

Youthful Population -- Gaines' 65-and-Older Population Quoted at Only 9-Pct

Front Page News - Published on: December 03, 2011

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. population 65 and older is now the largest in terms of size and percent of the population, compared with any previous census, according to a new 2010 Census brief released recently from the U.S. Census Bureau on the nation's older population. The group grew at a faster rate than the total population between 2000 and 2010.

According to the 2010 Census, there were 40.3 million people 65 and older on April 1, 2010, increasing by 5.3 million since the 2000 Census when this population numbered 35.0 million.

The percentage of the population 65 and older also increased during the previous decade.

In 2010, the older population represented 13.0 percent of the total population, an increase from 12.4 percent in 2000.

Locally, according to 2010 U.S. Census figures, 9.0 percent of Gaines County's 17,526 residents were 65 years of age and older.

Gaines County, according to Census figures, boasted one of the smallest 65-and-younger percentages in the West Texas and southeastern New Mexico region.

Neighboring Lea County, New Mexico featured a 65-and-older population of 10.8 percent, according to figures, while the highest percentage in the immediate region was recorded in Borden County, with 20.7 percent of its population over the age of 65.

Earlier this calendar year, Gaines County learned it had a population of 17,526 from the April 1, 2010 census process, which showed to be a 21.14 percent increase -- or a growth of 3,059 persons -- from April 1, 2000's population count of 14,467 for the county.

Gaines County, according to 2010 Census figures, has 34.8 percent of its population under the age of 18 years old and 10.4 percent of its population under the age of 5, both of which are well above the State's average.

Around the West Texas region, the larger counties of Lubbock, Midland and Ector counties all saw double-digit population percentage increases.

Lubbock County, according to Census figures, had an increase of 14.92 percent and boasts a population of 278,831 as of April 1, 2010, which is up from 242,628 in 2000. Midland County boasted a population of 136,872 in last April's count,

which is up 15.24 percent from 2000's population of 116,009.

Ector County, according to the report, has a population of 137,130, which is up 11.67 percent from 2000's county of 121,123.

Around the immediate Gaines County area, Andrews, Yoakum, and Martin Counties reported population increases of 12.05, 7.61, and 1.10 percent respectively, while Terry County (-0.86 percent) and Dawson County (-7.69 percent) reported population losses.

As a whole, Texas' April 1, 2010 population was quoted at 25.14 million, which is an increase of roughly 4.3 million people from 2000.

65 and Older Population Grew Faster than Total Population

Between 2000 and 2010, the population 65 and older grew 15.1 percent, while the total U.S. population grew 9.7 percent. The opposite happened between 1990 and 2000 when the growth of the older population was slower than the growth of the total population, with growth rates of 12.0 percent and 13.2 percent, respectively.

Population Size and Growth Varied Among the Older Age Groups

Examining the growth of 10-year age groups within the older population shows that 85- to 94-year-olds experienced the fastest growth between 2000 and 2010. This group grew by 29.9 percent, increasing from 3.9 million to 5.1 million.

Among five-year age groups in the older population, 65- to 69-year-olds grew the fastest. This age group grew by 30.4 percent, rising from 9.5 million to 12.4 million. The 65- to 69-year-old group is expected to grow more rapidly over the next decade as the first baby boomers start turning 65 in 2011.

The only older population age group to decline between 2000 and 2010 was the 75- to 79-year-old age group. This group decreased by 1.3 percent from 7.4 million to 7.3 million. The changes in this group mainly reflect the relatively low number of births during the early 1930s as fewer numbers of people entered these ages between 2000 and 2010.

Population of Older Men Increased at a More Rapid Rate than Older Women

While women continue to outnumber men in the older ages, men have continued to close the gap over the decade by increasing at a faster rate than women. The largest growth rate for a 10-year age group within the older population was for men 85 to 94 years old (46.5 percent). Women in this age group also increased but to a smaller degree (22.9 percent). When five-year age groups are compared, men 90 to 94 years old had the fastest growth rate (50.3 percent) while women increased the fastest in the 65- to 69-year-old age group (28.2 percent).

The number of men per 100 women in the older ages has increased over time as

differences in male and female mortality continued to narrow and more males entered into the older population. For most single years of age above age 65, the ratio of men to women was higher in 2010 than in 2000 and 1990.

In the 2010 Census, there were approximately twice as many women as men at age 89 (361,309 compared with 176,689, respectively). This doubling point occurred about four years older than it did in 2000 and six years older than it did in 1990, illustrating the narrowing gap in mortality between men and women at the older ages.

South had Largest Number of People in Older Ages, While Northeast had Largest Percentage

Comparisons across the nation's four regions in 2010 show that the South contained the greatest number of people 65 and older at 14.9 million, followed by the Midwest at 9.0 million, and the West at 8.5 million. The Northeast had the smallest number of people 65 and older at 7.8 million but also had the highest percentage of people 65 and older at 14.1 percent. Following the Northeast was the Midwest at 13.5 percent and the South at 13.0 percent. The West had the smallest percentage of people 65 and older at 11.9 percent.

West had the Fastest Growth in the Populations 65 and Over and 85 and Over

When compared with the 2000 Census, all regions grew in both the 65 and older and 85 and older populations. The region with the fastest growth in the population 65 and older was the West (23.5 percent), increasing from 6.9 million in 2000 to 8.5 million in 2010. The region with the fastest growth in the population 85 and older was also the West (42.8 percent), increasing from 806,000 in 2000 to 1.2 million in 2010.

According to Census figures, the state of Texas boasted a 65-and-older population of 10.3 percent.

Rhode Island was the Only State Whose 65 and Older Population Decreased

Among the 50 states, Rhode Island was the only one to decrease in the number of people 65 and older, declining from 152,402 in 2000 to 151,881 in 2010. The District of Columbia's 65-and-older population also decreased from 69,898 in 2000 to 68,809 in 2010.

Compared with other states, Florida had the greatest share of the population that was 65 and older in both 2000 and 2010 (17.6 percent and 17.3 percent, respectively). West Virginia (16.0 percent), Maine (15.9 percent), Pennsylvania (15.4 percent) and Iowa (14.9 percent) followed in 2010.

The state with the lowest share of the population 65 and older was Alaska in both 2000 and 2010 (5.7 percent and 7.7 percent, respectively). Alaska is also notable as the state with the largest growth rate for the population 65 and older. The

state's older population grew from 35,699 in 2000 to 54,938 in 2010, resulting in a percent increase of 53.9 percent.

Population 85 and Older Increased in All States

Between 2000 and 2010, all states experienced increases in the number of people who were 85 and older. However, the magnitude of growth varied among states.

Alaska had the largest percent change between 2000 and 2010 (78.9 percent), increasing from 2,634 in 2000 to 4,711 in 2010. Mississippi had the smallest growth rate (3.4 percent) and increased from 42,891 in 2000 to 44,359 in 2010. Alaska was also the state with the lowest number and percentage of the population 85 and older when compared with other states.

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