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Area Growth Rate Outstrips State's Harrisonburg Metro Ranks No. 3 Among Localities

Posted 2009-01-30

By [Jeremy Hunt](#)

HARRISONBURG - Harrisonburg's population grew at nearly double the state rate between 2007 and 2008, according to figures released this week.

From 2000 to 2005, Virginia's annual population growth was about 1.2 percent, but in the last few years, it's dropped below 1 percent, according to information from the University of Virginia.

Between 2007 and 2008, state population growth was 0.9 percent.

In the Friendly City, however, the population grew by 1.7 percent from 2007 to 2008.

By comparison, Rockingham County's population grew 1.05 percent from 2007 to 2008.

The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at U.Va. released its annual population estimates Tuesday. Figures for 2008 are preliminary estimates from July 1 of last year.

The Harrisonburg Metropolitan Area's population was estimated at 120,467 in 2008, up more than 1,500 from 2007.

The area, which includes the city and Rockingham County, is the third-fastest-growing metro area in Virginia, according to estimates.

The area grew by 11.4 percent from 2000 to 2008, a rate exceeded only by the Northern Virginia and Winchester metro areas.

Between 2000 and 2008, the city grew 12.8 percent, while the state grew by 9.7 percent.

The city's population was 45,632 in 2008, up 780 from the previous year.

The numbers were no surprise to City Manager Kurt Hodgen.

"It just shows that this is still a good, attractive area for people to move into," Hodgen said, explaining that the rate shows Harrisonburg's health.

Rockingham County's population was 74,835, up 778 from 2007.

"It's consistent to what we've been seeing in the past. Whether in the coming year it will sustain itself at that level, I don't know," County Administrator Joe Paxton said. "A lot of that will depend on how we recover out of the economic slowdown."

Figures Used To Allocate Funding

Virginia's population is about 7.8 million, up more than 70,000 from the previous year.

The state uses the numbers to determine how to allocate state funds for programs such as public safety and education, said Qian Cai, director of the Cooper Center's demographics and workforce group.

Localities also use the numbers for planning and budgeting, Cai said.

Paxton said the data are used to help the city and county decide how to split the cost of local social services.

Cai said the slowdown statewide was the result of fewer people moving into Virginia than in previous years.

Natural increases caused by the birth rate exceeding the death rate was steady, she said, but fewer people migrated to the commonwealth.

"Migration is typically driven by economic opportunity, employment opportunity," she said. "So, when the economy is slowing down," fewer people move to a new place.

Contact Jeremy Hunt at 574-6273 or jhunt@dnronline.com

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7. **RE: Area Growth Rate Outstrips State's**

January 30, 2009 9:23 AM

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Marloe
Harrisonburg

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6. RE: Area Growth Rate Outstrips State's

January 30, 2009 9:11 AM

re: 4 and 5

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Paladin
Bridgewater



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5. RE: Area Growth Rate Outstrips State's

January 30, 2009 8:24 AM

Re 4: I echo your thoughts. Unbelievable.

Katherine
Harrisonburg

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4. RE: Area Growth Rate Outstrips State's

January 30, 2009 8:18 AM

@2 and 3...(sigh), unbelievable.

laxwade25

REPORT



3. RE: Area Growth Rate Outstrips State's

January 30, 2009 7:39 AM

Re 2...nope...will use their fake SSN and such do get all their benefits

RC
Grottoes

REPORT

2. RE: Area Growth Rate Outstrips State's

January 30, 2009 3:08 AM

I'm just guessing here but could it be because of all the illegal aliens in the area? Or that we are considered the drug corridor for I-81? Don't worry though, pretty soon all the illegals will go back to Mexico. With our economy being so poor and all these plants closing down in the US they will probably reopen with cheap labor in Mexico.

Penny4MyThoughts
Shenandoah Valley

REPORT

1. RE: Area Growth Rate Outstrips State's

January 30, 2009 2:25 AM

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