



Demographics Bulletin

Zachary Community Schools

Charles M. Tolbert, Ph.D.

July 2008

2008—3

Zachary sets the pace in Louisiana:

- Latest Census population estimate is 14,055
- Up 25% since 2000
- Growth rate more than double that of any other Louisiana city of 10,000 or more

Watch for the next bulletin this fall:

- Five- and ten-year school-age population projections

Contact:

Charles M. Tolbert

(254) 722-2306

ctolbert@hotmail.com

We welcome your input and tips on developments that may impact the school-age population in the Zachary Community Schools.

Census Bureau Says Zachary Population Continues to Soar



Each July, the U.S. Census Bureau releases population estimates for incorporated places (cities, towns, villages). The estimate is for the population as of the previous July 1. Those closely watched numbers are just out, and Zachary continues to set the pace among larger Louisiana incorporated places. With an estimated population on July 1, 2007, of 14,055, Zachary has gained more than 2,700 persons since the Census of 2000. That is a red-hot growth rate of 24.6 percent. To put the growth here since 2000 in perspective, no other Louisiana city of 10,000 or more persons even comes close. The runners up are Mandeville at 12 percent growth since 2000 and Hammond at 10 percent. The year-over-year growth in Zachary is also impressive. The Census Bureau estimates annual growth from 2006 to 2007 at 674 more persons--a growth rate of 5 percent.

Zachary's experience also contrasts sharply with the remainder of East Baton Rouge Parish. Separate 2007 estimates were previously published by the Bureau for parishes and counties. Those numbers showed East Baton Rouge Parish growing by 4.2 percent since 2000, but losing a fraction of its population from 2006 to 2007. The cities of Baker and Baton Rouge also were estimated to have lost population in that same period (down 1.1 and 0.7 percent respectively).

Population estimates are important because they represent the best guess at a

local population between decennial censuses. The Census Bureau relies heavily on changes in housing unit counts in preparing population estimates. The robust estimates generated for Zachary in 2007 are no doubt a product of the volume of residential housing permits in times preceding last July. As we have noted in earlier bulletins, the frequency of permitting by the City of Zachary slowed considerably in early 2008. This suggests that next year's estimate of population for July 1, 2008, will show less growth. Fundamental community conditions remain quite favorable, however, for continued growth in the longer term.

U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of Population				
Geographic Area	Population Estimates			Percent Change 2000-2007
	April 1, 2000	July 1, 2006	July 1, 2007	
Baker city	13,728	13,831	13,575	-1.1
Baton Rouge city	228,699	230,715	227,071	-0.7
Zachary city	11,277	13,381	14,055	24.6
East Baton Rouge Parish	412,852	431,278	430,317	4.2

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. Table 4: Annual Estimates of the Population for Incorporated Places in Louisiana, Listed Alphabetically: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2007 (SUB-EST2007-04-22) Release Date: July 10, 2008

Population Estimates and School Enrollment

In school demography, local area population estimates are monitored to assist in planning and enrollment management. If the projections are reasonably valid and reliable indicators, they should assist in predicting school enrollment. The last two Zachary population estimates and school enrollment totals suggest a clear relationship between local population growth (as estimated on July 1 of a given year) and school enrollment (as of October of the same year). Both years 2006 and 2007 were high-growth years in the Zachary area, and there was corresponding double-digit growth in the Zachary Community Schools. Since the Zachary school system is so new, we will need several more annual data points to calibrate a growth model more precisely. And, all south Louisiana school system enrollments data exhibit temporary fluctuations due to Hurricane Katrina. Still, we can gain a better understanding of year-to-year variations in school enrollment by paying close attention to the annual population estimates.