

Modoc County

Modoc County, with a population of 9,450, encompasses the extreme northeast corner of the Shasta Cascade region of California. The county is comprised of 3,944 square miles of unspoiled, unpolluted, and un-crowded high desert splendor. With elevations ranging from 4,000 to 10,000 feet, 90 percent of the county is comprised of national forests, refuges and wilderness areas. Modoc County is bordered on the north by the state of Oregon, on the east by the state of Nevada, on the south by Lassen and Shasta Counties and on the west by the Siskiyou County. Originally a part of Siskiyou County, Modoc County, with its rich Indian lore, scenic beauty and abundant resources, became its own entity in 1874.

Modoc County was named by the Modoc Indians meaning "The Smiles of God" because of their intense love for the land which is comprised of rugged lava plateaus, fertile valleys and majestic mountains. Comprised of 70 percent public owned forest and wilderness, Modoc County's high desert climate provides warm dry summers, perfect for the outdoor enthusiast to enjoy camping, fishing, cross-country skiing and other outdoor activities. With more than 250 miles of trout streams and over 4,000 acres of lakes and reservoirs, Modoc County is a dream come true for hunters and fishermen.

Alturas, with a population of 2,892, is the largest city in Modoc County. At an elevation of 4,446 ft., this city serves as the seat of Modoc County. Alturas (Spanish for "Valley on Top of a Mountain") is located in the broad valley of the Pit River in the center of the county at the junction of Highways 395 and 299. Formed by the erosion and rebuilding of the volcanic flows of the Modoc Plateau, the valley is set on a prehistoric lake bed. The city is bordered on the south by the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge, the location of the natural preservation of wetlands. Marshes, forests, plains and lakes found in this area provide habitat for many types of wildlife.

East of Alturas, one the most beautiful mountain ranges, the Warner Mountains, can be found. The Warner Mountains, often referred to as "Where the West Still Lives," encompasses a major portion of Modoc National Forest. At over 70,000 acres, this area offers an abundance of wildlife and excellent recreational opportunities. Other areas of the county include the Surprise Valley, Jess Valley and Fandango Pass, all of which are considered to be the best ranching valleys in Northern California.

Picturesque and unspoiled Big Valley, tucked between high mountain peaks, consists of the towns of Adin, Lookout, Bieber, and Nubieber. All of these towns border the 14,100 acres of the Ash Creek Wildlife area. It is said that, during the winter months, nearly one-half of the world's population of Cackling Geese migrate here.

Settlers arriving in this area in the early 1800's began logging and farming in this region. Until recently, agriculture and logging had been the main source of

employment for residents of Modoc County. However, numerous town businesses, including several mills, were forced to close their doors due to the restrictions on logging and water rights.

Currently, the major employers in the area are government, agriculture, services, wholesale/retail and manufacturing. In Surprise Valley, cattle ranching and alfalfa hay production are still the leading enterprises in the area.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- As of the year 2000, total population was 9,450, of which 2,175 are aged 60+ and 740 are aged 75+
- Average of ½ senior per square mile
- The population of Modoc County has seen a slight decrease within the last decade
- In 2003, population decreased 0.3 %, and has been decreasing at an average rate of 0.2% annually, exhibiting a total negative growth rate of 401%, or 400 people, with roughly 2.5 people per square mile, a 4% decrease since 1991
- In 2000, high school graduates accounted for 30% of Modoc County's total population

TARGETED SENIOR POPULATIONS

- 75+ 34%
- Low Income 20%
- Minorities 8%

AGRICULTURE

- Hay, Alfalfa
- Cattle and Calves
- Potatoes, Irish

LABOR FORCE

- Total population employment rate in 2000 was 42%
- Total labor force is 3,953 (with an unemployment rate of 9.8 percent for men and 11.5 percent for women).
- The labor force in Modoc County experienced average variations between 1990 and 2002.
- Total labor force increased 10% during 2002

- Despite increase, total labor force decreased at an annual average of 0.2% since 1990
- Total employment has increased an average of 0.3% since 1990
- Employment increased 6% in 2002
- Unemployment rate was lowest in 2001 at 6.9% and highest in 1993 at 13.3%
- The projected unemployment rate for the year 2005 is 6.8%

INCOME

- The per capita annual income in the year 2000 was \$21,710
- Income indicators in Modoc County remained relatively stable of the last decade
- Total personal income decreased 301% in 2001
- Poverty rate increased from 15.0% in 1989 to 21.5% in 1999 (compared with California at 12.5% in 1989 to 14% in 1999)

HOUSING

- With total housing units in the year 2000 being 4,807, per capita housing was 51% or approximately 1 housing unit per every 2 persons
- Between 1991 and 2002, the number of total housing units in the county increased .01%, compared to an average annual increase of 2.7%
- Fair market rent has increased at an average of 8.5% since 2000

LOW INCOME

- 20% of the 60+ year old population is @ 125% or below poverty level. This is composed of:

78.7%	Non-Minority
.9%	African American
9.2%	American Indian/Alaskan Native
0	Asian
0	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
2.3%	Other
.9%	Multi-race
8.0%	Hispanic/Latino

- The number of TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) and CalWORKS (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) recipients and the number of households receiving food stamps have been decreasing steadily, reaching low points in 2002
- MediCal expenditures are at their highest, nearing 10 million in 2002

- The highest number of Medi-Cal eligible recipients are Non-Minority, consisting of 74% of the people served by the program

CLIMATE

- Average Maximum Temperature – mid-80's
- Average Low Temperature – low 40's
- Average annual precipitation – ranges from 12" to 18"
- Average annual snowfall – ranges from 20" to 55"