

# 2011 COMMUNITY REPORT

*Socioeconomic Indicators*



# VISION

## for a healthy Itasca area community

People in the Itasca area enjoy an exceptional quality of life because:

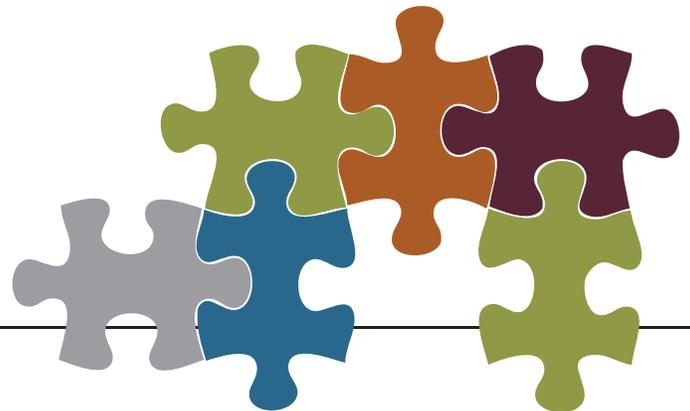
- Everyone has access to lifelong educational opportunities, advanced technology and quality cultural life, recreational and healthcare facilities.
- Healthy families are our foundation. Inclusion, respect and diversity are our strengths and all ages feel safe and secure.
- All people have access to quality employment and adequate housing and no one has to live in poverty.
- Our community supports the environmental quality and management of natural resources that best provide for a sustainable future.
- Leadership and volunteerism for the common good is encouraged and embraced. Effective partnerships among local governments, nonprofits, business and the faith community promote stability and vitality in a diversified local economy.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2005 a group of volunteers developed the Community Report as a way to help citizens, communities and public officials track progress toward achieving the desired outcomes of their vision for a healthy community.

Achieving these outcomes requires the collective effort of educators, private business, government, nonprofit organizations and citizens of the Itasca area.

The economic indicators selected for this report represent some of the important healthy community measurements. The categories used were selected based on relevancy, influence, availability of information and measurability over time.



## DESIRED OUTCOMES

### FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

#### People in the Itasca area:

- Will have adequate, affordable and safe housing
- Will not live in poverty
- Will have access to quality employment with fair wages to maintain a good standard of living

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

#### People in the Itasca area:

- Will have opportunities to serve as leaders, volunteers and participants to strengthen our community

### EDUCATION

#### People in the Itasca area:

- Will excel in basic academic skills and knowledge
- Will have access to lifelong learning
- Will have children who are healthy and start school ready to learn

### HEALTH

#### People in the Itasca area:

- Will work together to create healthy lifestyles
- Will have access to healthcare services with adequate insurance coverage
- Will have access to resources that support healthy lifestyles

### SAFETY

#### People in the Itasca area:

- Will feel safe and secure in their homes and in their community
- Will be a community of people who respect and care for one another

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

#### People in the Itasca area:

- Will manage and protect our natural resources to give future generations a healthy environment and a strong economy

# FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

## HOUSING

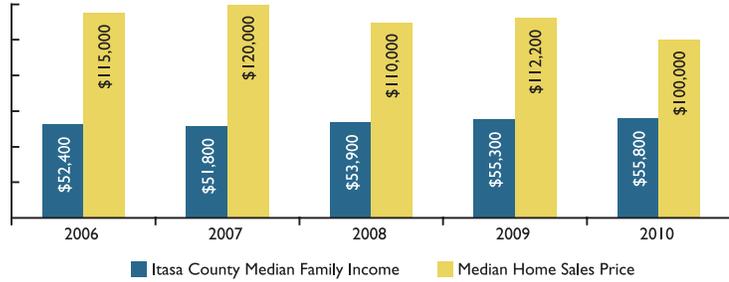
Since 2007 the median non-waterfront home sales price has dropped \$20,000 while median family income has increased \$4,000. In 2010 alone the median non-waterfront residential home sale price decreased by \$12,200 while the median family income increased by \$500. It is becoming more affordable for Itasca area residents to purchase a home under these market conditions.

**Goal:** By 2015 increase family income by \$8,000 to further close the gap between median family income and median home sales prices.

**Source- Median Family Income:** Housing and Urban Development, Program Income Limits

**Source- Median Home Sales Price:** Itasca County Board of Realtors® Multiple Listing Service for non-waterfront residential property

Housing Affordability



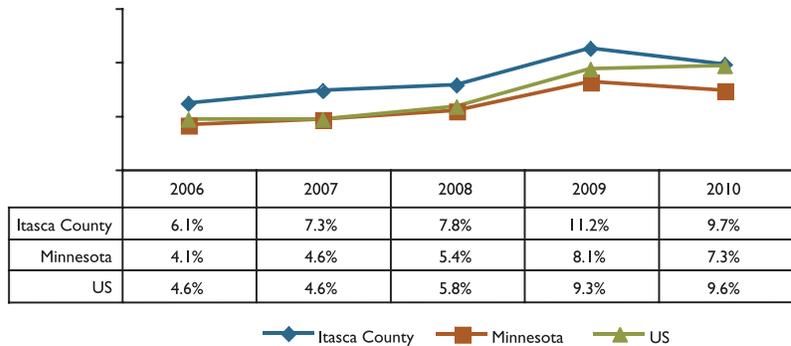
## JOBS

Historically, average annual unemployment rates in Itasca County tend to be around 2.4 percentage points higher than the statewide average, but only 1.5 percentage points above the U.S. rate. Although the average annual unemployment rate in Itasca County remained high throughout the recession and peaked at 11.2 percent in 2009, the annual average had dropped to 9.7 percent by the end of 2010.

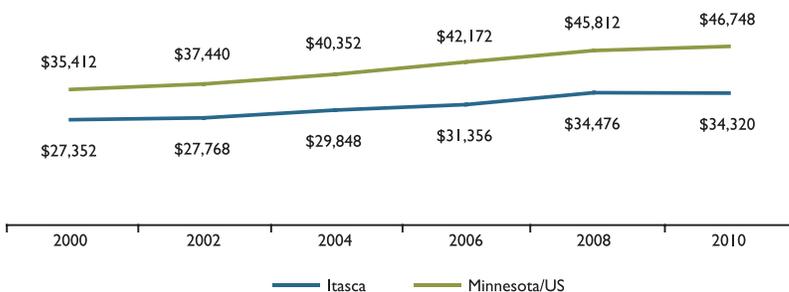
**Goal:** By the end of 2013, the average annual unemployment rate for Itasca County will return to pre-recession levels of 6-7 percent.

**Source:** MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development

Unemployment Rate



Annual average wage paid per job



The average annual wage paid per job in Itasca County has increased by nearly \$7,000 since 2000, yet remains, on average, about \$10,000 below state and national averages. With continued growth in mining-related occupations in Itasca County, it is expected that average annual wage rates will continue to climb in 2011 and 2012, but will remain below state and national averages.

**Goal:** By 2015, the average annual wage paid per job in Itasca County will increase by \$5,000.

**Source:** Bureau of Economic Analysis

# FINANCIAL WELL-BEING *continued*

## POVERTY

Over half of Itasca County's public elementary K-5 school children received free or reduced price lunch during the 2010-11 school year.

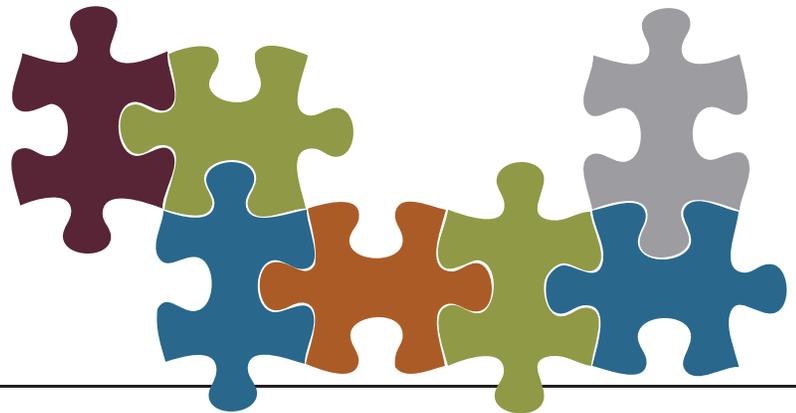
More than three-quarters of the students that participate qualify for the free lunch program. A household of four must have a yearly income of \$29,055 or less to qualify for free lunch and less than \$41,348 to qualify for reduced price lunch.

Use of the free and reduced price lunch program is an indicator that the family's income level does not meet its basic needs. There is a definite correlation between family poverty and lower academic achievement.

**Goal:** By 2015 the percentage of elementary school children receiving free or reduced-price lunch will be reduced by 5 percent.

*Source: MN Dept of Education*

Children who receive free or reduced price lunch



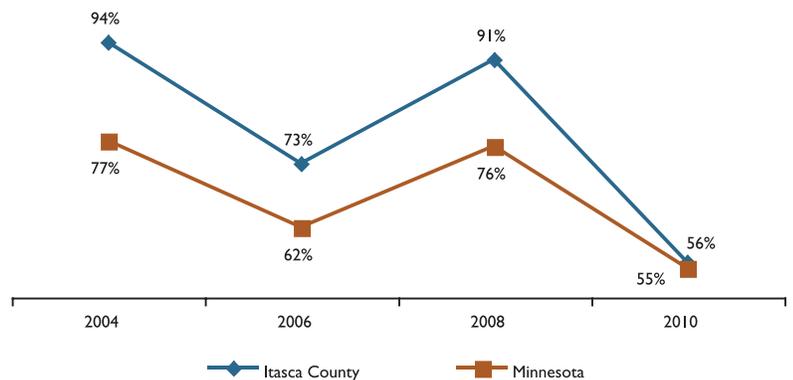
# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Itasca County's voter turnout in the last two presidential election years of 2004 and 2008 averaged fifteen percentage points higher than Minnesota's.

**Goal:** Maintain voter turnout average of 90 percent or higher during presidential election years.

*Source: Minnesota Secretary of State website and Itasca County Auditor's Office.*

Voter Turnout



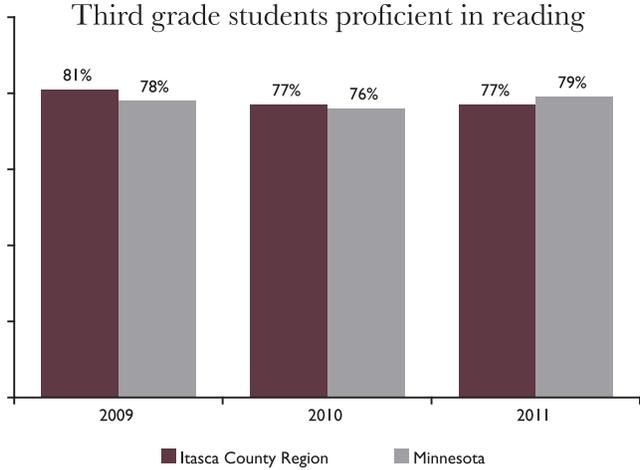
# EDUCATION

Over a period of three years, the 3rd grade students in the Itasca Area Schools Collaborative (IASC)\* districts scored fairly even with their state-wide peers on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) in reading.

Students of lower income families who receive free and reduced price lunch perform better than their state-wide peers.

**Goal:** The IASC region will achieve a 3 percent increase in 3rd grade reading proficiency each year for three years.

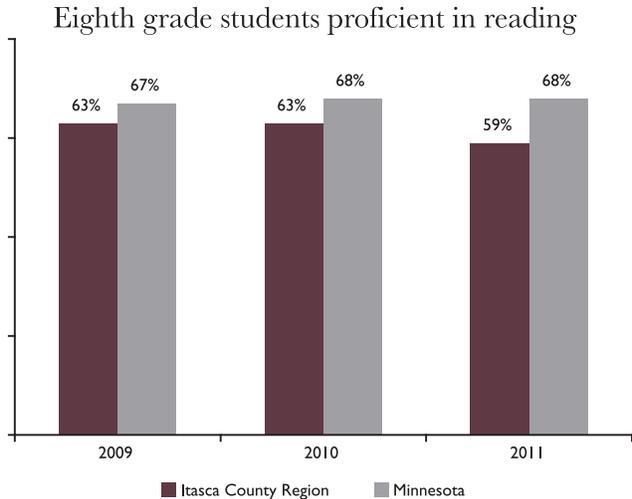
*Source: MN Dept of Education*



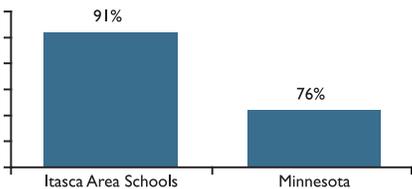
Eighth grade students in the Itasca Area Schools Collaborative districts scored lower than their peers on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in reading.

**Goal:** The IASC region will achieve a 3 percent increase in 8th grade reading proficiency each year for three years.

*Source: MN Dept of Education*



## Graduation rates in 2010



*Source: MN Dept of Education*

Graduation rates for Itasca Area Schools Collaborative high schools are significantly higher at 91 percent than the state average of 76 percent. \*The Itasca Area Schools Collaborative (IASC) includes eight high schools, an Area Learning Center in Grand Rapids, Northland Education Center, Itasca Education Center and an Alternative Learning Program in Nashauk. The Itasca area districts, as a region, have a graduation rate of 86 percent.

**Goal:** By 2014, the Itasca Area Schools Collaborative will increase the region's graduation rate by 5 percent.



# HEALTH

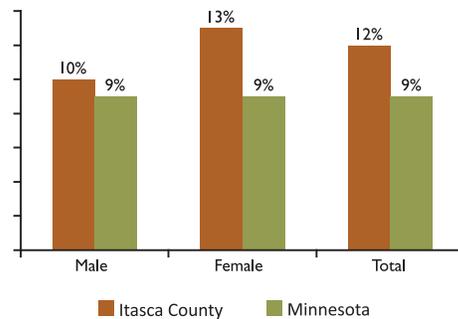
## TOBACCO

Although Itasca County 9th graders have decreased their smoking from previous years, they still use tobacco products at a rate higher than other Minnesota youth, especially smokeless tobacco. Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease and death.

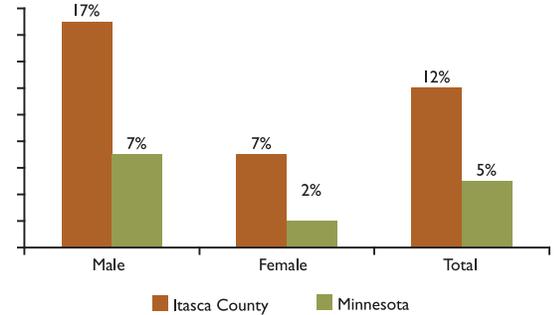
**Goal:** By 2015, tobacco use in Itasca County will be equal to the state's rate.

*Source: MN Student Survey, 2010*

9th graders who smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days



9th graders who used smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days



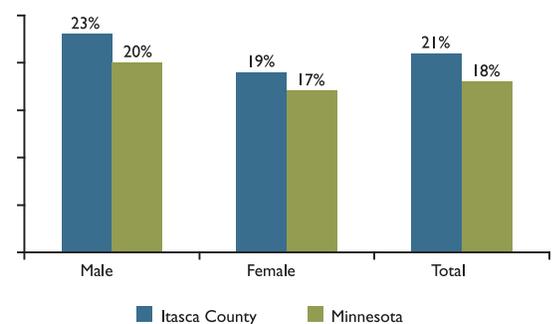
## HEALTHY EATING

Nationwide, obesity has increased dramatically over the last decade. Healthier food choices and increased physical activity will improve the quality of life for all Itasca County residents.

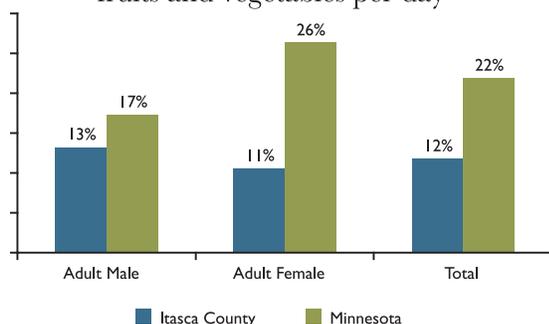
**Goal:** By 2015, 25 percent of Itasca County 9th graders will be eating 5 or more fruits and vegetables daily.

*Source: Minnesota Student Survey, 2010; MN Dept of Health*

9th graders who ate 5 or more fruits and vegetables yesterday



Adults who usually eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables per day

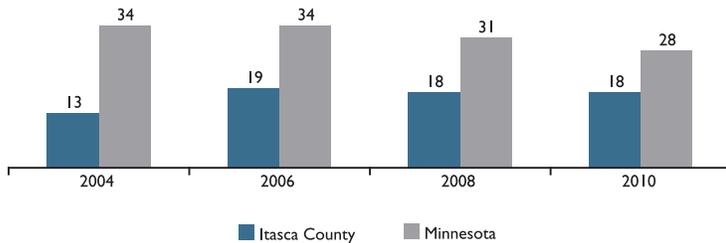


Fewer than 15 percent of Itasca County adults eat the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help prevent diabetes, heart disease and some forms of cancer.

**Goal:** By 2015, 15 percent of Itasca County adults will be eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

*Source: Bridge to Health Survey, 2010; Minnesota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2009*

Reported crimes per 1,000 inhabitants  
(Serious crime)

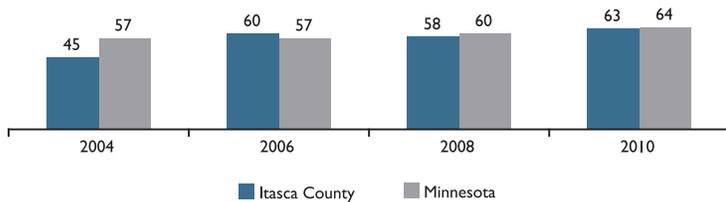


Itasca County's reported serious crime per 1000 inhabitants remains below the state level. The rate for all combined crimes in Itasca County during 2010 was about equal to the statewide numbers.

Serious crime is defined as criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault and burglary. Less serious crimes include offenses such as fraud, driving under the influence and vandalism.

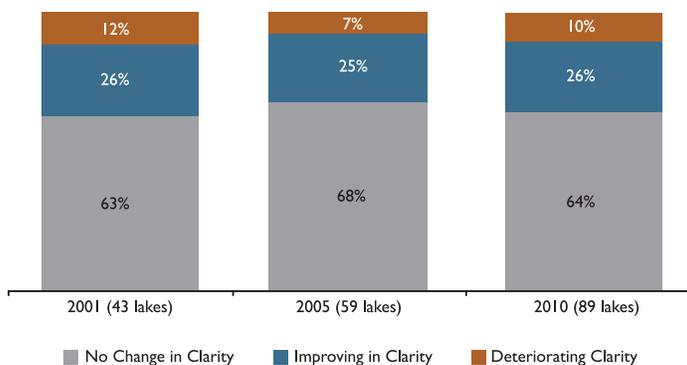
*Source: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Criminal Justice Information, Uniform Crime Report*

Reported crimes per 1,000 inhabitants  
(Combined serious and less serious crime)



# ENVIRONMENT

Lake Water Clarity



Lake water clarity is closely correlated with water quality. Data available indicated that the number of monitored lakes in Itasca County increased by 34 percent in the past five years. In 2010, 89 Itasca County lakes were included in the water quality monitoring process.

**Goal:** By 2015 the number of Itasca County lakes annually used for trend analysis will increase to 100 lakes and continue to maintain or improve in water clarity.

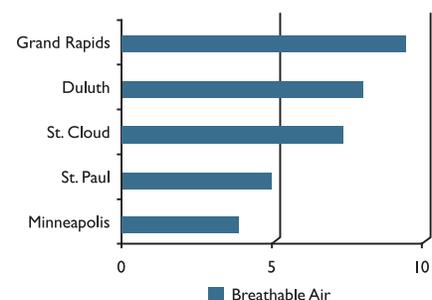
*Source: MN Pollution Control Agency*

Itasca County has one of the highest quality air grades in the state, making it a healthy place to live. Air quality reports track ozone, greenhouse gases, pollutants and smog levels. Clean air can lead to a better quality of life, while pollution produces health risks. "Breathable air" means that levels of oxygen are high enough and levels of toxic gases are low enough for safe breathing.

**Goal:** Itasca County's overall air quality ranking will remain at least 9 out of 10 in breathable air in Minnesota.

*Source: Homefacts.com*

Overall Air Quality  
(on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being highest)



Along with clear waters and exceptional air quality, Itasca County has over 1 million acres, or approximately 60 percent of the total land mass, available for public recreational access.

# WHY A COMMUNITY REPORT

The Community Report is intended to mobilize and engage the community around issues of concern. This report is published to help citizens and public officials track progress toward its community's overall vision. The Report provides the opportunity to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and to improve the community's understanding of the Itasca County area's overall health. The ultimate goal of this Community Report is to improve the community's well-being by focusing community energy on specific indicators of a healthy community.

## CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS



**Blandin Foundation**™  
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

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