



## **Tucker County West Virginia**

Parsons is the county seat of Tucker County.

Tucker County was founded in 1856. The county is in northeast West Virginia, on the Allegheny Plateau and in the Eastern Panhandle. Most of the county is in the Monongahela National Forest. Its economic base includes coal, limestone quarries, lumber production, livestock, and fruit farms.

Tucker County was named in honor of Henry St. George Tucker, prominent Virginia jurist. Two state parks, Blackwater Falls and Canaan Valley are located in the county. The county consists of some 422 square miles.

Tucker's father was born in Bermuda, came to Virginia as a boy, served in the Revolutionary Army, and became a judge after practicing law at Williamsburg. He published a five-volume annotated edition of Blackstone's Commentaries in 1803. Henry St. George Tucker served in the U.S. House of Representatives, then as a superior court judge, and finally (for 10 years) as president of the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals.

Tucker County is located in northern West Virginia. In April 2003 Tucker County had an unemployment rate of 9.2%, which was down from 10.9% in April 2002. This employment rate is ranked "Much Worse Than Average" in West Virginia. Many jobs in this Mountain County are minimum wage/seasonal positions at ski resorts. Also, 26% of Tucker County residents leave the county and state to work. In the past year, the county has lost 110 goods producing jobs this was 4% loss of positions in the nonfarm payroll. Service sector employment remained the same.

### **Transportation Development**

Tucker County has no four-lane access; however the completion of Corridor H (new four-lane highway which connects I-79 and the Virginia border) in the coming decade will open the entire county to economic and residential opportunity. There are no railroads or bus service and the nearest navigable river is the Monongahela which is 100 miles away.

### **Infrastructure**

Tucker County has significant challenges in the area of infrastructure. Thomas needs water system improvements and its waste sewer segregated from naturally occurring storm and spring runoff. Parsons needs to update its sewer system; currently grades in old lines have deteriorated to the point raw sewage is discharged during any storm event. Davis needs to extend its water service and has a sewer project in development Total Dailey Maximum Loads (TDMLs) are in question for the Canaan Valley area and it is unclear at this time which sanitary issues need to be resolved.

The City of Parsons Wastewater System has been flooded numerous times since the devastation of the 1985 flood. As a result, this antiquated system cannot manage the storm water flow and raw sewage is flowing freely in this municipality. The City can afford fifty percent loan, but there is a dire need of grant funds to complete this project.

New water service is sorely needed in the communities of Moore, Porterwood, and Location Road. The Hamrick PSD and the City of Parsons are developing projects to address these needs.

### **Cluster Development**

Kingsford's charcoal brick manufacturing plant in Parsons is part of the regional wood industry cluster. A value-added wood enterprise is located in Davis. An emerging development in the energy sector would be the establishment of a wind farm between Parsons and Thomas. There is an effort to re-establish some coal production in the area. A new Industrial Park is being developed outside of Davis and two value added wood industry firms have committed to locate there.

Tucker County has a cluster of natural resource based activities. There is a US Forest Service Ranger District Headquarters in the County and a Wildlife Refuge located in Canaan Valley. Two state parks and a wildlife management area are also located in the county. Thomas has a unique cluster of artisans and crafters. An outlet enterprise that serves to market hand crafted products from all of West Virginia is located in Thomas.

### **Technology**

Tucker County is a rural county that has not had an economic, transportation or population base to experience much technology based economy. DSL is available to some of the county. The wind farm is cutting edge technology of that sector. The local emergency communications system is in the process of constructing a new facility. It will have state of the art equipment and be able to provide the most current 911 services.

### **Neighborhood Revitalization**

Although Tucker County does not contain neighborhoods often found associated with larger urban areas it is, in part, composed of many small towns and unincorporated communities. For the most part, these areas are occupied by lower income persons and have a variety of community needs. This county has one high school, which graduated 79 students in 2003 compared to 123 five years prior. There are also 2 primary schools and two libraries that contain 24,072 volumes.

Many communities feel their potable water supplies have been compromised by coal mining and gas well development. Public comments include concerns of low quality, low quantity, and property damage due to high iron content. Public water extensions are under construction for the citizens serviced by Hamrick PSD, in the Holly Meadows, Horseshoe Run, Shaffertown and Lead Mine communities.

## **Community Housing Needs**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 4,634 housing units within the County's boundaries. Of these, 3,052 are occupied and 1,582 are vacant. Renters occupy 533 of the housing units and 2,519 units are owner occupied.

The County's housing stock is in transition, with 21.6 % of the units having been built before 1939. In 1990 33.9 % of residential structures were built before 1939. Public water is a critical need in the Holly Meadows and the Tucker County Horseshoe Run Communities; however, a project is well underway to meet this need. In general there are no large areas of deterioration, but individual locations of rehabilitation exist which need to be addressed. There is a need for both elderly /family assisted housing and multi-family development.

## **Economic Development Needs**

The commercial attributes of Tucker County are not centrally located. The County's economic base has declined since the 1985 flood. Existing industry, primarily tourism, timber, and mining have experienced reduction in business. A commercial park is ripe for development near Davis and an industrial building is under construction. Infrastructure is a critical issue to complete the development of the site.

The lack of public water/waste management is the most serious infrastructure issue to be addressed for economic development in this county.

## **Documentation**

1. Small Cities Block Grant Hearing
2. 1990 Census
3. 2000 Census
4. Region VII Planning & Development Council Regional Development Plan/Overall Economic Development Plan (1998/1999)
5. (1998/1999) Project Priority List
6. BEP County Profiles
7. <http://www.state.wv.us/bep/lmi/datarel/drcntyem.htm>
8. <http://www.wvcountries.org/map-frameset.html>

## **BEARFACTS 1991-2001 Tucker, West Virginia (54093)**

Tucker is one of 55 counties in West Virginia. It is not part of a Metropolitan Area. Its 2001 population of 7,182 ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> in the state.

### **PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME**

In 2001 Tucker had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$20,299. This PCPI ranked 28th in the state and was 89 percent of the state average, \$22,862, and 67 percent of the national average, \$30,413. The 2001 PCPI reflected an increase of 10.3 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 Tucker was \$13,422 and ranked 26th in the state. The 1991-2001 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 4.2 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 Tucker had a total personal income (TPI) of \$145,785. This TPI ranked 51<sup>st</sup> in the state and accounted for 0.4 percent of the state total. In 1991 the TPI of Tucker was \$103,820 and ranked 49th in the state. The 2001 TPI reflected an increase of 8.6 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 3.5 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 Tucker. In 2001 net earnings accounted for 55.0 percent of TPI (compared with 59.3 in 1991); dividends, interest, and rent were 16.6 percent (compared with 16.0 in 1991); and transfer payments were 28.3 percent (compared with 24.8 in 1991). From 2000 to 2001 net earnings increased 11.9 percent; dividends, interest, and rent increased 2.2 percent; and transfer payments increased 6.4 percent. From 1991 to 2001 net earnings increased on average 2.7 percent each year; dividends, interest, and rent increased on average 3.9 percent; and transfer payments increased on average 4.9 percent.

### **EARNINGS BY PLACE OF WORK**

Earnings of persons employed in Tucker increased from \$77,712 in 2000 to \$80,501 in 2001, an increase of 3.6 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 \$59,313 to the 2001 estimate was 3.1 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.