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Census: Mansfield population down 3 percent

Growth in prison, medical facility populations offsets overall decline

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MANSFIELD — Growth in the institutionalized population disguised a 10 percent decline in the rest of Mansfield's population, according to new data released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

According to the bureau, the institutionalized population includes people in prisons, nursing homes, hospitals, mental wards and juvenile institutions.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Census Bureau released population counts for every incorporated area in the country. That showed Mansfield's population loss from 2000 to 2010 was about 3 percent.

However, demographic profiles released today show that apart from an influx of inmates and other institutionalized people in nursing homes and health care facilities, the city's non-institutionalized population actually slipped to 41,940 from 46,475 in 2000.

The increase in the prison population in Richland County has been minimal, going from 4,939 in 2000 to 5,014 last year. One in eight people counted in the City of Mansfield were at either Richland Correctional Institution, Mansfield Correctional Institution or another facility.

The demographic profiles include detailed breakdowns on age, sex, race and housing.

The median age in Richland County increased to 40.9 years from 37.7. Crawford County got a little grayer at 41.9 years in 2010, compared to 38.2 in 2000, which makes it 16th in median age out of 88 counties.

Median age grew in every county in the state. Knox County's addition of 1.7 years was the seventh smallest. Ontario was one of the most rapidly aging cities, moving from a median age of 39.3 to 43.1 years. The state's median age went from 36.2 to 38.8 years.

The number of husband-wife families in Ashland, Crawford, Knox and Richland counties has fallen 4 to 5 percentage points since 2000. About 30,000 more people in those counties live alone.

Anastasia Snyder, a professor of human development and family science at The Ohio State University, cited several reasons for the decline in married households.

First, she said, a lot of the solo householders are widowed, because of the aging population.

According to the 2010 Census, there were 3,917 people older than 65 living alone, up from 3,557 in 2000.

A new life stage has developed, Snyder said — “emerging adulthood.” Adults age 18 to 25 are not getting married right away. Instead, Snyder said, they are opting to get established in life first.

“People are delaying marriage, and people are spending significantly less time of their lives in the married state,” Snyder said. “We have this high, but steady, divorce rate.”

Some of the emerging adults are “boomerang kids,” who move back in with their parents because they can’t afford to live on their own.

“It’s more difficult for young adults nowadays, it just takes longer to be an adult,” Snyder said. “After the recession, the situation got even worse ... young adults are facing a lot more competition. It’s more difficult for them to become economically independent.”

Zhenchao Qian, a sociology professor at The Ohio State University, has done research on this phenomenon. He said the number of young adults age 19 to 29 living with their parents rose from 25 percent in 1980 to 34 percent in the late 2000s.

“Young adults have poor job prospects when the economy is bad,” he said.

In some parts of the state, there are just far fewer young adults. In Crawford County, for example, the share of the population between ages 15 and 34 slumped to 22 percent, a decline of 3 percentage points. For the state, the share is 26 percent.