

The city of Safford is located in the Upper Gila River Valley in the southeast corner of Arizona where the San Simon and Gila Rivers meet. The foothills of the Pinaleno Mountains begin about five miles southeast of the city. Mount Graham, the highest peak in the mountain range, and its companion peaks have a marked effect on the local climate by reducing winter precipitation. Safford, the county seat of Graham County, was established in 1874 and almost immediately became an agricultural area. Water is drawn from the Gila River to create 40,000 acres of irrigated agriculture.

Principal Economic Activities

Safford serves as the retail center for southeastern Arizona and western New Mexico, serving roughly 65,000 people. Substantial employment occurs in a wide variety of retail and service businesses, as well as mining, agriculture and light manufacturing. Agriculture has been a mainstay of the Safford and Graham County economies with cotton as the principal commodity, and remaining acreage used for hay and small grains. NatureSweet®, LTD operates a 20-acre greenhouse that produces tomatoes and cucumbers year-round and distributes them throughout the United States. Mining is a driving economic force and local employment and businesses receive a substantial boost from Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. with its two local mines: one in Safford and the other in Morenci. The Arizona Department of Corrections has two prison facilities, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons has one near the Safford area. Eastern Arizona College is a community college located in nearby Thatcher. Mount Graham Regional Medical Center is a major employer in Safford.

Scenic Attractions

Safford, ten miles north of the Coronado National Forest, provides many recreational facilities. Popular spots are the 10,720-foot Mt. Graham and Pinaleno Mountains. The Pinaleno Mountains are home to the largest binocular telescope in the world. Swift Trail, a 36-mile tour and one of many scenic drives in the area, provides a route to the summit and features many picnicking and camping sites. Discovery Park is a 160-acre, world-class attraction that includes the Natures Hideaway Riparian Wetlands, a narrow-gauge 1880s railroad and Governor Aker Observatory. The Bureau of Land Management administers 740,800 acres of land within Graham County. Some of the unique recreational opportunities are the Hot Wells Dunes, Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area and Black Hills Back County Byway. Roper Lake State Park, south of Safford, has overnight camping and day-use picnic areas, plus mineral water hot springs.

Community Facilities

The city of Safford offers two historic museums, a senior community center, a fine arts center, a Boys and Girls Club, a library, a bowling alley, two indoor theaters, a swimming pool, an 18-hole golf course, several tennis and paddleball courts, seven parks, numerous picnic areas at Mt. Graham and Roper Lake, 12 baseball diamonds (six lighted), several soccer fields and one rodeo arena.



BASIC INFORMATION

Founded:	1874	Incorporated:	1901
Elevation:	2,900 ft.	Location:	Graham County
Distance to major cities:			
Phoenix:	164 miles	San Diego:	535 miles
Tucson:	130 miles	Los Angeles:	537 miles
Las Vegas:	458 miles		

POPULATION

	2000	2010	2016 (est.)
Safford	9,232	9,580	9,358
Graham County	33,489	37,299	38,303
State of Arizona	5,130,632	6,401,569	6,835,518

Office of Economic Opportunity

PROPERTY TAX

	2000	2010	2016
Elementary / High School	6.89	3.96	4.66
City / Fire District	0.43	0.38	0.53
Graham County	4.32	4.45	6.20
Totals (Graham County)	11.64	8.78	11.39

Arizona Dept. of Revenue & Arizona Tax Research Foundation

SALES TAX / TRANSACTION PRIVILEGE TAX

Safford	2.50%
Graham County	6.60%
State	5.60%

Arizona Dept. of Revenue & Arizona Tax Research Foundation

LABOR FORCE

	2000	2010	2016
Civilian Labor Force	3,581	4,228	4,259
Unemployed	129	596	254
Unemployment Rate	3.6%	14.1%	6.0%

Office of Economic Opportunity

WORKFORCE EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

	Count	Share
Less than high school	779	12.9%
High school or equivalent, no college	1,728	28.6%
Some college or Associate degree	2,705	44.8%
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	823	13.6%

American Community Survey

INDUSTRY (RANKED BY EMPLOYMENT)

	Count	Share
Education, health care & social assistance	831	23.2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, & mining	493	13.7%
Retail trade	466	13.0%
Public administration	412	11.5%
Arts, entertainment, food & recreation services	345	9.6%
Other services, except public administration	269	7.5%
Construction	194	5.4%
Manufacturing	154	4.3%
Finance, insurance & real estate	153	4.3%
Professional, scientific, & administrative services	140	3.9%
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	70	2.0%
Information	50	1.4%
Wholesale trade	9	0.3%

American Community Survey

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

City of Safford
 Sandy Findley / Horatio Skeete
 717 W. Main St.
 P.O. Box 272
 Safford, AZ 85548
 Phone: 928-432-4010
 Email: sfindley@ci.safford.az.us /
hskeete@ci.safford.az.us
 Website: www.cityofsafford.us

Local First Arizona
 407 E. Roosevelt St.
 Phoenix, AZ 85004
 Phone: 602-956-0909
 Email: info@localfirstaz.com
 Website: www.localfirstaz.com

Graham County Chamber of Commerce
 1111 Thatcher Blvd.
 Safford, AZ 85546
 Email: info@graham-chamber.com
 Website: www.graham-chamber.com

Arizona Commerce Authority
 Statewide Economic Development Group
 118 N. 7th Ave., Suite 400
 Phoenix, AZ 85007
 Phone: 602-845-1200
 Email: info@azcommerce.com
 Website: www.azcommerce.com

ACA has partnered with APS to provide you with **Arizona Prospector**, a free database to access available real estate opportunities in rural Arizona. [Click here](#) to access available properties in this community.