

U.S. Department of Agriculture. Census of Agriculture-2007.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. "Montana 2013 Agricultural Statistics."

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5.2 POPULATION

Historic Population Trends

Big Horn County is Montana’s 14th most populated county. Big Horn County grew at a significantly slower rate (1.5%) than its neighboring counties during the last decade, with Yellowstone County seeing a 12.6% increase and Carbon County seeing a 5.2% increase. Hardin grew by about 3.5% (121 persons between 2000 and 2010). Lodge Grass lost 16% (82 persons) between 2000 and 2010 and has seen population decline over the past two decades (see Table 3). The population of the unincorporated area of the county, including Lodge Grass and census designated places was 8,932 in 2010, compared to 8,777 in 2000. Approximately 45% of the population in the unincorporated areas lives within one of the six census designated places or Crow Agency.

Table 3: Population Change for Hardin, Lodge Grass, Crow Agency and Big Horn County: 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1990-2000	% Change 2000-2010
Hardin	2,940	3,384	3,505	15.1	3.5
Lodge Grass	517	510	428	(1.3)	(16.0)
Crow Agency	1,446	1,552	1,616	7.3	4.1
Big Horn Co.	11,337	12,671	12,865	11.7	1.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Demographic Profile Data

Table 4: Census Designated Places (CDPs): 2000-2010

Town	2000	2010
Busby	695	745
Fort Smith	122	161
Muddy	627	617
Pryor	628	618
St. Xavier	67	83
Wyola	186	215

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Demographic Profile Data

Locals report that many of the people who left Lodge Grass in the last decade moved to Hardin. Others from Lodge Grass, Hardin and other areas in the county have left the county entirely and have moved to the Billings area.



Crow Fair (Photo: Montana Department of Commerce)

The ethnic composition of the county continues to change toward a greater proportion of American Indians.

Table 5: Ethnic Groups as Percent of Total Population: 1990, 2000 and 2010*

	1990	2000	2010
White	43.4	36.6	31.4
American Indian & Alaska Native	55.5	59.7	64.3
Hispanic or Latino	n/a	3.7	4.0
Black or African American	.2	.2	0.5
Asian	.4	.5	0.7
Some Other Race	.6	.7	1.2

* Numbers may add to more than the total population, and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Demographic Profile Data

Big Horn County is a younger county than Montana on the whole with Montana’s percentage of persons older than 65 being more than 15%. The median age in Big Horn in 2000 was 29.8; and in 2010, 30.5. Whereas Montana’s median age in 2010 was 39.8 and the median age in the U.S. was 37.2 in 2010.

Table 6: Population by Age: 1990, 2000 and 2010*

	1990		2000		2010	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
0-4	1,278	11.3	1,180	9.3	1,355	10.5
5-17	2,903	25.6				
5-19			3,737	29.5	3,311	25.7
18-24	1,008	8.9	1,322			
20-24			707	5.6	935	7.3
25-44	3,327	29.3	3,363	26.5	2,864	22.3
45-64	1,817	16.0	2,595	20.5	3,110	24.2
65+	1,004	8.9	1,089	8.6	1,290	10.0

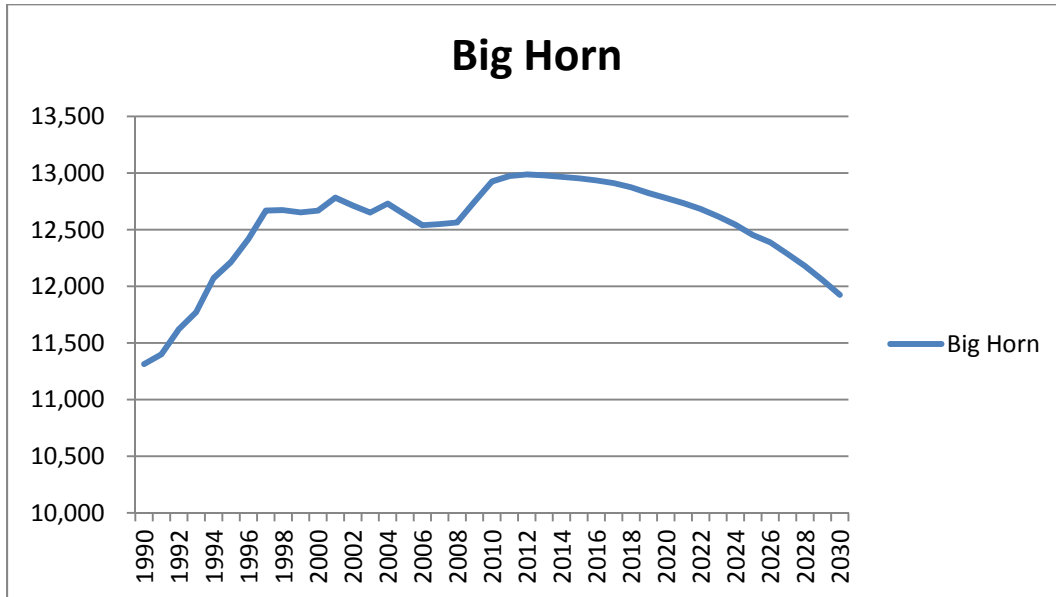
* 2000 and 2010 Census categorized age differently than previous censuses

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Demographic Profile Data

Population projections

Based on standardized methodology from the Montana Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC), the population of Big Horn County is projected to decline slowly over the next few decades. By 2030, the population is projected at 11,925 persons, approximately the same as the 1994 population.

Table 7: Big Horn County Population 1990-2012 Estimates and 2012-2030 Projections



Source: Montana CEIC, “Montana State and County Population Projections 1990-2060” compiled using eREMI - a product of Regional Economic Models, Inc. (www.remi.com) - Released April 2013

Sources:

Montana Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC). <http://ceic.mt.gov> “MT County Total Population Comparison, 1990 – 2060”

U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder2. <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

5.3 HOUSING

Big Horn County saw very little growth in the number of housing units over the last decade compared to Montana and the nation as a whole. The number of housing units in Big Horn County increased by less than 1% compared to 17% for the state of Montana.

The average household size in Big Horn County has remained stable at approximately 3.2 persons per household and continues to be greater than the average household size of the state which is currently 2.58 persons. Average household size is much larger for Muddy Cluster, Crow Agency, Pryor, and Busby than for the county average.

Table 8: Big Horn County Housing Units

	2000	2010	% Change
County	4655	4695	0.8
Hardin	1411	1401	-0.7
Lodge Grass	164	133	-19.0
Montana	412,633	482,825	17.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Demographic Profile Data

Population growth generally outpaced housing stock. In the county between 2000 and 2010, housing stock grew at about half the rate of the population (housing stock in the county increased by 0.8% and population grew by 1.5%). In Hardin, the population increased by 3.5% but the housing stock declined by 0.7%. According to locals, some of the newcomers to Hardin are living in RVs and mobile homes that have been moved onto city lots. In Lodge Grass, where the population declined by 16%, the housing stock diminished at an even greater rate of 19%.

Table 9: Average Household Size*

	MT	Big Horn	Hardin	Lodge Grass	Muddy	Crow Agency	Pryor	Busby
2000	2.45	3.25	2.56	3.34	4.18	4.40	3.78	3.93
2010	2.35	3.21	2.65	3.80	4.28	4.51	3.47	4.07

*averages both renter and owner-occupied housing

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Demographic Profile Data

Owner-occupied housing units in the county increased by 26 units between 2000 and 2010 (see Table 3.3) and renter-occupied units increased by 55 units. The reduction in vacant housing units could be a combination of the removal of some older housing units and the occupancy of some previously vacant (and possibly substandard) units. Overall vacancy rates for owner-occupied homes in the county are consistent with the state (see Table 11), but vacancy rates are much tighter in Muddy Cluster and Crow Agency. The increase in rental occupancy also follows national trends during the Great Recession with more people renting homes than buying.