

# Merrick County

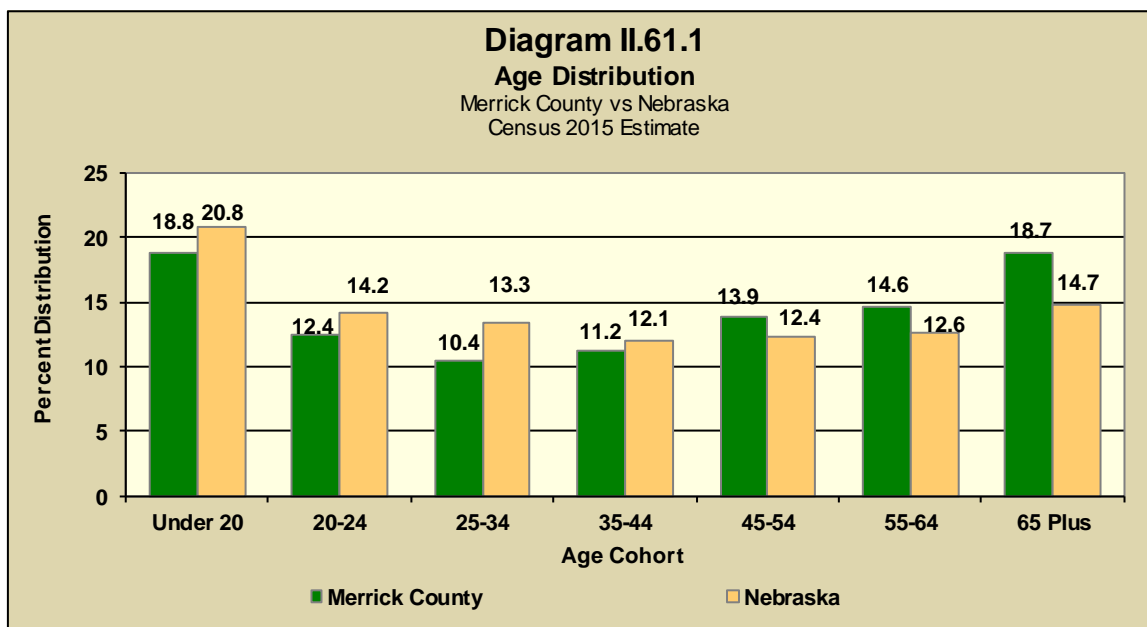
## Summary

- Between 2010 and 2015, the county’s population decreased by 0.7 percent or by 58 persons.
- Between 2010 and 2015, the Hispanic population increased by 22.5 percent.
- Between 2014 and 2015, the total number of full- and part-time jobs decreased by 23.
- In 2015, average earnings in the county was \$58,315 compared to \$53,754 statewide.
- Between 2014 and 2015, the unemployment rate decreased from 3.8 percent to 3.7 percent.
- In 2015, the average real value of new single-family construction was \$164,625.
- In fiscal year 2016, the average price of an existing home was \$105,681.
- In a November 2016 rental survey, the average vacancy rate was 4.43 percent.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Population Characteristics

The Census Bureau’s most recent Census population count indicated that between 2010 and 2015, Merrick County’s population decreased by 0.7 percent, or from 7,845 people to 7,787 people. This figure compared to a statewide population growth rate of 3.8 percent. The number of persons from 15 to 24 years of age changed from 917 in 2010 to 964 in 2015, an increase of 5.1 percent. The number of people from 25 to 34 years of age increased by 2.9 percent, and those aged between 35 and 44 decreased by 4.2 percent. As shown in Diagram II.61.1, people younger than 25 represented 31.2 percent of the population in 2015, while individuals aged 55 and older represented 33.3 percent of the population in Merrick County. This figure compared to statewide numbers of 35.0 percent of the population below the age of 25 and 27.3 percent aged 55 and older.



Between 2010 and 2015, the white population decreased by 1.9 percent, while the black population increased by 72.7 percent. The Hispanic population of any race changed from 271 to 332 or by 22.5 percent. Table II.61.1, below, presents the details of these population variations.

Subject	Nebraska			Merrick County		
	Census 2010	July 2015	% Change	Census 2010	July 2015	% Change
<b>Population</b>	1,826,341	1,896,190	3.8%	7,845	7,787	-0.7%
<b>Age</b>						
Under 14 years	383,542	394,263	2.8%	1,557	1,466	-5.8%
15 to 24 years	258,206	268,848	4.1%	917	964	5.1%
25 to 34 years	245,176	252,533	3.0%	785	808	2.9%
35 to 44 years	220,838	228,643	3.5%	914	876	-4.2%
45 to 54 years	258,726	234,477	-9.4%	1,183	1,079	-8.8%
55 to 64 years	213,176	238,715	12.0%	1,073	1,134	5.7%
65 & over	246,677	278,711	13.0%	1,416	1,460	5.7%
<b>Race</b>						
White	1,649,264	1,689,616	2.4%	7,661	7,512	-1.9%
Black	85,971	93,900	9.2%	22	38	72.7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	23,418	26,492	13.1%	35	55	57.1%
Asian	33,322	44,479	33.5%	60	84	40.0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2,061	2,338	13.4%	6	7	16.7%
Two or More Races	32,305	39,365	21.9%	61	91	49.2%
<b>Hispanic (of any race)</b>						
Hispanic or Latino	167,405	197,416	17.9%	271	332	22.5%

## Population Migration

Total population change is a combination of births, deaths, and the net migration of those arriving in and leaving the state. The result of births minus deaths is termed the “natural increase.” As calculated from data shown in Table II.61.2, at right, from April 2000 to July 2009, Merrick County’s natural increase was estimated to be 26 people. Merrick County experienced net out-migration from 2000-2009, with 564 persons having left the county during that period.<sup>97</sup> The 2015 population estimates showed a natural increase of 47 persons and a net out-migration of 105 persons since the 2010 Census. In total, Merrick County’s population decreased to 7,787 persons.

<b>1980 Population</b>	<b>8,945</b>
Natural Increase 80–90	308
Net Migration 80–90	-1,211
<b>1990 Population</b>	<b>8,042</b>
Natural Increase 90–00	110
Net Migration 90–00	52
<b>2000 Population</b>	<b>8,204</b>
Natural Increase 00–09	26
Net Migration 00–09	-564
2009 Population Estimate	7,666
<b>2010 Population</b>	<b>7,845</b>
Natural Increase 10–15	47
Net Migration 10–15	-105
<b>2015 Population Estimate</b>	<b>7,787</b>

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (DOT)’s Department of Motor Vehicles provides another source of information about migration trends. These data represent the net of driver’s license exchanges: licenses issued to new residents of Nebraska and licenses surrendered to other states when Nebraska residents relocate to a new state. Known as the driver’s license exchange data, these records show that the net change in Merrick County changed from -10 persons in 2014 to 20 persons in 2015, with an additional net movement of 11 in the first six months of 2016. The driver’s license total exchanges for the last 15 years are presented on the following page in Table II.61.3.

<sup>97</sup> Net migration includes a residual, a change the Census Bureau has not attributed to any cause.

<b>Table II.61.3</b>			
<b>Driver's Licenses Exchanged and Surrendered</b>			
Merrick County			
2001–First half of 2016 DOT Data			
<b>Year</b>	<b>In-Migrants</b>	<b>Out-Migrants</b>	<b>Net Change</b>
Calendar 2001	82	76	6
Calendar 2002	82	72	10
Calendar 2003	67	53	14
Calendar 2004	47	58	-11
Calendar 2005	76	71	5
Calendar 2006	63	71	-8
Calendar 2007	54	69	-15
Calendar 2008	93	43	50
Calendar 2009	55	52	3
Calendar 2010	91	60	31
Calendar 2011	62	40	22
Calendar 2012	75	61	14
Calendar 2013	68	55	13
Calendar 2014	60	70	-10
Calendar 2015	68	48	20
First Half of 2016	37	26	11

Another source of data describing population and migration is the Nebraska Department of Revenue (DOR). Data from the DOR indicate that total income tax returns in the county increased from 3,398 in 2014 to 3,401 in 2015, as shown in Table II.61.4, at right.

**School-Age Children**

According to the Nebraska Department of Education (DOE), the total number of school-age children in Merrick County decreased by 0.9 percent from 1,395 in 2015 to 1,382 in 2016, as shown below in Table II.61.5. The number of school-age children 5 to 11 years of age increased from 666 in 2015 to 694 in 2016.

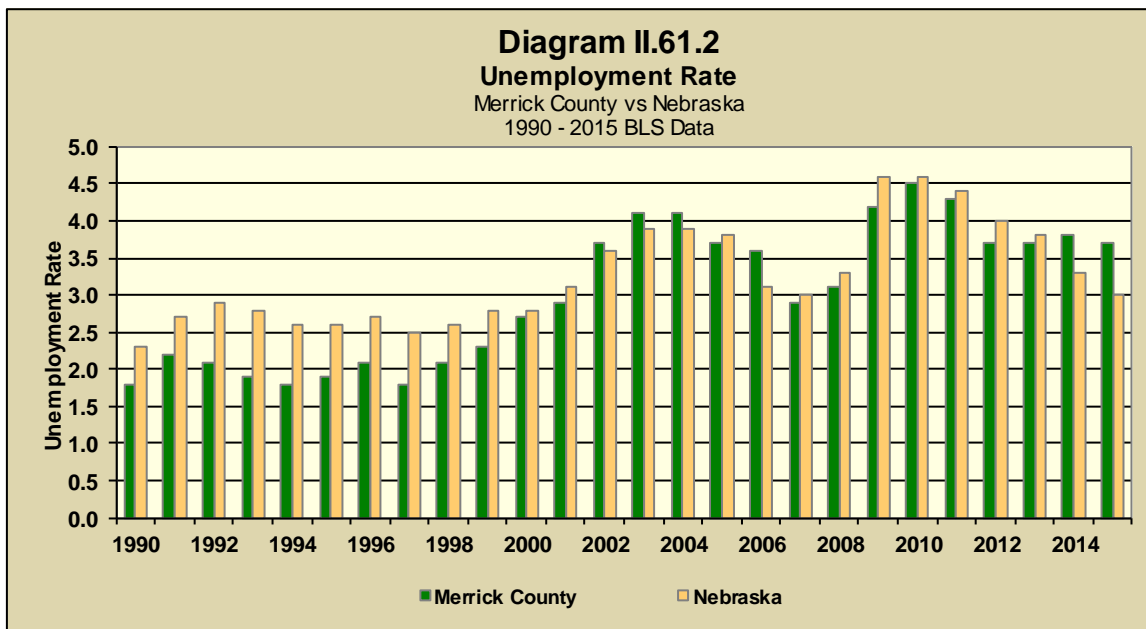
<b>Table II.61.4</b>	
<b>Income Tax Returns</b>	
Merrick County	
1991–2015 DOR Data	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Returns</b>
1991	3,581
1992	3,594
1993	3,612
1994	3,677
1995	3,669
1996	3,658
1997	3,617
1998	3,596
1999	3,531
2000	3,511
2001	3,419
2002	3,365
2003	3,348
2004	3,274
2005	3,033
2006	3,350
2007	3,306
2008	3,494
2009	3,322
2010	3,277
2011	3,319
2012	3,352
2013	3,363
2014	3,398
2015	3,401

<b>Table II.61.5</b>				
<b>School-Age Children</b>				
Merrick County				
Academic Years 1992–2016 DOE Data				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Age Group</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>5–11</b>	<b>11–13</b>	<b>14–18</b>	
1992	902	252	669	1,823
1993	941	249	680	1,870
1994	926	272	661	1,859
1995	905	276	637	1,818
1996	927	285	655	1,867
1997	932	299	643	1,874
1998	971	280	658	1,909
1999	936	244	702	1,882
2000	857	284	672	1,813
2001	866	268	650	1,784
2002	902	255	720	1,877
2003	655	217	471	1,343
2004	644	213	461	1,318
2005	747	230	637	1,614
2006	716	220	595	1,531
2007	695	240	565	1,500
2008	720	228	584	1,532
2009	686	205	586	1,477
2010	691	226	546	1,463
2011	683	211	541	1,435
2012	706	215	539	1,460
2013	682	208	497	1,387
2014	662	211	489	1,362
2015	666	217	512	1,395
2016	694	196	492	1,382

## ECONOMICS

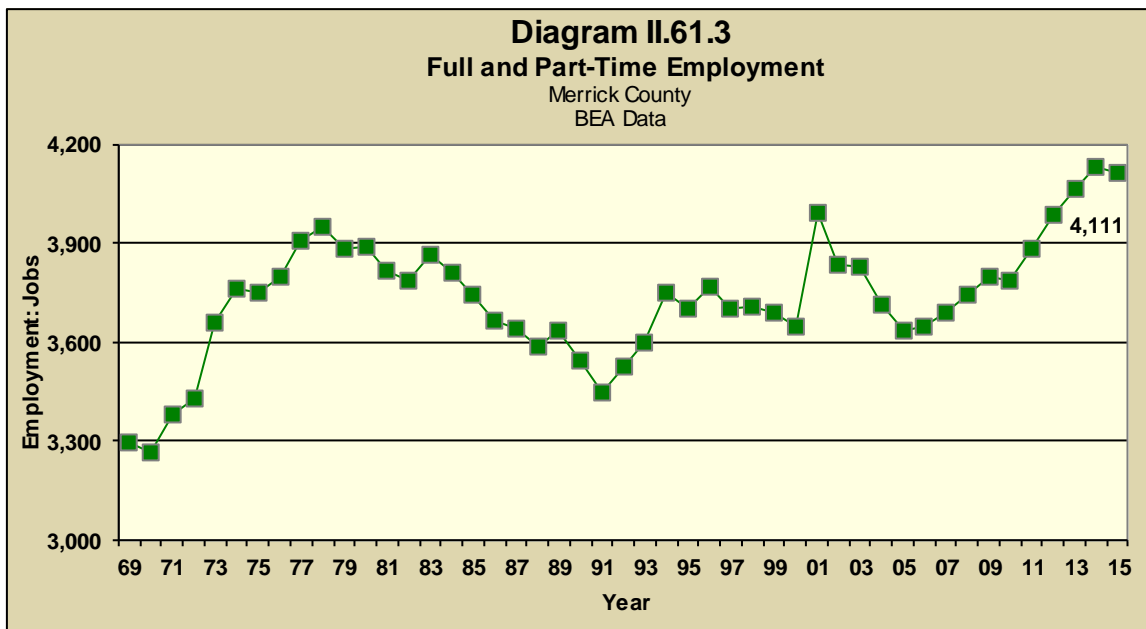
### Labor Force

Labor force and employment statistics were derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data. The labor force in Merrick County, defined as the number of people working or actively seeking work, decreased from 4,120 in 2014 to 4,057 in 2015. The total number of people employed changed from 3,965 in 2014 to 3,907 in 2015. The unemployment rate for the county was 3.7 percent, compared to the state unemployment rate of 3.0 percent for 2015. Unemployment in the county experienced a decrease of 0.1 percentage points between 2014 and 2015. These unemployment rate data are presented in Diagram II.61.2, below.

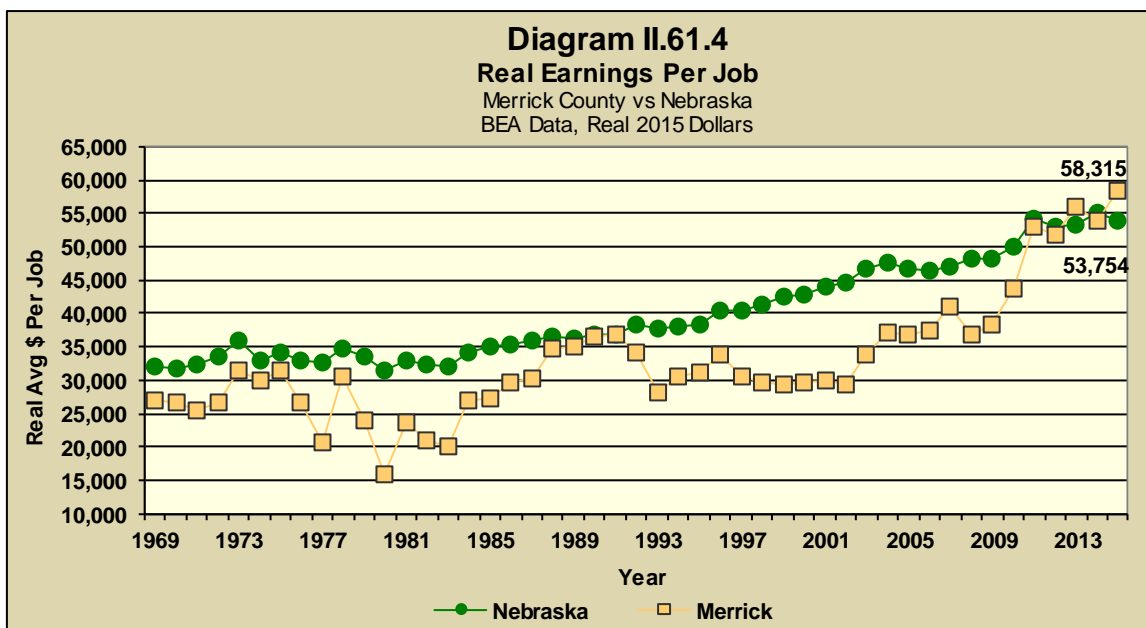


### Employment and Personal Income

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) also measures employment, defined as the total number of full and part-time jobs. In 2015, the most recent year for which these data are available, there were 4,111 jobs in Merrick County, a decrease of 23 jobs since 2014. Diagram II.61.3 presents total employment for the county from 1969 through 2015.



As shown in Diagram II.61.4, below, real average earnings per job in the county was \$58,315 in 2015, which compared to a statewide average earnings per job of \$53,754. In 2015 the U.S. average earnings per job was \$58,228.



Total real personal income in 2015, comprising all wage and salary earnings, proprietorship income, dividends, interest, rents, and transfer payments, was \$382,423,000, an increase of 4.8 percent between 2014 and 2015. Table II.61.6, on the following page, shows further annual data for the years 1969 through 2015.

**Table II.61.6**  
**Total BEA Employment and Real Personal Income**

Merrick County  
 1969–2015 BEA Data, 1,000s of Real 2015 Dollars

Year	Earnings	Social Security Contributions	Residence Adjustment	Dividends, Interest, Rents	Transfer Payments	Personal Income	Per Capita Income	Total BEA Employment	Average Real Earnings per Job
1969	88,516	3,865	21,825	28,225	12,756	147,457	17,234	3,297	26,847
1970	87,259	3,946	19,767	30,303	14,492	147,875	16,901	3,268	26,701
1971	86,361	4,250	18,784	30,687	14,731	146,313	16,625	3,383	25,528
1972	91,842	4,623	19,986	33,649	15,491	156,345	17,398	3,427	26,799
1973	115,352	5,735	21,168	37,135	17,530	185,450	20,514	3,657	31,543
1974	112,792	6,432	19,576	38,464	18,192	182,592	20,574	3,760	29,998
1975	117,821	6,615	18,509	40,041	19,972	189,727	20,906	3,751	31,410
1976	100,779	7,130	19,490	39,205	20,697	173,040	18,955	3,800	26,521
1977	80,297	7,101	20,138	41,164	21,288	155,786	16,989	3,906	20,557
1978	120,822	7,240	21,120	42,439	21,859	199,000	22,215	3,947	30,611
1979	92,547	7,197	22,638	41,252	22,417	171,656	19,267	3,883	23,834
1980	62,036	7,134	22,650	45,782	24,060	147,394	16,429	3,887	15,960
1981	90,415	7,619	22,499	50,671	24,944	180,910	19,967	3,815	23,700
1982	79,022	7,385	21,178	56,945	26,359	176,119	19,685	3,786	20,872
1983	77,330	7,334	20,509	56,942	26,851	174,297	19,605	3,866	20,003
1984	103,096	7,789	20,948	57,615	27,524	201,393	22,881	3,808	27,073
1985	102,541	7,841	20,275	55,280	27,927	198,183	22,970	3,744	27,388
1986	108,327	8,177	20,284	54,460	29,104	203,998	24,091	3,666	29,549
1987	110,583	8,298	20,306	50,982	29,232	202,805	24,446	3,642	30,363
1988	124,278	8,695	20,633	50,394	29,453	216,063	26,091	3,586	34,656
1989	127,390	9,146	19,986	53,989	28,291	220,509	27,085	3,635	35,045
1990	129,582	9,341	20,882	51,996	28,969	222,089	27,565	3,543	36,574
1991	126,978	9,224	23,770	51,250	29,744	222,517	27,526	3,446	36,848
1992	120,797	9,585	25,279	49,602	30,482	216,576	26,363	3,524	34,278
1993	101,514	9,834	28,107	50,857	31,336	201,980	24,503	3,597	28,222
1994	114,965	10,162	32,081	49,166	33,579	219,629	26,641	3,753	30,633
1995	115,009	10,124	34,011	50,245	34,983	224,124	26,945	3,703	31,058
1996	126,982	10,218	36,292	50,459	36,899	240,414	28,837	3,767	33,709
1997	113,385	10,356	39,323	52,006	37,295	231,653	27,647	3,703	30,620
1998	110,318	10,758	41,636	54,130	39,523	234,848	28,340	3,709	29,743
1999	108,495	10,877	44,125	54,883	42,116	238,741	28,799	3,688	29,418
2000	107,861	11,029	46,685	60,040	43,518	247,074	30,308	3,646	29,583
2001	119,180	12,364	45,374	56,894	45,079	254,162	31,593	3,990	29,870
2002	112,808	12,286	45,177	51,314	47,691	244,704	30,382	3,838	29,392
2003	129,717	12,326	46,885	50,576	48,937	263,789	32,838	3,827	33,895
2004	137,687	12,474	46,710	44,026	50,300	266,249	33,206	3,712	37,092
2005	133,613	12,144	46,676	38,283	51,547	257,975	32,638	3,634	36,768
2006	136,828	13,450	48,706	40,237	54,393	266,714	34,137	3,645	37,539
2007	151,145	14,700	52,674	45,821	55,688	290,628	37,700	3,691	40,949
2008	137,516	13,629	55,197	50,842	60,513	290,438	37,553	3,744	36,730
2009	145,387	13,803	50,859	46,487	65,604	294,536	37,698	3,797	38,290
2010	165,230	14,679	50,464	44,318	66,492	311,825	39,692	3,786	43,642
2011	205,638	13,619	52,282	50,707	67,119	362,127	46,817	3,882	52,972
2012	206,894	14,522	50,144	50,131	64,667	357,314	45,815	3,986	51,905
2013	227,503	16,520	44,877	50,292	64,029	370,182	47,514	4,067	55,939
2014	222,959	18,311	43,378	51,377	65,643	365,046	47,000	4,134	53,933
2015	239,732	18,980	42,873	52,712	66,086	382,423	49,110	4,111	58,315

According to the Nebraska Department of Revenue (DOR), returns from taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes (AGIs) of less than \$10,000 decreased by 9.7 percent between 2010 and 2015. Returns from taxpayers with AGIs of \$10,001 to \$25,000 decreased by 9.1 percent over the period. On the other hand, returns for AGIs of \$100,000 or more increased by 57.0 percent over the 2010 to 2015 period. Table II.61.7, on the following page, presents AGI distribution for the years 1991 through 2015.

<b>Table II.61.7</b>										
<b>Income Tax Returns by Adjusted Gross Income</b>										
Merrick County										
1991–2015 DOR Data										
Year	Less than \$10,000	\$10,001–\$15,000	\$15,001–\$25,000	\$25,001–\$35,000	\$35,001–\$50,000	\$50,001–\$75,000	\$75,001–\$100,000	\$100,000–\$250,000	More than \$250,000	Total <sup>98</sup>
1991	1,188	377	780	556	409	190	15	36	0	3,581
1992	1,210	358	759	525	452	194	40	39	0	3,594
1993	1,192	382	736	528	462	214	14	50	0	3,612
1994	1,290	362	725	496	488	229	15	42	0	3,677
1995	1,180	336	773	516	497	268	25	49	0	3,669
1996	1,182	340	688	530	494	300	56	55	0	3,658
1997	1,123	301	675	524	515	336	57	56	12	3,617
1998	1,064	294	688	502	502	361	100	70	15	3,596
1999	1,014	281	656	477	514	413	94	66	16	3,531
2000	999	272	619	484	525	423	86	85	0	3,511
2001	986	257	588	436	530	437	94	73	0	3,419
2002	974	268	569	469	498	398	95	73	0	3,365
2003	907	272	584	470	508	401	109	76	0	3,348
2004	802	291	534	454	517	425	156	84	11	3,274
2005	699	216	484	402	499	445	175	97	16	3,033
2006	712	297	552	424	524	511	196	117	17	3,350
2007	704	242	491	406	507	566	212	155	23	3,306
2008	696	282	549	489	501	518	246	184	29	3,494
2009	673	272	488	434	489	540	222	175	29	3,322
2010	621	264	484	392	459	560	267	200	30	3,277
2011	629	252	481	352	444	581	303	239	38	3,319
2012	576	259	461	399	441	568	329	264	55	3,352
2013	556	257	478	384	464	578	305	296	45	3,363
2014	544	268	465	370	500	548	323	336	44	3,398
2015	561	235	445	404	507	541	347	315	46	3,401

Poverty is the condition of having insufficient resources or income. In its extreme form, poverty is a lack of basic human needs, such as adequate and healthy food, clothing, housing, water, and health services. According to the Census Bureau’s Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program, the number of individuals in poverty decreased from 903 in 2010 to 796 in 2015, with the poverty rate reaching 10.4 percent in 2015. This compared to a state poverty rate of 12.2 percent and a national rate of 14.7 percent in 2015. Table II.61.8, at right, presents poverty data for the county.

<b>Table II.61.8</b>		
<b>Persons in Poverty</b>		
Merrick County		
1998–2015 Intercensal Estimates		
Year	Persons in Poverty	Poverty Rate
1998	879	11.0
1999	790	9.7
2000	681	8.6
2001	762	9.5
2002	845	10.5
2003	780	9.7
2004	727	9.1
2005	721	9.1
2006	775	10
2007	694	9.2
2008	759	10.1
2009	866	11.6
2010	903	11.8
2011	823	10.9
2012	838	11.0
2013	847	11.1
2014	791	10.4
2015	796	10.4

<sup>98</sup> Income levels with fewer than 10 returns were not disclosed, but are included in the totals. As a result, income levels may not sum to total.

### Business Establishments

The total number of business establishments in Merrick County increased by 48 between 1980 and 2014, at an annual rate of change of 0.7 percent, as reported by the Census Bureau and as presented in Table II.61.9, at right.<sup>99</sup> This compared to an average annual rate of change of 1.03 percent statewide. Merrick County lost 4 business establishments between 2013 and 2014, while statewide there was an increase of 406.

### HOUSING

#### Housing Development

The Census Bureau estimates that the total number of housing units increased by 2.0 percent in Merrick County between 2010 and 2015, from 3,698 to 3,771. This compared to an estimated 3.0 percent increase statewide, as shown below in Table II.61.10.

Table II.61.9 Business Establishments State of Nebraska vs. Merrick County 1980–2014 Census Bureau Data		
Year	Nebraska	Merrick County
1980	37,727	192
1981	37,582	194
1982	37,500	191
1983	41,889	205
1984	43,151	206
1985	43,115	207
1986	42,538	193
1987	42,691	197
1988	43,134	202
1989	43,302	204
1990	43,749	194
1991	44,405	213
1992	45,269	219
1993	46,059	230
1994	46,640	238
1995	47,128	222
1996	47,607	240
1997	48,588	235
1998	48,655	237
1999	48,968	226
2000	49,623	232
2001	49,710	231
2002	50,259	245
2003	50,394	252
2004	50,928	242
2005	51,440	244
2006	51,906	237
2007	52,517	245
2008	52,152	248
2009	51,633	243
2010	51,886	230
2011	51,553	232
2012	52,294	240
2013	52,585	244
2014	52,991	240

Table II.61.10 Housing Units State of Nebraska vs. Merrick County 2000 and 2015 Census Data and Intercensal Estimates				
Subject	Nebraska	% Growth Since Census	Merrick County	% Growth Since Census
2000 Census	722,668	-	3,649	-
2010 Census	796,793	10.3%	3,698	1.3%
July 2011 Estimate	801,129	0.5%	3,713	0.4%
July 2012 Estimate	804,659	1.0%	3,718	0.5%
July 2013 Estimate	809,171	1.5%	3,740	1.1%
July 2014 Estimate	814,970	2.3%	3,758	1.6%
July 2015 Estimate	820,913	3.0%	3,771	2.0%

The 2015 five-year ACS released data on the vacancy and tenure of housing units in Merrick County. As shown in Table II.61.11 on the following page, 10.7 percent of housing units, or 399, were vacant in 2015. Of the 3,325 housing units that were occupied in 2015, 73.2 percent, or 2,434, were owner-occupied and the remaining 26.8 percent were renter-occupied.

<sup>99</sup> Totals may not add due to rounding-off of county totals.



<b>Table II.61.11 Housing Units by Tenure</b> Merrick County 2010 Census and 2015 Five-Year ACS Data				
Tenure	2010 Census		2015 Five-Year ACS	
	Units	% of Total	Units	% of Total
Occupied Housing Units	3,151	85.2%	3,325	89.3%
Owner-Occupied	2,345	74.4%	2,434	73.2%
Renter-Occupied	806	25.6%	891	26.8%
Vacant Housing Units	547	14.8%	399	10.7%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>3,698</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,724</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As shown in Table II.61.12, below, there were 3,136 single family dwellings in 2015, which accounted for 84.2 percent of all housing units. Apartment units accounted for 3.9 percent of housing units, with 144 units. Mobile homes also accounted for an additional 7.0 percent of housing with 262 units.

<b>Table II.61.12 Housing Units by Type</b> Merrick County 2010 and 2015 Five-Year ACS Data				
Tenure	2010 Five-Year ACS <sup>100</sup>		2015 Five-Year ACS	
	Units	% of Total	Units	% of Total
Single-Family	3,159	85%	3,136	84.2%
Duplex	29	1%	168	4.5%
Tri- or Four-Plex	33	1%	14	.4%
Apartment	120	3%	144	3.9%
Mobile Home	355	10%	262	7.0%
Boat, RV, Van, Etc.	0	0%	0	.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,696</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,724</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table II.61.13, below, shows the disposition of vacant housing units in Merrick County. The 2015 five-year ACS shows 12.8 percent of vacant units were for rent, 4.0 percent were for sale, and 0.0 percent were rented or sold but not yet occupied. At the time of the 2010 Census there were 144 “other vacant” units, or 26.3 percent; this compared to 47.9 percent “other vacant” units in 2015.

<b>Table II.61.13 Disposition of Vacant Housing Units</b> Merrick County 2010 Census and 2015 Five-Year ACS Data				
Disposition	2010 Census		2015 Five-Year ACS	
	Units	% of Total	Units	% of Total
For Rent	128	23.4%	51	12.8%
For Sale	58	10.6%	16	4.0%
Rented or Sold, Not Occupied	20	3.7%	0	.0%
For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	197	36.0%	141	35.3%
For Migrant Workers	0	0.0%	0	.0%
Other Vacant	144	26.3%	191	47.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Annually, the Census Bureau reports for each county the number and valuation of building permits issued by permit-issuing agencies.<sup>101</sup> In most years for which data are presented, single-

<sup>100</sup> Data unavailable in 2010 Census

family unit construction represented the majority of residential development in the county. Single-family building permit authorizations in Merrick County remained at 24 from 2014 to 2015 and the average value of construction was \$164,625 in 2015. The statewide average in 2015 was about \$200,980. This value excluded the cost of the lot and infrastructure improvements. Total permitted units remained at 24 from 2014 to 2015. These changes in residential permit activity in the county compared to a decline in population of 417 people since 2000. Additional details of permit activity and per unit valuations are presented in Table II.61.14.

Year	Authorized Construction in Permit Issuing Areas					Per Unit Valuation, 1000s of Real 2015 \$			
	Single-Family Units	Duplex Units	Tri- and Four-Plex Units	Multi-Family Units	Total Units	Single-Family Units(\$)	Duplex Units (\$)	Tri- and Four-Plex Units (\$)	Multi-Family Units (\$)
1980	15	.	.	8	23	101.30	.	.	54.10
1981	15	.	.	.	15	85.40	.	.	.
1982	11	.	4	.	15	59.70	.	74.60	.
1983	9	.	.	.	9	65.80	.	.	.
1984	9	.	.	.	9	78.40	.	.	.
1985	2	.	.	.	2	52.70	.	.	.
1986	3	.	.	.	3	105.30	.	.	.
1987	11	.	.	.	11	77.80	.	.	.
1988	11	.	.	.	11	79.70	.	.	.
1989	8	.	.	.	8	81.30	.	.	.
1990	20	.	.	.	20	103.40	.	.	.
1991	28	.	.	.	28	78.40	.	.	.
1992	15	2	.	.	17	62.80	50.60	.	.
1993	27	16	3	12	58	87.70	53.20	53.20	63.30
1994	38	.	.	5	43	95.10	.	.	50.60
1995	34	.	.	.	34	106.60	.	.	.
1996	21	.	.	.	21	109.30	.	.	.
1997	35	.	.	5	40	117.60	.	.	73.20
1998	29	.	.	.	29	98.20	.	.	.
1999	41	.	.	.	41	104.60	.	.	.
2000	18	.	.	.	18	114.80	.	.	.
2001	23	.	.	.	23	110.70	.	.	.
2002	22	.	6	.	28	159.8	.	111.9	.
2003	25	.	.	8	33	109.0	.	.	14.2
2004	25	.	.	5	30	103.8	.	.	13.9
2005	28	.	.	5	33	107.5	.	.	13.4
2006	25	.	.	5	30	120.1	.	.	13.0
2007	32	.	.	52	84	104.7	.	.	55.4
2008	8	.	.	.	8	208.8	.	.	.
2009	14	.	.	.	14	146.4	.	.	.
2010	19	4	.	.	23	133.8	81.3	.	.
2011	17	.	.	.	17	172.6	.	.	.
2012	31	.	.	.	31	189.0	.	.	.
2013	29	.	.	.	29	163.4	.	.	.
2014	24	.	.	.	24	190.3	.	.	.
2015	24	.	.	.	24	164.6	.	.	.

<sup>101</sup> Permits do not necessarily translate into a precise and full count of housing production. Some dwellings permitted are never constructed. As well, some dwellings may be built in areas that lack a building permitting process, have a lax permitting process, or have insufficient oversight of construction activity.

## Housing Characteristics

The Department of Property Assessment Division (PAD) provided a database of residential property transactions over the last 18 years. Property transactions are primarily related to existing buildings, with very few for new construction. During fiscal years 1999 through 2016, there were 1,691 property transactions in Merrick County. Of these, 1,579 were for single-family homes during this 18-year period, as shown in Table II.61.15.

<b>Table II.61.15</b>						
<b>Residential Property Transactions</b>						
Merrick County						
Fiscal Years 1999–2016 PAD Data						
<b>Year</b>	<b>Single-Family</b>	<b>Mobile Home</b>	<b>Duplex</b>	<b>Townhome</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Total</b>
1999	78	7	0	1	1	87
2000	98	4	0	1	0	103
2001	75	3	0	0	4	82
2002	90	3	0	4	0	97
2003	109	0	1	0	0	110
2004	84	1	0	1	0	86
2005	90	0	0	0	0	90
2006	121	9	0	4	3	137
2007	87	1	0	5	1	94
2008	100	5	0	2	0	107
2009	62	4	0	1	0	67
2010	91	3	1	1	0	96
2011	79	3	0	6	0	88
2012	65	1	0	8	0	74
2013	74	2	0	6	0	82
2014	84	0	0	1	0	85
2015	95	4	0	5	0	104
2016	97	3	0	2	0	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,579</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,691</b>

The PAD data also include descriptions of the quality of the building, which refers to the grade of materials and workmanship used in the original construction. Of the 898 single-family home property transactions for units built before 1930, .1 percent of units were of low quality and 19.0 percent were of fair quality. Conversely, of the 46 homes built from 2001 through 2010, 0.0 percent of units were of low quality and 28.3 percent of fair quality. Table II.61.16 provides details on the quality of these single-family residential dwellings by vintage of construction.

<b>Table II.61.16</b>										
<b>Single-Family Homes by Year Built and Quality of Materials and Workmanship</b>										
Merrick County										
Fiscal Years 1999–2016 PAD Data										
<b>Quality</b>	<b>Before 1930</b>	<b>1931-1960</b>	<b>1961-1970</b>	<b>1971-1980</b>	<b>1981-1990</b>	<b>1991-2000</b>	<b>2001-2010</b>	<b>2011-2016</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Total</b>
Low	1	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	9
Fair	171	18	24	24	7	13	13	1	1	272
Average	711	128	147	128	13	68	24	17	3	1,239
Good	14	1	3	8	6	12	9	2	0	55
Very Good	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Missing	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1,579</b>

In regard to the current condition of residential dwellings, of the same 898 single-family homes built before 1930, 16.7 percent of the homes were worn out or badly worn, and 74.1 percent

were in average condition. Table II.61.17 provides details about the condition of single-family residential dwellings by year built.

Condition	Before 1930	1931-1960	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-2000	2001-2010	2011-2016	Missing	Total
Worn Out	8	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	10
Badly Worn	142	7	11	4	2	0	0	0	1	167
Average	665	133	159	141	18	56	18	7	3	1,200
Good	81	9	6	17	7	38	26	13	0	197
Very Good	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Missing	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1,579</b>

**Housing Costs**

Between 2010 and 2016, the average price of an existing single-family home changed from \$88,836 to \$105,681, a total increase of 19.0 percent, as shown in Table II.61.18, at right.

Single-family home prices from the PAD database also indicated a general increase in average home prices and average floor area for newer homes. The average home price for single-family homes in Merrick County ranged from \$56,964 for homes built before 1930 to \$175,420 for homes built from 2001 to 2010, and \$208,139 for the newest homes built between 2011 and 2016.<sup>102</sup> Homes built from 2011 through 2016 were also larger, averaging 1,661 square feet per unit. Table II.61.19, below, provides additional details about single-family homes.

Fiscal Year	Average Sales Price (\$)
1999	56,605
2000	53,029
2001	55,854
2002	63,022
2003	57,147
2004	66,407
2005	66,330
2006	73,287
2007	69,434
2008	76,461
2009	74,223
2010	88,836
2011	88,687
2012	105,322
2013	94,250
2014	91,888
2015	111,756
2016	105,681
<b>Average</b>	<b>77,203</b>

Year Built	Average Sales Price (\$)	Average Floor Area (Sq. Ft.)	Price per Sq. Ft. <sup>103</sup> (\$)
Before 1930	56,964	1,451	39.3
1931-1960	72,996	1,358	53.8
1961-1970	90,216	1,430	63.1
1971-1980	85,039	1,407	60.4
1981-1990	82,382	1,440	57.2
1991-2000	118,408	1,592	74.4
2001-2010	175,420	1,817	96.6
2011-2016	208,139	1,661	125
<b>Average</b>	<b>76,528</b>	<b>1,460</b>	<b>52</b>

<sup>102</sup> When a manufactured home is placed on a permanent foundation, the Assessor considers the property a single-family dwelling. Hence, these property transactions are seen even though a single-family new construction permit was probably not issued for the manufactured home.

<sup>103</sup> Price per sq. ft. may not compute precisely due to rounding-off of sales price and floor area.

**SURVEY OF RENTAL PROPERTIES**

From September through November of 2016, a telephone survey was conducted with landlords and rental property managers throughout Nebraska. Table II.61.20 presents some basic statistics about the completed surveys from this and other surveys conducted from 2002 through 2016 in Merrick County. The number of completed surveys increased from 11 in 2015 to 16 in 2016. Between 2015 and 2016 the vacancy rate for all units increased by 1.5 percentage points and was at 4.43 percent in 2016.

Year	Completed Surveys	Total Units	Vacancy Rate	Absorption Rate
2002	2	72	.0	.0
2003	4	58	3.5	7.1
2004	9	197	12.2	40.2
2005	10	215	9.3	27.3
2006	10	266	4.5	63.2
2007	11	162	8.6	17.3
2008	13	253	5.5	33.1
2009	11	203	4.9	43.9
2010	9	125	4.8	26.0
2011	10	223	3.1	42.9
2012	13	273	1.1	48.3
2013	12	261	3.5	22.0
2014	17	305	3.9	25.5
2015	11	243	2.9	30
2016	16	610	4.4	19.2

Table II.61.21 below shows the amount of total and vacant units with their associated vacancy rates. At the time of the survey, there were an estimated 91 single family units in Merrick County, with 2 of them available. This translates into a vacancy rate of 2.2 percent in Merrick County, which compares to a single family vacancy rate of 3.6 percent for the State of Nebraska. There were 462 apartment units reported in the survey, with 20 of them available, which resulted in a vacancy rate of 4.3 percent. This compares to a statewide vacancy rate of 4.1 percent for apartment units across the state. The average vacancy rate for all unit types over the last five years was 3.2 percent.

Place	Total Units	Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate	5-Year Vacancy Rate Average
Single Family	91	2	2.2%	2.8%
Apartments	462	20	4.3%	3.8%
Mobile Homes	12	3	25.0%	10.8%
“Other” Units	0	0	.0%	.
Don't Know	45	2	4.4%	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4.43%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>

Table II.61.22, reports units by number of bedrooms. Three bedroom units were the most common type of reported single family unit, with 23 units. The most common apartment units were one bedroom units, with 92 units. Details for additional unit types are reported on the following page.

<b>Table II.61.22</b>						
<b>Rental Units by Number of Bedrooms</b>						
Merrick County						
2016 Survey of Rental Properties						
<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>Single Family Units</b>	<b>Apartment Units</b>	<b>Mobile Homes</b>	<b>“Other” Units</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Total</b>
Efficiency	0	0	0	0	.	0
One	0	92	0	0	.	92
Two	17	74	11	0	.	102
Three	23	12	1	0	.	36
Four	1	0	0	0	.	1
Don’t Know	50	284	0	0	45	379
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>610</b>

Table II.61.23, at right, displays the vacancy rate of single family units by the number of bedrooms. Three bedroom units were the most common type of reported single family unit, which had a vacancy rate of 4.3 percent.

<b>Table II.61.23</b>			
<b>Single Family Units by Number of Bedrooms</b>			
Merrick County			
2016 Survey of Rental Properties			
<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Available Units</b>	<b>Vacancy Rates</b>
Efficiency	0	0	%
One	0	0	%
Two	17	1	5.9%
Three	23	1	4.3%
Four	1	0	.0%
Don’t know	50	0	.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

Table II.61.24, below, displays the vacancy rate of apartment units by the number of bedrooms. The most common apartment units were one bedroom units, which had a vacancy rate of 3.3 percent.

<b>Table II.61.24</b>			
<b>Apartment Units by Number of Bedrooms</b>			
Merrick County			
2016 Survey of Rental Properties			
<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Available Units</b>	<b>Vacancy Rates</b>
Efficiency	0	0	%
One	92	3	3.3%
Two	74	3	4.1%
Three	12	0	.0%
Four	0	0	%
Don’t know	284	14	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

Average market-rate rents by unit type are shown in Table II.61.25, below. Not all respondents were able to disclose the rental amounts for their units, so there may be some statistical aberrations in the computed rental rates, but generally those units with more bedrooms had higher rents.

<b>Table II.61.25</b>					
<b>Average Market Rate Rents by Number of Bedrooms</b>					
Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties					
<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>Single Family Units</b>	<b>Apartment Units</b>	<b>Mobile Homes</b>	<b>“Other” Units</b>	<b>Total</b>
Efficiency	\$	\$495	\$	\$	\$495
One	\$	\$428	\$	\$	\$428
Two	\$671	\$503	\$400	\$	\$547
Three	\$1,062	\$733	\$500	\$	\$804
Four	\$1,537	\$	\$	\$	\$1,537
Don't know	\$581	\$475	\$	\$	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$699</b>	<b>\$497</b>	<b>\$450</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$566</b>

Table II.61.26, below, shows the average rental rates for assisted units by number of bedrooms and unit type. Since assistance is often based on income of the resident or other case by case determinations, average assisted rents can vary across bedroom size.

<b>Table II.61.26</b>					
<b>Average Assisted Rate Rents by Number of Bedrooms</b>					
Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties					
<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>Single Family Units</b>	<b>Apartment Units</b>	<b>Mobile Homes</b>	<b>“Other” Units</b>	<b>Total</b>
Efficiency	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
One	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Two	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Three	\$136	\$	\$	\$	\$136
Four	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$136</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$136</b>

Table II.61.27, on the following page, shows vacancy rates for single family units by average rental rates for Merrick County. The most common rent for single family units was above \$1,500 dollars and units in this price range had a vacancy rate of 0.0 percent.

<b>Table II.61.27</b> <b>Single Family Market Rate Rents by Vacancy Status</b> Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties			
Average Rents	Single Family Units	Available Single Family Units	Vacancy Rate
Less Than \$500	11	0	.0%
\$500 to \$750	25	2	8.0%
\$750 to \$1,000	0	0	%
\$1,000 to \$1,250	0	0	%
\$1,250 to \$1,500	0	0	%
Above \$1,500	49	0	.0%
Missing	6	0	.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

The average rent and availability of apartment units is displayed in Table II.61.28, below. The most common rent for apartments was \$500 to \$750 dollars and the units in this price range had a vacancy rate of 4.9 percent.

<b>Table II.61.28</b> <b>Apartment Market Rate Rents by Vacancy Status</b> Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties			
Average Rents	Apartment Units	Available Apartment Units	Vacancy Rate
Less Than \$500	176	6	3.4%
\$500 to \$750	286	14	4.9%
\$750 to \$1,000	0	0	%
\$1,000 to \$1,250	0	0	%
\$1,250 to \$1,500	0	0	%
Above \$1,500	0	0	%
Missing	0	0	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

Respondents were asked if utilities are included in the rent and, as shown in Table II.61.29 below, 9 respondents, or 64.3 percent, included some sort of utility in the rent.

<b>Table II.61.29</b> <b>Are there any utilities included with the rent?</b> Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties	
Period	Respondent
Yes	9
No	5
<b>% Offering Utilities</b>	<b>64.3%</b>



The type of utility included in the rent is shown in Table II.61.30, below. There were 4 respondents who included electricity, 2 respondents who included natural gas, 9 respondents who included water and sewer and 9 respondents included trash collection in the rent.

<b>Table II.61.30</b> <b>Which utilities are included with the rent?</b> Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties	
Type of Utility Provided	Respondent
Electricity	4
Natural Gas	2
Water/Sewer	9
Trash Collection	9

Table II.61.31, at right, shows the number of survey respondents who keep a waiting list. As can be seen, 5 respondents said they keep a waitlist, with an estimated 58 number of persons on the wait list.

<b>Table II.61.31</b> <b>Do you keep a waiting list?</b> Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties	
Period	Respondent
Yes	5
No	9
<b>Waitlist Size</b>	<b>58</b>

Respondents were also asked how they would rate the need for renovating existing units. As shown in Table II.61.32 below, most respondents indicated there was moderate need for the renovation of existing single-family units and moderate need for the renovation of existing apartment units.

<b>Table II.61.32</b> <b>How would you rate the need for renovation of existing units in the city?</b> Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties				
Need	Single Family	Apartments	Mobile Homes	Other Units
No Need	1	1	1	
Low Need	1	1	1	
Moderate Need	6	6	6	
High Need	2	2	2	
Extreme Need	2	1	1	

Respondents were also asked how they would rate the need for the construction of new units. As shown in Table II.61.33 below, most respondents indicated there was either low need or extreme need for the construction of new single-family units and low need for the construction of new apartment units.

<b>Table II.61.33</b> <b>How would you rate the need for construction of new units in the city?</b> Merrick County 2016 Survey of Rental Properties				
Need	Single Family	Apartments	Mobile Homes	Other Units
No Need	1	1	1	
Low Need	4	4	4	
Moderate Need	2	2	2	
High Need	2	2	2	
Extreme Need	4	3	3	

