

Arroyo Grande

People and Place

Location

Arroyo Grande is just south of San Luis Obispo on California Highway 1 in San Luis Obispo County. The community covers 5.7 square miles of land and is approximately 185 miles north of Los Angeles and 248 miles south of San Francisco. The geographic coordinates of Arroyo Grande are lat 35°06'55"N, long 120°34'29"W.

Demographic Profile

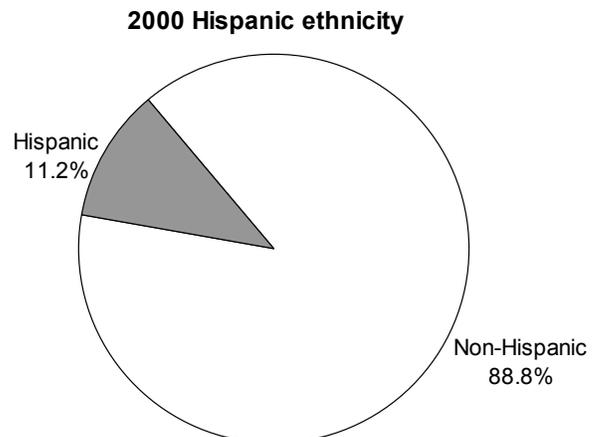
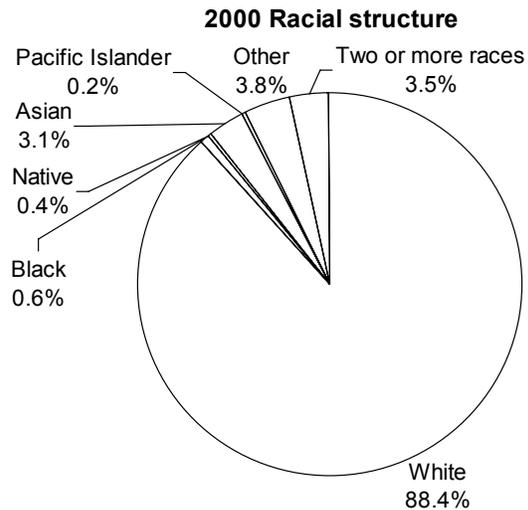
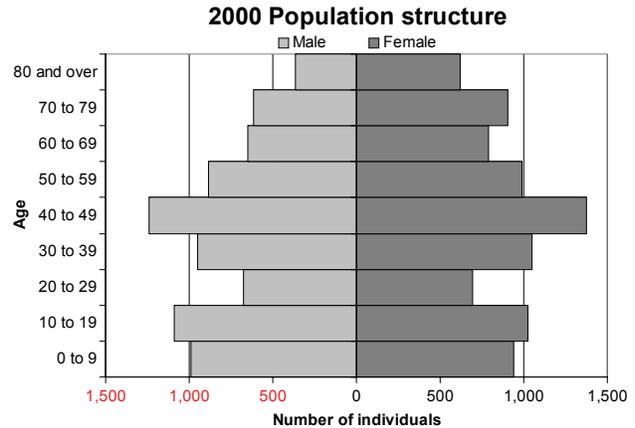
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Arroyo Grande was 15,851, a 10.2% increase from 1990. The gender composition was 52.9% female and 47.1% male. The median age in 2000 was 41.9, slightly older than the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years and older, 86.0% had a high school education or higher, 25.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 7.2% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma/equivalency for 22.6%.

The majority of the racial structure of Arroyo Grande was white (88.4%), followed by individuals who identified with some other race (3.8%), individuals who identified with two or more races (3.5%), Asian (3.1%), black (0.6%), American Indian and Alaskan Native (0.4%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.2%). Ethnicity data indicate 11.2% identified as Hispanic. Approximately 5.7% of the population was foreign-born, of which 41% were born in Mexico.

In 2000 82.4% of the population lived in family households.

History

Arroyo Grande is in the heart of what was Chumash Indian territory for centuries. Chumash hunters, fishermen, and foragers used local marine, coastal, and river resources. They regularly transported resources from their offshore islands to the mainland in unique redwood-planked boats known as "tomols." Their mariners imported specialized stone blades and drills manufactured on the islands, plus marine resources such as shark, bonito, and halibut. Their fishermen used a variety of nets, traps, baskets, hooks, spears, and plant poisons to catch or stun fish and catch seals and sea otters. On the coast they collected abalone and mussels.



The Chumash trade network passed raw marine materials such as fish, whale bones, and oils to the interior.

Although the Portuguese conquistador Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo first encountered the Chumash in 1542, it was not until 1772 that five Catholic missions were established within the Chumash Nation. After the secularization of the missions in 1833, the Chumash population fell into severe decline. In 1901 the U.S. government allocated 75 acres along Zanja de Cota Creek near Mission Santa Ynez to the surviving Chumash community. Today the Chumash have their own business council, a thriving bingo operation, and a federal housing program on their small reservation. Approximately 5,000 people identify themselves as Chumash Indians.¹

Between 1821 and 1848, California was under the jurisdiction of Mexico after it gained independence from Spain. Land grants were made to settlers in the area until 1848 when California became a U.S. territory and San Luis Obispo became one of its original 27 counties. Many place names in the area reflect this heritage.²

Burgeoning agriculture and quarrying spurred rapid population growth in the late 1800s, facilitated by overland transport options available through the Southern Pacific Railroad. By the 1950s conveyors were installed on the waterfront for unloading sardine boats that accelerated the commercial development of the area's harbors in response to newly discovered fishing grounds offshore.³

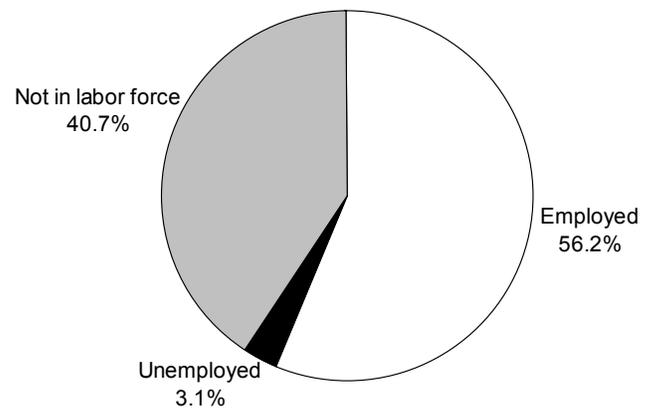
Arroyo Grande originated when a rancher subdivided his property in response to drought conditions in 1864. City infrastructure grew up around the resulting community and residents voted to incorporate in 1911.⁴ Today Arroyo Grande's economy is supported by the tourism industry and local festivities feature its agricultural emphasis. The annual Strawberry Festival, for example, commemorates its most famous crop. The city also has six parks.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 56.2% of Arroyo Grande's potential labor force 16 years of age and older were employed, 3.1% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 5.2% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 40.7% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were education, health, and social services (20.4%), local, state, or federal government (17.4%), retail trade (14.5%), and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (8.6%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry,

2000 Employment structure



fishing, and hunting employed 2.2%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in these data.

The California Employment Development Department lists Arroyo Grande Hospital, Arroyo Grande High School, Mid-State Bank, and Talley Farms as the major employers.⁵

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Arroyo Grande's per capita income in 1999 was \$24,311, the median household income was \$48,236, and 6.9% of the population lived below the poverty line. In 2000 there were 6,750 housing units in Arroyo Grande, of which 96.0% were occupied and 4.0% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 69.9% were by owner and 30.1% were by renter. Almost half (42.6%) of the vacant units were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Arroyo Grande is a general law city. The city's five-member council (mayor and four council members) is elected at-large. Council members serve overlapping terms of four years, and the mayor is directly elected for a two-year term.⁶ Arroyo Grande has a 7.25% sales and use tax rate and the county uses a 9.0% transient lodging tax rate that earned \$4,229,463 for the 2001 fiscal year.⁷ See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fishermen and processors in California.

A California Department of Fish and Game Marine Region Field Office and a U.S. Coast Guard station are 30 miles away in Morro Bay. Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held in Foster City, approximately 211 miles away.

Facilities

Arroyo Grande is accessible by a number of transportation options. Amtrak provides passenger rail

service from the nearby station in Grover Beach. San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport is about 9 miles away and the nearest major international airports are in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The Arroyo Grande public school system has five primary/middle schools and two high schools. There are also seven private primary/middle schools and two private high schools in the city. The city Public Works Department provides water and sewer services to area residents and the Arroyo Grande Police and Fire departments administer public safety. Arroyo Grande Community Hospital provides health services. The city has at least three hotels, along with one inn and two bed and breakfasts. The city has no marine facilities (i.e., harbor, docks, etc.).

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

No seafood processors operated in Arroyo Grande in 2000. Landings data for Arroyo Grande were recorded as part of the Other San Luis Obispo County Ports group which includes the communities of Atascadero, Baywood Park, Cambria, Cayucos, Grover City, Nipomo, Oceano, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo, San Miguel, San Simeon, and Shell Beach. Reported landings for this port group in 2000 were in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represent landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): groundfish 9 t/\$110,441/40 and other species <1 t/\$88/6. See the Atascadero community profile for additional information.

In 2000 Arroyo Grande residents owned 23 commercial vessels, of which 8 participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Arroyo Grande residents in 2000 that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/0, crab 0/0/3, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/0/15, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 1/0/0.⁸

In 2000 one federal groundfish permit was held by a community member. The number of Arroyo Grande residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/2, crab 0/0/3, groundfish 0/0/11, highly migratory species NA/0/2, salmon 0/0/19, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/3, and other species 2/0/10.⁹

In 2000 Arroyo Grande residents held at least 74 commercial fishing permits, including 73 state registered permits. The number of state permits held by residents in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/4, crab 0/0/3, groundfish 0/0/13, highly migratory

species NA/0/2, salmon 0/0/32, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/3, and other species 2/0/13.¹⁰

Sportfishing

Several charter vessels operate out of San Luis Obispo County targeting albacore tuna, rock cod, salmon, and other species. Many also offer seasonal whale watching tours. In 2000 at least 12 charter businesses served sport fishermen and tourists. Arroyo Grande has four sportfishing license vendors. In 2000 43,399 resident sportfishing licenses, 40 nonresident sportfishing licenses, 52 sport salmon punch cards, and 30 abalone report cards were purchased in San Luis Obispo County. In the port group consisting of Avila Beach and Morro Bay, 12 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 17,759 anglers. These vessels reported 123,441 landings composed of more than a dozen species. Rockfish (unspecified) and Albacore tuna accounted for 93.9% and 4.6% of the landings respectively.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members may engage in subsistence fishing in the Arroyo Grande area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing is not discussed in detail in this community profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” for fishermen who do not earn revenue from their catch, but fish for pleasure or to provide food for personal consumption. Information on subsistence fishing in California is captured to some degree in the sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Two Arroyo Grande residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries in 2000.

Sportfishing

Arroyo Grande residents purchased 57 Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. Houghton Mifflin Company. No Date. Encyclopedia of North American Indians: Chumash. Online at <http://www.rain.org/eagle/chumash1.htm> [accessed 8 February 2007].

2. The County of San Luis Obispo Online. 2005. About the county. Online at http://www.co.slo.ca.us/SLOCo_InterPortal.nsf/SLOCo_AboutCounty.htm?OpenPage&charset=windows-1252 [accessed 8 February 2007].

3. History in San Luis Obispo County. 2004. Timeline. Online at <http://www.historyinslocounty.com/index.htm> [accessed 8 February 2007].

4. The City of Arroyo Grande. 2005. Local history. Online at <http://www.arroyogrande.org/general/history.php> [accessed 8 February 2007].

5. State of California. No date. Labor market information: Major employers in San Luis Obispo County. Online at <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/cgi/databrowsing/?PAGEID=4&SUBID=131> [accessed 8 February 2007].

6. City of Arroyo Grande. 2003. City of Arroyo Grande: City Council/Redevelopment Agency. Online at <http://www.arroyogrande.org/admin/council.php> [accessed 8 February 2007].

7. State of California. 2004. California counties transient lodging tax revenue. Online at <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locprep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> [accessed 8 February 2007].

8. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

9. See note 8.

10. See note 8.