SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS 6W, 8, and 9

Covers counties:

Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Sibley, Swift, Waseca, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine

2019 REGIONAL PROFILE

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DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE

The Southwest Minnesota planning region includes a total of 23 counties, covering three Economic Development Regions (EDRs) and two Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). In sum, Southwest Minnesota was home to 392,605 people in 2018, about 7 percent of the state's total population. The region saw a 0.8 percent decline in population over the past 8 years, primarily due to larger losses in Region 6W and Region 8, which overwhelmed the small increase in Region 9. In comparison, the state of Minnesota saw a 5.8 percent gain (Table 1).

Only 3 of the 23 counties in the region gained population from 2010 to 2018, with the other 20 seeing declines. The largest counties in the region are Blue Earth and Nicollet County, which make up the Mankato/North Mankato Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). With 67,427 people, Blue Earth is the 13th largest county out of 87 in the state, and Nicollet has 34,220 people after gaining almost 1,500 people. Other large counties in the region include Le Sueur with 28,494 people, Lyon with 25,629 people, Brown with 25,111 people, and Nobles with 21,924 people; while Big Stone and Lincoln are the smallest counties in the region.

Table 1. Population Change 2010-2018

	2010 Population	2018 Estimates	*2010-2018 Change*	
			Number	*Percent*
Southwest Minnesota	**395,643**	**392,605**	***-3,038***	***-0.8%***
Region 6W	**45,190**	**42,711**	***-2,479***	***-5.5%***
Big Stone Co.	5,269	4,989	*-280*	*-5.3%*
Chippewa Co.	12,441	11,924	*-517*	*-4.2%*
Lac qui Parle Co.	7,259	6,658	*-601*	*-8.3%*
Swift Co.	9,783	9,345	*-438*	*-4.5%*
Yellow Medicine Co.	10,438	9,795	*-643*	*-6.2%*
Region 8	**119,151**	**116,400**	***-2,751***	***-2.3%***
Cottonwood Co.	11,687	11,277	*-410*	*-3.5%*
Jackson Co.	10,266	9,911	*-355*	*-3.5%*
Lincoln Co.	5,896	5,673	*-223*	*-3.8%*
Lyon Co.	25,857	25,629	*-228*	*-0.9%*
Murray Co.	8,725	8,276	*-449*	*-5.1%*
Nobles Co.	21,378	21,924	*+546*	*+2.6%*
Pipestone Co.	9,596	9,047	*-549*	*-5.7%*
Redwood Co.	16,059	15,249	*-810*	*-5.0%*
Rock Co.	9,687	9,414	*-273*	*-2.8%*
Region 9	**231,302**	**233,494**	***+2,192***	***+0.9%***
Blue Earth Co.	64,013	67,427	*+3,414*	*+5.3%*
Brown Co.	25,893	25,111	*-782*	*-3.0%*
Faribault Co.	14,553	13,758	*-795*	*-5.5%*
Le Sueur Co.	27,703	28,494	*+791*	*+2.9%*
Martin Co.	20,840	19,785	*-1,055*	*-5.1%*
Nicollet Co.	32,727	34,220	*+1,493*	*+4.6%*
Sibley Co.	15,226	15,028	*-198*	*-1.3%*
Waseca Co.	19,136	18,691	*-445*	*-2.3%*
Watonwan Co.	11,211	10,980	*-231*	*-2.1%*
State of Minnesota	**5,303,925**	**5,611,179**	***+307,254***	***+5.8%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

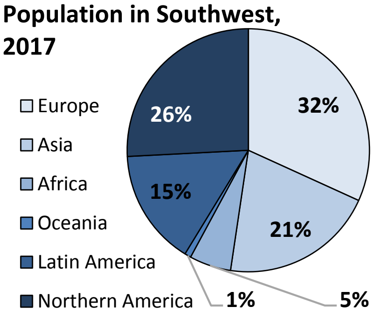
Table 2. Components of Population Change, 2010-2018

	Total Change	*Natural Increase*	Vital Events		Net Migration		
			Births	Deaths	*Total*	*Inter-national*	*Domestic*
Southwest	*-3,047*	*+6,998*	38,698	31,700	*-10,078*	*+4,889*	*-14,967*
Minnesota	*+307,254*	*+228,289*	570,171	341,882	*+81,671*	*+107,830*	*-26,159*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Southwest Minnesota has experienced a natural increase – more births than deaths – of about 7,000 people so far this decade. However, the region lost population because of out-migration, with about 10,000 more people moving out of the region than moving in. Though there was domestic out-migration of nearly 15,000 people, the region did enjoy positive in-migration of nearly 5,000 additional residents from international sources (Table 2). Southwest Minnesota is now home to 18,565 foreign born residents, or about 4.7 percent of the total population. The number of immigrants in the region increased by 28.6 percent since 2010, outpacing the statewide growth rate of 22.2 percent. About half of these immigrants (9,246 people) were from Latin America, while the second largest number were from Asia (Figure 1). The fastest growing wave of new immigrants came from Africa, rising by nearly 1,000 people from 2010 to 2017.

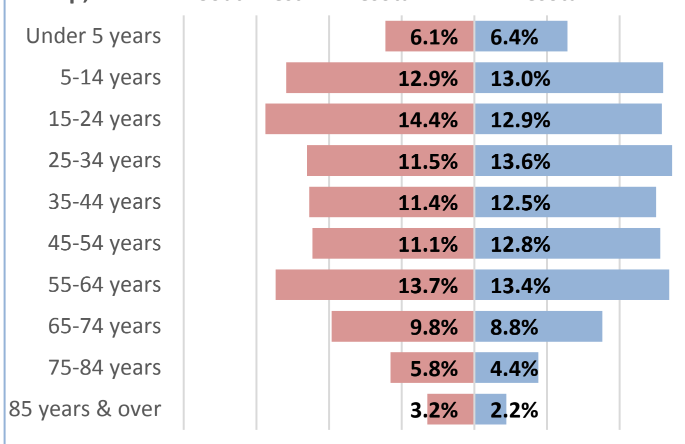
Figure 1. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population in Southwest, 2017



POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

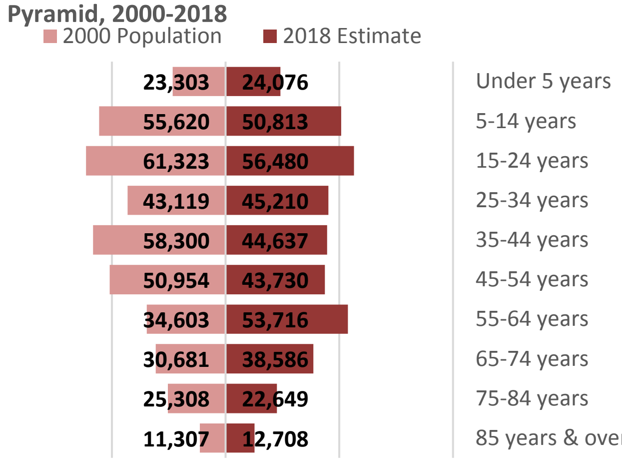
Southwest Minnesota has an older population than the rest of the state, with 32.5 percent of residents aged 55 years and over, compared to 28.8 percent statewide. Consequently, Southwest Minnesota had a lower percentage of people in the 25- to 54-year-old age group, typically considered the "prime working years," as well as a smaller percent of school-aged children. However, having several postsecondary institutions in the region led to a higher percentage of people aged 15 to 24 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of Population by Age Group, 2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Figure 3. Southwest Minnesota Population Pyramid, 2000-2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

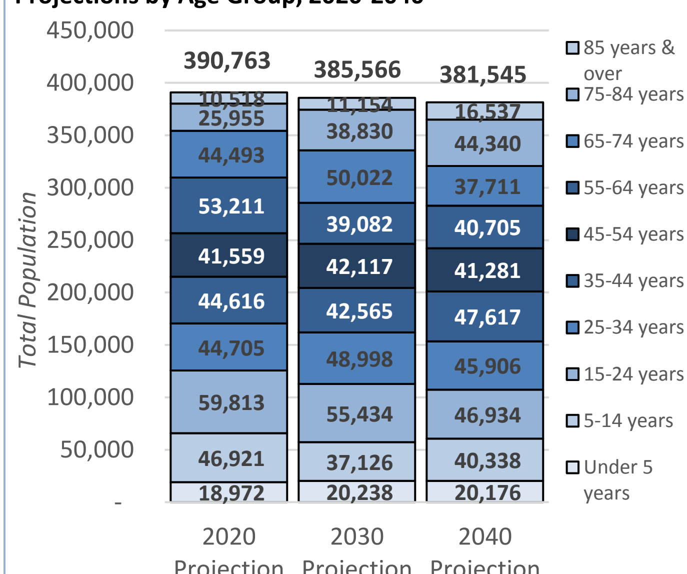
A large portion of the region's population is a part of the Baby Boom generation, people born between 1946 and 1964, which is creating a significant shift in the population over time. While the number of younger and middle-aged residents was declining, the number of residents aged 55 years and over was rapidly increasing. This included a huge jump in the number of people from 55 to 74 years of age, but a more measured change in people aged 75 years and over (Figure 3).

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP

Southwest Minnesota is projected to experience more population decline in the next 20 years. According to population projections from the [State Demographic Center](), the region is expected to lose 9,200 residents from 2020 to 2040, a -2.4 percent decline (Figure 4). In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 8.8 percent.

Southwest Minnesota is expected to add nearly 24,400 people aged 75 years and over, a 67 percent jump. The region is also projected to see a small gain in the 25- to 44-year-old age group, as well as a corresponding bump in children under 5. In contrast, the region is expected to lose school-aged children and young adults, as well as people from 45 to 64 years as the current Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid.

Figure 4. Southwest Minnesota Population Projections by Age Group, 2020-2040



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

POPULATION BY RACE

Southwest Minnesota's population is less diverse than the state's, but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2017, about 92.6 percent of the region's residents reported white alone as their race, compared to 83.7 percent of residents statewide. The region had much smaller percentages of Black or African American residents, Asian or Other Pacific Islanders, and people of Two or More Races. However at 6.4 percent, Southwest Minnesota had a higher percentage of people reporting Hispanic or Latino origin than the state, and a similar percentage of people of some other race, and American Indian. The region's white population was declining whereas the population of all other race groups was increasing rapidly (Table 3).

Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2017	Southwest Minnesota			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	*Change from 2000-2017*	Percent	*Change from 2000-2017*
Total	**391,760**	**100.0%**	***-0.7%***	**100.0%**	***+11.6%***
White	362,647	92.6%	*-3.5%*	83.7%	*+4.5%*
Black or African American	6,911	1.8%	*+155.7%*	6.0%	*+90.4%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	2,546	0.6%	*+28.3%*	1.0%	*+4.7%*
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	6,880	1.8%	*+59.7%*	4.7%	*+79.2%*
Some Other Race	7,039	1.8%	*+10.6%*	1.7%	*+45.3%*
Two or More Races	5,737	1.5%	*+71.6%*	2.8%	*+86.7%*
Hispanic or Latino	24,974	6.4%	*+100.6%*	5.2%	*+98.5%*

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey*

Nobles County had the most diverse populace in the region, including 25 percent of residents reporting Hispanic origin, which was the highest rate in the state. Redwood, Lyon, and Watonwan were also relatively diverse. In contrast, at least 97 percent of residents in Big Stone, Brown, Faribault, Lac qui Parle, and Lincoln were white alone, making them among the least diverse in the state.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

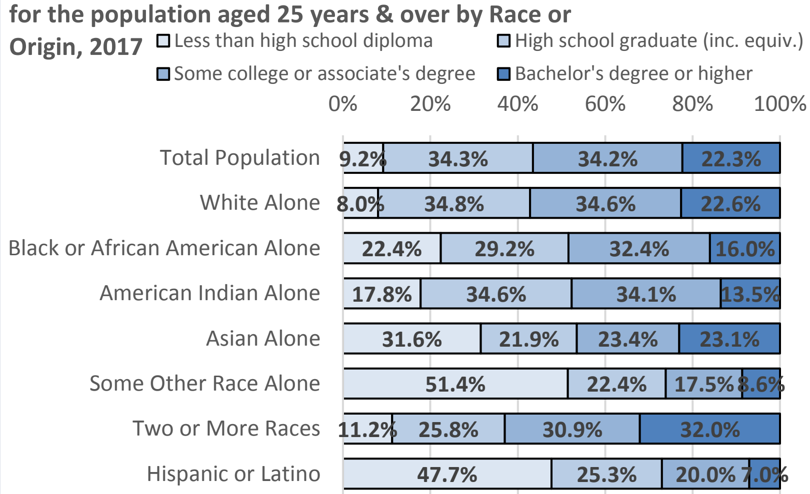
With 31.7 percent of adults aged 18 years and over having a college degree, Southwest Minnesota has lower educational attainment than the state, where 42.7 percent of adults have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree. In contrast, Southwest has a slightly higher percentage of people with some college but no degree, and a much higher percentage of people with a high school diploma or less (Table 4).

Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2017	Southwest Minnesota		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total Population, 18 years & over	**302,782**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than high school	28,463	9.4%	7.8%
High school graduate (incl. equiv.)	100,252	33.1%	25.6%
Some college, no degree	77,747	25.7%	23.8%
Associate's degree	34,953	11.5%	10.6%
Bachelor's degree	44,868	14.8%	21.7%
Advanced degree	16,499	5.4%	10.4%

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey*

Educational attainment varies significantly by race and ethnicity in Southwest Minnesota. Nearly half of Hispanic or Latino residents or people of Some Other Race had less than a high school diploma, compared to just 8 percent of White residents. However, over 30 percent of Black or African Americans, American Indians, and people of Two or More Races have attended some college or earned an associate's degree, and 23.1 percent of Asian residents had a bachelor's degree or higher, which was in line with the white population (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Southwest Minnesota Educational Attainment for the population aged 25 years & over by Race or Origin, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

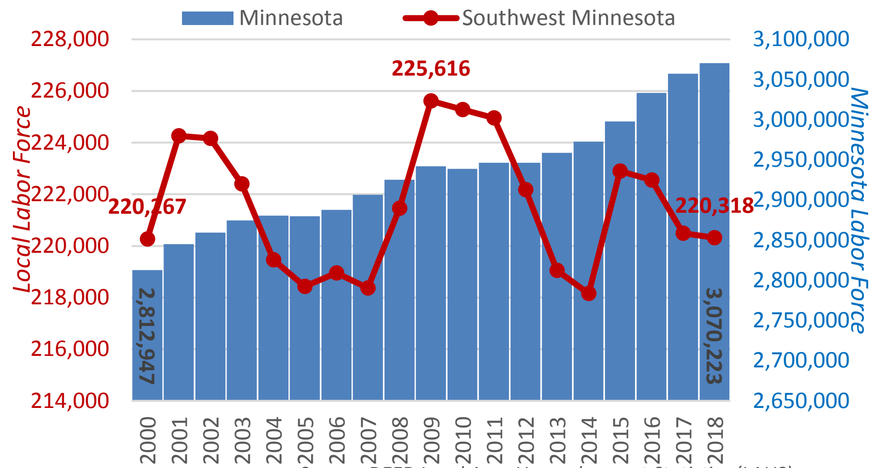
LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE

According to data from DEED's Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Southwest Minnesota had an annual average labor force count of just over 220,300 workers in 2018. The regional labor force has fluctuated up and down since 2000, but ended with about the same number of workers in 2018 as it had in 2000. As such, the labor force in Southwest Minnesota actually reached a peak in 2009, and has since declined (Figure 6).

Southwest Minnesota lost about 2,000 workers from 2000 to 2007, then added over 7,000 workers during the Great Recession as people flooded into the labor market to earn extra income. As the economy recovered, people began dropping out again until 2014, then the region has seen more ups and downs. There were just over 6,750 unemployed workers in 2018, down from a high of more than 15,000 unemployed workers in both 2009 and 2010. These labor force constraints will have a substantial impact on the regional economy.

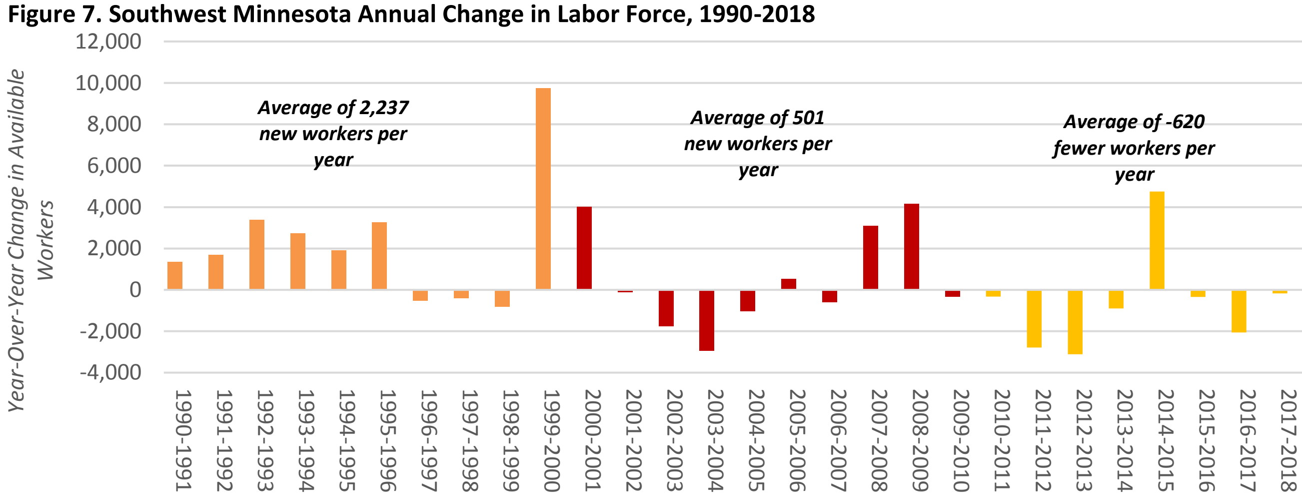
Figure 6. Annual Labor Force Estimates, 2000-2018



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

Averaging a net gain of 2,237 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, employers in Southwest Minnesota were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. With recent declines, the region actually averaged a loss of 620 fewer workers per year between 2010 to 2018 (Figure 7). Increasingly tight labor markets and a growing scarcity of workers is now recognized as one of the most significant barriers to future economic growth in Southwest Minnesota. In the face of these constraints, it has become evident that a more diverse workforce in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and immigration has been and will continue to be a vital source of the workers that employers need to succeed. As the white, native-born workforce continues to age, younger workers of different races or from different countries will comprise the fastest growing segment of the labor force.

Figure 7. Southwest Minnesota Annual Change in Labor Force, 1990-2018



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

If Southwest Minnesota's population changes at the projected rates shown in Figure 4 above, the region would be expected to see a decline in the labor force over the next decade. Applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group creates labor force projections for the region, which show a steady 4 percent drop in workforce numbers (Table 5).

In addition to the overall decline, the labor force will also see a significant shift over time, with large gains in the number of workers aged 65 years and over against huge declines in the number of workers aged 55 to 64 years. The region is also expected to lose teenaged workers and entry-level workers in the next decade. However, the region is expected to see gains in the number of 25 to 54 year olds. Due to the growth, the 25 to 54 year old age group will make up about 58 percent of the total workforce in 2030, up from 54.5 percent in 2020. Either way, these long-term declines will likely lead to a tight labor market in the future, with employers needing to respond to the changing labor force availability in the region.

Table 5. Southwest Minnesota Labor Force Projections

	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	*2020-2030 Change*	
			Numeric	*Percent*
16 to 19 years	12,101	10,634	*-1,467*	*-12.1%*
20 to 24 years	27,614	26,655	*-960*	*-3.5%*
25 to 44 years	79,363	81,355	*+1,992*	*+2.5%*
45 to 54 years	35,870	36,352	*+482*	*+1.3%*
55 to 64 years	40,887	30,030	*-10,857*	*-26.6%*
65 to 74 years	14,207	15,973	*+1,766*	*+12.4%*
75 years & over	2,470	3,384	*+915*	*+37.0%*
Total Labor Force	**212,512**	**204,382**	***-8,130***	***-3.8%***

Source: calculated from MN State Demographic Center projections, and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With 68 percent of the working age population aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Southwest Minnesota had slightly lower labor force participation rates than the state's 69.9 percent rate. However, the region actually had higher labor force participation rates than the state in all but two age groups, but the overall rate was lower because a higher percentage of the region's labor force was older (Table 6).

In contrast, the region had lower participation rates than the state for every race group; and also had large unemployment rate disparities for minorities. Almost 20 percent of Black or African American workers were unemployed, compared to 3.2 percent of white workers. The region also had 10,959 workers with disabilities in the labor force, with higher participation rates in the region. Unemployment rates were highest for youth, minorities, and workers with disabilities.

Table 6. Southwest Minnesota Employment Characteristics, 2017

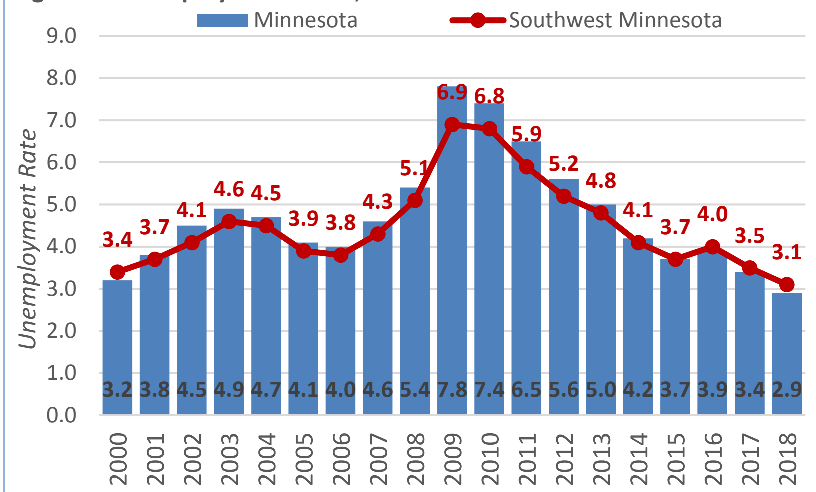
	Southwest Minnesota			Minnesota	
Age Group	Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	**212,832**	**68.0%**	**3.8%**	**69.9%**	**4.3%**
16 to 19 years	12,651	56.9%	11.8%	52.6%	12.8%
20 to 24 years	25,077	83.1%	5.6%	84.2%	7.1%
25 to 44 years	78,693	88.9%	3.4%	88.4%	3.9%
45 to 54 years	41,618	86.3%	2.5%	87.2%	3.0%
55 to 64 years	41,132	76.8%	2.6%	72.5%	3.2%
65 to 74 years	11,255	31.9%	2.0%	27.4%	2.7%
75 years & over	2,358	6.8%	1.6%	6.1%	2.8%
Employment Characteristics by Gender					
Male	113,133	72.8%	4.2%	73.7%	4.8%
Female	99,647	63.3%	3.2%	66.1%	3.8%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	199,618	68.0%	3.2%	69.7%	3.6%
Black or African American	3,303	66.5%	19.4%	69.8%	11.0%
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,028	57.9%	6.6%	58.6%	13.3%
Asian or Other Pacific Islanders	3,410	66.6%	5.6%	71.1%	5.2%
Some Other Race	3,476	73.5%	11.5%	77.2%	7.5%
Two or More Races	1,954	69.9%	10.1%	72.5%	9.1%
Hispanic or Latino	11,772	74.0%	9.0%	76.2%	7.2%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	10,959	55.2%	8.6%	52.3%	9.5%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population 25 to 64 years	161,437	84.8%	2.8%	84.1%	3.5%
Less than H.S. Diploma	9,494	68.8%	3.5%	65.4%	4.9%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	47,576	81.4%	2.2%	78.7%	2.9%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	63,243	87.4%	2.5%	85.2%	3.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	41,129	90.1%	1.3%	89.6%	2.1%

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Up until 2016, Southwest Minnesota had consistently reported slightly lower unemployment rates than Minnesota and the nation, regardless of the state of the economy. According to [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](), the region's unemployment rate hovered just below the state rate from 2002 to 2008, before rising to almost 7 percent in 2009 and 2010, then dropping back to prerecession levels in 2014 and 2015, when it matched the state rate. Since then, Southwest Minnesota's unemployment rate has been just above the state rate, while hovering around 3 percent (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Unemployment Rates, 2000-2018



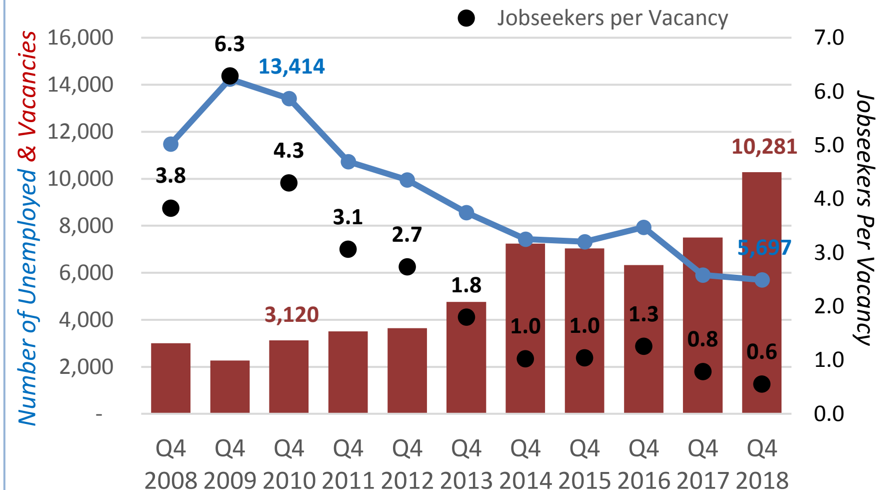
Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY

As the number of available workers has declined and the economy continues to recover, the region's labor market has tightened. One clear demonstration of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which now stands at 0.6-to-1 in Southwest Minnesota.

According to recent job vacancy survey results, there were 10,281 openings reported by employers compared to 5,697 unemployed jobseekers in the region. The ratio climbed as high as 6.3 during the recession in 2009 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Jobseekers Per Vacancy, 2008-2018



Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, LAUS program

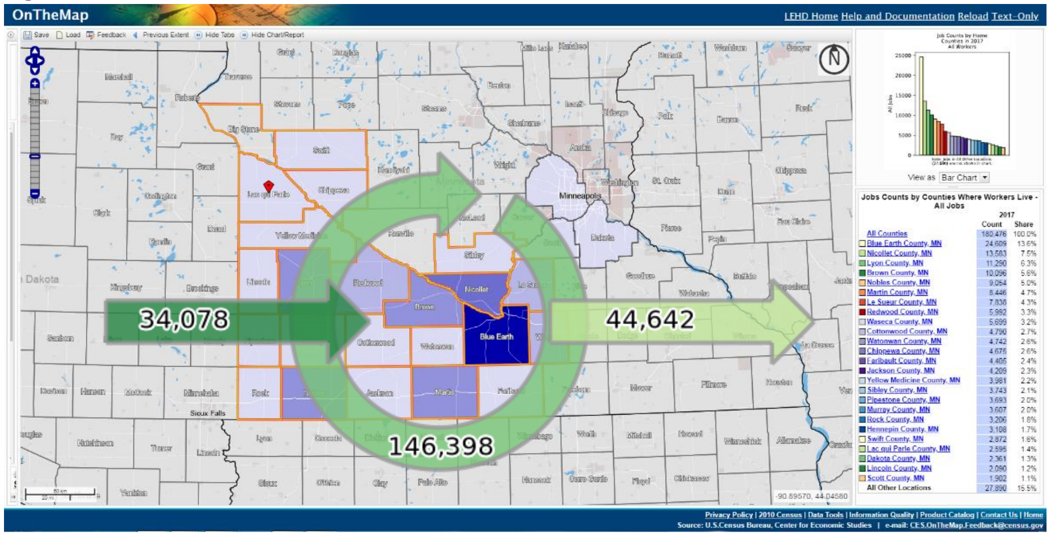
COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED

According to commuting data from the [U.S. Census Bureau](), the vast majority – about 81 percent – of workers who live in the region also work within the region. However, Southwest Minnesota is a net exporter of labor, having slightly more workers than available jobs. In sum, 146,398 workers both lived and worked in Southwest Minnesota in 2017, while another 34,078 workers drove into the region for work, compared to 44,642 workers who lived in the region but drove to surrounding counties for work (Table 7 and Figure 10).

Table 7. Southwest Minnesota Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs), 2017	2017	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	180,476	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	34,078	18.9%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	146,398	81.1%
Living in the Selection Area	191,040	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	44,642	23.4%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	146,398	76.6%

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap]()

Figure 10. Southwest Minnesota Labor and Commute Shed, 2017



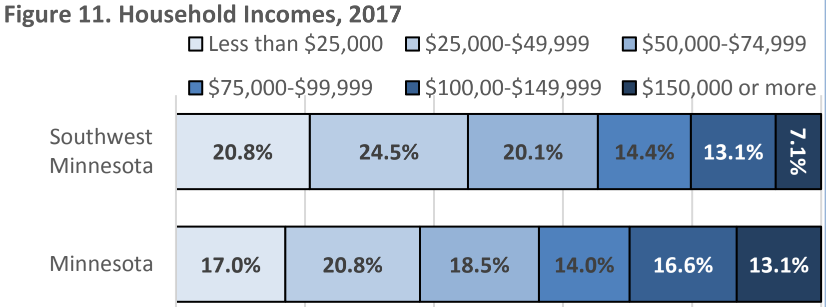
Home to Mankato, Blue Earth County is the largest regional employment center, and was the biggest draw for workers, followed by Lyon, Nicollet, Brown, Nobles, Martin, Le Sueur, Waseca, and Redwood County. Employers in the region both lose and draw workers from the Twin Cities metro area, as well as Minnehaha County in South Dakota, which includes Sioux Falls. More workers commute out of the region than commute in (Figure 10).

INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes were significantly lower in Southwest Minnesota than the rest of the state. The median household income in Southwest was $55,181 in 2017, compared to $65,699 in Minnesota. Just under half (45.3%) of the households in the region had incomes below $50,000 in 2017, compared to 37.8 percent of households statewide Another 34.5 percent earned between $50,000 and $100,000, and 20.2 percent earned over $100,000 per year (Figure 11).

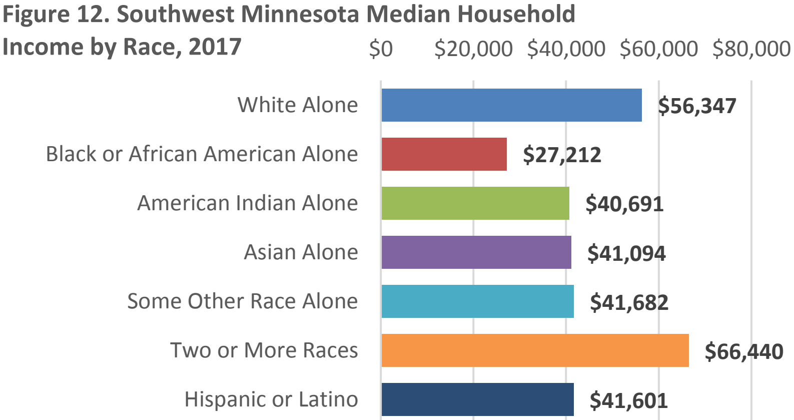
Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Median household incomes varied by race or origin in the region. Black or African American households reported the lowest incomes in Southwest Minnesota, with a median income that was nearly $30,000 lower than for white households. With the exception of households of two or more races, all of the other race and origin groups had median incomes around $41,000 per year, which was about $15,000 lower than the median household income for whites (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Southwest Minnesota Median Household Income by Race, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

COST OF LIVING

According to DEED's Cost of Living tool, the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) was $55,548 in 2018. The cost of living for a similar family in Southwest Minnesota was $44,952 – which was the lowest of the 6 planning regions in the state. The highest monthly costs were for transportation, food, and housing; though the region's housing, child care, taxes, and transportation costs were significantly lower than the rest of the state. In order to meet the basic cost of living for the region, the workers in the family scenario described would need to earn $14.41 per hour over the course of 60 hours per work week.

DEED's Cost of Living tool provides different estimates for household compositions including single people, partnered couples, and up to 4 children. For a single person living alone and working full-time, the estimated yearly cost in Southwest would be $26,724, which would require an hourly wage of $12.85 to meet the basic needs standard of living (Table 8). That was also the lowest cost of living in the state.

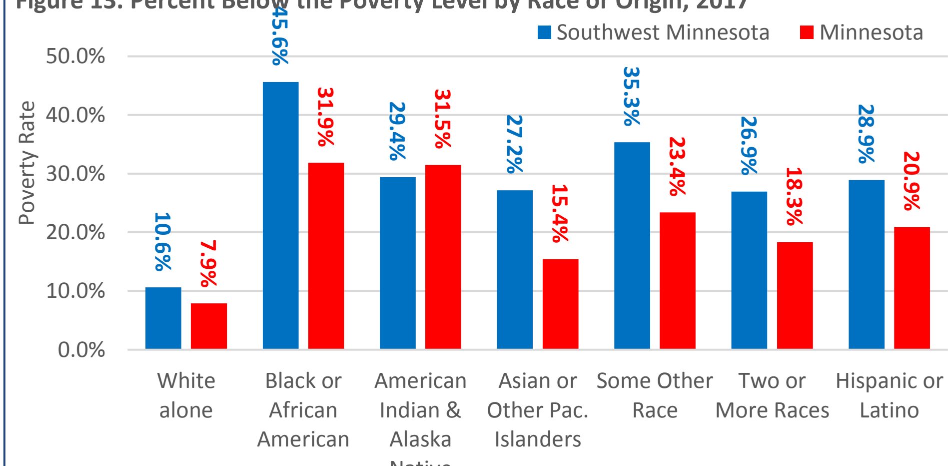
Table 8. Southwest Minnesota Cost of Living, 2018

Family Composition	Number of Workers	Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
				Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Trans-portation	Other	Taxes
Southwest Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$26,724	$12.85	$0	$332	$138	$577	$590	$279	$311
Single, 1 child	1 FT	$39,360	$18.92	$456	$490	$338	$750	$594	$381	$271
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$44,952**	**$14.41**	**$228**	**$759**	**$496**	**$750**	**$681**	**$463**	**$369**
2 parents, 2 children	2 FT	$62,784	$15.09	$770	$990	$504	$1,021	$716	$617	$614
State of Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$30,900	$14.86	$0	$335	$137	$759	$629	$336	$379
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$55,548**	**$17.80**	**$511**	**$764**	**$484**	**$986**	**$729**	**$537**	**$618**

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

Overall, Southwest Minnesota's poverty rate was 12.3 percent, which was just above the statewide rate of 10.5 percent. Like incomes, poverty levels varied widely by race and origin. It was estimated that over 45 percent of the region's Black or African American population was below the poverty level in 2017, compared to just 10.6 percent of the white population. Likewise, poverty levels hovered around 30 percent for American Indians, people of some other race, and people of Hispanic or Latino origin. About 27 percent of Asian residents and people of two or more races were below the poverty level in 2017. In almost all cases, the region's poverty rate was higher than the state's poverty rate, a reflection of the lower household incomes as noted above (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent Below the Poverty Level by Race or Origin, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Southwest Minnesota was $18.02 in the first quarter of 2019, which was the lowest wage level of the six planning regions in the state. Southwest's median wage was $2.93 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling 86 percent of the statewide wage rate, and $4.76 below the median hourly wage in the Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to nearly $10,000 per year for a full-time worker. At $17.66, EDR 8 had the lowest median wage in the region, just below EDR 6W at $18.01, and well below EDR 9 at $18.24 (Table 9).

Table 9. Occupational Employment Statistics by Region, 1st Qtr. 2019	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
Central Minnesota	$18.94	286,270
Twin Cities Metro Area	$22.78	1,793,870
Northeast Minnesota	$18.57	144,430
Northwest Minnesota	$18.09	223,830
Southeast Minnesota	$19.28	241,540
Southwest Minnesota	**$18.02**	**176,430**
EDR 6W - Upper MN Valley	$18.01	17,080
EDR 8 - Southwest	$17.66	55,840
EDR 9 - South Central	$18.24	103,510
State of Minnesota	**$20.95**	**2,867,700**

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics

Based on location quotient, Southwest Minnesota stands out for having higher concentrations of farming, production, healthcare support, transportation and material moving, installation, maintenance, and repair, and education, training, and library workers than the state. The largest occupations in the region include office and administrative support, production, sales and related, and food preparation and serving positions. Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in food prep and serving, building, grounds cleaning and maintenance, sales and related, personal care and service, and healthcare support, which tend to have lower educational and training requirements. For the most part, the gap in pay between Southwest Minnesota and the state is also much lower in these jobs (Table 10).

Table 10. Southwest Minnesota Occupational Employment Statistics, 1st Qtr. 2019	Southwest Minnesota				State of Minnesota		
	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	*Share of Total Employment*	*Location Quotient*	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Statewide Employment	*Share of Total Employment*
Total, All Occupations	**$18.02**	**176,430**	***100.0%***	***1.0***	**$20.95**	**2,867,700**	***100.0%***
Office & Administrative Support	$17.40	24,540	*13.9%*	*1.0*	$19.10	405,970	*14.2%*
Production	$17.67	18,090	*10.3%*	*1.4*	$18.68	214,230	*7.5%*
Sales & Related	$13.75	16,490	*9.3%*	*1.0*	$14.97	277,070	*9.7%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	$11.38	16,190	*9.2%*	*1.1*	$11.90	242,170	*8.4%*
Transportation & Material Moving	$18.02	14,210	*8.1%*	*1.3*	$18.48	177,580	*6.2%*
Education, Training & Library	$21.30	12,480	*7.1%*	*1.2*	$24.22	166,300	*5.8%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	$29.71	10,610	*6.0%*	*0.9*	$35.79	190,720	*6.7%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	$21.30	8,200	*4.6%*	*1.3*	$23.13	100,030	*3.5%*
Management	$40.34	8,030	*4.6%*	*0.8*	$51.26	171,250	*6.0%*
Personal Care & Service	$12.78	7,300	*4.1%*	*0.8*	$12.90	144,070	*5.0%*
Healthcare Support	$14.62	7,080	*4.0%*	*1.4*	$16.82	83,380	*2.9%*
Construction & Extraction	$23.43	7,000	*4.0%*	*1.1*	$28.07	100,510	*3.5%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	$13.17	5,340	*3.0%*	*1.0*	$14.97	85,820	*3.0%*
Business & Financial Operations	$28.58	5,220	*3.0%*	*0.5*	$33.03	164,510	*5.7%*
Community & Social Service	$21.71	4,180	*2.4%*	*1.2*	$22.73	57,870	*2.0%*
Protective Service	$19.11	2,830	*1.6%*	*1.0*	$21.52	44,390	*1.5%*
Architecture & Engineering	$31.43	2,400	*1.4%*	*0.7*	$37.53	56,070	*2.0%*
Computer & Mathematical	$30.61	2,000	*1.1%*	*0.3*	$40.96	96,020	*3.3%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	$19.36	1,450	*0.8%*	*0.6*	$24.35	39,670	*1.4%*
Life, Physical & Social Science	$28.45	1,160	*0.7%*	*0.7*	$33.54	26,210	*0.9%*
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	$15.01	920	*0.5%*	*3.8*	$16.51	3,980	*0.1%*
Legal	$36.11	720	*0.4%*	*0.6*	$36.50	19,870	*0.7%*

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2019

In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in management, legal, architecture and engineering, computer and mathematical, healthcare practitioners, business and financial operations, and life, physical, and social science occupations, which all need higher levels of education and experience, including many that require postsecondary training. The pay gaps between the region and state are much bigger in these occupations.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in Southwest Minnesota reported 10,281 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2018, which was an increase of nearly 3,000 additional openings compared to the past year, and the second highest number ever reported in the region. The median hourly wage offer was $13.63 across all occupations, but ranged from a low of $10.00 per hour for protective service workers, to more than $25 per hour or more for management, computer and mathematical, and business and financial operations occupations. Reflecting changing demand for occupations and for the workers to fill the openings, the median wage offer increased almost $3.50 compared to the fourth quarter of 2013, a 34 percent increase.

The largest number of vacancies were in personal care and service occupations, followed by food preparation and serving, production, transportation and material moving, protective service, and health care. Almost 60 percent of the vacancies in the region were in these six occupational groups. Overall, 40 percent of the openings were part-time, 28 percent required postsecondary education, and 30 percent required a year or more of experience (Table 11). In sum, educational requirements in the region had been stable or declining over the past 5 years, while work experience requirements were rising.

Table 11. Southwest Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, 4th Qtr. 2018

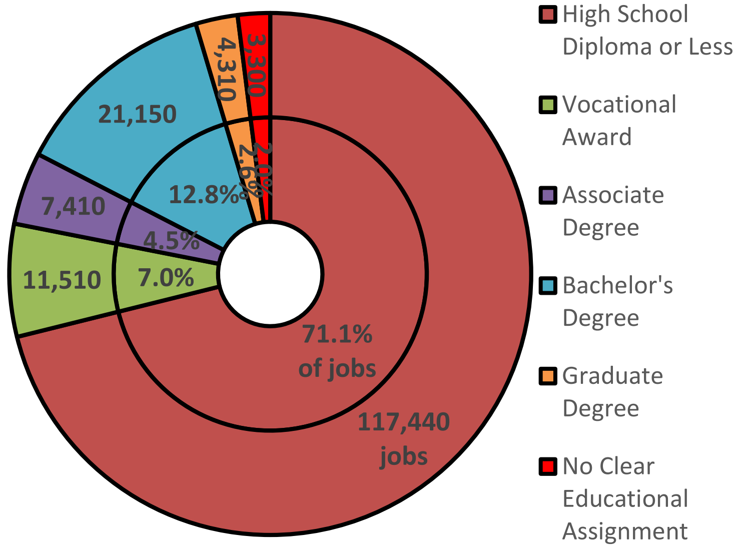
	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Experience	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer
Total, All Occupations	**10,281**	**40%**	**6%**	**28%**	**30%**	**42%**	**$13.63**
Personal Care & Service	1,326	76%	0%	6%	3%	65%	$11.98
Food Preparation & Serving Related	1,300	59%	2%	14%	14%	2%	$10.95
Production	996	6%	1%	9%	18%	3%	$14.00
Transportation & Material Moving	911	28%	17%	9%	61%	81%	$19.22
Protective Service	817	99%	0%	1%	2%	99%	$9.98
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	790	41%	0%	96%	43%	96%	$22.70
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	611	14%	8%	3%	7%	10%	$12.43
Sales & Related	608	39%	3%	42%	41%	15%	$13.73
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	421	4%	0%	50%	75%	29%	$17.92
Office & Administrative Support	376	30%	4%	18%	47%	5%	$14.01
Construction & Extraction	323	1%	47%	13%	14%	20%	$16.52
Healthcare Support	296	51%	0%	24%	2%	63%	$12.76
Education, Training & Library	281	51%	52%	98%	79%	92%	$14.28
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	227	0%	0%	36%	40%	9%	$14.92
Management	202	0%	0%	95%	99%	57%	$28.66
Business & Financial Operations	155	3%	0%	77%	96%	17%	$26.08
Architecture & Engineering	151	2%	2%	73%	79%	34%	$24.23
Community & Social Service	80	20%	0%	57%	81%	63%	$19.32
Computer & Mathematical	70	23%	0%	81%	76%	11%	$26.47
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	19	9%	0%	90%	74%	5%	$18.48

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, 4th Qtr. 2018

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Similar to Job Vacancy Survey results, data from DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program shows that only about 30 percent of jobs in the region require postsecondary education for entry. The other 70 percent can be started with a high school diploma or less and some amount of on-the-job training (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Southwest Minnesota Share of Jobs by Educational Requirements, 2019



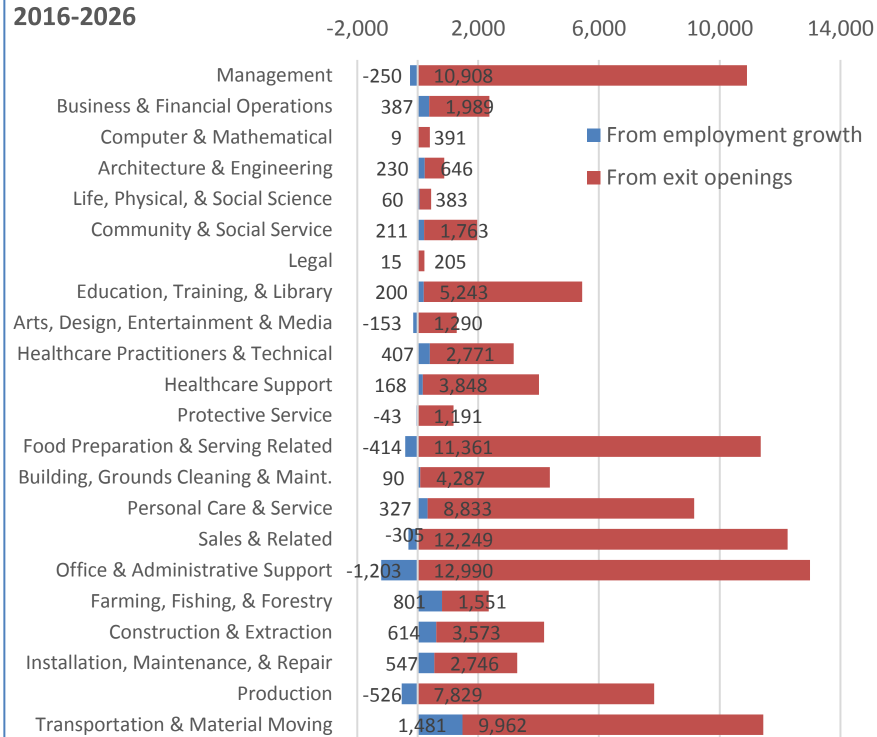
Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics

Certain careers – such as dentists, lawyers, and teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including cost estimators, sales representatives, and correctional officers – do not. College is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to fields that would otherwise be closed, such as nursing or engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace. While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between $14,500 and almost $50,000 per year in Minnesota. For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to different jobs that earn different amounts of money. Students and jobseekers can use labor market data to make more informed career decisions.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Overall, the 23-county Southwest Minnesota planning area is projected to grow 0.9 percent from 2016 to 2026, a gain of just 1,885 new jobs. That is the slowest of the 6 planning regions in the state. In addition, the region is also expected to need 103,553 replacement openings to fill jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changers. Transportation and material moving, farming, construction and extraction; installation, maintenance, and repair; and healthcare support and practitioners are expected to see the most new growth, but every occupational group will show some future demand either through new jobs or replacement openings (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Southwest Minnesota Employment Projections, 2016-2026



Source: DEED 2016-2026 Employment Outlook

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's Occupations in Demand tool, there are well over 200 occupations showing relatively high demand in the region, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries. For example, nursing assistants, personal care aides, teachers, mechanics and repair workers, and heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers are among the top occupations in demand based on the consistent need for workers in these fields. Many of the jobs are concentrated in manufacturing, health care, transportation, and other related industries (Table 12).

Table 12. Southwest Minnesota Occupations in Demand (with Median Annual Wage), 2019

Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College, Vocational Training, or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Personal Care Aides ($26,919)	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers ($44,307)	Registered Nurses ($65,723)	Elementary School Teachers ($49,919)
Combined Food Prep & Serving Workers ($23,754)	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers ($40,150)	Nursing Assistants ($30,046)	Secondary School Teachers ($51,607)
Cashiers ($23,665)	Childcare Workers ($23,494)	Machinists ($41,453)	Agriculture & Food Science Technicians ($42,140)
Janitors & Cleaners ($27,891)	Office Clerks, General ($34,602)	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses ($45,512)	Physician Assistants ($107,805)
Retail Salespersons ($25,408)	Maintenance & Repair Workers ($40,722)	Automotive Service Techs. & Mechanics ($36,107)	Industrial Engineers ($76,019)
Home Health Aides ($27,561)	Teacher Assistants ($28,683)	Industrial Machinery Mechanics ($47,807)	Accountants & Auditors ($62,792)
Waiters & Waitresses ($21,617)	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants ($38,419)	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers ($58,377)	Mental Health Counselors ($74,423)
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers ($31,014)	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Mfg. ($62,712)	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics ($36,520)	Mechanical Engineers ($78,526)
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers ($26,428)	Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers ($41,595)	Industrial Engineering Technicians ($48,612)	Financial Managers ($102,734)
Cooks, Restaurant ($24,812)	First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep & Serving Workers ($33,357)	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrig. Mechanics ($47,753)	Human Resources Specialists ($53,909)

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

ECONOMY

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Southwest Minnesota was home to 12,307 business establishments providing an average of 177,006 covered jobs through 2018, with a total payroll of just under $7.4 billion. That was about 6.1 percent of total employment in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were $41,780 in the region, which was over $16,000 lower than the state's average annual wage (Table 13).

Table 13. Southwest Industry Employment Statistics, 2018

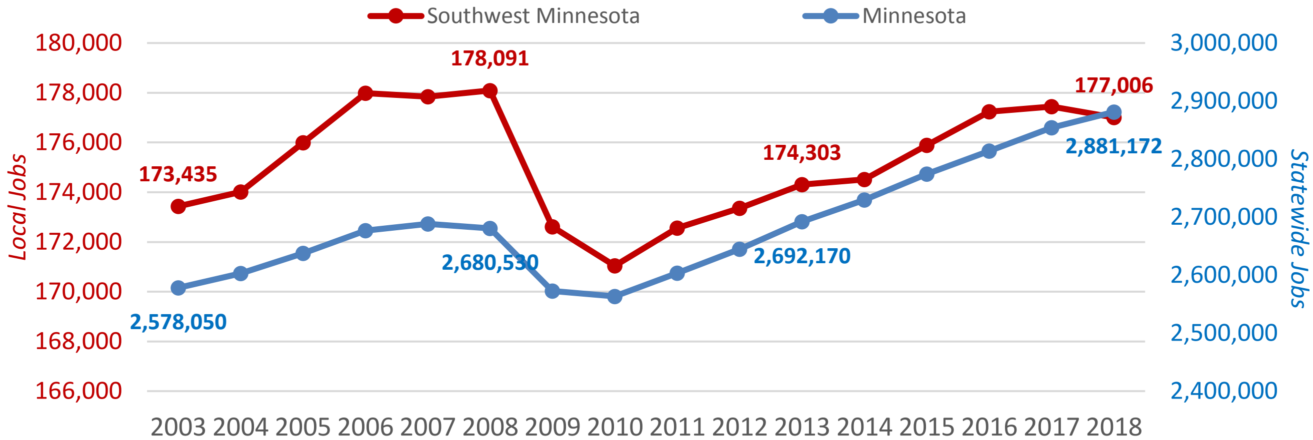
Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Average Annual Wage	2013-2018 Change in Jobs	2013-2018 Percent Change	2017-2018 Change in Jobs	2017-2018 Percent Change
Southwest Minnesota	**12,307**	**177,006**	**$7,395,247,152**	**$41,780**	***+2,703***	***+1.6%***	***-437***	***-0.2%***
Region 6W	1,562	17,414	$685,651,639	$39,374	*-90*	*-0.5%*	*+65*	*+0.4%*
Region 8	3,996	53,633	$2,165,862,749	$40,383	*-688*	*-1.3%*	*-127*	*-0.2%*
Region 9	6,749	105,959	$4,543,732,764	$42,882	*+3,481*	*+3.4%*	*-374*	*-0.4%*
Minnesota	**175,424**	**2,881,172**	**$167,122,456,472**	**$58,005**	***+189,002***	***+7.0%***	***+27,207***	***+1.0%***

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)

With 105,959 jobs at 6,749 business establishments, EDR 9 accounts for about 60 percent of total employment in the Southwest Minnesota planning region. EDR 9 also provided all of the region's job growth during the recovery from 2013 to 2018, adding 3,481 net new jobs. In contrast, EDR 6W had the smallest number of firms and jobs, with 17,414 jobs at 1,562 firms, and saw a loss of 90 jobs in the past five years. EDR 8 had 3,996 establishments providing 53,633 jobs in 2018, despite a loss of 688 jobs since 2013. EDR 9 had the highest average annual wages at $42,882, though that was still over $15,000 below the state average (Table 13).

Southwest Minnesota has seen employment ups and downs over the past 15 years, ending 2018 with about 3,600 more jobs than it had in 2003. The region entered the recession later than the state, still experiencing job growth through 2008, before suffering severe declines in 2009 and 2010. Since then, Southwest Minnesota has recovered much more slowly than the state, which gained jobs at a 7.0 percent clip from 2013 to 2018, compared to a 1.6 percent increase in the region. Southwest reached a peak of 178,091 jobs in 2008, then hit a low of 171,042 jobs in 2010, and has still not recovered all of the jobs lost during the recession (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Industry Employment Statistics, 2003-2018



Source: DEED QCEW program

After gaining more than 1,000 jobs in the past 5 years, the largest industry in Southwest Minnesota is now health care and social assistance, with 31,321 jobs at 1,272 firms. Due to the region's older population, the largest sector was nursing and residential care facilities with 10,596 jobs, followed by ambulatory health care services with 8,032 jobs, hospitals with 7,291 jobs, and social assistance, with 5,401 jobs.

With 31,136 jobs at 603 firms, manufacturing is now the second largest employing industry, accounting for 17.6 percent of total jobs in the region. That is 6 percent higher than the state's concentration of employment in manufacturing. At $51,737 in 2018, average annual wages were nearly $10,000 higher in manufacturing than the total of all industries. Retail trade is the third largest industry, with 19,882 jobs at 1,520 establishments, while the closely related accommodation and food services industry was fifth largest with 12,083 jobs at 870 firms, and arts, entertainment and recreation offered 1,965 jobs. Combined these three industries offer nearly one in every five jobs in the region, but annual wages are relatively low in these service-providing industries.

With 16,278 jobs accounting for 9.2 percent of total jobs, the region has a higher concentration of employment in educational services than the state. Other important industries include public administration, construction, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, agriculture, other services, professional and technical services, and administrative support and waste management services. Ten of the 20 main industries in the region added jobs since 2013, with huge gains occurring in health care and social assistance, transportation and warehousing, educational services, construction, agriculture, and public administration. In contrast, the region saw significant job declines in management of companies, accommodation and food services, and retail trade (Table 14).

Table 14. Southwest Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2018								
	2018 Annual Data			Avg.	*2013-2018*		*2017-2018*	
NAICS Industry Title	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll ($1,000s)	Annual Wage	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*
Total, All Industries	**12,307**	**177,006**	**$7,395,247**	**$41,780**	***+2,703***	***+1.6%***	***-437***	***-0.2%***
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,272	31,321	$1,297,504	$41,426	*+1,031*	*+3.4%*	*+233*	*+0.7%*
Manufacturing	603	31,136	$1,610,892	$51,737	*-60*	*-0.2%*	*-455*	*-1.4%*
Retail Trade	1,520	19,882	$486,015	$24,445	*-415*	*-2.0%*	*-485*	*-2.4%*
Educational Services	240	16,278	$682,193	$41,909	*+956*	*+6.2%*	*+139*	*+0.9%*
Accommodation & Food Services	870	12,083	$165,537	$13,700	*-691*	*-5.4%*	*-96*	*-0.8%*
Public Administration	588	10,035	$438,099	$43,657	*+471*	*+4.9%*	*+69*	*+0.7%*
Construction	1,525	8,181	$431,353	$52,726	*+568*	*+7.5%*	*-78*	*-0.9%*
Wholesale Trade	655	8,000	$470,985	$58,873	*+175*	*+2.2%*	*+242*	*+3.1%*
Transportation & Warehousing	750	7,172	$275,257	$38,379	*+1,222*	*+20.5%*	*+358*	*+5.3%*
Finance & Insurance	719	6,009	$371,086	$61,755	*+39*	*+0.7%*	*-68*	*-1.1%*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	658	5,333	$230,166	$43,159	*+513*	*+10.6%*	*-238*	*-4.3%*
Other Services	1,036	4,933	$142,770	$28,942	*-41*	*-0.8%*	*+99*	*+2.0%*
Professional & Technical Services	607	3,975	$228,966	$57,602	*-20*	*-0.5%*	*-65*	*-1.6%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	381	3,937	$135,826	$34,500	*-351*	*-8.2%*	*-42*	*-1.1%*
Information	213	2,624	$127,539	$48,605	*-249*	*-8.7%*	*-151*	*-5.4%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	236	1,965	$32,897	$16,742	*+26*	*+1.3%*	*-16*	*-0.8%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	284	1,430	$39,943	$27,932	*+173*	*+13.8%*	*+178*	*+14.2%*
Management of Companies	48	1,408	$116,953	$83,063	*-550*	*-28.1%*	*-36*	*-2.5%*
Utilities	81	964	$87,255	$90,514	*-72*	*-6.9%*	*-14*	*-1.4%*
Mining	25	337	$24,011	$71,248	*-19*	*-5.3%*	*-9*	*-2.6%*
Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)								

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, the workforce in the region was aging over the past 10 years. Nearly one-quarter (24.8%) of workers in the region were 55 years or older, compared to 21.5 percent statewide and just 18.4 percent in the region one decade earlier. In contrast, the percentage of teenaged workers was falling, and while wages were going up for younger workers, the number of hours worked was going down (Table 15).

As noted above, wages were climbing across the board for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market. While wages were still lowest for the youngest and oldest workers who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-fulltime jobs in industries like retail trade and accommodation and food services, these two age groups enjoyed the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2008 to 2018. Wages were highest for workers between 45 and 64 years of age, and males worked more hours than females, though the gap was narrowing.

Table 15. Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries, 2008-2018								
Southwest Minnesota	**Percentage of Workers**		***Percent of Workers, Minnesota***		**Median Hourly Wage**		**Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.)**	
	2018	**2008**	***2018***	***2008***	**2018**	**2008**	**2018**	**2008**
Total, all ages	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	$16.49	$12.75	401	402
19 years & under	7.6%	9.4%	6.1%	7.5%	$10.40	$7.39	105	109
20 to 24 years	11.3%	12.5%	10.3%	11.6%	$13.11	$10.15	252	260
25 to 44 years	39.1%	37.6%	42.9%	42.7%	$18.67	$14.44	462	470
45 to 54 years	17.3%	22.1%	19.1%	22.5%	$20.23	$15.60	480	480
55 to 64 years	18.2%	13.8%	16.7%	12.6%	$19.25	$15.00	480	465
65 years & over	6.6%	4.6%	4.8%	3.1%	$14.76	$10.97	207	186
Male	47.8%	47.1%	49.1%	49.0%	$18.91	$14.65	469	478
Female	52.2%	52.9%	50.9%	51.0%	$15.38	$11.71	365	350
Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics								

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, Southwest is projected to grow just 0.9 percent from 2016 to 2026, a gain of 1,885 new jobs, which would make it the slowest growing region in the state. Unlike any other region, the largest and fastest growing industry is expected to be agriculture, which is projected to add over 1,425 jobs from 2016 to 2026. Likewise, health care and social assistance is expected to add over 1,330 jobs, a 4.5 percent increase. The region is also expected to see significant job growth in transportation and warehousing, construction, and professional and technical services. In contrast, retail trade, other services, manufacturing, accommodation and food services, information, and arts and recreation are all expected to suffer job cuts in the next decade (Table 16).

Table 16. Southwest Minnesota Industry Projections, 2016-2026

Industry	Estimated Employment 2016	Projected Employment 2026	*Percent Change 2016-2026*	*Numeric Change 2016-2026*
Total, All Industries	**211,618**	**213,503**	***+0.9%***	***+1,885***
Health Care & Social Assistance	29,857	31,196	*+4.5%*	*+1,339*
Manufacturing	31,264	31,145	*-0.4%*	*-119*
Retail Trade	20,647	19,748	*-4.4%*	*-899*
Educational Services	16,891	16,886	*0.0%*	*-5*
Public Administration	13,150	13,136	*-0.1%*	*-14*
Accommodation & Food Services	12,207	11,965	*-2.0%*	*-242*
Construction	7,995	8,408	*+5.2%*	*+413*
Wholesale Trade	8,272	8,323	*+0.6%*	*+51*
Transportation & Warehousing	7,176	8,023	*+11.8%*	*+847*
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	7,632	7,142	*-6.4%*	*-490*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	5,599	7,026	*+25.5%*	*+1,427*
Finance & Insurance	6,314	6,369	*+0.9%*	*+55*
Professional & Technical Services	4,296	4,600	*+7.1%*	*+304*
Administrative & Waste Services	4,163	4,277	*+2.7%*	*+114*
Information	2,746	2,569	*-6.4%*	*-177*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	2,544	2,402	*-5.6%*	*-142*
Management of Companies	1,563	1,541	*-1.4%*	*-22*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,232	1,269	*+3.0%*	*+37*
Utilities	755	831	*+10.1%*	*+76*
Mining	349	312	*-10.6%*	*-37*

Source: DEED 2016-2026 Employment Outlook

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Southwest Minnesota was home to 27,444 self-employed businesses or “nonemployers” in 2017, which are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as “businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax, originating from tax return information of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).” Southwest Minnesota saw a small decline in nonemployers over the past decade. In sum, the region lost 77 nonemployers from 2007 to 2017, a -0.3 percent decrease. However, Region 9 did see an increase due to population and economic growth. In sum, these nonemployers generated sales receipts of over $1.2 billion in 2017 (Table 17).

Table 17. Nonemployer Statistics, 2017

	2017		*2007-2017*	
	Number of Firms	Receipts ($1,000s)	*Change in Firms*	*Percent Change*
Southwest Minnesota	**27,444**	**$1,243,769**	***-77***	***-0.3%***
Region 6W	3,296	$138,721	*-97*	*-2.9%*
Region 8	8,405	$392,408	*-52*	*-0.6%*
Region 9	15,743	$712,640	*+72*	*+0.5%*
Minnesota	**409,860**	**$19,370,490**	***+22,876***	***+5.9%***

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Like other parts of Greater Minnesota, agriculture is also a key industry in Southwest Minnesota, including 18,319 farms producing just under $7.8 billion in the market value of products sold in 2017 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Several of the highest ranked agriculture counties in the state are in Southwest Minnesota, including Martin (#2), Nobles (#4), Blue Earth (#5), Redwood (#6), and Rock (#9). Like the state, the number of farms in the region declined over the past 5 years, but Southwest Minnesota still accounts for 26.6 percent of the farms in the state (Table 18).

Table 18. Census of Agriculture, 2017

	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	*State Rank*
Southwest Minnesota	**18,319**	**$7,758,272,000**	***1***
Region 6W	3,526	$1,185,918,000	*8*
Region 8	7,287	$3,350,135,000	*1*
Region 9	7,506	$3,222,219,000	*2*
Minnesota	**68,822**	**$18,395,390,000**	

Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats by contacting Luke Greiner at 320-308-5378 or at luke.greiner@state.mn.us or Mark Schultz at 507-205-6068 or at mark.schultz@state.mn.us