

# Iowa's poorest areas making some strides

By DAVID YEPSEN

Des Moines, Iowa, Tuesday, May 22, 1990

Register Staff Writer

Some of Iowa's poorest counties are showing the most improvement in reducing poverty, an indication incomes may be increasing in those areas, the state's latest poverty figures show.

On the downside, more than one out of 10 Iowans remains at or below the federal poverty level.

The Iowa Department of Education report shows 11 percent of Iowans lived in poverty in 1988, up from 10.7 percent in 1987. A total of

310,533 Iowans were living in poverty in 1988, 6,281 more than in 1987, or a 2.1 percent increase.

## "Minimal Change"

Steve Boal, the research and data consultant for the department, said the report shows "minimal change" in Iowa's poverty rate from 1987 to 1988.

"Some of the worst counties showed some of the most improvement" in reducing the numbers of Iowans in poverty, however.

The data were compiled by the department using information from 1988 state income tax returns. It is used by the state in planning educational programs.

## Pockets of Poverty

The report showed the pockets of poverty in Iowa remain the same — largely concentrated in southern and northeast Iowa — while the state's urban counties enjoyed the lowest rates of poverty.

The numbers are likely to be an issue in the 1990 campaign for governor. Gov. Terry Branstad, a Republican, has touted his economic development efforts, yet his own administration's data show an increase in poverty. Democrats are critical of his economic development efforts.

Charles Palmer, the Human Services commissioner for Branstad, said there are "several things going on. You are seeing in some communities more of a community development effort that is seeing the creation of some new jobs."

## "People Moving Out"

Some of the improvement in poverty rates in poor counties may have occurred because "in some of the hardest hit, you'll have some people moving out" in search of jobs, Palmer said. The departure of people below the poverty rate would show up as an improvement in the poverty rate.

Also, that federal standards go up each year would explain some of the increase in poverty across the state. Someone living near the poverty rate

The Register

## Poverty in Iowa

Here are the counties with the highest and lowest percentages of their residents who have low incomes.

### The worst

	1988 low income people	Percentage of population
1. Ringgold	984	18.2%
2. Davis	1,565	18.0
3. Taylor	1,268	16.9
4. Wayne	1,196	16.8
5. Delaware	3,053	16.4
6. Clayton	3,275	16.2
Decatur	1,396	16.2
8. Keokuk	1,888	15.7
Van Buren	1,288	15.7
10. Howard	1,638	15.6

### The best

	1988 low income people	Percentage of population
1. Story	4,922	6.8%
2. Johnson	7,072	8.2
3. Grundy	1,085	8.5
Boone	2,171	8.5
5. Warren	3,207	8.7
6. Linn	15,128	8.8
7. Polk	29,700	9.1
8. Scott	14,523	9.3
9. Black Hawk	11,667	9.4
10. Jasper	3,435	9.5

SOURCE: Iowa Department of Education

POVERTY

Please turn to Page 10A

