

# Population Notes

A look at the demography and geography of Wisconsin



Spring 2011: # 18

Applied Population Laboratory • Department of Community and Environmental Sociology • UW-Madison

## Redistricting in Wisconsin - Redrawing the Lines

In late December 2010, the first new data from the 2010 Census came out in the form of state population totals. While the new numbers are not very exciting in and of themselves, they signal the start of a new cycle of redistricting and reapportionment. A few quick facts about Wisconsin's new state population total:

State Resident Population, 4/1/2010:	5,686,986
Numeric change from Census 2000:	323,271
Percentage change from Census 2000:	6.03%
2010 National Rank	20
U.S. Congress Seats	8
Change in number of seats since 2000	0
New target size of U.S. Congress districts:	710,873

Every ten years when the decennial census is concluded, each state in the nation conducts redistricting to respond to new population counts and population shifts within the state. Figure 1 shows how Wisconsin county populations changed from 2000 to 2010.

### The Process in Wisconsin

What does redistricting mean for Wisconsin? Although this process involves all levels of government, the creation of congressional, legislative, county, and municipal districts are completed in separate phases. The first phase of redistricting occurs at the local level with counties and municipalities. The second phase occurs in the state legislature where new legislative and congressional districts are created. The purpose of redistricting is to establish election districts which provide equal representation of the population under the constitutionally required "one person, one vote" principle.

### Local Redistricting

The first steps of redistricting come at the local level, explains Dan Veroff, director of the Applied Population Laboratory. "Wisconsin is a bit unique in that it's a bottom up process. The first steps involve drawing new county supervisory districts and then creating municipal wards, which are the basic building block. All voting districts for U.S. Congress, the state legislature, and municipalities are made up of wards." The establishment of municipal wards requires cooperation between the municipalities and the county boards in which a municipality is located and involves a 3-step process.

**Step 1** requires the county board to create a tentative county supervisory district plan. Because they are representative districts, state statute requires that county supervisory districts be substantially equal in population. The county board is required to hold a public hearing on the plan and after approval, the tentative plan is submitted to each municipal government in the county. Counties have up to 60 days to create a tentative redistricting plan. ***The clock for step 1 started on March 21, 2011.***

**Step 2** requires municipalities to create and adjust ward boundaries to comply with the proposed supervisory district plan within 60 days of receiving the tentative plan. Municipal wards are not representative districts and simply must be within population ranges specified in the statutes based on the total population of the municipality.

**Step 3** requires counties to adopt a final supervisory district plan and cities to establish an aldermanic district plan within 60 days. Like county supervisory districts, aldermanic districts must be substantially equal in population. ***Step 3 should be finished by October 2011.***

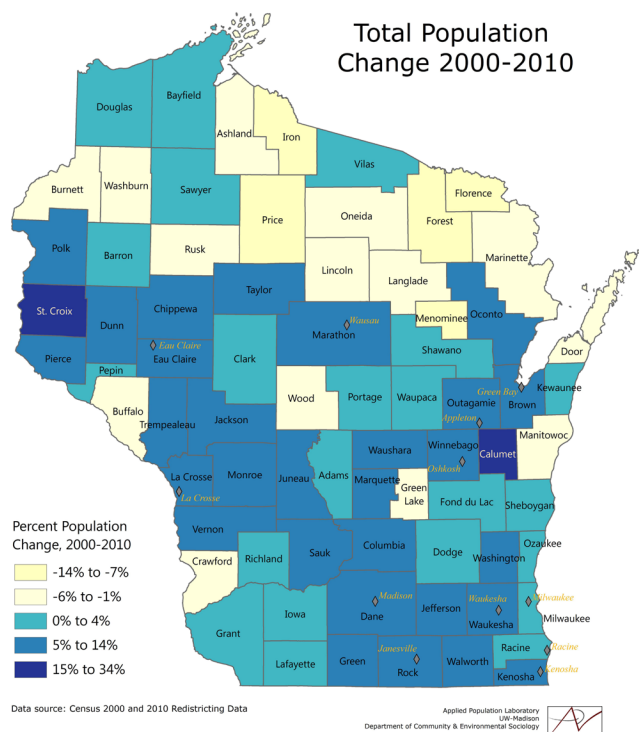


Figure 1 Percent Population Change from 2000 to 2010 for Wisconsin counties

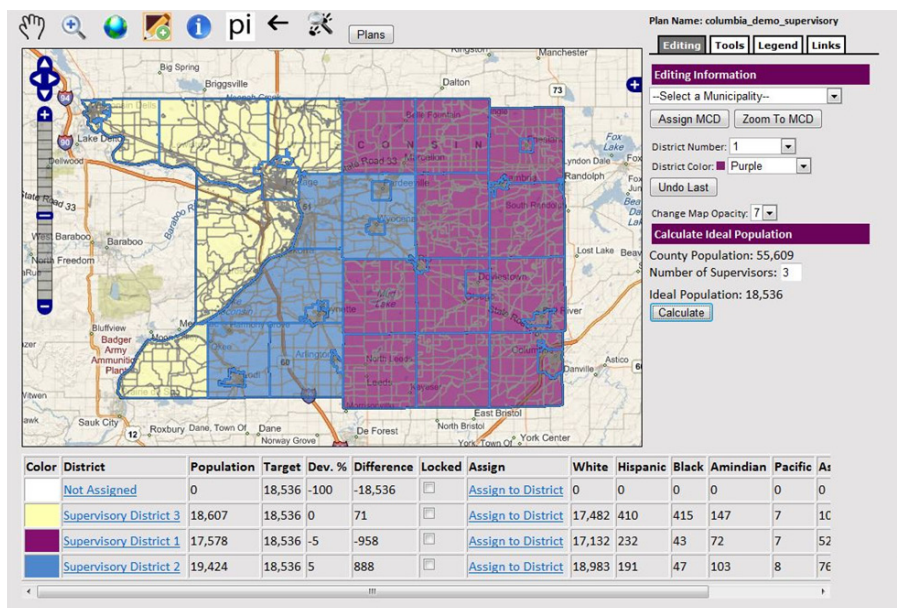


Figure 2 Screen capture from the WISE-LR application showing the point and click creation of county supervisory districts for Columbia County. WISE-LR was developed by James Beaudoin of the Applied Population Laboratory using open source tools and applications.

## WISE-LR: A tool for local redistricting

To assist local governments with this redistricting process the Applied Population Lab developed WISE-LR utilizing open source software. WISE-LR is a simple-to-use local redistricting tool that local government officials and planners can use to create county supervisory, aldermanic, and municipal ward boundaries. The web based tool uses maps and tabular data combined with a “point and click” approach to help draw ward boundaries and assign population totals to wards. This web based tool and the 2010 Census data are available at no cost to all counties in Wisconsin.

Visit the WISE-LR website at:

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/ltsb/wiselnr/index.htm>

## Legislative Redistricting

By October 2011, the counties will establish supervisory districts and adopt their plans that provide the newly created supervisory districts and municipal wards. After this six month period these plans are provided to the state legislature where the new ward boundaries are used to redraw state legislative and federal congressional districts. This legislative redistricting process will occur during the 2011-2012 session of the state legislature and is scheduled to conclude by June 2012.

For more information about redistricting contact:

James Beaudoin, 608-265-9488 or

Dan Veroff, 608-265-9545

Visit the APL website at: [www.apl.wisc.edu](http://www.apl.wisc.edu)

## Ongoing at the APL

- Katherine Curtis was featured as an expert on a recent Wisconsin Eye program focused on the first 2010 Census results for Wisconsin.
- Bill Buckingham’s work on Expanding Geographic Information into Medicine and Public Health was featured in UW’s Best Practices Showcase 2011 program.
- Dave Long will be a participant in the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership spring membership meeting. As a participant, he will share techniques and learning from his ongoing work on the Madison Neighborhood Indicators project.
- Sarah Kemp and Roz Klaas will be presenting information about the School Enrollment Projections Program at the upcoming Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials spring conference.
- Richelle Winkler has been serving on the steering committee for the annual conference of the International Symposium on Society and Resource Management to be held in Madison (June 4-8, 2011). For more information and details about the conference please visit <http://www.issrm2011madison.iasnr.org/>



The Applied Population Laboratory (APL) is a unit within the Dept. of Community and Environmental Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Our professional staff provide demographic and geographic analysis on a variety of topics for UW-Extension; UW faculty, staff, and students; government agencies; non-profit organizations; community groups; corporations; and the general public. We often work on a contract basis or through grant funding. We would be happy to discuss with you how APL can support your research needs. Please contact us at:

Applied Population Lab, 316 Ag Hall, 1450 Linden Dr., Madison, WI 53706 • (608) 265-9545 • [www.apl.wisc.edu](http://www.apl.wisc.edu)