

Chapter Three



New building being constructed in Willard's industrial park

Economic Development

Local and Regional Economy

An analysis of local and regional economies provides an idea of economic strengths and weaknesses. This analysis also helps to identify opportunities that Huron County can capitalize on. Land use patterns and economic development are tied together in many ways. Businesses and manufacturers need land to build and grow. They have specific infrastructure needs that local communities have to plan for and manage. Through careful planning, Huron County can prepare for future growth in a way that does not impose a financial burden to residents.

Income Data

The Huron County per capita income in 2003 was \$24,495. This was 88 percent of the State average, (\$27,977), and 82 percent of the national average, (\$29,469). In 1994, the per capita income in Huron County was \$19,266. The average annual growth rate in per capita personal income in Huron County was 3.5 percent compared to 4.1 percent for the State and 4.2 percent for the nation over the same time period.¹

The median household income according to the 2000 census was \$40,588. While 10.6 % of the persons in Ohio were living in poverty, 8.5 of the persons in Huron County were living in poverty.²

Human Resources and Employment Trends

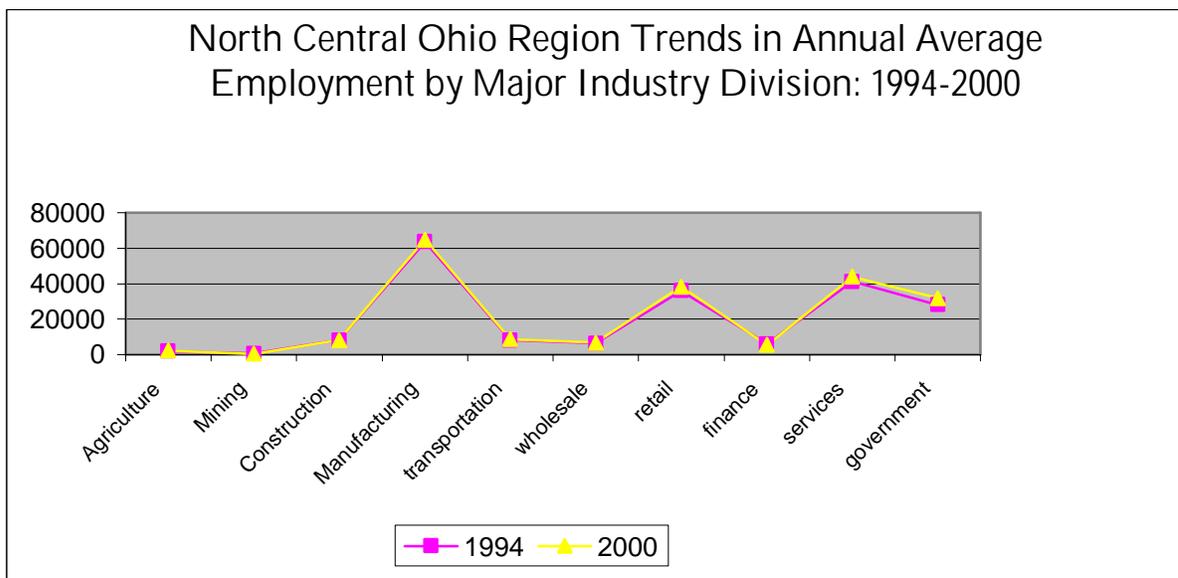
When looking at trends in employment it was very difficult to obtain specific data on Huron County that was current. The most current information although very minimal was from 2004. In an attempt to provide some comparative analysis, data is provided from Ohio, the north central region of the state and the county.

¹ Per capita personal income is the annual total personal income of residents divided by resident population.

² Ibid.

In the North Central Region of Ohio manufacturing is the largest sector for employment. Nearly one third of non-farm wage and salary employment (30.7%) is derived from manufacturing. Following manufacturing is employment in the service sector at 20.7%. Wages in these two sectors ranged from \$737 - \$923/week for manufacturing jobs to \$175 - \$340/ week for service-sector jobs.³ Illustration 3-1 provides a breakdown of the annual average employed in the major employment categories from 1994 to 2000.

Illustration 3-1



Source: Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, Demographic, Labor Force and Industry Trends

The most recent data available on Huron County employment trends provided by the Ohio Department of Development is available for the year 2003. The trends in average annual employment and breakdown of employment categories are shown in Table 3-1. As can be seen, manufacturing is the largest employer followed by Government. "NA" in Table I indicates that no data was available for that particular employment category.

³ Ohio Job and Family Services, *Demographic, Labor Force, and Industry Trends*, June 2002.

Table 3-1: Employed Persons 16 and over by Industry 2003

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	630
Mining	NA
Utilities	NA
Construction	1,511
Manufacturing	8,493
Wholesale trade	NA
Retail trade	2,417
Transportation and warehousing	856
Information	359
Finance and insurance	412
Real estate and rental and leasing	147
Professional and technical services	502
Management of companies and enterprises	64
Administrative and waste services	485
Educational services	NA
Health care and social assistance	NA
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	135
Accommodation and food services	1,866
Other services, except public administration	751
State and Local Government	2,839
Federal Government	<u>146</u>
Total	21,139

Source: State of Ohio, Department of Development

Data were also obtained by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. What follows in Table 3-2 is a comparison of data sets by employment categories for the State of Ohio and the North Central Region of Ohio that signifies the potential job growth in each category as specified. The most current data available from this source were from 2004. It is important to note that Table 3-1 was derived from information collected from various U.S. Census reports while the data that follows was obtain by surveys of existing employers.

Table 3-2: Employment Projections by Category
Ohio and North Central Region

	Ohio 2005-2007	Region 2002- 20012
Total Employment, All Jobs	0.5	0.8
Goods-Producing	-0.8	0.0
Natural Resources and Mining	-0.5	-0.6
Construction	0.2	1.7
Manufacturing	-1.2	-0.1
Services-Providing	0.9	1.3
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	0.4	1.1
Information	-0.1	-0.3
Financial Activities	0.7	0.9
Professional and Business Services	1.4	2.6
Education and Health Services	1.9	1.9
Leisure and Hospitality	1.5	1.1
Other Services (Except Government)	0.2	1.2
Government	0.2	0.9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-4.8	-0.8
Wholesale Trade	0.4	2.1
Retail Trade	0.4	0.9
Transportation and Warehousing	0.1	1.2
Finance and Insurance	-0.5	0.6
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.7	1.8

Source: State of Ohio Department Jobs and Family Services, Ohio Workforce Informer website: <http://www.ohioworkforceinformer.org/cgi/dataanalysis/i...>

Table 3-3 provides a listing of the major employers in Huron County. As illustrated, manufacturing is the leading category of major employers.

Table 3-3: Major Employers in Huron County

Berry Plastics/Venture Packaging	Manufacturing
Campbell Soup Co./Pepperidge Farm	Manufacturing
Commercial Vehicle Group/Mayflower	Manufacturing
Fisher-Titus Medical Center	Service
MTD Products	Manufacturing
Norwalk Furniture Corp	Manufacturing
R. R. Donnelley Co.	Manufacturing

Source: State of Ohio Department of Development

According to 2003 figures, the total wages paid to employees in Huron County was more than \$716,726,000. The major wage producing sectors are broken down as follows:

Table 3-4: Wages by Sector, 2000

Economic Sector	Huron County Wages Paid (000)
Manufacturing	299,012
Services	88,679
State and Local Government	85,177
Construction	67,722
Retail Trade	45,200
Transportation and Warehousing	27,615
Agriculture	12,385
Other	90,936
Total	\$716,726

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2000

Employment

Table 3-5 describes the nature and sector of employment of Huron County residents (not employees, as the U.S Census groups by place of residence). The largest occupational category is in production, transportation, and material moving, jobs traditionally thought of as "blue collar". With one-third of its jobs in this category, Huron County greatly exceeds the statewide proportion of less than one-fifth. Conversely, management and professional jobs only employ slightly more than one-fifth of Huron Countians, as opposed to the statewide proportion of 31.0 percent. Another "white collar" category, sales and office occupations, are somewhat less common among Huron County residents than they are statewide (20.3 vs.26.4 percent). The remaining categories are more similar between county and state.

Table 3-5: Employment by Occupation and Sector

Occupation	#Huron Co.	%Huron Co.	% Ohio
Management, professional, related occupations	5,949	21.2	31.0
Service occupations	3,792	13.5	14.6
Sales and office occupations	5,700	20.3	26.4
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	267	1.0	0.3
Construction, extraction, & maintenance occupations	3,005	10.7	8.7
Production, transportation, material moving	9,382	33.4	19.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining	690	2.5	1.1
Construction	2,201	7.8	6.0
Manufacturing	9,342	33.3	20.0
Wholesale trade	740	2.6	3.6

Industry	#Huron Co.	%Huron Co.	% Ohio
Retail trade	2,785	9.9	11.9
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	1,817	6.5	4.9
Information	389	1.4	2.4
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	795	2.8	6.3
Professional, scientific, mgt, administration, waste mgt	1,181	4.2	8.0
Educational, health and social services	4,314	15.4	19.7
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services	1,913	6.8	7.5
Other services (except public administration)	1,191	4.2	4.5
Public administration	737	2.6	4.1

Source: 2000 Census of Population

After reviewing all of the available data, some of which has been provided above, there is conclusive evidence that the manufacturing sector of the Huron County economy remains strong. One third of the county’s working residents are employed in this sector as opposed to one-fifth statewide. While construction and transportation/warehousing/utilities have slightly higher employment than the state as a whole, proportionately, most of the other sectors, which include some of the professions, lag behind the state.



One of Norwalk’s major industries, Janesville Acoustics

Policy Statements and Recommendations

1. Promote Huron County as a single location for development, understanding that communities and sites within the county may compete for a business, but that locating the business within the county is a “win” for all of the county.
2. Zoning should help guide industrial, commercial, and service businesses to appropriate and targeted locations based on their intensity of use, and impact on adjacent and nearby uses and infrastructure (water, sewer, roadway). Zoning is helpful in this regard in municipalities and in unincorporated areas. Encourage consistency in zoning throughout the county’s townships and municipalities wherever feasible, particularly within adjacent jurisdictions. Additionally, encourage townships to develop uniformity within their zoning codes.

3. Slow, steady growth is projected for the County. Over the next twenty years, the need for additional land for industrial development is likely. Such use should be guided to existing or future identified sites and industrial parks. County and local officials should also make provision for the assembly of large sites, to be able to respond to larger prospective projects. Maintain a countywide database of prime locations (buildings, sites, and industrial parks) for industrial development, housed at the Huron County Development Council.
4. When industrial site needs cannot be satisfied by existing available buildings or sites within municipalities, land which is adjacent to or in close proximity to those municipalities should be given highest priority. A major reason is the availability or low development cost of infrastructure extensions, proximity to employment bases, and orderly growth considerations. Priority sites should also be located adjacent to or in close proximity to appropriate transportation routes (highway and rail), corridors, and intersections.
5. Provision of municipal services to new industrial sites as described in #4 above can be provided through annexation. Affected local jurisdictions (municipality and township) may pursue the creation of a Joint Economic Development District or Cooperative Economic Development Agreement.
6. Regardless of the pursuit of new business ventures, primary emphasis should be placed on the retention and expansion of existing businesses. Efforts should be made to accommodate expansions of businesses at their current sites whenever feasible.
7. Huron County is located at the fringe of the Lake Erie tourism region, which continues to grow in stature as a major destination. While Huron County's position may be considered secondary, its proximity to the lakefront counties and several destinations (such as Norwalk Raceway Park) help position it for a moderate level of tourism related development. Encourage tourism-related business that benefits from the county's rural, natural, and historic assets, but which does not exploit or denigrate those resources. Use the county's existing network of Chambers of Commerce and other business associations to promote tourism throughout the county.
8. Encourage and develop programs, services, and incentives that maintain Huron County's competitive advantages for business growth. These may include workforce development, financial incentives, adequate utilities, logistics for distribution of products, entrepreneurial development and counseling, and other assistance. One business amenity that is needed within the county is a facility to house business meetings ranging from small functions to larger (several hundred people) meetings.
9. Maintain an economy of scale in supporting and coordinating local efforts and development organizations with the countywide Huron County Development Council.
10. Support Huron County's agricultural sector, which is the primary land use in the county, by taking steps to preserve farmland and minimize its loss, and by seeking complementary businesses such as value added food processing and large scale farming operations if they conform to standards of health and environmental integrity.

11. Encourage the continuous improvement of information and communications technology to ensure that Huron County is a competitive location for technology-based business. Take steps to proactively position Huron County and its communities for emerging technologies.
12. Facilitate commercial and industrial development through maintenance of a business-friendly permitting and inspection process. Explore alternatives to the existing use of an outside commercial inspection and plan approval process (through Richland County), including initiation of a Huron County office, if such an office can be self-sustaining, or dedicated staff operating from another entity (i.e. Richland County, Erie County/Sandusky).
13. Preserve those features that set Huron County apart as a business location with a desirable quality of life. Such features include:
 - a. Open space and recreational opportunities
 - b. Leisure activities, including access to water, golf, walking trails, and other amenities.
 - c. Outstanding generalist and specialist health care facilities and professionals.
14. Huron County has organized a task force to look at problems and the future plans for building regulations for commercial development throughout the county. The plumbing is being handled by the State of Ohio. There have been no complaints regarding this service up to now. The task force is recommending no changes at the present time.

The commercial building, electrical and code compliance division is currently being handled by the Richland County Building Regulations Department in Mansfield. Expansions in job responsibilities have adversely affected the quality of work performed for Huron County resulting in many issues being raised by builders, contractors and various public officials from throughout the county. It is recommended by the task force that the County look at the option of creating its own Commercial Building Regulations department or contract with another county or organization that can provide these services. A local, county-wide commercial regulations department would allow for more control, accountability, and more efficient service to Huron County businesses and industries which will create a positive impact on economic development.