

2.2 Housing Characteristics

General State of Housing

Burnett County's housing stock is growing, with the number of housing units increasing by almost 7% from 1990-2000. The number of housing units in the state of Wisconsin grew approximately 13% over that same time period. The majority of structures in the county are 1-unit detached structures at 85.6% of the housing stock. Duplex and multi-family dwellings compose another 3.3% of the total housing stock, and mobile homes make up 9.5%. The median year structure built for the county is 1974. Average monthly owner costs for a mortgaged house as well as median rent prices in Burnett County are lower than those for the State of Wisconsin; however, the 2000 Census indicated that just over 30% of Burnett County households that are renting spend more than 30% of their household income on rent. Concurrently, nearly 18% of those who have a mortgage or are without a mortgage spend more than 30 percent on housing; meaning housing costs are a significant burden to a substantial portion of the households in Burnett County.

Senior housing is a growing and significant part of the county's housing stock. From senior villages to full nursing care facilities, a variety of new housing units are being provided. Big Gust Terrace, Courtyard Square, and Crexway Court, all located in Grantsburg, are examples of apartment buildings specifically designed for seniors. The Sandy Knoll, offering long-term and short-term care in Grantsburg, is an example of a community-based residential facility that serves seniors. Additionally, the Burnett County Housing Authority has developed approximately 50 housing units in Webster and Siren to help affordably meet the needs of elderly residents. The need for senior housing is likely to increase as the Baby Boom generation gets older. This may lead to an increased demand for condominium units, but may also result in an overabundance of single-family detached homes.

Housing Supply

The U.S. Bureau of the Census classifies a housing unit as a house, apartment, mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall. Table 2-7 details the number of housing units in Burnett County, its communities, and the State of Wisconsin.

Housing Growth Versus Population Growth

Housing growth does not always correspond with population growth. The communities with the most population growth are not always the communities with the most housing growth. The reason for this is that the number of persons per household is on the decline. On average, fewer people live in one housing unit than did 10 years ago. More homes are being used to house fewer people, so housing often grows faster than the population in some communities. Refer to *Persons Per Household* for more details.