



## **Inter-County Commuting Patterns in Eureka County Implications for Eureka County's Economy**

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The majority of working Americans commute to and from work on a daily basis. While many of these trips are made within the same city or county limits, a number of commuters travel outside their county of residence. Although this may be of little importance to an individual worker, inter-jurisdictional commuting can impact a city's or county's revenue base or its required level of public services, both positively and negatively. This fact sheet discusses the presence of "incommuters" and "outcommuters" in Eureka County in relation to the State of Nevada as a whole, and the potential impacts of these commuting patterns on county revenues and public services.

Each of Nevada's counties experiences some level of inter-county commuting. Some county residents travel outside the county for work. These people are called **outcommuters**. Others travel into that same county from other counties for work. These workers are called **incommuters**.

### **Eureka County**

Eureka County is located in central Nevada just east of Elko County and White Pine County (see Figure 1). It has the state's

second smallest population and has the second fewest resident workers of all Nevada counties. In fact, the largest town in Eureka County is the town of Eureka with less than 500 residents.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Eureka County has only 712 resident workers, but supplies 2,243 jobs. Thus, Eureka County has three times the number of jobs as it has workers.

This disparity shows either an acute shortage of housing in Eureka County or a very strong competitive advantage in industry. Examining the Bureau of Economic Analysis' Total Employment by Industry for year 2001, 83.6 percent of all



**Figure 1: Eureka County.**

employment in Eureka County was in mining, indicating that Eureka County is attracting workers from neighboring counties because of its strong mining industry.

commute from neighboring Elko County. Eureka and Storey Counties are the only counties in Nevada that have more incommuting workers than resident workers.

### Eureka County Incommuters

While Eureka has very few resident workers, commuting data shows that Eureka draws in workers from outside counties. Only 630 (28 percent) of the 2,243 people who work in Eureka County live within county lines (see Table 1). More than twice that number, 1,488 (66 percent),

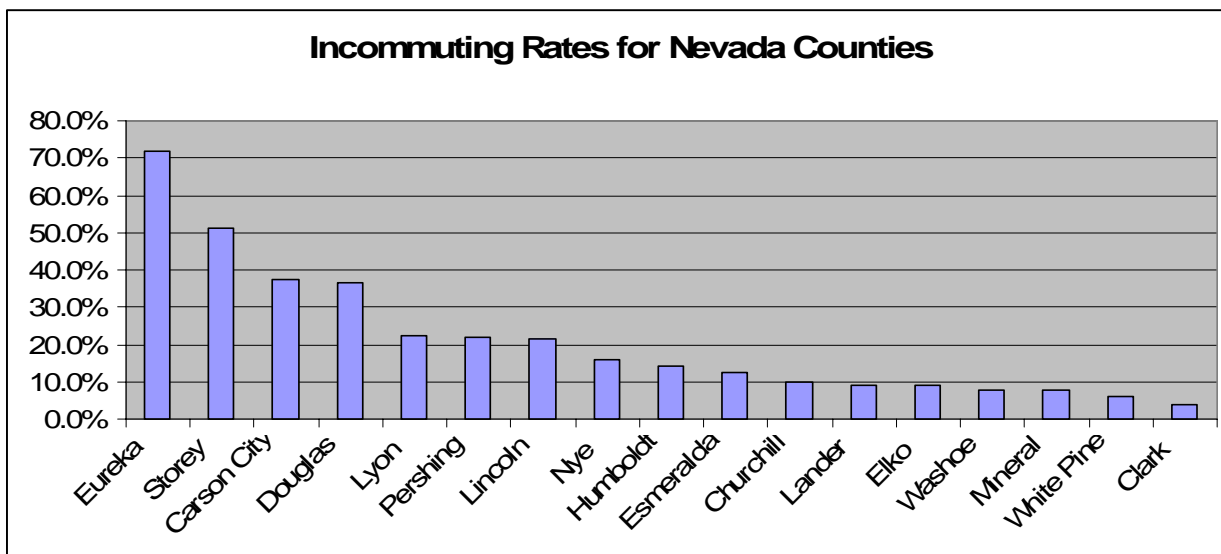
Figure 2 illustrates incommuting rates for all Nevada counties. In relation to other Nevada counties, Eureka has the highest rate of incommuting. Overall, 72 percent of all people who work in Eureka County live in another county. The next highest incommuting rate is 51 percent in Storey County.

**Table 1: Eureka County Workers' Place of Residence.**

Residence County	Workplace County	Count	%
Elko Co. NV	Eureka Co. NV	1,488	66.34%
Eureka Co. NV	Eureka Co. NV	630	28.09%
Lander Co. NV	Eureka Co. NV	54	2.41%
White Pine Co. NV	Eureka Co. NV	36	1.60%
Other NV	Eureka Co. NV	33	1.47%
Other	Eureka Co. NV	2	0.09%
		<b>2,243</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	Incommuters	<b>1,613</b>	<b>71.91%</b>

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2003.

**Figure 2: Incommuting Rates for all Nevada Counties.**



Source: United States Census Bureau, 2003.

## Eureka County Outcommuters

A relatively low rate of outcommuting exists in Eureka County, primarily due to its lack of residents and its strong mining industry (see Figure 3). In addition, there are no large cities within a short driving distance

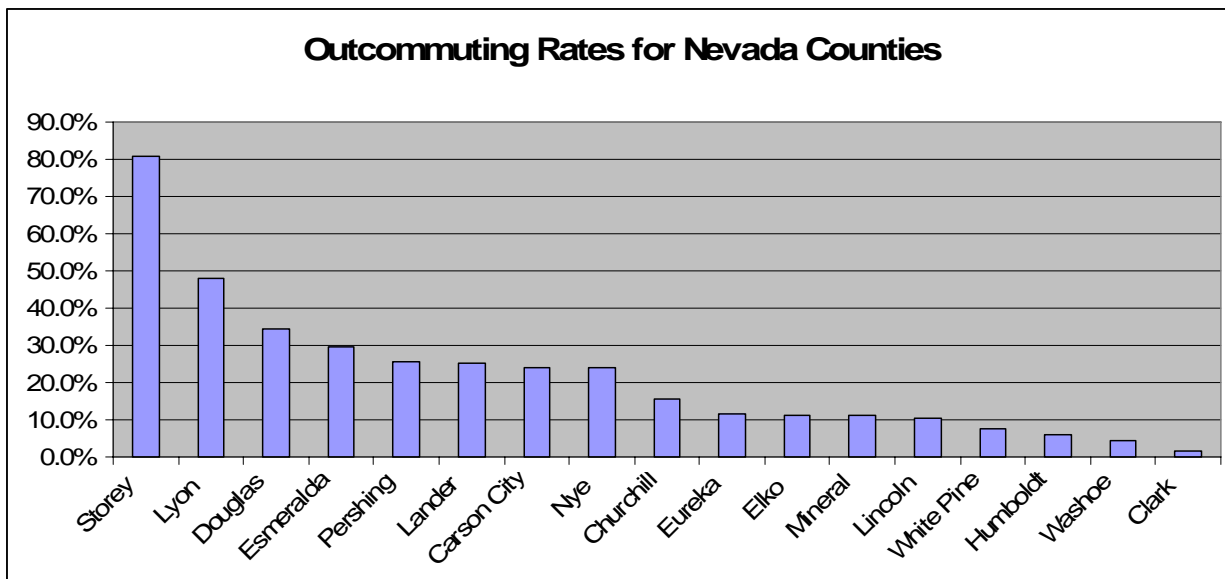
of Eureka County to attract Eureka's resident workers. The majority of Eureka County residents who work stay within the county, while only 82 of its 712 (12 percent) resident workers leave the county (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Eureka County Resident's Place of Work.**

Residence County	Workplace County	Count	%
Eureka Co. NV	Eureka Co. NV	630	88.48%
Eureka Co. NV	Elko Co. NV	50	7.02%
Eureka Co. NV	Lander Co. NV	9	1.26%
Eureka Co. NV	Other NV	13	1.83%
Eureka Co. NV	Other	10	1.40%
		<b>712</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
	Outcommuters	<b>82</b>	<b>11.52%</b>

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2003.

**Figure 3: Outcommuting Rates for all Nevada Counties.**



Source: United States Census Bureau, 2003.

## Local and Regional Implications

Eureka County has a strong localized competitive advantage in providing jobs, especially in mining, but a severe shortage in housing and a developed commercial sector. Figure 4 explains the primary reason behind Eureka County's housing shortage. The two population centers within Eureka County are the town of Eureka in the southeast part of the county and the Crescent Valley area, which is almost 20 miles south of Interstate 80. But the majority of the mines are in the northeast corner of the county, approximately 50 to 100 miles from its most populated towns. For mine workers, the driving distance to work from Crescent Valley to the northern mines is further than the driving distance from cities or towns like Elko or Carlin (both in Elko County) that offer more developed public services and urban amenities.

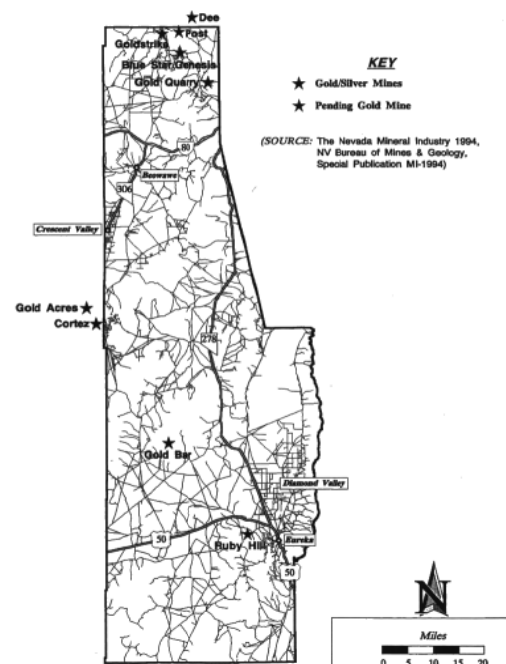
The dramatic number of incommuters illustrates the role Eureka County plays in the Elko *Micropolitan Area* economy. Since most of Eureka County's incommuters come from Elko County, the majority of people who work in Eureka County choose to live in the nearby towns of Elko County such as Carlin or Elko with their associated commercial sectors. Eureka County may be missing out on an opportunity to capitalize on its competitive

advantage in providing mining jobs by essentially encouraging its workers to live and spend their income in Elko County.

The knowledge of incommuting and outcommuting patterns can provide local decision makers information to discuss possible consolidation of services and collaborative economic development strategies.

**Figure 4: Eureka County Mines and Population Centers.**

*Existing Mines In & Near Eureka County*



Source: Eureka County Home Page

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