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MARCH 19, 2009

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Tulsa County leading in growth

Census estimates show it's No. 1 in the state for total population increase.

BY CURTIS KILLMAN
World Staff Writer

For the second consecutive year, Tulsa County ranked No. 1 in the state in total population increase for a one-year period, according to estimates released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau. Fueled by nearly 2,000 new

domestic residents, Tulsa County grew by an estimated 7,841 people during a one-year period ending July 1, bringing its total population to 591,982.

The population increase edged out Oklahoma County, which grew by an estimated 7,590 people to 706,617 residents.

The No. 1 ranking for Tulsa County follows multiple years in which it trailed Oklahoma County in population increases.

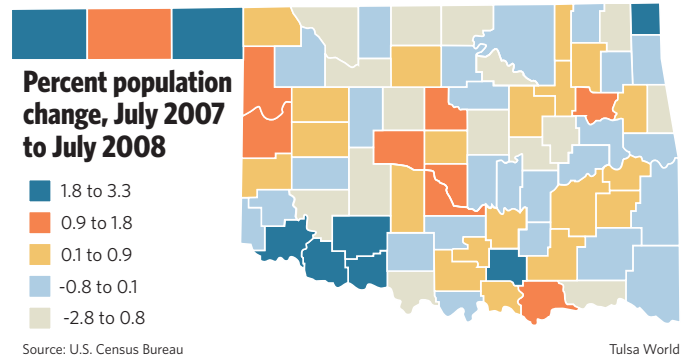
Tulsa Metro Chamber Economist Bob Ball said a strong local economy during that time period may have contributed to the population increase here.

"People move where the jobs are," Ball said. A 13.2 percent higher per capita income in Tulsa County also

may serve it better during the recession, Ball said.

"If you want to weather a recession and make some money, the opportunity is better in Tulsa, because of the nature of business here," Ball said.

Rapid growth in Owasso and Bixby, coupled with re-development in the city of Tulsa, may be some of the reasons the county leads in



SEE GROW A4

REPORT: MAJOR REPAIRS NEEDED

Crumbling prisons



A preliminary architectural and engineering study of state correctional facilities showed nine of the 30 buildings that make up the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester need major repairs, major renovations or to be torn down. TOM GILBERT/Tulsa World

State strongholds not so strong

BY BARBARA HOBEROCK
World Capitol Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY — Seventeen percent of the buildings at the state's correctional facilities need major work or need to be torn down, according to a summary of a facilities assessment obtained by the Tulsa World.

The preliminary architectural and engineering study of the buildings that make up the state's 17 prisons found "no surprises," said Rep. Randy Terrill, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Safety and the Judiciary.

A final version of the report will be used to determine if the state repairs crumbling infrastructure or shifts more inmates to private facilities.

The initial facility assess-



A preliminary architectural and engineering study rated the buildings that make up the state's 17 correctional facilities, including the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester. Tulsa World file

ment ranked the 402 buildings at the state's prisons on a scale of one to four.

A one ranking meant a building was new or minimal

repairs were needed, while a four meant a building needed major renovation, replacement or to be torn down.

Terrill said 17 percent of the

buildings earned a three or four rating, while more than 80 percent ranked one or two.

"I think the report mostly confirms what we suspected," said Terrill, R-Moore. "Department of Corrections facilities are not in the best or absolute worst of shape."

He said the final report will be a compass for lawmakers as they decide how to proceed.

Options include making minimal repairs, tearing down buildings, adding public beds to existing facilities, building a new, state-owned facility or contracting with private prisons for more beds, Terrill said.

Senate Democrats are concerned that inmates could be pushed into private prisons when state facilities are ca-

SEE DOC A4

'Department of Corrections facilities are not in the best or absolute worst of shape'

REP. RANDY TERRILL

Chairman of a House appropriations subcommittee



OSU Medical Center Trust Chairman Robert Poe announces the agreement of transfer from Ardent Health Services on Wednesday.

SHERRY BROWN/Tulsa World

Hospital rescue lauded

OSU Medical Center officials sign new agreement.

BY RANDY KREHBIEL
World Staff Writer

If the Oklahoma State University Medical Center were a patient, it would be out of intensive care, resuscitated by an agreement formalized Wednesday with the signing of an acquisition agreement between the hospital's current owner and a city-controlled trust.

"I'm not sure we had 1,000 people on this," said trust chairman Robert Poe, "but we had 990. And we needed all 990."

He called chief negotiator Howard Barnett a "hero of heroes."

The rescue required the combined efforts of the city, the Legislature, Gov. Brad Henry, current owner Ardent Health Services, OSU, the George Kaiser Family Foundation, Tulsa's other hospitals and an untold num-

SEE OSU A4

IRAQ CASUALTY

Roadside bomb kills Oklahoman

FROM STAFF REPORTS

A military policeman from Oklahoma was killed this week in Iraq, the Department of Defense said Wednesday.

He was identified as Army Cpl. Gary L. Moore, 25, of Del City, who was killed Monday in Baghdad when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

Moore was assigned to the 978th Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion at Fort Bliss, which is near El Paso, Texas.

Officials at Fort Bliss said Moore entered the Army in January 2007 at Oklahoma City.

SEE SOLDIER A4

High 63, Low 41

Partly Cloudy with isolated T-storms



Complete weather on E6

Action Line.....E4	Editorial.....A12
Ask Amy.....D4	Horoscope.....C6
Bridge.....D4	Movies.....Spot 4
Comics.....D4,5	Obituaries.....A10
Crosswords.....D4	Stocks.....E5
Dining Out.....Spot 7	Transitions.....A10



Madness begins

See how OU and others fared in the NCAA Tournament.

Tomorrow in Sports

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Obama: Immigration reform needed

Though no longer at the forefront of hot topics, the issue is still important, he says.

BY CHARLES BABINGTON
Associated Press

COSTA MESA, Calif. — President Barack Obama said Wednesday he still supports “comprehensive immigration reform,” even though he rarely mentions it anymore.

Asked about the emotional and politically delicate topic at a town hall format in Southern California, the president said the nation must find a way to strengthen its borders while also giving about 12 million illegal immigrants a path to possible citizenship.

“If they stay in the shadows,” he said, some employers will exploit them, hurting wages and work conditions for all American workers.

Obama said illegal residents who have been in the United States a long time and have



President Barack Obama speaks Wednesday at the Orange County Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa, Calif.

GERALD HERBERT/Associated Press

put down roots should have a mechanism for achieving legal status. They would have to learn English, pay a significant fine and “go to the back of the line” of those applying for legal entry, he said.

Obama has not listed immigration reform among the ambitious programs he is

pushing this year. His remarks came at a meeting with about 1,300 people in this Los Angeles suburb.

Former President George W. Bush backed a similar immigration program, but it died in Congress amid heavy criticisms, especially from those saying too many illegal immi-

grants have been allowed to enter the country.

Obama visited the area Wednesday to promote his \$787 billion economic stimulus and to tape an appearance Thursday on “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno.”

At the town hall meeting, Obama portrayed himself as an elected official helping average Americans battle entrenched interests from Washington and Wall Street regardless of the political cost. He defended his ambitious plan to overhaul health care, energy, education, taxes and spending policies in the coming months.

“I know some folks in Washington and on Wall Street are saying we should focus on only one problem at a time: ‘our problem,’” Obama said. “But that’s just not the way it works,” he told a crowd of 1,300 in a hot auditorium. “You don’t get to choose between paying your mortgage bills or your medical bills.”

The government must tackle multiple challenges at once, he said.

Fewer migrations seen to Sun Belt

Economy stunts growth in Nevada, Florida and Arizona.

BY HOPE YEN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Strapped by the nation’s economic crisis, fewer Americans are migrating to Sun Belt hot spots in Nevada, Arizona and Florida, instead staying put for now in traditional big cities.

Census data released Thursday highlight a U.S. population somewhat locked in place by the severe housing downturn and economic recession, even before the impact of rippling job layoffs after last September’s financial meltdown.

The population figures as of July 2008 show growth slowdowns in once-booming metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Las Vegas, Phoenix and Tampa, due mostly to a rapid clip of mortgage foreclosures as well as frozen lines of credit that made it harder for out-of-staters to move in.

As a result, Rust Belt metro areas such as Buffalo, N.Y., Pittsburgh and Cleveland, Ohio, stanching some population losses, and Boston, Los Angeles and New York saw gains. Well-to-do exurbs around Washington D.C. saw growth declines as people weary of costly commutes moved closer to federal jobs in the nation’s capital.

“It’s the bursting of a ‘migration bubble,’” said William

H. Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution think tank who analyzed the numbers. “Places that popped up in migration growth in the superheated housing markets earlier in the decade are now just as quickly losing their steam.

“It’s the constraint of not being able to buy or sell a home that is keeping people from moving long distances,” he said.

Las Vegas, known for its warm climate and wide spaces, had its smallest annual population gain in nearly 20 years.

In Michigan, where the struggles of the auto industry led to the nation’s highest unemployment rate, 60 of the state’s 83 counties lost population. Florida and Rhode Is-

land are facing similar pressures.

Despite slowing migration, the South and West continued to account for the most growth from 2007 to 2008.

Raleigh-Cary, N.C., and Austin-Round Rock, Texas, were the nation’s fastest-growing metro areas, registering growth rates of 4.3 percent and 3.8 percent, respectively. Both are high-tech centers and the sites of major college campuses that helped cushion them from the housing slowdown.

Metros registering the biggest numerical gains were Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston. Despite housing slowdowns in 2008, Phoenix and Atlanta ranked third and fourth in growth, respectively, followed by Los Angeles.

GROW:

International migration outpaces domestic migration in 42 counties.

FROM A1

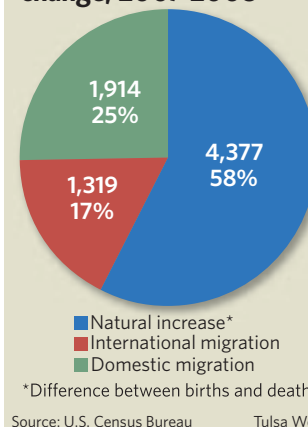
overall population growth.

“I think with the infill and growth in the outlying communities, that’s probably accounting for some of the growth in Tulsa County,” said Barbara Gibson, Senior Geographic Information Systems specialist for the Indian Nations Council of Governments.

The Tulsa County population grew by 1.3 percent during the one-year period ending July 1, making it the 17th-fastest growing county by percentage in the state.

Percentage-wise, Roger

Tulsa County population change, 2007-2008



Mills and Wagoner counties were the two fastest-growing counties in the state, growing a respective 3.3 percent and 2.7 percent, Census Bureau figures indicate.

Tulsa County’s population growth showed signs of decline, though, compared with

the 2006-07 year, when the population increased 1.4 percent, or 7,975 residents.

Digging deeper in the numbers shows that a higher percentage of Tulsa County’s new residents were migrants from outside the county, compared with Oklahoma County.

Of Tulsa County’s 7,841 new residents in the past year, 41 percent were migrants from outside the county. In Oklahoma County, 21 percent of its new residents were migrants from outside the county. The remainder came from births.

Of the 3,233 residents who migrated to Tulsa County, 1,319 are classified as international migrants and 1,914 residents came from domestic locations. Meanwhile, 1,838 international migrants moved to Oklahoma County while 226 county residents moved away from the county to other locations within the U.S. for a net gain of 1,612 mi-

grants.

International migration outpaced the domestic migration in 42 counties, including Oklahoma County, from 2007 to 2008.

International migration includes both native and foreign-born populations.

The census report reflects a trend of continued population decline in many rural counties in the state.

Statewide, 32 Oklahoma counties have lost population since 2000.

Deaths have outpaced births in 25 counties in the past eight years.

Nineteen of the 25 counties with more deaths than births have also seen a decrease in their total population.

From July 2007 to July 2008, 23 counties lost population.

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DOC:

Private lockups hold about 19 percent of the state’s prisoners.

FROM A1

pable of doing the job, said Senate Minority Leader Charlie Laster, D-Shawnee.

“Our concern is that there may be a desire on behalf of (Senate Republican) leadership to close some state facilities in favor of private prisons,” said Laster, who has not seen the report.

Senate President Pro Tem Glenn Coffee, R-Oklahoma City, declined to comment, saying through a spokesman that the preliminary report is incomplete.

Department of Corrections Director Justin Jones declined to comment.

Oklahoma has six private prisons that have 2,510 empty beds, said Renee Watkins, Department of Corrections administrator of private prisons and jails. Some states recently removed their inmates from private prisons here, Watkins said.

Oklahoma has 4,324 inmates in private prisons, which is about 19 percent

Preliminary DOC facility assessment

A study of the 402 buildings at the state’s 17 correctional facilities shows:

- 24 percent received a rating of 1, meaning they were new or needed minimal repairs.
- 59 percent received a rating of 2, meaning one-third of the building systems needed major repair.
- 10 percent received a rating of 3, meaning two-thirds of the building systems needed major repair.
- 7 percent received a rating of 4, meaning the building needed major renovation or to be torn down.

of the population, Watkins said.

The study, done by The Durrant Group Inc., cost \$415,000, said Jennifer Monies, as spokeswoman for House Speaker Chris Benge, R-Tulsa. The state received bids on the project, she said.

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OSU:

The hospital will be run by St. John Health Systems.

FROM A1

ber of private individuals pitching in to keep northeast Oklahoma’s primary indigent care hospital from failing.

“Every health-care system in Tulsa has a vested interest in the long-term success of this hospital,” said Ardent Oklahoma division President Earl Denning, who with Poe signed the half-inch thick agreement.

Ownership of the hospital officially passes from Ardent to the OSU Medical Center Trust on March 31.

The hospital will be managed by St. John Health Sys-

tems.

The hospital appeared headed for closure late last year until a meeting involving state and local leaders produced the outlines of Wednesday’s agreement.

Denning recalled the governor turning to the others and saying, “We’re not leaving until we have a deal.”

“What really happened is what often happens in this community,” said Mayor Kathy Taylor. “People got

together to make something happen.”

“This is better than I imagined,” said House Speaker Chris Benge, R-Tulsa. “It’s been a long journey. I started working on this four years ago ... I was happy to do it but I probably didn’t know what I was getting into.”

Despite a pledged infusion of more than \$100 million from public and private sources over the next five years, Poe said the teaching hospital for OSU’s osteopathic medicine program is not quite out of the woods.

“The next threshold is to get to the point that physicians are committed to sending patients here,” Poe said. “The osteopaths are unbelievably loyal to this facility. When they see we’re here to stay, we hope they’ll start practicing here again. That’s the next significant challenge.”

A large number of hospital staff and medical students attended Wednesday’s signing in the hospital auditorium, and several came up to thank Poe for saving the hospital.

Reluctantly, Poe acknowledged the job isn’t finished.

“It’s going to be hard work,” he said. “I’m totally confident we can do it, but I can’t tell you how.”

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SOLDIER:

Moore’s company was deployed to Iraq in June.

FROM A1

They said he was promoted to corporal in January, although the Department of Defense had him listed as a specialist.

Officials at Fort Bliss noted that its soldiers from the 978th MP Company deployed to Iraq in June to provide training and oversight of the Iraqi police.

Before being attached to Fort Bliss, Moore had been stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, southwest of Rolla, Mo.

Moore’s awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon.

He was also posthumously awarded the Purple Heart.

U.S. DAILY CASUALTIES

Iraq: As of Wednesday, at least 4,259 members of the U.S. military had died in the Iraq war since it began in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

No new U.S. deaths were reported by the military.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

- Army Cpl. Gary L. Moore, 25, of Del City, Okla., killed Monday in Baghdad in a roadside bombing, assigned to the 978th Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Afghanistan: As of Wednesday, at least 591 members of the U.S. military had died in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan as a result of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, according to the Defense Department.

The latest identifications

reported by the military:

- Marine Staff Sgt. Archie A. Taylor, 37, Tomball, Texas; died Saturday after a nonhostile incident in Kabul province, Afghanistan; assigned to the 2nd Intelligence Battalion, II MEF Headquarters Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.
- Air Force Airman Staff Sgt. Timothy L. Bowles, 24, Tucson, Ariz.; died Sunday near Kot, Afghanistan, after his vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device; assigned to the 3rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.
- Army Sgt. Christopher P. Abeyta, 23, Midlothian, Ill.; died Sunday in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, after an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Kot, Afghanistan; assigned to the 1st

Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Woodstock, Ill.

Army Sgt. Robert M. Weinger, 24, Round Lake Beach, Ill.; died Sunday in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, after an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Kot, Afghanistan; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Woodstock, Ill.

Army Spc. Norman L. Cain III, 22, Oregon, Ill.; died Sunday after an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Kot, Afghanistan; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Woodstock, Ill.

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AND
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