Decatur County

The maps and tables in this publication were prepared using PCensus 7.06 for MapInfo and MapInfo Professional 7.0.
Decatur County is located in east central Indiana. It is bordered by Franklin County to the east/northeast, Ripley to the southeast, Jennings to the south, Bartholomew to the west, Shelby to the west, and Rush to the north. U.S. Highway 421, Interstate Highway 74, and State Highway 3 cross the county. Elevation is 700-900 feet. The landscape features oak, maple, beech, birch, and hickory trees. A variety of land surfaces are found: nearly level (northwest and north central), level to slightly sloping (southeast), and moderate to steep slopes (everywhere else). Most of the county pertains to the Indiana and Ohio Till Plain land resource area, except some southeastern areas that belong to the Southern Illinois and Indiana Thin Loess and Till Plain land resource area.

Decatur county is in the Eastern Time Zone and observes DST. Average daily temperatures are 18°/37° in January and 61°/86° in July. Annual precipitation is 41 and snowfall 15-25 inches.

Typically the first freeze of the season occurs October 20-25 in all but the northern third where it is between October 15-20. The last freeze varies from around April 25-30. The growing season lasts about 168-183 days.

Agriculture activity is mainly in corn for grain and livestock. About four-fifths of the land is farmland and about four-fifths of that is in commercial crops. Additional crops are soybeans and winter wheat. Fruits include apples and strawberries. Livestock includes cattle/calves, milk cows, and hogs/pigs. Main natural resources include crushed stone, petroleum, and forestland.

Communities include the city of Greensburg, which is the county seat. Towns include Milford, Millhousen, Newport, St. Paul (which extends into Shelby County), and Westport. Townships include Adams, Clay, Clinton, Fugit, Jackson, Marion, Salt Creek, Sand Creek, and Washington.

Sources: Map from PCensus for MapInfo; Notes from Indiana Facts: Flying the Colors by John Clements, 1995.
Famous sons and daughters of Decatur County include Carl Fisher, who initiated the Indianapolis 500 racetrack. He began as a bicyclist and became one of the greatest car and racing enthusiasts in Indiana history. Born in Greensburg, he first gained notoriety performing dangerous bicycling stunts, then was part of the founding of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, testing hot air balloons in races in 1909 and then cars in 1911. Later he invested in a Florida swamp, converting it into the resort of Miami Beach. Unfortunately, due to a devastating hurricane that struck Miami Beach, the stock market crash of 1929, and untimely investments in New York, he died nearly penniless in 1939.


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](http://www.in.gov/oca/grants/valueadd/VAFinalReports.html)):