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*Timely, accessible,
and credible
analysis of
state and local
budget and tax
issues*

Employment, Income & Poverty, 2006: Wilkes County

Labor Force

- Wilkes County's labor force, including employed and unemployed workers seeking employment, totaled 31,367 in 2006.
- The county's labor force *declined* by 7.7% between 2000 and 2006.

Unemployment

- Wilkes County's unemployment rate averaged 5.5% in 2006, compared to a statewide figure of 4.8%.
- Wilkes County's unemployment rate was higher in 2006 than it was in 2000.
- Some 1,739 people were unemployed and actively seeking work in Wilkes County in 2006, up from 1,220 people in 2000.

Income & Poverty

- Median household income in Wilkes County equaled \$32,453 in 2006 – an amount equivalent to 76.1% of the statewide figure.
- The county's per capita income of \$17,564 was \$5,381 less than the statewide level.
- The county's poverty rate of 17.5% was higher than the statewide level of 14.7 percent.
- All together, 40.3% of the county's residents had incomes less than twice the federal poverty level (\$41,228 for a family of four).

Job Projections

- The Wilkes County area is expected to add 25,114 jobs between 2004 and 2014.
- Most of the jobs expected to add the most positions (e.g. cashiers, retail salespersons) offer low wages, few benefits and little upward mobility.
- The jobs expected to grow the most in percentage terms, like those in health fields, typically pay good wages but require workers with some type of postsecondary credential.
- Some 81% of the county's adults possessed no more than a high school degree in 2005.

Living Income Standard

- A working family with children needs to earn, on average, \$15.41/hour to cover basic living expenses in Wilkes County.

