

# Lowndes County by the Numbers

How Do We Compare With Peer and Aspirant Communities?

2013 Report



VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY  
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& ECONOMIC RESEARCH

*This report has been prepared for the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce by the Center for Business and Economic Research at Valdosta State University.*

Establishing a plan for economic success and growth requires an unbiased knowledge of a community's endowments and economic indicators. While community endowments are the unique characteristics that arise from location and geography and therefore are not likely to change, economic indicators such as demographics and labor market structure can be cultivated and enhanced in ways to improve the economic growth and prosperity of a community. Progress toward achieving these desired outcomes can only be assessed by comparing oneself to peer and aspirant communities. This report identifies the peer and aspirant communities for Lowndes County and compares economic indicators that measure the strengths and opportunities for this community.

## The purpose of the report is to provide

- A collection of data to assess the economic performance of Lowndes County as benchmarked against peer and aspirant communities. The quantitative data allows for an objective assessment.
- A comparison of benchmarks as general economic conditions change over time. This allows for assessing whether or not incremental improvements keep pace or exceed the peer and aspirant communities.
- A foundation for developing strategic planning and growth strategies for the Lowndes County community.

## Peer and Aspirant Communities

The primary counties of 104 Metropolitan Statistical Areas covering eleven states in the Southeastern region of the United States were considered as potential peer and aspirant communities for the Lowndes County community. Based upon economic, geographic, and demographic similarities, fourteen peer and aspirant communities emerged as benchmark communities for Lowndes County.

Benchmarking allows for a "moment-in-time" comparison of communities, as well as a "longitudinal" comparison of changes over time. Benchmarking using unbiased data provides an excellent assessment of a community's economic progress and shortfalls.



**Houston County, Alabama**, located in southeast Alabama along the Florida border, has a population of just over 100,000 residents. Although it does not have direct interstate access, Houston is bisected by U.S. highways 84 and 231. Houston is home to a branch of Troy University and a community college. Major industries include agriculture, aerospace, distribution, retail and advanced technology.

**Lee County, Alabama**, located in east central Alabama along the Georgia border, has a population of over 135,000 residents. I-85 and three U.S. highways crisscross the county. Lee is home to Auburn University and a community college. Major industries include high-tech manufacturing, education, research firms and retail.

**Morgan County, Alabama**, located in north central Alabama along the Tennessee River, has a population of over 115,000 residents. Morgan is a transportation hub with access to I-65, two U.S. highways, two railways, and a river port. Morgan is home to Redstone Arsenal U.S. Army post. Major industries include high-tech manufacturing, distribution, retail and tourism.

**Clarke County Georgia**, located in northeast Georgia, has a population of over 115,000 residents. Although it does not have direct interstate access, Clarke is bisected by U.S. Routes 441 and 29. Clarke is home to the University of Georgia and a technical college. Major industries include research and development, education, retail, publishing and tourism.

**Floyd County, Georgia**, located in northwest Georgia along the Alabama border, has a population of nearly 100,000 residents. Although it does not have direct interstate access, Floyd is bisected by U.S. Routes 441 and 27. Floyd is home to Berry College, Shorter College and two two-year colleges. Major industries include healthcare, technology, tourism, education and manufacturing.

**Houston County, Georgia**, located in central Georgia, has a population of over 135,000 residents. Houston is at the crossroads of Georgia with direct access to I-75 and several major state and U.S. roadways. Houston is home to Robins Air Force Base and a two-year college. Major industries include technology, aviation, retail, and tourism.

**Lowndes County, Georgia**, located in south central Georgia along the Florida border, has a population of over 105,000 residents. Lowndes has direct access to I-75 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Lowndes is home to Moody Air Force Base, Valdosta State University, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, and Georgia Military College. Major industries include healthcare, education, retail and leisure and hospitality services.

**Warren County, Kentucky**, located in south central Kentucky near the Tennessee border, has a population of over 105,000 residents. Warren has direct access to I-65 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Warren is home to Western Kentucky University and a technical college. Major industries include high-tech manufacturing, healthcare, technology, education and leisure and hospitality services.

**Ouachita Parish, Louisiana**, located in north central Louisiana, has a population of over 150,000 residents. Ouachita has direct access to I-20 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Ouachita is home to the University of Louisiana at Monroe and two two-year colleges. Major industries include plastics, paper and wood, telecommunications, insurance and healthcare.

**Rapides Parrish, Louisiana**, located in central Louisiana, has a population of over 130,000. Rapides has direct access to I-49, several major U.S. and state roadways, and a river port. Rapides is home to Louisiana State University at Alexandria and a technical college. Major industries include manufacturing, distribution, and healthcare.

**Forrest County, Mississippi**, located in southeast Mississippi, has a population of over 80,000 residents. Forrest has direct access to I-59 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Forrest is home to the University of Southern Mississippi, William Carey University, and a two-year college. Major industries include manufacturing, education and healthcare.

**Nash County, North Carolina**, located in northeast North Carolina, has a population of nearly 95,000 residents. Nash has direct access to I-95 and U.S. Highways 64 and 301. Nash is home to North Carolina Wesleyan College and a community college. Major industries include advanced manufacturing, software and information technology, bio-pharmaceuticals and financial services.

**Wayne County, North Carolina**, located in central North Carolina, has a population of over 110,000 residents. Although it does not have direct interstate access, Wayne is bisected by U.S. Highway 70 and several major state highways. Wayne is home to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Mount Olive College and a community college. Major industries include manufacturing, agriculture and healthcare.

**Florence County, South Carolina**, located in eastern South Carolina, has a population of over 130,000 residents. Florence has direct access to I-95 and I-20. Florence is home to Francis Marion University and a technical college. Major industries include manufacturing, healthcare, pharmaceutical, financial services and distribution.

**Montgomery County, Tennessee**, located in north central Tennessee along the Kentucky border, has a population of over 160,000 residents. Montgomery has direct access to I-24 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Montgomery is home to Austin Peay State University and neighbor to Fort Campbell Army Base located in Kentucky. Major industries include technology, manufacturing, printing and publishing and consulting and professional services.

## Economic Indicators

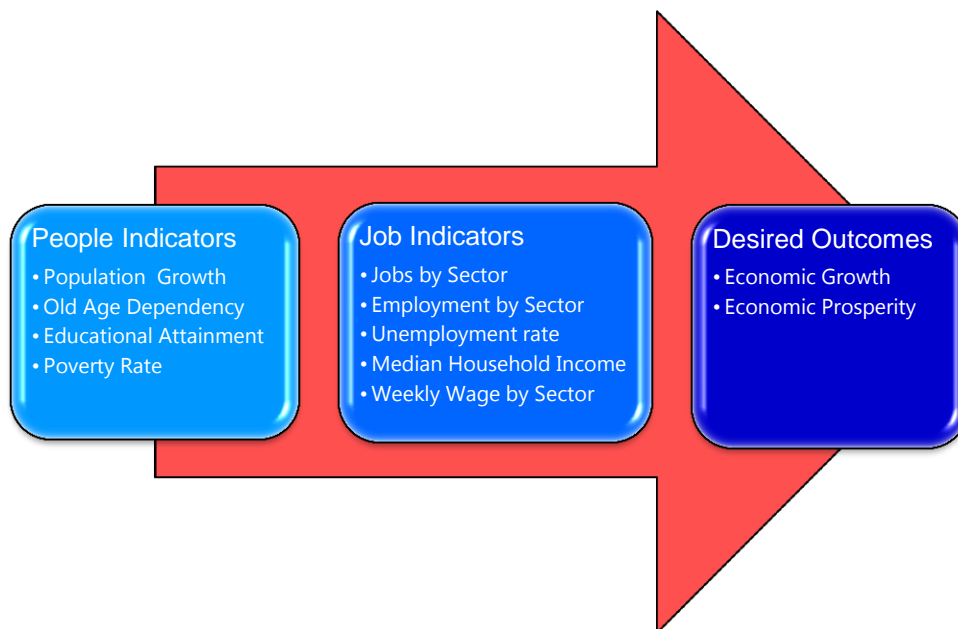
To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Lowndes County community relative to its peer and aspirant communities, we identified twelve indicators that are linked to economic growth and prosperity.

The twelve indicators are divided into two categories, **People Indicators** which capture the demographic characteristics of a community and **Job Indicators** which capture the labor market characteristics of a community. The economic indicators used to compare and rank the fifteen communities are obtained from widely-accepted and reliable sources, and are regularly updated.

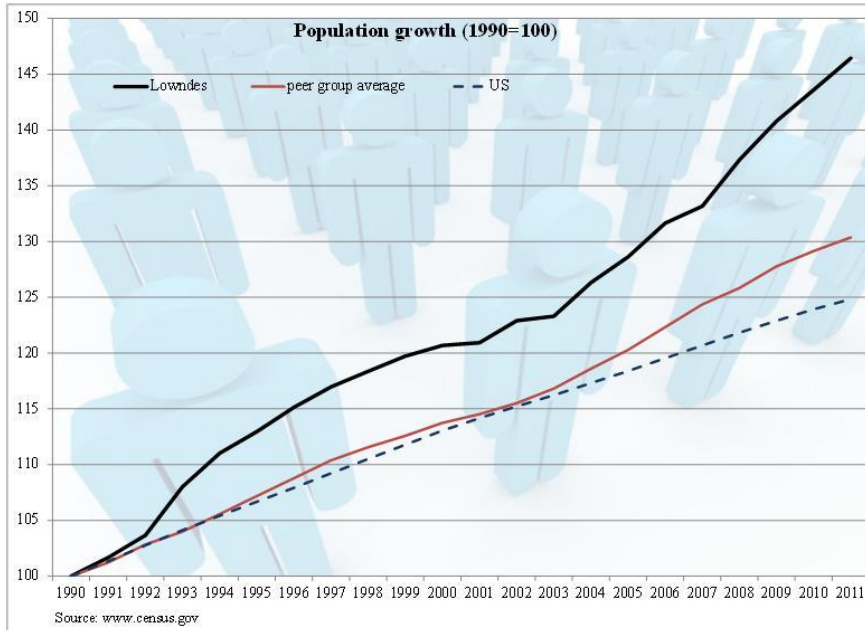
## The Report

The report is divided into two major sections:

- **The Region Over Time** - The first section provides a comparison of the people and job indicators over time. The Lowndes County community indicators are compared to the peer and aspirant communities' average, the Southeast region, and the United States indicators over time.
- **The Region Today** - The second section compares the most recent people and job indicators for the fifteen communities and uses the data to rank the fifteen communities.

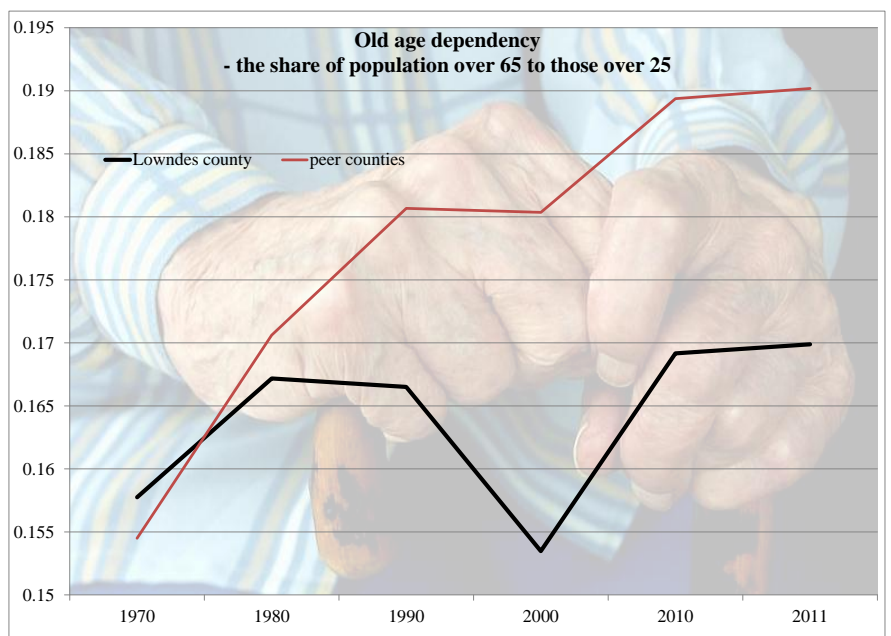


This section of the report compares economic indicators for Lowndes County to the peer and aspirant average, the Southeast region, and the United States. The comparison reveals the trends of the various indicators for and weaknesses of Lowndes County over time.

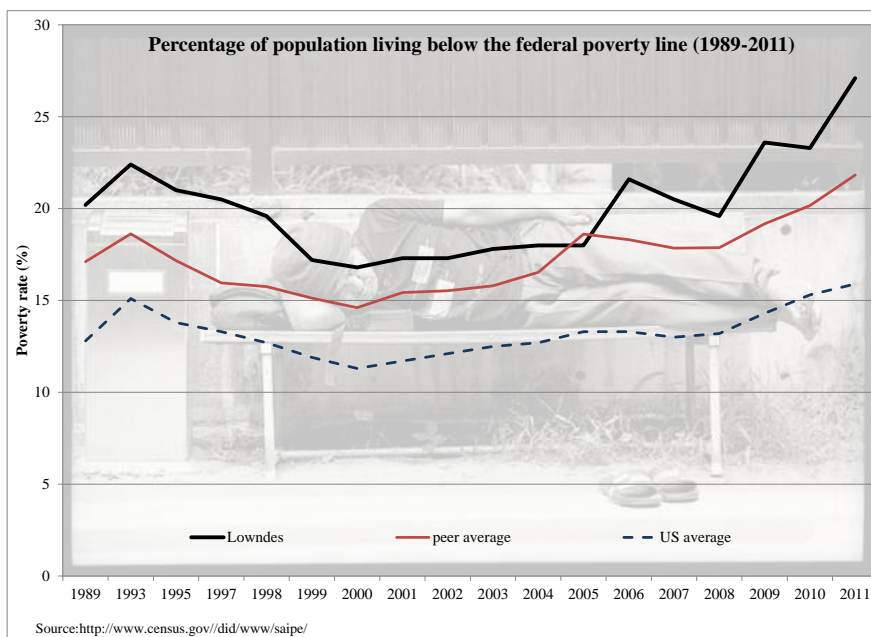
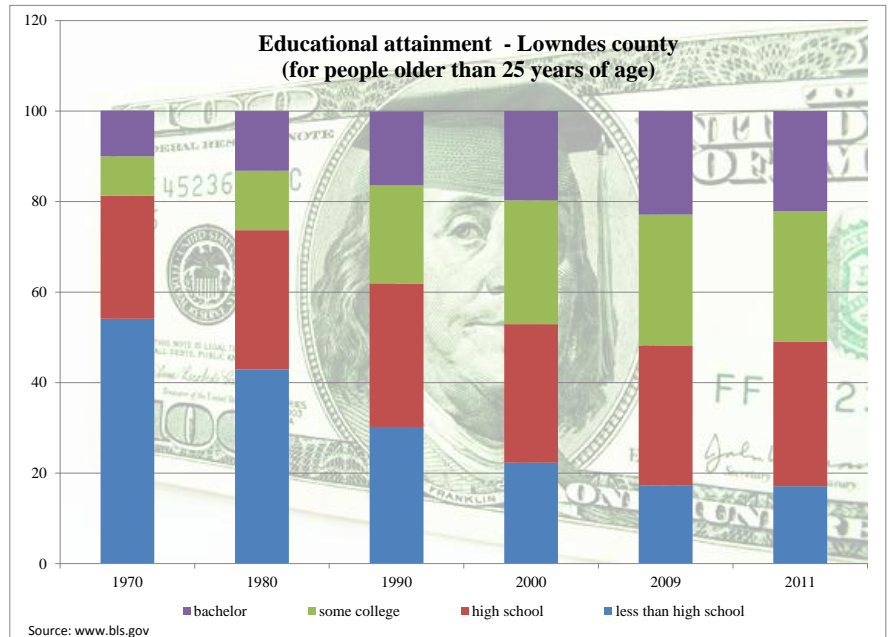


**Population Growth:** From 1993 to 2002, the Lowndes County population generally grew at approximately the same rate as the peer and aspirant average and the United States. Beginning in 2003, the year the U.S. Office of Management and Budget recognized the greater Valdosta area as a Metropolitan Statistical Area, Lowndes County's population began growing at a faster rate than both the United States and the peer and aspirant communities.

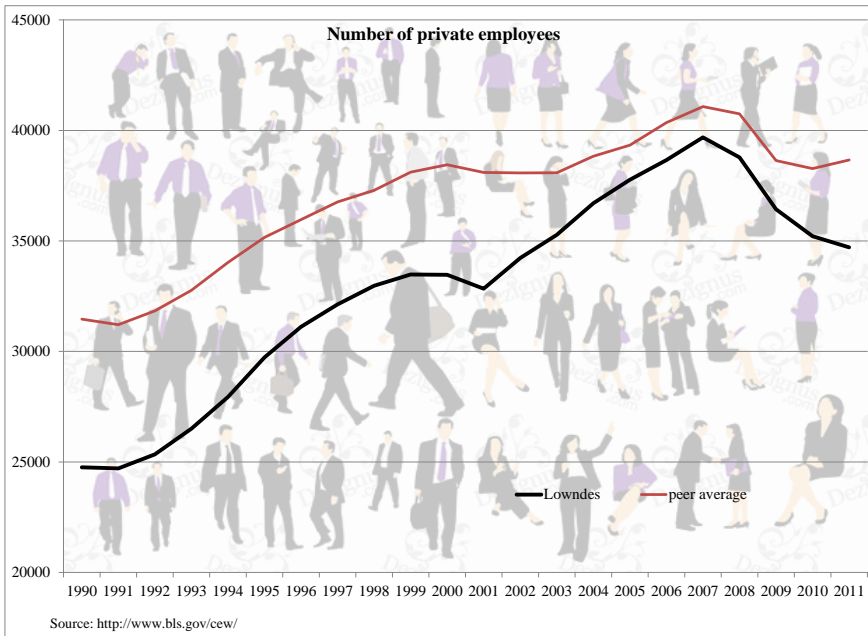
**Old Age Dependency:** Old Age Dependency is the ratio of people 65 years and older as a percent of population 25 years and older. Lowndes County has a lower ratio of Old Age Dependency over the forty year time horizon. The growth rate of old age dependency for Lowndes County has increased at a faster rate than the average rates of the peer and aspirant communities, as well as the Southeast region, over the last decade. Since 2009, the Old Age Dependency ratio has remained relatively constant for Lowndes County and the peer communities.



**Educational Attainment:** This graphic reveals the positive changes in educational attainment for Lowndes County over the last forty years. The percentage of the population with less than a high school education has steadily declined over the last forty years. While the percent of the population with a high school degree has not changed significantly, the percentage of the population with some college or a bachelor’s degree or higher have increased significantly. The peer and aspirant average changes are consistent with Lowndes County’s changes over time.



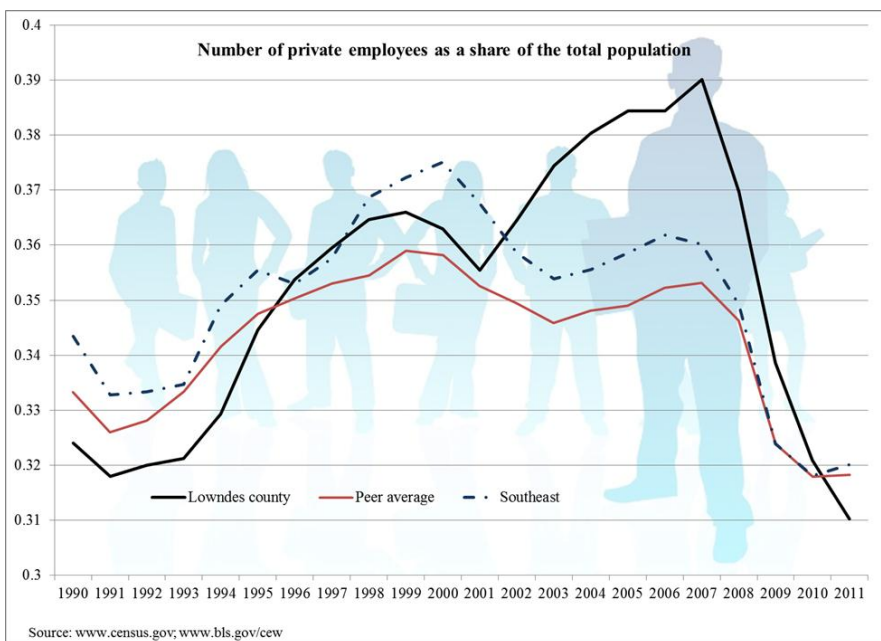
**Poverty Rate:** Over time, the poverty rate for Lowndes County is consistently higher than the United States and the peer and aspirant averages. Since the beginning of the Great Recession in 2007, poverty rates for the United States and for the peer and aspirant communities have increased and remained at an elevated level through 2011. Unfortunately, the gap has widened, as Lowndes County’s poverty rate increased faster than both the United States average and the peer and aspirant community average.



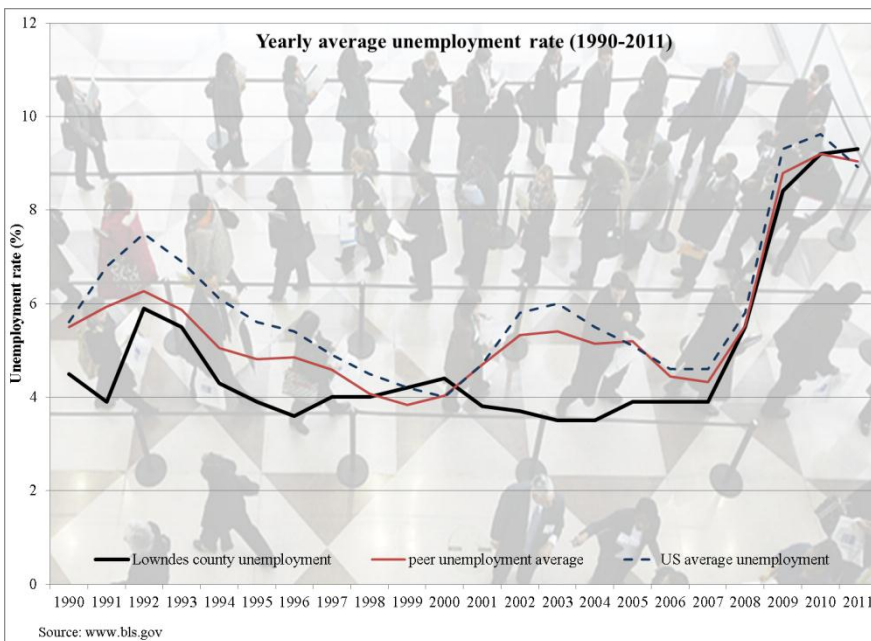
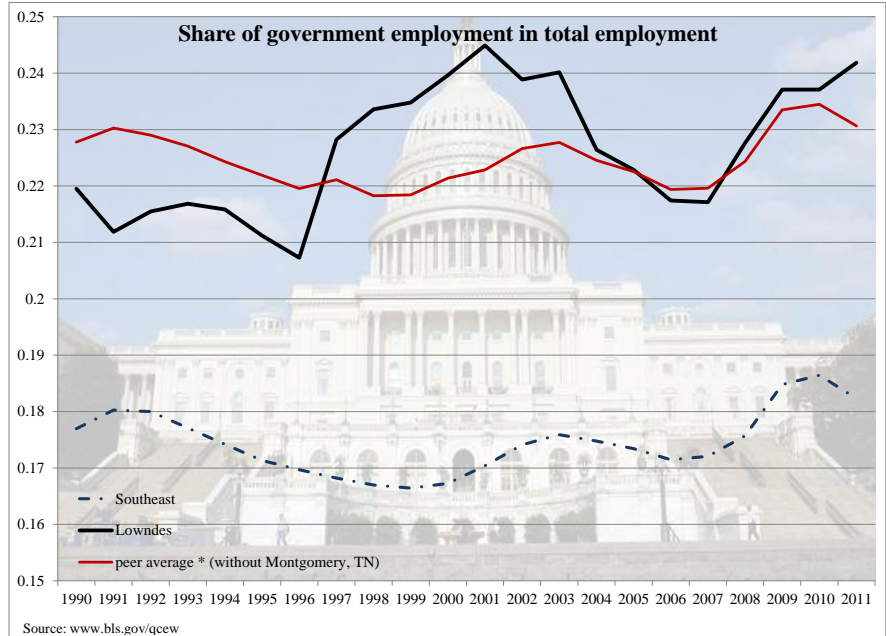
### Total Private Sector Jobs:

Although Lowndes County's total number of private sector jobs was below the peer and aspirant average, the number of jobs increased at a faster rate than the peer and aspirant community average from 1990 through 2007. During the Great Recession, the number of private sector jobs lost in Lowndes County mirrored the average number of jobs lost for the peer and aspirant communities. Unfortunately, Lowndes County continued to lose jobs – even after the peer and aspirant communities began to recover jobs.

**Private Sector Employment:** Over the first decade of the twenty-first century, the percent of private employees as a share of the total population grew at a more accelerated rate for Lowndes County than the Southeast region and the peer and aspirant communities. However, since 2007, private sector employment as a share of the total population has declined faster for Lowndes County. Since 2010, private sector employment in Lowndes County has been less than peer and aspirant communities and the Southeast region.

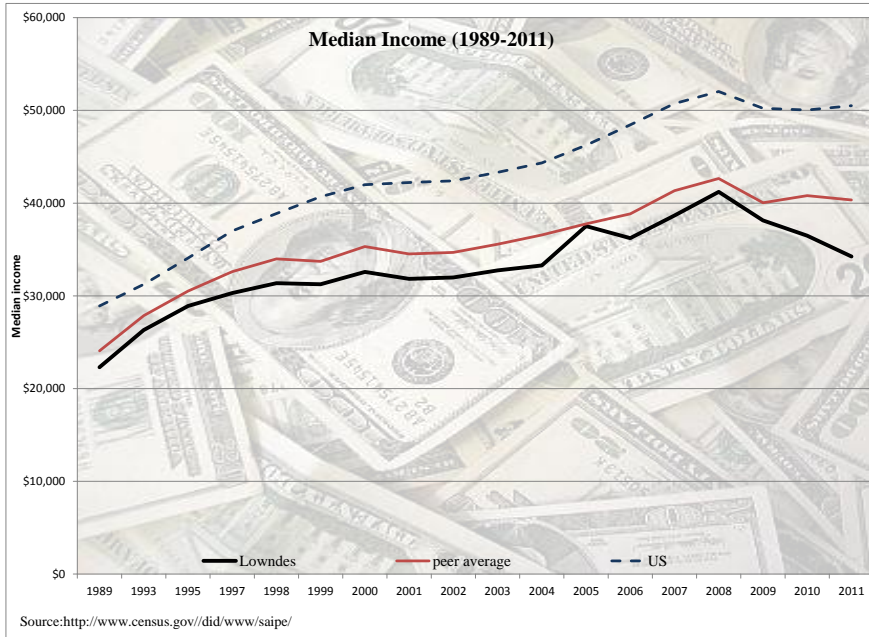


**Government Employment:** The share of government employment as a percent of total employment for Lowndes County and the peer and aspirant communities is well above the Southeast region average.



**Unemployment Rate:** From 1993 through 2007, Lowndes County had a low and steady unemployment rate, averaging around 4%. For most of that time period, Lowndes County’s unemployment rate was less than the peer and aspirant communities and the United States. From 2007 through 2009, Lowndes County’s unemployment rate increased at a rate similar to the United States and the peer and aspirant communities. Since 2010 however, Lowndes County’s unemployment rate has increased, and is now higher than the comparison groups.



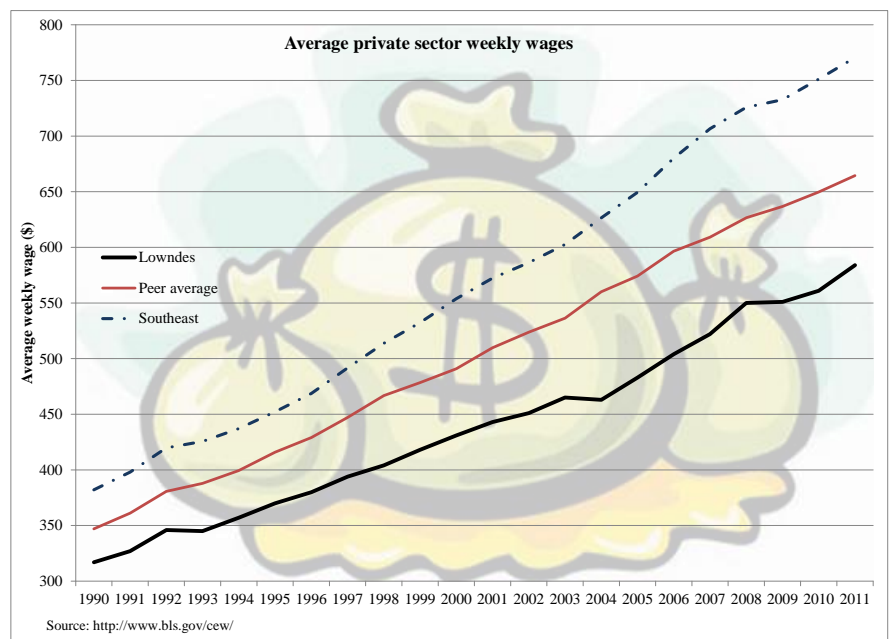


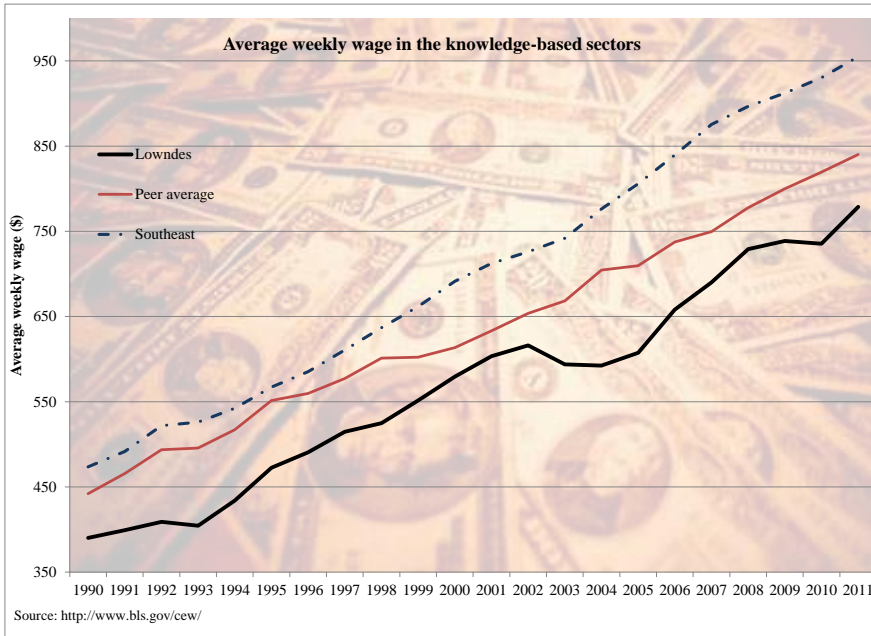
### Median Household Income:

Lowndes County's median income is lower than the United States and the peer and aspirant communities. Since widening during the late 1990s, the median income gap between the Lowndes County community and the United States has remained fairly constant with the median income approximately \$12,000 lower for Lowndes County. Unfortunately, since 2008, the median income gap has widened between Lowndes County and the peer and aspirant communities.

### Average Private Sector Weekly Wage:

Lowndes County's average private sector weekly wage is less than the Southeast region's average and peer and aspirant's average weekly wages. Although Lowndes County's average weekly wage has increased over the twenty-year period, the rate of increase is slower than both the Southeast's and the peer and aspirant community's averages, leading to a widening of the average weekly wage gap.



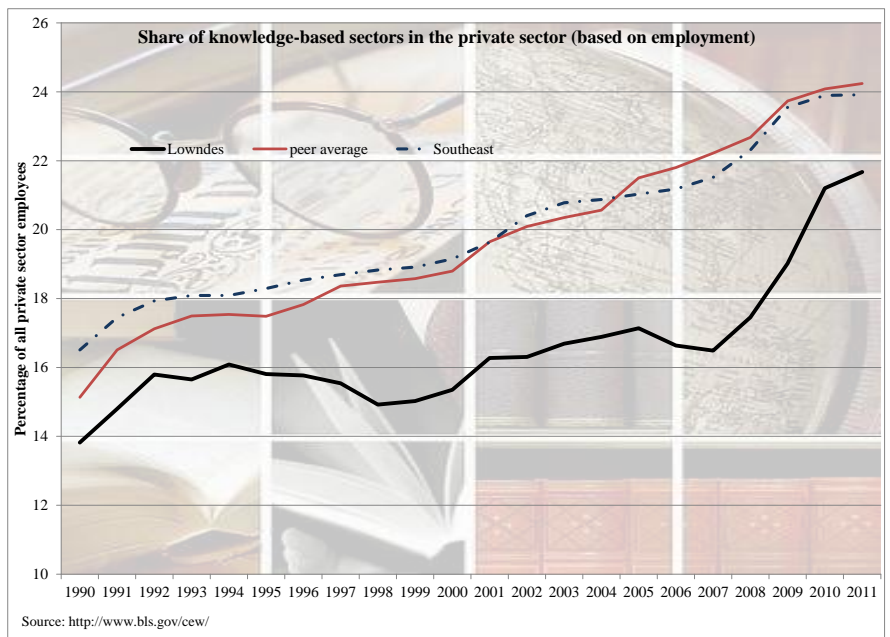


### Knowledge-Based Sector

**Average Weekly Wage:** Lowndes County’s knowledge-based sector average weekly wage is lower than the Southeast region’s average and the peer and aspirant’s average weekly wages. On a positive note, Lowndes County’s average weekly knowledge-based sector wage gap began to shrink in 2010.

### Knowledge-based Sector Share of Private Sector:

The knowledge-based sector as a percent of the total private sector has increased for Lowndes County over the last twenty years. Compared to the Southeast region average and the peer and aspirant average, the share of the knowledge-based sector in Lowndes County has increased at a faster rate since 2007, reducing the gap between the peer and aspirant communities and the Southeast region averages.



The people of Lowndes County are an important asset and are vital to the health and success of the community. The People Indicators are the five indicators that reflect the demographic foundations of the communities and measure how well-prepared the people in the community are for work. The following tables rank the fifteen communities for each of the five People Indicators.

**Population Growth:** A strong population growth rate is a sign that the community is growing and that job opportunities are available. Comparing the average population growth rate for the eleven-year period ending in 2011, Lowndes County ranks 5<sup>th</sup> among the peer and aspirant communities.

Rank	County	State	Population growth (2000-2011)
1	Montgomery	TN	30.3%
2	Houston	GA	29.3%
<b>5</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>21.3%</b>
	Average		14.4%
14	Ouachita	LA	5.2%
15	Rapides	LA	4.7%

**Educational Attainment – High School:** A low graduation rate increases the likelihood of lifelong low wages and increases risk of poverty. With 83.6% of the population over 25 years of age having a high school diploma or equivalent, Lowndes County improved to tie for 7<sup>th</sup> place among the peer and aspirant communities.

Rank	County	State	High school diploma or GED (2006-2011)
1	Montgomery	TN	90.2%
2	Houston	GA	87.5%
<b>7T</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>83.6%</b>
7T	Forrest	MS	83.6%
	Average		83.5%
14	Wayne	NC	81.1%
15	Floyd	GA	76.8%

**Educational Attainment – Bachelor Degree:** As markets become more competitive regionally, nationally and globally, workforce preparedness will become increasingly more important. Sustainable economic development requires an educated labor force. With 22.4% of the population over 25 years of age having a bachelor’s degree or higher, Lowndes County ranks 8<sup>th</sup> among the peer and aspirant communities

Rank	County	State	Bachelor degree, population over 25 (2006-2011)
1	Clarke	GA	40.6%
2	Lee	AL	31.2%
	Average		23.2%
<b>8</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>22.4%</b>
14	Floyd	GA	18.1%
15	Wayne	NC	16.0%

**Poverty Rate:** With 27.1% of the population living in poverty, Lowndes County ranks 13<sup>th</sup> among the peer and aspirant communities. Lowndes County is also below the peer average poverty rate of 22.2%.

Rank	County	State	Poverty rate (2011)
1	Houston	GA	14.3%
2	Montgomery	TN	16.5%
	Average		22.2%
<b>13</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>27.1%</b>
14	Forrest	MS	27.9%
15	Clarke	GA	39.2%

**Old Age Dependency:** Old Age Dependency is the ratio of people over 65 years to those 25 years and older. While an aging population may bring an accumulation of life-long wealth to a community, an aging population also requires more services and support. Lowndes County is unchanged, with the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest ratio, which suggests that it has a relatively larger working-age population.

Rank	County	State	Old age dependency (2011)
1	Montgomery	TN	13.4%
2	Lee	AL	16.1%
<b>5</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
	Average		18.9%
14	Houston	AL	21.7%
15	Floyd	GA	21.8%

Jobs are the life-blood of a community. High paying jobs attract skilled workers contribute to a better quality of life. The Job Indicators are the six indicators that reflect the workforce foundations of the communities. The following tables rank the fifteen communities for each of the six Job Indicators.

**Number of Private Jobs:** Lowndes County ranks 9<sup>th</sup> among the peer and aspirant communities, with 34,712 private sector jobs in 2011.

Rank	County	State	Total private sector employment (2011)
1	Ouachita	LA	56,118
2	Warren	KY	47,078
	Average		38,402
<b>9</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>34,712</b>
14	Floyd	GA	29,960
15	Forrest	MS	24,851

**Median Income:** Median household income is a commonly-used measure of household purchasing power, and includes income from all sources. In 2009, Lowndes County ranked 11<sup>th</sup> among the peer and aspirant communities, but lost ground in 2010, slipping to 13<sup>th</sup>. The median household income of just \$34,252 is below the peer and aspirant community average of \$39,929.

Rank	County	State	Median household income (2011)
1	Houston	GA	\$51,851
2	Montgomery	TN	\$47,684
	Average		\$39,929
<b>13</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>\$34,252</b>
14	Forrest	MS	\$33,203
15	Clarke	GA	\$30,880

**Average Weekly Wage:** Lowndes County's average weekly wage increased by 4.1% between 2010 and 2011, and has increased nearly 6.0% since 2009. Despite improvements in average weekly wages, Lowndes County's average weekly wage of \$584 is below the peer and aspirant average of \$659, and Lowndes County remains in 14<sup>th</sup> place.

Rank	County	State	Average Weekly Wage (2011)
1	Morgan	AL	\$748
2	Floyd	GA	\$742
	Average		\$659
<b>14</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>\$584</b>
15	Lee	AL	\$554

### Knowledge-based sector jobs as a share of all jobs:

Knowledge-based sector jobs are based on two-digit NAICS numbers for Information (51), Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (54), Management of Companies & Enterprises (55), and Health Care and Social Assistance (62). At 21.7%, Lowndes County's share of knowledge-based jobs remains below the peer and aspirant average, and declined from 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> place since the previous report.

Rank	County	State	Share of knowledge-based jobs (2011)
1	Rapides	LA	32.9%
2	Floyd	GA	30.7%
	Average		24.1%
<b>11</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
14	Morgan	AL	16.0%
15	Lee	AL	14.5%

### Knowledge-based sector Average Weekly wage:

Knowledge-based sector jobs are often high paying jobs. Lowndes County's knowledge sector average weekly wage increased 5.4% - from \$739 in 2009 to \$779 in 2011. Lowndes County knowledge-based sector average weekly wage now ranks 11<sup>th</sup> among the peer and aspirant communities. However, this is an improvement from 13<sup>th</sup> place in 2010.

Rank	County	State	Knowledge sector average weekly wage (2011)
1	Forrest	MS	\$1,005
2	Houston	AL	\$949
	Average		\$836
<b>11</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>\$779</b>
14	Lee	AL	\$743
15	Wayne	NC	\$700

**Unemployment Rate:** With an average unemployment rate of 9.3%, Lowndes County's unemployment rate is slightly higher than the peer and aspirant average unemployment rate of 9.1%. Since 2009, Lowndes County has slipped below the peer and aspirant average, and fallen from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> place.

Rank	County	State	Unemployment rate (2011)
1	Rapides	LA	7.1%
2	Lee	AL	7.4%
	Average		9.1%
<b>10</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
14	Florence	SC	11.0%
15	Nash	NC	13.0%

Economic indicators provide unbiased information about how Lowndes County compares to the fourteen other peer and aspirant communities. The economic indicators are divided into two major groups: People Indicators and Job Indicators. The ranking of each indicator within the major categories are summed together to determine a rank for each group of indicators, as well as an overall rank.

People Indicator Standing 2011			Job Indicator Standing 2011			Overall Standing 2011		
1	Montgomery	TN	1	Warren	KY	1	Warren	KY
2	Houston	GA	2T	Clarke	GA	2	Clarke	GA
3	Lee	AL	2T	Ouachita	LA	3	Houston	GA
4	Warren	KY	4	Houston	AL	4	Montgomery	TN
5	Clarke	GA	5	Rapides	LA	5	Houston	AL
<b>6</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	6T	Floyd	GA	6	Ouachita	LA
7T	Forrest	MS	6T	Houston	GA	7	Lee	AL
7T	Houston	AL	8	Morgan	AL	8	Morgan	AL
7T	Nash	NC	9	Florence	SC	9T	Forrest	MS
10T	Morgan	AL	10	Montgomery	TN	9T	Nash	NC
10T	Ouachita	LA	11T	Forrest	MS	11T	Rapides	LA
12	Florence	SC	11T	Nash	NC	11T	Floyd	GA
13	Wayne	NC	13	Lee	AL	<b>11T</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>
14	Floyd	GA	<b>14</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	14	Florence	SC
15	Rapides	LA	15	Wayne	NC	15	Wayne	NC

T = a tie ranking between two communities

## Conclusion

Lowndes County ties for 11th out of 15 peer and aspirant communities. This is a moment-in-time ranking of the communities' people and job indicators.

The following are the complete people and job economic indicator tables.

Rank	County	State	Population growth (2000-2011)
1	Montgomery	TN	30.3%
2	Houston	GA	29.3%
3T	Warren	KY	24.3%
3T	Lee	AL	24.3%
<b>5</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>21.3%</b>
6	Houston	AL	15.1%
7	Clarke	GA	14.6%
8T	Florence	SC	9.6%
8T	Nash	NC	9.6%
10	Wayne	NC	8.8%
11	Morgan	AL	7.9%
12	Floyd	GA	5.7%
13	Forrest	MS	5.4%
14	Ouachita	LA	5.2%
15	Rapides	LA	4.7%

Source: www.census.gov

Rank	County	State	High school diploma or GED (2006-2011)
1	Montgomery	TN	90.2%
2	Houston	GA	87.5%
3	Lee	AL	85.5%
4	Clarke	GA	84.9%
4	Warren	KY	84.9%
6	Ouachita	LA	84.0%
<b>7T</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>83.6%</b>
7T	Forrest	MS	83.6%
9	Houston	AL	82.9%
10T	Morgan	AL	81.9%
10T	Nash	NC	81.9%
12	Rapides	LA	81.8%
13	Florence	SC	81.6%
14	Wayne	NC	81.1%
15	Floyd	GA	76.8%

Source: www.census.gov

Rank	County	State	Bachelor degree, population over 25 (2006-2011)
1	Clarke	GA	40.6%
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<b>8</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>22.4%</b>
9	Florence	SC	20.5%
10T	Morgan	AL	19.0%
10T	Nash	NC	19.0%
12	Houston	AL	18.8%
13	Rapides	LA	18.4%
14	Floyd	GA	18.1%
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Source: www.census.gov

Rank	County	State	Poverty rate (2011)
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4	Houston	AL	17.5%
5	Warren	KY	18.9%
6	Nash	NC	19.7%
7	Floyd	GA	20.6%
8	Florence	SC	21.3%
9	Lee	AL	21.4%
10	Wayne	NC	21.9%
11	Rapides	LA	23.4%
12	Ouachita	LA	26.2%
<b>13</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>27.1%</b>
14	Forrest	MS	27.9%
15	Clarke	GA	39.2%

Source: www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe



Rank	County	State	Old age dependency (2011)
1	Montgomery	TN	13.4%
2	Lee	AL	16.1%
3	Houston	GA	16.4%
4	Clarke	GA	16.7%
<b>5</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
6	Warren	KY	18.1%
7	Forrest	MS	19.3%
8	Ouachita	LA	19.8%
9T	Wayne	NC	20.2%
9T	Florence	SC	20.2%
11	Nash	NC	20.8%
12	Morgan	AL	20.9%
13	Rapides	LA	21.0%
14	Houston	AL	21.7%
15	Floyd	GA	21.8%

Source: www.census.gov

Rank	County	State	Median household income (2011)
1	Houston	GA	\$51,851
2	Montgomery	TN	\$47,684
3	Morgan	AL	\$43,615
4	Nash	NC	\$43,151
5	Lee	AL	\$42,539
6	Houston	AL	\$40,428
7	Floyd	GA	\$40,159
8	Warren	KY	\$40,026
9	Florence	SC	\$39,663
10	Wayne	NC	\$39,089
11	Rapides	LA	\$36,624
12	Ouachita	LA	\$35,770
<b>13</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>\$34,252</b>
14	Forrest	MS	\$33,203
15	Clarke	GA	\$30,880

Source: www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe

Rank	County	State	Average Weekly Wage (2011)
1	Morgan	AL	\$748
2	Floyd	GA	\$742
3	Clarke	GA	\$701
4	Warren	KY	\$689
5	Houston	AL	\$671
6	Nash	NC	\$666
7	Ouachita	LA	\$664
8	Rapides	LA	\$661
9	Forrest	MS	\$659
10	Florence	SC	\$652
11	Houston	GA	\$644
12	Montgomery	TN	\$634
13	Wayne	NC	\$618
<b>14</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>\$584</b>
15	Lee	AL	\$554

Source: www.bls.gov/cew

Rank	County	State	Total private sector employment (2011)
1	Ouachita	LA	56,118
2	Warren	KY	47,078
3	Florence	SC	46,391
4	Rapides	LA	46,205
5	Clarke	GA	43,773
6	Morgan	AL	38,678
7	Houston	AL	38,519
8	Montgomery	TN	35,998
<b>9</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>34,712</b>
10	Lee	AL	34,363
11	Nash	NC	33,919
12	Wayne	NC	33,530
13	Houston	GA	31,931
14	Floyd	GA	29,960
15	Forrest	MS	24,851

Source: www.bls.gov/cew

Rank	County	State	Share of knowledge-based jobs (2011)
1	Rapides	LA	32.9%
2	Floyd	GA	30.7%
3	Ouachita	LA	30.6%
4	Clarke	GA	27.2%
5	Florence	SC	26.3%
6	Warren	KY	25.7%
7	Forrest	MS	24.7%
8	Wayne	NC	23.8%
9	Houston	GA	23.5%
10	Houston	AL	22.1%
<b>11</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
12	Montgomery	TN	21.3%
13	Nash	NC	20.1%
14	Morgan	AL	16.0%
15	Lee	AL	14.5%

Source: www.bls.gov/cew

Rank	County	State	Knowledge sector average weekly wage (2011)
1	Forrest	MS	\$1,005
2	Houston	AL	\$949
3	Houston	GA	\$936
4	Floyd	GA	\$925
5	Clarke	GA	\$897
6	Warren	KY	\$868
7	Florence	SC	\$820
8	Ouachita	LA	\$798
9	Nash	NC	\$797
10	Montgomery	TN	\$794
<b>11</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>\$779</b>
12	Rapides	LA	\$766
13	Morgan	AL	\$766
14	Lee	AL	\$743
15	Wayne	NC	\$700

Source: www.bls.gov/cew

Rank	County	State	Unemployment rate (2011)
1	Rapides	LA	7.1%
2	Lee	AL	7.4%
3	Clarke	GA	7.5%
4	Ouachita	LA	7.7%
5	Houston	GA	7.8%
6	Houston	AL	8.1%
7	Warren	KY	8.3%
8	Morgan	AL	8.7%
9	Montgomery	TN	9.2%
<b>10</b>	<b>Lowndes</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
11	Wayne	NC	9.4%
12	Forrest	MS	10.4%
13	Floyd	GA	10.9%
14	Florence	SC	11.0%
15	Nash	NC	13.0%

Source: www.bls.gov

**This study utilizes publicly available economic data, accessed from the following sources:**

The United States Census:

- Population estimates& educational attainment – **American Community Survey**, and **Decennial Censuses** ([http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data\\_documentation/comparing\\_with\\_decennial/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/comparing_with_decennial/)).
- Poverty and median income estimates – **Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates** (<http://www.census.gov//did/www/saipe/>).

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- Unemployment data – **Local Area Unemployment Statistics** (<http://bls.gov/lau/>).
- All the employment numbers (private, knowledge-based sector, government) and the corresponding wage estimates – **Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages** (<http://bls.gov/cew/>).

United States Military Bases:

- Location of military bases – [www.militarybases.com](http://www.militarybases.com).

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