

The State of the Subregion

# Ventura County

Measuring Progress in the 21st  
Century



MAY 2002

**Southern California Association of Governments  
Overall Work Program Tasks**

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## **Livable Communities:**

The State of the Subregion- Ventura County  
Measuring Progress in the 21st Century

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## **The Concept of Benchmarking and Performance Indicators**

Benchmarking and performance indicators are methods of painting a picture of our world. Ideally these indicators will generally show us how we are doing from the Big Picture perspective. Points on the horizon would tell us how we are doing economically, other points in the foreground would describe our social milieu and other points in the middle ground would depict clearly our physical environmental health.

As we analyze these indicators and refine them, the output can provide guidance in refining and selecting policies that will move us more effectively toward our goals.

SCAG has published four editions of its State of the Region Report (SRR) and report card and this is the County's second. Their Report connects the indicators directly to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Regional Plan. It summarized conditions in the following general areas: population, economy, housing, environment, transportation, and quality of life.

### **Performance Indicators for the Sub region: Ventura County**

Ventura County indicators have been chosen to meet at least one of several criteria: supports VCOG programs, measures the uniqueness of our County, readily available data exists, or the indicator can be compared to other SCAG counties.

Each of the indicators appears in a separate report card and is more fully described in this Report. The indicators are:

1. **Economic:** housing, childcare employment, children in poverty, jobs/housing balance
2. **Social:** crime, education, health, population density, and civic engagement
3. **Physical:** agricultural lands conversion, air quality, vehicle miles traveled, ocean water quality, and bird population

## **Population Overview**

In 1950 Ventura County was the eighteenth most populous in California and in 2000 was the twelfth largest. The population density in 1950 was 62 people per square mile and was almost seven times that in 2000, 408. The growth rate of the Nineties, however, was actually slower than that of the Fifties. (**Table 1**)

The SCAG region is expected to grow 37% in the next 23 years and Ventura County, 26%. The growth rates in 1000's of people per year from 2000-2010 and 2010-2020 are expected to be 9.2 and 7.9 respectively. Based on current research being done for SCAG, if these increases are to occur within the SOAR boundaries, new urban development densities will have to significantly increase.

The SCAG member counties are with the exception of Imperial, much larger than Ventura County. They are from 2-13 times larger than our County. (**Table 2**) So, the two closest in size, Riverside and San Bernardino, will be used for comparison throughout this report. The growth rates of the three counties roughly paralleled each other from 1900-1940, but then Riverside and San Bernardino's growth rates escalated. (**Figure 1**) Ventura County's historic rapid Sixties growth was also mirrored by San Bernardino. After 1980 Ventura County clearly left the race for good.

The total County population is derived from ten cities and the remaining unincorporated area. Whereas the incorporated area is only 18.8% of the County area outside of the Los Padres National Forest, the incorporated population is 87.5% of the County total. (**Table 3**) The individual cities and unincorporated areas of Ventura County range in population from 8250 people in Ojai to 160,300 in Oxnard. The total population of the unincorporated area is about 10% less than the City of Ventura's 103,500.

The City of Oxnard added the most people from 2000-2001, nearly 60% more than Simi Valley, the runner up. Oxnard has been the County's largest city since 1950 at 21,567. It passed Ventura during the war years, growing 153.2% in the Forties compared to Ventura's 24.7%, 16,534. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book, 1952, p. 512)

**Table 1.--Ventura County Population Increase (1000's of people per year), 1950-2000**

<u>Period</u>	<u>Rate (1000's per year)</u>	<u>Population at Start of Decade</u>	<u>Numeric Increase for Decade</u>
<b>1950-1959</b>	8.85	114,647	88,453
<b>1960-1969</b>	17.30	203,100	173,330
<b>1970-1979</b>	14.60	376,430	146,714
<b>1980-1989</b>	14.60	523,144	145,872
<b>1990-1999</b>	8.30	669,016	82,584
<b>2000</b>	-	753,197	-

**Source:** U.S. Census of Population

**Table 2.-- Population, 1910-2025, SCAG Region (In 1000's)**

<u>Area</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2025</u> <u>Forecast</u>	<u>2000-2025</u> <u>Increase</u>	<u>Per Cent</u> <u>Increase</u>
Imperial	14	59	92	142	318	176	124%
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>26%</b>
Riverside	35	105	663	1545	2832	1287	83%
San Bernardino	57	161	895	1709	2778	1069	63%
Orange	37	130	1933	2846	3403	557	20%
Los Angeles	504	2785	7478	9519	12,339	2820	30%
<b>SCAG Region</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>3313</b>	<b>11,590</b>	<b>16,514</b>	<b>22,621</b>	<b>6107</b>	<b>37%</b>

**Source:** California. Dept. of Finance, as provided by SCAG and U.S. Census, April 2000.

**Table 3.--County of Ventura and Cities: Population Increase 2000-2001, Rank Order by Increase.**

<u>AREA</u>	<u>January 2000</u>	<u>January 2001</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
OJAI	7925	7975	50	.6
PORT HUENEME	22,150	22,250	100	.5
SANTA PAULA	29,150	29,300	150	.5
FILLMORE	13,850	14,100	250	2.5
MOORPARK	31,700	32,150	450	1.4
UNINCORPORATED	93,900	94,400	500	.5
SAN BUENAVENTURA	101,800	102,600	800	7.9
CAMARILLO	57,300	58,800	1500	4.7
THOUSAND OAKS	117,300	119,400	2100	1.8
SIMI VALLEY	111,600	114,800	3200	2.9
OXNARD	172,600	177,700	5100	3.0
<b>VENTURA COUNTY</b>	<b>759,400</b>	<b>773,500</b>	<b>14,200</b>	<b>1.9</b>

*Source:*

*Department of Finance. Note: these numbers are slightly different than the U.S. Census ones.*

**Economic Sector**

## Employment

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** Strong levels of employment are important to the individual, families, commerce and the overall economic health of the County. High unemployment affects crime rates, individual and family health and wealth.

**How is Ventura County Doing?** The 1995-2000 growth rate of wage and salary employment for Ventura County lags significantly behind that of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties but ahead of that of the State. (**Table 4**)

**Table 4.--** Wage and Salary Employment, 1980-2001 (In 1000's)

<u>County</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>2001,</u> <u>Sept.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Ventura	168.3	247.1	47%	254.3	.3%	293.8	15.5%	297.0	1.0%
Riverside	n.a.	321.7	n.a.	354.5	10.2%	468.0	32%	n.a.	
San Bernardino	n.a.	413.5	n.a.	447.2	8%	544.4	22%	n.a.	
California	10,201	12,863.4	26%	12,407.6	(-3.5%)	16,246	13.8%	16,554	1.9%
United States	93,506	112,141	19.9%	113,376	1%	140,100	23.5%	142,900	1.9%

**Note:** Annual Average labor force (except 2001) and industry employment; Civilian labor force, total, all industries

**Source:** California. Employee Development Dept.; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Website/Employment Situation Summary, Table A; SCAG Employment Database, as provided by SCAG.

The number of "employed" residents in the County increased 3.8% from 1999 to 2000. (**Table 5**) This number is different from wage and salary employment which is the number of jobs in our County vs. people in the County with jobs that do not necessarily work in the County. The number of employed residents is substantially greater.

**Table 5.--** Ventura County, Employed residents, Annual Average

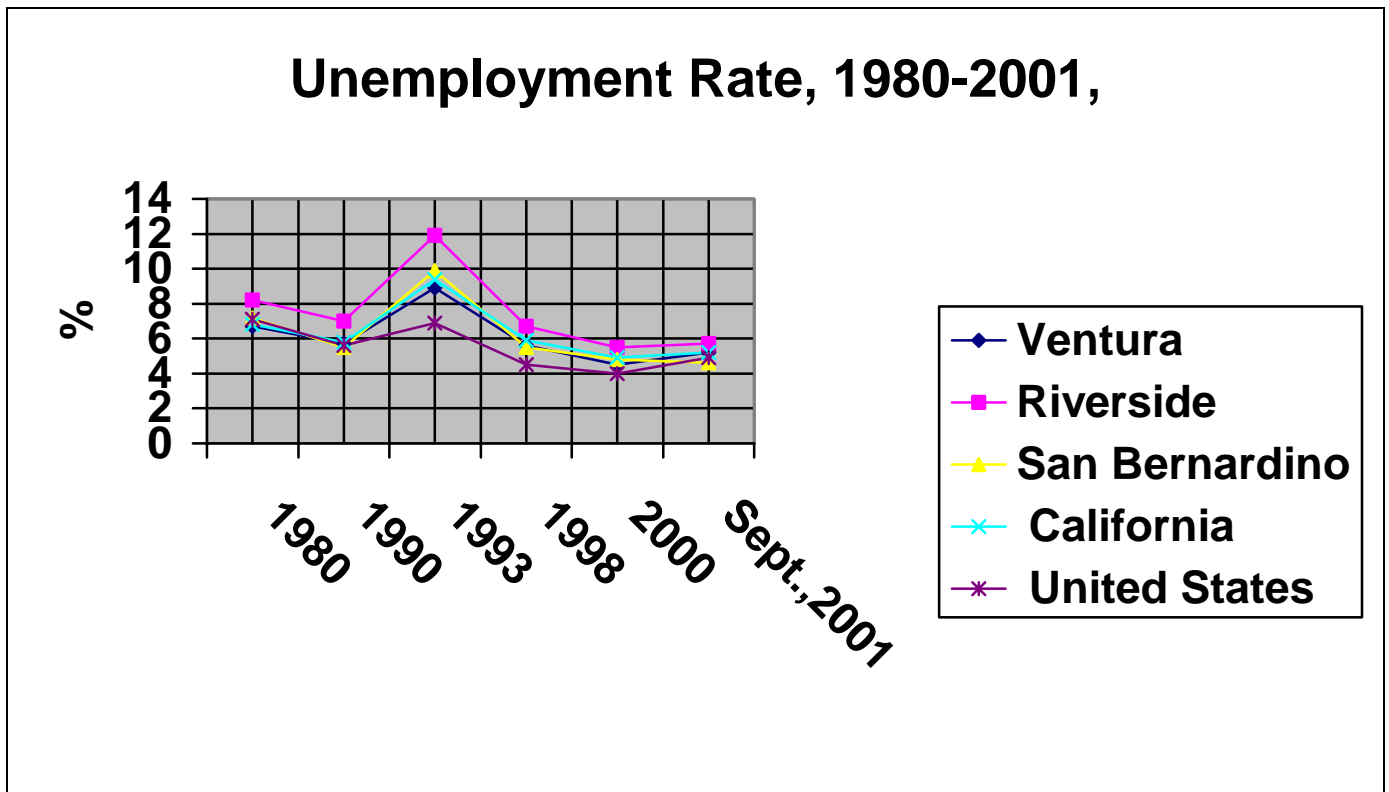
<u>1991</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>August,</u> <u>2001</u>
341,540	353,601	366,747	378,430	392,690	398,898
x	3.5%	3.6%	3.2%	3.8%	1.6% (8 mo.)

**Source:** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Website, <http://data.bls.gov>, Metropolitan Area at a Glance.

The unemployment rate is at a record low. Ventura County's dipped to 4.5% in 2000, lower than the State's. (Table 6) However, in 2001 it grew to 5.2%. Ventura County consistently is worse than San Bernardino or the United States, but better than the State or Riverside County.

**Table 6.--** Unemployment Rate, 1980-2001, Percent

<u>County</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Sept.,2001</u>
San Bernardino	7.20	5.50	9.90	5.50	4.8	4.6
United States	7.10	5.60	6.90	4.50	4.0	4.9
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>6.70</b>	<b>5.70</b>	<b>8.90</b>	<b>5.60</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.2</b>
California	6.80	5.80	9.40	5.90	4.9	5.2
Riverside	8.20	7.00	11.90	6.70	5.5	5.7



**Source:** California. Employment Development Dept., Website/Labor Market Information/Employment by Industry; California Department of Finance. Website; UCSB Economic Forecast Project, The 2000 Ventura County Economic Outlook, February, 2000; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Website /Stats.

Related Economic Indicators

Employment and Salary by Industry Sector. In 2001 the Services sector continued as the largest employment group. (**Table 7**) Government, third in size in 1994 has been displaced by Durable Manufacturing. The smallest sector in 1994 and in 2001 is Mining, the only one to have reduced employment. Employment in the Non-durable Manufacturing sector increased 78% during this period, more than any other sector.

Although we have a healthy economy, Ventura County salaries are lower than average. Ventura County ranks 70<sup>th</sup> out of 285 nationwide counties in terms of increased salary (3.3%, 1998). In addition, Ventura county residents on average earn an annual pay of \$31,962, which falls several thousand dollars short of the state annual pay average \$35,349 (U.S. Dept. of Labor, July, 2000 Report).

The average Ventura County Salary in 2001 was \$37,648. For comparison, the average Los Angeles-Long Beach resident earns \$36,608 per year, with the average annual pay of Riverside-San Bernardino at \$27,505. The highest average annual pay in the State is found in San Jose County, \$51,409 per year. (*U.S. Dept. of Labor, Annual Average Pay Report*)

At the low end of the scale U.S. Census data reveals that the average annual salary of retail and services and the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors is just over \$21,000. At the upper end the non-durable manufacturing sector received an average annual salary over \$83,000.

**Table 7.--** Employment and Salary by Industry Sector, 1994-2001

<b>Industry Sector</b>	<b>1994-Employees</b>	<b>2001-Employees</b>	<b>Average Salary-\$ 2001</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>251,100</b>	<b>299,850</b>	<b>37,648.</b>
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	17,833	21,517	20,855
Mining	2000	900	52,395
Construction	10,133	15,317	35,438
Durable Manufacturing	21,617	26,392	55,549
Non-Durable Manufacturing	8383	14,742	83,087
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	10,550	11,317	44,475
Wholesale Trade	11,617	13,325	45,651
Retail Trade	44,367	52,083	21,124
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	12,383	15,783	46,664
Services	69,508	82,892	32,761
Government	42,708	45,583	49,063

**Source:** California Employment Development Dept. as cited in UCSB Economic Forecast Project, The 2002 Ventura County Economic Outlook, pp. 64-65; *U.S. Census Bureau County Business Patterns 1997*

**Gross Product.** Of the 319 metropolitan areas in the United States, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Ventura County's economy is the 78<sup>th</sup> largest, just behind Albuquerque and in front of Tucson. (**Table 8**)

The economies of the counties of Southern California are important on a global scale. Only fifteen countries have a larger gross product than Los Angeles County. The gross product of Ventura County is almost as large as that of Iraq and is larger than Uruguay. However, the population of Iraq is 31 times larger, 23,330,983. Uruguay is 4 times larger, 3,360,105. (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The World Factbook. July, 2001 estimates)

**Table 8.--Gross Product. World Comparisons- 2000**

<u>Area</u>	<u>Gross Product, 2000 (U.S. \$ Billions, Current)</u>	<u>World Rank</u>
Australia	428.00	15
<b>Los Angeles</b>	363.70	16
Netherlands	360.00	17
Malaysia	88.80	63
San Jose, Ca.	85.40	64
<b>Riverside/San Bernardino</b>	84.10	65
Tampa-St.Petersburg- Clearwater	82.20	66
Philippines	78.00	69
Iraq	25.50	138
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>24.50</b>	<b>139</b>
Tucson	22.90	140
Uruguay	20.50	148

**Source:** The United States Conference of Mayors, Website, DRI-WEFA.

**Measurement.** Annual percentage increase of employment.

### **Childcare Employment**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** Our children are the future citizens of our County, the future voters, the future employees, and the future decision makers. The degree to which we provide adequately for their care in large part will determine the fate of the County. Adequate investments must be made for proper childcare or society will eventually crumble. Significant funds invested in preschool education will save substantial downstream repair costs. (Santa Clara Intergovernmental Council, A Planner's Guide to Child Care, 1992, p. 6) However, the problem continues to deteriorate. From 1990-98 in California, the number of single parent families with children increased from 25% to 26%. (The Annie Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Book, p. 51)

**How Is Ventura County Doing?** There has been considerable improvement in the numbers of available child care employees per 100,000 people from 1990-1998: 27.7% increase in Ventura County and 25.4% in Los Angeles County (**Table 9**)

**Table 9.--** Child Care Employees Per 100,000 People: Ventura and Los Angeles Counties, 1998

<u>County</u>	<u>1990 Direct Child Care Employment</u>	<u>Employees per 100,000 people</u>	<u>Popul ation April 1990</u>	<u>1998 Direct Child Care Employment</u>	<u>Employees per 100,000 people</u>	<u>Population Estimate July, 1998</u>
Ventura	2951.00	441.00	669,000	4158.00	563.00	738,000
Los Angeles	25447.00	287.00	8863000.00	34,701	360.00	9,650,000

**Source:** EICCI, 1999, Ventura County, p. v, Los Angeles County, p. 6; SCAG, State of the Region, 1999, p. 8.

Finding affordable childcare is a serious problem everywhere in California. The cost for two children in a full time, licensed center costing from a low of 23% of the average household income in Madera County to a high of 45%, Inyo County. This is a very significant portion of the family budget. The lack of affordable childcare means children are not being cared for properly and, or are being left alone. In 1998 the average annual cost for childcare at Ventura County licensed centers was \$5652 for a 2-5 year old. (**Table 10**) For our comparative counties, San Bernardino County took the lowest dollar amount at \$4790 annually, but Ventura County relatively takes the smallest percent of the family budget (27%).

**Table 10.--**Childcare, Average Annual Cost of Full-time, Licensed Care in a Center, 1998

<u>Area</u>	<u>Infant (to 24 mo.)</u>	<u>2-5 Years Old</u>	<u>Avg. Household Income (H.I.)</u>	<u>Care for 2 as % of H.I.</u>
Ventura	\$7744	\$5652	\$49,780	27
Riverside	\$6630	\$4866	\$38,366	30
San Bernardino	\$6656	\$4790	\$37,874	30
California	\$6549	\$4993	\$38,979	30
Los Angeles	\$7189	\$5040	\$35,863	34

**Source:** The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, as cited on California Institute for County Government, Website.

**Measurement.** The County's direct employment for childcare and a ratio compared to Los Angeles County are the current measures.

## Housing

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** Shelter is one of humanity's most basic needs and requirements of well being, along with food and clothing. People without shelter are the homeless, frequently the subjects of distressing news stories.

Our society has as one of its major goals the provision of adequate housing. All levels of government are committed to this objective, Federal, State, Regional and Cities. The Ventura County General Plan has several housing goals, amongst them are the following:

Housing preservation: Preserve the condition of the existing housing stock and the continuing affordability of currently affordable units.

Housing opportunities: Increase housing opportunities for households of all income levels, with special emphasis on lower-income households, the elderly, single-heads of household, large families, farm workers, handicapped and homeless.

(Ventura County General Plan: Goals, Policies and Programs, amended June 19, 2001, p. 65)

Overcrowding, more than 1.01 persons per room, is a lesser known aspect of too little affordable housing. When families cannot find their own home, they are often forced to share with another family. Six percent of all housing in this County in 1998 was overcrowded. These are also generally lower income families. (Southern California Association of Governments, 1998-2005 Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2001) In 2000 there were 243,530 households in Ventura County and the average size was 3.04 persons. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001)

**How Is Ventura County Doing?** The provision of new housing has improved recently over ten years ago.(**Table 11**) However, the addition of 3410 housing units in 2001 is somewhat of a drop

from 4442 in 1999. (UCSB Economic Forecast project, The 2002 Ventura County Economic Outlook, p. 104). This production is still low compared to the 1986 high of 7513 units.

Our three comparable counties all reached their lows during the 1993 depression and have gradually been pulling back as the economy has improved, but still are nowhere near 1986 highs. Ventura County's 2001 production was less than half that of 1986. San Bernardino in 2000 had about one fifth and Riverside was better at about two thirds.

**Table 11.**--Housing Units Permitted (Single and multi-family), Comparable Counties, 1980-2000

<u>County</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1986*</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>4022</b>	<b>7513</b>	<b>2612</b>	<b>1372</b>	<b>2316</b>	<b>3182</b>	<b>4442</b>	<b>3971</b>
San Bernardino	8339	33,964	13,209	5852	5593	6120	14,579	6580 (1)
Riverside	7871	23,943	15,631	7299	9784	12,512	7172	15,410

\*Peak year from 1980-2000

**Source:** SCAG; UCSB. Economic Forecast Project, as cited in Los Angeles Times, "Ventura County Economic Profile", February 29, 2000; (1) California, Department of Finance, Web page: Statistical Abstract, Table 1-6, [www.dof.ca.gov](http://www.dof.ca.gov).

The cities of Ventura County reflect the Countywide numbers. (**Table 12**) Thousand Oaks with 15% of the County's population issued the most residential permits, 27% of the county total. Ojai approved the least.

**Table 12.**-- Dwelling Units Permitted, Ventura County 1990-2001, Rank Order

<u>Area</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Unincorporated	420	149	232	n.a.
Ojai	19	12	12	5
Santa Paula	36	4	3	20
Port Hueneme	0	4	40	33
Fillmore	30	44	130	179
Moorpark	92	1736	500	260
Camarillo	470	192	361	355
Ventura	266	372	219	392
Oxnard	376	290	1032	492
Simi Valley	134	412	776	585
Thousand Oaks	769	514	666	923
<b>Total County</b>	<b>2612</b>	<b>2166</b>	<b>3971</b>	<b>3410</b>

**Source:** UCSB, Economic Forecast Project, The 2001 Ventura County Economic Outlook, p. 103, 2001.

Affordability and Home Ownership.

At the same time that home construction is a bit on the rise, so are prices. This is especially true in Ventura County. In March, 2002 the median housing price is 105% more than in Riverside County. (**Table 13**) The affordability of available new housing is a crucial part of the home ownership equation. First time buyers are prevented from moving into Ventura County’s market when prices are high and affordability is low. Recruitment of new employees from other regions becomes difficult along with other problems.

**Table 13.--**Median Sales Price of Homes, March, 2001-2, Rank Order

	<b>2001 (\$)</b>	<b>2002</b>
San Bernardino	135,000	146,000
Riverside	184,000	184,500
Los Angeles	218,000	250,000
<b>Ventura County</b>	<b>265,000</b>	<b>300,000</b>
Orange	275,000	317,000

**Note:** Derived from all sales: new, existing, condominiums, and single-family detached.

**Source:** California Association of Realtors, [www.car.org](http://www.car.org)

According to the California Association of Realtors, affordability decreased in all our comparable areas in February, 2002 compared to last February, as part of a statewide trend. (**Table 14**) Overall, California changed from 31% a year ago to 36%. Ventura County’s index number is currently 38%. Our index regressed from last year by three points. San Bernardino and Riverside have significantly more affordable housing at 51%, approaching the national level. For reference, the least affordable county in the state is San Francisco at 11 percent, six points worse than a year ago.

Also in relation to the nation as a whole, housing in California and our comparable counties generally is less affordable. The State’s low was in 1989 at 17%. In that year Ventura County’s low was 10%, then the lowest of all the comparable areas.

**Table 14.--**Housing Affordability Index, 1989-2002 (Percent of households that can afford to buy median price detached home), Comparable Areas

<b><u>Area</u></b>	<b><u>1989</u></b>	<b><u>1990</u></b>	<b><u>1995</u></b>	<b><u>1997</u></b>	<b><u>1998</u></b>	<b><u>1999</u></b>	<b><u>2000</u></b>	<b><u>2001</u></b>	<b><u>2002, Feb.</u></b>
Orange	14	22	39	38	38	n.a.	26	27	31
California	17	23	38	39	42	37	29	32	36
Los Angeles	14	20	36	39	41	n.a.	33	34	38
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>38</b>
Riverside/ San Bernardino	31	38	51	57	56	53	47	49	51
United States	47	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	55	52	54	57

**Source:** California Association of Realtors, Research and Economics Department, Website: [www.Car.org](http://www.Car.org), California Housing Affordability Index, April 4, 2002 Release; and provided by SCAG (1989-1998 data).

**Measurement.** Absolute number of new units and annual percent increase.

### **Jobs/Housing Balance**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** The balancing of jobs with housing will assist in reducing vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion, improving air quality, conserving energy, and helping to protect agriculture/open space lands. Ventura County's population is projected to increase 30% by 2010, growing from 669,000 in 1990 to 870,000 in 2010. With this many people yet to arrive in the County, it is obvious there is a great opportunity to achieve greater balance in the future.

**How is Ventura County Doing?** From 1990-2000, vehicle miles traveled increased 15.4%, a faster rate than the population illustrating what a significant impact better balancing of jobs and housing might have. (SEE VMT section) In the year 2000 there were 293,800 jobs in the County (Wage and Salary employment). There were 251,712 housing units according to the 2000 Census. The jobs/housing balance ratio then is 1.17. The ratio has worsened, as in 1990 it was 1.23. The most recent VCOG adopted forecast expects it to be 1.77 by 2025. SCAG has suggested using 1.21 as guideline. VCOG has used 1.10 to 1.34 as a range. Therefore, the sub region is within that range, but is not doing well as the ratio has decreased in ten years.

**Measurement.** Jobs per dwelling unit expressed as a ratio.

### **Poverty**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** Low income can reduce the quality of virtually all aspects of daily life: diet, housing, clothing, transportation, health, childcare, education, etc.

The poverty threshold established for an American family of four in 2000 was \$17,463 annual income. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Website: [www.census.gov/hhes/poverty](http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty), "Poverty 2000) The median household income of Ventura County was \$55,521 in 2000, the second highest of the surrounding counties and the SCAG region. (**Table 15**)

**Table 15--Median Income, Surrounding Counties, 2000**

<b>County</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>U.S. Rank</b>
Kern	\$34,711	204
San Bernardino	\$40,534	148
Los Angeles	\$40,864	142
Riverside	\$41,005	140
Santa Barbara	\$43,464	112
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>\$55,521</b>	<b>52</b>
Orange	\$56,675	46

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Website: [www.census.gov/c2ss](http://www.census.gov/c2ss). Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001.

**How Is Ventura County Doing?** The recent strong economic recovery lowered the 1993 peak poverty level of 15.1% for the United States down to 11.3% in 2000, nearly matching the record lows of 1973. (U.S. Census Bureau, Press Release, 9/25/01, Website: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) According to the 2000 Census it appears that from our peak of 11.1% in 1993, Ventura County's rate has dropped to 9.2% but still has some distance to go to the even lower 1980-1990 levels.

Compared to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties in 2000 our County's percent in poverty was significantly lower, and as a result, fewer people proportionately were affected. (**Tables 16 & 17**) The U.S. Census Bureau for April, 2000 counted 68,540 people or 9.2% of all ages in poverty in Ventura County. (Census 2000)

**Table 16. – People below the poverty level, Comparative Counties, 2000**

<b>County</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Ventura	47,742	68,540
Riverside	131,690	214,084
San Bernardino	174,727	263,412

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

There is obviously a strong correlation between the economy and poverty. Indeed, according to the Census Bureau, the dramatic increases in poverty from 1990- 1993 were attributable to the recession of 1990-91. "Poverty tends to peak after a recession," so by 1993 California

unemployment peaked at 9.4%, and dropped with the economic recovery to 5.2% by August, 2001.” (Census Bureau as cited above) In Ventura County unemployment peaked at 8.9% in 1992 and 1993 and dropped to 5.1% by 2001. This pattern was repeated in Riverside and San Bernardino. (SEE Employment section)

There is more to poverty, however, than merely a discussion of the number of people affected. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), the depth of poverty has also increased for those falling below the poverty line. “The average poor person fell \$2416 below the poverty line in 1999. By contrast in 1993, the average poor person fell \$2104 below the poverty line; in 1996, the figure was \$2122.” (figures adjusted for inflation; CBPP Website, “Poverty Rate Hits Lowest Level Since 1979....”)

**Table 17.--Poverty- 1980 to 2000, Percent of Population**

Area	1980	1990	1993	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Ventura	7.84	7.30	11.10	9.80 (3)	10.30 (8)	*	*	9.2
United States	13.00	13.50 (2)	15.10 (5)	13.70	13.30	12.80	11.80 (6)	11.30
California	11.00	12.50	17.40	16.90	16.60	16.30 (4)	14.6	13.30 (7)
Riverside	11.07	11.50	15.00	*	15.0	*	*	15.0
San Bernardino	10.76	12.70	17.50	*	17.9	*	*	16.00 (9)

**Sources:** \*=Numbers not available. U.S. 1998 Statistical Abstract; California Institute for Federal Policy Research. (2) U.S. -1990, procedures changed and not directly comparable to 1980 number. (3) Census Bureau, 1996; (4) U.S. Census Bureau, March 1999, 1998 and 1997 Current Population Surveys, as cited in SCAG, State of the Region, May 2000, Draft - 3 year average; (5) U.S. Bureau of the Census, Website: [census.gov/hhes/poverty](http://census.gov/hhes/poverty); Table 2, Poverty Status of Persons...1959-1993; (6) Census Website, as above, Poverty 2000, Highlights; (7) Census Website, as above, Current Population Survey, Table D, Poverty, Mr. 2001; (8) Census Website, “Estmod97/est97\_CA.da.”; (9) U.S. Census Bureau, Website: [www.census.gov/c2ss](http://www.census.gov/c2ss). Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001.

Ventura County Cities. Within our County the poverty rates vary significantly. (Table 17a) Oxnard currently has the highest percentage with 15.1%, according to the 2000 Census, while the three eastern most cities, Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, and Simi Valley have about only one third that percentage. The older cities are all on the higher end of the poverty scale.

**Table 17a.--Poverty: A City Comparison, April, 2000**

	<b>People in Poverty (%)</b>
Thousand Oaks	5.0
Camarillo	5.3
Simi Valley	5.8
Moorpark	7.0
Ventura	9.0
Countywide	9.2
Ojai	10.7
Port Hueneme	12.2
Fillmore	13.2
California	14.2
Santa Paula	14.7
Oxnard	15.1

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

**Measurement.** Percent of people of all ages in poverty.

### **Children in Poverty**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** Just as childcare employment is linked to the future of our County, State and Nation, so is the poverty level of our children. Healthy children are the very building blocks for a healthy society. The degree to which our children are beset with personal and social ills is the very degree to which the next generation of our adult society will be beset with the same problems. Families in poverty with children characteristically also suffer from poor diet, inadequate health care, delinquency, low self esteem and other emotional ills, and low educational performance. These difficulties spawn many of the primary social ills of our adult society: crime, unemployment, suicide, illiteracy, disease, drug use, etc. The very fabric of society is ultimately affected as these children grow into adults. The social and economic costs to our nation are enormous.

**How Are We Doing?** The United States: “Despite the enormous wealth in the United States, our child poverty rate is among the highest in the developed world.” (Anna E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Book, State Profiles of Child Well-Being, 2001, p. 20) A recent study of 17 developed countries shows that the United States had the highest child poverty rate of all of them. (Rainwater, Lee and Timothy M. Smeeding, 1995, Doing Poorly: The Real Income of American Children in Comparative Perspective, Working Paper No. 127, Luxembourg Income Study, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University) Another shows that of all the industrialized countries only Russia has a higher rate than the United States. (UNICEF, The State of the World’s Children 2000, p. 76 as cited in Kids Count Data Book, p. 20)

In spite of this dismal situation, the 2000 poverty rate shows improvement. The Census Bureau indicates that the rate for children in the United States fell in 2000 to 16.2%, the lowest since 1979. This translates nonetheless into about 12 million children, almost sixteen times the population of Ventura County. (Census Bureau, Website: Poverty in the United States, Table A-2). Additionally the average poor child fell farther below the poverty line in 1998 and 1999 than any time since 1979. (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, as cited above).

California: In 1990 18.2% of California children lived in poverty. By 1993, the height of the recession, this level had risen to 26.4% percent, or 2,331,091. (California Institute for Federal Policy Research, Web page: [www.calinst.org](http://www.calinst.org), Income and Poverty Data, p. 2.) This dropped slightly by 1998 to 25%, or 2,223,700, and perhaps further by 2000. Also, in extreme poverty in 1998 were 9% or 832,484 (defined as fifty percent of the poverty level). (Anna E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Book, State Profiles of Child Well-Being, 2001, p. 50)

As the United States rates poorly when compared to other developed countries, so does our State when compared to the rest of the U.S. California is ranked 44<sup>th</sup> of our 50 states. In 1993 14.8% of all United States children in poverty lived in our state.

**Table 18.--California, Children in Poverty –1980-2000, Percent**

	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>
California	15.2	18.2%	26.4%	25%	19% (1)

**Sources:** SCAG; (1) U.S. Census Bureau, Website: [www.census.gov/c2ss](http://www.census.gov/c2ss). Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001- Note: applies to related children only, not completely comparable to other years.

Ventura County: Our County, however, compares well with the rest of SCA|G. Since 1980 Ventura County has had the lowest percentage of children in poverty in the SCAG area (the earliest data available), including Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. (**Table 19**) From 1980 to 1990 Ventura County was the only SCAG county that did not increase the percent of children in poverty. In the depths of the recession in 1993, these levels peaked, and began dropping in the late '90's. The U.S. Census Bureau in 1995 estimated there were 29,450 children under age 18 in poverty and 17,650 related children age 5-17 in families in poverty in Ventura County.

**Table 19.--Percent of Children in Poverty-1980-2000, Comparative Counties**

<b>County</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997 (3)</b>	<b>2000</b>
Ventura	10.2	10.2	16.00	13.8 (1)	16.6	13.0 (2)

Riverside	15.5	15.80	21.90	n.a.	22.7	22.0
San Bernardino	14.7	17.9	17.5	n.a.	25.7	22

**Sources:** (1) U.S. Census Bureau, Model-Based Income and Poverty Estimates for Ventura County, California in 199[6]"; (2) U.S. Census Bureau, Website: [www.census.gov/c2ss](http://www.census.gov/c2ss). Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001; (3) www.Childrennow.Org, Website, California County Data Book.

**Measurement.** The percent of all children in poverty.

### **Social Sector**

#### **Crime**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** The perception and the reality of being safe at home and in public places affects the mental, physical and economic well being of every citizen. It affects one's willingness to participate in public affairs, to walk and drive the streets, to attend public meetings, to open your front door to strangers and friends, in short, virtually every aspect of life.

**How is Ventura County Doing?** Focusing on violent crime, we find the County is at least two times safer statistically than our comparison counties, SCAG and the State. Some of its cities are amongst the safest in the nation. (**Table 20** and **Table 21**; U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, March, 2000)

Violent crime constitutes but a small portion of all crime, but is that of greatest concern for personal safety. Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. In California and Ventura County, violent crime peaked in 1992. (California. Attorney General. Website: [Caag.state.ca.us/cjsc/publications](http://Caag.state.ca.us/cjsc/publications), Table 1, California Crime Index, 1952-2000) The rate has since steadily declined. (**Table 20**) The FBI reports that for the first six months of 2001, violent crime dropped an additional 1.3% across the country. Property crime declined from 1991 through 1999, increased till this year, and appeared to be dropping in 2001. Ventura County's violent and property crime rate continued declining all the way through 2001. (**Table 21**, Los Angeles Times, April 8, 2002)

The greatest number of violent crimes, of course, occurred in the largest city, Oxnard, but the highest rate of crime is in Santa Paula, the eighth largest city, giving it the third highest total. (**Table 22**) The number one, lowest crime rate is in Simi Valley, but it has the sixth highest number of crimes in the ten cities.

**Table 20.--Rate of Violent Crime, 1985-2000 (per 100,000 population), Rank Order**

<u>Area</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2000</u>
Ventura	<b>328.10</b>	<b>426.20</b>	<b>546.1</b>	<b>427.80</b>	<b>355.20</b>	<b>275.7</b>
SCAG	943.50	1369.50	n.a.	1114.80	891.20	428.2
San Bernardino	820.90	1071.50	1116.7	922.50	695.90	526.3
Riverside	653.50	1054.80	1793.3	946.30	787.90	607.9
California	773.80	1055.30	1103.9	951.20	781.00	610.5

**Source:** California. Attorney General. Website: [Caag.state.ca.us/cjsc/publications](http://Caag.state.ca.us/cjsc/publications), Table 1, California Crime Index, 1952-2000)

**Table 21.--Ventura County Cities, Violent Crime, Offenses Known to the Police\*, and Reported Crimes, 1999-2000--Rank Order, Rate Per 100,000**

<u>City</u>	<u>1999</u> <u>Offenses</u>	<u>Rate per</u> <u>100,000</u>	<u>2000</u> <u>Offenses</u>	<u>Rate per</u> <u>100,000</u>
Simi Valley	117*	104	74**(First 6	x

			months)	
Thousand Oaks	156*/154	131	178	148
Camarillo	121*/99	160	77	122
Moorpark	53*/53	178	50	168
Unincorporated Area	190	204	165	176
Ojai	25	303	16	194
Port Hueneme	70*	333	n.a.	n.a.
Ventura	334*	337	161** (First 6 months)	x
Fillmore	48*47	355	59	445
Oxnard	850*	542	489** (First 6 mo.)	x
Santa Paula	163*	603	n.a.	n.a.

**Source:** Ventura County Sheriff. Website: 1999/2000, Offense Comparison, All Crimes, Website; \*FBI, Website: Table 8, Offenses Known to the Police, Cities and Towns over 10,000 in Population, 1999; \*\*FBI, Website: Crime Index Trends, Offenses Known to Law Enforcement, January through June 2000.

**Legend:** x = not applicable; n.a.= not available

**Table 22.--Violent Crimes Committed per 1000 residents- 2001, Rank Order]**

	Rate per 1000
Moorpark	1.2
Simi Valley	1.3
Thousand Oaks	1.4
Camarillo	1.7
Ojai	2.5
Fillmore	2.6
Overall County	2.6
Ventura	2.7
Port Hueneme	3.2
Santa Paula	4.3
Oxnard	4.6

**Source:** Ventura County Sheriff; Police Depts. Of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Simi Valley and Ventura, as cited in the Los Angeles Times, April 8, 2002, Daryl Kelley.

**Measurement.** Rate of violent crimes per 100,000 population.

### **Education**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** A well educated populace is the very basis of the foundation of our modern society. Education is important in determining personal success in the job market and one’s ability to contribute positively to society. An educated family is better equipped to deal with the complexities of daily life: insurance policies, annual taxes, home and health maintenance, computers, budgeting, etc. The better educated the family, the more it can contribute to the community: volunteering to help those less fortunate, voting wisely, participating on juries, filling out Census forms, etc.

**How is Ventura County Doing?** A high rating for this indicator will show how well equipped our society is to move positively into the future. There are many possible measurements. Only three are used here.

New Graduation Rates. From 1999 to 2000 72.2% of high school students in Ventura County graduated with their class, a significant increase from 66.3% over the 1997-98 period. (**Table 23**) This is the highest rate in our comparative areas. All the compared jurisdictions also improved.

Dropout rates. Ventura County has the lowest dropout rate for Grades 9-12 compared to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties and the State. (**Table 24**) Moreover, from 1998-99, Ventura County's rate dropped while the other two counties rose and the State stayed the same.

Graduates in California Public Schools Completing All Courses Required for the University of California and/or California State University Entrance. The rates for Los Angeles, San Bernardino and the State improved from 1992-3 to 1997-98. But since 1997-98, only the Ventura and Riverside County rate of students prepared to go on the California universities has slightly improved while that for the other counties and the State has regressed. (**Table 25**)

**Measurement.** The percentage of high school students graduating with their class. (**Table 23**)

**Table 23.--**Graduation Rates in Public Schools, 1994-95 to 1999-00: State and County Comparison

<u>Area</u>	<u>1994-95</u>	<u>1997-98</u>	<u>1998-99</u>	<u>1999-00</u>
San Bernardino	63.20	61.30	63.9	64.6
California	n.a.	67.3	68.3	68.7
Riverside	65.30	64.20	67.2	70.3
<b>Ventura</b>	68.90	66.30	73.4	72.2

**Note:** Graduation rate is the current number of graduates expressed as a percent of grade 9 enrollment 4 years earlier

**Source:** California. Dept. of Education, Website, Dataquest, Educational Demographic Unit. .

**Table 24.--**Annual Dropout Rates for Grades 9 through 12 in California Public School Districts, Comparative Areas, 1995-96 to 1999-00

<u>Area</u>	<u>1995--96</u>	<u>1997-98</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>1998-99</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>1999-00</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Ventura	2.90%	2.10%	800	1.9	728	1.8	721
Riverside	2.80%	2.50%	2008	2.2	1825	2.4	2131
California	3.9%	2.9	47,036	2.8	46,470	2.8	47,282
San Bernardino	4.70	3.50	3444	2.6	2641	3.1	3326

**Source:** California Dept of Education, Website, Dataquest, County Level Reports, and as cited on California Institute for County Government, Website.

**Table 25.--**Numbers of 12th Grade Graduates in California Public Schools Completing All Courses Required for U.C. and/or C.S.U. Entrance, Comparative Areas, 1992-3 to 1998-9.

<u>Area</u>	<u>1992-3</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Graduates</u>	<u>1997-8</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Graduates</u>	<u>1998-9</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Graduates</u>
Los Angeles	34.8	66,900	40.1	72,135	38	75,382
Riverside	30.7	10,591	29	14,002	32.2	14,863
San Bernardino	22.1	13,023	25.8	16,509	25.2	17,651
Ventura	38.30	6670	36.40	7076.00	36.6	7407
California	33.1	249,320	36.6	282,897	35.6	299,221

**Source:** California. Dept. of Education, as cited on Website, California Institute for County Government.

## Health

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** The health of individuals and their families is crucial to their overall welfare. There is nothing more personal and important.

### **How is Ventura County Doing?**

The United States Surgeon General developed the Healthy 2000 program to measure the nation's health. There are 300 objectives. 15 are used here. In all but one indicator, tuberculosis, Ventura County is better than Riverside and San Bernardino. (**Table 26**) There is one tie with San Bernardino for suicides for the 1996-1998 period. However, Ventura County is significantly better in most of the categories. These differences are partially explained by significant disparities in educational achievement, poverty levels and income. (See above chapters)

**Table 26.--**Health Status Profile, 1995-1997 vs. 1996-1998, Comparative Areas

	<u>Ventura</u>	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>San Bernardino</u>	<u>National Objectiv</u>

							<u>e</u>
	<b>1995-1997</b>	<b>1996-1998</b>	<b>1995-1997</b>	<b>1996-1998</b>	<b>1995-1997</b>	<b>1996-1998</b>	
<b>Birth cohort Infant Death Rate</b>	<b>5.1**</b>	<b>5.4**</b>	7.8	7.2	8.0	7.7	7.0
<b>Late or No Prenatal Care - % of live births</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>11.3</b>	24.2	23.5	25.6	24.0	10.0
<b>Low Birth weight Infants - % of live births</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>	6.1	6.3	6.7	6.5	5.0
<b>Births to Teens-per 1000 Females, ages 15-19</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>44.6</b>	69.7	65.3	73.8	69.4	none
<b>Syphilis- Crude case rate</b>	<b>.28**</b>	<b>.18**</b>	.65**	.47**	.90**	.45**	4.0
<b>AIDS –crude case rate</b>	<b>9.0**</b>	<b>7.24**</b>	18.42**	17.44**	11.57**	9.60**	43.0
<b>Tuberculosis-crude case rate</b>	<b>10.35</b>	<b>9.44</b>	6.24	5.62	8.12	7.44	3.50
<b>Coronary Heart Disease*</b>	<b>79.2**</b>	<b>75.2**</b>	107.5	107.4	127.3	123.4	100.0
<b>All Cancer Sites*</b>	<b>102.7**</b>	<b>101.1**</b>	114.5**	112.3**	122.6**	119.9**	130
<b>Cerebrovascular Disease*</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>22.9</b>	24.5	23.9	26.5	25.0	20.0
<b>Motor Vehicle Accidents*</b>	<b>11.0**</b>	<b>9.6**</b>	18.3	17.5	17.3	15.0	14.2
<b>Firearm Related Deaths*</b>	<b>8.4**</b>	<b>8.7**</b>	14.0	12.4	16.4	14.2	11.6
<b>Suicide Deaths*</b>	<b>9.9**</b>	<b>9.8**</b>	11.7	10.8	10.9	9.8**	10.5
<b>Homicide Deaths*</b>	<b>4.7**</b>	<b>4.7**</b>	10.4	8.9	12.4	10.8	7.2
<b>Drug Related Deaths</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.4</b>	8.0	7.1	7.5	7.1	3.0

Notes: \* Age adjusted death rate; \*\*meet Healthy People 2000 Objective

Source: California. Dept. of Health Services, County Health Status Profiles, 1999 and 2000, as published on Website: [www.dhs.cahwnet.gov](http://www.dhs.cahwnet.gov).

Ventura County has reached the most Healthy People 2000 objectives of the three counties. (Table 27) Nine were achieved: infant deaths, syphilis, AIDS, coronary heart disease, all cancer sites, motor vehicle accidents, firearm, suicide and homicide deaths.

**Table 27.--Healthy People 2000 Objectives Met**

Ventura County	9
Riverside	3
San Bernardino	4

In spite of the significant differences noted above, the top 4 leading causes of death are the same in all areas compared.

**Table 28.--Top 3 Leading Causes of Death**

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Ventura</u>	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>San Bernardino</u>	<u>California</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
1.00	HTD	HTD	HTD	HTD	HTD
2.00	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN	CAN
3.00	STK	STK	STK	STK	STK
4.00	CPD	CPD	CPD	CPD	CPD

**Legend:** HTD-Heart Disease; CAN-Cancer; STK=Cerebrovascular disease; CPD-pulmonary disease

**Source:** University of Southern California, Southern California Studies Center, "Health Indicators in Southern California", Health Atlas of Southern California, 1999, p. 11-13.

Related Data. Physicians. The number of available doctors is vital to the overall health of the populace. The Los Angeles Metropolitan area ranks at the bottom of the nine largest such areas in the country in terms of "physicians per 100,000 population." None of the three compared counties can match the number of active doctors available to California or the US (Table 29).

This is generally viewed as a negative. However, given the above Healthy 2000 rankings for Ventura County noted above, this perhaps can be explained by the relative high health of our residents. They may not need as much care. This in turn is also affected by other factors such as wealth and education.

**Table 29.--Health Care Resources, 1996**

<u>Ventura</u>	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>San Bernardino</u>	<u>California</u>	<u>US</u>
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<b>Active doctors(non-federal; per 100,000 pop. - 1996</b>	<b>190.00</b>	134.00	166.00	240.00	247.00
<b>General Acute Care Beds</b>	<b>157.00</b>	216.00	197.00	247.00	n.a.

Source: IBID, p.15.

The data for earlier periods is not apparently available, therefore a statement regarding our progress cannot be made in this year's report.

**Measurement.** Number of Healthy 2000 Objectives that have been achieved.

## **Civic Engagement**

### **How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?**

The involvement of our citizens in social and civic functions and organizations is a critical building block in the overall strength of our society. Our institutions need our support. Participation builds trust in the system and provides stability. The juries, the Planning Commissions, the service clubs, the charitable funds, all need dedicated people. There are few things that the citizens of the United States are asked to do for their country: voting, paying taxes, jury duty and answering the decennial Census are major ones. The degree to which our citizens support these minimal duties is a good indicator of our level of civic engagement. In recent years, however, our citizenry's involvement in government and their communities has generally decreased. (Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," Journal of Democracy, 6:1, January, 1995, p. 67)

### **How Is Ventura County Doing?**

There are many measures of civic engagement, but only two crucial ones that are readily available will be used: voter turnout and census response.

#### **Voter turnout**

Voting is the single easiest way citizens have to directly express their collective views. It is one of the most effective in that the end result is electing one's own representative or deciding a

ballot measure. Unfortunately, national trends for Presidential election years in the last 34 years show a significant decline in the percent of eligible and registered voters that go to the polls. In 1964, 69.3 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot and by 1996 and 1998, respectively, this had dipped to 52.2 and 41.9 percent. (**Table 30**) The average over this period was 69.3 percent. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Website: [www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/history/htab01.txt](http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/history/htab01.txt), p.1)

For registered voters the picture is not too different. In 1966 and 1968, respectively, with 70.3 percent and 74.3 percent returns, the 1996 and 1998 returns had dipped to 65.9 percent and 62.1 percent. The average for the period was 66 percent. The 1998 Federal election was the lowest since records have been kept. It was also the lowest regular General election for the State since 1910. (Two special elections had less turnout in 1974/79)

For Ventura County, 1998 was the lowest General Election result ever, going back to the beginning of record keeping in 1920. Generally Ventura County follows the same patterns as the State and Federal, but our overall average turnout is higher at 72.6%. (**Figure 2**) But the trend since 1972 has been a reduced percent of voters. The vote was up in 2000 over 1996, but did not match the 1992 election, despite the closeness of the results. For reference, in the 2002 Gubernatorial Primary Election, March 5<sup>th</sup>, in Ventura County, there were 385,140 registered voters, of which only 30% turned out.

Ventura County had the best turnout of all comparative areas in the 2000 election and is therefore doing relatively well in this aspect of civic engagement. (**Table 31**)

**Table 30.--Percent of Registered Voters Voting**

	<b>Federal</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>County</b>
1966	70.3	79.2	77.5
1968	89.7	85.8	86.4
1970	68.1	76.2	76.4
1972	79.9	82.3	83.1
1974	62.2	64.1	66.3
1976	77.6	81.5	83
1978	62.6	70.4	73.7
1980	76.5	77.2	82.3
1982	64.1	69.8	73.1
1984	74.6	74.9	77.5
1986	64.3	59.4	59.2
1988	72.5	72.8	75.6
1990	62.2	58.6	60.8
1992	78	75.3	76.9
1994	62.5	60.5	63.1
1996	65.9	65.5	66.4
1998	62.1	57.6	53.5
2000	67.5	69.8	73.6
2002	-	-	51.1

**Source:** (1) Federal Election Commission, Website: [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov), Voter Registration and Turnout 2000, p. 2; (2) California. Secretary of State. Website: [www.vote2000.ss.ca.gov/returns.htm](http://www.vote2000.ss.ca.gov/returns.htm); (3) Ventura County Clerk, Primary and General Election Statistics of Ventura County Since 1920.

**Table 31.--** Voters in 2000 Election, Rank Order by Percent Eligible Voting

<u>Area</u>	<u>Eligible</u>	<u>Percent Eligible</u>	<u>Registered</u>	<u>Percent Registered</u>	<u>Ballots Cast</u>	<u>Percent Registered Voting</u>	<u>Percent Eligible Voting</u>
San Bernardino	1,088,398.00	42.67	691,548	63.54	464,402	67.15	43
Riverside	1,007,246	45.18	634,126	62.96	455,077	71.76	45
California	21,461,275	51.92	15,707,307	73.19	11,142,843	70.94	52
<b><u>Ventura</u></b>	<b>491,135</b>	<b>58.04</b>	<b>387,075</b>	<b>78.81</b>	<b>285,038</b>	<b>73.64</b>	<b>58</b>

**Source:** California. Secretary of State. Website: [vote2000.ss.ca.gov/returns.htm](http://vote2000.ss.ca.gov/returns.htm)

#### Census Response Rate

Once every ten years people are asked to file a Census return. Depending on the length of the questionnaire, this could take up to twenty minutes. Accurate electoral redistricting and distribution of Federal funds depend upon the completeness of the count. Overall, the State improved from 65% in 1990 to 70%. Fortunately, Ventura County responded in 2000 at a higher rate than any of our comparative counties and more than the State as a whole. (**Table 32**) In fact, Ventura County tied for the number one State position with Orange County.

**Table 32.--** 2000 U.S. Census Response Rate

<u>Area</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Riverside	65
San Bernardino	68
Los Angeles	70

California	70
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>76</b>

**Source:** California. Dept. of Finance, The Improvement in California's Mail Response Rate in Census 2000, January, 2001, Table 3.

**Measurement:** Percent of registered voters voting in Presidential elections

## **Physical Environment**

### **Agriculture**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** The preservation of agriculture, along with open space continues to be a primary concern to the public, witness recent votes on SOAR initiatives and the creation of an open space district. Farmland is not just a temporary land use

to be replaced in the future by development (VCOG, Strategies for Livable Communities [SLC], 1998, p. 5). Our soils are extremely valuable and are more efficient, combined with climatic factors, than many other areas of the State. (Value of Agricultural Land T, p. 14) The economic impact of agriculture is enormous, as it brings in over \$2.5 billion annually. (SLC, p. 50) Ventura County is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> nationally in the market value of our agricultural products, and compares favorably to the market values found in our comparative counties. (**Table 33**) Also, over 8% of our jobs are in agricultural industries, including processing and sales (VALT, p. 53)

**Table 33.--Market Value of Agricultural Products-Comparative Counties**

<b>County</b>	<b>Market Value</b>	<b>National Rank</b>
<b>Riverside</b>	\$1,047,525,000	9
<b>Ventura County</b>	\$845,613,000	13
<b>San Bernardino</b>	\$617,833,000	26

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, as cited in SCAG, Economic Chapter, Regional Plan, p. 21.

**How Is Ventura County Doing?**

Since 1994, 1826 acres have been converted. The latest report shows that from 1998 to 2000, 295 acres were lost. (**Table 34**, Land Use Category, subtotal) Ventura County has lost the fewest acres of the comparative counties.

**Table 34.--Farmland Conversion- Ventura County 1998-2000**

<b><u>Land Use Category</u></b>	<b><u>Total Acres '98</u></b>	<b><u>Total Acres '00</u></b>	<b><u>Acres Lost</u></b>	<b><u>Ac. Gained</u></b>	<b><u>Total Change</u></b>	<b><u>Net Change</u></b>
Prime	51,818	51,624	498	304	802	-194
Statewide Importance	37,700	37,613	178	91	269	-87
Unique	22,643	22,608	426	391	817	-35

Local Importance	11,076	11,097	25	46	71	21
<b>Subtotal</b>	123,237	122,942	1127	832	1959	<b>-295</b>
Grazing Land	207,852	206,693	1342	183	1525	-1159
<b>Ag Subtotal</b>	331,089	329,635	2469	1015	3484	-1454
Urban & Built up land	95,522	97,235	802	2515	3317	1713
Other Land	125,403	125,144	1025	766	1791	-259
Water area	3939	3939	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Area Inventoried</b>	555,953	555,953	4296	4296	8592	0

**Source:** California, Dept. of Conservation, Farmland Conversion Report 1998 to 2000, 2001, Table A-40, p. 63.

**Table 35.--Relative Loss of Agricultural Land, Comparative Counties, 1998-2000**

	Total Acres 1998	Total Acres 2000	Acres Lost	Net Change	Percentage of Change
Riverside	501,738	484,821	32,990	-16,917	-3.37%
San Bernardino	50,925	44,741	6,528	-6,184	-12.14%
Ventura	123,237,	122,942	1,127	-295	-0.23%

(1)- Prime, Statewide, Unique, and Local farmland

**Source:** IBID

**Measurement.** The key measurement is how many acres of farmland of all types that have been converted.

### **Air Quality**

**How is it important to the average citizen?** Along with the food and water we consume, there is little more important to our health than clean air. The quality of the air results from all the basic daily decisions of society to carry out the tasks of modern life, driving, smoking, manufacturing, heating, etc. The resultant pollution affects our health. Asthma and other respiratory illness can be caused or exacerbated by air pollution. Ventura County's agriculture can also be affected by it.

**How's Ventura County Doing?** Ventura County is a “severe non attainment” area for the state and federal one-hour ozone air quality standards. In addition, the county is not in attainment of the state standard for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). The county is in attainment for all other state and federal air quality standards. Inland areas of the county exceed the ozone standards more frequently than the coastal areas. (Appendix, **Figure 1**) A comprehensive, long-term air pollution control program has significantly reduced countywide ozone levels over recent years. (**Figure 2**) The number of exceedances of the federal and state one-hour ozone standards have also declined. (Appendix, **Table 1**) These air quality improvements have occurred despite a growing population (**Figure 2**). Although ozone levels have declined in recent years, the county still experiences violations of the federal and state one-hour ozone standards. (Appendix, **Table 2**) However, as mandated by the federal Clean Air Act, attainment of the federal one-hour ozone standard is expected by 2005. Steady progress towards meeting the state one-hour standard is expected as well.

**Measurement.** A. The number of days per year that ozone exceeds the National and State Standards B. The maximum ozone concentrations in parts per million. (**Appendix**)

## **Urban Density**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** Increasing density modestly helps to maximize the retention of open space and agricultural lands, positively impacts the costs of capital improvements and creates an overall better quality of life. Modest increases in density will reduce the use of the automobile which will have many beneficial effects. (VCOG, Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction [VMT], 1995, p. 5-5)

A recent County study of six Ventura County cities shows that compact development, 20% of growth accommodated by infilling and the rest on new land at 50% higher density, would save significant acreages of agricultural land. (Hansen Trust, Value of Agriculture to Ventura County: An Economic Analysis, 1996, pp. 129, 152-154) This compact development was also shown to save significant infrastructure tax driven expenditures.

**How Is Ventura County Doing?** Nationwide, the development of urban land has increased at a faster rate than the populace. From 1982 to 1997 urbanizing land increased 45% and population only 17%. (William Fulton, Who Sprawls Most?, Brookings Institution Survey Series, July, 2001, as cited in International City Managers Assn. et al, Getting to Smart Growth, 100 Policies for Implementation, 2002, p. 9) This, however, is not true for Ventura County or our two comparative Counties. (**Table 35**)

Another factor contributing to the nationwide decrease in density is the size of all homes:

1993 1725 square foot median size home

1999 1928 “ “

The median size home for Los Angeles County is 1649 square feet. All areas were not surveyed. (U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey, 1999, Table 1-3.

House size has increased in spite of the shrinking nationwide trend in household size to 2.61 people. This trend again does not apply to Ventura County. Our average household size increased from 3.02 in 1990 to 3.04 in 2000.

Ventura County has the highest urban area density of the two compared counties, Riverside and San Bernardino, but of course, Los Angeles is much higher. (Table 36)

Oxnard, the County’s largest city is the most dense at 12.7 persons per acre and the smallest city, Ojai, is the least dense at 3.3. However, the second largest city, Thousand Oaks, is the second least dense. (Table 37)

**Table 35.--Urbanized Area vs. Population Growth, Comparative Counties, 1990-2000**

	<u>Urbanized</u> <b>1990</b>	<u>Acres</u> <b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Population</b> <b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Persons</b> <b>/</b> <b>Sq. Mi.</b>
<b>Riverside</b>	207,037	254,968	47,931	23	1,195,400	1,545,387	349,987	29	214.4
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>87,951</b>	<b>97,235</b>	<b>9284</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>671,600</b>	<b>753,197</b>	<b>81,597</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>408.2</b>
<b>Los Angeles</b>	148,690	162,513	13,823	9	8,897,500	9,519,338	621,838	7	22344. 1
<b>San Bernardino</b>	210,266	237,898	27,63 2	13	1,440,700	1,709,434	268,734	19	85.2

**Source:** California. Dept. of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring; California. Dept. of Finance, 7/1/90; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Website: www. Quickfacts. Census. Gov.

**Table 36.--Urbanized Area Density , Comparative Counties, 1990-2000**

	<b>1990 Density</b> <b>Persons/Acre</b>	<b>2000 Density</b>
<b>San Bernardino</b>	6.9	7.2
<b>Riverside</b>	5.8	6.1
<b>Ventura</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.8</b>
<b>Los Angeles</b>	59.8	64.0

**Source:** California. Dept. of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring.

**Table 37.--Ventura County Cities, Urbanized Land Density, 2001**

**2001**

<b>Ventura*</b>	12175	102,574	8.4
<b>Sta. Paula*</b>	2438	29,303	12.0
<b>Oxnard*</b>	13982	177,700	12.7
<b>Ojai</b>	2413	7970	<b>3.3</b>
<b>Thou.Oaks</b>	31,309	119,411	3.8
<b>Simi Valley</b>	23,446	114,837	4.8
<b>Camarillo*</b>	9478	58,817	6.2
<b>Moorpark*</b>	4828	32,151	6.6
<b>Port H.</b>	2792	22,249	7.9
<b>Fillmore*</b>	1435	14,096	9.8

**Urban Ac.   Population   Persons/acre**

**Source:** Total City Acres, Ventura County GIS, City Limits, 2001.

What does the future hold as measured by the various General Plans in the six cities asterisked in Table 37? The numbers indicate a density reduction: 1994- **8.2** people per acre vs. 2010- **8.1** people per acre.

However, forces may be at work to cause changes in this trend. Recent study confirms that to accommodate forecasted new development within the existing City Sphere of Influences and the newly adopted SOAR boundaries will require densities of about nine dwelling units to the acre. (VCOG, Livable Communities Strategy/Infill Study, March, 2000).

**Measurement.** Persons per acre.

### **Vehicle Miles Traveled**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is a measure of the total number of miles driven daily by all vehicles. With a constant increase in vehicle miles traveled the public experiences increased gasoline usage and costs, more time consuming congestion and increased air pollution. This is one problem that the average citizen contributes to and can also help to improve. This is why the Benchmark Indicator is miles traveled per person. The Ventura Council of Government's 1995 Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction Final Report (VMT Report) contains great detail on the causes, impacts and principles of reduction

and is an excellent resource for developing land use and transportation planning policies to assist with this issue. (**Available in Ventura County Planning Dept.**) This excellent document can also assist the public in understanding the extent of their contribution to the problem and practical methods to better the situation.

**How is Ventura County Doing?** From 1990-2000, VMT increased faster, 15.4% than the population growth of Ventura County, 12.6%. (**Table 38**) The most current 1999-2000 Caltrans estimates also show that VMT growth continues to outstrip population growth. Our County also has the highest 1990 miles per person, 23, as compared to Riverside and San Bernardino. This number increased by 2000 to 24.1. (**Table 37**)

**Table 38.--Vehicle Miles Traveled vs. Population Growth, Ventura County, 1990-2000**

	<b>VMT-1990</b>	<b>VMT-1999</b>	<b>VMT-2000</b>	<b>Population Increase 1990-2000-%</b>	<b>VMT Increase 1990-2000-%</b>	<b>Population Increase 1999-2000-%</b>	<b>VMT Increase 1999-2000-%</b>	<b>2000 Miles Traveled/Person</b>
<b>Ventura County</b>	15,353,630	17,714,000	18,131,000	12.6	15.4	1.9	2.35	24.1

**Source:** SCAG, 1994 RME Sub regional Performance Indicators for VCOG; \*Caltrans, Brian Domsick.

**Table 39--Miles Traveled per Person, Comparative Counties, 1990**

	<b><u>Riverside</u></b>	<b><u>San Bernardino</u></b>	<b><u>Ventura</u></b>	
<b>1990 VMT</b>	26,660,527	24,167,055	<b>15,353,630</b>	
<b>1990 Population</b>	1,170,413	1,418,380	<b>669,016</b>	
<b>1990 Miles/person</b>	22.8	17.0	<b>23.0</b>	
<b>2000 Population</b>			<b>753,197</b>	

<b>2000 Miles/Person</b>			24.1	
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**Source:** SCAG, State of the Region Report, 1993, p. 11.22; U.S. Census Bureau.

**Measurement.** Daily VMT per person.

### **Ocean Water Quality**

**How is it important to the average citizen?** Ventura County is home to 42 miles of Pacific Ocean coastline, which to the residents is a priceless asset. To ensure responsible access to the beaches within the county, the Environmental Health Department of the Resource Management Agency conducts weekly sampling of ocean water at over 50 beaches. The purpose of this sampling is to monitor the bacteria levels of the ocean water and to measure the findings against state standards. Regular updates along with much more valuable information can be found on their website: (<http://www.ventura.org/envhealth/programs.htm>) .

The mission of Ventura County’s Environmental Health Department is, “to assure the protection of human health and of the environment through the routine monitoring of coastal marine waters for bacterial contamination; to provide information as to the bacteriological quality of these waters; and to coordinate with private organizations and public agencies.”

**How Is Ventura County Doing?** Since the Environmental Health Department reported to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in December of 1999, there have been thousands of samples taken from over 50 beaches weekly to ensure proper access limitations with regard to state standards. Previously for the 2965 routine ocean water samples gathered by November, 1999, 97.% of the samples complied with the State standards. The beach closure days were up substantially from 2000 to 2001. In 2001, 1212 of the 2497 were from two beaches, Hobie Beach and Kiddie Beach. The remainder is 1285 beach closure days for 2001.

**Table 40.--Ventura County Beach Closure Days, 2000 and 2001**

2000: 869  
2001: 2497

**Source:** Environmental Health Web Site

It was concluded that high counts can occur at any beach usually after a storm and especially near drains.

**Measurement.** Beach closure days

### **Bird Population**

**How Is It Important to the Average Citizen?** “Birds are an ‘ecological litmus paper. Because of their rapid metabolism and wide geographical range, they reflect changes in the environment quickly; they warn us of things out of balance sending out signals whenever there is a deterioration in the ecosystem.” (Roger Tory Peterson as cited on [http://www. Audobon.org](http://www.Audobon.org)) Two practical examples of this are the canaries that miners historically used to test for poisonous gases and the sentinel chickens that Ventura County Environmental Health uses to warn of encephalitis infected mosquitoes.

For the last one hundred years the Audobon Society has counted birds nationwide from December 14 to January 5<sup>th</sup>. From the original 25 count areas there are now over 1800 with over 52,000 participants. In the 102<sup>nd</sup> Count over fifty-one million birds were counted.

### **How is Ventura County Doing?**

The counts show that the sub-area totals do not vary much. Unfortunately it appears that only the last three years of data are readily available for our County. Using the litmus paper analogy, this appears to mean there are no major poisons or infections in our physical environment. This bodes well for the people as well as the birds that live here.

**Table 41.--Ventura County Bird Counts**

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>Thousand Oaks Count</u></b>	<b><u>Ventura Count</u></b>
<b>1999</b>	159 species	179 species
<b>2000</b>	165	181
<b>2001</b>	158	173

**Measurement.** Annual species reported in the Christmas bird counts.

## **Appendix**

### **Air Quality Report Card**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>TREND</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>
Air Quality	Up	B+	Ventura County is a “severe nonattainment” area for the state and federal one-hour ozone air quality standards. In addition, the county is not in attainment of the state standard for fine particulate matter (PM <sub>10</sub> ). The county is in attainment for all other state and federal air quality standards. Inland areas of the county exceed the ozone standards more frequently than the coastal areas. A comprehensive, long-term air pollution control program

			has significantly reduced countywide ozone levels over recent years. The number of exceedances of the federal and state one-hour ozone standards have also declined. These air quality improvements have occurred despite a growing population (see attached tables). Although ozone levels have declined in recent years, the county still experiences violations of the federal and state one-hour ozone standards. However, as mandated by the federal Clean Air Act, attainment of the federal one-hour ozone standard is expected by 2005. Steady progress towards meeting the state one-hour standard is expected as well.
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**TABLE 1**  
**NUMBER OF DAYS EXCEEDING THE NATIONAL AND STATE**  
**AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR OZONE**

(1-hour standard<sup>1</sup>)

<b>Location</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
El Rio	0/9*	0/12	3/17	1/8	0/7	0/7	0/8	0/2	0/1	0/1
Ventura	0/5	2/12	0/4	2/5	0/3	0/4	1/10	0/2	0/0	0/0
Simi Valley	14/86	32/97	6/58	8/40	15/80	22/85	13/73	2/47	4/37	2/31
Piru	4/46	4/44	0/15	0/4	2/19	1/20	0/17	0/6	1/4	0/3
Ojai	2/27	4/30	4/33	1/23	2/17	2/27	2/38	0/10	0/13	0/7
T. Oaks	3/27	0/20	2/31	4/22	2/28	1/28	5/26	0/20	1/13	0/9
Countywide	18/99	33/106	10/69	13/58	17/88	23/90	17/80	2/59	5/41	2/33

<sup>1</sup> Federal 1-hour standard - >0.12 parts per million; State 1-hour standard - >0.09 parts per million

\* Number of days exceeding national standard/number of days exceeding state standard.

Source: Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD), March 2000

**TABLE 2**  
**MAXIMUM OZONE CONCENTRATIONS - VENTURA COUNTY**

(hourly average - parts per million)

<b>Location</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
El Rio	0.12	0.12	0.14*	0.14	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.10
Ventura	0.11	0.13	0.11*	0.14	0.10	0.12	0.13	0.11	0.09	0.09
Simi Valley	0.16	0.17	0.14	0.15	0.16	0.17	0.16	0.13	0.17	0.13
Piru	0.14	0.15	0.12	0.11	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.13	0.10
Ojai	0.14	0.17	0.15	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.11	0.11	0.11

T. Oaks	0.17	0.12	0.13*	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.14	0.12	0.13	0.11
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\* Does not meet representative criteria

Source: Ventura County APCD, March 2000

This Report was  
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