

# Census notes population rise

## Numbers up double digits in city, county

BY ALEX LANG

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Monongalia County and Morgantown saw double-digit percentage increases in population in the past decade, according to numbers released by the U.S. Census Bureau on Wednesday.

Preston County's population increased 14.3 percent and Marion County saw a decrease of .3 percent over the past decade.

A census is required by the U.S. Constitution every 10 years. Population is used to determine representation at various levels of government and to determine certain types of funding.

The West Virginia legislature

will discuss the issue of redistricting during a special session later this year.

"I'm pleased, but not surprised," Morgantown Mayor Bill Byrne said.

He said the new numbers show people are "voting with their feet" and voting in support of what is happening in Morgantown.

West Virginia county-by-county numbers and a state breakdown by ethnicity were released Wednesday by the census bureau. Further information should be available today.

Morgantown saw a 10.6 percent increase — or 2,851 more people — in its jurisdiction. The total population according to the census is 29,660, up from 26,809 in 2000.

The increase officially moved Morgantown past Wheeling for fourth-largest city in the state. Morgantown was the only city among the top seven largest in the state that did not have a

decrease in population. Fairmont was seventh-largest, with 18,704 residents.

Mon County saw an even bigger percentage jump than Morgantown, with a 17.5 percent increase, or 14,323 more people. The total now stands at 96,189,

up from 81,866 in 2000. In 2010, Preston County's population was 33,520 and Marion's was 56,418.

Kanawha, at 200,073 people, and Charleston, at 51,400, were the most populated county and city

SEE CENSUS, 2-D

# CENSUS

FROM PAGE 1-D

in the state, respectively. West Virginia saw a 2.5 percent increase in total population — 1,852,000, up from 1,808,000. Counties in the eastern panhandle had dramatic increases in population.

The numbers show a migration of population from the southern to the northern part of the state, said Unk Christiadi, demographer for the WVU Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

Most of the growth was in the Morgantown Metropolitan Statistical Area and in the Eastern Panhandle.

The growth in Morgantown wasn't unexpected, Christiadi said. In addition to the migration, the birth rate in the area is higher than the death rate.

"It's always good to see

Morgantown continue to grow," Monongalia County Commission President Asel Kennedy said.

An increase in population adds to an area's tax base, he said. The increase is especially beneficial for the county because many of the new residents are renters. Rental properties are charged more in property taxes than owner-occupied dwellings.

High numbers of renters also can pose problems, Kennedy said, citing issues with counting a population that is highly transient.

Kennedy applauded the work of organizations such as the Morgantown Utility Board (MUB) and Mountain Line Transit for their efforts to continue to grow and absorb the population growth. MUB has increased its capacity, and roughly 1 million people rode local buses last year.

## 2010 MOST POPULOUS COUNTIES AND CITIES IN WEST VIRGINIA

Population Rank 2010	County	Population 2000	Population 2010	Percent Change
1	Kanawha	200,073	193,063	-3.5
2	Berkeley	75,905	104,169	37.2
3	Cabell	96,784	96,319	-0.5
4	Monongalia	81,866	96,189	17.5
5	Wood	87,986	86,956	-1.2
6	Raleigh	79,220	78,859	-0.5
7	Harrison	68,652	69,099	0.7
8	Mercer	62,980	62,264	-1.1
9	Marion	56,598	56,418	-0.3
10	Putnam	51,589	55,486	7.6
17	Preston	29,334	33,520	14.3

### INCORPORATED PLACE

Population Rank 2010	County	Population 2000	Population 2010	Percent Change
1	Charleston	53,421	51,400	-3.8
2	Huntington	51,475	49,138	-4.5
3	Parkersburg	33,099	31,492	-4.9
4	Morgantown	26,809	29,660	10.6
5	Wheeling	31,419	28,486	-9.3
6	Weirton	20,411	19,746	-3.3
7	Fairmont	19,097	18,704	-2.1
8	Beckley	17,254	17,614	2.1
9	Martinsburg	14,972	17,227	15.1
10	Clarksburg	16,743	16,578	-1.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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