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# Metro

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# Population explosion continues

## Metro area ranks 2nd in growth

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Metro Atlanta continues to grow with no end in sight, ranking No. 2 in the nation for total population growth of metropolitan areas in the past year.

"The jobs and the lifestyle here are attracting a whole lot of people," said Sam Williams, president of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

The 28-county area that surrounds Atlanta added 151,063 people last year, according to U.S. Census Bureau data released today. Dallas-Fort Worth was first in population growth in the nation, growing by 162,250 people from July 1, 2006, to July 1, 2007.

In the past seven years,

however, the Atlanta region added a little more than a million people — more than any other region in the country. The metro area's population is now 5,278,904.

"The Atlanta area is viewed as a place of opportunity," said Mike Alexander, research division chief of the Atlanta Regional Commission. People move here from California, New York and the Midwest for job prospects, promotions or to start their own businesses.

"We're a Sun Belt metropolitan region with a strong higher education system and modern job sectors — information and technology. That will continue to attract people," Alexander said.

"Now with stable job growth and a slowdown in the housing market, we expect the population growth rate will slow down from previous highs, but we'll continue to grow at a

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## GEORGIA'S POPULATION GROWTH

National Rank	Area	Pop. 2006	Pop. 2007	Pop. change	National Rank	Area	Pop. 2006	Pop. 2007	Pop. change
2	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Manetta	5,127,841	5,278,904	151,063	202	Valdosta	128,347	130,170	1,823
76	Savannah	321,490	329,329	7,839	213	Dalton	152,627	154,043	1,416
78	Gainesville	172,391	180,175	7,784	252	Albany	163,150	164,069	919
93	Augusta-Richmond County/S.O.	522,608	528,519	5,911	256	Macon	229,026	229,846	820
119	Athens-Clarke County	183,346	187,405	4,059	275	Rome	95,076	95,618	542
144	Warner Robins	128,070	131,016	2,946	296	Hinesville-Fort Stewart	71,667	71,803	136
201	Brunswick	99,963	101,792	1,829	361	Columbus / Ala.	230,347	282,756	-7,591*

\*Increase related to local deployments from Fort Benning  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

## Census: Small companies drive job growth

CHARLES W. KOWES / Staff

► Continued from D1  
 Metro Atlanta saw a net growth of 55,000 jobs last year, he said.

That's not the heady rate of the 1996 Olympic year, when Atlanta saw 92,500 new jobs, according to Chamber of Commerce

data. But job creation is definitely up from the period after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; Atlanta lost

42,700 jobs in 2002, chamber data show.

In terms of percentage population gain, cities in the South took the lead nationally, with eight of the 10 fastest-growing cities. Gainesville ranked fourth nationally, with a 4.5 percent population gain. Palm Coast, Fla., was first, with a 7.2 percent growth rate.

"It's been a steady growth. It hasn't been big jumps like Gwinnett and Forsyth and some of those," said Kit Dunlap, president of Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce in Gainesville.

"It's no surprise to us," she said.

"We're next to Gwinnett. Obviously, [growth is] coming north."