

# ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Development of the Town of Blaine’s Comprehensive Plan will begin with an overview of the community based on known information from the past to present and projections of the future covering a 20-year planning horizon. This chapter gives an overview of demographic trends and background information necessary to develop subsequent components of the comprehensive plan including past, present, and future population; household and employment forecasts; demographic trends; age distribution; education and income levels; and employment characteristics. It also includes a section on the overall goals, objectives, policies (actions), and programs to help guide future preservation and development over the 20-year planning horizon.

## 1.2 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Looking at the characteristics of population, both past changes and future projections, can help a community plan for the needs of the future. This section will look at past population numbers and the predictions of future growth for the Town of Blaine and Burnett County.

### Population Trends

Table 1.1 represents the population for the Town of Blaine from 1950 to 2000. After a decline from 1950 to 1960 and remaining stagnant over the next ten years, Blaine’s population has experienced growth since 1970 for a net gain of 95 persons. The greatest percentage of growth by decade was from 1990 to 2000, when the town’s population increased by roughly 30 percent.

| Table 1.1: Population Trends |        |       |       |        |        |        |                           |                          |
|------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Location                     | 1950   | 1960  | 1970  | 1980   | 1990   | 2000   | Absolute Change 1950-2000 | Percent Change 1950-2000 |
| Town of Blaine               | 149    | 129   | 129   | 151    | 172    | 224    | 75                        | 50.34%                   |
| % Of County Population       | 1.46%  | 1.40% | 1.39% | 1.22%  | 1.31%  | 1.43%  |                           | ---                      |
| Burnett County               | 10,236 | 9,214 | 9,276 | 12,340 | 13,084 | 15,674 | 5,438                     | 53.13%                   |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Burnett County suffered a loss in population from 1950 to 1960 but has experienced growth every decade since, with the largest jump in absolute numbers and percentage from 1970 to 1980. From 1950 to 1980, Blaine’s share of the County’s population was decreasing, but since then its share has been increasing, but has not quite reached the level it was in 1950.

### Population Projections

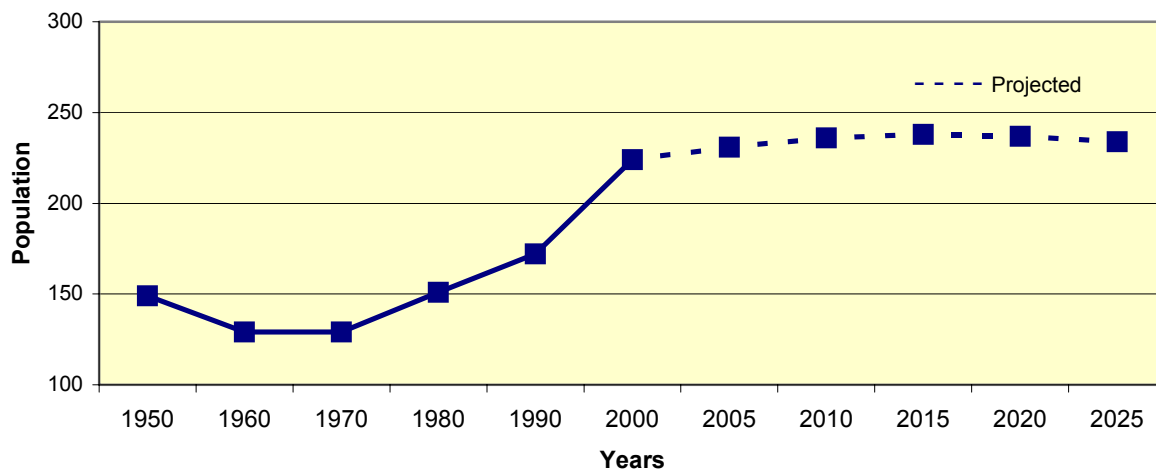
Table 1.2 displays population projections for the Town of Blaine and Burnett County through 2025. Population projections identify moderate growth through the year 2025 for the County, but

little increase in the Town. Figure 1.1 charts both the historical population as well as the projected population to year 2020.

| Table 1.2: Population Projections 2005 - 2025 |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Year  | Town of Blaine | Burnett County |
| 2005  | 231            | 16,375         |
| 2010  | 236            | 16,993         |
| 2015  | 238            | 17,329         |
| 2020  | 237            | 17,415         |
| 2025  | 234            | 17,390         |
| Absolute Change 2005-2025                     | 3              | 1,015          |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Service Center

**Figure 1.1: Town of Blaine  
Population: 1950-2000, Population Projections: 2005-2025**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; WI Dept. of Administration, Demographic Services Center

Several factors accounting for the limited increase in population projections for the town may include the lack of private land available, limited residential lakeshore development opportunities, limited commercial opportunities, a decrease in birth rates, out-migration of young adults, and limited employment opportunities in the town.

Important to understand is that while the population is projected to remain steady, the average household size is expected to decrease. This trend is important because it means more housing units may still be needed in the town to support the overall population over the 20-year planning horizon.

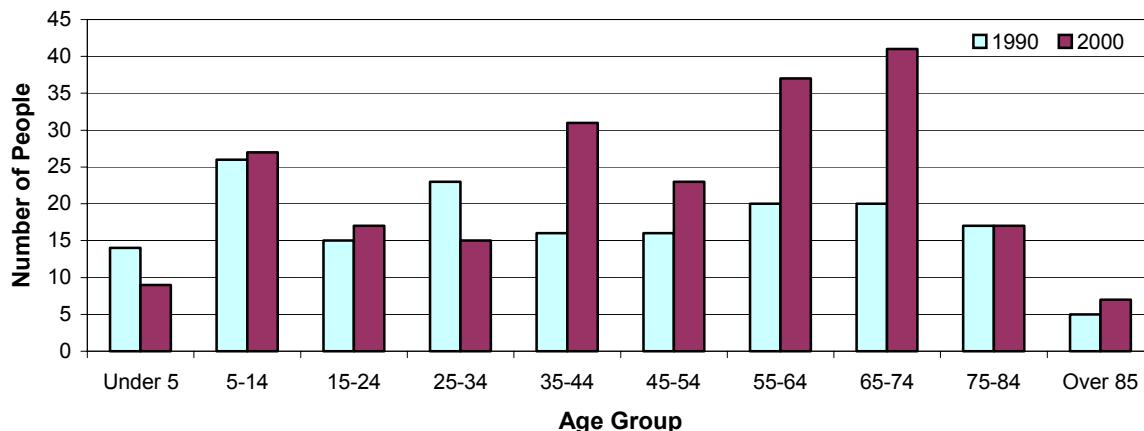
### Population Composition

Population figures and growth rates do not provide any insight about the characteristics of the population. To learn more about the people of the Town of Blaine, information about race, sex, and age of the population must be examined.

In 2000, there were 110 males and 114 females living in the Town of Blaine. Nearly all (91.1%) of the residents reported their race as white in the 2000 U.S. Census.

The median age of a Town of Blaine resident in 2000 was 50.5 years, compared to 40.0 years in 1990. This average is higher than both the Burnett County median age of 44.1 years and the State median age of 36.0 years. Figure 1.2 compares the age distribution of residents in 1990 and 2000.

**Figure 1.2**  
**Town of Blaine Age Distribution 1990 & 2000**

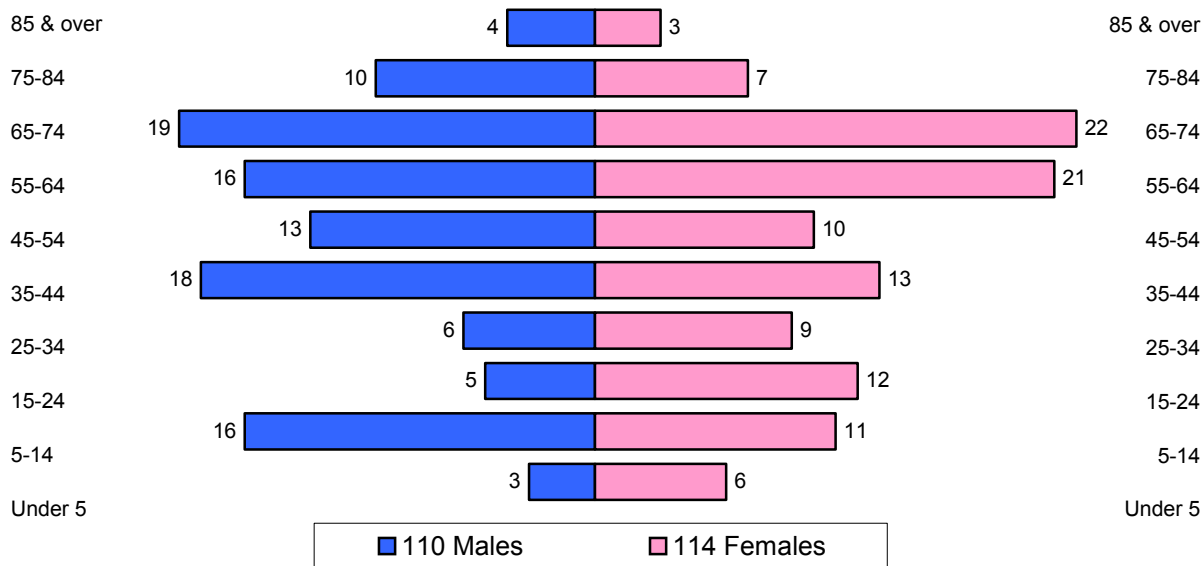


Source: U.S Census Bureau

In the years from 1990 to 2000, the age groups of Blaine residents remained relatively stable except for four age groups. There was approximately a 35 percent decrease in the 25 to 34 age group (from 23 to 15 persons), a 94 percent increase in the 35-44 age group (from 16 to 31 persons), an 85 percent increase in the 55-64 age group (from 20 to 37 persons), and a 105 percent increase in the 65-74 age group (from 20 to 41 persons). Large increases in the older age groups is likely due to seasonal town residents retiring to their Blaine homes permanently and out-migration of younger residents due to limited employment opportunities.

The population pyramid in Figure 1.3 represents a visual depiction of the age distribution in 2000. As shown in the chart, the age group with the largest percentage (18.3%) of the population falls in the range of 65-74. Male and female population age groups are fairly evenly split, 110 being male and 114 being female.

**Figure 1.3: Male and Female Age Distribution for Town of Blaine, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF 1)

### 1.3 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Definitions referring to household characteristics may assist the reader in further understanding household figures. According to the U.S. Census Bureau:

A **household** includes all of the people who occupy a housing unit.

**Occupants** may consist of a single family; one person living alone; two or more families living together; or any other group or related or unrelated people who share a housing unit.

A **housing unit** is a house; apartment; mobile home; group of rooms; or single room occupied (or if vacant, intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters.

#### Household Trends and Projections

National and state trends have all moved towards an increase in the number of households, along with a decrease in the average persons per household. The main reasons for the decrease in household size include, but are not limited to: a decrease in birth rates, people waiting longer to get married, and an increase in the average life span thereby resulting in more elderly people living alone. The Town of Blaine has followed this trend. The town has experienced an increase

of 31 households since 1990. However, during this same period the number of persons per household has decreased from 2.61 in 1990 to 2.31 in 2000 (See detail in the Housing Section).

Table 1.3 shows households by type for the Town of Blaine. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 97 households in the town. The majority of these households (68%) were family households. Of these family households, roughly 86 percent were a married-couple family household. Non-family households accounted for 32 percent of total household. Of the 29 householders living alone, approximately 52 percent were age 65 and over.

| <b>Table 1.3: Households 2000</b>               |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
|   | <b>Town of Blaine</b> |
| <b>Total Households</b>                         | <b>97</b>             |
| <b>1. Family households</b>                     | <b>66</b>             |
| <b>a. Married-couple family</b>                 | <b>57</b>             |
| <b>i. With own children under 18 years</b>      | <b>15</b>             |
| <b>ii. Without own children under 18 years</b>  | <b>42</b>             |
| <b>b. Female Householder, no spouse present</b> | <b>4</b>              |
| <b>i. With own children under 18 years</b>      | <b>1</b>              |
| <b>ii. Without own children under 18 years</b>  | <b>3</b>              |
| <b>2. Non-family households</b>                 | <b>31</b>             |
| <b>a. Householder living alone</b>              | <b>29</b>             |
| <b>i. Householder 65 years and over</b>         | <b>15</b>             |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF 1)

Table 1.4 displays both the actual numbers of households and projections from 1980 through 2025. Household projections for the town show a gain of 18 from 2000 to 2025.

| <b>Table 1.4<br/>Households 1980-2000, Household Projections 2005-2025</b> |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Town of Blaine</b>  | <b>1980</b> | <b>1990</b> | <b>2000</b> | <b>2005</b> | <b>2010</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2020</b> | <b>2025</b> |
| <b>Households</b>  | 64          | 66          | 97          | 102         | 108         | 112         | 114         | 115         |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, WI Dept. of Administration

## 1.4 INCOME AND POVERTY LEVELS

More than any other type of data, income data indicates how an area is doing economically. Income is measured several ways and this section will explain and compare some of those statistics for the Town of Blaine and Burnett County.

### Household Income

Table 1.5 reports the average annual income for households in the Town of Blaine as of 1999 as reported by Census 2000. Of the town's households, 39.7 percent report an annual income of over \$35,000, while 16.7 percent of households report annual incomes below \$10,000. Nearly 18 percent of households had an income over \$50,000.

| <b>Table 1.5: Household Income</b> |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Annual Income</b>               | <b>Percent of Households</b> |
| Less than \$10,000                 | 16.7%                        |
| \$10,000 - \$24,999                | 24.3%                        |
| \$25,000 - \$34,999                | 19.2%                        |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999                | 21.8%                        |
| \$50,000 - \$99,999                | 15.3%                        |
| \$100,000 and over                 | 2.6%                         |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF 3)

The median household income (MHI) for the Town of Blaine in 1999 as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census was \$31,250, compared to a MHI of \$34,218 for Burnett County and \$43,791 for the State of Wisconsin. As illustrated in Figure 1.4, householders age 35 to 44 had the highest median household income of any age group at nearly \$60,000. Because of living on fixed incomes, the lowest income level was among the over 75 years age group.

**Figure 1.4: Median Household Income  
Town of Blaine 1999**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

### **Per Capita, Per Capita Personal Income, and Poverty Rates**

Per capita income (PCI) is defined as all resident *money* income divided by population. It is composed of generally traceable money from wages, interest, dividends, welfare program payments, etc. It does not take into account money received from sale of property, money borrowed, exchange of money between relatives in same households, tax refunds, gifts, and insurance payments, which per capita personal income (PCPI) figures do take into consideration. Thus, PCPI figures are always higher than PCI. PCPI is not available at the community level. The U.S. Census Bureau reports PCI and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, calculates PCPI at the county level on a yearly basis.

As indicated by Table 1.6, PCI in 1999 for the Town is considerably lower than the County and State per capita incomes. Per Capita Personal Income for Burnett County is only 71 percent of the State PCPI and is the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest in the state.

Poverty rates are determined on the basis of money income and do not reflect the fact that many low-income people receive non-cash benefits. The poverty rate in the Town of Blaine (15.3%) is almost double that of the County and the State as shown in Table 1.6.

| <b>Table 1.6: Income Levels and Poverty Rates</b> |                       |                       |                           |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
|   | <b>Town of Blaine</b> | <b>Burnett County</b> | <b>State of Wisconsin</b> |
| Per Capita Income, 1999                           | \$12,895              | \$17,712              | \$21,271                  |
| Per Capita Personal Income, 2001                  | NA                    | \$20,625              | \$29,196                  |
| Percent of individuals below poverty level        | 15.3%                 | 8.8%                  | 8.7%                      |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Table 1.7 compares different measures of income and poverty from Census 2000 data for the Town of Blaine with surrounding communities. Median household incomes in the towns of Burnett County were all in the same range, however, the Washburn and Douglas County municipalities had somewhat higher levels of income. The percentage of family households below the poverty level in the Town of Blaine was neither the highest nor the lowest of the communities listed; however, the Town had a significantly lower per capita income and the “individuals below poverty level” rate percentage was much higher, than the surrounding communities listed in the table.

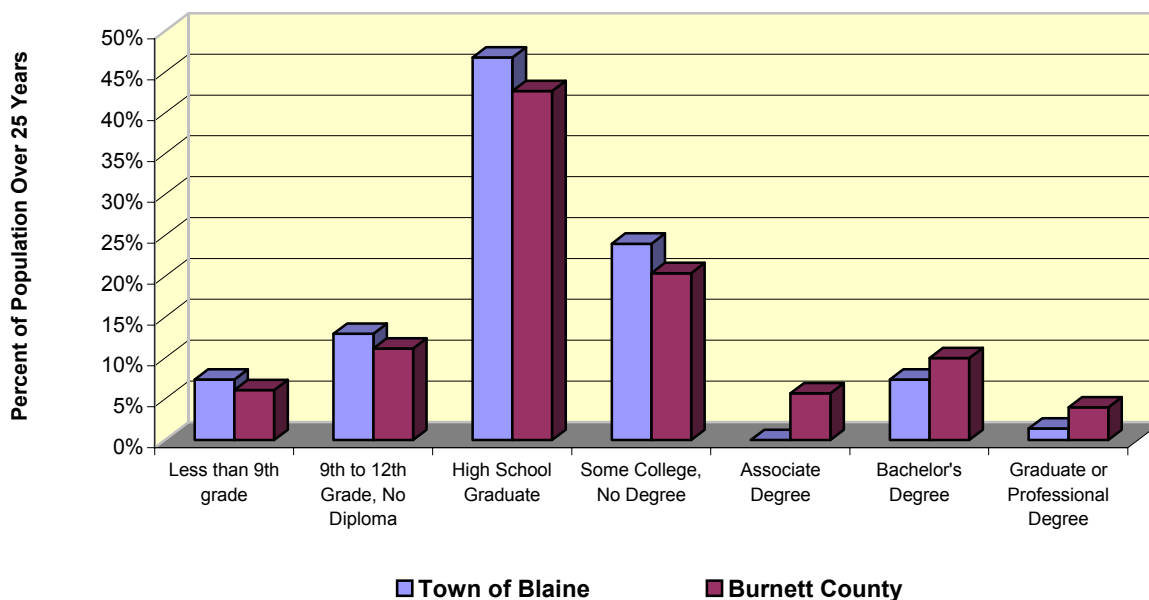
| <b>Table 1.7: Income Levels for Town of Blaine and Surrounding Communities</b> |                       |                      |                          |   |   |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
|  | <b>Town of Blaine</b> | <b>Town of Swiss</b> | <b>Town of Webb Lake</b> | <b>Town of Dairyland (Douglas County)</b> | <b>Town of Minong (Washburn County)</b> |
| Median Household Income, 1999  | \$31,250              | \$30,461             | \$31,033                 | \$35,313                                  | \$36,667                                |
| Median Family Income, 1999   | \$34,531              | \$34,219             | \$36,000                 | \$48,333                                  | \$41,094                                |
| % of family households below poverty level                                     | 6.8%                  | 9.2%                 | 0%                       | 7.6%                                      | 5.3%                                    |
| Per Capita Income, 1999  | \$12,895              | \$16,870             | \$17,584                 | \$18,155                                  | \$20,679                                |
| % of individuals below poverty level   | 15.3%                 | 10.2%                | 5.0%                     | 9.0%                                      | 7.9%                                    |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF 3)

### 1.5 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A good indicator of the quality of life in a community is the educational attainment of its residents. Generally, a high level of educational attainment reflects a skilled population with higher earnings potential. Figure 1.5 illustrates the level of educational attainment for the population age 25 and over in the Town of Blaine and Burnett County in 2000. In the Town of Blaine, 79.5 percent of the population is high school graduates or higher compared to nearly 83 percent in the County. Residents in the Town that have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher amount to 8.9 percent compared to 14 percent in the County.

**Figure 1.5: Educational Attainment 2000**



Source: U. S. Census 2000

## 1.6 EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

A community’s labor force consists of all individuals age 16 and above who are employed or unemployed and looking for work. No specific labor force data is available at the community level; therefore, county data is used.

A recent publication by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development stated, “Demographic projections prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Administration suggest that the state will be faced with a significant labor shortage within the next 10 to 15 years as the number of people turning 65, fueled by the aging of the “Baby Boomer” generation surpasses the number of people turning 18 due to low birth rates and slowing migration patterns. Consequently, the number of workers entering the labor force will not be sufficient to replace those ending their working careers”.<sup>1</sup>

### **Burnett County Labor Force**

Table 1.8 highlights Burnett County Labor Force statistics for the last ten years on an average annual basis. Overall, Burnett County’s labor force has been increasing steadily except for small declines in 1998 and 1999. In 2002, the unemployment rate climbed to the highest level since 1994.

<sup>1</sup> Mortarboards, Paychecks, and Crystal Balls: The Link Between Education and Wisconsin’s Labor Force. October 2002

|             | 1994  | 1995  | 1996  | 1997  | 1998  | 1999  | 2000  | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Labor Force | 6,724 | 6,945 | 7,035 | 7,169 | 7,079 | 6,947 | 7,246 | 7,642 | 7,736 | 7,993 |
| Employed    | 6,297 | 6,626 | 6,712 | 6,815 | 6,782 | 6,631 | 6,956 | 7,239 | 7,277 | 7,577 |
| Unemployed  | 428   | 318   | 323   | 354   | 297   | 315   | 290   | 403   | 459   | 416   |
| Unemp. Rate | 6.4%  | 4.6%  | 4.6%  | 4.9%  | 4.2%  | 4.5%  | 4.0%  | 5.3%  | 5.9%  | 5.2%  |

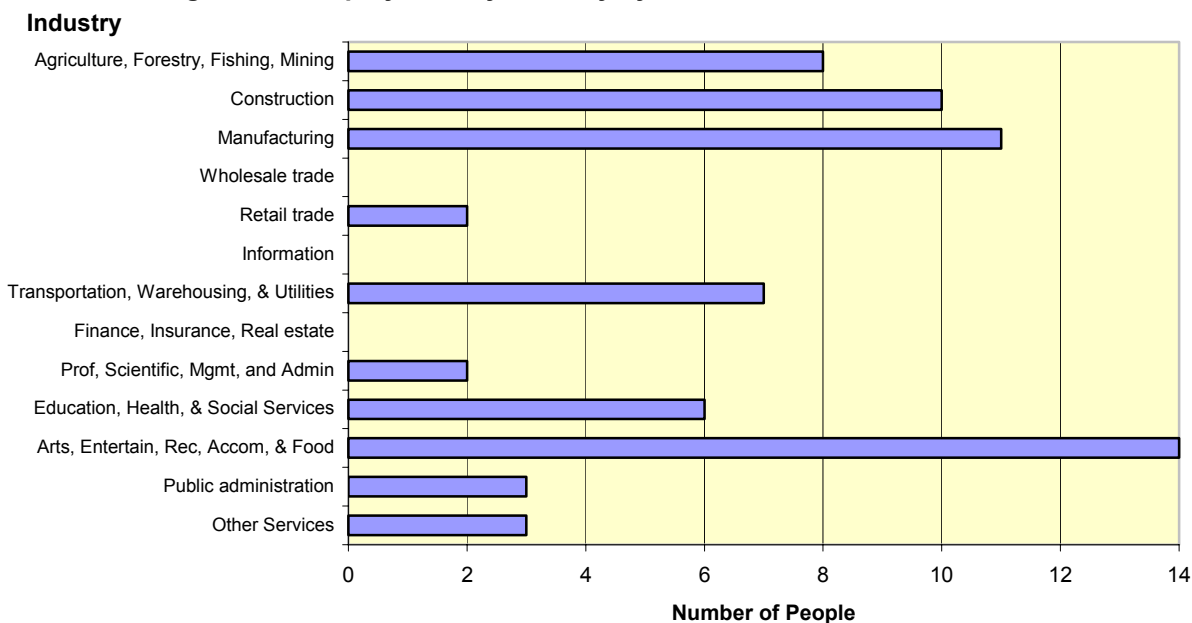
Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, LAUS

**Employment by Industry**

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 66 residents of the Town (16 years and over) were employed at that time in either the Town of Blaine or elsewhere. Of the 66 residents that commuted to work, the mean travel time to work was 29.4 minutes, indicating that most were employed outside of the town. See Chapter 6 for details of commuting patterns and areas where residents were employed.

Figure 1.6 identifies employment by industry for Blaine residents in 2000. As indicated by the chart, three industry sectors dominated resident employment. Over 21 percent of residents were employed in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services industry (strongly related to the strong tourism-related atmosphere of Burnett County) while roughly 17 percent were employed in the manufacturing industry and 15 percent in the construction industry.

**Figure 1.6: Employment by Industry by Town of Blaine Residents 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Top Town of Blaine Employers

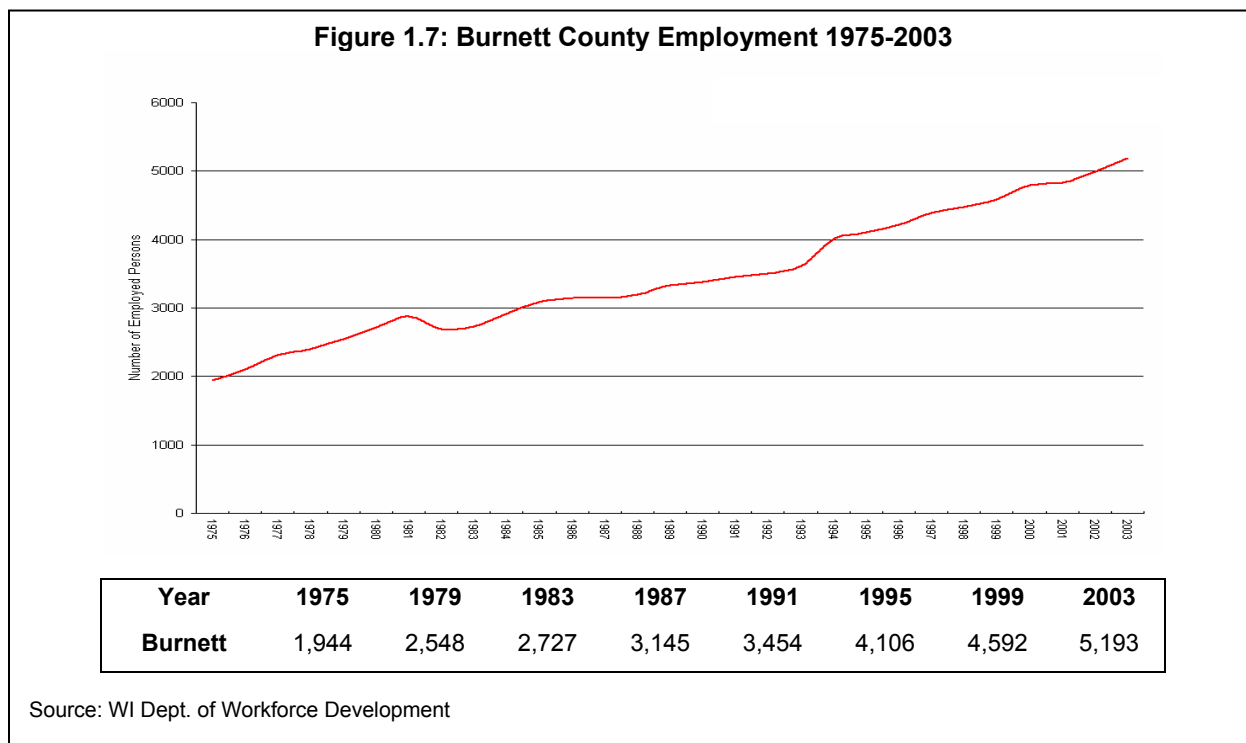
Employment opportunities are critical to the continued growth and economic stability for the town and residents of Blaine. Table 1.9 lists the employers located in the Town of Blaine as reported by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development in March 2003. This table indicates to some extent the low level of employment opportunities in the Town.

| Employer Name                  | Product or Service                      | Employment Size Range |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Town Of Blaine Burnett County  | Executive and Legislative Offices       | 5-9                   |
| Markville Plumbing & Heating   | Plumbing, Heating, and Air Conditioning | 1-4                   |
| Chain of Lakes Landscaping Inc | Landscaping Services                    | NA                    |
| T & T Logging                  | Logging Services                        | NA                    |
| Hillside Inn                   | Bar/restaurant                          | NA                    |

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, March 2003; Town of Blaine  
 NA – Not Available

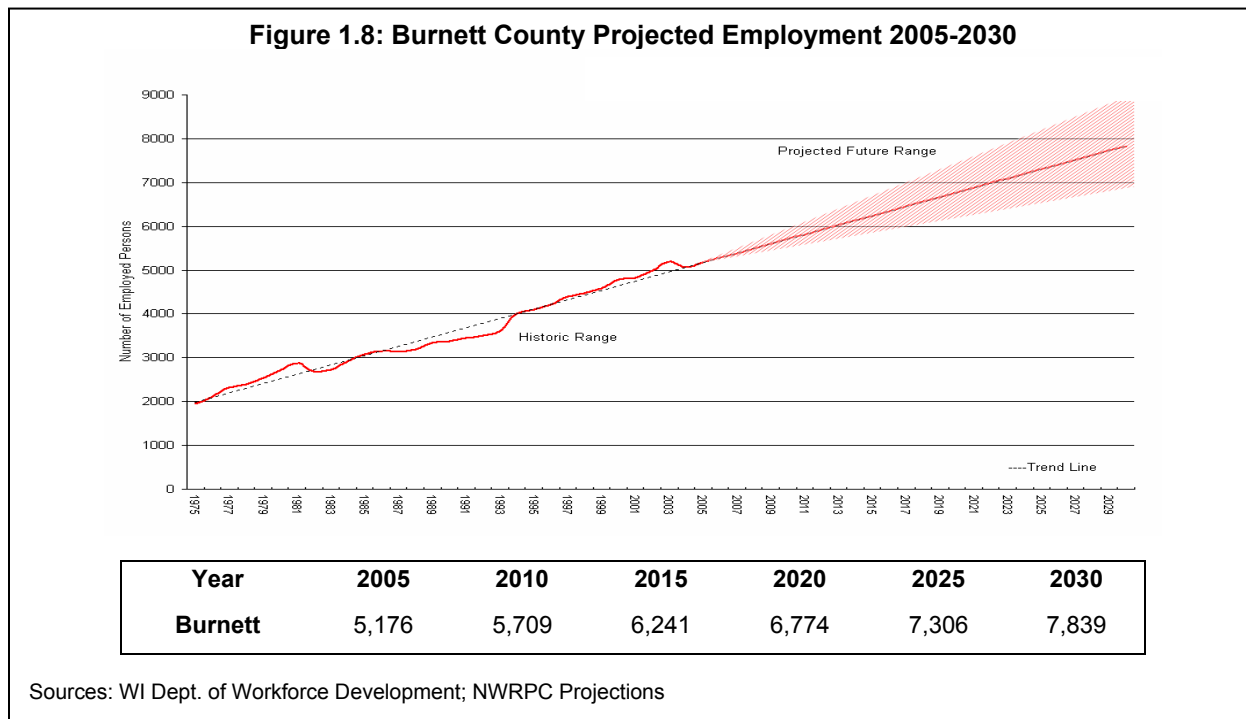
### Burnett County Employment Forecast

Based on data from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) highlighting the number of jobs with employers located in Burnett County from 1975 to 2003, employment projections were developed by NWRPC to 2030. Figure 1.7 shows the employed persons for 1975 to 2003 and Figure 1.8 shows not only the past employment data but also the employment



projections for future years to 2030.

Analyzing the local employment data from 1975-2003 derived employment projections for Burnett County. The “trend line” in Figure 1.8 depicts a “best fit” of the known data values and a projection of the future data values. The shaded area in Figure 1.8 represents a range of probability, meaning that it is more likely that the future value will fall somewhere within this



range rather than directly along the trend line. This is a very simplistic model to be used for general planning purposes. The Wisconsin DWD will develop more detailed county projections.

## 1.7 OVERALL GOAL STATEMENT

The Town of Blaine has prepared a number of goals and objectives that include actions and policies in addressing land use activities. For purposes of this planning process, actions identified through the plan are also defined as policies. The goals and objectives are intended to assist the town board and local property owners in implementing actions deemed important and in the interest of the community. It is imperative that the goals, objectives, and actions described in this plan are implemented to fully achieve the desired outcome. A full set of the goals, objectives, and actions are included in the implementation chapter of this plan.

The overall goal is to retain rural character in the Town of Blaine. To do this, the overall objective of the Town of Blaine is to guide future development and redevelopment of the community in a manner consistent with the chapter goals, objectives, actions, and identified programs contained in this document. The overall policy is to adopt and implement the

comprehensive plan and continue to work with the adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions. The overall programs outlined throughout the recommendations and action plan represent the methods to achieve the overall plan goal.

## **1.8 RESULTS OF ISSUES IDENTIFICATION PROCESS**

As part of the planning process, the community identified a list of issues confronting the community and completed a SWOT analysis.

**October 21, 2002**

### **HOUSING**

1. Lot sizes
2. Trailers – location requirements, minimum spaces
3. County grandfather clauses for maintaining and improving substandard building units
4. Low income/fixed income housing units
5. New housing developments – town input into locations, lot sizes, etc. – develop requirements.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

1. Input into decisions regarding snowmobile/ATV usage, trails and roads possible restrictions
2. Boating/ski-jet regulations, also float planes
3. Continued maintenance and improvement of town roads
4. Road requirements for new development areas
5. Development of biking/hiking trails
6. More cooperation from fed, state and county regarding public land
7. Future shuttle transportation needs
8. Enforcement of traffic regulations in town

### **NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

1. Preservation of historic cemeteries
2. Lake use and protection
3. Groundwater protection
4. Surface water runoff to lakes and streams
5. More town input into disposition of public forest lands
6. Logging practices, i.e. clearcutting and abandoned logging roads
7. Parks
8. Possible hunting restrictions on public land acquisitions
9. Historic building preservation
10. Rustic road development
11. Maintain and protect town scenic areas (on all lands, fed state, county)

### **UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

1. Location of cell towers and power lines
2. Regulations on billboards
3. Gas and water line development
4. Town hall construction with appropriate facilities
5. High voltage power lines
6. Expansion and improvement to town-owned cemeteries
7. Wells, septic systems – issues concerning increased state regulations
8. Maintenance and expansion of recycling and waste disposal services
9. Investigate possibilities of generator construction

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Maintain rural atmosphere in the town through selection of appropriate enterprises
2. Maintain some control over future industries
3. Investigate rezoning of properties along State Highway 35
4. Consider environmental impacts, such as noise, traffic, lighting, odor, pollution, etc., when new development is proposed

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

1. Look for cooperative opportunities with other municipalities, including tribal governments
2. More cooperation with county regarding town issues
3. Need faster police service from county
4. More cooperation from WDNR and public forest and land agencies regarding the use of town lands and roads

### **LAND USE**

1. Billboard regulations and siting issues
2. Light pollution
3. Investigate county zoning in the town
4. Protection of wetlands
5. Development of parks
6. Adequate building setbacks from roads

## **1.9 S.W.O.T. (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS)**

### **Strengths**

1. Concerned citizens
2. Rural atmosphere
3. Natural resources
4. Scenic Riverway system
5. Community pride
6. Northland Community Center – varied uses

### **Weaknesses**

1. Distance from medical services
2. Distance from other services
3. Lack of law enforcement
4. Natural resources – drawing too many people and ATVs/snowmobiles to area
5. Low tax base

### **Opportunities**

1. Appropriate development to increase tax base
2. Increased services for senior citizens
3. Development of interconnected trails for ATVs and snowmobiles to reuse use on restricted lands

### **Threats**

1. Loss of control over town lands to other governmental units
2. The loss of public lands for residential development Example – county forest lands
3. Threat of development into small parcels, loss of rural atmosphere
4. Increase in ATV traffic and lack of enforcement to regulate it