

Here We GROW Again

By Steve H. Murdock

Texas has shown continued rapid growth since 2000, with the population increasing from 20.9 million as of April 1, 2000, to 23.5 million as of July 1, 2006. This increase of nearly 2.7 million or 12.7 percent from 2000 to 2006 is a larger numerical increase than for any other state and a growth rate roughly twice the nation's 6.4 percent growth rate.

If this trend continues, Texas is likely to add another 3.6 to 4.0 million people by 2010, boosting its total population to more than 25 million. The state's remarkable growth has fueled rapid growth in Texas real estate markets since 2000, particularly in urban and suburban areas.

Recently released Census data show that this population growth has also made Texas cities among the most rapidly growing markets in the entire nation. Texas has three of the country's ten largest cities. Houston ranks fourth with a population of more than 2.1 million as of July 1, 2006, San Antonio is seventh with nearly 1.3 million and Dallas ninth at roughly 1.2 million.

More impressively, Texas had five of the ten cities with the largest numerical increases from 2005 to 2006. No other state had more than one. Phoenix was first with an increase of more than 43,000; San Antonio was second with more than 33,000; Fort Worth was third with more than 30,000; Houston was fourth with roughly 26,500; Austin was sixth with roughly 18,600; and Dallas was eighth with nearly 17,000.

In percentage terms, the 2005–2006 data show just how rapid growth has been in some Texas cities. Among cities of more than 100,000 persons, McKinney was the second fastest-growing city in the nation, increasing by 11.1 percent, behind North Las Vegas with an 11.9 percent increase. McKinney was the fastest-growing city in its size category in the

nation for the entire 2000–2006 period, with a 97.6 percent increase (from 54,409 in 2000 to 107,530 in 2006).

Other Texas cities in the 100,000+ category that made the 20 fastest-growing in the nation (in percentage terms) from 2005 to 2006 included Grand Prairie, with an increase of 6.6 percent (to 153,812), Denton, up 5.1 percent (to 109,561) and Fort Worth, up 4.8 percent (to 653,320). Fort Worth's increase was particularly notable because no other city of its size showed such a large increase.

When population changes for all Texas towns and cities are examined, the pervasive nature of population growth in Texas places becomes evident. Of the 1,204 Texas places with 2005 and 2006 population values, 78.2 percent (942) showed population increases, 4.6 percent (about 55) showed no population change and 17.2 percent (207) showed declines. Of the 1,189 places with both 2000 and 2006 population values, 71.3 percent (848) showed population increases from 2000 to 2006, 0.6 percent (7) showed neither increases nor decreases in population and 28.1 percent (334) showed population declines.

The largest numerical increases from 2005 to 2006 were in the largest places. San Antonio led with an increase of more than 33,000, followed by Fort Worth with more than 30,000, and Houston with nearly 27,000. The largest declines were in Beaumont, with an estimated loss of 1,600, Port Arthur with 838, Copperas Cove with 837, and Gatesville with 404.

For the 2000 to 2006 period, numerical increases were largest in Houston (nearly 191,000), San Antonio (more than 152,000) and Fort Worth (nearly 119,000).

The largest declines were in Wichita Falls, with a decrease of 4,800, Beaumont with 4,000, and Port Arthur, 2,000. Overall, however, the data show that growth has far outpaced decline. Over 200 Texas towns and cities increased by at least 1,000 persons from 2000 to 2006. Only ten lost 1,000 people or more.

In percentage terms, the fastest growing places from 2000 to 2006 were Hutto, which grew by 666 percent, Fate (645 percent), Little Elm (484 percent), Murphy (313 percent) and Kyle (289 percent). Those places with the largest percentage declines are largely in the Panhandle and West Texas regions and included Aspermont, with a decrease of nearly 17 percent, and Morton, Pecos and Whiteface, each of which decreased by roughly 15 percent.

Population growth in certain areas of Texas has been extensive, reflecting the total growth in the state. Although parts of the Panhandle and West Texas continue to struggle to maintain their populations, the data for other places show that Texas is increasingly dominating national patterns of population growth. The state's real estate markets are likewise expanding to keep pace. ♦

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THE TAKEAWAY

Texas' population had a larger numerical increase from 2000 to 2006 than any other state, and a growth rate (12.7 percent) twice that of the nation. Houston, San Antonio and Fort Worth had the largest increases. Only ten Texas towns lost 1,000 people or more.