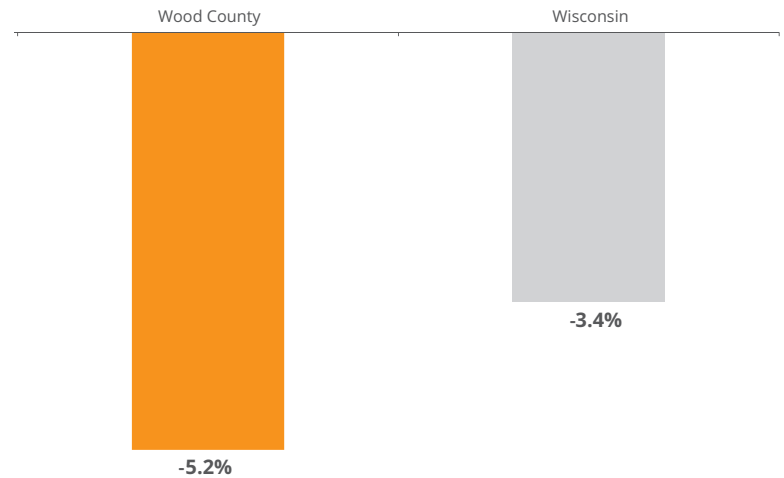
EMPLOYERS

We are all — workers and employers alike — closely tied to the regional, national and international economies. We are not insulated from the downturns, nor are we immune to broader changes in production processes and competitive pressure. We operate in this broader economic context and, just like workers and employers, we must consider and understand surrounding conditions to move toward our best possible future.

Employment in Wood County peaked in the fourth quarter of 2000 at 46,700 jobs and declined with the 2001 recession. The years that followed saw slow growth, later wiped out by the 2007 recession and nine successive quarters of hard job loss. Since the low point of 41,200 jobs at the start of 2010, Wood County has started to see modest growth.

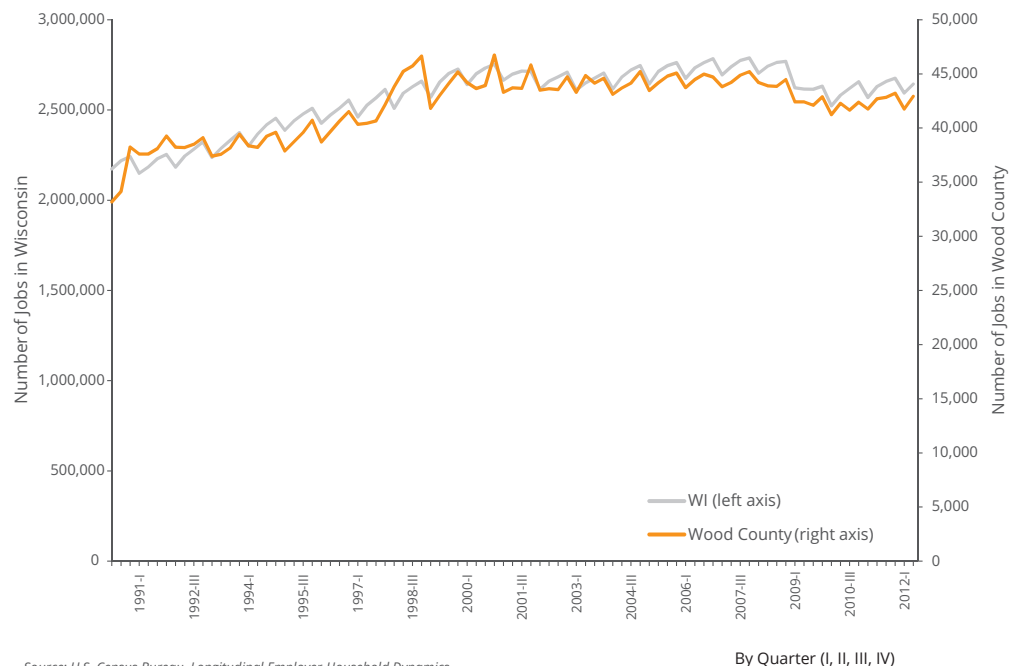
Total employment in Wood County follows the state trend fairly closely. In 2012, Wisconsin's job total was still 3.4% below pre-recession levels. In Wood County, our job base lags the recession by 5.2%. The gap between Wood County and the state grew in 2011, with the state generating jobs over the course of that year, while Wood County's employment level made only tiny progress. Over 2011, the state closed the recession jobs gap from 4.6 to 3.4%; Wood County moved only from 5.3 to 5.2% over the same period.

PERCENT CHANGE IN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT
IN WOOD COUNTY AND WISCONSIN, 2007Q1-2012Q1



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Quarterly Workforce Indicators.

QUARTERLY TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN ALL INDUSTRIES
IN WOOD COUNTY AND WISCONSIN, 1990-2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics.



◀ Video about Incurage's workforce strategies.

DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC HEALTH

EMPLOYERS

Even when job growth is slow, some industries are growing. Here we consider our most significant and most dynamic industries.

The largest employers by industry in Wood County are ambulatory health care services (clinics and doctors' offices), truck transportation, and paper manufacturing. Because the total is on the county level, it is dominated by the clinics in Marshfield. Truck transportation and paper manufacturing (despite its decline) both remain important sources of employment throughout the county.

Industries that have the largest rates of growth are plastics and rubber products manufacturing, social assistance, and miscellaneous store retailers. Their growth is impressive, increasing employment by 10%, 20%, even 30% in a year, accounting for an increase of almost 200 jobs. In these sectors, employers show a hiring trend.

When looking only at college-educated workers, job opportunity is actually declining; this population currently experienced a slight decrease in employment (-0.1%). However, some industries did see growth; employers have added jobs for college-educated workers in nursing, science and engineering. Yet, some of these statistics are troubling. Growth industries for highly-educated workers in retail and auto dealerships do not necessarily require a college degree.

RANK	INDUSTRY	GROWTH IN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN 2011Q2-2012Q1	AVERAGE QUARTERLY EMPLOYMENT 2011Q2-2012Q1
TOP FIVE EMPLOYERS IN WOOD COUNTY BY NAICS 3-DIGIT INDUSTRY, ALL WORKERS			
—	ALL INDUSTRIES IN WOOD COUNTY		38,215
1	621 Ambulatory Health Care Services		7,864
2	484 Truck Transportation		3,457
3	322 Paper Manufacturing		2,538
4	722 Food Services and Drinking Places		1,980
5	623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities		1,364
TOP FIVE IN GROWTH IN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN WOOD COUNTY BY NAICS 3-DIGIT INDUSTRY, ALL WORKERS			
—	ALL INDUSTRIES IN WOOD COUNTY	0.3%	38,215
1	326 Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	33.4%	184
2	624 Social Assistance	23.5%	661
3	453 Miscellaneous Store Retailers	20.0%	196
4	811 Repair and Maintenance	16.0%	482
5	237 Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	9.9%	265
TOP FIVE EMPLOYERS IN WOOD COUNTY BY NAICS 3-DIGIT INDUSTRY, WORKERS WITH AT LEAST A COLLEGE DEGREE			
—	ALL INDUSTRIES IN WOOD COUNTY		7,638
1	621 Ambulatory Health Care Services		2,526
2	322 Paper Manufacturing		566
3	484 Truck Transportation		458
4	511 Publishing Industries (except Internet)		238
5	522 Credit Intermediation and Related Activities		208
TOP FIVE IN GROWTH IN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN WOOD COUNTY BY NAICS 3-DIGIT INDUSTRY, WORKERS WITH A COLLEGE DEGREE			
—	ALL INDUSTRIES IN WOOD COUNTY	-0.1%	7,638
1	624 Social Assistance	33.0%	99
2	452 General Merchandise Stores	7.9%	114
3	441 Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	4.9%	85
4	623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	4.5%	207
5	541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3.1%	166



Silver Tsunami

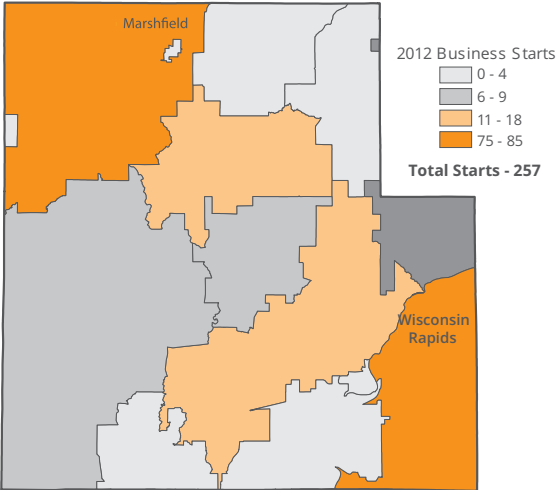
The age distribution of south Wood County impacts our economic future. With a median age of 44 years, many of our residents are approaching or at retirement. As these experienced workers retire, employer demand for skilled replacements will increase.

According to the Office of Economic Advisors, within Wood County, nearly 60% of manufacturing employees are aged 45 and older. Local employers forecast mass retirements on the horizon. Large impending exits of older, skilled workers will create opportunities for the future workforce, but at the same time, create challenges for employers who seek skill-specific employees.

Employers are a dynamic contributor to our community and a central focus of our efforts to build strengths, skills, and opportunity for the area. The number of business start-ups is another indicator to measure economic dynamism in the region. In 2012, 257 businesses were started in Wood County. More than half of these were in Marshfield or Wisconsin Rapids, a reflection of the higher population of the two cities, but nearly 100 new businesses were started in south Wood County's smaller towns.

We always want to be a community that attracts new business in order to build a stronger and more diverse foundation for the future, even as we continue to support our long-standing firms. Both are critical. For instance, nearly 90% of employment in Wood County is concentrated in firms that are more than ten years old, and those firms pay, on average, 30-40% higher salaries than their younger counterparts. Older, more established businesses are the foundation of our economy, but entrepreneurship is a sign that we are growing, dynamic and moving forward.

WOOD COUNTY 2012 BUSINESS STARTS BY ZIP CODE



Source: Wisconsin Network; UW-Stevens Point Continuing Education

Invest in What We Do Well

“There is an emerging consensus on what works to grow a local economy, and it is quite simple – build on what you are good at and what you know how to do.” – Angela Duran, Duran & Associates

In 2011, after a scan for local business opportunities in the manufacturing sector, Incourage supported the launch of the Regional Economic Growth Initiative (REGI). Members of REGI help determine how south Wood County can most efficiently and effectively use its assets, develop and deepen relationships with others, and work collaboratively to expand the number of existing jobs and attract new businesses.

REGI includes representatives from local municipalities, manufacturing, food processing industries, education, Incourage, and the Chamber of Commerce. This broad, regional cooperation and planning is essential to our area’s future.

According to a recent economic analysis of Wood County by Angela Duran, “The region also has a competitive advantage in several processing industries related to food, paper and chemicals. Food products that are particularly strong include cheese, cranberries and potatoes.” Coupled with our abundant natural resources, and our community’s long history with manufacturing, industry will continue to be a top employer of our residents for years to come.

Manufacturing and its supporting industries require strategic investments in order to expand the sector even further. Its continued strength is a key to creating jobs and improving job quality for south Wood County’s residents. Manufacturing jobs provide higher wages, greater job stability and better benefits than other large and growing sectors, such as the retail and food service industries. To help manufacturing jobs continue to grow, we must continue to invest in our workforce and promote regional, non-competitive approaches to economic development.



◀ Read more about REGI and asset-based economies in *Growing the Economy in Central Wisconsin*, available online or by mail

DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC HEALTH

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Civic health is improving in south Wood County as seen in voter participation rates. This, together with volunteerism, is an asset to build upon. United Way of Inner Wisconsin reported that our volunteer hours jumped up dramatically last year, after falling for the two years prior. Volunteers in south Wood County put in over 193,000 hours during 2012, equivalent to 96 full-time jobs. This surge of volunteerism has helped our neighbors overcome social and economic challenges.

Our willingness to build a better community through service is just one asset related to civic life. Voter turnout is also a reflection of our strength as a community. In the 2012 presidential election, 78.3% of registered voters headed to the polls, slightly higher than the turnout statewide (77.3%).

Despite south Wood County's strong 2012 turnout, it still represents a decline in participation from the 2008 presidential election. In eight of our towns and villages, voter turnout dropped from 2008 levels. Yet, the health of our community depends upon political participation, especially as we seek to guide our elected leaders toward solutions for our community's challenges.

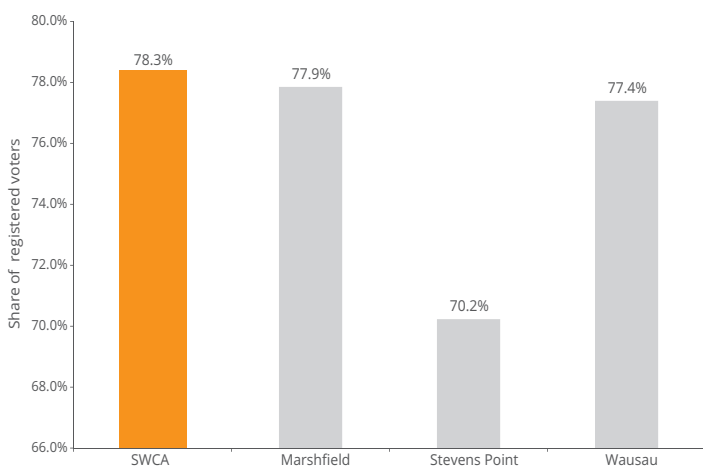
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

The future of our community depends on residents working together. As a united force, our youth, elders, workers, business owners, and elected officials can create the kind of community we all desire. In that respect, our future looks bright. Residents of south Wood County mirror the strong current of cooperation that has made Wisconsin 10th in the nation for volunteerism. According to a 2012 Community Engagement Survey and outreach, 95% of respondents said they were involved in improving our region. In the last year, 66% of our residents volunteered to help neighbors, and 88% donated to local charities. However, only 39% attended town hall meetings which illustrates an opportunity for residents to participate more in local government.

Incourage's community engagement efforts are further informed by a recent report by the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC). According to the NCoC, "Civic engagement appears to protect communities against unemployment and contribute to their overall economic resilience. This is a powerful reminder that when our nation's citizens are more connected, more engaged, and more invested in one another, our communities are stronger."

SHARE OF REGISTERED VOTERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

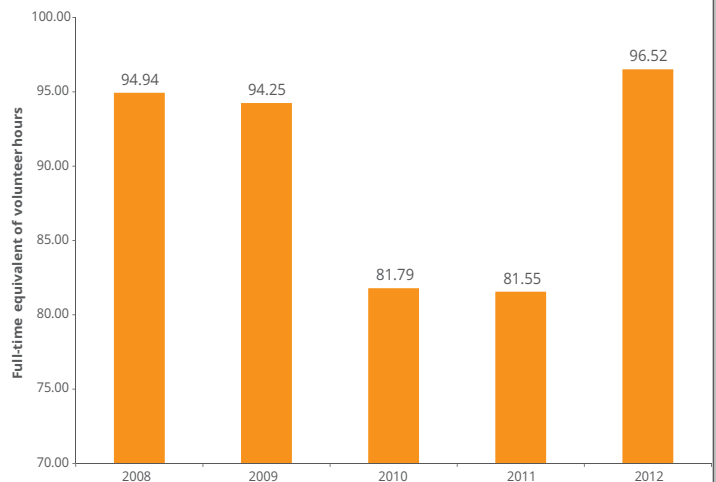
IN SWCA, MARSHFIELD, STEVENS POINT, AND WAUSAU



Source: State of Wisconsin, Government Accountability Board

UNITED WAY VOLUNTEER HOURS

IN SWCA EXPRESSED AS FULL-TIME JOB EQUIVALENTS, 2008-2012



Full time equivalent indicates 40hrs per week, 50 weeks per year

Source: United Way of Inner Wisconsin

DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC HEALTH SAFETY

Safety is one of the most basic measures of quality of life in a community. Crime leads residents to isolate themselves from their neighbors, and businesses to avoid high-value expansions and investments. A safe neighborhood is one of the critical traits young families look for when choosing a place to raise their children.

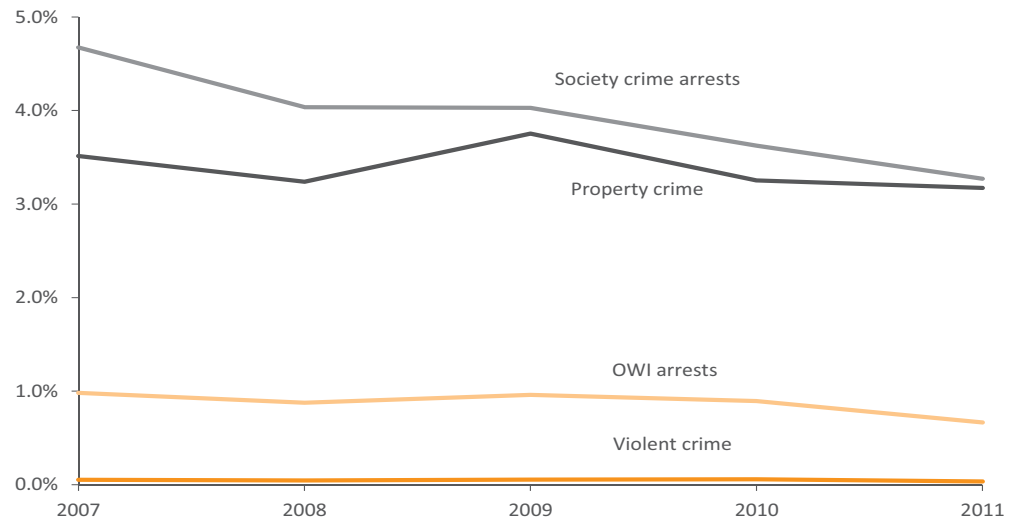
South Wood County is very safe. The number of violent crimes in the region is very low, with no more than 20 incidents reported per year, over the past six years. Property crime is also on the decline, dropping 9% between 2006 and 2011.

OWI — Operating While Intoxicated — arrests are also down since 2006. After a 32% decrease over six years, the number of drunk driving arrests in 2011 fell below 200 in the south Wood County area. Safe roads and safe driving are vital in a rural community where families often drive more miles for work, school and recreation than their urban counterparts.

Society crime arrests (weapons, disorderly conduct, vagrancy) also fell an impressive margin of 30% from 2006-2011.

THE NUMBER OF CRIMES AS A SHARE OF THE POPULATION

IN ROME, GRAND RAPIDS AND WISCONSIN RAPIDS, 2007-2011



Source: Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance, Statistical Assistance Center and U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Table DP05 Demographics and Household, Five-year Estimates 2007-2011



Ward 1: Neighbors Say “No” to Crime

Neighbors in Wisconsin Rapids’ Ward 1 have united to confront a string of property crimes in the area. Inspired by Mayor Vruwink’s call for citizens to, “Share ideas in areas they’re passionate about,” residents of Ward 1 asked for the city’s help to discourage crime. The Mayor’s office, local aldermen, the police chief, and planning and zoning all advised Ward 1 on effective crime reduction methods.

The Ward 1 group has begun a beautification and chronic nuisance abatement program to reduce crime. This includes creating zoning ordinances, fines, and a follow-up process. The organizers hope to develop a core group of residents to help those who can’t afford to make improvements to their property.

“It may seem like a small thing, but clean-up works, and the community gets a shot in the arm to create a better, safer area. They begin to see what’s possible.” - Kathy Rash, Ward 1 Resident

This report supported by:

incourage
community foundation
incouragecf.org

Written By:

COWS | BUILDING
THE HIGH ROAD

Center on Wisconsin Strategy
University of Wisconsin-Madison
cows.org

Laura Dresser, PhD
Associate Director, COWS

Michele Mackey, JD, MS
Senior Associate, COWS

Kathryn Edwards
Graduate Research Assistant, COWS

Special thanks to the following organizations and agencies for providing data for this report: Childcare Resource & Referral of Central Wisconsin; Department of Workforce Development - Office of Economic Advisors; North Central Community Action Program; North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board; UW-Stevens Point Continuing Education; United Way of Inner Wisconsin; and Wood County Human Services.

incourage
community foundation

478 e grand ave
wisconsin rapids wi 54494
715.423.3863
hello@incouragecf.org
incouragecf.org



© June 2013