

## Wood County Community Demographics

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- Located in the center of Wisconsin, Wood County was incorporated in 1856.
- In 2000, the county had a population of 75,555, which was a 2.6 percent increase from 1990.
- 2000 Census indicates that minorities made up 3.6 percent of the Wood County population:

White	96.4%
Asian	1.6%
Hispanic or Latino	.9%
Other races	1.1%

- Median age of county residents was 38.4.
- 25.5 percent of Wood County residents are under 18 years of age.
- Residents age 65 and over made up 15.3 percent of the population.
- In 2000, it was estimated that 6.5 percent of Wood County residents were living in poverty.
- In 1999, the median household income in Wood County was estimated at \$41,767. The average per capita personal income in 1999 was \$20,203.

## Executive Summary

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The LIFE project is a collaboration among partners who care about advancing the quality of life in Wood County.

### Four-step Process:

The LIFE project utilizes a four-step process that leads to continuous evaluation and improvements.

1. The report defines where we are and how we are doing relative to key indicators that describe various aspects about the quality of life in our communities.
2. Public input and perception is gathered through a phone survey. This information, when combined with quantifiable data, provides a basis for setting community goals or priorities.
3. The document serves as a guide to help mobilize action and improve life in Wood County. In addition, the LIFE Steering Committee uses the report to stimulate discussion, create momentum, and initiate change on a broad county-wide level.
4. As future reports are prepared, each serves the additional purpose of monitoring progress as well as continuing the ongoing process of evaluation and improvements.

As this is Wood County's second report, it is anticipated that the 2003 and 2006 documents will create a foundation in which additional indicators will be built upon in future editions.

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## Executive Summary continued

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The LIFE project is a community effort of the Steering Committee of Wood County. Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their efforts in this report's completion:

\*Kim Baltus, Marshfield Area United Way – Project Co-Chair  
\*Bruce Trimble, United Way of Inner Wisconsin – Project Co-Chair  
Michelle Boernke, UW Marshfield/Wood County  
Kelly Borchardt, Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Wisconsin, Inc.  
\*Sue Budjac, Mid-State Technical College  
\*John Chrest, Wood County Department of Social Services  
Nancy Eggleston, Wood County Health Department  
Heather Ericksen, Wood County Health Department  
Rosemary Felice, Wood County Department of Aging  
Christine Hanten, Wood County Department of Social Services  
Helen Jungwirth, Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune  
Bruce King, Marshfield School District  
\*Connie Loden, Heart of Wisconsin Business & Economic Alliance  
\*Kelly Lucas, Community Foundation of South Wood County  
Peter Manley, Wood County University of Wisconsin Extension  
\*Dean Markwardt, Marshfield Area Community Foundation  
Dan McCollum, UW Marshfield/Wood County  
Mayor Mike Meyers, City of Marshfield  
\*Karen Olson, Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Mary Peterson, Pittsville School District  
Dean Ryerson, (1987-2006) Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools

\* Denotes financial support from respective organizations

### **Background**

Community leaders began meeting in the Spring of 2002 to discuss ways to create efficiencies and a common agenda to advance the quality of life in Wood County. After meeting with participants involved with the Marathon County LIFE report, we established a steering committee to simulate the collection of data for our county. We wish to acknowledge the willingness of Marathon County to share their experiences and final reports. The indicators we selected were based on the Marathon County report.

### **How This Report will be Used**

Wood County has many strengths and attributes as outlined in each respective indicator. We see these as positive reasons to live, work and play in Wood County. You will note, however, we have identified areas for improvement. These will be utilized by organizations to improve the quality of life throughout Wood County.