

Riverside County had state's highest growth rate

07:31 AM PST on Friday, December 10, 2010

By JIM MILLER
Sacramento Bureau

SACRAMENTO - Riverside County grew the fastest of any California county during the year ending July 1, despite higher-than-average unemployment and a huge foreclosures problem.

Statewide, the population increased by just 0.9 percent, to 38.8 million, from July 1, 2009, through July 1, 2010, according to Wednesday's report by the state Department of Finance. Almost all of the growth reflects natural increase -- live births minus deaths.

Riverside County's maternity wards stayed busy. But the county, far more than elsewhere, also attracted thousands of people from other parts of the U.S. and foreign countries.

Story continues below



Kurt Miller/The Press-Enterprise

Riverside County grew by 1.58 percent, to almost 2.2 million in a report on the 12 months ending July 1 by the state Department of Finance. "More people are moving in than moving out," finance demographer Linda Gage says.

"More people are moving in than moving out," Department of Finance demographer Linda Gage said of Riverside County. "That's a healthy growth rate and it's certainly outstripping the rest of the state."

Riverside County grew by 1.58 percent, to almost 2.2 million, and San Bernardino County grew by 0.98 percent, to 2.08 million. The counties remain the fourth- and fifth-largest in California, respectively.

Riverside County's growth rate in Wednesday's report is a far cry from the 4 percent-plus gains posted during the go-go years of large housing projects and plentiful jobs.

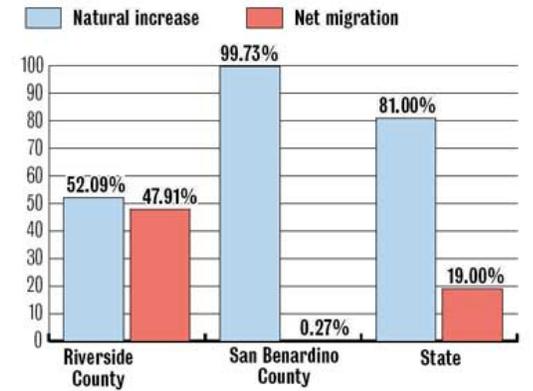
Still, far more people continue to come to the county than leave it.

According to the finance department, 10,554 people moved to Riverside County from other parts of the U.S. during the year.

That is the most in the state, and triple that of Placer County, which had the next-highest domestic migration total.

Story continues below

POPULATION GROWTH: Riverside County's population grew by 1.58 percent from July 1, 2009, through July 2010, the highest rate in the state. The county's growth was almost equally due to natural increase and people moving into the county. San Bernardino County had virtually no net migration.



SOURCE: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

In addition, Riverside County attracted 5,571 residents from foreign countries, seventh-highest in the state.

Los Angeles County topped that category, with 42,426 new residents from foreign countries. More than 47,000 people left that county, however.

Wednesday's report bodes well for Inland Southern California's prospects during the upcoming redrawing of legislative and congressional lines to reflect updated census numbers.

The census numbers used in redistricting will come out in April. The report suggests that many residents hit by foreclosures or unemployment have stayed local, or otherwise were replaced by new arrivals.

Reach Jim Miller at 916-445-9973 or jmiller@PE.com