

POPULATION FORECAST FOR ARCHULETA COUNTY

In order to establish population forecast models the subcommittee members studied trends worldwide, nationwide, statewide and local. We looked at population data and listened to opinions. We evaluated our findings which culminated in the development of the three population forecast models. These models are for Archuleta County and not for the PAWS District. PAWSD currently uses a formula of 75% of the County numbers to indicate the district population.

Although the methodology used to determine the models is logical (see second page), the results prove to be thought provoking due to the financial and economic conditions that presently exist. There are recent occurrences that make us feel our low model isn't low enough. Likewise, none of us can come up with a rationale to justify the high estimate any time in the foreseeable future. Due to the variable nature of population forecasts, the committee is recommending the PAWSD Board review the population numbers each year and make adjustments on at least a five year basis.

In our study we recognize that growth is not constrained by the lack of availability of buildable lots or larger acreage parcels. There is a wide array of available housing types including low cost apartments, senior housing, townhomes, condominiums, starter homes and large luxurious homes on acreage.

As of now, the low population model is the starting point as the constraints on growth are numerous.

1. The nationwide financial crisis.
2. Persistently high unemployment.
3. The housing market is experiencing an economic depression.
4. Financing for businesses and home mortgages is extremely difficult to obtain.
5. Consumer confidence is negative.
6. Economic instability has caused a shift in people's comfort level resulting in individuals working longer. Early retirement may be a thing of the past for many. This will impact the second home market.
7. Archuleta County has few employers who do not rely on the local economy for their success.

What would need to change that would result in movement toward the mid population estimate?

1. A major improvement in the economic well-being of the nation.
2. Employment opportunities improve substantially both nationally and locally.
3. The recruitment of employers to the County who do not rely on the local economy for their success thus providing stability for the local work force - Parelli as an example. Although increased tourism is a plus, one new tourist family here for a week does not equal one new gainfully employed full-time family.

4. Availability of financing for businesses and home purchasers.
5. Consumer confidence returns to a positive level.

What would need to happen to change our opinion of the high population estimate? The prevailing thought is that something of an unforeseen nature would have to occur to elevate the population to these levels.

The Subcommittee #2 population estimates are only the first step in determining the water needs for this community now and into the future. These estimates are substantially less than those contained in the Steve Harris report of February 2009.

The Community Water Supply Work Group
Population Subcommittee

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Methodology used for Population Estimation Models is as follows: The county's estimates for current population, flat projections for the next few years as there are no projects in the development stage that will add to our population quickly, along with the SDO projections for the rest of the period. The low and high forecasts were developed by determining standard deviations based on historical SDO estimates versus what actually occurred.

Comparison of Future Population Projections for Archuleta County

