

Census Bureau releases detailed population info

By Tom Betz

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The U.S. Census Bureau recently released more detailed Kansas 2010 Census population totals and demographic characteristics to the governor and leadership of the state legislature.

The data provides the first look at population counts for Kansas counties, and shows most of western Kansas lost population including Cheyenne County which was down 2,726 from 3,165 10 years ago.

Michael Solomon, Sherman County economic development director said he was getting his first look at the numbers, and will be comparing them to his vision of the Goodland shopping region.

He said it is less important how the population is shifting within the counties, but more important to look at the total shopping area Sherman County depends on to bring money into the county. That area runs from Wray, Colo. to Benkelman, Neb., on the north to Tribune on the south Brewster on the east and Stratton, Colo., to the west.

The official 2010 Census Redistricting numbers will be used to redraw federal, state and local legislative districts, taking into account population shifts since the 2000 Census.

Census data for Kansas show the five most populous incorporated places and their Census counts are Wichita, 382,368; Overland Park, 173,372; Kansas City, 145,786; Topeka, 127,473; and Olathe, 125,872.

Wichita grew by 11.1 percent since the 2000 Census. Overland Park grew by 16.3 percent, Kansas City decreased by 0.7 percent, Topeka grew by 4.2 percent, and Olathe grew by 35.4 percent.

The largest county is Johnson, with a population of 544,179. Its population grew by 20.6 percent since 2000. The other counties in the top five include Sedgwick, with a population of 498,365 (increase of 10.0 percent); Shawnee, 177,934 (increase of 4.7 percent); Wyandotte, 157,505 (decrease of 0.2 percent); and Douglas, 110,826 (increase of 10.9 percent).

Sherman County showed a population of 6,010 in 2010, down 750 from the 2000 census, but ahead of the U.S. Census 2009 estimated population of 5,860. The drop over 10 years is about 11 percent. However, based on the U.S. Census estimate for 2009 Sherman County is up 150 or ahead by about 2.5 percent.

The University of Kansas Institute for Policy and Social Research and Entrepreneurship Works for Kansas puts out an annual Kansas County profile in July with a set of population estimates created by Wichita University and the latest figures were compiled in 2008.

Comparing the estimates with the U.S. Census figures shows some counties are holding true to

the Wichita University computer model, but others are off by quite a bit.

The Census figures show Sherman County has dropped about 1 percent per year over the past 10 years, but not as fast as the Wichita State University estimate for 2010 with Sherman County population estimated at 5,519 a drop of 1,241 over the 10 years for 19 percent.

Northwest counties

With the new U.S. Census figures Wichita University will be able to update their computer population estimate model. In many cases the county estimates for 2010 done by Wichita University were off by more than 3 percent, but in the case of Greeley County the Wichita University was about as close as you can get missing the actual U.S. Census count by 2. The 2010 estimate was 1,245 and the U.S. Census count was 1,247.

Greeley County dropped 18.7 percent in the 2010 Census to

1,247 from 1,534 in the 2000 Census.

Thomas County showed a drop of 3.42 percent to 7,900 in 2010 down from 8,180 in 2000. The 10-year average is a loss of 28 people per year. The Wichita University estimate for Thomas County for 2010 of 7,178 was lower by 722 or about 10 percent.

Cheyenne County dropped 13.87 percent in the 10 years down to 2,726 from 3,165. The Wichita University population estimate for 2010 was 2,651, or 75 people (2.7 percent) lower.

Decatur County dropped 14.72 percent down to 2,961 from 3,472. The Wichita University estimate or 2010 was 2,888, (73 lower).

Norton County dropped 4.74 percent down to 5,671 from 5,953. The Wichita University estimate for 2010 was 5,345 or 326 lower (5.7 percent) than the U.S. Census.

Rawlins County dropped 15.07

percent down to 2,519 from 2,986. The Wichita University estimate for 2010 was 2,373, (146 below the census count).

Sheridan County dropped 9.14 percent down to 2,556 from 2,813. The Wichita University estimate for 2010 was 2,347, (209 below the census).

Wallace County dropped 15.09 percent down to 1,485 from 1,749. The Wichita University estimate for 2010 was 1,405, (80 below the census).

Gove County dropped 12.16 percent down to 2,695 from 3,068. The Wichita University estimate for 2010 was 2,428, (267 below the census).

Logan County dropped 9.52 percent down to 2,756 from 3,048. The Wichita University estimate for 2010 was 2,534, (222 below the census).

In the western half of the state only a handful of counties showed growth in the past 10 years with Ellis being the only one in the

northwest part. In the southwest part Pratt, Hamilton, Stephens, Seward, Ford and Gray counties show growth over the 2000 census.

Saline County increased 3.75 percent up to 55,606 from 53,597. Ellis County increased 3.44 percent up to 28,452 from 27,507.

Statewide Kansas showed a 6.1 percent growth in population from the 2000 census to 2,853,118 in 2010.

State redistricting

The increase in the state population will not change the number of Congressional representatives for the state, but will cause the size of the existing districts to shift, and means the Big First Congressional district is likely to get bigger. Currently the Big First covers 69 of the 105 Kansas counties.

Redistricting will be done for the state legislature representative and senate districts and Rep. Rick Billinger and Ward Cassidy plus

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer will be in the thick of the redistricting process.

On a national basis the number of people in a district represented by a Congressman has risen from 210,328 in 1910 to 710,767 in 2010. For Kansas the number in the representative district has risen from 211,369 in 1910 to 715,953 in 2010. In the 100 years Kansas has lost three representatives going from a high of seven down to four, and the 6.1 percent increase in the state population is not enough for the state to gain a seat, but is enough to maintain the four seats the state has.

In looking at redistricting the Big First Congressional will have to grow by 42,497 to balance out at the 715,953. There are other factors beyond the population numbers that will be considered in the redistricting including the effects of a rising Hispanic population.

City does not receive grant for band shell

By Karen Krien

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The mayor had received a letter from the Kansas Historical Society informing him that the city had not received a grant for the band shell.

The city, with the help of Greg Kite, former resident, had applied for the grant. The letter, which was received on Feb. 25, said the funds were limited and only 28 percent of the projects had been funded. Mr. Kite said he would submit the grant again.

The band shell, located in Sawhill Park, is in need of repair. Water has caused damage to the building. The council agreed that the city does not have the money to restore it.

Mayor Scott Schultz asked J.R. Landenberger, city superintendent, to look at the roof and see if it needs patching and look at the gutters to see that they are clear. If the roof looks like there could be some places where water is getting in, he said, we need to patch it.

Roger Jensen, councilman, and Mr. Schultz talked about the vents in the attic which have been covered. That, they said, is causing a lot of the damage. How to make these repairs will be discussed after they have looked in the attic.

Contractor liability

For several months, the council has been hashing over the requirements for contractor liability insurance. The present regulation requires the contractor to be insured for \$100,000 but part of the council wants the contractor to be covered for \$300,000.

Both Paula Keller, councilwoman, and Bruce Swihart, councilman, felt that the licensing requirements were

too restrictive. Mr. Swihart asked if his sons helped him pour cement, would they have to be licensed? The answer was, if the job requires a building permit and they are paid, yes."

Mrs. Keller said the requirements over reaches the property owner's right to have whoever they need. Mike Day, attorney, pointed out that there are "grey areas" when a "contractor" does not have a description.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Jensen moved to accept the resolution that would raise the requirement rates. Dale Weeks and Mr. Jensen voted yes, Mrs. Keller and Mr. Swihart voted no. Carla Lampe, councilwoman, was not present, so Mayor Schultz broke the tie by voting yes. The resolution now requires contractors to have \$300,000 liability insurance.

Emergency Building

Mr. Schultz and Mr. Jensen had recently met with the St. Francis Emergency Building Board. They said the meeting had went well. The boiler situation was discussed, noting the emergency medical technicians and/or the firemen would be in charge of the boiler as needed.

The city will pay a share of the expenses each month and the utilities would be the same rates. The building will be leased to the county for a minimal amount, probably \$1.

No decision was made as the information will be presented to the commissioners.

Metering requirements

Superintendent Landenberger

said he had a call from Kansas Municipal Energy Agency concerning Sunflower Electric's requirement for new metering. Sunflower is the company which provides the city's electricity. The company is requiring that a contractor look at the city power plant and put in meters by June at a cost of \$35,000.

There are a lot of questions, he said. We need to make sure there is a requirement of the costs and if the meters need to be installed. For that kind of money and time frame, I think someone needs to talk to us personally.

It is amazing that everyone is always wanting money, Mr. Swihart said. Mrs. Keller wondered what would happen if the city didn't pay the \$35,000? Mr. Landenberger said he didn't know. He will be finding more information.

Curb and gutter replacement

Spring is coming and the superintendent said it is time to start looking at replacing at least one block of curb and gutter on Main Street. Mr. Landenberger said two blocks are in real need of replacing along with a few approaches. Krutsinger Construction, Benkelman, had given the city a price of around \$12,000 a block last year and Mr. Landenberger thought it was still good.

They talked briefly about some of the residential areas that might need curb and gutter replacement. Mr. Landenberger will find out if the bid is still good and curbs and gutters will be discussed at a future meeting.

Recycling

Mr. Jensen is the county's representative on the Northwest Kansas Recycling Center Board which consists of eight counties. He reported that the county had 138 tons of trash which was recycled. Of the 138 tons, 9 tons were e-waste items.

The county bill at the landfill, he said, has dropped about \$9,000 a year. Because of the increased amount of items at the recycle center, there is a need for more manpower and that savings could be used for wages. Sorting, is sometimes a problem, he said.

I am proud of the recycling program we have as well as the citizens, Mr. Jensen said. Let's hope it continues to do well for the county and the city.

Swimming pool

Mr. Swihart, swimming pool committeeman, reported there would be a meeting that week and they would go over the applicants for a pool manager as well as discuss policies and prices.

Mr. Swihart asked if there had been any interest in putting the siding on the Scout Hut. Mayor Schultz said the asking for bids had not been advertised yet.

In other business

The council agreed to go with the Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance as the city employees now have it. There is a \$250,000 cap. They will look at the insurance again after more is known where the health bill is headed.

The mayor said he had asked Mr. Landenberger to put another

220-volt outlet at the park as there are two parties needing it during the car show in May. Mayor Schultz asked the council what they thought should be charged for the use of the outlets. The council agreed that the car show was a good event for St. Francis and people shouldn't be discouraged by a charge. They finally said to charge a small fee for those with booths that were using the profits for personal gain.

Concerning city cleanup, Mr. Day said Sherry Smith has until March 15 to remove items they want from the property on Emerson Street. If anyone sees property that needs to be cleaned up, contact Mr. Landenberger or the city office, 332-3142.

The council discussed which city uniforms should be paid for and how much. They discussed everything from the cost to clean, to the cost of shoes but finally decided to leave the matter as it stands - shirts and jeans for the city crew are provided and for part of the cleaning; the police uniforms are provided. The department head needs to consider their budget when spending money.

A zoning variance was approved for Amanda Jensen to open a new daycare on Adams and Third streets.

Business incentives were approved for Jensen Construction (new building) and for Amanada Jensen (daycare).

Next meeting

The next meeting of the city council will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday at city hall.

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WE MISSED YOU

By now you have received a brochure that gave you information about the meetings being held at the 7th Day Adventist Church in St. Francis. The meetings continue this weekend and end the weekend of March 25,26. The following schedule are the times and topics for March 18, 19:

March 18- Friday 7 p.m. Central "Whatever happened to right and wrong?"
 March 18- Friday 8 p.m. Central "Your day in court"
 March 19- Saturday 10 a.m. Central "Memory Lapse and Monkey Business"
 March 19- Saturday 11:15 a.m. Central "Mister One Day Late"
 March 19- Saturday 5:15 p.m. Central "How to prosper in Health"
 March 19- Saturday 6:15 p.m. Central "How to Start Life Over Again"

In each meeting you will hear clear explanations of Bible Prophecies that explain world conditions. Your questions will be answered about topics such as the Millennium, End of the World, Salvation by Grace, Mark of the Beast and many more. Practical information on topics like healthy living and financial management will also be presented directly from the pages of your Bible. These studies will help you find peace with yourself, your family, your friends, and most importantly, with God. At the end of each presentation a printed summary of the topic will be given to those who attend.

Also, after Saturdays meeting (11:15 a.m.) there will be a free vegetarian lunch served to all those who attend. If you want recipes, we will supply those to you.

SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? Make plans to attend the next meeting on March 18, 7 p.m. Central time and bring a friend along.