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## The Landscape: McMinnville

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# The Landscape

## McMinnville

by Beth Dillon

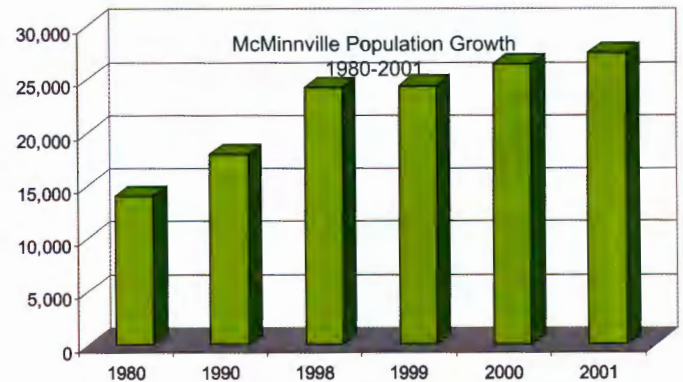
When pioneer William T. Newby arrived in Oregon from McMinnville, Tennessee during the Great Migration of 1843, he settled in what would become the new west's McMinnville. Ten years later he began construction on a gristmill at the west end of Third Street. The need for workers to build and operate the mill fueled the area's early economy, spurring rapid growth of opportunities for agricultural development. Known for its rich farmland and plentiful wineries, this area of Yamhill County remains the picturesque landscape that many associate with rural Oregon. Yet McMinnville boasts an array of cultural and educational opportunities.

McMinnville incorporated as a town in 1876 and as a city in 1882. Construction flourished along Third Street from 1885 to 1912. Preservation of this downtown remains important to the city, as it has become a nationally recognized historic district that bustles with farmer's markets, fine restaurants, and eclectic stores.

Beyond the walls of Third Street, McMinnville provides a friendly city atmosphere emphasizing education through superb public and private schools. The McMinnville School District serves over 5,000 students through five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. In addition, McMinnville is the home of Linfield College, an independent, comprehensive liberal arts college, as well as providing a site for a campus of Chemeketa Community College.

Over the past 10 years, the City's population has grown at an annual rate of approximately 4.0%, which encourages McMinnville's ongoing expansion as a full-service city that provides public safety, public works, a library, and parks and recreation surrounded by farmland and forest.

To some, this growth makes McMinnville appear to be the Willamette Valley's latest "boom town," but the City Planning Department has managed expansion well. Says Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee Member and Chamber Staff President Celia Wheeler, "The City has been working since 2000 on developing McMinnville's 20 year land use needs analysis needed to expand the urban growth boundary. It too shows a continued steady growth. Until the UGB expansion is approved and the Newberg-Dundee bypass built, the assumption is that McMinnville will not 'boom,' but continue that steady pattern."



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Population Research and Census, Portland State University

The Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, or Newberg-Dundee Bypass, represents an effort to accommodate the increasingly dense traffic patterns that choke rural roads as a result of continued population growth. Area commuters aiming for McMinnville are well aware of their fate if ever caught between Newberg and Dundee in the late afternoon hours: 99W merges into a single lane and goes through a Dundee stop light, creating delays that rival the best Southern California rush hour jams. Planned for possible construction in three-to-five years, the Bypass would extend approximately 11 miles from east of Newberg to where Oregon 99W and Oregon 18 meet west of Dundee.

Wheeler emphasizes the importance of transportation patterns to the local economy. "Access to I-5 continues to be considered a challenge in attracting and keeping employers and allowing dual income families to keep a reasonable commute. Our main challenges and opportunities are both in managing growth and meeting the employment needs of an increased population. As with many counties in Oregon, the need for more family wage jobs is important.

"McMinnville is a wonderful place to live and do business. The city is large enough to offer full amenities, yet small enough to keep its small town charm."



Downtown McMinnville business district in 1920. OHS Neg. #005958.



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Downtown McMinnville business district in 2004. Photograph by Craig Wollner.