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# FOCUS

## SOUTHERN UTAH

T H I N G S   A R E

## TRENDING UP DOWN SOUTH



*A paddleboarder enjoys one of the unique opportunities available in Washington County at Sand Hollow Reservoir.*

## The strength of Utah's Dixie is in its planning

Born in 1850 in Switzerland, 9-year-old John Stettler Stucki arrived in Salt Lake City after walking across the plains with his family and other pioneer settlers. His time in northern Utah was short, as Brigham Young had a role for his family: colonizing a new settlement located 300 miles south, near present-day St. George.



As documented by the Washington County Historical Society, Utah's Dixie was settled deliberately and by design, early in the state's history. A short time after the pioneers first entered the Salt Lake Valley, LDS Church Pres. Young sent Parley P. Pratt and several men to explore the Virgin River Basin and evaluate the potential for colonization there.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 presented nationwide economic disruptions to the textiles and cotton indus-

**see DIXIE page 19**

#### Economic, recreational, educational, cultural

## Cedar City has some real advantages

In January 2017, Gov. Gary Herbert challenged Utah businesses to create 25,000 jobs in the state's rural counties by the end of 2020. The Cedar City area took that challenge seriously. In just two years from the governor's



request, 2,172 new jobs were created in Iron County. That's an astounding increase of 12.29 percent. This growth wasn't unique to just one or two job sectors but was spread across almost every category.

The local office of economic development would love to take credit for all of that success, but the reality is that Cedar City finds itself in exactly the right place with just the right resources for businesses to thrive. The fact that the city's leaders continue to welcome business growth makes the road to success even smoother.

**see CEDAR CITY page 19**



*Hiking amid world-class scenery is an amenity available to residents and visitors to Iron County's Cedar City.*

# IRON COUNTY MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Ranked by Average Annual Employment in 2018



	Company Name / Address	Phone / Web	Avg. Annual Employment	Industry	Top Local Executive(s)
1	<b>Southern Utah University</b> 351 W. University Blvd. Cedar City, UT 84720	435-586-7700 suu.edu	2,000-2,999	Higher education	Scott L. Wyatt
2	<b>Iron County School District</b> 2077 W. Royal Hunte Drive Cedar City, UT 84720	435-586-804 irondistrict.org	1,000-1,999	Public education	Stephen Allen
3	<b>Intermountain Healthcare</b> 1303 N. Main St. Cedar City, UT 84721	435-868-5000 intermountainhealthcare.org	500-999	Healthcare	Glenna Beyer
4	<b>Walmart</b> 1330 S. Providence Center Drive Cedar City, UT 84720	435-586-0172 walmart.com	250-499	Warehouse clubs & supercenters	Kurt Harbin
4	<b>Genpak LLC</b> 2791 W. 275 N. Cedar City, UT 84720	435-865-7025 genpak.com	250-499	Foam manufacturing	Richard Dawson
4	<b>Cedar City Municipality</b> 10 N. Main St. Cedar City, UT 84720	435-586-2950 cedarcity.org	250-499	Local government	Maile Wilson Edwards
4	<b>Express Employment Professionals</b> 392 W. 200 N. Cedar City, UT 84720	435-586-9084 expresspros.com	250-499	Temporary help services	Eric Myers
8	<b>Leavitt Group Enterprises</b> 115 N. Main St. Cedar City, UT 84721	435-586-6553 leavitt.com	100-249	Insurance-related activities	Eric Leavitt
8	<b>Iron County</b> 68 S. 100 E. Parowan, UT 84761	435-477-8300 ironcounty.net	100-249	Local government	Alma Adams, Mike Bleak, Paul Cozzens
8	<b>Brian Head Resort</b> 329 Utah Route 143 Brian Head, UT 84719	435-677-2035 brianhead.com	100-249	Accommodations	Burke Wilkerson
8	<b>MetalCraft Technologies</b> 526 Aviation Way Cedar City, UT 84721	435-586-3871 metalcraft.net	100-249	Aircraft parts manufacturing	J. Spencer Grant
8	<b>Lin's Supermarket</b> 150 N. Main St. Cedar City, UT 84720	435-586-3346 linsgrocery.com	100-249	Grocery store	Associated Foods
8	<b>Holt Farms</b> 1710 Utah Route 18 Beryl, UT 84714	435-878-2728 robertholtfarms.com	100-249	Support activities for crop production	Robert Holt
8	<b>Discovery Ranch South</b> 4928 N. 4500 W. Cedar City, UT 84721	855-667-9388 discoveryranchforgirls.com	100-249	Residential care	Andrea Burgess
8	<b>American Pacific Corp. (AMPAC)</b> 10622 W. 6400 N. Cedar City, UT 84721	435-865-5000 ampac.us	100-249	Chemical manufacturing	Dr. Joseph Carleone
8	<b>Home Depot</b> 1518 S. Providence Center Drive Cedar City, UT 84720	435-865-5305 homedepot.com	100-249	Home centers	Derek Campbell
8	<b>State Bank of Southern Utah</b> 377 N. Main St. Cedar City, UT 84721	435-865-2300 sbsu.com	100-249	Banking	Eric Schmutz
8	<b>Smith's Marketplace</b> 633 S. Main St. Cedar City, UT 84720	435-586-1203 smithsfoodanddrug.com	100-249	Grocery store	Kevin Davis
8	<b>Milgro Newcastle Inc.</b> 300 S. 900 W. Newcastle, UT 84756	435-439-5285 facebook.com/milgronursery	100-249	Nursery	Gary F. Miller Scott Miller
8	<b>Cedar Health and Rehabilitation</b> 411 W. 135 N. Cedar City, UT 84721	435-586-6481 cedarhealthand rehab.com	100-249	Skilled nursing facility	Spencer Eaton

## DIXIE

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try, and Brigham Young recognized the opportunity for Utah saints to grow and sell cotton.

John and the Stucki family were sent from Salt Lake City to settle with other Swiss saints in Santa Clara. Preceding the Swiss, as many as 40 other families had been directed there by Young. Hailing from the southern United States, these families possessed

the specific knowledge and skills to grow cotton. Paying homage to the nickname of their former home, these settlers called the region “Utah’s Dixie.”

The first extensive manufacture of cotton cloth began in 1865 when a cooperative cotton factory was organized under the direction of Young. This meant the cotton lint would not need to be baled and sent to others to

see DIXIE page 21



Shown under construction earlier this year, the Arcadia Resort is one of several dozen new communities being built in Utah's Dixie.



Downtown St. George is always growing. This four-story, Class A office building is seen from atop the historic St. George Tabernacle.

## CEDAR CITY

from page 17

When it comes to economic prosperity in rural Utah, Cedar City has several unfair advantages. First, it's located perfectly for work and for play. Businesswise, it's very helpful to be located within one day's trucking of major western markets, including Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City and Denver. It's also nice to be the commercial center for numerous smaller communities from across various county and state lines.

Recreationally, it's ideal to be surrounded by nearly every kind of terrain imaginable. There are lush alpine forests, rugged high deserts and majestic red rock destinations just minutes from downtown. Cedar Breaks National Monument, Zion and Bryce Canyon national parks, Brian Head ski and summer resort, and thousands of acres of public lands are all nearby. At a mile-high elevation among the convergence of the Colorado Plateau, the Great Basin and the Mojave Desert, Cedar City has four distinct seasons, with opportunities for adventure throughout the year.

Among Cedar City's economic advantages is its long list of amenities that are not common to most rural

locales. There aren't many communities of 32,000 residents that are home to a university, a technical college, a dedicated railroad spur, a regional airport, a world-class theater company and lots of room for expansion. Tourism opportunities in Cedar City contribute another economic element, as millions of dollars are brought into the community each year by visitors from around the world who come to experience the parks and to attend the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespeare Festival. These ingredients have created a perfect environment for a diverse and thriving economy.

One of the most sought-after resources in today's economy is a qualified workforce. This is an area where Cedar City excels. Southern Utah University has been an integral part of the community since its founding in 1897. Today, SUU is Utah's fastest-growing university, with 11,224 students enrolled, representing a 10.1 percent increase in the past year. Recent innovations, including a three-year bachelor's degree program and a cooperative dual enrollment program with Southwest Technical College, are evidence of the university's “student-first” goal.

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The manufacturing industry continues to grow in Cedar City as witnessed by the manufacturing floor of Genpak Plastics.



A student refuels a small airplane as part of the training offered by Southern Utah University's aviation program.

# WASHINGTON COUNTY MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Ranked by Average Annual Employment in 2018



	Company Name/Address	Phone Web	Avg. Annual Employment	Industry	Top Local Executive(s)
1	<b>Intermountain Healthcare</b> 1380 E. Medical Center Drive St. George, UT 84790	435-251-1000 intermountainhealthcare.org	3,000-3,999	Healthcare	Mitchell Cloward
1	<b>Washington County School District</b> 121 W. Tabernacle St. St. George, UT 84770	435-673-3553 wash12.org	3,000-3,999	Public education	Larry Bergeson
3	<b>Dixie State University</b> 225 S. 700 E. St. George, UT 84770	435-652-7500 dixie.edu	1,000-1,999	Higher education	Del W. Beatty
3	<b>Walmart</b> 2610 Pioneer Road St. George, UT 84790	435-674-0459 walmart.com	1,000-1,999	Warehouse clubs & supercenters	Mike Longoria
3	<b>St. George City</b> 1756 E. 200 N. St. George, UT 84770	435-627-4000 sgcity.org	1,000-1,999	Local government	Jon Pike
6	<b>SkyWest Airlines</b> 444 S. River Road St. George, UT 84790	435-634-300 skywest.com	800	Air transportation	Russell Childs
7	<b>Paparazzi</b> 4771 Astragalus Drive St. George, UT 84790	855-697-2727 papazziaccessories.com	500-999	Direct sales	Ryan Reeve
7	<b>Home Depot</b> 937 N. Westridge Drive St. George, UT 84770	435-634-7312 homedepot.com	500-999	Home improvement centers	Carl Sorensen
9	<b>Washington County</b> 197 E. Tabernacle St. Washington, UT 84770	435-634-5700 washingtoncity.org	250-499	Local government	Dean Cox Victor Iverson Gil Almquist
9	<b>Andrus Transportation Services Inc.</b> 3185 E. Deseret Drive St. George, UT	435-673-1566 andrustrans.com	250-499	General freight trucking, long-distance trucking	Jimmy R. Andrus
9	<b>Washington City</b> 111 N. 100 E. Washington, UT 84780	435-656-6300 washingtoncity.org	250-499	Local government	Kenneth Neilson
9	<b>Captioncall</b> 555 S. Bluff St. St. George, UT 84770	435-673-2385 captioncall.com	250-499	Interpretation services	*
9	<b>Harmons</b> 1189 E. 700 S. St. George, UT 84790	435-628-0411 harmonsgrocery.com	250-499	Grocery store	Kevin Bushnell
9	<b>Family Dollar Distribution Center</b> 4815 River Road St. George, UT 84790	435-688-6600 corporate.familydollar.com	250-499	Warehousing/retail trade	Casey Shirley
9	<b>Costco</b> 835 N. 3050 E. St. George, UT 84790	435-256-0003 costco.com	250-499	Retail warehouse club	Kerry Haden
9	<b>Stephen Wade Auto Center</b> 150 Hilton Drive St. George, UT 84770	435-222-7605 stephenwade.com	250-499	Automobile dealer	Jared Wade
9	<b>Lin's Supermarket</b> 2928 E. Mall Drive St. George, UT 84790	435-773-6800 linsgrocery.com	250-499	Grocery store	Jeff Rimer
9	<b>Tuacahn Center for the Arts</b> 1100 Tuacahn Drive Ivins, UT 84738	435-652-3200 tuacahn.org	250-499	Entertainment facility/ education	Jonathan O. Hafen
9	<b>Red Mountain Resort</b> 1275 Red Mountain Circle Ivins, UT 84738	435-673-4905 redmountainresort.com	250-499	Accommodations	Tracey Welsh
20	<b>Litehouse Foods</b> 239 Old Highway 91 Hurricane, UT 84737	435-705-7300 lighthousefoods.com	100-249	Food manufacturing	Ken Kaneversky Shelly Barker

## DIXIE

*from page 19*

produce cloth. The enterprise required the construction of a mill and the installation of the necessary machinery. A site in modern-day Washington was selected because of nearby water power from the Virgin River. However, soon after, the Civil War ended, restoring the national cotton supply and the economics no longer justified growing cotton in Utah's Dixie.

But the community, new infrastructure and a hard-work ethic were here to stay.

Today, the cities and communities of Washington County are as diverse as the first settlers. Generations of early settlers have labored to build their legacies as well as the local economy. The county population has grown from 691 people in 1860 to an estimated 172,000 today.

Just as Brigham Young foresaw opportunity there in the 1860, others have recognized Dixie's unique potential throughout the years and have used thoughtful planning to guide the area's growth. In recent years, the area economy has been boosted by several influences, including a rapidly expanding state university, a technical college, year-round tourism opportunities, a regional airport and national housing trends like the "Great California Exodus."

Washington County is fast becoming Utah's year-round recreation capital. Tourism is thriving, thanks to the abundance and variety of nearby activities. Nearby Zion National Park attracts 4.3 million visitors each year, a number that jumped nearly 60 percent in the past decade. Currently, Zion ranks as the fourth-most-visited national park, ahead of Yellowstone (fifth) and Yosemite (sixth).

But it's not just Zion. In recent months, Utah's Dixie has solidly established itself as a contender for OHV and off-road vehicle recreation. Featuring warmer temperatures and drier weather, it's also less-crowded and more easily accessible than Moab. The Sand Hollow OHV area covers 15,000 acres of breathtaking scenery and desert life. Sand Hollow State Park is one of Utah's newest, supporting year-round activities, including national endurance competitions, bringing athletes in from around the world to compete and train. Snow Canyon State Park provides endless trails for wandering among sandstone dunes and cliffs, with some of the most beautiful scenery in the region. And the nearby state parks of Quail Creek and Gunlock reservoirs feature picturesque opportunities for camping, fishing and boating.

Small-business owners Bill and Michelle Ennis opened Washington

County's first water paddle sports shop in 2011, providing rentals at Gunlock Reservoir and Quail Creek Reservoir. Growth exploded at first, and has produced a predictable 15 percent to 20 percent growth rate in the most recent years, said Bill Ennis, selling goods and services to "residents, tourists and tourists who become residents." Similar success has been achieved by other small-business owners in Dixie, from dentists and graphic artists to restaurant operators.

The Dixie Metropolitan Planning Commission has projected substantial growth for the region, as people representing a broad demographic continue to relocate to Dixie. One of the many influences is the activity of the airport. Formerly located on top of a land-locked mesa above downtown St. George, the city airport was unable to grow. It was closed in 2011 and moved

to an empty plot of land several miles away. To promote additional growth and attract more regional flights, the airport changed its name to St. George Regional Airport. SkyWest Airlines is headquartered in St. George and operates from 10 national hubs, providing more than 2,200 flights per day. From the St. George regional airport, they've added connections to several international airports like Denver, Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, effectively connecting St. George to the world, with only one stop.

But perhaps the biggest economic boost of relocating the airport was the land it deserted. The city of St. George recognized the opportunity for redevelopment and worked to guide the creation of a long-term master plan for the abandoned airstrip overlooking the city. Dubbed the "Tech Ridge" development, the once-dark mesa now hosts

the new main campus of Dixie Technical College. One of the next parcels to develop is adjacent to the college and will be the new headquarters for two tech companies, earning the attention of other entrepreneurs and firms that are seeking lower operational costs and an improved work-life mix.

Throughout Dixie there are more than a half-dozen large, mixed-use developments in progress, including the explosive growth surrounding I-15's Exit 2.

In its relatively short history, Utah's Dixie has seen remarkable but sustainable economic growth. With vision, planning and leadership, it's positioned to be a foundation for regional growth for generations to come.

Chris Knoles is the director of marketing for Zwick Construction Co.. He's a descendent of John Stucki, one of the first settlers of Utah's Dixie.

## Building People, Relationships, Communities & Economies.



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CEDAR CITY  
from page 19

The university's Larry H. and Gail Miller Family Center for Entrepreneurship provides mentorship, monthly networking events, a lively entrepreneurship club and new programs in development. This gives students of all disciplines access to resources to start a business. This program has led to the creation of successful companies that are thriving in Cedar City, including online retailer Outdoor Vitals and a local outdoor gear retail and rental shop, Cedar Sports.

SUU has also developed an aviation program that is looking to fill a nationwide need for pilot training. Created in 2013, the program offers both fixed-wing and helicopter pilot training. Today, the program is train-

ing 10 percent of the nation's new helicopter pilots and a significant number of airplane pilots. Plans are already underway to create a new aviation maintenance technician program, set to begin next year. This program will mesh nicely with the state's Aerospace Pathways Program, which expanded into Cedar City in 2019.

The Aerospace Pathways Program started in the Davis and Granite school districts in Northern Utah in 2015, creating training programs that begin in high schools, advance to technical colleges, then provide on-site internship training at aerospace companies. In Cedar City, local company MSC Aerospace worked with Southwest Technical College, the Governor's Office of Economic Development and the Iron County School District to expand this program in Southern Utah to help train new employees for its Metalcraft

Technologies and SyberJet companies. Adding SUU's aviation maintenance technician program is a natural fit for this program.

Southwest Technical College is part of the state's system of technical colleges. It is headquartered in Cedar City and serves all of Iron, Beaver, Garfield and Kane counties with more than 20 accredited programs in fields of automotive, business, computer science, culinary arts, digital media, health professions, industrial maintenance and automation, professional truck driving and welding.

Students graduating from these programs are finding more and more opportunities to remain in the community as Cedar City's job creation continues to expand in many areas. New positions in healthcare, construction, information technology, manufacturing and business finance allow some stu-

dents to live in the community after graduation as Cedar City continues to grow at a rapid pace. In 2018, Iron County had the highest growth rate of any county in the state at 3.6 percent.

All this recent growth has inspired the Cedar City Chamber of Commerce to take the lead in a new community visioning program to help guide the path toward a healthy community identity for the next 30 years. Dubbed "Vision 2050," the chamber is working with community leaders to help ensure that the city continues to maintain its unique identity while the population is projected to double during that period. Efforts to protect historic parts of the community; to enhance the traditional downtown area; and to meet future needs of transportation, infrastructure, education, arts and culture, business, healthcare, etc., are being addressed through this program.

Looking ahead, Cedar City strives to find the best use of its assets to direct growth in a positive way. The Cedar City-Iron County Office of Economic Development is working with its committee of county, city, school district and water conservancy district leaders to ensure that its efforts are focused on a healthy future for the community, aiming to grow local companies, preserve community identity and to attract new businesses that bring higher-paying jobs.

The recent announcement that GOEX Corp. is expanding its operations from Wisconsin into Cedar City is an ideal example of this effort. The company will build a 120,000-square-foot facility in the 540-acre Port 15 Industrial Park, bringing 100 new jobs. GOEX joins Charlotte Pipe, Genpak, Bway/Mauser, WL Plastics, GAF and other plastics manufacturing companies that transport raw materials in via rail and ship out a variety of products – primarily to western U.S. markets.

Cedar City's growing, diverse economy and its vast opportunities for healthy expansion make this community an example of how economic success along the metropolitan Wasatch Front can also be achieved in Utah's outlying rural communities. The designation of two qualified Opportunity Zones in Iron County, the potential to develop a rural spoke of the Utah Inland Port and the development of thousands of acres of solar electricity facilities add even more elements to this successful equation.

Cedar City's business future is certainly bright.

Danny Stewart is the director of economic development for Cedar City and Iron County. He also serves as a member of the boards of directors for the Cedar City Chamber of Commerce and Southwest Technical College.

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