



BOX ELDER COUNTY

“Home of the Golden Spike National Historic Park”

Dear Student,

Our office at the Box Elder County Tourism Council is pleased to send information to enhance your study of Utah and our county in particular. We are delighted that your understanding will be enriched beyond the textbook.

You will learn some of the history of the early Native Americans and Pioneer Settlers in Box Elder County. You will find out about many historic and nature sites. You can also discover information about the two life changing engineering achievements- Trains and Rockets! As you learn about Trains, you'll learn about the “Joining of the Rails” in 1869. Then, just over 100 years later, our county helped send people into outer space on the spaceshuttles! Both historic sites are within 8 miles of each other.

We are sure you will enjoy learning about Box Elder County and sharing this information with your classmates. For some great “hands-on” learning, come visit us in Box Elder County. Bring this letter with you to the Historic Box Elder County Courthouse at 01 South Main Street in Brigham City. Look for the Tourism Office on the 2nd Level and we'll give you a gift of a Golden Spike souvenir pin. If you are unable to visit in person, visit our website at www.visitboxeldercounty.com.

Hope to see you soon!!

Joan Hammer
Box Elder County Tourism



Box Elder County is located in the northwestern part of Utah. It is bordered by Idaho to the North, Tooele County, the Great Salt Lake, and Desert to the South, Nevada to the West, and the majestic Wasatch Mountains to the East, which includes Cache County, Weber County, and Davis County. Our county's history is as rich as any gold mine, and it is an integral part of Utah's heritage.

Box Elder County was incorporated in 1869, just 27 years before Utah became a state, and it is Utah's fourth-largest county in land area, covering 5,594 square miles. To put that into perspective, it's an area five times larger than the state of Rhode Island, with an additional 1,000 square miles of Utah's Great Salt Lake. Our county is well-connected to the rest of Utah through Interstate Highways I-15 and I-84 and U.S. Highways 30, 89, and 91, making travel to and from our county easy and convenient.

•Quick Facts about Box Elder County•

Founded	January 5, 1856
County Seat	Brigham City
Land Area	5,723.34 Sq Miles of Land with an additional 1,000 miles of Great Salt Lake
Highest Point	Bull Mountain--9,938 Feet
Crops Harvested	Fruit, Vegetables, Wheat, Mint, Onions, Mushrooms
Livestock Raised	Cattle, Sheep, Turkey, Elk
Mining	Lime-building Stone, Gravel, Sand
Manufacturing	Rocket Motors, Rocket Fuels, Vehicle Airbags & Initiators, Steel, Trampolines, Pontoon Boats, Bowling Balls, Church Steeples, Steel Fence Posts, Steel Farm Gates, Diapers, Home Paper Goods, Metal Recycling
Production	Cereal, Meat Processing, Flour, Grains, Seeds
Other	Water Bottles, Warehouse Distribution, Medical Marijuana Greenhouses
Recreation Areas	Golden Spike National Historic Park, Crystal Hot Springs, Willard Bay State Park, Wasatch-Cache National Forest Campground, Mantua Reservoir, Devil's Playground
Sites of Interest	Fruit Highway, Box Elder Tabernacle, Brigham City Temple, Brigham City Museum of Art & History, Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Spiral Jetty, Rocket Gardens at Northrop Grumman, Marble Park, Tremonton Art Murals, Box Elder Fairgrounds
Government	Three Seat Commission
Popular Events	Golden Spike Rodeo, Box Elder County Fair, Peach Days, Pickleball Tournaments, Arts Festival

Fun Fact:
Box Elder County
is named after the
Box Elder Tree



Box Elder County Census Information

Place	Totals	2010	2020	Change	Change %
Box Elder County		49,975	57,666	7,691	15.4%
Bear River City		853	877	24	2.8%
Brigham City		17,889	19,650	1,751	9.8%
Corinne		685	809	124	18.1%
Deweyville		332	417	85	25.6%
Elwood		1,034	1,173	139	13.4%
Fielding		455	546	91	20%
Garland		2,400	2,589	189	7.9%
Honeyville		1,441	1,606	165	11.5%
Howell		245	240	-5	-2.0%
Mantua		687	1,090	403	58.7%
Perry		4,512	5,555	1,043	23.1%
Plymouth		414	427	13	3.1%
Portage		245	273	28	11.4%
Riverside		760	971	211	27.8%
Snowville		167	163	-4	-2.4%
South Willard		1,571	1,840	269	17.1%
Thatcher		789	807	18	2.3%
Tremonton		7,647	9,894	2,247	29.4%
Willard		1,772	1,978	206	11.6%

Population, percentage of increase/change (2010-2020) 15.4%

Persons per square mile in Box Elder County (2020) 10.0

Quiz Your Knowledge

1. Where is the fastest growing area in Box Elder County?
2. How many places in Box Elder County lost residents?

History of Box Elder County



During the 1820's and 1830's, numerous fur trappers and explorers frequented the area that is now Box Elder County. The earliest visitor was likely, Jim Bridger, who made a canoe trip from Cache Valley down the Bear River in 1825 and was the first white man to discover the Great Salt Lake. Prehistoric hunters and gatherers roamed the area as early as 12,0000 years ago.

Box Elder County's first non-indigenous permanent settlers were the Latter-Day Saint Pioneers. The Pioneers arrived in 1851, and immediately began to build the area in typical early Mormon fashion. The fields were plowed and planted. Homes, churches and public buildings were constructed using native materials and donated labor in the cooperative manner recommended by their church officials.

Because Shoshone Native Americans were already inhabiting the land, livestock raids and violent clashes between the Native Americans and the new settlers were common until the Territorial Governor James Duane Doty negotiated the Treaty of Box Elder on July 30, 1863 in Brigham City.

In 1854, Brigham Young sent Lorenzo Snow to take charge of the colony of chosen families known simply as the Box Elder Stake of Zion. Snow functioned as the political as well as the ecclesiastical leader and renamed the community "Brigham City". A courthouse was erected in the late 1850's, and Brigham City soon became the county seat. Until the 1860's, Brigham City was the northern terminus of settlement along the Wasatch Front. Perry and Willard both to the south of Brigham City are the next oldest communities in Box Elder County.

Brigham Young's vision for the Great Basin Kingdom was self-sufficiency. Beginning in the 1860's, Box Elder Stake (County) under Lorenzo Snow pioneered a cooperative movement designed to help achieve that idea. It so impressed Brigham Young that he used it as prototype for the "United Order" movement of the 1870's among Utah Mormons. The idea was that the pioneers would pool their wealth and labor into community enterprises instead of working for personal profit. The Box Elder Cooperative was successful in achieving a large measure of self-sufficiency and in maintaining a large degree of Mormon exclusiveness.

It was these early pioneers that provided the area with most of its present day names. For example, "Box Elder" comes from the abundance of Box Elder trees in the area. "Brigham City", the county seat, is named after LDS leader and the first Utah Territory Governor. The towns-Willard, Howell and Snowville are all named after early church dignitaries. One outstanding exception to these pioneer named area names is Corinne. During the railroad boom years, Corinne was established as a railroad and freighting town. For several years, the non-Mormon residents of this boom town boasted that they were "The Gentile Capitol of Utah", and at one time it was being considered by the U.S. Government to become the state capitol city! In July 1870, Corinne residents spurred the founding of the Liberal Party to oppose the Mormon People Party. Unfortunately, with the shifting of the railroad and freight industries to other areas, the "Berg on the Bear" dwindled in size and stature, and is now a quiet rural town. Much of the early pioneers and settlers spirit and influence is still felt throughout the county today.

In addition to its rich pioneer heritage, Box Elder County was the scene of one of the most significant events in United States History. The Promontory Summit took place on May 10, 1869 when the last spike was driven to complete our nations first Transcontinental Railroad joining the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific railroads. The driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory Summit signaled an end to the great western frontier and changed the history of our nation. This event marked the end of the Pioneer Era since immigrants no longer used wagon trains by necessity to cross the Great Plains.

Fortunately through the efforts of the Golden Spike Association of Box Elder County, the events of that day have been preserved and reconstructed. Each year on May 10th, a traditional ceremony commemorates the driving of the Golden Spike. The site was proclaimed a National Historic Park by the U.S. Government. It has become a mecca to railroad and history buffs. Tourists and Historians from around the world visit the site annually. The beautiful new Visitor Center and replicas of the famed locomotives, the 119 and Jupiter, welcome visitors all year long. The Visitor Center features documentaries, movies, artifacts, and displays honoring the "Wedding of the Rails". The Golden Spike National Historic Park celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike on May 10, 2019.



Topography of Box Elder County

Most of Box Elder County is flat desert plain with an elevation of 4,200-4,600 feet above sea level. The plain was anciently part of the floor of Lake Bonneville. Approximately 1,000 square miles within in the county are covered by the remnants of Lake Bonneville (Great Salt Lake). The lakes receding shorelines have created extensive marshes, mud flats and salt flats.

On the eastern exterior of the county lies the exterior peaks of the Wasatch Range rising to over 11,000 feet above sea level while those of the Grouse Creek and Raft River Ranges to the northwest reach almost 10,000 feet in elevation. A range of low mountains and hills running parallel to the Wasatch Range in the east part of the county defines the Malad and Lower Bear River Valley in which all the urban areas lie and the majority of the population live. Fertile soils and a good supply of irrigation water in the Bear River Valley area have made our county one of Utah's best agricultural sectors. Areas in the central portion of the county that are not covered by the Great Salt Lake are too high in alkaline to sustain any agriculture activity.

Climate of Box Elder County

The climate of Box Elder County is moderate with low humidity. Our growing season is 168 days. Summers typically range from 70 degrees to 95 degrees. Winter temperatures are between 20 degrees to 35 degrees. Precipitation varies widely in Box Elder County depending on elevation. Approximately 4 inches of annual precipitation is recorded near the shores of the Great Salt Lake, while over 30 inches of precipitation is recorded in the highest levels of the Wasatch mountains. Our county croplands typically receives 6-16 inches of annual precipitation. Snow falls as early as October and as late as April.

Fun Fact:

Did you know that the Utah State Quarter was released on November 8, 2007, commemorating the Golden Spike's driving at Promontory Summit in Box Elder County.



Other Sites of Interest

Locomotive Springs Waterfowl Management Area: Excellent hunting and fishing await the sportsman in this remote area of the county located about 16 miles west of the Golden Spike National Historic Park. Travel to this area can be hazardous, so always check weather and road conditions before travel.

Lucin Cut-Off: On March 4, 1904, the original Southern Pacific main line through Promontory Summit was replaced by 12 mile long wooden trestle across the Great Salt Lake. This was and still is one of the most ambitious and best known railroad engineering achievements other than the transcontinental railroad itself. In 1959, \$54 million rock causeway replaced the trestle, however, the wooden trestle is still used occasionally.

Great Salt Lake: The great inland sea is the second largest saltiest body of water on earth. The salt level is so great that the only life the water can support is brine shrimp and the larva of a brine fly. It covers an area of 1,500 square miles (1000 sq miles in Box Elder County) with 350 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 33 feet. The lake has no none outlet which accounts for it's unusually high saline and mineral content.

Kelton: Kelton is located 5 miles south of Utah Highway 30. Kelton is a ghost town and was the last town built by the Central Pacific prior to the driving of the Great Salt Lake. The town suffered after a 6.6 earthquake hit in March 1934.

Park Valley: Park Valley is located 28 miles southwest of Snowville on Highway 30. The area saw a streak of excitement after the town struck gold. Hundreds of boomers streamed into the area and a 5 stamp mill began turning out 500 a day in gold. In 1914, a group of Russian immigrants attempted to colonize the valley, but the drought forced abandonment. Remnants of those mining and colonizing days can still be seen.

Zaqistan: Zaqistan is a micro-nation located in the west desert of Box Elder County. Founded in 2005 by artist, Zac Landsberg, the amicro-nation has no residents, just art work.



Spiral Jetty: Built in 1970, is located off Rozel Point, in the Great Salt Lake, just west of the Golden Spike National Historic Park. It is 1,500 feet long and 15 feet wide. The Spiral Jetty was created by American Sculptor, Robert Smithson.



Crystal Hot Springs: Located in Honeyville, Utah, the natural hot and cold springs have the highest mineral content in the world. The hot springs are open year round, where you can enjoy the waterslides, soaker pool, Olympic pool, cold spring pool or 3 hot tubs. The Crystal Hot Springs opened in 1901.

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge: A 74,000 acre National Wildlife Refuge, open since 1928, is home to millions of migratory birds, wetlands, marshes, mudflats and open water. The Bird Refuge offers walking trails, an auto-tour, bird watching tower, outdoor learning playground and an education center. The Bird Refuge is located west of I-15 in Brigham City.

Chinese Arch: Chinese Arch is a natural arch located near the Golden Spike Historic Park. The arch was named to honor thousands of Chinese workers brought in to accomplish Central Pacific's portion of the building of the transcontinental railroad.

Rocket Gardens: Located in front of the office buildings at Northrop Grumman, the Rocket Gardens is a walking display of several of the rockets and the technology used to lift astronauts into space! Northrop Grumman is located on Highway 83 near the turn off for the Golden Spike.

Heritage Theatre: Once the Perry Ward Building, the beautiful red building has been home to the Heritage Theatre since 1975. The Heritage Theatre produces several plays each year.

Sun Tunnels: Completed in 1976, the four Sun Tunnels are concrete tubes laid out in an X shape, each drilled with holes to pattern the constellations of Draco, Perseus, Columbia, and Capricorn. The tunnels are massive, and sit in a remote valley in the Great Basin Desert, west of the Bonneville Salt Flats.

Willard Bay State Park: A freshwater reservoir located west of I-15 is the perfect destination to boat, water ski, tube, fish, swim and camp. The new Pond is perfect for a fun summer day of swimming, or becoming a certified scuba diver. It is one of the only bodies of water in Utah deep enough for certification.

Academy Building: The birthplace of Ballet West, and home to the Christensen brothers who brought the Nutcracker to the United States. The Academy Building is in the heart of Brigham City, built in 1903, the Academy Building has served many purposes but is now operated by Box Elder Chamber of Commerce and serves as an event center.

Fun Facts about Box Elder County

- The Methodist Church in Corinne is the oldest extant Methodist Church in Utah. Built in 1870.
- The first weather station in Utah was located in Corinne.
- Idle Isle Restaurant in Brigham City is Utah's oldest operating restaurant.
- The Berlin Candy Bomber, Gail Halverson, is from Garland.
- Brigham City was home to Bushnell General Military Hospital during World War II.
- Box Elder County has several pieces of outdoor artwork--Sun Tunnels, Tremonton Art Murals, Spiral Jetty and more.
- Box Elder County is home to several hot springs. Crystal Hot Springs is the most well known with the highest mineral content in the world. Stinky Springs is a primitive hot springs in Corrine. Belmont Springs located in Garland is a popular scuba diving spot.
- Helen Keller visited the soliders at Bushnell General Military Hospital.
- Box Elder County is 5 times the size of Rhode Island.
- Smith's Grocery Store and Flying J Fuel Stops both started in Box Elder County. The first Smith's location was in Brigham City. The first Flying J was in Willard.
- Portia Nelson was born and raised in Brigham City. She is well known for her part on Sound of Music and the song "Make Me a Rainbow".
- The Wellsville Mountains are the steepest mountains in the world. The elevation rises the highest from the smallest base.
- Several movies, shows and commercials have been filmed in Box Elder County.
- Vehicle Airbags were invented in Box Elder County.
- Headquarters to the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation.
- Major employers include AutoLiv, Nucor, Northrop Grumman, Malt O Meal, Box Elder School District, Wal-Mart, West Liberty Foods and Proctor & Gamble.
- Highway 89 is often referred to as "Utah's Famous Fruit Highway". Every summer, several fruit stands pop up all along the 89 selling fresh fruits, vegetables, and goods.
- Box Elder County is home to the oldest rodeo in Utah.





Annual Events

Box Elder County is home to several annual events! Our most popular and well known event is Brigham City Peach Days. Peach Days is a 2 day event that takes place the weekend following Labor Day Weekend. The famous event showcases a fruit displays, 2 parades, a car show, live entertainment, vendors, food booths, a pageant and a carnival. Peach Days started in 1904, and is a tradition for many families across the Wasatch Front.

Our Box Elder County Fair and Rodeo takes place each year in late August. This event allows our community to show off their talents and enjoy a week full of fair events! Our world famous rodeo sells out every year!

No one celebrates the holidays like Box Elder County. Every 4th of July and Pioneer Day, our communities come together for activities, car shows, fairs, parades, softball tournaments and fireworks.

Summer in Box Elder County is the place to find the best home grown produce! Our local farmers open up their fruit stands on Highway 89 to sell peaches, apricots, cherries, raspberries, tomatoes, corn, zucchini and more! Our locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables are full of flavor!

Halloween is a special time of year for all ages. Trunk or treats, Trick or Treating on Main Street, Fall Carnivals, Pumpkin Patches and Petting Farms happen all throughout the community!

As soon as the pumpkins get put away, Christmas activities start! The Nutcracker Celebration in Brigham City celebrates the Christensen Family and the beloved Nutcracker play. Fantasy at the Bay at Willard Bay State Park lights the night with favorite holiday songs and beautiful twinkling lights. Cowboy Christmas Market is an annual tradition with shopping, vendors and live entertainment at Box Elder County Fairgrounds. Tremonton City lights the town with a light show and music. Don't miss the Christmas Village and Lights on Main Street in Brigham City.

Other annual events that are not to be missed:

- Little Valley Days in Mantua
- Hay & Beet Days in Tremonton
- Art on Main in Brigham City