Benton County

The maps and tables in this publication were prepared using PCensus 7.06 for MapInfo and MapInfo Professional 7.0.
3. Geographic and Historical Notes

Benton County is located in south central Indiana. It is bordered by Illinois to the west, Newton and Jasper counties to the north, White to the northeast, Tippecanoe to the southeast, and Warren County to the south. U.S. Highways 41 and 52 cross Benton County. The landscape features oak, elm, ash, cottonwood, and hickory. This county is part of the Northern Illinois and Indiana Heavy Till Plain land resource area. The landscape is nearly flat across almost all of the county, but slopes slightly along the Pine Creek and tributaries in the southeast.

This County is in the Eastern Time Zone and observes DST. Average daily January temperatures are 14°/32° in January and 62°/85° in July. Annual precipitation is 34-38 and snowfall 20-36 inches.

Typically the first freeze of the season is around October 10-15 and the last freeze is around April 25-30 (southeast) and May 1-5 (northwest). The growing season lasts about 158-173 days.

Main agricultural activities and crops include corn for grain, soybeans, and sweet corn. Nuts, strawberries and apples are grown. Main vegetable crops are sweet corn, pumpkins and snap beans. A special crops is popcorn. Main natural resources include commercial forestland.

Cities include Fowler, the county seat. Towns include Ambia, Boswell, Earl Park, Fowler, Otterbein (which extends into Tippecanoe County), and Oxford. Townships include Bolivar, Center, Gilboa, Grant, Hickory Grove, Oak Grove, Parish Grove, Pine, Richland, Union and York.

Sources: Map from PCensus for MapInfo; Notes from Indiana Facts: Flying the Colors by John Clements, 1995.
Famous sons and daughters of Benton County include Donald Williams and Dan Patch. Donald Williams was a space shuttle crew commander on Atlantis in 1989. Williams loved watching the night sky from his farm home in Otterbein. Dan Patch was a racehorse from Oxford at the turn of the 20th century. He competed nationally, never lost, was acclaimed perhaps the nation’s greatest athlete, and was used to market a myriad of products. (Nelson Price, Indiana Legends, Carmel: Guild Press of Indiana, Inc., 1997, p. 123, 244, 258, 259)

Benton County is not a tobacco-producing county, according to the Strategic Development Group’s “Alternative Agricultural Strategy” (Bloomington, March 15, 2001) report, which is part of Governor Joseph E. Kernan’s “Recipient Final Reports for Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture Grant Programs” (http://www.in.gov/oca/grants/valueadd/VAFinalReports.html):