

3.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Demographic Profile



The planning process for the Town of Oconto Falls begins with a profile of the people who live, work and own property in the community. Specifically, this section analyzes the size, composition and trends of the population. This information is critical to forecasting the need for community facilities and services, since it is people who will demand better schools, roads, parks, jobs and other public services.

POPULATION TRENDS

The Town of Oconto Falls has experienced **sporadic population gains** over the last four decades as demonstrated in Table 1. To spite an overall population gain, the Town has seen its share of the total county population diminish.

TABLE 1 HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS						
Location	1970	1980	1990	2000	Actual Chg 1970-2000	% Change 1970-2000
<i>Town of Oconto Falls</i>	895	1,033	1,014	1,139	244	27.3%
Share of County Population	3.5%	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%	NA	NA
Oconto County	25,553	28,947	30,226	35,634	10,081	22%

Source: WI Dept. Administration, Demographic Service Center and 2000 U.S. Census

To put the population growth rate of the Town of Oconto Falls into context, Table 2 compares the population changes for all Towns in Oconto County. From this table, it is apparent that the growth in the Town of Oconto Falls is rather moderate when compared to the other Towns in the county and behind the average for all Towns. Of the 23 Towns in Oconto County, the **Town of Oconto Falls growth rate ranked 16th**.

From the 1990 Census to 2000, the population of Oconto County (as a whole – including cities and villages) increased by 5,138. This was a growth rate of 17 percent for the decade. As can be seen from Table 2, many of the smaller Towns experienced a faster growth rate than the county.

TABLE 2 COMPARISON OF TOWN POPULATION TRENDS			
Town Name	1990 Population	2002 Population Estimate	% Change 1990 - 2002
<i>Town of Oconto Falls</i>	1,014	1,179	16.3%
Town of Abrams	1,347	1,861	38.2%
Town of Bagley	271	341	26.0%
Town of Brazeau	1,169	1,436	22.8%
Town of Breed	564	686	21.6%
Town of Chase	1,375	2,270	65.1%
Town of Doty	184	263	42.9%
Town of Gillett	1,026	1,099	7.1%
Town of How	564	579	2.7%
Town of Lakewood	607	901	48.4%
Town of Lena	790	771	-2.4%
Town of Little River	1,003	1,076	7.3%
Town of Little Suamico	2,637	4,164	57.9%
Town of Maple Valley	690	678	-1.8%
Town of Morgan	815	918	12.6%
Town of Mountain	730	868	18.9%
Town of Oconto	999	1,349	35.0%
Town of Pensaukee	979	1,252	27.9%
Town of Riverview	483	848	75.6%
Town of Spruce	776	897	15.6%
Town of Stiles	1,243	1,515	21.9%
Town of Townsend	715	997	39.4%
Town of Underhill	668	869	30.1%
All Towns in Oconto County	21,379	26,817	25.4%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census and 2002 DOA Population Estimates

Table 3 projects the population of the Town of Oconto Falls through 2025 and compares this population change to Oconto County, and the State of Wisconsin for the same time period. These projections indicate that the Town of Oconto Falls is expected to experience a population increase greater than the state growth rate, but slightly less than the overall growth rate projected for Oconto County.

TABLE 3 POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2000 – 2025			
Year	Town of Oconto Falls	Oconto County	Wisconsin
2000	1,139	35,652	5,363,675
2005	1,200	37,720	5,531,025
2010	1,258	39,670	5,700,303
2015	1,308	41,385	5,878,871
2020	1,355	43,018	6,056,186
2025	1,394	44,351	6,216,980
Percent Change 2000-2025	22.4%	24.4%	15.9%

Source: DOA Demographic Service Center Projections, 2004

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population figures and growth rates do not provide any insight about the characteristics of the population. To learn more about the people of the Town of Oconto Falls, information about the race, sex, and age of the population must be examined.

In 2000, there were **565 males and 574 females** living in the Town of Oconto Falls. Nearly 100% of the residents reported their race as white in 2000 U.S. Census.

The median age of a Town of Oconto Falls resident in 2000 was 38.5. This average is slightly lower than the median age of a Oconto County resident (38.8) and also higher than the median age of a Wisconsin Resident (36.0).

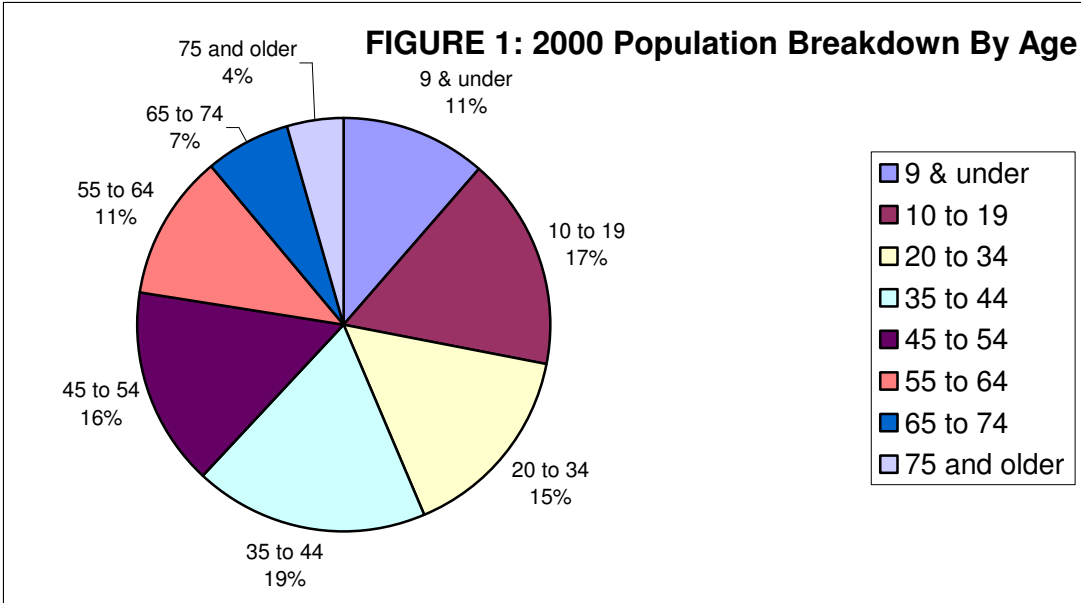


Figure 1 examines the age distribution of Town residents in 2000. What is significant to notice from the chart is that the age groupings are fairly evenly distributed. This is important because it suggests that services will be needed for residents of all ages (young and old).

GENERAL HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

A “household” can be basically described as a group of people living together in a single dwelling unit. This could include a family, a single person, or a group of unrelated individuals sharing a house or an apartment, but excluding those persons living in a group quarters.

National and state trends have all moved towards an increase in the number of households, along with a decrease in the average number of persons per household. The main reasons for this decrease in household size include:

- a decrease in birth rate;
- people waiting longer to get married;
- an increased divorce rate; and
- an increase in the average life span thereby resulting in more elderly people living either alone or with another family member.

The Town of Oconto Falls has not escaped this trend. Between 1990 and 2000, the total number of households increased from 350 to 434. During this same period, the population per household decreased slightly from 2.69 to 2.62. This trend is expected to continue in the Town over the next 20 years.

The vast majority of the Town’s households (76%) are family households (families). Of these family households the most common type was married-couple family households (66.6%). However, the number of non-family households is quite large for a Town the size of Oconto Falls. In 2000, nearly a third of all households (104) were considered non-family households. The vast majority of these non-family households (80) were people living alone.

Economic Profile¹

Economic conditions have a direct impact on the supply, demand and costs for housing, infrastructure and services within a community. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the economic situation in the Town of Oconto Falls to predict additional housing, infrastructure and service needs. This section profiles the local economic environment by examining factors, including per capita income, poverty rate, and unemployment rate.

To understand and appreciate the local economic picture in the Town of Oconto Falls, it is necessary to look beyond the Town and examine characteristics in Oconto County.

¹ Much of the information included in this section was obtained from the *Oconto County Workforce Profile* developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Division of Workforce Solutions, Bureau of Workforce Information, October 2001.

Comparisons between the Town and the county provide much more information about the local economic situation than would a simple look at conditions only in the Town of Oconto Falls. Furthermore, these comparisons put economic characteristics into perspective.

LABOR FORCE

The labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons who are 16 years of age and older. Table 4 tracks the rate of employment and unemployment in Oconto County between 1996 and 2001 (5 year period). According to the data available, there was a significant increase in the size of the labor force between 2000 and 2001. However, many of these individuals were unable to find employment, which significantly increased the unemployment rates. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the **Town of Oconto Falls had 852 individuals over the age of 16, 661 of which are in the labor force. Of those 661 individuals, 18 or 2.1% were unemployed.**

TABLE 4 OCONTO COUNTY CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE DATA						
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Labor Force	15,100	15,400	15,771	15,493	15,935	16,896
Employed	14,200	14,500	14,902	14,809	15,210	15,752
Unemployed	900	900	809	684	725	1124
Unemployment Rate	5.9%	5.8%	5.1%	4.4%	4.5%	6.8%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program.

The term used to describe the relationship between the labor force and population is participation rate. Oconto County has traditionally had a lower participation rate than the State of Wisconsin. The 2000 county participation rate was 66.7%, behind 2000 Wisconsin participation rate of 69%. This can be partially attributed to the fact that Oconto is a rural county and rural counties often have lower participation rates than urban counties primarily due to fewer employment opportunities. Participation rates are often affected by economic, cultural, and demographic conditions. The Town of Oconto Falls participation rate in 2000 was 77.5%.

MAJOR COUNTY EMPLOYERS

According to the Town of Oconto Falls Resident Survey, **53% of respondents work outside of the township. The remaining respondents, 47% either did not work, were retired, or worked in the Town.**

About one-third of all employed Oconto County residents work outside of the county. The Green Bay/Brown County area is the destination for over 70% of the outbound commuters. Brown County also sends the largest number of workers into Oconto County for work. The majority of the workers who commute either to or from Brown County on

a daily basis use USH 41/141. This also applies to residents of the Town of Oconto Falls since STH 22, which connects to both USH 41 and USH 141.

Table 5 provides some detailed information about county commuting patterns. Though a bit dated, the patterns are still believed to be generally correct. Updated information will not be available until 2004.

TABLE 5					
2000 OCONTO COUNTY COMMUTING PATTERNS					
(1994 Information Provided in Parenthesis for Comparison)					
County	Commute Into		Commute From		Net Commute
Brown	6,518	(3,115)	644	(525)	-5,874 (-2,590)
Marinette	701	(564)	712	(402)	11 (-162)
Shawano	436	(230)	269	(326)	-167 (96)
Outagamie	195	(89)	55	(0)	-140 (-89)
Elsewhere	810	(385)	461	(115)	-349 (-270)
Total	8,860	(4,383)	2,141	(1,368)	-6,520 (-3,015)

Source: 1994 Data from Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development; US Dept of Commerce, Census 2000

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, most residents of the Town of Oconto Falls were employed in management, professional and related occupations (26.9%), followed closely by sales and office occupations (23.3%), and production, transportation and material moving occupations (20.5%). Less than five percent (4.2%) of all Town residents indicated they were working in farming, fishing and forestry occupations in 2000.

The 2000 U.S. Census also indicated Town residents were employed in several different industry sectors. Table 6 provides a detailed look at Town resident employment in 2000 by industry group.

TABLE 6		
INDUSTRY GROUPS REPORTED BY TOWN OF OCONTO FALLS RESIDENTS		
Industry Group	Number of Residents	Percent of Residents
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	71	11.0%
Construction	49	7.6%
Manufacturing	134	20.8%
Retail trade	59	9.2%
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	45	7.0%
Finance, insurance, real estate	44	6.8%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management	32	5.0%
Education, health and social services	100	15.6%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census (Industries with less than 5.0% of the workforce are not listed)

Tables 7 and 8 highlight the top 10 industry groups and employers in Oconto County. There were a total of 669 private sector employers and 70 government reporting units in Oconto County in 1997 (most recent economic census information). The largest private employers employed 27% of all workers in Oconto County.

Five of the county's top ten industry groups were in the manufacturing sector in 1997. Although manufacturing employment wages in Oconto County are lower than the state average, manufacturing makes up 32% of the county's employment and represents a slightly larger portion of the county's total payroll (36.4%). The top ten industry groups accounted for 59% of non-farm wage and salary employment earnings in the county. All of the top ten employers are included in the largest industry groups in the county.

TABLE 7		
TOP 10 INDUSTRY GROUPS IN OCONTO COUNTY		
Industry Group	Employers	Employment
Educational Services	6	798
Health Services	30	769
Eating & Drinking Est.	69	649
Executive, Legislative, & General Government	28	529
Transportation Equipment	3	500
Furniture and Fixtures	NA*	NA*
Food and Kindred Products	6	386
Lumber & Wood Products	16	367
Electronic & Electronic Equipment	NA*	NA*
Food Stores	15	294

Source: Oconto County Workforce Profile, 1997

*NA (Not Available) used in accordance with confidentiality standards

TABLE 8		
TOP 10 PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS IN OCONTO COUNTY		
Company	Product or Service	Employees
KCS Intl Inc.	Boat Manufacturing	500-999
Oconto Falls Public Schools	Education	250-499
Saputo Cheese USA Inc.	Cheese Processing	250-499
Oconto County	Government	250-499
Community Memorial Hospital Inc.	Hospital Services	100-249
Coop Educational Services Agency #8	Administration of Education Programs	100-249
Heyde Health Systems - Oconto	Skilled Nursing Care	100-249
Unlimited Services of Wisconsin Inc.	Current-Carrying Wiring Devices	100-249
Nercon Eng & Mfg Inc.	Conveyors and Conveying Equipment	100-249
Beverly Health & Rehab.	Skilled Nursing Care	100-249

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. ES-202 file tape, 1998.

INCOME & WAGES

Table 9 provides information about the relative income for residents living in the Town of Oconto Falls compared to Oconto County and Wisconsin residents. The table includes statistics for:

- **Per capita income** is total income divided by the total number of residents, including children and other groups of individuals who do not actually earn income.
- **Median household income** is the middle point of reported household incomes in a community (households include families, married couple households and individual households).
- **Median family income** is the middle income reported by families in the 2000 U.S. Census. (An important distinction between median family income and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue **adjusted gross income** data is that the latter does not include social security and other types of transfer payments.)

The Town of Oconto Falls compares favorably to Oconto County, but the County compares poorly with the state. The county’s less than favorable comparison to the state is also reflected in unemployment and other key economic indicators. This trend is not expected to change in the near future.

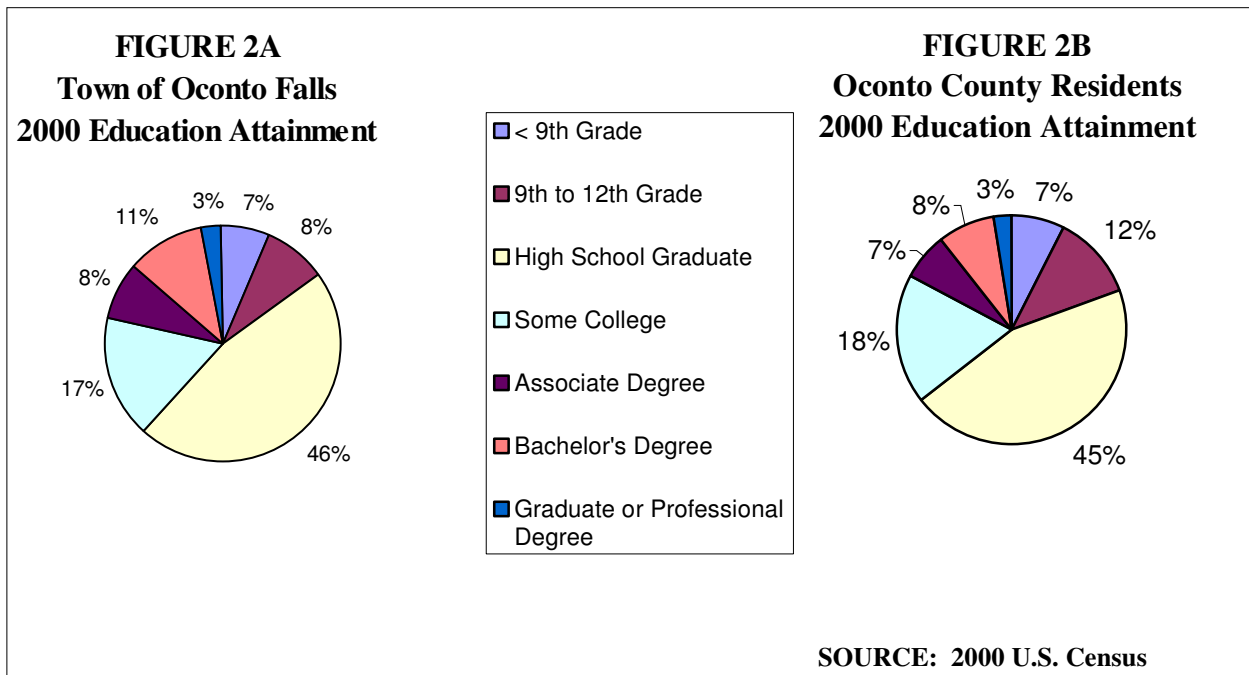
MEDIAN INCOME vs. AVERAGE INCOME
<p>The U.S. Census Bureau data related to income is reported as a “median” figure. This represents the middle point of all incomes reported. It is <u>not</u> the same as an “average” income. For example, if 4 people reported their income at \$30,000 and 1 person reported their income at \$100,000, the median income for these 5 people would be \$30,000. In the same scenario, the average income would be \$44,000, which does not accurately depict where the majority (i.e. 4 people vs. only 1) reported their income.</p> <p>The U.S. Census does not provide an average income figure. Moreover, it is not possible to calculate an average without access to every individual census form from Evansville where an income was reported. The U.S. Census Bureau privacy policies prohibit this level of access. It is anticipated that the Town’s average income figures would be higher than the median income.</p>

TABLE 9 INCOME COMPARISON				
	2000 Median Household Income	2000 Per Capita Income	2000 Median Family Income	2000 Adjusted Gross Income
Wisconsin	\$43,791	\$21,271	\$52,911	\$40,570
Oconto County	\$41,201	\$19,016	\$46,846	\$32,367
T. Oconto Falls	\$49,531	\$17,564	\$53,304	\$32,539

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2000 U.S. Census, and Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

EDUCATION LEVELS

A good indicator of the quality of life in a community is the educational attainment of its residents. Generally, a high level of educational attainment reflects a skilled population with a higher earnings potential. Figures 2A and 2B illustrate the level of educational attainment for persons age 25 and over in Oconto County and the Town of Oconto Falls in 2000. In both the Town and county, about a quarter of the population is without a high school diploma. **Approximately 50% of the population has a high school diploma (or equivalent) and about 20% of county and Town residents have a post secondary education.**



POVERTY STATUS

Slightly more than seven percent of the Town of Oconto Falls' population (7.3 percent or 84 individuals) were living below the poverty level in 1999. This is slightly behind the county statistics of 7.1 percent, but well ahead of the state average of 8.7 percent. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 13.6 of all elderly Town residents (age 65 and older) were living below the poverty level. Moreover, 4.2 percent of all families were living below the poverty level.

EMPLOYMENT FORECAST FOR OCONTO COUNTY

The strong national economy of the last decade has had a positive impact on Oconto County and the greater Wisconsin Bay Area. The economy supports a variety of service industries, including tourism. Recent low-interest mortgage loan rates have also spurred

housing construction and commercial development, particularly in the southern portions of Oconto County.

Unemployment rates in Oconto County have been steadily rising since reaching a 10-year low in 1999 (4.4%). In 2000, rates increased to 4.9%. In 2001, the unemployment rate dropped to 6.9% (a reflection of a larger national economic recession). By 2002, rates had increased to 8.6%. Unemployment rates over the last two years have been around 8%. Manufacturing layoffs and shut downs have been responsible for the elevated unemployment rates in Oconto County. As a result, many workers commute beyond the county to find employment.

In a world economy, change is always on the horizon. The impact of the recent economy slowdown and the war on terrorism are yet to be seen. One indicator of the economic downturn is high gas prices, which have increased transportation, electricity, and natural gas costs. If gas prices continue to increase, development may be deterred in rural portions of Oconto County, including the Town of Oconto Falls. Furthermore, the cost of living will also increase significantly, particularly for residents who commute long distances to work each day. For now, it is important to monitor the economy and prepare for a potential economic recession by supporting a diversified county economic base.