



Bethel, Sullivan County, New York: Home of the 1969 Woodstock Festival

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INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Sullivan County is located along the New York/Pennsylvania border. As of the 2000 census, the population was 73,966. The county seat is Monticello and the name is in honor of Major General John Sullivan, who was a hero in the American Revolutionary War, and is well-known internationally for its rich entertainment history.

From early visitors and historic settlers to the county's newest investors and residents, Sullivan County was, and continues to be, recognized as the perfect place to live, work, play and raise a family. With a desirable location, highly educated work force, nationally recognized schools and pro-business environment, Sullivan County has it all.

Sullivan County has always been a popular tourist destination, with access to the Catskill Mountains, recreational parks, water sports, fishing, hunting, skiing and many other outdoor activities. However, its two most notable legacies to American pop culture are the resort complexes of the Borscht Belt (with their golf courses, social events, and entertainers) and the 1969 Woodstock Festival.

The 1969 Woodstock Festival took place in Bethel. The town of Bethel is the heart of Sullivan County, which blends farm land with residential and commercial development. In the center of town is the Sullivan County Airport and the Sullivan County Industrial Park. Although there were many interesting historic events in Bethel, none has caught the attention of the world like the 1969 Woodstock Festival. Currently the historic field is the site of the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts. The Town of Bethel is also well known for its numerous lakes, excellent fishing areas, and recreational programs.

ACCOLADES

- #30 of 50 Fabulous Places to Retire, (*Fifty Fabulous Places to Retire*)

CLIMATE

The climate is typical of the interior northeast. Weather in the summer is cool with temperatures rarely reaching 90 and averaging in the 70's in the day and around 60 at night. In the spring and fall temperatures are very inconsistent with warm days in the 70's and cold days with snow. The winter is cold with average high's below freezing for most of the winter and nighttime temperatures often dropping to near 0. The average snowfall is upwards of 6 feet per year, with snow cover over the majority of the winter.

[Click here](#) for a chart of average monthly high and low temperatures.¹

¹ www.weather.com

DEMOGRAPHICS

A summary of key facts from the 2000 Census is provided below.² [Click here](#) for the fully detailed "Quick Facts" page about Fremont County available on www.census.gov.

Population

- Population: 76,588
- Population, % change 2000-2006: +3.5%
- Persons under 5 years old: 5.5%
- Persons under 18 years old: 22.6%
- Persons 65 years old and older: 14.1%
- Female persons: 49.2%

Races

- White persons: 86.8%
- Black persons: 9.8%
- Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin: 10.5%
- Asian persons: 1.6%
- American Indian and Alaska Native persons: 0.3%
- Persons reporting two or more races: 1.4%

Education

- High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+: 76.2%
- Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+: 16.7%

COST OF LIVING

"Head for the Hills - New Yorkers are trading the overcrowded overpriced Hamptons for the simpler pleasures of the Catskills."³

Housing

The median housing value in the county in 2000 was \$93,300. Since 2000 however, the County has experienced a considerable appreciation in its real estate market. The average sales price of a home in the first quarter of 2005 was \$190,669 showing an increase of 18.6 since 2004. Median rent in Sullivan County is \$545, which is considered modest in comparison with regional rents.

The housing boom can be attributed to a sudden increase in the second home market coupled with rapidly growing demand for housing from people who commute to other areas in the New York metropolitan region. Another trend and ever-growing phenomenon in the County is the

² www.census.gov

³ *New York Times, 2006*

development of high-end second homes. These high-end second homes contribute to the area tax base while placing little burden on area schools.

Taxes

Sullivan County is made up of 21 municipal governments and 8 school districts. Real property tax rates vary by municipality and district because in New York State, each taxing jurisdiction has the authority to levy and collect their own taxes. It should be noted that real property tax bills consist of school, town or village, and county tax. The largest share of real property tax goes to the school district, followed by Town/Village tax, and finally the County.

Income Tax

New York State residents are required to pay state income tax. Military personnel who are not New York State residents are exempt, but dependents and/or spouses who are employed in New York State are required to file state income taxes.

Sales Tax

The New York State sales tax is four percent with each locality assessing an additional amount. The County's local rate is three and a half percent. The combined Sales Tax rate of seven and three-quarter percent is lower than surrounding counties.

Income

- Median Household Income (2001)..... \$34,605
- Per Capita Income (2001).....\$18,583

The County's per capita income compares favorably with surrounding counties. In fact, in 1990, the gap between Sullivan County's per capita income and surrounding counties was far greater than it was in 2000 which is a reflection of the County's stronger economy in recent years. It is anticipated that Sullivan County's per capita will reach Orange County levels by 2010.

Retirement

Sullivan County offers its retirees plenty of opportunities to keep active. The U.S. Department of Agriculture designated Sullivan County as one of the three "rural retirement" counties in New York State.

LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE

Less than 2 hours from New York City lies one of the most unspoiled, beautiful and untapped recreational areas in the United States. The area framed by the Delaware River to the south, the Beaverkill River (fly-fishing's American birthplace) in the west, the rock climbing mecca of the Shawangunk Ridge in the east and the spectacular Catskill Mountains to the north. New York's Sullivan County offers tremendously varied terrain for virtually any pursuit.

Sullivan County is in the southern part of New York State, southeast of Binghamton and southwest of Albany. It is separated by the Delaware River from Pennsylvania.

The county, which starts about 75 miles northwest of New York City, is nestled firmly within the Catskill Mountains. Its northeastern corner is within the Catskill Park. [Click here](#) for a map of the area.⁴

ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS

Bethel Woods Center for the Arts

Bethel Woods is located at the site of the original 1969 Woodstock Festival in Bethel, New York, approximately 90 minutes from NYC. Set within nearly 1,700 pristine acres, Bethel Woods will present a variety of artists and performances in 2007, including classical, pop, rock and country. By providing artists with the opportunity to play and perform on one of music's most legendary grounds, Bethel Woods is committed to building its status as a must-see cultural destination for arts lovers from around the region, the country, and the world. [Click here](#) to visit the Bethel Woods website.

The Museum at Bethel Woods

The museum will depict the social, political, generational, cultural and musical transformation of the 1960's and sets the stage for the 1969 Woodstock Music & Arts Fair. Dramatic audio visual technology, immersive interactives and a walking tour offers visitors the opportunity to experience the greatest of rock festivals. The museum and gift shop opens in 2007. Visit the website for more information.

Museums

- [Sullivan County Museum](#)
- [Catskill Fly Fishing Center & Museum](#)
- [Delaware Arts Center](#)
- [Ten Mile River Scout Museum](#)

The Outdoors & Fishing

- [Lake Superior State Park](#)
- [Town of Liberty, Hanofee Park](#)
- [Basha Kill Wildlife Management Area](#)
- [Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River](#)

Golf

- [Villa Roma Country Club](#)
- [Concord Resort & Golf Club](#)

⁴ www.google.com/maps

- [Kutsher's Country Club](#)
- [Swan Lake Golf and Country Club](#)
- [Sullivan County Golf & Country Club](#)

Skiing

- [Holiday Mountain Ski and Fun Park](#)

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Shopping

Shopping in Sullivan County consists mostly of flea markets, farmer's markets and small antique shops. There are also malls and outlet malls not far from Bethel.

- [Calicoon Flea Market](#)
- [The Galleria at Crystal Run](#)
- [Woodbury Common Premium Outlet Mall](#)

Transportation

- [Shortline Bus/Coach USA](#)
- [Metro North Railroad](#)
- [Stewart International Airport](#)

EMPLOYMENT

Sullivan County offers generous incentive programs and a pro-growth commitment to help new employers establish and expand their businesses. The Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development provides an assistance program for site selection, energy savings, permits and approvals. Sullivan Works is a one-stop center designed to assist both employers and job seekers. The center maximizes the opportunity for businesses to find and retain employees with skills matched to their needs. The center includes the New York State Department of Labor, The Center for Workforce Development and other employment resources.

Sullivan County is experiencing a slow but steady shift in its economic base. The Sullivan County Division of Planning and Community Development has attributed this shift to an emerging finance, insurance and real estate sector, new warehouse distribution facilities, arts & entertainment, small high tech companies and specialized manufacturing industries.

This healthy diversification reflects the resiliency Sullivan County has shown through its history and which now can be found on the Main Streets of lovely villages and towns. Once decayed and run-down buildings, are being transformed into viable and attractive space for a variety of businesses.

Largest Employers

- Sullivan County Government Center
- Catskill Regional Medical Center
- SDTC The Center for Discovery
- United States Postal Service Monticello Central School District
- Wal-Mart
- New Hope Community
- Sullivan ARC

HIGHER EDUCATION

- [Sullivan County Community College](#)