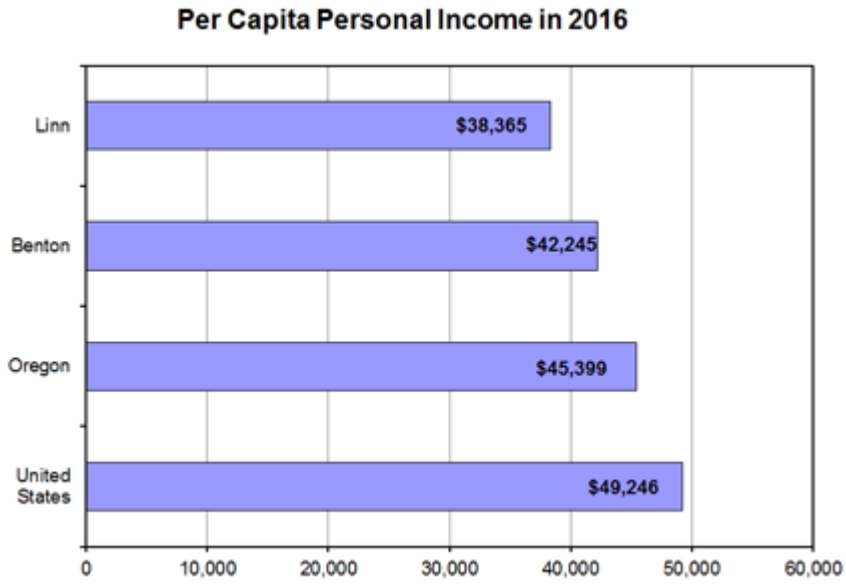
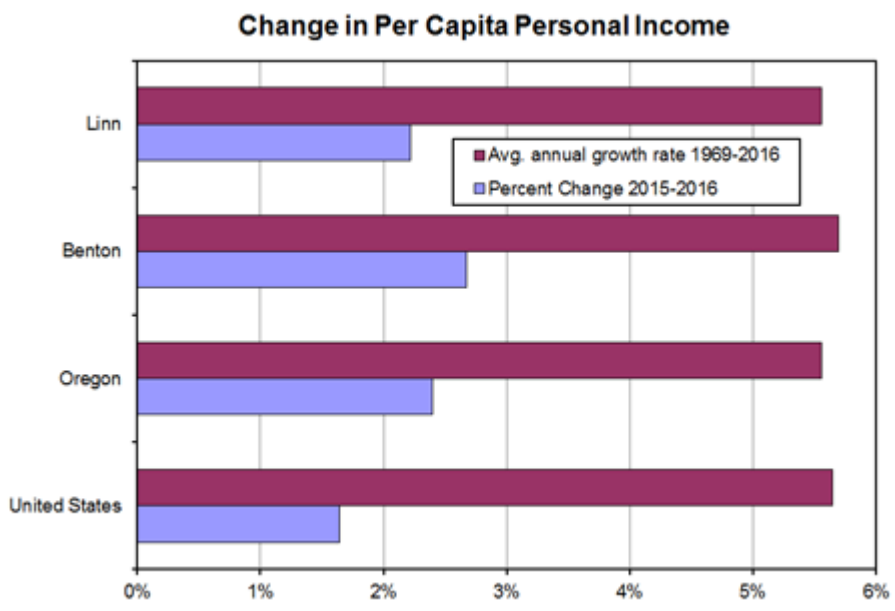
New Personal Income Data for Linn and Benton Counties

February 12, 2018 *by Pat O'Connor*

Several months ago, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released new estimates of per capita personal income (PCPI) by county. Personal income data is not among the most current economic indicators – the “new” county estimates are for 2016. Despite the time lag in producing personal income data, they are still valuable for evaluating a county’s economic health.



Personal income data includes wage and salary income, but it also includes other sources of income. One of these other income sources is transfer payments from the government. Transfer payments include social security income, food stamps, Medicare and Medicaid, welfare income, and student grants and loans received from the government. Personal income also includes dividends, interest, and rent that people receive. Farm income is another component captured in personal income data.

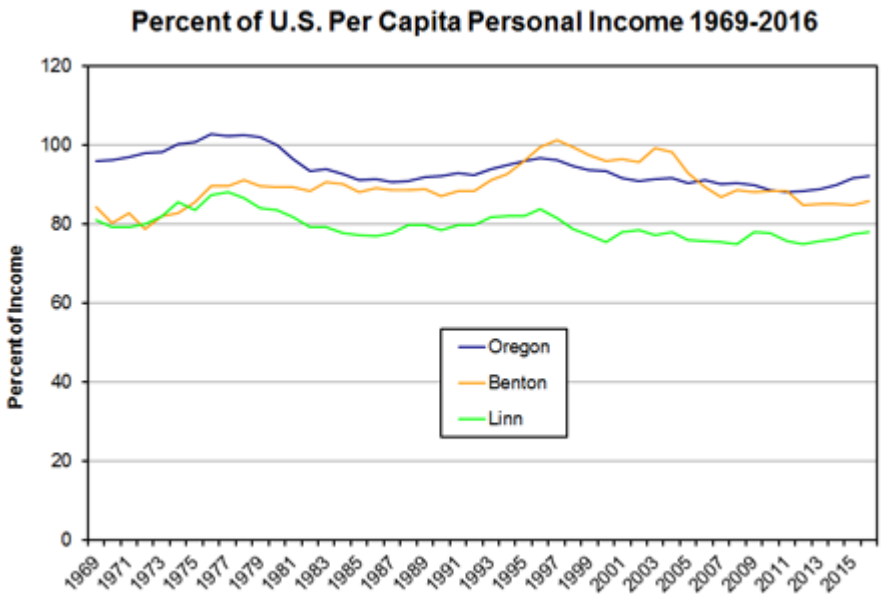


The first graph shows Benton and Linn counties compared with Oregon and the nation in terms of per capita personal income. Benton County’s ($42,245) per capita income level in 2016 exceeded Linn County but lags behind Oregon and the U.S. Linn County’s ($38,365) per capita income level was significantly less than both the state and the nation.

The second graph illustrates the short-term and long-term percent change in per capita personal income in Benton and Linn counties, Oregon, and the United States. The short-term change is shown in the over-the-year percent change from 2015 to 2016.

Both counties and Oregon all had a gain in PCPI from 2015 to 2016. Benton County's PCPI grew 2.7 percent, faster than Oregon and the U.S. Linn County's PCPI expanded 2.2 percent, lagging slightly behind Oregon's growth of 2.4 percent, but faster than the U.S. growth of 1.6 percent.

The long-term trend in PCPI is captured by looking at the annual average percent change from 1969 to 2016. Over that period, Benton County's 5.7 percent per capita personal income growth slightly outpaced Linn County, Oregon, and the nation. Linn County's per capita personal income growth of 5.6 percent matched Oregon (5.6%) and the U.S. (5.6%).



The third graph shows the PCPI for Oregon, Benton and Linn counties, as a percentage of U.S. PCPI. In 2016 Oregon's PCPI was 92.2 percent of the U.S. PCPI. Benton County's PCPI was 85.8 percent of the U.S. level, and Linn County's PCPI was 77.9 percent of the U.S. PCPI in 2016.