

WYOMING PROFILE OF DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMICS AND HOUSING

NORTHWEST REGION SUMMARY: ENDING JUNE 30, 2009

INTRODUCTION

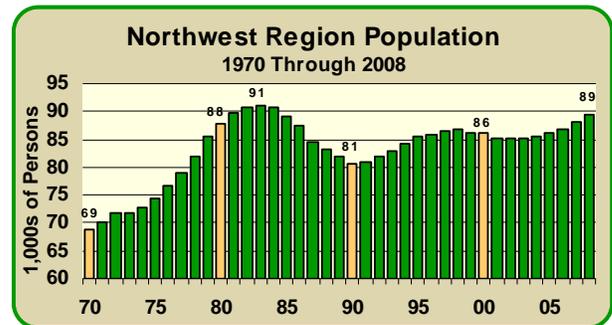
The *Wyoming Profile*, sponsored by the Wyoming Housing Database Partnership, is undertaken semi-annually. The objective is to provide current, quality information about factors influencing the development, production, use, rehabilitation, demand and need for housing and related services in Wyoming's local communities. This regional summary, focusing on the Northwest Region, is one of six publications that inspect a group of counties in the state, as shown in the map presented below. The Northwest Region is comprised of Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs, Park and Washakie counties.



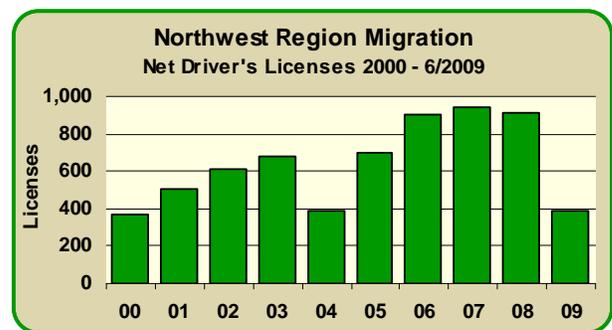
DEMOGRAPHICS

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, between 1990 and 2000, the Northwest Region's population rose from 80,562 to 86,222, an increase of 7.0 percent. Recent Census Bureau estimates place the population in the Northwest region at 89,452 as of July 1, 2008. This is a rather slow rate of growth, rising only 3.7 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 Northwest Region showed a natural increase of about 2,058 persons and net migration representing another 1,172

persons since the 2000 census. The changed in population can be seen in the chart below.



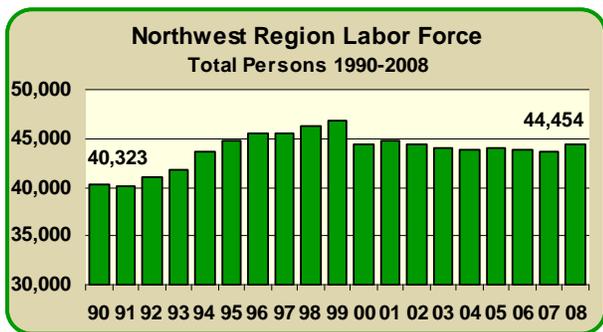
The Wyoming Housing Database Partnership also utilizes quarterly data from the Wyoming Department of Transportation regarding driver's licenses of new or departing residents of the state in order to track changes in population. While the net of surrendered and exchanged driver's licenses was a little slow in 2000 and 2004, about 375, there have been substantive increases since then, with 2008 figures exceeding 917 persons and figures from the first half of 2009 showing a net increase of 393 persons. It would appear that recent growth, while still strong, is slightly more moderate in the region.



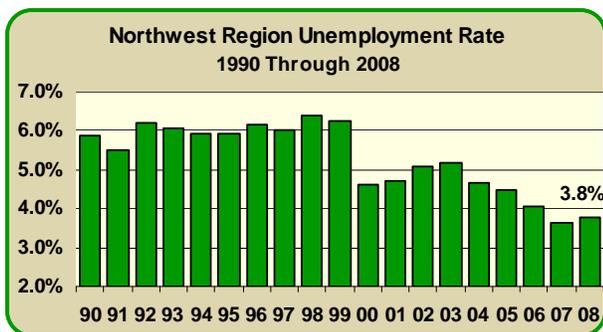
ECONOMICS

Economic growth in the region can be examined through labor force statistics data, which represents those persons working or seeking work. The labor force in the Northwest Region has been expanding relatively modestly over the

past 18 years, rising at an average annual rate of some 0.5 percent per year, as seen below. In fact, between 2007 and 2008, the labor force increased by 766 persons, rising to 44,454.¹



Additionally, the number of persons working rose more quickly and reached some 42,768 persons in 2008. Over the last few years, the rate of employment expansion has been 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 6.2 percent in 1992 to 3.8 percent in 2008, as noted below.

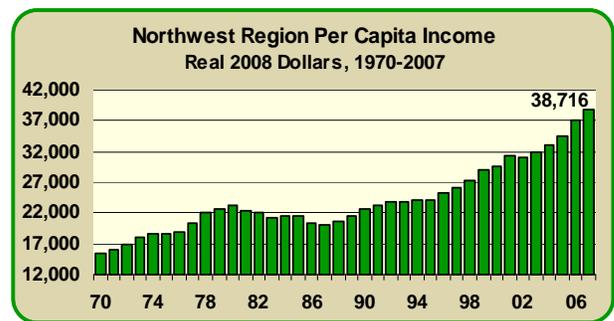


Low levels of unemployment may cause upward wage pressure in the labor markets, and, in turn, and increase in earnings. This is, in fact, occurring as of late. In 1979, average real earnings per job in the Northwest Region were \$34,376. Unfortunately, this level of earnings was not sustained, with the average declining in real terms by more than \$6,600 by 1989, dipping to \$27,775 per job. It varied little over the next several years, with the real average still \$27,545 in 1996. Since that time, however, average earnings have been edging upward, rising at an annual compound growth rate of 1.8 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 was \$33,510.



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 Northwest Region is on the rise. Real per capita income is some 58 percent higher than in 1979, and as of 2007 was over \$38,716, as seen below.

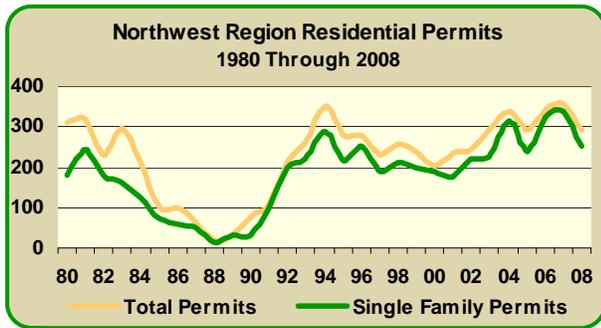


HOUSING

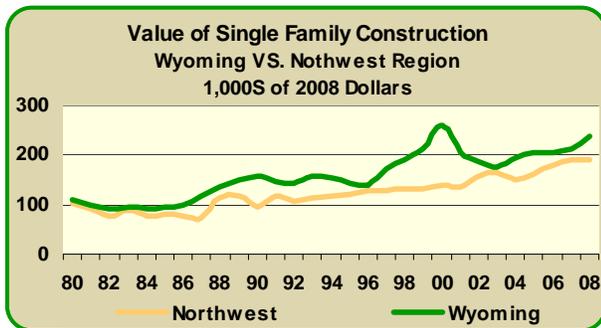
The consequence of such a strong economic rebound can be seen in a variety of fashions. However, housing is most notable. During the latter 1970s, with incomes increasing, the housing sector was very active, with significant levels of housing construction in the Northwest Region. Like employment and income, it fell off sharply during the recession of the early 1980s; 1981 saw 317 total permits, of which some 242 were for single-family units. By 1988, there were only 17 permits, 15 of which were single-family units. Today, however, the construction of single-family units is much higher but has fallen

¹ The data from 2000 onward was rebased and may not be directly comparable to earlier years.

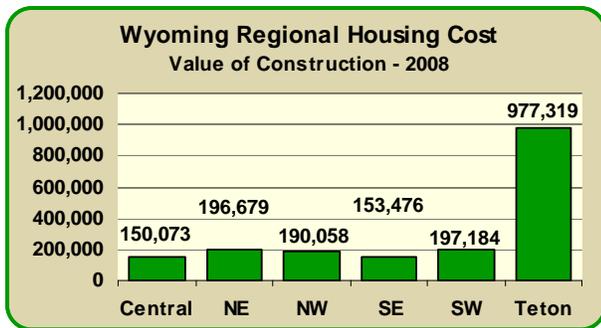
in the last two years to 250 units in 2008, as shown below.



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 Northwest Region. Overall, these values have been trending upward for many years, with the statewide average reaching \$238,320 in 2008, as noted below.

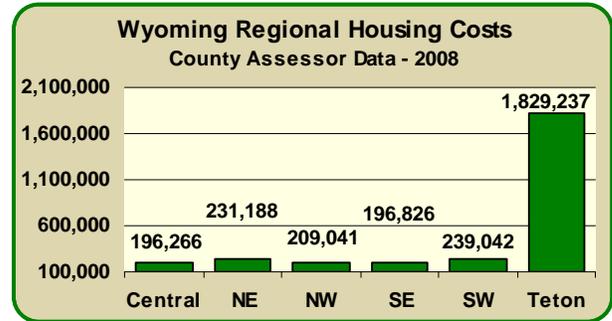


The average real value of new construction in the Northwest Region is comparable to other regions in the state, with only the Teton Region significantly higher in 2008, as noted below.



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 Northwest Region appears to be

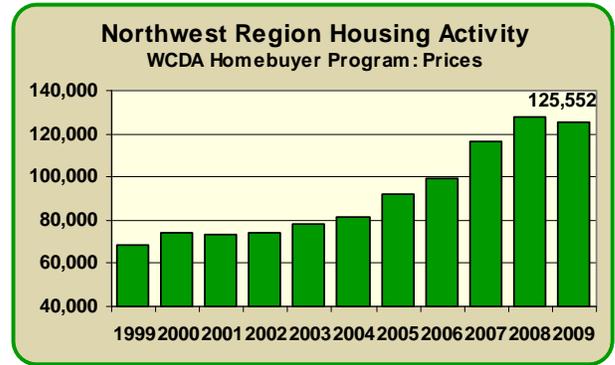
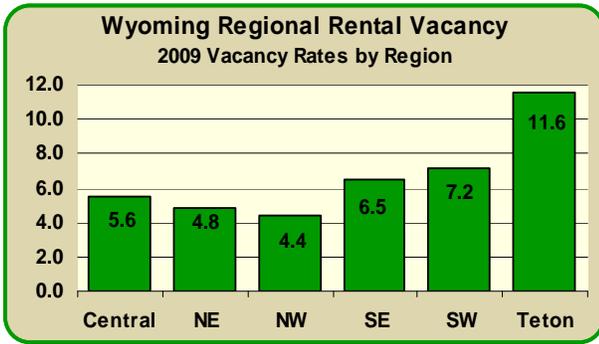
more moderately priced than new construction when compared with the other regions of the state. The Northwest Region had an average existing price of some \$209,041 in 2008. The Teton Region again has the highest price, exceeding \$1.8 million in 2008, as seen below.



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, 142 completed surveys covered 2,613 rental units in the Northwest Region. Rental vacancy rates have been quite tight recently and have inched up from 3.0 percent in the second half of 2008 to 4.4 percent in first half of 2009.

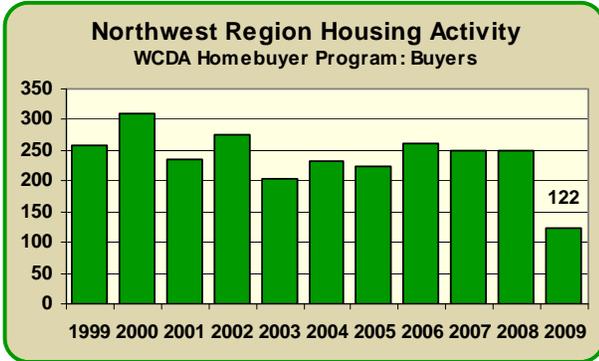
Rental Vacancy Rates Northwest Region				
Year	Sample	Total Units	Vacant Units	Vac. Rate
2001a	73	1,541	85	5.5
2001b	48	1,211	83	6.9
2002a	50	995	83	8.3
2002b	62	1,375	96	7.0
2003a	53	1,799	70	3.9
2003b	86	2,260	148	6.5
2004a	99	2,604	136	5.2
2004b	87	2,187	122	5.6
2005a	93	2,099	68	3.2
2005b	104	2,530	95	3.8
2006a	97	1,843	51	2.8
2006b	120	2,609	64	2.5
2007a	119	2,468	34	1.4
2007b	117	2,722	70	2.6
2008a	138	2,880	87	3.0
2008b	155	2,756	82	3.0
2009a	142	2,613	116	4.4

The Northwest Region had the lowest vacancy rate of all regions in the state, as seen on the following page.



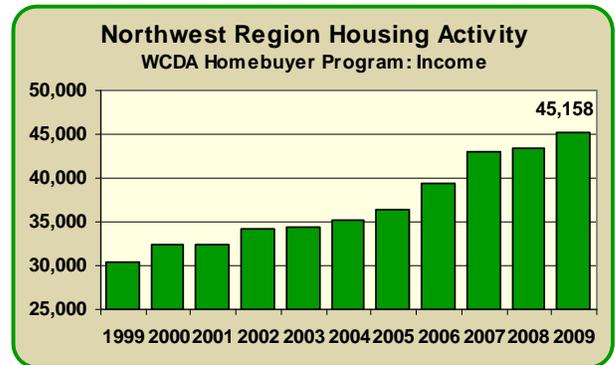
WCDA FISCAL YEAR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Wyoming Community Development Authority 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. Since 1979 the WCDA has helped over 47,800 householders become homeowners. Over the last 10 years, the WCDA has assisted between 200 and 300 Northwest Region householders per year with the purchase of their home. In fiscal 2009, this represented some 122 householders, due to a highly constrained bond market, as noted below.

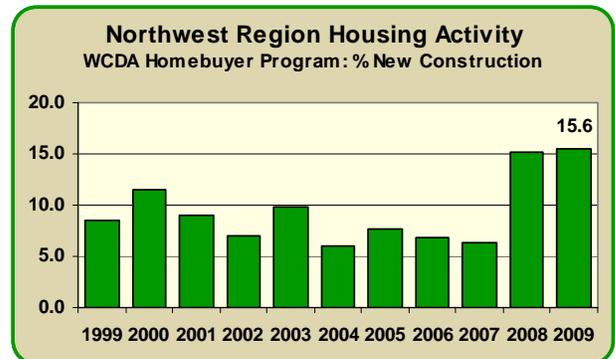


The WCDA homebuyer program also protects Central Region residents from the rapid increase of average home prices occurring in the region over the past few years. In the last 10 years, this region wide average has, in nominal terms, risen from \$68,530 to nearly \$125,552, a rise of more than 6.4 percent per year. However, prices in this program dipped slightly by 1.5 percent between fiscal 2008 and 2009, as seen at right, above.

The need for this program is very evident, as household incomes in the program are not actually keeping pace with the increases in housing costs. The average household income for Northwest Region householders participating in WCDA homebuyer programs has risen from \$30,356 to \$45,158 over this same period, an increase of 4.1 percent per year, as noted below. This is less than the growth in housing prices.



In order to further affect change in the marketplace, the WCDA is continuing its efforts to support the purchase of new affordable homeownership opportunities. Consequently, the level of new construction found in the WCDA homebuyer programs has increased drastically since 2007. This level and has held steady for two years at roughly 15 percent since then, as shown below.



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.