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Recently released population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show the nation's population increased from 281.4 million in April 2000 to 296.4 million in July 2005, a numerical increase of 15 million and a percentage increase of 5.3 percent. The estimates show a total Texas population of almost 22.9 million as of July 2005, up more than two million or 9.6 percent since April 2000 when the state population was nearly 20.9 million.

Texas' numerical increase was second only to California's, which increased 2.3 million. Florida was third in numerical growth adding roughly 1.8 million, followed by Georgia's increase of some 900,000 and Arizona's 800,000.

In percentage terms, Texas' rate of increase lagged Nevada (20.8 percent), Arizona (15.8 percent), Florida (11.3 percent), Georgia (10.8 percent), Utah (10.6 percent) and Idaho (10.4 percent). Texas, the second fastest growing state in numerical terms and the eighth fastest in percentage terms in the 1990s, has been the second fastest growing in numerical terms and seventh fastest growing in percentage terms since 2000. Texas' pattern of both rapid absolute and relative growth is continuing.

Although Texas' post-2000 population growth is similar in magnitude to that in earlier decades, the growth has had somewhat different sources. In the 1990s, about 50 percent of Texas' population growth of nearly 3.9 million resulted from natural increase (more births than deaths), 30 percent was from domestic migration from other states and about 20 percent came from immigration from other nations.

From 2000 to 2005, about 58 percent was natural increase, about 9 percent domestic migration and 33 percent immigration from other nations. Natural increase accounted for some 190,000 a year in the 1990s and about 220,000 per year since 1999. Domestic migration was nearly 120,000 per year in the 1990s and a little over 36,000 per year from 2000 to 2005. Immigration was roughly 77,000 per year in the 1990s and averaged about 126,000 per year from 2000 to 2005.

Domestic migrants are what demographers refer to as "positively selected." That means they tend to have higher average levels of education and income than persons in the areas to which the migrants move. They tend to substantially increase the markets for various goods and services, including real estate.

Immigrants, on the other hand (today and historically), tend to be a bimodal group. Some have high levels of education and relatively high-paying jobs; however, a much larger proportion have relatively low levels of education and take relatively low-paying jobs. Immigrants have smaller effects on economic growth. Thus, the growth of the post-

2000 period has been less supportive of economic growth.

Although the post-2000 period has produced a different kind of rapid growth than existed in the 1990s, recent estimates suggest a trend toward greater proportions of population attributable to domestic migration.

Year-to-year patterns of change from 2000 to 2005 show that domestic migration was reduced to only 23,000 from 2002 to 2003 (accounting for only 6 percent of total population growth) and increased to only 29,000 from 2003 to 2004 (only 8 percent of total population growth). However, in 2004–05 nearly 52,000 in domestic migration accounted for 13 percent of the state's growth. If this trend continues, domestic migration may show renewed importance with positive impacts on the Texas economy.

If the 2000–05 trends continue into 2010, Texas will again increase its population by between 2.8 and three million. This would be a slower rate of growth than in the 1990s but would produce as large a numerical increase as at any time in Texas history.

If this growth is accompanied by a significant component of domestic migration, the Texas population increase is likely to provide a larger and increasingly advantaged market for real estate. ♣

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