

Census Finds Fast Growth in Arizona and South Dakota

June Kronholz reports on the fastest-growing counties.
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The biggest population growth continues to be in the southwestern corner of the U.S., the Census Bureau reports today in a new survey of counties. But some out-of-the-way places are showing the biggest percentage gains like Kendall County, Ill., and Lincoln County, S.D.

The Census Bureau says Maricopa County, Ariz., which includes Phoenix, gained 696,000 people between 2000 and 2006, the biggest increase in the nation. Maricopa, with a population of 3.8 million, added about 3 million people since 1970. Harris County, Texas, which includes Houston, was second with 486,000 new residents and Riverside County, Calif., was third with 481,000.

Only the house-by-house decennial census is used in apportioning congressional seats, but the Census Bureau's yearly population surveys give a good hint where population trends and apportionment are continuing to go. Of the 10 counties with the biggest numerical gains, eight are in Arizona, California, Texas and Nevada. The other two are Gwinnett County, Ga., near Atlanta, and Will County, Ill., near Chicago.

But five of the fastest growing counties those with the biggest percentage increases are in the southeast, including counties in Florida, Virginia and Georgia. Flagler County, Fla., grew by 67% and Kendall, outside Chicago, grew 62%. Lincoln grew 46%—to 35,239.

Chattahoochee County, Ga., was the fastest-growing between 2005 and 2006. It's the home of Fort Benning, a staging area for the Iraq war.

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Growth in Will county has just begun. It is not just Will County but the surrounding counties that are growing. With the extension of I-355 the three expressway corridors of I-80, I-355 and I-55 will continue their explosive growth. I am running for Trustee at Joliet Junior College. I believe that growth and how to pay/plan for it is one of the biggest issues facing JJC and other taxing bodies in the Will County area. Schools and park districts have approached municipalities for 'impact fees' but the towns dislike 'impact fees' because they put them at a disadvantage to attract new developments and growth against neighboring towns who do not.

I'd advocate a regional or state wide impact fee on new development to help pay for growth. Then one town or village would not be at a disadvantage to the next and the growth of the region can be controlled.

Scott Leturno

Candidate for Trustee at Joliet Junior College

Comment by Scott Leturno – March 26, 2007 at 11:11 pm

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