

North Bend, Oregon

People and Place

Location

North Bend is located in southern Oregon's Coos County at 43°24'24"N, 124°13'23"W. The community is approximately 217 miles south of Portland, Oregon, and 534 miles north of San Francisco, California. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the community encompasses a total area of 5.07 square miles, including 1.17 square miles of water and 3.9 square miles of land.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, North Bend had a total population of 9544 people, with a population density of 2446 people per square mile of land area. In 2000, the percentage of males was 47.4% to 52.6% females. The median age of 39.6 was higher than the national median of 35.3 years for the same year. Approximately 61.8% of those eighteen and over earned the equivalent of a high school diploma or higher, 11.5% earned at least a bachelor's degree, and 4.2% earned a graduate degree.

The racial composition of North Bend in 2000 was 92.5% White, 1.8% American Indian and Alaska native, 1.3% Asian, 0.4% Black or African American, and 0.3% native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. A small percentage (1.0%) identified with some other race and 2.7% with two or more races. A total of 3.7% identified as Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 2.81% of the population was foreign-born, with 16.7% from Canada, followed by 14.9% from Japan, and 11.9% from Peru.

History

The Coos Bay watershed was originally inhabited by the ancestors of the modern day Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw, and Coquille Indians. The area is Oregon's largest coastal estuary and has provided natural resources for local inhabitants for centuries. In 1579 Sir Francis Drake sought shelter for his ship the Golden Hind in the nearby area.¹ Spanish and English ships sailed along the coast as early as the 16th century. It is believed that the first Europeans to explore the area were fur traders of the Hudson Bay Company in the 1820s. In 1852, the vessel Captain Lincoln shipwrecked on the north spit of Coos Bay and 52 surviving soldiers explored the area.² Their rescue drew attention to the region and merchants, settlers, and miners were quickly drawn to the area. The California gold rush in the late 1840's drew more Euro-American settlers to the area and by 1853 the first group reached the area of Coos Bay and established Empire City, the first town in the area.³ In 1855-1856 a war with the Indians resulted in a forced relocation of the Tribes onto reservations on Oregon's north coast.

Asa S. Simpson built the first sawmill in the area taking advantage of the large timber resources. Asa's son, Louis Simpson, followed in his father's footsteps and continued in the timber industry as sawmills grew and generated various wood products from fruit boxes to furniture.⁴ Other facilities sprung up around the timber industry, including machine shops, a woolen mill, milk condensary, brewery, shipyards, the first hospital in the region, churches, and many saloons. Trade expanded to distant markets, most importantly to San Francisco. Sawmills, shipbuilding, coal mining, and farming activities were major industries of the surrounding settlements.

North Bend was incorporated in 1903. In 1912, Vern Gorst and Charles King established an auto stage line between North Bend and Marshfield, what is known today as the City of Coos

Bay. The fare was 0.25 cents a ride. In 1913, Mr. Gorst brought a hydroplane to North Bend and by 1925 he founded Pacific Air Lines, a mail carrier with occasional passenger service. Pacific Air Lines eventually merged with other companies to become the modern day United Airlines.

In 1936 the McCullough Bridge, renamed the Conde B. McCullough Memorial Bridge after the death of its creator, was built thereby completing Highway 101.⁵ This bridge is one of the modern day hallmarks of North Bend. During World War II the local shipyards built minesweepers and rescue tugs for the U.S. Navy. In addition to ships, cranberry farming was introduced and improved to provide food products to the military during wartime. In 1951, Weyerhaeuser opened a large lumber mill in the area which eventually closed in 1989. With the decline of the timber industry in the 1980s the area saw an increase in tourism and service industries. Today North Bend continues to prosper in the tourism, timber, and agriculture industries.

North Bend is located in close proximity to many state and county parks for outdoor recreation such as Cape Arago State park, Susunet Bay State Park, and Shore Acres State Park. Activities include fishing charters, clamming, crabbing, beach combing, whale watching, hiking, biking, camping, bird watching, and kayaking. The Coos Bay watershed in conjunction with the Cities of Coos Bay and Charleston offers various events and festivals year round. In North Bend specifically, one can participate in the South Coast Dixieland Clambake Jazz Festival, the Oregon Dune Musher's Mail Run, and the Southern Oregon Dahlia Tuber Sale. In addition, the largest covered mall on the Oregon Coast, the Pony Village Mall offers numerous retail services. The Mill Casino and Hotel, built on the site of the former Weyerhaeuser mill by the Coquille Indian Tribe, provides gambling and entertainment opportunities.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

Based on the 2000 U.S. Census, "health care and social assistance" was the top occupational field (18.5%) for the employed population 16 years and over, followed by "retail trade" (13.4%), and "educational services" (9.4%). The "agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting" occupations represented 3.3% of the employed population. The unemployment rate was 5.5%, lower than the national average of 5.7% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). A total of 55.4% of the population was employed in 2000 and 41.1% were not in the labor force, higher than the national average of 36.1%. Local, state, or federal governments employed approximately 19.2% of the labor force in the same year.

North Bend's per capita income in 1999 was \$16,703, compared to the national average of \$21,587. The median household income in the same year was \$33,333, lower than the national average of \$41,944. For whom poverty status was determined, 14.8% of the city's population was living below the poverty line in 1999, slightly higher than the national average of 12.4%. In 2000, there were 4291 housing units in North Bend, of which 92.5% were occupied and 7.5% were vacant. Of the occupied units 59.5% were owner occupied, while 40.5% were renter occupied. Only a small percentage of the vacant units (5.6%) are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

North Bend, incorporated in 1903, operates under a City Charter. There are six City Council members, including a Mayor and five Council members; the City also maintains a position for a city administrator. The state of Oregon has no general sales tax. The lodging tax is

levied at 1% of the fee charged to the customer for overnight lodging and funds the Oregon Tourism Commission. Property tax is determined by a permanent rate set for the taxing district. The tax rate ranges from \$7 to \$15 per \$1000 of real market value. Assessed values are limited to a 3 percent annual growth rate.

Fishing businesses located in Oregon or deriving income from Oregon resources must pay a corporate excise or income tax totaling 6% of their net Oregon income. Wholesale fish dealers, canners, and bait dealers pay a landing fee that is determined from a percentage of the value of the food fish purchased from commercial harvesters. Salmon and Steelhead Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) landing fees are \$0.05 per pound for round, \$.0575 per pound for dressed, and \$.0605 per pound for dressed with heads off. Other regular landing fees are based on value; salmon and steelhead are 3.15% of value (including eggs and parts); all other fish and shellfish are 1.09% of value, and near-shore species are 5% of value.

Vessel owners must pay registration and title fees, and marine fuel taxes that support boating facilities, marine law enforcement, and boating safety education. Fishing boats and equipment may be taxed as personal property if they are valued at less than \$1 million. If their value exceeds this amount, they are taxed as industrial property. In 2004, title transfer fees are \$30 and registration fees are \$3 per foot based on center length of vessel. Oregon levies a fuel tax of \$0.24 per gallon of gasoline and use fuel. The Oregon Department of Agriculture administers four commodity commissions, Oregon Albacore Commission, Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, Oregon Salmon Commission, and Oregon Trawl Commission. Fishermen pay fees to these commissions for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.

North Bend is approximately 95 miles from the National Marine Fisheries Service research station in Newport, Oregon. The closest Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is located approximately 9 miles away in Charleston. The U.S. Coast Guard has a Group/Air Station located in North Bend. The closest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office and Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are located 217 miles away in Portland.

Facilities

North Bend is accessible via air, sea, and ground. The North Bend Airport is located in the city proper. Two additional airports, Newport Municipal Airport (95 miles) and Portland International Airport (218 miles), are also located nearby. The major road connecting North Bend to neighboring communities is U.S. Highway 101. Two bus companies operate in Coos Bay, Greyhound and Porter Stage. While there is commercial freight rail service, the closest passenger service, Amtrak, is located in Eugene.

North Bend School District #13 supports approximately nine schools, including two private or alternative and seven public schools. Of the public schools, there is 1 high school, 1 middle school, 3 elementary schools, and 1 school that services grades six through ten. One of the private schools supports grades kindergarten through eighth, while the other serves pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Southwestern Oregon Community College is the closest community college, located in the City of Coos Bay, and the University of Oregon (Eugene) is the closest four-year college.

The Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board supplies water to North Bend residents, Verizon Communications provides telephone communications, and electric power is administered by Pacific Power. Public safety is provided by the North Bend Police Department comprised of a

Chief of Police, and approximately 28 officers. The North Bend Fire Department responds to fire and safety calls from three distinct fire stations, which staff approximately 12 career personnel and 34 volunteer fire fighters.⁶ The closest hospital is located in Coos Bay, the Bay Area Hospital, followed by the Coquille Valley Hospital in Coquille, Oregon. There are approximately six hotels and two national and private campgrounds and recreational parks identified by the local Chamber of Commerce.⁷

The Oregon International Port of Coos Bay supports a large array of commercial vessel traffic with most recreational and commercial fishing facilities located at the mouth of Coos Bay in Charleston and the larger commercial cargo located in the Upper Bay Cargo area. The fishing facilities in Charleston are managed by the port district of Coos Bay Harbor. The majority of the commercial fishing vessels, approximately 95-99% are moored in Charleston, where commercial fishing vessels occupy approximately 200 of the 550 moorages.⁸ Recreational fishers are drawn to the area because of its safe conditions in a protected bay area. Commercial cargo is comprised of barge traffic and deep draft vessels transporting logs and wood chips.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, there were no vessels that delivered landings to North Bend and available data indicates that there are zero fish processors located in the community. North Bend residents owned 25 vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries, including 11 that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by North Bend residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/11/0), groundfish (0/1/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/18/2), shellfish (NA/3/NA), and shrimp (NA/2/0).⁹

In 2000, two community members held a total of two federal groundfish fishery permits. Recorded data for 2000 indicates that the number of North Bend residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish (0/1/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), other species (0/2/0), salmon (0/18/2), shellfish (0/2/NA), and shrimp (2/2/1).¹⁰

According to the available data, 34 permits were registered to North Bend residents in 2000, of which 32 were registered state permits, and 2 were a federal permit. Recorded data indicates that the number of permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: groundfish (0/1/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/18/3), shellfish (0/3/NA), shrimp (2/2/0), and other species (0/3/0).¹¹

Sportfishing

There were at least two outfitter guide businesses and one licensed charter vessel business operating in North Bend in 2003. Presently, North Bend has three sportfish licensing vendors. In 2000, the number of licenses sold by active agents was 1983 at a value of \$37,226. Additional sportfishing data was not available for North Bend as it is most likely aggregated under the port district of Coos Bay.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, there were two vessels owned by North Bend residents that participated in North Pacific fisheries. Seven residents served as crewmembers on vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries in the same year. North Bend residents held four North Pacific commercial fishing

permits in 2000, with one individual holding a federal permit and two individuals holding state permits. These individuals held two Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish permits, and one CFEC halibut permit salmon.

Sportfishing

Fishermen based in North Bend purchased 63 sportfishing licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

¹ City of Coos Bay Oregon. No date. History of Coos Bay, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.coosbay.org/cb/aboutcb/CBHistory.htm> (access date - August 2005).

² Coos County Historical Society. 2004. *A Selective Chronology of South Coast History: Origins to 1900*, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cooshistory.org/> (access date - August 2005).

³ Oregon Bay Area History. No date. No title, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cooshistory.org/ptwo.html> (access date - August 2005).

⁴ The South Coast Oregon Directory, Cities Guide. 2005 *Welcome to North Bend Oregon*. [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.scod.com/cities/northbend/> (access date - August 2005).

⁵ Coos County Historical Society. 2004. *A Selective Chronology of South Coast History: 1900 to Present*, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cooshistory.org/> (access date - August 2005).

⁶ Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. 2005. North Bend Community Profile, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://info.econ.state.or.us:591/FMPro?-db=Community.fp4&-Format=forms.htm&-lay=webpage&-op=eq&sort%20name=North%20Bend&-script=hit%20count&-Find> (access date - March 2005).

⁷ Oregon's Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. No date. No title, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://oregonsbayareachamber.com/cbplain.htm> (access date - August 2005).

⁸ M. Callery. Communications Director, Port of Coos Bay, Oregon. Pers. commun. October 2005.

⁹ “‘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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