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# Fort Worth, 3 other Texas cities in top 10 of growth list

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By any measuring stick, Texas cities are leading the way in population growth.

U.S. Census data released Thursday shows four Texas cities — Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and Austin — in the Top 10 in actual population gain from July 1, 2006, to July 1, 2007. Only one other state, North Carolina with Charlotte and Raleigh, had more than one city in the Top 10.

State demographer Karl Eschbach said Texas continues to create jobs and has a strong economy compared to the rest of the nation. He noted that some states such as Florida and Arizona that were competing with Texas for population have seen their economies cool because of the real estate slump.

The continued growth of Fort Worth and Austin caught Eschbach's eye.

"They are both core metropolitan cities that are attractive to in-migrating middle-class populations," Eschbach said. "A lot of major cities, including both Houston and Dallas, have immigrants replacing U.S.-born citizens."

## Texas' big gain

Eschbach notes that Texas gained an estimated 3 million people from 2000 to 2007, the most of any state. The Texas State Data Center, which Eschbach leads, estimated the Texas population at 23,904,380 in 2007. The data center projects the state will gain another 19 million in population by 2040 for a total of 43,581,928 if growth continues at same rate it did from 2000 to 2004.

In the Metroplex, he projects Fort Worth and Arlington to gain another 2.7 million in population by 2040 and Dallas-Plano-Irving to see an increase of 6.4 million by 2040.

"If you look at our projections, I don't necessarily see any short-term caps on growth," Eschbach said.

Killeen, with a 6.5 percent jump was sixth and Denton, with a 4.7 percent increase. was 10th on the list of cities with top percentage growth. Fort Worth's population grew by 4.5 percent, which was good enough for 11th. But Fort Worth was the largest U.S. city to crack the Top 20.

"As they get bigger, cities growth rates tend to slow down," Eschbach said. "I'd say I expect that to eventually happen for Fort Worth but I don't see any reason why Fort Worth can't sustain these current growth rates for some time."

## New Orleans rebounds

The latest census estimates show New Orleans residents steadily returning to the Crescent City following Hurricane Katrina.

With a gain of 28,926, New Orleans' population had rebounded to an estimated 239,124 by July 1, 2007. That's still well short of the 453,726 that lived in New Orleans on July 1, 2005, before Hurricane Katrina devastated the city on Aug. 29, 2005.

"They still have lots of problems of houses without electricity or areas where schools haven't reopened," said Louisiana Tech demographer Caroline Leung. "People are coming back but how fast they can come back is still in question. A lot of the people are still in Texas in the Houston area. And I think a lot of people who are coming back aren't going to New Orleans, they're settling somewhere between Baton Rouge and New Orleans."

Leung said New Orleans could eventually come close to a population of 400,000 but she doesn't believe it will ever reach its pre-Katrina population.

"New Orleans was losing population before the storm," she said. "People were leaving for the suburbs long before Katrina hit."

A University of New Orleans study released this week found that 62 percent of flooded homes in New Orleans and St. Bernard Parish were being renovated or repairs had been completed.

The survey was conducted in May. A similar survey from early 2007 found that 35 percent of flooded homes were being renovated.

New Orleans' 13.8 percent population jump was the largest percentage increase in the U.S. from July 1, 2006 to July 1, 2007. McKinney, northeast of Dallas, was third with an 8 percent jump.

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#### **City population Percentage growth**

1. New Orleans (13.8 percent)
2. Victorville, Calif. (9.5 percent)
3. McKinney (8 percent)
4. North Las Vegas, Nev. (7.4 percent)
5. Cary, N.C. (7.3 percent)
6. Killeen (6.5 percent)
7. Port St. Lucie, Fla. (6.3 percent)
8. Gilbert, Ariz., (5.8 percent)
9. Clarksville, Tenn. (4.8 percent)
- 10. Denton (4.7 percent)**
- 11. Fort Worth (4.5 percent)**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates from July 1, 2006, to July 1, 2007