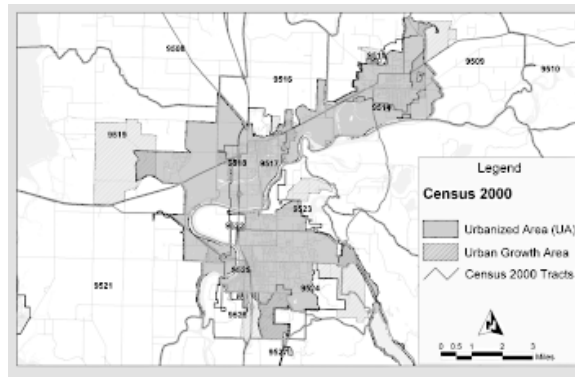


# SKAGIT COUNTY IN TRANSITION

## DEMOGRAPHY 2003

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Funded by:

Island Hospital Health Foundation  
City of Anacortes  
City of Burlington  
Town of La Conner  
City of Mount Vernon  
City of Sedro-Woolley  
Skagit County Health Department

April 2003

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Skagit County Health Department publishes periodic reports on demographic and health issues relevant to Skagit County residents.

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# A REPORT IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO ON THE NET



We have all put out searches on the Internet and come up with 1,245,143 responses only to give up after our tired eyes gave out. Increasingly more data is being made available on the Internet. That is good, make no mistake about it. Yet, judging by the reaction of many data users, many of us still prefer to have a hardcopy report in front of us to ponder and guide us to additional data sources in a goal-directed and economical fashion - or better yet, take us to a person that can knowledgeably talk about the data.

The County serves as a Census Data Affiliate to the Washington Office of Financial Management overseeing census data release and distribution during the inter-censal period to as many organizations and residents as possible in Skagit County. The Commissioners have encouraged, actively supported and helped sponsor workshops on Census Data throughout the County.

This is the Second DEMOGRAPHY Report for Skagit County. It is the first report since the 2000 Census in which we are reporting some of the local census results. Any population estimates for years later than 2000 will be estimates, based on the 2000 Census.

Used properly, data can be a means to improve our lives. Skagit County residents are, of course, interested in numbers other than Census figures, so some of the reporting here includes results for a Community Health Survey, conducted in 2002. Other data included are vital statistics reported by the Center for Health Statistics in Olympia.

One purpose of publishing demographic and health data here is to make frequently used data

available. Our intention is to publish a new DEMOGRAPHY Report every few years as new estimates and data sets come out.

Business owners, mayors, non-profit organization administrators, educators are all policy-makers at one time or another. They need to employ judgment at every turn of the decision-making process. While judgment cannot be taught per se, good judgment generally reflects reliance on relevant information and data. Good data, of course, do not only come in the form of numbers. Sometimes there is qualitative information that is equally or more persuasive. Whether qualitative or quantitative data, our objective is to assist you either in finding the data - some of it in this publication, or to point you to some source that may contain the data you are looking for. Additionally, we may be able to help you decide what sort of data might be pulled together for a specific policy issue.

We are grateful to the cities around Skagit County who again underwrote some of the printing costs for this report and its dissemination to the public. We encourage you to make use of the resources listed and to call us if you need help with data details or interpretation.

# 2000 CENSUS - A STATIC PICTURE IN A DYNAMIC DEMOGRAPHIC WORLD

The United States Census has been taken every ten years since 1790. On April 1st of every decennial year the 435 seats in the House of Representatives in the United States Congress are apportioned according to the population distribution in our society.

Census data have taken on increasing importance over time for planning and decision-making for our society. The fields of application of census data include public health; local planning for land use, road building, transportation, school and hospital construction, public utilities; marketing; manpower analysis; family planning programs; immigration and emigration policy and many others.

**With the 22nd Census, Skagit County reached 102,979 persons.** Our County was the 9th fastest growing county in the State during the intercensal period from 1990 to

2000. The Census provides a benchmark, a static picture in a dynamic world. As time moves on we use the census numbers as a basis from which to estimate population growth in the years between the census. Such population estimates are done by various federal and state agencies such as the Office of Financial Management in Olympia which estimated the Skagit population to be 105,100 in 2002. We here in the County track these estimates and make them available to our residents. In addition we disseminate city population figures, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Center for Health Statistics (CHS) data such as vital statistics (births and deaths) and other data.

About 14% of the population filled out the more extensive census questionnaire which provided the so-called Summary File 3 or Long Form data. This includes city populations, poverty data, detailed housing information, disability data, etc.

deaths, age, and sex provide the underlying assumptions. If any of these are observed changing in a significant way then you might expect the projections to veer off in one direction or another. Projections should periodically get revised as some of the underlying assumptions change such as economic outlook which in turn drives labor movement and population migration.

We provide some of the more frequently used demographic data for you to have handy, such as age-breakdowns (following page). Typically, policy issues touch certain age groups, rather than the total population. If you are trying to market a product, frequently it is a specific age-group you are addressing; if you are a police chief planning for crime prevention, you might want to know the size of young age groups - those who contribute the preponderance of potential criminals, etc.

### Census Population Skagit County 1890 thru 2000

|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| 1890             | 8,747   |
| 1900             | 14,272  |
| 1910             | 29,241  |
| 1920             | 33,373  |
| 1930             | 35,142  |
| 1940             | 37,650  |
| 1950             | 43,273  |
| 1960             | 51,350  |
| 1970             | 52,381  |
| 1980             | 64,138  |
| 1990             | 79,545  |
| 2000             | 102,979 |
| 2001 (estimated) | 104,100 |
| 2002 (estimated) | 105,100 |

### Projections

The state of Washington periodically prepares population projections. These are used by business and the public sector for planning. In considering reliability of population projections we need to be aware that the further away we move from the census years the more unreliable the projections get. Projections are prepared using the so-called "component method", primarily fertility, mortality and migration moved forward in time. Births,

### Skagit County Population Projections Intermediate Series

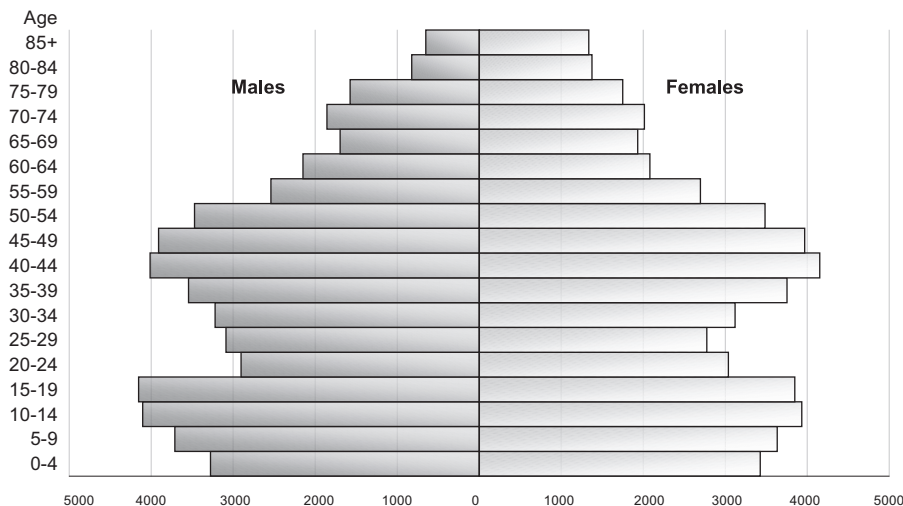
2005 thru 2025

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| 2005 | 113,136 |
| 2010 | 123,807 |
| 2015 | 135,717 |
| 2020 | 150,449 |
| 2025 | 164,797 |

Source: Office of Financial Management  
Olympia, WA 2002

# Skagit County Population Pyramid 2000

The Population of Skagit County in 2000



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census

The population pyramid shows the age and sex composition of Skagit County for the year 2000 at a glance, with the horizontal bars representing the numbers or proportions of males to females in each 5 year age group. The youngest age group of 0-4 is smaller than the age group 5-9 reflecting a decline in births and/or migration in the youngest age group. Note after age 45 how the attrition process accelerates, causing the narrowing peak of the pyramid. The higher life expectancy of females is clearly evident in the oldest age group where males are survived by females at a ratio of almost 2 to 1.

## SKAGIT COUNTY BY AGE AND SEX IN THE YEAR 2000

| Age | Male | Female | Age | Male | Female | Age | Male | Female | Age    | Male | Female |
|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| >1  | 642  | 596    | 26  | 533  | 521    | 52  | 753  | 722    | 78     | 268  | 377    |
| 1   | 718  | 663    | 27  | 578  | 558    | 53  | 740  | 772    | 79     | 290  | 342    |
| 2   | 677  | 660    | 28  | 623  | 628    | 54  | 511  | 539    | 80     | 204  | 327    |
| 3   | 388  | 669    | 29  | 628  | 663    | 55  | 563  | 534    | 81     | 206  | 278    |
| 4   | 723  | 682    | 30  | 701  | 660    | 56  | 563  | 590    | 82     | 205  | 239    |
| 5   | 682  | 700    | 31  | 638  | 654    | 57  | 515  | 571    | 83     | 179  | 259    |
| 6   | 749  | 720    | 32  | 614  | 614    | 58  | 498  | 466    | 84     | 143  | 253    |
| 7   | 789  | 780    | 33  | 656  | 646    | 59  | 425  | 442    | 85     | 139  | 231    |
| 8   | 809  | 771    | 34  | 659  | 650    | 60  | 424  | 455    | 86     | 102  | 187    |
| 9   | 824  | 736    | 35  | 676  | 688    | 61  | 473  | 451    | 87     | 83   | 158    |
| 10  | 832  | 756    | 36  | 756  | 777    | 62  | 432  | 409    | 88     | 85   | 149    |
| 11  | 814  | 794    | 37  | 765  | 738    | 63  | 381  | 397    | 89     | 55   | 117    |
| 12  | 830  | 773    | 38  | 721  | 776    | 64  | 391  | 424    | 90     | 45   | 88     |
| 13  | 753  | 753    | 39  | 805  | 750    | 65  | 362  | 400    | 91     | 52   | 70     |
| 14  | 799  | 790    | 40  | 796  | 816    | 66  | 342  | 392    | 92     | 26   | 96     |
| 15  | 822  | 749    | 41  | 760  | 834    | 67  | 363  | 375    | 93     | 21   | 45     |
| 16  | 852  | 803    | 42  | 786  | 783    | 68  | 350  | 363    | 94     | 18   | 50     |
| 17  | 867  | 817    | 43  | 775  | 822    | 69  | 359  | 425    | 95     | 19   | 39     |
| 18  | 889  | 742    | 44  | 750  | 810    | 70  | 380  | 393    | 96     | 12   | 28     |
| 19  | 726  | 660    | 45  | 758  | 830    | 71  | 364  | 410    | 97     | 13   | 19     |
| 20  | 691  | 617    | 46  | 807  | 800    | 72  | 340  | 419    | 98     | 3    | 7      |
| 21  | 549  | 537    | 47  | 778  | 838    | 73  | 326  | 411    | 99     | 3    | 6      |
| 22  | 598  | 587    | 48  | 772  | 748    | 74  | 374  | 373    | 100-04 | 3    | 15     |
| 23  | 580  | 539    | 49  | 788  | 743    | 75  | 328  | 341    | 105+   | 0    | 0      |
| 24  | 584  | 544    | 50  | 758  | 756    | 76  | 317  | 350    |        |      |        |
| 25  | 572  | 567    | 51  | 721  | 735    | 77  | 273  | 350    |        |      |        |

# POPULATION AND DIVERSITY



necessary at all. And why do we report on it here?

Reporting of ethnicity is a data tool and prerequisite to successful improvement of specific health and social conditions or to serve as a recognized tool of cultural differences in the market place.

**“Hispanics continue to face health disparities. This is unacceptable. That’s why we are committed to getting information and resources to those communities where the health gaps exist.”**

Tommy Thompson, Secretary  
US Department of Health & Human Services

Population growth is the result of births minus deaths plus migration. As there are fewer births than deaths in our county - as in most other parts of our country - population growth occurs as a result of immigration. This results in greater diversity of our population. Migration into the county is fed by migration into the US, called immigration which is a function of quotas from different continents and refugee allocations from various ‘political hotspots’.

Part of Skagit County’s growth can be attributed to the increase in the immigrant Hispanic population. Although the overall Hispanic population in Skagit County is about 11.2%, most Hispanics are concentrated over a relatively small area, namely in the cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington where their share of the population represents about 25% according to the 2000 Census.

## Population and Diversity:

Race, ethnicity, ancestry and culture are not interchangeable terms. Yet in bureaucratic language these terms are sometimes used inappropriately. This is a sensitive issue; some people struggle with the terminology - including the Census Bureau. The 2000 US Census allowed people to choose more than one race.

The important question is why a distinction by ethnicity/ race is

Race and ethnicity are markers for more fundamental determinants of health status such as access to health care, economic status and health behaviors. Race and ethnic-specific disease rates are confirmed through large sample studies. Data are not uniformly collected throughout the country, but they confirm ethnic-specific disparities in health status.

The US has remained an “Immigration Country”. As new immigrants arrive, they undergo adjustment processes in terms of education and acculturation. Census data can be useful in understanding how to make this adjustment process a little smoother. Many Hispanics, as other groups before them, come from agricultural societies where fertility patterns are higher, meaning that in their country of origin the cultural value included having more children than in a highly industrial society. Children represent a significant economic value by contributing to agricultural labor as was the case in our society only 75 years ago. As acculturation takes place fertility patterns tend to adjust to the country of immigration within about two years.

**Estimated Population by Ethnicity  
Skagit County 2000**

| Ethnicity | Number | Percent | Ethnicity                         | Number | Percent |
|-----------|--------|---------|-----------------------------------|--------|---------|
| White     | 89,070 | 86.5    | Native Am.                        | 1,909  | 1.9     |
| Black     | 450    | .04     | Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander | 163    | 0.2     |
| Asian     | 1,538  | 1.5     | Hispanic*                         | 11,536 | 11.2    |

\*May be of any race

**Top Ten Ancestries  
Reported in Skagit  
County in 2000**

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| German       | 14% |
| English      | 11% |
| Norwegian    | 9%  |
| Irish        | 8%  |
| Swedish      | 4%  |
| Dutch        | 4%  |
| Scottish     | 3%  |
| French       | 3%  |
| Italian      | 3%  |
| Scotch-Irish | 2%  |

A reflection of our immigration history is the ancestry as shown in the table, above, for Skagit County.

**English as a Second  
Language (ESL):**

A significant number of students in our schools do not speak English as their first language. As is evident from the table on English as a Second Language (ESL), some school districts such as Mount Vernon have a considerably larger percentage of ESL students than others. ESL numbers reflect our long immigration

**ESL STUDENTS  
2003**

| District          | Number | Percent |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Anacortes         | 26     | 0.8%    |
| Burlington-Edison | 424    | 11.9%   |
| Concrete          |        | none    |
| Conway            | 20     | 4.5%    |
| La Conner         | 4      | 0.6 %   |
| Mt. Vernon        | 1350   | 24%     |
| Sedro-Woolley     | 416    | 9.4%    |

history and demonstrate the diversity of our county population, representing over a dozen languages including Chinese, Greek, Russian, Spanish, German and Korean.

**Special Education**

A total of 2524 students are classified as special education students in Skagit County Schools (see table p. 11, for more details). This represents approximately 13 percent of the total student body in the seven school districts of the county.

**Ethnicity by City (%)  
Skagit County 2000 Census**

| City          | White | Hispanic* | Black | Asian | Native A. |
|---------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Anacortes     | 92    | 3.0       | 0.2   | 1.7   | 1.5       |
| Burlington    | 76    | 26        | 1.0   | 1.6   | 0.1       |
| La Conner     | 90    | 3.3       | 3.2   | 0.3   | 1.9       |
| Mount Vernon  | 76    | 25        | 0.4   | 2.5   | 0.2       |
| Sedro-Woolley | 94    | 6.8       | 0.2   | 0.5   | 0         |

\* May be of any race -- therefore percentages may add up to >100

**Disabilities of Adults**

The US Census Bureau defines disability as a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition. This condition can make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering. This condition can also impede a person from being able to go outside the home alone or to work at a job or business.

With the aging of our society the probability of disabilities will also increase. The following table shows types of disabilities by category:

**Types of Disability  
Skagit County 2000**

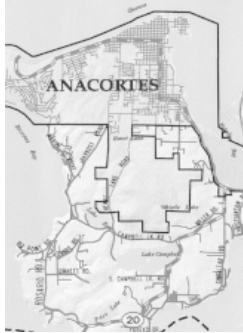
| Total disabilities tallied<br>all age groups: 33,006 100% |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|
| Sensory Disability  | 4,632 | 14.0% |
| Physical disability                                       | 8,272 | 25.1% |
| Mental disability   | 5,049 | 15.3% |
| Self-care disability                                      | 2,457 | 7.2%  |
| Go-outside-home disability                                | 5,527 | 16.7% |
| Employment dis.   | 7,069 | 21.4% |

# CITY POPULATIONS

## City Population Estimates 2002

Percent Growth since 2000

**Anacortes**  
14,910  
2.4%

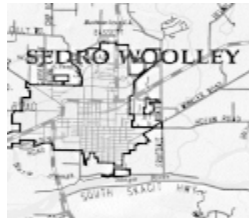


**Burlington**  
7,190  
6.4%



**Mount Vernon**  
26,670  
1.6%

**Sedro-Woolley**  
8,805  
1.7%



**La Conner**  
775  
1.8%



**Concrete**  
790  
0%



**Hamilton**  
340  
10%

**Lyman**  
415  
1.5%

## Mount Vernon new Urbanized Area

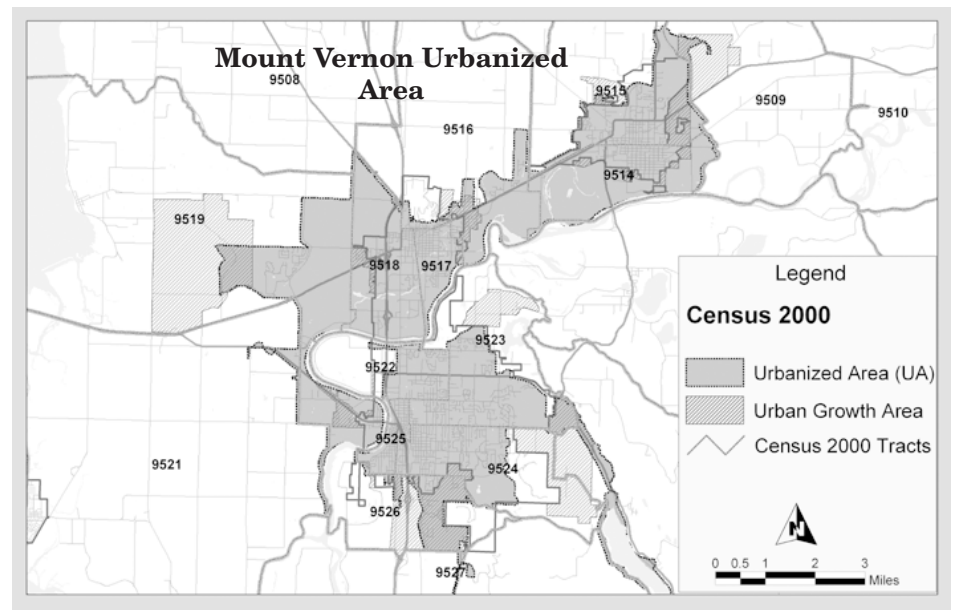
With the 2000 Census Mount Vernon became the 13th urbanized area in the State of Washington. This will put us in the league with Los Angeles and New York (perhaps a dubious distinction). An UA is defined as consisting of a central place (s) and adjacent territory with a general population density of a least 1,000 people per square mile of land area that together have a minimum residential population of at least 50,000 people. (See map below).

The implications of having become an urbanized area include the ability to apply for federal funds to expand infrastructure development, especially in the transportation net.

## City Populations

Our city populations have grown according to traditional settlement patterns, that is along transportation routes such as the I-5 corridor (Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley) and along bodies of water (Anacortes, La Conner).

The population estimates given at left represent the population residing within city boundaries. The population in unincorporated areas of the County remained stable at 43% in 2002. Unincorporated areas are governed by the County rather than city jurisdictions.



**Population and Economy**

Skagit County - with a current population of approximately 106,000 - is one of the faster growing counties in the state. We grew at 2.4 percent annually for a total increase of apprx. 26,000 persons since 1990. About 80% of our growth came from migration and 20% from natural growth.

Skagit County's economy is increasingly diversifying. With population density and traffic congestion in the greater Seattle area functioning as population push factors, our County is projected to grow in the foreseeable future.

Skagit County's economy is in a state of transition from natural resource oriented to retail and services with an emerging emphasis on attracting high-tech industry.

Factors such as housing, schools and child care all have a direct impact on attracting and retaining industry and business.

Economic indicators include employment statistics, income, tax revenues and expenditures, census data by industry, education levels, housing costs and use of assistance programs. Our goal is primarily to familiarize the reader with various economic indicators and where to find information on them.

**Skagit County has been classified**

**as an economically distressed area by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.** Even in a relatively full-sector employment economy statewide, Skagit's unemployment rate always tends to be slightly higher than the state overall. **The unemployment rate has inched up from 6.8 in 2000 to 7.8 in January, 2003.**

The County's labor force grew to 48,248 in 2002 from 44,344 in 1995 and is a reflection of the County's overall population growth. The County has been significantly impacted by Boeing's work force reduction of about 50,000 persons statewide since 2000.

On balance, our economy is relatively attractive with new housing continuing and sales of single family residences strong and housing prices moving significantly upward.

**The Economic Census**

In addition to our population census, the Census Bureau also conducts an economic census every five years. It tracks our economic progress, our international trade and analyzes our financial framework. The economic census describes the economy from the national to the local level. Successful business and accuracy of our planning depend on it. Trade associations can get data about their own and competing industries, about trends in industry and merchandise lines, and determine what is happening elsewhere in

industry. The Census Bureau sent out 5 million forms to businesses throughout the nation, which were due February 12, 2003. The first national data will be reported in spring of 2004. After that, county level and industry by industry results are scheduled for publication early in 2005. (see website on back cover of report).

During the intercensal period, the Census Bureau publishes **County Business Patterns** (issued July 2002) and **Nonemployer Statistics** (issued November 2002). The first is an annual series that provides subnational economic data by industry. The series is useful for studying the economic activity of small areas; analyzing economic changes over time; and as a benchmark for statistical series, surveys, and databases between economic censuses. Nonemployer Statistics are released each year. **Nonemployers are businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax.** The current data series began with reference year 1997. The series is useful for studying the economic activity of small businesses at various geographic levels including county level. **Businesses use the data for analyzing market potential,** measuring the effectiveness of sales and advertising programs and developing budgets.

| <b>Area</b>        | <b>Houses Sold</b> | <b>Average price</b> | <b>Days on Market</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Anacortes          | 344                | \$245,101            | 126                   |
| Burlington         | 205                | \$182,183            | 77                    |
| Concrete & East    | 45                 | \$114,376            | 106                   |
| La Conner          | 54                 | \$243,998            | 118                   |
| Lyman/Hamilton     | 22                 | \$108,988            | 90                    |
| Mount Vernon       | 509                | \$184,312            | 82                    |
| Sedro-Woolley      | 235                | \$145,028            | 87                    |
| <b>Total Sales</b> | <b>1414</b>        | <b>\$174,855</b>     | <b>98</b>             |

| <b>Industry</b>                    | <b># of Establmts.</b> | <b>Receipts</b> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Construction                       | 685                    | 39,025          |
| Used Car dealers                   | 14                     | 4,180           |
| Freight trucking                   |                        |                 |
| long-distance                      | 42                     | 4,030           |
| Real Estate                        | 742                    | 51,392          |
| Legal Services                     | 57                     | 1,931           |
| Architectural Services             | 28                     | 991             |
| Home Health Care Svcs              | 40                     | 345             |
| Child Care                         | 199                    | 3,591           |
| Barber shops                       | 23                     | 536             |
| Beauty shops                       | 172                    | 3,178           |
| * \$39,025 represents \$39,025,000 |                        |                 |

**Income**

**Income** is collected by the census for people ages 15 and over. It is the amount of money received during the previous year from a variety of sources, including earnings, unemployment and worker's compensation, social security, supplemental security income, public assistance, veteran's payments, survivor benefits, disability benefits, pension or retirement income, interest, dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates and trusts, education assistance, alimony, child support, financial assistance from outside of the household, and other income.

Various statistical measures give us different insights into how well off our society is and what the implications of various income classifications are. The following little table demonstrates the influence of education on earnings.

**Average Annual Earnings US 1999**

|                      |          |
|----------------------|----------|
| High School Dropout  | \$18,900 |
| HS Graduate          | \$25,900 |
| College Graduate     | \$45,000 |
| Professional Degrees | \$99,300 |

It is crucial to clearly define various measures, so that the implications of the data are also clear. For example, when we talk about *household* income, this represents the combined pretax income of one or more people occupying a housing unit as their usual place of residence. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated people who share living arrangements.

**Skagit County 2002 Estimated Income**

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Per Capita Income | \$22,159 |
| Median Household  | \$45,376 |
| Average Household | \$58,784 |

*Family* is defined as a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

**Poverty Indicators**

There are various measures and levels of poverty locally. The table, below on Per Capita income shows that minorities frequently have incomes below the mean. Per capita is derived by the total income for persons 15 years and over divided by the total number of persons in that group. If one person makes an income the size of Bill Gates and the rest earn minimum wage, per capita income could

**Percent of Families Living Below Poverty in Skagit County 2000 Census**

|               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| Anacortes     | 6.0%  |
| Burlington    | 11.7% |
| Concrete      | 8.4%  |
| La Conner     | 8.8%  |
| Mount Vernon  | 10.8% |
| Sedro-Woolley | 10.7% |

**2003 Federal Poverty Level**

| Family Size | Annual   | Monthly |         |         |
|-------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
|             | 100%     | 100%    | 185%    | 200%    |
| 1           | \$8,980  | \$749   | \$1,385 | \$1,497 |
| 2           | \$12,120 | \$1,010 | \$1,869 | \$2,020 |
| 3           | \$15,260 | \$1,272 | \$2,353 | \$2,544 |
| 4           | \$18,400 | \$1,534 | \$2,837 | \$3,067 |

**Per Capita Income by City and Selected Ethnicity 1999**

|                      | All Persons | Nat. Amer. | Asian    | Hispanic |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Anacortes</b>     | \$22,297    | \$12,365   | \$11,638 | \$12,478 |
| <b>Burlington</b>    | \$17,167    | \$21,905   | \$24,958 | \$ 8,789 |
| <b>Concrete</b>      | \$12,492    | \$12,543   | n/a      | n/a      |
| <b>La Conner</b>     | \$24,308    | \$ 8,393   | n/a      | n/a      |
| <b>Mount Vernon</b>  | \$17,041    | \$ 7,091   | \$10,411 | \$ 7,881 |
| <b>Sedro-Woolley</b> | \$16,517    | n/a        | \$16,911 | \$ 7,357 |

be misleading. Between 6 and 12 percent of families in Skagit County live below the poverty level.

**School Lunch**

School lunch participation rates are another powerful local indicator of poverty. The National School Lunch program is a federally assisted meal program, established under President Harry Truman in 1946, operating today in more than 99,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. Free and reduced lunches improve the learning readiness of children from economically disadvantaged households. A total of 6,683 students participate countywide (see table, page 10).

If we take free and reduced lunches as a proxy for economic affluence, we can conclude that there are considerable differences between school districts as well as within school districts, ranging between 13 and 65 percent. High school students seem to be less prone to take advantage of school lunch benefits than do elementary school students, perhaps for reasons of image or food preference.

**Demographic Change**

Growth between censuses does not necessarily occur evenly throughout the age structure (see also pyramid, page 3). Implications arise for society from such uneven growth and it is helpful to take this into consideration when doing business or forming policy. The following table shows percent change from the 1990 to the 2000 census by five year age groups:

| <b>% Change by 5 yr.<br/>Age Group 1990 to 2000</b> |                           |           |
|---|---------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Age Group</b>                                    | <b>Change<br/>Persons</b> | <b>%</b>  |
| 85+   | 753                       | 61        |
| 80-84   | 930                       | 68        |
| 75-79   | 539                       | 20        |
| 70-74   | 400                       | 12        |
| 65-69   | -82                       | -2        |
| 60-64   | 493                       | 13        |
| 55-59   | 1,667                     | 48        |
| 50-54   | 3,269                     | 88        |
| 45-49   | 3,629                     | 86        |
| 40-44   | 1,395                     | 21        |
| 35-39   | 1,029                     | 16        |
| 30-34   | 33                        | 1         |
| 25-29   | 411                       | 8         |
| 20-24   | 1,635                     | 39        |
| 15-19   | 2,742                     | 53        |
| 10-14   | 2,415                     | 44        |
| 5-9   | 1,068                     | 17        |
| 0-4   | 1,098                     | 20        |
| <b>Total:</b>                                       | <b>23,424</b>             | <b>29</b> |

**Aging of Population**

Aside from the democratic observation that we are all getting older by the minute, our society is aging as well, as a result of the baby boomers (1946 through 1964 moving up the population pyramid, p. 2). The differential growth is most evident in the age group 45 through 54 with intercensal growth of over 86 percent. This age group, ten years from now will make a major contribution to the growth of the aging population, whereby the ages 80 plus had already grown over 60 percent in the intercensal period. This development is also reflected in the median age which has risen in the County from 35.6 in 1990 to 37.2 in 2000. Another result of aging will be the need for smaller housing units including single person households (women surviving men in significant numbers).

**Youth Flight**

A general development of rural counties has traditionally been that of young people moving away. Some of this is evident in our county looking at the relatively small growth of the age group 25 through 34. This probably reflects high school graduates moving for the purpose of a college education and young people moving in search of professional opportunities.

**In-Migration**

Aside from the two specific developments just discussed, the significant overall population growth reflects in-migration into the County most likely driven by more affordable housing than elsewhere, a positive retirement environment, an increasing diversity of our local economy during the 1990s, growth in the Hispanic population and some in-migration due to a traffic fatigue of people living in the urban area south of us which has not managed to solve its transportation problems.



*Migration into and out of the county is not limited to humans. See description of agricultural census, p. 12*

# FREE AND REDUCED LUNCHES

## Free and Reduced Lunches October 2002

| District/School          | Enrollment   | # free/<br>reduced | Percent    | District/School      | Enrollment   | # free/<br>reduced | Percent    |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| <b>Anacortes</b>         | <b>3,303</b> | <b>722</b>         | <b>22%</b> | <b>Mount Vernon</b>  | <b>5,605</b> | <b>2,704</b>       | <b>48%</b> |
| Fidalgo ES               | 326          | 62                 | 19%        | Centennial ES        | 604          | 447                | 74%        |
| Island View ES           | 468          | 192                | 41%        | Jefferson ES         | 553          | 290                | 52%        |
| Mount Erie ES            | 488          | 100                | 23%        | Lincoln ES           | 372          | 219                | 59%        |
| Whitney ES               | 188          | 64                 | 34%        | Little Mtn ES        | 557          | 366                | 66%        |
| Anacortes MS             | 526          | 121                | 23%        | Madison ES           | 469          | 386                | 82%        |
| Anacortes HS             | 1,307        | 183                | 14%        | Washington ES        | 480          | 280                | 58%        |
|                          |              |                    |            | La Venture MS        | 352          | 218                | 62%        |
| <b>Burlington-Edison</b> | <b>3,545</b> | <b>1163</b>        | <b>33%</b> | Mt Baker M S         | 457          | 251                | 55%        |
| Allen ES                 | 460          | 233                | 51%        | MV HS                | 1,761        | 615                | 35%        |
| Bay View ES              | 482          | 89                 | 18%        |                      |              |                    |            |
| Edison ES                | 481          | 75                 | 16%        | <b>Sedro-Woolley</b> | <b>4,439</b> | <b>1,621</b>       | <b>37%</b> |
| Lucille Umbarger ES      | 576          | 212                | 37%        | Central ES           | 414          | 203                | 49%        |
| West View ES             | 486          | 317                | 65%        | Evergreen ES         | 577          | 271                | 47%        |
| B-E HS                   | 1,060        | 224                | 21%        | Mary Purcell ES      | 397          | 206                | 52%        |
|                          |              |                    |            | Clear Lake ES        | 239          | 91                 | 38%        |
| <b>Concrete</b>          | <b>793</b>   | <b>454</b>         | <b>57%</b> | Big Lake ES          | 189          | 38                 | 20%        |
| ES                       | 417          | 266                | 64%        | Samish ES            | 195          | 60                 | 31%        |
| MS                       | 138          | 87                 | 63%        | Lyman ES             | 194          | 97                 | 50%        |
| HS                       | 238          | 101                | 42%        | Cascade MS           | 684          | 294                | 43%        |
|                          |              |                    |            | State Street HS      | 403          | 64                 | 16%        |
| <b>Conway</b>            | <b>446</b>   | <b>89</b>          | <b>20%</b> | SW HS                | 1,142        | 297                | 26%        |
|                          |              |                    |            |                      |              |                    |            |
| <b>La Conner</b>         | <b>639</b>   | <b>201</b>         | <b>31%</b> |                      |              |                    |            |

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Number of Students with Disabling Conditions by School District, October 2002

| CONDITION                            | Anacortes    | Burlington   | Concrete     | Conway      | La Conner    | Mount Vernon | Sedro-Woolley |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Developmental Delay/ Preschool       | 30           | 83           | 32           | 2           | 13           | 160          | 156           |
| <b>Serious Behavioral Disability</b> | <b>10</b>    | <b>10</b>    | <b>10</b>    | <b>1</b>    | <b>3</b>     | <b>36</b>    | <b>24</b>     |
| Ortho Impaired                       | 1            | 3            | 0            | 1           | 0            | 10           | 3             |
| <b>Health Impaired</b>               | <b>55</b>    | <b>58</b>    | <b>5</b>     | <b>11</b>   | <b>10</b>    | <b>75</b>    | <b>74</b>     |
| Spec.Lng.Disability                  | 144          | 190          | 63           | 15          | 35           | 342          | 316           |
| <b>Mental Retardation</b>            | <b>7</b>     | <b>14</b>    | <b>3</b>     | <b>0</b>    | <b>5</b>     | <b>47</b>    | <b>17</b>     |
| Multiple Disabilities                | 11           | 11           | 3            | 0           | 3            | 14           | 9             |
| <b>Deaf</b>                          | <b>1</b>     | <b>1</b>     | <b>0</b>     | <b>0</b>    | <b>0</b>     | <b>7</b>     | <b>0</b>      |
| Hearing Impairment                   | 1            | 7            | 1            | 0           | 1            | 4            | 4             |
| <b>Visually Impaired/Blind.</b>      | <b>1</b>     | <b>1</b>     | <b>0</b>     | <b>1</b>    | <b>0</b>     | <b>0</b>     | <b>1</b>      |
| Deaf/ Blind                          | 0            | 10           | 0            | 1           | 0            | 0            | 0             |
| <b>Communication Disordered</b>      | <b>86</b>    | <b>58</b>    | <b>7</b>     | <b>8</b>    | <b>14</b>    | <b>105</b>   | <b>41</b>     |
| Autism                               | 9            | 6            | 1            | 1           | 2            | 9            | 7             |
| <b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>        | <b>2</b>     | <b>2</b>     | <b>0</b>     | <b>0</b>    | <b>0</b>     | <b>8</b>     | <b>1</b>      |
| <b>Total:</b>                        | <b>358</b>   | <b>444</b>   | <b>125</b>   | <b>41</b>   | <b>86</b>    | <b>817</b>   | <b>653</b>    |
| <b>% of all Students</b>             | <b>11.4%</b> | <b>12.5%</b> | <b>15.8%</b> | <b>9.2%</b> | <b>13.5%</b> | <b>14.5%</b> | <b>14.7%</b>  |



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### Agricultural Data

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Agriculture is still one of the most important activities in our Valley. The Census of Agriculture is the most comprehensive source of data portraying our Nation's agriculture. From 1840 to 1920 the Census of Agriculture was taken every 10 years and since then every 5 years. In fact, February 3rd, 2003, was when the most recent agriculture census forms for the year 2002 were due to have been returned.

This census is the only source of uniform data on agricultural production and operator characteristics down to the county level. It measures where farmers and ranchers stand, their production costs and cropping systems, their farm supply needs, and how trends are changing.

At a time of changing definitions when some city kids don't have a clue where milk comes from, the question "What is a farm?" is especially justified: According to the census a farm is "any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year."

Just like in the population census there is a short form and a long

form. Examples of questions on the short form include land use and ownership, acres irrigated, crop acreage and quantities harvested, livestock and poultry inventories, value of products sold. Twenty-five percent of farmers are asked about production expenses, fertilizer and chemicals used, machinery and equipment inventories, market value of land and buildings, and income from farm-related sources.

Among new information collected this year was computer/internet use, production contracts/landlord shares, certified organic production commodities, acres treated with manure, grain storage capacity and new commodities such as bison, deer, elk, llama, emus and ostriches.

As the Commissioners are focusing on new and creative ways to economically revitalize agriculture in our Valley, upcoming census data can provide support to that end. Fertile Skagit County is ideally located to continue to grow local farm to market food for a growing urban population in the State. Responding to demands for healthy, fresh, local farm products will be a prerequisite to achieving this goal.

Why is the County so worried about farmers and our farm economy to the point that sometimes it is thought of as favoring farmers?

According to Washington State University's Cooperative Extension in Skagit County nine out of ten farm couples depend on off farm income of one of the partners in order to maintain their farm operation. Typically the spouse or partner will work as a teacher,

postal worker or other gainful employment which provides medical benefits for the family which otherwise would have to be purchased from \$400 on upwards. **Nationally 56% of farmer spouses worked at least part time off the farm.**

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### Release of Data

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**The Big get Bigger and the Small get Bought:** Until early 2004, we will have to make do with 1997 data. The number of farms is declining like anywhere else in the country. **Since 1987 the number declined by 92 farms to 714 in 1997.** Parallel to that development is the increase in number of farms of 1,000 acres or more which climbed from 11 in 1987 to 17 in 1997.

The agricultural situation certainly is difficult and misunderstood by many consumers and farmers themselves by virtue, for example, of its product diversity, say compared the automobile industry.

Relatively few farms in Skagit County receive direct government payments. Without government payments, net farm income constitutes only 15% of the value of production. **To earn \$50,000 in net farm income, the average farm would need to produce \$338,000 in total revenue.**

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will begin releasing data starting in the Spring of 2004, on both electronic and print media, with individual reports for all counties.

## DUI or DWI

Our society has long been fascinated with crime and punishment. A disproportionate chunk of our county tax dollars go towards public safety and the judiciary system. **In Skagit County about 51% of the general county budget, or \$20 million goes towards these services** spread over 12 departments, with about half of that budget to the Sheriff's Department. The **Sheriff's Department is only one of eight local law enforcement agencies in Skagit County**, serving the unincorporated areas of Skagit County and administering the jail. Five cities have their own police departments and there are two tribal police departments.

As a society we need to invest more in crime prevention. That starts with paying attention to early child development. We tend to ignore that a prevention approach is more cost effective by several magnitudes than a "treatment after the fact" approach, both in terms of dollars and human costs.

**Whatever you call it, driving while intoxicated or under the influence is trouble.** Legal consequences depend upon two major factors: number of offenses and blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Since January 1999, the legal limit for BAC is 0.08%. A "BAC" of greater than 0.15% results in more serious consequences. Refusing a test won't help, because Washington has an "implied consent" law. Refusal will simply put a person in the same category as those with a BAC greater than 0.15%. **At best, a DUI will cost you plenty of time, money, and hassles.**

### Skagit County DUIs\* Charged by Court Jurisdiction 2002

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Anacortes           | 127 |
| Burlington          | 83  |
| Concrete            | 5   |
| Mount Vernon        | 148 |
| Sedro-Woolley       | 33  |
| Unincorporated Area | 882 |

Total: 1278

\* Driving under the Influence



### COST OF A DUI TO DRINKER

| Source                           | Amount             |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Attorney Fees                    | \$2,500 to \$3,500 |
| or more for jury trial or appeal |                    |
| Fines (minimum)                  | \$1,000 to \$1,300 |
| Evaluation                       | \$75 to \$100      |
| Alcohol Information School       | \$75 to \$100      |
| Civil Suits                      | unlimited          |
| Electronic Home Monitoring       | \$ 12-15/day       |
| License Reissue Fee              | \$ 150             |
| Ignition Interlock               | \$65-75 per month  |
| Treatment (Outpatient)           | \$2,500            |
| Further treatment                | Thousands          |
| Insurance                        | \$2000 to \$3000   |
| over five years                  |                    |
| Towing Charges                   | \$100 to \$200     |
| <b>Total:</b>                    | <b>Big Bucks</b>   |

## Jail Population

The Skagit County jail was built in April of 1984, originally with 83 beds. In 1991, 62 bunks were added, bringing the jail capacity up to 145. As you can see from the table, jail occupancy has been steadily increasing, and in 2001 it averaged 149% of capacity. Various measures have been implemented to deal with the overcrowding, including electric home monitoring, work release, and community service programs.

### Average Daily Jail Population Skagit County 1999-2001

|                                | 1999       | 2000       | 2001       |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Capacity                       | 145        | 145        | 145        |
| ADP (Average Daily Population) | 166        | 205        | 216        |
| <b>ADP as % of Capacity</b>    | <b>114</b> | <b>141</b> | <b>149</b> |
| Male                           | 148        | 179        | 187        |
| Female                         | 20         | 26         | 29         |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>168</b> | <b>205</b> | <b>216</b> |

### Ethnicity in Percent

|                 |     |      |     |
|-----------------|-----|------|-----|
| Caucasian       | 73% | 73%  | 75% |
| Black           | 2%  | 1.5% | 2%  |
| Hispanic        | 18% | 20%  | 18% |
| Native American | 4%  | 5%   | 4%  |
| Asian           | 1%  | 1.5% | 1%  |

This Demographic Report, although focusing on the Census 2000 data release, is generally about a wider range of data which our community needs to conduct sound policy. Therefore, some other datasets are included. We need to make competent decisions not only as businesses or government agencies but also as individuals in different areas such as health. Examples include access to providers, choosing health insurance, etc. Briefly, some of the health issues under discussion follow.

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### Health Care Crisis

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Health care costs consume more than 14% of the US budget. Yet, despite spending more money on health care than other nations, in 2000 the US ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in life expectancy. Obviously, health status is **not** all about health care. Health care is needed, however, when the major determinants of health—lifestyle, environment, and genetics—let us down.

Skagit County is not exempt from the national ongoing crisis in health care. The main issues are hotly debated and include increasing health care costs, doctor shortages, declining and uneven reimbursements to doctors for Medicare, skyrocketing malpractice insurance premiums and more. New patients frequently lack access to care if they are either Medicare or Medicaid patients. Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people over 65 and some disabled people. Medicaid is a joint state- and federally-funded program for low-income people. Medicare and Medicaid are the

largest payers of medical care, but they are not paying competitive or equal reimbursements. Additionally physicians have had to hire more people to deal with the onerous paperwork from Medicare, Medicaid and multiple health insurance plans. With our population aging, the share of patients on Medicare is steadily increasing as will the crisis in health care if no solutions are forthcoming.

Emergency rooms at Hospitals are overextended because patients who cannot find access to primary care providers turn to emergency rooms where they cannot be turned away. This is however, an expensive way to dispense medical care.

We may have only limited influence over remedying the health care crisis. On the personal level we may, however, have some counter measures. As the results of the Community Health Survey demonstrate, many of our health issues are brought about by poor health behavior such as lack of exercise, poor dietary habits and poor stress management. We have some influence over our behavior and, therefore have some input into our health and development of illness. Through sound prevention practices we can make a contribution toward our own health and toward keeping overall health care costs down.

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### Health Survey

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The Skagit County Community Health Survey was first conducted in 1995 and again in 2001 with results being released last year. Participating organi-

zations were the Hospitals in the county and the Skagit County Health Department. Additional funding was provided by Regence Blue Shield, Island Hospital Health Foundation, Skagit/Island Counties Medical Society, United Way of Skagit County, Washington Health Foundation and Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories.

This was a telephone survey of 1,007 adults in Skagit County, measuring health risk behaviors, safety practices and environmental health risks to which the population might be exposed.

Some major findings from the Survey that relate to public health:

- 18% had *no medical checkup* in the past five years
- 22% in East County *lacked Health Insurance Coverage*, compared to 14% in Central and 9% in West County. Countywide 31% of Hispanics lacked health insurance
- 14% of Skagitonians were diagnosed with *asthma*
- 13% of all respondents had experienced either a *heart attack, myocardial infarction, coronary heart disease or stroke*
- 21% *never eat breakfast*
- 13% of residents 50 and over and 18% 65 and over said they have *diabetes*
- 5% of all residents *eat fast food daily*; 42% occasionally
- 32% drink *3 cups of coffee or more* each day and half the popu-

lation drinks at least one caffeinated beverage a day

- 30% of our population get 6 hours of sleep or less in every 24 hour period while 10% get more than 8 hours
- 49% of respondents said their jobs require them to mostly sit or stand
- 86% of Skagitonians engage in at least ten minutes of moderate activities per day
- 51% of Skagitonians engage in at least ten minutes of vigorous activities per day
- 21% of all persons experienced a high level of stress
- 41% of Skagitonians experienced medium stress in past 30 days
- 16% experienced a lot of financial stress in past 30 days
- 10% of Skagitonians commute more than 60 minutes one way to work

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## Survey Implications

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Summarizing some implications of the survey findings for public health and for residents here in Skagit County, three conclusions stand out:

*First*, as a consequence of a health care system in crisis, access to medical care is becoming more difficult for some individuals. *Second*, the preponderance of medical issues of concern to public health can be summarized under chronic disease. *Third*, our health

status is determined by four major factors: genetics, environment, access to health care, and health behavior. Of those, health behavior is by far the most important contributor - Skagitonians, like anyone else, need to take a look at health behavior! Considering that the bulk of the health care crisis is linked to diagnosis and treatment, anything we can do to improve our individual health will, over time, benefit us in quality of life and lower health care costs.

Skagit County has relatively similar rates of mortality as the State. Following is a table of mortality

| <b>Disease</b> | <b>Rate</b> |
|----------------|-------------|
| Heart Disease  | 202.4       |
| Cancer         | 194.2       |
| Strokes        | 67.9        |
| COPD**         | 48.2        |
| Accidents      | 35.2        |
| Alzheimer's    | 37.1        |
| Diabetes       | 25.3        |
| Flu/ Pneumonia | 17.2        |
| Suicide        | 11.9        |
| Liver Disease  | 9.8         |

\* age adjusted to 2000  
US population  
\*\* Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease

rates per 100,000 persons for the State of Washington in 2001: In reviewing the table of mortality for the ten leading causes of death it is noticeable that all but one of the first seven causes are so-called chronic diseases. The exception is accidents (also called unintentional injuries) which include falls, motor vehicle accidents, poisoning, etc.

Of these chronic diseases approximately 50% are evenly divided between coronary heart disease and cancer.

What are the implications of this for all of us? These two diseases as all *chronic diseases* do not have so-called sudden onset. They are the result to some degree of genetic predisposition and environmental factors beyond our control, but they develop in significant part *due to our health habits*. It important for us to realize that we have some control over our own health following good prevention strategies.

Diabetes, the 7th most frequent cause of mortality in the County has increased slightly since 1995 most likely due to the disproportionate growth of Hispanics in Skagit County. Hispanics and Native Americans are more predisposed to diabetes than the rest of the population. Survey results show that 8% of residents in the Central area versus 4% of the total County have been diagnosed with diabetes. The Central area has the largest Hispanic population.

Although we suspect that asthma rates may have increased partly due to better diagnosis, the survey shows that those earning less than \$35,000 in Skagit County annually had been diagnosed with asthma at a higher rate than those with higher incomes (17%).

Summarizing the survey results, this report **emphasizes PHYSICAL ACTIVITY and STRESS MANAGEMENT** as two areas over which you have a modicum of control in preventing chronic diseases.

**The Community Health Survey** asked about a number of health indicators. Given the growing problem of increasingly limited health resources and increasing chronic disease, **two topics of public health interest emerged from the survey results: Stress and physical inactivity.** These are two significant contributors to chronic disease and premature death. The following two sections focus on how these are linked to health and include general recommendations for how to increase physical activity and manage stress.

### Physical Activity Key to Health

The 2002 Community Health Survey would indicate, Skagit County residents as a whole could improve their levels of physical activity.

**Exercise!** We have all heard it to the point that we are a little tired of being nagged.

Physical activity is not a very complicated concept. Walking is the simplest form of physical activity. Think about it. Here we have the chance of reducing (in some cases altogether preventing) heart disease, cancer, diabetes, asthma yet somebody has to hold a Celebrity Walk, promising us to be walking with the mayor in order to get us off the couch to do what is natural and good for us.

Anthropologists tell us that man had to walk an average of twenty miles a day to hunt for the daily requirements of food for the family. Now we have it delivered, stashed in our cars/desks, or drive-through restaurants.

That obviously was a different lifestyle -- no doubt with different

***“Physical Fitness  
is one thing  
you cannot delegate”***

Howard Leibrand, MD  
Health Officer  
Skagit County

hazards. It sounds like the parental tales of bravery: *‘When I went to school ...we had to walk six miles to school, in the snow ...* Participation in regular physical activity -- at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on at least five days per week, or 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity at least three times per week -- is critical to sustaining good health.

Physical activity is an essential factor in chronic disease prevention/ management, weight management, and performance and mood.

**Weight Management** is one reason for regular physical activity. Most people gain about two pounds/yr. Walking about a mile a day can help prevent this.

- US Surgeon General estimated the economic cost of obesity at \$200 billion in 2000.
- 61% of the adult population are either obese or overweight.
- Overweight people have medical bills up to \$1,500 greater a year than those of healthy weight.

**Performance and Mood:** You don't need a lot of fancy equipment or a gym membership to be

active, though these are a lot cheaper than anti-depressants.

- The brain benefits from exercise: programs involving both aerobic exercise and strength training produced better results on cognitive abilities than either one alone.
- Exercise is your most potent weapon against back problems
- Strength training can make your arms, legs and lower body stronger. In turn your risk of falls and other injuries decreases.
- Volunteers who exercised for at least ten minutes a day felt less tired, depressed, and confused.

**Be healthy. Be active.**

**30** minutes a day  
at least **10** minutes at a time  
**5** days a week

- Helps older adults become stronger and better able to move about without falling
- Promotes psychological well-being
- Reduces feeling of depression and anxiety
- People feel less anxious for several hours after they have exercised.

***Physical Activity by Education and Household Income  
US in 2000***

|                                     | <b>Meeting<br/>Recommended<br/>Activity</b> | <b>Insufficient<br/>Activity</b> | <b>Physically<br/>inactive</b> |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Less than 12 years of school</b> | 14.5%                                       | 36.2%                            | 49.3%                          |
| <b>12 years of school</b>           | 21.9%                                       | 44.7%                            | 33.4%                          |
| <b>Some College (13-15 yrs)</b>     | 28.3%                                       | 48.2%                            | 23.5%                          |
| <b>College (16 or more years)</b>   | 34.2%                                       | 50.0%                            | 15.8%                          |
| <b>Household Income</b>             |   |                                  |                                |
| <b>Less than \$10,000</b>           | 18.9%                                       | 36.7%                            | 44.5%                          |
| <b>\$10,000 to \$19,999</b>         | 18.9%                                       | 40.2%                            | 40.9%                          |
| <b>\$20,000 to \$34,999</b>         | 23.3%                                       | 44.3%                            | 32.4%                          |
| <b>\$35,000 to \$49,999</b>         | 27.8%                                       | 47.8%                            | 24.5%                          |
| <b>\$50,000 and over</b>            | 33.5%                                       | 50.3%                            | 16.3%                          |



**Lifestyle:** The trick is to integrate physical activity into your lifestyle so that it becomes habit, not a chore. How might you do that?

- Take your children hiking
- Bike to work if you live within biking distance
- Park far enough from the worksite to get some exercise if you have to drive to work
- Use stairs instead of elevator



**“Make Physical Activity  
part of your Life --  
a willing Habit instead  
of a Chore”**

**Peter Browning, Director  
Health Department**

- Get a dog and walk it
- Mow your lawn with a push mower. Mow your neighbor’s lawn too!
- Listen to upbeat music while you move

The table, above shows a positive relationship between education, income and physical activity and correspondingly that those with the least education and the least income are more likely to be physically inactive.

If physical activity is embedded into your daily lifestyle then the motivation will drive you forward to exercise. That is, if you have your dog’s well-being in mind, then you will gladly walk him, knowing

that you will get the added benefit of fitness.

If you are over 40 or have an illness or injury check with your doctor before you begin an exercise program.

**Be healthy. Be active.**

**Travel Time to Work  
for Workers  
16 yrs. and Over\***

| <b>In Minutes</b>   | <b>Persons</b> |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Less than 5 Minutes | 2,476          |
| 5 to 9 minutes      | 6,482          |
| 10 to 14 minutes    | 7,651          |
| 15 to 19 minutes    | 5,833          |
| 20 to 24 minutes    | 5,686          |
| 25 to 29 minutes    | 1,871          |
| 30 to 34 minutes    | 4,302          |
| 35 to 39 minutes    | 982            |
| 40 to 44 minutes    | 1,082          |
| 45 to 59 minutes    | 2,815          |
| 60 to 89 minutes    | 2,536          |
| 90 minutes or more  | 1,648          |

\*43,364

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### Stress – Threat to Physical and Mental Health

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No one is immune to stress. We sleep less, we work longer, we are less active than past generations. Commutes are longer and more difficult. We change jobs, residences, and spouses on a regular basis. A lack of permanence is a serious threat to mental health.

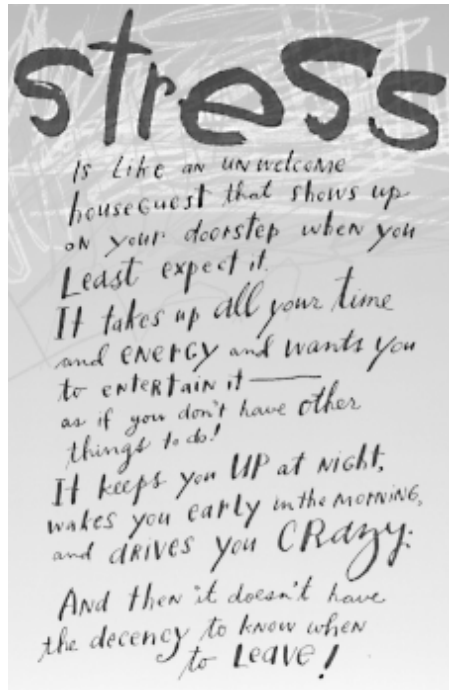
Information has become our daily currency. Cell phones accompany us like babies, in meetings, cars, stores, and bathrooms. E-mail inboxes are overflowing with largely unessential information which distracts and stresses us. Rushing at a frenetic pace to our families from work, school and sports practices leaves barely time to wolf down a pre-fabricated meal.

Stress can sharpen your senses, get you excited, and help you focus to meet the challenges. But, turning this response on too often - and for too long - is likely to extract multiple costs to health. *If not managed well, stress can kill you!*

The basic pathway of stress is pretty simple:

**event---> emotional  
response---> physiological  
response ----> consequences.**

Stress is the response of the body to demands made upon it. When faced with something we perceive as a “stressor”, our brains direct



our bodies to react. This **stress response system** prepares us for “fight or flight” by activating a chain of hormones that prepare us to protect ourselves. Immediate effects include increased alertness, wider pupils, increased blood pressure, faster heart rate and breathing, and tense muscles. These effects are pretty useful when we need to act quickly for self-preservation. Hormones like cortisol, however, can inflict damage over time by shutting down the immune system.

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### Good Stress-Bad Stress

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*Just as one man's trash is another man's treasure, one man's stress is another man's apathy.* It is not only the amount of stress, but also the quality of stress that affects an individual. Both positive and negative life experiences can result in stress.

“Good stress” can include experiences such as the birth of a child, building a new house, falling in love, starting a new job, or any of a number of positive life events. “Bad stress” might result from workload, financial pressure, legal problems, conflict, safety concerns, lack of time, relationship problems, losses, etc. Some of these stress factors tend to linger, and are more likely to threaten our health if they persist over time.

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### Scientific Links to Stress

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Scientific links of stress to chronic disease are increasingly established. Some are direct – such as high blood pressure, gastric disease, migraine headaches, and certain autoimmune diseases. Others are only strongly suspected, especially in the cancer area. The evidence is being medically and scientifically refined as time passes. The leading causes of death in the U.S. (pg.14) have all been linked to stress, although the relationships are not always clear. What we do know is that stress creates physiological reactions that can create or intensify underlying risks for chronic illness.

Physical results of stress include depression, decreased immune system/increased susceptibility to infection, diabetes, and a harmful pattern of cholesterol and fats in the blood, high blood pressure, and the attendant risks of heart attack and stroke.

Beyond the physical costs of stress, there are societal costs. Stress contributes to absenteeism from work, increased health care

costs, impaired judgment and lost productivity. The National Safety Council estimates that on an average workday one million employees are absent for stress-related reasons. Up to 90% of visits to primary care physicians are stress related. Up to 80% of industrial accidents are due to stress.

Some of the symptoms of chronic stress can include:

- Upset stomach, diarrhea, indigestion
- Headache, backache
- Insomnia
- Eating too much or too little
- Feeling hostile, angry, irritable
- Feeling anxious
- Avoiding other people
- Crying
- Forgetfulness
- Feeling frustrated by little things

The good news is that we do not have to be hapless victims of stress. To a greater or lesser degree, stress **can** be managed. The events, themselves, may not be within our control (although some probably are) but certainly how we choose to respond is within our control. Mind you, trying to manage it can be stressful at first, because any type of behavior change requires a little work. The basic prescription for managing stress is to identify the culprit, avoid situations that lead to stress, and practice good “self-care”. Self-care includes such basics as adequate sleep, healthy diet, and regular physical activity. It also includes a sort of anti-stress armory: a repertoire of relaxation techniques, maintaining perspective, letting go of things beyond our control, and asking ourselves “is this really important?” or “whose problem is this, anyway?”

Here are some more tips:

- Decrease or discontinue caffeine
- Get regular exercise
- Find time for relaxation/ meditation
- Get adequate sleep
- Remember to breathe!
- Have realistic expectations of yourself and others
- Let go of unnecessary responsibilities
- Take breaks and set aside time for leisure activities
- Cultivate a personal “support system”
- Examine your beliefs/perceptions about a situation and consider changing the way you look at things
- Create a soothing environment
- Have a sense of humor - “when things can’t get any worse, they get funny”

Frequently we respond to stress symptoms instead of dealing with the underlying stressful event. Under stress, we may do things that are not in the best interest of our health. We may sleep less, either because we are sleepless or because we don’t have time to sleep. In turn this leads to using caffeine or other stimulants to stay awake or keep up energy levels. Being edgy and in need to calm down, might lead to the urge for a drink, a pill, or something even less healthy (or illegal). Many people feel the need to smoke when they are stressed. We may skip meals, graze, or grab for high sugar or high fat “convenience” foods. Hectic schedules make it hard to build in time for regular physical activity.

Ironically, if we were better nourished, better rested, and physically active, we’d be more immune to stress factors. Even if stress doesn’t result in serious illness, it simply doesn’t feel good,

and most of us would rather feel good than feel bad. There is something to be said about quality of life!

**Skagit County Results on Stress**

**Frequent Headaches**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Females:  | 21% |
| Males:  | 9%  |
| Respondents earning less than \$20,000 annually | 27% |
| 18-20 year olds                                 | 26% |
| Those w/ children at home                       | 20% |
| w/no children at home                           | 12% |

**Commuting to Work one way**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| 30-60 minutes     | 16% |
| More than 60 min. | 10% |

**Coping with Stress**

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Physical Activity     | 35% |
| Tobacco               | 16% |
| Alcohol               | 11% |
| Prescription Medicat. | 9%  |

**No Vacation in previous 12 Months**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| All residents                     | 24% |
| East County                       | 32% |
| Hispanics                         | 48% |
| Respondents w/ HS Diploma or less | 32% |

**Cups or shots of coffee/ day**

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| One to two     | 35% |
| Three to four  | 18% |
| More than four | 14% |

**Sleep per 24 hours**

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Four hours or less | 2%  |
| Five or six hours  | 28% |

## CONCLUSIONS

**This Demography Report is by necessity a small window into available data. We touched on our purpose in the Preface.**

Primarily, we want you, the data user, to know that we are willing to help either find data, interpret data that you have, or assist you in suggesting what data might be most suitable for your purpose.

Presenting data for grants, for projects, for policy proposals, for manpower, all need careful selection if they are to support the stated goal as accurately as possible.

Our country is in the midst of a demographic revolution, with 79 million baby boomers approaching retirement, so that in about 30 years there will be twice as many older Americans in the US as there are today.

This will have countless implications also for Skagit County. To name just one: if the current difference in life expectancy between males and females remains, we can expect an increasing number of single women in the ages of 70 plus.

Annual population estimates prepared by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) indicate that Washington State's population continues to grow, although at a slower rate which reflects the slowdown in the economy. Our State's population reached 6,041,700 on April

1, 2002 having grown at the rate of 1.2% over the previous year.

Skagit County too continues to grow. Its population reached 105,100 in 2002 and grew by 2.06% since 2000. This is nevertheless significantly slower than our neighbors to the north and south of us, which grew at 3.2% and 3.6% respectively for that two year period.

Look for future publications this year on Aging, and Child and Family Health.

**Don't be blinded by the  
magic power of  
numbers and formulas.  
*There is no adequate  
substitute for judgment***

**ABSTRACT DATA .....QUITE CONCRETE**

**Space Budget  
in Millions \$**

| Year | Dollars   |
|------|-----------|
| 2000 | *13,600.8 |
| 2001 | 14,357.2  |
| 2002 | 15,012.7  |
| 2003 | 15,117.0  |
| 2004 | 15,690.4  |

Equals \$13,600,800,000



**Percent of Households  
Owning Companion Pets**

| Pet   | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| Dog   | 36.1    |
| Cat   | 31.6    |
| Bird  | 4.6     |
| Horse | 1.7     |

**Daily Crude Oil  
Production in 2000  
in thousands of  
barrels/day**

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Saudi Arabia      | 8,404 |
| Russia            | 6,479 |
| United States     | 5,822 |
| Iran              | 3,696 |
| China             | 3,249 |
| Norway            | 3,197 |
| Mexico            | 3,012 |
| Venezuela         | 2,949 |
| Iraq              | 2,571 |
| United Arab Emir. | 2,368 |

**The Statistical Abstract**

(published by the US Census Bureau) is a veritable treasure chest of 1,000 pages of tables, topical introductions, maps, definitions and statistical information, published annually for 122 years now.

The information of the Statistical Abstract is also available on a web site, see back cover. The topical variation is mindboggling and a thorough study of it would no doubt put you on the way to big money in Jeopardy.

It tells us that in the US:

- 3,430,000 women **smoked during pregnancy** in 1999
- 11% of all 14-24 year olds were **high school dropouts**
- An estimated 69 million people were subscribing to **Cable TV** in 2001 at an average basic rate of **\$32.87**
- 65% of all **men are overweight**
- 22% of all **men are obese**
- 48% of all **females are overweight**
- 21% of all **females are obese**



**SHRINKING DOLLAR**

**For producers a 1982 dollar was worth 71 cents in 2001**  
**For consumers a 1982 dollar was worth 57 cents in 2001**

**Top Recipients of  
Military Aid in  
2000**

**Country Dollars**

|        |               |
|--------|---------------|
| Israel | 3,120,000,000 |
| Egypt  | 1,301,000,000 |
| Jordan | 226,400,000   |
| Bosnia | 51,900,000    |
| Kosovo | 33,400,000    |

**Cash Receipts  
Leading States for  
Vegetables  
US 2000 in Mill \$**

**Value % of total  
Receipts**

|            |       |
|------------|-------|
| California | 6,802 |
| Florida    | 1,456 |
| Washington | 768   |
| Idaho      | 689   |
| Arizona    | 682   |



## DATA SOURCES FOR GENERAL DEMOGRAPHY

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| American Factfinder .....                       | factfinder.census.gov      |
| Office of Financial Management .....            | www.ofm.wa.gov             |
| Population Reference Bureau .....               | www.prb.org                |
| Statistical Abstract of the United States ..... | www.census.gov/statab/www/ |
| U.S. Bureau of the Census .....                 | www.census.gov/            |

## DATA SOURCES FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Anacortes Chamber of Commerce .....                                  | www.anacortes-chamber.com                                   |
| Bureau of Labor Statistics .....                                     | stats.bls.gov   |
| Burlington Chamber of Commerce .....                                 | www.skagit.com/chambers/burl.htm;www.burlington-chamber.com |
| Concrete Chamber of Commerce .....                                   | www.concrete-wa.com   |
| Department of Social and Health Services, Constituent Services ..... | 1-800-737-0617  |
| Economic Census .....  | www.census.gov/ec02/guide.html                              |
| The Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC) .....  | www.skagit.org  |
| La Conner Chamber of Commerce .....                                  | www.laconnerchamber.com                                     |
| Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce .....                               | www.mvcofc.org; www.mountvernonchamber.com                  |
| North Cascade Chamber of Commerce .....                              | www.marblemount.com   |
| Sedro-Woolley Chamber of Commerce .....                              | www.sedro-woolley.com                                       |

## DATA SOURCES FOR CHILDREN

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Child Care Resource and Referral .....                 | 416-0939         |
| DSHS Office of Research and Data Analysis .....        | www.wa.gov/dshs  |
| DSHS Constituent Services .....                        | 1-800-737-0617   |
| Washington Kids Count (University of Washington) ..... | www.hspc.org/wkc |
| Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction .....   | www.k12.wa.us    |

## DATA SOURCES FOR HEALTH

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Affiliated Health Services .....   | www.affiliatedhealth.org     |
| Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) .....                     | www.cdc.gov/                 |
| Center for Health Statistics (Washington State Department of Health) ..... | www.doh.wa.gov/Data/data.htm |
| Skagit County Health Department .....                                      | www.skagitcounty.net/health  |

## MISCELLANEOUS DATA SOURCES

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Access Washington .....                                  | www.access.wa.gov                    |
| Department of Corrections .....                          | www.wa.gov/doc                       |
| Directory of Online Statistics Sources .....             | www.berinsteinresearch.com/stats.htm |
| Skagit County .....                                      | www.skagitcounty.net                 |
| Statistics.com .....                                     | www.statistics.com                   |
| WA State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs ..... | www.waspc.org                        |
| Washington State Patrol .....                            | www.wa.gov/wsp                       |