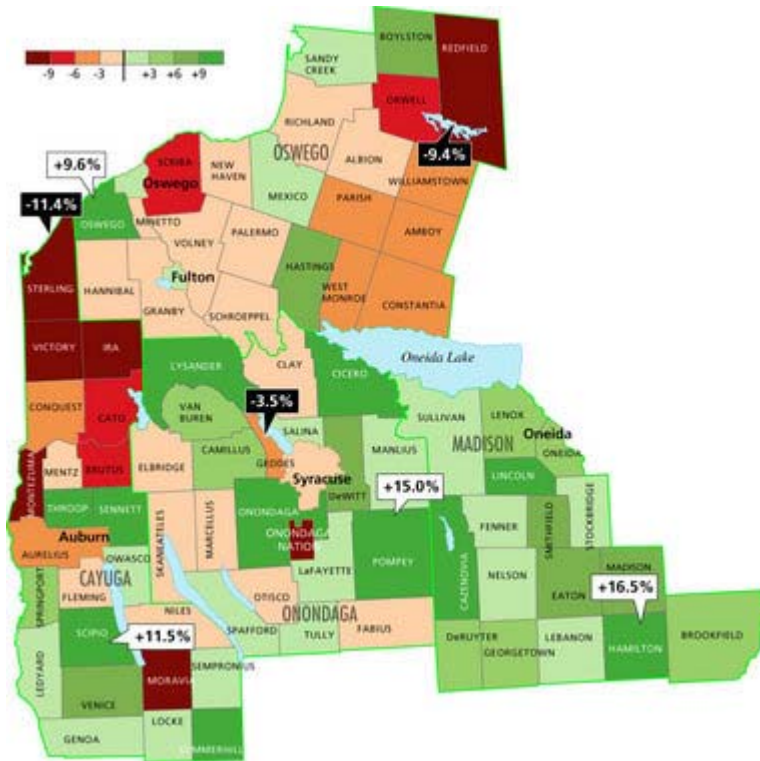


Central New York halts decline in population, according to latest Census statistics

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By **Mark Weiner / The Post-Standard**



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Syracuse, NY -- After decades of steep population losses, Syracuse and Central New York appear to have halted the decline and turned a corner with some emerging pockets of growth, according to 2010 U.S. Census results released Thursday.

In a stunning surprise to government leaders -- who expected new losses -- Central New York's population grew by 1.4 percent in the past decade to reach an all-time high of 742,603 in the four-county Syracuse area, the 2010 Census showed.

The population total for Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego and Madison counties topped the previous record of 742,177 set in 1990, according to U.S. Census Bureau records dating to 1820.

Fueling the growth were Madison County -- whose 5.8 percent population gain to 73,442 ranked as

the sixth-highest increase among New York counties -- and parts of Onondaga County such as the fast-growing towns of Cicero, Lysander and Pompey.

The Central New York region also benefited from a smaller-than-projected loss in Syracuse, the region's urban core. The number of city residents declined by 1.5 percent to 145,170 in 2010. It marked the Salt City's slowest rate of population decline since the 1960 Census.

U.S. Census analysts had predicted that Syracuse would lose about 5 percent of its population, dropping below 140,000 for the first time since 1910. The change in direction prompted some experts to declare that the region's population losses are now part of the past.

"Much of the decline that went on in the past few decades is behind



us," said Michael Wasylenko, a professor of economics and interim dean at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

"It's done," Wasylenko said of the steep population losses. "And now we're beginning to see a buildup of jobs in what we call high-tech sectors. We've got a lot of going on here. It's happening slowly, and in different pockets, but if you add it up we're probably adding jobs in the right sectors."

At Syracuse City Hall, government officials who had hoped for a population loss under 10 percent (the 2000 Census decline) were almost giddy to hear the city lost only 1.5 percent, or about 2,000 people, in the past decade. "I think this indicates we may have turned a corner," said Paul Driscoll, Syracuse's commissioner of Neighborhood and Business Development.

"If we had come in anywhere between a loss of 5 percent and 10 percent, I would have been smiling," Driscoll said Thursday. "This is really better-than-expected news."

Syracuse's growth was fueled by dramatic demographic changes in the past decade, led by a growing minority population, the Census figures showed. The city's Asian population soared by nearly 62 percent to 8,021, the Hispanic population gained nearly 55 percent to 12,036 and the African-American population was up 14.6 percent to 42,770, according to the Census.

The number of non-Hispanic whites in Syracuse dropped to 52.8 percent of the population, down from 62.4 percent in 2000. The results mean that if the trend continues, minorities will likely become the majority in the city by the 2020 Census.

Dennis Connors, curator of history of Onondaga

Historical Association, attributed the growth to a repeat of history. He said Syracuse's growth is being fueled in part by immigrants moving to the city to escape political strife and poor economic conditions.

Ups and downs

The 2010 population of townships and cities in the four-county Central New York region are listed below, ranked by their percentage change in population. Villages are not included; their populations are counted in the appropriate township figures.

COUNTIES

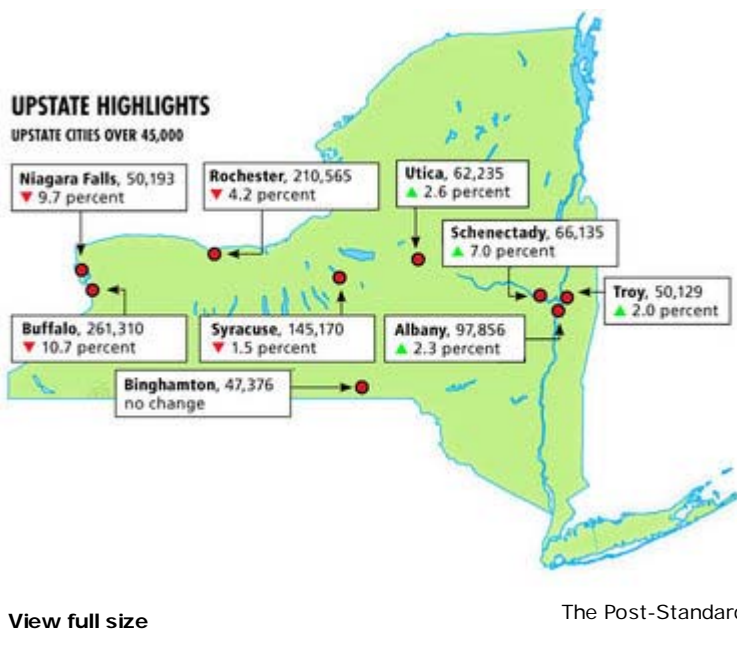
Onondaga Madison Otsego Lewis



New York state 2010 Census data

Find and compare Census data for every county, city and town in New York, including overall population, breakdown by race, and how the population numbers have changed since the 2000 Census.

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"Part of this is new immigration," Connors said. "When you look at Syracuse's population growth in the past, you could see big bumps when the United States was going through a large growth in immigration."

He added, "These are a lot of the same reasons why people were coming over here from Italy in 1910 or Ireland in the 1840s. There are some repeating patterns that one

Place	2010	Pct. Change
Hamilton	6,690	▲ 16.7%
Pompey	7,080	▲ 15.0%
Cicero	31,632	▲ 13.0%
Lysander	21,759	▲ 12.8%
Scipio	1,713	▲ 11.5%
Summerhill	1,217	▲ 10.8%
Sennett	3,595	▲ 10.8%
Lincoln	2,012	▲ 10.7%
Onondaga	23,101	▲ 9.7%
Oswego	7,984	▲ 9.6%
Cazenovia	7,086	▲ 9.3%
Throop	1,990	▲ 9.1%
Eaton	5,255	▲ 8.9%
Boylston	549	▲ 8.7%
Madison	3,008	▲ 7.4%
Hastings	9,450	▲ 7.3%
De Witt	25,838	▲ 7.3%
Smithfield	1,288	▲ 6.9%
Venice	1,368	▲ 6.4%
Brookfield	2,545	▲ 5.9%
Lenox	9,122	▲ 5.3%
Springport	2,367	▲ 4.9%
Camillus	24,167	▲ 4.4%
Van Buren	13,185	▲ 4.1%
DeRuyter	1,589	▲ 3.7%
ONEIDA	11,393	▲ 3.7%
Georgetown	974	▲ 3.0%
Ledyard	1,886	▲ 2.9%
Fenner	1,726	▲ 2.7%
Locke	1,951	▲ 2.7%
LaFayette	4,952	▲ 2.5%
Sullivan	15,339	▲ 2.3%
Sandy Creek	3,939	▲ 2.0%
Manlius	32,370	▲ 1.6%
Spafford	1,686	▲ 1.5%
Salina	33,710	▲ 1.3%
Stockbridge	2,103	▲ 1.1%
Genoa	1,935	▲ 1.1%
Tully	2,738	▲ 1.1%
OSWEGO	18,142	▲ 1.0%
Owasco	3,793	▲ 1.0%
Nelson	1,980	▲ 0.8%
FULTON	11,896	▲ 0.3%
Mexico	5,197	▲ 0.3%
Lebanon	1,332	▲ 0.2%
Sempronius	895	▲ 0.2%
Minetto	1,659	▼ 0.2%
Fleming	2,636	▼ 0.4%
Albion	2,073	▼ 0.5%

sees here.”

Others saw additional evidence Thursday that Central New York as a region had finally halted decades of population loss. “I would read it as encouraging news for Syracuse that we have been able to slow the decline and stabilize the population,” said Christine Himes, a demographer and director of the Center for Policy Research at SU’s Maxwell School. “That is something Buffalo and Rochester have not been able to do.”

Himes found Syracuse has managed to stop its losses ahead of every other Upstate city of 100,000 or more. “This year’s decline is smaller than any other large Upstate cities have experienced since 1960,” Himes said, noting that Buffalo has lost about half of its population in the past 50 years.

“It seems to me Syracuse has been able to either stabilize the population or change the population of the city where it can maintain growth and not decline any more,” Himes said Thursday.

At City Hall, Driscoll credited programs to stabilize neighborhoods, including the Syracuse Neighborhood Initiative and a separate program that provides down payment assistance to low-income homeowners. He said a refugee resettlement program on Syracuse’s North Side also likely helped stabilize the population.

“All of these things contributed to holding our population relatively steady after years and years of hemorrhaging,” Driscoll said.

“It was a good feeling,” Driscoll said of the reaction to the new Census numbers at City Hall. “There were a lot of cities that felt they had made a lot of changes and didn’t see it reflected in their Census. I think this shows we made some of the right moves here in the last decade.”

Upstate cities

The Census results showed Syracuse, with a 1.5 percent population loss, was the most stable of the cities of 100,000 or more in Upstate New York. Buffalo’s population of 261,310 plummeted by 10.7 percent. Rochester, at 210,565, declined by 4.2 percent.

The five largest cities in the state remained New York City (up 2.1 percent to 8,175,133), Buffalo, Rochester, Yonkers (down 0.1 percent to 195,976) and Syracuse, 145,170.

In Central New York, several small cities saw population gains over the past decade. The fastest-growing small city in the region was Oneida in Madison County, up 3.7 percent to 11,393. The city of Cortland in Cortland County was up 2.5 percent to 19,204.

Fabius	1,964	▼ 0.5%
Palermo	3,664	▼ 0.6%
Schroepfel	8,501	▼ 0.8%
Otisco	2,541	▼ 0.8%
Clay	58,206	▼ 1.0%
Niles	1,194	▼ 1.2%
SYRACUSE	145,170	▼ 1.5%
Skaneateles	7,209	▼ 1.6%
Marcellus	6,210	▼ 1.7%
Richland	5,718	▼ 1.8%
Hannibal	4,854	▼ 2.1%
New Haven	2,856	▼ 2.5%
Granby	6,821	▼ 2.7%
Volney	5,926	▼ 2.8%
Elbridge	5,922	▼ 2.8%
Mentz	2,378	▼ 2.8%
AUBURN	27,687	▼ 3.1%
Constantia	4,973	▼ 3.3%
Geddes	17,118	▼ 3.5%
Amboy	1,263	▼ 3.7%
West Monroe	4,252	▼ 4.0%
Aurelius	2,792	▼ 4.9%
Parish	2,558	▼ 5.0%
Williamstown	1,277	▼ 5.4%
Conquest	1,819	▼ 5.5%
Brutus	4,464	▼ 6.6%
Scriba	6,840	▼ 6.7%
Orwell	1,167	▼ 6.9%
Cato	2,537	▼ 7.5%
Ira	2,206	▼ 9.1%
Redfield	550	▼ 9.4%
Victory	1,660	▼ 9.7%
Moravia	3,626	▼ 10.2%
Montezuma	1,277	▼ 10.8%
Sterling	3,040	▼ 11.4%

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Two other local cities that gained were in Oswego County: The city of Oswego gained 1 percent to 18,142, and the city of Fulton was up 0.3 percent to 11,896 after decades of decline.

Around the region

Among the Syracuse area's four counties, Madison County led the region's growth with a 5.8 percent population gain to 73,442, ranking as the sixth fastest-growing county in New York state.

Oswego County stayed almost the same at 122,109, a drop of 0.2 percent. Cayuga County had a population of 80,026, down 2.4 percent.

Onondaga County remained the population center of Central New York, with 467,026 residents. That's an increase of 1.9 percent, and the first population growth for Onondaga County since the 1990 Census recorded 468,973 residents.

Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney said the news was encouraging, and will be helpful as the county seeks to attract new employers looking for a large pool of skilled workers.

"One of the things we hear from businesses thinking about locating in Central New York is whether or not they can attract the local talent for their business," Mahoney said Thursday.

The county executive said she was eager to see more detailed Census reports due later this year. She said those reports will indicate if more young, college-educated residents are finding jobs locally and choosing to stay in Central New York. "I hope we are encouraging young people to stay," Mahoney said. "If we can stop the brain drain, that could be very good news for us."

Mahoney said it is likely that some of the region's newfound stability is the result of a growing number of jobs in health care and higher education.

"We will have to take a closer look at the demographics to understand it, but we know the sectors of the economy that were growing during the recession included higher education and health care," Mahoney said. "And we are home to world-class institutions when it comes to higher education and health care."

Growing towns

Onondaga County's growth over the past decade was led by the towns of Pompey (up 15 percent to 7,080), Cicero (up 13 percent to 31,632) and

A more diverse population

The white majorities in Syracuse and in the four-county Central New York region have declined, while minority populations have increased.

SYRACUSE POPULATION CHANGE



Lysander (up 12.8 percent to 21,759). They were the second-, third- and fourth-fastest growing towns in the region.

The only town in the four-county region with faster growth was Hamilton in Madison County, up 16.7 percent to 6,690

Carole Marsh, Pompey's town supervisor, said she found the Census results "very exciting" for a town that has shown steady growth in the past two decades. "It's beautiful country out here," Marsh said. "The scenery is gorgeous, we have some fantastic schools and people love the area. We are very fortunate."

Marsh said she believes the town is attractive to many families because it is served by five high-performing school districts — Cazenovia, Jamesville-DeWitt, Fayetteville-Manlius, LaFayette and Fabius-Pompey.

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