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Life Of A Legend

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Census: Detroit's Population Plummets 25 Percent

Mayor Disputes Numbers

JOHN FLESHER, Associated Press

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TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. -- Hammered by the auto industry's slump, Detroit saw its population plummet 25 percent over the past decade, according to census numbers released Tuesday that reflect the severity of an economic downturn in the only state where overall population declined.

The statistics show that the Motor City's population fell from 951,270 in 2000 to 713,777 last year. Although a significant drop was expected, state

demographer Ken Darga said the total is "considerably lower" than the Census Bureau's estimate last year.

"That's just incredible," added Kurt Metzger, a demographer with a Data Driven Detroit, a nonprofit that collects statistics used by area planners. "It's certainly the largest population loss percentage-wise that we've ever had in this city."

Detroit's population peaked at 1.8 million in 1950, when it ranked fifth nationally. But the new numbers reflect a steady downsizing of the auto industry - the city's economic lifeblood for a century - and an exodus of many residents to the suburbs.

Mayor Dave Bing disputed the new population data and plans to appeal. He said his city has at least 750,000 residents, which he called an important threshold for qualifying for some state and federal financial programs. He didn't say how so many people may have been missed.

City Council President Charles Pugh suggested that thousands of people "who are skeptical, distrustful of the government" avoided the count, such as convicted felons, illegal immigrants and residents who list suburban addresses to get lower car insurance.

The drop-off of more than 237,000 people in Detroit helped Michigan become the only state that suffered an overall population decline between 2000 and 2010, slipping 0.6 percent to 9,883,640. But the city, the state's largest, was not solely responsible for the dubious distinction.

The population fell 18 percent in Flint, another city heavily dependent on the auto industry and the birthplace of General Motors. Pontiac and Saginaw, which also lost jobs in auto and parts manufacturing, dropped 12 percent and 17 percent respectively.

Nearly half of the state's 83 counties lost residents, underscoring the ripple effect from Michigan's reliance on the ailing manufacturing sector. Michigan has lost nearly 860,000 jobs since 2000, and its unemployment rate has long been among the nation's highest.

"The census figures clearly show how crucial it is to reinvent Michigan," Gov. Rick Snyder said. "It is time for all of us to realign our expectations so that they reflect today's realities. We cannot cling to the old ways of doing business."

Metzger, the demographer, said Detroit's population drop partially reflects the migration of middle-class blacks to suburban counties, a trend that the mayor acknowledged. The numbers also suggest that some blacks have given up on Michigan altogether: the state's non-Hispanic black population fell 1.8 percent, from 1,408,522 to 1,383,756.

That marks Michigan's first drop in black residents since statehood, and a historically significant change for a state that was long a magnet for blacks leaving the South to escape discrimination and find jobs, said William Frey, a Brookings Institution demographer.

The recent housing crisis has accelerated foreclosures and driven down prices, which Metzger said has enabled more black families to buy houses in the suburbs.

"The next wave of ex-Detroiters with the same hopes and dreams has moved to the suburbs," he said.

Altogether, Michigan's cities lost 7 percent of their populations. Flint's population now stands at 102,434 residents. The capital city of Lansing suffered a 4 percent drop to 114,297, and even Grand Rapids - Michigan's second largest city, located in the less hard-hit western part of the state - was down 5 percent to 188,040.

Population increases were recorded in mostly suburban and some rural areas, the largest in counties on the fringe of metropolitan areas with large numbers of suburban commuters. Clinton County, north of Lansing, jumped 16.5 percent and Livingston County, between Detroit and Lansing, was up 15.3 percent.

Some rural areas fared badly. For example, the Upper Peninsula saw populations drop in 13 of its 15 counties, including a 13.3 percent drop - the worst statewide among counties - in far northwestern Ontonagon County.

Sharp increases were seen in Michigan's Asian and Hispanic populations.

The non-Hispanic Asian population was 236,490, up 35 percent over the decade - Michigan's fastest growing racial group - and now accounts for 2.4 percent of the state's residents. The state's Hispanic population grew by 34.7 percent, to 436,358, or 4.4 percent of the overall population.

The American Indian population inched up 1.3 percent to 54,665.

Associated Press reporter Ed White in Detroit contributed to this story.

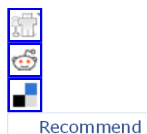
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Children aren't the only ones who are forced to deal with bullies. Workplace bullying is on the rise along with cyberbullying over the internet. For those facing these situations, here are a few tips to help adults and kids deal with bullying.

- [Elizabeth Taylor: 1932-2011](#)



Screen legend Elizabeth Taylor dies at age 79.

Question Of The Day

Which was your favorite Elizabeth Taylor movie?

- The Taming of the Shrew (1967)
- Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1966)
- Cleopatra (1963)
- Butterfield 8 (1960)
- Suddenly, Last Summer (1959)
- Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958)
- Raintree Country (1957)
- Giant (1956)
- Elephant Walk (1954)
- The Last Time I Saw Paris (1954)
- Ivanhoe (1952)
- A Place in the Sun (1951)
- Little Women (1949)
- Lassie Come Home (1943)
- Some other one.

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