

Rural population is changing, if not increasing

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‘**N**othing ever changes around here” is a common refrain in many rural Wisconsin communities.

However, a quick look at some of the dynamics often reveals significant changes. Sometimes they are important, but subtle and therefore go unnoticed. Other times, we have just been too busy to notice. Over the next four weeks we will examine some of those changes.

When it comes to change, Richland County is typical of many rural Wisconsin counties.

At first glance, one might conclude that not much seems to be happening in Richland County. In 1900, Richland County was home to 19,483 people. By 2000, the population had fallen to 17,924.

Rural Wisconsin

Week 1:
County
migration

During the same period, Wisconsin’s population increased by 175 percent.

According to state Department of Administration estimates, the county’s population increased by only 150 between 2000 and 2005.

Almost one-fourth of the county’s residents in 2005 lived in a different county in 2000. Similarly, more than 20 percent of those living in Richland County in 2000 moved out of the county by 2005.

The Internal Revenue Service reports that 4,186 people moved into Richland County during the five-year period. This was mostly offset by the 4,011 who moved out of the county. However, it clearly reveals that something is happening in Richland County.

Coming and going

The number of people moving into and out of area counties, from 2000 to 2005:

County	Migrating in	Migrating out	Not migrating
Richland	4,186	4,011	13,812
Iowa	5,766	5,466	19,377
Green	8,039	7,252	29,450
Lafayette	3,300	3,271	14,000
Grant	8,757	9,714	39,853
Sauk	14,347	12,985	48,745

SOURCE: IRS

The chart above provides migration data for Richland and other select Wisconsin counties. Similar data for any county in the U.S. is available at: <http://enterprise.star-telegram.com/ARCIms/Maps/clt/2007/irsmig.asp>.