County Profile 2013
Desha County

U of A
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System
The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service is pleased to release these updated county profiles in hopes that these publications may serve as a useful tool for local officials, community leaders and economic development professionals.

This publication provides a comparison and overview of the demographic, economic and social trends in Arkansas counties. The information is presented in graphs and maps to allow the reader to quickly grasp current trends and conditions and gain insight into local and regional contexts. We encourage leaders and decision makers to use this publication in conjunction with their knowledge of the local geography, culture and political environment to make wise decisions for Arkansas’ future.

The state agencies providing data and assistance for this publication include the State Data Center at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services. We thank the many individuals at these departments and organizations for their quick response to our requests for information.

Several departments and individuals of the University of Arkansas worked in collaboration to publish these county profiles. Wayne Miller, Community and Economic Development, coordinated the project. Thai Nguyen compiled the data and developed graphs and charts. Vuko Karov developed the maps and checked the data for accuracy. Chris Meux designed the cover, and Donna Rinke published the profiles on the Cooperative Extension website. Their many hours of effort are greatly appreciated.

We hope you find this publication useful as you plan for the future of your communities.

Tony E. Windham, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Agriculture-Extension
and Director, Cooperative Extension Service
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(For Local Staff Chair See Inside Backcover)
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Population, 1960-2010

Desha County

The population of Desha County decreased substantially from 30,770 in 1960 to 13,008 in 2010.

Population Change, 2000 to 2010

The Natural State

Population grew most rapidly in Northwest & Central Arkansas counties and declined in some East and South Arkansas counties between 2000 and 2010.
There were more people living in Desha County between the ages of 0 and 19 and the ages of 45 to 59 than any other age groups.

Except for the increase in population in the age group of 60-79, the population of the other age groups declined from 2000 to 2010.
Counties in Northcentral Arkansas had the highest proportion of people aged 65 and older in 2010.

The elderly population as a proportion of the total population grew most rapidly in Central and Northwest Arkansas from 2000 to 2010.
Central & Northwest Arkansas had the highest domestic in-migration of people between 2005 and 2009, while Arkansas, Bradley, Clay, Desha, Mississippi, Pulaski, Sebastian, Sevier and Woodruff counties had the largest domestic out-migration of people during this period.

Most of the people (85%) in Desha County lived in family households. The proportion of people living each household type was about the same for Desha County as it was for the state.

*Note: The data were from the five-year sample (2005-2009) collected by the American Community Survey. Since this is sample data, the margin of error for counties with small populations may be large.
The proportion of Hispanic people living in Desha County increased from 3 percent to 4 percent between 2000 and 2010.

The Hispanic population may be of any race: white, black or any other combination of races.

The percentage of Caucasian people living in Desha County was the same as for African American people, which was forty-eight percent. Other minorities represented about four percent of the population.

The proportion of Hispanic people living in Desha County increased from 3 percent to 4 percent between 2000 and 2010. The Hispanic population may be of any race: white, black or any other combination of races.

Educational Attainment, 2005-2009*

Desha County had a larger percentage of people who did not complete high school, and a smaller percentage of people who had bachelor's and professional degrees as compared to the statewide average in the five-year period 2005-2009.

*Note: The data were from the five-year sample (2005-2009) collected by the American Community Survey. Since this is sample data, the margin of error for counties with small populations may be large.
Schools in Desha County spent $9,816 per child in the 2011-2012 school year as compared to an average expenditure of $9,112 statewide.

Desha County schools raised more of their revenue from state and federal aid than did the average of all Arkansas public schools in the 2009-2010 school year.
Employment growth was highest in Central & Northwest Arkansas between 2000 and 2010.

**Figure 15**

**Labor Force, 2000 to 2010**  
*Desha County & State*

Desha County employment decreased since 2006 and unemployment increased since 2008.

**Figure 16**

**Change in Employment, 2000 to 2010**  
*The Natural State*

Employment growth was highest in Central & Northwest Arkansas between 2000 and 2010.

Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS), Bureau of Economic Analysis
In general, Northwest, Central, and Western Arkansas counties had the lowest unemployment rates while Delta and Coastal Plain counties had the highest rates in 2010.
More people were employed in service occupations in Arkansas and in the United States than in any other occupation in 2010.

A larger proportion of jobs in Desha County were government and governmental enterprises (17%), manufacturing (13%) and farming (12%) in 2010 as compared to the state average. There were considerable missing data (19%) due to non-disclosure of confidential information.
The trade sector lost more jobs, while the finance, insurance, real estate and information sector gained more jobs between 2001 and 2010 than any other sectors in Desha County. There were considerable missing data due to non-disclosure of confidential information.

Nearly 30 percent of the jobs in the manufacturing sector in 2010 in Arkansas were in the food processing industries.
Total personal income in Desha County, in constant dollars, increased between 1994 and 2008 and declined from 2008 to 2010.

Income from net earnings declined and income from transfer payments increased between 1999 and 2010 in Desha County.
Desha County residents received a smaller share of income from net earnings, and dividends, interest and rent, and a larger share from transfer payments as compared to the state average in 2010.

Median household income was considerably lower in Desha County than the state average in 2005-2009.

*Note: The data were from the five-year sample (2005-2009) collected by the American Community Survey. Since this is sample data, the margin of error for counties with small populations may be large.
Per capita incomes were highest in Central & Northwest Arkansas and lowest in some West & Northcentral counties in 2010.

Per Capita Income, 1990 to 2010
Desha County, State & United States

Figure 27

Desha County per capita income was lower than both the State and the U.S. between 1990 to 2010.

Per Capita Income, 2010
The Natural State

Figure 28

Per capita incomes were highest in Central & Northwest Arkansas and lowest in some West & Northcentral counties in 2010.
Desha County residents received per capita unemployment insurance benefits that were considerably higher than the state average from 2000 to 2010.

Source: Regional Economic Profiles, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Manufacturing and farm & farm services sectors accounted for about half of total earnings in Desha County in 2010, and comprised a much larger share of total earnings as compared to the state as a whole.

Source: Regional Economic Profiles, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Desha County residents received per capita unemployment insurance benefits that were considerably higher than the state average from 2000 to 2010.
Average weekly earnings in the manufacturing sector ranged from a high of $1,089 in the paper products industry to a low of $423 in the apparel industry in 2010.
Desha County retail sales declined from a high of $225 million in 1997 to $142 million in 2010 during the years, 1990 - 2010.

Retail sales per capita were highest in counties that are regional trade centers in 2010.
The estimated poverty level remained considerably higher in Desha County than the state average in 1989, 1999 and 2010.

**Estimated People Below Poverty Level, 2005-2009***

The estimated poverty level was highest in the Delta with many counties having a poverty level over twenty-one percent in the five-year period from 2005 to 2009.

*Note: The data were from the five-year sample (2005-2009) collected by the American Community Survey. Since this is sample data, the margin of error for counties with small populations may be large.
There was a wide range in the proportion of students who received free and reduced price school lunches across the seventy-five counties in the 2009-2010 school year. Participation rates ranged from thirty-five percent to one-hundred percent with a higher percentage of youth in the Delta Region counties receiving free and reduced price lunches.

A larger proportion of children lived in poverty than for the population as a whole in the five-year period, 2005-2009. Desha County had a higher proportion of young and elderly people living in poverty than the state average.

*Note: The data were from the five-year sample (2005-2009) collected by the American Community Survey. Since this is sample data, the margin of error for counties with small populations may be large.
A substantial percentage of the population (between 30% and 51%) was eligible for Medicaid in thirty-six counties in 2010, primarily located in the Eastern and Southern parts of the state.

A larger proportion of people living in the Delta counties and Columbia, Jefferson and Lafayette counties participated in the Supplemented Nutrition Assistance Program when compared to people in other parts of the state in 2010.

A substantial percentage of the population (between 30% and 51%) was eligible for Medicaid in thirty-six counties in 2010, primarily located in the Eastern and Southern parts of the state.
The teen fertility rate varied from County to County and was highest in some Delta and Coastal Plain counties in the five-year period from 2006 to 2010. Counties with the highest teen fertility rates included Bradley, Crittenden, Desha, Hempstead, Mississippi, Monroe, Ouachita, Phillips, Poinsett, St. Francis, Scott, Sevier, and Yell counties.

The infant mortality rate was highest in the Bradley, Crittenden, Dallas, Newton, Ouachita, Perry, Prairie, and Stone counties in the five-year period from 2006 to 2010.
Female headed families as a proportion of total families in Desha County increased from 14 percent in 1970 to 31 percent in 2005-2009 and remained above the state average.

The Delta counties and the Coastal Plains counties had the highest proportion of families with only a single parent present in 2010.

*Note: The data were from the five-year sample (2005-2009) collected by the American Community Survey. Since this is sample data, the margin of error for counties with small populations may be large.
The market value (in constant dollars) of agricultural products sold in Desha County declined substantially from $138 million in 1978 to $83 million in 2002, then increased to $141 million in 2007.

The two counties with the highest market value of agricultural production were in Northwest Arkansas. However, many Delta and Highlands counties also ranked high in terms of the market value of agricultural production in 2007.
Forty-two percent of the farms in Desha County had sales of less than $50,000 in 2007. These farms accounted for 0.3 percent of total farm sales. Thirty-one percent of the farms had sales of $500,000 or more and these farms accounted for eighty-six percent of total sales.

The number of farms in Desha County declined substantially from 829 in 1964 to 273 in 2007.

*Note: Due to the lack of available data, the unknown column was added for the missing data*
Crop sales were the major source of farm income for Desha County farmers, increasing from $101 million in 1999 to $166 million in 2010.

Desha County farmers received a higher proportion of farm income from crops when compared to all Arkansas farmers in 2010.
Farm income from crop sales fluctuated in an increasing trend in Desha County from 1994 to 2010. Crop sales were $125 million in 1994, increasing to $166 million in 2010.

Timber output of Desha County declined between 1999 and 2009. Production of softwood increased slightly, and production of hardwood decreased.
Over seventy-five percent of the land area in many Coastal Plain and Ouachita Highland counties qualified as timber acreage in 2010.

The total timber acreage in Desha County was 153,000 acres in 2010. Farmers/ranchers and private individuals owned a large share (about 80%) of the timberland in Desha County.
In general, sparsely populated counties had more miles of County roads to maintain per person than more densely populated counties in 2010.
AGRICULTURAL SERVICES Includes establishments primarily engaged in performing soil preparation services, crop services, veterinary and other animal services, farm labor and management services, and landscape and horticultural services, for others on a contract or fee basis.

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE The sum of all employed and unemployed persons 16 years of age or older. Members of the Armed Forces are excluded.

"CONSTANT $" Figures adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, 1982-1984 = 100.

“CURRENT $” Figures not adjusted for inflation.

CONSTRUCTION Includes general building contractors (residential, operative, and nonresidential); heavy construction contractors (highway, street, etc.); and special trade contractors (plumbing, heating, air conditioning, painting, paper hanging, electrical, masonry, stonework, roofing, sheet metal, concrete, and miscellaneous special trade contractors).

DELIVERED VALUE OF HARVESTED TIMBER The value of harvested timber delivered to the first processing point. The value includes the value of the timber (stumpage value), the cost of harvesting, and the cost of transporting the timber to the first processing point.

EARNINGS Earnings include wages and salaries, other labor income, and proprietors' income by place of work.

EMPLOYMENT An estimate of the number of persons, on a place-of-residence basis, who worked anytime for pay or profit or worked 15 hours or more as an unpaid family worker during the week of reference (the week including the 12th of the month). Also included are those who, although not working, had some job attachment and were not looking for work, and persons involved in labor-management disputes.

FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS Includes a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. The number of family households always equals the number of families; however, a family household may also include non-relatives living with the family. Families are classified by type as either a married-couple family or other family which is further classified into "male householder" (a family with a male householder and no wife present) or "female householder" (a family with a female householder and no husband present).

FARMING Includes businesses whose primary source of revenue is from crop and livestock production.

FEMALE HEADED FAMILIES A family with a female householder and no husband present.

FINANCIAL SERVICES Financial, insurance, and real estate services.

GOVERNMENT Employees of city, county, state and federal governments.

IMPUTED & MISC. INCOME RECEIVED Consists of imputed income, such as gross rental value of dwellings and value of home consumption, and other farm related income components, such as machine hire and custom work income, rental income, and income from forest products.

INCOME Total income is the algebraic sum of the amount reported separately for wage or salary income; non-farm net self-employment income; farm net self-employment income; interest, dividend, net royalty or rental income; social security or railroad retirement income; public assistance or welfare income and all other income.

INFANT MORTALITY RATE The number of infant deaths (under one year of age) per 1,000 live births.

JOBS The number of full-time and part-time jobs in a geographic area.

MANUFACTURING Includes manufacturing industries dealing with food and kindred products; textile mill products; apparel products; lumber and wood products; furniture and fixtures; paper and allied products; printing and publishing; chemicals; petroleum and coal; rubber and miscellaneous plastics; leather; stone, clay and glass; primary metal industries; fabricated metal products; machinery; electrical and electronic equipment; transportation equipment; instruments; and miscellaneous industries.
MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD  The gross market value before taxes and production expenses of all agricultural products sold or removed from place regardless of who received payment. It includes sales by the operator as well as the value of any shares received by partners, landlords, contractors, or others associated with the operation. It does not include payment received for participation in federal farm programs nor does it include income from farm-related sources such as agricultural services, or income from non-farm sources.

MINING  Includes extraction of oil and gas, non-metallic minerals, sand and gravel.

NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION  The difference between domestic in-migration to an area and domestic out-migration from the area during the period.

PER CAPITA INCOME  The per capita income is the total personal income divided by the total population of the area studied. The per capita income measure should be used with care. In the short run, it may temporarily vary from the result of unusual conditions (bumper crops, a major construction project or a catastrophe). In the long run, it may misrepresent the economic well-being of the general population because of the presence of a large institutional population (college, prison). While per capita income reflects average income per person, it does not accurately reflect family unit spendable income.

PERSONAL INCOME  The total income received by residents of an area, including earnings, transfer payments, and interest, dividends and rent.

POVERTY LEVEL  An individual or household is considered to be living below the poverty level when their income is below an income threshold established by the Bureau of Census. The income cutoffs used by the Bureau of Census to determine the poverty status of families and unrelated individuals consist of a set of 48 thresholds arranged in a two-dimensional matrix consisting of family size cross-classified by presence and number of family members under 18 years old.

RETAIL SALES  Includes sales from general merchandise stores; department stores; variety stores; food, bakery and dairy stores; automotive dealers; gasoline stations; eating and drinking establishments; and other retail trade establishments.

SINGLE HEAD OF FAMILY  Single head of a family with no spouse present.

SERVICES  Includes a variety of items ranging from hotels to attorneys. Included in this category are hotels and other lodging places; personal services (laundry, photographic studios, beauty shops, shoe repair, funeral services); business services (advertising, mailing, news syndicates, personnel supply services, computer services); auto repair services and garages (retail, parking, repair); miscellaneous repair services (electrical, etc.); amusement and recreation services (orchestra, dance halls, etc.); health services (physicians, dentists, nursing care facilities, hospitals, medical labs, outpatient care); legal services; educational services; social services (job training, individual and family services, day care); membership organizations (business, professional, labor, civic, social, etc.); engineering and architectural services; and other similar services.

STUMPAGE VALUE OF HARVESTED TIMBER  The value of timber harvested going to the landowner.

TEEN FERTILITY RATE  is the birth rate for women 15 to 19 years of age. It is the number of live births per 1000 women 15-19 years of age.

TRADE  Includes wholesale and retail trade.

TRANSPORTATION  Includes railroads; trucking service and warehousing; other transportation services (bus, air, and U.S. postal service); communication systems (radio, T.V., etc.); and utilities and sanitary services.

UNEMPLOYMENT  An estimate of the number of persons who, for the entire week of reference (the week including the 12th of the month), did not work at all, were able to work, and available for work, and (1) were looking for work, or (2) would have looked for work except that (a) they were waiting to return to a job from which they had been laid off, or (b) they were waiting to report to a new job.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE  The number of unemployed workers as a percentage of the civilian labor force.
Desha County Staff Chair

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***For additional copies of the County Profile or information on your county, please contact your County Staff Chair listed above.***