

# **UW-Madison report studies millennials who moved to rural communities**

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A report from UW-Madison highlights rural communities that have managed to keep their young adults, bucking the trend of millennials leaving for greener pastures.

It shows these young adults want to be connected to nearby metro areas but also desire a strong sense of community in the place they're living.

Per a release from the university, the percentage of adults age 20 to 39 fell 22 percent in the median Wisconsin municipality between 1990 and 2010. But 15 percent of rural communities in the state were found in a study last year to have a stable or rising percentage of young adults.

The study was conducted by Randy Stoecker, a professor of sociology at UW-Madison. He first examined data for all towns, villages and cities in the state, and then sent researchers to the top 12 communities to perform in-person case study interviews. More recently, further interviews were done to dig deeper into what makes each place special.

Communities studied were: Delavan, West Bend, Omro, De Pere, Black Creek, Plover, Hayward, Somerset, New Richmond, Onalaska, Brooklyn and Evansville.

For many of these areas, being close to a big city makes all the difference — Evansville is near Madison; Onalaska is near La Crosse; and New Richmond and Somerset are just over the state line from the Twin Cities.

“To have rural development that happens in the way people want it to happen may depend on urban development,” Stoecker said. “It’s a real symbiosis.”

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