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METROPLAN RELEASES 2023 METROTRENDS DEMOGRAPHIC REVIEW AND OUTLOOK
Changing Demographics in Central Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, AR, August 9, 2023 — Metroplan announces release of the *2023 Demographic Review and Outlook*. The 2023 edition reviews changing demographics in the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Since about 2010, the Central Arkansas region has seen less in-migration and population growth has slowed. Most other south-central U.S. metro areas are seeing similar trends. Declining U.S. fertility rates and an aging U.S. population mean migration is unlikely to return to pre-2010 rates. Nonetheless, Metroplan’s population estimates for 2023 suggest a small uptick in local population growth.

Additional highlights:

- The General Fertility Rate (the number of births per 1,000 women of childbearing age) has declined in Central Arkansas from about 67.7 in 1990 to 58.5 in 2020.
- In 2021, Covid-19 was the third leading cause of death in the state, after heart disease and cancer. The disease’s long-term impacts on mortality remain uncertain.
- Higher death rates are caused by aging of the population but there has also been a rising toll from “deaths of despair” caused by drug and alcohol abuse, and even suicides.
- Since 2010 life expectancy has declined for the U.S. and Central Arkansas.
- Household sizes have gotten smaller. Almost 38 percent of housing units in the region are rentals, and nearly one-third of households consist of people living alone.
- Little Rock is still the largest city in Central Arkansas. Conway passed North Little Rock shortly after the 2020 census and is now the region’s second largest city. Ward is the region’s fastest-growing city and its tenth largest.
- The pace of housing construction has slowed since the pandemic-related surge of 2020 and 2021.
- Total building permits declined about 22 percent from 2021 to 2022.
- The region is seeing a minor increase in “missing middle” housing units like duplexes, triplexes and four-plexes.

Read the full publication by visiting:
<https://metroplan.org/publications/>

Metroplan publishes *Metrotrends* twice yearly. All articles, tables and figures are available for republishing with credit. Further information on this issue may be obtained in the new *2023 Demographic Review and Outlook*, available as a PDF or paper copy from Metroplan.

Metroplan is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the four-county region of Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski and Saline counties. It is a voluntary association of local governments that has operated since 1955.

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