

Population, Sprawl and Immigration Trends in Eighth District Metro Areas Vary Widely

By Michael R. Pakko and Howard J. Wall

Recently, the Census Bureau released estimates of metro-area populations as of July 1, 2006. The latest data are consistent with the usual observation that population is flowing from the Snow Belt to the Sun Belt, with slower growth rates concentrated in the East and Midwest and more rapid growth rates concentrated in the West and South. As a region that straddles the Midwest and Midsouth, the Eighth Federal Reserve District experienced a wide range of population changes across its metro areas.

Taking the totals for all metro areas in the District, the 2006 population estimate was 8.6 million, representing an increase of approximately 460,000 residents since 2000 (a growth rate of 5.6 percent). By comparison, the population of the United States as a whole experienced an increase of 6.4 percent over the period. Among the four major metro areas in the District, only Little Rock, Ark., saw faster-than-average population growth: 6.9 percent. Louisville, Ky.-Ind., and Memphis, Tenn.-Ark., grew by 5.2 percent and 5.8 percent, respectively, while the St. Louis, Mo.-Ill., metro area population expanded by only 3.9 percent.¹

Some of the smaller metro areas in the District were among the fastest growers. Most prominently, the Fayetteville, Ark.-Mo., metro area grew by 21.3 percent since the beginning of the decade, putting it among the 20 fastest-growing metro areas in the country. Other rapidly growing metro areas in the District include Springfield, Mo. (10.5 percent); Bowling Green, Ky. (8.8 percent); Hot Springs, Ark. (8.1 percent); and Columbia, Mo. (7.1 percent). At the other end of the spectrum, the population of Pine Bluff, Ark., fell by 3.4 percent—the only metro area in the District to have experienced a population decline over the period.

Suburban Sprawl

The data for metro areas as a whole obscure some significant patterns of growth within the metro areas them-

selves, particularly the ongoing movement of population from central cities and inner suburbs to outlying suburbs. The St. Louis metro area offers a prime example of this trend. Since the beginning of the decade, the population of the city of St. Louis rose by only 1.6 percent, while St. Louis County, which is home to the suburbs immediately abutting the city, experienced a decline of 1.6 percent. Counties containing the second and third layers of suburbs beyond the central city grew very rapidly, however: Lincoln, Mo. (28.7 percent), Warren, Mo. (21 percent), St. Charles, Mo. (19.3 percent) and Monroe, Ill. (15.4 percent).

Similarly, in the central counties of the Little Rock (Pulaski), Memphis (Shelby) and Louisville (Jefferson) metro areas, which include central cities and inner suburbs, population expanded by less than 2 percent, meaning that the bulk of metro area population growth took place in outlying suburbs. In the Little Rock area, growth was strongest in Lonoke (19.1 percent), Faulkner (17.1 percent) and Saline (12.6 percent) counties. In the Memphis area, two Mississippi counties—De Soto (35.0 percent) and Tunica (12.9 percent)—and two Tennessee counties—Fayette (25.3 percent) and Tipton (11.9 percent)—grew much faster than the rest of the metro area. The population of Spencer County, Ky., has been the fastest growing county in the Louisville metro area (and, indeed, in the entire Eighth District), having expanded by 40 percent since 2000. Another five counties in the Kentucky part of the Louisville metro area also saw double-digit population growth: Oldham (19.7 percent), Shelby (19.1 percent), Bullitt (19 percent), Nelson (12.3 percent) and Trimble (11.7 percent).

This movement toward outlying suburbs is evident even in some of the smaller metro areas in the District. For example, Greene County, Mo., which includes the city of Springfield, grew by 6 percent, while the nearby counties of Webster and Christian expanded by 14.4 percent and 29.9 percent, respec-

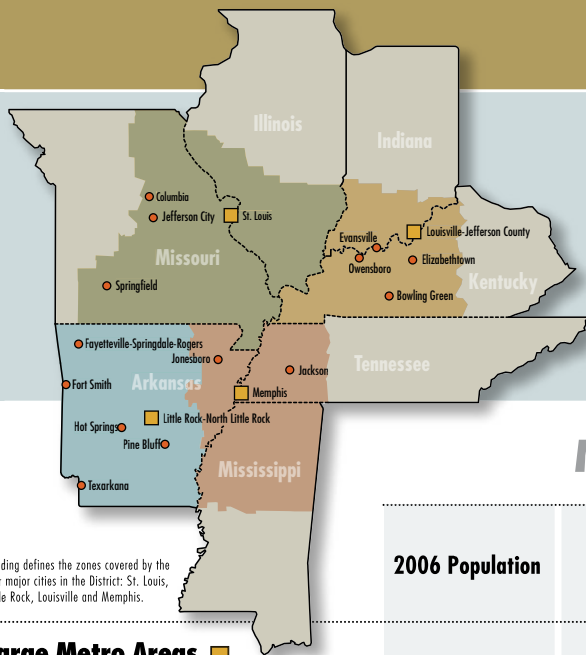
tively. Similarly, the fastest growing county in the Fort Smith, Ark., metro area is Crawford County rather than its own Sebastian County, and the most rapidly growing county in the Jefferson City, Mo., metro area is Callaway County instead of its own Cole County.

International and Domestic Migrants

Data on net international and internal (domestic) migration across District metro areas, also published by the Census Bureau, show no clear pattern. In fact, there is not even a clear pattern in whether the two types of migration are negative or positive net contributors to population growth at the metro-area level.

In the St. Louis metro area, for example, international migration added 26,682 residents over the decade, offsetting a 23,449 outflow of domestic migrants. In Memphis, on the other hand, net inflows have been positive for both types of migrants, with a net inflow of 13,040 international migrants and 5,934 domestic migrants. Louisville also saw positive net flows for both types of migrants, but it was domestic migration that was predominant (a net inflow of 16,776), although international migrants did account for a large portion of the population increase (a net inflow of 11,803). This pattern was more pronounced for Little Rock, where the net increase in population due to domestic migration was about 4.5 times that due to international migration.

For the central counties of these four metro areas, there *was* a clear pattern of the relative importance of the two types of migration. In each case, positive net international migration helped to offset the large net out-migration to other parts of the area or the country. In fact, if it weren't for international migration, these central counties would have seen overall population losses. The city of St. Louis saw a net international inflow of 11,050 and a net domestic outflow of 52,859.² Shelby



Shading defines the zones covered by the four major cities in the District: St. Louis, Little Rock, Louisville and Memphis.

METRO AREA POPULATION

	2006 Population	Change Since 2000	Percentage Change	International Migration	Internal (Domestic) Migration
Large Metro Areas ■					
St. Louis, Mo. - Ill.	2,803,024	104,337	3.9	26,682	-23,449
Little Rock-North Little Rock, Ark.	652,834	42,316	6.9	3,710	17,027
Louisville-Jefferson County, Ky. - Ind.	1,222,216	60,241	5.2	11,803	16,776
Memphis, Tenn. - Miss. - Ark.	1,274,704	69,500	5.8	13,040	5,934
Small and Medium Metro Areas ●					
Bowling Green, Ky.	113,320	9,154	8.8	2,455	3,550
Columbia, Mo.	155,997	10,331	7.1	2,927	1,488
Elizabethtown, Ky.	110,878	3,331	3.1	-38	-1,147
Evansville, Ind. - Ky.	350,356	7,541	2.2	1,520	854
Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, Ark. - Mo.	420,876	73,831	21.3	9,957	43,199
Fort Smith, Ark. - Okla.	288,818	15,648	5.7	3,763	4,327
Hot Springs, Ark.	95,164	7,096	8.1	444	8,148
Jackson, Tenn.	111,937	4,560	4.2	1,027	796
Jefferson City, Mo.	144,958	4,906	3.5	859	506
Jonesboro, Ark.	113,330	5,568	5.2	886	2,132
Owensboro, Ky.	112,093	2,218	2.0	307	-868
Pine Bluff, Ark.	103,638	-3,703	-3.4	443	-5,871
Springfield, Mo.	407,092	38,718	10.5	1,489	28,532
Texarkana, Texas - Texarkana, Ark.	134,510	4,761	3.7	516	2,771

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau

County (Memphis) experienced a net inflow of 11,795 international migrants and a net outflow of 35,862 domestic migrants. Jefferson County (Louisville) had an inflow of 9,638 international migrants and a domestic outflow of 17,310. In Little Rock, Pulaski County had a net inflow of 2,843 international immigrants to partly offset its net domestic outflow of 11,373 residents.

International migration has been important for some of the smaller- to medium-sized metro areas as well, especially those that experienced the most-rapid growth. Metro areas in which international migration has accounted for more than 20 percent

of the area's population growth include Bowling Green, Columbia, Evansville, Fort Smith and Jackson. It is worth noting, however, that the two fastest growing metro areas in the District—Fayetteville and Springfield—owe most of their population growth to net migration from the rest of the country. For Fayetteville, large net domestic migration accounted for 59 percent of the total change in population, while the corresponding number for Springfield was 74 percent.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 The numbers for the St. Louis metro area do not include the portion of Crawford, Mo., county that lies within the metro area border. Also, St. Louis city successfully appealed its initial population estimate, which had indicated a population decline. In this article, the data on total population changes in the St. Louis metro area and the city of St. Louis reflect the revised estimate.
- 2 These numbers are from the original estimates, not the revised estimates, which are not yet available at this level of detail.