

**AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF
NEWTON COUNTY IN
NORTHWEST ARKANSAS**



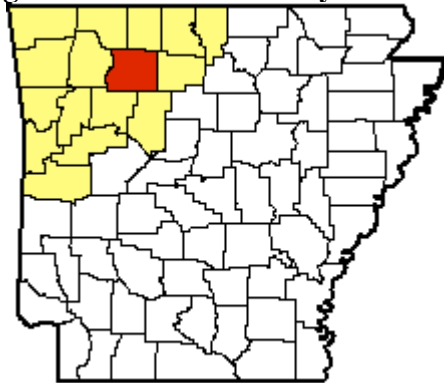
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An Economic Analysis of Newton County in Northwest Arkansas

I. Geographic Description

Newton County is comprised of 823 square miles and is located in the east-central portion of Northwest Arkansas in the physiographic regions of the Springfield Plateau in the northern portion of the county and the Boston Mountains in the southern portion of the county. Figure 1 highlights the counties that comprise the Northwest Arkansas region, as defined by the Arkansas Department of Economic Development. Newton County is shown in red; all other counties in the region are shown in yellow.

Figure 1 – Newton County’s Location



The Ozark National Forest is located in the southern portion of the county. The headwaters of the Big Piney Creek are located in Newton County; the river flows southeast through the county into Johnson County and eventually into Lake Dardanelle and the Arkansas River. The Buffalo National River Area is located in northern Newton County; the river flows east through the county into Searcy County and eventually merges with the White River on the border of Marion and Baxter County.

Sources:

United States Census Bureau. State and County QuickFacts.

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/05/05101.html>

Chart 2-5: Physiographic Regions. Arkansas Statistical Abstract – 2000. April 2000.

Census State Data Center, University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Page 72.

The Rand McNally Road Atlas, 2002 Edition. Page 10.

II. Demographic Characteristics

Population

In 1980, the population of Newton County was 7,756 persons. The county ranked 73rd in terms of population among Arkansas’ 75 counties and 16th among the 16 counties in Northwest Arkansas. By 1990, the population of the county had decreased 1.2 percent to 7,666 to rank 74th among Arkansas’ counties and 16th among the counties in Northwest Arkansas. From 1980 to 1990, the population of the state of Arkansas increased 2.8

percent from 2,286,435 to 2,350,725; from 1990 to 2000, the state's population increased 13.7 percent to 2,673,400 persons. In 2000, the population of Newton County stood at 8,608, an increase of 12.3 percent from 1990. The county was the 71st most populous county in Arkansas and the 15th most populous county in Northwest Arkansas in 2000. The two most populous cities in Newton County and their populations in the year 2000 were Jasper (498) and Western Grove (407). Jasper is the county seat for Newton County.

DRI-WEFA, an economic analysis consulting firm, projects the population of Newton County will increase by 2.0 percent to 8,780 people in the year 2010. If the projections are realized, Newton County will be the 68th most populous county in Arkansas and the 15th most populous county in Northwest Arkansas.

The gender makeup of Newton County is relatively more male than the makeup of the state on the whole. In the year 2000, the proportions of males and females in the county were 50.6 percent and 49.4 percent, respectively, compared to 48.8 percent and 51.2 percent, respectively, for the state.

In the year 2000, Newton County had the 13th oldest median age, the 27th lowest proportion of residents under age 18, and the 34th lowest proportion of residents age 65 and older among all Arkansas counties. In the year 2000, the median age of residents in Newton County was 40.1 years, compared to 36.0 years for the state. From 1990 to 2000, the proportion of the county's population that was under 18 years of age decreased from 28.0 percent to 24.9 percent; for the same period, the proportion of Arkansans under 18 years of age decreased from 26.4 percent to 25.4 percent. From 1990 to 2000, the proportion of the county's population that was 65 years of age or older decreased from 15.1 percent to 14.8 percent; for the same period, the proportion of Arkansans age 65 or older decreased from 14.9 percent in 1990 to 14.0 percent in 2000.

The racial composition of Newton County is decidedly more Caucasian than the population for the state on the whole. In 2000, the proportions of Newton County's population comprised of Caucasians, African Americans, American Indians and Native Alaskans, and Asians were 97.4 percent, 0.1 percent, 0.6 percent, and 0.2 percent, respectively. For the state, in 2000, the proportions of Caucasians, African Americans, American Indians and Native Alaskans, and Asians were 80.0 percent, 15.7 percent, 0.7 percent, and 0.8 percent, respectively. In 2000, the proportion of residents in Newton County who were Hispanic was 1.1 percent, compared to the state's proportion of 3.2 percent.

Sources:

United States Census Bureau, Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990. <http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/ar190090.txt>

United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File.

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsTable?_lang=en&_vt_name=DEC_2000_PL_U_GCTPL_ST7&_geo_id=04000US05

The Rand McNally Road Atlas, 2002 Edition. Page 10.
 DRI-WEFA, U.S. Regional Analysis. Data supplied by the Institute for Economic Advancement, University of Arkansas-Little Rock.
 United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000. <http://censtats.census.gov/data/AR/04005.pdf>
 United States Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 1990. http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsTable?_lang=en&_vt_name=DEC_1990_STF1_DP1&_geo_id=04000US05
 United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000. <http://censtats.census.gov/data/AR/05005101.pdf>
 United States Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Table DP-1. General Population and Housing Characteristics: 1990. http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsTable?_lang=en&_vt_name=DEC_1990_STF1_DP1&_geo_id=05000US05101

Income

Table 1 presents median household income and median family income for the year 1999 and per capita personal income for the year 2000 for Newton County. The table also ranks Newton County in terms of these income statistics among the 75 counties in Arkansas and the 16 counties in Northwest Arkansas.

Table 1 – Newton County Income Statistics

Income Statistic	Newton County	Percent of State	Arkansas			Northwest Arkansas		
			Rank	Range		Rank	Range	
				Low	High		Low	High
1999 Median Household Income	\$24,756	76.9%	67	\$20,510	\$42,569	15	\$21,397	\$40,281
1999 Median Family Income	\$30,134	77.9%	65	\$25,846	\$48,717	15	\$27,580	\$45,235
2000 Per Capita Personal Income	\$14,303	65.0%	75	\$14,303	\$30,447	16	\$14,303	\$25,358

Table 2 presents poverty statistics for different resident groups in Newton County and for the State of Arkansas in 1999. The table ranks the county among the 75 counties in Arkansas and among the 16 counties in Northwest Arkansas in terms of the three poverty rates presented. For example, the county ranked 17th among the counties in Arkansas and 2nd among the counties in Northwest Arkansas in terms of the poverty rate for individuals in 1999.¹

¹ Note: Rankings are from highest poverty rate to lowest. Hence, a ranking of one indicates relatively high levels of poverty, and a ranking of 75 indicates relatively low levels of poverty.

Table 2 – Newton County Poverty Rates, 1999

Poverty Statistic	County Rate	Arkansas Rate	Arkansas			Northwest Arkansas		
			Rank	Range		Rank	Range	
				Low	High		Low	High
Individuals	20.4%	15.8%	17	7.2%	32.7%	2	10.1%	23.8%
Families with Related Children	22.6%	18.1%	22	7.8%	40.8%	2	11.2%	26.4%
Individuals 65 and Older	16.9%	13.8%	32	7.3%	27.6%	4	8.6%	26.6%

Table 3 presents average weekly earnings for covered employment in Newton County in the year 2001. The table also displays average weekly earnings as a proportion of the state’s figure and ranks Newton County in terms of average weekly earnings relative to the counties in Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas for which data were available. For example, in terms of average weekly earnings in the manufacturing sector, Newton County ranked 66th among the 71 counties in Arkansas for which data were available and 14th among the 15 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available.

Table 3 – Newton County Average Weekly Earnings, by Sector, Calendar Year 2001

Sector	Average Weekly Earnings	Percent of State	Arkansas			Northwest Arkansas		
			Rank	Range		Rank	Range	
				Low	High		Low	High
Manufacturing	\$318.36	55.4%	66 / 71	\$260.75	\$894.22	14 / 15	\$312.98	\$587.60
Wholesale Trade	\$367.99	51.3%	61 / 68	\$214.77	\$995.14	11 / 14	\$214.77	\$995.14
Retail Trade	\$244.68	72.0%	70 / 73	\$215.61	\$439.32	14 / 15	\$244.32	\$358.05
Information	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$306.77	\$869.54	N/A	\$348.10	\$832.62
Financial Activities	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$282.76	\$829.55	N/A	\$282.76	\$622.20
Professional and Business Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$218.14	\$955.05	N/A	\$256.91	\$955.05
Education and Health Services	\$231.49	42.7%	74 / 74	\$231.49	\$668.35	16 / 16	\$231.49	\$649.85
All Sectors	\$316.63	61.1%	75 / 75	\$316.63	\$681.93	16 / 16	\$316.63	\$631.34

Table 4 presents the share of personal income in Newton County in 2000 attributable to different sectors of the economy. The table displays how this share compares to the proportion for the state in aggregate and ranks Newton County in terms of the share of personal income attributed to the sectors relative to the counties in Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas for which data were available. For example, in terms of the share of personal income attributed to the manufacturing sector, Newton County ranked 70th among the 73 counties in Arkansas for which data were available and last among the 15 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available.

Table 4 – Disposition of Personal Income in Newton County, by Sector, Year 2000

Sector	Share of Personal Income	Greater or Less than State	Arkansas			Northwest Arkansas		
			Rank	Range		Rank	Range	
				Low	High		Low	High
Farm Earnings	2.6%	0.0%	52 / 75	0.1%	15.9%	11 / 16	0.4%	15.9%
Manufacturing	3.4%	-10.9%	70 / 73	1.3%	77.9%	15 / 15	3.4%	27.1%
Transportation and Utilities	1.8%	-3.9%	66 / 71	1.3%	14.5%	15 / 15	1.8%	14.5%
Wholesale Trade	0.5%	-3.0%	63 / 67	0.2%	11.4%	13 / 15	0.4%	5.9%
Retail Trade	2.4%	-5.4%	73 / 75	1.4%	24.4%	16 / 16	2.4%	24.4%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.8%	8.0%	N/A	1.1%	3.5%
Services	4.8%	-10.1%	70 / 75	3.3%	29.0%	16 / 16	4.8%	29.0%
Business Services	0.2%	-2.4%	62 / 65	0.1%	10.5%	14 / 14	0.2%	5.5%
Health Services	0.5%	-5.7%	72 / 72	0.5%	14.4%	16 / 16	0.5%	14.4%
Hotel and Lodging	0.4%	0.1%	10 / 55	0.04%	1.9%	3 / 14	0.05%	1.9%
Amusement and Recreation Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.03%	1.0%	N/A	0.03%	1.0%

The sale of livestock accounted for 98.0 percent of Newton County’s cash receipts from farm marketings in the year 2000. Livestock cash receipts and total cash receipts for Newton County in the year 2000 were \$9.7 million and \$9.9 million, respectively; the county ranked 53rd in terms of the former and 70th in terms of the latter among Arkansas’ counties. Cash receipts for crops and government payments for Newton County in the year 2000 totaled \$200,000 and \$664,000, respectively; the county ranked 73rd in terms of the former and 46th in terms of the latter among Arkansas’ counties. The county ranked 70th among Arkansas’ counties in terms of total production expenses in the year 2000, \$11.6 million. As of January 1, 2002, Newton County had a total of 20,000 cattle and calves and 11,000 beef cows; the county ranked 37th in terms of the former and 36th in terms of the latter among the counties in Arkansas.

Sources:

- United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000. <http://censtats.census.gov/data/AR/04005.pdf>
- United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000. <http://censtats.census.gov/data/AR/05005101.pdf>
- U.S. Commerce Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Accounts Data, Local Area Personal Income, Table CA1-3: Personal Income Summary Estimates. <http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/>
- Arkansas Employment Security Department, Covered Employment and Earnings, Annual 2001. Table 6: County Summary Employment and Earnings, by Industry, Calendar Year 2001. <http://www.accessarkansas.org/esd/01antb6.htm>
- Arkansas Employment Security Department, Covered Employment and Earnings, Annual 2001. Table 1: Average Covered Employment and Average Weekly Earnings, by Industry, 2001. <http://www.accessarkansas.org/esd/01antb1.htm>

U.S. Commerce Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Regional Accounts Data, Local Area Personal Income. Table CA05 – Personal Income by Major Source and Earnings by Industry. <http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/>
 Arkansas Agricultural Statistics Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 2001 County Profiles. <http://www.nass.usda.gov/ar/newton.PDF>

Education

Newton County contains the following four school districts, with October 1, 2000 enrollment found in parentheses: Deer (255), Jasper (569), Mt. Judea (240), and Western Grove (281). Table 5 displays the average ACT composite score for high school seniors (which ranges from 1 to 36, with 36 being the best), the attendance rate, the dropout rate (percentage of students dropping out of school in Grades 7-12 from October of one school year to October of the next school year), the graduation rate (percentage of students enrolled in Grade 9 and completing Grade 12), and the college remediation rate (percentage of freshmen entering an *Arkansas* college or university who are required to take at least one remedial class) for the above school districts and for the state in aggregate.

Table 5 – Educational Statistics for Newton County Schools, 2000-2001 School Year

School District	ACT Composite Score	Attendance Rate	Dropout Rate	Graduation Rate	College Remediation Rate
Deer	19.1	92.6%	0.7%	91.6%	43.0%
Jasper	21.2	93.4%	2.6%	86.5%	45.0%
Mount Judea	15.8	88.5%	5.8%	81.7%	33.0%
Western Grove	22.2	92.2%	0.0%	100.0%	56.0%
State Average	20.1	93.2%	3.0%	84.3%	41.0%

Among the 301 school districts in Arkansas for which data were available, the ACT composite scores for the school districts in Newton County ranked as follows: Deer (tied for 186th), Jasper (tied for 39th), Mt. Judea (288th), and Western Grove (tied for 9th); because of ties, the rankings ranged from 1 through 299. Among the 72 school districts in Northwest Arkansas, the ACT composite scores for the school districts in Newton County ranked as follows: Deer (tied for 58th), Jasper (tied for 20th), Mt. Judea (72nd), and Western Grove (tied for 8th). District-wide average ACT composite scores for the 301 school districts in Arkansas for which data were available ranged from 24.0 to 14.0; for the school districts in Northwest Arkansas, the district-wide average ACT composite scores ranged from 24.0 to 15.8.

Among the 307 school districts in Arkansas for which data were available, the dropout rates for the school districts in Newton County ranked as follows: Deer (tied for 255th), Jasper (tied for 113th), Mt. Judea (tied for 28th), and Western Grove (tied for 285th); because of 27 districts' being tied for last place with a 0.0 percent dropout rate, the

rankings ranged from 1 through 285.² Among the 72 school districts in Northwest Arkansas, the dropout rates for the school districts in Newton County ranked as follows: Deer (63rd), Jasper (23rd), Mt. Judea (tied for 4th), and Western Grove (tied for 69th); because of four districts' being tied for last place with a 0.0 percent dropout rate, the rankings ranged from 1 through 69. For the state, dropout rates ranged from 15.4 percent to 0.0 percent; for the districts in Northwest Arkansas, dropout rates ranged from 12.5 percent to 0.0 percent.

Among the 307 school districts in Arkansas for which data were available, the graduation rates for the school districts in Newton County ranked as follows: Deer (tied for 89th), Jasper (tied for 154th), Mt. Judea (219th), and Western Grove (tied for 1st). Among the 72 school districts in Northwest Arkansas, the graduation rates for the school districts in Newton County ranked as follows: Deer (tied for 23rd), Jasper (43rd), Mt. Judea (56th), and Western Grove (tied for 1st). For the state, graduation rates ranged from 100.0 percent to 23.6 percent; for the districts in Northwest Arkansas, graduation rates ranged from 100.0 percent to 63.2 percent.

Among the 307 school districts in Arkansas for which there were data available, the college remediation rates for the school districts in Newton County ranked as follows: Deer (tied for 179th), Jasper (tied for 162nd), Mt. Judea (tied for 231st), and Western Grove (tied for 95th); because of 31 districts' being tied for last place with a 0.0 percent college remediation rate, the rankings ranged from 1 through 281.³ Among the 72 school districts in Northwest Arkansas, the college remediation rate for the school districts in Newton County ranked as follows: Deer (tied for 38th), Jasper (tied for 31st), Mt. Judea (tied for 57th), and Western Grove (tied for 12th); because of three districts' being tied for last place with a 0.0 percent college remediation rate, the rankings ranged from 1 through 70. For the state, college remediation rates ranged from 100.0 percent to 0.0 percent; for the districts in Northwest Arkansas, college remediation rates ranged from 80.0 percent to 0.0 percent.

In the Deer School District, neither of the district's schools is accredited by the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges (NCASSC). In the Jasper School District, neither of the district's schools is accredited by the NCASSC. In the Mt. Judea School District, neither of the district's schools is accredited by the NCASSC. In the Western Grove School District, neither of the district's schools is accredited by the NCASSC.

Table 6 displays the proportion of persons 25 years of age or older in Newton County with various levels of education in the year 2000. The table also presents the proportions for the state in aggregate and ranks the county among the 75 counties in Arkansas and among the 16 counties in Northwest Arkansas in terms of the four levels of education presented. For example, Newton County ranked 30th among Arkansas' counties and

² Note: Rankings are from highest dropout rate to lowest. Hence, a ranking of one indicates a relatively high dropout rate, and a ranking of 285 indicates a relatively low dropout rate.

³ Note: Rankings are from highest remediation rate to lowest. Hence, a ranking of one indicates a relatively high dropout rate, and a ranking of 281 indicates a relatively low remediation rate.

ninth among the counties in Northwest Arkansas in terms of the proportion of the persons 25 years of age or older with a bachelor's degree in 2000.

Table 6 – Educational Attainment in Newton County, 2000

Level of Education	County	Arkansas	Arkansas			Northwest Arkansas		
			Rank	Range		Rank	Range	
				Low	High		Low	High
Bachelor's Degree	8.1%	11.0%	30	4.2%	18.0%	9	5.4%	14.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3.7%	5.7%	36	1.8%	10.1%	9	2.8%	9.8%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	11.8%	16.7%	29	6.3%	28.1%	9	8.4%	24.5%
High School Diploma or Higher	70.2%	75.3%	42	56.2%	84.4%	11	65.4%	80.4%

There are seven Arkansas colleges and universities within 100 miles of Jasper, Arkansas. The institutions, the number and type of degree programs offered at the institutions, and their enrollment statistics are presented below.

Arkansas State University – Mountain Home (ASUMH) is a two-year public college located in Mountain Home, Arkansas in Baxter County. The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education has approved the dissemination of the following academic degrees and certificate programs at ASUMH: certificates of proficiency in 5 program areas, technical certificates in 9 program areas, and associate degrees in 14 program areas. Opening fall enrollment for ASUMH was 1,238 persons in 2001, 8.5 percent greater than fall 2000. Opening fall enrollment for the two-year public institutions in Arkansas stood at 43,387 in 2001, 6.3 percent greater than fall 2000. ASUMH ranked 13th among the 23 two-year public institutions in Arkansas in terms of fall enrollment in 2001. Since 1997, fall enrollment at ASUMH has increased 45.3 percent, compared to a 16.6 percent increase for two-year public institutions in Arkansas.

Arkansas Tech University (ATU), located in Russellville, Arkansas in Pope County, is a four-year public university. The AHECB has approved the dissemination of the following academic degrees and certificate programs at ATU: technical certificates in 3 program areas, associate degrees in 10 program areas, baccalaureate degrees in 54 program areas, master's degrees in 20 program areas, and a specialist degree in educational leadership. Opening fall enrollment for ATU was 5,576 in 2001, 7.8 percent greater than fall 2000. Opening fall enrollment for the four-year public universities in Arkansas stood at 65,704 in 2001, 2.4 percent greater than fall 2000. The school ranked fifth among the ten four-year public universities in terms of fall enrollment in 2001. Since 1997, fall enrollment at ATU has increased 31.6 percent, compared to a 4.8 percent increase for four-year public universities in Arkansas.

North Arkansas College (NAC), located in Harrison, Arkansas in Boone County, is a two-year public college. The AHECB has approved the dissemination of the following academic degrees and certificate programs at NAC: certificates of proficiency in 5 program areas, technical certificates in 25 program areas, an advanced certificate in electronics, and associate degrees in 26 program areas. Opening fall enrollment for NAC was 1,889 persons in 2001, 4.0 percent greater than fall 2000. The school ranked eighth among the 23 two-year public institutions in Arkansas in terms of fall enrollment in 2001. Since 1997, fall enrollment at NAC has decreased 14.6 percent.

Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC), located in Bentonville, Arkansas in Benton County, is a two-year public college. The AHECB has approved the dissemination of the following academic degrees and certificate programs at the NWACC: certificates of proficiency in 4 program areas, technical certificates in 3 program areas, associate degrees in 26 program areas, and an advanced certificate in medical dosimetry. Opening fall enrollment for NWACC was 4,292 persons in 2001, 5.8 percent greater than fall 2000. The school ranked third among the 23 two-year public institutions in Arkansas in terms of fall enrollment in 2001. Since 1997, fall enrollment at NWACC has increased 32.5 percent.

The University of Arkansas (UA), located in Fayetteville, Arkansas in Washington County, is the flagship institution of the University of Arkansas system. The AHECB has approved the dissemination of the following academic degrees and certificate programs at the UA: associate degrees in 2 program areas, baccalaureate degrees in 123 program areas, post-baccalaureate certificates in 2 program areas, master's degrees in 101 program areas, specialist degrees in 8 program areas, doctoral degrees in 42 program areas, and a professional degree in law. Opening fall enrollment for the UA was 15,752 in 2001, 2.6 percent greater than fall 2000. The school ranked first among the ten four-year public institutions in Arkansas in terms of fall enrollment in 2001. Since 1997, fall enrollment at the UA has increased 7.5 percent.

The University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton (UACCM), located in Morrilton, Arkansas in Conway County, is a two-year public college in the University of Arkansas system. The AHECB has approved the dissemination of the following academic degrees and certificate programs at the UACCM: certificates of proficiency in 3 program areas, technical certificates in 17 program areas, and associate degrees in 17 program areas. Opening fall enrollment for UACCM was 1,290 in 2001, 10.1 percent greater than fall 2000. The school ranked 12th among the 23 two-year public colleges in Arkansas in terms of fall enrollment in 2001. Since 1997, fall enrollment at UACCM has increased 43.8 percent.

The University of the Ozarks, located in Clarksville, Arkansas in Johnson County, is a four-year private liberal arts university and offers baccalaureate degrees in 25 program areas. Opening fall enrollment for the University of the Ozarks was 654 persons in 2001, 5.1 percent greater than fall 2000. Since 1997, fall enrollment at the University of the Ozarks has increased 22.5 percent.

Sources:

Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas School Information Site, Performance Report, 2001. <http://www.as-is.org/reportcard/rc2001/>

North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. <http://www.ncacasi.org/>

United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table DP-2. Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000. <http://censtats.census.gov/data/AR/05005101.pdf>

United States Census Bureau, Census 2000, Table DP-2. Profile of Selected Social Characteristics: 2000. <http://censtats.census.gov/data/AR/04005.pdf>

Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas State Colleges and Universities. <http://www.arkansashighered.com/colleges.html>

Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Approved Academic Degree and Certificate Programs. http://www.arkansashighered.com/pdfs/RP/degrees_2003.pdf

Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Opening Fall Enrollment at Public Colleges and Universities. October 29,2001.

<http://www.arkansashighered.com/Research/Enrollment/Actual%20Enroll%20Fall%202001.xls>

University of the Ozarks. <http://www.ozarks.edu/academics/programs.html>

III. Infrastructure

Ports

There are no navigable waterways in Newton County.

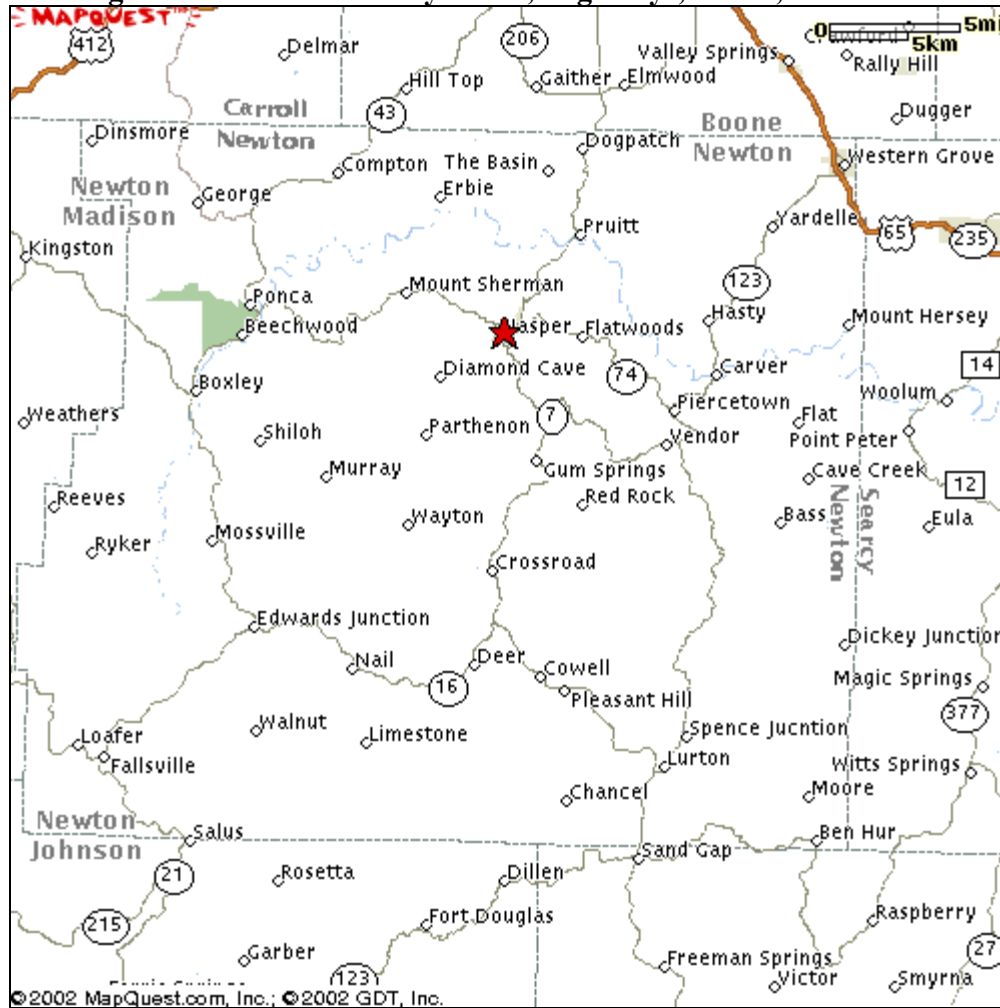
Source:

Arkansas Waterways Commission. <http://www.waterways.dina.org/waterways.html>

Highways

Figure 2 displays the major cities, highways, lakes, and rivers found in Newton County. In 2004, one mile of passing lanes is to be added to Arkansas State Highway 7 at the border between Newton County and Boone County.

Figure 2 – Newton County Cities, Highways, Lakes, and Rivers



Sources:

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. Statewide Transportation Improvement Program 2003-2005 Preliminary.

<http://www.ahtd.state.ar.us/contract/progcon/stip/stip%20by%20ffy%202003%2D2005%20prelim.xls>

MapQuest.com, Inc. <http://www.mapquest.com>

Utilities

Table 7 displays the surplus water capacity, the surplus wastewater capacity, the electricity provider, and the natural gas provider for the City of Jasper and the City of Western Grove in Newton County.

Table 7 – Utilities for Jasper, Arkansas and Western Grove, Arkansas

City	Water Surplus Capacity	Waste Water Surplus Capacity	Electricity Provider	Natural Gas Provider
Jasper	N/A	N/A	Carroll Electric Cooperative	none
Western Grove	N/A	Septic Systems	N/A	N/A

Two wells supply the City of Jasper with its water supply, and Valley Springs supplies water to the City of Western Grove.

Sources:

City of Jasper Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Gayle Ruhweld, Western Grove Water Department, City of Western Grove, Arkansas.

Railroads

The Arkansas & Missouri Railroad passes through Fayetteville, Greenland, Springdale, West Fork, and Winslow in Washington County west of Newton County and junctions with the Kansas City Southern Railroad in Fort Smith, with the Union Pacific Railroad in Van Buren, Arkansas, and with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad in Monette, Missouri.

The Missouri and Northern Arkansas Railroad passes through Bergman in Boone County north of Newton County in its 527-mile route from Kansas City, Missouri to Newport, Arkansas. The railroad has interchanges with the Union Pacific Railroad in Kansas City, Missouri and Newport, Arkansas; with the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad in Lamar, Aurora, and Springfield, Missouri; and with the Kansas City Southern Railroad in Joplin, Missouri.

The Union Pacific Railroad has a line running from its hub in Little Rock along the Arkansas River south of Newton County through Russellville, Clarksville, Ozark, Van Buren, and Fort Smith to a mainline junction in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

The Dardanelle & Russellville Railroad, located in Russellville in Pope County south of Newton County, is a five-mile short-line providing direct access to the Port of Dardanelle, local industry, and the Union-Pacific Railroad Railroad’s main line. The D&R Railroad also owns available industrial sites with rail access.

Sources:

Arkansas & Missouri Railroad. <http://www.arkansasmissouri-rr.com/map.html>

RailAmerica, Inc., North American Rail Group.

http://www.railamerica.com/html/missouri_northern_arkansas_r.html

RailAmerica, Inc. North American Rail Group.

<http://www.railamerica.com/railmaps/MNA.htm>

Union Pacific Railroad. <http://www.uprr.com/aboutup/usguide/usa-ar.shtml>

Russellville Economic Development Partnership, Inc.
<http://www.russellville.org/enter/transportation.htm>

Airports

There are no airports located in Newton County. The four major airports closest to Newton County are the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport in Bentonville, Arkansas (roughly 100 miles northwest of Jasper), Springfield-Branson Regional Airport in Springfield, Missouri (roughly 100 miles north of Jasper), Adams Field Airport in Little Rock, Arkansas (roughly 140 miles southeast of Jasper), and Tulsa International Airport in Tulsa, Oklahoma (roughly 200 miles west of Jasper).

Source:
 AirNav, LLC. Arkansas Airports. <http://www.airnav.com/airports/us/AR>

IV. Labor Force

A breakdown of covered employment for Newton County in 2001 is provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8 – Covered Employment for Newton County, 2001 Annual Averages

North American Industry Classification System Industry Group	Average Employing Units	Average Covered Employment
Natural Resources & Mining	8	15
Construction	9	14
Manufacturing	17	87
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	32	183
Wholesale Trade	4	22
Retail Trade	19	120
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	10	41
Education & Health Services	11	156
Leisure & Hospitality	14	82
Other Services	6	12
Local Government	12	379
State Government	8	95
Other	11	31
Newton County - Total	128	1,054

The manufacturing sector accounted for 8.3 percent of total covered employment in Newton County in 2001, compared to the state's figure of 20.5 percent. In terms of the proportion of covered employment attributed to the manufacturing sector, the county ranked 68th among the 71 counties in Arkansas for which data were available and last among the 15 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available. For the state, the proportions ranged from 62.4 percent (Calhoun County) to 5.1 percent (Perry County); for Northwest Arkansas, the proportions ranged from Marion County's 48.2 percent to Newton County's 8.3 percent.

The wholesale trade sector accounted for 2.1 percent of total covered employment in Newton County in 2001, compared to the state's figure of 4.1 percent. In terms of the proportion of covered employment attributed to the wholesale trade sector, the county ranked 51st among the 68 counties in Arkansas for which data were available and 8th among the 14 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available. For the state, the proportions ranged from 23.0 percent (Woodruff County) to 0.3 percent (Marion County); for Northwest Arkansas, the proportions ranged from Boone County's 7.5 percent to Marion County's 0.3 percent.

The retail trade sector accounted for 11.4 percent of total covered employment in Newton County in 2001, compared to the state's figures of 11.9 percent. In terms of the proportion of covered employment attributed to the retail trade sector, the county ranked 46th among the 74 counties in Arkansas for which data were available and 10th among the 15 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available. For the state, the proportions ranged from 18.9 percent (Saline County) to 2.7 percent (Calhoun County); for Northwest Arkansas, the proportions ranged from Baxter County's 14.5 percent to Benton County's 8.6 percent.

The transportation, warehousing, and utilities sectors accounted for 3.9 percent of total covered employment in Newton County in 2001, compared to the state's figure of 5.5 percent. In terms of the proportion of covered employment attributed to the transportation, warehousing, and utilities sectors, the county ranked 29th among the 69 counties in Arkansas for which data were available and 8th among the 14 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available. For the state, the proportions ranged from 18.4 percent (Little River County) to 0.8 percent (Marion County); for Northwest Arkansas, the proportions ranged from Crawford County's 17.7 percent to Marion County's 0.8 percent.

Data for the information sector in Newton County were not available. For the state, the information sector accounted for 1.9 percent of total covered employment in 2001. Among the 56 counties in Arkansas for which data were available, the proportion of covered employment attributed to the information sector ranged from 3.6 percent (Pulaski County) to 0.3 percent (Little River County). Among the 12 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available, the proportions ranged from Boone County's 3.2 percent to Johnson County's 0.4 percent.

Data for the financial activities sector in Newton County were not available. For the state, the financial activities sector accounted for 4.3 percent of total covered employment in 2001. Among the 73 counties in Arkansas for which data were available, the proportion of covered employment attributed to the financial activities sector ranged from 7.5 percent (Pike County) to 1.9 percent (Nevada County). Among the 14 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available, the proportions ranged from Marion County's 5.0 percent to Scott County's 2.3 percent.

Data for the professional and business services sector in Newton County were not available. For the state, the professional and business services sector accounted for 9.2 percent of total covered employment in 2001. Among the 68 counties in Arkansas for which data were available, the proportion of covered employment attributed to the professional and business services sector ranged from 23.3 percent (Benton County) to 0.5 percent (Woodruff County). Among the 15 counties in Northwest Arkansas for which data were available, the proportions ranged from Benton County's 23.3 percent to Scott County's 0.6 percent.

The education and health services sector accounted for 14.8 percent of total covered employment in Newton County in 2001, compared to the state's figure of 11.3 percent. In terms of the proportion of covered employment attributed to the education and health services sector, the county ranked 12th among the 74 counties in Arkansas for which data were available and 3rd behind Baxter County and Searcy County among the 16 counties in Northwest Arkansas. For the state, the proportions ranged from 19.9 percent (Baxter County) to 2.2 percent (Little River County); for Northwest Arkansas, the proportions ranged from Baxter County's 19.9 percent to Crawford County's 6.6 percent.

The leisure and hospitality sector accounted for 7.8 percent of total covered employment in Newton County in 2001, equivalent to the state's figure. In terms of the proportion of covered employment attributed to the leisure and hospitality sector, the county ranked 26th among the 73 counties in Arkansas for which data were available and 5th among the 16 counties in Northwest Arkansas. For the state, the proportions ranged from 16.7 percent (Carroll County) to 1.9 percent (Woodruff County); for Northwest Arkansas, the proportions ranged from Carroll County's 16.7 percent to Madison County's 4.3 percent.

A summary of Newton County's largest employers is presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9 – Newton County's Largest Employers

Company Name	City	Product	Employees
Newton County Nursing Home	Jasper	Skilled Care	A
Newton County Special Services	Jasper	Individual and Family Social Services	A

Employee Codes – A: Less than 100

Figure 3 displays the annual unemployment rates for Newton County, the State of Arkansas, and the United States for the period 1995 through 2001. For the period, Newton County experienced unemployment rates well above the state and national averages; the annual unemployment rate in Newton County was between 0.8 percent above and 3.9 percent above the annual unemployment rate for the state and between 0.2

percent above and 4.3 percent above the annual unemployment rate for the U.S. for the period. In 2001, the unemployment rate in Newton County was 6.7 percent, compared to the state and national figures of 5.1 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively. Newton County had the 26th highest unemployment rate among Arkansas' 75 counties in 2001 and the highest unemployment rate among the 16 counties in Northwest Arkansas. Unemployment rates in Arkansas ranged from 2.2 percent in Benton County to 13.9 percent in Mississippi County; unemployment rates in Northwest Arkansas ranged from Benton County's 2.2 percent to Newton County's 6.7 percent.

Figure 3 – Historical Unemployment Rate Comparisons: 1995-2001

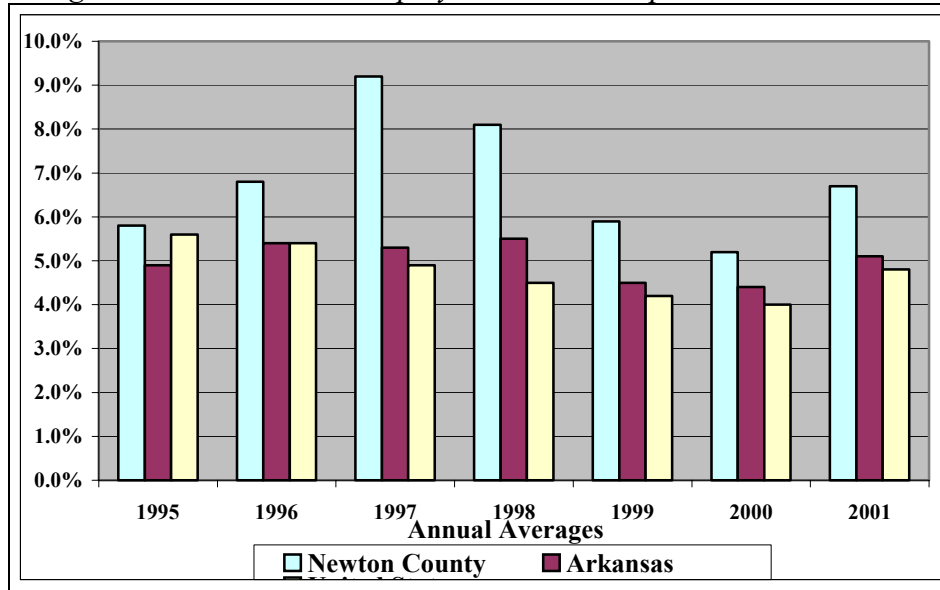
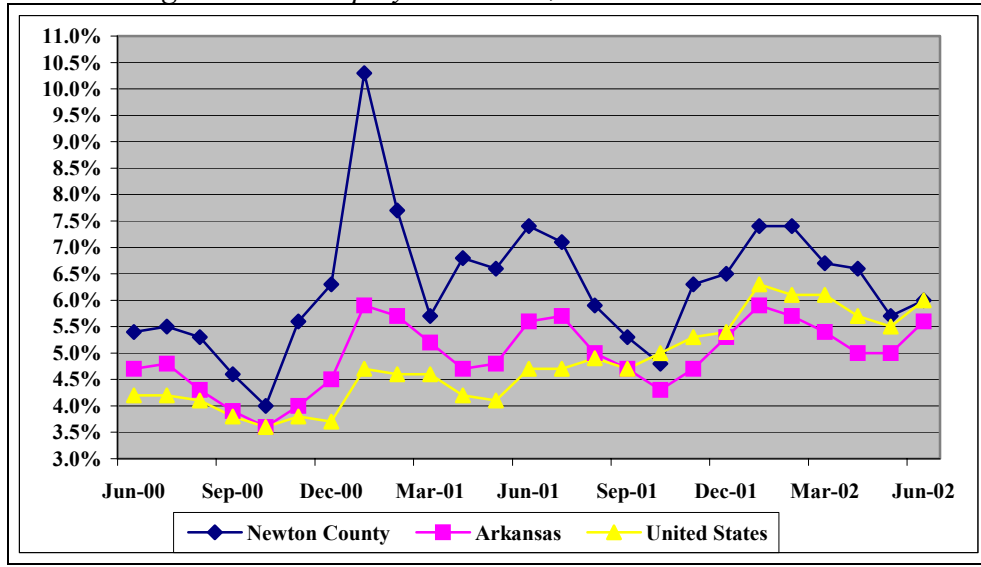


Figure 4 displays the monthly unemployment rates for Newton County, the State of Arkansas, and the United States from June 2000 to June 2002.⁴

⁴ Note: Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Figure 4 – Unemployment Rates, June 2000 – June 2002



Sources:

Arkansas Employment Security Department, Covered Employment and Earnings, Annual 2001. Table 6: County Summary Employment and Earnings, by Industry, Calendar Year 2001. <http://www.accessarkansas.org/esd/01antb6.htm>

Arkansas Employment Security Department, Covered Employment and Earnings, Annual 2001. Table 1: Average Covered Employment and Weekly Earnings, by Industry, 2001. <http://www.accessarkansas.org/esd/01antb1.htm>

Largest Employers by County data from Arkansas Department of Economic Development.

Arkansas Economic Security Department, Arkansas Revised Labor Force Statistics, Annual Average, 2001. <http://www.accessarkansas.org/esd/lmiaa01.htm>

Arkansas Employment Security Department, Arkansas Labor Force Statistics. <http://www.accessarkansas.org/esd/lmilaborforcestats.htm>

V. Available Industrial Sites and Buildings

There are no available industrial sites or industrial buildings in Newton County.

Source:

Available Building and Site Database for Arkansas Communities, Arkansas Department of Economic Development. http://www.1800arkansas.com/Buildings_Sites/

VI. Economic Goals

Newton County faces many challenges to successful economic development. The median age of the population of the county is significantly older than the state median. Newton County has the lowest per capita personal income numbers of any county in Arkansas. Poverty rates are high, and average weekly earnings are low. Educational attainment of the population is lower than state averages at all levels.

Each of these factors needs to be addressed in order for Newton County to catch up to state averages. Policies focusing on the retention and education of young people are the keys to the attraction of high quality industries to the area. With such a small population, the labor force does not exist to serve large operations. Therefore, the focus of economic development should be on small, quality industries that can make best use of specific local resources.

Newton County is home to spectacular scenery and natural beauty. These qualities make the county an attractive location for retirement and for tourism. Indeed, both industries already exist in Newton County and should be the focus of development resources.

VII. Opportunities for Future Business Development

Skilled Care

As cost pressures throughout the healthcare industry have grown, nursing homes have converted segments of their facilities to provide sub-acute care, rehabilitation, or other higher-margin business lines. Many nursing home chains have developed expertise in skilled rehabilitation therapies, e.g., occupational, physical, speech, and respiratory. In addition, many now offer complex and intensive medical services to patients whose health problems are more serious than those of the typical nursing home resident. This sub-acute care market niche provides a cost-efficient alternative to general acute-care hospitals.

The growth of assisted-living facilities will be driven by change in U.S. demographics. Individuals aged 85 and older — a group representing the largest number of users of long-term healthcare services — is currently the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. At present, 3.6 million people are over the age of 85, and that number is expected to reach 5.7 million by 2010. Industry sources project that expenditures for senior living approximated \$18 billion in 2000 and could reach \$30 billion by 2005. Assisted-living services are provided largely to private-pay, long-term clients, but many states are developing regulatory structures to provide some reimbursement under Medicaid.

Beginning in the 1980s, the assisted-living industry emerged as an attractive housing alternative for frail and elderly persons who do not require intensive medical care. However, financial struggles have reduced the projected growth rate of this housing model over the past few years. Standard & Poor's believes that assisted living remains desirable for individuals able to pay for the bulk of their housing needs. However, the industry will continue to struggle unless additional state and/or federal payment reimbursements are instituted.

Source: Standard and Poor's NetAdvantage.

<http://0-www.netadvantage.standardpoor.com.library.uark.edu/>