

# COMMUNITY ECONOMIC PROFILE

*for*

## BLYTHE RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

*Prepared in conjunction with the City of Blythe and Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce*

### Location

Blythe, incorporated July 24, 1916, is located 227 miles east of Los Angeles, 626 miles south of San Francisco and 150 miles west of Phoenix in the Palo Verde Valley along the Colorado River.

### Economic Growth and Trends

	1980	1990	2000	2009
Population-County	663,166	1,170,413	1,545,387	2,107,653 <sup>1</sup>
Taxable Sales-County	\$3,274,017	\$9,522,631	\$16,979,449	\$26,003,595 <sup>2</sup>
Population-City	6,805	8,428	20,463	21,329 <sup>1</sup>
Taxable Sales-City	\$69,134	\$102,364	\$129,240	\$160,476 <sup>2</sup>
Housing Units-City	2,433	2,783	4,103	4,587 <sup>1</sup>
Median Household Income-City	\$14,777	\$22,847	\$35,324	\$42,850 <sup>3</sup>
School Enrollment K-12	4,000	3,772	3,706	3,610 <sup>4</sup>

1. California Department of Finance, January 1, 2009. Population figures include Ironwood and Chuckawalla Valley State Prisons populations. Housing count reflects occupied dwellings. 2. California State Board of Equalization, calendar year 2008. Add 000. 3. WITS, 2009. 4. California Department of Education, 2009. Enrollment count is for 2008-09.

### Climate

Period	AVERAGE TEMPERATURE			RAIN	HUMIDITY		
	Min.	Mean	Max.	Inches	4 A.M.	Noon	4 P.M.
January	37.4	52.6	67.8	0.48	57	32	32
April	53.4	70.9	88.3	0.13	55	22	19
July	75.7	92.1	108.4	0.21	60	28	25
October	55.4	73.4	91.4	0.27	58	27	28
Year	55.2	71.9	88.5	3.96	58	27	26

### Transportation

**RAIL:** Arizona & California Railroad serves the Palo Verde Valley, with connections to Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad out of Barstow and Phoenix for transcontinental destinations. Businesses have access to piggy-back ramp services and container hauling.

**TRUCK:** 4 carriers in Blythe.

**OVERNIGHT DELIVERY TO:** Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and Phoenix.

**AIR:** Blythe Municipal Airport, owned by Riverside County but overseen and managed by the City of Blythe, has general aviation facilities.

**BUS:** Greyhound; Palo Verde Valley Transit Agency.

**PORTS:** Nearest ports are in Los Angeles-Long Beach, 230 mi. west, and San Diego, 220 mi. southwest.

**HIGHWAYS:** I-10 west to Los Angeles and east to Phoenix, U.S. 95 north to Las Vegas and State Highway 78 south to Brawley and Yuma.

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## Industrial Sites

There are 180 acres in the city limits zoned for light and heavy industry. About 25 percent is vacant and available in parcels ranging in size from 1 to 10 acres. The terrain is level and drainage is fair. Subsoil is silty clay loam. Sizes of water lines range from 4 to 12 inches. Sizes of sewer lines range from 8 to 24 inches.

Description of sites on and off rail lines, zoned for industry, outside the city limits in other tracts or districts: There are 877 acres inside the Blythe sphere of influence zoned for industry, of which 702 acres border the city, mostly extending south along the railroad. All parcels are served by electricity and natural gas. There are 2,000 acres available for industry surrounding the Blythe Municipal Airport.

Site data compiled in cooperation with the Blythe Chamber of Commerce.

## Public Services

**WATER:** City of Blythe.

Maximum pumping capacity: 7.6 mg/d. Peak consumption: 6.6 mg/d. Average consumption: 3.7 mg/d. Cost per 1,000 gallons in quantities of 100,000 gal/month: \$1.09 plus a monthly meter charge starting at \$16.24 (price based on size of meter. Meters range from 3/4" to 8" with monthly meter charges ranging from \$16.24 to \$544.50, respectively). Activation charges: \$135 deposit for residential; \$340 deposit for commercial. The city no longer does meter installations.

**SEWER:** City of Blythe.

Capacity of sewer plant: 2.4 mg/d. Peak flow: 3.6 mg/d. Sewer service charge: Yes. On what basis rated? Type of user. Type of treatment plant: Secondary. Any facilities for non-recoverable industrial waste water: No. Sewer connection charges: Varies.

## Infrastructure

Master plan of storm drains: On site retention required on lots over 25,000 sq. ft. No charges currently assessed.

Dedication requirements: Based on Circulation Element of General Plan.

Improvement requirements: Curb, gutter, sidewalk and pavement.

Consistency: City of Blythe Standard Drawings and Specifications.

## Utilities

**GAS:** Southern California Gas Co.

For residential and business rates applicable to Blythe, contact Southern California Gas Co. at (800) 427-2200.

**ELECTRIC:** Southern California Edison.

For residential and business rates applicable to Blythe, contact Southern California Edison at (800) 655-4555.

**TELEPHONE:** Verizon.

For rates and types of service available in Blythe, contact Verizon at (800) 483-4000 for residential or (800) 483-5000 for business.

## Governmental Facilities - Tax and Insurance Rates

- Blythe has the council-manager form of government. Assessed valuation minus exemptions (2008-09): \$649,031,089; County: \$236.8 billion. Ratio of assessed value to appraised value: 100% of full cash value.
- Industrial property tax rates (2008-09) per \$100 assessed valuation. Code area: 85-000. City rate: n/a; County: \$1.00000; School: n/a; Other: n/a; Total: \$1.04445.
- Commercial property tax rates (2008-09) per \$100 assessed valuation. Code area: 03-000. City rate: n/a; County: \$1.00000; School: n/a; Other: n/a; Total: \$1.04445.
- Retail Sales Tax: State 7.25%, County/City 0.75%, Riverside County Transportation Commission 0.5%, County Transportation 0.25%, Total 8.75%.
- Police Department: 25 sworn personnel, 3 reserve officers, 14 non-sworn personnel, 11 marked vehicles, 12 unmarked vehicles, 4 four-wheel drive units, 1 animal control unit, 2 boats, 1 watercraft unit. Support service available from Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

## The Blythe Labor Market Area

## Characteristics of the Labor Force

## Manufacturing Employment

- Fire Department: Part-time chief, 33 trained paid volunteers, 1 full-time fire marshal, one 50 foot Telesquirt, 4 pumpers, 1 quick attack truck, 1 squad truck, 2 command vehicles. Mutual Aid Agreement with the Riverside County Fire Department.
- Fire Insurance Classification: Insurance Service Office. City rating: 4. Adjacent unincorporated area: 4.
- Major projects completed in the last few years for city services: \$543,900 East Hobsonway water main extension; \$4.1 million (phase I) Hobsonway street improvement project; \$1.8 million DeFrain Blvd. to Community College sewer main extension; \$698,000 signalization of on/off ramps at I-10 and Lovekin Blvd.; \$918,000 water plant and water main extension at Community College.
- Major projects authorized for improvement and/or under construction of city services or to adjacent unincorporated area: \$1.5 million downtown redevelopment/revitalization project; \$10 million water treatment plant on Riverside Drive west of Intake Blvd. and a \$2.8 million water and sewer project on Balzburg and Riviera Drive.

Area consists of Blythe and unincorporated Ripley (the Palo Verde Census County Division).

Area population: 14,619		Total employment: 5,572	
Natural Resources & Mining	485	Professional & Business Services	209
Construction	237	Education & Health Services	876
Manufacturing	183	Leisure & Hospitality	539
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	1,188	Other Services	360
Information	36	Government	1,308
Financial Activities	151		

Source: U. S. Census, 2000.

**Extent of Unionization:** Four of the six grocery retail chain stores are unionized. Agricultural workers are less than 25% unionized.

Agriculture is the largest sector of employment in the economy. The second largest is in the service industry: motels, restaurants and campgrounds. Blythe is the second largest port of entry in California with well over one million motor vehicles entering the portal annually. Blythe is also located near the Colorado River and several facilities are available for river sports enthusiasts.

The two state prisons west of the city have stimulated substantial growth in the non-agricultural sector of the local economy. Together, Ironwood and Chuckawalla State Prisons have approximately 1,914 employees.

Wage rates, extent of unionization, fringe benefits and related information for specific industries and job classifications may be obtained from the State Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, 1325 Spruce Street, Suite 110, Riverside, California 92507, (951) 955-3204, or at 7000 Franklin Blvd., Suite 1100, Sacramento, California 95823, (916) 262-2162.

The COMMUNITY AREA referred to below includes Blythe and surrounding unincorporated community of Ripley. There are 5 manufacturing plants in the community area. Leading group classes of products are ready-mix concrete and asphalt. The largest manufacturing firms are:

Name of Company	Employment	Products
Morgan Corporation	231	Manufacturing
Hi-Value Processors	120	Vegetable packing
Toshin Trading Co.	65	Feed processor
Crawford & Associates	26	Ready-mix concrete/concrete blocks
Modern Ginning Co.	20	Cotton ginning

## Non-Manufacturing Employment

Name of Company	Employment	Description
Ironwood State Prison	1,120	Level III prison
Chuckawalla Valley State Prison	794	Level II prison
Palo Verde Unified School District	389	Public school system
Palo Verde Comm. College District	200	Community college district
Palo Verde Hospital	150	Hospital
City of Blythe	111	Municipality
Albertsons	100	Supermarket
County of Riverside	91	Public administration
K-Mart	88	Retail
Palo Verde Irrigation District	85	Public irrigation
Southern California Gas Co.	43	Public utility

## Community Facilities

**HEALTH:** Blythe has 1 hospital, with a 51 total bed capacity and a 24-hour-a-day staffed emergency room; 21 physicians/surgeons, 15 dentists, 2 optometrists and 2 chiropractors. Specialty consultants are available on a monthly schedule.

**EDUCATION:** Palo Verde Unified School District contains 3 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school, 1 continuation high school and 1 community day school. Two private schools are located in Blythe. Palo Verde Community College and Park University offer continuing and advanced education opportunities.

**CULTURAL:** 26 churches, 1 library, 1 newspaper, 1 museum, 2 radio stations, Blythe Cablevision, 2 banks, 1 savings and loan, 7 parks, 7 campgrounds and 1 three-screen movie theater. Other recreational facilities include a bowling center, 3 boat ramps on the Colorado River, 3 county parks on the Colorado River, an 18-hole city-owned golf course, a fairground with a community center, a community center in the city park and an 18,500 sq. ft. recreation center.

According to the California Department of Finance, Blythe has 5,468 housing units. The housing stock consists of 3,044 single detached units, 152 single attached units, 496 multiple 2 to 4 units, 881 multiple 5 plus units and 895 mobile homes.

The median sales price for new and existing homes is \$95,000, as reported by DataQuick for October 2009.

There are 21 motels, with 1,098 rooms, in Blythe.

There are 11 mobile home and RV parks in Blythe with 422 mobile home spaces and 648 RV spaces.

## Remarks

The Blythe area has over 3,000 acres of industrially zoned land at prices that are significantly lower than similar land in Southern California. Blythe's relative location to growing major markets makes it attractive for manufacturing and distribution industries interested in the benefits of Blythe's convenience to Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico. On February 1, 1997, the City signed a 30-30 year lease agreement with Riverside County on the Municipal Airport property, which is located 8.5 miles west of downtown. Blythe lies ¼ mile within the 100 km free trade zone established by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which places the airport facility in a prime location as a potential hub for international trade. The airport facility encompasses 3,904 acres and is served by access from Interstate 10 - less than one mile from the airport entrance. The airport's main airstrip is 6,562 feet in length and is designated D II. The Airport Master Plan calls for ultimate airstrip length of 10,012 feet and a designation of D V.

*For further information contact the Riverside County Economic Development Agency, P.O. Box 1180, Riverside, CA 92502, (951) 955-8916 or (800) 984-1000; the City of Blythe, 235 North Broadway, Blythe, CA 92225, (760) 922-6161; online at [www.cityofblythe.ca.gov](http://www.cityofblythe.ca.gov); or the Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce, 201 South Broadway, Blythe, CA 92225, (760) 922-8166.*