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**Monroe County Workforce and
Commuter Survey
2001-2002**

**Executive Summary
September 2002**



Monroe County Workforce and Commuter Survey 2001-2002

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Pocono Mountains Industries, Inc. along with the Monroe County Industrial Development Authority and the Pocono Mountains Industrial Park Authority are economic development organizations dedicated to creating jobs for Monroe County citizens, expanding the county's tax base and attracting new investment.

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Monroe County Workforce and Commuter Survey 2001-2002

Introduction, Scope and Objectives

The Business and Economics Research Group (BERG) of East Stroudsburg University, in cooperation with Pocono Mountains Industries (PMI), conducted a comprehensive survey of the Monroe County workforce to determine:

1. The number of Monroe County residents who work outside the county.
2. The geographical distribution of the commuters' place of employment.
3. The characteristics of Monroe County commuters in comparison to non-commuters.
4. The degree and nature of underemployment in Monroe County.
5. The skill differences among commuters, non-commuters, unemployed and retired Monroe County residents.

To accomplish these objectives, BERG and PMI identified a large and representative sample of Monroe County residents who were asked to complete a relatively simple questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part was completed by all respondents and provided general information on age, employment, education, income and skills for all residents. The second part differentiates among commuters, non-commuters, unemployed and retired in order to identify the unique characteristics of each group. See Appendix A for sample of the survey form. The scope of the BERG-PMI study was much broader than two previous commuter studies that were conducted in 1989 and 1997.

The Monroe County Planning Commission designed and implemented the first commuter survey to determine commuter time patterns and the feasibility of alternative transportation systems. The survey focused primarily on commuters using private passenger vehicles and it was successful in receiving a significant number of completed and usable questionnaires and in determining popular departure and arriving times as well as average commuting distance. The interesting conclusion of this survey was that commuting residents of Monroe County were highly interested in alternative modes of transportation such as park and ride facilities and rail service.

The second survey was initiated by the Pocono Mountains Chamber of Commerce in 1997 and its main purpose was to determine skills, education, income and other characteristics of commuters. The results of this study showed that Monroe County commuters were highly skilled and educated, worked mostly in manufacturing and service industries, commuted an average of 132 miles per day and earned a median income of around \$50,000.

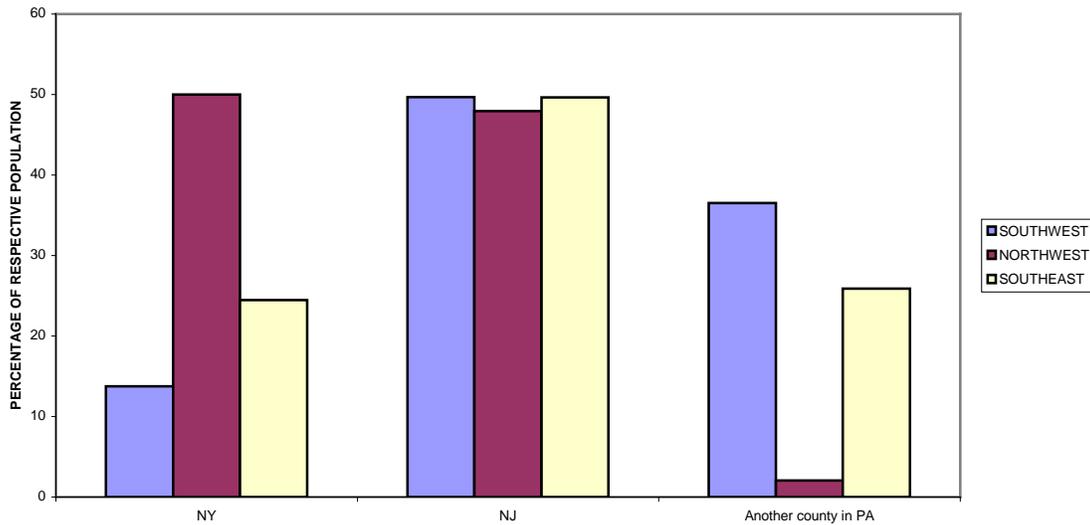
The BERG-PMI survey was a workforce survey rather than a commuter survey. A large number of questionnaires (21,158) were mailed to 10,579 Monroe County property owners. This constitutes about 16.42% of Monroe County households. In addition to the mailing, 200 surveys were made available for completion at Monroe County CareerLink.

The response rate was very high with 4,115 completed questionnaires or 19.25% of the total surveys were returned. Statistically, when the sample size is large, the sample statistics are the best and most unbiased estimates for the population as a whole.

The survey forms were color-coded to determine the areas of the county where commuters reside and also protect their anonymity. The methodology assured random and yet representative stratified samples and the response rate was high enough to generate statistically significant results. See Appendix B for a color-coded map of Survey Distribution Areas.

The comparison of commuters according to place of residence within the county did not produce any interesting findings. There were no significant differences in age, income, education or skills. Commuters residing in the southwest quadrant of the county were employed primarily in New Jersey and other Pennsylvania counties while northwestern residents commuted mostly to New York and New Jersey. The Northeast quadrant is not shown due to the insignificant number of responses received (only 4 commuters out of 227 responses).

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OF MONROE COUNTY COMMUTERS BY REGION



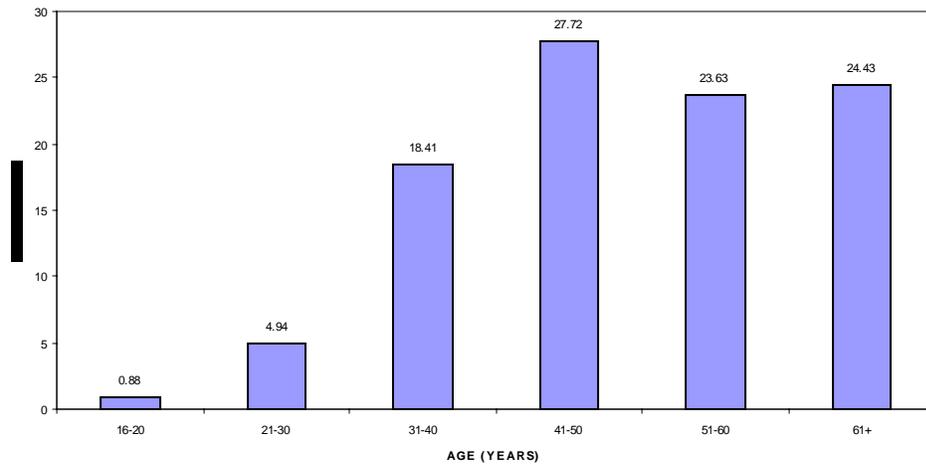
The broader scope of the BERG-PMI survey produced comparative statistical profiles of groups within the Monroe County workforce and allowed the identification of important differences between commuters and non-commuters. The findings of the study are presented in four parts followed by a summary and conclusion section. A series of tables and graphs depicting and illustrating the results are presented throughout the Executive Summary. All charts are shown in the Full Report.

The General Characteristics of Monroe County Workforce

Based on the responses to the first part of the survey, the survey respondents seem to have the following socioeconomic characteristics:

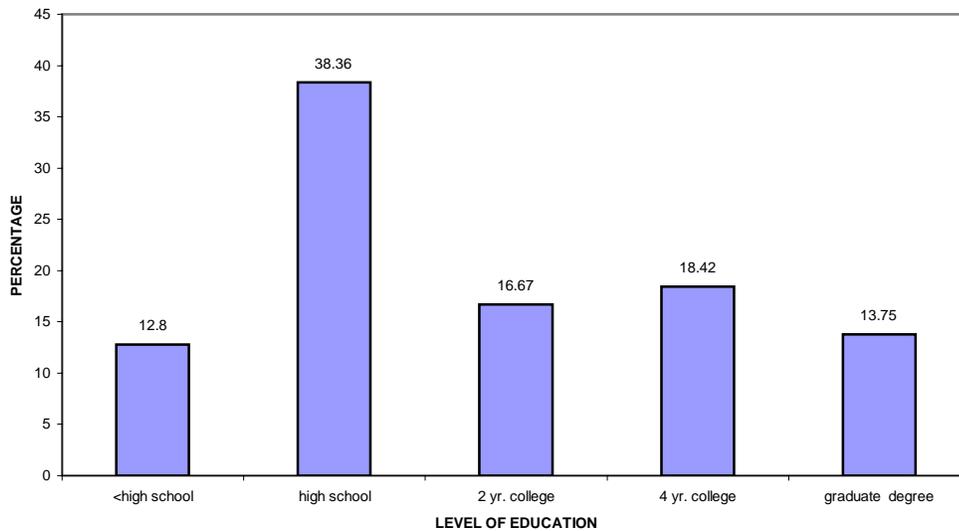
- The largest age category (27.7%) is 41-50 years.

**AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALL RESPONDENTS
(TOTAL RESPONSES = 3987)**



- A significant percentage of Monroe County respondents (24.43%) are over 61 years of age.
- The gender distribution is 50% male and 50% female.
- A significant percentage of county respondents (48.84%) have some education beyond high school.

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ALL RESPONDENTS
(TOTAL RESPONSES = 3876)**



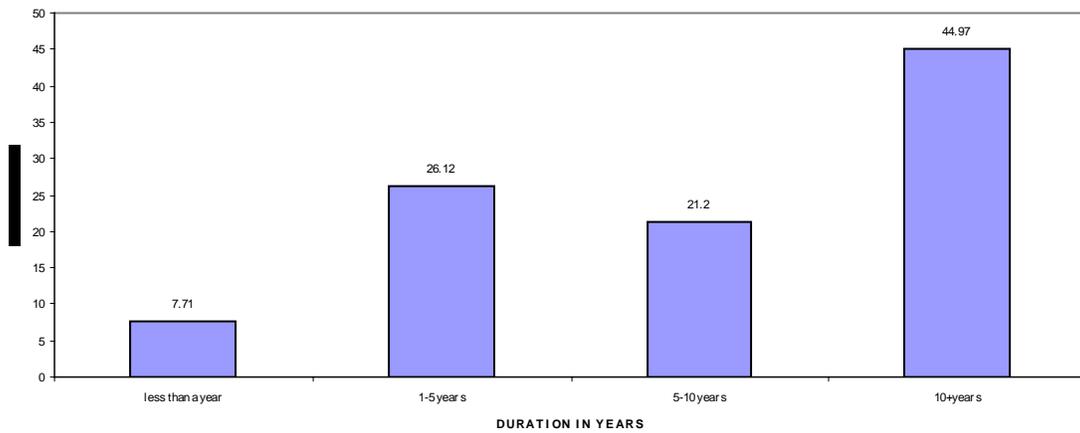
- The largest income category \$25,000-50,000 contained 39.02% of all respondents, 30.83% earned more than \$50,000 with the remaining 69.17% earning less than \$50,000.
- The great majority of Monroe County survey respondents (79.33%) are married.
- Most people who responded work full time (59.49%), a smaller percentage (10.92%) reported as part time workers, an even smaller percentage (6.58%) were unemployed and a considerable percentage (23.02%) were retired.

8. Approximately one out of every four survey respondents commute to a place of employment outside the county (25.04%), 44.69% work within the county and the remaining 30.23% are either unemployed or retired. Given the large sample size, these numbers will not be different for the county as a whole.

Employed in Monroe County

In general, people employed in Monroe County reported a high degree of job stability with 66.17% reporting that they have been working at their present job for over 5 years and a great amount of job satisfaction. Most Monroe County employees (80.13%) reported that their current job utilizes their skills adequately and that their skills could not be used more adequately at another job.

**IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN MONROE COUNTY,
DURATION OF CURRENT EMPLOYMENT
(TOTAL RESPONSES = 467)**



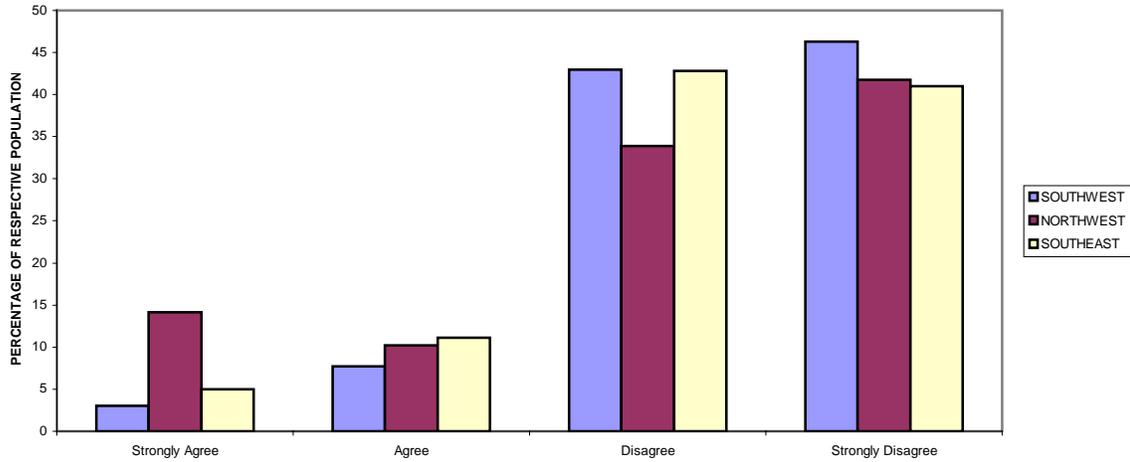
Commuter Characteristics

Monroe County residents who are employed outside the county reported that their primary area of employment was New Jersey (49.76%) followed by other Pennsylvania counties (26.12%) and New York (24.11%). A small but interesting percentage of Monroe County residents reported that they are employed outside the county but that they do not commute. It is not sure whether this 6.3% of “non-commuters” represent the wave of the future, cyber-commuting through their home computers to a place of employment outside the county, or whether it was just a mistake in completing the forms. The average time of commuting was 51.5 minutes per day. The average cost of commuting was \$51 per week.

The greater percentage of Monroe County commuters are “chronic” commuters with 65.06% reporting that their previous employment was also located outside the county and that they are not willing to stop commuting and accept a lower pay in Monroe County. Even though 47.94% indicated that they may accept a small pay decrease (between 10 and 30%) to accept a job in the county.

In response to whether the terrorist attacks of September 11 have had any effect on their willingness to commute, the great majority of commuters (83.98%) said no!

**RECENT TERRORIST ATTACKS ON OUR NATION ARE MAKING YOU RETHINK ABOUT
YOUR DECISION TO COMMUTE TO WORK OUT OF MONROE COUNTY, PA
TOTAL RESPONSES: 1,005**



The Unemployed

Those who considered themselves unemployed (6.58% of all respondents) were asked to describe the reasons for their unemployment. Approximately half of the unemployed reported that they prefer not to work. It is not clear whether this indicates lack of incentive or some sort of inability or even disability. 22.81% indicated that their unemployment was temporary which indicates cyclical factors and 27.49% indicated that they simply could not find appropriate employment, which could be interpreted as serious structural or technological unemployment, which is both chronic and difficult to correct.

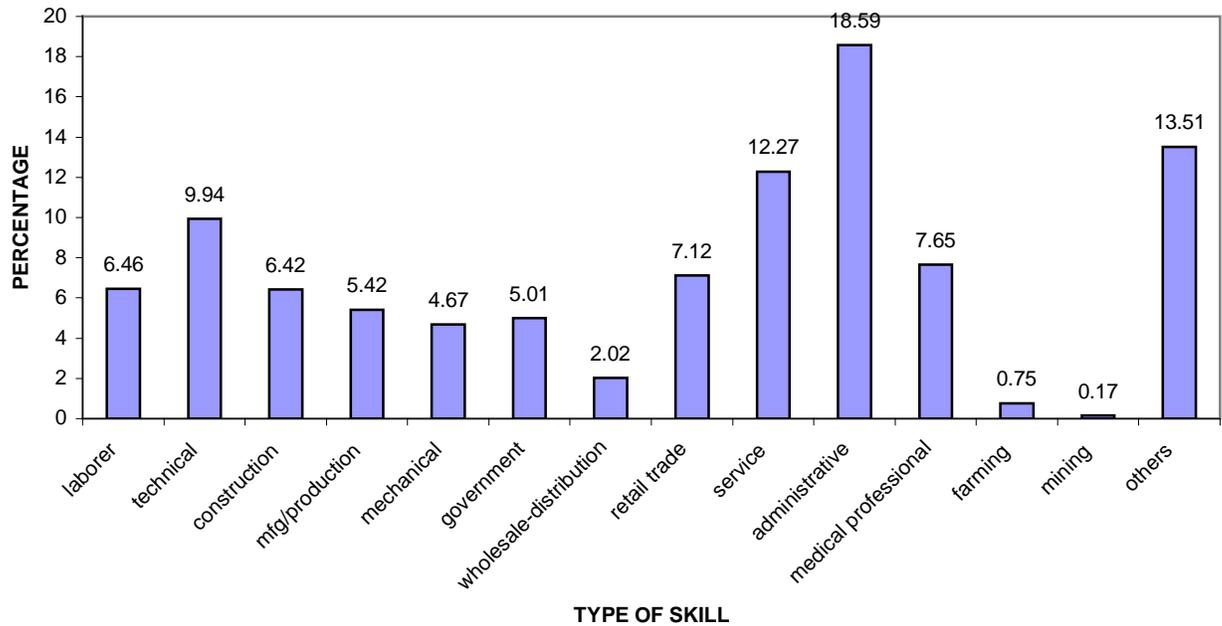
The Commuter to Non-Commuter Comparison

The commuter to non-commuter comparison led to some interesting differences between the two groups:

- Most commuters were between 31 and 50 years old (64.07%)
- Most non-commuters were over 50 years of age (54.35%)
- Most commuters were male (64.7%)
- Most non-commuters were female (55.08%)

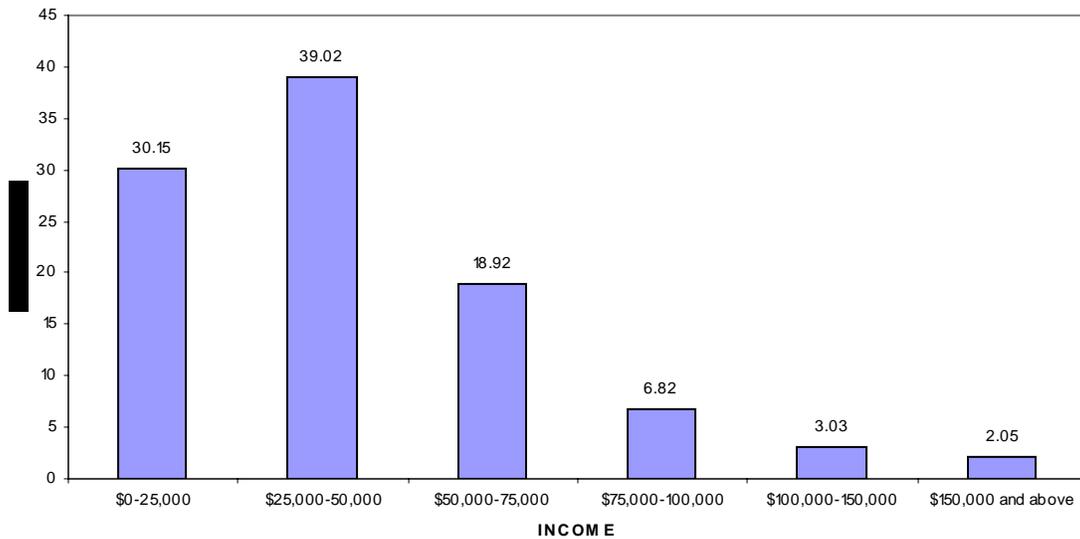
- Practically all commuters were fully employed (90.94%) while only 49.35% of non-commuters reported full-time employment.
- The unemployment rate for commuters was 1.13% and for non-commuters 8.33%.
- Educational levels among commuters seem higher than non-commuters with 55.18% of commuters reporting post high school education as compared to 46.7% for non-commuters.
- Skills among commuters appear higher than among non-commuters especially in technical, manufacturing, administrative and medical categories.

**SKILL DISTRIBUTION OF ALL RESPONDENTS
(TOTAL RESPONSES = 4115)**



- Incomes of commuters were significantly higher than non-commuters, 53.83% of commuters earned incomes greater than \$50,000 while only 22.58% of non-commuters earned that much.

**INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF ALL RESPONDENTS
(TOTAL RESPONSES = 3562)**



Summary of Major Findings

The BERG-PMI study of 2001-2002 is based on a large sample of the workforce of Monroe County representing about 8% of the entire labor force. The objectives of the study were to measure the number of county residents who commute to jobs outside the county and develop demographic and economic profiles for commuters, non-commuters and those who are not working. In the process of pursuing these general objectives, the study fulfilled its original objectives and actually even achieved several objectives beyond its original scope.

In general it was found that commuters are mostly male and younger, wealthier, more skilled, more educated and more full-time (rather than part-time employed) than non-commuters. Commuters were also found to be “chronic”, “habitual” and determined. These descriptions are based on the fact that a great number of commuters have indicated that they have been commuting to their present jobs for the last five, ten or more years. They also indicated that they commuted to previous jobs and that they will rather commute than accept lower paying jobs within the county. They also seemed determined to continue commuting even in the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11.

The study found that a significant number of Monroe County residents worked outside the county, in pursuit of higher incomes and better utilization of their education and skills. The non-commuting residents were generally older and mostly female, less educated and earning lower incomes than the commuters. The county residents who are not employed, seemed voluntarily unemployed because of disabilities, old age and family responsibilities. The ones who wish to work but are not able to find employment are the truly unemployed and the reasons for their unemployment are difficult to determine from their responses. Finally, the unemployment rates estimated by the survey results may actually exaggerate the true unemployment rates of Monroe County because they include respondents who are not technically in the labor force since they are not actively seeking employment.

A common consequence of a research study is that it not only provides answers to a certain number of questions but it also raises new and interesting questions. This study is no exception, since it has raised several questions that could encourage further research, which in turn could generate information that would supplement its current findings.

One such question is whether there is a reverse flow of commuting from outside the county to places of employment within Monroe County. This question could not be addressed by the BERG-PMI study because it would require a survey of employers within the county rather than residents of Monroe County.

A second question is whether commuting patterns change over time due to the completion of Route 33 extension connecting I-78 and I-80 or other structural changes in the infrastructure of our region.

Finally, any study of this magnitude and importance needs to be updated periodically in order to be relevant over time. We strongly recommend that this study be updated in five years time.