

## CONCHO COUNTY

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**Population:** 3,774 (2003 estimate)

### History:

Concho County, the northwestern-most county within the Central Texas Hills & Rivers Region, gets its name from the Concho River that flows through it. The river's name, Spanish for "shell," was derived from early Spanish explorers who traversed the area during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, finding large quantities of shells in its waters.

For thousands of years the county was inhabited by nomadic Indians, who found the Concho River to be an important food source. It was also on the banks of the Concho River that shamanistic ritual training was performed by Comanche Indian tribes. Approximately 1,500 pictographs were painted on limestone bluffs that overlook the Concho River.

In 1882 Comanche Indians were still active and raiding settlers in Concho County. Frederick Ede, of English descent, however, platted the town of Eden encouraging more settlers to establish in the area. Families from the East coast, Midwest and throughout Europe came to Concho County during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, drawn by the romance of the undiscovered American west and the lure of land. Agriculture and livestock reigned, with Concho County being the largest sheep and wool producing county in the United States up until 1988.



*Credit: Texascourthouses.com*

### Geography:

The county straddles the northern edge of the Edwards Plateau and features two major rivers: the Concho River and Colorado River, which forms the northeast county line. Concho County's elevation ranges from 1,600 feet to 2,100 feet above sea level. There two principal cities in Concho County include:

*Paint Rock* (pop. 300) is the county seat (US Highway 83) and approximately 30 miles east of San Angelo and 150 miles northwest of Austin. Some of the most noted Indian pictographs in the state are found at Paint Rock Excursions. Visitors can see approximately 1,500 markings by Comanche Indians and other nomadic groups who originally occupied the area. Other activities in Paint Rock include Ingrid's Custom Hand-Woven, Inc., where 100% sheep's wool rugs and saddle blankets are made.

*Eden* (pop. 2,561) is 19 miles east of the geodetic center of the state. It also is home to the Don Freeman Memorial Museum, which details a timeline of the county's development, from early Native American settlements through the present; a large portion of the museum is devoted to Eden's military heroes, highlighting General Ira C. Eaker, inventor of the 'artificial horizon'.

## **Things to Do:**

*Paint Rock Excursions:* Site where nearly 1,500 Indian pictographs were painted (below) by Comanche Indian tribes. Tours by appointment. Paint Rock. 325/732-4376.



*Credit: Paint Rock Excursions*

*Don Freeman Memorial Museum:* County history museum that interprets Concho County's development from Native American days and agricultural pursuits to pioneer families and county's military veterans. Eden. Open Saturday and Sunday only. 325/869-8803.

*Barrow Museum:* Interprets county's agricultural and ranch history and features farm implements, rare windmills and other memorabilia. The four-building complex is located on a working ranch and also houses arrowheads and other Native American items. Open Thursday through Sunday. Eola.

*Ingrid's Custom Hand-Woven, Inc.:* Watch pure sheep's wool woven into rugs and saddle blankets on 13 different looms. Open Monday through Friday. Paint Rock. 325/732-4370.

*Comanche Spring Game Ranch:* 5,400 acres of year-round exotic trophy hunting. Eden. 325/869-3221.

*Concho Springs Golf Course:* Nine holes overlooking scenic Brady Creek, Eden, 325/869-8180.

## **Lodging:**

Dry Hollow Hideaway, seven miles west of Paint Rock  
Duck Creek School House, Paint Rock  
Hardin Creek RV Park: Eden  
Lipan Ranch, Paint Rock  
Paint Rock Cabins, Paint Rock  
Ranchero RV Park, Eden  
Slumber Inn, Eden  
The Forman's House, Millersview

## **Shopping:**

The Eden Flower Shop gifts and interior décor, Eden  
Hoffman Mesquite Mill, Paint Rock  
Ingrid's Hand Woven Rugs, Paint Rock  
Kiser Iron Works, Paint Rock  
Once Upon a Time antiques, Eden  
The Resale Shop, Eden  
Schumann's, Eden  
Venison World, Eden

## **Dining:**

City Limits, Eden  
Lowake Steak House, Paint Rock  
Red Barron, Eden  
The River Rock Café, Paint Rock

- more -

**Festivals/Events:**

May: Sheep Shearing Contest, Paint Rock  
June: Summer Solstice at Paint Rock Excursions  
July: July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks, Paint Rock and Eden  
September: Fall Fest Celebration Fall Fest Celebration and World Class Bull Ride, Eden  
November: Concho County Hunters' Appreciation lunch, Paint Rock (First Saturday of November)  
Eden's Concho County Camouflage Cotillion (Dinner and Dance First Saturday Night of November), Eden  
December: Christmas on the Square, Eden  
Winter Solstice at Paint Rock Excursions

For more information about Concho County and the Central Texas Hills & Rivers Region, visit their website at [www.edentexas.com](http://www.edentexas.com)