

Ventura

People and Place

Location

Ventura is on the southern coast of California between the Ventura and Santa Clara river valleys. The community is 68 miles north of Los Angeles and 27 miles south of Santa Barbara. Part of the Los Angeles metropolitan area, Ventura encompasses 21.07 square miles of land and 11.59 square miles of water in Ventura County. The city's geographic coordinates are lat 34°26'83"N, long 119°17'32"W.

Demographic Profile

In 1930 Ventura's population was 11,603 and by 1950 it reached 16,643. While the city's population grew slowly in the first half of the century, it grew rapidly in the latter part, reaching 100,916 by the year 2000, according to the 2000 U.S. Census.¹ The gender composition was 50.8% females and 49.2% male. The median age in 2000 was 36.8, compared to the national median of 35.3. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 83.8% had a high school education or higher, 26.8% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 10.2% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The majority of the racial structure was white (78.8%), followed by individuals who identified with some other race (11.1%), persons who identified with two or more races (4.3%), Asian (3%), black (1.4%), American Indian and Alaska Native (1.2%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.2%). Ethnicity data indicate 24.3% identified as Hispanic. About 13% were foreign-born, 61.1% from Latin America.

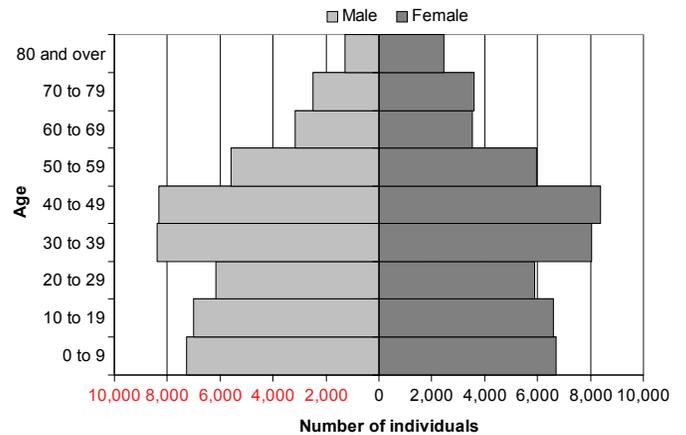
In 2000 80.6% of the population lived in family households.

History

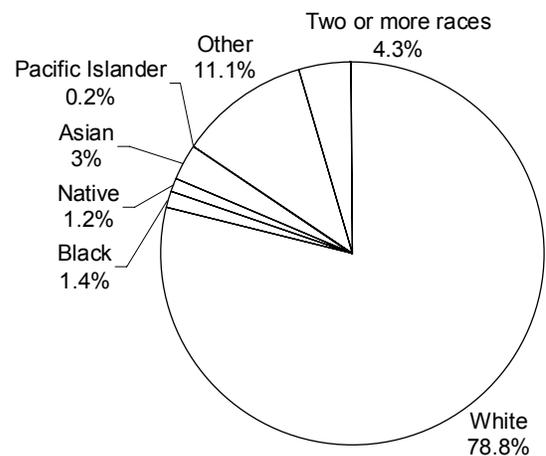
Southern California was inhabited by Indians as early as 13,000 years ago. The Chumash, perhaps the most prominent native group in the Ventura area, were present approximately 2,000 years ago. They engaged in a maritime economy, harvesting fish (particularly sardines) and sea mammals.²

Missionaries came to California in the late 1700s. The San Buenaventura mission was dedicated by a Spanish Missionary, Father Junipero Serra, on 31 March 1782.³ The mission period was followed by Mexican rule. Ranchos, large agrarian manors, dominated the landscape during the Mexican period. In the early 1800s,

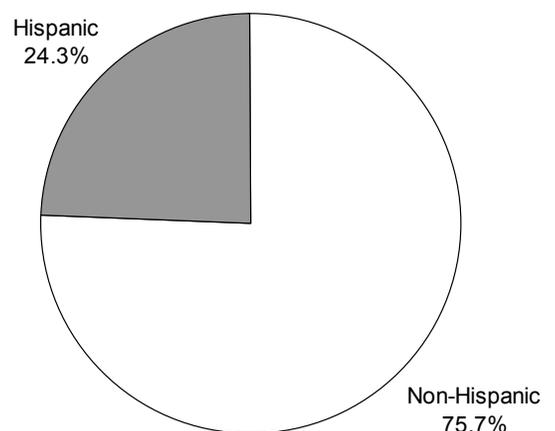
2000 Population structure



2000 Racial structure



2000 Hispanic ethnicity



the area’s population was predominantly Mexican. The state was ceded to the U.S. at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. From this point on the area underwent a demographic transition as Euro-Americans migrated from the East Coast, increasing dramatically at the end of the Civil War in 1865.

Ventura’s original name was San Buenaventura. Thomas Bard is considered to be the father of Ventura. Bard helped organize Ventura County and became president of Union Oil. The primary Ventura oil field was drilled in 1914 and produced up to 90,000 barrels a day. The topography surrounding Ventura—mountains to the east and coastline to the south and west—contributed to the area’s isolation well into the 1900s. The soils of Ventura County are some of the richest in California and are excellent for growing citrus crops. Growers in this area early in the twentieth century formed what would be the highly successful Sunkist organization.

Although Ventura residents wanted to develop their harbor for some time, it was not until the state got involved through highway construction that the harbor was actually built. In the 1950s the state, needing fill material for highway construction, offered to excavate Ventura harbor. The city took charge of harbor design and maintenance. In 1968 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began maintaining the harbor. With completion of the Ventura Freeway in 1969, the area was connected to Los Angeles and became more accessible.⁴ Ventura harbor and much of the southern Californian coast were hit hard by El Niño storms in 1998. Waves as high as 10 feet pounded the coast, while a water spout “ripped the roofs off mobile homes.”⁵

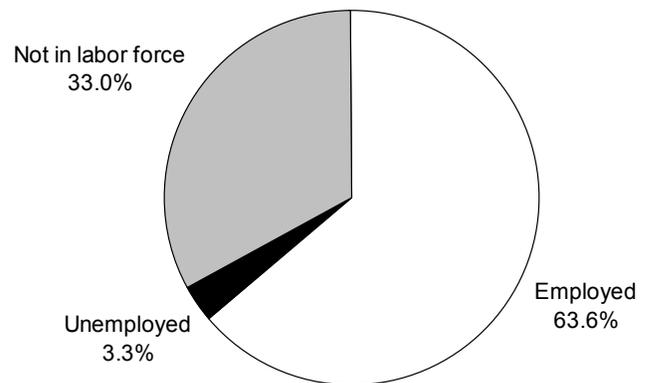
Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 63.6% of Ventura’s potential work force 16 years of age and older were employed, 3.3% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 5% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 33% were not in the labor force. The primary employment sectors were service (29%), local, state, or federal government (19.4%), and retail (17%).⁶ Natural resource jobs including agriculture, fishing, forestry, and hunting employed only 1.3%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

Major employers include Ventura County, the Ventura Unified School District, Ventura Community College, and the Ventura County Health Care Agency.

2000 Employment structure



According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Ventura’s per capita income in 1999 was \$25,065, above the national per capita income of \$21,587. The median household income was 52,298 compared to the national median household income of \$41,994. About 9% lived below the poverty level, compared to the national average of 12.4%. In 2000 Ventura had 39,803 housing units, of which 96.8% were occupied and 3.2% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 58.7% were by owner and 41.3% were by renter. Of the vacant units, about 27.1% were due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Ventura is a charter city incorporated 10 March, 1866.⁷ The city is governed by a mayor, deputy mayor and five-member council, all elected. Ventura’s first charter was adopted on 7 January, 1932. Charter cities differ from general law cities in that they allow the citizenry to mold the city’s operations (e.g., laws, governing bodies) to meet its particular characteristics. A charter can only be adopted or changed by majority vote.⁸ Ventura levies a 7.25% sales and use tax and Ventura County has a 8% transient lodging tax. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in California.

Long Beach, 89 miles away, has the nearest offices of the National Marine Fisheries Service and California Department of Fish and Game. An office of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is in Los Angeles. Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held in San Diego.

Facilities

U.S. Highway 101 runs through Ventura and connects it with Los Angeles to the southeast and with Santa Barbara 27.5 miles to the northwest. Commercial

airports are nearby in Oxnard (6 miles), Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles.

The Ventura Unified School District has 17 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 5 high schools.⁹ Southern California Edison supplies electricity and Southern California Gas Company provides natural gas. The city's water supply comes from three sources: Lake Casitas Reservoir, the Ventura River, and several groundwater wells. The city's wastewater plant has a capacity of 14 million gallons per day.¹⁰ The Ventura Police Department has 126 officers, and the city's crime rate is one of the lowest in the country for cities with a population of 100,000 or more.¹¹ Ventura has two hospitals, Community Memorial Hospital of San Buenaventura and Ventura County Medical Center. St. John's Regional Medical Center is 6 miles away in Oxnard. Ventura has 38 hotels and 2 recreational vehicle parks.

Ventura harbor was completed in 1963 and offers nearly 1,600 recreational berths and 200 commercial berths.¹² At present the harbor houses about 10 sportfishing boats, 73 commercial fishing vessels, and 1,400 other craft. The harbor also has a marina center, resort, boat repair yard, commercial fish processing facility, a support facility for offshore oil drilling, and headquarters for Channel Island National Park.¹³

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 121 vessels, all commercially registered, landed fish in Ventura. Residents landed fish in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic 12,026 t/\$2,544,449/19; crab 26 t/\$76,048/23; groundfish 34 t/\$92,584/43; highly migratory species 127 t/\$455,459/18; salmon confidential/confidential/2; shrimp 139.1 t/\$483,396/27; and other species 149 t/\$816,323/66. In 2000 Ventura had at least three processing plants that employed about 48. The companies processed sea urchin roe, halibut, rockfish, and shark fillets.

Ventura residents owned 40 vessels in 2000 that fished in the region, including 18 that participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by community members that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/7, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/0/4, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/0, and other species 0/0/1.¹⁴

In 2000 a resident held a single permit for the federal groundfish fishery. The number of residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA)

was: coastal pelagic 1/0/15, crab 0/0/1, groundfish 0/0/27, highly migratory species NA/0/11, salmon 1/0/5, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/4, and other species 0/0/89.¹⁵

Ventura residents in 2000 held at least 249 permits, including 248 state registered permits. The number of permits held by community members for each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 1/0/23, crab 0/0/1, groundfish 0/0/33, highly migratory species NA/0/16, salmon 1/0/8, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 0/0/7, and other species 0/0/158.¹⁶

Sportfishing

In 2002 four commercial passenger fishing vessels were licensed to Ventura residents. Ventura belongs to the Port Hueneme, Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Barbara port complex, which received 352,260 landings in 2000 by 77,345 anglers. The top five fish landed were unspecified rockfishes, ocean whitefish, barred sand bass, kelp bass, and California barracuda.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members may be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Ventura area, however, specific information on subsistence fishing in Ventura is not discussed in detail due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game terms "recreational" 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

In 2000 Ventura was moderately involved in North Pacific fisheries. Residents owned two vessels that fished in the region and landed fish in the following North Pacific fishery (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): salmon (confidential/confidential/1).

In 2000 one Ventura resident held a single state permit, a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit for salmon. Seven community members held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

Ventura residents purchased 166 Alaskan sportfishing licenses in 2000.

Notes

1. Ventura Visitor and Convention Bureau. 2003. About Ventura: Heritage. Online at <http://www.ventura-usa.com/about/index.cfm?action=heritage> [accessed 10 April 2007].
2. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. 2002. Chumash Indian life. Online at <http://www.sbnature.org/research/anthro/chumash/index.htm> [accessed 10 April 2007].
3. San Buenaventura Mission. 2003. History: Mission. Online at http://www.sanbuenaventuramission.org/history_main.html [accessed 10 April 2007].
4. See note 1.
5. W. Booth. 1998. Intense winter storms pummel California with proof of El Niño's power. *The Washington Post*, February 7, p. A07.
6. Ventura Chamber of Commerce. 2004. Community profile 2002. Online at <http://www.venturachamber.com> [accessed 10 April 2007].
7. City of Ventura. 2004. Introduction: Charter of the city of San Buenaventura. Online at <http://www.ci.ventura.ca.us/cityhall/resources/citycharter.doc> [accessed 10 April 2007].
8. California Board of Equalization. 2004. California city and county sales and use tax rates. Online at <http://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/pub71.pdf> [accessed 10 April 2007].
9. Ventura Unified School District. 2004. Ventura unified school district. Online at <http://www.ventura.k12.ca.us/> [accessed 10 April 2007].
10. Ventura Chamber of Commerce, 2002–2003. View of Ventura: Ventura Chamber of Commerce relocation guide. Online at <http://www.ventura-chamber.org/relocation/index.asp> [accessed 10 April 2007].
11. City of Ventura. No date. City hall-Police department. Online at <http://www.cityofventura.net/depts/police/index.asp> [accessed 10 April 2007].
12. Sailors Choice. 2004. Welcome to Ventura harbor. Online at <http://www.sailorschoice.com/ventura/> [accessed 10 April 2007].
13. U.S. Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District. 2003. Navigation home page. Online at <http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/co/navigation/counties.html> [accessed 10 April 2007].
14. 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.
15. See note 14.
16. See note 14.