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FACT SHEET 01-12

UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## **Historical Patterns of Population Growth and Change for Eureka County**

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“Attracting and retaining people to live, work, raise a family and retire underlies the economic growth of any region. Population growth is both a cause and a consequence of economic growth. County patterns of population growth and change reflect differences among regions in their ability to attract and retain people both as producers and consumers in their economies.”  
(Smith, 1994)

### **Why Are Population Estimates Important?**

Population and rates of population growth provide vital information to federal, state and local government employees as well as private sector personnel regarding areas of economic growth. Population estimates provide information used under several programs to allocate federal and state funds and sales taxes to counties and to allocate justices of the peace for townships. In addition, population estimates are used to determine various vital rates such as poverty, mortality, fertility, per capita income, and others for use in official grant requests.

During the 1980's and 1990's, the state of Nevada was the fastest growing state in the nation. However, population growth has not been uniform, and has declined in some cases during this time period. This fact sheet will investigate trends in Eureka County's population growth over time and in relation to other counties in the state of Nevada.

## County Population: 1970 to 1999

Population in the state of Nevada grew from 441,535 in 1970 to 1,967,650 in 1999 or an increase of 346 percent for the state (See Table 1). For Eureka County, population increased from 938 in 1970 to 1,930 in 1999 or an increase of 106 percent during the study period. In 1970, Eureka County had 0.21 percent of total state population and ranked 15th among Nevada's seventeen counties. However, by 1999, Eureka County had declined to 0.10 percent of total state population and dropped to 16th among the 17 counties.

**Table 1. Nevada Population by County and Region: 1970 to 1999.**

County	1999			1970			1970 to 99			
	Population	Percent of State	Rank	Population	Percent of State	Rank	Change in Rank	Actual Change	Percent Change	Percent of Total State
Clark	1,343,540	68.28	1	227,230	51.46	1	0	1,116,310	491.27	73.15
Washoe	323,670	16.45	2	119,192	26.99	2	0	204,478	171.55	13.40
Carson City	52,620	2.67	3	16,054	3.64	3	0	36,566	227.77	2.40
Elko	50,620	2.57	4	13,946	3.16	4	0	36,674	262.97	2.40
Douglas	42,590	2.16	5	7,067	1.60	8	3	35,523	502.66	2.33
Lyon	34,150	1.74	6	8,437	1.91	7	1	25,713	304.76	1.68
Nye	33,550	1.71	7	5,459	1.24	11	4	28,091	514.58	1.84
Churchill	25,310	1.29	8	10,650	2.41	5	-3	14,660	137.65	0.96
Humboldt	18,090	0.92	9	6,380	1.44	10	1	11,710	183.54	0.77
White Pine	11,150	0.57	10	10,067	2.28	6	-4	1,083	10.76	0.07
Pershing	7,460	0.38	11	2,656	0.60	12	1	4,804	180.87	0.31
Lander	7,010	0.36	12	2,653	0.60	13	1	4,354	164.23	0.29
Mineral	6,450	0.33	13	6,961	1.58	9	-4	-511	-7.34	-0.03
Lincoln	4,250	0.22	14	2,526	0.57	14	0	1,724	68.25	0.11
Storey	3,740	0.19	15	696	0.16	16	1	3,044	437.36	0.20
Eureka	1,930	0.10	16	938	0.21	15	-1	992	105.76	0.07
Esmeralda	1,520	0.08	17	623	0.14	17	0	897	143.98	0.06
Nevada	1,967,650	100.00		441,535	100.00			1,526,115	345.64	100.00
Metro	1,667,210	84.73		346,422	78.46			1,320,788	381.27	86.55
Non-metro	300,440	15.27		95,113	21.54			205,327	215.88	13.45

It is of interest that the metropolitan counties of Clark and Washoe increased their percentage share in total state population from 78.5 percent in 1970 to 84.7 percent in 1999. Clark County population increase was approximately 73 percent of the total state population increase from 1970 to 1999. This also explains Clark County's political clout given the "one-man, one-vote" concept. Eureka County's population increase from 1970 to 1999 was only 0.07 percent of the total state increase for this time period.

### Population Growth and Stability: 1970 to 1999

Table 2 shows county average annual population growth rate and stability from 1970 to 1999. Eureka County's average annual population growth rate was estimated to be 2.76 percent, the 14th highest of all seventeen counties. The instability index ranked Eureka County 4th. Results from Table 2 show Eureka County population growth to be unstable and somewhat lower than the rest of Nevada. This instability may be linked to the "boom-bust" characteristic of Eureka's mining industry.

The average annual percentage growth of population is the summation of annual percentage change from 1970 to 1999 divided by the number of years (29 years). The instability index is the coefficient of variation, or the standard deviation divided by the mean. A high instability index indicates that the annual percentage of population growth varies considerably over time. Such instability may be characteristic of a one sector county economy and may signify the need for local economic diversification.

**Table 2. Nevada County Population Growth Rate and Stability Index, 1970 - 1999**

County	Average Annual Percentage Growth (%)	County Rank	Instability Index	County Rank
Nye	6.68	1	1.06	8
Douglas	6.46	2	0.63	14
Storey	6.09	3	0.86	9
Clark	5.60	4	0.27	17
Lyon	4.96	5	0.47	15
Elko	4.61	6	0.82	10
Carson City	4.23	7	0.79	11
Pershing	3.73	8	1.33	7
Esmeralda	3.70	9	3.25	3
Humboldt	3.70	9	0.76	12
Lander	3.59	11	1.80	6
Washoe	3.41	12	0.41	16
Churchill	3.05	13	0.76	13
Eureka	2.76	14	2.59	4
Lincoln	1.89	15	2.16	5
White Pine	0.41	16	9.86	2
Mineral	-0.23	17	11.52	1
Nevada	4.88		0.24	

**Table 3. Nevada Population by County Average Annual Growth Rates, 1970-1999, by decade, 1998 and 1999**

County	1970-1999 Growth Rates	Rank	1970-1979 Growth Rates	Rank	1980-1989 Growth Rates	Rank	1990-1999 Growth Rates	Rank	1998 Growth Rate	Rank	1999 Growth Rate	Rank
Nye	6.68	1	5.53	4	7.46	1	7.11	1	7.68	2	12.85	2
Douglas	6.46	2	10.67	1	3.76	9	4.79	5	4.62	5	2.82	8
Storey	6.09	3	8.23	2	5.55	4	4.33	7	4.26	6	1.91	11
Clark	5.60	4	5.27	5	5.24	5	6.38	2	5.28	4	7.04	3
Lyon	4.96	5	4.94	6	4.25	8	5.79	4	6.03	3	6.06	5
Elko	4.61	6	2.21	15	7.01	2	4.61	6	3.19	7	2.82	8
Carson City	4.23	7	7.22	3	2.50	15	2.83	10	2.88	9	1.47	13
Pershing	3.73	8	2.60	13	2.97	11	5.84	3	10.15	1	2.61	10
Esmeralda	3.70	9	2.44	14	6.86	3	1.60	14	-2.74	16	7.04	3
Humboldt	3.70	9	4.05	10	3.30	10	3.74	9	2.57	10	0.67	15
Lander	3.59	11	4.46	8	4.93	6	1.14	16	0.14	14	-0.43	16
Washoe	3.41	12	4.68	7	2.88	12	2.60	12	0.86	12	3.96	7
Churchill	3.05	13	2.74	12	2.69	13	3.81	8	0.67	13	5.37	6
Eureka	2.76	14	2.98	11	2.66	14	2.64	11	-1.20	15	17.68	1
Lincoln	1.89	15	4.13	9	4.93	6	1.27	15	1.95	11	1.43	14
White Pine	0.41	16	-2.04	17	1.48	16	1.94	13	3.01	8	1.73	12
Mineral	-0.23	17	-1.06	16	0.40	17	-0.01	17	-3.50	17	-2.57	17
Nevada	4.88		4.93		4.45		5.31		4.26		6.03	

## County Population Growth Rate by Different Time Periods

Table 3 presents the 1970 to 1999 average annual percentage change in population for Nevada counties. Eureka County's population growth averaged 2.76% over the entire period and was ranked 14th of all seventeen Nevada counties. Also shown are averages for 1970-1979; 1980-1989; 1990-1999; 1998 and 1999. Eureka County's average annual growth rate for 1970 to 1979 was 2.98 percent, which ranked Eureka County 11<sup>th</sup> among Nevada's seventeen counties. From 1980 to 1989, Eureka County's average annual population growth rate was 2.66 percent, which lagged behind the state's average of 4.45 percent and ranked Eureka County 14<sup>th</sup> among Nevada's seventeen counties

From 1990 to 1999, Eureka County's average annual percentage population growth rate was 2.64 percent, which trails the state's average by 2.67 percent and ranks Eureka County 11th among Nevada's seventeen counties. Eureka County's population growth rates of -1.20 percent in 1998 and 17.68 percent in 1999 show the variability in this county's economy. Eureka County's growth rate was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in 1998 but first in 1999. During 1998, Eureka County trailed the state's average by 5.46 percent while in 1999 Eureka County exceeded the state's average by 9.65 percent.

### Summary of Eureka County Population

- Eureka County's 1999 population of 1,930 amounted to 0.10 percent of the state's total and ranked it 16<sup>th</sup> among Nevada's 17 counties.
- Eureka County's population growth of 992 from 1970 to 1999 was 0.07 percent of total state's population increase.
- From 1970 to 1999, Eureka County realized an average annual population growth rate of 2.76 percent which ranked Eureka County 14<sup>th</sup> among Nevada's 17 counties.
- From 1970 to 1999, Eureka County had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest instability index of Nevada's 17 counties.
- Eureka County's average annual rate of population growth in the 1980's (2.66%) was approximately 89 percent of the 1970's average (2.98%). In the 1990's Eureka County's average annual rate of population growth (2.64%) was 99 percent of the 1980 value.
- It is of interest to compare the population growth rate for Eureka County from 1998 to 1999. In 1998, Eureka County's population growth rate declined by 1.20 percent. In 1999, Eureka County realized a population growth rate of 17.68 percent. In 1998, Eureka's population growth rate ranked 15th among Nevada's 17 counties, while in 1999 Eureka County registered the highest growth rate of Nevada's 17 counties.
- The variability of county population growth in comparing figures from 1998 and 1999 indicates dependency on a single sector economy such as mining. This also indicates the need for economic diversification for Eureka County.

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Detailed population information for the state of Nevada can be retrieved from the Nevada State Demographer's Web Site. The address is: [www.nsbdc.org/demographer/](http://www.nsbdc.org/demographer/)

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