

Transportation

Highways

Highway traffic counts on major highways leading into Vilas County peaked in 1978 and declined slightly for a number of years since that date, at least partly as a result of higher gasoline prices and the emphasis on saving energy. In the last several years, the totals have again increased and reached new peaks. Highway improvements on Highways 45 & 51 helped speed traffic flow to all parts of Vilas County, however more improvement is needed.

US Highway 51 is a primary north-south artery, linking Vilas County to Interstates 90 and 94 in south central Wisconsin. US 51 is four lanes controlled access from southern Wisconsin to approximately 15 miles south of Minocqua, and two lanes of modern construction to the Upper Michigan border.

State Highway 70 is the major east-west corridor through the county. Highway 70 provides access toward Michigan's Upper Peninsula and the Minneapolis/St. Paul areas. US Highway 45, traversing the eastern edge of the county, is a second north-south route between Wisconsin's Fox River Valley and the Upper Peninsula and are modern two lane structures. State Highways 17 and 47 provide further access routes. Vilas County also maintains 206 miles of county trunk roads. The following tables are daily traffic counts by month for the major highways leading into Vilas County.

Table 7-1
Daily Traffic Counts (Highways 45 and 47 North of Antigo)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Average	Annual Total
1969	2,340	2,741	2,754	3,226	4,301	5,085	6,332	6,332	4,455	4,044	3,705	2,790	4,009	1,463,194
1970	2,666	2,743	3,020	3,021	4,372	5,343	6,796	6,426	4,934	4,373	4,093	3,232	4,252	1,551,828
1980	3,689	4,031	4,003	4,135	5,989	6,318	7,669	7,224	5,613	5,447	4,849	4,082	5,254	1,917,740
1990	4,819	4,874	5,020	5,599	7,016	7,126	7684*	7567*	6581*	6,133	5,879	4,743	6,087	2,221,664
1995	5,498	5,849	5,807	6,195	8,113	9,014	9,920	8,899	8,110	7,474	6,788	5,879	7,296	2,662,858
1996	5,243	5,913	5,954	6,232	7,983	8,883	9,998	9,352	8,019	7,846	6,901	6,052	7,365	2,688,103
1997	5,361	6,113	5,903	6,342	8,090	8,932	10,243	9,446	8,048	7,931	7,242	6,301	7,496	2,736,040
1998	5,726	6,184	5,983	6,975	8,581	8,948	10,283	9,328	8,514	8,076	7,484	6,608	7,724	2,819,321
1999	5,817	6,626	6,591	6,912	7,032	7,197	na*	na*	na*	na*	na*	na*	6,696	2,443,979
2000	na*	6,350	6,356	7,097	8,840	8,934	10,399	9,398	8,553	7,610	7,735	6,494	7,979	2,912,235
2001	6,334	6,308	6,392	6,771	8,045	9,181	10,647	10,039	8,932	8,543	8,269	**	8,133	2,968,479
2002	6,584	6,697	6,628	7,122	8,954	9,505	11,139	10,236	8,886	8,461	7,963	6,906	8,257	3,013,714

* construction

**information not available(DOT reporting year is December-November)

SOURCE: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Department of Transportation, Rhinelander & Madison

Table 7-2
Daily Traffic Counts (Highway 51 at Merrill)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Average	Annual Total
1969	3273	3892	4054	4445	5762	6726	7856	7973	6044	5466	5076	4265	5,403	1,971,973
1970	3818	4085	4599	5471	6228	7184	8533	8571	6743	6236	5486	4672	5,969	2,178,624
1980	4897	5293	4902	5054	7374	7817	9651	9632	7077	7194	6190	5461	6,712	2,449,819
1990	8775	9024	9260	9652	12281	13880	13731	15287	10907	9478	9568	8921	10,897	3,977,405
1995	11209	12533	11678	**	16378	16921	**	18988	16153	15583	14037	12975	14,646	5,345,608
1996	11534	13161	**	**	15747	18379	21341	20765	17071	17423	13677	13090	16,219	5,919,862
1997	11520	13594	12953	13137	16364	17698	21459	20283	17598	16831	15020	13978	15,870	5,792,398
1998	12755	13728	12666	14791	17731	**	23517	21620	**	**	14552	13640	16,111	5,880,556
1999	12525	14290	13817	17834	17966	20049	22174	24343	15981	16930	15413	**	17,393	6,348,412
2000	**	**	14290	14685	17542	20588	23210	22529	17444	17052	14099	14522	17,596	6,422,576
2001	14046	14254	14450	14209	16592	18374	22148	15615	17732	15884	15645	**	16,268	5,937,853
2002	13370	14067	14188	13347	17180	19661	23196	22395	18849	18427	17012	13534	17,102	6,242,291

**information not available

SOURCE: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Department of Transportation, Rhinelander and Madison

Table 7-3
Highway Mileage by System for Vilas County
(as of January 1)

Year	State Trunk System	County Trunk System	Local Roads (City/village/town)	Other Roads (Parks, Forests)	Total (All Systems)
1971					1484.0
1972					1492.3
1974					1518.1
1976					1515.0
1978					1520.3
1980					1518.4
1982					1547.8
1988	136.13	205.84	1112.04	115.46	1569.47
1990	136.28	205.84	1111.77	151.01	1604.90
1992	136.28	205.84	1114.08	166.15	1622.35
1994	133.24	204.21	1117.43	198.75	1653.63
1997	133.30	204.21	1118.08	198.65	1654.24
2001	133.26	204.21	1124.17	61.58	1523.22

Source: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Wisconsin Blue Book, 1989-90, 1991-92, 1993-94, 1995-96, 1997-98, 1999-2000, 2001-2002

Table 7-4
Wisconsin State General Transportation Aid Payments to Vilas County

Year	Payments*	Year	Payments*
1978	\$314,754	1997	\$595,045
1979	\$307,163	1998	\$666,251
1980	\$364,233	1999	\$272,383
1985	\$334,422	2000	\$773,241
1990	\$368,885	2001	\$773,241
1995	\$449,940	2002	\$757,773
1996	\$517,431		

*Amount rounded to nearest dollar

Source: Wisconsin Dept. Of Transportation

Table 7-5
Number of Motor Vehicles Registered with State
(as of December 31)

Year	Vilas County			State of Wisconsin		
	Autos	Trucks	Total Motor Vehicles*	Autos	Trucks	Total Motor Vehicles*
1961	4,252	na	na	na	na	na
1970	5,820	1,958	8,282	na	na	na
1980 thru 1990	na	na	na	na	na	na
1991	9,308	7,369	18,366	2,462,669	1,112,614	3,982,901
1992	9,250	7,846	18,776	2,451,276	1,170,784	4,018,786
1993	9,530	8,434	19,741	2,447,699	1,251,440	4,129,519
1994	9,269	8,894	19,990	2,427,092	1,318,568	4,172,462
1995	9,395	9,377	20,800	2,410,804	1,390,709	4,268,618
1996	9,077	9,838	20,705	2,386,133	1,459,282	4,241,260
1997	9,097	10,745	22,046	2,424,510	1,613,454	4,503,904
1998	8,969	10,998	21,937	2,382,479	1,639,265	4,449,217
1999	9,223	11,959	23,431	2,441,008	1,753,542	4,713,643
2000	9,286	12,765	24,326	2,436,055	1,869,479	4,798,056
2001	9,309	13,576	25,426	2,434,982	1,971,694	4,946,305
2002	9,281	14,325	26,191	2,426,922	2,057,992	5,038,541

*Total includes autos, trucks, busses, campers, cycles, mobile homes, mopeds, motor homes, RDTR, SCBS, Semi, SPDV and TRLR
Source: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Wisconsin Department of Transportation Vehicle Registration

**Table 7-6
Reported Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents**

Year	Reported Traffic Accidents*	Injuries in Reported Traffic Accidents	Property Damage Crashes+	Fatalities in Reported Traffic Accidents	
				Vilas County	Wisconsin
1969	232	134		2	1,142
1970	209	128		2	1,128
1975	344	186		0	939
1980	420	201		8	985
1985	494	200		4	750
1990	558	251		5	763
1995	572	251		3	739
1996	602	310		3	759
1997	549	254	383	2	721
1998	531	251	361	2	709
1999	512	278	335	5	744
2000	628	301	427	5	801
2001	591	158	425	10	764
2002	616	172	438	6	805

*Reporting threshold is the minimum set of criteria that must be met before a crash is considered reportable. On 12/20/79 property damage threshold was \$400 combined damage/\$200 for government-owned property; on 7/31/81 damage threshold was \$500 to any one person's property/\$200 for government-owned property; 4/19/88 damage threshold was \$500 to any one person's property/\$500 for government-owned vehicles/\$200 for all other government-owned property; 1/1/96 damage threshold is \$1,000 for any one person's property/ \$1,000 for government-owned vehicles/\$200 for all other government-owned property.

+New information category available.

SOURCE: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Wisconsin Department of Transportation DMV Traffic Accident Database; Wisconsin Traffic Crash Facts, WI Dept. Of Transportation (website)

Air Travel

Air traffic, particularly general aviation, continues to be an important part of the picture in moving people to and from this area. In 1998-99 United Express and Mesaba Northwest AirlinK provide daily flights in and out of the Rhinelander-Oneida Airport and thus serve the Vilas County area. To a lesser extent, scheduled air service is provided to the Vilas County area through the Central Wisconsin Airport near Mosinee, served by Mesaba Northwest AirlinK, United Express, and Skyway Airlines.

In addition to the airports at Eagle River and Lakeland in Arbor Vitae (near Woodruff), there are a number of airports serving private planes in communities throughout Vilas County including those at Boulder Junction, Land O'Lakes, Manitowish Waters, and Phelps. Charter air service is available through most of these. Major improvements at the airports during the last several years have greatly increased their efficiency and ability to handle increased air traffic.

Boulder Junction has a local facility; grass strip, no services, no verification of numbers. .

Central Wisconsin Airport at Mosinee constructed an air traffic control tower and installed 5 instrument approaches from 1990 through 1996. 1997 and 1998 saw expansion of the airport with four boarding bridges for 4 airlines with 25 flights per day to 4 hub airport while 9 air freight operations provide 13 flights per day. A new concourse was completed in December of 1998.

Eagle River Airport has two runways: a single paved runway (4/22) that is 5,000 feet long and 75 feet wide with Medium Intensity Runway Lights, Runway End Identifier Lights and precision Approach Path Indicator; and grass runway (13/31) which is 2,170 feet long and 140 feet wide and is open April through November. Over the years the airport has built a new terminal building, new taxiways, and new hangars as well as a new weatheration system, automatic weather observation system and a ground communications outlet. Future construction plans call for a helipad in 2003 and a new paved crosswind runway in 2004.

Lakeland Airport added VASI to one of its runways; 1992 MALS/R lighting was added; a Localizer was added in 1993 & 1994; while one runway was widened to 100' in 1996. A new 24-hour weather station was added in October, 1998. In 2000 a new parallel taxiway for runway 18/36 was added and the terminal building was enlarged and remodeled. Eleven (11) hanger lots were added in 2001-2002

Land O'Lakes Airport had greatly expanded during the last five years. There are 15 hangers at present with plans to add another 10 hangers. The unique location of the airport (within 1 mile of the central business district) allows walking distance access to shopping, golfing and other recreational activities.

In 1999 a GCO (Ground Communications Outlet) was added for flight planning convenience. In 2000 a new hanger phase included 7 hangers with two being 60' x 60' containing small jet aircraft. There are a total of 35 hangers in the four hanger phases and another 10 hangers will be added in the near future. Future plans call for new runway marking for runway 4/22 (in 2001), a new VASI system for runway 14/32 at both ends along with a REIL system for the approach end of runway 32 (in 2002), an AWOS system for the airport (in 2003) and extending runway 14/32 by 500 feet (in 2004).

Rhineland/Oneida County Airport has also shown considerable growth and improvement over the last five years with the building a third runway, the addition of city water & sewer, the building of a storage shed, a hanger and major terminal renovation as well as the addition of snow removal and firefighting and rescue equipment. Airport improvements continued in 1997 with the addition of a deicing facility and in 1998 the passenger terminal received a new roof and a boarding bridge connecting the terminal to the aircraft.

The following table shows general runway length and air operations.

Table 7-7				
North Central Wisconsin Airports				
Location	Runway Length(s)	No. of Operations for 12 months*	Total Air Carrier Enplanements***	
Eagle River	4/22 - 5000 13/31 - 2170	1990 - 2,524 1991 - 2,868 1992 - 3,152 1993 - 3,503 1994 - 3,649 1995 - 3,438 1996 - 3,274 1997 - 3,368 1998 - 3,688 1999 - 2000 - 2001 - 23,500 2002 - 25,000	1991 - 354 1992 - 367 1993 - 399 1994 - 448 1995 - 498 1996 - 543 1997 - na 1998 - na 1999 - 2000 - 2001 - 500 2002 - 500	
Lakeland Airport Noble F. Lee Memorial Field	18/36 - 5,150 10/28 - 3,600		Air Carrier Enplanements 1997 - <1,000 1998 - <1,000 1999 - <1,000 2000 - <1,000 2001 - <1,000 2002 - <1,000	Non-Air Carrier Enplanements 1991 - 24,487 1992 - 23,771 1993 - 27,514 1994 - 28,599 1995 - 26,064 1996 - 13,893 1997 - 14,136 1998 - 11,549 1999 - na 2000 - na 2001 - 8,071 2002 - 9,120
Land O'Lakes	3,800	1990 - na 1991 - na 1992 - na 1993 - na 1994 - na 1995 - na 1996 - na 1997 - na 1998 - na 1999 - 2000 - 2001 - 2002 -	1990 -na 1991 - na 1992 - na 1993 - na 1994 - na 1995 -na 1996 - na 1997 - na 1998 - na 1999 - 2000 - 2001 - 2002 -	

**Table 7-7
North Central Wisconsin Airports**

Manitowish Waters	3,500 & 3,300	1990 - 2,500 1991 - 2,700 1992 - 2,700 1993 - 2,900 1994 - 3,000 1995 - 3,300 1996 - 3,500 1997 - 4,500 1998 - 5,500 1999 - 7,500 2000 - 7,500 2001 - 2002 -	
Boulder Junction	3,800 & 3,200	1990 - 1,000 (est) 1991 - 1,000 (est) 1992 - 1,000 (est) 1993 - 1,000 (est) 1994 - 1,000 (est) 1995 - 1,000 (est) 1996 - 1,000 (est) 1997 - 1,000 (est) 1998 - 1,000 (est) 1999 - 1,000 (est) 2000 - 1,000 (est) 2001 - 1,000 (est) 2002 - 1,000 (est)	
Rhineland - Oneida County	6,800 & 4524	1990 - 31,240 1991 - 31,864 1992 - 30,982 1993 - 28,548 1994 - 30,024 1995 - 29,886 1996 - 29,832 1997 - 33,400 1998 - 33,476 1999 - 33,500 2000 - 33,560 2001 - 35,600 2002 -	1991 - 24,599 1992 - 28,577 1993 - 30,943 1994 - 32,736 1995 - 31,718 1996 - 34,217 1997 - 37,064 1998 - 39,444 1999 - 42,682 2000 - 40,849 2001 - 26,560 2002 -

Table 7-7			
North Central Wisconsin Airports			
Central Wisconsin (Mosinee)	7,645 & 6, 500	1990 - 37,220	
		1991 - 38,320	1991 - 123,925
		1992 - 38,760	1992 - 136,100
		1993 - 38,999	1993 - 130,188
		1994 - 37,436	1994 - 122,856
		1995 - 41,039	1995 - 115,688
		1996 - 42,486	1996 - 125,154
		1997 - 40,145	1997 - 141,633
		1998 - 37,775	1998 - 151,333
		1999 - 38,437	1999 - 143,535
		2000 - 38,455	2000 - 121,938
		2001 - 38,342	2001 - 130,897
		2002 - 36,362	2002 - 144,615

na - not available

*One aircraft operation is one aircraft movement either arriving or departing an airport

**Runway construction 7/1/96 - 8/1/96

***The total passengers would be approximately double the number of enplanements

SOURCE: Survey of airport facilities

The following table shows the increased registrations of private aircraft in Vilas County as well as within the entire State of Wisconsin.

Table 7-8		
Number of Aircraft Registered		
Year	Vilas County	Wisconsin
1971	28	3,014
1975	32	4,026
1985*	36	4,367
1995*	73	4,999
1996*	69	4,917
1997*	74	4,952
1998*	81	5,046
1999	74	4,582
2000	76	4,633
2001	77	4,611
2002	77	4,516

*Registrations of Regular, Antique, Homebuilt and Municipal (CAP) aircraft

SOURCE: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Bus Service

Greyhound Bus Line is the only remaining bus line servicing the Northwoods area. A daily bus from Minocqua to Chicago (with points in route as follows): Minocqua, 7:20am; Rhinelander, 8:00am; Antigo; Shawno; Whittenburg; Green Bay; Milwaukee; Chicago, 4:00pm. The return route is Chicago, 12:00pm; Rhinelander, 7:55pm; Minocqua, 8:45pm. There is the possibility of connection at Whittenburg with Valley Bus Line.

Railroads

Railroad service to Vilas County was discontinued many years ago and the rails all removed. It is unlikely such service will return to the area. The closest rail service is now in Rhinelander.