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My, How You've Grown

Texas Nears 20 Million Mark

By Steve H. Murdock

Texas is on the verge of a record-setting population explosion. More new Texans took up residence in the state during the year ending July 1, 1998, than any other year this decade. That sets the stage for what could send the 1990s into the record books as the decade with the largest numerical increase—ever.

In July 1998, Texas had nearly 19.8 million residents—nearly 374,000 more than lived here one year earlier. Only California added more people (484,000). Texas gained substantially more than did Florida (239,000).

Previously, the 1996-97 year had experienced the biggest growth of the decade. Roughly 353,000 joined the Texas population that year. As important as the level of growth is the balance in the sources of such growth.

Domestic migration—people moving into the area from outside the state—was responsible for 21.1 percent—about 79,000 persons—of the total 1997-98 population growth. International immigration accounted for 26.8 percent and natural increase (births minus deaths) for 52.1 percent.

Since the last census on April 1, 1990, Texas has added nearly 2.8 million, again second only to California with nearly 2.9 million. During the 1990s, Texas has had a 16.3 percent growth rate, the eighth fastest in the nation. Nevada has grown the most with a 45.4 percent increase.

Put another way, the nearly 2.8 million new Texans is roughly equivalent to adding another Houston and another Dallas (1990 populations) to the state's total. The latest numbers suggest that under virtually any reasonable scenario the state will have 20 million residents by 2000.

The 1970s currently hold the record for the most people added in a single decade—slightly more than three million. Texas only needs to add 259,000 to break that record.

Texas population growth has been relatively balanced. Since April 1, 1990, 56.7 percent came from natural increase. Another 23.6 percent was the result of immigration from other countries. Other states contributed 19.7 percent. While Texas has been adding new residents by natural increase, international immigration and domestic immigration, other populous states have been hurt by the departure of large numbers.

Recent estimates suggest Texas will enter the 21st Century as a rapidly growing state with balanced sources of population growth. Although the characteristics of persons being added must be considered carefully when determining real estate implications, Texas has the ingredients to continue expanding its real estate market for years to come. □

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