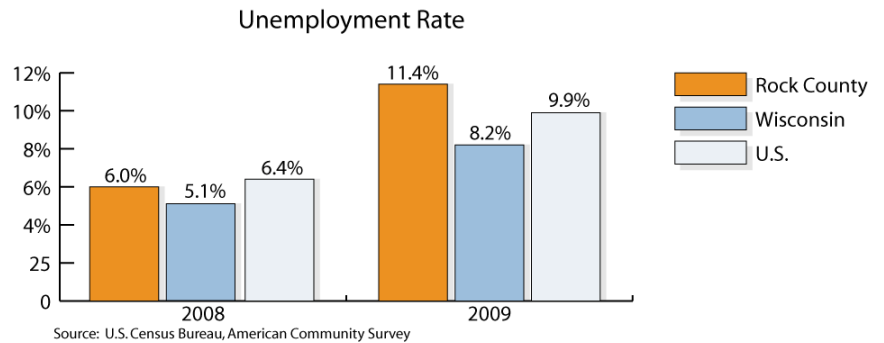


The Recession's Impact on Rock County

Unemployment and Poverty Rates Are Up, Private Health Insurance Coverage is Down

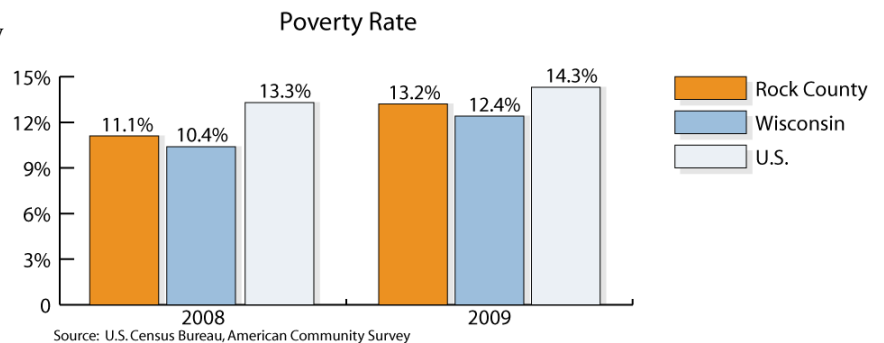
Unemployment Rate in Rock County Has Risen

The unemployment rate in Rock County rose from 6.0 percent in 2008 to 11.4 percent in 2009. The unemployment rate in Rock County was higher than the Wisconsin average, which rose from 5.1 percent in 2008 to 8.2 percent in 2009. The increase in Rock County's unemployment rate means that about 4,700 more people in the county were out of work in 2009 compared to 2008.



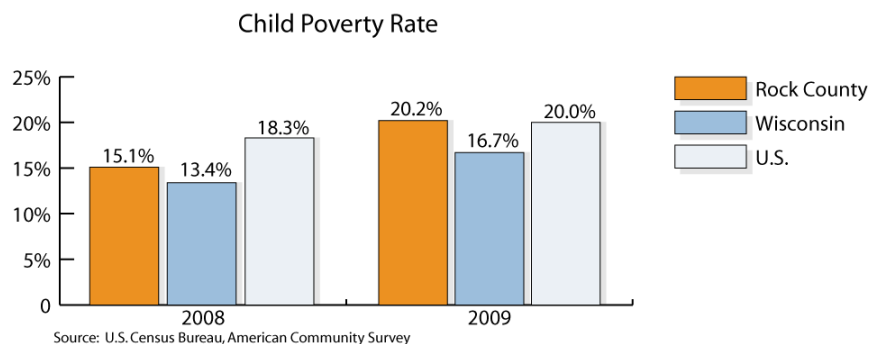
Poverty in Rock County Has Increased

As a result of the recession, the total poverty rate in Rock County increased from 11.1 percent in 2008 to 13.2 percent in 2009. Rock County's poverty rate exceeded the Wisconsin average, which rose from 10.4 percent in 2008 to 12.4 percent in 2009. Both Rock County and Wisconsin have poverty rates that are lower than the national average.



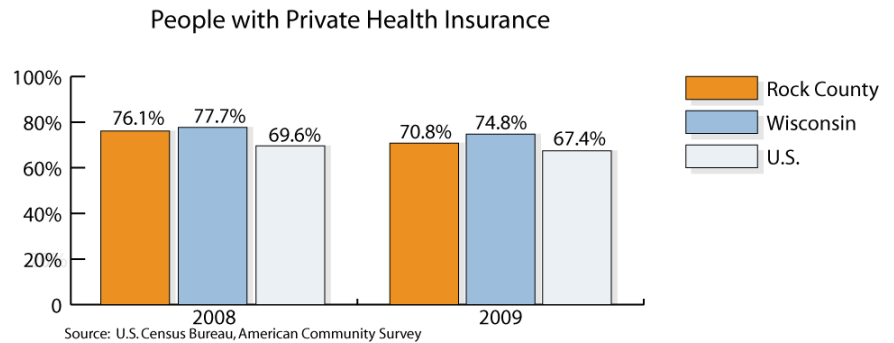
More than One out of Five Children in Rock County Now Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in Rock County rose from 15.1 percent in 2008 to 20.2 percent in 2009. Rock County's child poverty rate is higher than the statewide average, which rose from 13.4 percent in 2008 to 16.7 percent in 2009. Nearly 2,000 additional children slipped into poverty in Rock County between 2008 and 2009, which represents a population greater than the village of Clinton.



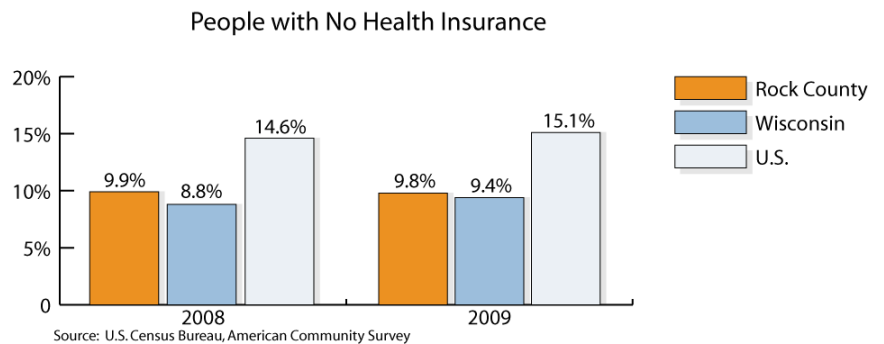
Fewer People in Rock County Have Private Health Insurance

The percent of people in Rock County with private health insurance decreased, from 76.1 percent in 2008 to 70.8 percent in 2009. The increased unemployment rate impacted health insurance coverage, since most families obtain insurance through their employers. Rock County and Wisconsin in general still have significantly higher rates of private health insurance coverage than the nation as a whole.



BadgerCare Plus Prevents Increase in the Uninsured

The percent of Rock County residents that have no health insurance stayed about the same, decreasing from 9.9 percent in 2008 to 9.8 percent in 2009. BadgerCare Plus enrollment in the county grew by nearly 3,700 people (about 19 percent) in 2009, which kept the sharp drop in employer coverage from resulting in a substantial increase in the uninsured. Both Rock County and Wisconsin have a much smaller share of their population without health insurance than the national average.



Addressing the Impact of the Recession

Rock County is feeling the impact of the national recession, as steep job loss has pushed many residents into poverty and forced the loss of private health insurance coverage. These changes are particularly alarming considering they happened over a time period of just one year. Still, by many measures, Rock 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 Rock 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.