Census helps to define us

Hispanics make up 35.7 percent

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The population of San Angelo may not have grown greatly in the past decade, but the 10-year mirror the census holds up tells us we are nonetheless a different city in many ways.

Tom Green County is now home to 110,224 people, according to the 2010 census, and 93,200 of them live within the San Angelo city limits.

Half the people in Tom Green County under the age of 17 are Hispanic, according to the American Community Survey, and Hispanic people now make up 35.7 percent of the total population, according to the 2010 census figures released this month.

The black population in the county increased by 147 people, or 3 percent over the 10 years. People who declare themselves to be Native American, Asian, Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders also increased in number, enriching the diversity of the county.

So looking at a crowd anywhere in town, on average 88 of every 100 people you’d see were living in Tom Green County 10 years ago. Of those, 77 live in the same house as a year ago, and another 11 would have moved but stayed within the county.

Five have arrived from other parts of Texas within the past year, another four from somewhere in the U.S. outside Texas, and you would have to find a crowd of at least 200 people to stand an average chance of running into one person who has moved here from somewhere outside the U.S. in the last year. The odds of encountering one of the latter go up if you’re visiting the campus of Angelo State University.

Some folks arrive here without moving: 1,939 children were born in the county during the year leading up to the ACS in 2009, about 1,000 higher than the number of deaths for the year.

Income figures show that Tom Green County residents as a whole are somewhat better off now than they were at the turn of the century, with median individual income having increased 24 percent to $21,483, the increase keeping pace with Texas and the nation as a whole but still significantly lower than the average, which for Texas is $24,318 and for the U.S. is $27,041.

In 2000, twice as many households in the county lived on less than $10,000 annual income as lived on more than $100,000. That position is now reversed — the number of households in extreme poverty declined by almost a third over the decade, and the number making more than $100,000 per year has more than doubled.

“Fewer people are living in severe poverty, but there are still many in poverty,” said Ken Stewart, director of Community Development Initiatives for the Center for Community Wellness, Engagement and Development of Angelo State University.

The number of people living at or below the poverty line increased over the decade by 7.24 percent in the county, although that increase was less than the nationwide 9.1 percent increase.

Select changes in Tom Green County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Percent change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>104,010</td>
<td>106,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median personal income</td>
<td>$17,325</td>
<td>$21,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons living below poverty level</td>
<td>15,209</td>
<td>16,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households earning less than $10,000</td>
<td>4,669</td>
<td>3,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households earning more than $100,000</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>4,810</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant housing units</td>
<td>4,413</td>
<td>4,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median home value</td>
<td>$63,600</td>
<td>$83,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Because Hispanic crosses racial lines, demographic figures will not match total population.


Ambleide School of San Angelo elementary students walk along the Concho River as part of a field trip in which they learned about water and all its different functions as part of a program devised by the Upper Colorado River Authority. The river and water quality have become an intense focus of interest for the city over the past year.

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Ken Stewart, director of Community Development Initiatives for the Center for Community Wellness, Engagement and Development of Angelo State University.

See WHO, 10H
state or national average. Of every 100 Tom Green County residents, about 17 live in poverty.

The city’s development arm and the chamber of commerce deserve credit, Stewart said, for some of the beneficial changes that occurred between censuses. “Early in the decade, there was some income equalization, with the working people catching up,” he said. “Some of that was the result of changes in city and business leadership.”

Stewart worries that even though some income indicators are encouraging, the increases in cost of health and education — “these are the things you need to be successful” — are far outpacing the increases in income needed to pay for them.

The county’s increase in housing stock was slight compared to the fervid jumps elsewhere, and median home prices increased by 31 percent, sober in comparison to the 44 percent state and 55 percent national averages. But one of the shocking statistics over the past 10 years, one that tells the tale of the housing collapse, lies in the increase in the number of vacant housing units, which across the country increased by 45 percent and in Texas by 49 percent — evidence of widespread foreclosure — while in Tom Green County, the number increased by a mere 2.27 percent.

During the decade, the type of work done by the county’s residents changed, with major shifts away from manufacturing and information, which lost about 1,500 jobs, to health, education, arts, recreation and hospitality, which gained about 3,000.

Still, the city needs to attract businesses that make and sell goods, Stewart said.

“The good wages and pay still come with manufacturing,” he said. “We have the resources and the opportunities to draw businesses.”