



Rice County, Minnesota Economic and Workforce Characteristics

Population and Laborshed

Rice County was the 13th largest county in Minnesota in 2006, up from 14th place in 2000. Population grew at a rate of 9.4 percent between 2000 and 2006, compared to 5.0 percent growth for the State of Minnesota. There are 21 cities and townships in Rice County. Faribault and Northfield are the largest cities in the county, and they added the most new residents between 2000 and 2006. Dundas and Lonsdale grew at the fastest rate. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Population 2000 to 2006: Cities in Rice County

Area	Population 2000	Population 2006	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Rice County	56,665	61,980	5,315	9.4%
Dundas	547	798	251	45.9%
Faribault	20,818	22,733	1,915	9.2%
Lonsdale	1,491	2,684	1,193	80.0%
Morristown	981	1,040	59	6.0%
Nerstrand	233	245	12	5.2%
Northfield	17,147	19,413	2,266	13.2%
State of Minnesota	4,919,479	5,167,101	247,622	5.0%

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

Faribault and Northfield are also the largest employment centers in the county, together accounting for 91 percent of county employment. The county's major highways and proximity to other large communities (including the Twin Cities metro area) contributes to the large numbers of commuters both into and out of the county. Twenty percent of the county's jobs are filled by workers from other counties, especially Dakota and Steele counties. (See Table 2.) The county's laborshed is the area from which a new or expanding business can expect to draw its workers (based on current employers' recruitment patterns). The following two pages display labor shed maps for the cities of Faribault and Northfield.

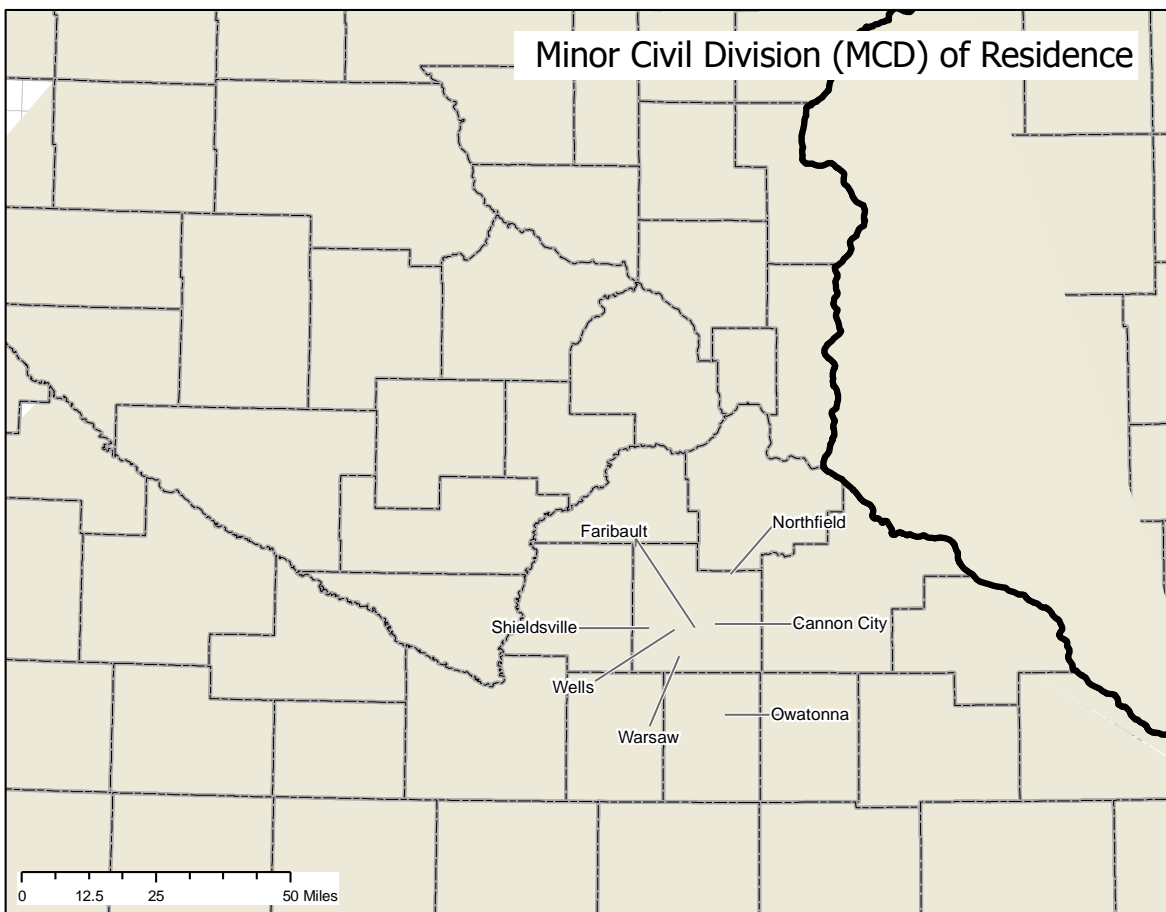
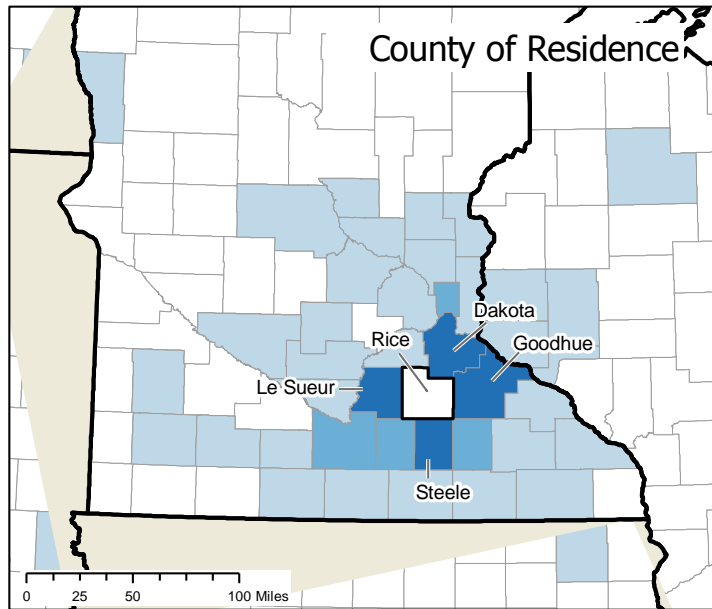
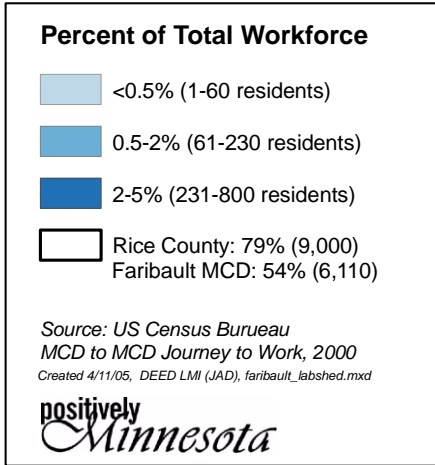
Table 2. Rice County Laborshed: Where Workers Live

County	Number of Rice County Workers Living in the Residence County	Share of Rice County Workers Living in Residence County
Rice County	20,228	79.1%
Dakota County	1,267	5.0%
Steele County	939	3.7%
Goodhue County	726	2.8%
Le Sueur County	492	1.9%
All other counties	1,934	7.6%

Source: US Census Bureau, Journey to Work files

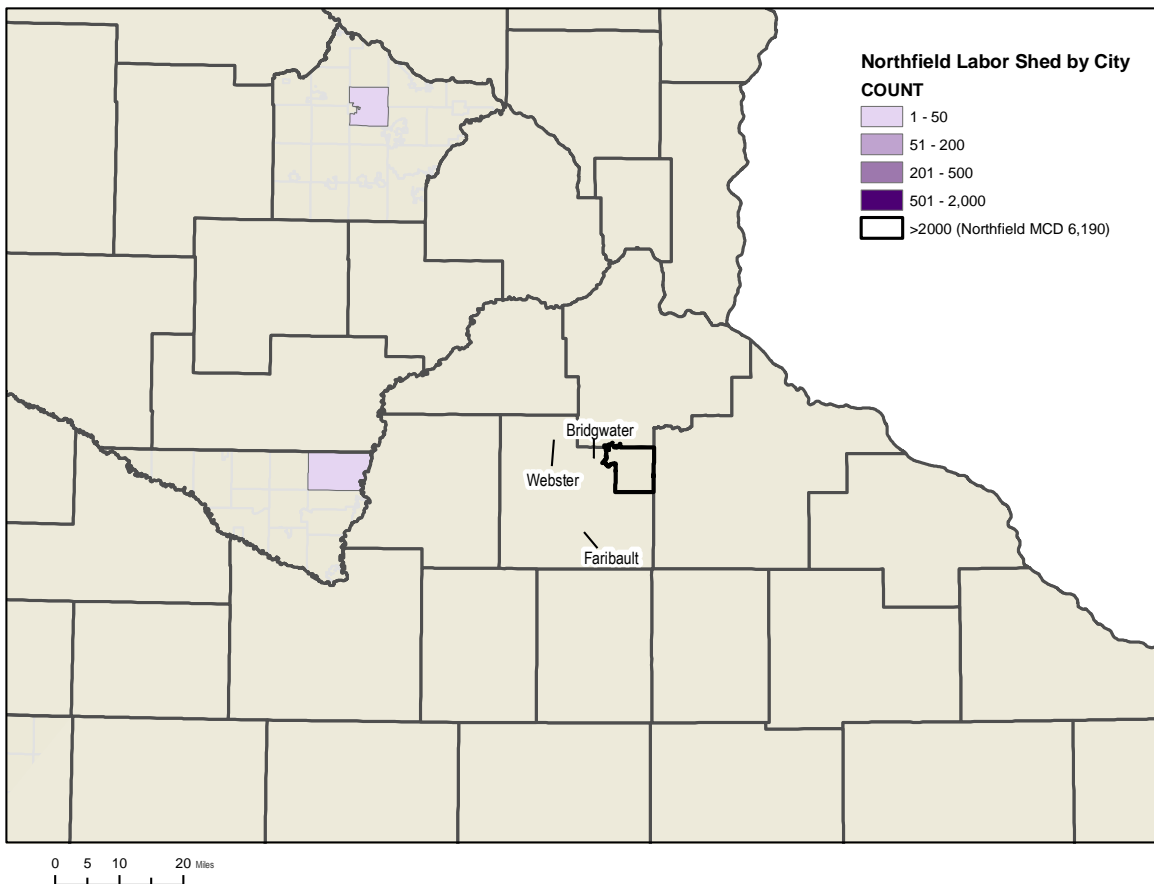
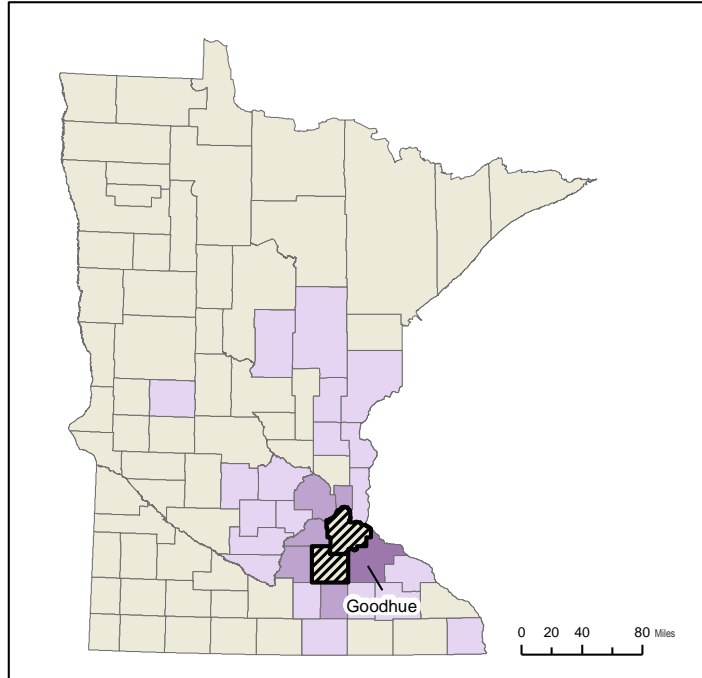
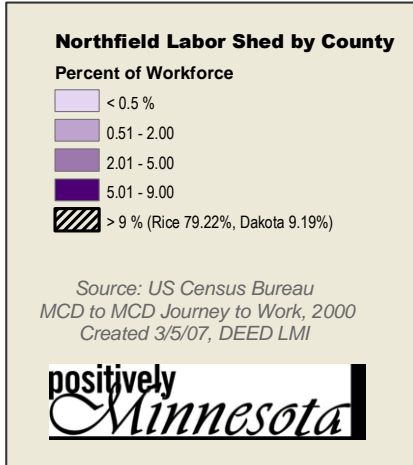
City of Faribault

Where Workers Live



City of Northfield

Where Workers Live



New and expanding businesses may also try to retain some out-commuters. Thirty percent of the county’s working residents commute outside the county for work, with many going to metro area counties such as Hennepin and Ramsey. (See Table 3.) Those commuters represent more than 8,000 workers.

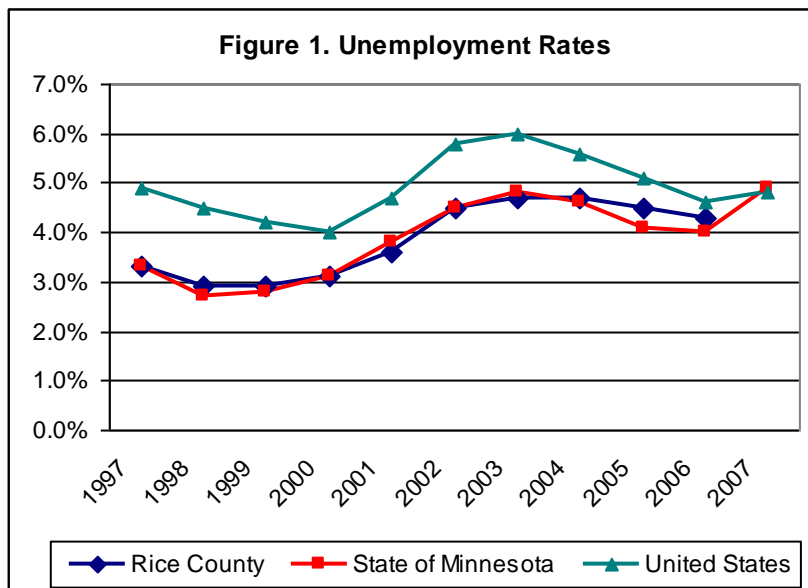
Table 3. Rice County Commuted: Where Residents Work

County	Number of Rice County Residents Working in the County	Share of Rice County Residents Working in the County
Rice County	20,228	70.7%
Dakota County	2,817	9.9%
Hennepin County	1,771	6.2%
Steele County	1,043	3.7%
Scott County	775	2.7%
Ramsey County	555	1.9%
Le Sueur County	278	1.0%
All other counties	1,137	4.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, Journey to Work files

Labor Force Availability

The standard measure of available workers is the unemployment rate. Figure 1 displays the unemployment rates for Rice County, the State of Minnesota and the US since 1997. The rate in Rice County closely followed the state rate until 2005, when it jumped to four-tenths of a percentage point about the state rate. It has been slightly higher than the state since that time.



Source: MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Table 4 displays unemployment statistics for each county in the laborshed. It also provides comparison with state and national unemployment rates. Unemployment rates in the labor market area tend to be close to or higher than the state rate. Rates are especially high in neighboring Le Sueur County. The Rice County rate was higher than the state rate in December 2007.

Table 4: Unemployment Statistics, December 2007

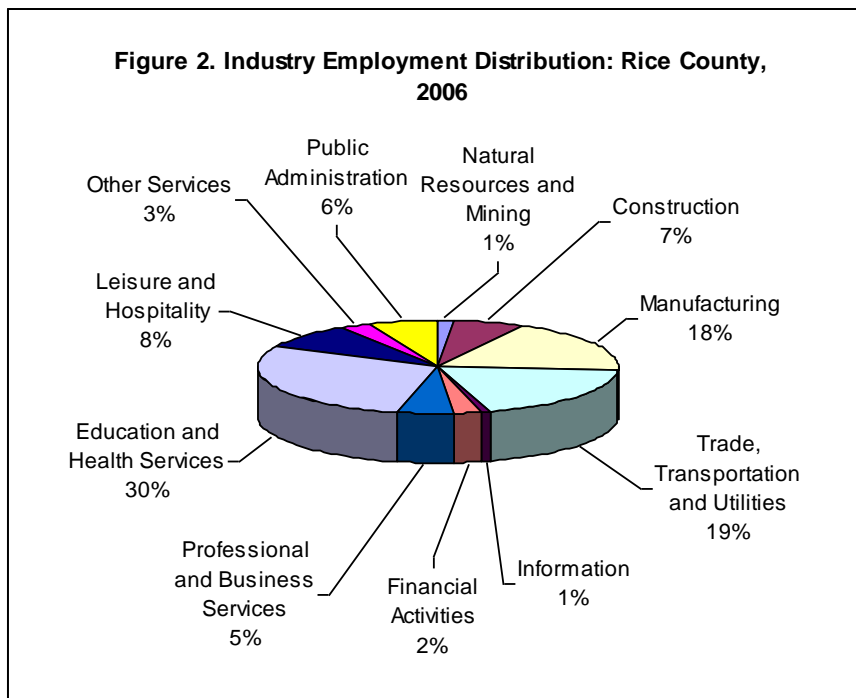
	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Rice County	31,953	30,173	1,780	5.6%
Dakota County	233,876	223,778	10,098	4.3%
Steele County	20,384	19,479	905	4.4%
Goodhue County	25,432	24,055	1,377	5.4%
Le Sueur County	13,996	12,925	1,071	7.7%
		MN Unemployment Rate		4.9%
		US Unemployment Rate		4.8%

Source: MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Industry Employment

Education and health services are the largest industry supersector in Rice County. It accounts for 30 percent of payroll employment and 32 percent of payroll wages. Trade, transportation and utilities (which includes more than 2,800 jobs in the retail trade sector) is second largest, and manufacturing ranks third. Food manufacturing is the largest manufacturing industry in the county. It includes breakfast cereal manufacturing, poultry processing, and fruit and vegetable canning, among other things. Other large manufacturing industries are machinery manufacturing, fabricated metal product manufacturing, nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing, plastic and rubber products manufacturing, and computer and electronic product manufacturing.

Employment gains from 2004 to 2006 were largest in health care and social assistance, while manufacturing employment fell 11 percent over the period (510 jobs). Data available for the Second Quarter of 2007 (the most recent data available) show that manufacturing employment held steady over the same period in 2006. Health care and social assistance led job growth, while construction shed the most jobs year-over-year.



Source: MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages