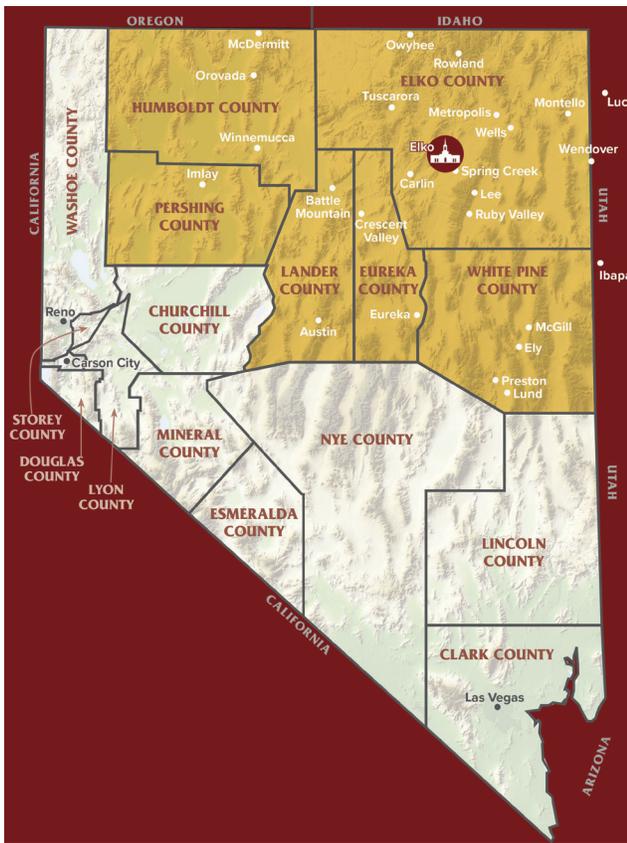


# History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Northeastern Nevada



Miners rushed across northeastern Nevada in the 1840s as quickly as possible to get to the California gold rush. Little did they know that on the land they traversed, one of the richest gold mines in the world would later sit. Today, the golden spire of a temple crowns this beautiful land.

The Elko temple district includes towns and communities in six large Nevada counties covering approximately 46.5% of the state of Nevada, or 51,389 square miles. This large geographic area is home to four stakes and one district of the Church.

Northeastern Nevada was first settled by Shoshone tribes. Many of them traveled from place to place to take advantage of warmer climates in the winter. As the population of Utah grew, farmers and ranchers moved their families to this area and began to establish agricultural operations. Ranching, farming, mining and railroads became major industries. Many support industries

followed, creating a bustling economy with plentiful employment opportunities.



1902: Lund's first meetinghouse, built of logs and lumber. (Courtesy White Pine County Historical Society)

Although beautiful, this high desert area of the Great Basin, with its rugged terrain and many miles between settlements and communities, was not easy to settle. However, the early settlers were undaunted. They were hard-working and committed to their growing communities and industries. Many were devoted to the gospel of Jesus Christ and brought their faith with them.

The earliest organized Church units in northeastern Nevada began in White Pine County, in the communities of Lund, Preston and Georgetown. Apostles and the Presiding Bishop visited the area, followed by the stake president from St. George, Utah, who was sent to organize the Church in 1898.

Other areas — like Wells, Metropolis, McGill and Montello — were under the jurisdiction of the North Weber Stake from Ogden, Utah, because of the ease of railroad travel. The Elko, Winnemucca and Carlin Church units were organized by the California Mission. The Wendover Branch was founded by the Tooele Utah Stake.

The early Saints settling in their respective communities helped the Church grow, including finding places to meet and worship. As they were getting started, they met in peoples' homes, an opera house, a mortuary, an amusement hall, a community church, an Elks hall and a Knights of Pythias hall.

As the number of Saints grew, they wished to have their own places in which to meet. They worked hard to raise funds for buildings, such as the beautiful Ely Tabernacle.

In May of 1928, the Elko home where members had been meeting was sold and moved to make room for a new brick church building. The day after the home was moved, ward members began construction. A local newspaper reported, "The busiest place in Elko after 6 o'clock in the evening is the site for the new Mormon church." By mid-September of the same year, the Saints were meeting in their new building.

Many northeastern Nevada communities became part of the new Nevada Stake based in Ely, the 96th stake in the Church, in September of 1926. Elko became part of the Nevada Stake in 1937.



Dedication of the first chapel in Winnemucca, Nov. 12, 1929.  
Dedicated by Church President Heber J. Grant.  
*(Courtesy Kenneth Lords)*

May 31, 1942, was a significant historical day. On this day, Apostle Joseph F. Merrill divided the Nevada Stake, creating the Humboldt Stake based in Elko and named after the Humboldt River flowing through the area. The Humboldt Stake was the 143rd stake created in the Church. The Nevada Stake later became known as the Ely Nevada Stake.

For many years the Humboldt Stake included communities from Montello to Orovada, Winnemucca to Austin, and Owyhee to Eureka, with wards and branches in between. Church leaders traveled great distances to serve the Saints. The Humboldt Stake was renamed the Elko Nevada Stake on Jan. 6, 1974.

The Winnemucca Nevada Stake was created on Oct. 11, 1981, a division from the Elko Nevada Stake. On March 19, 1995, the Elko Nevada Stake was divided into the Elko Nevada East and Elko Nevada West Stakes. The Wendover Ward became a district of the Salt Lake City West Mission on Jan. 4, 1998.

Today's Saints continue as those who came before, with a love for others and a commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Focusing on family history, they manifest their dedication by traveling many miles to serve, volunteer and worship in surrounding temples.

President Russell M. Nelson's announcement on April 24, 2021, that a temple would be built in Elko was an answer to many prayers. What joy that announcement brought to the members of northeastern Nevada, as well as to many who once lived in the area!

Ground was broken for the Elko Nevada Temple by Elder Paul P. Pieper on May 7, 2023. A beautiful house of the Lord has since risen. The temple will be dedicated on Oct. 12, 2025, by Elder Gary E. Stevenson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

As the Church has grown in the area, the Saints of northeastern Nevada have gradually separated into their various congregations. They are now joining together again in one temple district — to worship, serve and unite families for eternity in the house of the Lord. They look forward to serving together in the Elko Nevada Temple.

