Minidoka County

January 2017

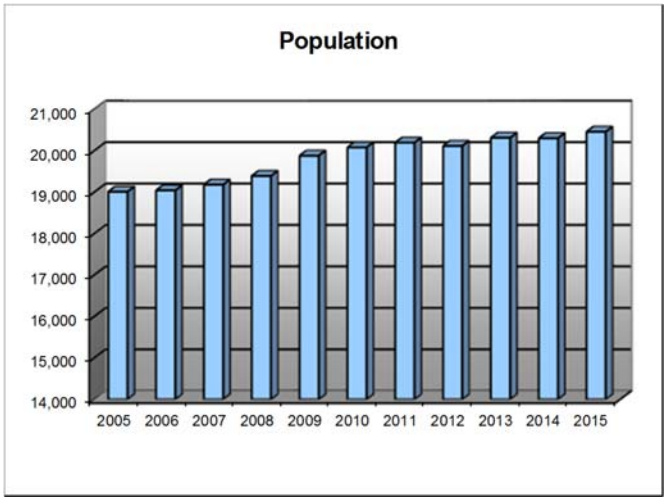
Workforce Trends

IDAHO DEPT. OF LABOR

Population

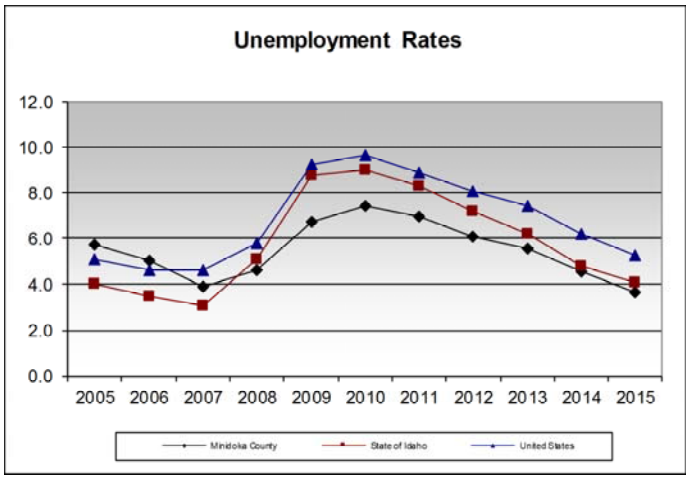
The population of Minidoka County is growing after a series of starts and stops. Incremental increases in five of the last six years produced a 7.6 percent increase over the decade to 20,461 in 2015. Rupert, the county seat, has an estimated population of 5,705 for 2015. The downtown core has retained its historic buildings including the iconic Wilson Theatre, renovated with community collaboration. The downtown plaza is one of the few remaining in Idaho, continuing to be the centerpiece of the community.

Still heavily dependent on agriculture and food processing, the county economy has diversified to include durable manufacturing and wholesale and retail trade tied to agriculture. Wages tend toward the low end — a challenge in attracting and retaining workers but appealing to new businesses. New employers have been willing to pay higher wages although they remain below competing states. Renewed economic vitality, the area's scenic beauty and the lure of nearby recreation are drawing new residents and companies.



Labor Force & Employment

Minidoka County is commonly joined to Cassia County and referred to as the Mini-Cassia area. Employment in Minidoka County has traditionally been seasonal. The city of Burley lies in both counties, divided by the Snake River, and both counties are linked economically, politically and socially. The area offers a labor pool with a strong work ethic and a strategic location with convenient access to commercial rail and Interstate 84 with I-86 nearby. The unemployment rate peaked at 10.2 percent in 1986 and fell to a record low 3.9 percent in 2007. In the past, many workers relied on fresh pack potato operations, farm jobs, sugar processing and potato processing for employment. In 2003, the J.R. Simplot Co. closed its Heyburn plant, idling 600 workers, driving unemployment to 7.7 percent. After closure, the plant along the Snake River was donated to the city of Burley for an industrial park, which now houses a retail outlet, a restaurant associated with the cheese plant and Gem State Processing, a potato dehydrator based out of Pasco, Washington. A previous tenant, Renova Ethanol, lost its half-built plant in bankruptcy proceedings with assets purchased by Natural Chem Holdings. Double L Manufacturing constructed a new plant for its custom-designed potato harvesting equipment marketed globally. PerforMix and WillTran have committed to facilities in Minidoka County, both with previous ties to southwestern Idaho.



Labor Force	Dec 15	Dec 16
Civilian Labor Force	10,887	10,847
Total Employment	10,534	10,523
Unemployed	353	323
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2	3.0
State of Idaho % Unemployed	3.9	3.7
U.S. % Unemployed	5.0	4.7

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Civilian Labor Force	9,476	9,809	10,051	10,078	9,494	10,467	10,560	10,381	10,396	10,429	10,709
Unemployment	544	494	392	462	637	777	734	633	579	475	392
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.7	5.0	3.9	4.6	6.7	7.4	7.0	6.1	5.6	4.6	3.7
Employment	8,932	9,315	9,659	9,616	8,857	9,690	9,826	9,748	9,817	9,953	10,317

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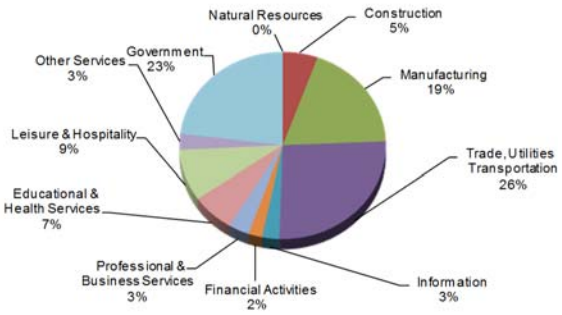
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs for 2015



Major Employers	
Amalgamated Sugar	Horizon Organic Milk
Budget Motor	Jentzsch-Kearl Farms
Brewster Dairy	Mart Produce
Double L Manufacturing	Minidoka Memorial Hosp.
Gem State Processing	Sun Valley Potatoes
Gossner Foods	Whitesides Dairy

Wages & Income

Minidoka County ranks 7th regionally and 13th among Idaho's 44 counties in per capita income. Growth has been robust at 52 percent since 2005 with a significant 14 percent record increase between 2010 and 2011. The per capita income grew 4.8 percent from 2014 driven by Non-farm Proprietor's Income and outpacing the state and nation at 3.3 and 3.7 percent, respectively. Growth was driven previously by a strong agricultural base and increased construction activity near the Heyburn-Burley Industrial Park and throughout the Mini-Cassia area. Farm proprietors' income experienced its greatest growth spurt in 2011 when it was $81,765, up from $31,695—a growth rate of 160 percent.

Average covered employment rose 6.7 percent from 2014, following a flat year previously, with wages growing 3.6 percent over the same time period. Employment in Professional and Business Services along with Educational and Health Care Services reported the largest growth at 22 percent and 29 percent, respectively. Manufacturing along with Trade, Utilities and Transportation had the largest numeric increases, adding 100 workers each. Wages for Other Services grew by almost 11 percent from 2014.

Occupational Wages*	Median Wage
Teachers	$43,380.00
Registered Nurses	$26.98
Certified Nurses Aides	$10.57
Medical Secretary	$12.02
Bank Tellers	$10.95
Cashiers	$8.94
Welders	$12.31
Janitors and cleaners	$10.79
Landscapers	$12.17
Construction Labor	$13.22
Food cooking machine operators	$14.38
Food batchmakers	$15.77
Ag workers, farm/ranch animals	$9.08
Graders/sorters - ag products	$12.72

* 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 2005, 2014 & 2015	2005		2014		2015	
	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages
Total Covered Wages	6,725	$24,259	7,078	$33,895	7,552	$35,119
Agriculture	1,133	$19,627	1,379	$31,027	1,428	$32,726
Mining	*	*	0	$0	0	$0
Construction	294	$25,144	314	$38,725	331	$39,267
Manufacturing	1,063	$36,860	1,063	$52,563	1,168	$55,107
Trade, Utilities & Transportation	1,463	$24,515	1,472	$38,526	1,576	$40,005
Information	149	$26,440	156	$34,277	165	$35,870
Financial Activities	122	$26,839	124	$36,560	129	$36,326
Professional and Business Services	161	$26,517	167	$27,406	204	$26,859
Educational and Health Services	321	$17,114	324	$20,480	416	$19,514
Leisure and Hospitality	506	$9,615	513	$12,294	548	$12,614
Other Services	142	$16,572	164	$23,322	168	$25,845
Government	1,369	$24,937	1,402	$29,355	1,420	$30,034

Per Capita Income	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Minidoka County	$24,696	$27,292	$29,564	$29,118	$28,873	$32,927	$34,240	$34,395	$35,898	$37,614
State of Idaho	$31,357	$32,580	$33,031	$31,436	$31,727	$33,296	$34,691	$35,703	$37,153	$38,392
United States	$38,144	$39,821	$41,082	$39,376	$40,277	$42,453	$44,267	$44,462	$46,414	$48,112

Information provided by Bureau of Economic Analysis

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