

## Walla Walla Trends - 2018 Q3 Newsletter:

### News from the Port:



As the new school year begins in our communities, we welcome the students back to the area and remind folks to pay attention while driving through the school zones. With the start of school we are entering our fall season and the Port's summer has been a busy time for various real estate transactions that will result in new economic growth, job creation, new private and public investment that will result in new assessed value going on the tax rolls to provide additional funds for the various taxing districts to provide critical public services, including public schools.

As a result of the Port's various construction projects that have been completed or are still under construction this year, we have experience additional demand for development particularly in western Walla Walla County. The Port of Walla Walla has been fortunate to complete a couple of significant real estate transactions that will allow for continued growth in the Burbank/Wallula area. The two most recent real estate transactions occurred with the Dodd Road Industrial Park. The Port sold the Union Pacific Railroad 38 acres and Northwest Wine Services 22 acres within the Port's Dodd Road Industrial Park. Both property transactions will result in new investment in Walla Walla County. The Union Pacific Railroad has plans to construct a \$17 million Intermodal facility. This facility should spur additional industrial developments in the area, as transportation costs and availability of truck drivers continue to place significant impacts on manufactures. This facility will allow for truck trailers and cargo containers to be loaded onto rail cars and transported all over the country in a more cost-effective manner.

In addition to the real estate transactions previously mentioned at Dodd Road, the Port recently closed on 10 acres in the Burbank Business Park to NW Equipment Sales. NW Equipment Sales will be constructing a \$3 million Volvo-Mack Truck Dealership. When the construction is completed in Burbank, this will be the fourth dealership for NW Equipment Sales. They have dealerships in Hermiston, OR; Twin Falls, ID; and headquarters in Boise, ID. This will provide services to the industries that rely on trucking to move products all over the northwest and country.

Other news at the Port includes activities at the Walla Walla Regional Airport. After receiving news that Alaska Air was reducing flights to two roundtrips per day in Walla Walla for the August 26<sup>th</sup> – November 3<sup>rd</sup> schedule, the Port and the Air Coalition engaged the Alaska Air group to identify the continued growth in passenger's results in increasing "load factors" comparing 2017 to 2018. We believe that the trend continues to produce increase ridership (enplanements/deplanements) from Walla Walla. As a result, Alaska announced resuming of the third flight for five days per week beginning November 4, 2018. The new flight schedule will be an expansion of flights from the previous May – August schedule that was three roundtrips for four days per week. The Port continues to market the options for flights and the "FREE" parking to encourage travelers to consider the Walla Walla Regional Airport as the preferred choice for their travel plans. As we like to say, "Fly Walla Walla, it Works!"

Patrick H. Reay

Executive Director

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## Short Stories:

Welcome to the Walla Walla County Trends Blog!



Most indicators on the Walla Walla County Trends website are updated annually, although some indicators can only be updated every two-years and others every five-years. There are even a few indicators receiving updates as frequently as four times a year. However, even the most enthusiastic user of the Trends website has had no way to tell for sure when an indicator was updated - until now.

Subscribers to this newsletter received an email a few weeks back introducing them to the new Walla Walla County Trends Blog. As the email explained, the blog will be used to keep everyone up-to-date as to what indicators were recently updated. Future emails will offer a quick summary with a hyperlink that will take you directly to the blog. The blog will simply be a list newly updated indicators. Indicator titles will be clickable hyperlinks taking you to the specific indicator on the Walla Walla County Trends website.

Subscribers to the newsletter will receive blog updates, so no need to subscribe to both.

In the future, emails about blog updates will be sent from this email address: [indicatorsmanager@ewu.edu](mailto:indicatorsmanager@ewu.edu). Make sure to add it to your list of Safe Senders so you don't miss a single update.

As facilitators of the Walla Walla County Trends website, we hope you enjoy seeing new data and how it compares to previous years or to other closely related indicators as much as we do. We believe keeping you up-to-date through the blog will help you get even more out of the Walla Walla County Trends website.

In case you missed it, [click here](#) to visit the Walla Walla County Trends blog.

Thank you!

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## Country of Origin for Migrants Living in the U.S.



Quality data can serve as a starting point allowing people to talk about sensitive subjects. Good data can also help us cut through the noise created by highly charged, political hot-button topics, such as immigration and immigration policies in the U.S.

[Pew Research](#) tracks the country of origin for international migrants living in the U.S. going back to 1990. Pew's numbers represent all people born outside of the U.S. who are currently living in the U.S. and includes: naturalized citizens, people on a work visa or through another legal process, and undocumented immigrants.

An *international migrant* is defined by the United Nations Population Division as "someone who has been living for one year or longer in a country other than the one in which he or she was born."

So, where are we? According to Pew, the estimated total number of international migrant living in the U.S. during 2017 was 49,780,000, or about 15.3% of the total U.S. population.

More specifically, the top-10 countries of origin for international migrants living in the U.S. during 2017:

Immigrants In The U.S. - 2017			
Country of Origin	Total Immigrants	Share of U.S. Immigrants	Share of Total U.S. Population
Mexico	12,680,000	25.47%	3.89%
China	2,420,000	4.86%	0.74%
India	2,310,000	4.64%	0.71%
Philippines	2,080,000	4.18%	0.64%
Puerto Rico	1,900,000	3.82%	0.58%
Vietnam	1,410,000	2.83%	0.43%
El Salvador	1,390,000	2.79%	0.43%
Cuba	1,250,000	2.51%	0.38%
South Korea	1,180,000	2.37%	0.36%
Dominican Republic	1,070,000	2.15%	0.33%
Canada	890,000	1.79%	0.27%

While Canada is not the 11<sup>th</sup> highest country of origin for international migrants living in the U.S. during 2017 (Canada is in 12<sup>th</sup> place), it was included due to its close proximity.

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### Go Walla Walla - Hello Progress



Are you curious as to where all of the construction is taking place in Walla Walla? Would you also like to know about estimated start and finish dates and projected budgets?

If so, you are in luck. [Go Walla Walla](http://GoWallaWalla.com), an interactive website showing past and current construction projects has these answers to these questions, and more.

Project summaries, goals of construction projects, why the project is important, and official documents can be found in one place. Additionally, the Geographic Information System (GIS) powered [Go Walla Walla Interactive Project Map](#) shows a real-time list of current construction projects underway.

## Indicators in Action:

[Walla Walla County Cost of Living Lower Than Benchmarks](#) by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

The Metro Area Regional Price Parity (RPP), better known as the Cost of Living Index, is a federal measurement looking at the cost of living for all metro areas in the U.S. By measuring the cost of goods and services in different locations across the nation, direct comparisons can be made from one metro area to another, and to the nation as a whole.

The national RPP is always 100 and represents the national average of all metro areas. This allows the RPP scores of any metro area to be reflected as a percentage of the national RPP. For example, an RPP score of 90 is 10% below the national RPP and an RPP of score of 110 is 10% higher than the national RPP. A metro area RPP score of 100 is equal to the nation.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) (BEA), the RPP “price level is determined by the average prices paid by consumers for the mix of goods and services consumed in each region”.

The BEA collects data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI) program and the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).” CPI values from the nearest major metro area are used (Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue) excluding housing costs, which are taken from the ACS.

With an RPP score of 94.6 in 2016, the cost of living in the Walla Walla metro area was more affordable than in the nation. Specifically in

Walla Walla & Columbia Counties combined, the cost of living was about 5.4% lower than the nation as a whole in 2016.

Further, that value for Walla Walla & Columbia Counties has



actually decreased over the series. That means, that relative to most of the U.S., life has become less expensive here.

Among the eastern Washington metro areas chosen for comparison, both Benton & Franklin Counties combined and the Wenatchee area now show slightly higher living costs than the greater Walla Walla area. As the graph displays, their values in 2016 were 97.1 and 95.2, respectively. Of course, life in the

central Puget Sound (King & Pierce Counties) is much higher, weighing in at over 110 in 2016, or 10.5% less affordable than the nation.

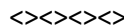
Steve Owens, Director of Member Services, Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce, said “As people consider Walla Walla as their new home for business, retirement or family relocation, cost of living will attract people looking for a certain standard of living...affordable houses, affordable lease rates, access to education, labor and resources, etc.”

“But a competitive environment is also important to ensure a healthy community as

well as a healthy business climate”, Owens said.

Owens said that seeing sharp increases and decreases in this indicator would be concerning; however, these have not occurred in Walla Walla County.

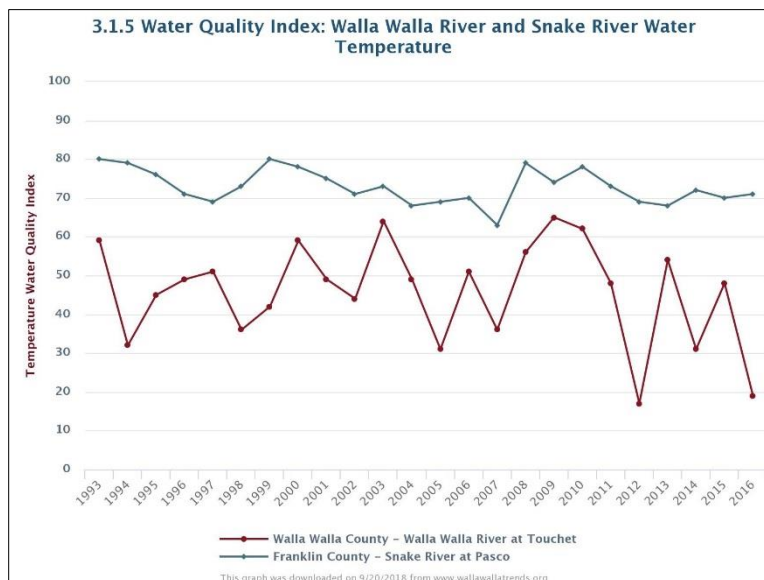
“All of Washington is basking in the glow of the red-hot Seattle area economy, but that heat takes a bit longer to get all the way over here to the east side of the state. And that isn’t necessarily a bad thing, as the inverse would also be true”, said Owens.



### [Water Temperature of Walla Walla and Snake Rivers](#) by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

Just as it is necessary for human life, oxygen is essential for salmonids (the family of fish that includes salmon, trout, chars, freshwater whitefishes and graylings) that inhabit the Walla Walla and Snake Rivers. These aquatic organisms need cold, oxygen-rich waters to stay healthy during critical life stages. Cold water holds more dissolved oxygen than warm water, so warmer water results in less oxygen available for aquatic life.

According to the [Water Research Center](#) (WRC), “Temperature is a critical water quality and environmental parameter because it governs the kinds and types of aquatic life, regulates the maximum dissolved oxygen concentration of



the water, and influences the rate of chemical and biological reactions.”

As the water temperature rises, fish are more likely to become physically stressed and contract diseases. If temperatures get above the

lethal limit (77°-78°F), salmonids can become dangerously stressed and even die.

Dave Stockdale, Director, Water & Environmental Center, Water Resources & Engineering at Walla Walla Community College, said "The lower the flow the warmer the water and the warmer the water the lower the soluble oxygen levels."

Stream temperature and dissolved oxygen standards are set by the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) and are reviewed and approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These standards are established to protect the most sensitive beneficial uses of local waters.

The Temperature Water Quality Index (WQI) is one component of the overall WQI. The overall WQI includes measuring pollutants such fecal coliform bacteria, phosphorus, oxygen, pH, nitrogen, and others. A complete explanation of the WQI, as a whole and for individual components, are posted [on the DOE website](#).

So what exactly do the numbers for the temperature WQI scores mean? The individual components of the WQI are the same as the overall WQI: a score of 80 and above meet expectations for water quality and are of the "lowest concern". Scores in the 40 - 79 range indicate a "marginal concern". Scores below 40 do not meet

expectations and are of the "highest concern". Overall, a score of 100 is the best possible score.

So how are our local rivers doing? The Snake River, [as measured at Pasco](#) scored a 71 in 2016. The average of the annual scores on the Snake River from 1993 to 2016 was 73. The Walla Walla River, [as measured at Touchet](#) scored a 19 in 2016. The average of the annual scores on the Walla Walla River from 1993 to 2016 was 46.

Stockdale said some caution should be used when looking at the annual mean score (as offered in this indicator) because they "don't show seasonal variations that might be more problematic even on a year that otherwise seems fine."

"Streamside (riparian) plantings will provide shade to keep water temperatures cooler, which increases dissolved oxygen level. Increased flows can be maintained through purposeful water use management- something many (Ecology, Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, Irrigation Districts, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation) are working on in our area in order to have enough water for fish, farms and people", concluded Stockdale.

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[Small Family-Owned Wineries and Cellars are at the Heart of Walla Walla's Wine Industry](#) by Brian Kennedy and Dr. Patrick Jones

It's obvious that the wine industry in Walla Walla County has seen substantial growth throughout the greater part of the recent decade as shown by [indicator 1.4.7](#). This growth

has pushed Walla Walla County to be one of the leading wine counties in the State. That growth has largely been driven by small scale family ran wineries and wine cellars. While that growth has been unprecedented, it seems to be reaching a plateau, which is indicative of a maturing sector.

According to the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, in 2016 there were 181

licensed and bonded wineries and wine cellars in Walla Walla County, up from 108 just seven years prior. Considering that statewide there are 1066 wineries scattered throughout the counties, Walla Walla is home to 17% of them. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most for any Washington county, falling second to King County with 236, or 22%. While it is important to note these don't represent physical locations and some wineries may be licensed or bonded for multiple brands, the Bureau's numbers makes comparisons across the state possible. To put this in perspective, while

there were 30 wineries per 10,000 people living in Walla Walla, both the State and King County had just 1 per 10,000 residents. No other county comes even close to that rate, Chelan would be the next closest, sitting at 1.1 per 10,000. In terms of size, Walla Walla is representing more than its fair share of the wineries throughout the State.

While leading the pack in terms of the number of wineries in the county, Walla Walla's leading rank seems to have fallen a couple places when looking at the total gallons of wine produced. Looking at [indicator 1.4.6](#), we can see that Walla Walla County produced just under three million gallons of wine in 2016. This is about 7% of the total wine produced throughout the state, which bottled 41.8 million gallons of wine. If distributed amongst the residents in the county during 2016, every person would have received 49 gallons of wine.

Of the top volume producing counties in the State, Walla Walla County fell to the 5th during 2016. The top producer, Benton County, out produced Walla Walla County by roughly 6.5 times, creating 19.9 million gallons or 48% of all the State's wine. Yakima, Grant, and King Counties were also ahead of Walla Walla in terms of total production.

Combining the data from wine produced in indicator 1.4.6 and the number of wineries and wine cellars found in indicator 1.4.7 we find that the average gallons of wine produced per

winery in Walla Walla is nearly 16,500 gallons. This is roughly 22,500 gallons lower than the State average of about 39,000 gallons per winery. This is also well below the top producing counties. Grant and Benton Counties have

created a substantial lead sitting at just shy of 275,000 and 160,000, respectively, gallons per winery. Benton and Grant County are dominated by a few mass producing national brands of wine, whereas Walla Walla's wine scene favors a more small scale experience to wine making.

Ashley Riggs, Chief Operating Officer of the [Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance](#), states that "most of the wineries in the Walla Walla Valley are boutique, family-run operations who focus on direct-to-consumer sales, which speaks to the personality of the region."

Ron Williams, Executive Director of [Visit Walla Walla](#), echo those words saying that "Walla

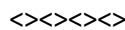


Walla has a high concentration of small production wineries—as few as 500 cases.” He attributes Walla Walla’s small town vibe niche in the winemaking industry in part to “young and new winemakers who are choosing Walla Walla because it is affordable, the industry is friendly to newcomers and Walla Walla has a higher regarded enology and viticulture program at Walla Walla Community College.”

While there has been incredible growth in the years leading up to 2014 in the county, the industry is starting to stabilize. From 2009 to 2017 there were 71 new wineries or wine cellars opened in Walla Walla County and since 2014 that number has seen little fluctuation compared to those early years. From 2014 to 2016 the number of wineries in the county has increased by only two. Given this low growth rate one can expect the numbers to continue to plateau in the coming years and this is certainly what the Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance expects.

“The number of wineries will remain stable for a number of years to come given there will always be a balance in the number of tourist operations and accommodations”, said Riggs.

Walla Walla’s wine industry has seen a lot of growth in the better part of the last decade and that growth has largely been driven by small scale, family owned, boutique wineries and wine cellars. This is certainly backed up by the data, a large number of wineries with a relatively lower number of gallons produced. While it seems that winemakers aren’t multiplying as they were in the past, their reputation of quality driven, low production, small case exclusive wines continues to shine over some of the more mass produced, quantity driven, winemakers throughout the wine community; and this is a trend that is expected to continue.



### [Life Expectancy in County Steadily](#)

[Increasing](#) by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

The desire for a long and healthy life is universal. In nearly all surveys of quality of life, both nationally and internationally, life expectancy is seen as a key indicator. Many experts argue life expectancy is the single most important measure of health.

The life expectancy measurement can reflect personal, medical, social, public health, and economic phenomena resulting in a proxy summary of how well a community or society is doing in providing essential goods and services associated with a long and healthy life, such as access to health care and to affordable healthy

foods. How does Walla Walla fare on this measure?

Looking at the [Life Expectancy at Birth](#) indicator on the Trends website, we quickly see during 2016 Walla Walla County, at 80.2 years, and Washington State at 80.4 years were both above the 78.6 years life expectancy in the nation. Consistent with 2016, both the county and state have been above the U.S. throughout the series. Since 1990, the county, state, and U.S. have experienced a slightly upward trend.

Beyond living longer, what do these numbers represent and what do they say about the overall health of a community?



Ashley Beck, PhD, Senior Research Scientist, Disease Prevention and Response with Spokane Regional Health District says, "Ultimately, life expectancy tells us how and if public health is working. From the historic founding of public health, it was meant to stop the spreading of disease."

"Beyond communicable diseases, public health has adapted and grown to focus on other conditions including chronic disease, all the while working to prevent disease and improve the conditions where people live work and play", said Beck.

Beck said increases in life expectancy are also due to advances in medical care specific to chronic conditions, decreases in infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and others, and fewer people are dying from common conditions, such as cardiovascular diseases.

Some insight into Walla Walla's experience with chronic disease can be found in the Trends indicator [Share of Deaths by Leading Causes](#). The rates of death by three of the top four

causes in Walla Walla are actually lower here than statewide. These are: cancer, heart disease and stroke. One of the four, however, stands out markedly for Walla Walla, and that is death from Alzheimer's, where the rate for the most recently tracked year (2015) is 50% higher than statewide. For most of the series in this indicator, Walla Walla's rate has been higher. And the Alzheimer's diagnosis has climbed over

the years, in contrast to the substantial decline in the county in deaths due to heart disease.

The different outcomes for these two diseases undoubtedly reflect both advances and challenges

occurring in the medical industry. Still, one wonders why Walla Walla's Alzheimer's experience is so elevated.

Overall, advances in the medical treatment, as well as improved access to health insurance, should thankfully keep the trend line for this indicator on a slow, but steady upward tilt.

