

TWO - EXETER

LOCATION

Exeter is located in Tulare County at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley. It is bisected by State Route 65 (Kaweah Avenue), which runs north and south, and it is situated one and one-half miles south of State Route 198, a major east/west route in Tulare County that connects Highway 99 to Sequoia National Park. Exeter is located seven miles east of Visalia, the county seat of Tulare County.

HISTORY

The original Exeter township was formed by the Southern Pacific (SP) Railroad through its subsidiary, Pacific Improvement Company. The townsite was established after the Pacific Improvement Company bought land from John Firebaugh in 1888, a local landowner. Exeter received its name from an early promoter of the improvement company, D.W. Parkhurst. He named the city Exeter after his home city of Exeter, England.

The original townsite encompassed 240 acres. The SP Railroad traversed the townsite in a northwest to southeast direction. The railroad depot was situated between Pine and Maple Streets on the east side of the railroad tracks. As was the case in many early railroad-sponsored towns, Exeter's first streets were laid out parallel with and perpendicular to the railroad tracks in a grid pattern. The streets had right-of-way widths of 80 feet and each block formed by these streets had a 20-foot wide alley that bisected the block. The early blocks were rectangular in shape, 320 by 400 feet. The lots measured 25 feet by 150 feet.

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In 1911, when Exeter incorporated, the city had already shifted the orientation of its newer streets to north/south and east/west alignments. This reorientation created numerous triangular-shaped blocks where the two street patterns joined. Today, many of these blocks are used either as park or church sites.

Exeter's land use patterns and appearance were forged by three seemingly unrelated forces - railroads, agriculture and building materials. Exeter's past, present and future land use patterns have been dictated by railroads. Exeter's first railroad, Southern Pacific, traversed the city in a northwest/southeast alignment. This man-made feature essentially divided the city in half. In 1905, the Visalia Electric Railroad began operation. This railroad connected Exeter to Visalia to the west and Lemon Cove to the northeast. This railroad, which runs from the SP Railroad to the east towards the foothills, has limited development in the northeast quadrant of town. The Sante Fe Railroad was constructed in 1914. The Sante Fe line formed the eastern border of Exeter. Except for the development of agriculturally-related industries (packing houses, cold storage) along the track, development has not occurred east of this railroad.

Oranges drive the economy in Exeter. This crop replaced Exeter's early crops, which included Emperor grapes, dry-land wheat and barley. First planted in 1896 by George Frost, the citrus industry today (oranges, lemons, grapefruit, tangerines) dominates Exeter's visual and economic landscape. Citrus is the dominate crop around Exeter and in fact lines both sides of State Route 65 from State Highway 198 to the city limits. In terms of the economy, as goes the citrus industry so goes the Exeter economy. Sectors of the economy that are strongly dependent on the citrus industry include, trucking, packing, cold storage, spraying, irrigating, processing, and marketing.

Bricks and granite were building materials that were mined in the Exeter area.

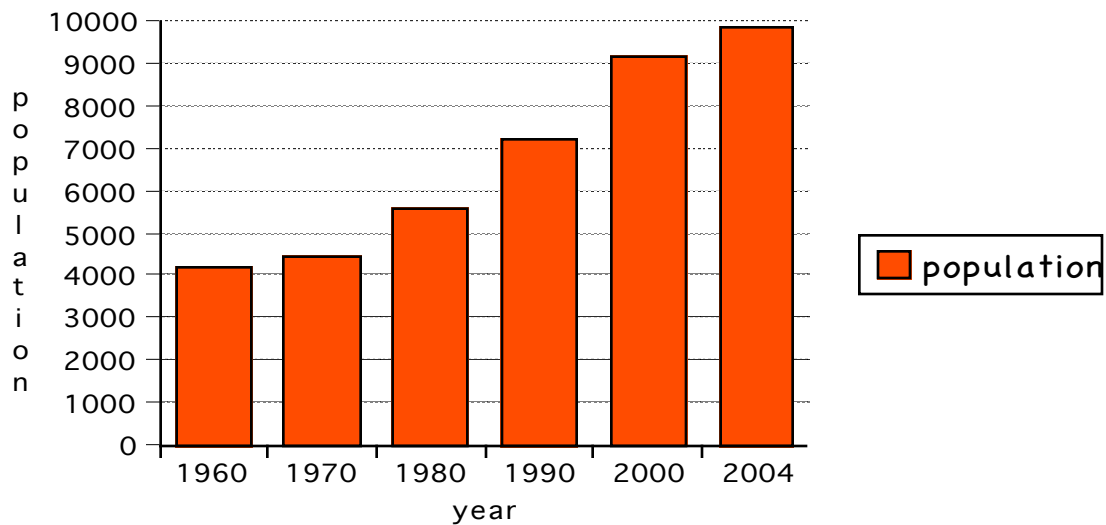
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The Exeter brick yard produced brick that was used widely on buildings throughout Exeter and the Rocky Point Granite Quarry provided material for most of the curbs in downtown Exeter and many of its buildings. Today, the brick yard, which is located north of Exeter, is used as a storm drainage retention basin.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Exeter's 2004 population was 9,904, up from the 2000 census figure of 9,169. Between 1980 and 1990, Exeter's annual growth rate was 2.6 percent. From 1990 to 2000 the annual growth rate dropped to 2.3 percent.

Figure No. 1: Exeter Population



The median age of Exeter residents is 30.1 years. Approximately 34 percent of the population is under 18 and 11 percent is over 65, highest among the eight cities in Tulare County.

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The median household income is \$33,738, second highest among the eight cities in Tulare County. Visalia is ranked first. Exeter is also second to Visalia for the lowest percentage of people in poverty, 19.1 percent.

The ethnic composition of Exeter residents is 57.4 percent White, 38.3 percent Hispanic, 1.3 percent Asian, .9 percent Native American and 2 percent Other.

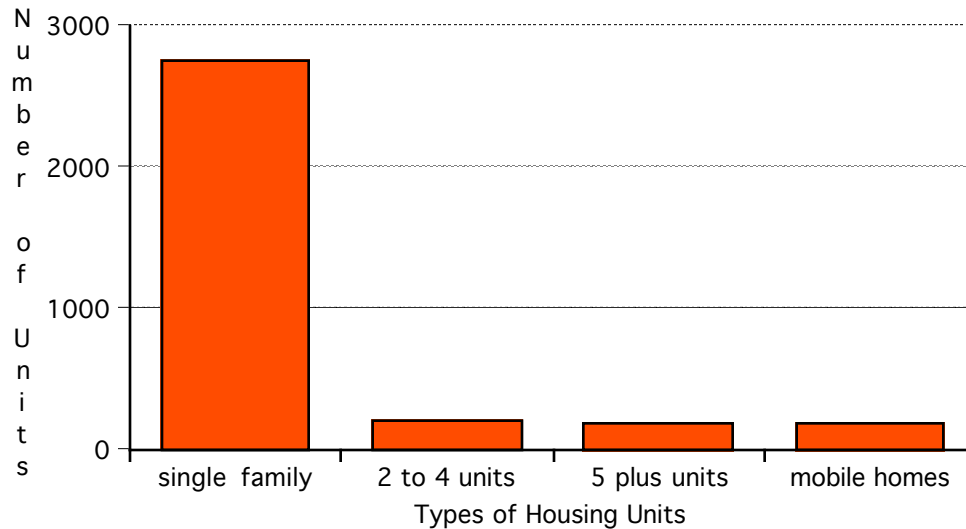
The top three industrial sectors employing persons in Exeter include manufacturing, 13.4 percent; health care, 11.9 percent and education, 10 percent. Only about 21 percent of Exeter's labor force works in town. The balance work in other communities (71.7 percent) or other counties (7.1 percent). The median travel time to work is 23 minutes, about the time it takes to drive to Visalia. Almost seven percent of the labor force has a commute time that exceeds one hour.

HOUSING

The number of housing units in Exeter in 2000 was 3,168, 3,001 were occupied and 167 were vacant. Almost 63 percent of the housing units were owner-occupied while 37 percent were renter-occupied. By housing type, Exeter had 2,448 single family dwellings, 365 apartments and 174 mobile homes. The median household size was 3.02 persons per unit, the second lowest among the county's eight cities.

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Figure No. 2: Types of Housing Units (2004)



The median rent in Exeter was \$522 per month and the median home value was \$94,800. Of the cities in the county, Exeter had the third highest median rent and median home value.

There are numerous types of households in Exeter. For example, 651 households (21.7 percent) are occupied by persons over 65; 563 households (18.8 percent) live alone; 446 (14.9 percent) are single parent households; and 1,668 (55.6 percent) households are occupied by a married couple with children.

LAND USE

Exeter is a compact community occupying approximately two square miles of

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land and containing a population of 9,168 (Jan. 1, 2000). The urban growth has extended in all directions from the original 1888 townsite. Exeter's downtown and its older residential neighborhoods are contained within a triangular area that is formed by the SP Railroad on the west, the Visalia Electric Railroad on the north and State Route 65 (Kaweah Avenue) on the east. The city's industrial districts, which are dominated by agriculturally-related uses such as packing houses and cold-storage facilities, are located along the Southern Pacific Railroad, the A.T. & S.F. Railroad, and Industrial Drive, located immediately south of the original townsite.

Single family residential development has occurred in all quadrants of the city, with most of this type of development occurring on the west side of town since 1980. Development of multiple family residential development has been limited. Scattered corner lots in the original townsite have been developed with duplexes and triplexes and a cul-de-sac street in the southeast quadrant of town was developed with 11 duplex units. The most recent multiple family developments included a 45-unit complex at the northeast corner of Visalia Road and Jacobs Place and an 18-unit complex at the northeast corner of F Street and Palm Avenue. These units provided housing opportunities for low- to moderate-income families in the community.

Commercial development is centered in the downtown and to a lesser extent, along Visalia Road and Kaweah Avenue (State Route 65). Recent developments include fast-food franchises on Visalia Road, an office complex on north Kaweah Avenue, a Best Western Hotel on south Kaweah Avenue, and numerous remodels of retail space in the downtown.

Schools and parks are scattered throughout the community. An elementary school was recently constructed on Sequoia Drive in the northeast quadrant of the city and the school district recently purchased a 22-acre future elementary school site in the Specific Plan planning area.