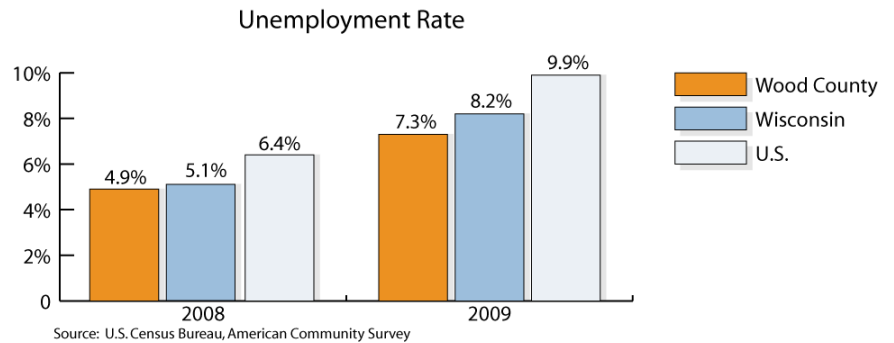


The Recession's Impact on Wood County

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

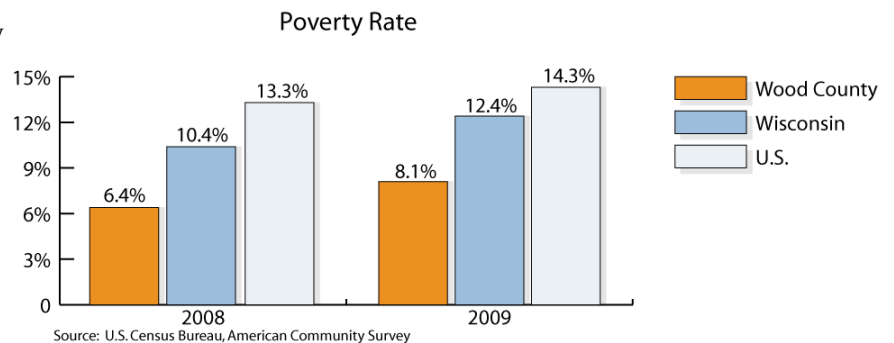
Unemployment Rate in Wood County Has Risen

The unemployment rate in Wood County rose from 4.9 percent in 2008 to 7.3 percent in 2009. The unemployment rate in Wood County in 2009 was still lower than the Wisconsin average, which rose from 5.1 percent in 2008 to 8.2 percent in 2009. The increase in Wood County's unemployment rate means that almost 930 more people were out of work in the county in 2009 than in 2008.



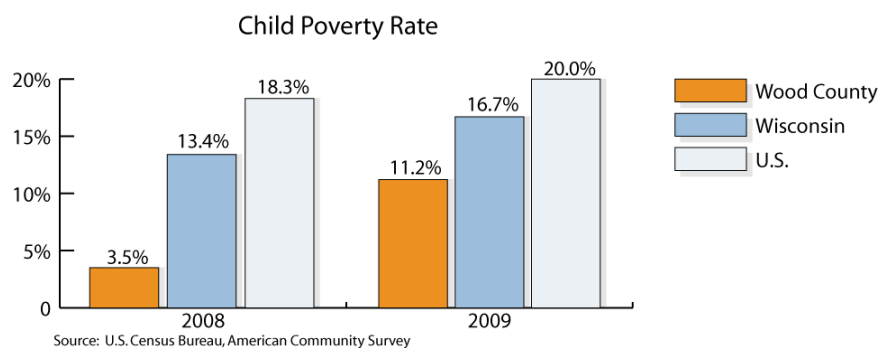
Poverty in Wood County Has Increased

As a result of the recession, the total poverty rate in Wood County increased from 6.4 percent in 2008 to 8.1 percent in 2009. Wood County's poverty rate was lower than the Wisconsin average, which rose from 10.4 percent in 2008 to 12.4 percent in 2009. The statewide poverty rate in Wisconsin was lower than the national average.



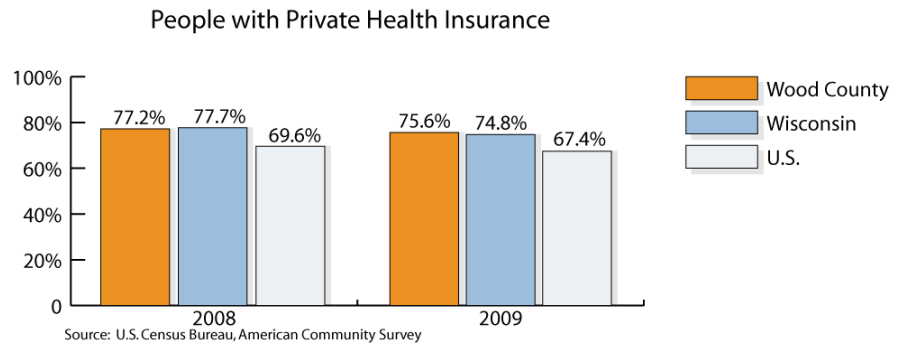
One out of Nine Children in Wood County Now Lives in Poverty

The child poverty rate in Wood County more than tripled, increasing from 3.5 percent in 2008 to 11.2 percent in 2009. Even after this increase, Wood County's child poverty rate was still lower than the statewide average, which rose from 13.4 percent in 2008 to 16.7 percent in 2009. More than 1,300 additional children slipped into poverty in Wood County between 2008 and 2009, which represents a population greater than the village of Biron.



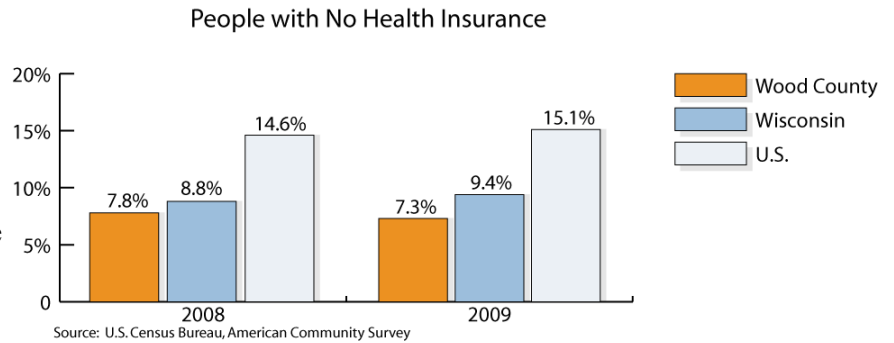
Fewer People in Wood County Have Private Health Insurance

The percent of people in Wood County with private health insurance decreased, from 77.2 percent in 2008 to 75.6 percent in 2009. The increase in the unemployment rate impacted health insurance coverage, since most families obtain insurance through their employers. Wood County and Wisconsin in general still have significantly higher rates of private health insurance coverage than the nation as a whole.



BadgerCare Plus Yields Decrease in the Uninsured

The percent of Wood County residents that have no health insurance decreased from 7.8 percent in 2008 to 7.3 percent in 2009. BadgerCare Plus enrollment in the county grew by about 1,350 people (15 percent) in 2009, which kept the drop in employer coverage from resulting in an increase in the uninsured. Both Wood County and Wisconsin have a much smaller share of their population without health insurance than the national average.



Addressing the Impact of the Recession

Wood 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, Wood 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 Wood 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.