

Raleigh and Cary make list of fastest growing U.S. cities

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Raleigh and Cary were among the 10 fastest-growing cities in the nation last year, a new census release shows.

As of July 2008, Cary ranked third among cities with 100,000 people or more. Its growth rate of nearly 7 percent came in behind only New Orleans and Round Rock, Texas, near Austin.

Raleigh ranked eighth, with a growth rate of 3.8 percent.

North Carolina joined Texas and California in claiming multiple spots in the top 10.

The numbers, released today, are another confirmation that the Triangle's growth continued even as the economy began to slow. But the state must wait to learn how it has fared in the severe recession that has gripped North Carolina and the nation in the past year.

The state's unemployment rate of 11.1 percent is now the seventh highest in the nation, and home building and sales have slowed dramatically.

State demographer Jennifer Song said that the influx of newcomers that has driven North Carolina's boom for the past 15 years likely has slowed since the census data were collected.

"There is certainly a lot of at least anecdotal evidence that suggests that mobility is slowing down across the country," she said.

Song said the state will continue to grow, because its birth rate is almost double its death rate. More than 1 million babies were born in North Carolina in the year that ended in mid-2008, while 600,000 people died.

FASTEST-GROWING CITIES

Two Triangle locales are among the top 20.



Small towns get bigger

Raleigh and Cary topped the growth charts among large cities with at least 100,000 people, but when cities of all sizes are included, the smaller towns come out on top in North Carolina. Here are the fastest-growing municipalities in the state, as of July 2008:

Rolesville, 23.7%	Clayton, 6.5%
Brunswick, 18.1%	Fairview, 6.3%
Watha, 12.7%	Holly Springs, 6.2%
Carolina Shores, 11.6%	Garner, 5.9%
Fuquay-Varina, 11.5%	Unionville, 5.5%
Knightdale, 9.2%	Marvin, 5.4%
Holly Ridge, 8.9%	Mineral Springs, 5.3%
Wake Forest, 7.3%	Zebulon, 5.2%
Cary, 6.9%	St. James, 5.2%
Davidson, 6.8%	St. Helena, 5.1%

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