




Labor Market Conditions in Lincoln County



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Labor market conditions in Wisconsin are changing rapidly and employers are requesting information on the skills of the workforce, labor supply, wages and benefits, and the effects of technology in the workplace. In response to a request from the Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation, the University of Wisconsin-Extension conducted a study of labor market conditions in Lincoln County during the first quarter of 2004. The purpose of the study was to examine the existing and anticipated demand for labor in the county. Data for the study are drawn from mailed questionnaires to 42 employers in the region.

Lincoln County employers do not anticipate growing much in the next year. Many employers continue to report that they are having difficulty recruiting qualified workers, and attribute it to the fact that applicants lack the necessary skills for the jobs that were available. The largest number of anticipated vacancies are for assemblers, processors and laborers.

Almost all employers report that they provide on-going training and skill development in their firm. They are most likely to offer job specific skills. On average, employers provided formal training to approximately 25% of their workforce and spent an average of \$2,536 on formal training last year.

Many employers report difficulty in retaining workers. The employee turnover rate was 13% in 2003, which is about average for the state. Most of the vacancies are due to resignations. A growing number of firms in the region report they have laid off workers in the last 12 months. About one-fifth of Lincoln County employers have laid off workers, with only about 90% of the workers being recalled. The average wage increase for Lincoln County employers was 3.2% in 2003 and is projected to be 3.9% in 2004. Employers estimated the cost of providing benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement, etc.) increased by 17% in 2003 and anticipate an increase of 16% during the next year.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
Introduction	1
Characteristics of Employers	1
Vacant Positions and Recruitment	3
Training	6
Retention	8
Benefits and Wages	9
Benefits	9
Wages	10
Summary and Conclusions	12
Appendix A. Survey of Lincoln County Work Establishments	13
Appendix B. Methods	26

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Current and Anticipated Average Employment Levels Among Employers	1
Table 2.	Average Percentage of Workforce in Age Groups	2
Table 3.	Average Percentage of Workforce in Racial/Ethnic Categories	2
Table 4.	Methods Employers Use to Recruit New Workers	3
Table 5.	Current and Anticipated (One Year) Vacancies in Lincoln County . . .	4
Table 6.	Employer Pre-Employment Screening Techniques	5
Table 7.	Employer Ratings of Importance of Employee Skills	6
Table 8.	Education Required for Various Positions in Lincoln County	7
Table 9.	Benefits Offered by Lincoln County Employers	9
Table 10.	Entry Wage, Maximum Wage, and Current Employment Among Lincoln County Employers	10

INTRODUCTION

In response to a request from the Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation, the University of Wisconsin-Extension conducted a study of labor market conditions in Lincoln County in the first quarter of 2004. The purpose of the study was to examine the existing and anticipated demand for labor in the county.

Data for the study are drawn from mailed questionnaires with 42 employers. These interviews obtained information on characteristics of the establishments, vacant positions and recruitment efforts, training, retention of employees, and benefits and wages offered in the firm. See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire used in these interviews.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYERS

Among the 42 employers interviewed, all but five were for-profit organizations. Most (67.5%) firms are independently owned, 10% are owned by a multi-establishment firm, 10% are locally owned but franchised, and 10% own branch firms.

We obtained information on the current and anticipated employment in the firm, and different types of employment: full-time, part-time, temporary/seasonal, and contract workers. See Table 1 for the average for each of these categories. The size of the firms in the sample ranged from 0 to 550 employees. Employers anticipate having about the same number of full- and part-time workers one year from now. Approximately three-fourths of the employers have some part-time workers. Relatively few, about one-fourth of the employers, hired temporary or seasonal workers. This figure is fairly low compared to many other labor market areas in Wisconsin. Relatively few employers used contract workers.

	Current	Anticipated
Full-time	54	52
Part-time	8	5
Temporary/Seasonal	2	2
Contract	2	2

As mentioned above, Lincoln County employers do not hire many temporary workers. About 40% of the employers have hired seasonal workers in the past five years and the majority tend to hire the same workers from year to year.

Recent census data suggest that immigration in the Midwest has increased dramatically over the past decade. We were interested in assessing the extent to which employers in the region were hiring immigrant workers. Over the past five years, 8% of the employers report they have hired immigrant workers at some time. Among those that have hired immigrant workers, only one firm hired a substantial number (more than 50) of immigrant workers during this period.

Several projections suggest that a relatively large percentage of the labor force will retire in the next five years or so, as the baby boomers begin to reach retirement age. We asked each employer to identify the percentage of their workforce in various age categories (Table 2). Overall, we find that the majority of residents are in prime working age. Approximately 15% of the workforce is older than 55 years old, which suggests the potential of a relatively large number of retirees in the next few years.

	Percentage
Under 25 years old	15.4
25-34	17.3
35-54	52.0
55-64	12.8
65 years or older	2.5

We asked employers to identify the racial/ethnic composition of their workforce (Table 3). The workforce in the Lincoln County area is largely white, but with a growing number of minority workers.

	Percentage
African American	0.1
Asian and Pacific Islander	0.6
Native American	1.6
White (Non-Hispanic)	95.9
Hispanic/Latino	1.5

VACANT POSITIONS AND RECRUITMENT

Several changes in the region have made it more difficult to recruit workers over the past decade. Rapid economic growth in the region has increased the demand for workers. The aging of the population has reduced the growth rate in the number of young workers, and the labor force participation rates among women have peaked. Computerization and other technological changes have affected the demand for skilled workers in the area. In the following section we briefly examine the current and anticipated vacancies in the firm, how they recruit workers, and the attributes and skills they look for in applicants.

Approximately 49% of the employers report they are having difficulty recruiting qualified workers. Even with the economic slowdown in the state, this figure is low compared to several other regions. For those employers reporting difficulty in hiring, we asked them to identify the reason. Employers are most likely to report that the problem was that applicants lack the necessary skills or were unwilling to work for the level of wages being offered.

We asked employers to identify the position that had been vacant the longest. There was a wide range of positions mentioned and no real pattern emerged. Most of the positions, however, tended to be skilled occupations, such as HVAC service and installers, tool makers, truck drivers, plumbers, etc.

How do Lincoln County employers recruit new workers? We asked employers to identify all the strategies they use to recruit new workers. In Table 4, we report the responses to this question. Employers are most likely to rely on current employees and walk-ins to recruit new workers.

Table 4. Methods Employers Use To Recruit New Workers	
	Percentage
Current Employees	64.1
Walk-ins	61.5
Newspaper Ads	61.5
Job Center	33.3
Schools	25.6
Internet	17.9
Temp Agency	15.4
Post Signs	15.4
Radio Ads	07.7
Job Fair	07.7
Recruiting Firm	07.7
Other	07.7
Community Agency	05.1
Referral Bonus	05.1
Hiring Bonus	02.6

In Table 5, we present a list of the current and anticipated (one year) vacancies among the employers interviewed in this study. The largest number of current vacancies and the largest number of anticipated vacancies are for assemblers, processors, and laborers.

Table 5. Current and Anticipated (One Year) Vacancies in Lincoln County			
	Current	Anticipated	Difficulty Recruiting (%Very)
Technical			
Computer Specialist	1	0	0.0
Engineering	0	1	0.0
Drafting Technicians	0	1	0.0
Other Professional/Technical Specialty	1	0	28.6
Clerical & Administrative Support			
Secretarial/Wordprocessing	0	1	0.0
General Office	0	1	0.0
Computer Operation & Data Entry	1	1	0.0
Receptionist/Desk Clerk	0	2	0.0
Shipping, Receiving, Stock & Inventory	0	1	0.0
Sales, Marketing, and Tellers			
Cashier/Teller	2	1	0.0
Other Sales & Marketing	0	1	0.0
Service			
Housekeeping/cleaners	1	2	0.0
Customer Service Representative	1	3	0.0
Gardening/Grounds	0	0	0.0
Health Care			
RN	2	0	100.0
Mechanics & Repair:			
Vehicle Maintenance & Repair	1	3	0.0
Industrial Machinery Maintenance & Repair	0	5	20.0
Electrical & Electrical Equipment Repair	2	2	50.0
HVAC & Refrigeration	1	2	75.0
Machine Operation:			
Machinists	0	3	0.0
Assemblers, Processors & Laborers			
General Machine Feeders/Offbearers	0	10	0.0
Assemblers	0	1	0.0
Inspectors/Quality Control	0	2	0.0
Truck Driver (CDL)	6	10	50.0
Forklift Operators/Material movers	7	2	0.0
Other Laborers & Helpers & Prod. Workers	20	19	0.0
Other Oper., Assem., Processors & Laborers	0	9	0.0

We next asked employers whether they use a variety of pre-employment screening techniques (Table 6). Employers are most likely to check references, use basic skills tests, and perform drug and alcohol testing. Co-worker interviews are also widely used.

Table 6. Employer Pre-Employment Screening Techniques	
	Percentage
Reference Checks	64.1
Basic Skills Test	35.9
Drug & Alcohol Test	33.3
Co-Worker Interviews	33.3
Job-Specific Skills Test	23.1
Job Trails/Internships	12.8
Personality Test	12.8
Aptitude Test	10.3
Other	07.9

There is substantial evidence that the skills demanded by employers are changing rapidly. To understand what skills are most valued by employers, we asked them to evaluate how important a variety of attributes were in their hiring decisions (Table 7). There were three levels of importance: very important, somewhat important, and not at all important. Employers value many of the standard skills, such as reading, writing and math. However, there appears to be much more emphasis placed on basic work skills, such as punctuality, productivity, safety awareness and motivation.

Table 7. Employer Ratings of Importance of Employee Skills	
	Percent Very Important
Attendance/Punctuality	94.7
Integrity/Honesty	94.7
Listening	92.1
Productivity	89.2
Quality/Customer Satisfaction	88.9
Teamwork	86.8
Initiative/Motivation	86.1
Proper use of tools, equipment, and technology	81.6
Reading Skills	75.7
Speaking	71.1
Safety Awareness	70.3
Ability to organize and use info	67.6
Specific Job-Required Skills	66.7
Mathematics	58.3
Ability to learn and apply new concepts	59.5
Problem Solving Skills	56.8
Writing Skills	56.8
Decision Making Skills	48.6
Ability to interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds	48.6
Creativity	37.8
Computer Skills	25.0

TRAINING

Given the technological change there is a growing need for job training. To assess how much and what type of training Lincoln County employers offered we asked a series of questions regarding their training activities. Over one-third (36%) of employers provide some type of informal training and 54% provide some type of formal training (usually defined as classroom instruction or other than on-the-job training) to new hires. On average, a new hire receives 20 hours of formal training. One-fourth (24%) of the employers reported that they provide new hires with a mentor. Many employers also provide new hires with some type of orientation to the workplace. Thirty-nine percent provided a formal orientation, with an average of five hours of orientation, and 51% gave new hires an informal orientation. Similarly, almost all (84%) employers report they provide on-going training and skill development in their firm. They are most likely to offer job specific skills for this type of training. On average, employers provided some formal training to about one-fourth of their employees and spent an average of \$2,536 (excluding one firm with very large expenditures) on training last year.

In Table 8, we provide descriptive information on the educational requirements for various positions in Lincoln County. College and technical degrees are not required for most service and laborer positions. Surprisingly, employers do not require a college

or technical degree for many skilled positions, such as vehicle maintenance or industrial machinery repair.

Table 8. Education Required for Various Positions in Lincoln County	
	Percent Requiring Technical College or Above
Technical	
Computer Specialists	80.0
Engineering	100.0
Drafting Technicians	100.0
Other Professional/Technical Specialty	85.7
Clerical & Administrative Support	
Secretarial/Wordprocessing	28.6
Bookkeeping & Accounting	30.8
General Office	0.0
Computer Operation & Data Entry	0.0
Receptionist/Desk clerk	0.0
Shipping, Receiving, Stock & Inventory	33.3
Other Clerical & Administrative Support	25.0
Sales, Marketing, and Tellers	
Retail Sales	0.0
Sales Representative	100.0
Commission Sales	50.0
Cashiers/Tellers	0.0
Other Sales & Marketing	100.0
Service	
Chefs & Cooks	0.0
Kitchen Staff	50.0
Other Food and Beverage	100.0
Housekeeping and cleaners	0.0
Cleaning/Janitorial	0.0
Customer Service Representative	0.0
Health Care	
RN	100.0
LPN	100.0
CNA & Health Aides	100.0
Mechanics & Repair:	
Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	0.0
Industrial Machinery Maintenance & Repair	60.0
Electrical & Electrical Equipment Repair	75.0
HVAC & Refrigeration	100.0
Other Mechanics & Repair	100.0
(continued)	

**Table 8. Education Required
for Various Positions in Lincoln County (continued)**

	Percent Requiring Technical College or Above
Machine Operation:	
CNC Programmer/Operator	100.0
Tool & Die Makers	100.0
Machinists	83.3
Machine Tool Setter/Operator	33.3
Welder-Tig/Mig	100.0
Welder-Wire	100.0
Welder-Combination	100.0
Other Precision Production	100.0
Assemblers, Processors & Laborers	
General Machine Feeders/Offbearers	0.0
Assemblers	0.0
Misc. Assemblers & Fabricators	0.0
Inspectors/Quality Control	33.3
Truck Driver (CDL)	0.0
Forklift Operators/Material Movers	25.0
Hand Packers and Packagers	0.0
Other Laborers & Helpers & Prod. Workers	0.0
Other Operators, Assemblers, Processors & Laborers	0.0

RETENTION

The tight labor market of the late 1990s has put additional pressure on employers to retain good workers. We asked employers whether they had difficulty retaining workers in the labor market. Only 31% of the employers reported difficulty. This figure is relatively low compared to data collected from employers over the past decade, and may indicate that the lingering effects of the recession are persuading more workers to stay in their current positions. The reasons for this difficulty were quite wide ranging—too many options, wages, insurance, etc. The average turnover rate in the county was 13% in 2003, which is about average for other areas of the state. Most of the vacancies were due to resignations. Among the employers in the study who had some turnover in the last year, the average number of resignations was 12, versus about 11 terminations and one retirement.

A growing number of firms in Wisconsin were laying off employees over the past few years due to the slowdown in the economy. Approximately one-fifth (21%) of the Lincoln County employers we interviewed reported that they laid off employees in the past 12 months. The average number laid off was 11 and the average number recalled was 10. To get an aggregate picture, the total number of workers laid off from our sample was 86, while only 78 have been recalled. The average absentee rate among Lincoln County employers was 3% in 2003. Among the possible reasons for absenteeism, employers were most likely to report that illness, child care, family or

personal conflicts were the source of the problem.

BENEFITS AND WAGES

1. Benefits

Employers were asked to report whether they provided a number of benefits to workers in their firm. Table 9 summarizes these findings. Almost all of employers offer paid vacations and two-thirds offer health insurance to their employees. Many employers offer health insurance to family members, however, most employers are requiring workers to pay a larger percentage of the costs. Other common benefits include retirement plans, maternity or family leave and dental care coverage.

Table 9. Benefits Offered by Lincoln County Employers	
	Percent
Paid vacations	84.6
Health insurance to employees	66.7
(% employee pays ____%)	27.0
Health insurance to family members of employees	59.0
(% employee pays ____%)	26.6
Retirement plan	64.1
401k/403(b) match	39.8
Company provided	23.1
401k/403(b) plan	25.6
Maternity or family leave (paid or unpaid)	48.7
Dental care coverage	41.0
Disability	43.6
Long-term	30.8
Short-term	35.9
Paid sick leave	33.3
Tuition reimbursements	30.8
Time off to attend classes	35.9
Section 125 Flex-benefits	25.6
Employee assistance programs	12.8
Profit sharing	20.5
Vision care	23.1
Cafeteria benefit plan	20.5
Stock options	10.3
Technology assistance	12.8
Transportation assistance	2.6
Company-provided childcare	0.0
Housing assistance	2.6

Employers do recognize the growing importance of benefits in attracting good workers—62% report that their benefit package has become more important in attracting workers over the past five years. One-third have made some changes in their benefit package and eight percent anticipate making changes over the next year. Eighty-two percent of the employers require new employees to work for a specified time before receiving benefits. Employers estimated the cost of providing benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement, etc.) increased by 17% in 2003 and anticipate an increase of 16% during the next year.

In addition to the standard package of benefits offered to workers, we looked at several other work incentives. We asked employers if they provided flextime—allowing workers to set their starting time for work. Twenty-eight percent said they offer flextime. Only about 13% of the employers reported they offered job sharing at their establishment. Few (5%) of the employers offer tele-commuting or other options that allow individuals to work out of their homes on a regular basis.

2. Wages

The overall wage increase for Lincoln County employers averaged 3.2% in 2003 and is projected to be 3.9% in 2004. In Table 10 we report the entry and maximum wages for various positions in Lincoln County.

Table 10. Entry Wage, Maximum Wage, and Current Employment Among Lincoln County Employers			
	Entry Wage	Maximum Wage	# Workers
Technical			
Computer Specialists	15.34	20.72	19
Engineering	19.77	36.30	14
Drafting Technicians	11.33	18.00	12
Other Professional/Technical Specialty	10.86	21.18	18
Clerical & Administrative Support			
Secretarial/Wordprocessing	9.02	13.97	21
Bookkeeping & Accounting	10.50	15.16	26
General Office	8.20	10.75	21
Computer Operation & Data Entry	8.00	13.75	5
Receptionist/Desk clerk	8.17	11.94	10
Shipping, Receiving, Stock & Inventory	12.73	20.41	15
Other Clerical & Administrative Support	9.17	14.36	7
Sales, Marketing, and Tellers			
Retail Sales	7.42	22.83	111
Commission Sales	11.62	26.81	12
Cashiers/Tellers	5.68	7.00	39
(continued)			

**Table 10. Entry Wage, Maximum Wage, and Current
Employment Among Lincoln County Employers (continued)**

	Entry Wage	Maximum Wage	# Workers
Service			
Kitchen Workers	6.98	11.32	73
Other Food and Beverage	6.00	12.00	50
Housekeeping/cleaners	7.19	9.58	21
Customer Service Representative	9.00	16.67	17
Health Care			
RN	17.04	21.82	22
LPN	13.37	16.04	5
CNA & Health Aides	10.99	13.84	88
Mechanics & Repair:			
Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	12.50	16.77	28
Industrial Machinery Maintenance & Repair	14.47	20.71	123
Electrical & Electrical Equipment Repair	14.47	19.28	24
HVAC & Refrigeration	13.55	18.95	6
Machine Operation:			
CNC Programmer/Operator	10.50	16.00	6
Tool & Die Makers	12.00	20.00	5
Machinists	13.20	19.89	39
Machine Tool Setter/Operator	9.60	13.80	13
Woodworking Machine Setter/Operator	8.00	11.50	16
Assemblers, Processors & Laborers			
General Machine Feeders/Offbearers	9.63	14.41	280
Assemblers	7.25	11.25	35
Inspectors/Quality Control	11.70	17.33	13
Truck Driver (CDL)	11.54	14.27	64
Forklift Operators/Material Movers	12.17	16.18	51
Other Laborers & Helpers & Prod. Workers	9.60	15.44	391
Other Oper., Assem., Processors & Laborers	11.29	15.90	40

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from the Lincoln County labor market study suggests employers do not anticipate hiring many new workers in the next year or so. Many of the employers report they have laid off workers in the past few years and have not recalled all of these workers. Many employers will probably resist hiring many new workers until there is sufficient demand or they can not easily outsource their work. Most employers do not report much difficulty in hiring, although low wages offered in some businesses can be an obstacle.

Lincoln County employers are relying increasingly on a skilled and trained workforce. Many employers are currently offering formal training programs for their workers, but the training is largely job-specific and is not available to a wide range of workers. Increasing efforts to provide formal training will become increasingly important for many employers in the region. By far, the largest demand for workers is for positions requiring very little training, education or experience. Efforts to increase productivity of these workers will also require substantial investments in training. Employers in the region tend to emphasize the importance of soft skills, such as attendance, teamwork and honesty rather than hard skills, such as reading, writing and even computer skills.

Compared to many other regions of the state, Lincoln County employers are less likely to offer many basic benefits, such as health insurance, disability insurance and paid vacations. Employers do recognize, however, the growing importance of benefits in attracting good workers. Many employers have made or plan to make changes in their benefit packages. But the increasing cost of health insurance constrains many employers.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY OF LINCOLN COUNTY WORK ESTABLISHMENTS

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

Q1. Which category best describes this establishment?

- 1. For-profit organization
- 2. Government organization (including public educational institutions)
- 3. Other non-profit organization
- 4. Other (please specify _____)

Q2. Which description best fits this establishment's situation.

- 1. It is an independent, single establishment firm.
- 2. It is owned by a multi-establishment firm.
- 3. It is locally owned, but franchised to offer "brand-name" products or services.
- 4. It owns one or more branch establishments besides the one at this location.
- 5. It is a franchise that sells the right to use its concept to one or more franchisees.

Q3. What is your establishment's main product or service? Please describe this activity as specifically as possible. _____

Q4. In what year did it begin operations in this community? 19__

All of the following questions refer to your establishment only.

Q5. What are the current number of employees working in your establishment now and the expected numbers one year from now, and the number five years ago in each of the following categories?

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Anticipated 1 Year</u>
Full-time payroll employees	_____	_____
Part-time (<35 hours/week) payroll employees	_____	_____
Temporary/seasonal employees (hired for a specific time period)	_____	_____
Contract workers (hired for specific job/employed by another firm)	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____

Q6. Over the past five years, have you used "staffing"(temporary) agencies for hiring temporary workers?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

Q7. During the past five years, have you used temporary employees as a recruitment method for locating permanent employees?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

Q8. During the past five years, have you hired any seasonal workers for a specific time period, such as the summer?

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No
- ___ 3. Don't know

Q8a. If yes, are you generally able to retain the same workers from year to year?

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No
- ___ 3. Don't know

Q9. During the past five years, have you hired any immigrant workers (defined as someone who was not born in the United States and did not have their citizenship when you hired them)

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No
- ___ 3. Don't know

Q9a. If yes, how many immigrant workers have you hired? _____

Q10. During the past five years, have you hired any guest workers (defined as someone who has a H1 visa)?

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No
- ___ 3. Don't know

Q10a. If yes, please identify their country or origin and the number from each country.

Country	#
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Q11. Please estimate what percentage of your workforce is in the following age categories.

	Percent
1. Under 25 years old	_____
2. 25-34	_____
3. 35-54	_____
4. 55-64	_____
5. 65 years or older	_____

Q12. Please estimate what percentage of your workforce is in the following racial/ethnic categories.

	Percent
African American	_____
Asian and Pacific Islander	_____
Native American	_____
White (Non-Hispanic)	_____
Hispanic/Latino	_____
Other	_____

B. VACANT POSITIONS AND RECRUITMENT

Q13. Are qualified workers easy to **recruit** in this labor market (within an hour's commuting distance)?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q13a. If no, what specific types of employees are you having difficulty finding? _____

Q13b. What have you done differently in the past three years to recruit workers? _____

Q13c. What do you consider the most important reason for this difficulty?

- 1. Too few applicants
- 2. Applicants lack necessary skills
- 3. Applicants unwilling to work for the wages/benefits offered
- 4. Applicants unwilling to accept working conditions/requirements
- 5. Other (please specify _____)

Q14. Among positions that do not require a college degree, which position has been vacant for the longest period of time (leave blank if no vacancies) ? _____

Q14a. How many weeks has this position been vacant? _____ weeks

Q14b. Why is this position vacant?

- 1. New position
- 2. Previous employee left
- 3. Previous employee was fired
- 4. Other reason (please specify _____)

Q15. Which of the following methods do you normally use to recruit new workers? (check all methods that apply and underline the three most effective strategies)

- 1. Post help-wanted signs
- 2. List advertisements in newspapers
- 3. Consider walk-ins without referrals
- 4. Referrals from Job Center
- 5. Referrals from temp/staffing agency
- 6. Referrals from a community agency
- 7. Referrals from schools
- 8. Referrals from employee in your firm
- 9. Used recruiting firm
- 10. Internet
- 11. Job fair
- 12. Hiring bonuses
- 13. Referral bonuses
- 14. Television advertising
- 15. Radio advertising
- 16. Other sources (please specify _____)
- 17. Don't know

The next few questions are about some factors that might or might not be important in your evaluation of a prospective employee.

Q16. Do you use any of the following pre-employment screening techniques?

- 1. Basic skills testing
- 2. Aptitude testing
- 3. Job specific skills testing
- 4. Personality testing
- 5. Drug & alcohol testing
- 6. Reference checks
- 7. Job trails/internships
- 8. Co-worker/team member interviews
- 9. Other (please specify _____)

Q17. How important are the following attributes in selecting employees?

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not at all Important</u>
1. Reading skills	1	2	3
2. Writing skills	1	2	3
3. Mathematics	1	2	3
4. Speaking	1	2	3
5. Listening	1	2	3
6. Attendance/punctuality	1	2	3
7. Productivity	1	2	3
8. Initiative/motivation	1	2	3
9. Integrity/honesty	1	2	3
10. Quality/customer satisfaction	1	2	3
11. Teamwork	1	2	3
12. Ability to interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds	1	2	3
13. Ability to organize and use information	1	2	3
14. Problem solving skills	1	2	3
15. Creativity	1	2	3
16. Decision making skills	1	2	3
17. Ability to learn and apply new concepts	1	2	3
18. Proper use of tools, equipment, and technology	1	2	3
19. Safety awareness	1	2	3
20. Computer skills	1	2	3
21. Specific skills required for job	1	2	3
22. Other –specify below			
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3

Q18. Do you customarily use a probationary period when hiring new workers?

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No
- ___ 3. Don't know

Q19. Do starting salaries/wages vary for individuals in the same position based on the applicant/s skills, experience and/or training?

- ___ 1. Yes
- ___ 2. No
- ___ 3. Don't know

C. TRAINING

Q20. Have the skill demands in your establishment changed in the past five years?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q20a. If yes, would you say that the following skills are more in demand today? (check all that apply)

- 1. Basic reading
- 2. Writing
- 3. Numeric skills
- 4. Social and verbal skills
- 5. Problem solving skills
- 6. Basic computer skills
- 7. Other (please specify_____)

Q20b. Have the skill needs of this job changed because of: (check all that apply)

- 1. New technology
- 2. More use of computers
- 3. New products produced
- 4. Higher level of product quality
- 5. New services provided
- 6. Change in the organization of work, such as broader job categories or new duties in this job?

Q21. Do you provide any of the following for new hires? (Check all that apply)

- 1. Formal Orientation _____ # hours
- 2. Informal Orientation
- 3. Formal Training _____ # hours
- 4. Informal Training
- 5. Mentors

Q22. Do you provide workers with on-going training and skill development?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

Q23. Do you offer on-site training at your establishment for any of the following (check all those that apply)?

- 1. Basic academic skills
- 2. Job specific skills
- 3. Other (please specify_____)

Q24. Do you provide pay or other incentives for employees who participate in training to acquire new knowledge and skills?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q25. How many of your employees received formal training last year? _____ workers

Q26. How much did your firm spend on formal training last year? \$_____

Q27. Please indicate any areas that you would be interested in receiving assistance in addressing your employment needs.

- 1. Recruiting workers
- 2. Screening or matching applicant skills to job requirements
- 3. Analyzing skill requirements for jobs in my firm
- 4. Determining skill training needs of workers in my firm
- 5. Providing training to upgrade the skills of workers in my firm
- 6. Reducing employee absenteeism
- 7. Reducing turnover
- 8. Increasing employee productivity
- 9. Out-placement assistance for employees who may lose employment
- 10. Other (Please specify _____)

D. RETENTION

Q28. Are qualified workers difficult to **retain** in this labor market?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q28a. What is the primary reason for this difficulty? _____

Q28b. What have you done differently in the past three years to retain workers? _____

Q29. What was the turnover rate (% of positions vacated) in your establishment in 2003? ____%

Q30. Among the positions that were vacated, how many were due to resignations, retirees, or terminations?

- # of resignations _____
- # of retirees _____
- # of terminations _____

Q31. Did your establishment lay-off any employees in the past 12 months?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q31a. If yes, how many workers were laid off? _____

Q31b. If yes, how many workers were recalled? _____

Q32. What was the average absenteeism rate (% of workdays missed) in your firm last year (2003)? ____%

Q33. What are your major reasons for absenteeism? (Check all those that apply)

- 1. Illness
- 2. Child care problems
- 3. Family/personal problems
- 4. Transportation problems
- 5. Poor work ethic
- 6. Other

E. BENEFITS AND WAGES

Q34. Please indicate whether any of the following benefits are provided to workers in this position? (check all that apply)

- 1. Health insurance to employees (% employee pays ____%)
- 2. Health insurance to family members of employees (% employee pays ____%)
- 3. Dental care coverage
- 4. Vision care
- 5. Disability 5a. Short-term 5b. Long-term
- 6. Retirement plan
 - 6a. Company provided
 - 6b. 401k/403(b) plan
 - 6c. 401k/403(b) match
- 7. Paid vacations
- 8. Paid sick leave
- 9. Maternity or family leave (paid or unpaid)
- 10. Employee assistance programs
- 11. Tuition reimbursements
- 12. Time off to attend classes
- 13. Profit sharing
- 14. Cafeteria benefit plan (giving the employee the option of choosing benefits)
- 15. Company-provided childcare
- 16. Stock options
- 17. Section 125 Flex-benefits
- 18. Housing assistance
- 19. Transportation assistance
- 20. Technology assistance (providing employees with home computer, internet access, etc.)
- 21. Other (please specify _____)

Q35. Do you offer flextime at your establishment?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q36. Do you offer job sharing at your establishment?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q37. Do you offer tele-commuting or other options that allow individuals to work out of their homes on a regular basis?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q38. Do you require most new employees in your establishment to work for a specified time before receiving benefits?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Q39. In your experience with workers in this region, do you find that benefits are more important, less important, or equally important to wages?

- 1. Benefits are more important than wages
- 2. Benefits are equally important as wages
- 3. Wages are more important than benefits
- 4. Don't know/no response

Q40. Over the past five years, has your benefit package become more important to attract good workers?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know/no response

Q41. Have you made any significant changes in your benefit package over the past five years?

___1. Yes

___2. No

Q41a.. If yes, what changes have you made? _____

Q42. Do you anticipate making any significant changes in your benefit package in the near year?

___1. Yes

___2. No

Q42a.. If yes, what types of change? _____

Q43. What was your overall wage increase (percentage) for 2003? ___%

Q44. What is your anticipated wage increase (percentage) for 2004? ___%

Q45. Please estimate how much the cost of providing benefits (health insurance, retirement, etc.) increased during the year 2003. _____%

Q46. How much you anticipate the cost of benefits will increase in 2004? _____%

Q47. What actions has your firm taken to promote firms from within the organization?

WAGE INFORMATION

The following table is an effort to summarize the occupational employment of your establishment. We need to establish the wage range, current employment level, current and anticipated vacancies, recruitment difficulty, and desired education and experience for each position in your workforce. For the question on recruitment difficulty, circle the appropriate answer—evaluate whether it is not difficult (N), somewhat difficult (S), or very difficult (V) to recruit for each position in your firm. What type of education, work experience, and special skills/abilities do you look for in hiring new employees? Circle whether an educational level of none (N), high school (H), technical college (T), college (C), or an advanced degree (A) is absolutely required and the number of years of experience you absolutely require. Use blank lines for occupations not listed.

Position Description	Entry Wage	Maximum Wage	Current Number Employed	Current Vacancy	Anticipated Vacancies (1 year)	Difficulty to Recruit	Education Required	Exp. Require (Years)
<i>EXAMPLE:</i> Bookkeeper	\$6/hour	\$8/hour	2	1	1	S	T	5
Technical								
Computer Specialists	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Teachers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Engineering	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Drafting Technicians	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Professional/Technical Specialty	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Clerical & Administrative Support								
Secretarial/Wordprocessing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Bookkeeping & Accounting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
General Office	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____

Position Description	Entry Wage	Maximum Wage	Current Number Employed	Current Vacancy	Anticipated Vacancies (1 year)	Difficulty to Recruit	Education Required	Experience Required (Years)
Computer Operation & Data Entry	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Receptionist/Desk clerk	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Shipping, Receiving, Stock & Inventory	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Clerical & Administrative Support	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Sales, Marketing, and Tellers								
Retail Sales	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Sales Representatives/ Wholesale	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Commission Sales	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Cashiers/Teller	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Sales & Marketing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Service								
Chefs & Cooks	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Kitchen Workers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Wait Staff	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Bartenders	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Food & Beverage	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Housekeeping/cleaners	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Cleaning/Janitorial	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Domestic Service	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Child Care	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____

Position Description	Entry Wage	Maximum Wage	Current Number Employed	Current Vacancy	Anticipated Vacancies (1 year)	Difficulty to Recruit	Education Required	Experience Required (Years)
Protective Service	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Customer Service Representative	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Gardening/Grounds	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Service	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Health Care								
RN	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
LPN	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
CNA & Health Aides	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Health Care Technician & Technologist	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Health Care	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Mechanics & Repair:								
Vehicle Maintenance & Repair	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Industrial Machinery Maintenance & Repair	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Electrical & Electrical Equipment Repair	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
HVAC & Refrigeration	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Mechanics & Repair	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Machine Operation:								
CNC Programmer/Operator	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Tool & Die Makers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Machinists	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____

Position Description	Entry Wage	Maximum Wage	Current Number Employed	Current Vacancy	Anticipated Vacancies (1 year)	Difficulty to Recruit	Education Required	Experience Required (Years)
Machine Tool								
Setter/Operator	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Welder-Tig/Mig	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Welder-Wire	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Welder-Combination	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Woodworking Machine								
Setter/Operator	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Extruding Machine								
Setter/Operator	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Precision Production	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Skilled Trades	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Assemblers, Processors & Laborers								
General Machine Feeders/ Offbearers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Assemblers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Electrical & Electronic Assemblers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Misc. Assemblers & Fabricators	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Inspectors/Quality Control	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Foundry Workers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Truck Driver (CDL)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____

Position Description	Entry Wage	Maximum Wage	Current Number Employed	Current Vacancy	Anticipated Vacancies (1 year)	Difficulty to Recruit	Education Required	Experience Required (Years)
Forklift Operators/ Material Movers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Hand Packers & Packers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Laborers & Helpers & Production Workers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
Other Operators, Assemblers, Processors & Laborers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	N S V	NHTCA	_____

APPENDIX B: METHOD

Nearly 270 labor market surveys were sent to businesses throughout Lincoln County. Many surveys were distributed to small service and retail businesses. UW-Extension staff created a mailing list using information from various sources including Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation lists, existing Extension information, a Merrill Chamber of Commerce directory of local human resource professionals, and the phone book. When possible, we sent surveys directly to human resource directors, lead managers, or owners. Corporations were also given the option to complete the survey online via the UW-Extension link in the Lincoln County website. None did so.

Forty-two (42) completed surveys were returned to the Extension office. Although the percentage of completed surveys returned was somewhat low (16%), the number returned was on a par or in some cases slightly above the number of completed surveys returned in other rural counties that have recently conducted similar labor market studies. It is important to note that eight (8) of the county's leading employers (100 employees or above) completed a survey. This fairly good rate of return from the county's larger employers can be partially attributed to the Community and Development Educator's efforts to speak and/or meet individually with these companies' human resource directors.