

MADISON INFORMATION

Economy

Wisconsin state government and the University of Wisconsin-Madison remain the top two Madison employers. However, Madison's economy today is evolving from a government-based economy to a consumer services and high-tech base, particularly in the health, biotech and advertising sectors. Beginning in the early 1990s, the city experienced a steady economic boom and has been comparatively unaffected by recession. Much of the expansion has occurred on the city's south and west sides, but it has also affected the east side near the Interstate 39-90-94 interchange and along the northern shore of Lake Mendota. Underpinning the boom is the development of high-tech companies, many actively fostered by the UW-Madison working with local businesses and entrepreneurs to transfer the results of academic research into real-world applications, most notably bio-tech applications.

Many businesses are attracted to Madison's skill base, taking advantage of the area's high level of education. According to city-data.com, 48.2% of Madison's population over the age of 25 holds at least a bachelor's degree. Forbes magazine reported in 2004 that Madison has the highest percentage of individuals holding Ph.D.s in the United States. In 2005, Forbes listed the city as having the lowest unemployment in the nation: 2.5%, less than half the U.S. 2004 average. In 2006, the same magazine listed Madison as number 31 in the top 200 metro areas for "Best Places for Business and Careers." However, Forbes has named Madison in the top ten several times within the past decade.

Business

The largest employer in Madison is the Wisconsin state government, not including the University of Wisconsin-Madison (although UW, University System and UW Hospital & Clinics employees are considered state employees[22]).

The University of Wisconsin Hospital & Clinics is an important regional teaching hospital and regional trauma center, with notable strengths in nephrology, oncology, digestive disorders, and endocrinology.[23] Other Madison hospitals include St. Mary's Hospital,[24] Meriter Hospital and the VA Medical Center.

Madison is also home to companies such as the North American division of Spectrum Brands (formerly Rayovac), Alliant Energy, American Family Insurance, the Credit Union National Association, CUNA Mutual Group, University of Wisconsin Credit Union, and FSBO Madison. Technology companies in the area include Netconcepts, Telephone and Data Systems, TomoTherapy, Broadjam, Sonic Foundry, Raven Software, Human Head Studios, Renaissance Learning, Epic Systems Corporation, and Berbee Information Networks. Many biotech firms

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exist here as well, including PanVera, now part of Invitrogen, Promega, and the Iceland-based Nimblegen.

Oscar Mayer has been a Madison fixture for decades, and was a family business for many years before being sold to Kraft Foods. The pizza chains Rocky Rococo, Pizza Pit, and the Glass Nickel Pizza Company originated in Madison.

Education

University of Wisconsin-Madison

According to *Forbes* magazine, Madison ranks second in the nation of top places in overall education.[25][26] It is home to the University of Wisconsin–Madison, as well as Edgewood College, Madison Area Technical College, and Madison Media Institute, giving the city a student population of nearly 50,000. The University of Wisconsin contributes the vast majority of these, with roughly 41,000 students enrolled. This makes it one of the largest public universities in the United States. It is consistently rated among the top public post-secondary schools in the country. In a *Forbes* magazine city ranking from 2003, Madison had the highest number of Ph.D.s per capita, and third highest college graduates per capita, among ranked cities in the United States.[27] Sports make up a large part of the campus experience at the university, both intramural and intercollegiate. The University's athletic teams, nicknamed "The Badgers", are consistently among the best in United States, drawing throngs of students, alumni, and state residents to their contests.

Additional degree programs are available through satellite campuses of Lakeland College, Upper Iowa University the University of Phoenix, Concordia University-Wisconsin, and Cardinal Stritch University for students who maintain full-time employment.

The Madison Metropolitan School District serves the city and surrounding area. With an enrollment of approximately 25,000 students in 46 schools, it is the second largest school district in Wisconsin behind the Milwaukee School District.[28] Madison has more than six times the National Merit Scholar Semifinalists than comparable school districts. The five public high schools are: James Madison Memorial, Madison West, Madison East, Madison LaFollette, and Malcolm Shabazz City High School, an alternative school. Notable public elementary schools include Aldo Leopold Elementary and Randall Elementary, the first school built in Madison over 100 years ago. The most notable of the private schools is Edgewood High School, located on the Edgewood College campus and Wingra School which encompasses students in grades Kindergarten through 8th.[29] St. Ambrose Academy is a Catholic school offering grades 6-12 on the west side.[30]

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With the State-imposed property tax caps, the Madison School District has found itself struggling as of late. In trying to find new methods of funding and support, the School District has tried to estimate the opinions of the public by holding public sessions on their budget. While the Madison also has an especially strong non-credit learning community with multiple programs and many private businesses also offering classes. Examples include Wisconsin Union Mini Courses, Madison School Community Recreation, St. Mary's HealthWorks, and the University of Wisconsin's Continuing Education program.

Transportation

Madison is served by the Dane County Regional Airport, which serves more than 100 commercial flights on an average day, and nearly 1.6 million passengers annually. Madison Metro operates bus

WSOR number 4025 painted for the railroad's 25th anniversary, seen in Madison July 23, 2005.

Railroad freight services are provided in Madison by Wisconsin and Southern Railroad (WSOR) and Canadian Pacific Railway (CP). Wisconsin & Southern has been operating since 1980, having taken over trackage owned since the 19th century by the Chicago and North Western and the Milwaukee Road. Some of the proposed light rail and commuter routes would use existing WSOR rights-of-way, such as the line between the Kohl Center and Middleton. Limited commuter trains were tested along this line in the early 2000s as "football specials". The trains took passengers from the Middleton depot to Camp Randall Stadium to help alleviate parking issues on game days.

A number of bus lines connect Madison to nearby cities. Badger Bus, connects Madison to Milwaukee running multiple buses a day. Greyhound Lines, a nationwide bus company, has a local stop and offers routes through most of the country. Van Galder Bus Company, a subsidiary of Coach USA, provides transportation through Rockford to Chicago - Downtown at the Amtrak station, O'Hare Airport and Midway Airport. Mad-Bus provides transportation for University of Wisconsin students to the Twin Cities. First Student offers charter bus rental services to groups in the Madison and Milwaukee area.

I-39, I-90, and I-94 expressways intersect at Madison, connecting the city to Milwaukee; Chicago; Rockford, Illinois; Minneapolis-St. Paul and Wausau. U.S. Routes US-12, US-14, US-18, US-51 and US-151 connect the city with Dubuque, Iowa, the Wisconsin cities of Lacrosse and Janesville, and Lake Michigan. The Beltline is a six-to-eight lane freeway on the south and west sides of Madison and is the main link from downtown to the southeast and western suburbs

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Bicycling

The Madison Mayor's Platinum Bicycling Committee has concluded that the bicycle is a vehicle for positive social change. Madison has long been one of the best places to bicycle in America. And Madison has the opportunity to distinguish itself by making visionary improvements to conditions for bicyclists in the city that would even further improve life here and make Madison THE national model for bicycle friendly communities.

In fall 2006 Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz formed the Platinum Biking City Planning Committee with the overall goals of

1. Achieving the Platinum designation level through the League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Communities program, and...
2. Putting forward a roadmap - or bike path - for Madison to become the best city in the country for bicycling.

Health Promotion

The City of Madison ranks high as a healthy city on many surveys. This plan will complement and further the activities and goals of other plans and organizations working to improve the health of Madison residents.

Mayor Cieslewicz started the Fit City Madison health initiative to help address skyrocketing rates of obesity and the increase in sedentary lifestyles. The health benefits of regular physical activity are far-reaching: reduced risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, and other diseases; lower health care costs; and improved quality of life for people of all ages. Improving health lessens the impact of the growing health care crisis and decreases the money individuals spend on prescription drugs and that Madison spends on emergency health care.

Physical activity need not be unduly strenuous for an individual to reap significant health benefits. Even small increases in light to moderate activity, equivalent to bicycling for about 30 minutes a day, produce measurable benefits among those who are least active. One of the best ways to sustain a physical activity program is to incorporate it into your day-to-day routine. Bicycling for transportation and recreation fits well with these goals. Making bicycling a safer and easier choice for people also improves the health of the community.

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Recent Madison Accolades Include:

- Top Ten places to Buy a Home. ABC News, August 2009
- One of the Nation's 25 Best Cities, Kiplinger's Personal Finance, 2007
- The Nation's Smartest City. Bizjournals, 2008
- One of the Top Ten Greenest Cities, Yahoo! Real Estate, 2007
- Madison Area Rated One of the Nation's 10 Top Metros for Income Growth, Bizjournals, 2007
- One of the 30 Best Towns in America, Outside, 2007
- Madison one of the top 50 cities in Fortune's Small Business, "Best Places to Live and Launch," 2008
- Madison one of "Five Perfect College Towns," Smarter Travel, August, 2007
- Top Medium-Sized Metro in the Arts, Creative Class Group, 2007
- Most Romantic US City. USA Weekend.com 2006
- Wisconsin's "most sophisticated city," New York Times Style Magazine, 2008
- Most Unique American Cities & Towns. Newsmax Magazine, 2009
- 2nd "Best Place to Educate Your Child" Forbes, 2007
- 2nd in Top 100 Best Places to Raise a Family. September 2009
- #1 Walking City. Prevention Magazine 2007
- 8th Healthiest Place for Women. Self Magazine. 2009
- Best Teeth in America. Men's Health. 2008
- #2 Best Place to Find a Job, Money Magazine. 2009
- One of 10 Best Markets for Women in Business, bizjournals, 2007
- One of the world's Top Startup Hubs, Fast Company, 2007.
- #1 Best Midwest Food Town, Midwest Living Magazine, 2009
- Best Farmers Market in the Nation, EatingWell 2007
- One of 9 Cities where Dogs Rule. Dog Fancy. 2007

