

Surprise

Community Profile

Prepared by the ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Surprise is in the fast-growing northwestern part of the Valley of the Sun, along U.S. 60/state Highway 93. It was named by its founder, Homer C. Ludden, after his hometown of Surprise, Nebraska. The city is experiencing explosive growth in its residential, commercial and industrial sectors. According to Department of Economic Security data, Surprise is the fastest growing city in Arizona. More than 54,000 new residential dwelling units are planned for construction over the next 10 years. Surprise is the Spring Training home for the Texas Rangers and Kansas City Royals.

Basic Information

Founded: 1929
Incorporated: 1960
Elevation: 1,130
Located in Maricopa County
Nearby Highways: HWYS I-17, I-10, US 60, Loop 303

Distance to Major Cities:
Phoenix: 25 miles
Tucson: 140 miles

Population

| | 1990 | 2000 | 2006 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Surprise | 7,122 | 30,848 | 98,140 |
| Maricopa County | 2,122,101 | 3,072,149 | 3,792,675 |
| Arizona | 3,665,228 | 5,130,632 | 6,305,210 |

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security and US Census Bureau

Principal Economic Activities

In the past, Surprise's economy was heavily agricultural. Although it is still important, the city's tremendous growth has created considerable employment in the construction, retail and service sectors for Surprise residents. The city offers business and industry many opportunities for growth and profit. The expansion of a planned transportation system and plans for a massive water recharge project will local capacity for growth.

County Employment

| | 2006 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 373,800 |
| Professional and Business Services | 321,200 |
| Government | 212,400 |
| Educational and Health Services | 187,000 |
| Mining and Construction | 184,600 |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 174,900 |
| Financial Activities | 151,100 |
| Manufacturing | 132,900 |
| Other Services | 68,500 |
| Information | 32,100 |

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security

Figures are organized under the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS).



Labor Force Data

| | 1990 | 2000 | 2006 |
|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| Civilian Labor Force | 2,654 | 11,771 | 14,086 |
| Unemployed | 193 | 490 | 631 |
| Unemployment Rate | 7.3% | 4.2% | 4.5% |

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security

Growth Indicators

| | 1990 | 2000 | 2006 |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| New Bldg. Permits | 201 | 4,630 | 4,722 |
| Taxable Sales (\$) | 72.3 million | 524 million | 2.3 billion |
| Net Assessed Value (\$) | 45.8 million | 176.1 million | 744.5 million |

Sources: Arizona State Univ., AZ Dept. of Revenue, AZ Tax Research Foundation
1990 New building permit data incomplete: One or more months not available.

Scenic Attractions

White Tank Regional Park, which borders the city to the west, has unusual Indian petroglyphs in its 26,000 acres where camping, hiking & picnicking are popular activities. Surprise is also home to the West Valley Art Museum, which houses an extensive art collection & an ever-changing series of visiting exhibits from around the world. The Heard Museum will open in 2006 with native art exhibits. Nearby Wickenburg, is a rugged cowboy town with top-notch resorts. To the northwest is "gold country" with many interesting ghost towns. Within a short distance of Surprise is Lake Pleasant where water sports are popular. Quiet desert settings encourage hiking, rock hounding, horseback riding & picnicking. Surprise is also home to the world-class retirement community Sun City Grand.

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Community Facilities

The City of Surprise offers a wide range of community facilities including a new recreation/aquatic center, a community center, library, youth center, five parks, seven golf courses, eight basketball courts, four softball diamonds (two lighted), and lit tennis courts.

| Educational Institutions | Public | Private |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Elementary | Y | Y |
| High School | Y | N |

Financial

Number of banks: 9

Government

Fire Department: Staffed City/Local Fire Department

Law Enforcement: City Police Department

Airports

Glendale Airport with a lighted/paved 7,200-ft. runway is 12 miles southeast of the city. Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport is a 35-minute drive southeast of the city.

Medical

The local healthcare provider is SunHealth (Boswell, Del Webb & SunHealth Research Institute).

Hotel & Lodging

Number of Rooms: 400

Meeting Rooms: 20

Capacity of Largest Facility: 500

Industrial Properties:

Over 1,000 acres of employment land available. For current information contact the City of Surprise Economic Development Department.

Utilities

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Electricity | APS (Statewide) | 800.428.7324 |
| Natural Gas | Southwest Gas Corp. (statewide) | 800.766.9722 |
| Telephone | Qwest (statewide) | 800.244.1111 |
| Water & Sewer | City of Surprise | 623.583.1000 |

Cable Providers: Y

Digital Switching Station: Y

Internet Service Provider: Y

Cable Internet Service Provider: Y

Fiber Optics: Y

Taxes

| Property Tax Rate | 1990 | 2000 | 2006 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Elementary/High Schools | 9.30 | 7.78 | 5.75 |
| City/Fire District | 0.84 | 0.85 | 0.91 |
| Countywide | 3.51 | 3.35 | 2.74 |
| Totals | 13.65 | 11.98 | 9.40 |

Source: Arizona Tax Research Foundation

Note: Tax rate per \$100 assessed valuation

School district participates in the Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC).

Sales Tax

| | 2006 |
|-----------|-------------|
| City/Town | 0.00% |
| County | 0.70% |
| State | 5.60% |

Sources: Arizona League of Cities & Towns, Arizona Dept. of Revenue

Weather

| | Avg. Low (°F) | Avg. High (°F) | Precip. (in.) |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| January | 40.0 | 67.3 | 0.9 |
| February | 43.2 | 71.6 | 1.2 |
| March | 47.3 | 77.1 | 1.1 |
| April | 52.9 | 85.3 | 0.3 |
| May | 61.8 | 94.5 | 0.1 |
| June | 70.1 | 103.3 | 0.1 |
| July | 78.0 | 106.0 | 0.8 |
| August | 76.9 | 104.4 | 1.1 |
| September | 69.9 | 99.3 | 0.9 |
| October | 57.6 | 88.6 | 0.7 |
| November | 46.0 | 75.3 | 0.7 |
| December | 39.4 | 66.6 | 1.2 |
| Yearly Avg. | 56.9 | 86.6 | 9.0 |

Source: Western Regional Climate Center

Western Regional Climate Center, wrcc@dri.edu. Period of record 1964-2004.

Average Total Snowfall 0.0". Nearest data available from Youngtown, AZ.

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

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