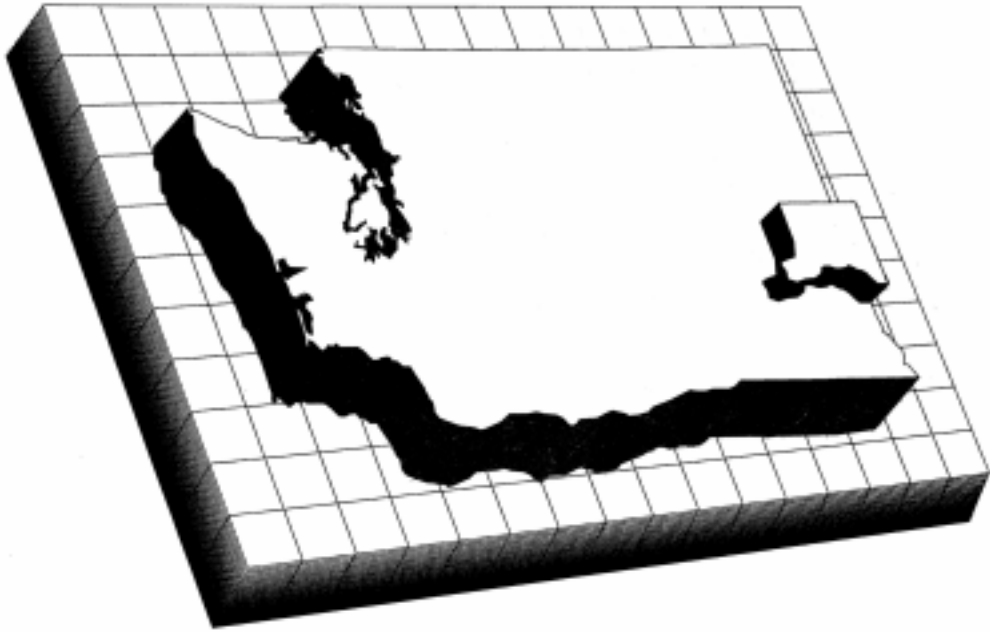


WHITMAN COUNTY PROFILE



June 1999
Labor Market and
Economic Analysis Branch
Gary Bodeutsch, *Director*

WHITMAN COUNTY PROFILE

JUNE 1999

Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch
Employment Security Department

This report has been prepared in accordance with
RCW 50.38.050.

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INTRODUCTION

This report profiles the labor and economic characteristics of Whitman County. It was prepared by the Labor Market and Economic Analysis (LMEA) Branch of the Washington State Employment Security Department and is one in a series that profiles labor market and economic conditions in each of Washington's 39 counties.

The profile is designed to assist state and local planners in developing local economic strategies. It is also an effective tool for answering labor market and economic questions frequently asked about the county. Readers with specific information needs should refer to the *Table of Contents* or to the *data appendix* to more quickly access those sections of particular interest to them.

Like the earlier Whitman County Profile of March 1995, the purpose of this report is to provide a compre-

hensive labor market and economic analysis of Whitman County. Characteristics profiled include the following:

- physical geography, economic history, and demographics
- labor force composition and trends
- industries, employment, and earnings
- skills and occupations
- economic development and job training

Much of the information in this report is regularly updated on the LMEA Internet homepage. The homepage contains current and historical labor market information which can be accessed by area or by type of information. The site address is:

<http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea>

Any inquiries or comments about information in the profile should be directed to the Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch.

GEOGRAPHY

Comprising a total land mass of 2,151 square miles, Whitman County ranks 10th in size among Washington counties. The county is situated in southeast Washington along the Washington-Idaho border. On the Washington side, it is bordered to the north by Spokane County, to the west by Adams County (and a small part of Franklin County at its southwest corner), and to the south by the counties of Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin.

Whitman County lies in the heart of the Palouse country. Its topography is generally that of flat land and rolling hills (the Palouse Hills). The rich, dark, porous, moisture-retentive soil is composed of loess and volcanic ash overlaying basalt. Various forms of bunchgrass constitute the native vegetation, though most of the dryland has since been converted into a productive wheat farming region.

Elevations in the region range from 1,100 to 3,400 feet above sea level. At the higher elevations are Tekoa Mountain and a number of prominent rock formations such as Bald Butte, Steptoe Butte, and Kamiak Butte.

The Snake River is responsible for the county's winding southern border with Columbia, Asotin, and Garfield counties. Along this river-forged border lies the Snake River Canyon—a canyon that cuts a 2,000-foot deep swath through the Palouse Hills. The county's single largest body of water is Rock Lake, located in the northwest corner. Among the county's major tributaries are the Palouse River, Rock Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Pleasant Valley Creek, and Union Flat Creek. There are also a host of lesser tributaries.

ECONOMIC HISTORY

The following was excerpted from several sources, most notably *Colfax: 100 Plus* by Edith S. Erickson; *Palouse in the Making* by Garrett D. Kincaid; *Covered Wagons Days in the Palouse Country* by Lula Downen; *Pullman, Washington* by the Pullman Chamber of Commerce; and *1953 Yearbook of the Washington State Association of County Commissioners and Engineers*.

Whitman County is named in memory of Marcus Whitman, a Protestant missionary killed, along with his wife and other followers, by Indians in 1847. The county is in the Palouse country. The origin of the word *palouse* is uncertain. It may stem from a phrase in the Nez Perce language denoting the people living along the lower Snake River.

Whitman County was organized by the territorial legislature on November 29, 1871 by partitioning what was then Stevens County—a huge area covering what are now 13 eastern Washington counties, all of Northern Idaho, and much of western Montana. The county, as originally conceived, was itself quite large, covering what are now the modern-day counties of Whitman, Franklin, and Adams. The bill establishing the county was signed by Territorial Governor Edward S. Salomon (appointed by President U.S. Grant).

Native American Indian tribes migrated across the plains long before the advent of white settlement. In addition to the Palouse (or Palus), there were the Upper Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, and Nez Perce. The tribes were sustained by the bounty of the region: deer and elk hunting in the hills and grasslands; root, berry, and nut gathering in the forests and wetlands; and fishing in any of the numerous rivers and streams.

White settlement into Whitman County began in 1868. The early settlers were engaged, for the most part, in livestock grazing. They took full advantage of the region's abundant grasslands to graze thousands of heads of cattle, sheep, and horses.

By the early 1870s, however, newer settlers began the process of converting the land to agricultural production (a conversion more or less completed by the 1880s). Most of the production revolved around field crops such as wheat, oats, barley, and flax straw. Fruits and vegetables such as apples, peaches, plums (and prunes), currants, gooseberries, raspberries, and peas were also found to grow well within the county, especially along the banks

of the Snake River. Wheat production, however, clearly dominated the county's agricultural sector.

The methods used to plant the county's first wheat (and other grain) crops were both labor-intensive and time-consuming. The soil was plowed by horse or ox-teams, the seeds broadcast by hand. However, technological advancement in the industry came rapidly. In time, walking plows gave way to horse-drawn plows, which, in turn, gave way to tractor-plows. Manual threshing, harvesting and binding soon yielded to horse-drawn combines which yielded to tractor-pulled combines which, in turn, yielded to gas-powered, self-propelled combines. This rapid evolution in farm machinery reduced both the time and labor needed to plant and harvest crops, thus contributing tremendously to growth in the industry.

A major contributor to the county's agricultural richness was the State Agricultural College of Washington, a land grant college founded at Pullman in 1890 (now Washington State University). A fierce lobbying effort convinced legislators that Pullman was the best site for the college—a particularly notable achievement considering other, more established towns such as Spokane were also lobbying hard. The academic scope of the college was broad, encompassing many of the liberal arts. However, it excelled in the areas of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, dairying, poultry, and forestry. The college's 416 acre Experiment Station was the most highly-cultivated and technologically-advanced farm in the region, coordinating its efforts with state agriculturists.

During the 1860s and 1870s, travel in and out of the county was restricted to steamboats and stagecoaches—primarily The Oregon Steam Navigation Company and Northwestern Stage Company. By the 1880s, though, railroads dominated the transportation industry, playing a major role in the county's economic development.

Competition within the railroad industry was fierce as companies large and small vied for the right to move through the county. The largest regional line was the Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company. It competed with nationally-known companies: Great Northern, Union Pacific, Northern Pacific, Central Pacific, and the Milwaukee Railroad. So, too, did smaller railroads such as the Columbia and Palouse Railroad

Company (bought by Northern Pacific), the Spokane and Inland Empire Electric Railway Company (bought by Great Northern), and the Washington-Idaho Railroad Company. The Whitman Electric Railway and Power Company got as far as incorporation, but did not actually get off the ground.

Though not considered a major industry today, lumber mills were among the first businesses to operate in the county. The reason was simple—most new arrivals wanted something better than a log cabin, creating the need for lumber to build proper houses. The county's first sawmill was built in the early 1870s. Before the turn of the decade, the water-powered mills were a common sight in towns throughout the county. So, too, for that matter, were flour mills.

The events of the past helped to establish a pattern of economic development that, for all intents and purposes,

survives to this day. Of course, not everything remains unchanged. For example, the once mighty railroads have been largely displaced by cars, trucks, and ships. Agriculture, of course, remains king. But it continues to evolve even after a 100-year history. So, too, does higher education. From a fledgling land grant college, Washington State University has grown to national prominence for its work in agricultural research (4,200 acres of cultivated land today compared to 400 acres in 1890), and also for a wide variety of academic and professional disciplines. Today, it is the single largest employer in Whitman County.

Relatively new and emerging industries such as high technology, light manufacturing, health services, and tourism and recreation are also finding footholds in Whitman County.

POPULATION

The Office of Financial Management has estimated Whitman County's 1998 population at 41,400, making it the 23rd largest county in the state. The last actual

head-count was the 1990 Census when there were 38,775 residents.

Trends

Population changes are generally seen as an important socio-economic indicator. A growing population symbolizes economic health while a waning one signifies economic decline. People tend to follow jobs. However, the conditions in Whitman County are unusual. A large university population distorts an otherwise relatively small population base. The student population accounts for about 40 percent of the county's population.

Figure 1 is somewhat misleading because the scale of the chart makes the changes in population appear more dramatic than they actually are. The difference between the lowest point (1970) and the highest point (1998) is only 3,500. *Figure 2* shows a more accurate growth level by comparing population growth in Whitman with the state by indexing the numbers to 1970=100. Over the period, the county's population grew by only 9 percent while the state's went up by 67 percent. However, even with the low growth, the trend is clear. There was moderate growth until 1981; there was decline from 1981 to 1988; and there has been steady, albeit slow, growth again through 1998.

The decline after 1981 is attributable, in part, to the national economic malaise brought on by the "double-dip" recessions of the early 1980s. The second recession ended in 1982; however, the population decline in Whitman County continued until 1988. Although some industrial sectors experienced job losses during that time, they were not sufficiently large enough to account for the population decline.

Enrollment and staffing levels at Washington State University (WSU) were the cause. Although the economy, measured by employment, was sputtering during the early 1980s, it had recovered and was expanding soon thereafter. However the University's enrollment levels were just the opposite. Through the 1970s, WSU's student population experienced strong growth and reached a high in 1980 that wasn't surpassed until 1998 (*see Figure 3 on the next page*). But with the burden of budgetary constraints, WSU's enrollment fell rather consistently throughout much of the 1980s. In 1993, enrollment started increasing and has been growing strongly since. These fluctuations in the student body have a significant effect on the total population of Whitman County.

Figure 1
Population Trend
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Office of Financial Management

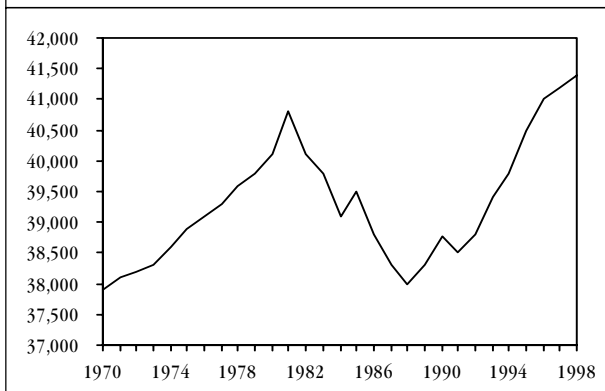


Figure 2
Population Trend
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Office of Financial Management

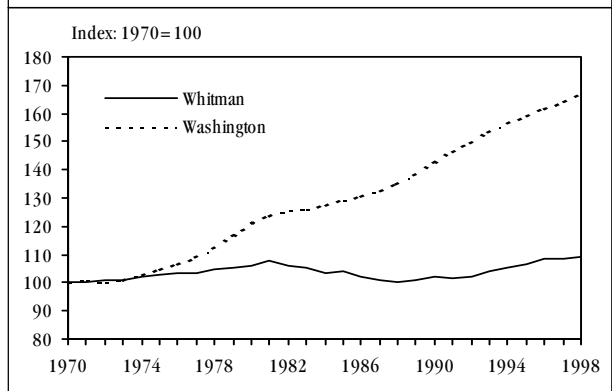
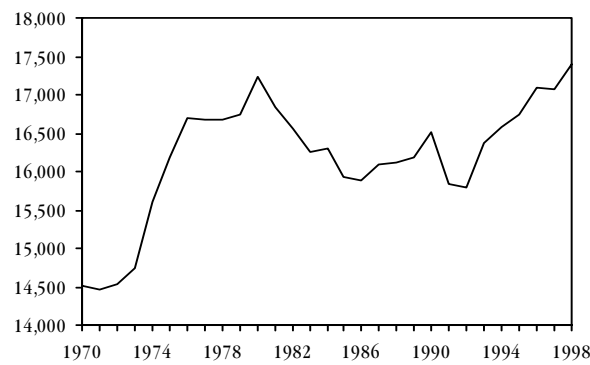


Figure 3
WSU Student Population
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Office of Financial Management



Populated Areas

Most county residents live in incorporated areas, and that is also where growth is occurring. In 1998, only 16 percent of Whitman County's 41,400 residents lived outside of incorporated areas. Growth in areas that were incorporated was almost 8 percent from 1990 to 1998. Unincorporated population increased by 1 percent.

The county has only two cities with populations over a thousand: Pullman and Colfax. Well over half of the county's population resides in Pullman, home to WSU. Colfax's population was 2,880 in 1998, having increased only 4 percent since 1990. *Figure 4* shows the population of all the incorporated municipalities in the county along with their growth rates since 1990.

Figure 4
Population of Cities, Towns, & County, April 1, 1990 to April 1, 1998
Source: Office of Financial Management

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	%Chg 90-98
Whitman	38,775	38,500	38,800	39,400	39,800	40,500	41,000	41,200	41,400	6.8%
Unincorporated	6,629	6,598	6,647	6,782	6,737	6,704	6,666	6,673	6,705	1.1%
Incorporated	32,146	31,902	32,153	32,618	33,063	33,796	34,334	34,527	34,695	7.9%
Albion	632	635	655	650	655	671	675	685	685	8.4%
Colfax	2,761	2,778	2,785	2,790	2,810	2,820	2,865	2,830	2,880	4.3%
Colton	325	325	330	335	350	360	365	360	365	12.3%
Endicott	320	338	339	368	360	345	364	347	350	9.4%
Farmington	126	126	125	130	130	130	167	160	158	25.4%
Garfield	544	577	602	597	594	619	630	610	614	12.9%
Lacrosse	336	330	346	350	390	407	415	400	392	16.7%
Lamont	93	87	88	92	93	93	104	99	88	-5.4%
Malden	189	210	210	210	215	225	265	265	265	40.2%
Oakesdale	346	346	405	410	433	435	438	450	450	30.1%
Palouse	915	915	920	925	960	975	980	975	975	6.6%
Pullman	23,478	23,090	23,190	23,480	23,770	24,360	24,650	24,970	25,070	6.8%
Rosalia	552	570	588	613	620	643	663	627	660	19.6%
St. John	499	513	501	512	508	529	558	544	548	9.8%
Tekoa	750	780	780	861	870	880	885	880	870	16.0%
Uniontown	280	282	289	295	305	305	310	325	325	16.1%

Population by Age Groups

The population distribution among various age groups as well as the changes in this distribution over time shows aspects of the population not revealed by the overall numbers. *Figures 5 and 6* categorize the population of Whitman County and Washington State by age group share size. These are estimates for 1995 and projections for 2010.

Whitman County age group shares are very different from Washington State's primarily because of the presence of Washington State University (WSU) in Pullman. As a result, the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 provide the

most striking contrast between Whitman County and Washington State. (The median age in Whitman County is 24.6 years versus 34.6 throughout the state.) Since the job opportunities of Whitman County are limited, these young college students are likely to move to other areas upon graduation. Consequently, the share sizes of the 25-44 and 45-64 age groups of the county are kept lower than the state's overall average. The 0-14 age group also remains small in comparison to the state because the 25-44 age group, considered to be the largest age group having children, is statistically low in the county.

Figure 5
Population by Age Groups
Whitman County, 1995 and 2010
Source: Office of Financial Management

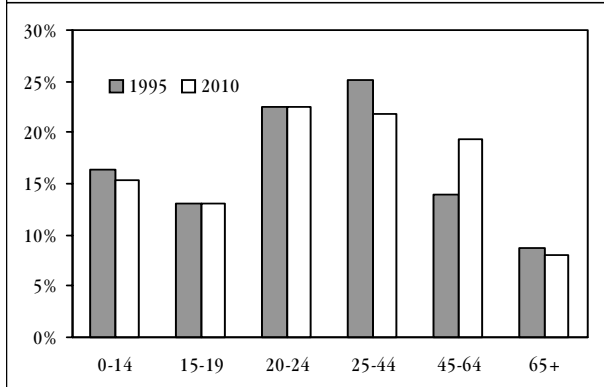
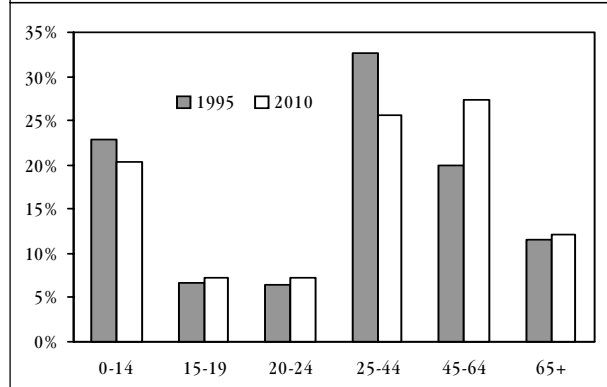


Figure 6
Population by Age Groups
Washington State, 1995 and 2010
Source: Office of Financial Management



Demographics

Even with the presence of the university, Whitman County's population is less diverse than the state, though not by much. Recent estimates (*see Figure 7 on the next page*) show Whitman County with a population that is 90.3 percent white while statewide the percentage is 88.7. Asian and Pacific Islanders, the second largest racial group both in Whitman County and the state, comprise 7.7 percent of the county and 6.0 percent statewide. Blacks and Native Americans have about a 1 percent share

of the county's population. Those of Hispanic origin, who can be of any race, had a 2 percent share.

Whites may be the predominant racial group in Whitman County, but the proportion of non-whites is increasing at a much faster pace. Comparing the 1990 Census and the 1997 estimates, Whitman County's general population grew by 6 percent; the number of whites, 4 percent; and the number of non-whites, 39 percent. This trend is also occurring statewide and nationwide.

Figure 7
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin
Whitman County and Washington State, 1990 and 1997
Source: Office of Financial Management

	1990 Census		1997 Estimates		1990-1997 % Change
Whitman					
Total	38,775	100.0%	41,200	100.0%	6.3%
White	35,888	92.6%	37,194	90.3%	3.6%
Black	497	1.3%	545	1.3%	9.7%
Indian/Aleut	264	0.7%	284	0.7%	7.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,126	5.5%	3,177	7.7%	49.4%
Hispanic Origin*	683	1.8%	806	2.0%	18.0%
Washington					
Total	4,866,692	100.0%	5,606,800	100.0%	15.2%
White	4,411,407	90.6%	4,970,825	88.7%	12.7%
Black	152,572	3.1%	193,426	3.4%	26.8%
Indian/Aleut	87,259	1.8%	107,142	1.9%	22.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	215,454	4.4%	335,407	6.0%	55.7%
Hispanic Origin*	214,570	4.4%	339,978	6.1%	58.4%

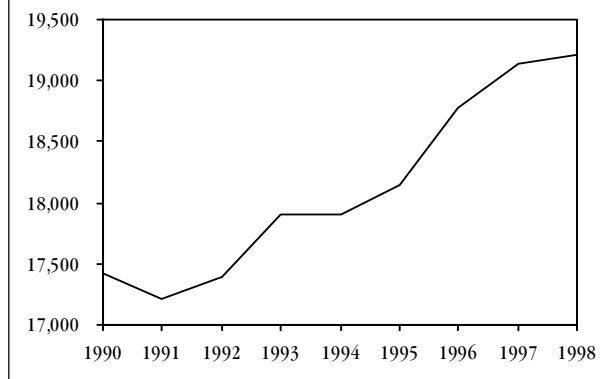
**Hispanics can be of any race.*

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE

The resident civilian labor force is defined as all persons 16 years of age and older within a specified geographic area who are either working or actively seeking work. This excludes those serving in the armed forces. Like the general population, the labor force can be seen as a key economic indicator. Since gross domestic product and gross state product are not gathered at the county level, labor force changes, as well as other measures serve as substitutes.

In 1998, the labor force in Whitman County was estimated at 19,220. *Figure 8* shows the changes from 1990 to 1998. The labor force, overall, grew by over 10 percent during this period, expanding from its 1990 level of 17,420. The state's labor force grew 20 percent over the same period. The county's work force declined by about 200 during the 1990-91 recession and was flat from 1993-94 but otherwise experienced moderate growth. The 1998 level is an all-time high for the county.

Figure 8
Civilian Labor Force
Whitman County, 1990-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



Demographics

Racially, the labor force composition of Whitman County loosely corresponds to its general population (*see Figure 9*). According to the 1996 estimates by the Employment Security Department, about 90 percent of Whitman County's labor force was white. The next largest racial group was Asian/Pacific Islander at close to 7 percent of the total. The remaining divisions accounted for between 1 and 2 percent of the labor force.

The general population of Whitman County is evenly split between males and females. However, the labor force is not as close to a 50-50 split. Fifty-six percent of the work force is male while 44 percent is female. State-wide, males also have a larger portion of the work force.

Figure 9
Resident Labor Force by Race
Whitman County, 1996 Annual Averages
Source: Employment Security Department

Total	18,750
White	16,820
Black	200
Native American	140
Asian & Pacific Islander	1,280
Hispanic	310

UNEMPLOYMENT

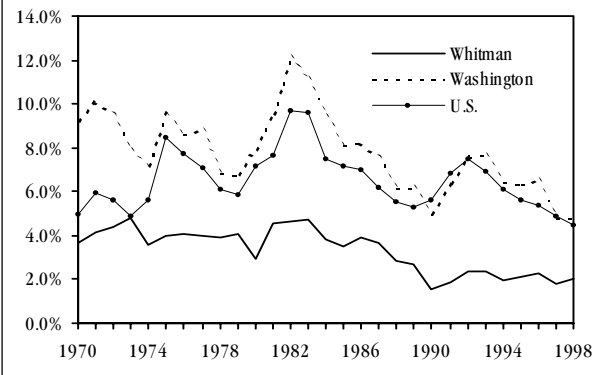
Trend

The civilian labor force consists of those who are working and those without a job who are looking for work. The unemployment rate is the percentage of the total labor force who are not working but who are actively looking for work. The unemployed do not include retirees, persons in institutions (including students), or those who have come to be known as “discouraged workers,” i.e., persons who would like to work but who are not actively searching for a job. None of these groups of people are included in the unemployment figures because they are not looking for work. Unemployment encompasses more than whether a person is filing a claim for unemployment benefits; nationally, the number of claimants is only about one-third of the total number of unemployed.

At the national level, the unemployment rate is determined by a monthly survey of households. At the local level, the state’s portion of this household survey is integrated with other information (e.g., unemployment insurance claims and surveys of business establishments) to produce unemployment rates at the state and county level.

Figure 10 shows the unemployment rate for Whitman County, Washington State, and the United States since 1970. As is readily apparent, unemployment is not a significant problem in Whitman County, especially when its rate is compared to the state’s and the nation’s. Over the last twenty-eight years the county’s rate has averaged 3.3 percent of the work force, and its worst point was 4.8 percent in 1973. At the height of the employment problems associated with the “double-dip” recessions of the early 1980s, the county’s rate stayed below 5 percent while the nation was close to double-digit unemployment and the state was over 12 percent. The 1990s have been wonderful years for employment in the county. Since 1990, the rate has averaged 2.0 percent. In 1997 it was 1.8 percent and in 1998 it was 2.0 percent.

Figure 10
Unemployment Rates
Whitman, Washington, & U.S., 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



1998 U.S. rate is preliminary

The low unemployment rate can be attributed to at least two factors: the university and agriculture. Not only does the school itself provide high levels of employment, many college students take jobs, even if only part-time, and are counted as being employed when they do so. However, when they do not work, they are not counted as being unemployed (they’re among the institutionalized population that is not considered part of the labor force). In that sense, the unemployment rate may be distorted by this phenomenon.

Neighboring Lincoln, Asotin, and Garfield counties also have low unemployment rates (with no university), and they have essentially the same type economy based on capital-intensive rather than labor-intensive agriculture. The entire region has a relatively low population density and an economy that, while agricultural, does not rely on large numbers of farm workers. This tends to keep unemployment low. Whitman County has the lowest of the low unemployment in the region, and this is undoubtedly attributable to WSU. But the type of agricultural economy also is a strong factor.

Unemployment Insurance Claims

Figure 11 shows unemployment insurance claims, categorized by broad occupational (rather than industrial) groupings, for Whitman County and Washington State for the period July 1, 1997 - June 30, 1998. There are very strong similarities between the county and the state.

The four occupational groupings with the highest number of UI claimants in Whitman County are structural work (i.e., construction), professional/technical/managerial jobs, service jobs, and clerical jobs. And although the percentage numbers differ somewhat, those four groupings also have the largest number of claimants statewide. They account for two-thirds of the claimants in the county and over half of the claimants statewide.

A rough grouping categorizes professional, clerical, sales, and service occupations as white-collar jobs and

the remainder as blue-collar jobs. Whitman County had 52 percent of all its claims come from blue-collar professions and the state had 55 percent. Most of the state outside the metropolitan areas normally has a much higher share of blue-collar.

Whitman County had a smaller share of its claims (6.6 percent) come from agricultural jobs than did the state (8.5 percent) even while the percentage of agricultural workers is almost the same in the county (3.5 percent) as it is in the state (3.6 percent). While there are seasonal employment variations in Whitman County's agricultural industry, they are not as extreme in wheat farming as with tree fruits, for example, where large numbers of workers are needed for short periods at thinning and harvest time. That situation invariably leads to high filing rates for UI benefits.

Figure 11
Unemployment Insurance Claimants
Whitman County and Washington State, July 1, 1997 - June 30, 1998
Source: Employment Security Department

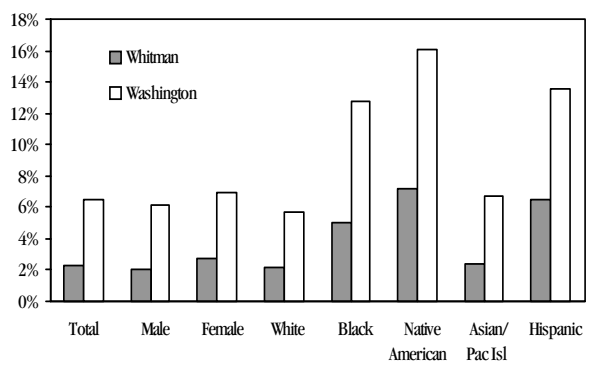
	Whitman		Washington	
	Claimants	Percentage	Claimants	Percentage
Structural work	142	25.3%	57,245	18.7%
Professional/technical/managerial	107	19.1%	51,013	16.7%
Service	70	12.5%	33,975	11.1%
Clerical	67	11.9%	34,107	11.2%
Motor freight and transportation	62	11.1%	15,951	5.2%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	37	6.6%	25,823	8.5%
Sales	27	4.8%	16,497	5.4%
Packaging and material handling	21	3.7%	28,132	9.2%
Machine trades	15	2.7%	16,577	5.4%
Processing	6	1.1%	15,327	5.0%
Benchwork	5	0.9%	8,475	2.8%
Miscellaneous, NEC	2	0.4%	2,246	0.7%
Total	561	100.0%	305,368	100.0%
White-Collar*	271	48%	135,592	45%
Blue-Collar*	288	52%	167,530	55%

**Miscellaneous/NEC occupations excluded*

Demographics

As *Figure 12* shows, unemployment is not evenly distributed along racial lines in Whitman County. According to 1996 estimates by Employment Security analysts, unemployment, while lower in the county than throughout the state, follows the pattern of the state: non-whites, taken together, have higher unemployment than whites and male-female unemployment is just about even. More specifically, in 1996 the unemployment rate for males was 2.0 percent, slightly less than for females at 2.7 percent; for whites, 2.2 percent; for blacks, 5.0 percent; for Native Americans, 7.1 percent; for Asian/Pacific Islanders, 2.3 percent; and for those of Hispanic origin, 6.5 percent. The rates for the smaller racial groups may be suspect because of small numbers which are not amenable to statistics. The Native American rate of 7.1 percent, for example, equates to only 10 unemployed.

Figure 12
Unemployment by Race
Whitman County & Washington, 1996
Source: Employment Security Department



INDUSTRIES, EMPLOYMENT, AND WAGES

Data in this section are derived through two different Bureau of Labor Statistics programs which are conducted in Washington by the Employment Security Department. The first, called CES (Current Employment Statistics), generates monthly nonagricultural employment figures; the second, the Quarterly Employment and Wages pro-

gram (ES-202), includes data on both agricultural and nonagricultural employment covered under the state unemployment insurance program. All wage data and agricultural employment data in this section stem from the Employment and Wages program; other employment information comes from the CES program.

Employment Trend

Nonfarm employment in Whitman County has grown steadily, if not remarkably, since 1970 (see *Figure 13*). With the exception of two downturns during national recessionary periods, the trend has been one of continual expansion. Overall, employment climbed 60 percent through 1998, a gain of almost 7,000 jobs. This growth, though, must be considered moderate; during the same period, statewide employment more than doubled (140 percent growth). *Figure 14* indexes employment to 1970=100 and shows the growth rates of the county and the state. Broadly, the cause for this varia-

tion is the substantial economic differences between the state and the county. Washington's economy, as a whole, is driven by a diverse number of industries, including high tech and aerospace, clustered throughout Puget Sound. Whitman County's economy is driven by capital-intensive (rather than labor-intensive) agriculture and a large university. The type of agriculture practiced in Whitman County does not create a large number of jobs and the university, though it does provide a large number of jobs, is not an economic engine in the sense of rapid job creation.

Figure 13
Nonagricultural Wage & Salary Employment
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department

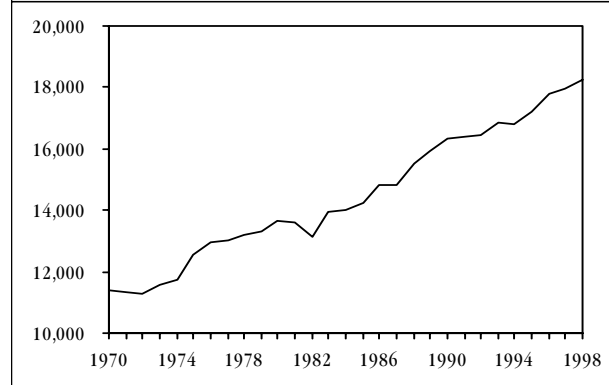
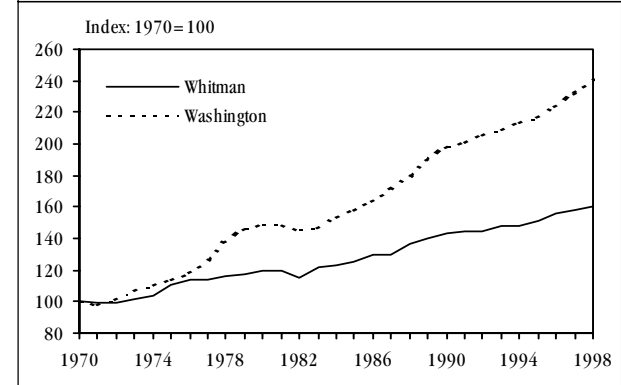


Figure 14
Nonagricultural Wage & Salary Employment
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



Location Quotients

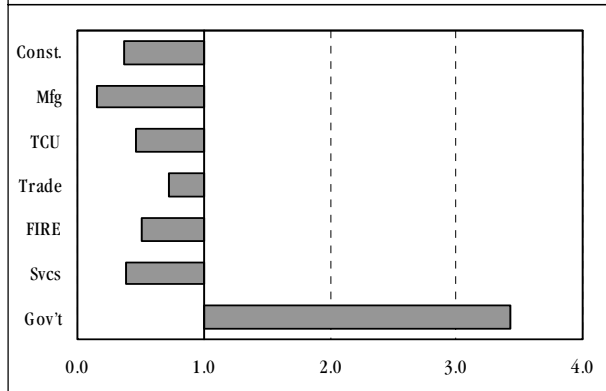
One way to determine how an area's economy is shaped is to compare it to another area. The following section shows fairly specifically, by industry sector, how Whitman County's employment patterns both differ from and coincide with Washington State's. When comparing an industry's share of all employment at the county level to the same industry's share at the statewide level, it becomes apparent that some county employment is distributed differently than statewide employment. The *location quotient* compares the share of total employment in a particular industry division in the county with the share it represents in Washington State.

The quotient is determined by dividing the statewide industry employment share into the county industry share. A quotient of 1.0 denotes an industry in which the county is typical to the state as a whole; a value above 1.0 shows an industry with a higher concentration of employment; and a value below 1.0 marks a county industry with a lesser concentration of employment than in the same industry statewide.

A quotient above 1.0 suggests that the good or service produced by an industry is exported from the area; a quotient below 1.0 is a sign that, hypothetically, goods or services must be imported into an area to provide the same consumption patterns found at the state level. The greater the value above or below 1.0, the stronger the suggestion of exporting or importing becomes.

Figure 15 shows the location quotients of the major industry sectors in Whitman County. As is apparent, the only industry sector which is an "exporter" is government.

Figure 15
Location Quotients
Whitman County, 1998
Source: Employment Security Department



And it is a very heavy exporter. The "product" it exports is college graduates. (The bulk of government employment in Whitman County is tied to the university; were it not for WSU, government employment in the county would be fairly equivalent to the statewide average.)

All other industry sectors have quotients less than 1.0. Trade is not so far off the mark as to suggest importation. However, the other sectors are considerably less than 1.0 and county residents probably do not have the goods or services they produce readily available. Agriculture, calculated for the private sector (excluding government), has a location quotient of 1.66, indicating a substantial export component.

Annual Average Wage

The annual average wage is derived by dividing the total wages paid in an area by the annual average employment in that area. Jobs not covered by the unemployment insurance program are excluded; however, approximately 90 percent of all employment in the state is covered under the program. The average wage does not include any benefits (e.g., insurance or retirement plans) other than actual wages.

In 1997, the average wage in Whitman County was \$24,351 (ranked 13th among Washington's 39 counties). The statewide average was \$30,755. As *Figure 16* shows, the average wage in the county has closely ap-

proximated the trend of the statewide average, albeit at a lower level (dollar amounts have been adjusted to 1997 dollars). The early- to mid-1970s saw a strong wage trend compared to the current one: however, a decline began in 1978 which lasted until 1990. Since then, real wages have been generally (and gradually) increasing. Even so, increases in the wage have a long way to go before the 1977 peak of \$27,945 is surpassed.

(The large increase in the average wage from 1970 to 1971 was occasioned by state government workers, including the faculty and staff at WSU, being brought under the covered employment system.)

Figure 16
Annual Average Wage
Whitman, Washington, & U.S., 1970-1997
Source: Employment Security Department

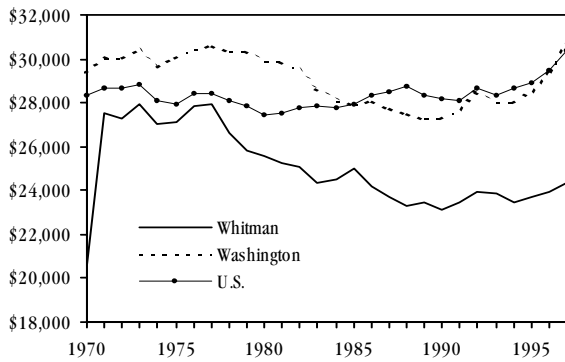


Figure 17 shows the average wage by industry sector in Whitman County and in Washington. As can be seen, the county's wage, by sector and by industry, is generally lower than the statewide averages. The glaring exception is government where the wage at the state government level (the bulk of Whitman County's employment) surpasses the norm for state government throughout Washington because of higher pay levels associated with the university.

Figure 17
Annual Average Wage
Whitman County and Washington State, 1997
Source: Employment Security Department

	Whitman	State		Whitman	State
Total	\$24,351	\$30,756	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	\$19,597	\$37,481
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$14,971	\$15,370	Depository Institutions	\$23,637	\$32,860
Agricultural Production Crops	\$15,515	\$12,329	Insurance Carriers	\$30,972	\$44,465
Agricultural Services	\$13,742	\$16,936	Insurance Agents, Brokers, & Svcs	\$17,823	\$37,889
Manufacturing	\$31,617	\$40,726	Real Estate	\$11,513	\$22,472
Printing & Publishing	\$13,523	\$30,377	Services	\$14,816	\$30,942
Industrial Machinery & Equipment	\$19,838	\$39,535	Hotels & Other Lodging Places	\$6,822	\$15,397
Transportation & Public Util	\$27,218	\$38,603	Personal Services	\$9,593	\$15,765
Trucking & Warehousing	\$21,802	\$28,592	Business Services	\$14,741	\$52,015
Transportation By Air	\$26,803	\$36,525	Auto Repair, Services, & Parking	\$17,884	\$23,033
Communication	\$25,708	\$49,049	Motion Pictures	\$5,303	\$13,450
Electric, Gas, & Sanitary Services	\$53,030	\$51,232	Amusement & Recreation Services	\$4,884	\$18,288
Trade	\$16,121	\$21,678	Health Services	\$19,082	\$29,235
Wholesale Trade	\$30,681	\$36,654	Legal Services	\$17,947	\$39,593
Durable Goods	\$33,977	\$39,655	Social Services	\$11,820	\$15,414
Nondurable Goods	\$29,020	\$32,838	Membership Organizations	\$10,516	\$19,821
Retail Trade	\$10,270	\$16,821	Engineering & Management Svcs	\$26,472	\$42,288
Bldg Materials/Garden Supplies	\$15,735	\$23,072	Private Households	\$8,191	\$8,318
Food Stores	\$12,809	\$19,529	Government	\$30,601	\$32,827
Auto Dealers & Service Stations	\$20,607	\$26,986	Federal	\$38,492	\$41,938
Eating & Drinking Places	\$6,037	\$10,326	State	\$33,431	\$32,974
Miscellaneous Retail	\$11,512	\$16,870	Local	\$22,018	\$30,341

Agriculture

Agriculture is a very important industry in Whitman County. From the perspective of employment, it is a relatively small industry but from the perspective of income, it looms very large in the county's economy. Although crop prices have been down in recent years, farm income has always been a significant portion of all personal income in the county. The most recent year (1996) saw its share at 8.5 percent of the total, but it has been as high as 30 percent (1974 and 1975). *In toto*, Washington derived only 1.2 percent of its income from the farm.

The amount of farm income derives from a number of different sources. A main one is that Whitman County is the premier wheat and barley producer in the state. In 1996, the county harvested 24 percent of the state's wheat output and 40 percent of its barley, more than any other county. In addition to this, the county is also the largest producer of hogs and pigs in Washington; its 10,000-head inventory accounted for 29 percent of the state-

wide total. It is also an important producer of sheep and lambs as well as field crops such as peas and grass seeds, primarily the Kentucky bluegrass variety.

As mentioned before, though, in terms of employment it has to be considered a minor industry. The entire agricultural sector, including crops, livestock, and agricultural services, only amounted to 505 hired workers in 1997, 3.5 percent of the county's covered employment. The grain crops such as wheat and barley do not require large amounts of labor. In fact, the largest industry, crop production, had almost as many employers (385) as workers (398).

The average wage paid in agriculture was \$14,971 in 1997, somewhat less than the statewide agricultural wage of \$15,370 and significantly less than the county's overall average wage of \$24,351. The more specific industry of crop production, which employs the bulk of farm workers in the county, paid more than its statewide counterpart, though: \$15,515 versus \$12,329.

Construction

Construction employment has been on the upswing since the 1990-91 national recession which had checked its growth (see Figure 18). The sector had 380 jobs in 1998. Even though employment dropped by 10 from 1997, the trend has been one of increase since 1991. In fact, the number of jobs grew by about three-fourths over the period; a very strong annualized average growth rate of 8.1 percent. Even with the gains, however, construc-

tion has only a 2 percent share of nonagricultural employment compared to the 6 percent share statewide.

As the chart shows, construction employment is down from highs registered during the 1970s (peaking at 660 in 1977) when a number of agricultural, irrigation, and campus projects were ongoing. The trend is upward, though, after the stagnation of the early- to mid-1980s.

Figure 18
Construction & Mining Employment
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department

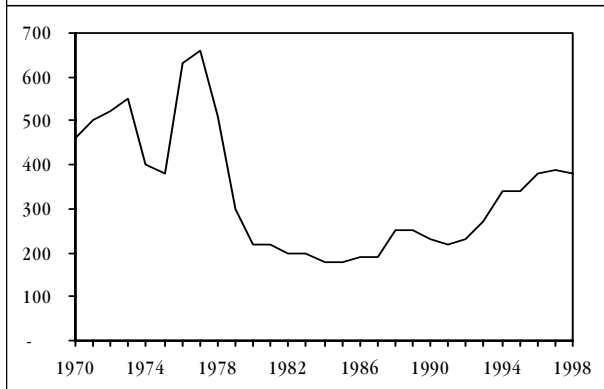
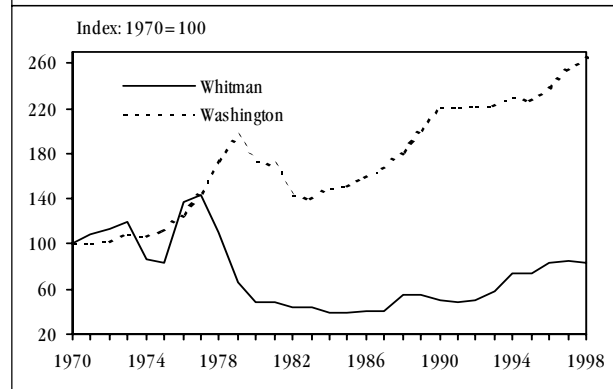


Figure 19
Construction & Mining Employment
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



The increase in jobs, of course, stems from an increase in construction activity. The gain has been spread out among the three subdivisions of construction: special trades workers, such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and painters; general building (primarily residential) construction; and heavy construction.

The specifics of employment and wages in the various subdivisions have been suppressed to avoid identification of individual employers. In general, however, heavy construction pays the highest wages but employs the fewest workers. Special trades employs the most. General building pays the lowest wages.

Manufacturing

Employment in manufacturing fell in the late 1970s (see *Figure 20*) when the county's food processing industry collapsed and some other manufacturing industries declined. This was followed by a relatively long period of stagnation that ended only in 1990. Since then, though, growth has been strong, going from 190 workers in 1990 to 420 in 1998, an increase of over 120 percent. *Figure 21* shows that growth in recent years has been outpacing statewide manufacturing increases. Even so, manufacturing only accounts for slightly over 2 percent of the county's nonagricultural employment base. Statewide, the share is 15 percent.

In general, the manufacturing sector is composed of numerous small businesses with few employees. How-

ever, the Port of Whitman County Industrial Park has attracted a number of new manufacturing industries. These firms, which have been responsible for most of the recent increases in the sector's employment level, are in the electronics and computer field. Production of instruments measuring electricity is the dominant industry in the sector.

The average wage in manufacturing (\$31,617), while greater than the overall county average wage (\$24,351), lags the statewide average (\$40,724), which is driven by large, Puget Sound industries. The Whitman County manufacturing wage is strongly influenced by high levels of pay in the electronics field.

Figure 20
Manufacturing Employment
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department

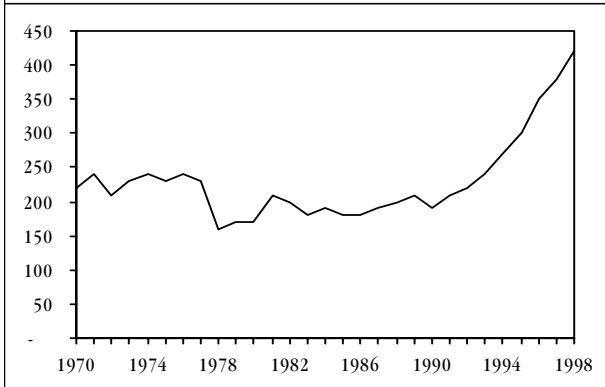
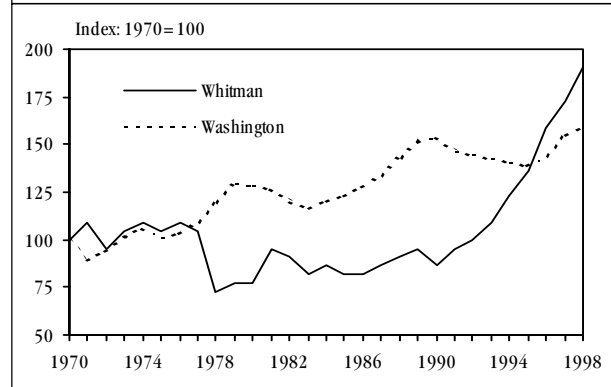


Figure 21
Manufacturing Employment
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



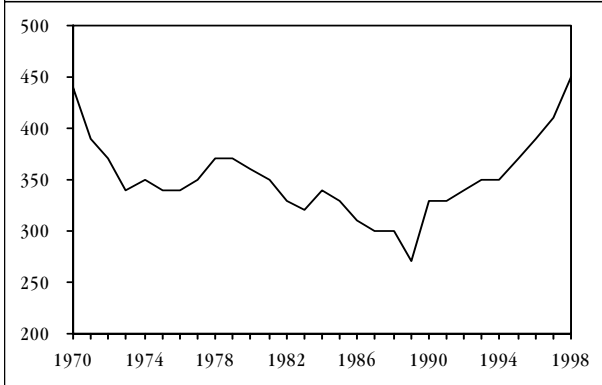
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities (TCU)

The TCU sector includes industries as diverse as trucking and warehousing, bus and taxi service, and utilities such as gas, electricity, and communications. After a long and gradual decline since 1970 (see *Figure 22 on the next page*), employment picked up in the sector beginning in 1990, and rose from 270 to

450 in 1998. The latest year also saw employment finally rising above its 1970 level. The gains were mainly in communications employment with lesser increases in trucking and warehousing and air transportation.

Compared to the state, though, employment growth in the sector has not been especially robust. *Figure 23*

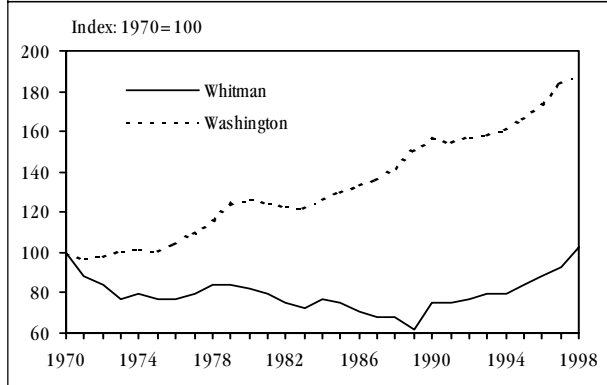
Figure 22
TCU Employment
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



shows the growth rates for the two, and even just looking at the growth since 1990, the state has slightly outpaced the county. TCU employment makes up 2.5 percent of the county's nonagricultural workers. Statewide, the share is 5 percent.

The average wage in the TCU sector was \$27,218 in 1997, greater than the county's overall average wage but

Figure 23
TCU Employment
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



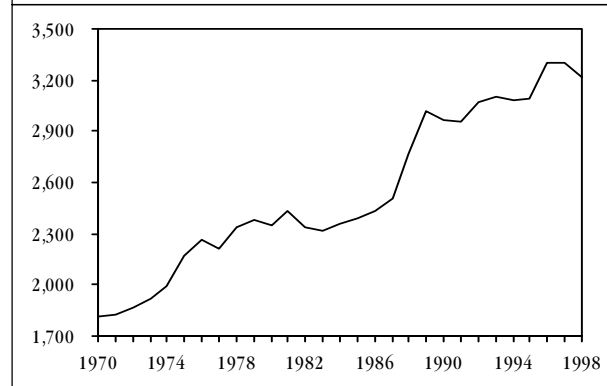
considerably less than the same-sector wage statewide. Those in trucking and warehousing averaged \$21,802, air transportation workers only averaged \$26,803, and those in communications \$25,708. Providers of electric/gas/sanitary services were paid an average of \$53,030, the highest wage of any sizeable industry in the county.

Trade

After government, trade is the largest employing sector in Whitman County. Trade employment has grown by 77 percent since 1970, adding a total of 1,400 new jobs. The periods of greatest increase were the mid-1970s and the late-1980s (*see Figure 24*). And although employment slumped during the 1990-91 national recession, it rebounded and surpassed its previous high point in 1989. In 1998, the sector employed 3,220 workers who comprised 18 percent of the county's nonfarm work force. The annual average wage in trade was \$16,121 in 1997, a good deal lower than the \$21,678 statewide average.

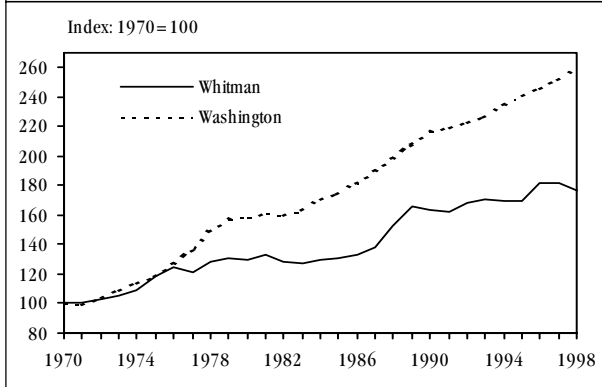
A standard division of the trade sector is into wholesale and retail industries. As a rule, wholesale trade employs fewer people but pays a higher wage; this is true in Whitman County. A plus for the county is that wholesale trade's share of all trade is higher than it is statewide. The county has 29 percent of its trade workers in wholesale compared to 25 percent statewide. This is reflective of the wholesale trade activities occurring in an agricultural area; the crops are bought and sold at the wholesale level before going to market. Employment in wholesale trade is concentrated in farm and garden machinery, grain crops, and farm supplies.

Figure 24
Trade Employment
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



Retail trade, in terms of employment, is far larger than wholesale trade. The retail sector is characterized by many, frequently part-time, jobs with relatively low wages. The average wage in retail in 1997 was only \$10,270, particularly low when compared to the statewide average for retail of \$16,821. The wage for retail workers

Figure 25
Trade Employment
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



was one-third that of wholesale workers who were paid an average wage of \$30,681.

(Note: while the average wage is derived by dividing total paid wages by the annual average employment, no distinction is made between part-time and full-time employment. The average wage, particularly in retail trade, does not necessarily reflect the wage of someone working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year.)

Except within government, there is no other specific industry with more employment in Whitman County than eating and drinking places. Almost half of all retail employment is in this industry, and this is a very strong factor in the entire retail sector's low annual average wage. Over 1,000 workers averaging \$6,037 per year drags down the overall average. The high employment level and the low wage are undoubtedly strongly influenced by the large student population in the county. Not only do students tend to eat a lot of pizza and hamburgers, they are also willing to work part time for a low wage. Their large numbers and availability for part-time work removes pressure for wage increases within the industry.

Measured by employment, the next largest retail industry is food stores. The latest year showed employment of 460 and an average wage of \$12,809. The food stores category includes groceries, delis, convenience stores, specialty food shops, candy stores, etc.

The only other industry with a sizeable employment level in retail trade is auto dealers and service stations. There were 220 workers in the industry in 1997, averaging \$10,607 per year.

Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE)

FIRE is a small sector, relative to others, commanding only a 2.6 percent share of the county's nonfarm employment. Nor is it a large sector statewide, but there it nevertheless enjoys a 5 percent employment share. Its trend in the county since 1970 has been toward growth—since 1970 the number of jobs has doubled and in 1998 the number was 480. The average wage for the sector

was \$19,597 in 1997, significantly less than the statewide FIRE sector wage of \$37,481.

The largest industry is depository institutions. This category includes banks, savings and loans, credit unions, etc. Employment constituted well over half of all FIRE employment and it had one of the higher annual average wages (\$23,637) within the sector.

Figure 26
FIRE Employment
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department

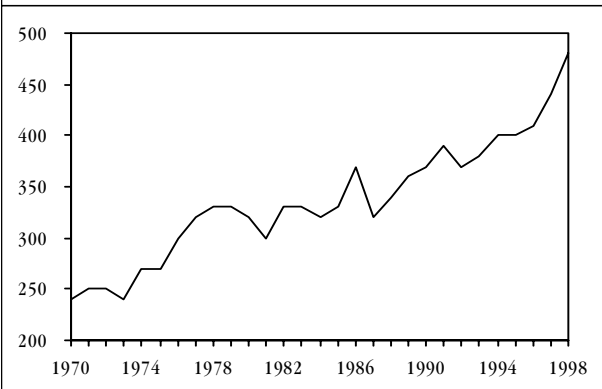
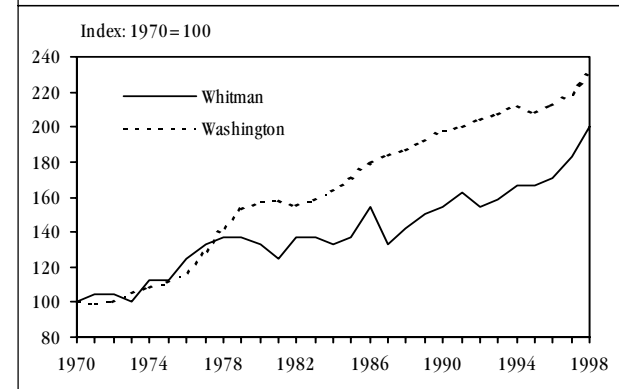


Figure 27
FIRE Employment
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



Services

Services has been the fastest growing sector in Whitman County. It has grown 107 percent since 1970 (see Figures 28 and 29), adding 980 jobs and bringing its total up to 1,900 in 1998. Most of the growth occurred between 1985 and 1993. That strong growth, though, was followed by a sharp drop in 1994 with only slight increases since then. Most of that job loss was centered in business services, specifically in photocopying and duplicating services.

The Whitman County average wage for services in 1997 was quite a bit less than the statewide average; \$14,816 as opposed to \$30,942. Like the trade sector, the lower wage is probably related to the large student population and its willingness to engage in part-time work at a relatively low wage. Statewide, the services sector is strongly influenced by very high wages found in the data processing and software industries (i.e., Microsoft employees, for example, are classified in business services).

Health services was easily the largest services industry in 1997, its employment level more than double that of social services, the next largest. Health services includes employment in the offices of physicians, dentists, chiropractors, etc., as well as in hospitals and nursing care facilities. The average wage in health services was \$19,082 and employment was about 620.

Other services industries with fairly large amounts of employment are social services (269), hotels and lodging places (208), and engineering and accounting services (111). Workers at hotels and lodging places had an average wage of only \$6,822; in social services the wage was \$11,820; and in engineering and accounting it was \$26,472.

Figure 28
Services Employment
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department

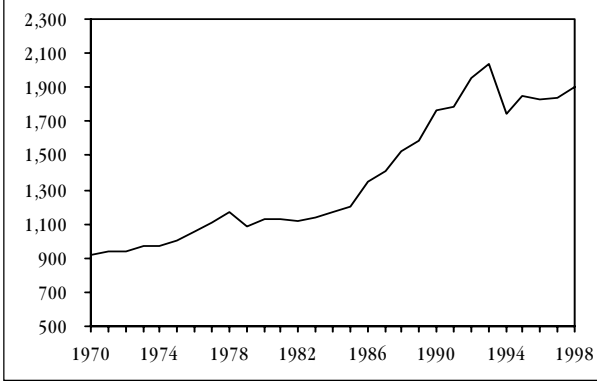
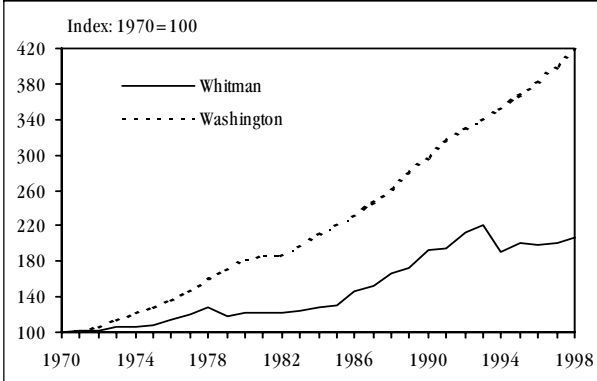


Figure 29
Services Employment
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



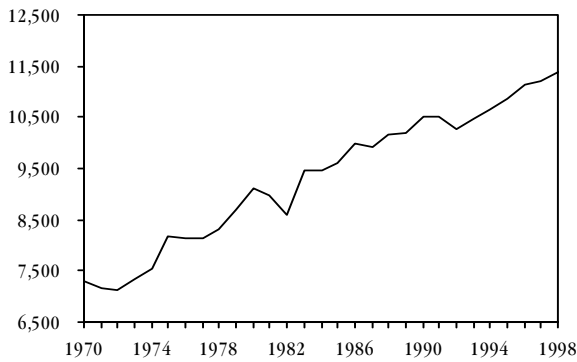
Government

The public sector is by far the largest “industry” in Whitman County. It has the largest payroll and employs the most people. And it is a major driver of the county’s economy. Figures 30 and 31 show the growth of public sector employment since 1970. Although its growth rate has not been spectacular (56 percent since 1970), it has been steady and involves a very large number of workers. The only slowdown of significance occurred during the early 1980s when the national “double-dip” recessions had a strong effect on Washington’s economy, and state and local government employment declined

throughout the state. Whitman County lost about 500 government jobs, then, but they were quickly regained. In 1998, there were 11,370 public employees in Whitman County, 62 percent of the county’s nonfarm workers.

The average wage for government—all levels combined—was \$30,601 in 1997, second only to manufacturing. The government payroll strongly influences the county’s overall average wage of \$24,351: if government were removed from the equation, the remnant would average out to a wage of \$17,876.

Figure 30
Government Employment
Whitman County, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department

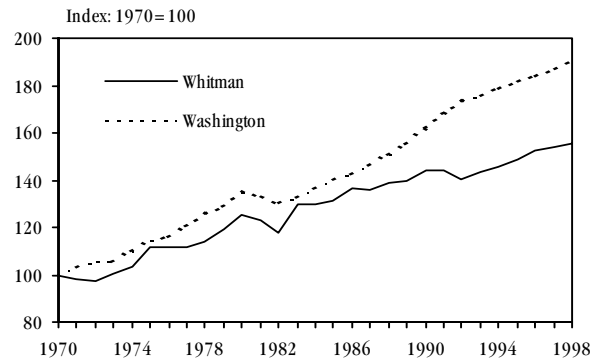


Because of Washington State University (its workers are state government employees), state government is the largest component of government in the county. This is in contradistinction to the rest of Washington where local government employees, who handle K-12 education, usually outnumber state employees by a two-to-one margin. In Whitman County, employment at the state government level accounts for 70 percent of public employment and 36 percent of *all* employment. And, 97 percent of state government employment is at the university.

In 1997, state government employed 5,082 workers. The annual payroll was \$170 million; the county's entire payroll was \$348 million. The average wage for state employees was \$33,431, higher than the same sector statewide because of the higher levels of pay associated with the university faculty.

The effect of the university on the surrounding area is tremendous. The huge payroll filters into the community and is used to make mortgage payments, buy gro-

Figure 31
Government Employment
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1998
Source: Employment Security Department



ceries, clothes, and cars, and all the other thousands of economic transactions that occur daily. Numerous jobs in virtually all industry sectors are dependent upon the university payroll. And in addition to the university payroll, spending by students injects another large layer of income into the area.

Local government, on the other hand, is at about the same level in terms of employment share as is local government throughout the state; 13 percent in Whitman, 10 percent statewide.

The largest segment of local government employment was in K-12 education, slightly over 1,000 employees. The next largest group, close to 650, were employed in general governmental functions, and about 200 were hospital workers.

The average wage for local government was \$22,018 in 1997.

Federal government employment in Whitman County is minimal. There were 271 federal employees in 1997 and their average annual wage was \$38,492.

OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT

A different but informative way to view an area's work force is in terms of occupational divisions rather than industrial divisions. *Figure 32* shows employment in the major occupational divisions in 1996 and projections to 2006. The data are for Whitman and Lincoln counties combined.

Washington State University has skewed the numbers for these rural counties. Neighboring counties are made up of larger percentages of "blue-collar" workers and smaller percentages of "white-collar" workers than the state as a whole. Whitman County is just the opposite. With the influence of WSU, the two counties have a large portion of workers in the professional category, raising the county's percentage of "white-collar" workers well above the statewide average. Some 80 percent of Whitman County's workers are white-collar; statewide, the figure is around 73 percent.

Jobs in the professional/paraprofessional grouping will, in 2006, remain the most numerous. The group should gain over 1,500 new jobs over the ten years. In general, white-collar jobs will show strong growth while blue-collar jobs will have slow growth or even declines. Agriculture should actually lose about 170 jobs.

Figure 33 shows hourly wages by occupation for Lincoln and Whitman counties based on 1997 surveys done by the Employment Security Department. The occupations are listed by broad occupational categories and the wages are either hourly or annual. The "rank" column shows a number which ranks the amount of employment from the most (1) to the least (197).

While the table is heavily influenced by Whitman County (the largest occupation is Graduate Assistant, Teaching), the information is still useful and gives an idea of the most common occupations in the area and the average wage for the occupations.

Figure 32
Occupational Employment and Projections
Whitman and Lincoln Counties, 1996 and 2006
Source: Employment Security Department

	1996		2006		% Chg	# of Jobs
Total	22,676	100.0%	25,796	100.0%	13.8%	3,120
Managerial & Administrative	1,726	100.0%	1,948	100.0%	12.9%	222
Professional, Paraprof., & Tech	8,660	501.7%	10,198	523.5%	17.8%	1,538
Marketing & Sales	1,433	83.0%	1,687	86.6%	17.7%	254
Clerical & Admin. Support	3,027	175.4%	3,321	170.5%	9.7%	294
Services	3,365	195.0%	3,960	203.3%	17.7%	595
Ag., Forestry, Fishing & Related	1,109	64.3%	939	48.2%	-15.3%	-170
Prec. Production, Craft, & Repair	1,796	104.1%	1,956	100.4%	8.9%	160
Operators, Fabricators, & Laborers	1,560	90.4%	1,787	91.7%	14.6%	227
White-Collar	18,211	1055.1%	21,114	1083.9%	15.9%	2,903
Blue-Collar	4,465	258.7%	4,682	240.3%	4.9%	217

Figure 33**Occupational Wages****Whitman and Lincoln Counties, 1997****Source: Employment Security Department**

Occupation	Wage*	Rank**	Occupation	Wage*	Rank**
Managerial & Administrative Occupations:			Engineering Teacher, Postsecondary	\$51,440	34
Financial Manager	\$22.82	58	Math Science Teacher, Postsec	\$37,480	130
Purchasing Manager	\$18.46	129	Computer Science Teacher, Postsec	\$47,400	79
Marketing, Advertising, Public Rel Mgr	\$20.87	150	All Other Postsecondary Teacher	\$31,810	9
Administrative Service Manager	\$20.06	49	Teacher, Elementary	\$35,240	14
Engineering, Math, Natrl Science Mgr	\$32.77	119	Teacher, Secondary School	\$34,600	13
Postmaster, Mail Superintendent	\$20.98	139	Teacher, Special Education	\$36,660	121
Education Administrator	\$27.92	17	Teacher, Vocational Education	\$15.89	142
Medicine & Health Service Manager	\$26.24	152	Instructor, Nonvocational Education	\$13.71	48
Construction Manager	\$23.60	120	Instructor & Coach, Sport	\$12.95	50
Communication, Transport, Util Mgr	\$20.96	75	Farm & Home Management Advisor	\$16.31	82
Food Service & Lodging Manager	\$10.85	39	Librarian, Professional	\$18.66	40
Public Admin, Chief Exec & Legislator	\$10.62	128	Technical Assistant, Library	\$11.42	135
General Manager & Top Executive	\$23.52	8	Vocational & Educational, Counselor	\$18.90	61
All Other Manager & Administrator	\$21.79	19	Instructional Coordinator	\$22.49	42
Professional, Paraprof, & Technical Occupations:			Teacher Aide, Paraprofessional	\$9.43	46
Loan Officer & Counselor	\$18.19	146	Physician & Surgeon	\$53.62	174
Accountant & Auditor	\$18.02	43	Physical Therapist	\$25.62	197
All Other Financial Specialist	\$15.83	66	Registered Nurse	\$20.06	32
Purchasing Agent & Buyer, Farm	\$16.29	165	Licensed Practical Nurse	\$12.56	101
Purchase Agnt, exc Whlsl, Retail, Farm	\$17.82	157	Pharmacist	\$30.43	125
Personnel, Train/Labor Relation Spec	\$18.10	195	Medical & Clinic Lab Technologist	\$18.54	175
Comply Officer & Inspectr , exc Const	\$15.90	172	Radiologic Technologist	\$16.96	147
All Other Management Support Wrkr	\$17.03	27	All Other Health Prof, Paraprof, Tech	\$15.57	29
Electrical & Electronic Engineer	\$24.94	183	Writer & Editor	\$15.25	123
Mechanical Engineer	\$26.25	158	Public Relations Spec, Publicity Writer	\$16.32	116
Surveying & Mapping Technician	\$13.73	166	All Other Professional, Paraprof, Tech	\$17.00	2
All Other Engineering & Related Tech	\$17.12	23	Sales And Related Occupations:		
All Other Physical Scientist	\$25.13	153	First Line Supervisor, Sales & Related	\$13.82	41
Agricultural & Food Scientist	\$22.04	184	Insurance Sales Worker	\$18.06	131
Biological Scientist	\$20.64	102	Travel Agent	\$9.25	140
All Other Life Scientist	\$21.91	196	Sales Rep, Science & Rel, exc Retail	\$22.29	126
Biologic, Agri, Food Tech, exc Health	\$12.11	106	Sales Rep, exc Retail, Sci, Related	\$16.34	80
All Other Physical & Life Science Tech	\$15.00	5	Salesperson, Retail	\$8.46	12
Computer System Analyst, EDP	\$21.04	38	Salesperson, Parts	\$10.85	90
Computer Support Specialist	\$16.54	96	Counter & Rental Clerk	\$7.25	73
Computer Programmer	\$20.29	159	Stock Clerk, Sales Floor	\$8.09	72
All Other Social Scientist	\$17.90	74	Cashier	\$7.51	7
Social Work, Medical & Psychiatric	\$14.34	134	Telemrkrtr, Door-To-Door Sales & Rel	\$9.56	185
Social Work, exc Medic & Psychiatric	\$15.37	87	All Other Sales & Related Occupation	\$11.77	124
Residential Counselor	\$9.73	103	Clerical & Administrative Support Occupations:		
Clergy	\$15.09	173	First Line Supervisor, Clerical	\$14.22	26
Lawyer	\$31.25	100	Bank Teller	\$8.70	51
Graduate Assistant, Teaching	\$12,670	1	New Account Clerk	\$10.49	167
Life Science Teacher, Postsecondary	\$42,950	25	Insurance Policy Processing Clerk	\$11.45	191
Chemistry Teacher , Postsecondary	\$44,440	53	Municipal Clerk	\$13.26	176
Physics Teacher, Postsecondary	\$40,520	115	Reservation & Transport Ticket Agent	\$8.09	107
All Other Phys Science Tchr, Postsec	\$37,130	55	Library Assistant & Bookmobile Driver	\$9.71	114
Social Science Teacher, Postsec	\$17.73	18	Teacher Aide & Education Asst, Clerk	\$8.25	98
Health Specialties Teacher, Postsec	\$54,970	24	Legal Secretary	\$11.45	143
English & Foreign Lang Tchr, Postsec	\$12.93	62	Medical Secretary	\$9.88	192
Art, Drama & Music Teacher, Postsec	\$42,680	67	Secretary, except Legal & Medical	\$11.12	3

Figure 33 (continued)
Occupational Wages
Whitman and Lincoln Counties, 1997
Source: Employment Security Department

Occupation	Wage*	Rank**	Occupation	Wage*	Rank**
Stenographer	\$11.89	148	Farmworkers, Food/Fiber Crops	\$6.19	10
Receptionist, Information Clerk	\$8.88	71	Farmworkers, Farm/Ranch Animals	\$8.15	52
Typist, including Word Processing	\$9.85	88	All Other Agricultural, Forestry, Fish	\$11.59	31
Bookkeeping, Account & Audit Clerk	\$10.60	11	Produc, Construc, Op, Maint, & Material Handl Occup:		
Billing, Cost & Rate Clerk	\$10.65	104	1st Line Superv, Mechanic & Repair	\$19.86	78
General Office Clerk	\$9.57	4	1st Line Supervisor, Constr & Extract	\$21.04	111
Computer Oper, exc Peripheral Eq	\$10.49	136	1st Line Supervisor, Transportation	\$22.18	141
Mail Clerk, except Mail Machine	\$7.60	186	1st Line Supervisor, Mgr, All Other	\$18.92	138
Postal Mail Carrier	\$15.95	69	Machinery Maintenance Worker	\$18.13	108
Meter Reader, Utilities	\$16.08	154	Maintenance Repairer, General Utility	\$13.52	15
Stock Clerk, Stockroom or Warehouse	\$10.00	64	Automotive Mechanic	\$13.73	60
Order Filler, Sales	\$10.33	168	Automotive Body, Related Repairer	\$12.53	161
Traffic, Shipping & Receiving Clerk	\$11.61	83	Bus & Truck Mech & Diesel Specialist	\$15.44	127
All Other Clerical & Admin Support	\$10.21	59	Farm Equipment Mechanic	\$11.81	30
Service Occupations:			Heat, A/C, Refriger Mech & Install	\$14.30	117
Fire Fighting & Prevention Supervisor	\$25.08	149	All Other Mech, Installer & Repairer	\$16.50	84
Police & Detective Supervisor	\$21.91	155	Carpenter	\$17.53	47
All Other Service Supervisor	\$12.31	36	Electrician	\$19.39	95
Fire Fighter	\$12.52	92	Concrete & Terrazzo Finisher	\$14.35	189
Police Patrol Officer	\$18.25	81	Painter/Paperhanger, Constr & Maint	\$15.79	91
Sheriff & Deputy Sheriff	\$18.52	160	Plumber, Pipefitter, Steamfitter	\$19.33	118
Guard & Watch Guard	\$8.81	144	Carpet Installer	\$12.15	179
All Other Protective Service	\$12.16	105	Paving, Surfacing, Tamping Equip Opr	\$17.61	97
Bartender	\$7.08	56	Highway Maintenance Worker	\$13.63	45
Waiter & Waitress	\$5.68	16	All Other Const & Extract, exc Helper	\$14.39	145
Dining Rm, Cafeteria & Bartend Help	\$6.53	151	Sewing Machine Oper, Nongarment	\$9.24	164
Counter Attend, Lunchroom, Cafeteria	\$6.61	122	Laund/Drycln Mach Op/Tend, exc Pres	\$7.35	170
Baker, Bread & Pastry	\$9.34	163	All Other Machine Setter/Set-Up Oper	\$11.41	109
Cook, Restaurant	\$7.88	37	Electric, Electronic Eq Assemb, Prec	\$12.51	180
Cook, Institution or Cafeteria	\$9.23	63	Welder & Cutter	\$15.59	156
Cook, Fast Food	\$6.20	76	Water, Liqu Waste Treat Plant, Sys Op	\$16.29	162
Food Preparation Worker	\$6.97	22	All Other Plant & System Operator	\$14.54	85
Combined Food Preparation & Service	\$6.27	20	Truck Driver, Heavy or Tractor-Trailer	\$14.33	21
All Other Food Service Worker	\$7.09	187	Truck Driver, Light, incl Delivery & Rel	\$10.32	44
Dental Assistant	\$12.14	132	Bus Driver, except School	\$11.33	89
Medical Assistant	\$10.06	188	Bus Driver, School	\$11.94	33
Nursing Aide, Orderly & Attendant	\$7.46	35	Driver/Sales Worker	\$10.83	133
Home Health Aide	\$7.31	93	Service Station Attendant	\$7.14	113
Physical, Corrective Therapy Asst, Aide	\$9.04	177	All Other Transport Related Worker	\$14.06	112
Maid & Housekeeping Cleaner	\$7.08	70	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operator	\$11.06	171
Janitor & Cleaner, except Maid	\$8.85	6	Conveyor Operator & Tender	\$13.91	65
All Other Cleaning & Building Service	\$8.19	110	All Other Material-Moving Equip Op	\$13.67	181
Hairdresser & Cosmetologist	\$7.83	77	Helper, Mechanic & Repairer	\$9.67	190
Amusement & Recreation Attendant	\$7.40	68	Helper, Carpenter & Related Worker	\$10.80	194
Personal Home Care Aide	\$7.70	169	All Othr Frght, Stock, Mat Move, Hand	\$8.65	94
Child Care Worker	\$7.49	54	Hand Packer & Packager	\$7.37	99
All Other Service Worker	\$7.70	137	Vehicle Washer & Equipment Cleaner	\$8.14	182
Agriculture, Forest, Fishing, & Related Occupations:			All Othr Help, Labor, Matl Move, Hand	\$10.44	86
First Line Supervisor, Agr, Forest, Fish	\$23.65	178			
Animal Caretaker, except Farm	\$8.14	193			
Farm Equipment Operator	\$7.50	28			
Laborer, Landscaping & Grndskeeping	\$9.50	57			

**Wages are either hourly or annual.*

***Ranking is by size of employment per occupation, from highest (1) to lowest (197)*

PERSONAL INCOME

This section deals with income rather than wages, which were discussed earlier and which are only one aspect of income. Data in this section are derived from

the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. All income data have been adjusted to 1996 dollars.

Total Personal Income

Personal income is generally seen as an important indicator of a region's economic vitality. Conceptually, personal income captures all types of income. Wages, salaries, government transfer payments, retirement income, farm income, self-employed income, proprietors' income, interest, dividends, and rent are all included in this measure. Because business and corporate incomes are not included, it is considered personal income.

In 1996, total personal income in Whitman County was \$697 million. This ranked 23rd among Washington's counties and reflected a 5.3 percent increase over the previous year and a 35 percent increase since 1970. Statewide, personal income grew 4.5 percent from the previous year and 160 percent since 1970. Clearly, the county has not been experiencing the same income growth as the state as a whole.

Dividing the total personal income of an area by the population yields personal per capita income. Per capita income is a useful measurement; it gives a common denominator between income (growth or decline) and population (growth or decline) so that comparisons can

be made between different areas or time periods with unlike populations and incomes.

Whitman County's per capita income in 1996 was \$17,606; the statewide figure was \$25,277, a sizeable difference. The county ranked 35th in the state (out of 39 counties). However, the figure did reflect a 4.7 percent increase over the previous year, greater than the statewide growth of 3.0 percent. Since 1970, however, the county's per capita income in real terms increased 30 percent, a small gain compared to the statewide 61 percent.

The large difference between the county's per capita income and the state's stems from two sources: industry and population. The statewide income is strongly influenced by the high tech and aerospace industries around Puget Sound. The large number of highly paid jobs drives up the overall statewide per capita figure. Whitman County has no such industrial base. Further, its large student population drags down the per capita figure. The proverbial poverty-stricken student does not contribute much in the way of personal income.

Figure 34
Personal Income
Whitman County & Washington, 1970-1996
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

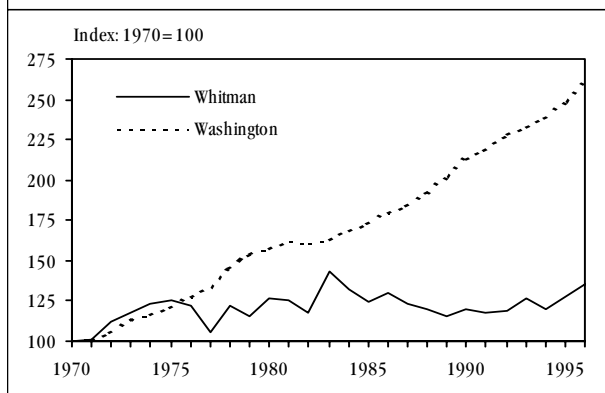
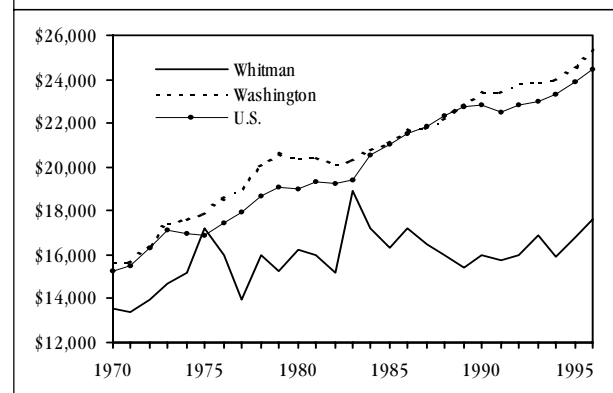


Figure 35
Per Capita Income
Whitman, Washington, & U.S., 1970-1996
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



Per capita income gives no indication of how income is distributed throughout the population. A median income figure does, at least to a degree. The median is the point at which there is an equal number above and an equal number below. The median household income for Whitman County was estimated at \$30,208 in 1998—half of all households had more and half had less. Even

this figure, though, is skewed by the student population. Every dormitory, fraternity, sorority, and student apartment is a household. And again, this drags down the average. The county's median income ranked 31st in the state. Washington State's median income was \$44,134 the same year.

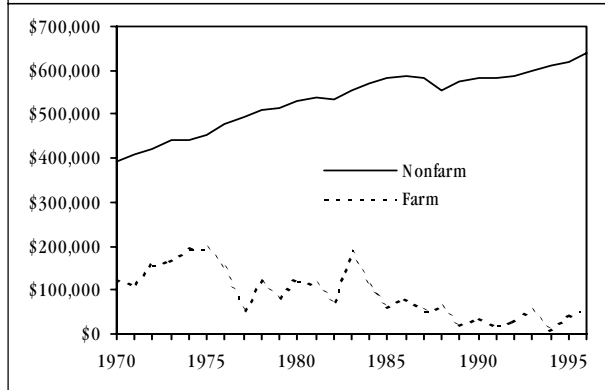
Farm Income

An appropriate way to look at personal income in Whitman County is in terms of agriculture. *Figure 36* shows total personal income divided into farm income and nonfarm income since 1970. The overall trend has been a decline in farm income (it has fallen 53 percent) and quite steady growth in nonfarm income (up 63 percent), which, when taken together, account for the scant 35 percent increase in total personal income.

The proportion of farm income to personal income has declined accordingly. In 1970, farms accounted for almost one-fourth of all personal income. The share rose to 30 percent in 1974 and 1975. Since the mid-1980s, though, it has generally ranged between 5 and 10 percent. The most recent year came in at 8 percent. This percentage, though, remains much higher than the state-wide farm income share, about 1 percent.

The sharp variations in personal income are mainly caused by harvested wheat acreage and fluctuating farm commodity prices. Nonfarm income tends to be stable with only gradual and minor changes. By way of example, 1983 was a peak year for personal income and for farm income. While nonfarm income hardly changed at all from the previous year, an outstanding, record-setting

Figure 36
Farm and Nonfarm Income
Whitman County, 1970-1996
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



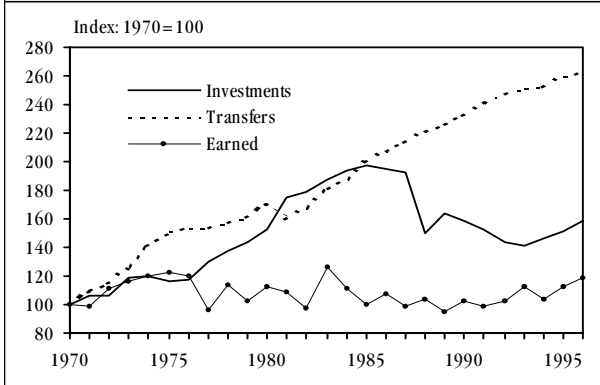
wheat and barley harvest combined with abnormally high prices (the national wheat crop was off that year) to catapult farm income up 93 percent above the previous year. Total personal income jumped by 26 percent. Nonfarm income only increased 4 percent, only slightly more than its usual yearly gain.

Components of Personal Income

As mentioned earlier, personal income encompasses many different types of income. All the various types, however, can be subsumed under the three broad categories of earnings, transfer payments, and investment income. Earnings include wages, salaries, and proprietors' income; transfer payments include income main-

tenance, unemployment insurance, and retirement payments; investment income consists of interest, dividends, and rent. *Figure 37* shows how these components of personal income have changed over time in Whitman County.

Figure 37
Changes in Personal Income Components
Whitman County, 1970-1996
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



Earned Income

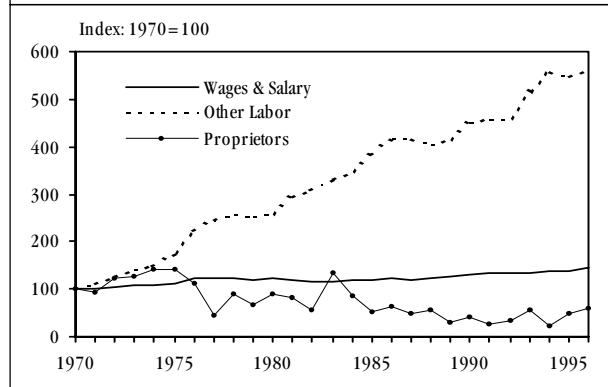
The largest portion of personal income is earned income. Although its percentage of the total has diminished over the last two decades, it, nevertheless, retains the lion's share of all income. This component of personal income is an important reflection of an area's economy because it shows how much income people derive directly from their jobs.

Earned income includes wages and salaries, proprietors' income, and what is called "other labor income." Other labor income subsumes an assortment of incomes but primarily consists of employer payments into employee pension and health care plans. *Figure 38* shows that earned income has only had, overall, minimal growth (19 percent) since 1970. While its 1996 portion of all personal income was 65 percent, this is down considerably from its 1970 share of 75 percent.

The main reason behind the slow growth of earned income is the very steep decline in proprietors' income, which has fallen by 42 percent since 1970. At that time, proprietors accounted for 37 percent of earned income; by 1996, their share had fallen to 18 percent. In Whitman County, well over half of proprietors' income was from the farm. And because of this, there can be wide income swings from year to year.

The income of wage and salary workers, on the other hand, grew, but slowly, over the period, going from \$261 million to \$361 million, a 44 percent gain. In 1996, it

Figure 38
Changes in Earned Income Components
Whitman County, 1970-1996
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



accounted for more than three-fourths of earned income (74 percent). The problem here is that while wage and salary real income increased by 44 percent, the number of wage and salary workers increased by 56 percent over the same time frame. The areas of fastest job growth were in low paying industries, trade and services.

The "other labor income" component, while the smallest portion of earned income, was also the fastest growing. It grew by 460 percent from 1970 to 1996, going from \$7 million to \$40 million. Its share of all earned income increased from 2 to 8 percent.

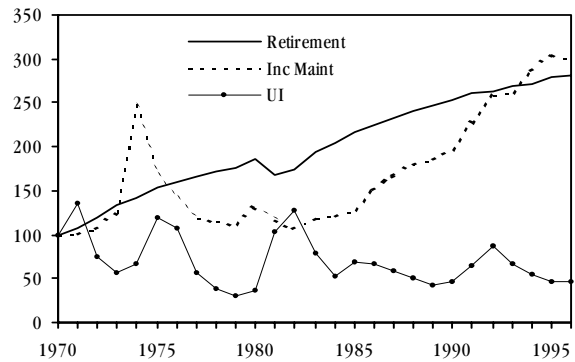
Transfer Payments

A transfer payment is generally seen as a payment by the government to someone from whom no service is rendered. Transfer payments are second in size after earnings in the composition of personal income, and have grown tremendously over the last two decades. As shown earlier, transfer payments are garnering an ever larger share of personal income. In 1970, they amounted to \$47 million, or 9 percent of all personal income. Over the next two decades, transfer payments increased by 162 percent. By 1996, they were \$122 million, 16 percent of personal income.

The largest portion of transfer payments is made up of retirement and related payments. These include social security payments, federal government civilian and military retirement pay, and state and local government retirement pay. This portion also includes Medicare payments, a very fast growing item. *Figure 39* shows the three main components of transfer payments and their growth since 1970. Retirement and related payments increased by almost 181 percent from 1970-96, giving this component a 92 percent share of all transfer payments in 1996.

Income maintenance includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children, general assistance, food stamps, and other transfers generally thought of as welfare. Income maintenance grew from 1970's \$2.3 million to 1996's \$7.1 million, a 200 percent increase. This

Figure 39
Changes in Transfer Payments Components
Whitman County, 1970-1996
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



amounts to 6 percent of all transfer payments. Statewide, the portion is 8 percent.

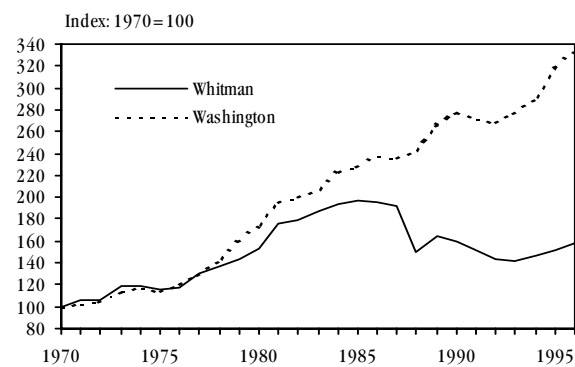
Unemployment insurance payments form the final component of transfer payments. There has been a decrease in the dollar amount of this item; it went from \$4.0 million in 1970 to \$1.9 million in 1996. UI payments fluctuate directly with the unemployment rate, of course, and the county is currently at a very low level of unemployment. These payments make up 2 percent of county transfer payments (statewide, the share is 4 percent, reflective of higher unemployment).

Dividends, Interest, and Rent

These types of income (collectively called investment income) are the prime examples of making money with money. Money which has been used to purchase stocks, bonds, or which resides in bank accounts, or has been loaned, or which was used to purchase rental properties, can return a profit. No service or work is performed, yet income is derived from the invested money.

In Whitman County, investment income has not increased as much since 1970 as it has throughout the state (58 percent versus 233 percent): however, its share of personal income is slightly greater than it is throughout the state (19 percent versus 18 percent in 1996). Much of this difference undoubtedly stems from a higher level of rental income derived from the student population of the county. *Figure 40* shows investment income for the period 1970-96. It is indexed to 1970=100.

Figure 40
Investment Income
Whitman County, 1970-1996
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



JOB TRAINING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Job Training

The *Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)* of 1982 established programs to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force. A special note is the emphasis placed on economically disadvantaged individuals and others who face serious barriers to employment. It is upon this legislation that the Employment Security Department and other providers base their job service programs.

Private Industry Council. Washington is divided into areas that provide services related to employment. Private Industry Councils often administer these regions, called Service Delivery Areas. For Whitman County the administrator for JTPA grants is the *Eastern Washington Partnership Private Industry Council (PIC)*. These grants are used to train and place local unskilled or unemployed workers. The PIC has jurisdiction over JTPA Service Delivery Area X, which includes Whitman as well as Ferry, Pend Oreille, Garfield, Stevens, Columbia, Lincoln, Asotin, and Walla Walla counties. Administrative responsibilities (e.g., record keeping, data collection, program planning, employer contact, etc.) and executive oversight are handled by the council.

Job Service Center. Operated by the Employment Security Department, the Spokane Job Service Center (JSC) and its Pullman Satellite Office provide job services to residents of Whitman, Spokane, Lincoln, Asotin, and Garfield counties. The JSC is a full-service office; that is, it provides the full range of services offered by any JSC in the state. In addition to providing Unemployment Insurance, the JSC administers several other programs.

WorkFirst is administered in cooperation with the Department of Social and Health Services. It seeks to make those on public assistance self-sufficient through employment. Services include job planning and counseling, case management, childcare assistance, educational and vocational training, and job placement.

The Walla Walla JSC manages the *Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act (EDWAAA)* for Whitman, Garfield, and Asotin counties. This program is designed to assist clients laid-off be-

cause of either plant closures or plant restructuring and technology improvements. Through this program, clients work with counselors to assist in determining job skills and interests. They then draw up an individual training strategy, which may include retraining at the community college with tuition and fees paid by the state. Job search workshops are provided to enhance skills such as resume writing, application processing, and interviewing.

The *Claimant Placement Program* targets recent unemployment insurance applicants for job placement services to speed their return to work. This shortens the duration of unemployment for the individual and saves costs to the unemployment insurance trust fund.

The *Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)* is another JSC administered program. This one is designed to assist those who have been displaced because of the impact of foreign imports on their industries. While the amount of benefits and compensation periods vary, the program offers services only after the U.S. Department of Labor certifies that the individual has indeed been dislocated as a result of such impacts on his or her industry.

Other programs operated by the Spokane County JSC include the *Refugee Program* and the *Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW)* program. Both programs provide counseling, job training, job search, and placement opportunities. Two other important programs also operate out of the JSC—The *Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)* program and the *Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP)*. The basis of these programs is to provide counseling, career search skills, and job placement assistance. Additionally, a Veterans Affairs representative is available on site.

Many of the services listed above are also available through the Pullman Job Service Center located in Whitman County. The Pullman JSC is a full-service satellite affiliate of the Spokane JSC.

Educational Facilities. Founded in 1890, Washington State University (WSU) is the only institution of higher education in Whitman County. WSU is a four-year,

state-supported university accredited both regionally and nationally. It emphasizes undergraduate teaching, research, and public service. The 600-acre main campus, consisting of seven colleges and a graduate school, is located in the town of Pullman. In 1989 WSU became a multicampus system with the establishment of campuses in Spokane, the Tri-Cities, and Vancouver.

The university offers more than 100 major fields of study. Bachelor's degrees are available in all major areas, with master's and doctoral degrees available in most. These programs are represented by more than 4,500 courses in seven major colleges: Agriculture and Home Economics, Business and Economics, Education, Engineering and Architecture, Pharmacy, Sciences and Arts, and Veterinary Medicine. WSU also has an Intercollegiate Center for Nursing Education headquartered in Spokane.

WSU not only is the state's public land-grant university, but also Washington's only statewide university. WSU has Cooperative Extension offices in all 39 counties, seven research and extension facilities in various locations, and

16 Small Business Development centers statewide. Most courses are taught in person. Others are transmitted through Washington Higher Education Telecommunication System (WHETS), which transmits live, interactive instruction to the branch campuses and other sites.

Although Washington State University is the only institution of higher education in Whitman County, others can be found both in neighboring counties and across the border in Idaho. They include:

- University of Idaho; Moscow, Idaho
- Eastern Washington University; Cheney, Washington
- Gonzaga University; Spokane, Washington
- Lewis-Clark State College; Lewiston, Idaho
- Whitworth College; Spokane, Washington
- Whitman College; Walla Walla, Washington
- Spokane Community College; Spokane, Washington
- Spokane Falls Community College; Spokane, Washington
- Walla Walla Community College; Clarkston, Washington
- Walla Walla Community College; Walla Walla, Washington

Economic Development

The major provider of economic development information and assistance in Whitman County is the *Palouse Economic Development Council (PEDC)*. The PEDC is a nonprofit corporation organized as a public-private partnership. Its membership is made up primarily of representatives from local governments, private businesses and utility companies. Located at Washington State University Research and Technology Park in Pullman, PEDC works to promote economic development in not only Whitman County but also in Asotin, Columbia, and Garfield counties. This promotion of economic development is achieved through many different means. Some of its activities and projects include:

- Rural telecommunications
- Business assistance, retention & recruitment
- Provision of business resources
- Demographic research
- Community development
- Tourism promotion
- Business workshops
- Transportation planning
- Internet training, web site development & searches
- Promote Rural Entrepreneurism through Action Learning (REAL), a high school program

Other economic development organizations in Whitman County include the *Colfax* and *Pullman Cham-*

bers of Commerce. The Chambers of Commerce are composed of business owners and other interested individuals who work together to further the business interests of their communities. Another organization, the *Whitman County Business Development Association*, is dedicated to the implementation of business and business education.

Infrastructure. An area's infrastructure is an integral part of economic development. The following are primary infrastructural elements currently in place in Whitman County.

Roads and Highways. The major thoroughfare through Whitman County is U.S. Highway 195 which connects Colfax with Pullman, Spokane, and Clarkston. Running north and south, U.S. Highway 195 is connected to the rest of Whitman County through a network of State Routes (23, 26, 27, 127, 271, and 272).

Air Transportation. Whitman County has two main airports, Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport and Whitman County Airport. Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport has a 6,730-foot runway which allows it to offer passenger service through Horizon Air and cargo service through Airpac Airlines. Whitman County Airport has a 2,170-foot runway and can only accommodate small private aircraft. There is also a general

service airport in Rosalia and a number of other small air strips throughout the county. For major commercial passenger service, county residents can travel to the Spokane International Airport, located 60 miles north of Colfax and 75 miles north of Pullman.

Port Rail Service. Whitman County has three barge ports (Wilma, Almota, and Central Ferry) with a com-

bined total of 11 slips. The major cargoes handled are grain exports, fertilizer, wood products, and petroleum products. These cargoes are transported down the Snake River to the Columbia River near the Tri-Cities. Petroleum products are transported upriver in barges specially constructed to carry petroleum and grain products.

SUMMARY

The defining elements in Whitman County's economy are, and have been, farming and education. The first settlers came to farm, and that has remained a way of life. They also pressed hard for the establishment of a land grant college (that became Washington State University), and that also has become a way of life.

Although Whitman County leads Washington in the production of wheat and barley and although farm income constitutes close to a tenth of all earned income, employment in agriculture is low compared to other sectors. In some eastern Washington counties, particularly those involved in tree fruits, the agricultural sector can provide up to 25 percent of all employment. The local crops in Whitman County are capital rather than labor intensive and farm workers only constitute about 3 to 4 percent of the county's workers. One of the fortunate consequences is that high seasonal unemployment, which besets many agricultural communities, is not a factor in Whitman County.

WSU is far and away the largest employer in the county. And it provides very stable employment that pays relatively high wages. Its economic influence, though, is not limited to the admittedly large payroll it injects into the local economy. The "product" of the university is an educated man or woman, and the influence that person will have is incalculable. Graduates from the school's agricultural department, for example, have undoubtedly influenced the farm sector in the Palouse for many years by transferring knowledge from the school to the field.

Although it has only a small share of employment, manufacturing has been expanding at a good pace over the last few years, especially in the area of electronics. The sector pays the highest average wage in the county.

The fastest growth in terms of employment, though, has come from the services and trade sectors. Since 1970, services jobs more than doubled, and trade employment grew by more than three-fourths. (Government, the largest sector, increased 56 percent.) While the average wage in these sectors is relatively low, they do pro-

vide a large number of jobs. A low average wage can indicate a high level of part-time work.

Because of the stability of the university and an agricultural base that does not require a large labor force or few if any migrant workers, unemployment is always among the lowest of Washington's 39 counties. Only 2.0 percent of the work force was idle in 1998. Statewide, 4.8 percent were unemployed.

Other economic indicators are also healthy. The annual average wage in Whitman County was \$24,351 in 1997, 13th among Washington's 39 counties. Although the personal per capita income was low (\$17,606 in 1996 and ranked 35th), it is important to note that per capita income, unlike the average wage, is derived by dividing total personal income by the county's entire population. The very large student population at the university exerts a heavy downward pressure on the level of this income measure.

Further, the population has been growing strongly since 1988. In most areas, population growth follows hard on economic growth because people follow jobs. Whitman County is different, though, in that the student population, whose size is determined by legislative action, accounts for the major changes occurring in the county's population. (In 1998, the county's population was 41,400; of that, WSU accounted for 17,404.) Even so, the recent growth is at least partially driven by the county's economic performance.

In general, the economic outlook is good for Whitman County. Growing trade and service sectors complement the large government sector. International developments loosening trade restrictions in overseas markets should prove beneficial to wheat and barley growers. Growth in the manufacturing sector should enhance the prospects for good, well-paid jobs. The average wage, which tracks with the state's average wage, has shown improvement in recent years after a long-term downward trend. And, unemployment is very low.