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## Stillwater area leads state in growth

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Population in the Stillwater area has grown by 17 percent since 2000, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates released Thursday.

It was the most aggressive growth area in the state among areas with at least 18,000 residents.

The seven-county Oklahoma City metropolitan area grew by nearly 100,000 residents, good for an 8.9 percent growth rate, which ranked second. Between 2000 and 2007, the Oklahoma City metro area jumped from the nation's 47th largest to 44th.

The Durant area in southeast Oklahoma grew by 8.3 percent, and the seven-county Tulsa metropolitan area grew by 5.4 percent.

Conversely, the Altus area lost 9.4 percent of its population, or 2,661 residents, during the same period, and the Ponca City area fell by 5.1 percent, or 2,442 residents.

Cities that are included in the Oklahoma City and Tulsa metropolitan areas were not listed separately.

However, the report estimated Cleveland County (Norman) has seen a growth of 28,436 since 2000, a 13.7 percent jump.

### What fueled the growth?

#### *Stillwater*

Stillwater City Manager Dan Galloway said his city's growth resulted from several factors, primarily fueled by massive construction projects at Oklahoma State University, many of them funded at least in part by OSU alumnus Boone Pickens.

Foremost among them is a long-term conversion of the former neighborhood north of Lewis Field into an athletic village. OSU also is expanding its football stadium, a \$100 million project that will boost seating capacity to 60,000.

Pickens's donations have had "a significant impact" on the population growth.

"The population of construction workers alone has had some impact. This is a multiyear construction project. It's very likely they will become part of the permanent population," Galloway said.

"As OSU goes, so goes the community, and vice versa," Galloway said.

At the same time, Stillwater has seen steady growth in retail and other small businesses, Galloway said.

### Population changes

Here are the fastest growing areas in the state. Each listing includes the city listed and suburbs.

| Rank | City          | Percent change | Population increase |
|------|---------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1.   | Stillwater    | 17.2           | 11,741              |
| 2.   | Oklahoma City | 8.9            | 97,568              |
| 3.   | Durant        | 8.3            | 3,029               |
| 4.   | Tahlequah     | 6.8            | 2,872               |
| 5.   | Woodward      | 5.5            | 1,019               |
| 6.   | Tulsa         | 5.4            | 46,225              |
| 6.   | Shawnee       | 5.4            | 3,519               |
| 8.   | Ardmore       | 4.1            | 2,242               |
| 8.   | Ada           | 4.1            | 1,428               |
| 10.  | Muskogee      | 2.4            | 1,685               |



Source: U.S. Census Bureau