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**YAKIMA COUNTY PROFILE**

**APRIL 1997**

Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch  
Employment Security Department

This report has been prepared in accordance with  
*RCW 50.12.260.*

Carver Gayton, *Commissioner*  
Washington State Employment Security Department

Gary Bodeutsch, *Director*  
Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch  
P.O. Box 9046  
Mail Stop 6000  
Olympia, WA 98507-9046  
(360) 438-4800

Prepared by Jay Barrier, *Economic Analyst*  
and Paul Cichello, *Research Analyst*  
Layout by Bonnie Dalebout, *Editorial Assistant*

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Yakima County Development Association  
P.O. Box 1387  
Yakima, WA 98907  
(509) 575-1140

Kittitas-Yakima Resource Conservation and Economic  
Development District (Ki-Yak)  
Yakima County Courthouse - Room 30  
Yakima, WA 98901  
(509) 575-2932

Yakima Job Service Center  
306 Division Street  
Yakima, WA 98902  
(509) 575-2688 or (SCAN) 558-2688

Sunnyside Job Service Center  
800 East Custer  
P.O. Box 747  
Sunnyside, WA 98944

Frank Cole, *Regional Labor Economist*  
Employment Security Department  
306 Division Street  
Yakima, WA 98902  
(509) 574-0141

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# INTRODUCTION

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This report profiles the labor market and economic characteristics of Yakima 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 *Yakima County Profile* of August 1992, the purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive labor market and economic analysis of Yakima County. Characteristics profiled include the following:

- physical geography, economic history, and demographics
- labor force composition and trends
- industries, employment, income, 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>**

In addition to the internet, much of the information is also regularly updated in an LMEA data base made available to the public through an electronic bulletin board system. The system can be accessed at no cost via personal computer, computer modem, and appropriate communications software. For information about accessing the bulletin board, contact the Automated LMI section of the Employment Security Department at (206) 438-4800.

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

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# GEOGRAPHY

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Yakima County is situated in south central Washington State. Comprising a geographic area of 4,287 square miles, or roughly 6.5 percent of the state's land area, it is the second largest county in Washington. This wide expanse makes Yakima a study in contrasts.

To the west the terrain is rough, mountainous, densely timbered, and increasingly elevated as it nestles up against the eastern exposure of the Cascade Mountain Range. The mountain range (whose highest point in Yakima County is 12,307 feet above sea level at Mount Adams) forms a barrier against the moisture-laden clouds encroaching from the Pacific Ocean. Once relieved of their watery burden over the Cascades, the lighter clouds pass down into the lowlands known as the upper and lower Yakima Valley. As a consequence, the precipitation level stays relatively low at seven to eight inches a year. Surrounded by mountains, the basin also retains warm air, creating a climate conducive to agriculture.

The eastern two-thirds of the county are less precipitous and elevated as the terrain descends from steep and

dense pine and fir forests to the semi-arid foothills and terraces dotted with sagebrush and sparse vegetation that mark the Yakima Valley. The point of division in the valley is around Union Gap—north of the gap, the weather is somewhat cooler, and crops mature a little later than in the lower valley.

The life blood of this dry but productive valley is the Yakima River, a 215-mile tributary of the Columbia River connecting the two adjacent basins. It is fed by 833,700 acre feet of water held collectively in the Lake Cle Elum, Kachess, and Keechulus reservoirs. Secondary water sources, namely the Naches and Tieton Rivers, are fed by 231,700 acre feet of water in the Bumping Lake and Tieton reservoirs. Just outside of Yakima City, the Naches and Tieton rivers merge and join the Yakima River to supply over 2,100 miles of irrigation canals and laterals. Through a combination of abundant water, roughly 300 days of sunshine per year, and rich volcanic soil, the Yakima Valley has emerged as a strong agricultural region.

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# ECONOMIC HISTORY

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Yakima County derives its name from the region's Indian tribe. It is widely considered to mean runaway, with reference to the rivers that surround the valley. The county was created in 1865 after being partitioned from a part of Spokane County and most of now-defunct Ferguson County.

Native Americans were the first to live and prosper in the valley. The livelihood of these largely nomadic tribes was dependent on the Columbia and Yakima rivers which brought them salmon each year. Abundant indigenous foods such as camas, bitter roots, berries, and deer were also important staples in their diet. In 1855, a treaty was signed establishing a 1.3 million acre reservation for the 14 tribes that once roamed the Yakima Valley.

The arrival of white missionaries and adventurers around the mid-1800s further signaled the beginnings of significant change. Trappers and fur traders had moved through the area, but found little success and did not stay long. Later in the century, wagon trains from the American Midwest entered the valley, but continued on to Puget Sound or Oregon.

Prime grazing land, however, attracted cattlemen to the area as early as 1859, but their ranches were on the Klickitat side of the Simcoe Mountains. It was not until 1860 that the cattle industry began in Yakima. That was the year Fielding Mortimer Thorp became the county's first permanent settler. More significantly, he brought 250 head of cattle with him. Other settlers soon followed, further expanding the cattle, and later the sheep, industry. It was during this period that farming was introduced to the area. Indeed, of great importance was the fruit and vegetable industry that started to take shape.

Around agriculture emerged the infrastructure by which it could be sustained. The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway to Yakima City in 1884 opened the door for the transportation of agricultural products. An early settler, Walter Granger, was the mover behind irrigation in the area. In 1892 the first water sluiced into the Sunnyside Canal; that beginning was followed by the extensive irrigation system of ditches and canals that now envelops the valley. Following the Reclamation Act of

1902, the first of five large fresh water reservoirs was completed at Bumping Lake in 1910. This allowed a more regulated supply of water to be released according to crop needs.

As agricultural production increased, so did the demand for labor. Prior to World War II, most farm labor was done by the farmers, their families, and hired Native Americans. Because World War II took many workers from the area, the use of migrant workers greatly increased, particularly workers from Mexico through the auspices of the Bracero Program. Many laborers of Hispanic origin also came from Texas to help with the harvesting.

Yakima County's lumber and wood industry had its origins in the late 1800s. Since then, a host of complementary industries such as logging operations and sawmills have developed. The processing and shipping of fruits and produce added to the region's industrial base.

During World War II, the Manhattan Project at the Hanford Reservation in nearby Benton County gave rise to the region's nuclear industry. Some of the workers for the project, particularly in construction, resided in Yakima County. In the 1970s, construction work on WPPSS nuclear power program in the same area again drove up construction employment in Yakima County as well as in the Tri-Cities.

The 1980s were economically challenging times for the county, and for most of eastern Washington. The double-dip national recessions were devastating. Work ended on the WPPSS nuclear power project. There was also the Soviet grain embargo, which hurt many in the agricultural community. These all combined to stunt economic growth for most of the decade on the eastern side of the Cascades. The average wage declined precipitously and per capita income was essentially flat. When recovery ensued, the 1990-91 recession appeared. It, however, was relatively mild and since then the county's economy and employment have been growing at a reasonably moderate pace.

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# POPULATION

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## Population Trends

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Changes in population generally reflect, although belatedly, economic conditions; the fluctuations in population, therefore, are usually viewed as an after-the-fact judgment of economic health—people follow jobs.

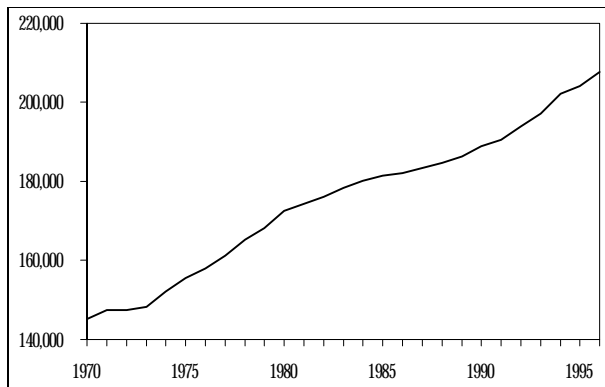
Yakima County's population, estimated to be 207,600 in 1996 by the Office of Financial Management, has shown fairly steady growth since 1970. After a recession-caused plateau in the early 1970s, an upward trend in growth has been the norm. The fastest growth occurred from 1973 through 1980 when the average annual growth rate was 2.2 percent. The growth continued after that but at a slower rate; from 1980 to 1988, the annualized growth rate was 0.9 percent. Since 1989, the annualized growth rate has risen to 1.6 percent. Overall for the 1970-1996 period, Yakima County's annualized growth rate was 1.4 percent (43.0 percent total); simultaneously, Washington State's population grew 61.6 percent, or 1.9 percent per year.

A closer look at the components that constitute population change is even more revealing. The natural change

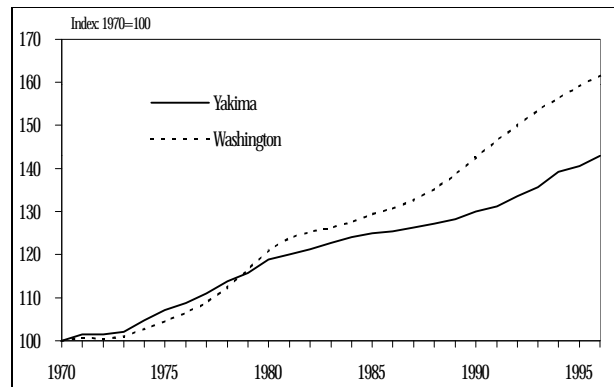
(number of births less number of deaths) tends not to fluctuate radically and usually reacts only to major social disruptions (examples are the great Depression which lead to the lowest birth rate in the 20th century, and WWII's aftermath, the baby boom). In Yakima County, the natural change added 47,052 people to the population from 1970-1996.

It is, however, the migratory element of population change that responds quickly to economic conditions. The 1973-1980 period had more people entering than leaving the county: in-migration less out-migration resulted in a net gain of 14,634, or an average of 2,091 a year. 1980 to 1988 saw a net out-migration of 2,130 or 266 per year. From 1989-1996, in-migration returned at a rate of 399 per annum, adding 3,194 residents to Yakima County. The net migratory flow since 1970 accounts for 15,336 residents with just 1,064 net newcomers from 1980-1996. Combining the natural change with net migration yields an overall population gain of 62,388 since 1970.

**Figure 1**  
**Population Trend**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1996**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



**Figure 2**  
**Population Growth Rate**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1996**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



# Towns and Cities

Yakima had 14 incorporated municipalities in 1996, most of which are located on or near the major rivers flowing through the county, especially within the Yakima Valley. *Figure 3* details the population of these municipalities for 1990-1996. The city of Yakima, the county seat, has over one-fourth of the county's total population.

The table depicts a 13.5 percent increase in the population of incorporated regions between 1990 and

1996. This compares to a 5.8 percent growth for unincorporated regions. The increase is due largely to the creeping borders of incorporated areas. Border extensions, particularly in Union Gap (2,031) and Yakima (5,733), accounted for 8,100 people being added to the rolls. Had these regions not extended their boundaries, the growth in unincorporated areas would have been 15.0 percent versus a slower 5.5 percent for incorporated areas.

**Figure 3**  
**Population of Cities, Towns, and County**  
**April 1, 1990 to April 1, 1996**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<b>Yakima County</b>	188,823	190,500	193,900	197,000	202,100	204,100	207,600
Unincorporated	88,214	86,854	88,790	90,328	94,248	94,440	101,475
Incorporated	100,609	103,646	105,110	106,672	107,852	109,660	106,125
Harrah	352	364	411	442	453	450	465
Naches	596	605	689	689	689	685	695
Moxee	825	836	835	870	925	975	995
Tieton	693	695	715	855	891	930	995
Mabton	1,482	1,465	1,465	1,495	1,615	1,625	1,645
Granger	2,053	2,065	2,099	2,081	2,085	2,130	2,180
Zillah	1,911	1,920	1,960	2,060	2,190	2,235	2,300
Wapato	3,795	3,760	3,790	3,760	3,790	3,825	3,895
Union Gap	3,120	3,100	3,110	3,170	3,220	3,305	5,370
Selah	5,113	5,110	5,120	5,110	5,170	5,450	5,600
Toppenish	7,419	7,460	7,460	7,550	7,734	7,765	7,760
Grandview	7,169	7,320	7,380	7,590	7,690	7,725	7,940
Sunnyside	11,238	11,270	11,370	11,420	11,660	11,710	11,720
Yakima	54,843	57,676	58,706	59,580	59,740	60,850	62,670

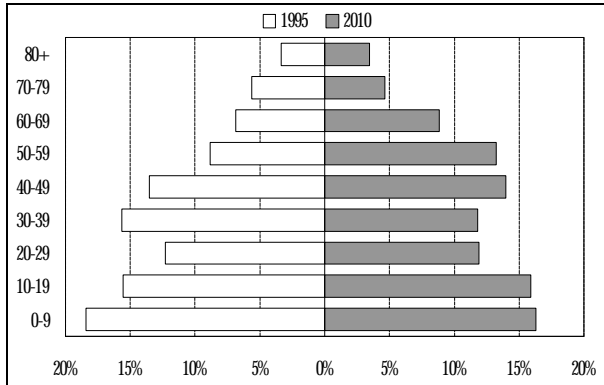
# Population by Age Groups

Changes in the age composition of a population can be detected with the help of pyramid graphs. In a population with a constant birth rate, it is intuitive that there should be fewer people in the older age groups. This can be displayed in a horizontal bar graph with equal age groupings. With minor caveats, the graph should take on

the appearance of a pyramid with a large number of newborns dwindling to relatively few people in old age.

*Figure 4* on the next page is a pyramid diagram of Yakima County's population in 1995 and 2010. Looking at 1995, the diagram does not depict the shape that is expected. A bubble occurs for residents aged 30 to 49,

**Figure 4**  
**Population by Age Group**  
**Yakima County, 1995 and 2010**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



showing a larger than normal share of the population (the baby boomers) in these age groups. Looking at the age groups for 2010, the bubble has shifted, growing older to the 40-59 age range.

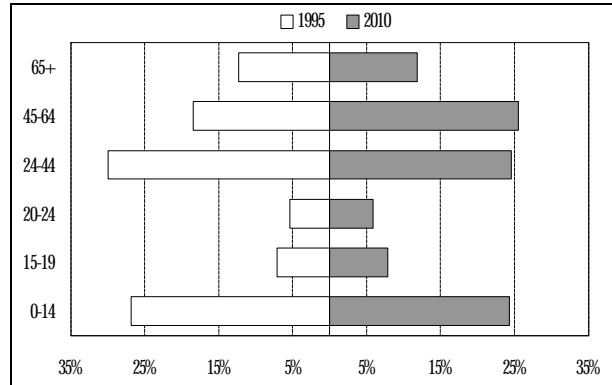
Changes in each group's share of the general population have significance if we make the following assumptions about group characteristics:

- 0-14 - Infants or adolescents a decade or two removed from the labor force
- 15-19 - Prospective new entrants in the labor force, less college students
- 20-24 - New entrants into the labor force
- 25-44 - Workers in their prime years of work productivity
- 45-64 - Mature workers with years of accumulated skills and experience
- 65+ - Retirees

Figure 5 categorizes the population of Yakima County into the age groups described above. Over the next 15 years, demographic changes for Yakima County will result in a more mature work force.

The share of the population in the 0-14 age group is expected to decrease by 2.5 percent. In 1995, this group

**Figure 5**  
**Population by Age Group**  
**Yakima County, 1995 and 2010**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



comprises a 26.8 percent share of the Yakima population. The 15-19 year-old age group will increase slightly, gaining less than one percentage share and the 20-24 year-old cohort will see a similar increase in share.

In 1995, 25-44 year-olds composed the greatest share of the population in Yakima County. The 29.9 percent share is expected to drop to a 24.6 percent share by 2010. At that time, the 45-64 year-old age group will become the largest group in the county. While this group composes just an 18.8 percent share in 1995, it is projected to encompass 25.5 percent of the population in 2010.

The population over 65 will remain relatively stable. Changing by less than a single percentage share, Yakima's senior share is expected to drop from 12.3 to 11.9 percent.

In general, the population in Yakima County, like the state as a whole, is growing older. The age increase is a reflection of the maturation of the *baby boomers*; in 2010, those born between 1946 and 1964 will be between 46 and 64 years old.

## Race and Ethnicity

Yakima County contains a sizable Native American population—primarily members of the Yakama tribe who are mainly congregated on the huge Yakama Indian Reservation. In 1995, Native Americans and Aleutians accounted for 7.2 percent of the population versus a 2.0 percent share of the state population. Other non-white resident shares fall below the state average, with a black

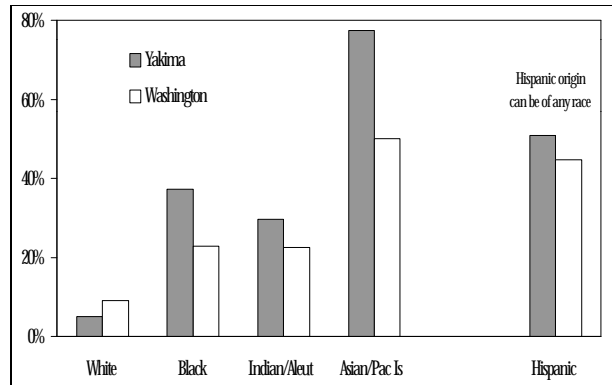
population of 1.6 percent (statewide 3.4 percent) and an Asian/Pacific Islander share of just 2.8 percent (statewide 6.0 percent). The white population (88.3 percent) comprises a share similar to the state share (88.6 percent). From an ethnic rather than a racial perspective, people of Hispanic origin comprise a considerable segment of Yakima population. In 1995, one third of the



Yakima people were of Hispanic origin: in Washington, only 5.7 percent.

Growth in recent years is another matter. From 1990 to 1995, the 4.9 percent growth of the white population is considerably below the Washington mark of 9.1 percent. For non-whites, growth has easily surpassed the state average: Native Americans increased by 29.6 percent (11,413 to 14,796), African Americans grew 37.2 percent (from 2,466 to 3,355), and Asian Pacific Islanders expanded by 77.4 percent (from 3,223 to 5,717). *Figure 6* compares the percentage growth in each racial category for Yakima County and the state of Washington.

**Figure 6**  
**Population Growth by Race & Hispanic Origin**  
**1990-1995**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



# CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE

The resident civilian labor force is defined as all persons 16 years of age and older in 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. Patterns of growth and

decline in the county's labor force are largely driven by economic cycles as well as activity in the local industry sectors. 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 proxies of economic performance.

## Trend

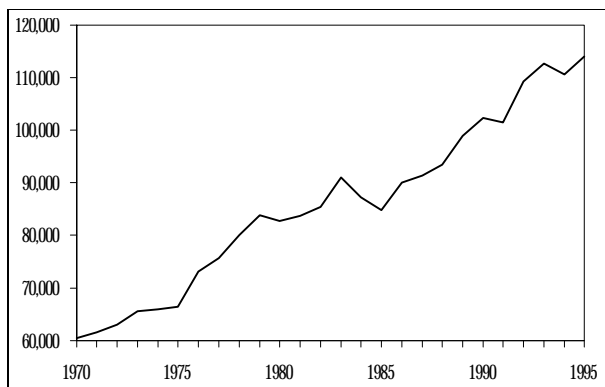
In 1995, the labor force in Yakima County was on the upswing at 114,000, up by over 3,000 from 1994. (Of that number, 99,700 were employed while 14,300 were unemployed.) *Figure 7* displays the county's civilian labor force from 1970 to 1995. Over that period, Yakima's labor force grew by 89 percent versus 98 percent growth in the labor force for the state; *Figure 8* compares the county's labor force to the statewide labor force, indexing them to 1970 = 100.

With the exception of the 1982 to 1985 period, the long term upward trend in the county has been fairly consistent with the state as a whole. By 1982, the combination of a severe national recession and shutdown of the Hanford projects drove the county's unemployment

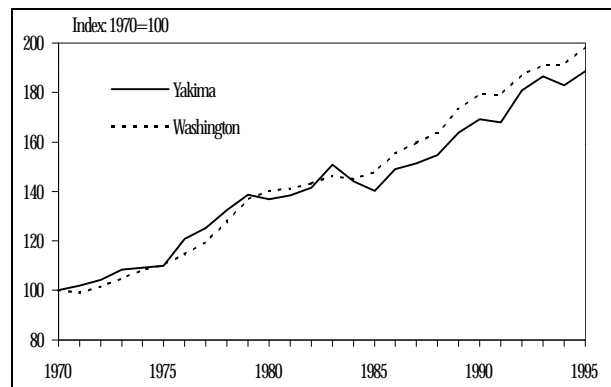
rate to its highest level in recent history. In 1983, large increases in asparagus, apple, and cherry production attracted greater numbers of migrant workers to Yakima County. The labor force grew by 7 percent in just one year. Severe cold weather in 1985 adversely affected all fruit and field crop production levels, except asparagus. As a result, agricultural production suffered and total employment fell 6 percent (5,900) during this period.

Since 1986, the state and county patterns have closely matched. Despite a mild recession-based setback in 1991, the county's labor force grew 26.7 percent (+24,000) between 1986 and 1995. In comparison, the state's labor force increased 27.6 percent during the same time period.

**Figure 7**  
**Civilian Labor Force**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 8**  
**Civilian Labor Force**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



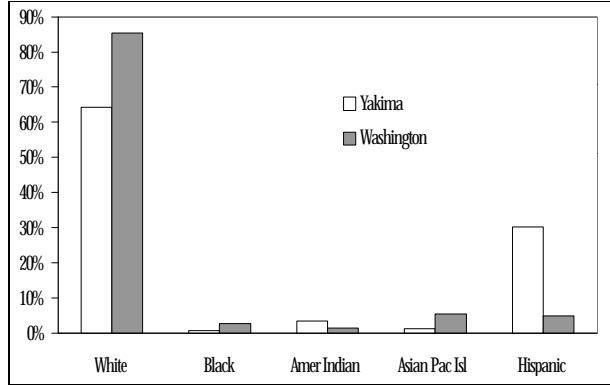
# Demographics

Demographic data on the civilian labor force are prepared in a fashion that combines race and ethnicity so that minority characteristics can be counted. Unlike Census data on the general population, those of Hispanic origin are not separated into their respective racial groups.

In 1995 (the latest available demographic data), the Yakima County labor force was predominantly white (64.3 percent) and predominantly male (57.5 percent). Those of Hispanic origin accounted for 30.3 percent of the labor force. Native Americans accounted for 3.3 percent, Asians/Pacific Islanders for 1.3 percent, and Blacks for 0.8 percent of the labor force.

Of the whites, 55.0 percent were male and 45.0 percent were female; of Native Americans, 55.3 percent were male and 44.7 percent were female; of Asian/Pacific Islanders, 46.7 percent were male and 53.3 percent were female; and of blacks, 66.7 percent were male and 33.3

**Figure 9**  
**Labor Force by Race & Hispanic Origin**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1995**  
*Source: Bureau of the Census*



percent were female. Those of Hispanic origin were 63.5 percent male and 36.5 percent female.

# UNEMPLOYMENT

The civilian labor force consists of both 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.

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.

## Trend

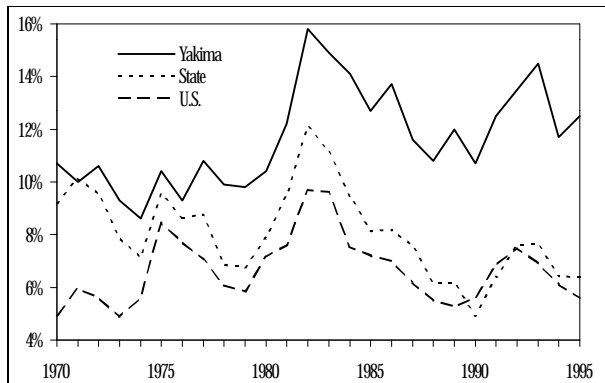
The 1970-1995 unemployment rates for Yakima County, Washington State, and the United States are depicted in *Figure 10*. In 1971, the annual average unemployment rate in Yakima County was less than the statewide rate (by one-tenth of a percentage point): that was the only time this occurred in the last twenty-five years. Since then, there has been a steady widening of the gap between the two. In 1995, the county’s unemployment rate was 12.5 percent, almost double Washington’s 6.4 percent. Preliminary figures for 1996 suggest the rate may drop slightly, but certainly not a significant amount.

The rates of 1971 were aberrational, though. State-wide unemployment was at a historically high point and the county’s rate was at a historically low point. Unem-

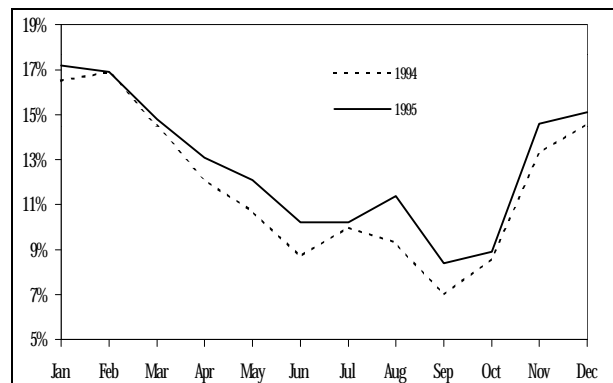
ployment in Yakima County has traditionally been greater than the state as a whole, and much of this is because of the agricultural base of the county’s economy. An economy with a large, labor intensive agricultural sector will generally have higher unemployment than in other economies. The seasonality of farm labor coupled with the vagaries of weather and its effect on harvests contribute to this “Gap” factor. Although unemployment has decreased in both the state and the county since the national recessions of the early 1980s, the county’s annual average unemployment rate stubbornly remains at double-digit levels.

Coupled with the relatively high annual average unemployment rate, there is strong seasonal variation in unemployment within the year. The agricultural nature

**Figure 10**  
**Unemployment Rates**  
**Yakima, Washington, & U.S., 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 11**  
**Monthly Unemployment**  
**Yakima County, 1994 and 1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



of the economy has a differential effect from national and state rates because it is driven by crop production levels. The jobless rates typically form a “W” pattern, shown in *Figure 11* on the previous page. The highest rates occur in January with a bottoming effect in June as the asparagus and cherry harvests overlap. Unemployment then rises with the cessation of these harvests in July but then

falls to the typically lowest point of the year in September. The major harvests of the Red and Golden Delicious apples begin in earnest in mid-September. Thereafter, the rate rises as many industries slow with the winding down of harvest activities. Within a year, the unemployment rate can vary tremendously: in 1995, it ranged from 17.2 percent in January to 8.4 percent in September.

## Demographics

Estimates for 1995 show striking differences in unemployment between the races as well as for those of Hispanic origin. With an overall unemployment rate of 12.5 percent for 1995, the lowest rate among the various groups was 6.7 percent for non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders. Non-Hispanic whites had the next lowest rate, 7.0 percent. All other groups were over 20

percent. Non-Hispanic blacks had a rate of 22.2 percent; non-Hispanic Native Americans had a 23.7 percent rate; and those of Hispanic origin had a 23.5 percent rate.

Unemployment by sex occurred at about the same rate. For men, the 1995 rate was 12.8 percent and for women, a somewhat lower 12.2 percent.

## Industrial Typology

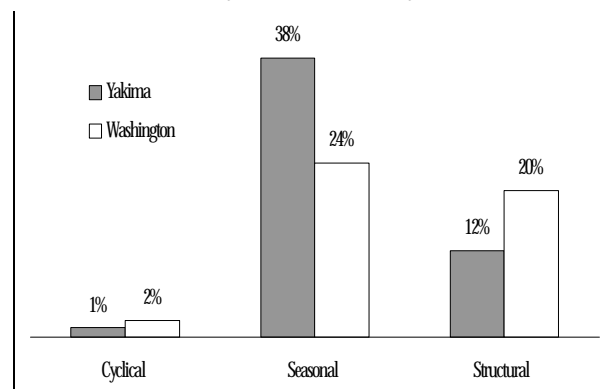
A number of specific industries within Washington State have been defined as being seasonal, cyclical, or structurally mature. These designations relate to the level of variation in employment or to a decrease in employment over specific time periods. Because all three categories are reflective of employment instability or decline, the degree to which a county's economic base depends upon these industries reveals a tendency toward or away from unemployment.

Industries with *seasonal* employment patterns are characterized by large employment increases and decreases in particular months of the year. Poor weather conditions, holiday seasons, and weather-related activities such as harvesting are examples of such factors. Industries with *cyclical* employment patterns are characterized by sharp increases and decreases in employment during periods of general economic growth and contraction. The employment patterns are generally related to upswings and downturns in overall economic activity, i.e., the national business cycle. *Structurally mature* industries are characterized by long-term declines in total annual average employment. These declines may be the result of increased productivity, automation, technological change, exhaustion of natural resources, or other factors. (Note: An industry can be recognized in more than one typology. Construction, for example, is very dependent upon weather and is also

highly sensitive to fluctuations in the business cycle. It has been categorized as both seasonal and cyclical.)

The number of workers employed in these type industries in Yakima County have been tabulated in *Figure 12*. In 1990, 38 percent of all employment was concentrated in seasonal industries, 12 percent in structurally-maturing industries, and only 1 percent in cyclical industries. In comparison, the statewide typology was as follows: 24 percent seasonal, 20 percent structurally-maturing, and 2 percent cyclical.

**Figure 12**  
**Industrial Typology**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1990**  
**Source: Employment Security Department**



Because Yakima County's economy is concentrated primarily in seasonal industries (i.e., agricultural production, food and kindred products, lumber and wood products, and wholesale trading of nondurable goods), there is a tendency toward a high variation in unemployment

during the course of a year. However, the economy tends to be protected from the sharp ups and downs associated with the business cycle and from long range increases in unemployment because of maturing industries.

## Unemployment Insurance Claims

Figure 13 lists claims filed for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits in Yakima County from July 1994 through June 1995 and compares them to claims filed throughout the state in the same period. Claims are categorized by major occupational grouping rather than by industry.

Three of the occupational groupings accounted for over 57 percent of the UI claims filed in Yakima County. Agriculture (32 percent), processing jobs (12 percent), and packing and material handling jobs (14 percent) are all directly or indirectly associated with the high seasonality found in an agriculturally based economy. Statewide, the same three categories only comprised 20 percent of

UI claims. Of the remaining occupational categories, all had a smaller share of the total than did their counterparts throughout the state.

If the claims by occupation are (roughly) categorized as blue-collar or white-collar, there is a sharp difference between unemployment in Yakima County and in the state. More than three-fourths of the county's claims stem from blue-collar jobs while the figure is 52 percent statewide. Not only is agricultural employment subject to seasonal variation, leading to UI claims, but the county has a much greater concentration of employment in these typically blue-collar occupations.

**Figure 13**  
**Unemployment Insurance Claimants**  
**Yakima County and Washington State; July 1, 1994 - June 30, 1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

	Yakima		Washington State	
	Claimants	Percentage	Claimants	Percentage
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	7,913	31.6%	27,875	7.3%
Packaging and material handling	3,528	14.1%	29,372	7.7%
Processing	2,896	11.6%	17,408	4.5%
Structural work	2,116	8.4%	63,681	16.6%
Clerical	1,778	7.1%	49,169	12.8%
Service	1,636	6.5%	40,261	10.5%
Professional/technical/managerial	1,418	5.7%	63,299	16.5%
Miscellaneous, NEC	1,392	5.6%	23,189	6.1%
Machine trades	819	3.3%	21,141	5.5%
Motor freight and transportation	739	3.0%	16,712	4.4%
Sales	569	2.3%	19,707	5.1%
Benchwork	239	1.0%	11,354	3.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,043</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>383,168</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
White-Collar*	5,401	22.8%	172,436	45.0%
Blue-Collar*	18,250	77.2%	187,543	52.1%

\*Miscellaneous/nec occupations excluded

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# INDUSTRIES, EMPLOYMENT, AND WAGES

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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 program (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.

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## Employment Trend

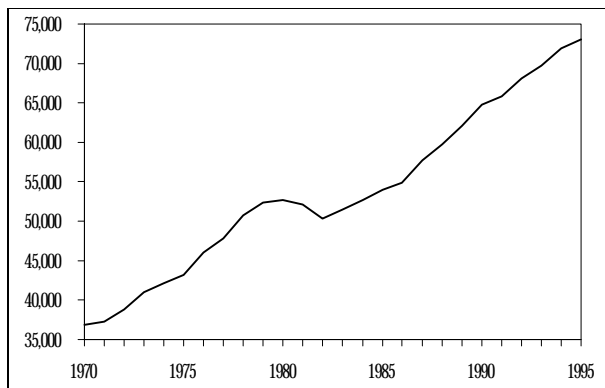
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Since 1970, the Yakima economy added 36,250 non-farm jobs, going from 36,850 to 73,100 in 1995 (*Figure 14*). This 98 percent increase is somewhat less than the statewide employment growth of 117 percent. Growth in the county was strong during the 1970s, somewhat outpacing the state for most of the period. The national recessions of the early 1980s caused sharp declines in employment at both the county and state levels: following that, job growth was stronger in the state than in the county. The decade of the 1980s saw strong growth in the industries of the Puget Sound area, particularly among aerospace and high tech firms, and the sheer numbers involved there strongly influence the statewide averages. Eastern Washington, on the other hand, did not

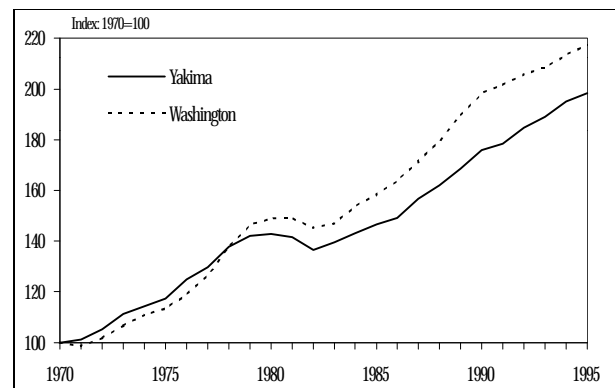
fully participate in that economic boom. While Yakima County certainly did not stagnate during that era, its growth was not as robust as that enjoyed on the other side of the Cascades.

The 1990-91 national recession caused no employment declines in the state or in Yakima County, although it did slow growth (the 1990-91 increase amounted to only 1.5 percent in the county). Since 1991, jobs have increased by 11.1 percent in the county compared to 7.9 percent statewide. A recent fall-off in county construction and manufacturing jobs, however, limited growth to 1.7 percent from 1994 to 1995.

**Figure 14**  
**Nonagricultural Wage & Salary Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 15**  
**Nonagricultural Wage & Salary Employment**  
**Yakima County & Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



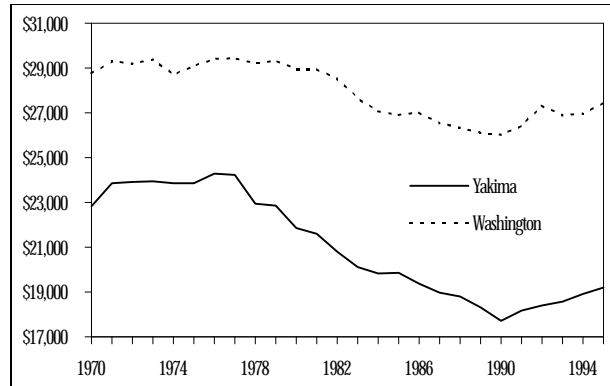
# Annual Average Wage

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. (Note: all amounts here have been inflation adjusted to 1995 dollars.) The average wage does not include any benefits (e.g., insurance or retirement plans) other than actual wages.

The average wage in Yakima County in 1995 was \$19,208, some 30 percent less than the state's average wage of \$27,448. The trend (in real dollars) for both, though, has been following the same pattern (see *Figure 16*): flatness through most of the 1970s followed by a long decline which did not bottom out until 1990. Since then, the county's wage has been increasing each year and in 1995 was \$1,495 more in real terms than it was in 1990. The state's increase was slightly less, \$1,415.

Overall, Yakima County's employment comprises less than 4.0 percent of the state total, and its average wage is 70 percent of the statewide average wage. How employment is distributed in the major industry sectors greatly affects the average wage. Agricultural workers in Yakima County, whose average wage is quite low, account for 22 percent of all agricultural workers in the state, and within Yakima County account for 21 percent of the entire work force. Those who work in crops production receive an even lower average wage, and the county's employment in this industry division represents almost

**Figure 16**  
**Annual Average Covered Wage**  
**Yakima County & Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



30 percent of all crop workers statewide. (Note: the very low wages of agriculture can be misleading; the annual wage is a twelve-month average, and agricultural work is rarely full-time employment for the full year.)

Outside agriculture, Yakima County annual average wages, when grouped into major industry sectors, are also lower than their statewide counterparts. Ranging from manufacturing (32 percent less than statewide manufacturing) to government (10 percent less than the state's average), all sectors pay less than the same sectors statewide. At the 2-digit SIC level, as shown in *Figure 17* on the next page, only a handful of industries exceed the statewide averages.

## Location Quotient

When comparing Yakima County's shares of industry employment to Washington State, it's apparent that county employment is distributed differently than the state. The *location quotient* compares the share of total employment in a particular industry division in Yakima County with the share it represents in Washington State. (The data for this section are derived from the ES-202 program, which includes agricultural employment.)

The quotient is determined by dividing the share of state employment into the share of Yakima County employment of the same industry or sector. 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

over-represented in the county; and a value below 1.0 marks an industry with less than average employment in the county.

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. The major industry sectors shown in *Figure 18* on page 16 indicate, of course, that the agricultural sector is a major exporter of goods. Trade is almost exactly on par with

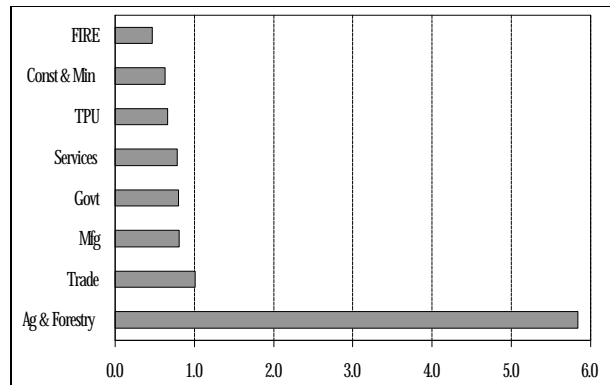


**Figure 17**  
**Annual Average Covered Wages, 1995**  
**Yakima County and Washington State**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

	<b>Yakima</b>	<b>State</b>		<b>Yakima</b>	<b>State</b>
<i>Total</i>	\$19,208	\$27,448	General Merchandise Stores	\$14,573	\$17,611
<i>Agriculture &amp; Forestry</i>	\$11,013	\$14,527	Food Stores	\$16,336	\$17,633
Agricultural Production - Crops	\$10,201	\$10,955	Auto Dealers & Service Stations	\$21,743	\$25,251
Agricultural Services	\$13,750	\$15,667	Apparel & Accessory Stores	\$12,521	\$17,505
<i>Construction &amp; Mining</i>	\$23,388	\$29,865	Furniture & Home Furnishings	\$19,607	\$20,991
General Building Contractors	\$23,441	\$28,340	Eating & Drinking Establishments	\$8,424	\$9,677
Heavy Construction Contractors	\$25,830	\$37,303	Miscellaneous Retail	\$14,549	\$15,306
Special Trade Contractors	\$22,928	\$28,153	<i>Finance, Insurance &amp; Real Estate</i>	\$24,592	\$32,149
<i>Manufacturing</i>	\$25,306	\$37,447	Depository Institutions	\$25,539	\$29,642
Food & Kindred Products	\$23,760	\$28,327	Nondepository Credit Institutions	\$34,481	\$39,500
Lumber & Wood Products	\$26,171	\$31,681	Security, Brokers & Services	\$90,284	\$65,673
Furniture & Fixtures	\$16,936	\$23,063	Insurance Carriers	\$34,879	\$37,896
Paper & Allied Products	\$33,528	\$45,528	Insurance Agents, Brokers & Svcs	\$26,063	\$34,585
Printing & Publishing	\$24,539	\$27,963	Real Estate	\$12,630	\$19,797
Rubber & Misc. Plastic Products	\$28,089	\$27,198	Holding & Other Investment Offices	\$26,697	\$57,203
Stone, Clay, Glass, Concrete	\$30,477	\$30,313	<i>Services</i>	\$18,948	\$25,839
Fabricated Metal Products	\$25,356	\$29,664	Hotels & other Lodging Places	\$10,000	\$13,595
Machinery, except Electrical	\$22,948	\$35,599	Personal Services	\$15,076	\$14,326
Electronic & Electrical Equipment	\$22,620	\$31,327	Business Services	\$12,773	\$34,653
Transportation Equipment	\$26,688	\$49,642	Auto Repair, Services, & Garages	\$18,216	\$21,052
Instruments & Related Products	\$24,362	\$44,274	Miscellaneous Repair Services	\$19,693	\$24,773
Misc Manufacturing Industries	\$22,147	\$25,269	Motion Pictures	\$6,923	\$12,722
<i>Transportation &amp; Public Utilities</i>	\$26,353	\$34,876	Amusement & Recreation Services	\$11,470	\$16,145
Local & Interurban Passngr Transit	\$16,396	\$16,522	Health Services	\$24,748	\$27,415
Trucking & Warehousing	\$22,450	\$26,345	Legal Services	\$23,479	\$35,269
Transportation by Air	\$22,398	\$35,461	Educational Services	\$19,616	\$22,993
Transportation Services	\$24,097	\$27,254	Social Services	\$14,357	\$14,227
Communication	\$29,642	\$46,051	Museum, Art Gallr, Bot & Zool Gdns	\$11,497	\$16,270
Electric, Gas, & Sanitary Services	\$42,742	\$43,399	Membership Organizations	\$19,307	\$18,223
<i>Trade</i>	\$16,674	\$19,826	Engneerng, Acctng, Rsch, Mgmt	\$27,956	\$39,792
<i>Wholesale</i>	\$20,514	\$33,094	Private Households	\$6,987	\$8,667
Wholesale Trade - Durable Goods	\$26,554	\$35,698	<i>Government</i>	\$27,880	\$30,833
Wholesale Trade - Nondurable	\$19,103	\$29,964	Federal	\$33,709	\$37,018
<i>Retail</i>	\$14,246	\$15,546	State	\$30,365	\$31,298
Building Materials & Garden Suppl	\$22,342	\$21,378	Local	\$26,268	\$28,848

the state, and manufacturing, government, and services are not dramatically different. On the other hand, finance, insurance, and real estate; construction; and transportation and public utilities may require outside input for consumption to be similar to that of the state.

**Figure 18**  
**Major Industry Location Quotients**  
**Yakima County, 1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



## Agriculture

It's hard to overestimate the influence of agriculture upon Yakima County. It permeates all areas of the county and affects, in one way or another, almost all people in the county. The county's agricultural employment in 1995 was over 19,000, ranging from a low of 10,000 to a high of almost 30,000 and accounting for over one-fifth of all covered employment in the county. Yakima County has less than 4 percent of all jobs in the state but 22 percent of all farm workers in the state are employed there. A large number of jobs in other industries are heavily dependent upon agriculture: food processing, wholesale trade, and trucking and warehousing are prime examples. In 1994, farm income amounted to 8 percent of all personal income in the county. The cash receipts for crops that year amounted to close to \$600 million—19 percent of the state's entire crop receipts.

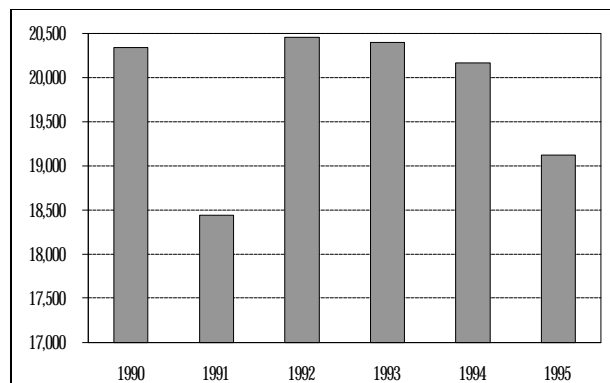
This huge work force has a tremendous output. The county consistently ranks at or near the top in the production of apples, mint, hops, apricots, sweet cherries, Bartlett pears, peaches, asparagus, and sweet corn. (In this connection, it is worth noting that Washington is the nation's top producer of apples, pears, sweet cherries, and hops.) In addition, there are substantial amounts of field crops and Yakima County also has the largest inventory of cattle and calves of any county in the state—237,000 head in 1996, 18 percent of the state's total.

The agricultural sector, in its entirety, employed 19,121 workers on average in 1995 and paid an average

wage of \$11,013. (The average wage formulation does not take part-time work into account, so, while the figure may appear low, it does not necessarily reflect the wage of a full-time worker.) The crop production industry employed most agricultural workers, 16,092, and the bulk of those (about 11,400) worked in fruit orchards, which are highly seasonal and heavily labor-intensive. Over 2,000 workers were employed in agricultural services, primarily crop preparation services, and livestock production also had a fairly large number of workers.

Figure 19 shows employment in the agricultural sector since 1990. While the 1995 figures are down from previous years, the employment level is almost entirely

**Figure 19**  
**Agricultural Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1990-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



dependent upon how well that year's crop fared and, unlike other industries, increases or decreases are not indicative of a growing or declining industry. The 1996

apple harvest was the largest on record and should positively affect employment.

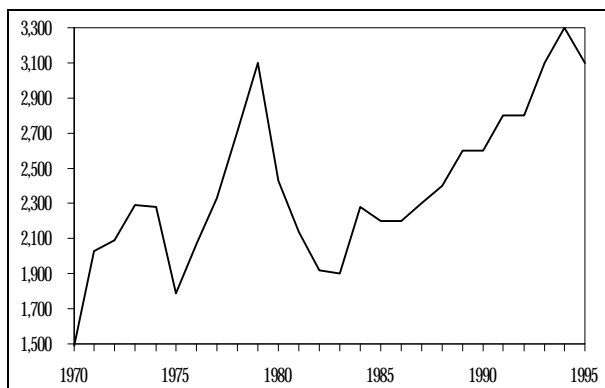
## Construction and Mining

Mining employment is minuscule in Yakima County: the handful of workers (less than 10) are included with construction in this analysis.

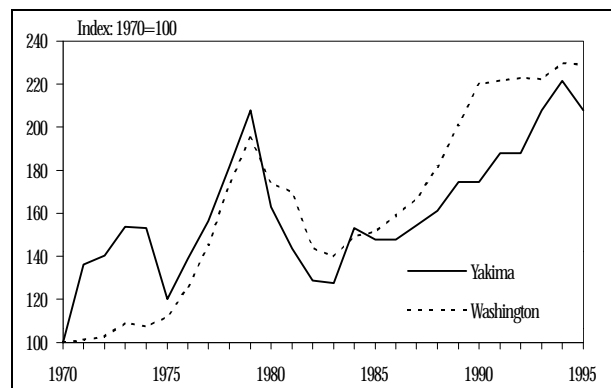
Since 1970, construction sector employment increased from 1,490 to 3,100 (+1,610). This increase of 108 percent fairly closely approximates the statewide gain in construction of 129 percent. *Figure 20* shows the number of jobs since 1970 and *Figure 21* shows the number indexed to 1970=100 for both Yakima County and Washington State. As the chart shows, the growth rates for the two have been about the same, and the county follows the state's pattern of growth and decline. The large increases and declines occurring from 1976 through 1983 are related to WPPSS construction and the national "double-dip" recessions of the early 1980s. The peak year, 1979, saw 3,100 workers: this number was not surpassed until 1994. Since employment bottomed out in 1983, growth in construction employment in the county has been relatively steady, although the latest year shows a drop-off of some 200 workers.

On average, construction workers in Yakima County were paid \$23,388 in 1995, significantly less than the average of \$29,865 that was paid statewide to construction workers. At least part of the difference is explained by the paucity of the sector's highest paid workers, those involved in heavy construction. Relatively, the county has considerably fewer heavy construction workers than does the state and this tends to bring down the average. Construction employment is divided into three categories; special trades construction, general building, and heavy construction. The largest in Yakima County is special trades, which includes carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters, etc. There were about 1,500 workers in this industry and they were paid an average wage of \$22,928 in 1995, the lowest of the three. General building, primarily concerned with residential construction, employed about 1,000 workers with an average wage of \$23,441. The smallest industry, heavy construction, employed less than 300 workers but paid an average of \$25,830.

**Figure 20**  
**Construction Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 21**  
**Construction Employment**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



# Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector in Yakima County is slightly larger in relative terms than the statewide sector. In the county, manufacturing has a 15 percent share of nonfarm jobs whereas Washington's manufacturing has a 14 percent share. The county's manufacturing employment has grown from 6,790 in 1970 to 10,600 in 1995, a 56 percent increase (see *Figure 22*). Statewide during the same period, manufacturing grew by only 39 percent, markedly less than Yakima's increase.

*Figure 23* shows manufacturing employment for the county and the state indexed to 1970=100. Growth in the county has been good since the end of the national recessions of the early 1980s with only a couple of minor down ticks during the last thirteen years. Statewide, a decline in the sector began in 1991 and continued through 1995, while in Yakima County, growth continued through 1994 and then fell a bit. Preliminary figures indicate that growth in both the county and in the state has resumed in 1996.

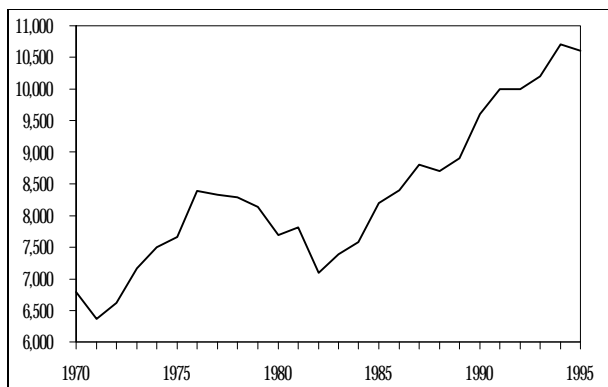
Manufacturing is a key element in any economy because, in general, these industries provide relatively well-paying jobs that often are quite stable. While Yakima County does not have the level of aerospace or high tech firms that predominate in the Puget Sound area (and generate a relatively high average wage), its manufacturing firms pay a wage substantially higher than the county's average. In 1995, the sector had an average annual wage of \$25,306.

The bulk of manufacturing employment stems from the agricultural sector, i.e., food processing. About 40 percent of the manufacturing sector is engaged in this activity, and its more than 60 firms employ close to 4,000 workers. Although employment fell off a bit in 1995, preliminary figures for 1996 suggest it is on the increase again. The largest industry is canned fruits and vegetables, followed by meat packing and frozen fruits and vegetables. The food processing industry paid an average wage of \$23,760 in 1995, somewhat lower than the average for all of manufacturing but still considerably higher than the all-sector average of \$19,208.

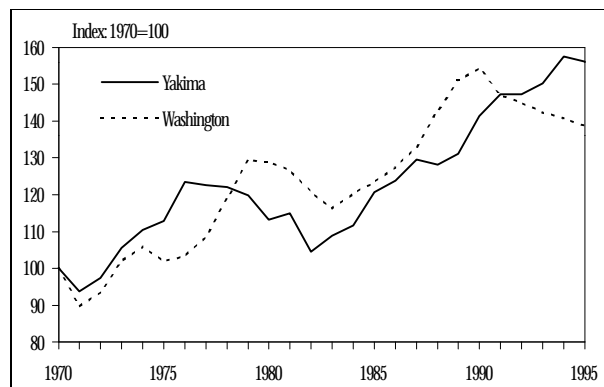
Lumber and wood products is the second largest manufacturing industry. In 1995, covered employment stood at about 1,700 workers with the largest number of workers employed at sawmills or doing millwork. There were also fair numbers of workers in logging itself and in mobile home construction. The average wage in lumber and wood products was \$26,171.

Other manufacturing industries with a number of workers were non-electrical machinery, paper and allied products, transportation equipment, and fabricated metal products. Employment ranged between 500 and 700 in 1995. Except for transportation equipment, these industries have each averaged over 3 percent annual growth for the last ten years.

**Figure 22**  
**Manufacturing Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 23**  
**Manufacturing Employment**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

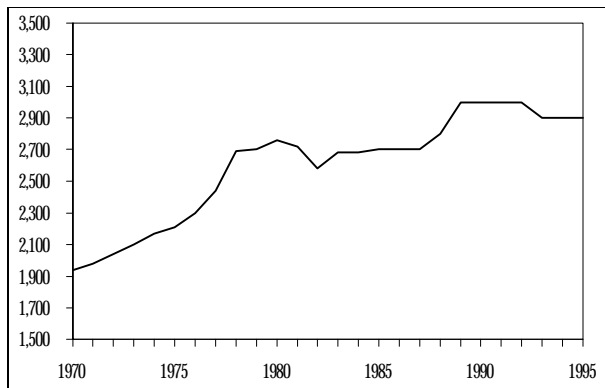


# Transportation and Public Utilities (TPU)

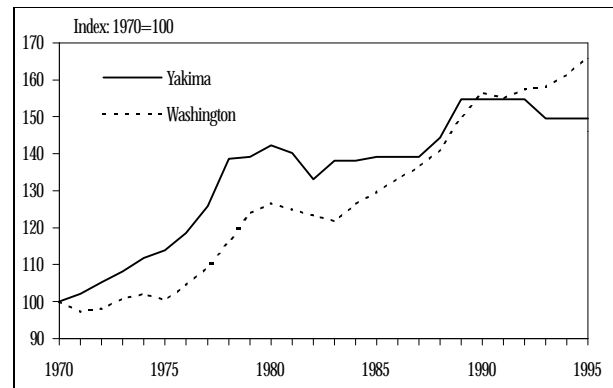
The TPU sector accounted for 4 percent of nonfarm employment in Yakima County in 1995. Although somewhat smaller than the statewide share of 5 percent, this still amounted to 2,900 jobs, mostly involved with trucking and warehousing. *Figures 24 and 25* show employment in the sector and how it has evolved since 1970. Employment growth was relatively strong through the 1970s but dipped during the national recessions of the early 1980s and then stagnated for several years. Growth resumed in 1988 only to fall victim to the 1990-91 national recession. There has been little movement in the sector since. After government, TPU is the highest paid sector in the county with an average wage in 1995 of \$26,353.

Trucking and warehousing is the largest industry in the sector, accounting for more than half (54 percent) of covered employment. This industry is a key one in the agriculturally based economy—all that farm produce must be stored and/or trucked to markets. Truckers and warehouse workers were paid an average of \$22,450. Communications was the next largest industry, in terms of employment, with almost 700 UI covered workers. On average, they were paid \$29,642 annually. Highest paid among the sector's employees were those involved in electric, gas, and sanitary services. Comprising about 11 percent of the sector's work force, they were paid an average of \$42,742 in 1995.

**Figure 24**  
**Transportation & Public Utilities Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 25**  
**Transportation & Public Utilities Employment**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



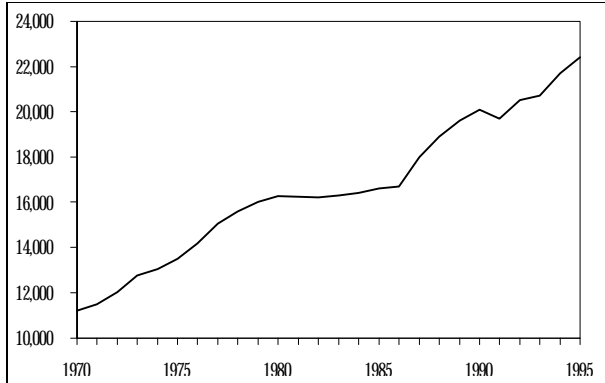
## Trade

Employment growth in Yakima's trade sector outpaced that of the state for several years in the early 1970s but has slowed since. Nevertheless, over the last quarter-century, trade added over 11,000 jobs, a doubling from the 1970 level. In 1995, there were 22,400 jobs in the sector. *Figures 26 and 27* on the next page show the numerical increase, and the growth rate compared to the state. Increases in trade employment have been relatively continuous, marred only by a flatness in the early-1980s and a brief dip during the 1990-91 national recession. Trade is the largest of the nonfarm industry sectors and comprises 31 percent of employment in the county. The

average wage for trade employees in 1995 was \$16,674. After agriculture, this was the lowest wage of all sectors. However, the trade sector, like the agricultural sector, is characterized by high levels of part-time work and the average wage is not necessarily the wage of a full-time worker.

The two main divisions in trade are wholesale and retail. In general, wholesale pays a higher wage than retail—there is less part-time work. Yakima County has a higher concentration of wholesale workers than does the state, 39 percent versus 24 percent, and this helps

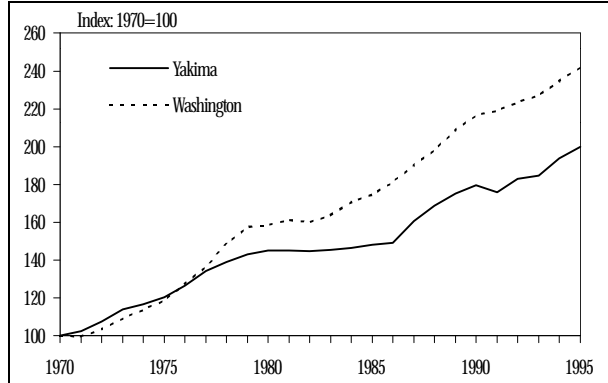
**Figure 26**  
**Trade Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



keep the overall average wage for trade from being even lower. The average in wholesale was \$20,514; in retail, \$14,246.

Employment in wholesale trade is dominated by fresh fruits and vegetables. The sale of these farm products at the wholesale level employs over 5,000 workers in the county. This amounts to 60 percent of all wholesale trade employment. The average wage in this industry was \$19,103 in 1995. Durable wholesaling averaged \$26,554.

**Figure 27**  
**Trade Employment**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



The primary reason the wage is relatively low in retail trade is the high level of employment and low average wage in eating and drinking establishments. This is the largest industry in the retail sector, encompassing restaurants, fast food establishments, taverns, etc., and employs about 4,400 workers. Very high levels of part-time work coupled with relatively low hourly wages result in an average wage of \$8,424.

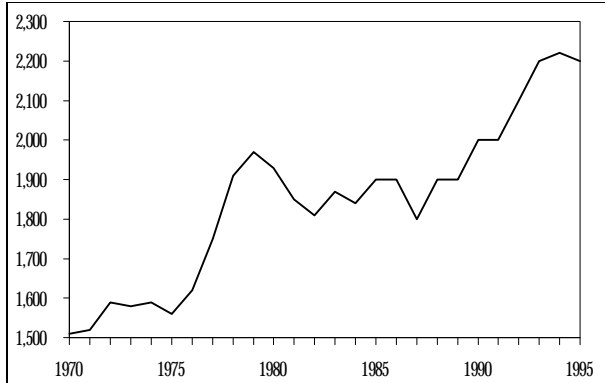
Other sizable industries in the retail sector are food stores and general merchandise stores. Each employs over 2,000 workers in Yakima County.

## Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE)

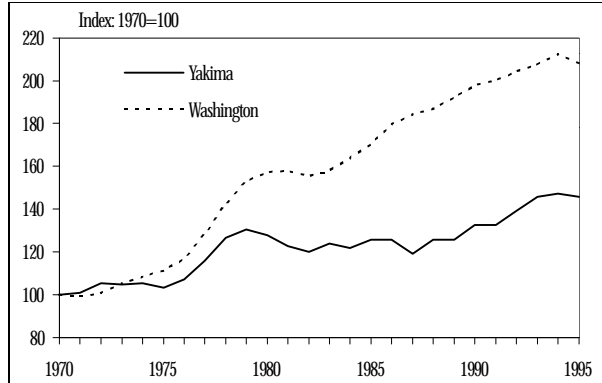
This sector includes banks, credit unions, savings and loans, insurance agents and brokers, real estate agents and brokers, apartment managers, etc. It is the smallest industry sector in the county with only 3 percent of nonfarm employment. This equates to 2,200 jobs and the number has not changed appreciably over the last quarter-century, increasing by only 46 percent. Virtually all of the growth occurred in two spurts, from 1975 to 1980 and from 1988 to 1994 (see Figure 28 on the next page). Indexing employment to 1970=100, it is apparent that statewide growth in this sector has been considerably greater than in the county (Figure 29 on the next page). The average wage in the industry, at \$24,592, however, is considerably higher than the countywide average of \$19,208.

That average wage is driven by employment in depository institutions, which is the largest industry in the sector (over 800 employees) and which paid an average of \$25,539 in 1995. Next largest, and an industry which brings down the average wage, is real estate. This is another industry characterized by part-time employment with a relatively low average wage (\$12,630). The FIRE sector's employment increase since 1988 has been most strongly influenced by gains in the real estate industry. Real estate employment tends to fluctuate with the economy: many people will go into it part time during periods of strong economic growth but then drop out when the economy flattens.

**Figure 28**  
**Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 29**  
**Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Employment**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

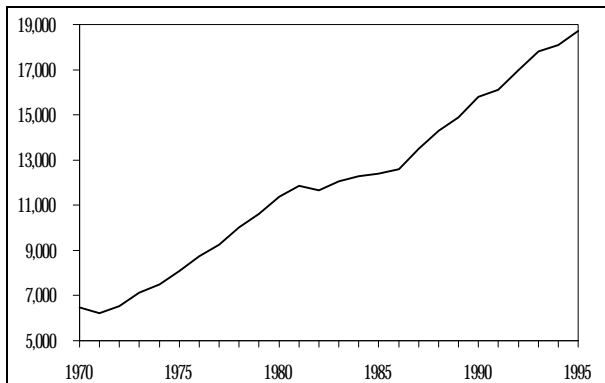


## Services

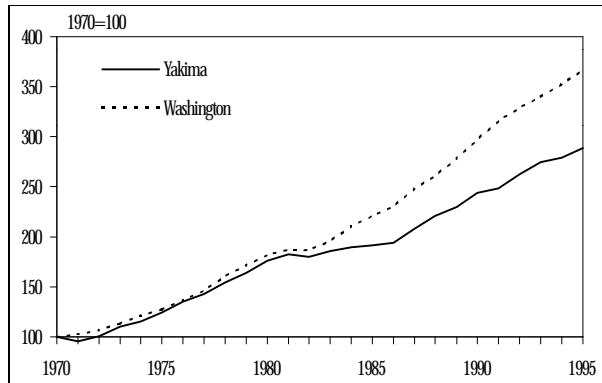
Employment in the county's services sector, like services almost everywhere, has had strong growth over the last twenty-five years. As *Figure 30* shows, its growth was almost uninterrupted for the entire period. In 1995, the sector was the second largest in the county (after trade) with a 26 percent share of nonfarm jobs, and it was easily the fastest growing sector since 1970. Going from 6,480 to 18,700, the sector experienced a total increase of 189 percent, which is an annualized growth rate of 4.3 percent. *Figure 31* compares Yakima County to Washington, and while the state's growth rate in services is higher, that does not detract from the county's strong performance.

The health services industry is the largest employer and contributed most to the area's growth, but social services and business services also played a part. Health services grew strongly until 1993 but has been almost flat since then. The efforts to contain costs in the industry since the national—and local—dialogue over health care has resulted in hiring slow downs in the industry. Nevertheless, in 1995, health services (which includes hospitals, the offices of physicians and dentists, nursing care facilities, etc.) employed over 6,800 covered workers. The social services industry has grown significantly over the last few years, to the point where it employed almost 2,400 workers in 1995. The annualized growth rate over the last ten years has been 10.7 percent, an

**Figure 30**  
**Services Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 31**  
**Services Employment**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



unusually high rate. The primary drivers of the growth have been individual and family services, children's day care centers, and residential care services. Each of these industries employs over 500 workers. Business services, with about 1,500 workers is the third largest services industry in Yakima County. Within it, the largest employers are help supply services, i.e., temporary help agencies, building maintenance firms, and detective and armored car services. Surprisingly, the next largest industry is membership organizations with almost 1,500 employees. Normally, this category consists of paid workers of organizations like unions, churches, fraternal organizations, etc. In Yakima County, however, member-

ship organizations also include paid workers of Native American tribal organizations.

The average wage in the services sector is fairly close to the average of all industries: at \$18,948 in 1995, it was \$260 less. While health services paid a healthy \$24,748, the sector average was pulled down by lower wages in business and social services. Business services had an especially low wage when compared to the same industry statewide: \$12,773 versus \$34,653. This is explained by the absence in the county of a sizable number of computer software workers, whereas statewide, there are firms like Microsoft whose large work force is paid very high wages.

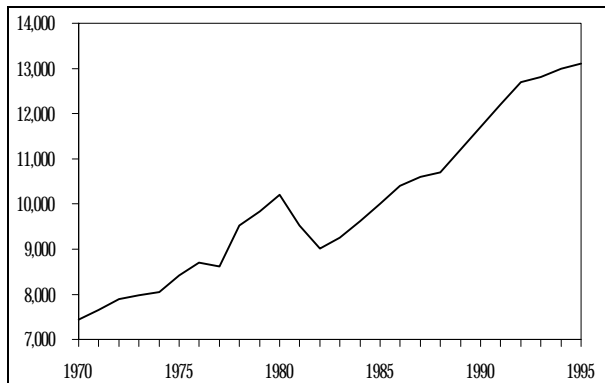
## Government

The size of government (at all levels) in Yakima County, based on the number of employees, is proportionally very close to the statewide size. Eighteen percent of the county's nonfarm work force is in government while statewide the share is 19 percent. Aside from a two-year retrenchment in 1981-82 during the severe national "double-dip" recessions, growth has been constant and moderate. Overall, government realized an annualized growth rate of 2.3 percent, less than trade, services, construction, and the overall county growth rate. Its share size has fallen gradually over time; from a high of 21 percent in 1971 to its current 18 percent. Even so, government is a large component of the employment base. It is the third largest industry sector and employed 13,100 workers in 1995. *Figures 32 and 33* show the employment levels of government since 1970.

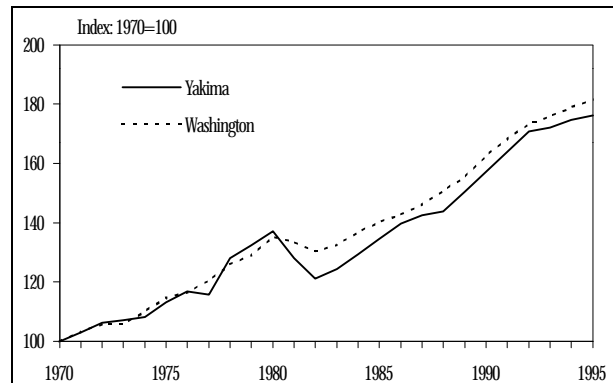
Even though there is almost proportional parity in the size of government between the county and the state, employment among the three levels is distributed quite differently. Yakima County has fewer federal and state government employees but many more at the local level. Seventy percent of Yakima's public employment is at the local level whereas throughout Washington the average is 58 percent.

Of federal employment, the bulk of it is with the Postal Service. There are also a number of federal workers associated with the irrigation systems of the farming regions, with conservation programs, and with national defense. All together, the federal government employs about 1,400 workers. State government's largest employer is the community college in Yakima. There are also relatively large numbers of workers involved

**Figure 32**  
**Government Employment**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 33**  
**Government Employment**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1995**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*





with providing residential care, job training and employment services, and administering social and manpower programs. In all, state government employs almost 2,500 workers.

Local government, as mentioned, is the largest component of government in the county with about 9,000 employees. As with local governments in just about all counties, the bulk of employment is dedicated to K-12 education. In Yakima County, about two-thirds of local

government employment (about 6,000 workers) is in the elementary and secondary schools systems. Another 25 percent is involved in the executive and legislative functions of local government and the remainder are scattered among a number of different functions.

The overall average wage for government employees was \$27,880 in 1995. The federal government averaged \$33,709; state government, \$30,365; and local government, \$26,268.

## Industry Projections

Forecasts of industry employment for the county and the state are shown in *Figure 34*. These forecasts are made by Employment Security analysts and are based on historic trends in Yakima County and Washington State. The projections are modified according to economic outlook and anticipated developments such as plant openings and closures, energy availability, foreign and domestic trade volume, and government resource policies.

The five and ten year forecasts show that overall growth will be the same for both the county and the state. Washington's will be a slight bit higher for the 1996-2001

period, mainly because of the anticipated surge in aerospace employment over the next five years. The county's largest sectors, services, trade, and government will have the fastest growth.

From 1996 to 2001 the annualized growth rate in Yakima County will 2.5 percent and from 2001 to 2006 is expected to be 1.5 percent. The historical rate for the county (1970-95) is 2.8 percent, so this is a slight lessening of growth during the first five-year period, followed by a greater drop in the next five years, paralleling both the national and state long-term forecasts.

**Figure 34**  
**Annual Average Nonagricultural Employment Projections, 1996, 2001, and 2006**  
**Yakima County and Washington State**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

	Yakima County					Washington	
	1996	2001	2006	% Change		% Change	
				1996-2001	2001-2006	1996-2001	2001-2006
Total Nonfarm Employment	74,900	84,600	91,200	13.0%	7.8%	13.2%	7.8%
Manufacturing	10,500	11,100	11,500	5.7%	3.6%	7.3%	2.6%
Construction & Mining	3,100	3,300	3,500	6.5%	6.1%	8.2%	5.3%
Transportation & Utilities	3,000	3,300	3,400	10.0%	3.0%	8.2%	2.2%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	23,100	25,900	27,900	12.1%	7.7%	12.9%	7.8%
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	2,200	2,400	2,500	9.1%	4.2%	9.1%	5.0%
Services	19,400	23,600	26,400	21.6%	11.9%	21.9%	13.1%
Government	13,600	15,000	16,000	10.3%	6.7%	9.5%	5.8%

# OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

An informative way to look at the county's employment mix is by occupational rather than industrial divisions. From the occupational perspective, the prominence of the agricultural industry in Yakima County is quite striking. In 1995, 4.3 percent of the workers in Washington had occupations in agriculture, forestry or fishery fields. For Yakima County, the proportion was 20.7 percent. This means that over one in five workers was involved in agriculture and forestry for Yakima, as opposed to less than one in twenty for the state as a whole.

The prominence of agricultural work explains the strong blue-collar presence in Yakima and its community: 46.1 percent of the county works in blue-collar jobs, versus the state average of 28.1 percent. With growth of just 16 percent, compared to a projected 36 percent growth in white-collar jobs, blue-collar workers are expected to comprise 42.3 percent of the Yakima work force in 2005. This will leave 57.7 percent of the Yakima work force in white-collar jobs, still well below the projected state average of 73.8 percent.

The drop in the proportion of blue-collar workers will come largely at the expense of the agriculture, forestry, and fishery segment which expects a meager 5 percent growth in jobs. The county as a whole expects growth of 28,764 jobs, or 27 percent of the current number of jobs. The big gainers are expected to be the Professional, Paraprofessional, and Technical occupations (gaining 7,059 or 43 percent) and the Services occupations (gaining 5,602 or 41 percent). *Figure 35*, below, shows the number of jobs by occupational grouping for 1995, projections for the year 2005, and the percentage each has of the total for both the county and the state.

*Figure 36*, on the next page, is a listing of specific occupations in Yakima County, along with the respective minimum, maximum, and mean pay, either hourly or monthly. The information is derived from surveys conducted by the Employment Security Department (the surveys took place in 1994 and 1995). The information can provide a useful tool for comparing wages from different types of occupations.

**Figure 35**  
**Occupational Employment and Projections**  
**Yakima County and Washington State, 1995 and 2005**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

	Yakima County						Washington	
	1995		2005		% Chg	Jobs	1995	2005
Total	107,073	100.0%	135,837	100.0%	26.9%	28,764	100.0%	100.0%
Managerial & Administrative	5,848	5.5%	7,742	5.7%	32.4%	1,894	7.1%	7.3%
Professional, Paraprof., & Tech	16,450	15.4%	23,509	17.3%	42.9%	7,059	21.6%	23.2%
Marketing & Sales	9,428	8.8%	12,224	9.0%	29.7%	2,796	11.4%	11.4%
Clerical & Admin. Support	12,377	11.6%	15,726	11.6%	27.1%	3,349	16.0%	15.2%
Services	13,572	12.7%	19,174	14.1%	41.3%	5,602	15.7%	16.8%
Ag., Forestry, Fishing & Related	22,193	20.7%	23,269	17.1%	4.8%	1,076	4.3%	3.7%
Prec. Production, Craft, & Repairs	10,220	9.5%	13,448	9.9%	31.6%	3,228	11.6%	10.9%
Operators, Fabricators, & Laborers	16,985	15.9%	20,745	15.3%	22.1%	3,760	12.2%	11.5%
White-Collar	57,675	53.9%	78,375	57.7%	35.9%	20,700	71.9%	73.8%
Blue-Collar	49,398	46.1%	57,462	42.3%	16.3%	8,064	28.1%	26.2%

**Figure 36**  
**Occupational Wages, Yakima County, 1995**  
**(\*M/H Denotes Monthly/Hourly Pay Rate)**  
**Source: Employment Security Department**

TITLE	*	MEAN	MIN	MAX	TITLE	*	MEAN	MIN	MAX
Accountant	M	\$2,781.00	\$1,390.00	\$4,555.00	Lawyer	M	\$3,109.00	\$2,666.00	\$4,100.00
Accounting Clerk I	M	\$1,483.00	\$1,003.00	\$2,089.00	Machine Oper, Metal Fabrication	H	\$7.42	\$6.50	\$9.25
Accounting Clerk II	M	\$1,672.00	\$1,283.00	\$2,394.00	Machinist	H	\$13.06	\$8.75	\$16.83
Accounting Clerk III	M	\$1,976.00	\$1,477.00	\$2,508.00	Maid, Hotel/Motel	H	\$5.22	\$5.00	\$7.00
Administrative Clerk	M	\$1,780.00	\$1,147.00	\$2,508.00	Maintenance Mechanic	H	\$12.84	\$6.50	\$19.85
Appliance Repairer	H	\$11.63	\$6.00	\$32.91	Maintenance Repairer, Gen Utility	H	\$11.33	\$5.15	\$19.99
Assembler I, General	H	\$6.26	\$5.00	\$9.50	Manager, Branch/Local	M	\$3,219.00	\$1,304.00	\$8,657.00
Assembler II, General	H	\$10.35	\$7.75	\$13.12	Manager, Office (Administrative)	M	\$2,444.00	\$1,217.00	\$4,887.00
Auto Detailer	H	\$6.58	\$6.00	\$12.50	Manager, Plant (Manufacturing)	M	\$3,179.00	\$2,129.00	\$4,519.00
Baker	H	\$13.69	\$9.52	\$14.30	Manager, Restaurant	M	\$1,602.00	\$956.00	\$3,500.00
Bartender	H	\$7.01	\$5.00	\$10.00	Manager, Retail Store	M	\$2,518.00	\$1,500.00	\$3,824.00
Bookkeeper, Full Charge	M	\$2,024.00	\$912.00	\$3,928.00	Manager, Service, Auto	M	\$2,212.00	\$999.00	\$4,310.00
Buyer/Purchasing Agent	M	\$2,287.00	\$1,415.00	\$3,731.00	Mechanic, Motor Vehicle	H	\$11.58	\$6.50	\$16.25
Cabinetmaker	H	\$15.29	\$14.76	\$17.00	Medical Technologist	M	\$3,029.00	\$2,751.00	\$3,558.00
Carpenter, Construction	H	\$15.90	\$11.00	\$22.00	Medical Transcriber	M	\$1,755.00	\$1,217.00	\$2,240.00
Carpenter, Maintenance	H	\$11.25	\$7.50	\$16.60	Messenger/Mail Clerk	M	\$1,338.00	\$1,246.00	\$1,516.00
Cashier	H	\$6.11	\$4.90	\$12.83	Nurse Aide/Orderly	H	\$7.53	\$5.75	\$11.89
Chef	M	\$1,686.00	\$1,239.00	\$3,083.00	Nurse, L.P.N.	H	\$13.25	\$9.00	\$16.39
Clean-Up Worker	H	\$6.96	\$5.00	\$14.30	Nurse, Registered	M	\$3,351.00	\$1,912.00	\$4,614.00
Computer Operator	M	\$1,757.00	\$1,130.00	\$2,499.00	Order Clerk	M	\$1,264.00	\$1,232.00	\$1,590.00
Computer Programmer	M	\$2,404.00	\$1,580.00	\$2,901.00	Packer, Fruit	H	\$6.72	\$5.00	\$7.80
Computer Programmer, Sr	M	\$3,177.00	\$2,372.00	\$4,302.00	Painter, Maintenance	H	\$10.89	\$9.91	\$12.67
Cook, Dinner	H	\$8.21	\$5.50	\$12.61	Paralegal Assistant	M	\$2,226.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,560.00
Cook, Short Order	H	\$6.44	\$4.95	\$8.50	Payroll Clerk	M	\$1,835.00	\$956.00	\$3,587.00
Customer Service Clerk	H	\$8.05	\$6.00	\$12.00	Pharmacist Assistant	H	\$10.07	\$5.90	\$12.71
Data Entry Operator I	M	\$1,434.00	\$1,217.00	\$1,660.00	Pharmacist, Registered	M	\$4,390.00	\$3,886.00	\$4,627.00
Data Entry Operator II	M	\$1,531.00	\$1,217.00	\$2,237.00	Plumber, Pipefitter	H	\$17.14	\$10.00	\$24.50
Data Entry Operator III	M	\$1,874.00	\$1,350.00	\$2,372.00	Programmer/Analyst	M	\$3,021.00	\$2,598.00	\$4,100.00
Day Care Worker	H	\$5.91	\$5.25	\$13.24	Purchasing Clerk	M	\$1,882.00	\$1,373.00	\$2,508.00
Delivery Driver/Rte Worker	H	\$8.30	\$5.00	\$11.38	Receptionist	M	\$1,330.00	\$852.00	\$2,173.00
Dental Assistant	H	\$9.60	\$6.00	\$12.00	Sales Clerk	H	\$6.54	\$4.90	\$12.83
Desk Clerk	H	\$6.45	\$5.25	\$7.80	Sales Representative/Sales Agent	M	\$2,896.00	\$900.00	\$6,047.00
Dining Room Attendant	H	\$5.06	\$4.90	\$5.88	Salesperson, Auto Parts	H	\$10.25	\$7.00	\$17.26
Dispatcher, Motor Transpor	H	\$12.18	\$5.50	\$18.75	Salesperson, Parts, Other	H	\$9.89	\$6.00	\$15.30
Drafter (All Classes)	M	\$1,749.00	\$1,043.00	\$2,694.00	Salesperson, Specialty	H	\$9.77	\$5.00	\$26.44
Drafter Designer	M	\$2,668.00	\$1,695.00	\$3,500.00	Secretary I	M	\$1,755.00	\$876.00	\$2,301.00
Electrician, Maintenance	H	\$16.73	\$8.50	\$22.23	Secretary II	M	\$1,927.00	\$1,516.00	\$2,491.00
Electronics Tech, All Classes	M	\$1,930.00	\$1,441.00	\$2,579.00	Secretary III	M	\$2,044.00	\$1,599.00	\$2,607.00
Engineer	M	\$4,333.00	\$2,129.00	\$8,334.00	Secretary, Executive	M	\$2,438.00	\$1,695.00	\$3,302.00
Engineering Technician, All	M	\$2,344.00	\$1,651.00	\$3,850.00	Secretary, Legal	M	\$2,063.00	\$1,700.00	\$2,565.00
Estimator	M	\$3,394.00	\$1,738.00	\$5,014.00	Service Representative	H	\$11.47	\$7.51	\$18.13
Fast-Food Worker	H	\$5.34	\$4.90	\$6.25	Sheet Metal Worker	H	\$9.06	\$6.50	\$11.00
Field Contractor	M	\$2,867.00	\$1,390.00	\$5,348.00	Shipper/Receiver	H	\$7.42	\$5.00	\$15.63
File Clerk	M	\$1,399.00	\$956.00	\$1,590.00	Sorter/Grader, Agric Produce	H	\$5.35	\$4.90	\$8.50
Food Service Worker	H	\$7.78	\$5.00	\$10.32	Stock Clerk/Storekeeper	H	\$7.24	\$5.05	\$12.33
Forklift Operator	H	\$8.77	\$5.75	\$13.06	Supervisor, Assembly	M	\$2,720.00	\$1,712.00	\$4,592.00
Gardener/Groundskeeper	H	\$8.19	\$5.50	\$12.83	Supervisor, Clerical	M	\$2,790.00	\$1,995.00	\$3,759.00
Gen Office Worker, 1/Office	M	\$1,390.00	\$999.00	\$1,738.00	Supervisor, Food Service	M	\$2,030.00	\$1,453.00	\$3,631.00
General Office Clerk I	M	\$1,306.00	\$956.00	\$1,940.00	Supervisor, Maintenance	M	\$2,995.00	\$1,738.00	\$4,807.00
General Office Clerk II	M	\$1,469.00	\$912.00	\$2,261.00	Supervisor, Other First Line	M	\$3,033.00	\$1,441.00	\$6,684.00
General Office Clerk III	M	\$1,724.00	\$1,364.00	\$2,348.00	Supervisor, Warehouse	M	\$2,793.00	\$1,477.00	\$4,166.00
Grocery Checker	H	\$10.63	\$5.15	\$12.33	Switchboard Oper-Receptionist	M	\$1,446.00	\$978.00	\$1,924.00
Guard/Gatekeeper	H	\$7.52	\$6.50	\$14.43	Systems Analyst	M	\$3,134.00	\$2,868.00	\$3,260.00
Heavy Equipment Operator	H	\$16.49	\$10.50	\$22.41	Truck Driver, Heavy Or Tr-Trailer	H	\$9.49	\$5.75	\$19.99
Host, Hostess (Restaurant)	H	\$6.04	\$4.90	\$8.00	Truck Driver, Light	H	\$8.00	\$5.00	\$13.88
Housekeeper, Hosp, Nrsng Home	H	\$7.76	\$5.35	\$10.00	Waiter/Waitress	H	\$5.34	\$4.90	\$6.50
Inspector, Quality Control	H	\$10.91	\$5.90	\$21.76	Warehouse Worker	H	\$8.04	\$5.47	\$18.73
Janitor, Porter, Cleaner	H	\$7.13	\$4.90	\$12.33	Welder	H	\$11.16	\$6.85	\$13.56
Kitchen Helper	H	\$5.87	\$4.90	\$8.50	Word Processing Operator I	M	\$1,708.00	\$1,260.00	\$2,405.00
Laborer, Construction	H	\$12.73	\$7.00	\$19.14	Word Processing Operator II	M	\$1,708.00	\$1,260.00	\$2,405.00
Laborer, Material Handling	H	\$7.53	\$5.75	\$12.64	Worker, Cannery	H	\$10.49	\$6.85	\$13.56
Laundry Worker	H	\$6.92	\$5.25	\$13.88					

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# PERSONAL INCOME

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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 1994 dollars.

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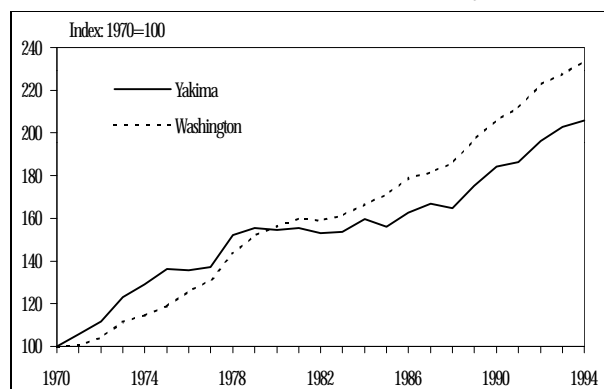
## Total Personal Income

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Personal income is generally seen as a key 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 1994, total personal income in Yakima County was \$3.7 billion, up 1.5 percent from the year before in real dollars. *Figure 37* shows the change in total personal income (indexed to 1970=100) in the county and the state from 1970 to 1994. In general, the level of personal income fluctuates with changes in the economy: there was moderate growth in Yakima County during the 1970s, followed by slow to no growth throughout most of the 1980s, and then another upswing during the 1990s. For the entire period, the county's personal income increased by 106 percent; statewide, the increase was 134 percent. The county's

**Figure 37**  
**Personal Income**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1994**  
**Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis**



annualized rate of growth was 3.1 percent over the last 24 years but since the last upswing began in 1988, the average has been 3.8 percent.

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## Per Capita Income

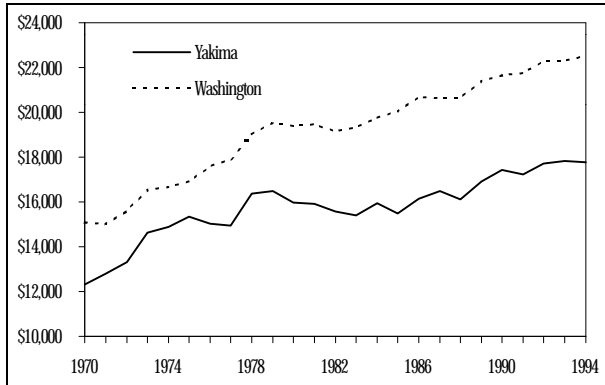
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The total amount of income in an area is only a sensible concept if there is some relationship to the number of people in an area. Per capita personal income (PCPI) captures that. By dividing total personal income by the population, one arrives at a figure that can be used as a common denominator between different time periods or different areas.

*Figure 38* on the next page shows PCPI for Yakima County and Washington State over time. As is apparent, the county trails the state, and the gap has widened

appreciably since the early 1980s. Recovery from the double-dip recessions of the 1980s was rapid and strong for the economy of the state as a whole, which is driven largely by the aerospace and high tech firms of Puget Sound. Eastern Washington did not fully participate in that recovery and for much of the period since has struggled to maintain its level of economic growth. In 1994, per capita income for Yakima County was \$17,760, lagging the state's by almost \$4,800.

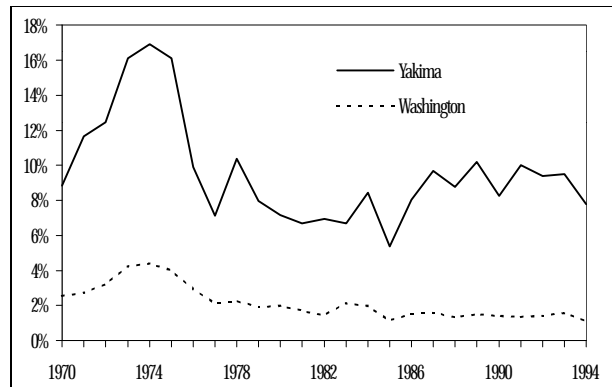
**Figure 38**  
**Per Capita Income**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*



## Farm Income

In 1994, farm income totaled \$287 million in Yakima County, amounting to 8 percent of all personal income in the county. The share has been as high as 17 percent (1974) when the dollar amount was \$391 million. Income derived from farming is a substantial part of the county's economy, to a much greater degree than most other counties and to the state as a whole. *Figure 39* shows the county's farm income as a percentage of personal income and compares that share to the statewide percentage. Clearly, farm income is a crucial element within Yakima's economy. Statewide in 1994, farm income only amounted to 1 percent of personal income. In fact, Yakima's farm income amounted to 21 percent of the entire state's farm income.

**Figure 39**  
**Farm Income as a % of Personal Income**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*



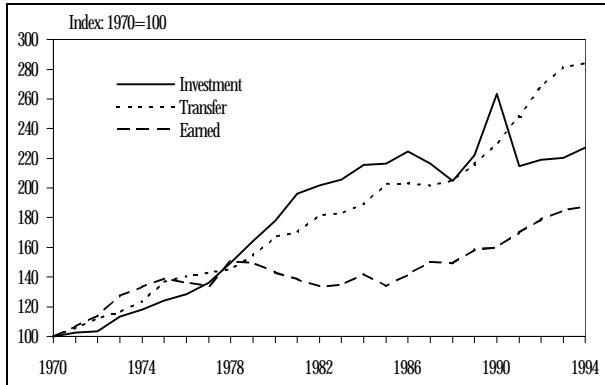
## Components of Personal Income

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 maintenance, unemployment insurance, and retirement payments; investment income consists of interest, divi-

dends, and rent. *Figure 40* on the next page shows how these components of personal income have changed over time in Yakima County and *Figure 41* shows their share sizes in 1994.

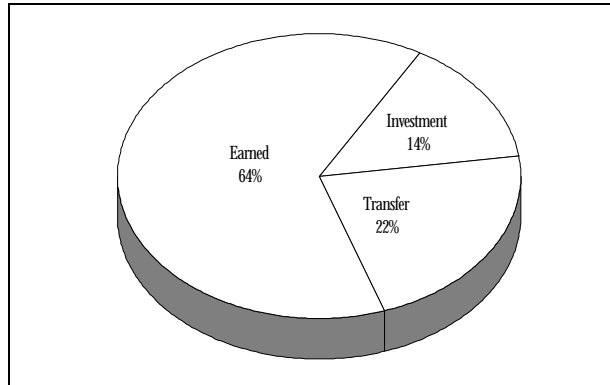
Earned income is still the bulk of personal income, but it has rapidly lost share size as the sources of income have increasingly turned to transfer payments and investment income. In 1970, earnings amounted to 71 percent

**Figure 40**  
**Changes in Personal Income Components**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*



of personal income; the most recent year, 1994, had the share size at 64 percent. The big gainer was transfer payments, whose share size went from 16 to 22 percent. Investment income remained about the same, going only

**Figure 41**  
**Components of Personal Income**  
**Yakima County, 1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*

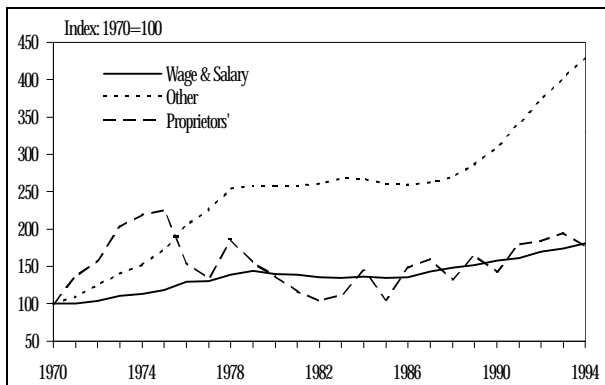


from 13 to 14 percent. In dollar amounts, 1994 saw earned income at \$2.4 billion, transfer payments at \$824 million, and investment income at \$545 million.

## 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

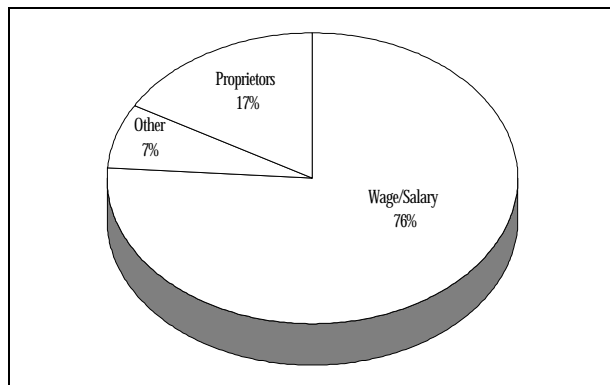
**Figure 42**  
**Changes in Earned Income Components**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*



of employer payments into employee pension and health care plans.

As *Figure 42* shows, "other" labor income has been the fastest growing element of earned income even though, as *Figure 43* shows, it is the smallest element. Employers (and employees) often find it advantageous in terms of taxes to substitute benefits for direct pay increases—these substitutions show up as other labor income. In 1994, other labor income amounted to \$177 million, an increase of 330 percent from its 1970 level.

**Figure 43**  
**Components of Earned Income**  
**Yakima County, 1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*



Proprietors' income, in dollars, came to \$400 million in 1994, giving it a 17 percent share of earned income. Over the course of the last 24 years, it increased by 76 percent, but as the chart shows, it tends to fluctuate widely. The great bulk of proprietors' income derives from the farm, and the level of farm income is dependent on how well the crop does and on what the going market rate is. The line denoting proprietors' income is very similar to the line showing farm income as a percentage of personal income in *Figure 39*.

Wage and salary income makes up 76 percent of earned income but has grown by only 76 percent since 1970. That is an annualized average of 2.5 percent, which contributes to the poor growth of the annual average wage discussed earlier. In 1994, wage and salary income amounted to \$1.8 billion. The slow growth of real wage and salary income is not unique to Yakima County: over the same period, growth of state (104 percent) and national (63 percent) wage and salary income has also been relatively slow in real terms.

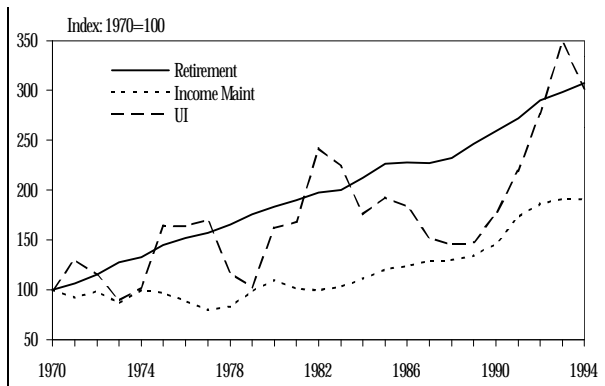
## Transfer Payments

Transfer payments are normally payments from the government to an individual for which no service is rendered. Growth in this type of income, when compared to any other type of income growth, has been phenomenal. In Yakima County, since 1970, the growth was 184 percent; for Washington, 220 percent; and for the nation, 212 percent. In Yakima County, more than one out of every five dollars of income is in the form of a transfer payment. *Figures 44 and 45* show the growth rates of its various components and the size of those components in 1994.

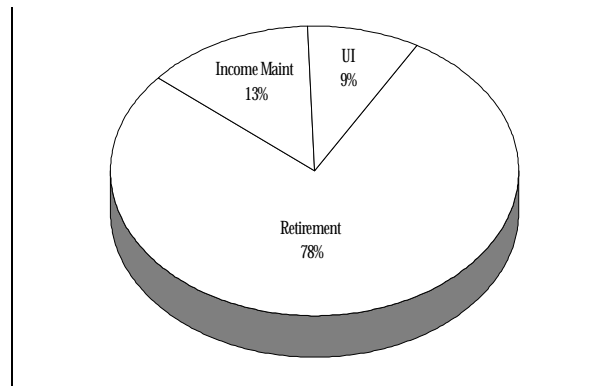
coming a larger and larger share of the total. Retirement and related payments have increased by 208 percent since 1970, totaling \$641 million in 1994. The smallest element of transfer payments is unemployment insurance payments, which totaled \$73 million dollars in 1994. As the chart shows, the level of UI payments fluctuates dramatically. They are directly related to the unemployment rate which fluctuates with contractions and expansions of the economy. The last component of transfer payments is called income maintenance, what is generally referred to as welfare. It includes food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, SSI payments, and other, smaller programs. Income maintenance has been the slowest growing of transfer payments' three elements with a 91 percent growth rate since 1970. Its dollar value was \$109 million in 1994.

As mentioned earlier, there are three categories of payments. The largest is retirement and related, which includes military pensions, civilian government pension plans, social security payments, and medical payments (i.e., primarily Medicare). Medical payments are be-

**Figure 44**  
**Changes in Transfer Payment Components**  
**Yakima County, 1970-1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*



**Figure 45**  
**Components of Transfer Payments**  
**Yakima County, 1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*

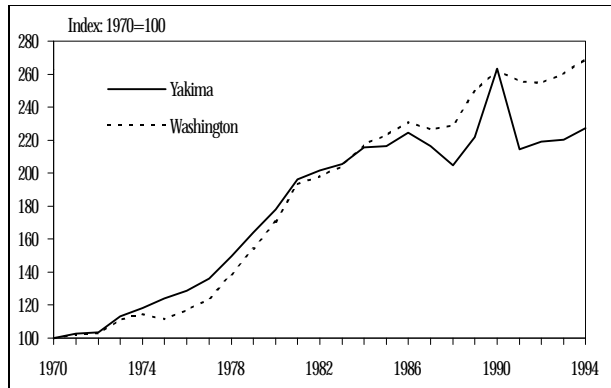


# Investment Income

The final portion of personal income is investments, i.e., the income people derive from interest, dividends, and rent. *Figure 46* indexes the amount to 1970=100 and compares the county with the state. Until 1983, the county tracked very closely with the state, but then lost ground as overall statewide prosperity increased during the 1980s while portions of the eastern side of the Cascades were almost inert. The willingness (or ability) to invest in income generating properties or instruments hinges upon the dynamism of the economic climate.

In 1994, investment income was \$545 million, or 14 percent of personal income. It grew 127 percent since 1970, averaging 3.5 percent growth annually. Since 1984, when Washington's growth rate surpassed the county's, the growth rate in Yakima County averaged less than one percent per year.

**Figure 46**  
**Investment Income**  
**Yakima County and Washington, 1970-1994**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*





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# JOB TRAINING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## Job Training

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**Job Service Centers.** The *Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)* of 1982 established programs to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force. Of note is the emphasis placed on economically disadvantaged individuals and others who face serious barriers to employment.

Many JTPA contracts are administered through the *Yakima and Sunnyside Job Service Centers (JSCs)*. The Yakima JSC is responsible for the Upper Valley and the Sunnyside JSC handles the Lower Valley.

The Yakima JSC administers the *Job Opportunities Basic Skills (JOBS)* program in cooperation with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The program's goal is to make those on public assistance self-sufficient through employment. Services include job planning and counseling, case management, child care assistance, educational and vocational training, and job placement. Additionally, two *Family Independence Program (FIP)* Offices are located in Wapato and Toppenish.

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 Sunnyside and Yakima JSCs both administer this program.

*Unemployment Insurance*, administered by all JSCs, provides temporary financial assistance to eligible unemployed individuals who are able, available, and actively seeking work, or who are in approved training programs.

The *Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act (EDWAAA)* is a program designed to assist clients laid-off because of either plant closures or plant restructuring and technology improvements. Counseling, training, and job search strategies and workshops are made available to dislocated workers.

The Yakima JSC administers Veterans Programs, namely the *Local Veterans Employment Representative*

(*LVER*) program and the *Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP)*. The gist of the programs is to provide counseling, career search skills, and job placement assistance.

The JSCs administer *Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker* programs which provide assistance to agricultural workers. The JSC also operates two satellite facilities; one in Cwicke and one in Wapato. The Sunnyside JSC runs outstation facilities in Grandview and Zillah during the agricultural season (April through October).

Additional JTPA programs are administered through the Yakima County Department of Employment and Training, which oversees Service Delivery Area IX (also known as the Tri-Valley Consortium).

**Educational/Training Institutions.** Formal job training and education are provided through a number of institutions in the area.

*Heritage College* in Toppenish, the county's only four-year college, is a private institution whose major fields of concentration are teacher education, business administration, and social sciences. Nearby Ellensburg (36 miles from Yakima City) is the site of Central Washington University.

The *Yakima Valley College* in Yakima City (with satellite facilities and an agricultural training center located in Sunnyside) is part of the state community college system. It offers vocational, academic, and basic skill courses.

*City University and Trend College*—both private, accredited vocational institutions—are also in Yakima City.

Grandview houses *Yakima Lower Valley College*, a small non-accredited institution with a practical nurse program.

The *Perry Technical Institute* in Yakima City has the county's one state-approved, non-college degree program. In cooperation with Central Washington University, it offers extension programs in engineering, robotics, and other technology.

# Economic Development

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**Development Organizations.** The *Yakima County Development Association* is an Economic Development Council. Industrial recruitment, business retention, and expansion are the focus of Yakima County Development Association. The Association is involved in activities that will:

- Assist Yakima County businesses with their expansion plans;
- Encourage existing businesses to remain in Yakima County;
- Support the creation of new businesses in Yakima County;
- Foster economic linkages between businesses within the county and throughout Washington State;
- Market Yakima County to out-of-state companies; and
- Build a continuing perception of Yakima County as an excellent place to do business.

One call to the Yakima County Development Association offices connects a business owner or manager with all the assistance and information that is available on:

- Business finance resources;
- Industrial revenue bonds;
- Targeted jobs tax credits;
- Manufacturing sales and use tax deferral/exemption;
- Quality assurance programs and awards;
- Process improvement assistance;
- Permit requirements;
- Succession planning;
- Relocation; and
- Jobs skills training and education.

The *Kittitas-Yakima Resource Conservation and Economic Development District (Ki-Yak)* serves both Kittitas and Yakima counties. It is an independent, non-profit, nonpartisan group whose primary concerns are natural resource conservation, human resource development, and economic development. Its mandate is to:

- Implement the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965;
- Develop and periodically update an Overall Economic Development Plan for the district;
- Develop and sponsor programs to aid the long-range economic growth of the district;
- To assist localities with high unemployment with plans and programs dealing with public works and economic development; and

- To initiate economic planning and technical assistance necessary to further the public welfare.

More specifically, Ki-Yak will develop programs or identify existing programs designed to:

- Reduce regional poverty;
- Help communities and businesses respond efficiently to shifts in national and international patterns; and
- Capture economies of scale in the provision of governmental services by cooperating on a multi-county level.

**Chambers of Commerce.** Chambers of Commerce are generally comprised of business owners and other interested individuals who work together to further the business interests of their communities. Yakima County has a number of these organizations, including ones in Yakima, Toppenish, Grandview, Sunnyside, Granger, Selah, and Zillah.

**Infrastructure.** Some other elements conducive to economic development in the area include the Sun Dome, a multi-purpose arena which is available for, among other things, agricultural and business-related exhibitions and shows.

There are three FAA approved airports as well as three private airfields. The largest is *Yakima Air Terminal*, the only one which serves air carriers. It has a 7,603 foot asphalt runway. The Yakima airport has recently qualified as a port of entry (the first in central Washington) and is applying to be accepted as a foreign trade zone. The goal is for the airport to become an international trans-shipment hub connected to Puget Sound's international and domestic transportation network.

The *Union Pacific* and *Washington Central Railroads* both operate in Yakima County, handling a variety of cargoes and commodities. Together, they constitute a major rail system for shipping agricultural products.

*Ports* on the Columbia River are found in adjoining Benton County, giving importers and exporters access to the Pacific Ocean.

One of the most important infrastructure items in the area is, of course, Yakima County's irrigation system. The extensive system of dams and canals is the source of the county's agricultural well-being.

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# SUMMARY

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The prosperity of Yakima County stems from agriculture. As a producer of food for the nation and the world, it is a premiere site, and the future of the county's fortunes will undoubtedly be intertwined with the farmer's. Growth in other sectors, particularly manufacturing, is desirable, though, to counter-balance the seasonality and lower wages associated with agriculture. Within manufacturing, value-added processing, stemming from agricultural products, will continue to grow and fill both major and niche markets and enhance the local economy. Yakima County has an excellent infrastructure to enhance and support growth—airports, a good rail system, a good highway system, and water access to the Pacific Ocean through ports on the Columbia River in Benton County. These advantages make the county competitive with other areas vying to attract growth and development.

Nonagricultural wage and salary employment is growing at a good pace. In fact, it increased by 98 percent during the period 1970-95 while the resident population grew 41 percent. The annualized employment growth rate was 2.8 percent over that period. Since the end of the 1990-91 recession, job creation (at 2.7 percent annually) has been in line with its historical average. Projections for the 1996-2001 period indicate some, but not much, abatement, with growth coming in at about 2.5 percent each year.

Unemployment is a continuing problem for Yakima County, with the percentage of joblessness running consistently higher than that experienced by the state as a whole. In 1971, Yakima County's unemployment rate was 10.0 percent and Washington State's was 10.1 percent. That was the only time in the past 25 years that the county's rate was lower than the state's. And the decade of the 1980s saw the gap between the rates of the county and the state widen. The average for 1995 was 12.5 percent unemployed in Yakima County compared to 6.4 percent for the state as a whole. Unemployment tends to be high in areas having a highly seasonal employment base, such as agriculture.

Population and labor force have both grown at moderate levels over the last two decades. Demographic shifts

in the population point to a decrease in the proportion of whites and an increase in the proportions of all other racial groups. Those of Hispanic origin are also increasing, accounting for one-third of the county's total population. This change is paralleled in the labor force statistics as well.

Covered earnings in Yakima County are considerably less than the state average (\$19,208 versus \$27,448 in 1995). This also reflects the problems of comparing manufacturing based earnings (i.e., Puget Sound) to agriculturally based earnings. The largest sector of employment, by far, is agriculture, and the lowest annual average earnings are found in that sector. (It must be remembered, though, that the part-time nature of much agricultural work greatly affects the pay—the average annual pay does not necessarily reflect full-time work.) Consequently, overall average county earnings lag state earnings by about 30 percent. Average covered earnings in all the major industrial sectors fall below the state averages. Additionally, per capita income in the county lags the statewide figure by about 20 percent (\$17,760 versus \$22,542 in 1994).

While unemployment and wages are problematic, comparisons with statewide averages are somewhat misleading. Washington's overall figures are strongly influenced by the Puget Sound area with its aerospace and high tech industries. While wages are considerably higher, the cost of living is also considerably higher. Yakima County is more rural and land and housing costs are less.

Agriculture is a dynamic industry in the Yakima Valley. It incorporates new technologies, produces world-class products, and is very competitive in a shrinking globe. Linked to manufacturing's food processing operations, the entire industry provides a high level of employment in the area. These basic industries contribute greatly to the burgeoning trade and services sectors. Nonfarm job growth is expected to continue at a moderate pace for the next several years. The average wage, though relatively low, has been on the upswing since 1990, ending a 15-year real-dollar decline. Yakima County's economy should perform well through the turn of the century.