

Demographic Trends of Smaller Communities

April 6, 2001, St. Simons Island, GA - Non-metropolitan population growth rates have rebounded from the low levels of the 1980s. Population growth in the 1990s was widespread geographically and occurred in counties with a variety of economic specializations. The 2000 Census found that non-metropolitan areas of the United States contained 56.1 million residents, a gain of 5.6 million since April of 1990. In all, 1,702 of the 2,303 non-metropolitan counties grew between 1990 and 2000. Most of the growth came from net migration rather than from the natural increase (births minus deaths) that has traditionally caused non-metropolitan growth. Fueled by an influx of migrants from urban areas and fewer people leaving, rural gains since 1990 are near record levels, a sharp reversal of the trend of the 1980s.

Welcome:

Ed Cunningham, Chairman of the Southern Municipal Conference

Moderator:

Andrew Harris, President, Georgia Municipal Association

Speaker:

Ken Johnson, Ph.D., Demographer and Professor of Sociology, Loyola University-Chicago

Co-Sponsor:

The Southern Municipal Conference

Factoids:

"This growth in the 1990s is only the second period of widespread nonmetropolitan growth in 80 years." *Ken Johnson, Professor, Loyola University-Chicago*

"Nonmetropolitan areas - those without an urban center of 50,000 or more - gained 5.2 million additional residents (10.3 percent) between April 1990 and April 2000. In contrast, such areas grew by only 1.3 million during the 1980s." *Ken Johnson, Professor, Loyola University-Chicago*

"The rate of population increase in rural areas since 1990 is nearly four times as great as that during the 1980s. Almost 74 percent of the 2,303 rural counties are now growing, compared to only 45 percent during the 1980s." *Ken Johnson, Professor, Loyola University-Chicago*

"Rural women have been bearing fewer children, influenced by the trends that affected urban women: rising levels of education, paid employment outside the home and delayed marriage." *Ken Johnson, The Rural Rebound, Population Reference Bureau, August 1999*

In Attendance:

Over 50 Representatives from:

Alabama

Alabama League of Municipalities

City of Clanton

City of Rainbow

Arkansas

Arkansas Municipal League

City of Clarksville

Florida

Florida League of Cities

City of Gainesville

City of Lake Alfred

City of Palatta

City of Parkland

City of South Bay

City of Wilton Manors

Georgia

Georgia Municipal Association

City of Alma

City of Columbus

City of Commerce

City of Lumpkin

City of Monticello

City of Norcross

City of Savannah

City of Toccoa

Kentucky

Kentucky League of Cities

City of Fort Mitchell

City of Williamsburg

Louisiana

Louisiana Municipal Association

Mississippi

Mississippi Municipal League

City of Belzoni

North Carolina

North Carolina Municipal League

Hand Made in America

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Municipal League

City of Greenwood

Southern Municipal Conference

Tennessee

Tennessee Municipal League

Texas

Texas Municipal League

City of Groesbeck

Virginia

Virginia Municipal League

City of Danville

Washington, D.C.

National League of Cities

National Center for Small Communities