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District Population Tops 600,000

Added almost 30K residents during the last 10 years, highest level since 1990

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It's a great day for residents of the District of Columbia.—

Mayor Adrian M. Fenty

WASHINGTON – The District of Columbia’s population increased by more than 29,600 residents during the last 10 years bringing the city’s total population to 601,723, according to the results of the 2010 Census, which was released on Tuesday. This is the first time in more than 60 years that the District’s population increased between the 10-year census periods. The District has not had more than 600,000 residents since 1990.

“More people than ever are moving to our city and staying in our city,” said Mayor Adrian Fenty. “This is a fantastic endorsement of the work we’ve done to transform our schools, improve city services, deliver safer streets and build stronger, healthier neighborhoods across the District of Columbia.”

The growth in the District’s population means an increase in federal funds allocations for the next 10 years to programs that are population based. This will have definitive and far reaching impact on programs for public health, public housing, foster care, senior employment, community development block grants, transportation, and special education. The District stands to gain at least an addition \$50 million annually in population-based federal funds.

"It's terrific that the District has reached this milestone," said Harriet Tregoning, director of the District’s Office of Planning, which oversees the District’s State Data Center and Census activities. “We had a great response rate from our citizens - with 72 percent of residents mailing in their 2010 Census forms, I am not at all surprised that Census was able to record nearly 602,000 residents in the District as of last April. We are a great place to live and I expect the District population to continue to steadily grow."

Increase in Births, New Residents

This tremendous growth can be attributed to increasing births to District residents and an influx of new residents from other states and abroad. Births have increased annually from about 7,600 in 2000 to more than 9,000 in 2009, with a natural increase (births over deaths) of about 27,000 since 2000. The District added more than 24,000 new residents from outside the United States since 2000. The city also made gains in domestic migration. Between 2008 and 2009, about 4,450 more people moved to the District from other states than moved away.

Jobs

People are choosing the Washington region to call home because of several factors. While other areas in the nation and region have lost jobs during the economic downturn in the last couple years, the Washington region has remained relatively stable and even added jobs. From October 2009 to October 2010, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the District alone added 20,600 jobs. During the same period, unemployment has dropped from 11.7 percent to 9.6 percent, and the region’s jobless rate was the lowest in the country. Data comparing the Census Bureau’s 2002 and 2007 Economic Survey for the District businesses show the number of establishments in the categories of retail, arts, entertainment and hospitality have more than doubled -- from 3,900 in 2002 to 10,400 – while sales increased from \$6.6 billion to \$9.1 billion.

Transportation

The District’s investments in providing more transportation choices – including car and bike sharing, rapid bus service and streetcar lines – are helping residents better utilize public transportation and walk to work. According to census data, between 2000 and 2009, for workers 16 years and older, the percentage of people who used public transportation or walked to work increase from 45 percent to 48.2 percent, while the percentage that drove private vehicles decrease from 49 percent to 43 percent.

Crime

Another important factor making the District a safe and attractive place to live and work is the significant decline in crime rates. Crime rates in the District have declined significantly over the last several years. According to crime statistics from the Metropolitan Police Department, major crimes are down 22 percent since 2001. The District's homicide rate fell to its lowest point in 44 years in 2009 and the city is on pace to decrease homicides by another 5 percent this year.