

## Chapter 3 - Population and Economic Characteristics

### Overview

Alcona County's population in 2000 was 11,719 persons. Accordingly, the County's population density averaged only 17.4 persons per square mile as compared to Michigan which had a population density of 163.6 persons per square mile. Although Alcona County is still very rural in nature, its year round population has increased by 5,367 persons since 1960 (see **Figure 3.1**). Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that the county gained in population every ten years from 1960 through 2000. Over this 40 year period the year round population nearly doubled in size from 6,352 persons to 11,719 persons. Population projections indicate the population will continue to grow in the decades to come.

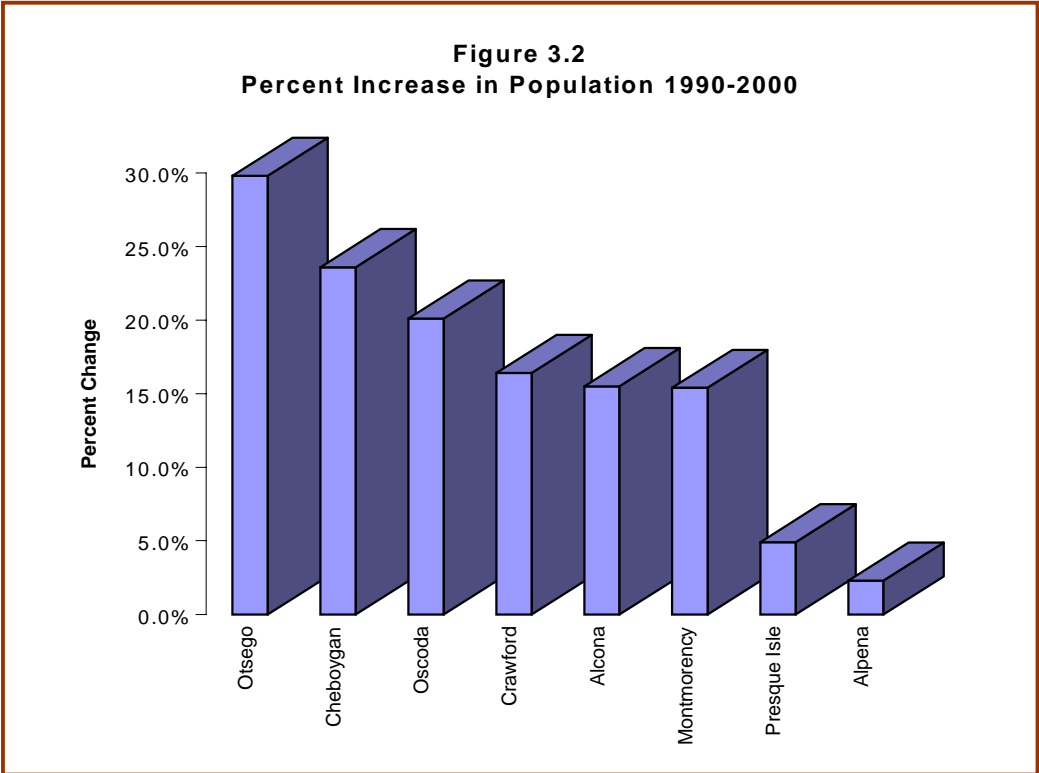
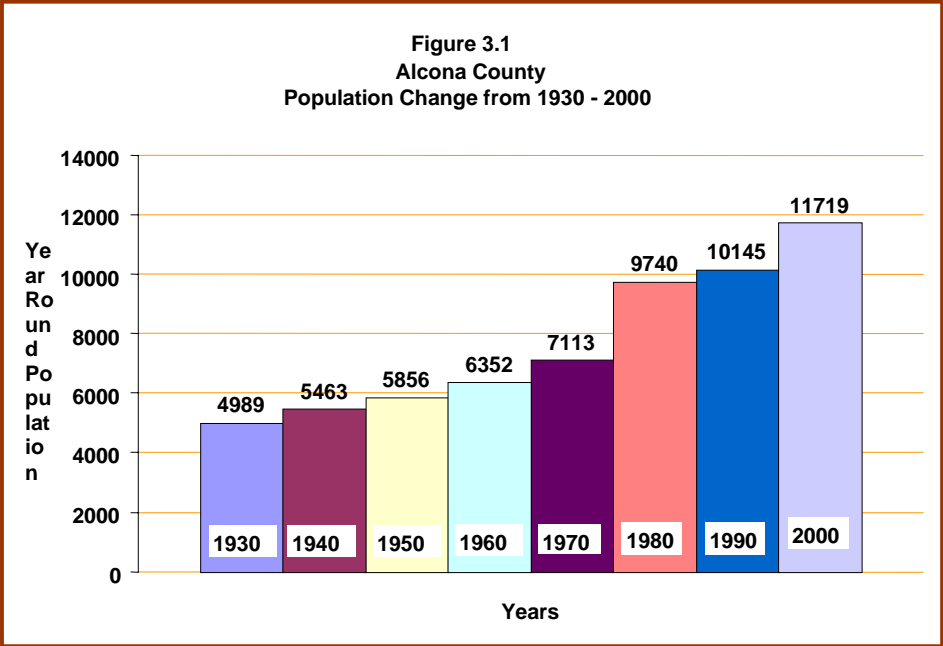
Seasonal populations can have a significant impact on communities. Seasonal residents may include retirees that winter in the south or second home owners. The US Census does not report seasonal populations; however, seasonal structures are reported. The 2000 Census found that 48 percent or 5,067 houses were seasonal. Given this high number of seasonal structures, large fluctuations in the population occur during peak summer times.

### Population

The 2000 Census showed Alcona County with a population of 11,719. The county population density averages 17.4 persons per square mile, however, higher densities exist within the communities of Harrisville, Curtis, Lincoln and Lost Lake Woods and around major water bodies such as Hubbard Lake and coastline Lake Huron (**Table 3.1**). The county population has nearly doubled since 1960 (**Figure 3.1**). The population of the county has increased every decade since 1930. Prior to 1960 the county experience moderately low growth, growing by less than 500 people each decade. The largest population increase was 36.9 percent (2,627 people) recorded between 1970 and 1980. Since 1990 there has been an increase in population of 15.5 percent (1,574 persons). Although not the fastest growing of the eight counties that make up the Northeast Region, Alcona County did experience a moderate rate of growth during the last decade. Percentage growth rates are displayed in **Figure 3.2**.

### Population by Municipality

All of the communities gained population between 1990 and 2000. Curtis Township gained the most year round population growing by 249 year round residents. Caledonia Township experienced the second highest amount of growth adding 216 persons (**Table 3.1**). Mitchell Township had the highest percent growth rate though it added less actual people than seven of the other townships. Additionally, six of the townships had percent growth rates higher than the county average.



**Table 3.1  
Population For Alcona County & Municipalities, 1990-2000**

Municipality	1990 Population	2000 Population	Population Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 1990-2000
Alcona Township	906	1,089	183	20.2%
Caledonia Township	987	1,203	216	21.9%
Curtis Township	1,129	1,378	249	22.2%
Greenbush Township	1,373	1,499	126	9.2%
Gustin Township*	823	832	9	1.1%
Harrisville Township	1,315	1,411	96	7.3%
Hawes Township*	1,035	1,167	132	12.8%
Haynes Township	549	724	175	31.9%
Mikado Township	852	1043	191	22.4%
Millen Township	417	463	46	11.0%
Mitchell Township	290	396	106	36.6%
City of Harrisville	470	571	47	9.4%
Village of Lincoln	337	364	27	8.0%
Lost Lake Woods CDP**		339		
Alcona County	10,145	11,719	1,574	15.5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census  
 \* Includes parts of Village of Lincoln  
 \*\* Count also included in Alcona Township

## Seasonal Population

Obtaining accurate numbers of seasonal residents and tourists is difficult. It is important to note the U. S. Census population figures do not include most of the seasonal population of the County. Since the census is taken in April, persons who's primary home is elsewhere are not counted in Alcona County. The figures presented for housing characteristics show that 48 percent or 5,067 housing units are listed as seasonal, recreational or occasional use homes. Therefore, it can be assumed that the County's resident population can significantly increase during peak periods in the summer months. Using the 2.24 persons per household for Alcona County and the 5,067 seasonal homes, peak seasonal population could increase by approximately 11,000 persons; thereby potentially doubling the population of the County. This figure does not include those seasonal visitors or tourists staying in area motels, campgrounds or family homes. Special recreational events such as opening of deer hunting, salmon and trout fishing seasons can greatly increase this transient population.

## Population Projections

Population projections compiled by Northeast Michigan Council of Government (NEMCOG) predict the county's population will grow to 13,220 persons by the year 2010. Population is projected to grow to approximately 14,863 persons by the year 2020. Communities planning for this projected growth should consider natural and manmade hazards when directing location and density of development.

## Age

The 2000 U.S. Census data shows that 55.5 percent of Alcona County's population was 45 years old or older. (**Table 3.2**). The breakdown of the County's population by age grouping shows a loss in numbers of persons in the "under 5 years" and "20-24 years" age groups. The "25-44" and "45-64 years" age groups gained the most persons over the last decade, increasing by 1,184 and 1,024 respectively. There was also a small gain in the "5-19" age group which increased by 105 persons.

Age	1990	% of Total Pop.	2000	% of Total Pop
Under 5	515	5.1%	505	4.3%
5-19	1822	17.4%	1,927	16.2%
20-24	438	4.3%	330	2.8%
25-44	1,271	22.8%	2,455	20.9%
45-64	2,612	25.7%	3,636	31.0%
65+	2,443	24.1%	2,886	24.5%
Median Age	44.8 years		49 years	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The median age of residents in Alcona County increased 4.2 years to 49 during the period 1990-2000, (**Table 3.2**). This is a similar increase, but is still 13.5 years older than the median age for the State which increased from 32.5 to 35.5 years. This increase in the median age can be attributed to the existing population getting older and the inward migration of retirees that are selling their primary year round residences and moving "north" to their seasonal homes.

All of the County's municipalities had older median age figures than the State which had a median age of 35.5 years. Mikado Township recorded the youngest median age in the county of 40.5 years, while Alcona Township recorded the oldest figure of 57.6 years. The high median age in Alcona Township is attributed to the resort community development of Lost Lake Woods. Lost Lake Woods Association was formed as a non-profit in 1926 and according to the by-laws for the purpose of, "To associate together and carry on hunting, fishing, boating, golf, and other general athletic or lawful sporting purposes,...". One thousand acres of the original 8,500 acres was subdivided for housing, the balance was set aside for outdoor recreation activities. Though today LLW still functions as an outdoor resort community, membership characteristics are transitioning as people retire, sell their primary residence and move "north" to the community. The 2000 US Census subset the information and reports it as the Lost Lake Woods CDP. Median age for the Lost Lake Woods CDP was 67.1 years, some 31.6 years older than the State's median age. If the seasonal-summer population were reported the median age would be even older.

**Table 3.3** shows age groups and median ages by minor civil division. The distribution of persons by age was relatively uniform throughout the Townships. However, the age distributions of the population within Alcona County contrast with the State as a whole. In Alcona County, the percentage of the preschool and school aged children is lower and the percentage of the population 45 and older is higher than the state wide basis.

**Table 3.3**  
**Age Distribution By Municipality For Alcona County - 2000**

MUNICIPALITY	< 5 Yrs.	%*	5-19 Yrs.	%*	20-24 Yrs.	%*	25-44 Yrs.	%*	45-64 Yrs.	%*	65 Yrs. & >	%*	Median Age
Alcona Twp.	28	2.6	148	13.6	20	1.8	180	16.6	337	31.0	376	34.5	57.6
Caledonia Twp.	39	3.2	184	15.3	43	3.6	251	20.8	388	32.2	298	24.8	50.5
Curtis Twp.	63	4.6	226	16.5	30	2.2	277	20.1	434	31.6	348	25.3	50.4
Greenbush Twp.	71	4.7	212	14.1	30	2.0	292	19.5	491	32.8	403	26.9	51.7
Gustin Twp.*	53	6.4	135	16.2	31	3.7	206	24.8	242	29.1	165	19.8	44.1
Harrisville Twp.	61	4.3	263	18.6	48	3.4	293	20.8	404	28.6	342	24.2	47.0
Hawes Twp.*	42	3.6	208	17.8	20	1.7	274	23.5	374	32.1	249	21.3	46.9
Haynes Twp.	31	4.3	127	17.5	27	3.7	140	19.3	252	34.8	147	20.3	49.0
Mikado Twp	64	6.1	222	21.2	34	3.3	271	26.0	285	27.3	167	16.0	40.5
Millen Twp.	17	3.7	78	16.9	17	3.7	88	19.0	148	32.0	115	24.8	50.3
Mitchell Twp	11	2.8	53	13.4	6	1.5	72	18.2	148	37.3	106	26.8	53.3
City of Harrisville	25	4.9	71	13.8	24	4.7	111	21.6	133	25.8	150	29.2	48.5
Village of Lincoln	20	5.5	62	17.0	10	2.7	89	24.4	95	26.1	88	24.2	45.3
Lost Lake Woods CDP**	3	0.9	13	3.9	2	0.6	28	8.2	107	31.6	186	54.9	67.1
Alcona County	505	4.3	1927	16.4	330	2.8	2455	20.9	3636	31.0	2866	24.5	49.0
State of Michigan		6.8		23.2		6.5		29.8		22.5		12.3	35.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

\* Count includes parts of Lincoln

\*\* Count also included in Alcona Township figures

## Household Characteristics

State of Michigan. **Table 3.4** presents information on household characteristics gathered in the 2000 US Census. Information includes total number of households, average household size, householder living alone, householder 65 years & older living alone, and households with an individual 65 years & older. The average household size in Alcona County is smaller than the state average.

Communities with more than 500 year round households include Alcona, Caledonia, Curtis, Greenbush, Harrisville, and Hawes Townships. Certain household types can be more vulnerable to natural hazards. Communities with the highest number of persons living alone, and persons 65 years & older living alone are Alcona, Curtis, Greenbush and Hawes Townships.

<b>Table 3.4</b>					
<b>Alcona County: Household Characteristics - 2000</b>					
MUNICIPALITY	Total Households	Avg. Household Size	Householder Living Alone	Householder Alone 65 yrs. & Older	Household w/ Individual 65 yrs. & older
Alcona Township	524	2.08	154	98	260
Caledonia Twp.	535	2.25	129	69	217
Curtis Township	608	2.25	151	66	235
Greenbush Twp.	685	2.19	187	112	283
Gustin Township*	358	2.29	99	49	115
Harrisville Twp.	555	2.37	125	63	180
Hawes Twp.*	528	2.20	156	82	183
Haynes Township.	308	2.35	70	38	107
Mikado Township	397	2.60	81	38	119
Millen Township	202	2.24	56	28	74
Mitchell Twp.	193	2.05	59	32	79
Village of Lincoln	179	2.03	71	45	73
City of Harrisville	239	1.92	99	54	101
Lost Lake Woods CDP**	189	1.79	59	45	126
Alcona County	5,132	2.24	1,366	729	1,953
Michigan	-----	2.56	-----	-----	-----

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census  
 \* Count includes parts of Lincoln  
 \*\* Count also included in Alcona Township figures

## Race and Ethnic Composition

Information found in **Table 3.5** shows that Alcona County has a very small minority population and that situation has changed relatively little over the last several decades. A small increase in the minority population from 1990 to 2000 is mostly attributed to different reporting criteria in the 2000 Census. For the first time, respondents were given the opportunity to choose more than one race category. Excluding the two or more races category, Hispanic or Latino Origin was the largest minority group with 0.7 percent of the population, followed by American Indian at 0.6 percent, and Asian and Black both at 0.2 percent. Persons indicating two or more Races made up 0.9 percent.

	Number of Persons	% of Total Population
Total	11,719	100%
White	11,489	98.0%
Black	19	0.2%
American Indian	73	0.6%
Asian	21	0.2%
Two or More Races*	109	0.9%
Hispanic or Latino Origin**	81	0.7%

\* Census 2000 gave respondents the opportunity to choose more than one race category.  
\*\* Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin may be of any race.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## Disability Status

Data shown on **Table 3.6**, gives an indication of how many disabled people reside in Alcona County. A person was classified as having a disability if they had a sensory disability, physical disability, mental disability, self-care disability, going outside the home disability or an employment disability. The 2000 Census showed there were 2,844 disabled persons in Alcona County. The largest numbers of disabled persons in the county were between the ages of 21 - 64 (1,513), and of the people in this group, 36.5 percent were employed. This compares with the State of Michigan where as a whole, 54.8 percent of the disabled population between 21-64 years is employed. The lower percentage is likely attributed to limited employment opportunities and limited public transportation. Over 40 percent of the 65 years and older population was identified as having a disability. In comparison to surrounding counties and the state, Alcona County has a relatively higher percentage of disabled persons than the other counties in the region. In the 8 county northeast region, the average percentage of individuals with a disability between 21 and 64 was 21.8 percent and in the State as a whole it was 18.1 percent.

## Educational Attainment

The U.S. Census Bureau tracks educational attainment for persons 25 years of age or older. Since 1990 educational attainment in Alcona County has improved as shown by **Table 3.7**. The number of people 25 and older who had a high school diploma or higher increased from 68.6 percent in the 1990 Census to 79.7 percent in the 2000 US Census. Even though this represents a great improvement, it is somewhat lower than the 83.4 percent for the State as a whole. The percentage of persons with high school diplomas, Associate Degrees and Bachelor's Degrees all increased between the 1990 and 2000 US Census. Additionally, the number of persons with less than 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, or 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (no diploma) greatly decreased over the last decade.

**Table 3.6**  
**Alcona County**  
**Disability Status of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Persons \* - 2000**

LOCAL UNIT	Disabled persons 5-20	% Disabled 5-20	Disabled persons 21-64	% Disabled 21-64	% of disabled persons 21-64 employed	Disabled persons 65+	% Disabled 65+
Alcona Twp.	12	7.8%	124	23.1%	40.3%	118	31.9%
Caledonia Twp.	18	9.8%	164	23.2%	50.0%	115	40.2%
Curtis Twp.	27	11.2%	218	29.1%	28.9%	156	45.9%
Greenbush Twp.	13	6.0%	178	22.9%	33.1%	161	39.0%
Gustin Twp.*	37	25.0%	109	22.3%	33.0%	67	37.9%
Harrisville Twp.	34	12.6%	150	21.3%	50.0%	76	29.0%
Hawes Twp.*	5	2.2%	148	23.2%	32.4%	100	41.7%
Haynes Twp.	11	8.1%	95	24.2%	44.2%	64	39.8%
Mikado Twp.	15	6.3%	142	24.4%	38.7%	90	50.0%
Millen Twp.	16	19.5%	55	24.3%	38.2%	52	54.2%
Mitchell Twp.	4	10.8%	55	25.3%	5.5%	56	45.2%
City of Harrisville	2	2.8%	75	30.7%	25.3%	82	44.6%
Village of Lincoln	11	16.9%	38	20.2%	31.6%	51	56.0%
Alcona Co.	194	9.7%	1513	24.2%	36.5%	1137	40.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census  
\* Count includes parts of Lincoln

**Table 3.7**  
**Alcona County Educational Attainment 1990 & 2000**

Degree	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	883	12.0%	504	5.6%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> no Diploma	1,434	19.5%	1,310	14.6%
High School Diploma	2,910	39.5%	3,750	41.9%
Some college no degree	1,100	14.9%	1,880	21.0%
Associates	376	5.1%	537	6.0%
Bachelors	425	5.8%	589	6.6%
Graduate or Professional	239	3.2%	388	4.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



## Housing Characteristics

The US Census reports a wide variety of housing characteristics. In 2000 there were 10,584 housing units in Alcona County. The total number of units includes single and multiple family housing types. Single family, detached housing account for 84.6 percent total. There were 1,385 mobile homes reported in the 2000 Census. Thirty-five percent of the structures were built prior to 1960. Since 1960 between 1,200 and 2,300 units have been built each decade, with greatest number built in the 70's (2,335 units). Actually, the post war housing boom in the 1940's saw the greatest number of structures built in a decade (2,362).

Information reported on occupied housing units found 28.3 percent of the housing units are heated with natural gas, a 47 percent increase from 1990. Some 45.8 percent heat with bottled, tank or LP gas and 12.3 percent heat with wood. Four percent or 222 homes use electricity and 9.2 percent use fuel oil. Other data show 0.7 percent of the structures lack complete plumbing and 0.4 percent lack complete kitchen facilities. Some 2.2 percent or 114 occupied units have no phone service.

Housing characteristics for Alcona County are found in **Table 3.8**. Certain characteristics contrast sharply with the state as a whole. For example, 48 percent of the housing is seasonal as compared to 5.5 percent in the state. Within the County the percent of seasonal housing units ranges from 16.3 percent in the Village of Lincoln to 72.0 percent in Mitchell Township.

In the County, 89.9 percent of the occupied housing units are owner occupied as compared to 73.8 percent in the state as a whole. The percent owner occupied housing is 64.9 percent in the City of Harrisville and 74.9 percent in the Village of Lincoln. Whereas within the Townships, the percent owner occupied is above 90 percent. Throughout the county, owner vacancy rates are fairly low, with the vacancy rates between 0.7 and 4.9 percent. The renter vacancy ranges from 0.0 percent in Haynes to 18.2 percent in Hawes Township.

<b>Table 3.8</b>								
<b>Alcona County: Housing Characteristics - 2000</b>								
MUNICIPALITY	Total Housing Units	Total Occupied Housing Units	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied	Total Seasonal Housing Units	% Seasonal *	Total Vacant % Owner	Total Vacant % Renter
Alcona Township	1313	524	94.5%	5.5%	748	57.0%	3.3%	9.4%
Caledonia Twp.	1074	535	92.9%	7.1%	513	47.8%	2.0%	11.6%
Curtis Township	1605	608	91.9%	8.1%	924	57.6%	4.9%	9.3%
Greenbush Twp.	1453	685	90.2%	9.8%	733	50.4%	2.2%	10.7%
Gustin Township**	483	358	80.2%	19.8%	87	18.0%	2.0%	12.3%
Harrisville Twp.	790	555	90.8%	9.2%	205	25.9%	1.9%	12.1%
Hawes Twp.**	1003	528	91.5%	8.5%	433	43.2%	2.4%	18.2%
Haynes Township.	598	308	93.5%	6.5%	276	46.2%	0.7%	0.0%
Mikado Township	666	397	90.7%	9.3%	229	34.4%	3.2%	5.1%
Millen Township	541	202	91.1%	8.9%	327	60.4%	1.6%	0.0%
Mitchell Twp.	731	193	94.3%	5.7%	526	72.0%	2.2%	8.3%
Village of Lincoln	246	179	74.3%	25.7%	40	16.3%	4.3%	17.9%
City of Harrisville	327	239	64.9%	35.1%	66	20.2%	3.1%	13.4%
Lost Lake Woods CDP***	511	189	98.9%	1.1%	306	59.9%	5.1%	50.0%
Alcona Co.	10584	5132	89.9%	10.1%	5067	47.9%	2.6%	11.0%
Michigan	-----	-----	73.8%	26.2%	-----	5.5%	1.6%	6.8%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census								
* Figure shows the seasonal housing units as a percentage of the unit's total housing units.								
** Count includes parts of Lincoln								
*** Count also included in Alcona Township figures								

## Economic Characteristics

### Overview

Alcona County is a rural, sparsely populated county sandwiched between two larger, more urbanized counties (Alpena and Iosco). The opportunity for year-round higher wage jobs has traditionally not been good in Alcona County. For this reason, a large number of Alcona County residents commuted to the Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Iosco County to work. Others commuted to Alpena County, where a large number of good paying industrial jobs could be found. Over the last decade, however, this picture has changed a great deal. In June of 1993, the Wurtsmith Air Force Base was closed, causing the loss of over 600 government jobs, some of which were held by Alcona County residents. In the late 1980's and early 1990's many hundreds of industrial jobs were lost in Alpena County due to severe cut backs and closures of several of their major employers. Alpena County was hard hit again in 2000 when the Fletcher Paper Co. closed its doors, leaving 230 employees without jobs. These job losses impacted Alcona County employment, as well.

During the 1990's major efforts have been underway in all three counties with the goal of improving and diversifying the local economy of each. For example, efforts to re-use the Wurtsmith Air Force Base as an industrial park have yielded new manufacturing jobs. Development of medical and educational facilities has also created new jobs. Unfortunately, the recent downturn in the U.S. economy has negatively affected this area again, leading to closures and/or cut-back in some of the newer businesses. Considering the fact that there are available buildings and infrastructure in place, it is hoped that these jobs can be replaced in the not too distant future. Alpena County's economic development efforts have been aimed at retaining and expanding industrial employment, while attracting employers in other sectors, such as retail and services, especially health care. Alcona County has reinvigorated their Economic Development Corporation (EDC) in order to work on retaining and attracting new private businesses and investment. Alcona County, especially the Harrisville area, has also become more well known as an attractive and reasonably priced community for retirees. The influx of new residents has also positively impacted the local economy in that area.

### Income

According to the U.S. Census, between 1989 and 1999 Alcona County's median household income increased by a greater percentage than did the State's rate (**see Table 3.9**). During the last decade Alcona County's median family income increased by over one-third (34.2%), while the State's rate only increased by 10.9 percent. This rise in the area's average income is most likely due to the fact that some financially stable retirees moved into the county during that period. In spite of this healthy boost to the area's overall income, Alcona County's 1999 median household income was still 29.8 percent lower than the State's rate during that year.

	1989	1989 (In 1999 \$*)	1999	% Change**
Alcona Co.	\$18,013	\$23,378	\$31,362	34.2%
Michigan	\$31,020	\$40,260	\$44,667	10.9%

\* 1989 income converted into 1999 dollars.  
 \*\* Percent change from 1989 income (using 1999 dollar conversion) to 1999 income.  
 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## Poverty

Poverty statistics from the U.S. Census show (see **Table 3.10**) that Alcona County rates in nearly all categories are only a few points higher than the State rates (1999 data). For example, the percent of families who fell below the poverty rate in 1999 was 9.1 for the county and 7.4 for the State. Nine percent of individuals 65 years and older fell below the poverty rate in Alcona County, compared to the State's figure of 8.2 percent.

Unfortunately, the percentage of Alcona County female headed households that fell below poverty was much higher than the State's rate in 1999. Nearly one-third (32.3%) of the county's total female headed households fell below poverty during that year, while over one-half (56%) of the female headed households containing related children under five years of age fell below poverty. The State's poverty statistics for female headed households are also alarmingly high, but not as high as the county's figures.

	Alcona Co.	Michigan
Percent of families below poverty	9.1%	7.4%
Percent with related children < 18 yrs.	15.2%	11.3%
Percent of female headed households below poverty	32.3%	24.0%
Percent with related children < 18 yrs.	44.4%	31.5%
Percent with related children 0 - 5 yrs.	56.0%	44.2%
Percent of individuals below poverty	12.6%	10.5%
Percent 18 yrs. old and >	11.3%	9.3%
Percent 65 yrs. old and >	9.0%	8.2%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census		

## Labor Force

### Employment and Unemployment

The civilian labor force is defined as all civilian individuals over age 16 who are employed, or actively seeking employment. Labor force numbers can change rather quickly, in response to economic conditions. During prolonged periods of unemployment, unsuccessful job seekers can drop out of the work force by going back to school, leaving the area in search of work elsewhere or by stopping the search for work.

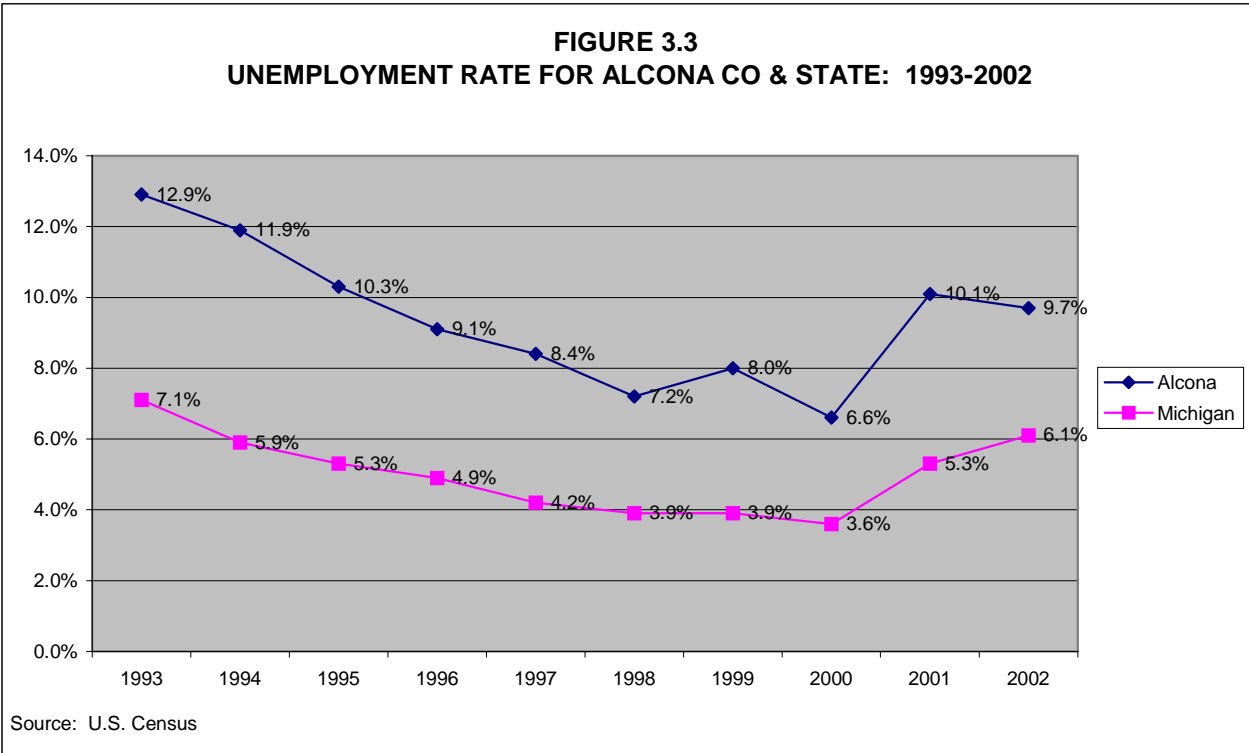
**Table 3.11** shows the annual average civilian labor force for Alcona County over the last ten years (1993 - 2002). When comparing 1993 to 2002 it is found that the civilian labor force only increased by 1.7 percent (45 persons) during that time period. Comparing the labor force between 1993 and 1997, however, shows a difference of 675 persons between those two years. This is a good example of how the labor force numbers can fluctuate from year to year based on the availability of jobs in the area. Looking at the numbers of persons employed in Alcona County between 2002 and 1993, these figures show that there was an increase of 175 persons (+4.5%). The difference in numbers of the unemployed fell between 1993 and 2002 by 125 persons (-21.7%). This trend is reflected in the falling unemployment rates recorded during that time period. In 1993, Alcona County's unemployment rate was a very high 12.9 percent, while it had fallen to 9.7 percent by 2002.

Data found on **Table 3.11** and in **Figure 3.3** shows that over the past ten years Alcona County's unemployment rate has followed the same trend line as the State's rate, except in 1999 and in 2002. During this period the county's annual unemployment rate has been consistently higher than the State's rate by a difference of between three and six percentage points. In the early 1990's Alcona County's unemployment rate was very high (over 10% annual average rate). This was in response to the job losses in Iosco County (Wurtsmith Air Force Base closure) and in Alpena County, as was discussed earlier in this chapter. During the mid to late 1990's the county's unemployment rate fell

**Table 3.11**  
**Alcona County Civilian Labor Force: 1993 - 2002**

	Civilian Labor Force		Employment		Unemployment		Unemp Rate	Mich. Unemp Rate
	#	% Dif*	#	% Dif*	#	% Dif*	%	%
1993	4,450	6.0%	3,925	11.3%	575	-14.8%	12.9%	7.1%
1994	4,850	9.0%	4,275	8.9%	575	0.0%	11.9%	5.9%
1995	4,875	0.5%	4,375	2.3%	500	-13.0%	10.3%	5.3%
1996	5,000	2.6%	4,550	4.0%	450	-10.0%	9.1%	4.9%
1997	5,125	2.5%	4,675	2.7%	425	-5.6%	8.4%	4.2%
1998	5,050	-1.5%	4,675	0.0%	375	-11.8%	7.2%	3.9%
1999	5,025	-0.5%	4,625	-1.1%	400	6.7%	8.0%	3.9%
2000	4,975	-1.0%	4,650	0.5%	325	-18.8%	6.6%	3.6%
2001	4,700	-5.5%	4,225	-9.1%	475	46.2%	10.1%	5.3%
2002	4,525	-3.7%	4,100	-3.0%	450	-5.3%	9.7%	6.1%

\* Figure shows percent difference from preceding year.  
Source: Mich. Dept. of Career Dev., Employment Services Agency, Office of Labor Market Information



nearly every year, until it reached a low of 6.6 percent in 2000. The overall economy for the State and US was very good during those years, which was helpful in boosting the employment opportunities for Alcona County and adjacent Iosco and Alpena Counties. Unfortunately, in 2001 and 2002 the county's unemployment rate increased sharply taking it into the ten percent range again. The recent national recession was directly responsible for this increase, which is also reflected in the State's unemployment rate for those years. Alcona County's unemployment rate actually decreased by a small amount between 2001 and 2002 (from 10.1% to 9.7%), which may be a hopeful sign that the economic recession will be short lived.

### Wage and Salary Employment

Wage and salary employment in Alcona County (and Iosco County) has historically been concentrated in government jobs.<sup>1</sup> (see **Table 3.12** and **Figure 3.4**). Employment in that sector, however, dropped substantially starting in 1992, due to the loss of over 600 government jobs when the Wurtsmith Air Force Base closed in Iosco County.

The largest employment sector found in Alcona and Iosco Counties is now retail employment (24.1% of the wage and salary employment in 2002). Service sector and government employment come in very close to one another at 23.2 percent and 22.3 percent, respectively. Manufacturing employment in 2002 was 16 percent of the wage and salary employment. Employment in "other" sectors ("other" includes transportation, communications & utilities, wholesale trade & finance, insurance and real estate) accounted for 8.4 percent of the wage and salary employment, while the mining and construction sector was last at 5.8 percent.

Alcona and Iosco Counties combined added 1,025 new jobs between 1993 and 2002 for an overall increase of 10.5 percent total wage and salary employment. Between 2001 and 2002, however, Alcona and Iosco Counties' total wage and salary employment decreased by 1.8 percent (-200 jobs). Most of the job losses were found in the manufacturing and other sectors. The majority of these job losses were in Iosco County, rather than Alcona County. The loss of manufacturing employment was largely due to the closure of the ITT facility, while the loss of jobs in the "other" sectors was mostly related to the closure of TimCo, a transportation firm. In spite of these job losses, however, the Alcona/Iosco County area still has the second largest number of jobs in the manufacturing sector of any area in Northeast Michigan.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Data for Alcona County includes Iosco County. Iosco County numbers overshadow Alcona County because of population differences. However, the economy of the two areas are very closely linked because many people who live in Alcona County work in Iosco County.

**Table 3.12  
Alcona-Iosco Counties  
Wage and Salary Employment by Sector  
1993 - 2002**

	Mining & Const.	Mfg.	Retail	Service	Govt.	Other*	Total**
1993	475	1,950	2,100	1,825	2,500	875	9,750
% Dif***	0.0%	2.6%	-7.7%	1.4%	-19.4%	6.1%	-6.3%
1994	550	2,150	2,400	2,050	2,325	1,025	10,525
% Dif***	15.8%	10.3%	14.3%	12.3%	-7.0%	17.1%	7.9%
1995	550	2,375	2,550	2,175	2,250	1,300	11,125
% Dif***	0.0%	10.5%	6.3%	6.1%	-3.2%	26.8%	5.7%
1996	550	2,500	2,600	2,250	2,225	1,400	11,525
% Dif***	0.0%	5.3%	2.0%	3.4%	-1.1%	7.7%	3.6%
1997	600	2,400	2,625	2,325	2,250	1,600	11,775
% Dif**	9.1%	-4.0%	1.0%	3.3%	1.1%	14.3%	2.2%
1998	625	2,375	2,625	2,400	2,275	1,650	11,950
% Dif***	4.2%	-1.0%	0.0%	3.2%	1.1%	3.1%	1.5%
1999	700	2,400	2,575	2,475	2,325	1,275	11,750
% Dif***	12.0%	1.1%	-1.9%	3.1%	2.2%	-22.7%	-1.7%
2000	725	2,200	2,675	2,525	2,425	1,300	11,850
% Dif***	3.6%	-8.3%	3.9%	2.0%	4.3%	2.0%	0.9%
2001	650	1,875	2,575	2,450	2,425	1,000	10,975
% Dif***	-10.3%	-14.8%	-3.7%	-3.0%	0.0%	-23.1%	-7.4%
2002	625	1,725	2,600	2,500	2,400	900	10,775
% Dif***	-3.8%	-8.0%	1.0%	2.0%	-1.0%	-10.0%	-1.8%

\* Other = Transportation, Communications & Utilities, Wholesale Trade & Finance, Insurance & Real Estate.

\*\* Total may not add due to rounding

\*\* Percent difference from preceding year

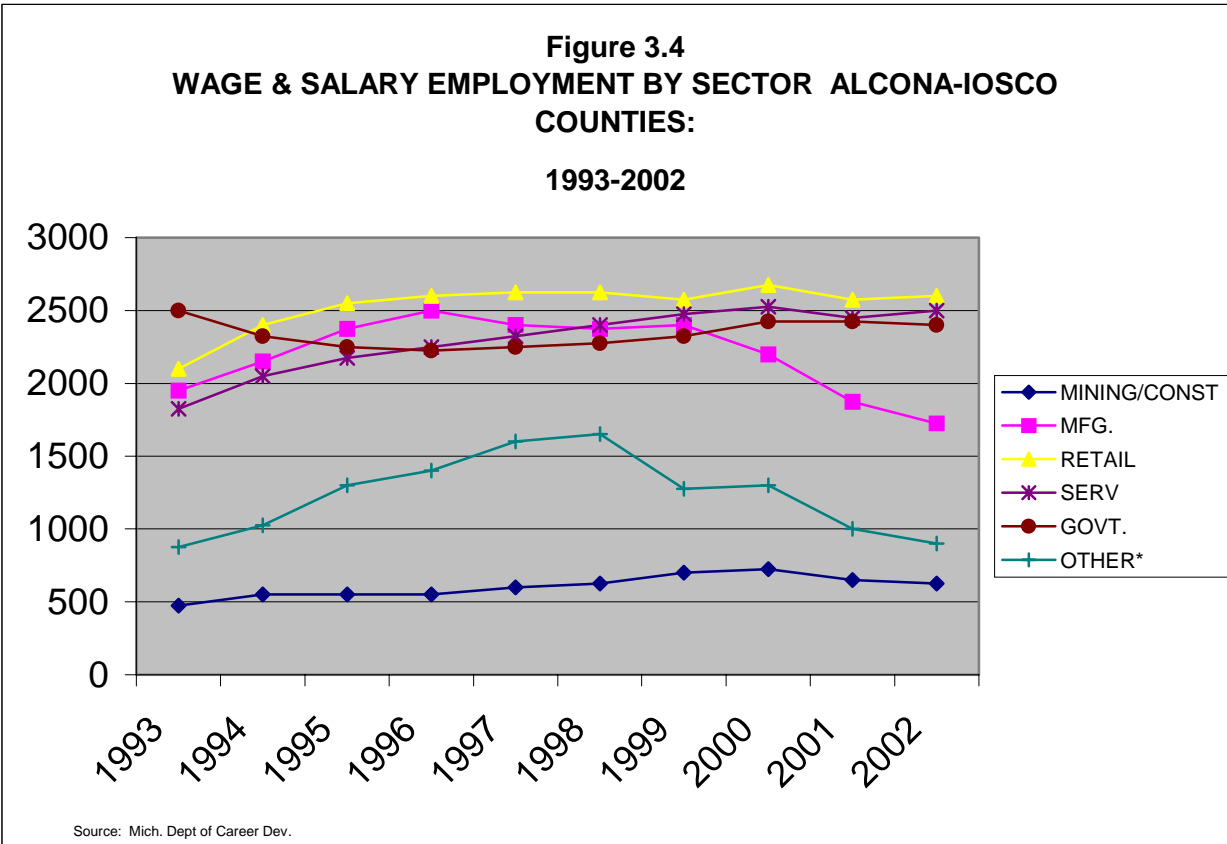
Source: Mich. Dept. of Career Dev., Employment Services Agency

Major Employers

Information found in **Table 3.13** shows the top ten major employers for Alcona County. Six of the ten shown are either public entities, such as the school system, or are medical facilities organizations, such as nursing homes. While many of these employers are located in the county seat of Harrisville, several are located in other communities, such as Lincoln or are in scattered sites throughout the county. Other employment information from the Alcona Hazard Analysis Plan of 2002 provides information on principle employers in the County, see **Tables 3.14 and 3.15**

<b>Table 3.13</b> <b>Alcona County Major Employers</b> <b>2003</b>	
Employer	# of Emp.
Alcona Community Schools	162
Alcona County	120
Lincoln Haven Health Care Center	60
Jammieson Nursing Home	50
Alcona Tool & Machine	50
Alcona Motors	40
Lincoln Precision Carbide	40
Lost Lake Woods Association	38
Alcona County Road Commission	36
Alcona Health Center	35

Source: "2002 Michigan Industrial Directory" and "2002 Michigan Services Directory" by Harris InfoSource and Northeast Michigan Council of Governments





**Table 3.14  
Principle Employers**

**Manufacturing Employers**

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Employees</b>
Alcona Tool & Machine Inc	Harrisville	Tools, dies, jigs, fixtures & carbide prdts	50
Lincoln Precision Carbide Inc	Lincoln	Precision carbide tools & inserts	30
Great Northern Lumber Of MI	Lincoln	Wooden pallets	28
Northern Precision	Lincoln	Tool & die: punches, carbide & steel inserts	22
Huron Tool Products Inc	Lincoln	Cutting tools	20
W & S Development Inc	Greenbush	Hydraulic cutterhead dredges	16
Hillman Extrusion Tool Inc	Lincoln	Carbide, cold forming & extrusion dies, punches & tooling	14
Lincoln Tool Co Inc	Harrisville	Tool & die	13
Parts Manufacturing Co	Harrisville	Production machining of small parts & assemblies	12

Source: Harris Publishing Company, 1998 Industrial Directory

**Table 3.15  
Other Major Employers**

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Product</b>
Alcona School District	Lincoln	125	Education
Alcona County	Harrisville	92	Government
Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health	Lincoln	52	Healthcare
Smith-Jamieson, Inc.	Harrisville	50	Healthcare
Alcona Motors, Inc.	Lincoln	45	Auto Dealership
Benton Harbor Health Care Center	Lincoln	40	Healthcare
Alcona Motors, Inc.	Lincoln	40	Automotive Repair
Lost Lake Woods Association	Lincoln	38	Recreation
Alcona County Road Commission	Lincoln	37	Government
Lincoln Haven Health Care Center	Lincoln	35	Healthcare

Source: Local County Economic Development Contact