

Beaver Dam, Wisconsin

# DAILY CITIZEN

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## BUSINESS

### Marketing Waupun gets easier

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**Citizen Staff/Hank Snyder**  
Standing in front of Waupun Correctional, one of three prisons in Waupun, city administrator Gary Rogers said he is happy over the report that shows when the prison population isn't counted, that the average income of Waupun citizens jumps from \$17,974 to \$20,336. "This is what companies look at when deciding where to build, higher income of the citizens."

**WAUPUN** — The wrong numbers on income and education of a community can make developers shy away and Waupun has been fighting wrong numbers for years.

This is why a study released Tuesday about how census figures are distorted when an inmate population is included, was good news for city officials.

The study, "Removing the Inmate Population from the Census Data" was conducted by Michael Burayidi and Mamadou Coulibaly of the Center for Community Partnerships UW-Oshkosh, and paid for by the city of Waupun. The project was initiated by Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, president of Fond du Lac County Economic Development Corporation and Gary Rogers, Waupun city administrator.

Mayor Jodi Steger said Tuesday she was pleased with the report.

"This helps put the figures of Waupun's education and income in perspective," she said. "The old figures were really skewed.

We were at a disadvantage with three

prisons in town. Developers look at a site and they don't know the income includes the prisons, and their maximum wage is something like \$2 an hour."

The study came about in a desire to better market 280 acres of Department of Corrections land on the east of Highway 151 and north of Highway 49 that Waupun was negotiating to purchase.

"I had expressed concern to Gary (Rogers) and Mayor Steger about marketing the land knowing what we knew about the census data," said Hicks-Sorensen. "I knew it would be to Waupun's advantage to figure out a way to document what we knew about the fallacies of the census data for Waupun. With over 20 percent of the population considered as institutionalized, it affects the median income and educational attainment which are both critical factors in the site selection process for large commercial projects like those we will be hoping to attract to Waupun."

Rogers said, "We needed real numbers. Any commercial development, any retail development, looks at the disposable income of the population. With our prisons, it meant we were almost always way outside their numbers."

"The study will help with our marketing. When they say, 'We're not interested,' we can say, 'did you know in Waupun we have three prisons. Here is a document showing our income is higher than the census bureau shows. It's not just our feelings.'"

The percentage of men age 25 and over, with a high school diploma or higher, raises from 78.2 to 82.9 percent when inmates are eliminated from the figures. A more dramatic change occurs when considering males 25 and over with college degrees or higher, which raises from 11.5 to 18.5 percent. Then when the total population of those 25 and over with college degrees or higher, the number goes from 12.8 to 15.9.

The study also notes differences in income levels.

"The recalibration of the data shows Waupun to have a per capita income of \$20,336, a much higher figure than that reported by the census bureau of \$17,974," according to the study. The new figure moves Waupun's per capita income much closer to the state and national averages (\$21,272 and \$21,587 respectively).

Rogers said the figures will help in marketing the Department of Corrections land and that other developers will be helped too.

"I'm sure New Haven Developers will utilize this," He said.

The study was published in the February 2009 edition of Economic Development Quarterly. It is also available on the FCEDC web site by going to <http://www.fcdec.com/community partner.html>.