

The District and its Economy

The District

The District consists of Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam, and Stark Counties in north-central Illinois. The district covers a total of 2,873 square miles. The Illinois River divides the district in two providing a central geographical feature. The district is located approximately 30 miles from Peoria and Bloomington, 40 miles from the Quad Cities on the Mississippi River, 50 miles from Rockford, and 60 miles from downtown Chicago. Springfield, the state capitol of Illinois, is located approximately 100 miles from the district. Figure 1 shows the district location within the state.

The District represents a mainly rural population with urban centers in Bureau and LaSalle Counties. LaSalle County is the most urbanized in the district, with four urban communities. The largest community in the district, Ottawa, lies in the center of LaSalle County with a population of 18,307¹ persons and is also the county seat. Peru and LaSalle, adjacent communities also located in LaSalle County, have a combined population of over 19,000 persons. Streator, also in LaSalle County, had a 2000 population of 14,190. Princeton, the county seat of Bureau County, with a 2000 population of 7,501 and Spring Valley, also in Bureau County with a 2000 population of 5,398, represent larger communities outside of LaSalle County. Please see Table 1 for a listing of communities with over 1,000 and county populations within the District. Figure 2 shows the location of the communities within the District.

Population in the district has decreased in three out of the five counties in the last forty years. Putnam County, North Central District's smallest county, has increased population by over 33 percent with a 4,570 population in 1960 and a 6,086 population in 2000. The District as a whole, however, has decreased in population by 1.05 percent since the 1960 Census. The State of Illinois has increased in population by 23.19 percent since the 1960 Census as well. Loss in population seems to be due to out migration of young people to other areas looking for employment. This report, therefore, focuses on economic development issues for both rural and urban areas and the needs and resources of the entire district.

Geography

Geography and land quality was the deciding factor in the settling of the District in the first half of the 19th century. The same geographical features will also be the primary factor in future development success of the district. The land is productive for grain row crops and well suited for livestock throughout the entire district. Woodland and pasture areas are more predominant at close proximity to the Illinois River at the center of the District. The District's natural ability to support the agriculture industry has provided the historical basis for the District's economy and is expected to continue that foundation into the near future.

Lying in the heart of America's "Corn Belt", the District is a part of the country's most important agriculture areas. The Illinois River lowlands consist of extremely rich soils resulting in highly productive farmland. This farmland constitutes 84 percent of the total land area in the District.²

¹ 2000 Census of Population and Housing, U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Dept. of Commerce

² *Farms, Land in Farms, and Land Use, 1987 and 1992*; U.S. Census of Agriculture

The Illinois River is a productive water supply, major transportation artery, and recreation and tourism resource for the North Central District. This river flows through the center of the district in a southwest direction from Lake Michigan. It provides a vital drinking source for many communities either directly or by wells drilled into the river bottoms. It is also an integral part of the Illinois Waterway, and is one of the state's most popular inland water routes. Combined, the Illinois River, Calumet-Sag Canal, Calumet River, Little Calumet River, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, Des Plaines River, and Chicago River, the Illinois Waterway extends for 330 miles and drains into the Mississippi River at Grafton. Together, the Illinois Waterway drains over one-half of the state of Illinois and is one of the most notable topographic features in Illinois.

The Illinois River is also the main barge route between Chicago and St. Louis. River barge terminals are located in eight communities along the Illinois River in the North Central District³. Cities with barge terminals include: Ottawa, Utica, LaSalle, and Peru in LaSalle County; Spring Valley in Bureau County; Hennepin in Putnam County; and Henry and Lacon in Marshall County.

Annual flooding of the Illinois River limits the recreation potential. Numerous river camps, however, are located along its banks throughout the district. Its historic, scenic, and recreational attributes provide attracted tourism to the district and communities along the river each year. For example, Lake DePue, adjacent to the Illinois River, draws thousands of people every summer to the Village of DePue for the APBA Pro National Championship Races. Tourism attracted by the Illinois River brings valuable revenue to communities and counties within the District and plays a vital role in economic development in the future.

Topography in the District is comprised of sloping timber and wetlands near the Illinois River and relatively flat cropland between its stream tributaries. Level to gently rolling fields are planted in corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay, and are found between drainage ways. Soils are predominately dark-colored in the highlands and light-colored in the lowlands. These soils are comprised mainly of material derived from glacial drift.

Steep terrain is generally found in the form of deep, narrow valleys that have been cut into the underlying rocks below the glacial drift by rivers. A particularly steep area of land along the Illinois and Vermillion Rivers is located at Starved Rock State Park in Utica, LaSalle County. Bold bluffs are also located at Buffalo Rock State Park, along with Matthiessen State Park, both in LaSalle County. These state parks are three of Illinois' major attractions because of the rock formations found there. Outcrops of rock can also be found in sections along the Fox River.

Natural Resources

Deposits of minable resources exist in various locations throughout the District. Sand, clay, and gravel deposits are plentiful along the Illinois, Fox, and Spoon River valleys, and also along Bureau Creek. Sand and Gravel pits and quarries are scattered throughout the district, producing both crushed stone and ground limestone. These resources are used widely for the production of cement, agricultural lime, ballast, and construction aggregates. Industrial ores such as fluorspar, silica, clay, and shale, and metallic ores such as lead, zinc, and fluorite (Illinois' official state mineral), are commonly mined. Demand and district economy will determine the future use of

³ Illinois Inland River Guide, 1996

these resources.

About one-tenth of the total U.S. coal resources are found in Illinois⁴, and the state currently ranks fifth in national coal production. The Illinois Basin/Eastern Interior Coal Field stretches northward into the District through the bottom two-thirds of Bureau and LaSalle County. This field boasts “soft”, or bituminous coal measures in easy-to-mine fields deposited during the Pennsylvanian period 280 to 320 million years ago. Coal mining has been a commercial industry in the District since the early 1800s. Many mines prior to and during World War II have been shut down and abandoned. Remnants of these abandoned mines are noticeable in many communities by towering slag piles and strip mines. Some mines, however, are still active today and have been producing steady amounts of coal since the 1960s. Figure 3 shows the coal mined areas in the North Central District.

Illinois has historically been a high national producer of crude oil. In 1983, Illinois ranked fourteenth among oil-producing states. Illinois has never been an important producer of natural gas. Although the state currently has reserves of both crude oil and natural gas, these reserves are found in the southern and western parts of the state. There are no notable production locations of crude oil or natural gas within the North Central District.

Another notable geographical feature of the district is land and forests, but the supply is decreasing fast. Approximately 91 percent of the total land in the District was used for farming in 1978⁵. That number dropped to 84 percent in 1992 and to just under 82 percent in 1992 and continues to drop as valuable farmland is bought up by corporate expansions, community growth, and transportation. The price of land is increasing in the meantime, making ownership for farmers more difficult and renting land more common. This high cost of land and drop in prices for farm production was the primary cause of the Farm Crisis in the 1980s, and the effects are still noticeable today.

Forests comprised over 39 percent of the total land area in Illinois at its settlement. Today, that number is down to 10 percent. Forests in the District are found along the major rivers and streams, mainly on sloping land, as flat land is now mainly used for urbanizing and agriculture.

Environment

The District has had recent concern with wetlands along the Illinois and Fox River that have been recently exposed to development by industrial and transportation expansion. A particular area of note is an area of wetlands found along Interstate 180 in Bureau County. This area supports many species of wildlife, although there are no known endangered species. Conservation areas along the Illinois River also support diverse forms of wildlife, and should be preserved. In addition, most of Marshall County, and southern portions of Bureau and LaSalle Counties have been identified as the Illinois River Bluffs Resource Rich Area because of its significant natural community and species diversity. This state program targets improving environmental and ecosystem diversity.

⁴ *The Natural Resources of Illinois*; 1990, Illinois Natural History Survey Special Publication 6, State of Illinois Department of Energy and Natural Resources

⁵ Rural Economic Technical Assistance Center (RETAC), Western Illinois University

In order to help protect the environment and direct growth, 4 of the 5 counties have Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Zoning ordinances. LaSalle County completed their comprehensive plan in 1998 and adopted its first zoning ordinance in 2004. Marshall County completed their zoning ordinance in 1998. Bureau, Putnam and Stark counties have had zoning ordinances. A comprehensive land use plan and zoning ordinance are very important to directing growth and development in the counties and municipalities. Putnam County is currently contemplating updating their Comprehensive Plan to give their zoning decisions the best direction possible. Marshall County has a farmland protection ordinance in place to make sure the prime farmland in the county will only be used for farming in future generations.

With all the natural amenities in the District, zoning plays an important role in making sure these are not contaminated or destroyed by future development. Marshall County has several State Conservation Areas along the Illinois River, as seen in Figure 4. Throughout the 5 counties there are numerous natural areas and nature preserves, Figure 5. The wetlands, river and streams are very important to the area and we need to make sure future development is done with the preservation of these amenities in mind, figures 6, 7, and 8. In preserving these amenities no development should be done in the floodzone areas where during a flood the development would be destroyed and the waterways possible contaminated.

Many communities are striving to support and preserve historical areas. Certain communities are focusing on the main street areas where distinctive architecture exists. Other concerns are specific sites of particularly old structures that should be preserved. The process to preserve the precious historical structures requires much effort, however. Certain programs such as Main Street Illinois have been introduced to the district recently to help take on this effort.

Groundwater

According to the Illinois Geological Survey, the District has an abundant supply of ground water for industrial, municipal, or domestic purposes. This groundwater is tapped in the formed of wells drilled into numerous glacial aquifers at varying depths. The Sankoty Aquifer is a large glacial sand and gravel aquifer that provides drinking water to the south central section of the district along the Illinois River Valley.

The most common aquifer types used for industrial and municipal purposes are the St. Peter, New Richmond, Mt. Simon, Eau Claire, and Granville ages. Smaller supplies for domestic use are commonly found in the Pennsylvanian strata. Aquifers found in these age formations will provide the district with fresh drinking water for future growth.

Transportation

Transportation systems supply is one of the most notable features of the District. The completion of Interstate 80 in the 1950s, and Interstate 39 in the 1980s has greatly boosted accessibility to all parts of the county and improved the district's overall transportation system. Interstate 80 crosses the district in an east-west direction about five miles north of the Illinois River. I-80 is a major national cross-country system beginning in New York and ending in San Francisco. Highways in the District are shown in Figure 1.

Interstate 39 is a more recent addition to the district transportation system beginning in Rockford and heading southward to Bloomington, where it joins Interstates 74 and 55. Interstate 39, along with Interstate 74 and 55, provide access to Peoria and Indianapolis in the Midwest and

Springfield, St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans in the south. These two interstates intersect in LaSalle County, and place the District at one of the most widely used traffic crossroads in the state. Through these two major traffic routes, the district is linked directly to the national Interstate system.

The Illinois Department of Transportation has completed a feasibility study of a new four-lane highway that would connect the Heart of Illinois area (Peoria) and Chicago. If built, the new highway would extend from Peoria to either Interstate 80 or 55, in the general direction of Chicago. Depending on the final location of this route, its construction could have a definite positive impact on the county.

In addition to the important interstate freeways in the district, it is also served by a large number of U.S. and state highways. U.S. highways that pass through the district are routes 6, 34, 51, and 52. These are all-important Illinois highways and provide both north-south and east-west travel through Illinois. Among the many state highways that pass through the district, routes 251, 78, and 29 pass through the district as major state thoroughfares. Other important state highways include routes 92, 26, 40, 23, 71, 18, 89, 17, and 91.

All of the area transportation systems including interstate, U.S., and state highways combine with the counties' well-established system to provide good access to all areas of the district, state, and Midwest region. This combined transportation system provides the district with a distinct advantage in motor-freight transportation. Major Midwest trade locations are within one to two days of travel.

There are five major rail lines through the District that serve all five counties. Railroads are shown in Figure 9. The Burlington Northern (BN) line passes through Bureau and LaSalle County and also serves as a major Amtrak route to Chicago from California. CSX Transportation (CSXT) has one line running through Bureau and LaSalle County as well. Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS) has a line running southeast through Bureau and Putnam Counties. The Atchinson, Topeka, and Santa Fe (ATSF) Railroad Company has a line running east-west through Marshall and LaSalle Counties. Finally, a major north-south line by the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company (CNW) runs through Bureau and Stark Counties. Placement of these lines has been a major factor in recent industrial development within the district. This rail system provides excellent rail service for the entire district.

Several communities in the region are working on a possible passenger commuter from Peru to Joliet. In 2002 several communities and 2 counties formed the Illinois Valley Rail Steering Committee. At that time they authorized a rail feasibility study done, which was completed in 2003. The study found the project viable. In July 2007 \$250,000 was appropriated by Congress for the planning of a new rail.

Four airports serve the North Central District, but do not offer scheduled passenger carrier service. Three out of the four airports are located in LaSalle County. The largest airport, the Illinois Valley Airport at Peru in LaSalle County, provides mainly corporate flights along with charter flights and private usage. A second airport located in Dayton Township in LaSalle County has replaced the previous Ottawa Airport and is used mainly for private usage and the Skydive Chicago organization. The Streator airport is the third in LaSalle County and is also privately used with some corporate flights. The fourth and final district airport is the Marshall County Airport located at Lacon. It primarily offers private service for Marshall County. Airports within the district are also shown in Figure 9. District is within close proximity to

commercial flight carriers available in Bloomington, Chicago, Peoria, Rockford, and the Quad Cities.

Population and Labor Force

Population Characteristics

The District has a population of 172,610 persons according to the 2000 Census. Of these people 35,503 lived in Bureau County, 111,509 lived in LaSalle County, 13,180 lived in Marshall County, 6,086 lived in Putnam County, and 6,332 lived in Stark County. Population statistics are outlined in detail in Table 1.

Between 1960 and 2000, population in the district decreased by 1.05 percent, amounting to a loss of about 1,840 people in forty years. During the same time interval, the state population increased by 23.19 percent, amounting to a gain of about 2,338,135 people. Of the five counties, Stark County had the largest percentage loss of 22.33 percent from 1960 to 2000. Putnam County had the smallest percentage loss with 1.15 percent. Two counties saw an increase from 1960-2000. LaSalle County saw a slight increase of 0.64 percent. Putnam County was the county in the district to experience the largest percentage increase in population with an increase of 33.17 percent. This figure can be misleading because the overall population in 1960 was 4,570 and increased to 6,086 by 2000, an increase of 1,516 persons over thirty years. Population did drop nearly 6 percent, however, for Putnam County from 1980 to 1990.

Every county and community in the district with a population over 1,000 persons experienced a decrease in population between 1980 and 1990, according to Census data. The Village of Sheridan in LaSalle County was the only exception to this trend, whose 85 percent increase in population, was due to the annexation of the Sheridan Correctional Facility into the Village corporate limits. However this trend seems to be reversing as 3 of the 5 counties experienced a population growth from 1990-2000. Only 6 of the 23 communities with a population greater than 1,000 saw a decline in population for the same period. The District saw an increase of 2.92 percent or 4,899 people. Of that increase 93.8 percent or 4,596 occurred in LaSalle County. A Map showing the community populations is seen in Figure 10.

Although the number of total births has outnumbered the number of deaths in the district, outmigration of population has been the cause of population loss from 1980-1990. The Committee has accredited this outmigration to young and middle-aged people leaving the district in search of education or employment opportunities. Since this category represents the productive, wage-earning age group, this loss creates an additional problem for economic development.

The general population and minority characteristics of the District are shown in Table 4. The percentage of males to females is comparable to the state of Illinois figures. The district has a higher percentage of females to males, and is predominately white. In the District 4.18 percent are non-white and 4.57 percent of the population is listed as also Hispanic. In LaSalle County, 5.03 percent of the population is non-white with 1.5 percent being black and the rest being in several other categories. 5.19 percent of the population in LaSalle County is listed as also Hispanic. In the other four counties, 2.63 percent of the total population is nonwhite and 3.43 percent of the population is listed as also Hispanic.

Overall, the district has a higher percentage of the age group above 65 than does the state of

Illinois. The district has a lower percentage of under 18 than the state. This corresponds with the fact that the median ages for each county are also higher than the state. This information supports the theory that young adults and middle-aged persons are leaving the district. Statistically, those below the age of 18 and above 65 are more likely to have low incomes, have more need of social services, and less likely to be in the labor force. These factors can have a negative impact on economic development within the district.

Table 5 shows the educational attainment for persons 25 years of age and older. The district has a higher percentage of persons with a high school diploma than the state. While nearly 28 percent of persons in the state have graduated from high school, 39 percent of persons in the district are high school graduates. Education attainment below high school graduation and also some college is comparable with the state. Although the district has a higher percentage of persons with some college or an associate degree than the state, the district is well behind state figures for both a bachelor degree and graduate professional degree from college.

The higher percentage of high school graduates 25 and older in the district is an indicator of the skill levels and employability of the labor force. Also, higher educational levels in the district population are indicators of the ability of the labor force to be retrained. This information implies that the district has a fairly skilled labor force to offer industry. However, professional occupations located in the district may need to look elsewhere for a higher degree of education. In general, the education levels attained by residents of the district should not hinder future economic development. The Committee, however, has expressed that a skilled labor force is what the district is slowly losing at this point.

Income characteristics by county in the District are shown in Table 6. Each county and the district as a whole has a considerably lower median income level than the median for Illinois. Putnam County had the highest median family income of the five counties with \$50,708 in 1999. LaSalle County was next with \$49,533, then Bureau County with \$48,488, Marshall County with \$48,061, and finally Stark County with \$43,410. Per capita personal income in 1998 was well below the state for the counties and the district as a whole. Putnam County the closest per capita personal income in 1999 with \$19,792. The state per capita personal income was \$23,104, while the district averaged a much lower \$18,870.

The substantially lower district income figures than the state reveals some slight economic distress among families in the district. Although the district as a whole is slightly below the state poverty level, 5.32 percent of the district falls below the poverty level. The state of Illinois level lies at 7.8 percent. LaSalle County had the highest percentage in the district with 6.9 percent below poverty level, then Stark with 6.3 percent, and Bureau with 5.4 percent. Putnam County was next with 4.2 percent, and finally Marshall County with 3.8 percent below poverty level. Although the district does not yet show distress with poverty levels, it is still a trend to watch into the future. An increase in families below the poverty level within the district can hinder economic development in the future.

Workforce Characteristics

Table 7 shows that the labor force has decreased from 2001 to 2003 after seeing an increase from 1990-2001. The District's labor force has been on the rise since 2003. Each county has seen an increase since 2003. The District has seen a 7.9 percent increase in workforce since 2003 with the state only saw a 3.8 percent increase in workforce.

Table 8 shows the unemployment rates for the counties, the Ottawa-Streator Micropolitan Statistical Area, the district, Illinois and the U.S. For the 24-month period from July 2005 to June 2007 four of the counties had a higher unemployment rate than Illinois and the nation. Marshall County was the only one that had a lower unemployment rate.

The NCI Works says in their preliminary draft of the State of the Workforce report that from 2000 to 2006 job growth slightly exceeded labor growth, which could hamper economic development in the region.

Economy

Economic Activity and Trends

As shown in Tables 9 and 10, manufacturing, agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, and services are the major economic activities of the North Central District. Retail trade and services industries are concentrated in LaSalle County, as it is the most urbanized county in the district. According to the totals in this table, almost 66 percent of all employed residents in the district work in LaSalle County. The number and percent of employed persons in each category are shown. Statistics are arranged by county and show the change between 1990 and 2005. There are two tables to show these numbers because in 2001 there was a change in job categorization. The District totals also show that there was an almost 10 percent increase in the number of jobs over the fifteen year period. Some information in Tables 9 and 10 are not listed due to the small number of employed persons or confidential information. All information was included in the total employment numbers and percentages. This data should be analyzed carefully to identify particular employment categories or industries that decreased or increased total employment overall. As was the case with the district labor force, employment in the District decreased slightly in the 1980s, but has increased in the 1990s.

Table 11 shows the agricultural activity by county between 1978 and 2002. Information listed in this table includes the number of farms, land used for farming in acres, average farm size, operators, average operator age, and average sales per farm. The number of farms in the district has decreased by more than 50 percent in that time frame. Total land used for farming has decreased in each county as well, but the size of farms has significantly increased. Average age of operators has increased by almost 10% in that time frame, but average sales per farm have increased significantly.

Table 12 lists major employers by county in the district. The table lists employers with 100 employees or more. Bureau County has thirteen major employers, LaSalle County has sixty-six, Marshall County has five, Putnam County has three, and Stark County has one.

Financial Resources

Adequate financial sources are the most important factors in economic development. Public loans and bonds are essential to supplement private investment capital. The participation of local lending institutions is almost always necessary to make public matching funds available.

In the private sector, there are 9 banks and 2 savings and loan associations in Bureau County, 21 banks and 2 savings and loan associations in LaSalle County, 5 banks in Marshall County, 2 banks in Putnam County, and 3 banks in Stark County. The largest lending institutions by county

are located in Princeton, Peru/LaSalle, Mendota, Ottawa, and Streator. The positive attitude of these financial institutions toward economic development is crucial in making investment capital available when needed for projects. Commercial loans are readily available to qualified applicants in the district at competitive interest rates.

Local governments raise funding for economic development projects by issuing general obligation bonds and occasionally, industrial revenue bonds. Communities in the District have varying legal bonding limits. However, a general rule of debt limitation is that municipalities should avoid debt beyond 25 percent of assessed valuations. Governments should leave a margin below the legal limit to allow for lowered debt limits caused by declining property values.

Another bonding source for the region is the Upper Illinois River Valley Development Authority (UIRVDA). UIRVDA provides services to all counties in the District except Stark County. UIRVDA can issue bonds that can finance capital improvements and can reduce the rate of interest. The Authority's financial and supportive powers enable it, with the written approval of the Governor of the State of Illinois, to: issue taxable bonds; issue tax-exempt bonds; issue moral obligation bonds; issue notes or other evidences of indebtedness: for the purpose of developing, constructing, acquiring or improving properties or facilities for business entities locating in or expanding within the territorial jurisdiction of the Authority. The Authority may also: acquire ; own; lease or sell real property and improvements

Assessed valuations of available communities are listed in Table 13. This information is from 2002, and many changes have taken place since then. These numbers will be tracked and more attention will be given to changes in the assessed valuation of the District.

Other financial resources available are loan guarantee and revolving loan programs. There are 12 communities in the District that have revolving loan programs (see Table 3). Community Development Application Program (CDAP) grants are also available to individual communities if they meet or exceed a required low-to-moderate income level. These services and programs can help reduce the interest costs paid by new or expanding firms borrowing money for development projects.

Community Facilities and Services

Public and semi-public services and their adequacies for economic development are examined in this section for the report. The District's housing, water supply and sewer facilities, schools, industrial sites and parks, hospitals and clinics, as well as services for the low-income population and aged are reviewed.

An adequate supply of safe and affordable housing for the district's labor force is essential to attract new development. Inadequate housing can also be an obstacle to economic development efforts. Deterioration of the housing stock causes decrease of the property tax base, which is the principal source of local governments revenue.

Table 14 shows the housing units by county and according to urban or rural area. Out of the five counties in the District, LaSalle County is the only one with more housing units located in urban places. In Putnam and Stark Counties, housing units are located in rural areas only.

Table 15 shows communities that have and do not have community water and sewer services. Many communities are taking it upon themselves to improve these systems, so many apply for

state funding to improve water towers, sewage treatment plants, water and sewer mains, and other projects. However, only a certain number of communities are accepted each year, and that is if they meet many qualifying criteria. Most smaller communities in the District need improvements in some part of their public utilities system. More funding is needed to assist these small communities with their efforts for improvement. Even the larger communities have sections of their systems that are old and need improvements.

Tables 16 & 17 shows the age of housing and percentages of those units with facilities. Complete plumbing, water service (whether public or private), and sewer system facilities are addressed. In terms of age, in 1990 Bureau, Marshall, and Stark counties fall well below the state percentage (11.7 percent) for new housing built between 1980 and 1990. LaSalle County is close behind with 9.5 percent new housing units. Putnam County exceeds the state percentage with 12.6 percent. Percentage of older homes built in 1939 or prior exceed the state percentage (27.1) in all counties in the district.

In terms of age in 2000, Bureau, Marshall, and Stark counties fall well below the state percentage (6.9 percent) for new housing built between 1995 and 2000. LaSalle County is close behind with 6.2 percent new housing units. Putnam County exceeds the state percentage with 11.6 percent. Percentage of older homes built in 1939 or prior exceed the state percentage (22.6) in all counties in the district.

Older housing is normally associated with greater proportions of substandard or deteriorated housing units. Since the percentage of older homes exceeds the state percentage in each county, it can be said that the district as a whole most likely has a high percentage of substandard housing units than that of the state. This study shows that homes in general throughout the county are aging, and new homes should be added to improve the housing quality stock for future populations. Since homes without water and sewer also exceed the state percentage, the district also has a high percentage of homes lacking water and sewer.

Public schools and the education system in the district provide quality education in general. Schools serve communities or districts and have room for expansion. There have been several improvements to the school system in the district lately. For example, Bureau Valley High School was completed a few years ago in Manlius, in Bureau County. There are several school districts constructing additions to current buildings at Ottawa High School, Princeton High School and Streator grade schools. There is also one highly regarded college in LaSalle County, the Illinois Valley Community College. Three other community colleges have parts of their service area in the District. They are BlackHawk Community College, Illinois Central College, and Sauk Valley Community College.

Industrial parks with water and sewer service, electricity and natural gas are important recruiters for new industrial expansions and relocations, along with new businesses. Peru and LaSalle have several industrial parks with full services. New water towers in the parks provide adequate water supply and pressure. These facilities are successfully attracting industrial development. The City of Princeton in Bureau County has two industrial parks that are currently served by community services. Princeton is in the process of completing the infrastructure for a Tech Park. EDA grant funds were received to complete infrastructure to this park. The city has recently added a water tower at one of the locations to improve water service. In addition, the City of Mendota in LaSalle County has completed an industrial park located on the east side of town adjacent to Interstate 39 with the assistance of an EDA for infrastructure to the park.

Public housing is available throughout the District. Senior housing, day care centers, and assisted living units are also available. The City of Henry in Marshall County has recently added another senior public housing development with a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).