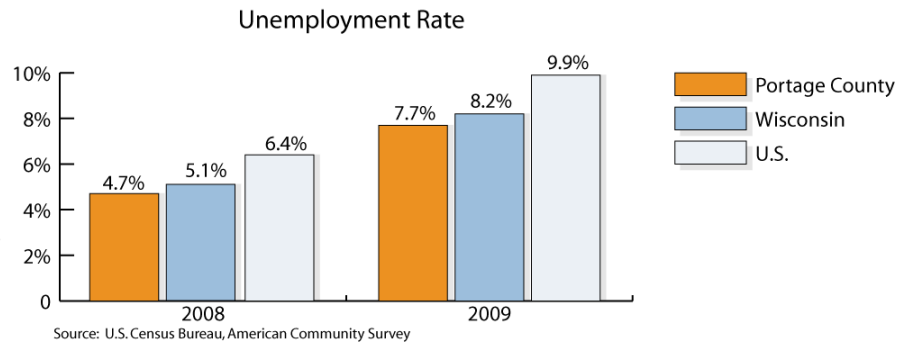


The Recession's Impact on Portage County

Unemployment is Up, Health Insurance Coverage is Down

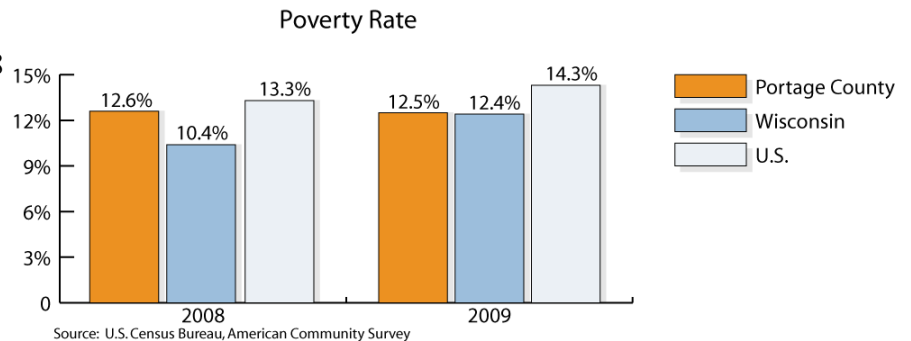
Unemployment Rate in Portage County Has Risen

The unemployment rate in Portage County rose from 4.7 percent in 2008 to 7.7 percent in 2009. The unemployment rate in Portage County is about the same as the Wisconsin average, which rose from 5.1 percent in 2008 to 8.2 percent in 2009. The increase in Portage County's unemployment rate means that more than 1,100 more people in the county were out of work in 2009 compared to 2008.



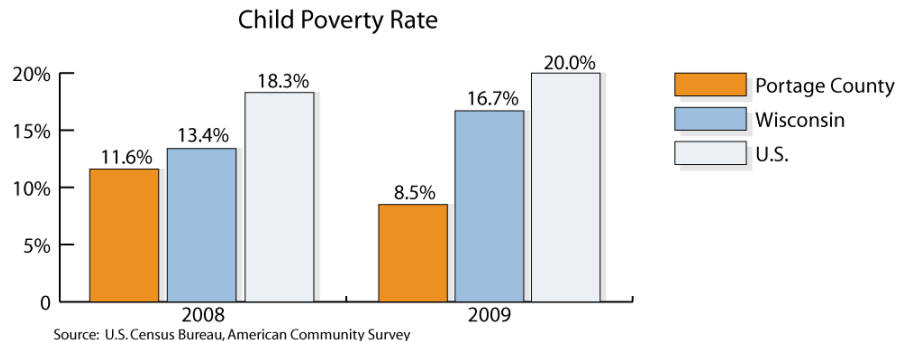
Poverty in Portage County Has Stayed About the Same

The total poverty rate in Portage County decreased slightly from 12.6 percent in 2008 to 12.5 percent in 2009. Portage County's poverty rate is about the same as the Wisconsin average, which rose from 10.4 percent in 2008 to 12.4 percent in 2009. Wisconsin's poverty rate is lower than the national average.



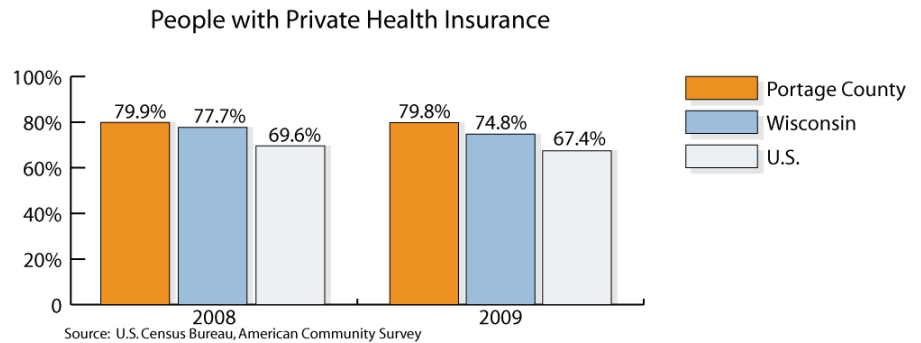
One out of Twelve Children in Portage County Now Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in Portage County dropped from 11.6 percent in 2008 to 8.5 percent in 2009. In 2009, Portage County's child poverty rate was about half of the statewide rate, which rose from 13.4 percent in 2008 to 16.7 percent in 2009. Statewide, one out of six children lived in poverty in 2009, compared to one out of five nationally.



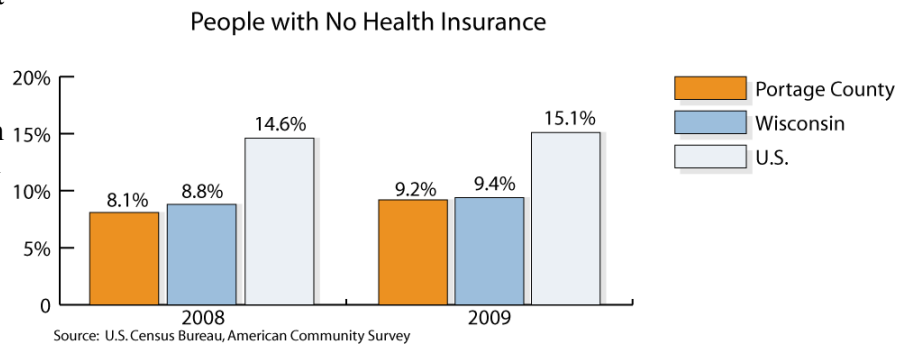
Private Health Insurance Levels in Portage County Stay Constant

The percent of people in Portage County with private health insurance stayed about the same, in contrast to a significant decrease in the state as a whole. Portage County and Wisconsin in general have much higher rates of private health insurance coverage than the nation as a whole.



BadgerCare Plus Cushions State Increase in the Uninsured

The percent of Portage County residents that have no health insurance increased from 8.1 percent in 2008 to 9.2 percent in 2009. The substantial statewide increase in BadgerCare Plus enrollment kept the drop in employer coverage from resulting in a much larger increase in the uninsured. Both Portage County and Wisconsin have a much smaller share of their population without health insurance than the national average.



Addressing the Impact of the Recession

Portage County is feeling the impact of the national recession, as steep job loss has had an effect on many residents. Still, by many measures, Portage County's economic situation is better than the national average.

Fortunately, the Recovery Act contained several changes in tax credits for low income families that softened the blow of the recession a little. However, those credits are scheduled to end at the close of the year and Congress will have to vote soon on whether to extend them.

Low-income households were also assisted by increased Medicaid funding in the Recovery Act, which enabled Wisconsin to preserve eligibility for BadgerCare Plus. Without an extension of federal aid for states and

continuation of the state's hospital assessment initiated in 2009, Wisconsin will be hard pressed to avoid sharp reductions in the low-income families served by BadgerCare Plus.

It will take a concerted effort to meet the needs of struggling families in Portage County. Public services like health care, education, and economic support are especially important in times of economic crisis. To help Wisconsin families and communities back on the road to economic recovery, state and federal policymakers will need to employ a balanced approach to closing the budget deficit, while avoiding significant cuts to programs that help families hit hard by the national recession.