

Census shows shift

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EBR largest parish in La., N.O. shrinks

BY GREG GARLAND
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East Baton Rouge is now Louisiana's most populous parish with a population of 440,171, overtaking Orleans and Jefferson parishes, according to U.S. Census Bureau data released Thursday.

The census figures also show that Ascension and Livingston

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parishes experienced the highest percentage population growth among the state's 64 parishes over

the past decade. Each grew by just under 40 percent while the state's population increased by 1.4 percent to 4.53 million.

The census figures reflect a marked shift in Louisiana's population from the New Orleans metro area to Louisiana's capital region since Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

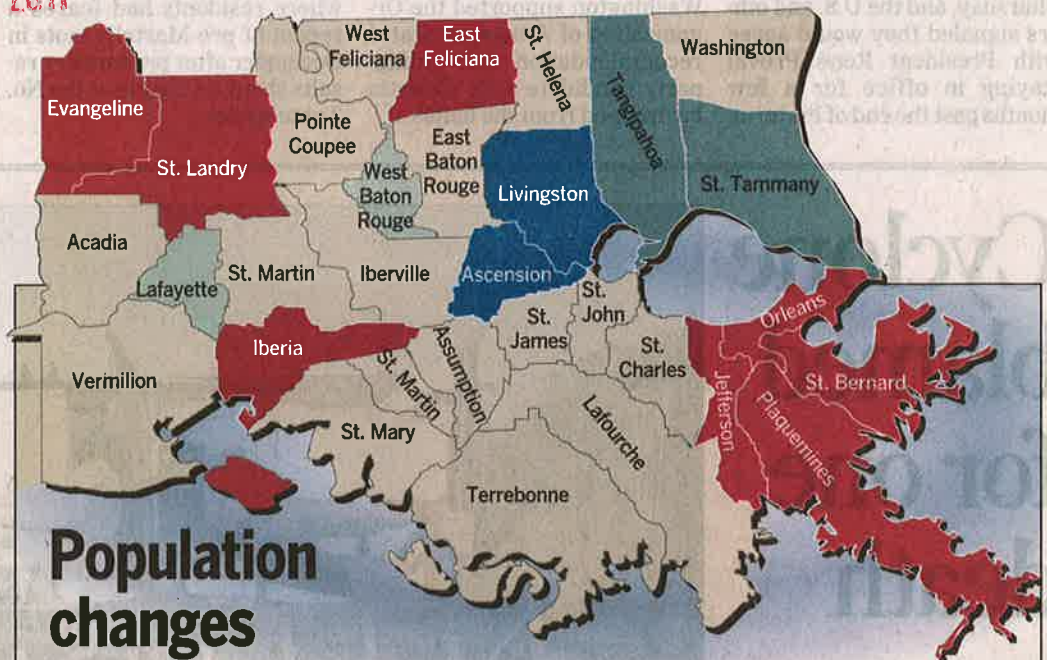
Adam Knapp, president and chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, said the 2010 census figures show the nine-parish capital region has grown at an even-faster pace than researchers were projecting.

The capital region now has a population of just more than 800,000, Knapp said, which is an important threshold for economic development purposes and attracting new businesses.

"We're considered a major market now," Knapp said. "If you think of it as a boxing metaphor, were in a different weight class."

He said the capital region's population was 705,973 in 2000 and it wasn't expected to surpass 800,000 until some time in 2013.

"It's fantastic news," Knapp



■ 30% or more increase ■ 20% to less than 30% increase ■ 10% to less than 20% increase ■ 0% to less than 10% increase ■ Parishes that lost population

PARISH	2000	2010	CHANGE	PARISH	2000	2010	CHANGE
Ascension	76,627	107,215	39.92%	Acadia	58,861	61,773	4.95%
Livingston	91,814	128,026	39.44%	St. James	21,216	22,102	4.18%
St. Tammany	191,268	233,740	22.21%	West Feliciana	15,111	15,625	3.40%
Tangipahoa	100,588	121,097	20.39%	St. Mary	53,500	54,650	2.15%
Lafayette	190,503	221,578	16.31%	Iberville	33,320	33,387	0.20%
West Baton Rouge	21,601	23,788	10.12%	Pointe Coupee	22,763	22,802	0.17%
St. Charles	48,072	52,780	9.79%	Assumption	23,388	23,421	0.14%
Vermilion	53,807	57,999	7.79%	Iberia	73,266	73,240	-0.04%
Washington	43,926	47,168	7.38%	Evangeline	35,434	33,984	-4.09%
St. Martin	48,583	52,160	7.36%	St. Landry	87,700	83,384	-4.92%
Lafourche	89,974	96,318	7.05%	Jefferson	455,466	432,552	-5.03%
Terrebonne	104,503	111,860	7.04%	East Feliciana	21,360	20,267	-5.12%
St. John the Baptist	43,044	45,924	6.69%	Plaquemines	26,757	23,042	-13.88%
East Baton Rouge	412,852	440,171	6.62%	Orleans	484,674	343,829	-29.06%
St. Helena	10,525	11,203	6.44%	St. Bernard	67,229	35,897	-46.60%

Source: U.S. Census

Advocate graphic

said.

Ascension and Livingston parishes were the fastest-growing parishes in the state in terms of their percentage growth rates of just under 40 percent, the census report shows.

Ascension's population grew by 30,588 over the past decade to 107,215; Livingston's grew by 36,212 to 128,026.

East Baton Rouge Parish's population grew at a slower pace, 6.6 percent, rising 27,319 to 440,171 over the decade.

Lafayette Parish also showed robust population growth of

16.31 percent — 31,075 people over the decade, from a population of 190,503 to 221,578.

St. Tammany Parish added the largest number of people over the decade, 42,472 — from 191,268 to 233,740.

But a post-Katrina exodus resulted in dramatic population losses for most of the New Orleans metro area.

Orleans Parish saw its population drop by 29 percent, from 484,674 to 343,829. The population of Jefferson Parish fell from 455,466 to 432,552, a 5 percent decline.

Hard-hit St. Bernard Parish

lost nearly half its population, falling from 67,229 in 2000 to 35,897 in the 2010 census.

East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President Kip Holden did not respond to telephone and e-mail messages left with his staff on Thursday seeking comment on the latest census figures.

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Walker, who chairs the Metro Council, said the population growth is a good thing but poses challenges

"We're continuing to gain

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SHIFT

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population in tough times, so that's encouraging," Walker said.

But, he said, keeping up with infrastructure improvements needed to support a growing population is a continuing challenge.

Walker said he's hopeful the latest census figures will qualify the parish for more federal dollars to pay for road work and other public improvements.

"We can't slow down," Walker said. "We have to keep up with the growth."

Ascension Parish President Tommy Martinez said he thought population growth for Ascension might be even higher than was reflected in the latest census data.

"As you drive around Ascension Parish, you can see the growth, and it's continuing," Martinez said.

He said balancing growth can be tough when it comes at such a rapid pace.

"Right now we have to build a school a year," Martinez said. "We're behind the eight ball on infrastructure, and we know that."

He said the parish is handling

the pressures that come with the population growth by working together.

"We've got a great sheriff's office and school system, and everybody works together here," Martinez said.

Livingston Parish President Mike Grimmer said the latest numbers are no surprise and reflect what he sees in growing school populations and more traffic on the streets.

"It's good growth for us because we're starting to get more retail businesses and more jobs," Grimmer said. "That's something the parish has been light on in past."

He said it also means more tax revenue.

Troy C. Blanchard, an LSU demographer, said Livingston and Ascension parishes have been "listed among the top 100 fastest-growing counties in the United States in the past couple of years."

Blanchard said one big unanswered question from the latest census figures is what the future holds for the New Orleans metro area.

"We can't slow down. We have to keep up with the growth."

MIKE WALKER,

Baton Rouge mayor pro tem

He said there was an assumption that people who moved after Katrina would come back, but the population has yet to rebound.

The New Orleans metro area has a lot of infrastructure and potential for growth, Blanchard said, and it will be interesting to see what happens over the next decade.

The Baton Rouge metro area has a different challenge as it grows into a big city, Blanchard said.

"It's a very exciting time for south Louisiana, for our area, at least," he said.

He said one issue confronting Baton Rouge is a "hollowing out" of the urban core as people move to suburban communities like Central and Zachary or to Livingston and Ascension parishes.

Knapp noted that the capital region's population grew by almost 14 percent over the past decade, from 705,973 to 802,484. By comparison the state's total population grew by 1.4 percent, from 4,468,976 to 4,533,372.

Parishes by most population in 2010

PARISH	2000	2010	PARISH	2000	2010
East Baton Rouge	412,852	440,171	Jefferson Davis	31,435	31,594
Jefferson	455,466	432,552	Morehouse	31,021	27,979
Orleans	484,674	343,829	DeSoto	25,494	26,656
Caddo	252,161	254,969	Allen	25,440	25,764
St. Tammany	191,268	233,740	Sabine	23,459	24,233
Lafayette	190,503	221,578	West Baton Rouge	21,601	23,788
Calcasieu	183,577	192,768	Assumption	23,388	23,421
Ouachita	147,250	153,720	Plaquemines	26,757	23,042
Rapides	126,337	131,613	Pointe Coupee	22,763	22,802
Livingston	91,814	128,026	Union	22,803	22,721
Tangipahoa	100,588	121,097	Grant	18,698	22,309
Bossier	98,310	116,979	St. James	21,216	22,102
Terrebonne	104,503	111,860	Concordia	20,247	20,822
Ascension	76,627	107,215	Franklin	21,263	20,767
Lafourche	89,974	96,318	Richland	20,981	20,725
St. Landry	87,700	83,384	East Feliciana	21,360	20,267
Iberia	73,266	73,240	Claiborne	16,851	17,195
Acadia	58,861	61,773	Jackson	15,397	16,274
Vermilion	53,807	57,999	West Feliciana	15,111	15,625
St. Mary	53,500	54,650	Winn	16,894	15,313
St. Charles	48,072	52,780	LaSalle	14,282	14,890
Vernon	52,531	52,334	Bienville	15,752	14,353
St. Martin	48,583	52,160	Madison	13,728	12,093
Washington	43,926	47,168	West Carroll	12,314	11,604
Lincoln	42,509	46,735	St. Helena	10,525	11,203
St. John the Baptist	43,044	45,924	Catahoula	10,920	10,407
Avoyelles	41,481	42,073	Caldwell	10,560	10,132
Webster	41,831	41,207	Red River	9,622	9,091
Natchitoches	39,080	39,556	East Carroll	9,421	7,759
St. Bernard	67,229	35,897	Cameron	9,991	6,839
Beauregard	32,986	35,654	Tensas	6,618	5,252
Evangeline	35,434	33,984	TOTAL	4,468,976	4,533,372
Iberville	33,320	33,387			

Source: U.S. Census

Advocate graphic