Shoshone County

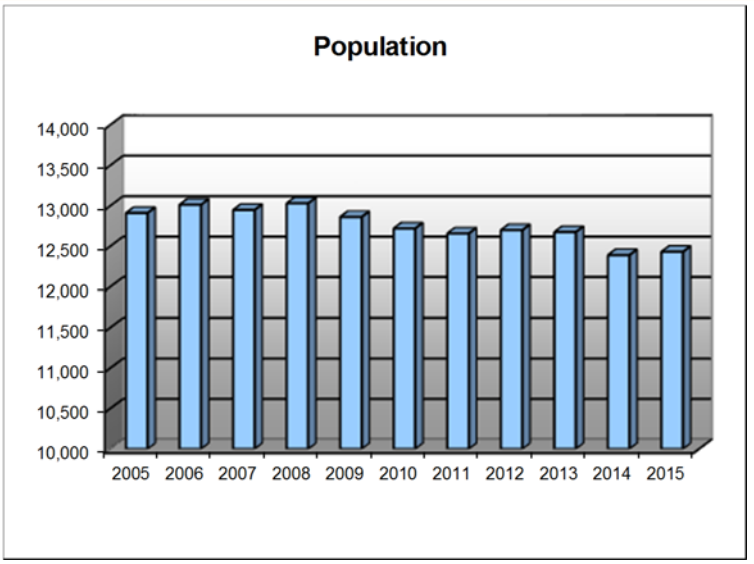
November 2016

Workforce Trends

Population

After devastating mine and smelter closures, Shoshone County's population fell 28 percent in the 1980s and continued declining at a lesser rate in the following decades. Increasingly some Silver Valley towns became bedroom communities for the Coeur d'Alene area. From 2005 to 2015, the population fell 3 percent from 12,912 to 12,420 while Idaho's population grew 15.9 percent and the U.S. population grew 8.8 percent.

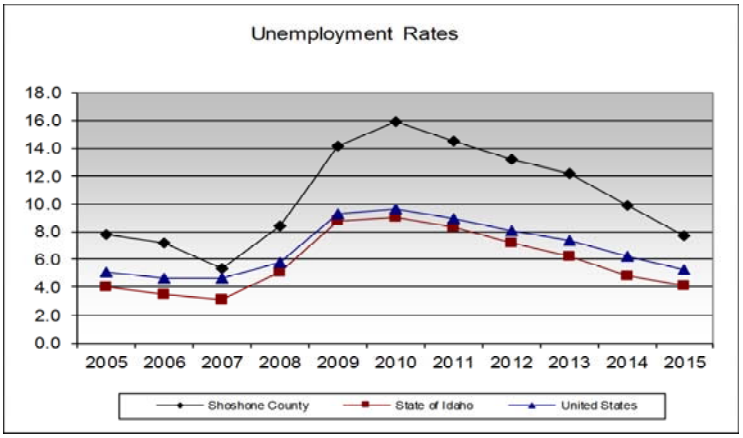
The county seat, Wallace, has a population of 761 in 2015. The largest cities are Kellogg with a population of 2,069, Pinehurst at 1,580 and Osburn at 1,510.



Labor Force & Employment

High silver prices are breathing some life back into the mining industry, which had declined from a peak of 4,200 jobs in 1981 to just 310 in 2003. The Lucky Friday and Galena mines, which were the only ones left open, employ twice as many people as they did four years ago, and the Sunshine Mine reopened in 2007 after closing in 2001. By mid-2008, mining employed 700. Then the global recession hit, slashing prices for silver, lead and zinc. Sunshine shut down again and the Galena laid off workers in late 2008. In the last half of 2009, higher prices for silver and other minerals raised hopes, and by the end of 2010 exploration efforts increased and the Coeur side of the Galena Mine reopened in early 2011. Mining employment was back to 782 in 2015. The three richest silver mines in the United States are in Shoshone County.

Shoshone County is developing its tourism sector. In 1990, the world's longest gondola opened, running from Kellogg to the Silver Mountain ski area. In 2008, Silver Mountain Resort broke ground on an 18-hole golf course and opened an indoor water park. Just two years later Silver Rapids was named one of the top 10 water parks in the nation. Wallace's charming and historic downtown draws many travelers off Interstate 90. Lookout Pass, a ski area along the interstate near the Montana border, doubled employment in the last few years. Hikers, bicyclists and snowmobilers are increasingly exploring the county's hundreds of miles of trails. The ski areas, tourist facilities, lodging, restaurants and bars employ about 400.



Labor Force	Oct 15	Oct 16
Civilian Labor Force	5,162	5,055
Total Employment	4,787	4,722
Unemployed	374	333
% of Labor Force Unemployed	7.3	6.6
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	5,693	5,630	5,864	6,193	6,304	5,488	5,511	5,608	5,502	5,214	5,169
Unemployment	444	406	312	521	890	873	799	737	670	518	399
% of Labor Force Unemployed	7.8	7.2	5.3	8.4	14.1	15.9	14.5	13.1	12.2	9.9	7.7
Employment	5,249	5,224	5,552	5,671	5,414	4,615	4,712	4,871	4,832	4,696	4,770

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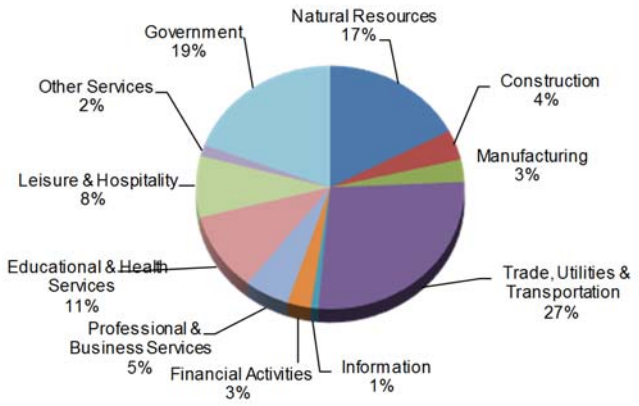
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs for 2015



Major Employers
Dave Smith Motors
Galena Mine (operated by US Silver)
Lookout Pass Ski Area
Lucky Friday Mine (operated by Hecla Mining Corp.)
Shoshone Medical Center
Silver Mountain Resort
United Mine Services
Wal-Mart

Economic Development

In the early 1980s, Shoshone County was one of Idaho's three most prosperous counties. More than 20 years of high unemployment made it the third poorest by 2003. Fortunately, rising employment and wages over the last few years have helped the county regain some of its former luster. According to U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, the county's median household income grew 31 percent between 2003 and 2008. But median household income fell nearly 9 percent from 2008 to 2009. As silver prices and production gained traction in 2010, median household income rose nearly 3 percent in 2010. The Silver Valley Economic Development Corp. is adamant about expanding and diversifying the economy.

Occupational Wages*	Starting Wage
Assemblers	$7.25
Bookkeepers	$8.75
Carpenters, Journey-level	$16.00
Cashiers	$6.75
Clerks, General Office	$7.50
Clerks, Retail	$7.00
Cooks, Restaurant	$7.50
Janitors	$7.75
Laborers, Mine	$11.80
Miners, Contract	$16.75
Nurses, Registered	$18.25
Secretaries, General	$7.75
Truck Drivers, Heavy	$13.00

* 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	4,378	$27,678	4,501	$41,166	4,593	$43,217
Agriculture	71	$28,663	24	$32,389	20	$40,279
Mining	393	$50,439	781	$77,812	782	$81,071
Construction	225	$28,578	175	$53,365	183	$45,811
Manufacturing	242	$26,679	134	$31,854	137	$32,579
Trade, Utilities & Transportation	1,077	$30,531	1,203	$40,399	1,248	$43,112
Information	29	$22,437	41	$42,481	41	$46,232
Financial Activities	102	$21,625	123	$25,156	130	$26,866
Professional and Business Services	330	$23,588	245	$38,272	249	$35,143
Educational and Health Services	369	$22,207	357	$27,089	480	$31,694
Leisure and Hospitality	392	$9,503	377	$13,053	375	$13,553
Other Services	87	$18,186	80	$30,037	69	$32,006
Government	1,061	$27,723	960	$31,550	879	$35,289

Per Capita Income	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Shoshone County	$25,765	$26,303	$28,040	$28,716	$28,648	$30,081	$31,244	$33,222	$32,789	$33,665
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 U.S. Census Bureau

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