

Population Trends in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

May 2010

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development

The **INSTITUTE** for

Public Policy & Economic Development

*A partnership among Keystone College, King's College, Luzerne County Community College,
Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Commonwealth Medical College,
University of Scranton, & Wilkes University*

Contents

Introduction 4

Lackawanna County 4

 Migration..... 4

 Population..... 6

 Births and Deaths..... 7

 K-12 Enrollments..... 8

Luzerne County 10

 Migration..... 10

 Population..... 12

 Births and Deaths..... 13

 K-12 Enrollments..... 14

Conclusion..... 17

References 18

List of Figures

Figure 1: In vs. Out Migration - Lackawanna County	6
Figure 2: Lackawanna Population Totals 2000-2008	7
Figure 3: Lackawanna County Births & Deaths	8
Figure 4: Lackawanna County Total Enrollment	9
Figure 5: Lackawanna County Public School Enrollment	9
Figure 6: Lackawanna County Private School Enrollment	10
Figure 7: Luzerne County In vs. Out Migration	12
Figure 8: Luzerne County Population 2000-2008	13
Figure 9: Luzerne County Births & Deaths	13
Figure 10: Luzerne County Total Enrollment	15
Figure 11: Luzerne County Public School Enrollment	15
Figure 12: Luzerne County Private School Enrollment	16

List of Tables

Table 1: Lackawanna County In-Migration 1990-2008	5
Table 2: Lackawanna County Out-Migration 1990-2008	5
Table 3: Luzerne County In-Migration 1990-2008	11
Table 4: Luzerne County Out-Migration 1990-2008	11

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Introduction

Analysis for this report was conducted using data provided by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The IRS uses address changes reported on tax forms to gauge migration movements to and from state counties. Findings and IRS data sets were referenced from the 2008 final reports on Lackawanna and Luzerne counties, published by The Institute. Government statistics on birth and death rates for the two counties over the past two decades were also used. This data was produced by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Using the information, net increases and decreases in the total populations of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties were then calculated for each year between 1990 and 2008. Results showed that overall population of each county was on the decline from the mid-90's to the early 2000's. Since then, both counties have maintained their population levels and even demonstrated some growth. Further analysis of migration and birth rate trends indicates that the counties may begin to see future population growth.

Lackawanna County

Migration

The Lackawanna Migration final report examined migration to and from the county, by state. The report's conclusions indicated that the top contributing states to Lackawanna County were Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. Pennsylvania, Florida, and New York accounted for the most outward flow of migration from Lackawanna County. Although the report indicated that the level of inward flow from these areas has increased annually since the 2000, such gains were offset by the outward flow of migrants to other states. Total in-migration for the entire period was 58,026 and outward migration for the same time period was 59,299.

Table 1: Lackawanna County In-Migration 1990-2008

Rank	Location	Total	Percentage
1	Pennsylvania	44,184	76.15%
2	New York	6,138	10.58%
3	New Jersey	4,326	7.46%
4	Foreign	1,280	2.21%
5	Florida	817	1.41%
6	California	344	0.59%
7	Connecticut	214	0.37%
8	Arizona	193	0.33%
9	Virginia	152	0.26%
10	Maryland	123	0.21%
11	Delaware	67	0.12%
12	North Carolina	50	0.09%
13	Rhode Island	34	0.06%
14	Kansas	26	0.04%
15	Massachusetts	22	0.04%
16	Nevada	36	0.06%

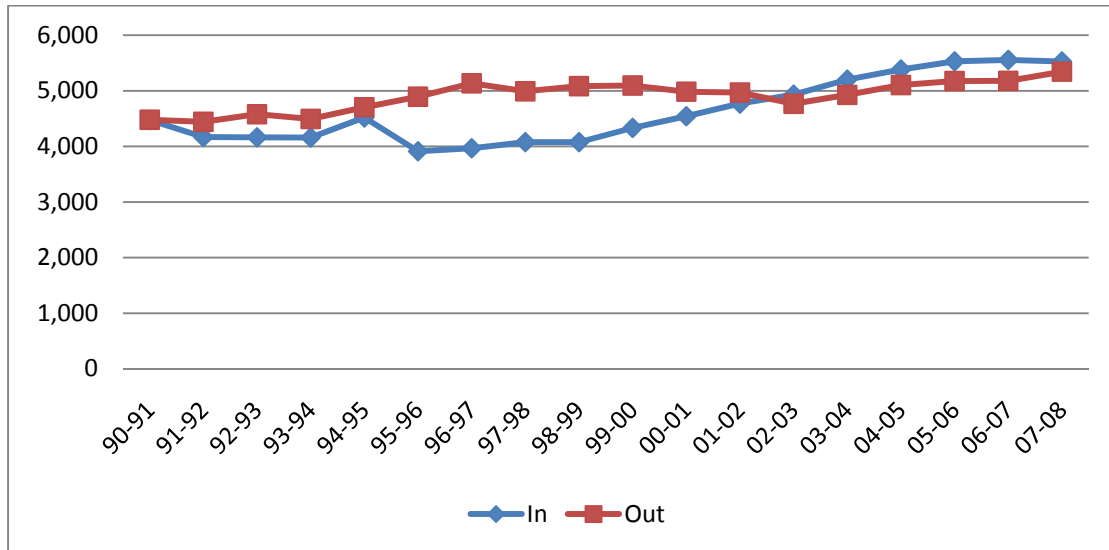
Table 2: Lackawanna County Out-Migration 1990-2008

Rank	Location	Total	Percentage
1	Pennsylvania	47,887	80.76%
2	Florida	2,868	4.84%
3	New York	2,575	4.34%
4	New Jersey	1,743	2.94%
5	Maryland	732	1.23%
6	California	611	1.03%
7	Arizona	593	1.00%
8	Virginia	519	0.88%
9	North Carolina	318	0.54%
12	Connecticut	302	0.51%
10	Nevada	269	0.45%
11	Delaware	222	0.37%
13	Massachusetts	214	0.36%
14	Illinois	198	0.33%
15	DC	109	0.18%
16	Ohio	33	0.06%
17	Hawaii	26	0.04%
18	Utah	22	0.00%
19	Rhode Island	22	0.00%
20	South Carolina	20	0.00%
21	Texas	16	0.00%

Population Trends in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

When examining state migration flows to Lackawanna County, data shows that, on average for most states (excluding New York and New Jersey), outward migration accounted for a higher percentage of total migration than inward migration.

Figure 1: In vs. Out Migration - Lackawanna County

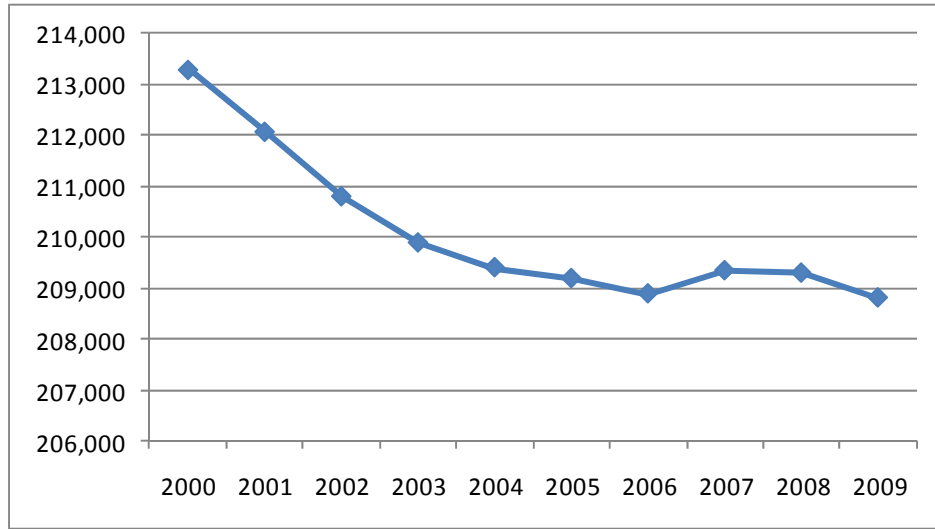


Data revealed negative net migration from 1990 through 2001 and positive net migration from 2002 to 2008. Migration to and from Lackawanna County was just about even in 1990. Over the next several years, outward migration gained momentum, until it peaked in 1996 at around 5,000 people annually. That level of outward migration was maintained from 1996 through 2001, at which point it began to drop off. In turn, from 2002 through 2008, inward migration gained ground and outpaced outward migration, but not by more than a few hundred people (according to IRS data).

Population

Lackawanna County's total population is on a downward trend, provided that the death rate is greater on average than its combined birth rate and migration into the area. The county's population decreased from 1990 to 2006 and there have been only marginal population increases since then.

Figure 2: Lackawanna Population Totals 2000-2008

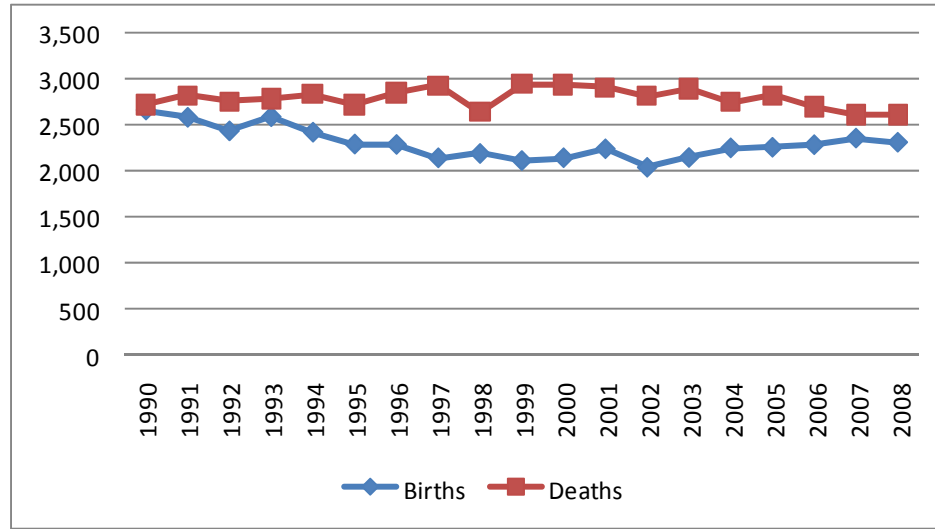


Data on total population indicate a reversal of the downward trend between 1999 and 2000; however, such increase was not represented in birth/death or migration data. This is due mainly to the fact that the decennial Census occurred in 2000; therefore, population statistics used actual results, rather than estimates prepared during interim years.

Births and Deaths

Lackawanna County's deaths outnumbered its births during the entire eighteen-year-period. Its number of births, however, has been on the rise since 2002, as evidenced by the following graph. By contrast, while the number of deaths has decreased since 1999, it continues to outpace annual births (although the gap is closing). If such trends continue, eventually the number of births will overtake the number of deaths and possibly result in further population growth at the latter end of the decade.

Figure 3: Lackawanna County Births & Deaths



K-12 Enrollments

School enrollment has fluctuated over the time period examined.¹ However, the county’s school enrollment figures also reflect a leveling off of the population decline in that enrollment totals for the county’s public schools slowly increased from 27,000 to over 29,000 from 2000 to 2008. Included in the increase in public school enrollments was the opening of the Fell School District, which has experienced a steady increase and a leveling off point. The Scranton School District saw the greatest increase in student enrollments from 2000 to 2008, starting with 8,500 students in 2000 to over 9,600 students in the 2008-20089 school year. The greatest jump in Lackawanna County’s public school enrollment occurred during from the 2005- 2006 school year to the 2006-2007 school year, when an increase of nearly 600 students occurred. Mainly contributing to the decline in Lackawanna County’s total school enrollment was a significant decrease in private school enrollments. In the 2000-2001 school year, the county’s private schools enrolled around 6,500 students; by the 2008-2009 school year, private school enrollment dropped below 4,500 students. This decrease of over 2,000 students greatly affected the county’s private school system. As such, several private schools have since merged with other schools, or simply closed. With a leveling off of the population decline and a continual increase in Lackawanna

¹ The Pennsylvania Department of Education did not begin to report Pre-K enrollment figures for public institutions until the 2004-2005 school year. PA DEP did not begin to report Pre-K enrollment figures for private institutions until the 2005-2006 year.

County's public school enrollment, it is probable that the county's enrollment decline will eventually level off.

Figure 4: Lackawanna County Total Enrollment

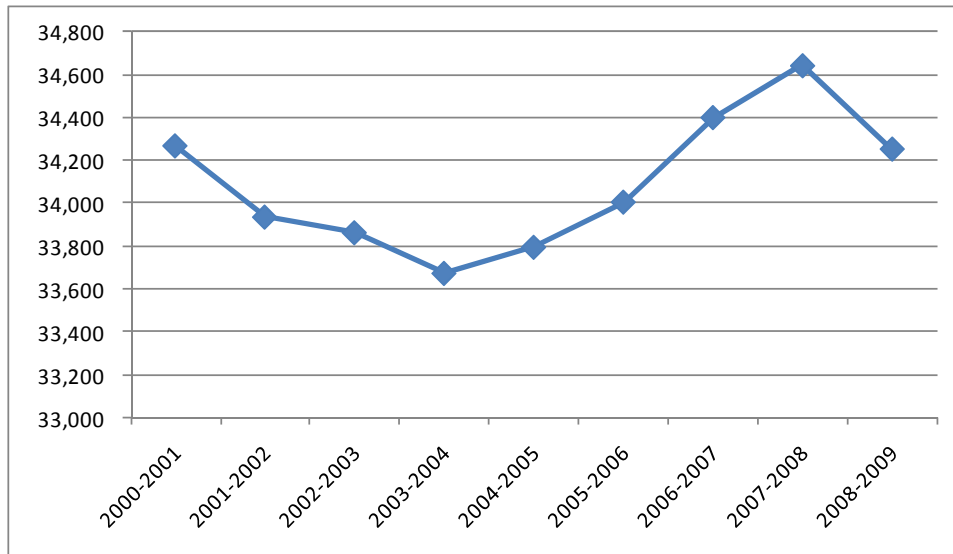


Figure 5: Lackawanna County Public School Enrollment

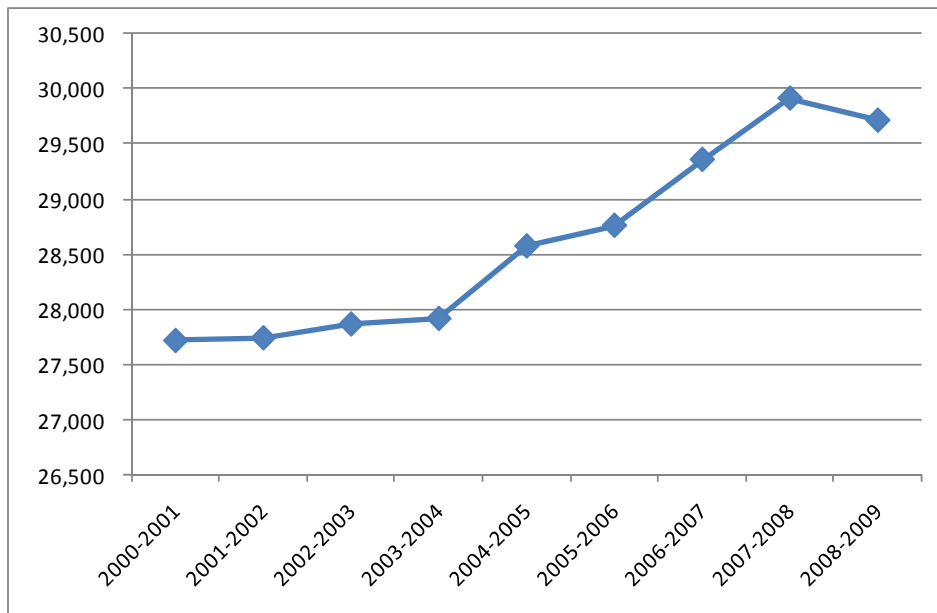
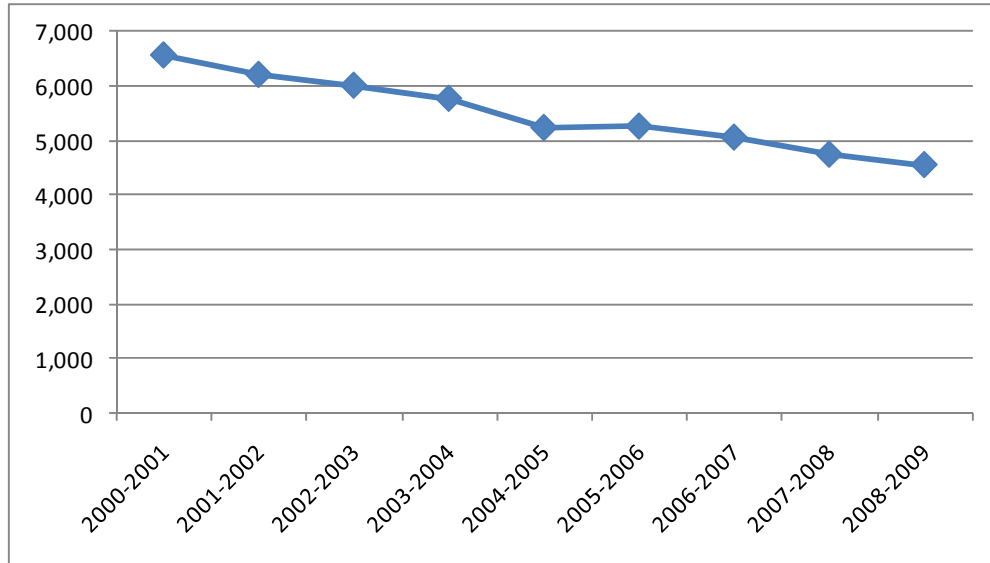


Figure 6: Lackawanna County Private School Enrollment



Luzerne County

Migration

Luzerne County experienced a higher net inflow of migrants from 1990 to 1992. Since then, data reveals that migration outflow outpaced migration inflow and resulted in negative population growth from 1992 to 2001. Since 2001, in-migration has picked up substantially, resulting in a net population increase of just over 1,000 people in 2006. For the time period 1990 – 2008, there were 89,660 people migrating to Luzerne County and 86,478 leaving Luzerne County.

Table 3: Luzerne County In-Migration 1990-2008

Rank	Location	Total	Percent (%)
1	Pennsylvania	61,787	68.91%
2	New York	10,213	11.39%
3	New Jersey	9,184	10.24%
4	Florida	1,865	2.08%
5	Foreign	1,450	1.62%
6	California	809	0.90%
7	Maryland	770	0.86%
8	Connecticut	675	0.75%
9	Virginia	500	0.56%
10	Massachussetts	444	0.50%
11	Arizona	404	0.45%
12	Delaware	388	0.43%
13	Nevada	282	0.31%
14	North Carolina	279	0.31%
15	Illinois	174	0.19%
16	Texas	123	0.14%
17	Hawaii	97	0.11%
18	Rhode Island	64	0.07%
19	Michigan	45	0.05%
20	Washington, DC	36	0.04%
21	Ohio	33	0.04%
22	South Carolina	22	0.02%

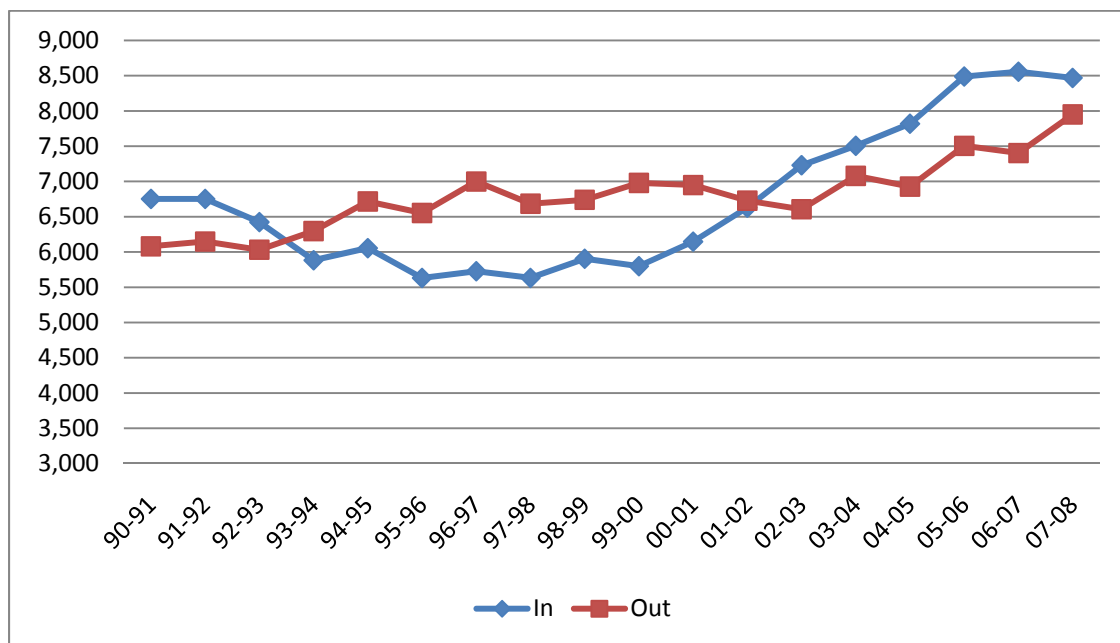
Table 4: Luzerne County Out-Migration 1990-2008

Rank	Location	Total	Percent (%)
1	Pennsylvania	61,787	68.91%
2	New York	10,213	11.39%
3	New Jersey	9,184	10.24%
4	Florida	1,865	2.08%
5	Foreign	1,450	1.62%
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16	Texas	123	0.14%
17	Hawaii	97	0.11%
18	Rhode Island	64	0.07%
19	Michigan	45	0.05%
20	Washington, DC	36	0.04%
21	Ohio	33	0.04%
22	South Carolina	22	0.02%

Population Trends in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

Examining migration flows by contributing states, a trend similar to that in Lackawanna County is evident. New Jersey, New York, and other Pennsylvania counties have been responsible for the most migration into Luzerne County; similarly, Pennsylvania, Florida, and New York have been the destinations of most of Luzerne County's out-migrants. Their percentage of migration into Luzerne County is substantially higher than their total migration out of the county. The other states (not including New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania), have taken more residents from Luzerne County than they have contributed to the county. Migration between Luzerne County and other Pennsylvania counties follows the same trend. The county's migration outflow accounts for a higher percentage of its total migration.

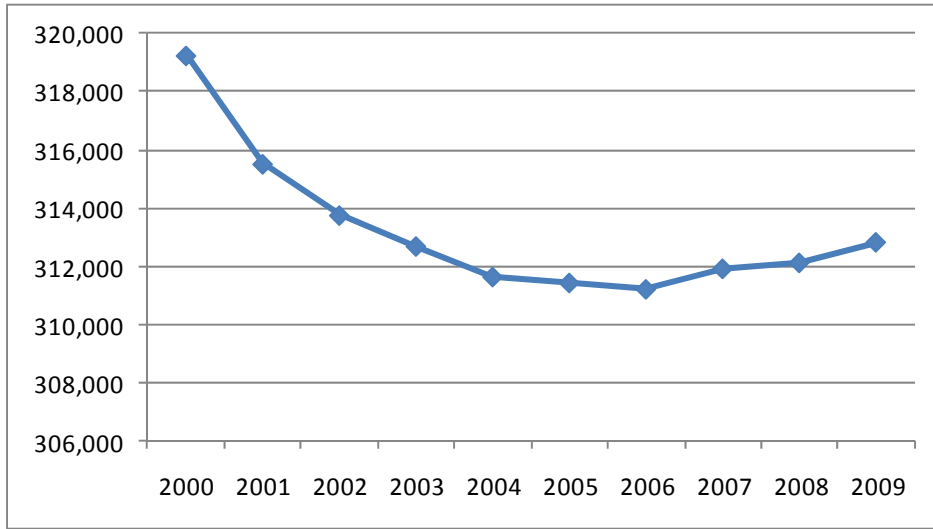
Figure 7: Luzerne County In vs. Out Migration



Population

The county's total population rose slightly during the early 1990's, then decreased steadily from the mid-1990's through 2003. It has since reached a plateau. U.S. Census data again showed a population spike from 1990 through 2000. Again, we must call into play the actual Census 2000, which reflects a more realistic picture of Luzerne County's population; this, therefore, explains the increase in overall population between 1999 and 2000.

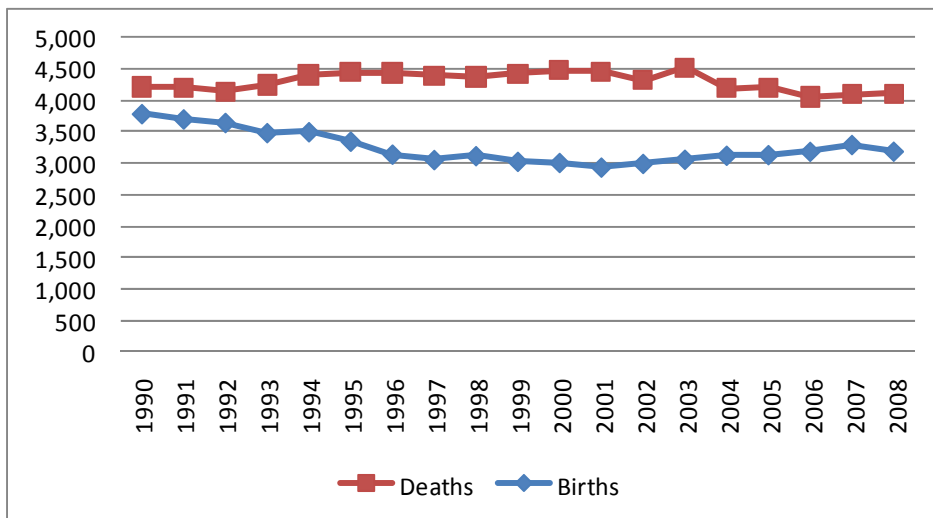
Figure 8: Luzerne County Population 2000-2008



Births and Deaths

Similar to Lackawanna County, when adjusting total population to reflect migration, birth and death rates, data indicates that there are changes in total population; however, as detailed in the graph below, the number of deaths are decreasing and the number of births are increasing.

Figure 9: Luzerne County Births & Deaths



K-12 Enrollments

Although it saw some fluctuation in enrollment, Luzerne County's overall school enrollment is declining.² In all, Luzerne County experienced an approximate 2,300 student enrollment decline between the years of 2000 and 2008. Like Lackawanna County, however, Luzerne County's total enrollment is mainly affected by the drop in its private school enrollments. Luzerne County's public school enrollment has also been on the rise, though such increase remains much steadier than Lackawanna County's. Luzerne county experienced a dip in total enrollments in the 2008-2009 school year.

Luzerne County's public school enrollment reached nearly 42,000 in the 2000-2001 school year, and rose to just over 42,800 in the 2008-2009 school year. The increase resulted in the opening of the Bear Creek School District, which has also experienced steady enrollment increases. The Hazleton School District experienced the county's greatest enrollment increases between 2000 and 2009, moving from 8,400 students in 2000 to more than 10,250 in 2009. The district's greatest enrollment spike occurred between the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years, when its enrollment increased by more than 600 students. By contrast, in the 2000-2001 school year Luzerne County's private schools enrolled nearly 9,500 students; by the 2008-2009 school year, that figure dropped to 5,100. This drop of over 4,000 students, coupled with an increase of 2,000 students in its public schools resulted in the overall decline. It should be noted, however, that the increase public school enrollment in Luzerne County has been steady, is expected to continue, despite the dip in enrollment totals in 2008-2009.

² The Pennsylvania Department of Education did not begin to report Pre-K enrollment figures for public institutions until the 2004-2005 school year. PA DEP did not begin to report Pre-K enrollment figures for private institutions until the 2005-2006 year.

Figure 10: Luzerne County Total Enrollment

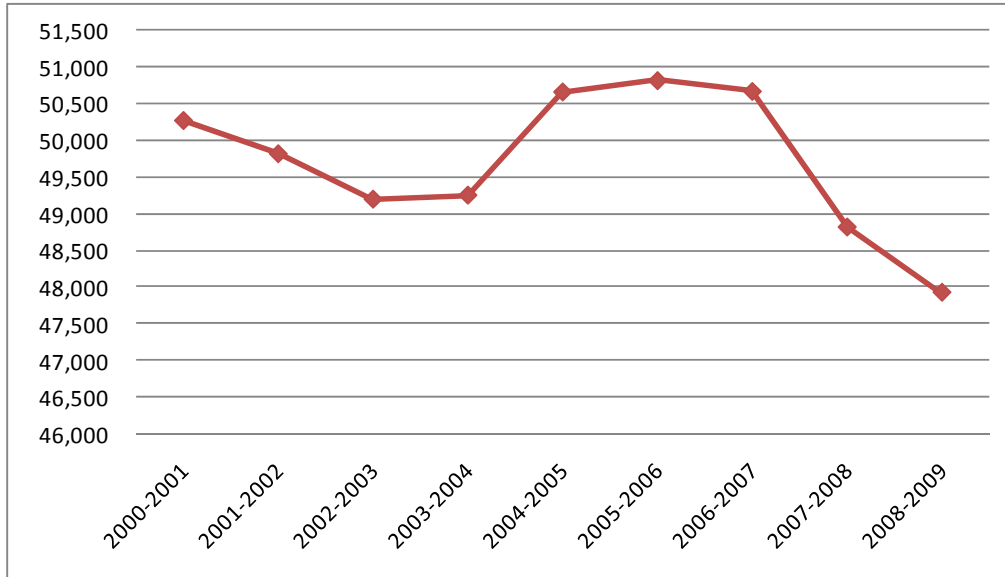


Figure 11: Luzerne County Public School Enrollment

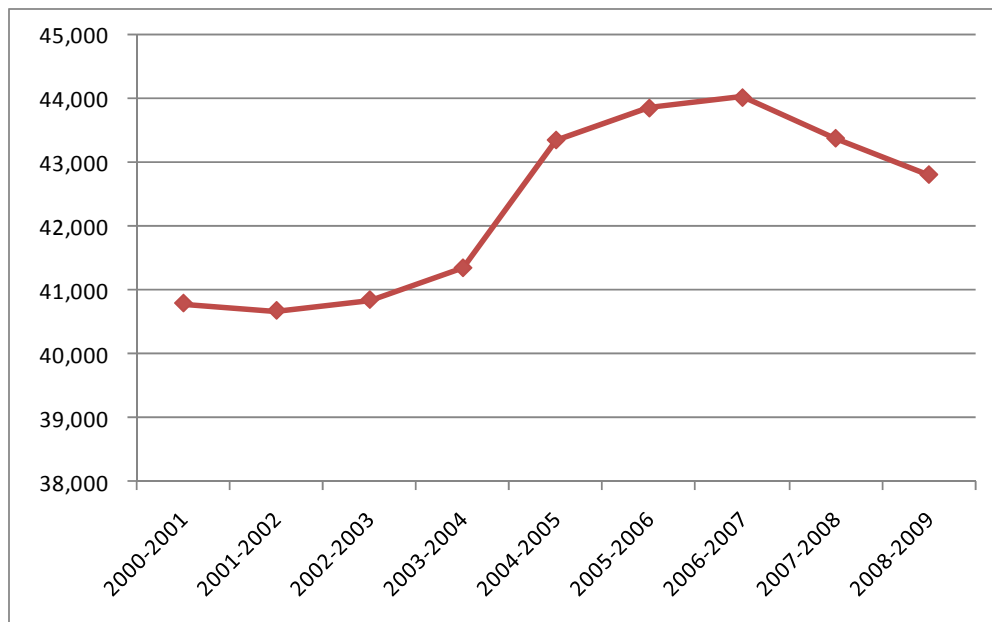
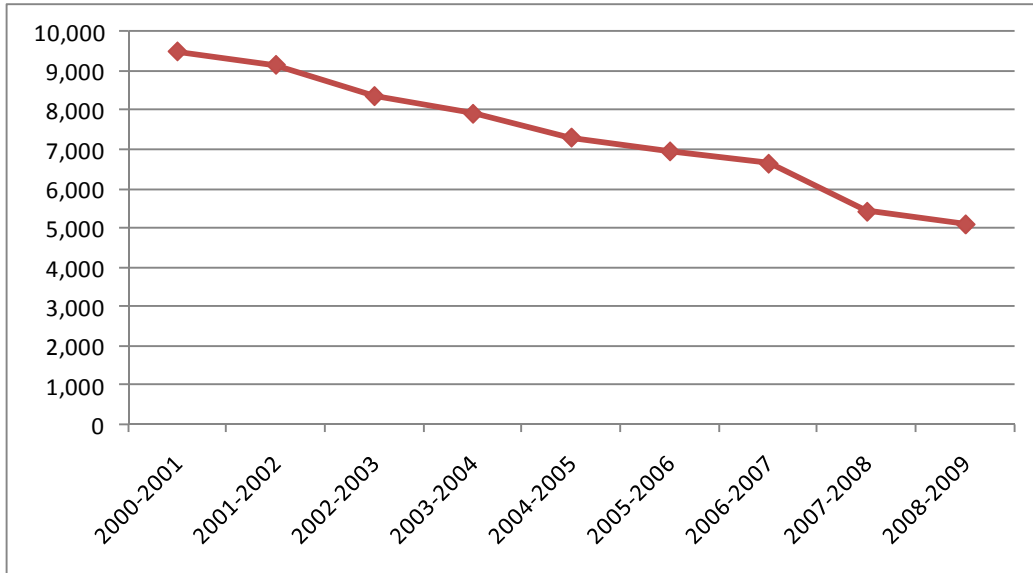


Figure 12: Luzerne County Private School Enrollment



Conclusion

Data for Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties indicates that, on average over the seventeen-year-period, outward migration has outpaced inward migration. Death rates have also been consistently higher than birth rates, which has resulted in negative population growth over the period. Data also shows, however, that such trends may be reversing and could result in long-term population growth. This is evident not only in the counties' migration and birth rate data, but also in their school enrollment figures, as public school enrollments are steadily increasing, and private school enrollment declines are expected to eventually drop off. It is imperative to note that, again, both counties continue to follow a parallel path in terms of most recent trends. While this has been indicative across many indicators since the 1950's, recent trends towards revitalization continue the relationship.

References

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