

3. INVENTORY

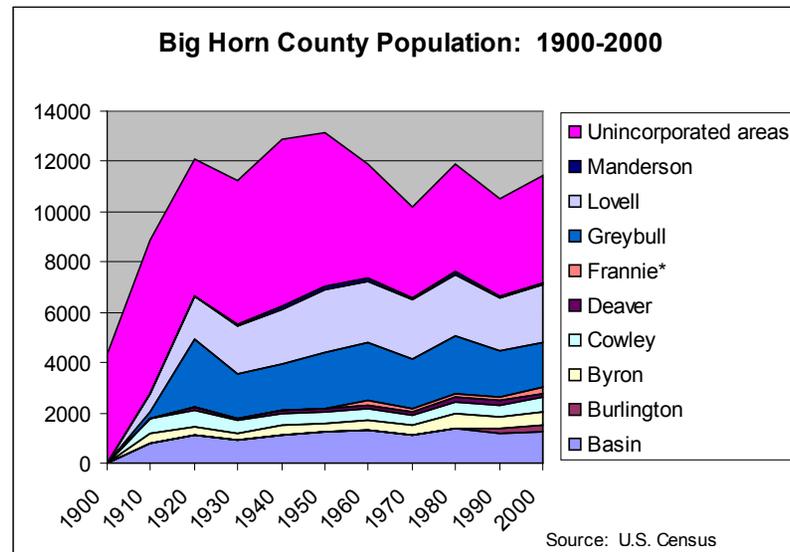
This chapter includes the reports prepared on various topics and which together provide background information necessary for preparing a county land use plan. Background information was assembled on the topics of:

- Population growth trends
- Housing conditions and demand
- Land use and development
- Agriculture
- Economic trends and conditions
- Infrastructure and the capacity of the county and its towns to accommodate growth
- Maps of Land Use, Land Types, Natural Constraints, Infrastructure, Regulatory Limitations
- Review of Big Horn County citizen opinions, perspectives and expectations as obtained from the 2007 Big Horn County landowner survey and other public comment

3.1 POPULATION TRENDS

INTRODUCTION

Planning future land use requires an understanding of how people have used the land in the past and how they will use it in the future. That depends on how many people and where they will live, work, and recreate. It also depends on the composition of the population and the potential for population change that comes as the result of aging, migration, and ethnic shifts. Anticipating changes in population numbers and composition is essential to planning for future needs.



HISTORIC POPULATION

The population of Big Horn County rose and fell in the last century.

- Total county population peaked at 13,156 in 1950.
- Population of the county’s two largest towns also peaked in the first half century—Greybull at 2,692 in 1920 and Lovell at 2,508 in 1950.
- Cowley’s highest population was 687 in 1920.
- Population in all other communities has been largest between 1980 and 2000.
- Population in unincorporated areas peaked at 6,689 in 1940 and in 2000 was 4,270

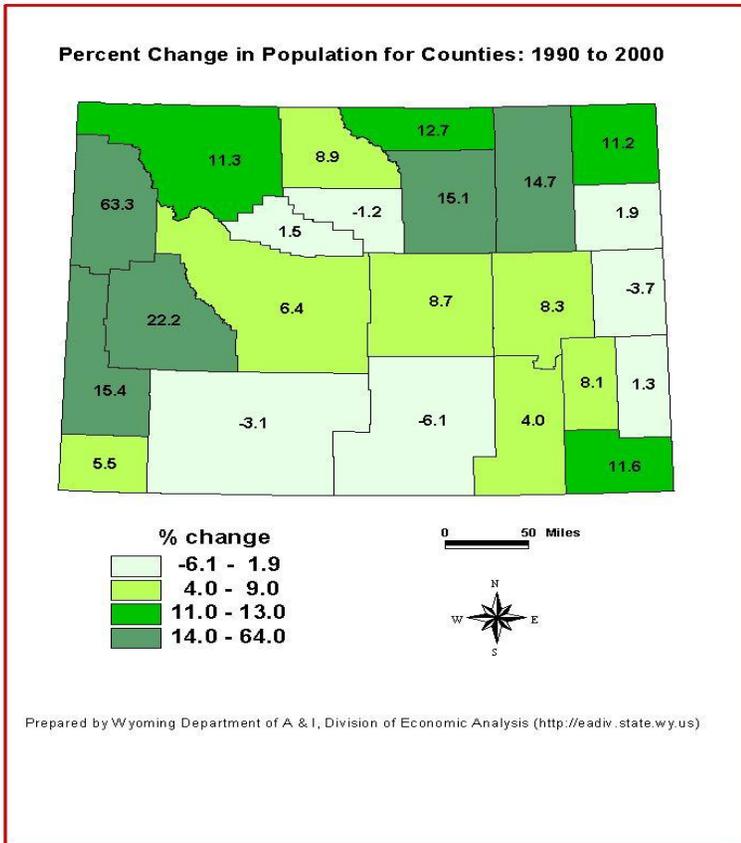
Big Horn County Recent Population Change						
	1990	2000	2006	numeric change	% change	% change
	Census	Census	Estimate	1990-2000	1990-2000	2000-2006
Basin	1180	1238	1,242	58	4.9%	0.3%
Burlington	184	250	249	66	35.9%	-0.4%
Byron	470	557	550	87	18.5%	-1.3%
Cowley	477	560	592	83	17.4%	5.7%
Deaver	199	177	178	-22	-11.1%	0.6%
Frannie*	148	209	211	61	41.2%	1.0%
Greybull	1789	1815	1,761	26	1.5%	-3.0%
Lovell	2131	2281	2,288	150	7.0%	0.3%
Manderson	83	104	102	21	25.3%	-1.9%
Unincorporated areas	3864	4270	4,246	406	10.5%	-0.6%
Hyattville		73				
Meadowlark Lake		8				
Big Horn County Total	10525	11461	11390	936	8.9%	-0.6%

*Includes portion in Park County, total of 29 persons in 2000

Source: U.S. Census

The county grew by nearly nine percent between 1990 and 2000, with the largest numeric growth (406 persons) in unincorporated areas. The county's smallest towns—Burlington, Byron, Manderson, and Cowley—had the highest municipal growth rates during the decade.

Big Horn County's growth during the decade was about mid-range compared to all other counties in the state. Four counties lost population during the 1990-2000, ten ranged between 1.5-9.0% growth, and nine grew by 10% or more.

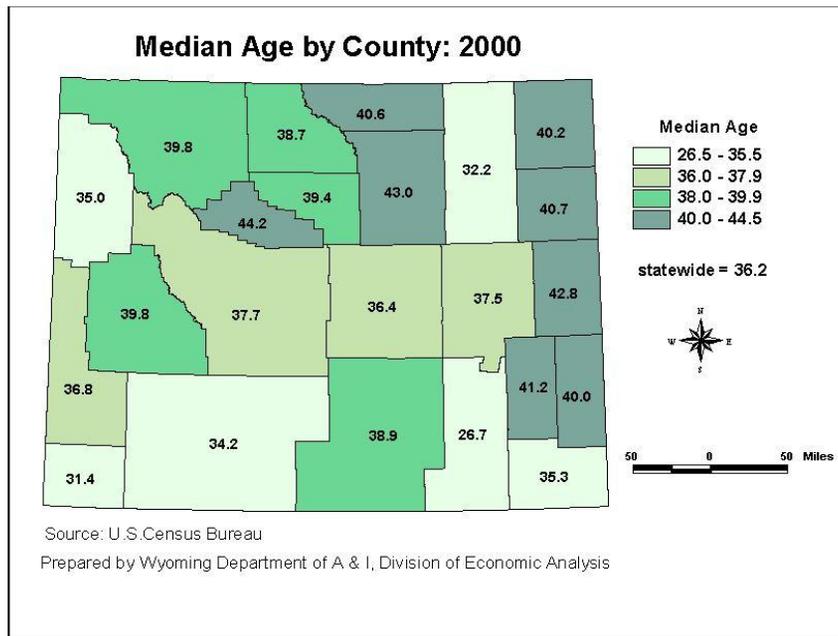


Between 2000 and 2006, the county's total population declined by approximately 0.6%, according to U.S. Census estimates. With the exception of Cowley, which is estimated to have grown by about 6.0% between 2000 and 2006, population in all other municipalities and overall county-wide has remained basically steady or declined slightly.

Components of Population Change: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2007							
Area	Total Population Change*	Natural Increase			Net Migration		
		Total	Births	Deaths	Total	Net International Migration	Net Internal Migration
Wyoming	29,048	19,423	49,092	29,669	11,661	2,060	9,601
Big Horn	-198	90	1,036	946	-241	45	-286

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau
Release Date: March 20, 2008

Declines in population are due to residents moving out of the county. Population estimates (released in March 2008 at the county-level only), indicate that between 2000 and 2007 there were 90 more births than deaths in the county, but the gain was offset by a net outmigration of 241 persons.



AGE CHARACTERISTICS

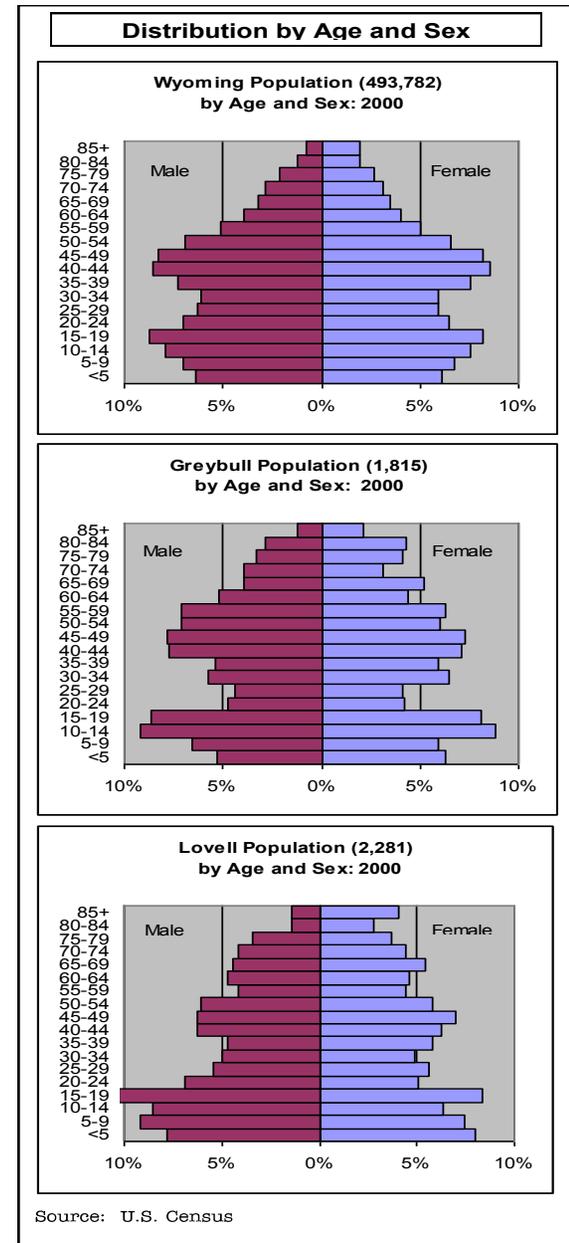
Total population numbers are essential for planning, but after numbers are calculated, age is perhaps the single most important dimension of population when considering present and future needs. Senior citizens have obvious and different needs compared with younger generations and school-age children. Median age in Big Horn County was 38.7 years, ranking it 13th out of Wyoming’s 23 counties.

The percentage of older persons has been rising in Big Horn County over the past few decades, resulting from lower rates of natural growth (births and deaths) and net migration (particularly by younger persons) out of the county.

In order to increase population, either natural growth rates have to increase, or more newcomers need to arrive, or both.

Age distribution of the total population is an indicator of potential for natural growth. A “population pyramid” is one way to show distribution of age by sex, and it gets its name from the fact that age whittles down the population at the top of the pyramid and fertility broadens it at the bottom. In Wyoming (as in the rest of the nation), birth rates are in decline, so the population pyramid of Wyoming in 2000 is not a perfect pyramid; it extends out for the baby boom generation (ages 36 to 54 in 2000) and again to a lesser degree for baby boomers’ children (ages 5 to 24).

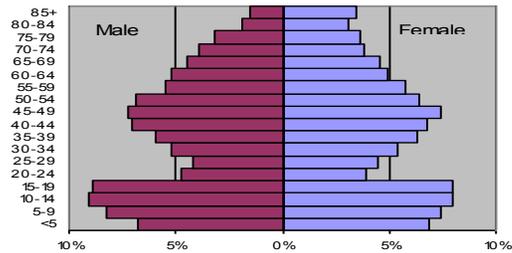
Age distribution in Greybull and Lovell indicate divergent trends in different communities in Big Horn County. Both have larger proportions of older persons (over 65) compared to the state. Greybull is similar to the state with its “baby boomer factor” hour-glass shape. Lovell more closely approximates a true pyramid with a broader base of younger persons. Compared to Greybull, Lovell also has a greater proportion of persons in their 20s, which is regarded as the age of highest potential for reproduction (albeit national trends indicate more women bearing children at older ages). (Note also that the smaller the population, the more variation is likely between age and sex categories, such as the significantly greater number of males in the 15-19 age category for Lovell. With larger populations, such as the state’s, these variations tend to smooth out.)



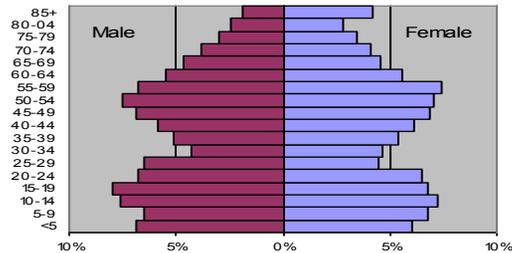
Source: U.S. Census

Population Distribution

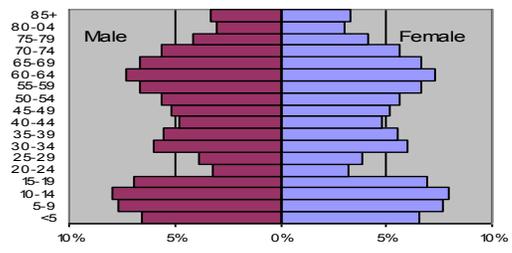
**Big Horn County Population (11,461)
by Age and Sex: 2000**



**Estimated Big Horn County Population
(11,390) by Age and Sex: 2006**



**Projected Big Horn County Population
(11,324) by Age*: 2020**



*Breakdown by sex shown here to allow general comparison with other figures. Breakdown is not based on projections, but simply the total projected population divided by two.
Source: Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis Division, Internet Release: October 21, 2004

Source: U.S. Census

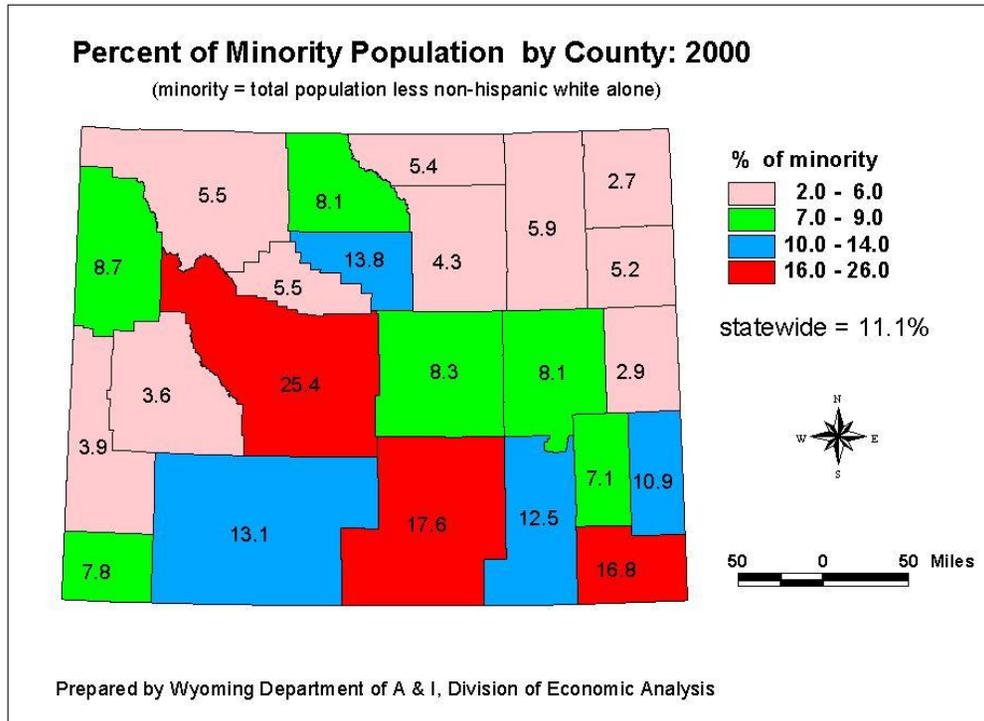
The age-sex distribution of total Big Horn County population is changing over time. In 2000, the distribution was generally similar to that of the state, but with far fewer persons with ages 20-54.

Based on U.S. Census estimates, in 2006 the proportion of school age children 5-19 decreased, and the proportion of ages 20-29 increased (in part reflecting shift in age categories over time and assumption that some younger residents remain in the county).

According to age categories forecasts from the Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis Division in 2004, there will be considerably more persons 60 and older in the county compared to 2000. The number of school age children is forecast to be similar to that of 2006 (but less than 2000), and there will be a dramatic decrease in persons ages 20-29. (Note that data on distribution by sex was not part of the projection data and the allocation by sex in the population pyramid is simply total population divided in half.)

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Big Horn County is predominately White (94%). Although considerably less diverse than the nation (with White population at 69.1%), the county is more diverse than most other counties in northern Wyoming. Hispanic-Latinos are the largest minority group in the county (6.4%). The number of Hispanic-Latinos increased by 28% between 1990 and 2000, far outpacing the county’s overall 9% growth in the same decade.

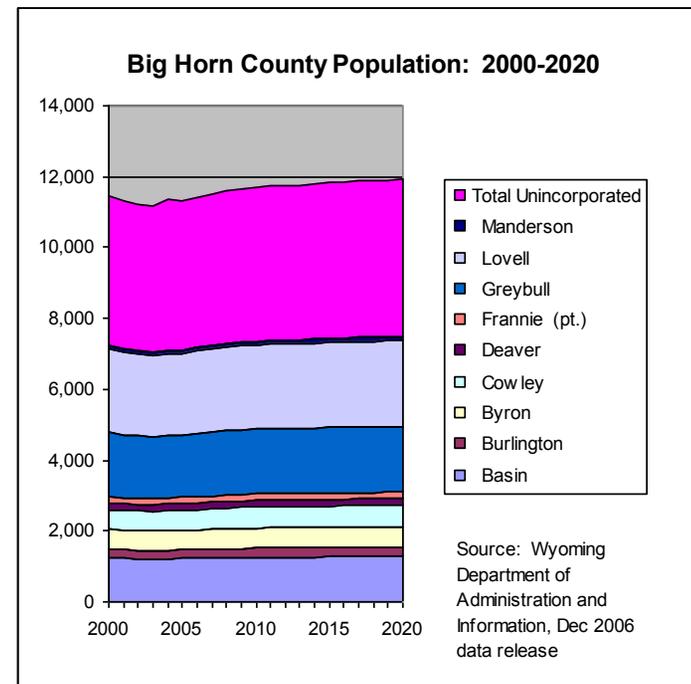


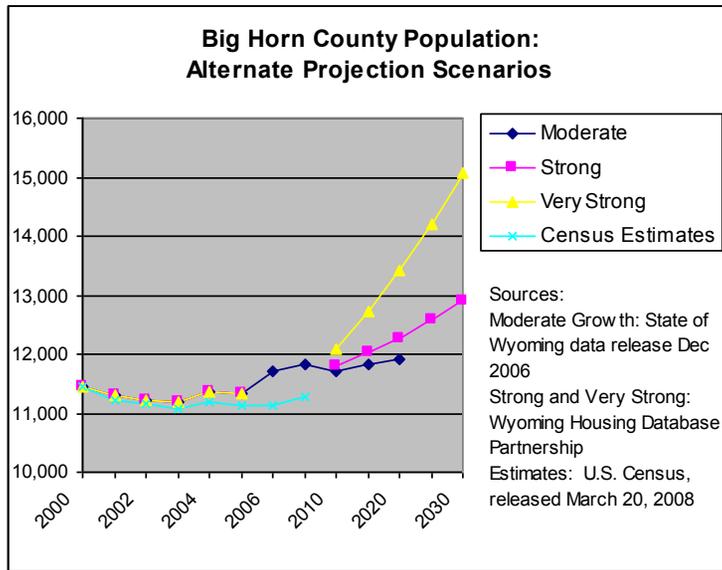
The State of Wyoming Department of Administration and Information (A&I), Economic Analysis Division prepares 20-year population projections for the state based on demographic and economic variables. The most recent projection was released December 2006. According to the forecast, Big Horn County will experience slow growth through 2020, a total 4.0% increase between 2000 and 2020. The state uses the same rates of annual growth for each municipality as for the county as a whole, therefore there is no variation of growth rates among communities in the forecast.

The Wyoming Housing Database Partnership also provides population projections to use in analyzing future housing demand. They consider three projection scenarios: 1) moderate growth population (the Department of A&I projection), 2) strong growth, and 3) very strong growth. The strong growth and very strong growth scenarios extend to 2030 and are based on long-term population and employment forecasts released by NPA Data Services Inc. (Note that Figure ___ over emphasizes the rate of growth for the period 2010-2030 for all three scenarios. The rate is shown in five year increments compared to annual increments for the period 2000-2010.)

The U.S. Census releases population estimates annually. Census estimates are smaller than those projected in the state's moderate growth scenario. The census estimates for 2007 were approximately 560 persons less than the state of Wyoming's moderate growth forecast for the same year. The census estimates are based primarily on actual counts from the 2000 census and then adding and subtracting numbers based on administrative records. These records include registered births and deaths, federal income tax returns, Medicare records, and military movement. Since most administrative record data sources lag the current estimate year by as much as two years, the current year estimates are projected from past years' data. U.S. census estimates are the general standard for population numbers between decennial counts.

Six of the nine incorporated municipalities in the county have completed master plans since 2004. Plans for Frannie, Greybull, and Lovell used the moderate growth projections from the Wyoming Department of A&I. The Byron plan examined all three scenarios, pointing out that even the very strong growth projection of 623 persons in 2020 was lower than Byron's 1980 population of 633. The Cowley plan identified future growth of nearly 50% between 2000 and 2020, with projected population of 746 by 2020. By comparison, the very strong growth scenario projects a total increase of 17% in the county during that same period. The 2004 Burlington Plan projected a ten year population scenario with total population of 336 in 2014, a 34% increase from 2000. Basin, Deaver, and Manderson do not have land use or master plans other than what it is included in the 1977 County Plan.





PERMANENT AND SEASONAL POPULATION

Population projections are based on decennial census data, which record an individual's residency based on location of their "permanent" residence. Consequently, population projections do not take into account part-time residents. As the number of second and third homes increases, so do numbers of seasonal residents. These persons are not accounted for in the historic or projected population counts.

Seasonal residency is growing in Wyoming and accounted for 3,000 new homes between 1990 and 2000. (Taylor)

Big Horn County includes two of the top 20 locations in Wyoming for seasonal homes. (Taylor) With 96% of all housing units in seasonal use only, Meadow Lark Lake in Big Horn County is the #1 location in Wyoming for proportion of seasonal homes. In 2000, 8 persons and 2 year-round homes were counted in the census. Actual population increases and decreases dramatically with seasonal use. In Hyattville, 32% of all housing units in 2000 were seasonal.

CONCLUSIONS

It is important in land use planning to identify population projections and to understand their limitations. The State of Wyoming makes its forecasts using the best available information on population and economic trends. Still, it is not feasible for the State to provide detailed, localized forecasts for every jurisdiction or geographic unit. Despite best efforts and most current technology, not all future events can be predicted. Therefore, local government should monitor growth and be able to make adjustments to plans if growth occurs at much different rates than anticipated.

There will likely be different rates of growth among the various communities and locations with Big Horn County. As noted above, both Burlington and Cowley are planning on growth rates greater than the rest of the county. Growth often attracts growth, so the county can likely anticipate increased population (and related development) in unincorporated areas near growing municipalities.

Faster growth from neighboring counties may also have potential to spill over into Big Horn County. Park County grew by 11.3% between 1990 and 2000, compared to Big Horn County at 8.9% for the same period. Between 2000 and 2007, Park County was estimated to have grown by 5.1%, whereas Big Horn County had a slight decrease in population. It is difficult to determine, based on these data, if Park County population growth affects Big Horn County population, but anecdotal information suggests that people who work in Park County are moving to Big Horn County for lower housing prices and quality of life. (Markert)

As it looks to the future, Big Horn County should consider the source of population growth. Population age distribution patterns indicate slow overall natural growth far into the future (although this may certainly vary among communities). One implication is that school populations may fluctuate but over time the trend will be relatively flat. Increasing real numbers and proportion of older persons is also a factor to consider in land use planning. Older persons have more specialized needs including transportation, health care, and housing (maintenance of aging housing stock on fixed incomes as well as specialized housing needs).

Besides natural growth, the only other source of population is people moving to the county. The last decade indicates that many of the newcomers will likely be Hispanic or other minorities.

In the foreseeable future, Big Horn County will not have the problem of trying to accommodate rapid population growth. It is most likely that the county will have slow growth overall; that the growth will be uneven amongst the municipalities; and that the unincorporated area will see a major portion of the growth. Absent rapid population growth, is there really a need to plan? Yes. One reason is that a good plan should be flexible enough to accommodate some unexpected growth. Rapid growth often catches communities by surprise. Planning now helps hedge against that possibility. A second reason for planning now is that even with modest growth, bad outcomes can result through a lack of planning. A good plan will address county development issues including second home development, subdividing agricultural land, and encouraging building near towns. Whether growth is rapid or slow, development will be better when it follows a well-planned pattern.