Outmigration and the Changing Economy of the Great Plains

Presented by:
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The Great Plains
Percentage Change in Population 1980-2003

Data used to produce map from U.S. Census Bureau, map produced by Xan Stevens at KU Policy Research Institute.


Data for these maps taken from www.census.gov
Rural Population Decline and Urban Population Growth 1930-2000: Number of northwest Kansas counties it takes to equal the population of Johnson County.

Data for these maps taken from www.census.gov

Kansas has 9 Large Metro Counties & 78 Small Counties. Since 1990 nearly 90% of the state’s population growth has occurred in the Large Metro Counties, and from 1988 to 1998 nearly 75% of the state’s employment increase was in the same counties. In the Medium Counties, the mid-size communities, such as Hays, Salina, Hutchinson, and Manhattan, are growing, but the rural areas are declining.
As of 2000, nationwide the percentage of the population 65 and over was 12.4%, while Kansas was 13.3%. Within Kansas, as of 1990, the counties with the greatest population loss in the previous decade, also had the highest percentage of people 65 and over.

Hispanic Population of Kansas Counties 1990-2000

Kansas experienced an 101% increase in the Hispanic population from 1990 to 2000.

Data used for graph from http://factfinder.census.gov/
From 1960 to 2003 the number of farms in Kansas decreased 41% from 110,000 to 64,500. However, the average size of the Kansas farm increased from 456 acres to 732 acres.

Extent of the Ogallala Aquifer in the Great Plains
Ark River Near Colorado Border
Kansas Gas Production By Field
1994-2004

- All Other Fields
- Greenwood Field
- Panoma Field
- Hugoton Field
Hugoton Field Gas Production
1928-2004 & Trend

Year

B C F  (As Shown In Billion Cubic Feet)

Ave. Shut-In Pressure (PSIG)

Kansas Gas Production
1998-2004 By Month

Gross Volume (Billions)
Linear (Gross Volume (Billions))
What Does the Future Hold?

- **Sustainability of Resources**
  - Changes in agriculture
    - Value-added
    - Niche markets
  - Water usage
  - Wind energy

- **Diversification (Economic Gardening)**
  - Agritourism, ecotourism and heritage tourism
  - Biosciences (incl. ethanol production, biomaterial, pharmaceuticals)
  - Free land and other incentives to encourage people to move to Great Plains towns. Current technologies allow people to live anywhere and still conduct business.

Success Stories

- **Valley County Nebraska using the HomeTown Competitiveness (HTC) Program**
  - A comprehensive approach to long-term rural community sustainability, mobilizing local leaders, energizing entrepreneurship, engaging and attracting young people, capturing wealth transfer
  - Valley County has an Entrepreneurial Development System and in the last 6 months they have $180 million in new investment and have created 80 jobs

- **Texas Prairie Rivers Region, Inc.**
  - A non-profit public private partnership of 15 rural counties along the eastern side of the Texas panhandle.
  - Over 500 partners, include private landowners, small town businesses, local governments, conservationists, resource agencies, and other who work to preserve the native plains and their way of life.
  - Partnership works to address concerns including water conservation, stopping salt cedars and Russian olive invasions, preservation of habitat and threatened bird and animal species, brain drain of loss of young adults through out-migration, sustainable development of rural communities.