

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cochise County Faces a Slow Population Shift

BENSON — According to recent projections from the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity, Cochise County is entering a period of gradual population decline. The county's population, estimated at 129,042 in 2025, is projected to increase slightly to 129,091 in 2026. After that brief rise, however, the trend turns downward. By 2030, Cochise County is projected to have 128,494 residents, a decrease of 548 people, or 0.4%, from the 2025 estimate.

That short-term change is modest and may be difficult to notice from year to year. The longer view tells a clearer story. By 2060, the county's population is projected to fall to 120,476—a loss of 8,566 residents, or 6.6%, compared with the 2025 estimate. The figures suggest that Cochise County is likely to remain broadly stable through the remainder of this decade but experience slow, persistent contraction over the following 30 years.

The outlook varies considerably among the county's municipalities. Tombstone stands apart as the only community projected to achieve sustained growth. Its population is estimated at 1,408 in 2025 and is projected to reach 1,487 in 2030, an increase of 5.6%. By 2060, Tombstone is projected to have 1,850 residents—442 more than in 2025 and a gain of 31.4%.

Sierra Vista also shows near-term resilience. Its population is estimated at 45,838 in 2025 and is projected to peak at 45,944 in 2028 before settling at 45,873 in 2030. By 2060, the city's population is projected to decline to 44,230. That long-term reduction of 3.5% is smaller than the decline anticipated for most other municipalities, allowing Sierra Vista to retain its position as the county's largest city.

Other communities face more substantial losses. Bisbee is projected to experience the steepest percentage decline, falling from an estimated 4,954 residents in 2025 to 4,751 in

2030 and 3,472 in 2060. The long-term decrease of 1,482 residents represents nearly 30% of its estimated 2025 population.

Huachuca City is projected to decline from 1,616 residents in 2025 to 1,327 in 2060, a reduction of 17.9%. Willcox follows a similar path, falling from 3,255 to 2,688, or 17.4%. Benson is projected to decrease from 5,589 to 4,972, while Douglas falls from 16,347 to 14,630 from 2025 to 2060. These represent long-term declines of 11% and 10.5%, respectively.

The unincorporated balance of Cochise County remains comparatively steady in the short term. Its overall population is estimated at 50,035 in 2025 and projected at 49,915 in 2030, a decline of just 120 residents. By 2060, however, that population is projected to reach 47,306, a decrease of 5.5%.

The county's larger census-designated places, or CDPs, follow an unusually consistent pattern. Mescal, Miracle Valley, Naco, Pirtleville, St. David, Sierra Vista Southeast, Sunsites and Whetstone are all projected to decline by only about 0.2% to 0.3% between 2025 and 2030. This points to considerable stability during the current decade.

By 2060, each of these CDPs is projected to stand approximately 5.4% to 5.5% below its 2025 estimate. Sierra Vista Southeast, the largest Cochise County CDP which includes Hereford, Nicksville, Ramsey Canyon, and Sierra Vista Estates, declines from an estimated 15,301 residents in 2025 to 14,467 in 2060—a loss of 834 people. Whetstone falls from 3,432 to 3,245 during the same period, while the smaller CDPs experience proportionally similar reductions.

Taken together, the projections describe a county changing slowly but unevenly. Near-term population levels remain relatively stable, yet the long-term outlook is predominantly negative. Tombstone's projected growth and Sierra Vista's relative stability provide important exceptions, but most communities are expected to become smaller by 2060.

For more information on the Cochise County economy, including current and historical data, visit CochiseEconomy.com, a partnership project of Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group, Arizona G&T Cooperatives, and community sponsors.

County and Municipality Comparison					
Geography	2025 Estimate	2030 Projection	2060 Projection	Change to 2030	Change to 2060
Cochise County	129,042	128,494	120,476	-0.4%	-6.6%
Benson	5,589	5,526	4,972	-1.1%	-11.0%
Bisbee	4,954	4,751	3,472	-4.1%	-29.9%
Douglas	16,347	16,177	14,630	-1.0%	-10.5%
Huachuca City	1,616	1,580	1,327	-2.2%	-17.9%
Sierra Vista	45,838	45,873	44,230	0.1%	-3.5%
Tombstone	1,408	1,487	1,850	5.6%	31.4%
Willcox	3,255	3,186	2,688	-2.1%	-17.4%
Unincorporated Balance	50,035	49,915	47,306	-0.2%	-5.5%
Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity					

Census-Designated Place Comparison					
Geography	2025 Estimate	2030 Projection	2060 Projection	Change to 2030	Change to 2060
Mescal	1,857	1,852	1,756	-0.2%	-5.5%
Miracle Valley	606	604	573	-0.2%	-5.5%
Naco	874	872	826	-0.2%	-5.5%
Pirtleville	1,497	1,494	1,416	-0.2%	-5.5%
St. David	1,738	1,734	1,643	-0.2%	-5.5%
Sierra Vista Southeast	15,301	15,264	14,467	-0.2%	-5.5%
Sunsites	838	836	792	-0.2%	-5.5%
Whetstone	3,432	3,424	3,245	-0.2%	-5.5%
Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity					

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