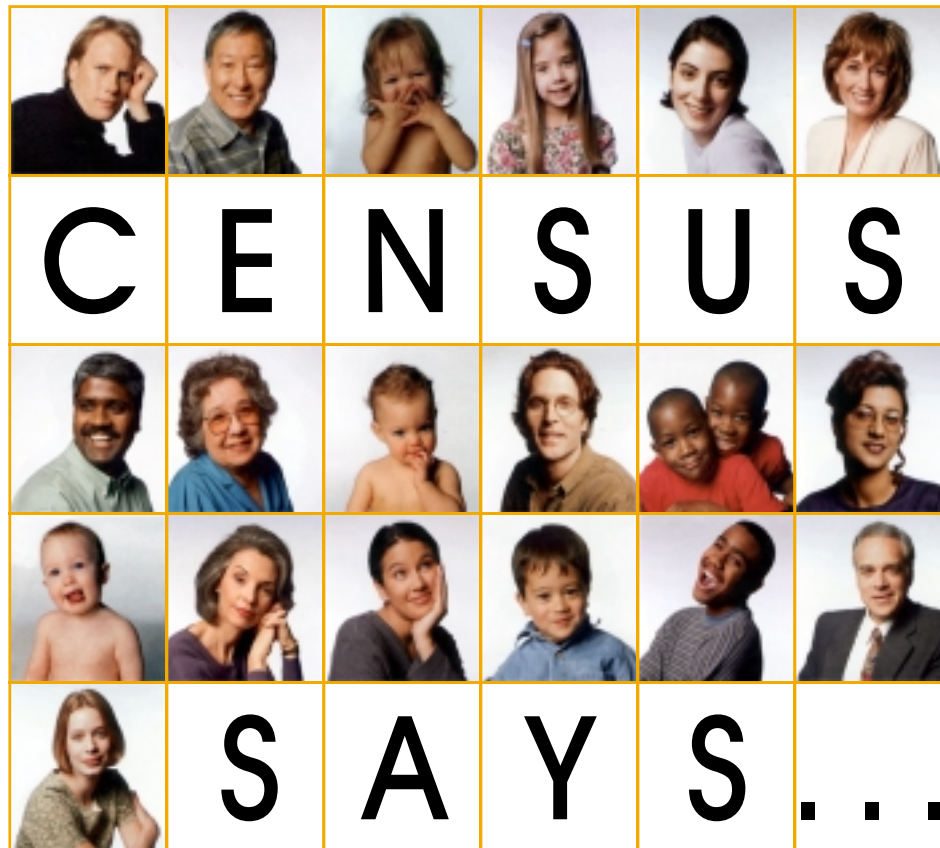


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By Steve H. Murdock

Texas is growing faster than experts predicted. The 2000 Census counted more than 20.8 million Texans, a ten-year increase of 22.8 percent. There are 500,000 more state residents than the U.S. Census Bureau thought there would be.

There were other Census surprises as well. The nation's 281.4 million population is seven million higher than anticipated. From 1990 to 2000, the United States grew 13.2 percent. In fact, resident population counts showed that nearly all states had somewhat higher growth than had been estimated. Only the District of Columbia lost population, about 35,000.

The 3.8 million Texas increase was the largest of any decade in Texas history. The population growth rate was the highest since the 1970s.

One of every eight persons added to the U.S. population during the decade was a Texan. Enough new Texans were added to duplicate the 1990 populations

of Houston, Dallas and San Antonio.

Twenty-four states have 2000 population totals less than the number of new Texans. Only California's 4.1 million increase was more. The new California total is nearly 33.9 million.

According to the new Census, other states with more than eight million inhabitants are New York, with nearly 19 million; Florida, 16 million; Illinois, 12.4 million; Pennsylvania, 12.3 million; Ohio, 11.4 million; Michigan, 9.9 million; New Jersey, 8.4 million; Georgia, 8.2 million; and North Carolina, 8 million.

The Texas growth rate was eighth fastest nationwide. Nevada's 66.3 percent increase was the fastest. Arizona followed with 40 percent; Colorado had a ten-year growth of 30.6 percent.

Wyoming continues to have the fewest people—roughly 494,000. Vermont's 609,000 and Alaska's 627,000 follow. North Dakota and West Virginia grew the slowest. The former added only 3,400 people and the latter fewer than

15,000 or 0.5 and 0.8 percent, respectively.

Overall, the ten largest states contained 54 percent of the nation's population in 2000 and accounted for 52 percent of the 1990–2000 growth.

Census 2000 affirms Texas' position as a major growth center and that the United States is growing more rapidly than most developed countries. Data yet to come will show which Texas regions are growing most rapidly and where real estate markets offer the greatest promise for expansion.

Editor's note: First statewide Census 2000 results were released in December. County, city and smaller area data were not available at press time. ♣

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