

Demographics

Land Area: 3,169 square miles

Population: 4,619 (Based on 1990 US Census)

By Race

3,699	White
11	Black
140	American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut
7	Asian, Pacific Islander
762	Other
2,106	Hispanic (<i>percent of population 45.6%</i>)

By Age, by %

under 5	8.2 %
5-17 yrs	23.5 %
18-20	3.7 %
21-24	4.2 %
25-44	15.5 %
45-54	9.8 %
55-64	7.5 %
65-74	7.5 %
75+	4.9 %

By Gender

2,370	Males
2,249	Females

Population Estimates for municipalities, July 1997 Total = 5,911

18	Bonanza
2,361	Center (MCP)
68	Crestone
116	Moffat
676	Saguache
2,672	Unincorporated areas

Households: 1,643

2.76	Persons per household
56 %	Family households, with children under 18 years
171	Female householders (no spouse present) family household
68.4 %	Female householders (no spouse present) family households, % with children under 18 yrs
423	Non-family households

Health Care:

1	Active non-federal physician
0	Community hospitals

Social Programs:

825	Social Security Program beneficiaries
-----	---------------------------------------

Education:

1,296	Persons 3 and over enrolled in school
1,052	Persons 3 and over enrolled in Elementary or High School
99 %	Persons 3 and over enrolled in Elementary or High school, % public
160	Persons 3 and over enrolled in College
31	Persons 16-19 not enrolled in school and not a high school graduate
65.9 %	Persons 25 and over, percent high school graduate or higher
14.4 %	Persons 25 years and over, percent with Bachelor's degree or higher
37.9 %	of Population over 5 years old speaking language other than English at home
34.9 %	of Population over 5 years old speaking Spanish at home

Income (1989):

Median Family income	\$18,915	Median household income	\$15,853
47.4 %	households with income of less than \$15,000		
23.1 %	households with income of \$15,000-\$24,999		
13.7 %	households with income of \$25,000-\$34,999		
7.2 %	households with income of \$35,000-\$49,999		
4.9 %	households with income of \$50,000 to \$74,999		
3.7 %	households with income of \$75,000 or more		

Employment:

1,871	Workers 16 years and over
27.6 %	Workers 16 years and over, percent working outside county of residence
16.4 %	Workers 16 years and over, percent working at home
2,026	Labor force
40.5 %	Civilian labor force percent female
26 %	Civilian labor force employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries
14.3 minutes	Average travel time to work

Employment and Wages by Classification, 1997

Class	Establishments	Average Employment	Average Wage
Private industry	136	887	\$16,895
Agri-production: crops	26	274	\$21,845
Agri-production: livestock	3	20	\$15,153
Agriculture Services	10	143	\$15,008
General Construction	3	12	\$6,760
Special trade, construction	11	25	\$12,698
Manufacturing	6	81	\$15,146
Transportation, Comm, PU	10	24	\$17,071
Wholesale: durable goods	4	28	\$20,902
Wholesale: non-durable goods	7	53	\$25,376
Retail: Food stores	3	25	\$9,910
Retail: Auto/service stations	6	42	\$15,870
Retail: Eating & drinking	11	54	\$5,678
Retail: Misc.	4	10	\$7,262
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	9	29	\$17,776
Services	19	61	\$10,930
Government: State	5	7	\$31,192
Government: Local	17	515	\$16,700
Government: Federal	5	41	\$30,110

Poverty:

1,399	Persons below poverty level in 1989 (total population 4,567)
30.5 %	Percent of all people of all ages in poverty, 1993
303 or 24.5 %	Families with income below poverty level, 1989
54.4 %	Percent of families with female householder (no spouse present) below poverty level, 1989
1,399	Persons with income below poverty level, 1989 (30.6 %)
42.4 %	Percent of related children less than 18 years below poverty level, 1989
20.2 %	Percent of persons 65 years and over below poverty level, 1989

Crimes Known To Police In 1995 (number of):

148	Serious crimes
20	Violent crimes
0	Murders and non-negligent manslaughters
1	Forcible rapes
1	Robberies
18	Aggravated assaults
128	Property crimes
29	Burglaries
95	Larceny-thefts
4	Motor vehicle thefts
2	Arsons

Housing:

2,306	Housing units
68 %	One unit detached
1.6 %	One unit attached
2.4 %	Five or more units
23.9 %	Mobile home or trailer
55.4 %	With public water system or private company
53.2 %	With public sewer
1,643	Occupied housing units
1,103	Owner-occupied housing units
67.1 %	Owner-occupied housing units as a percent of occupied

Owner-occupied housing units, median value \$39,000

Value, specified owner-occupied units 601

415	Less than \$50,000
161	\$50,000 to \$99,999
18	\$100,000 to \$149,999
3	\$150,000 to \$199,999
3	\$200,000 to \$299,999
1	\$300,000 or more
540	Renter –occupied housing units
663	Vacant housing units
339	Seasonal, recreational or occasional use
5 %	Homeowner vacancy rate
10 %	Rental vacancy rate
2.74	Persons per owner-occupied unit
2.79	Persons per renter-occupied unit
77.4 %	Occupied housing units with phone

Agriculture:

43.2 %	Farm earnings, percent of total earnings
535	Farm population
11.6 %	Farm population, percent of total
7.9 %	Farms, % less than 50 acres (1987)
54.7 %	Farms, % 500 acres or more (1987)
472,194	Land in farms, total acreage (1987)

1999 Agricultural Land Audit, Saguache County Abstract:

Land Class	Acres	Total Actual Value	Actual Value Per Acre
Irrigated Farm	76,736	\$15,681,889	204.36
Meadow Hay	41,422	\$8,639,634	208.58
Grazing	212,416	\$3,109,321	14.64
Waste	173,071	\$1,012,465	5.85
Total	503,645	\$28,443,309	

Abstract of Assessment:

Classification of Real and Personal Property for 1999 Taxes (County of Saguache Assessor)

Vacant:

Residential	\$8,143,168
Commercial	\$28,810
Other	\$1,501,839
Minor Structure	\$37,251
Total Vacant	\$9,711,068

Residential:

Single-family Residence	\$5,788,596
Duplexes-Triplexes	\$19,799
Multi-Units (4-8 units)	\$117,801
Multi-Units (9+ units)	\$46,978
Manufactured Housing	\$779,028
Manf. Housing Parks	\$16,459
Total Residential	\$6,768,661

Commercial:

Merchandising	\$734,665
Lodging	\$160,812
Offices	\$191,365
Recreation	\$131,881
Special Purpose	\$550,912
Warehouse/Storage	\$1,504,544
Multi-Use (3+ uses)	\$69,638
Commercial Personal Property	\$837,791
Total Commercial	\$4,180,608

Industrial:

Manuf./Processing	\$447,438
Industrial Personal Prop.	\$107,454
Total Industrial	\$554,892

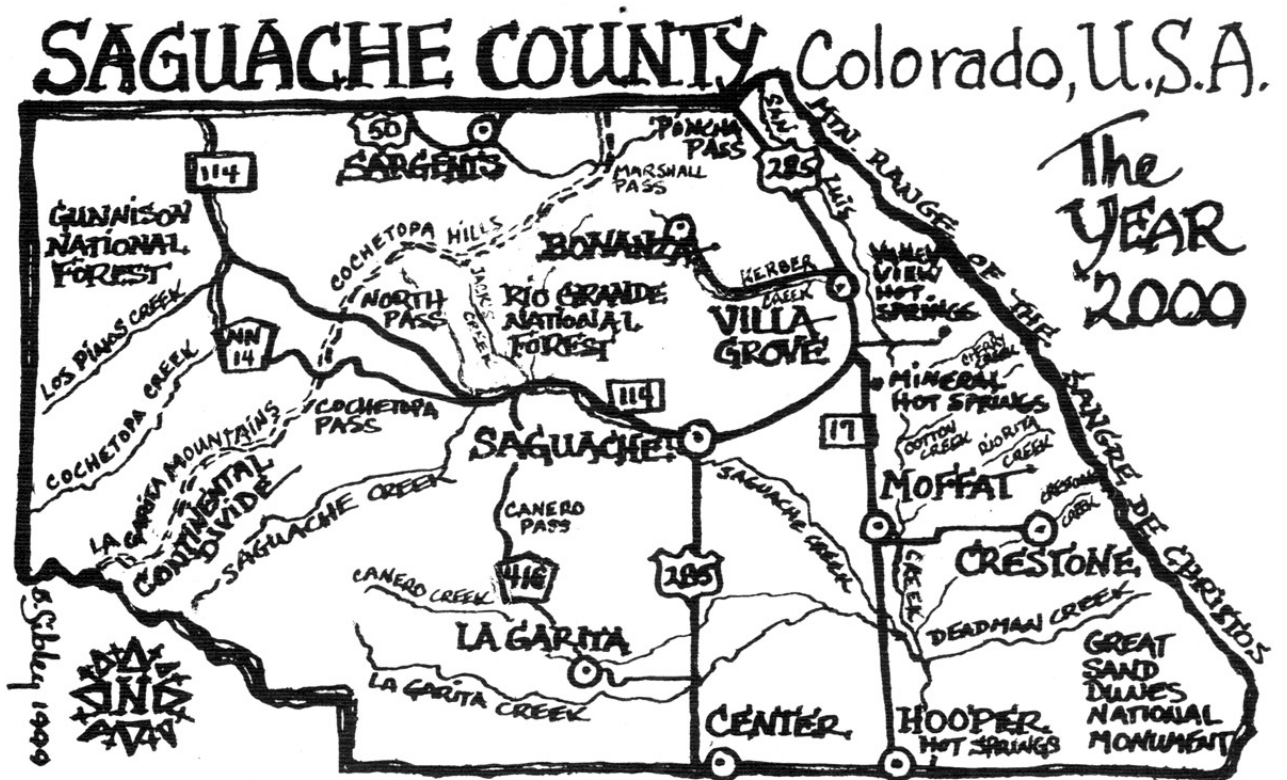
Abstract of Assessment, Continued -

Agricultural:

Meadow Hay Land	\$2,505,503
Grazing Land	\$904,114
Waste land	\$308,560
Farm/Ranch Residence	\$1,563,387
Manufactured Housing	\$326,946
Farm/Ranch Support Buildings	\$4,271,111
Agricultural Personal Property	\$157,176
Total Agricultural	\$14,580,321

Natural Resources:

Earth or Stone Products	\$309,869
Severed Mineral Interests	\$413,464
Earth/Stone Personal Property	\$207,905
Total Natural Resources	\$931,238



000 WITH NINE TOWNS, AND NOT ONE TRAFFIC LIGHT!

Artist: Barb Sibley - Handcarved, Saguache

Center

Center Town Clerk - 719 754-3497

In November of 1906, from the community of Centerville, the Town of Center was founded. As it approaches its' centennial year, the community is already planning the celebration. Although Center is in the middle of the beautiful San Luis Valley, at the south edge of Saguache County, it is not a typical tourist town. It is the "Agricultural Center" of the Valley and thrives on the success of the agriculture around it.

With a population of approximately 2000 people, the town has the atmosphere of rural America. Residents of the farming community around Center are very much a part of the town, adding nearly another 2000 people to the area's population. "Main street," actually two streets that intersect in the middle of town, has a grocery store, hardware & farm supply, pharmacy, barber shop, video store, restaurants, arcade / gift shop, bank, credit union, liquor stores, taverns, industrial & business supply, chamber of commerce, tortilla factory & outlet, clothing stores, laundry, tire store, and a motor car company. All of these are locally owned and operated with a genuine small town attitude. Most have been family establishments and part of the town for a very long time. Other businesses in town offering great small town service include custom embroidery, plumbing & heating, hair salons, convenience stores, restaurants, bank, auto & farm supply, farm equipment sales, fuel & service stations, an electrical contractor, accountants, pressure washer sales & service, an industrial ventilation company, a realtor, agricultural warehouses and processors, farm chemical companies, an irrigation company, welding shop, fuel oil companies, and many small home businesses.

The "New" Town hall houses police, clerk, utilities, and administration offices. The "old town hall, (the White house)" houses the library, social services and other organization offices. A modern-yet friendly, post office is on main street. Medical services are available at the medical clinic, the dentist's office, the public health office, and the mental health office. Strong ties to agriculture influence the type of businesses. There are no hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast rooms at this time.

One unique aspect of Center is its utility service. The town's Utility Department provides Center with its own electricity, natural gas, water, sewer, and cable television, and charges for these services on one bill. This department has received many compliments for its high quality service and ability to thrive in a small town.

Center has a beautiful Community Park, one of the nicest in the San Luis Valley. Completely fenced and away from traffic, this safe place has gorgeous grass play areas, including new playground equipment and covered picnic tables, soccer fields, baseball fields, a football field and track, and has large paved parking areas. It's a wonderful place for family and community events.

Of interest to visitors:

Many people are fascinated to see the technology used in today's farming and agriculture-related businesses, the lifeblood of Center's economy and interests. Potatoes, grain, lettuce, carrots, alfalfa hay, and spinach are the primary crops grown in this area. Related industries from these crops include numerous warehouses that grade, pack and ship the various commodities and two potato processing plants. Also located in the Center area are the Colorado State University Research Center and Farm (San Luis Valley Branch); the Adolph Coors Research Farm; an all organic crop farm and carrot processor. The Center Area Chamber of Commerce will gladly arrange tours of the above listed industries for anyone interested. Availability depends on the time of year and weather, but there is always something happening.

The main events in Center each year are the San Juan Fiesta in June, the Harvest Festival at the end of August, and the Chamber/Kiwanis Annual Christmas Parade & Events, held on a Saturday, usually a week to 10 days before Christmas. All of these events offer a full day of family fun.

(See Also - Resource Guide, Organizations, Associations & Foundations - Center Chamber of Commerce.)

Center Town Hall, 3rd and Worth Street, PO Box 400, Center 81125

Crestone

Town Hall - 719 256-4313

Crestone and the Baca Grande Development are located 15 miles east of Hwy 17 on County Road T. The community is nestled up against the Sangre De Cristo Mountain Range. The population of the area is approximately 1,000 and varies winter to summer.

There are many hiking trails in the area including Willow Lake, North Crestone Lake and South Crestone Lake. The trails are fairly well maintained and the lakes are approximately 5-6 miles from the trailheads.

Crestone and the Baca are considered by some to be an "alternative building capitol." Homes are being built from straw bales, papercrete (a paper & concrete mixture) and a variety of recycled and natural materials and methods.

There are several spiritual centers located in the area.

Crestone Moffat Business Association <http://www.crestone.org>

Vision for Crestone, Baca and Moffat (1995): A community in which each individual actively shares in the responsibility for sustaining and enhancing our quiet, simple, rural way of life.

Moffat

719 256-4385

Moffat, a town of approximately 100 people, is situated along Highway 17 in the northern end of the San Luis Valley. The town was incorporated in 1911 and at one time was a booming railroad town. With the rail gone, Moffat fought to survive.

In recent years, the town has seen slow growth. With the growth has come business - agriculture, cottage industry and entrepreneurs are the way of life for many people. Businesses, within the town include two bed and breakfasts; a flower & gift shop; a Credit Union; a medical clinic; a manufacturing company; two construction companies; a trading post, feed shop and cafe; a second hand store and the US Post Office.

The town of Moffat is the site of the Moffat Schools which provides quality personal education for pre-school through high school. Stop by and visit our little piece of the great San Luis Valley!

Saguache

Town Clerk - 719 655-2232

The incorporated Town of Saguache is the Northern Gateway to the San Luis Valley on the intersection of State Highways 114 & 285. The elevation is 7,800 feet, surrounded by the Sangre De Cristos on the east and the San Juan mountain range on the west. The population of this scenic rural ranching community is approximately 700. Saguache was settled in 1867 by Otto Mears, the "Pathfinder," as a supply town for the mining cities around us. Saguache means "water at the Blue Earth," a Ute Indian name. The Saguache County Museum is a pioneer museum filled with seven rooms of memorable, nostalgic & educational collections.

Many artists and craft people live in Saguache County and started the "Handmade Tour" in 1993. On the 3rd weekend in September, artists display their work, along with live music, food and fun! (See Resource Guide, Calendar - September.)

Basic services are available in Saguache, such as: medical clinic, ambulance and EMT, several denominations of churches, grocery store, hardware & mechanic services, library, K through 12 public school system, along with cottage industry artesian. Saguache is also the county seat for this large Colorado county. Ranching is considered the main occupation in the northern portion of Saguache County.

Saguache, Continued -

An attraction to the area is abundant outdoor recreation within the Rio Grande National Forest and Bureau of Land Management lands, all nearby within a beautiful valley between the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the Cochetopa Hills Range of the Rocky Mountains. The climate ranges from ideal 70 to 75 degree summer days to somewhat severe winters with typical spring wind until the snow bares off the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Precipitation is limited on the valley floor to approximately 7 to 9 inches per year with the nearby mountains providing valuable watershed for irrigation water. Full service communitites are nearby including Salida (45 miles north), Monte Vista (35 miles south) and Alamosa (50 miles south and east).

The Chamber of Commerce has a website:

<http://www.saguache.org>.

It has photos, and stories by Cecil Hall on the history of Saguache. 719 655-2805

Sargents

There are 13 year-round residents in Sargents. National Forest land surrounds the town, so fishing and big game hunting draw many people to the area.

Sargents used to have 45 businesses when the railroad and mining was active. The wooden water tower still stands and there are several railroad buildings in the area. Sargents used to have a railroad round table and service from Gunnison over Marshall pass to Salida.

Tourists use Hwy 50, but traffic is slower in the winter. Salida is 33 miles to the east and Gunnison is 32 miles to the west.

Villa Grove, Unincorporated

There are 50 citizens in Villa Grove, mainly business owners or retirees. The main businesses are construction or art related, including pottery and gift galleries, a trading post and cafe, liquor store, motel and U.S. Post Office. Villa Grove is in the Saguache school district, but most kids go to Moffat School.

On the Valley floor, toward the top of the San Luis Valley, Villa Grove can have serious winter weather.

Additional Sources of Information

US Census information, Colorado Statistics
<http://www.galileo.com>

US Immigration Service
719 589-9736

US Occupational Safety & Health Administration
800 669-5771
<http://www.sasquatch.library.orst.edu>

NOTES
