

St. Croix County is Near Nation's Top in 10-year Growth

St. Croix's 33.55% increase ranks 45th nationally as an urban fringe county

From 2000 to 2010, St. Croix County, Wisconsin was among the top population-gaining fringe counties in the U.S. according to the Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau has four classifications for U.S. counties that are based on size and location. 'Metro-central' counties are located at the core of large, urbanized metropolitan areas. A county like St. Croix, located 20 minutes east of St. Paul, Minnesota and 40 minutes from Minneapolis, is designated as 'metro-outlying'. 'Micropolitan' areas are smaller versions of heavily populated metro-central areas. And lastly, 'rural counties' are areas with low population density and the population may be growing only slightly or not at all.

About 672 counties in the U.S. have the metro-central designation. Another 428 counties are considered metro-outlying. From 2000-2010, St. Croix's population increased by 33.55% to rank it as the 45th fastest-growing metro-outlying county in the U.S. St. Croix's increase was well above the combined rate of 16.8% for all 428 metro-outlying counties.

"This is no surprise," said William Rubin, executive director of St. Croix Economic Development Corporation. "St. Croix is on the Census Bureau's list of the one hundred fast-growing counties occasionally, so it stands to reason that it would be among the leaders as a fringe county over a ten year period."

Rubin noted that other counties within the 13-county Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington metro area also made the fastest-growing list. Wright County, Minnesota ranked 32nd (+38.52%), followed closely by Sherburne County, also in Minnesota, at 36th (+37.27%) and Chisago County (MN) ranked 59th (+31.06%). Pierce County, Wisconsin, just south of St. Croix, is also included in the federal definition of the 13-county metro area, and reported a 10-year population increase of 11.69%

The Census Bureau estimated that metro-central counties grew by 10.3% from 2000-2010 and now have 236.8 million of the 308.7 million people in the U.S. About one hour east of the Wisconsin-Minnesota border is the Eau Claire metro area, comprised of Eau Claire and Chippewa counties. Chippewa recorded a population increase of 13.04% to rank third among Wisconsin's metro-central counties while Eau Claire was further down the list in tenth place with an increase of 6.02%.

Even the smaller micropolitan areas grew between 2000 and 2010. Nationally, the 688 micropolitan areas grew by 5.9%. In Wisconsin, Sauk County is the fastest-growing micropolitan area. It grew by 12.30% over the 10-year census period. Closer to St. Croix, Dunn County grew by 10.05% to rank as Wisconsin's 4th fastest-growing micropolitan. To qualify for this designation, the federal Office of Management and Budget requires the area to have at least 50,000 residents, but the anchor central city can be as small as 10,000 residents.

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