

Kimberly

Statistical Data

Population:	3,663*
Elevation:	3,921cfeet
Precipitation:	9 inches**
Average Snowfall:	19 inches**
Temperature Range—Fahrenheit: **	
Spring:	29 to 68
Summer:	48 to 85
Fall:	26 to 74
Winter:	19 to 42
County:	Twin Falls
Website:	www.cityofkimberly.org

*U.S. Census ESRI forecast for 2009

**Historical averages

Kimberly lies near the center of the Magic Valley about four miles east of Twin Falls.

The Snake River flows about three miles north of the city. The Sawtooth National Forest, with peaks rising over 8,000 feet, begins at the Forest Service Headquarters about four miles south of town.

Pre-Incorporation Years

For millennia, the land around present-day Kimberly was an arid sagebrush-covered desert. American Indians—primarily of the nomadic Bannock and Shoshone Tribes—passed through the area on their way to their summer and winter encampments. (See Southwestern Idaho, The Region—American Indians.)

Circa 1810 trappers/explorers began exploring the Snake River and its tributaries seeking to trap and trade for beaver pelts and map the land. (See Southwestern Idaho, The Region—Early Trappers/Explorers.)

Beginning in the early 1840s Oregon Trail emigrants traveled along the south border of the Snake River near present-day Kimberly. (See Southwestern Idaho, The Region—Oregon and California Trails.)

On November 17, 1884, the Oregon Short Line (OSL) Railroad completed construction of railroad line that began at Granger, Wyoming; angled in a northwesterly direction through Shoshone, about 27 miles due north of present-day Kimberley; then through Caldwell to the railhead at Huntington, Oregon.

Upon completion, the rail line connected the commercial centers of Omaha, Nebraska, and Portland, Oregon, creating another transcontinental railroad. Railroad interests completed the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 at Promontory Summit in northern Utah. (See Southwestern Idaho, The Region—Railroad.)

In 1894 Congress passed the Carey Act, one of several laws designed to encourage settlement of lands in the arid West. (See Southwestern Idaho—Federal Land Reclamation Laws and Cities of the Magic Valley—Carey Act Projects.)

Under the Carey Act, the federal government ceded up to one million acres to any state that would bring the land under cultivation under a public-private partnership. Private interests financed and built dams and canals. The State sold parcels of land—40 to 160 acres—to individuals. In Idaho, the Idaho State Land Board represented State interests. The developers sold water rights and often platted towns and sold townsite lots. Idaho would ultimately use 850,000 acres of its allotment. (See Southwestern Idaho, The Region—Federal Land Use Laws.)

Around 1900 Ira B. Perrine, a local farmer and entrepreneur who produced food for the miners in the Wood River Mining District, sought to bring water to the fertile soils. (See Southwestern Idaho, The Region—Mining, Wood River Valley—Silver and Gold.)

Perrine developed a “Carey Act” diversion dam—Milner Dam—across the Snake River at The Cedars, a point about 18 miles due east of present-day Kimberly.

This project included formation of the Twin Falls Land and Water Company (TFL&W). Perrine brought together several investors—including Peter Kimberly, a steel manufacturer from Sharon, Pennsylvania, and the namesake of the city of Kimberly—to construct the dam and build a system of irrigation canals to hundreds of new farms. When completed, the hydroelectric Milner Dam stood 73 feet high and 2,160 feet long and created a 4,000-acre reservoir. The dam provided irrigation water on both the north and south sides of the Snake River. They were able to use gravity flow on the south; however, the north side required pumping.

In 1905 TFL&W delivered irrigation water to the farms south of the Snake River Canyon, ultimately irrigating about 244,000 acres. The irrigation water led to the creation of the farming communities of Kimberly, Hansen, Twin Falls, Filer and Buhl.

Attuned to the freight demands for the new farms and communities that were opening up, OSL completed construction of a branch line to each of those cities. The first train entered Kimberly in 1905. In 1906 OSL completed the Kimberly Train Depot.

In order to bring water to the north side of the Snake River, Perrine assembled other investors and formed the Twin Falls North Side Land and Water Company (North Side Project). They built canals and pumped irrigation water from Milner Reservoir into Wilson Lake Reservoir and the Main North Side Canal.

The North Side Project would eventually irrigate 185,000 acres and led to the establishment of Hazelton, Eden, Jerome and Wendell.

In 1905 the TFL&W Project platted the town of Kimberly and began selling building lots. The village soon began to take shape with a general store, bank, livery stable, blacksmith, meat market, pool hall and post office.

Turning sagebrush lands into productive farms was particularly arduous. After families labored by hand and horse-drawn conveyances to clear the sagebrush, they had to plow and level the land sufficient to allow flood irrigation. After they planted their fields, thousands of jack rabbits spread across the land, devouring the crops as they emerged from the soil. (See Southwestern Idaho—The Region, Federal Land Use Laws—Fighting Jack Rabbit Menace.)

Incorporation

In 1905 Kimberly became an incorporated village. On August 8, 1967, Kimberly became an incorporated city in conformance with new Idaho municipal law.

Turning Points

Irrigation

Milner Dam and the complex irrigation system of canals and ditches of the Northside Project provided the basis for the founding of Kimberly. The success of Kimberly's agricultural economy still relies on irrigation.

Railroad

The railroad provided transportation critical to the success of the city. It not only allowed convenient transportation of passengers and rapid movement of mail and freight, but area farmers and ranchers could efficiently ship their commodities to market.

Kimberly Today

Amenities and Attractions

Kimberly has three city parks. City Park has two baseball fields, a tennis court, basketball hoops, a playground, three horseshoe pits, a pavilion, a picnic area and a covered stage. Kimberly Meadows has a play area for kids. Kimberly Heights has a playground.

Stricker Ranch, a museum with many artifacts and exhibits of the area's early settlement, is just outside of town.

The Kimberly Public Library is located in the historic train depot. The library provides an After School program once a week and a four week summer program for grade school children, as well as a "mommy and Me" program for toddlers. The high school students volunteer in this program, as do the Kiwanis club. The library also offers after school and evening hours, as well as safe internet accessibility.

Each year at the end of April, the city celebrates the Day of the Child, a day filled with children's activities including a special lunch and book reads. At that time, schoolchildren also learn about and plant trees, celebrating Arbor Day and the city's heritage as a "Tree City."

Each June, the Kimberly Business Owner's Association (KBOA) sponsors Kimberly Cruise, an antique car show.

On the second weekend in July, the city celebrates Kimberly Good Neighbor Days at City Park. The celebration includes a parade, dinner in the park, family activities and vendor booths.

The KBOA hosts a Halloween Trunk-or-Treat event in our City park for a safe environment for the youth in the community. They serve hot dogs and give out bags of candy to every participant. All of the vehicles pull in with their trunks facing inward toward the park. The kids are able to visit each decorated car “trunk” and receive candy. In 2009, the KBOA handed out over 800 bags of candy.

On the first weekend in December, the community ushers in the holiday season with the Christmas Tree Lighting celebration. Town residents gather in Downtown Kimberly for an evening of festivities including the lighting of the tree, along with the arrival of St. Nicholas on his horse, bringing gifts to the children. The streets are closed to traffic and burn barrels are placed in the streets for heating and atmosphere. The businesses remain open and meals are served by the Senior Citizens for those interested.

In 2009, the City was named “Capital of the Day” by Governor Otter, who spent the day in the City of Kimberly with our citizens

Wilson Lake Reservoir, located 15 miles northeast, is a 600-acre fishery that, in 1976, produced the largest perch caught in Idaho—15.5 inches, two pounds, ten ounces.

The Minidoka Internment National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, is located about 13 miles due northwest of town. It marks a national tragedy following the December 7, 1941, attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent stripping of constitutional rights from all known Americans of Japanese ancestry living in coastal communities. The Jerome County Museum in Jerome has a display honoring the camp’s history. (See Southwestern Idaho, The Region, World War II—Hunt Camp, Imprisonment of American Citizens of Japanese Descent.)

The 212-foot-high Shoshone Falls on the Snake River—higher than the famous Niagara Falls near Buffalo, New York—and park are 3 miles north.

Thousand Springs State Park has several units located on the Snake River at various points between Twin Falls and five miles north of Hagerman. These park units and fisheries include spectacularly beautiful spring-fed waterfalls tumbling hundreds of feet from the north rim of the Snake River Canyon Gorge and white-water rapids interspersed with crystal-clear pools of water that restore the Snake River.

Downhill skiing is available at Magic Mountain Ski Resort in the Sawtooth National Forest about 28 miles south of the city and Pomerelle Resort, located a similar distance to the southwest.

About 14 miles north begins the 750,000-acre Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. There is no road access on this side of the preserve. The preserve includes Idaho’s

Great Rift, the source of the lava flow that created the unique volcanic landscape. (See Eastern Idaho, The Region—Distinctive Geographic and Geologic Features.)

In addition to outdoor activities available in the Snake River Canyon, hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, biking, swimming, boating and winter sports are also available in nearby reservoirs, the national forest and the preserve.

Perhaps the most significant amenity that Kimberly residents enjoy is living in a quiet rural environment while being within a few miles of Twin Falls with its regional shopping malls, hospital, airport and community college.

Economy and Major Employers

Kimberly School District has over 150 employees and is the city's largest employer. The University of Idaho Research Center has about 30 employees and is the next largest employer. Several small businesses involved with the agricultural industry and downtown retail stores provide most of the city's other jobs.

Many family breadwinners commute to Twin Falls for employment.

Education

The Kimberly School District provides most of the city's K-12 education. The district operates two elementary schools, a middle school, high school and the district offices in Kimberly. The school has been endowed with three scholarship funds that distribute about \$50,000.00 a year to Kimberly students to further their education. Two of these funds are endowments that were established through wills by community members who believed educating our children is the responsibility of each generation. The third fund is the newly created Kimberly School Foundation established by community members to support both further education of our students and innovative teaching programs and materials that supplement our district funding.

Statistics:

- ▶ 91 students enrolled in preschool
- ▶ 86.33% of the 4th grade students were proficient or advanced on the Idaho Standard Achievement Test taken in the spring of 2009.
- ▶ 85.13% of the students in eighth grade were proficient or advanced on the Idaho Standards Achievement Test.
- ▶ 100% students were promoted from 8th grade to high school
- ▶ Between 95% and 100% graduation rate according to state calculations during the past three years.

The nearest institution of higher learning is the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls.

In 2008, Mayor Overacre implemented the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. The City and School District work together with our Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, which is a program sponsored and funded by the City. It is comprised of High School students who form their own Mayor and Council and conduct their meetings like the regular City Council meetings. They are informed about City issues and discuss possible outcomes. They are involved with the

discussions about ordinances, resolutions and bonds that the City Council is currently reviewing. They are encouraged to talk to their parents and come to Council Meetings. They are working with our City Planning and Zoning Department to incorporate a walking trail system throughout our community. They head a recycling program in the City and they perform regular community service activities. They attend the annual Association of Idaho Cities conference, where they interact with City and State leadership. They are slated to be the first Mayor Youth Leadership group in the Nation, recognized through the International City Managers Association.

In 2010, the City of Kimberly applied to be one of the “100 Best Communities For Youth”.

Academic/Athletic Achievements:

State Academic Champions:

Girls Basketball:

Boys Basketball

Volleyball: 2009, 2008

Boys Track: 2009

Girls Track:

Softball: 2009

Boys Golf:

Girls Golf: 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

Football: 2007

Baseball: 2006, 2005

Cross Country – Boys

Cross County – Girls

State Athletic Champions:

2010, 2009, 2008

2008 (2nd)

2009 (2nd), 2008 (3rd)

2010 (3rd), 2009 (1st)

2009 (2nd)

2010 (1st), 2009 (1st), 2008 (2nd), 2007 (1st)

2010 (2nd), 2009 (4th)

2010 (3rd), 2009 (4th)

2007 (2nd)

2009 (3rd), 2008 (4th)

2008 (2nd)

Kimberly was also awarded the **first-ever** “State Athletic Excellence 2009” award for the fundraising and concern they displayed toward a student/athlete from another city that was diagnosed with cancer.

Health Care

The closest hospital is St Lukes Magic Valley Regional Medical Center in Twin Falls. Kimberly has a physical therapy clinic; a dentist office; a nursing home; a senior center; and Nature’s Gates, natural remedies, in the city.

Slated for the fall of 2011, Family Health Services plans to locate a new facility in Kimberly.

Newspaper

The Rock Creek Star is a local weekly paper which covers: Kimberly, Hansen and Murtaugh.

The Times News is a larger daily paper, which also covers Kimberly and is located in Twin Falls.

Transportation

U.S. Highway 30 intersects Kimberly. The closest access to Interstate 84 is the interchange located on Idaho Highway 50 about six miles northeast of the city.

The closest full-service airport is Joslin Field - Magic Valley Regional Airport in Twin Falls.

Railroad service is available for freight a few miles from town.

Utilities and Services

Private companies provide electricity, telephone, satellite, cable, natural gas and wireless services. The City provides water, sewer, solid waste removal services, street maintenance and police protection. The Rock Creek Fire Department provides fire protection.

In 2010 the City received a \$400,000 grant to replace Center Street East, along with curb, gutter and sidewalks. The new road has a 30 year estimated life.

In 2010 the City was awarded the #1 drinking water in the State of Idaho and in 2009, Rob Wright, the Public Works Superintendent was named Idaho Rural Water's Administrator of the Year.

The City is currently undertaking a \$6.6M water infrastructure project, which will replace many of the dilapidating underground main lines. In addition, the City is drilling a new well, installing a new water tank, replacing an existing redwood tank and installing the City's first set of residential water meters. The meters will be read electronically and will not require a meter reader to obtain the readings.

Vision for 2050

In 1960 Kimberly had a population of 1,298. By 2000 the population doubled to 2,629. Since 2000 the city's population has grown at about 2.5 percent annually. For the next several years, these growth trends will likely slow, as a result of the decline in the general economy, before resuming historic trends.

The city will continue to pay for infrastructure improvements needed to accommodate this growth from existing revenue sources, grants or bonds approved by the citizens.

Over the next 40 years the city's population will likely double to around 6,000. New residents will continue to want to live in our quiet, peaceful community where they can find affordable housing near the urban amenities of larger cities.

Mayors

2008 David Overacre

2004 Jim Sorensen

2000 Jim Sorensen

1996 Jim Sorensen Elected

1995 Jim Sorensen Appointed

1994	George McAdams	Appointed
1994	Jesse Posey	Resigned
1990	Jesse Posey	
1989	Jesse Posey	
1988	Jesse Posey	
1987	Jesse Posey	
1986	Jesse Posey	
1986	Ron Jones	Recalled
1983	Ron Jones	
1979	RosaLea Whitehead	
1975	Von Nebeker	
1971	Von Nebeker	
1967	Walter Slaughter JR.	

City Incorporated 1967

1959	M.L. Ledbetter	
1958	Willard M. Rees	
1957	Frank H Horsh	
1955	Willard M. Rees	
1953	Audrey F. Graham	
1949	Frank H. Horsh	
1947	Lloyd K. Wright	1947 Mayor J.H. Henry
1939	R.H. Denton	
1933	Mervin B. Gill	
1930	H.V. Newkirk	
1929	L.H. Walden	
1927	W.M. Arnold	
1921	W.F. Breckon	
1920	J.M. Steelsmith	
1917	R.G. Wilson	

Bibliography

Original research by Hal Bunderson

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