

Benson serves as the western gateway to the scenic and historic attractions of Cochise County and has copyrighted the name “Home of Kartchner Caverns State Park.” Located in the historical San Pedro Valley, it offers proximity to both Tucson and Sierra Vista. Its rugged mountains, grassy valleys, moderate climate and proximity to many historical sites makes it a popular tourist attraction. The City of Benson was founded in 1880, when the Southern Pacific Railroad came through southern Arizona. Until 1910, Benson was the railroad hub of southern Arizona. It was named for Judge William B. Benson of California, a friend of Charles Crocker, then-president of the railroad.

Principal Economic Activities

Benson is situated along several trade routes: Interstate 10, U.S. 80, State Highway 90 and the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad. AEPCO and Apache Nitrogen Products are major employers, while many residents work in Tucson or Sierra Vista. Both retail chain and specialty stores are available. The city supports a large retired population and is a winter refuge for people from colder climates. Its nearby historic and scenic sites are increasingly popular with tourists.

Scenic Attractions

Cochise County, land of the great Apache chiefs Cochise and Geronimo, was truly “the last frontier,” subject to raids by the Chiricahua Apaches until the late 1880s. Nearby are the world famous Kartchner Caverns State Park and Old Tucson's Mescal movie site. Other attractions include: Tombstone, 20 miles from Benson; Gammon's Gulch Movie Set & Museum; historic Fort Huachuca, with its 1880s buildings and an Indian war days museum; the Amerind Museum which features remnants of prehistoric Indian cultures; and the Holy Trinity Monastery along the San Pedro Riparian Area. In addition, there are numerous mountain ranges that provide rockhounding, photography, picnicking, hiking, camping, bird watching and hunting opportunities.

Community Facilities

Benson offers a broad range of community facilities including four parks, one golf course, a community pool, a skate park, a library, a community center and many baseball, football, track and soccer fields. There is also a museum/gallery.



BASIC INFORMATION

Founded:	1880	Incorporated:	1924
Elevation:	3,585 ft.	Location:	Cochise County
Distance to major cities:			
Phoenix:	160 miles	San Diego:	454 miles
Tucson:	46 miles	Los Angeles:	532 miles
Las Vegas:	453 miles		

POPULATION

	2000	2010	2016 (est.)
Benson	4,711	5,098	4,981
Cochise County	117,755	131,436	128,343
State of Arizona	5,130,632	6,401,569	6,835,518

Office of Economic Opportunity

PROPERTY TAX

	2000	2010	2016
Elementary / High School	8.99	4.29	7.08
City / Fire District	0.62	0.46	0.58
Cochise County	5.70	5.07	5.92
Totals (Cochise County)	15.31	9.82	13.59

Arizona Dept. of Revenue & Arizona Tax Research Foundation

SALES TAX / TRANSACTION PRIVILEGE TAX

Benson	3.50%
Cochise County	6.10%
State	5.60%

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LABOR FORCE

	2000	2010	2016
Civilian Labor Force	2,008	1,900	1,682
Unemployed	163	209	88
Unemployment Rate	8.1%	11.0%	5.2%

Office of Economic Opportunity

WORKFORCE EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

	Count	Share
Less than high school	463	12.0%
High school or equivalent, no college	1,061	27.6%
Some college or Associate degree	1,527	39.7%
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	794	20.7%

American Community Survey

INDUSTRY (RANKED BY EMPLOYMENT)

	Count	Share
Education, health care & social assistance	408	27.5%
Retail trade	252	17.0%
Public administration	208	14.0%
Professional, scientific, & administrative services	123	8.3%
Arts, entertainment, food & recreation services	92	6.2%
Construction	90	6.1%
Manufacturing	82	5.5%
Finance, insurance & real estate	71	4.8%
Wholesale trade	57	3.8%
Other services, except public administration	50	3.4%
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	48	3.2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, & mining	0	0.0%
Information	0	0.0%

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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