An aerial photograph of a wooded area with a lake. In the background, there are several buildings and a parking lot. The foreground is dominated by dense trees and a body of water. The entire image has a reddish tint.

Chapter 3: Regional Background and Trends

**A Long Range Transportation Plan for
Siouxland Regional Transportation Planning Association**
Completed by the Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO)

I. Overview

The Siouxland Regional Transportation Planning Association (SRTPA) Region IV serves as one of the Regional Planning Affiliations for the northwestern Iowa region. The region is located in an area of highly productive soils and generally adequate rainfall thus spawning a vibrant agricultural industry that is the backbone of the economy. The chapter will first describe the demographic trends and issues in the region followed by major economic issues that are anticipated to have a large effect on the region's transportation system.

A. Population

The population of this region has been gradually declining over the years with the declines being particularly steep in the more rural counties of Ida, Monona and Cherokee. The region's population is not anticipated to grow over the duration of this plan keeping in line with past trends. Table III.1 illustrates the general population trend in each of the counties in comparison with the trends at the state level. It can also be seen that the more urban counties of Plymouth and Woodbury had the lowest population loss and in the case of Plymouth a modest gain. It is also important to note that the urban area population of Woodbury County has been subtracted from the Woodbury County total population as the Sioux City metropolitan urban area is not part of the Region IV planning region.

Table III.1 Population Change by County

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000 - 2010 Net Population change (Births, Deaths and Migration)	% Change 2000 - 2010
Cherokee	17,269	16,238	14,098	13,035	12,072	-893	-7.40%
Ida	9,283	8,908	8,365	7,837	7,089	-673	-9.50%
Monona	12,069	11,692	10,034	10,020	9,243	-721	-7.80%
Plymouth	24,322	24,743	23,388	24,849	24,986	150	0.60%
Woodbury	17,127	18,881	17,771	17,142	17,836	-285	-1.60%
Region IV	78,059	76,430	70,412	70,992	71,226	-2,422	-3.40%
State of Iowa	2,825,368	2,913,808	2,776,755	2,926,324	3,046,355	120,031	4.10%

Source: US Census Bureau 1970 – 2000

Iowa Data Center

The following table shows distribution of rural to urban population in the region. It must be noted that excluding the urban area population which belongs to the MPO, the Woodbury County characteristics are much more rural, similar in nature to the other counties. In Table III.2, Woodbury County includes the Sioux City area population to indicate the importance of the urban and rural distribution in Woodbury County.

Table III.2 Distribution of Rural to Urban Populations

	Cherokee		Ida		Monona		Plymouth		Woodbury	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Urban	4,984	4,662	0	0	2,712	2,662	9,018	9,260	86,735	84,336
Rural	8,051	7,410	7,837	7,089	7,308	6,581	15,831	15,726	17,142	17,836

Sources: Office of Social and Economic Trends Analysis – Iowa State University
US Census Bureau 2000 – 2010

Figure III.1 Rural/Urban Distribution by County 2000 and 2010

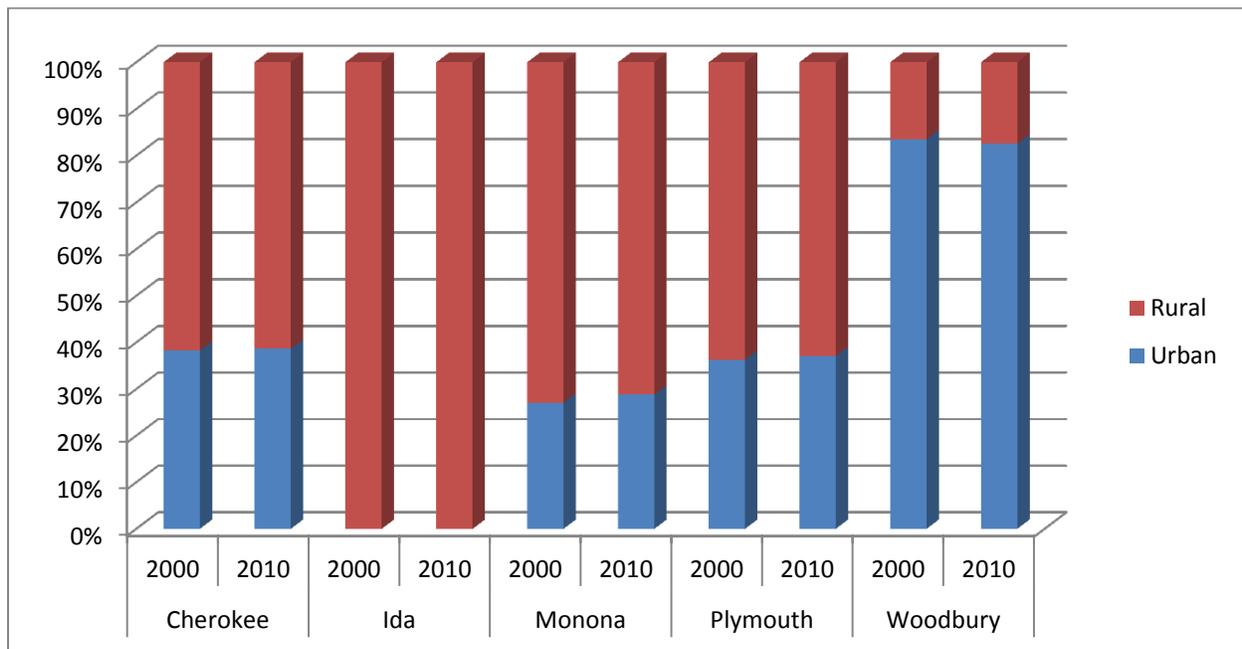


Table III.2 (above) shows the rural and urban distribution of Cherokee, Ida, Monona, Plymouth and Woodbury Counties. It should be noted that the U.S. Census Bureau defines an urbanized area as a population of 50,000 or more. Outside of the urbanized area, the urban population in these counties can be attributed to what is defined as urban clusters which must have a population on 2,500 or more. An urban area generally consists of a large central place and adjacent densely settled census blocks which means the only county in SRTPA Region IV that is without an urban area is Ida County. Without using the Sioux City area population to define the

urban and rural distribution in the above tables, Woodbury County would display a zero population in its urban area. Due to the nature of Woodbury County, it would be unfair to classify it strictly rural and discard the fact that it contains a major metropolitan area.

The Table III.3 below illustrates the SRTPA projected population figures to 2040. The projections were derived by past trends. An important note: the 2040 Population Projection for Woodbury County is without the urban area included.

Table III.3 Population Projection Based on Historic Trends

	Projected Yearly Change Based on Historic Trends	2040 Population Projection
Cherokee	-0.89	9,232
Ida	-0.67	5,794
Monona	-0.66	7,577
Plymouth	0.07	25,516
Woodbury	0.10	18,379
Region IV	-0.23	66,472
State of Iowa	0.19	3,224,867

Another sub trend in the region is the gradual aging of the population. The median age figure is used to illustrate this trend as it represents the age at which half the population is older and the other half is younger. The following Table III.4 illustrates the median age for each of the five counties in the region in 2000 and 2010 according to the U.S. Census Bureau followed by the age breakdown by sex for the entire five county planning area (Table III.5). The median age over the past Census has shown a substantial increase in the rural area.

Table III.4 Median Age

	Median Age in 2000	Median Age in 2010
Cherokee	41.7	47
Ida	41.5	44.8
Monona	43	47.5
Plymouth	37.8	41.2
Woodbury	34.2	35.1
Iowa	36.6	38.1
U.S.	35.3	37.2

Source: US Census Bureau 2000; 2010

It can be seen from the table that the counties in Region IV have comparatively high median ages with all registering figures higher than both the statewide and national levels. Given the aging of the “baby-boom” generation, it can be forecasted that the median age will continue to increase rapidly owing to the sheer size and dominating influence of this cohort in the population. During the 2035 LRTP plan update, a Woods & Poole projection had for example the median age of Cherokee County at 48.21 years in 2015 with similar but lower values for the other counties in the region. By the 2010 Census the median age within Cherokee County had increase from 41.7 to 47 years.

This scenario of an increasingly aging population will pose difficulties for the regional transportation system going forward. As the population ages, mobility decreases and this will be especially acute in rural areas where mobility is principally provided by personal automobiles. Isolation of persons who are no longer able to drive will become more common and will be a central theme to be focused on. The challenge for long term planning in this area will be, in addition to maintaining and improving the existing transportation system, the provision of alternative transportation modes for this older population.

Maximum creativity will be demanded in planning in such an environment given the well-known limitations of traditional transit in very low population density (rural) areas. Ideas like carpooling (using electronic technology to assemble rides) or simple neighborliness and SRTS (Siouxland Regional Transit System) on demand access can help in this regard.

The table III.5 below gives the region wide breakdown by age and sex cohort. As seen below, the largest population cohorts are 0-19 and 40-59. By the year 2035 the latter of the cohorts will be at retirement age and there may possibly be more of a need for alternative transportation modes for these individuals. The 0-19 age cohort will be of young professional and middle aged adults. This group tends to rely more upon personal automobiles to get around.

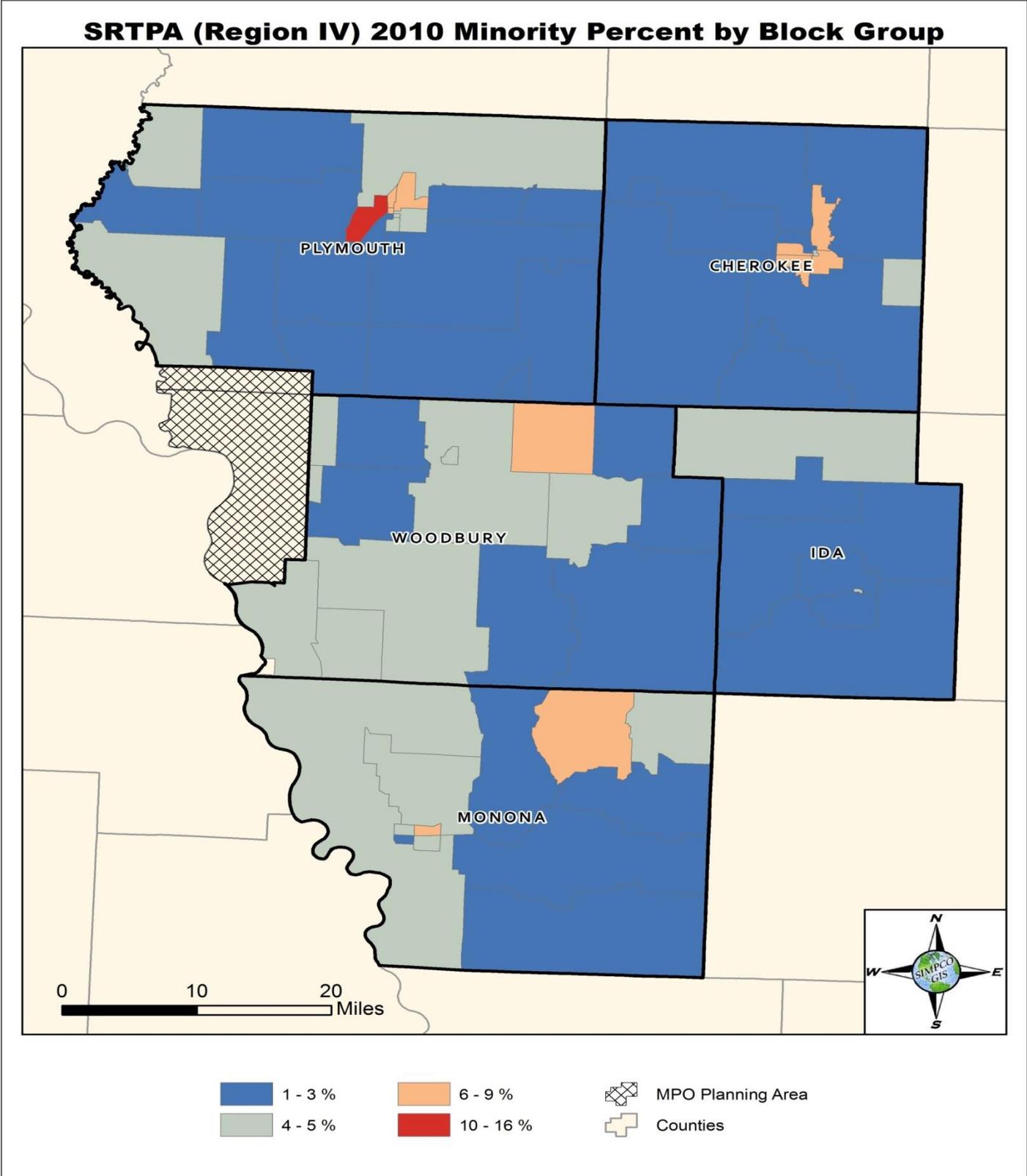
Table III.5 Population by Age and Sex

Population by Age	Number			Percent		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Total	64,801	32,115	32,686	100%	100%	100%
0 - 4 years	4,074	2,083	1,991	6.3%	6.5%	6.1%
5 - 9 years	4,216	2,167	2,049	6.5%	6.7%	6.3%
10 - 14 years	4,482	2,333	2,149	6.9%	7.3%	6.6%
15 - 19 years	4,287	2,196	2,091	6.6%	6.8%	6.4%
20 - 24 years	2,647	1,376	1,271	4.1%	4.3%	3.9%
25 - 29 years	3,262	1,693	1,569	5.0%	5.3%	4.8%
30 - 34 years	3,330	1,676	1,654	5.1%	5.2%	5.1%
35 - 39 years	3,435	1,716	1,719	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%
40 - 44 years	3,717	1,904	1,813	5.7%	5.9%	5.5%
45 - 49 years	4,931	2,465	2,466	7.6%	7.7%	7.5%
50 - 54 years	5,341	2,721	2,620	8.2%	8.5%	8.0%
55 - 59 years	4,901	2,525	2,376	7.6%	7.9%	7.3%
60 - 64 years	3,824	1,976	1,848	5.9%	6.2%	5.7%
65 - 69 years	3,135	1,537	1,598	4.8%	4.8%	4.9%
70 - 74 years	2,554	1,191	1,363	3.9%	3.7%	4.2%
75 - 79 years	2,431	1,032	1,399	3.8%	3.2%	4.3%
80 - 84 years	2,066	832	1,234	3.2%	2.6%	3.8%
85+ years	2,168	692	1,476	3.3%	2.2%	4.5%

Source: U.S Census Bureau 2010

Region IV has traditionally been an area of low minority concentrations but that scenario has gradually been changing with the continued importance of the agricultural processing industry. Recent years have seen an increase in immigrant populations, particularly from Hispanic regions in the Western Hemisphere, Southeast Asia and East Africa. Consequently, the non-white population is now a noticeably large percentage in many of the towns of Region IV. Rural areas that are still primarily farms are still predominantly low minority as illustrated by Map III.1. It can be seen from the map that a significant pocket (10 percent or greater) of minority concentration is within Plymouth County in the Le Mars, Iowa area.

Map III.1 Minority Composition by Census Block Group



B. Income

Region IV has traditionally trailed nationwide values for median and mean income and the latest figures are no exception. The following tables illustrate the median household income and the per capita income for each of the five counties in the region. It is important to note that due to changes in no longer collecting a long form in the U.S. Census in 2010, the data derived for the 2010 numbers were based on the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.

Table III.6 Median Household Income by County.

	1990	2000	2010
Cherokee	\$22,967	\$35,142	\$44,635
Ida	\$22,859	\$34,805	\$44,521
Monona	\$20,714	\$33,235	\$41,398
Plymouth	\$26,796	\$41,638	\$56,379
Woodbury	\$25,186	\$38,509	\$44,343
State of Iowa	\$26,229	\$39,469	\$48,872
National	\$30,056	\$41,994	\$51,914

Sources: US Census Bureau 1990 and 2000
American Community Survey 2006-2010 5 year estimates

Table III.7 Per Capita Income by County

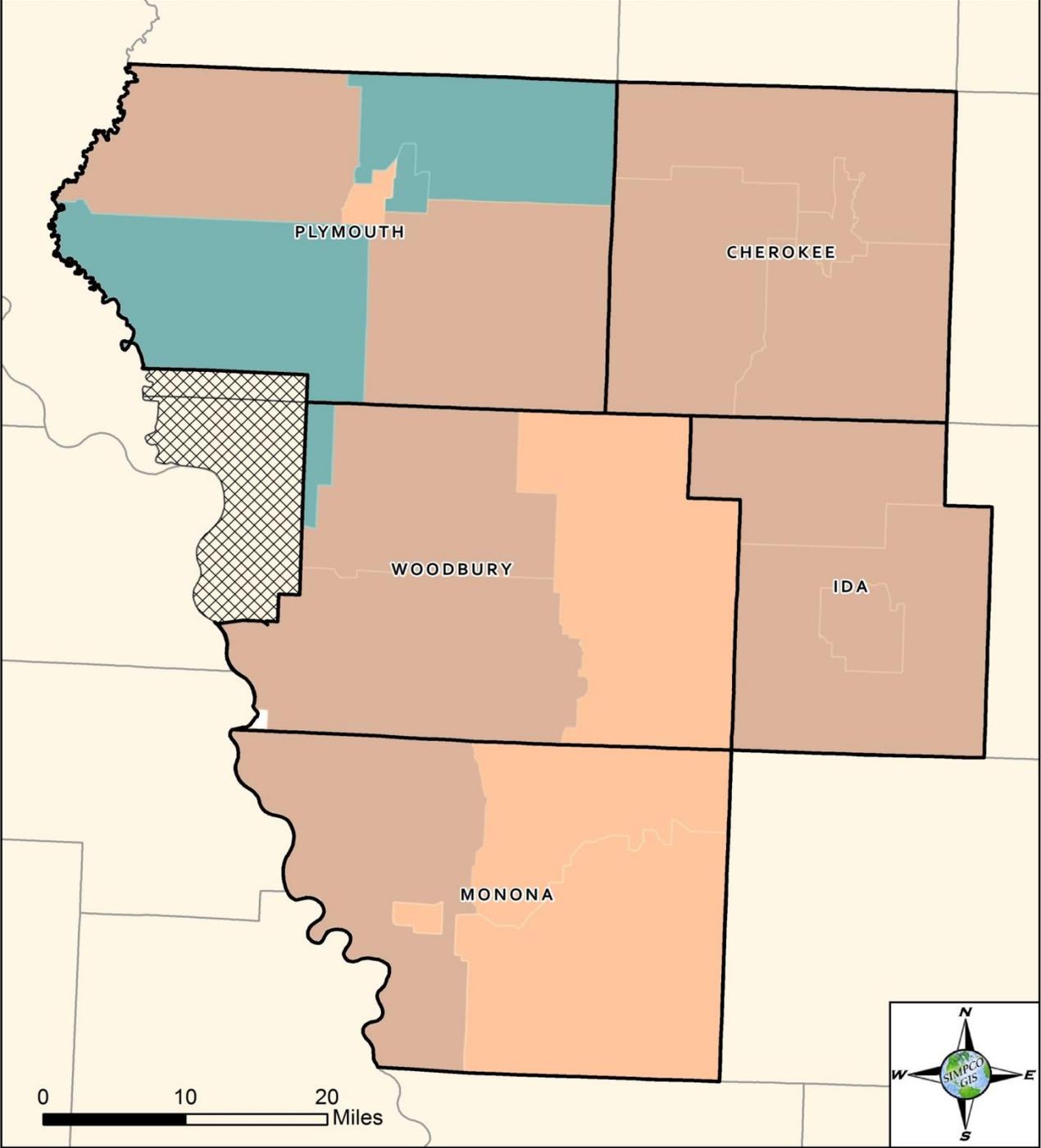
	1980	1990	2000	2010
Cherokee	7,444	16,115	23,288	25,507
Ida	8,652	16,547	24,011	23,841
Monona	7,673	14,553	22,769	22,774
Plymouth	7,625	16,435	26,301	28,060
Woodbury	9,696	17,266	25,548	22,069

Sources: US Census Bureau 1990 and 2000
American Community Survey 2006-2010 5 year estimates

From the Table III.6, it can be seen that all counties, with the exception of Plymouth County had median incomes below the State of Iowa and National numbers. In all areas, the median income increased on average by over 20 percent between the years 2000 and 2010. This was a slower growth rate than between the years 1990 and 2000 and may be due to the recession in the later 2000s. The following histogram depicts the change in income distribution by county between census years 2000 and 2010 (page III-9). Map III.2 illustrates the median income by census block group throughout the region.

Map III.2 Income by Census Block Group

SRTPA (Region IV) 2012 Median Household Income by Block Group



- | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|
| More than \$82,000 | \$24,001 to \$39,000 | MPO Planning Area |
| \$68,001 to \$82,000 | \$24,000 or less | Counties |
| \$53,001 to \$68,000 | No households | |
| \$39,001 to \$53,000 (US median: \$50,157) | | |

Figure III.3 Income Distribution by County for Census Year 2000

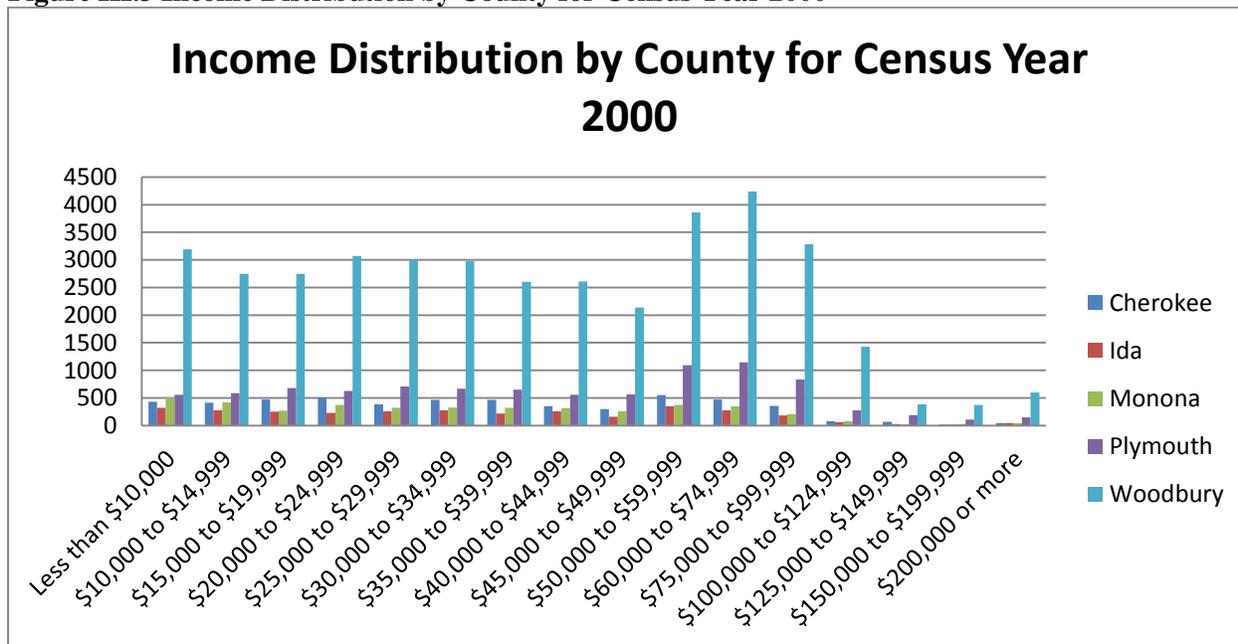
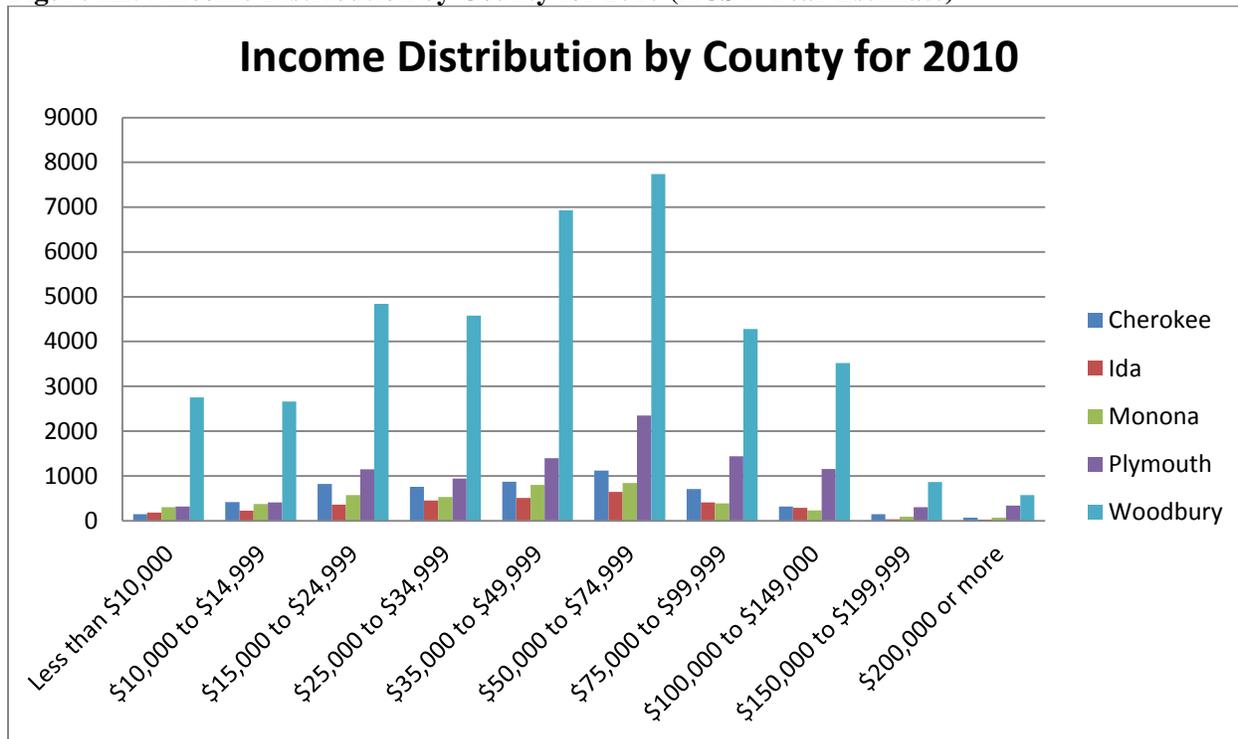


Figure III.4 Income Distribution by County for 2010 (ACS 5 Year Estimate)



Again, with the change in the Census format in 2010, the numbers are estimates from the ACS. There is also a slight discrepancy in the numbers from the income range that was collected in the 2010 ACS 5 year estimate limiting the ranges than what was previously collected in the 2000

Census. From Figures III.3 and III.4, it can be discerned that the number of persons earning very large incomes (\$200,000 and greater) has increased at a faster rate in the period than the general population in all counties. This indicates that income disparity is rising and follows the national trend. Plymouth and Woodbury counties showed the largest absolute changes in this regard. It is anticipated that, given the primarily rural nature of Region IV, median incomes will continue to trail the national average.

C. Employment

As mentioned previously, Region IV has very rich soils (several inches to a few feet deep in many locations) created by the erosive effect of receding glaciation thousands of years ago. Additionally, the receding glaciation also affected the drainage patterns of rivers and led to regular alluvial flooding before the large upstream dams for flood control and hydroelectric power put an end to such occurrences. These flood events added many critical soil forming minerals further enhancing the soil. Thanks to this and regular, reliable rainfall, the principal economic activity in Region IV is agriculture and its related services and industries. The following table illustrates the number of farms and average size for each county in Region IV.

Table III.8 Region IV Farms

	Ag Jobs	Related	Number of Farms	Average Farm Size (acres)	Acres in Farmland	Total Land Area (Acres)	Percent of Land in Farms
Cherokee	3,035		840	375	314,896	369,494	85%
Ida	1,246		633	431	272,578	276,624	99%
Monona	1,403		649	606	393,600	447,261	88%
Plymouth	5,685		1,442	359	517,248	552,932	94%
Woodbury	13,601		1,149	388	445,554	561,526	79%
Region IV	24,970		4,713	2,159	1,943,876	2,207,837	88%
Iowa	331,880		92,856	331	30,747,550	36,013,737	85%

Source: Iowa State University Extension
USDA Census of Agriculture 2007

As the table indicates, farming dominates Region IV's economy thoroughly with almost 90 percent of all land uses being agriculture related. The principal products were corn, soybeans, hogs/pigs and cattle. The average farmland values per acre of high quality crop land were in the region of \$12,000 to \$13,500 in 2013. Total employment figures for farming are very difficult to come by given the informal and seasonal nature of farm work but the agriculture related job

figure in the table as well as the number and size of farms gives some indication of the level of farm related employment activity.

Supporting the farm output is a large agriculture processing and service industry. This industry takes the corn, soybeans, hogs/pigs, cattle, dairy etc. as input and manufactures processed food items for consumption nationally and internationally. Several well-known names in the food processing industry have large operations in or near Region IV. Examples include Tyson Foods Inc., BPI, Well's Dairy, Con Agra, Cargill, Sioux Honey Association and American Popcorn. Their products range from cut and ground beef, processed pork/ham, popcorn, milk, ice cream and other dairy products, soy oil, processed cereal etc.

The following table gives a breakdown of employment by industry in the region. Care must be taken in interpreting the results as the figures include the entire area including the Metropolitan Area statistics. The figures include 2004 estimates and projections out to 2014 of employment by industry in the entire five county planning area.

Table III.9 Employment by Industry

	2004	
	Estimate	2014 Projection
Ag Services, Forestry, Fishing	155	185
Mining	90	90
Construction	1565	1615
Manufacturing	9810	10790
Transportation & Public Utilities	2490	2065
Wholesale Trade	3915	4005
Retail Trade	9845	10955
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2735	2980
Services	36695	40175
Public Administration	4710	4960

Source: Iowa Workforce Development

Region IV is an area of comparatively low unemployment. Of the five counties, Monona has consistently had the highest rate averaging between 3.5 percent and 5.9 percent between 1990 and 2010 courtesy of US Census Bureau and Iowa Workforce Development. Woodbury County shows a significant increase in the unemployment rate between 2008 and 2010 in which the recession may have affected the rate in that timeframe. Woodbury County's numbers also

include the urban area. The following table shows unemployment rates for each county during the twenty year period 1990 to 2010.

Table III.10 Unemployment Rates by County

	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
Cherokee	2.7%	3.2%	3.2%	3.4%	2.7%	2.4%	4.0%	4.6%	4.2%	3.5%	4.0%
Ida	2.4%	2.8%	2.5%	2.7%	2.4%	2.2%	3.2%	4.4%	3.5%	3.8%	3.5%
Monona	3.5%	4.5%	3.5%	3.8%	3.5%	3.2%	4.2%	5.9%	5.5%	5.4%	5.9%
Plymouth	3.0%	3.7%	2.9%	3.9%	2.8%	2.7%	3.4%	4.1%	3.2%	3.3%	2.8%
Woodbury	4.3%	4.3%	3.2%	3.7%	2.9%	2.7%	3.8%	5.3%	4.3%	3.8%	6.2%

Sources: *Office of Social and Economic Trends Analysis – Iowa State University*
US Census Bureau 1990 – 2000
American Community Survey 2006-2010 5 year estimates

It is not anticipated that the unemployment figures will change significantly during the timeframe of this plan as economic change tends to occur slower in this region. The projection by SRTPA is thus for unemployment in the 2040 timeframe, barring some significant economic discontinuity to still be in the 3 percent – 5 percent range.

II. Summary

In summary, it can be stated that Region IV has an aging population with economic activity centered on agriculture, agricultural services and industry. The area is primarily rural in nature with income and wealth concentrated in the towns, excluding Ida, and racial diversity slowly increasing. The socio-economic aspects discussed in this chapter should be kept in mind when discussion of the regional transportation infrastructure comes up in subsequent chapters.