

Appendix G: Bergen County Introduction Text

Settled by the Dutch, Bergen County (Bergen, County) was created in 1683 as one of New Jersey's four original counties. Located in the northeastern corner of New Jersey, it is bordered by the Hudson River and New York City to the east, New York State to the north, Passaic County to the west, Hudson County to the south and Essex County at the southwestern corner.

The diverse landscape includes the scenic cliffs of the Palisades overlooking the Hudson River, the Ramapo Mountains of the New Jersey Highlands, the Ramapo River, Saddle River and Hackensack River valleys, the urban wetlands of the New Jersey Meadowlands, and three reservoir areas at Woodcliff Lakes, Lake Tappan and Oradell. Bergen County is comprised of 70 municipalities covering a total area of approximately 247 square miles (234 square miles of land and 13 square miles of water).

The skyline of New York City can be seen across the Hudson River, and access to the city is convenient via the double-decked George Washington Bridge. The opening of the bridge in 1931 contributed greatly to the growth of the county, which until then had consisted largely of farmland, century-old homes and pockets of residential development. At the present time, Bergen County is primarily suburban in nature, with several municipalities that are more urban in nature. According to the 2012 Census Estimate, Bergen has 918,888 residents, or over 10% of all the people living in New Jersey - the largest number of people residing in any county in the stateⁱ.

Elementary and high schools throughout Bergen County enjoy a reputation for excellence, and five colleges in the county offer outstanding opportunities for higher education. The county provides one of the greatest pools of highly educated, skilled laborers in the metropolitan area.

Bergen features a range of businesses and employment opportunities that complement its location and population. With an excellent roadway network and public transportation system in place, the County has become home to numerous corporate headquarters, in addition to major metropolitan shopping centers and local downtown business districts. The bounty of hotels and restaurants attracts business travelers as well as tourists visiting the county and the greater New York metropolitan area.

The desirable transportation network and access to New York City have made Bergen County a very desirable place to live. The varied housing stock provides rental and owner options ranging from high-rise and garden-style apartments to comfortable suburban homes on tree-shaded streets to wooded estates.

Whether living, working, or visiting Bergen County, there is plenty to see and do. Bergen is known for its historic heritage and variety of recreational, cultural, and entertainment facilities. There are 20 county parks totaling 9,000 acres of first-class swimming, golf, riding, and skiing, as well as passive areas for those seeking solitude, as well as the many municipal facilities available to the local residents. The world renowned Meadowlands Sports Complex offers opportunities to attend athletic events, concerts and cultural exhibits year round.

ⁱ United States Census Estimate, 2012.