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Northwest Arkansas Community Indicators: A Quality-of-Life Assessment

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The Community & Family Institute



About the Institute

The Community and Family Institute is located in the University of Arkansas' Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. The Institute was founded in 1997 based on the principle that community improvement, initiative sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment of needs, evaluation of community goals and the development of appropriate and pragmatic responses to problems. The Institute is dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom research strategies for exploring important social issues in the Northwest Arkansas region and beyond.

The Northwest Arkansas Community Indicators Project is a prime example of a comprehensive evaluation of community needs. The goal of this project has been to stimulate dialogue about developing issues in the region and to encourage informed strategies for shaping future policies and effective actions.

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There are a number of individuals who provided input to this project in its earliest stages. Their insights and suggestions are found throughout this report. In addition, though acknowledged as authors, the Community and Family Institute research staff worked tirelessly on this project and truly became forensic social scientists on the job. Their long hours and tedious searches for applicable data were remarkable and those contributions found throughout the report.

Finally, we want to thank the "too many to name" government and non-profit agencies that participated in the early formative stages of this project, and then delivered on data requests to complete this assessment. Not every indicator, problem, or relevant piece of data is in this report. However, we do hope that this report represents a start for what will be a lengthy conversation on the social issues confronting Northwest Arkansas and how resources might be leveled to address solutions and develop pragmatic plans for growing and prospering through the 21st Century.

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Executive Summary

Northwest Arkansas has experienced considerable transformation in its soft infrastructure (demography, health, education, arts, civic engagement, etc.) over the last thirty years. The changes occurring in Northwest Arkansas have created a number of significant challenges that the region must acknowledge and address head-on, but certainly not all the changes have had a negative effect. The region's metamorphosis has invigorated communities throughout the area and created a tremendous set of social, economic, and cultural opportunities.

The intent of this quality of life report is two-fold. First, is to provide the people of Northwest Arkansas with an empirically grounded understanding of the changes taking place in their communities and the consequences of those changes. The second is to serve as a resource for citizens, service providers, and other stakeholders as they discuss the region's challenges, build upon its successes, and plan for its future.

A regional approach that examines, in detail, the quality of life in the four counties of Northwest Arkansas (Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington), is the report's focus. Focusing on life in these four counties forces one to ask big questions that transcend jurisdictional boundaries.

Quality of Life

We begin the report by exploring residents' opinions of Northwest Arkansas as a place to live. A representative sample of residents were asked: *How would you rate Northwest Arkansas as a place to live?*

- ★ The majority of residents rated Northwest Arkansas as an “*excellent*” or “*good*” place to live.
- ★ Residents' evaluations of Northwest Arkansas changed only slightly between 2000 and 2008.

Sociodemographic Composition

- ★ Between 1990 and 2000, the population in Northwest Arkansas expanded dramatically. Since 2000, population growth in the region has slowed down considerably, although Benton and Washington Counties continue to experience double-digit growth rates.
- ★ Much of the population growth in Northwest Arkansas has come from the in-migration of foreign-born residents. Since 1990, increases in the number of foreign-born residents in Northwest Arkansas has outpaced the growth in foreign-born residents in other regions of the state.
- ★ In 2000, nearly 10 percent of the populations of Benton, Carroll, and Washington Counties was Hispanic.

Income & Poverty

- ★ Per capita income has grown over the last several decades in Arkansas and in the Northwest Arkansas region. By 2006, both Washington and Benton Counties had higher per-capita incomes than the state average.
- ★ Since 1980, all Northwest Arkansas counties, except for Madison County, had lower percentages of people living in poverty than the state as a whole. However, recent data show an upturn in the percentage of people living in poverty in Northwest Arkansas since 2004.
- ★ With the exception of Madison County, the percentage of children living in poverty in Northwest Arkansas has increased steadily since 1980.

Housing & Homelessness

- ★ The majority of available housing stock in Northwest Arkansas is single-family units. Since 1980, single-family housing units have represented nearly 75 percent of all housing units in Northwest Arkansas.
- ★ The percentage of multi-family dwellings increased in both Benton and Washington Counties since 1980--in both cases, the percentage of multi-family dwellings has been slightly higher than the state average.
- ★ Northwest Arkansans pay nearly three hundred dollars more a year in fair market rent than the average renter in Arkansas.
- ★ In 2007, the total number of observed and estimated "invisible" homeless persons in Benton and Washington Counties was 1,170.

Families & Households

- ★ The percentage of children living in poverty in Northwest Arkansas counties between 1990-2000 increased slightly. However, since peaking in 2001 the percentage of children living in poverty has leveled off.
- ★ In Northwest Arkansas, only Benton County experienced significant growth in the number of households with children under the age of 18. By 2006, nearly 40 percent of households in Benton County had at least one child.
- ★ Relative to many of the other counties in the northern part of the state, the Northwest Arkansas region has a higher proportion of households with children.

Education

- ★ Reading proficiency scores for 4th and 8th students in Northwest Arkansas dropped between 2006 and 2007.
- ★ The percentage of the population in the Northwest Arkansas counties with more than a high school education increased since 1980.
- ★ All four Northwest Arkansas counties and the state of Arkansas improved their graduation rates between 2006 and 2007. All of the Northwest Arkansas counties had higher percentages of students graduating high school compared to the United States average in 2007 (approximately 75%).
- ★ Since 1999, student enrollment at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville has been steadily increasing and by 2006, nearly 18,000 students entered the university. Likewise, enrollments at Northwest Arkansas Community College have increased since 1999.

Health

- ★ Prenatal care in Northwest Arkansas is waning. While the rate of pregnant women not receiving prenatal services was lower than the state average in 2000, by 2003 all four Northwest Arkansas counties had higher-than-average rates of pregnant women not receiving prenatal care.
- ★ Mortality rates for heart disease, cancer, and stroke declined since 1990 in the state of Arkansas. In the period 2002-2004, only Benton County had higher rates of heart disease than the state average.
- ★ In 2004, nearly 20 percent of Northwest Arkansas residents were without health insurance.
- ★ The percentage of overweight adults has declined in Northwest Arkansas since 2004. However, fewer adults are exercising regularly and more are being diagnosed with diabetes.

Public Safety

- ★ After peaking in the 1990s, crime rates declined in Northwest Arkansas. However, crime rates in Washington County have been consistently higher than the state and other Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ Whereas the violent crime rate for the United States has been declining since 1991, Northwest Arkansas has experienced a steady increase in the volume of violent crime since 1977.
- ★ Arrest rates for illegal drug possession increased steadily between 1988 and 2005.
- ★ Since 1997, the ratio of sworn police officers to citizens in Northwest Arkansas is below the U.S. average, but consistent with the state of Arkansas as a whole.

Aging & Elderly

- ★ Northwest Arkansas has a higher percentage of the elderly employed than the rest of the state.
- ★ The percentage of elderly living in poverty in Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas counties has steadily decreased over the last fifteen years.
- ★ Northwest Arkansas is getting younger. By 2000 only Madison and Carroll Counties had higher-than-average proportions of elderly residents.
- ★ Carroll and Benton Counties had the highest age-adjusted mortality rates for influenza and pneumonia up until 1999, but by 2004, only Carroll County had mortality rates higher than the state average.

Natural Environment

- ★ In 2000, Carroll and Madison County generated nearly twice as much off-stream water usage as the other counties in Northwest Arkansas.
- ★ In 2008, the two largest and the fastest growing counties (Benton and Washington) contain more facilities engaging in environmentally harmful activities than the two rural counties (Carroll and Madison) in the region.
- ★ The vast majority of Northwest Arkansas workers - in excess of 70 percent - drive to work alone. However, the rate is declining.

Civic Engagement & Arts

- ★ In 2007, Northwest Arkansans volunteered in greater percentages than the state and United States average.
- ★ Since 1980, Northwest Arkansas voters have demonstrated a higher rate of participation in presidential elections than the rest of the country.
- ★ Northwest Arkansas counties have higher rates of self-employment in the arts than other counties in the state.
- ★ With 90 charitable foundations throughout Northwest Arkansas, and over 2.5 billion dollars in assets, these organizations gave away nearly 17 percent of their total monies available in 2008.

Village of 100

If Northwest Arkansas was comprised of only 100 residents there would be...



8 people of color



33 families impoverished



35 households with children



34 persons with only a high school education



73 owner-occupied homes



Less than 1 death annually from cardiovascular disease



66 persons who voted in the 2004 election



75 people who drove to work alone



14 elderly persons



Less than 1 violent crime reported to police every year

Note: The reader should exercise interpretive caution with the information presented above. The data appearing in this profile are generalizations based on data extracted from the the 2000 Census, which were available for all Northwest Arkansas counties.

Chapter 1

Introduction:

Quality-of-Life in Northwest Arkansas



Taking pictures and telling a story...It's a way to catalog history, interpret the present, and preserve the past for future generations. The intent of this report is to tell the story of life in Northwest Arkansas.

But, there is more to telling a story than simply compiling facts. That is only the first step. In addition, the information gathered must also be presented in a manner that is accessible, understandable, and contextualized. To accomplish this task, this report presents a composite of community indicators across eleven quality-of-life domains to tell the story of Northwest Arkansas. If the strategy has been successful, the story told will be one that residents of the region can relate to, connect with, and be inspired to action by.

Getting Started

In November 2007, representatives from the University of Arkansas' Community & Family Institute, the Northwest Arkansas Community Foundation, and the United Way of Northwest Arkansas began a conversation about the importance of developing an ongoing assessment of the quality-of-life in Northwest Arkansas. The group brainstormed about the types of indicators that might best assess community life, develop stakeholder interest, advance regional accountability, and most importantly, connect donors to their passions.

A stakeholders meeting was held in May 2008 with over 200 individuals representing more than 60 organizations from around Northwest Arkansas in attendance. Institutional representatives from public, private, and non-profit sectors were asked to participate in focus groups organized around specific topic area domains. Each focus group was asked to generate a list of topic-specific indicators. (For example, the education focus group generated a list of indicators to measure educational outcomes.) Unfortunately, not every suggested indicator found its way into this report. In some cases, information simply did not exist (and therefore could not be collected), or when it did exist it was not in a usable form.

Why a Regional Approach?

A regional perspective on the quality-of-life in Northwest Arkansas is important because many issues transcend more limited territorial boundaries. Certainly, the Northwest Arkansas region consists of multiple local jurisdictions including counties, cities, townships, and school districts, with each having their own local planning autonomy. Nevertheless, there are a number of critical problems that can only be addressed regionally. In recent times, the Northwest Arkansas Council has made extraordinary efforts to address the hard infrastructure needs of the region (e.g. air and water quality, traffic patterns, transportation, growth) by adopting a regional approach. With a regional approach new alliances can be created, new partnerships forged, and innovative strategies developed to address the soft infrastructure challenges facing Northwest Arkansas in the 21st Century. Hopefully, this report will contribute to these future dialogues.

For the purposes of this report, "Northwest Arkansas" includes Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington Counties. While there are other classifications that could be used for identifying the region, this report uses the **county** as the primary unit of analysis. The report systematically compares and contrasts differences between each county. When possible, regional indicators are compared with the state of Arkansas as a whole, and in some cases the United States. These comparisons are made because **place matters**, and while the residents of Northwest Arkansas do, in fact, share a great deal in common, it is also important to note differences when possible.

Much of the information presented in this report reinforces what many already know - Northwest Arkansas is a great place to live. That being said, some of what is presented here highlights some issues of concern, and challenges that the region's residents will have to meet head-on.

A Quality-of-Life Assessment

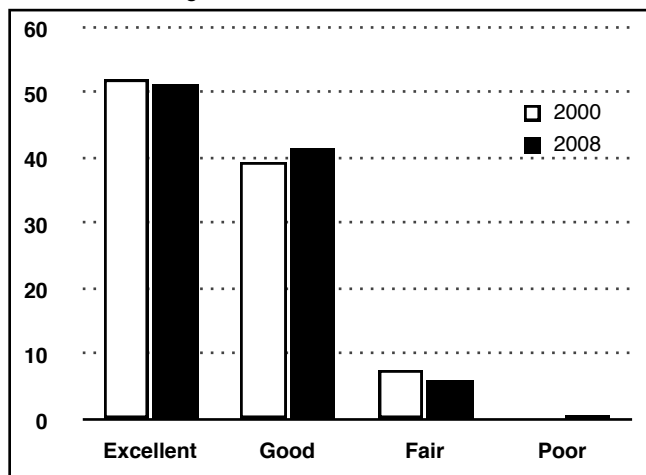
Deciding which quality-of-life domains to address, which indicators best captured the core issues within each of these domains, and how these indicators should be presented was a significant

challenge in the development of this project. A number of local and regional groups, organizations, stakeholders, and interested parties gave critical feedback and input in determining the final product in this report. Ultimately, it was decided that the most effective strategy would be to use broad, bold strokes to paint a portrait of life in Northwest Arkansas.

So, what is “community quality-of-life”? Typically, when people speak of quality-of-life, they refer to the overall well-being of a community. It is comprised of both objective conditions of life in a community as well as residents’ subjective evaluations and interpretations of their experiences.

**What
People Are Saying
About...
Quality of Life**

Figure 1.1
Residents’ Ratings: Northwest Arkansas As A Place To Live



Sources: Northwest Arkansas Community Survey, 2000. Northwest Arkansas Omnibus Survey, 2008.

In 2000, and again in 2008, the Community and Family Institute conducted a survey to measure people’s perceptions of life Northwest Arkansas. Among other things, residents were asked, “How would you rate Northwest Arkansas as a place to live?” Results from these two surveys are presented below.

A majority of Northwest Arkansas residents rated Northwest Arkansas as an “excellent” place to live, and another 40 percent provided a “good rating.” In contrast, fewer than 10 percent of residents thought the quality of life in Northwest Arkansas was only “fair” or “poor”. Notably, residents’ ratings of Northwest Arkansas as a place to live have remained stable since 2000.

The **What People Are Saying** section in the report will be revisited from time to time as residents’ opinions are examined in relationship to factual data on the four counties and the Northwest Arkansas region.

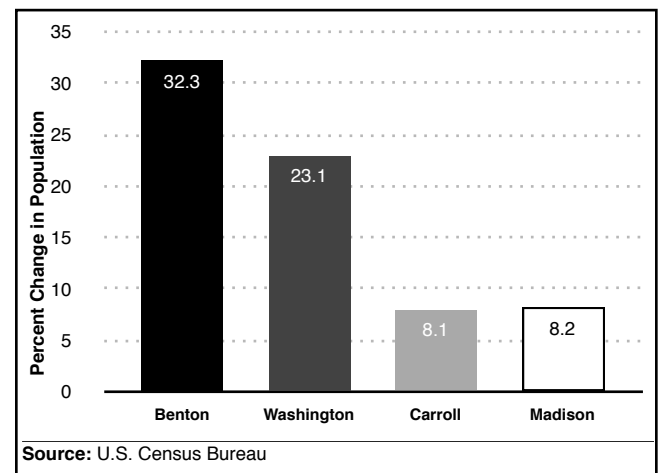
The Northwest Arkansas Region

Northwest Arkansas is made up of a patchwork of small and medium- sized cities. The Northwest Arkansas region is currently experiencing unprecedented population growth, increased diversity, and an expanding economy. No region in the entire state of Arkansas is growing at a faster pace than Northwest Arkansas, and the region is among the fastest growing in the entire south central United States.

Benton County population estimates in 2007 showed 203,107 residents. The largest city in Benton County is Rogers, although Bentonville is gaining ground. A large portion of the growth in the Northwest Arkansas region is taking place in Benton County.

(continued next page)

Figure 1.2
Population Growth in Northwest Arkansas Counties: 2000-2007



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

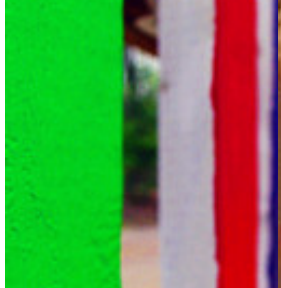
Carroll County population estimates in 2007 showed 27,429 residents. The largest city in Carroll County is Berryville.

Madison County, located to the south of Carroll County, had an estimated 15,420 residents in 2007. The largest city in Madison County is Huntsville.

Washington County population estimates showed 194,292 residents in 2007. The largest city in Washington County is Fayetteville.

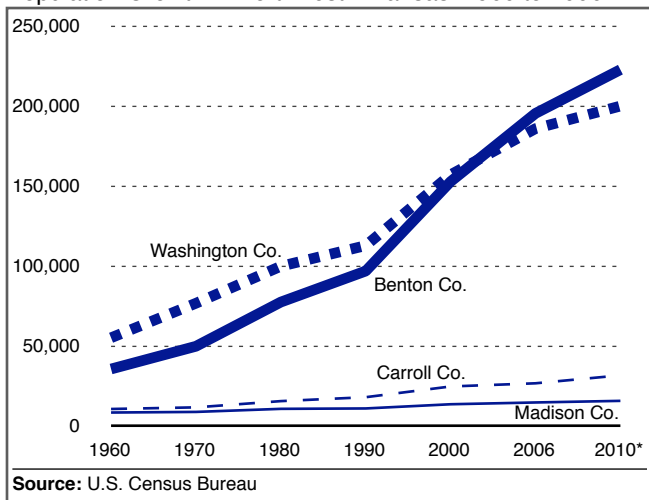
Chapter 2

Social and Demographic Composition: Growth and Diversity



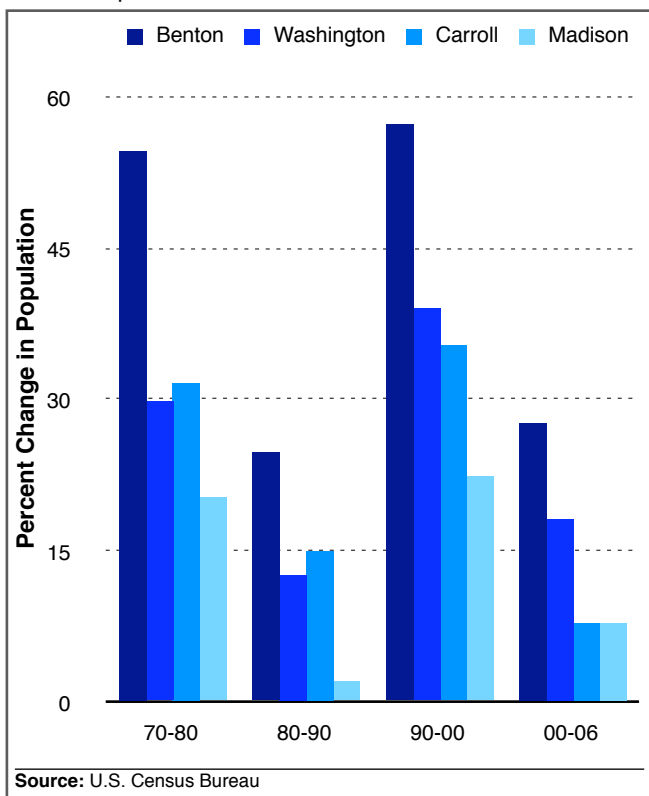
Growth & Change in Northwest Arkansas

Figure 2.1
Population Growth in Northwest Arkansas: 1960 to 2006



Northwest Arkansas has experienced dramatic population growth over the past forty-plus years. As one of the fastest growing regions in Arkansas, significant population shifts, particularly in Washington and Benton Counties, have created tremendous challenges - and opportunities - for the region.

Figure 2.2
Rate of Population Growth in Northwest Arkansas: 1970-2006



- ★ Overall, general population growth in Carroll and Madison Counties was relatively constant between 1960-1990. Since 2000, both counties registered small increases in population growth.
- ★ Benton County's growth was noteworthy between 1990 and 2000. By 2004, Benton County became the most populous county in Northwest Arkansas.
- ★ 2010 projections show continued growth in all four of the Northwest Arkansas counties.

As Figure 2.2 shows, there has been a surge-lull-surge-lull pattern to the population change in each of the four counties in Northwest Arkansas since 1970.

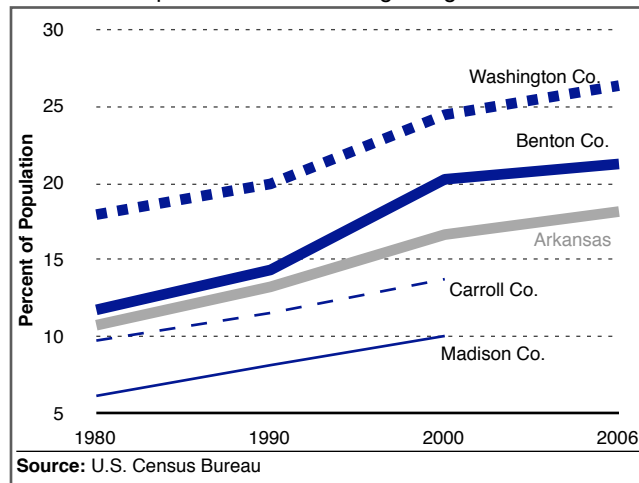
- ★ Benton County had the highest percent change in population growth between 1970 and 2006.
- ★ Madison County had the lowest percent change in population growth between 1970 and 2006.
- ★ After a slowdown between 1980-1990, the population in Northwest Arkansas counties expanded appreciably.
- ★ Since 2000, the percent population change in the region has slowed markedly, although Benton and Washington Counties continue to experience double-digit percentage change growth.



Human Capital and Social Capital

Figure 2.3

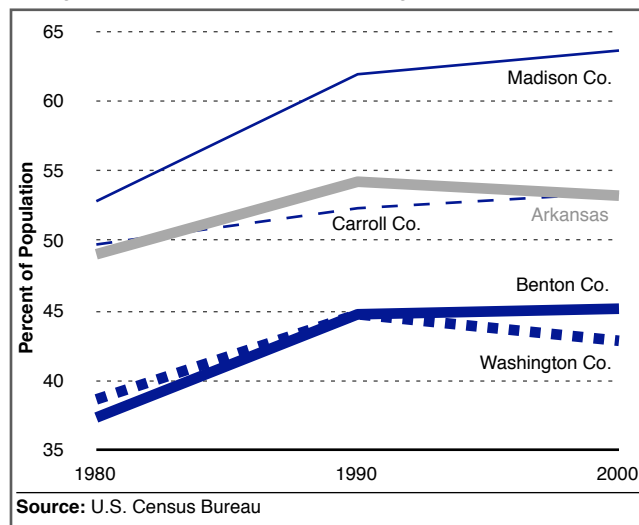
Percent of Population 25+ w/ College Degree: 1980-2006



One of the notable demographic shifts in Northwest Arkansas has been the increase in the number of residents, age 25 years and older, with a college education (see Figure 2.3). This type of change in a community's aggregate education level is often described as an increase in *human capital*. For individuals who exchange their human capital for such things as wages and health benefits, investments in human capital are critical for assuring one's own economic security. For communities, increasing human capital is integral for future economic growth because of the link between human capital and productivity.

Figure 2.4

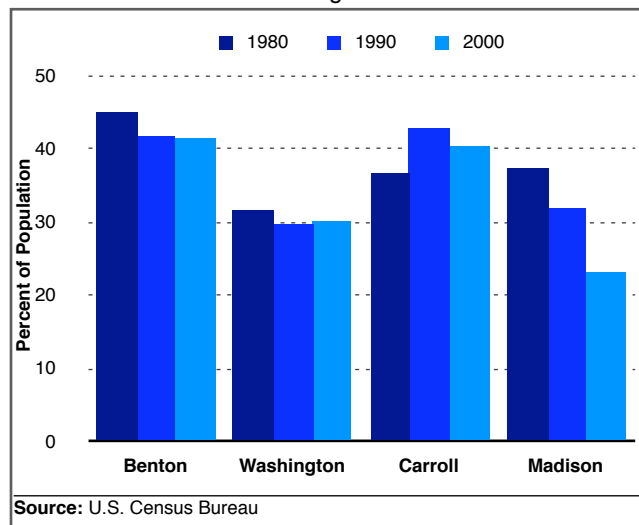
Living in Same Residence 5 Years Ago: 1980-2000



Residential stability is often viewed as a necessary precondition for building cohesive, healthy communities. Conversely, high rates of residential turnover are seen as a disruptive, disorganizing force. One of the main drawbacks of residential instability is that it limits residents' ability to associate with and get to know one another. In other words, residential instability limits the social connectedness among neighbors who have difficulty acquiring adequate levels of *social capital*.

Figure 2.5

Different Residence 5 Years Ago: Moved From Out of State



★ Northwest Arkansas demonstrates two distinct patterns of residential stability, presented in Figures 2.4.

“Movers” Between 1980 and 2000, fewer than half of the residents of Benton and Washington Counties lived in the same residence for at least five years. Relative to the rest of Arkansas, these two counties demonstrate significantly lower levels of residential stability.

“Stayers” Between 1980 and 2000, at least half of the residents of Madison and Carroll Counties lived in the same residence for at least five years. The level of residential stability in Madison County far exceeds the state average.

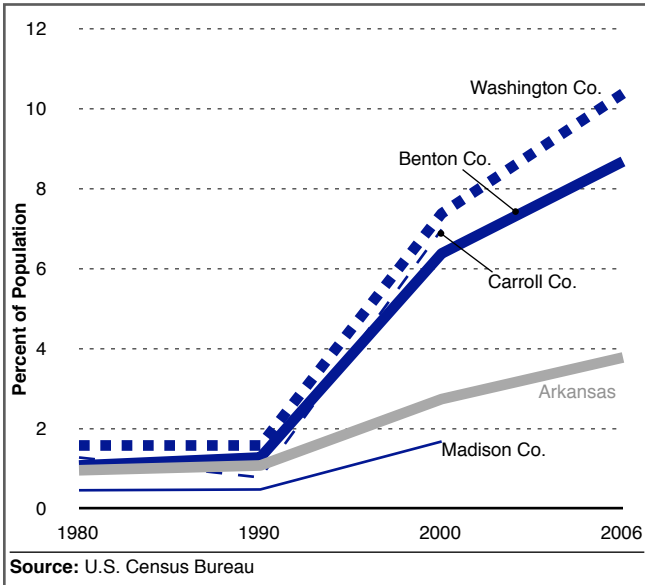
★ Of those who reported living in their residence for less than five years, most moved from an in-state location.

★ Benton County consistently has experienced the highest percent of out-of-state migration.

In-Migration

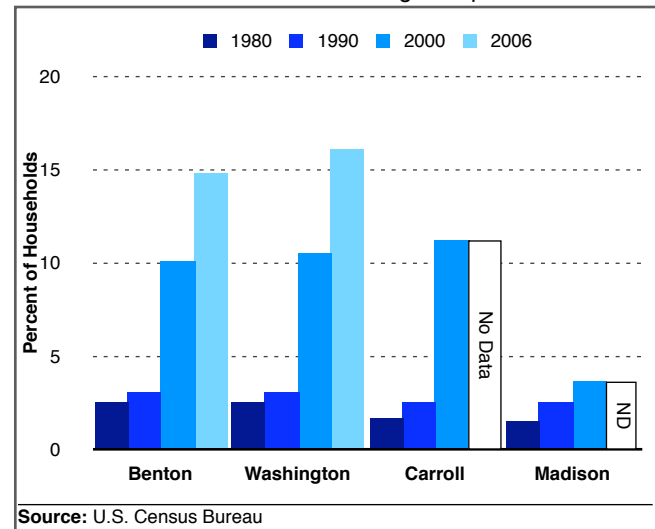
Much of the population growth in Northwest Arkansas has come from the in-migration of foreign-born residents. Since 1990, increases in the number of foreign-born residents in Northwest Arkansas far outpaced the growth in foreign-born residents in other regions of Arkansas.

Figure 2.6
Percent of Population Foreign-Born: 1980-2006



- ★ **Between 1990 and 2000:**
 - * Benton County's foreign-born population increased nearly 500 percent
 - * Carroll County's foreign-born population increased more than 800 percent.
 - * Madison County's foreign-born population increased more than 300 percent.
 - * Washington County's foreign-born population increased 460 percent.
- ★ The number of foreign-born residents living in the state of Arkansas increased 137 percent between 2000 and 2006.
- ★ Since 1980 there have been increases in every Northwest Arkansas county in the proportion of the population who speak a language other than English at home.
- ★ By 2006, English was not the primary language spoken in approximately 15 percent of households in Benton and Washington Counties.

Figure 2.7
Percent Households: Other Than English Spoken in Home



In 2007, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation commissioned a study entitled “*A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas.*” Several important findings in that study are echoed in the dynamics of the Northwest Arkansas region. The report notes the following:

- ★ “Arkansas had the fourth-fastest-growing immigrant population nationwide between 1990 and 2000: 196 percent.”
- ★ “The highest foreign-born population shares can be found along the western edge of Arkansas, with the largest communities in Springdale, Rogers, and Fayetteville.”
- ★ “The number of children in immigrant families in Arkansas grew 276 percent between 1990 and 2000, a rate exceeded by only one other state—North Carolina.”

In addition to increased racial diversity, Northwest Arkansas communities experienced significant shifts in their ethnic composition. Most notable has been the substantial increase in the number of residents who are of Hispanic background or origin.

In characterizing Arkansas and these regions with an expanding Hispanic population, the Rockefeller reports goes on to say:

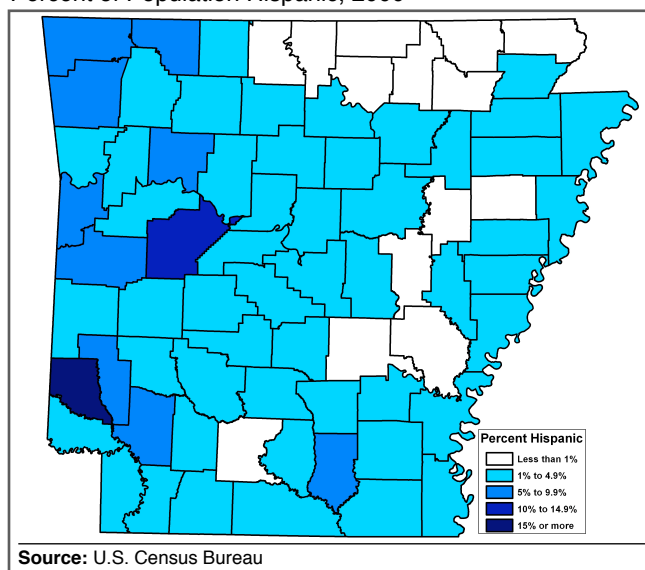
- ★ “Like other Southern states with large shares of Mexican immigrants, Arkansas has many undocumented immigrants. In 2004–05, 51 percent of Arkansas immigrants were

undocumented, compared with 29 percent nationally.”

- ★ “Arkansas’ Hispanic children—those with foreign- or native-born parents—have poverty rates over twice as high as those for non-Hispanic white children but below the rate for black children.”
- ★ “Limited English proficient (LEP) students—those reported by the schools as having limited English skills—are concentrated in a hand-full of districts, mostly in northwest and western Arkansas.”

Figure 2.8

Percent of Population Hispanic, 2000



- ★ In 1990, Hispanic residents comprised about 1 percent of the statewide population. By 2000, the percentage of Hispanics in Arkansas had increased to nearly 8 percent.
- ★ In 2000, Benton, Carroll, and Washington Counties all had nearly 10 percent Hispanic residents.

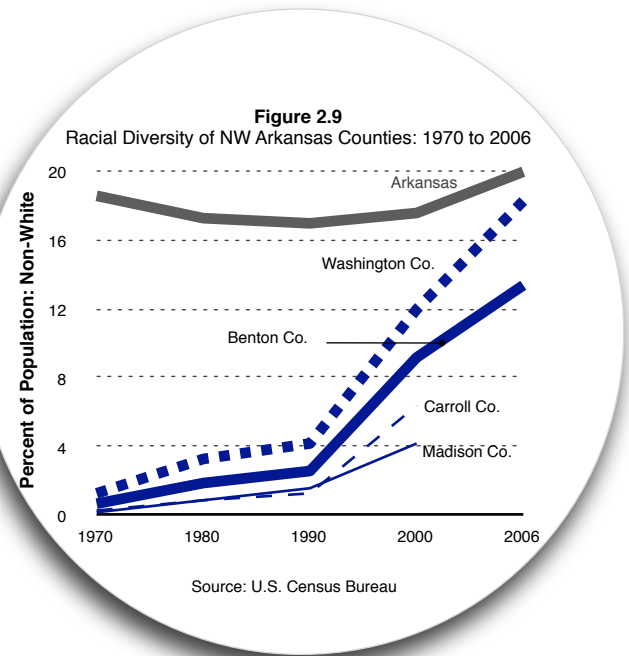
*"Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..."
~ Statue of Liberty Inscription*

Indicator in the Spotlight:

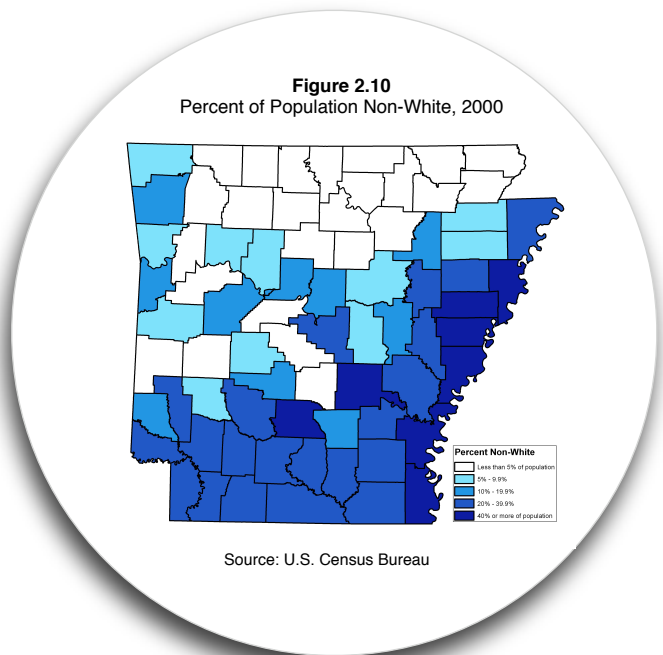
Racial and Ethnic Diversity

As suggested, increased racial and ethnic diversity has been an important part of Northwest Arkansas' population shifts over the last thirty-five years. Prior to 1990, the racial composition of the Northwest Arkansas region was monochrome - in the extreme. That year, more than 95 percent of the total population in each of the four counties was White. Since then, however, the demographic composition of Northwest Arkansas has changed considerably.

- ★ By 2000, Northwest Arkansas was in the midst of a racial diversity explosion. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of non-Whites increased by 350% in Benton County, 280% in Washington County, nearly 500% in Carroll County, and 260% in Madison County.
- ★ By 2006, racial diversity in Washington and Benton Counties approached the average for the state of Arkansas.
- ★ The level of racial diversity in Benton and Washington Counties in 2000 was similar to that found throughout western and central Arkansas.
- ★ By far, the regions displaying the highest levels of racial diversity were eastern and southern Arkansas.
- ★ In 2000, Phillips County had the largest non-White minority population (60.7%) and Cleburne County had the lowest non-White minority population (1.8%).



"Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and makes the present inaccessible." ~ Maya Angelou



What People Are Saying About... Race Relations

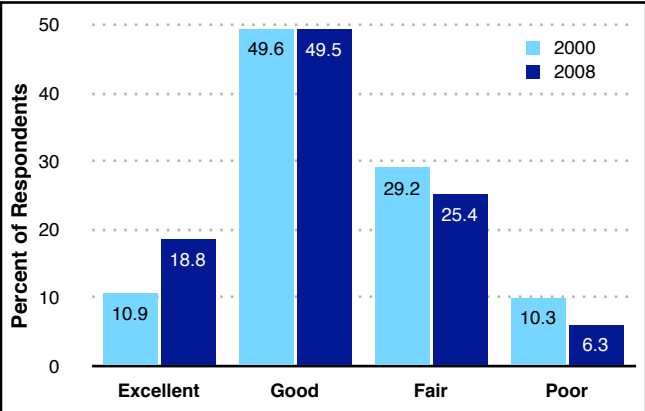
It is clear that Northwest Arkansas is experiencing rapid social and demographic changes. Quite often, increased cultural diversity is viewed positively by community members, as a collective asset and source of community pride. Culturally diverse communities provide the context in which residents can develop new dialogues and forge new understandings. In sum, cultural diversity is thought to enrich the social experiences of community members and improve overall quality of life.

But, change is not always easy. As beneficial as diversity can be, it must also be acknowledged that sudden demographic shifts can also result in increased social conflict.

So, how do the residents of Northwest Arkansas feel about race and ethnic relations in the region?

Most residents have a positive view of race relations and things appear to be improving. Between 2000 and 2008 the percentage of respondents who described race relations as “*excellent*” nearly doubled.

Figure 2.11
Race/Ethnic Relations: Northwest Arkansas Communities



Sources: Northwest Arkansas Community Survey, 2000; Northwest Arkansas Omnibus Survey, 2008.



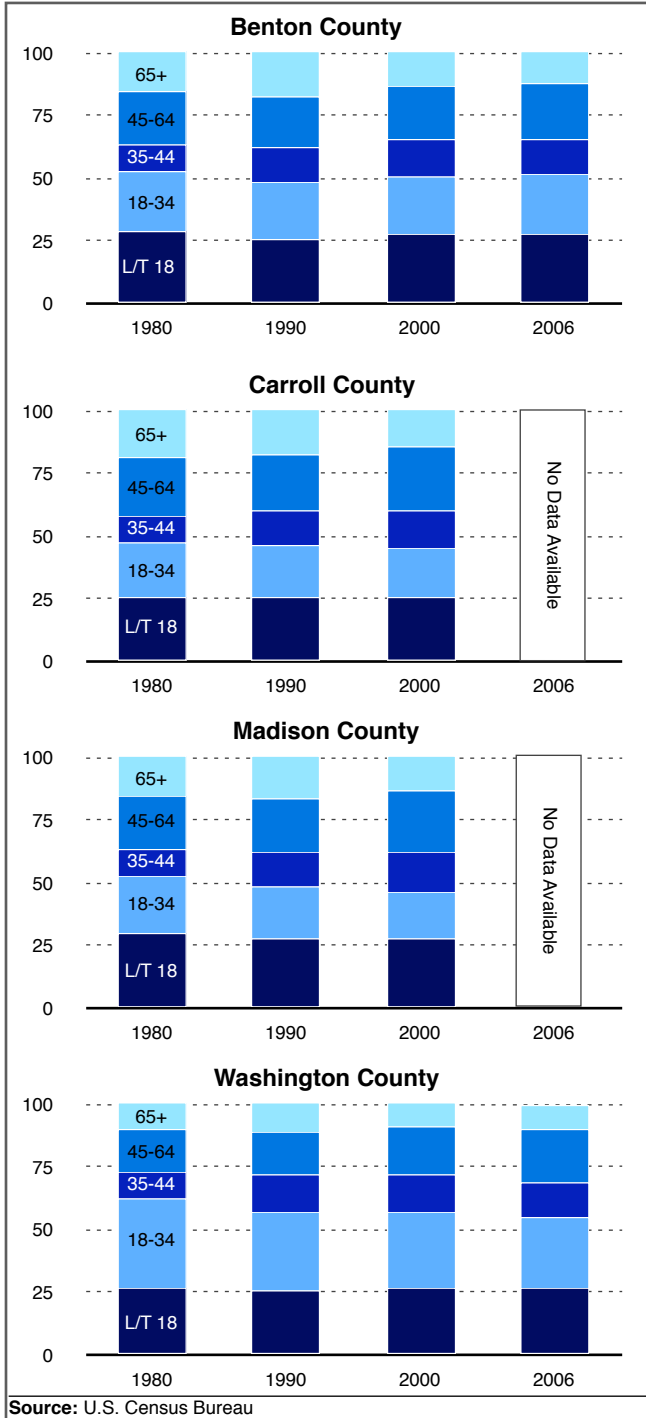
- ★ A majority of residents in 2000 and 2008 described racial and ethnic relations in Northwest Arkansas as *excellent or good*.
- ★ Roughly one-third of Northwest Arkansas residents described racial and ethnic relations as *fair or poor*.
- ★ The 2008 survey results show that race and ethnic relations in Northwest Arkansas are improving.
- ★ The number of *fair and poor* responses declined substantially over the last eight years, while the percentage of respondents reporting race and ethnic relations as *excellent* nearly doubled.



Changing Age Structure

Whether a result of aging-in-place, or immigration, important changes have taken place in Northwest Arkansas with regard to the age composition of its residents. While the population in these counties age, there continues to be important growth among its younger cohorts.

Figure 2.12
Age of Northwest Arkansas Residents: 1980-2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

- ★ In the four Northwest Arkansas counties, the 35-44 age group, which represents the core workforce population, has expanded steadily since 1980.
- ★ While the retired population has grown in many places throughout the United States, the percentage of persons age 65 and over has slowly declined or remained constant in Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ Since 1980, the size of the 18-34 age group in Washington County has been much larger than Benton, Carroll, and Madison Counties.
- ★ Residents between the ages of 45-64 represent the fastest growing age group in the Northwest Arkansas region. By 2006, this cohort was nearly twice the size of its older (65+) and younger (35-44) cohorts in Benton and Washington Counties.
- ★ By 2010, it is expected that there will be some compositional changes in the Northwest Arkansas age structure; more elderly aging-in-place and a continued growth of the workforce cohort.



What's It All Mean?

The data presented in the preceding pages make it abundantly clear: Northwest Arkansas has experienced rapid growth between 1980 and 2000 but since 2000, that growth has slowed down. Nevertheless this pattern raises two questions for consideration: 1) What is the nature of this growth? and 2) What are its consequences?

In general, the population expansion in Northwest Arkansas can be summarized with one word: *diversity*. The rapid influx of people has brought about dramatic changes in the sociodemographic profile of the region. Residents of Northwest Arkansas in the 21st Century are significantly more likely to be members of racial and ethnic minority groups, more likely to have immigrated

to the United States, and more likely to have a college education. In sum, Northwest Arkansas' growth has brought about a significant expansion of the region's human, social, and cultural capital. And the good news is that these changes are generally seen in a positive light by most residents.

The growth over the past few decades has created both opportunities and challenges for the region's residents. For example, the arrival of foreign born immigrants provides established residents with opportunities to enhance their own human, social, and cultural capital. At the same time, however, this sudden influx of foreign-born populations also presents Northwest Arkansas with some of its greatest challenges.

Chapter 3

Income and Poverty: Making Ends Meet



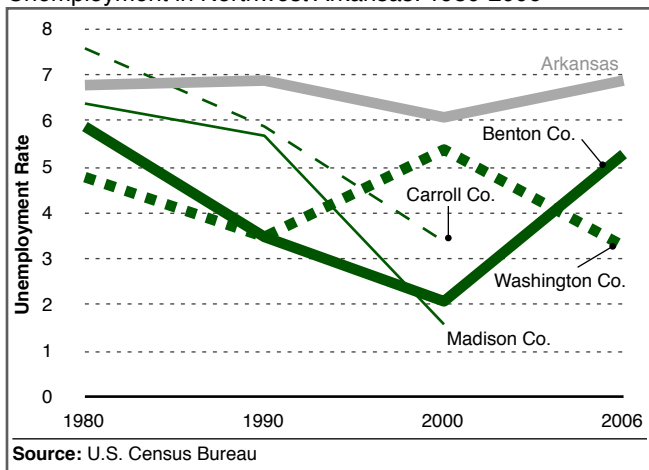
Income and Poverty in Northwest Arkansas

Quality of life is directly tied to the strength and robustness of the local economy. Not only does a more vibrant and diverse mix of economic activity provide opportunities for productive employment, but it also creates the capacity to fund public services. A community is healthier and generally happier when public services (education, highways, protection, etc.) are adequately provided for and when residents can undertake meaningful and important work for which they feel like they are being adequately compensated for.

For these and other reasons, a strong economy is correlated with a healthy workforce and individual prosperity. Ultimately, the economic vitality of an area does not only result in good quality of life--it is often the cause of it. Unhealthy forces that are structurally created and locally maintained, clearly threaten the quality of life of any region. Below is a discussion of economic opportunity and limitations.

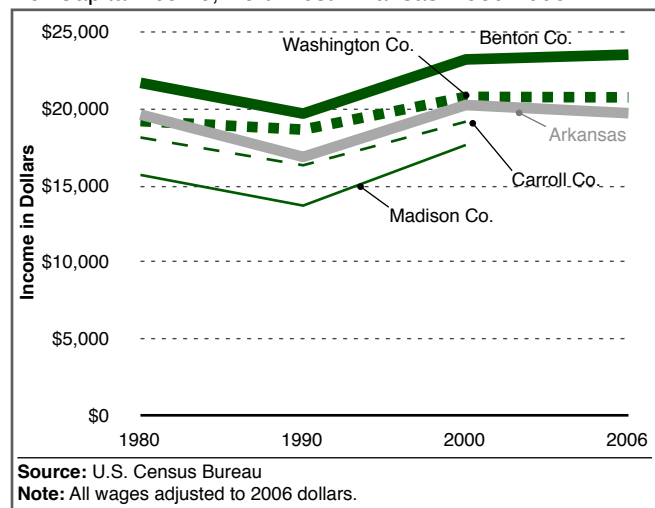
Individuals

Figure 3.1
Unemployment in Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006



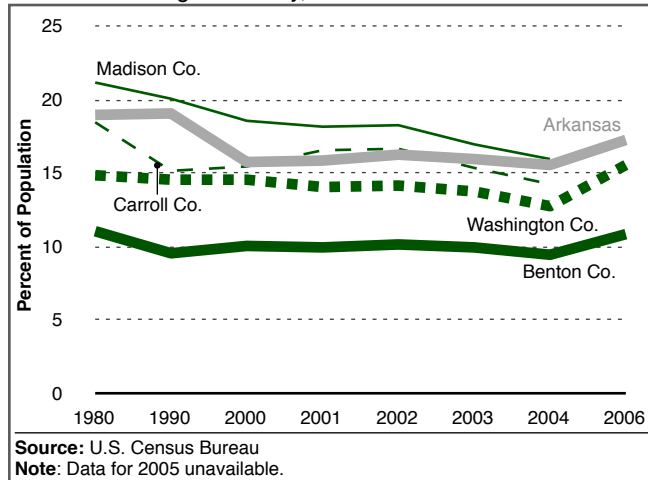
For the most part since 1980, Northwest Arkansas counties have enjoyed lower unemployment rates relative to the rest of the state - a testament to the increasing economic opportunities in Northwest Arkansas during the latter part of the 20th Century.

Figure 3.2
Per-Capita Income, Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006



- ★ Madison and Carroll Counties consistently had decreasing unemployment rates since 1980.
- ★ Most Northwest Arkansas counties enjoyed a significant drop in their unemployment rates between 1980-90.
- ★ More recently, Benton County's 2006 unemployment rate (5.3) more than doubled since 2000. Washington County's 2006 unemployment rate (3.3) declined by a similar amount since peak in 2000.
- ★ Per capita income has grown over the last several decades in Arkansas and in the Northwest Arkansas region.
- ★ By 2006, both Washington and Benton Counties had higher per-capita incomes than the Arkansas state average (\$19,756)

Figure 3.3
Individuals Living in Poverty, Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006



Poverty continues to plague our nation's communities. The elderly, children, women with children, minorities, the disabled...hardly any social or demographic category escapes it. And even now, in the 21st Century, the percentage of those living in poverty is increasing.

Poverty rates for all individuals mask important subgroup differences - rates for Hispanics and Blacks, single-families headed by a female, and foreign-born residents are higher than the national average. While these more complicated relationships between income and demographics are not explored in this report, they remain as stark reminders of who, how many, and where persons are living in poverty.

In 2007, Arkansas ranked in the highest quintile among states with the largest percentages of people living in poverty. A similarly low ranking was true for both youth (under the age of 18) and the elderly (65 years of age and over) in Arkansas.

★ Since 1980, all Northwest Arkansas counties except for Madison County had lower percentages of people living in poverty than the state as a whole.

★ By 2004, the percentage of persons living in poverty in Madison County had dropped to the state average of 16 percent.

★ Benton and Washington County had lower percentages of persons living in poverty than the rest of Northwest Arkansas and the state.

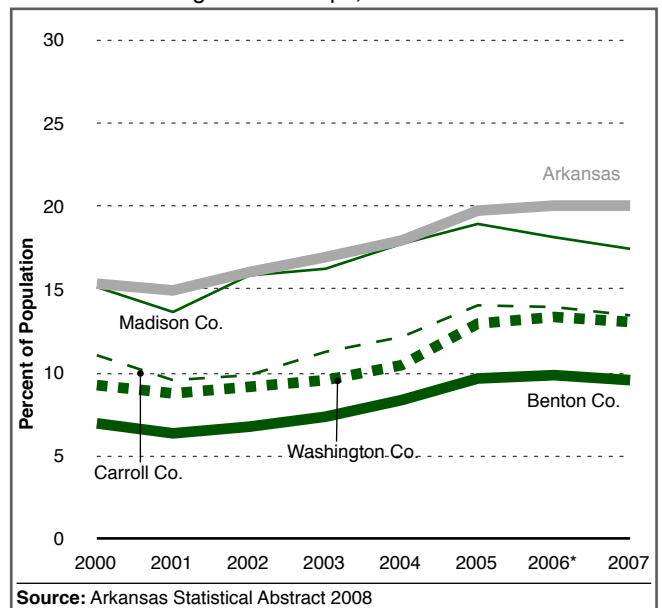
★ Benton and Washington County percentages of persons living in poverty increased by nearly 2 percent between 2004-2006.

★ In 2006, over 17 percent of Arkansas' population was living in poverty (at or below the federal level of \$9,800 for an individual) compared to 12 percent in the United States.

★ Since 2000, the percent of residents on food stamps in both the state and Northwest Arkansas counties has steadily increased.

★ Food stamp recipients in Northwest Arkansas counties have been on a similar trajectory as the state; Madison and Carroll Counties in 2007 had the highest percentage of residents on food stamps in the region.

Figure 3.4
Percent Receiving Food Stamps, NW Arkansas: 2000-2007



"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have enough; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1936

Families

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 9.8 percent of American families (7.5 million) lived at or below the poverty line in 2006. Poverty was most prevalent among families headed by single women. More than a quarter of all female-headed families (more than 4 million) were impoverished. The figure for married-couple families was 4.9 percent .

Figure 3.5
Families Living in Poverty, Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006

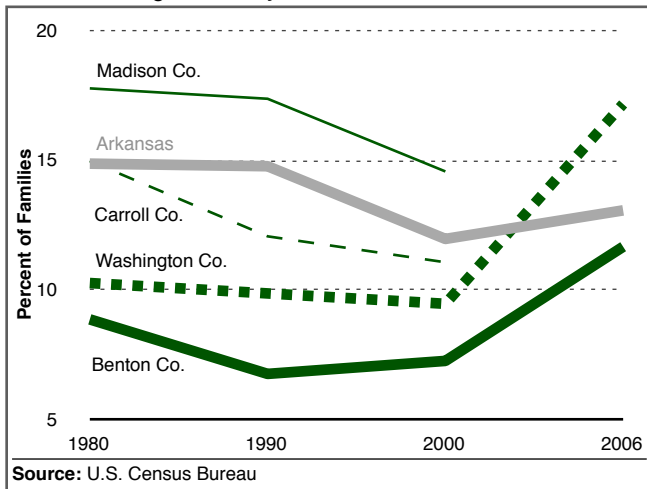
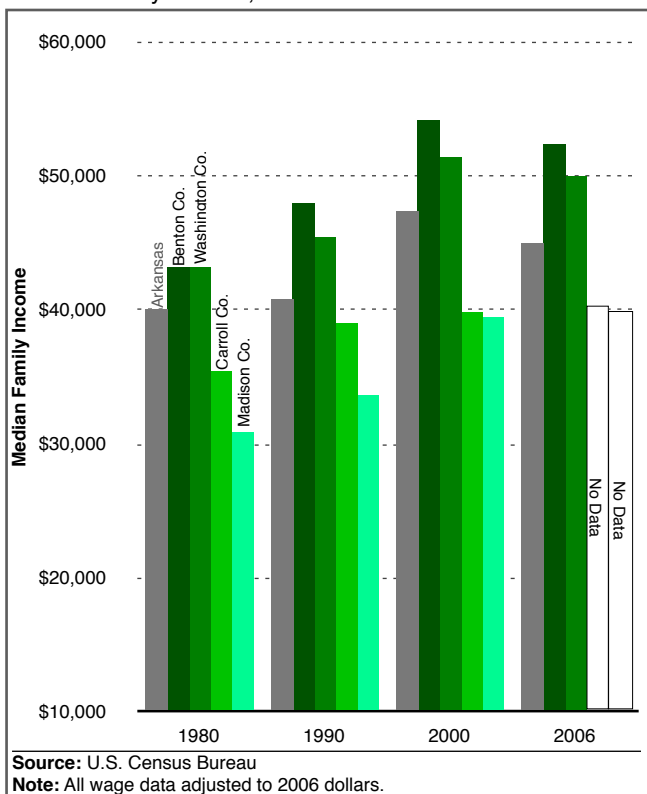


Figure 3.6
Median Family Income, Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006



- ★ Similar to the percentage of persons living below the poverty level, Madison County was the only county since 1980 to have a higher percentage of families living below the poverty level relative to other Northwest Arkansas counties and the state.
- ★ All the Northwest Arkansas counties and the state had declining percentages of families living in poverty between 1980-2000.
- ★ Washington and Benton County experienced sharp increases in the percentage of families living in poverty between 2000-2006.
- ★ Since 1980, median family income has steadily increased in all of the Northwest Arkansas counties until 2000. In the two most populous counties (Washington and Benton), median family income was higher than the state average.
- ★ Since 1980, Benton County median family income has outpaced all the other counties in the region and the state. The 2006 median family income in Benton County was more than \$52,000.
- ★ Since 1980, Madison and Carroll Counties have lagged behind the state's average median family income.

Children

Nearly 13 million American children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, which currently is \$20,650 a year for a family of four. The number of children living in poverty increased by 11 percent between 2000-2006. Today there are 1.2 million more children living in poverty in the United States than in 2000.

Like adults, poverty among children is not equally distributed. Thirty-three percent of Black children, 27 percent of Latino children, and 10 percent of White children live in poverty in the United States. Of particular concern for states

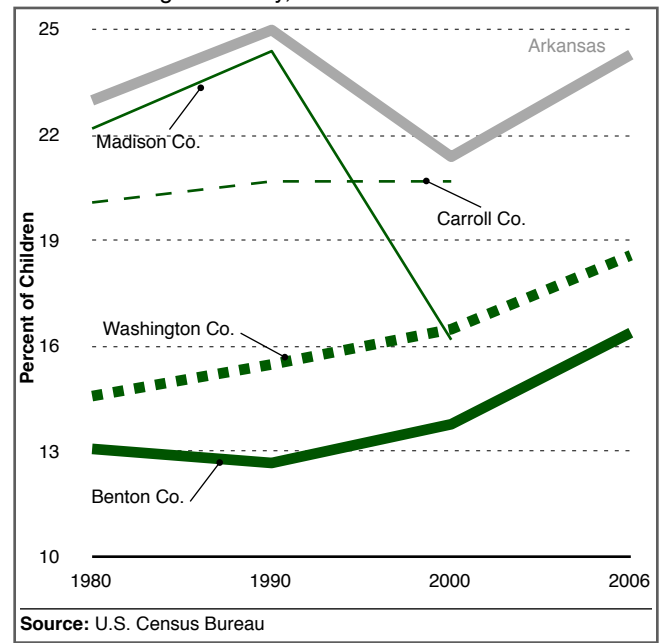
- ★ In 2006, nearly 25 percent of children under the age of 18 were living in poverty in Arkansas.
- ★ In 1990, Madison County had 22 percent of children under 18 living in poverty and that percentage dropped by nearly 8 percent in 2000.
- ★ While there have been gradual percentage increases in children living in poverty since 1990, the percent of children living in poverty in Benton and Washington Counties has jumped by almost 4 percent between 2000 and 2006.
- ★ Arkansas ranks in the top ten of states in the U.S. with children living in poverty.

like Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas region, more than one-quarter of immigrant children are poor, compared to the 16 percent of children who live in poverty whose parents are native born.

In 2007, nearly 40 percent of children were living at or below the 200 percent poverty line - that number was 50 percent for children living in Arkansas. While money clearly matters for adults and children, the instability and unpredictability of low-wage work often leads to deteriorating financial circumstances in the household.

Figure 3.7

Children Living in Poverty, Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006

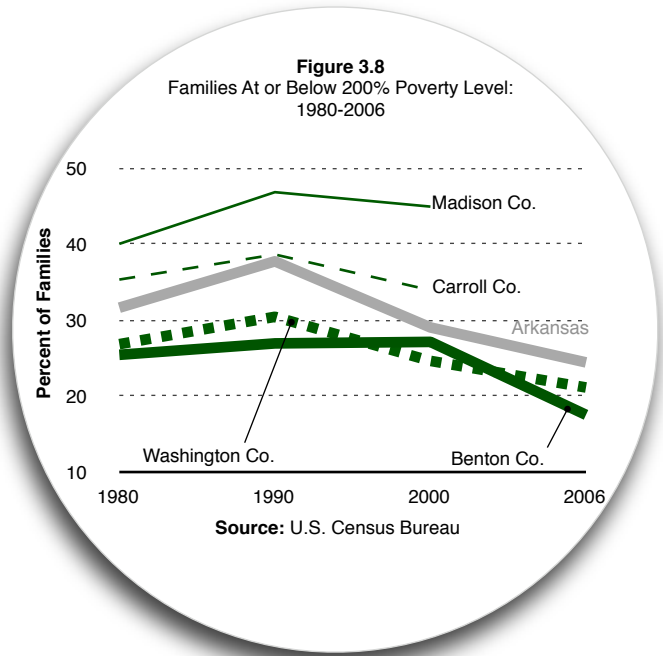


Indicator in the Spotlight:

Poverty and a Living Wage

Economic growth has been an important part of the transformation of the Northwest Arkansas region. With the economic boom starting in the late 1980's, opportunity has been growing in Northwest Arkansas.

- ★ Since the late 1980's, the number of families living at or below the 200% poverty line (families earning a living wage) in Arkansas decreased.
- ★ In 2000, Madison and Carroll Counties had a greater proportion of families living at or below the 200% poverty line compared to the rest of Arkansas.
- ★ By 2006, Benton and Washington County had less than one-fifth of its families living at or below the 200% poverty line.

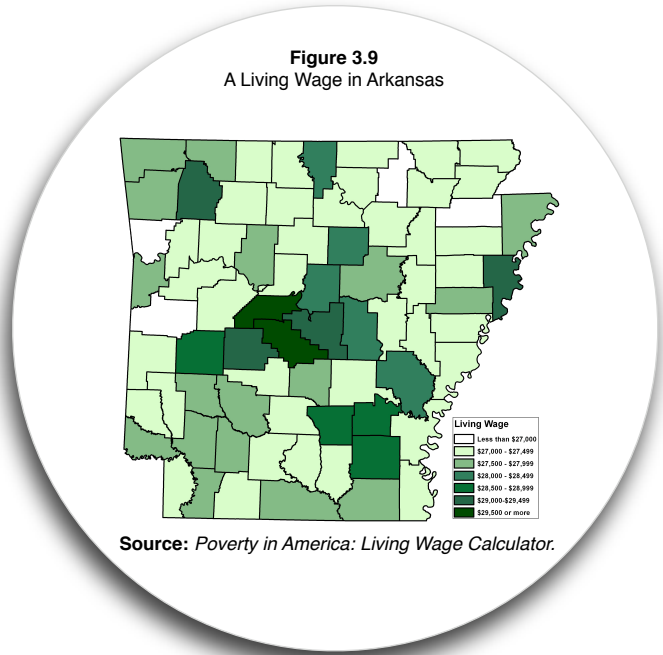


In many American communities, families working in low-wage jobs do not make a sufficient income to live, given the standard cost of living. This "living wage" is one benchmark used to better understand "functional poverty."

- ★ In 2007, the estimated living wage among the Northwest Arkansas counties was highest in Madison County.
- ★ The Northwest Arkansas region as a whole, was considerably lower as a living wage region compared to Central and Southeastern Arkansas.
- ★ The average 2007 living wage for a family of three in Arkansas was \$28,500.

"You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."

Woodrow Wilson



The table below provides a detailed picture of both the 2007 annual income required to meet the living wage standard, and the breakdown of monthly expenses used to calculate these standards. The living wage estimates are based on a family of three--two adults and one child. This family size of three has been the statistical average size of Arkansas families since 1980.

Arkansans are spending, on average, \$450.00 on food each month. While child care estimates seem low for the state (\$324.00 per month), Northwest Arkansas families, on average, spend fifty dollars less than the average Arkansas family of three. Medical costs also appear to be low, and next to transportation, are the lowest proportional expenses for Arkansan families. Two interesting anomalies stand out in the table below: 1) Housing in all of the counties except for Carroll is higher than the average for the state; and 2) Transportation costs are lower in Benton and Washington County by more than forty dollars

compared to the state average, but those same costs are doubled in Carroll and Madison Counties compared to the rest of the counties in Northwest Arkansas. This “hidden” cost may be an important disadvantage for those rural residents who are bearing an even greater burden in 2008 with gasoline prices fluctuating around \$4.00 per gallon.

Keeping in mind that the current federal minimum wage is \$6.25, the average living hourly wage in Arkansas is \$13.70 per hour. Again this represents the wage necessary to meet minimum monthly expenses for a family of three. Benton, Carroll and Washington Counties all have living hourly wage estimates of \$13.37 per hour; Madison County is estimated to be at \$14.03 per hour. Again, Madison County residents appear to be paying the double burden of increasing housing and transportation costs relative to their neighbors in the region.

Table 3.10 Determining a Living Wage in Northwest Arkansas (2007)

	ARKANSAS	Benton County	Carroll County	Madison County	Washington County
Monthly Expenses					
Food	\$452	\$452	\$452	\$452	\$452
Child Care	\$324	\$274	\$274	\$274	\$274
Medical	\$259	\$259	\$259	\$259	\$259
Housing	\$520	\$554	\$482	\$554	\$554
Transportation	\$127	\$82	\$180	\$180	\$82
Other	\$327	\$339	\$315	\$339	\$339
Monthly After-Tax Income Required	\$2,101	\$1,961	\$1,962	\$2,058	\$1,961
Annual After-Tax Income Required	\$24,119	\$23,530	\$23,543	\$24,698	\$23,530
Annual Taxes					
Payroll Tax	\$2,180	\$2,127	\$2,128	\$2,233	\$2,127
State Tax	\$263	\$257	\$257	\$270	\$257
Federal Tax	\$1,938	\$1,891	\$1,892	\$1,985	\$1,891
Gross Annual Income Required	\$28,500	\$27,804	\$27,820	\$29,184	\$27,804

Source: *Poverty in America: Living Wage Calculator* (www.livingwage.geog.psu).

What's It All Mean?

In 2007, a living wage in Arkansas (gross annual income required) was \$28,500. Since 1990, the percentage of persons making a living wage in Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas region has been declining. For the state as a whole, data indicates that there has been a nearly 12 percent decline in those making a living wage; Washington County saw a decline of nearly 10 percent during that same period of time. The question that these shifts raise is what is actually happening to these people? It may be that they are moving out of the living wage category (at or below 200 percent above the poverty level) and *into* poverty. Looking at the shifts between these two groups, the upturn in persons living in poverty, particularly in Washington County, may be accounting for some of this change.

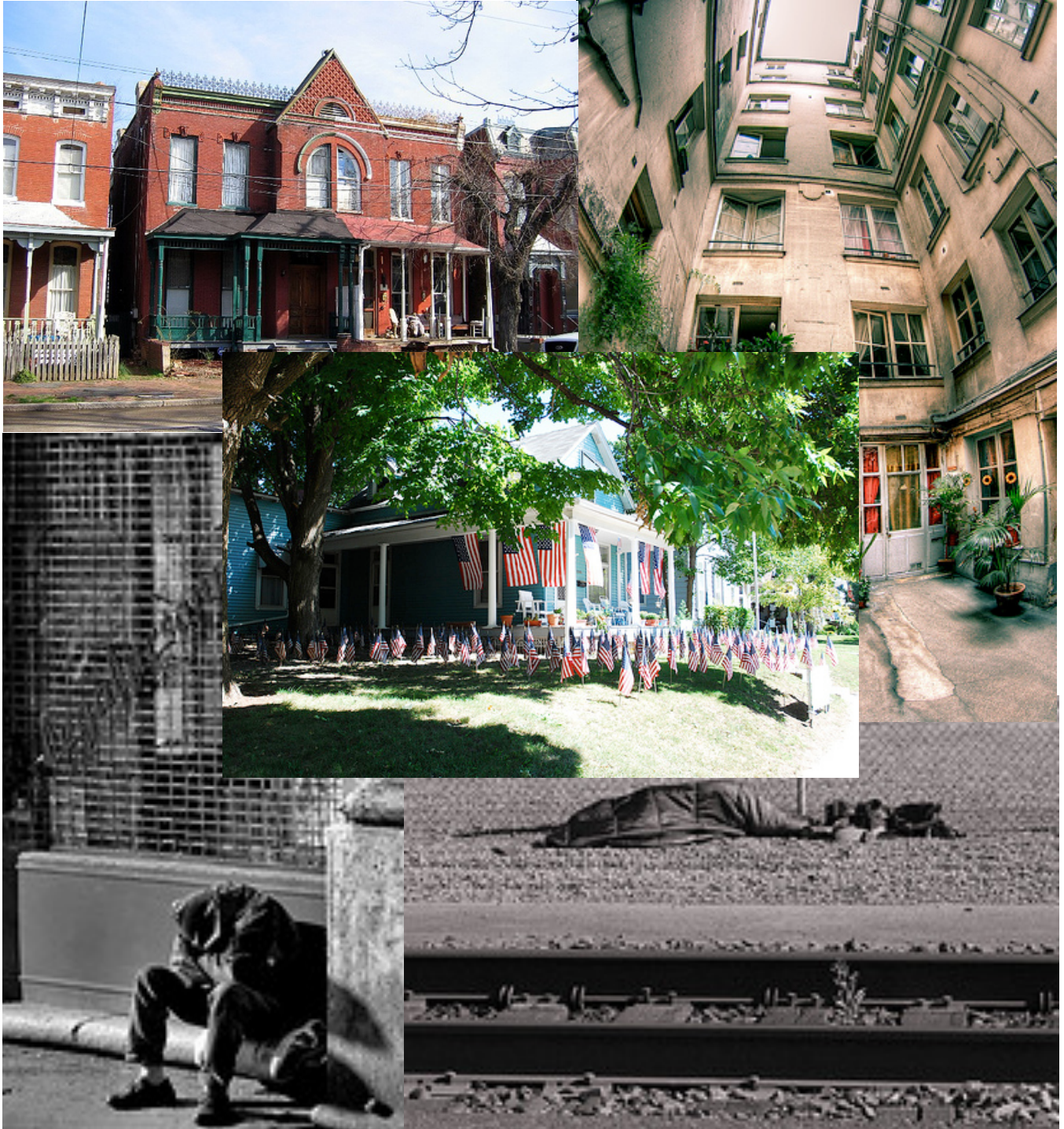
Not unlike the rest of the country, Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas region experienced a

significant period of prosperity during the 1990's. However, current income and poverty indicators suggest that the first decade of the 21st Century may not be as prosperous a period of growth. While there are a number of indicators that suggest a slowing down in the general economy, the upswing in the number of persons, families, and children living in poverty in the state and the region may be some early indication of what lies ahead. It is likely that these and other trends like them will be reflected in the 2010 census.

Good news and bad news for children in Northwest Arkansas. The good news is, the four Northwest Arkansas counties are all doing better than the rest of the state. The bad news is that Northwest Arkansas appears to be experiencing an increase in their percentages of children and families living in poverty.

Chapter 4

Housing and Homelessness: With and Without Place



Housing in Northwest Arkansas

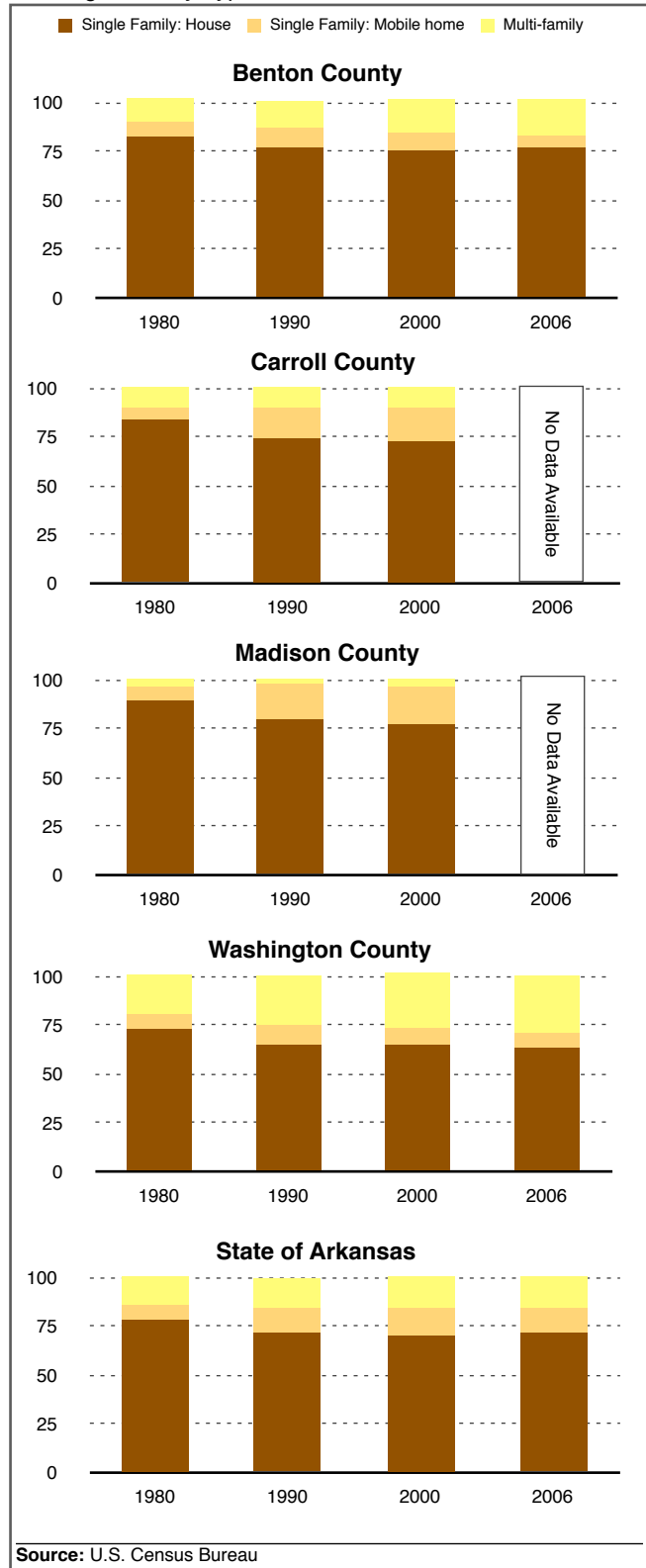
Housing Availability

Housing and/or the lack of housing is fundamental to any quality of life assessment. The ability to secure a safe, affordable place to live in is essential to all residents. By providing physically appealing, structurally sound, and financially manageable housing options, local governments can increase the standard of living and the quality of life in their area. Ultimately, there are stressors associated with housing (space, affordability, repair costs, etc) and they too impact impact well-being in a community.

How diverse the housing stock is tells us something important about its residents. Likewise, a range in housing stock prices suggests a heterogenous population; much of the homelessness story around the country and in Arkansas is a direct function of the limited availability of affordable housing.

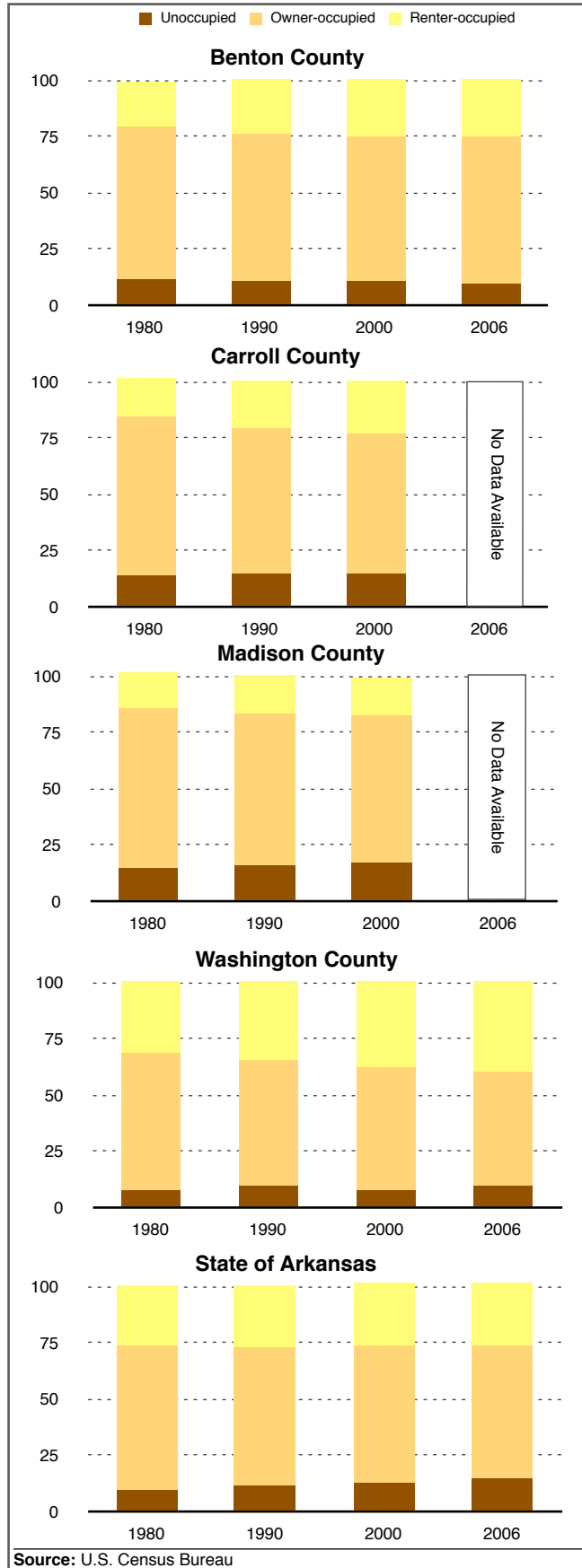
- ★ The majority of available housing stock in Northwest Arkansas counties is single-family units.
- ★ Since 1980, single-family housing units have represented nearly 75 percent of all units in the Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ The percentage of multi-family dwellings has increased in both Benton and Washington Counties since 1980. In both cases, the percent of multi-family dwellings in these counties has been slightly more than the state average.
- ★ The growth in mobile home units in Madison and Carroll County through the 1980's and 1990's has been considerable. In both these counties, mobile homes are the second most abundant type of dwelling unit.
- ★ In 2006, the percentage of mobile home units in Arkansas (13.3%) was nearly twice the United States average (6.9 %).

Figure 4.1
Housing Units, by Type, Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

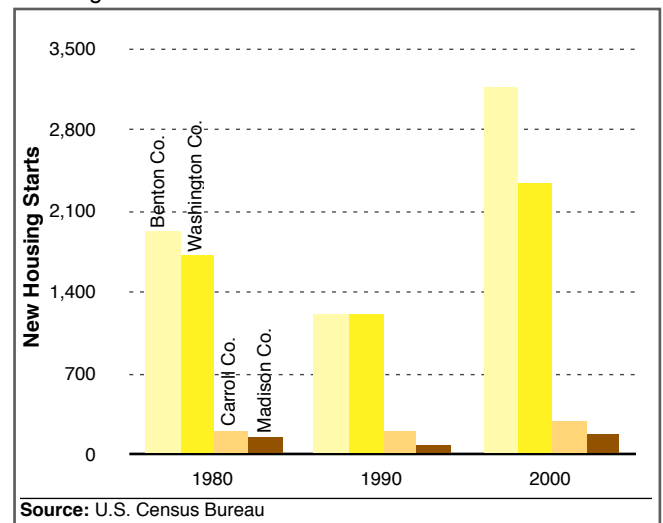
Figure 4.2
Home Ownership in Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006



Home ownership in the United States has decreased slightly in the last three years, as vacancy rates have inched upward. This report does not reflect the recent downturn in the housing market and general economy because of the historical data being used (pre-2007). However, one can anticipate important changes in these and other data in the next several years both in Northwest Arkansas and the state as whole.

- ★ The percentage of owner-occupied units has declined over the last several decades in all Northwest Arkansas counties, while the percentage of vacant units has slowly increased.
- ★ The percentage of renter-occupied units in Washington County, is both the highest in the region and significantly more than the state average.
- ★ By 2006, the number of renter occupied units in the state increased to nearly 30 percent; the U.S. average for renter-occupied units was 33 percent.
- ★ In Figure 4.3, Washington and Benton County growth is reflected in the number of new housing starts since 1980.
- ★ By 2000, Benton county had seen over 3,000 new housing units started in the 1999-2000 period.

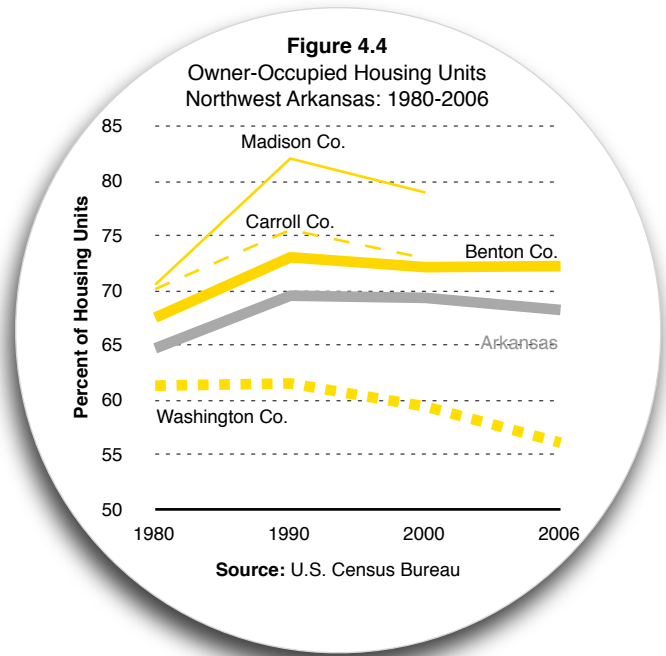
Figure 4.3
Housing Starts in Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2000



Indicator in the Spotlight:

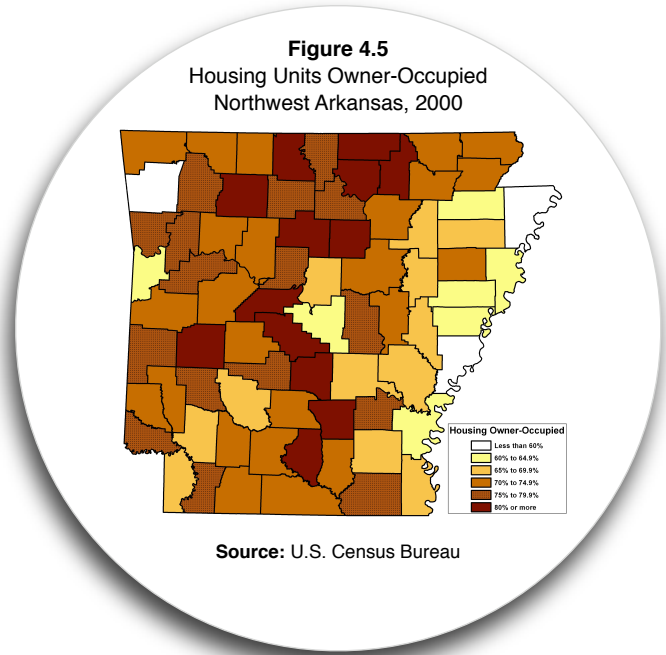
Home Ownership in Northwest Arkansas

- ★ Since 1980, the majority of housing units in Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas counties have been owner-occupied units.
- ★ The percentage of owner-occupied units increased significantly in the 1980's as suburbanization was beginning to take hold in the region.
- ★ From 1990 to 2006, the percentage of owner-occupied housing declined slightly in Northwest Arkansas.
- ★ By 2006, Washington County had the smallest percentage of owner-occupied housing in the region (55%).
- ★ Few counties in the state had less than 60 percent of owner-occupied housing stock; Washington, Mississippi, and Phillips Counties had the smallest proportion of owner-occupied housing in the state.



"The ideal of happiness has always taken material form in the house, whether cottage or castle; it stands for permanence and separation from the world."

Simone de Beauvoir



Housing Affordability

To measure housing affordability more directly, the percentage of a household's gross monthly income dedicated to the payment of rent is used. "Affordable" housing is defined as housing requiring 30 percent **or less** of a household's gross income. In Northwest Arkansas, the mean annual wage for renters is \$10.50 per hour, roughly \$21,000 per year, while the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment in Northwest Arkansas is \$7,296 per year. Thus, the typical renter in Northwest Arkansas has to work a minimum of 46 hours per week in order to pay FMR for a two-bedroom apartment. A minimum wage worker would have to work in excess of 75 hours per week to afford the same (see Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6
Housing Affordability, by County
Hours Needed To Work For FMR, Minimum Wage Workers

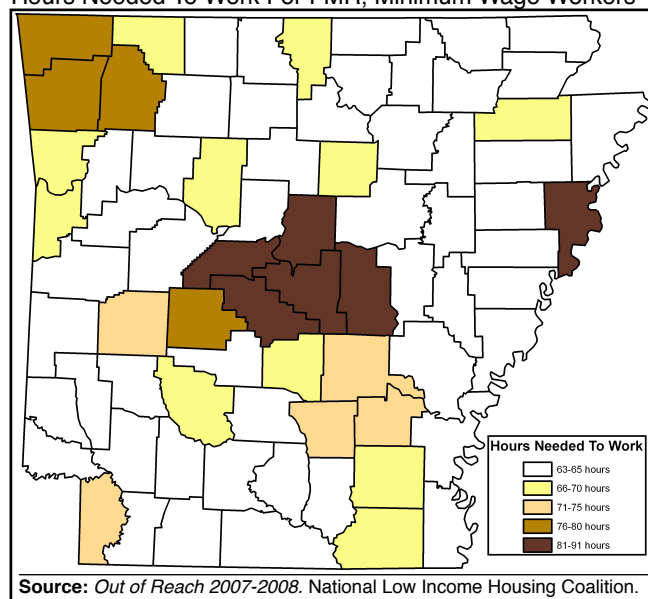
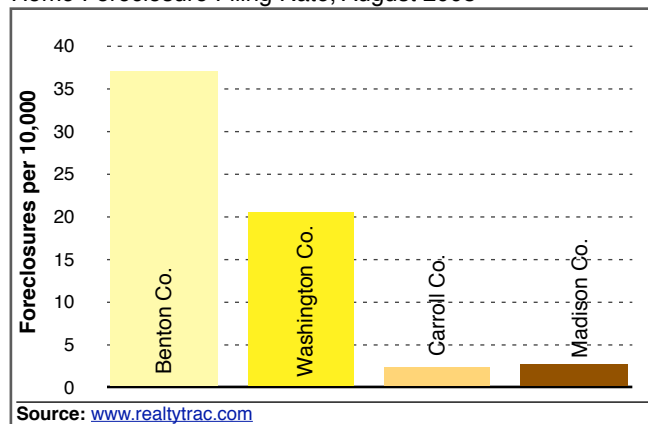


Figure 4.7
Home Foreclosure Filing Rate, August 2008



"In the United States, families paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. An estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing, and a family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States. The lack of affordable housing is a significant hardship for low-income households preventing them from meeting their other basic needs, such as nutrition and healthcare, or saving for their future and that of their families."

Source: *Trends in Housing Costs: 1985-2005 and the 30-Percent-of-Income Standard*. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. June 2008.

Across both time and space, housing costs generally have been increasing at a rate much faster than the costs of other items. Between 1985-2005 the cost of shelter increased by 104 percent, compared to other items that increased by 74 percent. As a result of this trend, median monthly housing costs including utilities, have increased by 128 percent. With the continued emphasis on home ownership and the recent downward shift in the economy, an important question arises: Is the 30 percent standard for "affordability" adequate?

- ★ Minimum wage workers in the Northwest Arkansas counties of Benton, Madison, and Washington pay nearly three hundred dollars more a year in fair market rent than the average renter in Arkansas in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment.
- ★ As the ripple effects of the economic downturn become increasingly apparent, the number of home foreclosures in the region are growing. Benton County recorded nearly 40 foreclosures per every 10,000 homes in August 2008.
- ★ Madison and Carroll Counties recorded a limited number of foreclosures while Washington County had 20 foreclosed properties for every 10,000 homes in August 2008.

Figure 4.8
 Median Rent in Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006

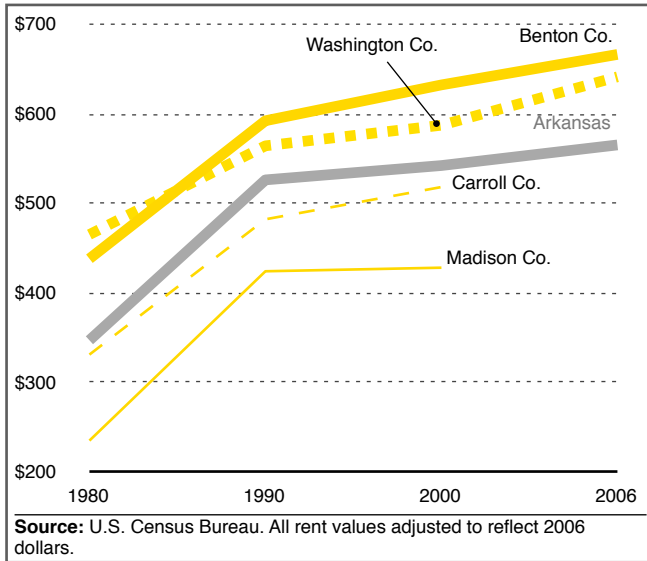
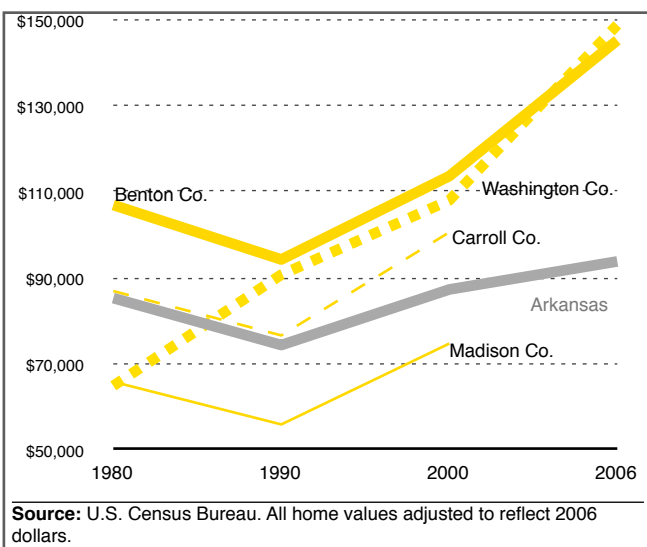


Figure 4.9
 Median Home Values in Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006



- ★ Using inflation-adjusted 2006 dollars, median gross rent in Northwest Arkansas and the state has steadily increased since 1990.
- ★ Both Madison and Carroll Counties have gross median rents below the Arkansas state average.
- ★ Benton County has the highest median rent average in Northwest Arkansas (\$667.00) which is nearly one hundred dollars more than the state average.
- ★ All the Northwest Arkansas counties and the state experienced a dramatic upswing in median rent during the 1980s.
- ★ Using inflation-adjusted 2006 dollars, median home values in Northwest Arkansas and the state have been increasing since 1990.
- ★ With a slowing economy during the 1980s, much of Northwest Arkansas and the state saw a dramatic downturn in median home values; However, Washington County was an exception with its median home value rising from \$65,000 to \$91,000 during the 1980s.
- ★ Benton and Washington County home values were nearly \$60,000 more than the median home value average for the state.



Housing Quality

- ★ New housing stock (<10 years old) has increased in Benton and Washington County since 1990, while the remainder of the region and the state saw declining percentages of new housing stock.
- ★ By 1990, few homes in Northwest Arkansas and the state lacked adequate plumbing or kitchen facilities. However, even in 2000, Madison County had nearly 8 percent of its homes with inadequate plumbing and kitchen facilities.

Figure 4.10
Homes Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities,
Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006

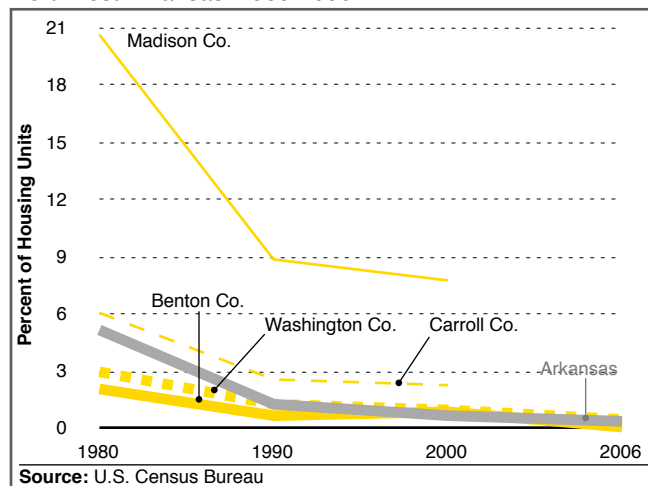


Figure 4.11
Homes Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities,
Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006

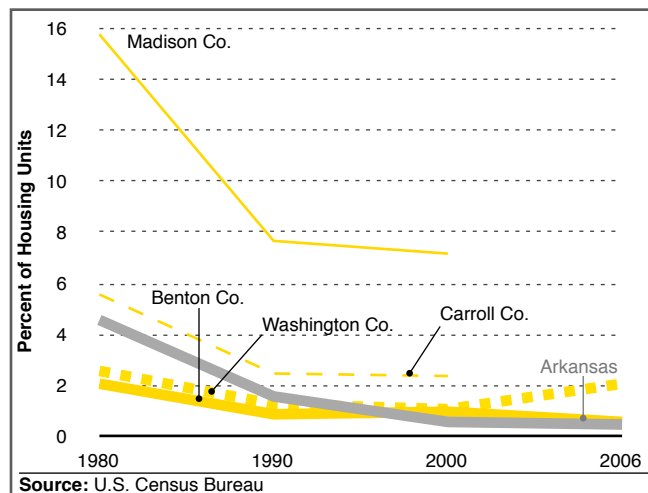
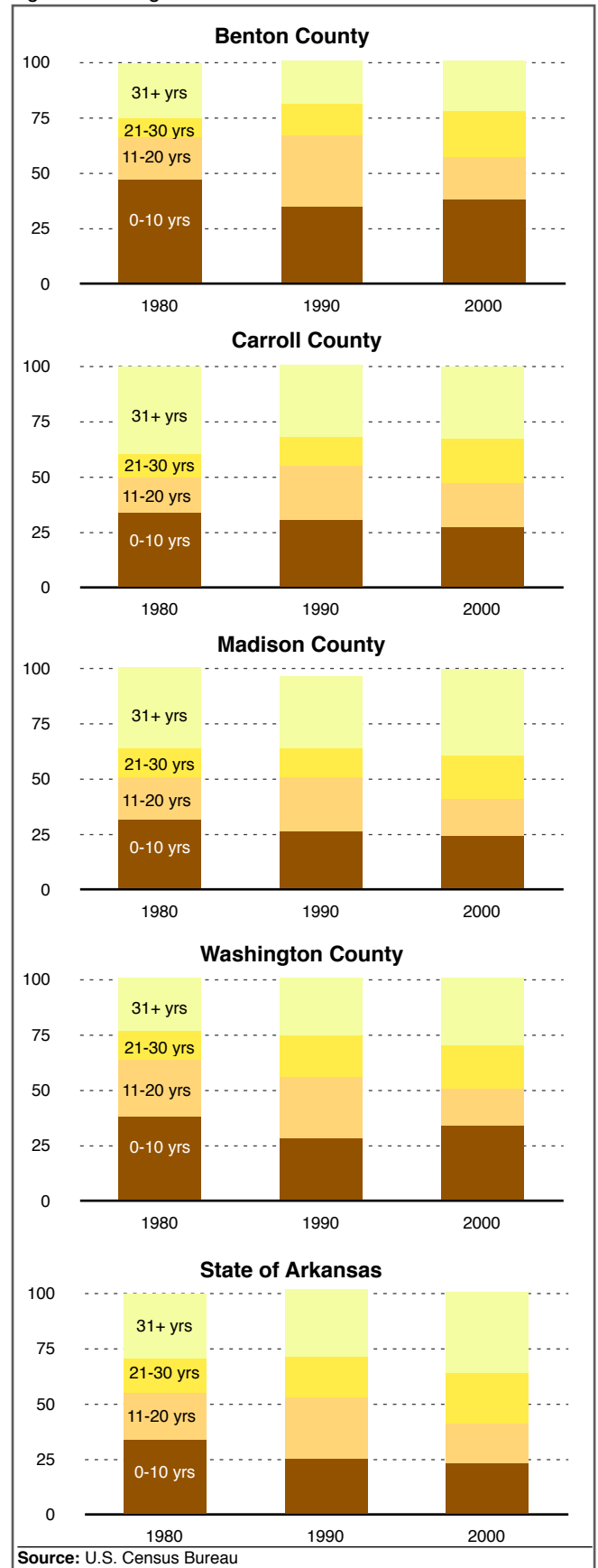


Figure 4.12
Age of Housing Stock in Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2000



Homelessness

It is estimated that on any given night approximately 1,170 adults and youth Washington and Benton Counties are homeless (see Table 4.1). This figure is based on a number of components. First, there were 308 homeless persons identified from a 24-hour point-in-time census conducted January 25-26, 2007. Second, there were an estimated 501 homeless children identified. Some of these children accompanied parents who were interviewed for the census, but most were identified through attendance records from local school districts. Finally, there were an estimated 362 homeless adults and children who were identified based on estimates of the number of persons utilizing soup kitchens, day shelters, and food banks, and the number of guardians of the homeless children attending local schools.



Table 4.1 Count of Homeless Persons and Projections of Inaccessible Homeless Persons
Northwest Arkansas Area Point-in-Time Survey

Directly Observed Homeless Persons	308
Adults (18 years and over)	285
Children (13 to 17 years)	23
Homeless Children Not Directly Observed	501
Children accompanying directly observed adults (see above)	59
Children attending schools in Benton and Washington Counties	442
Additional Homeless Persons	361
Persons utilizing soup kitchens/day facilities (estimate)	162
Parents of children attending school (estimate)	199
ESTIMATED TOTAL	1,170

Source: Fitzpatrick Kevin M., et al. 2007. *Northwest Arkansas Area Point-in-Time Survey (PIT) of Homeless Persons, January 25-26, 2007.*

Of the respondents counted in the point-in-time census, the median age of respondents was 34 years. Almost two-thirds of the sample, (63%) was between the ages of 25 and 54. Men comprised 61 percent of the survey respondents. Eighty-four percent of respondents were Caucasian/White, eight percent were African-American/Black, with the remaining eight percent comprised of other race/ethnic categories; 4.5 percent of respondents were Hispanic. When looking at the family structure of the homeless in Northwest Arkansas, the point-in-time survey found 67 percent of homeless persons were unaccompanied adults (see Table 4.2). Of those persons in families, 5 percent were couples without children, 6 percent were couples

with children, 21 percent were one-parent families with children, and 1 percent was in some other family arrangement. These compositional characteristics reflect the general structure of the homeless population nationwide. While single individuals make up a large portion of the homeless population, the number of families with children living on the street and shelters are clearly increasing.

For the point-in-time survey, fewer than 2 percent of respondents were actually interviewed on the streets. Nevertheless, soup kitchen interviews revealed that overall 8 percent of respondents actually spent the night, most often in the past seven days, on the streets. The most common

Table 4.2 Characteristics of Homeless Families

Northwest Arkansas Area Point-in-Time Survey

Family Structure (n = 308)

Two-parents, at least one child	18	5.8%
Single-parent, at least one child	64	20.8%
Couple, no children	16	5.2%
Single individual	206	66.9%
Other	4	1.3%

Spent The Night Most Often, Past 7 Days (n = 308)

On the street	37	12.0%
Emergency shelter	108	35.1%
Transitional housing apartment/facility	42	13.6%
Hotel/motel	8	2.6%
Treatment facility	49	15.9%
Hospital, jail, other institution	4	1.3%
Own residence	8	2.6%
Residence of relative or friend	52	16.9%

Source: Fitzpatrick Kevin M., et al. 2007. Northwest Arkansas Area Point-in-Time Survey (PIT) of Homeless Persons, January 25-26, 2007.

living situations included emergency shelter (41%), transitional housing (13%), doubling up/ staying with a friend or relative (17%), and treatment facilities (16%).



By The Numbers

Homelessness in Northwest Arkansas

30.5

Estimated number of homeless persons for every 10,000 Northwest Arkansas residents.



1

Number of Permanent Supportive Homeless Shelters



4

Number of Emergency Homeless Shelters



7

Number of Transitional Homeless Shelters



24

Number of Day Service Providers



422

Number of Homeless Shelter Beds



Note: Homeless data and estimate limited to Benton and Washington Counties.

What's It All Mean?

The Northwest Arkansas region like much of Arkansas, experienced a housing boom (post-1990) after the high interest rate mortgages of the 1980's. For many parts of the region that meant more new housing units but it also meant soaring values in terms of both median gross rent and home values. Even with the recent downturn in both the housing market and the economy, much of the Northwest Arkansas region still reports home values and rents much higher than the state average. Those housing statistics, coupled with the affordability gap in the region, has and will continue to have profound consequences on the working class and poor in Northwest Arkansas.

While owning your own home remains part of the "American dream," there are high numbers of both visible and invisible homeless in the region.

Though there is no reliable trend data to support the growth of homelessness in Northwest Arkansas, the numbers of declining home ownership, coupled with the widening in the affordability gap, increasing numbers of foreclosures nationwide, and the downturn in the economy all will likely have important implications for the homeless service provider network in Northwest Arkansas and the state. While the region currently has a small portion of its homeless living on the street, unless adequate shelter provision is made for this increasing population, particularly for women with children, homelessness will become a more visible problem in the region. In addition, while creating more affordable housing is important for this population, comprehensive services must be developed and made available to meet their growing complexity of needs and challenges.

Chapter 5

Families and Households: Young and Old Living Together



Family and Household Composition

Strong and vibrant communities are often tied directly to strong, supportive and nurturing families. Parents engaged in the social and academic environments of their children, who actively participate in the local labor market, who care about their community clearly represent an important foundation upon which communities can thrive and grow. When these elements are missing; when families are broken apart, living in poverty, relying on state or federal assistance, or mistreating their children or elders, the community is impacted and the overall quality-of-life diminishes.

Figure 5.1
Average Family Size, Northwest Arkansas: 1980-2006

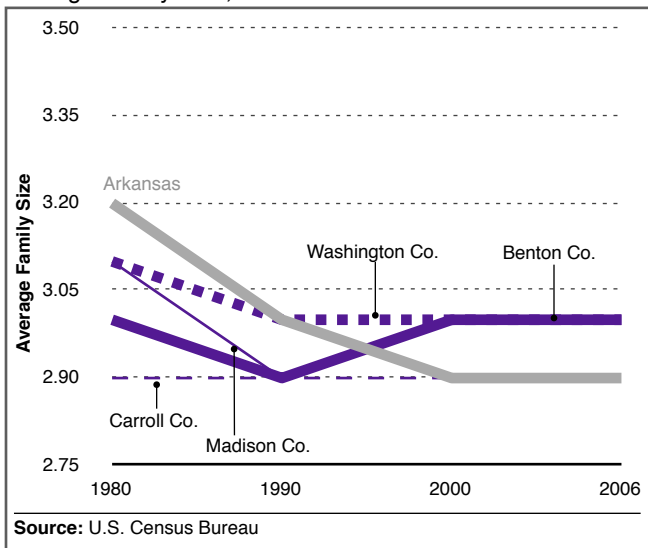
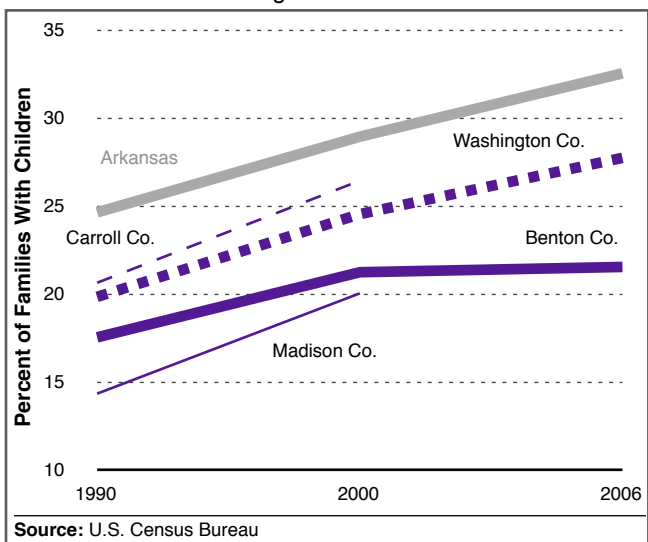


Figure 5.2
Families w/ Children: Single Head of Household: 1990-2006



While the indicators discussed in the following pages could have been integrated into other domains/sections of the report, they are presented here as important pieces of the larger story of families in Northwest Arkansas.

- ★ After reaching a high of 3.2 persons per family in 1980, the average number of persons per family in the state of Arkansas dropped to 2.9 persons in 2006.
- ★ With the exception of Carroll County, the average family size in Northwest Arkansas declined through the 1980s.
- ★ Benton County is the only Northwest Arkansas county to register an increase in average family size since 1990.
- ★ On average, Benton and Washington Counties have average family sizes higher than the state average.
- ★ Since 1990, Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas region, experienced straight line growth in the percentage of families with children headed by a single person.
- ★ While the rate of single parent families in Benton County has leveled off in recent times, the other counties in Northwest Arkansas continue to see their rates rise.
- ★ By 2006, one-third of all Arkansas families with children were headed by single parents.



Family Wellness

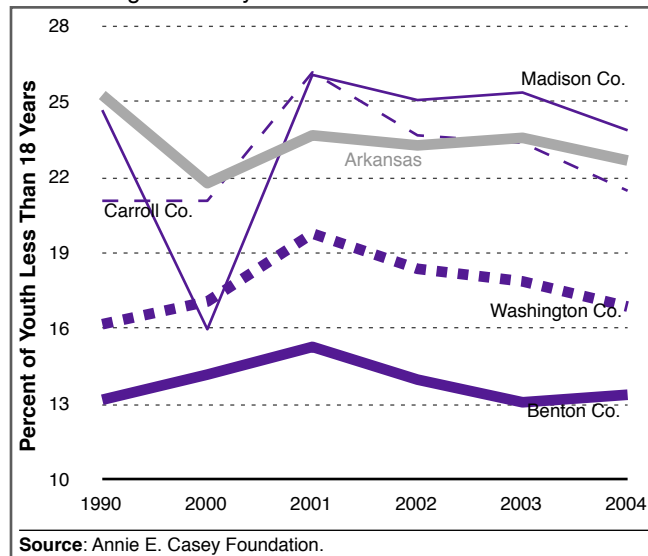
Child poverty may represent the single greatest threat to the well-being and future of the nation's children. At present, an estimated 17 percent of the American children live in poverty. The significance of living in such conditions cannot be overstated. Poverty impedes learning, social and emotional development, mental and physical health, and the prospect of successful, productive adulthood. Highest among minority children, poverty rates have and will continue to challenge the capacity of government and non-profit agencies.

Currently, there are over 150,000 children living in poverty in Arkansas; 42 percent of this population is African-American; 65 percent Arkansas' impoverished children live in a single-parent home. Arkansas ranks in the top fifth of states when it comes to child poverty rates. Of the four Northwest Arkansas counties, only Madison county had a of child poverty higher than the state average.



Figure 5.3

Youth Living in Poverty in Northwest Arkansas 1990-2004

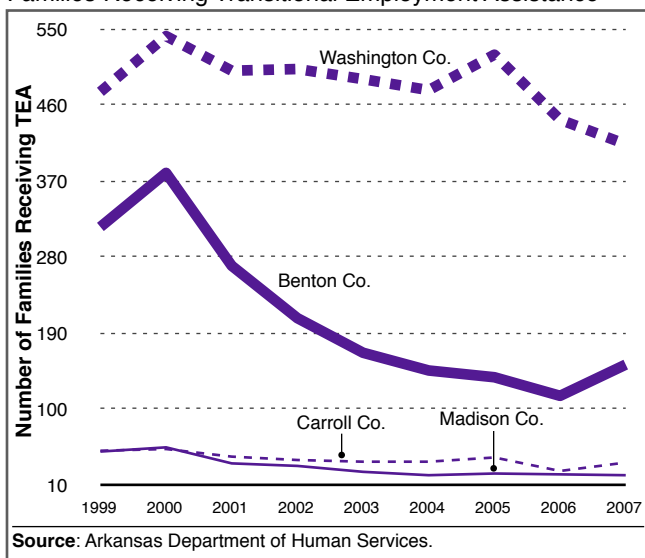


- ★ In 2004, nearly one-quarter of Arkansas's children were living in poverty. Only Madison County had a child poverty rate higher than the state average.
- ★ The percentage of children living in poverty in Northwest Arkansas counties between 1990 and 2000 increased slightly. Since peaking in 2001, the percentage of children living in poverty in Northwest Arkansas has declined.

Exhibit 5.1.
What is TEA?

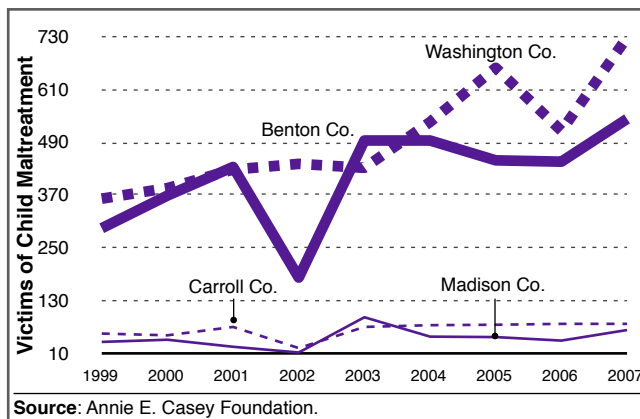
TEA is short for Arkansas' Transitional Employment Assistance program, which is jointly funded with the Federal government and designed to assist needy families in becoming economically self-sufficient by obtaining and retaining employment that is sufficient enough to sustain the family. Eligible families receive education and training that enable them to prepare for the transition out of welfare and into work.

Figure 5.4
Families Receiving Transitional Employment Assistance



- ★ Highly dependent on size and employment opportunities, the number of families receiving Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) is greatest in Washington and Benton Counties.
- ★ In all the Northwest Arkansas counties, families receiving TEA has declined since 1999.
- ★ Benton County went from a high of over 370 families receiving TEA in 2000 to a low of 100 in 2006.
- ★ Washington County families receiving TEA declined in the last two years by nearly 100 cases.

Figure 5.5
Number of Child Maltreatment Cases Filed



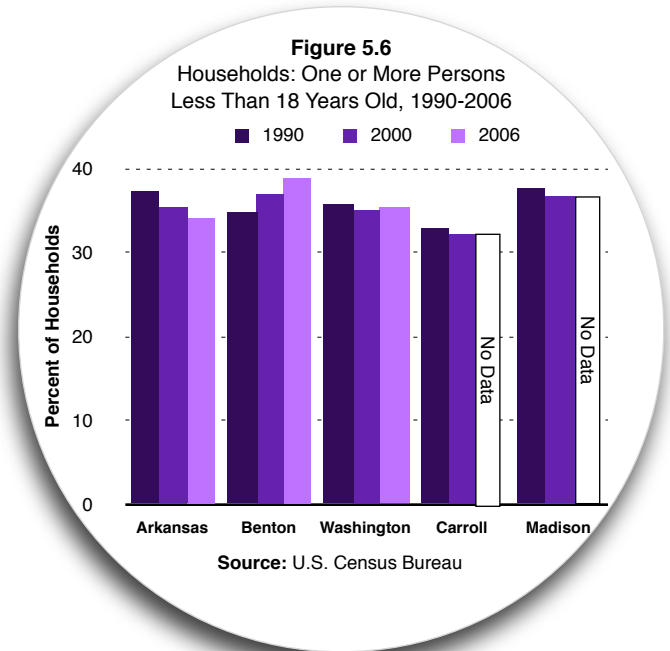
- ★ Highly dependent on population size, the number of maltreatment cases in both Washington and Benton County significantly increased between 1999 and 2007.
- ★ After experiencing a drop-off in maltreatment cases filed between 2001-2002, the number of cases in Benton County increased to nearly 500 cases in 2007.
- ★ Both Madison and Carroll Counties report on average fewer than 100 cases of maltreatment per year--that number has changed very little over the last decade.

Indicator in the Spotlight:

Young and Old in Northwest Arkansas Households

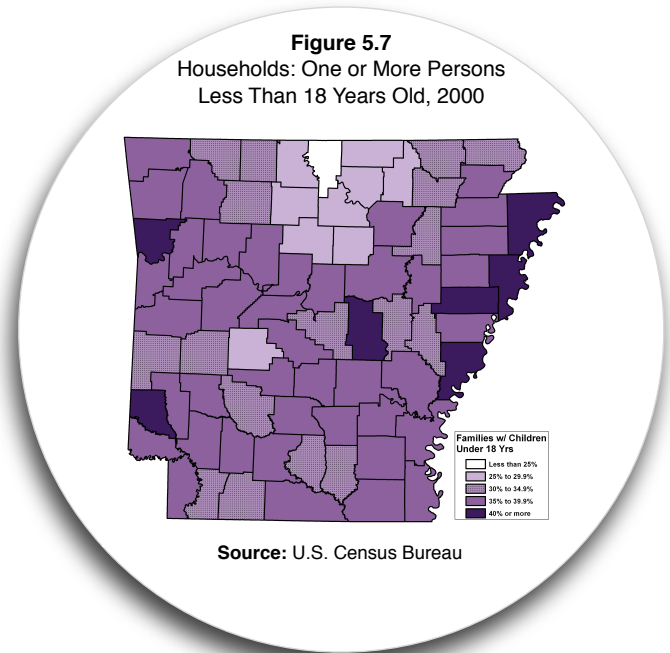
By 2050, experts estimate that the U.S. population under the age of 18 will grow by 39 percent. While this growth is slightly less than registered during other time periods (e.g. post World War II), children will represent nearly one-quarter of the total U.S. population. Notably, projections indicate that the majority of these children born during this period of time will be due to the arrival of new immigrant families. Without this immigration surge, population projections show the under 18 population would actually decline by nearly 8 percent.

- ★ The percentage of households with children under 18 in the state of Arkansas has slowly declined over the last several decades.
- ★ In Northwest Arkansas, only Benton County has experienced significant growth in the number of households with children under the age of 18.
- ★ Relative to many of the other counties in the Northern part of the state, the Northwest Arkansas region had a higher percentage of children living in households in 2000.



"Perhaps the greatest social service that can be rendered by anybody to this country and to mankind is to bring up a family."

George Bernard Shaw

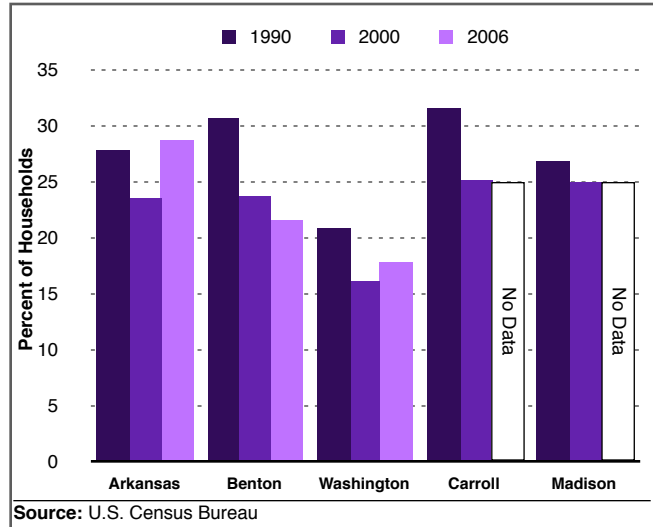




Current population estimates show the nation's elderly population doubling in size by 2050. As the baby-boomer generation continues to age, the number of households with one or more persons over 65 years of age will continue to grow. While Northwest Arkansans age-in-place and newly retired seniors look for a place to move to, Northwest Arkansas, already designated as an up-and-coming retirement destination, is likely to experience significant changes in household age composition in the next several decades.



Figure 5.8
Households: One or More Persons 65 Years or Older



- ★ In 2006, nearly 30 percent of households in Arkansas had one or more persons 65 years of age or over.
- ★ The majority of households in the United States are uni-generational; this is likely the case for Arkansas as well.
- ★ Washington County mirrored the state-wide shifts in households with regards to elderly persons. After a 5 percent drop between 1990 and 2000, the percent of households with elderly persons increased in 2006.
- ★ Except for Washington County, in the percent of households with one or more persons over 65 years of age has declined since 1990.



What's It All Mean?

Family composition in Northwest Arkansas looks quite different than the rest of the state. Other than average family size, Northwest Arkansas counties had fewer families headed by a single person, fewer households with persons over the age of 65, and in all but one of the counties (Madison), smaller percentages of children living in poverty. This is good news. Nevertheless, each of the four Northwest Arkansas counties are registering double digit percentages of children currently living in poverty. Related to these figures are the maltreatment numbers that have showed alarming increases over the last several years--primarily in Washington and Benton Counties.

Compositionally, households in Northwest Arkansas are not undergoing radical change relative to the rest of the state or the the country as a whole. The projections for what will take place in this country hold special meaning for Northwest Arkansas because of its rapid inflow of immigrants. The projected growth in the under 18 population will be a function of immigration. Responding to this change and developing new and innovative strategies for addressing the challenges associated with developing multi-cultural communities will need to be a primary focus for city and county administrators.

Chapter 6

Education: Preparing for the Future



The Contours of Public Education

A sound education is the foundation for a prosperous future. A strong education system powers the local economy by providing graduates with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to enter the workforce. In addition, an excellent educational system leads students to seek higher education, which in turn raises technological discovery, produces higher paying jobs, and allows citizens to take a more active role in their community's economy. The state of the educational system touches nearly every aspect of a community from healthcare to government.

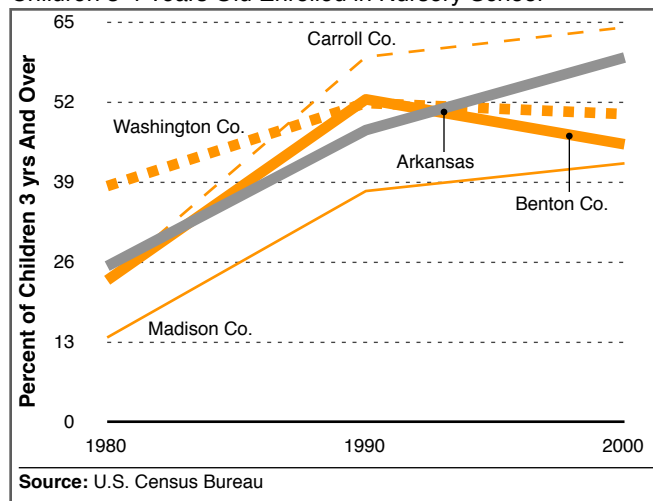
As part of the human capital growth in Northwest Arkansas, this investment becomes crucial to growing a vibrant and strong regional community. Beginning with pre-K education through post-secondary educational opportunities, how well communities manage to become stronger and increase their potential through this "human capital" investment will have an impact on the overall growth and success of the region well into the 21st Century.



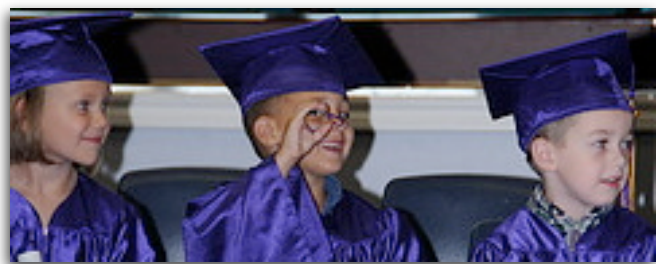
Pre-Kindergarten

In 1991, the Arkansas legislature established the *Arkansas Better Chance* pre-K program. The intent of the program was to provide assistance to educationally disadvantaged young children from birth through age five. With some funding challenges, in 2003, the *Arkansas Better Chance* for School Success Program received a \$40 million appropriation.

Figure 6.1
Children 3-4 Years Old Enrolled in Nursery School



- ★ Early enrollments in pre-K schools in the Northwest Arkansas region have, until recently, kept pace with the rest of the state.
- ★ In 2000, Carroll County had the highest pre-K enrollments in the Northwest Arkansas region (55%) and Madison County reported the lowest pre-K enrollments (41%).
- ★ While the percentage of pre-K enrollments in Arkansas increased, enrollments in the Northwest Arkansas region have leveled off or declined between 1990-2000.



Primary Education

It is important to point out at that the results presented in this chapter are school district outcomes that have been aggregated to the county level. Clearly, this aggregation has an impact on what is reported and how it is reported. Whether proficiency or achievement, school districts are combined to provide a picture of what is taking place in each of the four Northwest Arkansas counties. While some of the school districts reported proficiency scoring in earlier years not all did. Thus, these three most recent years are consistently available for every school district in every county in the Northwest Arkansas region.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), every state has been required to report the percentages of students achieving proficiency in reading and mathematics for grades 3 through 8. For each subject and grade combination, the percentages vary widely across states, and within

states as well. The proficiency examined in this report reflects the percentage of students scoring at or above *Basic* levels established by the state for the 4th and 8th grades.

- ★ In the past 3 years basic reading and math proficiency among Northwest Arkansas' 4th graders have been as high or higher than the state average.
- ★ The state and Northwest Arkansas counties dropped slightly in reading proficiency between 2006 and 2007.
- ★ In 2007, Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas counties had lower reading and math proficiencies than the United States average.

Figure 6.2
Reading, "Proficient and Above": 4th Graders

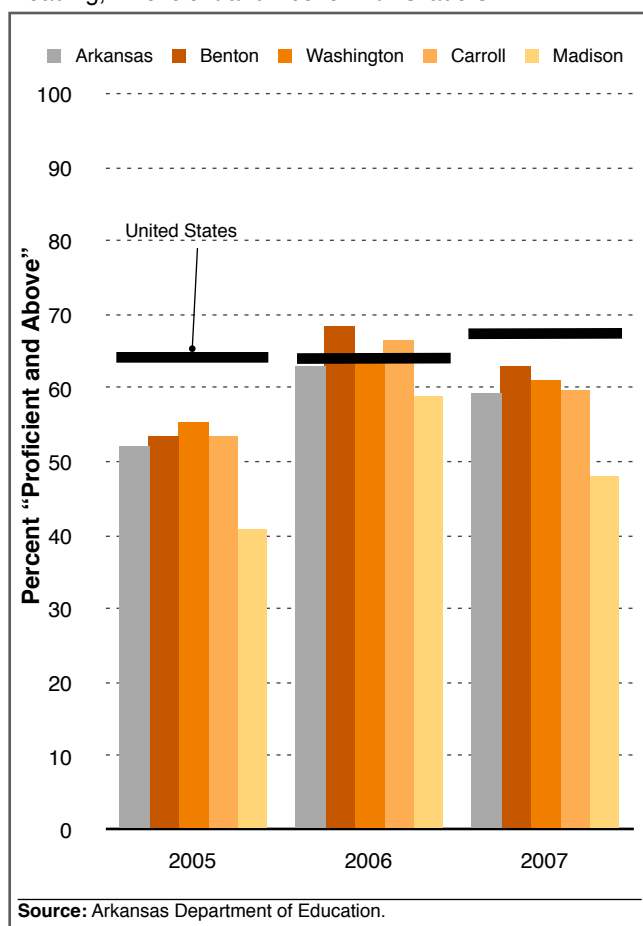
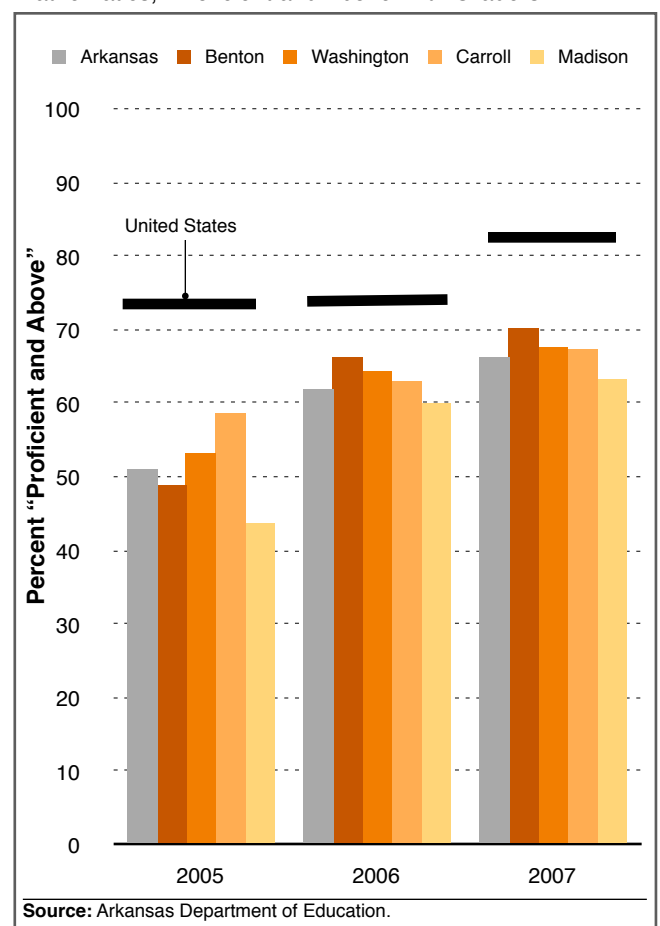


Figure 6.3
Mathematics, "Proficient and Above": 4th Graders



- ★ Reading and math proficiency among 8th graders in Northwest Arkansas counties was generally higher than the state average.
- ★ Reading proficiency among 8th grades was lowest in Carroll County and in all three years that level was lower than the state average.
- ★ The reading proficiency of Northwest Arkansas' 4th and 8th graders declined from 2006 to 2007.
- ★ 8th graders in the state and Northwest Arkansas counties had lower proficiencies in mathematics compared to the United States.
- ★ Math proficiency percentages have increased considerably in the last two years with both Washington and Benton Counties increasing by nearly 20 percent since 2005.

- ★ Madison County had the highest percentages of 8th graders at or above the Basic proficiencies levels in most years.
- ★ By 2007, the reading proficiency average of 8th graders at or above the Basic level in the United States was 74 percent. Only Benton County matched the national average with the state nearly 10 percentage points behind the national average.
- ★ In 2007, the math proficiency average of 8th graders at or above the Basic level in the United States was 82 percent. All the counties in Northwest Arkansas and the state were 20 percentage points (or more) behind the national average in math proficiency.

Figure 6.4
Reading "Proficient and Above": 8th Graders

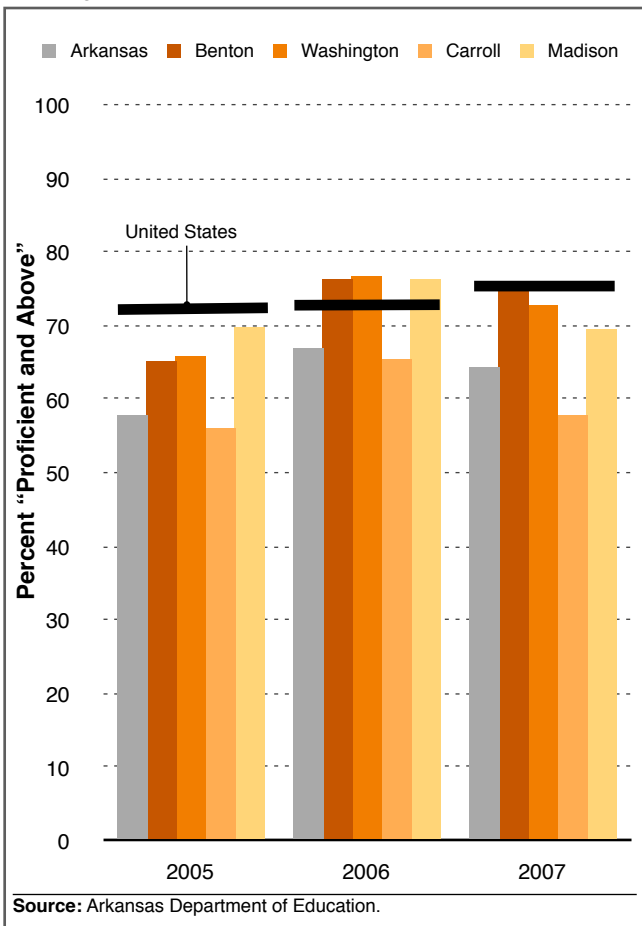
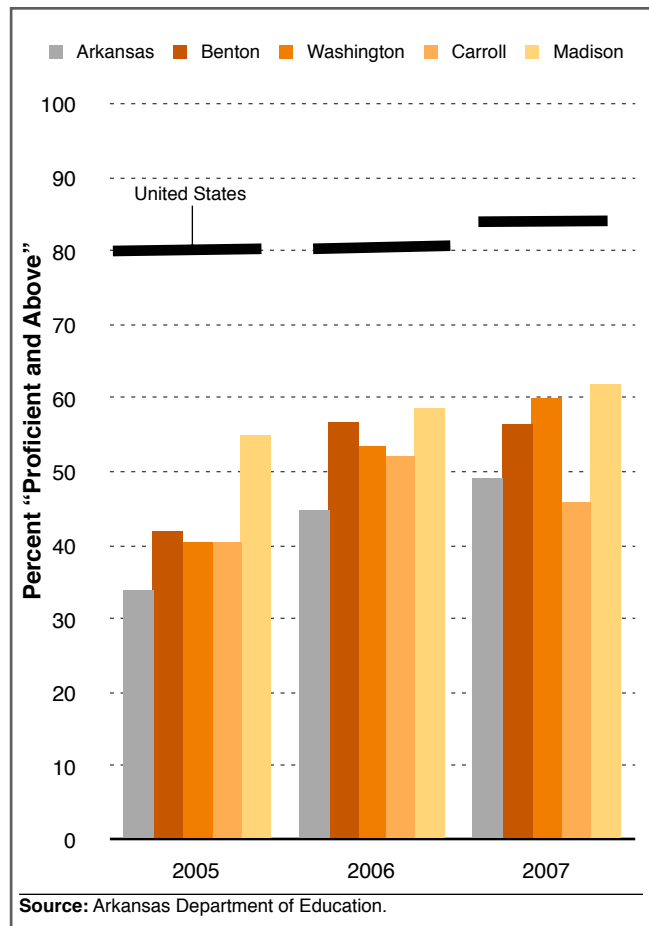


Figure 6.5
Mathematics, "Proficient and Above": 8th Graders



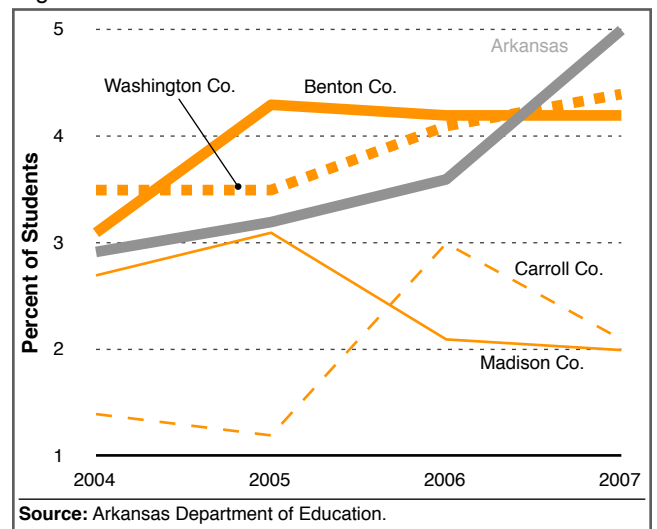
Secondary Education

In 2008, President Bush requested an additional \$1.2 billion in funding for Title I Grants to local educational agencies. This funding is designed to deliver greater resources to high-poverty high schools. While these resources are not earmarked they are intended to deliver resources to support more rigorous instruction and coursework in these schools with the goal of improving graduation rates and preparing all graduates for either post-secondary education or the workforce.

The nationwide initiatives to improve secondary education are voluminous. While many states and school districts depend on these types of federal initiatives, Arkansas on average only receives 11 percent of its education funding from the federal government. Thus, states like Arkansas are left having to find other sources for educational programming with nearly 60 percent of the funding for schools in Arkansas depending on state revenues for their success. That burden is nearly 12 percent higher than other states around the country.



Figure 6.6
High School Students Enrolled in AP Courses



- ★ Since 2004, the percent of high school students enrolled in advanced placement (AP) courses in Arkansas has risen to a current level of 5 percent.
- ★ Both Washington and Benton Counties, have higher percentages of AP enrolled students in high school yet they are still below the state average.
- ★ AP enrollments are low in both Carroll and Madison County; all Northwest Arkansas county AP enrollments are low relative to the state (5%) and national average of nearly 6 percent.

Figure 6.7
Average ACT Composite Score

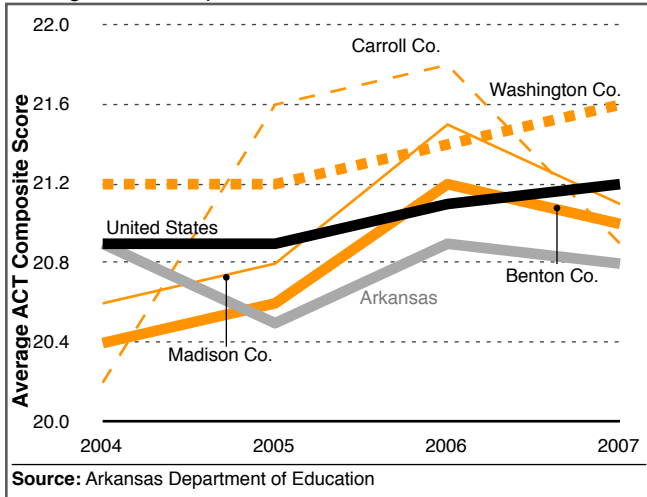
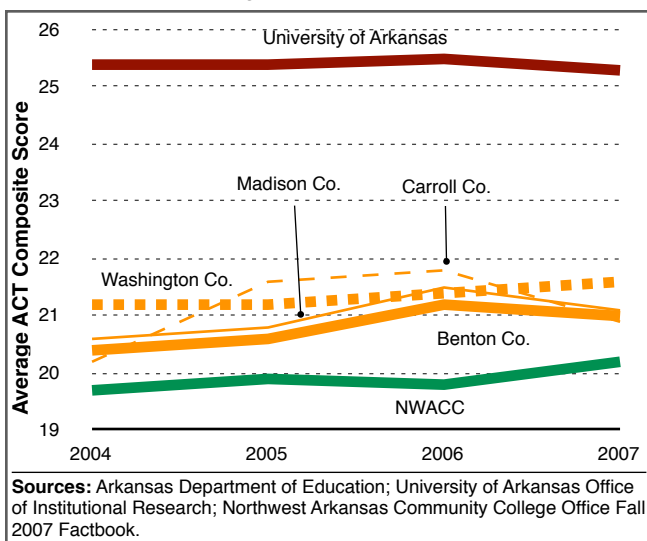


Figure 6.8
ACT Score Comparison for:
NWA High School Graduating Seniors, Entering NWACC
Freshmen and Entering University of Arkansas Freshmen



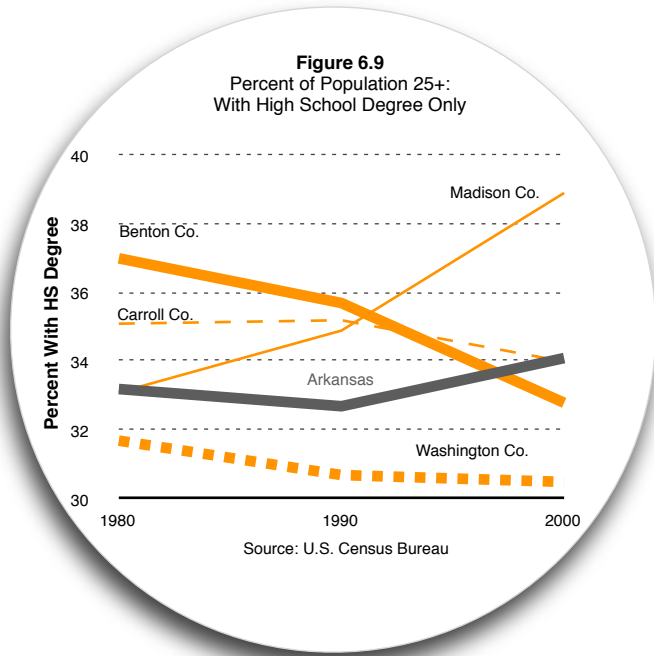
- ★ In 2004, the only Northwest Arkansas county with ACT composite scores exceeding the national average was Washington County.
- ★ All the Northwest Arkansas counties had higher ACT composite averages than the state average though the difference was very small.
- ★ Only Washington County mirrored the United States in terms of steadily rising ACT scores since 2004.
- ★ Relative to the average ACT composite score of entering freshmen at the University of Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas high school graduating seniors are scoring between 4 and 5 points lower.
- ★ Northwest Arkansas high schools graduating seniors in the four counties, on average, have a 1 to 2 point higher ACT composite score than the average entering freshmen at Northwest Arkansas Community College.



Indicator in the Spotlight: High School Education

Human capital is about investing in the skills and training required to increase a person's value in the labor market. Education becomes the primary mechanism for acquiring knowledge that can make a difference in development and economic productivity.

- ★ There has been a downturn in the percent of the population 25 years of age and over earning **only** a high school degree in most of the Northwest Arkansas counties since 1980.
- ★ With the presence of the University of Arkansas, more residents are being drawn into the county with significantly more years of education.
- ★ Only Madison County is lagging behind the state average of 34 percent with almost 39 percent of the population having **only** a high school education.
- ★ Northwest Arkansas is clearly a region in the state with a lower overall concentration of persons 25 years of age and over with **only** a high school degree.
- ★ While other regions are keeping pace with Northwest Arkansas, the majority of counties in the state have slightly more than a third of their residents with **only** a high school degree.



" Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela

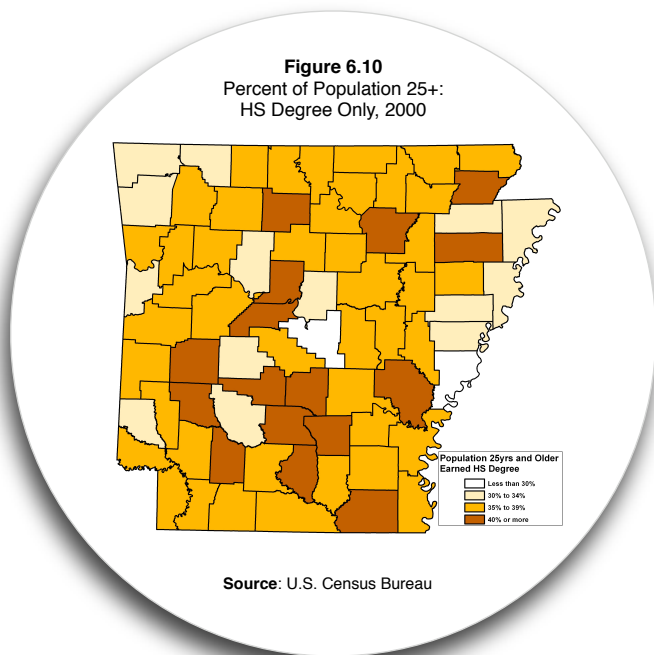


Figure 6.11
Average Graduation Rates

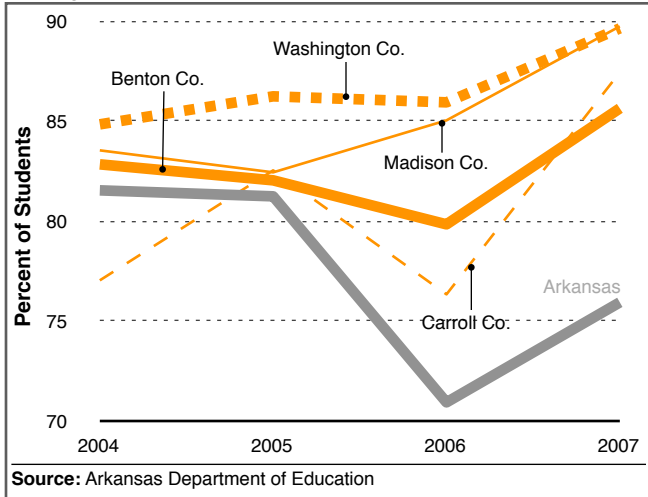


Figure 6.12
Average Dropout Rates

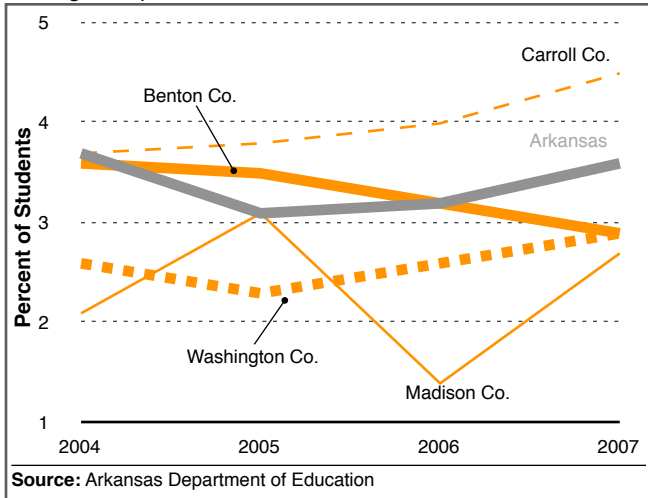
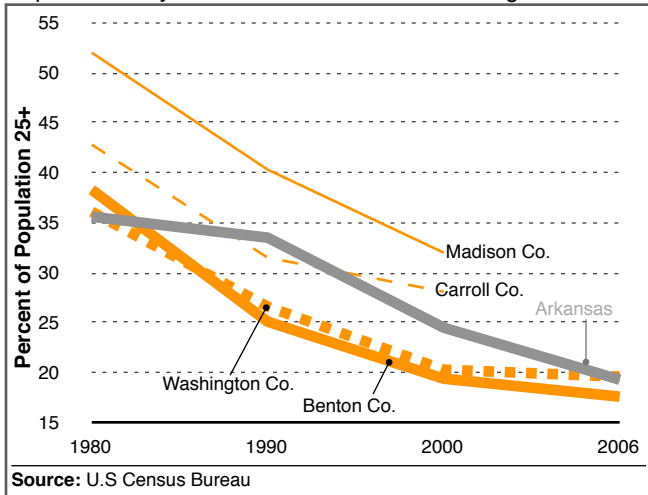


Figure 6.13
Population 25 yrs. and Over: Less Than HS Degree



★ Graduation rates are increasing in the state and region even though dropout rates have increased over the last few years in some of the Northwest Arkansas counties.

★ Over the last four years, the graduation rate in the state of Arkansas dropped from a high of 81 in 2005 to a low of approximately 75 percent in 2007.

★ All four Northwest Arkansas counties and the state of Arkansas improved their graduation rates between 2006-2007.

★ Carroll County experienced the greatest graduation rate flux in the last four years increasing and decreasing in big swings in alternating years.

★ All the Northwest Arkansas counties were above the United States 2007 average for high school graduation which was approximately 75 percent.

★ While dropout rates are difficult to gauge because individual school districts often use different formulas to compute them, the percentage of students dropping out of high school in Northwest Arkansas was relatively low.

★ The percent of high school students dropping out in the United States in 2007 was approximately 9 percent.

★ The percentage of residents with **less** than a high school degree has decreased significantly in the state and the Northwest Arkansas region over the last 25 years.

★ Madison and Carroll County both experienced declines in the percentage of their population with less than a high school degree. However, both counties still had a higher percentage of residents with **less** than a high school degree than the rest of the state in 2006.

Figure 6.14
Student:Teacher Ratios

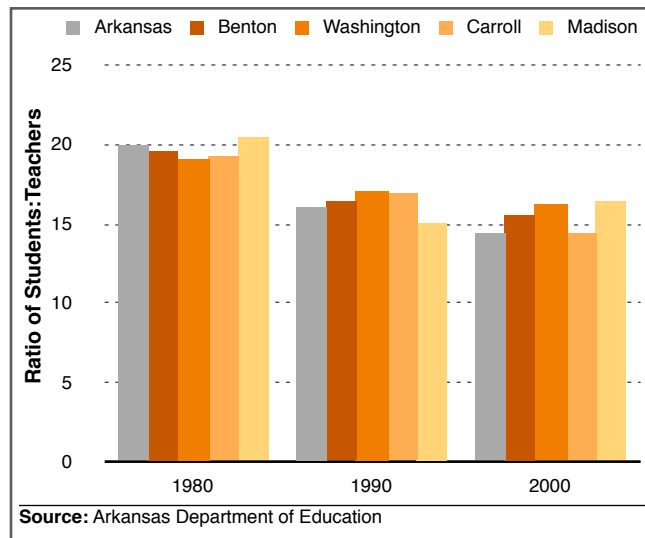


Figure 6.15
Average Annual Expenditures per Student

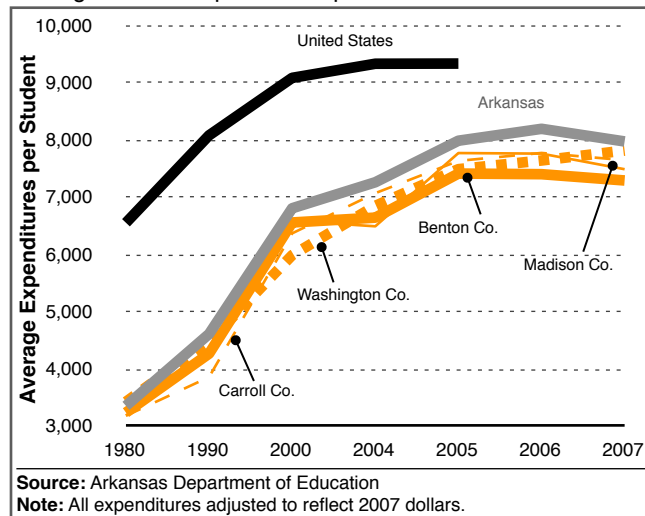
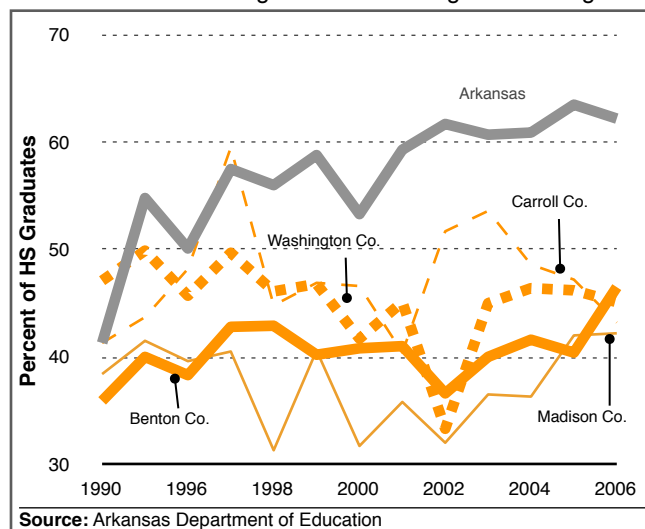


Figure 6.16
HS Graduates Attending Institutions of Higher Learning



- ★ Student-teacher ratios declined significantly across the state and in all of the Northwest Arkansas counties since 1980.
- ★ Madison and Washington Counties had slightly higher student teacher ratios than the other Northwest Arkansas counties and the state.
- ★ The student-teacher ratio for all public secondary schools in the United States in 2000 was approximately 16 students per classroom teacher.
- ★ Adjusted to reflect 2007 dollars, expenditures per student in Northwest Arkansas counties mirrored the steady increase reported in school districts throughout the country.
- ★ While Northwest Arkansas school districts have uniformly increased in their per student expenditures, the amount in all the districts averaged to the counties was still less than the Arkansas state average.
- ★ In 2005, Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas counties were \$1,500 to \$2,000 less per student than the national average of \$9,355.
- ★ Over the last 16 years, the percentage of high school graduates attending institutions of higher learning increased statewide by nearly 20 percent.
- ★ All of the Northwest Arkansas counties had lower-than-average numbers of high school graduates attending institutions of higher learning.
- ★ Washington and Benton County school districts had the highest percentages of students attending institutions of higher education in 2007--approximately 45 percent.

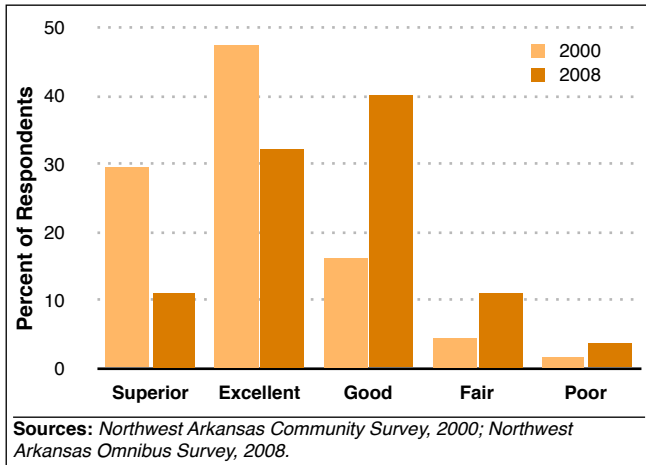
What People Are Saying About... Local Schools

Similar to the general growth and change patterns in Northwest Arkansas counties, the schools and school districts are experiencing some growing pains. Not all these pains are negative but clearly the schools are having to prepare for more students, more diverse students, more unprepared and disadvantaged students, and a greater number of students who are interested in attending some institution of higher education either locally or regionally.

In an effort to better understand how people in the Northwest Arkansas region are feeling about education, they were asked, both in 2000 and 2008, to rank the schools in their community from *Superior to Poor*...the results from those surveys can be found in Figure 6.17.



Figure 6.17
Satisfaction with Local Schools



- ★ In 2000, the overwhelming majority of Northwest Arkansas residents were pleased with the schools in their communities. Nearly 80 percent of respondents said they thought the local schools were either “*superior*” or “*excellent*.”
- ★ In 2008, the level of satisfaction in local schools among residents dropped considerably. A majority of Northwest Arkansas residents (51%) thought that the local schools were just “*good*” or “*fair*.”



Student Behaviors in the School Context

Exhibit 6.1. The Prevention Needs Assessment Project

Since 2002, Arkansas has participated in the *Prevention Needs Assessment* project which is administered in all school districts grades 6,8,10, and 12. The project uses a self-administered survey designed to measure need for prevention services in areas of substance abuse, delinquency, antisocial behavior and violence. It assesses problem behaviors as well as the protective mechanisms that moderate the negative effects of a wide range of social and behavioral risks. With nearly an 80 percent response rate in 2007, the survey reflects a well-balanced representation of students in junior and senior high schools across the state.

The results presented in this report are aggregated responses; comparisons are made across counties, the Northwest Arkansas region, and the state of Arkansas. In addition, a nationally representative normative sample of 200,000 students from seven states around the country is also used as a benchmark to compare Arkansas and its regions

Like all schools across the country, Arkansas schools struggle with a wide range of student behaviors that have consequences for achievement. While student behaviors outside of the school context have an important effect on student success, the graphs that are presented in the following pages look closely at a set of specific actions taking place in the school that have immediate consequences for the student-- **school suspension**. Tracking these types of behaviors are important for school personnel to understand both disruptive behaviors, as well as how best to plan for effective intervention.

Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana are clearly the three most prevalent drugs being used by junior and senior high schools in the country. Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas region mirror that use when looking at 30-day use percentages

among all grades. The 30-day drug use percentages tend to be highest among senior high school students, however, by 8th grade patterned use is beginning to be established. For example, in 2007, 30-day reported use of alcohol was approximately 15 percent among 8th graders but nearly double the percentage of users could be found in 10th grade. Likewise, for marijuana use in the last 30 days, more than 10 percent reported use in 8th grade and that number among 10th graders was nearly 16 percent. While these numbers are high, to put them in perspective to the national trend, all 30-day use rates in all grades for alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana in Arkansas were below the nationally normed average.

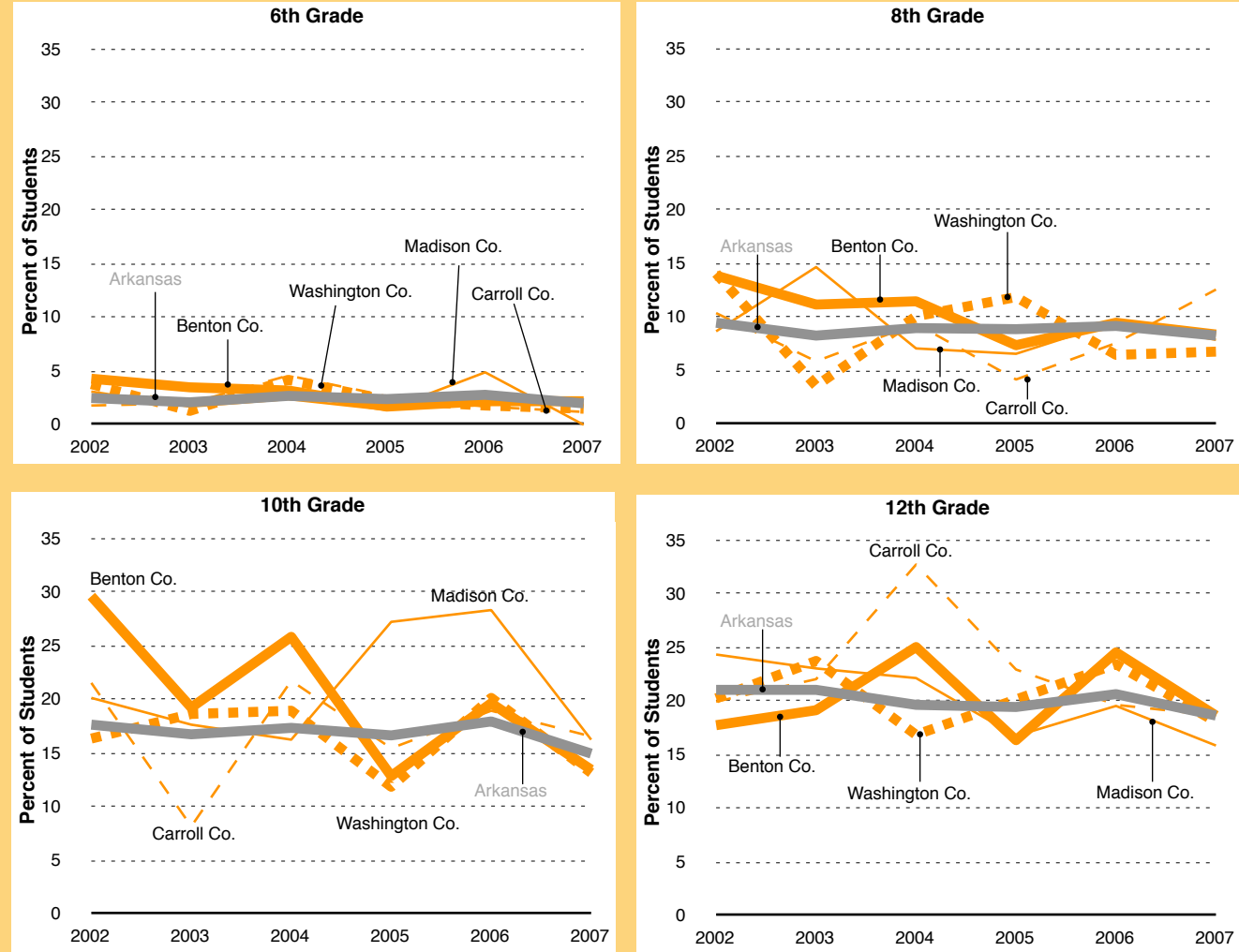
By 12th grade, more than 70 percent of Pride survey respondents in Northwest Arkansas claimed that all these drugs (alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana) were “*sort of easy*” or “*very easy*” to obtain in their respective communities.

Reported violence in and around schools across the country is a problem that has escalated in some cities and school districts to crisis levels. In 2007, Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas region were well below the national average for school violence, nevertheless, the percentage of students who reported having been in a fight in or around the school property increased. The overall percentage of students in grades 6-12 who reported they intentionally attacked another student to seriously harm them in the last 12 months was 16 percent. Mirroring rates found at the national level, it appears that school violence is highest among 8th and 10th graders. Consistent with the findings of elevated violence among 8th and 10th graders, this same age group is also the group of students that report the highest percentages of not feeling safe at school--23 and 25 percent respectively.

Source: Arkansas Needs Assessment Student Survey (APNA) 2007.

Exhibit 6.2

Students Who Have Been Drunk or High At School, Past Year: 2002-2007



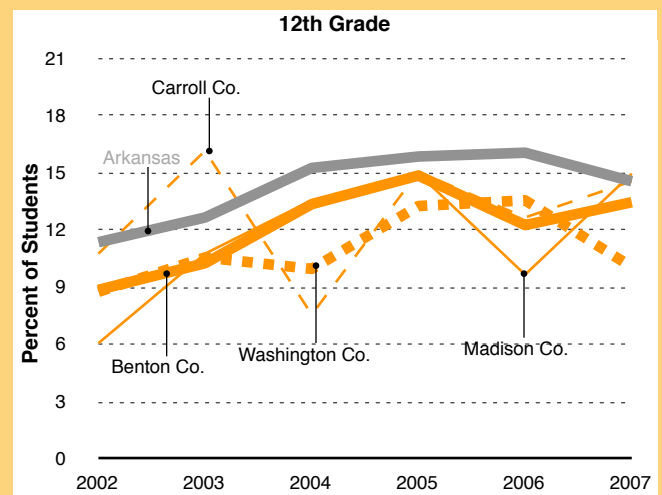
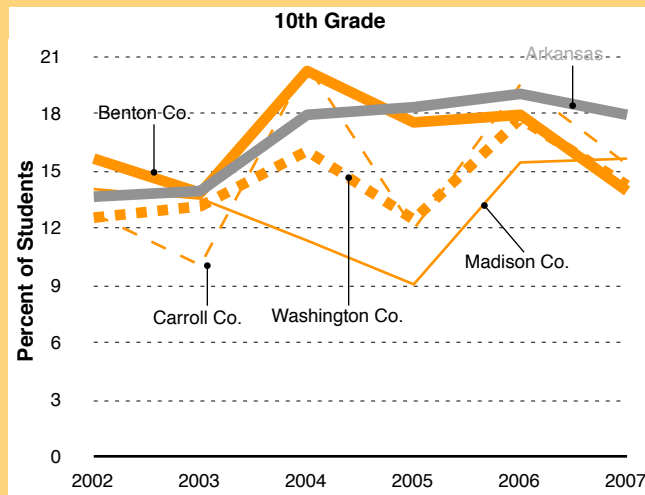
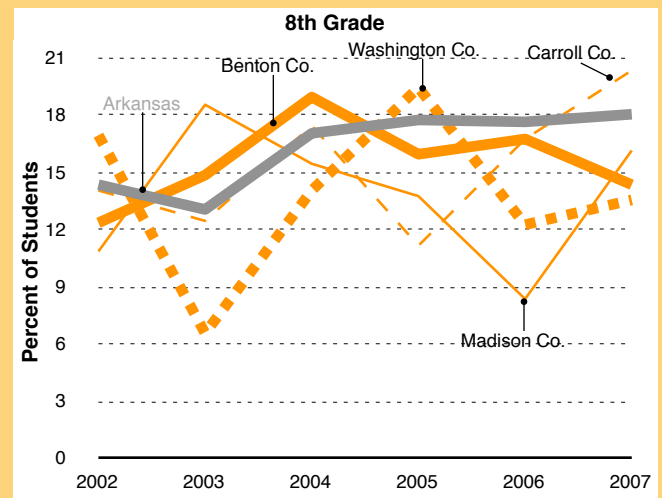
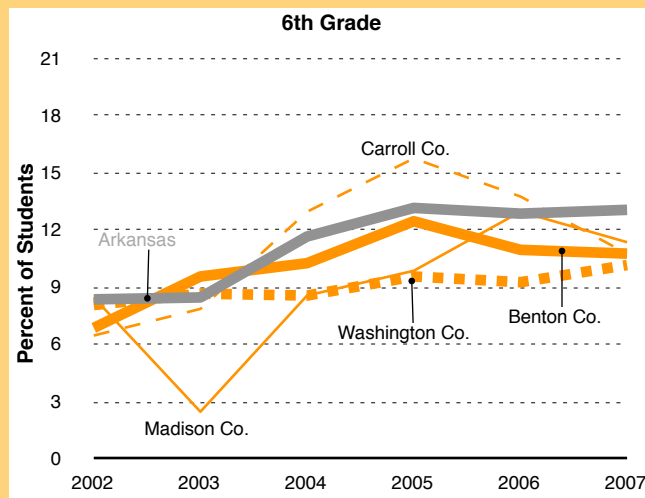
Source: Arkansas Department of Human Services. Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment Survey.

- ★ The percentage of students (grades 6,8,10,12) in the state reporting being drunk or high at school in the past year has remained relatively constant since 2002.
- ★ The numbers of students showing up drunk or high increased substantially from 6th grade (state average of 3%) to 12th grade (state average of nearly 20%).
- ★ Many risk-taking behaviors begin their formation in early junior high school and by 8th and 9th grade are beginning to show signs of significant increases.
- ★ All the Northwest Arkansas counties experienced behavioral shifts among their

- 10th grade students reporting being drunk or high in school in the last year.
- ★ All Northwest Arkansas counties reported significant decreases in the percent of students showing up drunk or high to school in the last year between 2006-2007.

Exhibit 6.3

Students Who Have Intentionally Attacked Another To Seriously Hurt Them, Past Year: 2002-2007



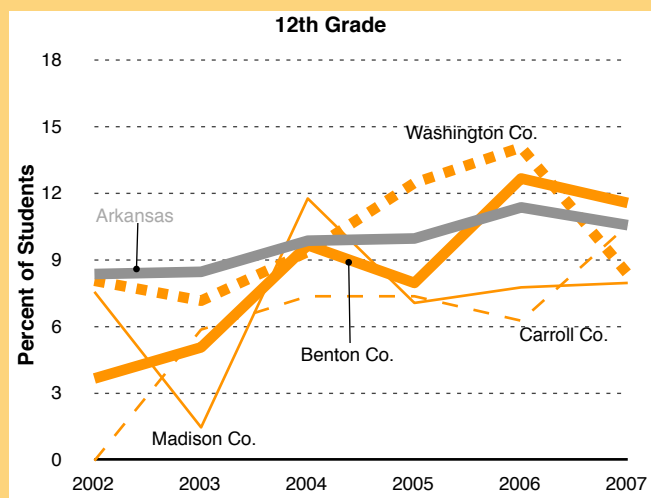
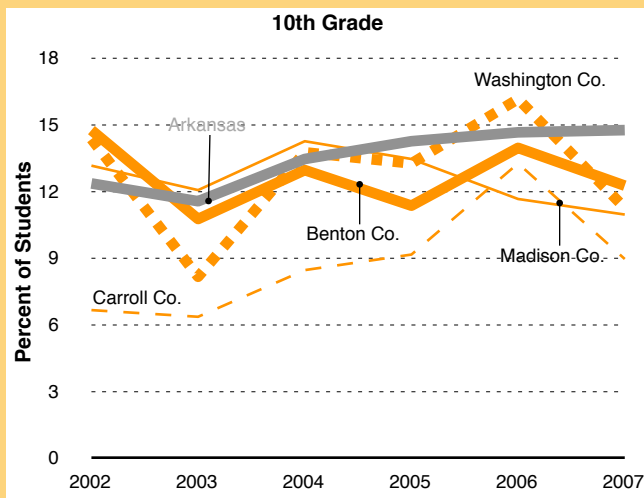
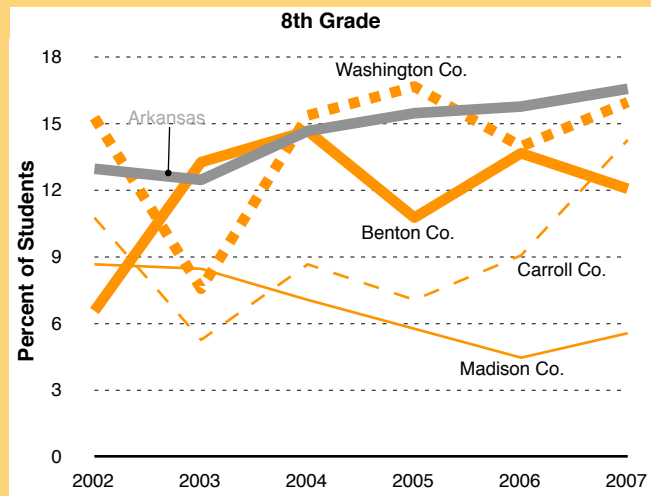
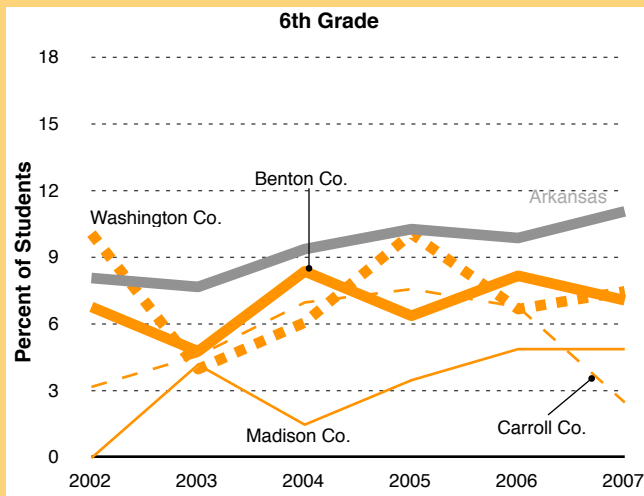
Source: Arkansas Department of Human Services. Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment Survey.

- ★ The percentage of students (grades 6,8,10,12) in the state who reported intentionally attacking another student in the past year to seriously hurt them, steadily increased since 2002.
- ★ Among 10th and 12th graders there have been important declines in reported violence both in the state and Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ In 6th grade, all Northwest Arkansas counties in most years, except Carroll County from 2004-2006, had lower percentages of students reporting intentionally attacking another student compared to the state average.

- ★ Since 2002, some Northwest Arkansas counties registered significant percentage increases.
- ★ By 2007, only 8th grade Carroll County students reported a higher percentage of students engaging in violent behavior compared to the average Arkansas 8th grader.
- ★ While violence peaks by 10th grade in Northwest Arkansas counties and in the state, violence among 12th graders in Benton, Carroll, and Madison Counties increased between 2006-2007.

Exhibit 6.4

Student Suspensions, Past Year: 2002-2007



Source: Arkansas Department of Human Services. Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment Survey.

- ★ Mirroring the steady increase in the state's students grades 6,8,10,12 who reported attacking another student to cause serious harm, the percentage of students across the state receiving suspension likewise has increased.
- ★ By 2007, more than 15 percent of 8th and 10th grade students in the state reported being suspended in the last year.
- ★ Except for Benton County 12th graders, the percentage of students reporting being suspended was lower in the Northwest Arkansas region compared to the state average.

- ★ The percent of students reporting being suspended between 2006-2007 has generally declined or leveled off in most Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ For 10th and 12th grade students in Northwest Arkansas counties and the state, there were fewer reported suspensions in the most recent year of data collection (2006-2007).
- ★ 12th graders in Carroll County schools reported an increase of nearly 3 percent in the past year regarding school suspensions.

Post-Secondary Education

Figure 6.18
Total Student Enrollments, 1999-2006

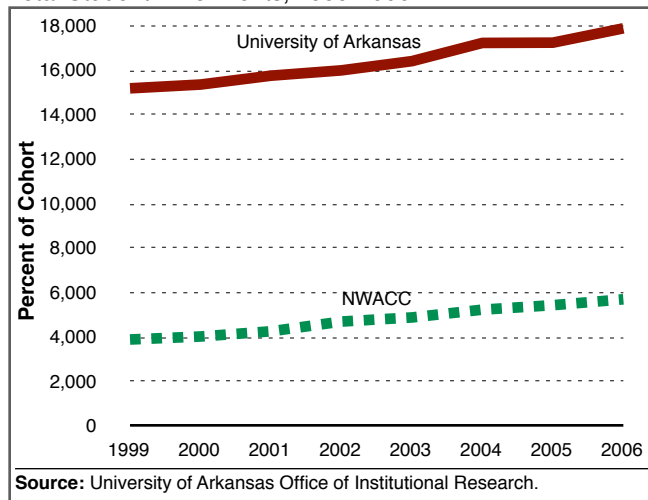
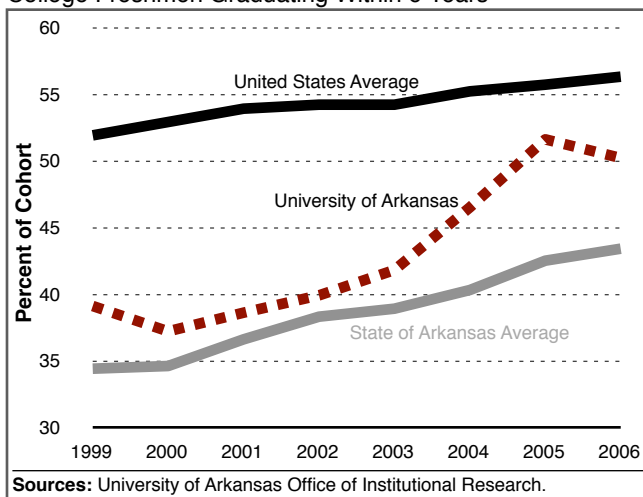


Figure 6.19
College Freshmen Graduating Within 6 Years



- ★ Since 1999, student enrollments at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville have been steadily increasing.
- ★ Since 1999, the enrollments at Northwest Arkansas Community College have increased. By 2006, nearly 6,000 students were enrolled at NWACC.
- ★ Six year graduation rates in the United States and Arkansas have steadily increased since 1999.
- ★ The percentage of the cohort graduating in 1999 (entered in 1994) was 35 percent in the state. This same percentage has increased to nearly 45 percent in the last seven years.
- ★ In the last 7 years, 6-year graduation rates have increased nearly 10 percent at the University of Arkansas with over 50 percent of the 2000 cohort graduating in six years.

What's It All Mean?

The contours of education in Northwest Arkansas are changing. In many respects, school districts and counties have made significant strides in improving the structure of their schools and the performance of their students. But the question of how to sustain that trend in the face of limited school revenues, increasing economic hardship, and a growing ELL population remains a challenge for many of the school districts in the Northwest Arkansas region.

The positive upswing in graduation rates, the percentage of residents with more than a high school education, and the increasing opportunity for students to attend quality higher education institutions like the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville and the Northwest Arkansas Community College, are all important elements for a region that will require higher human capital investments in the next several decades. Not all the news is good, and despite the fact that some schools in some counties are lagging

considerably behind both the regional and state averages in measures of student “success,” the overall snapshot of education for the region is a positive one.

While school provides a context for learning, it can also provide a context for behaviors that if left unchecked, can have a serious impact on learning, achievement, and overall student development. While this report barely scratches the surface in terms of risk behaviors, there should be some concern among all school districts in the region with respect to these risky behaviors. With the increase in population growth, schools will need to continue to closely monitor in-school behaviors. Drug use and violence are two issues in particular that schools will have to focus on in the decades ahead.

Chapter 7

Health: Health and Access To Care



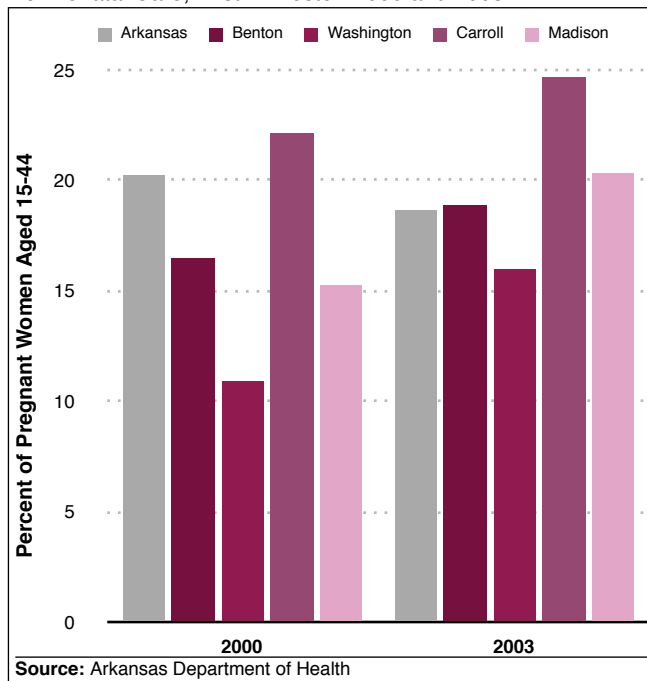
The Health of Northwest Arkansas Residents

An optimal quality of life mandates a complete state of physical and mental well-being. This state of being extends far beyond the absence of disease to include a variety of elements that impact both individual and community. Aside from the obvious benefits to the individual, health status is directly linked to productivity. A healthy workforce correlates to economic growth and prosperity. The individual benefits of good health, combined with economic community benefits, makes measuring health a necessity for assessing community quality of life.

How the population is doing, their rate of chronic disease and mortality, and health behaviors are all important aspects of a healthy community. Additionally, having access to new and innovative technologies to improve diagnosis and treatment, living close to clinics, hospitals, and practitioners, and having an opportunity to have the best and the most up-to-date health care are critical elements to not only maintaining health but improving it.

Infant Health

Figure 7.1
No Prenatal Care, First Trimester: 2000 and 2003



- ★ In 2000 the percentage of pregnant women not receiving prenatal care in the first trimester was approximately 20 percent in the state of Arkansas.
- ★ With the exception of Carroll County, the percentage of pregnant women not receiving prenatal care in Northwest Arkansas counties was lower in 2000 compared to the rest of the state.
- ★ Except for Washington County, Northwest Arkansas counties had higher rates of women not receiving prenatal care than the rest of state in 2003.



Figure 7.2
Low Birthweight Births

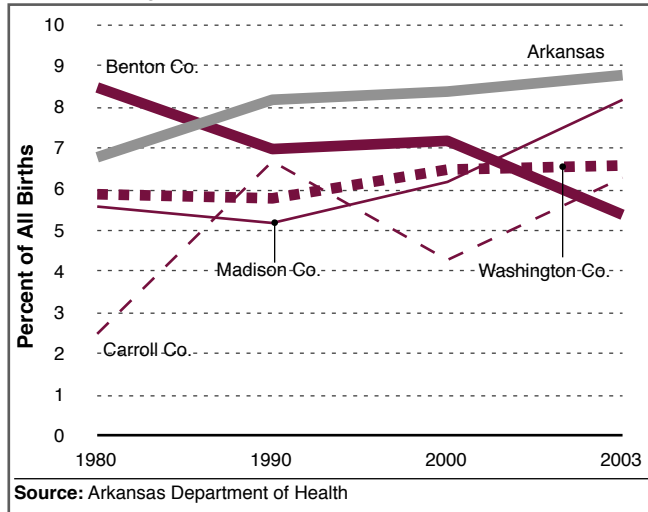


Figure 7.3
Infant Mortality Rates

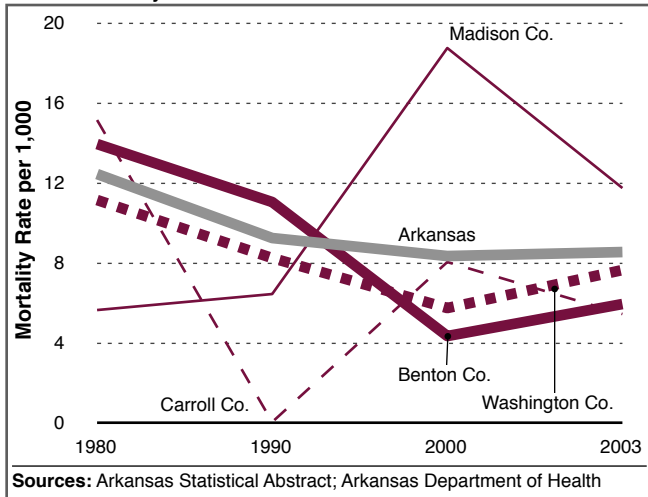
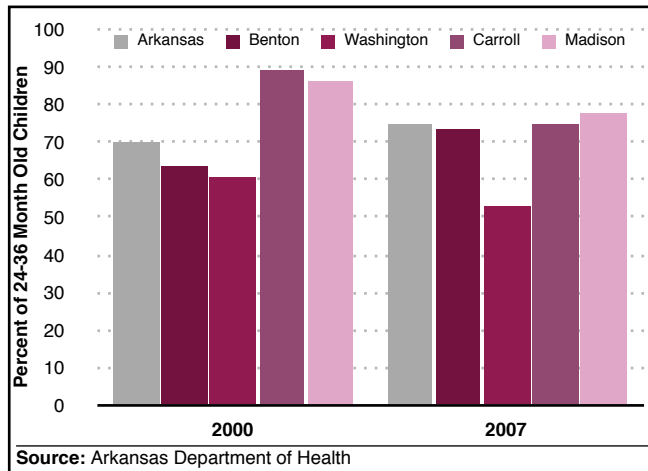


Figure 7.4
Child Immunizations: 2000 and 2007



- ★ The percent of low birthweight births in Arkansas steadily increased, though slight, since 1980.
- ★ By 2003, all of the Northwest Arkansas counties had lower percentages of low birthweight births relative to the rest of the state.
- ★ Since 2000, the two least populated counties, Madison and Carroll Counties, experienced an increase in low birthweight births.
- ★ Since 1980, the infant mortality rate has been steadily declining in the state of Arkansas from a high of 12 deaths per 1,000 live births to approximately 8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003.
- ★ Infant mortality rates in Washington and Benton Counties have been following the trend in the state with steady declines since 1980.
- ★ Both Madison and Carroll experienced significant upturns in infant mortality rates between 1990 and 2000. Since 2000, their infant mortality rates declined.
- ★ By 2003, the infant mortality rate in the United States was 6.84 deaths per 1,000 live births. Benton, Carroll, and Washington Counties had rates lower than the United States.
- ★ The percentage of children ages 2-3 years old in the state receiving proper immunizations increased over the last 10 years and by 2007, nearly 75 percent of Arkansas' children were properly immunized.
- ★ In Northwest Arkansas counties, only Benton County recorded an increase in the percentage of children getting properly immunized between 2000 and 2007.
- ★ By 2007, Washington County had the lowest immunization percentage in the Northwest Arkansas region with only 53 percent of children 2-3 years old being properly immunized.

Mortality in Northwest Arkansas

Chronic disease and mortality rates are one way to understand the health conditions and risks in a community. With health risks varying significantly by gender, race, and age, the following data are carefully interpreted in the context of the **general population's** chronic disease and mortality in the four Northwest Arkansas counties.

All the mortality data are presented using age-adjusted rates per 10,000 persons per county. Since most diseases occur at different rates across age groups, age-adjusted rates standardize the influence of a community's age diversity. Thus, disease and mortality comparisons can be made across communities regardless of their age composition.

- ★ Figures 7.5-7.9 show the top five age-adjusted mortality rates in the state of Arkansas for the period between 1990 and 2004.
- ★ Mortality rates for heart disease, cancer, and stroke have declined since 1990 in the state of Arkansas.
- ★ Benton County had higher rates of heart disease per 10,000 compared to the state average of nearly 19 deaths per 10,000 persons.
- ★ Northwest Arkansas counties had lower age adjusted cancer mortality rates than the state, but only Benton County was significantly lower than the state rate.
- ★ In both Madison and Carroll Counties there were sharp declines in the mid-1990's as their cancer rates leveled off.
- ★ Washington County had the highest age-adjusted cancer death rate in Northwest Arkansas.
- ★ While the age-adjusted mortality rates for stroke are three times lower in the state compared to heart disease and cancer, since 1999 they have increased in both Madison and Washington Counties.

Figure 7.5
Age Adjusted Heart Disease Mortality

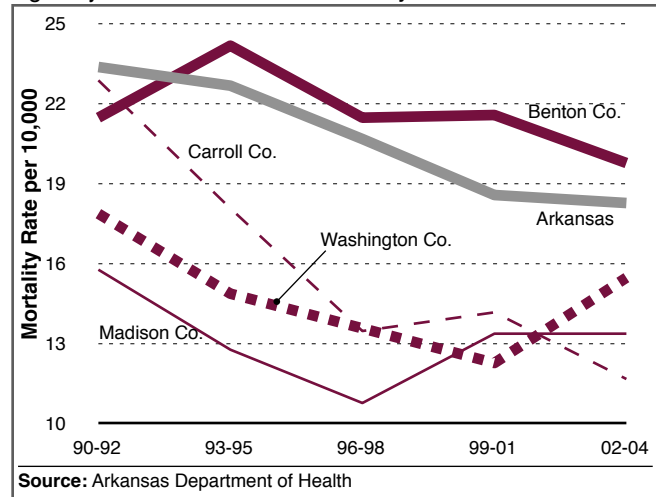


Figure 7.6
Age Adjusted Cancer Mortality

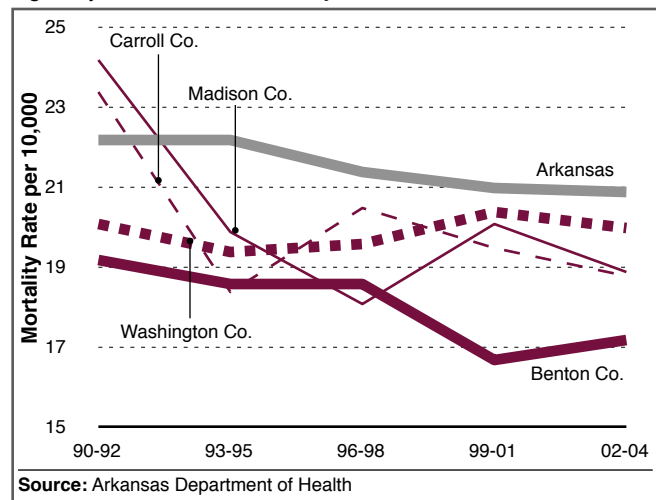
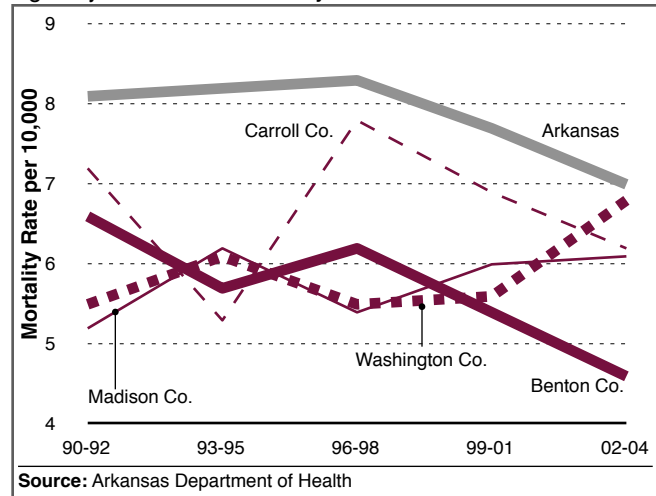


Figure 7.7
Age Adjusted Stroke Mortality



- ★ Age-adjusted mortality rates for chronic, obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in the state and Northwest Arkansas are relatively low. Nevertheless, these COPD mortality rates have increased steadily since 1990.
- ★ COPD age-adjusted mortality rates were highest in Washington County.
- ★ Washington County COPD mortality rates were higher than the state with nearly 6 persons per 10,000 dying each year in the period between 2002-04.
- ★ The most alarming of the five mortality trends examined is the age-adjusted mortality rate related to diabetes.
- ★ While the numbers are relatively low, the diabetes mortality rates in all of the Northwest Arkansas counties have increased since 1999.
- ★ Madison and Carroll Counties have registered significant increases since 1999, nearly doubling their diabetes death rates by the 2002-2004 period.

Figure 7.8
Age Adjusted COPD Mortality

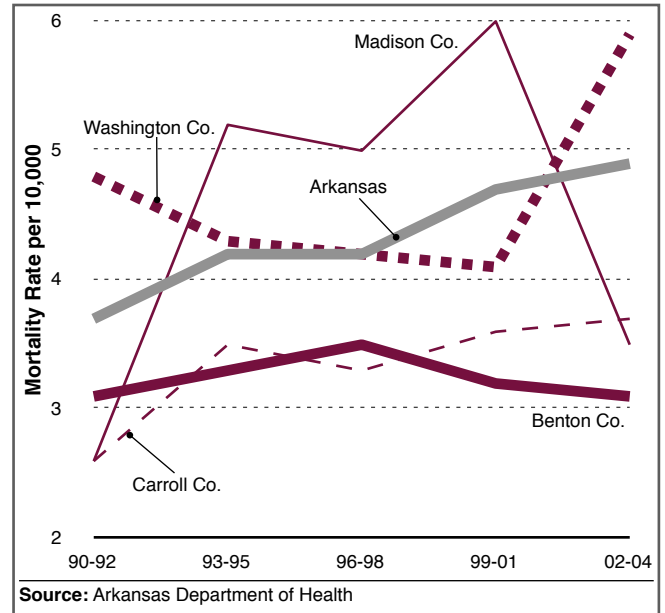
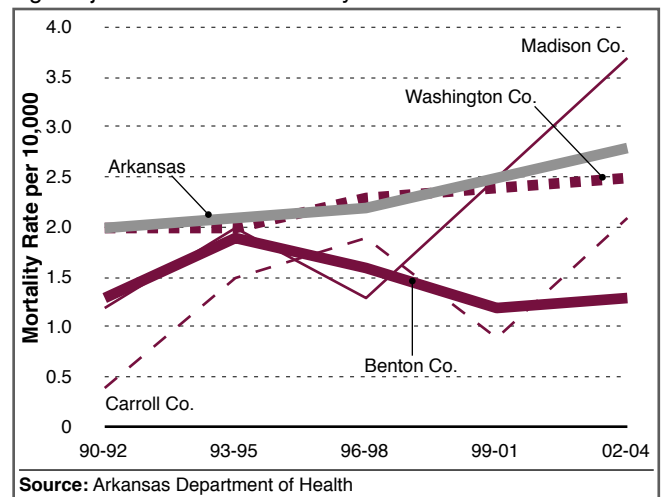


Figure 7.9
Age Adjusted Diabetes Mortality

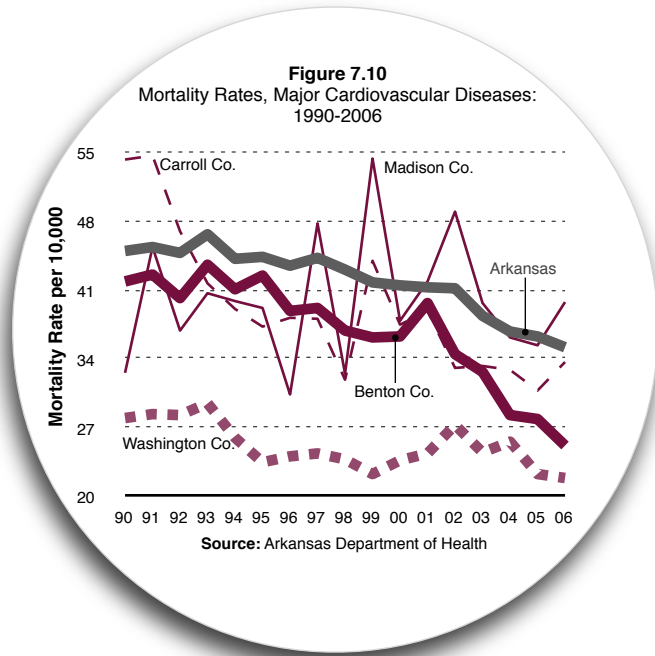


Indicator in the Spotlight: Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular disease continues to be the number one cause of death among adults in the United States; nearly 30 percent of all U.S. deaths can be attributed to this disease. Nevertheless, the rates in the United States have been declining similar to Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas since 1999.

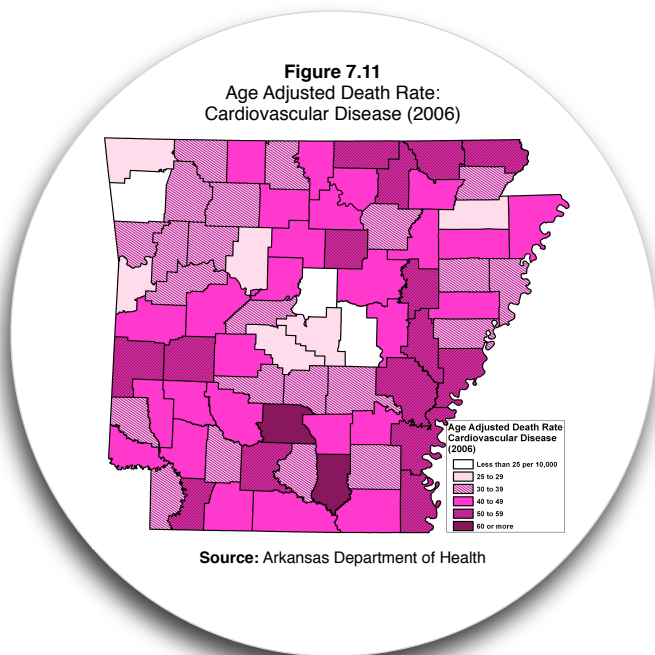
Current projections show that by 2010, the age-adjusted coronary heart disease death rate may decline by 36 percent. A developing body of knowledge from scientific research, advancing technology, and better health practices among large segments of the population are all factors contributing to this steady decline.

- ★ Cardiovascular disease mortality rates have been declining in the state since 1990.
- ★ By 2006, only Madison County had a higher cardiovascular disease mortality rate compared to the state average.
- ★ Benton County mirrored the state decline in cardiovascular disease mortality rates and has experienced the largest decline in the last 15 years among the Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ By 2006, Washington County had the lowest cardiovascular disease rate in Northwest Arkansas. Madison County had the highest in the region.



"Half the costs of illness are wasted on conditions that could be prevented."

Dr. Joseph Pirzorno

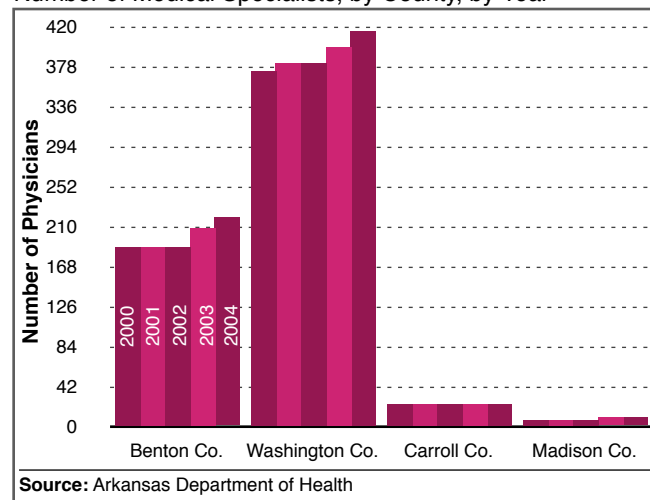


Access To Health Care

While the number of medical personnel and specialists continue to increase nationwide, certain geographic regions of the country have limited access. Persons living in rural counties like Madison and Carroll Counties often have to drive long distances to obtain health care services. Whether waiting long periods of time to get appointments or being affected by supply shortages of services like transplantation, rural residents are often impacted differently than their urban counterparts.

In addition to geographic location, poverty remains the single most important barrier to health care access in the United States. Beyond general medical care, even those persons with health care insurance are often underinsured with regards to dental, vision, and mental health care. In 2007, nearly 40 million people were without health insurance in the United States while another 13 million persons were underinsured. The percentage of persons uninsured has changed only slightly in the United States over the last few years, yet the percent without health insurance in the state of Arkansas has steadily increased during that same time period.

Figure 7.12
Number of Medical Specialists, by County, by Year



- ★ The number of medical specialists has increased in the last few years in Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ Madison and Carroll Counties have had limited medical specialists (2000-2004).

- ★ Because of large health care centers in Washington and Benton Counties and the growth in the general population, the number of medical specialists continue to grow in both counties as seen in Figure 7.12.
- ★ The number of nurses has slowly increased in both Washington and Benton Counties between the period of 2000-2005.
- ★ Madison and Carroll Counties have exhibited little change in the growth of nursing personnel between the years of 2000-2005.

Figure 7.13
Number of Nurses, by County, by Year

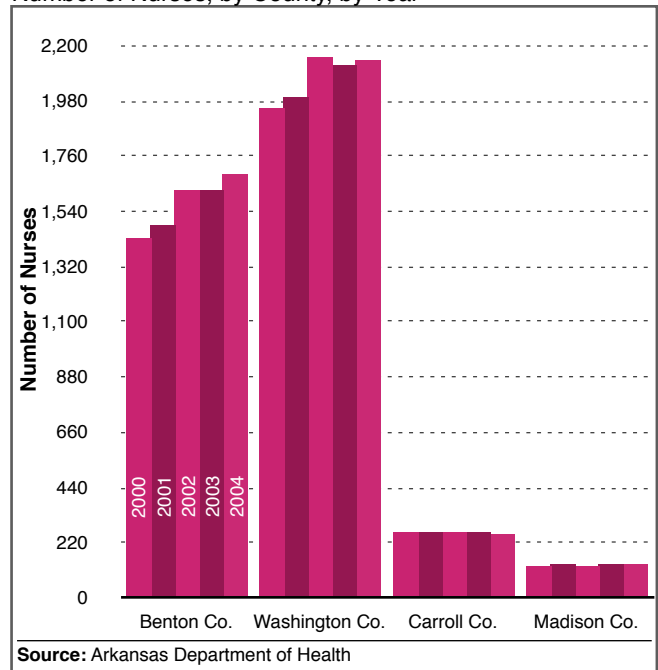
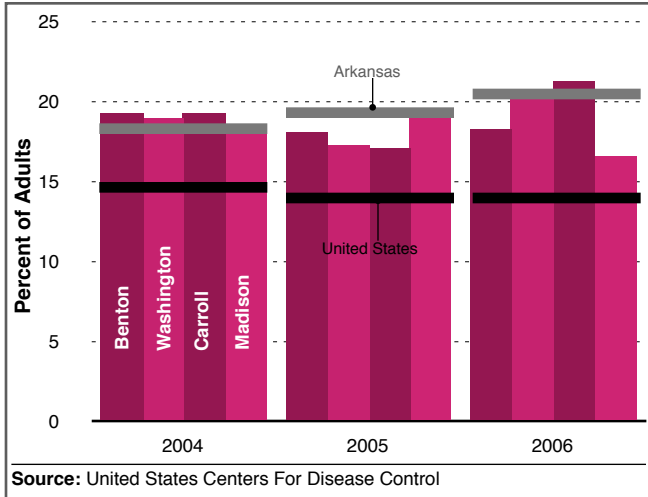


Figure 7.14
Adults Without Health Insurance, by Year, by County

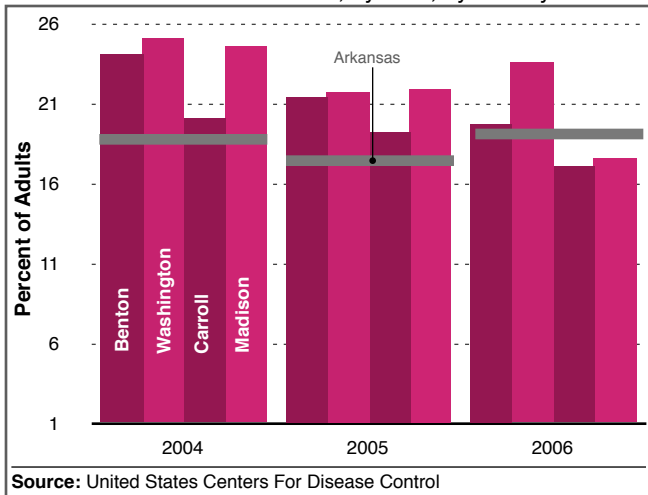


- ★ In 2004, nearly 20 percent of residents in the Northwest Arkansas counties and the state were without health insurance.
- ★ By 2006, both Washington and Carroll County had grown to over 20 percent uninsured--higher than the state average.
- ★ While the percent uninsured in the United States remained relatively constant, the Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas percentages increased slightly between 2004-2006.
- ★ Since 2004, the percentage of Northwest Arkansas residents without a personal physician has been over 20 percent and generally higher than the state average.



UNINSURED

Figure 7.15
Adults Without Personal Doctor, by Year, by County

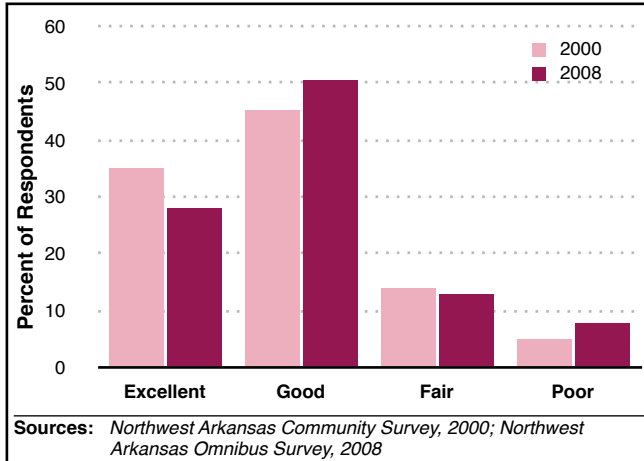


What People Are Saying About... Health Care

Attitudes toward health care often vary a great deal by socioeconomic status, region of the country, and the current state of the economy. In a recent poll, the Kaiser Foundation reported that nearly 3 in 10 Americans reported having difficulty in paying for health care or health insurance. In addition, while the majority of U.S. citizens were satisfied with the current health care they were receiving, a large percentage of citizens said their health care coverage was inadequate.

The general satisfaction of Northwest Arkansas residents is examined below. The results from the 2000 NWA Community Survey and 2008 Omnibus Survey show that while satisfaction is high among surveyed residents, attitudes are beginning to change.

Figure 7.16
Quality Of Health Care in Northwest Arkansas



- ★ In 2000, most Northwest Arkansas residents said that medical care in their community or in the region was either “*excellent*” or “*good*.”
- ★ While the shifts were modest between 2000 and 2008, Northwest Arkansas residents were slightly less satisfied now than they were eight years ago with their health care.

Health Risks and Prevention

Engaging in risky behaviors or following a lifestyle filled with risk and hazard, has shown to have wide ranging effects on youth and adults. Whether the effect is on a specific health outcome or just general social/physical development, taking unnecessary risks is a significant contributor to the problems Arkansans and Northwest Arkansans are experiencing. As simple as not wearing sunscreen or leaving an unlocked, loaded handgun in plain view, the risks that people take can actually have an impact on disease and mortality rates--some of what is discussed below are clearly relevant to earlier discussions on leading causes of death and disease in the region.

Preventing negative health outcomes often involves changing people’s behavior, or creating programming that introduces options to alter behavior. Developing an anti-smoking campaign may be an important part of prevention, but developing a program to help people actually quit smoking operates at another level that is critical to altering disease patterns among large subpopulations.

Figure 7.17
Prevalence of Smoking

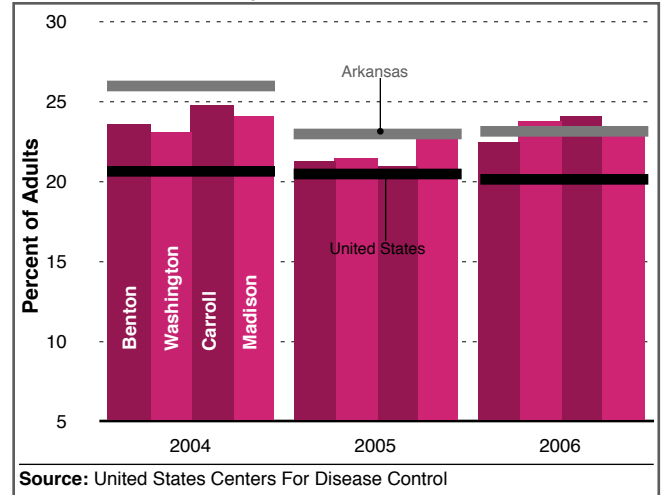
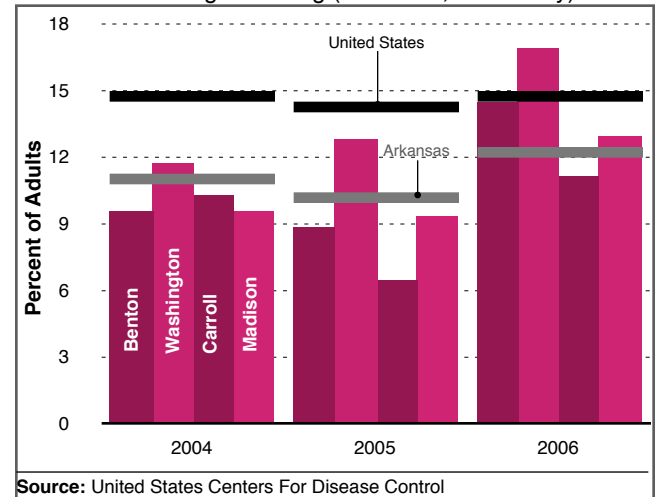
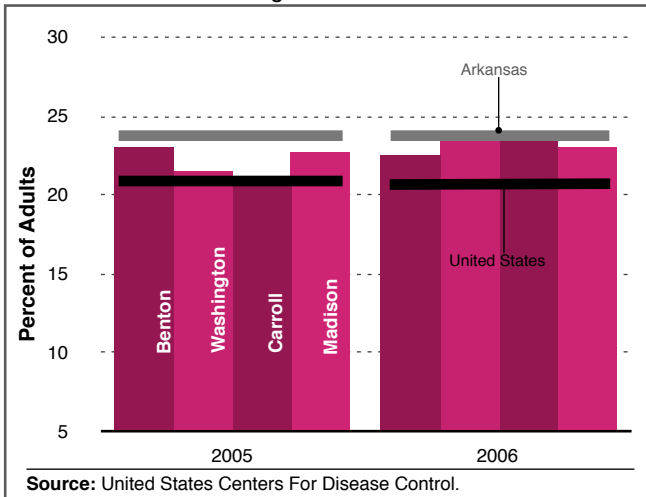


Figure 7.18
Prevalence of Binge Drinking (5+ Drinks, Same Day)



- ★ In 2004, Northwest Arkansas residents had higher rates of smoking prevalence among adults than the United States average (21%) but lower than the Arkansas state average (25%).
- ★ By 2006, Northwest Arkansans, except for Benton County, were smoking at higher rates than the average for the country and the state as a whole.
- ★ In general, the rate of binge drinking among Northwest Arkansas adults has consistently been lower than the U.S. average.
- ★ The rate of binge drinking among adults has been higher in Washington County than other Northwest Arkansas counties since 2004.

Figure 7.19
Adults Who Are Overweight



★ The percentage of adults in Northwest Arkansas who do not regularly exercise, and the percentage of adults with diabetes, has increased in Northwest Arkansas between 2005-2006.

★ Carroll County often demonstrates the largest percentage of adults who were overweight, not exercising, and diabetic during the 2004-2006 period, with a few exceptions.

★ The percentage of adults reporting diabetes in Northwest Arkansas counties was higher than both the national and state averages by 2006.

★ With regard to all three of the weight and exercise risk factors, Arkansas percentages were generally higher than the national averages.

Figure 7.20
Adults Who Did Not Exercise, Past Month

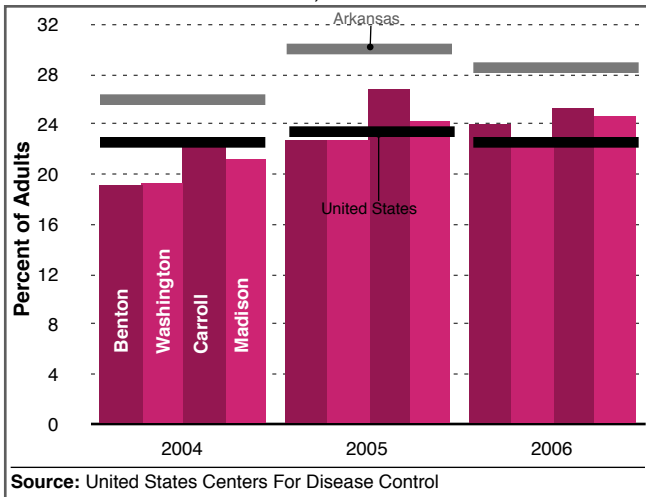
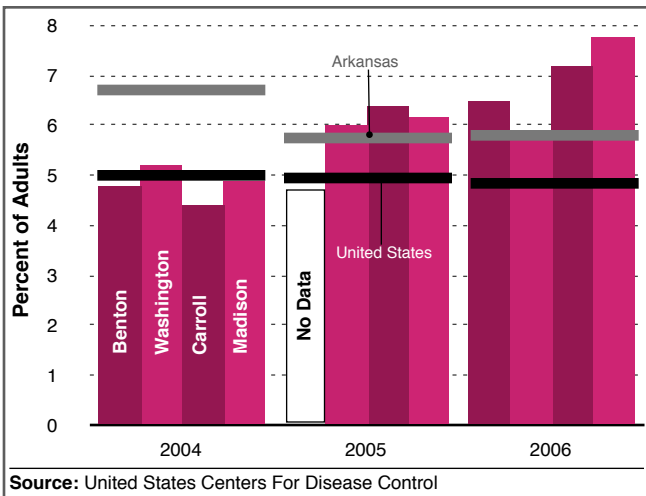
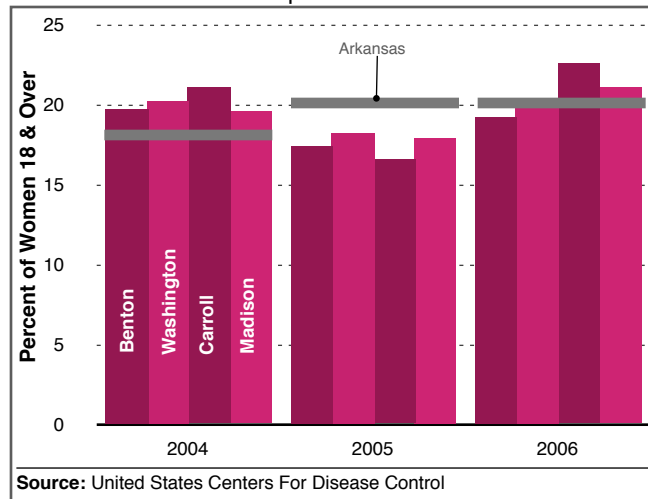


Figure 7.21
Prevalence of Diabetes



Preventative Health Care

Figure 7.22
Women 18 & Over: No Pap Smear Past 3 Years



- ★ In 2004, nearly one-fifth of Northwest Arkansas females 18 years of age and over had no pap smear in the past three years.
- ★ By 2006, nearly all the counties in Northwest Arkansas had higher percentages of women 18 years of age and over that did not have a pap smear in the last three years compared to the state average.
- ★ Mammogram testing among women ages 40 and over has increased in the state and in all of the Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ Except for Washington County in 2005, all the Northwest Arkansas counties lagged behind the state average for adults 16-64 being tested for HIV since 2004.
- ★ The percentage of adults ages 16-64 tested for HIV has slowly declined in the state and all of the Northwest Arkansas counties.

Figure 7.23
Adults Age 16 to 64: Receiving HIV Test

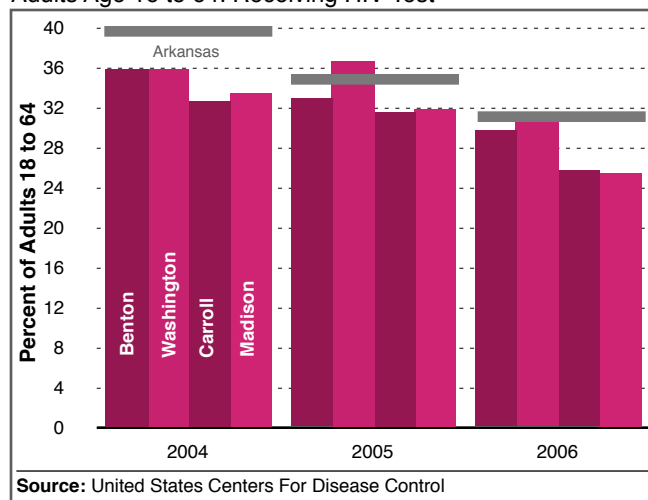
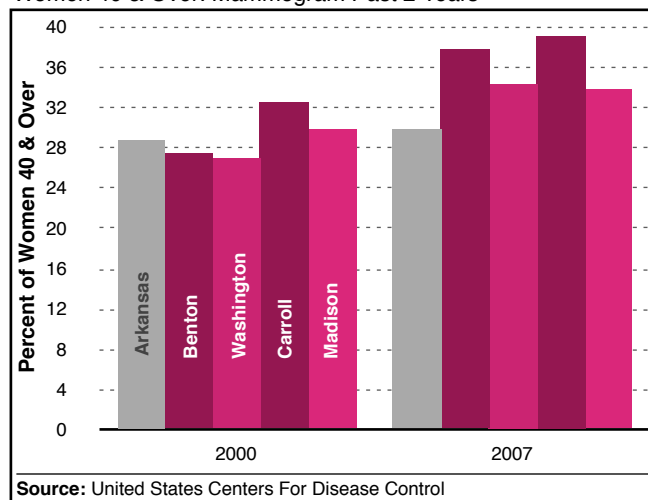


Figure 7.24
Women 40 & Over: Mammogram Past 2 Years



Mental Health and Access to Care

It is estimated that more than one-quarter of American adults over the age of 18, suffer from a major diagnosable mental disorder in a given year (Kessler 2005). While rates vary a great deal across subpopulations, major depressive disorder is the leading cause of disability among persons 15-44.

Suicide, which is often an active expression of severe mental health problems, averages a rate of 11 persons per 100,000 in the United States every year. These suicide rates are highest among men; men over the age of 85 have the highest rates of suicide across all age subgroups.

Figure 7.25
Suicide Rates: 1999-2005

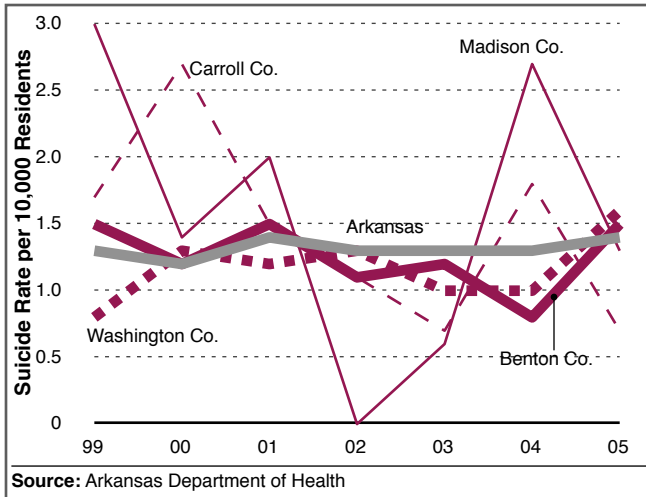
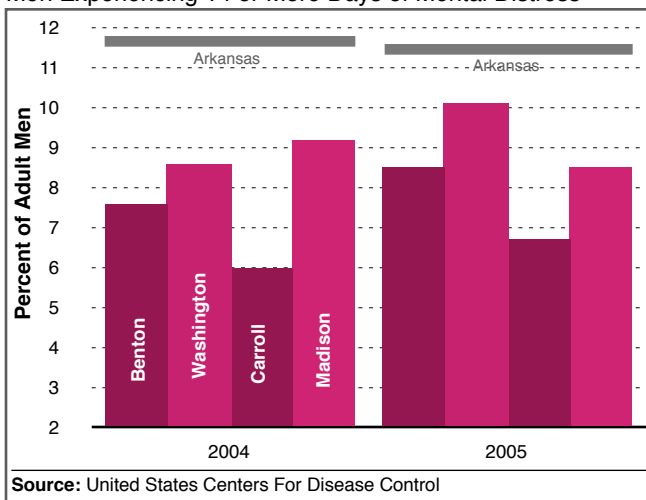


Figure 7.26
Men Experiencing 14 or More Days of Mental Distress



- ★ Suicide rates in the state have remained relatively constant since 1999.
- ★ While Benton and Washington Counties have followed a similar pattern in suicide rates to the rest of the state, Madison and Carroll counties have experienced large fluctuations in suicide rates from year-to-year since 1999.
- ★ The percentage of men 18 years of age and over reporting depressive symptoms in the last 14 days from the time of their interview is relatively low across all counties in Northwest Arkansas.
- ★ Males reporting depressive symptoms are slightly higher in Washington County relative to the rest of the Northwest Arkansas counties.

Figure 7.27
Number of Mental Health Workers, by County, by Year

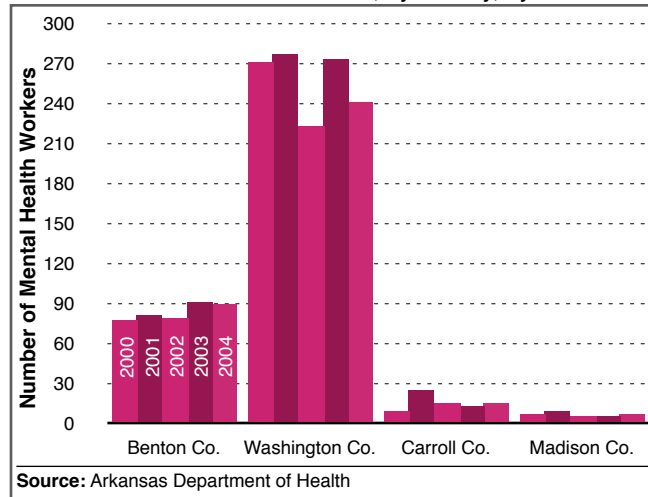


Figure 7.28
Clients Served: Arkansas Mental Health Services

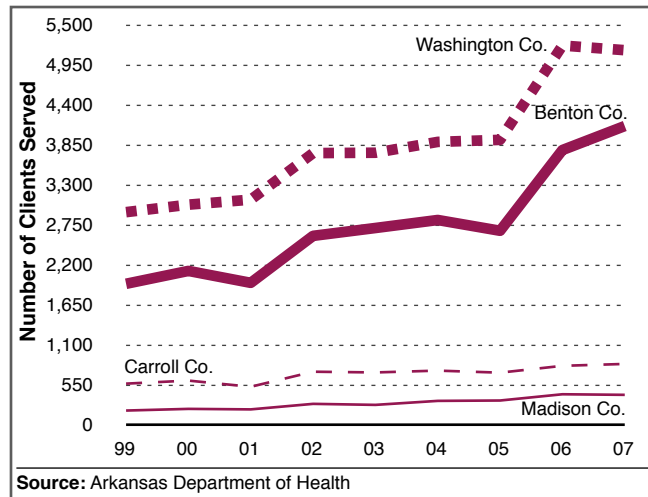
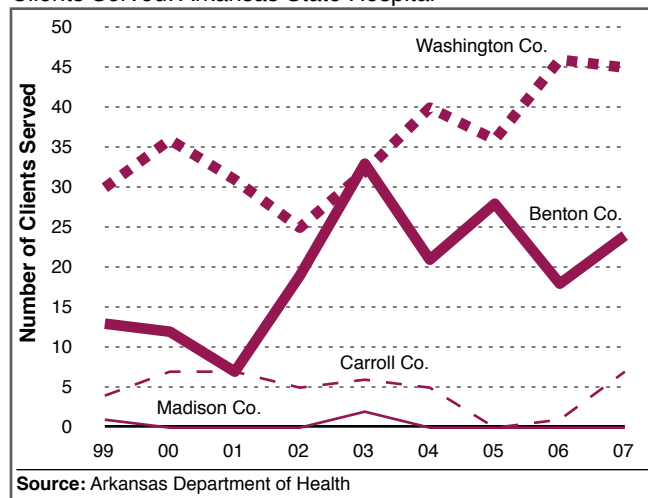


Figure 7.29
Clients Served: Arkansas State Hospital



- ★ While the number of mental health workers have increased slightly over the last 5 years in Benton County, little change was noted in the other Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ Despite little change in the number of mental health workers in any of the Northwest Arkansas counties, Figure 7.28 and Figure 7.29 show steady increases in the demand for mental health services.
- ★ In less than ten years, the demand for mental health services significantly increased in both Washington and Benton Counties.
- ★ Clients served by Arkansas mental health services nearly doubled in Washington County between 1999-2007.
- ★ The number of clients served by the Arkansas State Hospital has increased since 1999 in Washington and Benton Counties.
- ★ Clients served by the state hospital in Carroll and Madison County have been limited with little change over the last several years.
- ★ With limited psychiatric services in Northwest Arkansas, the demand continues to increase among both adults and children.



What's It All Mean?

While Arkansas as a whole is ranked as one of the states with the poorest health care coverage and often ranks high in a wide range of chronic disease indicators, the health of Northwest Arkansas residents has generally been better than the state on average, with some positive signs that health is improving. Nevertheless, there are a number of important health indicators that raise a red flag and suggest that a closer inspection of these indicators seems warranted.

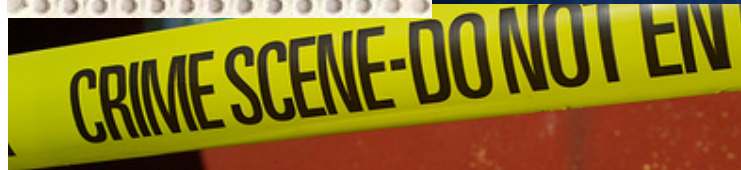
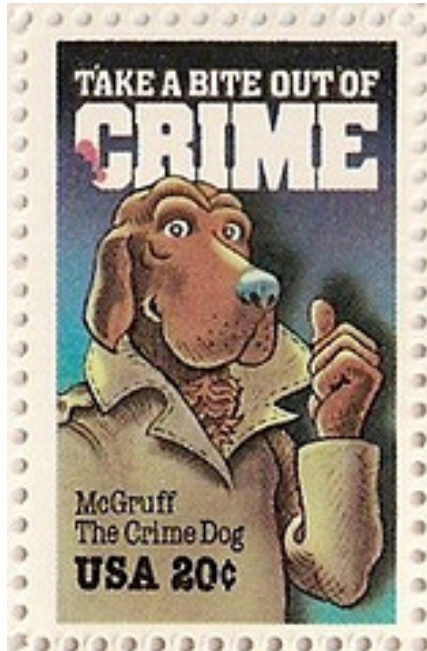
Chronic disease rates and age-adjusted mortality rates in the region suggest that many Northwest Arkansas residents are doing better than they were at the end of the 20th Century. However, age-adjusted rates for COPD and diabetes are increasing and may be cause for alarm. A number of health risk behaviors among Northwest Arkansas residents are contributing

factors to the rise of these two chronic diseases--further reason to more carefully examine risk and its impact on specific health outcomes.

Arkansas continues to be one of several states that consistently rank toward the bottom with respect to health care coverage, percent of residents with no health care insurance, and limited access to health care, health care technology, and health care specialities. For Northwest Arkansans, limited access may be partly the result of location of services and limited public transportation to assist the elderly, poor, and other subpopulations with accessing these services.

Chapter 8

Public Safety: Safer Than Other Places?



Public Safety in Northwest Arkansas

A critical dimension of a community's quality of life is *public safety* - the extent to which residents are protected from significant threats of harm to persons and property. Public safety is achieved through the the services of community members and governmental entities. Neighborhood residents keep an eye on each other's homes and supervise each other's children while police, fire, and emergency medical personnel respond to a variety of emergencies.

It is difficult to underestimate the importance of public safety for shaping the quality of life in local communities. Public safety is a fundamental prerequisite for creating a healthy community. It fosters a sense of personal security and well-being that, in turn, helps to build community cohesiveness and, eventually, neighborhood stability. A safe, cohesive, and stable community then serves as the foundation for economic development and growth. Given all that public safety makes possible, it is not surprising to find out that when asked to identify the issues most important to them, citizens consistently rank public safety near the top.



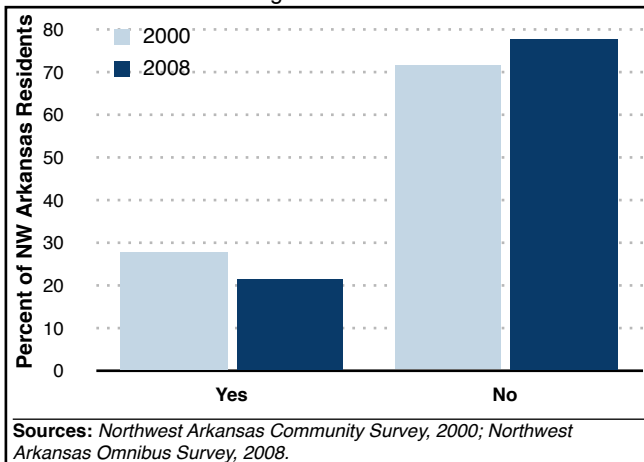
Frequently, rapid changes in a community produce fear and anxiety among residents. Survey data collected by the Community and Family Institute at the University of Arkansas suggest that the dramatic changes occurring in Northwest Arkansas have not produced an atmosphere of insecurity among its residents.

To put it simply: Northwest Arkansas residents feel safer today than they did in the recent past. The percentage of Northwest Arkansans who reported that they would be afraid to walk alone at night near their home actually decreased from 28 percent in 2000 to 22 percent in 2008.

The increased feeling of personal security expressed by those who live in Northwest Arkansas can be contrasted with the most recent Gallup Poll results, which show that Americans have grown steadily more fearful of crime in their neighborhoods since 2001.

What People Are Saying About... Neighborhood Safety

Figure 8.1
Afraid To Walk Alone At Night Near Home



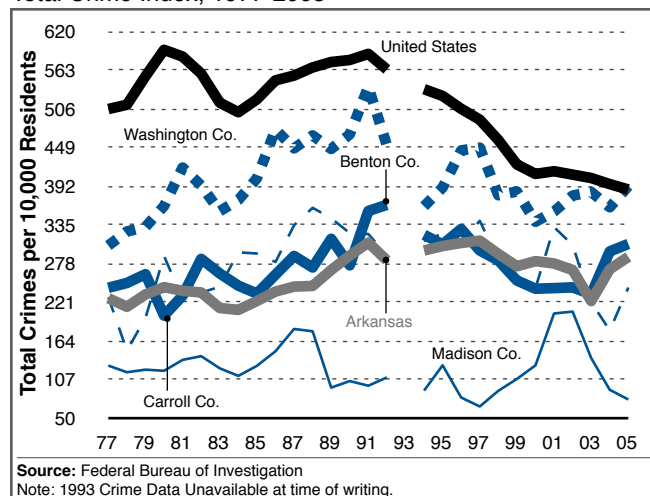
- ★ In 2000, 28 percent of Northwest Arkansas residents reported fear of walking alone at night near their home.
- ★ By 2008, the percentage of Northwest Arkansans who were fearful of walking alone at night dropped to 22 percent.

"Crime and the fear of crime have permeated the fabric of American life."

Warren E. Burger
Chief Justice, U.S. Supreme Court

Crime in Northwest Arkansas

Figure 8.2
Total Crime Index, 1977-2005



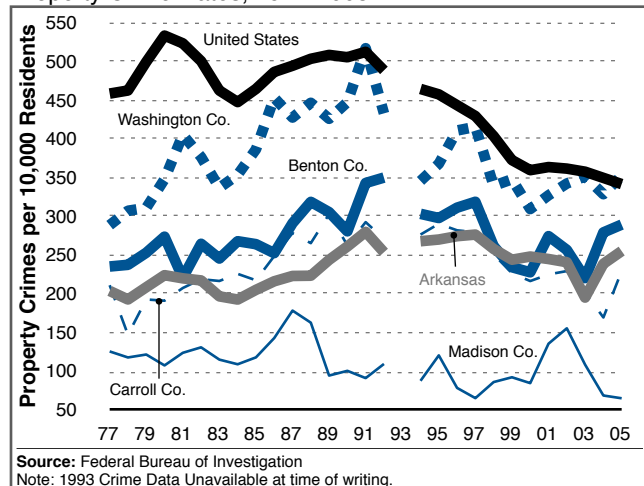
The primary source of crime statistics in the United States is the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniform Crime Reports*. Each year, state and local police agencies tabulate the total number of crimes reported to have occurred in their jurisdictions and pass this information on to the FBI. One of the chief benefits of the UCR program is that it enables local communities to examine crime *trends* - that is look at the volume of crime *over time*.

Crime information gathered as part of the UCR program is presented in Figure 8.2 and 8.3. The data are for Part I crimes measured annually by the FBI since 1977.

Figure 8.2 depicts the trend for all Part I crimes combined: murder/non-negligent homicide; forcible rape; aggravated assault; robbery; burglary; larceny; and motor vehicle theft (arson is excluded). Figure 8.3 is limited to Part I property crimes. For each figure, information provided by local police agencies has been aggregated to the county level.



Figure 8.3
Property Crime Rates, 1977-2005

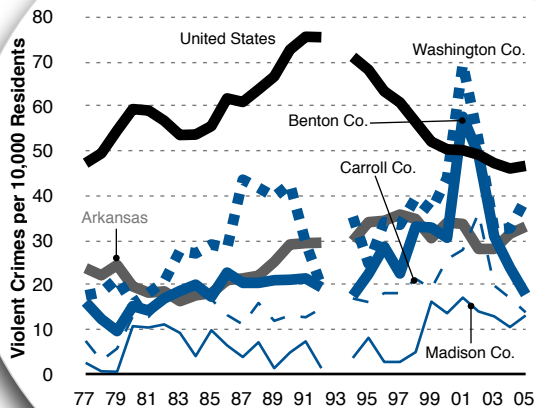


- ★ Overall, Northwest Arkansas has experienced a slight increase in the volume of serious crime between 1977 and 2005.
- ★ Since the 1990's, crime rates have undergone a substantial decline in Northwest Arkansas.
- ★ Crime rates in Washington County have been consistently higher than Arkansas as a whole, as well as the other three Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ Crime rates in Madison County are consistently far below the state average.
- ★ Most serious crimes involve offenses against property, not persons. Comparing Figure 8.2 and 8.3, one can see that the bulk of all serious crimes known to police consist of burglaries, larcenies, and motor vehicle thefts. Put another way, compared to property

Indicator in the Spotlight: Violent Crime in Northwest Arkansas

Figure 8.4

Violent Crime Rates, 1977-2005



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation
Note: 1993 Crime Data Unavailable at time of writing.

Despite their rarity, violent crime rates are a particularly important index of public safety and overall quality of life because of the physical, emotional, and financial costs they impose, as well as the level of fear and insecurity they generate among community members.

Figure 8.4 presents composite rates for Part I violent crimes - murder/non-negligent homicide; forcible rape; aggravated assault; and robbery - for each of the four Northwest Arkansas counties for the period 1977 thru 2005.

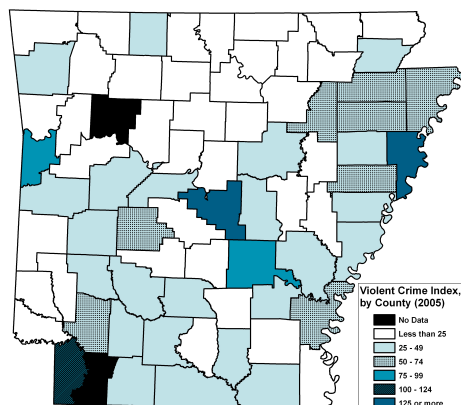
- ★ Whereas the violent crime rate for the United States as a whole has been declining since 1991, Northwest Arkansas has experienced a steady increase in the volume of violent crime, going all the way back to 1977.
- ★ In one recent two-year period, the violent crime rate of Northwest Arkansas exceeded the national average.
- ★ Violent crime rates in Washington County have been somewhat higher than the other three Northwest Arkansas counties over time. Notably, however, this violent crime gap between Washington County on the one hand, and Benton, Carroll, and Madison Counties on the other, is much smaller than for property crimes.
- ★ Northwest Arkansas has some of the lowest violent crime rates in the state of Arkansas. As recently as 2005, three of the four NWA counties had violent crime rates significantly lower than the state average.
- ★ Violent crime rates in Northwest Arkansas are approaching the national average.

"The real significance of crime is in its being a breach of faith with the community of mankind."

Joseph Conrad

Figure 8.5

Violent Crimes per 10,000 Residents
2005



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Intersection of Alcohol, Drugs, and Crime

Figure 8.6
Drug Possession Arrest Rates, 1988-2005

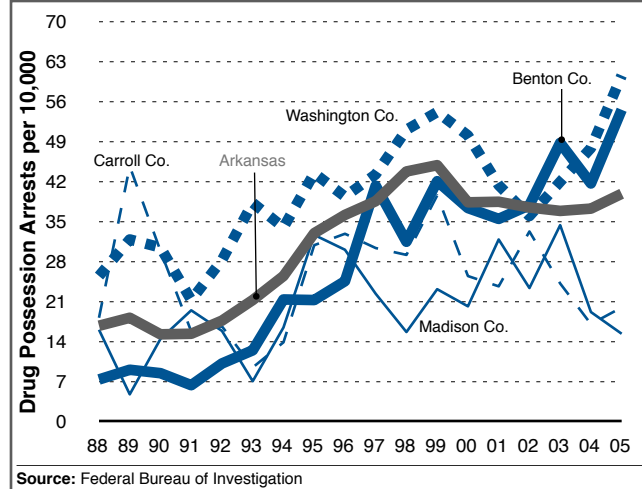
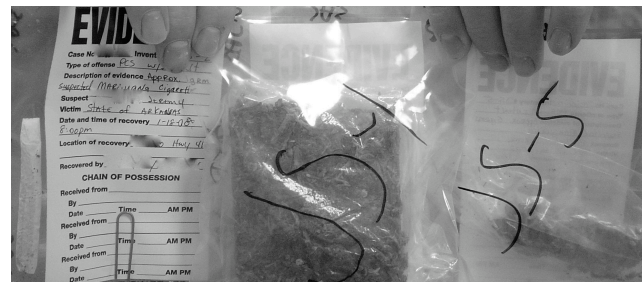
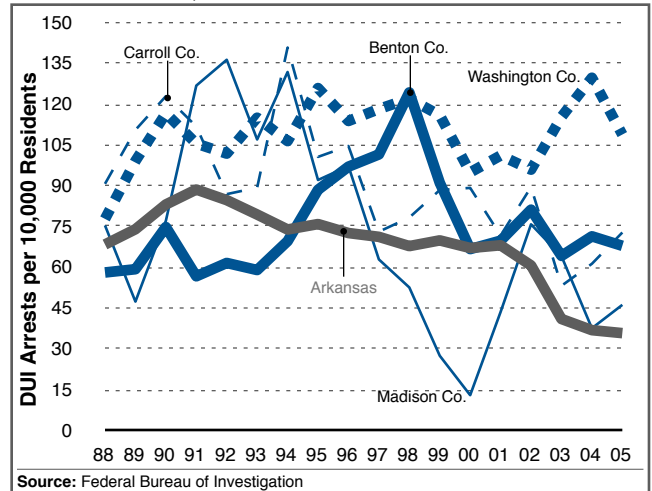


Figure 8.7
DUI Arrest Rates, 1988-2005

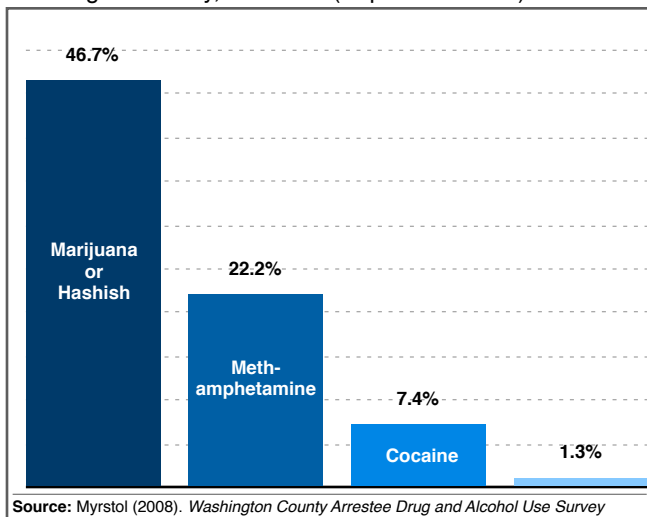


- ★ Arrest rates for illegal drug possession have increased steadily between 1988 and 2005, particularly in Washington and Benton Counties.
- ★ Over time, drug possession arrest rates have been highest in Washington County.
- ★ Recently, drug arrest rates in Benton County have converged with those in Washington County.
- ★ Different from the trend in Benton and Washington Counties, drug arrest rates in Carroll and Madison Counties are declining.

- ★ Overall, Northwest Arkansas' arrest rates for driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs have held steady between 1988 and 2005. A closer look, however, reveals some notably divergent patterns. Consider:

- 1) DUI arrest rates have risen markedly in Washington County.
- 2) Benton County has witnessed a small increase in DUI arrest rates.
- 3) Carroll and Madison Counties have experienced steady declines in DUI arrest rates that coincide with an overall decline in DUI arrest rates for the state as a whole.

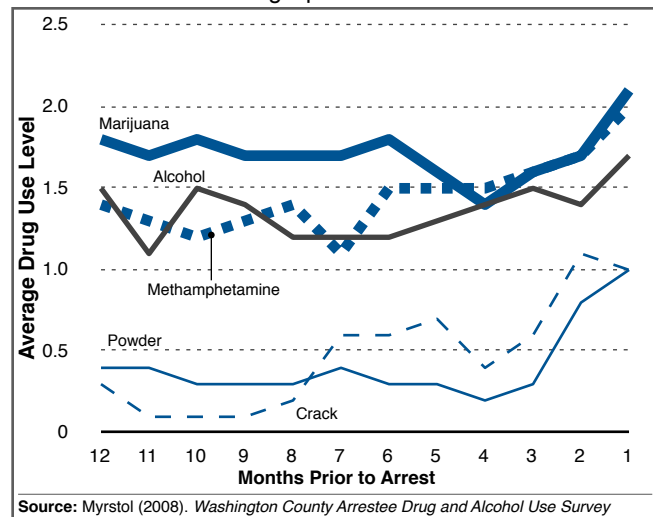
Figure 8.8
 Percentage of Arrestees Testing Positive For Drugs:
 Washington County, Arkansas (September 2007)



Recent data collected from adults booked into the Washington County jail reveal a great deal about patterns of alcohol and drug use among those arrested for criminal offenses. More than 80 percent of arrestees report consuming 5 or more drinks of alcohol on the same day at least once in their lifetime, nearly two-thirds report doing so at least once in the year preceding their arrest, and more than four out of every ten admitted to binge drinking within a month of their arrest.

Illicit drug use is also common among the Washington County arrestee population. In excess of 75 percent of all arrestees report using at least one illicit drug in their lifetime. Nearly half of all arrestees tested positive for THC (marijuana) on the day of their arrest. Approximately one-fifth of all arrestees tested positive for methamphetamine. Fewer than ten percent tested positive for cocaine or opiates.

Figure 8.9
 Arrestees' Average Level of Illicit Drug Use,
 12-Month Period Leading Up To Arrest



Arrestee data also show a discernible pattern of alcohol and drug use in the weeks leading up to arrest. Without exception, the frequency of drug use begins to increase dramatically between 90 and 120 days prior to arrest.

In addition, arrestee data show that in the days leading up to arrest the average level of use for marijuana and methamphetamine exceed that for all other drugs, including alcohol.

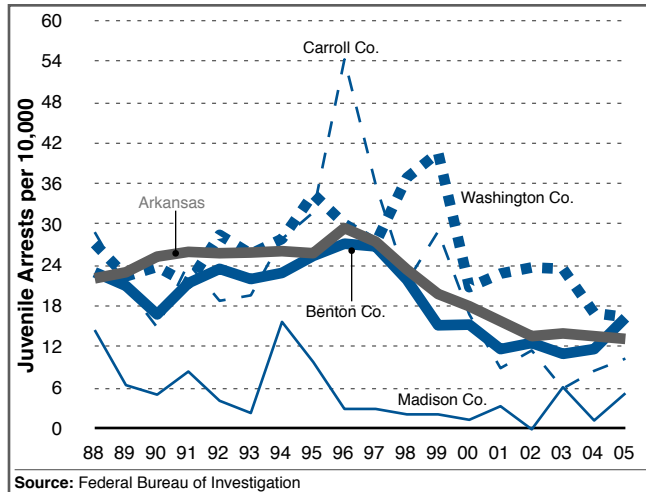
With respect to age of first use, the Washington County arrestee data show that alcohol and marijuana, substances used by nearly every arrestee at least once, are first used at a younger age than more serious drugs like methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin. With the exception of alcohol and marijuana, Washington County arrestees begin their experimentation with illicit drugs in their early 20s.

Table 8.1. Arrestee Self-Reported Alcohol and Drug Use
 Percent Responding "Yes"

	Ever	Past 12 Months	Past 30 Days	Past 7 Days	Past 3 Days	Age of Onset
Alcohol	83.0	60.8	40.9	---	---	16.4
Marijuana or Hashish	75.0	50.6	38.8	32.4	25.9	15.2
Methamphetamine	43.9	27.2	20.0	15.8	12.2	20.1
Powder Cocaine	39.3	14.0	6.1	2.2	1.4	20.3
Rock/Crack Cocaine	32.2	32.2	2.1	0.7	0.0	23.3
Heroin	9.9	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.6
Other Illicit Drug	29.6	11.5	---	---	---	20.6

Source: Myrstol (2008). Washington County Arrestee Drug and Alcohol Use Survey. University of Arkansas

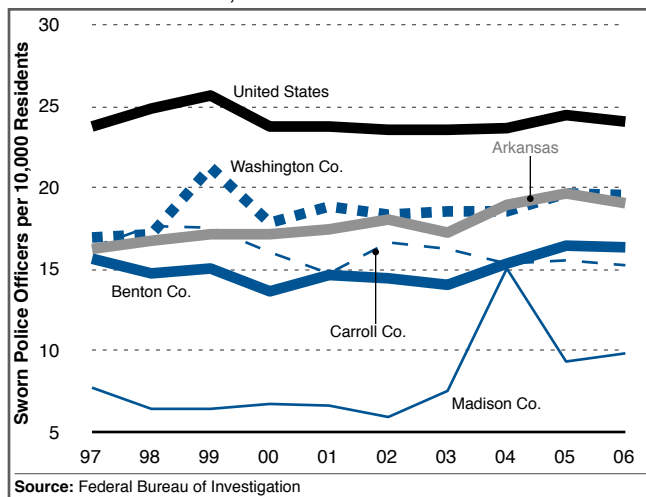
Figure 8.10
Juvenile Arrest Rates, Part I Offenses: 1988-2005



- ★ After peaking in the mid-to-late 1990's, juvenile arrest rates have fallen dramatically in Northwest Arkansas.
- ★ In 2005, Benton and Washington Counties had identical juvenile arrest rates, which were very near the state average.
- ★ Juvenile arrest rates have been consistently lower in Madison County than any of the other Northwest Arkansas counties and the state average.

Public Safety Capacity

Figure 8.11
Police: Citizen Ratios, 1997-2006



- ★ Since 1997, the ratio of sworn police officers to citizens in Northwest Arkansas was below the U.S. average, but was consistent with the state of Arkansas as a whole.
- ★ In the Northwest Arkansas region, Washington County has the highest police to citizen ratio, followed by Benton and Carroll Counties, and finally Madison County.
- ★ Of the four Northwest Arkansas counties, Madison County has, by far, the smallest police to citizen ratio.
- ★ Fire protection in Northwest Arkansas is typically provided by volunteer or mostly volunteer departments.

Figure 8.12
Distribution of Northwest Arkansas Fire Departments, 2007

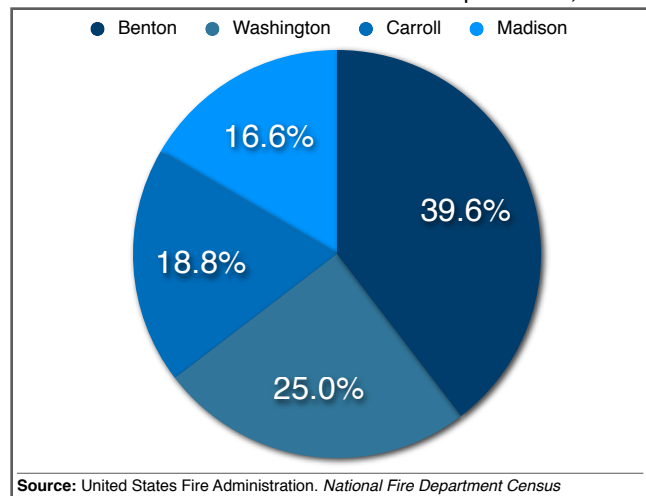
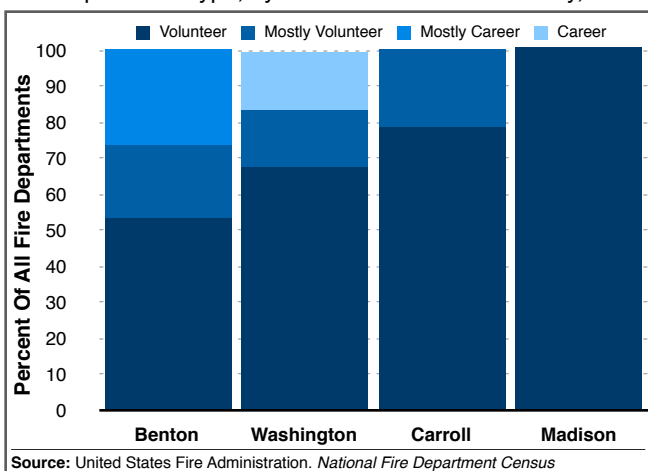


Figure 8.13
Fire Department Type, by Northwest Arkansas County, 2007



What's It All Mean?

Despite all of the changes taking place in the region, the residents of Northwest Arkansas do not appear to be experiencing heightened levels of fear and anxiety as a result. This may be in part due to the fact that Northwest Arkansas is generally safer than other places. Property crime rates have been declining steadily since the early 1990s, and both violent and property crime rates remain below the national average. Data also suggest that there have been important improvements when it comes to driving under the influence, one of the most pressing public safety issues in communities across the country: DUI arrest rates have declined over the past decade in nearly every Northwest Arkansas county. In addition, juvenile arrest rates have declined in every Northwest Arkansas county since the mid-1990s. And finally, the level of police protection enjoyed by Northwest Arkansas residents has actually increased in the last decade.

Keeping in mind all of the public safety gains just mentioned, Northwest Arkansas communities must also take note of several growing public

safety concerns. First, although the rate of violent crime in Northwest Arkansas remains below the national average, the region's violent crime rate has increased steadily since 1977. If current trends continue, the violent crime rate of Northwest Arkansas will exceed the national average. Second, while the rate of DUI arrests has declined markedly in recent years, arrests for drug-related offenses appear to be increasing. Although arrest statistics are typically a better measure of police priorities than underlying levels of criminal behavior, the increase in drug-related arrests since 1988 demand close attention. Added to this are the data collected from Washington County arrestees showing a level of methamphetamine use exceeding that in nearby jurisdictions like Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Taken together, these data suggest that while there is reason for the residents of Northwest Arkansas to celebrate at the present time, there are several public safety challenges that must be addressed if future generations are to enjoy the same levels of safety and personal well-being.

Chapter 9

Aging and the Elderly: Growing Old in Northwest Arkansas



Aging and the Elderly in Northwest Arkansas

Figure 9.1
Percent Females Age 65 & Over, 1980-2006

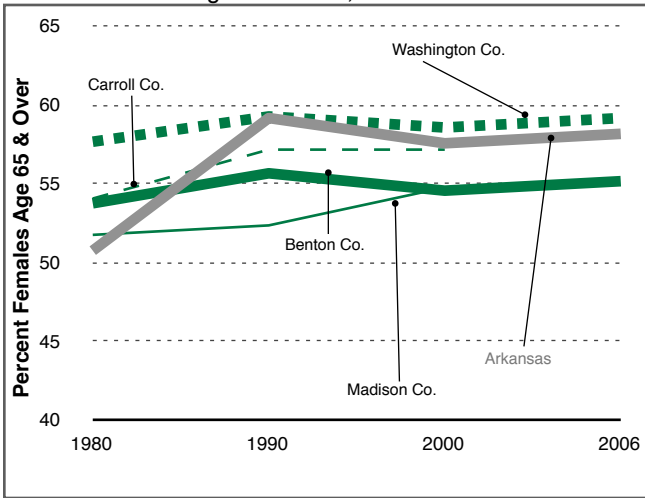
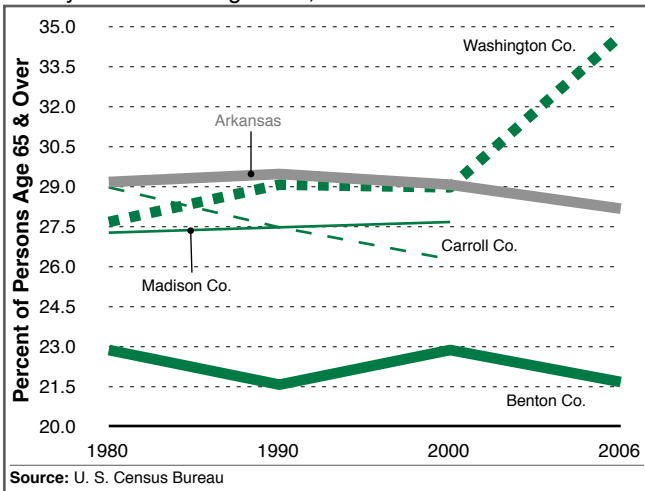


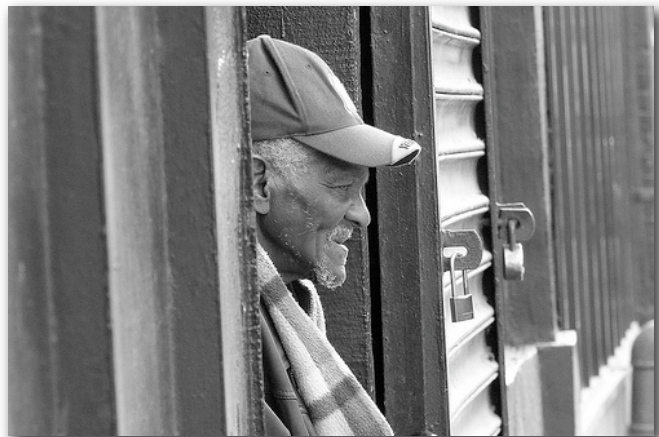
Figure 9.2
Elderly Persons Living Alone, 1980-2006



Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Community life touches everyone from infants to senior citizens. The elderly represent a subgroup that is particularly sensitive to community circumstances; limited mobility makes them highly susceptible to contextual changes/shifts in the social and economic landscape. Ranging from physical and mental well-being to services access/use, understanding how this group is impacted by community is important to assessing the overall quality-of-life in Northwest Arkansas.

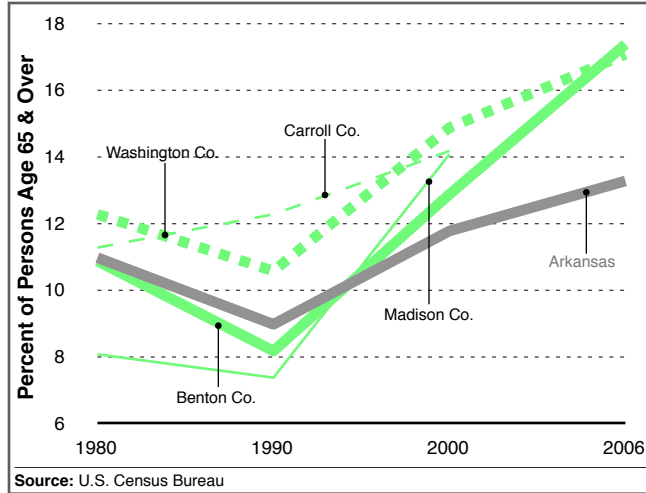
- ★ The gender composition of the elderly (percent female) in Northwest Arkansas and the state has changed slightly since 1980.
- ★ Madison County is the only county in the region to experience significant growth in the percentage of women over 65 since 1990.
- ★ The percentage of elderly persons living alone has remained relatively constant in Arkansas since 1980--shifting less than 1 percent over the last 26 years.
- ★ Benton County had fewer than one-quarter of its elderly residents living by themselves.
- ★ The remainder of Northwest Arkansas counties experienced modest shifts in the percent elderly living alone since 1980.
- ★ Washington County experienced a jump of nearly 6 percent in elderly living alone between 2000-2006.



Making a Living

Figure 9.3

Elderly Persons Employed, 1980-2006



- ★ A dramatic upturn in the percentage of persons 65 years of age and over who are currently employed has taken place in Northwest Arkansas counties since 1990.
- ★ Benton and Madison County saw their working elderly percentages nearly double between 1990-2000.
- ★ All of the counties in Northwest Arkansas have higher percentages of elderly employed compared to the rest of the state.
- ★ Those working in the state were 13.5 percent in 2006 compared to Washington and Benton Counties which were near 17 percent in 2006.



★ Potentially related to one another, Figures 9.3 and 9.4 suggest that employment among persons 65 years of age and over helped shift the percentage of elderly living in poverty in Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas counties.

★ Madison County exhibited the largest percentage decline of elderly living in poverty since 1980 dropping from a high of nearly 40 to almost 16 percent in twenty years.

★ Northwest Arkansas counties have mirrored the state's downturn of elderly living in poverty with dramatic shifts between 1980 and 2000. The current percent of elderly living in poverty in Arkansas is 12 percent.

Figure 9.4

Elderly Persons Living In Poverty, 1980-2006

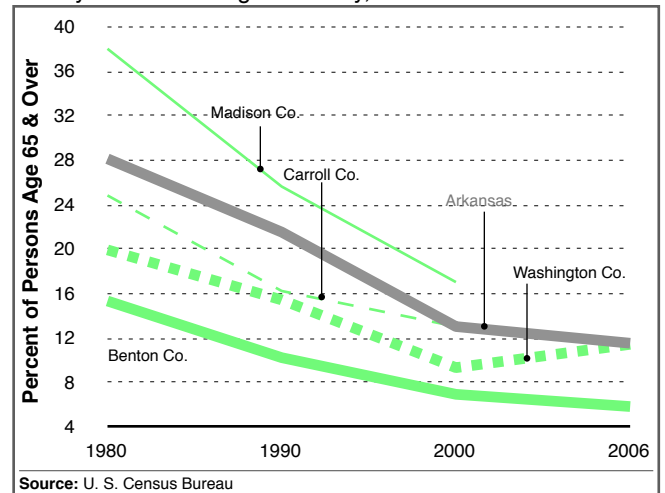
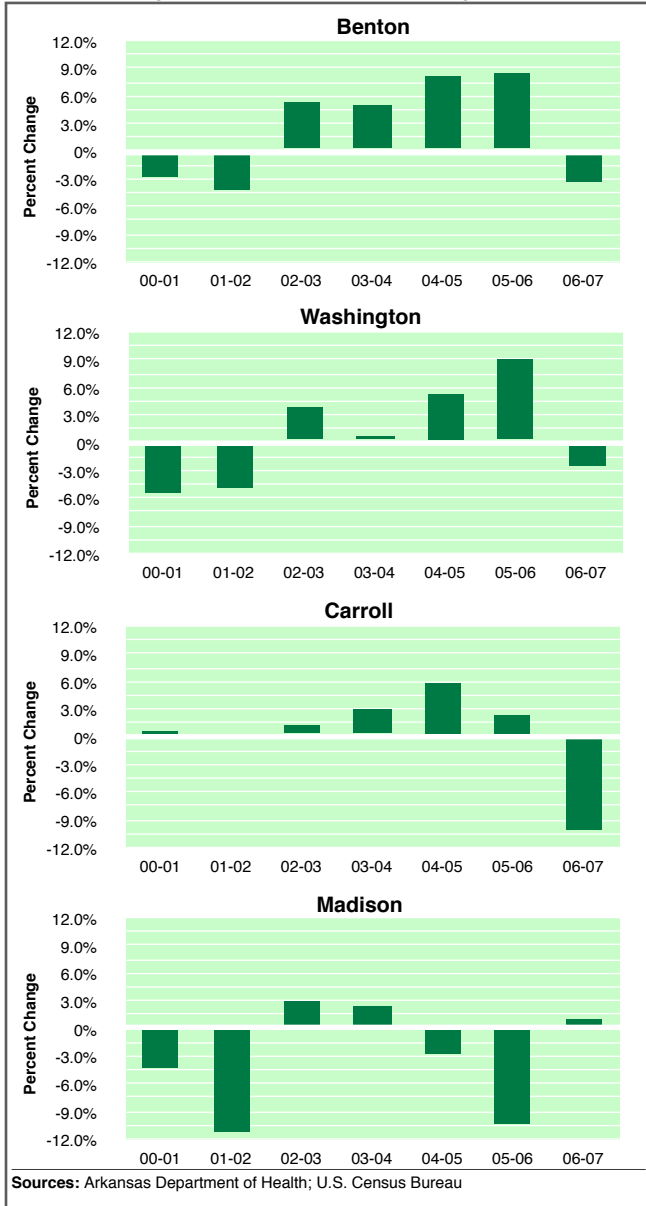


Figure 9.5
Percent Change: Elderly Persons Receiving Food Stamps



- ★ Since 2000, the percentage change of elderly receiving food stamps in Northwest Arkansas has fluctuated with no clear pattern to the present.
- ★ Benton County after two years of decline, recorded four years of continuous increases with nearly a 9 percent increase in elderly receiving food stamp support 2005-2006; the Washington county pattern was very similar.
- ★ Carroll County recorded small increases throughout the period since 2000, but marked a dramatic decrease in elderly receiving food stamps in the 2006-2007 period by nearly 10 percent.
- ★ Madison County recorded the greatest percentages declines over this period, losing more than 10 percent in two separate years.



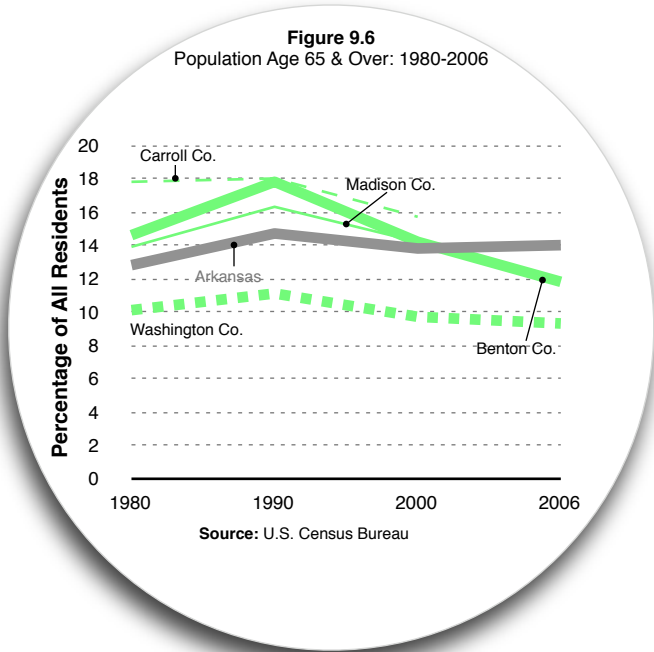
The food stamp program in the United States since the post-depression era, was designed to assist low-income individuals and families with obtaining food items in an effort to improve their diet and nutrition. Elderly persons represent a small percentage of the total persons on food stamps (less than 20%), yet as a group often need the assistance but are not enrolled. The majority of elderly who do receive food stamp benefits, live alone, receive less than \$100.00 a month, and are often unable to obtain adequate nutrition on their own.

Indicator in the Spotlight:

Senior Citizens in Northwest Arkansas

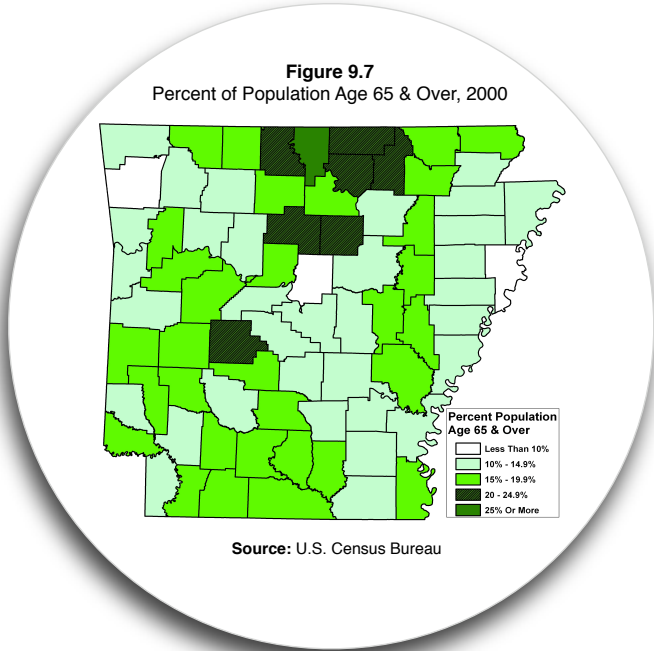
By 2030, it is estimated that there will be nearly 70 million elderly living in the United States accounting for roughly 20 percent of the U.S. population. With America's largest single baby boom generation entering into old age, the nation will need to prepare for that demographic shift both programatically and institutionally as more elderly require long-term care and hospitalization.

- ★ In 1980, the percent of persons over 65 in the state of Arkansas was approximately 12 percent. The percentage of persons over 65 living in the state has steadily increased reaching nearly 15 percent in 2006.
- ★ Northwest Arkansas counties had larger percentages of elderly compared to the the state on average in the period of 1980-1990 (except for Washington County).
- ★ By 2000, Madison and Carroll Counties still had slightly larger percentages of elderly than the rest of the region.
- ★ Northwest Arkansas counties have consistently declined in the percent of elderly; none of the counties appear to be on a projected increase relative to the state.
- ★ In the 2000 map shown in Figure 9.7, relative to the rest of the state, the concentration of elderly in Northwest Arkansas was moderate; only Carroll County had a concentration greater than 15 percent.
- ★ Partly due to the large concentration of University of Arkansas students, Washington County was one of three other counties to have the lowest percentage of elderly (< 10%). The other two counties with small concentrations of elderly were Conway and Crittenden Counties.



"When grace is joined with wrinkles, it is adorable. There is an unspeakable dawn in happy old age."

Victor Hugo, Author



Needing Support

Figure 9.8
Number of Medicaid Eligible Persons, 2004-2007

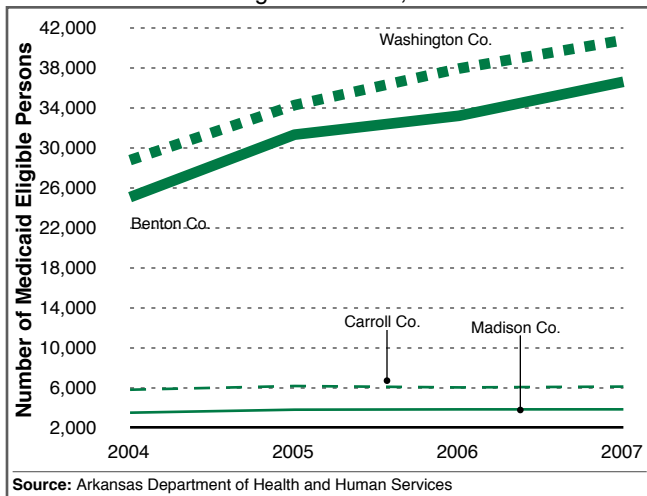


Figure 9.9
Percent of Medicaid Recipients Age 65 & Over, 2004-2007

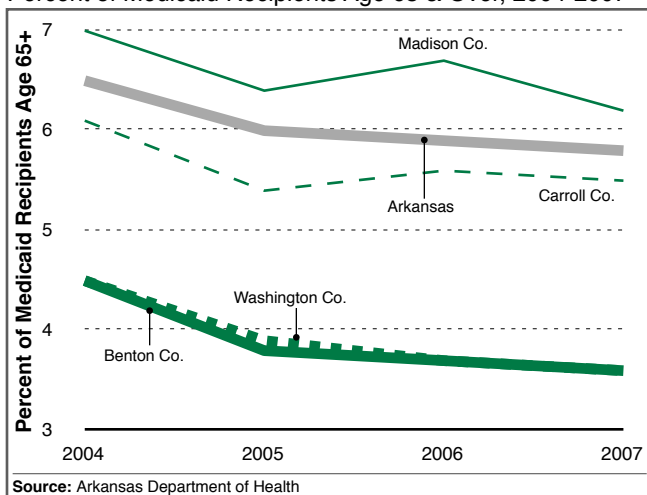
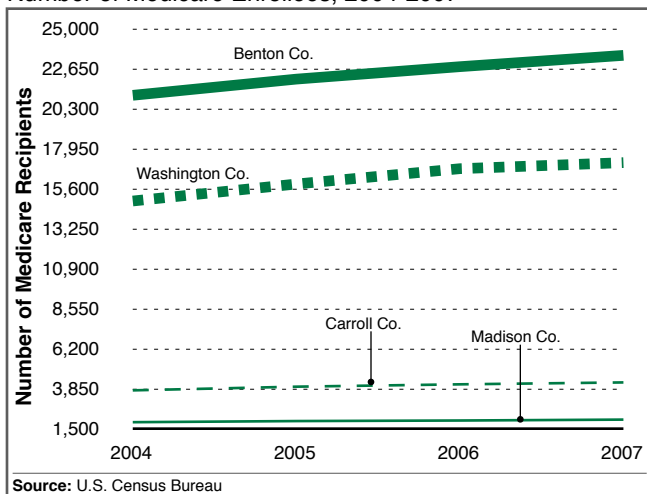


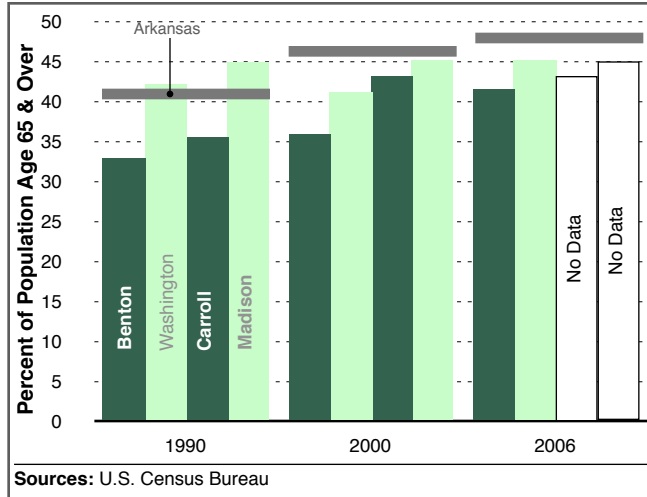
Figure 9.10
Number of Medicare Enrollees, 2004-2007



- ★ As a primary source of health care for low-income families, children, and the elderly, Medicaid enrollment continue to increase in both the state of Arkansas and Washington and Benton Counties.
- ★ Both Washington and Benton Counties increased in the number of Medicaid eligibles between 2004-2007 by nearly 32 percent.
- ★ Carroll and Madison County had nearly flat Medicaid enrollments between 2004-2007.
- ★ While Medicaid eligibles increased in the state and parts of Northwest Arkansas, since 2004, the percent of Medicaid recipients age 65 and over declined.
- ★ With declines in the percent of Medicaid recipients 65 years of age and over in all the Northwest Arkansas counties and the state between 2004-2005, Washington and Benton Counties continued on a similar downturn in the percent of Medicaid recipients--with the lowest percentage of those receiving aid at 3.5 percent in 2007.
- ★ Medicare is the primary health care support program designed to assist persons over the age of 65. Eighteen percent of all Arkansas eligible recipients received some Medicare benefits in 2005.
- ★ With over 40 million U.S. elderly receiving some Medicare benefits, the projected estimate is that number will increase to 77 million by 2030.
- ★ The two fastest growing counties in the Northwest Arkansas region (Benton and Washington Counties) are showing signs of steady increases over the last several years of persons enrolling in Medicare.



Figure 9.11
Elderly With Disabilities, 2000-2006



- ★ Since 1990, the percentage of elderly with some type of disability in the state of Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas has been increasing. Nearly 50 percent of persons over 65 years of age in Arkansas had some form of disability in 2006.
- ★ In 1990, Washington and Madison Counties had disability percentages higher than the state average of 41 percent. By 2006, none of the Northwest Arkansas counties had percentages of elderly disabled higher than the state average.

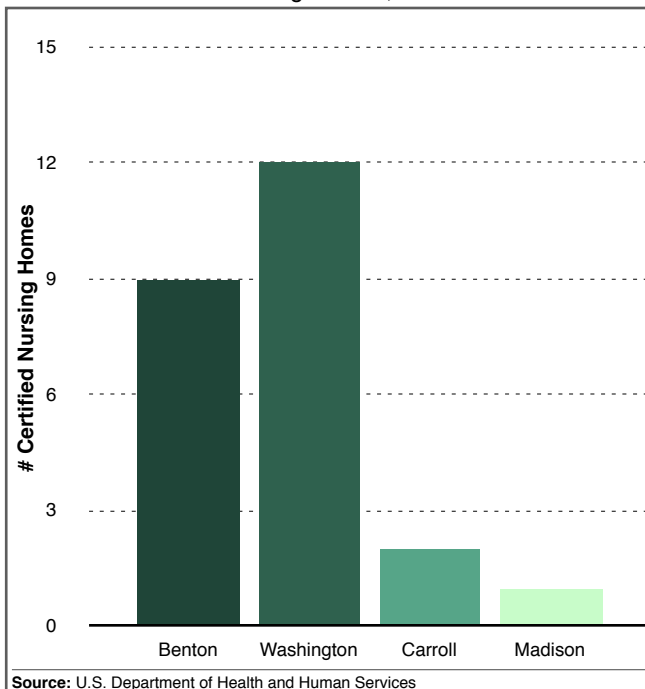
Elderly Care

Long-term care for the elderly represents a large portion of the total health care expenditures each year in the United States. In 2000, an estimated 10 million persons were using long-term care of which nearly 75 percent were over the age of 65.

By 2002, nearly 1.5 million elderly were in some long-term care facility. Estimates suggest that the number in long-term care will double by 2013 as the baby-boomer population begins to experience increasing disability and disease.

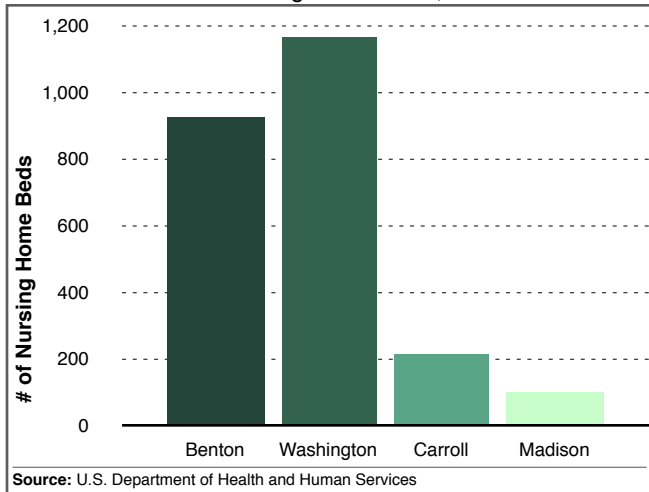


Figure 9.12
Number of Certified Nursing Homes, 2008



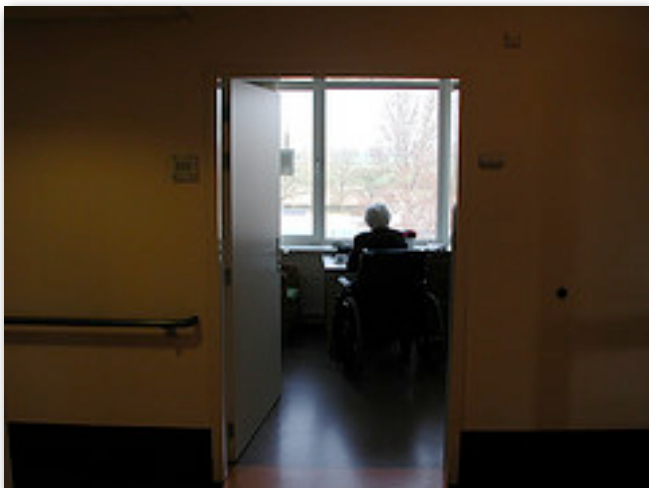
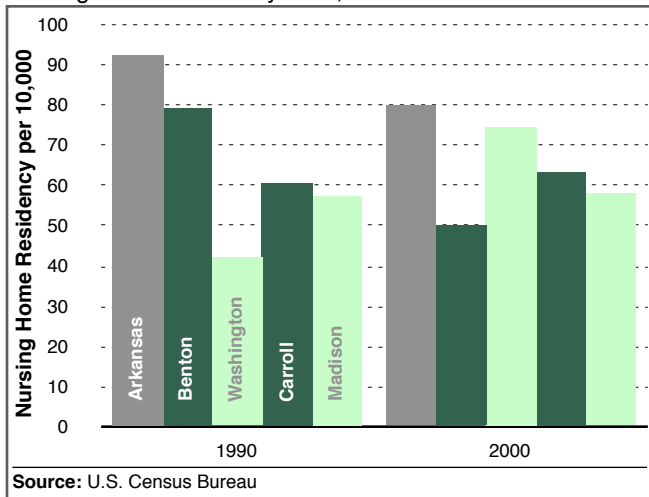
- ★ Based on population size, growth, and the growth in services, the number of nursing home facilities is much larger in Benton and Washington Counties compared to Carroll and Madison.
- ★ Currently there are over 200 long-term care/nursing facilities in the state of Arkansas.
- ★ While nursing facilities vary considerably in size and in services, the projected growth over the next several decades will likely be significant both in the state and the Northwest Arkansas region.

Figure 9.13
Number of Certified Nursing Home Beds, 2008



- ★ The number of nursing home beds was highest in Washington County with nearly 1200 certified beds.
- ★ With a limited number of facilities, Carroll and Madison Counties had fewer than 400 total nursing beds available to the elderly/disabled population in those counties.
- ★ The nursing home residency rate for Arkansas was over 91 persons per 10,000 residents but dropped to 80 persons in 2000.
- ★ The residency rates for the Northwest Arkansas counties was lower than the state average in both 1990 and 2000.
- ★ Residency rates increased in all the Northwest Arkansas counties between 1990 and 2000 except for Benton County.

Figure 9.14
Nursing Home Residency Rate, 1990 and 2000



Elderly Health

In 2002, heart disease, cancer, and stroke were the leading causes of death among persons 65 years of age and over. They continue to rank as leading causes of death across all age groups yet they are preventable. Smoking, lack of exercise, and diet/poor nutrition are significant risk factors for all of these causes and the elderly are often at heightened risk because of their limited mobility and sedentary lifestyles. Arkansas generally ranks in the bottom half of states meeting or exceeding federal stated goals for healthy behaviors; Arkansas ranked at or near the bottom in women's preventative health behaviors (mammograms, cancer screenings, and general preventative services).

Figure 9.15
Percent Population 65 & Over: No Flu Shot, Past Year

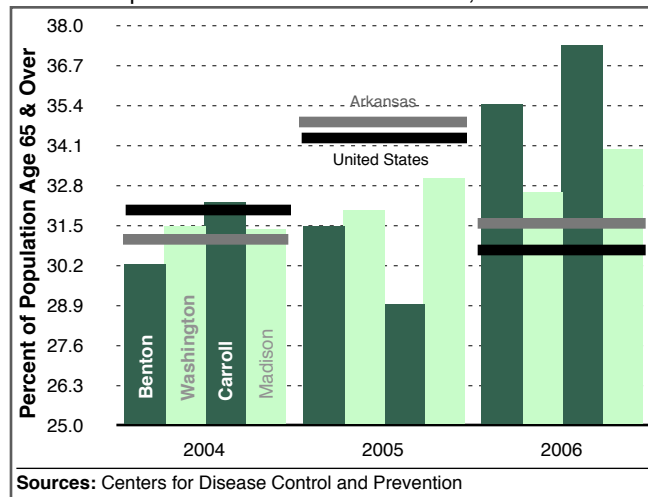
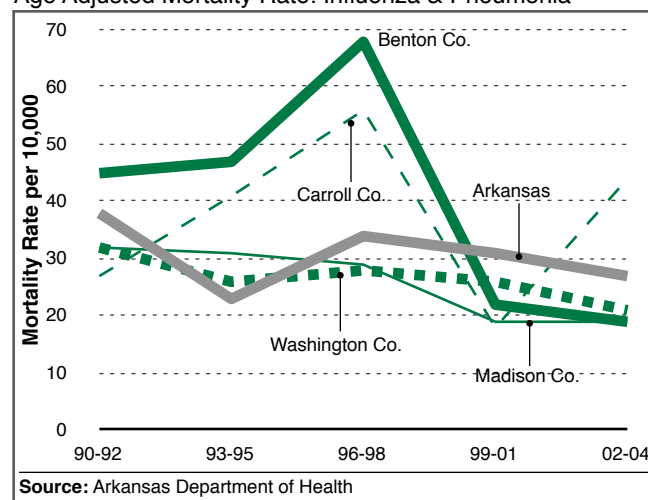


Figure 9.16
Age Adjusted Mortality Rate: Influenza & Pneumonia



- ★ In 2004, fewer elderly Arkansans were **not** getting flu shots compared to the average elderly U.S. citizen.
- ★ In 2005, the number of Arkansans **not** getting their flu shot had risen above the national average.
- ★ All of the counties in Northwest Arkansas registered significantly lower percentages than the U.S. and the state with regards to elderly not getting their flu shot.
- ★ By 2006, the percent of elderly residents in Northwest Arkansas **not** receiving their flu shots had increased significantly and was above both the state and national averages.
- ★ The age-adjusted mortality rate for influenza and pneumonia in the state of Arkansas has decreased from a high of 40 deaths per 10,000 to 29 deaths since 1990.
- ★ Carroll and Benton Counties had the highest age-adjusted mortality rates for influenza and pneumonia in Northwest Arkansas until 1999.
- ★ By 2004, only Carroll County had influenza and pneumonia death rates higher than the state.
- ★ By 2004, all the Northwest Arkansas counties (except Carroll) had influenza and pneumonia mortality rates at or less than 20 deaths per 10,000 persons.

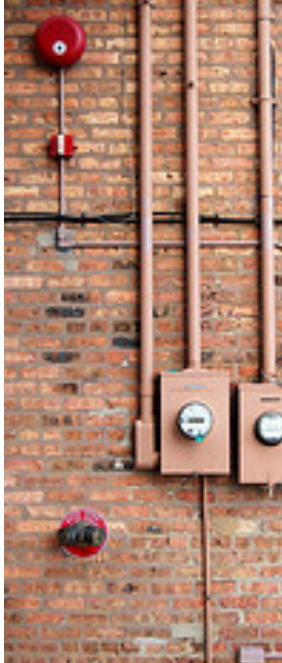
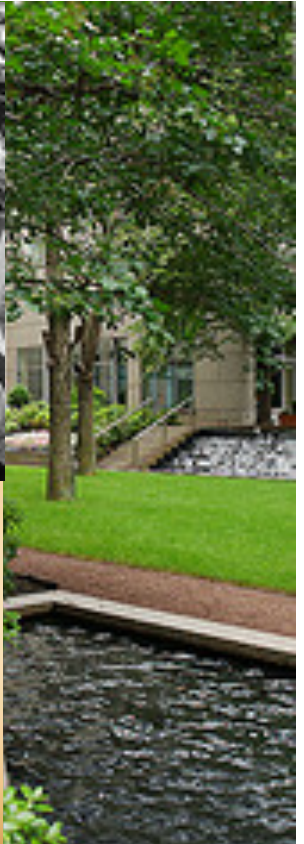
What's It All Mean?

Thanks to advances in medicine and health care, more people are living longer than ever before in the United States. With well over three million persons 85 years and above living in the United States, the challenge of care and services will continue to be a critical issue that needs to be addressed. The picture of elderly in Northwest Arkansas is somewhat unclear. While the percentage of persons 65 years of age and over has slowly increased in the state, the percentage of elderly in Northwest Arkansas counties has not. The percentage of elderly living in poverty has declined considerably in Northwest Arkansas since the 1980's, while the percent of elderly who are working has increased dramatically. The economics of Northwest Arkansas may be forcing more elderly back to work or delaying retirement for others in order to make ends meet. Food stamps, Medicaid, and other forms of support seem to be declining--either fewer are qualified or more who are eligible just are not receiving the benefits they are qualified to receive.

Like all aging Americans and Northwest Arkansans as well, health issues will continue to be at the forefront of planning and strategic development in communities to meet the growing demand of this aging population. With the doubling of the 65 and over population by 2030 and a tripling of the percent 85 years of age and over, infrastructure will need to begin to change to accommodate this demographic shift. Rising energy, food, and transportation costs will begin to impact this subgroup quickly; rural elderly are at greatest risk to have limited access to health care, affordable housing, long-term care, and social services. While Washington and Benton Counties appear to be poised to serve this changing demographic, Madison and Carroll Counties may need to carefully examine the impending growth in the retiring baby boomer generation and how that will impact their supportive infrastructures.

Chapter 10

Natural Environment: How Big is Our Footprint?

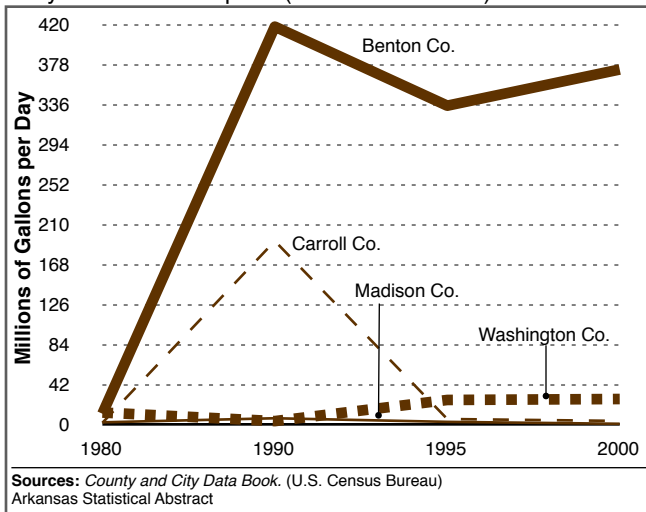


The Natural Environment

The natural environment strongly impacts community quality of life. From the air we breathe to the water we drink, the quality of the natural environment has a direct connection to personal life quality. Low air quality has been directly linked to health problems such as asthma, while low water quality can lead to the spread of disease. Open space allows people to exercise and enjoy the outdoors, improving both their mental and physical well-being. A healthy natural environment promotes a vibrant community.



Figure 10.1
Daily Water Consumption (Ground & Surface)



★ Nearly 50 percent of the U.S. population utilizes ground water for its residential supply-- that percentage may be higher in rural locations such as Carroll and Madison County.

★ Consumption has clearly been different in Benton compared to the remaining counties in Northwest Arkansas.

★ Carroll County experienced a spike in 1990 water consumption but it leveled off by 1995 and looked very similar to Madison and Washington County.

★ Off-stream water use often refers to usage for agricultural purposes. This type of system is used to water livestock and can be critical to improving general water quality, animal health, and overall pasture utilization.

★ In 2000, Carroll and Madison County were using nearly twice as much off-stream water as the other counties in Northwest Arkansas.

★ Off-stream water usage in the state of Arkansas was approximately 170 gallons per person per day.

Figure 10.2
Daily Off-stream Water Usage Per Capita, 2000

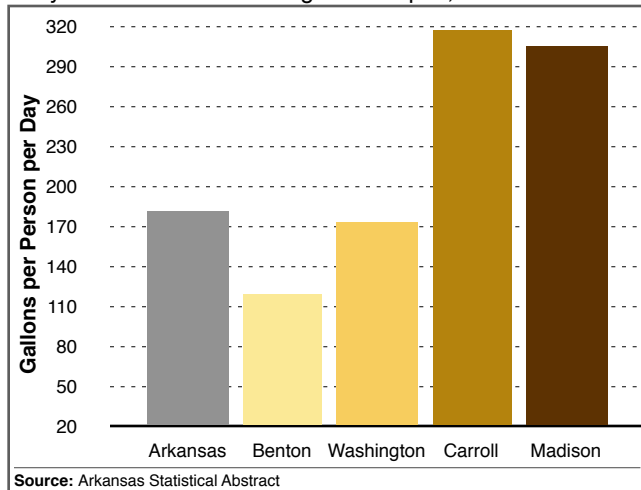
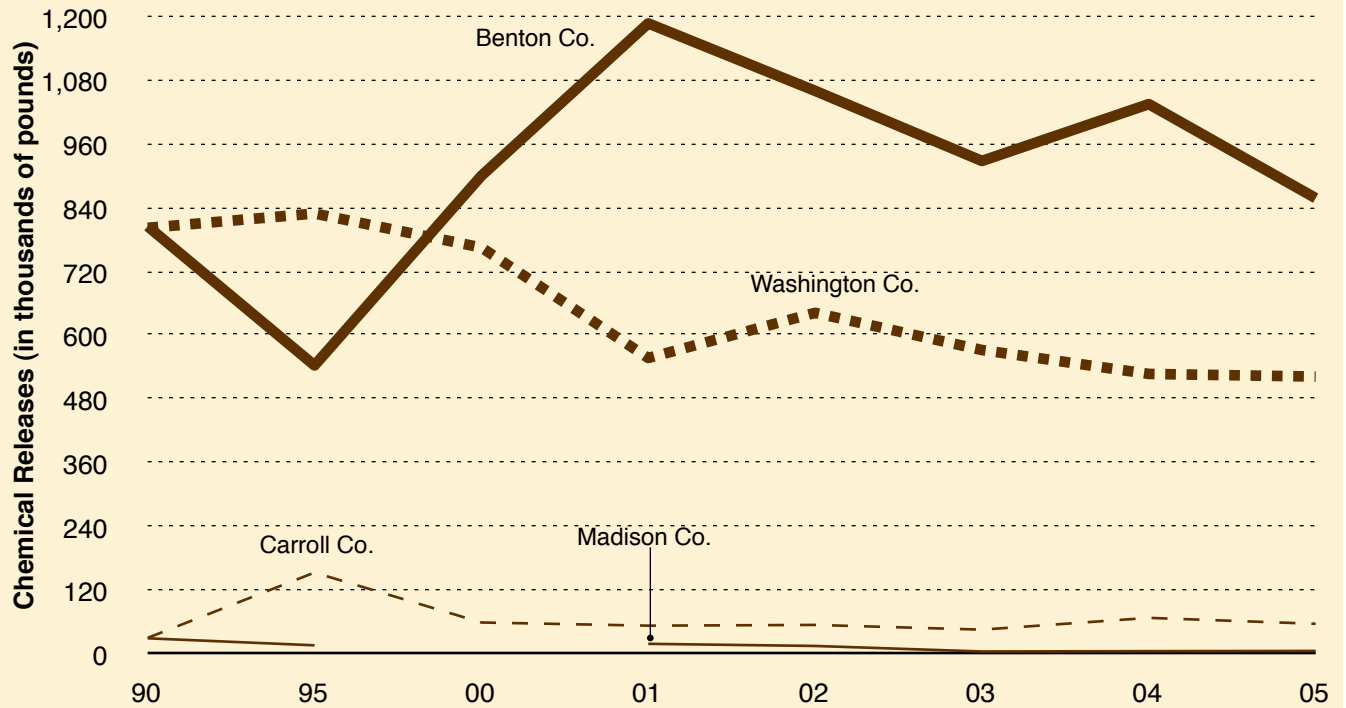


Exhibit 10.1

Annual Toxic Chemical Releases



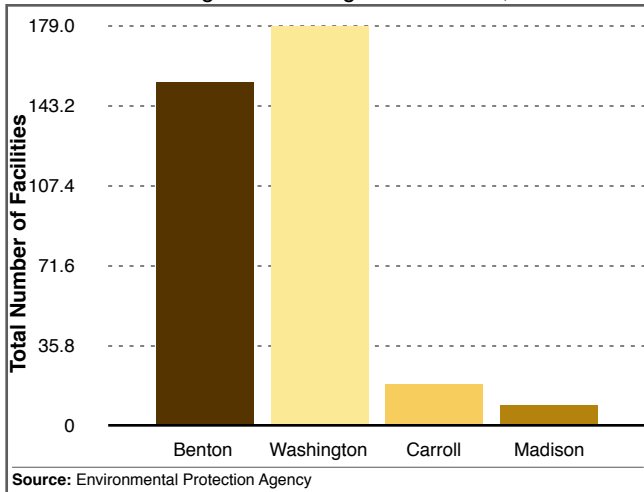
COUNTY	YEAR							
	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Benton	806,871	544,761	901,342	1,188,297	1,061,274	929,939	1,036,955	859,820
Carroll	31,070	154,185	60,015	54,055	55,475	46,581	68,720	57,595
Madison	30,270	17,970	nd	19,877	15,883	5,417	6,002	6,480
Washington	803,312	830,490	766,664	558,065	643,007	573,191	528,540	523,132

Source: Arkansas Statistical Abstract

- ★ Annual data on toxic chemical releases refers to a gross estimate from a number of different industrial, commercial and agricultural sources that release into water, air, and land.
- ★ While the least populated counties in Northwest Arkansas (Carroll and Madison) have remained constant regarding toxic release since 1990, a faster growing Benton County registered significant increases in releases during the period between 1995-2000.
- ★ Since 2000, toxic chemical releases in Benton County have declined and after a modest increase in the 2001-02 period, toxic releases in Washington County have leveled off during the same time period.



Figure 10.3
Facilities Producing or Releasing Air Pollutants, 2008



- ★ The Environmental Protection Agency keeps a record of all facilities that engage in potentially hazardous practices that require permit issuance or regular monitoring.
- ★ In 2008, the two largest and the fastest growing counties (Benton and Washington) contained more facilities engaging in environmentally damaging activities.
- ★ Washington County reported more air pollution release and hazardous waste activity than any of the other counties in the Northwest Arkansas region.
- ★ The EPA recently rated much of the western and northern section of the Northwest Arkansas as having failing or near failing air quality based on federally accepted standards.

Figure 10.4
Facilities Reporting Hazardous Waste Activities, 2008

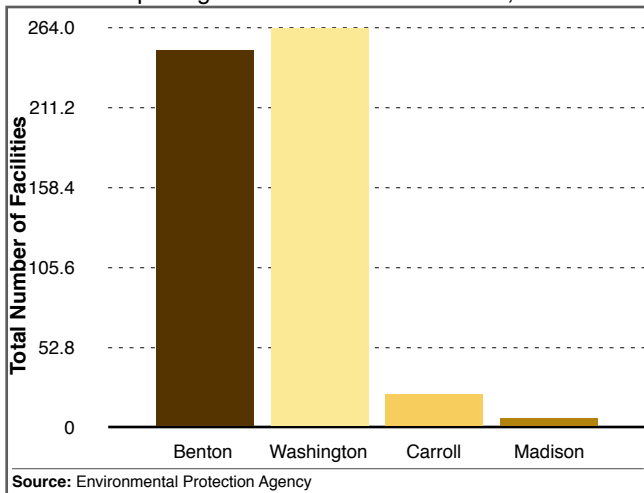
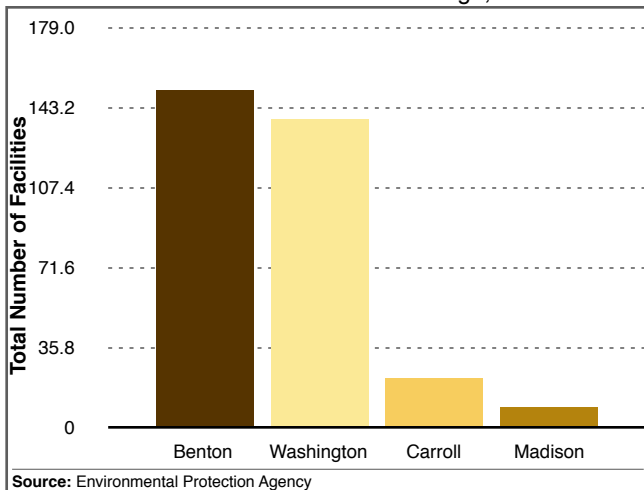
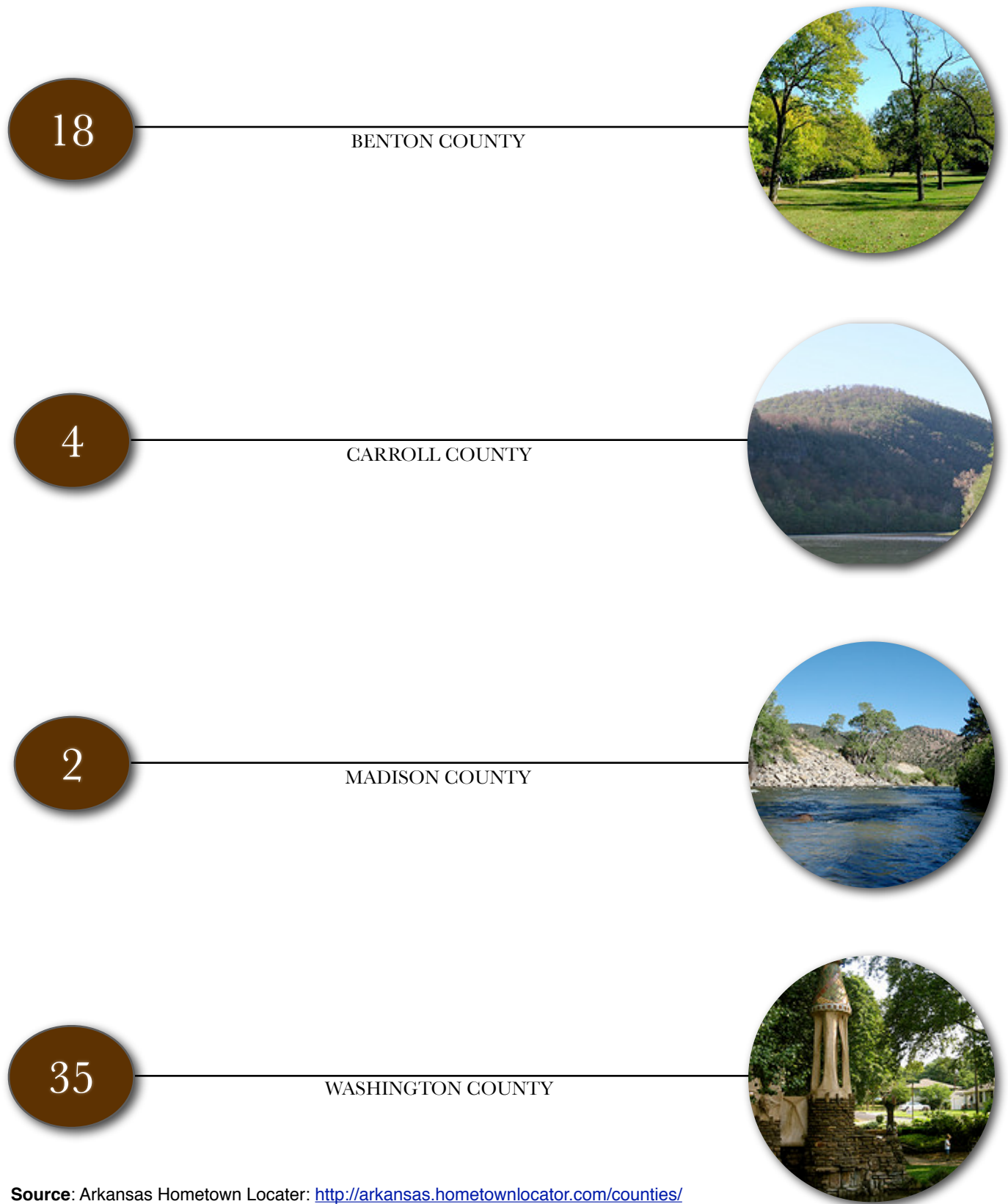


Figure 10.5
Facilities Issued Permits for Water Discharge, 2008



By The Numbers

Public Parks and Land Use in Northwest Arkansas

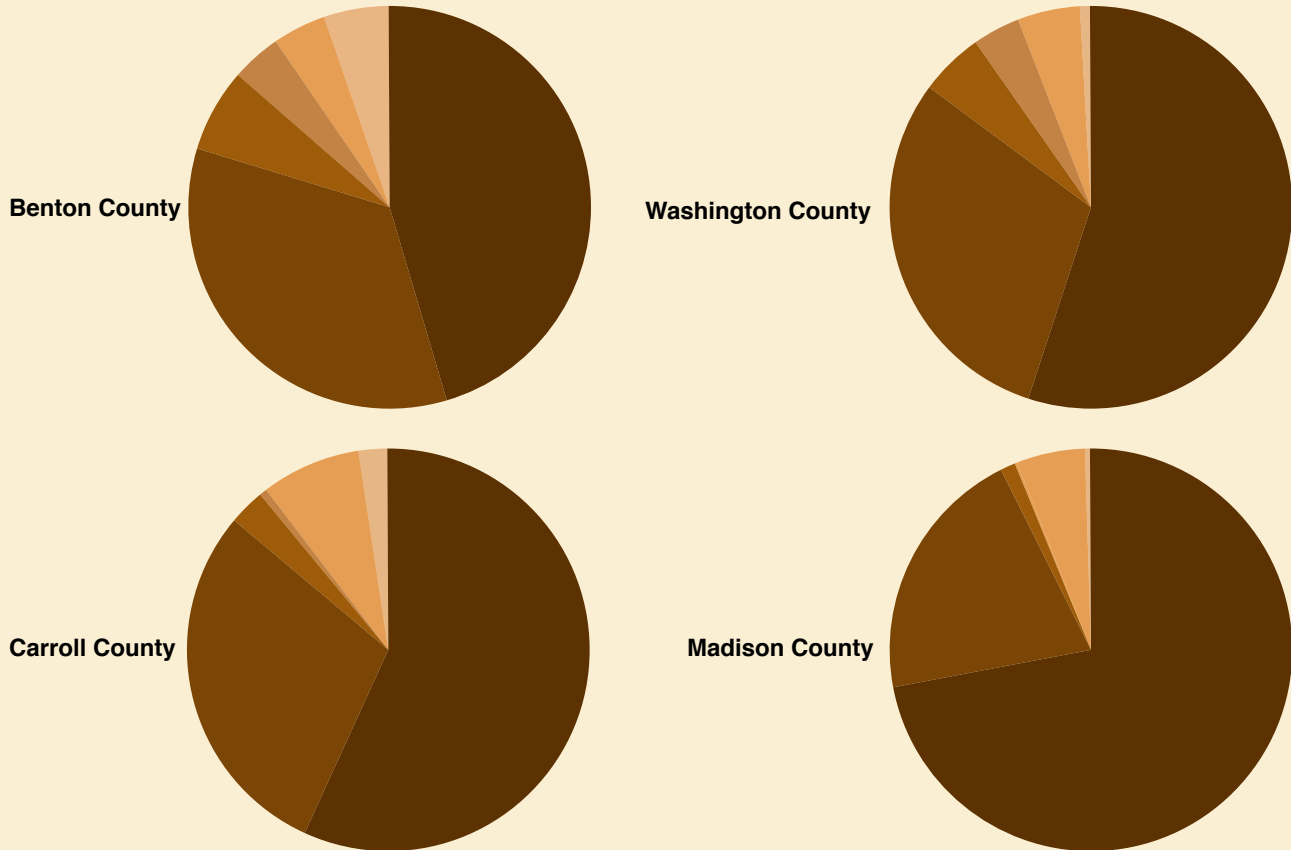


Source: Arkansas Hometown Locator: <http://arkansas.hometownlocator.com/counties/>

Exhibit 10.2

Distribution of Land Use Types in Northwest Arkansas Counties, 2006

● Forest ● Pasture ● Urban: Low ● Urban: High ● Transitional ● All Other



	Benton Co.	Washington Co.	Carroll Co.	Madison Co.
Land Use Type				
Forest	45.5	54.9	56.9	72.1
(% total acres) Pasture	34.4	30.0	29.3	20.6
Urban: Low Density	6.7	5.1	2.9	1.2
Urban: High Density	4.0	3.8	0.6	0.2
Transitional/Woody	4.3	5.0	8.0	5.5
All Other	5.1	1.2	2.3	0.4
Total Acreage	566,355	408,088	609,116	535,386

Source: Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies (CAST), University of Arkansas.

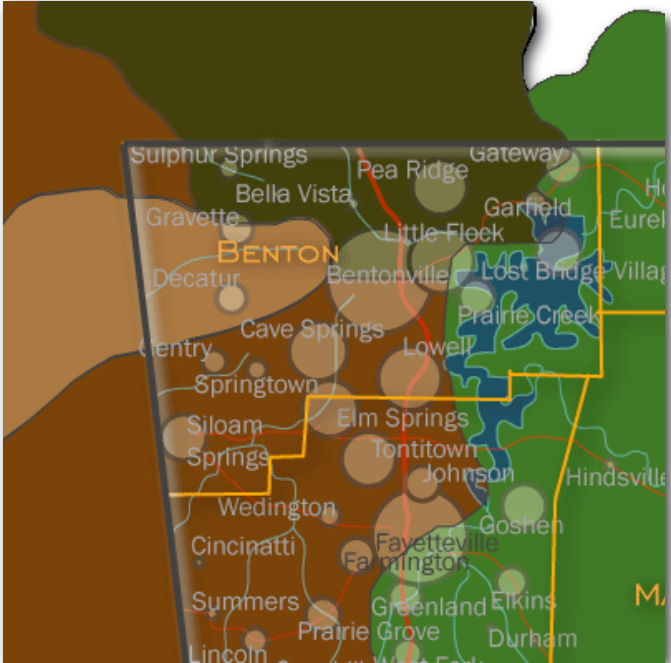
- ★ 2006 land use data shows that all the Northwest Arkansas counties had a majority of forest acreage except for Benton County.
- ★ Pasture land acreage is slightly higher in Benton and Washington Counties than other counties in the region,
- ★ Carroll and Madison Counties had < 5% of their total acreage as developed, high/low density urban acreage as reported in 2006.



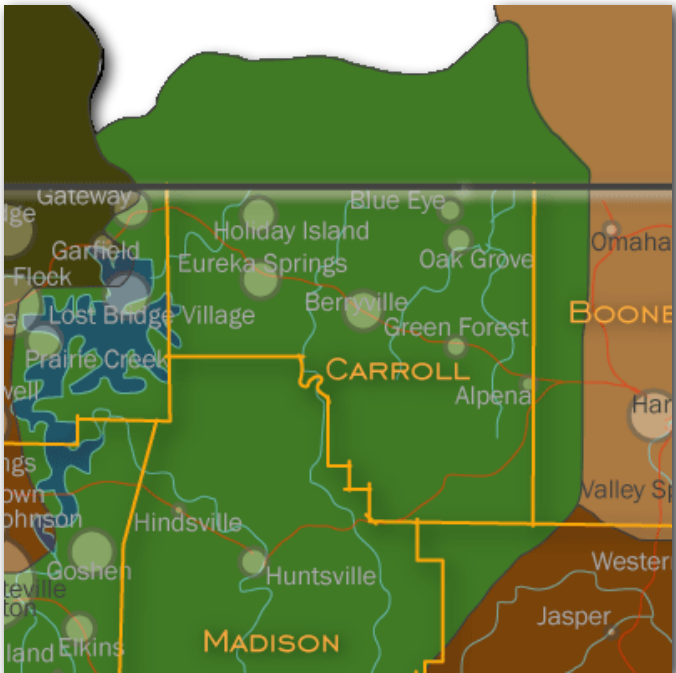
Watersheds of Northwest Arkansas

Watersheds are usually large areas of land absorbing precipitation that drains or seeps into existing natural water systems (marsh, stream, river, lake, ponds, and ground-water). Protecting the watershed is a vital piece of the ecosystem puzzle; Northwest Arkansas depends on these protected watersheds for its primary source of drinking water. The shades and colors represent the different watersheds in each of the four counties.

- BENTON COUNTY WATERSHEDS**
- Beaver Reservoir
 - Elk (Sugar Creek)
 - Illinois
 - Lake O The Cherokees
 - Lower Neosho (Spavinaw)



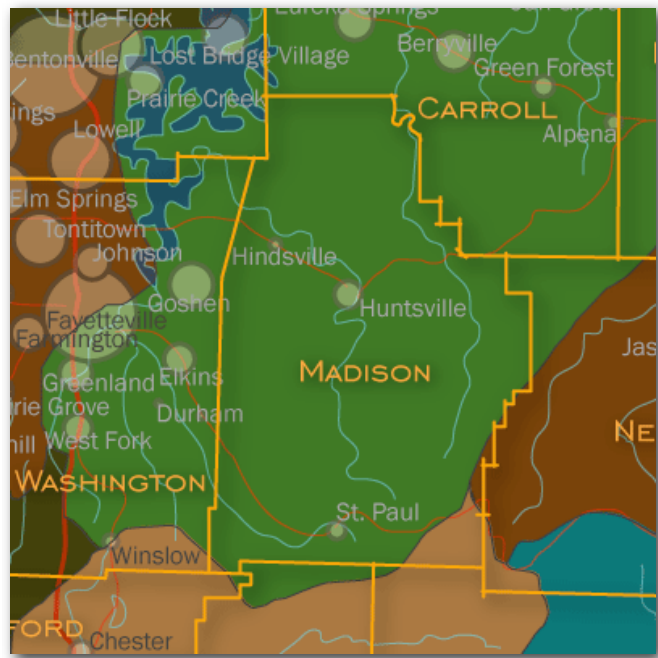
- CARROLL COUNTY WATERSHEDS**
- Beaver Reservoir



Source: Arkansas Natural Resource Commission

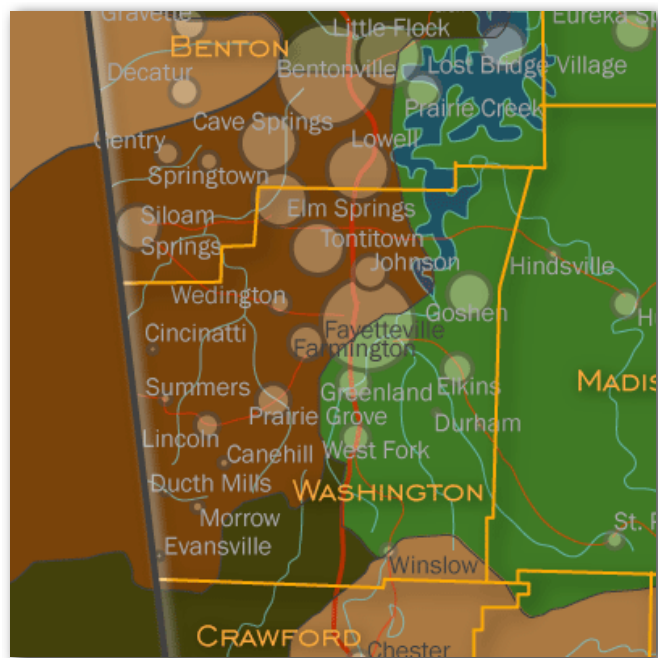
MADISON COUNTY WATERSHEDS

- Buffalo
- Frog-Mulberry
- Upper White (Beaver Reservoir)



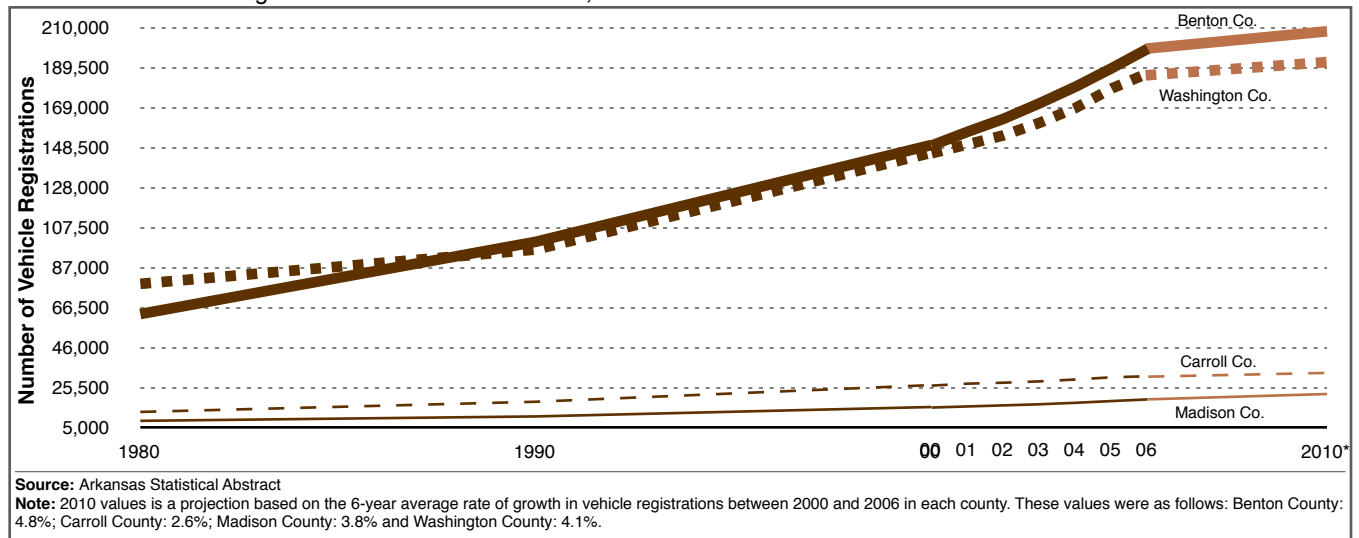
WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERSHEDS

- Frog-Mulberry
- Illinois
- Robert S. Kerr Reservoir
- Upper White (Beaver Reservoir)



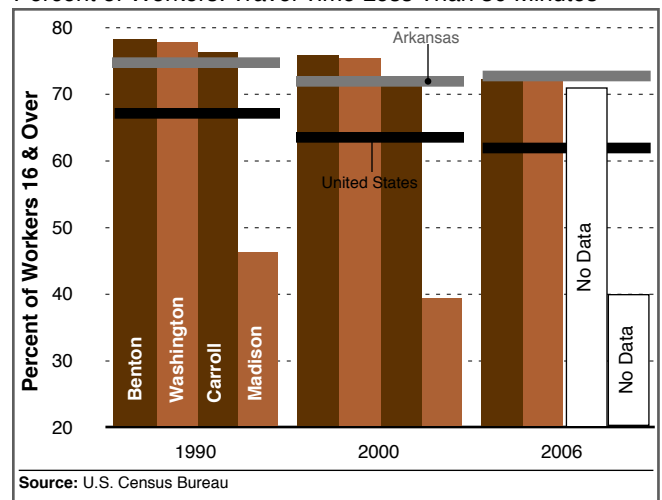
The Automobile Footprint

Figure 10.6
Number of Vehicles Registered in Northwest Arkansas, 1980-2006



- ★ The number of vehicle registrations in Northwest Arkansas counties have mirrored the dramatic population growth taking place in the Northwest Arkansas region since 1990.
- ★ The more populous counties (Benton and Washington) had 6 to 8 times the number of vehicles registered in 1980, compared to Carroll and Madison Counties.
- ★ By 1990, Benton County surpassed Washington County as having the largest number of automobiles registered in a given year in the region.
- ★ On average, since 1990, Northwest Arkansans have travelled shorter distances to work than the average worker in Arkansas and the United States.
- ★ By 2006, the percentage of workers in Washington and Benton Counties who travelled less than 30 minutes to work declined.
- ★ Carroll County workers were similar to Washington and Benton County workers regarding travel time to work.
- ★ By 2000, fewer than 40 percent of Madison County workers took less than 30 minutes to get to work.

Figure 10.7
Percent of Workers: Travel Time Less Than 30 Minutes

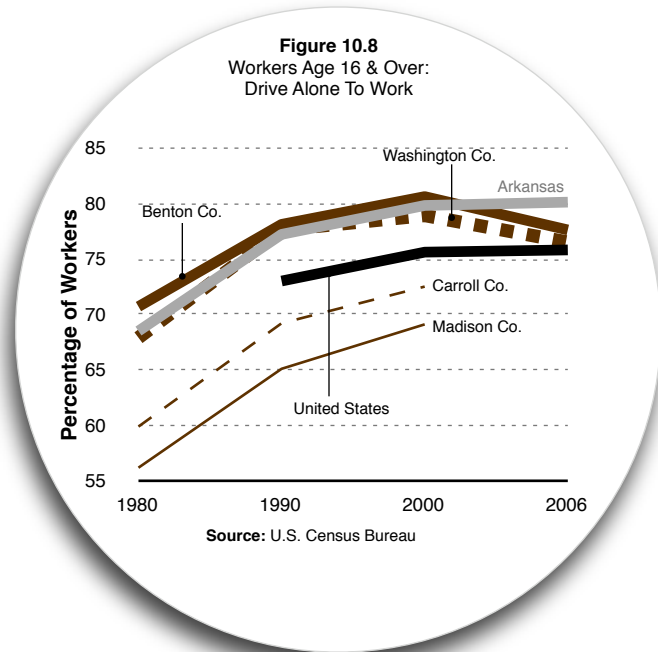


Indicator in the Spotlight:

Commuting To Work in Northwest Arkansas

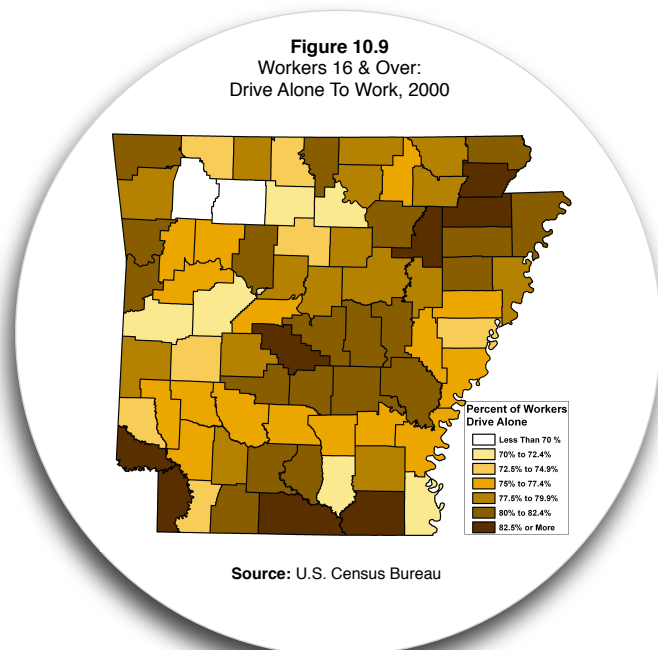
Despite the rising fuel costs, the majority of Americans (88%) drive to work and nearly 75 percent drive to work alone. As expected the majority of workers using public transportation are limited to the largest cities in the United States; these figures will continue to have an impact on the Northwest Arkansas region as it explores alternatives for reducing its carbon footprint.

- ★ The shift in the percentage of workers driving alone to work in Northwest Arkansas has mirrored the trend in both Arkansas and the U.S.
- ★ The largest percentages of Northwest Arkansas workers driving to work alone were in the most populous counties (Benton and Washington).
- ★ By 2006, all the Northwest Arkansas counties had lower percentages of workers driving to work alone compared to the state average (80%).
- ★ In Madison and Carroll Counties, the percentage of workers driving to work alone declined by nearly 20 percent over the last 20 years.
- ★ Madison County had the lowest percentage of workers driving to work alone in Arkansas in 2000.
- ★ The majority of Northwest Arkansas counties looked similar to the rest of the state regarding the percentage of workers who drove alone to work in 2000, except Madison County.



"Cities all over the world are getting bigger as more and more people move from rural to urban sites, and that has created enormous problems with respect to environmental pollution and the general quality of life."

Alan Dundes, American Educator



What's It All Mean?

Growth and environmental impact are strongly correlated--how big the carbon footprint is in an area is partly determined by the growth of its population, commercial and industrial development, and the rate as which natural resources are being used and abused. Since 1990, Northwest Arkansas counties have grown at an alarming rate and that growth has clearly had an impact on the natural resources and environment in the region.

While the data are inconsistent and not as comprehensive at the county level, the indicators suggest that careful monitoring of air and water quality as well as chemical release will be a critical piece to plotting the region's future. In addition, the data show quite clearly that despite

changes in the economy and fuel pricing, even in 2006. Northwest Arkansans were either not using or had limited access to alternatives for getting to work other than driving; unfortunately a large majority of those persons driving to work were driving to work alone.

Perhaps no other chapter in this report has revealed the dramatic impact that growth is having on the Northwest Arkansas region--increased emissions, traffic congestion on streets and highways, and the pressing importance of finding alternatives for the commute to work. As witnessed in other chapters, the importance of developing transportation options in Northwest Arkansas is becoming paramount.

Chapter 11

Civic Engagement & Arts

Getting Involved



Getting Involved in Northwest Arkansas

Quality of life is not derived from individual experience alone. Personal life quality is very much impacted by the community environment. This civic engagement domain seeks to incorporate the means by which individuals actively participate in the construction of a single community character. It is this cohesive action that bonds residents together as members of a distinct group, a group that transcends racial or religious differences.

Civic participation is associated with benefits at both the individual and community level. For the individual, as Harvard Professor Robert Putnam

proclaims, “networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust.” Putnam identifies a myriad of community-wide benefits of civic engagement including lower crime rates, better schools, more effective government, and faster economic development. Of course the thesis of his book raises an important set of questions that are vital to the region and understanding the region’s growth in the next several decades. If we are disconnected we need to figure out how to reconnect. If we are engaged less in our local communities, we need to find ways to get more engaged.

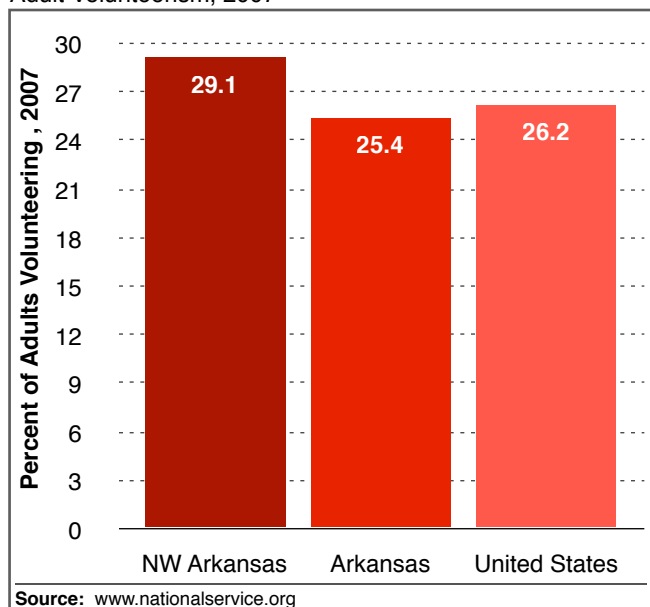
Source: Robert Putnam. *Bowling Alone*, 2001.

Exhibit 11.1
Most Popular Volunteer Activities and Organizations, 2007

	Northwest Arkansas	State of Arkansas	United States
Most Popular Volunteer Activities	Tutor/Teach (24.5%)	Collect/Distribute Food (25.7%)	Fundraise (27.9%)
	Fundraise (21.7%)	Fundraise (25.5%)	Collect/Distribute Food (24.5%)
	Professional/Management (16.3%)	General Labor (25.1%)	General Labor (21.4%)
	General Labor (16.2%)	Tutor/Teach (23.2%)	Tutor/Teach (20.5%)
Where People Volunteer	Religious Organization (34.7%)	Religious Organization (44.8%)	Religious Organization (35.7%)
	Educational (21.8%)	Educational (20.0%)	Educational (26.7%)
	Social Services (12.1%)	Social Services (12.1%)	Social Services (13.3%)
	Health (6.9%)	Civic (8.1%)	Health (8.0%)
	Civic (5.7%)	Health (7.0%)	Civic (6.0%)
	Sports/Arts (3.8%)	Sports/Arts (1.6%)	Sports/Arts (3.5%)
	Other (5.6%)	Other (6.4%)	Other (6.8%)

Source: www.nationalservice.org **Note:** With limited data availability, Northwest Arkansas includes only the Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers MSA.

Figure 11.1
Adult Volunteerism, 2007



Source: www.nationalservice.org

- ★ Nearly one-quarter of the volunteer activities for Northwest Arkansans in 2007 were tutoring/teaching.
- ★ Similar to the rest of the state and the country as a whole, Northwest Arkansans spent the majority of their time volunteering at religious organizations.
- ★ In 2007, Northwest Arkansans volunteered in greater percentages than the average citizen in Arkansas and the United States.
- ★ Unlike the rest of the state or the United States, Northwest Arkansans spent more than 16 percent of their volunteering time helping at the professional or management level.

Civic Engagement

As part of the democratic process, United States citizens exercised their right to vote in record numbers in the 2004 Presidential election. Over 125 million people cast a vote in the 2004 election--an increase of nearly 15 million voters from the 2000 election.

Generally, registered voters vote. Who registers and who votes is a more complicated story. Women, native born, older persons, married, higher educated, higher earners, veterans, and Midwesterners had the highest rates of voting in the 2004 elections.



Figure 11.2
NWA Residents Age 18 & Over: Registered to Vote

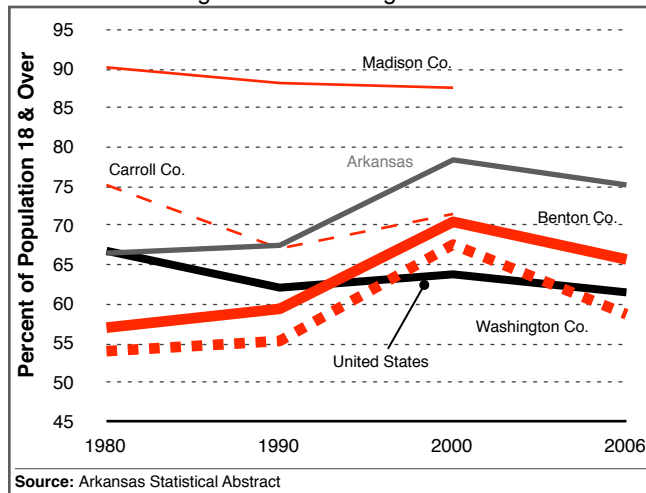
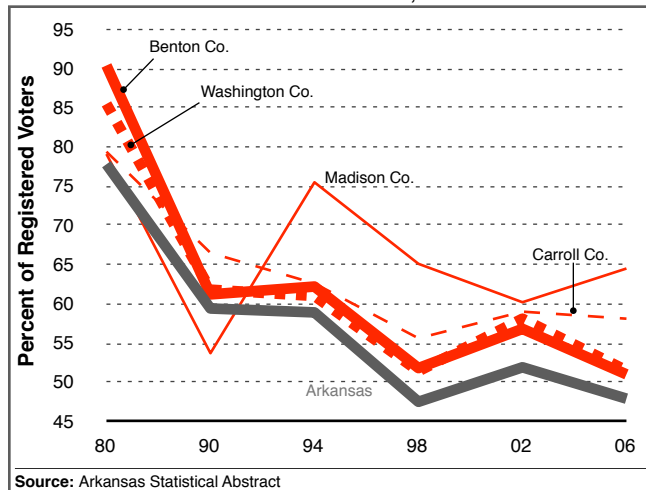


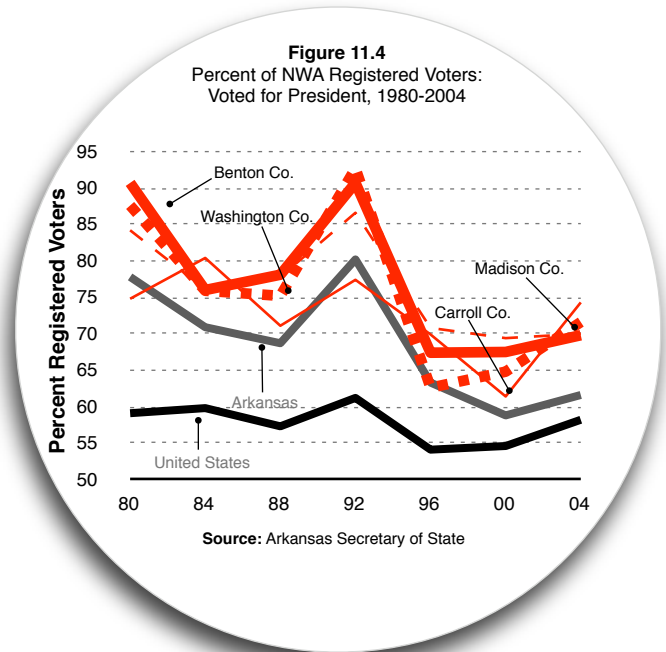
Figure 11.3
NWA Voters Who Voted For Governor, 1980-2006



- ★ Madison County had the highest percentage of eligible residents registered to vote between 1980-2000 among all the Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ In 2000, nearly 90 percent of eligible residents in Madison County were registered to vote.
- ★ Except for Madison County, all other counties in Northwest Arkansas had fewer residents registered to vote than the state average.
- ★ By 2006, all the counties in Northwest Arkansas, except for Washington County, had higher percentages of registered voters than the United States (62%).
- ★ Since 1980, the participation in Arkansas gubernatorial elections has been decreasing both state-wide and in Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ All Northwest Arkansas counties generally had higher percentages of eligible voters voting in the state-wide elections than the state on average.
- ★ In 2006, Carroll County had nearly 65 percent of its eligible voting residents cast a vote in the state-wide elections.

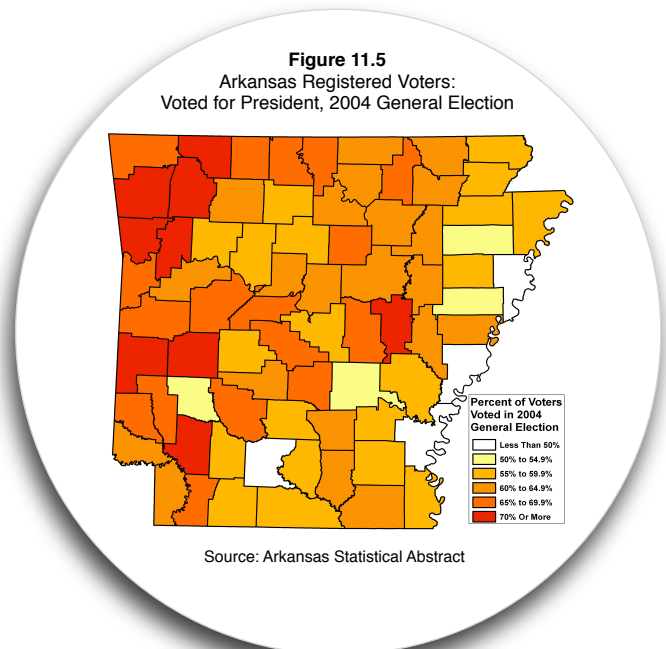
Indicator in the Spotlight: Voting in Northwest Arkansas

- ★ Since 1980, Arkansas and the Northwest Arkansas counties had higher percentages of registered voters voting in the presidential elections, compared to the rest of the country.
- ★ While national voter participation percentages have fluctuated slightly from one election to the next since 1980, there have been some big swings in voting behaviors in both the state and in Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ In the last presidential election in 2004, all of the Northwest Arkansas counties had higher percentage of residents voting than the average in the state and the entire country.
- ★ Carroll County had over 73 percent of its registered voters casting a vote in the 2004 presidential election.
- ★ The Northwest Arkansas region had one of the highest percentage of registered voters voting in the 2004 general election compared to any other region in the state of Arkansas.
- ★ Ouachita, Desha, Phillips, and Crittenden Counties, in Southern and Southeastern Arkansas, had fewer than 50 percent of its registered voters voting in the 2004 general election.
- ★ While the percentage of registered voters voting in the 2004 election in Arkansas was higher than the national average, very few regions of the state had as high a turnout as did the Northwest Arkansas counties.
- ★ Crawford, Franklin, Polk, Montgomery, Hempstead, and Prairie had more than 70 percent of its registered voters casting votes in the 2004 presidential election.



"Every citizen of this country should be guaranteed that their vote matters, that their vote is counted, and that in the voting booth, their vote has a much weight as that of any CEO, any member of Congress, or any President."

Barbara Boxer, United States Senator



Libraries in Northwest Arkansas

With nearly 10,000 public libraries in the United States, they represent the central administrative system that gives the American public access to print, video, audio, electronic, and other general reference materials. In addition, the 21st Century library is becoming an important link for the public to access the world wide web along with thousands of new reference sources that can only be searched on-line. Despite virtual libraries and the increasing use of the internet by the public for research purposes, in 2005, visits to public libraries were nearly 1.5 billion visits, or nearly 5 visits per person.



Figure 11.6
Number of Libraries and Main Branches, NWA, 2005

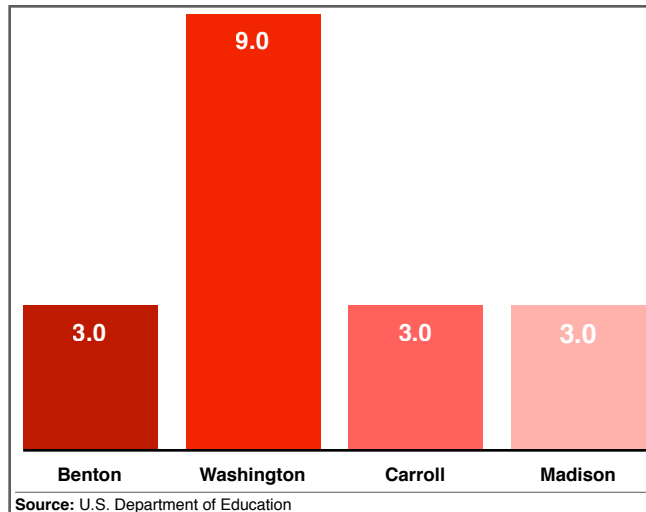
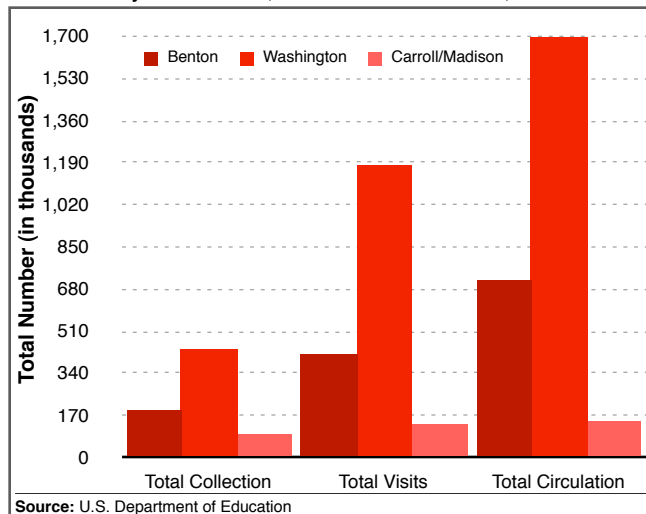


Figure 11.7
NWA Library Collections, Visits and Circulation, 2005



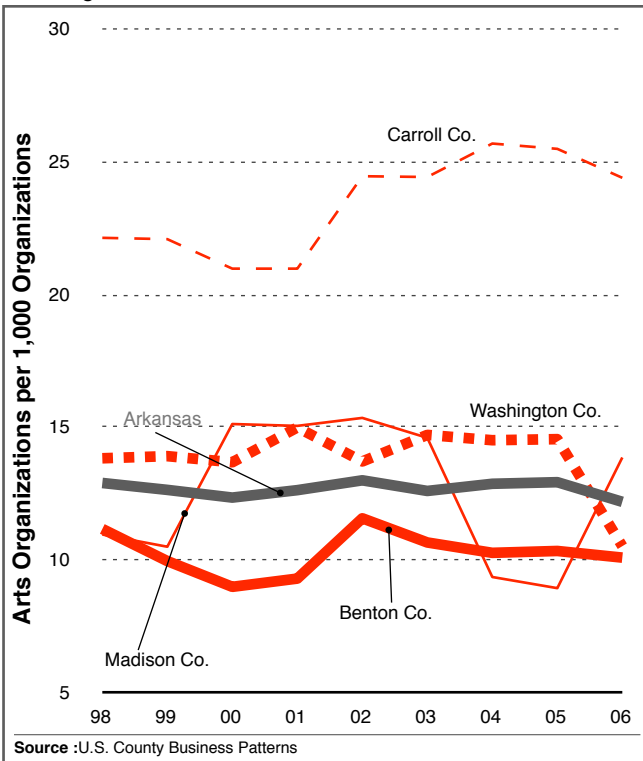
- ★ Washington County library system is the largest in the Northwest Arkansas region with nine libraries and/or branches.
- ★ In addition to the public libraries, the University of Arkansas, University of Arkansas Law School, Northwest Arkansas Community College, and John Brown University are all located in the Northwest Arkansas region.
- ★ In 2005, Washington County libraries had over 1 million patrons visit their facilities.
- ★ Benton County libraries, with only three libraries (Bentonville, Bella Vista, and Rogers) had nearly 500,000 visitors in 2005.
- ★ Totaling all the collections of the Northwest Arkansas libraries, there are still fewer than one million volumes for residents to have access to in the region.
- ★ In 2005, Washington County exceeded 1.7 million items in circulation which was the equivalent of 3 items per capita.
- ★ In Arkansas, the per capita library circulation was approximately 4 items and in the United States the average was 7 items per capita.

Arts in Northwest Arkansas

With continued growth in Northwest Arkansas' cultural capital, the region is fast becoming a 21st Century leader in the development and sustainability of Arkansas arts. The Crystal Bridges museum in Bentonville, the Walton Arts center in Fayetteville, and Eureka Springs, are all wonderful examples that document the vibrant and growing arts community in Northwest Arkansas.

Figure 11.8

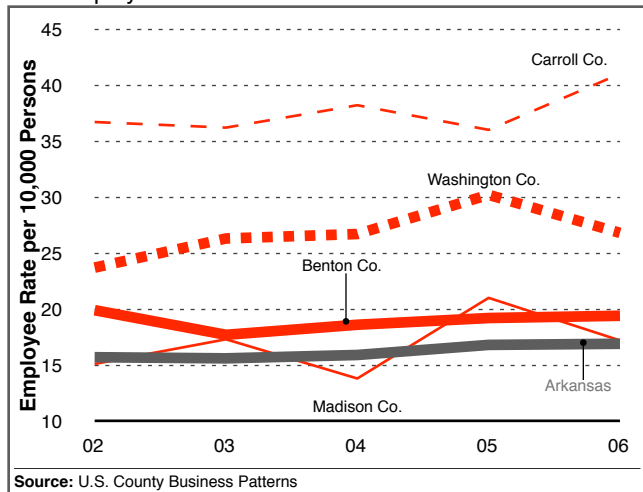
Arts Organizations in Northwest Arkansas 1998-2006



- ★ Art galleries, museums, and other arts organizations are abundant in Carroll County relative to the size of its population, averaging nearly 23 arts organizations per 1,000 general organizations over the last decade.
- ★ By 2006, only Carroll and Madison County, had more or as many arts organizations per 1,000 general organizations on average, compared to the rest of the state.
- ★ By 2006, all of the Northwest Arkansas counties had a higher rate of self-employment in the arts than the state average.
- ★ Carroll County had over 40 persons per 10,000 population working in the arts. Whether musicians, artists, craftspeople, actors, painters etc., the numbers for the region are testament to the growth in the arts over the last several years.
- ★ All of the Northwest Arkansas counties have registered some growth in arts employment since 2002.
- ★ Washington and Madison County experienced a small arts employment decline between 2005-2006 but still had a higher rate than the state average.

Figure 11.9

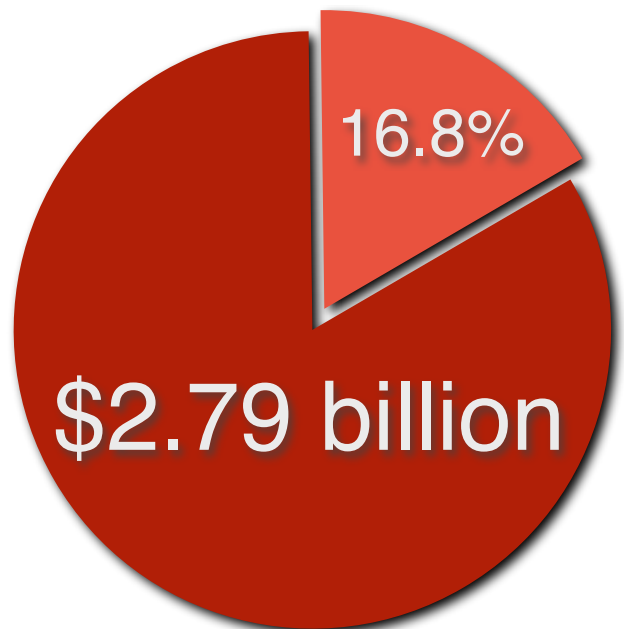
Self-Employed in the Arts in Northwest Arkansas 2002-2006



A Generous Region

With over a million charitable organizations in the United States, it is estimated that by 2052, charitable giving will reach \$55 trillion dollars. Since 1988, charitable giving has steadily increased each year; 2006 charitable donations increased by nearly 2 percent after adjusting for inflation. In 2006, the average charitable gift per capita in the United States was \$130.00. Arkansas ranked 22nd in the country in total giving but its per capita giving ranked 8th in the country in 2006 with Arkansans giving an average of \$161.00.

Northwest Arkansas continues to be a leader in charitable giving throughout Arkansas and the United States. Five of the top ten Arkansas Foundations with the largest giving amounts are in Northwest Arkansas. While many of the charitable gifts given each year by these generous foundations go to organizations and their work around the world, Northwest Arkansas continues to be the primary beneficiary of this focused generosity. Nearly 90 percent of the total dollar amount for charitable giving of the top 50 Arkansas foundations are in Northwest Arkansas. A large part of the growth, capital improvements, and service delivery in Northwest Arkansas has been and continues to be supported by these foundations.



Source: The Foundation Center 2008

- ★ With 90 charitable foundations throughout Northwest Arkansas, and over 2.5 billion dollars in assets, these organizations gave away nearly 17 percent of those monies in 2008.
- ★ In addition to the widespread generosity from these 90 foundations, in 2008 the United Way of Northwest Arkansas invested \$3.85 million to support 86 health and human service organizations throughout the region, while commanding over 1400 volunteers to help spearhead this significant effort of giving and service in local communities throughout the Northwest Arkansas region.



What's It All Mean?

President Kennedy said, “the raising of extraordinarily large sums of money, given voluntarily and freely by millions of our fellow Americans, is a unique American tradition...” Philanthropy, charity, giving voluntarily of not only money but time, is clearly a Northwest Arkansas tradition that bodes well for the region. Throughout this discussion on civic engagement, the data overwhelmingly point to the important leadership role that Northwest Arkansas is playing in the state.

The pattern of volunteering in Northwest Arkansas mirrors much of what is taking place throughout the state and the country; with over half of the top 10 largest giving foundations in the state, Northwest Arkansas has benefited greatly

from this generosity. Northwest Arkansans are engaged in their community, not only in terms of their giving and volunteering, but also in their participation in the democratic process. Since the 1980's, Northwest Arkansans have consistently voted on average, in greater percentage in the presidential elections than either the state or the United States.

Highlighted in a recent report from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation entitled, *Deep Roots and High Hopes: Foundations of Arkansas' Creative Economy*, the Northwest Arkansas region, is steadily becoming a mecca for the arts and performing arts. With entrepreneurial artists, musicians, and business leaders the region will continue to be a leading tourist destination in Arkansas.

Afterword:

Where Do We Go From Here?

Given what we now know about the extent and nature of Northwest Arkansas' growth, where do we go from here? What steps can be taken to tackle the challenges facing the region? How can Northwest Arkansas residents best take advantage of the unique opportunities provided by the region's growth?

Throughout the report, we've shown how existing data sources can be used to describe, in broad terms, the nature of the changes taking place in Northwest Arkansas. What these data cannot tell us, however, is how the people of Northwest Arkansas actually experience these changes. In order to develop a truly comprehensive, contextual understanding of life in Northwest Arkansas, steps should be taken to measure in much greater detail the texture of residents "lived" experiences. Researchers should begin to document both residents' personal experiences with the transformations taking place, as well as how they interpret and make sense of these experiences. Existing data seem inadequate for such a task. Original data collections, primarily in the form of citizen surveys, would be the optimal methodological approach. The development of new region-wide data collection strategies is one way for stakeholders to learn more about the issues that are important to them.

In addition, the report purposely avoided discussion of second and third-order questions. However, to better understand the complexities of the social infrastructure of the region, these more complicated questions need to be asked and answered. For example, rather than simply describing the prevalence of poverty, more advanced analyses would capture how poverty is differentially distributed among sub-populations (e.g. race, ethnicity, class, gender). More fine-grained analyses of this sort would allow policymakers to be more focused in their decisions about resources and programming.

Formally, the Northwest Arkansas Community Indicators project must be poised and ready to update information as the 2010 U.S. Census becomes available. A long-term commitment to improving this report is vital to the sustainability of the larger project and the benchmarking of the region's progress toward achieving some set of carefully articulated goals for improving the region's quality-of-life.

In addition to collecting new information (primary or secondary), local non-profits, governmental agencies, businesses, and other stakeholders need to begin to strategize how to respond to the challenges in the report. One example of what can be done in response to the changing social environment has been the development of the Diversity and Inclusion Program. Implemented through the Jones Center for Families and funded by the Walton Family Foundation. The primary goal of the Diversity and Inclusion Program is to initiate dialogue between the many diverse constituencies in Northwest Arkansas and encourage the development of cross-cultural relationships. Like many regions around the country, Northwest Arkansas is changing and that change is going to have significant implications for neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and local governments. Forward thinking in the development of new and innovative programs that are sensitive to the nature of this change will be necessary to improve cross-cultural dialogue and ultimately, the quality-of-life in the region.

Like all growing regions around the country, Northwest Arkansas needs to develop more affordable housing, while at the same time, maintaining a healthy mix of housing stock that matches the demands of an increasingly diverse population. Local governments, planners and developers continue to search for the right mix of housing stock as they develop new communities with designated mix-commercial and retail zones. These mixed-use zones have become popular around the country and the new planned Ruskin

Heights development on the eastern edge of Fayetteville provides a promising new alternative to housing ownership and retail development.

As this report shows, an unfortunate reality is that even in the best of economic times, some people get left behind. Prosperity, even when widely distributed, does not reach everyone. For example, while many homeowners have benefitted greatly as this region's growth drove up housing prices earlier in this decade, those high housing prices severely restricted the amount of affordable housing stock for those at the lower end of the economic ladder. In 2007, a comprehensive point-in-time census of the homeless, followed by a needs assessment of Washington and Benton County homeless, provided important baseline data for local government, service providers, and non-profit agencies, while confirming what was earlier expected. The data were designed to give providers both a better understanding of **how many** persons they serve but also their **specific needs**. It is critical that local government and service providers use this comprehensive data to develop more effective strategic plans for their organizations, but that the Northwest Arkansas Housing Coalition continue to use this data and any additional data collected to help implement and monitor a 10-year plan to end chronic homelessness in the Northwest Arkansas region. In addition, Northwest Arkansas needs to continue its bi-annual point-in-time census. This census provides critical information for providers and necessary data for the Continuum of Care in the region. Finally, as the legislature begins to look at the problem of affordable housing and homelessness more carefully in the upcoming session, issues related to comprehensive, reliable, and consistent data collection around the state will need to be discussed.

There is little debate among experts about the importance of education in determining the future trajectory of our country. How we get there, what we do, and what we focus on remains the center of much debate among parents, teachers, administrators and policy-makers. Many school districts throughout the Northwest Arkansas region are already carefully using the volumes of data they have access to in order to plot their future. The challenge is to provide resources and

expertise to those school districts with fiscal limits, lack of experience, and a challenging, high-risk student populations. For many communities, the greatest resource to leverage in their schools are their parents. This resource is often underutilized and with volumes of research showing how important it can be both to the student and school's success, every effort should be made to develop strategies for reaching out to parents, grandparents, and families to include them in the educational experience. The healthiest schools are those that find ways to embrace the community ethos while taking full advantage of an often untapped source of human and social capital.

How healthy is Northwest Arkansas is partially addressed in this report. However, we need finer grained analyses of the health and health behaviors of the region's general population, as well as more detailed information on specific subgroups that experience elevated levels of health risk and difficulties accessing health care, (e.g Hispanic and Marshallese). In addition to collecting comprehensive physical and mental health data, the current medical infrastructure is beginning to show signs of fatigue as the uninsured and underinsured population in Northwest Arkansas continues to expand. With that expansion comes specific challenges in health care delivery. These challenges are going to demand that the more rural counties begin to look more carefully at health care delivery and access among the more disadvantaged groups in these counties.

A number of ongoing health initiatives represent important steps toward developing a comprehensive region-wide health strategy to address these population shifts. The Hometown Health Care program, the task force addressing gaps in services to the Marshallese, and numerous outreach service programs delivered by county health departments, schools districts, health care providers are just a few examples. Special attention needs to be directed toward the problems of childhood obesity, diabetes, asthma and other chronic health conditions that put the region's future generation at risk.

While it is easy to fall into the habit of calling for more data, when it comes to issues of public

safety, the need for more detailed information is clear. At present, the only crime data routinely collected in the region is compiled by local police departments for the Uniform Crime Report. The problem with these data, is that less than half of all crimes are ever reported to police. Thus, any picture of the crime problem in the region relies solely on police data which is bound to be inaccurate. On a national level, the problem of under-reporting crime has been addressed with the National Crime Victimization Survey, which surveys a representative sample of approximately 135,000 persons age 12 and over to collect information on the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization each year. A similar, though much more modest effort, should be initiated in Northwest Arkansas.

In addition to more detailed data collection efforts aimed at detailing the extent and characteristics of crime, efforts should also be made to develop a more comprehensive picture of the region's institutional capacity to respond to public safety threats. In particular, members of the public and policymakers alike may benefit from a much more detailed picture of the composition and capabilities of government and private sector organizations whose task it is to provide public safety services.

Like many of the chapters in this report the reader may be left wanting more. More data at the county level, more data comparable across the region, more data that allows Northwest Arkansans to know how they compare to other places around the state and the country. The information reported also shows that growth is beginning to have a significant environmental impact. This certainly isn't a new finding but it is something that requires careful monitoring. Assessing environmental quality by using objective data that reports water and air quality, toxic releases, etc., is important, but there needs to be more attention paid to behaviors. What are people doing to lessen their ecological footprint on the region? Primary data collection that examines the behaviors and attitudes of Northwest Arkansas residents regarding littering, dumping, recycling, driving patterns and habits, use of public transportation, and traffic congestion could be very useful to programmatic

development and region-wide efforts to minimize environmental impacts.

Finally, like many growing regions, Northwest Arkansas has started to recognize the need to intensify the conversation regarding the access to and development of public transportation. As the data in this report reflects, the majority of people are driving to work and driving to work alone. That trend coupled with the linear rate at which the number of cars are being registered each year is already having an impact on the region's roads and highways. The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission, the Northwest Arkansas Council, the University of Arkansas Community Design Center, and the Northwest Arkansas Regional Mobility Authority have all played an important role in both helping to articulate the regional transportation issues as well as developing innovative solutions. Continued dialogue addressing both the need and the solutions are going to be important in the next several decades as Northwest Arkansas looks to fund changes and updates to hard and soft infrastructure. Support from local foundations and funders to address these varied needs has been extremely important to the region's progress. Schools, local service providers, communities, and citizens have benefitted greatly from this unmatched level of generosity and concern for the region that we believe will continue to spotlight Northwest Arkansas as a special place to live.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Web Resources

United States Resources:

American FactFinder <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html>

Metropolitan Quality of Life Data <http://diversitydata.sph.harvard.edu/related.jsp>

USA Counties <http://censtats.census.gov/usa/usa.shtml>

U.S. Census Bureau <http://www.census.gov>

Arkansas Resources:

Community and Family Institute <http://sociology.uark.edu/1876.htm>

Northwest Arkansas Community Survey <http://www.uark.edu/misc/family/index.html>

University of Arkansas Survey Research Center <http://survey.uark.edu>

Chapter 2: Social & Demographic Composition

References Cited

Capps, Randy. 2007. *A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas*. Washington, D.C.: Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

American FactFinder <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html>

Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov>

Federal Statistics <http://www.fedstats.gov/>

The Pew Center of the States <http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/>

The Pew Charitable Trust <http://www.pewtrusts.org/>

U.S. Census Bureau <http://www.census.gov/>

USA Counties <http://censtats.census.gov/usa/usa.shtml>

Arkansas Resources:

Community and Family Institute <http://sociology.uark.edu/1876.htm>

Northwest Arkansas Community Survey <http://www.uark.edu/misc/family/index.html>

University of Arkansas Survey Research Center <http://survey.uark.edu>

Chapter 3: Income & Poverty

References Cited

U.S. Census Bureau. 2007. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006*. Current Population Reports: Consumer Income. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

Poverty in America Project <http://www.povertyinamerica.psu.edu/>

Living Wage Calculator <http://www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu/>

The Urban Institute <http://www.urban.org/>

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities <http://www.cbpp.org/>

Arkansas Resources:

Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District <http://www.nwaedd.org/index.htm>

Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission <http://nwarpc.com/index.htm>

Chapter 4: Housing & Homelessness

References Cited

Fitzpatrick Kevin M., et al. 2007. *Northwest Arkansas Area Point-in-Time Survey (PIT) of Homeless Persons, January 25-26, 2007*. University of Arkansas: Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Accessed <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/index.cfm> June 15, 2008.

----- 2007. *Trends in Housing Costs: 1985-2005 and the 30-Percent-of-Income Standard*. Washington, DC. Government Printing Office.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

Center for Housing Policy <http://www.nhc.org/housing/chp-index/>

Habitat for Humanity: Affordable Housing Statistics
<http://www.habitat.org/how/stats.aspx>

Homelessness Resource Center
<http://www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov/Resource/Browse.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

National Alliance to End Homelessness <http://www.endhomelessness.org/>

National Coalition for the Homeless <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>

Out of Reach 2007-2008 National Low-Income Housing Coalition
<http://www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2008>.

RealtyTrac Foreclosures livepage.apple.com

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development <http://www.hud.gov>

Arkansas Resources:

Arkansas Continuum of Care <http://www.ashn.org/arcocnetwork/coc.htm>

Arkansas Homeless Coalition <http://www.arkansashomeless.org/>

Community and Family Institute <http://sociology.uark.edu/1876.htm>

National Alliance to End Homelessness <http://www.endhomelessness.org/>

Northwest Arkansas Housing Coalition <http://nwahc.org/index.html>

Chapter 5: Families & Households

References Cited

National Center for Children in Poverty Accessed <http://www.nccp.org/> August 15, 2008.

Passel, Jeffrey and D'Vera Cohn. 2008. *U.S. Population Projections 2005-2050*. Washington, DC; Pew Research Center.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

Annie E. Casey Foundation <http://www.aecf.org/>

Child Trends <http://www.childtrendsdatbank.org/index.cfm>

Every Child Matters <http://www.everychildmatters.org/>

National Center for Children in Poverty <http://www.nccp.org/>

The Brookings Institute <http://www.brookings.edu/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.hhs.gov/>

Arkansas Resources:

Arkansas Department of Human Services <http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/homepage.html>

Chapter 6: Education

References Cited

University of Arkansas. *Retention and Graduation Report*, Office of Institutional Research, February 2008 Accessed <http://www.uark.edu/admin/uadata>, July 23, 2008.

Northwest Arkansas Community College Fall 2007 *Factbook*, Office of Institutional Research Accessed <http://www.nwacc.edu/institutionalresearch/index.php>, July 23, 2008.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

International Archive of Educational Data <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/IAED/index.html>

National Center for Education Statistics <http://nces.ed.gov/>

National Education Association <http://www.nea.org/index.html>

National Head Start Association <http://www.nhsa.org/>

National Institute for Early Education Research <http://nieer.org/>

School Data Direct <http://www.schooldatadirect.org/>

U.S. Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>

U.S. Education State Facts <http://library.educationworld.net/statefacts/>

Arkansas Resources:

Arkansas Department of Human Services. Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment Survey <http://arkansas.pridesurveys.com/>

Local School Directory, Arkansas Public and Private Schools <http://www.localschooldirectory.com/state-schools/AR>

Northwest Arkansas Community Survey <http://www.uark.edu/misc/family/index.html>

Northwest Arkansas Head Start www.nwaheadstart.org

The National Office for Research on Measurement and Evaluation Systems <http://normes.uark.edu/>

University of Arkansas Survey Research Center <http://survey.uark.edu>

Chapter 7: Health

References Cited

Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Walters EE. 2005. *Prevalence, Severity, and Comorbidity of Twelve-Month DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R)*. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62:617-27.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality <http://www.ahrq.gov/>

American Public Health Association <http://www.apha.org/>

Kaiser Family Foundation <http://www.kaisernetwork.org/index.cfm#>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>

National Institutes of Health <http://www.nih.gov/>

Medicare <http://www.medicare.gov/>

Public Health Indicators and National Data <http://www.communityphind.net/>

Arkansas Resources:

Arkansas Alcoholics Anonymous <http://theagapecenter.com/AAinUSA/Arkansas.htm>

Arkansas Department of Health <http://www.healthyarkansas.com/>

Four County Community Health Needs Assessment 2004 <http://nwahealth.org/report/>

Chapter 8: Public Safety

References Cited

Myrstol, Bradley. 2008. *Washington County Arrestee Drug and Alcohol Use Survey*. University of Arkansas, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice.

United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2007. *Crime in the United States*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

Federal Bureau of Investigation www.fbi.gov

Gallup Poll (Fear of Crime)
<http://www.gallup.com/poll/13987/US-Crime-Problem-Less-Troubling-Americans.aspx>

National Institute of Justice <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/>

Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/index.html>

U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

United States Fire Administration <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/>

Arkansas Resources:

Arkansas Crime Information Center <http://www.acic.org/>

Northwest Arkansas Community Survey <http://www.uark.edu/misc/family/index.html>

University of Arkansas Survey Research Center <http://survey.uark.edu>

Chapter 9: Aging & Elderly

References Cited

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and The Merck Company Foundation. 2007. *The State of Aging and Health in America 2007*. Whitehouse Station, NJ: The Merck Company Foundation.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

AARP <http://www.aarp.org/>

Administration on Aging <http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/>

Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics
<http://www.agingstats.gov/agingstatsdotnet/main> site/default.aspx

National Council on Aging <http://www.ncoa.org/>

Social Security Administration <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture <http://www.usda.gov/>

Arkansas Resources:

Arkansas Department of Health <http://www.healthyarkansas.com/>

Arkansas Get Care <http://www.argetcare.org/>

Arkansas Senior Medicare/Medicaid Patrol
<http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/aging/asmp.html>

The Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Arkansas <http://www.aaanwar.org/>

Chapter 10: Natural Environment

References Cited

U.S. Bureau of Census 2008. *County and City Databook*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office

Web Resources

United States Resources:

Air Quality Indexing <http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=static.aqi>

Carbon Footprint Calculator <http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/>

Carbon Footprinting <http://www.carbonfootprint.com/>

Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.gov/>

U.S. Geological Survey <http://www.usgs.gov/>

USAGOV Environment and Natural Resources
http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Environment_Agriculture.shtml

U.S Department of Agriculture <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>

Arkansas Resources:

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality <http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/>

Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism
<http://www.arkansas.com/governors-conference/pdfs/2007-2008%20FinancialARIST.pdf>

Arkansas Natural Resources Commission <http://arkansaswater.org/>

Beaver Water District <http://www.bwdh2o.org/>

Benton/Washington Regional Public Water Authority <http://bwrpwa.com/>

Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies <http://www.cast.uark.edu/>

GeoStor 5.0, Arkansas' Official Geo-Data Clearinghouse
<http://www.geostor.arkansas.gov/Portal/index.jsp>

Northwest Arkansas Land Trust <http://www.nwalandtrust.org/>

Chapter 11: Civic Engagement & Arts

References Cited

Putnam, Robert. 2001. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

U.S. Department of Education. 2008. *Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 2005*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. 2008. *Deep Roots and High Hopes: Foundations of Arkansas' Creative Economy*. Carrboro, NC: Regional Technology Strategies.

Web Resources

United States Resources:

Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement <http://www.civicyouth.org/>

Corporation for National and Community Service <http://www.cns.gov/>

Council on Foundations <http://www.cof.org/>

Cultural Vitality in Communities (Urban Institute Report)
http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311392_Cultural_Vitality.pdf

Foundation Center: www.foundationcenter.org

National and Community Service Corporation: www.nationalservice.org

Robert Putnam: <http://www.bowlingalone.com/>

The Council of State Governments <http://www.csg.org/>

U.S. County Business Patterns <http://www.census.gov/epcd/cbp/index.html>

Volunteering in America <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov>

Arkansas Resources:

Arkansas Secretary of State <http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/>

Artists of Northwest Arkansas <http://www.artistsnwarkansas.org/>

Philanthropy in Arkansas
<http://www.cof.org/files/Documents/Government/StateGiving/AR.pdf>

