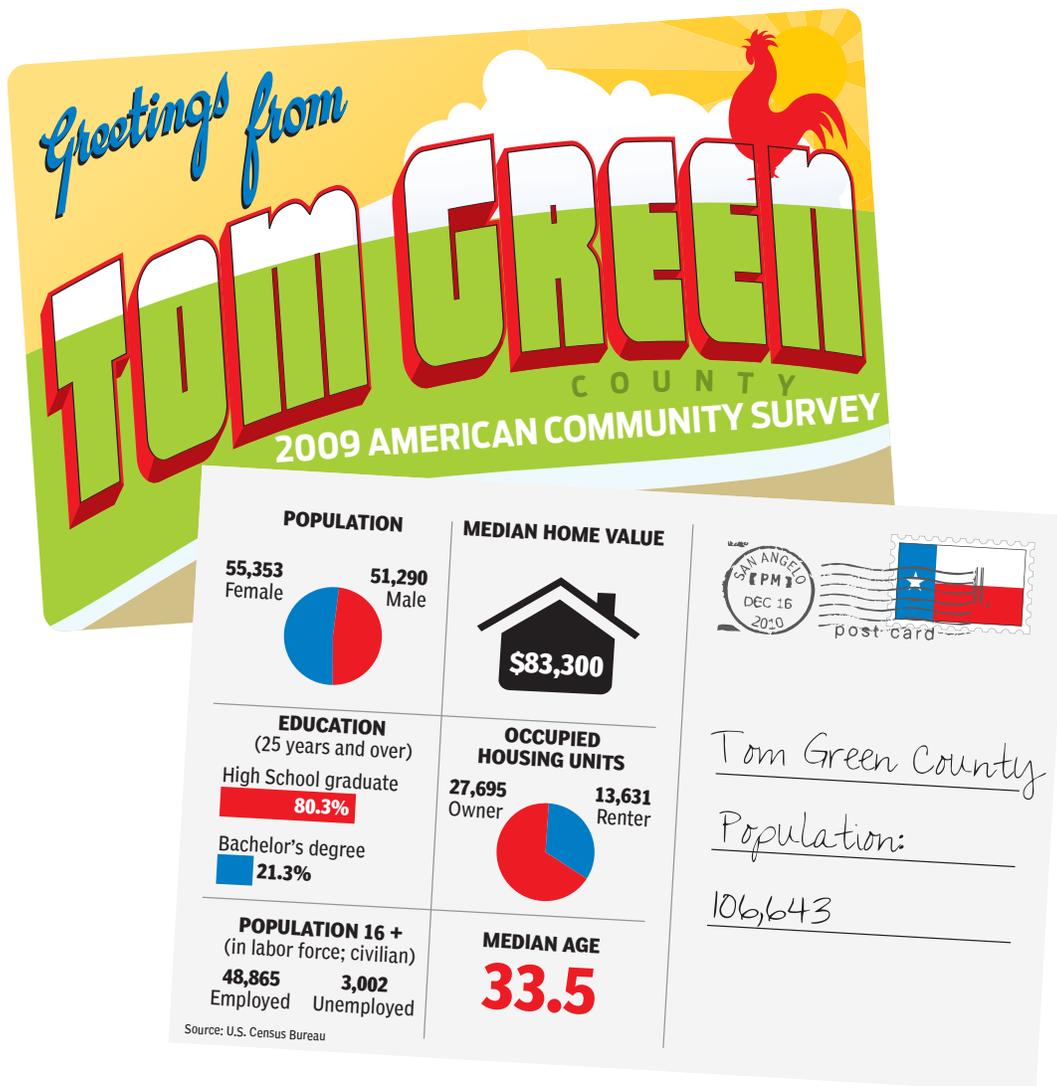


Tom Green County shows slight growth in survey



■ Housing stock, population, income up since 2000 poll

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Tom Green County grew only slightly during the past 10 years in

United States **CENSUS**

population, housing stock and income compared with the state and the nation, according to a massive release of data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The county's population grew by 2,633 people from the 2000 census

to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey estimates. The ACS estimates are a new data product released Wednesday that will allow small-level geography analysis every year instead of every 10 years.

The ACS data is not the 2010 census data, the release of which will take place during the next several months starting at the end of the year.

Please see CENSUS, 5A

CENSUS *from 1A*

The county's population grew 2.53 percent over the period from the 2000 Census to the end of the 2005-2009 ACS, while in Texas the population increased 18.8 percent, and nationally it grew by 9.1 percent.

Per capita income in the county increased by 24 percent over the nearly 10-year period, closely matching income growth in Texas — 23.91 percent — and the U.S., which increased by 25.27 percent. At \$21,843, though, it lagged well behind the average dollar income figures for the state — \$24,318 — and the nation — \$27,041.

The county added 1,923 housing units for a growth in housing stock of 4.38 percent, while in Texas housing increased by 15.32 percent and nationally by 10.18 percent. The ratio of housing units occupied by owners grew by 4.32 percent, and renters in the county declined by 8.08 percent, both mirroring national trends. However, across Texas, homeownership shrank by 2.56 percent.

The percentage of people living in poverty increased on all levels, but in Tom Green County it increased less rapidly than in the state and nation. The county's population in poverty grew by 7.24 percent while in Texas it increased by 9.09

BY THE NUMBERS

Select comparisons from the 2000 Census and the 2005-2009 American Community Survey for Tom Green County:

2000	2009	CHANGE	TEXAS CHANGE	U.S. CHANGE
Population				
104,010	106,643	2.53%	18.8%	9.1%
Per capita average income				
\$17,325	\$21,483	24.00%	23.91%	25.27%
Portion of individuals living below poverty level				
15.2%	16.3%	7.24%	9.09%	8.87%
Housing units				
43,916	45,839	4.38%	15.32%	10.18%
Portion of units occupied by homeowners				
64.1%	67%	4.52%	-2.56%	4.86%
Median home value				
\$63,600	\$83,300	30.97%	44.12%	55.02%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

percent and in the U.S. by 8.87 percent.

The median value of a single-family house went from \$63,300 to \$83,300 in the county, growing 30.97 percent. Nationally, the median house value increased by 55.02 percent, and in Texas it grew by 44.12 percent.

But the county's slow growth is far from being the whole story.

"I don't think that's unusual. I think we've been like that for a number of decades," said Ken Stewart, director of Angelo State University's Wellness, Education and Development Center.

"We sometimes think of progress too strictly in just economic terms," he said. "Some of the buried problems we have are not

necessarily completely solvable by having another job or increasing the sales tax revenues, but they're also things that figure into drawing people into a community."

Stewart and the center have been developing a series of indexes for the area using data to map out the community's strengths and weaknesses.

"Part of our motivation in the social health index and other projects is to stimulate focus on the quality of life, not strictly economic matters," he said.

The ACS figures also portrayed the composition of people in the county.

The county is slightly less diverse by race than it was at the turn of the century, with 82.4 percent of the popula-