

## **Help make '10 census count Accurate numbers vital for benefit of entire region**

**By KENNETH STEWART**

Special to the Standard-Times

The national census of population in 2010 opens abundant possibilities for San Angelo and local communities to improve, flourish and develop. That's because a complete and accurate count of the people finds so many important uses.

To be responsive to the community, for example, local governments must determine needs for schools, highways, parks, recreational facilities, public health services, libraries, police and fire protection, and plans for disaster response. They also must anticipate communitywide needs for housing, energy supply, workforce development, and numerous economic and social services.

Nonprofit groups and faith-based organizations enter the picture here, too, since government responses to community needs are so often provided by partnerships delivering everything from mental health support to youth mentoring projects or substance abuse treatment and prevention.

Knowing the people through the panorama of the census is crucial to adequate funding and effective organization of service partnerships that respond effectively to community needs.

Businesses thrive on new census information as well. Success in business, the mantra goes, depends on location, location, location! Accurate population numbers pinpoint and forecast potential markets, help firms identify access to workers with differing skill sets, and provide essential knowledge for product design and marketing strategy.

In March of next year (2010), the U. S. Census Bureau will mail a simple seven-item questionnaire to every household in San Angelo and the Concho Valley. Each household should diligently answer and return it to the Census Bureau.

Our nation's Constitution says that stepping forward to be counted is your obligation to the country.

Making sure that your family and household members are counted with you is also a vital step toward ensuring the progress of the community for the decade ahead.

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