



Franklin County's growth among fastest in Pennsylvania

By JIM HOOK Senior writer

Franklin County ranks among the fastest-growing counties in Pennsylvania.

The county grew by 1,207 people from 2008 to 2009, according to data released this week by the U.S. Census Bureau. The county ranked as the fifth fastest-growing county in Pennsylvania for the year, based on percentage growth. Only Chester, Cumberland, Lebanon and Pike counties grew at a faster rate.

The Census Bureau estimates that 144,994 people lived in Franklin County on July 1, 2009.

The county grew by 0.8 percent from 2008 to 2009 and 12.1 percent from 2000 to 2009.

The county is on pace to add the equivalent of a Borough of Chambersburg during the decade from April 1, 2000, to April 1, 2010. In the nine years since Census 2000, the county already has added 15,686 people, the population equivalent of a Greene or Guilford township.

Census 2010 will be taken April 1.

The Census Bureau calculated the county's growth in nine years based on:

- 16,365 births and 12,215 deaths for a natural growth of 4,150 people.

- Net migration of 12,346 people (10,953 domestic and 1,393 international.)

Franklin County ranked sixth among Pennsylvania's 67 counties in percentage growth between 2000 and 2009. Pennsylvania's top 10 counties (excluding Forest County) are in the south central and eastern part of the state. Forest County ranks No. 1, due primarily to the construction of a state prison there in 2004. Forest lost population in the most recent year.

Franklin County has been among Pennsylvania's top five fastest-growing counties in each of the past five years, although the annual growth has slowed dramatically from 2 percent in both 2005-06 and 2004-05.

Franklin County ranks among the nation's fastest growing micropolitan statistical areas. Micropolitan areas are densely populated, but lack a central city. Known as the Chambersburg Micropolitan Area, Franklin County ranked 28th among the 574 micropolitan areas in numeric growth (1,207) in the most recent year. The Chambersburg area also ranked 16th for the nine-year period.

The Chambersburg area ranked 67th and Gettysburg 68th for the nine-year period in percentage growth among micropolitan areas.

The Lebanon Metropolitan Statistical Area is the

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fastest growing metro area in the state and ranks 149th fastest in the nation by percentage. Five other metro areas in Pennsylvania rank make the nation's largest 100 list -- Philadelphia (fifth), Pittsburgh (22nd), Allentown (62nd), Scranton (92nd) and Harrisburg (96th).

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