



# PRESS release

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## **BENCHMARK ANALYSIS SHOWS IMPROVING TRENDS STATEWIDE, BUT MAJOR DIFFERENCES EXIST BETWEEN COUNTIES.**

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As Oregon prepares to enter the twenty-first century, many of the state's vital signs are good: wages are up; education levels are improving, crime is down; teen pregnancy rates have dropped; infant mortality is down.

Statewide statistics, however, don't tell the whole story. Residents of Oregon's 36 counties experience the state's good times very differently. While wages in urban counties went up by over \$3,000 between 1994 and 1998, rural wages rose by only \$1,200. Crime rates vary from 70 reported crimes per 1,000 in some counties to over 180 per thousand in others. Similarly, teen pregnancy rates are three time higher in some counties than in others.

A new report from the Oregon Progress Board, the *Oregon Benchmarks County Data Book*, released today at the Association of Oregon Counties Annual Conference, provides county-by-county breakdowns of data on 27 of Oregon's vital signs relating to the economy, communities and the environment. According to Progress Board Executive Director Jeffrey Tryens, "the Oregon Benchmarks allow Oregonians to monitor whether or not whether we, as a state, are achieving the result we care about. By providing county level data, the Progress Board hopes counties will be able to plan for their own futures more effectively."

Not all of the news is good. Job creation for almost every county fell sharply in 1998. After declining steadily during the early 1990s, child abuse and neglect hit a decade-long high in 1998. And Oregonians generated 150 pounds more trash per person in 1998 than they did five years earlier.

For each of the 27 Benchmarks, counties are ranked from best outcome to worst outcome. Three different averages are included, as well: statewide, urban and rural. "For the first time," said Tryens, "the Progress Board included urban and rural averages to allow counties to compare themselves with their peers."

(more)

Association of Oregon Counties Executive Director Bob Cantine explained, “this report is designed to make it easier for counties to learn from each other.

Using this report a county with a high juvenile arrest rate, for instance, can easily find peer counties with lower rates to learn from. Only by helping each other can we really help ourselves.”

The report also includes four indices ranking counties on a set of benchmarks in the areas of economy, K-12 education, crime and child well-being. While cautioning readers that any index can be misleading, Tryens said, “these indices are included to provide the casual reader with a quick snapshot of how counties are doing in relation to each other.”

Attached are copies of the introductions to each of the report’s sections along with copies of each of the four indices described above. Copies of the report can be obtained from the Oregon Progress Board by calling (503) 986-0039 or by going to <http://www.econ.state.or.us/opb>. **Printed copies are free to Oregon residents.**

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# Oregon Shines Goal One: Quality Jobs for All Oregonians

## Economy Benchmarks

Disparities between urban and rural counties are most apparent in the economy benchmark topic area. Deschutes and Gilliam Counties are the only two rural counties to crack the top five in any economy benchmark category.

Urban counties averaged 18 **net jobs created** per thousand residents per year while rural counties averaged eight between 1994 and 1998. Washington, Deschutes and Multnomah Counties are leaders in jobs creation. Only two rural counties, Gilliam and Umatilla broke into the top ten counties.

**Per capita income** in urban counties averaged 98% of the national average while incomes in rural counties averaged 75% over the same period. Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas Counties were the lead counties. Clatsop (11<sup>th</sup>) and Curry (12<sup>th</sup>) Counties lead rural counties.

Similarly, between 1994 and 1998, **wages** in urban counties averaged \$27,668 compared to a rural average of \$21,304 in rural counties. Washington and Multnomah Counties lead in wages. Morrow (7<sup>th</sup>) and Crook (10<sup>th</sup>) Counties are the rural leaders.

Rural Gilliam County breaks into the top five counties with an **unemployment** rate of 4.4%. Tillamook (9<sup>th</sup>) and Clatsop (11<sup>th</sup>) are other top rural counties. Benton, Clackamas and Washington, all with average rates under four percent, led urban counties. (A combined ranking of selected economy benchmarks can be found on page 82.)

## Education Benchmarks

**Children entering school ready-to-learn** was reported at the county level for the first time in 1997. Counties range in readiness from 100% of kindergartners in Wheeler County to just over 40% in a few counties. No clear pattern exists when comparing urban and rural counties.

**High school dropout** rates are somewhat lower in rural counties and differ dramatically. Wallowa County averaged under one percent per year while Jefferson County averaged over 10%. Columbia County had

the lowest urban dropout rate. Historically, areas of higher unemployment have lower dropout rates. Only Gilliam County has very low unemployment and very low dropout rates.

Rural counties hold the top four slots in both **third grade reading and third grade math achievement**. Clatsop is the only county placing in the top four on both tests. Benton, Clackamas and Washington lead the urban counties in both reading and math. Reading scores vary from a high 100% in Wheeler County to 65% in Jefferson County. Math scores also vary widely, as well. Gilliam leads with 80% of students meeting the standard.

Benton leads all counties in both **eighth grade reading and eighth grade math achievement**. Sherman and Grant also placed in the top four counties overall in both categories. Eighth graders in urban scored seven points higher, on average, in math and four points higher in reading. Like third grade scores, the highest and lowest counties vary dramatically in eighth grade reading and math.

County data on both **high school and college education levels** are derived from the 1990 U. S. Predictably urban counties have higher adult education levels than rural counties. (A combined ranking of selected education benchmarks can be found on page 83.)

# Oregon Shines Goal Two: Safe, Caring, Engaged Communities

## Civic Engagement Benchmark

Rural counties lead the way in **voter participation** with a high of 80% participation in Wallowa and Wheeler Counties, followed closely by Gilliam, Tillamook, Sherman.

## Social Support Benchmarks

Benton County's five year **teen pregnancy** rate of 9.4% leads all counties and is well ahead of second and third place urban counties Clackamas and Jackson. Wallowa, Grant, Baker, Union and Curry Counties are the leading rural counties. On average, urban and rural teen pregnancy rates are similar.

Washington, Wallowa and Union Counties lead the pack in percentage of mothers receiving adequate **prenatal care**. Generally, urban counties have a significantly higher percentage of care than urban counties

Gilliam and Sherman Counties led the state with zero **infant deaths** between 1993 and 1997. Grant, Morrow and Union were close behind with rates of less than four fatalities per 1,000 infants. Among urban counties, Washington ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, Yamhill 9<sup>th</sup> and Columbia 10<sup>th</sup>.

Benton County residents can expect significantly fewer **premature losses of life** than other counties. Washington and Yamhill Counties rank second and third. Tillamook County, in 12<sup>th</sup> place, is the rural leader in this category.

Lane County leads the state in **childcare availability** followed closely by Benton and Tillamook Counties. Hood River and Klamath Counties round out the top five.

**Child abuse** in Oregon counties varies dramatically from five per thousand in Clackamas County to 32 per thousand in Morrow County. Generally, rural counties record higher rates of child abuse than urban counties. Other urban counties with low rates are Washington, Benton and Polk. Rural leaders include Wallowa, Jefferson and Wheeler.

**Alcohol and tobacco use among pregnant women** also tends to be somewhat higher in rural counties. Washington and Benton Counties have the lowest rates among urban counties. Hood River and Wallowa Counties are rural leaders.

**Poverty** in rural Oregon is, on average, about 30% greater than in urban counties. Counties with the lowest average poverty rates between 1989 and 1994 are Clackamas, Washington, Gilliam and Columbia. Morrow (5<sup>th</sup>), Sherman (6<sup>th</sup>) and Crook (9<sup>th</sup>) are the next best rural counties.

The vast majority of Oregon **seniors live independently**. Not surprisingly, seniors in rural counties, where dependent care facilities are less available, lead with (A combined ranking of selected social support benchmarks can be found on page 84.)

## Public Safety Benchmarks

**Overall reported crime** varies dramatically among counties, from 64 per thousand in Lake County to 194 per thousand in Linn County. Not surprisingly, rural counties have lower crime rates. Gilliam, Wallowa, Wheeler and Grant counties round out the top five. Washington is the lead urban county with a five-year average rate of 97 per thousand. Columbia (14<sup>th</sup>) and Clackamas (15<sup>th</sup>) Counties fill out the top urban counties.

Total **juvenile arrests** also vary dramatically. Wheeler County reported a five year average of under four per thousand while Baker County reported 106 per thousand. Harney, Grant, Sherman and Klamath Counties round out the five counties (all rural) with the lowest arrest rates. Clackamas (6<sup>th</sup>) and Washington (7<sup>th</sup>) and Benton (11<sup>th</sup>) lead the urban counties. (A combined ranking of selected public safety benchmarks can be found on page 82.)

# Oregon Shines Goal Three: Healthy, Sustainable Communities

## Community Development Benchmarks

County level data on community development benchmarks is in limited supply. Only two benchmarks have county level data available at all and those are only from the 1990 U.S. Census.

**Home ownership** rates vary significantly between urban and rural counties. In 1990 68% of all rural Oregonians owned their own homes while 62% of all urban Oregonians were homeowners. Home ownership rates vary from 74% in Columbia County and 55% in Benton and Multnomah Counties.

The percentage of **renters who are cost-burdened** is similar in urban and rural counties (71% vs. 69%), but rates vary widely. In 1990 Harney County 39% of renters paid more than 30% of their income on housing while 85% of renters in Benton County were considered cost burdened.

A much lower percentage of **homeowners are cost burdened**. In 1990 38% of homeowners statewide are cost burdened. Gilliam County had the lowest percentage at 23%. Lincoln and Josephine Counties were the highest at 46%.

## Environment Benchmark

**Solid waste generation** is the only environment benchmark measured at the county level. The average rural resident generates about 100 pounds more solid waste per year than urban counties. However Harney, Wheeler and Grant Counties are the three lowest waste generating counties. All had five year averages of less than 1,000 pounds per person. Deschutes County had the highest rate of waste generation at over 2,000 pounds per person. Columbia, Polk and Benton Counties were the lowest waste generating urban counties.

**SELECTED COUNTY ECONOMY BENCHMARKS-RANKING**

	<b>Net Jobs</b>	<b>Per Capita Income</b>	<b>Wages</b>	<b>Unemploy- ment</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Washington</b>	1	2	1	3	7
<b>Multnomah</b>	3	1	2	6	12
<b>Benton</b>	5	5	3	1	14
<b>Clackamas</b>	6	3	4	2	15
<b>Lane</b>	11	6	9	9	35
<b>Marion</b>	16	8	8	7	39
<b>Yamhill</b>	14	10	11	5	40
<b>Deschutes</b>	2	4	17	19	42
<b>Linn</b>	8	15	5	17	45
<b>Jackson</b>	10	7	16	16	49
Gilliam	4	33	14	4	55
<b>Columbia</b>	29	11	6	11	57
Clatsop	18	9	19	12	58
<b>Polk</b>	12	18	22	8	60
Umatilla	9	19	21	20	69
Douglas	17	20	12	26	75
Morrow	13	35	7	23	78
Jefferson	19	31	15	14	79
Wasco	20	14	25	22	81
Tillamook	21	22	31	10	84
Lincoln	25	13	29	18	85
Hood River	7	16	34	31	88
Klamath	26	27	13	25	91
Coos	32	17	18	27	94
Sherman	15	34	33	13	95
Curry	28	12	32	24	96
Union	31	26	24	15	96
Crook	33	25	10	30	98
Josephine	27	24	28	28	107
Malheur	22	29	35	21	107
Lake	36	21	23	34	114
Baker	30	30	26	29	115
Harney	23	32	27	33	115
Grant	35	28	20	36	119
Wallowa	34	23	30	35	122
Wheeler	24	36	36	32	128

Bold Type = Urban Counties  
 Normal Type = Rural Counties

**COUNTY CRIME BENCHMARKS-RANKING**

	<b>Overall Crime</b>	<b>Juvenile Arrests</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Wheeler	4	1	5
Grant	5	3	8
Harney	9	2	11
Gilliam	2	10	12
Sherman	8	4	12
Curry	6	9	15
Klamath	11	5	16
Lake	1	15	16
Wallowa	3	13	16
<b>Washington</b>	10	7	17
<b>Clackamas</b>	15	6	21
Union	7	16	23
Morrow	16	8	24
Hood River	12	14	26
<b>Benton</b>	17	11	28
<b>Columbia</b>	14	21	35
Josephine	19	19	38
Umatilla	18	20	38
<b>Lane</b>	23	17	40
<b>Deschutes</b>	21	22	43
Douglas	20	25	45
Jefferson	22	23	45
<b>Multnomah</b>	33	12	45
Tillamook	13	33	46
<b>Marion</b>	34	18	52
<b>Yamhill</b>	25	28	53
<b>Jackson</b>	24	30	54
Malheur	28	27	55
<b>Polk</b>	29	26	55
Crook	26	31	57
Clatsop	35	24	59
Lincoln	31	29	60
Wasco	27	34	61
Coos	32	32	64
Baker	30	36	66
<b>Linn</b>	36	35	71

Bold Type = Urban Counties  
 Normal Type = Rural Counties

**COUNTY K - 12 EDUCATION BENCHMARKS-RANKING**

	<b>Dropout</b>	<b>8Read</b>	<b>8Math</b>	<b>3Read</b>	<b>3Math</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Grant	2	4	3	7	3	19
<b>Benton</b>	13	1	1	6	4	25
<b>Clackamas</b>	18	4	3	7	7	39
Union	8	17	10	2	4	41
<b>Washington</b>	24	6	3	1	8	42
Clatsop	15	12	15	3	2	47
Wallowa	1	12	7	24	4	48
Lake	7	3	19	11	10	50
Curry	12	6	10	12	11	51
Baker	11	9	2	17	23	62
Crook	6	21	24	3	11	65
Sherman	5	2	3	28	29	67
Gilliam	3	30	32	3	1	69
Harney	14	8	7	17	23	69
<b>Lane</b>	21	9	9	34	9	82
<b>Deschutes</b>	22	12	10	22	18	84
<b>Polk</b>	20	9	15	28	15	87
<b>Columbia</b>	10	17	29	15	20	91
Hood River	9	27	30	15	11	92
<b>Jackson</b>	26	17	19	20	11	93
Coos	16	26	15	20	20	97
Wheeler	4	12	35	17	34	102
Josephine	27	21	24	24	15	111
<b>Yamhill</b>	31	17	13	36	15	112
Douglas	23	21	22	22	26	114
Klamath	19	27	30	13	26	115
Tillamook	17	30	19	30	20	116
Wasco	30	29	24	9	26	118
<b>Linn</b>	32	21	18	30	18	119
Umatilla	29	30	24	9	31	123
<b>Multnomah</b>	34	30	13	24	25	126
Lincoln	33	16	23	27	29	128
Malheur	25	21	32	32	33	143
<b>Marion</b>	35	30	24	35	32	156
Jefferson	36	36	36	13	36	157
Morrow	28	35	34	33	34	164

Bold Type = Urban Counties  
 Normal Type = Rural Counties

**SELECTED CHILD WELL-BEING BENCHMARKS-RANKING**

	<b>Prenatal Care</b>	<b>Infant Mortality</b>	<b>Child Abuse</b>	<b>Pregnant Smoking</b>	<b>Teen Pregnancy</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Wallowa	1	8	5	5	2	21
<b>Washington</b>	1	6	2	2	14	25
<b>Benton</b>	4	16	3	2	1	26
<b>Polk</b>	4	13	4	9	11	41
<b>Clackamas</b>	4	21	1	9	7	42
Union	3	5	29	9	5	51
<b>Deschutes</b>	9	13	9	14	15	60
Grant	11	3	22	22	3	61
Hood River	15	18	21	1	13	68
<b>Columbia</b>	11	10	6	27	16	70
Tillamook	4	7	27	27	9	74
<b>Yamhill</b>	15	9	17	12	22	75
<b>Jackson</b>	28	20	16	8	8	80
Gilliam	13	1	22	14	34	84
<b>Lane</b>	25	16	10	14	21	86
Douglas	4	15	18	27	23	87
<b>Multnomah</b>	15	19	15	14	32	95
Wheeler	15	36	8	6	36	101
Josephine	27	10	19	33	12	101
Baker	9	30	31	27	4	101
Harney	15	25	30	21	10	101
<b>Marion</b>	22	24	13	12	31	102
<b>Linn</b>	24	26	11	23	19	103
Umatilla	31	22	12	14	27	106
Curry	29	29	20	23	6	107
Sherman	14	1	33	27	35	110
Morrow	36	4	36	6	29	111
Wasco	15	27	33	20	17	112
Crook	25	31	14	23	25	118
Jefferson	33	32	7	14	33	119
Malheur	34	33	22	2	30	121
Lincoln	22	12	32	36	24	126
Clatsop	15	28	28	33	26	130
Coos	31	22	25	35	18	131
Klamath	30	34	25	27	28	144
Lake	34	35	35	26	20	150

Bold Type = Urban Counties  
 Normal Type = Rural Counties