A Reprint from Tierra Grande

Big State, Big Cities, Big Growth

By Steve H. Murdock



exas has some of the largest, fastest-growing cities in the nation. In fact, three of the top ten largest U.S. cities in 2005 were in Texas.

Texas Cities in Top Ten Most Populated U.S. Metros, 2005

- 4 Houston more than two million
- 7 San Antonio nearly 1.3 million and
- 9 Dallas more than 1.2 million

San Antonio had been the eighth largest U.S. city a year earlier. But an additional 21,400 new residents coupled with San Diego's loss of nearly 8,300 moved the Alamo City up one spot.

No doubt about it. Populations in big Texas cities are burgeoning.

In the five years ending in 2005, Texas was the only state to have more than one city among the fastest-growing in America, and it had four.

Texas Cities Among Fastest-Growing in United States, 2000–05

- 4 San Antonio up more than 105,000
- 5 Fort Worth 82,700 more
- 7 Houston nearly 60,000 more
- 10 El Paso almost 35,000 more

Only Los Angeles (up some 150,300 to 3.8 million); Phoenix (up nearly 140,000 to 1.5 million) and New York (up more than 134,500 to 8.1 million) added more new residents than San Antonio and Fort Worth.

Looking at 2000–05 population growth by percentage makes little difference in the overall picture. Texas metros still dominate the nation.

U.S. Rankings by Percentage Growth, 2000-05

- 1 Fort Worth up 15.3 percent
- 4 San Antonio 9.1 percent higher
- 7 El Paso 6.2 percent higher
- 10 Austin up 4.6 percent



Las Vegas — billed as the fastest-growing city in America for many years — was second with a 13.6 percent gain. Arizona was the only other state with more than one city in the top ten fastest-growing cities by percentage (No. 3 Phoenix, 10.6 percent; No. 8 Tucson, 5.8 percent).

In the past year, Texas cities appear to have been growing even faster.

U.S. Big City Population Gains, 2004-05

- 2 San Antonio, up more than 21,400;
- 3 Fort Worth added 21,000;
- 7 Austin increased more than 9,500; and
- 10 El Paso welcomed more than 6,800.

Only Phoenix, which added nearly 44,500, could claim more new residents than the big Texas cities during the year.

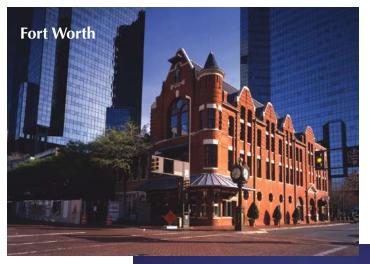
In percentage growth for the last year, Texas once again dominated as the only state with more than one city on the list.

U.S. Population Gain by Percent, 2004-05

- Fort Worth up 3.5 percent,
- 5 San Antonio up 1.7 percent,
- 6 Austin up 1.4 percent and
- 7 El Paso up 1.2 percent.

For the record, here are the ten largest Texas cities, ranked by population:

- 1 Houston —more than two million;
- 2 San Antonio nearly 1.3 million;
- 3 Dallas more than 1.2 million;
- 4 Austin more than 690,000;
- 5 Fort Worth more than 624,000;
- 6 El Paso nearly 599,000;
- 7 Arlington nearly 363,000;
- 8 Corpus Christi more than 283,000;
- 9 Plano more than 250,000; and
- 10 Lubbock nearly 210,000.



Of the 1,203 Texas "places" reported by the census in 2005, 70 percent had grown in the past five years. Another 3.5 percent remained the same, and 26.5 percent posted population declines.

Towns and cities in the Beaumont– Port Arthur area, those in rural areas and those in West Texas and the Panhandle in particular

found it difficult to maintain their populations.

Other Fast-Growing Texas Metros, 2000-05

McKinney — up nearly 42,200

Frisco — plus 37,100

Laredo — up more than 31,100

Austin — up more than 30,400

Arlington — nearly 30,000 higher

Plano — almost 28,100 more

Almost hidden in the head count are some smaller Texas cities with percentage population increases that can only be described as phenomenal.

Fast-Growing Small Texas Communities, 2000-05

- 1 Hutto 492 percent
- 2 Fate 406 percent
- 3 Little Elm 365 percent
- 4 Murphy 255 percent
- 5 Kyle 233 percent
- 6 Selma 175 percent
- 7 Cibolo 155 percent
- 8 Bee Cave 135 percent
- 9 Roman Forest 133 percent
- 10 Leander 129 percent
- 11 Frisco 110 percent

Any talk about population gains invariably raises questions about the other end of the spectrum — those cities that lost population.

Largest Numerical Declines in Texas, 2000-05

- 1 Wichita Falls nearly 4,400
- Beaumont almost 1,900
- 3 Pecos 1,250

Dallas

- 4 Abilene nearly 1,200
- 5 Pampa more than 1,100
- 6 Port Arthur nearly 1,100
- 7 Farmers Branch more than 1,000
- 8 Borger almost 1,000.

In percentage terms, population growth in several small Texas communities is nothing short of remarkable.

Fastest-Growing Texas Suburban Towns, Cities, 2004-05

- 1 Fate 63.4 percent
- 2 Manor 61.3 percent
- 3 Westworth Village 36.3 percent
- 4 Cibolo 33.8 percent
- 5 Hutto —21.6 percent

In percentage terms, some of the big population losers were among some of Texas' smaller places. Asperment lost most — 18.6 percent. Pecos was second with 13.2 percent. Morton, Throckmorton and Woodson all lost 12.8 percent. White Face declined by 12.5 percent.

There also were losers among small towns and cities. Kempner lost 4.9 percent, Lampa-



sas 4.8 percent, Lometa 4.7 percent, Texhoma 3.7 percent and Menard 3.5 percent.

Texas population patterns show the state's large cities are not just growing rapidly, but even those such as Austin, which struggled during the post-2001 recession, have recovered.

While such large U.S. cities as Detroit, Philadelphia and Chicago lost population in the first five years of this decade, big Texas cities attracted new residents by the thousands and drove real estate markets to record levels.

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THE TAKEAWAY

Texas has three cities among the nation's ten largest. But it is the percentage growth among the state's small cities and communities that elicits exclamations of "remarkable" or "phenomenal."



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