

Vital Signs of Grundy County

Prepared by



September 2012

“May you have the hindsight to know where you have been, the foresight to know where you are going, and the insight to know when you have gone too far.” **~Irish blessing**

So many organizations in Grundy County gather and track data, but it is for their own use and often not shared for the purpose of public dialogue. One goal of the Community Foundation of Grundy County is to watch out for the overall health and well-being of our county so that our programs and grants can be timely and effective. Part of our work is to convene networks of stakeholders around issues in common in order to develop action steps for collectively addressing issues of concern in our county. In order to develop action steps, data needs to be collected and tracked.

Therefore we are proud to present “Vital Signs,” a first step toward collecting and tracking data across ten topic areas: economy, employment, housing, health, environment, education & learning, transportation, safety, financial health, and social health. The amount of available data is overwhelming, therefore we have selected key data sets that we believe present a broad picture of the status of Grundy County.

As we reviewed data for presentation, we kept a few things in mind:

- How does Grundy County compare to our neighbors?
- What is the trend of the data in our county – is it better or worse over the years?
- Regardless of our neighbors, are there any figures or situations that are unacceptable for our county and needs to be addressed? What are our values?
- How can the Community Foundation of Grundy County use philanthropy to support the lead agencies and organizations?

This 2012 report is only the beginning. First of all, because the amount of available data is overwhelming, we have narrowed it down to a small document and we are sure we have missed something as a result. We intend to share this document with various stakeholders throughout the county in smaller settings to listen to feedback and brainstorm solutions to address negative issues. Secondly, this report will be updated and revised...most likely every two years. Most trends do not change overnight therefore there will not be much to report annually.

The ultimate goal is for this document to spur dialogue within and among organizations in order to identify the root cause of some of these issues as well as develop collaborative action steps toward alleviating them. Not every issue can be “fixed,” especially in light of federal and state rules imposed on various organizations. But we can take care of our own and work toward lessening the impact and make decisions that keep Grundy County a great place to live, work, recreate, worship, do business, and raise our families.

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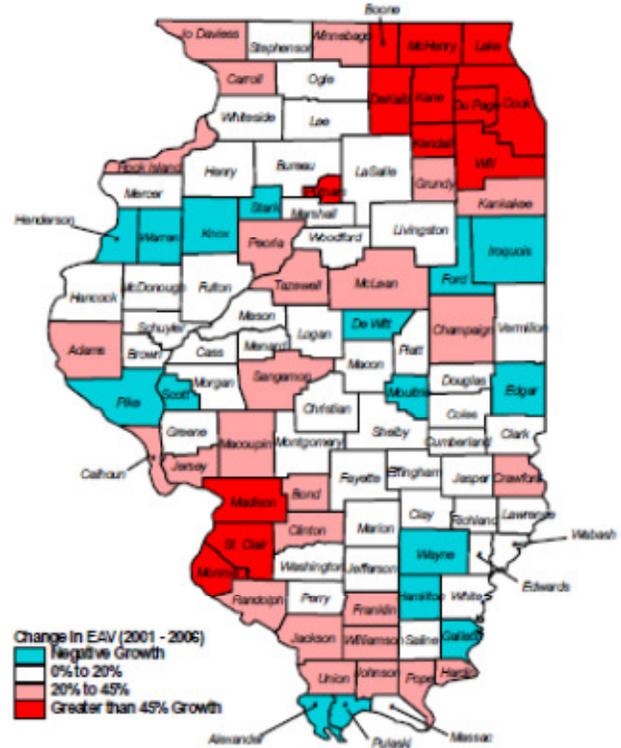
2012

Grundy County “Vital Signs”

Chart 1. Total EAV Growth

Goals:

- Highlight areas of concern to encourage further dialogue and action from all the community stakeholders;
- Provide governmental units with information to do effective planning and to make informed decisions in the best interests of county residents;
- Encourage cross-sector thinking and collaborative solutions;
- Build community capacity by sharing information.



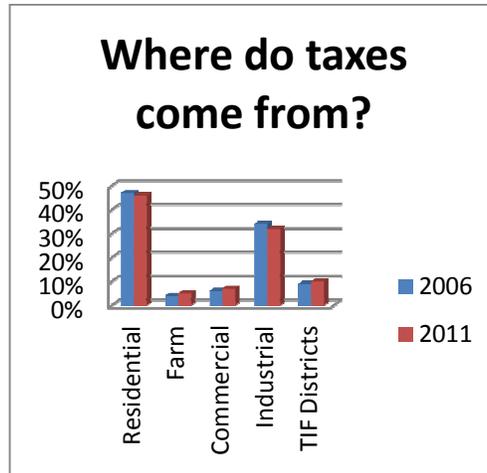
This map is a reflection of the overall data reported here (source: IL General Assembly). In a nutshell, Grundy County is holding our own when compared to our neighbors – we’re doing better than our more rural neighbors but we don’t have as vital an economy as our suburban and urban neighbors. Also, in February 2006, “Progressive Farmer” magazine rated Grundy County as one of the best places to live in rural America. This was opinion was based on our low crime rate, high access to health care, education, and leisure activities.

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ECONOMY

A healthy county has a diverse mix of residential, commercial, and industrial that spreads the tax burden among all and not weigh too heavily on one.



POSITIVE GROWTH 2001 to 2006: Total Equalized Assess Value (EAV) up 39% because residential up 83%
 (source: IL General Assembly).

Industrial growth is better, but commercial growth less, than surrounding counties.

	% Change Total EAV	Residential	Commercial	Industrial
Livingston	8%	26.4%	26.5%	28%
Kankakee	29%	38.4%	21.9%	24.8%
Grundy	39%	83%	11.5%	26.1%
Will	76%	86.1%	85.3%	25.5%
Kendall	117%	141.8%	96.8%	24.8%

PTAX-250 2011 Assessment Year (source: county PTAX-250 forms)						
	<u>Grundy</u>	<u>Will</u>	<u>Kendall</u>	<u>Livingston</u>	<u>LaSalle</u>	<u>Kankakee</u>
Residential	\$867,744,575	\$14,916,953,691	\$2,382,527,169	\$338,490,739	(not available at press time)	\$1,263,376,613
Farm A	\$43,289,380	\$234,297,526	\$55,994,031	\$59,816,118		\$134,698,166
Farm B	\$47,014,768	\$55,614,597	\$47,340,307	\$114,949,249		\$63,502,246
Commercial	\$124,535,642	\$2,273,643,561	\$347,303,682	\$86,069,698		\$318,710,879
Industrial	\$774,792,008	\$2,596,888,290	\$81,178,068	\$13,465,786		\$98,381,916
Tax Increment Financing	\$159,512,525	\$282,320,532	\$693,680	\$20,730,211		\$43,278,766

MIXED BUSINESS GROWTH

Retail Sales: Sales tax growth in Grundy County (2010-2011) shows overall growth, but is strong in only two categories: agriculture and automotive & filling stations with general merchandise. Lumber, building, and hardware are trending down. A bigger concern is the “retail leakage,” which is the amount of purchasing done outside the county (source: GEDC).

Retail sales per capita (source: census.gov)	LaSalle	\$15,466
	Kankakee	\$11,264
	Grundy	\$11,097
	Livingston	\$10,438
	Will	\$10,221

Business Growth: The total number of businesses in Grundy County has decreased from 1,095 in 2005 to 1,090 in 2009 (source: US Census Bureau). Shrinking numbers include retail, the trades, construction, accommodation & food service, and manufacturing. There has been modest growth in healthcare and transportation & warehousing. In a better economy, the total number of businesses would be rising at a faster rate, but at least we have maintained our numbers.

Forecast:



EMPLOYMENT

A healthy county has a diverse mix of jobs among all industries and wage brackets to support and sustain families.

Employment trends: from 2001-2010, total employment has fluctuated on average between 14,500 and 16,500 jobs, peaking at 17,452 in October 2007 (source: CEDS).

The unemployment rate in Grundy County has dropped from 12.4% in 2010 to 11.7% in 2011, **yet is still higher than our neighboring counties** (source: GEDC 2011 Economic Review).

Grundy County:

- Mirrors our neighbors for percentage of workers in manufacturing and retail;
- Has fewer employees in the government sector than our neighbors; and
- Has more employees in construction, transportation, warehousing, and utilities than our neighbors.

72% of our residents leave the county to work (2009), up from 65% in 2003 (source: CEDS).

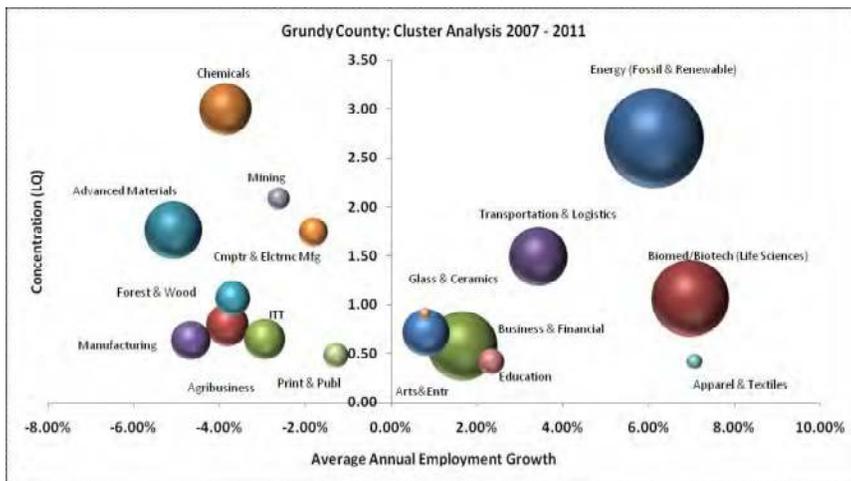
The fact that fewer and fewer residents work within the county makes us look more and more like a bedroom county.

4% shift from production-based economy to service-based economy (source: CEDS).

The shift is most easily measured in share of jobs by industry and shows a decline in production share from 27.6% in 2002 to 23% in 2008.

Employment in Grundy County is a paradox of stable, higher-wage jobs in the nuclear and chemical industries, compared to lower-wage jobs in the transportation & warehouse industries, compared to less stable jobs in construction and the trades. Overall Grundy County has a higher-than-average unemployment rate.

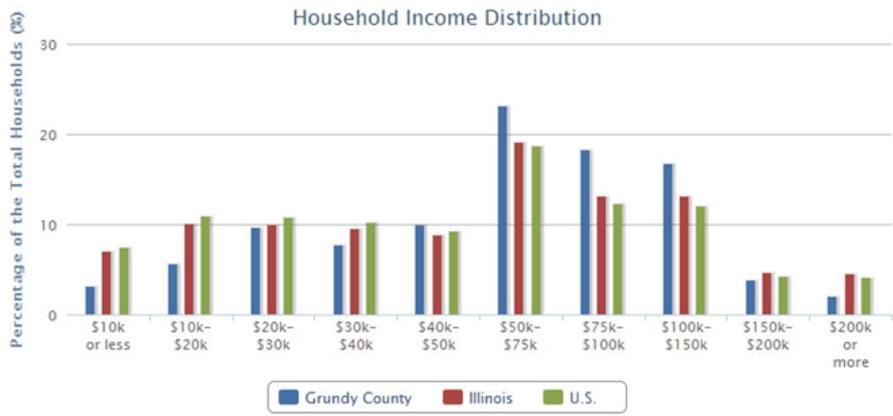
(table source: CEDS)



FINANCIAL HEALTH

The financial health of Grundy County can be viewed by looking at household income and the corporate health of the county as a whole. Each of these is a vital sign as to the financial health of the county and its residents.

Income As of 2009, household per capita income was \$64,455 compared with \$55,222 for Illinois and \$51,425 for the US. The Household Income Distribution chart below shows that Grundy averages below state and national figures of households earning \$40,000 or less and Grundy averages above Illinois and the US in households earning \$50,000 to \$150,000 (source: US Census Bureau).



Rank	County	Employment December 2009	Average Weekly Wage
1	Lake	311,365	\$1,197
2	Cook	2,369,891	\$1,142
3	Rock Island	74,448	\$1,115
4	DuPage	547,989	\$1,082
5	Tazewell	56,517	\$1,016
6	Grundy	15,486	\$951
7	Sangamon	126,261	\$928
8	DeWitt	5,402	\$911
9	McLean	83,695	\$901
10	Peoria	97,864	\$895

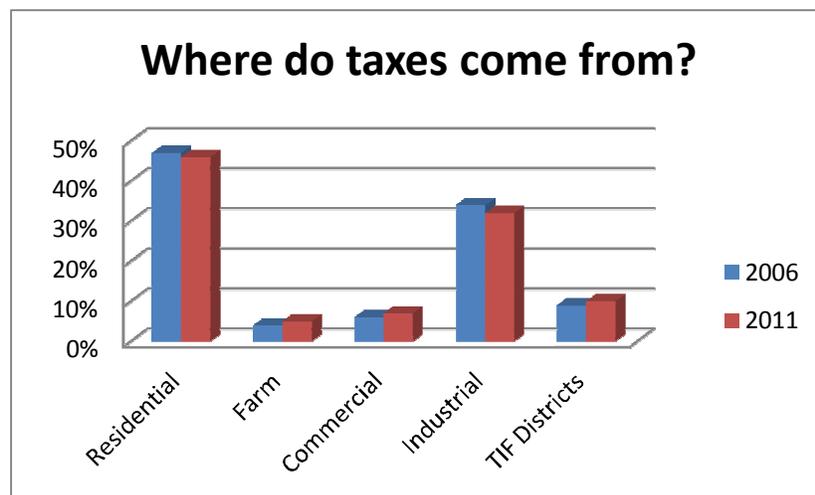
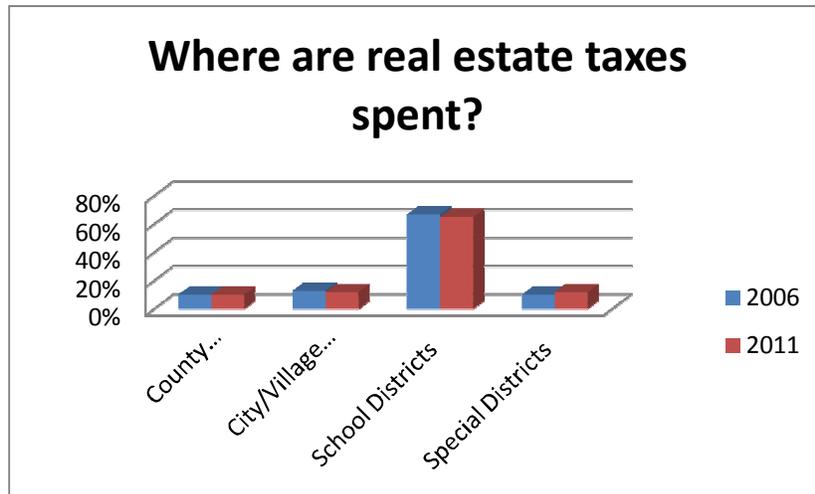
(table source: CEDS)

Real Estate Taxes Illinois is a high real estate tax state, ranking 7th highest out of 50 states, and Grundy County ranks 90th out of 1,822 counties nationally (source: taxfoundation.org). Grundy homeowners pay approximately 1.79% of median home value in real estate taxes which ranks 113 out of 1,822 counties. Grundy home owners pay approximately 4.96% of median income, which is 67th out of 1,622 counties nationally. The trends have shown a slight rise 2006 to 2009.

From 2006 to 2009, the Equalized Assessed Valuation for Grundy has risen about 12% while the tax extensions have risen almost 18%.

Cost of Government

The cost of government services provided by Grundy County departments is only a small part of what appears on our tax bills. The biggest part of our real estate tax bill is the cost of education. County government is a second component and municipal and special services such as fire districts and library districts make up the third component (source: Grundy County Clerk's Office).



The cost of county government consists of over 36 separate funds. The levy for the General Fund has increased very little in the last five years from \$15,522,000 to \$16,018,000. This does not include expense from specific funds such as County Highway Fund, Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, Health Insurance Fund, etc. Income to support the General Fund comes from real estate taxes and sales taxes. In the last five years, sales tax revenue has risen from \$3,134,000 to \$4,118,000 and real estate revenue has risen from \$3,210,000 to \$5,214,000 (source: Grundy County Treasurer's Office).

Decreasing federal support

In addition, Grundy County has suffered from very low federal expenditures in both total expenditures and grant expenditures. Ranking the per capita total federal expenditures by county for the 102 counties in Illinois, Grundy was 92nd in 2006, 98th in 2007, 97th in 2008, and 94th in 2009 (source: CEDS).



HOUSING

A healthy county has a diverse selection of housing that is affordable, safe, and appropriate for all sections of the population.

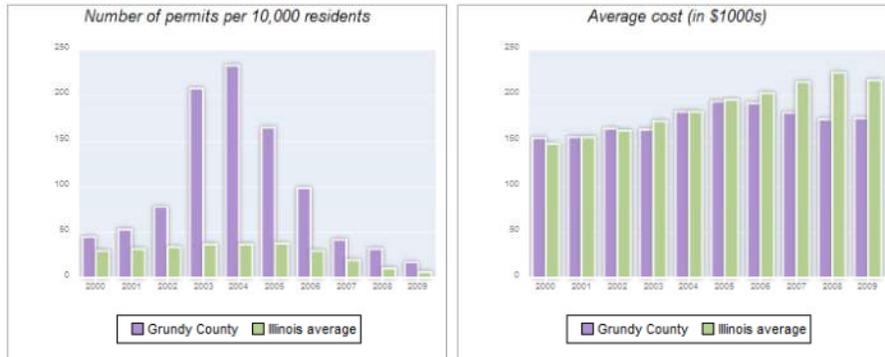


Table source: US Census

Foreclosures – 13th in the State of Illinois

In 2011, Grundy County had 240 foreclosure files, which was **down** 28% from 2010. This places Grundy as 13th in Illinois with a rate of one in every 78 households. **This decline defies the regional trend** as combined foreclosures in the surrounding counties of Kankakee, Kendall, LaSalle, Livingston and Will **rose** 5% in the same period (source: Joliet Herald News via RealtyTrac.com).

Residential Home Prices – going backward to 2001 prices

The S&P/Case-Shiller Index provides insight into home pricing. Average home prices in the region, including Grundy County:

- 2001 = \$150,000
- 2005 = \$198,000 (peak)
- 2010 4th quarter = \$150,000
- 2011 4th quarter = \$129,500

It is also important to track whether Grundy residents are living within their means.

73% of Grundy County properties have no 2nd mortgage or home equity loans in 2010, which indicates that Grundy residents are not over-extending themselves with housing debt. However, most Grundy residents earning up to \$75,000 are **paying more than 30% of their income in housing costs**, which is at **the high end of the scale** according to the US Census Bureau. If residents are spending upwards of 30% of their income on housing and its related expenses, less income is available for other living expenses. Conservative advice leans more toward 20-25% of income be spent on housing (source: US Census American Community Survey).



HEALTH

In a vital community, everyone is able to work and play. When illness or disability interfere, we lose a part of our community's energy. Personal choice plays a part of personal health, and our collective choices have a great impact on our community's health.

Access to Care

92% with insurance (source: US Census American Fact Finder)

Data from 2008-2010 shows that a high majority have some kind health insurance, whether private, Medicare, Medicaid, government health plans, or VA.

71% increase in Medicaid

The number of Medicaid recipients in Grundy County has risen from 3,261 in 2006 to 5,585 in 2010, with 3,290 of them being children (source: IDHFS).

Conditions	Grundy County	State of IL
Smoking	21%	26%
Obesity	28%	26%
High Blood Pressure	32%	28%
Arthritis	28%	26%

Cause of Death – Almost half from cancer and heart disease

For the years 2005-2007, cancer death rates were 197.4 per 100,000 and heart disease deaths were 165.6 per 100,000. Rates for heart disease decreased over the past 10 years, while rates for cancer stayed the same. Cancer rates in Grundy County are slightly higher than Illinois rates (source: IDPH).

Mental Health vs. Physical Health

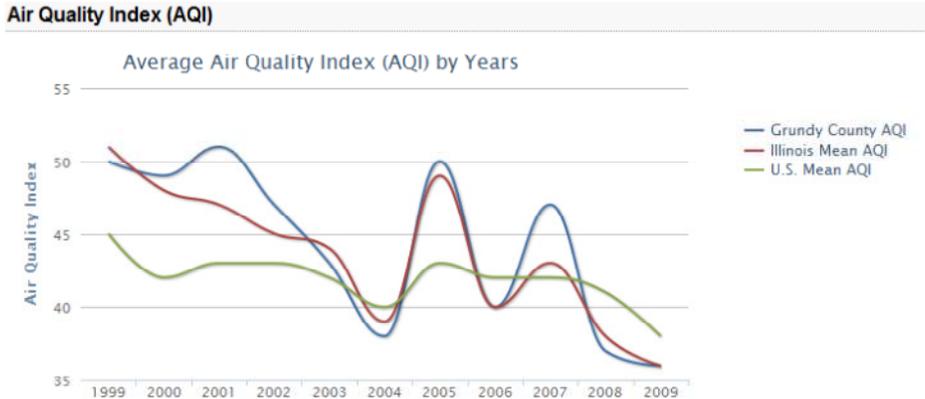
More Grundy County residents are in poorer mental health than physical health. The 2008 Illinois Department of Public Health survey found 16.2% of Grundy residents had more than **eight bad days of mental health** in the last month while 12.2 % Grundy residents had more than **eight physical health bad days** in the last month (source: IDPH and Behavioral Risk Factor). **The requests for mental health services at the Grundy County Health Department rose 47% from 2010 to 2011** (source: GC Health Department). Anecdotal reports from the Morris Hospital emergency department and social service agencies suggest this is a serious public health problem that is only expected to grow.



ENVIRONMENT

A vital county has residents and businesses who act responsibly because they care about the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Air Quality This table indicates that while the air quality in Grundy County and in Illinois has been sporadic compared to the US, the State of Illinois and Grundy County Average Air Quality Indices have remained in the “good” levels (source: IEPA).



Air quality indices (AQI) are numbers used by government agencies to characterize the quality of the air at a given location. As the AQI increases, an increasingly large percentage of the population is likely to experience increasingly severe adverse health effects. Air quality index values are divided into ranges, and each range is assigned a descriptor and a color code. Standardized public health advisories are associated with each AQI range. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses the following AQI:

Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern	Colors
0 to 50	Good	Green
51 to 100	Moderate	Yellow
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange
151 to 200	Unhealthy	Red
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple
301 to 500	Hazardous	Maroon

Water quality & quantity

Grundy County drinking water, whether by private well or public water supply, comes entirely from groundwater. According to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s “Water 2050” report, estimated demand from deep wells by 2050 should give residents in the northern half of Grundy County real reason for concern and thus, take action now to pursue water demand management. At the regional scale, the deep-bedrock aquifer is being mined at current withdrawal rates. This does not meet any definition of sustainability.

When looking at regional and state-wide water reports, the emphasis is regional rather than specific to any locality. Grundy County is projected to have pretty healthy population and employment growth as a percent of current numbers. Water supply problems are not expected in the immediate future, but professionals caution to be prudent and not assume that groundwater quantity and quality will always be as it was or is (source: CMAP).



Forecast:

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Growing a vital local economy depends on educating our youth to assume jobs in our county. For our children, staying in school and earning a high school diploma is the minimum threshold to apprenticeships, college, or technical training that lead to better jobs and careers that support families.

School Size

For the 2010-2011 school year, Grundy County had 9,470 students in grades K-12. Grundy has 24 public schools among 12 public school districts, plus one private school.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

“Adequate Yearly Progress” is defined as at least 95% of students are tested and at least 85% meet or exceed standards in reading and math. Also, a high school must graduate at least 82% of students (source: ISBE).

All of the high schools in Grundy County and surrounding counties are graduating at least 82%, but **no area high school is coming close to the 85% mark in reading and math scores.** Lincoln Way High School District in Will County is the only area high school at the 70% or higher for math and reading. **Grundy Math scores range from 44% to 61% and reading scores range from 37% to 62% -- well below the AYP minimum of 85%.**

<u>AYP 2010-2011</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Gardner SW	44%	37%
Coal City	59%	51%
Minooka	60%	61%
Morris	61%	62%

Dropouts

Schools in Grundy County have some of the **lowest dropout rates** in the surrounding counties. In 2010, Grundy’s rate was 5.2%; Kankakee 11.5%; Kendall 4.2%; Livingston 11.5%; Will 9.9% (source: ISBE).

Cost of Education

Operating expense per pupil is the gross operating cost of public schools (excepting summer school, adult education, bond principal retired and capital expenditures) divided by the nine-month Average Daily Attendance for the regular school term (source: ISBE). 2009-2010 Operating Expense Per Pupil:

Kendall	\$ 9,010
Grundy	\$ 9,737
Kankakee	\$10,162
Livingston	\$10,410
Will	\$10,657

Educational attainment: 400% rise in number of Grundy residents with some college education

Between 1970 and 2008, the numbers of Grundy residents with some college has jumped from 8% to 36%. Likewise, the number with less than a HS graduation has dropped from 44% to 10% (source: US Census Bureau).

However, according to the Grundy Economic Development Council, a significant gap continues to exist between Grundy County and the remainder of the Chicago metropolitan area. The difficulty that this situation creates from an economic development standpoint is best demonstrated when considering the educational profile of neighboring counties with which Grundy County must compete to solicit new private investment (source: CEDS). Kankakee, Grundy, and LaSalle Counties rank last among the counties that are considered part of the Chicago suburban and exurban community. These three counties also have lower educational attainment percentages when compared to neighboring counties in the Chicago metropolitan area, thus making it harder for our residents and county as a whole to compete.

Higher Education

The Morris campus of Joliet Junior College is the only post-secondary school option within the county. It has had as many as 960 students enrolled in Morris, but has seen a decline in enrollment. **There are no four-year institutions or satellite campuses located within the County.**



TRANSPORTATION

A vital county depends on its residents being able to access critical services such as getting to work, education, health care, and shopping for necessities.

Availability

5.5% Grundy residents have no vehicle (up from 3.9% in 2006-2008)

28% Residents believe the county lacks transportation

A recent Grundy Transit System survey indicated a need for intra-county transportation and service to Joliet, Ottawa, and Chicago to link with resident's services in adjoining counties and hubs to national service.

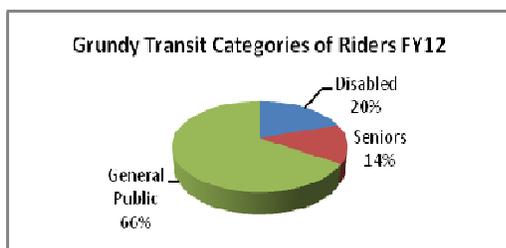
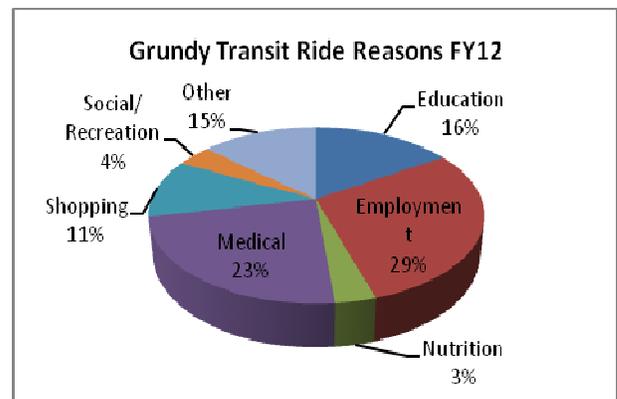
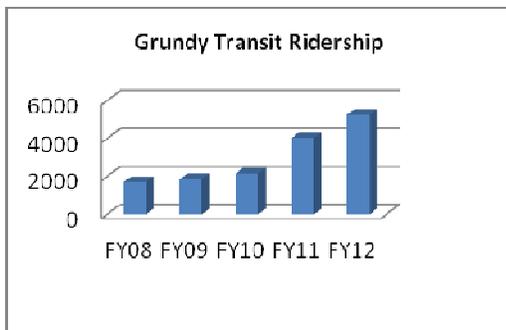
Fragmented Transportation

Morris Hospital provides free non-emergency transportation to and from the hospital and physicians' offices for health-related appointments. The hospital uses 6 buses and transported 17,379 riders in 2011. Other transportation includes the City of Morris PUP van for seniors within the city limits and the Veterans Assistance Commission that provides rides for veterans to VA medical facilities.

Grundy Transit System

300% Increase in Ridership

The expanded Grundy Transit System has grown from 1,700 rides in 2008 to 5,254 in 2012. This number is expected to grow more as the county system increases both the number of buses available and the destinations available in and around Grundy County.



Source: Grundy Transit System



SAFETY

One measurement of a vital county is trends in crime, domestic violence, and child abuse, as well as incidents requiring response from law enforcement, fire, and ambulance. In Grundy County:

Child Abuse... Rising

Steadily rising and topping Illinois rate for the last 5 years.
In 2010 there were 352 unique children among 398 reports.
(source: DCFS)

Domestic Offenses ... Falling

Domestic offenses index has fallen dramatically from 2000 with 284 to 104 in 2009 (source: GC Sheriff and police depts).

Violent Offenses... Falling

Violent index offenses rates have fallen slightly from 75 in 2000 to 63 in 2009 (source: GC Sheriff and police depts).

Property Offenses... Rising

Property index offenses have risen significantly from 863 in 2000 to 1,332 in 2009 (source: GC Sheriff and police depts).

Fire Calls... Falling

Total fires reported in Grundy County have fallen from 164 in 2007 to 135 in 2009. There has been an increase in building fires from 20 to 34 and a decrease from 39 to 22 in brush grass or natural vegetation fires (source: ISFM).

Sheriff... Falling

The number of events reported to the Sheriff's office has fallen from 94,967 in 2008 to 57,907 in 2011. However, the tasks assigned to the Sheriff's department have changed over the years. During the same time period, court-related summons and citation activities of the Sheriff's office has increased from 1,682 to 2,883.

EMS runs... Falling

The number of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) runs rose from 2008 to 2010 but have had a rapid decrease from 2010 to 2011. This could be due to actual decrease in usage or inaccurate reporting or both (source: IDPH).

Speaking of Safety...

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Center has received an "A" rating on a new hospital safety score card that was recently released by Leapfrog Group. The Hospital Safety Score uses national performance measures from several sources to produce a single score representing each hospital's overall performance in keeping patients safe from preventable harm and medical errors. The sources include the Leapfrog Hospital Survey, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Forecast:



SOCIAL HEALTH

Assessing the social health of the county is difficult because measures are often subjective rather than statistically-objective metrics. Nevertheless, the quality of life for some residents is indicated by these vital signs.

In Grundy County:

- A family of four with an income of **\$21,854** or less is considered poverty level;
- A single parent with two children must make **\$49,030 a year (\$19.79/hour)** to be self-sufficient (enough income to meet basic needs without assistance); minimum wage in Illinois is \$8.00/hour (source: IL Self-Sufficiency Project);
- **32.4%** of Grundy families headed by single mothers with children under the age of 18 live in poverty (source: US Census Bureau);
- **30%** of Grundy’s school-age youth are eligible for free or reduced lunch (Illinois average is 51.5%) (source: ISBE).

County poverty levels:

Kendall	3.9%
Will	6.2%
Grundy	6.9%
LaSalle	10.8%
Livingston	11.0%
Kankakee	15.0%

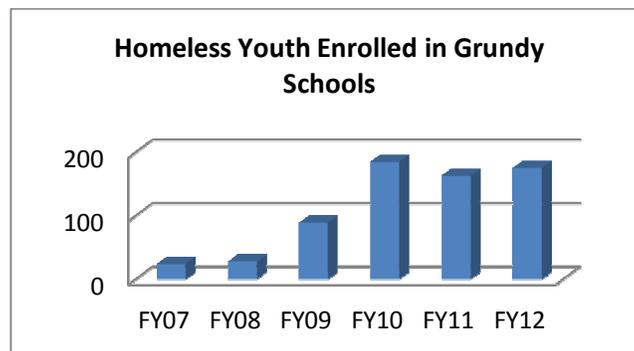


Table source: Kendall-Grundy Regional Office of Education

At Step by Step Child Care Center in Morris, **85% of families qualify for state-subsidized child care payments.**

A more subjective evaluation can be done by looking at the current experience of We Care of Grundy County. We Care describes the need for serves in the last several years as “an explosion.” However, some of this is due to increased visibility and funding, such as the programs for rental assistance. Most relevant is the increase in the number of households who were supplied with food assistance:

2005 = 566 households
2011= 2,554 households



Forecast:

SOURCES

Census.gov/American Factfinder

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

County Clerks:

- Grundy
- Will
- Kendall
- LaSalle
- Livingston
- Kankakee

Grundy County Board/Clerk's Office

Grundy County Health Department

Grundy County Sheriff's Office

Grundy County Tax Assessor's Office

Grundy County Treasurer's Office

Grundy Economic Development Council's

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- 2011 Economic Review

Grundy Transit System (GTS)

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (IDHFS)

Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)

Illinois General Assembly

Illinois Self-Sufficiency Project

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

Illinois State Fire Marshall's Office (ISFM)

Kendall-Grundy Regional Office of Education

Step-by-Step Child Care

TaxFoundation.org

US Census Bureau

US Census American Community Survey

We Care of Grundy County

Special thanks to Lorene Kennard of Walnut Avenue Research

<http://www.walnutavenueresearch.com/>