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Policy Research Institute
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Economic Trends Report: Atchison

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Foreword

The Kansas Center for Community Economic Development (KCCED) is a joint center of the Policy Research Institute at the University of Kansas and the Kansas Center for Rural Initiatives at Kansas State University. Its purpose is to enhance economic development efforts by bringing university expertise to rural Kansas.

The statements, findings, and conclusions of this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Policy Research Institute, the University of Kansas, or any other individual or organization.

Atchison County, Kansas and Vicinity

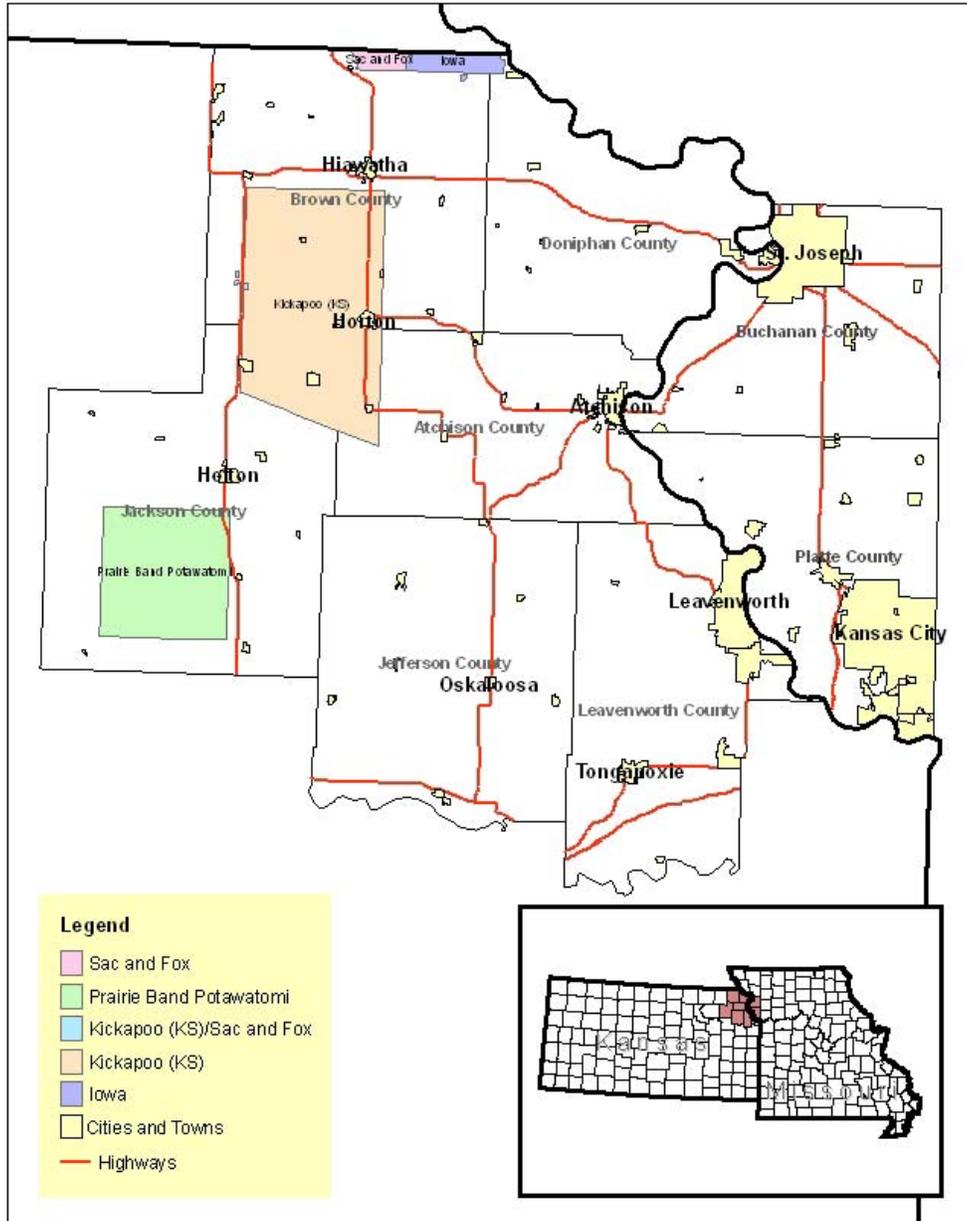


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Economic Trends: Atchison

Introduction

The following report is an objective look at several key economic trends occurring in the City of Atchison over the last few decades. The report is categorized under the following areas:

- Population and Housing,
- Employment,
- Income,
- Taxes, and
- Education.

Throughout the report, Atchison's performance is compared with the performance of the cities of Hiawatha (Brown County), Holton (Jackson County), and Leavenworth (Leavenworth County) and Atchison County overall, as well as the state of Kansas and northeast Kansas counties in some occasions. It is by no means a comprehensive analysis of economic trends facing the City of Atchison but rather an overview of some key economic and demographic variables.

Population and Housing

In every community, population size and economic activity are closely related. Characteristics of the region's population are regarded as indicators of economic conditions and economic potential. Past population changes indicate economic trends in the community and can be compared to other cities, as well as the statewide and national averages. Population is directly related to employment opportunities within the area, wage differentials between regions, and a community's overall economic and social conditions. Growing communities are more likely to adapt successfully to a changing economic environment than areas with constant or decreasing population. New residents in a community mean additional consumers, taxpayers, and suppliers of labor. Without population growth, communities face problems of a tightening labor market, lack of new customers for businesses, a shrinking tax base, and an overall decline in economic activity. Generally, areas of population growth are also areas of economic growth, whereas areas of population loss suffered previous economic decline and restructuring.

Population and Housing: Key Findings

- The population of Atchison reached its peak in 1920 at 16,429. The Decennial Censuses have shown increases and declines with an overall declining trend. The 2000 Census showed Atchison's population to be at 10,232, around 62 percent of what it was at its peak. Recent population estimates suggest that the decline has slowed and population may be stabilizing. (Table 1)
- Population in Atchison declined 4 percent from 1990 to 2000. During the same time period, the population growth rate of the state was 8.5 percent and the nation was 13.1 percent. Of the comparative cities, only Hiawatha's growth rate was less with a 5.2 percent decline. The previous decade, 1980 to 1990, was even worse for Atchison, which experienced a 15 percent decrease in population compared to growth for all the comparative cities. The City of Atchison's percent lost has been greater than the county's since 1980. (Table 2, Figure 1, Map 1)

Table 1
Population Totals and Growth Rates
Atchison and Kansas

Year	City of Atchison		Kansas	
	Population Total	Growth Rate	Population Total	Growth Rate
1910	15,722		1,690,949	
1920	16,429	4.5	1,769,257	4.6
1930	12,630	-23.1	1,880,999	6.3
1940	13,024	3.1	1,801,028	-4.3
1950	12,648	-2.9	1,905,299	5.8
1960	12,792	1.1	2,178,611	14.3
1970	12,529	-2.1	2,249,071	3.2
1980	12,565	0.3	2,364,236	5.1
1990	10,656	-15.2	2,477,588	4.8
1991*	10,716	0.6	2,498,722	0.9
1992*	10,726	0.1	2,532,394	1.3
1993*	10,760	0.3	2,556,547	1.0
1994*	10,641	-1.1	2,580,513	0.9
1995*	10,641	0.0	2,601,007	0.8
1996*	10,665	0.2	2,614,554	0.5
1997*	10,623	-0.4	2,635,292	0.8
1998*	10,636	0.1	2,660,598	1.0
1999*	10,617	-0.2	2,678,338	0.7
2000	10,232	-3.6	2,688,424	0.4
2001*	10,207	-0.2	2,700,453	0.4
2002*	10,143	-0.6	2,711,769	0.4
2003*	10,111	-0.3	2,723,507	0.4

* Estimates

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

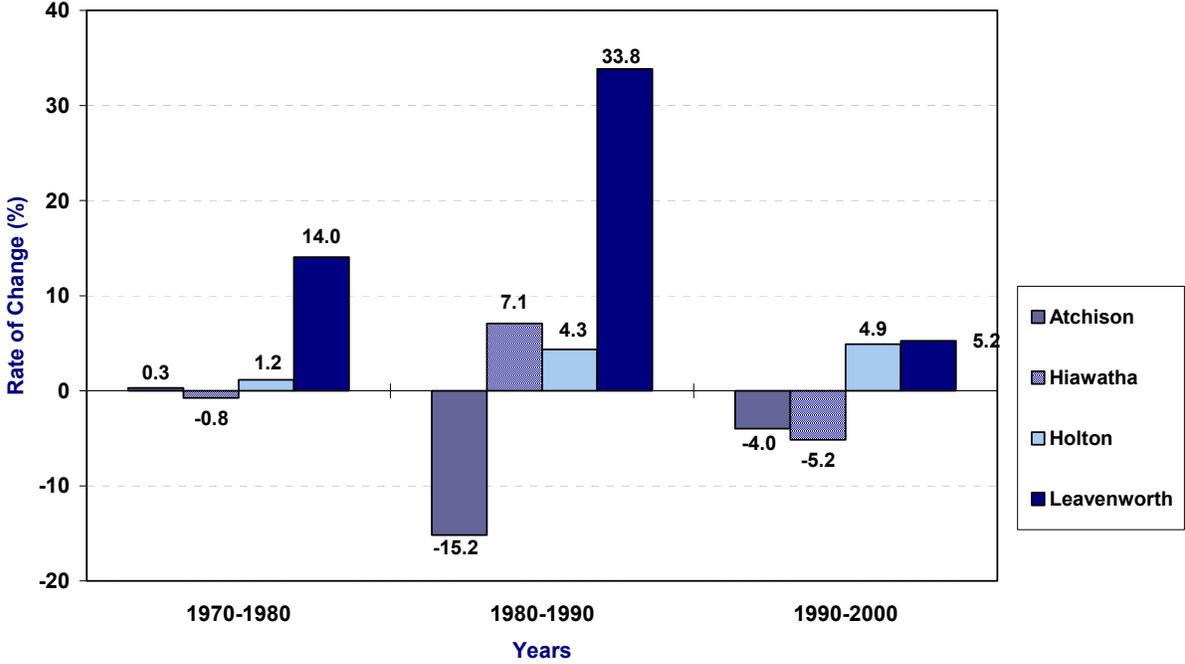
Table 2
Population Growth Rates
Atchison, Comparative Cities, County, Kansas, and U.S.
1970-2000

<u>Year</u>	<u>1970-1980</u>	<u>1980-1990</u>	<u>1990-2000</u>
Atchison	0.3%	-15.2%	-4.0%
Hiawatha	-0.8%	7.1%	-5.2%
Holton	1.2%	4.3%	4.9%
Leavenworth	14.0%	33.8%	5.2%
Atchison County	-4.0%	-8.0%	-0.9%
Kansas	5.1%	4.8%	8.5%
United States	11.4%	9.8%	13.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

- The largest age group segment in the City of Atchison in 2000 was made up of people in the 25-44 year-old range, though this was down slightly percentage-wise since 1990 (from 24 percent then to 23.5 percent in 2000). The cohort which grew the most in the last decade was the 18-24 year-olds: in 1990 their numbers stood at 1,267, by 2000 this had grown to 1,416. (Table 3a)
- The trend for the City of Atchison mostly follows the trend for Kansas with regards to age groups as a percentage of total population. The 18 to 24 year olds as a percentage of total population for Kansas remained stable and increased for Atchison, while the 5-17 year olds increased as a percentage of total population for Kansas and declined for Atchison. (Table 3b, Figure 2)
- From 1990 to 2000, the percentage of owner-occupied housing in Atchison remained fairly stable from 61.4 to 61.0 percent of total housing. Renter-occupied housing increased slightly from 29.5 to 30.6 percent, indicating the growth of younger people (18-24) in the community. Vacant housing declined from 1990 to 2000. Atchison has a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing compared to Hiawatha, Holton and Leavenworth and a lower percentage compared to the county. (Table 4)

Figure 1
Rates of Population Change
Atchison and Comparative Cities
1970-2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

Table 3a
Population by Selected Age Groups
Atchison and Kansas
1990-2000

Age Groups:		0-4	5-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65 and Over
City of Atchison	1990	716	2,195	1,267	2,557	1,941	1,980
	2000	632	1,995	1,416	2,407	1,991	1,791
Kansas	1990	188,390	473,224	254,493	774,499	444,397	342,571
	2000	188,708	524,285	275,592	769,204	574,400	356,229

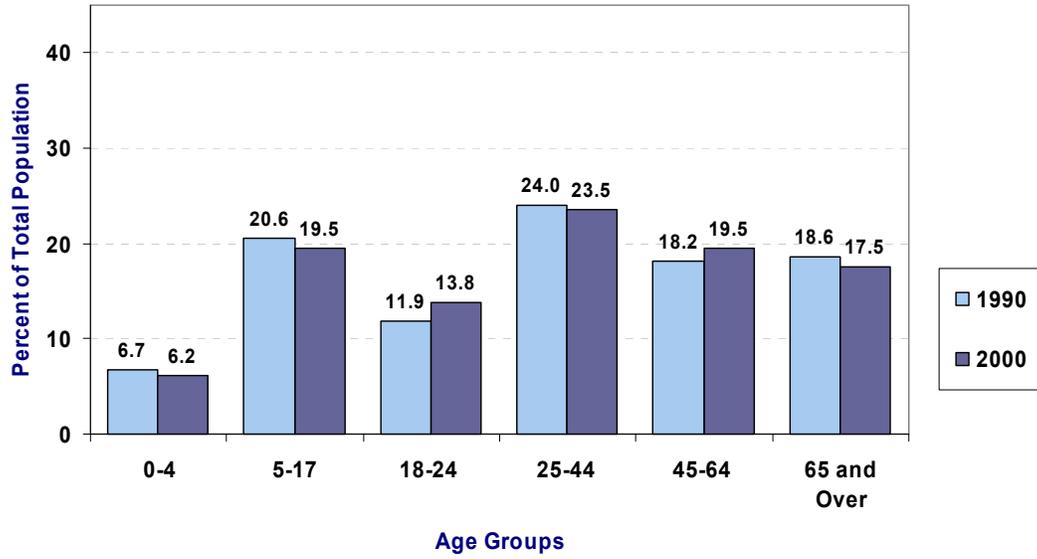
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

Table 3b
Population by Selected Age Groups as Percent of Total
Atchison and Kansas
1990-2000

Age Groups:		0-4	5-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65 and Over
City of Atchison	1990	6.7%	20.6%	11.9%	24.0%	18.2%	18.6%
	2000	6.2%	19.5%	13.8%	23.5%	19.5%	17.5%
Kansas	1990	7.6%	19.1%	10.3%	31.3%	17.9%	13.8%
	2000	7.0%	19.5%	10.3%	28.6%	21.4%	13.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

Figure 2
Population by Age Group
as Percent of Total Population
City of Atchison: 1990 and 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

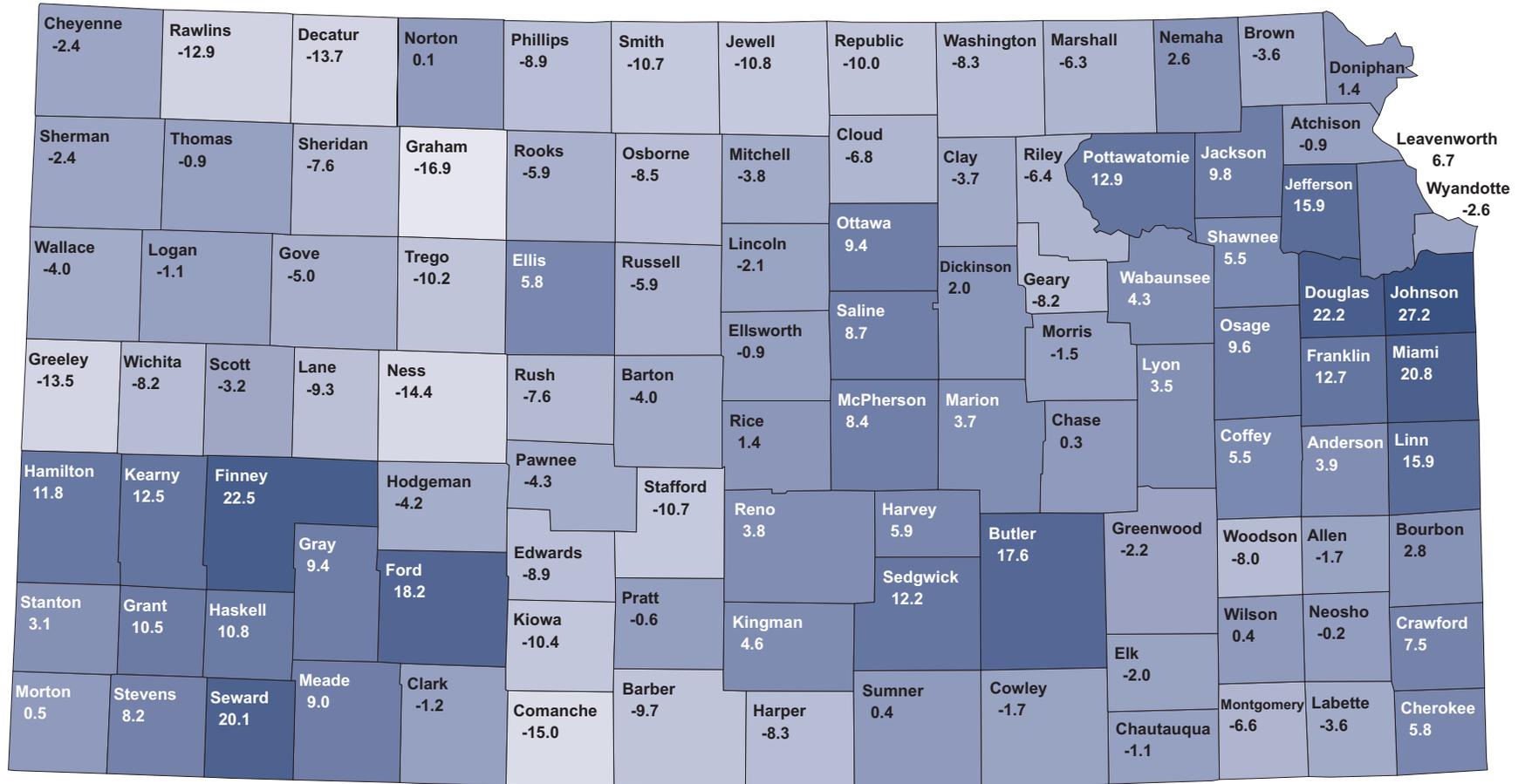
Table 4
Percent Types of Housing
Atchison, Comparative Cities, and County
1990-2000

	1990			2000		
	<u>Owner-Occupied</u>	<u>Renter-Occupied</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>Owner-Occupied</u>	<u>Renter-Occupied</u>	<u>Vacant</u>
Atchison	61.4%	29.5%	9.1%	61.0%	30.6%	8.5%
Hiawatha	61.3%	31.0%	7.7%	57.7%	31.6%	10.9%
Holton	65.8%	27.8%	6.4%	59.3%	32.5%	8.3%
Leavenworth	47.2%	44.1%	8.7%	47.2%	45.8%	7.0%
Atchison County	67.0%	24.6%	8.4%	67.5%	24.6%	8.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

Map 1

Percent Population Change of Kansas Counties, 1990-2000



Source: Policy Research Institute; data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing (CPH-2-18 and CPH-L-157) STF1-A; Census 2000, Public Law 94-171 and CQR data.

State: 8.5

Employment

Economic vitality of every community is reflected in the employment situation. This section compares the key employment measurements such as labor force size and unemployment in the Atchison area with its comparative cities. It also looks at the flow of workers in and out of Atchison County.

The number of people who are either working or willing to work determines the size of the labor force. This number is influenced not only by the size of population but also by the perceptions of individuals that suitable job opportunities exist within the community. Diverse healthy economies tend to offer the widest variety of job opportunities and thereby attract a large number of job seekers, which increases the size of the labor force. The unemployment level reflects the amount of economic activity within an area and how well the local market is able to match the supply and demand for labor.

Employment data is divided into two categories: place of residence (where members of the labor force live) and place of work (where the jobs are physically located). Place of residence data measures persons employed while place of work data measures jobs. The number of employed persons in a region usually will not match the number of jobs. One person can have more than one job and workers can live in one area and commute to work in another. It is useful to look at the worker flow pattern in a region to determine the extent to which people will travel for a job and/or to live in a region. Worker flow data is most useful in determining certain characteristics of the population, such as the willingness to travel for a job (workers in) and the willingness to live in a county (workers out).

Employment: Key Findings

- Between 1990 and 2000 the number employed in Atchison (U.S. Census Bureau data by place of residence) grew 2.2 percent. This is considerably below the state's employment growth rate of 12.3 percent as well as the comparative cities which grew from 10 to 13 percent. In 2000, the number employed in Atchison stood at 4,536. This does not reflect the total number of jobs available in Atchison, but rather the number of people who live there and are employed, either there or elsewhere. (Tables 5a and 5b, Figure 3)
- Another way to break down employment is to compare the number of persons who are employed with those looking for employment. In 2000, the unemployment rate for the City of Atchison was 7.9 percent, the highest of all the comparative cities, and higher than the county and state. In 2000, the first indications of an economic slowdown were becoming apparent, and these tend to affect larger, more metropolitan areas before rural communities. By 2003, the average unemployment rate for Atchison County was 4.8, slightly below the state average of 5.4, (Table 5a, Map 2)
- Employment details can also be broken down by industry. However, due to a new industry classification system, data from 2000 can not be compared to previous years, so a per-industry growth analysis can not be conducted. Nevertheless, in 2000 a little over 30 percent of the jobs in Atchison were in the Educational, Health and Social Services sector. Following that were manufacturing and retail jobs which together accounted for roughly another 30 percent of total employment. The rest of the categories were relatively small, all less than seven percent of employment and most less than five. (Tables 6a and 6b, Figure 4)

- Map 3 shows where residents of Atchison County worked in 2000. A little over 77 percent of the workers residing in the county worked in the county. Leavenworth County supplied the next higher number of jobs for Atchison County residents at 302, followed by Buchanan (254) and Platte (220) counties in Missouri. This data, as previously mentioned, illustrates the willingness of a worker to live in a county and travel out to a job. It also tells something about the ability of jobs to attract workers out of their area of residence. (Map 3)
- Map 4 illustrates worker flow in to Atchison County in 2000; i.e., where people live that work in the county. Worker flow in tells something about the jobs available in the county and about the willingness of persons to travel into Atchison County for a job. The majority of jobs in Atchison County are filled by county residents at 75 percent. The county supplies jobs for 1,947 workers living outside Atchison County. The largest number of workers flow into Atchison County from Buchanan County in Missouri (461 workers). Leavenworth (413 workers) and Doniphan (316 workers) counties supply the next two highest number of workers for Atchison County jobs. (Map 4)

Table 5a
Labor Market Summary
Atchison, Comparative Cities, County, and Kansas
2000

	<u>Civilian Labor Force</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Unemployment Rate</u>
Atchison	4,925	4,536	389	7.9
Hiawatha	1,779	1,669	110	6.2
Holton	1,541	1,490	51	3.3
Leavenworth	13,678	13,044	634	4.6
Atchison County	8,304	7,788	516	6.2
Kansas	1,374,698	1,316,283	58,415	4.2

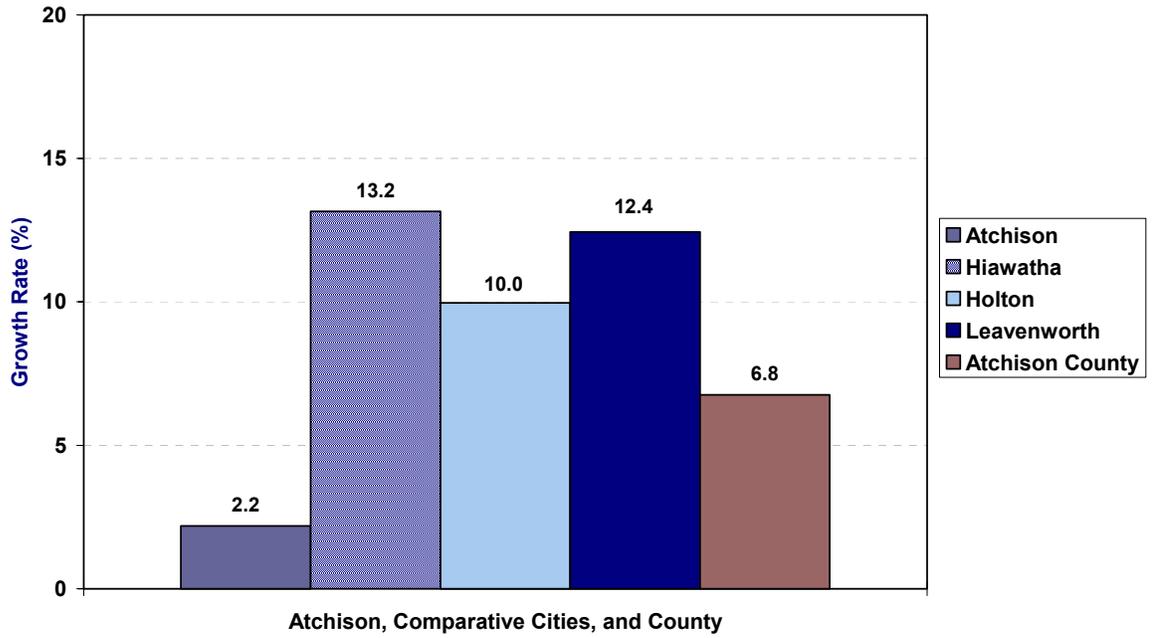
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Table 5b
Labor Market Summary
Percent Change
Atchison, Comparative Cities, County, and Kansas
1990-2000

	Percent Change, 1990-2000			
	Civilian Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Atchison	3.0%	2.2%	13.4%	10.1%
Hiawatha	16.8%	13.2%	129.2%	96.2%
Holton	11.2%	10.0%	64.5%	48.0%
Leavenworth	9.3%	12.4%	-30.9%	-36.8%
Atchison County	6.6%	6.8%	4.5%	-2.0%
Kansas	11.8%	12.3%	1.1%	-9.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

Figure 3
Employment Growth Rates
Atchison, Comparative Cities, and County
1990-2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000.

Table 6a
Employment Levels by Industry
Atchison, Comparative Cities, and County
2000

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Atchison</u>	<u>Hiawatha</u>	<u>Holton</u>	<u>Leavenworth</u>	<u>Atchison County</u>
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	67	40	16	38	326
Construction	200	104	104	842	533
Manufacturing	806	149	140	781	1,409
Wholesale Trade	135	39	41	230	252
Retail Trade	531	169	172	1,547	768
Transp., Warehousing & Utilities	226	104	97	545	403
Information	60	28	39	426	93
Finance, Insur., Real Est.	202	131	70	913	336
Professional	129	73	69	1,107	186
Educational, Health & Soc. Serv.	1,381	436	322	3,312	2,122
Arts & Entertainment	319	195	227	986	529
Other Services	212	113	71	621	377
Public Administration	268	88	122	1,696	454
Total Employment	4,536	1,669	1,490	13,044	7,788

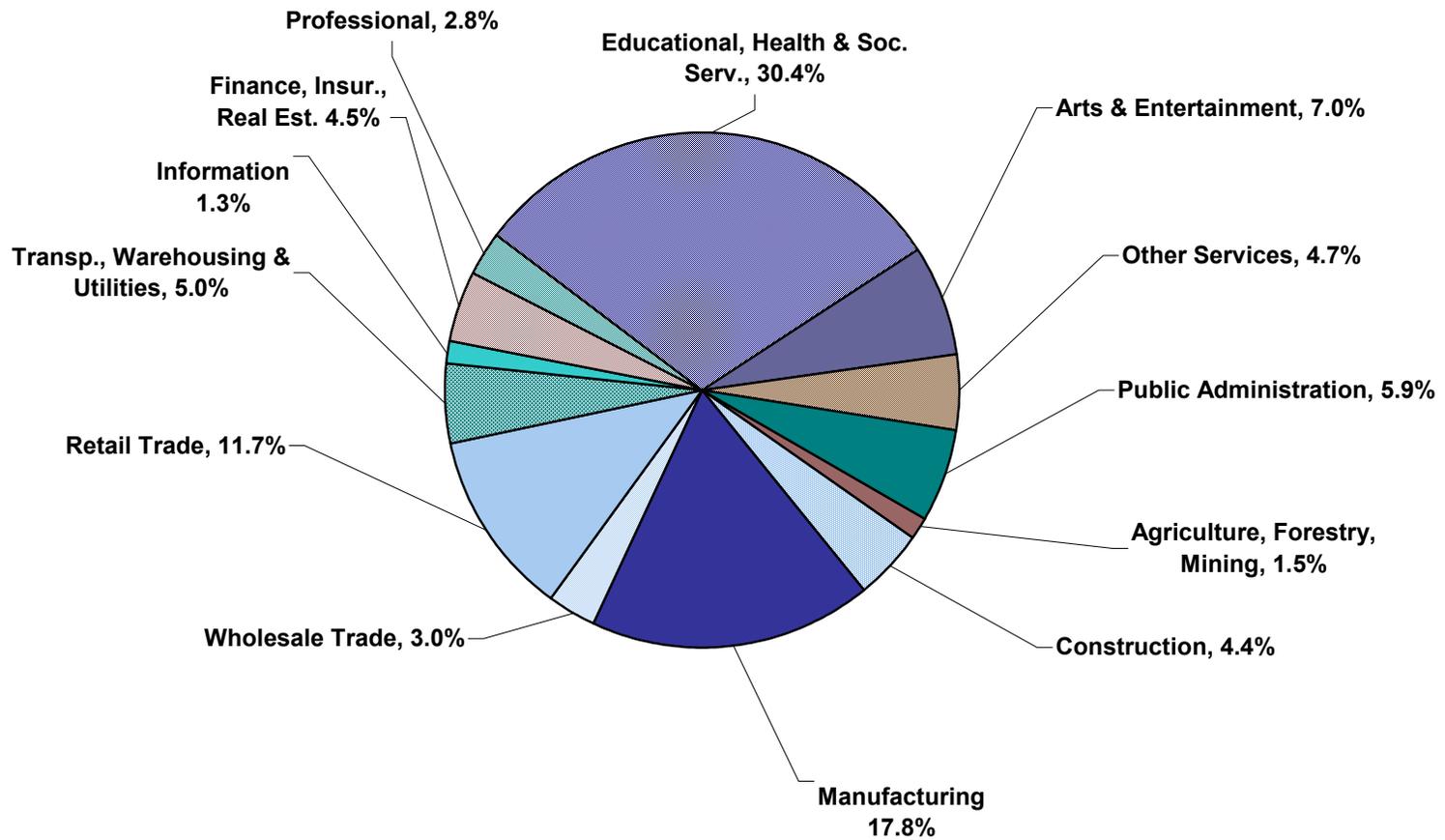
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Table 6b
Employment Shares by Industry
Atchison, Comparative Cities, and County
2000

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Atchison</u>	<u>Hiawatha</u>	<u>Holton</u>	<u>Leavenworth</u>	<u>Atchison County</u>
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	1.5%	2.4%	1.1%	0.3%	4.2%
Construction	4.4%	6.2%	7.0%	6.5%	6.8%
Manufacturing	17.8%	8.9%	9.4%	6.0%	18.1%
Wholesale Trade	3.0%	2.3%	2.8%	1.8%	3.2%
Retail Trade	11.7%	10.1%	11.5%	11.9%	9.9%
Transp., Warehousing & Utilities	5.0%	6.2%	6.5%	4.2%	5.2%
Information	1.3%	1.7%	2.6%	3.3%	1.2%
Finance, Insur., Real Est.	4.5%	7.8%	4.7%	7.0%	4.3%
Professional	2.8%	4.4%	4.6%	8.5%	2.4%
Educational, Health & Soc. Serv.	30.4%	26.1%	21.6%	25.4%	27.2%
Arts & Entertainment	7.0%	11.7%	15.2%	7.6%	6.8%
Other Services	4.7%	6.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%
Public Administration	5.9%	5.3%	8.2%	13.0%	5.8%
Total Share	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

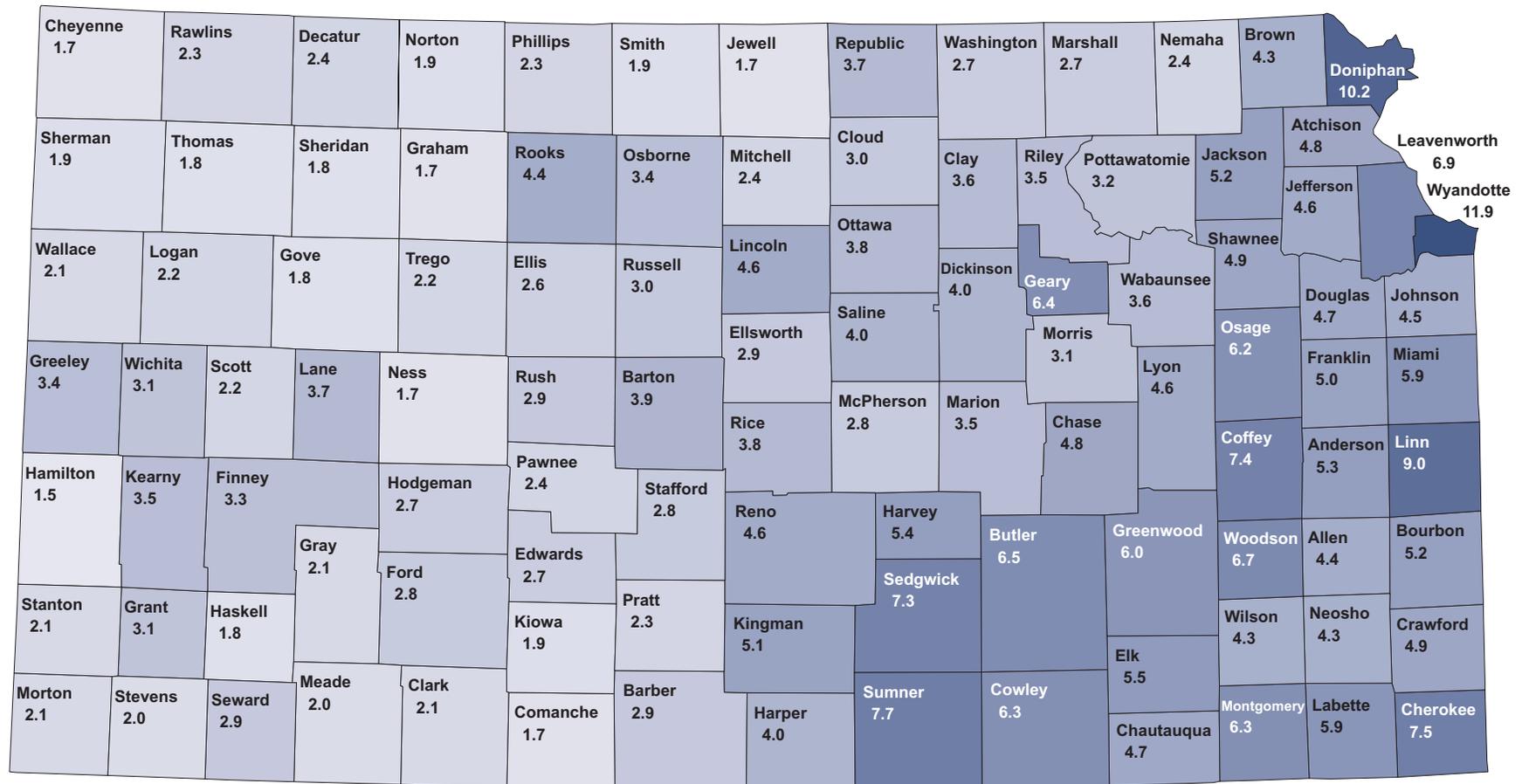
Figure 4
Employment Percent Share by Industry
Atchison
2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Map 2

Average Unemployment Rate for Kansas Counties, 2003

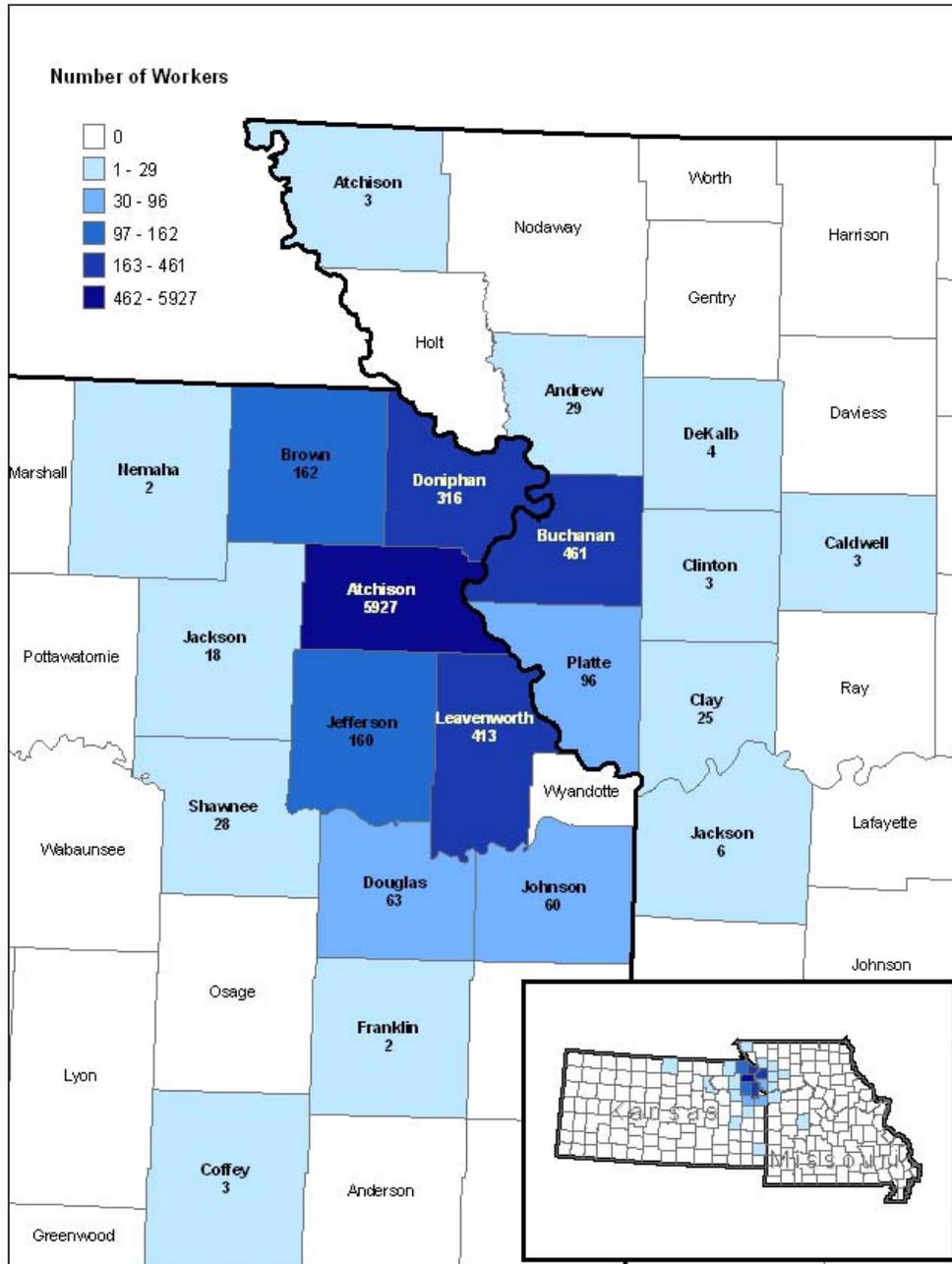


Source: Policy Research Institute; data from the Kansas Department of Human Resources, Kansas Labor Market Information Services.

Kansas: 5.4

Map 4

Workers in Atchison County, Kansas by County of Residence



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 County to County Worker Flow data.

Income

The economic base of the community is determined by the income of the community's residents. Higher average wages may indicate a greater number of jobs in high growth, high performance businesses. Low wage growth may indicate a higher concentration of stable or declining industries. Per capita income is also used as a measure for a region's overall standard of living. Per capita data indicates the relative wealth of the area compared to the state. As the productivity of business and industry increases, per capita personal income also rises.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the Census Bureau define income differently. BEA uses the concept of personal income while the Census Bureau uses the notion of money income.¹ This report includes both; it looks at per capita income from the Census Bureau to compare the City of Atchison with other areas and BEA per capita personal income figures for the most recent county comparisons.

Income: Key Findings

- Per capita personal income (PCI) in Atchison in 1999 stood at \$14,441, an amount considerably less than the average across the state of \$20,506. Of the comparative cities it was the lowest with the next lowest being Hiawatha at \$16,981. This may be explained by the higher percentage of its population in the 18-24 age range; this age group is traditionally ascribed to a higher number of students and part-time workers who draw lower wages. (Table 7, Figure 5)
- In looking at Atchison's PCI as a percentage of the state's PCI, Atchison's PCI is losing ground. In 1979, Atchison's PCI was 81 percent of the state's PCI by 1989 it was 75 percent and in 1999 it had slipped to 70 percent of the state's. Therefore, while PCI has been increasing for Atchison, it has not kept pace with the state or the comparative cities. (Table 7, Figure 5)
- Map 5 illustrates the per capita personal income (PCPI) for Atchison County, which is based on BEA personal income. For 2002, Atchison County's PCPI was \$21,600 compared to \$28,900 for the state. Atchison County has one of the lower PCPI for the region. (Map 5)

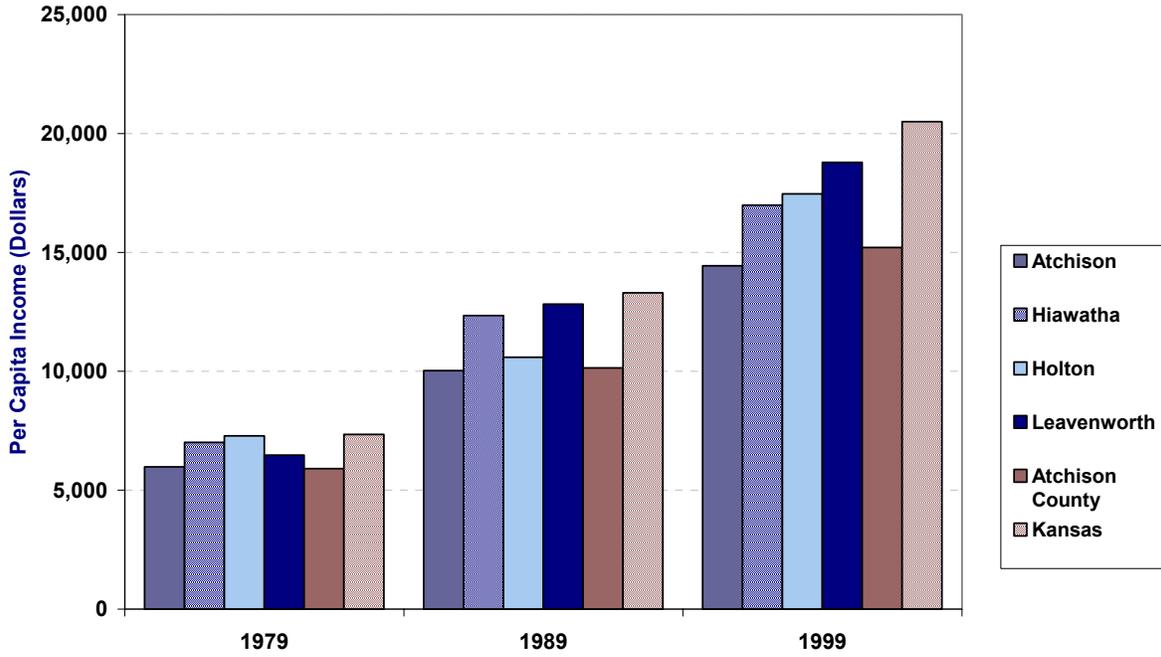
¹ **Personal income** is defined by BEA as the current income received by persons for all sources minus their personal contributions for social insurance. Personal income includes both monetary income (including non-paycheck income such as employer contributions to pensions) and non-monetary income (such as food stamps and net rental value to owner-occupants of their homes). **Money income** as defined by the Census Bureau covers only money received by individuals (with no subtraction of social insurance contributions) and excludes non-cash benefits.

Table 7
Per Capita Income
Atchison, Comparative Cities, County, and Kansas
1979-1999

	Per Capita Income			Percent Growth		
	<u>1979</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>79-89</u>	<u>89-99</u>	<u>79-99</u>
Atchison	5,983	10,028	14,441	67.6%	44.0%	141.4%
Hiawatha	7,011	12,339	16,981	76.0%	37.6%	142.2%
Holton	7,286	10,590	17,459	45.3%	64.9%	139.6%
Leavenworth	6,480	12,827	18,785	97.9%	46.4%	189.9%
Atchison County	5,910	10,144	15,207	71.6%	49.9%	157.3%
Kansas	7,350	13,300	20,506	81.0%	54.2%	179.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

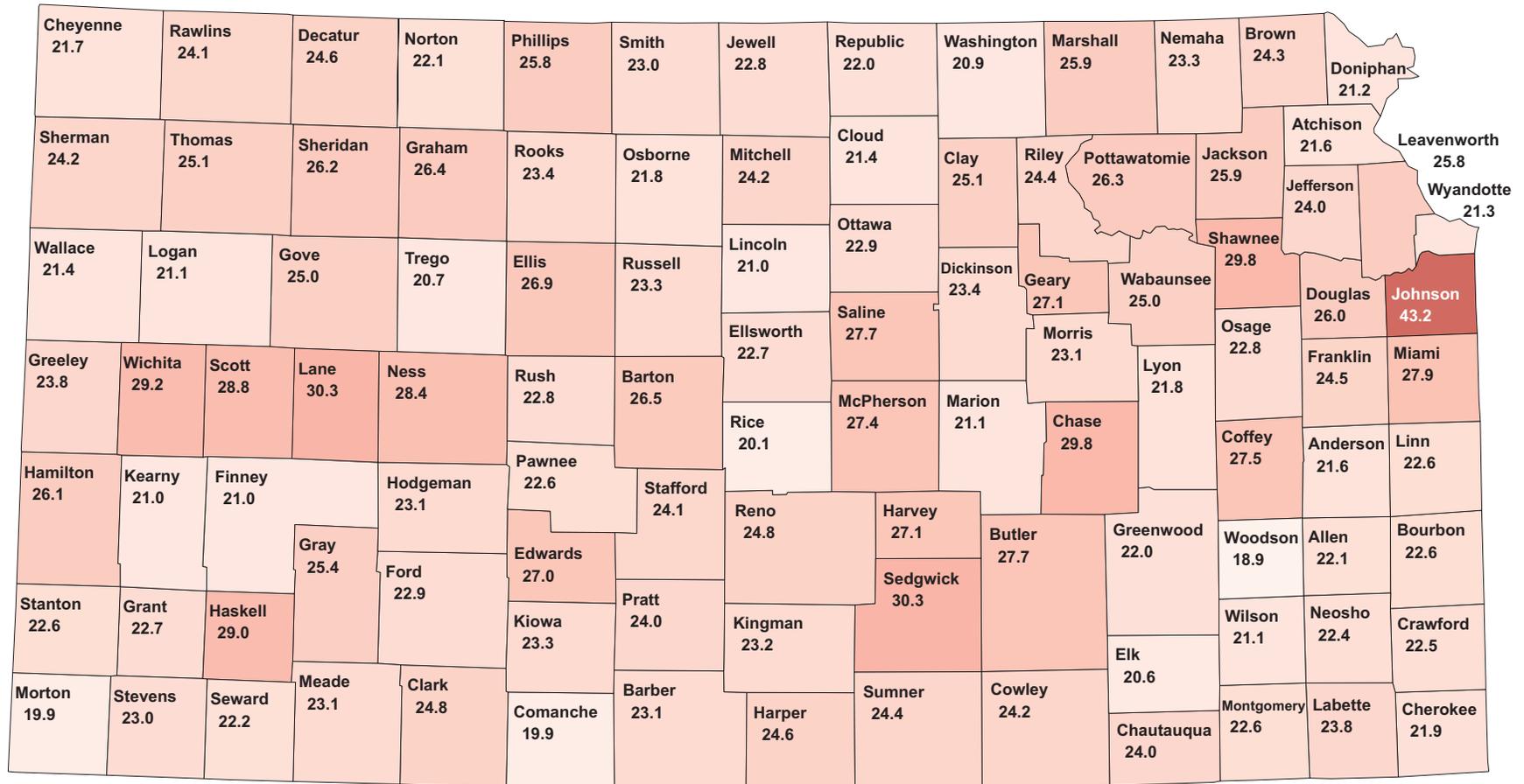
Figure 5
Per Capita Income
Atchison, Comparative Cities, County, and Kansas
1979-1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

Map 5

Per Capita Personal Income, 2002 (in Thousands of Dollars)



Source: Policy Research Institute; data from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, Local Area Personal Income, CAI-3 Per capita Personal Income, <http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/>

State: 28.9

Taxes

Of all the taxes residents pay, the one that varies most from city to city is the property tax. City, county, school districts and occasionally other governmental units use the mill levy (tax per \$1,000) on locally owned property to raise money. Although many residents view high property taxes in a negative light, taxes are necessary to provide services which those residents use. Therefore, high taxes may be a positive situation if they are used wisely to provide for the community in ways which local members deem important and relevant. When comparing the tax structure of one city to another, it is important to keep in mind differences in the level of services between those places.

Furthermore it is also important to think about property *values*. In a city where property taxes are high, but property values are low, simply looking at the mill levy may not give a complete picture. Residents can be content to live with high property taxes if their properties were purchased at relatively low prices. Conversely, low property taxes will not necessarily attract home-buyers if the price of those homes is unaffordable.

An indicator of local business activity is sales tax data. Sales tax data can be used to identify retail trade centers, to identify leakages from local communities, and to track consumer spending. Pull factor data is calculated by using sales tax data. A pull factor is the ratio of an area (for example city or county) over state per capita sales tax collections. Since retail businesses collect the majority of sales tax revenues, most people use pull factors to gain insight into the relative strength of the retail community. The pull factor measures how well retail businesses in an area are holding on to and attracting taxable retail trade.

Taxes: Key Findings

- In 2003, the total property tax levied by the City of Atchison was 57.570 mills. This was down about slightly, 0.5 percent, from ten years previous, but was still somewhat higher than levies in the comparative cities. (Table 8, Figure 6)
- The assessed valuation in a city is the dollar value of all property within the city limits. Over time, the assessed valuation increases as new structures are built, or more land is annexed to the city, or as property values rise. In all cases examined here, total assessed valuations followed population rankings. That is, the more people who reside in a city, the higher the assessed valuation; therefore Leavenworth had the highest and Hiawatha the smallest. In Atchison the assessed valuation grew at an average annual rate of about 8 percent from 1993 to 2003. (Table 9, Figure 7)
- The state's sales tax rate is set at 5.30 percent and cities can levy a maximum of 3.00 percent. Atchison has a combined (city and county) rate of 7.30 percent. Hiawatha's total tax rate is 6.80 percent, Holton's is 6.55 percent, and Leavenworth's is 7.30 percent.²

² Sales Tax Jurisdiction Code Booklet, *Online Version*, Revised 9/04, Kansas Department of Revenue, Publication KS-1700.

- For the northeast Kansas region, all of the counties had trade pull factors in 2003 less than 1.00, indicating leakages outside the counties and the region with regard to retail trade sales.³ The County Trade Pull Factor for Atchison County was 0.63 for Fiscal Year 2003. The City Trade Pull Factor for the City of Atchison was 0.95.⁴ (Map 6)

Table 8
City Mill Levies
Atchison and Comparative Cities
1993-2003

	Total Mill Levies*			Percent Growth		
	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>93-98</u>	<u>98-03</u>	<u>93-03</u>
City of Atchison	57.866	61.599	57.570	6.5%	-6.5%	-0.5%
Hiawatha	45.678	49.994	39.714	9.4%	-20.6%	-13.1%
Holton	46.279	33.840	50.969	-26.9%	50.6%	10.1%
Leavenworth	47.315	48.414	54.534	2.3%	12.6%	15.3%

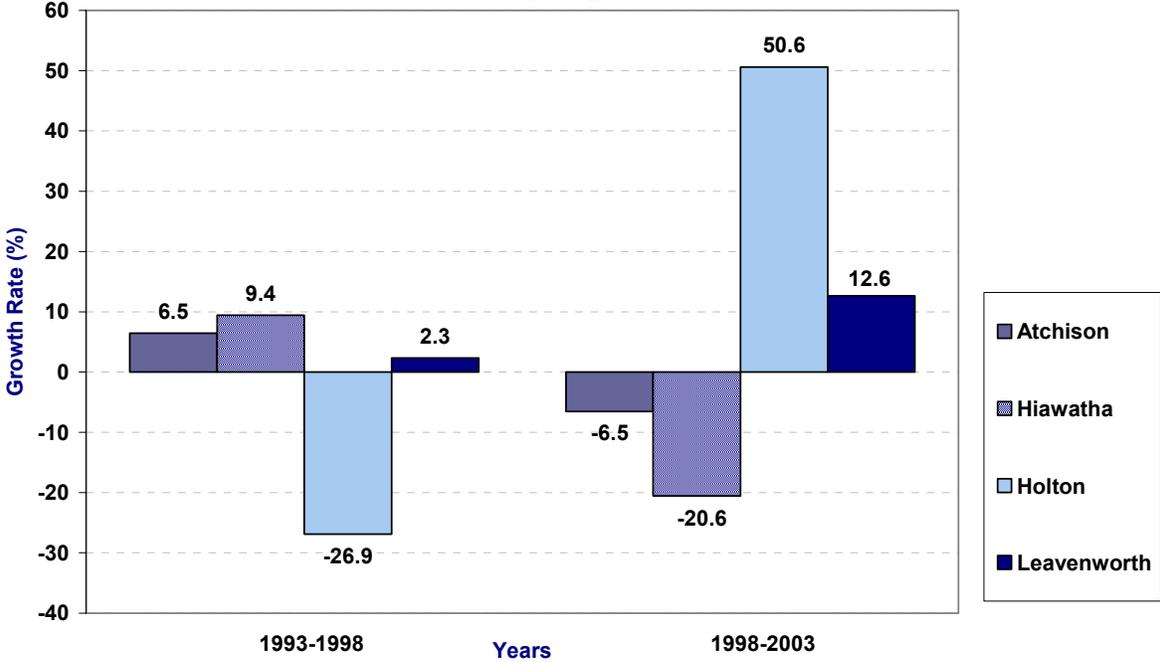
*Rates for the next year, i.e. "2003" = 2003 Rates for 2004.

Source: League of Kansas Municipalities, *Kansas Government Journal*, Jan. 1994, Feb. 1999, and March 2004.

³ A pull factor value *above* 1.00 indicates that a community is attracting more business than it is losing. A pull factor *below* 1.00 indicates that a community is losing more business than it is capturing.

⁴ *A Study of Retail Trade in First Class Cities Across Kansas: An Annual Report of Trade Pull Factors and Trade Area Captures*, K-State Research and Extension, March 2004.

Figure 6
City Mill Levy Growth Rates
Atchison and Comparative Cities
1993-2003



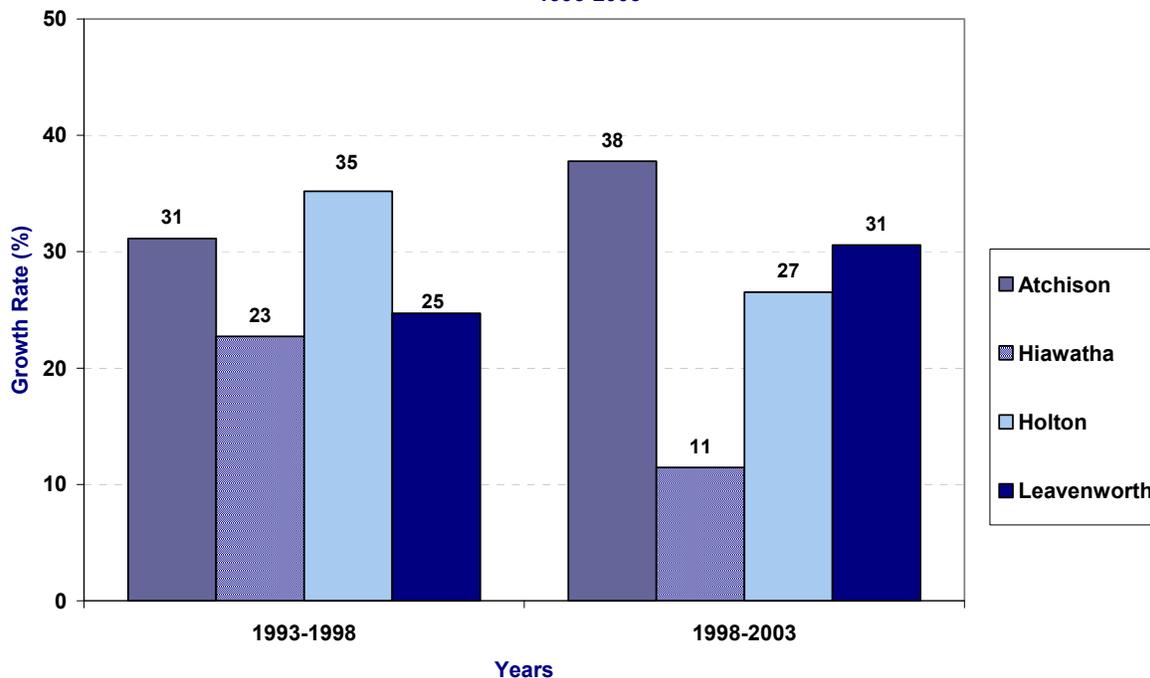
Source: League of Kansas Municipalities, *Kansas Government Journal*, Jan. 1994, Feb. 1999, and March 2004.

Table 9
Assessed Tangible Valuation
Atchison and Comparative Cities
1993-2003

	Assessed Tangible Valuation (in thousands of dollars)			% Growth		
	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>93-98</u>	<u>98-03</u>	<u>93-03</u>
Atchison	30,051	39,404	54,292	31.1%	37.8%	80.7%
Hiawatha	11,525	14,144	15,765	22.7%	11.5%	36.8%
Holton	9,578	12,949	16,383	35.2%	26.5%	71.0%
Leavenworth	99,893	124,581	162,656	24.7%	30.6%	62.8%

Source: League of Kansas Municipalities, *Kansas Government Journal*, Jan. 1994, Feb. 1999, and March 2004.

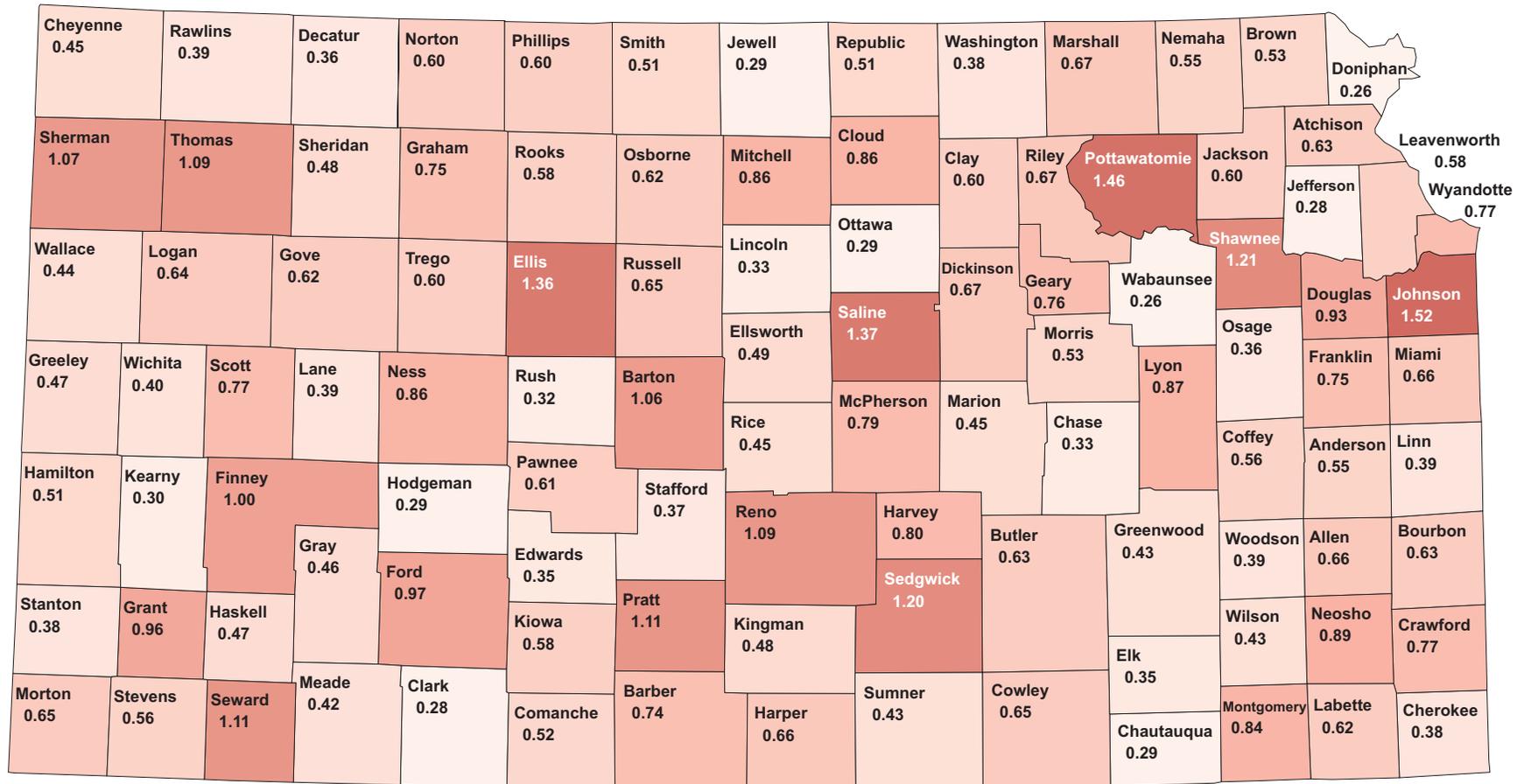
Figure 7
Assessed Valuation Growth Rates
Atchison and Comparative Cities
1993-2003



Source: League of Kansas Municipalities, *Kansas Government Journal*, Jan. 1994, Feb. 1999, and March 2004.

Map 6

County Trade Pull Factors, FY 2003



Source: Policy Research Institute; data from *County Trade Pull factors: Annual Report for Fiscal 2003*, K-State Research and Extension, <http://www.agecon.ksu.edu/ddarling/d2002/StudyReports.htm>

Note: Pull factor = County per capita sales tax/state per capita sales tax. A pull factor higher than 1.0 indicates the county is attracting business; a pull factor less than 1.0 indicates the county is losing business.

Education

The educational level of residents is likely to influence the well-being of the whole community. Communities able to provide a higher-skilled workforce are more likely to benefit from new developing industries. Residents who have a good educational background will be more employable and able to command higher salaries. Employers will benefit as well because they will most likely experience lower turnover and training costs. Individuals with lower education levels have a harder time finding jobs that can supply a living wage and may be more likely to use social services. It is also helpful to know work-relevant attributes of the population, such as years of education, when assessing work force availability for jobs that require certain education levels. Since a region's residents provide a large portion of its labor force participants, it is helpful to know work-relevant attributes, such as years of education.

Education: Key Findings

- The percentage of Atchison residents over the age of 25 who had achieved less than a high school diploma was 15.5 percent in 2000, above statewide percentage of 14. The percentage in Atchison decreased considerably from 1990 when it stood at 23.3 percent. (Table 10)
- The number of people in Atchison who had completed college, whether through an associate, bachelor's, or graduate program, increased from 1990 to 2000, and consequently the number of those who had only completed through high school fell. Overall, the number of Atchison residents who held at least one post-secondary degree in 2000 was around 24.4 percent, making it below the state's percentage of 31.6. Benedictine College is located in Atchison, but it appears that the majority of its students leave the area after graduation. (Table 10)
- The Atchison school district graduated roughly 101 high school students on average each year from 1993 to 2003. The number of high school dropouts each of those years fluctuated from a low of 18 to a high of 70, with the average of 30. The school district has started several programs, such as Project Success, to prevent and recover high school dropouts. The decrease in the number of dropouts since 1997 indicates that this program is working. (Table 11)
- High school dropouts as a percent of graduates in Atchison averaged about 30 percent a year from 1993 to 2003, higher than the average rate for Kansas during the same period, about 20 percent. However, in Atchison the rate seems to be decreasing: its highest level was in 1997, and the rate leveled off since then. (Table 11)

Table 10
Educational Attainment of Persons over 25
As a Percentage of the Population of Persons over 25
Atchison and Kansas
1990-2000

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Completed Less Than 9th Grade</u>	<u>9-12th Grade No Diploma</u>	<u>High School Diploma*</u>	<u>Some College</u>	<u>Associate Degree</u>	<u>Bachelor's Degree</u>	<u>Graduate Degree</u>	<u>Population Over 25</u>
Atchison	1990	697	809	2,717	869	258	592	536	6,478
	2000	320	633	2,286	1,384	251	693	553	6,120
Kansas	1990	120,951	172,321	514,177	342,964	85,146	221,016	109,361	1,565,936
	2000	88,124	149,675	507,612	417,722	99,096	290,271	148,707	1,701,207
<i>As a Percent of Population of Persons over 25:</i>									
Atchison	1990	10.8%	12.5%	41.9%	13.4%	4.0%	9.1%	8.3%	
	2000	5.2%	10.3%	37.4%	22.6%	4.1%	11.3%	9.0%	
Kansas	1990	7.7%	11.0%	32.8%	21.9%	5.4%	14.1%	7.0%	
	2000	5.2%	8.8%	29.8%	24.6%	5.8%	17.1%	8.7%	

* includes equivalency (GED)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing and 2000 Census.

Table 11
High School Graduates and Dropouts
Atchison, County, and Kansas
1993-2003

	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
USD 409 Atchison											
Graduates	76	101	106	101	92	99	94	108	103	107	120
Dropouts	18	40	30	27	70	18	28	26	28	19	21
Atchison County											
Graduates	190	209	249	225	225	250	225	241	224	234	246
Dropouts	40	49	36	36	80	21	36	32	32	24	30
Kansas											
Graduates	26,019	26,481	27,769	26,997	27,931	29,331	30,015	30,592	30,883	31,083	31,545
Dropouts	5,753	6,505	6,680	6,432	6,541	6,156	5,807	4,831	4,674	4,586	3,585
High School Dropouts as a Percent of Graduates:											
USD 409 Atchison	23.7%	39.6%	28.3%	26.7%	76.1%	18.2%	29.8%	24.1%	27.2%	17.8%	17.5%
Atchison County	21.1%	23.4%	14.5%	16.0%	35.6%	8.4%	16.0%	13.3%	14.3%	10.3%	12.2%
Kansas	22.1%	24.6%	24.1%	23.8%	23.4%	21.0%	19.3%	15.8%	15.1%	14.8%	11.4%

Graduates and Dropouts: High school graduates and dropouts for year ending; i.e. School Year 2002-2003 falls under 2003.

Source: Kansas State Department of Education, <http://www.ksbe.state.ks.us/Welcome.html>, September 20, 2004.

Conclusion

Economic data is an important tool of the community economic development process, because it gives community members a better view of the current facts and trends in different areas of performance for the community. However, numbers alone are not enough. The data must be analyzed and interpreted, taking into account the intuition of those within the community as to what the trends really mean.

Overall, the population for the City of Atchison has been declining since 1920, when it peaked at 16,429. Some of the decades saw pockets of growth, such as the 1940's and 1960's, but not enough to reverse the trend. Recent population estimates suggest that the decline has slowed. However, there are several positive indicators that may help to stabilize or reverse this declining trend. First, employment growth, while below the state's growth rate, did grow modestly from 1990 to 2000. Increased employment opportunities will certainly assist the city in retaining and attracting new residents. Worker flow in and out of the county shows good employment opportunities for Atchison County and the region for county residents as well as residents from nearby counties.

The 2000 Census data shows that the city's over 25 population, proportionally, is less educated than the state. This may explain why the per capita personal income for the city, while increasing, continues to lag the state and other cities within the region. Increased educational opportunities may help to foster and increase income over time.

Atchison faces some challenges in the years to come as it attempts to halt the loss of population and not only continues to increase jobs, but to increase better paying jobs. The recent trends in employment and the slowing of out-migration are positive indicators that a change in direction is possible.