



Barbour County West Virginia

Barbour County is situated on the Allegheny Plateau, and includes part of the Laurel Ridge. The Tygart River drains the area consisting of approximately 345 square miles.

Philippi is the county seat, and was settled in 1780 by Richard Cottrill and Charity Talbott. The community was originally known as Anglin's Ford and then Booths Ferry. It was later renamed Philippi in honor of Philip Pendleton Barbour.

The battle of "Philippi Races" is reputed to have been the first land battle between the Union and Confederate Armies.

The city is situated in a level valley served by the Tygart River.

Barbour County is known for its coalmines, lumber production, natural gas and oil wells. Agricultural production has been reduced to provider gardens, forage hay, and cattle in recent years.

Barbour County formed in 1843 and was named for distinguished Virginia jurist, Philip Pendleton Barbour. Barbour's brother James was at one time Governor of Virginia, a United States Senator, Minister to Great Britain, and served as Secretary of War from 1825 to 1828.

Barbour County is located in north central West Virginia. In July of 2003, the county had an unemployment rate of 9.8%, which is slightly down from 10.0% in January of 2003. This rate is ranked "Much Worse Than Average" statewide.

US Route 33 (Corridor H) passes through the southern-most corner of the county, providing the entire county with less than five (5) miles of four-lane access.

Transportation Development

Only 5 miles of four-lane (U.S. 33) highway serve Barbour County; that road barely clips the southern tip. A four-lane connector from I-79 to Corridor H has been approved and is being planned for the future. Barbour County has a scenic railroad, which connects to Elkins in Randolph County. There is a rural airport at Philippi; however, no commercial air transportation is available. From the commercial perspective, no waters exist in Barbour County for commercial use.

Infrastructure

Good progress has been made in providing potable water to the rural residents of this county. A regional jail is locating close to the Town of Junior on Corridor H (Rt. 33) and this has caused infrastructure development, both water and sewer, in the local area. As of

2003, the Barbour County Development Authority is in the process of implementing an EPA grant to furnish the Belington Industrial Park expansion with water/sewer.

ARC awarded funds to the Century-Volga Public Service District in Barbour County to extend water service to the areas of Carrollton Road and Talbott Road. This project is under construction and will provide water service to approximately 138 new customers.

Cluster Development

Even though Barbour County suffers from the lack of four-lane highways it does have cluster development. Value-added wood products firms are located at the Belington Industrial Park. These enterprises have been so successful that the local development authority has purchased additional property for economic development. A specialty aluminum-tubing firm will occupy a new shell building that was constructed in 2002. Companies who are located in the original industrial park want to grow and have submitted letters of intent to relocate into the expansion project. The Belington site is 7 miles from Corridor H and ties in nicely with other Counties who belong to the Hardwood Alliance Zone. Barbour County is in close proximity to the Wood Technical Training Center at Elkins, Weyerhaeuser's Truss Joist plant at Buckhannon, and the myriad of lumber mills, dry kilns, and other wood industry facilities in the region.

The Philippi Industrial Park is fairly new, but successful venture. Plastic product manufacture takes place at this site with 3 firms in operation. This plastics cluster adds needed diversity to Barbour County's economic Base. It is reported that there was a \$1.6 million dollar payroll from jobs created at this site. For a rural community with very low population density that has suffered chronic unemployment for 25 years that is a significant economic development.

Technology

The City of Philippi has been awarded a grant to install community wide broadband and is in the implementation stages of that project in 2003. Alderson Broaddus is located at Philippi and offer degree programs in health and natural sciences.

Existing Community Conditions

Barbour County has experienced a slight population decline since 1990. In that year, the population totaled 15,699, while only 15,557 residents were listed on the 2000 Census. This decrease represents a -0.9% change, and can be attributed to a lack of four-lane access, rural accessibility and economic development. (The population of Barbour County also dwindled from 1980 to 1990, when totals decreased from 16,639 to 15,699.)

Most of Barbour County's population has low to moderate income. In 2000, the median household income was \$24,729. This level has increased since 1990, when the level was \$15,607. The West Virginia median household income for 2000 was \$29,696.

This County's increase in household income can be attributed to several factors. First of all, during the ten-year period in question, benefit levels such as minimum wage and Social Security increased. The high increase in Barbour County household income is most likely due to the availability of higher wage jobs within commuting distances outside the county (i.e. FBI Center in Harrison County). The 2003 Barbour County Economic Data Profiles report 45% of the County's workforce are employed outside the County. Residents may be earning a higher wage but this is offset by greater transportation costs. A decrease in population also contributed to higher median incomes because fewer non-employed persons influenced the calculations. During the 1990's, the numbers of extraction-based jobs sharply decreased and are now stable at lower levels. As a result, and coupled with a slight population decline, the median income levels in 2000 can be expected to remain static until the economic impact of Corridor H manifests.

Barbour County does not contain neighborhoods that resemble urban settings. The City of Philippi is the largest municipality with 2,870 residents and is the county seat. Two other municipalities, the City of Belington (1,788 residents) and the Town of Junior (450 residents), are also located in the county.

Barbour County's commercial hubs are the cities of Philippi and Belington. Existing industry, agriculture, and coal are static. The coal industry has been in steady decline since the 1980's, with only one mine remaining in the county. Tourism, however, seems to be picking up with the advent of scenic train routes throughout the southeastern portions of the county. Among the county's historic structures is the Barbour County Courthouse, the visual focal point of the City of Philippi.

The county's rich Civil War history also adds to tourist appeal. The Philippi Covered Bridge is the site of the first land battle of the Civil War and the Laurel Mountain Battlefield is near Belington. Philippi is host to an annual Blue/Gray Reunion each year that draws many Civil War enthusiasts from across the country.

Despite the relative slumps in economic development, plastic and forestry industries have experienced new growth at the new industrial parks in Philippi and Belington. A dimensions plastics specialty manufacturer is in the process of purchasing the new shell building at the Belington Industrial Park and a southern cabinet manufacturer is seriously considering locating to Barbour County.

Barbour County has a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. In addition to the Barbour County Fairgrounds, which is in need of an indoor arena, there are baseball fields, soccer fields and football fields at Philip-Barbour High School. However, there is a need for infrastructure upgrades to both the fairgrounds and the high school. A new high school on the same property as the current school is under construction. As this new school is completed, the aforementioned infrastructure needs become more apparent. Belington and Junior both contain community parks, and there are additional athletic facilities located on the campus of Alderson Broaddus College in Philippi. Also, Audra State Park and Teter Creek Wildlife Management Areas are located in the county.

The county contains Broaddus Hospital, just outside of Philippi, and a countywide EMS service. There are only three volunteer fire departments located in each of the municipalities, making quick response times to the rural sections of the county virtually impossible. The Barbour County Detachment of the WV State Police is located on US Route 219 between Philippi and Belington and staffs four (4) officers. The Barbour County Sheriff's Department (five [5] deputies and police forces in each of the municipalities serves the county. Alderson Broaddus College also maintains a security staff.

As is the case with many rural counties, road maintenance is an ongoing need. Also, the quality of life for all county residents could be greatly improved with the extensions of public, potable water systems throughout the county. Many natural water supplies are impaired because of pre-regulated mine damage.

Housing Conditions

According to the 2000 Census, there are 7,348 housing units in Barbour County. Of these, 6,123 are occupied and 1,125 are vacant. Renters occupy 1,315 of the units, while owners occupy 4,808 of the units.

The county's housing stock is fairly old, with over 23% of the units having been built prior to 1939. There were approximately 961 housing starts during the period between 1990 and 2000. This is over 100 fewer new homes than were built in the previous decade. This relatively low number of housing starts exemplifies the age of the county's communities. It is also indicative of only a slight population change. Because the county's population only changed -0.9% between 1990 and 2000, the number of new housing starts normally would be expected to be low once again. Historic low interest rates may have an unpredictable influence on new housing in 2003. A high number of county residents have lived in their homes for many years. According to the 1990 Census, 32.1% of owner-occupied housing units were purchased and moved into prior to 1969. In 2000 the ratio has dropped to 18%. This is indicative of a population transition.

In general, there are no large areas of deterioration. However, certain individual locations of deterioration need to be addressed. Also, as is the case in most communities, more elderly / family assisted and multi-family housing units would be helpful to community residents.

Completed waterline extensions along State Route 57 into the Elk City area should allow for further residential and commercial growth. The same is true for the Valley Furnace, Kasson, Shiloh, Claude, and Hiram areas.

Community Needs Assessment and Priorities

The County still needs to expand its economic base in the manufacturing sector. The Barbour County Development Authority is diligently working on that issue.

County leaders have identified a major use for their fairground facilities. In 2002, a commissioned feasibility study on establishing an equine center was updated that documented favorable conditions to establish such a center. The major need included an indoor arena. A key issue identified in the study was that such a facility would likely fail if it had to service a debt load. The Barbour County Commission has pursued and are presently exploring options to obtain the \$1 million needed to construct the arena.

The small community of Century is an area of concern due to sanitation issues. The enclave is built on a hillside that has drainage problems and old dilapidated private septic systems. Pecks Run has been identified by the State Natural Recourse Conservation Service as having unacceptable levels of e.coli in the watershed. Century is located at the headwaters of this tributary of the Tygart River. Local and county leaders are working on possible solutions. Also, providing public, potable water to rural areas of the county continues to be an ongoing priority.

Documentation

1. Barbour County Horse Center Feasibility Study (2000)
2. Small Cities Block Grant Hearing
3. Housing Data from 1990 Census
4. Population Data from 2000 Census
5. Region VII Planning and Development Council Regional Development Plan / Overall
6. Economic Development Plan (1998 / 1999)
7. 2000 Region VII Planning and Development Council Project Priority List
8. West Virginia Economic Summary
9. West Virginia County Profiles Website,
<http://www.state.wv.us/bep/lmi/cntyprof/CP99barb.htm>

BEARFACTS 1991-2001 Barbour, West Virginia

Barbour is one of 55 counties in West Virginia. It is not part of a Metropolitan Area. Its 2001 population of 15,428 ranked 37th in the state.

PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME

In 2001 Barbour had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$17,157. This PCPI ranked 41st in the state and was 75 percent of the state average, \$22,862, and 56 percent of the national average, \$30,413. The 2001 PCPI reflected an increase of 4.5 percent from 2000. The 2000- 2001 state change was 4.8 percent and the national change was 2.2 percent. In 1991 the PCPI of Barbour was \$11,478 and ranked 44th in the state. The 1991-2001 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 4.1 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 4.2 percent and for the nation was 4.3 percent.

TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME

In 2001 Barbour had a total personal income (TPI) of \$264,702. This TPI ranked 37th in the state and accounted for 0.6 percent of the state total. In 1991 the TPI of Barbour was \$178,734 and ranked 35th in the state. The 2001 TPI reflected an increase of 3.7 percent from 2000. The 2000-2001 state change was 4.4 percent and the national change was 3.3 percent. The 1991-2001 average annual growth rate of TPI was 4.0 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 4.2 percent and for the nation was 5.5 percent.

COMPONENTS OF TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME

Total personal income includes net earnings by place of residence; dividends, interest, and rent; and transfer payments received by the residents of Barbour. In 2001 net earnings accounted for 51.5 percent of TPI (compared with 52.0 in 1991); dividends, interest, and rent were 16.9 percent (compared with 16.8 in 1991); and transfer payments were 31.6 percent (compared with 31.2 in 1991). From 2000 to 2001 net earnings increased 2.6 percent; dividends, interest, and rent increased 2.5 percent; and transfer payments increased 6.3 percent. From 1991 to 2001 net earnings increased on average 3.9 percent each year; dividends, interest, and rent increased on average 4.0 percent; and transfer payments increased on average 4.2 percent.

EARNINGS BY PLACE OF WORK

Earnings of persons employed in Barbour decreased from \$98,080 in 2000 to \$96,270 in 2001, a decrease of 1.8 percent. The 2000-2001 state change was 3.9 percent and the national change was 2.5 percent. The average annual growth rate from the 1991 estimate of \$75,067 to the 2001 estimate was 2.5 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 3.9 percent and for the nation was 5.6 percent.

Note: All income estimates with the exception of PCPI are in thousands of dollars, not adjusted for inflation.