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## 88,000 Michiganians left state in 2009

Census: Florida top draw, but recession slowed migration

*DETROIT NEWS STAFF AND WIRE*

Michigan lost 88,000 residents in 2009 — second only to the state of New York in net migration — as thousands left the recession-plagued state for jobs elsewhere, according to Census Bureau data released this week.

At the same time, domestic migration last year reached its lowest level since the government began tracking it, the Census Bureau said, citing a separate study of 100,000 Americans.

Similar Michigan data will be released later this year. The national development reflects the lingering effects of the Great Recession, which curbed Americans' mobility.

About 10.5 million Americans changed counties between 2009 and 2010, or about 3.5 percent of the population, the lowest percentage since 1947, when the government first began tracking the numbers, according to census data. About 15.8 million people moved between 2004 and 2005, when the economy was healthy.

The recession and effects of the housing crisis have continued to freeze Americans in place, said Kenneth Johnson, senior demographer at the University of New Hampshire's Carsey Institute.

But in Michigan, where the annual jobless rate was 13.3 percent in 2009, many residents packed up to find work in other states with relatively low unemployment rates, said demographer Kurt Metzger, director of the nonprofit Data Driven Detroit.

"It was a lot of that realization that nothing was going to happen in the near term and there was no way they were going to survive," Metzger said. "They were just forced to move."

Florida remained the top destination of Michigan movers in 2009, when an estimated 19,440 residents moved there since 2008. That's down substantially from the nearly 31,000 who moved to the Sunshine State in 2006, when Michigan was deep in a recession that hadn't yet hit Florida. The state numbers are based on a survey of 2 million Americans.

Overall, movement out of Michigan — and beyond the border states of Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin — rose each year since 2005, topping 159,204 in 2009. Such migration helped Michigan become the only state to lose population in the decade.

"We've long been mortified at Michigan's losses," Michael D. LaFaive, fiscal policy director for the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, said in an email. "Every person who leaves may potentially be the next Berry Gordy or Will Kellogg."

Jobs were the primary attraction in the destination states that saw the biggest percentage increases among relocating Michiganians: Wyoming, Colorado and North Carolina. The latter state saw 9,510 Michigan migrants in 2009, more than triple the 2,628 who moved there in 2005.

Wyoming has one of the country's lowest unemployment rates at 6 percent and its strong economy has attracted people from other states to work, for example, in its energy industry, said Bob Jensen, CEO of the Wyoming Business Council, the economic development unit for the state.

"Several years ago when our unemployment rate was 2.5 to 3.5 percent, we were actively recruiting workers

from all over the place," he said. "We did have a couple of recruiting missions to try to attract work force from areas (including Michigan) that had a higher unemployment rate."

In all, about 37 million Americans moved between 2009 and 2010, including those who moved within the same county, according to the data.

About four out of 10 movers cited housing-related reasons. Another third said they moved for family reasons, and about 16 percent cited job reasons.

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