

Community Indicators

A healthy natural environment, public safety, transportation, leisure, and support services contribute to strong community life.

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Air Quality

Indicator 1

Air quality is good in the Great Rivers Region

Data Highlights

88% of COMPASS survey respondents rated their community's air quality as good or excellent.

Ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide contaminants are all within standards in all five counties.

The region consistently has some of the lowest Air Quality Index (AQI) numbers in both Wisconsin and Minnesota, generally in the mid-20's range, which is "GOOD".

The counties in the region meet all state and federal standards for ambient air quality.

Sources

Wisconsin DNR, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, AirNow, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

For Additional Information

www.dnr.wi.gov/air/aq/monitor/index.htm
www.epa.gov/reg5oair
www.airnow.gov
www.pca.state.mn.us/air

Implications for our Community

Clean air is essential to our health and well-being, and the air we breathe impacts our quality of life. Air quality standards determined by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the States of Minnesota and Wisconsin help protect the public from high concentrations of air pollutants that can impact human health. Ambient air is the portion of the atmosphere external to buildings and which the general public breathes.

The three contaminants of primary concern are particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and ozone. Particulate Matter (PM), tiny airborne particles suspended in the air, can penetrate portions of the lung and may affect sensitive people with respiratory diseases. Sulfur Dioxide (SO²) is released during the burning of fossil fuels. Ozone at ground level is produced in the air through a reaction involving several contaminants. Automobile exhaust, solvent use, and fuel combustion sources are the main contributors. At ground level, ozone is unhealthy to breathe. Ozone also damages trees, crops, corrodes masonry, and causes paint to darken.

The Clean Air Act established two types of national air quality standards. Primary standards are intended to protect public health, including the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Secondary standards set limits to protect public welfare, including protection against decreased visibility, damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings.

Although there are EPA operated air quality monitors throughout both Minnesota and Wisconsin, none are in the Great Rivers Region. La Crosse County contains the only continuous air monitoring equipment for PM_{2.5} in the region, and Vernon County contains the only ozone monitoring equipment.

Surface Water Quality

Indicator 2

The quality of the region's rivers, lakes, and streams impacts overall quality of life.

Data Highlights

The WI DNR studied PCB levels in the Black River, and determined that the river itself is not contaminated enough to produce levels detectable in fish. The fish with high PCB levels in the Black are likely accumulating the contaminants in the Mississippi River and migrating up the Black River.

The most common impairment of our Regions surface waters is mercury.

66% of COMPASS Survey respondents rated the quality of the water in rivers and lakes in their community as good or excellent.

Vernon County residents rated the quality of rivers and lakes in their community the highest.

Sources

Wisconsin DNR, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

For Additional Information

www.dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/wqs/303d/

www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-and-programs/minnesotas-impaired-waters-and-tmdls.html

Implication for our Community

The quality of the region's rivers, lakes and streams can impact the health, recreational interests, tourism, economy, and overall quality of life of its residents. Section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act states that water bodies that are not meeting their designated uses (fishing, swimming), due to pollutants, must be placed on the impaired waters list. States are responsible for listing waters that are impaired and submitting the lists to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for review and approval. States must then develop an analysis of the sources of pollutants causing the impairments, and the reductions of each source to address the impairments. In the Great Rivers Region, five water bodies were removed from the impaired waters list since 2008, and two were added. Not all segments of the listed rivers and creeks are impaired.

Impaired Waters List, Regional Bodies of Water 2010		
County	Body of water	Contaminant
La Crosse	Mississippi River	Mercury, PCB
	Neshonoc Lake	Mercury, PCB, STSS
	Black River	PCB
	Adams Valley Creek, Fleming Creek, Gills Coulee Creek, Halfway Creek, Johnson Coulee Creek, Long Coulee Creek	STSS
Monroe	Black River	PCB
	Tomah Lake	P
	Angelo Pond, North Flowage, Ranch Creek	Mercury
	Clear Creek	Elevated Water Temperature
	Creek 23-13b, Printz Creek, Stillwell Creek	STSS
	South Fork Lemonweir River	BOD, P
Trempealeau	Black River	PCB
	Trempealeau River	Mercury
	Marinuka Lake	Mercury, P
	Hardies Creek, Irvin Creek, Newcomb Valley Creek, North Creek, Tappen Coulee Creek, Welch Coulee Creek	STSS
	Trump Coulee Creek	STSS, P
Vernon	Mississippi River	Mercury, PCB
	Baraboo River (West Branch)	BOD, P, STSS
	Jug Creek	STSS
Houston	Mississippi River	Mercury, PCB
	Money Creek	Fecal Coliform, Turbidity
	Root River	Mercury, Fecal Coliform, Turbidity
	Root River South	Mercury

Wastewater Discharges

Indicator 3

Proper treatment of wastewater protects the environment and our health

Data Highlights

There are a total of 73 permitted wastewater discharge entities in the 5 county region. The numbers by industry and municipality are: La Crosse County (4 and 14), Monroe (3 and 13), Trempealeau (1 and 12), Vernon (3 and 11), and Houston (4 and 8).

Monitoring reports must be submitted monthly from each entity, including maximums and averages for a variety of indicators.

Monitoring reports are public information and can be obtained by contacting the state regulatory body.

As of March, 2011, none of the presently issued permits in the 5 counties were on public notice for renewal or revocation.

Sources

Wisconsin DNR, Minnesota PCA, Minnesota DNR

For Additional Information

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/ww/
www.dnr.state.mn.us/watershed_tool/index.html
www.pca.state.mn.us/

Implications for our Community

Water pollution degrades surface waters making them unsafe for drinking, fishing, swimming, and other activities. As authorized by the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. The EPA sets the discharge limits but also delegates regulatory authority to states that can then issue their own permits and set discharge limits that are at least as stringent as the EPAs.

In 1987, to better regulate storm water runoff quality, Congress began to regulate Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) with NPDES permits, as well. Many municipalities in the region are attempting to improve their storm water runoff quality by implementing best management practices.

Not only is the discharge concentration of contaminants regulated, by also the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). In addition to regulating pH and temperature, some commonly regulated wastewater contaminants include biological oxygen demand (BOD), fecal coliform (bacteria), total suspended solids (TSS), ammonia-nitrogen (NH₃-N), chloride (TRC), and total dissolved solids (TDS). A majority of treatment operations in the Great Rivers Region are compliant year-round and resolve any compliance issues in a timely manner.

In Wisconsin, WPDES permits are issued by the WDNR's Bureau of Watershed Management, with federal oversight from the US EPA.

In Minnesota, NPDES permits are issued by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, with federal oversight from the US EPA.

Municipal Water Quality

Indicator 4

Clean, safe drinking water is necessary for our health and well-being.

Data Highlights

75% of COMPASS survey respondents rated the quality of the drinking water in their community as good or excellent.

All municipal water systems in the Region use chlorine to keep the water biologically safe throughout the distribution system.

All municipalities in Houston County are in various stages of developing Wellhead Protection Programs, as well as 7 municipalities in Monroe County, 8 in Trempealeau County, and 6 in Vernon County. No municipalities in La Crosse County are listed as having wellhead protection programs.

Sources

Wisconsin DNR

Minnesota Department of Health

Wisconsin Department of Health

For Additional Information

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/dwg/

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/com/

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/water/

www.cityoflacrosse.org

Implications for our Community

All municipal water systems in the Great Rivers Region use groundwater as their source. There are various human activities that can potentially contaminate drinking water supplies. These include excessive use of fertilizers, pesticides, road salt, and failing septic systems. Each municipality provides some level of treatment to the water before it reaches the public for use. Each community must test their drinking water periodically for various parameters including inorganic minerals, man-made organic compounds, and bacteriological contaminants. The public must be notified if the contaminant exceeds drinking water standards. Wellhead protection plans protect the quality and quantity of our public drinking water supplies by identifying existing and potential sources of contamination, establishing a public education program, establishing a water conservation program, a contingency plan for providing safe water in the event of contamination, and a management plan to address existing and potential sources of contamination.

Within the Great Rivers Region there are 47 municipal water systems that provide drinking water to residents. They are:

Houston County – Caledonia, Eitzen, Hokah, Houston, La Crescent, Spring Grove;

La Crosse County – Bangor, Holmen, La Crosse, Mindoro, St. Josephs, Onalaska, Rockland, Shelby, West Salem;

Monroe County – Cashton, Kendall, Norwalk, Oakdale, Sparta, Tomah, Warrens, Wilton;

Trempealeau County – Arcadia, Blair, Dodge, Eleva, Ettrick, Galesville, Independence, Lincoln, Osseo, Pigeon Falls, Strum, Trempealeau, Whitehall;

Vernon County – Chaseburg, Coon Valley, Genoa, Hillsboro, La Farge, Ontario, Readstown, Stoddard, Viola, Viroqua, Westby.

Municipalities treating their water supply systems for removal of iron are: Houston County (2), La Crosse County (5), Monroe County (4), Trempealeau County (10), Vernon County (4).

Municipalities treating their water supply systems for manganese removal are: Houston County (2), La Crosse County (1), and Monroe County (1).

Municipalities treating their water supply systems for corrosivity removal are: Houston County (1), Monroe County (5), Trempealeau County (8), and Vernon County (1).

Municipalities treating their water supply systems for radon removal are: Monroe County (1), and Trempealeau County (1).

Private Well Water Quality

Indicator 5

Few private wells are tested regularly in the Great Rivers Region.

Data Highlights

There were 660 active wells in Houston County, 2,846 in Vernon, 4,825 in La Crosse, 4,738 in Monroe, and 3,245 in Trempealeau as of 2010.

Common groundwater contaminants in the region include coliform bacteria, nitrate, iron, and pesticides.

In 2010, approximately 50% of private well tests at a main laboratory servicing La Crosse, Vernon, and Houston counties came back positive for coliform bacteria.

Sources

Wisconsin DNR
www.dnr.state.wi.us/,

Minnesota DNR
www.dnr.state.mn.us/index.html

MN Department of Health
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/swca/index.html#houston

Central Wisconsin
Groundwater Center
www.uwsp.edu/cnr/gndwater/

Implications for our Community

Because of the rural nature of the counties located in the Great Rivers Region, many residents rely on private wells to provide water for household use. In rural areas, nearly all residents rely on private wells as their source for domestic drinking water. However, many private well users know very little about the quality of the water in their well.

The only way to determine the safety of the water for human or livestock consumption is to have the water tested by the well user and sent to a certified laboratory in the region for analysis. Within the five counties, water can be tested at Davy Laboratories in La Crosse or the La Crosse Public Health Laboratory. Water testing should be a regular routine for private well users since water quality can change over time.

The construction of an individual well has a major influence on the quality of the well water. It is common for wells located very close to one another to produce water of very different water quality because of the well depth, casing depth, land-use activities, and the soil and rock types which the well has been drilled through or located in.

There are a number of different reasons why private wells may become contaminated or observe changes in water quality. Some are due to natural causes, but many are caused by human activity. Because groundwater is actually precipitation that has infiltrated into the soil and rock, what we do on the land surface can often have a large effect on the quality of our groundwater resource and private wells. Private wells, if not properly maintained, can provide a direct route for contamination from the surface to the groundwater.

A special well construction area was established near Spring Grove, MN in January of 2007 due to well contamination. The SWCA limits drilling new or altering existing wells because of potential public health risks.

Solid Waste

Indicator 6

La Crosse County's waste to energy program is a model for the country.

Data Highlights

Trempealeau County does not have its own landfill, nor does Houston County. Their refuse goes to La Crosse County.

The Wisconsin DNR estimates that the La Crosse County landfill has 24 years of useful life remaining as is, that Vernon County's has 10 years left, and Monroe County's has 14 years left.

Sources

La Crosse County Solid Waste Management Plan, Wisconsin DNR, Minnesota PCA, Houston County Solid Waste Management Plan

For Additional Information

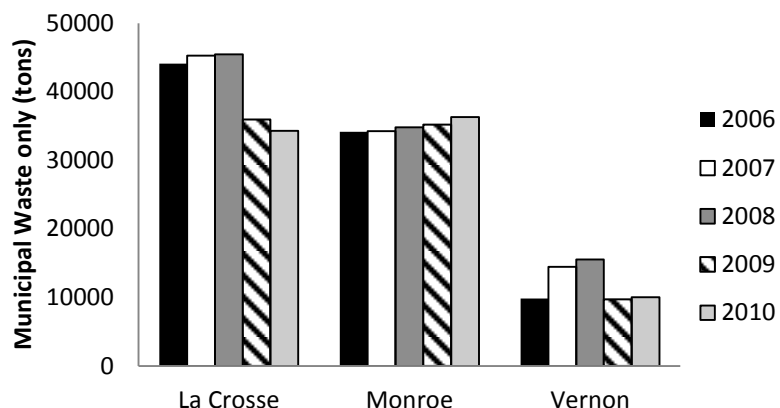
www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/solidwaste/

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/wm/solid/

www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/waste/waste-home.html

www.houstoncounty.gov/office2.com/

Municipal Waste Received in Landfills



Implications for our Community

The amount of waste a community produces can have a large impact on the natural environment and the quality of life. Today's modern landfills are designed with environmental controls, and must meet the Department of Natural Resources requirements. The DNR regulates landfills to prevent negative impacts to people and the environment. Landfills must collect and treat liquids and gases they generate before releasing them to the environment. Landfill operators must monitor their facilities to detect any contamination, report monitoring data to the DNR and respond quickly to any problems.

La Crosse, Monroe and Vernon counties each have their own county landfill and La Crosse County has a waste-to-energy plant operated by Xcel Energy. The waste to energy plant produces enough energy to serve approximately 10,000 homes a year. This displaces over 10,000 tons of coal annually.

La Crosse County has a Household Hazardous Wastes Facility where residents and businesses can take their paints, batteries, chemicals, etc. Electronic waste can also be recycled there for a small fee.

The most effective way to divert waste from our landfills is to recycle and compost. The average person in our region generates 4.7 pounds of trash (residential and their share of commercial trash) each day and recycles 1.9 pounds of that trash per day.

Recycling

Indicator 7

Recycling and composting reduces the amount of waste in our landfills.

Data Highlights

79% of COMPASS Survey respondents rated their community's efforts to encourage recycling good or excellent.

Houston County residents rated their community's efforts to encourage recycling the highest.

Recycling rates have increased slightly each year from 2007 to 2009.

Sources

La Crosse County Solid Waste Management Plan, Wisconsin DNR, Houston County Solid Waste Management Plan, Recycling Association of Minnesota

For Additional Information

www.dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/recycle/
www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/solidwaste/
www.houstoncounty.gov/office2.com/
www.recycleminnesota.org/

Implications for our Community

Landfilling waste is an inefficient use of resources, and since there is no national law that mandates recycling, state and local governments often introduce recycling requirements. The vast majority of the municipalities in La Crosse County fund their solid waste and recycling program services via their general funds rather than user fees. In 2009, solid waste and recycling services required general funds of just under \$1.9 million in the City of La Crosse, and just under \$900,000 in the City of Onalaska. Four municipalities in La Crosse County have user fees – three through bag sales and one via the water bill. Grant funding from the DNR covers about 1/3 of the cost of operating a recycling facility in the Great Rivers Region, and if this funding were revoked, the City/County would either have to bear more of the burden, or the life expectancy of landfills would sharply decrease.

Collection service is typically performed manually in La Crosse County municipalities using rear load packer trucks, with garbage collection provided weekly and recycling every other week. There are several drop-off sites located around the County, but there is a lack of consistency in operating hours and the types of materials collected, according to the 2010 La Crosse County Solid Waste & Recycling Evaluation Report.

Houston County does not have a landfill, but has several recycling centers and curbside recycling available in many of its communities that are funded by the County, user fees, State grants, and payments from La Crosse County.

Problematic recyclable materials include appliances, tires, batteries (lead acid), used oil, oil filters, fluorescent and HID lamps, and antifreeze.

Non-problematic recyclable materials include textiles, cardboard, paper, aluminum, glass, plastic, carpet, pallets, latex paint, and organics.

From 2007 to 2009, the recycling rate for non-problematic recyclable materials in Houston County was 40.6% of the waste a person generated per day and 36% in Wisconsin counties.

Wisconsin counties also generate nearly 100 pounds of yard waste per person per year and approximately ½ lb. of electronic waste.

Drug Arrests

Indicator 8

Drug arrest rates have reduced in every county in the region except La Crosse.

Data Highlights

67% of COMPASS survey respondents expressed concern over illegal drug use in their community.

In 2010, drug arrests in WI were up by 2% from the previous year, 81% of arrests were for possession and 19% for sale and/or manufacturing.

The most common drug associated with arrests was marijuana.

Between 14-30% of youth in grades 9-12 surveyed reported having used marijuana¹.

La Crosse County has had the highest drug arrest rate in 2010 and experienced a 30% increase from 2009.

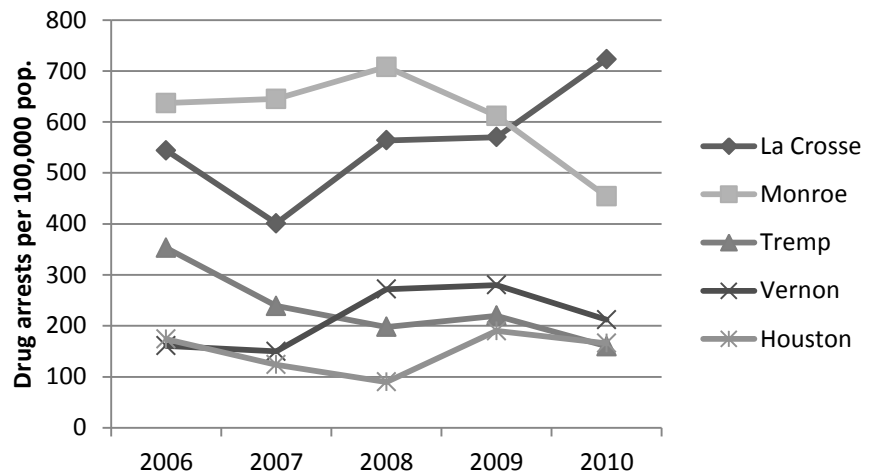
Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties all experienced double digit decreases in drug arrests from 2009 to 2010.

Sources

Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance; 2006-2010. Arrests in Wisconsin Report, <http://oja.wi.gov/category.asp?linkcatid=1324&linkid=709&locid=97>

Minnesota Department of Public Safety, 2006-2010 Uniform Crime Report, <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>

¹ YRBS County Data, CDC 2009-2011.



*Drug arrests include possession, sale, and manufacturing of narcotic substances.
* Drug Arrest Rate = (drug arrests in county/county's population) X 100,000

Implications for Our Community

Drug abuse and addiction have negative consequences for individuals and for society. Drug abuse affects the health and mental health of individuals. Estimates of the total overall costs of substance abuse in the United States, including productivity and health- and crime-related costs, exceed \$600 billion annually. This includes approximately \$181 billion for illicit drugs.² As staggering as these numbers are, they do not fully describe the breadth of destructive public health and safety implications of drug abuse and addiction, such as family disintegration, loss of employment, failure in school, domestic violence, and child abuse.

Prescription drug abuse is a fast-growing problem nationally, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention classifying prescription drug abuse as an epidemic. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) shows that nearly one-third of people aged 12 and over who used drugs for the first time in 2009 began by using a prescription drug non-medically. Some individuals who misuse prescription drugs, particularly teens, believe these substances are safer than illicit drugs because they are prescribed by a healthcare professional and dispensed by a pharmacist. Local data on prescription drug use is not available. Information from local law enforcement suggests an increase in heroin use in the region.

² Office of National Drug Control Policy (2004). The Economic Costs of Drug Abuse in the United States, 1992-2002. Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President (Publication No. 207303). Available at www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/pdf/economic_costs.pdf (PDF, 2.4MB)

Violent Crime

Indicator 9

Violent crime rates are lower in the Great Rivers Region than at the state level.

Data Highlights

Trempealeau, Vernon and Houston counties have had significantly lower violent crime rates than La Crosse and Monroe counties in all years listed.

2010 violent crime rates for Wisconsin were:

La Crosse – 183

Monroe – 175

Tremp – 54

Vernon – 38

These new rates show a decrease in violent crime in every county except Monroe County.

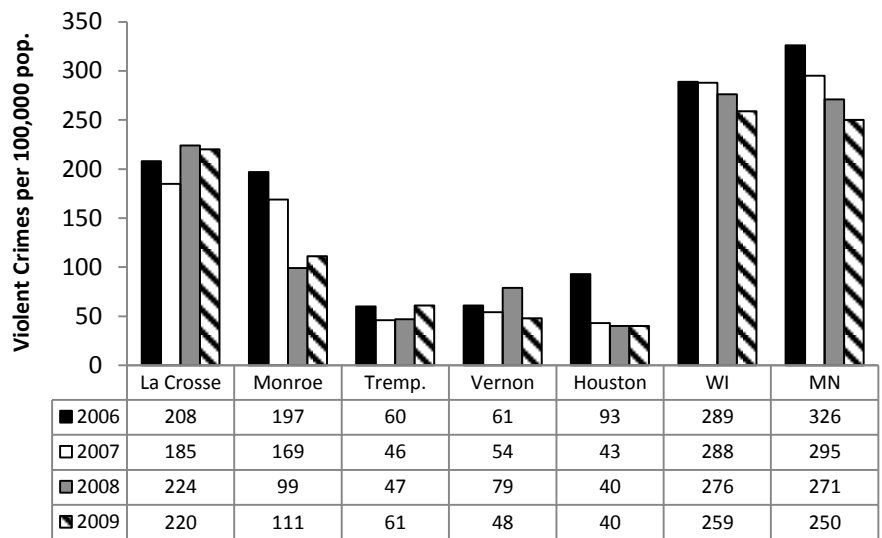
78.2% of COMPASS survey respondents rated the overall quality of law enforcement in their community as good or excellent.

10.7% of COMPASS survey respondents rated the safety of their neighborhood as poor or fair.

Sources

Office of Justice Assistance;
<http://oja.state.wi.us/>

Bureau of Criminal
Apprehension Minnesota,
Justice Information
Services, 2006-2009
Uniform Crime Report



* Violent Offense Rate = (violent offenses in county/county's population) X 100,000

* Violent crime rate offenses are the summation of murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery offenses

Implications for Our Community:

Violent crimes involve face-to-face confrontations between a victim and a perpetrator. Violent crime offenses include murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes can be committed with or without the use of a weapon. Quality of life in a community is enhanced when the violent crime rate is low. Each state compiles the Uniform Crime Report which provides crime statistics on a yearly basis. The violent crime rate is the number of reported violent crimes per 100,000 residents. Calculating rates allows for comparison of communities of different sizes.

At the state level in Wisconsin, aggravated assault accounted for 59% of the violent crime rate while murder accounted for only 1% in 2010.

Sexual Assault

Indicator 10

Sexual assault is the most underreported crime in America.

Data Highlights

Houston County has consistently the lowest sexual assault rates in the region.

Monroe County had the highest increase of sexual assaults from 2009 to 2010.

In 2010 there were 4,857 sexual assaults reported in Wisconsin, up 5% from the previous year.

In 2010 there were 2,230 sexual assaults reported in Minnesota, down .04% from the previous year.

In 2010 there were 159 sexual assaults reported in the Great Rivers region.

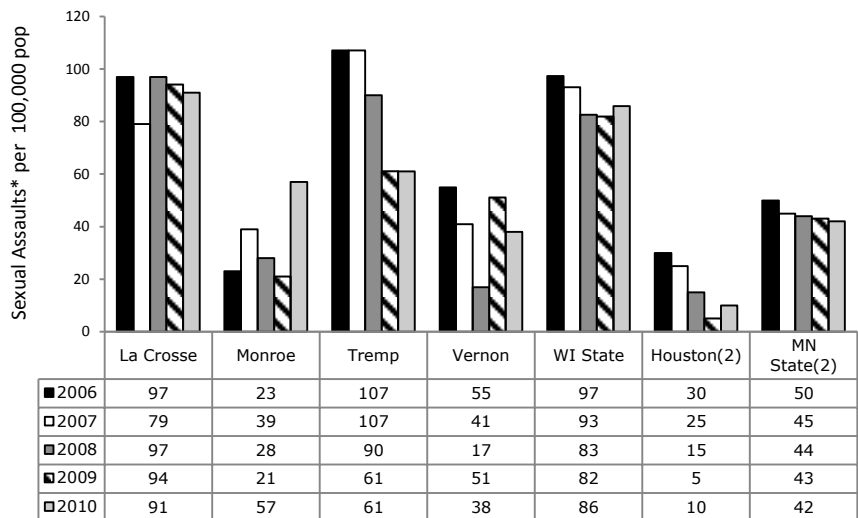
Sources

State of Minnesota
Department of Public Safety
Uniform Crime Reports
2006-2010

Wisconsin Office of Justice
Assistance
Sexual Assaults in
Wisconsin
Uniform Crime Reports
2006-2010

For more information

CDC, National Center for
Injury Prevention and
Control
Division of Violence
Prevention
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention



*WI data includes forcible rape, forcible sodomy/oral sex, assault with an object, forcible fondling, statutory rape and ejaculation/excretion upon victim. (2)Houston County and MN state data includes forcible rape and attempted rape only. Statutory rape and other sex offenses are excluded.

Implications for our Community

Sexual assault takes many forms of unwanted sexual contact or threats. Some types of sexual acts included in the category of sexual assault include forced sexual intercourse (rape), sodomy (oral or anal sexual acts), child molestation, incest, fondling and attempted rape. Sexual assault in any form is often a devastating crime. Assailants can be strangers, acquaintances, friends, or family members. Assailants commit sexual assault by way of violence, threats, coercion, manipulation, pressure or tricks. It is important that the victim of sexual assault understand that no matter where they were, the time of day or night assaulted, what they were wearing, or what they said or did, if they did not want the sexual contact, then the assault was in no way their fault. Persons who commit sexual assault do so out of a need to control, dominate, abuse and humiliate. Obtaining an accurate measurement of sexual assault is a challenge because it is highly underreported. Many factors contribute to under-reporting including shame and embarrassment or fear of a legal system that often puts the victim's behavior and history on trial.

The most common prevention strategies focus on the victim, the perpetrator, or bystanders. Strategies that aim to equip the victim with knowledge, awareness, or self-defense skills are referred to as risk reduction techniques. Strategies targeting the perpetrator attempt to change risk and protective factors for sexual violence in order to reduce the likelihood that an individual will engage in sexually violent behavior. The goal of bystander prevention strategies is to change social norms supporting sexual violence and empower men and women to intervene with peers to prevent an assault from occurring.

Domestic Abuse

Indicator 11

Intimate partner violence affects persons regardless of age, race, or social strata.

Data Highlights

In 2010, domestic violence homicides were 29% of all homicides in Wisconsin.

According to a CDC study on intimate partner violence: 17.7% of women in Wisconsin and 22.2% in Minnesota have been raped in their lifetime;

41.3% of women in Wisconsin and 48.4% in Minnesota have experienced some form of sexual violence other than rape;

23.7% of men in Wisconsin and 22.4% in Minnesota have experienced some form of sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime.¹

56.5% of COMPASS survey respondents expressed concern over domestic abuse including child abuse and elder abuse in their community.

New Horizons Shelter and Outreach Centers served 2,070 persons from the region in 2011 representing an increase of 25% from 2010.

Sources

National Network to End Domestic Violence;

www.nnedv.org;

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence;

www.ncadv.org

Centers for Disease Control-Injury Center-Violence Prevention; www.cdc.gov

Implications for Our Community:

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another. It is an epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, nationality or educational background.

Domestic violence is legally defined at the state level and state law establishes procedures for restraining orders. Wisconsin and Minnesota both have domestic violence legislation which covers same-sex relationships.

Domestic violence is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior, and thus is part of a systematic pattern of dominance and control. Domestic violence results in physical injury, psychological trauma, and sometimes death. The consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and truly last a lifetime. It has been well documented that witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next.

Accurate domestic abuse statistics are difficult to obtain because abuses are largely underreported. An important element of an effective strategy against domestic violence is prevention. Prevention of domestic violence should include promoting healthy behaviors in relationships among young people as well as adults.

According to Youth Risk Behavior Surveys conducted in the Great Rivers Region, between 7-12% of respondents said they had been hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past 12 months.

A community's response to domestic violence should be coordinated and include law enforcement, supportive services and health care services guided by shared beliefs that do not re-victimize or blame the victim. Resources needed include emergency safe housing, legal services, supportive counseling, telephone hotlines and referral services, services for children, and rehabilitation for offenders.

¹ Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Child Abuse

Indicator 12

Rates of child abuse in the region are similar to the state rate.

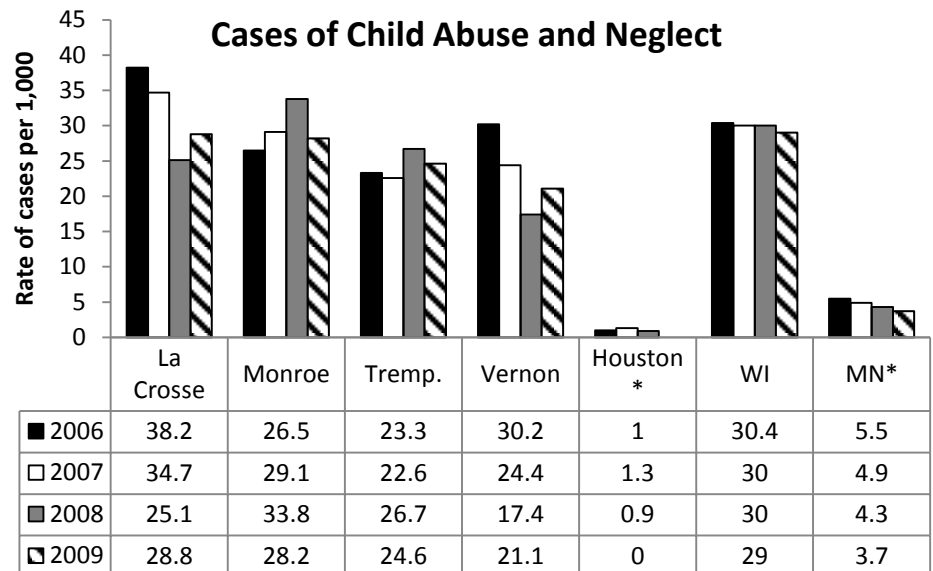
Data Highlights

The significant difference between Wisconsin and Minnesota data is due to how the data is reported.

Wisconsin data reports alleged claims of abuse and neglect while Minnesota data only shows substantiated abuse.

Substantiated abuse means that the county has conducted an assessment in response to a report and found that maltreatment occurred.

La Crosse and Vernon counties saw the largest reduction in child abuse from 2006 to 2009.



*Data only includes substantiated cases.

Implications for Our Community

All children deserve to have a basic level of care and to be safe from harm. In fact children need a safe nurturing environment in order to fully develop and thrive. Child abuse is the physical, sexual or emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child. Child abuse is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes.

Understanding the causes of abuse is important to addressing the problem of child abuse. Parents who physically abuse their spouses are more likely than others to physically abuse their children. There is no one profile of an abuser, but often they have one or more of these issues: high stress, history of being abused, low self-esteem, emotional issues, alcohol abuse, lack of parenting skills, relationship or financial problems. Children who are abused or neglected are more likely to experience poor health outcomes, social, cognitive and behavioral problems.

Programs that strengthen families and focus on the protective factors that help reduce child abuse and neglect offer the best hope for eliminating child abuse in our community.

Sources

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org

Intervention services are provided by county social services and law enforcement. The protective service system promotes the well-being of children in their home setting whenever possible, or provides for another safe and stable place for them to live such as foster care.

Elder Abuse

Indicator 13

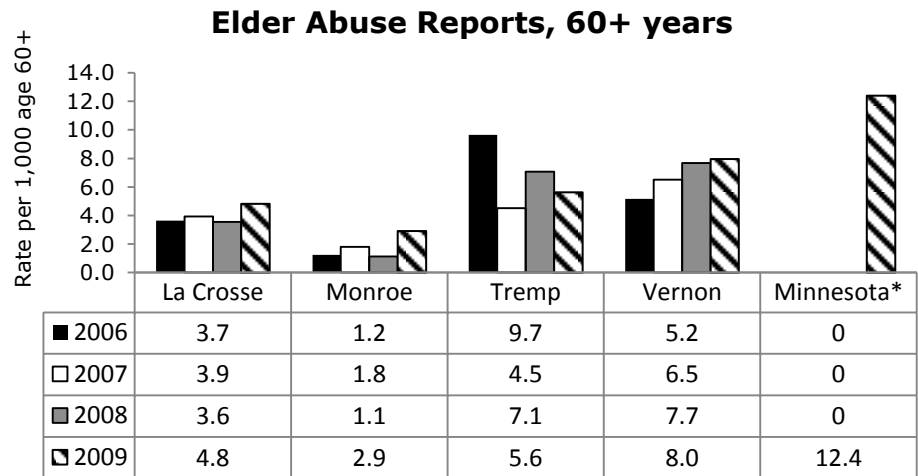
Neglect is the most common form of elder abuse.

Data Highlights

From 2007 to 2009 the rate of elder abuse was highest for Vernon County residents.

In 2006, Trempealeau had the highest rate of elder abuse in the region.

MN data was only available for 2009. Houston County data was not available.



Implications for Our Community

Wisconsin law defines elder abuse as occurring when any person at or above the age of 60 has been subjected to any of the following four categories of abuse: physical abuse; material exploitation; neglect; and self-neglect. The National Center on Elder Abuse had expanded this to include sexual abuse, emotional abuse and abandonment. Reporting elder abuse is voluntary and not required by medical professionals or other service providers. If an elderly person is legally competent, he or she may refuse an investigation.

Elder abuse can occur anywhere; in the home, in nursing homes, or in other institutions. It affects seniors of all ethnic groups, social status, and both men and women. Dementia, mental health, and substance abuse are risk factors for the occurrence of elder abuse. The majority of alleged abusers are relatives of the victim. Most cases of elder abuse go undetected. Shame, fear and not knowing how to get help may contribute in an underreporting of elder abuse.

Sources

Wisconsin Department of Health Services

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov ;

Minnesota Department of Health

www.health.state.mn.us

Childcare

Indicator 14

Childcare costs are higher in Wisconsin and Minnesota than in most of the US.

Data Highlights

According to a 2010 study by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, full time childcare for an infant in WI costs \$10,520 per year and \$13,650 per year in MN.

The US Department of Health and Human Services recommends that parents spend no more than 10% of their family income on childcare.

Weekly costs for licensed center and licensed family care in the region ranges from \$113-\$133 a week. La Crosse County had the highest childcare costs and Trempealeau County was on the lower end of the price range.

Sources

Wisconsin Department of Health Services

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov ;

Minnesota Department of Health

www.health.state.mn.us

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

www.naccrra.org/docs/Cost_Report_073010-final.pdf

KIDSCOUNT Data Center,
datacenter.kidscount.org

Certified and Licensed Childcare Slots per 1,000 children ages 0-7 (2006-2009)

	2006	2007	2008	2009
La Crosse	139.6	111.3	100.3	94.8
	434.2	372.0	364.3	361.9
Monroe	65.4	56.3	49	38.2
	154.5	138.7	124.1	127.4
Trempealeau	201	130.5	117.3	89
	254.6	209.4	225.3	221.0
Vernon	49.8	44	38.5	32.4
	138.5	112.2	122.6	106.0

Source: KIDSCOUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>

Note: Top number equals certified slot rate, bottom number equals licensed slot rate, Houston County data was not available

Implications for Our Community

A safe and stimulating environment is essential for the healthy development of a child. For many families finding the right childcare is a difficult process. Although a variety of childcare options may exist, quality childcare that is affordable can be difficult to find. Low wages coupled with high childcare costs can make employment not cost effective. The cost of childcare varies depending on the type of childcare setting, age, and number of children. Working parents must also decide on whether to seek a childcare provider that is certified, licensed, or unregulated. State government subsidies for regulated childcare may be available for families with a gross income at or less than 185% of the poverty level. Childcare needs become more challenging and more costly for families with multiple children and during summer. Unregulated childcare may be more affordable and not necessarily inferior to regulated options. Parents however should pay close attention to caregiver competencies and safety training.

According to national data collected in 2010 by the US Census Bureau, 58.1% of two-parent families have both parents employed. Part time childcare can sometimes be difficult to find. There is also no childcare option for sick children in the Great Rivers Region. The rate of available regulated (certified and licensed) childcare slots has decreased each year in the region.

Traffic Crashes

Indicator 14

Traffic crash rates are highest in Monroe and Vernon County.

Data Highlights

In 2010, 562 persons were killed in WI motor vehicle traffic crashes, 411 were killed in Minnesota in the same year.

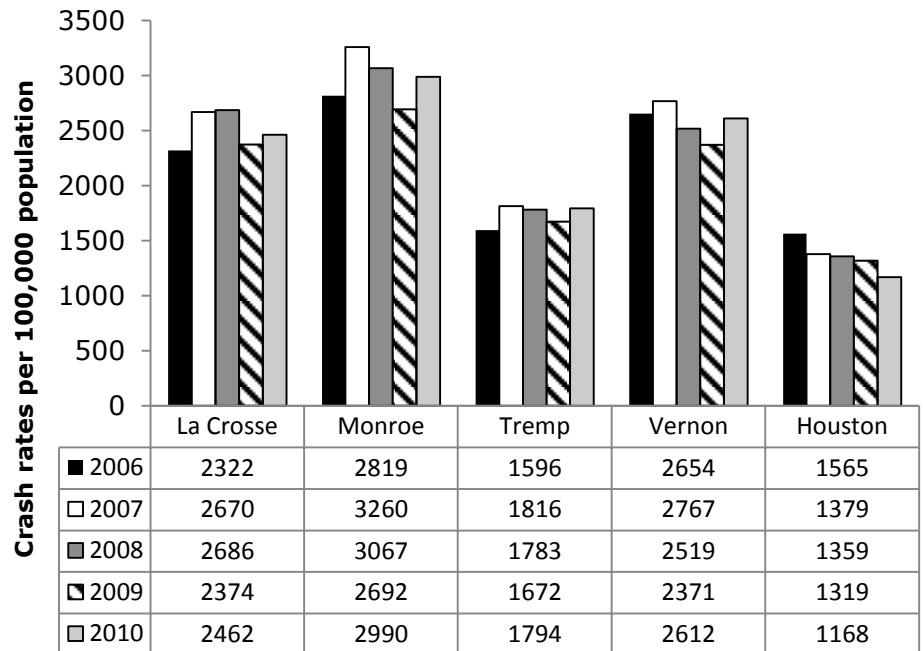
39% of the persons killed in WI motor vehicle crashes died in alcohol related crashes, in Minnesota 32% died in alcohol related crashes.

Although the largest number of crashes occurs in La Crosse County, the rate of traffic crashes is highest in Monroe followed by Vernon County.

In WI there is one injury or fatal crash every 17.6 minutes, one person is killed in a traffic crash every 15.6 hours

Sources

Wisconsin Department of Transportation;
<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety/motorist/crashfacts/docs/archive>
 Minnesota Department of Public Safety;
www.dps.state.mn.us



Implications for our Community

A traffic crash involves at least one motor vehicle and results in an injury or death, or damage to property. Road-traffic crashes are responsible for more harm than all other forms of transportation combined. Traffic crashes are generally placed into categories such as fatal, injury, and property damage. Traffic crashes are caused by many things, including driver fatigue, driver intoxication, bad weather events, failure of brake or steering systems, slow driver reaction-time, and roadway obstructions. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety provide a yearly traffic crash statistics detailing types of crashes, types of vehicles in crashes, severity of injury, time of day, and age and gender of drivers. Analyzing crash data allows officials and law enforcement to better address traffic safety issues by understanding why and where crashes are occurring and who is being impacted.

The rural nature of many of the roads and highways in the Great Rivers Region impacts the number of traffic crashes that result in fatality or serious injury. Although La Crosse County has the highest number of traffic crashes, when adjusted for the population Monroe and Vernon County have higher rates of traffic crashes than the other counties in the region.

Property Crime

Indicator 15

Property crime rates are lower in the Great Rivers Region than at the state level.

Data Highlights

87% of COMPASS survey respondents rated the safety of their neighborhood as good or excellent.

70% of COMPASS survey respondents rated their community's efforts to prevent crime as good or excellent.

Vernon County had the lowest property crime offense rate in all years except in 2008

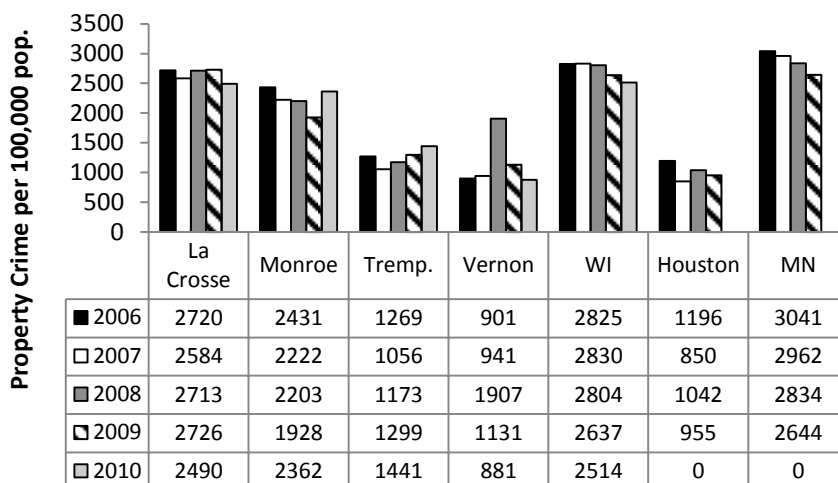
La Crosse County has had the highest property crime offense rate in all years listed

La Crosse and Vernon counties experienced decreases in property crime rates in 2010 while Trempealeau and Vernon experienced increases

Sources

Office of Justice Assistance;
<http://oja.state.wi.us/>,
Wisconsin Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Minnesota Department of Public Safety, 2006-2009 Uniform Crime Report,
<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>



*Property crime offenses are a sum of burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson offenses

* Property Offense Rate = (property offenses in county/county's population) X 100,000

2010 Houston, MN data not available at time of printing.

Implications for Our Community

Property crimes, or property offenses, include burglary, theft, arson, motor vehicle theft, and criminal damage to property. These types of crimes do not involve face-to-face confrontation between a perpetrator and a victim. Crime rate levels are dependent upon the willingness of victims to report crimes and are generally higher in more populated areas. There are several ways to examine the safety of our communities. We can examine the property crime rates, or person-to-person crime rates. Deterrence to crime based on law enforcement presence is also critical. How safe we feel our community is and how much we trust one another to watch out for each other are also important when considering public safety. Overall, the property crime rate appears to be declining slightly in the Great Rivers Region. Vernon County's property crime rate was very different in 2008 than in other years. La Crosse County's property crime rate is the highest of the counties in the Great River's Region and is similar to Wisconsin and Minnesota's rate on average.

Traffic Crashes

Indicator 16

Traffic crash rates are highest in Monroe and Vernon County.

Data Highlights

In 2010, 562 persons were killed in WI motor vehicle traffic crashes, 411 were killed in Minnesota in the same year.

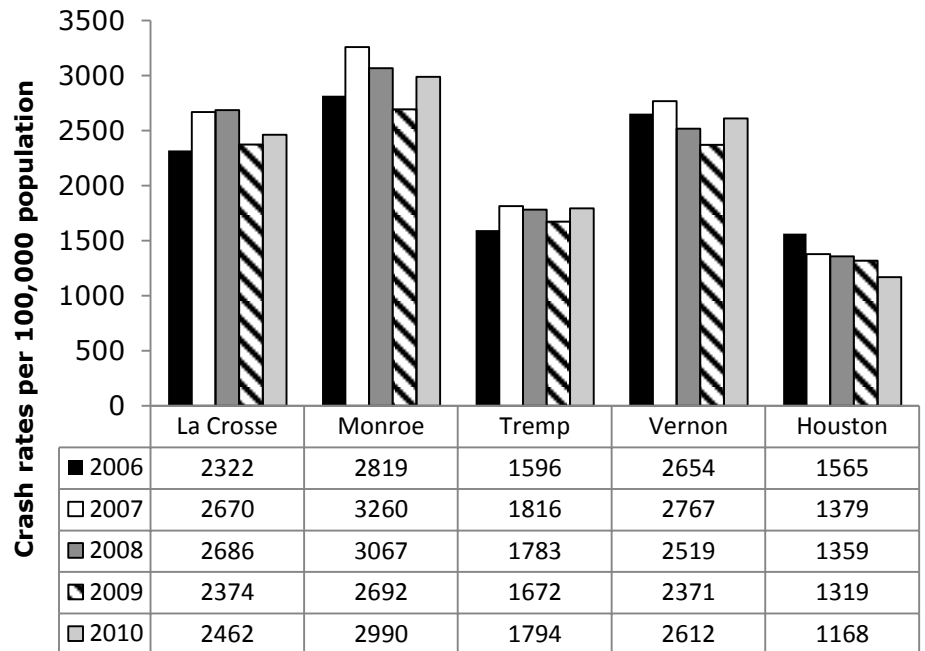
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Wisconsin Department of Transportation;
<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety/motorist/crashfacts/docs/archive>
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Implications for our Community

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The rural nature of many of the roads and highways in the Great Rivers Region impacts the number of traffic crashes that result in fatality or serious injury. Although La Crosse County has the highest number of traffic crashes, when adjusted for the population Monroe and Vernon County have higher rates of traffic crashes than the other counties in the region.

Leisure License Sales

Indicator 17

Recreational opportunities are abundant in the Great Rivers Region.

Data Highlights

Houston County data on licenses sold was only available for 2010:

3,441 Fishing Licenses
2,615 Registered Boats
11,108 Hunting Licenses

The registered boat numbers are for the County in which the boat resides and not necessarily where the boat owner lives.

Fishing license sales increased from 2007 to 2009 in each WI County, ranging from 4.9% in La Crosse to 10.2% in Vernon.

The number of registered boats also increased in each WI County, ranging from 1.3% in Monroe to 4.0% in Trempealeau.

The number of hunting licenses sold also increased in each WI County, ranging from 0.7% in Monroe to 6.5% in Trempealeau.

Hunting and Fishing license numbers include both resident and non-resident for all types of game.

	La Crosse	Monroe	Trempealeau	Vernon
Fishing License Sales				
2007	23,152	9,708	5,397	5,306
2008	23,301	9,857	5,500	5,176
2009	24,605	10,417	5,662	5,847
Registered Boats				
2007	10,944	3,431	3,173	2,579
2008	11,279	3,518	3,266	2,678
2009	11,207	3,477	3,300	2,676
Hunting License Sales				
2007	30,606	16,746	11,005	8,379
2008	30,656	16,762	11,346	8,184
2009	31,100	16,861	11,715	8,565

Implications for Our Community

The Great Rivers Region is a haven for year-round outdoor leisure activities. The region has over 90,000 acres of state and federal recreation land and over 10,000 acres of county owned recreation land. These recreational lands provide an abundant opportunity for residents to pursue numerous outdoor activities, many of which require leisure licenses. Along with legal licensure, the states provide regulations and safety tips for each leisure activity that requires a license.

The Great Rivers Region is home to some very unique recreational lands including four state parks, the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge, the Trempealeau County National Wildlife Refuge, and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

Some of the leisure activities available in the region include: hunting, fishing, canoeing, boating, hiking, biking, skiing, snowmobiling, canoeing, and wildlife viewing. Promoting and maintaining these recreational opportunities can improve the economies and quality of life in the region.

Sources

www.dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cs/licenses.htm
www.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/index.html