

DeKalb County Quality of Life:

A Collaborative Assessment of Key Strategic Issues Facing
Human Services in DeKalb County

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COMMUNITY
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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| I. Introduction | 1 |
| II. Data Sources Used in this Report | 2 |
| III. Summary of Social and Economic Changes Affecting DeKalb County | 3 |
| A. Ongoing Economic Restructuring | 3 |
| B. Growing Population Diversity | 4 |
| C. Growing Social & Economic Integration with the Region | 7 |
| IV. DeKalb County Quality of Life Assessment | 8 |
| A. Introduction | 8 |
| B. Trends in the Quality of Life for Residents of DeKalb County | 9 |
| 1. Changes in Demographics and the Economy | 10 |
| 2. Changes in K–12 Public Education | 11 |
| 3. Changes in the Environment | 14 |
| 4. Changes in Civic Engagement | 14 |
| 5. Changes in Public Safety | 15 |
| 6. Changes in Public Health | 16 |
| a. Birth Related Indicators | 16 |
| b. Risky Behaviors Indicators | 17 |
| c. Indicators of Access to Health-Related Services | 17 |
| d. Other Misc. Indicators | 18 |
| C. Comparison of DeKalb County with other Counties in Illinois | 19 |
| 1. Demographics and the Economy | 19 |
| 2. K–12 Public Education | 20 |
| 3. The Environment | 20 |
| 4. Civic Engagement | 21 |
| 5. Public Safety | 21 |
| 6. Public Health | 22 |
| V. Conclusion | 23 |

I. Introduction

DeKalb County is experiencing several simultaneous structural shifts in its population, its economy, and its relations to the surrounding region and the world. These shifts are likely to generate important changes in the demand for different categories of human services over the next decade. In order to understand the implications of these changes, this project emerged from discussions among a group of individuals who represent some health and human service funding agencies in DeKalb County. These individuals represent:

- ✦ The City of DeKalb;
- ✦ DeKalb County Community Services;
- ✦ DeKalb County Community Mental Health Board;
- ✦ DeKalb County Community Foundation; and
- ✦ Kishwaukee United Way

There was consensus among these individuals to participate in a study that would create a baseline to assist in measuring the quality of life in our community, ultimately toward directing future funding to improving the root causes of human service issues facing people in our County of DeKalb. This report presents the results of their initial efforts. The report provides two different types of information:

- ✦ A narrative summary that describes the structural shifts that are underway and provides some broad data that can be useful for planning, and
- ✦ Two sets of quantitative indicators that provide the community with specific information related to different aspects of the quality of life for residents. This information is presented as DeKalb County data and as data compared to other counties in Illinois.

There is no assertion that the information contained in this brief report provides a full account of the changes in the County. Nor is there an assertion that the indicators collected provide a full accounting of the quality of life for residents. Nonetheless, this information is presented as a “first draft” of these goals, and others in the community are urged to contribute additional information to future versions of this report.

II. Data Sources Used in This Report

This report is based on existing data that was obtained by the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University (NIU). The sources include the following:

- U.S. Census Bureau:
- 2000 Decennial Census
- 2005 American Community Survey
- Local Employment Dynamics Database
- Illinois Interactive Report Card
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
- The State of Working Illinois, 2006
- Illinois State Board of Education
- Illinois Interactive Report Card
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- Illinois State Board of Elections
- Illinois State Police
- Illinois Department of Public Health, Center for Health Statistics
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Service

An electronic copy of this document is available on the website of each sponsoring organization:

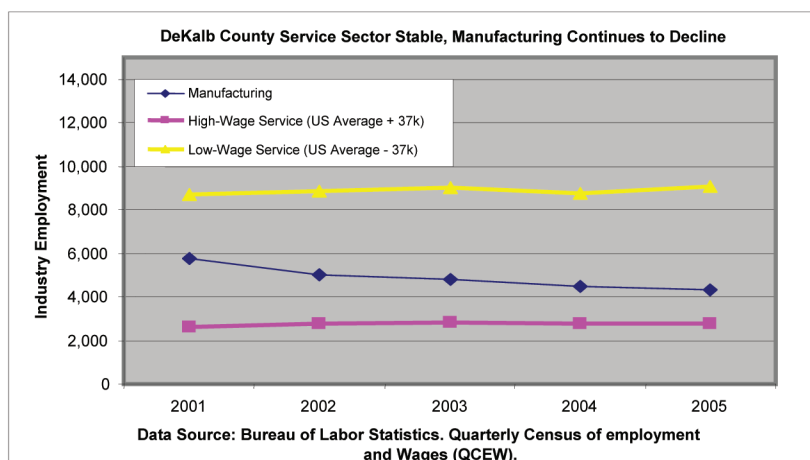
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|--------------------------------------|--|
| • The City of DeKalb | www.cityofdekalb.com |
| • DeKalb County Community Services | www.dekalbcounty.org/ComSvs/ComSvs.html |
| • DeKalb County Mental Health Board | www.dekalbcounty.org/MH/mental_health.html |
| • DeKalb County Community Foundation | www.dekalbcountyfoundation.org |
| • Kishwaukee United Way | www.kishwaukeeunitedway.org |

III. Summary of Social and Economic Changes Affecting DeKalb County

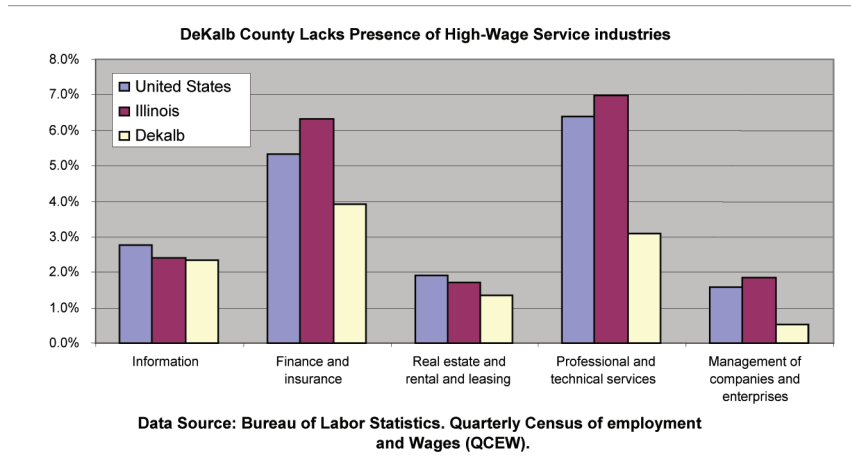
The changes that are transforming day-to-day life in DeKalb County are complex and intertwined. None of them can be understood fully in isolation from the others. For the purposes of discussion, they can be artificially separated in order to highlight each.

A. Ongoing economic restructuring. DeKalb County's economy has undergone several transformations over the last century and a half. The current transformation continues a pattern that began several decades ago. The pattern has several features:

- » Relative stability in the overall number of jobs in the private sector County. Based on the Census Surveys used for this analysis, the number of private sector jobs increased only 0.1 percent from 2001 to 2005.
- » Relative stability in the total number of government jobs in the County. From 1990 to 2000, for example, the total number of DeKalb County residents employed by all levels of government grew 2.1 percent (from 8,969 in 1990 to 9,160 in 2000).
- » Continued loss of jobs in the manufacturing industry. For example, manufacturing jobs dropped about 25% from 2001 to 2005 (5,753 jobs in 2001 to 4,325 in 2005).
- » Compensating growth of jobs in construction and services, which allows the County's unemployment rate to remain relatively constant despite the scale of sector restructuring. For example, there was an increase of over 500 employees in each of these two sectors.



» Concentration of new jobs in lower-income categories and sluggish growth of jobs in high-wage sectors, especially the high-wage end of the service sector (US average income of \$37,000+). The high-wage segments of the service sector make up only 11.2 percent of the County’s job structure, compared to 19.2 percent statewide.

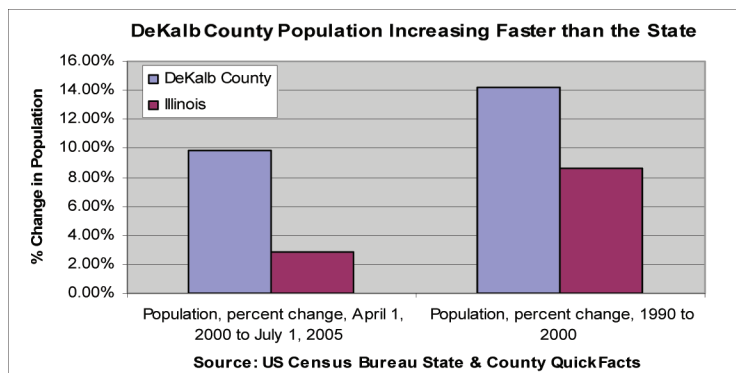


» Falling median family incomes. As a result of this economic restructuring, the median income earned by families in the County dropped approximately 4% between 2000 and 2005 when adjusted for inflation. Although this drop is less than that experienced by all families in Illinois, the drop nonetheless indicates a long-term pattern, over a course of five years, of increasing economic strain on most families in the County.

» The latest American Community Survey (2005) reports 16.7 percent of all individuals in the County resident population as living in poverty. In 2000, DeKalb County reported 11.4 percent of all individuals living in poverty. The increase in the percent of individuals living in poverty in the County is higher than Illinois. Between 2000 and 2005, the percentage of Illinois residents living in poverty increased from 10.7 percent to 12 percent.

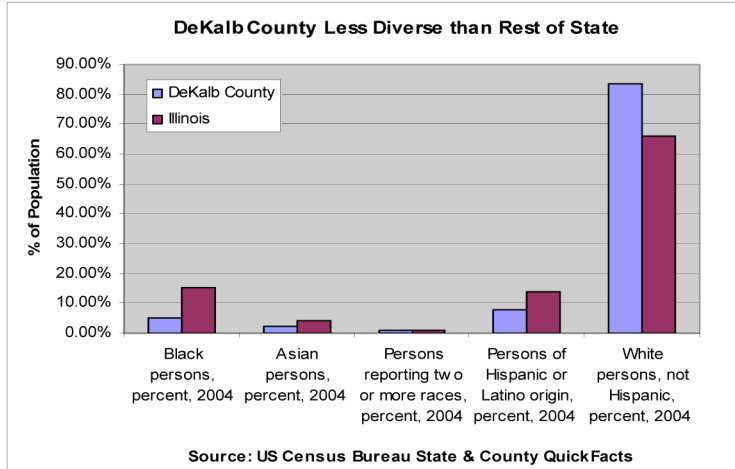
B. Growing population diversity. The County is experiencing underlying, historic shifts in the demography of its residents. New residents from surrounding counties as well as new immigrants from outside the U.S. are entering the County in large numbers as DeKalb County becomes more and more integrated into the larger dynamics of growth that are reshaping the Northern Illinois region.

- » The latest population estimate by the U.S. Census Bureau (2005) puts DeKalb County's population at 97,665. This is a population growth of close to ten percent since 2000. DeKalb's population rate is increasing faster than the State. This rate of growth is high, especially given the relative stability in the number of jobs.

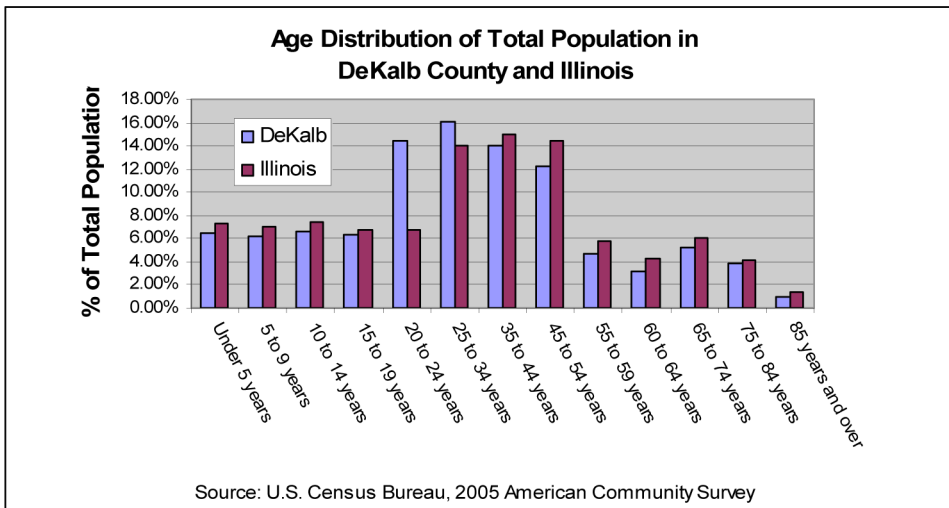


- » The Hispanic population is the fastest growing group in DeKalb County and now represents the largest minority group. The percentage of County residents who are Hispanic has risen from 3 percent in 1990 to close to 9 percent in 2005. The Hispanic population is largely Mexican. An important feature to note is the growing trend of new immigrants who come to DeKalb County directly from their home nation, without first spending time in Chicago or another community closer to the region's urban core.
- » The second largest minority group is African Americans with an estimated 3.4 percent of the total population. From 2000 to 2005, the African American population in DeKalb County decreased 1.2 percent, from 4.6 to 3.4 percent.

» Although the County is increasingly more diverse, the County’s population continues to be predominantly white and less diverse than the rate of the State.



» The County’s population is relatively young. In 2005, the majority of the population ranged between 20-24 and 25-34 years old. This is a significant difference from the state’s age demography. In DeKalb County, for example, the 20-24 age category comprises about 14.5 percent of the total population, while Illinois’ is closer to 7 percent of its total population. One explanation for the difference between the State and the County can be attributed to the impact of NIU on the demographics of the County. In 2005, the official NIU enrollment figure was reported as 25,208 students. Many of these students were estimated to fall within the 20-24 and 25-34 years old category.



- » Conversely, the senior citizen population (aged 65+) has seen only a modest increase over time. In 2000, there were 8,711 people over the age of 65 in DeKalb's total population, whereas in 2005, the number increased to 8,899. From 2000 to 2005, the County's 65+ population increased by only 0.2 percent.
- » The County's population is increasingly better educated. Between 2000 and 2005, for example, the percentage of residents over the age of 25 who have a high school diploma increased from 87.5 percent to 92.4 percent, compared to only 81 percent statewide.

C. Growing social and economic integration with the region. The effects of decades of growth in the Northern Illinois region has reduced DeKalb County's relative social & economic autonomy. Although the County cannot yet be considered a "suburb" of the Chicago metro region, it no longer functions as a network of relatively independent small towns.

- » The growing integration can be seen in commuting patterns. In 2003, for example, only 38.8 percent of the employed resident population of DeKalb County worked inside the County. Approximately 19.1 percent of employed County residents worked in Kane County, 11.2 percent worked in DuPage County, and 10.2 percent worked in Cook County. In contrast, only 3.5 percent of DeKalb County residents worked in Winnebago County.
- » Employers in DeKalb County obtain only 50.9% of their workers from within the County. The other half of individuals who work in DeKalb County commute from Cook (7 percent), Kane (5.3 percent), LaSalle (4.8 percent) and Ogle (4.5 percent).

IV. DeKalb County Quality of Life Assessment

A. Introduction

This second section of the report presents an overview of how different social and economic trends in DeKalb County are combining to affect the quality of life of residents. There is no definitive measure for the quality of life in a community. Indeed, in our increasingly diverse culture, many people value factors differently in their own assessment of quality. Consequently, this report does not attempt to combine specific factors into one overall assessment of quality.

Instead, this report identifies several different categories of social and economic factors that people would relate to the overall quality of life for most residents in the community. These categories were based on the United Way of America State of Caring index. Alterations were made based on the availability of data for DeKalb County. Within each category, data were obtained for several factors. There is, of course, an inherent bias in these data since they report only what can be measured with numbers. Even more, they report only what is *already* measured with number. Many other factors that can be described with numbers are not regularly measured. Many of the factors that people include in their own estimation of the quality of life do not lend themselves to quantitative measurement.

With these limitations in mind, this report is offered to the community as a first step toward measuring changes in some important factors that do indeed relate to the quality of life for most residents of DeKalb County. We welcome suggestions for improving this report in the future.

B. Trends in the Quality of Life for Residents of DeKalb County

We developed six broad categories of social and economic factors that have an effect on the quality of life for most residents of DeKalb County. They are:

- Changes in demographics and the economy,
- Changes in K-12 public education,
- Changes in the natural environment,
- Changes in civic engagement,
- Changes in public safety, and
- Changes in public health.

In order to assess DeKalb County's status in regard to these changes, two types of measurements are used in each of these six categories. This report summarizes the findings for each measure.

- **DeKalb County Trends.** These data compare the most recent data on DeKalb County with past data on DeKalb County. The result is an assessment over time of whether trends are improving, staying about the same, or getting worse.
- **Comparison of DeKalb County with Other Illinois Counties.** The second compares the most recent DeKalb County data with the most recent data for all other counties in the State of Illinois.

It is very important to note that these two types of measures need to be examined separately. Because of the limitations on available data, there are many differences in the specific factors that are included in these two analyses. In addition, one set of measures compare changes *over time* and the other does not.

1. Changes in Demographics and the Economy

Data on ten specific factors were collected in this category:

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|---|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Total Population | 2004–2005 | 95,306–97,665 | 2.48% increase |
| Net Migration of People | 2003–2004 | 739–905 | 22.5% increase |
| Median Household Income (adjusted for inflation) | 2002–2003 | 45,977–45,913 | 0.14% decrease |
| Dependency Ratio (Age Under 18 and Over 65) | 1990–2005 | 31.7%–30.8% | 0.9 point decrease |
| % Families in Poverty | 2000–2003 | 5.1%–9.3% | 4.2 point increase |
| Unemployment Rate | 2004–2005 | 5.3%–5.3% | unchanged |
| Hourly Wage Needed to Afford Housing Rent | 2004–2005 | \$14.06–\$14.38 | 2.3% increase |
| Families with Single Female Head of Household | 1990–2000 | 7.3%–8.5% | 1.2 point increase |

Overall Assessment: The County’s total population is clearly increasing. There are very different points of view, however, about whether this adds or subtracts to the quality of life. It is significant, however, that the overall volatility of the County’s resident population is increasing. For example, more people are both moving into and out of the County each year, resulting in more “churning” of the resident population. The increase in “churning” is generally a negative factor. Despite the steady unemployment rate, other economic factors are trending in ways that negatively affect the quality of life. On balance, therefore, we conclude that the most recent trends are **more negative than positive**.

2. Changes in K-12 Public Education

Data on four specific factors for each public school district within the County were collected in this category.

All DeKalb County School Districts

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 95.8%–94.3% | 2 point decrease |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds | 2004–2006 | 70%–77% | 7 point increase |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$11,742–\$12,845 | 9% increase |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 19.6–19.8 | unchanged |

DeKalb School District

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|--|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 86.9%–90.6% | 4 point increase |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds. | 2004–2006 | 68%–76% | 8 point increase |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$13,004–\$14,130 | 8.7% increase |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 17.1%–19.9% | 3 person increase |

Genoa-Kingston School District

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 100%–95.7% | 4 point decrease |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds | 2004–2006 | 67%–74% | 7 point increase |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$8,454–\$9,867 | 16.7% increase |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 15.4%–19.4% | 4 person increase |

Hiawatha School District

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|--|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 96.2%–97.5% | 2 point increase |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds. | 2004–2006 | 66%–69% | 3 point decrease |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$13,780–\$13,074 | 5% decrease |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 20.8%–16.4% | 5 person decrease |

Hinckley-Big Rock School District

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 95.5%–95.2% | Unchanged |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds. | 2004–2006 | 71%–81% | 10 point increase |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$12,782–\$16,013 | 25.2% increase |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 14.9%–15.7% | Unchanged |

Indian Creek School District

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 100%–87.5% | 2 point decrease |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds. | 2004–2006 | 77%–84% | 7 point increase |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$12,153–\$12,823 | 5.5% increase |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 18.9%–21.7% | 3 point increase |

Sandwich School District

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 89.3% - 94.2% | 5 point increase |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds. | 2004–2006 | 65%–75% | 10 point increase |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$9,287–\$11,315 | 21.8% increase |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 30.0%–28.0% | 2 person decrease |

Somonauk School District

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 98.7%–95.4% | 4 point decrease |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds. | 2004–2006 | 73%–77% | 4 point increase |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$11,737–\$12,229 | 4.2% increase |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 18.8–14.8 | 4 person decrease |

Sycamore School District

| Factor | Years Reported | Data | Change |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Graduation Rate | 2004–2006 | 100%–98.1% | 2 point decrease |
| % Students Meet or Exceed State Stnds. | 2004–2006 | 73%–80% | 7 point increase |
| Per Pupil Expenditures | 2004–2006 | \$12,736–\$13,306 | 4.5% increase |
| Average Class Size in High School | 2004–2006 | 21.0%–22.8% | 2 person increase |

Overall Assessment: The public school districts that serve DeKalb County residents are all coping with the changing demographics, such as the rise in poverty and the arrival of new residents. Using the measures presented, the result is a mixed assessment. Some of the changes revealed in the numbers represent very small actual changes. A good example is that a drop in graduation rate may actually represent a very small change in the number of students who graduate. It is fair to say that, overall, the public school system is not satisfied with many of its own performance measures. Each school district is working to make improvements, but dramatic improvements (where possible) are not yet in place. On balance, therefore, we estimate that the effect of public schooling on the quality of life is **mostly positive, but mostly unchanged.**

3. Changes in the Environment

Data on six specific factors were collected in this category.

| Factor | Most Recent | Data | Change |
|---|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Farmland Acreage | 1990–2000 | 386,076–359,352 | 6.9% decrease |
| Carbon Monoxide Emissions (tons/year) | 2003–2004 | 114.5–123.8 | 8.1% increase |
| Nitrogen Oxides Emissions (tons/year) | 2003–2004 | 107.0–113.2 | 5.8% increase |
| Particulate Matter in the Air (tons/year) | 2003–2004 | 244.1–236.3 | 3.2% decrease |
| Sulfur Dioxide Emissions(tons/year) | 2003–2004 | 30.1–30.2 | unchanged |
| Volatile Organics In the Air (tons/year) | 2003–2004 | 401.9–373.8 | 7% decrease |

Overall Assessment: The County continues to lose farmland acreage to new development at a steady pace, although there is reason to believe that the County government’s policy to avoid development in unincorporated areas has a beneficial effect. In terms of air quality, progress is being made in reducing some of the more visible sources, such as particulates and volatile organics. Basic emissions of carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides continue to grow faster than the growth in population. On balance, therefore, we assess that the most recent trends are **more negative than positive**.

4. Changes in Civic Engagement

Data on three specific factors were collected in this category.

| Factor | Most Recent | Data | Change |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| General election Registered voters | 2000–2004 | 49,267–55,380 | + 6,113 voters |
| % Residents 18+ Registered to vote | 2000–2004 | 71.7 %–72.1% | 0.4% increase |
| % Registered Voters Who cast ballots | 2000–2004 | 67.7 %–74.0% | + 6.3 percent |

Overall Assessment: The increase in percentage of adults who register to vote and the simultaneous increase in the percent of registered voters who actually vote in a general election are both positive signs of higher engagement in civic activities. Yet both of those percentages could be much higher. On balance, however, we conclude that the trend in civic engagement is **more positive than negative**.

5. Changes in Public Safety

Data on four specific factors were collected in this category.

| Factor | Most Recent | Data | Change |
|--|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Violent Crimes Reported Per 100,000 residents | 2003-2005 | 276.3–285.9 | 9.6 per 100K increase |
| Property Crimes Reported Per 100,000 residents | 2003-2005 | 2,936.0–2,930.8 | 5.2 per 100K decrease |
| Drug Crime Arrests Per 100,000 residents | 2003-2005 | 1,027.1–988.5 | 38.6 per 100K decrease |
| Other Crimes Reported Per 100,000 residents | 2003-2005 | 399.8–422.0 | 22.2 per 100K increase |

Overall Assessment: DeKalb County residents enjoy a relatively low rate of reported violent crimes, and that rate has risen only a small amount. Property crimes are 10 times more frequent, and show a very slight decrease. There is, however, a low but rising rate of other types of crimes, including crimes against school personnel, children, domestic crimes and hate crimes. This rise in other crimes may suggest warnings in regard to the strains created by growth and change in the County's social and economic structure. Recent years have seen a drop in drug-related arrests, although it is not clear if this drop reflects less drug-related crime. On balance, therefore, we conclude that public safety factors are **mostly stable, but with some warning signs.**

6. Changes in Public Health

Data on seventeen specific factors were collected in this category. Public health is a complex category. In order to reflect that richness, data are grouped into four sub-categories: births, evidence of risky behaviors, access to health-related services, and a last category of other miscellaneous factors, some of which have only limited data.

a. Birth Related Indicators:

| Factor | Most Recent | Data | Change |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| % of Mothers Beginning Prenatal Care in First Trimester of Pregnancy | 2000–2004 | 82.9%–84.7% | 1.8 point increase |
| % of Births to Mothers Under 18 Years of Age | 2000–2004 | 2.1%–2.0% | 0.1 point decrease |
| % of Babies Born With Low Birth Weights | 2000–2004 | 7.8%–7.5% | 0.3 point decrease |
| Infant Mortality Rate | 2000–2004 | 8.0%–8.0% | unchanged |

Partial Assessment: The birth-related indicators show stability over the last several years, in some ways this is remarkable since the County’s population is experiencing relatively rapid change. Yet these factors are stable at rates that are not what public health officials would desire. For example, more than 15 percent of mothers are still not receiving prenatal care in their first trimester.

b. Risky Behaviors Indicators:

| Factor | Most Recent | Data | Change |
|---|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| % of Adults Who Smoke Tobacco | 1997–2002 | 24.4%–23.4% | 1 point decrease |
| % of 12 th Graders Who Have Used Alcohol In The Last 30 Days | 2005–2006 | 51.0%–49.2% | 1.8 point decrease |
| % of 12 th Graders Who Have Used Marijuana In The Last 30 Days | 2005–2006 | 31.7%–29.8% | 1.9 point decrease |
| % of 12 th Graders Who Have Used Tobacco In The Last 30 Days | 2005–2006 | 31.6%–27.7% | 3.9 point decrease |

Partial Assessment: Unacceptable rates of risky behavior continue to occur, although there is some evidence of small decreases. (Note: Data was not available by county in Illinois.)

c. Indicators of Access to Health-Related Services:

| Factor | Most Recent | Data | Change |
|---|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| % Unable to See Doctor At Least Once In Last Year Because Of Cost | 1997–2002 | 7.7%–7.0% | 0.7 point decrease |
| Immunization Rates At Public Health Facilities | 2000–2002 | 90.0%–63.0% | 27.0 point decrease |
| % Medically Uninsured | 1995–2000 | 11.0%–11.8% | 0.8 point increase |

Partial Assessment: Available data on access to health services indicates stability, although it is not known if less pervasive use of public health facilities for immunizations is fully off-set by use of private facilities. Recent changes in Medicaid funding need to be assessed.

d. Other Misc. Indicators:

| Factor | Most Recent | Data Range |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| % of Adults Who Report At Least One Day Not Physically Healthy In The Last 30 days | 1997–2002 | 73.2%–59.8% |
| % of Adults Who Report At Least One Day Not Mentally Healthy In The Last 30 Days | 1997–2002 | 59.4%–60.6% |
| People Who Report They Need Help With Personal Or Routine Care | 2002 | 621 |
| Number of Suicides | 1997–2001 | 8–7 |
| Number of Divorces Or Annulments | 2000–2003 | 293–236 |
| % of Average Family Income Needed To Pay For Full-Time Preschooler child care | 2002 | 13.0% |

Overall Assessment: The overall balance of factors related to public health imply relative stability in the health of County residents, and relative stability in the ability of residents to access and benefit from health-related services. Yet the incidence of behaviors that pose risks to the health of individuals remains unacceptably high. These behaviors also remain relatively stable. (*Note: People who report they need help with personal or routine care data is not available across all counties.*)

C. Comparison of DeKalb County with other Counties in Illinois

This section compares DeKalb County with other Illinois counties, using the latest data that can be compared to other counties. Please note that this sometimes alters the data that are reported for DeKalb County since comparable data for all Illinois counties are not available for every year.

1. Demographics and the Economy

DeKalb County's demographics and economic position compares favorably to other Illinois counties. The table below shows that the lowest ranking indicators in this category are: Wage Needed to Afford Average Rent, Homeownership Rate and Percent of Families with a Single-Female-Headed household. These low rankings may reflect the impact of the NIU student population on the demographics and the economy of the County.

| | Demographics/Economy | Data Point | Ranking of DeKalb County | Number of Illinois Counties Reporting |
|---|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Percent of IL Population | 9.4% | 8th | 102 |
| 2 | 2005 In-Migration Flow of Residents | 28.4% | 5th | 102 |
| 3 | 2005 Out-Migration Flow of Residents | 18.8% | 24th | 102 |
| 4 | Median Household Income | \$45,828 | 14th | 102 |
| 5 | Families In Poverty | 9.60% | 21st | 102 |
| 6 | Percent of Unemployment Rate | 5.3% | 49th | 102 |
| 7 | Hourly Wage Needed to Afford Housing Rent | \$14.38 | 94th | 102 |
| 8 | Homeownership Average Rate | 59.6% | 99th | 102 |
| 9 | Families with Single Female Head of Household | 4.9% | 69th | 102 |

2. K-12 Public Education

Table below depicts a county-wide ranking on commonly perceived education indicators. From the ranking of 102 counties in Illinois, DeKalb County mostly falls on the lower-end of the identified indicators. The lowest ranking indicator is the Average of High School Class Size, ranking 91st out of the 102 counties. This translates into an average High School Class Size in DeKalb County that is significantly higher than most counties in Illinois.

| Education | Data Point | Ranking of DeKalb County | Number of Illinois Counties Reporting |
|--|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 Graduation Rate | 89.9% | 59th | 102 |
| 2 Percent of Students Who Meet or Exceed State Tests | 69.8% | 63rd | 102 |
| 3 Per Pupil Expenditures | \$12,159 | 67th | 102 |
| 4 Average High School Class Size | 20.0 | 91st | 102 |

3. The Environment

DeKalb County is well positioned on commonly perceived environment indicators. The table below illustrates the median or upper placement of the County in this category. One indicator that ranked slightly below the median is the Volatile Organic material found in the County in proportion to the rest of Illinois counties.

| Environment | Data Point | Ranking of DeKalb County | Number of Illinois Counties Reporting |
|--|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 Percent of Land Used As Farm Land | 88.54% | 20th | 102 |
| 2 Carbon Monoxide Emissions | 123.8 | 48th | 101 |
| 3 Nitrogen Oxides Emissions | 113.2 | 46th | 102 |
| 4 Particulate Matter In The Air | 236.3 | 50th | 102 |
| 5 Sulfur Dioxide Emissions | 30.2 | 48th | 102 |
| 6 Volatile Organic Material In The Air | 373.8 | 66th | 102 |

4. Civic Engagement

DeKalb County is not engaged in civic duties where the right to participate in the election process is concerned, both in registering to vote and electing to act on that registration in a recent major election.

| Civic Engagement | | Data Point | Ranking of DeKalb County | Number of Illinois Counties Reporting |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | General Election Registered Voters | 26.1% | 97th | 102 |
| 2 | General Election Ballots Casts | 27.0% | 98th | 102 |

5. Public Safety

DeKalb County is a relatively safe place to live and work in Illinois. Compared to other Illinois counties, residents experience moderate levels of crime. The principal exception to this overall assessment is a relatively high rate of property crimes.

| Public Safety | | Data Point | Ranking of DeKalb County | Number of Illinois Counties Reporting |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Violent Crimes reported per 100K residents | 2.80 | 46th | 102 |
| 2 | Property Crimes Reported per 100K residents | 28.66 | 82nd | 102 |
| 3 | Drug Crime Arrest per 100K residents | 4.83 | 38th | 102 |
| 4 | Other Crimes Reported per 100K residents | 4.13 | 56th | 102 |

6. Public Health

DeKalb County indicators illustrate residents are attentive to their health and well-being. The population that avoids the Doctor regardless of cost is very low while the percentage that is uninsured is high. The indicator for teen births is low in comparison to other counties while the infant mortality rate is elevated in comparison. The dependency rate is the most extreme indicator showing a smaller percentage of the population falling outside the age range of 16 through 65 in comparison to the other counties. The divorce rate is quite low.

| | | | Ranking of DeKalb County | Number of Illinois Counties Reporting |
|----------------------|---|---------|---|--|
| Public Health | Data Point | | | |
| 1 | Percent of Adults Who Report Tobacco Use | 23.40% | 33rd | 102 |
| 2 | Immunization Rate at Public Health Facilities | 63.00% | 54th | 85 |
| 3 | Dependency Rate (Age under 16 and over 65) | 30.83% | 5th | 102 |
| 4 | Percent of Births to Teens under age 16 | 2.8% | 11th | 102 |
| 5 | Percent of Pregnant Woman Who Receive Prenatal Care in 1st Trimester | 84.7% | 56th | 102 |
| 6 | Low Birth Weight Babies | 7.5% | 47th | 102 |
| 7 | Infant Mortality Rate | 0.01% | 62nd | 102 |
| 8 | Percent of Residents Without Health Insurance | 13.38% | 73rd | 102 |
| 9 | Percent Reporting at Least One Not Physically Healthy Day in Last 30 Days | 40.2% | 98th | 100 |
| 10 | Percent Reporting at Least One Not Mentally Healthy Day in Last 30 Days | 39.4% | 98th | 100 |
| 11 | Avoiding Doctor due to Costs | 7.40% | 25th | 101 |
| 12 | Percent of All Marriages Ending in Divorce or Annulment Each Year | 0.24% | 18th | 102 |
| 13 | Percent of Resident Population Committing Suicide | 0.0063% | 28th | 102 |

V. Conclusion

This report has presented information that describes some of the social and economic changes that are underway in DeKalb County today. Many of these changes will affect the demand for human services over the next decade. The report also provides initial data on a wide variety of indicators that measure components of the quality of life for County residents. Regular reporting of these indicators over the next several years would help assess current and future challenges to our high quality of life.

The sponsors of this report do not assert that all of the social and economic changes affecting DeKalb County are covered fully in this report. Nor is it claimed the indicators included here cover all aspects of the quality of life for residents. However, the information contained in this report may be helpful to public and private organizations that provide human services to residents of the County.

» NOTES: