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**M**ore arrive each day. Some are born there. Others move there from around the globe. Whether the newcomers are from Paris, Texas or Paris, New Hampshire or Paris, France, they are fueling a population surge in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. In the process, these migrants are the foundation for a strengthening real estate market.

On July 1, 1996, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the combined population of the Dallas and Fort Worth-Arlington metropolitan areas at more than 4.5 million and rising. This is a six-year gain of 13.3 percent. Surrounding suburban counties have grown especially fast since 1990—more than 25 percent.

The half million new residents for the region represents 25 percent of the 2.1 million new Texans added during those six years.

Each metropolitan area is a strong migrant magnet in its own right. The Dallas area's gain was ninth highest among Texas' 27 metropolitan areas. Fort Worth-Arlington ranked eleventh. In actual head count, only Houston added more people than Dallas, while Fort Worth-Arlington was fourth.

Last year the Census Bureau put the Dallas metropolitan area (see table) increase at nearly 372,000—a gain of 13.9 percent since 1990. The Dallas area grew

more than the 12.6 percent growth rate reported for Texas overall. Fort Worth-Arlington posted a 12.2 percent gain.

Population growth results from natural increase (births minus deaths), domestic immigration (from within Texas and from other states) and international immigration. The source of population growth is important because of the different effects each has on real estate.

Real estate markets are more affected by growth from migration than from natural increase. That is because nearly all migration involves new demand for housing. New births may not result in housing changes.

Similarly, a family moving from within the United States is likely to have more effect on the market than one moving from another country. Domestic immigrants tend to have higher incomes and spend larger amounts for housing.

State-wide patterns in the 1990s show less natural increase and more domestic immigration when compared to the 1980s. In 1980-90, 65.8 percent of all Texas population growth resulted from natural increase. In the 1990s, that fell to 55.2 percent. During the same time, the number moving from across Texas and across the nation jumped 13.6 percent. International immigrants fell 3 percent.

Overall population growth patterns differ for the Dallas and Fort Worth-

Arlington metropolitan areas. Natural increase accounted for 48.2 percent of Dallas' total growth in the 1980s. That jumped to 55.7 percent in the 1990s. At the same time, Fort Worth-Arlington's natural increase surged 18.2 percent to 55.8 percent of total population growth.

Population changes may be concentrated within specific parts of a metropolitan area. Like metropolitan areas elsewhere, Dallas and Fort Worth-Arlington growth has been greater and the effects of domestic immigration larger in the suburbs. International immigration has more effect on counties containing the central city.

Dallas County, the central-city county for the Dallas metropolitan area, actually posted a net loss of native-born Texans—about 75,000—while recording nearly an equal number of newcomers from other countries. Of the total international newcomers to the Dallas area, 86 percent moved to the central-city county.

Tarrant County, the central-city county for the Fort Worth-Arlington area, gained more international than domestic migrants. Tarrant County received 95 percent of the international immigration to its metropolitan area.

The influx of immigrants to the central cities did not, however, change the fact that nearly all suburban counties in the metropolitan area grew more rapidly than the central-city counties. Hunt



County in the Dallas area was the region's lone exception.

Migration to the suburbs was primarily of domestic origin. Among Dallas area suburban counties, domestic newcomers accounted for 68.5 percent of all growth and for 93 percent of all migration.

Similarly, among Fort Worth-Arlington suburban counties, domestic sources produced nearly 75 percent of the growth and more than 94 percent of all migration.

Nowhere is the rapid population growth more evident than in suburban Collin and Denton counties. Collin County's 1990-96 increase of 108,400 was a 41.4 percent overall population gain—the sixth largest increase of any Texas county. Of that total, 72 percent was the result of new arrivals from within the United States.

Denton County's increase of nearly 75,000 made it the tenth fastest growing of any Texas county. Nearly 63 percent of its growth was domestic.

Population patterns explain the rapid growth in real estate markets throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Two relatively distinct markets can be identified. Central-city counties attract

new residents from other nations and, therefore, suggest that moderately priced housing is more likely to be in demand. On the other hand, suburbs generally attract domestic immigrants more likely to have greater purchasing power.

Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington real estate professionals face different challenges depending on where they work. But wherever they work, they are likely to be envied by those in other markets because of

the area's rapid growth. In fact, if population trends set in 1990-96 continue, the Dallas-Fort Worth region will likely contain a population of nearly five million by the year 2000. ☐

Population Estimates Dallas and Fort Worth-Arlington Metropolitan Areas		
	Population on July 1, 1996	Percent Change Since 1990
<b>Dallas Area</b>		
Collin County	372,400	41.1
Dallas County	2,000,000	8
Denton County	348,500	27.4
Ellis County	97,100	14
Henderson County	65,700	12.2
Hunt County	67,900	5.5
Kaufman County	62,100	19
Rockwall County	34,200	33.4
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>3,048,000</b>	<b>13.9</b>
<b>Fort Worth-Arlington Area</b>		
Hood County	35,000	20.7
Johnson County	110,300	13.6
Parker County	76,000	17.4
Tarrant County	1,305,200	12.2
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>1,526,600</b>	<b>12.2</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

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