

The community of Curry County is located as far south on the Oregon coast as one can go without actually crossing over the border into California. The community consists of a lot of what we like to call “California Imports”, which are the elderly individuals who have worked and lived their lives in California then, moving to the beautiful Oregon coast for their retirement sharing the majority section of the population with the local retirees.

The members from our community all seem to be more on the conservative side due, not only/ to our rural location and demographics but, also due to the counties major areas of industry. These major areas of industry consists of either the logging or mill work of the rich timberlands, fishing the river and ocean commercially and guided, farming of cranberries and life stock, and other various small town businesses.

This area is very small community oriented area with small 2A/3A sized schools. This is due to the fact that there is several small towns and communities spread out all with small populations. Because of the small populations not only in the towns but schools, there is limited funding to the schools causing teachers to be laid off making it not a desired location for new teachers and the same older teachers are providing the same marginal education resulting in a lower quality of education. I have noticed that this has made it harder for the counties students to get into quality higher education institutions.

The average job isn't associated with a very high income partly due to the fact that most jobs available are small town businesses. Most of the agricultural occupations like farming and logging also are hardly associated with high income due to the inconsistency of work or high output farms. Some of the few occupations in the community which are associated with a high income consist of working in the electrical business, guided fishing, and contracting. The community of the county overall can't be associated with higher levels if income.

After researching and comparing the actual major areas of industry with my hypothesis, I hypothesized fairly accurate according to my research. According to Oregon Secretary of State, the main areas of industry consist of “Forest products, agriculture, commercial and sport fishing, recreation and tourism”. After examining this information I did over look one of the major contributors to the economy of the community which is the recreation and tourism. Also, according to *Onboard Informatics*, the major areas of industry for Oregon are (from highest to lowest) “Construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, public administration, accommodation and food services, wood products, administration support and waste management services, and educational services”.

When evaluating my hypothesis and the facts from research, my hypothesis was a little off and slightly proven wrong. The number of students on average who obtain a high school diploma in Curry County is 90.8 percent. This is higher than that of the states average which is 89.2 percent. However, the numbers for higher education go the other way. The average students who obtain a bachelor’s degree for Curry County is 20.4 percent compared to the state which is at 29.2 percent (American Community Survey).

In comparing my hypothesis with my research on the income/ wealth levels of the county I was also somewhat off. Out of the 36 counties in Oregon Curry County ranked 15<sup>th</sup> for wealth. The average income per capita of Curry County is \$23,832 which is marginally lower than that of the state as a whole which is \$26,171 per capita (USA.com). However the median household income is \$38,401 which has increased by 27 percent since the year of 2000 (Secretary of State). This shows that the income is possibly increasing. The house hold median income of Curry County is still about half than that of the rest of the state but it is improving.

Due to the fact that Curry County is a rural community and its given areas of industry, I would have to hypothesize the majority of the party registration is more republican. This is not due to the fact that I am a republican but more to the common association of republicans and rural areas along with timberland associated occupations. As far as the Non-Affiliated voters and independent voters I think that the numbers will be considerably smaller due to the fact that there is a large number of extremes for both Democratic and Republican voters.

After reviewing *Oregon Secretary of State*, my hypothesis was in fact correct. In Curry County there were 4,047 registered Democratic voters which fell short from outnumbering the registered Republican voters which tallied out at 5,927. The Non-Affiliated voters accounted for a smaller amount of 2,717 along with an even smaller amount of independent which consists of only 878 registered voters.

In terms of what my county voted on the presidential elections for Obama and how they changed from the first and second election it is harder to hypothesize. From my knowledge that the county is traditionally more conservative, I would have to say that not many of them actually voted for him in the first place. However, for the populations in which he did receive votes from in the first election, I would have to hypothesize that the number of supporting votes in the second election would have decreased immensely from the numbers in the first election due to the large amounts of dissatisfaction in which I heard just from working with the population of people all throughout the county.

Through research my hypothesis on voter percentage change for Barack Obama was kind of right but at the same time off to a certain degree. The number of citizens in Curry County which voted for Obama for his first presidential run in 2008 was a total of 5,230. For his second presidential run for reelection the number of voters which he received was at 605 votes less,

which was a total of 4,625, from the first election. He did in fact have a smaller turnout for his second run than he did from his first one but, it wasn't the large amount in which I predicted. For the second election there was actually a higher turnout for Mitt Romney which was a total of 6,598 making Romney receive a total of 1,368 more votes than Obama from the residents of Curry County (Ballot Pedia). This voter support does in fact support my hypothesis due to the fact that the county is primarily a republican conservative community. The voter registration results do in fact support the socio- demographics because of the idea that that it is such a rural agricultural oriented community.

The first ballot measure in which I would like to discuss is the Curry County Law Enforcement Tax Levy, Measure 8-71 of May, 2013. The plan of this levy would place a levy of \$1.97 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of all unincorporated regions of the county for a five year period. This was intended to help our understaffed and underfunded county generate 4.5 million dollars in order to acquire the resources in which it was in desperate need of. The likely supporters of this ballot are progressives and members of the law enforcement family. The result of this measure was that it was killed by a vote of 4,031 no votes (56%) to 3,139 yes votes (43%) (Oregon Secretary of State). This result shows that the county doesn't have a large amount of support for its law enforcement for the cost that it requires. This outcome does in fact support my hypothesis because of the fact that the majority of the county consists of conservatives and lower income individuals who think that they are already taxed enough. I was honestly surprised by this result because of the fact that everyone in the community is aware of the struggle that the county is going through and is seeing their friends lose their jobs because of a lack of funding.

The second ballot measure in which I think is important to recognize is the Curry County School District Levy Increase of May, 2012. The goal behind this measure was to add an

additional \$0.85 to per \$1,000 assessed to the current school levy. The likely supporters of this measure are also more on the progressive side along with those affiliated with teaching along with the school programs. The outcome of this measure was that it did not pass. It received 1,138 (55%) no and 901 (44%) yes vote (Oregon Secretary of State). This to shows again that this community is more of a conservative community that doesn't like to pay more than they already do along with the fact that there is a large population of the people that are less well off. This did support my hypothesis due to the fact that it is a republican dominated county and have agricultural values. This was honestly a surprise to me that the people of the community did not want to support the youth of the area. The schools are on the verge of closing down and the town's people are not willing to support the children who are our future.

The state representative for Curry County is Wayne Krieger and the senator is Jeff Kruse. Wayne is a republican which makes sense because it is a republican dominate county. He has been on the Oregon Board of Forestry, Governors Water Enhancement Board, The Landslide Task Force, and The Forest Industries Council on Taxation. He also owns a ranch/ tree farm and worked as an Oregon State Police Officer. Jeff Kruse is also a member of the Republican Party. He has been a part of Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, Farm Home Administration County Committee, and Douglas County Planning Advisory Committee. Throughout his life he has served as a farmer, a supervisor of Oregon Turkey Growers, and a construction worker. Their supporting issues along with their political party registration say a lot for what Oregon's political culture is (Oregon Secretary of State). Both of these individuals are men who have worked real jobs in their lives and the jobs are the same jobs that the majority of the people in the county currently make a living doing.

### References

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