

# Safford

## Community Profile

Prepared by the ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Safford is in the southeastern portion of the state on the south bank of the Gila River. The foothills of the Pinaleno Mountains begin about five miles southeast of the City. Mount Graham, the highest peak in the mountain range, and its companion peaks have a marked effect on the local climate by reducing winter precipitation. Safford, the county seat of Graham County, was established in 1874 and almost immediately became an agricultural area. Water is drawn from the Gila River to create 40,000 acres of irrigated agriculture.

A Main Street and REDI accredited community

### Basic Information

Founded: 1874  
 Incorporated: 1901  
 Elevation: 2,844  
 Located in Graham County  
 Nearby Highways: HWYS I-10; US 70; US 191  
 Enterprise Zone available

Distance to Major Cities:  
 Phoenix: 164 miles  
 Tucson: 130 miles

### Population

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
Safford	7,359	9,232	9,460
Graham County	26,554	33,489	37,338
Arizona	3,665,228	5,130,632	6,500,194

Sources: Arizona Department of Commerce and US Census Bureau  
 The City of Safford estimates current population between 9,800 and 9,900.

### Principal Economic Activities

Safford serves as the retail center for this part of AZ, serving 65,000. Agriculture has been the mainstay of the Safford & Graham County economy, with cotton the principal commodity. Remaining acres are used for hay and small grains. A 20-acre greenhouse produces tomatoes grown under glass. Ranching & Mt. Graham Internatl. Observatory also play a role in the local economy. Retail trade and services continue to play a significant role in the economy of the area.

### County Employment

	<u>2010</u>
Other Private Service-Providing	2,925
Government	2,800
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,600
Goods Producing	1,100

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



### Labor Force Data

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
Civilian Labor Force	2,910	3,581	4,161
Unemployed	178	129	115
Unemployment Rate	6.1%	3.6%	2.8%

Source: Arizona Department of Commerce

### Growth Indicators

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
New Bldg. Permits	159	117	208
Taxable Sales (\$)	76.3 million	127.8 million	253.7 million
Net Assessed Value (\$)	19.7 million	31.3 million	41.5 million

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

### Scenic Attractions

Safford, 10 miles north of the Coronado Natl. Forest, is an area that provides many recreational facilities. Popular spots are 10,720-ft. Mt. Graham and Pinaleno Mtns. Swift Trail, a 36-mile tour & one of many scenic drives in the area, provides a route to the summit & features many picnicking & camping sites. Discovery Park is a 160-acre, world class attraction, that includes Natures Hideaway Riparian Wetlands, a Narrow Gauge 1880s Railroad & Gov. Aker Observatory. BLM administers 740,800 acres of land within Graham County. Some of the unique recreational opportunities are Hot Wells Dunes, Gila Box Riparian Natl. Conservation Area & Black Hills Back County Byway. Roper Lake State Park, south of Safford, has overnight camping & day use picnic areas, plus mineral water hot springs.

## Community Facilities

The City of Safford offers a broad range of community facilities including two historic museums, a community center, fine arts center, library, a bowling alley, two indoor theaters, an Olympic-size swimming pool, one 18-hole golf course, one 36-hole miniature golf course, batting cages, several tennis and paddleball courts, seven parks (five acres with play equipment; one 120-acre county regional park south of town), numerous picnic areas at Mt. Graham, Roper Lake and county parks, 12 baseball diamonds (six lighted), and one rodeo arena.

### Educational Institutions

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

### Financial

Number of banks: 5

### Government

Fire Department: Volunteer  
Law Enforcement: City Police Department

### Airports

Safford Airport has two lighted/paved 6,000-ft./4,800-ft. runways, UNICOM radio, rental car and charter plane services are available.

### Medical

One 59-bed hospital with 18 physicians, a 128-bed convalescent home and a counseling center.

### Hotel & Lodging

Number of Rooms: 350  
Meeting Rooms: 9  
Capacity of Largest Facility: 150

### Industrial Properties:

There are two industrial parks with 645 acres. Municipal utilities available; air, rail, and highway access.

### Utilities

Electricity	City of Safford Utilities	520.348.3143
Natural Gas	City of Safford Utilities	520.348.3143
Propane	Griffen Propane	928.428.0071
Propane	Matlock Gas Co.	928.428.0641
Telephone	Qwest (statewide)	800.244.1111
Water & Sewer	City of Safford Utilities	520.348.3143

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

## Taxes

Property Tax Rate	1990	2000	2011
Elementary/High Schools	7.64	6.89	6.27
City/Fire District	1.27	0.43	0.45
Countywide	4.79	4.32	3.87
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13.70</b>	<b>11.64</b>	<b>10.59</b>

Source: Arizona Tax Research Association  
Note: Tax rate per \$100 assessed valuation  
NOTE: School district participates in Gila Institute for Technology (GIFT).

### Sales Tax

	2011
City/Town	2.50%
County	0.50%
State	5.60%

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

## Weather

	Avg. Low (°F)	Avg. High (°F)	Precip. (in.)
	46.3	80.0	9.0
January	28.7	60.0	0.7
February	31.9	64.8	0.6
March	37.0	70.6	0.6
April	43.2	79.7	0.3
May	51.1	88.8	0.2
June	60.2	98.0	0.3
July	67.7	98.2	1.6
August	65.9	95.7	1.6
September	58.9	92.1	1.0
October	47.1	82.4	0.9
November	35.4	69.2	0.5
December	28.8	60.2	0.8

Source: Western Regional Climate Center  
Western Regional Climate Center, wrcc@dri.edu. Period of record 1948-2005.  
Average Total Snowfall 1.0". Data from Safford Agricultural Center, AZ.

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

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