

= Phoenix , Arizona =

Phoenix (/ ˈfiːnɪks /) is the capital and largest city of the U.S. state of Arizona . With 1 @, @ 563 @, @ 025 people (as of 2015) , Phoenix is the sixth most populous city nationwide , the most populous state capital in the United States , and the only state capital with a population of more than 1 million residents .

Phoenix is the anchor of the Phoenix metropolitan area , also known as the Valley of the Sun , which in turn is a part of the Salt River Valley . The metropolitan area is the 12th largest by population in the United States , with approximately 4 @. @ 3 million people as of 2010 . In addition , Phoenix is the county seat of Maricopa County and is one of the largest cities in the United States by land area .

Settled in 1867 as an agricultural community near the confluence of the Salt and Gila Rivers , Phoenix incorporated as a city in 1881 . Located in the northeastern reaches of the Sonoran Desert , Phoenix has a subtropical desert climate . Despite this , its canal system led to a thriving farming community , many of the original crops remaining important parts of the Phoenix economy for decades , such as alfalfa , cotton , citrus , and hay (which was important for the cattle industry) . In fact , the " Five C 's " (Cotton , Cattle , Citrus , Climate , and Copper) , remained the driving forces of Phoenix 's economy until after World War II , when high @-@ tech industries began to move into the valley and air conditioning made residences much more comfortable in the very hot summers .

The city averaged a 4 percent annual population growth rate over a 40 @-@ year period from the mid @-@ 1960s to the mid @-@ 2000s . This growth rate slowed during the Great Recession of 2007 ? 09 , and has rebounded slowly . Phoenix is the cultural center of the Valley of the Sun , as well as the entire state .

= = History = =

= = = Early history = = =

For more than 2 @, @ 000 years , the Hohokam peoples occupied the land that would become Phoenix . The Hohokam created roughly 135 miles (217 km) of irrigation canals , making the desert land arable . Paths of these canals would later become used for the modern Arizona Canal , Central Arizona Project Canal , and the Hayden @-@ Rhodes Aqueduct . The Hohokam also carried out extensive trade with the nearby Anasazi , Mogollon and Sinagua , as well as with the more distant Mesoamerican civilizations . It is believed that between 1300 and 1450 , periods of drought and severe floods led to the Hohokam civilization 's abandonment of the area .

After the departure of the Hohokam , groups of Akimel O 'odham (commonly known as Pima) , Tohono O ? odham and Maricopa tribes began to use the area , as well as segments of the Yavapai and Apache . The O 'odham were offshoots of the Sobaipuri tribe , who in turn were thought to be the descendants of the formerly urbanized Hohokam .

The Akimel O ? odham were the major Indian group in the area , and lived in small villages , with well @-@ defined irrigation systems , which spread over the entire Gila River Valley , from Florence in the east to the Estrellas in the west . Their crops included corn , beans and squash for food , while cotton and tobacco were also cultivated . Mostly a peaceful group , they did band together with the Maricopa for their mutual protection against incursions by both the Yuma and Apache tribes . The Maricopa are part of the larger Yuma people , however they migrated east from the lower Colorado and Gila Rivers in the early 1800s , when they began to be enemies with their Yuma brethren , settling amongst the existing communities of the Akimel O 'odham .

The Tohono O 'odham lived in the region as well , but their main concentration was to the south , and stretched all the way to the Mexican border . Living in small settlements , the O 'odham were seasonal farmers who took advantage of the rains , rather than the large @-@ scale irrigation of the Akimel . They grew crops such as sweet Indian corn , tapery beans , squash , lentils sugar cane and melons , as well as taking advantage of native plants , such as saguaro fruits , cholla buds ,

mesquite tree beans , and mesquite candy (sap from the mesquite tree) . They also hunted local game such as deer , rabbit and javalina for meat .

When the Mexican ? American War ended in 1848 , Mexico sold its northern zone to the United States and residents became U.S. citizens . The Phoenix area became part of the New Mexico Territory . In 1863 the mining town of Wickenburg was the first to be established in what is now Maricopa County , to the northwest of modern Phoenix . At the time Maricopa County had not yet been incorporated : the land was within Yavapai County , which included the major town of Prescott to the north of Wickenburg .

The U.S. Army created Fort McDowell on the Verde River in 1865 to forestall Native American uprisings . The fort established a camp on the south side of the Salt River by 1866 , which was the first non @-@ native settlement in the valley after the decline of the Hohokam . In later years , other nearby settlements would form and merge to become the city of Tempe , but this community was incorporated after Phoenix .

= = = Founding and incorporation = = =

The history of the city of Phoenix begins with Jack Swilling , a Confederate veteran of the Civil War . In 1867 , while traveling through the Salt River Valley , he saw a potential for farming , much like the military had already cultivated further east , near Fort McDowell . He formed a small community that same year about 4 miles (6 km) east of the present city . Lord Darrell Duppa , one of the original settlers in Swilling 's party , suggested the name " Phoenix " , as it described a city born from the ruins of a former civilization .

The Board of Supervisors in Yavapai County , which at the time encompassed Phoenix , officially recognized the new town on May 4 , 1868 , and the first post office was established the following month , with Swilling as the postmaster . On February 12 , 1871 , the territorial legislature created Maricopa County , the sixth one formed in the Arizona Territory , by dividing Yavapai County . The first election for county office was held in 1871 , when Tom Barnum was elected the first sheriff , running unopposed when the other two candidates , John A. Chenoweth and Jim Favorite , fought a duel wherein Chenoweth killed Favorite , and then was forced to withdraw from the race .

The town grew during the 1870s , and President Ulysses S. Grant issued a land patent for the present site of Phoenix on April 10 , 1874 . By 1875 , the town had a telegraph office , sixteen saloons , and four dance halls , but the " townsite @-@ commissioner form of government " needed an overhaul , so that year an election was held in which three village trustees , as well as several other officials , were elected . By 1880 , the town 's population stood at 2 @, @ 453 .

By 1881 , Phoenix 's continued growth made the existing village structure with a board of trustees obsolete . The Territorial Legislature passed " The Phoenix Charter Bill " , incorporating Phoenix and providing for a mayor @-@ council government , and became official on February 25 , 1881 when it was signed by Governor John C. Fremont , officially incorporating Phoenix as a city with an approximate population of 2 @, @ 500 .

In the 1880s , the arrival of the railroad in the valley was the first of several key events that altered the economy of Phoenix . Phoenix became a trade center , with its products reaching eastern and western markets . In response , the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce was organized on November 4 , 1888 . Earlier in 1888 the city offices were moved into the new City Hall , at Washington and Central . When the territorial capital was moved from Prescott to Phoenix in 1889 the temporary territorial offices were also located in City Hall . With the arrival of the Santa Fe , Prescott and Phoenix Railroad in 1895 , Phoenix was connected to Prescott , Flagstaff and other northern state communities . The increased access to commerce expedited the city 's economic rise . The year 1895 also saw the establishment of Phoenix Union High School , with an enrollment of 90 .

= = = 1900 to World War II = = =

On February 25 , 1901 , Governor Murphy dedicated the permanent Capitol building , and the Carnegie Free Library opened seven years later , on February 18 , 1908 , dedicated by Benjamin

Fowler . The National Reclamation Act was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1902 , which allowed for dams to be built on waterways in the west for reclamation purposes . The first dam constructed under the act , the Theodore Roosevelt Dam began in 1903 . It supplied both water and electricity , becoming the first multi @-@ purpose dam , and Roosevelt himself attended the official dedication on May 18 , 1911 . At the time , it was the largest masonry dam in the world , forming Theodore Roosevelt Lake in the mountain east of Phoenix .

On February 14 , 1912 , under President William Howard Taft , Phoenix became the capital of the newly formed state of Arizona . This occurred just six months after Taft had vetoed a joint congressional resolution granting statehood to Arizona , due to his disapproval of the state constitution 's position regarding the recall of judges . In 1913 Phoenix adopted a new form of government , changing from a mayor @-@ council system to council @-@ manager , making it one of the first cities in the United States with this form of city government . After statehood , Phoenix 's growth started to accelerate , and eight years later , its population had reached 29 @,@ 053 . In 1920 Phoenix would see its first skyscraper , the Heard Building . In 1929 Sky Harbor was officially opened , at the time owned by Scenic Airways . It would later be purchased by the city in 1935 , who operates it to this day .

On March 4 , 1930 , former U.S. President Calvin Coolidge dedicated a dam on the Gila River named in his honor . However , the state had just been through a long drought , and the reservoir which was supposed to be behind the dam was virtually dry . The humorist Will Rogers , who was also on hand as a guest speaker joked , " If that was my lake I 'd mow it . " Phoenix 's population had more than doubled during the 1920s , and now stood at 48 @,@ 118 . It was also during the 1930s that Phoenix and its surrounding area began to be called " The Valley of the Sun " , which was an advertising slogan invented to boost tourism .

During World War II , Phoenix 's economy shifted to that of a distribution center , transforming into an " embryonic industrial city " with the mass production of military supplies . There were three air force fields in the area : Luke Field , Williams Field , and Falcon Field , as well as two large pilot training camps , Thunderbird Field No. 1 in Glendale and Thunderbird Field No. 2 in Scottsdale .

= = = Post @-@ World War II explosive growth = = =

A town that had just over sixty @-@ five thousand residents in 1940 became America 's sixth largest city by 2010 , with a population of nearly 1 @.@ 5 million , and millions more in nearby suburbs . When the war ended , many of the men who had undergone their training in Arizona returned bringing their new families . Learning of this large untapped labor pool enticed many large industries to move their operations to the area . In 1948 high @-@ tech industry , which would become a staple of the state 's economy , arrived in Phoenix when Motorola chose Phoenix for the site of its new research and development center for military electronics . Seeing the same advantages as Motorola , other high @-@ tech companies such as Intel and McDonnell Douglas would also move into the valley and open manufacturing operations .

By 1950 , over 105 @,@ 000 people resided in the city and thousands more in surrounding communities . The 1950s growth was spurred on by advances in air conditioning , which allowed both homes and businesses to offset the extreme heat experienced in Phoenix and the surrounding areas during its long summers . There was more new construction in Phoenix in 1959 alone than during the period of more than thirty years from 1914 to 1946 .

Like many emerging American cities at the time , Phoenix 's spectacular growth did not occur evenly . It largely took place on the city 's north side , a region that was nearly all Caucasian . In 1962 , one local activist testified at a US Commission on Civil Rights hearing that of 31 @,@ 000 homes that had recently sprung up in this neighborhood , not a single one had been sold to an African @-@ American . Phoenix 's African @-@ American and Mexican @-@ American communities remained largely sequestered on the town 's south side . The color lines were so rigid that no one north of Van Buren Street would rent to the African @-@ American baseball star Willie Mays , in town for spring training in the 1960s . In 1964 , a reporter from the New Republic wrote of segregation in these terms : " Apartheid is complete . The two cities look at each other across a golf

course . "

= = = 1960s to present = = =

The continued rapid population growth led more businesses to the valley to take advantage of the labor pool , and manufacturing , particularly in the electronics sector , continued to grow . The convention and tourism industries saw rapid expansion during the 1960s , with tourism becoming the third largest industry by the end of the decade . In 1960 the Phoenix Corporate Center opened ; at the time it was the tallest building in Arizona , topping off at 341 feet . The 1960s saw many other buildings constructed as the city expanded rapidly , including the Rosenzweig Center (1964) , today called Phoenix City Square , the landmark Phoenix Financial Center (1964) , as well as many of Phoenix 's residential high @-@ rises . In 1965 the Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum was opened at the Arizona State Fairgrounds , west of downtown . When Phoenix was awarded a NBA franchise in 1968 , which would be called the Phoenix Suns , they played their home games at the Coliseum until 1992 , after which they moved to Talking Stick Resort Arena . In 1968 , the Central Arizona Project was approved by President Lyndon B. Johnson , assuring future water supplies for Phoenix , Tucson , and the agricultural corridor in between . The following year , Pope Paul VI created the Diocese of Phoenix on December 2 , by splitting the Archdiocese of Tucson , with Edward A. McCarthy as the first Bishop .

In the 1970s the downtown area experienced a resurgence , with a level of construction activity not seen again until the urban real estate boom of the 2000s . By the end of the decade , Phoenix adopted the Phoenix Concept 2000 plan which split the city into urban villages , each with its own village core where greater height and density was permitted , further shaping the free @-@ market development culture . Originally , there were 9 villages , but this has been expanded to 15 over the years (see Cityscape below) . This officially turned Phoenix into a city of many nodes , which would later be connected by freeways . 1972 would see the opening of the Phoenix Symphony Hall , Other major structures which saw construction downtown during this decade were the Wells Fargo Plaza , the Chase Tower (the tallest building in both Phoenix and Arizona) and the U.S. Bank Center .

Nominated by President Reagan , on September 25 , 1981 Phoenix resident Sandra Day O 'Connor broke the gender barrier on the U.S. Supreme Court , when she was sworn in as the first female judge . 1985 saw the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station , the nation 's largest nuclear power plant , begin electrical production . 1987 was marked by visits by both Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa .

There was an influx of refugees due to low @-@ cost housing in the Sunnyslope area in the 1990s , resulting in 43 different languages being spoken in local schools by the year 2000 . The new 20 @-@ story City Hall opened in 1992 , and 1993 saw the creation of " Tent City " by Sheriff Joe Arpaio , using inmate labor , to alleviate overcrowding in the Maricopa County Jail system , the fourth @-@ largest in the world . The famous " Phoenix Lights " UFO sightings took place in March 1997 .

Phoenix has maintained a growth streak in recent years , growing by 24 @. @ 2 % before 2007 . This made it the second @-@ fastest @-@ growing metropolitan area in the United States , surpassed only by Las Vegas . In 2008 , Squaw Peak , the second tallest mountain in the city , was renamed Piastewa Peak after Army Specialist Lori Ann Piastewa , an Arizonan and the first Native American woman to die in combat while serving in the U.S. military , as well as being the first American female casualty of the 2003 Iraq War . 2008 also saw Phoenix as one of the cities hardest hit by the subprime mortgage crisis , and by early 2009 the median home price was \$ 150 @, @ 000 , down from its \$ 262 @, @ 000 peak in 2007 . Crime rates in Phoenix have gone down in recent years , and once troubled , decaying neighborhoods such as South Mountain , Alhambra , and Maryvale have recovered and stabilized . Recently , downtown Phoenix and the central core have experienced renewed interest and growth , resulting in numerous restaurants , stores , and businesses opening or relocating to central Phoenix .

= = Geography = =

Phoenix is in the southwestern United States , in the south @-@ central portion of Arizona , and about halfway between Tucson to the south and Flagstaff to the north . The metropolitan area is known as the " Valley of the Sun " , due to its location in the Salt River Valley . It lies at a mean elevation of 1 @,@ 086 feet (331 m) , in the northern reaches of the Sonoran Desert .

Other than the mountains in and around the city , the topography of Phoenix is generally flat , allowing the city 's main streets to run on a precise grid with wide , open @-@ spaced roadways . Scattered , low mountain ranges surround the valley : McDowell Mountains to the northeast , the White Tank Mountains to the west , the Superstition Mountains far to the east , and the Sierra Estrella to the southwest . On the outskirts of Phoenix are large fields of irrigated cropland and several Indian reservations . The Salt River runs westward through the city of Phoenix , and the riverbed is often dry or contains a little water due to large irrigation diversions . The community of Ahwatukee is separated from the rest of the city by South Mountain .

According to the United States Census Bureau , the city has a total area of 517 @.@ 9 square miles (1 @,@ 341 km²) ; 516 @.@ 7 square miles (1 @,@ 338 km²) of it is land and 1 @.@ 2 square miles (0 @.@ 6 km² , or 0 @.@ 2 %) of it is water . Even though it is the 6th most populated city , the large area gives it a low density rate of approximately 2 @,@ 797 people per square mile . In comparison , Philadelphia , the 5th most populous city has a density of over 11 @,@ 000 .

As with most of Arizona , Phoenix does not observe daylight saving time . In 1973 , Gov. Jack Williams argued to the U.S. Congress that due to air conditioning units not being used as often in the morning on standard time , energy use would increase in the evening . He went on to say that energy use would rise " because there would be more lights on in the early morning . " He was also concerned that daylight savings time would cause children to go to school in the dark .

= = = Cityscape = = =

= = = = Neighborhoods = = = =

Since 1979 , the City of Phoenix has been divided into urban villages , many of which are based upon historically significant neighborhoods and communities that have since been annexed into Phoenix . Each village has a planning committee that is appointed directly by the city council . According to the village planning handbook issued by the city , the purpose of the village planning committees is to " work with the city 's planning commission to ensure a balance of housing and employment in each village , concentrate development at identified village cores , and to promote the unique character and identity of the villages . " There are 15 urban villages : Ahwatukee Foothills , Alhambra , Camelback East , Central City , Deer Valley , Desert View , Encanto , Estrella , Laveen , Maryvale , North Gateway , North Mountain , Paradise Valley , Rio Vista , and South Mountain .

The urban village of Paradise Valley is different than the nearby town of Paradise Valley . Although the urban village is part of Phoenix City , the town is independent .

In addition to the above urban villages , Phoenix has a variety of commonly referred @-@ to regions and districts , such as Downtown , Midtown , West Phoenix , North Phoenix , South Phoenix , Biltmore , Arcadia , and Sunnyslope .

= = = Climate = = =

Phoenix has a hot desert climate (Köppen climate classification BWh) , typical of the Sonoran Desert in which it lies . Phoenix has long , very hot summers and short , mild winters . The climate is arid , with plenty of sunshine and clear skies . Average high temperatures in summer are the hottest of any major city in the United States , and the city has more days when the temperature exceeds 100 ° F (38 ° C) than any other city in the United States . On average (1981 ? 2010) , there were 107 days annually with a high of at least 100 ° F (38 ° C) , including most days from late May

through early October . Highs top 110 ° F (43 ° C) an average of 18 days during the year . Every day from June 10 through August 24 , 1993 , the temperature in Phoenix reached 100 ° F (38 ° C) or more , the longest continuous number of days (76) in the city 's history . Officially , the number of days with a high of at least 100 ° F (38 ° C) has historically ranged from 48 in 1913 to 143 in 1989 . For comparison , From 1870 through 2012 , New York City has seen a temperature of 100 ° F (38 ° C) or more a total of only 61 days . On June 26 , 1990 , the temperature reached an all @-@ time recorded high of 122 ° F (50 ° C) . However , despite Phoenix 's claim to the most extreme temperatures , it does not have the highest average temperature . In that respect it comes in second to Miami , with an average daily temperature of 75 ° F (24 ° C) , compared to Miami 's 77 ° F (25 ° C) .

Most deserts undergo drastic fluctuations between day and nighttime temperatures , but not Phoenix due to the urban heat island effect . As the city has expanded , average summer low temps have been rising steadily . The daily heat of the sun is stored in pavement , sidewalks and buildings , and is radiated back out at night . During the summer , overnight lows greater than 80 ° F (27 ° C) are commonplace , as the daily normal low remains at or above 80 ° F (27 ° C) from June 22 to September 8 . On average , 67 days throughout the year will see the nighttime low at or above 80 ° F (27 ° C) . On July 15 , 2003 Phoenix set their record for the warmest minimum daily temperature , at 96 ° F (36 ° C) .

The city averages approximately 300 days of sunshine , or over 85 % of daylight hours per year , and receives scant rainfall , the average annual total at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport from 1933 ? 2015 being 7 @.@ 46 in (189 mm) . Precipitation is sparse during most of the year , but the monsoon brings an influx of moisture . Historically , the monsoon officially started when the average Dew point was 55 ° F (13 ° C) for three days in a row ; on average this event occurred around July 7 ; however , in 2008 the National Weather Service decreed that from that point forward , June 15 would be the official first day of the monsoon , and it would end on September 30 . The monsoon raises humidity levels and can cause heavy localized precipitation , occasional flooding , large hail , strong winds , the rare tornado , and dust storms , which can rise to the level of a haboob in some years .

July is the wettest month of the year (1 @.@ 05 in (27 mm)) , while June is the driest (0 @.@ 02 in (0 @.@ 51 mm)) . On September 8 , 2014 , the city of Phoenix recorded its single highest rainfall total by the National Weather Service with a total of 3 @.@ 30 in (84 mm) . This total rainfall on this day measured more than Phoenix 's annual rainfall average and broke a 75 @-@ year @-@ old previous record of 2 @.@ 91 in (74 mm) , set back on September 4 , 1939 . This storm was created from the remnants of Hurricane Norbert that had moved up from the Gulf of California and turned the city 's major interstates and low @-@ lying roadways into flood plains , stranding hundreds of motorists . Dewpoints range from 39 @.@ 0 ° F (4 ° C) in June to 58 @.@ 2 ° F (15 ° C) in August .

On average , Phoenix has only one day per year where the temperature drops to or below freezing . However , the frequency of freezes increases the further one moves outward from the urban heat island . Frequently , outlying areas of Phoenix see frost . Officially , the earliest freeze on record occurred on November 4 , 1956 , and the latest occurred on March 31 , 1987 . The all @-@ time lowest recorded temperature in Phoenix was 16 ° F (? 9 ° C) on January 7 , 1913 , while the coldest daily high temperature ever recorded was 36 ° F (2 ° C) on December 10 , 1898 . The longest continuous stretch without a day of frost in Phoenix was over 5 years , from November 23 , 1979 , to January 31 , 1985 . Snow is a very rare occurrence for the city of Phoenix . Snowfall was first officially recorded in 1898 , and since then , accumulations of 0 @.@ 1 inches (0 @.@ 25 cm) or greater have occurred only eight times . The heaviest snowstorm on record dates to January 21 ? 22 , 1937 , when 1 to 4 inches (2 @.@ 5 to 10 @.@ 2 cm) fell in parts of the city and did not melt entirely for three days . The most recent snow of significance fell on December 6 , 1998 , across the northwest portions of the valley that are below 2 @,@ 000 feet . During the 1998 event , Sky Harbor reported a dusting of snow . On December 30 , 2010 and February 20 , 2013 , graupel fell , although it was widely believed to be snow .

= = = Flora and fauna = = =

Due to its location in the Sonoran Desert , nearly all of the native desert fauna are occasionally found within Phoenix boundaries , but mostly in the suburbs and the remaining desert areas around the city . Mammal species found around the Phoenix area include coyote , javelina , bobcat , occasionally jaguar , mountain lion , desert cottontail rabbit , jackrabbit , antelope ground squirrel , mule deer , and a few species of bats that roost in and around the city . There are many species of native birds , including Gambel 's quail , Gila woodpecker , mourning dove , white @-@ winged dove , the roadrunner , the state bird , the cactus wren , and many species of raptors , including falcons , hawks , owls , vultures , such as the turkey vulture and black vulture , and eagles , including the golden and the bald eagle . The suburbs and surrounding areas of Phoenix are also home to a plethora of native reptile species , including the Western diamondback rattlesnake , Sonoran sidewinder , several other types of rattlesnakes , Sonoran coral snake , dozens of species of non @-@ venomous snakes , including the Sonoran gopher snake , and the California kingsnake , the gila monster , desert spiny lizard , several types of whiptail lizards , the chuckwalla , desert horned lizard , Western banded gecko , Sonora mud turtle , and the desert tortoise . Native amphibian species , include the Couch 's spadefoot toad , Chiricahua leopard frog , and the Sonoran desert toad . Phoenix and the surrounding areas are also home to a wide variety of native invertebrates , including the Arizona bark scorpion , giant desert hairy scorpion , Arizona blond tarantula , Sonoran Desert centipede , tarantula hawk wasp , camel spider , and tailless whip scorpion .

The Arizona Upland subdivision of the Sonoran Desert (of which Phoenix is a part) has " the most structurally diverse flora in the United States . " One of the most well @-@ known types of succulents , the giant saguaro cactus , is found throughout the city and its neighboring environs . Other native species are the organpipe , ocotillo , barrel , prickly pear and cholla cacti , Palo Verde trees , various types of palm trees , agaves , foothill and blue paloverde , ironwood , mesquite and the creosote bush .

The Greater Phoenix region is home to the only thriving feral population of rosy @-@ faced lovebirds in the U.S. This bird is a popular birdcage pet , native to southwestern Africa . Feral birds were first observed living outdoors in 1987 , probably escaped or released pets , and by 2010 the Greater Phoenix population had grown to about 950 birds . These lovebirds prefer older neighborhoods where they nest under untrimmed dead palm tree fronds .

= = Demographics = =

Phoenix is the sixth most populous city in the United States according to the 2010 United States Census , with a population of 1 @, @ 445 @, @ 632 , making it the most populous state capital in the United States . Phoenix 's ranking as the sixth most populous city was a drop from the number five position it had held since the U. S. Census Bureau released population estimates on June 28 , 2007 . Those statistics used data from 2006 , which showed Phoenix 's population at 1 @, @ 512 @, @ 986 , which put it just ahead of Philadelphia .

After leading the nation in population growth for over a decade , the sub @-@ prime mortgage crisis , followed by the recession , led to a slowing in the growth of Phoenix . There were approximately 77 @, @ 000 people added to the population of the Phoenix metropolitan area in 2009 , which was down significantly from its peak in 2006 of 162 @, @ 000 . Despite this slowing , Phoenix 's population grew by 9 @. @ 4 % since the 2000 census (a total of 124 @, @ 000 people) , while the entire Phoenix metropolitan area grew by 28 @. @ 9 % during the same period . This compares with an overall growth rate nationally during the same time frame of 9 @. @ 7 % . Not since 1940 ? 50 , when the city had a population of 107 @, @ 000 , had the city gained less than 124 @, @ 000 in a decade . Phoenix 's recent growth rate of 9 @. @ 4 % from the 2010 census is the first time it has recorded a growth rate under 24 % in a census decade .

The Phoenix Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (officially known as the Phoenix @-@ Mesa @-@ Glendale MSA) , is one of 10 MSAs in Arizona , and was the 14th largest in the United States

, with a total population of 4,192,887 as of the 2010 Census . Consisting of parts of both Pinal and Maricopa counties , the MSA accounts for 65 % of the total population of the state of Arizona . Phoenix only contributed 13 % to the total growth rate of the MSA , down significantly from its 33 % share during the prior decade . Phoenix is also part of the Arizona Sun Corridor megaregion (MR) , which is the 10th most populous of the 11 MRs , and the 8th largest by area . It had the 2nd largest growth by percentage of the MRs (behind only the Gulf Coast MR) between 2000 and 2010 .

The population is almost equally split between men and women , with men making up 50 % of city 's citizens . The population density is 2,797 people per square mile , and the median age of the city is 32 years , with only 9 % of the population being over 62 . 98 % of Phoenix 's population lives in households with an average household size of 2.77 people . There were 514,806 total households , with 64 % of those households consisting of families : 42 % married couples , 7 % with an unmarried male as head of household , and 14 % with an unmarried female as head of household . 33 % of those households have children below the age of 18 . Of the 35 % of non-family households , 27 % of them have a householder living alone , almost evenly split between men and women , with women having 13 % and men occupying 13 % . Phoenix has 590,149 housing units , with an occupancy rate of 87 % . The largest segment of vacancies is in the rental market , where the vacancy rate is 14 % , and 51 % of all vacancies are in rentals . Vacant houses for sale only make up 17 % of the vacancies , with the rest being split among vacation properties and other various reasons .

The median income for a household in the city was \$ 47,866 , and the median income for a family was \$ 54,804 . Males had a median income of \$ 32,820 versus \$ 27,466 for females . The per capita income for the city was \$ 24,110 . 21 % of the population and 17 % of families were below the poverty line . Out of the total population , 31 % of those under the age of 18 and 10 % of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line .

According to the 2010 Census , the racial breakdown of Phoenix was as follows :

White : 65 % (46 % non-Hispanic)

Black or African American : 6 % (6 % non-Hispanic)

Native American : 2 %

Asian : 3 % (0 % Indian , 0 % Filipino , 0 % Korean , 0 % Chinese , 0 % Vietnamese , 0 % Japanese , 0 % Thai , 0 % Burmese)

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander : 0 %

Other race : 0 %

Two or more races : 1 %

Phoenix 's population has historically been predominantly white . From 1890 to 1970 , over 90 % of the citizens were white . In recent years , this percentage has dropped , reaching 65 % In 2010 . However , a significant portion of this decrease can be attributed to new guidelines put out by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1980 , when a question regarding Hispanic origin was added to the census questionnaire . This has led to an increasing tendency for some groups to no longer self-identify as white , and instead categorize themselves as " other races " . 20 % of the population of the city was foreign born in 2010 . Of the 1,342,803 residents over 5 years of age , 63 % spoke only English , 30 % spoke Spanish at home , 2 % spoke another Indo-European language , 2 % spoke Asian or Islander languages , with the remaining 1 % speaking other languages . About 15 % of non-English speakers reported speaking English less than " very well " . The largest national ancestries reported were Mexican (35 %) , German (15 %) , Irish (10 %) , English (9 %) , Black (6 %) , Italian (4 %) , French (2 %) , Polish (2 %) , American Indian (2 %) , and Scottish (2 %) . Hispanics or Latinos of any race make up 40 % of the population . Of these the largest groups are at 35 % Mexican , 0 % Puerto Rican , 0 % Guatemalan , 0 % Salvadoran , 0 % Cuban .

According to a 2014 study by the Pew Research Center , 66 % of the population of the city identified themselves as Christians , while 26 % claimed no religious affiliation . The same study says that other religions (including Judaism , Buddhism , Islam , and Hinduism) collectively make up about 7 % of the population . In 2010 , according to the Association of Religion Data Archives , which conducts religious census each ten years , 39 % of those polled in Maricopa county considered themselves a member of a religious group . Of those who expressed a religious affiliation , the area 's religious composition was reported as 35 % Catholic , 22 % to Evangelical Protestant denominations , 16 % Latter @-@ Day Saints (LDS) , 14 % to nondenominational congregations , 7 % to Mainline Protestant denominations , and 2 % Hindu . The remaining 4 % belong to other religions , such as Buddhism , and Judaism . While there was an overall increase in the number of religious adherents over the decade of 103 @,@ 000 , that did not keep pace with the overall population increase in the country during the same period , which increased by almost three @-@ quarters of million individuals , resulting in the percentage drop . The largest aggregate increases were in the LDS (a 58 % increase) and Evangelical Protestant churches (14 % increase) , while all other categories saw their numbers drop slightly , or remain static . Overall , the Catholic Church had an 8 % drop , while Mainline Protestant groups saw a 28 % decline .

= = Economy = =

The early economy of Phoenix was focused primarily on agriculture and natural resources , dependent on the " 5Cs " of copper , cattle , climate , cotton , and citrus . With the establishment of the Southern Pacific rail line in 1926 , the opening of the Union Station in 1923 , and the creation of Sky Harbor airport by the end of the decade , the city became more easily accessible . The Great Depression affected Phoenix , but Phoenix had a diverse economy and by 1934 the recovery was underway . At the conclusion of World War II , the valley 's economy surged , as many men who had undergone their military training at the various bases in and around Phoenix returned with their families . The construction industry , spurred on by the city 's growth , further expanded with the development of Sun City . It became the template for suburban development in post @-@ WWII America , and Sun City became the template for retirement communities when it opened in 1960 . The city averaged a 4 percent annual growth rate over a 40 @-@ year period from the mid @-@ 1960s to the mid @-@ 2000s .

As the national financial crisis of 2007 ? 10 began , construction in Phoenix collapsed and housing prices plunged . Arizona jobs declined by 11 @.@ 8 % from peak to trough ; in 2007 Phoenix had 1 @,@ 918 @,@ 100 employed individuals , by 2010 that number had shrunk by 226 @,@ 500 to 1 @,@ 691 @,@ 600 . By the end of 2015 , the employment number in Phoenix had risen to 1 @.@ 97 million , finally regaining its pre @-@ recession levels , with job growth occurring across the board .

As of 2014 , the Phoenix MSA had a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of just over \$ 215 billion . The top five industries were : real estate (\$ 35.5B) , Finance and insurance (\$ 18.8B) , manufacturing (\$ 18.2B) , Retail trade (\$ 16.6B) , and health care (\$ 16.6B) . Government , if it had been a private industry , would have been ranked third on the list , generating \$ 18 @.@ 9 billion .

In Phoenix , real estate developers face few constraints when planning and developing new projects . Accordingly , the city is prone to overbuilding during times of economic prosperity . This explains the city 's higher @-@ than @-@ average vacancy rates .

As of 2010 , the top five employment categories were office and administrative support (17 @.@ 8 %) , sales (11 @.@ 6 %) , food preparation and serving (9 %) , transportation and material moving (6 @.@ 1 %) , and management (5 @.@ 8 %) . The single largest occupation is retail salespersons , which account for 3 @.@ 7 % of the workforce . As of January 2016 , 10 @.@ 5 % of the workforce were government employees , a high number because the city is both the county seat and state capitol . The civilian labor force was 2 @,@ 200 @,@ 900 , and the unemployment rate stood at 4 @.@ 6 % .

Phoenix is currently home to four Fortune 500 companies : electronics corporation Avnet , mining

company Freeport @-@ McMoRan , retailer PetSmart , and waste hauler Republic Services . Honeywell 's Aerospace division is headquartered in Phoenix , and the valley hosts many of their avionics and mechanical facilities . Intel has one of their largest sites in the area , employing about 12 @,@ 000 employees , the second largest Intel location in the country . The city is also home to : the headquarters of U @-@ HAUL International ; Best Western ; and Apollo Group , parent of the University of Phoenix . US Air / American Airlines is the largest carrier at Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix . Mesa Air Group , a regional airline group , is headquartered in Phoenix .

The military has a significant presence in Phoenix , with Luke Air Force Base located in the western suburbs . The city was severely impacted by the effects of the sub @-@ prime mortgage crash . However , Phoenix has recovered 83 % of the jobs lost due to the recession .

= = Culture = =

= = = Performing arts = = =

The city has numerous performing arts venues , most of which are located in and around downtown Phoenix or Scottsdale . The Phoenix Symphony Hall is home to the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra , the Arizona Opera and Ballet Arizona . The Arizona Opera company also has intimate performances at its new Arizona Opera Center , which opened in March 2013 . Another venue is the Orpheum Theatre , which is home to the Phoenix Opera . Ballet Arizona , in addition to the Symphony Hall , also has performances at the Orpheum Theatre as well at the Dorrance Theater . Concerts also regularly make stops in the area . The largest downtown performing art venue is the Herberger Theater Center , which houses three performance spaces and is home to two resident companies , the Arizona Theatre Company and the Centre Dance Ensemble . Three other groups also use the facility : Valley Youth Theatre , iTheatre Collaborative and Actors Theater .

Concerts can be attended at Talking Stick Resort Arena and Comerica Theatre in downtown Phoenix , Ak @-@ Chin Pavilion in Maryvale , Gila River Arena in Glendale , and Gammage Auditorium in Tempe (the last public building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright) . Several smaller theaters including Trunk Space , the Mesa Arts Center , the Crescent Ballroom , Celebrity Theatre , and Modified Arts support regular independent musical and theater performances . Music can also be seen in some of the venues usually reserved for sports , such as the Wells Fargo Arena and the University of Phoenix Stadium .

Several television series have been set in Phoenix , including Alice (1976 ? 85) , the 2000s paranormal drama Medium , the 1960 ? 61 syndicated crime drama The Brothers Brannagan , and The New Dick Van Dyke Show from 1971 to 1974 .

= = = Museums = = =

Dozens of museums exist throughout the valley . They include the Phoenix Art Museum , Arizona Capitol Museum , Arizona Military Museum , Hall of Flame Firefighting Museum , the Pueblo Grande Museum and Cultural Park , Children 's Museum of Phoenix , Arizona Science Center , and the Heard Museum . In 2010 the Musical Instrument Museum opened their doors , featuring the biggest musical instrument collection in the world .

Designed by Alden B. Dow , a student of Frank Lloyd Wright , the Phoenix Art Museum was constructed in a single year , opening in November 1959 . The Phoenix Art Museum has the southwest 's largest collection of visual art , containing more than 17 @,@ 000 works of contemporary and modern art from around the world . Interactive exhibits can be found in nearby Peoria 's Challenger Space Center , where individuals learn about space , renewable energies , and meet astronauts .

The Heard Museum has over 130 @,@ 000 square feet (12 @,@ 000 m ²) of gallery , classroom and performance space . Some of the signature exhibits include a full Navajo hogan , the Mareen Allen Nichols Collection containing 260 pieces of contemporary jewelry , the Barry Goldwater

Collection of 437 historic Hopi kachina dolls , and an exhibit on the 19th @-@ century boarding school experiences of Native Americans . The Heard Museum attracts about 250 @,@ 000 visitors a year .

= = = Fine arts = = =

The downtown Phoenix art scene has developed in the past decade . The Artlink organization and the galleries downtown have successfully launched a First Friday cross @-@ Phoenix gallery opening . In April 2009 , artist Janet Echelman inaugurated her monumental sculpture , Her Secret Is Patience , a civic icon suspended above the new Phoenix Civic Space Park , a two @-@ city @-@ block park in the middle of downtown . This netted sculpture makes the invisible patterns of desert wind visible to the human eye . During the day , the 100 @-@ foot (30 m) -tall sculpture hovers high above heads , treetops , and buildings , the sculpture creates what the artist calls " shadow drawings " , which she says are inspired by Phoenix 's cloud shadows . At night , the illumination changes color gradually through the seasons . Author Prof. Patrick Frank writes of the sculpture that " ... most Arizonans look on the work with pride : this unique visual delight will forever mark the city of Phoenix just as the Eiffel Tower marks Paris . "

= = = Architecture = = =

Phoenix is the home of a unique architectural tradition and community . Frank Lloyd Wright moved to Phoenix in 1937 and built his winter home , Taliesin West , and the main campus for The Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture . Over the years , Phoenix has attracted notable architects who have made it their home and have grown successful practices . These architectural studios embrace the desert climate , and are unconventional in their approach to the practice of design . They include the Paolo Soleri (who created Arcosanti) , Al Beadle , Will Bruder , Wendell Burnette , and Blank Studio architectural design studios . Another major force in architectural landscape of the city was Ralph Haver whose firm , Haver & Nunn , designed commercial , industrial and residential structures throughout the valley . Of particular note was his trademark , " Haver Home " , which were affordable contemporary @-@ style tract houses .

= = = Tourism = = =

The tourist industry is the longest running of today 's top industries in Phoenix . Starting with promotions back in the 1920s , the industry has grown into one of the top 10 in the city . Due to its climate , Phoenix and its neighbors have consistently ranked among the nation 's top destinations in the number of Five Diamond / Five Star resorts . With more than 62 @,@ 000 hotel rooms in over 500 hotels and 40 resorts , greater Phoenix sees over 16 million visitors each year , the majority of whom are leisure (as opposed to business) travelers . Sky Harbor Airport , which serves the Greater Phoenix area , serves about 40 million passengers a year , ranking it among the 10 busiest airports in the nation .

One of the biggest attractions of the Phoenix area is golf , with over 200 golf courses . In addition to the sites of interest in the city , there are many attractions near Phoenix , such as : Agua Fria National Monument , Arcosanti , Casa Grande Ruins National Monument , Lost Dutchman State Park , Montezuma 's Castle , Montezuma 's Well , and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument . Phoenix also serves as a central point to many of the sights around the state of Arizona , such as the Grand Canyon , Lake Havasu (where the London Bridge is located) , Meteor Crater , the Painted Desert , the Petrified Forest , Tombstone , Kartchner Caverns , Sedona and Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff .

= = = Other attractions and annual events = = =

Due to its natural beauty and climate , Phoenix has a plethora of outdoor attractions and

recreational activities . The Phoenix Zoo is the largest privately owned , non @-@ profit zoo in the United States . Since opening in 1962 , the zoo has developed an international reputation for its efforts on animal conservation , including breeding and reintroducing endangered species back into the wild . Right next to the zoo , the Phoenix Botanical Gardens were opened in 1939 , and are acclaimed worldwide for their exhibits and educational programs , featuring the largest collection of arid plants in the U.S. South Mountain Park , the largest municipal park in the U.S. , is also the highest desert mountain preserve in the world .

Other popular sites in the city are : Japanese Friendship Garden , Historic Heritage Square , Phoenix Mountains Park , Pueblo Grande Museum , Tovrea Castle , Camelback Mountain , Hole in the Rock , Mystery Castle , St. Mary 's Basilica , Taliesin West , and the Wrigley Mansion .

There is long list of annual events in and near Phoenix which celebrate the heritage of the city , as well as its diversity . Some of those are : the Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show , the largest horse show in the world ; Matsuri , a celebration of Japanese culture ; Pueblo Grande Indian Market , an event highlighting Native American arts and crafts ; Grand Menorah Lighting , an annual December event celebrating Hanukah ; ZooLights , an annual December evening event at the Phoenix Zoo , featuring millions of lights ; the Arizona State Fair , begun in 1884 , an annual fair ; Scottish Gathering & Highland Games , an annual event celebrating Scottish heritage ; Estrella War , an annual event celebrating medieval life ; Tohono O 'odham Nation Rodeo & Fair , Oldest Indian rodeo in Arizona ; and the Chinese Week & Culture & Cuisine Festival , an annual celebration of Chinese culture .

= = = Cuisine = = =

Like many other western towns , the earliest restaurants in Phoenix were often steakhouses . Today , Phoenix is also renowned for its Mexican food , thanks to both its large Hispanic population and its proximity to Mexico . Some of Phoenix 's restaurants have a long history . The Stockyards steakhouse dates to 1947 , while Monti 's La Casa Vieja (Spanish for " The Old House ") was in operation as a restaurant since the 1890s , but closed its doors November 17 , 2014 . Macayo 's (a Mexican restaurant chain) was established in Phoenix in 1946 , and other major Mexican restaurants include Garcia 's (1956) and Manuel 's (1964) . The recent population boom has brought people from all over the nation , and to a lesser extent from other countries , and has since influenced the local cuisine . Phoenix currently boasts cuisines from all over the world , such as Korean , barbecue , Cajun / Creole , Greek , Hawaiian , Irish , Japanese , sushi , Italian , fusion , Persian , Indian , Spanish , Thai , Chinese , southwestern , Tex @-@ Mex , Vietnamese , Brazilian , and French .

The first McDonald 's franchise was sold by the McDonald brothers to a Phoenix entrepreneur in 1952 . Neil Fox paid \$ 1 @,@ 000 for the rights to open an establishment based on the McDonald brothers ' restaurant . The hamburger stand opened in 1953 on the southwest corner of Central Avenue and Indian School Road on the growing north side of Phoenix , and was the first location to sport the now internationally known " golden arches " , which were initially twice the height of the building . Three other franchise locations opened that year , a full two years before Kroc purchased McDonald 's and opened his first franchise in Illinois .

= = Sports = =

= = = Major league = = =

Phoenix is home to several professional sports franchises , and is one of only 13 U.S. cities to have representatives of all four major professional sports leagues , although only one of these teams actually carry the city name and two of them play within the city limits .

The Phoenix Suns were the first major sports team in Phoenix , being granted a National Basketball Association (NBA) franchise in 1968 . They had originally played at the Arizona Veterans Memorial

Coliseum before moving to America West Arena (now Talking Stick Resort Arena) in 1992 . The year following their move to the new arena , the Suns made it to the NBA finals for the second time in franchise history , losing to Michael Jordan 's Chicago Bulls , 4 games to 2 . The U.S. Airways Center hosted both the 1995 and the 2009 NBA All @-@ Star Games .

In 1997 , the Phoenix Mercury were one of the original eight teams to launch the Women 's National Basketball Association (WNBA) . They also play at Talking Stick Resorts Arena . They have won the WNBA championship three times : first in 2007 when they defeated the Detroit Shock , again in 2009 when they defeated the Indiana Fever , and in 2014 when they swept the Chicago Sky .

The Arizona Diamondbacks of Major League Baseball began play as an expansion team in 1998 . The team has played all of its home games in the same downtown park , now known as Chase Field . It is the second highest stadium in the U.S. (after Coors Field in Denver) , and is known for its swimming pool beyond the outfield fence . In 2001 , the Diamondbacks defeated the New York Yankees 4 games to 3 in the World Series , becoming the city 's first professional sports franchise to win a national championship while located in Arizona . The win was also the fastest an expansion team had ever won the World Series , surpassing the old mark of the Florida Marlins of 5 years , set in 1997 .

The Arizona Cardinals are the oldest continuously run professional football franchise in the nation . Founded in 1898 in Chicago , they moved to Phoenix from St. Louis in 1988 and currently play in the Western Division of the National Football League 's National Football Conference . Upon their move to Phoenix , the Cardinals originally played their home games at Sun Devil Stadium on the campus of Arizona State University in nearby Tempe . In 2006 they moved to the newly constructed University of Phoenix Stadium in suburban Glendale . Since moving to Phoenix , the Cardinals have made one championship appearance , Super Bowl XLIII in 2009 , where they lost 27 ? 23 to the Pittsburgh Steelers .

Sun Devil Stadium held Super Bowl XXX in 1996 . The University of Phoenix Stadium hosted Super Bowl XLII in 2008 , and Super Bowl XLIX in 2015 .

The Arizona Coyotes of the National Hockey League moved to the area in 1996 , formerly known as the Winnipeg Jets . They originally played their home games at America West Arena in downtown Phoenix before moving in December 2003 to the Jobing.com Arena (now named the Gila River Arena) in Glendale .

* Note : The Cardinals won 2 of their championships while in Chicago , pre @-@ modern era .

= = = Other sports = = =

The Phoenix area hosts two annual college football bowl games : the Fiesta Bowl , played at the University of Phoenix Stadium , and the Motel 6 Cactus Bowl , which is held at Chase Field .

Phoenix has an arena football team , the Arizona Rattlers of the Arena Football League . Their games are also played at Talking Stick Resort Arena . They won their first of five AFL championships in 1994 ; in 2014 they won their third championship in a row .

The Greater Phoenix area is home to the Cactus League , one of two spring training leagues for Major League Baseball . With the move by the Colorado Rockies and the Arizona Diamondbacks to their new facility in Scottsdale , the league is entirely based in the Greater Phoenix area . With the Cincinnati Reds ' move to Goodyear , fifteen of MLB 's thirty teams are now included in the Cactus League .

The Phoenix International Raceway was built in 1964 with a one @-@ mile oval , with a one @-@ of @-@ a @-@ kind design , as well as a 2 @.@ 5 @-@ mile road course . It currently hosts several NASCAR events per season , and the annual Fall NASCAR weekend , which includes events from four different NASCAR classes , is a huge event . After thirty years of hosting various events , especially NHRA drag racing events , Firebird International Raceway (FIR) closed operations in 2013 , but the NHRA re @-@ opened the venue to NHRA events in 2014 under the new name , " Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park " .

The city is also host to several major professional golf events , including the LPGA 's Founder 's Cup and , since 1932 , The Phoenix Open of the PGA . The Phoenix Marathon is a new addition to

the city 's sports scene , and is a qualifier for the Boston Marathon . The Rock ' n ' Roll Marathon series has held an event in Phoenix every January since 2004 .

= = Parks and recreation = =

Phoenix is home to a large number of parks and recreation areas . The city of Phoenix includes national parks , county (Maricopa County) parks and city parks . Tonto National Forest forms part of the northeast boundary of the city , while the county has the largest park system in the country . The city park system was established to preserve the desert landscape in areas that would otherwise have succumbed to development and includes South Mountain Park , the world 's largest municipal park with 16 @, @ 500 acres (67 km2) . The city park system has 182 parks which contain over 41 @, @ 900 acres (16 @, @ 956 ha) , making it the largest municipal park system in the country . The park system has facilities for hiking , camping , swimming , horseback riding , cycling , and climbing . Some of the other notable parks in the system are Camelback Mountain , Encanto Park (another large urban park) and Sunnyslope Mountain , also known as " S " Mountain . Papago Park in east Phoenix is home to both the Desert Botanical Garden and the Phoenix Zoo , in addition to several golf courses and the Hole @-@ in @-@ the @-@ Rock geological formation . The Desert Botanical Garden , which opened in 1939 , is one of the few public gardens in the country dedicated to desert plants , and displays desert plant life from all over the world . The Phoenix Zoo is the largest privately owned non @-@ profit zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its programs devoted to saving endangered species .

= = Government = =

In 1913 , Phoenix adopted a new form of government , switching from the mayor @-@ council system to the council @-@ manager system , making it one of the first cities in the United States with this form of city government , where a city manager supervises all city departments and executes the policies adopted by the Council . Today , Phoenix represents the largest municipal government of this type in the country .

The city council consists of a mayor and eight city council members . While the mayor is elected in a citywide election , Phoenix City Council members are elected by votes only in the districts they represent , with both the Mayor and the Council members serving four @-@ year terms . The current mayor of Phoenix is Greg Stanton , a Democrat who was elected in 2011 , and re @-@ elected in 2015 . The mayor and city council members each have equal voting power in regards to setting city policy and passing rules and regulations . The city 's website was given a " Sunny Award " by Sunshine Review for its transparency efforts .

= = = State government facilities = = =

As the capital of Arizona , Phoenix houses the state legislature , along with numerous state government agencies , many of which are located in the State Capitol district immediately west of downtown . The Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections operates the Adobe Mountain and Black Canyon Schools in Phoenix . Another major state government facility is the Arizona State Hospital , operated by the Arizona Department of Health Services . This is a mental health center which is the only medical facility run by the state government . The headquarters of numerous Arizona state government agencies are in Phoenix , with many located in the State Capitol district .

= = = Federal government facilities = = =

The Federal Bureau of Prisons operates the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) Phoenix which is within the city limits , near its northern boundary .

The Sandra Day O 'Connor U.S. Courthouse , the U.S. District Court of Arizona , is located on Washington Street downtown . It is named in honor of retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra

Day O 'Connor , who was raised in Arizona .

The Federal Building is at the intersection of Van Buren Road and First Avenue downtown , and contains various federal field offices and the local division of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court . This building formerly housed the U.S. District Court offices and courtrooms , but these were moved in 2001 to the new Sandra Day O 'Connor U.S. Courthouse . Before the construction of this building in 1961 , federal government offices were housed in the historic U.S. Post Office on Central Avenue , completed in the 1930s .

= = = Crime = = =

By the 1960s crime was becoming a significant problem in Phoenix , and by the 1970s crime continued to increase in the city at a faster rate than almost anywhere else in the country . It was during this time frame when an incident occurred in Phoenix which would have national implications . On March 16 , 1963 , Ernesto Miranda was arrested and charged with rape . The subsequent Supreme Court ruling on June 13 , 1966 , Miranda v. Arizona , has led to practice in the United States of issuing a Miranda Warning to all suspected criminals .

With Phoenix 's rapid growth , one of the prime areas of criminal activity was land fraud . The practice became so widespread that newspapers would refer to Phoenix as the Tainted Desert . These land frauds led to one of the more infamous murders in the history of the valley , when Arizona Republic writer Don Bolles was murdered by a car bomb in 1976 . It was believed that his investigative reporting on organized crime and land fraud in Phoenix made him a target . Bolles was the only reporter from a major U.S. newspaper to be murdered on U.S. soil due to his coverage of a story . Max Dunlap was convicted of first @-@ degree murder in the case .

Street gangs and the drug trade had turned into public safety issues by the 1980s , and the crime rate in Phoenix continued to grow . After seeing a peak in the early and mid @-@ 1990s , the city has seen a general decrease in crime rates . The Maricopa County Jail system is the fourth @-@ largest in the world . The violent crime rate peaked in 1993 at 1146 crimes per 100 @,@ 000 people , while the property crime rate peaked a few years earlier , in 1989 , at 9 @,@ 966 crimes per 100 @,@ 000 .

In the most recent numbers from the FBI (2012) , those rates currently stand at 637 and 4091 , respectively . Since their peak in 2003 , murders have dropped from 241 to 114 in 2014 .

In 2001 and 2002 Phoenix ranked first in the nation in vehicle thefts , with over 22 @,@ 000 and 25 @,@ 000 cars stolen each year respectively . It has declined every year since then , stood at 7200 in 2014 , a drop of almost 70 % during that timeframe . The Phoenix MSA has dropped to 70th in the nation in terms of car thefts in 2012 .

As the first decade of the new century came to a close , Arizona had become the gateway to the U.S. for drug trafficking . Another crime issue related to the drug trade are kidnappings . In the late 2000s , Phoenix earned the title " Kidnapping capital of the USA " . The majority of the kidnapped are believed to be victims of human smuggling , or related to illegal drug trade , while the kidnappers are believed to be part of Mexican drug cartels .

= = Education = =

Public education in the Phoenix area is provided by 33 school districts . There are 21 elementary school districts , which contain over 215 elementary schools , and they are paired with 4 high school districts , which have a total of 31 high schools serving Phoenix . Three of the high school districts (Glendale Union , Tempe Union and Tolleson Union) only partially serve Phoenix . With over 27 @,@ 000 students , and spread over 220 square miles , The Phoenix Union High School District is one of the largest high school districts in the country , containing 16 schools and nearly 3 @,@ 000 employees . In addition , there are 4 unified districts , which cover grades K @-@ 12 , which add an additional 58 elementary schools and 4 high schools to Phoenix 's educational system . Of those four , only the Paradise Valley district completely serves Phoenix . Phoenix is also served by an expanding number of charter schools , with well over 100 currently operating in the city .

== Post @-@ secondary education ==

Arizona State University is the main institution of higher education in the region . Its main campus is in Tempe . ASU also has campuses in northwest Phoenix (ASU West Campus) , downtown Phoenix (ASU Downtown Campus) , Mesa (ASU Polytechnic Campus) , and Glendale (Thunderbird School of Global Management) . ASU is one of the largest public universities in the U.S. , with a 2012 student enrollment of 72 @, @ 254 .

A branch of the University of Arizona College of Medicine is located near ASU 's downtown Phoenix campus . There is also a small satellite campus for Northern Arizona University (based in Flagstaff) located in Phoenix .

The Maricopa County Community College District includes ten community colleges and two skills centers throughout Maricopa County , providing adult education and job training . Phoenix College , part of the district , was founded in 1920 and is the oldest community college in Arizona and one of the oldest in the country .

The city is also home to numerous other institutions of higher learning . Notable institutions include : Barrow Neurological Institute , the world 's largest neurological disease treatment and research institution ; Grand Canyon University , a private Christian university initially founded in 1949 as a non @-@ profit school , it now operates as a for @-@ profit institution ; the University of Phoenix is the nation 's largest for @-@ profit university with over 300 @, @ 000 students at campuses throughout North America , as well as online ; and the Arizona Summit Law School , a private , for @-@ profit law school located in downtown Phoenix .

== Media ==

The first newspaper in Phoenix was the weekly Salt River Valley Herald , established in 1878 , which would change its name the following year to the Phoenix Herald . The paper would go through several additional name changes in its early years before finally settling on the Phoenix Herald , which still exists today in an on @-@ line form . Today , the city is served by two major daily newspapers : The Arizona Republic , which along with its online entity , azcentral.com , serves the greater metropolitan area ; and the East Valley Tribune , which primarily serves the cities of the East Valley . The Jewish News of Greater Phoenix is an independent weekly newspaper established in 1948 . In addition , the city is also served by numerous free neighborhood papers and weeklies such as the Phoenix New Times , and Arizona State University 's The State Press .

The Phoenix metro area is served by many local television stations and is the largest designated market area (DMA) in the Southwest , and the 12th largest in the U.S. , with over 1 @. @ 8 million homes (1 @. @ 6 % of the total U.S.) . The major network television affiliates are KNXV 15 (ABC) , KPHO 5 (CBS) , KPNX 12 (NBC) , KSAZ 10 (Fox) , KASW 61 (The CW) , KUTP 45 (MyNetworkTV) , and KAET 8 (PBS , operated by Arizona State University) . Other network television affiliates operating in the area include KPAZ 21 (TBN) , KTVW @-@ DT 33 (Univision) , KFPH @-@ DT (UniMás) , KTAZ 39 (Telemundo) , KDPH 48 (Daystar) , and KPPX @-@ TV 51 (ION) . KTVK 3 (3TV) and KAZT 7 (AZ @-@ TV) are independent television stations operating in the metro area . KSAZ @-@ TV , KUTP , KPAZ @-@ TV , KTVW @-@ DT , KFPH @-@ DT , KTAZ , KDPH @-@ LP , and KPPX @-@ TV are network owned @-@ and @-@ operated stations .

Many major feature films and television programs have been filmed in the city . From the opening sequences in Psycho , to the night attack by the aliens in 1953 's The War of the Worlds , to freeway scenes in Little Miss Sunshine , Phoenix has been the location for numerous major feature films . Other notable pictures filmed at least partially in Phoenix include Raising Arizona , A Home at the End of the World , Bill & Ted 's Excellent Adventure , Days of Thunder , The Gauntlet , The Grifters , Waiting to Exhale and Bus Stop .

The radio airwaves in Phoenix cater to a wide variety of musical and talk radio interests . Stations include classic rock formats of KOOL @-@ FM and KSLX @-@ FM , to pop stations like KYOT @-@ FM and alternative stations like KDKB @-@ FM , to the talk radio of KFYI @-@ AM , the

Christian programming of KZZP @-@ FM and KALV @-@ FM , and the country sounds of KMLE @-@ FM . With its large Hispanic population there are numerous Spanish stations , such as KNAI @-@ FM , KHOT @-@ FM , and KOMR @-@ FM .

= = Infrastructure = =

= = = Transportation = = =

= = = = Air = = = =

Phoenix is served by Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (IATA : PHX , ICAO : KPHX) , one of the ten busiest airports in the United States , serving over 110 @, @ 000 people on over 1000 flights per day . The airport is centrally located in the metro area near several major freeway interchanges east of downtown Phoenix . The airport serves more than 100 cities with non @-@ stop flights .

Aeroméxico , Air Canada , British Airways , and WestJet are among several international carriers as well as American carrier American Airlines (which maintains a hub at the airport) providing flights to destinations such as Canada , Costa Rica , Mexico , and London .

The Phoenix @-@ Mesa Gateway Airport (IATA : AZA , ICAO : KIWA) in neighboring Mesa also serves the area 's commercial air traffic . It was converted from Williams Air Force Base , which closed in 1993 . The airport has recently received substantial commercial service with Allegiant Air opening a hub operation at the airport with non @-@ stop service to over a dozen destinations .

Smaller airports that primarily handle private and corporate jets include Phoenix Deer Valley Airport , located in the Deer Valley district of north Phoenix , and Scottsdale Airport , located just east of the Phoenix / Scottsdale border . There are also other municipal airports including Glendale Municipal Airport , Falcon Field Airport in Mesa , and Phoenix Goodyear Airport .

= = = = Rail and bus = = = =

Amtrak served Phoenix Union Station until 1996 when the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) threatened to abandon the route between Yuma , Arizona and Phoenix . Amtrak rerouted trains to Maricopa , 30 miles south of downtown Phoenix , where passengers can board the Texas Eagle (Los Angeles @-@ San Antonio @-@ Chicago) and Sunset Limited (Los Angeles @-@ New Orleans) . Though UP ultimately retained the trackage , Amtrak did not return , although the station remains .

Amtrak Thruway buses connect Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport to Flagstaff , Arizona for connection with the Los Angeles @-@ Chicago Southwest Chief . Phoenix is also served by Greyhound bus service , which stops at 24th Street near the airport .

Valley Metro provides public transportation throughout the metropolitan area , with its trains , buses , and a ride @-@ share program . 3 @. @ 38 % of workers commute by public transit . Valley Metro 's 20 @-@ mile (32 km) light rail project , called Valley Metro Rail , through north @-@ central Phoenix , downtown , and eastward through Tempe and Mesa , opened December 27 , 2008 . Future rail segments of more than 30 miles (48 km) are planned to open by 2030 .

= = = = Roads and freeways = = = =

Phoenix auto traffic depends on both surface streets and freeways . Freeways fall under the auspices of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) . Phoenix ranks first in the nation in the quality of its urban freeways , and the state as a whole ranks first in the nation in the quality of bridges . While being the sixth most populous city in the nation , Phoenix 's freeways do not suffer from the same type of congestion seen in other large cities . In fact , in a recent study , there is not a single stretch of freeway in Phoenix ranked in the 100 worst freeways for either congestion or

unreliability .

Part of the reason for this is the extensive freeway system in the city , due to the majority of that system being funded by local , rather than federal funds , through a ½ cent general sales tax measure approved by voters in 1985 . Another offshoot of this local funding is that Phoenix is the largest city in the United States to have two Interstate Highways and no 3 @-@ digit interstates .

As of 2005 , the metropolitan area of Phoenix contains one of the nation 's largest and fastest growing freeway systems , consisting of over 1 @,@ 405 lane miles . The freeway system is a mix of Interstate , U.S. , and State highways which include Interstate 10 , Interstate 17 , US 60 , SR 51 , Loop 101 , Loop 202 , SR 51 , SR 143 , and SR 30 . There are still major additions to routes 101 , 202 and 303 underway , as well as several other smaller projects around the valley . State Routes 30 , 87 , 85 , and 74 connect Phoenix with other areas of the Valley and Arizona .

The street system in Phoenix (and some of its suburbs) is laid out in a grid system , with most roads oriented either north @-@ south or east @-@ west , and the zero point of the grid being the intersection of Central Avenue and Washington Street . The original plan was for the east @-@ west streets to be named after presidents , with the north @-@ south streets named after Indians , however the north @-@ south streets were quickly changed to numbers , with avenues running to the west of Central , and streets to its east . Major arterial streets are spaced one mile (1 @.@ 6 km) apart , divided into smaller blocks approximately every ½ of a mile . For example , Scottsdale Road , being the 7200 block , lies 9 miles to the east of Central Avenue (72 / 8) .

Freeways and state highways in Phoenix :

== = Alternate forms of transportation == =

The Maricopa Association of Governments has a bicycle advisory committee working to improve conditions for bicycling on city streets and off @-@ road paths . Bicycling Magazine ranked Phoenix the 15th most bicycle friendly city of fifty cities in the United States with a population greater than 100 @,@ 000 .

== = Utilities == =

Being located in the desert , Phoenix relies on a water supply delivered to the city via a system of canals which divert water from the region 's rivers and lakes , with the largest portion of the city 's water coming from the Colorado River through the Central Arizona Project 's canal . The city 's electrical needs are served primarily by Arizona Public Service , although some customers receive their electricity from the Salt River Project (SRP) . The main sources of electrical generation are nuclear , and coal power plants . Arizona is home to the Palo Verde Nuclear Power Station , the largest nuclear @-@ generating facility in the United States . SRP is also the largest water provider in Phoenix .

== = Health care == =

In 2011 (the last year for which information is available) , Phoenix had a slightly younger population than the country as a whole . While the United States had 13 @.@ 3 % of its population over the age of 65 , Phoenix 's percentage stood significantly lower , at 8 @.@ 1 % . Phoenix 's percentage of 18 @.@ 8 % in the next age group , 45 ? 64 was also a great deal lower than the national average of 26 @.@ 6 % . This results in 73 % of Phoenix 's population being 44 or younger , as compared to the national percentage of 60 .

In 2010 (the last year for nationally reported figures) , Phoenix was at or below national levels for most reportable diseases , with the exception of both hepatitis A and B , where they were slightly over the national average (0 @.@ 8 and 1 @.@ 8 to 0 @.@ 5 and 1 @.@ 1 % , respectively) .

In most major categories , Phoenix had a lower incidence of death than the rest of the nation . Only deaths due to Alzheimer 's (29 @.@ 7 to 27 @.@ 2 deaths per 100 @,@ 000) and pre @-@ natal conditions (5 @.@ 3 to 3 @.@ 8 deaths per 100 @,@ 000) were slightly above the national

average . Deaths due to HIV and liver disease were exactly at the national average of 2 @. @ 5 and 10 @. @ 8 respectively . However , in several major categories , Phoenix had significantly lower indices of death : deaths by cancer stood at only 57 % (106) of the national average of 184 @. @ 6 deaths per 100 @, @ 000 ; deaths due to heart disease , 56 @. @ 1 % of the national rate of 249 @. @ 8 per 100 @, @ 000 . Cancer and heart disease were the two top causes of death in the country .

Low @- @ weight births (7 @. @ 5 %) were below the national average of 8 @. @ 1 % , yet infant mortality (7 @. @ 2 %) was higher than the rest of the U.S. (6 @. @ 1 %) . Births to teen mothers were significantly higher than the rest of the country , sitting at 12 @. @ 2 % as compared to 8 @. @ 4 % nationally .

The Phoenix metropolitan area is serviced by 56 hospitals and medical centers . The Mayo Clinic , a not @- @ for @- @ profit medical practice and medical research group based in Rochester , Minnesota . Phoenix is one of two other locations with Mayo Clinics (the other being Jacksonville , Florida) . It is the first and largest integrated not @- @ for @- @ profit medical group practice in the world ; Mayo Clinic has been near or at the top of the U.S. News & World Report List of " Best Hospitals " for more than 20 years . St. Joseph 's Hospital and Medical Center is part of Dignity Health (formerly Catholic Healthcare West) , one of the largest healthcare systems in the western United States . St. Joseph 's is a not @- @ for @- @ profit hospital with special advocacy for the poor and underserved . John C. Lincoln North Mountain Hospital is a general medical and surgical hospital , which performed nearly at the level of nationally ranked U.S. News Best Hospitals in 4 adult specialties . Phoenix Children 's Hospital in Phoenix , AZ is nationally ranked in 5 pediatric specialties according to U.S. News & World Report . It is a 425 @- @ bed children 's teaching hospital . Arizona Heart Institute , opened in 1971 , is known internationally as one of the first freestanding outpatient clinics dedicated exclusively to cardiovascular health . Banner Health is a non @- @ profit health system in the United States , based in Phoenix . It operates 23 hospitals as well as specialized facilities . The health system is the 2nd largest employer in Arizona , behind Walmart , employing more than 35 @, @ 000 . Banner Health was created in 1999 through a merger of Lutheran Health Systems , based in North Dakota , and Samaritan Health System , based in Phoenix . Of the top 10 rated hospitals in the city (top 12 in the state) , 4 are Banner hospitals . Barrow Neurological Institute (BNI) at St. Joseph 's Hospital and Medical Center is the world 's largest dedicated neurosurgical center and a leader in neurosurgical training , research , and patient care . More operative neurosurgical procedures take place at BNI than at any other institution in the United States .

= = Notable people = =

= = Sister cities = =

With the creation of the Phoenix Sister Cities (PSC) organization in 1972 , Phoenix became a member of the international Sister City movement . It would take the organization several years to become official , not filing for Articles of Incorporation until 1975 , and not entering into their first Sister City agreement until 1976 , with Hermosillo , Mexico . The organization 's mission statement states their purpose is to " ... create people @- @ to @- @ people relationships between the residents of Phoenix and its sister cities through commercial , educational , cultural and artistic exchange programs and events that create and sustain global , long @- @ term , international partnerships and business opportunities for the citizens of Phoenix . " Currently , Phoenix has ten sister cities , as designated by the Phoenix Sister Cities Commission and Sister Cities International , shown in the table below . Phoenix and Prague have shared a Capital Cities relationship since May 1991 , which was expanded to Sister City Status in 2013 .