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N.C. draws people despite the economy

State is 4th fastest growing in U.S., Census report shows.

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Staff Writer

Posted: Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008

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North Carolina was one of the nation's fastest growing states from July 2007 to July 2008. It remains the nation's 10th largest state.

State	Current population	Pct. growth
1. Utah	2,736,424	2.53
2. Arizona	6,500,180	2.31
3. Texas	24,326,974	2.03
4. N.C.	9,222,414	2.00
5. Colorado	4,939,456	2.00

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

North Carolina's population rose 2 percent during the past year, making it the nation's fourth fastest growing state – and the most rapidly growing of any state east of Texas, a new report shows.

The state gained almost 181,000 residents from July 2007 to July 2008, according to the report released Monday by the U.S. Census Bureau. With a 2008 population of 9.2 million, North Carolina remains the nation's 10th largest state.

While the new figures don't reflect any changes during the past five months, when the economy registered its sharpest declines, they do show the state's growth rate is slowing. From 2006 to 2007, the state's population increased 2.17 percent.

But only Utah, Arizona and Texas grew at a faster rate, the reports shows.

South Carolina was the nation's 10th fastest growing state. It now has about 4.5 million residents, an increase of 1.7 percent over the previous year.

North Carolina passed New Jersey in population two years ago. Today, it has about a half-million fewer residents than Georgia, the next largest state.

Migration is driving North Carolina's growth, with many coming here for the jobs, climate and quality of life, experts say.

"There's been a slowdown in job creation, but we are still creating jobs," says Tony Crumbley, vice president of research for the Charlotte Chamber. "...The quality of life in mid-sized cities in the South is where people want to be."

The three N.C. counties that gained the most residents from 2000 to 2007 were, respectively, Wake, Mecklenburg and Union, according to figures from the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management.

The Census report also shows:

The nation's fastest growth occurred in the Rocky Mountains, home to six of the 10 fastest-growing states.

While the West was the fastest-growing region, the South added more people.

Northeastern states on the whole have gained population at an increasing rate since 2005, a change from the declining growth from 2000 to 2005.

Only two states – Michigan and Rhode Island – lost population from 2007 to 2008.

Staff Writer Ted Mellnik and The (Raleigh) News & Observer contributed.

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troyison wrote on 12/23/2008 02:49:38 PM:

This means nothing and they know it. NC is the last to feel the effects of the economic issues brought on in a great part because of greed and NC will be the last out of the issue. We are just at the beginning folks. Now that Wachovia is Wells Fargo and is headquartered in San Francisco, and BOFA is laying off 35,000 people, how will Charlotte retain it's "ASSUMED" world class status and keep more people running here from their economically challenged areas? All the movement into NC is just rats running from one part of the sinking ship to another that hasn't sunk yet, but is going down with the rest of the ship too... IMHO.

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jose2 wrote on 12/23/2008 09:37:08 AM:

let's say it again...this news and a dollar will get you a cup of coffee.

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word_up wrote on 12/23/2008 09:15:11 AM:

Yes, they move here and keep their cars registered in other states.