

## County Profile

Lorain County is located in northeast Ohio along the south shore of Lake Erie. The county seat is the City of Elyria, and the largest city is Lorain, a significant port city on Lake Erie. The county is part of the Cleveland-Elyria OH Metropolitan Statistical Area. U.S. Congressional Districts 4, 7, and 9 are based in Lorain County. The county's official website is [www.loraincounty.us](http://www.loraincounty.us).

The 301,356 residents are distributed across the county with an average population density of 613.3 persons per square mile, although some areas are metropolitan and more highly populated than the rural farming counterparts. Population is on the rise, increasing 5.9% between 2000 and 2010, although the recession of the last decade has hit the industrial county hard.

### Historical Origin

Lorain County was founded on December 22, 1822 and is named for the French Province of Lorraine. Lorain County was carved from portions of Huron, Cuyahoga, and Median counties. According to a letter in the Lorain County Historical Society files, Herman Ely, the founder of Elyria, was the leading proponent for the creation of Lorain County. Mr. Ely's generosity of donating cash, land, and to build a jail, sheriff's residence, and courthouse motivated the State of Ohio leadership to name Elyria the county seat on February 14, 1823. However, it was not until January 21, 1824 that Lorain County was official organized and opened its seat of justice in Elyria.

### Current Characteristics

Today's inhabitants of Lorain County are predominantly Caucasian, Latino, and African-American. A small number of residents are Asian or other nationalities. The residents of Lorain County are descendants of German, Irish, English, Polish, Italian, Hungarian, and Slovakian heritage. English is the primary language in 92.2% of the households, and Spanish is the primary language in 4.5% of the households.

Lorain County has a total area of 923 square miles, 492 of which are land. The remaining 432 square miles are water, the majority of which is Lake Erie. The county borders Lake Erie on its north side, and is adjacent to Cuyahoga, Medina, Ashland, Huron, and Erie counties. It shares an international border with Ontario, Canada on the northern Lake Erie border. Cleveland is the closest major city, located immediately to the east. Columbus, the state capitol, is approximately 115 miles southwest. Toledo is 100 miles to the west, making Lorain County conveniently accessible to three of Ohio's major cities.

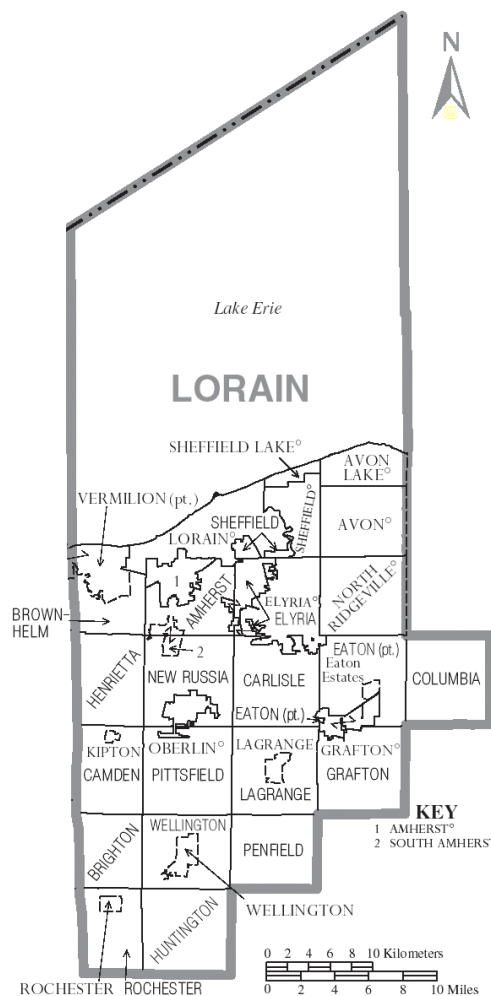
### Jurisdictions

Lorain County is comprised of nine cities, seven incorporated villages, and eighteen townships, and is governed in a standard county type government with incorporated villages and cities as well as townships. The county government covers the entire area. Elyria serves as the county seat.

The City of Lorain is the largest city, and is joined by the cities of Amherst, Avon, Avon Lake, Elyria, North Ridgeville, Oberlin, Sheffield Lake, and Vermilion. Villages include Grafton, Kipton, LaGrange, Rochester, Sheffield, South Amherst, and Wellington.

Outside of the incorporated jurisdictions, Lorain County is divided into eighteen townships. These include Amherst, Brighton, Brownhelm, Camden, Carlisle, Columbia, Eaton, Elyria, Grafton, Henrietta, Huntington, LaGrange, New Russia, Penfield, Pittsfield, Rochester, Sheffield, and Wellington.

Within the townships, there are several unincorporated communities. These informal neighborhoods include Belden, Brentwood Lake, Brighton, Brownhelm, Brownhelm Station, Columbia Hills Corners, Eaton Estates, Henrietta, Huntington, North Eaton, Penfield, and Pittsfield.



### Elyria

Elyria is the county seat and second largest city in Lorain County. The city occupies a land area of 20.57 square miles, and is located in the north central part of the county. It is 26 miles west of Cleveland and just south of the port city of Lorain.

<b>Elyria Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	54,533
Population, 2013 Estimate	53,956
White	78.1%
Black or African American	15.5%
Hispanic or Latino	4.9%
Language Other than English	4.1%
Number of Households	22,745
Persons per Household	2.36
Median Income	\$41,531
Persons Below Poverty Level	18.2%

The founding father of Elyria, Herman Ely, hailed from West Springfield, Massachusetts and was the son of a well-known merchant, Justin Ely. The elder Ely was a developer and investor in the Western Reserve area of Ohio owned by the Connecticut Land Company of Harford. Following his father’s visionary footsteps, in 1816, the younger Ely would form a settlement named after him (Ely) and the Austrian province of Illyria, a place he had visited in Europe and loved. Thus was the formation of Elyria, created by a grist mill, a few buildings, and some homes at a fork in the Black River.

Originally a part of Huron County, the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation to create the “Town of Elyria” on February 23, 1833. Included in the town was “all the part of the township of Elyria which is included within the branches of the Black River” and that it “hereafter be known and distinguished by the name of the Town of Elyria.” It would eventually be settled by inventive and pioneers after the American Revolutionary War. By the time Ely passed away, the city boasted 1500 residents.

Today, Elyria has almost 55,000 residents and is Ohio’s 14<sup>th</sup> largest city. It is the home of the Easter Seal Society, as well as invention of the sewing machine, padded bicycle seats, colored golf balls, and rubber heels. Heisman Trophy winner (1950) Vic Janiowicz hails from Elyria. Elyria is world headquarters to Ridge Tool, Invacare Corporation, EMC Corporation, Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems and Diamond Products. In 1908, Elyria Memorial Hospital was built and is now one of America’s best 100 hospitals. The Midway Mall was built in 1967 and captured significant retail trade for decades. In the 70’s and 80’s as industry and automotive businesses took a downturn, Elyria became known as part of the “rust belt”.

Major highways pass through Elyria. The Ohio Turnpike and Interstate 90 divide in the city, as I-90 goes north and the Ohio Turnpike/I-80 heads south. Other routes include State Routes 2, 57, 58, 113, 301, and 611 and U.S. Route 20.

As a melting pot of manufacturing, services, and retail, Elyria is a busy city as its residents and visitors carry out their daily activities.

### **Lorain**

Lorain is the largest county city in terms of both population and land area. The city has a land area of 23.67 square miles. It sits on Lake Erie, and is one of the largest ports of the Great Lakes in Ohio. Lorain is Ohio’s 10<sup>th</sup> largest city.

<b>Lorain Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	64,097
Population, 2013 Estimate	63,710
White	55.0%
Black or African American	17.6%
Hispanic or Latino	25.2%
Language Other than English	18.2%
Number of Households	25,713
Persons per Household	2.47
Median Income	\$34,823
Persons Below Poverty Level	29.2%

The original post office in Lorain, established in 1807, was called the “Mouth of the Black River” because there was no official name for what would become the City of Lorain. When Lorain County was formed in 1822, the settlement called “Black River” became known as “Lorain”. In 1834 the city became incorporated as “Charleston” by John S. Reid and his son, but in 1874 was re-incorporated as “Lorain” again. Reid’s son became the first mayor of Lorain.

Lorain boasts one of the largest dry-docks in the world on fresh water. The city’s existence is borne in shipbuilding, and it is home to the American Shipbuilding Company, first as the Cleveland Shipbuilding Company. Lorain is home to United States Steel and Republic Steel.

Ford Motor Company established itself in the City of Lorain in 1974 and became one of the city’s largest employers. Ford Motor Company produced models such as the Econoline series, Ford Torino, Mercury Montego, Ford Thunderbird, and the Mercury Cougar at times in it’s Lorain facilities.

Many people worldwide identify with the infamous Lorain Lighthouse, depicted in many books and brochures touting lighthouses of the Great Lakes. In 1978, this lighthouse was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places. The Charles Berry Bridge in Lorain is the second largest bascule bridge in the world. Terry Anderson, former Lebanese hostage and well-known journalist and poet/author Helen Steiner Rice are both natives of Lorain, Ohio.

### **North Ridgeville**

North Ridgeville is the third largest city in Lorain County. It occupies 23.4 square miles on the eastern edge of Lorain County.

<b>North Ridgeville Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	29,466
Population, 2013 Estimate	31,269
White	95.0%
Black or African American	1.5%
Hispanic or Latino	3.3%
Language Other than English	7.4%
Number of Households	11,753
Persons per Household	2.49

Median Income	\$66,313
Persons Below Poverty Level	6.1%

North Ridgeville was originally known as Ridgeville. In 1829, the Postmaster General requested the name be changed to North Ridgeville to eliminate frequent mail mistakes due to another post office of the same name. The community near what is now the intersection of State Route 113 and U.S. Route 20 was generically known as Ridgeville Center and the post office was identified as North Ridgeville. In 1958, Ridgeville Township officially incorporated as a village. By 1960, the population was sufficient to incorporate as a city.

**Avon**

The city of Avon lies between North Ridgeville and Avon Lake on the eastern border of Lorain County. The city, which occupies 20.8 square miles, is almost twice the size of Avon Lake, its neighbor to the north, but the two cities are very close in population.

<b>Avon Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	21,191
Population, 2013 Estimate	22,017
White	92.4%
Black or African American	2.3%
Hispanic or Latino	3.4%
Language Other than English	9.5%
Number of Households	7,555
Persons per Household	2.69
Median Income	\$80,485
Persons Below Poverty Level	6.3%

Avon was originally settled in the early 1800s. As the population grew, the area then known as Avon Township was separated into separate entities. The north section of the township became Avon Lake; the southern section was incorporated as the Village of Avon in 1917. In 1961, the village became the City of Avon.

Several major interstates and highways traverse Avon. State Route 83 is the primary north south highway in the city, while State Routes 254 and 611 and Interstate 90 are major east west thoroughfares. Because of these primary transportation routes, many retail, commercial, and service businesses have developed along the highways.

**Avon Lake**

Avon Lake occupies 12 square miles in northeast Lorain County. The city stretches for five miles along the Lake Erie shore.

<b>Avon Lake Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	22,581
Population, 2013 Estimate	22,998
White	95.7%
Black or African American	1.1%
Hispanic or Latino	2.4%

Language Other than English	6.0%
Number of Households	8,900
Persons per Household	2.52
Median Income	\$81,177
Persons Below Poverty Level	4.5%

Avon Lake was originally part of the City of Avon, which lies directly south of the city. Because of rapid population growth, the two areas were separated in 1915. Avon Lake was incorporated as a village in 1917. By 1950, the village had grown enough to attain city status and a city charter was enacted in 1952.

Avon Lake was originally an agricultural community, specializing in grape production. In 1926, an industrial base developed when the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company constructed a power plant. Today, Avon Lake is home to the largest employer in Lorain County, the Ford Motor Company Ohio Assembly Plant. The plant employs more than 1,800 people and has been in existence since 1974. PolyOne Corporation, the eleventh largest employer in the county, is also located in Avon Lake. This Fortune 500 company provides employment for 577 people.

**Amherst**

The city of Amherst is located in western Lorain County approximately 9 miles from Elyria. The city occupies 7.2 square miles and is the sixth largest city in the county.

Amherst Statistics	
Population, 2010	12,021
Population, 2013 Estimate	12,112
White	95.7%
Black or African American	0.7%
Hispanic or Latino	5.3%
Language Other than English	3.8%
Number of Households	4,513
Persons per Household	2.64
Median Income	\$63,497
Persons Below Poverty Level	6.6%

Amherst was established in 1807. The city is known for its many sandstone quarries, which is what drew early settlers to the area. At the peak of sandstone production in the late 1800s, there were nine sandstone quarries operating at once. Over the years, the quarries were bought and sold many times as companies consolidated their operations. Today, the Cleveland Quarries Company operates the quarries and produce Birmingham Buff Sandstone and Berea Sandstone.

**Vermilion**

Vermilion is located on the western border of Lorain County at the mouth of the Vermilion River. The city occupies 10.65 square miles and is located in both Lorain and Erie counties.

Vermilion Statistics	
Population, 2010	10,586
Population, 2013 Estimate	10,490
White	96.8%

Black or African American	0.3%
Hispanic or Latino	2.8%
Language Other than English	1.7%
Number of Households	4,555
Persons per Household	2.33
Median Income	\$51,560
Persons Below Poverty Level	10.5%

Vermilion was incorporated in 1837 and developed as a fishing and small boat harbor. The city’s architectural style is reminiscent of a typical New England hamlet with clapboard buildings, giant maples, and a village square. The original settlers of the area were from Connecticut, contributing to the architectural style of the area.

As the area surrounding Vermilion developed, the Vermilion River proved inadequate for large commercial water traffic. Recreational boating became very popular. Today, Vermilion is primarily a resort community featuring many beaches, cottages, and condominiums along the Lake Erie shore.

**Sheffield Lake**

Sheffield Lake is located on the shores of Lake Erie approximately 13 miles north of Elyria. The city occupies 2.48 square miles.

<b>Sheffield Lake Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	9,137
Population, 2013 Estimate	9,067
White	94.5%
Black or African American	1.7%
Hispanic or Latino	4.9%
Language Other than English	6.4%
Number of Households	3,802
Persons per Household	2.41
Median Income	\$47,287
Persons Below Poverty Level	12.7%

The City of Sheffield Lake was originally known as Sheffield Lake Village. It separated from Sheffield Township in 1920. At that time, the area’s overall population was rising due to steel mill production but Sheffield Lake was primarily farmland. Over the next decade, the northern section became more urbanized while the southern half remained agricultural. This development led to disagreements over infrastructure improvements and ultimately led to the village splitting into two separate entities. The northern section retained the Sheffield Lake Village name, now Sheffield Lake, and the southern section became Sheffield Village.

**Oberlin**

Oberlin is located in central Lorain County approximately 9.5 miles southwest of Elyria. It is the smallest city in the county, occupying a total land area of 4.92 square miles.

<b>Oberlin Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	8,282
Population, 2013 Estimate	8,390
White	73.0%
Black or African American	14.8%
Hispanic or Latino	5.1%
Language Other than English	9.0%
Number of Households	2,575
Persons per Household	2.30
Median Income	\$53,025
Persons Below Poverty Level	21.0%

Oberlin is best known as the home of Oberlin College and Conservatory, a liberal arts and music school with approximately 2,900 students. The overwhelming majority of these students, 91%, are from out-of-state or abroad. Two Presbyterian ministers founded Oberlin College in 1833. The school is named after John Frederick Oberlin, a minister who provided great inspiration to the school’s founders. Oberlin College is the largest employer in the city and seventh largest employer in Lorain County.

In 2012, *Ohio Magazine* named Oberlin “Best Hometown” in northeast Ohio. The city has also been named Ohio’s “Best College Town” for its array of arts and culture and eclectic shops and restaurants. Most recently, Oberlin was named one of five “Best Intergenerational Communities”.

**Grafton**

Grafton is the largest village in Lorain County. It is located along the East Branch of the Black River and occupies 4.74 square miles.

<b>Grafton Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	6,636
Population, 2013	N/A
White	65%
Black or African American	32.7%
Hispanic or Latino	2.3%
Language Other than English	N/A
Number of Households	965
Persons per Household	2.68
Median Income	N/A
Persons Below Poverty Level	N/A

Grafton was incorporated as a village in 1877. Although now primarily a bedroom community, Grafton has been home to several industries throughout its history, including sandstone quarries, gristmills and an aluminum foundry.

Today, the Lorain Correctional Institution and Grafton Correctional Institution, both part of Ohio’s state prison system, are located in Grafton. Lorain Correctional currently houses approximately 1,500 inmates and is considered one of the most overcrowded prisons in the state.



The security level of inmates housed at LCI is minimum through maximum. Grafton Correctional Institution houses 2,000 inmates under minimum and medium security.

### **Wellington**

Wellington is the second largest village in Lorain County. Located in the rural southern portion of the county, it occupies 3.89 square miles and sits at the intersection of State Routes 18 and 58.

<b>Wellington Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	4,802
Population, 2013	N/A
White	95.8%
Black or African American	1.2%
Hispanic or Latino	2.0%
Language Other than English	N/A
Number of Households	1,956
Persons per Household	2.39
Median Income	N/A
Persons Below Poverty Level	N/A

Settlers from Massachusetts and New York founded the village in 1855. In its early years, the village was home to a thriving carriage making industry. Today, Wellington is a quaint village known for its century homes and distinctive architecture.

### **Sheffield**

Sheffield is located in the metropolitan northern half of Lorain County between Sheffield Lake and Sheffield Township. The village occupies 10.84 square miles along the Black River.

<b>Sheffield Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	3,982
Population, 2013	N/A
White	89.3%
Black or African American	4%
Hispanic or Latino	6.1%
Language Other than English	N/A
Number of Households	1,581
Persons per Household	2.51
Median Income	N/A
Persons Below Poverty Level	N/A

When the area including Sheffield was first settled, Sheffield Township, Sheffield Lake and Sheffield were considered one jurisdiction under the name Sheffield Township. In 1920, the area east of the Black River separated from the township and formed Sheffield Lake. By the early 1930s, a division formed between the agricultural south and the more populated north portions of Sheffield Lake. In 1933, residents of the south formed a separate village that is today known as Sheffield.

### LaGrange

LaGrange is located in the rural southern corridor of Lorain County. The village occupies an area of 2.01 square miles, all of which are land.

LaGrange Statistics	
Population, 2010	2,103
Population, 2013	N/A
White	96.6%
Black or African American	0.4%
Hispanic or Latino	1.9%
Language Other than English	N/A
Number of Households	726
Persons per Household	2.73
Median Income	N/A
Persons Below Poverty Level	N/A

The village was incorporated in 1875. The town’s primary purpose was to support workers from the gristmills, cheese factories, and sandstone quarries in the area. Businesses such as hotels, stores, and taverns prospered. The Belle Vernon Company built a large creamery that processed dairy products from milk supplied by local farmers. Records indicate a large fire in 1897 destroyed many buildings on the town square, but the area quickly rebuilt.

### South Amherst

South Amherst occupies 2.49 square miles in the northeast quadrant of Lorain County. The village is situated between the cities of Amherst and Oberlin.

South Amherst Statistics	
Population, 2010	1,688
Population, 2013	N/A
White	96.2%
Black or African American	0.4%
Hispanic or Latino	2.7%
Language Other than English	N/A
Number of Households	665
Persons per Household	2.51
Median Income	N/A
Persons Below Poverty Level	N/A

South Amherst is known for its Berea Sandstone quarries. These quarries, including the well-known Buckeye Quarry, are some of the largest and deepest in the world. The quarry industry has provided significant employment in the area since the mid 1800s. Cleveland Quarries Company continues to operate in the area today.

### Kipton

The Village of Kipton is located on the western edge of the county in Camden Township. Kipton is a small village in both population and land area, occupying only 0.45 square miles.

<b>Kipton Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	243
Population, 2013	N/A
White	97.1%
Black or African American	0%
Hispanic or Latino	2.5%
Language Other than English	N/A
Number of Households	102
Persons per Household	2.38
Median Income	N/A
Persons Below Poverty Level	N/A

In 1852, the Toledo, Norwalk and Cleveland Railroad were established and opened a station in Kipton. Because of the station, Kipton became the center of trade in Camden Township. The rail line was abandoned in 1976. Today, the rail trail is part of the North Coast Inland Trail, a recreational trail for biking, running, and other sports.

Kipton was the site of a serious train wreck on April 19, 1891 that was caused by a failure of rail engineers' watch synchronization. This derailment led to tighter controls in the rail industry in 1993 when rail chronometry standards were adopted.

### **Rochester**

Rochester is located in the southwest portion of Lorain County along the West Branch of the Black River. It is the smallest village in the county based on population and has a land area of 1.1 square miles, making it the second smallest in terms of land area.

<b>Rochester Statistics</b>	
Population, 2010	182
Population, 2013	N/A
White	96.2%
Black or African American	0%
Hispanic or Latino	2.2%
Language Other than English	N/A
Number of Households	71
Persons per Household	2.56
Median Income	N/A
Persons Below Poverty Level	N/A

There is limited access to Rochester via state highways. State Route 511 is the only north south roadway. State Route 162 runs east west to the south of village.

### **Townships**

Lorain County is divided into eighteen townships. Each township, its population according to 2010 U.S. Census figures, and land area is listed below:

<b>Township</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Land Area</b>
Amherst	6,844	15.5 sq. mi
Brighton	915	16.2 sq. mi

Brownhelm	7,618	20.2 sq. mi
Camden	1,677	20.1 sq. mi
Carlisle	7,500	24.6 sq. mi
Columbia	7,040	25.7 sq. mi
Eaton	5,750	23.4 sq. mi
Elyria	3,266	5.9 sq. mi
Grafton	2,833	25.5 sq. mi
Henrietta	1,861	21.3 sq. mi
Huntington	1,341	26.3 sq. mi
LaGrange	6,164	25.7 sq. mi
New Russia	2,515	24.2 sq. mi
Penfield	1,789	22.1 sq. mi
Pittsfield	1,581	26.3 sq. mi
Rochester	799	17.6 sq. mi
Sheffield	3,720	2.4 sq. mi
Wellington	6,222	22.6 sq. mi

### Population and Housing

The population of Lorain County is 301,356 according to 2010 U.S. Census figures. This represents a 5.9% increase from 2000 Census figures. The county’s population has experienced wide fluctuations in growth since the early 1900s. The county grew rapidly until the 1930s, but the population increased only 2.9% between 1930 and 1940. Between 1950 and 1970, population again increased rapidly until slowing in the 1970s and 1980s. By 1990, the population had decreased by 1.9% until slowly increasing to current levels. Slow population growth is projected to continue over the next several decades.

Lorain County Population Statistics	
Population Density	613.3 persons/square mile
Female Population	50.8%
Male Population	49.2%
Median Age	37.3 years
Population Under 18	23.2%
Population Over 65	15.3%
White	87.1%
African American or Black	8.8%
Hispanic or Latino	8.9%
Multi-Racial	2.6%
Average Household Size	2.5 persons

Within Lorain County, there are 127,684 housing units. Of these housing units, 90% are occupied, leading to a vacancy rate of 10%. Of the occupied units, 70.5% are owner occupied and 24.6% are renter occupied. The home ownership rate is 72.5% and the median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$143,600. Multi-unit housing structures such as apartment buildings account for 17.9% of all housing units in the county.

### Household Income

According to 2010 U.S. Census data, the median household income in the county is \$51,756. This figure is approximately 6% higher than the statewide median income of \$48,857. 14.2% of

Lorain County residents live below the poverty level, slightly below the statewide average of 15.4%. Within the county, Avon Lake has the highest median household income at \$81,177 and the lowest percentage of persons living below the poverty level at 4.5%. The city of Lorain has the lowest median income in the county at \$34,823 and the highest percentage of persons living below the poverty level at 29.2%.

### Waterways and Watershed

Lorain County sits on the south shore of Lake Erie, slightly east of the western basin. The Vermilion River flows into Lake Erie on the far western boundary with Erie County and the Black River flows through the City of Lorain into the lake. Except for a small corner of the extreme northwest that is part of the Vermilion River Watershed, Lorain County is part of the Black River Watershed.

The small section of Vermilion River Watershed includes a portion of Brownhelm Township and the City of Vermilion's extreme east side. The Vermilion Watershed drains land that is 73% agricultural, 25.3% woodland, and 1.9% wetland, water, or urban.

The Black River Watershed drains the majority of Lorain County. It originates in Huron and Ashland Counties to the south and Medina County to the east, but Lorain County makes up most of the entire watershed. The Black River is divided into three parts: Mainstream, East Branch, and West Branch. The Mainstream Branch begins at the juncture of the other two branches in Cascade Park in the City of Elyria. This section of the river is 15.3 miles long, draining the most highly populated and developed areas of the county.



The East Branch of the Black River drains land used for agriculture as well as contemporary urban sprawl. The 200 square mile area includes riparian forests and warm-water habitats, causing it to have been considered for “wild and scenic” designation by ODNR in 1998. While this designation did not come to pass, the area is still a gorgeous but challenging blend of yesterday’s heritage and tomorrow’s development. The East Branch forms in Medina and Ashland Counties, and winds through Grafton as it comes north to meet its western counterpart in Elyria. The total length of the East Branch is 45 miles. It receives runoff from more developed urban-like areas of North Ridgeville and Carlisle and Eaton Townships.

The West Branch flows for 52 miles through farmland in the less populated areas of the county and drains 175 plus acres, which are primarily farmland. It begins in northern Ashland County and meanders through Rochester on its way to meet the East Branch in Elyria. As it flows through the rural communities on its way to the Mainstream Branch, it provides watershed for business and industry, residential, and commercial properties in small proportions as well. Part of the West Branch is currently involved in a special project that will identify watershed characteristics in Oberlin, Wellington, Rochester, and LaGrange, and fourteen townships.

At the source of the East Branch of the Black River, the elevation is 1,138 feet above sea level. As the river empties into Lake Erie at the mouth, the elevation is 573. The average fall for the entire length of the river is 7.6 feet per mile.

Numerous creeks flow into the Black River and its downstream tributaries. These tributaries and the branch of the Black River they ultimately flow into are identified below.

<b>West Branch Tributaries</b>	<b>Mainstream Tributaries</b>	<b>East Branch Tributaries</b>
Beaver Creek	Aldrich Creek	Center Creek
Brownhelm Creek	Big Creek	Crow Creek
Charlemont Creek	Caley Creek	Salt Creek
Elk Creek	Chance Creek	Willow Creek
Frankenburg Creek	East Creek	
Quarry Creek	Folger Creek	
	French Creek	
	Havet Creek	
	Little Beaver Creek	
	Martin Run	
	Quarry Creek	
	Robinson Creek	
	Shepards Run	

While there is no master list of ditches in the county, the County Engineer has identified approximately 40 ditches that equal 28.6 miles of waterway. These ditches provide initial drainage from lands and running into the creeks that then drain into the Black River and its two branches. Privately owned and maintained ditches have not been quantified. Some cities, villages, and townships maintain ditches within their jurisdictional lines, but those waterways have not been identified or quantified.

Drainage in Lorain County is primarily gravity fed because the land slopes gently to the north as water flows into Lake Erie. Subsurface drainage includes clay, plastic, and concrete tile.

Surface drainage includes grass waterways, swales, and ditches. The drainage reaches an outlet such as a storm sewer, catch basin, ditch, stream, or river. The highest elevation in the county is on the Ashland/Lorain County border near Sullivan where the elevation is 1,169 feet above sea level. Aside from this high point, elevations range from 850 feet above sea level in Rochester (west) and 804 in Grafton (east), both in the southern half of the county, to Elyria at 715 and North Ridgeville at 728 in the central area, to Lorain at 610 and Avon/Avon Lake at 600 along the northern coastline.

Twenty-one reservoirs pepper the landscape in Lorain County. Some feed the water supply and others are recreational bodies of water.

<b>Water Supply Reservoirs</b>	<b>Recreational Lakes</b>
Grafton	Ber Al Lake
Kipton	Brentwood Lake
Oberlin	Clare Mar Camp Lake
Wellington	Eppley Pond
	Findley Lake
	Firelands Boy Scout Lake
	Jaquay Lake
	Lake Haven
	Estates Reservoir
	Lorella Lake
	Ponderosa Lake
	Taylor Lake
	Ukranian Youth Camp Lake
	Wyleswood Lake

Lorain County has eleven dams. Each dam, location, and ODNR classification is identified in the table below.

<b>Dam</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>
Brentwood Lake Dam		Grafton
Grafton Reservoir Dam		Grafton
Eppley Pond Dam		LaGrange
Findley Lake Dam		Wellington
Ponderosa Pines Dam		Wellington
Wellington Reservoir Dam 1		Wellington
Wellington Reservoir Dam 2		Wellington
Firelands Boy Scout Camp Dam		Kipton
Lake Haven Estates Dam		Vermilion
Oberlin Reservoir Dam 1		Oberlin
Oberlin Reservoir Dam 2		Oberlin
Upground Reservoir		

Lorain County is covered by parts of three eco-regions. Along the coastal area, the Erie Lake Plain provides a nearly level coastal strip of lacustrine deposits in beach ridges and swales. The climate is affected by the water, which makes it warmer, moist, and amenable to the fruit and vegetable production characteristic of the coastline. An area in Brownhelm and Henrietta

townships is part of the clayey, high lime till plains, making the area less productive than the coastal area due to the need for artificial drainage and more compatible with grain production. The southern half of Lorain County is a rolling landscape with low rounded hills and scattered end moraines and kettles. This less fertile area, not prone to lake effect climate fluctuations, makes it more likely to be used for livestock and grain production.

Soil types in Lorain County are generally not highly erodible. Most of the land has the potential for being productive farmland if drained properly. Soil types include glacial till with a low concentration of limestone or dolomite; glacial stream sediment, which is fertile when drained; alluvial, which is constantly changing as it takes on more sediment through natural drainage; and lake bed sediment that is clay-like in nature and difficult to drain. Most soils do not meet hydric standards, except for those in and around Sheffield Lake, Avon Lake, and Avon with a few veins throughout the Elyria and Lorain areas. The northeast quadrant of the county is where hydric soils are located.

There is no evidence of Karst formation in Lorain County.

The aquifers in Lorain County are such that natural wells have poor water production, ranging from 0 gpm to a high-end production of perhaps 25 gpm. There is a relatively high probability of the wells that do produce having sulfur in the water, contributing to offensive smell and taste of naturally drilled well water. Therefore, for the most part, man-made water distribution systems are prevalent in Lorain County, making residents dependent upon a utility service to deliver water for personal, commercial, and manufacturing uses.

### **Climate**

The climate of Lorain County is consistent with most of Ohio. The humid continental climate zone features cold winters, hot summers, and no dry season. The warm season lasts from late May to mid-September. The cold season occurs from early December through early March.

In a typical year, temperatures range from 19° to 83°F. It is rare for temperatures to drop below 5°F or rise above 90°F. The average annual temperature is 52.1° F. July is the warmest month with an average high temperature of 85° F. January is the coldest month with an average low temperature of 21° F.

The most common forms of precipitation are light rain, light snow, thunderstorms, and moderate rain. The average annual precipitation for the county is 37.24 inches. August is typically the wettest month with average precipitation of 3.92 inches. February generally has the least precipitation with an average of 2.36 inches.

Relative humidity and dew point are factors typically measured to predict how comfortable a person will find the weather. The relative humidity typically ranges from 45%, which is considered comfortable, to 94% (very humid) over the course of the year. Dew point is sometimes considered a better measure of comfort level because it more directly relates to how quickly perspiration will evaporate from a person's skin. The lower the dew point, the drier the air feels. In Lorain County, dew points usually range between 12°F and 69°F. The two periods of the year that are considered most comfortable are early May to late June and late August to mid-October.



## Land Use

Lorain County’s landscape features river valleys, rolling hills, pastures, and woodlands as well as flat fields and pastures. This variation in landscape is due primarily to the continental glaciers that covered the region more than 15,000 years ago. Because of this varied landscape, Lorain County has significant variation in land use across its 492 square miles of land area.

Land Use	
Urban	26.67%
Cropland	38.32%
Pasture	6.99%
Forest	22.64%
Open Water	1.06%
Wetlands (Wooded, Herbaceous)	4.32%
Bare/Mines	0%

Urban land use includes areas utilized for residential, commercial, industrial, and transportation purposes. Cropland and pastures account for 140,000 acres of land use in Lorain County. As residents move from crowded urban areas to less crowded rural communities, the percentage of land used for urban areas has increased while cropland and pastures have decreased.

Forested land in the county provides residents with access to thousands of acres of local and state parks, forests, nature preserves and wildlife areas. The largest of these parks is Lorain County Metro Parks. The park district was founded in 1957 and has grown from one small park to over 9,000 acres spread across 25 parks throughout the county. Visitors can participate in over 100 activities at the various parks, from biking, hiking, and fishing to arts and crafts, dancing, and photography.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Ohio State Parks operates Findley State Park, an 838-acre facility located south of Wellington. The park provides visitors with hiking, biking, boating, fishing, and camping opportunities in a heavily wooded setting.

In addition to these large park facilities, many cities and villages maintain several parks, beaches, and recreation areas within their jurisdictions. Several communities in Lorain County have demonstrated their commitment to protect and manage their public tree resources and have been recognized by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry with a Tree City USA designation. Communities in Lorain County receiving this designation are Avon Lake, Columbia Township, Elyria, Oberlin, and Wellington.

Open water accounts for only a small percentage of Lorain County’s 432 square miles of land area. Lake Erie accounts for 491 square miles of Lorain County’s total area, but this amount is not included in the land area figure because it is open water.

## Regulation

Zoning regulations have been enacted for all cities, villages, and townships in Lorain County. Each jurisdiction provides their own zoning inspector, permit forms, fee schedules, and procedures. All nine cities in the county have a Building Department to manage zoning regulations, perform inspections, and enforce building codes. While the cities have full-time staff

in their building and zoning departments, the townships typically employ someone part-time to fill this role. In some cases, townships and villages have collaborated to share the services of a zoning official. Because these functions are handled independently by each jurisdiction, Lorain County does not have a countywide building department. There have been informal discussions among some of the townships about forming a shared department to perform this function but discussions have not progressed passed the informal stage at this time.

### Transportation

Lorain County has many highways providing transportation routes to all areas of Ohio. These routes include major thoroughfares and supporting dual-lane highways running from all directions across the county.

The Ohio Turnpike intersects Lorain County midway through the northern half. Running from south of Vermilion through the southern part of Elyria and leaving the county through North Ridgeville, it is the primary east west interstate in northern Ohio. When the Ohio Turnpike enters Lorain County near Vermilion, I-80 and I-90 are combined. At the Elyria interchange, I-90 splits to the north through Cleveland; I-80 goes south of Cleveland and towards Pennsylvania. The North Ridgeville interchange boasts of some of the heaviest exchange traffic in the state as I-80, I-480, and I-490 leads travelers to and from Cleveland. I-90 crosses the far north along the coastline, as does State Route 6, providing a limited access four and six lane highway to the far north. To the south, U.S. Route 20 crosses through Kipton, Oberlin, and the south side of Elyria and into North Ridgeville. Further south, State Routes 18, 303 and 162 provide two-lane access across the county.

Major north-south routes include State Route 58 starting in Amherst; State Route 57 beginning in Lorain and going through Elyria and south; State Route 83 that runs south out of Avon and Avon Lake through North Ridgeville. An array of smaller two-lane state highways provides access from one area to another. Several state highways take travelers and goods from one town to another, including State Routes 82, 113, 254, 511, and 611.

There are 36.81 miles of interstate highway (including 20.7 miles of the Ohio Turnpike) and 222.39 miles of state highway in Lorain County; 269.47 miles of county roads; 327.49 miles of township roads and streets. The major federal and state routes that traverse Lorain County include:

Interstates	U.S. Highways	State Highways	
I-80/90 (Ohio Turnpike)	U.S. 6	S.R. 2	S.R. 113
I-480	U.S. 20	S.R. 10	S.R. 162
		S.R. 18	S.R. 254
		S.R. 57	S.R. 301
		S.R. 58	S.R. 511
		S.R. 82	S.R. 611
		S.R. 83	

Lorain County’s road system includes 230 bridges and 1,300 culverts. Bridges are defined as having a span in excess of ten feet while culverts span less than ten feet. Many bridges and culverts were built in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, some still standing strong and enduring

the constant load testing and integrity checks made by the Lorain County Engineer. Bridges in the past were built with the “Warren Truss” construction, made of single and double trusses with pillar supports as needed. Today, the replacement bridges are made of pre-stressed concrete and steel, using the “Warren Pony Truss” type of construction. Other bridge construction includes bascule, stone arch, steel stringer, and deck plate construction.

Lorain County engages in an aggressive program of bridge maintenance, replacing bridges as they deteriorate or repairing them to preserve a bit of history when possible and practical. While some bridges and culverts fall within municipal lines, the county engineer is responsible under Ohio law for maintaining and repairing these bridges as necessary and for inspecting and controlling access to those in need of repair and maintenance.

Numerous small airports intersperse the countryside in Lorain County. In addition to heliports at the local hospitals for use by air-medical services, small airports facilitate the movement of aircraft freely into and out of Lorain County. The larger airports include the Lorain County Regional Airport. All in all, there are 22 non-medical airstrips in Lorain County, most of them privately owned.

Railroad tracks traverse Lorain County from all directions. The Norfolk Southern runs along Lake Erie between Sandusky and Conneaut, NY terminals. The CSX line crosses the county diagonally as it hauls into Toledo, Willard, and points south, originating from Cleveland and West Virginia terminals. Other smaller lines, like the Lake Shore Railway, transport their goods into Toledo, Cleveland, and Columbus terminals via tracks in the northern half of the county south of the Norfolk Southern lines.

**Utilities**

Across Lorain County, utility services are provided by a variety of companies. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) regulates private companies that provide public utility services. Some communities provide residents with their own municipal electric system. In Lorain County, utility service providers regulated by PUCO are:

Electric Service	Natural Gas Service
Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas
Lorain-Medina Rural Electric	Northeast Ohio Natural Gas Corp.

Two companies provide the majority of electric service in Lorain County. In the northern part of the county, Ohio Edison is the predominant utility. Ohio Edison is part of First Energy. Headquartered in Akron, Ohio, First Energy provides electric service to six million customers across six states through its ten regulated distribution companies. A small sliver of residents in the upper northeast corner of Lorain County receive their electric service from The Illuminating Company, the component of First Energy that serves Cleveland and far northeast Ohio. In the southern portion of the county, the Lorain-Medina Rural Electric Cooperative provides most electric service. This service is a non-profit cooperative owned and controlled by its members; the service has been in existence since 1935. Today, it serves 16,600 customers across Ashland, Huron, Lorain, Medina, and Wayne Counties.

Columbia Gas of Ohio provides the majority of natural gas service in Lorain County. The company has been in operation since the early 1900s and provides service in 61 of Ohio’s 88 counties for a total of 1.4 million customers in the state. The Northeast Ohio Natural Gas Corp. provides service to a small sliver of customers in northwest Lorain County. The company has provided natural gas service since 1986 and primarily serves customers in northeast central Ohio.

Many municipalities maintain their own water and sewer service for residents. In the more rural areas of the county, the Rural Lorain Water Authority supplies water service. The Authority was formed in 1973 and provides service to all or part of 21 contiguous counties, four villages, and one city for a total service area of 680 square miles.

Utility providers for each jurisdiction in the county are identified below.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Electric</b>	<b>Natural Gas</b>	<b>Water /Sewer</b>
Amherst	Amherst Utility Dept.	Columbia Gas	Amherst Utility Dept.
Amherst Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columba Gas	Lorain County Water Dept.
Avon	Illuminating Company	Columbia Gas	Avon Water Dept.
Avon Lake	Illuminating Company	Columbia Gas	Avon Lake Water Dept.
Brighton Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Brownhelm Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Camden Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Carlisle Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Columbia Twp.	Lorain Medina Rural Electric	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Eaton Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Elyria	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Elyria City
Elyria Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Grafton	Grafton Utility Co.	Columbia Gas	Grafton Utility Co.
Grafton Twp.	Lorain Medina Rural Electric	Columbia Gas	Grafton Utility Co.
Henrietta Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Huntington Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Kipton	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
LaGrange	Lorain Medina Rural Electric	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
LaGrange Twp.	Lorain Medina Rural Electric	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Lorain	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Lorain City
New Russia Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
North Ridgeville	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	North Ridgeville City
Oberlin	Oberlin City Utilities	Columbia Gas	Oberlin City Utilities
Penfield Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Pittsfield Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Rochester	Lorain Medina Rural Electric	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Rochester Twp.	Lorain Medina Rural Electric	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Sheffield	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Sheffield Village
Sheffield Lake	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Sheffield Lake City
Sheffield Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Sheffield Township
South Amherst	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Rural Lorain Water Authority
Vermilion	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Vermilion City Water Dept.
Wellington	Wellington Village	Columbia Gas	Wellington Village
Wellington Twp.	Ohio Edison	Columbia Gas	Wellington Village

## Education

Lorain County residents have access to many educational institutions across the county. From primary and secondary school districts to post-secondary education, there are multiple options to meet the varied need of residents.

Twenty public school districts and four private high schools serve the residents of Lorain County, with a combined student population of approximately 52,000. Fourteen of these districts are primarily located in Lorain County while six are located in Lorain and adjacent counties. The public school districts serving Lorain County students include:

- Amherst Exempted Village School District
- Avon Local School District
- Avon Lake City School District
- Black River Local School District
- Clearview Local School District
- Columbia Local School District
- Elyria City School District
- Firelands Local School District
- Keystone Local School District
- Lorain City School District
- Mapleton Local School District
- Midview Local School District
- New London Local School District
- North Ridgeville City School District
- Oberlin City School District
- Olmstead Falls City Schools
- Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City School District
- Strongsville City School District
- Vermilion Local Schools
- Wellington Exempted Village School District

Several private schools provide additional educational opportunities to residents of Lorain County. These schools represent divers religious and philosophical backgrounds.

School	Grade Levels	Location
Christian Community School	K – 12	North Eaton
Elyria Catholic High School	9 – 12	Elyria
First Baptist Community School	K – 12	Elyria
Lake Ridge Academy	K – 12	North Ridgeville
Open Door Christian School	K – 12	Elyria
St. Jude School	K – 8	Elyria
St. Mary School	K – 8	Elyria

Lorain County residents are also served by one joint vocational school district. Lorain County Joint Vocational School is located on a 100-acre site in Oberlin, conveniently located at the intersection of State Route 58 and U.S. Route 20. The school provides career and technical

education for more than 1,000 students from thirteen school districts in Lorain County. In addition to the high school students who study at Lorain JVS, the school provides training and education opportunities to more than 4,000 adults annually through their Adult Education Center.

Within Lorain County, two colleges provide post-secondary degree options for students in the region. Oberlin College and Conservatory is a private residential college with 2,900 students. The college, founded in 1833, is known for its liberal arts and music programs. The majority of Oberlin's students are from out-of-state or abroad, giving the college and surrounding city a very diverse student population.

Lorain County Community College is a public, two-year non-residential college. The college was founded in 1964 and provides services to more than 15,000 students per year. LCCC's main campus is in Elyria; satellite-learning centers are located in downtown Elyria, Lorain, North Ridgeville, and Wellington. The college provides two-year degree and certificate training programs; through partnerships with other colleges and universities, students can also enroll in bachelors and masters program on LCCC's main and satellite campuses.

### **Healthcare Facilities**

Residents of Lorain County have access to many healthcare resources. Within the county, there are two full-service hospitals, one community hospital, and two freestanding emergency departments.

University Hospitals, which operates healthcare facilities in twelve counties across northeast Ohio, operates three hospitals in the county. UH Elyria Medical Center is the largest hospital in Lorain County. Located in Elyria, the facility has 387 patient beds and offers a comprehensive range of healthcare services. The facility has served Lorain County residents since 1908. Originally named Elyria Memorial Hospital, the facility was later known as EMH Regional Medical Center until 2014, when it became a part of University Hospitals.

University Hospitals also operates two freestanding emergency departments in Lorain County. The Avon Health Center opened in 1997 and features a freestanding 24/7 emergency department, sports medicine and rehabilitative services, and physician offices. The Amherst Health Center has served the west side of Lorain County for decades. Prior to 2011, the facility was a full-service hospital. Due to budget constraints and duplication of services, inpatient care and surgical services were no longer offered at the Amherst campus. Today, the facility offers a freestanding 24/7 emergency department as well as outpatient laboratory and imaging services.

Mercy Health operates two hospitals and numerous specialty facilities and physician offices across Lorain County. Mercy Regional Medical Center is a 338-bed, full-service hospital that provides inpatient, outpatient, and ancillary services. Prior to 2010, the facility was known as Community Regional Medical Center.

Mercy Allen Hospital is a 25-bed community hospital located in Oberlin. The facility has been providing healthcare services to central and southern Lorain County since 1907. It is designated as a critical access hospital, which is a special government designation recognizing the crucial need for healthcare services in the area.

Residential healthcare facilities are present throughout the county, including nineteen licensed nursing homes with a total of 1,927 beds and twelve residential care facilities with a total of 836 beds. These facilities provide healthcare and housing for elderly individuals, dementia patients, and others recovering from short- and long-term illnesses and injuries.

<b>Residential Facility</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Beds</b>
Amherst Manor Retirement Community	Amherst	Unavailable
Anchor Lodge Retirement Village	Lorain	Unavailable
Autumn Aegis Retirement Community	Lorain	Unavailable
Avon Oaks Caring Community	Avon	Unavailable
Center Ridge Health Campus	North Ridgeville	150 beds
Elms Retirement Village	Wellington	Unavailable
Good Samaritan Skilled Nursing and Rehab	Avon	Unavailable
Kendal at Oberlin	Oberlin	42 beds 325 residents
Keystone Point	LaGrange	121 beds
Kingston of Vermilion	Vermilion	Unavailable
Lake Pointe Health Center	Lorain	Unavailable
Life Care Center of Elyria	Elyria	Unavailable
Mercy New Life Hospice Center of St. Joseph	Lorain	13 beds
Northridge Health Center	North Ridgeville	Unavailable
Oak Hills Nursing Center	Lorain	Unavailable
Palm Crest Nursing Homes	Elyria	Unavailable
St. Mary of the Woods	Avon	30 beds 128 apartments
Towne Center Community Campus	Avon Lake	120 beds
Villa Camillus Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Columbia Station	Unavailable
Welcome Nursing Home	Oberlin	108 beds
Wesleyan Senior Living	Elyria	Unavailable
White Orchid Adult Care	Avon Lake	5 residents

The Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities operates six residential group homes for adults with developmental disabilities. These homes are located in traditional neighborhoods throughout Lorain County and provide 24-hour staffing to support residents.

### **Correctional Institutions**

Three correctional institutions are located in Lorain County: Lorain County Jail, Lorain Correctional Institution, and Grafton Correctional Institution. The Lorain County Sheriff's Office Corrections Division operates the Lorain County Jail. It is a full service jail with the capacity to house 422 male and female inmates. The facility provides a complete range of services to maintain the safety and security of individuals incarcerated in the facility, including medical staff, mental health staff, on-site laundry, kitchen facilities, maintenance and custodial staff, a chaplain, and commissary services.

Lorain Correctional Institution is operated by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. The facility is located on a 111-acre property in Grafton. Opened in 1990, the facility currently houses 1,574 inmates. The security levels for these inmates range from Minimum

Security to Maximum Security with the majority classified as Close Security. In 2013, the facility was referred to as one of the most over-crowded prisons in Ohio. The facility was designed to hold approximately 1,000 inmates but regularly operates at 135% of the capacity, a common problem among corrections facilities in the state. The facility employs 416 staff members, including 261 security staff.

Grafton Correctional Institution is located on a 1,700-acre property north of and adjacent to the Lorain Correctional Institution in Grafton. The facility is also operated by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and has been in operation since 1988; it currently houses 2,020 inmates. The security level for inmates housed in this facility ranges from Minimum Security to Close Security. The facility employs 357 total staff, of which 207 are security staff. The chart below identifies the security levels of inmates housed at both state facilities.

<b>Security Level</b>	<b>Lorain Correctional</b>	<b>Grafton Correctional</b>
1 = Minimum Security	16%	63%
2 = Medium Security	29%	38%
3 = Close Security	54%	<.01%
4 = Maximum Security	0.5%	0%
5 = Administrative Maximum	0%	0%

### **Agriculture**

Across Lorain County, the farmland is characteristic of Ohio’s finest crop production next to land consumed by urban sprawl. The county is a blended mix of traditional grain, fruit and vegetable, and livestock producing businesses, other manufacturing, and service providers. According to the U.S. Agricultural Census, 83.7% of Lorain County’s agricultural land is used for crops; 8.5% is woodland and 7.8% is devoted to other agricultural uses.

Like many other counties in Ohio, Lorain is losing farmland at a rapid rate. Between 2001 and 2007, the county lost nearly 38,000 acres of farmland to commercial and residential development. The Northeast Ohio Media Group said in February 2009 that Lorain County was at Ohio’s epicenter of agricultural land decline in an article by Damon Sims that cited the U.S. Census of Agriculture.

According to current census data, Lorain County has 768 farms that average about 160 acres in size with average gross sales of \$233,203. The average farm receives an additional \$4,760 in crop subsidies during that same time frame. This gives each acre an average production value of \$737.46. The average farmer holds over \$79,000 farm equipment to cultivate and harvest these crops.

<b>Lorain County Crop Production</b>	
Total Production	122,692 acres
Soybeans	72,316 acres
Corn	12,767 acres
Wheat	12,019 acres
Vegetables	1,301 acres
Orchards	780 acres



Most of the production farmland in Lorain County is in the southern half of the county near the villages of LaGrange, Wellington, and Kipton. Oberlin is a breath of city air amidst farmland, but as one travels toward Lake Erie, the soils turn less productive, population density increases, and urban atmosphere prevails except for a few fields, farm markets, and an occasional pasture for cattle or horses.

Lorain County is home to several major agricultural companies. Green Circle Growers is based in Oberlin and provides countless numbers of greenhouse stock items to retail centers like Home Depot across the Midwest. Other smaller growers, landscapers, and nurseries pepper the countryside, providing work and income to hundreds of county residents. Farm markets that sell seasonal produce to individuals and larger quantities to food service suppliers are common in Lorain County.

While agriculture is important to Lorain County’s economy, the number of farms is clearly decreasing, and suburbia is encroaching on the family farm as it is in many places across the country. With plentiful access to individual transportation and widely enhanced communications and utilities, families that once chose to live inside city limits are moving to the country. They are building homes on two or five or ten-acre plots, land wiped directly out of agricultural production to satisfy needs to leave the busy environment of the city. As cities and villages expand, their boundaries push into once-productive land for homes, parks, and small retail centers. With this comes the urban farmer whose interest is in recreational animals or an occasional farm market, but primarily not in traditional production agriculture.

**Business and Industry**

The business climate in Lorain County is moving in a positive direction. In spite of the economic downturn the United States faced in the late 2000s, the county has reported economic growth in fourteen of the last fifteen years. Local and regional economic development organizations such as Team Lorain County, Lorain County Growth Partnership, Team NEO, Cleveland Plus, and Great Lakes Innovation and Development Enterprise have worked diligently to foster innovation and new business growth in the county. In 2013, the county reported 4,956 active businesses; of this number, 357 were new businesses.

Between 2000 and 2007, significant changes occurred within the employment statistics of many industries in Lorain County. It was during this time that the economic downturn was felt most strongly. As demonstrated in the chart below, many industries experienced a decline in employment between 2000 and 2005. Between 2005 and 2007, however, many industries recovered their employment losses from 2005 and exceeded their records from 2000.

<b>Payroll Employment by Industry</b>			
<i><b>Industry</b></i>	<i><b>2000</b></i>	<i><b>2005</b></i>	<i><b>2007</b></i>
Manufacturing	28,748	21,245	20,191
Retail Trade	13,013	13,460	16,813
Health Care and Social Assistance	11,204	12,326	14,332
Accommodation and Food Services	7,419	8,171	8,554
Construction	6,320	5,846	8,595
Administrative and Waste Services	4,800	4,823	6,822
Other Services (Ex. Public Admin)	3,921	3,334	7,901

Wholesale Trade	2,502	2,791	3,508
Educational Services	1,852	2,244	3,669
Professional and Technical Services	1,973	2,088	4,940
Finance and Insurance	1,922	2,078	3,318
Transportation and Warehousing	1,956	1,900	3,034
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,231	1,412	2,396
Information	1,682	1,319	1,581
Management of Companies and Enterprises	420	421	598
Utilities	483	386	380

While most industries are currently meeting or exceeding employment statistics from 2000 and 2005, this is not universally true. Some industries have not recovered their losses from the early 2000s. The primary example of this is the manufacturing sector. In 2000, manufacturing firms employed 28,748 individuals. In 2007, this sector employed 20,191, a loss of nearly 30%.

As the economy of Lorain County and the State of Ohio has recovered from the economic downturn, employment statistics have continued to improve. Since 2009, the unemployment rate for Lorain County has steadily declined. As of June 2014, the unemployment rate is 7.6%. While this figure has continued to improve, Lorain County's unemployment rate is the ninth highest in Ohio. This rate is also considerably higher than the Ohio rate of 5.5% and the United States average of 6.1%.

<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>					
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Total Labor Force	159,500	155,900	155,200	155,400	155,400
Employed	143,700	141,200	142,400	142,900	142,800
Unemployed	15,800	14,700	12,800	12,600	12,600
Unemployment Rate	9.9%	9.4%	8.3%	8.1%	8.1%

While manufacturing does not employ as many people as it once did, it continues to be a critical economic force in Lorain County. Collectively, the top five employers within the manufacturing sector employ more than 4,200 people. Among the top 25 manufacturing firms, 9,441 people are employed. The top five manufacturing employers in the county are:

1. Ford Motor Company
2. Invacare Corp
3. PolyOne Corp
4. Ridge Tool Company
5. United States Steel Corp

With twenty public school districts, two colleges, and multiple private schools, education is a significant employment sector in the county. Seven education organizations are ranked among the top 25 employers in the county, providing employment for 5,059 people.

1. Lorain City Schools
2. Elyria City Schools
3. Oberlin College
4. Avon Lake City Schools
5. North Ridgeville City School District

6. Vermilion School District
7. Lorain County Community College

Healthcare is also a substantial employment sector. Mercy Regional Medical Center and UH Elyria Medical Center employ approximately 2,600 people between three hospitals, two freestanding emergency departments, and various specialty centers, outpatient clinics, and physician practices operated by each health system. The health systems are ranked number two and number four, respectively, among the top employers in Lorain County.

According to data compiled by Team Lorain County in 2010, the two 25 employers in Lorain County are:

<b>Company</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Employees</b>
Ford Motor Company Ohio Assembly Plant	Avon Lake	1,874
Mercy Regional Medical Center	Lorain	1,520
Lorain County Government	Elyria	1,355
EMH Regional Healthcare System	Elyria	1,137
Lorain City Schools	Lorain	1,022
Elyria City Schools	Elyria	947
Oberlin College	Oberlin	906
Murray Ridge Protection Center	Elyria	850
Avon Lake City Schools	Avon Lake	770
Invacare Corporation	Elyria	732
PolyOne Corporation	Avon Lake	577
City of Lorain	Lorain	538
Ridge Tool Company	Elyria	526
United States Steel Corporation Lorain Tubular	Lorain	523
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation	Grafton	500
North Ridgeville City School District	North Ridgeville	490
City of Elyria	Elyria	477
Vermilion School District	Vermilion	474
Lorain County Community College	Elyria	450
Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems	Elyria	400
Republic Engineered Products, Inc./Republic Steel	Lorain	400
TeleTech Holdings Inc.	Amherst	400
Forest City Technologies	Wellington	350
Elyria Foundry Co.	Elyria	329
Parker Hannifin Nichols Airborne Division	Elyria	329

### **County Profile Summary**

And so it goes that Lorain County graces the shores of Lake Erie with a widely diverse group of communities, setting forth a culture that combines urban and rural into a family-oriented, hustling and bustling venue for its residents and visitors. Where urban sprawl lies next to fields of grain and livestock, Lorain County brings together the best of city living and America's farmland. Never far from anything, the residents can live, work, and play all in one county and never experience boredom. On this canvas, the Lorain County Hazard Mitigation Plan intends to provide the ideas and data for a community safe from harm's way through establishing a resilient homeland through sustainable practices to diminish and limit the negative effects of disasters.