Deschutes County Historical Highlights

1813 First white men to enter Central Oregon: Reed and Seton from the American Pacific Fur Company.

1843 Fremont Exploration: lead by John C. Fremont and his party which included Kit Carson, Thomas "Bad hand" Fitzpatrick, and Billy Chinnook.

1848 Oregon Territory created.

1851 Clark Party camps on the bank of the Deschutes River near the future townsite of Bend.

1859 Oregon gains Statehood.

1862 Felix Scott Jr., Marion Scott, John Craig and Robert Millican bring 900 head of Cattle into Central Oregon and spend the winter here. Reputed to be the first white men to do so.

1874 William P. Vandvert settles on the Deschutes River south of present site of Sunriver.

1877 Farewell Bend Ranch established by John Y. Todd.

1878 Tetherow Crossing built (oldest home standing in Deschutes County).

1882 Crook County formed from Wasco County.

1886 Post Office established at Farewell Bend Ranch by John Sisemore.

1894 Passage of Carey Act which allow free land to those who irrigate it, opens the high desert to development.

1900 Columbia Southern Railroad reaches the City of Shaniko. Alexander M. Drake arrives in the future town of Bend.

1901 City of Sisters platted.

1902 Name of post office changed temporally from "Bend" to "Deschutes" Millard Triplett constructs Bend’s first frame building.

1903 Bend population reaches approximately 250 people.

1908 Deschutes National Forest established.

1909 Race up the Deschutes River canyon by the Union Pacific RR and the Great Northern RR begins. Terrebonne platted as Hillman.

1910 LaPine platted as townsite. First electric light turned on in Bend and Redmond.
First attempt made to create Deschutes County from part of Crook County.

Great Northern RR (Oregon Trunk Line) reaches Bend and Redmond.

1911
First tuff stone building erected in Bend (J.I. West Building).
Civic and business leaders in Bend urge for the Preservation of trees.
First stucco structure built in Bend (Dream Theatre on Bond Street).
Mrs. S.M. Whitted of Bend becomes the first women in Oregon to vote in a local election.
Mrs. Hattie Corkett of Bend becomes the first woman in Oregon to sit on a jury.

1912
Mrs. Della W. Nichols of Laidlaw (Tumalo) becomes first woman candidate in Deschutes Co. (running for school superintendent).
Vernon A. Forbes becomes first person from Bend to be elected to a statewide office.

Jefferson County formed from part of Crook County.

1914
Shevlin-Hixon Company builds lumber mill in Bend.

1915
Redmond Potato show begins (forerunner of County Fair).
Gold discovered outside of Redmond on the Deschutes River.
Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Company builds lumber mill in Bend.

1916
*Deschutes County existence officially proclaimed by Governor Withycombe on Dec. 13th.*

1917
U.S. enters World War I on April 2nd.
17th Amendment passed by Congress allowing prohibition.

1918
First Deschutes County WWI death: Percy Steven (Bend) and Elmer Houston (Redmond).
Deschutes County Fair Association established.
WWI ends on November 11th.
Drake Park created by city bond levy.
Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Company reaches a payroll of over 1 million dollars.
Shevlin Park donated to city of Bend by Shevlin-Hixon Lumber Company.
19th Amendment to the Constitution passed giving women the right to vote (August 26th).

1920
Mail carrier service starts in Bend.
Assessing of property begins in Bend.
Deschutes County Library Board organized.
Women's Civic Improvement League builds "Day Nursery".
Bend Civic Council organized to promote community welfare and growth.

1921
First streets to be paved in Bend (Wall, Bond, Congress and Delaware Avenue).
Half of the town of Sisters burns to the ground in a fire. Next year, other half is destroyed.

1922
John Sisemore cabin from the Farewell Bend Ranch demolished.
First water fountain installed in Bend on Wall Street.
Deschutes County Library Board organized.
Bend Civic League organized to promote community welfare and growth.

1923
Over a million board feet if lumber cut by Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Company.
1924 Harmon Park in Bend established by grant from Harmon Foundation of New York City.
1925 McKenzie Highway completed.
1926 Rear of the Congress Street Apartments in Bend dynamited by moonshiners.
1927 Charles Lindberg files the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic Ocean.
1929 Stock market crashes leading to the great depression.
1931 Natural Gas Service extended into Bend.
1932 Amelia Earhart becomes first women to fly solo across the Atlantic (2nd wife of former Bend resident George P. Putnam).
1933 First Water Pageant held on Mirror Pond in Bend.
1934 6th Street in Redmond paved.
1937 Deschutes County Courthouse destroyed by mysterious fire (old 2nd Central School).
1939 Deschutes County Courthouse completed, Truman Phillips architect.
1940 Construction of a modern airport at Roberts Field begins.
1941 U.S. enters WWII after a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.
1942 U.S. leases Roberts Field for a WWII B-17 bomber and P-38 training base.
1945 WWII ends with the Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri.
1946 City of Sisters incorporated.
1947 Deschutes County Pioneer Association founded.
1948 First jet plane lands in Central Oregon at Roberts Field in Redmond.
1950 Shevlin-Hixon Lumber Company saws its last log on December 23rd.
1951 Streets in downtown Redmond changed to a one-way grid system.
1957 Three Sisters Wilderness Area established.
1958 Pomalift starts operation at Bachelor Butte.
1959 Downtown Redmond transformed into "board town" for State Centennial Celebration.

1963 COCC breaks ground for campus on Awbrey Butte. President Kennedy shot in Dallas, Texas.

1964 Astronauts arrive in Central Oregon to train at Lava Lands for moon landing.

1965 Kah-Nee-Tah resort opens for business.
Sunriver master plan developed.
Last Bend Water Pageant held.

1967 Bond and Wall Streets in Bend become a one-way grid.

1968 Neil Armstrong becomes the first man to walk on the surface of the moon.

1970 Deschutes County finishes first comprehensive plan.

1972 Pilot Butte Inn becomes first building in Deschutes County to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places
Pilot Butte Inn demolished after being declared a fire hazard.
U.S. signs the Paris peace agreement ending U.S. involvement in Vietnam War.
Oregon establishes Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and statewide planning goals.


1987 All remaining Shevlin-Hixon Lumber Mill buildings demolished.

1990 Awbrey Hall fire destroys numerous homes west of Bend.

1991 Oregon Trunk Rail Road trestle across the Deschutes River demolished.


1998 Deschutes County’s population breaks 100,000 citizens.

1999 Bend Amateur Athletic Club rehabilitated after being vacant for over 20 years.
Failed attempt by residents of the LaPine area to incorporate at as city.

2000 Oregon Trunk RR Depot in Bend moved to Old Mill District and rehabilitated as art school.

2001 City of Bend receives approval for first National Register Historic District.