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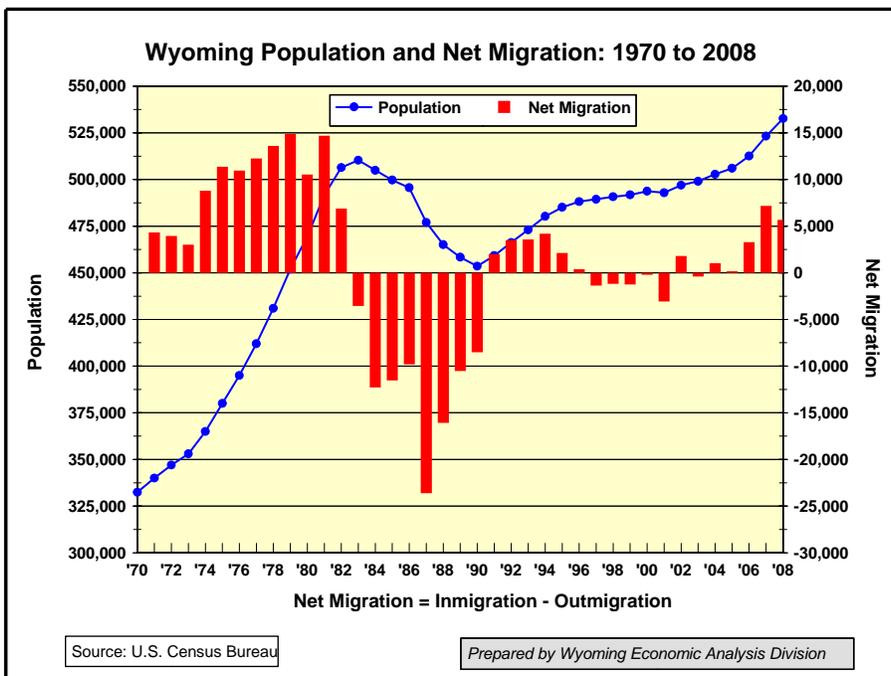
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WYOMING'S POPULATION CONTINUED TO EXPERIENCE STRONG GROWTH IN 2008

CHEYENNE -- Wyoming's total resident population reached 532,668 in July 2008, and it surpassed the previous year's record of 523,252, which is a revised figure, according to estimates just released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The annual increase from 2007 to 2008 was over 9,400 persons, or 1.8 percent. The estimated net migration, after accounting for the natural change (births and deaths), indicated that nearly 5,700 more persons moved into Wyoming than left the State during the year. The 7,900 births were 26 percent higher than that in 2000. Nationally, the population was estimated at 304.1 million in 2008, an increase of 0.9 percent from the previous year. Wyoming's growth rate was ranked 7th highest in the nation, higher than the northern and eastern neighboring states, but lower than the western and southern bordering states.

"Though the 1.8 percent population expansion in the State was slightly slower than the previous year's level of 2.1 percent, it was still the second fastest growth since 1982, the end year of the oil boom," said Wenlin Liu, senior economist with the Economic Analysis Division. "This was not a surprise because it just followed the substantial job growth rate of 3.9 percent in 2007 (the 2nd fastest in the nation). People tend to move to areas where economies are viable," Liu said. "Wyoming's population growth has been lagging behind the job increase for quite a few years. Certainly the strong population growth has brought some relief to the laborforce shortage the State has been facing," said Wenlin Liu.



"The estimated population only includes residents, it does not count non-resident or out-of-state workers, which have been contributing to a significant portion of the State's workforce, particularly in the mining (including oil and gas extraction) and construction industries. As the energy development continued, many of those out-of-state workers stopped commuting, and chose to settle down in Wyoming and may have brought their families with them too," Liu commented. "The robust job growth, plus a low unemployment rate in the State should put Wyoming in a attractive position in terms of migration in the near future. As the rest of the nation, particularly Wyoming's neighboring states are facing increasing economic difficulties, some of their residents may choose the Cowboy state as their destination to relocate, and at the same time, discourage Wyoming residents from moving away," Liu continued.

The complete figures are available online, <http://eadiv.state.wy.us/> or U.S. Census Bureau's website, <http://www.census.gov/>