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Central Oregon, Metropolitan Portland are state's fastest-growing areas

Jason Jurjevich

Population Research Center

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Population grew in all regions of Oregon between 2000 and 2010, and the proportion of Oregonians living in the three-county metropolitan Portland region inched up to nearly 43 percent, according to newly released U.S. Census Bureau data.

Central Oregon grew by 30.5 percent during the decade — the fastest growth rate of any region of the state. By 2010, about 5.2 percent of Oregon residents, or just over 200,000 people, lived in the area composed of Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties (Table 1).

The three-county Portland metro region grew 13.6 percent during the decade, the second-fastest rate of growth in the state, according to Census 2010. The metro region, composed of Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas counties, grew by nearly 200,000 residents during the past decade— from 1.44 million people a decade earlier to 1.64 million people in 2010.

Other regions in Oregon — including the Valley, Eastern, Northwest and Southwest — saw their share of the total population shrink because their growth rates were below the state's 12 percent average. A detailed analysis of

population change for Oregon and its regions is below.

Table 1: Population Change, 2000-2010

	April 1, 2000 U.S. Census	April 1, 2010 U.S. Census	Population Change 2000-2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
Oregon	3,421,399	3,831,074	409,675	12.0%
Central	153,558	200,431	46,873	30.5%
Eastern	297,994	309,043	11,049	3.7%
Metro	1,444,219	1,641,036	196,817	13.6%
Northwest	147,931	157,674	9,743	6.6%
Southern	441,310	478,993	37,683	8.5%
Valley	936,387	1,043,897	107,510	11.5%

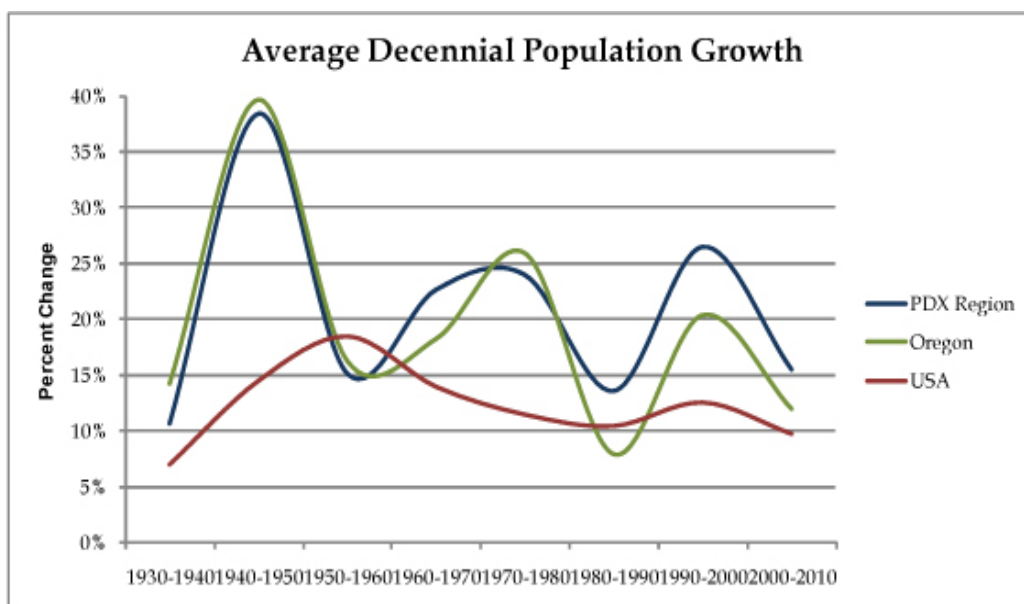
Oregon was home to 3.8 million people in 2010, according to the census, up from about 3.4 million in 2000. At 12 percent, the state's growth rate is below the West's regional average, 13.8 percent, but above the national average, 9.7 percent.

Except for the 1950s and the 1980s, population growth in Oregon has outpaced the national average (Figure 1).

In the 1980s, a marked economic decline, particularly in logging and forest products, stemmed the flow of migrants to Oregon and resulted in a slower pace of growth for Oregon (7.9 percent) compared to the nation (10.4 percent). Population growth in the Portland metropolitan area, however, outpaced the national average with 13.6 percent growth during the period.

Bolstered by strong employment growth and amenity-driven migration, both the Portland metro and the State of Oregon sustained impressive population growth during the 1990s. During the 1990s, U.S. population growth stood at 12.5 percent, but even more pronounced was population growth in the metropolitan area (26.5 percent) and the state (20.4 percent).

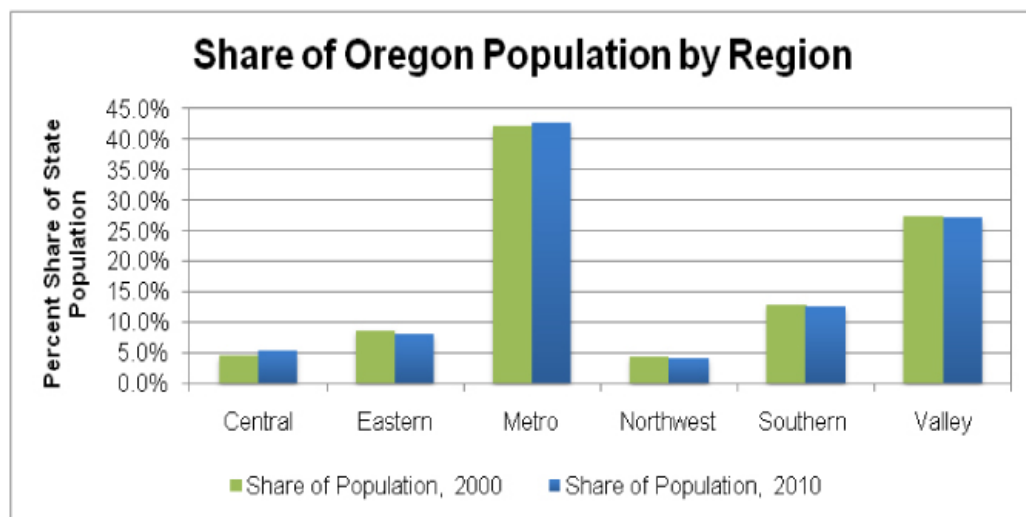
Figure 1: Growth By Decade



Counties in the Portland metropolitan area and the Willamette Valley are home to more than two-thirds of the state's

population. The Valley, the state's second-largest region by population, added 107,510 residents between 2000 and 2010 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Regional Population Share



While Central Oregon recorded the highest population growth of any region in Oregon during 2000-2010 (30.5 percent), its growth was primarily concentrated in Deschutes County.

Both working-age and retirement-age migrants poured into Bend during the past several decades, leading Deschutes County to the highest population growth of any county in the state at 36.7 percent. Population growth was less pronounced in Crook and Jefferson counties, which grew by 9.4 percent and 14.3 percent, respectively.

At 3.7 percent, Eastern Oregon had the slowest population growth of any region in the state during the 2000s. The fastest-growing county in this region was Hood River County; the combination of an increasing number of residents commuting to Portland, retirement migration, a growing agricultural employment base, and amenity-based migration in the Columbia River Gorge led to an increase of almost 2,000 county residents during the decade.

Gains in Umatilla (7.6 percent), Lake (6.4 percent), and Wasco (6.0 percent) counties represent the next biggest relative gains in population for the region. Of the 15 counties in this region, more than half (8) experienced a population decline during the decade. Many of these counties are not only losing population through net out-migration, but they are also losing population because of natural decrease (deaths exceeding births).

With the highest absolute growth of any region in Oregon, the Portland metro region added almost 200,000 residents during the 2000s (13.6 percent growth). Washington, Multnomah, and Clackamas counties added approximately 85,000, 75,000, and 38,000 persons, respectively, representing three of the top four absolute increases of population in Oregon.

Following the Portland metro region, counties in the Willamette Valley recorded the second-highest absolute growth by adding 108,000 persons during the decade (11.5 percent growth). With population growth of 20.9 percent, Polk County achieved the second-highest relative growth in the state behind Deschutes County (36.7 percent). Marion, the other county in the Salem metro region, had the largest absolute growth (30,500) of any Valley county.

Population growth in Northwest Oregon, 6.6 percent, was half of the state average. However, while Clatsop, Lincoln, and Tillamook counties experienced near 4.0 percent growth, the proximity of Columbia County to Portland largely resulted in the highest growth in the region at 13.3 percent.

Growth in Southern Oregon was highly uneven. With considerable population growth in Medford and Ashland, Jackson County was the fastest-growing county in the region at 12.1 percent. Grants Pass also recorded an increase in its population, which led Josephine County to the second-highest growth in Southern Oregon (9.2 percent). Douglas and Curry counties also had modest population increases (7.2 percent and 5.8 percent, respectively), but Coos County's increase of 264 persons represented the smallest gain of any county in the region— a 0.4 percent increase over its 2000 figure.

Table 2: Population by Oregon County

	April 1, 2000 U.S. Census	April 1, 2010 U.S. Census	Population Change 2000-2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
Crook	19,182	20,978	1,796	9.4%
Deschutes	115,367	157,733	42,366	36.7%
Jefferson	19,009	21,720	2,711	14.3%
CENTRAL	153,558	200,431	46,873	30.5%
Baker	16,741	16,134	-607	-3.6%
Gilliam	1,915	1,871	-44	-2.3%
Grant	7,935	7,445	-490	-6.2%
Harney	7,609	7,422	-187	-2.5%
Hood River	20,411	22,346	1,935	9.5%
Klamath	63,775	66,380	2,605	4.1%
Lake	7,422	7,895	473	6.4%
Malheur	31,615	31,313	-302	-1.0%
Morrow	10,995	11,173	178	1.6%
Sherman	1,934	1,765	-169	-8.7%
Umatilla	70,548	75,889	5,341	7.6%
Union	24,530	25,748	1,218	5.0%
Wallowa	7,226	7,008	-218	-3.0%
Wasco	23,791	25,213	1,422	6.0%
Wheeler	1,547	1,441	-106	-6.9%
EASTERN	297,994	309,043	11,049	3.7%
Clackamas	338,391	375,992	37,601	11.1%
Multnomah	660,486	735,334	74,848	11.3%
Washington	445,342	529,710	84,368	18.9%
METRO	1,444,219	1,641,036	196,817	13.6%
Clatsop	35,630	37,039	1,409	4.0%
Columbia	43,560	49,351	5,791	13.3%
Lincoln	44,479	46,034	1,555	3.5%
Tillamook	24,262	25,250	988	4.1%
NORTHWEST	147,931	157,674	9,743	6.6%
Coos	62,779	63,043	264	0.4%
Curry	21,137	22,364	1,227	5.8%
Douglas	100,399	107,667	7,268	7.2%
Jackson	181,269	203,206	21,937	12.1%
Josephine	75,726	82,713	6,987	9.2%
SOUTHERN	441,310	478,993	37,683	8.5%
Benton	78,153	85,579	7,426	9.5%
Lane	322,959	351,715	28,756	8.9%
Linn	103,069	116,672	13,603	13.2%
Marion	284,834	315,335	30,501	10.7%
Polk	62,380	75,403	13,023	20.9%
Yamhill	84,992	99,193	14,201	16.7%
VALLEY	936,387	1,043,897	107,510	11.5%

Population change is the combination of three components: births, deaths, and migration. The excess of births over deaths leads to a natural increase and the excess of deaths over births produces a natural decrease of population. The third component, migration, either adds or subtracts to population based on whether there is a net positive exchange of migrants (net in-migration) or a net negative exchange (net out-migration).

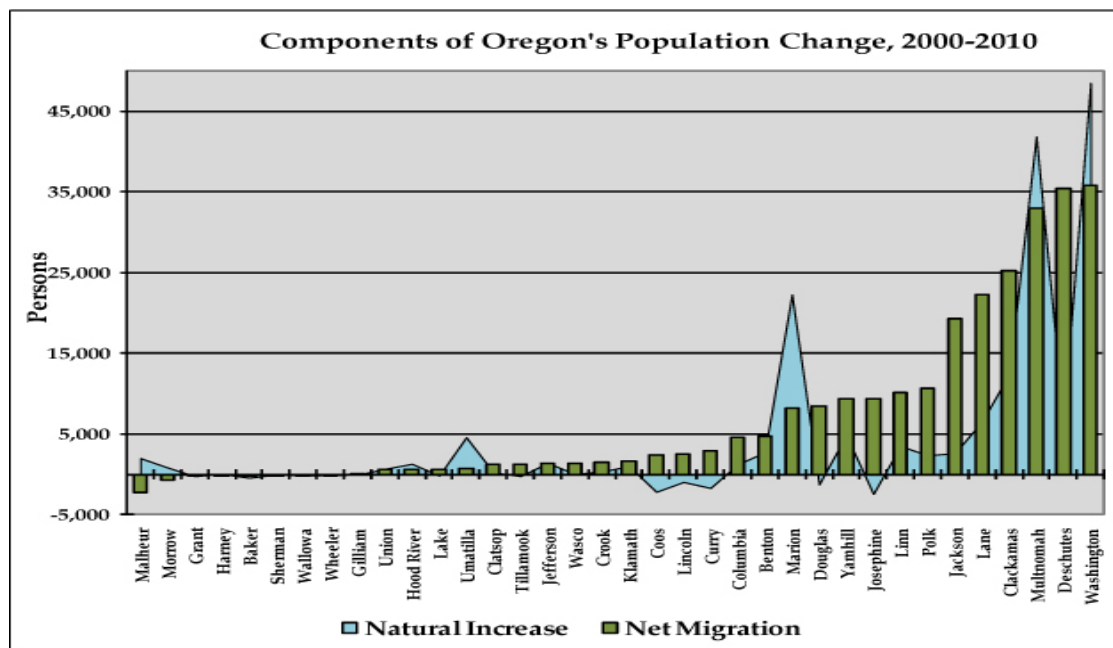
Between 2000 and 2010, Oregon's population increased by almost 410,000 persons. Underlying this growth is net in-migration of 250,000 persons combined with a natural increase of approximately 150,000 — meaning that net in-

migration accounted for 60 percent of the state's increase in population.

Washington, Deschutes and Multnomah counties had the largest absolute levels of net in-migration in Oregon — each county added approximately 35,000 persons due to net migration.

While net migration was a significant component of population growth in Washington and Multnomah counties, the majority of population growth was actually due to natural increase. In Deschutes County, however, natural increase only accounted for less than 20 percent population change (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Population Change In Oregon



Other counties where population increase was largely due to net migration include: Lane, Jackson, Polk, and Linn counties. As in the case of Deschutes County, natural increase in these counties only accounted for 10-20 percent of population growth, making net migration the primary component of population change.

Net migration explains population growth in a plurality of Oregon counties. In Marion, Umatilla, Hood River, Morrow, and Malheur counties, however, population increased largely due to natural increase. For these counties, natural increase is attributable in part to their growing share of Latino in-migrants who are generally younger and have higher birth rates compared to their neighbors.

In Southern Oregon, an aging population in Coos, Lincoln, Curry, and Josephine counties led to a natural decrease in population, combined with small levels of net in-migration.

As Table 3 illustrates, Josephine County had a net in-migration of more than 9,000 persons during 2000-2010, but the county's population grew by just 7,000 residents because of a natural decrease in population (almost 2,500 persons). For Coos County, its net inflow of 2,400 persons was virtually offset with a loss of 2,200 persons due to natural decrease.

Table 3: Net Migration vs. Natural Increase

	Population Change 2000-2010	Births 2000-2010	Deaths 2000-2010	Natural Increase 2000-2010	Net Migration 2000-2010
Oregon	409,675	468,051	309,799	158,252	251,423
Baker	-607	1,639	2,076	-437	-170
Benton	7,426	7,728	5,011	2,717	4,709
Clackamas	37,601	40,488	28,100	12,389	25,212
Clatsop	1,409	4,069	3,834	235	1,174
Columbia	5,791	5,199	3,968	1,232	4,559
Coos	264	6,321	8,496	-2,175	2,439
Crook	1,796	2,358	2,013	345	1,451
Curry	1,227	1,623	3,322	-1,699	2,926
Deschutes	42,366	17,322	10,390	6,932	35,434
Douglas	7,268	11,023	12,276	-1,253	8,521
Gilliam	-44	166	231	-65	21
Grant	-490	636	876	-240	-250
Harney	-187	792	739	53	-240
Hood River	1,935	3,067	1,770	1,298	637
Jackson	21,937	22,315	19,698	2,617	19,320
Jefferson	2,711	3,217	1,821	1,396	1,315
Josephine	6,987	8,089	10,523	-2,434	9,421
Klamath	2,605	8,100	7,093	1,007	1,598
Lake	473	708	879	-171	644
Lane	28,756	36,328	29,821	6,507	22,249
Lincoln	1,555	4,511	5,466	-955	2,510
Linn	13,603	14,272	10,779	3,493	10,110
Malheur	-302	4,826	2,834	1,991	-2,293
Marion	30,501	47,348	25,068	22,280	8,221
Morrow	178	1,608	772	836	-658
Multnomah	74,848	97,282	55,405	41,877	32,971
Polk	13,023	8,168	5,816	2,352	10,671
Sherman	-169	147	183	-36	-133
Tillamook	988	2,598	2,831	-234	1,222
Umatilla	5,341	10,767	6,182	4,585	756
Union	1,218	3,121	2,456	665	553
Wallowa	-218	606	766	-160	-58
Wasco	1,422	2,914	2,867	47	1,375
Washington	84,368	76,396	27,880	48,516	35,852
Wheeler	-106	94	192	-98	-8
Yamhill	14,201	12,203	7,366	4,837	9,364

The Portland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) consists of five Oregon counties and two counties in Washington State, a more inclusive area than the three-county Metro region reported in the tables above. Between 1980 and 2010, the MSA added approximately 885,000 residents leading to 66 percent growth during the past three decades (Table 4).

The fastest-growing counties in the metro area were Clark and Washington counties. Explosive growth in Clark County (121.3 percent) and Washington County (115.5 percent) resulted in each county adding more than 200,000 residents during the period.

The next-highest absolute gains in population were in Clackamas and Multnomah counties, which added 134,000 and 173,000 residents, respectively, during the past three decades.

Table 4: Oregon Population, 1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Population Change 1980-2010	Percent Change 1980-2010
Clackamas	241,919	278,850	338,391	375,992	134,073	55.4%
Clark	192,227	238,053	345,238	425,363	233,136	121.3%
Columbia	35,646	37,557	43,560	49,351	13,705	38.4%
Multnomah	562,647	583,887	660,486	735,334	172,687	30.7%
Skamania	7,919	8,289	9,872	11,066	3,147	39.7%
Washington	245,860	311,554	445,342	529,710	283,850	115.5%
Yamhill	55,332	65,551	84,992	99,193	43,861	79.3%
Portland MSA	1,341,550	1,523,741	1,927,881	2,226,009	884,459	65.9%

Slower relative growth in Multnomah County (30.7 percent) during the period resulted in population becoming less concentrated in Multnomah County and more evenly dispersed across the seven-county region. In 1980, almost 42 percent of MSA residents lived in Multnomah County, followed by Washington County (18.3 percent). However, in 2010, just 33 percent of metropolitan Portland residents lived in Multnomah County compared to 24 percent and 19 percent living in Washington and Clark counties, respectively.

While the Portland MSA recorded the highest absolute (884,459) and relative (65.9 percent) population growth from 1980 to 2010, other metropolitan regions in Oregon also recorded impressive growth (Table 5). Largely buoyed by growth in Marion County, the Salem metropolitan area recorded the second-highest growth rate (56.4 percent) in Oregon, followed by Medford (53.4 percent).

The Bend metropolitan area is not included in the table below because in 1980, the U.S. Census Bureau did not include Bend as a metropolitan area. Growth in Deschutes County, however, was the highest of any county over the thirty-year period at 153.8 percent.

Table 5: Oregon MSA Population Change, 1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010	Population Change 1980-2010	Percent Change 1980-2010
Salem MSA						
Marion	204,692	228,483	284,834	315,335		
Polk	45,203	49,541	62,380	75,403		
	249,895	278,024	347,214	390,738	140,843	56.4%
Eugene MSA						
Lane	275,226	282,912	322,959	351,715	76,489	27.8%
Medford MSA						
Jackson	132,456	146,389	181,269	203,206	70,750	53.4%

Institute for Portland Metropolitan Studies graduate research assistant Michael Burnham and Population Research Institute researchers Charles Rynerson and Risa Proehl contributed to this report.

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