

# Brown County Assessment Study

## August 2005

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### **Background**

The Tracy Family Foundation (TFF) was established in 1997 by the Robert and Dorothy Tracy Family. TFF offers resources to charitable institutions, in Brown and surrounding counties, which focus on strengthening the family unit and bolstering a fundamental value system encompassing honesty, integrity, fairness, a Catholic/Christian belief, and a strong work ethic. Since 1998, the Tracy Family Foundation has distributed over \$1.8 million, thousands of which have gone to programs and services for residents of Brown County. These dollars have funded a wide range of needed services for youth and families to improve their quality of life.

To continue to stay informed about the needs and assets in Brown County, TFF has engaged The Medical Foundation (TMF) and the University of Illinois Extension-Adams/Brown County Unit (UIE) to undertake an effort to assess community strengths and needs. This study focused on the areas of youth, education, families, health and wellness, and community betterment and evaluated what is currently occurring in Brown County in these areas, and where community members envision Brown County could be in the future.

Over an eight-month period, TMF and UIE staff reviewed existing data as well as conducted primary research through interviews, focus groups, and a survey with various groups of people in the County. The findings detailed in this report aim to develop a comprehensive view of the needs and resources within Brown County, provide stakeholders with current data to inform decision-making and planning, and offer direction to TFF on future funding decisions.

### **Methodology**

To conduct this evaluation, TMF and UIE used a community assessment process that included quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, community input and review, and report development. This process was guided and informed by a group of key community stakeholders who were members of a steering committee. A list of steering committee members for this project can be found in Appendix A. From December 2004 to July 2005, research was collected and analyzed for this assessment using a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Quantitative data was collected through both primary and secondary sources. A four-page survey was developed and completed by Brown County community members. A copy of the survey is available in Appendix B. The purpose of the survey was to collect information from residents on how satisfied they are with various community services,

housing characteristics, health care services, and educational services, their highest priorities for change in the community, and Brown County's strongest assets and resources. Of the 500 people who completed the survey, a total of 484 surveys were used for analysis. Sixteen surveys were not analyzed due to incomplete and/or unreadable responses. In addition to the survey, quantitative data on Brown County was also compiled from a wide variety of existing national, state, and county sources. These included United States Bureau of the Census, United States, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Public Health, and University of Illinois Extension-Adams/Brown Unit.

Additionally, TMF and UIE staff collected qualitative data through an extensive process of conducting focus groups and interviews. During this period, 12 focus groups with 70 individuals and 37 one-on-one interviews were conducted. Participants in the focus groups and interviews included representatives of the Tracy family, TFF Trustees, Brown County youth, adults, elders, schools, churches, area non-profits, business owners and managers, key community leaders, and other community members.

Each focus group was facilitated by trained TMF and UIE staff who utilized a Focus Group Guide to ensure uniform data collection across groups. On average focus groups were between 1.5 to 2 hours in length. A complete listing of focus groups and focus group participants is provided in Appendices C and D respectively. A copy of the Focus Group and Interview Guide is provided in Appendix E. Interviews were conducted in person or via telephone and lasted approximately 30 minutes to one hour in length. Each interview was conducted using an Interview Guide. The purpose of the focus groups and interviews was to gather additional information on the needs and assets in Brown County and identify the gaps in services available in the community.

## **County Profile**

### Population Characteristics

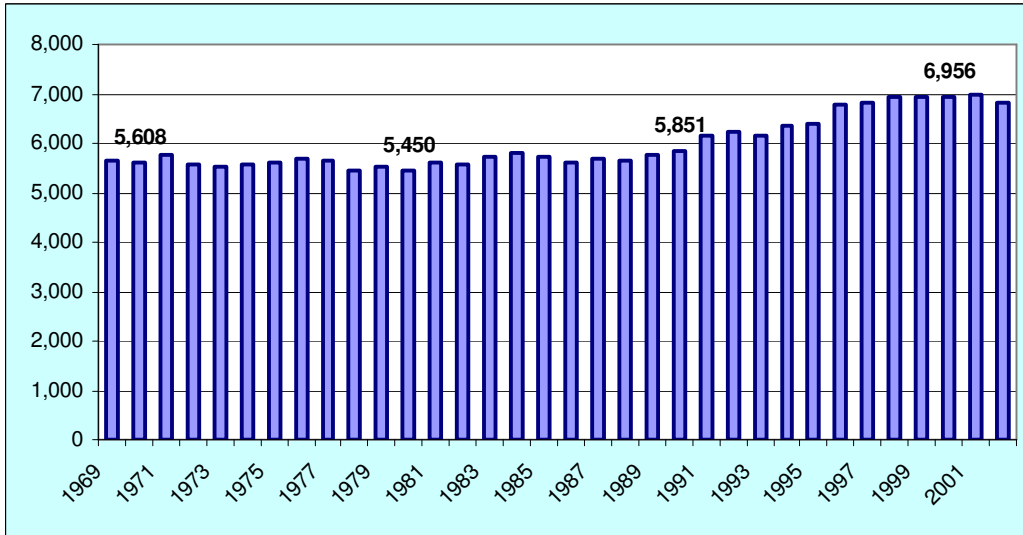
Over the last two decades, Brown County has seen a relatively stable population (without counting the prison population). In 2000, the resident population was 5,007, a scant increase of 1.3% compared to the 1990 population and a 8% loss since 1980. It is estimated that the Brown County population will decrease over the next five years but at a slower rate of 0.5%. (See Figure 1 for Population Trends.)

Changes in population, however, have not been equal across age groups (Figure 2). From 1990 to 2000, the population in the 22-29 year old and 30-39 year old age groups significantly decreased, which also most likely contributed to the decline in the number of school age children. It is expected that the population of school age children will most likely continue to decrease in the years ahead.

The "baby boomer" age groups (40-49 year olds and 50-64 year olds) dominate the current demographic profile, making up nearly 31% of the population. The numbers of people in the 40-49 year old and 50-64 year old age groups increased from 1990 to 2000.

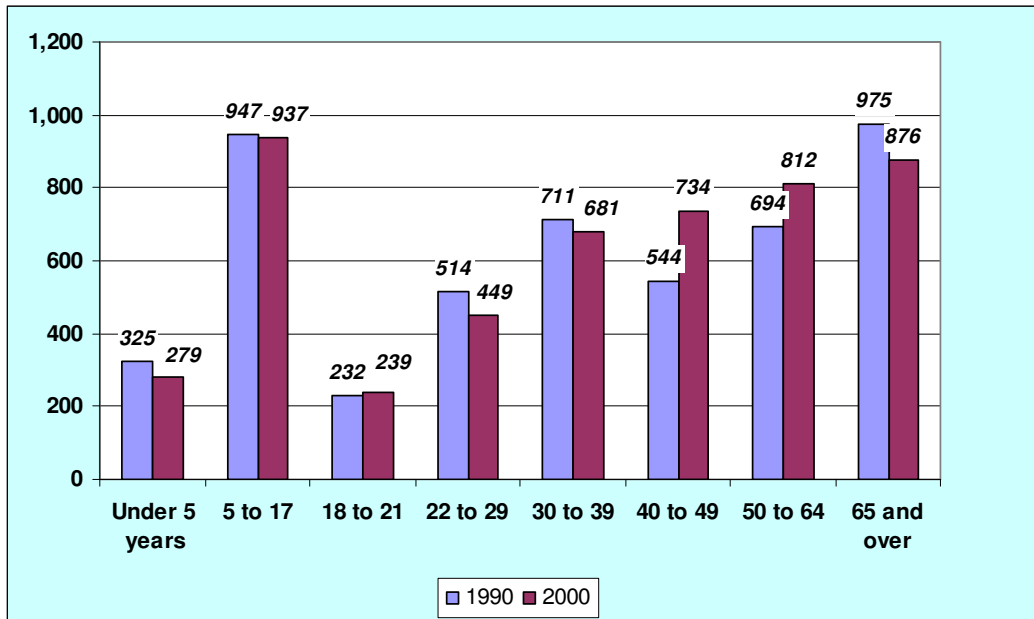
If members of this cohort migrate out of the area as they retire, it will have a significant impact on the County. This was seen in the last decade or so with the senior population (ages 65 and over), whose population decreased 10.2% from 1990 to 2000. This decline was most likely due to migration.

**Figure 1: Brown County Population Trends, 1969 to 2002**



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System 2004

**Figure 2: Brown County Population by Age Group, 1990 and 2000**



Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 1

Households

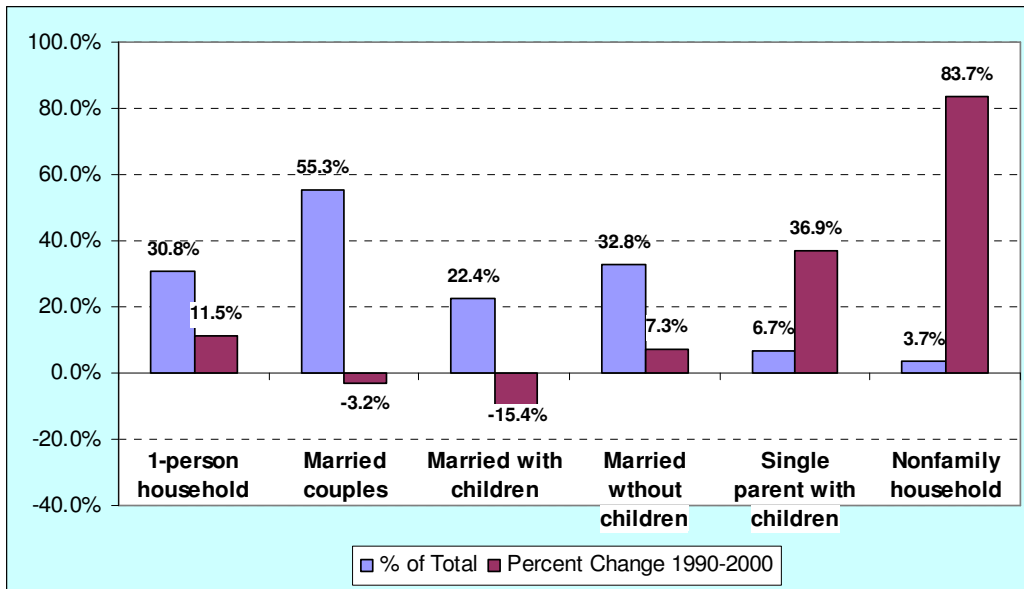
Even though the total population increased only 1.3% from 1990 to 2000, the total number of households increased by 5.9% (Figure 3). This increase most likely occurred

as a result of the changing structure of households and families in Brown County. From 1990 to 2000, the number of one-person households increased by 11.5%, comprising 31% of all households in the year 2000. Nearly half of the one-person households (45%) are occupied by someone 65 and older, and over 50% are occupied by a female.

The number of family households increased by only 1.0% from 1990 to 2000; however the make-up of family households changed slightly. From 1990 to 2000, the number of married couple families decreased by 3.2%, while the number of married couples with children decreased by 15.4%. However, the number and proportion of single parent families with children increased. In 2000, there were 141 single parent households, a 36.9% increase over 1990. In addition, approximately one-third of households (32.8%) in 2000 were categorized as married couples without children, while 22.4% included married with children. The number of all households with children under 18 declined from 1990 to 2000, falling from 33.2% to 29.1%. In 2000, nearly one-quarter (23%) of all households with children under 18 were from single parent families.

The number of elderly householders (aged 65 and older) decreased from 668 (33.5% of all households) to 592 (28.1%) in 2000. This shift reflects the decline in the number of persons in the 65 and over age group.

**Figure 3: Brown County Selected Household Characteristics**



Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 1

### Income Levels

Incomes in Brown County have lagged Illinois and the Western Illinois Region by significant margins until recent years (Table 1). However, the income gap closed significantly in the 1990 to 2000 period. For example, Brown County median household income in 1990 was \$20,477 compared to \$23,609 for the Western IL region. Ten years later, Brown County median household income exceeded that of the Western Illinois

Region (\$35,563 vs. \$34,990). Income growth in Brown County surpassed the Region and Illinois during that period for all indicators except non-family median income.

From 1990 to 2000, total personal income in Brown County also increased at a rate exceeding both the Western Illinois Region and Illinois. Since 1990, total personal income increased 61.2% in Brown County compared to 57.2% in Illinois and 49.2% in the Region. Poverty rates decreased between 1990 and 2000 and were below averages for the Western Illinois Region and Illinois for most measures. However, there is a large cohort (10.8% of the population) clustered in the income category just above the poverty level.

**Table 1: Brown County Household Income, 1990 and 2000**

	Brown County			Western IL Region		
	1990	2000	%	1990	2000	%
<b>Median household income</b>	\$20,477	\$35,563	73.7%	\$23,609	\$34,990	48.2%
<b>Average household income</b>	\$29,638	\$39,656	33.8%	\$33,529	\$43,329	29.2%
<b>Median family income</b>	\$25,101	\$43,924	75.0%	\$28,868	\$44,138	52.9%
<b>Median non-family income</b>	\$10,461	\$16,786	60.5%	\$28,868	\$20,297	62.7%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

### Economic Trends

The structure of the Brown County economy is similar in many respects to other counties in Western Illinois. Table 3 provides a current estimate of the number of businesses for major economic sectors. The largest number of businesses are within the services summary (93), followed by retail trade (45), government (30), finance/insurance/real estate (22), and construction (16). Few striking differences are revealed except for the manufacturing and government sectors. Although it may appear that Brown County with a much larger proportion of government establishments is a haven for government offices, in reality this is typical of small sparsely populated rural places that have relatively fewer businesses in other sectors. In this case Brown has fewer establishments in construction, manufacturing, transportation, and wholesale trade.

**Table 3. Number of Business by Economic Sector for 2005**

	Brown County		Western Illinois Region	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture & Mining	9	3.8%	232	3.7%
Construction	16	6.8%	509	8.2%
Manufacturing	2	0.9%	211	3.4%
Transportation	5	2.1%	223	3.6%

Communication	1	0.4%	40	0.6%
Electric, Gas, Water, Sanitary Services	1	0.4%	23	0.4%
Wholesale Trade	9	3.8%	316	5.1%
Retail Trade Summary	45	19.1%	1,323	21.2%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	22	9.4%	520	8.3%
Services Summary	93	39.6%	2,374	38.1%
Government	30	12.8%	399	6.4%
Other	2	0.9%	60	1.0%
Totals	235	100.0%	6,230	100.0%

Source: InfoUSA and Environmental Systems Research Institute

What the county lacks in business diversity it makes up for in size. From an employment and payroll perspective the economic landscape is dominated by two sectors, actually two establishments which provide over 60% of all jobs in the County. (Table 4) The wholesale trade sector, which includes DOT Foods, is by far the largest with 47.3% of all employment in the county. The government sector with 484 employees, 14.7% of all jobs, is second but nearly three-fourths of those jobs are at the Western Illinois Correctional Center. The dominance of these two large facilities skews all other employment comparisons with the Western Illinois Region.

**Table 4. 2005 Employment by Economic Sector**

	Brown County		Western Illinois Region	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture & Mining	31	0.9%	933	1.5%
Construction	27	0.8%	2,524	4.0%
Manufacturing	11	0.3%	10,492	16.6%
Transportation	70	2.1%	1,614	2.5%
Communication	0	0.0%	435	0.7%
Electric, Gas, Water, Sanitary Services	8	0.2%	315	0.5%
Wholesale Trade	1,559	47.3%	4,495	7.1%
Retail Trade Summary	296	9.0%	13,079	20.7%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	97	2.9%	3,721	5.9%
Services Summary	710	21.6%	21,933	34.6%
Government	484	14.7%	3,730	5.9%
Other	0	0.0%	62	0.1%
Totals	3,293	100.0%	63,333	100.0%

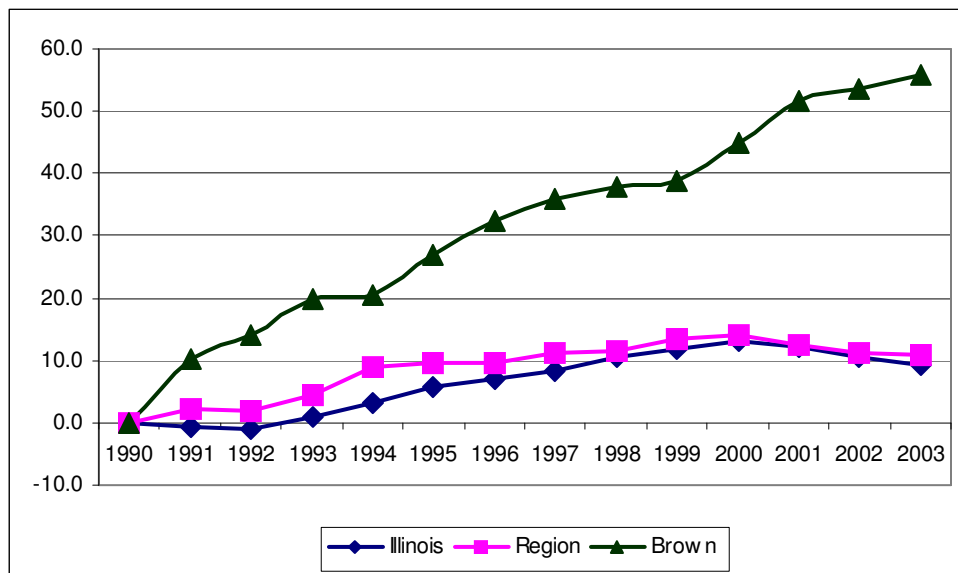
Source: InfoUSA and Environmental Systems Research Institute

The growth of these two large employers produced extraordinary changes in the local economy since 1990. The dramatic increase in incomes and reduction in poverty documented in the previous section are the most notable. With the opening of the Western Illinois Correctional Center in 1989 and nearly simultaneous expansion at DOT

Foods, the growth in wage and salary employment was remarkable. Between 1990 and 2003, wage and salary employment increased 72.3% in Brown County while Illinois and the Western Illinois Region languished with increases of 9.7% and 11.1% respectively. An estimated 1,156 new jobs were created compared to a total of only 4,005 in the neighboring counties combined. Figure 4 provides a graphic illustration of the accumulated growth in wage and salary employment.

The total employment picture, which includes the farm sector and proprietors (self employed persons), provides a slightly different view of local economic performance. Total employment also increased at a rate significantly greater than Illinois or the Region but weakness in the small business and farming sectors blunted these gains. Total employment increased 46% with 1,173 new jobs added between 1990 and 2003. Nearly 99% of the employment growth in Brown County was the result of increases in wage and salary employment with the small business sector only contributing about 60 new jobs over the thirteen year period. In both Illinois and the surrounding Region growth in the small business sector was a significant source of new employment.

**Figure 4. Accumulated Year to Year Percentage Change in Wage and Salary Employment**



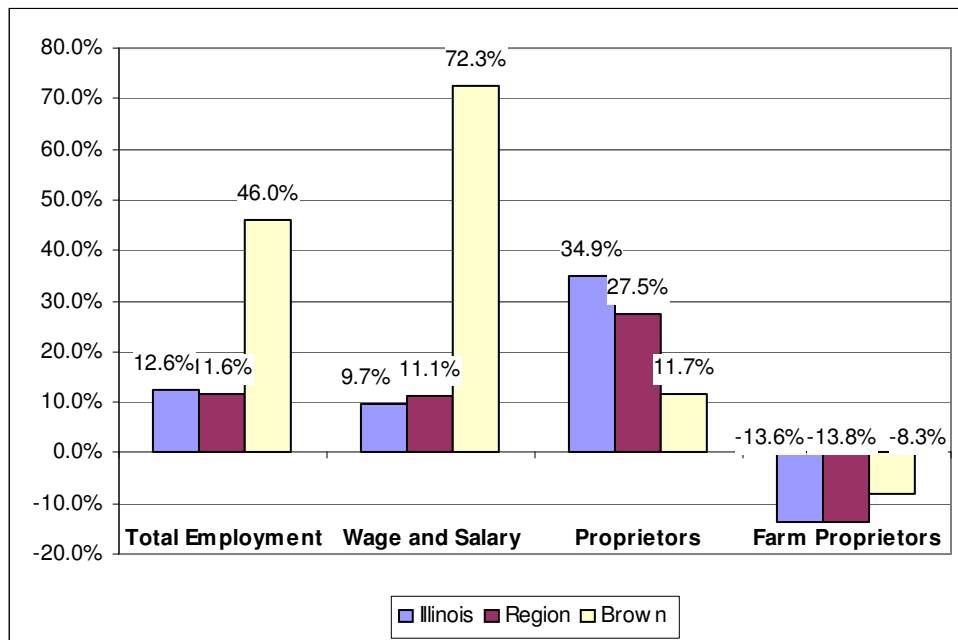
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System 2005

Figure 5 displays the total changes in employment as well as the components of change – wage and salary employment, proprietors, and farm proprietors for the 1990 to 2003 period. In the Western Illinois Region the growth in proprietor employment accounted for 27.5% of all new jobs, in Illinois 34.9% of all new jobs were proprietors. Schuyler County was the only Western Illinois county with a smaller growth rate for proprietors. The low rate of entrepreneurship is probably the result of several factors. Ample job opportunities in Brown County may suppress the need to start a business in order to create a job. The low population density diminishes prospects for successful retail and service businesses that serve local markets. Competition for labor in a County where the

number of jobs exceeds the labor supply might also affect the potential success of a small business enterprise.

Farm proprietor employment continued a downward trend that started nearly one half century ago. The relatively lower decline in the number of farm proprietors in Brown County is likely the result of the exceptional opportunities for off-farm employment. The preservation of smaller less profitable farm units is often a function of the availability of an off-farm job. Brown is the only county in Western Illinois and only one of nine in the State, the rest are in Southern Illinois, that have more farm owners listing off-farm employment as their primary occupation instead of farming. Therefore it is likely that the vigorous growth in wage and salary employment has helped to preserve many small farm units that otherwise would have been consolidated into larger operations.

**Figure 5. 1990 to 2003 Change in Total, Wage and Salary, Proprietor and Farm Proprietor Employment**

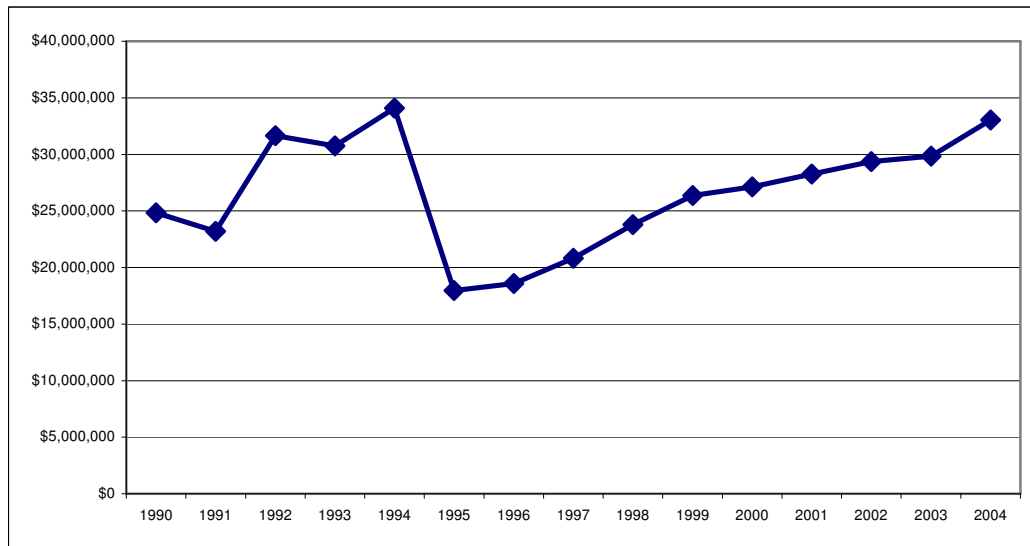


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System 2005

The retail sector, often viewed as a barometer of local economic conditions, is particularly weak in Brown County. Total retail sales trends (Figure 6) indicate a generally upward trend since 1995 when a significant decline in the Agriculture and Miscellaneous sales tax category occurred probably as the result of a major business closure like a grain elevator.

Despite the rising trend since 1995 there is still a significant amount of leakage in the retail sector. Table 5 summarizes retail expenditures and demand for 2005. These estimates only include household/consumer expenditures and do not include business to business retail sales.

**Figure 6. Brown County Total Retail Sales Trends**



Source: Illinois Department of Revenue

An estimated 47.7% of all potential retail sales are occurring outside the County. Nearly two-thirds of lost retail sales are in automobile and general merchandise categories. This retail sales leakage is not unique to Brown County. Nearly all small market, rural counties in Illinois that lack a car dealership are struggling to capture a larger proportion of potential retail sales. This is normally a significant challenge because in most rural counties a large proportion of workers commute to larger communities for employment. In Brown the opposite is true because of the abundant jobs available in the community where a very large proportion of workers (over 70%) live and work in the County.

**Table 5. Brown County 2005 Retail Sales, Potential Sales, and Leakage Estimates**

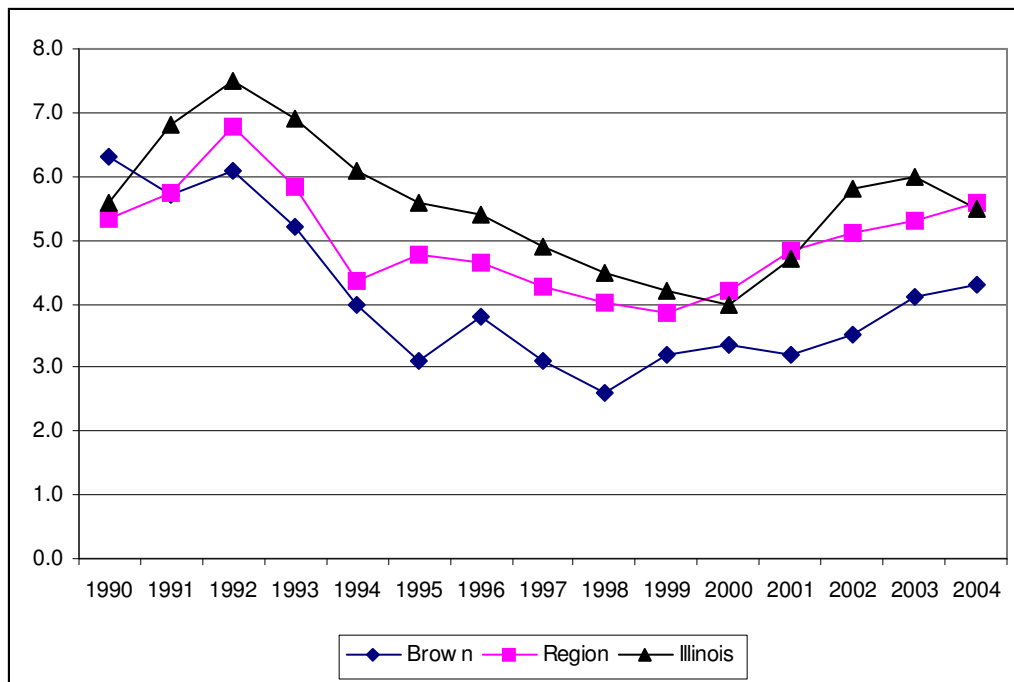
	Supply	Demand	Leakage	
	(Retail Sales)	(Retail Potential)	(Amount)	(%)
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$17,269,570	\$33,027,821	\$15,758,251	47.7%
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$1,283,990	\$8,373,119	\$7,089,129	84.7%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$255,822	\$545,465	\$289,643	53.1%
Furniture Stores	\$177,782	\$443,888	\$266,106	59.9%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$190,751	\$564,709	\$373,958	66.2%
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$3,091,134	\$4,682,512	\$1,591,378	34.0%
Food & Beverage Stores	\$4,496,433	\$6,047,793	\$1,551,360	25.7%
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$1,299,437	\$1,607,314	\$307,877	19.2%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	\$115,775	\$283,355	\$167,580	59.1%
General Merchandise Stores	\$2,380,904	\$5,557,125	\$3,176,221	57.2%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$321,558	\$661,409	\$339,851	51.4%
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$3,655,984	\$4,261,132	\$605,148	14.2%

Source: InfoUSA and Environmental Systems Research Institute estimates 2005.

## Labor and Employment

The unemployment rate in Brown County is one of the lowest in Illinois. Since 1992 the rate has remained consistently below the Regional and Illinois averages (Figure 7). During most of that period the rate remained below 4% and even dipped below 3% in 1998. While this may seem to be a rosy picture of “full employment” it is also something of a dilemma for local businesses. A competitive labor market with a surplus of willing workers is preferred, and needed, by local businesses in order to grow. Regional unemployment rates also remained below the Illinois average for much of this period.

**Figure 7. Annual Average Unemployment Rate Trend 1990 to 2004**



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In a sparsely populated area like Western Illinois with little or no growth in the resident population, workers can only come from two sources. One is an increase in labor force participation rates and the other is an increase in the number of people commuting to work. Table 6 illustrates the impact of a healthy job market on labor force participation rates. Between 1990 and 2000 the proportion of persons 16 years and over that are in the labor force increased significantly. The increase was particularly large for females where the proportion jumped from 51.9% to 60.6%.

**Table 6. Brown County Labor Force Participation Rates 1990 and 2000**

	1990		2000	
Total 16 years and over	3,729		3,894	
In labor force	2,290	61.4%	2,619	67.3%
Male	1,720		1,882	
In labor force	1,248	72.6%	1,399	74.3%
Female	2,009		2,012	
In labor force	1,042	51.9%	1,220	60.6%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

One of the impacts of the rise in labor force participation rates is an increased number of children who live in families where all parents work. Table 7 provides a summary of the types of families children under 18 years live in and the number of those children living in families where all parents work. Between 1990 and 2000 the proportion of children 18 and under living in families where all parents work increased from 65.7% to 79.3%. The most striking, but commonsense, statistic is the large proportion of children in single parent households where the lone parent is employed. This is particularly important because an increasing number of children are living in single parent families. The largest percentage change actually occurred in families with two parents where the proportion of families with both parents working increased from 63.4% to 76.5%.

**Table 7. Brown County Children by Family Type by Employment Status**

	1990		2000	
Total children aged 18 and under	1,249		1,170	
Children with all parents in labor force	820	65.7%	928	79.3%
Living with two parents	1,105	88.5%	928	79.3%
Both parents in labor force	701	63.4%	710	76.5%
Living with one parent:	144	11.5%	242	20.7%
Single parent in labor force	120	83.3%	218	90.1%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

The most important source of new workers for Brown County businesses are commuters from neighboring counties (Table 8). Nearly all jobs in Brown County were held by County residents prior to 1980. By 1990 25.2% of employees were commuters and by 2000 the proportion of commuters increased to nearly 40%. Those commuters are coming from 12 counties in Western Illinois with Adams, Schuyler, and Pike contributing 65% of the total. With projections for no increase in the Brown County population the regional labor pool will be an increasingly important component of economic development opportunity in the future.

**Table 8. Residence of Workers at Brown County Businesses**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Brown</b>		<b>Out of County Commuters</b>	
1970	1,557	1,453	93.3%	104	6.7%
1980	1,533	1,471	96.0%	62	4.0%
1990	2,065	1,545	74.8%	520	25.2%
2000	2,896	1,740	60.1%	1,156	39.9%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System 2005

Finally it is important to note that the average wages for Brown County residents that work in the County are 20% lower than the average wages of commuters.(Table 9) There are several potential explanations for this difference. The most likely is that commuters were underemployed in previous jobs and found better paying prospects in Brown County. In fact the average wage of Brown County residents that commute out of the County, nearly 30% of all workers, is also greater than the average for those that work in the County.

**Table 9. Average Wages for Brown County Workers by Place of Residence in 2000**

<b>Place of Residence</b>	<b>Workers</b>	<b>Average Wage</b>
Outside Brown County	1,017	\$30,015
Brown	1,725	\$23,981

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System 2005

## Housing

Housing is strongly influenced by demographic characteristics. As the number of households increased between 1990 and 2000 so did the number of occupied housing units (Table 10). Home ownership increased slightly from 73.7% to 74.1%. This proportion is similar to homeownership shares in other Western Illinois counties. Although the vacancy rate decreased between 1990 and 2000 it remained above the Regional average of 9.6% and well above the Illinois average of 6%.

**Table 10. Brown County Housing Tenure 1990 and 2000**

	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
Total Housing Units	2,357		2,456	
Occupied	1,991	84.5%	2,108	85.8%
Owner occupied	1,468	73.7%	1,561	74.1%
Renter occupied	523	26.3%	547	25.9%
Vacant	366	15.5%	348	14.2%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

The age structure of renters and owners changed between 1990 and 2000. Home ownership increased for all age groups except 35 to 44 and 55 to 64 year olds (see Table 11). The decline in ownership for the 55 to 64 year age group was small but for 35 to 44 year olds the decline was over 5%. For all age groups over 45 years of age, homeownership was above 80%. Over 85% of 45 to 54 year olds owned homes, the largest share for all categories. The number of 18 to 24 year olds that own homes doubled between 1990 and 2000. Although the absolute numbers are small this is a very positive indicator. Young adults are apparently able to find and purchase housing in the County. Unfortunately in the next age group, 25 to 34 years, the total number of owned and rented housing units decreased reflecting population losses in this age group. Nearly one-third of all owner occupied housing is headed by a person 65 or older but the number and proportion of senior owned housing is declining.

**Table 11. Brown County Housing Tenure by Age of Householder 1990 and 2000**

	Rent		Own	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
15 to 24 years	79.8%	73.2%	20.2%	26.8%
25 to 34 years	39.7%	35.8%	60.3%	64.2%
35 to 44 years	26.2%	31.4%	73.8%	68.6%
45 to 54 years	21.2%	14.6%	78.8%	85.4%
55 to 64 years	14.6%	17.2%	85.4%	82.8%
65 to 74 years	19.6%	17.8%	80.4%	82.2%
75 years and over	18.8%	18.7%	81.2%	81.3%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

The housing landscape is dominated by single family detached housing (Table 12), 78% of all housing is in this category. An additional 13% of housing are mobile homes. Vacancy rates are lowest for multifamily rental units (10%) and highest for mobile homes 20.7%. The housing stock is relatively old with over 55% of housing constructed prior to 1950. By comparison 45% of housing in the surrounding counties was constructed prior to 1950. The median age of housing is almost 60 years. Slightly more than 50% of the owners of occupied housing do not have a mortgage compared to 43% for the Region and 30% for Illinois.

Measures of substandard housing indicate that Brown County has a larger proportion of housing lacking plumbing and telephone service than other counties in the Western Illinois region although the proportions are still small. The 2000 Census reported 5.8% of occupied housing lacked telephone service compared to 3.1% for the Region. 1.4% lacked complete plumbing facilities, over double the 0.5% in the Western Illinois Region.

**Table 12. Brown County Housing Units in Structure in 2000**

	Total		Occupied		Vacant	
Total Housing units	2,456		2,108		348	
1, detached	1,915	78.0%	1,662	86.8%	253	13.2%
1, attached	4	0.2%	4	100.0%	0	0.0%
2	46	1.9%	39	84.8%	7	15.2%
3 or 4	69	2.8%	69	100.0%	0	0.0%
5 to 9	46	1.9%	29	63.0%	17	37.0%
10 to 19	53	2.2%	48	90.6%	5	9.4%
20 to 49	4	0.2%	4	100.0%	0	0.0%
Mobile home	319	13.0%	253	79.3%	66	20.7%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

### **Schools and Educational Resources**

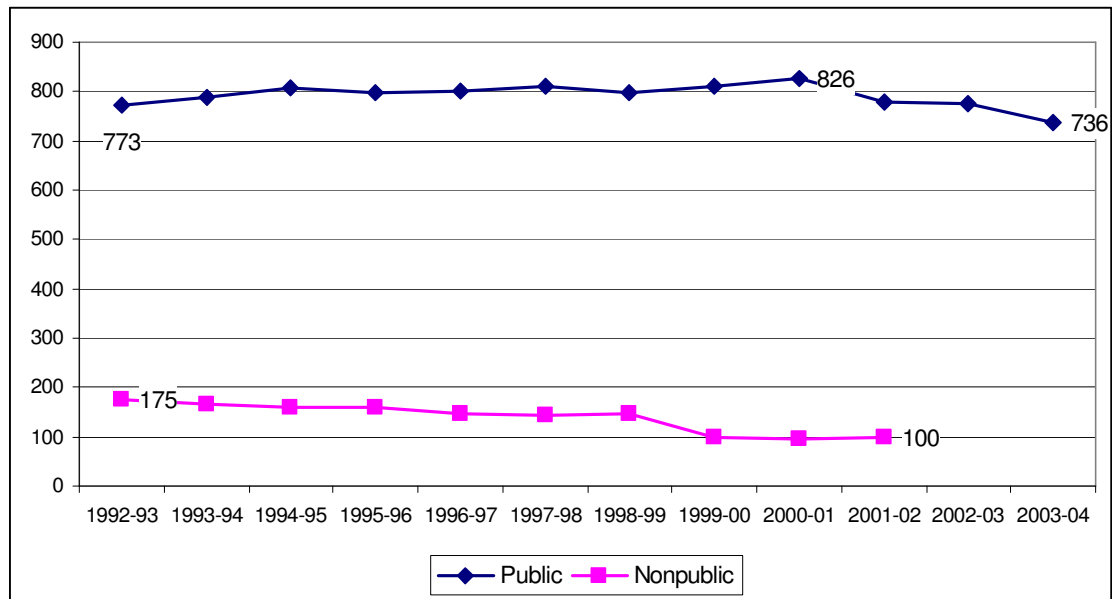
School and student characteristics are often reliable indicators of broader community values and trends. In many rural communities schools are the most important (and most expensive) institution. Not only do they serve an educational role but they are often an important locus for social and cultural interaction.

#### Enrollment and Student Characteristics

Brown County Community Unit School District 1 operates as a county-wide unit district. It is one of only nine county-wide unit districts operating in Illinois. Enrollment trends in recent years have trended downward as a result of demographic changes in the 1990's (Figure 8). Over the last ten years enrollment in the district remained relatively flat at about 800 students. Since 2000, when enrollment peaked at 826, the district has experienced losses. In 2003-2004 enrollment was 736, a decline of about 11% from the 2000-2001 school year. Enrollment losses were also the rule at the nonpublic school (St. Mary's). The same downward trends prevailed throughout the Western Illinois Region where school enrollment peaked in 1997-1998.

In 2004 Brown County had the smallest proportion of low income students among a selected group of school districts in Western Illinois. This corresponds with poverty statistics which indicate poverty rates in Brown County are lower than in many of the surrounding counties. The proportion of students classified as low income returned to 1999 levels after increasing to a high of 32.2% in 2002 (Table 13).

**Figure 8. Brown County Schools Enrollment Trends**



Source: Illinois State Board of Education 2005

Low income enrollment increased over 1999 levels in every district except Brown and Meredosia. The proportion of low income students is higher for elementary students, 39.1% in 2004 for Pre-K-Grade 4, than for middle and high school students.

**Table 13. Percent of Students Classified as Low Income 1999 to 2004 (sorted low to high)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Brown</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>32.2</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>24.9</b>
Meredosia	31.7	32.3	34.8	33.6	35.3	31.8
Camp Point	26.5	27.1	30.2	31.4	30.6	32.6
Pittsfield	20.3	20.4	22.8	26.0	26.7	36.6
Illinois	36.1	36.7	36.9	37.5	37.9	39.0
Rushville	30.5	32.6	34.8	32.8	36.0	39.8
Griggsville	37.3	45.3	43.9	43.3	40.0	40.3
Jacksonville	30.3	30.1	34.1	34.4	36.5	40.7
Quincy	38.4	38.9	38.5	41.1	39.0	42.5
Beardstown	42.3	45.4	52.8	55.8	56.9	62.2

Low-income students are pupils aged 3 to 17, inclusive, from families receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches. The percent of low-income students is the count of low-income students divided by the total fall enrollment multiplied by 100.

Brown County also had the lowest student mobility rate when compared with several school districts in Western Illinois (Table 14). The mobility rate, which measures the number of enrollment changes as a percent of total enrollment, is an indicator of permanence and stability in the districts population. High mobility rates create administrative and teaching challenges. High rates are most common in places that have larger proportions of low income, transient families but may also occur when rapid population changes (increases or decreases) occur during the year. Beardstown and Quincy were the only districts in the region where the mobility rates were significantly above the Illinois average of 16.8% in 2004.

**Table 14. Student Mobility 1999 to 2000 (sorted low to high)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Brown</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>7.6</b>
Pittsfield	14.6	12.4	10.6	13.6	12.1	9.7
Camp Point	20.6	9.9	12.4	12	7.8	10.6
Rushville	12.8	12.3	11.7	10.4	12.1	12.4
Griggsville	6.0	18.2	18.6	10.0	11.8	13.3
Jacksonville	16.9	17.2	14.2	15.5	15.9	16.0
Illinois	18.1	17.5	17.2	16.5	16.4	16.8
Meredosia	13.2	11.6	23.6	10.6	27.5	16.8
Beardstown	22.8	24.7	25.5	33.1	28.0	22.4
Quincy	32.1	24.7	28.9	34.3	30.5	33.1

Student mobility (Turnover) reflects any enrollment change between the first school day in October and the last day of the school year. It is the sum of the students who transferred out and the students who transferred in, divided by the average daily enrollment multiplied, by 100. Students are counted each time they transfer out or in during the reporting year. Thus, individual students may be counted more than once.

### School Spending

Illinois school districts depend on property taxes for the majority of school funding. This creates many inequities as the EAV (Equalized Assessed Value) of property varies dramatically from district to district. Some rural districts with an agricultural tax base have an EAV per pupil of less than \$30,000 while some suburban districts in the Chicago metro area have an EAV over \$1,000,000 per pupil.

In 2004 the Brown County EAV per pupil was \$69,253 placing it ahead of the other rural districts, except for Meredosia, but behind the larger commercial centers in the Region (Table 15). Between 1999 and 2004 Brown County had the largest proportional increase in EAV (39%) when compared to other districts in the Region.

**Table 15. Equalized Assessed Value per Pupil (sorted low to high by 2004)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Beardstown	30,207	32,389	33,088	34,635	35,471	36,270
Barry	36,099	38,050	42,200	44,865	45,585	43,084
Griggsville-Perry	41,953	46,007	50,755	55,362	53,154	51,415
Scott	48,453	53,668	55,245	59,257	57,576	52,441
Camp Point	42,842	45,205	49,956	54,680	53,706	55,248
Schuyler	45,887	47,871	52,369	57,110	56,854	55,811
Pikeland (Pittsfield)	46,811	51,255	56,932	62,327	61,537	62,178
<b>Brown</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>53,687</b>	<b>60,176</b>	<b>69,120</b>	<b>71,825</b>	<b>69,253</b>
Meredosia	69,072	63,034	68,510	75,736	75,176	75,338
Quincy	63,849	71,953	73,174	74,589	76,197	80,071
Jacksonville	65,670	70,521	75,760	81,307	83,813	86,909

Equalized assessed valuation per pupil, an indication of district wealth, is the district's equalized assessed valuation divided by the 9-month average daily attendance.

Table 16 compares the school district tax rates for the same group of Western Illinois school districts. Camp Point was the only rural district with a rate lower than Brown County in 2004. The tax rate increased just 3% between 1999 and 2000. In five of the districts rates actually declined during the same period while in Barry, Griggsville, and Beardstown there were double digit increases.

**Table 16. School Tax Rate per \$100 of Equalized Assessed Value (sorted low to high by 2004)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Camp Point	3.23	3.27	3.23	3.16	3.24	3.27
Quincy	4.15	3.91	3.82	3.83	3.85	3.81
Jacksonville	3.88	3.88	3.78	3.73	3.78	3.83
<b>Brown</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>4.08</b>
Pikeland (Pittsfield)	4.36	4.42	4.19	4.05	4.09	4.21
Barry	3.16	3.5	3.98	4.01	4.09	4.22
Scott	4.21	4.2	4.26	4.26	4.3	4.38
Griggsville-Perry	4.06	4.43	4.43	4.16	4.29	4.48
Schuyler	4.68	4.59	4.43	4.22	4.39	4.56
Meredosia	5.15	5.18	4.89	4.8	4.62	4.97
Beardstown	4.64	4.77	4.97	4.92	5.24	5.3

Total school tax rate per \$100, an indication of district effort, is the district's total tax rate for education (per \$100) as shown on local property tax bills.

Brown County has one of the lowest levels of instructional expenditures per pupil when compared with neighboring districts (see Table 17). In 2004 the ratio of instructional expenditures to total operating expenditures was the lowest among the districts in Western Illinois at 0.54. Since 1999 instructional expenditures increased by a larger margin, 46%, than in any other school district. The average increase for all school districts was 26%.

**Table 17. Instructional Expenditure per Pupil (sorted low to high by 2004)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Scott	3,349	3,757	3,922	3,881	4,026	3,679
<b>Brown</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>3,054</b>	<b>3,358</b>	<b>3,579</b>	<b>3,690</b>	<b>3,815</b>
Camp Point	2,789	2,815	3,219	3,391	3,518	3,961
Quincy	3,732	4,030	4,029	3,877	4,027	4,044
Pittsfield	3,469	3,676	3,791	3,981	4,101	4,175
Jacksonville	3,302	3,483	3,710	4,017	4,294	4,358
Schuyler	3,556	3,755	3,921	4,225	4,506	4,361
Barry	3,779	3,685	3,873	4,071	4,374	4,393
Griggsville	3,433	3,887	4,088	4,411	4,589	4,495
Meredosia	3,305	3,011	3,244	3,988	4,247	4,519
Beardstown	3,785	4,146	4,163	4,599	4,881	4,718

Instructional expenditure per pupil: Instructional expenditures divided by the 9-month average daily attendance. "Instruction" includes activities dealing with the teaching of pupils or the interaction between teachers and pupils. Teaching may be provided for pupils in a school classroom or in another location such as a home or hospital and may include other learning activities. It may also be provided through some other approved media such as television, radio, telephone, or correspondence. Included here are the activities of aides or assistants of any type (clerks, graders, teaching machines, etc.), which assist in the instruction process. (Excluded are Capital Outlay expenditures which are reported separately.)

The operating expenditure per pupil of \$7,076 in 2004 was nearly identical to the average cost per pupil for all Western Illinois Region school districts (\$7,064). Per pupil expenditures increased 46% between 1999 and 2004. The average for all districts was 27%. (See Table 18)

**Table 18. Operating Expenditures per Pupil (sorted low to high by 2004)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Scott	6,204	6,006	6,259	6,819	6,633	6,071
Pittsfield	5,612	5,993	6,161	6,618	6,664	6,780
Camp Point	4,536	4,545	5,005	6,080	6,119	6,819
Jacksonville	5,137	5,670	6,072	6,648	6,961	6,914
Quincy	6,141	6,689	6,769	6,630	6,842	6,925
Barry	5,921	5,786	6,385	6,463	7,171	6,970
<b>Brown</b>	<b>4,847</b>	<b>5,489</b>	<b>6,053</b>	<b>6,268</b>	<b>6,931</b>	<b>7,076</b>

Beardstown	5,532	5,972	6,011	6,586	7,373	7,368
Schuyler	5,927	6,140	6,585	6,923	7,487	7,485
Griggsville-Perry	5,950	6,388	6,853	7,381	7,379	7,627
Meredosia	6,097	5,344	5,482	6,827	6,843	7,673

Operating expenditure per pupil is the gross operating cost of a school district (except summer school, adult education, bond principal retired, and capital expenditures) divided by the 9 Month Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for the regular school term of those children being educated within the district boundaries. Previous year data are reported.

### School Performance Indicators

Testing regimes in schools changed in the last few years as implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act influences how states develop, implement, and report standardized tests. Table 19 displays the new format for reporting overall school district performance also called the “Adequate Yearly Progress Report”. This table compares Brown County with many of the neighboring rural districts in addition to Quincy and Jacksonville the closest medium sized cities. It is important to exercise caution in making judgments based on a single year of test results. Year to year test results often vary by notable margins. Comprehensive data on standardized test scores is available in an interactive format at <http://www.iirc.niu.edu>.

**Table 19. 2004 Adequate Yearly Progress Report**

	Percent Tested on		Percent Meeting/Exceeding Standards*		Other Indicators	
	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Attendance Rate</i>	<i>Graduation Rate</i>
BARRY COMM UNIT SCHOOL DIST 1	100.0	100.0	69.6	57.1	96.3	100.0
BEARDSTOWN C U SCH DIST 15	99.5	100.0	52.4	51.7	94.2	100.0
<b>BROWN COUNTY C U SCH DIST 1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>95.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>
CENTRAL CUSD #3 (Camp Point)	100.0	100.0	64.3	65.3	95.6	96.0
GRIGGSVILLE-PERRY C U SCH DIST 4	100.0	100.0	64.5	58.2	96.1	81.4
JACKSONVILLE SCHOOL DIST 117	99.3	99.2	63.2	64.0	94.6	94.6
MEREDOSIA-CHAMBERSBURG CUSD 11	98.8	98.8	56.8	46.9	94.7	100.0
PIKELAND C U SCH DIST 10	99.0	99.0	59.0	56.8	95.3	83.9
QUINCY SCHOOL DISTRICT 172	99.1	99.1	64.0	67.3	93.9	82.7
SCHUYLER CO C U SCH DIST 1	100.0	100.0	67.4	65.1	95.0	91.2

SCOTT-MORGAN C U SCHOOL DIST 2	100.0	100.0	45.8	45.8	95.0	82.4
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Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is an NCLB (No Child Left Behind) indicator of progress. To make AYP, a school must meet certain levels established for (1) the percent of students tested; (2) the academic performance of students; and (3) a third criterion, which for Illinois schools include either the attendance rate for non-high schools or the graduation rate for high schools. (See individual school report cards for details).

Brown County currently meets or exceeds the ISBE standards for reading and mathematics and is not included on any academic watch or warning lists. Attendance and graduation rates are above the Illinois averages and equal to or better than many school districts in the Region. Brown County students ranked near the middle of all high schools in the Region for Composite ACT test scores (Table 20). Only three high schools had scores that matched or exceeded the Illinois average of 20. Overall downward trends in scores are primarily a result of an increase in the proportion of students taking the test. In 2001 only 61% of high school seniors took the ACT by 2004 the participation rate was 94%.

**Table 20. Composite ACT Scores 2001 to 2004**

COUNTY	SCHOOL NAME	2001	2002	2003	2004
ADAMS	CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL	22.1	19.5	19.2	19.3
ADAMS	LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL	22.2	19.7	19.7	20.1
ADAMS	QUINCY SR HIGH SCHOOL	21.6	19.5	19.6	19.6
ADAMS	SEYMOUR HIGH SCHOOL	22.0	17.9	18.3	18.0
ADAMS	UNITY HIGH SCHOOL	22.0	19.9	21.3	19.9
<b>BROWN</b>	<b>BROWN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>18.9</b>
CASS	A-C CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL	20.5	19.6	18.8	19.1
CASS	BEARDSTOWN JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL	21.4	18.5	18.9	18.2
CASS	VIRGINIA SR HIGH SCHOOL	19.7	17.9	19.1	18.1
MORGAN	FRANKLIN JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL	20.0	18.9	18.9	20.0
MORGAN	JACKSONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL	22.2	19.3	19.6	19.5
MORGAN	MEREDOSIA-CHAMBERSBURG HIGH SCH	17.6	18.1	17.8	16.9
MORGAN	TRIOPIA JR-SR HIGH SCHOOL	18.9	20.9	20.1	19.0
MORGAN	WAVERLY HIGH SCHOOL	20.2	21.3	19.2	18.7
PIKE	BARRY HIGH SCHOOL	22.8	19.3	19.0	19.2
PIKE	GRIGGSVILLE-PERRY HIGH SCHOOL	19.6	16.9	19.8	18.8
PIKE	PITTSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL	21.8	20.1	19.7	20.9
PIKE	PLEASANT HILL HIGH SCHOOL	22.1	20.3	18.1	19.0
PIKE	WEST PIKE HIGH SCHOOL	17.7	18.8	21.3	19.8
SCHUYLER	RUSHVILLE HIGH SCHOOL	19.8	18.7	17.8	18.4
SCOTT	BLUFFS HIGH SCHOOL	17.6	17.9	17.5	18.0
SCOTT	WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL	20.4	19.0	19.2	18.6

Source: Illinois State Board of Education 2005

High school dropout and truancy rates are presented in Tables 21 and 22. While not indicators of academic performance they are important barometers of school, student, and family relationships and interaction. The high school drop-out rate in Brown County is among the lowest in the Western Illinois Region. In 2004 the rate was less than one percent placing the high school well below the Illinois average of 4.6%. The truancy rate was also below one percent, the lowest among schools in the Region.

**Table 21. High School Drop-Out Rates 1999 to 2004 (ranked low to high)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Rushville	2.5	1.1	3.7	4	1.8	0.3
Camp Point	1.3	2.1	1.7	1.3	1.6	0.6
<b>Brown</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.9</b>
Jacksonville	2.9	4.2	3.1	3.9	1.5	2.3
Quincy	5.5	4.7	4.2	3.6	2.7	2.5
Griggsville	0.7	2.7	5.1	4.6	5.3	3.9
Meredosia	9.4	10	5.4	1	7.2	4
Illinois	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.1	4.9	4.6
Pittsfield	6.7	4.2	2.9	7.6	5.6	5.5
Beardstown	5	3.3	4.6	4.1	4.6	8.5

Dropout rate is the number of dropouts divided by the fall enrollment less post-graduates multiplied by 100. Dropouts include students in grades 9-12 whose names have been removed from the district-housed roster for any reason other than death, extended illness, graduation/completion of a program of studies, transfer to another public/private school, or expulsion.

**Table 22. Chronic Truancy Rates 1999 to 2004 (ranked low to high)**

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Brown</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>
Camp Point	0.5	1.5	0.3	0.6	0.8	0.9
Pittsfield	0.8	0.9	1.4	1	1.5	1.2
Griggsville	1.4	6.6	2.2	2.2	2.6	2
Jacksonville	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.6	1	2
Illinois	2.3	2.4	2.2	2	1.9	2.1
Quincy	1.2	1.8	1.9	2.6	2.5	2.5
Beardstown	1.8	2.1	5.1	10.5	4.2	4.1
Meredosia	3	3.1	5	3.5	10.8	15.3
Rushville	0.2	0.4	0.1	-	0.6	-

Chronic truancy rate is the number of chronic truants divided by the average daily enrollment multiplied by 100. Chronic truants include students subject to compulsory attendance who have

been absent without valid cause from such attendance for 18 or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

### **Overarching Community Priorities**

Youth is a significant priority for Brown County residents. As seen in Table 23, the top three issues that were considered of high or very high priority to survey respondents included developing strategies for retaining youth in the county, improving the school system, and providing services for youth. More than 7 out of 10 survey respondents considered these youth-related issues as extremely important to the community. Other areas that were considered a priority for the community by at least two-thirds of survey respondents included improving medical services, revitalizing commercial areas, and providing services to needy families. At the bottom of the list were issues related to expanding services for senior citizens and creating opportunities for residents to get involved in community improvement programs, each with fewer than 50% of survey respondents considering the issue a high priority.

**Table 23: Ranking of Community Priorities, Percent Responding High or Very High Priority**

<b>Community Priorities</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Developing strategies for retaining youth in the county	77.1%
Improving the school system	75.5%
Providing services for youth	70.5%
Improving/expanding health and medical services	69.9%
Revitalizing commercial areas like downtown Mt. Sterling	67.0%
Making sure that families in need can find services	63.8%
Increasing the stock of housing for purchase	60.2%
Developing more arts programs for youth	59.9%
Improving the overall appearance of the County	59.4%
Developing more recreational and entertainment options for adults	58.7%
Providing services for families in need	58.1%
Increasing the stock of affordable rental housing	54.7%
Expanding services for senior citizens	48.2%
Creating opportunities for residents to get involved in community improvement programs	47.4%

### **Economic Development**

*“(I) remember when you could not find a place to park downtown on Saturdays.”  
-Brown County resident*

### Current Status and Community Priorities

As with so many rural communities in Illinois and across the country, the downtown business district looks much different than it did 20 years ago. As the largest community in Brown County, Mt. Sterling has served as the location for most of the businesses operating in the County, retail and otherwise. While this is still the case, the overall number and variety of businesses are much smaller than in the distant past. As Brown County is less than an hour away from three larger communities with a greater variety of shopping options—Quincy, Jacksonville, and Macomb—traveling to one or more of those communities has become a regular event for many county residents. This obviously has a significant impact on existing businesses as well as on the decisions of those considering to start a new business in Brown County. People participating in this assessment expressed a clear desire to have new businesses open in Brown County, particularly in downtown Mt. Sterling, but the commitment to patronizing those businesses to keep them viable is less clear.

Over 70% of Brown County employees work in the County. However, an estimated two-thirds of the employees of Brown County's two largest employers—DOT Foods and the Western Illinois Correctional Center—live outside Brown County. C&L Tiling has also expanded significantly in recent years and has reported difficulty in hiring locally. While there is a positive economic impact from such a daily influx of workers, the businesses that benefit are primarily gas stations, convenience stores, and local restaurants. A collaborative effort to encourage some of those commuters, even a small percentage, to reside in Brown County would have a large economic impact and would also positively benefit local governments through the introduction of new taxpayers.

As with so many small communities, the majority of young people who leave for school do not return right away, if ever. All too often they are encouraged to seek employment elsewhere, but it is also true that the variety of jobs for professionals and skilled workers are in short supply.

DOT Foods was identified by many participants in the assessment process as the economic driver in Brown County, a huge asset as an employer and as a community benefactor. Any viable economic development plan must take into consideration both the needs of DOT and the community and identify ways in which these needs overlap. However, this same plan must balance the strengthening of that relationship with efforts designed to bring in new and diversified businesses to the area.

Brown County has one of the most robust economies in rural Illinois today because of the influence of DOT Foods and the Western Illinois Regional Correctional Center. Brown County has become an employment destination for many workers in surrounding counties, as total employment at businesses in the County exceeds the local labor force. The growth in wage and salary employment and income over the last decade is three times the average for Western Illinois and Illinois. However, certain commercial sectors have been less fruitful than others in the County. Brown County's small business sector is relatively weak when compared with other Western Illinois counties, and non-farm proprietors' income has been on the decline since 1996. In addition, the retail sector is particularly weak with an estimated 40% of retail sales leaking out of the County.

When asked about their top priorities for economic development, more than two-thirds of community member survey respondents focused on supporting and expanding existing businesses as well as promoting new retail businesses and agriculture (Table 24). Also discussed in the focus groups and interviews, residents considered bolstering the community’s commitment to local, existing businesses and increasing the variety of small business in the community as important issues to emphasize. Other priorities for economic development included revitalizing downtown areas, expanding health care services, and attracting new youth and families to the area who both live and work in Brown County. Yet, fewer people considered new residential development as an important economic development priority.

When looking at survey responses by demographic group, two significant differences emerge. Those in the 30-49 year old age group were more likely than those in other age groups to identify all economic development strategies, except for preserving and promoting agriculture and tourism, as high priorities. In addition, those living outside Mount Sterling were significantly more likely to identify attracting new retail, attracting manufacturing, and attracting service business as high priorities compared to those living inside the Mount Sterling area.

**Table 24: Economic Development Priorities, Percent Responding High or Very High Priority**

<b>Economic Development Priorities</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Supporting and expanding existing businesses	70.7%
Attracting new retail businesses	67.9%
Preserving and promoting agriculture/agribusiness	66.2%
Supporting and expanding health care services	64.6%
Restoring downtown areas	62.9%
Creating a County-wide economic development plan	60.9%
Providing incentives to attract new businesses	60.6%
Encouraging and supporting entrepreneurship	58.6%
Attracting manufacturing businesses	58.3%
Attracting new services businesses	54.3%
Promoting new residential development	50.8%
Promoting tourism	29.9%

Challenges and Assets

One major challenge to realizing these economic development goals is that young people seem to be leaving the County to pursue educational or employment opportunities and are not returning. In addition, many workers perceive a lack of diversity in the job opportunities available due to the few employers in the area. This situation is made worse as many in the labor force already feel limited because of lack of education or skills. In addition, businesses and employees struggle with high taxes, fuel costs, and health care costs. Even many farmers take jobs off the farm in order to supplement their income.

Many residents cited several organizations and agencies in the area that already bolster the economic development of the community. These include DOT Foods, Western Illinois Correctional Center, Brown County Development Corporation, Great River Economic Development Foundation (GREDF), University of Illinois Extension, and County Financial Institutions.

## Schools and Education

*“[I envision] a school system that strives to provide a quality education—that helps all kids find their path.” -Brown County educator*

*“Doing OK is acceptable.”-Brown County resident*

### Current Status and Community Priorities

Data on the Brown County School system show mixed results. Total enrollment in the Brown County School District has been on a downward trend in recent years. Yet, over the last three years (2002-2004), the high school dropout rate has decreased each year, and the attendance rate has increased. Both rates are better than the Illinois average.

However, in 2004, instructional (\$3,815) and operating expenditures (\$7,076) per pupil were well below state averages (\$5,022 and \$8,482, respectively). Pupil to teacher ratios are lower than the state average for both elementary (16.8:1) and secondary (11.2:1) schools. Additionally, overall test performance as measured by the Illinois Board of Education was below state averages for the period from 2002-2004. None of schools in Brown County is currently on academic or financial watch/warning lists published by the Illinois Board of Education.

According to survey respondents, community members overwhelmingly believe that the schools are safe for teachers and students, with 90% of respondents saying that they strongly agree or agree with this statement (Table 25). School sports and parent involvement were also among the top three school issues for which community members believe are adequate or strong. Respondents were much less likely to agree that Brown County schools were strong in academic rigor, college preparation, cultural activities, and technology and vocational programs.

**Table 25: Rating for Schools Services, Percent Responding Agree or Strongly Agree**

<b>Statements on School-Related Issues</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Our schools are safe for students and teachers	90.0%
Sports programs are adequate	88.2%
Parents are actively involved in the school system	66.9%
School personnel communicate with residents, parents, and students	59.0%

Course offerings meet or exceed student needs	48.5%
Youth in the community are prepared for work when they complete high school	46.8%
Brown County schools are doing a good job of preparing students for college	46.8%
Cultural opportunities and activities (drama, dance, visual arts, and music) are adequate	46.5%
Technology and vocational education programs are adequate	45.2%

It is hoped that as families become more attracted to Brown County and stay, then the school population will grow. The desire is that this will increase the academic standards of the school, educational offerings in the fine arts, sciences, college preparatory courses, languages, and vocational training, and before- and after-school activities such as a breakfast program and extracurricular programs for K-5. To achieve school goals, it will be important to increase community involvement and raise the expectations of teachers, parents, and students.

#### Challenges and Assets

There are several challenges ahead, though, in attaining these goals. The declining school enrollment and lack of money in the schools are obstacles in improving and expanding academic and extracurricular programs. Schools face limited technology resources, outdated facilities, an increase in students enrolled in reduced or free lunch programs, and transportation needs for students. In addition, recruiting and retaining qualified teachers is a difficult task.

However, there are several resources in the community already working or striving to work on many of these school-related issues. These resources include school personnel, Brown County School District, libraries, John Wood Community College, St. Mary’s School, and Tracy Family Foundation.

### **Health**

*“We have a good doctor and dentist, it’s just difficult to get in because they are so busy.”  
-Brown County resident*

#### Current Status and Community Priorities

The major health concerns for Brown County are very similar to other rural counties in Illinois (Table 26). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, obesity, smoking, and alcohol use are the most significant risk factors for the area. Brown County residents appear to be slightly more likely to have health insurance than those in other rural counties or in the entire state. Most residents (88.3%) surveyed in the County reported having some type of health plan coverage.

**Table 26: Health Risk Factors and Health Coverage, for Brown County, Rural Illinois Counties, and Illinois**

	<b>Brown County</b>	<b>Rural IL Counties</b>	<b>Illinois</b>
Weight			
Obese	27.0%	21.9%	21.3%
Overweight	32.6%	39.3%	37.3%
High Blood Pressure	27.0%	30.0%	24.5%
Alcohol: At Risk Acute/Binge drinking	15.5%	16.3%	17.8%
Health Coverage: Has a health plan	88.3%	85.7%	85.9%
Oral Health: Seen a dentist in the past year	68.8%	68.6%	73.9%
Tobacco Use: Smoking	24.4%	25.1%	22.8%

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health’s IPLAN, the leading causes of death for Brown County residents are heart disease, cerebrovascular disease (stroke), and cancer (Table 27). These are similar to the rates seen throughout Illinois. An older population may contribute to the higher rates of heart disease and cerebrovascular deaths.

**Table 27: Leading Cause of Death, Brown County and Illinois**

	<b>Brown County</b>	<b>Illinois</b>
Heart disease	<b>36%</b>	<b>31%</b>
Cerebrovascular disease	<b>18%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Cancer	<b>16%</b>	<b>24%</b>

Source: IPLAN

Focus group and survey findings indicate that Brown County residents are concerned about the quality of and access to health care services. They value the health, mental health, and dental care services that are available and want to ensure that these services are maintained and potentially expanded. For example, 64.6% of survey respondents cited “supporting and expanding health care services” as a very high or high priority for the County.

Community members would like to improve access to many of these health care services, though. Specifically, residents wanted increased availability to specialty programs such as dental and mental health services, alcohol/other substance abuse programs, and adolescent-specific services. To reach a broader audience, there also seems to be a desire for health and wellness programs focusing on diet and exercise to be developed for the entire community. A stronger ambulance service was also noted as an area for improvement.

### Challenges and Assets

Like the rest of the country, Brown County residents face numerous challenges to increasing access to health care services. The most significant issue is the lack of providers, programs, and specialists within the County. There is a need for programs to address prevention and treatment of the chronic diseases that afflict Brown County residents such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes. Residents also have a desire for increased health promotion programs on the risk factors (e.g., nutrition, physical activity, smoking, alcohol, depression) for many chronic diseases. Many residents face obstacles because of time commitments, transportation needs and/or their socioeconomic status. Brown County contains an effected uninsured and underinsured population as well as many residents who lack transportation to even get to nearby health and medical services.

Residents recognized that resources exist in the community and valued the services that they provide. Some of the services identified as health and medical resources for the County included Quincy Medical Group, Brown County Health Department, Brown County Mental Health, ambulance service, hospice, Two Rivers Regional Council, YMCA, University of Illinois Extension–Family Nutrition Program, dentists, and neighbors who provide transportation to medical services.

### **Housing**

*“Additional development will not occur until more quality affordable housing is available in the county.”-Survey respondent*

### Current Status and Community Priorities

Dissatisfaction with housing was relatively high, both in survey responses and focus group discussions. As Table 28 indicates, over 50% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with six of the nine housing indicators listed on the survey. Rental housing was identified in particular as a need. Approximately 67% of survey respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the quality and availability of rental housing. Quality and availability of housing for purchase—especially mid-level housing—was also ranked as an issue of concern. Dissatisfaction levels were below 50% for the availability of “high end” residential housing for purchase, overall appearance of housing, and the availability of subsidized housing.

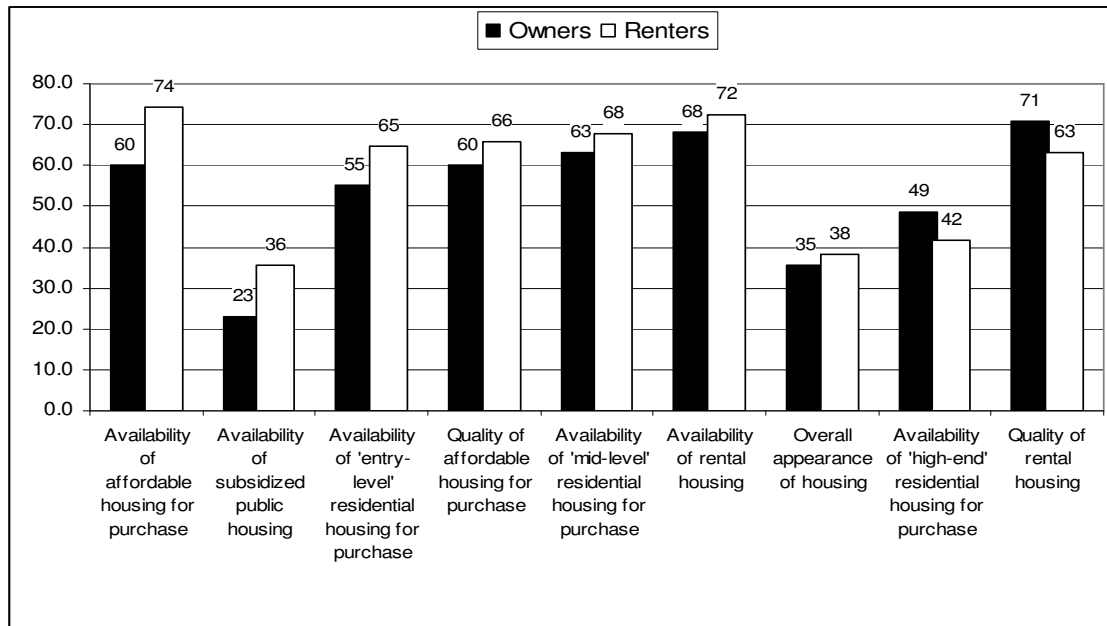
**Table 28: Housing Characteristics, Percent Responding Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied**

<b>Housing Characteristics</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Quality of rental housing	67.1%
Availability of rental housing	66.9%
Availability of “mid-level” residential housing for purchase	60.4%
Quality of affordable housing for purchase	60.2%
Availability of affordable housing for purchase	60.1%

Availability of “entry-level” residential housing for purchase	55.2%
Availability of high-end” residential housing for purchase	47.4%
Overall appearance of housing	35.7%
Availability of subsidized public housing	26.0%

Figure 9 shows that there was little difference between renters and owners in their responses to the housing survey questions. Renters were more likely to have higher levels of dissatisfaction on most housing indicators except on the quality of rental housing. The difference between the two groups was most striking for “availability of affordable housing for purchase,” where 74% of renters were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied compared to 60% of owners. Similarly, there was a large discrepancy in dissatisfaction levels for the indicator of “availability of subsidized housing,” where renters were much more likely to be dissatisfied than owners (36% vs. 23%).

**Figure 9: Housing Characteristics, Percent Responding Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied by Renter vs. Owner Status**



One possibility why so many people commute into Brown County for DOT Foods and Western Illinois Correctional Center is the lack of quality affordable housing. While there may be several reasons why workers commute rather than live in Brown County, it may be that targeting workers who commute long distances (e.g., 45 minutes or more) could be a viable strategy for a housing program. A strategy which brings together the real estate, business, and private sectors may provide a win-win situation for workers and employers.

#### Challenges and Assets

While residents hope for better quality, diversity, and affordability of residential housing for rental and purchase, a number of issues seem to remain in their way. One significant

issue is that it seems that local developers are not willing to assume the risk of developing new housing stock. Additionally, the existing housing stock often is not adequate, sometimes needing extensive repair. Because so many employees from Brown County’s two largest employers—DOT Foods and Western Illinois Correctional Center—commute from outside the County, it may appear to developers that the need for housing is not there.

Residents did see a number of resources already existing within Brown County which could help with the situation. Brown County Development Corporation, Great River Economic Development Foundation (GREDF), USDA Rural Development, University of Illinois Extension, County Financial Institutions, and Two Rivers Council of Public Officials are some of the organizations serving as important housing-related assets already in the County.

### Youth and Youth Involvement

*“An environment where youth are encouraged to dream and reach further.”*

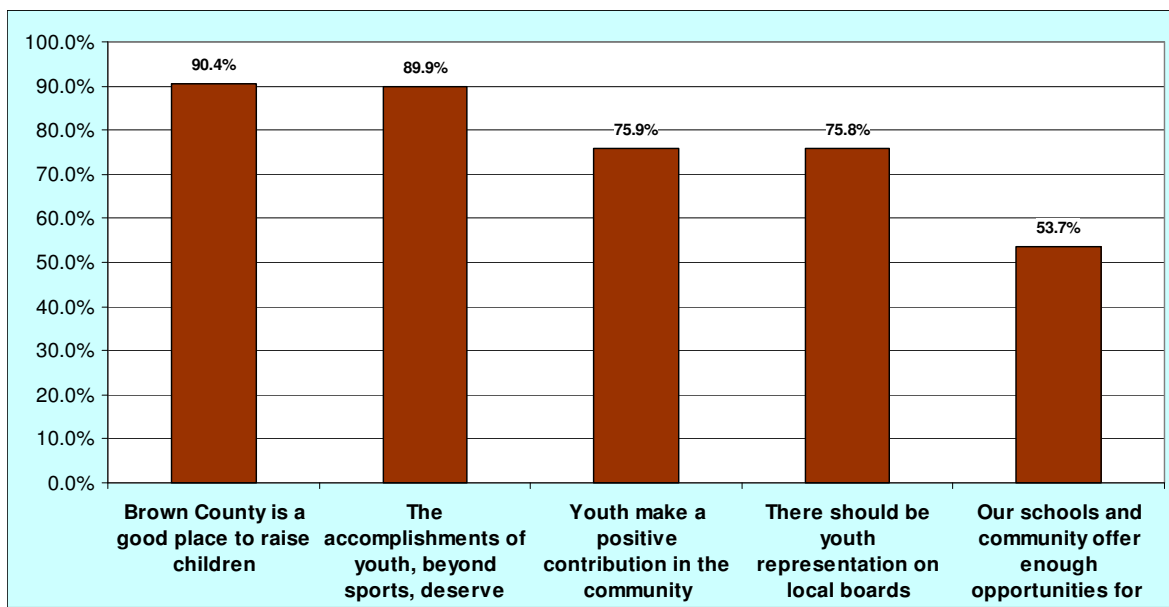
*“Youth are involved in existing opportunities.”*

*“[Youth need] a safe place to hang out.” -Responses from focus group participants*

#### Current Status and Community Priorities

Brown County residents strongly support increased youth participation in the community and also feel that Brown County provides a positive environment in which to rear today’s youth. Figure 10 indicates survey responses on many youth issues in Brown County. More than 90% of respondents agreed that “Brown County is a good place to raise children.” However, more than three-quarters of respondents also indicated their wish for increased youth participation, as 90% agreed with the statement, “The accomplishments of youth, beyond sports, deserves more recognition,” and 76% agreed with the statement, “There should be youth representation on local boards.” Only slightly more than half of respondents agreed that the community and schools offer enough opportunities for youth.

**Figure 10: Perception of Brown County Youth Measures, Percent Responding Agree or Strongly Agree**



Youth services and concerns were among the highest ranked priorities in the list of community improvement issues. The top priorities included developing strategies for retaining youth in the county, improving the school system, and providing services.

### Challenges and Assets

However, residents raised a number of concerns that they feel may hinder the development of additional youth programs. Some believed that many young people lack the desire to participate in programs or are too busy with jobs, school, and sports. In addition, some residents perceived that there is little adult or parent involvement both during and outside of the school day. According to residents, it was important for Brown County to adopt a long-term vision for the future related to youth and youth services.

Although people are concerned about the limited number of youth programs in the area, residents did see Brown County as already having a number of resources aimed to increase youth involvement. These included the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, sports programs, faith-based programs, the library, Little League, the Park District, University of Illinois Extension, 4H, and the YMCA.

### **Family and Social Services**

*“Brown County is a good place to raise a family.” -Longtime resident*

*“[Some] people are struggling to get by.” -Social service provider*

### Current Status and Community Priorities

According to survey and focus group findings, most residents believed that Brown County is a good place for families to raise children. Although people are mostly satisfied with the services that are available, there are concerns about access to services. Nearly half of survey respondents (47%) indicated that they have had problems finding services when needed. Increased access to social services is important to residents. Approximately two-thirds of survey respondents (64%) rated “making sure families in need can find services” as a high or very high priority for the community.

### Challenges and Assets

Access came up several times during discussions focusing on social and family services. Transportation to services is a concern for many residents, particularly for senior citizens and those who live outside of Mt. Sterling. The transportation problem is exacerbated even more with the recent move of the Department of Human Services office to outside of the County. Many residents also lamented that there is no centrally located office for social services near them.

Some people also raised concerns about the quality or lack of specific social services. Among survey respondents, only 46% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with social and family services, while 20% noted that they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with them. Several respondents also expressed significant concern about the

lack of childcare facilities and adult education opportunities. In addition, people perceived an increasing population of needy residents who are seeking services for basic needs such as health care, fuel costs, and affordable housing.

Residents recognize and value the resources that serve Brown County, such as area churches, Food Basket, Two Rivers Regional Council, United Way of Brown County, Mental Health Center, MidWest Youth Services, and Quanada. These organizations were all seen as existing social and family service agencies which are doing much to help the residents of the County.

## **Senior Citizens**

*“I’m not even sure of any public transportation. I know when I was unable to drive this was a terrible inconvenience.”*

*“[We need] services that would help seniors stay in their own homes.” –Survey respondents*

### Current Status and Community Priorities

Similar to the overall shrinking population of Brown County, the number of seniors (individuals 65 years of age and older) decreased 10.2% between 1990 and 2000. As the population of Brown County seniors declined more rapidly compared to other age groups, the proportion of elderly householders decreased from 33.5% of all households in 1990 (with a total of 668 elderly householders) households to 28.1% in 2000 (with a total of 592 elderly householders).

However, even with the decrease in the senior population, services for the elderly remain a high priority. Nearly half of survey respondents (48.2%) ranked “expanding services for senior citizens” as a high or very high community priority. Importantly, 60% of those 60 or older identified this as a high or very high priority. Many residents seem content with the quality of senior services in the County, with 62% of survey respondents noting that they were satisfied or very satisfied with “services for senior citizens.” Only 12% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with them, while 26% of survey respondents were indifferent.

The senior population sometimes had a different perspective than younger respondents on Brown County’s needs and state of current services. For example, survey respondents ages 60 or over were more likely than younger respondents to have a high level of satisfaction with social and family services, employment/job training, and youth services and were more likely to think there are plenty of opportunities to volunteer. However, seniors were less likely than younger people to consider “supporting and expanding existing business as a priority for economic development,” to have problems finding services, and to rank improving schools as a high priority.

During focus groups, many Brown County seniors were nostalgic for the community involvement they once saw in the County. They remembered being surrounded by thriving small rural communities with active civic and economic centers, where people did business and socialized with each other on a daily basis. This is illustrated by a participant's comment, "Remember when you couldn't find a parking space downtown on a Saturday?"

Today, the Brown County seniors depend heavily on their friends and neighbors for support and services which allow them to stay in their own homes, conduct daily activities, and obtain greater access to social and medical services. Focus group and interview participants discussed the important role that family and friends play in their reasons for staying in Brown County. Unfortunately, with the declining population, the number of friends and family is shrinking.

### Challenges and Assets

In addition to the decreasing population of their generation, seniors also discussed several other challenges that they face in Brown County. Many noted that there is a need for additional services and support for financially-needy individuals who are choosing between paying for food and prescription drugs as well as for individuals who are living alone and not eligible for nursing home services. In addition to obstacles in attaining access to services within Brown County, seniors also face transportation problems in accessing services and resources currently available outside of the County.

Residents considered many existing organizations to be helpful resources to Brown County seniors. These organizations included Brown County RSVP, Heritage Manor Nursing Home, Meals Plus, and Senior Centers in Mt. Sterling and Versailles.

## **Community Services**

### Current Status and Community Priorities

Overall, residents appear happy with the quality of services provided by community and governmental agencies (Table 29). Fire protection, ambulance, and library services received the highest ratings, with approximately three-quarters of survey respondents noting that they were satisfied or very satisfied with these activities. Parks and recreation facilities and law enforcement received more mixed reviews. While nearly two-thirds of respondents considered themselves satisfied or very satisfied with these services, approximately 20% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with them. Transportation services received the lowest marks, with fewer than one-third (30.6%) of those surveyed responding that they were satisfied or very satisfied with them.

**Table 29: Satisfaction Rating for Locally Provided Services, Percent Responding Satisfied or Very Satisfied**

<b>Community Services</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
Fire protection	83.0%
Ambulance services	78.8%
Library	73.1%
Parks and recreation facilities	68.7%
Law enforcement	62.3%
Employment and job training services	46.6%
Transportation services	30.6%

Challenges and Assets

Residents who participated in this assessment mentioned that there needs to be more expanded services in the community and, most importantly, that services and municipal buildings need to be more accessible. While some cited the need for more community leaders to take charge of this effort, others felt that more resident involvement was essential. That is, property owners need to become more active and concerned. One suggestion that came up was that neighborhood clean-ups should be organized.

Many residents were content with the public services that exist in the community. Agencies and organizations already involved in these efforts included emergency services, the fire department, libraries, parks and recreation department, Mt. Sterling Police Department, and Brown County Sheriffs Department.

**Community Betterment**

*“It’s always the same people over and over again on the committees.” -Brown County resident*

Current Status and Community Priorities

Community betterment is a broad category, actually overlapping with elements from economic development, housing, and others. For the sake of this assessment, the concept of community betterment focuses on appearance and community involvement, both public and private. People participating in the assessment process were generally complimentary of public services. County residents approved the creation of a new taxing district to provide for library services; the main building is in Mt. Sterling but the library has a presence in Versailles and provides services in both Timewell and Ripley. Mt. Sterling also approved a Park District, somewhat unusual for such a small community. The Park District oversees the Joel Oliver Pool, for the most part, but has also led the way in providing more organized activities for young people in the community. Versailles also operates a pool, but as part of the Village operations not a separate entity.

The beautiful YMCA is seen as the jewel in Brown County’s crown. The response by residents has been overwhelmingly positive, and this facility will certainly have a significant impact on the future health of county residents.

Several annual events in Brown County are quite successful, such as the Deer Classic, while others have struggled, such as Mt. Sterling’s Harvest Festival. It seems as though events with a goal of raising money for a project or institution receive better responses than those that are simply designed for people to turn out. At this writing, the future of the Scarecrow Festival is in doubt, due primarily to the lack of volunteers needed to keep things going. This is unfortunate because an event like this has the potential for drawing people to Brown County. Brown County can serve as a connecting piece especially if the event occurs during the time that people are participating in the Spoon River and Pike County Color Drives.

In addition to the struggles of community-defining events, the decrease in functioning service clubs is unusual. Versailles and Timewell both have existing Lions Clubs, and while Timewell Lions operate three large events every year to raise money for their community programs, the average age of the membership grows every year while the actual number of members decrease. More unusual is the fact that there is no viable service club in Mt. Sterling. The Lions are gone, the Optimists recently demised, and a new Kiwanis chapter has struggled for a year, unlikely to renew its charter. While people say they are busy, it was not long ago that residents got together to organize such as to locate a new correctional center to the area.

Even with seemingly declining community involvement, most residents completing the assessment survey had positive attitudes about Brown County as a place to live (Table 30). More than 90% agreed that it was a good place to raise children, while nearly 80% believed that the quality of the County has improved in recent years and that they would recommend the area to a friend as a place to live. People are optimistic about the County’s future and especially of the contribution of youth in the community.

**Table 30: Community Attitude Measures, Percent that Agree or Strongly Agree**

<b>Statements on Community Services</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
Brown County is a good place to raise children	90.4%
The quality of life in Brown County has improved in recent years	78.6%
I would recommend Brown County as a good place to live if a friend was moving to Western Illinois	77.4%
Youth make a positive contribution in the community	75.9%
The future of Brown county looks bright	61.1%
People in Brown County work together to improve the community	59.2%
People in Brown County are satisfied with things as they are	50.1%

Even with their positive outlook on the future, residents wish for changes in the area's appearance and services. People suggested that community buildings in each municipality maintain a similar appearance in order to promote a basic identity and that properties bordering the area's main entry points be well-maintained. Residents also wished for a completed emergency services building, a park in Mt. Sterling south of Main Street, and a bike path from downtown Mt. Sterling to the YMCA (south) and to the golf course/lake (north).

### Challenges and Assets

Two major categories of issues—structural and attitudinal—appear to be challenges to improving the community's appearance and services. The structure and physical environment related to public buildings create some problems. First, there is the uncompleted emergency services facility, a city-county project which concerns many residents. In addition, many public buildings do not appear to be accessible to residents, thus hampering community involvement or access to needed services. Many other obstacles cited by residents fall under the rubric of attitudinal issues. Residents believed that some property owners are not concerned about the appearance of the community. In addition, it seems that people have a fear of change and are not interested then in becoming more actively involved in the community. Because of this declining involvement, many service clubs are fading away (with none present in Mt. Sterling), and volunteers are difficult to recruit for community festivals and annual events (e.g., Harvest Festival, Scarecrow Festival, Fourth of July Celebration).

Brown County contains numerous resources that serve as assets for community betterment. Some of these are the Brown County Development Corporation, Great River Economic Development Foundation (GREDF), University of Illinois Extension, Two Rivers Council of Public Officials, Mt. Sterling Park District, and Brown County Public Library District. Public services such as local law enforcement agencies, local fire protection districts and volunteer firemen, and Brown County Emergency Services also are significant resources which improve the community.

### **Recreation and Entertainment**

*“We need nice restaurants that are not just bars.” -Community resident*

### Current Status and Community Priorities

Increased opportunities for family-friendly recreation is important for Brown County residents. More than two-thirds of survey respondents indicated that attracting new retail business was a high or very high priority. Residents are looking for Brown County to offer diverse recreational activities including arts, culture, retail, and outdoor opportunities. Arts and culture festivals, movie theaters, miniature golf, walking paths, and bowling were a few of the ideas that people cited for improved recreational activities.

### Challenges and Assets

Individuals also noted that it was important to improve already existing facilities at the same time as attracting more retail stores and restaurants. Residents remarked that lake facilities, playgrounds, and walking trails exist but need significant improvements or expansions.

Some of Brown County's current resources in the area of recreation and entertainment included the lake, YMCA, parks, the pool, hunting lodges, the golf course, and animals such as deer and turkeys. Enhancing existing facilities would help create more family entertainment options.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected from archival data, community assessments, focus groups, interviews, and surveys, TMF and UIE developed a set of recommendations in each topic area, although many recommendations are overlapping. This information is intended to inform key community stakeholders in future decision-making and planning for Brown County. We believe that implementing many of these recommendations outlined below, while working in partnership with community leaders and members, will more effectively address the needs of Brown County. It is our hope that these recommendations will continue to mobilize key community leaders to build upon existing community assets to address issues in a multifaceted, coordinated approach. The recommendations in the following areas include:

#### Economic Development

- Encourage small business development with a revolving loan fund
- Encourage initiatives to support and retain existing businesses
- Support the expansion of the TIF district in Mt. Sterling
- Support partnerships with businesses and organizations providing family entertainment
- Work with DOT Foods to find ways to stay and grow in Brown County
- Work with DOT, C&L Tiling, and other major employers to attract complementary businesses to locate in Brown County
- Explore ways to increase usage of the Mt. Sterling airport, perhaps targeting new businesses that might utilize it
- Involve existing businesses in strategizing and recruiting new businesses
- Continue efforts around business retention programming
- Investigate potential value of Mt. Sterling applying for Main Street Illinois affiliation
- Encourage building improvements and beautification of Mt. Sterling's downtown district with a loan or grant program

#### Schools and Education

- Support sustainable initiatives for student-centered, student-led learning
- Support programs in the fine arts, music, sciences, college prep, and vocational education

- Continue collaborations with John Wood Community College and others to provide additional opportunities for adult education and diverse educational opportunities for youth
- Support adult literacy and math programs
- Work with schools to explore ways to recruit and retain teachers
- Upgrade school-based technology and support technology programs for students
- Explore partnerships and ways to involve larger community to become involved in education system

#### Health and Medical Services

- Increase community access to health education information
- Increase health screening opportunities
- Increase individual physical activity
- Expand existing nutrition education programs
- Encourage collaborative programs between health and medical providers and the schools
- Encourage the provision of health and medical services within Brown County

#### Housing

- Encourage an innovative and tailored housing program through partnerships with DOT Foods (and other employers), Mt. Sterling and Brown County governments, USDA, and County banks
- Include housing as part of any discussion around expanding or creating new TIF District
- Survey commuters to identify reasons why they commute rather than move to Brown County; use findings to create program addressing concerns, as possible or feasible

#### Youth and Youth Involvement

- Encourage and create more opportunities for youth leadership within the community including serving on local boards
- Continue to support athletic programs and support arts and other after school/evening programs
- Create/designate a safe place for youth to “hang out”
- Create a mentoring program with the young professionals group

#### Family, Senior, and Social Services

- Encourage the creation of a central site to host social service providers, accommodating the need of possible recipients for anonymity and confidentiality
- Expand collaborations between senior programs, YMCA, and health and medical professionals
- Explore and develop adequate transportation to services and resources currently available inside and outside of Brown County

#### Community Services and Betterment

- Provide training and support for local elected officials

- Encourage and create more opportunities for community adult and youth leadership
- Encourage building improvements and beautification of Mt. Sterling's historic downtown district with a loan or grant program
- Support the creation/rehab of local community centers in other Brown County municipalities such as Versailles, Ripley, and Timewell.
- Support the expansion of the Mt. Sterling library in Mt. Sterling and branches in Ripley, Timewell, and Versailles
- Incorporate service learning programming into the schools
- Expand volunteer opportunities, encouraging all county residents to contribute some amount of time annually for community events and activities
- Expand knowledge and use of County website to promote community betterment activities

#### Recreation and Entertainment

- Support partnerships with businesses and organizations providing family entertainment
- Support trail and walking path development to connect recreational facilities
- Support the development of sustainable recreational activities

## Notes and Sources

### County Profile

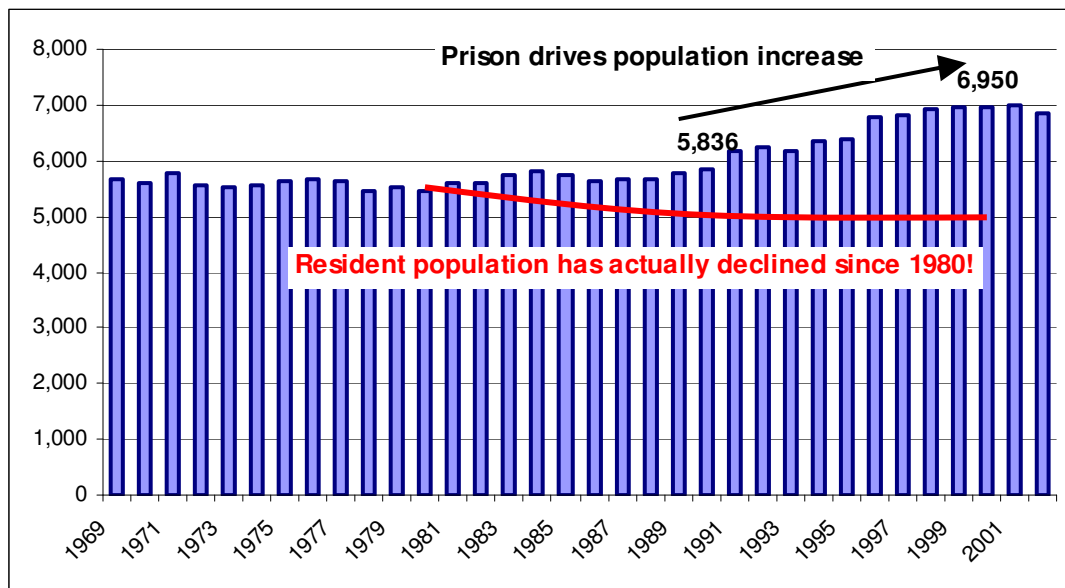
The county demographic profile was constructed using data from two sources. Most population and household data compares results from the long form, 100% count, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce. This is the most dependable source of demographic data for rural places. Income data sources include the Regional Economic Information System data published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, also a division of the US Department of Commerce.

Any reference to the Western Illinois Region or Region refers to the counties surrounding Brown (Adams, Cass, Morgan, Pike, Schuyler, and Scott). This area was selected as a benchmark for comparison because of geographic location and labor force dynamics.

### Population Characteristics

All population data published for Brown County by the Bureau of the Census and other federal and private data providers since 1989 includes inmates in the Western Illinois Correctional Center. The steady increase in the prison population since 1990 created an impression of robust growth. The series in Figure 1 illustrates the problem by showing the pronounced and steady growth since 1989 which contrasts sharply with the trend prior to 1990. Persons in institutions like prisons are classified as residents living in group quarters and can be separated from the resident population to identify the true population trends.

**Figure 1. Brown County Population Trends 1969 to 2002**

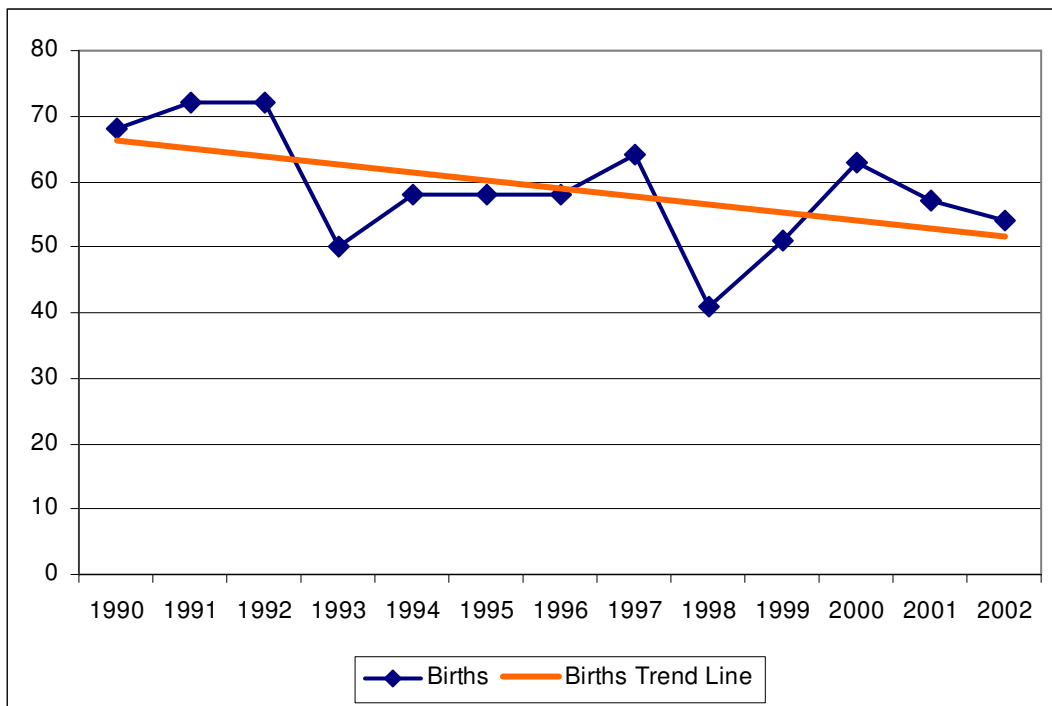


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System 2004

The 1990 Census reported a County population of 5,836. When the prison and other group quarters population (nursing home) are excluded the real resident population is 4,942. By 2000 the problem was more pronounced when the Census reported a population of 6,950. The resident population was actually 5,007. The 1980 Census population was 5,385. Therefore the resident population actually decreased by 443 or 8% between 1980 and 1990 and remained relatively stable between 1990 and 2000 with an increase of 1.3%.

Short term population projections indicate population losses over the next five years in the range of -0.5%. These estimates are based on the current age structure and forecasts for slow but continued out migration. The primary factor driving the estimates of population decline is the relatively fewer number of young adults. One result of this trend is a reduction in the number of births. Figure 2 displays birth trends from 1990 to 2002. Although there is significant variation in the rates a trend line added to the chart illustrates the decline in births since 1990.

**Figure 2. Brown County Live Births 1990 to 2002**



Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

On a positive note there was a slight increase in the 18 to 21 year cohort (see Table 1). This is remarkable considering the losses in other young adult age groups and the overall trends observed in most rural areas. This gain is probably linked to the abundant number of jobs for young unskilled workers in the local economy.

Brown County has a relatively old age profile like most of rural Western Illinois. In 2000, 17.5% of the population was over 65 years of age, a proportion nearly identical to the Region at 17.2%. However, the number of elderly residents has been decreasing in recent

years. In real terms there was a 10% decrease in the number of persons 65 and over while the senior population remained relatively stable in the Region posting a slight loss of 0.8%. This is a greater than expected decrease indicating age specific out migration. Since 1990 out migration of seniors from sparsely populated rural areas in Illinois has increased.

The number of school age children declined over the last decade and is projected to decline slowly over the next five years. Although the number of school age children remained relatively constant between 1990 and 2000 the number of preschool aged children dropped by more than 10%. This decline, reinforced by downward trends in birth rates since 1990, will influence school enrollment over the next decade. This is largely the result of losses in the 22 to 29 and 30 to 39 year age groups.

**Table 1. Brown County Population by Selected Age Groups 1990 and 2000**

	1990		2000		Change	
Under 5 years	325	6.6%	279	5.6%	-46	-14.2%
5 to 17	947	19.2%	937	18.7%	-10	-1.1%
18 to 21	232	4.7%	239	4.8%	7	3.0%
22 to 29	514	10.4%	449	9.0%	-65	-12.6%
30 to 39	711	14.4%	681	13.6%	-30	-4.2%
40 to 49	544	11.0%	734	14.7%	190	34.9%
50 to 64	694	14.0%	812	16.2%	118	17.0%
65 and over	975	19.7%	876	17.5%	-99	-10.2%
Total	4,942		5,007		65	1.3%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 1

The ‘baby boomer’ age group dominates the demographic profile with 31% of the population clustered in the 40 to 64 year age group. There are slightly larger than expected increases in this age group indicating age selective in-migration of persons into Brown County. Since the majority of households with persons in this age group have children of high school age or older they are not likely to contribute to an increase in the school age population. If members of this cohort migrate out of the area as they retire, a possibility reflected in recent declines in the over sixty-five age group, it will have a significant impact on the County.

### Households

Census data for households and families are not affected by the prison population. The resident population all live in households. A household is equivalent to a housing unit, like an apartment, trailer, or detached single family home. A family household includes related persons living together. Nonfamily households are comprised of unrelated persons

or a person living alone. Table 2 provides a profile of Brown County household and family characteristics for 1990 and 2000.

The total number of households increased by 5.9%, 117 new households, even though total population increased only 1.3%. This occurs as the structure of households and families change. The most striking change was the increase in one person households (11.5%). A large proportion, 45% (294), of the one person households are occupied by someone 65 and older and over 50% of those one person households are occupied by a female. In 2000, 30.8% of all households were occupied by one person compared to 28.2% in the Western Illinois Region.

**Table 2. Selected Household and Family Characteristics 1990 and 2000**

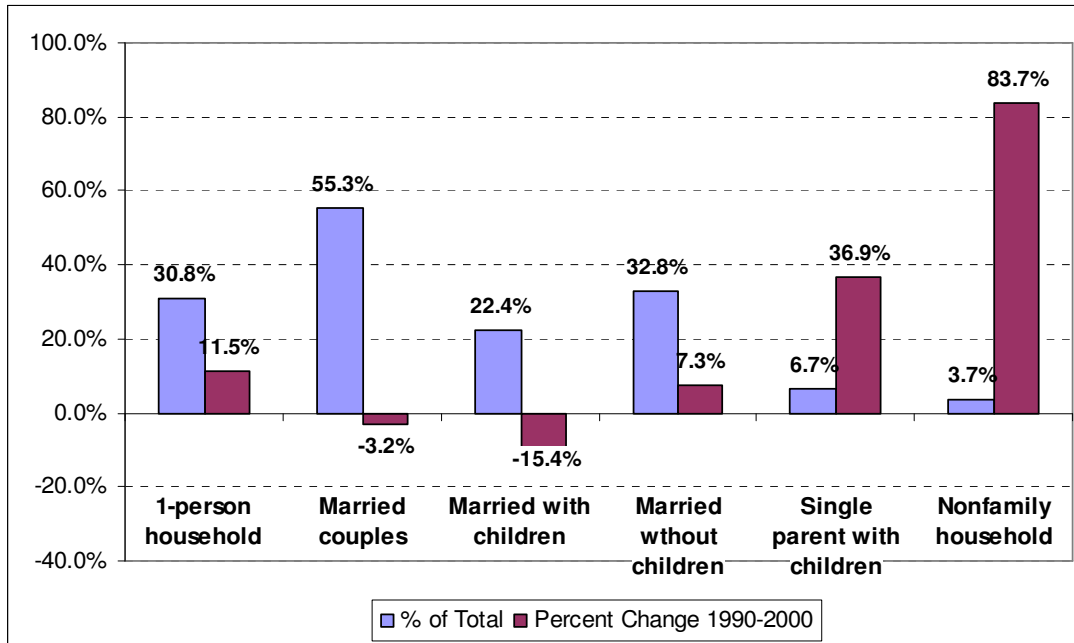
	1990		2000		Change	
Total:	1,991		2,108	% base	117	5.9%
1-person household:	582	29.2%	649	30.8%	67	11.5%
Male householder	231	11.6%	309	14.7%	78	33.8%
Female householder	351	17.6%	340	16.1%	-11	-3.1%
2 or more person household:	1,409	70.8%	1,459	69.2%	50	3.5%
Family households:	1,366	68.6%	1,380	65.5%	14	1.0%
Married-couple family:	1,204	60.5%	1,165	55.3%	-39	-3.2%
With own children under 18 years	559	28.1%	473	22.4%	-86	-15.4%
No own children under 18 years	645	32.4%	692	32.8%	47	7.3%
Other family:	162	8.1%	215	10.2%	53	32.7%
Male householder, no wife present:	40	2.0%	71	3.4%	31	77.5%
With own children under 18 years	21	1.1%	48	2.3%	27	128.6%
No own children under 18 years	19	1.0%	23	1.1%	4	21.1%
Female householder, no husband present:	122	6.1%	144	6.8%	22	18.0%
With own children under 18 years	82	4.1%	93	4.4%	11	13.4%
No own children under 18 years	40	2.0%	51	2.4%	11	27.5%
Nonfamily households:	43	2.2%	79	3.7%	36	83.7%
Male householder	23	1.2%	61	2.9%	38	165.2%
Female householder	20	1.0%	18	0.9%	-2	-10.0%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 1

The number of family households increased by only 1.0% and represented 65.5% of all households in 2000 compared with 68.6% in 1990. This growth masks some important structural changes (see Figure 3). Most notable is the decline of married couple families (-3.2%) and married couple families with children in particular (-15.4%). A significant and increasing number of households are “empty nesters” or married couples without children, currently about one third of all households. They are typically headed by a person over 50 years of age – remember that large ‘baby boomer’ cohort from the previous section. At the same time, the number and proportion of single parent families with children increased. In 2000 there were 141 single parent households up from 103 in 1990. 23% of all households with children under 18 are single parent families. The

increase was most pronounced for male headed households with an increase of 128.6%. In 2000, 29.1% of all households had children under 18 years of age compared with 33.2% in 1990.

**Figure 3. Brown County Selected Household Characteristics 2000 and Percent Change Since 1990**



Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 1

The number of nonfamily households with two or more unrelated persons living together nearly doubled from 43 in 1990 to 79 in 2000. All of the growth occurred in male headed nonfamily households.

**Table 3. Age of Householder 1990 and 2000**

	1990		2000		Change	
Total Households	1,991		2,108		117	5.9%
Householder 15 to 24 years	89	4.5%	114	5.4%	25	28.1%
Householder 25 to 34 years	348	17.5%	299	14.2%	-49	-14.1%
Householder 35 to 44 years	356	17.9%	433	20.5%	77	21.6%
Householder 45 to 54 years	264	13.3%	374	17.7%	110	41.7%
Householder 55 to 64 years	266	13.4%	296	14.0%	30	11.3%
Householder 65 to 74 years	322	16.2%	267	12.7%	-55	-17.1%
Householder 75 years and over	346	17.4%	325	15.4%	-21	-6.1%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 1

The number of elderly householders decreased from 668 (33.5% of all households) to 592 (28.1%) in 2000 (see Table 3). This shift reflects the decline in the number of persons in the 65 and over age group. The decline in the young adult households, except for the youngest category, reflects demographic trends discussed in the population section. The dramatic growth in the 45 to 54 year age category reflects the aging of the ‘baby boomer’ cohort which will be moving toward retirement in next decade. The fact that the number of households increased for most age categories even when there were population losses in some of those age groups illustrates changing family structure. For younger households divorce and separation often split one household into two as an example. The age structure of householders in Brown County is very similar to the Region.

### Income Levels

Incomes in Brown County have lagged Illinois and the Western Illinois Region by significant margins until recent years. In 1990 median household income was only 63.4% of the state average compared to 73.1% for the Region. By 2000 the income gap closed as most measures of household and family income increased at rates exceeding the Illinois and Regional averages. Table 4 compares incomes and changes in income for Brown County, the Western Illinois Region, and Illinois for the Census years 1990 and 2000.

Between 1990 and 2000 income growth exceeded the State and Region for every category except non-family households. Median household and family incomes are now equal to or exceed the average income thresholds for Western Illinois. For both of these indicators income growth exceeded 70%, far outstripping the 48.2% change in household income and 52.9% growth in median family income for the surrounding counties. Average growth rates for Illinois were also well below those in Brown County.

**Table 4. Household, Family, and Nonfamily Income Indicators for Brown County, the Western Illinois Region and Illinois 1990 and 2000**

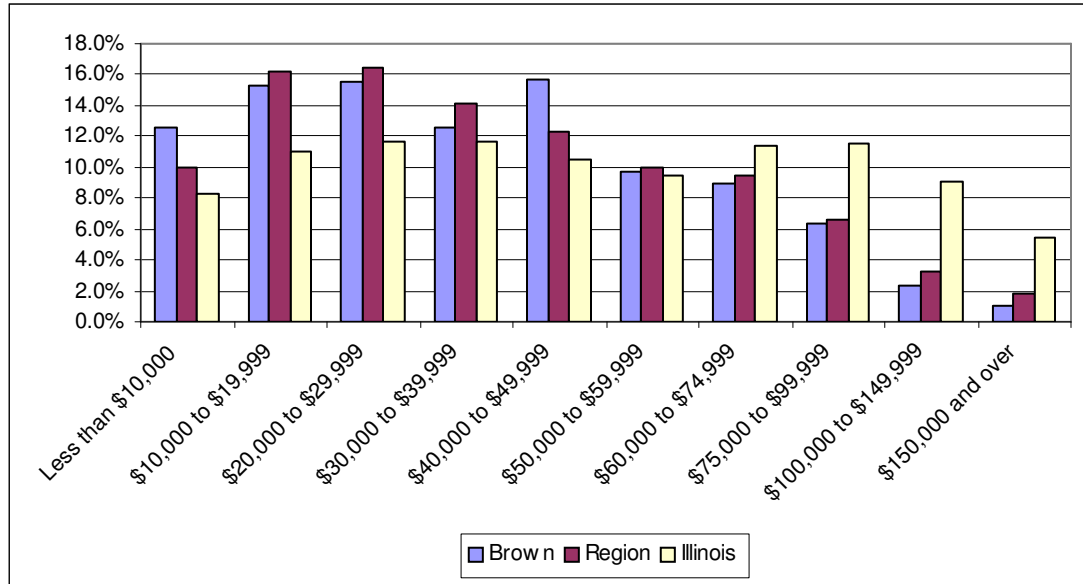
	Brown			Region			Illinois		
	1990	2000	% Chng.	1990	2000	% Chng.	1990	2000	% Chng.
Median Household Income	\$20,477	\$35,563	73.7%	\$23,609	\$34,990	48.2%	\$32,294	\$46,749	44.8%
Average Household Income	\$29,638	\$39,656	33.8%	\$33,529	\$43,329	29.2%	\$47,495	\$61,544	29.6%
Median Family Income	\$25,101	\$43,924	75.0%	\$28,868	\$44,138	52.9%	\$38,825	\$56,621	45.8%
Median Non-family Income	\$10,461	\$16,786	60.5%	\$12,474	\$20,297	62.7%	\$19,465	\$29,591	52.0%

Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

Figures 4 and 5 provide a graphic comparison of the income distribution for household and family income in 2000. The distribution of income for Brown County households (Table 4) closely mirrors the Region except for notably larger proportions of households

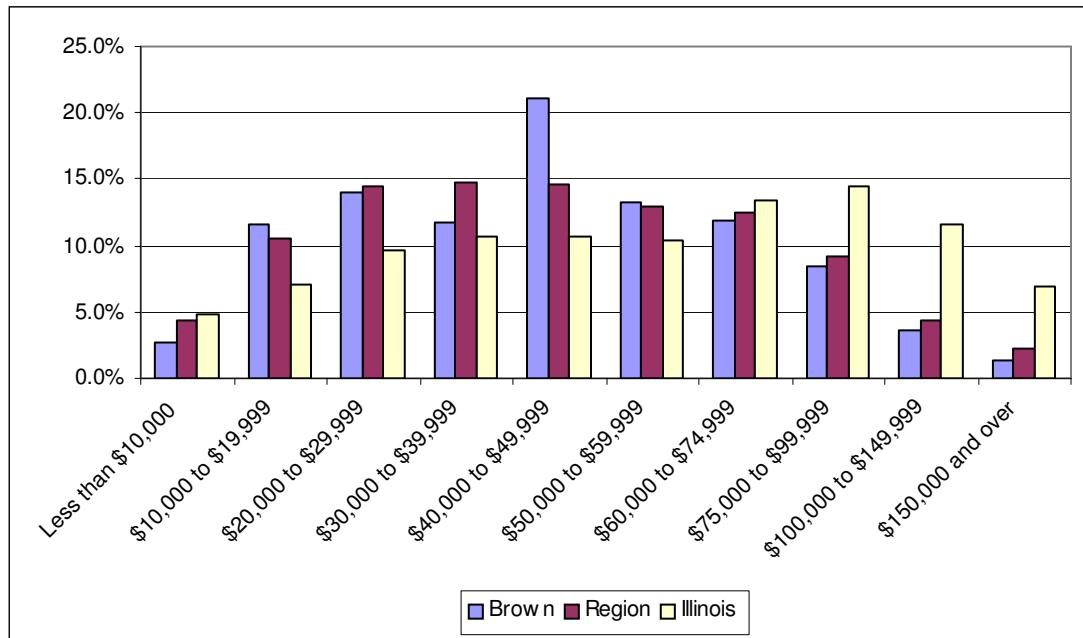
in the 'Less than \$10,000' and '\$40,000 to \$49,999' income categories. The distribution for family incomes also reveals differences for the 'Less than \$10,000' category because the non-family households, which comprise the majority of low income households, are not included.

**Figure 4. 2000 Household Income Distribution for Brown County, Western Illinois Region and Illinois**



Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

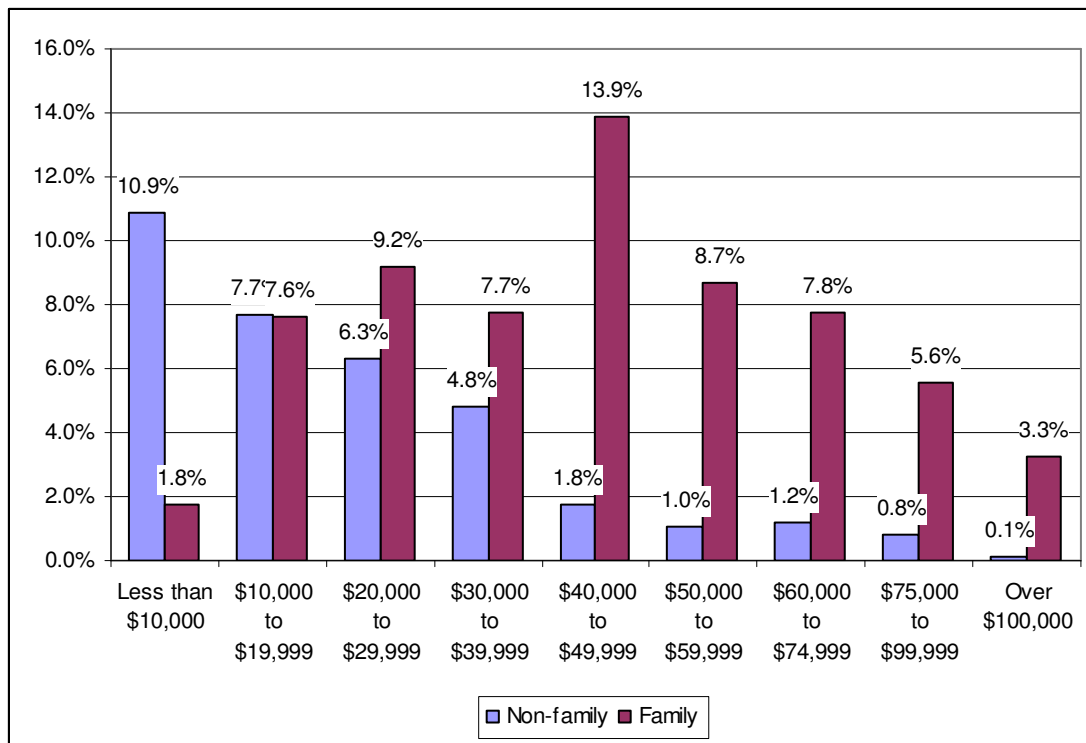
**Figure 5. 2000 Family Income Distribution for Brown County, Western Illinois Region and Illinois**



Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

Figure 6 illustrates the extraordinary differences between family and non-family incomes in Brown County. Of the 728 nonfamily households in Brown County nearly 55% have incomes below \$20,000. Over 50% of those low-income nonfamily households are elderly residents living alone. This is typical of rural Illinois counties with relatively large proportions of persons aged over 65 years of age living on fixed incomes from pensions and social security. 30% of the low-income households are nonfamilies headed by persons under 25 years of age. This group is dominated by males who live alone.

**Figure 6. Brown County 2000 Family and Nonfamily Income Distribution**  
(percentages are the proportion of all households in that category)

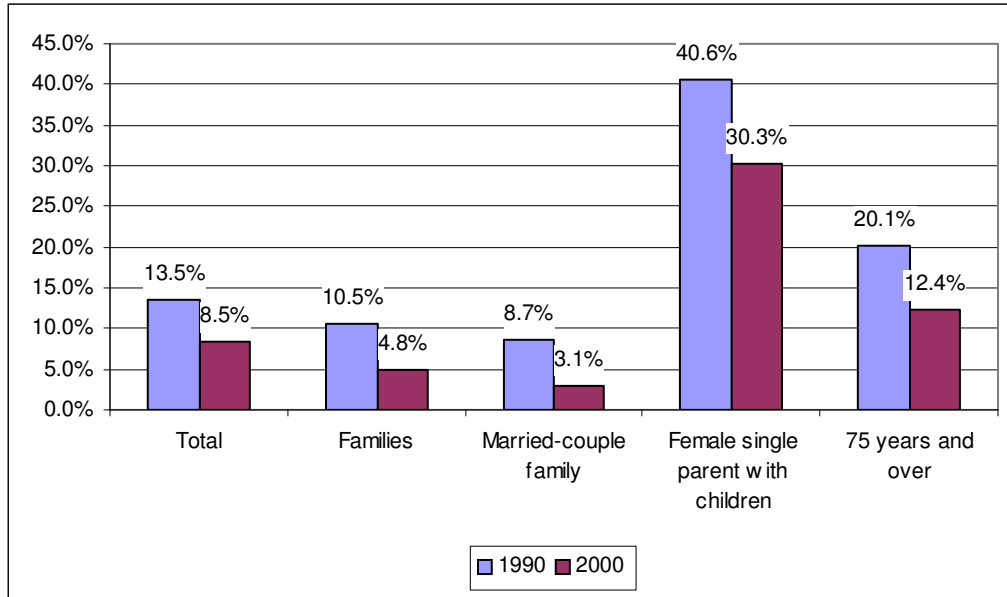


Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

One of the results of the dramatic growth in incomes was an equally remarkable reduction in poverty rates (Figure 7). Poverty rates decreased across the board for all categories of households and families. The number of persons in poverty decreased from 13.5% to 8.5% between 1990 and 2000. This put poverty rates in 2000 well below the Illinois and Western Illinois Regional averages of 10.4% and 10.7%. The rate for families was cut in half, declining from 10.5% to 4.8%. This rate was also well below the Illinois and Regional averages of 7.5% and 7.8%. Poverty rates for female headed households declined but remained relatively high at 30.3%. The rate is especially high (44%) for single female parents with children under five years of age. Rates were also higher for the oldest segment of the population. Persons in the 75 year and over age group had the highest poverty rates for all adults at 12.4%. It is important to note that an additional

10.8% of the population (535 persons) is hovering near the poverty line with incomes that are between 100% and 150% of poverty.

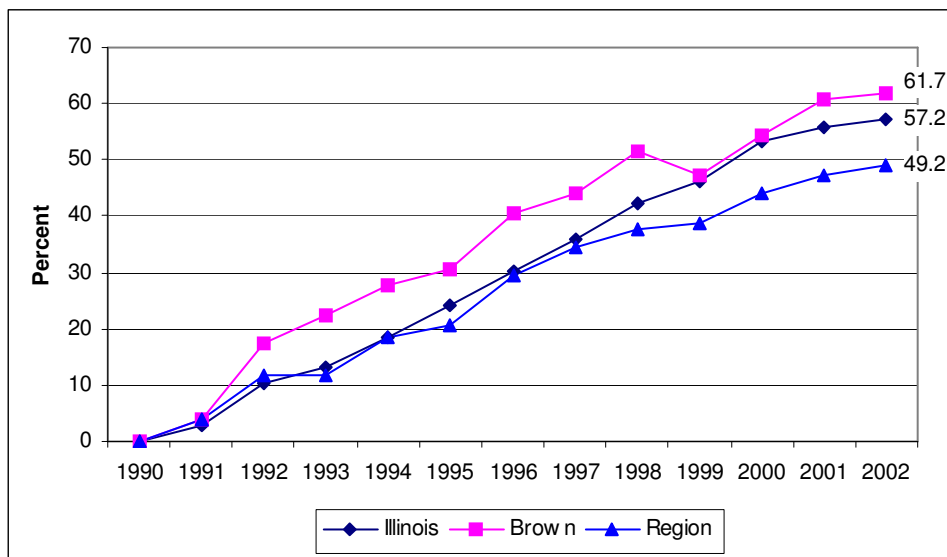
**Figure 7. Brown County Selected Poverty Rates for 1990 and 2000**



Source: Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, Summary File 3

Total personal income has also increased at a rate exceeding both the Region and Illinois over the last decade. Since 1990 total personal income increased 61.2% in Brown County compared to 57.2% in Illinois and 49.2% in the Region (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Accumulated Year to Year Percentage Changes in Total Personal Income**



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System 2004

## **Economic Trends**

County economic data for small rural counties like Brown and the surrounding counties is often of mediocre quality. This is the result of federal and state regulations that suppress the release of data when there are few businesses in a particular economic sector. The result is employment and income data for entire sectors of the economy are sometimes not reported. To work around this limitation a private data source was used for some economic data. Further complicating this task is a recent change in the way business data are organized and reported by federal agencies. Beginning around 2000 most federal agencies that collect, tabulate, and report business data switched from using the Standard Industrial Classification codes to the North American Industrial Classification System. This changeover makes it nearly impossible to compare data from years prior to 2000 to more current tabulations.

## **Appendix A: Steering Committee Members**

### List of Steering Committee Members

- Jean Buckley, Tracy Family Foundation
- John Hogan, Community Volunteer
- Dean Hulvey, Community Volunteer
- Louise Huseman, Community Volunteer
- Merle Kenady, Brown County School District
- Philip Krupps, Vice President, Brown County State Bank
- Peggy Perry, DOT Foods
- Catherine Tracy, Tracy Family Foundation
- Debbie Willis, Willis Insurance Agency
- Suzanne Woodward, Mt. Sterling YMCA
- Mike Yingling, Yingling and Nuessen Agency

**Appendix B: Community Survey**

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very satisfied and 5 being very dissatisfied, please circle your level of satisfaction with **community services** in Brown County .

	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. Fire protection.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
b. Law enforcement.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
c. Ambulance services .....	1	2	3	4	5	99
d. Services for senior citizens.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
e. Health and medical services .....	1	2	3	4	5	99
f. Mental health services.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
g. Dental services .....	1	2	3	4	5	99
h. Library.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
i. Parks and recreation facilities .....	1	2	3	4	5	99
j. Elementary schools .....	1	2	3	4	5	99
k. Middle school.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
l. High school .....	1	2	3	4	5	99
m. Transportation services .....	1	2	3	4	5	99
n. Youth services.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
o. Employment and job training services .....	1	2	3	4	5	99
p. Social and family services.....	1	2	3	4	5	99

2. Are there new services, or improvements to existing services, that you think should be provided for residents?

---

3. Please identify the relative priority for the following **economic development** programs in Brown County:

	<i>Priority</i>					<i>Very Low</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
	<i>Very High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>			
a. Supporting and expanding existing businesses .....	1	2	3	4	5		99
b. Attracting new retail businesses.....	1	2	3	4	5		99
c. Attracting manufacturing businesses .....	1	2	3	4	5		99
d. Promoting new residential development .....	1	2	3	4	5		99
e. Attracting new service businesses.....	1	2	3	4	5		99
f. Preserving and promoting agriculture/agribusiness .....	1	2	3	4	5		99
g. Promoting tourism.....	1	2	3	4	5		99
h. Supporting and expanding health care services .....	1	2	3	4	5		99
i. Providing incentives to attract new businesses .....	1	2	3	4	5		99
j. Restoring downtown areas .....	1	2	3	4	5		99
k. Creating a County-wide economic development plan .....	1	2	3	4	5		99
l. Encouraging and supporting entrepreneurship.....	1	2	3	4	5		99

4. Do you have any other ideas for improving economic development in Brown County?

---

5. Here are some statements about Brown County **schools and educational services**. Please indicate how you feel about each statement by circling the number that matches your opinion.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. Course offerings meet or exceed student needs .....	1	2	3	4	99
b. Technology and vocational education programs are adequate .....	1	2	3	4	99
c. Brown County schools are doing a good job of preparing students for college.....	1	2	3	4	99
d. Youth in the community are prepared for work when they complete high school .....	1	2	3	4	99
e. Our schools are safe for students and teachers.....	1	2	3	4	99
f. Sports programs are adequate .....	1	2	3	4	99
g. Cultural opportunities and activities (drama, dance, visual arts and music) are adequate.....	1	2	3	4	99
h. School personnel communicate with residents, parents, and students .....	1	2	3	4	99
i. Parents are actively involved in the school system .....	1	2	3	4	99

6. Are there new services, or improvements to existing services, that you think need to be provided for youth in Brown County?

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7. Please rate the following characteristics of **housing** in Brown County.

	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. Overall appearance of housing.....	1	2	3	4	99
b. Availability of subsidized public housing.....	1	2	3	4	99
c. Quality of affordable housing for purchase.....	1	2	3	4	99
d. Availability of affordable housing for purchase.....	1	2	3	4	99
e. Quality of rental housing.....	1	2	3	4	99
f. Availability of rental housing.....	1	2	3	4	99
g. Availability of "high-end" residential housing for purchase.....	1	2	3	4	99
h. Availability of "mid-level" residential housing for purchase.....	1	2	3	4	99
i. Availability of "entry-level" residential housing for purchase.....	1	2	3	4	99

8. Please add comments or suggestions concerning housing in Brown County

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9. Here are some statements about Brown County. Please indicate how you feel about each statement by circling the number that matches your opinion.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. People in Brown County are satisfied with things as they are.....	1	2	3	4	99
b. The future of Brown County looks bright.....	1	2	3	4	99
c. I am satisfied with the overall appearance of public and private property in Brown County.....	1	2	3	4	99
d. Brown County is a good place to raise children.....	1	2	3	4	99
e. Youth make a positive contribution in the community.....	1	2	3	4	99
f. People in Brown County work together to improve the community.....	1	2	3	4	99
g. People in Brown County receive adequate services based on the taxes they pay.....	1	2	3	4	99
h. I or my family have had problems finding services when we needed them.....	1	2	3	4	99
i. I would recommend Brown County as a good place to live if a friend was moving to Western Illinois.....	1	2	3	4	99
j. The quality of life in Brown County has improved in recent years.....	1	2	3	4	99
k. Residents have plenty of opportunities to volunteer and get involved in civic improvement activities.....	1	2	3	4	99
l. Our schools and community offer enough opportunities for youth to contribute to the community.....	1	2	3	4	99
m. The accomplishments of youth, beyond sports, deserve more recognition.....	1	2	3	4	99
n. There should be youth representation on local boards.....	1	2	3	4	99

10. What priority should be given to the following issues for Brown County?

	<u>Priority</u>					
	<i>Very High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Very Low</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. Improving the school system.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
b. Improving the overall appearance of the County.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
c. Creating opportunities for residents to get involved in community improvement programs.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
d. Increasing the stock of affordable rental housing.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
e. Increasing the stock of housing for purchase.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
f. Expanding services for senior citizens.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
g. Improving/expanding health and medical services.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
h. Revitalizing commercial areas like downtown Mt. Sterling.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
i. Providing services for families in need.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
j. Making sure that families in need can find services.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
k. Developing strategies for retaining youth in the county.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
l. Developing more recreational and entertainment options for adults.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
m. Providing services for youth.....	1	2	3	4	5	99
n. Developing more arts programs for youth.....	1	2	3	4	5	99

11. If Brown County's population substantially increases, would you be optimistic or concerned about Brown County's future?

Very Concerned      Concerned      No Strong Feeling      Optimistic      Very Optimistic  
1                              2                              3                              4                              5

a. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

12. If you could change anything about Brown County what would you change?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. What do you like most about Brown County?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Identify the top three issues facing Brown County?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Identify the top three resources or assets Brown County has to offer?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you live and/or work in Brown County?      1 Live                      2 Work

17. Do you own or rent your residence?              1 Own                      2 Rent

18. Please indicate your gender.                      1 Male              2 Female

19. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years

20. Please indicate the number of people currently living in your household, including yourself. \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you have children enrolled in a Brown County school?      1 Yes                      2 No

22. How long have you been a resident of Brown County? \_\_\_\_\_ years

23. Where do you live? If you live in the rural part of the County please select the community closest to you.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Mt. Sterling | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Buckhorn    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Ripley       | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Cooperstown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Versailles   | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 La Grange   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Timewell     | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Hersman     |

***Thank you for completing the survey. Please return by April 15, 2005. Call 217-223-8380 if you have questions. Return by mail to: U of I Extension PO Box 209 109 W. North St. Mt. Sterling, IL 62353***

## **Appendix C: List of Focus Groups**

### List of Focus Groups

- Education
- Agriculture/Business
- Senior Citizens
- Health
- Faith Communities
- Community of Ripley
- Community of Timewell
- Community of Versailles
- Young Professionals
- Youth Service Providers
- Youth

## Appendix D: List of Focus Group and Interview Participants

### List of Focus Group and Interview Participants

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Organization:</b>
Caroline Anderson	Youth Community Volunteer
Cheryl Baker	Brown County High Schools
Maxine Barker	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Jon Boylen	Brown County Farm Bureau
Jean Buckley	Steering Committee, Tracy Family Foundation
Esther Boehm	Heritage Manor Nursing Home
Steve Behymer	Brown County Little League
Roger Busen	Community Volunteer, Timewell
Charles Call	Brown County Boy Scouts
Anne Capestrain	Tracy Family
Carolyn Chaney	Two Rivers Regional Council
Richard Childers	Community Volunteer, Versailles
Joe Clifford	Community Volunteer, Versailles
Denise Conkright	PACT Headstart
Laurie Crary	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Dustin Cruitt	Farm Services Agency
Shanna Edison	PACT Headstart
Sean Eifert	Brown County Mental Health
Bob Einhart	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Mary Ferrill	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Dale Gadberry	Community Volunteer, Timewell; Dot Foods
Kelly Gadberry	Community Volunteer, Timewell
Brian Gallaher	Brown County Ambulance Services
Brandon Gallaher	First Baptist Church
Nikki Geisler	University of Illinois Extension
Theresa Geisler	Mt. Sterling Saving Center
Father Tom Henseler	St. Mary's School
Mark Hill	Mt. Sterling Implement
John Hogan	Steering Committee, Community Volunteer
Jerry Hooker	Brown County State Attorney
Mike Hulsen	DOT Foods
Dean Hulvey	Steering Committee, Community Volunteer
Louise Huseman	Steering Committee, Community Volunteer
Jim Jennings	Mayor, Mt. Sterling
Kevin Kackley	Mt. Sterling Veterinary Clinic
Brad Kassing	Community Volunteer
Carolyn Kassing	Dunlap Place
Suzy Kassing	DOT Foods
Cricket Kempf	Arms Unlimited
Gerald Kempf	Brown County Sheriff
Merle Kenady	Steering Committee, Brown County School District
Don Kerley	DOT Foods

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Organization:</b>
Sara Klusmeyer	Brown County Girl Scouts
Charlotte Koch	St. Mary's School
Kathy Knight	Community Volunteer, Timewell
Kevin Knight	Community Volunteer, Timewell
Sharon Knorr	University of Illinois Extension
Philip Krupps	Steering Committee, Brown County State Bank
Abigail Kunkel	Youth Community Volunteer
Harry Lemaster	Versailles Fire Department
Matt Martin	Cornerstone Church
Chad McCoy	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Lori McNeff	Brown County Elementary School
Ryan McNeff	Youth Community Volunteer
Marvin Meservey	Brown County High School
Charla Meyers	Soil and Water Conservation
Paul Mugerditchian	DOT Foods
Cara Newell	Youth Community Volunteer
John Oliver	United Way of Brown County; Dot Foods
Ed Perry	Community Volunteer, Timewell
Peggy Perry	Steering Committee, DOT Foods
Allen Petri	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Mary Petri	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Dennis Pritchard	First Christian Church
James Rausch	Mayor, Versailles
Marilyn Rausch	Community Volunteer, Versailles
Steve Ray	Quincy Medical Associates, Mt. Sterling
Jim Rischar	Community Volunteer, Timewell; Brown County State Bank
Chris Roberts	Brown County Board; Timewell Focus Group
Jacob Robinson	Youth Community Volunteer
Edna Scoggan	Community Volunteer, Timewell
Darren Seckman	Youth Community Volunteer
Bob Shields	Community Volunteer, Timewell
Randy Smith	Mt. Sterling Police Department
David Sniff	Culbertson Memorial Hospital
Jason Sorrells	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Jennifer Sorrells	Community Volunteer, Mt. Sterling
Susan Stammerjohn	Tracy Family Foundation
Mary Sullivan	Tracy Family
Jeff Summers	Mt. Sterling YMCA
Randy Templin	DOT Foods
Catherine Tracy	Steering Committee, Tracy Family Foundation
Dick Tracy	Tracy Family
Don Tracy	Tracy Family
Dorothy Tracy	Founder DOT Foods
Jane Tracy	Tracy Family
Jim Tracy	Tracy Family
Joe Tracy	Tracy Family

**Name:****Organization:**

John Tracy	Tracy Family
Pat Tracy	Tracy Family
Judy Tucker	Community Volunteer, Versailles
Dan Wagner	University of Illinois Extension Council
Janet Welty	Mt. Sterling Senior Center
Roy Welty	Community Volunteer
Holly Whitaker	Community Volunteer
Jamie Whitaker	Community Volunteer
Caitlin Wiese	Youth Community Volunteer
Debbie Willis	Steering Committee, Willis Insurance Agency
Justin Wilson	Youth Community Volunteer
Susan Wilson	Midwest Youth Services
Van Wilson	Brown County High School
George Woodward	Dear Ridge Auto Parts
Scott Woodward	Community Volunteer
Suzanne Woodward	Steering Committee, Mt. Sterling YMCA
Monte Yakle	Community Volunteer, Timewell
Bruce Yingling	Pea Ridge Township
Mike Yingling	Steering Committee, Yingling and Nuessen Agency

## Appendix E: Focus Group and Interview Guide

### Interview and Focus Group Meeting Guide

5 min. Welcome and Introductions

5 min. Overview of the Brown County Assessment & Tracy Family Foundation

The Tracy Family Foundation was established in 1997 by the Robert and Dorothy Tracy Family. The Foundation offers resources to charitable institutions, in Brown and surrounding counties, which focus on strengthening the family unit, and to those institutions that focus on the inner development of a fundamental value system that includes such values as honesty, integrity, fairness, a Catholic/Christian belief and a strong work ethic.

Since 1998, the Tracy Family Foundation has distributed over \$1.2 million, thousands of which have gone to programs and services for residents of Brown County. These dollars have funded a wide range of needed services for youth and families improve their quality of life.

To continue to stay informed about the community needs and assets in Brown County, TFF has engaged a collaborative of The Medical Foundation and the University of Illinois Extension – Adams/Brown County Unit to develop a study and write a report that analyzes the needs and assets in Brown County. The primary focus of the study will be in the areas of youth, education, families, health and wellness, and community betterment. The information in the report will also provide direction to the TFF on future projects and funding decisions. In addition, through a community presentation and the Tracy Family Foundation website, the results of the study will be shared with individuals and agencies serving Brown County.

Over the next six months, staff from TMF and UIE will be collecting and reviewing existing data drawn from national, state, and county sources to collect baseline data and develop a comprehensive view of the needs and resources within Brown County. In addition, qualitative and quantitative data will be collected through interviews, focus groups and surveys. Participants will include representatives of the Tracy family, TFF Trustees, Brown County youth, adults, elders, schools, churches, area non-profits, business owners and managers, key community leaders, and other community members. At the end of this process, a report will be developed for the Tracy Family Foundation and this information will be shared with the community.

5 min. Purpose of Meeting

- To gather information on the needs of the Brown County community.
- To gather information on the assets of the Brown County community.
- To identify gaps in services available to the Brown County community.
- To identify recommendations from the community to TFF on directions for future funding and projects.

90 min. Discussion Questions

1. How long have you lived/worked in Brown County?
2. Why do you live in Brown County?
3. a) Overall, what are your hopes and dreams for Brown County?  
b) What is your perception of others hopes and dreams?  
c) What helps/hinders you in attaining these dreams?
1. What issues/needs exist in Brown County?
2. a) What programs/services are addressing these issues/needs?  
b) Are you/your family using these services? Why? Why not?
3. What other resources exist in Brown County?
4. What other information do we need to collect?
5. Are there other comments/issues that are important?
6. Are there additional individuals/groups to speak with?

5 min. Next Steps

- Conducting focus groups and interviews and administering surveys through spring 2005 to gather data.
- In late spring 2005, the information will be compiled and provided to the Tracy Family Foundation staff and the steering committee for this project.
- In summer 2005, this information will be shared with the Brown County community.
- If you have any additional comments or questions, contact:

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5 min. Concluding Remarks