

Pendleton Station Profile

Pendleton (estimated 2009 population 17,515) is located in the Umatilla River Valley that cuts through the rolling dry farmland of the eastern Columbia Basin of northeastern Oregon. It was founded on the Umatilla River in 1864 on a site purchased for a span (pair) of horses. A toll bridge across the Umatilla River at the town site formed an important link in the westward migration via the Oregon Trail. The town was named for a United States Senator from Ohio, George Hunt Pendleton, the Vice Presidential candidate with McClellan against Abraham Lincoln in 1864. Mr. Pendleton favored agriculture and became noted as the "father" of the Civil Service System.

Agriculture, light manufacturing and tourism activities form the principal industries in and around Pendleton. The area's main crops are wheat, hay and cattle. Dry land farming is practiced in the Pendleton area, but considerable acreage of former desert land to the west of town has been brought under irrigation by pumping water mainly from the nearby Columbia River. Forestry is another major industry in the area. The Pendleton Woolen Mills, famous for wool blankets of Indian design, was founded in the early 1900's and continues to be one of the chief industries and tourist attractions.

CLIMATE: The area around Pendleton is semi-arid, with very warm and dry summers and cool, moist winters. Average July highs are near 90 with overnight lows around 60. January's average highs and lows are in the upper 30s and mid 20s. Temperatures have ranged from a high of 119 (all time Oregon record high 1898) to a low of -28 degrees during the period of record beginning in 1888. The growing season averages 161 days. Extremely cold temperatures are rare, with the temperature dropping below zero in only 1 out of 3 years.

Much of the moisture from Pacific storms falls over and west of the Cascade Mountains, with only an average of 12.2 inches of precipitation falling at the Weather Forecast Office (WFO). Heavier amounts of 30 to 70 inches fall in the nearby Blue Mountains, with lesser amounts west toward the central Columbia Basin. On average, over 80 percent of yearly precipitation falls between October and May. Pendleton snowfall averages about 17 inches. Periods of extended snow cover are usually broken by Chinook winds, which bring rapid melt and runoff of snow cover.

There are over 100 days each year on average with clear skies. Extended periods of fog and low clouds are common in the winter with an average of 30 days of dense fog mainly from November into February.

The land slopes upward very gradually from the desert-like Columbia Basin to the Blue Mountains to the southeast with an elevation of 4,000 to 7,000 feet. The City Center of Pendleton is at an elevation of 1000 feet above sea level, while the WFO at the airport sits at 1,514 feet.

TAXES: Oregon has no sales tax, but offsets this with a state personal income tax ranging up to 9%, but often about half of one's Federal. Real estate property taxes in 2009 were \$19.59 per \$1000 valuation. Pendleton's Cost of Living Index is 82.7.

TRANSPORTATION: Seaport Airlines provides air service to and from Portland. Additional service from Delta, United and Horizon airlines are available at Pasco and Walla Walla, Washington. Bus service is provided by Greyhound. Taxis operate within Pendleton.

EDUCATION: Pendleton's public school system includes 4 neighborhood elementary schools, a middle school and high school, and a regional community college. There are also 3 parochial schools. Blue Mountain Community College has an enrollment of over 10,000 full and part time students and offers associate's degrees in 20 program areas and certificates in 16 program areas.

CULTURAL: Pendleton swells each September during the Pendleton Roundup Rodeo, one of the oldest and largest in the West. The event includes parades, concerts, night shows, carnival, and street vendors.

Pendleton hosts the 2A State Basketball Tournament each March. Also in Pendleton are an arts center, 3 museums, symphony, and farmers market. The nearby Umatilla Tribal Nation operates a casino and museum.

MEDICAL: St. Anthony Hospital and medical staff provide modern emergency, surgical, diagnostic, and preventive care. Several assisted living facilities are available. Ambulance service is provided by the Pendleton Fire Department.

RECREATION: Pendleton operates 20 parks, a family aquatic center, river parkway, recreation center, and a skate park. Two nearby 18 hole golf courses and a disc golf course are available. McKay Reservoir, just south of Pendleton offers fishing and boating. Abundant fishing, hunting, hiking, camping, skiing, and snowmobiling are available in the nearby Blue Mountains. Children's sports include football, soccer, baseball, swimming, wrestling, track, and softball.

HOUSING: Rental units are in the \$400 to \$700 range. New home prices are around \$120 per square foot. Previously built homes range between \$70 and \$110 per square foot.

OTHER SERVICES: Pendleton is also the County Seat and many Oregon State services are available here. Water quality is very good and comes from springs and wells.

Fox TV (Ch. 11) and PBS (Ch. 42) are the only local TV stations, but the local cable operator offers over 200 channels plus 30 digital music channels. All major networks are carried, including stations from Portland and Tri-Cities in Washington. There are several internet and cell phone service providers.

STATION PROGRAM: The positions at the National Weather Service in Pendleton include the Meteorologist in Charge (MIC), Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM), Science and Operations Officer (SOO), Observation Program Leader (OPL), Electronic Systems Analyst (ESA), two electronic technicians (ET), an Information Tech Officer (ITO), and an Administrative Assistant (ASA), seven general forecasters, five senior forecasters, a service hydrologist (SH), two Hydrometeorological Technicians (HMT), one Intern (MI), and seasonal temporary staff students.

The forecast area covers Northeast Oregon from the Idaho state line west to the Cascades and south into Central Oregon. On the Washington side, we are responsible for most of southern Washington west to the Cascades. The programs include digital text and graphic forecasts, hazardous weather warnings, aviation forecasts, fire weather forecasting, dispersion outlook, short term forecasts and public service.

STATION HISTORY AND LOCATION: Weather reports were first recorded in downtown Pendleton in February 1866. Various downtown locations were the site for basic weather observations from November 1889 to April 1926. The U.S. Forest Service took over weather observations at the downtown Post Office location from July 1926 to June 1930. A member of the public again assumed these responsibilities from July 1930 to June 1935.

Weather observations began at the Pendleton Airport in April of 1935. We were located at the second floor of the Airport Terminal building from October 1960 through May 3, 1995. The current location is on the western portion of the airport complex, which is about 3.5 miles west of the city center. This location offers a splendid view of the community and surrounding area.

For additional information contact us on our administrative line (541)276-7832.