Custer County

November 2016

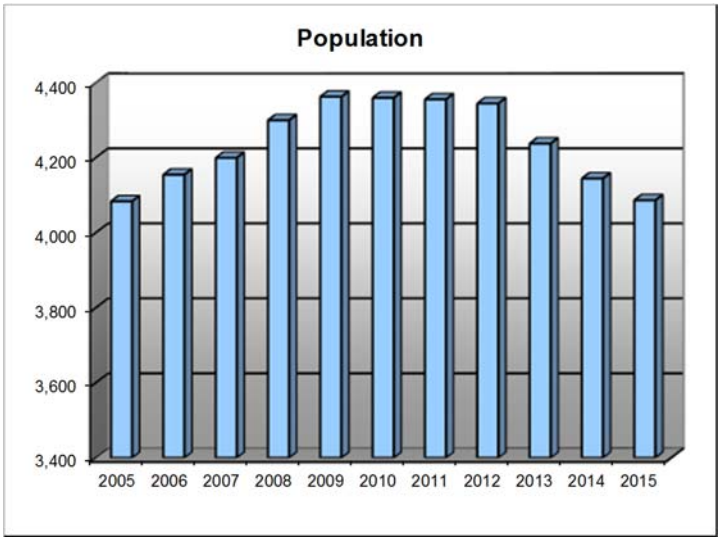
Workforce Trends

IDAHO DEPT. OF LABOR

Population

Custer County ranks 38th in the state with a 2015 population of 4,087. 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 closure of Thompson Creek Mining, previously considered one of the county's largest employers, could push the population count lower.

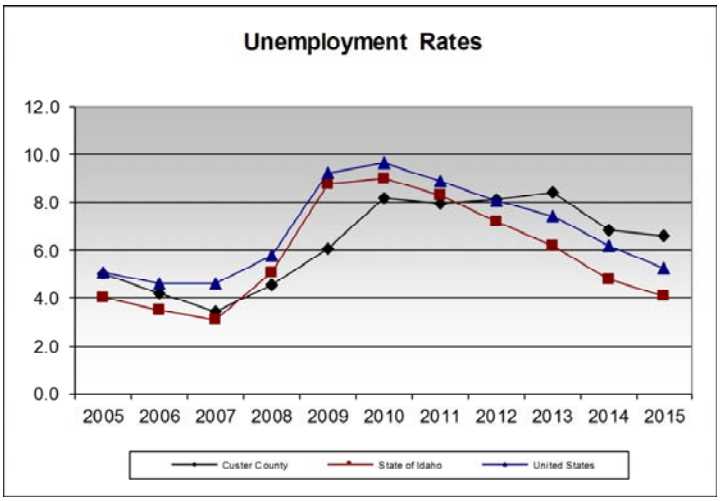
The county has been concentrating on diversifying beyond mining. Economic developers are working hand-in-hand with government officials to attract new business and help existing ones expand to reverse, or at least slow, the decline in the future.



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. A slight decrease occurred in 2105 bringing the annual unemployment rate was 6.6 percent. The county has been affected by forest fires and mine closures throughout the decade.

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.

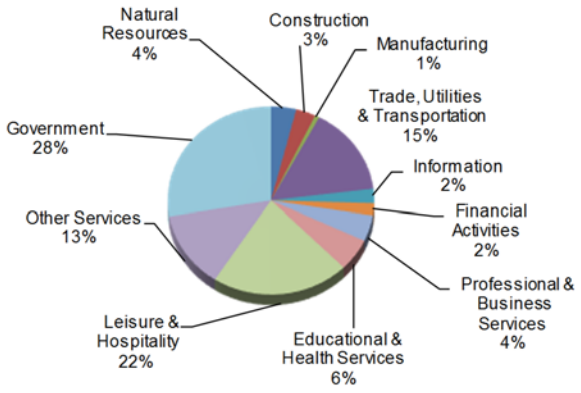


Labor Force	Oct 15	Oct 16
Civilian Labor Force	2,204	2,067
Total Employment	2,053	1,958
Unemployed	150	109
% of Labor Force Unemployed	6.8	5.3
State of Idaho % Unemployed	4.0	3.8
U.S. % Unemployed	5.0	4.9

Labor Force	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Civilian Labor Force	2,603	2,537	2,329	2,438	2,676	2,295	2,300	2,335	2,212	2,141	2,161
Unemployment	131	107	80	112	163	188	183	190	186	147	143
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.0	4.2	3.4	4.6	6.1	8.2	8.0	8.1	8.4	6.9	6.6
Employment	2,473	2,430	2,249	2,326	2,514	2,107	2,117	2,146	2,026	1,994	2,018

Prepared by Hope Morrow Regional Economist, Idaho Department of Labor • 1515 E. Lincoln Road, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
Phone: (208) 557-2500, ext. 4340 • email: hope.morrow@labor.idaho.gov • Labor Market Information website: lmi.idaho.gov

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs for 2015



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*	Median Wage
Farmworkers and Laborers	$14.74
Cashiers	$8.64
Excavation & Loading Machine & Dragline Operator	$17.61
Food & Beverage Serving Workers	$7.77
Industrial Truck/Tractor Operators	$14.23
Laborers & Material Movers, Hand	$9.78
Lodging Managers	$20.64
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	$8.30
Retail Sales Workers	$8.96

- Wage data includes nine counties of eastern Idaho. Additional occupational wage data can be found on the Idaho Department of Labor website at *lmi.idaho.gov*.

Covered Employment & Wages

Largely driven by the closures of two mines, and steady decreased in trade, covered employment fell by 7 percent over the decade. At the same time, covered wages increased 7 percent.

Wages for 9 out of 12 industries increased in 2015, while the average wage for total covered employment fell 16 percent. Despite the significant decline in the average wage paid by the mining companies, the industry still offered the highest average wage of $119,708—more than triple the next highest wage of any industry in the county in 2015.

Covered Employment & Average Annual Wages Per Job for 2005, 2014 & 2015	2005		2014		2015	
	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages
Total Covered Wages	1,593	$29,269	1,550	$37,638	1,440	$31,520
Agriculture	45	$20,221	58	$25,618	63	$24,132
Mining	215	$77,502	216	$101,317	62	$119,708
Construction	56	$21,340	48	$37,287	41	$38,948
Manufacturing	10	$20,998	11	$32,433	11	$34,654
Trade, Utilities, & Transportation	322	$20,232	218	$26,424	238	$25,477
Information	17	$44,268	43	$36,765	39	$43,175
Financial Activities	57	$13,754	34	$22,249	32	$25,660
Professional and Business Services	69	$18,783	62	$45,463	68	$37,413
Educational and Health Services	103	$10,754	89	$18,559	87	$20,259
Leisure and Hospitality	205	$15,200	299	$16,972	334	$18,458
Other Services	22	$28,063	34	$31,853	35	$32,882
Government	472	$29,189	438	$33,236	431	$34,687

Per Capita Income	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Custer County	$27,772	$29,423	$31,448	$32,694	$32,766	$33,575	$36,097	$39,807	$40,824	$43,158
State of Idaho	$29,815	$31,945	$32,952	$32,854	$31,392	$32,050	$33,544	$34,846	$35,641	$36,734
United States	$35,904	$38,144	$39,821	$41,082	$39,376	$40,277	$42,453	$44,266	$44,438	$46,049

Information provided by Bureau of Economic Analysis

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER, GOVERNOR
KENNETH D. EDMUNDS, DIRECTOR

This county is served by the office listed below:
Idaho Department of Labor
1301 Main St., Unit 1
Salmon, ID 83467-0990 Ph: (208) 756-2234

labor.idaho.gov

This publication is produced by the Idaho Department of Labor and is funded at least in part by federal grants from the U.S. Department of Labor. Costs associated with this publication are available upon request. The Idaho Department of Labor is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Dial 711 for Idaho Relay Service.