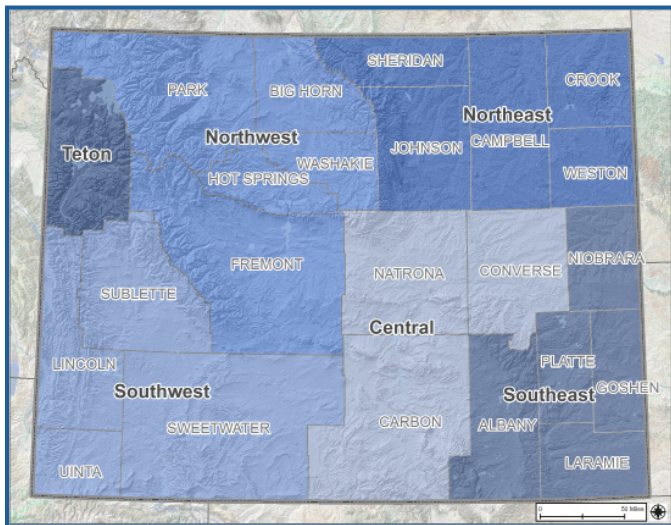


# Summary of the Southwest Region

## 2015 WYOMING PROFILE of Demographics, Economics, and Housing Ending December 31, 2015

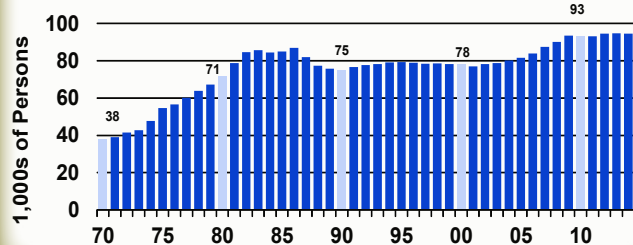
The **Wyoming Profile**, sponsored by the Wyoming Housing Database Partnership, is undertaken semi-annually to provide current, quality information about factors influencing the development, production, use, rehabilitation, demand, and need for **housing and related services** in Wyoming's communities. **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.



### Demographics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2000 and 2010, the Southwest Region's population rose from 77,848 to 93,277, or by 19.8 percent. Recent Census Bureau counts place the population in the Southwest Region at 94,538 as of July 1, 2014, which indicates a growth rate of 1.5 percent since the 2010 Census. The growth in population can be attributed to the natural increase of the overall population, the net of births minus deaths, as well as the net migration. Population changes are shown in Diagram 1.

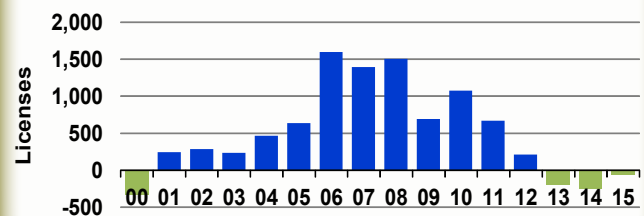
**Diagram 1. Southwest Region Population**  
1970–2014 Census Bureau Data



The Wyoming Housing Database Partnership utilizes quarterly data from the Wyoming Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding driver's licenses of new

or departing residents to track changes in population. While the net of surrendered and exchanged driver's licenses was low at 233 in 2003, there were substantial increases in the following years, with net in-migrants at 1,075 persons in 2010. However, population growth then slowed somewhat, with 2015 figures showing a net decrease of 59 persons, as shown in Diagram 2.

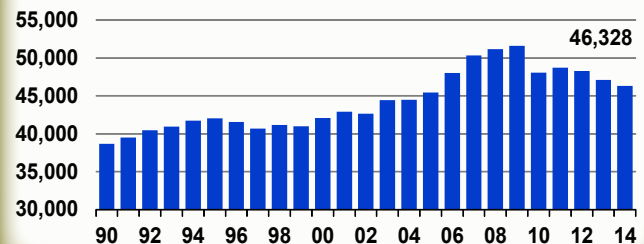
**Diagram 2. Southwest Region Migration**  
2000 – 2015 WYDOT Data



### Economics

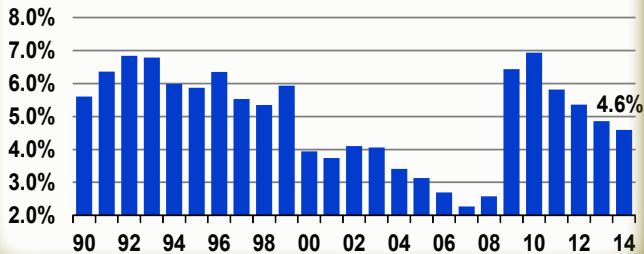
Economic growth in the region can be evaluated through labor force statistics data, which represent those persons working or seeking work as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In the Southwest Region, the labor force expanded steadily from 1990 to 2013, rising at an average annual rate of 1.2 percent per year, as shown in Diagram 3. Between 2013 and 2014, the labor force decreased by 0.8 percent to 46,328 persons. The number of persons working fell to 44,199 in 2014.

**Diagram 3. Southwest Region Labor Force**  
1990–2014 BLS Data



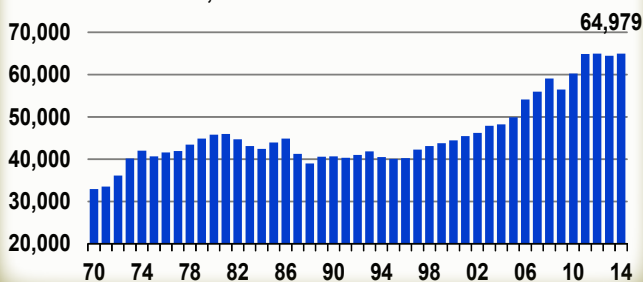
The national recession contributed to a rapid rise in unemployment between 2008 and 2010. Still, unemployment rates changed from a high of 6.9 percent in 1993 to a low of 2.3 percent in 2007. These rates rose sharply to 7.0 percent in 2010 and fell to 4.6 percent in 2014, as noted in Diagram 4.

**Diagram 4. Southwest Region Unemployment Rate 1990–2014 BLS Data**



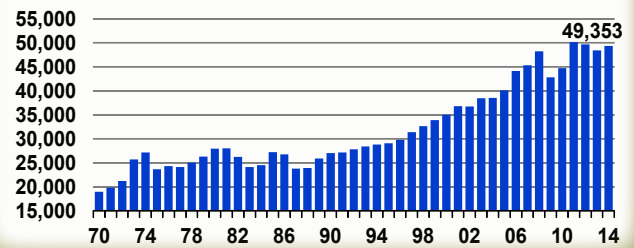
Low unemployment rates often cause upward wage pressure in the labor markets, and in turn, cause earnings to increase. In 1979, average earnings by place of work in the Southwest Region was \$44,839 in real 2014 dollars. Unfortunately, this level of earnings was not sustained, and the average declined until the late 1990's. Since 2010, earnings increased at an annual growth rate of 0.5 percent. As of 2014, the year for which the most recent data are available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the earnings by place of work was \$64,979, shown in Diagram 5.

**Diagram 5. Southwest Region Average Earnings Per Job: 1970–2014 BEA Data, Real 2014 Dollars**



Personal income is made up of earnings and unearned income sources, such as dividends, interest, rent, and government transfer payments. Together, these income sources, when divided by population, constitute per capita income. Real per capita income was 10.3 percent higher than it was in 2010, reaching \$49,353 in 2014, as shown in Diagram 6.

**Diagram 6. Southwest Region Per Capita Income 1970–2014 BEA Data, Real 2014 Dollars**



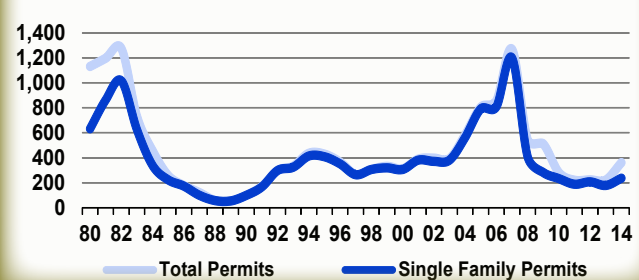
## Highlights...

- The population of the Southwest Region has grown by 1.5 percent since the 2010 Census, to 94,538 persons.
- The unemployment rate was 4.6 percent in 2014, higher than seen in 2007 but lower than in 2010.

## Housing

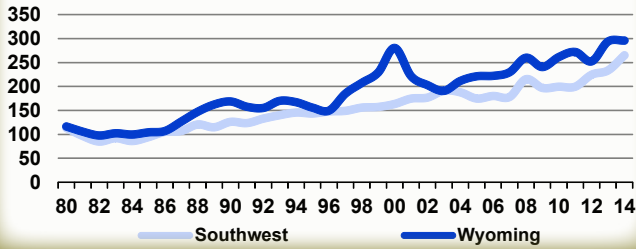
Consequences of economic change are often seen in the housing market. During the late 1970s, when incomes were increasing, the housing sector was very active with significant levels of housing construction in the Southwest Region. Like employment and income, the housing market fell sharply during the recession of the early 1980s; 1980 saw 1,132 total permits, of which some 633 were for single-family units, but by 1988 there were only 58 permits, all of which were for single-family units. The permitted single-family residential units peaked in 2007 at 1,200 units and 237 units were permitted in 2014, as shown in Diagram 7.

**Diagram 7. Southwest Region Residential Permits 1980–2014 Census Bureau Data**



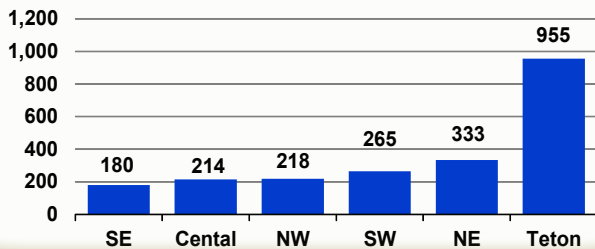
From 1980 to 2014, the real value of construction, representing only the cost of building the unit and not the land and lot costs, was fairly stable in the region. In 2014, construction in the Southwest Region had an average value of \$265,100 compared to the statewide average of \$295,855 as shown in Diagram 8.

**Diagram 8. Value of Single-Family Construction 1980–2014 Census Bureau Data, 1,000s of 2014 Dollars**



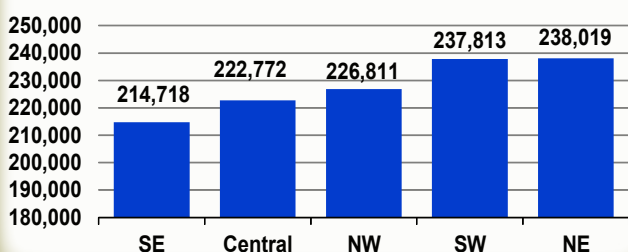
The average real value of new construction in the Southwest Region was the third highest in the state, as shown in Diagram 9.

**Diagram 9. Value of Single-Family Construction 2014 Census Bureau Data, 1,000s of 2014 Dollars**



County tax assessors in Wyoming report housing prices for existing homes sold on 10 acres or less throughout the state to the Wyoming Department of Revenue (DOR). As shown in Diagram 10, the Southwest Region had one of the highest prices for existing homes in 2014 at \$237,813, and was exceeded by the Northeast and the Teton Region, which is not pictured but had an average housing price of \$1.4 million

**Diagram 10. Average Sales Prices by Region 2014 DOR Data**



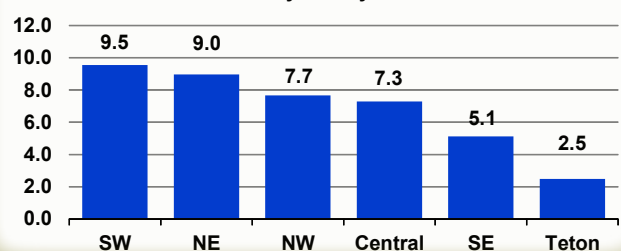
Every six months since 2001, the Wyoming Housing Database Partnership has conducted a survey of rental properties throughout the state. In the second half of 2015, 202 completed surveys covered 4,296 rental units in the Southwest Region. Results showed that rental vacancy rates fluctuated dramatically in this region with a low of 0.8 percent in the second half of 2007 and a high of 10.5 percent in the second half of 2009. In the second half of 2015, rental vacancy rates rose to 9.5 percent, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Southwest Region Rental Vacancy Rates**

| Rental Vacancy Survey Data (a = December, b = June) |        |             |              |              |
|---|--------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Year  | Sample | Total Units | Vacant Units | Vacancy Rate |
| 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     | 2713        | 57           | 2.1%         |
| 2006b   | 79     | 2887        | 24           | 0.8%         |
| 2007a   | 87     | 2797        | 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%         |
| 2009b   | 198    | 3,827       | 403          | 10.5%        |
| 2010a   | 232    | 4,158       | 352          | 8.5%         |
| 2010b   | 299    | 4,233       | 355          | 8.4%         |
| 2011a   | 299    | 4,258       | 324          | 7.6%         |
| 2011b   | 243    | 4,186       | 267          | 6.4%         |
| 2012a   | 245    | 4,274       | 217          | 5.1%         |
| 2012b   | 246    | 5,233       | 336          | 6.4%         |
| 2013a   | 266    | 4,772       | 381          | 8.0%         |
| 2013b   | 261    | 5,375       | 495          | 9.2%         |
| 2014a   | 257    | 5,923       | 354          | 6.0%         |
| 2014b   | 244    | 5,937       | 432          | 7.3%         |
| 2015a   | 255    | 4,606       | 375          | 8.1%         |
| 2015b   | 202    | 4,296       | 410          | 9.5%         |

The statewide vacancy rate was 6.9 percent. The Southwest Region had the highest vacancy rate of all regions in the state with 9.5 percent of all units vacant, as shown in Diagram 11.

**Diagram 11. Rental Vacancy Rates by Region December 2015 Rental Vacancy Survey Data**



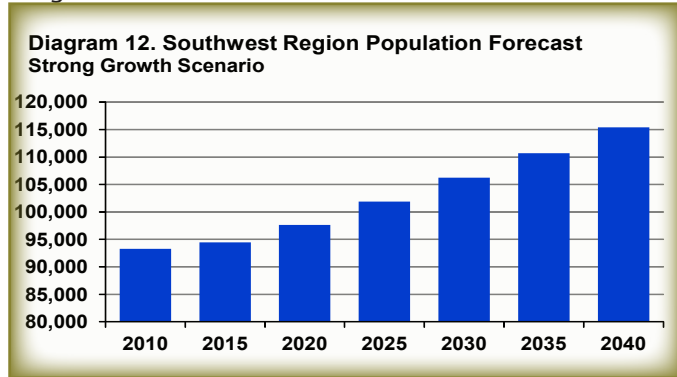
### Highlights...

- According to DOR data, the average home price in the Southwest Region was \$237,813 in 2014.
- The December 2015 rental vacancy survey revealed a vacancy rate of 9.5 percent, as compared to the state rate of 6.9 percent.

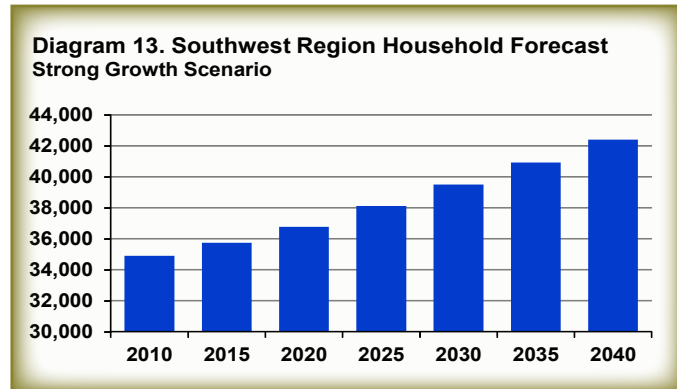
### WCDA Housing Needs Forecast

The 2015 Wyoming Housing Needs Forecast modeled three separate growth scenarios: moderate, strong, and

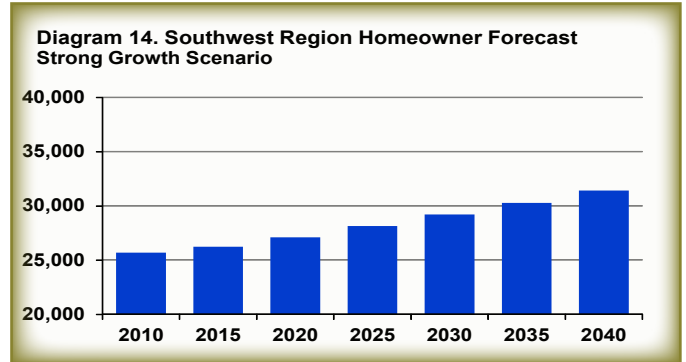
very strong. Only the strong growth scenario is presented here. In the strong growth scenario, population is forecasted to increase at an average annual rate of 0.7 percent and reach 115,390 persons in 2040, as shown in Diagram 12.



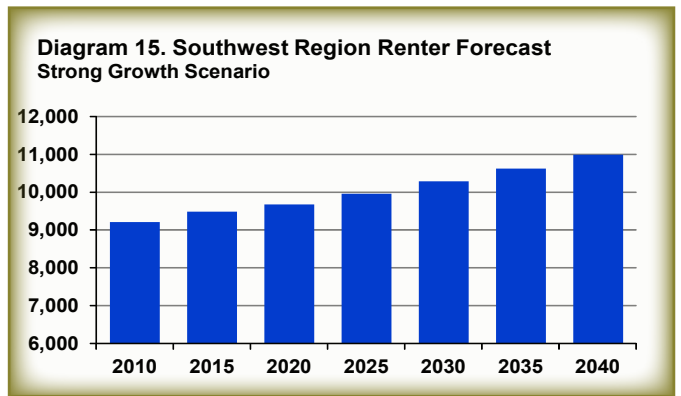
The Wyoming Housing Needs forecast also modeled household formation, which is computed using forecasted values of persons per household and population. The strong growth scenario household forecast estimates an increase of 7,507 households between 2010 and 2040, from 34,910 to 42,417 households. This represents an increase of 21.5 percent from 2010, or an average annual growth rate of 0.7 percent, as shown in Diagram 13.



The forecast separated households into owner- and renter occupied households. Owner-occupied households were forecasted to increase from 25,699 households in 2010 to 31,428 households in 2040. This represents an increase of 5,729 owner-occupied households and an average annual growth rate of 0.7 percent, as shown in Diagram 14.



Renter-occupied households are forecasted to increase from 9,211 households in 2010 to 10,989 households in 2040. This represents an increase of 1,778 renter occupied households and an average annual rate of 0.6 percent, as shown in Diagram 15.



*This regional summary was prepared for the Wyoming Housing Database Partnership. The complete 2015 Wyoming profile is available online on the WCDA website, [www.WyomingCDA.com](http://www.WyomingCDA.com).*



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