







Berkshire Blueprint



“Measuring for Success”

In March of 2007, the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation released the Berkshire Blueprint, an action plan intended to move the regional economy toward increased prosperity that preserves and maintains Berkshire County’s quality of life and markets the Berkshire lifestyle to attract visitors, firms and entrepreneurs. Fifteen indicators have been selected to track progress toward the Berkshire Blueprint’s goals. For more information about the Berkshire Blueprint, call 413-499-4000 or visit www.berkshiredc.com.





Economic & Business Climate

-  **GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT:** Berkshire County GDP grew 31% between 2001 and 2005. The national GDP grew 23% for the same period.
-  **LABOR FORCE:** The County’s labor force grew 4.4% since 1990 despite a population decline of 3.6%. (By contrast, the MA labor force grew 5%, but this was coupled with a population increase of 6%.)
-  **AVERAGE WAGE:** When adjusted for inflation, the average annual wage, excluding benefits, of private sector employees increased 6.7% since 1990.
-  **NEW BUSINESS STARTS:** The number of businesses grew by a net of 4.4% between 2001 and 2006.
-  **COST OF HEALTH CARE:** The median monthly cost of employers’ share of a family plan increased from \$488 in 2001 to \$713 in 2005. (National average 2005 = \$681)
-  **COST OF DOING BUSINESS INDEX:** The Moody cost index for Berkshire County is 114. (National average = 100; National range = 77.4 to 127.8)




Innovative Capacity

-  **PATENTS ISSUED:** From 1990 to 2004, an average of 4.7 patents per year were issued per 10,000 workers.
-  **INTERNET ACCESS:** 87% of the population has access to a high speed internet connection but of 32 cities and towns, 13 have no access and 11 have less than full access.

People and Prosperity

-  **POPULATION:** Berkshire County’s population declined 3.6% since 1990.
-  **HIGHER DEGREE ATTAINMENT:** Since 1990, residents 25 years of age and older holding at least a four-year college degree increased from 21% to 32%.
-  **CHRONIC DISEASE:** In the last five years, deaths from cardiovascular disease decreased by 13%.
-  **COST OF SINGLE FAMILY HOME:** The median price of a single family home in Berkshire County in 2005 was \$173,000; the median price in Massachusetts in 2005 was \$209,000.

Environment

-  **BALANCED LAND USE:** 90% of the land in the County is un-developed (farms, forests, wetlands and “vacant”), a decrease of 2% since 1971.
-  **AIR QUALITY:** Since 2002, ozone levels exceeding the US/EPA’s acceptable standard averaged less than three days per year.
-  **RECYCLING:** Berkshire County annually recycles 17% of its solid waste; MA averages 26% annually.