

**Nevada State Water Plan**  
**PART 1 — BACKGROUND AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT**

**Section 5**  
**Socioeconomic Background**

*Introduction*

This section of the *Nevada State Water Plan* provides an overview of demographic and economic characteristics and trends within the State of Nevada. Nevada's seventeen counties have shown considerable variation in their population's growth rates and other economic conditions. To facilitate a better understanding of these county-specific conditions and trends, individual county socioeconomic overviews have been compiled as stand-alone publications in support of the state water plan.

Nevada's present and future water needs can only be determined in concert with a thorough understanding of the trends in the state's population growth and economic prospects. This overview of Nevada's socioeconomic characteristics is intended to provide the baseline information upon which future water demands can be determined. By analyzing and combining economic conditions and water usage patterns with forecasts of future socioeconomic trends, a more accurate picture of Nevada's future water use needs can be derived.

*Early Settlement Patterns, Economic Pursuits and Population Trends*

Nevada's earliest European settlements served the needs of the first emigrant wagon trains traveling to Oregon and California. In the 1850's, in the northern part of the state, water diversions for irrigation originated along the Humboldt, Carson, Truckee and Walker rivers to facilitate increased agriculture production, making this the state's first and longest lasting industry. In the southern part of the state, the city of Las Vegas and the valley in which it lies were named for the lush meadows supported by natural artesian springs. The first organized water diversion and irrigation efforts in the state was recorded in the Las Vegas Valley, where early Mormon colonists began diverting the flow of Las Vegas Creek for agricultural purposes.

Later, in the 1860's, the early discoveries of Nevada's vast mineral wealth, particularly with the Comstock Lode (Storey County), Aurora (Mineral County) and Bodie (California), led to an expansion of agriculture and ranching endeavors in Smith and Mason valleys (Lyon County). Carson Valley (Douglas County) and Stillwater (Churchill County) also became important agricultural centers for the early influx of miners. A virtual explosion in population took place in Nevada's various mining districts. Water, and particularly its availability and use, soon influenced Nevada's growth patterns. Early in Nevada's development, water-rights conflicts arose among the mines and ore-

processing mills, the loggers and lumbermen, and the state’s agricultural interests.

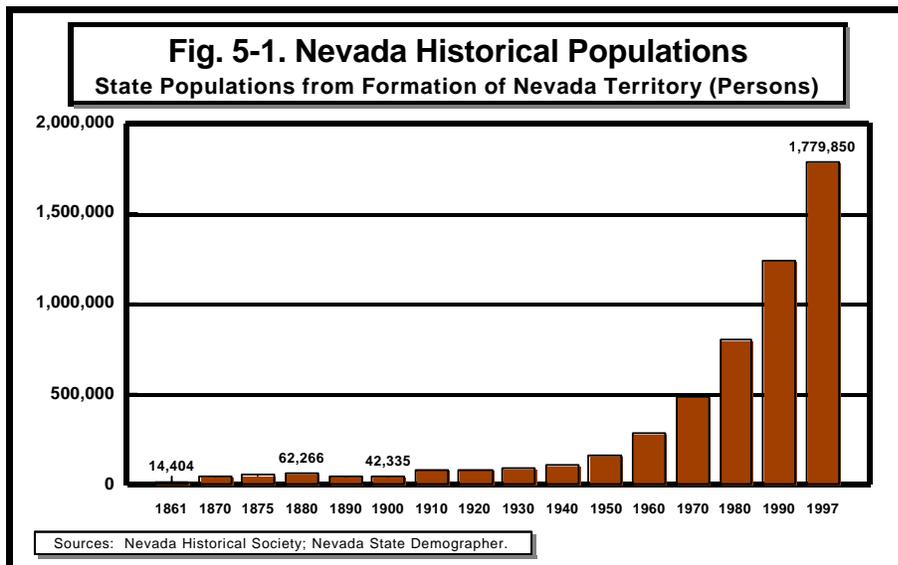
On November 25, 1861, the Nevada Territory was separated from the Utah Territory and the first Nevada Territorial Legislature met in Carson City and carved nine counties out of the newly created territory — Churchill, Douglas, Esmeralda, Humboldt, Lyon, Ormsby (later Carson City), Storey, Washoe and Lake counties. Just over a year later Lake County, which comprised the northern portion of present-day Washoe County, was renamed Rook County, and finally, in 1883, it became incorporated into Washoe County. At its inception, Esmeralda County comprised virtually four-fifths of the area of the new Territory of Nevada, with the remaining eight counties clustered in the northwestern portion of the state. Eventually, Esmeralda County was whittled down, ultimately resulting in the creation of an additional eight counties for Nevada.

While Nevada was still a territory, both Lander County (1862) and Nye County (1864) were created out of Esmeralda County. After statehood was obtained on October 31, 1864, Lincoln County, named after the President who supported Nevada’s entry into the Union, was formed in 1866 out of Nye County. Then, in 1869, Elko and White Pine counties were created out of Lander County, as was Eureka County in 1873. Later, in 1908, Clark County was formed out of the southern portion of Lincoln County, Mineral County was formed in 1911 out of Esmeralda County, and finally, rounding out Nevada’s present 17 counties, Pershing County was formed in 1919 out of the southern portion of Humboldt County. (See the Nevada and county map on the inside of the front cover.)

Based on a special territorial census conducted in 1861, Nevada’s population was recorded at 14,404 persons, with the greatest portion, or 4,581 persons, residing in and around Virginia City (Storey County). By the 1870 census, Nevada’s population had risen dramatically to 42,491 persons, of which 11,359 inhabitants, or 27 percent of the state’s total, were located in Virginia City and its environs, and 7,189 persons, or another 17 percent of the state’s total population, were located in and around Ely in White Pine County. These constituted the two principal mining centers in the state at that time. Meanwhile, Reno’s (Washoe County’s) population of only 3,224 persons comprised less than eight percent of the state’s total population, while Las Vegas (Clark County) was still part of

Lincoln County (1870 population of 2,985) and would not come into its own until 1908.

By 1875 the state’s population had grown to 52,630 persons and that of Virginia City, mirroring the fortunes of the Comstock Lode silver mining boom, had peaked at 19,528 residents, comprising over 37 percent of the state’s total population.

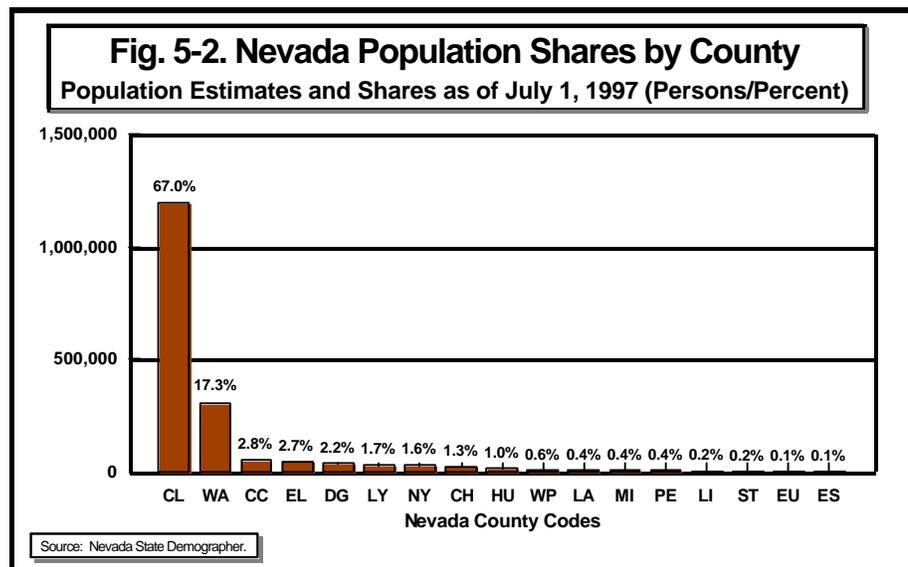


By 1877, however, the era of the Comstock mines was beginning to wane. While mining efforts in this area continued at a far reduced scale for another 20 years, the last of the great bonanzas, uncovered in 1875, steadily and gradually played out after 1880. By the time of the 1880 census, the state’s population had risen to 62,266 persons, although with the decline of the Comstock, Virginia City’s population, at 16,155 persons, had begun its inevitable decline.

By the turn of the century, the collapse of the mining industry produced the state’s Great Depression of 1880–1900, reducing Nevada’s population to 42,335 persons in 1890, down nearly 20,000 persons and 32 percent from that recorded in 1880 (see Figure 5–1). The temporary demise of Nevada’s mining industry led to profound population contractions throughout the state with almost 16,000 persons abandoning the Comstock mining area alone. As a result, by 1900 only 3,673 persons remained in Virginia City to work the mine tailings and eke out an existence as best they could. This exodus from the Comstock continued virtually unabated and by 1930 less than 700 persons remained in the town that had, quite literally, secured a place for Nevada in the Union.

Nevada’s 1900 census of population showed that Reno, located along the Truckee River, had become the dominant socioeconomic center of the state, a distinction it would not relinquish until late in 1950 to Las Vegas. Reno’s 9,141 residents recorded in the 1900 census accounted for almost 22 percent of Nevada’s total population. The other two large communities were Winnemucca, located along the Humboldt River and the path of the Central Pacific Railroad, which accounted for 4,463 of the state’s population, and Elko, with 5,688 residents. Together, these three large agriculture-based economies — Reno, Winnemucca, and Elko — strategically located along both river systems and rail routes, accounted for over 45 percent of Nevada’s 42,335 total residents in 1900. Interestingly, some 30 years before this time, the two major mining areas of the state — Virginia City and Ely — had comprised an identical 45 percent of the state’s total population. By 1890, however, their share of Nevada’s total resident population had fallen to only 13 percent, and would eventually fall to less than one percent by 1997. It was not the last time that mining in Nevada so abruptly altered the socioeconomic patterns and fortunes of a region.

New mineral discoveries and massive infusions of capital and labor brought Nevada back to its feet and effectively ended the state’s 1880–1900 Great Depression. On May 19, 1900, an erstwhile miner named Jim Butler discovered a promising outcrop of ore in the desert of southwestern Nevada. Initial assays revealed over 640 ounces of silver and \$200 of gold per ton. The rush



was on to the Goldfield Mining District and the cycle of prosperity, so reminiscent of the Comstock era, provided an unexpected boon to the state. During the 1900 census, Goldfield's (Esmeralda County) population was recorded at only 1,972 persons. Within five years, this isolated mining community had swelled to between 25,000 and 30,000 persons and was by far the largest community in Nevada. Nearly just as quickly, however, the Goldfield mining boom began its inevitable downward spiral. Goldfield's population fell to 9,369 persons by 1910 and then to only 2,410 persons by the time of the 1920 census, fewer than had been recorded during the 1880 population census of Esmeralda County. Such extreme variations in population would come to characterize early mining in Nevada. Thirty miles to the north of Goldfield, the town of Tonopah (Nye County) also boomed from local gold discoveries, with its population exploding from just 1,140 persons in 1900 to 7,513 persons by 1910.

As further evidence of Nevada's extensive mineral wealth, promising gold deposits were discovered north of Carlin in Eureka and Elko counties in 1907. However, many decades would pass before precious metal prices and advancements in mining extraction and milling technology allowed for the extensive development and cost-effective mining of this vast, but relatively low-grade region of ore, later to be called the "Carlin Trend".

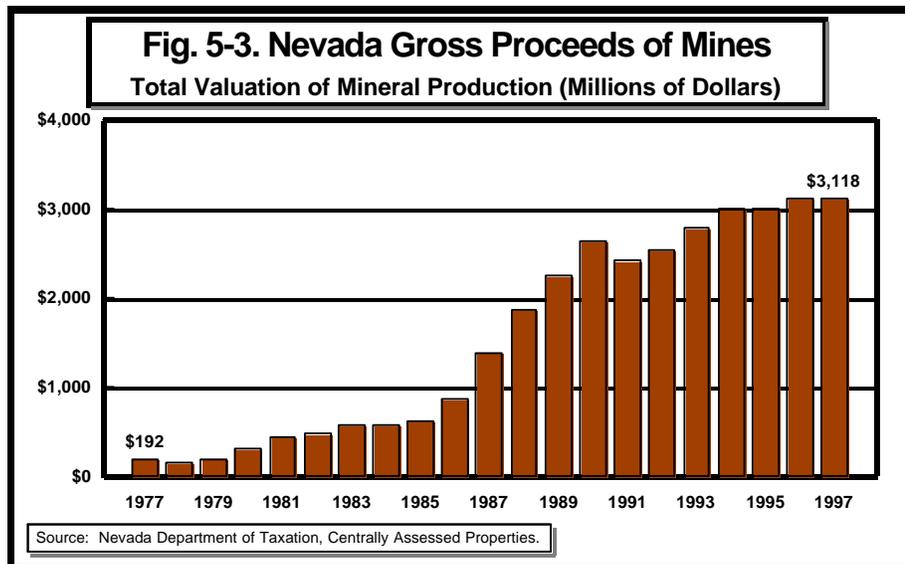
### ***The Development of Modern Nevada***

After the last of the great gold rushes in central Nevada, events began to take place that were destined to dramatically shape Nevada's future and lay the foundations for solid economic growth and prosperity. After an absence of 21 years, gambling again became legal in the State of Nevada on March 19, 1931. At that time, probably few could foresee the far-reaching impacts that the legalization of gaming would have on the state's future socioeconomic development, the fiscal structure of the state, water-use patterns and consumption rates, and the economic prosperity of its citizens. While showing modest growth through the Great Depression era and World War II, after the war the industry began to expand rapidly based largely on improved transportation infrastructure and a more mobile and affluent population.

The development of Nevada's gaming industry since WWII has been complemented by a diversification into other business endeavors as well, most notably warehousing, transportation, manufacturing and distribution. Early railway development was enhanced by Nevada's strategic location and access to the large urban markets of California, Oregon, and Washington, and public warehousing gained a natural foothold in Nevada. Legislative support for these industry pursuits came in the form of a 1949 law granting tax-exempt status to stored personal property awaiting interstate or international transshipment. In 1969, the "Freeport Law" was enhanced further by including "manufacturing" in the list of freeport-allowable processes and interpreting "processing" to include the feeding, watering, and slaughter of livestock. This law has proven to be instrumental in the continued growth and diversification of Nevada's economy.

Based upon Nevada's growing emphasis on gaming, tourism, warehousing and manufacturing, by 1960 nearly 75 percent of Nevada's population of 285,278 inhabitants lived in either Las Vegas with 127,016 persons (45 percent of the total population), or Reno with 84,743 persons (30 percent of

the total population). By the 1970 census, Nevada's population stood at 488,738 persons, of which 56 percent resided in Las Vegas and 25 percent were located in Reno. These two metropolitan areas now accounted for almost 81 percent of Nevada's total population.



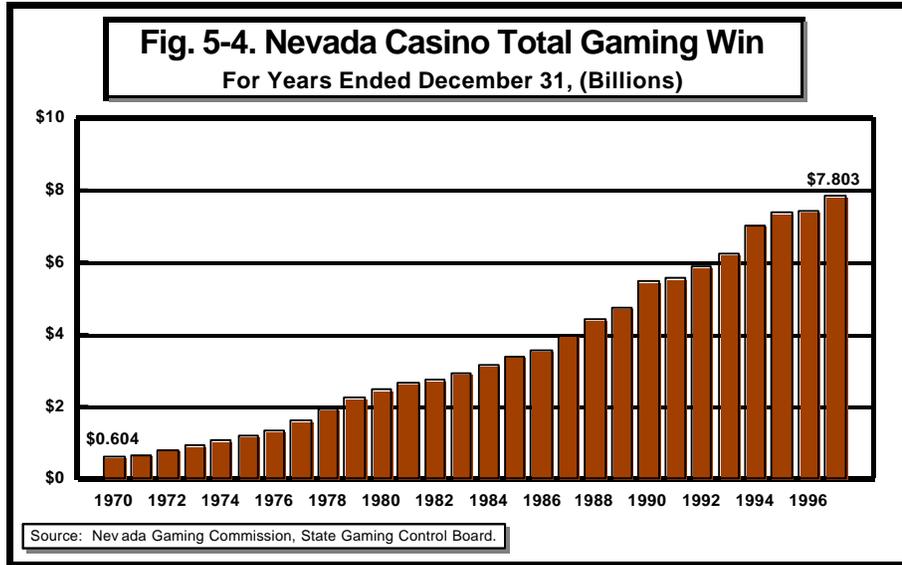
By the late 1970's and early 1980's, the

combination of national inflation, recession, and economic uncertainty had significantly elevated the price of gold and fostered a new resurgence in Nevada mining activities. Although gold had first been discovered along the "Carlin Trend" in 1907, it took the combination of high prices and advanced technology in the extraction and milling processes to promote the extensive development of these new mining operations. Today, the Carlin Trend constitutes Nevada's richest gold deposit and covers a vast area of north-central Nevada, running in approximately a northwesterly direction from Carlin, in Elko County, through the northeast corner of Eureka County, and back into Elko County (see Figure 5-3).

Major expansions in the state's gaming and tourism industry continued through the 1970's, 1980's and especially in the 1990's, when a new paradigm of Nevada casino, the mega-resort hotel and entertainment complex, became evident along the Las Vegas Strip. These full-featured casino, resort, and entertainment complexes firmly established the Las Vegas market as the premier destination resort location in the world, enticing over 30 million visitors in 1997 to the many-varied features (see Figure 5-4). After the severe national recession of 1980-82, which had noticeable effects on the state's gaming industry, the state's political leaders reinforced Nevada's commitment to economic diversification through the creation of a Commission of Economic Development and financial support of regional economic development authorities. With the state's economy and fiscal sources of revenues critically dependent on the health of the casino gaming industry, the state's diversification efforts ably served to present "the other side of Nevada."

During the late 1990's, effective marketing of the state's tourism and gaming attractions, combined with the continued promotion of diversified business interests, made Nevada the fastest growing state in the nation. By 1997, Nevada's resident population was estimated to have reached nearly 1.8 million persons, a considerable expansion from the 14,404 persons recorded in the first special territorial census taken in 1861. This overall growth equated to an average increase of nearly 13,000 persons per year over each of these 136 years. Furthermore, since 1950, Nevada's population has increased by an average of approximately 34,500 persons per year during the last 47 years. Of the total 1997 estimated population of 1,779,850 persons, 1,192,200 persons, or 67.0 percent, were

estimated to be living in Las Vegas, and 308,7000 persons, or 17.3 percent, were living in Reno. Together, these two areas now account for over 80 percent of Nevada's total population. Adding the other principal urban areas of Carson City (50,410 residents) and City of Elko (19,670 residents), produces an urban population concentration in Nevada of over 88 percent (see Figure 5-2).



But growth in Nevada and in particular the high rate of growth, has put severe strains on the state's resource requirements, particularly water. The state's infrastructure needs, social service requirements, police and fire protection, environmental conditions, and overall quality of life have also been affected. While some of the problems related to this rapid growth may be overcome or mitigated with judicious and timely legislation and more effective planning, others may become long-term situations that Nevada's residents in these rapidly growing areas will just have to accept. Despite the issues that growth raises, many believe that growth, appropriately planned and managed, must continue if the state, and its fundamental economic sectors, are to remain competitive and viable.

### ***Geography, Land Ownership, and County Relationships to Hydrographic Regions***

Nevada is situated in the western United States and is bordered by the State of California to the west and south; the states of Oregon and Idaho to the north, and the states of Utah and Arizona to the east. The Colorado River serves as Nevada's southeastern border with part of Arizona.

Nevada is divided into sixteen counties and one incorporated city, Carson City, the state's capital and the former Ormsby County. Nevada has a total surface area of 110,540 square miles and is the seventh largest state in the nation. Figure 5-5 shows county shares of Nevada's total area. From this graph we may see that just two counties — Nye and Elko — account for nearly one-third of Nevada's total area. The relationship between county populations and areas can be seen in Figure 5-9, which shows the population densities in persons per square mile using 1997 population figures. Nevada's overall topography is characterized by basins and ranges consisting of isolated mountain ranges with intervening long and relatively narrow valleys. Most of Nevada, totaling approximately 93,000 square miles, lies within what is called the Great Basin, in which all surface waters drain inward to terminal lakes, sinks, or playas. The highest point in the state is Boundary Peak (13,140

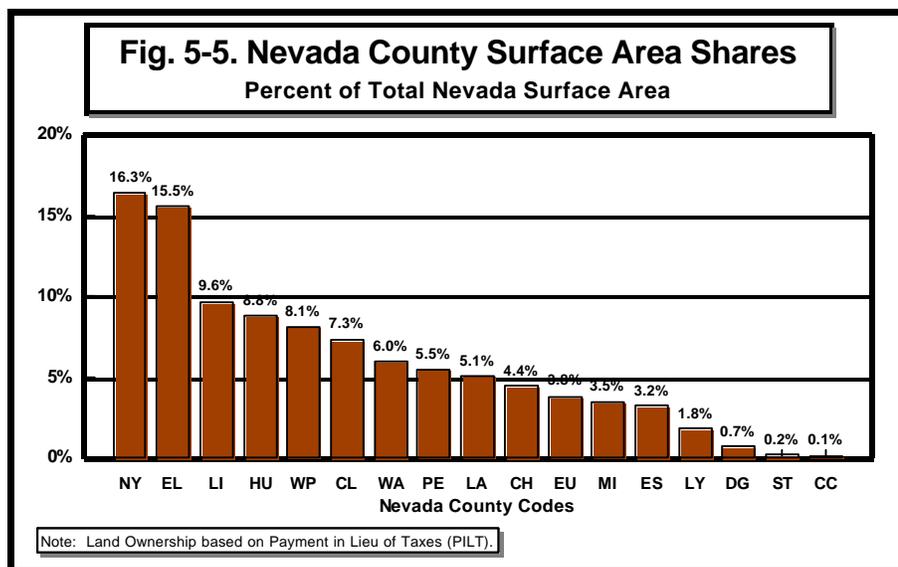
feet above mean sea level, or MSL), located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Esmeralda County and along the border with California. The lowest elevation in the state is 490 feet (MSL) and is located in the southernmost tip of the state along the Colorado River.

Nevada is the driest state in the nation in terms of its average annual rainfall. While the state

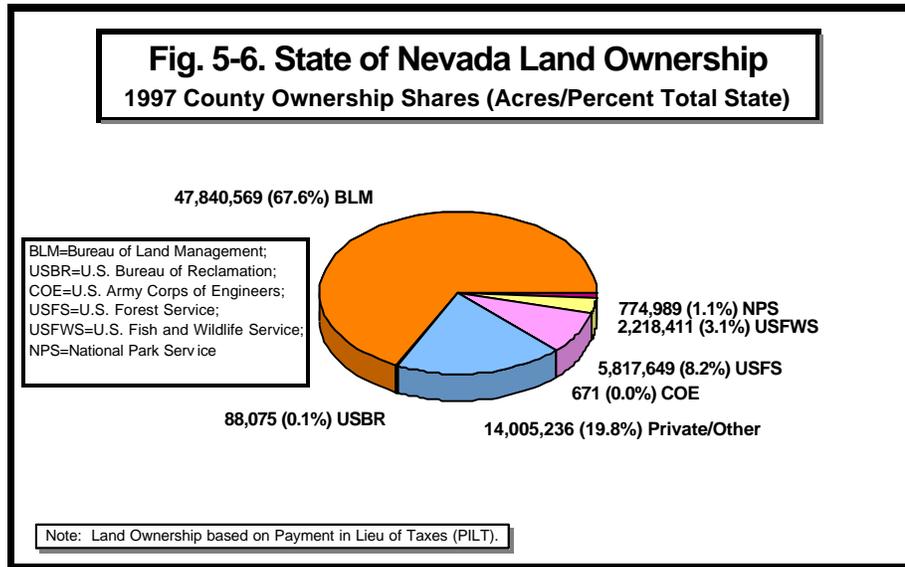
is characterized by a number of high mountain ranges, much of the precipitation driven by the jet stream and coming off the Pacific Coast is blocked by the rain shadow effect of the Sierra Nevada Mountains which lies along Nevada’s western border. Other precipitation entering the state typically comes in from the north and east, affecting the Ruby, Jarbidge, Independence, and East Humboldt mountains in Elko County in northeastern Nevada, and from wet tropical storm systems driven up from the south into Clark County and the Las Vegas area. The seasonal nature of the state’s precipitation, combined with its highly uneven nature, has required the extensive use of dams, reservoirs, lakes and diversion structures to trap the from the mountains in the spring and supply water for irrigation during the growing season and livestock and municipal purposes throughout the year. Groundwater pumping has also proven an increasingly important source of water, particularly for domestic purposes.

Of Nevada’s 70,745,600 acres of surface area, 56,740,364 acres, or over 87 percent of the state’s total area are managed and controlled by the federal government. Of these federally-managed public lands, approximately 47,840,569 acres are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM); 5,817,649 acres are managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS); 2,218,411 acres are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); 774,989 acres are managed by the National Park Service (NPS); 88,075 acres are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR); and 671 acres in Lincoln County are controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). Another 1,114,521 acres of the state lie within Indian Reservations and are held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The state owns 264,166 acres. Relative to other states in the nation, Nevada has the highest percentage of federally-managed public lands. Figure 5–6 presents the areas and shares of the state’s total area that is owned or managed by various entities. This graph is based on the “Payment in Lieu of Tax System (PILT)” and includes only those lands specifically withdrawn for public use for which the federal government pays taxes to the state.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Nevada Division of Water Resources (DWR), Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, have divided the State of Nevada into discrete hydrologic units for water planning and surface and groundwater management purposes. These



have been identified as 232 hydrographic areas (256 hydrographic areas and sub-areas, combined) within 14 major hydrographic regions or basins. These fourteen hydrographic regions (basins) and their 256 hydrographic areas and sub-areas, and their relationship to Nevada’s seventeen counties are presented below and in the map which follows.



- [1] **Northwest Region** — Covers 3,052 square miles (7,905 square kilometers or 1,953,280 acres) of northern Washoe and Humboldt counties and encompasses 16 hydrographic areas; extends into the State of California to the west and the State of Oregon to the north;
- [2] **Black Rock Desert Region** — Covers 8,632 square miles (22,357 square kilometers or 5,524,480 acres) of parts of Washoe, Humboldt, and Pershing counties and includes 17 hydrographic areas, two of which are divided into separate hydrographic sub-areas; extends into the State of California to the west and the State of Oregon to the north;
- [3] **Snake River Basin** — Covers 5,230 square miles (13,546 square kilometers or 3,347,200 acres) in parts of Elko and Humboldt counties and includes eight hydrographic areas; extends into the states of Oregon and Idaho to the north and the State of Utah to the east;
- [4] **Humboldt River Basin** — Covers 16,843 square miles (43,623 square kilometers or 10,779,520 acres) in parts of eight counties — Elko, White Pine, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Nye, Pershing, and Churchill — and the largest river (Humboldt River) wholly contained within Nevada. This basin contains 34 hydrographic areas and one hydrographic sub-area and is one of only two that are wholly contained within the State of Nevada. It originates in the Ruby, Jarbidge, Independence, and East Humboldt Mountain ranges (Elko County) and terminates in the Humboldt Lake and Sink (Pershing and Churchill counties). During particularly wet years, the Humboldt Sink may drain into the Carson Sink by means of the Humboldt Slough;
- [5] **West Central Region** — Covers 1,656 square miles (4,289 square kilometers or 1,059,840 acres) and includes parts of Pershing, Lyon, and Churchill counties and comprises five hydrographic areas. This basin is one of only two waterbasins that are wholly contained within the State of Nevada;
- [6] **Truckee River Basin** — Encompasses 2,300 square miles (5,957 square kilometers or 1,472,000 acres) containing parts of Washoe, Pershing, Churchill, Lyon, Douglas,

Carson City, and Storey counties comprising 12 hydrographic areas; originates in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the State of California and the Lake Tahoe Basin and terminates in Pyramid Lake (Washoe County);

- [7] **Western Region** — Covers 602 square miles (1,559 square kilometers or 385,280 acres) and is contained only in Washoe County in Nevada; contains nine hydrographic areas, one of which is divided into two sub-areas and another into one hydrographic sub-area; extends to the west into the State of California;
- [8] **Carson River Basin** — Covers 3,519 square miles (9,114 square kilometers or 2,252,160 acres) and includes parts of six counties—Douglas, Carson City, Lyon, Storey, Churchill, and Pershing; contains five hydrographic areas and one sub-area; has its origin to the west in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the State of California and its terminus in the Carson Sink and Desert (Churchill and Pershing counties);
- [9] **Walker River Basin** — Covers 3,046 square miles (7,889 square kilometers or 1,949,440 acres) of Mineral, Lyon, and Douglas counties (and a very small portion of Churchill County) and includes five hydrographic areas, one of which has been divided into three hydrographic sub-areas; has its origin to the west in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the State of California and its terminus in Walker Lake (Mineral County);
- [10] **Central Region** — By far the largest hydrographic region in Nevada covering 46,783 square miles (121,167 square kilometers or 29,941,120 acres) in thirteen Nevada counties—Nye, Elko, White Pine, Lincoln, Clark, Humboldt, Pershing, Churchill, Lander, Eureka, Lyon, Mineral, and Esmeralda. This region includes 78 hydrographic areas, ten of which are divided into two sub-areas and one into three sub-areas; extends to the south and west into the State of California;
- [11] **Great Salt Lake Basin** — Covers 3,807 square miles (9,860 square kilometers or 2,436,480 acres) of the easternmost portions of Elko, White Pine, and Lincoln counties; includes eight hydrographic areas, one of which is divided into four hydrographic sub-areas; extends to the east into the State of Utah;
- [12] **Escalante Desert Basin** — Covers a large area in Utah but only a very small part of it is in Lincoln County, Nevada—106 square miles (275 square kilometers or 67,480 acres). It is made up of only one hydrographic area; extends to the east into the State of Utah;
- [13] **Colorado River Basin** — Covers 12,376 square miles (32,054 square kilometers or 7,920,640 acres) including parts of Clark, Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine counties and is divided into 27 hydrographic areas; extends to the south into California, borders the Colorado River to the south and east, and extends into the states of Arizona and Utah to the east;
- [14] **Death Valley Basin** — Covers 2,593 square miles (6,716 square kilometers or 1,659,520 acres) of Nye and Esmeralda counties including eight hydrographic areas, one of which has been divided into two hydrographic sub-areas; also extends into the State of California to the south and west.

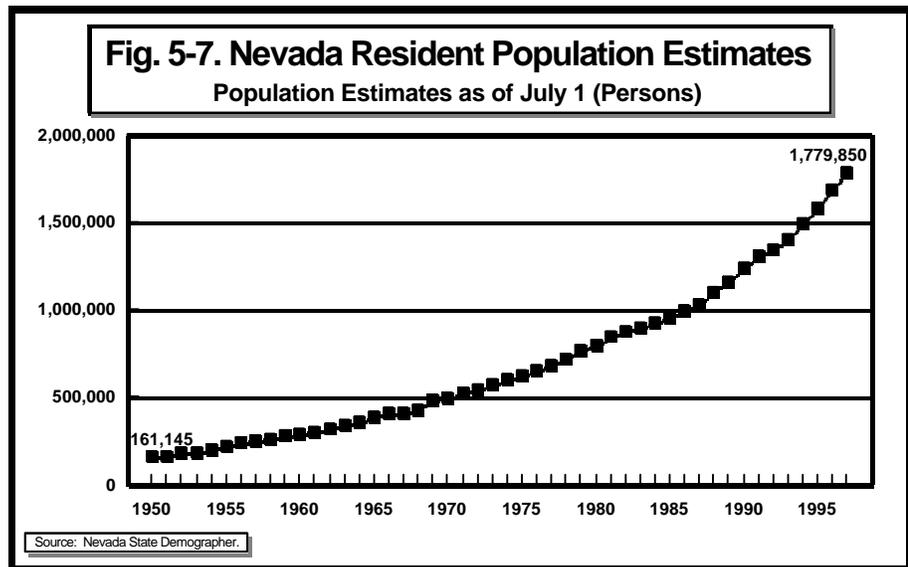
The figure, Nevada Hydrographic Regions/Basins and County Boundaries, shows the relationship between Nevada's political borders, i.e., counties, and its water basins. This information, and the relationship between the political (county) designations and the watershed boundaries becomes important as water planning shifts from a county basis, as largely presented in this water plan, to a more watershed-oriented basis.

[Placement of Figure 1.5 – 1. Nevada Hydrographic Regions/Basins and County Boundaries]

**Socioeconomic Characteristics**

**Population.** Nevada’s resident population was estimated at 1,779,850 persons on July 1, 1997, representing a population increase of 5.7 percent over the prior year and corresponding to an increase of 95,280 persons. During the years of 1990 through 1997, Nevada’s population growth averaged 5.2 percent per year. By decade, Nevada’s population has grown at an annual average rate as follows: 1950’s — 6.0 percent per year; 1960’s — 5.6 percent per year; 1970’s — 4.9 percent per year; and during the 1980’s — 4.4 percent per year (see Table 5–1). During the entire 1950–1997 time period, Nevada’s population growth has averaged a rate of growth of 5.4 percent per year. Figure 5–7 presents the trend in the state’s population estimates for 1950 through 1997. This graphs shows the more recent rapid rise in population since 1990, which corresponded to trends in Las Vegas (Clark County) and the completion of the first mega-resort casino properties — The Mirage and Excalibur.

Nevada’s total population has grown by 72.0 percent over the most recent ten-period of 1987–1997. Over this same 10-year period, the fastest growing counties in terms of population have been Elko (96.3 percent), Clark (93.3 percent), and Nye County (81.6 percent). The slowest growing counties with respect to resident population since 1987 include Eureka (11.4 percent), Mineral



(9.4 percent), Lincoln (8.4 percent) and Esmeralda County (down 5.2 percent). Other counties’ 10-year population growth rates, ranked by rate of growth, include Lyon (65.6 percent), Storey (65.3 percent), Pershing (60.6 percent), Douglas (57.9 percent), Lander (52.8 percent), Humboldt (52.5 percent), Churchill (42.8 percent), Carson City (36.3 percent), White Pine (33.0 percent), and Washoe County (29.5 percent). Figure 5–8 shows annual population growth rates for 1950 through 1997.

Table 5–1. Nevada Population Estimates — 1950–1997, shows total state and individual county decennial population estimates for the years 1950 through 1990, the latest population estimate for 1997, and annual average rates of growth for each decennial estimation period and for the period of 1990 through 1997. Population growth rates declined for the three decades after the 1950’s when growth averaged nearly 6.0 percent per year. However, by the 1990’s, with rapid growth in the state’s basic industry of gaming and tourism and the construction of mega-resort casino complexes in Las Vegas (Clark County), population growth accelerated to nearly 5.4 percent per year, a trend

that is likely to carry into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century as new mega-resort complexes continue to be constructed into the year 2000 (see Figure 5–8).

**Table 5–1. Nevada Population Estimates — 1950–1997**

**Population Estimates by County and Period Annual Average Growth (Persons)**

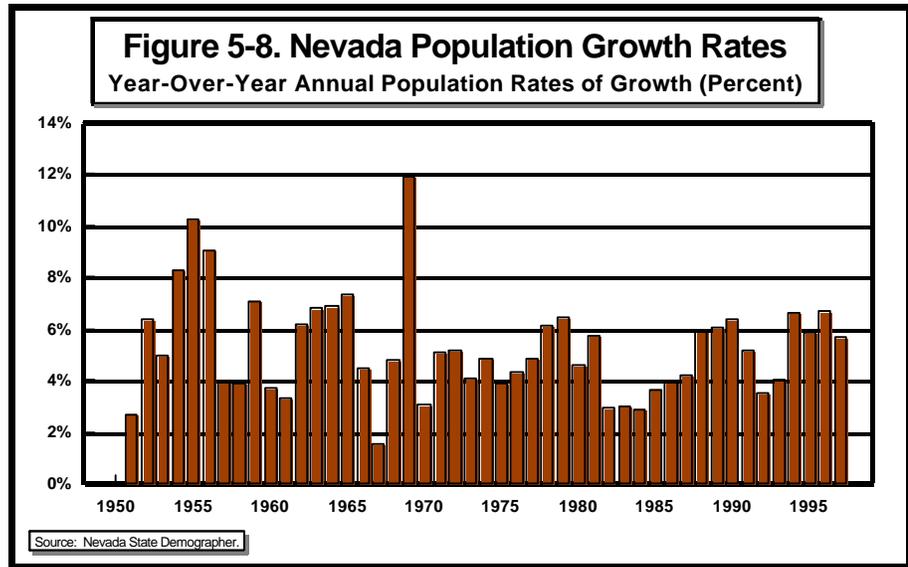
State/County	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1997
<b>NEVADA</b>	<b>161,145</b>	<b>287,660</b>	<b>494,990</b>	<b>800,508</b>	<b>1,236,130</b>	<b>1,779,850</b>
Annual Average Growth	—	5.97%	5.58%	4.92%	4.44%	5.35%
<b>Carson City</b>	4,198	8,020	16,054	32,022	40,950	50,410
Annual Average Growth	—	6.69%	7.19%	7.15%	2.49%	3.01%
<b>Churchill County</b>	6,188	8,505	10,650	13,917	18,100	23,860
Annual Average Growth	—	3.23%	2.27%	2.71%	2.66%	4.03%
<b>Clark County</b>	48,811	128,734	277,230	463,087	770,280	1,192,200
Annual Average Growth	—	10.18%	7.97%	5.26%	5.22%	6.44%
<b>Douglas County</b>	2,023	3,575	7,067	19,421	28,070	39,590
Annual Average Growth	—	5.86%	7.05%	10.64%	3.75%	5.04%
<b>Elko County</b>	11,703	12,051	13,946	17,269	33,770	47,710
Annual Average Growth	—	0.29%	1.47%	2.16%	6.94%	5.06%
<b>Esmeralda County</b>	611	634	623	777	1,350	1,460
Annual Average Growth	—	0.37%	-0.17%	2.23%	5.68%	1.13%
<b>Eureka County</b>	897	775	938	1,198	1,550	1,660
Annual Average Growth	—	-1.45%	1.93%	2.48%	2.61%	0.98%
<b>Humboldt County</b>	4,870	5,723	6,380	9,449	13,020	17,520
Annual Average Growth	—	1.63%	1.09%	4.01%	3.26%	4.33%
<b>Lander County</b>	1,860	1,580	2,653	4,076	6,340	7,030
Annual Average Growth	—	-1.62%	5.32%	4.39%	4.52%	1.49%
<b>Lincoln County</b>	3,850	2,378	2,526	3,732	3,810	4,110
Annual Average Growth	—	-4.70%	0.61%	3.98%	0.21%	1.09%
<b>Lyon County</b>	3,703	6,245	8,437	13,594	20,590	30,370
Annual Average Growth	—	5.37%	3.05%	4.89%	4.24%	5.71%
<b>Mineral County</b>	5,588	6,329	6,961	6,217	6,470	6,860
Annual Average Growth	—	1.25%	0.96%	-1.12%	0.40%	0.84%
<b>Nye County</b>	3,101	4,642	5,459	9,048	18,190	27,610
Annual Average Growth	—	4.12%	1.63%	5.18%	7.23%	6.14%
<b>Pershing County</b>	3,122	3,178	2,656	3,408	4,550	6,600
Annual Average Growth	—	0.18%	-1.78%	2.52%	2.93%	5.46%
<b>Storey County</b>	657	571	696	1,503	2,560	3,520
Annual Average Growth	—	-1.39%	2.00%	8.00%	5.47%	4.65%
<b>Washoe County</b>	50,484	84,988	122,574	193,623	257,120	308,700
Annual Average Growth	—	5.35%	3.73%	4.68%	2.88%	2.65%
<b>White Pine County</b>	9,479	9,732	10,140	8,167	9,410	10,640
Annual Average Growth	—	0.26%	0.41%	-2.14%	1.43%	1.77%

Note: Annual Average Growth Rates are measured from the preceding decennial population estimate.

Source Data: Nevada State Demographer.

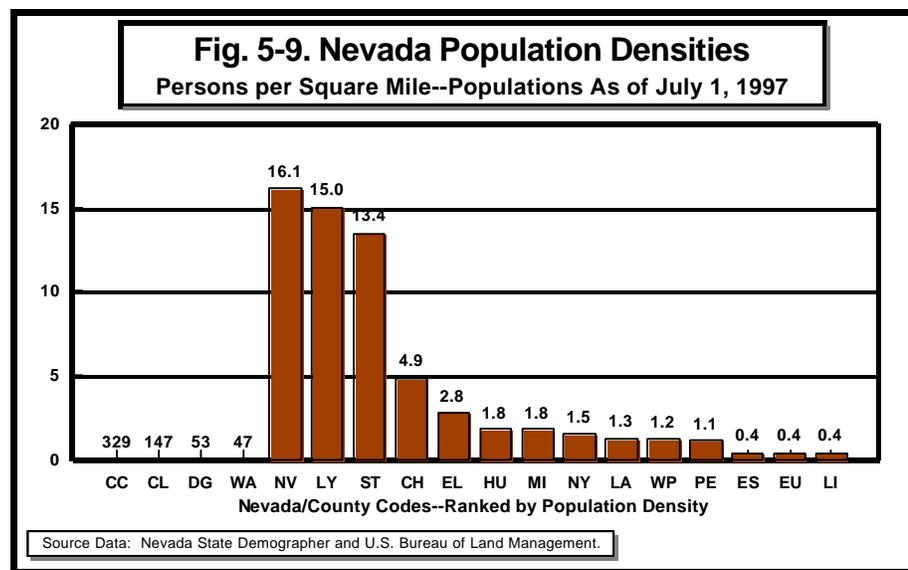
Nevada shows extreme variation in its population density among its seventeen counties. Based on

1997 populations, Nevada's average population density across all counties was approximately 16.1 persons per square mile. By county, Nevada's most populous counties in 1997 were Carson City (329 persons per square mile), Clark County (147 persons per square mile), Douglas County (53 persons per square mile), and Washoe County (47 persons per square mile). At the opposite extreme, Nevada's least populous counties were Esmeralda, Eureka, and Lincoln, all with a population density of approximately 0.4 person per square mile.



**Labor Force and Employment.** Table 5-2. Nevada Labor Force and Employment Information, presents populations, labor force information, total employment and unemployment for the years 1970 through 1997. The labor force and employment information in Table 5-2 is based on Nevada's resident population and shows only those workers residing within the state. The labor force to population ratios provide information on Nevada's labor force participation rate, an important measure in assessing that portion of the total population either employed or actively seeking employment.

Figure 5-10 presents trends in Nevada's labor force and employment over the period of 1970 through 1997 while Figure 5-11 shows the level and percent (of the labor force) of the state's unemployment for these same years.



**Table 5-2. Nevada Labor Force and Employment Information**

1970-1997 Populations, Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment

Year	Population (Persons)	Total Labor Force (Persons)	Labor Force to Population Ratio	Total Employment (Persons)	Persons Unemployed	Unemploy. Rate (S.A.)
1970	494,990	217,850	44.0%	204,600	13,250	5.9%
1971	520,000	227,950	43.8%	211,900	16,050	7.0%
1972	546,800	241,300	44.1%	224,075	17,225	7.0%
1973	569,200	260,175	45.7%	244,125	16,050	6.1%
1974	596,700	276,125	46.3%	253,900	22,225	7.8%
1975	620,000	288,300	46.5%	260,325	27,975	9.7%
1976	646,800	304,875	47.1%	277,750	27,125	8.9%
1977	678,100	333,875	49.2%	318,725	15,150	4.5%
1978	719,300	336,875	46.8%	321,775	15,100	4.4%
1979	765,300	400,000	52.3%	379,800	20,200	5.0%
1980	800,508	429,975	53.7%	402,575	27,400	6.3%
1981	846,220	463,025	54.7%	429,875	33,150	7.1%
1982	870,970	483,000	55.5%	433,975	49,025	10.2%
1983	897,160	486,000	54.2%	437,225	48,775	9.9%
1984	922,580	500,000	54.2%	457,775	42,225	7.8%
1985	955,810	521,000	54.5%	478,450	42,550	8.1%
1986	993,220	532,025	53.6%	500,000	32,025	6.0%
1987	1,035,040	557,025	53.8%	521,475	35,550	6.3%
1988	1,096,130	583,975	53.3%	554,000	29,975	5.1%
1989	1,162,340	602,000	51.8%	571,875	30,125	5.0%
1990	1,236,130	667,000	54.0%	633,125	33,875	5.0%
1991	1,299,360	693,000	53.3%	654,850	38,150	5.5%
1992	1,345,035	715,000	53.2%	667,400	47,600	6.6%
1993	1,398,840	745,975	53.3%	691,300	54,675	7.2%
1994	1,491,490	777,525	52.1%	729,700	47,825	6.1%
1995	1,579,150	804,350	50.9%	760,950	43,400	5.4%
1996	1,684,570	844,050	50.1%	798,400	45,650	5.4%
1997	1,779,850	883,225	49.6%	846,975	36,250	4.4%

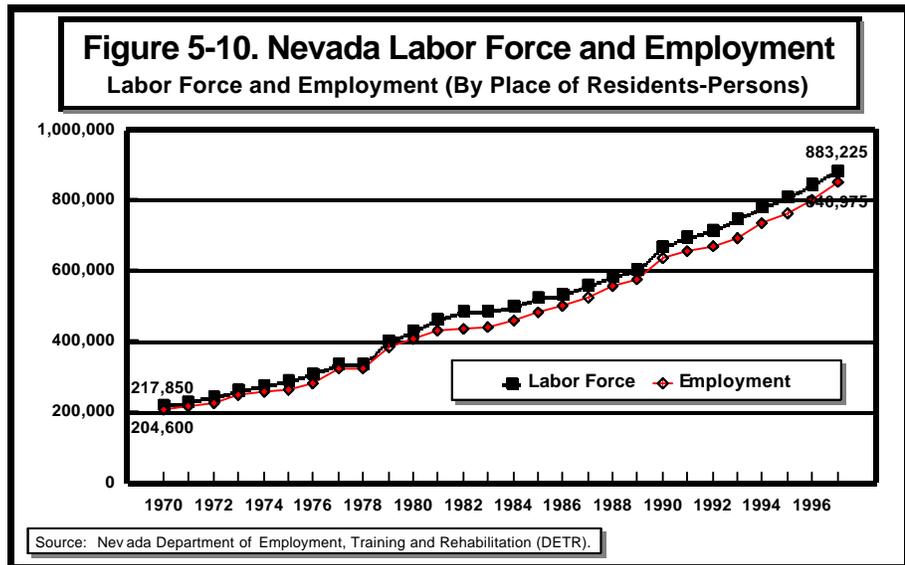
Notes: Population estimates are as of July 1st; labor force and employment are measures of the number of persons by place of residence and are based on census relationships.

Source Data: Nevada State Demographer; Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Research and Analysis Bureau.

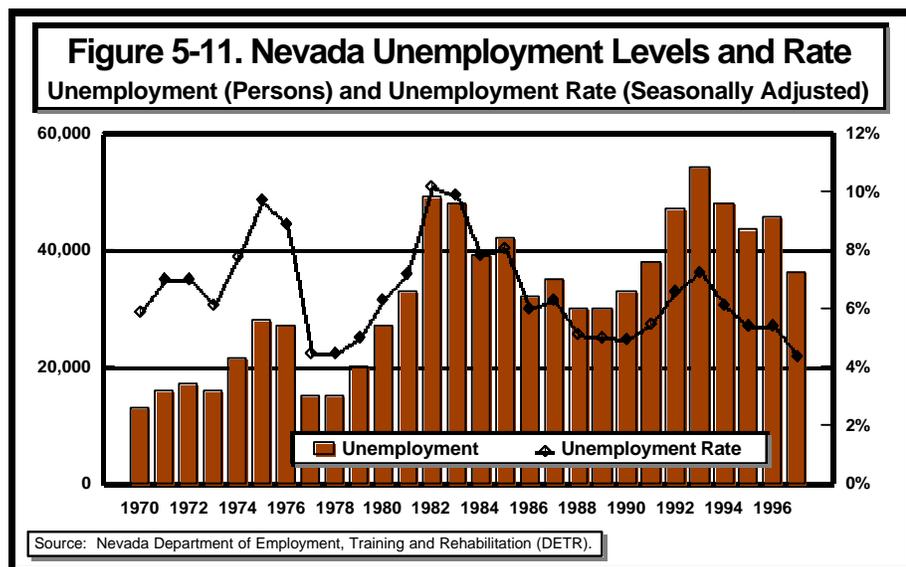
**Covered Employment and Payrolls.** Table 5-3. Nevada Covered Employment and Payrolls — 1997, presents Nevada's employment characteristics based on Nevada's 1997 total covered

employment (i.e., workers covered under state and federal unemployment insurance programs). This table shows that of Nevada’s 888,574 workers (excluding agriculture) in 1997, the 371,753 workers in the state’s service industry accounted for the greatest portion of total employment at 41.8 percent. Nevada’s 216,491 gaming industry jobs alone accounted for 24.4 percent of the state’s total jobs in 1997. The state’s service industries also accounted for the greatest percentage of total state payrolls at 38.9 percent, with gaming alone accounting for 20.4 percent of Nevada’s 1997 payrolls. (See Figure 5–12 for trends in Nevada’s total covered employment for 1980 through 1997.)

The highest average annual salary in Nevada in 1997 was in the mining industry which, at \$49,905 per worker per year, was 74.1 percent greater than the state’s average all-industry annual salary of \$28,671 per worker. The lowest average annual salary was in the state’s wholesale and retail trade industries, which, at \$21,704 per worker per year, was only 75.7 percent of Nevada’s overall average annual wage. Based on U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) full and part-time job classifications, the combined classification of agriculture, forestry, and fishing-related employment was estimated to comprise only approximately 1.4 percent of all jobs within Nevada in 1996 as compared to 2.1 percent of all jobs in 1970.



**Table 5-3.**  
**Nevada Covered Employment and Payrolls — 1997**  
 Covered Employment, Payrolls, and Average Annual Salaries

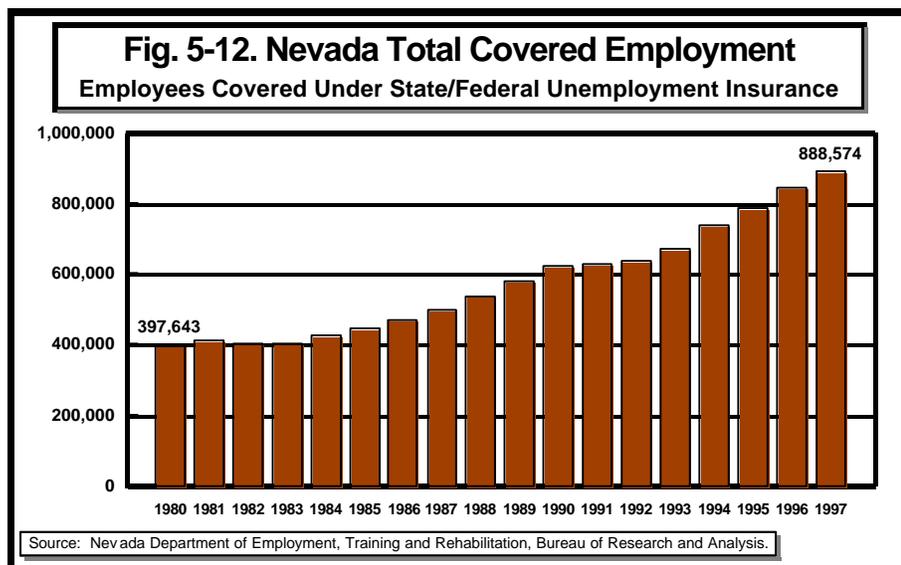


Industry Category	Employment (Persons)	Percent of Total Employment	Payrolls (Millions of Dollars)	Percent of Total Payrolls	Annual Average Salaries (Dollars)	Salary as a Percent of the County Average
<b>TOTAL STATE</b>	<b>888,574</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>\$25,476.73</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>\$28,671</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Mining	14,663	1.7%	731.75	2.9%	49,905	174.1%
Construction	81,953	9.2%	2,907.04	11.4%	35,472	123.7%
Total Manufacturing	40,604	4.6%	1,342.50	5.3%	33,063	115.3%
Trans., Public Utilities	44,877	5.1%	1,459.20	5.7%	32,516	113.4%
Total Trade	180,425	20.3%	3,915.94	15.4%	21,704	75.7%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	40,338	4.5%	1,371.24	5.4%	33,994	118.6%
Service Industries	371,753	41.8%	9,906.98	38.9%	26,649	92.9%
Gaming-Related	216,491	24.4%	5,202.57	20.4%	24,031	83.8%
Total Government	104,255	11.7%	3,638.94	14.3%	34,904	121.7%
Federal Government	13,519	1.5%	572.76	2.2%	42,367	147.8%
State Government	24,974	2.8%	838.29	3.3%	33,566	117.1%
Local Government	65,762	7.4%	2,227.89	8.7%	33,878	118.2%

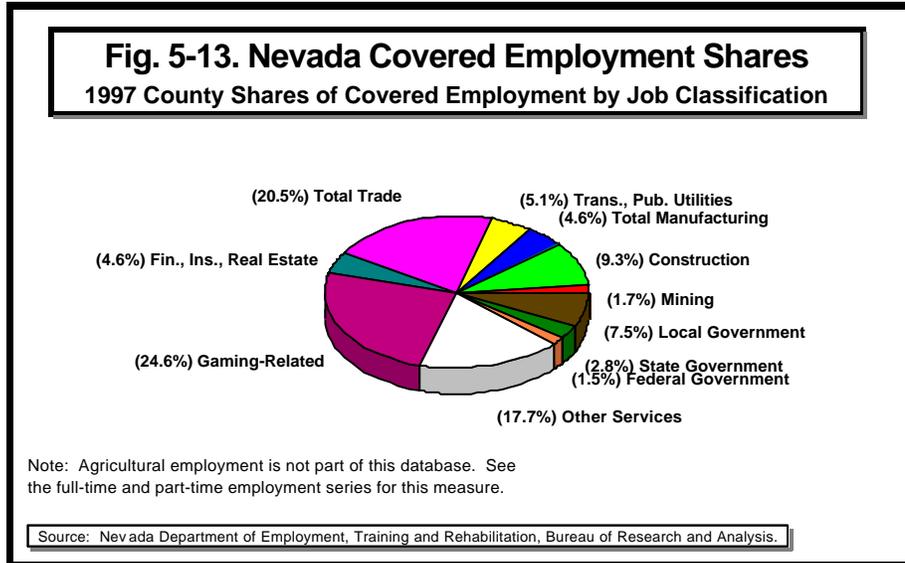
Note: Includes employees covered under state and federal unemployment insurance programs. Agricultural employment is not part of this employment series.

Source Data: Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Research and Analysis Bureau.

Of Nevada’s principal industry sectors, the state’s service industry dominates labor market and employment trends. With nearly 42 percent of all jobs in various service industries, primarily gaming related, medical and health care, and business and personal services, this industry tends to both drive and

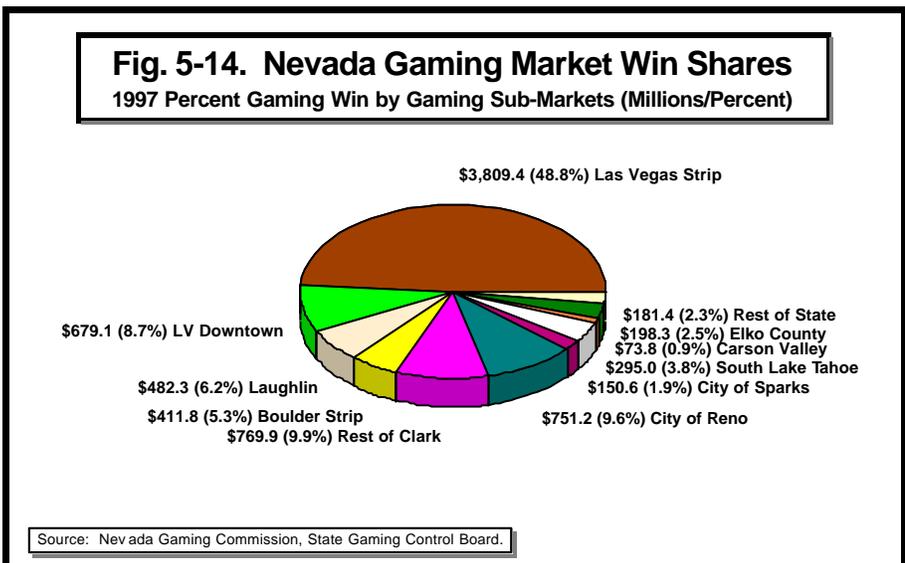


respond to employment trends in many other sectors, particularly trade, transportation and communication, finance and real estate, and state and local government sectors. Furthermore, with the services sector, one quarter of all jobs in Nevada are employed directly in gaming and related industry sectors of amusement and recreation.



**Casino Gaming.** The Nevada casino gaming industry represents a fundamental underpinning of the state’s economy both in terms of economic output and in terms of its fiscal effects on state and local government revenues. In addition, gaming also represents the state’s major “export” industry, bringing new capital (i.e., money) into the state in terms of tourism expenditures for Nevada’s gaming and tourism-related products and services. Nevada’s total casino gaming win, that is, the casinos’ “take” after payment of all winnings to players, was \$7.803 billion in 1997 and has grown at an average annual rate of approximately 9.5 percent since 1970.

Table 5–4. Nevada Casino Gaming Win — 1970–1997, shows gaming win trends for Nevada and its principal gaming markets and sub-markets. The Nevada casino gaming industry is characterized by a number of principal gaming markets, typically delineated by county or city boundaries. Figure 5–14 presents Nevada’s principal gaming markets and sub-markets and their 1997 levels of total gaming win and shares of statewide total gaming win. On a principal gaming market basis, Clark County accounted for 78.9 percent of Nevada’s total gaming win in 1997, Washoe County accounted for 12.7 percent of statewide total gaming win, and the South Lake Tahoe portion of Douglas County accounted for 3.8 percent of 1997’s total gaming win. Other



principal gaming markets in Nevada included Elko County, which accounted for 2.5 percent of the state’s total gaming win in 1997, and Carson Valley, which includes Carson City and that portion of Douglas County outside the South Lake Tahoe area and accounted for slightly less than 1.0 percent of the state’s total gaming win in 1997.

**Table 5–4. Nevada Casino Gaming Win — 1970–1997**  
**Total Casino Gaming Win† by Principal Gaming Market (Millions of Dollars)**

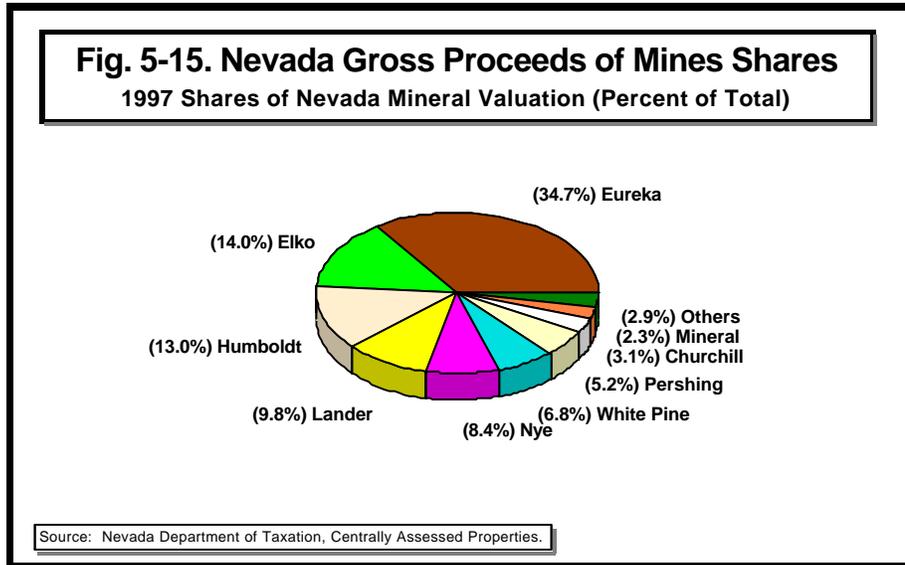
<b>Principal Gaming Market or Sub-Market</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990-97 Change in Gaming Win and Share</b>	<b>1990-97 Percent Change in Gaming Win</b>
<b>TOTAL STATE</b>	<b>604.35</b>	<b>2,478.45</b>	<b>5,480.25</b>	<b>7,802.70</b>	<b>2,322.45</b>	<b>42.38%</b>
<b>Clark County[1]</b>	394.24	1,697.41	4,103.39	6,152.42	2,049.03	49.94%
Percent of Total	65.23%	68.49%	74.88%	78.85%	3.97%	
Las Vegas Strip	290.90	1,231.98	2,604.98	3,809.40	1,204.41	46.23%
Percent of Total	48.13%	49.71%	47.53%	48.82%	1.29%	
Las Vegas Downtown	91.50	348.63	676.91	679.05	2.15	0.32%
Percent of Total	15.14%	14.07%	12.35%	8.70%	-3.65%	
Laughlin	n.a.	n.a.	398.64	482.26	83.62	20.98%
Percent of Total			7.27%	6.18%	-1.09%	
Boulder Strip	n.a.	n.a.	142.14	411.79	269.64	189.70%
Percent of Total			2.59%	5.28%	2.68%	
Rest of Clark County[2]	11.84	116.80	280.72	769.93	489.21	174.27%
Percent of Total	1.96%	4.71%	5.12%	9.87%	4.75%	
<b>Washoe County[3]</b>	119.52	462.28	814.14	995.23	181.09	22.24%
Percent of Total	19.78%	18.65%	14.86%	12.75%	-2.10%	
City of Reno	91.72	362.12	628.02	751.21	123.19	19.62%
Percent of Total	15.18%	14.61%	11.46%	9.63%	-1.83%	
City of Sparks	n.a.	n.a.	104.04	150.64	46.61	44.80%
Percent of Total			1.90%	1.93%	0.03%	
<b>South Lake Tahoe[4]</b>	72.21	221.09	339.16	294.97	(44.19)	-13.03%
Percent of Total	11.95%	8.92%	6.19%	3.78%	-2.41%	
<b>Carson Valley[5]</b>	3.88	34.63	57.26	73.75	16.49	28.80%
Percent of Total	0.64%	1.40%	1.04%	0.95%	-0.10%	
<b>Elko County</b>	7.48	37.87	111.67	198.31	86.64	77.58%
Percent of Total	1.24%	1.53%	2.04%	2.54%	0.50%	
City of Wendover	n.a.	n.a.	53.39	99.83	46.44	86.99%
Percent of Total			0.97%	1.28%	0.31%	

Notes: Casino gaming win is equal to the “house hold,” or the amount retained by the casino after all payouts as winnings to customers. “Percent of Total” measures each gaming market’s share of Nevada’s total gaming win. Principal gaming markets are presented in bold face type; gaming “sub-markets” appear in regular type. The Clark County (Las Vegas) casino gaming market consists of a number of sub-markets, the most important being the Las Vegas Strip. Others sub-markets include Las Vegas Downtown, Laughlin, Boulder Strip and the “Rest of Clark County,” consisting of off-Strip properties and casinos in North Las Vegas. Carson Valley casinos include those in Carson City and Douglas County, excluding the South Lake Tahoe properties. n.a. = Gaming win data not available for these time periods.

Source Data: Nevada Gaming Commission, State Gaming Control Board.

Nevada’s gaming markets are further subdivided into distinct gaming areas or sub-markets, typically based on a city or defined geographic area basis. These principal sub-markets include the Las Vegas Strip (comprising 48.8 percent of Nevada’s total gaming win in 1997), Las Vegas Downtown (comprising

8.7 percent of the state’s total gaming win), Laughlin (comprising 6.2 percent of statewide gaming win), Boulder Strip (comprising 5.3 percent of statewide gaming win), the city of Reno (comprising 9.6 percent of total gaming win), the city of Sparks (comprising 1.9 percent of total gaming win), and the city of Wendover in Elko County (comprising 1.3 percent of statewide total gaming win).



**Mining.** Table 5–5. Nevada Mining Industry Analysis — 1985–1997, presents information and trends with respect to the total valuation of minerals produced, the number of mining workers, and the productivity of mining workers for Nevada’s counties principally involved in mining activities. With the exception of White Pine County, which produces gold, silver and copper, the principal output of these counties’ mines is gold, with silver being a by-product. The rapid and relatively recent growth in gold mining in Nevada is clearly reflected by the trends between 1985 and 1990 (see Figure 5–3). Since that time, production has typically shown more modest gains and in some cases actually shown retrenchment in total production (e.g., Eureka and Humboldt counties).

Since the state became a territory in 1861, mining has and continues to play a crucial role in terms of the socioeconomic characteristics and trends of Nevada’s more rural counties. Today, Nevada represents the largest gold producer in the United States with \$2.671 billion in total gold production in 1997. The total value of all mining activity in the state in 1997 came to \$3.118 billion, up slightly over 1996’s total mineral production of \$3.110 billion. Five Nevada counties — Eureka County (accounting for 34.7 percent of total mineral production in 1997), Elko County (14.0 percent of total production), Humboldt County (13.0 percent of total production), Lander County (9.8 percent of total production), and Nye County (8.4 percent of total production) — accounted for 79.9 percent of the state’s 1997 total proceeds of mines (see Figure 5–15 for shares of mining proceeds for Nevada’s major producing counties).

**Table 5–5. Nevada Mining Industry Analysis — 1985–1997**

**Gross Mineral Proceeds, Workers, Productivity of Nevada’s Principal Mining Counties  
(Proceeds in Millions of Dollars; Productivity in Dollars per Worker per Year)**

<b>Mining County</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990-97 Volume Change</b>	<b>1990-97 Percent Change</b>
<b>NEVADA</b>						
Gross Mining Proceeds[1]	\$623.63	\$2,635.47	\$2,991.62	\$3,118.09	\$482.61	18.31%
Number Mining Workers	6,081	14,321	13,187	14,663	342	2.39%
Mining Worker Productivity[3]	\$102,554	\$184,029	\$226,862	\$212,650	\$28,621	15.55%
<b>Elko County</b>						
Gross Mining Proceeds	\$102.35	\$238.43	\$183.47	\$436.31	\$197.88	82.99%
Number Mining Workers	774	1,289	1,295	1,427	138	10.71%
Mining Worker Productivity	\$132,235	\$184,970	\$141,674	\$305,751	\$120,780	65.30%
<b>Eureka County</b>						
Gross Mining Proceeds	\$114.88	\$789.73	\$1,412.68	\$1,081.39	\$291.66	36.93%
Number Mining Workers	636	3,599	3,927	4,270	671	18.64%
Mining Worker Productivity	\$180,633	\$219,432	\$359,735	\$253,254	\$33,822	15.41%
<b>Humboldt County</b>						
Gross Mining Proceeds	\$31.94	\$356.96	\$441.82	\$405.24	\$48.28	13.52%
Number Mining Workers	393	1,527	2,305	2,451	924	60.51%
Mining Worker Productivity	\$81,272	\$233,768	\$191,681	\$165,338	(\$68,431)	-29.27%
<b>Lander County</b>						
Gross Mining Proceeds	\$96.22	\$276.03	\$279.94	\$304.58	\$28.55	10.34%
Number Mining Workers	845	1,360	1,082	1,290	(70)	-5.15%
Mining Worker Productivity	\$113,869	\$202,961	\$258,726	\$236,110	\$33,149	16.33%
<b>Nye County</b>						
Gross Mining Proceeds	\$140.04	\$500.41	\$229.55	\$260.90	(\$239.52)	-47.86%
Number Mining Workers	884	1,949	1,296	1,363	(586)	-30.07%
Mining Worker Productivity	\$158,420	\$256,754	\$177,120	\$191,413	(\$65,341)	-25.45%
<b>Pershing County</b>						
Gross Mining Proceeds	\$16.12	\$96.90	\$111.60	\$163.04	\$66.15	68.27%
Number Mining Workers	195	683	682	861	178	26.06%
Mining Worker Productivity	82,688	141,869	163,639	189,367	47,498	33.48%
<b>White Pine County</b>						
Gross Mining Proceeds	\$22.16	\$98.04	\$60.87	\$210.65	\$112.61	114.86%
Number Mining Workers	412	886	615	767	(119)	-13.43%
Mining Worker Productivity	\$53,783	\$110,653	\$98,980	\$274,636	\$163,982	148.19%

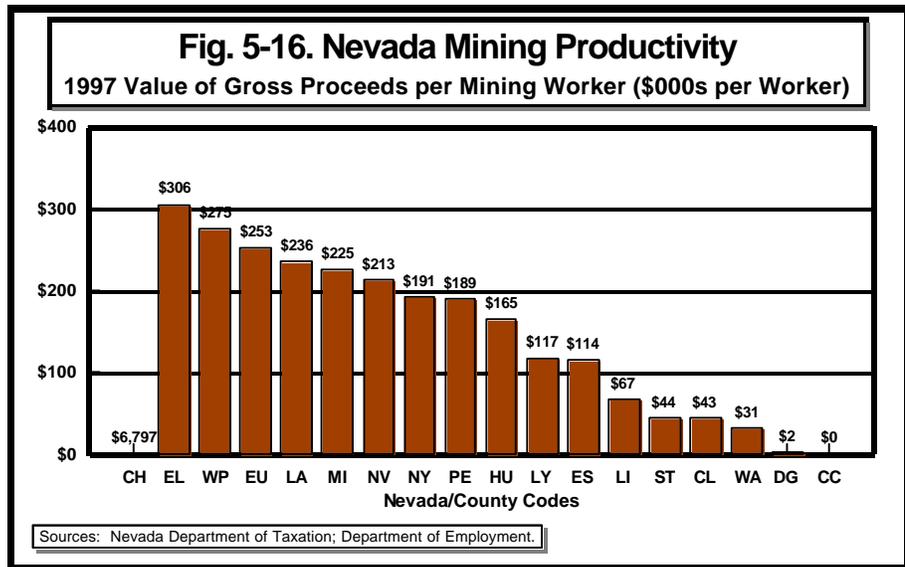
[1] Gross mining proceeds measures the market valuation of mineral sales made by the Nevada mining industry.

[2] Mining worker productivity measures the total state or county gross mining proceeds divided by the respective mining employment; measured in dollars per mining worker per year.

Source Data: Nevada Department of Taxation, Centrally Assessed Properties, Division of Assessment Standards.

In 1997 Nevada mines employed 14,663 workers, accounting for 1.7 percent of the state’s total employment. The Nevada mining industry paid \$731.75 million in total payrolls, accounting for 2.9 percent of the state’s total payrolls. Mining jobs averaged \$49,905 in annual wages per worker, 74.1 percent greater than the state’s all-industry average payroll of \$28,671 per worker. On average, the mining worker in Nevada produced \$212,650 in gross proceeds in 1997, effectively covering the average mining wage by 4.26 times. In Eureka County’s gold mines, the average worker produced

\$253,254 in gross proceeds in 1997, covering the average mining wage in that county by 4.80 times. Figures of mining productivity provide good measures of the viability of future mining operations with higher productivity measures also providing higher returns to producers (see Figure 5-16 for relative levels of mining worker productivity measures).



While mining’s impact to the major population centers is slight, a number of rural counties are critically dependent on the health of this industry sector and it will continue to be a primary driving force for those counties’ socioeconomic conditions and trends.

**Agriculture.** Agriculture represents one of Nevada’s oldest and longest-lasting economic activities. While mining may have been responsible for the early influx of emigrants through and into Nevada between 1850-1880, as well as bringing the State of Nevada into the Union in 1864, it was agriculture that remained after the original Comstock Lode’s demise in the 1870’s and 1880’s. It was also agriculture that persevered during Nevada’s depression of 1880-1900 when the state lost nearly one-third of its population. Agriculture in Nevada continued to survive and even prosper when later mining efforts in the state went through boom and bust cycles during the early 1990’s. Today, agriculture remains a fundamental socioeconomic underpinning for a number of rural Nevada counties and, no doubt, will remain an integral part of these counties’ economies irrespective of current or future mining trends.

Figure 5-17 shows the county shares of the state’s total irrigated acreage, which was estimated at 715,439 acres in 1995.

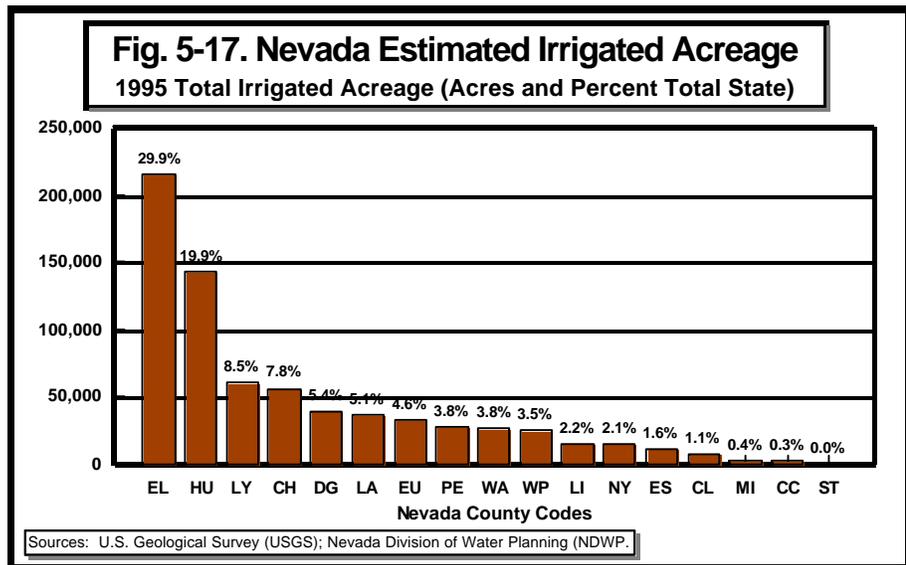


Table 5-6. Nevada Agricultural Statistics — 1974-1995, shows key agriculture statistics for all Nevada’s counties. It appears that agriculture, in terms of total irrigated

acreage, peaked in the state during the late 1970’s or early 1980’s. There has also been a more recent trend towards a strong statewide decline in on-farm workers and stronger growth to employment in related agricultural areas, primarily agricultural service workers, most typically representing the landscaping and lawn care service industries in the more urbanized areas of the state. On a statewide basis, workers involved in farm activities declined from 4,570 workers in 1974 to 3,962 workers by 1995 while workers in agricultural-related activities increased from 1,325 workers in 1974 to 9,180 workers by 1995.

**Table 5–6. Nevada Agricultural Statistics — 1974–1995**  
**Irrigated Acreage, Farm Marketings and Farm-Related Employment**

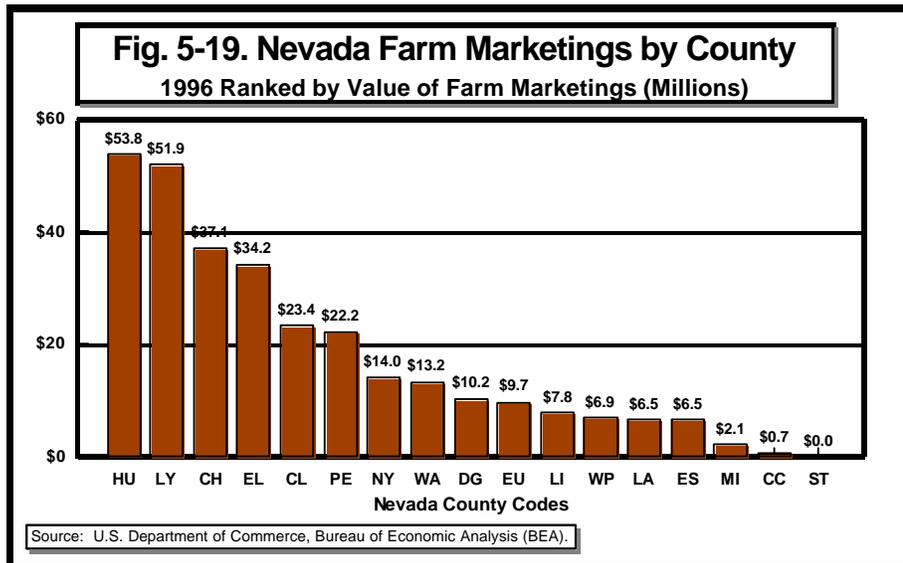
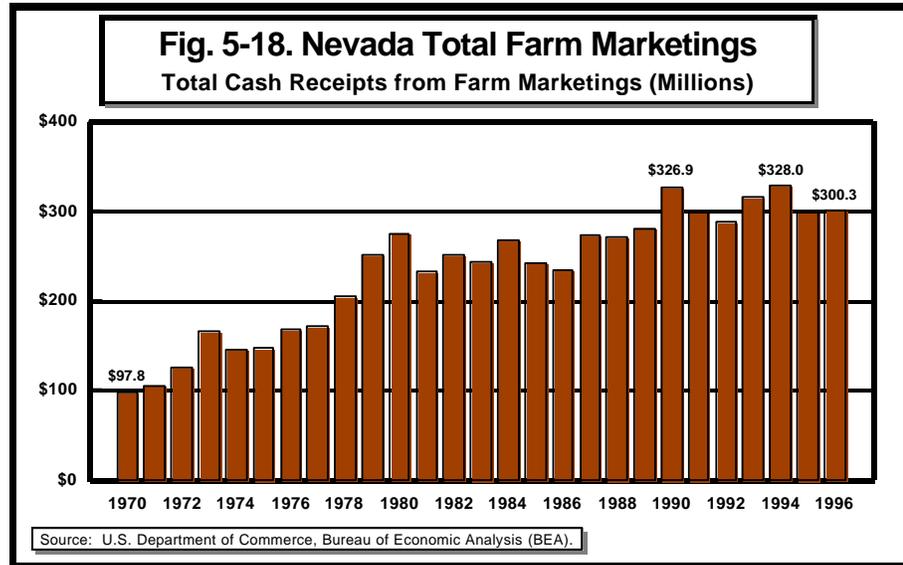
NEVADA	1974	1978	1982	1987	1990	1995
Irrigated Acres	777,510	881,151	829,761	773,588	728,350	715,439
Farm Marketings (\$000s)	\$145,458	\$204,047	\$250,610	\$271,904	\$326,889	\$298,085
Farm Workers	4,570	5,639	5,140	5,628	5,260	3,962
Agric. Services Workers	1,325	2,089	2,723	4,405	6,227	9,180

*Source Data:* Irrigated acreage figures for 1974, 1978, 1982 and 1987 are from the Bureau of the Census, Agriculture Division; irrigated acreage figures for 1990 are estimates from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS); irrigated acreage for 1995 are derived from estimates made by the Nevada Division of Water Planning (NDWP). Farm marketings, number of farm and agricultural service workers are from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Regional Economic Information Service (REIS). Agricultural Services Workers include workers in agricultural services, which is primarily landscaping and lawn care, as well as jobs in the forestry and fisheries areas.

With rising prices for agricultural produce, it appears that the value of Nevada’s farm marketings peaked in the early 1990’s, considerably later than the peak in reported acreage under irrigation (see Table 5–6 and Figure 5–18). Figure 5–19 shows the value of farm marketings ranked by county. In comparing these figures with the ranking of county irrigated acreage in Figure 5–17, we may see that while Elko County accounted for nearly 30 percent of the state’s total irrigated acreage in 1996, it accounts for \$34.2 million, or 11.4 percent, of the state’s total farm marketings. On the other hand, Lyon County, which accounted for only 8.5 percent of statewide irrigated acreage in 1996, made up \$51.9 million, or 17.3 percent of total farm marketings. The differences between shares of irrigated acreage and shares of farm marketings are best explained by the nature of the crops, with lower producing counties emphasizing forage crops like alfalfa, and other counties producing higher-valued crops (potatoes, onions, garlic, etc.).

In viewing the individual county figures, which are presented in Appendix 4 of the Appendices, particularly with respect to the amount of irrigated acreage, there also appears wide fluctuations in these levels of irrigated acreage indicating either highly volatile irrigation and crop production cycles based on water available for irrigation or, also very likely, fundamental problems in reporting and gathering accurate data on this industry sector.

The volatility in historical measures of this industry, particularly with respect to irrigated acreage, related water usage rates and livestock figures, makes forecasting irrigation and livestock water use especially difficult. However, there does appear to be a trend towards no new agricultural lands being brought under cultivation and in some counties, e.g., Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, and Washoe in particular, it appears that encroaching urbanization and the transfer of water rights to other uses, i.e., municipal and industrial, is causing the level of irrigated lands to actually decline. Given new and growing demands for limited water resources in the state, particularly for municipal use, wildlife protection and fishery restoration, instream flows and recreation, the future of agriculture in Nevada becomes especially uncertain.



***Index to Part 1, Section 5:***

Agriculture (5 – 22)  
Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (5 – 7)  
Carlin Trend (5 – 4, 5 – 5)  
Casino Gaming (5 – 18)  
Commission of Economic Development (5 – 5)  
Comstock Lode (5 – 3)  
County Relationships to Hydrographic Regions (5 – 6)  
Covered Employment and Payrolls (5 – 16)  
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (5 – 8)  
Development of Modern Nevada (5 – 4)  
diversification of Nevada’s economy (5 – 4)  
Early Settlement Patterns (5 – 1)  
federally-managed public lands (5 – 7)  
Freeport Law (5 – 4)  
Geography (5 – 6)  
Goldfield Mining District (5 – 4)  
infrastructure needs (5 – 6)  
irrigation efforts (5 – 1)  
Labor Force and Employment (5 – 14)  
Land Ownership (5 – 6)  
Las Vegas Strip (5 – 5)  
legalization of gaming (5 – 4)  
Mining (5 – 20)  
National Park Service (NPS) (5 – 7)  
Nevada  
    population densities (5 – 6)  
    topography (5 – 7)  
    total surface area (5 – 6)  
Nevada Division of Water Resources (DWR) (5 – 8)  
Nevada Hydrographic Regions/Basins (5 – 10)  
Nevada Territorial Legislature (5 – 2)  
Nevada Territory (5 – 2)  
Payment in Lieu of Tax System (PILT) (5 – 8)  
Population (5 – 12)  
Socioeconomic Characteristics (5 – 12)  
    Casino Gaming (5 – 18)  
    Covered Employment and Payrolls (5 – 16)  
    Labor Force and Employment (5 – 14)  
    Mining (5 – 20)  
    Population (5 – 12)  
state’s Great Depression (5 – 3)  
territorial census (5 – 2)  
tourism and gaming (5 – 5)  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (5 – 7)

*Nevada State Water Plan*

---

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) (5 – 7)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (5 – 7)  
U.S. Forest Service (USFS) (5 – 7)  
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) (5 – 8)  
Virginia City (5 – 2)  
water diversion (5 – 1)