

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Is there anyone who couldn't use an extra million dollars? The most certain method, if not the easiest, is to earn a college degree. In 2001, the earnings gap between college graduates with a bachelor's degree and high school graduates was about \$24,000 per year. Between graduation and retirement that translates into about \$1 million. UW-Madison Extension professor Andy Lewis notes that, when adjusted for inflation, the annual real earnings gap between high school and college graduates has increased by more than \$10,000 in the last 20 years.

The accompanying chart provides data on the percentage of adults, aged 25 years and older, in selected south-central Wisconsin communities and the state who have earned at least a bachelor's degree. Similar data are available at the Web site of UW-Madison's Center for Community Economic Development Web site: www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/Indicators_Links.htm#education1.

Bachelor degrees

Percentage of the population 25 and older that has received at least a bachelor's degree for selected south-central Wisconsin cities

Beloit



Janesville



Madison



Wisconsin avg.



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau;
NorthStar Economics

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