

BFT NL - 2017 #1:

Welcome!



The Benton-Franklin Trends website was launched in June of 2015 and has become a valuable resource for our community. Visit Tri-Cities has been a sponsor of this important portal since its inception. The website provides important data and tools to allow leaders from a cross-section of industries to evaluate where the Tri-Cities region performs well and where we can focus our efforts to improve the quality of life and economic well-being for our residents.

Similarly, the newsletter allows us to further focus some of the findings in attempts to highlight certain aspects, and bring forth meaningful dialogue.

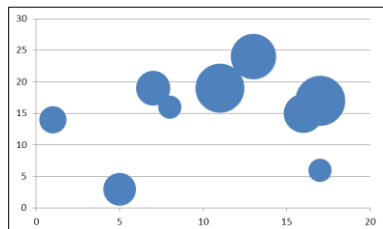
Net jobs created is of interest to Visit Tri-Cities as the tourism industry is rapidly growing. In the last two years five hotels have opened in the Tri-Cities and two additional hotels will open in the next six months. This development has created new jobs for multiple levels of the workforce; from entry level to mid-level management and executive positions.

We encourage you to share the Benton Franklin County Trends newsletter and website with others. The wide variety of information available is a hidden gem for the entire community.

Kris Watkins, President and CEO, Visit Tri-Cities

Indicator News:

Hans Rosling - The Best Stats Visualization You've Ever Seen



Times are changing - you don't have to be a complete data geek to enjoy data. With new visualizations and a variety of ways to compare data, it sometimes seems like new data presentations are appearing daily - some good and some not-so good.

On the good side, Hans Rosling, has a unique way of how he wants us to look at data. As a professor at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, he realized that there was "broad ignorance about the rapid health improvement in Asia" and in response, developed a tongue-in-cheek "Chimpanzee Test" as part of [The Ignorance Project](#).

Expanding on the concept of simplifying data presentations and visualizations to help people better understand what data is trying to say, Rosling produced his first of many videos, titled [The Best Stats You've Ever Seen](#).

Using animated bubble graphs, Rosling shows just how interconnected data can be. The bubble graph Rosling uses in the video has been updated, is fully interactive, and is accessible through the Gapminder website [here](#). For example, you can watch the life expectancy for every nation in the world drop during WWI and the income per person in most countries in the world drop during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

By clicking on the line titled "Income per person, GDP/capita in \$/year adjusted for inflation & prices", many different types of data can be viewed with the same animated and interactive aspects. If you are not quite there yet, we hope Rosling and the Skagit County Trends website are helping you become a full-fledged data geek!

Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Index



According to [Blue Cross Blue Shield](#) (BCBS), the "Health Index was designed to support national and local discussions about how to improve American health policy and practice. It is part of Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies' commitment to improving the health of America by uniting policymakers, community leaders, healthcare professionals and business leaders around data-driven insights to spark real change. It provides a better understanding about which diseases and conditions most greatly affect Americans' overall quality of life."

Using internally generated data from more than 40 million BCBS members, the "first-of-its-kind resource identifies the health conditions with the greatest impact on commercially-insured Americans." Including over 200 common diseases and conditions, the Health Index offers a score between 0 and 1 for nearly every county in the U.S.

The score represents the percentage of optimal health that the county is living at. For example, "a measurement of .9 indicates that, on average, the population of a county is living at 90% of its optimal health." The BCBS Health Index for the nation is .924, meaning America is living at 92.4% of our optimal health.

Benton County has a BCBS Health Index score of .931, meaning the county is living at 93.1% of its optimal health. Franklin County posted a score of .942.

In the rest of Washington State, BCBS Health Index scores range from a high of .947 in Adams County to a low of .904 in Wahkiakum County. Nationally, scores range from a high of .966 (Grant County, Nebraska) to a low of .867 (both Bland County, Virginia and Charlotte County, Florida).

500 Cities Project: “Local Data for Better Health”



The [500 Cities Project](#), a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), seeks to “identify, analyze, and report” on chronic disease measures. The 500 cities are the largest 497 cities by population and the 3 additional cities are included so all 50 states have cities represented in the project.

The project is unique in a variety of ways but perhaps none more than it representing “a first-of-its-kind data analysis to release information on a large scale for cities and for small areas within cities.” This data is offered at the census tract level. [Census tracts](#) are defined by the CDC as “small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county”, varying in population size across the U.S. but averaging approximately 4,000 residents.

Overall, the project includes over 103,000,000 people representing over 1/3 of the total U.S. population.

Although Pasco and Richland are not included in the 500 Cities Project, the Local Data for Better Health 2014 report [for Kennewick, Washington](#) (released June, 2016) has 28 different measurements dividing the city into 15 different segments. Categories include *Unhealthy Behaviors* (ex’s. smoking prevalence; adults sleeping less than 7 hours), *Health Outcomes* (ex’s. COPD; All Teeth Lost), and *Use of Preventative Measures* (ex’s. High Blood Pressure Medication; Cholesterol Screenings).

Offered in a convenient PDF format, the census tract maps are presented in consecutive pages allowing for quick and easy comparison from one measure to the next.

Indicators in Action:

[Income More Evenly Distributed in Combined Counties than Benchmarks](#) by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

A look at the distribution of income across a population typically reveals that it is not an equal distribution. In fact, many economists use the term income inequality rather than income distribution.

Research on income distribution in the United States began in the early part of the 20th century, so analysts have a long tradition of explaining the inequalities. Recently, a trend toward a greater inequality has been linked to changes in the labor market and in household composition. The labor market changes involved a shift in the 1980’s away from goods-

producing industries (that had been providing higher earnings opportunities to lower-skilled workers) to technical service industries (that tend to employ more educated workers at a higher wage) and to low-wage industries like retail trade. Household composition, a second major influencer of income inequality, has also evolved to yield a wider spread in the distribution. A higher share of households is now composed of single-parent and non-family households, which translates to a lower overall household income.

To better understand this indicator, it is easiest to consider household income levels being divided into five equal groups or quintiles: The lowest 0%-20%, 21%-40%, 41%-60%, 61%-80%, and the top 81%-100%. In other words, each income level category represents 1/5 of the households. The share offered for each income group is the share of the total overall income earned by that particular household income segment.

Looking at the graph for the [Share of Total Overall Income Earned by Household Income Level](#), or Income Distribution, in the combined counties during 2015, the top 20% of household income earners earned 45.8% of all the income in the combined counties. On the flip-side, the lowest 20% of household income earners earned 4.0% of all the income in the combined counties during the same year.

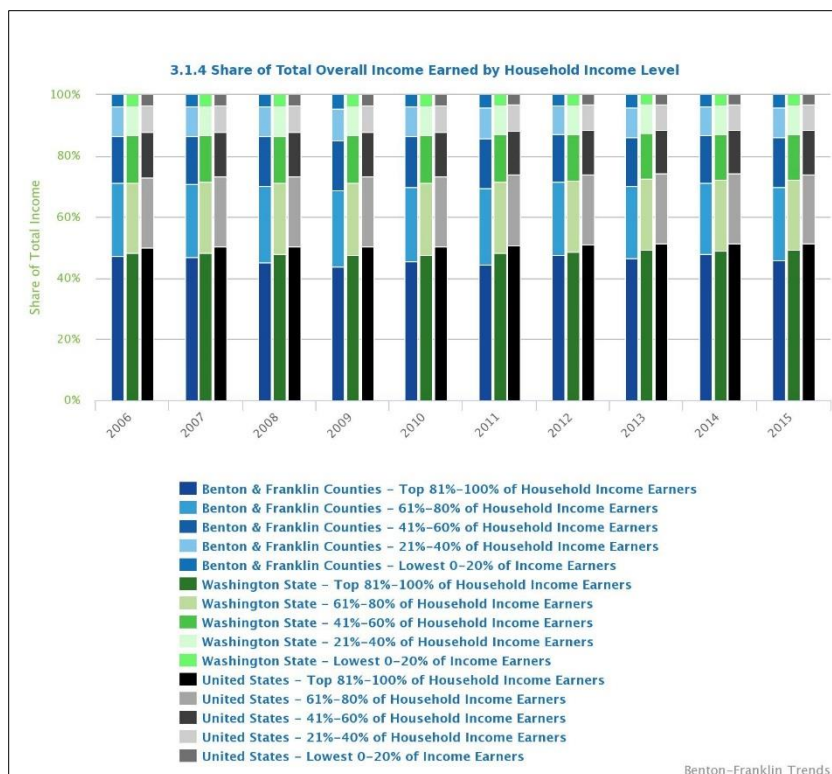
One particular pattern is clear. For all years and all locations in the data series, the higher the share of income earners, the higher the share of the total income they claim. What is different for the two counties is that the share of the total income earned by the lowest income earner category has slightly increased (3.7% in 2006 to 4.0% in 2015). At the same time, the share of the total income earned by the highest income earner category has decreased (47.2% in 2006 to 45.8% in 2015).

in 2006 to 45.8% in 2015). The state and U.S. benchmarks show an opposite of trend: the lowest income earner categories have claimed a decreasing share of total income earned while the highest income earner category has claimed an increasing share of the total income earned.

What is occurring in the combined counties is also occurring in each county individually. In Benton County during 2015, the share of the total income earned by the lowest income earner category was 3.6% in 2006, increasing to 3.9% in 2015. The share of the total income earned by the highest income earner category was 47.0% in 2006, decreasing to 45.8% in 2015. In Franklin County during 2015, the share of the total income earned by the lowest income earner category was 3.9% in 2006, increasing to 4.1% in 2015. The share of the total income earned by the highest income earner category was 46.8% in 2006, decreasing to 45.2% in 2015.

According to Ajsa Suljic, Labor Economist with the Washington State Employment Security Department, says "The lower household income earners in Tri-Cities are not dominated only by 'single-parent and non-family households,' but it's rather composition of multi-generational

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households with low income earners. Expansion of this group's share of total household income in the area coincides with population growth in this households segment of lower income earners. These households over the years have expanded their size and the earning capability."

In essence, what we have seen from 2006 to 2015 is the highest quintile of earners (the highest 20% of income earners) in the combined counties has earned less of the pie over time. Contrast this result to state and national trends: the share of this quintile in Washington was 48.1% in 2006, rising to 49.3% in 2015, while in the U.S. its counterpart group

rose from 49.9% in 2006 to 51.5% in 2015.. These are statistically significant as the changes.

Looking into the future, Suljic notes "the shift of new jobs from the middle range towards the lower pay spectrum has been caused again by the smaller footprint of Hanford cluster and diversification of available jobs to industries that do not pay as much."

With many changes recently that affect this indicator, it is perhaps one of the most important indicators to keep an eye on as we continue to move into the Tri Cities' economic future.

[Uninsured Population by Age Group Have Each Decreased](#) by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

Individuals and families lacking health insurance are vulnerable to a dangerous combination of health and financial crises. In the United States, most working adults with health insurance have it offered through their employers. Seniors (ages 65 and over) nearly always receive Medicare coverage. Low-income children are usually covered by Medicaid. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) extended Medicaid coverage to low-income results and subsidized holders of private, non-group coverage on the exchanges.

Compared to people with insurance, the uninsured population faces compromised health because they generally: receive less preventive care; are diagnosed with diseases at more advanced disease stages; and once diagnosed, tend to receive less therapeutic care and have higher mortality rates. The billions of dollars in costs for uncompensated care for the uninsured are indirectly passed on to funders of public programs and participants in private health plans.

The pattern of the uninsured varies markedly by age. To help clarify insurance status, this

indicator looks at separate age categories for those without health insurance. By introducing the age dimension, this indicator allows a deeper understanding of the overall measure of the uninsured.

An examination of the [share of the population uninsured by age group](#) graph reveals the most apparent aspect: the decreasing share of people without health insurance. Each age group category now shows produced a lower uninsured share of their segment of the population than earlier.

Attempting to avoid entering into or starting any debates about such a hotly contested issue as health care, it is important to simply look at the facts. [During 2015](#), 1.8 million Washingtonians (1 in 4) were insured through either Washington Apple Health or through private insurance offered through Washington Healthplanfinder.

In Benton County, this segment represents roughly 32% of the population and 40% of the population of Franklin County. These 32% of

Benton County residents received, on average, a monthly federal subsidy of \$272 to “help cover the cost of private insurance offered through Washington Healthplanfinder”, and these 40% of Franklin County residents receive a monthly federal subsidy of \$260.

Over 600,000 Washingtonians covered, 15,833 residents of Benton County and 7,434 residents of Franklin County enrolled in Washington Apple Health due to the expansion of Medicaid.

According to the [Office of the Insurance Commissioner of Washington State](#), one of

many current impacts of the Affordable Care Act on health insurance consumers in the state is that 2.9 million Washingtonians cannot be denied coverage simply due to pre-existing conditions.

According to the [Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation](#), the estimated

number of marketplace enrollees in the Affordable Care Act marketplaces for Congressional District 4 is 11,300 people.

Specifically during 2015 the estimated shares of uninsured residents:

In the combined counties,

- Under the age of 18 was 2.3%, decreasing from 7.0% in 2009.
- Ages 18 - 64 was 13.2%, decreasing from 21.5% in 2009.

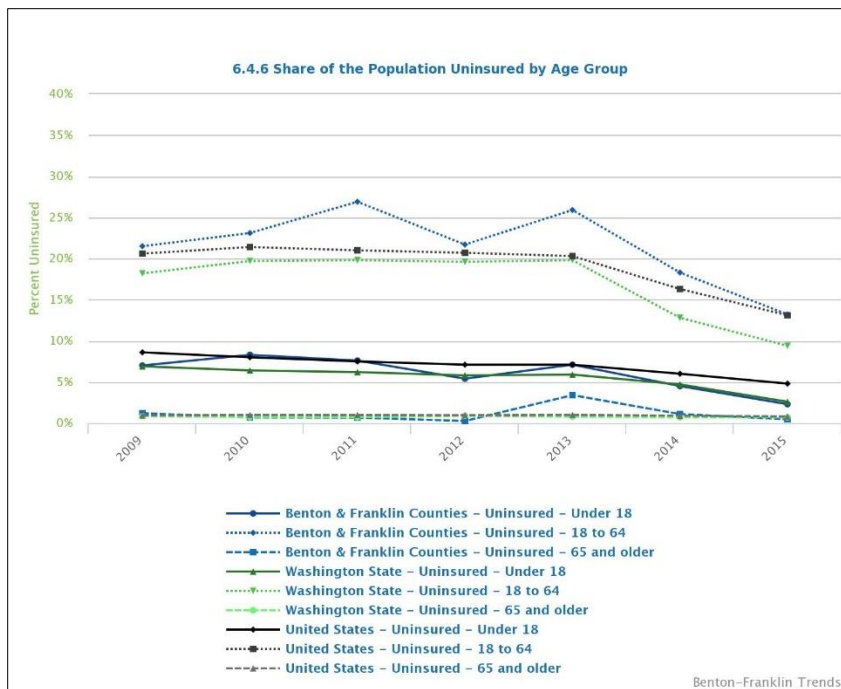
- 65 and older was 0.46%, decreasing from 1.2% in 2009.

During 2015 in Benton County, the share of uninsured residents:

- Under the age of 18 was 2.3%, decreasing from 8.0% in 2009.
- Ages 18 - 64 was 9.8%, decreasing from 17.2% in 2009.
- 65 and older was 0.3%, increasing from 0.0% in 2009.

During 2015 in Franklin County, the share of uninsured residents:

- Under the age of 18 was 2.2%, decreasing from 5.4% in 2009.
- Ages 18 - 64 was 20.7%, decreasing from 31.7% in 2009.
- 65 and older was 1.1%,



increasing from 5.1% in 2009.

Similar trends are occurring in the state and U.S. benchmarks.

During 2015 in Washington State, the share of uninsured residents:

- Under the age of 18 was 2.6%, decreasing from 6.9% in 2009.
- Ages 18 - 64 was 9.4%, decreasing from 18.2% in 2009.
- 65 and older was 0.7%, decreasing from 0.8% in 2009.

During 2015 in the U.S., the share of uninsured residents:

- Under the age of 18 was 4.8%, decreasing from 8.6% in 2009.
- Ages 18 - 64 was 13.1%, decreasing from 20.6% in 2009.
- 65 and older was 0.8%, decreasing from 0.9% in 2009.

According to Mark Brault, President of [Grace Clinic](#) in Kennewick, all across Washington State, “The change in the uninsured rate is primarily due to the implementation of the ACA. The ACA as implemented in Washington State, expanded eligibility for Medicaid which resulted in approximately 600,000 people obtaining coverage through that program as of the end of 2016.”

Referring to the difference between the two counties, Brault noted many of the changes in provided “a dramatic impact on the low-income population, [but] the expansion of coverage under the ACA is only available to people who have legal status. The fact that there are differences between the two counties in the

portion of the population that has legal status is one, and maybe the most significant, contributor to this difference.” Brault also says this is a major contributing factor to the differences in the shares of the uninsured population between the two counties.

Brault says they have “seen an increase in the percentage of our patients who are Hispanic, and who are primarily Spanish speaking, which is due to the fact that those without legal status represent a larger portion of the uninsured population than prior to 2014.”

Although Brault believes this indicator will “flatten out” as there was “very significant enrollment in Medicaid in the first two years and it is a safe bet that the vast majority of the people eligible for Medicaid under the new rules were enrolled in the first two years.”

Brault cautions “Whatever comes out of the current commitment to repeal/replace the ACA...will likely only increase the uninsured rate...and if the Medicaid expansion portion of the ACA is eliminated, the uninsured rate will increase significantly.”

[Child Abuse and Neglect on a 4-Year Period Low](#) by Lena Negrete, Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

In the United States, child abuse affects millions of children annually. Preventing and reporting child abuse is one of the most important things a community can do for its children because abuse goes beyond individual victims to negatively affect the communities in which they live. Child maltreatment can include the following; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. [The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act \(CAPTA\)](#) has defined child abuse and neglect as “any recent

act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation” or an “Act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm”.

More specifically, the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) defines child abuse and neglect as: Acts of Commission (physical, sexual, and psychological abuse) and Acts of Omission (physical, emotional, medical, dental, and educational neglect, as well as inadequate

supervision and exposure to violent environments).

National statistics on child abuse, as provided by [Child Help](#), are both alarming and concerning. Some of the more surprising estimated annual U.S. statistics include: 3.6 million referrals involving 6.6 million children; every 10 seconds a child abuse report is made, perhaps as high as 80% of child victims of abuse by the age of 21 had “met the criteria for at least one psychological disorder”, and that during 2014 “an estimated 1,580 children who died as a result of abuse and neglect — between four and five children a day.” These numbers might just underrepresent the truth as some research and estimations calculate undercounting could be by as much as [50% or more.](#)”

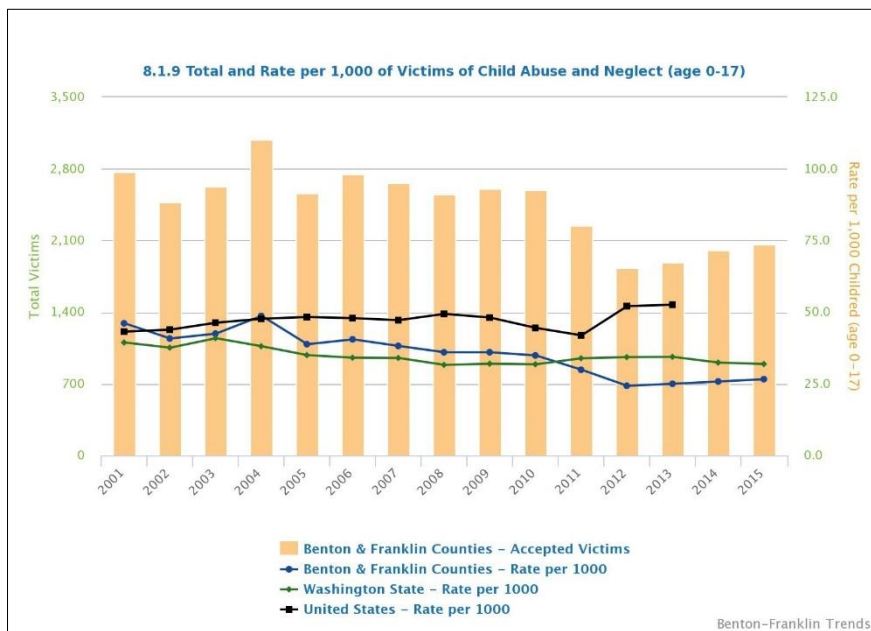
According to JoDee Garretson, Executive Director of [Support, Advocacy & Resource Center \(SARC\)](#) in Kennewick, WA, “Only about 30% of sexual abuse victims report their abuse. Most cases are not able to be successfully prosecuted due to the length of time between assault and disclosure, the lack of evidence, and the difficulty for jurors to understand many facets of the case surrounding sexual violence.”

Contributing factors, like these and others, make it virtually impossible to know the true numbers. Therefore, it is important to clarify that this indicator only counts accepted cases of

child abuse and neglect (cases reported to CPS that have been accepted for further investigation) and not all cases that were reported to CPS.

LoAnn Ayers, President and CEO of the United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties, says there are “several agencies that are continuing to do an excellent job of community education to prevent abuse and neglect. Agencies like the Support, Advocacy, and Resource Center as well as Catholic Family and Child Services have made a real impact on awareness.”

Additionally, Ayers said “as the diversity of our community increases, particularly with immigrants from other cultures, so does the challenge of helping folks know what should be



reported, how to report abuse and neglect, and what resources are available to help.” Child abuse and neglect often occurs in

families under stress or in the middle of a crisis. Parents and other caregivers are sometimes overwhelmed by pressure and may not be able to cope with personal, financial or marital problems. Drug and alcohol use may trigger abusive or neglectful behavior. There is also a growing correlation between domestic violence and child abuse.

In a combined effort between Child Protective Services (CPS) and Law Enforcement, agencies strive to coordinate an objective, timely and compassionate investigation of child abuse/neglect in order to seek the truth, minimize trauma, protect the child and hold offenders accountable.

Examining the graph for the [Total and Rate per 1,000 of Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect](#) indicator, during 2015 in Benton and Franklin Counties combined, there were 2,062 as the total number of accepted victims of child abuse and neglect, decreasing from 2,766, or by 25% since 2001.

For purposes of comparison, the rate of accepted referrals of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 youth ages 0-17 in the combined counties was 26.6 (down from 46.1 in 2001), 31.9 in Washington State (down from 39.4 in 2001) and 52.6 in the U.S. during 2013 (the most recent national data is available and decreasing from 43.2 in 2001).

For Benton County individually during 2015, the total number of accepted victims of child abuse and neglect was 1,433, decreasing from 2,018, or by 31% since 2001. As a rate per 1,000 youth

ages 0-17, this was 29.4, decreasing from 47.3 in 2001.

For Franklin County individually during 2015, the total number of accepted victims of child abuse and neglect was 629, decreasing from 748, or by 31% since 2001. As a rate per 1,000 youth ages 0-17, this was 21.8, decreasing from 43.2 in 2001.

Garretson says “Each year [SARC] provides services to approximately 400 new clients who have been sexually abused; 50% are under the age of 12, 25% between the ages of 12 – 18, the remaining 25% are adults, many of whom were victimized as children.”

Ayers says the improved number of accepted referrals of child abuse and neglect shouldn’t make us complacent. “We know that adverse childhood experiences impact far too many and have long lasting effects. Now, more than ever, we need to continue our educational efforts to reduce incidents of abuse and neglect. We have the opportunity to grow these efforts to ensure that all, even those newly arrived to our country, know that it is safe to report and it is safe to ask for help.”

5-Questions with: Kim Shugart, Senior VP for Visit Tri-Cities



1. Can you tell us a bit about the goals of Visit Tri-Cities for 2017?

Visitor spending in the Tri-Cities exceeds \$432.9 million each year. Our number one goal is always to increase visitor spending in the Tri-Cities, thereby creating economic vitality for the region and all Visit Tri-Cities’ programs support that goal.

In 2017 we will continue our work with the Tri-Cities National Park Committee to increase accessibility for visitors at the Manhattan Project National Historical Park at Hanford and to promote the Park along with the partner sites at Los Alamos and Oak Ridge. The potential upside is an increase of 50,000 out of town visitors per year once the Park is more accessible.

The recently launched Visit Tri-Cities Wine Tourism Council will be developing new marketing initiatives that encourage visitors to come here to experience the true authentic Washington Wine Experience.

We will explore the best way to promote STEM Tourism. The Tri-Cities is uniquely qualified to stake a claim as the premier destination for science minded travelers who want to experience first-hand the discoveries being made at the [Laser Interferometer Gravitational Observatory](#); the precise science that goes into making world-class wines; the discovery of a Columbia Mammoth in the region and the excavation taking place through [McBones Research Center Foundation](#); the wonder that is the [Hanford Reach National Monument](#) and of course the [B Reactor at the Manhattan Project National Historical Park](#).

We will promote the Tri-Cities brand as a Better, Bolder, Brighter place to live, visit and conduct business. We will issue over 200 leads to our hotel and meeting facility partners to support convention and sports tournament bookings and attract visitors in 2017 through 2023.

And we will promote the Tri-Cities through digital and print advertising; Visit Tri-Cities website; regional and national tradeshows; attendance at sports meetings industry events; media outreach to writers of a variety of publications.

2. The tourism industry generally tracks its performance in a variety of ways. What are those metrics that mean the most to Visit Tri Cities?

The tourism industry typically tracks performance through visitor spending and hotel-motel revenues generated. For visitor spending, the Dean Runyan Travel Impacts Study is the most widely accepted tool. This report provides data on how much is spent by specific category, how many jobs are supported by tourism and tax receipts that are collected by state and local entities.

For hotel-motel revenues we rely on Smith Travel Research Reports (STR) and hotel-motel tax collections reported to the State of Washington Department of Revenue. Each of these reports provides a different perspective and measurement and both are important, though there is no single report that provides the complete story.

3. How does Benton Franklin Trends inform the work of your organization?

Our role is to promote the Tri-Cities as a destination. The best way to measure if those efforts are successful is through monitoring visitor spending and hotel-motel revenues. We work with our municipal partners to make sure there is the proper infrastructure to support visitor activity and recreation, and with our hospitality partners to provide memorable experiences for visitors. The results are attributed to that combined effort. We like to call it the “three-legged stool” since the investment in tourism and destination marketing is funded by a public/private/industry based partnership, and none of us would be as successful without the others.

4. You're a long-time Tri Cities resident. Looking at the Trends from a private citizen's perspective, what are the measures that jump out at you?

Anytime you look at statistics it is important to understand that they help to show strengths and areas that need improvement, but they frequently don't tell the entire story. For example, Benton and Franklin counties might pace lower than the state average for household income, but if you look at the average price of a home and some of the reports for public safety, the picture becomes brighter than if

you look at just household income alone. Overall when you look at the long-term growth in those things that monitor quality of life for our residents; education, recreation, retail sales, and home ownership I think it becomes clear that the Tri-Cities is a good, solid investment for both individual and business development.

5. What uses do you see Benton Franklin Trends providing residents of the Tri Cities?

First, there is the sheer amount of information that the site provides, which is formatted in a logical and easy to use design. Second, is the diversity of the information provided. From community health, to economic vitality, to transportation, to arts and culture, there is meaningful data to be found. The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Analysis and Eastern Washington University have done an excellent job of keeping the reports as timely and up-to-date as possible and monitoring the data in order to bring forth conversation on relevant topics in the quarterly newsletter.