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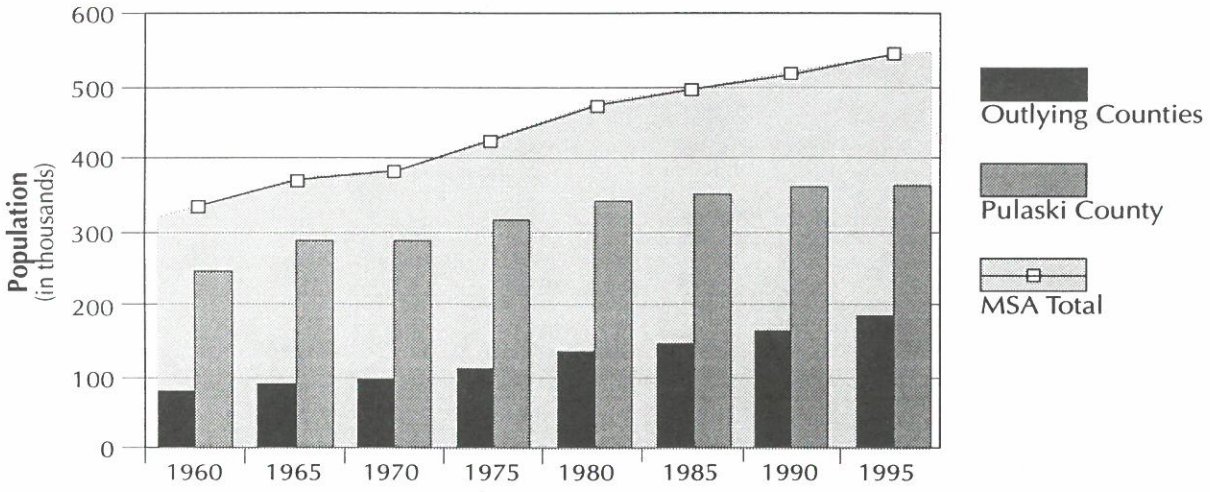
1995 Review and Outlook

The population of the four-county Little Rock-North Little Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) grew 5.25 percent from 1990 to 1995, from 523,457 in 1990 to 550,938 in 1995. As shown by the figures on the next page, Pulaski County grew by just over 1 percent during the last five years, while Faulkner County grew by 17 percent, Lonoke County by about 14 percent, and Saline County by just over 12 percent.

Chart 1

MSA Population Growth

Pulaski County and Outlying Counties Compared



As Chart 1 above shows, Pulaski County has barely grown since about 1980. Although the outlying counties still represent far less population as a whole, they have grown rapidly. As Charts 2 and 3 show, Pulaski has declined in relative terms from slightly over three-fourths of the metropolitan area's population in 1970 to about two-thirds today. The summaries on page three give a rough sketch of recent population and economic trends in each county.

Chart 2

1970 Regional Population

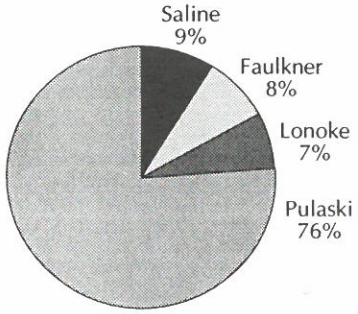
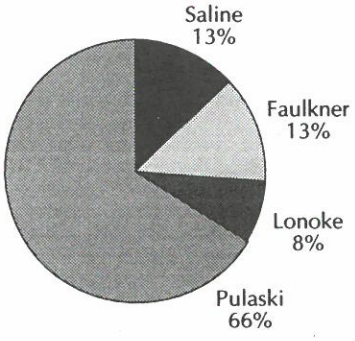


Chart 3

1995 Regional Population



Estimated Population: January 1995

Area	April 1990	January 1995	Absolute Change 90-95	Percent Change 90-95
Faulkner County	**60,006**	**70,444**	**10,438**	**17.4**
Conway	26,481	34,697	8,216	31.0
Greenbrier	2,130	2,418	288	13.5
Mayflower	1,415	1,592	177	12.5
Vilonia	1,133	1,340	207	18.3
Wooster	414	456	42	10.1
Other Communities	723	844	121	16.7
Unincorporated	28,433	29,097	644	2.3
Lonoke County	**39,268**	**44,699**	**5,431**	**13.8**
Cabot	8,319	10,429	2,110	25.4
Austin	235	800	565	240.4
Ward	1,269	1,800	531	41.8
Lonoke	4,022	4,161	139	3.5
England	3,351	3,083	-268	-8.0
Carlisle	2,253	2,194	-59	-2.6
Other Communities	795	701	-94	-11.8
Unincorporated	19,024	21,532	2,508	13.2
Pulaski County	**360,000***	**363,808**	**3,808**	**1.1**
North of River	150,620	153,246	2,626	1.7
North Little Rock	63,567	63,994	427	0.7
Jacksonville	29,961	30,074	113	0.4
Sherwood	19,452	20,081	629	3.2
Maumelle	6,912	7,834	922	13.3
Unincorporated North	30,728	31,263	535	1.7
South of River	209,380	210,562	1,182	0.6
Little Rock	180,925	182,274	1,349	0.8
Cammack Village	853	813	-40	-4.7
Alexander	207	220	23	6.3
Wrightsville	1,093	1,102	9	0.8
Unincorporated South	26,302	26,152	-150	-0.6
Total Incorporated	302,970	306,392	3,422	1.1
Total Unincorporated	57,030	57,416	386	0.7
Saline County	**64,183**	**71,987**	**7,804**	**12.1**
Benton	18,177	20,181	2,004	11.0
Bryant	5,269	6,395	1,126	21.4
Shannon Hills	1,755	1,805	50	2.9
Haskell	1,342	1,484	142	10.6
Traskwood	488	524	36	7.4
Bauxite	412	391	-21	-5.1
Unincorporated	36,740	41,207	4,467	12.2
LR-NLR MSA	**523,457**	**550,938**	**27,481**	**5.3**

*Adjusted 1990 census figures for Pulaski County (see box at the bottom of page 3 for explanation). Sources: Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1995 Metroplan estimates.

A Regional Profile

The Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA has experienced strong economic growth since 1990, particularly in 1993 and 1994. MSA unemployment has dropped from 5.6 percent in 1990 to 3.1 percent in June 1995. Central Arkansas has seen rapid employment growth in most sectors, particularly in the data processing and communications fields. Although not traditionally an industrial region, the MSA has recently seen impressive manufacturing growth. According to the Arkansas Institute for Economic Advancement, rapid employment growth is causing statewide and local labor shortages.

Faulkner County

There has been extremely rapid population and economic growth in Conway, which has added nearly one-third to its 1990 population. Conway's growth has also spun off into nearby Greenbrier, Mayflower and Vilonia. Conway has had dramatic success attracting new manufacturing firms. Conway's rapid housing growth has occurred in all directions, especially westward, although some slowing was evident in early 1995. The county is now confronting the boom's consequences, such as traffic growth and labor shortage. Many of the new residents commute to Pulaski County, but Conway has a strong employment base of its own and retains many residents in local jobs.

Lonoke County

The county's growth since 1990 has far exceeded expectations, caused mainly by the emergence of the MSA's newest "boom" area in and near Cabot. Now over 10,000 population, Cabot is becoming a bedroom community for Pulaski County workers. As of July, 1995, housing construction in Cabot remains rapid, despite a slowdown elsewhere in the MSA. There is also rapid growth in nearby Austin, Ward and unincorporated areas of northwestern Lonoke County.

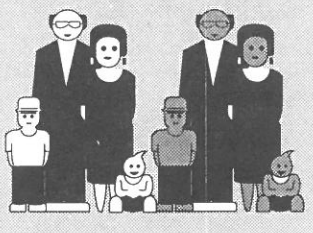
Pulaski County

The central county has strong economic growth and slow population growth. Continuing population decline in the older neighborhoods of Little Rock and North Little Rock has been counterbalanced by rapid housing growth around the edges, particularly in western Little Rock. As a whole, there has been slow population growth in both cities. Although the majority of the county's workers are still residents, a growing number of local workers are choosing to live outside Pulaski County and commute. There has been rapid employment growth in health care, data processing and manu-

(continued on the next page)

New Ways to Count People

This issue of the *Metrotrends Review and Outlook* provides detailed population estimates on the entire four-county Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA for the first time. Estimates are given for every incorporated community of over 1,000 population, and for some smaller towns. These estimates were made using a new system which is now primarily based on U.S. Census Bureau annual estimates for counties. The 1995 estimate shows considerably slower growth in Pulaski County than Metroplan's earlier 1992 and 1993 estimates, and is more accurate.



Accounting for the Undercount

The 1990 Census figures for Pulaski County and many large urban counties in the U.S. undercounted the local population. In 1991, the Census Bureau produced new, adjusted estimates of the population. Although not officially adopted, these figures probably give a more accurate picture. The overall difference is small: the adjusted figures give Pulaski County about 3 percent more population than the original figures. Metroplan's 1995 population estimates were also adjusted upward slightly to compensate for the 1990 undercount. The following table compares the official figures with the adjusted figures used by Metroplan:

Jurisdiction	Original 1990	Adjusted 1990 (Used by Metroplan)	Difference
Pulaski County	349,660	360,000	10,340
Little Rock	175,795	180,925	5,130
North Little Rock	61,741	63,567	1,826
Jacksonville	29,101	29,961	860
Sherwood	18,893	19,452	559
Maumelle	6,714	6,912	198
Wrightsville	1,062	1,093	31
Cammack Village	828	853	25
Alexander	201	207	6
Unincorporated	55,325	57,030	1,705

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Post Enumeration Survey of 1990 Coverage.

facturing. Sherwood and Jacksonville have seen continued housing growth since 1990 but have not grown anywhere near as fast as during the 1980's. Maumelle's housing growth sagged from 1990 to 1992, but accelerated through 1994 despite the regional housing slowdown, making it by far the fastest growing community in Pulaski County.

Saline County

The region's original "commuter county" is still growing fast. In Benton, rapid single-family housing growth has been augmented by substantial multi-family housing construction. There has also been major retail growth along the I-30 corridor, and some industrial growth. Bryant is still experiencing rapid growth despite a regional housing slowdown since late 1994. Housing growth in unincorporated Saline County continues at a fast pace, especially at the Hot Springs Village development in western Saline County.

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More to Come ...

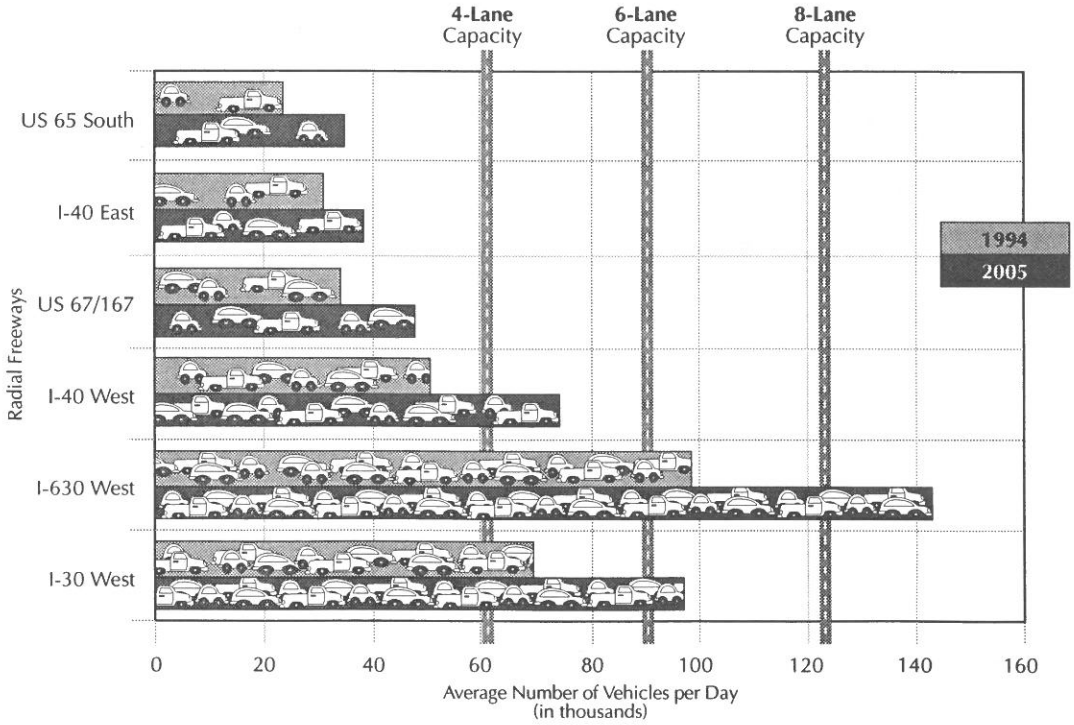
This edition of Metroplan's annual *Review and Outlook* provides complete data coverage of the entire four-county MSA for the first time. Because of the space required for all four counties, not all of the data normally provided could be included. A supplemental issue will be sent soon which will include the remainder of the annual data. Building permit information, employment data, new and expanding industries, assessed property valuations, bank deposits, and bank assets will be included.

Population Estimates and the Future

Metroplan's population estimates reveal rapid growth in the Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA's outlying areas. This portends major challenges in the future. As people move out to sparsely settled areas unprepared for urban needs, pressure is put on local infrastructure. An example is traffic growth. The following chart and table show what will happen to local freeways if current traffic growth trends continue:

Radial Freeway Traffic — 1994 and 2005

(Counts Taken Near Pulaski County Line*)



*Except counts for I-630, taken just west of downtown Little Rock.

Little Rock - North Little Rock MSA: Traffic Growth Trends for Radial Freeways

Freeway (at Pulaski County Line)	Major Regional Origin or Destination	Average Daily Capacity	Percent Traffic Growth 1980-1994	Average Daily Traffic 1994	Year Exceeding Capacity
US 65 - South (of central area)	Pine Bluff	60,500 (4-lane)	51.7[1]	24,120	2030
I-40 - East	Lonoke	60,500 (4-lane)	43.0	31,000	2039
US 67/167 - North	Cabot	60,500 (4-lane)	103.4	34,300	2016
I-40 - West	Conway	60,500 (4-lane)	138.2	50,960	1999[2]
I-630 - West	Western Little Rock	90,200 (6-lane)	135.5	99,000	1994[3]
I-30 - West	Benton	60,500 (4-lane)	118.7	68,700	1993[4]

[1]Percentage growth for US 65 south based on data 1986-1994.
[2]Under these projections, I-40 west to Conway will exceed 6-lane capacity (90,200 vehicles daily) in 2013.
[3]I-630 at this point will exceed 8-lane capacity (121,000 vehicles daily) in 2000.
[4]I-30 at this point will exceed 6-lane capacity in 2003, and 8-lane capacity in 2014.

Notes: The traffic count figures represent two-way traffic counts taken from monitoring points nearest the Pulaski County line except for I-630, where the traffic counts are from just west of downtown. With some freeways, congestion may be greater closer to downtown areas. The traffic counts, provided by the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, are subject to sampling error.

The capacity figures were developed by Metroplan's Technical Coordinating Committee to identify congested areas. Since the traffic counts cover a 24-hour day, a highway exceeding capacity may not be congested all the time. With few trucks and traffic spread evenly through the day, highways can handle greater volumes. The "year exceeding capacity" figures were derived from linear projections, based on traffic growth from 1980 to 1994. Note that, in some cases, designed capacities have already been exceeded.

Public School Enrollment Little Rock - North Little Rock MSA

Another example of regional growth and change can be seen in public school enrollment. The data, given in the table below, shows that enrollment dropped slightly in Pulaski County from 1990 to 1995, but grew in Faulkner, Lonoke, and Saline Counties:

County	1990-1991 School Year	1994-1995 School Year	Percent Change
Faulkner	10,551	11,954	13.3
Lonoke	8,581	9,350	9.0
Pulaski	55,579	54,658	-1.7
Saline	10,769	11,510	6.9
MSA Total	**85,480**	**87,472**	**2.3**

Source: Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, Arkansas Department of Education.

Components of Population Change

County	January 1995	April 1990	Change	Percent Change	Net Migration	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase
Faulkner	70,444	60,006	10,438	17.4	8,230	4,513	2,305	2,208
Lonoke	44,699	39,2o8	5,431	13.8	4,431	2,801	1,801	1,000
Pulaski	363,808	360,000	3,808	1.1	-9,832	29,364	15,724	13,640
Saline	71,987	64,183	7,804	12.2	6,107	4,354	2,657	1,697
MSA	**550,938**	**523,457**	**27,481**	**5.3**	**8,936**	**41,032**	**22,487**	**18,545**

Source: Metroplan, U.S. Bureau of the Census. Birth and death figures represent period from April 1990 to January 1995. Data provided by Arkansas Department of Health.

Outlook

The MSA is likely to experience slower growth in 1995 and 1996, but the slowdown and possible recession in the U.S. economy is unlikely to cause serious problems locally. The recent local growth in data processing and communications is likely to slow. Despite the recent housing slowdown, lower interest rates and a sound regional economy may allow local construction to hold steady in 1995 and 1996. The strong growth in and near Bryant, Cabot, Conway and Maumelle will continue. Increased development activity is possible in eastern Pulaski and central Lonoke counties, along I-40, I-440 and U.S. 165, where there are hints of development activity and commuting is convenient. Early 1995 saw two apartment complexes begun in Sherwood and western Little Rock. Further multi-family construction is likely to proceed at a moderate pace. Progress of the Riverfront project in Little Rock and North Little Rock is enhancing the prospect for commercial development in both downtowns.

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