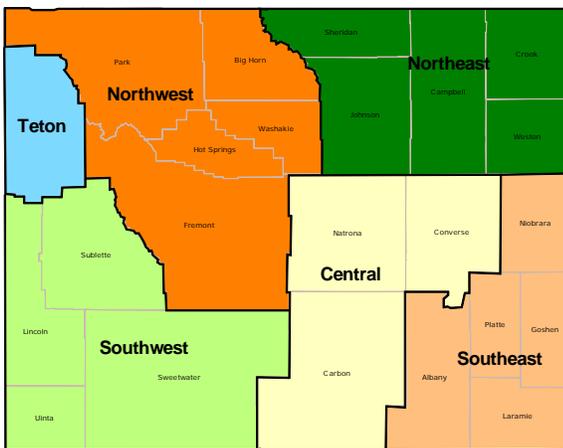


# WYOMING PROFILE OF DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMICS AND HOUSING

## SOUTHWEST REGION SUMMARY: ENDING JUNE 30, 2009

### INTRODUCTION

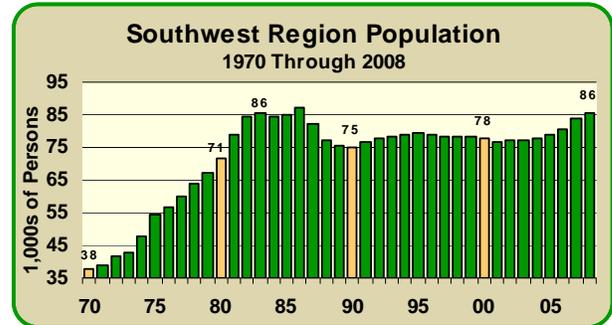
The *Wyoming Profile*, sponsored by the Wyoming Housing Database Partnership, is undertaken semi-annually. The objective is to provide current, quality information about factors influencing the development, production, use, rehabilitation, demand and need for housing and related services in Wyoming's local communities. This regional summary, focusing on the Southwest Region, is one of six publications that inspect a group of counties in the state, as shown in the map presented below. The Southwest Region is comprised of Lincoln, Sweetwater, Sublette and Uinta counties. It excludes Teton County.



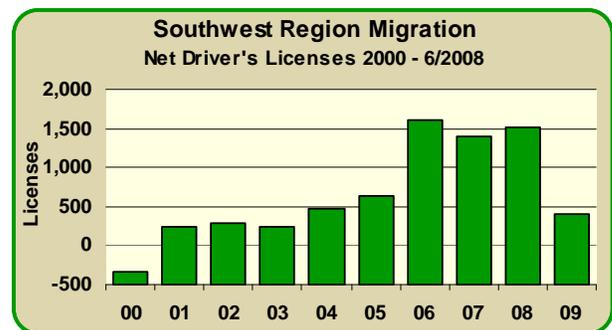
### DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 1990 and 2000, the Southwest Region's population rose from 74,996 to 77,848, an increase of 3.8 percent. Recent Census Bureau estimates place the population in the Southwest Region at 85,648 as of July 1, 2008. This is a strong rate of growth, rising another 10.0 percent since the 2000 Census. The growth in population can be attributed to the natural increase of the population, the net of births minus deaths, as well as the net migration. The Southwest Region showed a natural increase of about 5,846 persons and a net migration of another 1,954 persons.

Population changes can be seen in the chart below.



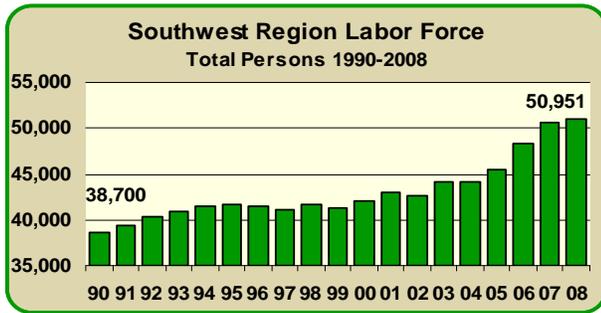
The Wyoming Housing Database Partnership also utilizes quarterly data from the Wyoming Department of Transportation regarding driver's licenses of new or departing residents of the state in order to track changes in population. While the net of surrendered and exchanged driver's licenses is usually several hundred, there have been substantive increases, with 2008 figures reaching nearly 1,500 persons and figures from the first half of 2009 numbering 401 persons. It would appear that population growth, while slowing, is still strong in the Southwest Region.



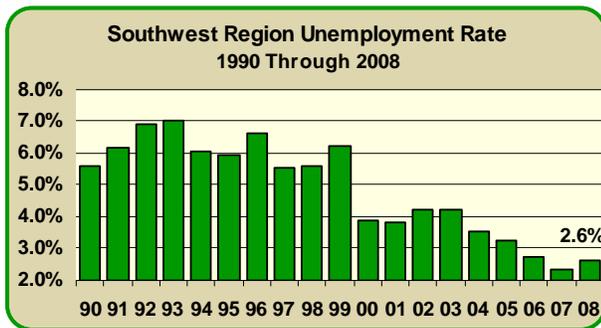
### ECONOMICS

Economic growth in the region can be examined through inspection of statistics regarding the labor force, or those persons working or seeking work. The labor force in the Southwest Region has been expanding modestly over the past 18 years at an average annual rate of 1.5 percent per year, as seen on the following page. However, between

2007 and 2008, the labor force rose 0.6 percent and reached an all-time high of some 50,951 persons.<sup>1</sup>

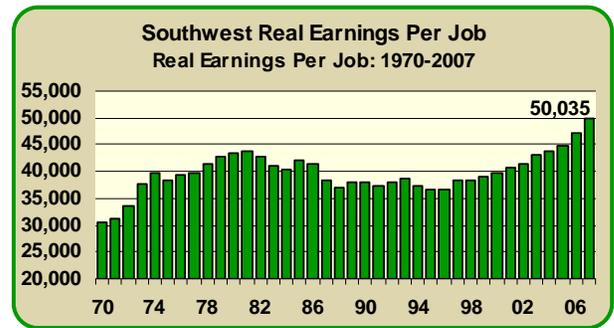


Additionally, the number of persons working continued to rise quickly and reached some 49,606 persons in 2008. Over the last few years the rate of employment expansion is greater than the overall change in the size of the labor force, thereby causing unemployment rates to decline. Unemployment rates have fallen from a high of 7.0 percent in 1993 to 2.6 percent in 2008, as noted below.

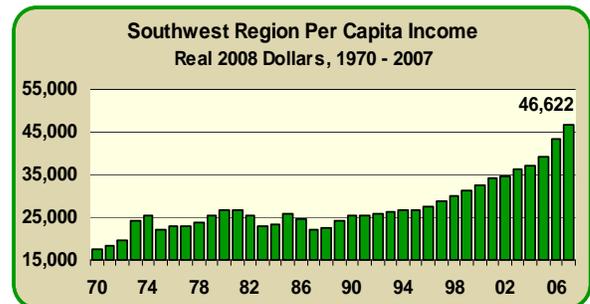


This particular circumstance is likely to cause upward wage pressure in the labor markets, and, in turn, cause earnings to increase. This has, in fact, occurred rather profoundly of late. In 1979, average real earnings per job in the Southwest Region was \$42,678. Unfortunately, this level of earnings was not sustained, with the average declining in real terms by more than \$5,700 by 1988, dipping to \$36,935 per job. It varied little over the next several years, with the real average still \$36,603 eight years later, in 1996. Since that time, however, average earnings have been increasing more quickly, rising at an annual compound growth rate of 2.9 percent per year and as of 2007, the year for which most recent data are

available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, average earnings per job exceeded \$50,035.



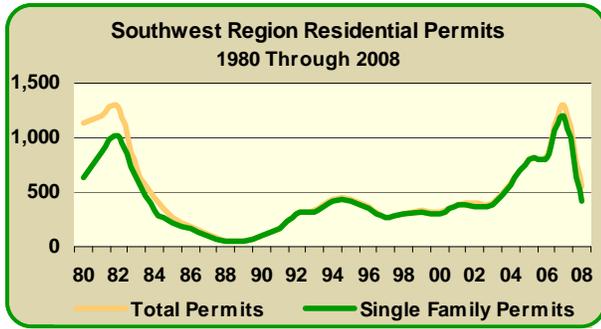
Personal income is comprised of unearned income sources, such as dividends, interest, rent and government transfer payments. Together, these income sources, when divided by population, create per capita income. This particular income measure also shows that the economic welfare of the Southwest Region is on the rise. Real per capita income is much more than the \$38,000 seen in the latter 1970s, and as of 2007, was more than \$46,622 for the first time, as seen below.



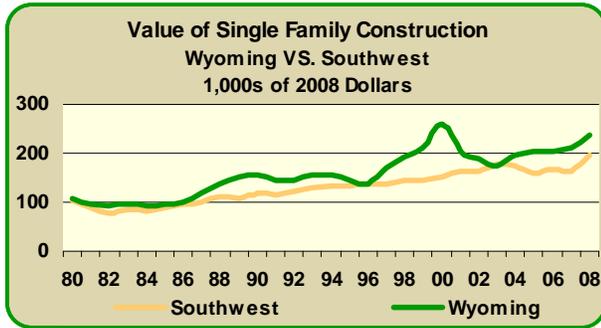
## HOUSING

The consequence of such a strong economic rebound can be seen in a variety of fashions. However, housing is most notable. During the latter 1970s, with incomes increasing, the housing sector was very active, with significant levels of housing construction in the Southwest Region. Like employment and income, it fell off sharply during the recession of the early 1980s; 1980 saw 1,132 total permits, of which some 633 were for single-family units. By 1987, there were only 55 permits, all of which were single-family units. Unfortunately, permitted residential units peaked in 2007 at 1,299 units, with only 546 units permitted in 2008, as shown on the following page.

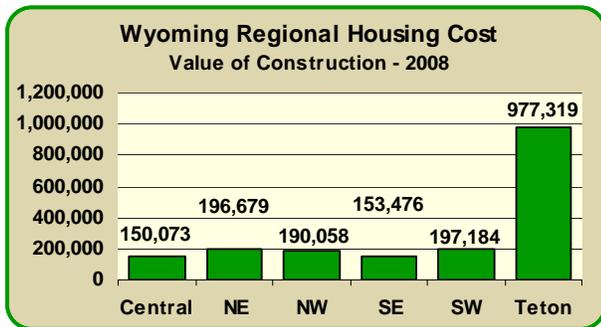
<sup>1</sup> The data from 2000 onward were rebased and may not be directly comparable to earlier years.



The real value of construction, representing only the cost of building the unit and not the land and lot costs, has been on the rise too, both statewide and in the Southwest Region. Overall, these values have been high for several years, with the statewide average exceeding \$238,320 in 2008, as noted below.

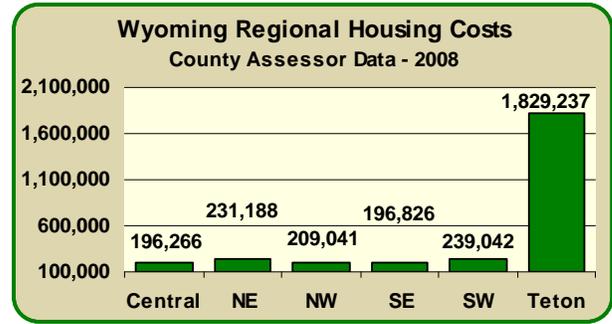


Still, the average real value of new construction in the Southwest Region is roughly comparable to most other regions, exceeding some \$197,184 in 2008. All areas are significantly less than the Teton Region, which is experiencing an extreme degree of high-end building.



The Wyoming Housing Database Partnership, in cooperation with the Wyoming Assessors, also prepared estimates of housing prices for existing homes sold on ten acres or less throughout the

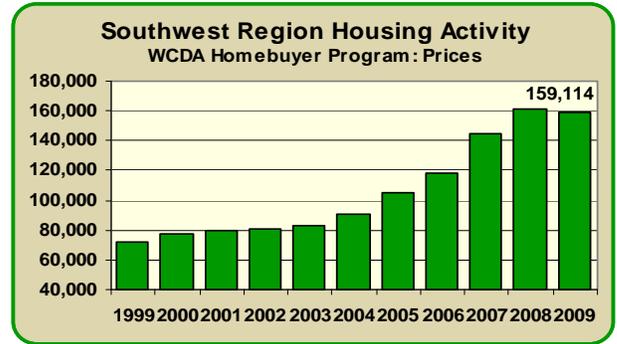
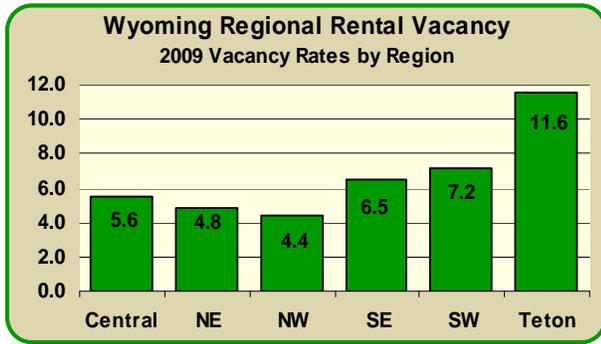
state. Existing housing in the Southwest Region appears to be more expensive when compared with the other regions of the state. The Southwest Region has the second highest price, exceeding an average of some \$239,042, exceeded only by the \$1.8 million housing prices seen in the Teton Region.



Every six months since 2001, the Wyoming Housing Database Partnership has conducted a survey of rental properties throughout the state. In the first half of 2009, 157 completed surveys covered 3,268 rental units in the Southwest Region. Rental vacancy rates are rising dramatically in this region and have increased from 0.8 percent in 2007 to 7.2 percent in 2009.

Rental Vacancy Rates Southwest Region				
Year	Sample	Total Units	Vacant Units	Vac. Rate
2001a	50	1,998	129	6.5
2001b	43	1,874	137	7.3
2002a	44	1,747	142	8.1
2002b	52	2,197	109	5.0
2003a	50	2,150	82	3.8
2003b	76	2,988	103	3.4
2004a	67	2,757	118	4.3
2004b	69	2,582	130	5.0
2005a	74	2,931	96	3.3
2005b	79	2,728	67	2.5
2006a	71	2,713	57	2.1
2006b	79	2,887	24	0.8
2007a	87	2,797	27	1.0
2007b	81	2,801	23	0.8
2008a	99	3,359	64	1.9
2008b	150	3,707	155	4.2
2009a	157	3,268	234	7.2

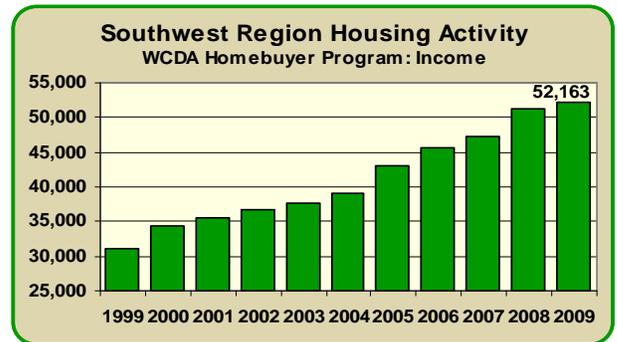
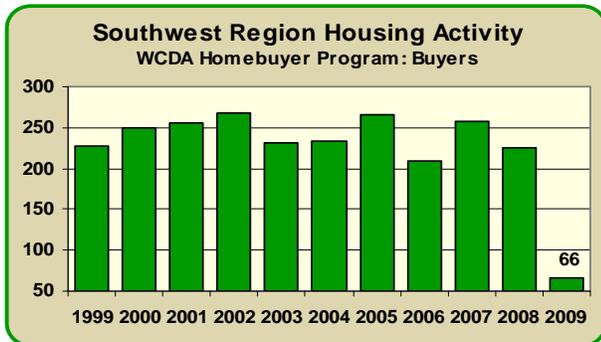
The Southwest Region had the second-highest vacancy rate for the state, with roughly 7.2 percent of all units vacant. The vacancy rates for each region in the state are presented in the chart on the following page.



## WCDA FISCAL YEAR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA) is attuned to the housing situation in the state, such as the issues of housing shortages, and is continually attempting to affect such pressures in a positive fashion. In fact, since 1979 the WCDA has helped over 47,800 householders become homeowners. Over the last 10 years, the WCDA has aided about 250 Southwest Region householders per year with the purchase of their home. In 2009, this declined significantly, represented by only 66 householders, due to a constrained bond market, as noted below.

The need for the housing program is evident, as household incomes in the program are not actually keeping pace with the increases in housing costs. The average household income for Southwest Region householders participating in the WCDA homebuyer programs rose from \$31,712 to \$52,163 over this same ten-year period, an increase of 5.1 percent per year.



The WCDA homebuyer program also protects Central Region residents from the rapid increase of average home prices occurring in the region recently. In the last 10 years, the regionwide average, reported by Assessors, rose almost 8.2 percent per year. However, prices in this program slipped by about 1.6 percent between fiscal 2008 and 2009, as seen at right, above.

In order to further affect change in the marketplace, the WCDA is increasing its efforts to support the purchase of new affordable homeownership opportunities. Consequently, the level of new construction found in the WCDA homebuyer programs has been increasing in recent years, rising from a low of 2.6 percent in 2005 to 10.6 percent in 2009.

This publication, and other related publications, can be found online at the Wyoming Community Development Web site, at <http://www.wyomingcda.com>. Select the *Development* button and *Community Information/Demographics* link.

