

# New census data show where state's population grew fastest

By **JAMIE GOLDBERG**  
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — Population gains in the Portland metro region, central Oregon and the Willamette Valley drove Oregon's growth over the last decade, according to newly released 2020 U.S. census data.

Multnomah County's population grew by 10.9% to 815,428 with the county adding more than 80,000 residents over the last decade, more than any other county in the state. However, both Washington and Clackamas counties grew at a faster rate than Oregon's largest county. Washington County's population grew by 13.3% to 600,372, while Clackamas County grew by about 12.1% to 421,401.

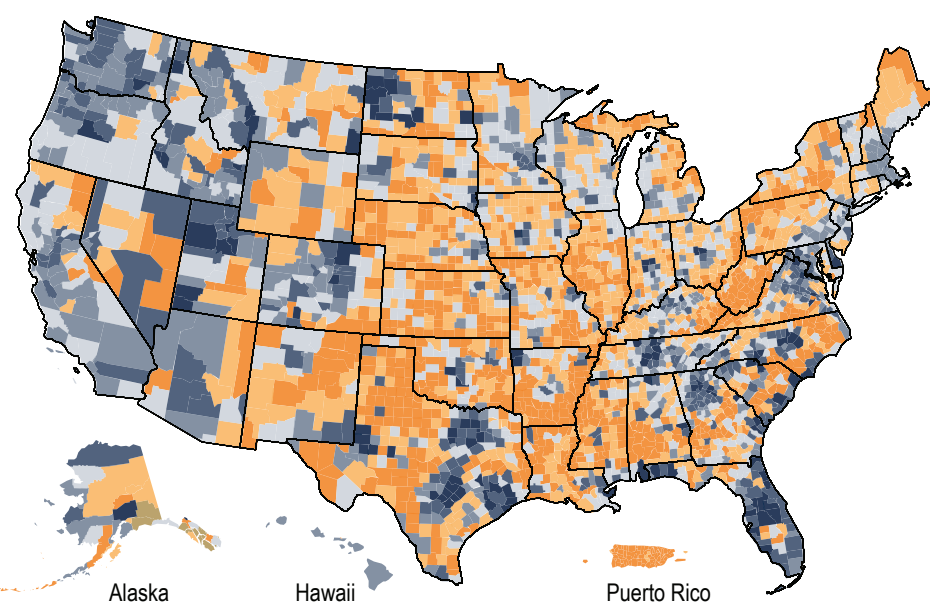
Josh Lehner, economist for the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, said the job market, quality of life and relative affordability in the Portland metro region as compared to other major cities on the West Coast, like San Francisco and Seattle, continue to make it the biggest draw for people looking to relocate to Oregon.

However, he said the population gains varied throughout the decade, with slow growth coming out of the Great Recession followed by six years of increasing migration to Oregon and the Portland metro region, specifically,

## Percentage change in population 2010-2020

■ 20 or more ■ 10 to 19.9 ■ 5 to 9.9 ■ 0 to 4.9 ■ -4.9 to -0.1 ■ -5.0 or less ■ NA

County data



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

before population gains slowed in the final three years of the decade. Oregon added fewer than 32,000 residents in 2020 amid the coronavirus pandemic, the slowest growth in the last decade.

"We've had so many changes in the last 10 years," Lehner said. "We started the decade coming out of the global financial crisis, and then we had an acceleration and a big relatively robust and healthy pickup in terms of migration, and then it slowed at the end of the decade."

### Across the state

Deschutes County, which includes tourism hub Bend, once again experienced the biggest jump in population of any county in the state as its population increased by 25.7% over the decade to 198,253.

Damon Runberg, the Oregon Employment Department's regional economist for the East Cascades, said the livability, natural beauty and recreation options in central Oregon continue to be

a draw for those looking to relocate. He said recent retirees and young professionals who prioritize quality of life over more career opportunities have long driven the population gains in central Oregon.

However, in the last decade, Runberg said more small professional firms relocated to Bend and an increasing number of 25- to 35-year-olds who work remotely moved to the Bend area, bringing their jobs with them. The pandemic only accelerated that remote working trend.

"The Bend economy has had these major transitions in its history, from being a timber town to transitioning to tourism to a lot of growth over the last decade of more professional-type jobs, becoming more representative of a traditional metropolitan economy," Runberg said. "I think that trend is the one we're going to see continue going forward."

Population gains across the state were also driven by migration to the Willamette Valley. Polk County's population increased by 16% to 87,433 over the last decade, while Benton County increased by 11.2% to 95,184, Linn County increased by 10.2% to 128,610 and Marion County increased by 9.7% to 345,920.

Polk County Commissioner Craig Pope said the county's lower cost of living has made it an attractive option for government employees who work in Salem or commuters who need access to Interstate 5. However, he said land use restrictions could prevent construction from moving forward unabated in the coming years, which could slow population growth.

"We've become very popular over the last decade, at least, because we've had available building space," Pope said. "A large portion of that growth has been in the West Salem area. Folks

there are still able to be inside the urban growth boundary of Salem, so they can get services, but pay lower property taxes."

Counties along the Oregon coast continued to experience modest growth over the last decade as well with Clatsop County growing at the fastest rate among coastal counties. Its population in 2020 was 41,072, a 10.9% increase from 2010.

Only one Oregon county saw population decline over the last decade with Grant County losing 2.8% of residents. However, the population across eastern Oregon remained relatively flat, with populations in Harney, Malheur and Wheeler counties increasing by 1% or less. That mirrored trends across the country, where the nation's smallest counties were more likely to see population declines or minimal increases.

Oregon's population grew by 10.6% from 2010 to 2020, reaching 4,237,256, according to data released in April. That's up from 3.83 million a decade prior. Oregon remains the 27th most populous state in the nation.

Oregon was the 13th-fastest growing state over the last decade, but grew more slowly than six other western states, including Utah, Idaho, Nevada and Washington.

# Hospitals across Oregon buckling under surge of COVID patients

Health care leaders beg people to get vaccinated, wear masks

By **ANDREW SELSKY**  
The Associated Press

GRANTS PASS — Patients left on beds in hospital hallways, their monitoring machines beeping away as too few doctors and nurses attend to an overload of emergencies. People diagnosed with cancer or heart disease desperately needing treat-

ments, but being turned away.

Hospital staffers and public health managers in southern Oregon say it's never been this bad. And it's apt to get worse as the super-contagious delta variant of COVID-19 spreads through a region where fewer than half the residents have been fully vaccinated against the

coronavirus.

"This is the worst condition our hospitals have seen, likely ever. I don't know that anyone could recall a time where we've had this much pressure on our health care system," Josephine County Public Health Manager Michael Weber told reporters Thursday, Aug. 12.

The health care leaders

got on a Zoom press conference with reporters to describe the dire situation, and to beg people to get vaccinated and wear masks.

"I implore you to wear a mask and get vaccinated, not just for your own protection, not just for your family, but for your neighbors and for the care and

support of your medical teams," said Leona O'Keefe, deputy Josephine County health officer.

Doctors, nurses and other health care workers who are on the front lines are becoming overwhelmed as the case load surpasses even last year's peak of COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Oregon Health Authority director Pat Allen said Aug. 11 that Oregon's record-setting COVID-19 hospitalization rate is filling hospitals statewide. On Aug. 12, there were a record number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 across Oregon, at 670, and 177 were in intensive care units.

## Notice

**Recently, Avista requested a change in natural gas rates for our Oregon customers. We know you care about your energy costs, so we think it's important to share this news with you.**

On July 30, 2021, Avista made five annual rate adjustment filings with the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (PUC) that if approved, are designed to increase overall natural gas revenue by approximately \$8.1 million or 7.4% effective Nov. 1, 2021. These filings have no impact on Avista's earnings.

The first rate adjustment is related to Avista's decoupling mechanism. Decoupling is designed to break the link between a utility's revenues and customers' energy usage. Generally, Avista's natural gas revenues are adjusted each month based on the number of customers rather than therms sales. The difference between revenues based on therm sales and revenues based on the number of customers is surcharged or rebated to customers beginning in the following year. If approved, Avista's request is designed to increase overall natural gas revenue by approximately \$2.0 million or 1.8%. This rate adjustment is driven primarily by the expiration of rebates currently being passed through to customers.

The second rate adjustment is the annual Purchased Gas Cost Adjustment (PGA) filing. PGAs are filed each year to balance the actual cost of wholesale natural gas purchased by Avista to serve customers with the amount included in rates. This includes the natural gas commodity cost as well as the cost to transport natural gas on interstate pipelines to Avista's local distribution system. If approved, Avista's natural gas revenues would increase by approximately \$6.1 million or 5.6%. This rate adjustment is driven primarily by wholesale natural gas prices, which are higher than the level presently included in rates. Avista does not profit on the actual natural gas commodity or the costs to transport natural gas to Avista's service territory.

The remaining three miscellaneous adjustments relate to intervenor funding, demand side management program funding, and recovering costs associated with regulatory fees. The combination of those three miscellaneous filings is a decrease in overall natural gas revenue of approximately \$49 thousand or 0.0% effective Nov. 1, 2021.

### The bottom line

If all five requests are approved, and you are an Avista natural gas customer using an average of 48 therms per month, you could expect your bill to increase by \$3.15, or 5.1% for a revised monthly bill of \$64.68 beginning Nov. 1, 2021. All other customer groups receiving firm natural gas service from Avista would also see increases.

### For more information

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are unable to provide copies at our office locations as we usually do. However, copies of our filings are available at [www.myavista.com/rates](http://www.myavista.com/rates) or you can call us at 1-800-227-9187.

This announcement is to provide you with general information about Avista's rate request and its effect on customers. The calculations and statements in this announcement are not binding on the PUC. For more information about the filing or for information about the time and place of any hearing, contact the PUC at:

Public Utility Commission of Oregon  
201 High Street SE, Ste. 100  
Salem, OR 97301  
(800) 522-2404, [www.puc.state.or.us](http://www.puc.state.or.us)

This notice contains forward-looking statements regarding the Company's current expectations. Forward-looking statements are all statements other than historical facts. Such statements speak only as of the date of the notice and are subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond the Company's control, which could cause actual results to differ materially from the expectations. These risks and uncertainties include, in addition to those discussed herein, all the factors discussed in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2020 and the Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2021.



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