

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.

FOUNDED: 1900
 COUNTY: Pima County
 DISTANCE TO PHOENIX: 110 miles
 HIGHWAYS: I-8, Hwy. 85, Hwy. 86
 ENTERPRISE ZONE AVAILABLE

INCORPORATED: No
 ELEVATION: 1,798 feet
 DISTANCE TO TUCSON: 131 miles

POPULATION

	1990	1998	1999
Ajo	2,919	5,492	2,809
Pima County	666,880	823,900	845,775
Arizona	3,665,228	4,764,025	4,924,350

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security and U.S. Census Bureau.
 Note: 1998 Ajo estimate projected from county population growth rates.

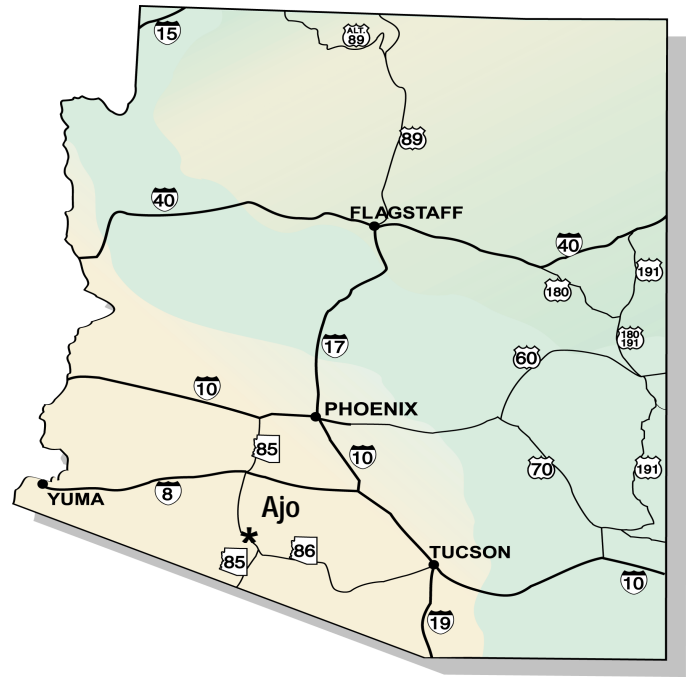
PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

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

	1990	1999
Agricultural Services, Forestry & Fishing	2,089	
Construction	15,155	21,900
FIRE	11,519	13,500
Manufacturing	27,564	30,400
Mining	2,122	2,000
Services	78,654	111,000
TCPU	9,115	13,700
Trade	54,277	71,700
Wholesale Trade	9,150	

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security and U.S. Census Bureau.



LABOR FORCE DATA

	1990	1998	1999
Civilian Labor Force	751	876	907
Unemployed	50	35	42
Unemployment Rate	6.7%	4.0%	4.6%

Sources: Arizona Department of Economic Security.

Growth Indicators

	1990	1998	1999
New Building Permits			
Taxable Sales (\$)			
Net Assessed Valuation (\$)	7,136,488	11,374,086	12,444,664

Sources: Arizona State University; Arizona Department of Revenue.

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.

TAXES

Property Tax Rate	1990	1998	1999
Elem/High School	3.40	4.95	4.68
City/Fire District	0.00	0.00	0.00
County	7.06	7.11	7.60
Total	\$10.46	\$12.06	\$12.28

Sources: Arizona Tax Research Foundation

Note: Property tax in Arizona is based on assessed valuation which is 10 percent of market value for residential property. Average tax rate on homes in Arizona before exemptions and rebates is 1.3% of market value.

Sales Tax Rate

City	0.00%
County	0.00%
State	5.00%

Sources: Arizona Tax Research Foundation

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.

Educational Institutions

	Public	Private
Elementary	Y	N
High School	Y	N
Middle School	Y	N

Financial

Number of Banks: 2

Governmental Agencies

Fire Department: Volunteer

Law Enforcement: Sheriff's Office

Airports

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

Medical

Ajo has one outpatient clinic.

Hotel and Lodging Facilities

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
	APS (Statewide)	800.253-5405
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 Dist	520.387.6385
	Ajo Improvement Co.	520.387.7151
	Arizona Water Co.	520.387.6668

Cable Providers: Yes

Cable Internet Service Provider: Yes

Digital Switching Station: No

Fiber Optics: No

Internet Service Provider: Yes

Weather

Month	Average Temperature (°F)		Average Total Precipitation (Inches)
	Daily Minimum	Daily Maximum	
January	49.9	64.1	0.70
February	43.9	68.5	0.53
March	48.1	73.2	0.82
April	55.6	82.1	0.33
May	63.1	90.8	0.06
June	71.2	98.9	0.06
July	78.4	103.2	1.36
August	76.3	100.9	2.46
September	72.2	97.9	0.75
October	61.4	87.8	0.51
November	59.3	74.3	0.55
December	42.7	66.0	0.83
Yearly Avg	58.6	84.0	8.95

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

For further information, contact:

Ajo District Chamber of Commerce
 400 Taladro St.
 Ajo, AZ 85321
 520.387.7742 Fax: 520.387.3641
 Email: ajocofc@tabletoptelephone.com
 Web: www.ajoinaz.com

Arizona Department of Commerce

3800 North Central Avenue, Suite 1400
 Phoenix, AZ 85012
 602.280.1321 FAX: 602.280.1305
<http://www.azcommerce.com/>

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