

= Ashland , Oregon =

Ashland is a city in Jackson County , in the State of Oregon . It lies along Interstate 5 approximately 16 mi (26 km) north of the California border and near the south end of the Bear Creek Valley , an arm of the Rogue Valley . As of July 1 , 2013 , the city 's population was estimated to be 20 ,713 .

The city is the home of Southern Oregon University (SOU) and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) . These are important to Ashland 's economy , which also depends on restaurants , galleries , and retail stores that cater to playgoers and other visitors . Lithia Park along Ashland Creek , historic buildings , and a paved intercity bike trail provide additional tourist attractions .

Ashland , originally called Ashland Mills , was named after Ashland County , Ohio , the original home of founder Abel Helman , and secondarily for Ashland , Kentucky , where other founders had family connections . Ashland has a mayor @-@ council government assisted by citizen committees . Historically , its liberal politics have differed , often sharply , with much of the rest of southwest Oregon .

= = History = =

Prior to the arrival of settlers in mid @-@ 19th century , the Shasta people lived in the valley along the creek approximately where Ashland is located . Early Hudson 's Bay Company hunters and trappers , following the Siskiyou Trail , passed through the site in the 1820s . In the late 1840s , settlers (mostly American) following the Applegate Trail began passing through the area . By the early 1850s , the Donation Land Act brought many white settlers into the Rogue Valley and into conflict with its native people . These often violent clashes continued until 1856 .

In 1851 , gold was discovered at Rich Gulch , a tributary of Jackson Creek , and a tent city developed on its banks , the area later known as Jacksonville . Settlers arrived in the Ashland area in January 1852 , including Robert B. Hargadine , Sylvester Pease , Abel D Helman , Eber Emery , and others . Helman and Hargadine filed the first donation land claims in Ashland . Helman and Emery built a sawmill along what they called Mill Creek (later renamed Ashland Creek) to turn timber into lumber for settlers . In 1854 , they and another settler , M. B. Morris , built a second mill , Ashland Flouring Mills , to grind local wheat into flour . The community around the mill became known as Ashland Mills . A post office was established in Ashland Mills in 1855 with Helman as postmaster .

During the 1860s and 1870s the community grew , establishing a school , churches , businesses , and a large employer , Ashland Woolen Mills , which produced clothing and blankets from local wool . In 1871 , the Post Office dropped " Mills " from Ashland 's name . In 1872 Reverend J. H. Skidmore opened a college , Ashland Academy , a predecessor of Southern Oregon University .

In 1887 , Portland , Oregon , and San Francisco , California , were joined by rail at Ashland . Until 1926 , when most rail service began taking a different route (east through Klamath Falls to avoid the steep grade through the Siskiyou Mountains) , Ashland thrived on rail trade of local products , including pears , peaches , and apples .

In 1908 , the Women 's Civic Improvement Club petitioned for the creation of a park ? Ashland Canyon Park ? along Ashland Creek . The discovery of lithia water near Emigrant Lake around the same time led to a plan to establish a mineral spa at the park . Voters approved bonds to pay for the project , which included piping the mineral water from its source to Ashland . The town engaged John McLaren , landscape architect of San Francisco 's Golden Gate Park , to design the park , renamed Lithia Springs Park , later shortened to Lithia Park . Although the park was popular , the mineral spa plans proved too expensive for local taxpayers and were abandoned in 1916 . Meanwhile , entrepreneurs took to bottling and selling mineral waters from the area 's springs .

During the Fourth of July celebration in 1935 , Angus L. Bowmer arranged the first performances of what would become the Oregon Shakespeare Festival . The festival grew during the 20th century , and has become an award @-@ winning and internationally @-@ known regional theater company .

Many of Ashland 's historic buildings have been preserved and restored . The city has 48 individual structures and 2 historic districts (the Ashland Railroad Addition District and the Downtown District) on the National Register of Historic Places . The structures include the Enders Building (home of the Columbia Hotel) , which from 1910 to 1928 contained the largest mercantile establishment between Sacramento and Portland .

= = Geography = =

Ashland is at 1 @, @ 949 feet (594 m) above sea level in the foothills of the Siskiyou and Cascade ranges , about 15 miles (24 km) north of the California border on Interstate 5 (I @-@ 5) . About 10 miles (16 km) south of Ashland and 5 miles (8 km) north of the California border is Siskiyou Summit , which at 4 @, @ 310 feet (1 @, @ 310 m) is the highest point on I @-@ 5 . Ashland is about 12 miles (19 km) south of Medford and about 300 miles (480 km) south of Portland . According to the United States Census Bureau , the city has a total area of about 6 @. @ 6 square miles (17 @. @ 1 km²) , all land .

Ashland Creek and its tributaries begin on the flanks of Mount Ashland , at 7 @, @ 533 feet (2 @, @ 296 m) above sea level in the Siskiyou Mountains south of the city . Upstream (south) of the city boundary , these streams flow mainly through the Rogue River ? Siskiyou National Forest . The creek flows through the city to meet Bear Creek , which roughly parallels I @-@ 5 along the east side of Ashland . Bear Creek , one of many streams in the Rogue Valley , flows generally northwest to join the Rogue River near Gold Hill , and from there the Rogue River flows generally west to its mouth on the Pacific Ocean . Ashland and the Bear Creek Valley are part of the Rogue Valley .

Oregon Route 99 , running roughly parallel to I @-@ 5 , passes through downtown Ashland . Oregon Route 66 enters Ashland from the east and intersects Route 99 near the city center .

= = = Climate = = =

Ashland lies within Oregon 's southwest interior climate zone , in which all but the higher @-@ elevation sites are in the rain shadow of the Oregon Coast Range to the west . The largest urban areas in this zone in addition to Ashland are Medford and Grants Pass in the Rogue Valley , and Roseburg in the Umpqua River Valley further north . Although the mountain peaks in this zone receive up to 120 inches (3 @, @ 000 mm) of precipitation a year , the urban areas and the valleys in which they lie generally get 20 inches (510 mm) or less . This valley climate is particularly good for growing fruit , especially pears , and for producing other crops and farm goods such as hay , grain , poultry , and beef .

Cloud cover in nearby Medford varies from an average of 21 percent in July to 86 percent in December . On average , precipitation falls in Ashland on 114 days each year and totals about 20 inches (510 mm) . The average annual snowfall is only 1 @. @ 4 inches (3 @. @ 6 cm) . The average relative humidity , measured at 4 p.m. daily , is 47 percent in Medford , varying from 26 percent in July to 76 percent in December . According to the Köppen climate classification system , Ashland has a warm @-@ summer Mediterranean climate (Csb) .

The coolest month is December , with an average high temperature of 47 ° F (8 ° C) , and the warmest month is July , with an average high of about 88 ° F (31 ° C) . The highest temperature ever recorded in Ashland was 108 ° F (42 ° C) , observed in August 1981 , and the record low of ? 4 ° F (? 20 ° C) occurred in December 1972 .

= = Demographics = =

In the census of 2010 , there were 20 @, @ 078 people , 9 @, @ 409 households , and 4 @, @ 542 families residing in the city . The population density was 3 @, @ 047 inhabitants per square mile (1 @, @ 176 / km²) . There were 10 @, @ 455 housing units at an average density of 1 @, @ 587 per square mile (613 / km²) . The racial makeup of the city was about 90 % White , 1 % African American , 1 % Native American , 2 % Asian , 0 @. @ 3 % Pacific Islander , 1 @. @ 4 % from other

racess , and 4 % from two or more races . Hispanic or Latino of any race were about 5 % of the population .

There were 9 @, @ 409 households out of which about 21 % had children under the age of 18 living with them . About 34 % were married couples living together ; 10 % had a female householder with no husband present , about 4 % had a male householder with no wife present , and about 52 % were non @-@ families . About 38 % of all households were made up of individuals and 13 @. @ 5 % had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older . The average household size was 2 @. @ 03 and the average family size was 2 @. @ 63 .

The median age in the city was 42 @. @ 9 years . About 16 % of residents were under the age of 18 , and about 16 % were between the ages of 18 and 24 . Rounded to the nearest whole number , 21 % were from 25 to 44 years old ; 30 % were from 45 to 64 ; and 18 % were 65 years of age or older . The gender makeup of the city was about 46 % male and 54 % female .

In 2010 , the median income for a household in the city was \$ 41 @, @ 334 , and the median income for a family was \$ 58 @, @ 409 . Males had a median income of \$ 50 @, @ 368 versus \$ 34 @, @ 202 for females . The per capita income for the city was \$ 28 @, @ 941 . About 21 % of the population and 13 % of families had incomes below the poverty line . Out of the total population , about 30 % of those under the age of 18 and 3 @. @ 5 % of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line .

= = Government = =

Ashland has a mayor ? council government consisting of a mayor and six council members elected by the city 's voters to serve four @-@ year terms . John Stromberg , whose term ends in 2016 , is the current mayor . Unelected citizen committees assist the mayor and council in setting legislative goals .

Peter Buckley , a Democrat from Ashland , represents Ashland and all of Oregon House District 5 in the state legislature . As part of Oregon Senate District 3 , Ashland is represented by Democrat Alan Bates . At the federal level , Greg Walden , a Republican , speaks for Ashland and the rest of Oregon 's 2nd congressional district in the United States House of Representatives . Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley , both Democrats , serve the state of Oregon in the United States Senate .

Historically , Ashland has been something of a political outlier in southwest Oregon . In the presidential election of 1860 , Ashland favored Abraham Lincoln while its neighbors strongly preferred pro @-@ slavery candidates . In the early 1900s , Ashland voters supported women 's suffrage and prohibition , generally out of step with the rest of the region . In more recent elections , liberal Ashland has supported tax levies and environmental regulations opposed by voters elsewhere in Jackson and nearby counties . Critics sometimes refer to the city as the People 's Republic of Ashland .

= = Economy = =

Income from tourism is important to Ashland 's economy . A large number of restaurants , galleries , and retail stores cater to thousands of visitors who attend plays each year at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival . In 2011 , the festival sold more than 390 @, @ 000 tickets to its theater productions .

The town 's largest employer is Southern Oregon University (SOU) , which has a faculty and staff of more than 750 . In addition to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the university , health @-@ service providers make significant contributions to the economy . Businesses related to outdoor recreation , transportation , technology , and light manufacturing are also important . In 2010 , the Shakespeare Festival employed about 500 people , the hospital about 400 , the public schools about 300 , and the City of Ashland about 250 . The Bathroom Readers ' Press , which produces the Uncle John 's Bathroom Reader books , is based in Ashland and San Diego . Brammo , specializing in battery @-@ electric motorcycles , was based in Ashland but moved to Talent .

= = Arts and culture = =

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival has grown from a summer outdoor series in the 1930s to a season that stretches from February to October , incorporating Shakespearean and non @-@ Shakespearean plays at three theaters . The OSF has become the largest regional repertory theater in the United States .

The Oregon Cabaret Theater features musicals and comedy throughout the year . Opened in 1986 , the dinner theater occupies a former First Baptist Church built in Mission Revival style . The Ashland Independent Film Festival , which shows international and domestic films of almost every genre , takes place each April in the Varsity Theatre downtown . About 90 films are shown during the five days of the festival . In 2009 , Ashland was the setting for the movie version of Neil Gaiman 's Coraline .

The annual Ashland New Plays Festival (ANPF) is a nonprofit organization that encourages playwrights to develop new work through public readings . Each year , the ANPF holds an international competition that winnows hundreds of submissions to four plays that are read to live audiences by professional actors during a five @-@ day festival in October .

= = Museums and other points of interest = =

The National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland is the world 's only laboratory dedicated to solving crimes against wildlife . Using forensic science , experts at the laboratory help wildlife officers to investigate possible crimes against animals and to establish links between victims and suspects in cases that go to court . The laboratory has assisted the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and foreign agencies concerned with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITIES) .

The Ashland City Band (ACB) was organized in the late 19th century as the Ashland Brass Band . The band used an octagonal gazebo @-@ style bandstand in Lithia Park until the Butler Memorial Band Shell was built in Lithia Park in 1946 . The ACB gives public concerts there each summer between June and August .

= = Parks = =

Lithia Park is a 93 @-@ acre (38 ha) park , including 42 acres (17 ha) on the National Register of Historic Places , that begins near the downtown shopping area and extends upstream along Ashland Creek near the center of the city . It includes two ponds , a Japanese garden , tennis courts , two public greens , a bandshell (outdoor stage) and miles of hiking trails . The name Lithia comes from natural mineral water found in the Ashland area . It has a strong mineral taste and slight effervescence , and the lithia water fountains found on the town plaza are frequently tasted by unsuspecting tourists (often at the behest of residents or frequent visitors who use the fountains as a cheap , humorous Ashland initiation rite) .

A hiking and biking path , the Bear Creek Greenway , begins in Ashland near the intersection of West Nevada Street with Helman Street , close to the confluence of Ashland Creek (which flows through Lithia Park) . with Bear Creek . The 25 @-@ mile (40 km) path follows Bear Creek between Ashland and Central Point and passes through Talent , Phoenix , and Medford .

= = Education = =

Southern Oregon University , a public co @-@ ed four @-@ year university founded in 1926 , offers courses of study toward degrees in the liberal arts , science , business , and education . Students can focus on any of more than 30 major fields or enroll in programs such as Shakespeare Studies and other minors . With an enrollment of about 6 @, @ 200 undergraduates as of Fall 2014 , this urban university also offers graduate @-@ level programs on its 175 @-@ acre (71 ha) campus .

About 57 percent of the university 's students are women , and about 43 percent are men . Their most popular major fields include those related to business , psychology , visual and performing arts , social sciences , and protective services such as law enforcement and firefighting . The student ? faculty ratio in 2013 ? 14 is 20 to 1 . Tuition in 2013 ? 14 is \$ 7 @, @ 863 per year for Oregon residents and \$ 20 @, @ 238 for all others .

The Ashland School District oversees three elementary schools , one of which is a magnet school focused on science and the arts ; one middle school ; one high school ; and a community learning center . Ashland High School was ranked 1,395th best among the nation 's public high schools and 15th best in Oregon by U.S. News & World Report as of 2013 .

= = Media = =

The Ashland Daily Tidings is published Monday through Saturday . The Mail Tribune , a morning daily published Monday through Sunday in Medford , also serves Ashland . Fifteen radio stations operate in the region around Ashland , including Jefferson Public Radio and KSKQ , an independent non @-@ profit broadcasting at 89 @. @ 5 FM . A former student @-@ run radio station with the call letters KSOC and the nickname " Radio Free Ashland " shut down in February 2013 after 14 years of broadcasting . Rogue Valley Community Television , based at Southern Oregon University , serves Jackson and Josephine counties . Ashland has no commercial television stations , but nearby Medford has seven .

= = Infrastructure and public services = =

The Asante Ashland Community Hospital is a general medical and surgical hospital that is part of the Asante health network based in Medford . As of 2015 , it has 49 inpatient beds .

The Ashland Public Library building was expanded from the city 's original Carnegie library . In 2003 , the historic Carnegie portion of the library was restored . In 2006 , budget problems led to the closing in April 2007 of the Ashland Library and 14 others in Jackson County . The event , which lasted until October 2007 , was the largest library closure in U.S. history . Although some of its services are handled by a private company , Library Systems and Services , the Ashland branch remains part of the Jackson County network of public libraries .

Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) Route 10 and Route 15 provides bus service to much of the city , both routes running every 30 minutes providing a combined service frequency of 15 minutes . Route 10 also provides service to Medford , where passengers can connect to any of the other six RVTD routes as well as to Southwest POINT , a daily shuttle operated by Klamath Shuttle carrying passengers between Brookings and the Amtrak station in Klamath Falls . The Klamath Falls Amtrak Station serves the Coast Starlight long @-@ haul passenger train on track owned by the Union Pacific Railroad . Ashland Municipal Airport , with a 3 @, @ 600 @-@ foot (1 @, @ 100 m) asphalt runway , offers general aviation services . Medford International Airport , 12 miles (19 km) from Ashland , also serves the city .

The City of Ashland moved to improve local broadband Internet access in the late 1990s by creating the Ashland Fiber Network (AFN) and building a fiber optic ring inside the city boundaries . However , by 2006 the city faced difficulties servicing AFN 's debt load , which was approaching \$ 15 @. @ 5 million . The city hired a new AFN director , Joe Franell , who suggested scrapping cable television service while retaining the more profitable high @-@ speed Internet access . In October 2006 , the cable television service was transferred to a local company , Ashland Home Net , while the City retained both the infrastructure and the wholesale Internet business .

= = Sister city = =

Ashland has one sister city :
Guanajuato , Mexico

= = Notable people = =