

State of the Lehigh Valley 2008

Community Trends at a Glance



**Lehigh Valley
Research Consortium**

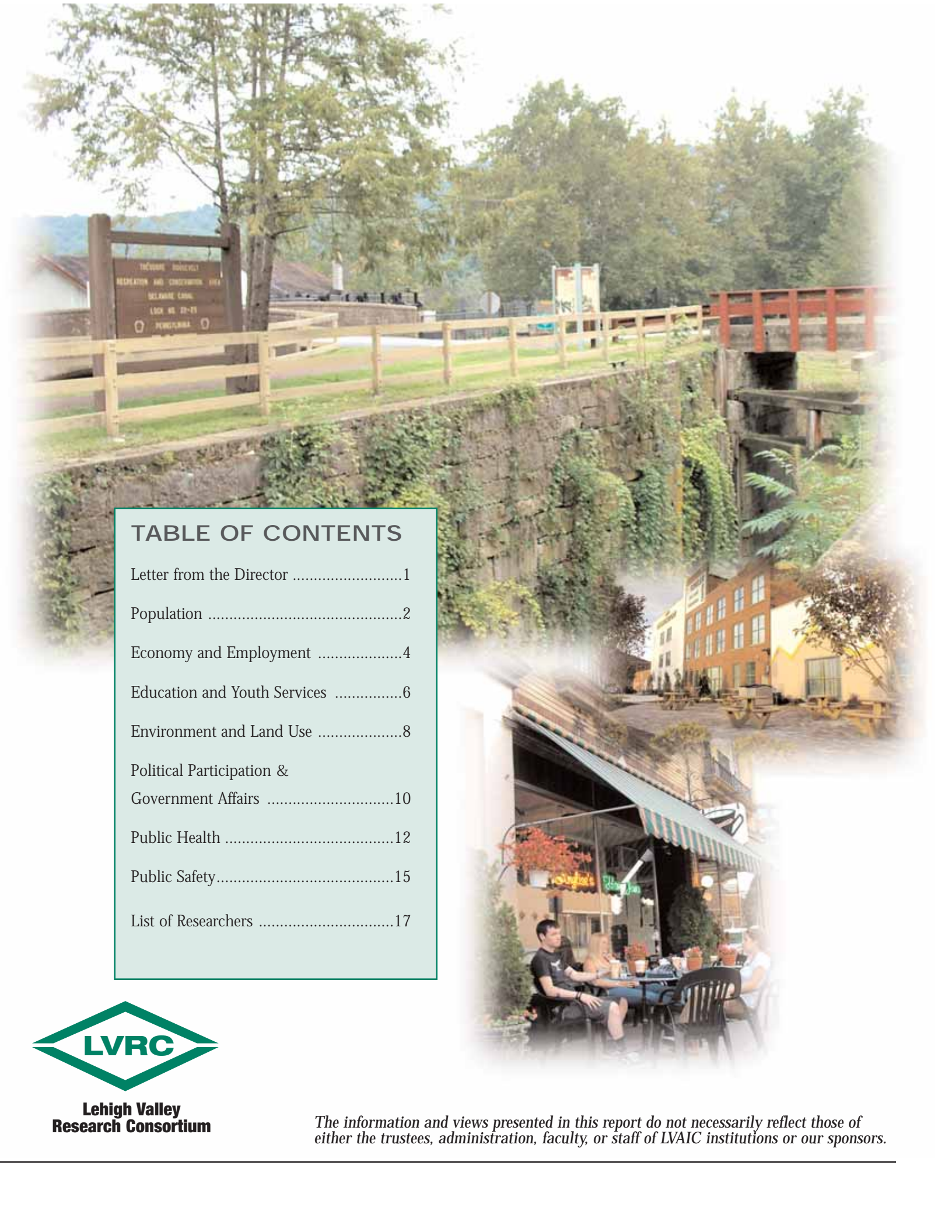


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Research Consortium**

The information and views presented in this report do not necessarily reflect those of either the trustees, administration, faculty, or staff of LVAIC institutions or our sponsors.

Letter from the Director

The Lehigh Valley Research Consortium (LVRC) is a collaboration among academic researchers, governmental, not-for-profit, and business groups throughout the Lehigh Valley, which has joined together to examine social, political, economic, health, and environmental issues in a regional context. The LVRC draws upon experts from local four and two year institutions of higher education in order to examine community issues, disseminate information about our community to citizens, engage in collective dialogue, and augment the classroom learning of our local college communities. This collaboration fosters new insights into regional challenges in the hopes of enhancing our understanding of complex issues and searching for viable solutions.

Recognizing the intertwined nature of the Valley's communities, we have created a community-based information system, which is a compilation of over 300 regional indicators. By pulling together many facets of community well-being into one location, this information system creates an opportunity for richer, more productive conversations about the future direction of our region, keeping in mind the unique nature of our diverse communities. In this report we identify a few of these indicators, examining how our region stacks up to statewide indicators in such important areas as education, public health, public safety, and the economy. We also look more closely at differences across indicators within our cities, boroughs and townships.

Research and teaching are also vital components of the LVRC. We serve as a connection point among faculty members of local institutions of higher education. As teaching institutions we also provide hands-on research and service-learning opportunities for our students, enhancing opportunities for both interdisciplinary and cross-institutional student collaboration.

I invite you to view the complete set of community indicators, reports and other information about the LVRC on our website, which is free of charge – <http://www.lehighvalleyresearch.org>.

Sincerely,



Michele Moser Deegan, Ph.D.
Director Lehigh Valley Research Consortium
Assistant Professor Political Science
Muhlenberg College

Acknowledgements

The Lehigh Valley Research Consortium operates within the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges, a collaboration of Cedar Crest College, DeSales University, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Moravian College, Muhlenberg College, Northampton County Community College and Lehigh County Community college. We are very grateful for the support and encouragement from the administrators and colleagues of these institutions.

We also owe our thanks to members of the LVRC Advisory Board for their continued support of our goals and in particular, their expertise in the development of our community-based information system and this report. A final note of thanks and appreciation

goes to organizations and individuals that provided financial support including: Crayola, Lehigh County, Northampton Community College, PPL, WLVT-PBS, Senator Lisa Boscola and Representatives Craig Dally, Bob Freeman, Julie Harhart and Steve Samuelson.

Photography credits:

Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (p.10, left)
Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
Wildlands Conservancy / T.L. Gettings (front cover, bottom left; p.8, p.9 center and right; p.12, left; back cover, bottom and right)



Population

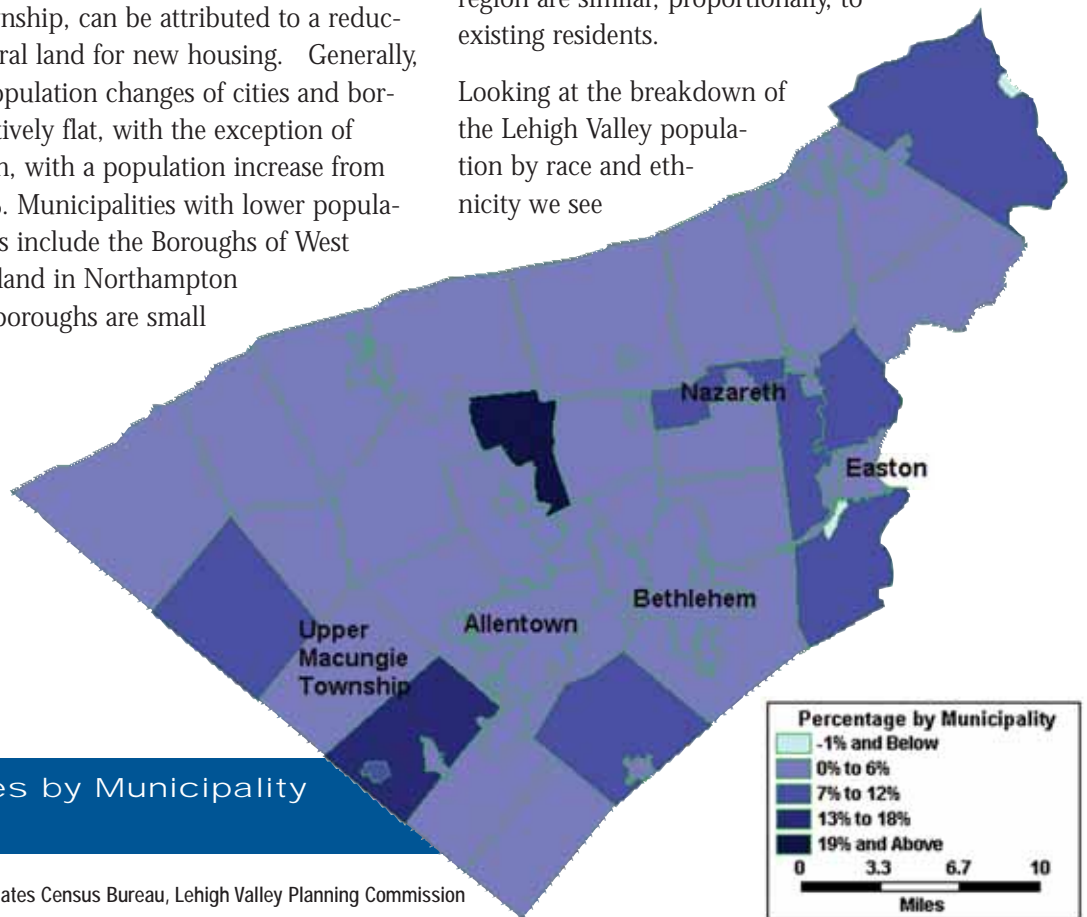
The estimated population in both Lehigh and Northampton counties has risen since 2004; Lehigh County grew from 325,244 to 335,544 and the estimated population in Northampton County increased from 283,312 to 291,306. Although the actual population growth of Lehigh County seems larger than that of Northampton County, the percent increases are relatively similar at less than 1.5% over this period. As shown in the map of the percentage change in estimated municipal populations from 2004 to 2006, the fastest growing municipalities were located in Northampton County. Municipalities closest to the New Jersey border including Forks, Palmer, Williams, Lower Nazareth and Upper Mt. Bethel Townships saw large increases. However, this growth is not as large as the influx of residents into Allen (25% increase) and Lower Macungie (15% increase) Townships. Even though the land in these two townships remains over 50% agriculture, their population growth along with Weisenberg Township, can be attributed to a reduction in agricultural land for new housing. Generally, the estimated population changes of cities and boroughs were relatively flat, with the exception of Alburty's Borough, with a population increase from 2004-06 of 11%. Municipalities with lower population growth rates include the Boroughs of West Easton and Portland in Northampton County. These boroughs are small



geographically, and have little room for building new residences. Conversely, townships grew at the fastest rate, a 5% change overall.

The Lehigh Valley is similar to Pennsylvania when it comes to age demographics. As shown in the graph, those aged 25-44 and 45-64 make up the largest percentage of these populations (about 26%). High school and college-age students make up the next highest percentages (about 13%) followed by those 75 and over (8%). These statistics have changed little since 2004, suggesting that new residents in the region are similar, proportionally, to existing residents.

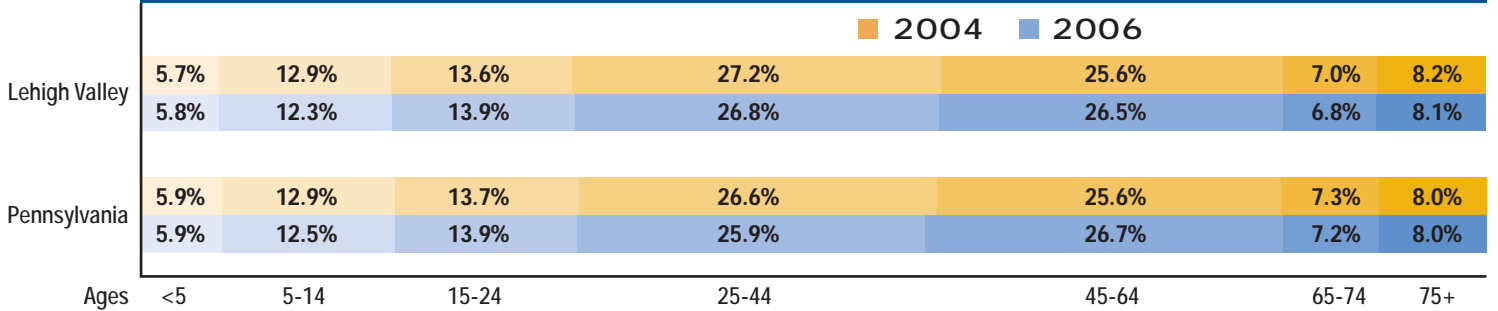
Looking at the breakdown of the Lehigh Valley population by race and ethnicity we see



Population Increases by Municipality
2004 to 2006

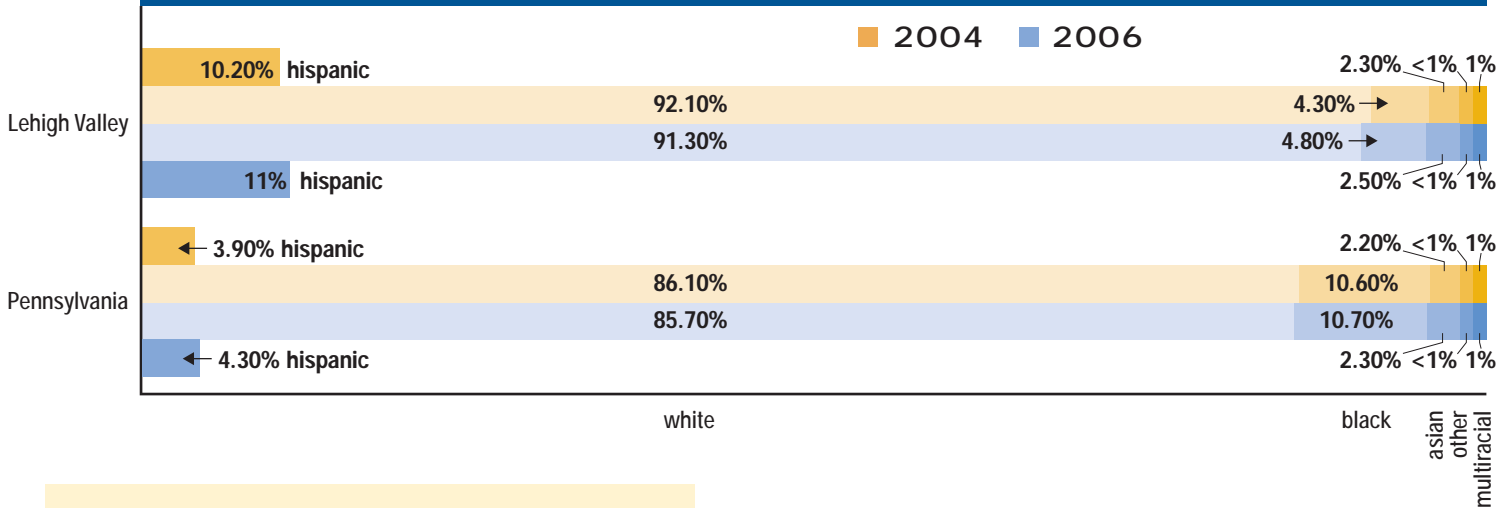
Data source: United States Census Bureau, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Population Percentage by Age 2004 and 2006



Data Source: United States Census Bureau

Population Percentage by Race and Ethnicity 2004 and 2006*



*Race categories include Hispanic origin.
Data Source: United States Census Bureau

During the past five years Lehigh Valley residents have consistently rated the area positively in terms of overall quality of life.

In surveys between 2003 and 2008 nearly 9 out of 10 residents of Lehigh and Northampton Counties rated the Lehigh Valley as either an excellent or good place to live. Over this time frame there has also been a slight increase (24% to 30%) in the number of local residents who rated life in the Valley as excellent. While generally pleased with quality of life in the area, a majority of local residents currently believe that life in the Lehigh Valley is getting worse.

Author: Christopher P. Borick

that residents of the region remain predominately white. In 2006, the Lehigh Valley had a higher percentage of whites compared to the state average (91% vs. 86%). Those identifying themselves as black comprise less than 5% of the LV population and Asian just under 3%. However, compared to 2004, the region is becoming more diverse. Population estimates suggest that the percentage of blacks and Hispanics increased over this period. The percentage of the estimated Hispanic population (of any race) increased from 10% in 2004 to over 11%, which is higher than the state average of just over 4% in 2006. While the percentage of blacks also increased by about 1%; blacks still comprise a smaller percentage of residents in the Lehigh Valley than in the state (5% vs. 11%). Unfortunately, the available data does not include break-outs for racial and ethnic demographics by municipality, thus we cannot compare population changes more closely.

Author Debra Wetcher-Hendricks

Economy and Employment

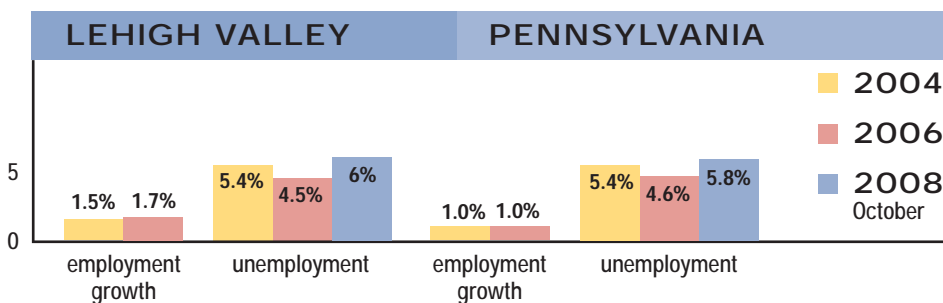
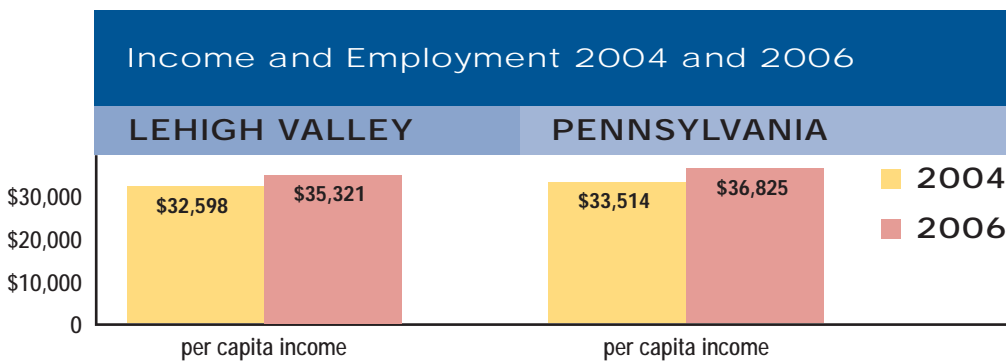


One of the most common ways for people to gauge the area in which they live is to examine the local economy. In order for the economy to thrive, employment rates must be high so people can purchase goods and services. The Lehigh Valley employs a large number of people. According to the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, approximately 311,000 people living in the Lehigh Valley had jobs in 2006. At that time, the Lehigh Valley provided 274,000 jobs at 15,400 companies. More than 27,000 commuters traveled to the Lehigh Valley to work at local companies.

The LVRC has compiled additional indicators of our region's economic and employment status. These indicators include per capita income, employment growth, new housing permits, and sheriff sales for

2004, 2005, and 2006. Per capita income refers to how much each individual receives, in monetary terms, of the yearly income generated in the country, state, or county. This is what each person would receive if the yearly income is divided equally among everyone. The data show that per capita income had a steady increase between 2004 and 2006 from approximately \$32,600 to \$35,300. The per capita income is very comparable to that for Pennsylvania as a whole, with Pennsylvania showing an average increase of \$1,000 each year. In our region, there was an average employment growth rate from 2004 to 2006 of 1.7%. This increase is higher than the rate of 1.1% for the state during this same period.

In order to have a better financial picture, we must also examine the unemployment rate. The table indicates that unemployment steadily declined from 2004 to 2006 from 5.4% to 4.5% in the region. Similar rates of unemployment existed for the state as well. While these numbers suggest a bright economic climate, the cur-



Data source: PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis



rent recession has impacted the Lehigh Valley. As of October 2008, the average unemployment rate for the region was 6%, slightly higher than the state unemployment rate of 5.8%.

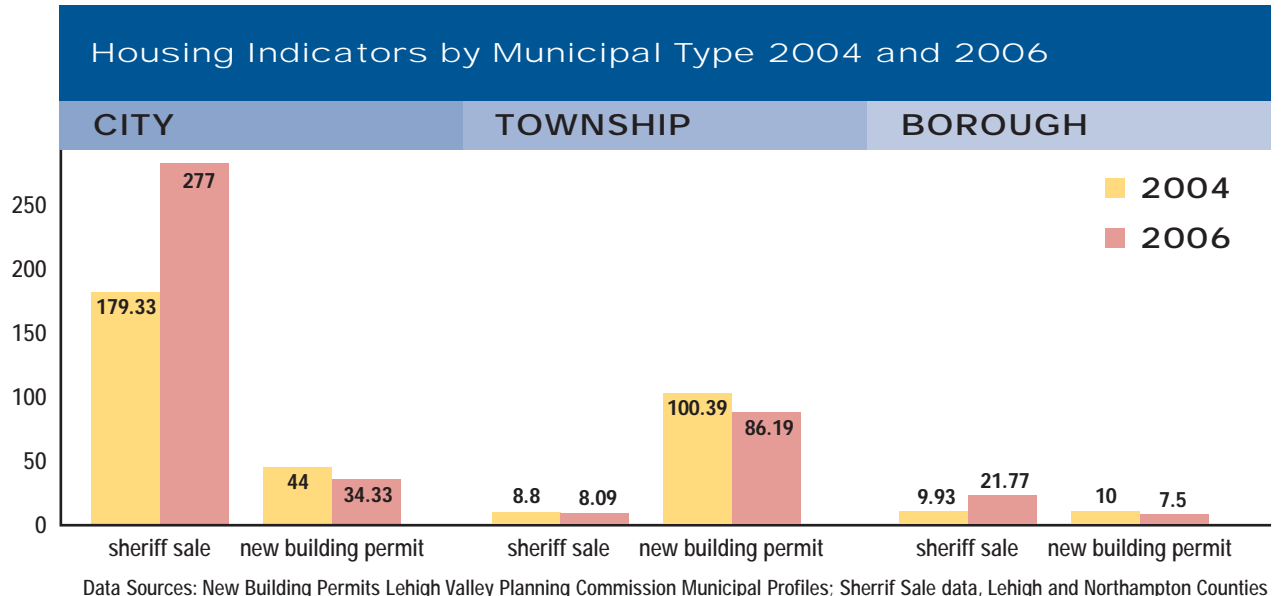
Employment rates and economic growth have strong influences on other aspects of the local economy, such as the number of new building permits issued and sheriff sales of existing homes. New housing permits issued in the Lehigh Valley rose from 3,471 in 2004 to 3,717 in 2005. In 2006, however, the number of permits decreased to 2,978. As shown in the graph, the average number of new building permits issued in cities declined from 44 in 2004 to 34 in 2006. The graph illustrates similar trends in the Valley's boroughs and townships.

The LVRC also obtained data for sheriff sales for the years 2004-2006. Sheriff sales are the first point of

public record at the local level for home foreclosures. In this report, we record the first time a home is listed for sale by county sherriffs' offices. Across the Lehigh Valley, sheriff sales declined from 1,363 in 2004 to 1,121 in 2006. A breakdown by city, borough, and township indicates that sheriff sales remained steady around 8.0 in townships for those three years. However, the number of sheriff sales steadily increased across those years in cities (from 179 to 277) and boroughs (from about 10 to 22). Information on other economic factors such as personal bankruptcy filing rates and dollar amounts in commercial and savings institutions in both the Lehigh and Northampton counties are available at the LVRC.

After four years of increasing satisfaction with the Lehigh Valley economy, local residents became more negative about the area's economy in 2008.

For the first time since 2003, at least half of Lehigh Valley adults gave the local economy a negative rating. These increasingly pessimistic views about the Valley's economy correspond with growing concern regarding the possibility of residents becoming unemployed. In 2008 concern regarding unemployment increased by 9%, and dissatisfaction with personal income increased by 7%.



Author Kerrie Q. Baker

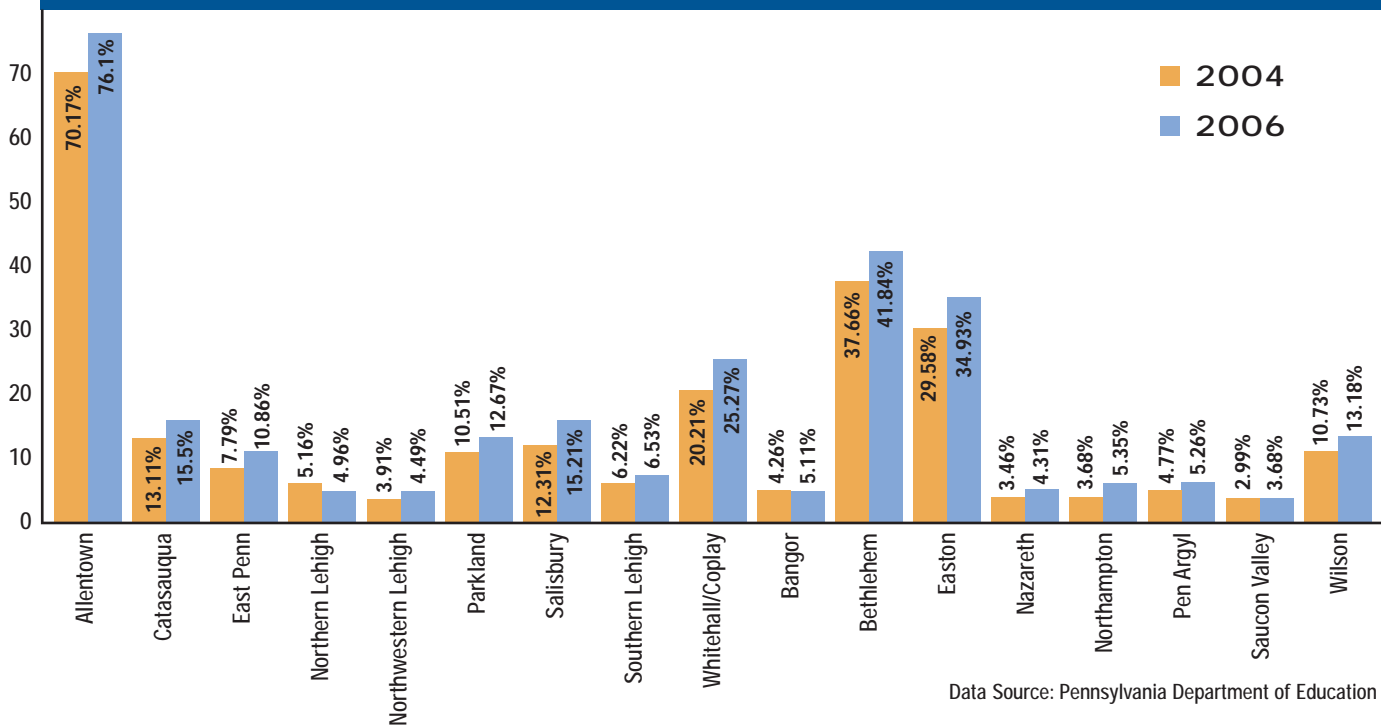
Education and Youth

The Lehigh Valley is home to 17 school districts serving approximately 96,620 students in 123 schools during the 2005-06 school district, an increase of 6% from the 2003-04 school year. Additionally the Lehigh Valley is home to 3 charter schools enrolling about 600 students. According to the PA Department of Education, about 11% of students in our region are enrolled in private schools and over 800 students are home-schooled.¹ We present a few indicators of our

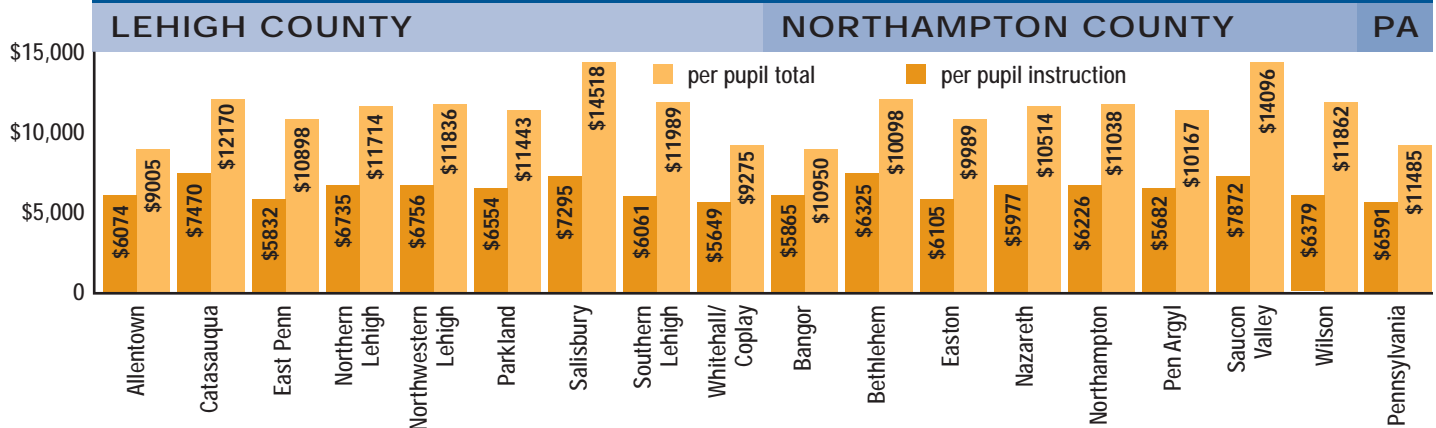
region's education system here. These indicators provide a glimpse of student demographics, education spending, and student outcomes. While these indicators are commonly used, along with other measures, to understand the progress of public education, these measures alone do not provide sufficient information to draw detailed conclusions about education in the Lehigh Valley. A more complete picture of our public schools can be found on our website.

¹PA Department of Education 2007, Home Education in Pennsylvania 2005-06; PA Department of Education 2006, Public, Private and Nonpublic School Enrollments 2005-06.

Percentage Minority Students by School District 2004 and 2006



Per Pupil Expenditures by School District 2006



Local residents have maintained generally favorable and consistent views about the quality of education in the Lehigh Valley.

Overall, about 7 out of 10 Valley residents rated public schools in the Lehigh Valley in a positive manner. Since 2003 there has been little change in the perceptions of local public schools, although there have been slight increases in the number of individuals rating area schools as poor.

As discussed in an earlier section of this report, the Lehigh Valley is becoming more diverse. This diversity is reflected in the composition of our school children. While some school districts have experienced more change than others in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, the percentage of minority students increased in 16 out of the 17 school districts between 2004 and 2006. As shown in the table, the largest percentage increases in minority students from 2004-2006 were in East Penn (39%), Whitehall-Coplay (25%), and Wilson Area (22%). While this

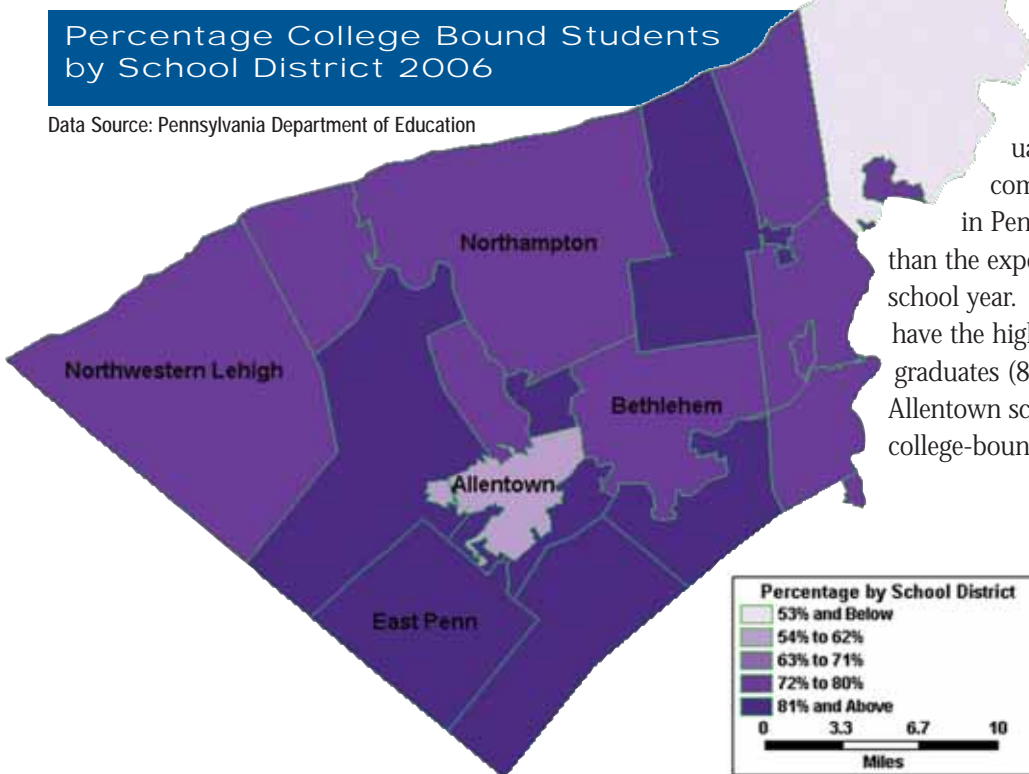
growth may appear high, minority student enrollment makes up less than 25% of the student population in all districts except for Allentown (75%), Bethlehem (42%), Easton (35%), and Whitehall-Coplay (26%).

K-12 public education spending is dependent upon a host of factors including a community's desire for certain programs and services, student need, state and federal mandates, union contracts, and school

infrastructure, to name a few. While there has been an increase in state funding for basic education and property tax relief as a result of legalized slot-machine gaming, local property taxes remain the primary means of revenue for public schools, followed by state, and federal funding. The current financing system has meant a continual struggle at the school district level to balance the aforementioned factors within its revenue capacity. The combination of these factors results in a range of student spending across our 17 school districts. As shown in the graph, total per pupil spending in 2006 ranged from a high of \$14,096 in the Saucon Valley SD to a low of \$9,005 in the Allentown SD, with an average of \$11,259.² There is less variation in instructional spending, which is primarily driven by the costs for classroom teachers and instructional supplies. In 2006, the average instructional expenditures across our region was \$6,398, slightly higher than the state average of \$6,591 and a 13% increase from 2004. This spending increase may be due, in part, to an increase in services for disadvantaged students and an increase in funding for state and federal mandates.

Percentage College Bound Students by School District 2006

Data Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education



While there are many ways to measure student success, here we highlight the percent of college-bound students in each school district at the end of the 2006 school year. This figure includes expected attendance at both two and four year institutions of higher education. On average, 77% of high school graduates in the region planned to attend college compared to 68% of all high school graduates in Pennsylvania. This percentage is also higher than the expected 74% college-bound rate in the 2004 school year. Parkland and Catasauqua school districts have the highest percentages of expected college-bound graduates (89% and 88%) while the Bangor Area and Allentown school districts have the lowest percentage of college-bound graduates (48% and 54%).

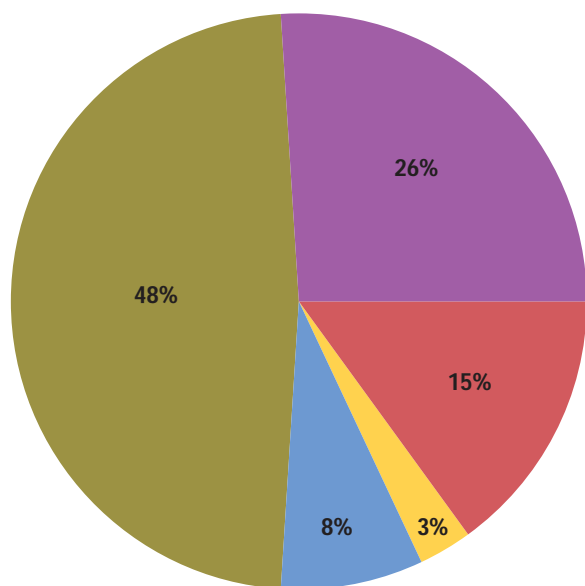
²According to the PA Department of Education, total expenditures include Current Expenditures (Instruction + Support Services + Non-Instructional Expenditures) + Capital (Facilities Acquisition, Construction and Improvement Expenditures) + Debt (Other Expenditures and Financing Uses). In the case of the Salisbury SD, this amount also includes pass-through funding for students educated through Kids Peace.

Authors Margaret Munley and Michele Moser Deegan

Environment and Land Use



Lehigh Valley Percentage Land Use 2006



2006

- residential
- commercial and industrial
- public
- parks and recreation
- agriculture and vacant

Data Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Municipal Profiles

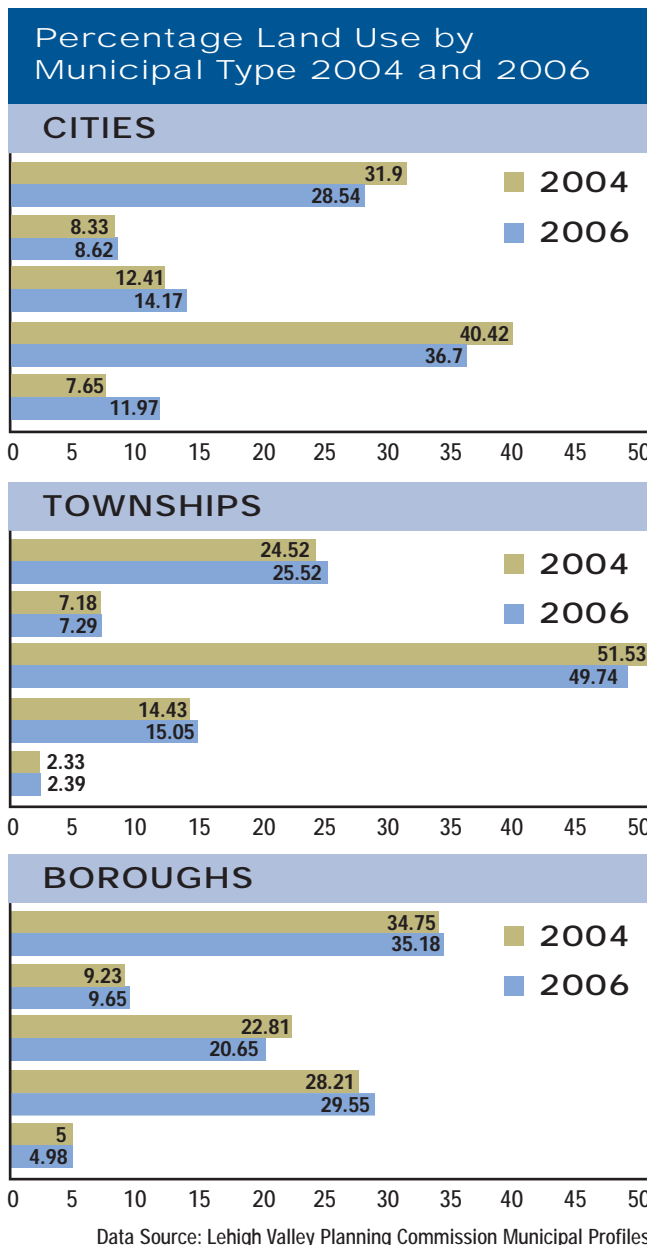
The Lehigh Valley consists of 464,287 total acres. As the region's population has changed, so too has the nature of our land use. We present a few indicators of our region's land use here. While these indicators are commonly used, along with other measures, to understand changes in land use, these measures alone do not provide sufficient information to draw detailed conclusions about land use in the Lehigh Valley. A more complete picture of our region can be found on our website or through the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.¹

As shown in the chart, in 2006 119,889 acres (26% of total acreage) were subject to residential use, an increase from 115,792. In 2004 nearly 9,771 acres (15% of total) were used for commercial purposes, a slight increase (14%) from 2004, while only 3% were used for public and quasi-public purposes, and 8% for parks and recreation. Finally, just over 48% (230,039 acres) by far the largest percentage, were used for agriculture or were considered vacant in 2006, a 3% decrease of land used for agriculture or identified as vacant from 2004 (237,530 acres).

Comparing our regions municipalities, as shown in the charts, changes to land use varied by cities, boroughs, and townships. Townships and boroughs gained land use for residences, while cities increased their land for public use and vacancies. For example, significant changes in residential land use took place in Lower Macungie Township, which increased from 29% in 2004 to 32% in 2006. During the same period, agricultural and vacant land in Lower Macungie Township decreased from 43% to 40%. In Alburtis Borough, residential land use increased from about 34% to 36% between 2004 and 2006. These examples demonstrate that some communities in the Lehigh Valley experienced changes in their land use applications but it is also of note that this process was not uniform across our region.

Allentown and Bethlehem underwent slight increases with regard to commercial land use. Allentown saw an increase in commercial land use from about 7% to 8% between 2004 and 2006, while Bethlehem witnessed an increase from 11% to 12% in commercial land use over the same period. The deindustrialization process, however, also continued. Allentown expe-

¹Comparable data does not exist for the state or nation.



rienced a decrease from 8.2% to 7.7% in industrial land use as a percentage of total land use between 2004 and 2006. Bethlehem followed this trend with industrial land use decreasing from 9.6% to 8.4%. As these examples and the overall data show, our region continued to experience growth in the residential housing sector, as well as in wholesale and warehousing, but industrial land use further decreased. Despite a single digit decline as a percentage of total land use, agricultural and vacant land remain the largest use of land in the Lehigh Valley.

While providing consistently positive ratings of the overall Lehigh Valley environment, local residents express fairly high levels of concern for specific environmental issues. Over the past 5 years about 3 out of 4 residents of the Valley rated the local environment as either excellent or good, but over half of the individuals in the area had concerns regarding the quality of the air and drinking water in their communities. In addition, about 8 out of 10 Lehigh Valley residents expressed concern with the loss of open space in the area, with over half of the local residents reporting that they are very concerned with declining green spaces.

Political Participation & Government



Political participation in the Lehigh Valley will play an important role in molding the region's future. In the region, voter participation was up 19% in 2008 from the same time in 2004, which is encouraging as voter participation is a key indicator of community engagement. In the Lehigh Valley in 2006, a greater proportion of residents were registered to vote than the national average (75% vs. 63%), yet, as shown in the table, nearly the same percentage of registered voters in the region actually turned out on election day as compared to the state and national averages. This may be due to differences in the makeup of the electorate here (voters tend to be older, for example), or the ways in which election officials conduct voting (longer lines might make it more difficult to vote, for example), or a reflection of weaker political party organizations to get out the vote on Election Day.

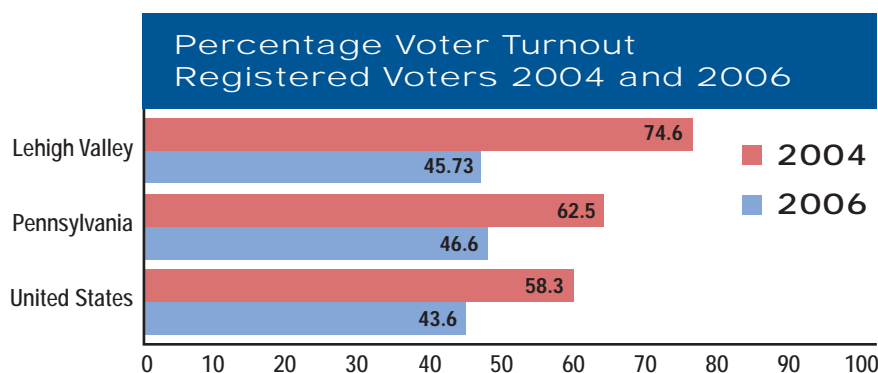
As shown in the table, township residents in the region were more likely to vote than those in boroughs, who in turn were more likely to vote than those in cities. This pattern gives suburban voters disproportionate influence over the makeup of county and state governments. The pattern is the result of higher average incomes, higher average levels of education, and lower average minority populations in the

Lehigh Valley residents have expressed consistently positive ratings of the government services provided to them.

During the past three years an average of 7 out of 10 local residents rated government services in their community as either excellent or good. While there has been a slight increase (21% to 25%) between 2006 and 2008 in the percentage of local residents giving negative ratings to government services, there appears to be general satisfaction with government performance in the region.

townships, all of which are factors that tend to increase voter turnout. Townships also hold a greater proportion of the Republican voters in the region. As the map shows, some townships on the western and eastern edges of the Lehigh Valley are over 50% Republican. By contrast, less than 1 in 3 voters in Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton are registered Republicans.

If we focus in further on each of the 62 municipalities that make up the Lehigh Valley for the presidential election in 2004: The highest rates of voter

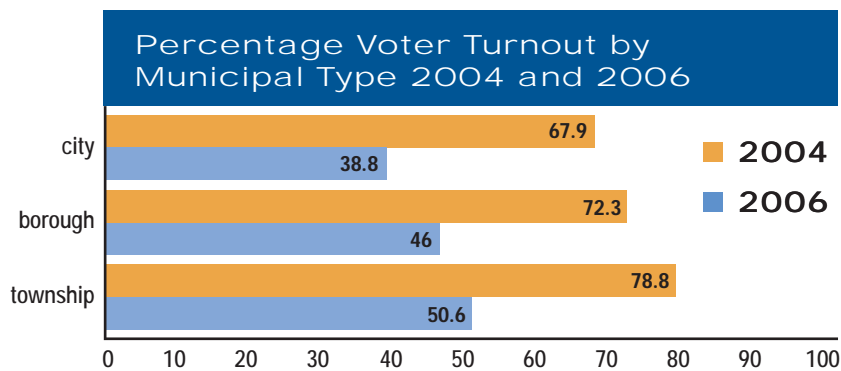


Data Source: United States Census Bureau, Lehigh County and Northampton County Voter Registration Offices

turnout were in Lowhill, Lower Macungie, North Whitehall, and Upper Milford Townships, and Coplay Borough.¹ Over 85% of registered voters cast ballots in all five of these municipalities in 2004. Conversely, the lowest rates of voter turnout were in Wind Gap, Freemansburg, and West Easton Boroughs, and the city of Easton. Less than 63% of registered voters cast ballots in these four municipalities in 2004. Voter participation was higher overall in Lehigh County than in Northampton County. Furthermore, as shown in the map, municipalities with the highest proportion of registered Republicans were Lynn, Weisenberg, Lowhill, Heidelberg, Lower Milford, and Lower Macungie Townships. Municipalities with the highest proportion of registered Democrats were Freemansburg, Coplay, Fountain Hill, and North Catasauqua Boroughs, along with the city of Bethlehem.

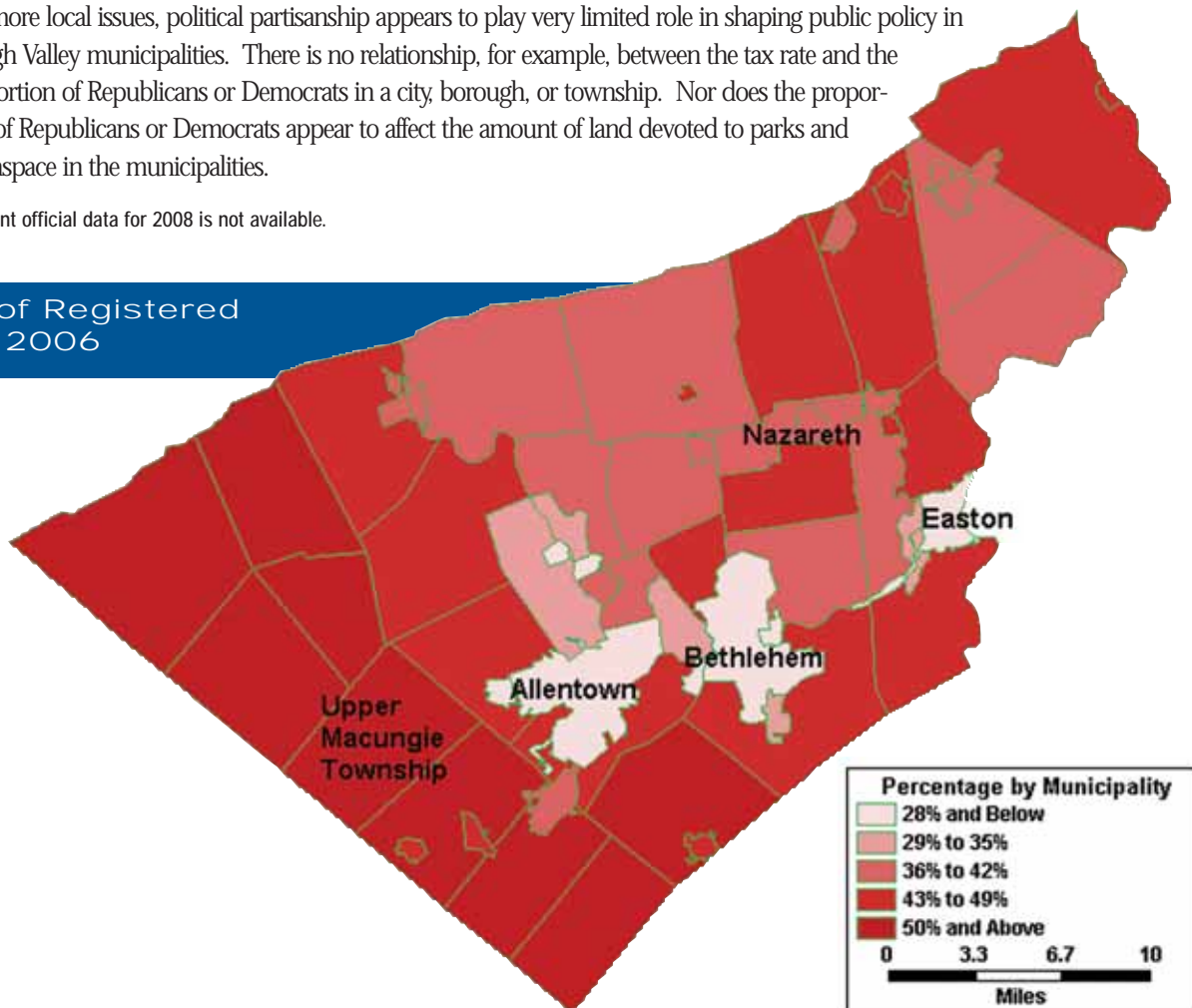
On more local issues, political partisanship appears to play very limited role in shaping public policy in Lehigh Valley municipalities. There is no relationship, for example, between the tax rate and the proportion of Republicans or Democrats in a city, borough, or township. Nor does the proportion of Republicans or Democrats appear to affect the amount of land devoted to parks and greenspace in the municipalities.

¹At print official data for 2008 is not available.



Data Source: Lehigh County and Northampton County Voter Registration Offices

Percentage of Registered Republicans 2006



Data Source: Lehigh County and Northampton County Voter Registration Offices

Author Ziad Munson

Public Health



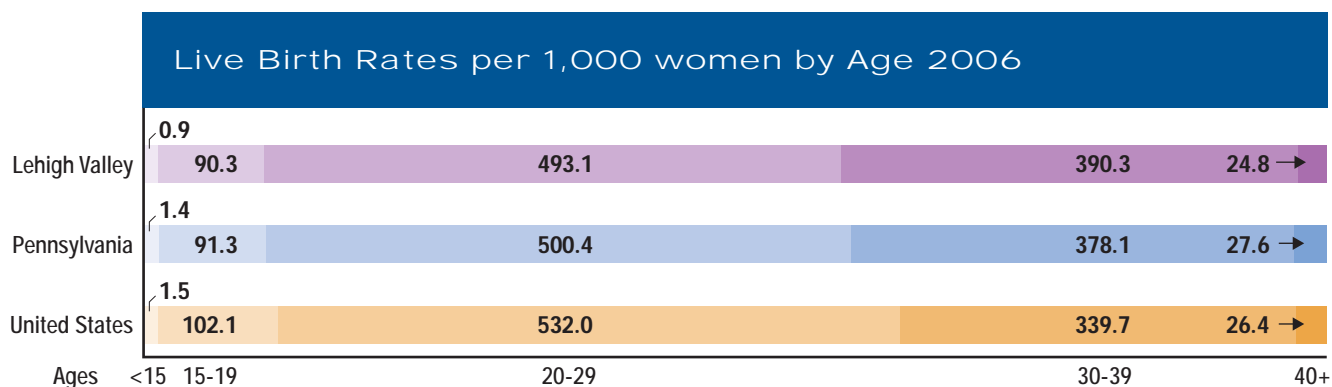
The physical and mental health of the community impacts its vitality and livability, affecting such areas as educational attainment and economic growth. While there are many indicators of public health, here we report on birthrates and causes of death for residents of Lehigh and Northampton counties. In Pennsylvania public health data are reported at the county level; thus it is difficult to measure physical and mental health at the municipal level. Here we report data for the Lehigh Valley in comparison to state and national averages.

The age of women giving birth may affect the health of children throughout their lives, depending upon the ability of the mother and family to adequately care for the child and the health of the mother giving birth. In addition, a high percentage of women in a community without a supportive environment may put a strain on local governmental services and the economy.

Causes of death are another key physical health indicator. Preventative measures exist to reduce the risk of certain illnesses. Thus, it is useful to examine which illnesses are the most frequent for residents, in order to develop a plan to reduce death rates in these areas.

As shown in the graph, similar to Pennsylvania and the US, the vast majority of women giving birth in the Lehigh Valley are in their 20's and 30's. Looking more closely, the rate of births to mothers in their 30s is somewhat higher in the Lehigh Valley than for the state and nation. The good news in the data is that births to teenage mothers and to women over 40, the two groups generally considered at highest risk for adverse outcomes, are lower in the Lehigh Valley than in the state and the nation. These trends have not changed between 2004 and 2006.

The leading causes of death in the Lehigh Valley mir-



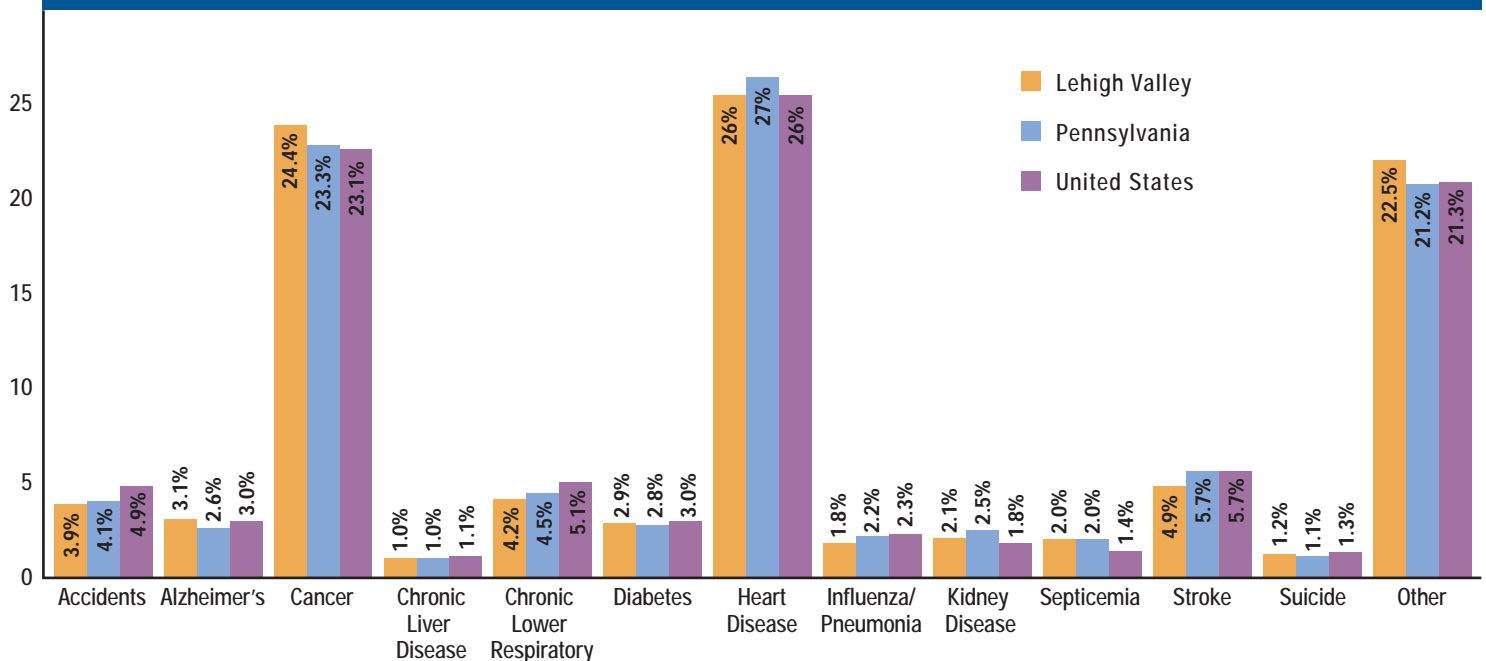
Data Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health



ror Pennsylvania and the nation as a whole, with heart disease (26%) and cancer (24%) far outpacing any other causes of death.¹ In Pennsylvania in 2006, 27% of all cancer deaths were from lung or bronchus cancer, followed by colon and rectal cancer (10%) and female breast cancer (7%). The leading causes of cancer mortalities in the Lehigh Valley are consistent with the state with the largest percentage of deaths from lung or bronchus (28%), colon and rectal (9%) and female breast (7%) cancers.

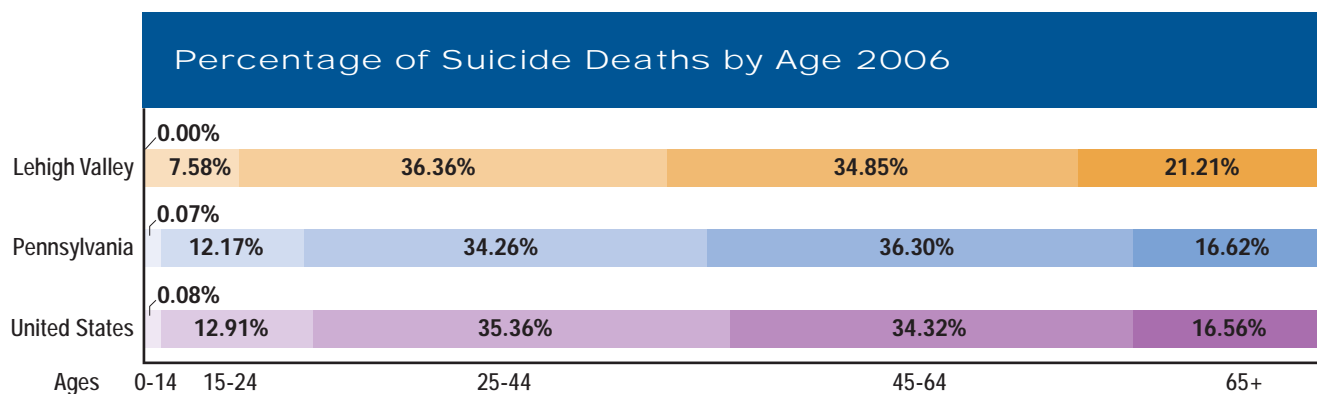
In the case of the tragic losses due to suicide, the focus has traditionally been on young people. It is somewhat encouraging that a smaller proportion of young people in the Lehigh Valley commit suicide (0.8 per 1,000) than in Pennsylvania as a whole (1.3 per 1,000), making up 7.6% of total suicides. While the chart suggests a similar proportion of the middle aged cohort (45-64) committing suicide in the Lehigh Valley and the state, the rate is just under half of the national rate (4.1 deaths per 1,000 in the

Percentage Causes of Death 2006



¹ For a complete listing of "other" causes of death see: http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/lib/health/VitalFiche/death/2006/d99028p_06_3.pdf.

Data Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health



Data Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health

Lehigh Valley, versus 7.4 in the United States as a whole). The percentage of elderly (65 and older) in the Lehigh Valley is higher than the state and nation (21.2% vs. about 16.6% in PA and nation). However, the rate of suicide in the elderly population in the Lehigh Valley is only nominally higher than the nation at large (2.5 per 1000 in the Lehigh Valley, versus 2.2 per 1000 in the U.S.) Pennsylvania stands out with a lower rate of 1.8 suicide deaths per 1000 among the elderly population. The data remind us that it is very important to focus on prevalence in middle-aged and older populations.

Over the past five years residents of the Lehigh Valley have expressed very positive views about the quality of health care services that they receive. In 2008 over 8 out of 10 individuals in Lehigh and Northampton Counties indicated that they receive either excellent or good health care services. This rating is generally consistent with results from surveys in each year since 2003, although the percentage of individuals providing negative ratings of health care services was slightly higher than at any time in the past five years.

Public Safety

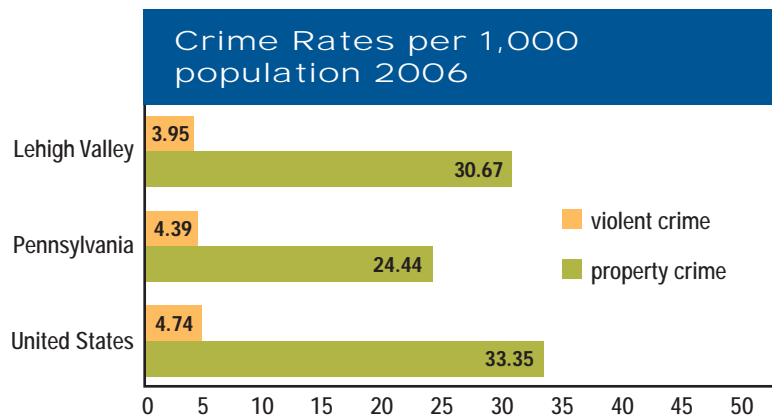
Public Safety contributes to residents' levels of satisfaction with their communities. Many factors contribute to a region's crime rates including the economy, residents' levels of educational attainment, population size and density, and demographics of residents. In this section we examine the rate of violent crimes and property crimes per 1,000 residents.¹ In the following tables, we compare the crime rates in Lehigh and Northampton counties with those of the United States and the state. We also compare crime in our 3 cities: Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton with other 3rd Class cities in Pennsylvania.² We report crimes using the U.S. Department of Justice's definition of violent crimes as: murder, negligent and non negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault and property crimes as: burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft.³

In 2006, the Lehigh Valley had a violent crime rate that was lower than both the state and nation (3.95 per 1,000 Lehigh Valley residents; 4.39 in Pennsylvania and 4.74 in the US). These rates are higher than the violent crime rates for the region in 2004 (2.86 violent crimes per 1,000 residents), but this could be due to factors including the changes in the population between 2004 and 2006 or changes in the economic landscape of the region.



Despite favorable views regarding the efforts of Lehigh Valley law enforcement officials, individual concern with becoming a victim of a crime has been increasing over the past few years. The results of this

latest survey show that 64% of local residents are concerned about becoming a crime victim up from 54% just two years ago. The increase in the number of violent crimes during 2006 and 2007 may help explain this significant change in the perceptions of Valley residents.



Data Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Justice Information Services Division

Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System, United States Census Bureau

¹All population rates are estimates from United States Census Bureau: U.S., State, County and Subcounty population estimates 2006 and are subject to change.

²Crime indicators and population rate only include 43 of the 62 LV communities as some boroughs and townships do not utilize the PA Uniform Crime Reporting system.

³United States Department of Justice: Crime in the United States by Region, Geographic Division, and State, 2005-2006.

Public Safety

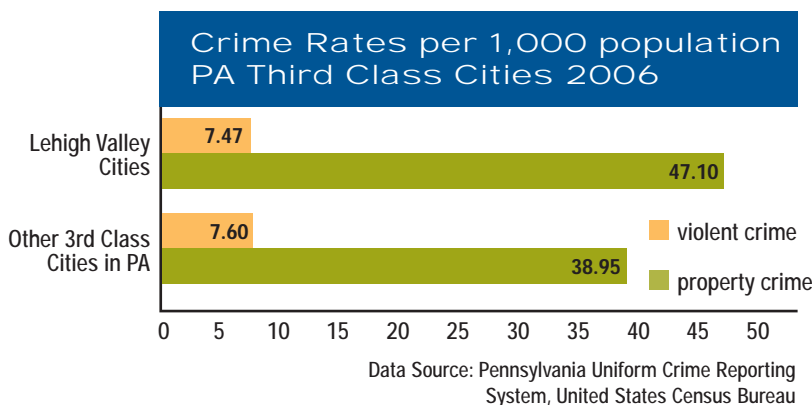
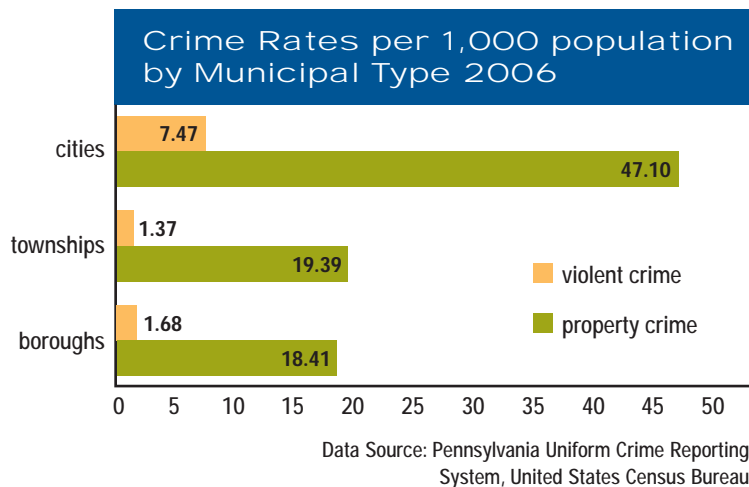
With regard to property crimes, there's a higher rate of these crimes for the Lehigh Valley (30.67 per 1,000 residents) as compared to the state (24.4 per 1,000 residents) but the rate is still lower than national rate of 33.35 property crimes per 1,000 residents. So, though the Lehigh Valley had fewer violent crimes than Pennsylvania and the United States, property crimes more closely mirrored the U.S. and surpassed Pennsylvania's average rate in 2006. Again, the Lehigh Valley showed a slight increase since 2004 when the property crime rate was 28.8 per 1,000.

To get a more detailed view of the concentration of crime rates in the Lehigh Valley, we have separated the municipalities into cities, townships, and boroughs. The smallest concentration of violent crimes occurred in the townships (1.37 crimes per 1,000 residents) as compared to the borough rate (1.68 crimes per 1,000 residents) and city rate (7.47 crimes

per 1,000 residents). However, property crime rates were lower in the boroughs (18.41 per 1,000 residents), followed by the townships' rate (19.39 per 1,000 residents) and cities' rate (47.1 per 1,000 residents).

While cities do have higher crime rates, our cities are not unique. As shown in the final graph, when compared to other 3rd class cities in the state, Lehigh Valley cities have a violent crime rate of 7.47 per 1,000 residents, which is about the same as other 3rd Class cities (7.6 per 1,000 residents). However, the property crime rate for Lehigh Valley cities is higher than the other 3rd Class cities (47 crimes per 1,000 residents vs. 39 per 1,000 residents).

Overall, the Lehigh Valley fairs better than the state with regard to violent crimes, but has a higher rate of property crimes, particularly in our 3 cities.



Author Tami Howe

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**Lehigh Valley
Research Consortium**



Lehigh Valley Research Consortium
130 W. Greenwich St.
Bethlehem PA 18018
(484)664-3828
www.lehighvalleyresearch.org

