Aging of the Milwaukee area workforce

Among the greatest challenges facing the 4-county metro area are the retirement of experienced, skilled workers and engagement of younger workers into the labor force. Age shifts are having dramatic impacts on the Milwaukee area labor force – with growing numbers of workers reaching retirement age and leaving the workforce. These changes (anticipated in ETI reports prepared two decades ago) are complicating Milwaukee’s transition out of the recession.

- According to the 2008 American Community Survey, 40% of adult males are aged 50 and over – approaching or already in retirement – up from 32% in 1990.
- In 1990 almost half (47%) of adult males in the metro area were in their 20s and 30s. Today only a third (35%) are in that younger adult age group.
- Nearly 300,000 metro area residents are ages 50 through 64 (including 153,700 women and 145,800 men).

Decline in laid-off workers receiving UI payments

The drop in workers receiving weekly unemployment insurance payments (to 43,700 the last week in June 2010) reflects improvements in employment for some and exhaustion of UI benefits for many others.

Safety Nets for Milwaukee County Residents: Jan. 2009 – June 2010

- FoodShare enrollments continued to climb.
- BadgerCare Plus enrollments decreased slightly under the temporary enrollment cap for single adults in the Core Plan.
- 13,837 families received Wisconsin Shares subsidies for 26,119 children.
- W-2 payment cases rose by over 500 in June.

No mass layoffs or plant closings reported for Milwaukee County firms in June.

Drilldown Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development (7/20/2010); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.