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Countywide population continues to fall

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According to estimates by Arizona's Office of Employment and Population Statistics, Cochise County's population decreased by 769 residents (-0.6 percent) between 2015 and 2016. The countywide population fell from 129,112 to 128,343—the fourth annual decline in the past five years. Since Census 2010, Cochise County has lost 3,003 residents, according to EPS estimates.

Despite recent population declines, EPS projects the countywide population will grow by an average of 0.8 percent annually in the short term (2016 to 2021) and 0.6 percent in the long term (2016 to 2050) reaching 133,476 in 2021 and 157,897 in 2050.

All areas of Cochise County saw population decreases from 2015 to 2016 except Bisbee, which gained 15 new residents (0.3 percent). Bisbee's population in 2016 was 5,312 (up from 5,297 in 2015). EPS projects Bisbee's population will decline by an average of 0.1 percent annually in both the short and long term, falling to 5,294 in 2021 and 5,104 in 2050.

The population of Sierra Vista dropped by 429 residents (-1.0 percent) in 2016, coming in at 43,754 (down from 44,183 in 2015). EPS projects Sierra Vista's population will grow by an average of 1 percent annually between now and 2021 and 0.6 percent per year from now to 2050, reaching 45,947 in 2021 and 53,229 in 2050.

The population of Douglas fell from 16,956 to 16,897 from 2015 to 2016, a decrease of 59 residents (-0.3 percent). EPS projects the Douglas population will increase by an average of 0.3 percent per year in both the short and long term, hitting 17,130 in 2021 and 18,784 in 2050. The population of Douglas includes

inmates at the state prison complex, which Douglas annexed in the early 2000s. Since then, inmates are counted as residents of the city. Prison inmates account for approximately 15 percent of the Douglas population.

Benson's population decreased by 18 residents (-0.4 percent) falling from 4,999 to 4,981 between 2015 and 2016. EPS projects Benson's population will grow by an average of 1.6 percent per year between 2016 and 2021 and 1.2 percent annually between now and 2050, reaching 5,379 in 2021 and 7,482 in 2050. EPS long-term projections for Benson and countywide could change drastically depending on the success of the planned Villages at Vigneto development in Benson, which would add 28,000 homes and nearly 60,000 residents to Benson and Cochise County by 2035, according to current plans.

Willcox saw its population decrease by 47 residents (-1.3 percent) from 2015 to 2016, dropping from 3,636 to 3,589. EPS projects the Willcox population will grow by an average of 0.3 percent annually from 2016 to 2021 and 0.2 percent per year from 2016 to 2050, hitting 3,639 in 2021 and 3,840 in 2050.

Huachuca City saw its population decline by 13 people (-0.7 percent) between 2015 and 2016, decreasing from 1,794 to 1,781. According to EPS projections, Huachuca City's population will fall by an annual average of 0.3 percent in the short term and 0.2 percent in the long term, dropping to 1,756 in 2021 and 1,642 in 2050.

Tombstone's population was down by 0.7 percent, or 9 residents, from 2015 to 2016, falling from 1,333 to 1,324. EPS projects Tombstone's population will remain relatively flat in both the short and long term, stabilizing at 1,333 residents to both 2021 and 2050.

The population residing in Cochise County's unincorporated areas fell by 209 (-0.4 percent) in 2016. In 2015, 50,914 people resided in the combined unincorporated areas of Cochise County. This dropped to 50,705 in 2016, according to EPS estimates. EPS projects the population of the countywide unincorporated areas will grow by an average of 0.9 percent in the short term and 0.8 percent in the long term, climbing to 52,998 in 2021 and 66,483 in 2050.

Statewide, Arizona's population grew 1.1 percent from 2015 to 2016, according to EPS. The statewide population was 6.84 million in 2016, up from 6.76 million in 2015. According to EPS projections, Arizona's population will grow by an annual average of 1.8 percent in the short term and 1.4 percent in the long term, reaching 7.47 million in 2021 and 10.82 million in 2050.

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POPULATION				
	2016	2015	Change	% Change
Arizona	6,835,518	6,758,251	77,267	1.1%
Cochise County	128,343	129,112	-769	-0.6%
Benson	4,981	4,999	-18	-0.4%
Bisbee	5,312	5,297	15	0.3%
Douglas	16,897	16,956	-59	-0.3%
Huachuca City	1,781	1,794	-13	-0.7%
Sierra Vista	43,754	44,183	-429	-1.0%
Tombstone	1,324	1,333	-9	-0.7%
Willcox	3,589	3,636	-47	-1.3%
Unincorporated Areas	50,705	50,914	-209	-0.4%

Source: Arizona Office of Employment and Population Statistics and Cochise College Center for Economic Research

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