



Custer County

IDAHO
DEPT. OF LABOR

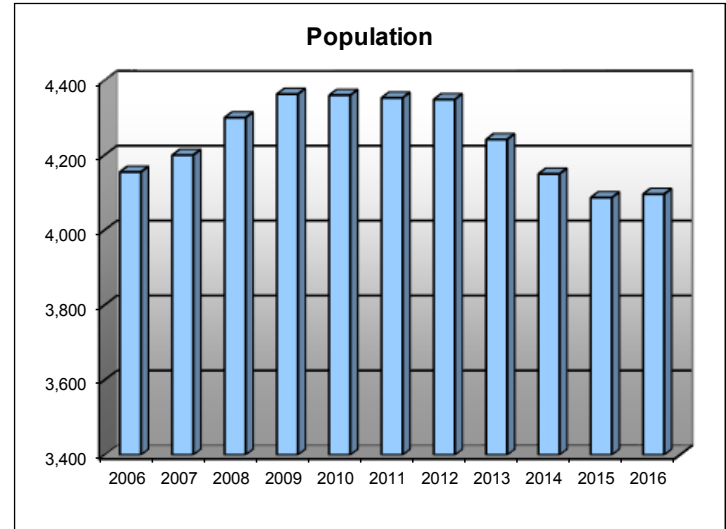
January 2018

Workforce Trends

Population

Custer County's 2016 population was 4,096 people. It's largest city, Challis, ID, ranks 81st in the state for population (1,041 people). For each person the county offers more than a square mile of space. It reflects the fortunes of the mining industry. Population decreased in the early 2000s, reaching a low in 2005 after losing over 300 residents as Hecla Mining closed. Population began growing again in 2006 but has declined each year since 2009. Recent stagnation and even small population gains could mean good things for the county.

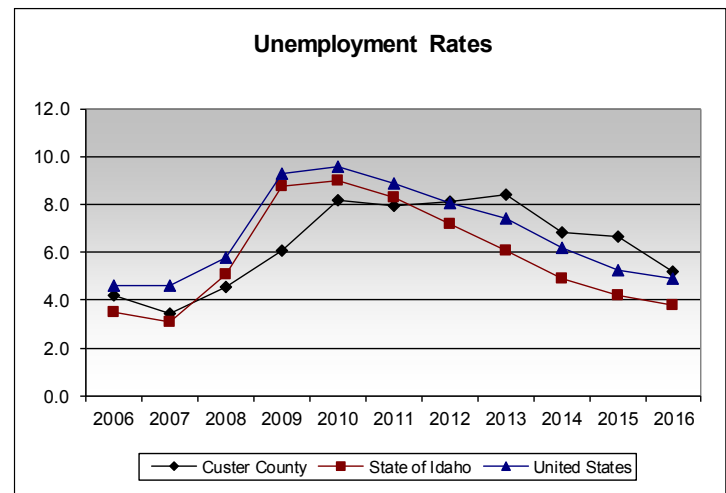
The county has been concentrating on diversifying beyond mining. Economic developers are working hand-in-hand with government officials to attract new business and help existing ones expand to reverse, or at least slow, the decline in the future.



Labor Force & Employment

Custer County's unemployment rate was higher than the state and nation early in the last decade. In 2003 the rate dipped to match the national rate but has fluctuated since then. The civilian labor force steadily decreased from 2002 to 2007 and has shown little change since. Because the county has limited employers, mergers and changes in management can severely affect the workforce, many of whom travel from other counties. The 2007 unemployment rate was the lowest of the last decade. It rose to over 8 percent between 2010 and 2013, then dropping to 6.9 percent in 2014. The county has seen a significant decrease in annual unemployment rates over the last few years, the 2016 rate was 5.2 percent.

One-third of the county's jobs are in government and natural resources. With only 5 percent of the land in private ownership, the Idaho Department of Fish &



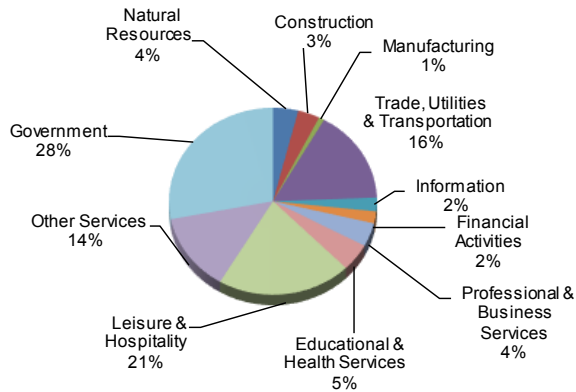
Game and the federal departments of Interior and Agriculture have cadres of employees to maintain the land. They complement employees of school districts and local government.

Trade is still a large industry as is leisure and hospitality because of resources like Redfish Lake, the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Borah Peak, the highest point in Idaho. Efforts are also underway to change the Boulder White Clouds National Monument into Idaho's first National Park.

| Labor Force | Dec 16 | Dec 17 |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Civilian Labor Force | 2,166 | 2,212 |
| Total Employment | 2,057 | 2,105 |
| Unemployed | 109 | 107 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 5.0 | 4.9 |
| State of Idaho % Unemployed | 3.6 | 2.9 |
| U.S. % Unemployed | 4.7 | 4.1 |

| Labor Force | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Civilian Labor Force | 2,537 | 2,329 | 2,438 | 2,676 | 2,295 | 2,300 | 2,334 | 2,210 | 2,140 | 2,135 | 2,138 |
| Unemployment | 107 | 80 | 112 | 163 | 188 | 183 | 189 | 186 | 147 | 143 | 112 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 4.2 | 3.4 | 4.6 | 6.1 | 8.2 | 8.0 | 8.1 | 8.4 | 6.9 | 6.7 | 5.2 |
| Employment | 2,430 | 2,249 | 2,326 | 2,514 | 2,107 | 2,117 | 2,145 | 2,024 | 1,993 | 1,992 | 2,027 |

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs for 2016



Covered Employment & Wages

Covered employment experienced a small rebound in 2016 with a 1.9 percent increase to 1,451. However wages continued a downward trend by dropping 1 to \$31,263 from 2015. The closures of two mines, and steady decrease in trade, covered employment fell by 10 percent and wages decreased 4.6 percent.

Wages for 7 out of 12 industries increased in 2016, while the average wage for total covered employment fell 1.2 percent. Despite the significant decline in the average wage paid by the mining companies, the industry still offered the highest average wage of \$99,101—nearly double the next highest wage of any industry in the county in 2016.

Major Employers

| |
|---|
| Challis & Mackay Joint School Districts #181 & #182 |
| Custer County |
| Idaho & U.S. Government (BLM, F&G, Ag) |
| Lamb's Foodtown |
| The Village Inn |
| Thompson Creek Mining Co |
| Village Square |

| Eastern Idaho Occupational Wages* | Entry Wage | Median Wage |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Farmworkers & Laborers | \$8.30 | \$9.54 |
| Cashiers | \$8.32 | \$9.29 |
| Excavation & Loading Machine & Dragline Operator | \$15.42 | \$19.79 |
| Food & Beverage Serving Workers | \$8.29 | \$8.77 |
| Industrial Truck/Tractor Operators | \$11.97 | \$15.25 |
| Laborers & Material Movers, Hand | \$8.37 | \$9.37 |
| Lodging Managers | \$15.93 | \$25.72 |
| Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners | \$8.24 | \$9.15 |
| Retail Sales Workers | \$8.34 | \$10.73 |

* Additional occupational wage data can be found on the Idaho Department of Labor website at lmi.idaho.gov.

| Covered Employment & Average Annual Wages Per Job for 2006, 2015 & 2016 | 2006 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|---|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | Average Employment | Average Wages | Average Employment | Average Wages | Average Employment | Average Wages |
| Total Covered Wages | 1,611 | \$32,755 | 1,423 | \$31,636 | 1,451 | \$31,263 |
| Agriculture | 44 | \$21,349 | 62 | \$24,432 | 64 | \$23,584 |
| Mining | 268 | \$84,082 | 62 | \$119,708 | 61 | \$99,101 |
| Construction | 68 | \$20,477 | 41 | \$39,519 | 47 | \$41,669 |
| Manufacturing | 6 | \$24,609 | 11 | \$36,556 | 13 | \$35,322 |
| Trade, Utilities, & Transportation | 247 | \$18,868 | 236 | \$25,648 | 253 | \$25,323 |
| Information | 22 | \$44,651 | 39 | \$43,598 | 37 | \$45,667 |
| Financial Activities | 58 | \$14,653 | 32 | \$25,660 | 32 | \$23,932 |
| Professional and Business Services | 57 | \$21,734 | 67 | \$37,423 | 63 | \$38,377 |
| Educational and Health Services | 103 | \$11,744 | 87 | \$20,259 | 75 | \$23,328 |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 211 | \$14,460 | 321 | \$18,133 | 324 | \$18,821 |
| Other Services | 21 | \$29,681 | 35 | \$32,883 | 41 | \$33,589 |
| Government | 506 | \$30,634 | 431 | \$34,647 | 440 | \$35,674 |

| Per Capita Income | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Custer County | \$31,713 | \$33,783 | \$34,611 | \$34,071 | \$35,989 | \$39,506 | \$41,008 | \$40,330 | \$40,719 | \$40,683 |
| State of Idaho | \$32,580 | \$33,031 | \$31,436 | \$31,726 | \$33,296 | \$34,695 | \$35,720 | \$37,186 | \$38,848 | \$39,470 |
| United States | \$39,821 | \$41,082 | \$39,376 | \$40,277 | \$42,461 | \$44,282 | \$44,493 | \$46,494 | \$48,451 | \$49,246 |

Information provided by Bureau Economic Analysis

This county is served by the office listed below:
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