



Population Statistics

of Janesville, Wisconsin

This list is provided by Al Hulick of the Janesville Community Development Department. Statistics are based on State of Wisconsin WDOA Population Estimates (as of January 1st each year).

| Year | Population | Notable Event |
|-------------|-------------------|--|
| 1835 | 5 | First European settlers come to Janesville. |
| 1842 | 215 | First bridge across Rock River at Janesville. |
| 1843 | 333 | “Upper dam” built in Janesville. |
| 1845 | 817 | First saw and grist mills established; first school started. |
| 1847 | 1,485 | |
| 1848 | 1,812 | First telegraph office opened in Janesville. |
| 1850 | 3,100 | Irish immigrants come to Janesville to work on the railroad. Norwegian immigrants publish a Norwegian language newspaper. |
| 1851 | | Janesville is the site of the first Wisconsin State Fair. |
| 1853 | 4,800 | First passenger train comes to Janesville. Janesville’s first municipal election is held. |
| 1855 | 7,118 | Janesville High School opens. |
| 1850 | 7,703 | |
| 1864 | 7,627 | |
| 1870 | 8,789 | Second Rock County Courthouse built. |
| 1875 | 10,115 | Janesville Cotton Mills dedicated. |
| 1880 | 9,018 | Janesville Electric Company brings electricity to the city. Harris Manufacturing exports agricultural reapers to Mexico. A national depression affects Janesville. |
| 1885 | 9,941 | Janesville Street Railway started. |
| 1890 | 10,836 | Streetcar suburbs -- Forest Park, Glen Etta, and Riverview --appeared |
| 1900 | 13,185 | New Rock County Jail built on Water Street |
| 1910 | 13,894 | |
| 1920 | 18,293 | Benson Avenue bungalows are built between 1919 and 1920 in response to the influx of working-class families that coincided with the opening of the General Motors tractor factory. |

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| 1930 | 21,628 | Chevrolet is making 450 cars per day--a number that will increase to 700 per day in May--and adds a new 1.5-ton truck to its Janesville assembly line. |
| 1940 | 22,992 | |
| 1950 | 24,899 | Janesville sets a residential construction record: 210 new houses, bringing to 717 the number built since World War II's end. The Rock County Airport provides passenger airline service. |
| 1960 | 35,184 | Prosperous Rock County has industry and farms: it has bloomed as one of the state's most vigorous areas; Beloit and Janesville are manufacturing centers; dairy farmers ship milk to Chicago. |
| 1970 | 46,426 | GM strike in Janesville over wages, cost-of-living increases, and retirement. Autoworkers' wages are \$4.02 an hour plus another \$1.75 in benefits |
| 1973 | 47,390 | |
| 1974 | 49,448 | |
| 1975 | 49,656 | |
| 1976 | 50,043 | |
| 1977 | 50,509 | |
| 1978 | 50,135 | |
| 1979 | 51,500 | Parker Pen's world headquarters (One Parker Place) gets renovated. |
| 1980 | 51,071 | National recession affects Janesville. However, Simmons USA establishes a mattress and bedding firm in the city |
| 1981 | 51,101 | |
| 1982 | 51,165 | Unemployment in Janesville is 21 percent. Because many people have exhausted their benefits, the true rate is closer to 30 percent. Mortgage rates in Janesville average 18.5 percent. |
| 1983 | 51,095 | Janesville Public Library becomes automated, putting its card catalog and circulation records on computer. 1700 second-shift workers return to the line at the Janesville GM plant, bringing the plant up to full production with 6500 employees. Current hourly wages are \$12 an hour for assemblers, \$14 for skilled workers. Bliss Family celebrates 100 th year of owning the Janesville Gazette. |
| 1984 | 52,085 | GM announces that pickup truck-building operations will be moved to a factory in Fort Wayne, Indiana. More than 1,250 Janesville workers accept the transfer offer. First Baptist Church celebrates its 140 th anniversary. |
| 1985 | 51,926 | Janesville celebrates its sesquicentennial, 1835-1985. Parker Pen announces the sale of its pen business. The new owners close the corporate headquarters downtown. |

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| 1986 | 52,202 | |
| 1987 | 52,336 | GM employs 5,600 people, 1,500 fewer than the plant's peak employment of 7,100 in 1980. |
| 1988 | 52,381 | |
| 1989 | 52,826 | |
| 1990 | 52,210 | GM of Janesville builds its last Chevrolet Cavalier and begins renovating the assembly line to make full-size sport-utility vehicles. Mercy Hospital adds a sports medicine clinic and centers for cancer treatment and plastic surgery. |
| 1991 | 52,538 | |
| 1992 | 53,358 | Racism put the city in the national spotlight with several Ku Klux Klan rallies. |
| 1993 | 54,022 | |
| 1994 | 54,553 | The birth of Miracle, the white buffalo calf, brings national attention to Rock County. |
| 1995 | 56,141 | |
| 1996 | 57,928 | The Janesville Public Library – renamed Hedberg Public Library to honor its major donors – opens its new facility. |
| 1997 | 58,639 | Janesville is the fastest-growing Rock County community in the 1990s. The city planner attributed the growth to “new jobs coming into the area along with the overall vitality of our retail and industrial base.” |
| 1998 | 59,223 | |
| 1999 | 59,626 | |
| 2000 | 60,200 | Census Bureau puts Janesville's population above 60,000 for the first time: a 14% jump since 1990. Good economic times, low unemployment, good schools, low housing costs, and proximity to I-90, Madison, and Rockford are all explanations given for this growth. |
| 2001 | 60,483 | Janesville Performing Arts Center opens. |
| 2002 | 60,775 | |
| 2003 | 61,110 | |
| 2004 | 61,130 | |
| 2005 | 62,130 | |
| 2006 | 62,540 | Wal-Mart opens SuperCenter in Janesville. |
| 2008 | | General Motors closes its Janesville facility. |