

# CHAPTER 1

## DOUGLAS COUNTY PROFILE

Douglas County is one of the original nine counties established in 1861 as part of the Nevada Territory. Today, Douglas County is one of seventeen counties in the State of Nevada. It is one of the smallest counties in the State and ranks number 15 in size. Almost 70 percent of the land<sup>1</sup> in Douglas County is federally owned.

There are three unincorporated towns in the County: [Gardnerville](#), [Genoa](#), and [Minden](#). Minden has been the county seat since 1916.

The County experienced significant population growth between 1960 and 2000, growing from 3,481 to 41,259. The Census Bureau estimates the current population is 47,710, a 1.5 percent increase from the 2010 population of 46,997.

Douglas County's economy is beginning to improve in the aftermath of the Great Recession, but total employment, which was 18,715 for 2015, has not recovered to the pre-Recession levels. Figure 1 provides some highlights about Douglas County.

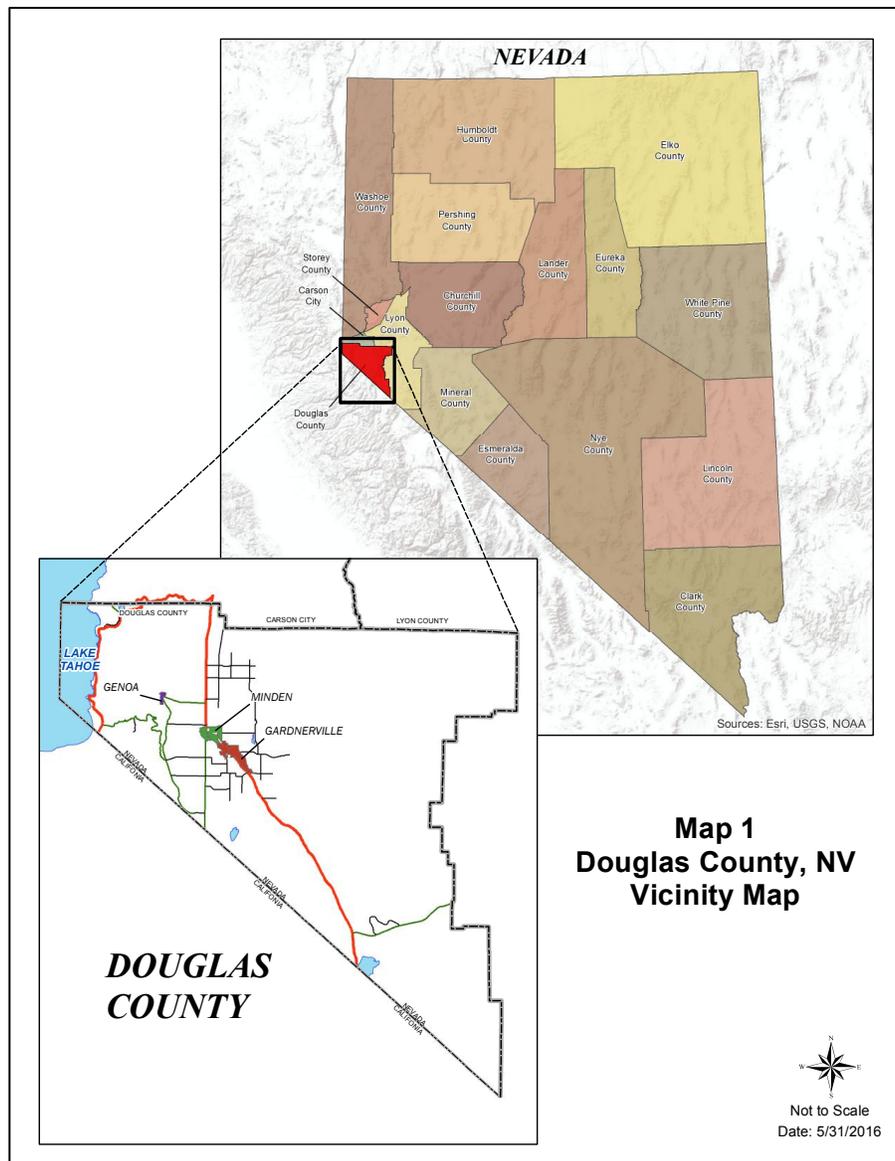
<b>Figure 1 Douglas County, NV Highlights</b>	
Year Established	1861
Area (Land and Water in Square Miles)	737.7
County Size Ranking	15
Percentage of Federal Lands	67.9%
2015 Population Estimate	47,710
Percentage increase in Population since 2010	1.5%
Housing Units	24,533
Percentage increase in Housing Units since 2010	1.8%
Number of New Residential Permits in 2015	146
Average Sales Price for Single Family Homes (2015)	\$395,332
Number of Jobs in 2015	18,715
Average Wage for all Industries in 2015	\$42,073
Poverty Rate	10.5%
Median Family Income (HUD, FY 2016)	\$69,400
High School Graduation Rate (Class of 2014)	90.61%

<sup>1</sup> "land" refers to parcels and does not include rights-of-way or water bodies. Total land area includes 28,395 parcels with 450,683 acres.



## GEOGRAPHY

Douglas County is located in the northwestern portion of Nevada and is bordered by the State of California to the west and southwest, the consolidated municipality of Carson City to the north, and Lyon County to the northeast and east (See Map 1). The County is one of the smallest in the State of Nevada with a total area of 737.7 square miles, or 472,133 acres. The terrain includes the Carson Range of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the west and the Pine Nut Mountains in the east. The elevations in Douglas County range from 9,593 feet at East Peak to approximately 4,640 feet where the Carson River flows into Carson City. Most of the County is located in the Great Basin Desert and is characterized by an arid climate. The Carson Valley lies in the middle of the County and covers approximately 420 square miles. The Valley is a productive agricultural region which depends on the Carson River Watershed. Other water bodies in Douglas County include Lake Tahoe (shared with the State of California), Topaz Lake (shared with the State of California), and the Walker River.



## HISTORY

Douglas County is named after Stephen A. Douglas, the U.S. Senator from Illinois remembered for his debates with Abraham Lincoln in 1858. Douglas County contains ancestral lands belonging to the Washoe Tribe as well as former trading posts and settlements from the 1800s, such as Double Springs and Mottsville.

The oldest non-indigenous settlement in the County as well as the State of Nevada is the Town of Genoa (est. 1851), formerly known as Mormon Station. Genoa served as the first seat of government for Douglas County. A portion of the town is on the National Register of Historic Places. Genoa also has a local historic district.

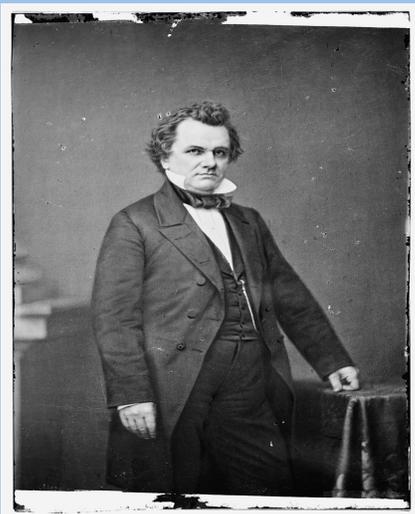
The Town of Gardnerville was established in 1879. Named after John Gardner, the Town's history has been influenced by Danish and Basque settlers.

The Town of Minden, which was established in 1906, was planned by the Dangberg family to serve workers in ranching and farming operations. The Dangberg Land and Livestock Company operated cattle and sheep ranches in Douglas County as well as Alpine County, CA. Minden's growth was spurred with the extension of the Virginia & Truckee Railway to Minden in 1906.

Douglas County's history also includes lumber barons such as Duane L. Bliss. Glenbrook was the site of a significant milling operation for his Carson Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company.

Many of the civic and commercial buildings in Gardnerville and Minden were designed by Nevada architect Frederick DeLongchamps, including the Douglas County Historic Courthouse in Minden and the Gardnerville High School (now the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center).

### **Box No. 1 Senator Stephen A. Douglas (1813-1861)**



Douglas County is named after Stephen A. Douglas, a U.S. Senator from Illinois and famous champion of the Mexican War – and powerful Chair of the Senate Committee on Territories. Douglas, a “popular sovereignty” Democrat, was largely responsible for the Compromise of 1850 and the controversial Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 that opened some previously prohibited territories to slavery and helped fuel the formation of the Republican Party. Douglas is also famously remembered for his lively senatorial debates with Abraham Lincoln in 1858, which cost him the popular vote but narrowly helped win him the reelection of his Senate seat by Illinois state electors.

**Box No. 2**  
**Douglas County, NV Timeline**

- 1848** Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago between Mexico and United States allows U.S. to take over present-day Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and a portion of Colorado
- 1850** The Compromise of 1850 establishes the Utah Territory
- 1851** Mormon Station established (name changed to Genoa in 1856)
- 1854** Utah Territorial Legislature creates Carson County
- 1861** Carson County residents obtain approval to separate from Utah Territory and create the Nevada Territory, which was approved by President Buchanan on March 2. Douglas County is one of the original 9 counties of the Nevada Territory
- 1864** Nevada becomes a state on October 31 during the Civil War
- 1879** Town of Gardnerville established
- 1887** Dawes Act allows transfer of 160 acre parcels (Pinenut Allotments) to individual Tribe members
- 1906** Town of Minden established
- 1916** County seat moved from Genoa to Minden
- 1931** Gambling legalized in Nevada
- 1942** Minden Airport established
- 1960** Douglas County Population is 3,481
- 1969** Bi-State Compact establishes the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)
- 1987** TRPA Regional Plan adopted
- 1990** Douglas County population is 27,637
- 1996** Douglas County Commissioners approve new Master Plan
- 2000** Douglas County population is 41,259
- 2002** Douglas County voters approve the Sustainable Growth Initiative
- 2007** Douglas County Commissioners approve the Building Permit Allocation and Growth Management Ordinance
- 2012** TRPA adopts new Regional Plan



## GOVERNMENT

Douglas County is governed by a five-member elected Board of County Commissioners. Other elected officials in the county include the District Attorney, the Sheriff, the Assessor, and the Clerk-Treasurer. The General Fund Budget for 2015-2016 was \$49.5 million. There are currently 495 full-time employees in Douglas County.

Each town in Douglas County (Gardnerville, Genoa, and Minden) has an elected town board as well as a town manager. The Town of Minden replaced Genoa as the county seat in 1916.

The East Fork Fire and Paramedic Districts provide fire protection and paramedic services for the Carson Valley portion of Douglas County while the Tahoe-Douglas Fire District serves the Tahoe Basin portion. The US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are primary respondents to fires on federal lands.

There are 31 taxing districts in Douglas County, including 15 General Improvement Districts (GID). Douglas County has the highest number of GIDs in the State of Nevada. The GIDs include communities such as Gardnerville Ranchos and Indian Hills in the Carson Valley as well as Kingsbury and Round Hill at Lake Tahoe. There are also two redevelopment districts in Douglas County. The Carson Valley redevelopment district includes areas located in Genoa and Indian Hills. The second redevelopment district, which was approved in February 2016, is located in Stateline.

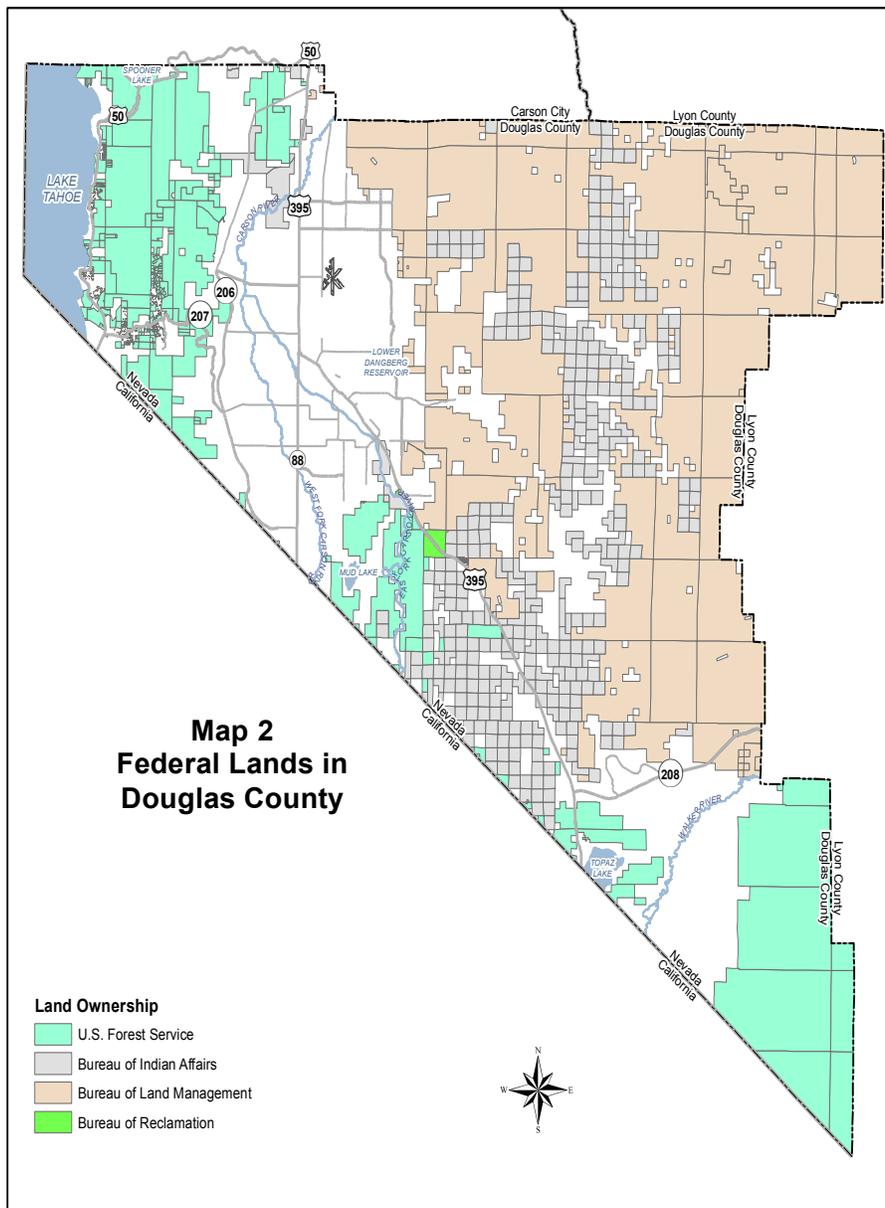
The County owns and manages the Minden-Tahoe Airport, which was established in 1942 to support military operations during World War II. Today, the airport serves as a general aviation airport and also as an aerial firefighting center (Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center). There are 355 aircraft based at the airport.

Public transit services are provided by the County-owned Douglas Area Rural Transit, or DART. DART provides local transit services in the Carson Valley only, but provides connections to regional express services provided by the Tahoe Transportation District.

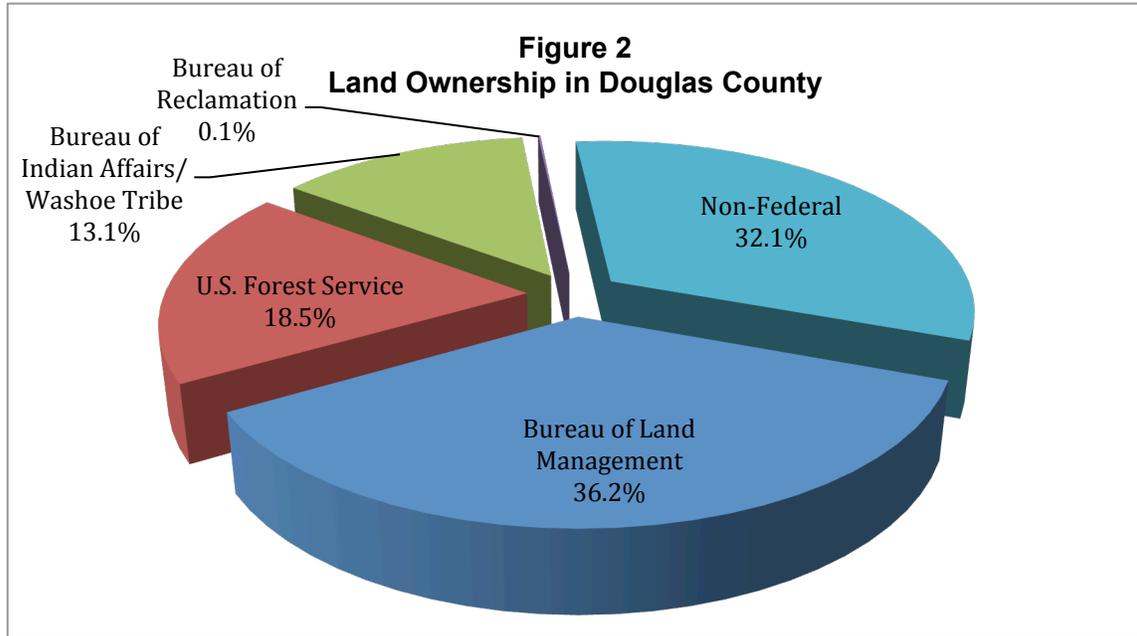


## LAND JURISDICTIONS

Similar to many counties in Nevada, most of the acreage in Douglas County is under the jurisdiction of the federal government. Federal lands account for 67.9 percent of the parcel acreage in Douglas County. Map No. 2 displays the location of federal lands within the County. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) properties are located to the east in the Pinenut Region while the U.S. Forest Service properties are located to the west in the Carson Range of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and in the southernmost portion of the County.



As shown in Figure 2, 36.2 percent of the lands in the County are managed by BLM. The U.S. Forest Service manages 18.5 percent of the lands in the County while the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) manages 13.1 percent. The remaining 32.1 percent of the land in Douglas County is under state, local, or private ownership.



Source: Douglas County GIS, May 2016

The Tahoe Basin portion of Douglas County is under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe Regional Planning Authority (TRPA). Following the adoption of the TRPA Regional Plan in 1987, a growth management system was put in place to limit development around Lake Tahoe. A new regional plan was adopted by TRPA in December 2012 and Douglas County was the first member government to adopt an area plan (South Shore Area Plan) consistent with the new TRPA Regional Plan.

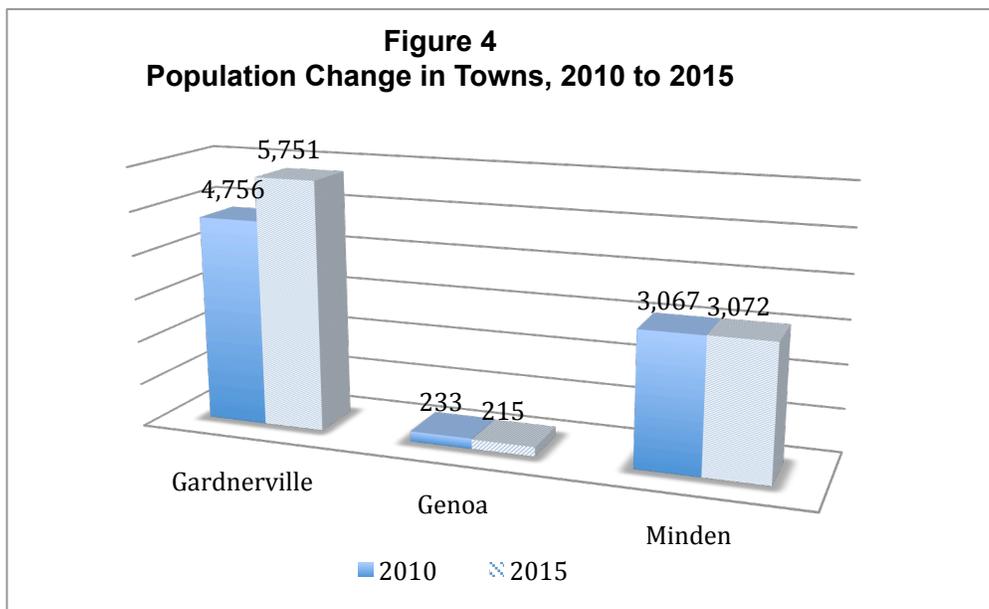
Private property outside of TRPA is regulated by Douglas County. In 2002, Douglas County voters approved the Sustainable Growth Initiative (SGI). The SGI was never implemented due to litigation, but the Board of Commissioners adopted a Building Permit Allocation and Growth Management Ordinance in 2007. The new ordinance created a residential allocation system for all of Douglas County, except the Tahoe Basin. The Great Recession of 2007-2009 essentially stopped all growth in the County. As a result, many residential allocations were not used and were rolled over to the next quarterly allocation cycle and became “excess” allocations. Excess allocations have increased from 560 in July 2011 to 882 in July 2016.

## POPULATION

The current population of Douglas County is 47,710 according to the July 2015 population estimate from the Census Bureau. This represents a 1.5 percent increase over the 2010 Census population figure of 46,997 and represents an average annual growth rate of 0.3 percent. The most recent certified population estimate from the Nevada State Demographer (July 2015) is higher and shows the total population of Douglas County at 48,223. Figure 3 compares the population estimates from both sources for the 2010 to 2015 period.

Year	U.S. Census Bureau	Nevada State Demographer	Difference
2010	46,997	46,997	0
2011	47,021	47,661	640
2012	46,986	48,015	1,029
2013	47,057	48,478	1,421
2014	47,519	48,553	1,034
2015	47,710	48,223	513

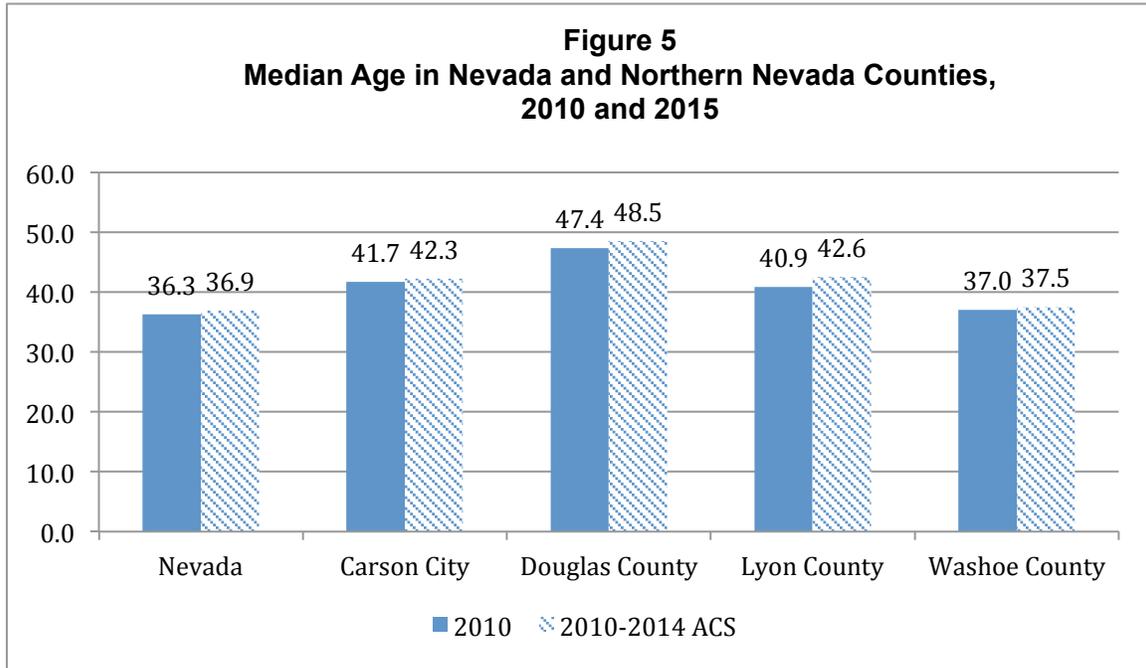
Figure 4 shows the change in population for each town based on the 2010 Census and the 2015 population estimates from the Nevada State Demographer. According to these estimates, Gardnerville has increased from its 2010 Census population of 4,756 to 5,751, an increase of 2.09 percent. The Town of Minden has shown very little growth since 2010 while Genoa's population has decreased slightly since 2010.



Source: 2010 Census & Nevada State Demographer



Douglas County continues to reflect a median age that is older than the State of Nevada and adjacent jurisdictions in Northern Nevada. As shown in Figure 5, the median age in Douglas County increased from 47.4 years in 2010 to 48.5 years according to the American Community Survey (ACS). The comparable median age for Nevada is now 36.9 years. The median age for Carson City, Lyon County, and Washoe County is 42.3, 42.6, and 37.5 years respectively.



Source: 2010 Census, American Community Survey 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimate

According to the State Demographer, Douglas County will grow from 48,223 to 48,931 in the year 2020. The annual growth rate is 0.2 percent and 0.3 percent. By comparison, the population for Nevada is projected to increase from 2,897,584 to 3,058,887 by 2020 based on an annual growth rate between 1.0 and 1.2 percent. The five-year projections are provided in Figure 6.

**Figure 6**  
**Population Projections for Nevada and Douglas County 2015 to 2020**

Year	Nevada	Percentage Change	Douglas County	Percentage Change
2015	2,897,584		48,223	
2016	2,926,703	1.0%	48,308	.2%
2017	2,958,564	1.1%	48,457	.3%
2018	2,993,180	1.2%	48,612	.3%
2019	3,026,563	1.1%	48,768	.3%
2020	3,058,887	1.1%	48,931	.3%

Source: Nevada State Demographer, based on 2015 Population Estimates



## HOUSING

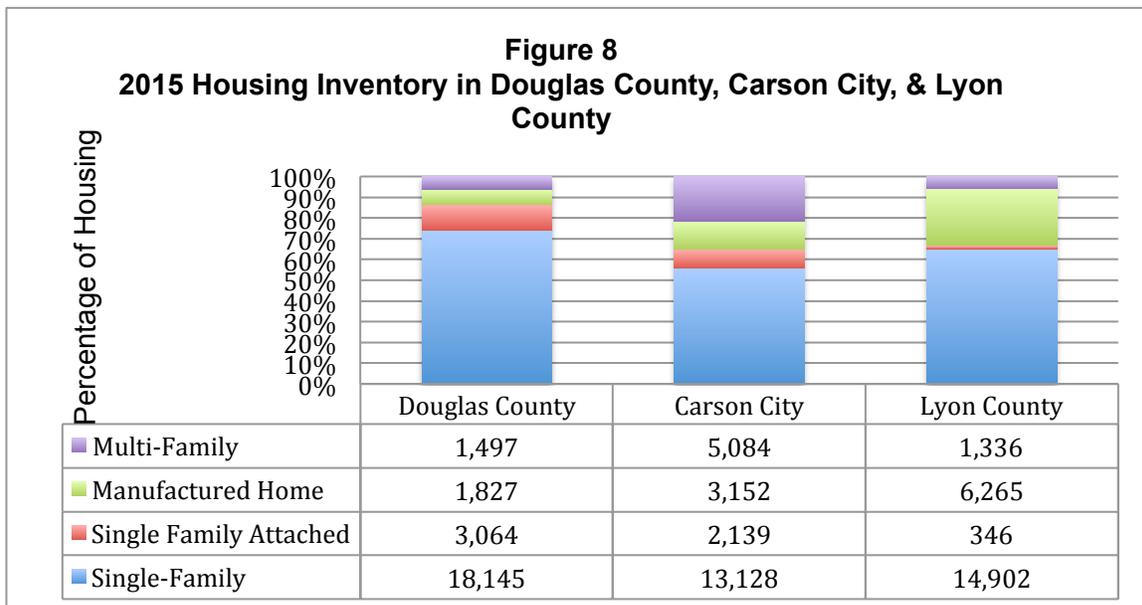
The number of housing units in Douglas County increased from 24,095 in 2010 to 24,533 in 2015, an increase of 1.8 percent. As shown in Figure 7, the Douglas County Assessor reported an increase of 401 new single-family units and 49 multi-family units during this period. Of the 49 multi-family units added to the housing stock since 2010, 30 units belonged to the Parkway Vista Affordable Senior Housing development in Gardnerville. Only one duplex was added to the housing inventory and the number of manufactured homes decreased by 14 units. The percentage of single-family detached homes in Douglas County has increased from 73.6 percent to 74.0 percent of the total housing stock while the percentage of multi-family units increased from 6.0 to 6.1 percent of the total housing stock.

**Figure 7  
Douglas County Housing Inventory, 2010 & 2015**

Housing Type	2010	2015	Change
Single-Family Detached	17,744	18,145	401
<i>Percentage of Total</i>	<i>73.6%</i>	<i>74.0%</i>	
Single Family Attached	3,062	3,064	2
<i>Percentage of Total</i>	<i>12.7%</i>	<i>12.5%</i>	
Manufactured Home	1,841	1,827	-14
<i>Percentage of Total</i>	<i>7.6%</i>	<i>7.4%</i>	
Multi-Family	1,448	1,497	49
<i>Percentage of Total</i>	<i>6.0%</i>	<i>6.1%</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,095</b>	<b>24,533</b>	<b>438</b>

Source: Douglas County Assessor Certified Housing Counts

Figure 8 compares the housing inventory in Douglas County with adjacent jurisdictions.

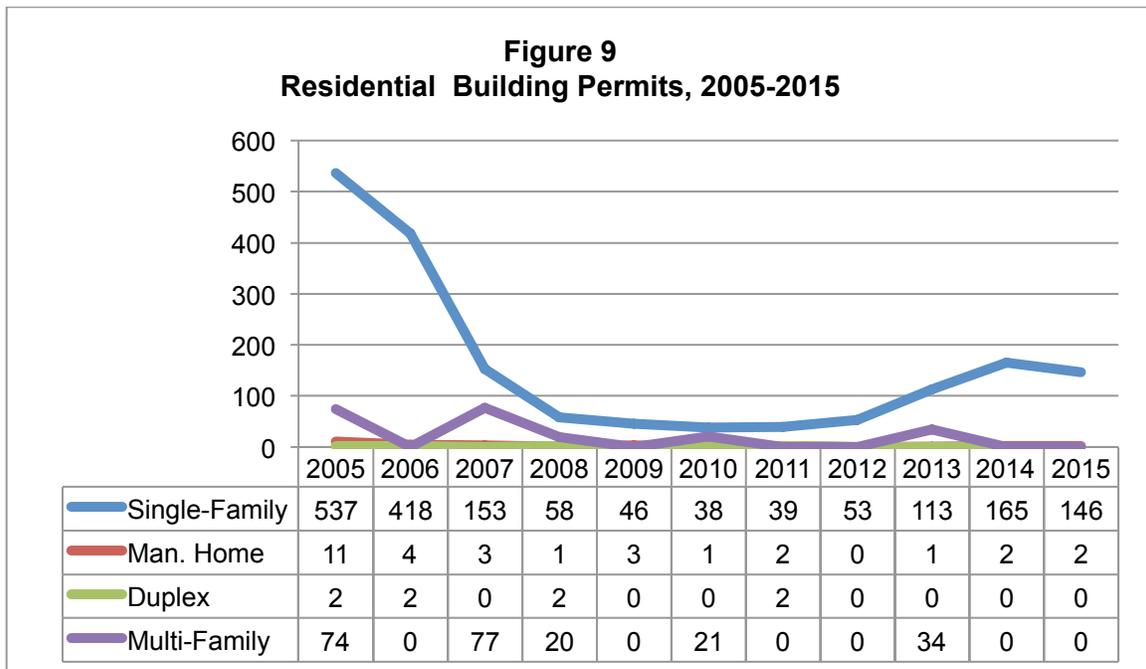


Source: County Assessor Certified Housing Counts



Douglas County has a higher percentage of single-family detached and single-family attached dwelling units than either Carson City or Lyon County. Carson City has the highest percentage of multi-family dwelling units while Lyon County has the highest percentage of manufactured homes.

Building permits for residential dwellings, particularly single-family dwellings, have been steadily increasing since the Great Recession. As shown in Figure 9 below, the number of single-family residential permits decreased from 537 permits in 2005 to only 38 permits in 2010. In 2015, there were 146 single-family permits. There have been few multi-family permits during the last few years with only 21 units in 2010 and 34 units in 2013.



Of the occupied housing units in Douglas County, 14,050 units are owner-occupied and 5,715 are renter-occupied, according to ACS. This represents a homeownership rate of 71.1 percent, which is almost identical to the comparable 2010 Census figure of 71.8 percent. Figure 10 compares housing tenure in Douglas County with Carson City and Lyon County. The homeownership rate in Lyon County is 71.9 percent while the comparable rate for Carson City is 58.2 percent. The national homeownership rate, as of the second quarter of 2016, is 62.9 percent.

**Figure 10  
Housing Tenure in Douglas County, Carson City, & Lyon County**

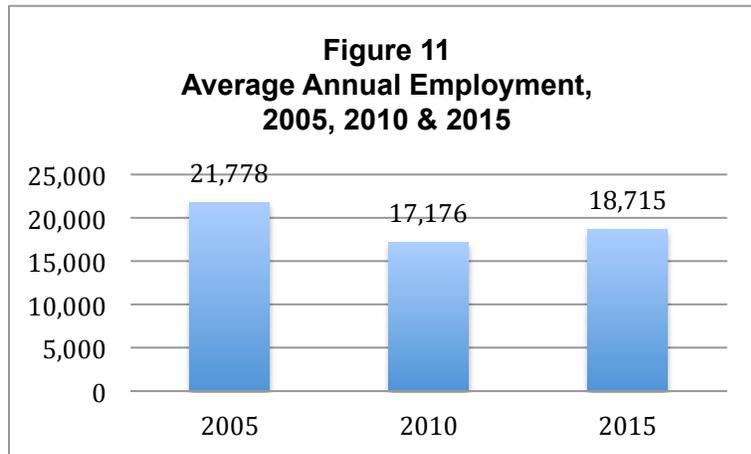
Jurisdiction	Owner-Occupied	%	Renter-Occupied	%	Total Occupied Units
<b>Douglas County</b>	14,050	71.1%	5,715	28.9%	19,765
<b>Carson City</b>	12,346	58.2%	8,879	41.8%	21,225
<b>Lyon County</b>	14,185	71.9%	5,543	28.1%	19,728

Source: American Community Survey 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimate



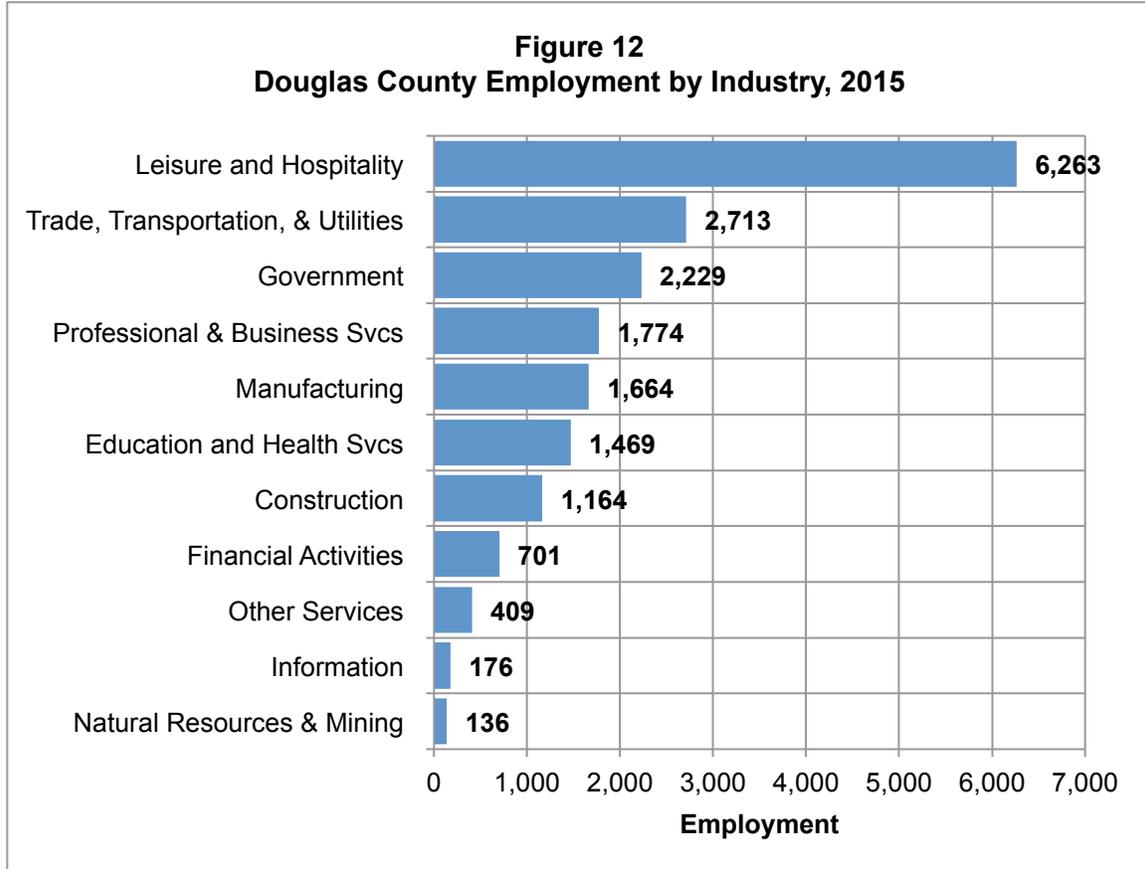
## ECONOMY

While employment levels are improving in the County following the Great Recession period, total employment has not reached the level of the pre-Recession period. As shown in Figure 11, the average annual employment was 21,778 in 2005 and then decreased to 17,176 in 2010. The average annual employment was 18,715 in 2015.

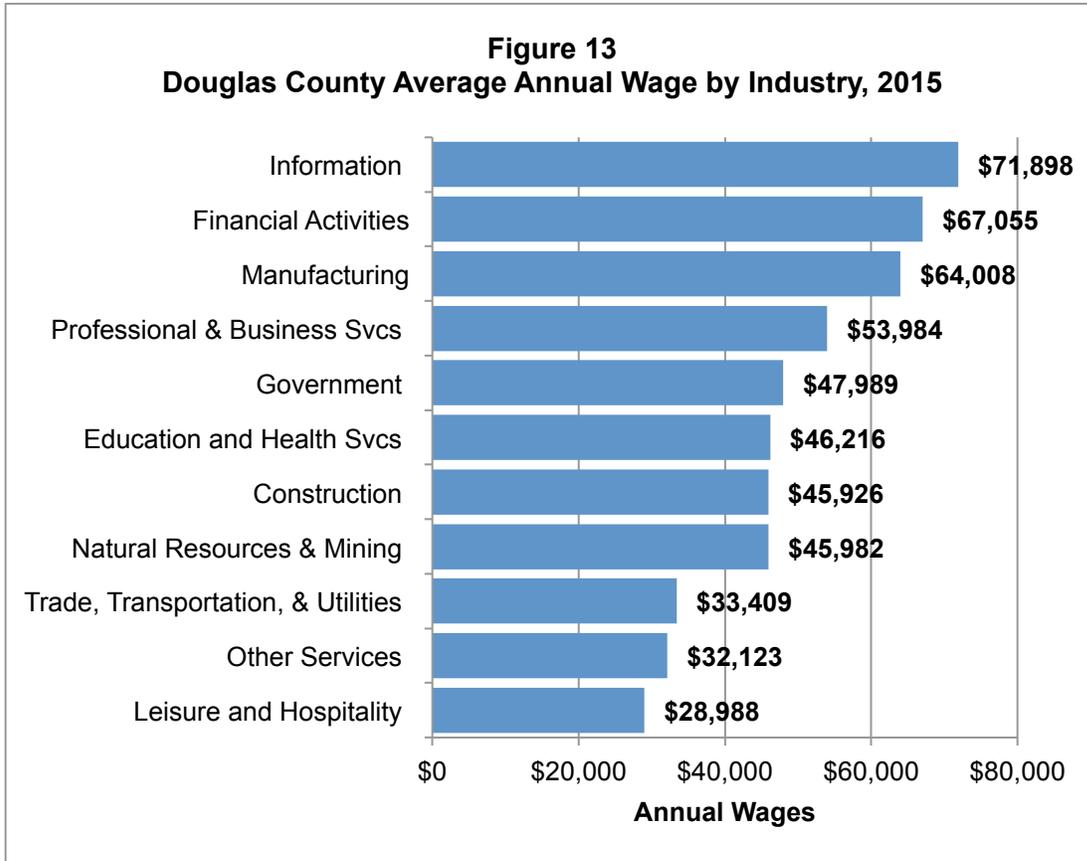


Source: NV DETR, 2015 Report

Figure 12 shows the number of jobs in each industry for 2015. The leisure and hospitality industry continues to be the dominant sector in Douglas County with 6,263 jobs, or 33 percent of the total employment. Compared to other counties in the State of Nevada, Douglas County ranks number one in the percentage of leisure and hospitality jobs.



The leisure and hospitality sector includes hotels and casino hotel jobs, which are concentrated in Stateline but are growing in Minden and Gardnerville with the opening of the C.O.D. casino and the re-opening of Sharkey’s Casino. As shown in Figure 13, the highest wages are associated with the information sector at \$71,898 while the lowest wages belong to the leisure and hospitality sector at \$28,988.



A list of the largest employers in Douglas County is provided in Figure 14. The list includes private and government employers with 300 or more employees. Harrah's is the largest employer in Douglas County, followed by the Douglas County School District. It should be noted that Harrah's and Harvey's Resort are both owned by Caesars Entertainment. The list has remained relatively constant during the last few years except that The Hard Rock Hotel (former Horizon) in Stateline is now included as one of the top employers in Douglas County.

**Figure 14  
Largest Employers in Douglas County, 2015**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>1</b>	Harrah's Stateline	1,000 to 1499	Casino Hotels	Stateline
<b>2</b>	Douglas County School District	900 to 999	Elementary and Secondary Schools	Minden
<b>3</b>	Douglas County	600 to 699	Executive & Legislative Offices Combined	Minden
<b>4</b>	Montbleu Resort	600 to 699	Casino Hotels	Stateline
<b>5</b>	Harvey's Resort	500 to 599	Casino Hotels	Stateline
<b>6</b>	Hard Rock Hotel	400 to 499	Casino Hotels	Stateline
<b>7</b>	Carson Valley Medical Center	300 to 399	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	Gardnerville
<b>8</b>	Wal-Mart Supercenter	300 to 399	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	Indian Hills
<b>9</b>	Carson Valley Inn	300 to 399	Casino Hotels	Minden

Source: DETR, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2016

Figure 15 provides the inflow and outflow counts for jobs in Douglas County. According to the 2014 report from the Census Bureau, a majority of the workers in Douglas County, or 54.4 percent, live outside of Douglas County and a majority of the people who live in Douglas County, or 57.0 percent, work outside of the County.

**Figure 15  
Inflow/Outflow Counts of Primary Jobs in Douglas County, 2014**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Employed in Douglas County but Living Outside</b>	9,485	54.4%
<b>Employed and Living in Douglas County</b>	7,954	45.6%
<b>Total Employed in Douglas County</b>	17,439	100.0%
<b>Living in Douglas County but Employed Outside</b>	10,556	57.0%
<b>Living and Employed in Douglas County</b>	7,954	43.0%
<b>Total Living in Douglas County</b>	18,510	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics for 2014



## EDUCATION

The Douglas County School District operates three high schools, two middle schools, and seven elementary schools which serve a total student population of 6,054 (FY14/15 School Year). In addition, the District operates two alternative schools: Douglas Alternative School and Jacobsen High School (at China Springs Youth Camp). The Douglas County School District spent \$10,668 per pupil in FY 2013-2014. By comparison, the State of Nevada spent \$8,576 per pupil during the same period.

According to the U.S. News 2016 ranking of public high schools in the United States, Douglas High School was ranked fifth out of 139 ranked public high schools in Nevada. The Douglas County School District had one of the highest graduation rates (four-year adjusted cohort) in the State for the 2014-2015 school year. Figure 16 includes the graduation rates for Douglas County, adjacent public school districts, and the State of Nevada. The Douglas County School District had a graduation rate of 90.61 percent while the Carson City and the Lyon County School Districts had graduation rates of 74.30 percent and 74.69 percent respectively. The graduation rate for Douglas High School alone for this same period was 92.56 percent.

**Figure 16**  
**Graduation Rates for 2014-2015 School Year**

Jurisdiction	2014-2015 Graduation Rate
Douglas County	90.61%
Lyon County	74.69%
Carson City	74.30%
State of Nevada	70.77%

Source: Nevada Department of Education

Total student enrollment in the Douglas County School District has been decreasing for several years. This trend is similar in Lyon County, but not in Carson City. Figure 17 below compares student enrollment figures for all three school districts since 2010.

