The Great Divide

Graphic possibilities as of Nov. 4:

**Median income,** 2013 dollars, 2006-2013, source MN Compass at Wilder Research:

<http://www.mncompass.org/economy/median-income#1-4805-d> provides data for a line graph comparing 7-county metro area with Greater MN. Shows that today’s gap has been with us for some time.

<http://www.mncompass.org/economy/median-income#1-5354-d> provides data for a county map.

I also have an Excel spreadsheet from the State Demographic Center showing change in median income by county between 1999 and 2013, in constant 2013 dollars. It’s very interesting – shows metro counties as among the big losers and some outstate counties as gainers. I’ll make use of this info in my editorial.

**Cost of living:**

DEED has a county-by-county estimate of the cost of basic necessities (including taxes) for families of various sizes: <http://www.mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/col/> This tool does not inspire a great deal of confidence in me. I notice that they use the same value for housing in all the metro counties plus several surrounding ones. That suggests that this information is not actually county-specific. It shows a big range, from Stevens County at $36K to several metro counties at $56K, for a family with one full-time earner, one part-time earner and one child.

[**http://www.realtor.com/local/Hennepin-County\_MN/home-prices**](http://www.realtor.com/local/Hennepin-County_MN/home-prices)is one example of the info that’s available at realtor.com about housing sale prices by county. I haven’t found a single spreadsheet with Minnesota counties, but the site is easy to navigate by clicking on the map. For example, it shows $238,200 as the average home sale price in Hennepin County as of now (these numbers are recalculated daily, the site says). By comparison, in McLeod County, the average home sale price is $139,900, and in Lac qui Parle County, it’s $63,000.

**Population change,** 2000-2014, source MN Compass

<http://www.mncompass.org/demographics/population#1-5014-d> provides data for a bar graph comparing 7-county metro area with greater MN in rate of growth in 2000-10 and 2011-14. It shows growth essentially stopping outstate since the recession.

<http://www.mncompass.org/demographics/population#1-8459-g> shows a county map of growth in just the past year. It’s all in the metro area plus St. Cloud, Rochester, Mankato and Fargo-Moorhead. Data for the map is available in the drop-down menu in the header tab labeled “view” on the right.

Total state population by county and by 10-year intervals, 1950 to 2014, is available on the Excel spreadsheet. It shows many outstate counties losing population but quite a few outstate gainers as well.

**Educational attainment,** 2006-2014, ages 25-34, percentage with a bachelor’s degree or higher

<http://www.mncompass.org/workforce/educational-attainment#1-6808-d> compares 7-county metro area with Greater MN. Shows that the gap predates the recession.

<http://www.mncompass.org/workforce/educational-attainment#1-5285-d> shows 2009-2013, by county. Shows Hennepin and Carver pulling away from the rest of the state.

Excel spreadsheet from MN State Demographic Center has county-by-county percentages of bachelor’s degree and higher among all those ages 25 and over, from the 2009-13 American Community Survey. Shows quite a range: several outstate counties at 13-14 percent on the low side; Hennepin at 45 percent on the high side.

Here’s evidence of a workforce shortage in Greater MN in job vacancy statistics: <https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/jvs/Results.aspx>

**Aging,** 2014 share of county population age 65+

<http://www.mncompass.org/aging/demographics#1-11527-g> shows that all outstate counties have larger share of seniors.

County-by-county age pyramids are available via an Excel spread sheet from the State Demographic Center. There are pyramids from 2015-45 at five-year intervals available for each county. They nicely show how some counties will see their share of elderly grow and working-age people shrink over the next three decades.

**Median age**, from 2009-2013 American Community Survey, is also available by county, via an Excel spread sheet. It shows a wide range that’s somewhat skewed by the presence of higher educational institutions outstate. That’s why Blue Earth County has the state’s lowest median age, 30. The highest is Aitkin County at 52. These data might work well on a map with variations in color shading.

**Race,** 1990-2030 (projected after 2014)

<http://www.mncompass.org/demographics/race#1-5107-d> percentage of people of color, 7-county metro versus Greater Mn. Shows big divergence.

<http://www.mncompass.org/demographics/race#1-5052-g> people of color by county, 2014.

**Cultural indicators:**

**Same sex marriage amendment vote, 2012:** county-by-county totals available <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/sessions/electionresults/2012-11-06-g-man.pdf>

**Religious adherence:** I have county-by-county share of the population adhering to a religious organization. It’s an Excel spreadsheet downloaded from the Association of Religious Data Archives, which Tom Gillaspy says is the gold standard source for such material. MN counties appear on lines 1320-1406 in this large spreadsheet. I see wide range, percentages from the 30s to the 90s, and a general trend toward more church affiliation outstate. But there are exceptions.