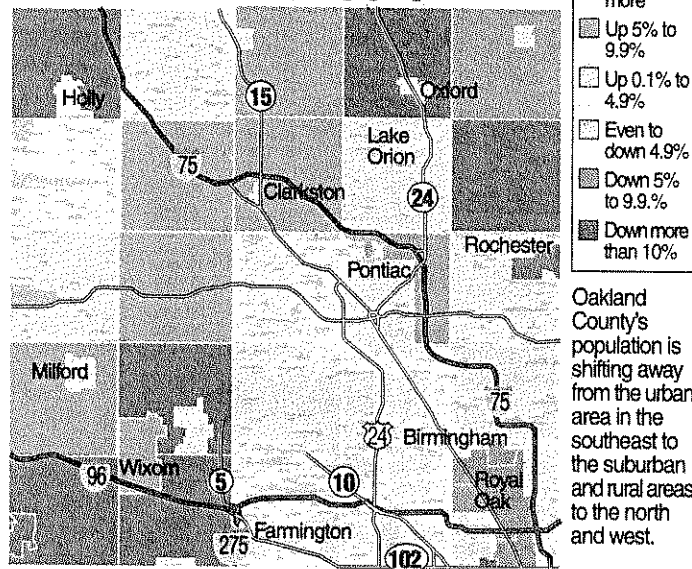


Oakland's changing population



The Oakland Press/BRYAN LAVIOLETTE

Oakland population moving west, north

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By HANK SCHALLER
Of The Oakland Press

The northern and western regions of Oakland County continue to show the most population growth since the 2000 Census, according to the latest population estimates released by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Among the fastest-growing county communities since the census was conducted were Holly Township, which grew by

1,548 residents, or 39.7 percent over the past five years; Oxford Township, which grew 3,070 residents, or 24.6 percent; and Oakland Township, which grew 3,095 residents, or 23.7 percent.

Other communities experiencing double-digit percentage increases in population were Commerce Township, which grew 5,359 residents, or 17.7 percent; Lyon Township, which grew

PLEASE SEE COUNTY/A-7

COUNTY

FROM PAGE A-1

Analyst says regional numbers show people staying in area to find work

by 1,858 residents, or 16.8 percent; Rochester, which grew by 1,425 residents, or 13.6 percent; Novi, which grew by 5,958 residents, or 12.5 percent; and South Lyon, which grew by 1,150 residents, or 11.5 percent.

Overall, the county has grown by only a modest 2.2 percent since the 2000 U.S. Census, according to population estimates by SEMCOG, the regional planning agency for Oakland, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne counties.

"I expect these population trends in Oakland County to continue as long as there is land available in these communities to build subdivisions," said Jim Rogers, manager of the SMART Data Center. "The north and west portions of the county are growing most because most of the rest of Oakland County is already built up or nearly built up."

The Oakland County community suffering the greatest percentage population loss since the census was taken was Royal Oak Township, which lost 1,199 residents, or 22.2 percent of its population. Part of Royal Oak Township's population decrease is because part of the township was annexed by Oak Park. But

many communities in the older, more developed south end of the county also suffered population declines.

Other county communities that have suffered population drops since the 2000 Census are Berkley, down 5.5 percent; Beverly Hills, down 2.1 percent; Bingham Farms, down 1.3 percent; Bloomfield Hills, down 3.7 percent; Bloomfield Township, down 2.7 percent; Clawson, down 5.6 percent; Farmington, down 0.7 percent; Farmington Hills, down 1.5 percent; and Hazel Park, down 2.7 percent.

Population also declined in Huntington Woods, down 3.6 percent; Lake Angelus, down 4.9 percent; Lake Orion, down 0.9 percent; Lathrup Village, down 2.7 percent; Leonard, down 1.5 percent; Madison Heights, down 3.3 percent; and Northville, down 3.5 percent.

Among other county communities losing population were Pleasant Ridge, down 8.6 percent; Royal Oak, down 5.7 percent; Southfield, down 0.1 percent; Sylvan Lake, down 4.4 percent; Waterford Township, down 1.2 percent; and Wolverine Lake, down 4.4 percent.

According to the report, the population of Oakland County was 1,220,090 residents on Dec. 1, up 2.2 percent from 1,194,156 residents at the time of the census, an increase of 25,934 residents.

That compares with neighboring Livingston County, which has grown 17.7 percent from 156,951 residents at the time the census was taken to the current estimate of 184,677 residents.

Overall, the population of southeastern Michigan, including the seven counties in the SEMCOG region, has increased 1.7 percent from 4,833,368 residents to 4,916,852 residents since the 2000 Census, or about 40 people a day. SEMCOG officials said that was less than one-third of the nation's growth rate.

Elsewhere in the region, the population of Washtenaw County was up 6.8 percent to 344,872 residents since the census; up 6.1 percent to 154,814 residents in Monroe County; up 5.9 percent to 834,651 residents in Macomb County; up 5.5 percent to 173,207 residents in St. Clair County; and down 2.7 percent to 2,004,541 residents in Wayne County.

In Detroit alone, the population has declined 6.5 percent or 62,295 residents since the last census and now stands at 888,975 residents.

"These estimates show that the pace of growth for the region has slowed in the last several years, but in some communities it continues to be strong," said Paul Tait, executive director of SEMCOG.

Rogers said the most encouraging news in the demographic report is that the population in southeastern Michigan overall is continuing to rise even though the region and Michigan have lost jobs for five years in a row and have a higher unemployment rate than the nation as a whole.

"People are sticking around and looking for their next job in this area," he said.