

More living in the area

Houston County population
passes 100,000, Census shows

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Two Wiregrass counties enjoyed double-digit percentage growth during the 2000s and Houston County hit a milestone population mark, according to newly released Census estimates.

Houston and Coffee counties were two of only 12 Alabama counties to grow more than 10 percent in population during the past 10 years and the Census estimate places Houston County's 2009 population at 100,085, the first time the county's population has ever exceeded 100,000.

"Our goal since 2000 has been 100,000 citizens by the 2010 Census and we are proud that we were able to reach that mark a year early, showing the appeal of our community," Houston County Commission Chairman Mark Culver said. "We have handled a rapid 13 percent growth while maintaining a positive environment to raise families."

The estimate puts Houston County as the 10th largest county in Alabama, just behind Etowah (103,645) and ahead of Marshall (90,899).

Dothan's Metropolitan Statistical Area (combined populations of Houston, Henry and Geneva), increased in population from 130,861 in 2000 to 142,691 in 2009.

"The fact we are growing 13 percent this decade versus the previous decade at 9.2 percent is a very positive sign for our region and for the continued growth in the future. The data proves that some of the work we are doing is contributing to building the attributes to lure more people and business in the area," Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce President Matt Parker said. "We need to continue to build capacity to grow with our focus on infrastructure, library development, and education support. I strongly believe we will see continued growth at this pace in the next decade."

The Census Bureau makes population estimates based on local records including births and deaths, IRS records of people moving within the United States, and census statistics on immigrants.

The official population count is currently taking place with the 2010 Census. Local officials say the population count is important because federal and state funding is tied to a county or community population.

Population estimates

County	2000	2009	Growth
Houston	88,787	100,085	12.7%
Coffee	43,615	48,635	11.5%
Henry	16,310	16,647	2.1%
Geneva	25,764	25,961	.3%
Dale	49,129	48,147	-2.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau