



Labor Market Profile

Region 7W

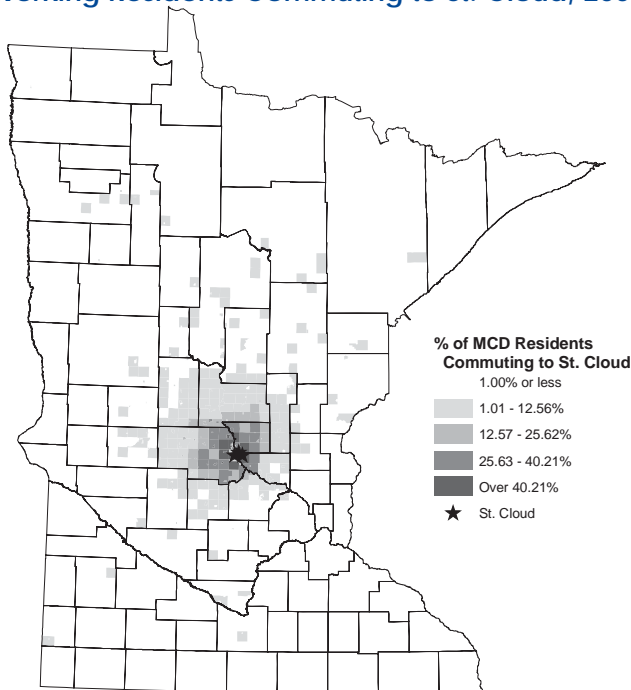
Central Minnesota

April 2006

Central Minnesota: Leading the Way

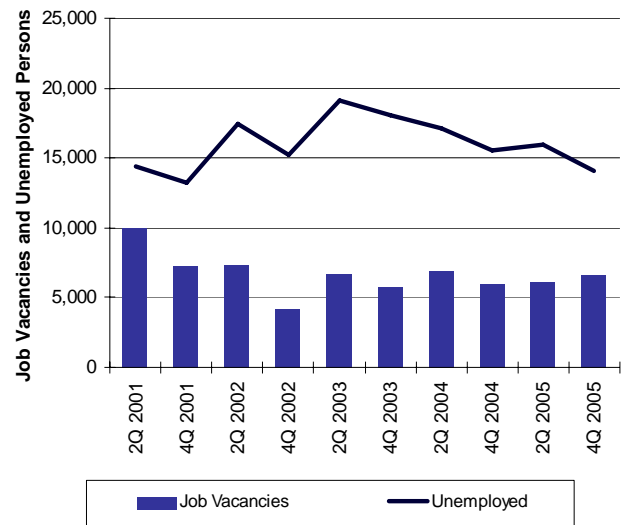
Economic Development Region 7W – made up of Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties in the Central Planning Region – is one of the fastest-growing regions in the state and nation. Many residents are within driving distance of both the Twin Cities and St. Cloud, providing explosive demographic growth, ample employment opportunities, and rapidly rising incomes.

Figure 1. Central Minnesota Laborshed: Share of Working Residents Commuting to St. Cloud, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Minor Civil Division Worker Flow Files. Online at www.census.gov

Figure 2. Job Vacancies and Unemployment in the Central Planning Region*



Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Job Vacancy Survey. Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/publications/jobvacancy/

From the first quarter of 2001 to the first quarter of 2005, the state suffered through a recession that wiped out nearly 49,500 jobs. In contrast, the four counties in Region 7W added close to 7,300 jobs.

At the same time, job vacancies have declined during the last three years, while regional unemployment has increased as a result of in-migration and manufacturing job losses. (See Figure 2.)

Executive Summary

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION 7W

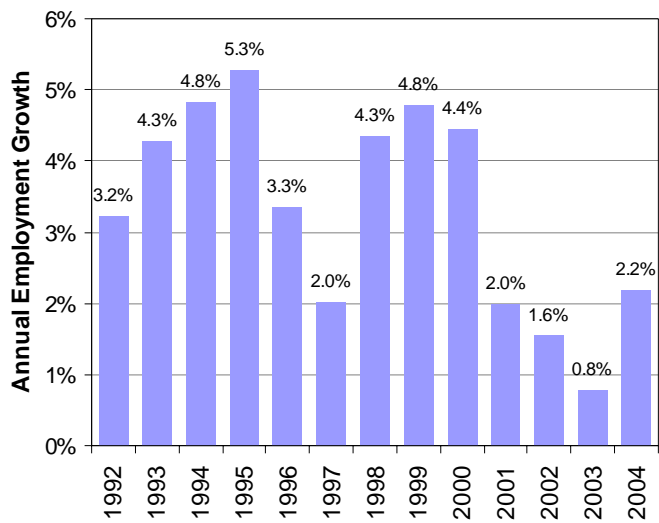
Employment in Region 7W – the four counties located in Minnesota’s Central Planning Region – had been growing at a rapid pace throughout the 1990s before tapering off slightly during the statewide recession in 2001. However, Region 7W still was able to add jobs through 2004 while many other regions suffered severe employment declines. (See Figure 3.)

Region 7W offers an abundant, educated workforce to businesses in the area. The available labor force was closing in on 215,000 workers in 2005, up from 185,000 just five years earlier. Even as the labor force has increased, the region’s unemployment rate has remained stable because of the job growth.

INDUSTRY COMPOSITION

The region’s top-employing industries are manufacturing, retail, healthcare and social assistance, and accommodation and food services. Together, these four broad sectors generate almost three-fifths of all employment, or close to 75,000 jobs. Rapid population growth has also pushed construction into the top-five list of employing industries in the region.

Figure 3. Annual Employment Growth: Region 7W, 1992-2003



Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/qcew/

WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

Labor force participation rates in Region 7W are above the already-high statewide rates, especially for women. Overall participation rates are over 75 percent in every county except Stearns, which is 73 percent, compared to the state’s rate of 71.2 percent. Wages in the region are lower than the Twin Cities, although median household incomes are comparable. This is due in part to the high number of residents in Sherburne and Wright Counties who commute into the Twin Cities metro area for work.

INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

Central Minnesota is expected to continue leading the state in job growth, with employment projected to increase 21 percent through 2012. As in all regions, employment growth will be particularly high in service-providing industries – including healthcare and social assistance, business services, and educational services – while manufacturing and agriculture are expected to add jobs at a more moderate pace.

However, the statewide recession has caused Initial Claims for Unemployment Insurance to increase since 2001. Likewise, the average unemployment spell has increased.



Know Your Market!

Effective decisions require an understanding of the regional economy and the market – from current market conditions to underlying trends and future challenges.



DEED’s Regional Analysis & Outreach Unit provides expert analysis services and customized reports and presentations, extending labor market information to planning and decision-making.

In Central Minnesota, contact Cameron Macht: 320.231.5174 ext. 7535 or by e-mail to cameron.macht@state.mn.us. For other regions, see the list of Regional Analysts at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/contact/

The Region's Industry Mix

Table 1. Employment and Wages for Industry Sectors: Region 7W, 3rd Qtr. 2005

Industry	3rd Qtr. 2005 Firms	3rd Qtr. 2005 Employment	Avg. Weekly Wage	3rd Qtr. 2005 Share of Total Employment
Total, All Industries	10,233	154,618	\$622	
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	140	1,676	\$404	1.1%
Mining	13	277	\$1,137	0.2%
Utilities	24	1,875	\$1,342	1.2%
Construction	1,879	12,284	\$812	7.9%
Manufacturing	756	26,234	\$774	17.0%
Wholesale Trade	460	6,309	\$790	4.1%
Retail Trade	1,370	22,843	\$414	14.8%
Transport and Warehousing	462	5,195	\$671	3.4%
Information	136	2,141	\$716	1.4%
Finance and Insurance	564	4,792	\$753	3.1%
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	425	1,532	\$404	1.0%
Professional and Tech Services	611	3,511	\$723	2.3%
Management of Companies	51	880	\$865	0.6%
Admin and Waste Services	481	6,460	\$470	4.2%
Educational Services	193	11,297	\$697	7.3%
Health Care and Social Assistance	706	20,439	\$736	13.2%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	180	2,217	\$211	1.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	691	13,418	\$201	8.7%
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	812	5,283	\$374	3.4%
Public Administration	252	5,842	\$733	3.8%

Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/qcew/

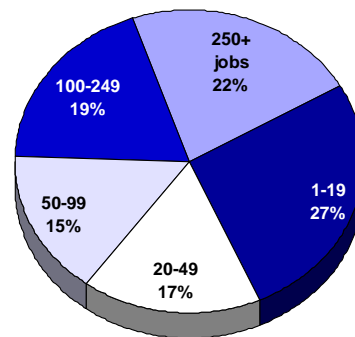
MAJOR INDUSTRIES

Manufacturing is the top-employing industry, offering nearly one in every five (17.0 percent) jobs. This high proportion demonstrates the region's reliance on the manufacturing industry. (See Table 1.)

With St. Cloud established as a regional center, and many surrounding communities growing rapidly, Region 7W also has significant employment in retail (22,843 private sector jobs) and healthcare and social assistance (20,439 jobs). Accommodation & food services, construction, and educational services are the other major employing industries in the region.

Region 7W has an interesting balance of employers, with almost half employing either less than 20 employees (27 percent) or more than 250 (22 percent). (See Figure 4.)

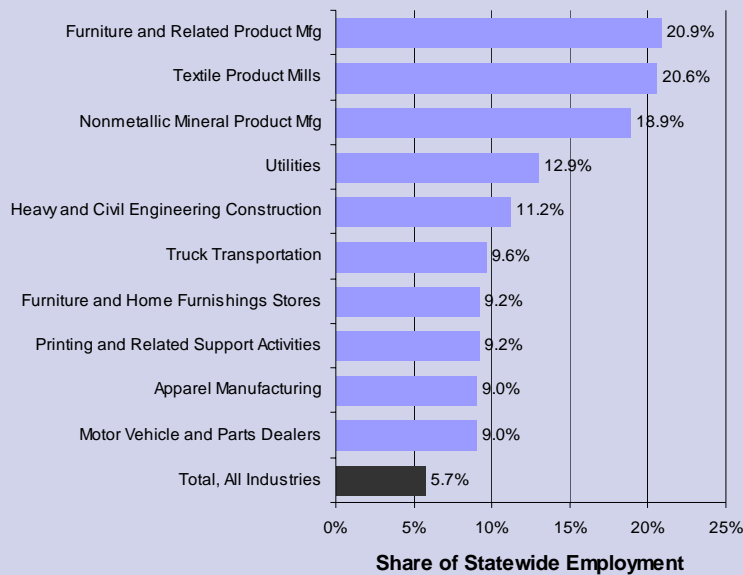
Figure 4. Distribution of Jobs by Employer Size Class: Region 7W, 1st Quarter 2004



Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/qcew/

The Region's Industry Mix

Figure 5. "Distinguishing Industries": Region 7W Industries with Above-Average Market Share, 2004



Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/qcew/

REGIONAL DISTINGUISHING INDUSTRIES

DEED defines a region's distinguishing industries as those with a better-than-average share of statewide industry employment. Region 7W has 5.7 percent of all Minnesota jobs. Ten distinguishing industries in the region have a 9 percent or greater share of statewide jobs. (See Figure 5.)

The region's natural resource base has made nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing one of the region's defining industries, while the strong manufacturing tradition leads to the area's competitive advantage in both furniture and textile production.

The region is also home to successful truck transportation companies and heavy & civil engineering construction firms, as well as utilities.

Although they have suffered setbacks during the recession, printing companies are still integral parts of the region's employment history.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

In a reflection of the region's balance between blue- and white-collar work, the region's economic diversity has served to mitigate the impact of the recession.

Indeed, the region boasts a mix of manufacturers, agriculture-related entities, a burgeoning health care industry, growing K-12 and post-secondary education institutions, emerging professional services, a strong printing industry, an active retail component, and several large public sector employers. That diversity is reflected in the list of the area's top employers. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Major Employers in Region 7W

Name	County	Primary Line of Business
CentraCare / St Cloud Hospital	Stearns	General Medical & Surgical Hospitals
Cold Spring Granite Co	Stearns	Cut Stone & Stone Prod Mfg
Electrolux Home Products	Stearns	Household Refrigerator & Home Freezer Mfg
St Cloud State University	Stearns	Colleges & Universities
Gold'n Plump Poultry Inc	Stearns	Poultry Processing
Dezurik/Copes-Vulcan	Stearns	Other Metal Valve & Pipe Fitting Mfg
Jennie-O Foods	Stearns	Poultry Processing
Antioch Co	Stearns	Blankbook & Looseleaf Binder Mfg
Bankers Systems Inc	Stearns	Financial Software
Merrill Corp	Stearns	Other Commercial Printing
Quebecor Printing St Cloud	Stearns	Commercial Lithographic Printing
International Paper Co	Stearns	Paper, Except Newsprint, Mills
New Flyer USA	Stearns	Heavy Duty Truck Mfg
Bauerly Brothers	Benton	Other Building Material Dealers
Royal Melrose Granite Co	Stearns	Cut Stone & Stone Prod Mfg
Nahan Printing	Stearns	Commercial Lithographic Printing
Bernick's Pepsi Cola	Stearns	Other Grocery Prod Merchant Whols
US Veterans Medical Center	Stearns	Other Hospitals
Northern States Power Co	Wright	Electric Power Distribution
CNT	Sherburne	Data Processing & Related Svcs

Source: InfoUSA. 2004 ALMIS Employer Database. Online at www.iseek.org

Regional Wage Structure

REGIONAL WAGES

In most industries, wages in Region 7W are slightly lower than metro and state averages. Nearly one-third (31.5 percent) of all jobs pay less than \$10 per hour. Another 46.5 percent pay between \$10 and \$20 per hour, while 22 percent pay \$20 or more. (See Figure 6.)

OCCUPATIONAL WAGES

The median wage for all occupations in Region 7W is \$13.87 per hour. The highest-paying jobs are typically found in management, professional, technical, and healthcare occupations, which require higher levels of education and experience. The lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in food preparation and serving, sales, and personal care and services. (See Table 3.)

The occupational group with the largest employment in Region 7W is office and administrative support, followed by sales, production, and food service jobs.

Figure 6. Wage Distribution of All Jobs: 2002

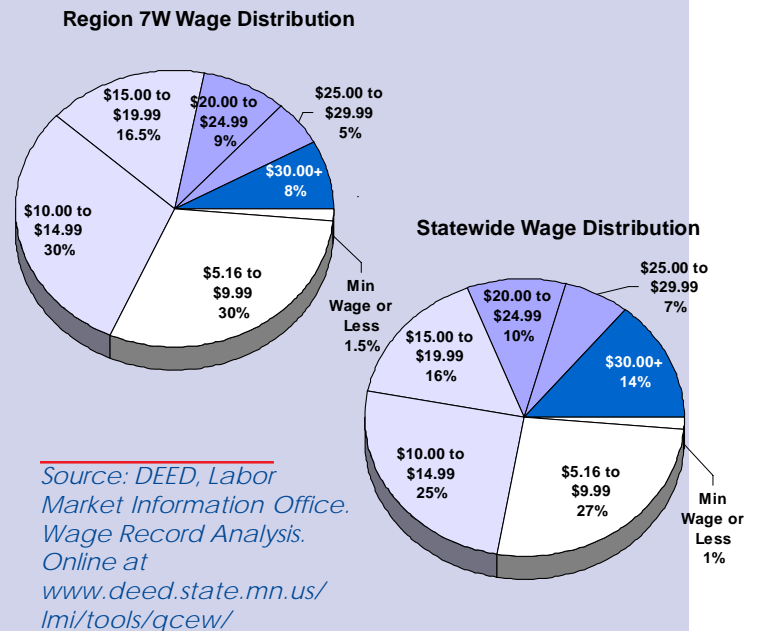


Table 3. 4th Qtr. 2005 Wages by Occupation: Region 7W

Occupation Group	Regional Median Wage	Regional Employ	Wage Range (10th, 50th, 90th percentiles)	
			10th	90th
Management Occupations	\$32.84	5,620	\$25	\$45
Legal Occupations	\$29.78	740	\$20	\$40
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	\$25.29	1,930	\$15	\$35
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	\$25.26	6,610	\$15	\$35
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	\$24.09	680	\$15	\$35
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	\$23.79	1,470	\$15	\$35
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	\$22.18	5,290	\$15	\$35
Construction and Extraction Occupations	\$19.94	7,660	\$10	\$30
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	\$19.45	10,360	\$10	\$30
Protective Service Occupations	\$17.65	1,990	\$10	\$30
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	\$17.17	5,530	\$10	\$30
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	\$16.30	1,210	\$10	\$30
Community and Social Services Occupations	\$15.72	2,200	\$10	\$30
Production Occupations	\$14.23	16,960	\$10	\$30
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$13.71	12,460	\$10	\$30
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$12.87	21,400	\$10	\$30
Healthcare Support Occupations	\$11.50	3,960	\$10	\$30
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	\$10.57	160	\$10	\$30
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	\$10.48	3,870	\$10	\$30
Sales and Related Occupations	\$10.46	16,140	\$10	\$30
Personal Care and Service Occupations	\$9.38	3,000	\$10	\$30
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupation:	\$7.88	13,370	\$10	\$30
ALL OCCUPATIONS	\$13.87	142,610	\$10	\$30

Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Occupational Employment Statistics (OES). Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/oes/

A Shifting Economy

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Region 7W continued to experience rapid job and population growth, gaining nearly 6,200 new jobs from the 3rd qtr. of 2004 to the 3rd qtr. of 2005. Both healthcare & social assistance and educational services saw tremendous growth, totaling more than 3,200 net new jobs.

Manufacturing recovered in the region as well, adding 735 new jobs. Responding to needs of the growing population, retail trade and accommodation & food services also welcomed nearly 1,500 jobs combined.

Employment growth in the construction industry finally slowed in the region, but utilities added 260 jobs.

Table 4. Industry Employment Growth: Region 7W, 3rd Qtr. 2004 - 3rd Qtr. 2005

Industry	2004 Average Employ	2005 Average Employ	Change 2004-2005	Percent Change 3rd Qtr. 2004 - 3rd Qtr. 2005
Total, All Ownerships	148,458	154,618	6,160	4.1%
Total, Private Sector	131,193	135,535	4,342	3.3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Mining	1,573	1,676	103	6.5%
Utilities	1,615	1,875	260	16%
Construction	12,380	12,284	-96	-1%
Manufacturing	25,499	26,234	735	2.9%
Wholesale Trade	6,398	6,309	-89	-1.4%
Retail Trade	22,243	22,843	600	2.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	5,223	5,195	-28	-0.5%
Information	2,302	2,141	-161	-7%
Finance and Insurance	4,231	4,792	561	13.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,496	1,532	36	2.4%
Professional and Technical Services	3,571	3,511	-60	-1.7%
Management of Companies and Ent.	834	880	46	5.5%
Administrative and Waste Services	6,584	6,460	-124	-1.9%
Educational Services	9,650	11,297	1,647	17%
Health Care and Social Assistance	18,868	20,439	1,571	8.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,079	2,217	138	6.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	12,604	13,418	814	6.5%
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	5,321	5,283	-38	-0.7%

Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/qcew/

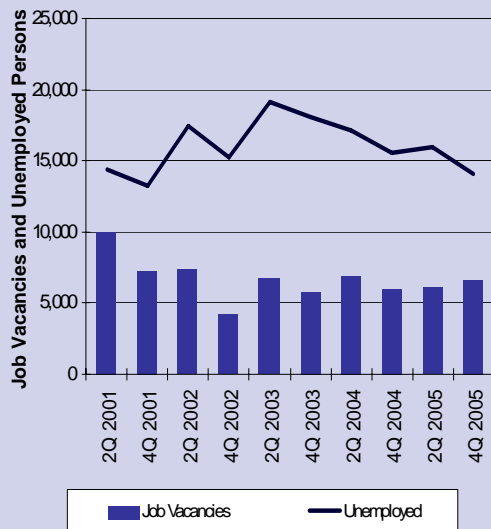
Table 5. Occupational Projections: Central Planning Region, 2002-2012*

Occupation	Regional Employ 2002	Percent Change 2002-2012	Net Job Growth 2002-2012	Net Replacements 2002-2012	Total Openings 2002-2012
Management Occupations	20,262	4.0	815	2,798	3,613
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	8,570	32.3	2,771	1,556	4,327
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	2,900	36.5	1,058	396	1,454
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	3,792	18.8	712	975	1,687
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,426	16.8	239	350	589
Community and Social Services Occupations	5,558	40.6	2,256	1,037	3,293
Legal Occupations	1,681	16.4	276	204	480
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	17,841	30.0	5,349	3,857	9,206
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occ	3,203	17.5	560	597	1,157
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	12,237	34.2	4,184	2,350	6,534
Healthcare Support Occupations	7,469	40.9	3,057	1,119	4,176
Protective Service Occupations	4,789	27.0	1,294	1,442	2,736
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	21,441	25.5	5,458	8,360	13,818
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance Occup.	9,845	26.7	2,626	1,967	4,593
Personal Care and Service Occupations	11,170	24.8	2,772	2,753	5,525
Sales and Related Occupations	30,228	22.4	6,769	10,047	16,816
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	38,068	14.8	5,634	9,086	14,720
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	5,970	-6.1	-364	1,658	1,658
Construction and Extraction Occupations	15,746	24.3	3,819	3,005	6,824
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	11,595	20.8	2,414	2,788	5,202
Production Occupations	30,472	11.7	3,560	7,294	10,854
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	19,496	18.9	3,680	4,200	7,880

Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Employment Outlook, 2002-2012. Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/projections/

Note: The most detailed geography for which Occupational Projections are produced is by Planning Region. The Central Planning Region includes Economic Development Regions 6E, 7E, and 7W.

Figure 7. Job Vacancies and Unemployment: Central Planning Region*



Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Job Vacancy Survey. Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/publications/jobvacancy/

MINNESOTA'S JOB VACANCY SURVEY

As the region has recovered and jobs have become more plentiful, surveys have shown the number of unemployed workers on a decline. Meanwhile, the number of job vacancies has remained constant since 2003. This has led to a competitive labor market with many qualified jobseekers looking for a limited number of jobs. (See Figure 7.)

In 2005, the Job Vacancy survey began to show data at the economic development region level, rather than just the regional planning level. Healthcare support jobs are in the highest demand, while the most openings are for food preparation and serving occupations, including fast food. Office and administrative support workers were in more demand as the region's economy continued to grow, and healthcare practitioners and construction workers remain a vital staffing need in the region. (See Table 6.)

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

The Central Planning Region, which includes Region 7W, is projected to be the fastest-growing region in the state with employment expected to increase 21 percent through 2012. Jobs in this 13-county Central Region are projected to jump from 283,759 in 2002 to 342,698 in 2012, an increase of nearly 60,000 jobs. (See Table 5.)

Led by mental health and substance abuse social workers, where employment is projected to nearly double, three of the top five fastest-growing occupations in the Central Region are healthcare-related, also including social and human service assistants, and home health aides.

Retail salespeople, cashiers, food preparation workers, office clerks, and waiters and waitresses will add the most new jobs overall.

Table 6. Job Vacancies: 4th Quarter 2005, Region 7W

Occupation Group	Regional Job Vacancies	Regional Vacancy Rate (%)	Statewide Job Vacancies	MN Vacancy Rate (%)
Architecture and Engineering	49	3.3%	1,422	3.2%
Art, Design, Entertainment and Media	NR	NR	725	2.5%
Building, Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	187	4.8%	1,249	1.8%
Business and Financial Operations	154	2.9%	3,416	2.5%
Community and Social Services	93	4.2%	1,037	2.6%
Computer and Mathematical	13	0.7%	1,898	2.6%
Construction and Extraction	310	4.0%	1,630	1.7%
Education, Training and Library	96	0.9%	1,739	1.2%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	0	0.0%	108	2.7%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	676	5.1%	6,618	3.1%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	255	3.9%	5,015	3.7%
Healthcare Support	429	10.8%	4,232	5.9%
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	23	0.4%	2,123	2.4%
Legal	0	0.0%	129	0.6%
Life, Physical and Social Science	7	1.0%	461	1.9%
Management	45	0.8%	2,936	2.4%
Office and Administrative Support	526	2.5%	6,109	1.5%
Personal Care and Service	56	1.9%	2,253	4.1%
Production	243	1.4%	4,562	2.0%
Protective Service	4	0.2%	1,158	3.0%
Sales and Related	396	2.5%	8,335	3.2%
Transportation and Material Moving	292	2.3%	3,799	2.2%
ALL OCCUPATIONS	3,857	2.7%	60,954	2.5%

Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Job Vacancy Survey. Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/publications/jobvacancy/

Demographics: Unemployment, Education, Immigration

UNEMPLOYMENT

Despite continuing job growth, Region 7W's unemployment rate has closely tracked that of the state over time. This is due to the high levels of in-migration, which have led to a rapidly increasing labor force. Region 7W's 2005 rate of 4.2 percent was nearly identical to the state rate, and lower than the U.S. rate of 5.1 percent. (See Figure 8.)

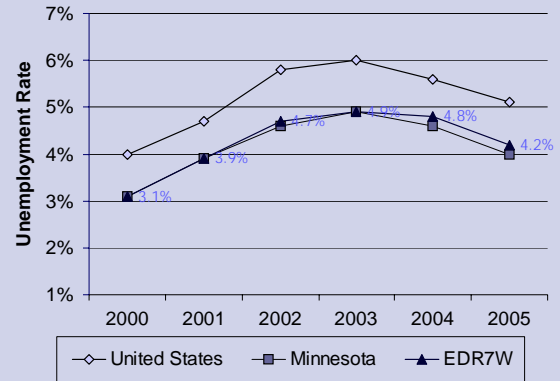
Unemployment rates are very similar throughout the region. Sherburne and Wright County had the lowest rates at 4.1 percent, while Benton County posted the highest rate at 4.5 percent.

EDUCATION

Region 7W offers a well-educated labor force and is home to several post-secondary institutions providing technical and advanced educational programs. St. Cloud State University is the largest institution in the area, serving over 16,000 students in 2002. Over 87 percent of the population aged 25 years and over has at least a high school diploma; about 14 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. (See Figure 9.)

Over half (53 percent) of the population has attended some college, including close to 8 percent with an associate's degree, one of the best rates of technical education in the state.

Figure 8. Unemployment Rates: Region 7W, Minnesota, and U.S.



Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/laus/

IMMIGRATION

Less than 75 percent of the region's residents lived in the same county in 2000 as in 1995. In-migration has become very important to the area, as the Twin Cities metro area stretches farther north and west, almost connecting with the St. Cloud metro area, which is expanding east and south along Interstate 94. (See Table 7.)

Figure 9. Educational Attainment of Region 7W's Adult Residents, 25 Years and Older: 2000

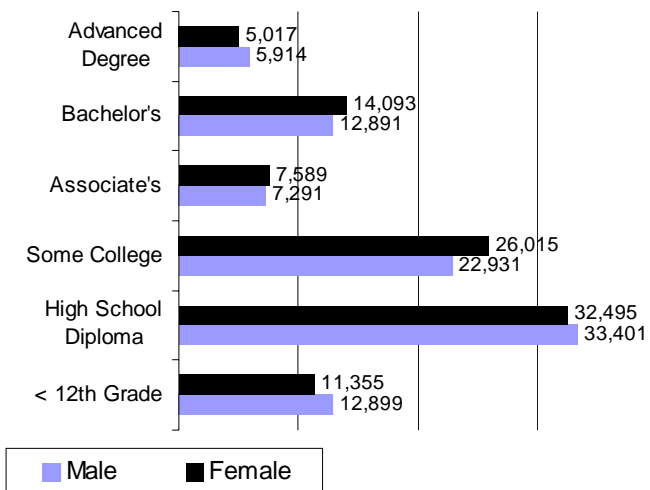


Table 7. Migration, 1995-2000, of Region 7W's Year 2000 Residents

Place of Residence in 1995	Region's 2000 Population	Percentage
Same house in 1995	168,923	56.7%
Same county in 1995	49,826	16.7%
Came from other county	60,543	20.3%
Other state	14,090	4.7%
Other nation	2,194	0.7%
Total	297,886	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF-3. Online at <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Demographics: Aging Population, Fewer Workers

IN THE LABOR FORCE

Labor force participation rates in Region 7W are significantly higher than elsewhere in the state, mainly because of the region's explosive population growth over the last decade.

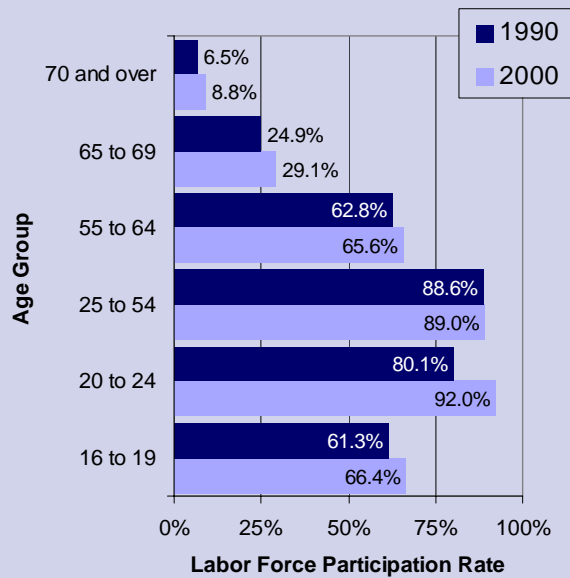
Participation rates are highest for workers in their 20s, 30s and 40s, and lower for older cohorts. (See Figure 10.)

THE POPULATION AGES

The 45- to 54-year-old age bracket comprises the fastest-growing segment of the population as Baby Boomers get closer to reaching retirement age – and continue to live longer. This may have significant ramifications for the region's workforce. There is some debate as to whether economic conditions and longer lives might compel older workers to remain in or reenter the market.

But Region 7W also is seeing rapid growth in workers between the ages of 25 and 44, considered the "prime working years." Central Minnesota is projected to be one of the fastest-growing regions in the state, both in overall population and also in available labor force. (See Figures 11 and 12.)

Figure 10. Labor Force Participation: 1990-2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1990 Census, STF-3, and Census 2000, SF-3

Figure 11. Adult Population Projection: Region 7W, 2000-2030

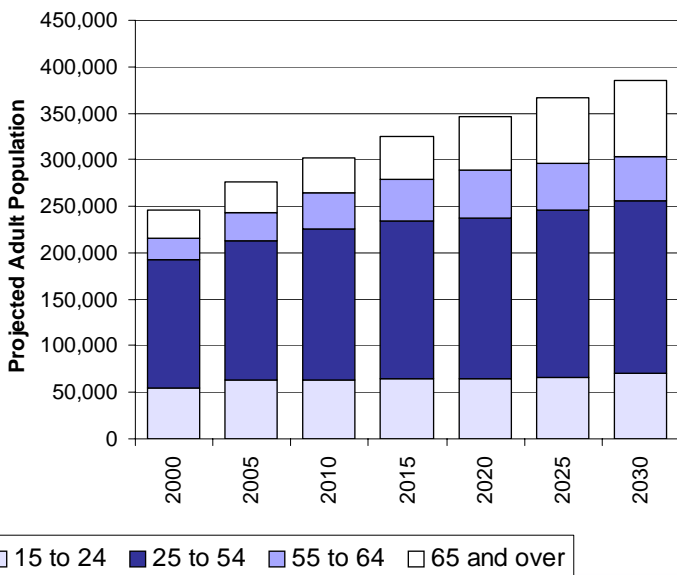
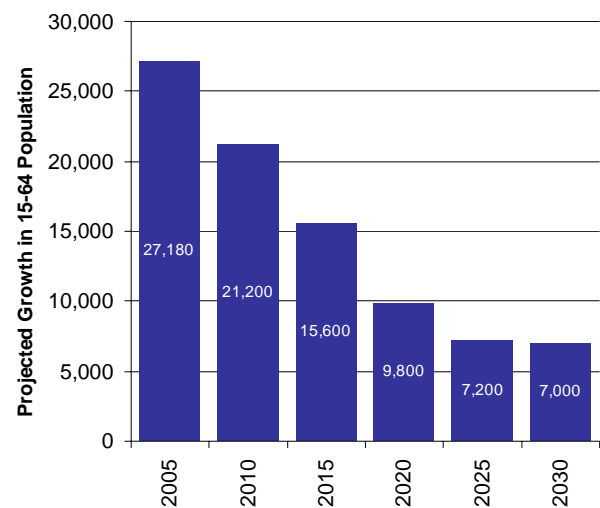


Figure 12. Projected Growth in Working Age Population: Region 7W



Source: Minnesota State Demographer. Population Projections, 2000-2030

Unemployment Insurance Activity

INITIAL CLAIMS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Initial claims for unemployment insurance have dropped quickly from 2003 to 2005, as the region's economy expanded. Goods-producing industries (NAICS Codes 11-33) accounted for about 66 percent of all claims filed. Manufacturing was the notable exception as claims rose from 2003 to 2004, then rose again in 2005.

Beyond that, claims were down in almost every industry in the region from 2003 to 2005. Claims filed in administrative support, educational services, and professional, scientific & technical services all dropped over 30 percent.

Benefit exhaustions (the number of persons that used their entire benefit) and the average duration of benefits were also down significantly in 2005. (See Table 9.)

NOTE: The count of initial claims is not a count of people. Some workers file multiple claims during the year.

Table 8. Initial Unemployment Claims by Industry

NAICS Code	Industry	2003	2004	2005
11	Ag, Forest, Fishing	159	134	120
21	Mining	118	138	169
22	Utilities	313	261	338
23	Construction	9,318	8,592	8,844
31-33	Manufacturing	5,182	5,537	6,404
42	Wholesale Trade	968	761	692
44-45	Retail Trade	1,850	1,536	1,317
48-49	Transportation & Warehousing	654	599	652
51	Information	250	157	186
52	Finance & Insurance	283	331	230
53	Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	202	197	186
54	Professional, Scientific, Technical	698	627	486
55	Mgmt of Companies & Enterprises	234	339	441
56	Admin Support & Waste Services	2,134	1,681	1,489
61	Educational Services	475	315	301
62	Health Care and Social Services	872	813	764
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	209	191	188
72	Accommodation and Food Services	587	635	634
81	Other Services (except Public Admin)	449	423	403
92	Public Administration	175	225	195
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES		25,208	23,545	24,092

Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Unemployment Insurance Statistics. Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/ui/

CONCLUSIONS

Region 7W, and more specifically the St. Cloud area, is a vital, growing regional center in the middle of Minnesota. The total labor force in the region has reached 215,000 and is growing rapidly both through increased in-migration and healthy demographic changes.

This growth has provided area employers with a highly-skilled, available work force and a steady consumer base. While St. Cloud draws workers from surrounding communities, many Sherburne and Wright County residents commute elsewhere for work. Labor force participation rates in the area are above the already-high state of Minnesota rates, especially for women.

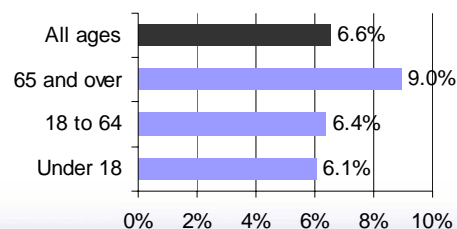
With nine post-secondary training institutions in the immediate area, the St. Cloud area offers one of the most well-educated, technical workforce in a state that is well-known for educational excellence. Enrollments are increasing at many of the area education institutions.

Table 9. Exhaustions of Unemployment Insurance Benefits: Region 7W

	Benefits exhaustions	Average duration of benefits (weeks)
2003 Total	2,800	15.4
2004 Total	1,910	14.3
2005 Total	1,607	13.5

Source: DEED, Labor Market Information Office. Unemployment Insurance Statistics. Online at www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/unemployment/ui/

Figure 13. Selected Poverty Rates: Region 7W, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, SF-3