

Changes to 'rural' definition discussed

MADISON — A town hall meeting will examine recent changes to the federal definition of "rural" and its effects on eligibility for public and nonprofit funding.

The forum, "What is Rural? The Impact of Definitions," will be 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 2, at the Lussier Family Heritage Center on Lake Farm Road, Madison.

"The definition of 'rural' has a direct impact on whether you can get the resources you need for your area," said Kathy Schmitt, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection community outreach specialist. "Even some private foundations won't give a community a second glance if it no longer meets their definition of rural."

The forum will include:

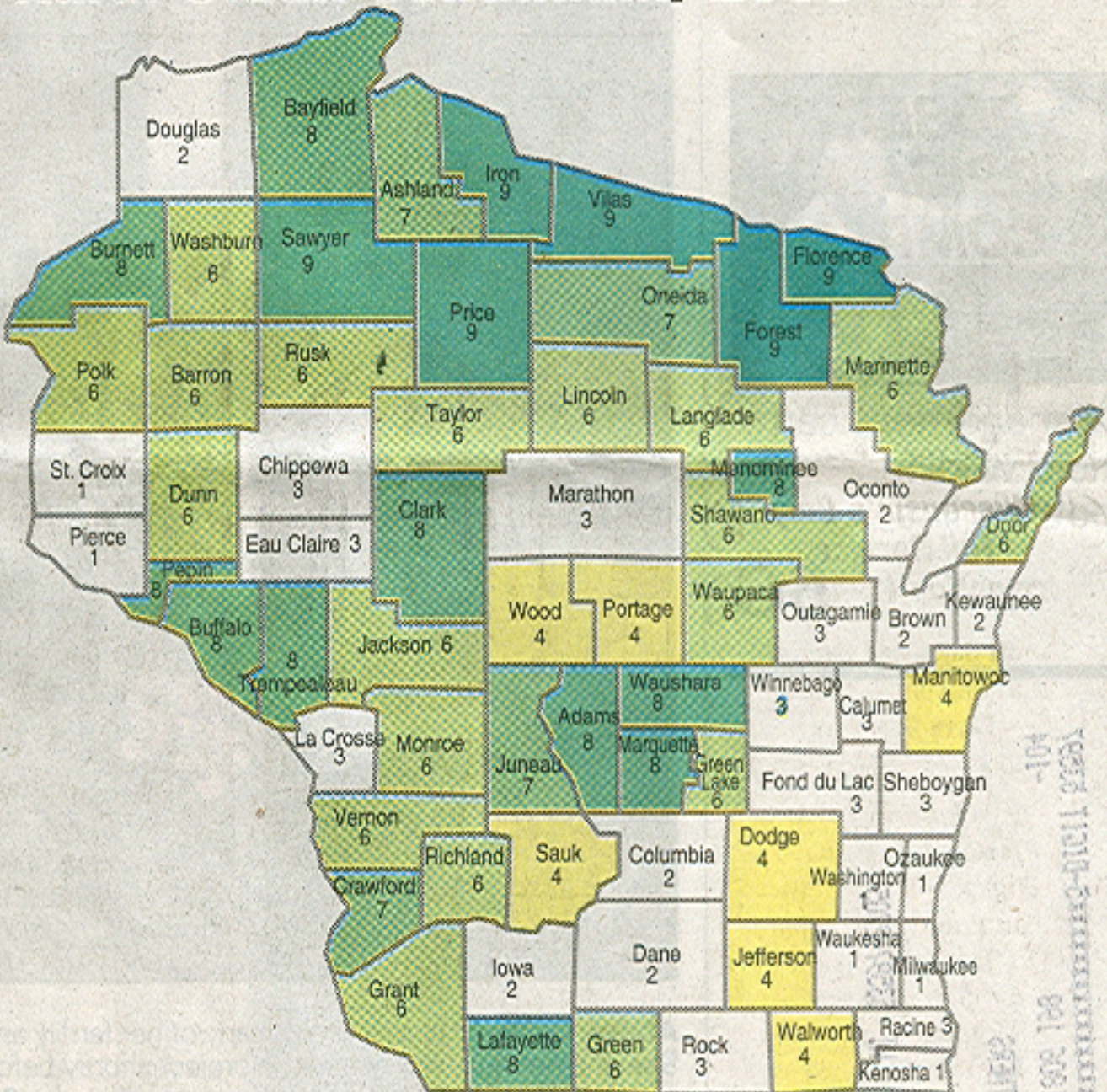
- Background information on the changes in definitions.
- A diverse panel of speakers who will talk about the effects of the changes from local, statewide and regional perspectives.
- A facilitated open mic session for participants to engage in a discussion about the effects.

Almost a dozen rural counties in Wisconsin already have suffered from the definition changes.

"The purpose of this town hall meeting is to bring about awareness," Ms. Schmitt said. "There are a lot of people unaware of how the change in definition can affect their ability to secure grants and participate in government and non-government programs."

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget's Census 2000 version of metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas classifies 298 formerly nonmetro counties as metro; 45 metro counties were reclassified as nonmetro.

Rural-Urban Continuum, 2003



1- Urban >1m metro	6- Nonmetro 2.5-20k, adj to metro
2- Urban <1m metro	7- Nonmetro 2.5-20k, not adj to metro
3- Urban <250k metro	8- Nonmetro <2.5k, adj to metro
4- Micropolitan > 20k, adj to metro	9- Nonmetro <2.5k not adj to metro
5- Nonmetro > 20k, not adj to metro	

Source: U.S. Office of Management and Budget

fied as nonmetro.

If there is sufficient interest, Wisconsin Rural Partners will use information gathered at the meeting to work toward

change in how programs use definitions to define who can participate.

To register visit www.wirural.org or call (608) 850-4411.