

Los Osos

People and Place

Location

Los Osos is in San Luis Obispo County, approximately 208 miles north of Los Angeles and 244 miles south of San Francisco. It covers 7.62 square miles of land. The geographic coordinates of Los Osos are lat 35°18'54"N, long 120°49'52"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Los Osos was 14,351, a 0.2% decrease from 1990. The gender composition was 52% female and 48% male. The median age in 2000 was 42.9, higher than the national median of 35.3. About 51.3% of the population was between the ages of 22 and 59. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 90.9% had a high school education or higher, 33.8% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 13.1% had a graduate or professional degree; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

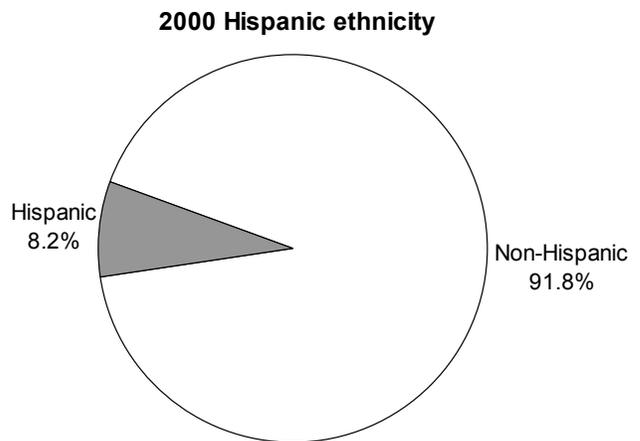
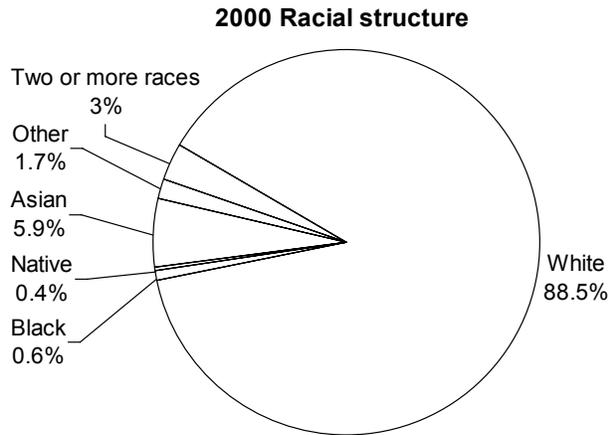
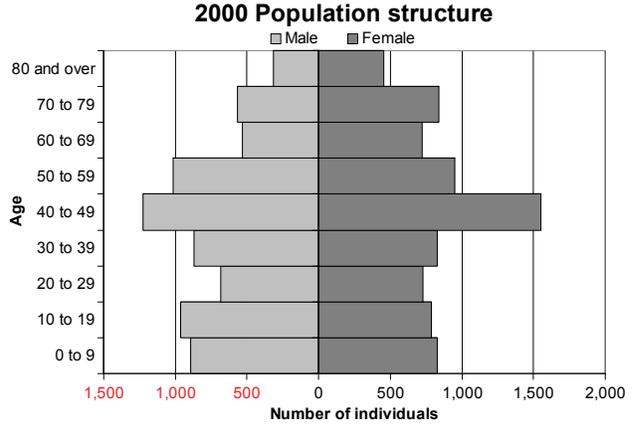
The majority of the racial composition was white (88.5%), followed by Asian (5.9%), individuals who identified with two or more races (3%), individuals who identified with some other race (1.7%), black (0.6%), and American Indian and Alaskan Native (0.4%). Ethnicity data indicate 8.2% identified as Hispanic.

Approximately 8.2% of the population was foreign-born, of which 35.4% were born in Malaysia and 16.5% in Mexico.

In 2000 80.8% of the population lived in family households.

History

The community of Los Osos and its neighbor Baywood share much of their history with San Luis Obispo County. The area was the heart of Chumash Indian territory for centuries. Chumash hunters, fishermen, and foragers used local marine, coastal, and river resources and transported resources from their offshore islands to the mainland in unique redwood-planked boats, known as "tomols." They imported specialized stone blades and drills made on the islands, plus marine resources such as shark, bonito, and halibut. Chumash fishermen used a variety of nets, traps, baskets, hooks, spears, and plant poisons to catch or stun fish and catch seals and sea otters. On the coast they collected abalone and mussels, and their trade network passed raw



marine materials such as fish, whale bones, and oils to the interior.

The Portuguese conquistador Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo first encountered the Chumash in 1542, but it was not until 1772 that five Catholic missions were established within Chumash territory. After secularization of the missions in 1833, the Indian population severely declined. In 1901 the U.S. government allocated 75 acres along Zanja de Cota Creek near the Santa Ynez Mission to the surviving Chumash. Today the Chumash have their own business council, a thriving bingo operation, and a federal housing program on the small reservation. Approximately 5,000 identify themselves as Chumash.¹

Between 1821 and 1848, California came under the jurisdiction of Mexico after it gained independence from Spain. Settlers received land grants in the area until California became a territory of the United States and San Luis Obispo became one of California's original 27 counties. Local place names reflect this heritage.² Burgeoning agriculture and quarrying in the area spurred rapid population growth in the late 1800s, facilitated by the Southern Pacific Railroad. By the 1950s conveyors were installed on the waterfront for unloading sardine boats, accelerating commercial development in response to newly discovered fishing grounds.³

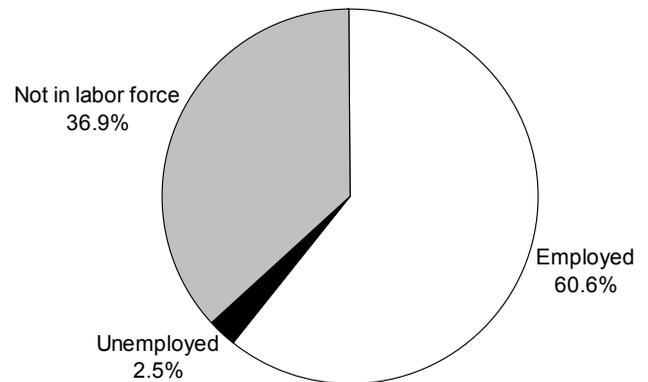
Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 60.6% of the potential labor force of Los Osos 16 years of age and older were employed, 2.5% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was a 4.0% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 36.9% were not in the labor force. The top employment sectors were local, state, or federal government (26.5%), education, health, and social services (24.9%), and retail trade (10.4%). Natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting employed 1.5%, but this percentage may be artificially low because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the per capita income of Los Osos in 1999 was \$24,838, the median household income was \$46,558, and 8.5% lived below the poverty level. In 2000 Los Osos had 6,214 housing units, of which 94.8% of which were occupied and 5.2% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 69.9% were by owner and 30.1% were by renter. About 49.4% of the vacant units were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

2000 Employment structure



Governance

In 1998 Los Osos created the Los Osos Community Services District (LOCSO), which replaced San Luis Obispo County's Service Area 9 and provided the first public agency governed by Los Osos residents.⁴ The LOCSO has a board of directors consisting of five members elected at-large. The board then chooses two members to be president and vice president.⁵ Residents pay a 7.25% sales and use tax rate and the county levies a 9% transient lodging tax, which earned \$4,229,463 in revenue for fiscal year 2001.⁶ See the Governance subsection (page 43) for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in California.

A California Department of Fish and Game Marine Region field office and a U.S. Coast Guard station are approximately 6 miles away in Morro Bay. Foster City, approximately 225 miles away, holds Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings. The nearest National Marine Fisheries Service office is the Pacific Fisheries Environmental Laboratory, 130 miles north in Pacific Grove.

Facilities

Los Osos is 12 miles west of U.S. Highway 101, 3 miles south of California Highway 1, and 14 miles from the San Luis Obispo County Airport, which is serviced by major airlines. Los Osos is in the San Luis Coastal Unified School District, which has six schools. The LOCSO provides fire protection and emergency service to area residents, as well as maintaining storm water drainage, the water supply, and wastewater service. The district also manages parks and street lighting. Private providers supply telephone, electricity, and gas services. Los Osos and the surrounding area have an extensive tourism industry with a well-established infrastructure, including accommodations.

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 no landings were made and no processors operated in Los Osos. Residents did own 35 commercial vessels, of which 13 participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by Los Osos residents in 2000 that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/1/14, shellfish NA/0/NA, shrimp NA/0/4, and other species 1/0/0.⁷

Five residents held four federal groundfish permits. The number of Los Osos residents holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/1, crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/21, highly migratory species NA/0/6, salmon 0/1/28, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 1/0/11, and other species 2/0/23.⁸

In 2000 residents held at least 137 commercial fishing permits, including 133 state registered permits. The number of state permits held by Los Osos residents in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic 0/0/1, crab 0/0/2, groundfish 0/0/25, highly migratory species NA/0/10, salmon 0/1/49, shellfish 0/0/NA, shrimp 1/0/17, and other species 2/0/25.⁹

Sportfishing

In 2002 and 2003, at least eight charter businesses served sport fishermen and tourists in Los Osos. There were no sportfishing license agents in Los Osos, however, in 2000 vendors in San Luis Obispo County sold 43,399 resident sportfishing licenses, 40 nonresident sportfishing licenses, 52 sport salmon punch cards, and 30 abalone report cards. In the port group consisting of Avila Beach and Morro Bay, 12 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 17,759 anglers in 2000. The vessels reported 123,441 landings composed of more than a dozen species. Rockfish (unspecified) and Albacore tuna accounted for 93.9% and 4.6% of the landings respectively.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members may engage in subsistence fishing in the Los Osos area, however, specific information on subsistence fishing is not discussed in detail due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” for fishermen who do not earn revenue from their catch, but fish for pleasure or to provide food for personal consumption. Information on subsistence fishing is captured to some degree in the sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 one Los Osos resident owned a vessel that participated in North Pacific fisheries. It made landings in the North Pacific salmon fishery, but specific information (landings in metric tons/value of landings) is confidential.

In 2000 one resident held a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission salmon permit for Alaska fisheries. Five Los Osos residents held crew member licenses for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

In 2000 Los Osos residents purchased 27 Alaska sportfishing licenses.

Notes

1. Houghton Mifflin Company. No date. Encyclopedia of North American Indians: Chumash. Online at <http://www.rain.org/eagle/chumash1.htm> [accessed 23 February 2007].
2. The County of San Luis Obispo Online. 2005. About the county. Online at http://www.co.slo.ca.us/SLOCo_InterPortal.nsf/SLOCo_AboutCounty.htm?OpenPage&charset=windows-1252 [accessed 23 February 2007].
3. History in San Luis Obispo County. 2004. Timeline. Online at <http://www.historyinslocounty.com/index.htm> [accessed 23 February 2007].
4. Los Osos, CA. No date. Local government. Online at http://www.losososbaywoodpark.org/local_government_Los_Osos.html [accessed 23 February 2007].
5. Los Osos Community Service District. No date. About the CSD. Online at <http://www.losososcsl.org/> [accessed 23 February 2007].
6. State of California. 2004. California counties transient lodging tax revenue. Online at <http://www.sco.ca.gov/ard/local/locprep/adhoc/county/0001cotranslodgtax.pdf> [accessed 23 February 2007].
7. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
8. See note 7.
9. See note 7.