TWIN CITIES RUN COUNTER TO NATIONAL TRENDS

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Body

The ***Twin Cities*** grew younger at the core in the 1990s, with immigrants and people moving from other states helping St. Paul and Minneapolis turn back the clock as the state and the nation aged.

Residents of St. Paul and Minneapolis also lived with slightly more people under one roof than in the past and were more likely to have children, again ***running*** contrary to state and ***national trends*** in part because of newcomers from other countries and other states.

The ***cities*** saw waves of immigrants from Eastern Africa, Asia and Central and South America among other areas in the 1990s, moving to join family members and find work thanks to the state's strong economy. And for more than a decade, Minnesota has taken in more people from other states and countries than it has seen move out.

"I'm guessing that migration and immigration have quite a bit to say about that," said Tom Gillaspy, state demographer. "People who move, particularly people who move long distances, tend to be younger."

Contrary to many areas in the state, St. Paul had a decline in its 65-and-over population and a relatively sharp increase in the number of children under 5, Gillaspy said.

While specific numbers on immigrants and people moving from other states are not yet available, the influx appears to have influenced census results that showed Minneapolis and St. Paul bucking several key ***trends***.

"That would be consistent with immigration," said Martha McMurry of the State Demographic Center said of the median-age and household findings, contained in census data being released today. "You would expect immigrants would have a younger population living in larger households and would be more likely to have children."

While aging baby boomers pushed the nation's median age last year to an all-time high of 35.3 and Minnesota's to 35.4, the median age -- the figure at which half the population is older and half younger -- fell in St. Paul and Minneapolis, to 31 and 31.2, respectively.

The gap was narrower 10 years ago, when Minnesota's median age was 32.4, compared with 31.2 in St. Paul and 31.5 in Minneapolis. At the same time, surrounding counties such as Washington, Dakota and Anoka have aged, Gillaspy said.

"My guess is that the longer the distance away, the less likely that people would have heard about Woodbury or Apple Valley relative to having heard about Minneapolis or St. Paul," Gillaspy said. "For many people, particularly young families, there's a tendency to move into ***cities*** and inner-ring suburbs and then flow outward from there."

At the same time, the average household size rose slightly in both ***cities*** during the last decade to 2.46 people in St. Paul and 2.25 in Minneapolis. The average Minnesota household had 2.52 people last year, down from 2.58.

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The percentage of family households with children was steady at 22.6 percent in Minneapolis and rose in St. Paul to 29.1 percent from 28.1 percent. Statewide, the share of family households with children fell to 33 percent from 34.7 percent.

In St. Paul, the youth movement appears to be a result in large part of racial and ethnic minority groups that have grown rapidly and tend to have more children, said Mark Vander Schaaf, research and geographic information systems coordinator for the *city*'s Planning and Economic Development Department.

More than half the *city*'s 35,488 Asians are under 18, Vander Schaaf said, citing census data. The total includes tens of thousands of Hmong refugees who began resettling in St. Paul from Laos after the Vietnam War, joined in the late 1990s by thousands of Hmong who moved from California. Hmong totals from the 2000 census are not yet available.

"Clearly the growth of the Asian population would relate to all three of the *trends*," Vander Schaaf said.

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