

Willmar Lakes Area Profile

Labor Market Information

The city of Willmar serves as a regional center for many of the counties in West Central and Southwest Minnesota, especially as an employment destination. In fact, Kandiyohi County is a **net importer of labor** (more available jobs than workers), **drawing commuters from many surrounding counties** every day in addition to the nearly 18,500 people who both live and work within the county. (See Table 1.) Combining the populations of all of the counties within reasonable commuting distance of the Willmar lakes area yields a market area of **401,855** people.

Table 1: Commuted & Laborshed

Residence County	Workplace County	Number of Workers	Residence County	Workplace County	Number of Workers
Kandiyohi Co. MN	Stearns Co. MN	561	Kandiyohi Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	18,409
Kandiyohi Co. MN	Meeker Co. MN	363	Swift Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	646
Kandiyohi Co. MN	Renville Co. MN	302	Chippewa Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	511
Kandiyohi Co. MN	Chippewa Co. MN	168	Stearns Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	465
Kandiyohi Co. MN	Swift Co. MN	157	Renville Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	422
Kandiyohi Co. MN	McLeod Co. MN	147	Meeker Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	381
Kandiyohi Co. MN	Hennepin Co. MN	110	Hennepin Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	93
Kandiyohi Co. MN	Wright Co. MN	55	Pope Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	89
Kandiyohi Co. MN	Redwood Co. MN	52	McLeod Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	35
Kandiyohi Co. MN	All Other Counties	491	Lac qui Parle Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	26
Total Outgoing Workforce		2,406	Yellow Medicine Co. MN	Kandiyohi Co. MN	26
			All Other Counties	Kandiyohi Co. MN	326
			Total Resident & Incoming Workforce		21,429

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Journey-to-Work data

Because workers are less mobile than other factors of production, availability of workers is important to firm location. Obviously, the most available workers are the unemployed. (See Table 2.)

However, unemployment is not always a good indicator. While some studies have found unemployment rates positively related to firm location, just as often it is negatively related or not related at all. Evidently high unemployment can indicate underlying social problems that make an area less attractive for business. Kandiyohi County and the surrounding areas have relatively **steady unemployment rates** that track closely with the State of Minnesota, which is consistently lower than the United States. Kandiyohi County's annual unemployment rate has been below the state rate four of the last five years, and under the U.S. rate all five years.

Table 2: Local Area Unemployment Statistics

March 2006	Unemployment			
	Labor Force	Employed	Number	Rate
Kandiyohi Co.	23,262	22,032	1,230	5.3%
Swift Co.	5,306	5,000	306	5.8%
Chippewa Co.	7,367	7,024	343	4.7%
Stearns Co.	82,927	78,651	4,276	5.2%
Renville Co.	8,234	7,703	531	6.4%
Meeker Co.	12,590	11,698	892	7.1%
Hennepin Co.	669,548	643,654	25,894	3.9%
Pope Co.	6,020	5,714	306	5.1%
McLeod Co.	19,799	18,756	1,043	5.3%
Lac qui Parle Co.	4,082	3,888	194	4.8%
Yellow Med. Co.	5,622	5,320	302	5.4%
Region 6E	63,885	60,189	3,696	5.8%
Central Minnesota	363,804	341,784	22,020	6.1%

Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) data
<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/laus.htm>

Instead, the availability measure that is most consistently and strongly related to firm location is the presence of workers in occupations needed for particular industries. The Willmar lakes area has a **technically skilled, affordable workforce available to businesses – especially those in agriculture and manufacturing**, both of which are more concentrated in Kandiyohi County than the state and nation. (See Table 3.)

Table 3: Minnesota Salary Survey & Regional Employment Estimates

<i>4th Quarter 2005 data</i>		Region 6E (includes Kandiyohi Co.)				Central Minnesota (includes Kandiyohi Co.)				State of Minnesota	United States
SOC Code	SOC Occupational Title	25th Percentile Wage	Median Hourly Wage	75th Percentile Wage	Estimated Employ- ment	25th Percentile Wage	Median Hourly Wage	75th Percentile Wage	Estimated Employ- ment	Median Hourly Wage	Median Hourly Wage
0	Total, All Occupations	\$10.09	\$13.97	\$19.91	49,070	\$9.94	\$13.87	\$20.12	237,700	\$15.95	\$14.33
111021	General & Operations Managers	\$23.66	\$32.56	\$46.47	560	\$22.77	\$33.03	\$49.36	2,940	\$39.89	\$38.98
112022	Sales Managers	\$34.98	\$50.31	\$66.13	80	\$28.98	\$38.56	\$55.35	420	\$48.39	\$42.26
113011	Administrative Services Managers	\$28.21	\$37.12	\$42.97	50	\$25.03	\$31.20	\$38.49	250	\$35.04	\$30.61
113021	Computer & Information Systems Managers	\$31.67	\$37.50	\$48.80	60	\$31.10	\$37.50	\$45.01	320	\$48.19	\$46.39
113031	Financial Managers	\$29.73	\$36.37	\$45.63	110	\$29.94	\$38.73	\$47.08	710	\$44.91	\$41.17
113051	Industrial Production Managers	\$26.15	\$31.04	\$39.07	90	\$25.53	\$31.11	\$38.00	390	\$36.84	\$36.42
113071	Transportation, Storage & Distribution Managers	\$25.20	\$29.98	\$35.22	100	\$25.20	\$29.98	\$35.22	100	\$36.36	\$33.08
119041	Engineering Managers	\$35.94	\$42.26	\$48.06	60	\$33.91	\$39.79	\$46.06	190	\$49.94	\$48.66
119121	Natural Sciences Managers	\$26.51	\$36.33	\$43.43	10	\$28.38	\$34.70	\$41.94	40	\$43.43	\$44.27
131051	Cost Estimators	\$16.51	\$20.35	\$28.32	120	\$17.20	\$23.81	\$28.51	610	\$25.41	\$25.02
131079	Human Resources, Training, & Labor Rel. Specialists	\$18.01	\$20.30	\$23.30	60	\$15.68	\$20.50	\$25.71	370	\$23.75	\$23.39
131199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	\$11.51	\$17.48	\$23.19	460	\$15.92	\$20.06	\$25.63	2,480	\$22.60	\$26.47
132011	Accountants & Auditors	\$18.96	\$21.84	\$26.69	290	\$19.36	\$23.17	\$29.04	1,630	\$24.84	\$25.22
151021	Computer Programmers	\$20.20	\$23.70	\$30.56	80	\$20.52	\$25.17	\$32.21	270	\$31.99	\$30.95
151031	Computer Software Engineers, Applications	\$24.78	\$26.92	\$29.09	50	\$24.82	\$30.70	\$40.09	530	\$37.38	\$37.50
151032	Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	\$26.33	\$32.40	\$38.82	160	\$26.33	\$32.40	\$38.82	160	\$39.44	\$39.87
151041	Computer Support Specialists	\$15.29	\$17.07	\$20.97	100	\$15.13	\$18.23	\$22.14	600	\$21.10	\$19.97
151051	Computer Systems Analysts	\$23.25	\$28.59	\$33.60	380	\$23.25	\$28.59	\$33.60	380	\$32.08	\$33.17
151061	Database Administrators	\$18.37	\$24.08	\$30.56	20	\$21.54	\$28.00	\$35.99	110	\$33.19	\$30.44
151071	Network & Computer Systems Administrators	\$21.18	\$26.48	\$30.31	50	\$19.48	\$23.50	\$28.43	310	\$29.28	\$29.05
151081	Network Systems & Data Communications Analysts	\$17.68	\$25.28	\$34.59	50	\$20.07	\$26.02	\$33.18	180	\$32.31	\$30.10
151099	Computer Specialists, All Other	\$19.57	\$22.88	\$38.73	50	\$18.34	\$22.94	\$29.07	260	\$29.44	\$29.14
172071	Electrical Engineers	\$23.72	\$29.56	\$48.05	50	\$22.87	\$32.54	\$43.15	190	\$35.93	\$35.76
172072	Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	\$24.26	\$28.66	\$37.62	50	\$23.98	\$29.30	\$35.44	90	\$35.63	\$37.74
172112	Industrial Engineers	\$21.99	\$28.36	\$37.51	50	\$22.54	\$25.87	\$30.65	270	\$32.97	\$32.47
172131	Materials Engineers	\$24.54	\$32.74	\$39.48	20	\$24.54	\$32.74	\$39.48	20	\$33.05	\$33.70
172141	Mechanical Engineers	\$25.70	\$30.48	\$35.35	460	\$25.70	\$30.48	\$35.35	460	\$31.07	\$33.03
173013	Mechanical Drafters	\$17.15	\$20.56	\$24.17	10	\$17.15	\$20.56	\$24.17	230	\$21.78	\$21.37
173023	Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technicians	\$16.74	\$20.22	\$23.80	80	\$18.82	\$23.77	\$28.18	260	\$21.91	\$23.16
173026	Industrial Engineering Technicians	\$18.08	\$21.61	\$24.57	20	\$15.22	\$17.31	\$20.62	200	\$21.51	\$22.40
173029	Engineering Technicians, Exc. Drafters, All Other	\$18.85	\$20.68	\$30.55	20	\$18.38	\$20.48	\$26.62	100	\$24.76	\$25.41
412022	Parts Salespersons	\$9.85	\$12.12	\$14.38	110	\$11.31	\$15.29	\$17.60	500	\$14.21	\$12.91

414011	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing	\$19.62	\$23.51	\$32.65	130	\$19.89	\$25.64	\$35.15	350	\$32.31	\$29.66
414012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing	\$17.91	\$21.80	\$30.15	450	\$18.08	\$23.98	\$32.46	2,250	\$25.35	\$23.01
419031	Sales Engineers	\$29.82	\$35.12	\$40.51	110	\$29.82	\$35.12	\$40.51	110	\$33.96	\$35.74
491011	First-Line Mgrs. of Mechanics, Install, & Repair Workers	\$17.76	\$24.50	\$29.07	190	\$19.15	\$24.06	\$29.24	950	\$25.14	\$25.13
492092	Electric Motor, Power Tool, & Related Repairers	\$6.80	\$13.44	\$18.39	70	\$6.80	\$13.44	\$18.39	70	\$14.81	\$16.24
493031	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	\$12.12	\$13.59	\$17.25	210	\$13.45	\$16.27	\$19.27	740	\$18.67	\$17.81
493041	Farm Equipment Mechanics	\$12.02	\$14.10	\$17.18	20	\$12.41	\$14.64	\$18.25	40	\$15.79	\$13.88
493042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	\$18.50	\$20.10	\$21.70	100	\$18.01	\$20.39	\$23.05	350	\$21.86	\$19.03
499012	Control & Valve Installers & Repairers	\$23.11	\$25.09	\$27.07	70	\$23.11	\$25.09	\$27.07	70	\$24.06	\$21.73
499021	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrigeration Mechanics	\$18.62	\$20.48	\$22.27	40	\$19.27	\$23.08	\$26.38	210	\$20.43	\$18.07
499041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$15.44	\$21.10	\$24.64	280	\$15.52	\$19.58	\$23.46	830	\$20.60	\$19.37
499042	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	\$13.17	\$16.68	\$22.15	430	\$12.85	\$16.34	\$20.25	1,510	\$17.04	\$15.24
499043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	\$11.19	\$12.83	\$14.72	50	\$12.55	\$14.86	\$20.39	90	\$16.45	\$16.32
511011	First-Line Mgrs. of Production & Operation Workers	\$17.57	\$21.38	\$26.47	520	\$18.09	\$21.65	\$26.36	2,030	\$22.48	\$22.28
512092	Team Assemblers	\$11.82	\$13.26	\$14.99	500	\$11.36	\$13.44	\$15.72	3,640	\$13.09	\$11.73
512099	Assemblers & Fabricators, All Other	\$5.96	\$6.63	\$11.52	120	\$6.78	\$11.30	\$14.06	490	\$12.08	\$12.38
514011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal	\$12.30	\$13.87	\$16.12	50	\$13.17	\$16.08	\$19.64	300	\$17.18	\$15.16
514012	Numerical Tool & Process Control Programmers	\$16.34	\$19.98	\$23.52	50	\$16.34	\$19.98	\$23.52	50	\$21.14	\$20.23
514021	Extruding & Drawing Machine Setters & Operators	\$12.09	\$14.86	\$17.72	160	\$12.09	\$14.86	\$17.72	160	\$14.29	\$13.53
514031	Cutting, Punching, & Press Machine Setters	\$8.44	\$11.38	\$13.85	170	\$10.93	\$13.52	\$16.62	620	\$14.66	\$12.77
514032	Drilling & Boring Machine Tool Setters	\$10.07	\$10.79	\$11.48	10	\$11.14	\$13.51	\$16.12	80	\$16.71	\$14.10
514033	Grinding, Lapping, Polish, & Buffing Machine Setters	\$11.60	\$13.59	\$15.44	60	\$11.04	\$13.21	\$15.70	250	\$14.86	\$13.56
514041	Machinists	\$14.64	\$17.66	\$21.82	210	\$16.35	\$19.03	\$21.47	950	\$19.00	\$16.80
514072	Molding, Coremaking, & Casting Machine Setters	\$11.21	\$15.42	\$17.46	70	\$10.87	\$12.66	\$14.92	430	\$13.71	\$12.16
514081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, & Tenders	\$15.17	\$17.53	\$19.52	40	\$15.17	\$17.53	\$19.52	200	\$16.73	\$14.66
514111	Tool & Die Makers	\$18.51	\$21.58	\$25.97	350	\$18.51	\$21.58	\$25.97	350	\$22.15	\$21.36
514121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers	\$12.49	\$15.25	\$18.21	300	\$13.54	\$16.06	\$18.65	1,400	\$17.48	\$15.16
514122	Welding, Soldering, & Brazing Machine Setters	\$10.73	\$13.20	\$16.45	110	\$10.73	\$13.20	\$16.45	110	\$15.92	\$15.11
514192	Lay-Out Workers, Metal & Plastic	\$11.28	\$13.89	\$16.89	40	\$11.28	\$13.89	\$16.89	40	\$15.68	\$16.18
514193	Plating & Coating Machine Setters & Operators	\$9.75	\$10.61	\$12.17	20	\$9.75	\$10.61	\$12.17	80	\$14.87	\$13.21
514194	Tool Grinders, Filers, & Sharpeners	\$15.31	\$17.08	\$19.52	20	\$15.31	\$17.08	\$19.52	20	\$15.98	\$15.00
517042	Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders	\$8.37	\$9.47	\$10.41	20	\$9.77	\$11.35	\$14.07	240	\$12.46	\$11.30
518021	Stationary Engineers & Boiler Operators	\$20.55	\$23.60	\$26.19	60	\$20.23	\$23.34	\$26.12	170	\$22.07	\$21.74
519021	Crushing, Grinding, & Polishing Machine Setters	\$10.21	\$17.38	\$19.71	60	\$12.67	\$16.09	\$19.09	230	\$16.46	\$13.45
519121	Coating, Painting, & Spraying Machine Setters	\$13.78	\$16.71	\$19.21	470	\$13.78	\$16.71	\$19.21	470	\$16.65	\$13.05
519198	Helpers--Production Workers	\$8.35	\$11.54	\$13.39	160	\$9.71	\$12.27	\$14.04	1,160	\$11.26	\$9.95
519199	Production Workers, All Other	\$12.59	\$15.48	\$17.51	280	\$9.94	\$13.03	\$15.82	1,380	\$13.44	\$11.21

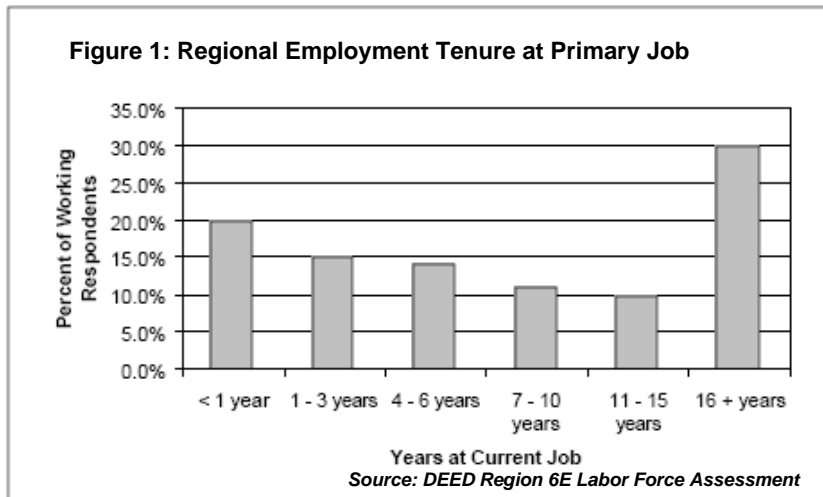
Source: DEED Minnesota Salary Survey, 4th Quarter 2005

<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/tools/oes/geog.asp>

Employment Information

Research shows that Americans are changing jobs and careers more frequently, regardless of the economy. The median number of years that wage and salary workers across the United States had been with their current employer was **3.7 years** in January 2002, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Despite these trends to the contrary, workers in the Willmar lakes area continue to display a remarkable amount of loyalty to their employers. According to recent Labor Force Assessments conducted in Region 6E, the median employee tenure was **7 years**, and the average tenure was **12 years**. Plain and simple, the data shows that workers in the Willmar lakes area are more likely to stay with their employers for the long term. (See Figure 1.)



Beyond that, the Willmar lakes area and the state of Minnesota are known for their skilled, motivated workforce and hard work ethic. Minnesota is the nation’s “hardest working” state, with the highest proportion of people participating in the labor force, as well as low absenteeism. Analysts have ranked Minnesota as the third best state to work in the country based on indicators such as workplace fairness and job opportunities – and the **top state for job quality**.

Minnesota ranks third in the “Camelot Index” with particularly high rankings in “healthy people” (1), “healthy society” (1), and “healthy economy” (8). Minnesota has the nation’s lowest percent of people without health insurance and the second lowest percentage of people living in poverty, according *State Policy Reports*. It’s also been the healthiest state in the country—and has been among the top two since the rankings began in 1990. Nearly 77 percent of Minnesotans own their homes, ranking fifth nationwide.

Minnesota’s array of cultural attractions, outdoor recreations options, and scenic landscapes appeals to both residents and visitors. For the seventh straight year, Minnesota tops the “**Most Livable State**” rankings from Morgan Quitno Press, based on indicators like affordable housing, safe streets, a strong education system, and excellent health care. The Willmar lakes area boasts an extremely diverse population and countless recreational amenities, creating a wide spectrum of family entertainment opportunities for local residents and visitors alike.

Table 4: Percentage of the Population with an Associate Degree

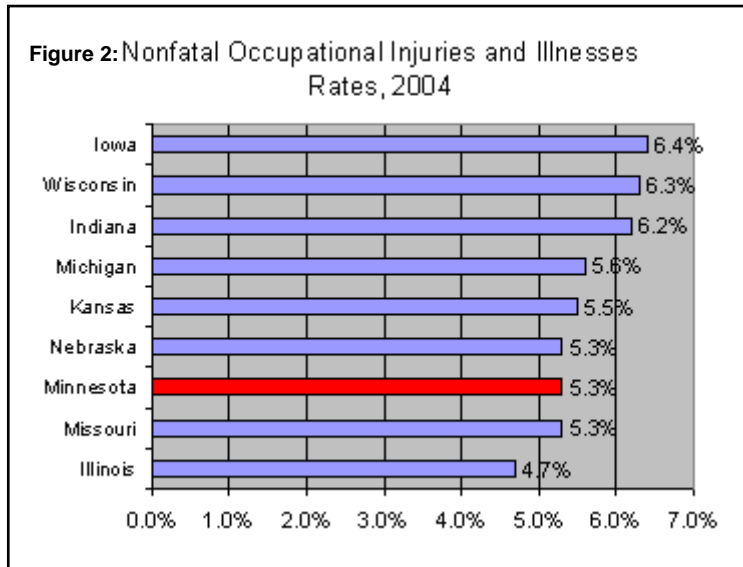
	City of Willmar	Kandiyohi County	Minnesota	Iowa	United States
18 to 24 years	1.0%	1.1%	0.8%	0.9%	0.5%
25 to 34 years	2.3%	2.4%	2.0%	1.8%	1.4%
35 to 44 years	2.8%	3.0%	2.3%	2.2%	1.8%
45 to 64 years	1.9%	2.6%	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%
65 years & over	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Total	8.4%	9.5%	7.5%	7.3%	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Minnesota has the highest percentage of residents aged 25 years and older with a high school diploma (92.3 percent) and the 9th highest percentage of people with college degrees (32.5 percent) among all states in 2004, according to the U.S. Census. Beyond that, the Willmar lakes area is home to a high quality education system and a well-trained technical workforce. Of particular note, Kandiyohi County has a much **higher percentage of workers with an associate degree** than the state, Iowa, and the U.S. (See Table 4.)

The UnitedHealth Foundation ranks Minnesota the **second healthiest state in the nation**, and Minnesota has very low absenteeism rates. The number of nonfatal occupational injuries over all industries declined 16 percent between 1999 and 2004 in Minnesota, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (See Figure 2.)

Today, based on labor costs, state and local tax burden, energy costs, and office rents, Minnesota can claim to be one of 29 states with an “average cost” of doing business, according to a study by the respected analysts from Economy.com. Just nine states were considered “low cost” places to do business, while 12 were described as “high cost.” Labor costs, land costs, and local tax burden are significantly lower in Kandiyohi County than the state of Minnesota.



One of the most recent changes is a law passed by the Minnesota Legislature creating up to 10 tax-free zones intended to encourage business and economic development in Greater Minnesota. These Job Opportunity Building Zones (JOBZ) stimulate economic activity by providing exemptions to local and state taxes, including the corporate franchise tax, income tax for operators and investors, certain sales taxes and property taxes, and wind energy production taxes. In addition, businesses can claim employment tax credits for the creation of high-paying jobs.

Since 1992, the legislature has passed major reforms resulting in a 40 percent drop in employer costs for workers’ compensation coverage. Other key pieces of legislation have reduced litigation costs, provided safety incentives, controlled the cost of workers’ compensation benefits over an employee’s lifetime, and increased compliance provisions, enabling Minnesota to be more competitive. Another significant change in recent years has been the elimination of the sales tax on capital equipment. Minnesota and the Willmar lakes area has created a climate that encourages business expansion and creates high quality jobs.

Economic Information

While the Willmar lakes area has a growing, relatively diverse economy with employment spread across manufacturing, retail trade, healthcare and social assistance, educational services, construction, information services, financial services and insurance; agriculture is still a very important part of the business community.

Kandiyohi County is the **fourth largest county in the United States** in terms of **turkey production and processing**. Minnesota is the nation’s biggest grower of turkeys, a sector that experts say contributes about 10,000 jobs and generates \$507 million in total economic activity to the state each year. Minnesota’s turkey-raising and -processing business has increased by 35 percent since 1994, according to a report by University of Minnesota economist Brian Buhr. **Jennie-O Turkey Store**, headquartered in Willmar, is the world’s largest turkey company, processing 1.2 billion pounds annually. Jennie-O Turkey Store currently employs over 7,000 people in the U.S., and distributes its products throughout the United States and 26 countries.

According to Minnesota Agriculture Statistics Service, Kandiyohi County was ranked **fourth** out of 87 counties in Minnesota in total Cash Receipts in 2002, with more than \$237.8 million in total cash receipts. In addition, Kandiyohi County was ranked **second in Livestock Cash Receipts** in 2002 at \$147.9 million, and 17th in Crop Cash Receipts in 2002 at \$83.05 million. Kandiyohi County produced 125,000 Pigs in 2004, the fourth most in Central Minnesota. (See Table 5.)

Kandiyohi County was home to 75 Hog and Pig farms in 2002, while there were more than 1,000 Hog and Pig farms in the extended region. Of the 75 farms in Kandiyohi County, 30 had inventories of 1,000 or more units, and 29 produced hogs and pigs to be used for breeding.

The entire state of Minnesota has nearly 11,000 hog and pig farms, with more than 1,600 farms having inventories of 1,000 or more units. That was a 17 percent increase in the largest size hog and pig farms since 1997. Through March of 2006, Minnesota counted 6,400 thousand head of total hogs and pigs, a two percent increase year-over-year. Minnesota's largest share of production is in market: under 60 pounds (2,240 thousand head); followed by 60 to 119 lbs (1,370 thousand head); 120 to 179 lbs (1,310 thousand head); and 180 lbs and over (900 thousand head).

Table 5: Hog & Pig Estimates, Minnesota Ag News

County	All Hogs		Annual Farrowings		Annual Pig Crop	
	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004
Big Stone Co.	43,000	41,000	8,500	8,000	76,000	72,000
Chippewa Co.	35,000	33,000	6,500	6,500	55,000	55,000
Kandiyohi Co.	89,000	87,000	13,000	13,500	119,000	125,000
Lac qui Parle Co.	89,000	87,000	11,500	11,500	99,000	100,000
McLeod Co.	10,000	10,000	1,600	1,500	14,400	13,400
Meeker Co.	13,000	13,000	2,400	2,500	21,000	22,000
Pope Co.	43,000	44,000	12,500	13,000	103,000	110,000
Redwood Co.	186,000	190,000	11,000	11,500	97,000	101,000
Renville Co.	242,000	201,000	54,000	54,000	488,000	495,000
Stearns Co.	91,000	93,000	19,500	20,000	177,000	184,000
Swift Co.	23,000	21,000	2,500	2,000	21,000	17,000
Todd Co.	11,500	12,000	5,400	5,500	47,000	49,000
Yellow Medicine	131,000	132,000	21,500	22,000	185,000	196,000
Stevens Co.	139,000	146,000	34,500	37,000	312,000	338,000

Source: Minnesota Agricultural Statistics Service

According to data from the Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, the Animal Production industry provided 802 jobs and more than \$5.8 million in total wages in Kandiyohi County in the 3rd Quarter of 2005 (approx. \$23.2 million annual payroll). The Food Manufacturing industry provided 1,980 jobs and close to \$17.9 million in total wages (approx. \$71.4 million annual payroll), and the Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing industry provided 259 jobs and \$2.6 million in total wages (approx. \$10.5 million annual payroll).

In Region 6E, there were just under 500 jobs in Crop Production; 1,282 jobs in Animal Production; 3,638 jobs in Food Manufacturing; 980 jobs in Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing; 963 jobs in Machinery Manufacturing; 3,410 jobs in Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing; and 252 jobs in Transportation Equipment Manufacturing in the 3rd Quarter of 2005, according to QCEW data.

Finally, the Willmar area is home to an excellent post-secondary institution providing technical and advanced educational programs. Ridgewater College, with locations in Willmar and Hutchinson, served well over 4,000 students in 2005. Ridgewater College's Center for Customized & Continuing Education provides many educational opportunities to develop new skills, to broaden knowledge base, and to increase technical proficiency, benefiting both a business organization and individual employees.

The Granite Falls campus of Minnesota West Community & Technical College is located about a half hour away, and serves close to 3,000 students. About 50 miles away, the St. Cloud area also has several post-secondary institutions serving more than 22,000 students. There are many different majors offered at these colleges and universities, but some of the most common are Business Management & Admin Services; Health Professions and Related Sciences; Education; Engineering-Related Technologies; Computer & Information Sciences; and Precision Production Trades. (See Table 6.)

Table 6: Post-secondary Institutions

Institution	City	Size	Distance
Ridgewater College	Willmar	4,142	0 mi.
Minnesota West Community & Technical College	Granite Falls	2,828	33 mi.
Ridgewater College	Hutchinson	4,142	36 mi.
St. John's University	Collegeville	2,015	45 mi.
College of St. Benedict	St. Joseph	2,033	47 mi.
St. Cloud State University	St. Cloud	16,077	50 mi.
St. Cloud Technical College	St. Cloud	3,400	50 mi.