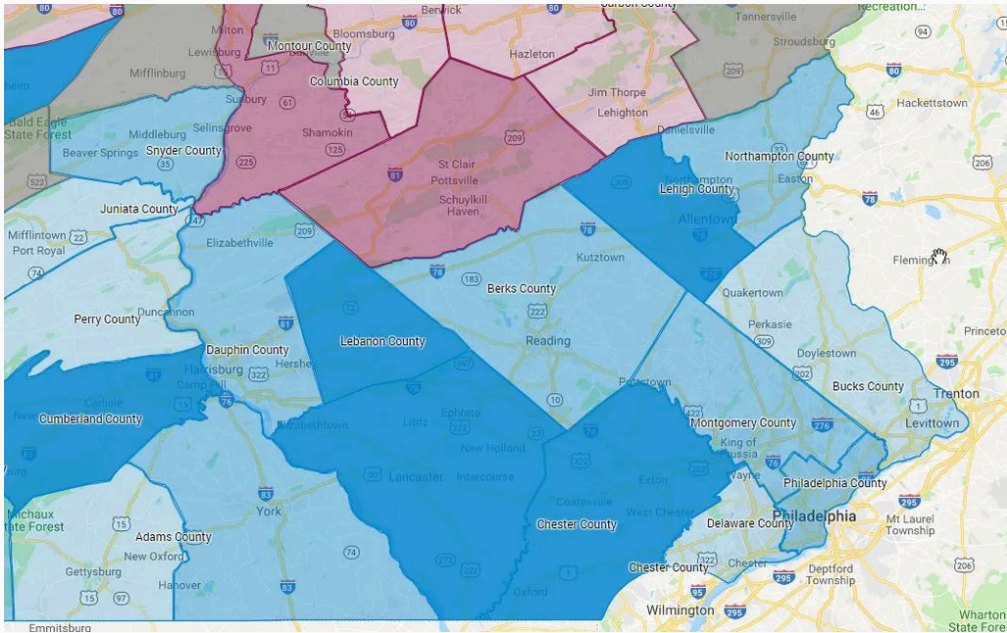


NEWS



 Opt-Out Signal Honored

Berks County's population is growing faster than the state's

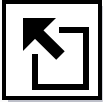


Berks County's population is growing faster than the state's



By **ADAM RICHTER** | arichter@readingeagle.com | Reading Eagle

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If Berks County's population growth has been slow the last couple years, Pennsylvania's has been downright crawling.

The U.S. Census Bureau released 2018 population estimates for all

Berks County's population rose from 411,442 in 2010 to 420,152 in 2018, a rate of 2.1%. The Keystone State, meanwhile saw overall population grow by 0.82% from 2010 to 2018.

Nationwide, the fastest-growing cities in the country were in the South and the West, according to the Census Bureau.

Michael Golembiewski, a transportation planner with the Berks County Planning Commission, was not surprised by the new numbers.

"It's still a desirable place to live," he said of Berks.

Pennsylvania's population change, by county

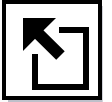
Click on a county to see the 2010 population and annual estimates through 2018.

Golembiewski characterized the growth rate of 2.1% as relatively slow, especially compared to other counties around Berks. Lebanon County, for instance, grew at 5.8% since 2010; Chester and Lancaster counties both grew at 4.64%; and Montgomery County grew at 3.59%.

But the county is part of a larger cluster in southeastern Pennsylvania, from Philadelphia and radiating outward, that has seen the most growth in the state over the last eight years. For the most part, northern and western Pennsylvania have lost population since the last census. Only 20 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties have seen their populations grow in the past eight years, and nearly all of them are in southern Pennsylvania.

"For years, eastern Berks County was acting as a bedroom community to the King of Prussia area," he said.

Golembiewski doesn't know why Berks has seen slow growth, but he's not surprised the population continues to increase. The cost of living is reasonable; there are lots of outdoor and recreational activities; and overall, he said, the quality of life is high.



Nearly every Berks municipality had at least a modest bump in population. Reading went from 88,082 in 2010 to 88,495 last year. But the biggest growth was in the suburbs; Reading was just seventh on the list of biggest population jumps.

The largest increase, in terms of raw numbers, happened in Muhlenberg Township, followed by Amity, Lower Heidelberg and Washington townships. But by percentage growth, the leaders in Berks were the rural townships of Ontelaunee and Upper Tulpehocken.

That's an important distinction because the raw numbers don't always indicate how much a municipality has grown. Reading grew by more than 400 people, but with a population so high, that's not even one-half of a percentage point.

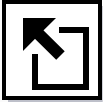
But when Ontelaunee Township's population grew by 370 people from 2010 to 2018, that represented a more than 22% jump.

Reading's 0.42% growth is also far behind the national average of cities with populations of more than 50,000. According to the Census Bureau, cities that large had an average growth rate of 7.5%.

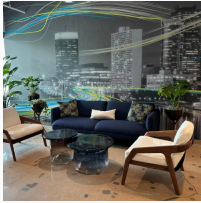
Lower Heidelberg also saw double-digit growth of 10.3%, going from 5,513 people in 2010 to more than 6,000 last year. Township Manager Pamela Stevens said she was not surprised by the numbers; in fact, she said, she thought they'd be higher.

Stevens said the township has been planning for growth and has seen that bear out. Recently, three developments have been approved or are close to approval that will bring more than 150 homes – a combination of single-family homes, apartments, and townhouses – to the township.

"A lot of people want to come and not be surrounded by suburbia," she said.



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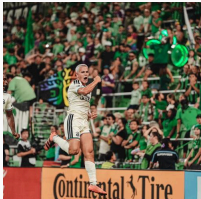
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Monday, August 24



Today in History: August 24, Pluto demoted to dwarf planet

Monday, August 24



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Sunday, August 23



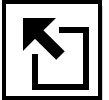
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Sunday, August 23



Business Weekly Agenda for August 23

Sunday, August 23



Coroner says Wyomissing man apparently drowned in neighbor's swimming pool

Friday, August 21



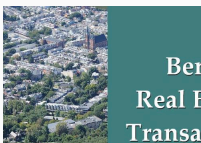
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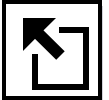
Friday, August 21



Berks
Real Estate
Transactions

Berks County real estate transactions for Aug. 23

Sunday, August 23



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