

1. Rindge's Economic Vision

The Economic Vision

In order to develop a clear vision of where the Town wants to go with its economic future, the residents needed to understand what the current and recent economic trends are, what the town's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats lie and what the broader community opinion is on a variety of economic measures. These factors were all presented and discussed at a series of public workshops in 2010. The culmination of those deliberations resulted in the following economic vision:

- A. The Town's *rural character*, enhanced by an abundance of natural resources – its lakes, mountains, agriculture and open space – shall be preserved and protected and the Town's rich historic legacy shall be honored.
- B. The community of Rindge will offer a *high quality of life* with economic opportunities, affordable quality public services, amenities and attractions including restaurants, cafes, bookstores and access to natural resources for residents and visitors.
- C. The Town of Rindge encourages our residents of all ages to live and work in the community, to *participate in its civic affairs* and take advantage of its natural and recreational resources.
- D. Rindge will be a *welcoming home* for new and existing businesses and entrepreneurs.
- E. Rindge will be a *gateway for visitors* to the Monadnock Region with adequate tourist oriented businesses and attractions.
- F. *New development* that reinforces the town's traditional New England architectural styles, a sense of community, and Rindge's unique history will be encouraged and supported.
- G. The communities of Rindge and Franklin Pierce University will be *partners* in each other's advancement.

Action Plan

From the Vision goals listed above, a total of fifty-one action tasks were developed, prioritized and town departments or committees were identified to advocate for and pursue their completion. The complete Action Plan is included in the appendix.

If the Rindge Economic Development Initiative is to produce results, the town needs to use the Action Plan as an ongoing, working document that is used as a blueprint for change. Every committee that is charged with action tasks needs to make regular progress toward their completion. It is also recommended that a coordinating committee be charged with overseeing the progress of the Action Plan, documenting the progress on each action task several times each year. At least annually, the coordinating committee should take stock of the entire action plan, review the progress on individual tasks, and re-assess priorities based on the best available current information. To foster this need for a constant assessment and evolution of the Action Plan an easily editable electronic version of the Plan has been provided to the town.

The REDI Action Plan has been shaped through many meetings and public input sessions over a period of more than eighteen months. The process has raised community leader expectations but the planning efforts that have gone into the plan will need the continued and deliberate involvement of all the town officials, boards and committees. Economic development requires constant and sustained effort to produce lasting economic results. Using the Action Plan as a guide to stay on task will greatly improve the chances for Rindge's successful economic future.

2. Demographics

Rindge has a population that is nearly seven times greater than it was fifty years ago and accounts for 7.6% of the region's 83,000 residents.

Population: Rindge has experienced significant population growth over the past fifty years – growing from 941 persons in 1960 to 6,014 in 2010 – a 639% increase. The population increases were the greatest between 1960 and 1990 – averaging 17.5% per year. Since then, they have moderated to about 6% per year. The NH Office of Energy & Planning (OEP) has estimated that this trend will continue through 2030.

Economic issues are not constrained by specific towns or even state boundaries. People work, shop, live and play in different places. To provide some perspective on this, the Rindge market area or “region” has been

Figure 2

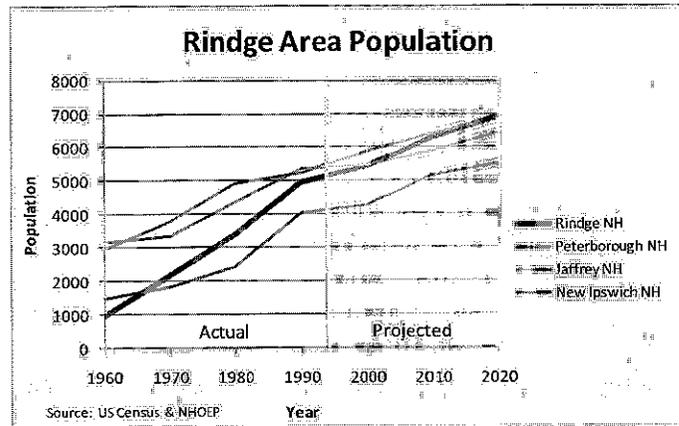


Figure 3

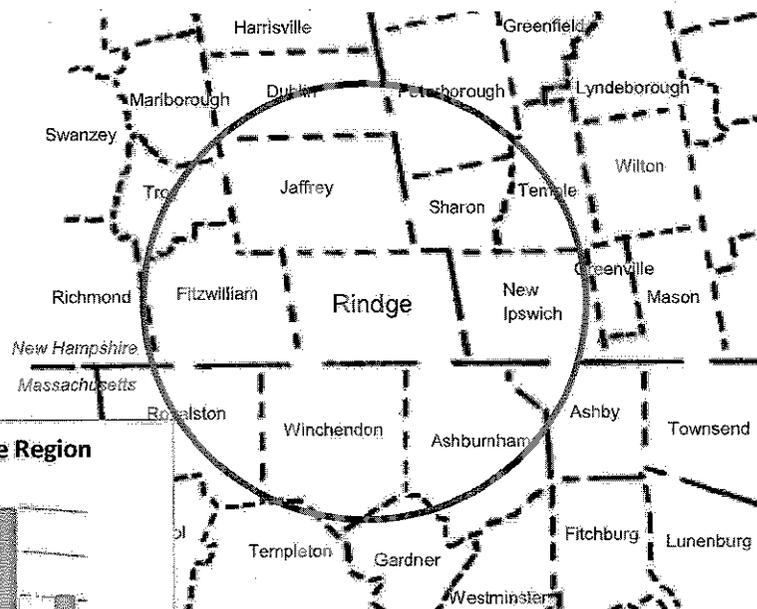
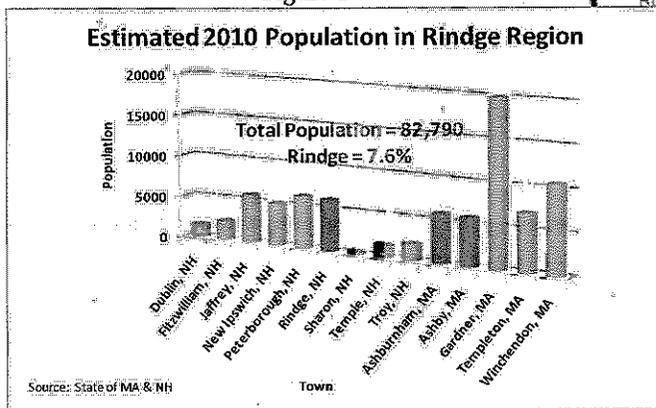


Figure 4

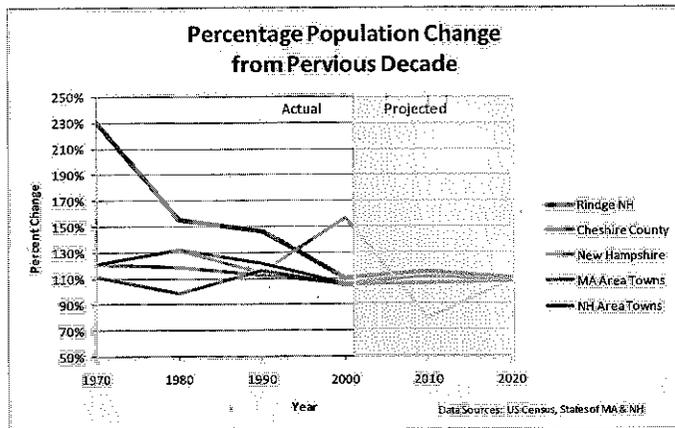


defined as a half-hour driving distance from Rindge (see figure 3). In 2010, there were an estimated 82,790 people living within that half-hour radius and Rindge accounts for 7.6% of that total

population base (figure 4).

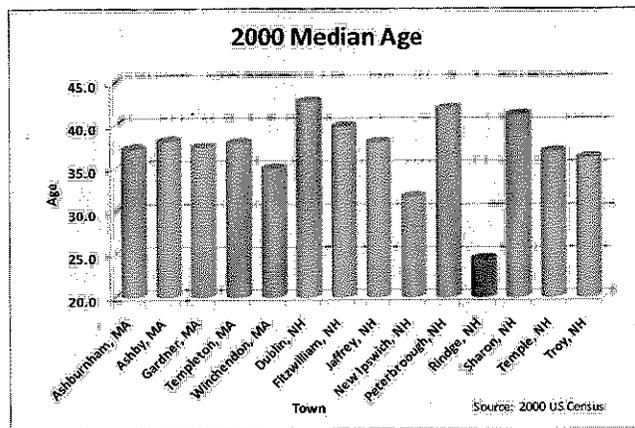
Figure 5 illustrates the percentage of population change from one decade to the next and projections to 2020 for Rindge, the other towns in the region (in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire), in Cheshire County and NH. What is evident from this chart is that Rindge's rate of population increase is slowing down and is projected to be much more in line with the other communities in the region in both states. The NH statewide population change experienced a more rapid rate of growth through 2000 but is projected to be lower than towns in the Rindge region for 2010.

Figure 5



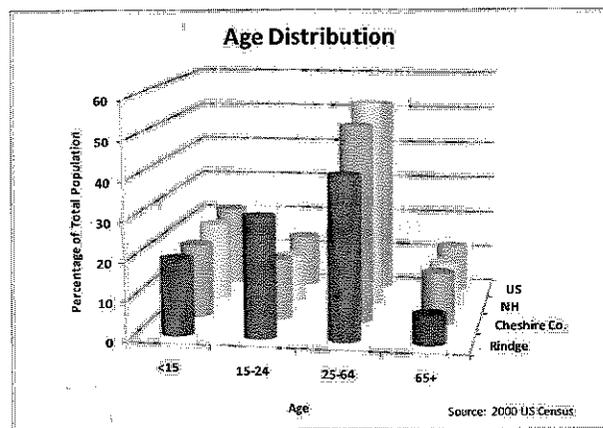
Age: With a median age of 24.5 years the initial impression is that Rindge must have an extremely young population compared to the other regional towns that have an overall median age of 37.1 years. Figure 6 highlights this striking difference with Rindge having the lowest and Dublin/Peterborough having the highest (at 42 years).

Figure 6



In order to understand why there is such a large disparity in age profiles, let's take a closer look at the age breakdown for Rindge, Cheshire County, the state and the country. Figure 7 indicates that Rindge's under-15 year old population is consistent with the other jurisdictions at about 20%. The 15-24 age bracket highlights Rindge's considerably higher percentage (31%). As a result, the age

Figure 7

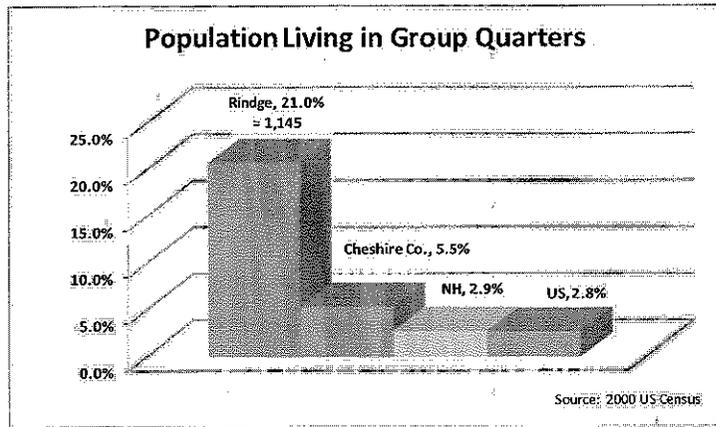


brackets of 25+ are proportionately smaller for Rindge than the county, state or US.

The disparity between Rindge's age distribution and the county, state and country is most readily explained by the fact that 21% of Rindge's population lives in group quarters, i.e., Franklin

Pierce University. As figure 8 highlights, Cheshire County, the state and the US all have significantly lower populations living in group quarters. This one statistic, median age, shows the significance of the presence of Franklin Pierce University to Rindge.

Figure 8



Educational Attainment: In 2000, Rindge had a higher percentage of residents who graduated from high school than the county, state and US (figure 9) and it was similar to several of the Rindge area communities (figure 10). The percentage of college graduates in Rindge was also higher than most communities in the region, as well as the US average, but lower than the county or state of New Hampshire.

Figure 9

	% High School Grads	% College Grads or Higher
Rindge	89.5%	24.9%
Cheshire Co.	86.2%	26.6%
NH	87.4%	28.7%
US	80.4%	24.4%

Source: 2000 US Census

Figure 10

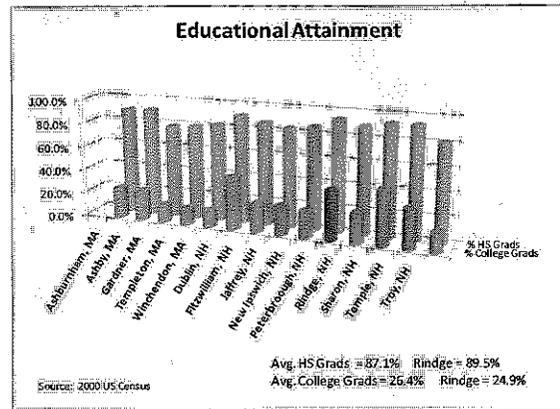
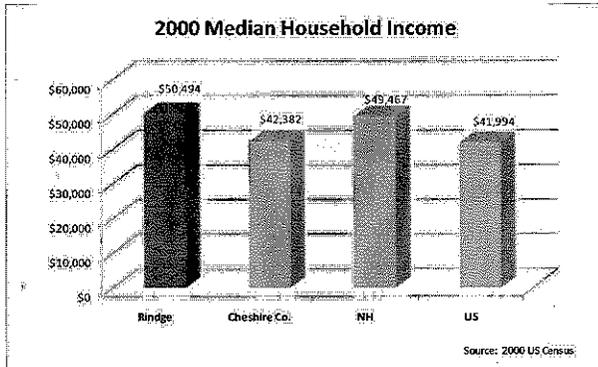


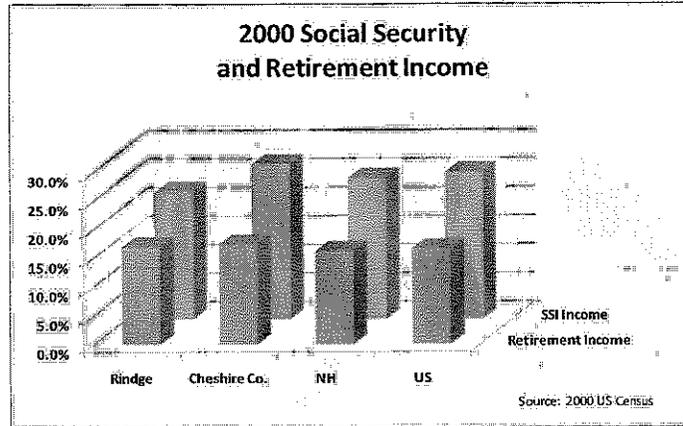
Figure 11



Household Income: The 2000 US Census found that Rindge had a median household income that was slightly above the state median income and well above Cheshire County and the entire country.

The Census also determined that the percentage of households receiving retirement income in Rindge was consistent with the county, state and national figures. Figure 12 shows that the percentage of Rindge's population that is collecting Social Security income (SSI) is a little below the norm for the county, NH and the US. This is likely due to the smaller percentage of the town's population that is over 65 years old.

Figure 12



3. Labor Force Characteristics

Manufacturing, education/health/social services, construction, retail trade and professional/scientific/management services comprise almost 72% of the occupations of Rindge residents

Total employment in the Rindge region was 24,664 in 2008. Rindge’s employment was 1756 which represents 7.1% of the region’s total employment base. Templeton and Winchendon, MA have similar numbers of employees to Rindge and Jaffrey, Peterborough and Gardner have considerably larger numbers of persons in the workforce.

Figure 13

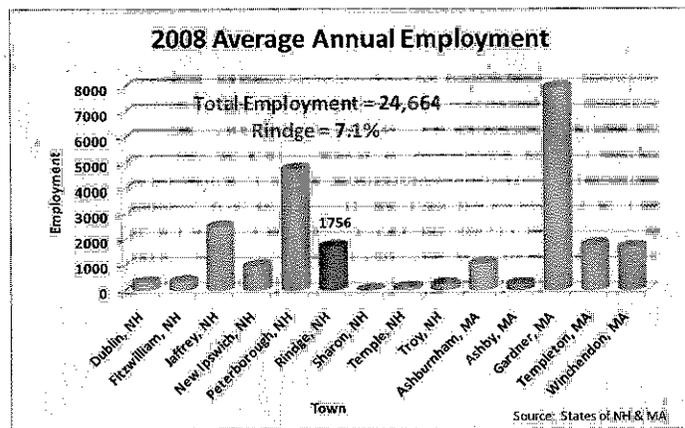
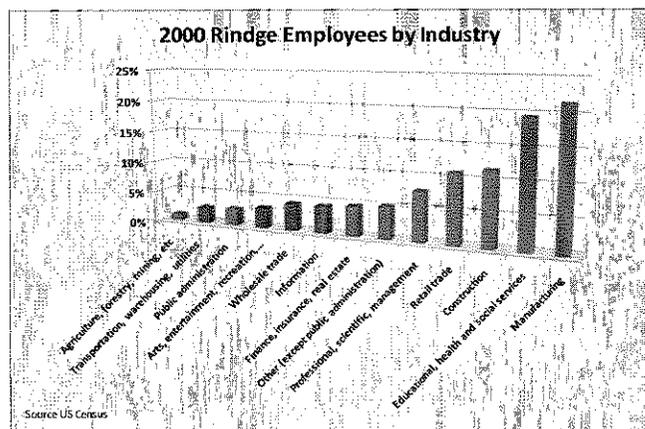


Figure 14

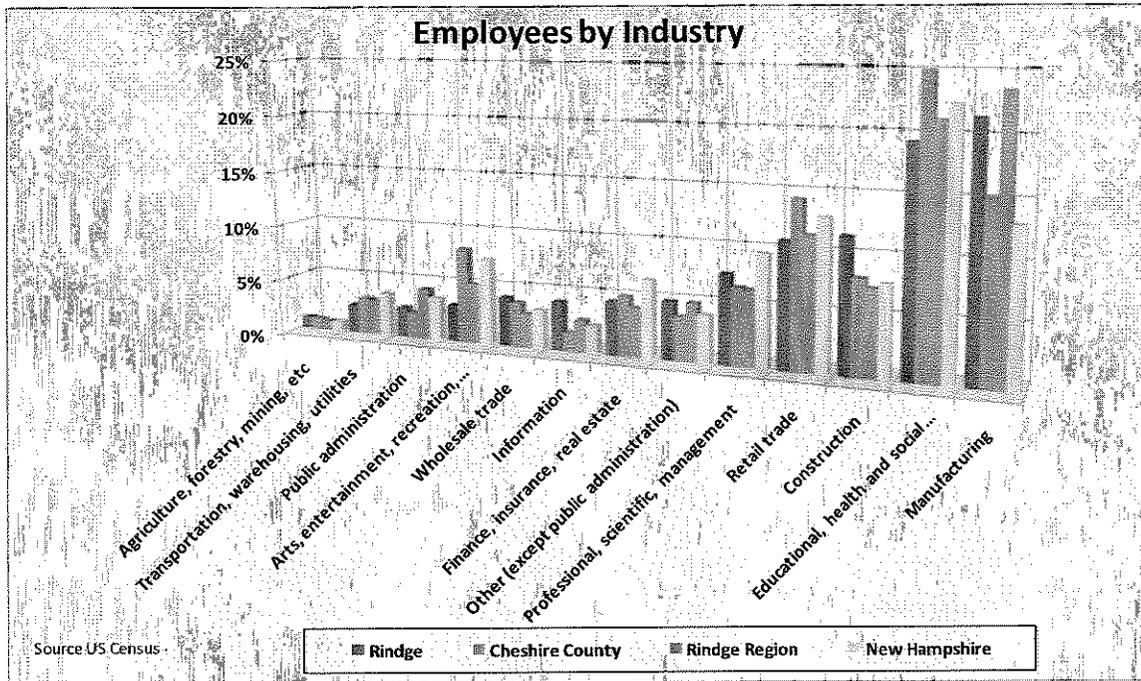
From the US Census we are able to develop a profile of the kinds of work that Rindge residents do for a living. Figure 14 shows this profile indicating that manufacturing, “education, health and social services,” construction, retail trade and “professional, scientific, and management services” comprise almost 72% of the occupations of Rindge residents.



Comparing Rindge’s employee occupation profile to other geographic areas produces the data shown in figure 15. This graph is significant because it highlights what Rindge workers do for a living. What they do is important if the town wants to utilize those

skills by growing existing businesses and attracting new ones to expand its economic base.

Figure 15



The major employee occupations for Rindge are shown in the red bars in figure 15. Comparing the Rindge data for each industrial sector to those of Cheshire County and the Rindge Region begins to highlight one geographic area's strengths compared to another.

- ◆ *Manufacturing Sector:* Both Ridge and the region are strong in this sector, compared to the county and state.
- ◆ *Educational, health care and social services Sector:* This is a strong sector for Rindge; it holds an even higher percentage significance to the county, region and state.
- ◆ *Construction:* This is an important sector for Rindge due to its strength in town as compared to the county, region and state.
- ◆ *Retail Trade Sector:* Rindge has a similar percentage of employees working in the retail trade sector compared to the other geographic areas. The data shows that the town is a little behind others as an occupational sector.
- ◆ *Professional, scientific, management, administrative Sector:* This sector is well represented in Rindge compared to the region and county and includes a wide range of professional and technical occupations including accountants, lawyers, engineers, researchers, company managers as a few examples.

- ◆ *Information Sector:* Rindge has a somewhat higher representation in this sector.
- ◆ *Arts, entertainment and recreation:* Rindge is underrepresented in this sector compared to the county, region and state. The weakness in this sector suggests that the town should consider strengthening it.

Class of Workers

In addition to looking at the types of work that residents do for a living, it is also helpful to review whether they are in private employment, work for the government, are self employed or are unpaid workers in the home. Figure 16 compares these employment categories for Rindge to the county, state and US. The most notable

Figure 16

Class of Workers	US	NH	Cheshire Co.	Rindge
Civilian Employment, 16+ yrs.	129.7 M	650,871	38,065	2,546
Private Wage & Salary Workers	78.5%	79.4%	78.9%	82.3%
Government Workers	14.6%	12.8%	12.4%	10.8%
Self Employed in Own Business	6.6%	7.6%	8.6%	6.6%
Unpaid Family Workers	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Source: 2000 US Census				

statistic from this table is that Rindge has a higher percentage of its labor force that works in the private sector (82.3%) compared to the other geographic areas. The percentage of workers in Rindge who are self employed is below that for the county and state but the

same as the US average. Rindge has a smaller percentage of government workers.

Unemployment

Figure 17 shows the twenty year unemployment rates for Rindge, the county, NH and the US. From this graph, it is clear that Rindge's unemployment rate has remained consistently *above* the county and state but generally *below* the national average. This suggests that Rindge should look at ways to provide greater economic diversity to help reduce unemployment, particularly during periods of economic recession.

Figure 18 provides a more detailed look at unemployment rates over the last year and a half, particularly in relation to the impacts of the current recession. While it is clear that New Hampshire has avoided the higher unemployment rates that are being experienced elsewhere in the nation, Rindge has experienced particularly high seasonal unemployment in the winter months. Figure 17 shows an annual downward trend in unemployment for Rindge for the period between 2009 and June of 2010. Figure 18,

being monthly data, shows a seasonal drop in unemployment followed by a slight upturn between May and June of 2010.

Figure 17

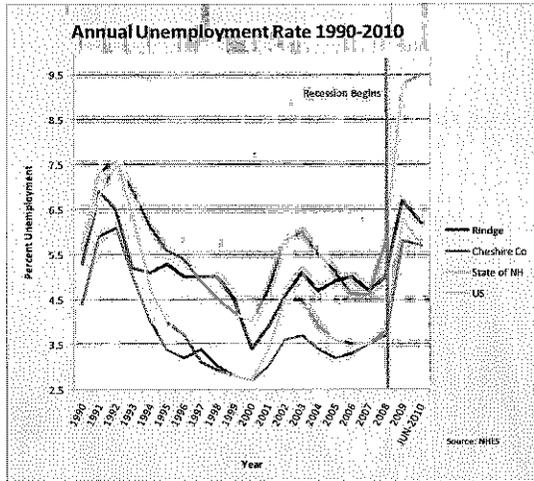
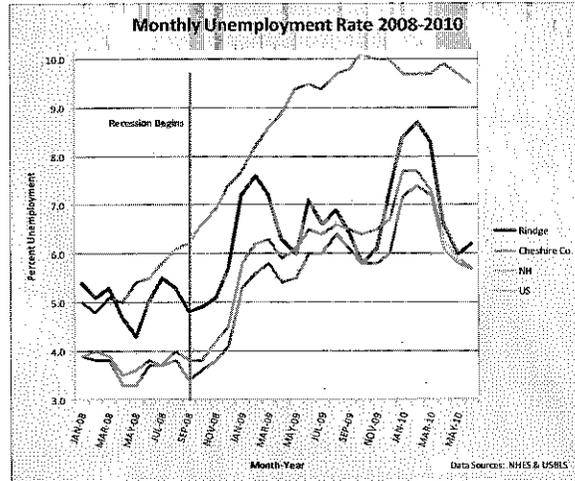


Figure 18



Commute to Work

Where people live and work provides a major indication of a community's economic market area. Figure 19 displays the most current commuting data from the 2000 US Census.

Where do Rindge residents work? The columns of the left of figure 19 show the number and percentages of total workers who live in Rindge. Not surprisingly, one-third of all the Rindge residents who work, work in town. The second highest commuting destination for Rindge residents is to Jaffrey (14.3%). The third largest commuting destination is "Other MA" towns. This destination comprises twenty-nine towns in Massachusetts that had fewer than 25 Rindge residents commuting to a specific community. Within this group, the towns that had larger numbers of Rindge commuters were: Lowell, Marlborough, Newton, Townsend, Waltham, Westford, Wellesley, Sterling and Worcester. The "Other NH" listing included twenty-three towns including: Dublin, Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Littleton, Goffstown, Litchfield, Manchester and Merrimack. Other individual towns that had sizeable numbers of Rindge commuters include Keene and Peterborough. In total there were 1,626 Rindge residents who commuted out of town for work.

Where do people who work in Rindge live? The two columns to the right of the town listings in figure 19 show the numbers and percentages of workers who work in Rindge and live in other communities. Of the 1808 people who work in Rindge, almost 46% are town residents. A total of 33 “Other NH” communities are the second largest source of Rindge employees. The towns with larger numbers of commuters to Rindge include: Antrim, Dublin, Hinsdale, Sullivan, Troy, and Walpole. Individual communities that had significant commuters to Rindge include Winchendon, Fitzwilliam, Swanzey, Keene, and Jaffrey.

Figure 19

Commuting Patterns					
LIVE in Rindge & Commute TO:		Town	WORK in Rindge & Commute FROM:		Net Job Import / (Export)
Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
830	33.8%	Rindge	830	45.9%	N/A
32	1.3%	Winchendon	129	7.1%	97
25	1.0%	Fitzwilliam	96	5.3%	71
186	7.6%	Other NH	240	13.3%	54
7	0.3%	Ashburnham	31	1.7%	24
33	1.3%	Swanzey	53	2.9%	20
33	1.3%	New Ipswich	30	1.7%	(3)
30	1.2%	Wilton	6	0.3%	(24)
33	1.3%	Nashua	8	0.4%	(25)
48	2.0%	Gardner	18	1.0%	(30)
31	1.3%	Westminster	0	0.0%	(31)
33	1.3%	Milford	0	0.0%	(33)
34	1.4%	Ayer	0	0.0%	(34)
53	2.2%	Other States	14	0.8%	(39)
60	2.4%	Leominster	7	0.4%	(53)
71	2.9%	Fitchburg	7	0.4%	(64)
156	6.4%	Keene	90	5.0%	(66)
153	6.2%	Peterborough	34	1.9%	(119)
350	14.3%	Jaffrey	183	10.1%	(167)
255	10.4%	Other MA	32	1.8%	(223)
2453		Total	1808		(645)

Source: 2000 Census

The last column in figure 19 shows the number of jobs that are net imported to Rindge from the communities listed. This figure is derived by subtracting the number of people who live in Rindge and commute out of town from the number who live out of town and commute to Rindge for work. In total there is a net outflow from Rindge of 645 workers. There are only four net importing towns (excluding the “other NH” designation) and thirteen towns (excluding “other MA”) that Rindge exports jobs to. Jaffrey, Peterborough, Keene, Fitchburg and Leominster attract the highest number of Rindge residents for work.

What this comparison reveals is that Rindge residents who commute out of town for work are more inclined to travel greater distances than the number of commuters who come to Rindge to work every day. Not surprisingly, the largest numbers of workers seek jobs that are in the immediate vicinity of Rindge to reduce their commuting times.