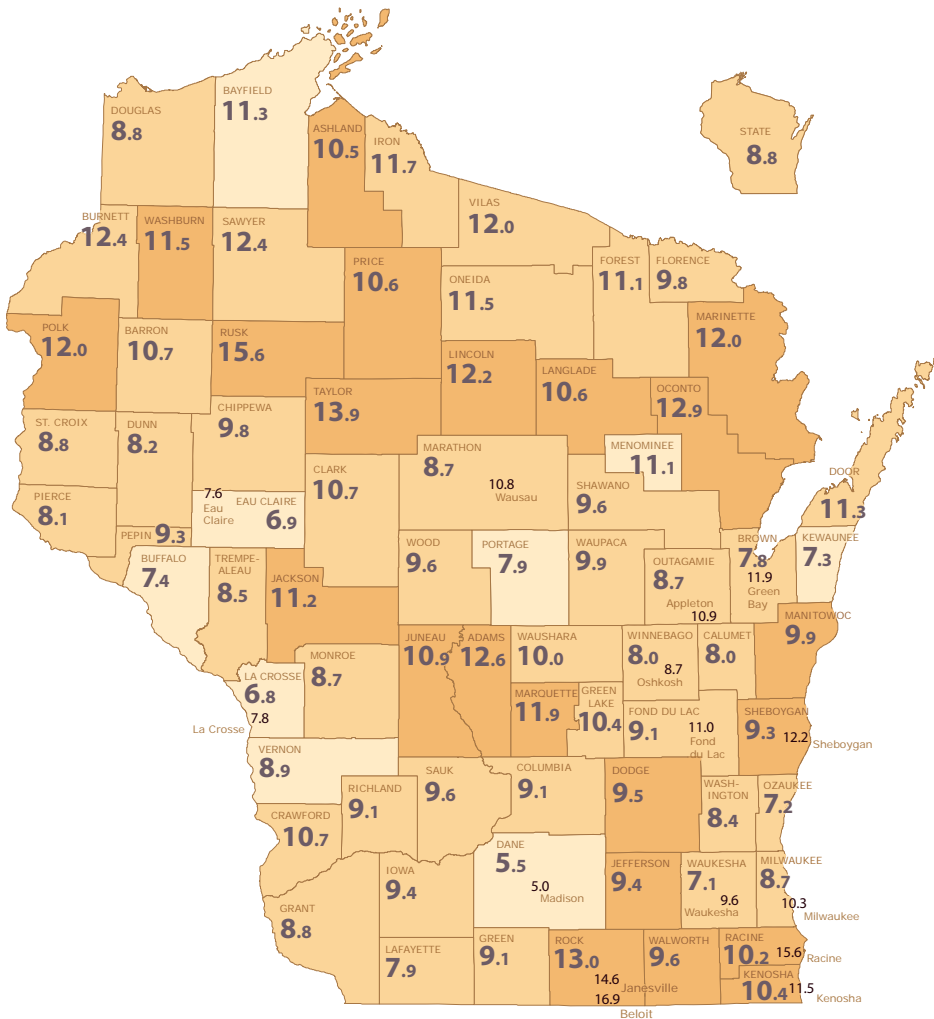
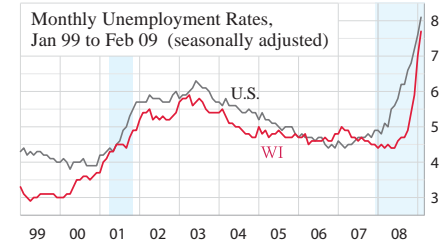


# Wisconsin At A Glance



## Unemployment Rate by County, February 2009

Unemployment in Wisconsin has increased significantly as a result of a nationwide recession that began in December 2007. The chart shows that this increase began in June 2008 and accelerated sharply beginning in September 2008. In February 2009, Wisconsin's unemployment rate reached 7.7 percent, the highest level the state has seen since April 1986.\* Nor does the upward trend appear to be ending. The initial estimate of the national unemployment rate for March 2009 is 8.5, an increase of 0.4 percentage points over the February rate. And, as can be seen on the chart, Wisconsin's unemployment rate has been following the national rate during this recession.



Blue bands indicate periods of recession.

Among Wisconsin's counties, Rusk, Taylor, and Rock had the highest unemployment rates in February 2009—15.6, 13.9, and 13.0. Rusk and Rock counties also had the greatest increases from the rates in February 2008—7.1 and 7.2 percentage points.\*\* A major event affecting Rock County was the closing of the General Motors plant in Janesville in December 2008, which resulted in the loss of 1,200 jobs directly as well as around 800 more at area companies that supplied parts to the plant. In Rusk County, whose population is one-tenth the size of Rock County's, the two biggest employers—Weather Shield in Ladysmith and Jeld-Wen in Hawkins, both manufacturers of wood windows and doors—had laid off around 400 employees as of February 2009.

After Rusk and Rock counties, Oconto, Lincoln, Marinette, Taylor, and Price counties had the greatest year-over-year increases (6.1, 6.0, 5.7, 5.6, and 5.4 percentage points). In Rock, Sheboygan, and Price counties, the rates in February 2009 were more than double the rates in February 2008, and in Lincoln, Ozaukee, Marinette, Oconto, and Kenosha counties, they were just short of double.

\*Seasonally adjusted. The rates shown on the front of this card, including the rate shown for the state as a whole, are not seasonally adjusted. Seasonal adjustment is a method of smoothing out fluctuations in the data that are due to seasonal factors rather than to deeper economic trends.

\*\*Wisconsin's unemployment rates are typically higher in February than in other months. However, comparing the February 2009 rates to the February 2008 rates provides a measure of the relative magnitude of these rates that is free of the effects of seasonality.

Prepared by Christopher Siciliano

WAAG-09-1/ April 2009

## Unemployment Rate by County, February 2009

Colors indicate the increase from February 2008 (the number of percentage points by which the February 2009 rates were higher than the February 2008 rates):



Small numbers (like this: 9.1) indicate rates for selected populous municipalities.

The "unemployment rate" is the percentage of persons in the labor force who do not have jobs but who are either actively looking for work or are expecting to be recalled from layoff. The "labor force" comprises all persons in the population who are available for work and who are at least 16 years of age, not confined to an institution, and not on active duty in the armed forces.

The rates shown above are not seasonally adjusted.

Data: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

