

**2013 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY DATA
FOR
ISABELLA COUNTY, MI.**



**Prepared by:
East Michigan Council of Governments
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General Facts About Isabella County

County Seat: City of Mt Pleasant
 Land Area: 574.27 square miles
 Local Governments: 1 city, 2 villages, 16 townships
 2010 Population: 70,311
 Population Density: 122.4 persons per square mile
 Median Age: 25.1

Table 1: Business Establishments In Isabella County¹

Type of Establishment	Self Employed & Stage 1				Total	Percent
	(1-9)	Stage 2 (10-99)	Stage 3 (100-499)	Stage 4 (500 +)		
Natural Resource & Mining	15	11			26	1.8%
Construction	101	24	3		128	9.1%
Manufacturing	37	15	6		58	4.1%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	213	96	6		315	22.3%
Information	15	8	1		24	1.7%
Financial Activities	117	27	3		147	10.4%
Professional and Business Services	150	33	3		186	13.2%
Educational & Health Services	137	76	4	2	219	15.5%
Leisure & Hospitality	57	89	2		148	10.5 %
Public Adm. & Other Services	135	26			161	11.4 %
Total	977	405	28	2	1,412	

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from U.S. Census Selected Statistics by Economic Sector, based on 2011 County Business Patterns

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Past, present and future growth patterns are a driving force and indicator of the future health and sustainability of a region. They help to define existing problems along with available socioeconomic resources and represent the current and future demands for those available resources. The sustainability of a region is dependent on how well the region meets the future needs of its residents. Future needs depend on a myriad of things including changes in population and households (both numbers and the details of those numbers) combined with existing development patterns and policy choices.

Table 2 presents a population history of Isabella County. Between 1980 and 2000 the County experienced a 17.1% population increase from 54,110 persons in 1980 to 63,351 persons in 2000. The County's population growth was greater than the experience of both the EMCOG Region and the State of Michigan. The 2010 U.S. Census results show that Isabella County continued to grow with a population increase of 11.0% since 2000 resulting in a population of 70,311.

¹ The County Business Data in Table 1 is lower than the same type of data in Tables 8 and 9 due to the different sources for the data: Table 1 data is based upon ES-202 filings as compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Tables 8 and 9 data are based upon National Establishment Time-Series [NETS] as compiled by Walls and Associates using Dun & Bradstreet's Market identifier files. The NETS data includes businesses and jobs that the ES-202 data does not capture such as many smaller businesses and part time proprietors and jobs. Further information on the differences in the two data sources can be found at <http://youreconomy.org/pages/insights.lasso#insights-NETS%20versus%20ES-202>

Table 2: Historic Population

Jurisdiction	Census 1980	Census 1990	Census 2000	Census 2010	% Change 1980 - 2000	% Change 2000 - 2010
Isabella County	54,110	54,624	63,351	70,311	17.1%	11.0%
State	9,262,078	9,295,297	9,938,823	9,883,640	7.3%	-0.6%
EMCOG Region	769,929	753,723	796,598	780,869	3.5%	-2.0%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from U. S. Census

Table 3 presents population estimates for Isabella County through the year 2040. These population estimates are based on a combination of average growth trends over the last four Decennial Censuses (1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010) and population estimates provided by the Michigan Department of Transportation.²

The average annual growth rate from 2010 to 2040 is shown on the right side of the table. Based on the population estimates Isabella County will experience an increase in population from the year 2010 to 2040 of 0.47% per year.

What is interesting to note in Table 3 are the Population subsets that make up the projections. In Isabella County there is a projected population decline of -3,475 from the “Domestic Migration Under the Age of 65” subset. This loss is more than offset by the projected growth in all of the other population subsets into the County. The population changes in Isabella County regarding overall growth as well as the “Natural Increase” (births – deaths) population subset changes contrast with the EMCOG Region as a whole which is forecast to lose population in both of these subsets.

Table 3: Population Projections: 2010 - 2040

Jurisdiction	Census 2010 (1,000's)	MDOT 2020 (1,000's)	MDOT 2030 (1,000's)	MDOT 2040 (1,000's)	Change 2010-2040 (1,000's)	Percent Change 2010-2040	Annual Growth Rate 2010-2040
Isabella County	70.1	72.6	77.4	80.8	10.7	15.2%	0.47%
Population Subsets							
Natural Increase		4.3	2.4	1.1	7.8		
International Migration		1.5	1.8	2.6	5.5		
Domestic Migration 65+		-	0.3	0.6	0.9		
Domestic Migration Under 65		-3.2	0.3	-0.6	-3.5		
EMCOG	780.8	774.0	766.1	773.7	-7.1	-0.9%	-0.03%
Population Subsets							
Natural Increase		5.9	-3.4	-16.0	-13.5		
International Migration		5.6	7.0	8.6	21.2		
Domestic Migration 65+		-0.2	.06	0.9	0.8		
Domestic Migration Under 65		-21.6	-0.05	6.1	-15.6		

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from Michigan Department of Transportation Planning

² The population numbers are shown in 1,000s for ease of reading the table.

Table 4 provides further detail of population forecasts for each city/village/township within Isabella County. The percent changes in population from 2010 to 2020 and from 2020 to 2040 are shown on the right side of the table. Based on population estimates all but one local unit (Village of Shepherd) in Isabella County is estimated to experience an increase in population from the 2010 Census to 2020 ranging from a low of 0.4% (Coe Township) to a high of 11.2% (Union Township). The population for all local units will grow from 2020 to 2040 by as much as 25.1% in Union Township.

NOTE: for the purpose of transportation planning the population forecasts as provided by MDOT were done by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) within Isabella County. A TAZ boundary may include a city or village as well as a township. The Village of Rosebush was embedded within a larger TAZ (Isabella Township) in the MDOT forecasts. EMCOG prepared forecasts for this village based on their 2010 Census population and using the same growth assumptions that were used by MDOT for the TAZ in which they are located. The resulting balance of the affected TAZ was adjusted accordingly in the following table.

**Table 4: Isabella County City, Village and Township
Population Projections: 2010-2040**

Local Unit	Census 2010	MDOT 2020	MDOT 2040	Percent Change 2010-2020	Percent Change 2020-2040
Broomfield Township	1,849	1,880	2,037	1.7%	8.3%
Chippewa Township	4,654	4,691	5,000	0.8%	6.6%
Coe Township	1,564	1,570	1,659	0.4%	5.7%
Coldwater Township	777	786	843	1.1%	7.3%
Deerfield Township	3,188	3,305	3,705	3.7%	12.1%
Denver Township	1,148	1,163	1,250	1.3%	7.5%
Fremont Township	1,455	1,468	1,568	0.9%	6.8%
Gilmore Township	1,459	1,470	1,566	0.8%	6.5%
Isabella Township	1,885	1,898	2,020	0.7%	6.4%
Lincoln Township	2,115	2,135	2,282	0.9%	6.9%
Mt. Pleasant City	26,016	26,385	28,443	1.4%	7.8%
Nottawa Township	2,282	2,306	2,469	1.0%	7.1%
Rolland Township	1,305	1,353	1,517	3.7%	12.1%
Shepherd Village	1,515	1,499	1,542	-1.1%	2.9%
Sherman Township	2,991	3,050	3,320	2.0%	8.9%
Union Township	12,927	14,371	17,977	11.2%	25.1%
Vernon Township	1,416	1,430	1,531	1.0%	7.0%
Village of Rosebush	368	371	394	0.7%	6.4%
Wise Township	1,397	1,460	1,659	4.5%	13.6%
Isabella County	70,311	72,590	80,782	3.2%	11.3%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from Michigan Department of Transportation Planning;
MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan

Another element of population trends is the age of the population as it directly impacts availability of a workforce and the experience of the workforce and types of both public and private services needed by the population. Table 5 identifies the median age³ for Isabella County for 4 decennial censuses (1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010). Isabella County’s median age is the youngest in the EMCOG Region.

Table 5: Median Age 1980 - 2010

Jurisdiction	Census 1980	Census 1990	Census 2000	Census 2010	Percent Change 1980 - 2000	Percent Change 2000 - 2010
Isabella County	22.7	24.5	25.1	25.1	10.6%	0.0%
EMCOG Region	28.8	33.2	37.2	39.7	29.2%	6.7%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from U.S. Census

Table 6 presents household (HH) estimates for the cities, villages and townships within Isabella County through the year 2040. From 2010 to 2020 the number of households is projected to increase by 11.2% countywide compared to a smaller increase in population of 3.2% indicating a shift to smaller household size. From 2020 to 2040 the local units in the County are all forecast to experience a further increase in the number of households ranging from 2.2% in Shepherd Township to a high of 41% in Union Township

As noted earlier these estimates along with the population estimates in Tables 4 as well as the household estimates in Table 6 were developed by MDOT for transportation planning purposes and therefore were done by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) within Isabella County. A TAZ boundary may include a city or village as well as a township. The Village of Rosebush was embedded within Isabella Township in the MDOT forecasts. EMCOG prepared forecasts for the village based on their 2010 Census households and using the same growth assumptions that were used by MDOT for the TAZ in which it is located. The resulting balance of the affected TAZ was adjusted accordingly in the following table.

³ The mid-point or the age at which 50% of the population is younger and 50% is older

**Table 6: Isabella County City, Village and Township
Household Projections: 2010 – 2040**

Local Unit	HH 2010	HH 2020	HH 2040	Percent Change 2010-2020	Percent Change 2020-2040
Broomfield Township	720	775	872	7.6%	12.5%
Chippewa Township	1,713	1,812	1,981	5.8%	9.3%
Coe Township	589	618	665	4.9%	7.7%
Coldwater Township	317	338	373	6.5%	10.6%
Deerfield Township	1,202	1,343	1,602	11.7%	19.3%
Denver Township	444	474	527	6.8%	11.0%
Fremont Township	532	564	619	6.0%	9.7%
Gilmore Township	561	594	648	5.7%	9.2%
Isabella Township	689	728	792	5.6%	8.9%
Lincoln Township	765	812	892	6.1%	9.8%
Mt. Pleasant City	8,376	8,968	10,003	7.1%	11.5%
Nottawa Township	859	913	1,006	6.3%	10.2%
Rolland Township	503	562	671	11.7%	19.4%
Shepherd Village	640	653	667	2.0%	2.2%
Sherman Township	1,195	1,293	1,467	8.2%	13.5%
Union Township	5,235	6,655	9,386	27.1%	41.0%
Vernon Township	546	580	638	6.2%	10.1%
Village of Rosebush	170	180	195	5.6%	8.9%
Wise Township	527	598	730	13.4%	22.0%
Isabella County	25,586	28,460	33,736	11.2%	18.5%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from Michigan Department of Transportation Planning;
MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan

EMPLOYMENT, JOBS AND SALES

Economic activity and sustainability is reflected to a large degree by the number and types of jobs available. Labor force data indicate the extent to which people are able to find jobs, the rate at which they are dropping out of the labor force, and the percent of people unable to find work. “Labor Force” consists of those employed and those without a job but actively looking for one (unemployed). Those who are without a job and not looking for one and are no longer receiving unemployment compensation and services are not considered a part of the labor force.

Table 7 shows the 24-month average labor force and unemployment data for Isabella County and the EMCOG Region, along with the State and National data, for the years 2011 and 2012. Isabella County's unemployment rate of 6.1% is lower than the National, the State and EMCOG rates.

Table 7: 24-Month Labor Force and Unemployment

Jurisdiction	Total Labor Force	Total Employed	Total Unemployed	24 Month Average Unemployment Rate
Isabella County	36,837	34,583	2,254	6.1%
National	154,329,000	141,769,500	12,559,500	8.1%
State	4,650,500	4,249,000	402,000	8.6%
EMCOG Region	356,608	309,295	29,627	8.3%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from Mich. Department of Labor Market Information 2011–2012, Data Explorer

The Isabella County unemployment rate of 6.1% is lower than the County’s 2010-2011 rate of 6.6%. The unemployment rate is a mathematical calculation of dividing the number of unemployed (those people within the system of looking for work) by the labor force. As noted above, those who are without a job and are no longer in the system for receipt of unemployment and services are not included in the calculation of the unemployment rate. Since 2010-2011 the labor force, the number employed and the number of unemployed has decreased with the labor force decrease at twice the rate of the other two measures. There can be several reasons for the decreased labor force and decreased number of employed and unemployed ranging from an out migration of workers to other areas of Michigan and the Nation for jobs to dropping out of the system as unemployment benefits end. However the rate of employment for the remaining County labor force has increased.

The following two tables show the working population in Isabella County and where they work in relation to where they live.

Table 8 shows the impact of workers commuting into and out of Isabella County as well as a subset for the City of Mt Pleasant and Chippewa and Union Charter Townships, has on the daytime population. The 30,722 workers (defined as the amount of the resident population age 16 and older who were employed either full time or part time) who live within Isabella County (regardless of the location of their employment) is compared to the 32,613 people who work within Isabella County to derive an estimated daytime population. The result is that Isabella County’s resident population increases by 2.7% when factoring in workers who commute to work from inside and outside of the county. Even though the overall county daytime population increases due to the number of workers who commute into the county to work, data for the Union Charter Township show that workers travel out of that township to work with the daytime population estimated to decrease by -5.7% with the township itself. As shown in the numbers for the City of Mt Pleasant and Chippewa Township subsets many workers commute into these two communities to work.

**Table 8: Commuter Adjusted Daytime Population
Isabella County**

County/MCD (a)	Total County/MCD Resident Population	Total Workers Living in The County/MCD	Total Workers Working in the County/MCD	Estimated Daytime Population In the County/MCD	Daytime Population Change Due to Commuting	Percent of Daytime Population Change Due to Commuting
Isabella County	69,451	30,722	32,613	71,342	1,891	2.7%
Chippewa Township	4,671	1,946	3,418	6,143	1,472	31.5%
City of Mt Pleasant	26,119	11,289	18,921	33,751	7,632	29.2%
Union Charter Township	12,088	5,695	5,001	11,394	-694	-5.7%

(a) MCD or Minor Civil Divisions are local unit of government with either 2,500 workers living in or 2,500 workers working in. The City of Mt Pleasant, Chippewa Township and Union Charter Township are the only MCDs within Isabella County

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from U.S. 2006-2010 Census Bureau American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates

Table 9 computes the Employment/Resident ratio by comparing the number of workers who both live and work within Isabella County to the number of workers employed within the County. Subsets of the total for Isabella County are shown for Chippewa Township, the City of Mt Pleasant and Union Charter Township. As shown below, there are more workers employed in Isabella County (32,613) than total workers who reside in Isabella County (30,722). Of the 30,722 working population living in the county, 24,341 actually work in the county. This equates to 79.2% of the workforce employed in Isabella County. This is reflected in the countywide Employment/Resident ratio of 1.06 which indicates that Isabella County imports workers living outside of the county for jobs within the County. There could be many reasons for this which this data does not provide insight into. Consistent with the data in Table 8 Chippewa Township and the City of Mt Pleasant capture workers from outside of the their boundaries while Union Township exports workers to other areas.

**Table 9: Labor Export/Import Analysis
Isabella County**

County/MCD (a)	Total Workers Working in the County/MCD	Total Workers Living in The County/MCD	Workers Who Both Live <u>and</u> Work in the County/MCD	Percent of Workers Who Both Live and Work in the County/MCD	Employment/ Resident Ratio
Isabella County	32,613	30,722	24,341	79.2%	1.06
Chippewa Township	3,418	1,946	532	27.3%	1.76
City of Mt Pleasant Union Charter Township	18,921	11,289	7,446	66.0%	1.68
	5,001	5,695	907	15.9%	0.88

(a) MCD or Minor Civil Divisions are local unit of government with either 2,500 workers living in or 2,500 workers working in. The City of Mt Pleasant, Chippewa Township and Union Charter Township are the only MCDs within Isabella County

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from U.S. 2006-2010 Census Bureau American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates

The next three tables focus on the types of business establishments in Isabella County and the number of jobs these businesses provide. Table 10 includes some further information about the business establishments⁴ that are included in Table 1 (see page 1). The data in Table 10 is broken down into the following business sectors:

Non-Commercial Sectors are educational institutions, post offices, government agencies, and other nonprofit organizations.

Non-Resident Sectors are businesses that are located in the Region but whose headquarters are located in a different state. Note: Residents have more influence on job creation than establishments headquartered outside of the state.

Resident Sectors are either stand-alone businesses in the region or businesses with headquarters in either the County or in the state of Michigan.

Non-commercial sectors make up 7% of the businesses in Isabella County. 3% of the businesses fall into the non-resident sector. The majority of businesses (90%) are in the resident sector. Data for both Isabella County and EMCOG as a whole is also included in Table 10.

Table 10: Business Establishments By Sector

Jurisdiction	Total	Non-Commercial	Non-Resident	Resident
Isabella County	3,887	271	131	3,485
EMCOG Region	53,338	3,723	1,668	47,947

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org 2009 data

⁴ An establishment is defined as an economic unit that produces goods or services at a single physical location.

Table 11 provides a different perspective of the resident sector data from Table 10 (i.e., the businesses that are headquartered either within the county or the state). The resident sector businesses are further broken down into the following business stages:

Self-employed (1 employee) consists of small-scale business activity that can be conducted in homes (i.e., cottage establishments) as well as sole proprietorships.

Stage 1 (2-9 employees) includes partnerships, lifestyle businesses and startups. Stage 1 companies are generally focused on defining a market, developing a product or service, obtaining capital and finding customers.

Stage 2 (10-99 employees) are typically at a phase where the company has a proven product, and survival is no longer a daily concern. Stage 2 companies generally begin to develop infrastructure and standardize operational systems. Company leaders delegate more and wear fewer hats.

Stage 3 (100-499 employees) companies are typically at an expansion stage as a company broadens its geographic reach, adds new products and pursues new markets. Stage 3 companies introduce formal processes and procedures, and the founder is less involved in daily operations and more concerned with managing the business culture and change.

Stage 4 (500+ employees) companies are typically at the point of dominating their industry and are focused on maintaining and defending their marketing position. Key objectives at this stage are controlling expenses, productivity, globalization and managing market niches.

These stages help to define the needs of businesses to support their growth which can help Isabella County and the EMCOG Region to better leverage resources. Regardless of their industry sector, companies in the same developmental stage experience similar challenges. Also, as companies move through these stages, not only do their internal needs change but their external needs such as what services they need from the community, also change.

The data in Table 11 shows that 90% of the resident sector businesses in Isabella County are either self-employed or Stage 1 businesses. The majority of the balance of resident businesses are Stage 2 businesses (9.6%). Stage 3 businesses (100-499 employees) and Stage 4 businesses (500+ employees) make up 0.5% of total businesses.

Table 11: Resident Sector Businesses by Stage

Jurisdiction	Self Employed	Stage 1 2-9 employees	Stage 2 10-99 employees	Stage 3 100-499 employees	Stage 4 500+ employees
Isabella County	1,192	1,938	335	15	5
EMCOG Region	18,858	25,040	3,800	223	26

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org 2009 data

The previous two tables (10 and 11) focus on the number of business establishments by sector and by stage for the dominant Resident Sector. The following two tables focus on the jobs that these business sectors and stages provide.

Table 12 shows the allocation of jobs by business sector (i.e., non-commercial, non-resident and resident) in Isabella County and for the EMCOG Region as a whole. The data is consistent with the findings in Table 10: the majority of jobs within Isabella County are in the resident sector (60%). The smallest portion of jobs (13.3%) is associated with businesses in the non-resident sector.

Table 12: Resident Jobs By Business Sector

Local	Total Jobs	Jobs Non-Commercial	Jobs Non-Resident	Jobs Resident
Isabella County	33,949	9,065	4,507	20,377
EMCOG Region	349,831	59,136	44,101	246,594

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org 2009 data

In Table 13 the resident sector jobs are further broken down by business stage (see the text for Table 11 for an explanation of Business Stages).

The majority of jobs from resident businesses in Isabella County are at Stage 1 and Stage 2 companies (67% combined) while 18.5% of jobs are from Stage 3 businesses (100 to 499 employees) and nearly 14% are from Stage 4 businesses (500+ employees). Nearly 6% of jobs are through self employment.

Table 13: Resident Business Jobs By Stage

Jurisdiction	Self Employed Jobs	Stage 1 Jobs 2-9 employees	Stage 2 Jobs 10-99 employees	Stage 3 Jobs 100-499 employees	Stage 4 Jobs 500+ employees
Isabella County	1,192	6,138	7,507	2,753	2,787
EMCOG Region	18,858	77,210	87,808	39,893	22,825

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from youreconomy.org 2009 data

The next two tables (14 and 15) show the annual sales (2009) by business type in Isabella County. Table 14 identifies sales by business sector. Resident Businesses make up 90% of businesses (see Table 12) and generate 67% of sales within Isabella County.

Table 14: Sales by Business Sector

Local	Total Sales (1,000s)	Sales Non-Commercial (1,000s)	Sales Non-Resident (1,000s)	Sales Resident (1,000s)
Isabella County	3,352,165.5	505,406.9	608,173.5	2,238,585.2
EMCOG Region	37,113,736.1	2,596,650.7	6,846,775.5	27,670,309.9

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org 2009 data

In Table 15 the Resident Business sector sales are broken down by Stage. Stage 2 businesses make up 37.6% of sales within Isabella County. The Self-Employed and Stage 1 businesses make up a nearly 30% of all sales; while the Stage 3 and 4 businesses make up 33% of sales. These numbers demonstrate the importance of the self-employed and smaller businesses (less than 10 employees) to the County's economy.

Table 15: Resident Sales by Stage

Jurisdiction	Self Employed Sales (1,000s)	Stage 1 Sales (1,000s) 2-9 employees	Stage 2 Sales (1,000s) 10-99 employees	Stage 3 Sales (1,000s) 100-499 employees	Stage 4 Sales (1,000s) 500+ employees
Isabella County	85,124.4	575,585.4	841,144.1	501,070.2	235,661.0
EMCOG Region	1,352,333.2	6,893,406.6	10,550,013.8	5,476,659.6	3,397,897.7

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from youreconomy.org 2009 data

Table 16 demonstrates how businesses in Isabella County have fared regarding their sales during the economic downturn from 2006 through 2009 by showing the percent change in sales during this four year period. The numbers are red (negative) for the Stage 2 companies indicating a reduction in sales. The remaining businesses, including the Self Employed experienced growth in sales during this period. The Stage 4 businesses in Isabella County experienced the strongest growth in sales which is very much in contrast to the majority of the Region. *The majority of the counties within the EMCOG Region experienced very slight reductions in sales from smaller companies (less than 10 employees) and in some cases sales for these smaller companies grew during the 2006-2009 timeframe.*

Table 16: Percent Change from 2006-2009: Resident Sales by Stage

Jurisdiction	Self Employed Sales	Stage 1 Sales 2-9 employees	Stage 2 Sales 10-99 employees	Stage 3 Sales 100-499 employees	Stage 4 Sales 500+ employees
Isabella County	1.8%	4.0%	-7.0%	0.2%	13.3%
EMCOG Region	-0.3%	-1.1%	-10.1%	-21.9%	-21.0%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from youreconomy.org data

Tables 17 through 19 present business establishment data for openings and closures; expansions and downsizing; and movement of businesses in and out of Isabella County during the period 2006 – 2009.

Table 17 presents the number of establishments that opened and closed from 2006 through 2009 and calculates the net increase of establishments.

Within Isabella County 1,048 business establishments opened and 807 closed. The closed establishments equal 77% of the opened establishments, resulting in a net gain of 23% opened establishments. In other words, for every 1 establishment that opened in Isabella County 0.77

establishments closed. Isabella County's experience is better than the experience of the EMCOG Region and the State as a whole which both experienced close to a 1 to 1 ratio.

Table 17: Establishments Opened and Closed 2006 - 2009

Jurisdiction	Opened 2006-2009	Closed 2006-2009	Net Opened 2006-2009	Net Percent Opened 2006-2009
Isabella County	1,048	-807	241	23%
State of Michigan	213,007	-201,869	11,138	5%
EMCOG Region	13,038	-12,621	417	3%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org

Establishments: non commercial, non resident, resident

Net Opened = the difference between openings and closings of establishments

Table 18 presents the number of establishments that either expanded (i.e., increased jobs) or contracted (i.e., downsized/reduced the labor force) from 2006 through 2009, and calculates the net increase of business expansions.

Within Isabella County 354 business establishments expanded while 118 contracted during 2006–2009. The contracted (downsized) establishments equal 33% of the expanded establishments resulting in a net gain of 67% of expanded establishments. In other words, for every 1 establishment that expanded in Isabella County, 0.33 establishments contracted or downsized. The EMCOG Region experienced 0.5 business contractions per 1 business expansion and the State experienced 0.4 businesses contractions per 1 business expansion.

Table 18: Establishments Expanded or Contracted 2006 - 2009

Jurisdiction	Expanded 2006-2009	Contracted 2006-2009	Net Expanded 2006-2009	Net Percent Expanded 2006-2009
Isabella County	354	-118	236	67%
State of Michigan	58,800	-25,818	32,982	56%
EMCOG Region	3,718	-1,949	1,769	48%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org

Establishments: non commercial, non resident, resident

Net Expanded = the difference between establishments that increased jobs and those that downsized.

Table 19 shows a different data set for business activity during the 2006 – 2009 timeframe: the number of establishments that either moved in or out of Isabella County. Within the County 50 business establishments moved in and 71 moved out during 2006 – 2009 for a net loss of **-21** business establishments. In other words, for every 1 business establishment that moved into the County 1.42 moved out. The County's experience is the same as for both the EMCOG Region and the State which both experienced a net loss of businesses (i.e., more businesses moved out than moved in).

Table 19: Establishments Moving Into and Out of the Area 2006 - 2009

Jurisdiction	Move In 2006-2009	Move Out 2006-2009	Net Move In 2006-2009	Net Percent Move In 2006-2009
Isabella County	50	-71	-21	-42%
State of Michigan	1,687	-2,927	-1,240	-74%
EMCOG Region	618	-702	-84	-14%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org

Establishments: non commercial, non resident, resident

Net Moved In = the difference between establishments that moved in and those that moved out.

Tables 20 through 22 present the **job impact** of business establishment activity regarding openings and closures; expansions and downsizing; and moving in and out of the area (from Tables 17 through 19)

Table 20 shows the number of jobs impacted by the opening and closing of business establishments from 2006 through 2009 (from Table 17) and calculates the net increase of jobs.

Within Isabella County 2,700 jobs were created due to opened business establishments and 3,468 jobs were lost due to business closures. The job losses due to closures equal 128% of the jobs created resulting in a net loss of **-28%** of the opened establishment jobs. In other words, for every 1 job gained by a business opening, 1.28 jobs were lost due to business closures. Isabella County's experience of net job loss is better than the experience for EMCOG (2.2 jobs lost for every 1 job gained) and the State as a whole (2.1 jobs lost for every 1 job gained) during the same time period.

Table 20: Jobs Impacted By Opening and Closing Establishments 2006 - 2009

Jurisdiction	Opened Jobs 2006-2009	Closed Jobs 2006-2009	Net Opened Jobs 2006-2009	Net Percent Opened Jobs 2006-2009
Isabella County	2,700	-3,468	-768	-28%
State of Michigan	551,322	-1,138,029	-586,707	-106%
EMCOG Region	28,168	-62,488	-34,320	-122%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org

Establishments: non commercial, non resident, resident

Net Opened Jobs = the difference between jobs created from opened establishments and jobs lost due to closures.

Table 21 shows the number of jobs impacted by the expansion and contraction (downsizing) of business establishments from 2006 through 2009.

Within Isabella County 3,585 jobs were created due to expansion of business establishments while 408 jobs were lost due to business downsizing. The job losses equal 11% of the jobs created, resulting in a net increase of 89% of the expanded establishment jobs. In other words, for every 1 job created 0.11 jobs were lost. The County's experience is much better than for the EMCOG Region (0.46 jobs lost for every 1 job created) and the State (0.6 jobs lost for every 1 job created).

**Table 21: Job Impact of Establishment Expansions and Contractions (downsizing)
2006 - 2009**

Jurisdiction	Expanded Jobs 2006-2009	Contracted (downsized) Jobs 2006-2009	Net	
			Expanded Jobs 2006-2009	Net Percent Expanded Jobs 2006-2009
Isabella County	3,585	-408	3,177	89%
State of Michigan	437,688	-246,613	191,075	44%
EMCOG Region	22,383	-10,196	12,187	54%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org

Establishments: non commercial, non resident, resident

Net Expanded Jobs = the difference between jobs impacted by expansion and downsizing of establishments

Table 22 shows the impact that the number of establishments either moving in or out of the County had on jobs during 2006 – 2009.

Within Isabella County 240 jobs were created by business establishments moving in. At the same time 279 jobs were lost by businesses moving out. In other words, for every 1 job created due to a business moving in to the County, 1.16 jobs were lost due to a businesses moving out. The County's experience of net job loss is very close to both EMCOG and the State which experienced about 1 job lost for every 1 job created during the same time period.

**Table 22: Jobs Impacted By Establishments Moving In and Out of the Region
2006 - 2009**

Jurisdiction	Move In Jobs 2006-2009	Move Out Jobs 2006-2009	Net Move In Jobs 2006-2009	Net Percent
				Move In Jobs 2006-2009
Isabella County	240	-279	-39	-16%
State of Michigan	26,734	-26,727	7	0%
EMCOG Region	2,806	-3,063	-257	-9%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from www.youreconomy.org

Establishments: non commercial, non resident, resident

Net Move In Jobs = the difference between jobs from business moving in and out of the region.

The next set of tables shows employment forecasts for the following occupational categories:

Table 23: Manufacturing

Table 24: Other Basic (farm, forestry/fish/agriculture and mining)

Table 25: Retail

Table 26: Wholesale

Table 27: Other (utilities, construction, transport, warehouse, information, finance, insurance, real estate, government)

Table 28: Services

Table 29: Total for All Categories

The forecasts are for the 30-year period 2010 to 2040. Each Table shows growth rates by type of occupation. Employment within Isabella County is forecast to increase by 27.3% within the 30 year period 2010–2040 compared to a 10.7% increase within the EMCOG Region and a 13.6% increase Statewide (Table 29). The occupational sector with the highest forecast of growth in Isabella County from 2010 to 2040 is “Services” at 20.9% from 2010 to 2020 and an

additional growth of 29.7% from 2020 to 2040 for a 30 year growth of 57% (Table 28). Two of the occupational sectors, Manufacturing (Table 23) and Other Basic (Table 24) are forecast with reductions in employment over the 30 year time frame.

**Table 23: Occupational Employment Forecasts 2010 - 2040
MANUFACTURING**

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2040	Percent Change 2010-2020	Percent Change 2020-2040
Michigan	503,751	499,375	450,679	-0.9%	-9.8%
EMCOG Region	33,223	32,310	28,946	-2.7%	-10.4%
Isabella County	1,901	1,752	1,612	-7.9%	-8.0%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from MDOT Planning; MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan, 2013

**Table 24: Occupational Employment Forecasts 2010 - 2040
OTHER BASIC**

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2040	Percent Change 2010-2020	Percent Change 2020-2040
Michigan	97,511	90,828	82,498	-6.9%	-9.2%
EMCOG Region	15,963	14,698	13,137	-7.9%	-10.6%
Isabella County	1,856	1,620	1,346	-12.7%	-16.9%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from MDOT Planning; MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan, 2013

**Table 25: Occupational Employment Forecasts 2010 - 2040
RETAIL**

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2040	Percent Change 2010-2020	Percent Change 2020-2040
Michigan	541,315	511,317	495,708	-5.5%	-3.1%
EMCOG Region	44,768	42,029	40,202	-6.1%	-4.3%
Isabella County	3,825	3,910	4,228	2.2%	8.2%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from MDOT Planning; MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan, 2013

**Table 26: Occupational Employment Forecasts 2010 - 2040
WHOLESALE**

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2040	Percent	Percent
				Change	Change
				2010-2020	2020-2040
Michigan	166,559	162,998	154,786	-2.1%	-5.0%
EMCOG Region	8,607	8,169	7,638	-5.1%	-6.5%
Isabella County	840	845	852	0.6%	0.8%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from MDOT Planning; MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan, 2013

**Table 27: Occupational Employment Forecasts 2010 - 2020
OTHER**

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2040	Percent	Percent
				Change	Change
				2010-2020	2020-2040
Michigan	1,536,596	1,623,614	1,697,672	5.7%	4.6%
EMCOG Region	109,826	114,316	119,908	4.1%	4.9%
Isabella County	18,140	19,408	21,627	7.0%	15.5%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from MDOT Planning; MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan, 2013

**Table 28: Occupational Employment Forecasts 2010 - 2040
SERVICES**

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2040	Percent	Percent
				Change	Change
				2010-2020	2020-2040
Michigan	2,194,496	2,496,969	2,842,633	13.8%	4.6%
EMCOG Region	141,039	158,728	181,560	12.5%	14.4%
Isabella County	11,472	13,868	17,985	20.9%	29.7%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from MDOT Planning; MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan, 2013

**Table 29: Occupational Employment Forecasts 2010 - 2040
ALL OCCUPATIONS**

Jurisdiction	2010	2020	2040	Percent	Percent
				Change	Change
				2010-2020	2020-2040
Michigan	5,040,226	5,385,100	5,723,975	6.8%	6.3%
EMCOG Region	353,426	370,250	391,390	4.8%	5.7%
Isabella County	38,035	41,403	48,436	8.9%	17.0%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from MDOT Planning; MDOT Source: Institute for Research, Employment and the Economy, University of Michigan, 2013

INCOME, POVERTY AND EDUCATION

Per capita personal income (PCPI) is widely used as an indicator of the economic well-being of residents in an area. Changes in PCPI provide a statistical measurement of an area's wealth and sustainability compared to regional or national benchmarks. PCPI is measured by totaling all income sources, wages and salaries, asset income and transfer payments and dividing that total by the total population.

Table 30 shows the National, State and Isabella County PCPI for December of 2011. The State and County is compared to the National PCPI of \$41,560. The PCPI for Isabella County and the State of Michigan are both below the National average.

**Table 30: Per Capita Personal Income
and
Percent of National Average**

Area	December 2011 PCPI	Percent of National PCPI
National	41,560	
Isabella County	27,960	67.3%
State	36,264	87.3%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from STATS America, January, 2013

Poverty is another strong indicator of the economic health and sustainability of the population of an area. Table 31 shows the level of poverty within Isabella County for the years 2000 and 2011 as compared to the EMCOG Region, the State and the Nation.

As a point of reference when reviewing Table 31, the 2012 preliminary estimated average U. S. Census poverty thresholds for annual income within the 48 contiguous states based on the size of the family unit are as follows:

Size of Family Unit	Annual Income
One person (unrelated individual)	\$ 11,722
Under 65 Years	11,945
65 Years and Over	11,011
Two People	14,960
Householder Under 65 Years	15,452
Householder 65 Years and Over	13,891
Three People	18,287
Four People	23,497
Five People	27,815
Six People	31,485
Seven People	35,811
Eight People	39,872

Source: www/census.gov

As shown in the numbers shown below, the National percentage of the population at the poverty level has increased by 2.8 percentage points since 2000 compared to 9.6 percentage points in Isabella County and 6.5 percentage points for the Region. The actual number of people within Isabella County at the poverty level may have increased because the County population has grown at a greater rate of 11% during the same time frame (see Table 2) Neither the Nation, the State of Michigan, the EMCOG Region nor Isabella County has experienced a reduction in the poverty rate since the 2000 Census. The number of people in poverty is the equivalent of 1 out of every 3.3 persons in Isabella County.

Table 31: Percent of Population At Poverty Level 2000 – 2011

Area	2000 Percent of Population	2011 Percent of Population	2011 Ratio of Persons in Poverty
Isabella County	20.4%	30.0%	1 Out of Every 3.3 Persons
National	12.2%	15.0%	1 Out of Every 6.7 Persons
Michigan	11.3%	17.5%	1 Out of Every 5.7 Persons
EMCOG Region	12.3%	18.8%	1 Out of Every 5.3 Persons

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from U. S. Census Bureau American FactFinder

Another indicator of the economic viability of an area is the educational attainment of the population living there. Table 32 presents a comparison of Isabella County's educational attainment for 2000 and 2011 by identifying the percent of the population age 25 and older that does not have a high school diploma and the percent of the same population that has a degree (high school diploma or higher).

For Isabella County, as well as the EMCOG Region and the State, the numbers have been going in a positive direction for the past ten years. The portion of population without a high school diploma has decreased while the educational attainment at all levels has increased.

Table 32: Education Attainment of Population 25 and Older 2000 - 2011

Area	2000 Percent Without High School Diploma	2011 Percent Without High School Diploma	2000 Percent With Diploma Or Higher	2011 Percent With Diploma or Higher	2000 Percent with Bachelors or Higher	2011 Percent with Bachelors or Higher
Isabella County	13.9%	10.4%	86.1%	89.6%	23.9 %	25.7%
Michigan	16.6%	11.6%	83.4%	88.4%	21.8%	25.3%
EMCOG	18.3%	13.1%	81.7%	86.9%	15.2%	17.7%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from Factfinder.census.gov

TAXABLE VALUES, TAX RATES AND HOUSING

The economic health of a community is, in many ways, tied to the health of its tax base. Without a healthy tax base essential services are difficult to deliver and the quality of life amenities that keep residents and businesses and attract new, become threatened. Without a

sustainable tax base, bonds and tax initiatives for everything from public safety, education, local roads to water and sewer, are also be at risk.

Table 33 presents a comparison of taxable values for Isabella County, the EMCOG Region, and Michigan for the years 2000, 2005 and 2011. During the period 2000–2005 Isabella County’s taxable value increase of 42.1% was greater than the increase for the EMCOG Region and for the State as a whole. During the years 2005–2011 the rate of growth of taxable value slowed for Isabella County (23.9%). As is shown in Table 33 the Isabella County rate of growth in tax valuation was significantly higher in recent years (2005-2011) compared to Michigan’s rate of growth of less than 1%, indicating more sustainability and growth in the County.

Table 33: Property Tax Valuation 2000 - 2011

Jurisdiction	2000 Taxable Valuation (million’s)	2005 Taxable Valuation (million’s)	Percent Change 2000 - 2005	2011 Taxable Valuation (million’s)	Percent Change 2005 - 2011
Isabella County	925.1	1,314.2	42.1%	1,627.8	23.9%
State	240,647.5	321,653.1	33.7%	323,615.6	0.6%
EMCOG Region	17,393.6	22,078.3	26.9%	24,285.3	10.0%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from 2000, 2005, and 2011 Ad Valorem Property Tax Report, Michigan Department of Treasury

Table 34 presents a comparison of the average tax rates levied for Isabella County, the EMCOG Region and for Michigan for the years 2000, 2005 and 2011. The tax rates are a calculation that represents an overall average millage rate based on total taxable values and total taxes levied. Tax millage rates are based on \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

During the years 2000–2005 the County's overall millage rate decreased by **-0.8%** compared to a decrease of **-1.7%** in EMCOG and an increase of 1.4% for the State. During the next six years (2005–2011) the millage rate within the County increased by 1.7%, compared to modest increases in the tax millage rates for both the EMCOG Region and the State.

Table 34: Property Tax Rates 2000 - 2011

Jurisdiction	2000 Average Tax Rate	2005 Average Tax Rate	Percent Change 2000 - 2005	2011 Average Tax Rate	Percent Change 2005 - 2011
Isabella County	38.75	38.45	-0.8%	39.10	1.7%
State	39.32	39.88	1.4%	40.00	0.3%
EMCOG Region	35.58	34.99	-1.7%	35.05	0.2%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from 2000, 2005, and 2011 Ad Valorem Property Tax Report, Michigan Department of Treasury
Average Tax Rate: calculation based on total taxes levied and total taxable valuation

Another indicator of the economic health of an area is the status of the growth of the housing stock and vacancy rates. Table 35 shows the 2000 and 2011 housing units and the rate of growth in housing units since the 2000 Census for Isabella County, the EMCOG Region, and the State. During this eleven-year period Isabella County experienced a 15.8% increase in housing

units, which is nearly four times the increase in the EMCOG Region as a whole (4.7%) and more than twice the statewide increase of 7.0%

Table 35: Housing Units 2000 - 2011

Jurisdiction	2000 Total Housing Units	2011 Total Housing Units	Percent Change 2000 - 2011
Isabella County	24,528	28,403	15.8%
State	4,234,279	4,532,215	7.0%
EMCOG Region	345,374	396,223	4.7%

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from U.S. Census StatsAmerica 2007-2011 Estimates

While Isabella County experienced gains in housing units during the past 11 years, the vacancy rate data in Table 36 provides further information: the number of vacant housing units in 2000 and 2011 and the percent those vacant units are of the total housing for the same time period.

Note: the vacancy rates are based on U. S. Census data. The Census determines a housing unit as vacant *if no one is living in it at the time of the interview, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. A vacant unit may be one which is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere* (www.census.gov). Based on this definition, second homes are counted as vacant.

As shown below, the increase in housing in Isabella County (15.8% from Table 35) is greater than the increase in vacancies (4.3 percentage points) for the County. The overall vacancy rate for Isabella County has grown from 8.6% in 2000 to 12.9% in 2011.

Table 36: Housing Vacancies 2000 - 2011

Jurisdiction	2000 Vacant Housing Units	2000 Vacancy Rate	2011 Vacant Housing Units	2011 Vacancy Rate	Change In Housing Vacancy Rate Percentage points 2000 - 2011
Isabella County	2,103	8.6%	3,657	12.9%	4.3
State	448,618	10.6%	707,033	15.6%	5.0
EMCOG Region	70,702	18.7%	88,348	22.3%	3.6

Source: Compiled by EMCOG from U.S. Census StatsAmerica 2007-2011 Estimates

SUMMARY OF DATA FOR ISABELLA COUNTY

The following is a list of highlights of findings of the economic data for Isabella County:

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

- Isabella County's population grew by 11% since 2000 (Table 2).
- Population is forecast to increase through 2040 at a rate of 0.47% per year (Table 3).
- In spite of the projection of population loss from the out migration of "Persons Under the Age of 65", the "International Migration" and the "Natural Increase" (births – deaths) population subsets will increase by 4,200 by the year 2030 and a total of 13,300 by the year 2040 (Table 3).
- The rate of population growth is forecast to grow by 3.2% from 2010 – 2020 and another 11.3% from 2020-2040 (Table 4).
- Isabella County's population is the youngest in the Region. The median age has increased slightly from 22.7 in 1980 to 25.1 in 2010 (Table 5).
- The number of households is forecast to increase from 2010 to 2040 at a greater rate than population growth indicating a trend to a smaller household size (Table 6).

EMPLOYMENT, JOBS AND SALES

- The 24-month (2011-2012) average unemployment rate for Isabella County of 6.1% is lower than the National rate of 8.1% and the EMCOG rate of 8.3% (Table 7).
- Isabella County's population is estimated to increase by 2.7% during the daytime due to the net impact of workers commuting to jobs within and outside of the County (Table 8).
- Overall, workers are imported from outside of Isabella County to work within the County (Table 9)
- Resident sector businesses (i.e., either stand alone businesses or businesses headquartered with the County or state) make up 90% of businesses within Isabella County (Table 10).
- Approximately 90% of the resident sector businesses in Isabella County are either self-employed (1 employee) or Stage 1 (2-9 employees) (Table 11).
- Stage 2 companies (10-99 employees) make up about 9.6% of businesses in Isabella County (Table 11).

- 60% of jobs in Isabella County come from resident sector businesses; the least amount of jobs (13.3%) is in the non-resident sector (Table 12).
- 67% of resident sector jobs in Isabella County are from either Stage 1 or Stage 2 businesses (Table 13).
- Resident businesses generate 67% of sales within Isabella County (Table 14).
- The Self-Employed and Stage 1 businesses (2-9 employees) generate nearly 30% of sales within Isabella County (Table 15).
- Stage 2 businesses (10-99 employees) generate over 37% of sales within Isabella County (Table 15).
- During the four year period 2006 – 2009 the Self-Employed businesses in Isabella County experienced a small growth in sales of 1.8% while Stage 1 businesses experienced a larger increase of 4.0% (Table 16).
- During the four year period 2006 – 2009 the Stage 2 businesses in Isabella County experienced a decrease in sales of -7.0% (Table 16).
- Stage 3 businesses which make up less than 1% of businesses and 13.5% of jobs in Isabella County experienced a 0.2% increase in sales during the same 4 year period (2006-2009. (Table 16).
- Stage 4 businesses In Isabella County experienced the largest growth in sales during the 2006-2009 timeframe of 13.3% (Table 16).
- From 2006 to 2009 the following business activity occurred in Isabella County:
 - For every 1 business that opened, 0.77 businesses closed (Table 17).
 - For every 1 job created from businesses opening, 1.28 jobs were lost due to business closures (Table 20).
 - For every 1 business that expanded, 0.33 businesses downsized (Table 18).
 - For every 1 job created from business expansion, 0.95 jobs were lost due to business downsizing (Table 21).
 - For every 1 business that moved in to the County, 1.42 businesses moved out of the County (Table 19).

- For every 1 job created from businesses moving in to the County, 1.16 jobs were lost due to businesses moving out of the County (Table 22).
- Employment Sector Forecasts: 2010-2040
 - The largest employee occupation sector is “Other” [utilities, construction, transport, warehouse, information, finance, insurance, real estate, government] (Table 27).
 - The second largest employee occupation sector is “Services” (Table 28).
 - The largest forecast increase in jobs at 20.9% (2010-2020) and another 29.7% (2020-2040 “Services” (Table 28).
 - Both “Manufacturing” and “Other Basic” [farm, forestry, fish, agriculture and mining] employment sectors in Isabella County are forecast to lose jobs by 2040 (Tables 23 and 24).
 - The employment sector numbers as a whole are forecast to increase 9% by 2020 and another 17% by 2040 (Table 29).

INCOME, POVERTY AND EDUCATION

- Isabella County's 24-month 2011 PCPI (per capita personal income) is 67.3% of the National average. (Table 30).
- 30% of Isabella County's population (2011) is at the poverty level, an increase of 9.6 percentage points since 2000 (Table 31).
- The portion of Isabella County's population with a high school diploma has been increasing steadily since 2000 (Table 32).
- The portion of Isabella County's population that has a college degree or higher has been increasing steadily since 2000 (Table 32)

TAXABLE VALUES, TAX RATES AND HOUSING

- Taxable values in Isabella County grew from 2000 to 2005 but have grown at a slower rate since 2005 (Table 33).
- Taxable values in Isabella County grew at a significantly higher rate than the EMCOG Region and the State as a whole (Table 33).
- The overall tax levy rate for Isabella County has remained fairly stable since 2000 (Table 34).
- The number of housing units in Isabella County grew by 15.8% from 2000 to 2011. This growth rate is over twice the growth rate for the State and over 3 times the growth rate for the EMCOG Region (Table 35).
- The housing vacancy rate ⁵ for Isabella County is 12% (an increase of 4.3 percentage points since 2000); a lower vacancy rate than for both the EMCOG Region and the State as a whole. (Table 36).

⁵ According to the U. S. Census a housing unit is considered vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the interview, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. A vacant unit may be one which is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere.