



HOUSTON COUNTY MINNESOTA, USA

www.co.houston.mn.us

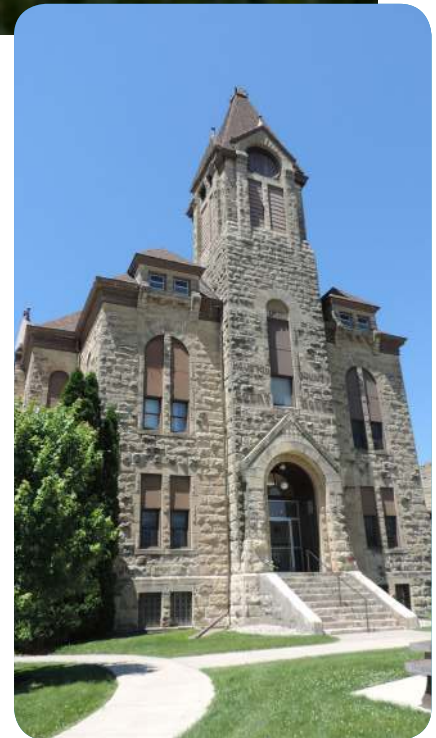


CLEAR VISION

Nestled in the Driftless region of Southeastern Minnesota, Houston County's magnificent landscape, close-knit communities, and hardworking employees have created an economy that honors its history and paves the way for an innovative future. The county's quaint, historic towns and its surrounding farmland are home to Mom & Pop stores and international manufacturing companies alike. Arts and culture, great schools, low cost of living, access to nature, and a wealth of recreational activities make Houston County the ideal place to live, work, play, and raise a family.

"This is what the American people always talk about when they talk about the Heart of America. When we talk about what makes America great, we talk about small towns, farmers, and hardworking folk with blue and white collars. Even through the hard times and the uncertainty, we live here because we want to live here, because we know it's the best place to live, make lasting friendships, and raise a family."

– Eric Leitzen, City Clerk for the City of Hokah



**HOUSTON COUNTY
MINNESOTA, USA**

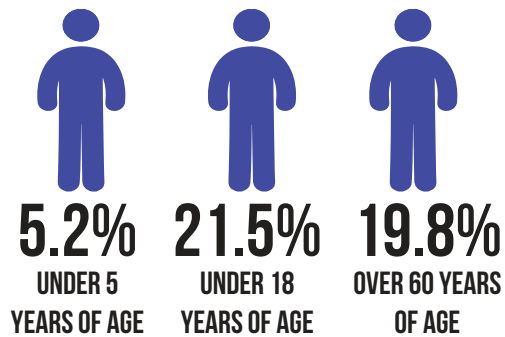
County Population: 19,027
Regional Area Population: 502,335
Unemployment Rate: 4.5%
Per Capita Income: \$27,626
Median Family Income: \$64,754
Median Age: 45
Senior Living Facilities: 6
Medical Clinics: 4
Median Home Price: \$159,000
Median Rent: \$634

COUNTY AT A GLANCE

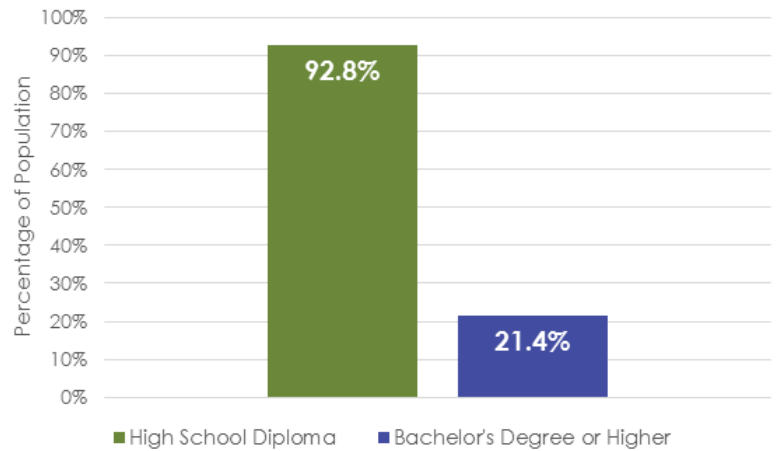
HOUSTON COUNTY POPULATION:

19,207

POPULATION BY AGE:



EDUCATION ATTAINMENT:



WORKING COMMUNITY

433

of Businesses

10,075

of Employees

4.5%

Unemployment Rate

\$30,726

Average Wage



Houston County's strong history of agriculture and manufacturing have laid the groundwork for today's entrepreneurial spirit and hardworking, well-rounded workforce. There is a growing attraction to Southeast Minnesota through Rochester's Destination Medical Center initiative, and many local organizations are working with the schools to enhance youth development and create talent pipelines; a number of innovative programs are in place with Houston County schools, such as robust World's Best Workforce plans and school-to-work internship programs. Lastly, access to educational institutions within a one-hour radius provide key relationships for workforce growth.



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Houston County shares an economic development region with Destination Medical Center, Journey to Growth, and Southeast Minnesota Together—all of which are organizations working to prepare for exponential job growth within the next 20 years.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES

TOP 6 MAJOR INDUSTRIES

HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

While staying ahead of the curve for the healthcare needs of the aging Baby Boomer population, Houston County also boasts a wealth of institutions for individuals with disabilities.

EDUCATION

Today's students are Houston County's future, and the four school districts within the county are committed to providing high-quality education and resources for local families.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Houston County and its incorporated municipalities provide a wide range of job opportunities to serve their communities.

MANUFACTURING

Houston County is home to several major manufacturing companies, producing everything from custom industrial ovens to innovative hunting cameras.

RETAIL TRADE

Houston County's idyllic downtowns are home to a wealth of small retail businesses, giving each community a unique identity and range of assets. Houston County is also home to businesses who participate in large, national markets.

TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING

The proximity of major cities, interstate highways, and the Mississippi River make Houston County an ideal location for transportation and warehousing.

INDUSTRY

	WISCONSIN AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE	HOUSTON COUNTY AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$43,781	\$41,132
Manufacturing	\$52,413	\$31,356
Public Administration	\$42,198	\$23,556
Educational Services	\$43,781	\$35,828
Retail Trade	\$35,946	\$24,960
Transportation & Warehousing	\$35,946	\$23,556



39% of Houston County businesses are owned by women.

EDUCATION

LA CRESCENT-HOKAH SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Students performed in the top 11% of Minnesota ACT scores
- All students grades 3-12 have access to 1-to-1 computing
- Expansive offerings in community education

CALEDONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

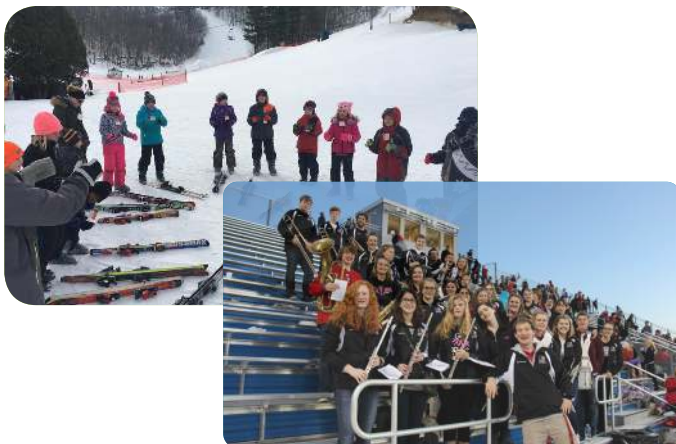
- State of the art facilities that feature 21st century learning spaces, including a new art gallery, maker-space, and alternative student seating and workspaces
- Promotion of creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication through a 1-to-1 iPad program
- Caledonia Elementary School was recognized as a Reward School for student achievement in reading and math

HOUSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Elementary School honored as a 2015 Celebration School by the Minnesota Department of Education
- Houston High School honored as a 2014 Gold Medal School by U.S. News and World Report
- Home of the Minnesota Virtual Academy, an innovative online public school available to all MN students

SPRING GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Both secondary and elementary schools have been recognized as Reward Schools by the Minnesota Department of Education
- Boasts a 13:1 student to licensed staff ratio
- Offers a wide variety of unique experiential learning opportunities for students including Odyssey of the Mind, Math Wizards, Young Writers Conference, Knowledge Bowl, Drama Club, Clay Target League, and many more



**HOUSTON COUNTY
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GRADUATION RATES

Caledonia
School District

98%

Spring Grove
School District

97%

Houston
School District

100%

La Crescent-Hokah
School District

97%

LIFE-LONG LEARNERS



HIGHER EDUCATION

Houston County's location in Southeast Minnesota provides many local opportunities for higher education. Several renowned colleges are within 30 minutes of Houston County, including private schools Luther College, St. Mary's University, and Viterbo University, as well as Winona State University and University of Wisconsin La Cross. There are also a number of technical and vocational schools in the region, which provide a wide array of talent to the manufacturing sector. Schools include Western Technical College, Minnesota State College Southeast, Rochester Community and Technical College, and Northeast Iowa Community College.

"Our schools are strong, with some of the top test scores in the state and a wealth of activities for students to participate in. Not only do our kids succeed academically, but the communities really support education--whether that's financial support or volunteering their time. There's a lot to be proud of."
- Matthew Schuldt, Market President, Merchants Bank

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The birth-to-three period is the fastest rate of brain development across the entire human life span. Social interaction enhances the speed and accuracy of learning at all ages; and all caregivers who are a part of a child's life impact his or her brain development. Each Houston County community has a unique offering for early childhood education; some examples include Caledonia's "Hand in Hand" Preschool (a Four-Star Parent Aware program) and the brand new Nisse Treehouse in Spring Grove, which has recently been selected as a Minnesota Reading Corps site.



HIGH VALUE LIVING



Residents of Houston County enjoy the benefits of rural life while maintaining ready access to modern conveniences. Houston County is located in the heart of the Southeast Minnesota Driftless Area, a small area of the Midwest that escaped glaciation in the last glacial period. Unparalleled views of the magnificent landscape, with its soaring limestone bluffs, rolling hills, valleys, streams, forests, and the mighty Mississippi River, provide a backdrop for a wealth of recreational opportunities. Houston County is home to Beaver Creek Valley State Park, and has become a destination for rare birdwatching, hunting, trapping, fishing, and hiking.

Quaint, historic downtowns dot the map of Houston County, presenting a wide variety of cafes, pubs, shops, antique stores, libraries, farmer's markets, and other unique amenities - such as the International Owl Center, the state-of-the-art Spring Grove Cinema, the Lawrence Lake Marina, and La Crescent's several apple orchards.

With so many year-round activities, a low cost of living, and the serene beauty of the region, Houston County is a wonderful place to live, work, and play.

"This is the perfect location for someone who prefers the beauty and pace of a rural lifestyle but also requires the employment opportunities to make a decent living. That is why Houston County is not only where I work, but it's also where I choose to live. Simple daily living, knowing your neighbors, low cost of living and high quality of life."

- Todd Roesler, CEO, Acentek



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Home costs in Houston County are 15% lower than the Minnesota state median.

CULTURE AND ARTS

COMMUNITY THEATRE

Houston County communities are dramatic...in a good way! There are several organizations working to bring entertainment and theatrical opportunities to residents. Spring Grove's Ye Olde House community theatre group puts on a show each summer in a historic barn, and Appleseed Community Theatre in La Crescent provides youth-centered programming supported by the La Crescent Area Healthy Community Partnership.



MUSIC IN THE PARK

Several Houston County communities host "Music in the Park" evenings with free music provided for residents and visitors. These events take place in the summer months and often feature treats and meals served by community volunteers.

BARN QUILTS

What began as a creative barn improvement project for a local family has evolved into an ever-growing series of public art! Enjoy a self-guided tour through the picturesque hills and valleys surrounding Caledonia to enjoy over 60 original, hand-painted barn quilts. The unique project aims to celebrate historical American quilt patterns and Houston County's agricultural heritage.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Houston County has a wealth of offerings for exploring the great outdoors. Spend the day hiking at Beaver Creek Valley State Park, enjoying the Houston Nature Center, or learning about our more mysterious birds at the International Owl Center. Take a ride on the Wagon Wheel Bike Trail in La Crescent, fish in the Mississippi River from Wildcat Park, or stroll through the Norwegian Ridge Birding and Nature Trails



The International Owl Center is a renowned non-profit organization with a global reach. Their work has been featured on Animal Planet and the Secret Life of Owls.

DIRECT ROUTES



AIR

Houston County is surrounded by a variety of air transportation needs, with the closest being the La Crosse Regional Airport; the La Crosse Regional Airport features direct daily service to connecting hubs, as well as daily air freight transport, corporate aircraft servicing, rental car facilities, and private aircraft. Other nearby airports include the Rochester International Airport and Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Houston County also boasts a small, public use airport a few miles from the county seat of Caledonia.

PORTS

The Mississippi borders the eastern edge of Houston County, with a port located just across the river in La Crosse, WI. The La Crosse port, equipped with cranes, conveyors, and other loading/unloading equipment, ships out one million tons of cargo annually.

TRUCKING

Houston County is conveniently located along Interstate 90 between Rochester, MN and La Crosse, WI. The western border of Houston County is also less than 85 miles from Interstate 35. There are several state highways and local roadways that connect the major interstate hubs and distribute Houston County goods throughout the region and the nation.

RAIL

The region is served by the Canadian Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroads. Combined, they handle over 2.5 million cars and almost 150 million tons of freight. Amtrak's long-distance Empire Builder, operating from Chicago to Seattle and Portland, stops in La Crosse and connects the region with Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

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TRANSPORTATION

DISTANCE TO MAJOR CITIES FROM HOUSTON COUNTY SEAT, CALEDONIA

CALEDONIA TO LA CROSSE:

23 miles
30 minutes

CALEDONIA TO ROCHESTER:

76 miles
1 hour and 19 minutes

CALEDONIA TO MADISON:

137 miles
2 hours and 38 minutes

CALEDONIA TO MINNEAPOLIS:

161 miles
2 hours and 37 minutes

CALEDONIA TO MILWAUKEE:

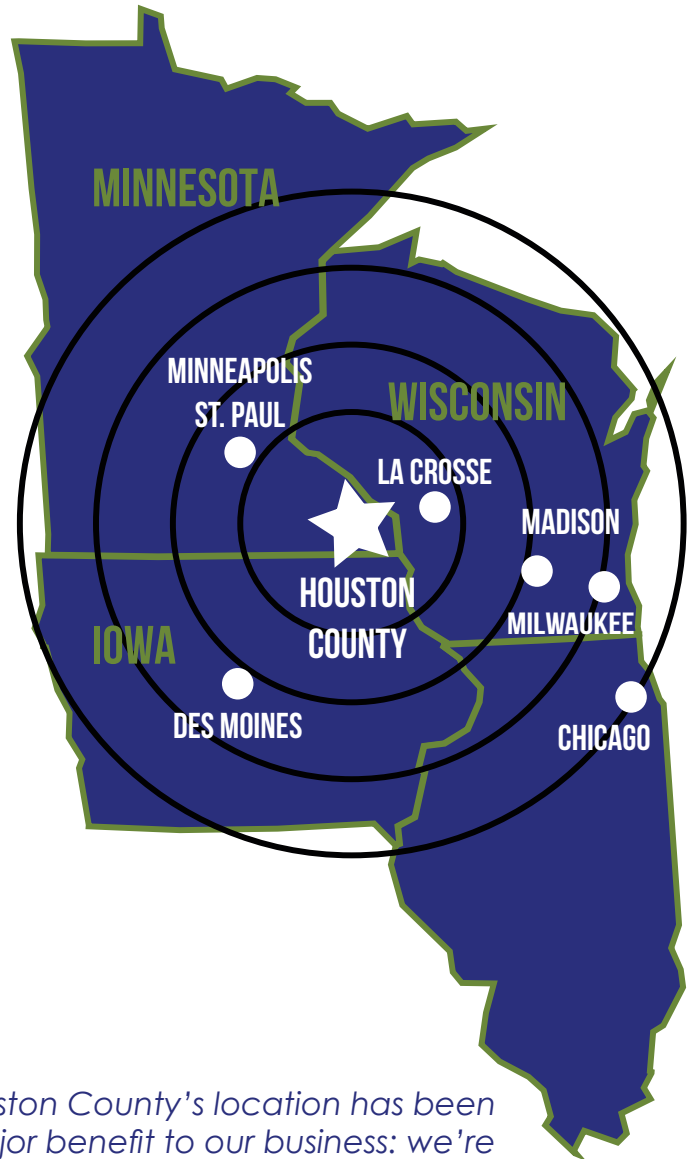
217 miles
3 hours and 32 minutes

CALEDONIA TO DES MOINES:

223 miles
3 hours and 51 minutes

CALEDONIA TO CHICAGO:

300 miles
4 hours and 40 minutes



"Houston County's location has been a major benefit to our business: we're right on Highway 44, close to I-90 and La Crosse, and we have a wealth of reputable local trucking companies. These transportation options make Houston County a great place to do business."

- Pete Gengler, CEO, Sno Pac Foods



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

HOUSTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Courtney Bergey, Executive Director
304 South Marshall Street
Caledonia, MN 55921
(507) 725-5836
www.co.houston.mn.us/EDA

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

Pam Bishop, V.P. of Economic Development
525 Florence Avenue
Owatonna, MN 55060
(507) 455-3215
www.smifoundation.org

MN DEPT. OF EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Natalie Siderius, SE MN Business Development
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200
St. Paul MN 55101
(651) 245-8674
www.mn.gov/deed

THE 7 RIVERS ALLIANCE

Dr. Lisa Herr, CEO
601 North 7th Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 787-8777
www.7riversalliance.org

CITY OF BROWNSVILLE

Michael Moriarty, City Clerk
104 North 6th Street
Brownsville, MN 55919
(507) 482-6732
www.brownsvillemn.org

CITY OF CALEDONIA

Adam Swann, City Administrator
231 East Main Street
Caledonia, MN 55921
(507) 725-3450
www.caledoniamn.gov

CITY OF EITZEN

Steve Schuldt, City Clerk
202 East Main Street
Eitzen, MN 55931
(507) 495-3017
www.eitzenmn.com

CITY OF HOKAH

Rodney Blank, City Administrator
102 Main Street
Hokah, Minnesota 55941
(507) 894-4990
www.cityofhokah-mn.gov

CITY OF HOUSTON

Christina Peterson, City Administrator
105 West Maple Street
Houston, MN 55943
(507) 896-4033
www.houston.govoffice.com

CITY OF LA CRESCENT

Bill Waller, City Administrator
315 Main Street
La Crescent, MN 55947
(507) 895-2595
www.cityoflacrescent-mn.gov

CITY OF SPRING GROVE

Erin Konkel, City Clerk
118 1st Avenue Northwest
Spring Grove, MN 55974
(507) 498-5221
www.springgrovemn.com



HOUSTON COUNTY
- MINNESOTA -
Economic Development Authority