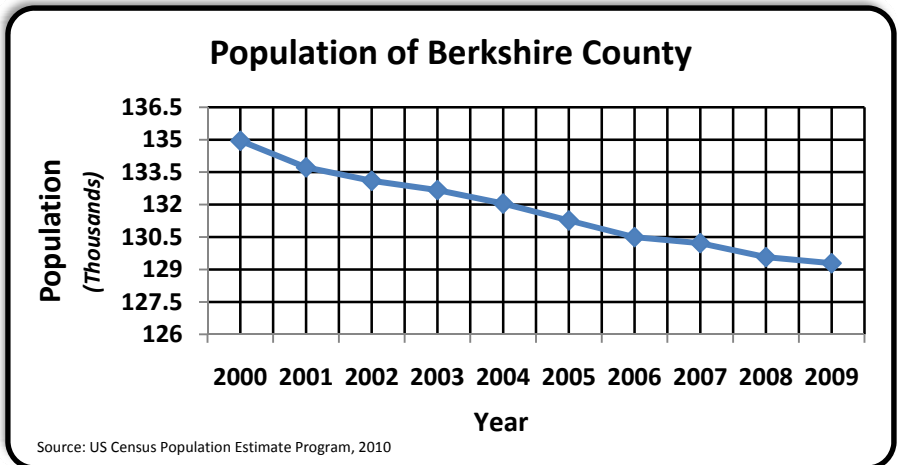


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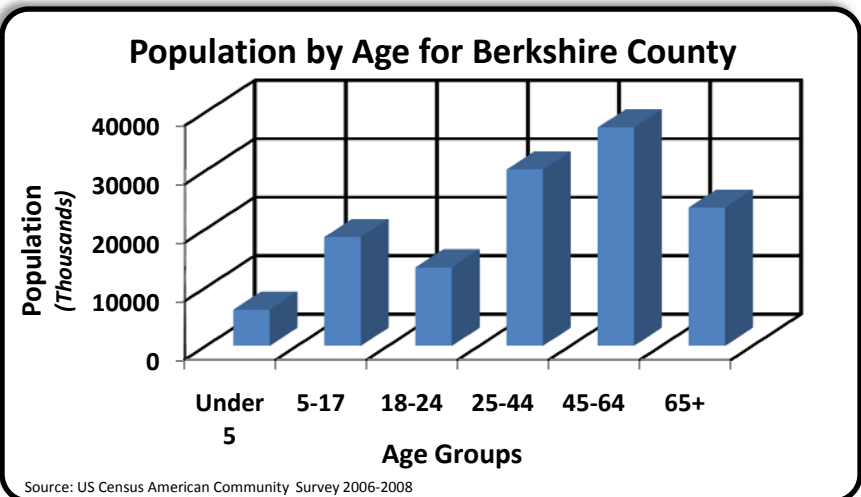
To help communities and economic development oriented organizations initiate conversations about potential projects, programs and activities for the 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy process, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission thought it was important to provide some baseline data on the Berkshires. The following data is a presentation of economic, housing and social characteristics for Berkshire County.

Social Characteristics

As shown on the adjacent *Population of Berkshire County* chart, Berkshire County has seen a steady decline in population from the 2000 to 2009. Although not shown, the Berkshires have seen a trend of decline in population since the 1970's. This trend could be attributed to the closure of a number of large manufacturing facilities over the past decades.

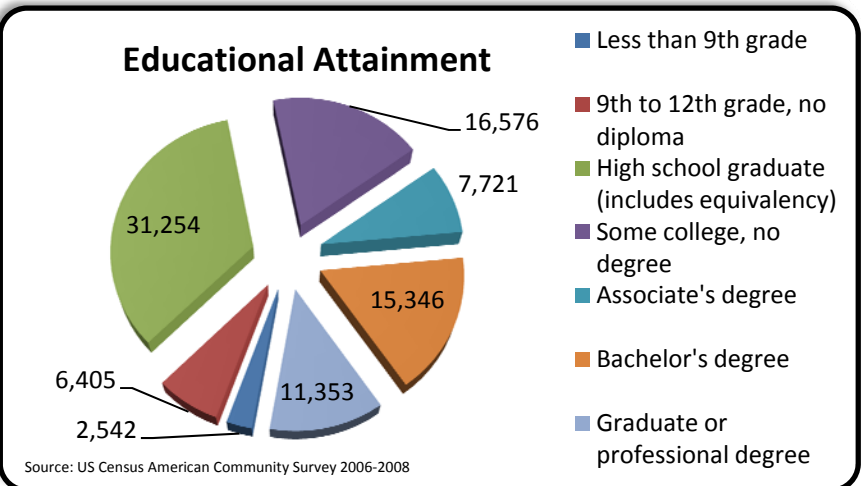


The *Population by Age for Berkshire County* chart, below, depicts a further breakdown of the County's population by age group.



As you can see the majority of the County's population is 25 years of age or higher. This gap could be an indicator that family groups are shrinking, similar to the national average, and that younger aged citizens are leaving the region for opportunities elsewhere. This could also be a correlation to a perceived lack of educational and economic opportunities.

The *Education Attainment* graph, bottom left, depicts the level of education Berkshire County citizens have achieved. As shown on this graph, 90 percent of the County's citizens are educated to a level of high school or higher, and 29 percent of the population has received educations at or beyond a bachelor's degree. The gap between high school and some level of college education is typical for a populated area which is centered on manufacturing and/or the service industries.



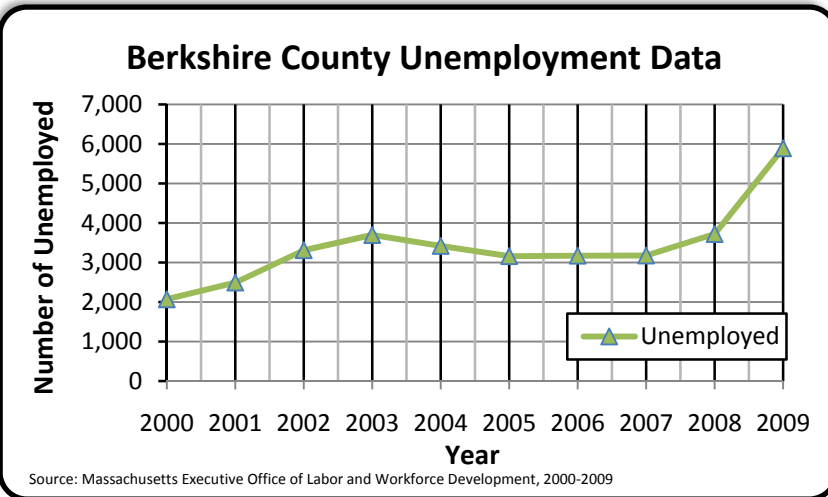
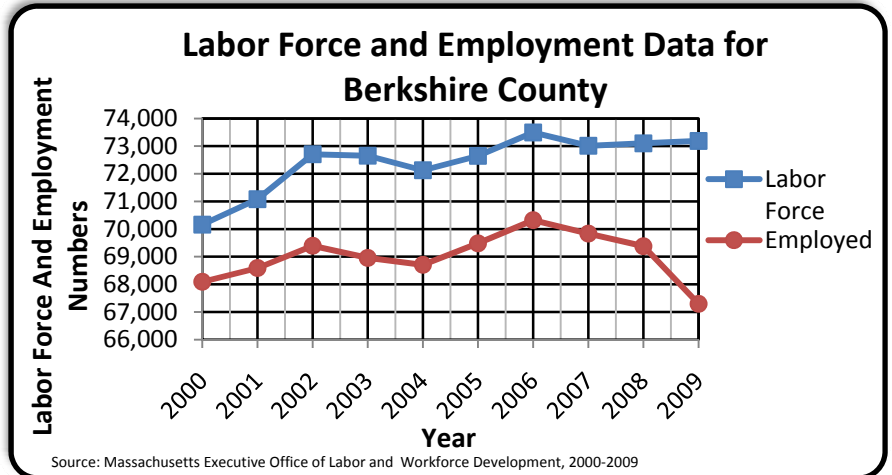
Economic Characteristics

According to data gathered from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, (*Labor Force and Employment Data for Berkshire County*

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graph), employment in the Berkshires over the past ten years has been fairly stable. The trend of available labor force has generally been mirrored by the trend of employment, with a fairly consistent gap. Much like the rest of the nation, the employment downturn shown for the 2007-2009 period is most likely due to the economic recession.

The *Berkshire Unemployment Data* graph, below, depicts the unemployment trend between 2000 and 2009. There was a gradual trend of

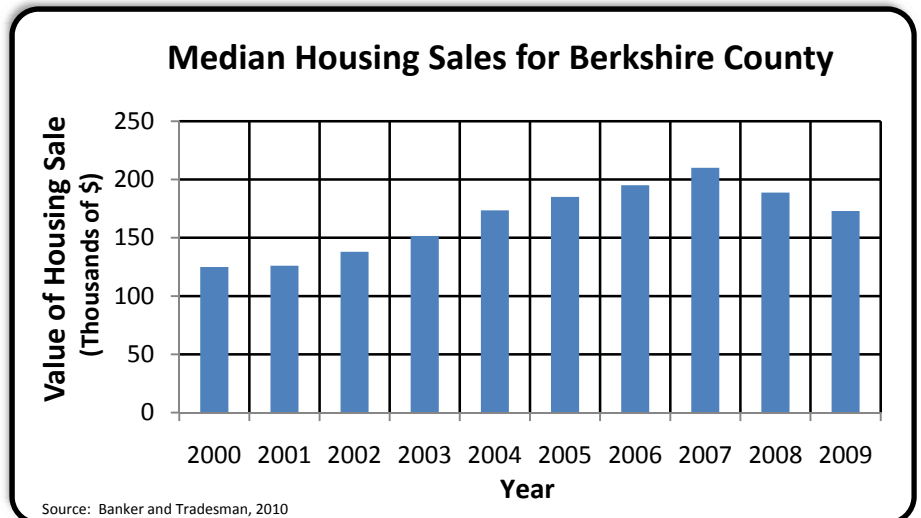


increased unemployment until 2004 when it stabilized, but then again in 2007 the number of unemployed individuals begins to rise sharply. As mentioned above, this is most likely the result of the economic recession nationally and the closure or downsizing of business regionally.

Based on data gathered from the US Census American Community Survey, the median household income in the Berkshires in 2000 was \$39,047. This rose by almost 25% to \$48,448 in 2008.

Housing Characteristics

As the adjacent *Median Housing Sales for Berkshire County* graph shows, the median sale value for homes in the Berkshires has gradually risen through the early and mid 2000's, but then began to drop following a peak in 2007. The lose after 2007 could be attributed to a number of different factors, but is most likely due to the economic recession and a saturation of housing stocks nationally.



If you would like additional demographic information, please visit www.census.gov or www.BerkshireBenchmarks.com. For clarification of the data presented in this document, please contact Mark Maloy, GIS Coordinator, by phone at (413) 442-1521 ex. 29 or e-mail at MMaloy@berkshireplanning.org, or Daniel Sexton, Planner, by phone at (413) 442-1521 ex. 28 or e-mail at DSexton@berkshireplanning.org.