

Arroyo Grande, California

People and Place

Location

Arroyo Grande covers 5.7 square miles of land and is located just south of San Luis Obispo along U.S. Highway 1. The community is situated approximately 185 miles north of Los Angeles and 248 miles south of San Francisco. The geographic coordinates of Arroyo Grande, California, are 35°06'55"N, 120°34'29"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Arroyo Grande was 15,851, a 10.2% increase from the 1990 U.S. Census. In 2000 the gender structure was evenly divided with slightly more females (52.9%) than males (47.1%). The median age in 2000 was 41.9, which is slightly older than the national median of 35.3 for the same year. In 2000 a total of 45.1% of the population was between the ages of 25 and 59, 23.3% was under the age of 17, and 21.0% was 70 or older. For the population 18 years and over, 86.0% had a high school education or higher, 25.7% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 7.2% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma/equivalency for 22.6% of the population. In 2000, 82.4% of the population lived in family households.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that the racial composition was predominantly White (88.4%) and Asian (3.1%). Black or African American, American Indian and Alaskan native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander each constituted less than one percent of the population in 2000: (0.6%, 0.4%, and 0.2% respectively). Overall, 3.8% classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 3.5% of the population identified themselves with two or more races. A total of 11.2% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 5.7% of the population was foreign-born, with 41% born in Mexico.

History

The area surrounding Arroyo Grande was the heart of the Chumash Indian territory for centuries. Chumash hunters, fishermen, and foragers exploited local marine, coastal, and river resources. In unique redwood-planked boats, known as *tomols*, they regularly transported resources from their offshore islands to the mainland. Chumash mariners imported specialized stone blades and drills manufactured on the islands, plus marine resources such as shark, bonito, and halibut. Chumash fishermen used a variety of nets, traps, baskets, hooks, spears, and plant poisons to catch or stun fish and catch seals and sea otters. On the coast they collected abalone and mussels, and the Chumash trade network passed raw marine materials such as fish, whale bones, and oils to the interior. Although the Portuguese conquistador Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo first encountered the Chumash in 1542, it was not until 1772 that five Catholic missions were established within the Chumash Nation. After the secularization of the missions in 1833, the Chumash population fell into severe decline. In 1901 the U.S. government allocated 75 acres along Zanja de Cota Creek near Mission Santa Ynez to the surviving Chumash community. Today the Chumash have their own business council, a thriving bingo

operation, and a federal housing program on their small reservation. There are approximately 5000 people who now proudly identify themselves as Chumash Indians.¹

Spanish explorers first entered the territory in 1542, but it took 200 years for exploration to get underway. With the explorers came Franciscan friars who began founding missions in the vicinity of Arroyo Grande. Between 1822 and 1821, California came under the jurisdiction of Mexico when it gained independence from Spain. Land grants were made to settlers in the area until, in 1848, California became a territory of the United States and San Luis Obispo became one of California's original 27 counties. Many place names in the area reflect this heritage.² Burgeoning agriculture and quarrying in the area spurred rapid population growth in the late 1800s, facilitated by overland transport options available through the Southern Pacific Railroad line. By the 1950s conveyors were installed on the waterfront for unloading sardine boats that accelerated the commercial development of the harbors of the area in response to newly discovered fishing grounds offshore.³

Arroyo Grande originated when a rancher subdivided his property in response to drought conditions in 1864. City infrastructure grew up around the resulting community and residents voted to incorporate the City of Arroyo Grande in 1911.⁴ Today Arroyo Grande's economy is aided by the tourism industry and local festivities are characterized by the agricultural emphasis of Arroyo Grande. The annual Strawberry Festival, for example, commemorates its most famous crop. In addition, visitors and residents enjoy recreational opportunities associated with six parks located within the city.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

The California Employment Development Department lists Arroyo Grande Hospital, Arroyo Grande High School, Mid-State Bank, and Talley Farms as major employers in Arroyo Grande.⁵ According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 56.2% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 5.2% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). Of the population over the age of 16, a total of 40.7% were not in the labor force. Of the employed civilian population, 20.4% worked in "Educational, health and social services," 14.5% worked in "Retail trade" and 8.6% worked in "Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services," the majority of those falling under "Accommodation and food services." A total of 17.4% of the employed civilian population was employed by the local, state, or federal in 2000. However only 0.1% was reported as working for the government in the industries of agriculture, forestry, fishing, or mining. A total of 2.2% of the employed civilian population over the age of 16 was involved in "Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting" according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

Arroyo Grande's per capita income in 1999 was \$24,311 according to the U.S. Census, while the median household income was \$48,236. In 1999 a total of 6.9% of the population was living below the poverty line. In 2000 there were 6750 housing units in Arroyo Grande, 96.0% of which were occupied, 4.0% were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 69.9% were owner occupied and 30.1% were renter occupied. Almost half (42.6%) of the vacant housing units were for "seasonal, recreational, or occasional" use.

Governance

In 1911 Arroyo Grande became a general law city. The city's 5-member City Council (Mayor and four Council members) is elected at-large. Council members serve overlapping terms of four years, and the Mayor is directly elected for a two-year term.⁶

Arroyo Grande has a 7.25% sales and use tax rate and the County uses a 9.0% transient lodging tax rate which earned \$4,229,463 in revenue for the 2000-2001 fiscal year.⁷ California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.⁸ Vessels registered in California with either the Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) are assessed property taxes by the county tax collector where it is moored.⁹ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.¹⁰ California levies a fuel tax of \$0.18 per gallon, a portion of which goes toward marine safety and education programs and boating facility administration and development.¹¹

The State of California levies landing taxes that must be paid by fishermen and fish processors involved in the retail sale of fish products. These taxes vary by species and range between \$.0013 and \$.0125 per pound of fish.¹² The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.¹³

There is a California Department of Fish and Game Marine Region Field Office and a U.S. Coast Guard station located approximately 30 miles away in Morro Bay. Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are held approximately 211 miles away in Foster City. The nearest National Marine Fisheries office is over 200 miles away.

Facilities

Arroyo Grande, located along U.S. Highway 1, is accessible by a number of transportation options. Amtrak provides passenger rail service from the nearby Amtrak station in Grover Beach. San Luis County Regional Airport is about 9 miles from Arroyo Grande and the nearest major international airports are in Los Angeles and San Francisco, 185 and 248 miles away respectively.

The public school system of Arroyo Grande consists of five primary/middle schools, and two high schools. There are also seven private primary/middle schools and two private high schools in Arroyo Grande. The City of Arroyo Grande Public Works department provides water and sewer services to area residents. Both the Arroyo Grande Police and Fire Departments administer public safety. Health services are provided by the Arroyo Grande Community Hospital. There are at least three hotels located in Arroyo Grande, along with one inn and two bed and breakfasts. The City of Arroyo Grande has no marine facilities (i.e., harbor, docks, etc.).

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Landings data for Arroyo Grande were recorded as part of the Other San Luis Obispo County Ports port group which includes the nearby communities of San Miguel, Atascadero, Baywood Park, Grover City, Cambria, Nipomo, Shell Beach, San Simeon, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles, Cayucos, and Oceano. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing):

groundfish (9 t/\$110,441/40) and other species (<1 t/\$88/6). See the Atascadero Profile for additional information about this community. According to available data, there were no seafood processors operating in Arroyo Grande in 2000.

In 2000 there were 23 commercial vessels owned by Arroyo Grande residents, eight of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Arroyo Grande residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (1/0/0), crab (0/0/3), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/0/15), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (1/0/0).¹⁴

In 2000, one federal groundfish permit was held by a community member. Recorded data indicates that the number of Arroyo Grande residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (1/0/2), crab (0/0/3), groundfish (0/0/11), highly migratory species (NA/0/2), salmon (0/0/19), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/3), and other species (2/0/10).¹⁵

At least 74 commercial fishing permits, including 73 state registered permits, were held by Arroyo Grande residents in 2000. According to recorded data the number of state permits held by Arroyo Grande residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (1/0/4), crab (0/0/3), groundfish (0/0/13), highly migratory species (NA/0/2), salmon (0/0/32), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/3), and , other species (2/0/13).¹⁶

Sportfishing

A number of charter vessels operate in San Luis Obispo County targeting albacore tuna, rock cod, salmon, and other species. Many of these charter vessels also offer seasonal whale watching tours. In 2000, at least 12 charter businesses serviced sport fishermen and tourists in and around Arroyo Grande. Arroyo Grande is home to four sportfishing license vendors. In 2000, San Luis Obispo County residents purchased: 43,399 resident sportfishing licenses, 40 nonresident sportfishing licenses, 52 sport salmon punch cards, and 30 abalone report cards. In the port group consisting of Avila Beach and Morro Bay, 12 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 17,759 anglers in 2000. These vessels reported 123,441 landings composed of more than a dozen species. Rockfish (unspecified) and Albacore tuna accounted for 93.9% and 4.6% of the landings respectively.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members might be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Arroyo Grande area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing in Arroyo Grande is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” to refer to fishermen that do not earn revenue from their catch but rather fish for pleasure and/or to provide food for personal consumption. Therefore information on subsistence fishing in California is captured, to some degree, within the above sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, there was very little involvement in North Pacific fisheries by Arroyo Grande residents. A total of two residents worked as crewmembers aboard vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

While the majority of the charter boats in Arroyo Grande target West Coast fisheries, 57 Arroyo Grande community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

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 - ² The County of San Luis Obispo Online. 2005. About the County, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.co.slo.ca.us/SLOCo_InterPortal.nsf/SLOCo_AboutCounty.htm?OpenPage&charset=window-s-1252 (Access Date - January 2005)
 - ³ History in San Luis Obispo County. 2004. Timeline, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.historyinslocounty.com/index.htm> (Access Date - January 2004).
 - ⁴ The City of Arroyo Grande. 2005. Local History, [Online] Available: <http://arroyogrande.org/general/history.php> (access date - January 2005).
 - ⁵ State of California. No date. Labor Market Information: Major Employers in San Luis Obispo County, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/majorer/sanluer.htm> (access date - September 2004).
 - ⁶ City of Arroyo Grande. 2003. City of Arroyo Grande: City Council/Redevelopment Agency, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.arroyogrande.org/admin/council.php> (access date - November 2004).
 - ⁷ State of California. 2004. California Counties Transient Lodging Tax Revenue, [Online]. Available URL: <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locprep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> (access date - July. 2004).
 - ⁸ State of California Board of Equalization. No date. Property Tax Rules, Rule 151. Vessels Subject to the Four Percent Assessment, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/pdf/r151.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
 - ⁹ California Department of Motor Vehicles. 2003. How to register a vessel, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/boatsinfo/boatreg.htm#how> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹⁰ State of California Board of Equalization. 2004. Ballast Water Management Fee, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/sptaxprog/blstweb12.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹¹ U.S. Department of Transportation. 2001. Provisions Governing the Distribution of State Motor Fuel Tax Receipts: California, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/hwytaxes/2001/california.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹² State of California. No date. Fish and Game Code Section 8040-8070, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycod?section=fgc&group=08001-8070> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹³ State of California Department of Agriculture. 2004. List of Marketing Programs, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cdafa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/mktbrds.html> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹⁴ 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
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