



SOUTHERN MINNESOTA  
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

# Development Opportunity Profile

## Le Sueur, Minnesota



*Developed for Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's  
Rural Entrepreneurial Venture (REV)*

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Developed by e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

## Introduction

The e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems believes in **empowering research** – making data-driven decisions about economic development to be more strategic and, ultimately, create the kinds of economic development outcomes and long-term community or regional prosperity you desire. We work hard to build tools and resources that communities can use to access and understand data and turn that raw information into knowledge you can apply in your community. This **Development Opportunity Profile** is one of our **Getting Started Tools**. This profile was prepared for Le Sueur County, Minnesota by e2, for our partner, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation’s Rural Entrepreneurial Venture (REV).

### Taking Stock – The Power of Assessment

Whether a community or a region is successful over time – or not – depends upon the commitment and choices of its leaders and people, and the investments they make in their development. As Deepak Chopra says, “When you make a choice, you change the future.” Making the *right* development choices is a prerequisite for achieving community and regional prosperity. The best way to make the *right* development decisions is to commit to a thoughtful and robust assessment of your region’s opportunities. By taking the time to discover and better understand your region’s genuine development opportunities, you will make smarter investments and enhance your region’s potential for greater prosperity.

This **Development Opportunity Profile** is a start on a pathway to prosperity. But, it is only a start. It reflects one view of your region, based on secondary data. We challenge you to build on this work, draw on your own knowledge of the region and its assets, and create a deeper understanding of your unique development opportunities. Then use this understanding to craft and implement a smart development game plan. We hope this **Development Opportunity Profile** is helpful and contributes to your future development success.

*Exploration ...*

*Dreaming ...*

*Visioning ...*

*Planning ...*

*Goal-setting ...*

*Action ...*

*Impact!*

## Asking the Right Questions

To be successful and achieve sustainable prosperity, every region needs to achieve two things, at a minimum – economic renewal and demographic renewal. These two things are intimately connected. New residents are attracted to and put down roots in places that offer diverse economic opportunities. And, a healthy population supports a more robust quality of life and the amenities that go with it – schools, health care, shopping, arts and recreation, for example. This **Development Opportunity Profile** helps you begin to answer a number of questions about your community or region:

1. What is the regional context for your place?
2. What are the demographic trends in your place?
3. How is your economy doing in terms of job creation?
4. How is your economy doing in terms of income generation?
5. What is driving your economy?

You may choose to address additional questions for your community or region – how are families are doing; how is the ethnic makeup of your community or region changing? The answers to these and other questions will help you focus in on your genuine development opportunities.

The first section of this Profile provides an historical overview of your economy as a whole:

- The regional context
- Population trends
- Employment trends
- Personal income trends
- Economic drivers

The second section delves more deeply into the business or entrepreneurial economy, describing general business ownership trends and specific entrepreneurial attributes of your region. In the final section, we provide a summary of key development opportunities for your county as well as some identified development challenges.

### Electronic Library

Research collected and analysis completed in support of this Profile is available through an Electronic Library at the following site:

<https://goo.gl/WVQXvi>

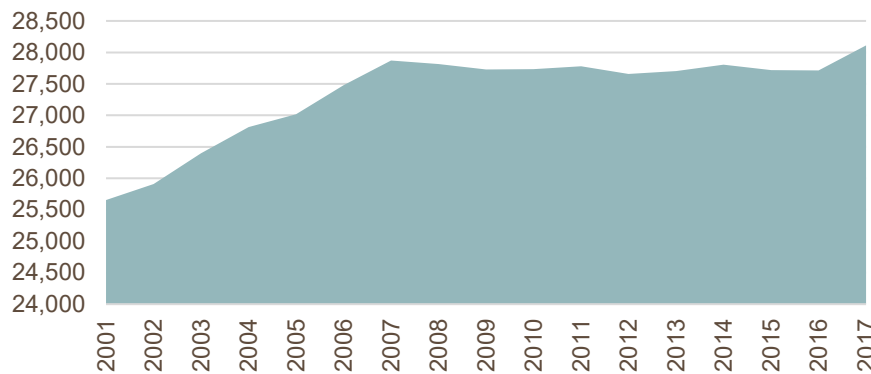
***Being a Smart Data Consumer.*** We provide a summary of research sources at the end of this Profile. Detailed source information can be found by reviewing specific research items in the Electronic Library. Data used in this Profile is based on sampling and estimates. Through the sampling process, data can be skewed particularly in smaller, more rural regions. We encourage you to carefully review the data and question the results if they are at odds with your experience. At the same time, remember that others – prospective residents, employees, and entrepreneurs – are using this same secondary data to learn about your county.



## Population Trends

Community and economic development should be focused on strategies that not only grow a more robust economy but create opportunities to attract and retain people. A growing population contributes to a strong workforce and supports community infrastructure including schools, health care, arts and culture, and retail activity. Failure to address population loss contributes to further economic and social contraction as a community or region's vibrancy and capacity decline.

**Figure 2. Population Trends**



### Le Sueur County, MN Quick Demographic Profile

**2010** Population – 27,703  
 Median Age – 39.7 Years  
 Households – 10,758  
 Average Household Size – 2.55

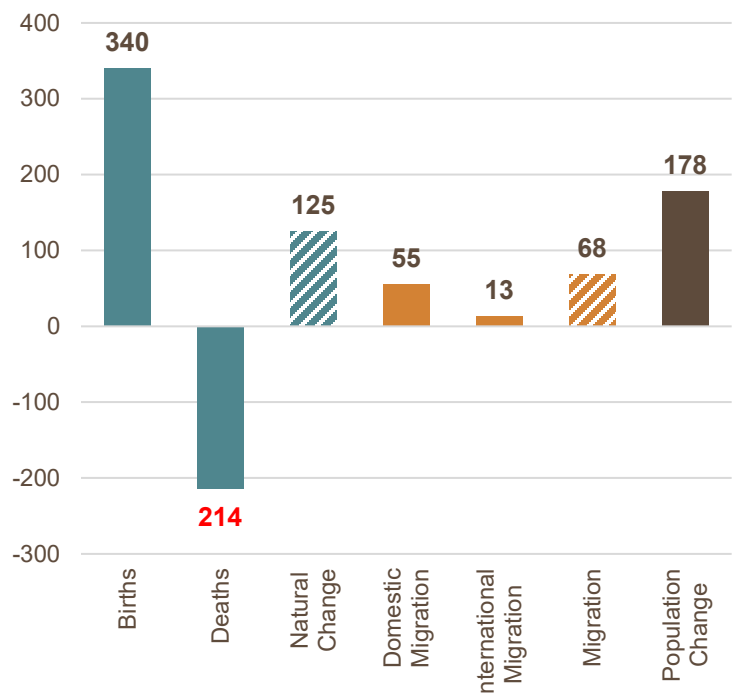
**2018** Projected Pop – 28,120  
**2023** Projection Pop – 28,491

Projected 2018-2023  
 Growth Rate = +0.26% per year

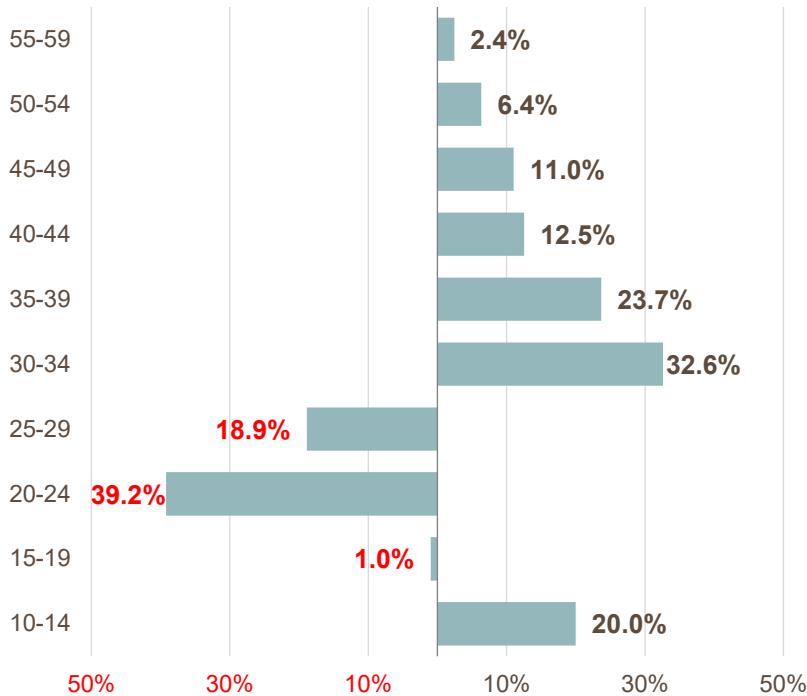
The Census Bureau makes a minor statistical correction called a "residual" which is included in Figure 2 but omitted from Figure 3. Because of this correction, natural change plus net migration may not add to total population change in Figure 2.

Figure 3 shows average annual change in population, including natural change (births and deaths) and migration (in-migration and out-migration), for 2000 through 2017. When natural population change moves towards zero or negative, a community will likely experience severe and chronic depopulation undermining community vitality. Migration, both domestic (within the U.S.) and international (outside of the U.S.) can strengthen or erode a community's demographic or population health. Heavy net outmigration (more people leaving than coming in) can further stress demographic health and contribute to declining economic fortunes and quality of life. As America ages, overall birth rates are coming down. For many counties, in-migration of new residents is essential to not only sustain current population levels but to enable growth. For areas to be prosperous, rapid population growth is not necessary.

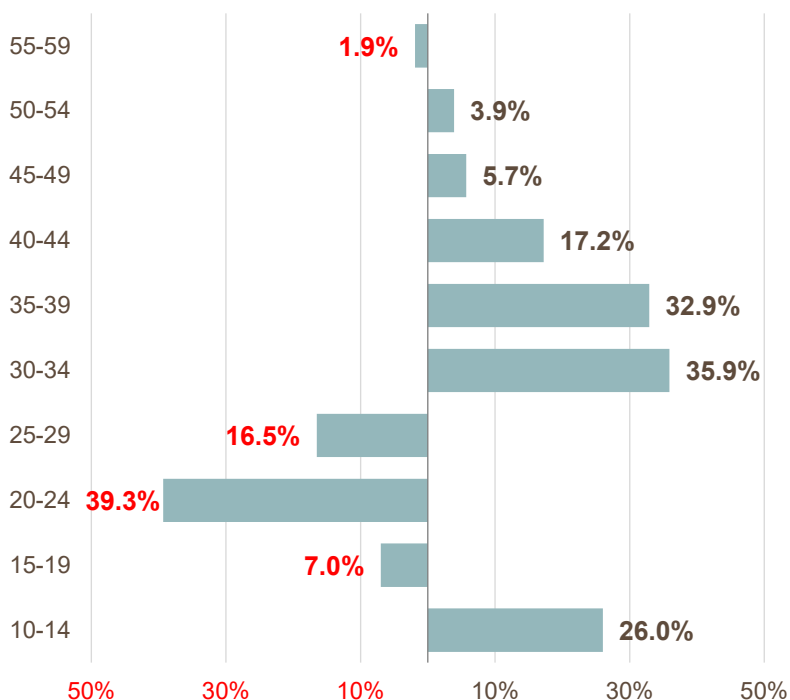
**Figure 3. Average Annual Components of Population Change, Le Sueur County, MN (2000-2017)**



**Figure 4. Percent Age Cohort Change  
(1990-2000)**



**Figure 5. Percent Age Cohort Change  
(2000-2010)**



Dr. Ben Winchester with the University of Minnesota studies population trends across America. We have been using his research increasingly over the past few years.

One way to think about a community's or region's **demographic health** is to compare changes in age cohort groups over ten year or Census periods. In much of rural America, there is a national trend where rural communities typically lose many of their 20-year-olds as they leave high school and often leave their home county to pursue higher education or work elsewhere.

What Dr. Winchester has observed is a trend of 30-year-olds returning after this away-from-home experience. This trend is potentially important to rural communities that have been losing population over time. With returning 30-year-olds, we have younger families, school-age children, a larger workforce and potential entrepreneurs.

Increasing the population of 30 year olds should be a development objective in the county. In creating a more entrepreneurial economy and society, your county can be more successful in retaining and attracting the 25 to 40 year old age groups. For this to happen more frequently, communities must create more and better economic opportunities with a range of jobs and careers through local business formation and growth.

## Employment Trends

Figure 6 to the right provides the historical trend for total employment in the county. Typically, if a county's population is increasing, we will also see increasing employment. However, for rural counties, it is not uncommon to see declining population with growing employment at least for some time. In most parts of America, workers are willing to travel long distances for jobs and careers. Workforce is often regional where people live in one community and commute to another community for work and running businesses. Eventually, if a community continues to experience population loss, its ability to sustain job growth is undermined. Later in this Profile, we provide more detailed information on job trends associated with different kinds of ventures by type and size of employment.

Figure 6. Employment Trends

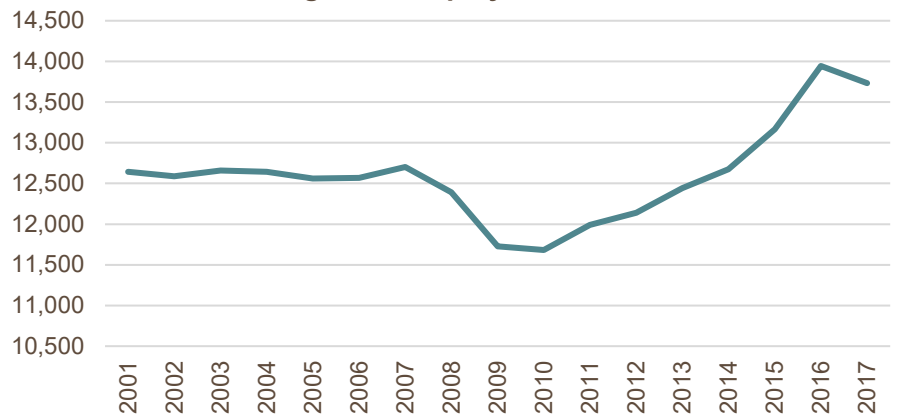
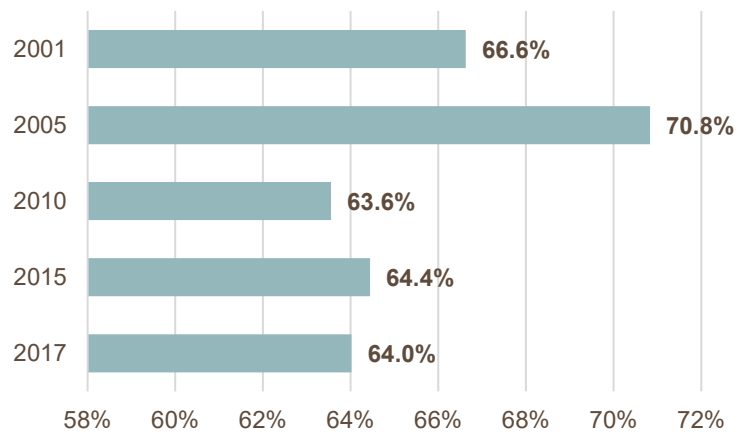


Table 1. Net Job Growth During Recession Periods

2001 Recession		Great Recession	
Recession (Mar-Nov 2001)	0.2%	Recession (Dec 2007-June 2009)	0.0%
Recovery (Dec 2001-Nov 2007)	-0.1%	Recovery (July 2009-Dec 2016)	0.1%

“Labor earnings to total personal income” is a good proxy for how dynamic or robust an economy is. Across the country, the share of labor earnings (active work) relative to total personal income has been dropping reflecting both an aging and stagnating economy. A healthy labor-earning rate is in the range of 60 to 70 percent. For communities with a Labor Earnings Ratio that has been consistently dropping, there should be concern about the vitality of a community's economy. In some situations, this ratio will fluctuate due to influences of natural resource extraction and processing. In communities where farming is predominant, earnings will fluctuate from year to year impacting this ratio. The same is true for other economies where oil, timber, fisheries and tourism are king. Understanding how these economic activities impact community health and well-being is important and a commitment to economic diversification is key to more stable and prosperous communities.

Figure 7. Labor Earnings as a Percent of Total Income

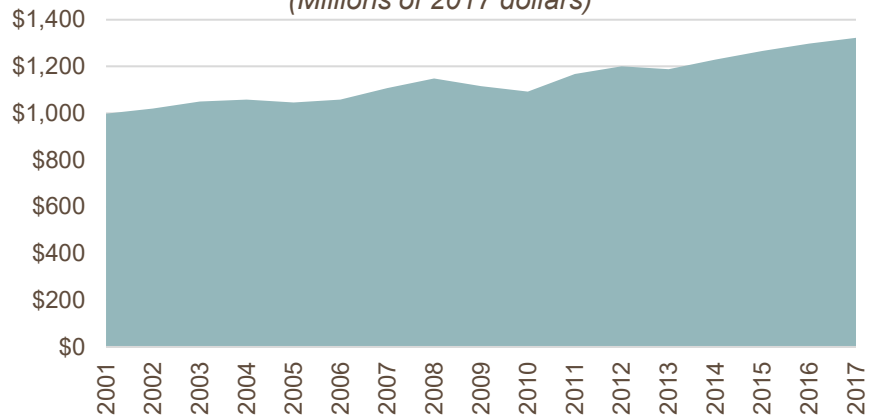


## Personal Income Trends

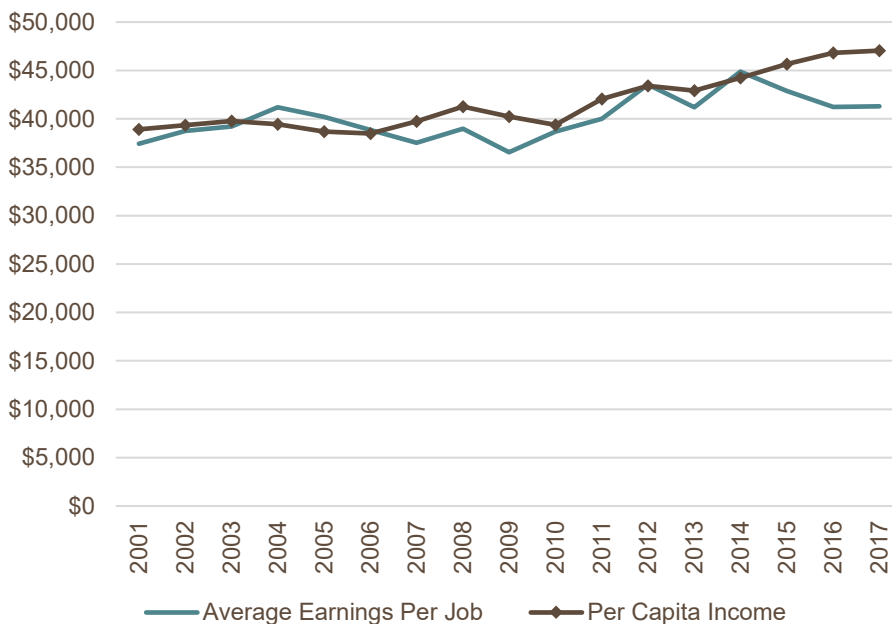
Long-term personal income trends, measured in real or inflation adjusted dollars (where a dollar in 2017 has the same purchasing power as a dollar in 2001) are presented for your county in Figure 9. Personal income is a critically important indicator of community well-being. Generally speaking, when personal income is rising faster than both population and employment, household and community well-being is improving. What

Figure 9 does not show is income distribution. We have additional research in your Electronic Library profiling Household Disposable Income and Current Net Worth.

**Figure 8. Personal Income Trends**  
(Millions of 2017 dollars)



**Figure 9. Average Earnings Per Job & Per Capita Income**  
(2017 dollars)



Per capita income (total personal income for the county divided by the number of permanent residents or population) is a good indicator of how well a county is doing. Per capita income in most rural communities is rising because of an aging population. Total personal income includes active earnings (wage and salary earnings) and passive earnings associated with rents, Social Security, retirement, royalties and the like. With aging populations, active earnings may be stagnant but per capita income is rising due to growing passive earnings. Average earnings per job gives us a better indicator of how business owners and workers are doing.

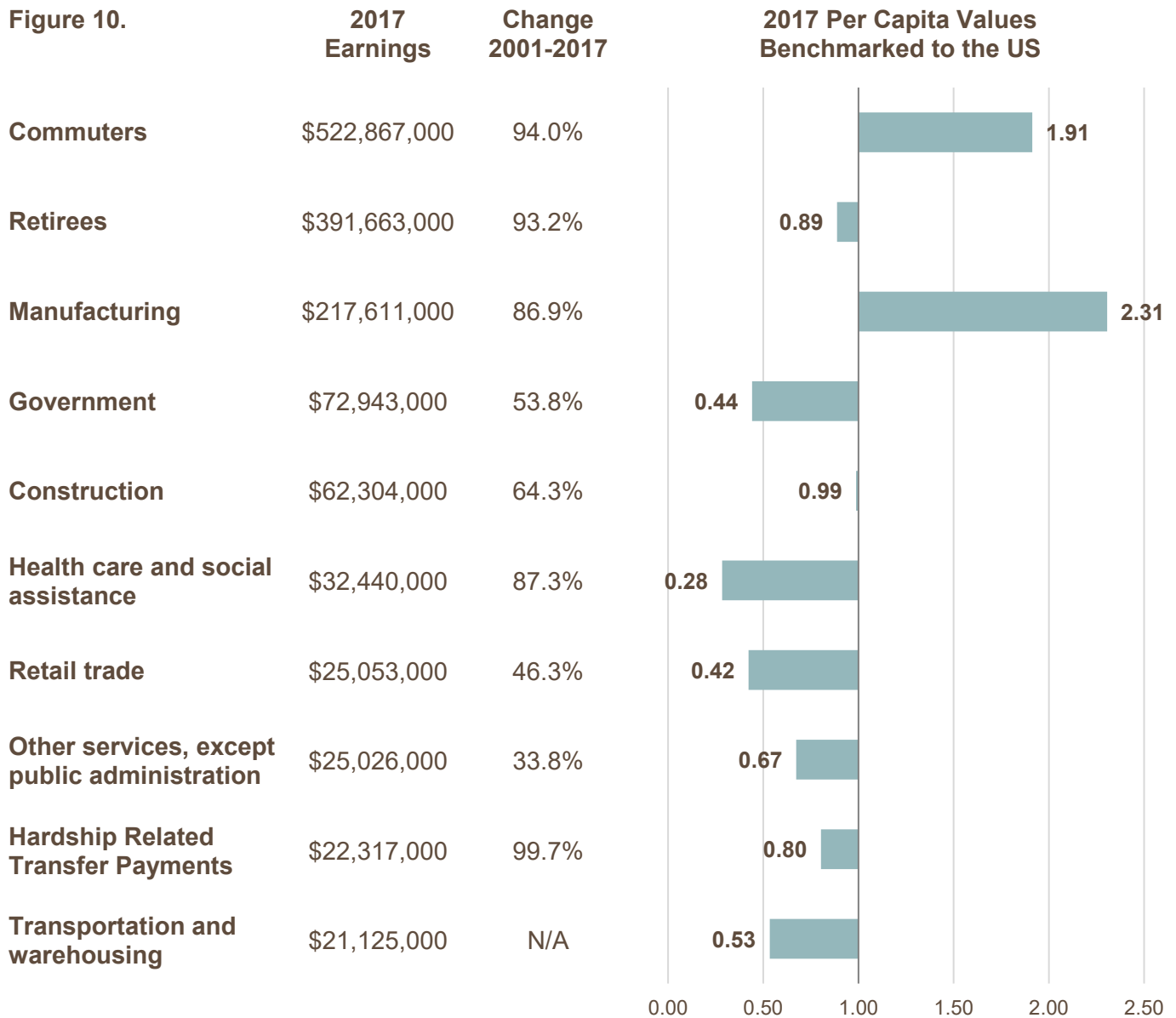
When average earnings are rising, chances are good that the county is doing better. The converse is true when average earnings are contracting reflecting reduced earnings from businesses and wage stagnation or cuts for workers.



## Economic Drivers

Every community, region or state is shaped by certain **economic drivers** that generate income. Using data on total earnings by industry, this profile highlights the top 10 **economic drivers** for the county, how each of these has done in the last decade and its relative importance benchmarked to U.S. averages.

Figure 10.



The following analysis provides additional detail on each of these “economic drivers” shaping your county’s economy and society. Additional information is available through the Profile’s electronic library and from the Center by contacting Don Macke at [don@e2mail.org](mailto:don@e2mail.org).

**Commuters.** American workers are often willing to travel significant distances for work and careers. We may choose to live in one community and work in another. For many rural communities, commuters are an important economic driver. People living in our community and working outside of it bring earnings home, generate local spending and support other economic and social activities foundational to our community's character and well-being.

**Retirees.** America is aging, and retirees are among the most important economic drivers in our communities today. Retirees are a non-traditional economic sector. We may consider manufacturing, mining and even health care as economic sectors, but retirees are increasingly important to our community's economic well-being. Retirees generate significant spending for 55-plus housing, health care, recreation and other activities. For some rural communities, a local hospital and clinics exist because of retirees and their Medicare insurance programs.

**Manufacturing.** Manufacturing is a mainstay economic activity. Manufacturing in the United States is under-going profound change due to automation and off shoring. Lower value and lower skill manufacturing is in decline. However, overall manufacturing activity in the U.S. based on value-added output is actually rising. Manufacturing can range from the production of clothing, cars and furniture to natural resource processing and refining.

**Government.** Government includes everything from military agencies to federal, state, and local government organizations. Government also includes public education ranging from the local public K-12 school system, public community colleges, colleges, universities and educational learning centers and agencies. For some communities, all or part of their health care system is public and would be included in the government sector. Government adds stability and diversification to your community while also providing critically important services. Ensuring government stability is highly recommended. Growing, through business development, a larger tax base is an important game plan providing adequate tax revenues to support government functions while reducing the burden on both farm and residential taxpayers.

**Construction.** Construction, like local retail trade and services, is found in most community and regional economies. Construction activity ranges from locally based contractors like plumbers and homebuilders to regionally based construction companies and external companies doing major projects (e.g., roads, power plants, etc.) in a community.

**Health Care and Social Assistance.** Depending upon the source and the community, between 5 and 10% of the entire American economy is associated with health care and social services. For many rural communities, the local hospital, clinic, dental office and care home represent major economic drivers and important sources of both jobs/careers and supply chain businesses like the local private pharmacy that exists because there is an assisted living home in your community.

**Retail Trade.** Retail Trade is a bedrock and iconic economic activity in every community. Over the years the Norman Rockwell main street has experienced significant change with emergence of strip commercial activities, shopping centers, franchised box stores and now electronic commerce (think Amazon). Locally

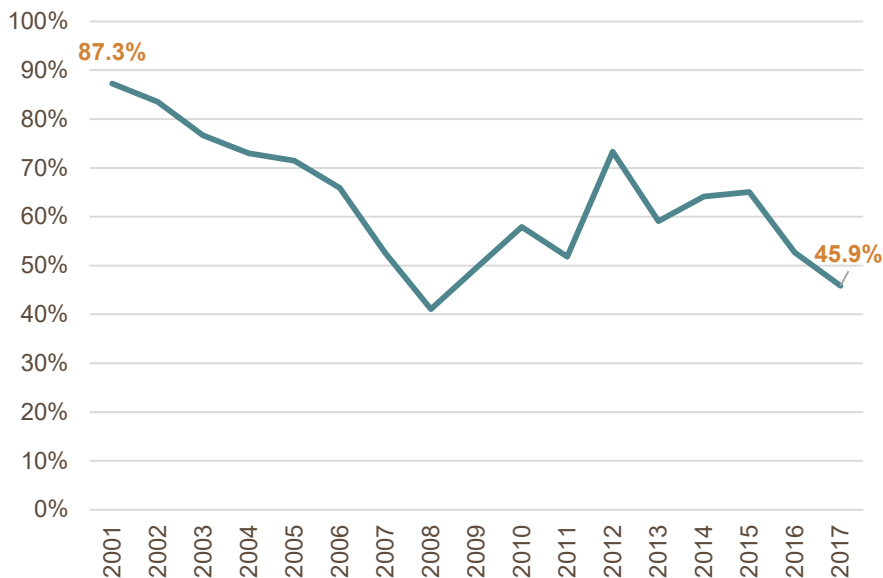
owned retail trade today is both very important to community health (e.g., captures and recycles local spending and roots wealth) and challenged.

**Other Services** (except public administration). Other Services is also an important sector in the County. This is typical, and this sector of your economy is growing. Other Services generated nearly \$14 million in household earnings in 2015. This sector has declined by 1.1% between 2001 and 2015. Further exploration of this sector is warranted and likely represents business development opportunities.

**Hardship Related Transfer Payments.** According to Headwaters Economics ([www.headwaterseconomics.org](http://www.headwaterseconomics.org)), Hardship Related Transfer Payments include payments associated with poverty and include Medicaid, Food Stamps (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Unemployment Insurance and other income maintenance benefits. With the Great Recession and an aging population, hardship payments have grown and become more important for many communities.

**Transportation and Warehousing.** These activities are often inter-related and are often important both regionally and nationally. Locally many communities have some form of agriculture with corresponding elevators, cooperatives and truckers bringing in inputs and shipping out harvest. Other communities, adjacent to major highway systems, may have warehousing distribution and trucking operations serving regional and national markets.

**Figure 11. Nonfarm Proprietor Income as a Percent of Wage & Salary Income**



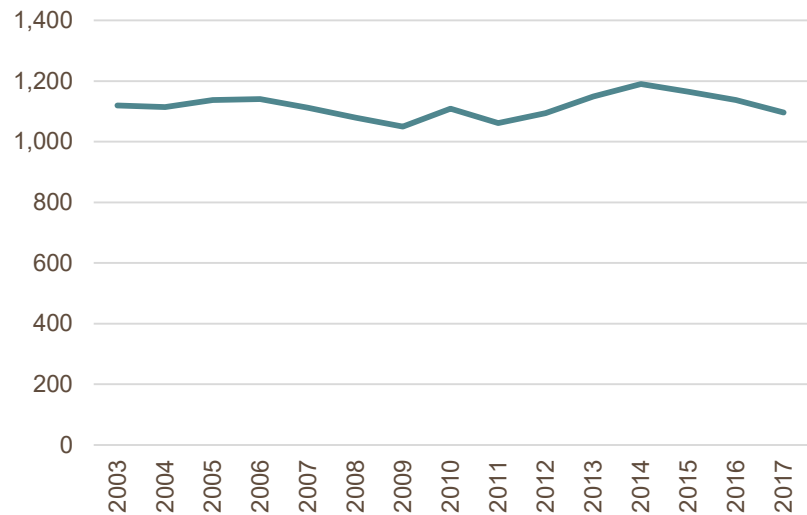
**Locally Owned Ventures.** Historically, one of the greatest assets of American communities was locally owned retail businesses, services and manufacturing operations (often referred to as Main Street USA). These were area-owned and operated. They were rooted in the community. Figure 11 measures the income associated with these locally-owned businesses compared to that associated with wage and salary jobs. This ratio provides an indication of how well these ventures are doing in our changing environment.

# Understanding the Business/Entrepreneurial Economy

## Big Picture Overview

A central driver of community or regional prosperity is the business community. Figures 12-19 provide an overview of the county's business community, including for-profit, non-profit and governmental enterprises, from 2003 through 2017. Figure 12 highlights the trend in the number of all regional business establishments including for-profit businesses, non-profit ventures and government entities.

Figure 12. Businesses



### Le Sueur County, MN Business Summary

**Total Businesses**  
994

**Businesses per 1,000 Residents**

Le Sueur County – 35  
Minnesota – 37  
U.S. – 77

**Total Employees**  
9,813

**Employees per 1,000 Residents**

Le Sueur County – 349  
Minnesota – 574  
U.S. – 447

Figure 13. Jobs

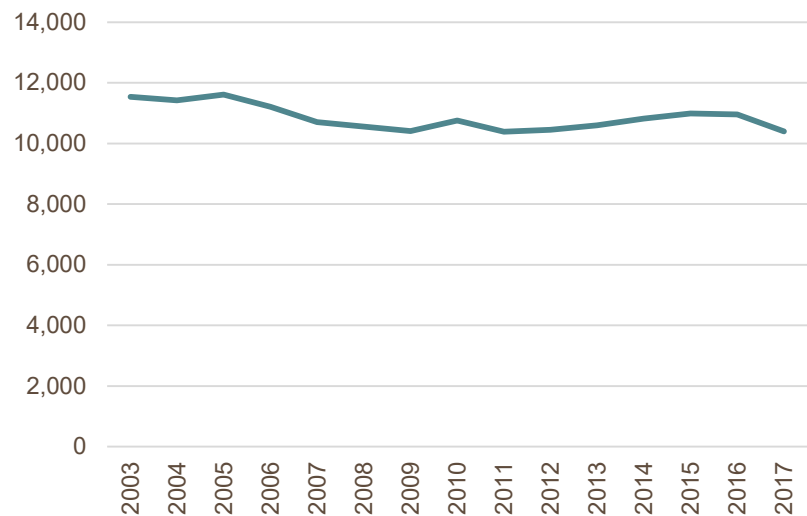


Figure 13 provides a comprehensive picture of all employment from for-profit business to non-profits to government entities including schools. This does not reflect the employment of those who live in the county and work outside of the county.

Data in Figures 12-14 & 16-19 is from [www.youreconomy.org](http://www.youreconomy.org).  
Find the source data for these figures in the electronic library.

Esri ([www.esri.com](http://www.esri.com)) produces regional analysis of ventures and employment by sector. The data provides a useful overview of the relative importance of specific sectors in the county's economy in 2018 (Table 2). Economic sectors are organized into two components. A county's *traded sectors* produce products and services that are sold outside the county, bringing new income into the county. Traded sectors are also referred to as *basic industries*. Strong regional economies have strong and diverse traded sectors.

Table 2 provides an accounting of the county's ventures including the number of Ventures by sector and associated full-time equivalent employment. This data source does not always capture all venture activity. For example, it may not fully reflect the number of farms and ranches in a rural area. For those sectors where we have data gaps, there are supplemental reports in your county's e-library.

**Table 2. Economic Sectors, Le Sueur County, MN, 2018**

Sector	Ventures	Employees	Percent of Total Employees
Agriculture	37	116	1.2%
Mining & Utilities	4	41	0.4%
Construction	96	423	4.3%
Manufacturing	55	2,324	23.7%
Wholesale Trade	39	378	3.9%
<b>Retail Trade*</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>1,094</b>	<b>11.1%</b>
Transportation & Warehousing	37	479	4.9%
Information	16	57	0.6%
<b>Finance &amp; Insurance*</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Real Estate	35	136	1.4%
Professional Services	48	231	2.4%
Management & Administrative	24	85	0.9%
Education	28	1,326	13.5%
Health Care	59	639	6.5%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	30	425	4.3%
Accommodations	16	156	1.6%
Food Service	55	595	6.1%
<b>Hospitality Sector**</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>1,176</b>	<b>12.0%</b>
Other Services	137	557	5.7%
Public Administration	51	438	4.5%
Unclassified Establishments	43	6	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>9,813</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Esri provides additional detail for these sectors including sub-sector information.

\*\*Hospitality Sector is created by combining the three preceding sectors.

**Retail Trade** nationally has undergone major changes as once dominant locally owned retailers are now competing with externally owned big box stores and online sellers. A strong and diverse retail sector is important to capturing local spending and generating additional economic growth. Additionally, services for business, households, non-profits and governmental agencies are increasingly important. We have additional information on your county's service sector in your e-library.

**Table 3** below provides more detail on retail demand and supply, identifying positive trade balances and spending leakages. The electronic library includes a more detailed **Retail MarketPlace Profile**. Your county might want to consider a two-part retail strategy focusing on (1) assisting business transitions in the *local sector* and (2) finding competitive niches for existing or new retail businesses.

**Table 3. Retail MarketPlace Profile, Le Sueur County, MN, 2018**

<b>Summary Demographics</b>						
2018 Population						28,120
2018 Households						10,942
2018 Median Disposable Income						\$51,290
2018 Per Capita Income						\$31,020
<b>Industry Summary</b>	<b>NAICS</b>	<b>Demand (Potential)</b>	<b>Supply (Sales)</b>	<b>Retail Gap</b>	<b>Leakage/Surplus Factor</b>	<b>Number of Businesses</b>
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$403,803,564	\$199,345,678	-\$204,457,886	-33.9	186
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$366,636,068	\$181,731,549	-\$184,904,519	-33.7	133
Total Food & Drink	722	\$37,167,496	\$17,614,129	-\$19,553,367	-35.7	53
<b>Industry Group</b>	<b>NAICS</b>	<b>Demand (Potential)</b>	<b>Supply (Sales)</b>	<b>Retail Gap</b>	<b>Leakage/Surplus Factor</b>	<b>Number of Businesses</b>
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$79,133,954	\$39,549,588	-\$39,584,366	-33.4	20
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$63,317,776	\$30,215,921	-\$33,101,855	-35.4	6
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$9,182,819	\$5,836,196	-\$3,346,623	-22.3	4
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$6,633,359	\$3,497,471	-\$3,135,888	-31.0	10
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$11,094,251	\$1,936,573	-\$9,157,678	-70.3	6
Furniture Stores	4421	\$6,535,948	\$670,292	-\$5,865,656	-81.4	2
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$4,558,303	\$1,266,281	-\$3,292,022	-56.5	4
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	\$12,866,887	\$2,049,754	-\$10,817,133	-72.5	3
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip & Supply Stores	444	\$27,925,823	\$5,427,644	-\$22,498,179	-67.5	14
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$25,087,510	\$3,315,730	-\$21,771,780	-76.7	10
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$2,838,313	\$2,111,914	-\$726,399	-14.7	4
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$56,787,697	\$54,624,536	-\$2,163,161	-1.9	29
Grocery Stores	4451	\$47,316,273	\$42,965,156	-\$4,351,117	-4.8	15
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$2,914,573	\$5,107,650	\$2,193,077	27.3	7
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$6,556,851	\$6,551,730	-\$5,121	0.0	7
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$26,206,077	\$21,752,163	-\$4,453,914	-9.3	9
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$41,180,452	\$39,529,333	-\$1,651,119	-2.0	13
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$17,778,292	\$674,730	-\$17,103,562	-92.7	3
Clothing Stores	4481	\$12,244,895	\$411,065	-\$11,833,830	-93.5	2
Shoe Stores	4482	\$2,579,990	\$0	-\$2,579,990	-100.0	0
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$2,953,407	\$263,665	-\$2,689,742	-83.6	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$10,686,113	\$5,216,869	-\$5,469,244	-34.4	13
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$9,316,590	\$4,900,307	-\$4,416,283	-31.1	11
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$1,369,523	\$316,562	-\$1,052,961	-62.5	2
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$62,448,269	\$6,015,112	-\$56,433,157	-82.4	5
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	\$46,474,152	\$3,913,971	-\$42,560,181	-84.5	1
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	\$15,974,117	\$2,101,141	-\$13,872,976	-76.8	4
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$14,660,305	\$4,500,942	-\$10,159,363	-53.0	17
Florists	4531	\$804,572	\$839,252	\$34,680	2.1	6
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$2,778,673	\$952,475	-\$1,826,198	-48.9	3
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$1,675,985	\$592,288	-\$1,083,697	-47.8	2
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$9,401,075	\$2,116,927	-\$7,284,148	-63.2	6
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$5,867,948	\$454,305	-\$5,413,643	-85.6	1
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$4,347,796	\$454,305	-\$3,893,491	-81.1	1
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$262,483	\$0	-\$262,483	-100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$1,257,669	\$0	-\$1,257,669	-100.0	0
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$37,167,496	\$17,614,129	-\$19,553,367	-35.7	53
Special Food Services	7223	\$987,909	\$98,630	-\$889,279	-81.8	1
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$2,101,095	\$3,378,199	\$1,277,104	23.3	15
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	7225	\$34,078,492	\$14,137,300	-\$19,941,192	-41.4	37

## Entrepreneurial Profile

Entrepreneurs play a central role in revitalizing community and regional economies. Where you have more robust entrepreneurial activity, you typically have more competitive, dynamic and prosperous economies. This is particularly true when there are rooted entrepreneurs who are part of the overall community, contributing to the economy and actively engaging in the civic and social life of the county. Healthy economies support a range of entrepreneurial talent – from aspiring and startup to growth-oriented and breakout entrepreneurs.

**Startup Entrepreneurs** are the seeds of an entrepreneurial economy, making up the mouth of the pipeline. Successful startups create opportunities for business growth that generates employment and ultimately drives the economy. One good proxy for startup entrepreneurs is the number of **self-employed** (where the owner/operator is the only employee). Figure 14 shows self-employment trends for your county from 1998 through 2015 ([www.youreconomy.org](http://www.youreconomy.org)). Rising self-employment can be due to two things. First, it can

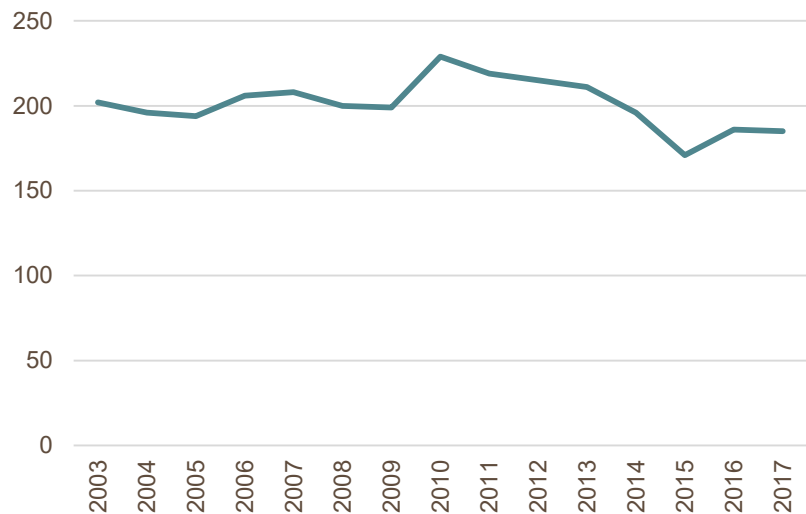
reflect the lack of wage and salary jobs where people in a community are forced into necessity entrepreneurship to get by until better jobs emerge. Second, it can be an indicator of increased new venture startups. Self-employment is a leading indicator of new entrepreneurial activity in a community. Working with the self-employed offers a significant development strategy for the county.

Conversely, declining self-employment can reflect two realities in a community. First, it can indicate an improving wage and salary job market where self-employed persons are taking jobs. For example, this may happen when a business expands and there are significant new job openings. Second, it can indicate deeper community decline where overall economic activity is contracting. Understanding what is behind these trends is paramount.

Regardless of your county's trend direction, it is important to discover who your self-employed entrepreneurs are. We urge the county to focus on the following three questions as it explores this development opportunity:

- Who are these self-employed startups?
- What are they doing?
- How could we help them be more successful?

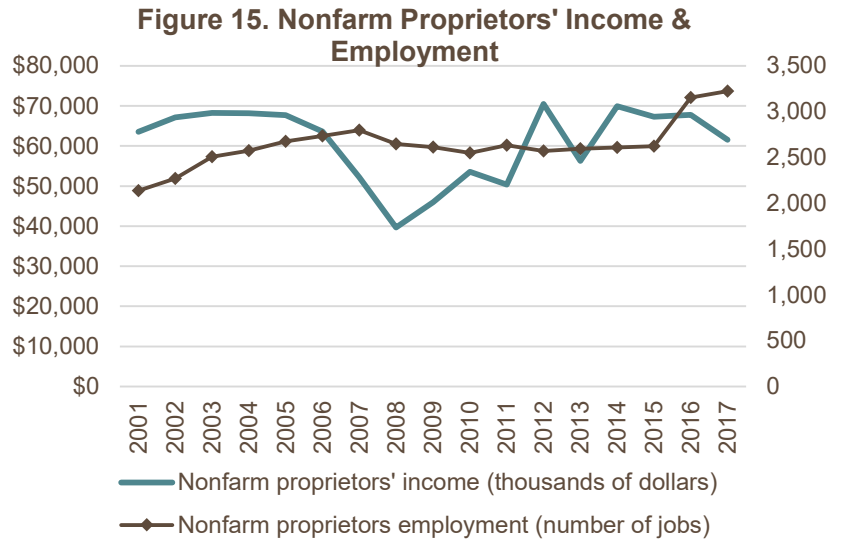
**Figure 14. Self-Employed**



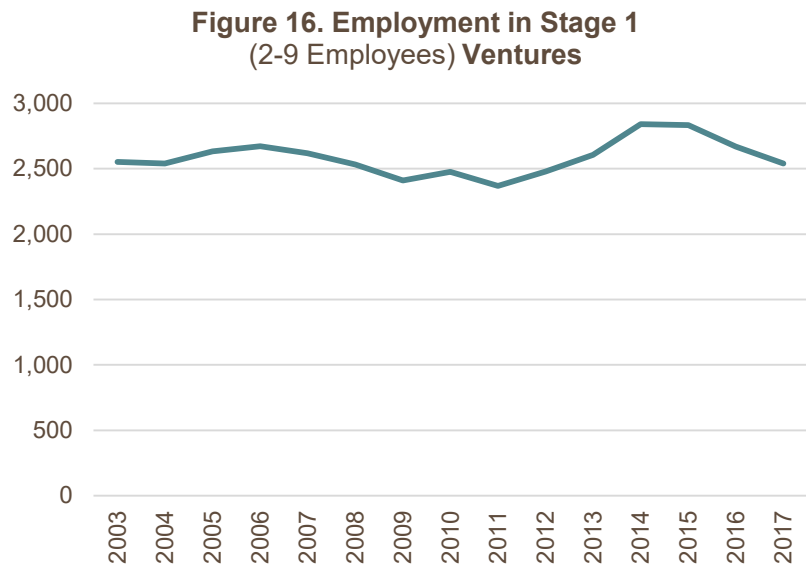
Increasing self-employment or startup activity can be an important business development objective within an overall economic development strategy.

**Established, Locally-Owned Entrepreneurial Ventures**

are important components of a community’s entrepreneurial pipeline. When family-owned, local businesses prosper, they hire more employees, pay more local taxes and are able to more actively support their communities. We use two sets of data to describe these entrepreneurs. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (Figure 15) tracks nonfarm proprietors, typically small main street type businesses that are not incorporated. Youreconomy.org (Figure 16) tracks ventures based on the number of employees, with Stage 1 businesses (2-9 employees) representing small, most likely family-owned or locally-owned businesses.



Stage 1 ventures with 2-9 employees overlap with Nonfarm and farm proprietorships. Typically, statistics on Stage 1 ventures have higher numbers for both number of ventures and employment. This difference is due to the fact that Stage 1 ventures can include small corporations and LLCs that may not be classified as proprietorships. Comparing the two sets of data can help a community or region gain a better idea of what is happening with this all-important component of your venture community. For communities or regions that are more rural, Stage 1 ventures and nonfarm proprietorships are the bedrock of “main street” type locally-owned ventures. These are our cafes, retail shops, dental offices, medical clinics, small manufacturing operations, local trucking firms and the like. Stage 1 indicators can vary as ventures move between the magic line of 9 to 10 to 10 to 99 employees. Watching how Stage 1 and Stage 2 indicators are changing can reflect movement between these two classes of businesses. Maintaining and sustaining nonfarm proprietorships and Stage 1 ventures are foundational to most regional economies. This is particularly true if ownership is local meaning profits from the ventures are creating local wealth.

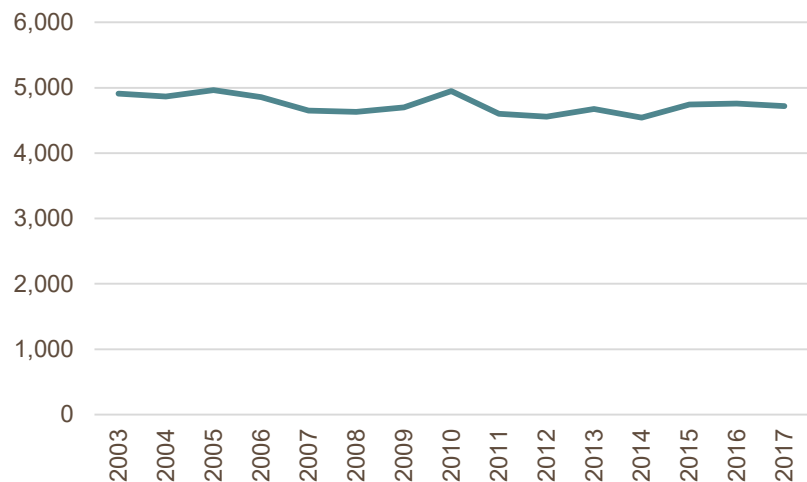




**Growth-Oriented Entrepreneurs** comprise an important part of the entrepreneurial pipeline. These entrepreneurs have the desire to grow and have – or are seeking – the market opportunities to turn that desire into a reality. There is a great deal of attention paid to **growth entrepreneurs** – Economic Gardening ([Edward Lowe](#)) focuses almost exclusively on these entrepreneurs. In most community and regional economies, we have found fewer growth entrepreneurs and much larger numbers of **growth-oriented entrepreneurs**. This latter group includes entrepreneurs who are actively exploring ways to grow their businesses but who may still benefit from the types of business development assistance most regions and communities can offer. Helping growth entrepreneurs often requires much higher-level resources, including diverse forms of capital.

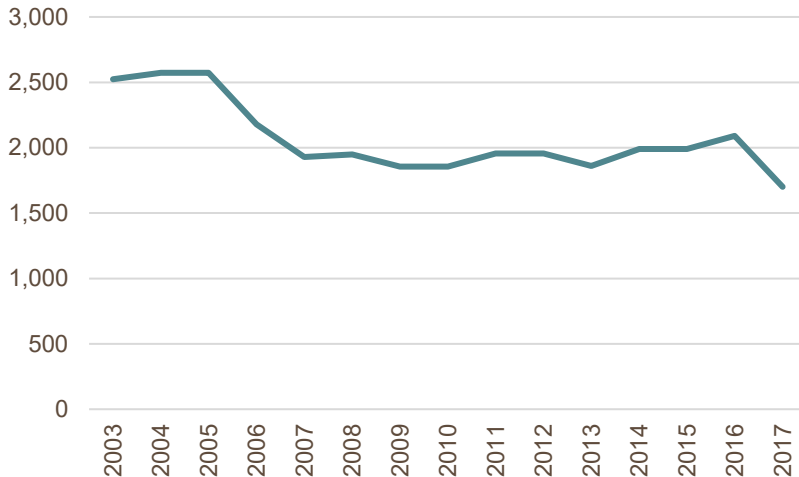
As a proxy for growth-oriented entrepreneurs, we use employment for Stage 2 ventures (10-99 employees). Figure 17 illustrates what we call Stage 2 Ventures or those employing 10 to 99 employees. Stage two ventures are critically important to a community or region. These ventures tend to create more jobs and better jobs. There may be less part-time or flexible time situations. Ventures at this size tend to need a stable and productive workforce creating jobs with better compensation, security and benefits. Ownership can be area, franchises with local and outside ownership and branch facilities of outside LLCs and corporations. Increasing Stage 2 ventures is an important development goal as these ventures tend to provide better jobs. Most likely some Stage 1 businesses became Stage 2 employers through growth.

**Figure 17. Employment in Stage 2 (10-99 Employees) Ventures**



**Breakout Entrepreneurs** are very important to both local and regional economies. Ideally, these entrepreneurial ventures create many jobs, stimulate economic growth and increase overall economic prosperity as new employee spending drives retail, service, construction and other sectors of the economy. In the **new economy**, many businesses are experiencing rapid sales growth but creating few jobs as they rely instead on contract employees and outsourcing strategies. As part of the entrepreneurial pipeline, communities should focus on those existing businesses that achieve breakout or rapid growth status **and** create many jobs in the process. According to Christine Hamilton-Pennell (former market research analysis with Littleton, Colorado’s Economic Gardening program), the typical high growth entrepreneurial venture is one that has been around for several decades and reaches a point where there is both motivation and opportunity for high growth. It often takes an entrepreneur time to figure out how to achieve higher growth, creating opportunities for the community to provide support and resource connections. This observation also suggests that leaders should not limit their focus to new entrepreneurial ventures. It is important to look at existing, established entrepreneurs who may be on the cusp of breakout growth.

**Figure 18. Employment in Stage 3  
(100-499 Employees) Ventures**



As a proxy for breakout entrepreneurs, we use employment associated with Stage 3 ventures (100-499). Many Stage 3 ventures achieve a certain level of growth and plateau. If we see employment growth among Stage 3 ventures, there is a strong probability that there is breakout entrepreneurial activity.

At the local or regional level, it is relatively easy to identify potential breakout entrepreneurs (remember, they can be non-profits and public enterprises). At this stage, businesses are often moving out of existing space

and building new office complexes or even campuses. They may be actively expanding their leadership teams or seeking new supplier relationships. Regional and local leaders should be watching for such evidence and meeting with these entrepreneurial teams to understand their plans and consider what support the community can provide.

**Figure 19. Employment in Stage 4  
(500+ Employees) Ventures**



**Large or Stage 4 Ventures.** The U.S. Small Business Administration defines the dividing line between small and big businesses as 500 employees. YourEconomy defines State 4 ventures as those with 500 or more employees. In rural regions, ventures with this kind of employment are rare and often associated with branch manufacturing plants, regional health care facilities, regional colleges and universities, consolidated K-12 school systems and major energy, power or mining operations.

Just as a water or natural gas pipeline is critical community infrastructure, the **entrepreneurial pipeline** is the lifeblood of a community or regional economy. A diverse set of entrepreneurial talent, across the entire pipeline, is one key to building a strong, diverse entrepreneurial economy. For the county, Table 4 provides a comprehensive picture of all private, public and non-profit business establishments across the entrepreneurial pipeline, using data from [www.youreconomy.org](http://www.youreconomy.org).

Every community, particularly within a larger regional setting, has elements of the entrepreneurial pipeline in place, with more businesses in the earlier stages of venture development. Regional and local leaders should focus on understanding the entrepreneurial talent that exists across this pipeline and targeting resources toward those with the desire, capacity and opportunity to grow.

**Table 4. Le Sueur County, MN Entrepreneurial Pipeline**

	2003	2007	Change	2007	2017	Change
<b>Establishments</b>	1,120	1,112	-8	1,112	1,096	-16
Self-Employed (1)	202	208	6	208	185	-23
Stage 1 (2-9)	701	708	7	708	701	-7
Stage 2 (10-99)	199	182	-17	182	197	15
Stage 3 (100-499)	16	12	-4	12	11	-1
Stage 4 ( 500+)	2	2	0	2	2	0
<b>Jobs</b>	11,539	10,706	-833	10,706	10,398	-308
Self-Employed (1)	202	208	6	208	185	-23
Stage 1 (2-9)	2,553	2,618	65	2,618	2,541	-77
Stage 2 (10-99)	4,910	4,652	-258	4,652	4,721	69
Stage 3 (100-499)	2,524	1,928	-596	1,928	1,701	-227
Stage 4 ( 500+)	1,350	1,300	-50	1,300	1,250	-50

## Using this Development Opportunity Profile

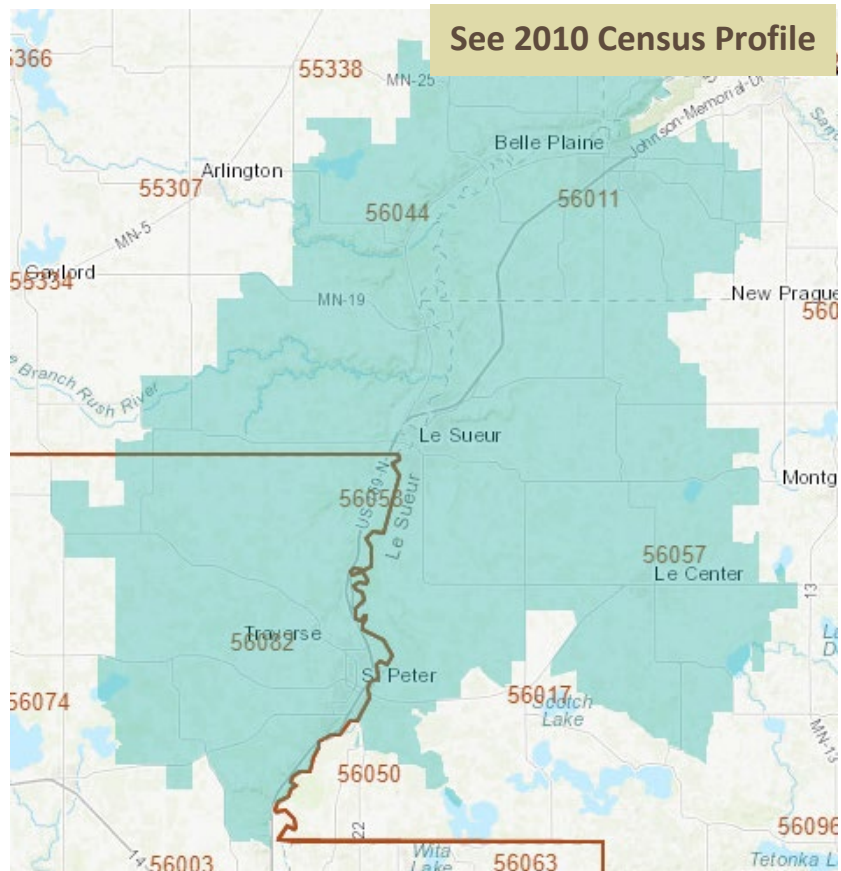
This **Development Opportunity Profile** is meant to be used as a conversation starter in your community or region. We believe that the best development decisions are made after a thorough assessment of your assets and opportunities. This Profile provides one set of information to get you started. We encourage you to share this profile with a diverse group of community and regional stakeholders and residents. The data shared here will be enriched by conversations with a range of partners who bring new and unique perspectives on your economy and opportunities. An entrepreneur is likely to look at this information from a different perspective than a community banker or county commissioner. Yet, these perspectives can help you establish a better understanding of your starting point and create the space for you to dream about what might be possible in your county going forward. Every community in America has the right and the responsibility to determine their own development vision and priorities. We have provided further analysis, by regional economist Don Macke, in a **Strategic Development Considerations** paper. This analysis is offered to help your community explore all your development options. We hope this information can help your community vision and pursue more impactful development in the years to come.

## Community Data

The following section provides a snapshot of community data for Le Sueur, Minnesota. This data is for your community's immediate area. More specific and detailed data is available through your REV Community Coach and the e-library.

## Le Sueur, MN

The map highlights the community region of Le Sueur, Minnesota. The community-level data has been pulled at the zip code level. Le Sueur is identified as the region including the following five zip codes: 56011, 56044, 56057, 56058, 56082.



### Le Sueur, MN Demographic Profile

**2010** Population – 34,378  
 Median Age – 34.2 Years  
 Households – 12,154  
 Average Household Size – 2.58

**2018** Projected Pop – 35,735  
**2023** Projection Pop – 37,013

Projected 2018-2023  
 Growth Rate = +0.71% per year

### Le Sueur, MN Business Summary

Total Businesses – 1,171

#### Businesses per 1,000 Residents

Le Sueur – 33  
 Le Sueur County – 35  
 Minnesota – 37  
 U.S. – 77

Total Employees – 12,759

#### Employees per 1,000 Residents

Le Sueur – 357  
 Le Sueur County – 349  
 Minnesota – 574  
 U.S. – 447

Sector	Ventures	Employees	Percent of Total Employees
Agriculture	42	135	1.1%
Mining & Utilities	3	11	0.1%
Construction	106	510	4.0%
Manufacturing	43	1,367	10.7%
Wholesale Trade	37	491	3.8%
<b>Retail Trade*</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
Transportation & Warehousing	37	479	3.8%
Information	18	99	0.8%
<b>Finance &amp; Insurance*</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Real Estate	52	129	1.0%
Professional Services	63	414	3.2%
Management & Administrative	28	133	1.0%
Education	44	2,107	16.5%
Health Care	103	1,881	14.7%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	31	371	2.9%
Accommodations	10	107	0.8%
Food Service	56	824	6.5%
<b>Hospitality Sector**</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>1,302</b>	<b>10.2%</b>
Other Services	154	816	6.4%
Public Administration	94	974	7.6%
Unclassified Establishments	43	6	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,171</b>	<b>12,759</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Retail MarketPlace Profile, Le Sueur, MN, 2018

### Summary Demographics

2018 Population	35,735
2018 Households	12,607
2018 Median Disposable Income	\$51,887
2018 Per Capita Income	\$29,320

Industry Summary	NAICS	Demand (Potential)	Supply (Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$457,952,490	\$365,579,471	-\$92,373,019	-11.2	198
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$414,139,666	\$337,931,553	-\$76,208,113	-10.1	142
Total Food & Drink	722	\$43,812,824	\$27,647,918	-\$16,164,906	-22.6	56

Industry Group	NAICS	Demand (Potential)	Supply (Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$87,667,230	\$67,871,917	-\$19,795,313	-12.7	20
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$70,156,671	\$19,605,471	-\$50,551,200	-56.3	5
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$9,990,630	\$43,880,339	\$33,889,709	62.9	4
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$7,519,929	\$4,386,107	-\$3,133,822	-26.3	11
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$13,005,733	\$2,288,317	-\$10,717,416	-70.1	8
Furniture Stores	4421	\$7,738,579	\$1,783,779	-\$5,954,800	-62.5	5
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$5,267,154	\$504,538	-\$4,762,616	-82.5	3
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	\$15,030,584	\$14,194,189	-\$836,395	-2.9	5
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip & Supply Stores	444	\$30,474,391	\$11,081,014	-\$19,393,377	-46.7	14
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$27,542,396	\$8,204,553	-\$19,337,843	-54.1	11
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$2,931,995	\$2,876,461	-\$55,534	-1.0	3
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$64,637,354	\$78,585,503	\$13,948,149	9.7	25
Grocery Stores	4451	\$53,641,792	\$44,230,841	-\$9,410,951	-9.6	11
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$3,312,534	\$3,796,600	\$484,066	6.8	6
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$7,683,028	\$30,558,062	\$22,875,034	59.8	8
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$29,023,460	\$17,108,457	-\$11,915,003	-25.8	7
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$46,155,389	\$117,530,323	\$71,374,934	43.6	16
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$21,233,761	\$1,599,496	-\$19,634,265	-86.0	6
Clothing Stores	4481	\$14,546,473	\$1,189,057	-\$13,357,416	-84.9	4
Shoe Stores	4482	\$3,077,458	\$0	-\$3,077,458	-100.0	0
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$3,609,830	\$410,439	-\$3,199,391	-79.6	2
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$12,453,167	\$10,267,153	-\$2,186,014	-9.6	9
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$10,838,478	\$9,950,591	-\$887,887	-4.3	7
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$1,614,689	\$316,562	-\$1,298,127	-67.2	2
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$71,789,717	\$8,332,692	-\$63,457,025	-79.2	6
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	\$53,663,510	\$6,569,011	-\$47,094,499	-78.2	1
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	\$18,126,207	\$1,763,681	-\$16,362,526	-82.3	5
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$16,075,545	\$8,539,730	-\$7,535,815	-30.6	25
Florists	4531	\$872,620	\$1,247,845	\$375,225	17.7	5
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$3,234,469	\$1,383,914	-\$1,850,555	-40.1	6
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$1,985,085	\$592,288	-\$1,392,797	-54.0	6
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$9,983,371	\$5,315,683	-\$4,667,688	-30.5	8
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$6,593,335	\$532,762	-\$6,060,573	-85.0	1
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$5,082,014	\$532,762	-\$4,549,252	-81.0	1
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$300,533	\$0	-\$300,533	-100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$1,210,788	\$0	-\$1,210,788	-100.0	0
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$43,812,824	\$27,647,918	-\$16,164,906	-22.6	56
Special Food Services	7223	\$1,123,889	\$132,264	-\$991,625	-78.9	2
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$2,514,441	\$4,169,309	\$1,654,868	24.8	10
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	7225	\$40,174,494	\$23,346,345	-\$16,828,149	-26.5	44

**A Note on Venture and Employment Data:** In our Development Opportunity Profiles, we use three public and two private sources of venture and employment research and data. A detailed review of our profiles shows that values change and sometimes change dramatically based on the sources we are using. The following summarizes these sources and their unique attributes:

### Public Sources

**U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.** BEA has very reliable data on private sector business establishments and associated employment. We use this source to profile both farm and nonfarm proprietorships. Proprietorships are typically locally owned and “main street” type smaller businesses. However, this kind of business organization can include small manufacturing, industrial, construction and other concerns.

**U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.** BLS captures very accurate information on all establishments that have wage and salary workers based on workman’s compensation filings. However, this source does not necessarily capture smaller self-employment ventures or proprietorships.

**U.S. Census Bureau.** Census establishment and employment data is based on surveys. It is comprehensive but for smaller geographies, the sampling can result in potentially unreliable estimates. This source does include information on commuters, home-based and self-employed persons by economic sector.

### Private Sources

**Esri.** We purchase data from Esri ([www.esri.com](http://www.esri.com)), a national market research company. Esri data is very current and can be procured for almost any geographic unit. It estimates ventures and employment at considerable detail including profiles of potential market demand by detailed economic sector. However, the Esri data is not as comprehensive as compared to Your Economy data.

**Your Economy.** The Your Economy ([www.youreconomy.org](http://www.youreconomy.org)) data is very comprehensive. The Your Economy data for ventures and jobs can be 20, 30 and even 40 percent higher as compared to the Esri data series. The Your Economy data set was created by the Edward Lowe Foundation and is now managed by the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

We use all these sources as they provide unique insights into the economy of a particular geography. Understanding what each source is measuring and how the source is estimating data are important. Hopefully this information helps users understand differences in data shared in this profile.

### Other Sources

All other data contained in this Development Opportunity Profile was obtained from the following:

- Esri ArcGIS Maps ([bao.arcgis.com](http://bao.arcgis.com)), 2019
- Headwaters Economics ([www.headwaterseconomics.org](http://www.headwaterseconomics.org)), 2019
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Census of Agriculture 2012 ([quickstats.nass.usda.gov](http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov)), 2019
- Ben Winchester [Brain Gain](#) Databook, University of Minnesota Extension (obtained privately), 2016

# About e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

The mission of **e2 – Entrepreneurial Ecosystems** is to help communities and regions connect, learn, and share best practices for building sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems across North America. With more than 25 years of field experience, particularly in rural America, e2 is the preferred resource for communities of all sizes wanting to pursue prosperity. E2, formerly the national Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, is hosted by [NetWork Kansas](#).

To learn more about e2, go to [www.energizingentrepreneurs.org](http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org).



**Don Macke – Regional Economist – e2-Entrepreneurial Ecosystems**  
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## How e2 Can Help

**e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems** can help communities increase prosperity through entrepreneur-focused economic development and ecosystem building through:

- **e2 Institutes.** Explore our new generation of e2 Institutes where teams come together, learn from each other and explore the expanded world of strategies, tactics and resources needed in entrepreneurial ecosystem development work.
- **National e2 Resource Network.** e2 offers a resource network capable of connecting those seeking help with those who can help across North America.
- **Analytics Support.** E2 helps communities and regions understand their entrepreneurial potential through research. A sampling of our research tools can be found [here](#).
- **Mentoring.** We mentor and coach new practitioners seeking to pursue entrepreneur-led development.
- **Fostering the eMovement.** We support the national entrepreneurship movement along with our partners including the **Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, SourceLink, Edward Lowe Foundation, Kauffman Foundation, and NetWork Kansas**. Together, we continue to advance the foundational ideas of building entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurship-led economic development.

**e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems** (formerly the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship) is led by Don Macke, who has more than 40 years of community economic development and policy experience. We have a national team of practitioners, both inside and outside e2, who bring research, coaching, incubation, market intelligence and other expertise to this work.

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