

## Prepared by the ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Ajo, the birthplace of copper mining in Arizona, has a rich history dating back hundreds of years. Today it is a popular tourist destination and retirement mecca offering an inexpensive lifestyle. Ajo (pronounced ah-ho) comes from either the Spanish word for garlic (ajo) or the Papago Indian word for paint (au'auho). Papagos obtained red paint pigments from the area. The Ajo lily, an onion-like plant, grows nearby. Located in western Pima County, this ethnically diverse town is on state Highway 85, north of the junction with state Highway 86 and south of Interstate 8. Ajo is surrounded by mountains and the Sonoran desert.

### Basic Information

Founded: 1854  
 Incorporated: No  
 Elevation: 1,798  
 Located in Pima County  
 Nearby Highways: HWYS I-8, Hwy. 85, Hwy. 86  
 Enterprise Zone available

Distance to Major Cities:  
 Phoenix: 110 miles  
 Tucson: 131 miles

### Population

	1990	2000	2007
Ajo	2,919	3,705	N/A
Pima County	666,957	843,746	1,003,235
Arizona	3,665,228	5,130,632	6,500,194

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security and US Census Bureau  
 N/A: Population estimates for this community are not available.

### Principal Economic Activities

Ajo's employment is in the tourist, service, and commercial sectors. Due to its location, Ajo serves as a gateway for visitors traveling to Mexico, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation, home to the Golden HA:SAÑ Casino. Phelps Dodge, the nation's largest copper company, ceased operations in 1986 and sold approximately 900 homes to new residents, mostly retirees. The company is planning to reopen the mine, at which time it expects to employ 400 people.

### County Employment

	2007
Government	77,900
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	63,900
Educational and Health Services	54,200
Professional and Business Services	52,300
Leisure and Hospitality	39,800
Manufacturing	27,500
Construction	26,400
Financial Activities	17,800
Other Services	15,500
Information	6,000
Other	1,800

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security  
 Figures are organized under the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS).



### Labor Force Data

	1990	2000	2007
Civilian Labor Force	755	1,129	1,263
Unemployed	52	79	88
Unemployment Rate	6.9%	7.0%	7.0%

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security

### Growth Indicators

	1990	2000	2007
Net Assessed Value (\$)	7.1 million	12.2 million	16.6 million

Sources: Arizona State Univ., AZ Dept. of Revenue, AZ Tax Research Foundation

### Scenic Attractions

Ajo is centered around a lovely plaza lined by tall palms and flanked by mission churches and Spanish-style buildings. Festivals are held in the plaza. Other attractions include an open pit mine lookout and a historical museum. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, 36 miles south of Ajo, is a magnificent reserve of virgin desert. Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, 860,000 acres, lies west of Ajo. It protects endangered desert bighorn sheep and a herd of pronghorn antelopes. A special permit to travel the Devil's Highway can be obtained at its Ajo headquarters. Mexico is 40 miles south of Ajo. Visitors cross at Sonoita, a town founded in the 17th century. Puerto Peñasco (Rocky Point), once a fishing village on the Gulf of California, is rapidly becoming a major resort area.

## Community Facilities

Ajo offers a broad range of community facilities including a library, recreation center, swimming pool, nine-hole golf course, bowling alley, three parks, four lighted tennis courts, a rifle range, roping arena and extensive picnic areas. Ajo also has several active fraternal organizations and 11 area churches.

<b>Educational Institutions</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Elementary	Y	Y
Middle School	Y	N
High School	Y	N

### Financial

Number of banks: 1

### Government

Fire Department: Volunteer  
Law Enforcement: Sheriff's Office

### Airports

Ajo Municipal Airport has a lighted 3,800-ft. paved runway.

### Medical

Ajo has one outpatient clinic.

### Hotel & Lodging

Number of Rooms: 42  
Meeting Rooms: 5  
Capacity of Largest Facility: 60

### Industrial Properties:

Numerous properties with utilities are available. Contact the Ajo District Chamber of Commerce for more information. Transportation services to Tucson and Phoenix and throughout Ajo and Why are provided by Ajo Stage Lines.

### Utilities

Electricity	Ajo Improvement Co.	520.387.7151
Electricity	Nogales/Santa Cruz County Public Library	520.287.3343
Natural Gas	Southwest Gas Corp. (statewide)	800.766.9722
Sewer	Ajo Improvement Co.	520.387.7151
Telephone	Table Top Telephone, Inc. (Ajo)	520.387.5600
Water	Ajo Domestic Water Improvement District	520.387.6385
Water	Ajo Improvement Co.	520.387.7151
Water	Arizona Water Co.	602.240.6860

Cable Providers: Y  
Digital Switching Station: N  
Internet Service Provider: Y

Cable Internet Service Provider: Y  
Fiber Optics: N

## Taxes

<b>Property Tax Rate</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2007</b>
Elementary/High Schools	3.40	6.10	4.91
City/Fire District	0.00	0.00	0.00
Countywide	7.06	7.76	6.35
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10.46</b>	<b>13.86</b>	<b>11.26</b>

Source: Arizona Tax Research Foundation  
Note: Tax rate per \$100 assessed valuation

NOTE: School district participates in the Joint Technological Education District (JTED).

### Sales Tax

	<b>2007</b>
City/Town	0.00%
County	0.50%
State	5.60%

Sources: Arizona League of Cities & Towns, Arizona Dept. of Revenue

## Weather

	<b>Avg. Low (°F)</b>	<b>Avg. High (°F)</b>	<b>Precip. (in.)</b>
January	41.5	64.0	0.7
February	45.4	68.9	0.6
March	49.2	73.8	0.8
April	55.6	81.9	0.3
May	63.0	90.3	0.1
June	71.8	99.6	0.1
July	77.7	103.0	1.2
August	76.0	100.8	1.9
September	71.9	97.2	0.8
October	61.5	87.0	0.5
November	49.8	74.3	0.6
December	43.5	65.9	0.8
Yearly Avg.	58.9	83.9	8.4

Source: Western Regional Climate Center  
Western Regional Climate Center, wrcc@dri.edu. Period of record 1914-2005.  
Average Total Snowfall 0.1".

This profile was prepared by the Arizona Department of Commerce Communications Division in cooperation with local sources.

For further information contact:

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