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**NEWS**

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### **Most Wisconsin Counties Lag In Income Growth** WISTAX Examines County PCPI From 2003 Through 2006

MADISON—From 2003 through 2006, 29 of Wisconsin's 72 counties had per capita personal income (PCPI) grow faster than the state average; and 10 of the 72 grew faster than the nation. The ten fastest-growing counties were generally small in population, accounting for less than 11% of state residents. A new report by the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX) shows mixed economic performance throughout the state.

In "Changing Fortunes in Wisconsin Counties," WISTAX examines recent income growth in state metro areas and in all 72 counties. The best county performances were in Bayfield, Buffalo, Door, Florence, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Langlade, Ozaukee, Vilas, and Waukesha. Each of these counties had annual average PCPI growth above the national average of 5.2%. WISTAX researchers noted that rising wages and strong investment gains were the main drivers in these counties. On average, earnings account for just under 70% of personal income.

The report notes that during the 2003-2006 period, state income growth lagged the nation. While national incomes climbed 5.2% per year, Badger State incomes rose 3.9% annually. Most counties performed worse than the state average. In Chippewa, Menominee, and Richland counties, PCPI rose less than 2% annually. In general, counties with little income growth were among the states poorest, WISTAX said. Five of the ten slowest growing counties had incomes below \$25,140. Seven were in the bottom half of counties (PCPI less than \$28,500)

Many of Wisconsin's metro areas also struggled. From 2003 through 2007, only metro Milwaukee (Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties) and Sheboygan had income growth topping the state average. However, both areas were in the bottom half of 365 U.S. metro areas studied. Milwaukee ranked 212th and Sheboygan was 235th.

The Janesville metro area (Rock County) was the metro with the slowest income growth (2.2% per year). The area was among the nation's 10 slowest-growing metros. Six other metro areas (Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Green Bay, Oshkosh, Racine, and Wausau) were in the bottom 100 metros nationally.

A free copy of *The Wisconsin Taxpayer* containing this report is available by writing WISTAX at 401 North Lawn Ave., Madison, WI 53704-5033; e-mailing [wistax@wistax.org](mailto:wistax@wistax.org); visiting [www.wistax.org](http://www.wistax.org); or phoning 608.241.9789. □