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Donald L. Harrison College of
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C O N T E N T S

3 The National Outlook

5 The Regional Outlook

Center Pages: Special profile of
Kennett, MO

Executive Summary

The economy suffered through another down quarter in 2009 I. Unemployment continues to rise, while inflation stays in check. The second quarter is likely to bring another decline in GDP, but there is still hope that the economy will begin to grow in the second half of 2009.

Southeast Missouri is feeling the effects of the national recession with declining employment and rising unemployment. No improvement locally can be expected until the national economy improves.

Southeast Missouri Business Indicators

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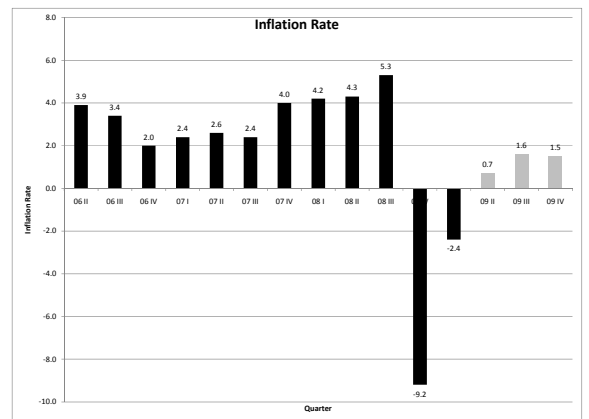
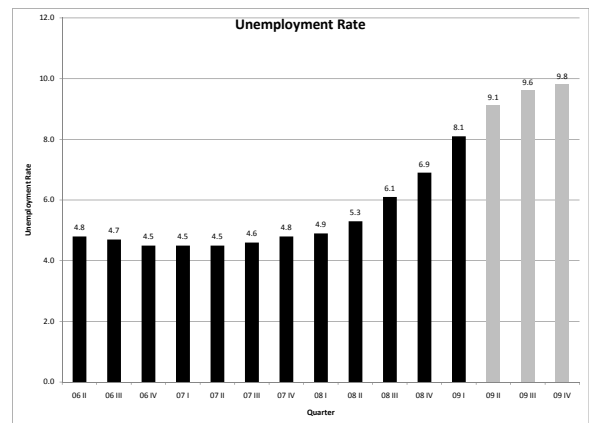
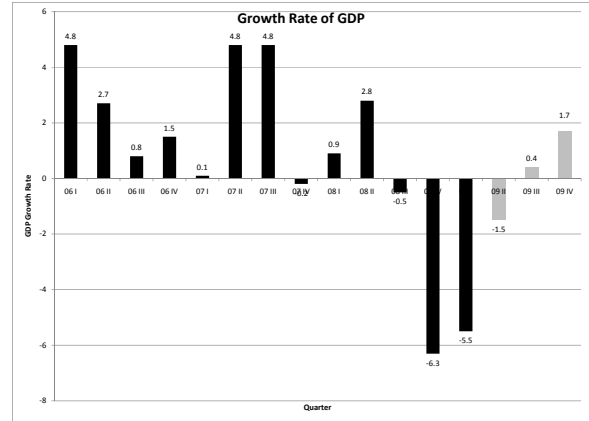
Is the Turnaround Near?

The first quarter of 2009 was a lot like the last quarter of 2008 – another steep drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), our measure of the nation’s production of goods and services. The revised average annual decline in GDP was 5.5% in the 2009 I, little improved from the 6.3% decline in 2008 IV.

Economic analysts are still looking for a decline in the second quarter of 2009, though at a more modest rate of -1.5%. There is still cautious optimism that GDP will actually start to increase in the last two quarters of the year, but the recovery is likely to be slow. Average annual growth of about one percent is forecast from July to December.

As is typical when the economy starts to emerge from a recession, the unemployment rate continues to rise. The latest figure for unemployment was 9.4% in May. Analysts expect the number to continue to rise throughout the remainder of 2009 and perhaps reach 10%. Given that the recovery is expected to be slow, the unemployment rate will probably remain at uncomfortable levels well into 2010.

One economic variable that is not a concern at the moment is inflation. With weak demand, firms have little pricing power. Prices fell again in 2009 I and are not expected to rise by any significant amount for the rest of the year. Long term, however, there is a concern. The Federal Reserve System has flooded the banking system with liquidity in an attempt to forestall the recession. As the economy recovers, this liquidity must be removed or inflation will be a serious problem. Exactly when and how fast to remove the liquidity

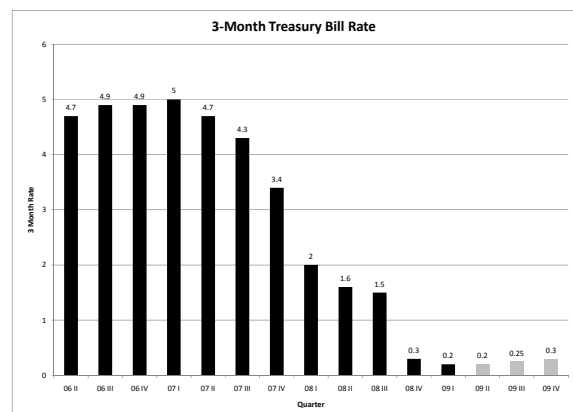
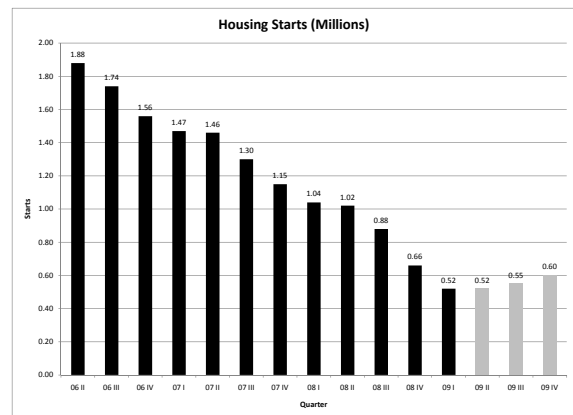
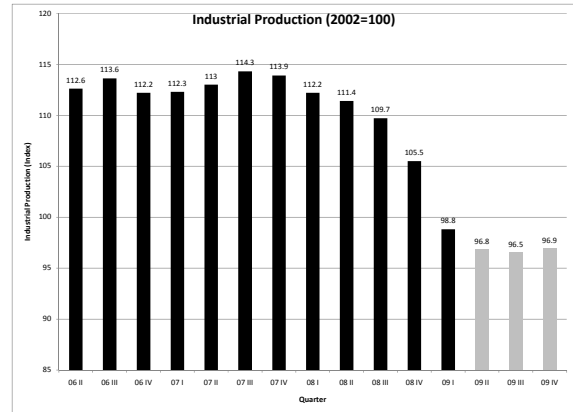


will be a challenge for the Fed in the coming months.

Industrial production has been steadily decreasing since the recession started and 2009 I was no exception. While further declines are expected for the rest of the year, there are some hopeful signs. New orders for manufactured durable goods rose in May by almost 2%, the third increase in the last four months. This is one key to a recovery in the economy.

The housing market still shows few signs of improvement. Housing starts fell to an average annual rate of about one-half million homes in the first quarter. This is about 25% of the high reached over two years ago. It is difficult to see how starts could fall much further, but the market still has a considerable backlog of unsold homes (new and existing) that hangs heavily over it. Southeast Missouri has not been immune to these difficulties. In the city of Cape Girardeau, for example, new building permits fell from 51 in the first five months in 2007 to 13 in the same period in 2009.

Short-term interest rates remain at historic lows. The Fed is committed to keeping its target interest rate (The Fed Funds Rate) between zero and 0.25%. No one expects a significant change in short term rates for perhaps the remainder of this year. Even long term interest rates are low, indicating that investors are not very concerned about future inflation.



Southeast Missouri Shows the Effects of the Weak Economy

The deterioration in the southeast Missouri economy past three quarters has been startling. Total employment has fallen from over 403,000 in 2008 II to about 380,000 in the first quarter of 2009. The unemployment rate has zoomed from 6.0% to 10.2% during that same time period. Personal income growth has fallen to one-half its average annual rate in 2008 II. Retail sales have also been falling.

Given the poor performance of the national economy over the past 3 quarters, the above numbers on southeast Missouri are hardly surprising. But the rapidity with which the economy slowed is quite stunning.

The unemployment rate exceeds 9% in 20 of the 24 counties that we cover. Employment fell in every one of the 24 counties in the first quarter of 2009. Personal income, while 3.0% higher than a year ago, actually fell, at an average annual rate, from the last quarter of 2008 to the first quarter of 2009. This is a very unusual occurrence, indicating the depth of the current recession.

When can the region expect to recover? Quite likely, we will follow the national economy and begin to recover in the second half of 2009. However, just as at the national level, the recovery locally is likely to be slow, with the unemployment rate climbing even higher before, the labor market starts to improve.

In the meantime, city and county budgets are likely to remain tight due to weak retail sales. Property taxes are also not

likely to increase much since housing values have declined in many areas.

(Note: Retail sales estimates were not available at press time. They will be listed on the Center's website as soon as they become available.)

Southeast Missouri Summary

	2007 IV	2008 I	2008 II	2008 III	2008 IV	2009 I
Bollinger						
Employment	5,902	5,951	5,903	5,799	5,854	5,536
Change (%)	1.8	0.8	-0.8	-1.8	0.9	-5.4
Unemployment (%)	5.2	6.5	6.7	6.1	6.0	9.7
Personal Income	261,135	265,309	271,246	271,392	272,330	
Change (%)	5.8	6.1	7.3	5.8	4.3	
Retail Sales	13,587	15,949	15,623	15,706	13,888	
Last 4 Quarters	60,914	61,057	60,596	60,865	61,166	
Butler						
Employment	19,568	19,324	19,798	20,144	20,537	19,353
Change (%)	-1.3	-1.3	2.5	1.8	1.9	-5.8
Unemployment (%)	6.4	6.6	5.8	6.1	6.6	8.0
Personal Income	1,200,740	1,212,875	1,236,623	1,233,450	1,230,984	
Change (%)	4.7	4.7	5.9	4.1	3.5	
Retail Sales	140,155	145,546	145,936	146,577	134,276	
Last 4 Quarters	574,660	573,699	572,302	577,824	571,945	
Cape Girardeau						
Employment	39,444	39,970	39,448	38,752	39,123	38,068
Change (%)	1.8	1.3	-1.3	-1.8	1.0	-2.7
Unemployment (%)	4.1	4.6	4.4	4.7	5.0	6.6
Personal Income	2,311,948	2,345,433	2,407,204	2,406,371	2,406,343	
Change (%)	5.7	5.7	7.3	5.5	4.1	
Retail Sales	301,871	334,307	318,616	347,934	299,545	
Last 4 Quarters	1,288,641	1,284,502	1,272,741	1,302,728	1,300,402	
Carter						
Employment	2,690	2,421	2,741	2,717	2,565	2,379
Change (%)	-4.9	-10.0	13.2	-0.9	-5.6	-7.3
Unemployment (%)	6.3	8.9	6.1	7.4	8.6	11.9
Personal Income	140,902	142,303	144,892	144,669	144,495	
Change (%)	4.5	4.5	5.7	4.1	2.6	
Retail Sales	10,011	9,381	10,903	12,417	10,232	
Last 4 Quarters	42,219	42,466	42,075	42,712	42,933	
Crawford						
Employment	11,182	11,019	11,151	11,063	10,680	10,293
Change (%)	-0.9	-1.5	1.2	-0.8	-3.5	-3.6
Unemployment (%)	7.2	8.7	7.5	8.0	9.1	12.2
Personal Income	665,781	672,303	685,437	684,253	683,753	
Change (%)	4.6	4.6	5.8	4.2	2.7	
Retail Sales	43,864	44,945	45,255	55,775	45,659	
Last 4 Quarters	192,753	190,021	188,758	189,839	191,634	

(Note: Personal Income & Retail Sales are in thousands of dollars.)

	2007 IV	2008 I	2008 II	2008 III	2008 IV	2009 I
Dent						
Employment	6,215	6,059	6,102	5,955	6022	5,774
Change (%)	2.1	-2.5	0.7	-2.4	1.1	-4.1
Unemployment (%)	7.2	8.4	7.4	8.0	8.0	10.5
Personal Income	369,167	372,744	379,958	379,203	378,918	
Change (%)	4.6	4.6	5.8	4.1	2.6	
Retail Sales	37,834	37,762	37,184	39,454	34,685	
Last 4 Quarters	149,479	149,581	148,873	152,234	149,085	
Dunklin						
Employment	12,894	12,831	12,891	12,278	12,672	12,028
Change (%)	0.8	-0.5	0.5	-4.8	3.2	-5.1
Unemployment (%)	7.9	8.4	7.6	8.3	8.8	11.9
Personal Income	828,939	837,199	854,560	854,948	851,946	
Change (%)	4.9	4.6	5.9	4.2	2.7	
Retail Sales	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Last 4 Quarters	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Franklin						
Employment	49,487	48,420	49,066	48,419	47,972	46,726
Change (%)	-0.7	-2.2	1.3	-1.3	-0.9	-2.6
Unemployment (%)	5.0	7.6	6.3	7.9	8.5	12.3
Personal Income	3,278,477	3,311,833	3,377,724	3,373,061	3,371,639	
Change (%)	4.8	4.8	6.0	4.3	2.8	
Retail Sales	267,742	271,654	271,870	282,354	250,612	
Last 4 Quarters	1,090,241	1,099,423	1,090,672	1,093,620	1,076,490	
Gasconade						
Employment	7,543	7,505	7,585	7,415	7,219	6,863
Change (%)	0.8	-0.5	1.1	-2.2	-2.6	-4.9
Unemployment (%)	5.2	7.9	6.6	7.8	8.3	12.7
Personal Income	432,547	436,712	445,228	444,541	444,544	
Change (%)	4.5	4.6	5.8	4.1	2.8	
Retail Sales	42,701	42,181	42,553	43,760	41,374	
Last 4 Quarters	173,967	172,785	171,786	171,195	169,868	
Iron						
Employment	5,575	5,793	6,024	6,127	6092	5,434
Change (%)	7.0	3.9	4.0	1.7	-0.6	-10.8
Unemployment (%)	4.7	5.4	4.7	5.2	5.5	8.4
Personal Income	255,404	261,910	263,773	265,816	269,523	
Change (%)	5.0	5.6	5.7	6.0	5.6	
Retail Sales	15,901	17,172	18,458	23,625	19,677	
Last 4 Quarters	72,327	71,495	71,557	75,156	78,932	

(Note: Personal Income & Retail Sales are in thousands of dollars.)

	2007 IV	2008 I	2008 II	2008 III	2008 IV	2009 I
Jefferson						
Employment	109,957	107,586	111,085	107,584	106,591	103,657
Change (%)	-0.7	-2.2	3.2	-3.2	-0.9	-2.8
Unemployment (%)	4.7	6.9	5.8	7.4	7.6	10.4
Personal Income	6,726,191	6,784,162	6,928,479	6,908,164	6,891,746	
Change (%)	4.9	4.8	6.2	4.3	2.5	
Retail Sales	494,075	520,132	517,408	541,428	466,306	
Last 4 Quarters	2,081,458	2,092,376	2,071,071	2,073,043	2,045,274	
Madison						
Employment	5,680	5,618	5,722	5,602	5,742	5,481
Change (%)	-0.1	-1.1	1.9	-2.1	2.5	-4.5
Unemployment (%)	5.6	6.5	5.9	6.4	6.2	9.6
Personal Income	280,653	283,467	289,223	288,581	289,656	
Change (%)	4.8	4.8	6.1	4.4	3.2	
Retail Sales	22,858	28,100	27,094	26,154	24,161	
Last 4 Quarters	101,245	104,175	103,446	104,206	105,509	
Mississippi						
Employment	5,498	5,393	5,5449	5,237	5,240	5,044
Change (%)	1.5	-1.9	2.9	-5.6	0	-3.7
Unemployment (%)	6.5	6.9	6.6	8.2	8.0	9.2
Personal Income	324,870	328,157	334,789	334,198	344,009	
Change (%)	4.6	4.6	5.8	4.2	2.7	
Retail Sales	20,587	23,449	23,842	27,205	21,086	
Last 4 Quarters	92,273	93,653	94,240	95,083	95,582	
New Madrid						
Employment	8,813	8,373	8,472	8,097	8,052	7,821
Change (%)	8.8	-5.0	1.2	-4.4	-0.6	-2.9
Unemployment (%)	6.4	7.3	6.7	7.2	7.4	9.6
Personal Income	483,030	487,957	497,881	496,986	496,608	
Change (%)	4.6	4.6	5.8	4.2	2.7	
Retail Sales	69,518	75,573	70,879	75,866	68,828	
Last 4 Quarters	290,468	290,706	286,045	291,836	291,146	
Pemiscot						
Employment	7,633	7,430	7,512	7,288	7,448	7,228
Change (%)	3.4	-2.7	1.1	-3.0	2.2	-3.0
Unemployment (%)	6.7	7.4	7.1	7.6	8.1	11.9
Personal Income	471,976	483,912	492,990	496,393	483,609	
Change (%)	2.3	3.6	4.9	2.3	2.5	
Retail Sales	33,214	37,297	34,611	36,166	31,314	
Last 4 Quarters	155,093	154,324	142,334	141,288	139,388	

(Note: Personal Income & Retail Sales are in thousands of dollars.)

	2007 IV	2008 I	2008 II	2008 III	2008 IV	2009 I
Perry						
Employment	9,948	10,016	9,994	10,024	9,968	9,662
Change (%)	-0.4	0.7	-0.2	0.3	-0.6	-3.1
Unemployment (%)	3.9	4.7	4.1	4.5	4.8	7.1
Personal Income	495,954	501,171	510,973	510,346	510,183	
Change (%)	4.5	4.5	5.8	4.2	2.8	
Retail Sales	53,837	58,273	60,212	62,614	54,410	
Last 4 Quarters	232,959	231,409	231,645	234,936	235,509	
Reynolds						
Employment	2,369	2,366	2,359	2,352	2,300	2,094
Change (%)	-2.3	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3	-2.1	-9.0
Unemployment (%)	7.7	8.8	6.8	7.7	8.7	13.8
Personal Income	157,983	159,531	162,647	162,366	162,248	
Change (%)	4.6	4.6	5.8	4.2	2.7	
Retail Sales	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Last 4 Quarters	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ripley						
Employment	6,229	5,975	6,141	5,902	6,104	5,895
Change (%)	3.5	-4.1	2.8	-3.9	3.4	-3.4
Unemployment (%)	6.7	7.4	6.0	7.0	7.5	9.3
Personal Income	298,165	301,080	306,906	306,420	306,082	
Change (%)	4.5	4.5	5.7	4.1	2.7	
Retail Sales	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Last 4 Quarters	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Scott						
Employment	18,415	18,873	19,065	18,578	18,596	17,960
Change (%)	-2.3	2.5	1.0	-2.6	0.1	-3.4
Unemployment (%)	6.0	6.6	5.9	6.4	7.0	8.9
Personal Income	1,166,354	1,176,133	1,199,016	1,196,660	1,195,037	
Change (%)	4.2	4.1	5.4	3.9	2.5	
Retail Sales	79,418	85,468	83,855	87,637	77,586	
Last 4 Quarters	358,226	357,727	336,532	336,378	334,546	
Ste. Genevieve						
Employment	9,361	9,341	9,569	9,567	9,356	9,047
Change (%)	-1.4	-0.2	2.4	0	-2.2	-3.3
Unemployment (%)	4.5	6.0	5.2	5.9	6.8	9.1
Personal Income	513,649	518,094	527,629	525,972	524,584	
Change (%)	4.3	4.2	5.4	3.7	2.1	
Retail Sales	37,427	38,983	40,755	44,901	37,778	
Last 4 Quarters	160,312	160,449	158,009	162,066	162,417	

(Note: Personal Income & Retail Sales are in thousands of dollars.)

	2007 IV	2008 I	2008 II	2008 III	2008 IV	2009 I
St. Francois						
Employment	27,398	27,543	28,465	27,960	27,815	26,791
Change (%)	-0.3	0.5	3.3	-1.8	-0.5	-3.7
Unemployment (%)	5.8	7.1	6.2	7.2	7.9	11.6
Personal Income	1,549,901	1,569,675	1,606,553	1,608,629	1,611,584	
Change (%)	5.7	5.7	7.1	5.5	4.0	
Retail Sales	163,750	173,118	178,760	179,034	164,182	
Last 4 Quarters	701,353	701,380	695,825	694,662	695,094	
Stoddard						
Employment	14,252	14,401	14,388	14,063	14,198	13,554
Change (%)	0.2	1.0	-0.1	-2.3	1.0	-4.5
Unemployment (%)	6.3	7.6	7.1	7.9	7.9	10.7
Personal Income	784,752	791,993	807,442	805,504	804,255	
Change (%)	4.4	4.3	5.5	3.9	2.5	
Retail Sales	55,572	65,026	66,950	69,782	60,215	
Last 4 Quarters	262,421	258,908	255,324	257,330	261,973	
Washington						
Employment	9,105	8,909	9,028	8,909	8,827	8,647
Change (%)	-0.7	-2.2	1.3	-1.3	-0.9	-2.0
Unemployment (%)	7.6	11.0	9.1	10.2	11.5	15.6
Personal Income	544,739	551,091	562,919	562,932	563,619	
Change (%)	5.2	5.1	6.4	4.8	3.5	
Retail Sales	35,427	37,676	37,877	40,241	33,720	
Last 4 Quarters	153,780	151,699	150,465	151,221	149,514	
Wayne						
Employment	5,191	4,879	5,069	5,060	5,090	4,943
Change (%)	-1.1	-6.0	3.9	-0.2	0.6	-2.9
Unemployment (%)	7.0	7.7	6.5	7.6	7.8	9.7
Personal Income	294,756	297,608	303,423	302,918	302,732	
Change (%)	4.7	4.7	5.8	4.2	2.7	
Retail Sales	20,652	21,253	22,798	24,190	21,044	
Last 4 Quarters	91,279	90,491	88,875	88,893	89,285	
Southeast Missouri						
Employment	400,349	395,996	403,127	394,892	394,063	380,278
Change (%)	0.1	-1.1	1.8	-2.0	-0.2	-3.5
Unemployment (%)	5.4	6.9	6.0	7.1	7.4	10.2
Personal Income	23,838,013	24,094,448	24,608,515	24,577,773	24,554,427	
Change (%)	4.9	4.8	6.2	4.4	3.0	
Retail Sales	1,960,001	2,083,245	2,071,439	2,182,820	1,910,578	
Last 4 Quarters	8,325,876	8,332,326	8,233,561	8,297,505	8,247,692	

(Note: Personal Income & Retail sales are in thousands of dollars.)

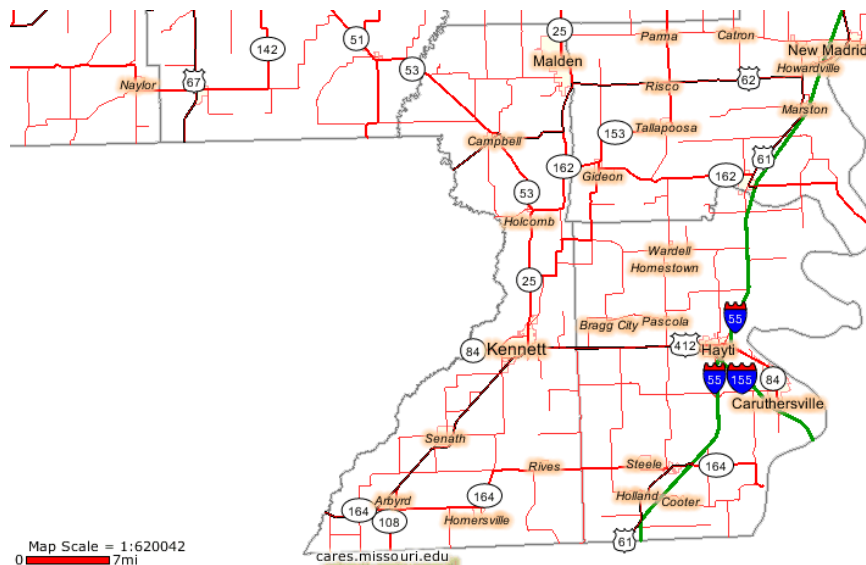
2008 Population Estimates for Southeast Missouri

Below are 2008 population estimates for counties and selected cities in southeast Missouri. The estimates are from the U.S. Census Bureau. Estimates for all cities in southeast Missouri are available at the Center's website:

<http://www6.semo.edu/cebr>.

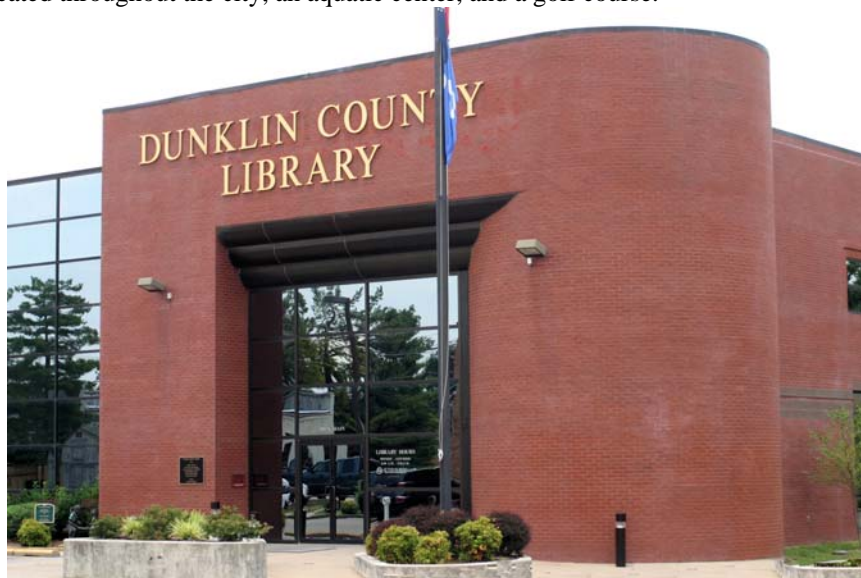
County	2000	2008	Change(%)	City	2000	2008	Change(%)
Bollinger	12053	11990	-0.3	Cape G. Poplar	35466	37317	5.3
Butler	40802	41383	1.3	Bluff	16986	17096	0.3
Cape G.	68693	73243	6.6	Farmington	13988	16097	15.2
Carter	5945	5890	-0.9	Sikeston	15958	16084	0.6
Crawford	22831	23970	5.0	Jackson	11979	13744	15.1
Dent	14934	15199	1.8	Kennett	11242	10707	-6.7
Dunklin	33107	31609	-4.5	Park Hills	7885	8851	13.0
Franklin	94058	100898	7.3	Perryville	7737	8172	5.6
Gasconade	15370	15261	-0.7	Dexter	7545	7661	1.4
Iron	10632	9918	-6.7	Caruthers.	6743	6145	-9.1
Jefferson	198738	217679	9.5	Charleston	4705	5111	8.0
Madison	11801	12276	4.0	Salem	4846	4870	0.3
Miss.	13427	13504	0.6	Malden	4787	4481	-6.7
New Mad.	19757	17589	-11.0	Ste. Gen.	4518	4418	-2.0
Pemiscot	20015	18515	-7.5	Frederick.	3925	4151	5.6
Perry	18136	18743	3.4	Cuba	3243	3555	9.6
Reynolds	6717	6388	-4.9	E. Prairie	3184	3066	-4.2
Ripley	13402	13485	0.6	New Mad.	3317	3012	-9.7
Scott	40390	40673	0.7	Piedmont	2001	1914	-4.5
Ste. Gen.	17908	17720	-1.0	Doniphan	1925	1887	-2.3
St. Fran.	55744	63214	13.4				
Stoddard	29693	29537	-0.5				
Wash.	23410	24548	5.2				
Wayne	13256	12652	-4.9				
SEMO	800819	835884	4.4				

Kennett-The Pride of the Bootheel



Located in Southeast Missouri's Bootheel, Kennett is a family-friendly, rural community about 4 miles east of Arkansas and 20 miles west of the Mississippi River. While Kennett offers the advantages of small town living, urban amenities are nearby in St. Louis (about 200 miles) and Memphis (about 100 miles). The county seat of Dunklin County, Kennett has easy access to I-55 via a recently completed four lane highway.

Kennett has an abundance of outdoor activities nearby for the nature enthusiast. The Little River Conservation Area has wetlands that attract migratory birds – a must-see for birdwatchers and photographers. Also in the Little River Conservation Area is the 200-acre Jerry Paul Combs Lake for fishing and boating. Kennett has six parks located throughout the city, an aquatic center, and a golf course.



Agriculture is an important part of Kennett's economy, with cotton, rice, soybeans, and corn being the major crops. Other important industries include banking (First National Bank, Kennett National Bank, Senath State Bank Mid County Branch, Southern Missouri Bank and Trust, UNICO Bank) and retail (Wal-Mart with 358 employees). Manufacturing employers include ARI Industries (railroad car components -- 115 employees), Parker-Hannifan (automotive specialty devices -- 95 employees), and Manac (truck trailers -- 44 employees). As the county seat, Kennett also has a concentration of social services, including Twin Rivers Regional Medical Center (375 employees), Visiting Nurses Association (800 employees), American Homecare Management (550

employees), Family Counseling Center (212 employees), NHC Health Care Center (145 employees), Heritage Nursing Center (72 employees), and Southaven Assisted Living.

In 2006, Kennett was selected to receive downtown redevelopment assistance through the Downtown Revitalization Economic Assistance for Missouri (DREAM) initiative. Kennett's downtown surrounds the Dunklin County Courthouse. The first project tackled under the DREAM initiative was the Sheryl Crow Aquatic Center (SCAC) – which houses a junior Olympic size pool and water slide, splash pad, and kiddy pool. A playground, new sidewalk, and decorative lights around the SCAC were designated as Mitchell Park in 2008. Another project was to renovate and restore the former Ely & Walker Dry Goods Company Factory No. 5, built in 1923, into an apartment community called the Ely Walker Apartments, which opened in 2008. New lighting in the entire downtown area and changes to business fronts, including removal of awnings and repair of sidewalks are also planned.



The city of Kennett owns City Light Gas and Water, which provides electric, gas, water, and sewer services to city residents. "Following last winter's ice storm, the city was able to restore power to city businesses and residents very quickly," notes Mayor Roger Wheeler, Senior. City Light Gas and Water also provides fiber optic high speed wireless internet access to hospitals and some businesses. Currently, it is investigating the feasibility of building a city-wide fiber optic to the home network.

"Despite the economy, I feel good about Kennett," says Mayor Wheeler. In the past ten years, many improvements have been accomplished. Kennett acquired a 20,000 square foot facility that has been designated as a regional campus of Southeast Missouri State University. Southeast Missouri State University – Kennett offers undergraduate and graduate classes in the traditional classroom as well as interactive television (ITV) classes. Also, Three Rivers Community College opened a regional campus in Kennett. Route 412 opened as a four-lane highway in 2007. This opening, along with resurfacing on Highways 25N and 84, has brought more traffic to the area. The community has made significant investment in the downtown area, including the SCAC and Ely Walker Apartments. Finally, the airport has seen a significant expansion. A new terminal building and 5,000 foot runway opened in 2006. A further \$1 million improvement to the airport is underway, including six new hangers and a new apron to accommodate larger planes.



Kennett built a 50,000 square-foot speculative building in its 116 acre Industrial Park. City Light Gas and Water supplies utilities and fiber optics to the Industrial Park at competitive rates. The city also offers a number of tax incentives.

Like all communities, Kennett faces some challenges. Emerson Electric, which had been an important employer in Kennett since the 1950s, closed in 2006, leading to a loss of almost 500 jobs. “Kennett, like all communities, faces global competition for business,” says Jan McElwrath, Executive Director of the Kennett Chamber of Commerce. “We must look beyond the smokestack and think regionally. All communities are part of a region. We need to work together and identify what would best fit here.” As in many rural areas, Kennett also faces some workforce challenges. The unemployment rate in April, 2009, was 9.8% in Dunklin, which exceeds the 8.1% unemployment rate for the state of Missouri.

For a modest-sized town in the corner of southeast Missouri, Kennett has an impressive array of individuals who have made their mark on the world stage. Sheryl Crow is no doubt the most recognized name of Kennett alums and rightfully so. Her professional accomplishments are amazing; but so are the many ways that she continues to contribute to her hometown, including her efforts in the construction of the Sheryl Crow Aquatic Center in downtown Kennett. Sally Stapleton, a Pulitzer Prize winning photojournalist, also hails from Kennett as does Trent Tomlinson, a rising star in the country western genre. John Wilder, CEO and chairman of the board, TXU Corp., is another Kennett native who has excelled in his professional life.



Kennett has an interesting array of annual events that make it an attractive weekend getaway for tourists in the area. Its first Missouri Waterfowl Festival was held in October of 2008. Given the many activities (Duck and Goose-calling contests, Retrieving Contests, demonstrations by well-known experts in the field) and the enthusiastic

response of attendees, this is destined to become a highly-anticipated annual event. The Delta Fair is held each September in Kennett and always experiences huge crowds. June is set aside for the BBQ cook-off that attracts teams from all over the region. Give a guy a smoker, an apron, and some barbecue sauce and all of a sudden he becomes an expert cook, it would seem. January has the Farm Show and Auction, which sees millions of dollars of equipment changing hands in just a few days, another indication of the importance of the agricultural industry to the city and region. With so much happening throughout the year, it would appear that there is always planning going on for some event. And Kennett does appear to be a busy place. When we met Mayor Wheeler for our interview, he had just finished helping set up for an appreciation dinner to be held the next night for individuals who had assisted in the city's recovery after the devastating ice storm this past winter.

While there have been some challenges the past year due to the ice storm and the weakening economy, Mayor Wheeler is very confident and excited about Kennett's future. As the economy improves, Kennett is well-poised to take advantage of the economic development opportunities that lie in front of it and to continue to prosper as a major retailing, service, and employment center in the Bootheel.

--Dr. Diane Primont

--Dr. Bruce Domazlicky

Kennett, MO, by the Numbers Statistics

Population (2008)	Kennett	10,707
	Dunklin County	31,609
Sales Tax Rate (2009)	Kennett	6.35%
Labor Force (2008)	Dunklin County	13,956
Median Household Income (2007)	Dunklin County	\$30,615
Major Employment Sectors (2007)	Agriculture & Support Activities	1,365
Dunklin County	Manufacturing	798
	Construction	517
	Retail & Wholesale Trade	3,202
	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	786
	Health Care	1,569
	Government	1,887

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Bureau of Economic Analysis

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