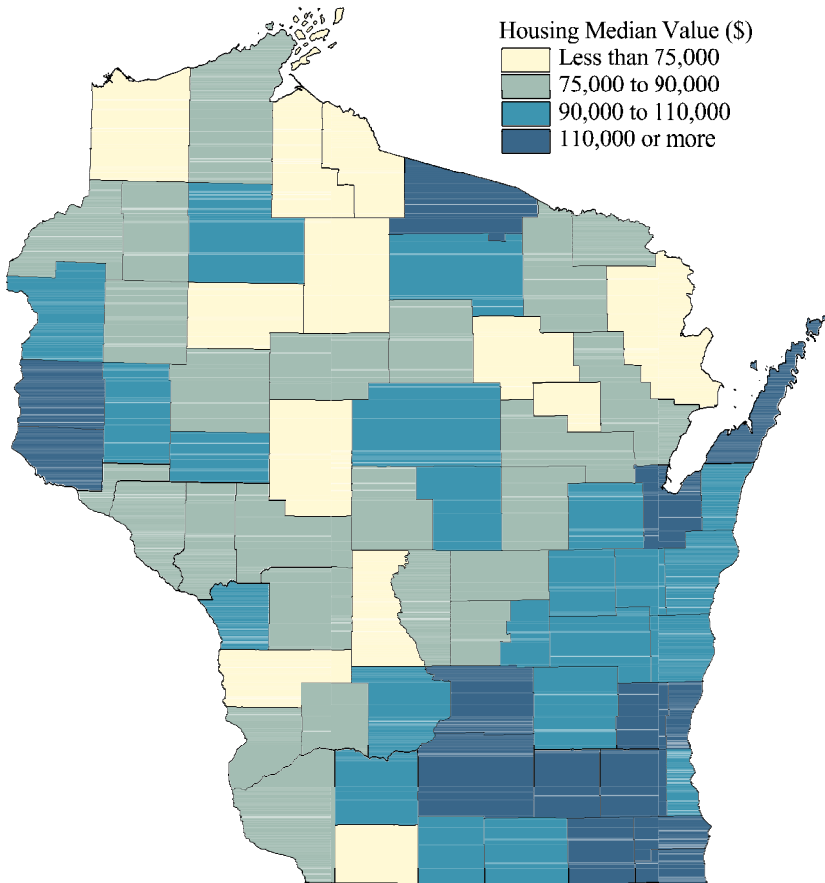


Figure 78

Median Housing Unit Value, Wisconsin Counties: 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population, 2000

In Closing...

The decennial census is an amazing and massive undertaking. For almost a decade the U.S. Census Bureau works on building an operational plan for the next census, testing and evaluating hundreds of individual procedures, updating digital maps, designing questionnaires (in several languages), contracting with companies to design and build the “data capture” machinery and software to transfer responses from several hundred million individual sheets of paper to digital images, and working with its federal, state, local, tribal and commercial partners to devise an effective advertising and promotional campaign. Then, in year 9 of the decade, the really difficult work begins. In a relatively brief period of less than two years, the

Census Bureau must open, staff and equip hundreds of local census offices around the country, mobilize its promotional campaign, mail out more than 100 million census questionnaires, send local census employees out to knock on doors of housing units from which a census questionnaire hasn't been received, convert the responses to digital files capable of being tabulated by computer, edit and verify the data, and report the final count to the President just nine months from the April 1 "Census Day." The outcome is a set of data files that provide uniformly consistent and high quality data to update the demographic portrait of every state, county, municipality, neighborhood and school district in the country. The amount of data is staggering, and this brief article has hardly scratched the surface of what can be learned about our state and our communities. Interested readers who wish to scratch a bit deeper are encouraged to visit the Census Bureau's website www.census.gov. After a little practice, this world of data becomes accessible 24 hours a day. Readers will quickly be able to expand this brief statistical portrait of Wisconsin on several topics not included here. They will also be able to take the ideas explored here and apply them to a new portrait for any of the state's 1,852 cities, villages and towns.



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