

REGIONAL DATA AND ANALYSIS

Mendocino County has an estimated 2022 population of more than 92,000 according to the most recent US census data. Ukiah, the county seat, has an estimated population approaching 17,000, and is located in the Russian River Valley, near the geographic center of the county. Ukiah is a local source of goods and services, and has historically been a center for agriculture, lumber manufacturing, allied businesses, and light industry. The population trend has been steadily increasing in recent years.

The Ukiah area includes a community college, a small but active airport, an 18-hole golf course, and Lake Mendocino - a man-made reservoir used for hydroelectric power generation, flood-control, water storage, and recreation.

For more extensive goods and services, residents can travel south to Santa Rosa, the county seat of Sonoma County. Santa Rosa may be reached from Ukiah in about one hour, under normal weather and traffic conditions. Santa Rosa is a regional center for retail and wholesale goods, and is a location for major offices of both state and federal governments. Other notable communities in Mendocino County serving the subject area are the town of Willits and the coastal towns of Mendocino and Fort Bragg. Willits is situated on Highway 101, approximately 23 miles north of Ukiah. Mendocino and Fort Bragg are coastal towns situated on the Highway 1, which runs along the Pacific Coast through Mendocino County, north of the subject property.

San Francisco is located approximately 110 miles to the south of Ukiah, and may be reached via U.S. Highway 101. This highway runs north-south through the coastal counties from southern California into southern Oregon and beyond.

Historically, the economic base of Mendocino County over the past several decades has been a combination of agriculture, fishing, and timber production and milling. However, over the last twenty years the timber industry has been in decline, resulting in the recent closure of most lumber mills in the area. One direct result of the decline in timber production has been that many larger timber holdings, previously operated as large scale industrial tree farms, have been split up and sold as smaller tracts, or preserved as managed forests. This trend has also caused an increase in rural residential development in the county.

The Mendocino and Sonoma County General Plan land use policies and zoning in much of the rural areas are intended to keep land holdings in large ownerships and to set a minimum parcel size of 160 acres. However, there are numerous existing parcels acknowledged by the county through Certificates of Subdivision Compliance that are much smaller than the "minimum parcel size". Many ranches and larger holdings were historically divided into parcels through the Homestead Act and do not require the county's subdivision approval.

Agriculture is still a major contributor to the county economy. Some land is suited for crop production including apples, pears, and premium quality wine grapes. The more rugged lands are used for timber production and grazing cattle and sheep. Coastal ridges, mostly in Sonoma County, have been proven to be suitable for premium quality grapes. A few of the pre-Prohibition era vineyards in Mendocino County, such as Ciapusci and Zeni vineyards, are still in operation producing ultra-premium wine grapes, and numerous newer plantings have more recently been developed, especially in the Anderson Valley, near the communities of Booneville and Yorkville.

Santa Rosa

The City of Santa Rosa is located approximately 45 miles north of San Francisco, and is the county seat, as well as the commercial hub, of Sonoma County. Santa Rosa, with a population of approximately 175,000, contains nearly 36% of the total Sonoma County population, and accounts for more than 50% of the County's retail sales.

The city provides police and fire protection, as well as water and sewer services to local residents. Education is provided by several school districts through High School, while the Santa Rosa Junior College and nearby Sonoma State University (in Rohnert Park) provide continued education. The city of Santa Rosa has four regional shopping centers, four hospitals, and offices for both the state and federal governments.