



2019-2021

Asset - Based Economic Development: Building Sustainable Small and Rural Communities

Adams County, Wisconsin Asset Map

Agricultural & Applied Economics 500: Senior Capstone Experience
University of Wisconsin-Madison



UniverCity Year

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**Asset - Based Economic
Development: Building
Sustainable Small and Rural
Communities**

**UniverCity Alliance: Adams
County, Wisconsin Asset Map**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MADISON
MAY 2021



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Executive Summary

How do we best develop the county with the limited resources available? This report provides an in - depth examination and analysis of Adams County, Wisconsin, located in North - Central, Wisconsin, to better understand its most prominent assets for economic development.

Students were tasked with creating an asset map for the county that would help make better decisions on where to locate economic development projects and enhance the strategic management of limited funds to promote short and long - term growth. In addition, a promotional “hype - video” was created using Adobe Premiere Pro software to showcase the county’s most important functions for the greater public to see.

Adams County can notably be characterized by the following:

- There are nearly 21,000 residents
- Ranks 19th out of 72 counties in the state of Wisconsin for tourism
- Located 90 minutes north of Madison, WI (capital of Wisconsin)
- Houses 2nd and 4th largest lakes in the state
- The median age is 52, which is higher than Wisconsin and the U.S.
- The median household income is about \$39,000, which is lower than Wisconsin and the U.S.
- There is limited racial and ethnic diversity
- Low worker retention rate: only 43% of Adams County residents work within the county
- Educational achievement is significantly lower than State and National averages
 - 12% have a bachelor’s degree or higher, while 14 - 15% did not finish high school
- Nearly 50% of homes are vacant/seasonal, indicating the popularity of the region for second homes and recreation
- Residents’ top five area of spending, in order, are:
 - Shelter, Health Care, Food at home, Food away from home, Entertainment and recreation
- The trade area has a net inflow of workers, leaving potential to capture dollars from those who commute into the trade area for work each day

Adams County has fortunately undergone an encouraging economic transformation in recent years. However, there are issues that we believe need to be addressed. **Initiatives to promote economic stability and growth in the years to come are listed below:**

- Promote and support entrepreneurial/small business causes
- Pursue investments that promote diversity and competition within the retail and restaurant division which stake a monopoly within the community

- The relative lack of educated residents in the region may hinder economic growth by discouraging firms that require higher levels of education from locating in the trade area
 - The county should look to build upon existing educational assets
- Replace aging residents with fresh young faces by pushing for state - funded initiatives poised to retain local college graduates looking to develop the county
- Produce innovative marketing campaigns that reach a large, targeted audience; recognizing Adams County as an ideal destination for recreation any time of year, ultimately increasing touristic footprint

Overall, despite its small nature in size, Adams County has and continues to use its existing assets in the right ways to foster a stable and prosperous economy. However, in order to ensure a future for its residents and avoid potential economic stagnation, there is work to be done.

Introduction

Where are we now, how did we get here, and where does it appear we are going? Adams County, Wisconsin is situated just north of the renowned Wisconsin Dells and ends just prior to entering the towns of Nekoosa and Wisconsin Rapids, located in North Central Wisconsin. As of 2018, the county population was estimated to be 20,786, with the most populous town being Rome, WI with 2,790 inhabitants. The median age is 52.6. The income per capita as of 2018 for county residents was \$37,194. Adams County houses the 2nd and 4th largest lakes in Wisconsin and is ranked 19th out of 72 counties in the state for tourism. The economy is largely based on tourism and agriculture and was recently recognized as the outdoor destination and sanctuary area during the peak months of the 2020 COVID - 19 pandemic. Adams County continues to work on new assets to promote sustainable economic development for the foreseeable future.



Workforce Profile

Corresponding data is referenced from the 2019 Adams County Workforce Profile, compiled by the State of Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development.

Population and Demographics

Demographic characteristics can give insight into potential demand for products and services within a district. Residents of the county will be the focus; non - residents, seasonal residents, and visitors are not considered in this summary.

From 2010 to 2018, Adams County has been said to have lost 89 residents (a -0.7% growth rate in population), whereas the state of Wisconsin has seen a positive proportional change in 2.27%, and the United States as a whole has seen a positive proportional change of 6.09%.

In Adams County, the town of Rome, displayed the highest numerical positive change of residents (70) as well as the highest proportional change of residents (2.57%). Net - migration, which is defined as people moving into the county minus those leaving, was positive, with a net migration of 4.2%. However, growth due to natural increase (births minus deaths) was significantly low with a value of - 4.7%.

Adams County's median age of 52.6 is significantly higher than the state's median age of 39.2 and the US national median age of 38.1. This highlights the country's relatively older population and suggestively could be a problem moving forward for economic development (particularly if fewer individuals of working age can support the workforce). However, the relatively old population has some positives: the variation can be leveraged by businesses in the area to meet the tastes and preferences of the existing population.

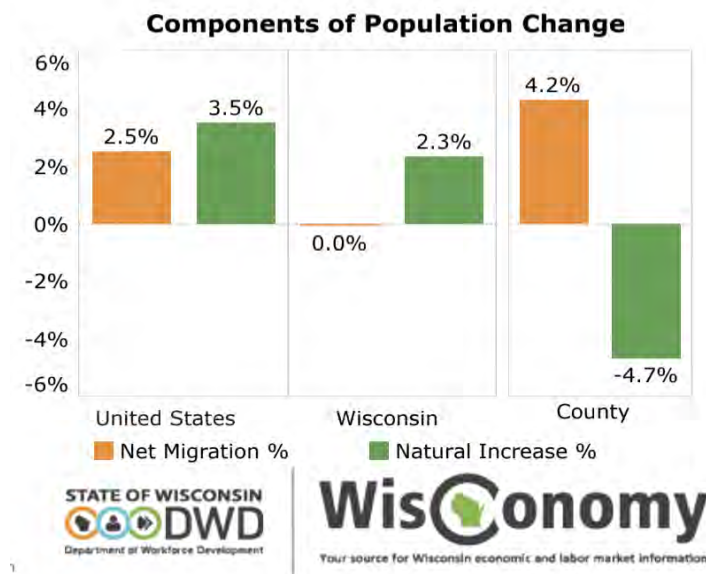
87.2% of the population is said to have attained a High School Diploma, with only 12.8% having earned a College Degree. The county is significantly less educated than the state and U.S. as a whole. The lack of educated residents in the region may hinder economic growth by discouraging firms that require high levels of education from locating in the county. As of the

10 Most Populous Municipalities in County

| | 2010 Census | 2018 Final Estimate D | Numeric Change | Percent Change |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Rome, Town | 2,720 | 2,790 | 70 | 2.57% |
| New Chester, Town | 2,254 | 2,057 | -197 | -8.74% |
| Adams, City | 1,967 | 1,918 | -49 | -2.49% |
| Dell Prairie, Town | 1,590 | 1,621 | 31 | 1.95% |
| Preston, Town | 1,393 | 1,399 | 6 | 0.43% |
| Adams, Town | 1,345 | 1,364 | 19 | 1.41% |
| Springville, Town | 1,318 | 1,295 | -23 | -1.75% |
| Quincy, Town | 1,163 | 1,179 | 16 | 1.38% |
| Strongs Prairie, Town | 1,150 | 1,166 | 16 | 1.39% |
| Easton, Town | 1,130 | 1,102 | -28 | -2.48% |
| Adams County | 20,875 | 20,786 | -89 | -0.43% |
| United States | 308,400,408 | 327,167,434 | 18,767,026 | 6.09% |
| Wisconsin | 5,686,986 | 5,816,231 | 129,245 | 2.27% |

Source: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration

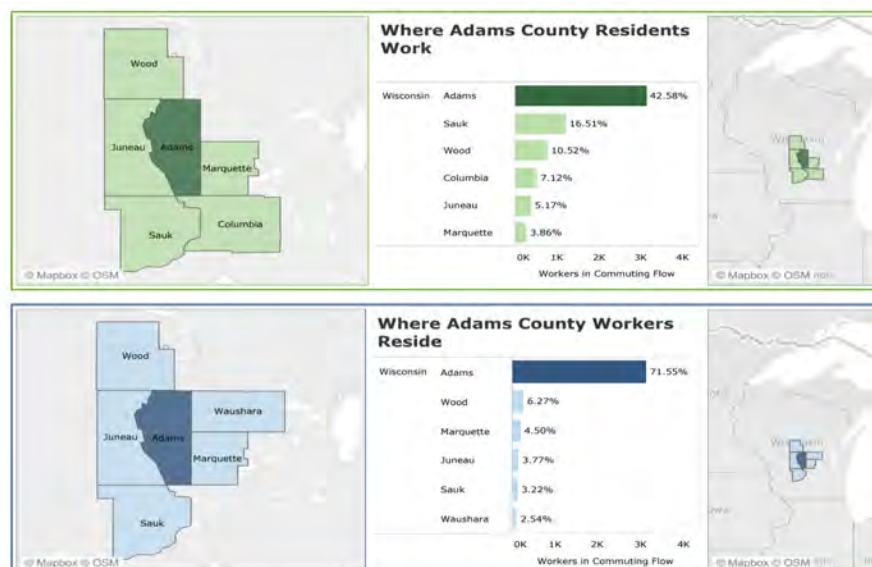
2020 US Census, the racial makeup of the county was 92.7% White, 2.7% Black or African American, 0.9% Native American, 0.6% Asian, 0.02% Pacific Islander, and 4.3% Hispanic or Latino.



Adams County Worker Commute

Nearly 43% of Adams County residents work within the county. This is well below the median of 65% for Wisconsin counties, ranking Adams as the fourth lowest county in terms of the percent of residents who work within the county. This low worker retention rate signifies the notion that nearby counties offer more or better job opportunities.

Of those who work in the county, 72% reside in Adams. According to an Annual Average Daily Traffic Count, vehicles primarily enter and exit Adams County from the south and the north on WIS 13 highway. There is nearly double the amount of traffic west of the towns of Adams - Friendship compared to eastbound. This could be due to a higher volume of traffic visiting Castle Rock Lake for recreation. The greater proportion of people commuting into the county from the westbound could represent an opportunity for economic growth by capitalizing on those individuals' spending before, during, and after work/leisure activities.



Labor Force Dynamics

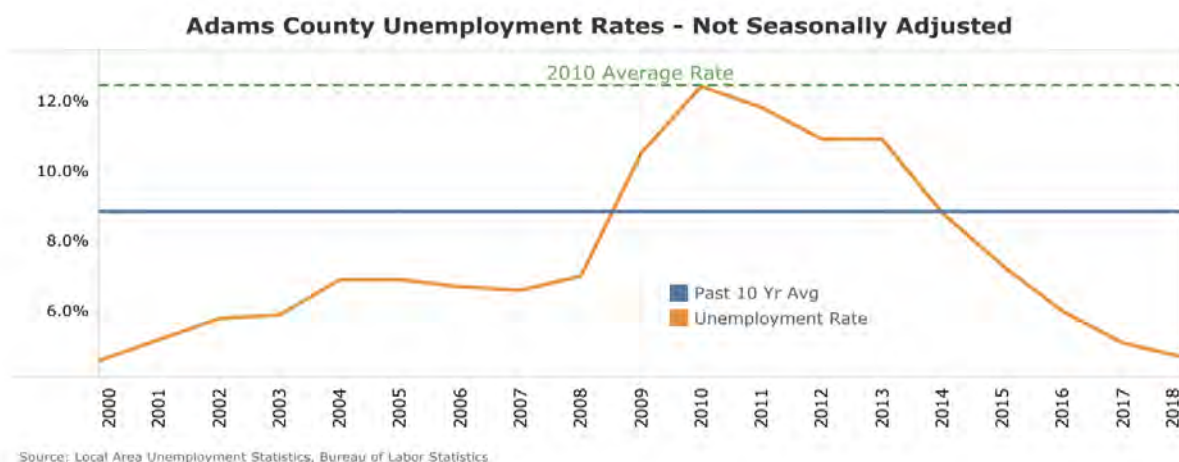
Adams County has experienced an overall negative growth rate since 2007 in their labor force. However, this slowing/declining is a worldwide trend likely to continue into at least the next decade. The county's older population is impacting the labor force participation rate as many baby boomers are beginning to retire. The top three employment sectors in Adams County are the same as Wisconsin and the United States: Services, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade.

Industry Employment, Wages and Projections

From 2017 to 2018, Adams County experienced negative job growth of roughly -1%, ranking it 67th among the state's 72 counties by percent change. Adams County, did however, experience job growth in four of eleven sectors; Manufacturing, Trade, Transportation, Professional and Business Services, and Construction. However, Leisure and Hospitality, the industry that supports the most jobs in the county, saw the largest negative percentage change in job growth in the county.

Notably, Adams had higher wages than the state averages in: Leisure and Hospitality, Natural Resources, and Public Administration. Conversely, wages in Manufacturing had the greatest decrease in relative share. Overall, all Adams' industry wages were 76.1% of the state level and decreased -0.5% from 2017 to 2018.

The North Central Workforce Development Area (WDA), which includes Adams County, is expected to see an industry employment growth of 7.3% from 2016 to 2026. Even with the aging population, which has declined growth in the labor force, job growth is expected to increase. Solutions to this issue will not be one - size - fits all. There will likely be a need for a combination of talent pipeline development, increased focus on talent attraction and retention, engaging under - utilized workforces, increasing automation, and retaining retirees in non - conventional work arrangements. Significant occupational growth in the North Central WDA is expected in the Health Services sector, with highest projected employment being in Office and Administrative Support, Production, and Sales. Significant growth is expected in many other occupational groups, supporting the notion that there is promise for long - term stability in the region's largest industries. It is expected that there will be many job openings in the future, simply due to retirements.



2018 Average Annual Wage by Industry

| | Wisconsin Average Annual Wage | County Average Annual Wage | 2018 % Wisconsin | 1-Year % Change* |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Trade, Transportation, Utilities | \$41,901 | \$36,723 | 87.6% | -0.4% |
| Public Administration | \$47,859 | \$50,314 | 105.1% | 3.7% |
| Professional & Business Services | \$60,729 | \$38,749 | 63.8% | 2.1% |
| Other services | \$30,674 | \$22,749 | 74.2% | 1.7% |
| Natural Resources | \$39,444 | \$44,236 | 112.2% | -2.6% |
| Manufacturing | \$58,048 | \$46,645 | 80.4% | -6.8% |
| Leisure & Hospitality | \$18,757 | \$21,012 | 112.0% | -0.8% |
| Information | \$73,577 | \$28,734 | 39.1% | -1.4% |
| Financial Activities | \$71,474 | \$30,963 | 43.3% | 0.4% |
| Education & Health | \$49,185 | \$39,025 | 79.3% | -0.8% |
| Construction | \$61,909 | \$37,173 | 60.0% | -4.7% |
| All Industries | \$48,891 | \$37,194 | 76.1% | -0.5% |

Impacts of Automation on the Workforce

Progress in the fields of artificial intelligence, autonomous transportation, and many other developments are expected to have significant effects on the nature of work for the years to come. Wisconsin has one of the highest concentrations of manufacturing jobs in the country (*an industry highly exposed to automation*). The Transportation and Material Moving sector is at greatest risk for automation (particularly truck driving jobs). Agriculture, another major industry in Wisconsin, has also seen a significant amount of automation over the years. Automation will accelerate the evolution of workplace skills, putting an additional emphasis on the roles of postsecondary education and upskilling of individuals. Will Adams County be able to adapt to the rapid changes of automation? How will Adams County adapt to the rapid changes of automation? This is an essential component of continued economic progress moving forward.

Homeownership

Homeownership is an important factor to consider for the economic prosperity of a region. The rate of homeownership can signal the amount of income/wealth in a community, as homeownership rates increase with income. In addition, homeownership positively correlates with demand expenditures for home furnishings, appliances, repair services, and improvement. Businesses such as nurseries, home furnishing, improvements stores, and appliance repair, have the potential to prosper when homeownership rates are high within their region.

The average home in Adams County is worth approximately \$194,000, which is 18% less than the average home in Wisconsin. The lower values, does however, correlate with lower rents for tenants in the area. In 2020, 41% of homes were owner - occupied and an additional 11% were renter - occupied, leaving 48% of homes as vacant or seasonal (indicating the popularity of the region for second homes and recreation). These figures are three times the vacant/seasonal homes rates of the state of Wisconsin (13%) and the United States (11%). From 2010 and 2020, the number of homes that were owner occupied remained relatively stagnant, however there was a 1.2% decline in renter occupied. This decline was made up by vacant/seasonal homes, which

increased one percent. This could indicate that renters are slowly being priced out of Adams County, to meet the needs of those willing to purchase vacant/seasonal homes.

It is of note to mention that very few homes have been built since 2010, indicating the lack of new construction/investment taking place in the county.

Annual Spending Patterns

Residents' top five areas of spending, in order, are: Shelter, Health Care, Food at Home, Food away from home, Entertainment and recreation. Spending in the area is generally similar to spending in Wisconsin as a whole.

Impact of COVID - 19 on Workforce

Unemployment exceeded 15% during closures related to COVID - 19, which was higher than the rest of the state. Free COVID - 19 weekly drive - through testing is being offered at two sites in Adams County for Wisconsin residents. Open food assistance is being offered throughout the county to support those with food insecurities. As of April 22nd, 2021, the county has recorded 1,666 positive cases and 12 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. 35.7% of county residents are said to have received their 1st vaccine dose.

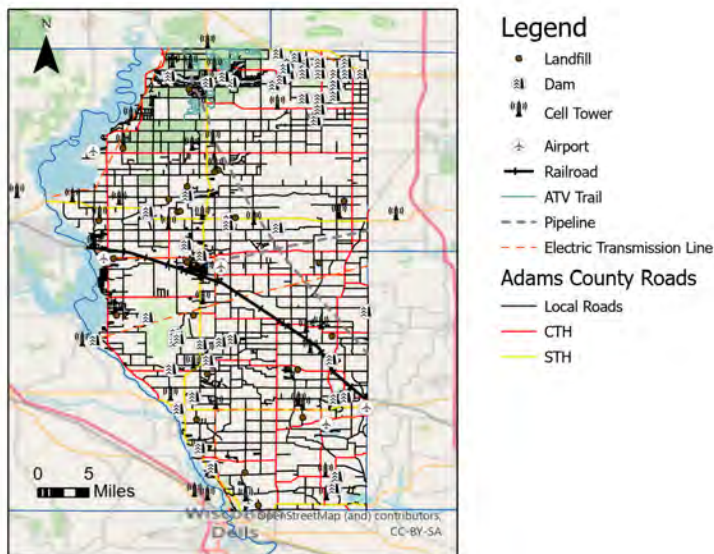
Assets of Interests

To best project Adams County's most prominent assets for economic development, Geographic Information System Mapping (GIS) will be used to create a color - coded categorical asset map. **The categories focused on for this project are listed and defined below. In addition commentary regarding assets of prominence in the county and their existing/potential impacts on economic development in the county will be provided. Highlighted in blue, are assets that the group was able to conduct in - person interviews with, to gain extended information regarding the organization and its extenuating impact on the Adams County economy.**

Infrastructure Assets

Classification: Utilities, phone, cell towers, electric, broadband, roads, rail transportation, airports, dams, pipelines, and landfills

Infrastructure Assets



Adams County is home to various infrastructure assets that are vital for economic activities, travel, communication, and access to public services. Five state highways run through the county including STH 23, 82, 21 and 73 that all run East to West. STH 13 runs North to South. County Highways and local roads connect the rest of the communities within Adams County. Besides roads, the county offers six airport locations and one major railroad running through the Adams Union Pacific Trainyard.

Access to broadband remains limited within Adams County. As of 2019, 25% of county residents were still without access to broadband. This rises to 50% for those with incomes of \$20,000 or less.

Airports

- Wood Airport (primarily utilized for tourists visiting Sand Valley Golf Resort)
- Bulldog Ranch Airport
 - ◆ Used primarily to transport prison inmates
- Adams County Legion Field (recreational use is most prominent)
 - ◆ Class A airport, located in Friendship
- Polish Paradise
- Clearwater Aero Estates
- Gunderson Moundview Hospital Airlift

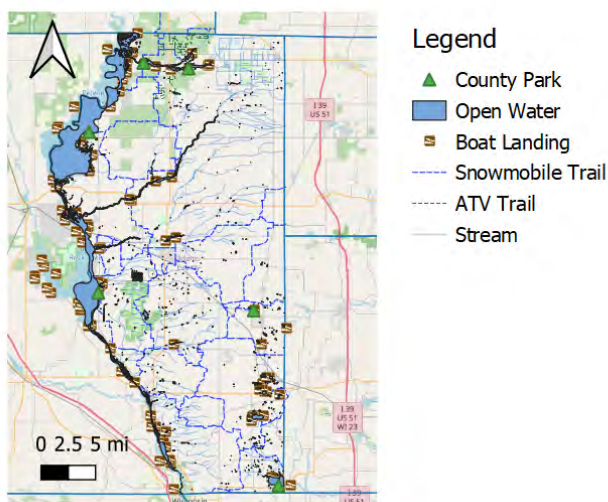
Transportation

- Union Pacific Trainyard (runs through the entire county), with a station stop in town of Adams
- Kobussen Bus Company
- No taxi service (weakness)
- Extensive road system (strength)

Natural Assets

Classification: Parks, lakes, natural formations, etc

Natural Assets



Natural assets are a strong suit of Adams County for economic prosperity, via tourism. Lake Petenwell and Castle Rock Lake, the 2nd and 4th largest lakes in Wisconsin are located in the

county. Additionally, there are 25 other lakes totalling 40,000 acres. Boating, swimming and water skiing are major lake recreation activities. Streams and lakes provide excellent fishing for residents and tourists. In addition, there are over 40,000 acres of public lands within the county. Trails provide hiking, biking, camping, running, ATV and snowmobiling opportunities. Tourism opportunities for inhabitants across the midwest and greater United States spark activity for other businesses in the county, primarily retail and restaurants organizations.

Specific Natural Assets in Adams County

- Castle Rock & Petenwell Lake
 - ◆ CR & Petenwell County Parks
 - 12 Outlying Parks & Launches
 - 100 Boat Slips
 - 223 Snowmobile Trails
 - 32 Off Road ATV Miles
 - 4 Shelters
 - 550 Campsites
 - 20 Petenwell ATV Campgrounds
- Roche - A - Cri State Park, Friendship WI
- Wisconsin Dells
- Castle Rock Lake

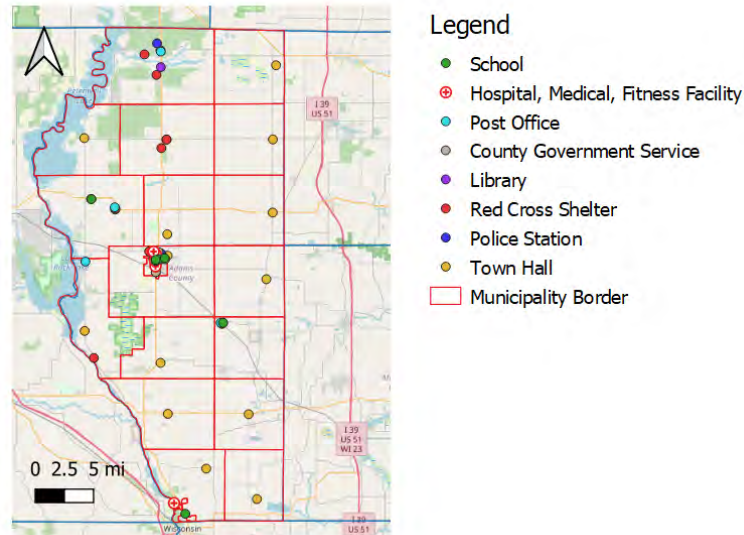


Pictured above is Roche - A - Cri State Park in Friendship, WI

Human Assets

Classification: School districts, junior and four - year colleges, libraries, government agencies, agricultural assets, chamber, job center, workforce info, and hospitals

Human Assets



School Districts/Junior and Four - Year Colleges

→ Mid - State Technical College: Adams, Wisconsin

- ◆ As part of the Wisconsin Technical College Systems, Mid - State Technical College in Adams has over 50 career opportunities with associates degrees, technical diplomas, and certificates.

→ Adams - Friendship Area School District

- ◆ The district excels in strong academic and co - curricular programs in a small, safe school district. Online programs, gifted and talented programs, and programs for exceptional educational needs are offered. The district consists of one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. The student to teacher ratio is quite small.

→ Grand Marsh Elementary

→ Roche A Cri Elementary

→ Dells Chritian Academy

Libraries

→ Adams County Library

→ Lester Public Library of Rome

Government Agencies

- Adams County Economic Development
- CREATE Adams County
- Adams County Courthouse
- Adams County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

Agricultural Assets

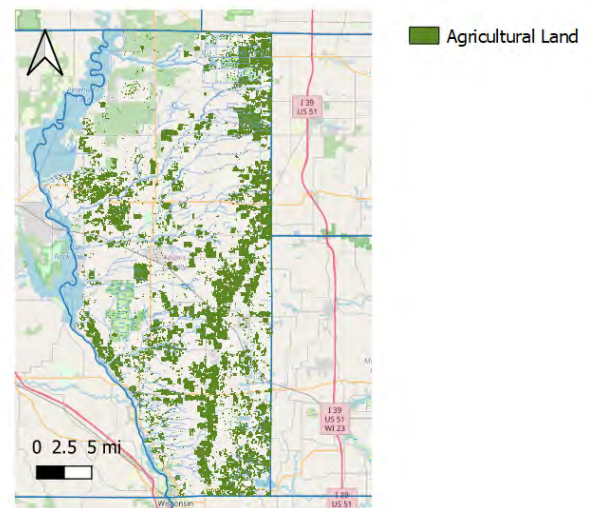
→ Bula - Gieringer Farm

- ◆ One of the largest potato and vegetable operations in Wisconsin. Located in Coloma, Adams County, WI, the farm raises over 8,700 acres of crops, 500 head of Black Angus cattle and 1,100 acres of pasture land

→ New Chester Dairy

- ◆ Located in Grand Marsh, WI, the farm is operated by **Milk Source** a multi-generational organization that operates 11 dairy farms over a variety of Midwestern states and is headquartered in Wisconsin
- ◆ The farm produces milk that one would see on frozen pizzas (for ex. DiGiorno's), Kwik - Trip butter, and Milk Source milk
- ◆ More than 75,000 gallons of milk are produced daily. The farm features two 80 - cow carousel milking parlors, is home to 8,500 dairy cows, and 90 employees
- ◆ Finalist for Leopold Conservation Award in 2014/2015. Recognized as innovative dairy farmers of the year in 2014

Agricultural Land



New Chester Dairy's Economic Spillover in Adams County

According to Avi Stern, *Director of Public Affairs for Milk Source*, the farm provides \$36 million dollars annually in economic impact for the Adams County area. The farm's presence is a huge factor in keeping the economy stable; providing local jobs and keeping gas stations and restaurants busy. Stern discussed that the organization also consistently helps local causes. With revenues earned from the farm, food pantries in the area are given financial support from existing leadership. In addition, local high schools are said to frequently receive milk sponsorships from *Milk Source* for team events.



Photographs above were taken in and outside of New Chester Dairy Farm in Grand Marsh Wisconsin. Pictured are Timmy Davenport, Brian Wiedenfeld, and Hyunsung Ko

→ Arkdale Edge Acres

- ◆ Family - owned dairy and crop farm with 3 generations actively working on the farm

→ Horizon Cranberry Farms

- ◆ 151 acre, family - owned cranberry farm located in Hancock, WI

→ Cypress Avenue Greenhouse/Gabriel Farm

- ◆ Sells quality bedding plants home grown from seed

→ Heartland Farms Inc

- ◆ Ships 50 - 100 semi loads of potatoes a day to help feed America. The 24,000 acre, family owned potato and vegetable farm is located in Hancock

- Roche - A - Cri Farm
 - ◆ Produces local fresh produce, herbs, and flowers that are sold at the Rome and Adams farmers markets
- Rome Farmer's Market
 - ◆ Held weekly on Friday from 9 AM to 2PM from May - October
 - ◆ Outstanding array of locally grown farm fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh frozen meats and seafood, homemade bakery, jams, pickles, salsa, and more
- Adams County Farmers Market
 - ◆ Live music, food from local food trucks and brat frys, as well as local produce

Healthcare/Medical/Fitness

- Gundersen Moundview Hospital and Clinic
 - ◆ Services include emergency department (physician staffed 24 hours a day), urgent care, clinics in Friendship and Westfield, imaging, laboratory, rehabilitation, specialists, hospitalization, and telemedicine
- Aspirus Riverview Hospital
- Adams Family Dentistry
- Healthfirst Network Clinic
- Phillips Roche - A - Cri Pharmacy
- **Adams County YMCA Express Center**
 - ◆ Project that will act as a catalyst for enabling and promoting healthy living for children, adults, and families within the Adams County community. Ensuring that all, regardless of age and socio economic background, have access to world class, life changing health & wellbeing programming and services
 - ◆ Very centrally located within the county
 - ◆ 6000 - 8000 SF that includes wellness center, multi - purpose room, group exercise studio and drop - in childcare area
 - ◆ This facility is committed to increasing Adams County's capacity to make it one of the healthiest places to live in Wisconsin
 - ◆ **Productivity gains are in direct correlation with higher standards of living (particularly from wellness). As a group, we are excited to see the impact this facility will have economically, socially, and physically for the county in the years to come!**

STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS BUILDING COMMUNITY

ADAMS COUNTY YMCA PROJECT

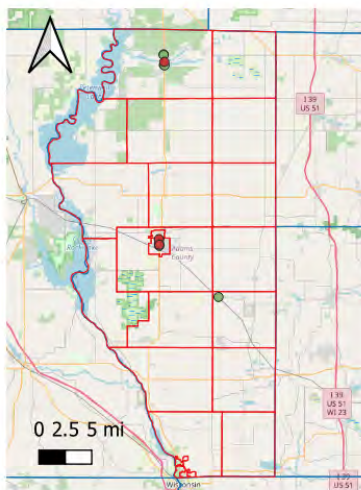
A NEW HEALTHY LIVING CENTER OF THE
JOHN E ALEXANDER | SOUTH WOOD COUNTY YMCA



Financial Assets

Classification: Banks, realtors and other organizations that can lend or provide financial support to new projects

Financial Assets



Legend

- Real Estate Agent
- Bank

Banks and Financial Services

- Adams Community Bank
- Ameriprise Financial Services

- BMO Harris Bank
- Edward Jones Financial Services/Retirement Planning
- Hansen & Associates Accounting LLC
- Key Savings Bank
- Nekoosa Port Edwards State Bank
- Royal Bank
- Thrivent Financial

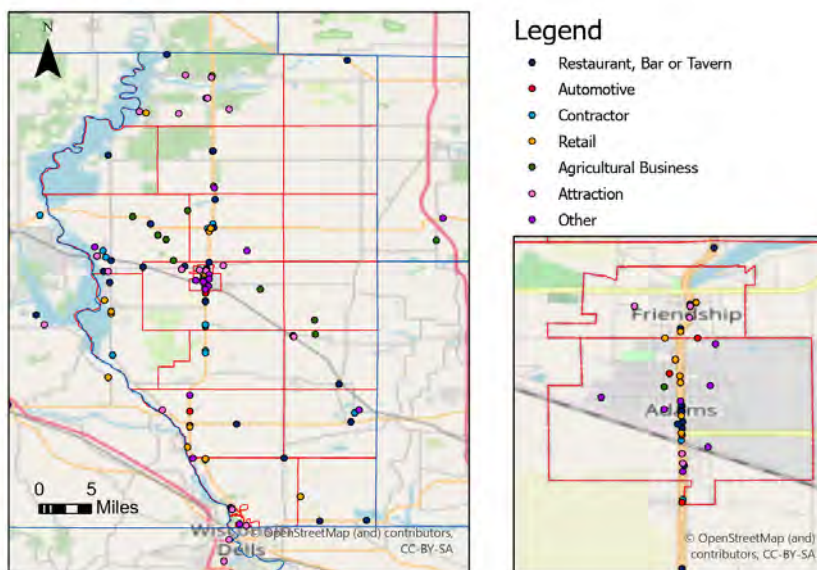
Realtors

- Coldwell Banker Advantage Realty, LLC
- First Weber Realtors/Lakes Office
- Pavelec Realty
- Timber Shores, LLC
- United Country Midwest Lifestyle Properties
- Whitmarsh Realty

Business Assets

Classification: Major employers, business clusters, and retail

Business Assets



Adams County mostly features “mom and pop” businesses that range from 1 - 20 employees. However, there are a few key assets that promote significant economic stability through tourism. Northern Bay Golf Course and Sand Valley Golf Course being primary generators of economic activity. Both courses bring in thousands of visitors from all over the midwest and the greater United States. Northern Bay, in particular, owns over 200 luxury

condominiums, situated on the course/Castle Rock Lake. Many golf - goers spend their nights in condominiums and spend their evenings at local restaurants, bars, and shops. Without the footprint that these courses bring in, many businesses would find themselves struggling to make ends meet, particularly in the summer. This is a testament to the importance of tourism in keeping the economy of Adams County strong and flourishing.

Tourism/Recreation

- Chula Vista Water Park, Wisconsin Dells WI
- Wisconsin Trapshooting Association
 - ◆ 280 acre site with 30 trap fields along with Wisconsin's only Olympic style bunker hosting regional competitions.
- **Northern Bay Golf Course, Arkdale WI**
 - ◆ 18 - hole Championship golf course and the only course in the Midwest that features 7 PGA Tour replica holes, with the highlight being a replica of the famous island green at TPC Sawgrass: home to the *PGA Tour Players Championship* in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.
 - ◆ Outdoor Tiki Bar, flat screens, fire pit, and the Island View Restaurant are additional features
 - ◆ 200 luxury condominium on the shores of Castle Rock Lake
 - ◆ Offers all of the amenities of a Wisconsin Dells resort without all the hustle and bustle of being there.
- Lake Arrowhead
 - ◆ Names Wisconsin's Course of the Year for 2013 by the Golf Course Owners of Wisconsin
- MoundView Golf Course
- Pinecrest Golf & Archery
- Cold Water Canyon Golf Course
- Sand Valley Golf Resort, Nekoosa WI
 - ◆ Situated on 1700 acres of majestic, tumbling sand dunes, this world class resort's goal is to recreate the experience of one of the world's premier golf courses: Pine Valley. Enjoy tasteful, cozy rooms with breath - taking views of sand dunes that will make you feel like an ocean is right around the corner. The course itself has its own personality, with some dual fairways, gigantic sand spits, enormous greens and even a hidden putting surface.
 - ◆ Golf Digest ranked Sand Valley as the 110th best public golf course in the United States (2019) and received the honor of Golf Digest's Best New Course of 2017.
 - ◆ Golf Pass ranked Mammoth Dunes at Sand Valley Resort, #7 for Best of Wisconsin golf courses in 2020. Sand Valley Course at Sand Valley Resort was ranked #14 in the state.

- ◆ Sand Valley Golf Course attracts tourists from around the state, the country, and around the world.



Retail

- Ace Hardware and Rental of Adams
- AF County Market
- Pritzl's Trading Post
- Kwik Trip
- Four Seasons Mini Mart
- Property Works Home and Garden Center

Agricultural - Based

→ Twin Creek Nursery (Friendship, WI)

- ◆ The property has been with the Miller family since 1920. The nursery sells mostly annual flowers (bedding plants, hanging baskets, landscaping plants, baskets for Mother's Day, perennials, greenhouses, trees/shrubs, apple trees)
- ◆ In the winter, the organization sells plenty of Christmas trees
- ◆ Customers come from all over the state of Wisconsin and greater midwest, particularly those who own summer homes in Adams County and are looking to take home plants/gifts
- ◆ The organization consistently makes donations to local causes: for example, building of the new YMCA as well as other local fundraising events



→ **Fawn Creek Winery (Wisconsin Dells, WI)**

- ◆ Family owned business that has been in town since 2011. Three acres of vines, with three different varieties.
- ◆ 15 different types of wines are used at Fawn Creek
- ◆ Customers tend to come from local municipalities, however some come from as far away as Chicago and Minneapolis
- ◆ The business ships to 38 different states



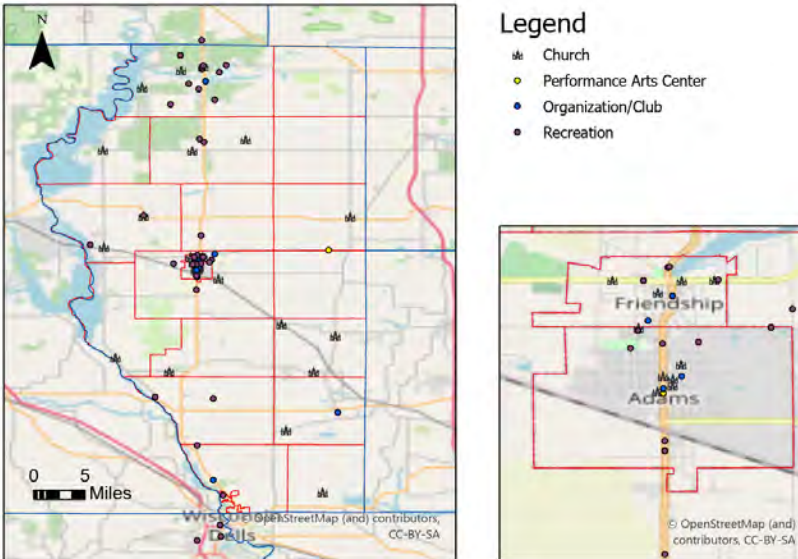
Shortcomings of Business Assets

- Absence of large supermarket, retail, and restaurant chains curtails food variety and accessibility for the residents of Adams County. For example in the town of Adams, county representative's claim that for lunch there are one of two options: McDonalds or Subway.
 - ◆ The absence of chains and competition unfortunately has sparked a monopoly effect amongst local retail/restaurant owners. For example, Dellwood Pavilion (a local restaurant located 10 minutes from Northern Bay Golf Course in Friendship, WI) charges prices that are questionably unaffordable for residents in the county. However, because of the large population of tourists that make their way into town for golf and Castle Rock Lake, Dellwood is able to spike prices (they are one of few restaurants in town). This is at the expense of those who live and work in the county day in - and day out at lower than average wages for the state of Wisconsin.
 - ◆ **Further Analysis**
 - Major real estate development companies and multinational supermarket corporations are most interested in using chain grocery stores as anchor tenants for mixed - use strip malls. It would be extremely difficult for the county to pursue and convince for development. This, in addition to large gaps in driving distances that major business assets are from one another in the county sparks more controversy. Given the existing monopoly effect that is available for local businesses in the county, it is unfortunate that despite having some of the most important agricultural and tourism - based assets in the state of Wisconsin, members of the county are unable to reap any positive benefits (for ex. lower costs for consumer goods).
- Lack of options for residents to seek out mental health services or therapy counseling for overcoming addictions.
- Retail sector is deficient in diversity particularly within the clothing/fashion industry which is catalyzed by a low abundance of department stores.

Cultural Assets

Classification: Performing arts center, clubs and organizations, churches, recreation activities.

Cultural Assets



Performance Arts Centers

- Sand County Players
 - ◆ Adams County's popular community theater
- Adams Community Theatre (ACT)
- Adams - Friendship Fine Arts Center
- Little Eagle Arts Foundations (LEAF)

Churches

- Adams Assembly of God
- Adams-Friendship Church of Christ
- Arising Christian Church
- Arkdale Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA)
- Big Flats Community Church
- Big Spring Congregational Church
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- Davis Corners United Methodist Church
- Faith Baptist Church

Organizations/Club

- Adams County Historical Society
- Adams County Heritage Center & Gunning - Purvis Building

- Adams-Friendship Lions
- American Legion Post 250
- Discover Rome Area Family Trails (DRAFT)
- Faith in Action of Adams County
- Friendship Connection, Inc.

Recreation

- Youth Sport Leagues
- Walking and Running groups
- Outdoor water recreation
- Winter activities
- Hunting/Fishing

A strong and positive culture is essential for a productive community development. Seen in the maps above, Adams County has a large faith based population with 28 worship areas in the county. Churches provide a space to facilitate community, share ideas, and expand networks. This is also seen in the county's numerous clubs and organizations. Additionally there are performing arts centers established that promote the arts and theater. Recreation opportunities embody the culture of outdoor activities of Adams County.

Mapping of Assets

Assets identified above will be categorized and mapped using the Quantum GIS program. Asset category will be represented by different color dots on a map of Adams County. Each asset will be identified, described, categorized and marked with an address in a CSV file. Using the CSV, assets can be geocoded according to where they are located within the county. In a spatial analysis of assets, categories of assets will be isolated in separate maps to offer discussion on asset locations, clustering and growth for the county. Maps will also be used in the infographics created for county websites, pamphlets and promotional material.

Video Series

In order to showcase Adams County's most meaningful assets in an accessible format, a 2 minute "hype" promotional video titled "Visit Adams County, Wisconsin" was created using Adobe Premiere Pro (online editing software) and uploaded to YouTube.

Being a county with primarily 50+ aged inhabitants, producing digital media that can be both accessible and valuable, has been a struggle for the county over the years. The hope is that this video can act as a medium for the outside world to get a peek into day - to - day life in Adams County, Wisconsin and its most appealing destinations.

Equipment Used:

- Sony A6400 Mirrorless Camera
- Rode Directional On - Camera Microphone
- DJI Mavic - Air Drone

Link to finalized video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tI4oPX27qA>

Conclusion

Key Takeaways

Our overarching goal was to create an asset map for Adams County that would help the county make better decisions on where to locate economic development projects and enhance the strategic management of limited funds to promote longevity. On the side, a promotional video was created to spark awareness and interest in visiting Adams County.

This report was completed with secondary data and includes very limited input from community leaders/members. The report should be used as a tool by existing leadership to make better decisions on the future of Adams County and its economy; we cannot outright make any recommendations.

Though Adams County struggles, in particular, with an aging population, limited diversity in retail/financial/restaurant establishments, and accessibility for quality tertiary education there is much to be said about Adams County's existing and forthcoming assets for economic development/prosperity.

As previously mentioned, the county ranks 19th out of 72 in the state for tourism. It houses the 2nd and 4th largest states in Wisconsin and attracts visitors from all over the Midwest and greater United States with its national recognized golf facilities (Sand Valley and Northern Bay). The county should focus its efforts on marketing and branding its existing tourist attractions. Recently, a local agency started at the University of Wisconsin - Madison called *Omnia Agency* has pushed to produce innovative campaigns that recognize Adams County as an ideal destination for recreation any time of year. Recognizing the accessibility of the county from major nearby metropolitan areas (Milwaukee WI, Chicago IL, and Madison WI) the agency has created Full & Half Page Ads, Pocket Guide Maps, Digital/Social Media Content, as well as Blog Posts for anyone around the world to easily access and get a feel for what the county is all about. By promoting awareness towards tourism, the county and its existing businesses (restaurants, small retail, nurseries, wineries) can benefit from more exposure and footprint.

On a social and wellness standpoint, the incoming YMCA Express project is very encouraging news for the community. Previously, it was said that residents and in particular, students, did not have access to workout facilities to become stronger, healthier, and faster. As is reiterated in countless economic development reports, healthier bodies correlate with healthier minds which increases productivity. The YMCA should be a spark in creating happier, more productive citizens within the county who are ready to stimulate even more positive change.

A major issue going forward for the county revolves around its aging population, which at the moment hovers around a median age of 52. Young minds are essential to building any economy, whether small or large. Without children, adolescents, and young adults there are no innovative and new minds to “push the page forward”, so to speak. Therefore, how can Adams County influence younger generations to stake a claim in building a life within the county? We propose that it would be of interest for the county to pursue and argue for state government funding initiatives to retain college graduates from the University of Wisconsin system to work and build the county (a bold first step). Adams County is not the most attractive destination, post graduation for students, given the nature of the economy (agricultural/tourism based) and the overall demographic (age, race, occupation). However, could higher wage incentives, boutique housing developments for recent graduates, and prospective career growth opportunities funded by the state, change the dynamic?

Overall, despite the small nature in size, Adams County has and continues to do its best in using its existing assets to foster a stable and prosperous economy. Our group looks forward to seeing the changes and growth in the years to come.

Miscellaneous Notes

Primary communication with consultees following liaison with Gavin Luther and Laura Hook. Students met with both the client and advisor, approximately once every two weeks during the course of the project timeline to check in and provide updates as well as receive constructive feedback.

In - person interviews were conducted with **Avi Stern** (Director of Public Affairs for Milk Source), **Bill Miller** (Twin Creek Nursery), **John Marx** (Manager of Fawn Creek Winery), and **Steve Tacheny** (Manager of Northern Bay Golf Course) to receive insider information regarding Adams County's most important businesses for economic prosperity. Brian Wiedenfield with the assistance of Laura Hook, finalized scheduling with our interviewees after making rounds of phone calls/emails. The interview series allowed local community members to voice their opinions and provide insight into what their business means for the county, economically and socially.

Acknowledgements

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About the Authors

The authors are undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison pursuing Bachelor's Degrees in Agricultural and Applied Economics. The inspiration for this project came from a collaborative interest in developmental economics and promoting the growth of sustainable, smart cities/counties for the future.



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UniverCity Alliance
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About UniverCity Year



UniverCity Year is a three-phase partnership between UW-Madison and communities in Wisconsin. The concept is simple. The community partner identifies projects that would benefit from UW-Madison expertise. Faculty from across the university incorporate these projects into their courses, and UniverCity Year staff provide administrative support to ensure the collaboration's success. The results are powerful. Partners receive big ideas and feasible recommendations that spark momentum towards a more sustainable, livable, and resilient future. Join us as we create **better places together.**