

Baker, Malheur, Union, & Wallowa Counties Regional Profile

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Demographics

Population growth

- Regional population grew by only 12% from 1990 to 2010, which was quite a bit lower than the 35% increase observed across the state overall ¹
- Growth in the region during this period was due more to natural increase than to in-migration (natural increase is the excess of births to deaths) ²

Change in ethnic composition ¹

- The size of the Latino population grew by about 75% between 1990 and 2010, from 8.2% to 14.4%, and represents the largest population of color in the region
- Over the last 2 decades, this region has consistently had greater representation of Latinos than the state, and in 2010 was about two percentage points higher than the state (Latinos were 12% of Oregon population in 2010)

Age ³

- The region is older than Oregon overall (though Malheur is a bit younger than the state), and is aging a bit more rapidly than the state

Employment & Labor

Unemployment ⁴

- Since 1990, the region has had consistently higher unemployment than the state (by about one percentage point)
- Unemployment has increased since 1990 – from about 8% in 1990 to about 12% in 2009-13, at a pace a bit slower than the state

Sources of income ⁴

- The majority of households (about 67%) get income from wages and salaries, but this is just below the state percentage (about 73%)
- About 37% of households get income from Social Security (higher than state percentage), followed by 20% that get income from retirement (close to the state percentage), and about 4% that receive income from public assistance programs (on par with the state percentage)

Industries employing regional residents: ⁴

- Between 1990 and the 2009-2013 period, the industry in which the highest proportion of regional residents worked did not change. At both times, the highest proportion of employed residents worked in the Education, Health, and Social Services industry (19% in 1990; 23% in 2009-13)
 - Note: Education, Health, and Social Service industry employment includes work in the public and private sectors
- In 1990, about 54% of regional resident workers were employed in the top three industries of 1) Education, Health, & Social Services, 2) Retail Trade, and 3) Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing. By 2009-2013 that had declined to 47%, due to declines in the percent employed in Retail Trade and Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing.
- The region has experienced declines in Manufacturing employment from 1990 to the 2009-2013 period; from 14% to 8% of employed residents. This decline was on par with the decline Oregon overall experienced.
- Between 1990 and the 2009-2013 period, the region saw significant increases in the percentages of workers employed in the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Accommodation industry as well as the Professional, Science, Management, & Administration and Public Administration industries

Local jobs: ⁵

- In 2013, the highest proportion of jobs located in the four-county region were in state and local government. Fourteen percent (14%) of all the full and part time jobs in the region in 2013 were in this industry. Private sector Health Care/Social assistance and Retail Trade jobs were close seconds, each representing 12% of jobs in the region. Together, these three top industries account for 38% of the jobs in the region.
- Between 2001 and 2013 the most significant decline occurred in the proportion of local jobs that were in the government sector (decline of about 2 percentage points)
- Between 2001 and 2013, the most significant increase occurred in the proportion of local jobs there were in the private sector Health Care/Social Assistance industry (increased by about 8 percentage points)

Commuting patterns: ⁴

- Since 1990, there has not been much change in resident commuters' travel times to work in this region
- The vast majority (about 71%) of commuters travel fewer than 20 minutes to work

Agriculture

Agricultural Economy:

- In 2012, Malheur County ranked 4th in the state for gross farm and ranch sales (\$373,397,000), while Union ranked 17th, Baker 18th, and Wallowa 26th ⁶
- In 2012, gross crop sales were only slightly higher than (by 1.4 times) gross animal product sales in the four-county region ⁶
- There was a 42% increase in animal product sales between 2000 and 2012, in inflation-adjusted dollars ⁶
- There was a 30% increase in crop sales between 2000 and 2012, in inflation-adjusted dollars⁶

- At the same time, there was a decrease (-13%) in the number of harvested acres between 2000 and 2012 ⁶
- Just as the state overall has seen continued declines over the last 23 years, this region's timber harvest in 2013 was about 31% of its 1990 level in 1,000s of board feet ⁷

Land cover change: ⁸

- Between 2000 and 2011, there was little to no change in land cover (developed land, cultivated land, forest, water/wetlands, or other covers)

Striking Statistics (areas where region stands out from state)

Challenges

- Higher than average percentage of infants born to mothers using tobacco ¹³
- Higher than average rate of traffic fatalities per 100,000 people ¹²
- Above average rate of child abuse ¹³
- Higher than average poverty rates among the whole population and among children ⁴
- Higher than average percentage of students eligible for the Free & Reduced Price Lunch Program ¹⁷
- Below average percentage of adults with a 4-year degree or more education ⁴
- Higher than average high school dropout rate ¹⁷
- Lower than average labor force participation among the total population, as well as among whites and Latinos, specifically ⁴
- Lower than average wages (per covered worker) ⁵
- More dramatic decline, since 1990, in the percentage of land in farms than the state ¹⁹

Strengths

- ✓ Higher than average prevalence of farmers markets, per 1,000 population ¹⁰
- ✓ Lower than average incidence of the most common communicable disease (Chlamydia) ¹³
- ✓ Lower than average arrest rate for crimes against person (willful murder, negligent homicide, rape, other sex crimes, kidnapping, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault) ¹⁴
- ✓ Better than average coverage of the social service system – ratio of people seeking social services (via *211info*) to social service providers was lower in the region than the state overall ¹⁶
- ✓ Higher than average number of childcare slots per 100 children ¹⁸

Sources

Data come from a variety of sources, as reported on the Rural Communities Explorer (<http://oe.oregonexplorer.info/rural/CommunitiesReporter/>), including:

- ¹ US Census Bureau, Decennial Census
- ² Population Research Center, Portland State University
- ³ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey & Decennial Census
- ⁴ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey
- ⁵ US Bureau of Economic Analysis
- ⁶ Oregon Agricultural Information Network, Oregon State University Extension Service
- ⁷ Oregon Department of Forestry
- ⁸ National Land Cover Database, Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium US Department of the ⁹ Interior & US Geologic Survey
- ¹⁰ Oregon Farmer's Market Association and U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
- ¹¹ Yellow Pages
- ¹² National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation
- ¹³ Oregon Department of Human Services
- ¹⁴ State of Oregon Criminal Justice Commission
- ¹⁵ Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap
- ¹⁶ *211info*
- ¹⁷ Oregon Department of Education
- ¹⁸ Child Care Research Partnership and Oregon Employment Department
- ¹⁹ USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Census of Agriculture