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Robert Bernstein
Public Information Office
301-763-3030/763-3762 (fax)
301-457-1037 (TDD)
e-mail: <pio@census.gov>
CB07-51

[Detailed Tables and Maps](#)
[State Contacts](#)

50 Fastest-Growing Metro Areas Concentrated in West and South

According to population estimates released today for all metro areas by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Atlanta metro area gained 890,000 residents from April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2006, the largest numerical gain of the nation's 361 metro areas.

This Georgia metro area (Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta) was the nation's ninth largest as of July 1, 2006 with a population of 5.1 million. Overall, six metro areas each gained at least 500,000 people between 2000 and 2006.

Dallas-Fort Worth had the second largest numeric increase at 842,000, and totaled about 6 million people. Houston (with an increase of 825,000), Phoenix (787,000) and Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif. (771,000) rounded out the top five metro area gainers over the time period. The five metro areas experiencing the greatest numeric change between 2000 and 2006 were in the South or West. (See Table 1 [Excel](#) | [PDF](#).)

The Northeast metro area with the greatest numeric change between 2000 and 2006 was New York (seventh overall nationally), while the Midwest metro area with the greatest numeric change over the same period was Chicago (10th overall nationally).

New York was the most populous metro area on July 1, 2006, with 18.8 million people, followed by Los Angeles (13 million) and Chicago (9.5 million). Fourteen metro areas had populations of 4 million or more. (See Table 2 [Excel](#) | [PDF](#).)

The New Orleans metro area experienced the greatest numeric loss from April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2006, declining 292,000 since 2000 to 1 million on July 1, 2006. It was followed by Pittsburgh (a loss of 60,000) and Cleveland (a loss of 34,000). The New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, La., metro area also had the biggest percentage loss during the same time period at 22.2 percent. It was followed by Gulfport-Biloxi, Miss. (a loss of 7.4 percent) and Weirton-Steubenville, W.Va.-Ohio (a loss of 5.2 percent).

St. George, in the southwestern part of Utah, was the fastest-growing metro area between 2000 and 2006, with a growth of 39.8 percent to total 126,000 on July 1, 2006. Rounding out the top five were Greeley, Colo. (31 percent); Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Fla. (29.6 percent); Bend, Ore. (29.3 percent); and Las Vegas (29.2 percent). (See Table 3 [Excel](#) | [PDF](#).)

The 50 fastest-growing metro areas were almost evenly distributed between just two regions — 23 in the West and 25 in the South. One metro area, Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, Ark.-Mo., straddled both the South and Midwest regions. Sioux Falls, S.D., was

the lone metro area among the top 50 fastest-growing located completely in the Midwest. Of the 50 fastest-growing metro areas, none were in the Northeast. York-Hanover, Pa., the fastest-growing metro area in the Northeast, ranked 95th.

10 U.S. Metro Areas With Highest Numerical Growth: April 1, 2000-July 1, 2006

Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, Ga.

890,211

Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas

842,449

Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, Texas

824,547

Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz.

787,306

Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif.

771,314

Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, Calif.

584,510

New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, N.Y.-N.J.-Pa.

495,154

Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va.

494,220

Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, Fla.

455,869

Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, Ill.-Ind.-Wis.

407,133

10 Fastest-Growing U.S. Metro Areas: April 1, 2000- July 1, 2006

St. George, Utah

39.8%

Greeley, Colo.

31.0%

Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Fla.

29.6%

Bend, Ore.

29.3%

Las Vegas-Paradise, Nev.

29.2%

Provo-Orem, Utah

25.9%

Naples-Marco Island, Fla.

25.2%

Raleigh-Cary, N.C.

24.8%

Gainesville, Ga.

24.4%

Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz.

24.2%

More than four-fifths of all U.S. metro areas (305 out of 361) had a larger population on July 1, 2006, than on April 1, 2000. The 50 fastest-growing metro areas between April 1, 2000, and July 1, 2006, all grew by at least 13.8 percent, which is more than double the nation's total population gain of 6.4 percent during the same time period. As of July

1, 2006, the 361 metro areas in the United States contained 249.2 million people — 83.2 percent of the nation's population.

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The Census Bureau is releasing population estimates of metro and micro areas— comprising one or more counties and collectively known as core-based statistical areas (CBSAs). All geographic boundaries for the July 1, 2006, population estimates series are defined as of Jan. 1, 2006. The Office of Management and Budget's statistical area definitions (for metropolitan, micropolitan, and combined statistical areas, as well as metropolitan divisions) are those issued by that agency in December 2005. Some metro area titles are abbreviated in the text of the press release. Full titles are shown in the tables.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau | Public Information Office | Last Revised: August 09, 2007
<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/009865.html>