Franklin County

The maps and tables in this publication were prepared using PCensus 7.06 for MapInfo and MapInfo Professional 7.0.
Franklin County is located in Southeastern Indiana along the Ohio border. It is also bordered by the following Indiana counties: Union on the north/northeast, Fayette on the north/northwest, Rush to the west/northwest, Decatur to the west, Ripley to the south/southwest, and Dearborn to the south/southeast. State Highways 1 and 101 and U.S. Highway 52 cross the county. Elevation is 650-1,000 feet. The landscape features birch, beech, maple, oak and hickory trees. A variety of land surfaces are found, with most areas moderately to steeply sloping (by rivers and creeks in the center of the county), but nearly level in the northeast. The county pertains mainly to the Kentucky Bluegrass land resource area, but the northeastern corner is in the Indiana and Ohio Till Plain land resource area.

Franklin County is in the Eastern Time Zone and observes DST. Average daily temperatures are 18°/38° in January and 61°/86° in July. Annual precipitation is about 40 and snowfall 18 inches.

Typically the first freeze of the season occurs October 10-15, except in the southwestern corner of the county where it occurs usually October 15-20 and in the northeastern area where it is earliest, October 5-10. The last freeze varies from around April 25-30 except for small northern areas where it is later, May 1-5. The growing season lasts about 153-168 days.

Agricultural activity is in both crops and livestock. About three-fifths of the land is farmland of which about half is commercial crops. Main crops are corn for grain, winter wheat, hay and soybeans. Livestock includes cattle/calves, milk cows, and hogs/pigs. Main natural resources include construction sand, gravel crushed stone, limestone, and forestland. Water resources include the Brookville Lake Reservoir and Whitewater River.

Communities include the city of Batesville (which extends into Ripley County) and the towns of Brookville (the county seat), Cedar Grove, Laurel, Mount Carmel and Oldenburg.
3. Location and Historical Notes

Franklin County Tobacco Production & Revenue:

Source: 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):

According to the most recent data available, Franklin County has 429 acres devoted to tobacco production on 132 farms (or 17% of the total of 776 farms in the county). Franklin ranked 7th for number of acres (429) and 5th for the number of farms (132) producing tobacco. Tobacco income, for each farm producing tobacco ($10,050), represented 25.4% of the figure for average household income ($39,604) in the county that year (1997).

Latest figures (from 1997 USDA Census):
Rank for acres in tobacco production: 7th
Acres in tobacco production: 429
Number of farms producing tobacco: 132
As a Percent of all farms: 17%
Rank in IN for percent of all farms: 7th
Tobacco income per farm producing: $10,050
Percent of County’s Ave. Household Income: 25.4%

[See appendices for more information.]

3. Location and Historical Notes

A famous son of Franklin County is Lew Wallace, best known as a novelist for Ben-Hur: Tale of the Christ (1880). He was also a soldier and commander in the Civil War, a diplomat, politician and lawyer. He was a member of the military court in the conspiracy trial for the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. For a time Wallace served as a state senator.

Another famous son is baseball player, Billie Herman (1909-1992), who was born in New Albany. A ten-time All-Star, he played for the Chicago Cubs and other teams. Another athlete, Fuzzy Zoeller, also of New Albany (1951-) is a well-known professional golfer.