

# Columbia County Profile

Columbia County was organized in 1846, by some of the first settlers who had purchased land nearly ten years before, in an area where Poynette now stands. Villages had been sprouting up at Columbus, Dekorra and Wyocena, each of which wished to become the county seat, but it was Fort Winnebago (Portage) that was eventually chosen.

The County's early growth came at a time of poverty and political disturbance in Europe. Although the majority of its settlers were from New York, Ohio and New England, others came from overseas. Among them were citizens of Welsh, Scottish, Irish, Norwegian and German heritage.

The first railroad was built across Columbia County in 1857. Other lines followed, making Portage an important railroad center. Soon State roads, and eventually Interstate highways crisscrossed the county. In Columbia County, there are 281 State highway miles, 356 County Trunk highway miles and 969 miles of town roads. With its abundant waterways, Columbia County steadily developed into the region's agricultural, industrial and travel hub we know today.

Present day Columbia County covers 774 square miles with 19% covered in forest land. The County also boasts 2 area hospitals, 2 local airports, 6 county parks, 10 community libraries and 22,400 acres of state-owned wildlife areas. The County contains 90 wind turbines capable of powering approximately 45,000 average residential homes.

Columbia County is governed by the Board of Supervisors representing 28 area districts. The County Clerk, Treasurer, Register of Deeds, Judges, District Attorney, Clerk of Courts, and Sheriff are elected officials.

Columbia County services are administered from 8 different County building locations. Some of the largest County Departments include the Highway Department; the Columbia County Jail, Huber Center, and Sheriff's Department; Health and Human Services; and the Columbia County Health Care Center. Other high-profile citizen service areas include Judicial Services, Child Support, Treasurer, Planning & Zoning, County Clerk, Veteran's Services and Land Information among others.

The Columbia County Wisconsin website can be viewed online at <https://www.co.columbia.wi.us>.

---

## 2023 Columbia County Population

---

### Towns (21)

Arlington	815
Caledonia	1,491
Columbus	632
Courtland	490
Dekorra	2,509
Fort Winnebago	816
Fountain Prairie	936
Hampden	583
Leeds	747
Lewiston	1,250
Lodi	3,276
Lowville	1,023
Marcellon	1,138
Newport	601
Otsego	664
Pacific	2,795
Randolph	765
Scott	876
Springvale	536
West Point	2,070
Wyocena	1,796

### Villages (10)

Arlington	840
Cambria	779
Doylestown	278
Fall River	1,807
Friesland	318
Pardeeville	2,056
Poynette	2,578
Randolph	453
Rio	1,143
Wyocena	746

### Cities (4)

Columbus	5,484
Lodi	3,216
Portage	9,915
Wisconsin Dells	2,557

**Grand Total: 57,979**

## 2024 Equalized Assessment

---

Towns	\$5,450,296,200	60%
Villages	\$1,233,018,800	14%
Cities	\$2,376,419,500	26%
	<b>\$9,059,734,500</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Where do we live?

---

### **Ten Largest Municipalities**

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Portage     | 6. Poynette        |
| 2. Columbus    | 7. Wisconsin Dells |
| 3. Lodi (Town) | 8. Dekorra         |
| 4. Lodi (City) | 9. West Point      |
| 5. Pacific     | 10. Pardeeville    |

## Where do we work?

---

### Top Ten Industry Groups

<b><u>Industry Group</u></b>	<b><u>Employment</u></b>
1. Manufacturing	5,510
2. Trade, Transportation, Utilities	4,320
3. Education & Health Services	4,234
4. Leisure & Hospitality	2,560
5. Public Administration	1,616
6. Construction	1,005
7. Professional & Business Services	987
8. Other Services	526
9. Financial Activities	478
10. Natural Resources & Mining	294

### Prominent Public & Private Sector Employers in Columbia County

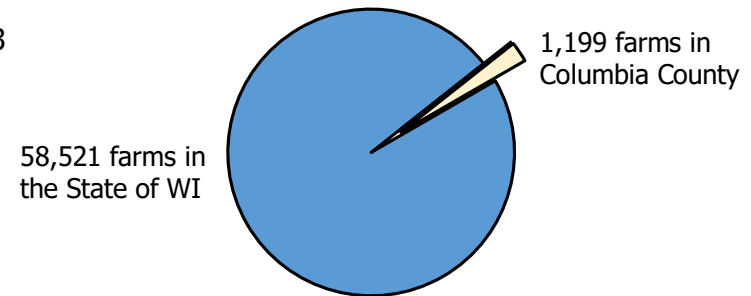
<b><u>Company</u></b>	<b><u>Product or Service</u></b>	<b><u>Size</u></b>
Aspirus Divine Savior Healthcare	Hospital, clinic, nursing home	500-999
Columbia County	Government	500-999
Cascade Mountain Ski Area	Skiing center	250-499
Associated Milk Producers, Inc.	Cheese manufacturing	250-499
Portage Community School District	Education	250-499
Saint-Gobain Corp.	Silicon components for medical industry	250-499
American Packaging Corp.	Commercial gravure printing	250-499
Columbia Correctional Facility	State maximum security prison	250-499
Wal-Mart (Portage/WI Dells)	Department store	250-499
Alkar	Manufacturing	100-249

## Agriculture

---

	<u>Average Size of Farms</u>	<u>Total Acres in Farmland</u>
<b>Wisconsin</b>	236 acres	13,800,000
<b>Columbia County</b>	242 acres	290,003

**Number of Farms in WI**



## Historical

---

- There are 20 Historical Markers located throughout the Columbia County territory.
- The Ice Age National and State Scenic Trail is one of eight Congressionally designated National Scenic Trails located throughout the United States. The Trail is a 1,200-mile footpath winding through 31 counties. It is one of the only two natural trails contained entirely within one state.
- Indian Agency House located just outside the City of Portage.
- Home of Pulitzer Prize winning author Zona Gale, author and educator Frederick Jackson Turner, and renowned environmentalist John Muir.
- The Merrimac Ferry is the lone survivor of upwards of 500 ferries chartered by territorial and state legislatures before the turn of the century.
- The Portage Canal is the only canal in Wisconsin, and it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.