

BENSON

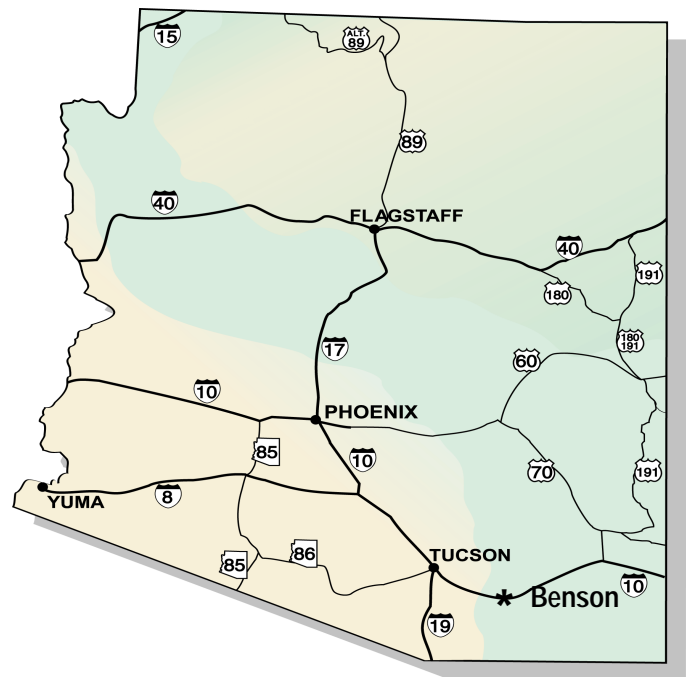
Community Profile

Prepared by the ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Benson serves as the western gateway to the scenic and historic attractions of Cochise County and has copyrighted the name "Home of Kartchner Caverns State Park." Located in the historical San Pedro Valley, it offers proximity to both Tucson and Sierra Vista. Its rugged mountains, grassy valleys, moderate climate, and proximity to many historical sites makes it a popular tourist attraction. The City of Benson was founded in 1880, when the Southern Pacific Railroad came through southern Arizona. Until 1910, Benson was the railroad hub of southern Arizona. It was named for Judge William B. Benson of California, a friend of Charles Crocker, then-president of the railroad.

FOUNDED: 1880
 COUNTY: Cochise County
 DISTANCE TO PHOENIX: 156 miles
 HIGHWAYS: SR-90, SR-80, I-10

INCORPORATED: Yes - 1924
 ELEVATION: 3,685 feet
 DISTANCE TO TUCSON: 45 miles



POPULATION

| | 1990 | 1998 | 1999 |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Benson | 3,824 | 4,540 | 4,605 |
| Cochise County | 97,624 | 123,750 | 124,575 |
| Arizona | 3,665,228 | 4,764,025 | 4,924,350 |

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security and U.S. Census Bureau.
 Note: Local sources estimate the trade area population to be 10,000.

PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Benson is situated along several trade routes – Interstate 10, U.S. 80, state Highway 90 and the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad. AEPCO and Apache Nitrogen Products are major employers. Many residents work in Tucson or Sierra Vista. Both retail chain and specialty stores are available. The city supports a large retired population and is a winter refuge for people from colder climates. Its nearby historic and scenic sites are increasingly popular with tourists.

| County Employment | 1990 | 1999 |
|---|-------|-------|
| Agricultural Services, Forestry & Fishing | 59 | |
| Construction | 0 | 2,000 |
| FIRE | 710 | 750 |
| Manufacturing | 1,034 | 1,300 |
| Mining | 160 | |
| Retail Trade | 5,287 | |
| Services | 5,543 | 8,125 |
| TCPU | 1,343 | 1,400 |
| Trade | | 7,150 |

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security and U.S. Census Bureau.

Major Private Employers

1. GAS CITY
2. APACHE NITROGEN
3. BENSON HOSPITAL
4. SEABHS
5. AEPCO

Major Public Employers

1. CITY OF BENSON
2. BENSON UNIFIED SCHOOL

LABOR FORCE DATA

| | 1990 | 1998 | 1999 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Civilian Labor Force | 1,322 | 1,387 | 1,424 |
| Unemployed | 101 | 109 | 94 |
| Unemployment Rate | 7.6% | 7.9% | 6.6% |

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security.

| Growth Indicators | 1990 | 1998 | 1999 |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| New Building Permits | 67 | 203 | 139 |
| Taxable Sales (\$) | 32,545,650 | 60,022,600 | 56,165,880 |
| Net Assessed Valuation (\$) | 10,786,085 | 17,609,907 | 17,941,244 |

Sources: Arizona State University; Arizona Department of Revenue.

SCENIC ATTRACTIONS

Cochise County, land of the great Apache chief Cochise and the notorious renegade Geronimo, was truly "the last frontier," subject to raids by the Chiricahua Apaches until the late 1880s. Nearby is the world famous "Kartchner Caverns State Park" and "Old Tucson's" Mescal movie site. Other attractions include: Tombstone, 20 miles from Benson; "Gammon's Gulch" Movie Set & Museum; historic Fort Huachuca, with its 1880's buildings and an Indian war days museum; the Amerind Museum which features remnants of prehistoric Indian cultures; and the Holy Trinity Monastery along the San Pedro Riparian Area are all "must see" local attractions. In addition, there are numerous mountain ranges that provide rock hounding, photography, picnicing, hiking, camping, bird watching and hunting opportunities.

TAXES

| Property Tax Rate | 1990 | 1998 | 1999 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Elem/High School | 6.27 | 7.68 | 7.70 |
| City/Fire District | 0.47 | 0.64 | 0.65 |
| County | 6.26 | 5.76 | 5.76 |
| Total | \$13.00 | \$14.08 | \$14.11 |

Sources: Arizona Tax Research Foundation

Note: Property tax in Arizona is based on assessed valuation which is 10 percent of market value for residential property. Average tax rate on homes in Arizona before exemptions and rebates is 1.3% of market value.

Sales Tax Rate

| | |
|--------|-------|
| City | 2.50% |
| County | 0.50% |
| State | 5.00% |

Sources: Arizona Tax Research Foundation

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Benson offers a broad range of community facilities including two parks, one golf course, four tennis courts, an Olympic-size pool, a bowling alley, a library, senior citizens center, many baseball, football, track and soccer fields. There is also a museum/gallery.

Educational Institutions

| | Public | Private |
|------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Community College | Y | N |
| Elementary | Y | Y |
| High School | Y | N |
| Middle School | Y | N |
| Vocational/Technical College | N | Y |

Financial

Number of Banks: 3

Governmental Agencies

Fire Department: Staffed City/Local Fire Department

Law Enforcement: City Police Department

Airports: Benson Municipal Airport

Runway 10/28 is 4,000 ft. x 75 ft. and is paved and lighted.

Medical

One community hospital.

Hotel and Lodging Facilities

Number of Rooms: 398

Meeting Rooms: 5

Capacity of Largest Facility: 150

Industrial Properties

Several sites with all utilities, railroad and freeway access are available. For more information contact the Benson Economic Development Committee.

Utilities

| | | |
|---------------|--|--------------|
| Electricity | Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooper | 520.586.2238 |
| Natural Gas | Benson Municipal Natural Gas | 520.586.2245 |
| Telephone | Qwest (statewide) | 800.244.1111 |
| Water & Sewer | Benson Municipal Water & Sewer | 520.586.2245 |

Cable Providers: Yes

Cable Internet Service Provider: No

Digital Switching Station: Yes

Fiber Optics: Yes

Internet Service Provider: Yes

Weather

| Month | Average Temperature (°F) | | Average Total Precipitation (Inches) |
|------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Daily Minimum | Daily Maximum | |
| January | 29.5 | 61.8 | 0.67 |
| February | 32.0 | 65.5 | 0.53 |
| March | 36.0 | 70.5 | 0.51 |
| April | 42.6 | 78.7 | 0.25 |
| May | 49.7 | 87.5 | 0.09 |
| June | 59.1 | 95.9 | 0.31 |
| July | 66.5 | 96.4 | 2.86 |
| August | 65.3 | 93.2 | 3.16 |
| September | 58.0 | 91.2 | 1.22 |
| October | 45.9 | 82.5 | 0.63 |
| November | 34.5 | 71.0 | 0.41 |
| December | 30.0 | 63.0 | 0.77 |
| Yearly Avg | 45.0 | 79.8 | 11.41 |

This profile was prepared by the Arizona Department of Commerce Communications Division in cooperation with local sources.

For further information, contact:

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