

1998 Review and Outlook

Metroplan estimates that the Little Rock-North Little Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) grew by 41,733 people, or 8 percent, between 1990 and 1998. Total population grew from 523,457 to 565,190.

Chart A, below, shows the region's population growth by county over this period. Faulkner County led, gaining 17,832 people, a growth of 29.7 percent. Saline County grew by 12,594 people, a rate of 19.6 percent over 1990 levels. Lonoke County was close behind, gaining 10,835 people, a rate of 27.6 percent.

Pulaski County, by comparison, barely grew at all, gaining an estimated 472 people between 1990 and 1998, a rate of 0.1 percent. In fact, Census Bureau estimates suggest that Pulaski County has been losing population slowly since about 1993.

Chart A
LR-NLR MSA Population Growth by County 1990 - 1998

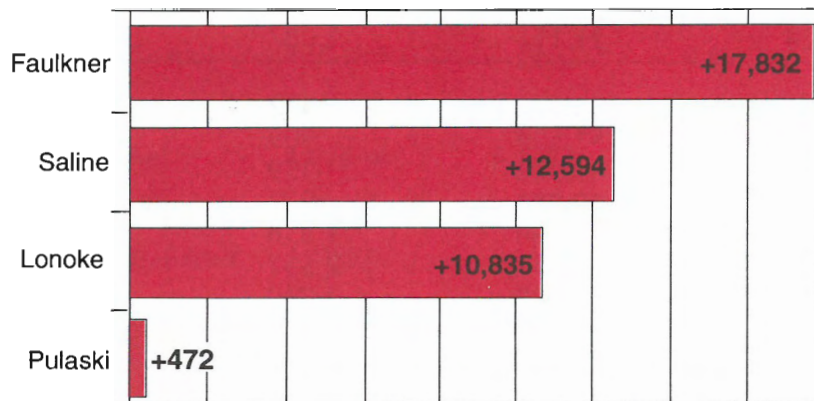
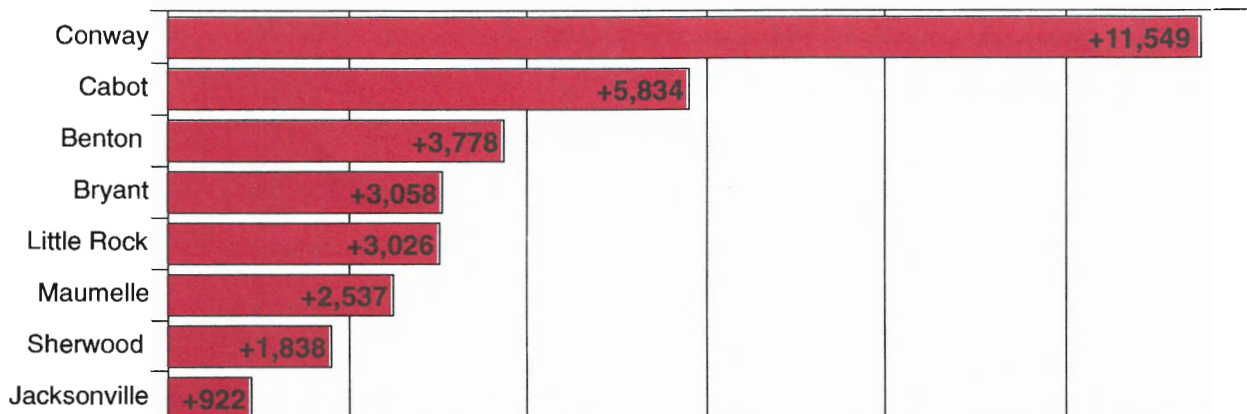


Chart B, below, shows the eight cities in the MSA with the greatest population growth, in simple number terms, since 1990. As the numbers show, Conway has added more new people than the next two cities, Cabot and Benton, combined. Little Rock, by far the largest city in the region, experienced less absolute population growth than Bryant, and barely more than Maumelle - both cities below 10,000 population total. North Little Rock did not make the list because population has probably dropped slightly since 1990.

Chart B
LR-NLR MSA Major Cities Ranked By Population Growth 1990 - 1998



Estimated Population: January 1998

Area	1990	Estimated 1998	Absolute Change 1990 - 1998	Percent Change 1990-1998
Faulkner County	60,006	77,838	17,832	29.7
Conway	26,481	38,030	11,549	43.6
Greenbrier	2,130	2,952	822	38.6
Mayflower	1,415	1,592	177	12.5
Vilonia	1,133	1,757	624	55.1
Wooster	414	501	87	21.0
Small communities	723	907	184	25.4
Unincorporated	28,433	32,099	3,666	12.9
Lonoke County	39,268	50,103	10,835	27.6
Cabot	8,319	14,153	5,834	70.1
Austin	235	590	355	151.1
Ward	1,269	2,310	1,041	82.0
Lonoke	4,022	4,569	547	13.6
England	3,351	3,415	64	1.9
Carlisle	2,253	2,348	95	4.2
Small communities	795	1,607	812	102.1
Unincorporated	19,024	21,111	2,087	11.0
Pulaski County	360,000	360,472	472	0.1
North of River	150,620	151,529	909	0.6
North Little Rock	63,567	63,228	-339	-0.5
Jacksonville	29,961	30,883	922	3.1
Sherwood	19,452	21,290	1,838	9.4
Maumelle	6,912	9,449	2,537	36.7
Unincorporated (N)	30,728	26,679	-4,049	-13.2
South of River	209,380	208,943	-437	-0.2
Little Rock	180,925	183,951	3,026	1.7
Cammack Village	853	829	-24	-2.8
Alexander	207	726	519	250.7
Wrightsville	1,093	1,064	-29	-2.7
Unincorporated (S)	26,302	22,373	-3,929	-14.9
Total unincorporated	57,030	49,052	-7,978	-14.0
Saline County	64,183	76,777	12,594	19.6
Benton	18,177	21,955	3,778	20.8
Bryant	5,269	8,327	3,058	58.0
Shannon Hills	1,755	1,949	194	11.1
Haskell	1,342	1,870	528	39.3
Traskwood	488	544	56	11.5
Bauxite	412	454	42	10.2
Unincorporated	36,740	41,678	4,938	13.4
LR-NLR MSA	523,457	565,190	41,733	8.0

Sources: Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census. 1998 Metroplan estimates.

Special Censuses Bring More Revenue For Local Cities

From 1996 through early 1998, a number of communities in central Arkansas contracted with the Census Bureau to have special census counts done of their fast-growing populations. This owes primarily to a recent change in state law that allows fast-growing cities to receive more state "turnback" revenue by proving population growth in recent years. By early 1998, eight central Arkansas communities had completed Special Censuses, boosting turnback revenues in every case.

The population numbers shown below generally verified Metroplan's estimates of local population growth through the time of the Special Censuses. In a few cases, the new counts caused Metroplan to revise its estimates slightly. The results also revealed significant reductions in average household size, particularly within Pulaski County. The extremely rapid growth in Alexander is primarily the result of a recent large annexation. Of course, all of the figures are just snapshots in time; the relentless process of population change will continue.

Special Census Results

City (County)	Date of Special Census	1990 Population	1990 Average Household Size	Special Census Population	Special Census Average Household Size	Percent Growth
Alexander (Pulaski)	12/11/97	201	2.83	726	2.31	261.2
Benton (Saline)	7/9/97	18,177	2.56	21,006	2.48	15.6
Cabot (Lonoke)	12/10/96	8,319	2.85	12,852	2.82	54.5
Conway (Faulkner)	4/26/96	26,481	2.44	35,993	2.49	35.9
Greenbrier (Faulkner)	11/20/96	2,130	2.79	2,829	2.73	32.8
Maumelle (Pulaski)	10/15/96	6,714	2.64	8,468	2.56	26.1
Sherwood (Pulaski)	3/25/97	18,893	2.68	20,435	2.45	8.2
Ward (Lonoke)	2/24/98	1,269	2.75	2,332	2.82	83.8

Source: Census State Data Center, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Surfin' for Data

The internet is rapidly becoming a vital data source. In fact, some of the information for this issue of the *Review and Outlook* was compiled from the web. For those interested in demographic data on the central Arkansas area, the following websites can help:

Agency	Website Address
➤ Metroplan	www.metroplan.org
➤ Census Bureau	www.census.gov/
➤ Arkansas Employment Security Department	www.state.ar.us/esd/ark_esd.html
➤ Development Information Network of Arkansas	www.aiea.uarl.edu/dina/
➤ Federal Statistics (access to all agencies)	www.fedstats.gov/

The 1997 Housing Market

Chart C
Total Housing Unit Permits
for Little Rock - North Little Rock MSA 1990 - 1997

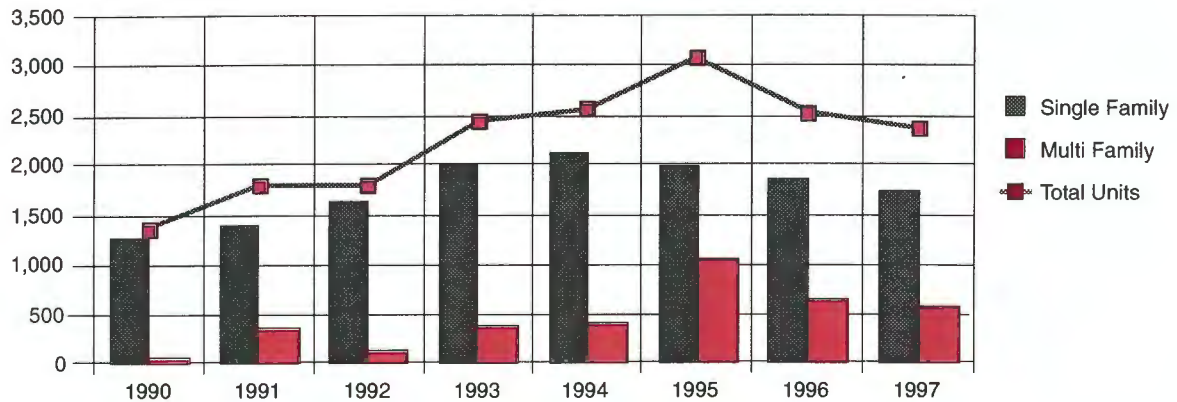


Chart D
Single Family Housing Unit Permits 1990 - 1997
for Larger Cities

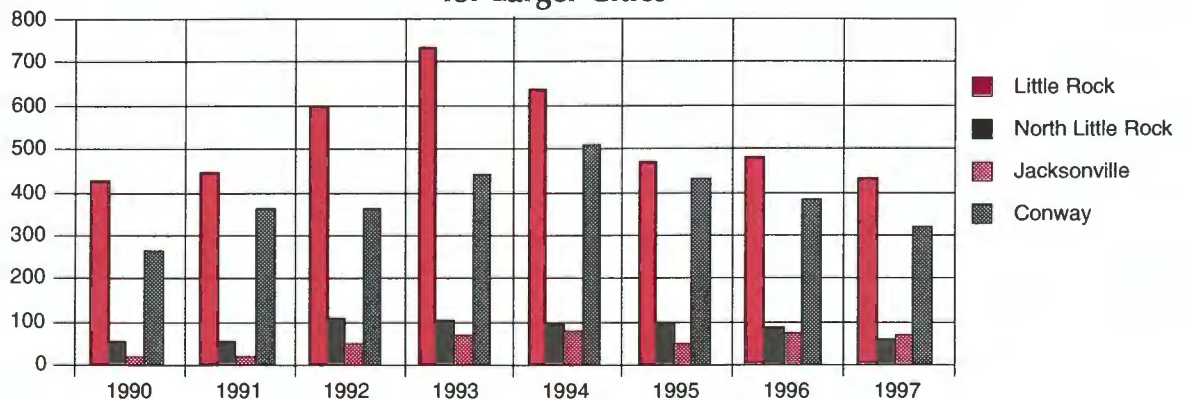
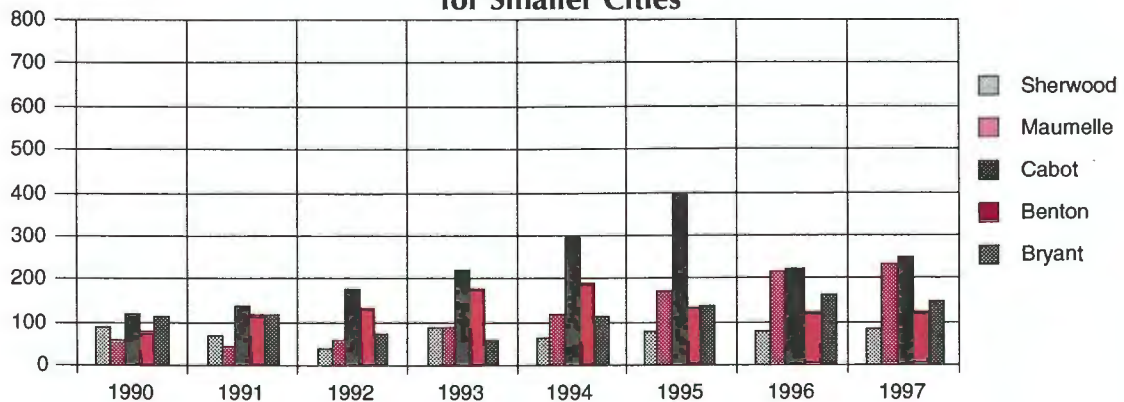


Chart E
Single Family Housing Unit Permits 1990 - 1997
for Smaller Cities



The 1997 Housing Market

Housing construction activity was down slightly in 1997 compared with the previous year. There were no drastic changes for any city. Maumelle continued its upward trend in single-family home construction, while Cabot also saw an increase over the previous year. Single-family housing permits held steady or decreased slightly in most other communities. Conway and North Little Rock showed the largest drop from 1996 levels. Multi-family construction also remained roughly stable, accounting for one-quarter of all housing units permitted, with major complexes built in Little Rock and Conway.

Single-Family Housing Unit Permits

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Little Rock	431	450	603	740	641	477	477	436
North Little Rock	61	58	113	107	97	98	90	66
Jacksonville	26	25	53	75	82	54	78	73
Sherwood	94	76	44	91	70	85	85	88
Maumelle	62	47	65	93	124	176	220	240
Cabot	123	141	184	224	297	400	235	256
Benton	85	122	138	183	194	138	126	127
Bryant	119	124	79	63	117	141	167	150
Conway	271	368	369	445	515	438	389	323
Total Single Family	1,272	1,411	1,648	2,021	2,137	2,007	1,867	1,759

Multi-Family Housing Unit Permits

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Little Rock	25	19	0	11	18	430	7	232
North Little Rock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Jacksonville	0	6	0	6	10	1	0	12
Sherwood	60	4	0	30	16	457	48	0
Maumelle	0	0	0	14	6	0	0	0
Cabot	N/A	3	N/A	0	48	29	13	2
Benton	2	66	34	223	31	0	278	16
Bryant	40	0	4	0	4	16	3	4
Conway	51	291	110	132	288	139	307	338
Total Multi-Family	178	389	148	416	421	1,072	656	606

Total Housing Unit Permits

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
MSA Total Units	1,450	1,800	1,796	2,437	2,558	3,079	2,524	2,365
Percent Single-Family	87.7	78.4	91.8	82.9	83.5	65.2	74.0	74.4
Percent Multi-Family	12.3	21.6	8.2	17.1	16.5	34.8	26.0	25.6

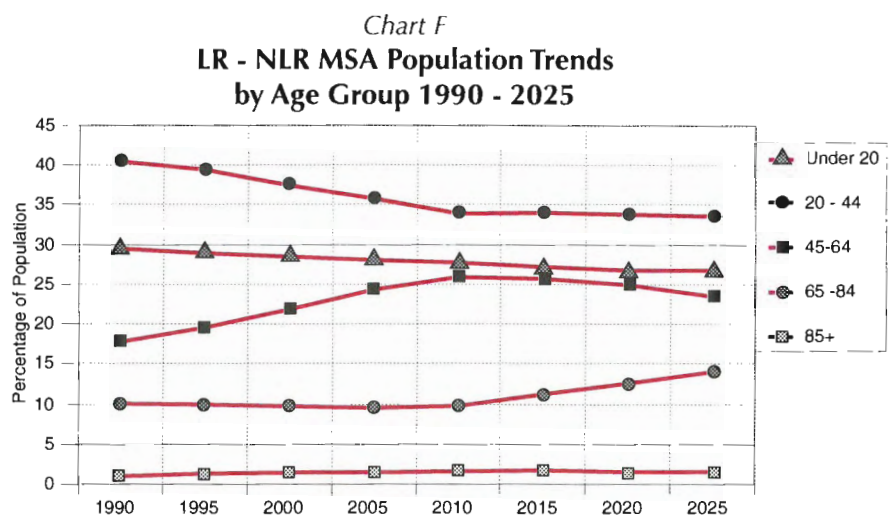
Central Arkansas and the Master Trend

Chart F, below shows an issue of great importance; anticipated changes in age structure likely to occur through the year 2025 in the Little Rock - North Little Rock MSA. The chart shows a local dimension of the issue that inspired Cheryl Russell's popular title: *The Master Trend: How the Baby Boom Generation is Remaking America*.

Profound changes are occurring as the Baby Boom generation grows older. The region's population aged 45 to 64 is the fastest-growing group, which is also true for the US as a whole. After 2010, this large group will begin declining, due to mortality and aging of the population into the older 65 to 84 age group. After 2010, people over 65 years old will be the region's fastest-growing segment of population.

What kind of changes are coming? Here are a few speculations:

1. Incomes are strong right now with a vast number of people in the prime income-earning years. When the Baby Boom begins retiring, primarily after 2010, income growth may slow.
2. Most crimes are committed by people in their late teens and early-to-middle 20's. As these groups become proportionally smaller, crimes may become less common.
3. As the retired population grows, work commuting may decline. Yet the demand for leisure travel could increase.



Census of the Millennium

It is now less than two years until the 2000 Census. At present, city and county governments are providing the latest address updates to the Census Bureau, to help guarantee an accurate count.

At Metroplan, we are analyzing census geography to help the Census Bureau define the boundaries for census tracts, block groups, and traffic zones for Census 2000. Census geography changes will probably occur in and near Conway, Mayflower, Vilonia, Maumelle, western Little Rock, Benton, Bryant, Cabot, Austin and Ward. New census tracts, block groups and traffic zones will be formed within previous boundaries, allowing easy comparison with past data.

Suggestions concerning new boundaries for census geography may be submitted to Metroplan within the next few months. Metroplan's Local Review Committee will analyze these changes and make recommendations to the Census Bureau.

1997 Economic Census

February 12, 1998 was the deadline for businesses around the USA to submit Economic Census forms, as required by law. It is, however, still possible to submit the forms late. The 1997 Economic Census will provide both governments and businesses with a wealth of data on economic trends. Results will be available over the Internet by early 1999.

From SIC to NAICS

The data will use the new NAICS codes (North American Industry Classification System) in place of the old SIC codes (Standard Industrial Classification). This change will allow many new business types to be included as the economy changes and the service sector grows. Just as important, the new NAICS codes will apply in Canada and Mexico as well, allowing easy comparison with their data.

Some Hints of How We've Changed

The following business classifications are newly independent categories added into the NAICS coding system to account for the latest economic trends. This list tells its own story about recent growth areas in the U.S. economy:

Semiconductor machinery manufacturing	Fiber optic cable manufacturing
Reproduction of computer software	Manufacture of compact discs except software
Convenience stores	Gas stations with convenience food
Warehouse clubs	Food/health supplement stores
Pet supply stores	Pet care services
Cable networks	Satellite communications
Cellular and other wireless communications	Telecommunication resellers
Credit card issuing	Temporary help supply

Outlook

The population and economy of the Little Rock - North Little Rock MSA will continue in slow growth mode during 1998. Preliminary 1998 data suggest housing construction is stable or rising slowly. Housing growth is moving upward in Benton and Conway, after a slowdown in 1996-1997. Maumelle is continuing its upward trend. Little Rock has also seen a mild increase in 1998 so far. All other markets appear roughly stable.

Pulaski County's population is stable, while all three outlying counties will continue to register population growth, but at a slower pace than during the middle 1990's.

Components of Population Change

County	January 1998	April 1990	Change	Percent Change	Net Migration	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase
Faulkner	77,838	60,006	17,832	29.7	14,092	7,666	3,926	3,696
Lonoke	50,103	39,268	10,835	27.6	9,067	4,766	2,998	1,759
Pulaski	360,472	360,000	472	0.1	-20,210	46,121	25,439	20,820
Saline	76,777	64,183	12,594	19.6	10,027	7,133	4,566	2,517
MSA	565,190	523,457	41,733	8.0	12,976	65,686	36,929	28,792

Sources: Metroplan, US Bureau of the Census. Birth and death figures represent period from April 1990 to January 1998. Birth and death data provided by the Arkansas Department of Health. 1997 birth and death components of data are provisional, final tallies available later this year.

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