

Graham County

Graham County, formed in 1881 by the 11th Territorial Legislature, was created from parts of Apache and Pima counties. The Legislature broke with the tradition of naming Arizona counties after local Indian tribes when the new county called "Graham" was named after the 10,516-foot Mount Graham, the highest peak in the area. The mountain, in turn, had been named "Graham" after Lt. Col. James Duncan Graham, a senior officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. Graham County was inhabited by Apache Indians from prehistoric times up to the present day. Indian village sites and sacred sites abound in Graham County, rich in archaeological artifacts. There were no Spanish or Mexican settlements in Graham County until about 1850. Camp Goodwin was established in 1866, but abandoned when the troops moved to establish Fort Apache in 1871. In the 1870s, farming communities began to appear along the Gila River, which traverses the county from east to west. Munsonville, now San Jose, was established in 1873; Safford followed in 1874; Solomonville in 1876; Smithville, now known as Pima, in 1879. In the next decade, Thatcher, Eden, Central, and Bryce were settled – all within a few miles of each other. This was, and is today, a rich agricultural area. Safford was the first county seat, but it was moved to Solomonville after two years. In 1915, after an election, the county seat was returned to Safford where it remains. Graham County was almost twice its present size prior to the formation of Greenlee County. The county now measures 4,630 square miles, of which 22 square miles are water. The San Carlos Indian Reservation covers approximately one-third of the land, with San Carlos Lake a popular site for its excellent fishing and camping. Recreation and tourism follow farming and ranching as the principal industries in Graham County. Individual or corporate ownership accounts for 10 percent of land ownership; the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, 38 percent; the state of Arizona, 18 percent; Indian reservations, 36 percent.



County Profile for
Graham County, Arizona



POPULATION			
	2000	2010	2023 (est.)
Graham County	33,489	37,299	39,025

Office of Economic Opportunity

SALES TAX / TRANSACTION PRIVILEGE TAX	
Graham County	1.00%
State	5.60%

Arizona Dept. of Revenue & Arizona Tax Research Foundation

LABOR FORCE			
	2000	2010	2022
Civilian Labor Force	12,270	14,570	15,695
Unemployed	666	1,883	648
Unemployment Rate	5.4%	12.9%	4.1%

Office of Economic Opportunity

WORKFORCE EDUCATION ATTAINMENT		
	Count	Share
Less than high school	3,542	14.7%
High school or equivalent, no college	7,298	30.3%
Some college or Associate degree	9,663	40.1%
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	3,566	14.8%

American Community Survey

INDUSTRY (RANKED BY EMPLOYMENT)		
	Count	Share
Education, health care & social assistance	3,071	22.9%
Retail trade	1,728	12.9%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, & mining	1,574	11.8%
Arts, entertainment, food & recreation services	1,522	11.4%
Construction	1,290	9.6%
Public administration	966	7.2%
Professional, scientific, & administrative services	633	4.7%
Finance, insurance & real estate	615	4.6%
Other services, except public administration	564	4.2%
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	551	4.1%
Manufacturing	485	3.6%
Wholesale trade	243	1.8%
Information	148	1.1%

American Community Survey

This profile was prepared by the Arizona Commerce Authority in cooperation with local sources. For further information, please contact:

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