

Chapter 3 – Community Profile

Population

The 2010 Census showed that Alpena County, with a population of 29,598, continues to be the most populated county in the Northeast Michigan region (excluding Emmet County). Population of the county has decreased by 1,716 people (-5.5 percent) since 2000. Although the county population density is 52.1 persons per square mile, 66 percent of the population is concentrated in Alpena Township and the City of Alpena (see **Table 3.1**). If the land area and population of the City of Alpena and Alpena Township are excluded, the average density for the remaining seven townships is 22.5 persons per square mile. The county population has increased by 59 percent since 1930. Population peaked in 1980 and is currently experiencing a decline. The largest population increase was 28.7 percent (6,367 people) recorded between 1950 and 1960.

Population by Municipality

Between 2000 and 2010, with the exception of Wellington Township, townships and the city lost population. Table 3.1 shows population trends for communities in the County. The two most populated communities, Alpena Township and the City of Alpena, lost the greatest number of year round residents.

Municipality	2000 Population	2010 Population	Percent Change	Numeric Change
Alpena County	31,311	29,598	-5.5%	-1,713
City of Alpena	11,311	10,483	-7.3%	-828
Alpena Township	9,781	9,060	-7.4%	-721
Green Township	1,205	1,228	1.9%	23
Long Rapids Township	1,019	1,010	-0.9%	-9
Maple Ridge Township	1,715	1,690	-1.5%	-25
Ossineke Township	1,761	1,675	-4.9%	-86
Sanborn Township	2,149	2,116	-1.5%	-33
Wellington Township	296	307	3.7%	11
Wilson Township	2,074	2,029	-2.2%	-45

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census
Note: Red text indicates decline and green text indicates increase

Seasonal Population

In 2010, the Census reported that 12.2 percent of the housing units in the county were seasonal. The percentage of Alpena County's housing units that are classified as seasonal is much less than that of the surrounding counties. Obtaining accurate numbers of seasonal residents and tourists is difficult. Because the decennial U.S. Census is conducted in April, the numbers only reflect those persons who live in the county on a year-round basis. A rough estimate of the number of county seasonal residents can be calculated by multiplying the number of county seasonal housing units (1,961) by the county's average number of persons per household (2.27),

for a total of 4,451 persons. Seasonal residents, therefore, added another 15 percent to the county's year-round residents, for approximately 34,049 persons, compared to the actual 2010 Census figure of 29,598 persons. This figure does not include those seasonal visitors or tourists staying in area motels, campgrounds or family homes. It is impossible to obtain accurate count of the number of the tourists who annually visit the county

Age Distribution

2010 Census data shows that 51 percent of Alpena County's population was 45 years old or older, an 8.9 percent increase since 2000 (see **Table 3.2 and Figures 3.1**). The shift towards an older population is most likely due to the existing residents getting older, rather than a significant amount of in migration. This conclusion is reached by the fact that the county's total population has decreased. The age group 45-64 is the most populous age group in all municipalities. In Alpena County as a whole, the 25-44 age group slightly exceeds the 65+ age group.

Increase in the median age is also evidence of a relatively stable population that is getting older. The median age of residents in Alpena County increased 5.2 years from 40.4 to 45.6 during the period 2000-2010, (see **Table 3.2**). At the same time the State's median age increase from 32.5 to 38.9 years. The difference in median age between the County and State increased from 1990 to 2010 as the County's population make-up "ages" at the faster rate. Green Township has the highest median age in Alpena County while Wellington Township has the lowest.

In conclusion, shifts in the County's demographic make-up are changing the population structure. Long term trends in the increase in median age continue at the faster rate than the State of Michigan and US. The rate has increased with the down turn in the economy, as young families move to other areas for employment. An aging population needs access to social and medical services. The county's emergency response services will experience an increase in demands.

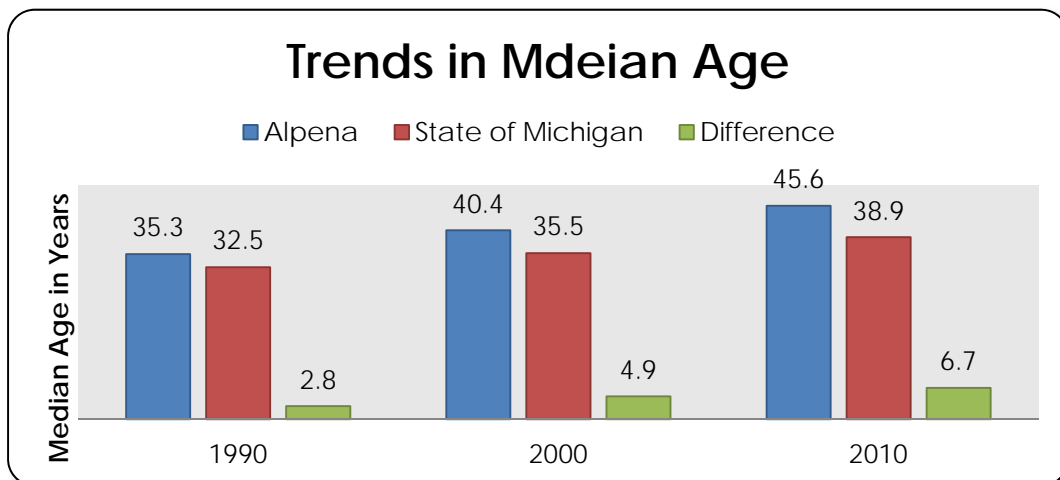


Table 3.2
Age Distribution By Municipality For Alpena County - 2010

Community	< 5 Yrs.	%*	5-19 Yrs.	%*	20-24 Yrs.	%*	25-44 Yrs.	%*	45-64 Yrs.	%*	65 Yrs. & >	%*	Median Age
City of Alpena	561	5.4	1925	18.4	664	6.3	2378	22.7	2921	27.9	2034	19.4	42.5
Alpena Township	448	4.9	1,507	16.6	391	4.3	1,696	18.7	3,013	33.2	2005	22.2	48.4
Green Township	60	4.9	219	17.8	38	3.1	229	18.6	435	35.4	247	20.1	48.9
Long Rapids Township	54	5.3	190	18.7	28	2.8	208	20.6	354	35.0	176	17.5	46.3
Maple Ridge Township	95	5.6	361	21.3	59	3.5	399	23.6	556	32.9	220	13.0	42.3
Ossineke Township	64	3.8	323	19.2	65	3.9	320	19.1	567	33.8	336	20.1	47.1
Sanborn Township	111	5.2	432	20.5	102	4.8	422	19.9	686	32.4	363	17.1	44.7
Wellington Township	21	6.8	60	19.5	14	4.6	71	23.1	82	26.7	59	19.3	41.1
Wilson Township	94	4.6	400	19.8	83	4.1	426	21.0	701	34.6	325	16.0	45.3
Alpena County	1,508	5.1	5,417	18.4	1,444	4.9	6,419	20.8	9,315	31.5	5,765	19.5	45.6
Michigan		6.0		20.8		6.8		24.7		27.9		13.8	38.9

*Figure shows the percentage each age grouping represents of the local unit's total population.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Disability Status

Data relating to disabled status is estimated by the American Community Survey and is based on a sample (**Table 3.4**). 64.4 percent of the population of Alpena County is classified as having some type of disability. A significant number, 2,651 people between the ages of 18-64 have some type of disability with ambulatory disabilities being the most common. Cognitive disabilities are the next most common in this age group. However, cognitive disabilities are the most common in the 5-17 year age group. A person was classified as having a disability if they had a sensory disability, physical disability, mental disability, self-care disability, going outside the home disability or an employment disability. The high percentage of disabilities in Northeast Michigan indicates a demand for disabled services. 38.4 percent of the population of Northeast Michigan over the age of 21 is classified as having a disability. More significantly, over 28 percent of households have a household member with a disability that lives alone.

Population under 5 years	52
With a hearing difficulty	39
With a vision difficulty	42
Population 5-17 years	245
With a hearing difficulty	28
With a vision difficulty	65
With a cognitive difficulty	232
With a ambulatory difficulty	77
With a self-care difficulty	97
Population 18-64 years	2651
With a hearing difficulty	461
With a vision difficulty	486
With a cognitive difficulty	1088
With a ambulatory difficulty	1431
With a self-care difficulty	440
With an independent living difficulty	763
Population 65+ years	2284
With a hearing difficulty	1239
With a vision difficulty	521
With a cognitive difficulty	568
With a ambulatory difficulty	1063
With a self-care difficulty	486
With an independent living difficulty	808
Source: American Community Survey 2010	

Selected Economic Indicators for Alpena County, MI

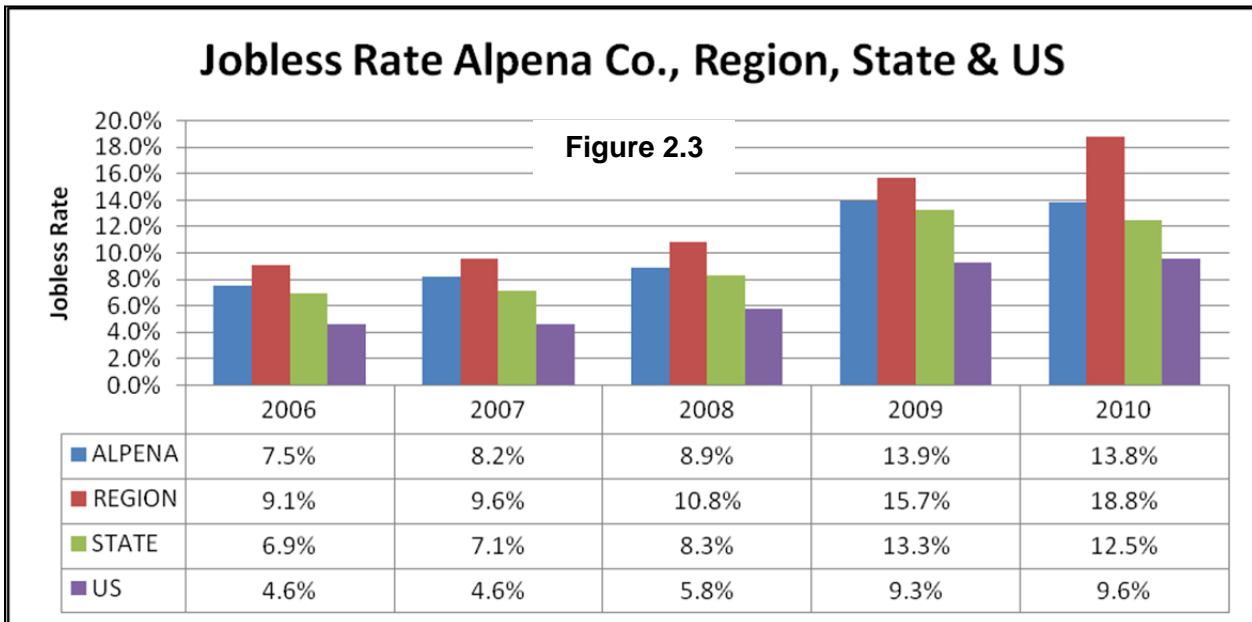
In Alpena County, 2010 Census data shows a loss in population levels over the last decade. The number of people in the labor force and employment has also dropped from 2004, as well the unemployment rate has increased. In 2009, Alpena County was 235th in the nation (3144 counties) in highest unemployment rate. The unemployment rate for the county has been consistently lower than region-wide rates. See **Figure 3.3**. The median household income dropped by \$1,800 from 2009 to 2010. Poverty rates have also increased in recent years.

Income and Poverty

A reliable measure of the economic health of families is median household income which is the midpoint of income for all households. While all eight counties of Northeast Michigan have generally exhibited a steady increase in median income over the past several decades, Northeast Michigan still lags behind the state as

Place	2009
Alcona County	\$32,644
Alpena County	\$35,710
Cheboygan County	\$36,860
Crawford County	\$35,866
Montmorency County	\$32,809
Oscoda County	\$32,928
Otsego County	\$42,831
Presque Isle County	\$36,520
State of Michigan	\$48,700
United States	\$51,425
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census	

a whole. The downturn in the economy in 2008 has resulted in a drop in median income for all counties except Oscoda County. **Table 3.4** present information on the median household income for counties in Northeast Michigan. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Otsego County continues to have the highest median household income. The 2009 median household income for Otsego County was \$42,831 which was 94.6 percent of State's household income. This is unusual in Northeast Michigan, where the median household income of most counties is much lower than the State rate. All other Northeast Michigan counties also have much higher poverty rates than Otsego County.



Generally speaking, individuals who have steady, year-round employment will tend to have higher overall incomes than those who are laid-off for part of the year. As more retirees move into the region and the local economy becomes more reliant on service and tourism job sectors, this trend of widening gaps between regional and state median household incomes is expected to continue. Lower incomes create challenges for balanced economic growth. As expenses for gas, food and housing continue to increase, families will be forced to move to areas that offer higher incomes. This could create an imbalance in the labor force necessary for positive economic growth.

The American Community Survey estimates that median household income in Alpena County from 2005-2009 was \$35,710 (**Table 3.4**). **Table 3.5** breaks down income levels in the county by age group.

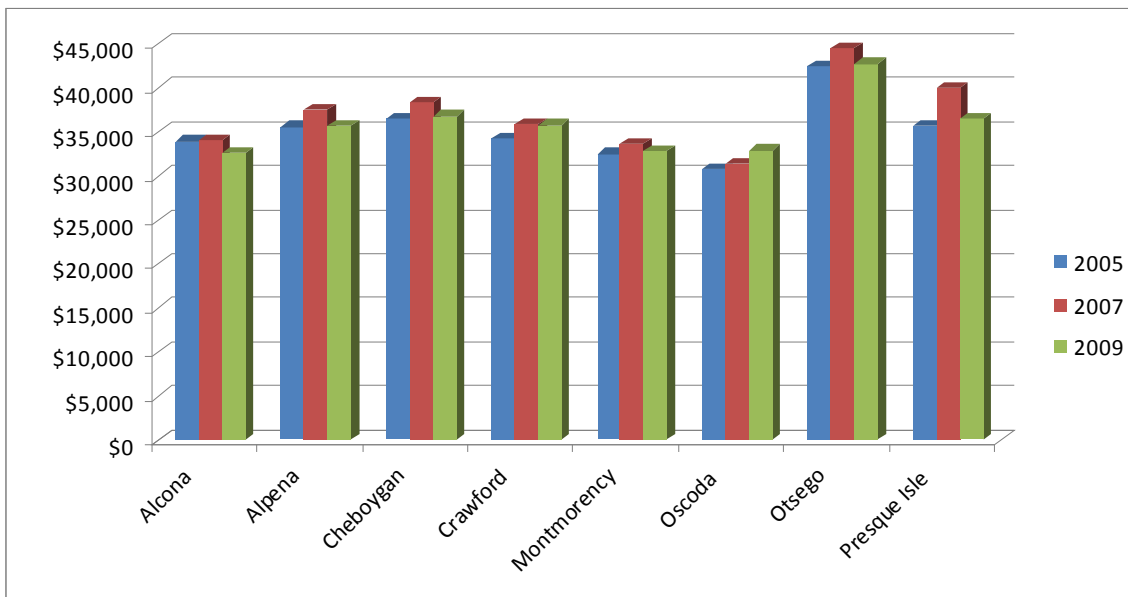
Table 3.5	
Median Household Income by Age: Alpena County	
	2008-2010
15-24 years	\$17,372
25-44 years	\$40,426
45-64 years	\$43,879
65+ years	\$28,793
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census - American Community Survey	

Poverty rates continue to be a problem in Alpena County and the Northeast Michigan region in general. Over 12 percent of all families are estimated to be in poverty. When children are present, this percentage increases for over a quarter, **Table 3.6**. Again, this number increases dramatically (46.9 percent) when a female head of household is present and goes even higher (67 percent) when

children under the age of 18 are in the household. This means that approximately 845 families with a female head of household (with children) are living in poverty in Alpena County. However, the percentage of householders 65+ years of age living in poverty has decreased from 6.9 percent in 2000 to four percent in 2010.

Table 3.6 Poverty Rates 2008-2010	
Category	Percent
Families	12.4
All families w/related children under 18	26.4
Married couple families	5.9
Married couple families w/related children under 18	12.1
Female householder, no husband present	46.9
Female householder, no husband present w/ related children under 18	67.0
Householder 65+ years	4.0
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census – American Community Survey	

Figure 3.2: Median Household Income for Northeast Michigan



Agriculture

According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture 2009 Survey, there were 573 farms with 58,947 acres of farmland in Alpena County. The 2009 survey found annual value of agricultural production was \$33,867,000, with \$15,028,000 in livestock sales, \$12,409,000 in dairy production, and \$6,430,000 in crop sales. Alpena County ranks 14 in the state in forage-land used for hay. Tables 3.7, 3.8 & 3.9 provide agricultural statistics from the Michigan Dept. of Agriculture.

Table 3.7: Alpena County	
Agricultural Lands	Amount
Total number of farms:	573
Total farmland:	58,947 acres (16.1% of total area)
Forage/pasture/non-crop farmland:	25,265 acres (42.86% of farmland)
Number of farms using organic production:	2 (no certified organic farms)
Cropland in transition to organic:	132 acres (includes non-certified acres)
Local Distribution	Amount
Farmers' markets:	1
U-pick farms /On-farm markets:	1
Farms using Community Supported Agriculture:	2
Value of direct-to-consumer farm product sales:	\$185,000
Local food production index:	24
Michigan Department of Agriculture – July 2009	

Table 3.8: Alpena County		
Key Products	Production	Revenues
Corn, soy, and wheat	14,307 acres (24.3% of cropland)	\$2,554,000
Vegetables	85 acres (0.14% of cropland)	\$182,000
Fruit and tree nuts	103 acres (0.1% of cropland)	\$175,000
Dairy farms	39 farms (1.7% of all in MI) #20	\$12,409,000
All animal operations	281 operations (16,537 animals)	\$15,028,000
Michigan Department of Agriculture – July 2009		

Table 3.9: Alpena County			
Locally Important Products	Size	Amount	MI Top 20 Ranking
Forage-land used for hay	25,265 acres	\$1,912,000	14
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas		\$3,835,000	
Michigan Department of Agriculture – July 2009			

Housing Stock

Over past decades, Alpena County has experienced a steady increase in number housing units. However, new housing starts drastically dropped in 2008 with the down turn in the U.S. economy. Housing characteristics from the 2010 US Census are presented in **Table 3.10**. The Census found 16,053 housing units with 12,791 units occupied and 3,262 units vacant. The City of Alpena has the most housing units at 5,278 units, with Alpena Township a close second at 4,907 units. Compared to other counties in the Northeast, Alpena County has a relatively low percentage of seasonal housing units. However, at 12.2 percent the rate is still double the

statewide seasonal housing rate. As would be expected, the seasonal housing rate for the City of Alpena is less than two percent. Communities with, Lake Huron shoreline, lakes, rivers and considerable private forestlands tend to have higher numbers of seasonal housing units. Communities with high numbers of seasonal housing present unique challenges when mitigating hazards. Given their geographic location structures are more vulnerable to wildfires and flooding hazards.

Table 3.10 Housing Counts and Occupancy Status in Alpena County						
Area Name	2010					
	Total	Occupied	Vacant	Percent Vacant	Seasonal	* Percent Seasonal
Alpena County	16,053	12,791	3,262	20.32%	1,961	12.2%
City of Alpena	5,278	4734	544	10.31%	70	1.3%
Alpena Township	4,907	3976	931	18.97%	558	11.4%
Green Township	922	508	414	44.90%	318	34.5%
Long Rapids Township	574	418	156	27.18%	107	18.6%
Maple Ridge Township	904	665	239	26.44%	184	20.4%
Ossineke Township	1102	706	396	35.93%	322	29.2%
Sanborn Township	1,083	845	238	21.98%	146	13.5%
Wellington Township	247	127	120	48.58%	98	39.7%
Wilson Township	1036	812	224	21.62%	158	15.3%
* Percent of total housing Source: US Census Bureau						

Information found in **Table 3.11** a shows the year that housing units were built in Alpena County. Generally speaking, the older a housing unit is the more it is likely to be in need of rehabilitation. As a rule of thumb, any housing unit that is older than 50 years may be in need of at least some, if not a great deal of renovation. Over 44 percent of the housing in Alpena County was built prior to 1960 with at least 17 percent having been built prior to 1940. Data indicates that the City of Alpena has, by far, the largest percentage of older housing units within the county (over 34 percent were built prior to 1940). While many of these homes are beautiful, historic and well-kept homes; several are in need of repair and renovations.

There is not a great deal of older housing stock (housing built in 1939 or earlier) found in other Alpena County municipalities. All local units, except Alpena City, had more than 50 percent of their housing stock built between 1940 and 1970 according to the 2000 census. Due to the age of this housing, some of it is no doubt in need of rehabilitation. Both the City of Alpena and Alpena County have housing rehabilitation programs that help lower income homeowners undertake needed repairs on their houses.

Table 3.11 Year Structure Built - Alpena County		
Year Structure Built	2000	2010
2000 or later		4.6%
1990-1999	11.2%	9.2%
1980-1989	10.3%	10.3%
1960-1979	33.8%	33.4%
1940-1959	24.6%	24.6%
1939 or earlier	19.9%	17.0%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and American Community Survey 2010		