

WWT NL - 2017 #1:

News from the Port:



Port of Walla Walla – Burbank Business & Industrial Parks

Commissioner Mike Fredrickson

Union-Bulletin Editorial

As you make your drive west on U.S. Highway 12 in the western area of Walla Walla County before you cross the Snake River Bridge on the left-hand side you will see the Port of Walla Walla's Burbank Business & Industrial Park. The Burbank Business & Industrial Parks are now served by Port provided municipal water and sewer services along with the associated roadway network. The Port of Walla Walla's Burbank Business & Industrial Parks are becoming an important economic engine for the Walla Walla County by providing jobs, private capital investment, taxes, and transportation solutions to the area.

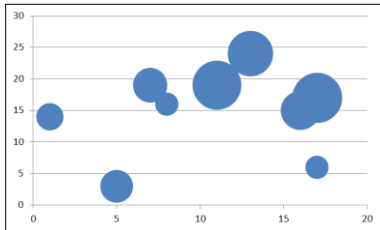
The Port's Burbank Industrial Park along the Snake River edge, is approximately 110 acres of heavy industrial zoned property. It is home to such businesses as: Schnitzer Steel, a global leader in the metals recycling industry that transports scrap steel, via barge, to the Portland, Oregon area; Northwest Grain Growers, a grain and feed company that transports grains, via barge, to the Portland, Oregon area; The Scoular Company, a supply chain solutions company for end-users and suppliers of grain, feed ingredients, and other food ingredients around the globe that also transports products, via barge, to Portland, Oregon area; Westway Feed Products, a global supplier and manufacturer of agricultural-based liquid feed solutions; Harris Rebar, North America's leading fabricator, an installer and distributor of concrete reinforcing steel and related products (Harris Rebar is owned by Nucor, North America's largest producer of rebar and steel products); Koncrete Industries, a Walla Walla concrete, sand, gravel, masonry supplier; and Frontier Transport, a freight shipping and trucking company. In addition to the businesses currently located within the Burbank Industrial Park, the Port has approximately 10 acres of developable land available for future tenants. The Industrial Park provides rail access, barge slip facilities, a high dock and great highway access, lending this Industrial Park to have all the essential transportation facilities serving the needs of the various businesses.

In addition to the Port's Burbank Industrial Park, the Port also manages the Burbank Business Park. The Port's Burbank Business Park has 97 commercial/light industrial zoned lots on approximately 120 acres. The Port recent sold 3 lots within the Burbank Business Park for commercial development. One commercial development under construction is by The Burbank Group, LLC, which is constructing a new gas service station, convenience store anchored by Subway and a car wash. The estimated private capital investment by The Burbank Group, LLC, is approximately \$3 million. In addition to the Burbank Group, LLC development, Ajsa, LLC is also constructing a new gas service station, convenience store and ancillary commercial retail space. The estimated private capital investment by Ajsa, LLC is approximately \$2 million.

So the next time you are driving U.S. Highway 12 going to or from the Tri-Cities, look off to the west and see the investment that is occurring in the Burbank community and western Walla Walla County.

Indicator News:

Hans Rosling - The Best Stats Visualization You've Ever Seen



Times are changing - you don't have to be a complete data geek to enjoy data. With new visualizations and a variety of ways to compare data, it sometimes seems like new data presentations are appearing daily - some good and some not-so good.

On the good side, Hans Rosling, has a unique way of how he wants us to look at data. As a professor at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, he realized that there was "broad ignorance about the rapid health improvement in Asia" and in response, developed a tongue-in-cheek "Chimpanzee Test" as part of [The Ignorance Project](#).

Expanding on the concept of simplifying data presentations and visualizations to help people better understand what data is trying to say, Rosling produced his first of many videos, titled [The Best Stats You've Ever Seen](#).

Using animated bubble graphs, Rosling shows just how interconnected data can be. The bubble graph Rosling uses in the video has been updated, is fully interactive, and is accessible through the Gapminder website [here](#). For example, you can watch the life expectancy for every nation in the world drop during WWI and the income per person in most countries in the world drop during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

By clicking on the line titled "Income per person, GDP/capita in \$/year adjusted for inflation & prices", many different types of data can be viewed with the same animated and interactive aspects. If you are not quite there yet, we hope Rosling and the Walla Walla Trends website are helping you become a full-fledged data geek!

Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Index



According to [Blue Cross Blue Shield](#) (BCBS), the "Health Index was designed to support national and local discussions about how to improve American health policy and practice. It is part of Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies' commitment to improving the health of America by uniting policymakers, community leaders, healthcare professionals and business leaders around data-driven insights to spark real change. It provides a better understanding about which diseases and conditions most greatly affect Americans' overall quality of life."

Using internally generated data from more than 40 million BCBS members, the "first-of-its-kind resource identifies the health conditions with the greatest impact on commercially-insured Americans." Including

over 200 common diseases and conditions, the Health Index offers a score between 0 and 1 for nearly every county in the U.S.

The score represents the percentage of optimal health that the county is living at. For example, “a measurement of .9 indicates that, on average, the population of a county is living at 90% of its optimal health.” The BCBS Health Index for the nation is .924, meaning America is living at 92.4% of our optimal health.

Walla Walla County has a BCBS Health Index score of .926, meaning the county is living at 92.6% of its optimal health. In the rest of Washington State, BCBS Health Index scores range from a high of .947 in Adams County to a low of .904 in Wahkiakum County. Nationally, scores range from a high of .966 (Grant County, Nebraska) to a low of .867 (both Bland County, Virginia and Charlotte County, Florida).

Washington Tracking Network (WTN) - Local Public Health Data



“The Washington Tracking Network (WTN) is a public website where users can find data and information about environmental health hazards, population characteristics, and health outcomes.”

Subtitled as “A Source for Environmental Public Health Data”, the website is supported by a Cooperative Agreement, the

Washington State Department of Health provides the content of the (WTN) website.

The WTN website is a multi-layered, interactive website. Users can access WTN quick information [by subject](#), through [the portal](#), or by using the [Information by Location](#) feature.

The first section, information by subject, offers a list of health-related subjects listed on the left-hand side of the webpage. Subjects include (but are not limited to): Asthma, Drinking Water, Heat Stress, Lead Exposure, Pesticides, Radon, and Traffic Air Pollution. Each subject offers important background information, some quick stats, and additional links to learn more about the subject and ways to reduce some of the negative effects.

The second section, the Portal, includes the following main category data topics: Climate and Health, Community, Environment, Exposure, Health, and Local Public Health Indicators (LPHI). Although the topics have varying geographical data available (some contain only state data while others offer census tract data), the LPHI indicators offer comparable data for each county in the state.

The third section, the Information by Location feature, which provides a map of Washington State and is offered at U.S. Census tract level. Four main categories include: Health Disparities, Lead Exposure, Social Vulnerability to Hazards, and Planning for Health.

Combined, the Washington State Department of Health Washington Tracking Network provides unique insight and perspectives of the state of health in Washington State.

Indicators in Action:

Share of Homeowners Generally

Matching Benchmarks by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

For most U.S. families, the home is the greatest asset in their economic portfolio. A recent study commissioned by the Consumer Federation of America and Fannie Mae concluded that homeownership is the main path to wealth and housing security for lower-income and minority Americans.

This indicator consists of the combined counties of Walla Walla and Columbia. In 2013, the U.S. Census Bureau combined the geographic locations of Walla Walla and Columbia Counties to form the 379th largest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the nation.

The new MSA designation allows for annual statistics from the American Community Survey (ACS) that were previously available only every three-years in Walla Walla County and every five-years in Columbia County. Currently, there are 17 indicators on the Trends site using MSA data, such as the [Share of Homeowners Paying 30% or More of Household Income on Housing Costs](#), [Median Household Income](#), [Total and Share of the Population Living in Poverty](#), and the [Total and Share of the Population who are Veterans](#).

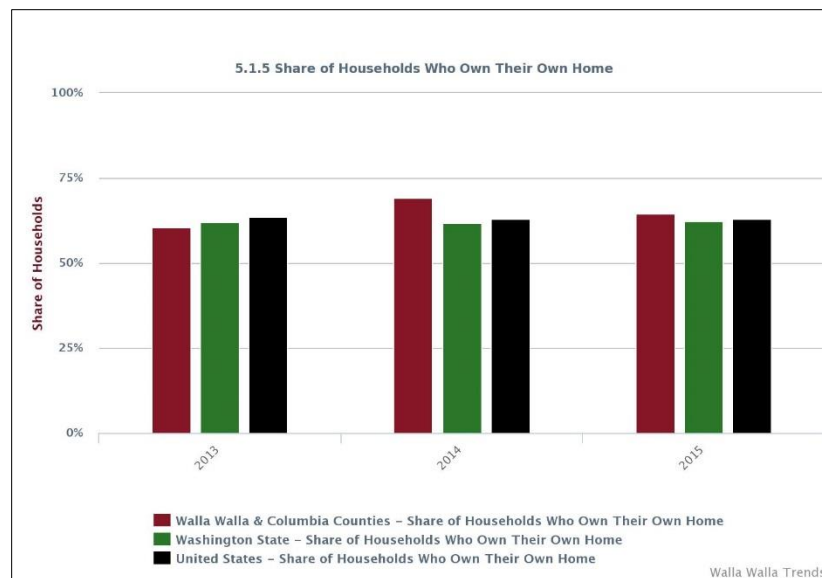
The new methodology, which began in 2013, shows approximately 63.0% of U.S. residents owned or were buying their home, decreasing from 63.5% in 2013. In Washington State, approximately 62.4% of residents owned or were buying their home, increasing from 61.9% in 2013. And in the two counties, approximately 64.6% of residents in Walla Walla and Columbia owned or were buying their home, increasing from 60.6% in 2013. Or, during 2015, the combined counties of Walla Walla and Columbia were 1.4 percentage points higher than the U.S. benchmark and 2.2 percentage points higher than the state.

than the state.

According to Mitchell Stalberger, President of the Walla Walla Association of Realtors, says “What we are finding more and more young professionals,

as well as the Baby Boomers, retirees are coming to Walla Walla for tourism and ‘discovering’ our lovely community. People are seeing affordable housing, with a steady economy, diversification and culture through education and the arts and great medical facilities.” Corroborating Stalberger’s statement is [the steady increase in direct travel and tourism spending](#) in the county.

Stalberger says they have “seen people coming to Walla Walla from all over the U.S., but mostly from the Western States...and larger cities like,



Denver, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Boise, etc.”

Ultimately, Stalberger believes the increase in homeownership rates have occurred because “no one industry is driving our economy. [We] have three hospitals and three Colleges/Universities as well as some State influence with the Prison and Corp of Engineers, but first and foremost we are still an agriculture

community.” (Aside from grapes for the wine industry, wheat and onion crops dominate the area).

Yet, Stalberger believes the notoriety from the wine industry has brought tourism to Walla Walla, but this has transitioned into Walla Walla becoming a true tourist destination bringing many new and returning visitors to the area with some staying permanently.

Merchandise Exports Slumped in 2015 While Share of State Remains Constant

By Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

Exports abroad, defined as goods and services shipped out of one country and into another, are strong job creators and drive many markets. Firms that export often create large economic impacts in a local or regional economy. Dollars received for their goods and services are clearly “new” to the local or regional economy as the exported goods are replaced with what could be considered imported money. In addition, workers in export-oriented companies usually command higher wages than those selling strictly to the local market.

This indicator has four main categories of exports: Food Manufacturing, Crop Production, Computers and Electronics, and “Other”. The “Other” category simply includes all exports that do not fall into the previous three categories.

Export values are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau’s Origin of Movement - Zip Code Based Series (OM-ZIP) which assigns exports to locations based on the United States Principal Party in Interest (USPPI) of record. The U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration (ITA) explains: “The OM-ZIP series can track export sales of states,

metropolitan areas, and ZIP codes (at the three-digit level), with statistics are available for exports of merchandise only.” In other words, exports of services, a growing share of US GDP, are not included.

The ITA describes the USPPI as “The person in the United States that receives the primary benefit monetary or otherwise of the export transaction. Generally, that person or entity is the U.S. seller, manufacturer, or order party, or the foreign entity while in the United States when purchasing or obtaining the goods for export.”

Examining the graph for the [Total Value of Merchandise Exports](#), we see that after a peak year in 2013 (\$2,160 million), 2014 and 2015 produced decreases (\$2,159 million and \$2,151 million, respectively).

Specific by category, the dollar value of exports originating from Walla Walla County during 2015 for:

- The largest category was “Other,” with \$56.0 million, decreasing from \$64.1 million in 2013 (-12.6%).
- Second was “Machine Manufacturing,” at \$44.5 million, decreasing from \$44.7 million in 2013 (-0.5%).

- Third was “Crop Production,” at \$25.4 million, decreasing from \$28.0 million in 2013 (-9.3%).
- Fourth was “Paper Manufacturing,” at \$9.1 million, increasing from \$5.9 million in 2013 (+54.2%).
- Fifth was “Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing,” at \$11.5 million, increasing from \$4.5 million in 2013 (+155.6%).

The share of total exports in Washington State originating in Walla Walla County throughout the series has been steady at 0.2%.

The “Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing” includes wine production, which according to [Indicator 1.4.6 - Total Gallons and Gallons per Capita of Wine Production](#), during 2015, Walla Walla County produced over 2.54 million gallons of wine (increasing from 1.58 million gallons in 2009, or by 60.8%), and is calculated to 41.9 gallons of wine produced on a per capita basis (compared to 5.6 gallons per capita in the state).

Paul Gerola, Economic Development Director with the Port of Walla Walla says the increase

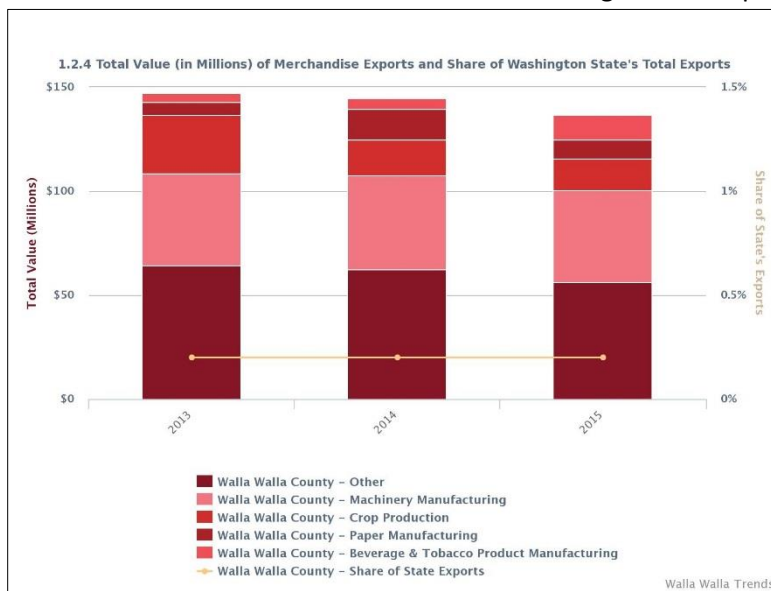
of exports in Beverage & Tobacco Product Manufacturing is not solely due to the wine industry. He believes “The establishment of distilling and brewery operations in the area” have contributed to these increases.

Gerola also believes the decrease in the dollar value of crops produced that were exported is a direct result of decreasing wheat prices, not only in the region, but world-wide. According to the [Financial Times](#), during the summer of 2016, wheat prices were at their “lowest level in a decade as huge harvests pile up in big growers

from Russia to the U.S.”. The Financial Times also reported wheat prices were “below \$4 a bushel for the first time since 2006”.

Just as Mitchell Stalberger, President of the Walla Walla Association of Realtors,

commented on in the Homeownership Rates article, saying “no one industry is driving our economy”, so too, when one sector of exports might have an unforeseen or uncontrollable negative setback, such as the world-wide drop in wheat prices, other sectors within Walla Walla have a better chance of remaining steady.



[Share of Deaths by Top-4 Causes](#)

[Decreasing Slowly Over Time](#) By Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

Although not a pleasant title, the data of this indicator provide insight into the health of the county population. If one dies from a condition, then it is likely that the person has lived with it

for several years. [Indicator 4.1.2 gives the four leading causes of death](#). Starting with the fourth largest contributor, we see that while representing 4.4% of deaths in 2015, stroke's share of all deaths has nearly halved since 1998 in Walla Walla.

According to the [National Stroke Association](#), strokes are the “fifth leading cause of death in America and a leading cause of adult disability”. Furthermore, “Up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable.” Also, it is important to understand there are medical treatments for stroke and [acting immediately at the first signs of stroke](#) can reduce the negative health-related impacts.

Taking up the third most important cause, we can observe that the share of deaths attributed to Alzheimer's disease grew dramatically - from less than 0.6% of all deaths in the county in 1998 to 9.2% in 2015. While share of the total population ages 65 and older remained relatively flat from 1980 (13.6%) to 2010 (14.9%). starting in 2011, its share increased from the previous year.

Yet, [The Alzheimer's Association](#) says, counter to what we might think about Alzheimer's disease, does not affect just the elderly. Younger-onset Alzheimer's disease, people afflicted before they reach 65 years of age, represent “Up to 5 percent of the more than 5 million Americans with Alzheimer's”.

The second most frequent cause of death in the county is heart disease. Although the number of

deaths attributed to it have decreased over the past few decades, [heart disease is still ranked as the #1 cause of death in the U.S.](#) (and has been [since 1921](#)). Still, the [American Heart Association](#) reports “Age-adjusted death rates for heart disease fell from 520.4 deaths per 100,000 Americans in 1969 to 169.1 in 2013.” A similarly dramatic decline can be seen in Walla Walla over the interval tracked by the indicator. The share has dropped from 28% to 19.5% in 2015.

The [seven key health factors and behaviors](#), or “Life's Simple 7”, are used by the American



Heart Association to “determine whether someone is ideal, intermediate, or poor cardiovascular health”. These “Life's Simple 7” health factors and behaviors are: blood pressure, physical activity, cholesterol,

healthy diet, healthy weight, smoking status, and blood glucose. For each of the 7 factors, The American Heart Association has three measurements for cardiovascular health: poor, intermediate, and ideal. Unfortunately, according to the American Heart Association, less than “1% of children meet all seven criteria for ideal cardiovascular health” and “Approximately 13% of U.S. adults meet 5 criteria, 5% meet 6 criteria, and virtually 0% meet all 7 criteria at ideal levels”.

In 2015, cancer was the leading cause of death in Walla Walla for the first time, largely due to the decline in heart disease as a factor. Unlike

heart disease and stroke, the indicator shows little progress in bringing the cancer rate down since 1998. For 2015, its share was 20.7%, much like the 1998 share of 20.3%. A little higher than the county share, the state share of cancer deaths decreased from 24.1% in 1998 to 23.2% in 2015. Unlike the other three leading causes of death which are somewhat isolated to certain parts of the body, cancers included in this indicator are for all deaths attributed to cancer.

According to the [National Cancer Institute](#), national cancer death rates have declined from

2004 to 2013 among men by 1.8% and among both women and children by 1.4%. Although moving in a positive direction, the institute also notes “Although death rates for many individual cancer types have also declined, rates for a few cancers have stabilized or even increased.”

By 2015, the leading causes of death and their share of all deaths in both the county and state have decreased from their share at the beginning of the series. As we continue to live longer, other diseases and afflictions will most likely begin to account for a larger share of the pie.

Population Enrolled in SNAP on a Two-Year Decline By Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

According to the [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Food and Nutrition Service](#), President John F. Kennedy’s “first Executive Order called for expanded food distribution and, on Feb. 2, 1961, he announced that food stamp pilot programs would be initiated.” In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson requested Congress pass a law making the food stamp program permanent. By 1974, the food stamps program was available across the nation with, nearly 14 million participants.

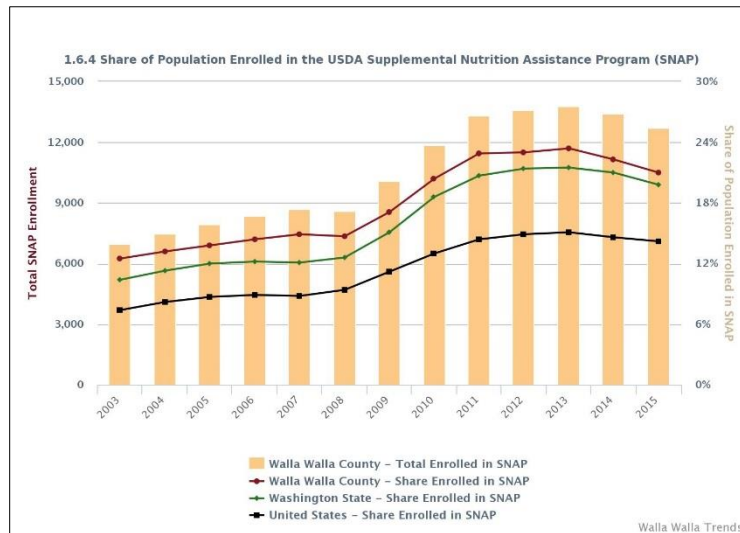
The Food Stamp Act of 1977, although going through a few different variations since (such as

the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988, the 1993 Mickey Leland Childhood Hunger Relief Act, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996, and the Electronic Benefit Transfer Interoperability and Portability Act of 2000), basically engrained the food stamps program into our society. [By 2016](#), participation in the Supplemental Nutrition

Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, reached over 44 million participants in the U.S. who received a monthly average of \$125.50 per qualifying person.

Regionally, during the federal fiscal

year 2015, the [USDA Profile in SNAP Households for Washington Congressional District 5](#), shows nearly 17.4% of all households were receiving SNAP benefits (272,518 total households with 47,381 receiving SNAP).



What has been the path of SNAP's adoption in the Walla Walla County? Looking at the graph for the [Share of the Total Population Enrolled in the USDA SNAP](#) program, we see that during 2015 21.0% of the population of the county were enrolled in SNAP (12,695 people), increasing from 12.5% of the population of the county in 2003 (6,967 people). Note, however, that the number and rate of SNAP users have declined since 2013, a phenomenon also seen in the state and the U.S.

Further, the county's share in 2015 was consistently higher than the state and national benchmarks: 21.0%, 19.8%, and 14.2% respectively. This margin also existed in 2003, however, where the shares were, 12.5%, 10.4%, and 7.4% respectively.

This result shouldn't be too surprising, in light of the share of the population in the combined counties of Walla Walla and Columbia (a designation by the U.S. Census called the Walla Walla Metropolitan Statistical Area - MSA) estimated to live at or below the Federal Poverty Level. As indicator [1.6.1, the Total and Share of the Population Living in Poverty](#) makes clear, in all but one year, the MSA's poverty rate has been higher than that of the state or the U.S. As an anti-poverty measure, SNAP usage will have a higher profile in communities with elevated poverty rates. As the Walla Walla economy continues to grow, albeit slowly, we anticipate that poverty will slowly decline and SNAP usage should as well.
