

Reedsport, Oregon

People and Place

Location

Reedsport is located in Douglas County of mid coastal Oregon at 43°42'09"N and 124°05'44"W. The community is approximately 194 miles south of Portland, Oregon, and 530 miles north of San Francisco, California. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the community encompasses a total area of 2.29 square miles, including 0.24 square miles of water and 2.06 square miles of land.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Reedsport had a total population of 4378 people and a population density of 2126.6 people per square mile of land area. In 2000, the percentage of males was 48.3% to 51.7% females. The median age of 47.1 was higher than the national median of 35.3 years for the same calendar year. Approximately 66.7% of those eighteen and over earned the equivalent of a high school diploma or higher, 13.3% earned at least a bachelor's degree, and 4.8% earned a graduate degree.

The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 80.3% of Reedsport's population lived in family households. The racial composition in 2000 was 93.9% White, 1.2% American Indian and Alaska native, and 0.4% Asian. A total of 2.2% of the population identified both with two or more races and with some other race. Less than five percent (4.7%) of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 2.6% of the population was foreign-born, with 42% from Canada, followed by 21.4% from Mexico, and 9.8% from Japan.

History

The area of the Reedsport was originally inhabited by the ancestors of the modern day Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua (Kuitsh), and Siuslaw Indians. The sixteenth century brought tales of contact between the local Native American Indians, Spaniards, and British explorers. By the 1700's contact increased and by 1791 Lower Umpqua traded with ships that stopped at the mouth of the Umpqua River.¹ Some of the first recorded contact between the Siuslaw and fur trappers from the Hudson's Bay Company occurred in 1826. In 1828 conflict between the Lower Umpqua and fur trapper and explorer Jedediah Strong Smith resulted in the loss of many of Smith's company.²

Fur trapping continued to grow in the area and in 1836 the Hudson's Bay Company established a trading fort, Fort Umpqua, upriver near the modern day town of Elkton. In addition to fur trapping, the gold rush brought more Euro-American settlers to the area. Reedsport was established in 1852 and was named after a pioneer resident Alfred W. Reed. The post office was established in 1912 and seven years later the town was incorporated. Reedsport was built on marshy ground and was subject to frequent flooding; therefore buildings were elevated above ground.³ Primary industries in the 1900s included timber and fishing. In 1964 a devastating flood caused major damage to the community and a dike was built to protect the lower town. With the collapse of the timber industry in the late 1990's, Reedsport continues to be supported by such industries as tourism, agriculture, and fishing.

Today the tourism industry is an important component of the Reedsport economy. The community is home to the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area headquarters office.⁴ A 50-mile stretch of sand dunes which offers hiking trails, beaches, 30 lakes, fishing, swimming,

interpretive exhibits, and wildlife watching. Campgrounds extend throughout the area. The Umpqua River Lighthouse is a short drive away in Winchester Bay. The Dean Creek Elk viewing area supports approximately 150 Roosevelt Elk on a 1000-acre reserve. Reedsport is also the home of the Umpqua Discovery Center that houses displays of the areas history.

Community events include the Tsalila Festival that celebrates Native American culture and traditions, and activities focused on watershed restoration and salmon recovery. Another popular event is the Ocean Festival, which includes U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Demonstrations and a Seafood BBQ. The Oregon Divisional Chainsaw Sculpting Championships, Dune Musher's Mail Run, and Summer Concert Series are examples of other activities held throughout the year.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

Based on the 2000 U.S. Census, "retail trade" was the top occupational field (14.7%) for the employed population 16 years and over, followed by "accommodation and food services" (13.9%), and "health care and social assistance" (12.0%). The "agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting" occupations represented 4.2% of the employed population. The unemployment rate was 10.0%, higher than the national average of 5.7% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). The number employed was 41.6%, lower than the national average of 50.5%, and 53.7% were not in the labor force, higher than the national average of 36.1%. Local, state, or federal governments employed approximately 18% of the labor force in 2000.

Reedsport's per capita income in 1999 was \$16,093, compared to the national average of \$21,587. The median household income in the same year was \$26,054; lower than the national average was \$41,944. For whom poverty status was determined, 16% of the city's population was living below the poverty line in 1999, higher than the national average of 12.4%. In 2000, there were 2178 housing units in Reedsport, of which 90.8% were occupied and 9.2% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 66.9% and 33.1% were owner occupied and renter occupied respectively. A total of 16.5% of the vacant units was for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Reedsport was incorporated in 1919. The City operates under a city charter, with seven City Council members including the mayor. In addition to the Council members, the City maintains a City Manager, a City Recorder, a City Attorney, and at the discretion of the City Council a municipal judge.⁵ 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.

Reedsport is approximately 72 miles from the National Marine Fisheries Service research station in Newport, Oregon. The closest Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) office is located approximately 33 miles away in Charleston. The U.S. Coast Guard's Umpqua River Station is located nearby in Winchester Bay, approximately 5 miles from Reedsport. The closest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office and Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are located 194 miles away in Portland.

Facilities

Reedsport is accessible via ground, air, and sea transportation. Reedsport lies along U.S. Highway 101. Greyhound provides bus services to area residents. While there is commercial freight rail service in the community, the closest passenger service, provided by Amtrak, is located in Eugene. The North Bend Airport is located nearby (24 miles) and two additional airports, Newport Municipal Airport (72 miles) and Portland International Airport (194 miles), are also located nearby.

The school system falls under the Reedsport School District 105, which supports two public schools. An elementary school contains grades kindergarten through sixth and the Reedsport Junior/Senior High School supports grades seven through twelfth. Southwestern Oregon Community College is located nearby in Coos Bay and the University of Oregon, the closest four-year college, is situated in Eugene.

Water is supplied by the City of Reedsport, Verizon Communications provides telephone communications, and the Central Lincoln Peoples Utility District administers electric power to community residents. The closest hospital is the Lower Umpqua Hospital, located in the city proper. The City of Reedsport Police Department, comprised of a 17-member police department and a 24-hour dispatch center, provides public safety. The Douglas County Sheriff's office and the Oregon State Police provide additional police support. The Reedsport Fire Department responds to fire and safety calls with a staff of 40 volunteer fire fighters, a Fire Chief, and a Fire Marshall. There are approximately six hotels, one bed and breakfast facilities, and several state, county and private campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks identified by the local Chamber of Commerce.⁶

Reedsport is included in the Port of Umpqua, which maintains multiple port facilities in Reedsport inclusive of their offices, a dock, a small industrial park, and an island used for wetland mitigation. The dock located in Winchester Bay, also managed by the Port of Umpqua, supports the commercial fishing fleet; please see the Winchester Bay Community Profile for more information.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, zero vessels delivered landings to Reedsport and there were no processors operating in Reedsport.

Reedsport residents owned 19 vessels in 2000 that participated in West Coast fisheries, including nine vessels that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Reedsport residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/9/0), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (11/0/1), shellfish (NA/0/NA), and shrimp (NA/1/0).⁷

In 2000, a total of 3 community members held 3 federal groundfish fishery permits. In the same year recorded data indicates that the number of Reedsport residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab (0/8/0), highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/9/1), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/1/1), and other species (3/0/0).⁸

According to the available data, 23 permits were registered to Reedsport residents in 2000, including 20 registered state permits and 3 federal permits. Recorded data indicates that the number of permits held by these community members in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: highly migratory species (NA/0/0), salmon (0/10/2), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/1/3), and other species (4/0/0).⁹

Sportfishing

Reedsport had at least four registered outfitter guide businesses in 2003. A total of four licensed charter vessel businesses were located in the community in the same year. Reedsport is home to three sportfishing license vendors. In 2000, the number of licenses sold by active agents was 2059 at a value of \$34,525.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, there were three vessels owned by Reedsport residents that participated in North Pacific fisheries. Seven residents worked as crewmembers on vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries in the same year. Reedsport residents held seven commercial fishing permits for the North Pacific in 2000, with five individuals holding federal permits and two individuals holding state permits.

Reedsport residents held a total of 794,775 halibut Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) shares and 756,293 Sablefish IFQ shares in 2000. In the same year residents held 1 groundfish License Limitation program (LLP) permit, 1 LLP crab permit, 1 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) Bering Sea and Aleutian Island (BSAI) groundfish permit, 1 CFEC halibut permit, and 1 CFEC salmon permit.

Sportfishing

Fishermen based in Reedsport purchased 28 sportfishing licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000. In the same year there were no residents operating sportfishing guide businesses in Alaska.

¹ Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians. 2005. Culture and History, [Online] Available: URL: http://www.ctclusi.org/cultural_historical.asp (access date - November 2005).

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- ² Jedediah Smith Society. 2005. Biography, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.jedediahsmithsociety.org/bioforstudents.html> (access date - November 2005).
- ³ Wikipedia. 2005. Reedsport, Oregon, [Online]. Available: URL: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reedsport, Oregon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reedsport,_Oregon) (access date - November 2005).
- ⁴ Chamber of Commerce. No date. Reedsport/Winchester Bay, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.reedsportcc.org/lodging.html> (access date - August 2005).
- ⁵ City of Reedsport. 2005. City of Reedsport Charter, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.reedsport.or.us/index.asp?Type=B_DIR&SEC={D8350D7C-6622-4547-B0D3-9F4EBB09E4EC}&DE={1496A7A4-A8FB-4FFA-9831-6121BDF0A913} (access date - November 2005).
- ⁶ Chamber of Commerce. No date. Reedsport/Winchester Bay, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.reedsportcc.org/lodging.html> (access date - August 2005).
- ⁷ “‘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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