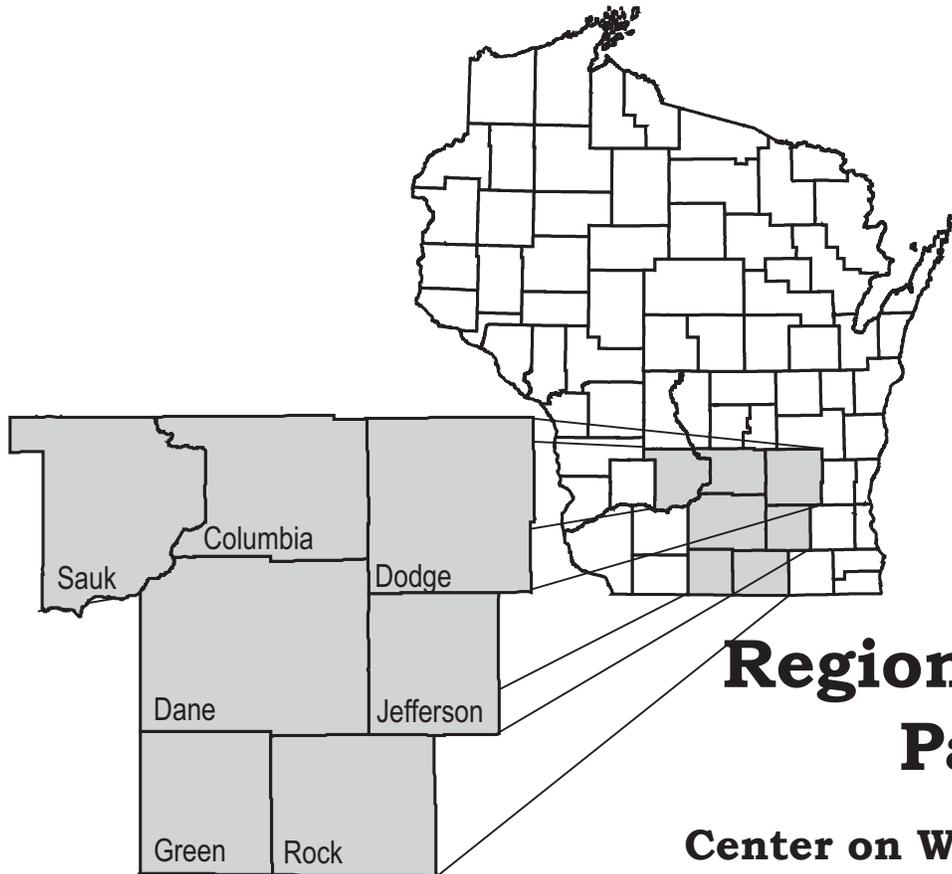

Sustaining Wisconsin

A Statewide Dialogue on Wisconsin's Future

A project of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), UW-Madison

Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Jefferson, Rock, & Sauk Counties

An Economic, Social, Environmental, and Political Snapshot



May 2002

Regional Briefing Paper Series

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Preface: Why we need State of the Region Reports

In January 2001 the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) launched an 18-month statewide grassroots public education campaign — complete with coordinated media outreach, public discussion forums, an interactive web site, and regular electronic mailings — on major issues of concern to the state. “Sustaining Wisconsin” offers a model for mass education on public policy and involvement that will produce real results now and can be used elsewhere in the future.

A central component of Sustaining Wisconsin is providing useful, accessible information to people in their communities. Integral to this mission is a series of regional reports we are releasing throughout the campaign. The regional reports are an attempt to understand and portray issues and matters that are of specific importance to residents in particular areas of Wisconsin. The regional reports focus more detailed attention on the many facts within Sustaining Wisconsin’s five broad issue categories: Jobs and the Economy, Families and Communities, The Future, Environment and Natural Resources, and Democracy and Civic Participation.

The regional reports are also part of a larger project currently underway at COWS to explore the state of rural Wisconsin. The rural areas of Wisconsin vary significantly depending on the region. In the northern part of the state, rural economies are facing unique challenges as tourism grows and the mining and timber industries change. In the southern part of the state, the pressures of suburban development and the current low prices for agricultural commodities, including milk, Wisconsin’s farming backbone, are forcing many farmers into heavier debt and often foreclosure.

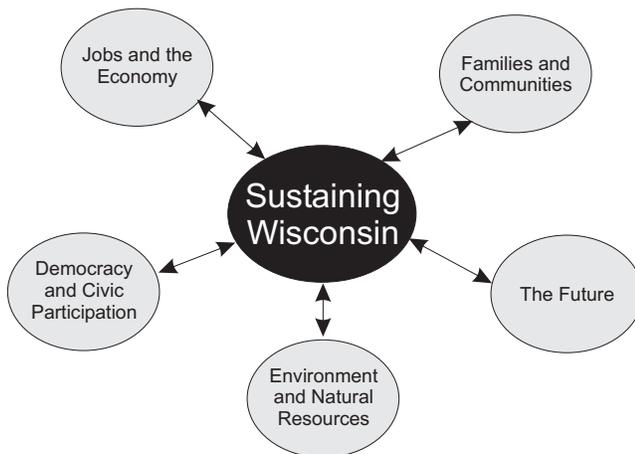
There are similarities behind the concerns facing residents of rural Wisconsin, as there are common features in the concerns that face us all. Our rural areas do not exist independently of the urban areas and the state of rural affairs is directly related to the state as a whole. By dividing the state into regions comprised of three to six counties, and then exploring in detail the particular issues, trends, opportunities and challenges, we believe that we can better understand our state as a whole, and for the first time begin to articulate a policy agenda for long-term, statewide economic sustainability.

Many decisions that impact our daily lives are made at the local and regional levels. More information about job growth, unemployment, health and social services, schools, lakes and rivers, and political participation can help us in making the right policy choices in our local areas. The regional reports are designed to contribute to the discussion around these issues, and draw attention to important choices and challenges that we face right in our own backyards.

The differences in geographical location, landscape, industry base, political affiliations, and environmental concerns all offer a chance to compare one area of Wisconsin to another area and to the state as a whole.

As with virtually all regions in Wisconsin, the counties explored in this regional report highlight how great it is to live here. The challenge before us as a state is to preserve our strongest traditions while confronting our greatest challenges.

Findings: The State of the Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Jefferson, Rock, & Sauk Region



Even a quick review of the challenges we face — that is, the problems we need to solve and the opportunities we need to preserve — reveals important connections between seemingly unrelated issues. The choices we and our leaders make should embrace those connections.

Jobs and the Economy

- The construction industry led job growth in the region, with the exception of Green County, between 1994 and 1999.
- Nearly half of the workers in Columbia, Green and Sauk counties did not earn enough in their primary job to lift a family of four out of poverty in 1998.

- In contrast to the statewide trend, Green, Jefferson, and Rock counties saw modest increases in the amount of land used for farming between 1992 and 1997.

Families and Communities

- Poverty rates in the region were all below the statewide average.
- Dane County had the third highest Fair Market Rent in the state in 2001.
- The percentages of AFDC/W2 recipients in all but Rock County were far below the state average in 2001.

The Future

- Dane County showed the most dramatic overall population increase between 1970 and 2000.
- Columbia County had a significantly higher infant mortality rate in 1998 compared to both the region and the state.
- Columbia, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk counties all had higher juvenile arrest rates than the statewide average in 1999.

The Environment and Natural Resources

- This region had 77 impaired water bodies in 2000. Dane and Dodge counties had the most impaired water bodies in the region with 21 each.
- Sauk County, with 36 percent of its area forested, had the greatest percentage of such land in the region.
- Green and Rock counties had the smallest percentage of recreation and conservation land in the region, both ranking among the 10 counties with the lowest percentage of such land statewide.
- This region contained a total of 53 Superfund sites in 1999. The majority of the region's sites are located in Dane, Dodge, and Rock counties. With 18 sites, Dane County contained the most sites.

Democracy and Civic Participation

- Only six of the 24 state legislative races held in the region in 2000 were competitive, with the winner garnering less than 60 percent of the votes cast.
- Incumbents outspent their challengers in 17 of the 20 contested races in the region.

Top 10/Bottom 10 in WI

- **Labor Force Participation Rate 1999** — Dane 3rd highest; Sauk 5th highest; Dodge 9th highest
- **Construction Wage 1998** — Dodge 2nd highest; Rock 5th highest; Dane 9th highest
- **Median family income 2001** — Dane 3rd highest
- **Poverty Rate 1997** — Jefferson 6th lowest; Dodge 9th lowest; Columbia 10th lowest
- **Families That Could Not Afford Fair Market Rent 1999** — Green 2nd lowest; Columbia 3rd lowest; Jefferson 4th lowest; Dodge 5th lowest
- **Prenatal Care Rates 1998** — Dane 8th highest; Dodge 9th highest
- **W-2 Participation 1998** — Rock 3rd highest; Dane 4th highest; Green 6th lowest; Jefferson 8th lowest
- **Juvenile Arrest Rates 1999** — Rock 3rd highest; Columbia 4th highest; Jefferson 8th highest
- **Badger Care Recipients 1999** — Dane 3rd lowest; Jefferson 6th lowest
- **Change in Renter Households 1990-2000** — Sauk 7th highest; Dodge 10th highest; Green 9th lowest
- **Campaign Finance Reform Referendum 2000** — Dane and Sauk, highest
- **Impaired Water Bodies 2000** — Dane and Dodge 3rd highest
- **Superfund Sites 1999** — Dane 7th highest

Jobs and the Economy

While Wisconsin as a whole has recently experienced an economic boom, we continue to face challenges in building a sustainable future for our state. The nature of work in Wisconsin is changing, as the economy shifts from family-supporting jobs in the manufacturing sector to low wage, dead-end jobs in the retail and service sectors. As wages drop, people are working longer hours to maintain their standards of living. Furthermore, not all citizens have shared equally in the economic boom. The wealthy have benefited disproportionately from the growth in the last decade, the middle class is largely stuck, and the poor are slipping further behind.

The construction sector led job growth in the region in the latter half of the 1990s, although the services sector also saw significant job growth. The relative increase of jobs in the service sector is of some concern, as this industry tends to pay lower wages and provide fewer benefits than manufacturing and construction jobs. The challenge ahead lies in promoting wages and benefits that can support families and reduce worker turnover.

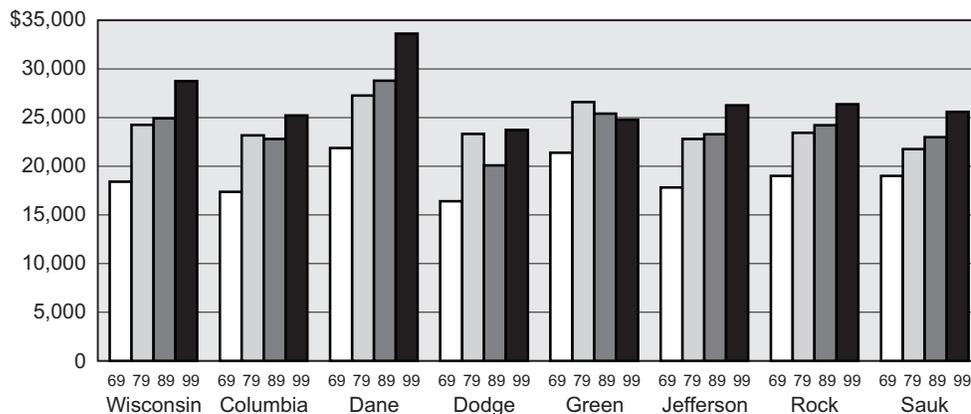
The labor force participation rates in the region are near the Wisconsin average, and unemployment rates in the region, with the exception of Columbia and Rock counties, are at or below the state average. The percentage of workers with poverty earnings in 1998 varied significantly by county, but overall was relatively low compared to the rest of the state; Dane County had the fifth lowest percentage of workers with poverty earnings statewide.

Throughout Wisconsin, there is a general trend toward large, “factory” farms, which are farms larger than 1000 acres. The region saw a similar increase in the number of factory farms between 1992 and 1997, although the change in percentage of land used for farming varied by county in the same time period.

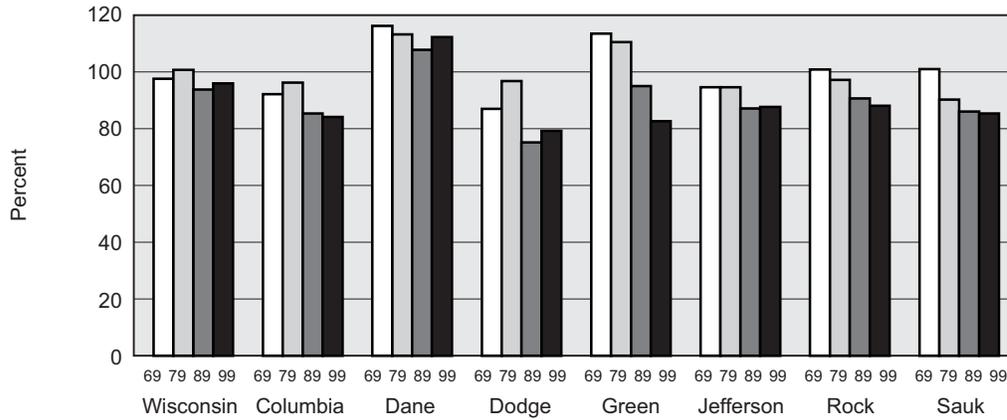
Economic Growth

- All counties in the region had per capita incomes below the state average in 1999, with the exception of Dane County, which showed a per capita income rate well above the national average.
- Regional per capita income as a percentage of the national per capita income shows that these counties were mostly below the national average from 1969 to 1999. However, Dane County consistently had the highest per capita income in the region and exceeded the state average in each decade from 1969 to 1999.

Per Capita Income, 1969–99
(adjusted for inflation, 2001 dollars)



Per Capita Income as a Percentage of the U.S. Per Capita, 1969–99



Labor Force Participation and Unemployment

Wisconsin rightfully takes pride in its strong work ethic, which is demonstrated in the region.

- Each county in the region had labor force participation rates above the national rate in 1999.
- Sauk County led the region, while Rock County had the lowest labor force participation rate, hovering near the national average.

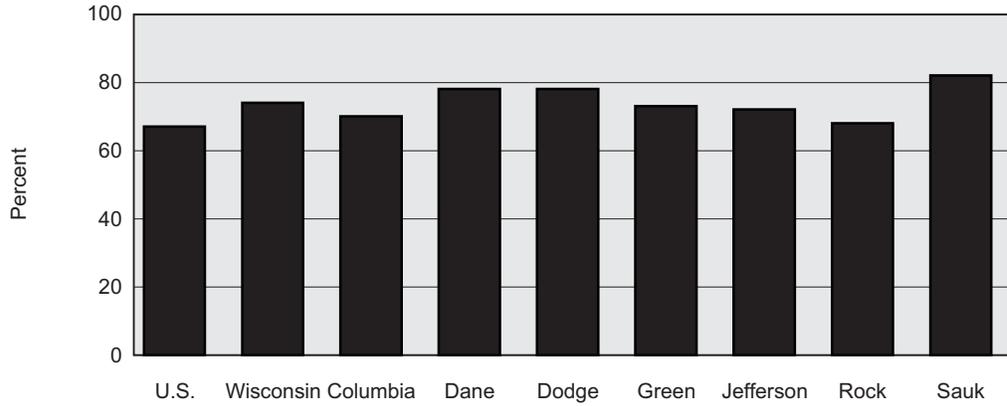
Through the 1990s, unemployment rates were at historic lows in Wisconsin. Similarly, each county in the region experienced an overall decline in unemployment in the same decade.

- Dane County’s unemployment rates remained significantly below the regional and statewide average from 1994 to 2000.
- Columbia and Rock counties showed unemployment rates that remained at or above the statewide average from 1994 to 2000.
- Sauk County’s unemployment rate went from above the statewide average in 1994 to below the Wisconsin average in 2000.

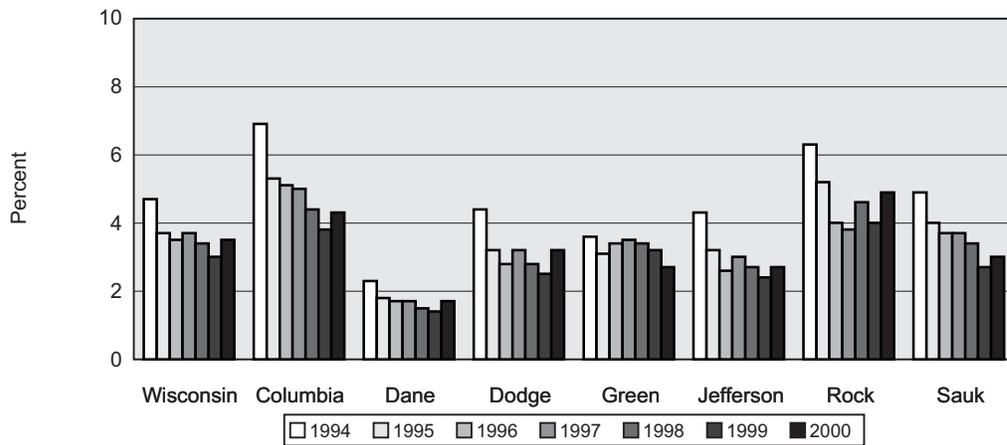
Unemployment rates fluctuate with seasons. Seasonal unemployment rates take into account jobs, such as those in the hospitality sector, that are added during the summer to meet increased tourist demands, revealing cycles of economic activity in particular areas.

- Columbia, Green, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk counties appear to be more susceptible to seasonal unemployment rate swings, while unemployment rates in Dane and Dodge counties seem less influenced by seasonal changes.
- Columbia and Sauk counties saw a two-percentage point swing in unemployment between summer and winter in recent years.
- Recent unemployment rates also show large increases in unemployment in January of 2002 for each county in the region, with the largest increases in Columbia, Green and Sauk counties.

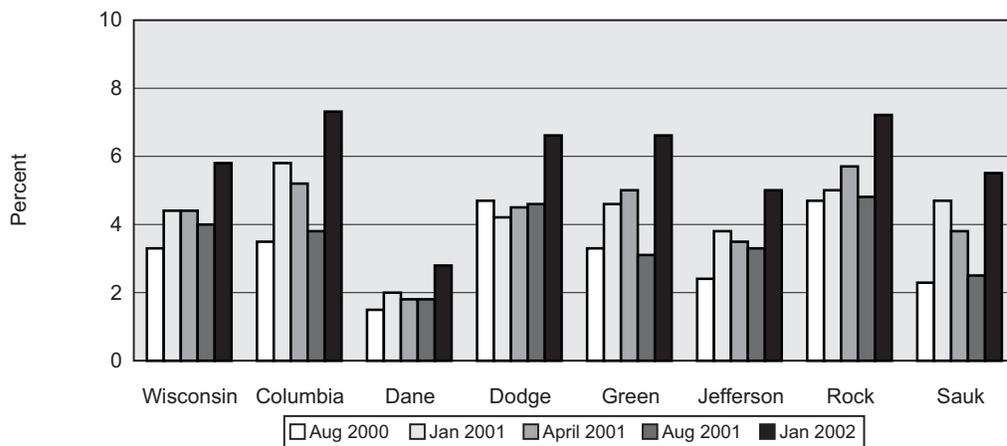
Labor Force Participation Rate, 1999



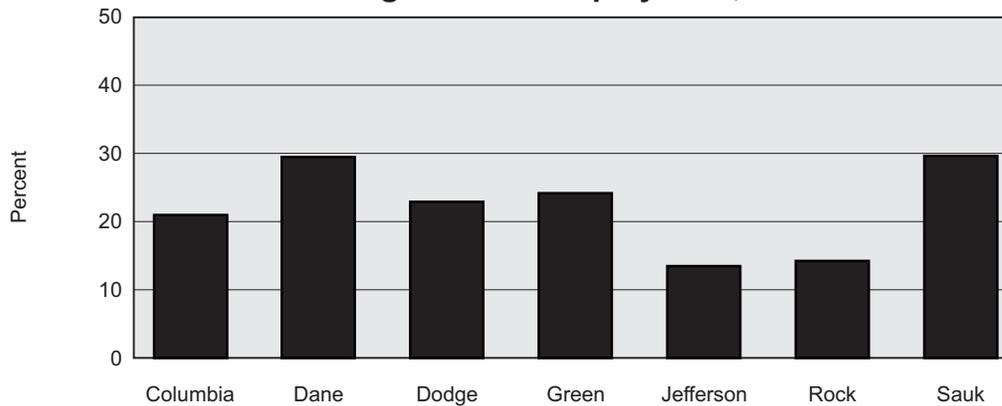
Unemployment Rates, 1994–2000



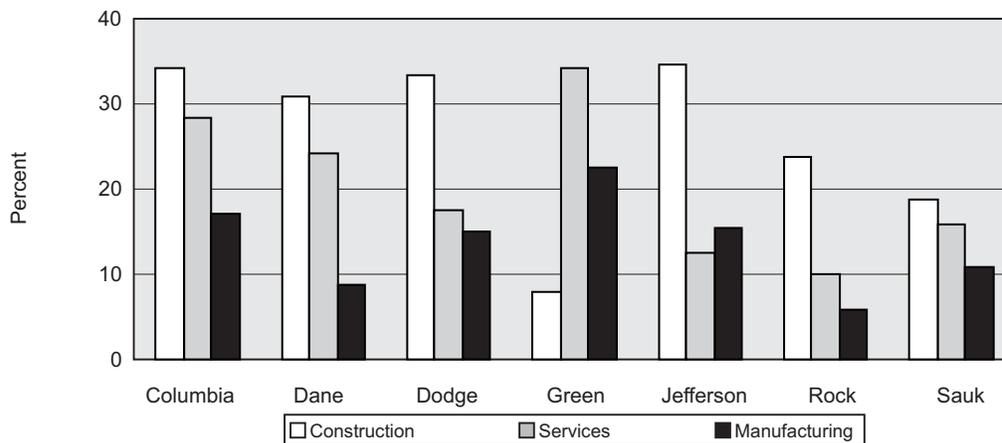
Recent Seasonal Unemployment Rates



Change in Total Employment, 1990–98



Job Growth Across Sectors, 1994–99



Job Growth

In addition to labor force participation and unemployment trends, job growth across sectors is an important indicator of the nature and quality of a region’s economy.

- Employment opportunities have increased in each county, with Sauk and Dane counties each showing a nearly 30 percent increase from 1990 to 1998, the largest increase in the region.
- The construction industry led the job growth in the region, with the exception of Green County, between 1994 and 1999.
- The service sector saw the largest increase in Green County, followed by Columbia and Dane counties.

Employment by Sector

Columbia County

More than a quarter of the non-farm employment in Columbia County in 1999 was in the manufacturing industry. Service, trade, and governmental jobs accounted for the bulk of the remaining non-farm employment in 1999.

Dane County

Services and government each accounted for approximately one fourth of non-farm employment in 2001. Trade is the third largest non-farm employment sector in Dane County.

Dodge County

Thirty-six percent of jobs in Dodge County were in the high-paying manufacturing sector. Services made up the next largest sector, with 20 percent of total non-farm employment in 2001.

Green County

Green County’s primary employment sectors in 2001 were trade, manufacturing, and services, constituting the bulk of its non-farm employment.

Jefferson County

The manufacturing industry constituted the largest single sector in Jefferson County’s non-farm employment in 2001. The trade and services sectors constituted the bulk of the remaining non-farm employment.

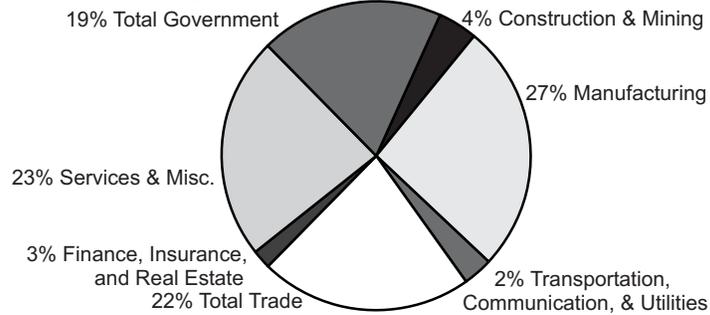
Rock County

Services, manufacturing and trade made up the bulk of non-farm employment in Rock County in 2001. Each of these sectors contributed approximately one-quarter of non-farm employment in the county.

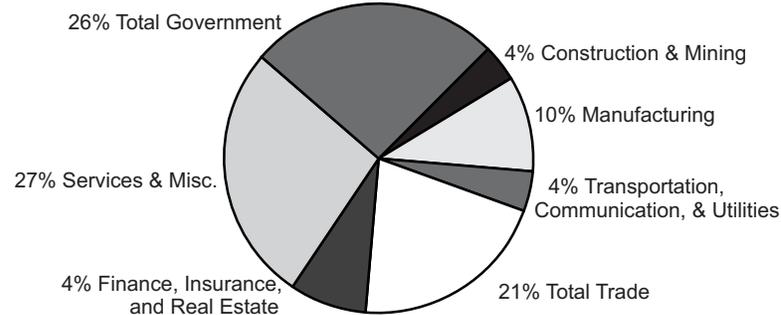
Sauk County

The low-paying service sector accounted for 28 percent of non-farm employment in Sauk County in 2001. Trade also accounted for a large segment of non-farm employment.

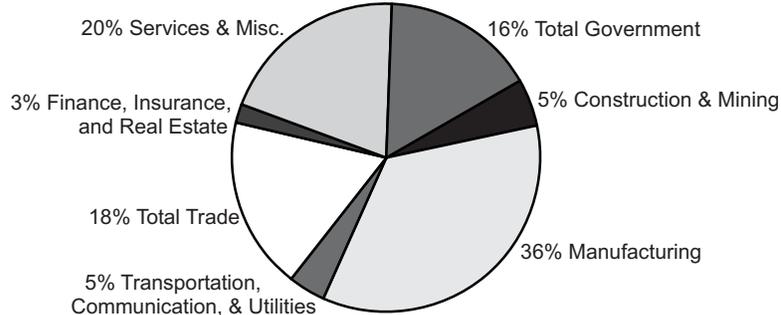
Columbia County Non-Farm Employment by Sector, 2001



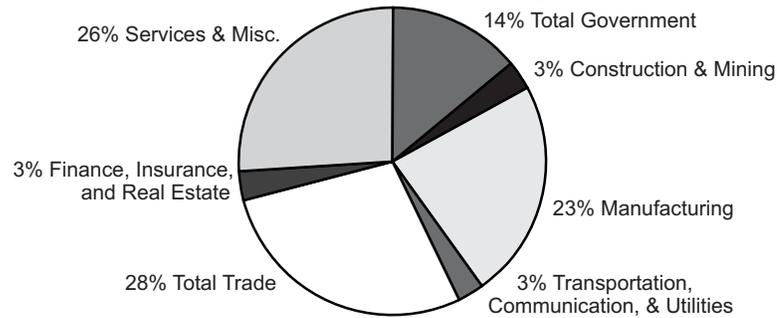
Dane County Non-Farm Employment by Sector, 2001



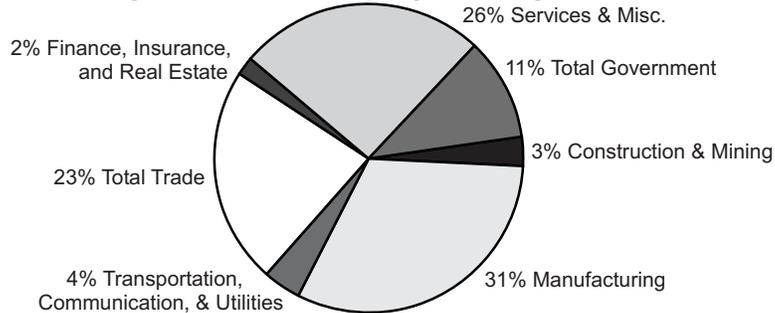
Dodge County Non-Farm Employment by Sector, 2001



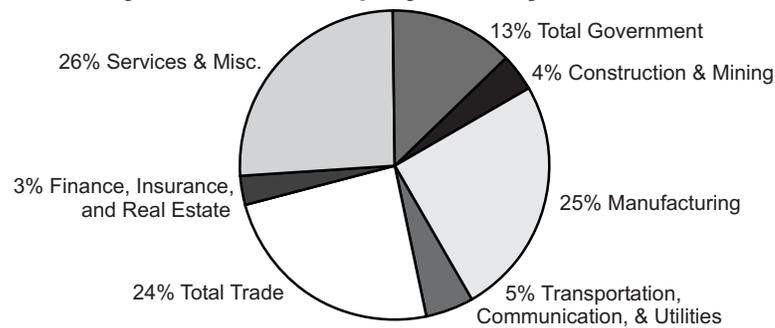
Green County Non-Farm Employment by Sector, 2001



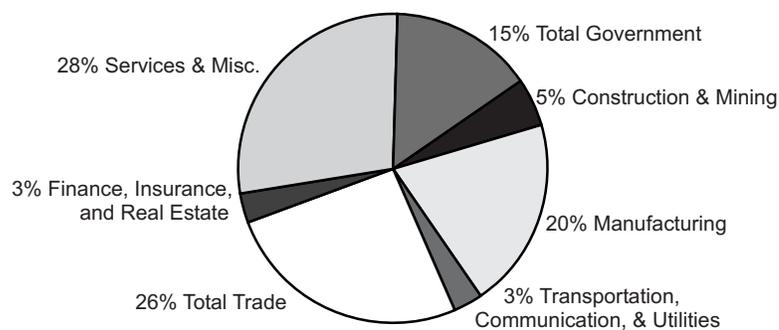
Jefferson County Non-Farm Employment by Sector, 2001



Rock County Non-Farm Employment by Sector, 2001



Sauk County Non-Farm Employment by Sector, 2001

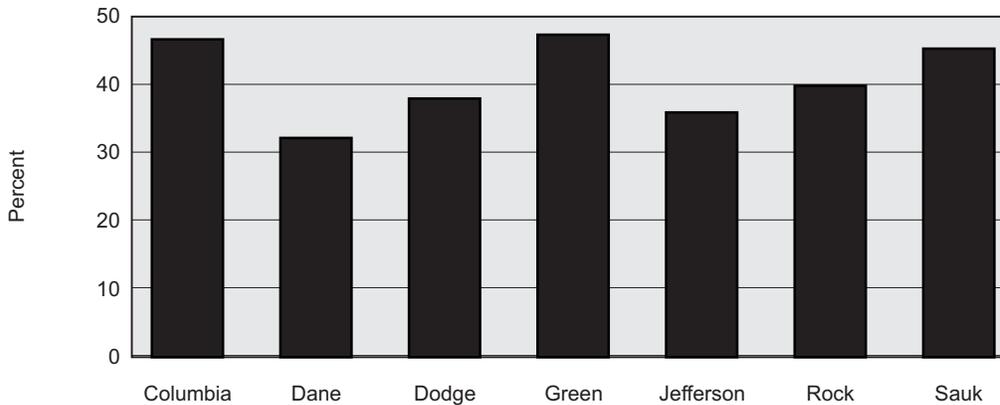


Workers with Poverty Earnings

A significant number of workers in the region had sub-poverty earnings in their primary jobs in 1998. The prevalence of workers with poverty earnings — \$17,650 for a family of four in 2001 — in itself, however, does not mean that people are living in poverty. These workers may live with another wage earner, work multiple jobs, or draw on alternative income sources. But poverty earnings are reflective of the types of jobs available in particular counties in Wisconsin, as well as of the opportunities residents have for securing the wages and the benefits sufficient for a basic quality of life. The percentage of workers with poverty earnings varied significantly from county to county in the region in 1998.

- Nearly half of the workers in Columbia, Green and Sauk counties did not earn enough in their primary job to lift a family of four out of poverty in 1998.
- Dane County was ranked fifth lowest statewide in 1998 for percentage of workers with poverty earnings.

Workers with Poverty Earnings, 1998
(in primary occupation)



Agriculture

Agriculture has always played an important role in Wisconsin, yet this role is declining as farmers continue to be squeezed by low commodity prices and development pressures. Farmers spend roughly seventy-five cents in the local economy for every dollar they earn, and as a result, as farms disappear, many local businesses may follow. The future of these farms will affect all residents of these counties, not only in the supermarket, but also in terms of the environment and the local economy.

- As was the case statewide, the number of full-time farms declined in the region between 1992 and 1997. Columbia, Dodge, Jefferson and Rock counties saw a faster rate of decline than that of the state.
- Between 1992 and 1997, the amount of land used for farming decreased in Columbia, Dane, Dodge and Sauk counties, with Dane and Dodge counties showing the fastest rate of decrease.
- Green, Jefferson and Rock counties saw modest increases in the amount of land used for farming between 1992 and 1997.

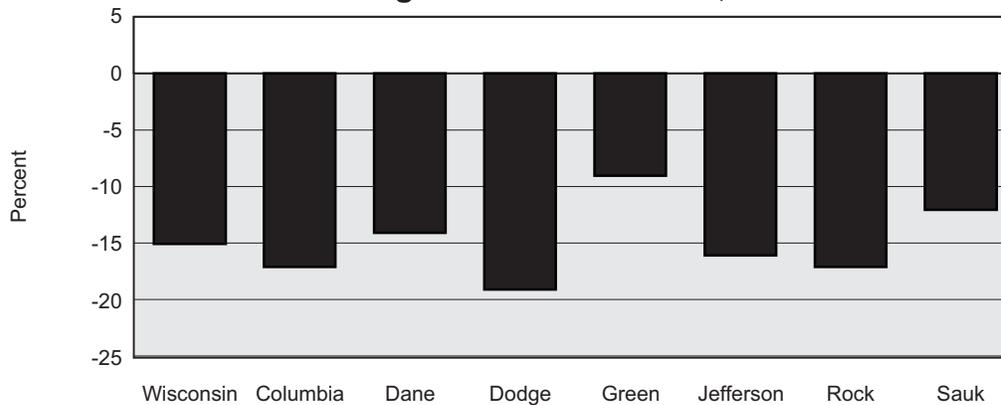
The number of farms larger than 1,000 acres in Wisconsin increased 32 percent between 1987 and 1997. By contrast, the number of farms with more than 1,000 acres in the United States increased by just 4.3 percent over the same time period.

- The number of large farms increased between 1992 and 1997 in every county in the region, with the exception of Dane County.

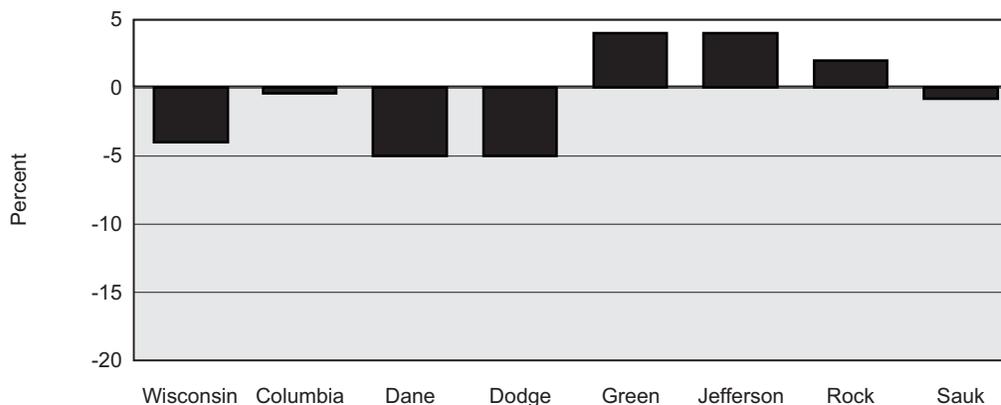
The characteristics of farmers in Wisconsin are also changing. Farming households are more and more likely to rely on additional income earned off of the farm, and income earned from two workers.

- The number of farmers who report farming as their principal occupation decreased in every county in the region, following the statewide trend. The rate of decline was faster than the Wisconsin average in Columbia, Dodge, Jefferson and Rock counties

Change in Full Time Farms, 1992–97



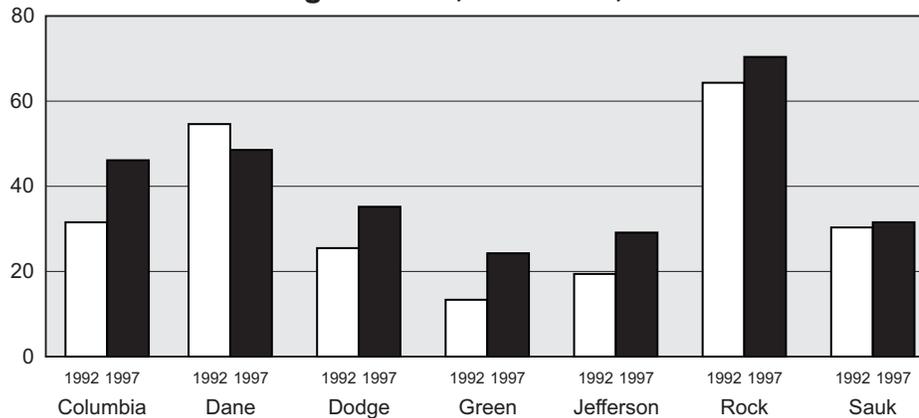
Change in Land Used for Farming, 1992–97



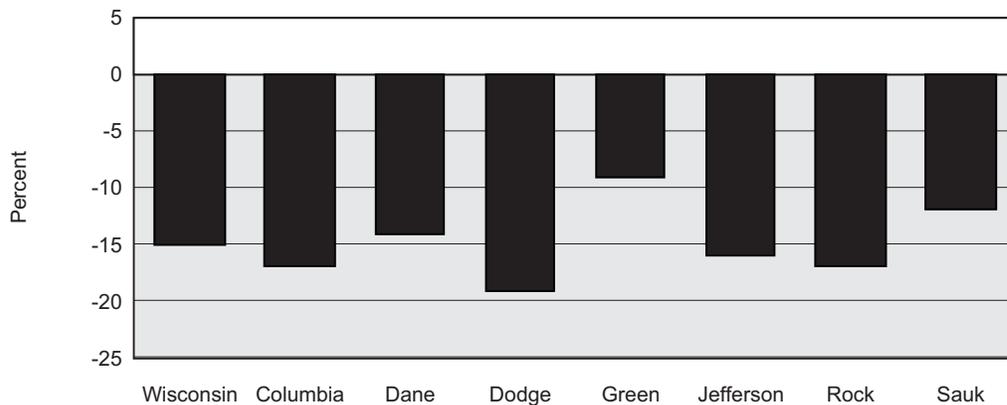
The average age of Wisconsin farmers is increasing slightly, as young people are not entering the occupation as quickly as older farmers are retiring. In Wisconsin, the average age of farmers increased from almost 51 years in 1992, to 52 years in 1997.

- The average age of farmers in the region, with the exception of Green County, was higher than the state average.

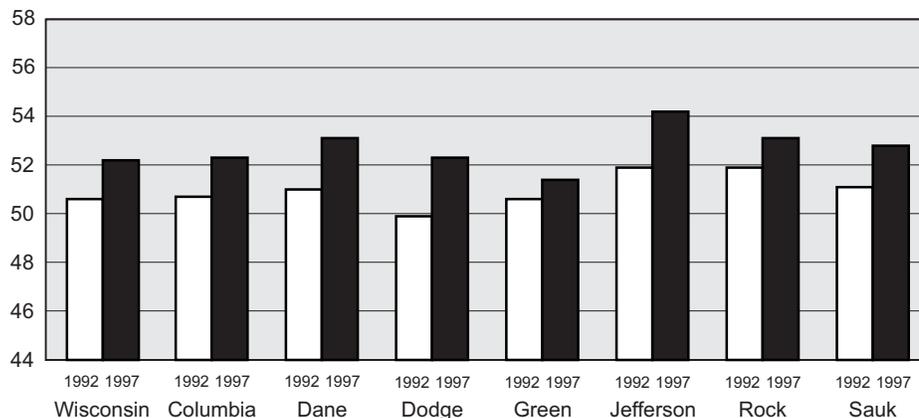
Farms Larger than 1,000 Acres, 1992 and 1997



Change in Those Reporting Farming as Principal Occupation, 1992–97



Average Age of Farmers, 1992–97

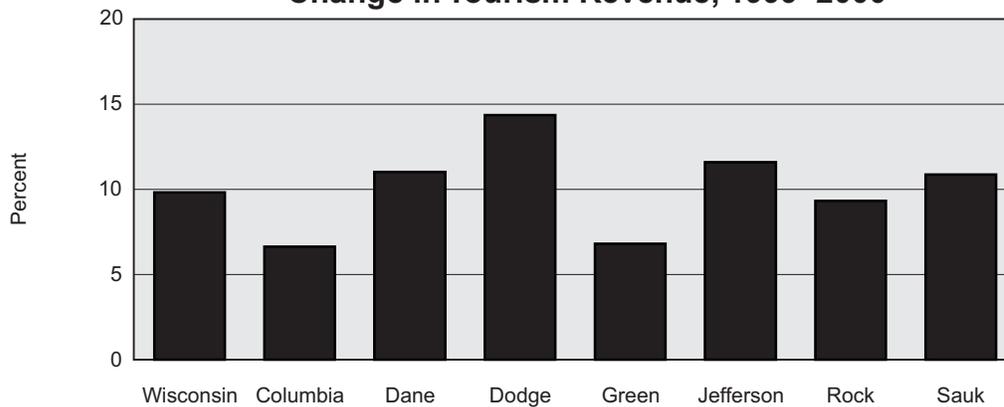


Tourism

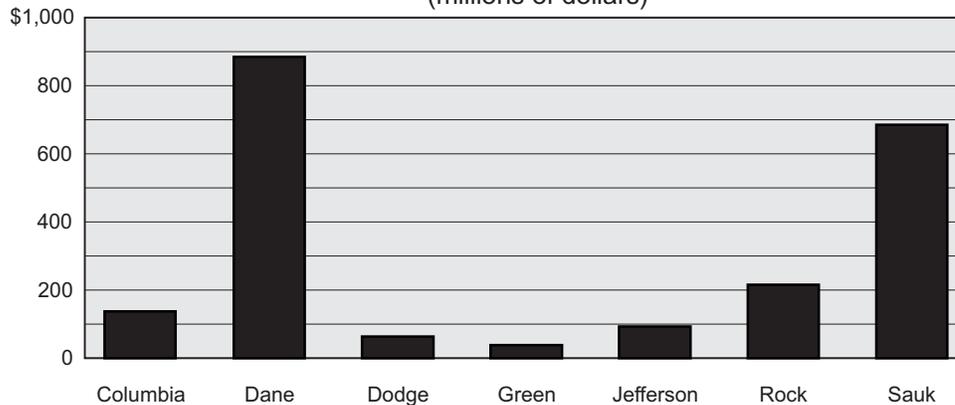
Tourism is an important industry throughout Wisconsin, as revenue from this sector supports job growth and local businesses. Yet, jobs within the industry are frequently low-wage and seasonal. As such, while the industry can be a good source of revenue for a county, the distribution and organization of tourism jobs must be carefully planned to ensure that they provide sustainable, family-supporting incomes.

- Tourism revenue in each county increased between 1999 and 2000, with Dane, Dodge, Jefferson and Sauk counties experiencing larger increases than the statewide average.
- Dane County leads the region in both traveler’s spending and total jobs in tourism. Tourists spent nearly \$1 billion in Dane County in 2000, supporting nearly 30,000 jobs.

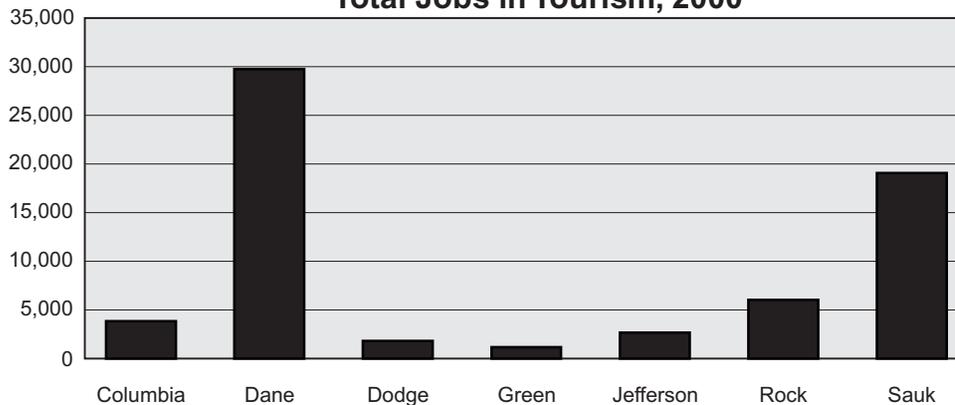
Change in Tourism Revenue, 1999–2000



Travelers’ Spending, 2000
(millions of dollars)



Total Jobs in Tourism, 2000



Families and Communities

Strong families and communities are integral to the realization of the American dream. In Wisconsin, work is up and welfare rolls are down, yet many workers remain poor. Shelter is considered a fundamental right, yet many of our citizens do not have access to affordable housing. Even as family incomes rise, the percentage of families who cannot afford the Fair Market Rent in their communities remain stubbornly high. By supporting working families, we promote strong communities. We must ensure that local economies can provide family-supporting wages, that our children and those in need are cared for, and that we provide affordable housing options to the citizens of our state.

This region has experienced increasing median family incomes, lower Fair Market Rents than Wisconsin as a whole, and a lower percentage of students eligible for free or reduced cost lunch as compared to the state. Higher incomes and fewer children requiring social services demonstrate that this region is moving in the right direction.

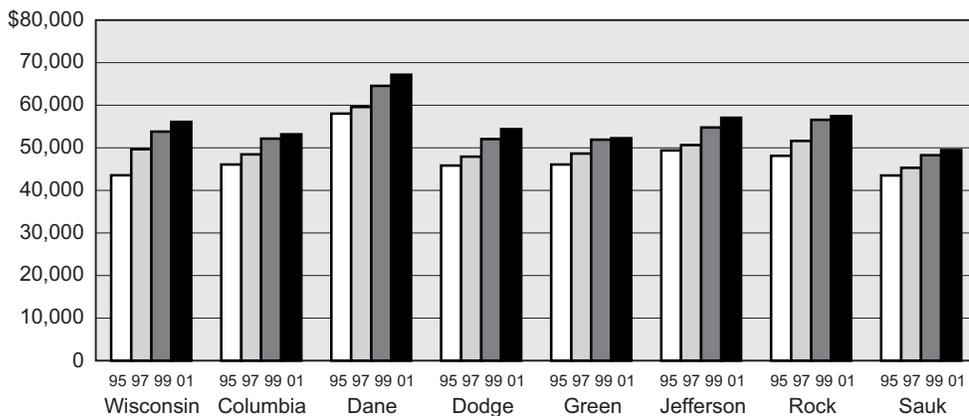
Yet, as this area moves forward, it remains important to address the needs of all of its families, particularly those who have not benefited equally from the growing economy. Despite poverty rates that are among the lowest in the state, more than 30 percent of families in all seven counties of the region could not afford Fair Market Rent in 1999. These challenges and others will become increasingly visible as the population continues to grow.

Family Income

The median family income in the region has experienced an overall increase, and remained near the statewide average, since at least 1995. The reasons for this growth must be looked at closely, however, as it is often the result of longer working hours and an increased number of households with two income-earners, both working at or near full time. In fact, the typical married couple in Wisconsin now works the equivalent of 1.9 full-time jobs.

- Dane County had the third highest median family income statewide in 2001.
- Columbia County families had income higher than the statewide average in 1995, but lagged behind since 1997.
- Sauk, Green, and Dodge counties also had median family incomes below the statewide median in 2001.

Median Family Income, 1995–2001
(adjusted for inflation, 2001 dollars)



Single Parent Families

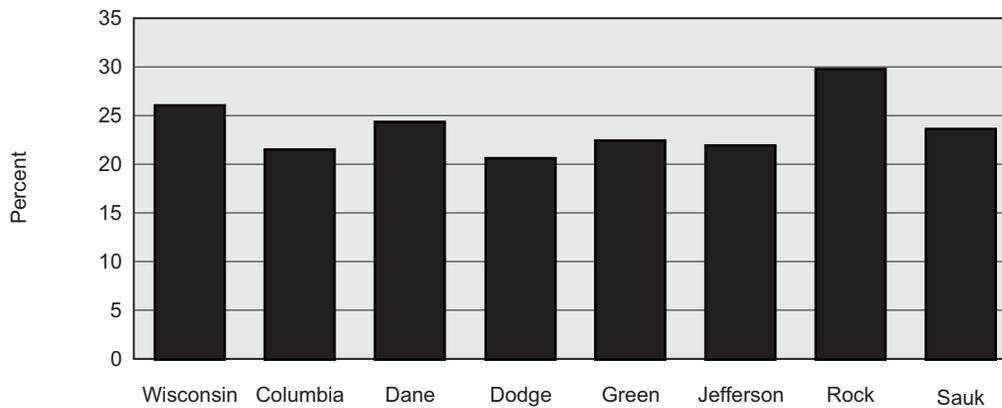
Single parent families often have lower median family incomes than their two-parent counterparts, and must often spend a significant portion of their income on child care costs and other supports, making it more difficult to make ends meet.

- Aside from Rock County, all of the counties in the region had lower percentages of single parent families than the state average in 2000.
- Rock County had the sixth highest percentage of single parent families in Wisconsin in 2000.

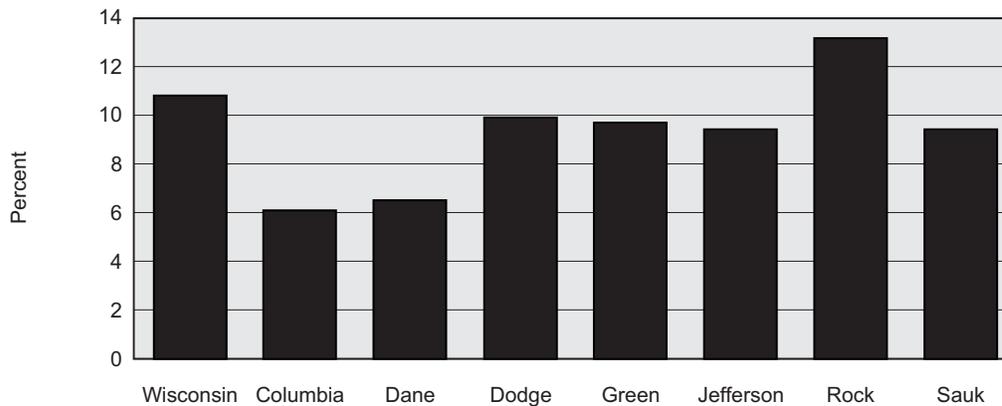
The rate of teen births is also an area of concern, as teen parents often require additional services to support them in raising their families. As these services become more costly, the region and the state will have to explore new methods for ensuring that they remain accessible to all families.

- With the exception of Rock County, the percentage of teen births in the region was lower than the state average in 1999.

Single Parent Families, 2000



Teen Births, 1999



Poverty

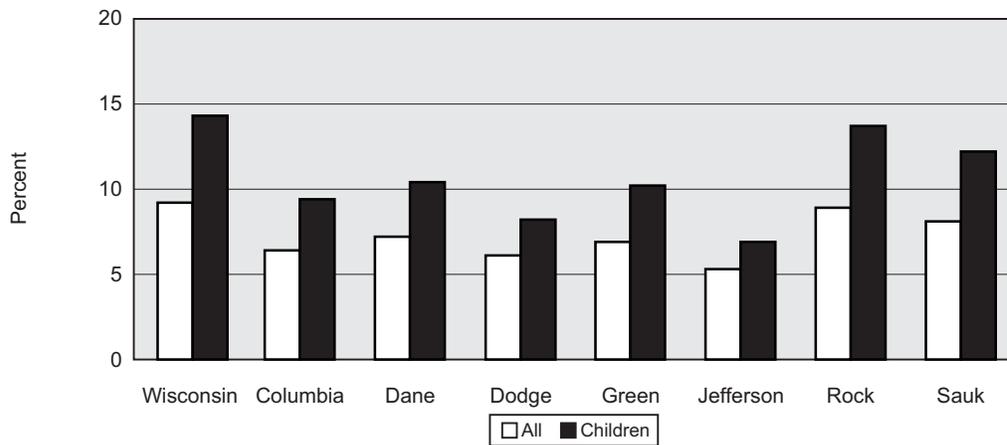
Poverty rates — defined as having income at or below \$17,650 for a family of four in 2001 — in this region are some of the lowest in the state.

- Poverty rates in all seven counties were lower than the statewide average in 1997.
- Rock County’s overall and childhood poverty rates were highest in the region, yet slightly below the statewide average.
- Jefferson County had the sixth lowest total poverty and childhood poverty rates in Wisconsin in 1997. Columbia County had the tenth lowest total poverty rate statewide.

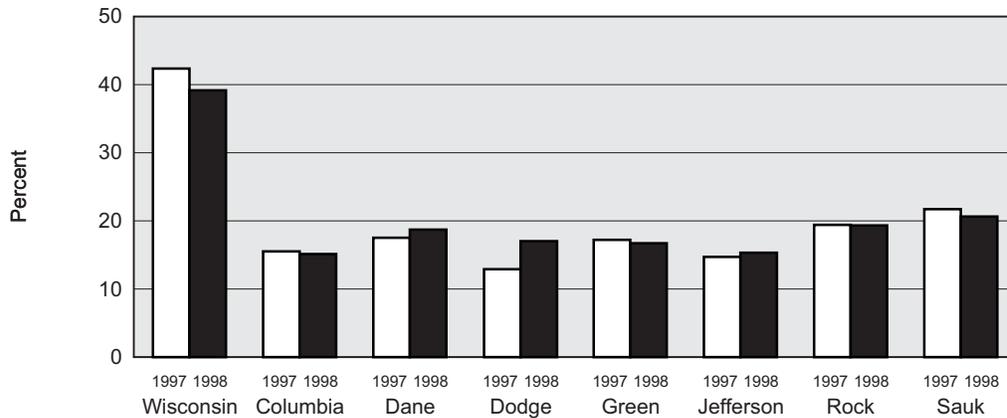
Overall, this region had relatively low numbers of children eligible for free or reduced cost lunch programs as compared to Wisconsin as a whole.

- Columbia County had the tenth lowest percentage statewide of children eligible for free or reduced cost lunch.

Poverty Rates, 1997



Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Cost School Lunch, 1997–98



Affordable Housing

Wisconsin’s building industry has been at the forefront of the recent economic boom. Unfortunately, not all residents have benefited equally. Construction rates for single-family residences have increased, but rates for apartments and other affordable housing options lag desperately behind. As a result, prices for rental units increase in areas where demand is highest, decreasing affordable housing options and placing greater strain on household budgets.

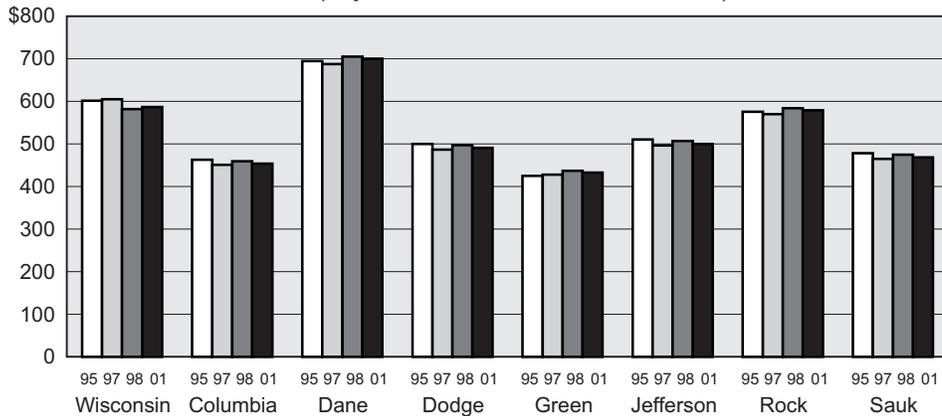
Fair Market Rent (FMR) is defined as a “gross rent estimate”, including the cost to rent a home or apartment plus the cost of all utilities. “Affordable FMR” is commonly calculated to be 30 percent of a household’s total gross income. Even where real Fair Market Rent held steady or slightly decreased, many residents remain priced out of a significant portion of the rental housing in each of the region’s counties.

- The FMR has largely held steady in all seven counties between 1995 and 2001.
- Dane County had the third highest Fair Market Rent and the third highest hourly wage needed to afford FMR in the state in 2001.
- Rock County had the tenth highest hourly wage needed to afford FMR.
- Green and Columbia counties had the fifth and eighth lowest percentage, respectively, of families who could not afford FMR.

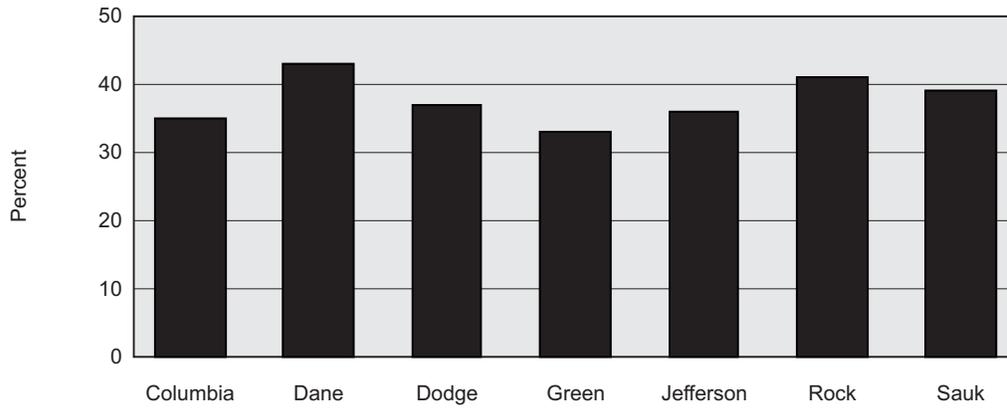
Home ownership has become increasingly expensive and out of reach for many Wisconsin residents, increasing the demand for rental units. The number of rental households in Wisconsin between 1990 and 2000 increased by more than eight percent.

- Sauk and Dodge counties experienced the seventh and tenth largest increases respectively, in renter households between 1990 and 2000; these increases were well above the Wisconsin average.
- Green County was just one of 12 counties statewide that experienced a decrease in renter households during the same time period.

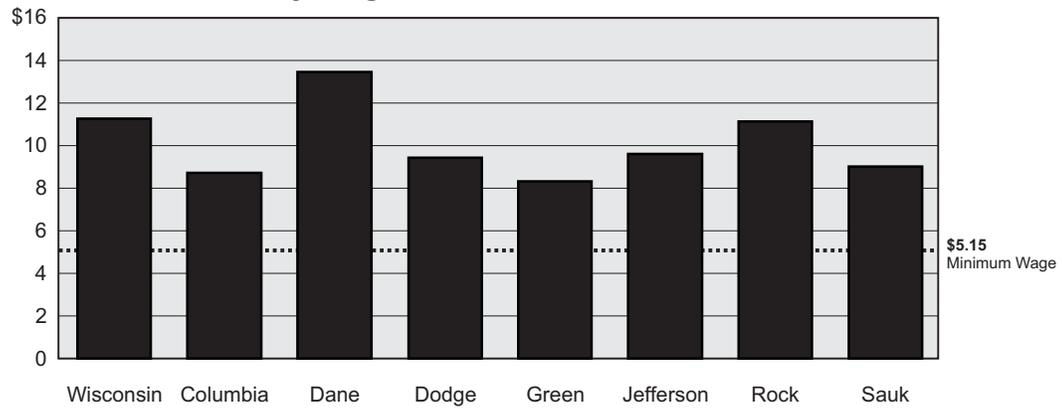
Fair Market Rent (FMR) For a Two Bedroom Apartment, 1995–2001
(adjusted for inflation, 2001 dollars)



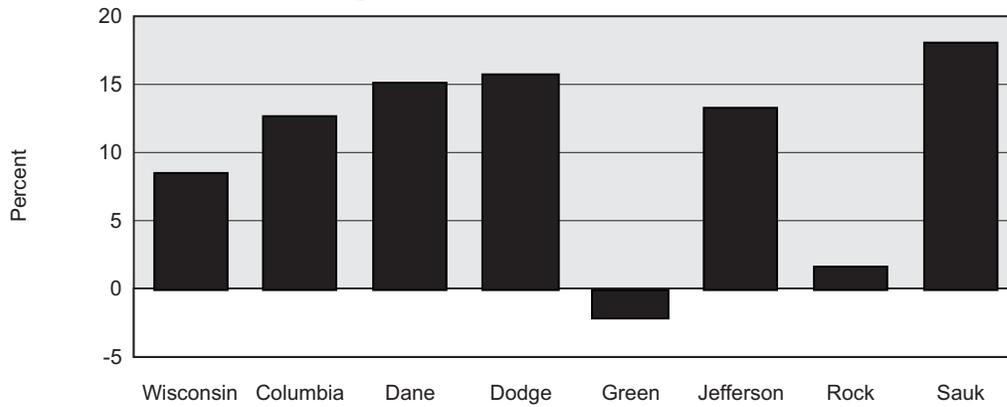
Families That Could Not Afford FMR, 1999



Hourly Wage Needed to Meet FMR, 2001



Change in Renter Households, 1990–2000

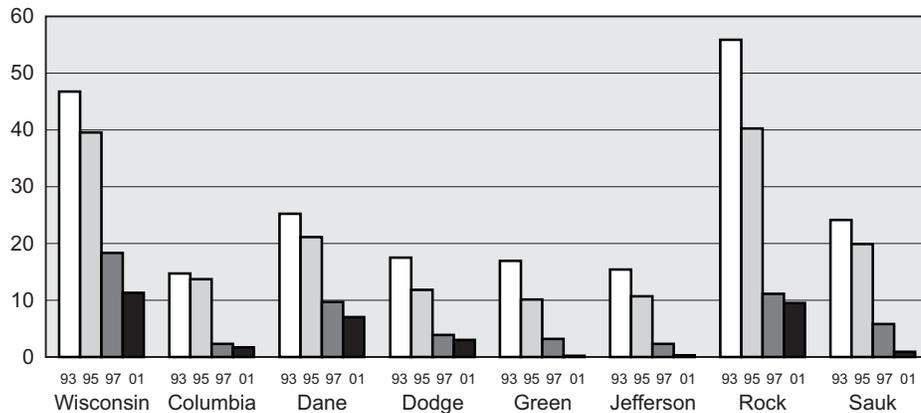


Welfare Reform

Wisconsin’s landmark welfare reform — W2 — has significantly altered the social services system. Welfare rolls have been cut by almost two-thirds in the state. While encouraging work as a solution, close attention should be paid to the jobs that are available and whether these jobs provide the resources necessary to support working families. In all of the counties in this region, as in Wisconsin as a whole, the number of recipients of AFDC/W2 declined significantly between 1993 and 2001.

- In every county but Rock County, the number of AFDC/W2 recipients per 1,000 residents was far below the state average in 2001.
- Rock and Dane counties had the third and fourth highest rates of W2 participation in the state in 2001.
- Green and Jefferson counties had the sixth and eighth lowest rates, respectively, of W2 participation.

AFDC/W2 Recipients, 1993–2001
(per 1,000 residents)



The Future

This seven county region is undergoing significant transformations. As the population changes and ages, the future of these counties will depend on how well the needs of all residents are met. The growth in the number of young people aged 16-24 highlights the importance of such issues as education and family services, and the increase in people aged 40-64 indicates a need for increased attention to specialized health services as the baby boom generation heads toward retirement.

Participation in public health care programs is an indicator of the level of need among lower-income families. Enrollment in these programs differed significantly across the counties in this region: while Dodge, Green, and Jefferson counties all had infant mortality rates significantly lower than the Wisconsin average, the above-average rates in Columbia and Dane counties suggest that the level and quality of health care, as well as the overall of quality of life in this region, require improvement.

Crime rates in the region provide a mixed picture of the quality of life. While arrest rates in Rock County greatly exceeded statewide averages in 1998 and 1999, rates in Dodge and Green counties were significantly below both state and regional levels.

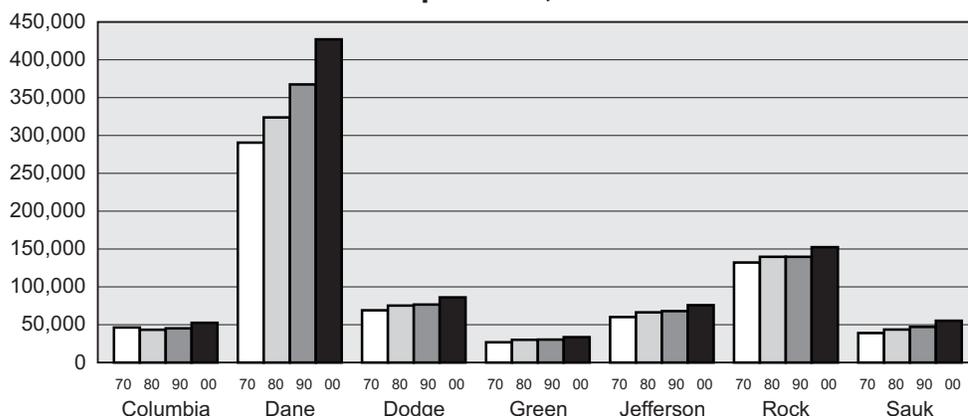
Essential to a sustainable future is maintaining the strong foundation in education in all communities across our state. Although the seven counties in this region vary in terms of educational indicators, overall dropout rates are generally lower and graduation rates are generally higher than statewide averages. ACT scores in these counties are in line with the rest of the state.

Population

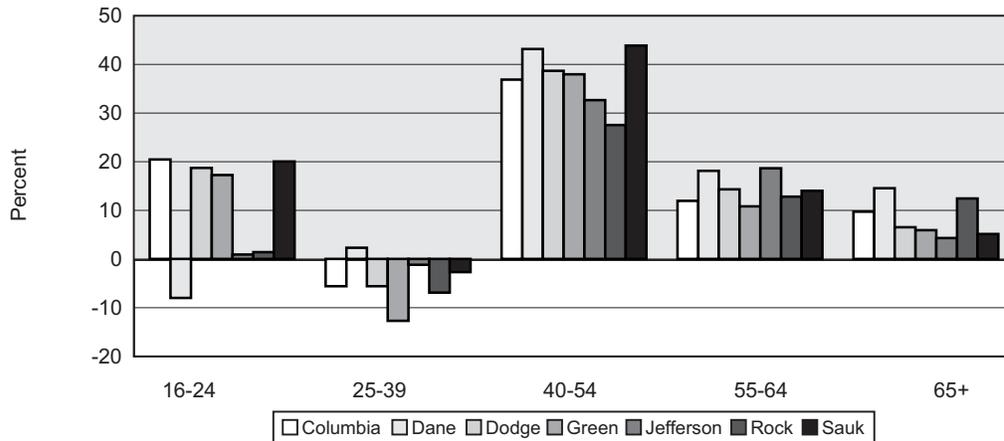
The population in the region has increased steadily between 1970 and 2000, although not uniformly across age groups, mirroring the overall statewide trend.

- Dane County showed the most dramatic overall population increase between 1970 and 2000. In contrast, the populations in Green and Columbia counties largely held steady over the same time period.
- The percentage of residents aged 40-54 showed a greater increase than other age groups over the ten-year period from 1990-2000. Sauk County showed the largest increase, with a 44 percent jump in population among residents on this age group
- Columbia County saw the largest growth in those aged 16-24, with a 20 percent increase. Among all counties in the region, only Dane County's population of 16-24 year-olds fell from 1990 levels.

Population, 1970–2000



Change in Population by Age Group, 1990–2000



Health Services

Wisconsin is among the nation’s leaders when it comes to quality health care and employer-provided health insurance. Continued attention, however, must be paid to the working poor, the unemployed, and the disabled, especially as county agencies are forced to bear an increasing portion of safety net services.

Prenatal care initiated in the first trimester decreases the likelihood of complications during childbirth and helps to ensure that both women and infants are healthy. It is important that continued attention be paid to access to such care, in particular to the availability of these services for low-income women.

- Sauk County was the only county in the region that had lower prenatal care rates than the Wisconsin average in 1998.
- Dane County led the region in 1998, with more than 88 percent of women seeking prenatal care in the first trimester. Dane and Dodge counties ranked eighth and ninth highest respectively statewide for percentage of women seeking prenatal care.

Federal aid for women, infants, and children (WIC) is a program that provides pregnant or breastfeeding women and children up to age five with necessary medical care if the family is earning less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level (\$32,652 for a family of four in 2001).

The measure of WIC rates can be read in at least two ways. The first is that participation rates indicate that residents in need of WIC assistance are receiving the services they require. On the other hand, higher rates of WIC assistance indicate more families in need, a concern that should be addressed throughout this region. In addition, the correlation of WIC recipient rates with child poverty rates indicates a significant number of children under age five living in households in which the primary earner’s income barely exceeds the poverty level.

- In 2000, Rock County was the only county that had WIC participation rates above the statewide average.
- Green County had the lowest WIC participation rate in the region and the fourth lowest participation rate in the state in 2000.

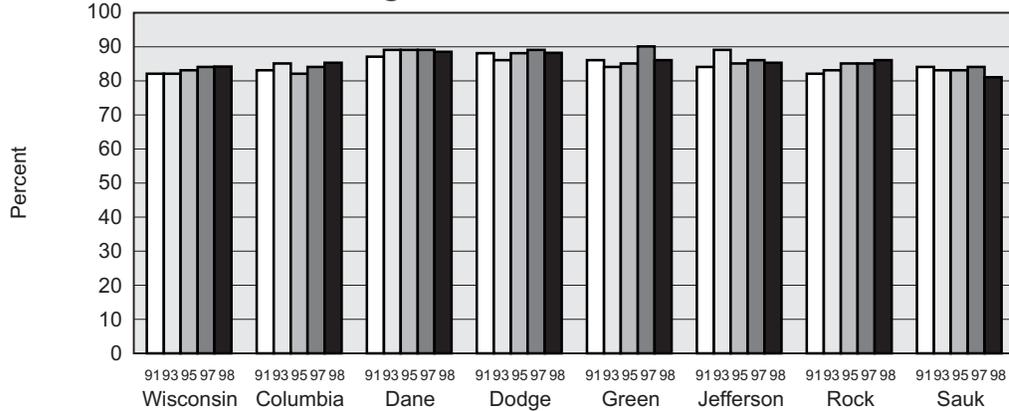
Infant mortality rates are also a significant measure of the overall quality of life in Wisconsin. Infant mortality rates are based on live births, and measure the rate of deaths occurring within the first year of an infant’s life; as such, they are one indication of the level and quality of care and nutrition received during that first year.

- Columbia County had a significantly higher infant mortality rate in 1998 compared to both the region and the state. Dane and Sauk counties also had higher infant mortality rates than the Wisconsin average.
- Dodge, Green, and Jefferson counties all had infant mortality rates that were significantly lower than the statewide average in 1998.

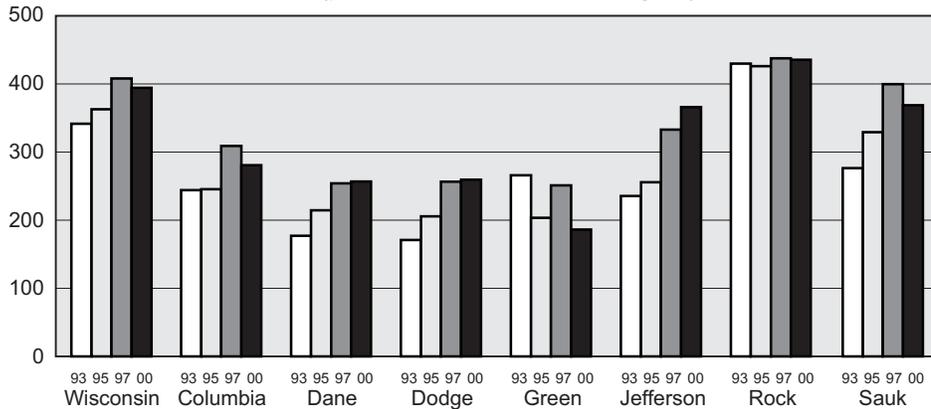
Badger Care is a health insurance program for families whose income does not exceed 185 percent of the federal poverty line, who are not covered by an employer’s group plan that pays 80 percent or more of the premium, and who are not eligible to be covered by Medicaid. As with other assistance programs, Badger Care participation rates indicate the presence of people in need.

- In 1999, all of the counties in the region had lower Badger Care participation rates than Wisconsin as a whole.

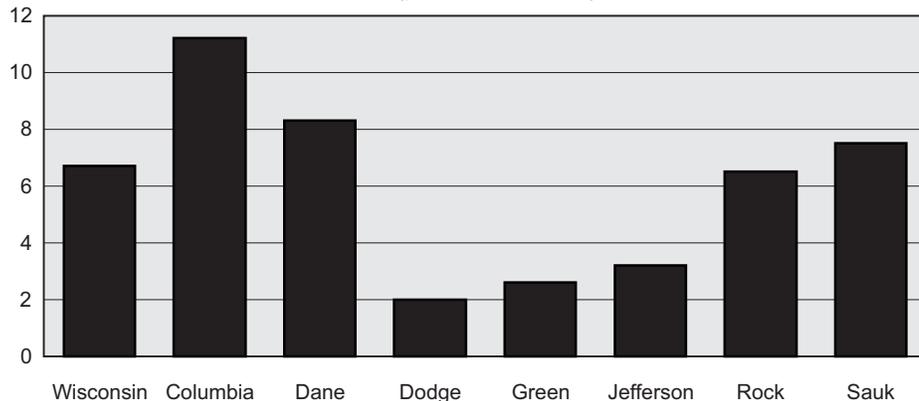
Women Seeking Prenatal Care in First Trimester, 1991–98



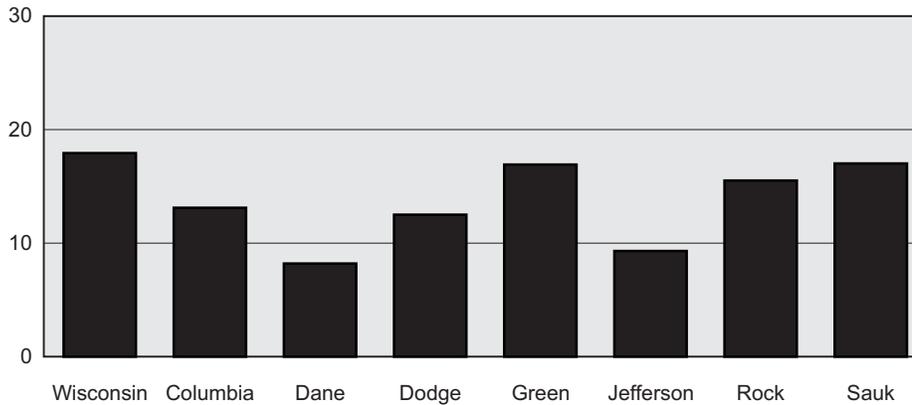
Children Under Age 5 Receiving WIC Services, 1993-2000
(per 1,000 children under age 5)



Infant Mortality Rates, 1999
(per 1,000 births)



Badger Care Enrollment, 1999
(per 1,000 residents)



Education

Wisconsin’s history demonstrates the importance that our state places on education. The region has had varying degrees of success in maintaining or improving the quality of educational services when looking at indicators such as student-to-teacher ratios, dropout rates, and graduation rates.

- The majority of the districts in the region had a lower public school student-to-teacher ratio than the statewide average during the 2000-2001 school year.
- Overall, Green County had the lowest public school student-to-teacher ratio in this region during 2000-2001.

A “dropout” is officially defined as a student who was enrolled in school at some point during the school year, but who was not enrolled in school during the following school year and who did not graduate.

- Most of the school districts in the region had dropout rates well below the Wisconsin average during the 2000-2001 school year. In fact, there were only five school districts in the entire region that had higher dropout rates than the state.
- Several school districts in the region had no dropouts during the 2000-2001 school year.

The “graduation rate” is the number of graduates divided by the total number of graduates and dropouts over a four-year period.

- Nearly all of the school districts in the region had significantly higher graduation rates than the statewide average during the 2000-2001 school year. Only eight school districts had graduation rates lower than the Wisconsin average.

There are many concerns surrounding the use of test scores as indicators of district achievement, in part because only students planning to enter post-secondary education programs take the ACT test. Standardized test scores, however, do enable comparisons of academic performance on specific tasks across the state.

- ACT scores throughout the region were comparable to the statewide average during the 2000-2001 school year. Students in the Madison Metropolitan School District in Dane County led this region with ACT scores averaging 24.1.

Public School Information, 2000–2001

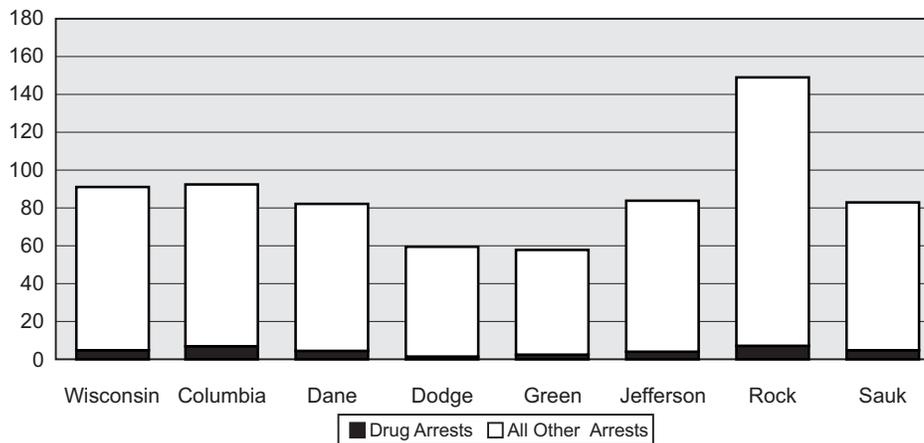
County	District	Student/Teacher Ratio	Dropout Rate	Graduation Rate	ACT Average
Wisconsin		12.8	2.1%	90.0%	22.2
Columbia	Cambria-Friesland	13.7	0.0	100.0	20.3
	Columbus	12.7	1.7	91.5	21.8
	Fall River	12.1	0.8	96.7	20.7
	Lodi	12.6	1.1	95.9	20.0
	Pardeeville Area	14.2	0.7	93.9	21.7
	Portage Community	11.3	0.3	97.7	21.9
	Poynette	12.8	2.0	90.9	21.3
	Randolph	11.6	1.1	94.1	22.3
	Rio Community	11.9	0.0	100.0	20.7
Dane	Belleville	12.1	0.0	100.0	22.1
	Cambridge	12.1	1.2	95.0	24.0
	De Forest Area	12.3	0.4	99.2	23.2
	Deerfield Community	10.3	0.4	97.6	22.1
	Madison Metropolitan	10.4	3.5	83.1	24.1
	Marshall	12.4	0.0	100.0	21.5
	McFarland	12.4	0.9	96.1	22.6
	Middleton-Cross Plains	11.7	1.2	93.0	23.8
	Monona Grove	11.4	0.7	97.7	23.1
	Mount Horeb Area	12.5	0.0	100.0	22.9
	Oregon	12.7	0.5	98.7	22.6
	Stoughton Area	13.1	0.5	98.9	21.5
	Sun Prairie Area	12.8	1.5	93.8	23.3
	Verona Area	11.3	0.0	99.3	23.7
	Wausaukee Community	12.2	0.0	100.0	22.5
	Wisconsin Heights	11.6	0.3	97.3	23.3
Dodge	Beaver Dam	13.2	1.0	95.1	22.8
	Dodgeland	10.1	0.0	100.0	21.1
	Herman #22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Horicon	13.0	2.2	93.8	22.2
	Hustisford	12.0	1.8	95.0	22.8
	Lomira	13.9	0.7	96.9	22.0
	Mayville	13.1	1.1	94.0	21.4
	Neosho J3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Rubicon J6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Green	Albany	11.4	0.7	97.7	20.4
	Brodhead	13.7	1.8	91.0	20.7
	Juda	11.7	0.0	96.2	22.0
	Monroe	10.7	1.2	94.5	22.1
	Monticello	10.9	0.0	100.0	21.4
	New Glarus	11.2	0.5	97.7	23.5
Jefferson	Fort Atkinson	12.4	2.0	90.6	23.5
	Johnson Creek	10.9	0.5	97.8	20.8
	Lake Mills Area	13.1	0.0	100.0	21.8
	Palmyra-Eagle Area	11.2	1.1	95.1	22.0
	Waterloo	12.0	0.3	98.6	22.3
	Watertown	14.0	1.3	91.9	22.2
Rock	Beloit	12.2	3.7	86.6	20.0
	Beloit Turner	13.5	0.0	100.0	21.5
	Clinton Community	11.3	0.5	97.6	21.8
	Edgerton	12.4	1.1	89.8	22.4
	Erin	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Evansville Community	11.2	2.2	86.9	20.7
	Janesville	11.4	3.0	86.7	20.7
	Milton	13.7	1.3	93.5	23.0
	Parkview	11.9	1.3	94.8	21.2
Sauk	Baraboo	13.0	4.1	89.5	23.1
	Reedsburg	12.5	3.4	84.1	20.4
	River Valley	12.0	1.0	95.4	22.3
	Sauk Prairie	11.7	1.9	89.7	22.6
	Weston	10.5	0.7	97.1	18.9
	Wisconsin Dells	12.4	0.8	97.1	22.0

Crime

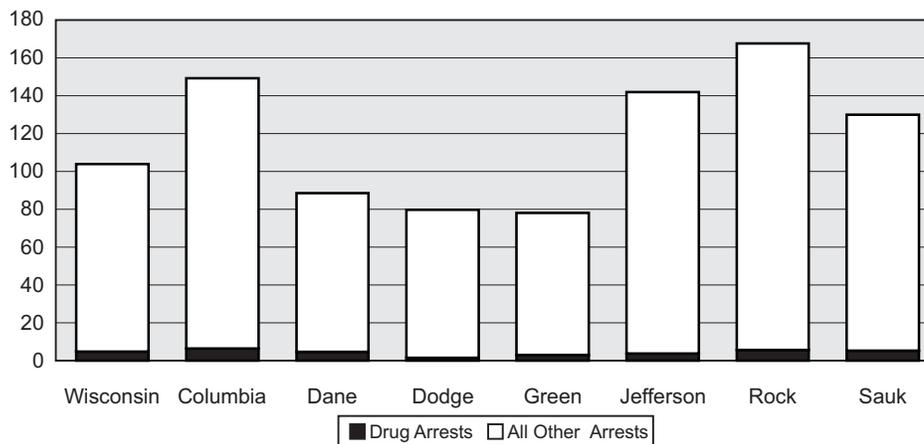
While crime rates are not the only determinant in assessing the quality of life in an area, they nevertheless remain a central concern in all of our communities.

- Both Columbia and Rock counties had higher adult arrest rates than the statewide average in 1998.
- Arrests rates in Green and Dodge counties were far lower than both the state and regional averages.
- Dodge County also had a far lower percentage of drug-related arrests than the rest of the region and the state.
- Columbia, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk counties all had higher juvenile arrest rates than the statewide average in 1999.

Total Adult Arrests, 1998
(per 1,000 adults)



Total Juvenile Arrests, 1999
(per 1,000 juveniles)



The Environment and Natural Resources

The environment and natural resources are keys to a successful future in all regions of Wisconsin. Water, air, and land quality is important for jobs, families, communities, and health. Whether used for industry, recreation, or consumption, Wisconsin's natural resources must be safeguarded.

Wisconsin's environment has always been a source of pride for its citizens. Yet, our state faces continuing threats to clean air, clean water, and open space that put Wisconsin's health, economy and green legacy at risk. While it is vital that other regions in the United States share responsibility for improving air quality, immediate action is necessary in Wisconsin to protect our most vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and those with respiratory ailments. Urban sprawl and farmland conversion are reducing open space and drastically changing Wisconsin's landscape, and continued reliance on short-term land use policies forces farmers to reduce their productive acreage and causes urban centers to deteriorate.

On the whole, this region contains modest amounts of forestland, wetlands, and recreation and conservation land compared to the rest of Wisconsin, contributing to the threats of flooding and increased erosion. Public health issues related to the prevalence of polluted water bodies and contaminated hazardous waste sites are of particular concern in this area.

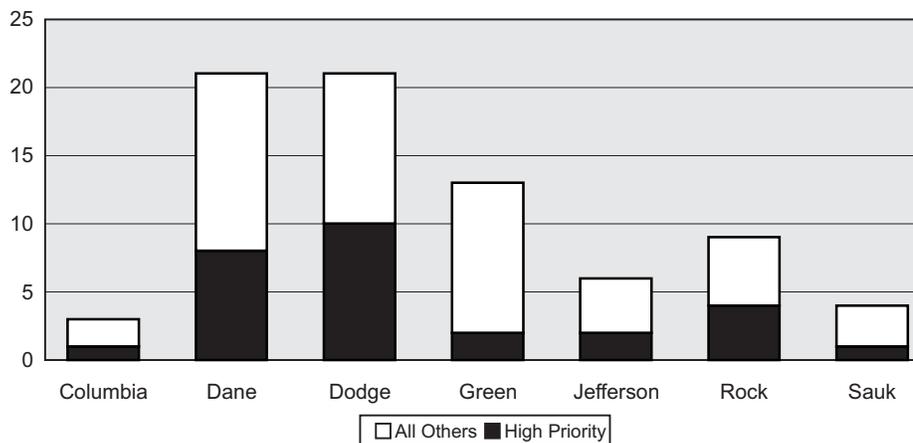
Water Quality

A number of water bodies in the region are polluted enough to be listed as "impaired waters" under the terms of the Clean Water Act, which requires states to identify waters that do not meet federal water quality standards. States are obligated to establish a priority ranking for these waters, taking into account their designated uses and pollution severity.

- This seven-county region had 77 impaired water bodies in 2000. Dane and Dodge counties had the most impaired water bodies in the region with 21 each, ranking these two counties third highest statewide.
- Each county contained at least one body of water classified as high priority for cleanup and abatement. Nearly half of the impaired water bodies in Dodge County are classified as high priority.

As with the rest of the state, this region faces some threat from mercury contamination in area bodies of water and the fish that inhabit them. Recently, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources expanded its mercury warning to include all Wisconsin water bodies, noting that it may be unsafe for women who are pregnant or of childbearing age to consume fish from any Wisconsin inland water body.

Impaired Water Bodies, 2000



Wetlands

In January 2001, a United States Supreme Court ruling limited the protections of the Clean Water Act to water and wetlands connected to navigable waters only. This decision removed many of Wisconsin’s wetlands from protection, some of which were filled in within weeks following the Court’s decision. In May 2001, the governor signed Act 6, reestablishing protections for all wetlands in the state, including those not connected to navigable waters.

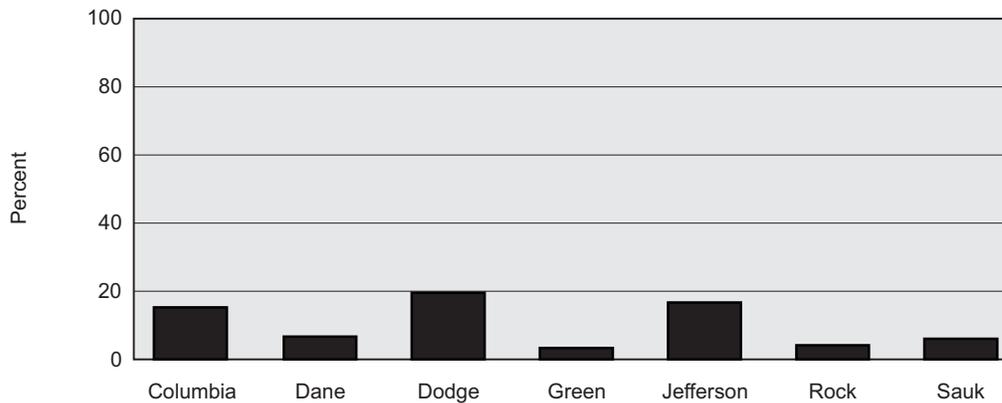
- Just 10 percent — 360,530 acres — of the region’s total area is wetlands. With less than five percent each, Green and Rock counties have the smallest percentage of land designated as wetlands in the region, ranking each among the 10 counties with the smallest amount of such land statewide.
- Dodge, Jefferson, and Columbia counties have the most wetlands acreage in the region, though even these counties each have less than one-fifth of their land designated as such.

Forest Land

Forests cover more than 45 percent of Wisconsin’s land area, although more than 98 percent of these forests are unprotected timberlands. Overall, forests cover a far lower percentage of land in this region, compared to Wisconsin as a whole.

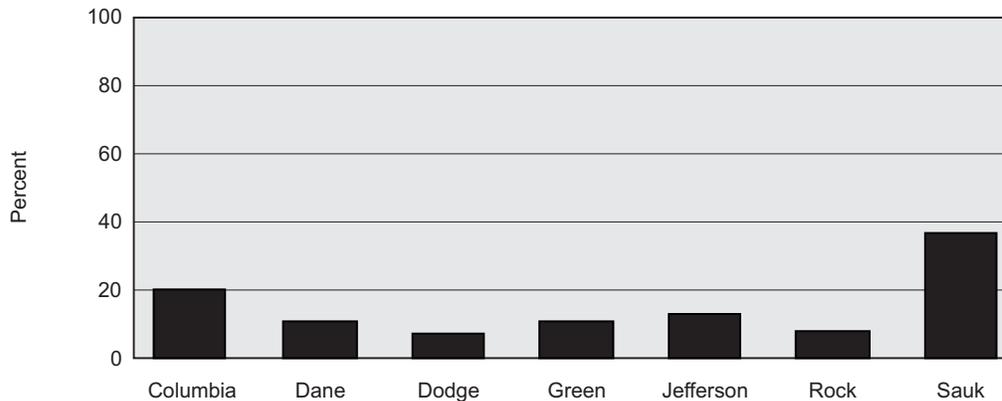
- Sauk County, with 36 percent of its area forested, had the greatest percentage of such land in the region in 1996. Dane, Dodge, and Rock counties had the smallest amount of forestland in the region, ranking each among the 10 counties with the least of such land in the state.

Acreage in Wetlands*

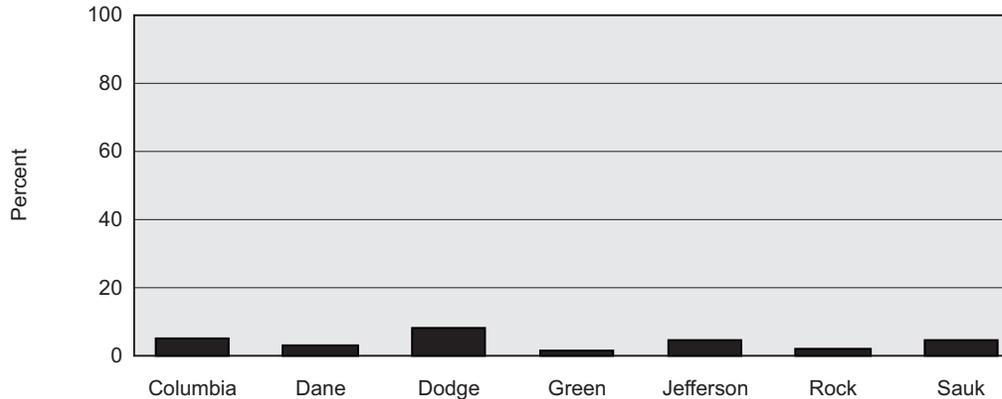


* See Sources for year of data collection

Acreage in Forests, 1996



Acreage in Conservation and Recreation Land, 2000



Conservation and Recreational Land Use

Wisconsin is known for its strong tourism industry, much of which is fueled by the relatively high proportion of land designated for conservation and recreation purposes. These include federal land, state forests, DNR-owned land, county parks and forests, and privately held recreation areas.

- Dodge County led the region, with eight percent of its total surface area reserved as recreation and conservation land in 2000.
- Green and Rock counties had the smallest percentage of recreation and conservation land in the region, with 1.5 and two percent, respectively. Both ranked among the 10 counties with the lowest percentage of such land statewide.

Environmental Health Risks

The Pollutant Standards Index (PSI) is a uniform system developed by the EPA to measure five air pollutants: particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and ozone. It converts the measured pollutant concentrations in a community's air to a number on a scale of 0 to 500. A PSI over 100 is considered unhealthy.

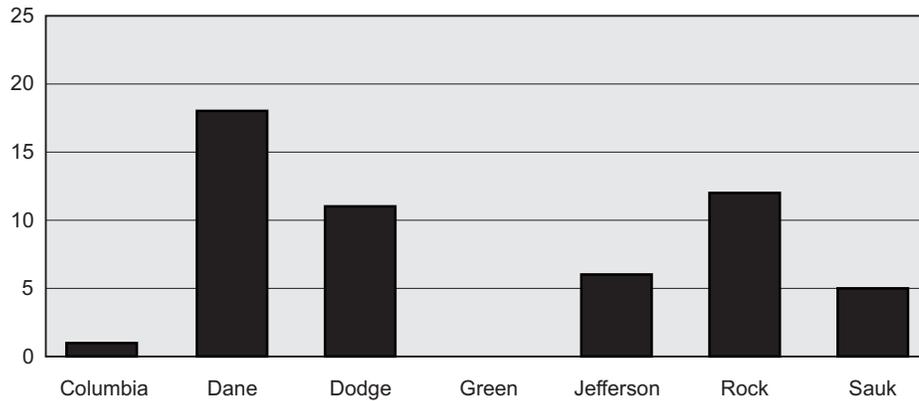
- All of the counties in this region had PSI ratings of under 100 and thus did not make the EPA's rating scale.

Superfund Sites

In general, Superfund sites include regions where public health is threatened by the existence of serious environmental hazards to such a degree that cleanup has become a national priority.

- This region contained a total of 53 Superfund sites in 1999. The majority of the region’s sites are located in Dane, Dodge, and Rock counties. With 18 sites, Dane County contained the most sites in the region and ranked 7th highest in Wisconsin.
- One Dane County site is located in the city of Dunn at the City Disposal Corp. Landfill and is currently on the final National Priorities List.
- Green County is one of only twelve Wisconsin counties with no Superfund sites.

Superfund Sites, 1999



Democracy and Civic Participation

Wisconsin has a strong tradition of political independence, clean government and civic engagement. Unfortunately, today that tradition is waning. Lax civic participation and an unresponsive government are caught in a downward spiral fueled by big money and special interests. This is further exacerbated by a lack of substantive media coverage on issues and candidates, ultimately hurting voters who rely on such sources to inform their decisions.

Wisconsin's political system is awash in money, and the cost of running a state-level campaign is skyrocketing. Legislative candidates spent \$7.1 million, and special interests a reported \$2.5 million, setting new spending records in election year 2000; overall spending was 26 percent higher than in election year 1998, when candidates spent approximately \$5.6 million.

The challenge facing our state is how to recapture our strong grassroots political tradition, including providing citizens with the information they need and encouraging all to actively participate in the political process.

Voter Choice

Statewide in 2000, 36 percent of all legislative seats were uncontested. In the remaining races, only a handful were truly competitive. (Competitive here means any race where the winner garnered less than 60 percent of the total votes cast.) Unfortunately, these same races also draw an inordinate amount of special interest money and large individual contributions from outside the candidate's district.

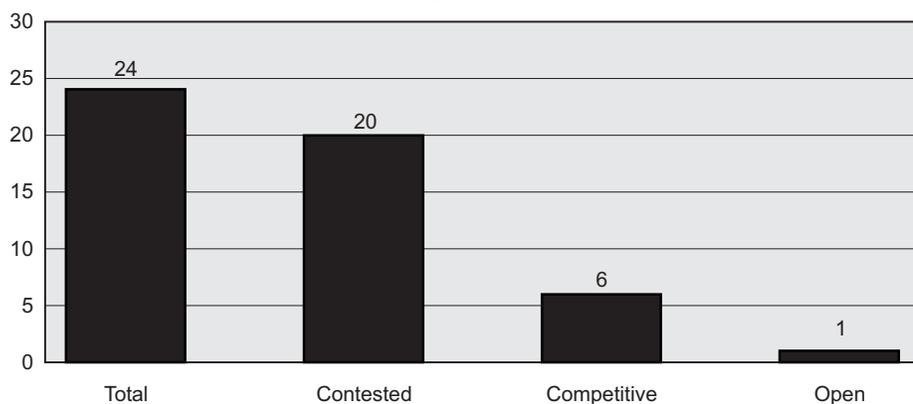
- Nineteen State Representatives and 10 State Senators represent this region in the state legislature. All of the Assembly seats and five of the Senate seats were up for election in November 2000.
- Twenty of the twenty-four state legislative races held in the region in 2000 were contested by more than one candidate; 19 of those races featured an incumbent running for re-election, and one race was for an open seat. Of these 20 races, only six were competitive, with the winner garnering less than 60 percent of the votes cast.

Campaign Spending

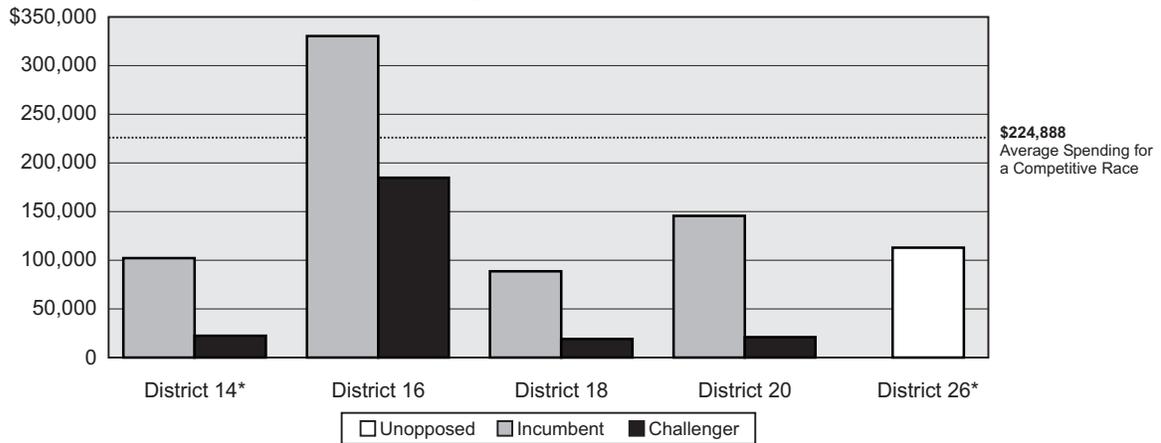
On average in Wisconsin, the cost of a competitive State Senate campaign in 2000 was \$224,888; it took roughly \$46,732 to run the average competitive State Assembly race. Incumbent spending was nearly double that of spending by challengers; not surprisingly, only three of 62 challengers statewide won contested seats in the 2000 state legislative elections.

- Incumbents outspent their challengers in 17 of the 20 contested races in the region.
- In Assembly District 39, an open seat, the Republican candidate spent over \$66,000, almost three times that spent by the Democratic candidate in the general election. A significant portion of this spending occurred during the five-way Republican primary election.

Voter Choice, State Legislative Races, November 2000

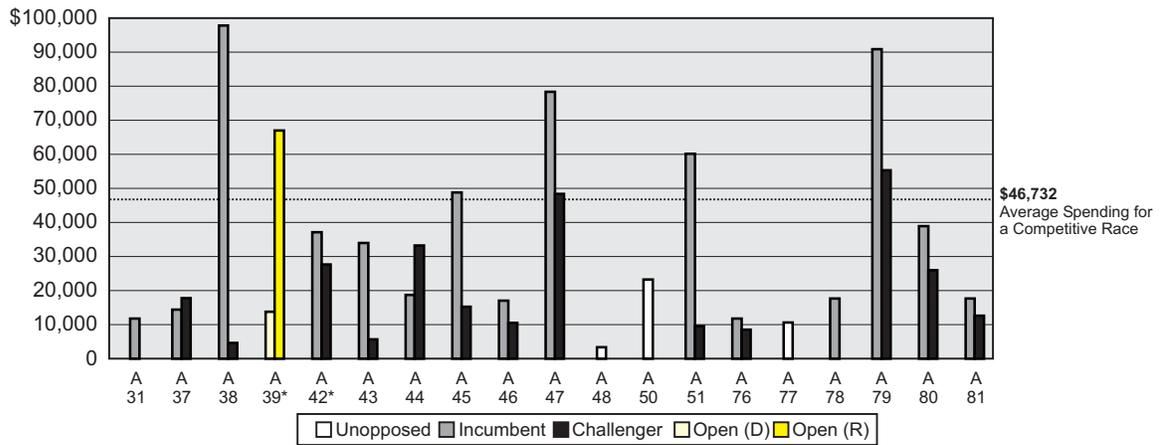


Candidate Spending, State Senate, November 2000



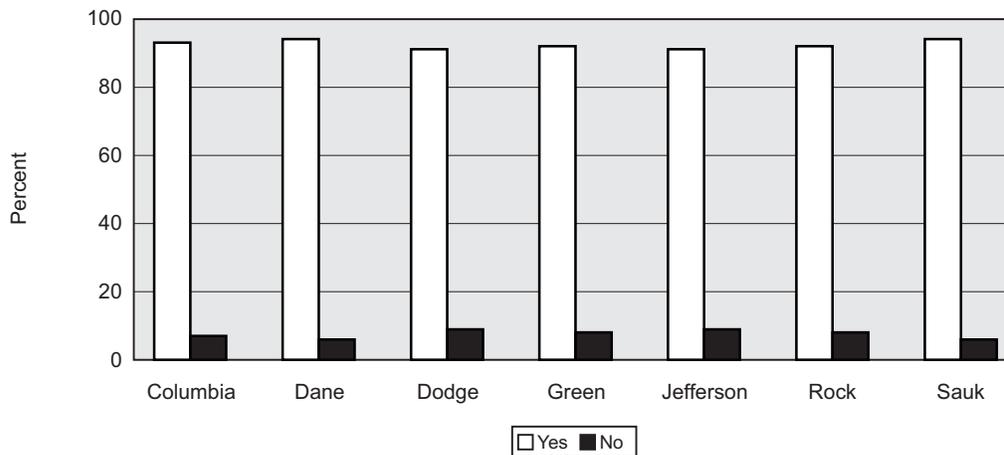
*Incumbent had opposition in the primary election.

Candidate Spending, State Assembly, November 2000

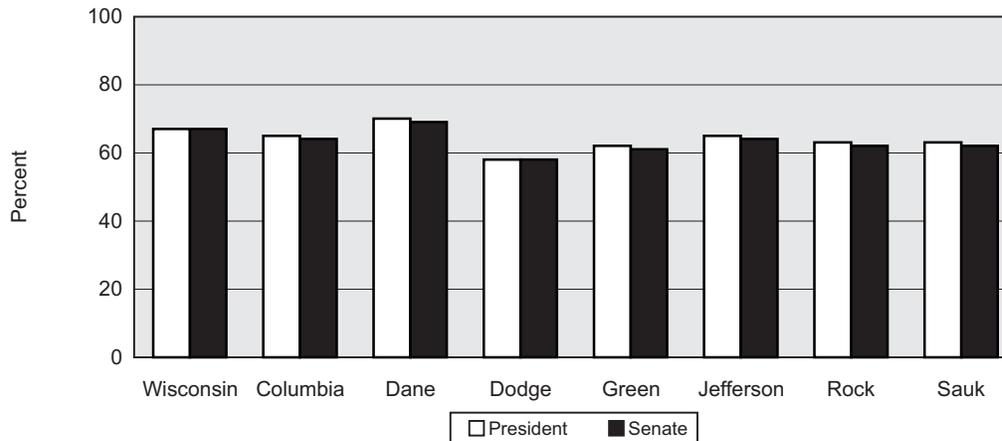


*Incumbent had opposition in the primary election.

Campaign Finance Reform Referendum, 2000



Voter Turnout, November 2000 (based on voting age population)



Statewide in 2000, 73 candidates running for state legislative office agreed to spending limits in exchange for publicly-funded grants under the Wisconsin Election Campaign Fund (WECF) program. Under the terms of the program, however, overall campaign spending in a race is limited only if both major party candidates agree to participate in the grant program.

In only 10 legislative districts in Wisconsin did both candidates accept the WECF grant and agree to limit their spending.

- In Assembly District 37, both candidates agreed to spending limits in exchange for public campaign funds. The race was competitive, and spending was held significantly below the statewide average.
- The incumbent spent from two to seven times that spent by the challenger in the four contested Senate races in the region in 2000. Only the race in Senate District 16 was competitive, with the winner earning less than 60 percent of the votes.

With the increased role of campaign money and the power of incumbency acutely evident in this region, it should come as no surprise that residents here have shown a desire to reduce the undue influence of money in the electoral process.

- A November 2000 advisory referendum to place limits on campaign spending passed by more than 90 percent in every county in the region.
- Dane and Sauk counties approved the referendum with 94 percent of the vote, the highest percentage statewide.

Voter Turnout

Statewide voter turnout in the fall general elections was nearly 67 percent in 2000.

- Dane County had the highest voter participation rates in the region, with 70 percent in the Presidential election and 69 percent in the U.S. Senate race.
- Dodge County had the lowest turnout, with 58 percent in both the Presidential and Senate elections.

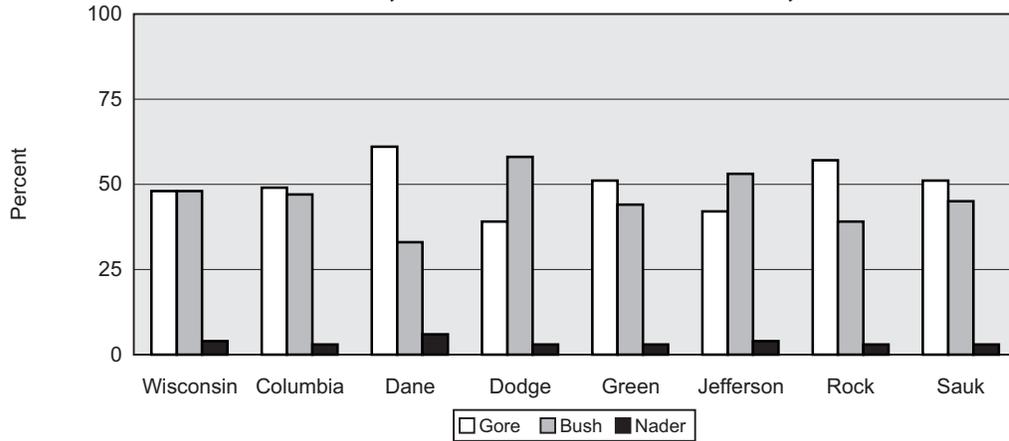
Political Independence

Wisconsin maintains a long tradition of independent, split-ticket voting. Our state currently has four Republican U.S. House members and five Democrats; two Democratic U.S. Senators; a Republican governor; a Republican controlled State Assembly; and a State Senate with a Democratic majority.

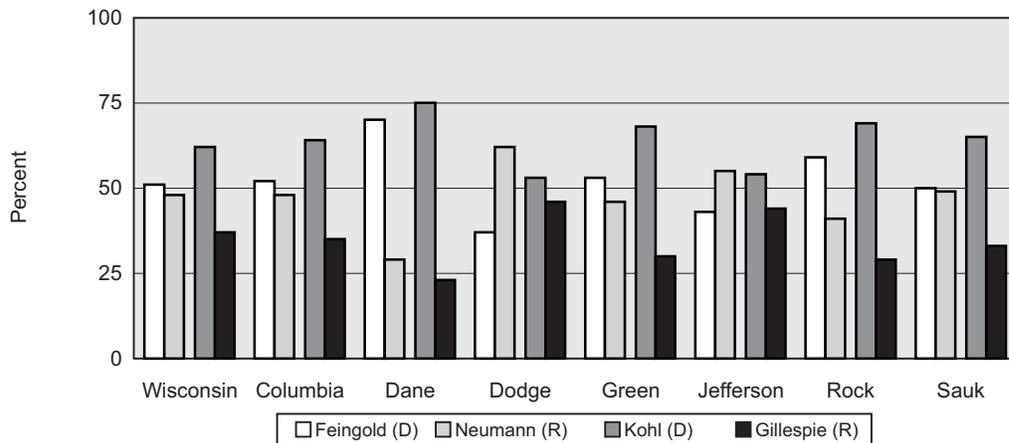
This region shows a similar trend in voter independence, with voting in state legislative elections tending to favor Republican candidates, and voting in national elections favoring Democratic candidates.

- All counties except Dodge and Jefferson counties gave the majority of their votes to the Democratic candidates in the U.S. Presidential and Senate elections. Yet, all counties except Dane County gave the majority of their votes to the Republican candidates in the U.S. Congressional elections.
- Republicans represent 17 of the 29 state legislative districts in the region.

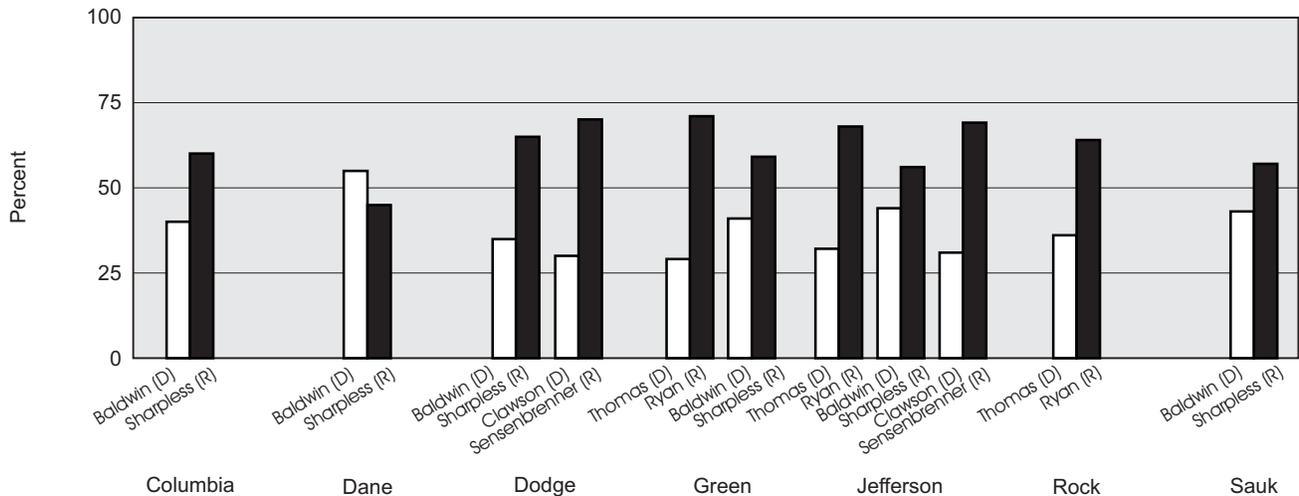
Vote Distribution, U.S. Presidential Election, November 2000



Vote Distribution, U.S. Senate Elections, November 1998 and 2000



Vote Distribution, U.S. Congressional Elections, November 2000



Sources

Jobs and the Economy

- Per Capita Income and Per Capita Income as a Percentage of the U.S. Average from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce at <http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis>.
- Labor Force Participation Rate from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development at <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us> (available only upon request).
- Unemployment Rates, Recent Seasonal Unemployment Rates, and Change in Total Employment from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Wisconsin Labor Market Information website at <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/>.
- Job Growth Across Sectors, and Non-farm Employment by Sectors in each county from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development at http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/cp_pdf/cp_mainx.htm.
- Workers with Poverty Earnings from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Wisconsin Labor Market Information website at <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/>.
- Change in Full Time Farms, Change in Land Used for Farming, Farms Larger than 1000 Acres, Change in Those Reporting Farming as Principal Occupation, and Average Age of Farmers from the 1997 Census on Agriculture by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census97/profiles/wi/wi.htm>.
- Change in Tourism Revenue, and Traveler's Spending from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism at http://agency.travelwisconsin.com/Research/EconomicImpact_Active/00econData.shtm#county.
- Total Jobs in Tourism from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism at http://agency.travelwisconsin.com/Research/EconomicImpact_Active/economipacthistory.shtm.

Families and Communities

- Median Family Income 1995-2001 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at <http://www.huduser.org/datasets/il.html>. Please note that median family income for all indicated years are estimates based on data from the 1990 census and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. See the HUD site for how these estimates are calculated.
- Single Parent Families, and Teen Births from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families WisKids Count 2001 at <http://www.wccf.org/index.html>.
- Poverty Rates from the US Census Bureau at <http://www.census.gov/datamap/www/55txt.html>
- Children Eligible for Free and Reduced Cost Lunch and Fair Market Rent from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families WisKids Count 2001 at <http://www.wccf.org/index.html>.
- Families That Could Not Afford FMR from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families WisKids Count 2000 at <http://www.wccf.org/wiskidcounties.html>.
- Hourly Wage Needed to Meet FMR from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families WisKids Count 2001 at <http://www.wccf.org/index.html>.
- Change in Renter Households from the National Low Income Housing Coalition at <http://www.nlihc.org/cgi-bin/oor2001.pl?getstate=on&getcounty=on&county=-all&state=WI>.
- AFDC/W2 Recipients from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families WisKids Count 2001 at <http://www.wccf.org/index.html>.

The Future

- Change in Population 1970-2000 and Change in Population by Age Group from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development at http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/cp_pdf/cp_mainx.htm
- Women Seeking Prenatal Care in First Trimester, from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families WisKids Count 2000 at <http://www.wccf.org/wiskidcounties.html>.
- Children Under Five Receiving WIC Services, Infant Mortality Rates, and Badger Care Enrollment from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families WisKids Count 2001 at <http://www.wccf.org/index.html>.
- Public School Information from the Department of Public Instruction web site at <http://www2.dpi.state.wi.us/spr/topselect.asp>.
- Total Adult Arrests and Total Juvenile Arrests from the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance at <http://oja.state.wi.us/static/publications.htm>.

Environment and Natural Resources

- Impaired Water Bodies from the Department of Natural Resources website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/wqs/303d/waterbody.html>.
- Acreage in Wetlands from the Department of Natural Resources website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/wetlands>.
- Acreage in Forests calculated by COWS based on data from US Department of Agriculture publication Wisconsin Forest Statistics 1996 pp 35-36.
- Acreage in Conservation and Recreation Land calculated by COWS based on data from the Wisconsin Blue Book 2001-2002, p. 649, and the Department of Natural Resources website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/wetlands>.
- Superfund Sites compiled from data provided by the Environmental Protection Agency, at Toxic Alert at <http://www.cqs.com/esuper.htm>.

Democracy and Civic Participation

- Voter Choice, State Legislative Races compiled from data available on the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign web site at <http://www.wisdc.org>.
- Candidate Spending, State Senate and State Assembly compiled from public records maintained by the State Elections Board by the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign at http://www.wisdc.org/2000Campaign_Profiles_Links.html#top.
- Campaign Finance Reform Referendum from the Wisconsin Counties Association at <http://www.wicounties.org/LegInfo/wlegis.html>.
- Voter Turnout calculated by COWS from data provided by the US Census Bureau at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/55000.html>, and the Wisconsin State Elections Board at <http://badger.state.wi.us/agencies/elections/>.
- Vote Distribution, Presidential, Senate, and Congressional Elections compiled by COWS from data maintained by the Wisconsin State Elections Board at <http://badger.state.wi.us/agencies/elections/sebpage38.html>.