

Washtenaw, Livingston rental rates highest in Michigan

Posted by [chefflin](#) April 09, 2008 09:58AM

By Tina Reed
The Ann Arbor News

Washtenaw and Livingston counties remain the two most expensive areas in the state to be a renter, according to a national report.

The cost of rent and utilities, known as the fair market rent, for a two-bedroom housing unit in the Ann Arbor metropolitan area is \$942. For Livingston County's metropolitan area, it is \$894.

The local numbers compare with \$805 for the metropolitan area containing Detroit, Warren and Livonia.

The information is compiled by the National Low Income Housing Coalition in a report released this week, "Out of Reach 2007-2008," which uses data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The report calculates the earning power that renters nationwide would need in order to afford housing. It projects that the national average is \$17.32 an hour to afford the rent for a two-bedroom unit.

In Michigan, the average is \$14.22 an hour, while Ann Arbor's housing dictates that a renter would need to earn a little more than \$18 an hour, or about \$37,680. In Livingston County, the figure would be about \$17 a hour, or \$35,760, to afford the average rent of a two-bedroom unit.

Defining affordable rent as up to 30 percent of a person's total income, the report found just more than half of Ann Arbor renters and about 46 percent in the Livingston County area are unable to afford rental costs.

The report's findings came as no surprise to some Ann Arbor residents enjoying the spring weather near State Street Monday afternoon.

Miche Jo, a psychology student and research worker at the University of Michigan, said she rents a two-bedroom townhouse that's part of university housing on North Campus for just more than \$1,000 a month. It's a better deal than living downtown because it includes heating and high-speed Internet, she said.

"Ann Arbor is expensive compared to the rest of Michigan - at least that's what I found," Jo said. "I'm from another college town - Bloomington, Indiana - and the prices here are higher."

The costs makes it difficult for people in lower income brackets to living in more desirable locations, Jo said.

Christopher Peck, who rents a room on South Division Street, said \$450 gets him a small room with a "tiny kitchenette" and a shared bathroom on the second floor of a large house. He thinks the job market is causing more rooms downtown to open up because more people are unable to afford the rent.

"I like to live downtown, but you have to pay for it," said Peck, who just moved back to Ann Arbor after living in Florida for three and a half years. He's lived in Ann Arbor for about 30 years. Although it's more expensive to live in the area, he said, it's also possible to earn more money locally.

"Florida doesn't pay anything; you can't move there and expect to make what you did here," Peck said. "But you have to make money to live here, bottom line."

While about 26 percent of Michigan residents are renters, about 40 percent of the Ann Arbor's metropolitan area is made up of renters, compared to only 12 percent in Livingston County's metropolitan area.

The average cost for two-bedroom rental housing in Michigan, the Ann Arbor area and the Livingston County area has gone up 26 percent, 25 percent and 30 percent, respectively, since 2000, the report says.

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Over 40,000 U-M students? Plus the rest of the renters/ the population, there ya go.

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"Fools build houses and the wise live in them"(Dutch proverb)
Is that not true any more ????

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