The Suburbs: Fastest Growing Hoosier Counties

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S ince the 1990 census, the fastest growing counties in Indiana have been primarily suburban counties, according to population estimates released this past March 17 by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (see **Map 1**). Of Indiana's 92 counties, 49 grew faster than the state between 1990 and 1997, with growth rates exceeding 5.8% (see **Map 2**). Twenty-seven counties experienced population growth between 1% and 5.8%, 11 counties showed little population change (less than 1%), and five counties experienced population decline of more than 1% since the 1990 census.

Hamilton County led the state in population increase, both in numbers (almost 46,000 more people) and in growth rate (42.1%) between 1990 and 1997. Its growth rate since the 1990 census was twice that of the second fastest growing Hoosier county, Hendricks. In fact, Hamilton County was the fastest growing county in the five-state region consisting of Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, and Michigan.

Other fast-growing Hoosier counties included Hendricks, Johnson, Dearborn, Owen, Hancock, Morgan, Jasper, Jennings, and Washington (see **Table 1**).

Hamilton County also the led the state in population growth in the most recent year, with more than 7,000 people added—a rate of 4.8% between July 1, 1996 and July 1, 1997. Other counties experiencing growth over 2% in the most recent year included Hendricks, Switzerland, Dearborn, Johnson, Morgan, Harrison, Miami, Hancock, Jennings, and Carroll.
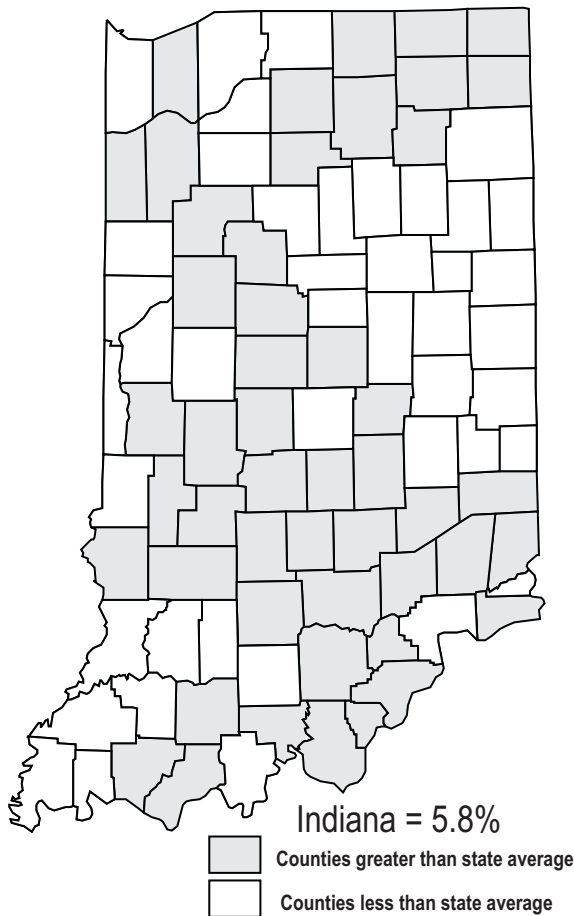
Recent population growth in Miami County is notable. In fact, Miami County has been the state's

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Map 1

**Indiana County Population Change
Compared to State Average, 1990 to 1997**

Indiana = 5.8%

Counties greater than state average

Counties less than state average

Map 2

**Indiana County Population Change
Compared to National Average, 1990 to 1997**

U.S. = 7.6%

Counties greater than national average

Counties less than national average

8th fastest growing county between 1996 and 1997. Due to the restructuring of Grissom Air Force Base, Miami County lost almost 4,700 people between 1991 and 1995. But since 1995, redevelopment efforts may have contributed to the county's net growth of about 800 people, for a growth rate of 2.5%.

The Bureau's estimates indicate that the population of Delaware County has declined by 2,000 people since the 1990 census, for a loss rate of 1.7%. Other counties that experienced significant population de-cline included Grant (1,350 people, or 1.8%), Vigo (1,167 people, or 1.1%), and Wabash (500 people, or 1.6%).

In the most recent year, Marion County's population actually declined by 1,200 people. Marion County continues to experience out-migration, with more people moving out of the county than moving in. In the first half of the 1990s, the county's natural increase (births exceeding deaths) resulted in a slight population growth for the state's most populous county. But between 1996 and 1997, its estimated net out-migration exceeded its natural increase, resulting in its population loss.

The ten largest Hoosier counties in terms of population are Marion, Lake, Allen, St. Joseph, Elkhart, Vanderburgh, Hamilton, Porter, Tippecanoe, and Madison. The smallest are Ohio, Union, Warren, Switzerland, and Benton, each with a population under 10,000. The growth rate for each of the 92 Hoosier counties is shown in **Table 2**.

It is important to note that these population figures are estimates produced using a demographic model and are not the result of a direct attempt to count population, as is done in a census year. The 1997 state and county estimates were produced by the U.S. Bureau of the Census using the Tax Return Method.

Table 1
Ten Fastest Growing Counties in Indiana

| | POPULATION INCREASE, 1990 TO 1997 | | |
	Percent Change	Increase in Number	Metropolitan Statistical Area
Hamilton	42.1	45,849	Indianapolis
Hendricks	21.9	16,574	Indianapolis
Johnson	21.3	18,779	Indianapolis
Dearborn	19.9	7,741	Cincinnati
Owen	17.2	2,976	Not in an MSA
Hancock	16.6	7,544	Indianapolis
Morgan	15.9	8,867	Indianapolis
Jennings	15.0	3,556	Not in an MSA
Jasper	15.0	3,737	Not in an MSA
Washington	14.4	3,426	Not in an MSA

Table 2
Indiana Rate of Growth by County, 1990-1997

County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate
Adams	5.6	Elkhart	9.3	Jefferson	5.0	Ohio	2.7	Sullivan	6.8
Allen	3.7	Fayette	0.5	Jennings	15.0	Orange	5.3	Switzerland	11.6
Bartholomew	8.0	Floyd	11.0	Johnson	21.3	Owen	17.2	Tippecanoe	5.9
Benton	1.2	Fountain	2.4	Knox	−0.5	Parke	6.7	Tipton	1.7
Blackford	−0.3	Franklin	10.2	Kosciusko	7.8	Perry	1.0	Union	4.2
Boone	12.7	Fulton	8.0	Lagrange	11.0	Pike	2.0	Vanderburgh	1.1
Brown	10.7	Gibson	0.1	Lake	0.8	Porter	11.8	Vermillion	1.3
Carroll	6.3	Grant	−1.8	La Porte	1.9	Posey	2.6	Vigo	−1.1
Cass	0.4	Greene	8.8	Lawrence	6.3	Pulaski	4.5	Wabash	−1.6
Clark	6.2	Hamilton	42.1	Madison	0.9	Putnam	11.2	Warren	−0.1
Clay	7.4	Hancock	16.6	Marion	2.1	Randolph	1.2	Warrick	13.2
Clinton	7.3	Harrison	13.7	Marshall	7.5	Ripley	10.4	Washington	14.4
Crawford	5.9	Hendricks	21.9	Martin	1.4	Rush	0.6	Wayne	−0.2
Daviess	4.8	Henry	1.5	Miami	−10.0	St. Joseph	4.5	Wells	3.2
Dearborn	19.9	Howard	3.4	Monroe	7.0	Scott	8.7	White	7.6
Decatur	7.3	Huntington	4.8	Montgomery	5.4	Shelby	7.1	Whitley	8.4
De Kalb	9.6	Jackson	8.4	Morgan	15.9	Spencer	6.2		
Delaware	−1.7	Jasper	15.0	Newton	8.4	Starke	4.4		
Dubois	6.9	Jay	0.8	Noble	10.7	Steuben	13.3		

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