

## Carbon County



Carbon County is the 15th smallest in Utah, with a 2020 Census population of 20,412.<sup>1</sup> Between 2010 and 2020, Carbon County declined by 991 residents, primarily driven by out migration.

From 2020 to 2060, Carbon County is projected to continue to experience below state average population and employment growth. Carbon County's population is projected to grow from 20,449 on July 1, 2020 to 22,422 in 2060. The median age is projected to rise from 37.5 in 2020 to 47.0 in 2060. Additional details on age groups are included below.

Carbon County's economy ranks among the most economically specialized economies in the state. Analysts expect the economy to grow, driven by a hardworking workforce, Utah State University Eastern, red rock tourism attractions, favorable broadband access, and proximity to the Greater Salt Lake economic region.

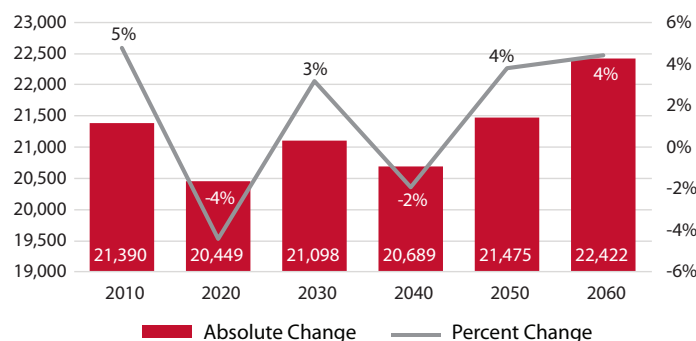
## Key Findings

- **Historical context** – Carbon County lost population in eight of the past 10 years due to net out-migration and job losses. Between 2010 and 2020, Carbon County declined by 991 residents. Driven by out migration, this resulted in a 2020 Census population of 20,412, the 15th smallest county in Utah.
- **Regional context** – Carbon County shares a strong economic link with Emery County. This two-county economic region functions largely as a single consumer market and labor market.
- **Population growth** – Carbon County's population is projected to grow from 20,449 on July 1, 2020 to 22,422 in 2060. Carbon County's overall population ranking decreases from the 15<sup>th</sup> smallest county in 2020 to the 12<sup>th</sup> in 2060.
- **Components of change** – Carbon County will experience negative growth in the 2030s, driven both by net migration and natural increase. However, starting in 2040, positive net migration will contribute to growth in the county.
- **Age composition** – Carbon County's population ages over the projection horizon. The share of the total population age 65 and older is projected to increase from 17.5% in

2020 to 28.0% in 2060. The share of the population under 18 is projected to decline, from 25.6% in 2020 to 18.1% in 2060. The median age is projected to rise from 37.5 in 2020 to 47.0 in 2060.

- **Economic growth** – Carbon County's employment is projected to increase from 10,889 in 2020 to 12,600 in 2060. Projected growth sectors include construction, professional, scientific and technical services, and arts, entertainment and recreation.

### Historic and Projected Growth in Carbon County



Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2020-2060 Projections

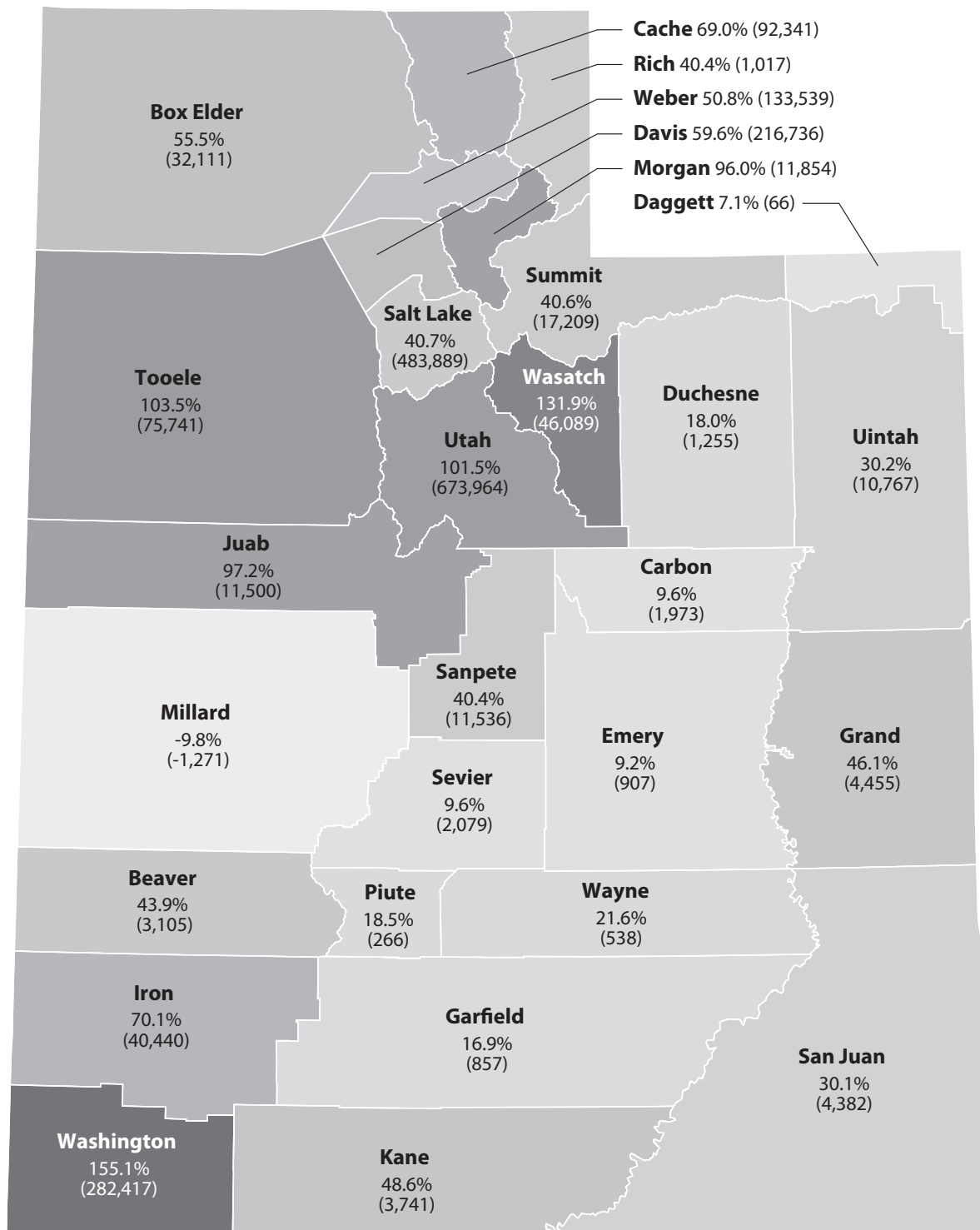
## Major Events/Projects

- **Economic development plans/CEDS** – The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy sponsored by the U.S. Economic Development Administration calls for the prioritization of economic diversity, workforce development, infrastructure investments (including tourism), and support for entrepreneurship. These plans are expected to guide Carbon County's economic diversification.
- **Coal-fired Powerplants** – The investor-owned utility PacifiCorp plans to retire two coal-fired powerplants in Emery County by 2036 and 2042. This timeline could be adjusted forward or backward depending on market conditions.
- **Mega Sites** – Carbon County hosts two mega sites, Carbon Highway 10 and Carbon Consumers Road. Both sites are certified through Stage 1, which involves a commitment from owners to hold the property for a project with at \$1 billion in capital investment and significant job creation.
- **Silicon Slopes East** – Leaders from Carbon and Emery counties have joined with Silicon Slopes to create a Silicon Slopes East chapter. This initiative capitalizes on and supports Utah's rapidly growing tech sector and stretches this momentum to eastern Utah, which is just a 90-minute drive from the epicenter of Utah's tech sector in Lehi, Utah. The initiative seeks to empower Coal Country's startup and tech community to learn, connect, and serve.
- **Uinta Basin Railway** – The Uinta Basin Railway is a public-private proposal for a common carrier railway envisioned to connect Utah's Uinta Basin with the national railway network. The Railway is currently being assessed through the NEPA process, including the evaluation of three route alternatives, environmental impacts, and mitigation options, as well as a "no-action" alternative. The U.S. Surface Transportation Board oversees this process. These projections recognize the potential for this development, but do not explicitly include the construction and ongoing impacts.

## Assumptions

- **Fertility** – The estimated 2020 Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for Carbon County is 1.84. The TFRs in all regions are predicted to decline, resulting in a TFR of 1.65 in Carbon County in 2060. Statewide, this the TFR is projected to decline from 1.99 in 2020 to 1.78 in 2060.
- **Life expectancy** – The estimated 2020 life expectancy for Carbon County males is 75.9 and 80.3 for females. Based on historical trends, we project it to rise to 81.7 for males and 85.5 for females by 2060.
- **Powerplant closures** – These projections assume the closure of Huntington and Hunter Powerplants in 2036 and 2042 as specified by their owner in their 2021 Integrated Resource Management Plan. Coal mining employment also declines based on these closures.
- **Resource constraints and policy choices** – These projections for Carbon County assume no land (including slopes, flood plains, and soils), water, or other resource constraints. Policy choices such as land use, community preferences, and opportunity zones are considered as part of the local review process.

# Utah Projected County Population Absolute and Percent Change, 2020 to 2060



Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2020-2060 Projections

# Projected Carbon County Growth by Category, 2020–2060

Year	Population				Employment			Households			
	Population	Absoulte Change	Annual Growth Rate	Median Age	Employment	Absolute Change	Annual Growth Rate	Households	Absolute Change	Annual Growth Rate	Persons Per Household
2020	20,449	n/a	n/a	37.5	11,174	n/a	n/a	7,950	n/a	n/a	2.5
2021	20,488	39	0.2%	37.7	11,635	461	4.1%	7,968	18	0.2%	2.5
2022	20,583	95	0.5%	38.1	11,747	112	1.0%	8,031	63	0.8%	2.5
2023	20,705	122	0.6%	38.4	12,025	278	2.4%	8,103	72	0.9%	2.5
2024	20,834	129	0.6%	38.7	11,988	-37	-0.3%	8,180	77	1.0%	2.5
2025	20,950	116	0.6%	39.0	11,718	-270	-2.3%	8,250	70	0.9%	2.5
2026	21,044	94	0.4%	39.4	11,601	-117	-1.0%	8,308	58	0.7%	2.5
2027	21,106	62	0.3%	39.8	11,603	2	0.0%	8,370	62	0.7%	2.5
2028	21,134	28	0.1%	40.2	11,245	-358	-3.1%	8,425	55	0.7%	2.4
2029	21,129	-5	-0.0%	40.7	11,213	-32	-0.3%	8,468	43	0.5%	2.4
2030	21,098	-31	-0.1%	41.1	10,945	-268	-2.4%	8,509	41	0.5%	2.4
2031	21,053	-45	-0.2%	41.6	10,895	-50	-0.5%	8,542	33	0.4%	2.4
2032	21,009	-44	-0.2%	42.1	10,826	-69	-0.6%	8,571	29	0.3%	2.4
2033	20,968	-41	-0.2%	42.5	10,814	-12	-0.1%	8,599	28	0.3%	2.4
2034	20,932	-36	-0.2%	42.8	10,845	31	0.3%	8,628	29	0.3%	2.4
2035	20,903	-29	-0.1%	43.1	10,875	30	0.3%	8,661	33	0.4%	2.4
2036	20,823	-80	-0.4%	43.4	10,847	-28	-0.3%	8,672	11	0.1%	2.3
2037	20,752	-71	-0.3%	43.5	10,864	17	0.2%	8,684	12	0.1%	2.3
2038	20,700	-52	-0.3%	43.6	10,881	17	0.2%	8,696	12	0.1%	2.3
2039	20,678	-22	-0.1%	43.7	10,901	20	0.2%	8,722	26	0.3%	2.3
2040	20,689	11	0.1%	43.7	10,937	36	0.3%	8,755	33	0.4%	2.3
2041	20,694	5	0.0%	43.7	10,983	46	0.4%	8,790	35	0.4%	2.3
2042	20,692	-2	-0.0%	43.6	10,980	-3	-0.0%	8,814	24	0.3%	2.3
2043	20,708	16	0.1%	43.5	11,026	46	0.4%	8,853	39	0.4%	2.3
2044	20,754	46	0.2%	43.3	11,093	67	0.6%	8,901	48	0.5%	2.3
2045	20,825	71	0.3%	43.2	11,181	88	0.8%	8,963	62	0.7%	2.3
2046	20,929	104	0.5%	43.2	11,276	95	0.8%	9,037	74	0.8%	2.3
2047	21,054	125	0.6%	43.3	11,385	109	1.0%	9,122	85	0.9%	2.2
2048	21,191	137	0.7%	43.5	11,507	122	1.1%	9,206	84	0.9%	2.2
2049	21,333	142	0.7%	43.7	11,620	113	1.0%	9,286	80	0.9%	2.2
2050	21,475	142	0.7%	43.9	11,728	108	0.9%	9,369	83	0.9%	2.2
2051	21,618	143	0.7%	44.2	11,827	99	0.8%	9,452	83	0.9%	2.2
2052	21,761	143	0.7%	44.5	11,919	92	0.8%	9,540	88	0.9%	2.2
2053	21,897	136	0.6%	44.8	12,013	94	0.8%	9,626	86	0.9%	2.2
2054	22,018	121	0.6%	45.1	12,097	84	0.7%	9,703	77	0.8%	2.2
2055	22,132	114	0.5%	45.4	12,192	95	0.8%	9,780	77	0.8%	2.2
2056	22,236	104	0.5%	45.7	12,284	92	0.8%	9,864	84	0.9%	2.2
2057	22,324	88	0.4%	46.0	12,375	91	0.7%	9,935	71	0.7%	2.2
2058	22,385	61	0.3%	46.3	12,454	79	0.6%	9,993	58	0.6%	2.2
2059	22,417	32	0.1%	46.7	12,528	74	0.6%	10,045	52	0.5%	2.2
2060	22,422	5	0.0%	47.0	12,600	72	0.6%	10,078	33	0.3%	2.2

Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, 2020–2060 Projections

## Endnote

1 The decennial census count is as of April 1, 2020. Projections are as of July 1 of each year.