

[Return to Business Articles Page](#)

Conway and Faulkner County Residents are Younger, Smarter and Wealthier

By Roger Lewis

Conway residents have a lower average age and more education when compared to Faulkner County, Arkansas and US residents. Average household incomes of Conway's residents are slightly below Faulkner County's and above the Arkansas average; but well below the US average. This information is revealed in the recent release of the 2010 census data and also the American Community Survey conducted by the census bureau.

Of the population 25 years and older, 41% of Conway's residents hold a college degree, associate, bachelors or professional degree, compared to 33% for Faulkner County, 24% for Arkansas and 35% for the United States. *Education is our greatest natural resource; it is our intellectual capital that will build this great community.*

In a recent book by Michio Kaku "Physics of the Future", he devotes a chapter on the future of wealth where he states that intellectual capitalism is replacing commodity capitalism. We can see this taking place in Conway with the growth in knowledge based industries and the decline of manufacturing industries. The fact that we are above the national average in education level not only speaks well of our values but it is the foundation for our future prosperity.

The median age of Conway's residents is 27.3 compared to 30.8 for Faulkner County, 36.1 for Arkansas and 35.8 for the U. S. That is, half of Conway's residents are under 27.3 years old. Students attending colleges in Conway are counted in the census and skew this number. The percent of the population between 20 and 24 years of age is 17.9% for Conway compared to 12.0% for Faulkner County, 6.8% for Arkansas and 7.0% for the U.S. The percent of Conway's population for all other age brackets are relatively equal to Faulkner County's, Arkansas and the U.S. when you adjust for the spike in the number of 20 to 24 year olds.

The 2010 census data collection used what is labeled as the short form did not include information on income. For this information, the census bureau conducts annually The American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS randomly samples addresses geographically and surveys the residents concerning income, occupations, education and other demographic information. Population characteristics are estimated from this survey data. Information from the survey generates data that helps to determine how more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year. It also provides a means to update the decennial census to reflect changes in demographics.

Incomes are reported in several ways, the most popular are per capita income and household incomes. Income includes all sources, in addition to earned income (wages), it includes retirement, investment, royalty, and rental incomes to name the major sources. It is a better measure of resident's standard of living than earned income only.

Per capita income is the total income of all residents divided by the population and this includes non wage earners such as children, elderly and disabled. It is the lowest measure of income. The per capita income is \$21,693 for Conway, \$23,080 for Faulkner County, \$20,977 for Arkansas and \$27,041 for the US.

Household incomes also include incomes from all sources and may include the wages of more than one person. The median household incomes, the midpoint of the house hold income range, are Conway \$41,966, Faulkner County \$44,600, Arkansas \$38,542 and US \$51,425. It is interesting to note that the average or mean household incomes are significantly higher, Conway\$57,866, Faulkner County\$58,774, Arkansas \$52,198 and the US \$70,096. The large discrepancy between the mean (average) and the median (midpoint) is due to how household incomes are arrayed, they do not follow the typical bell curve model. The lower incomes are bunched up at the lower level where as the upper incomes are spread out over a very long tail in the curve with some very high incomes skewing the average upward.

The fact that incomes of Conway resident's are lower than Faulkner County's is likely due to the high percentage of Conway's population between 20 and 24 years of age, largely college students with low or no income.

Another interesting data set is the sources of income. Social security is part of household incomes for 18.8% of Conway residents compared to 23.8% for Faulkner County, 37.6% for Arkansas and 27.1% for U.S. residents. The low percentage for Conway is also indicative of Conway's younger population.

Further demographic data on Conway and Faulkner County can be found at Pulse of Conway website: [www. pulseofconway.com](http://www.pulseofconway.com)