

Population Growth in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

August 2009

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	3
Lackawanna County	3
Education	5
Luzerne County	7
Education	9
Conclusions	11
References Cited	11

Produced by *The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development*

Senior Researchers

Teri Ooms

Sherry Tracewski

Research Associates

Robert Sawitski

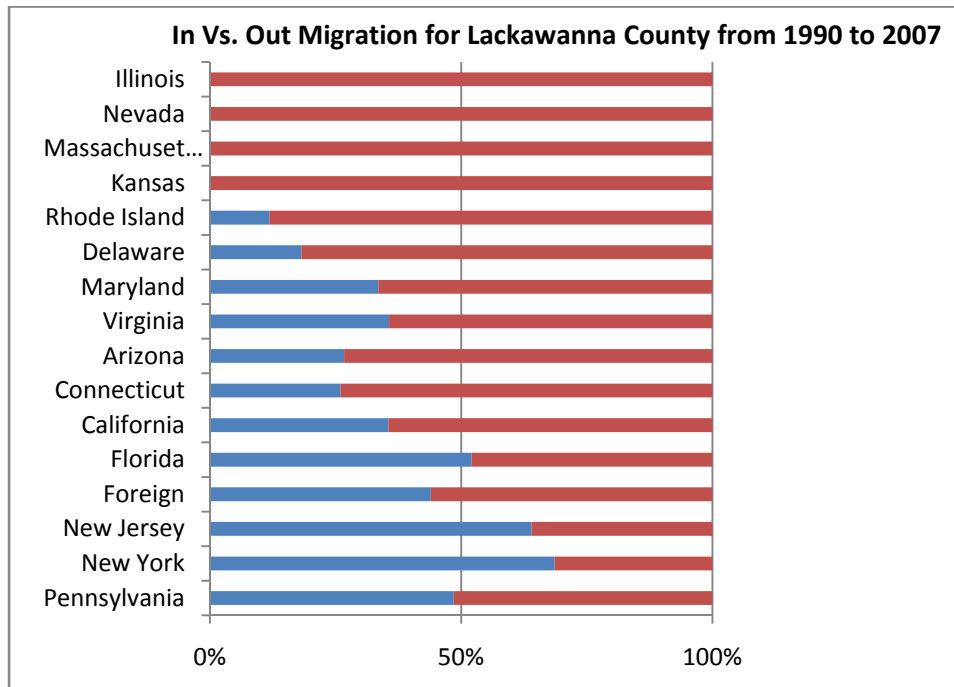
©2009 All Rights Reserved. The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development

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 2007. 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

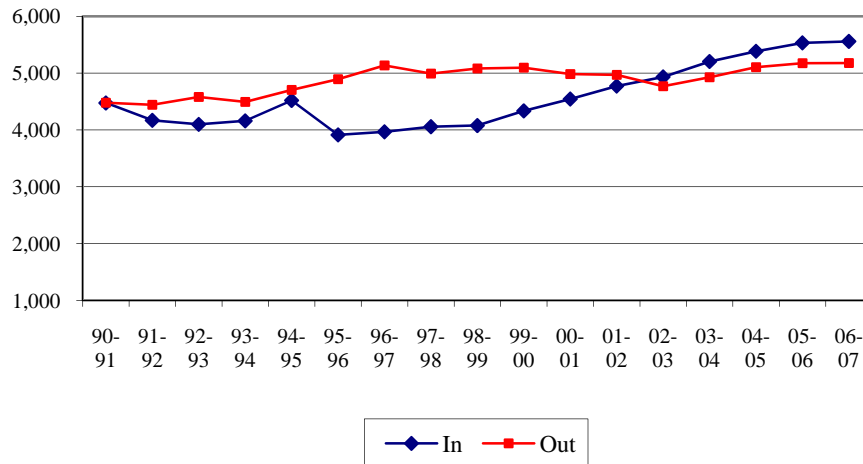
The Lackawanna Migration final report examined migration to and from the county, by state. The report's conclusions indicated that the top contributing states to Lackawanna County were Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. These states also accounted for the most outward flow of migration from Lackawanna 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.



Population Growth in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

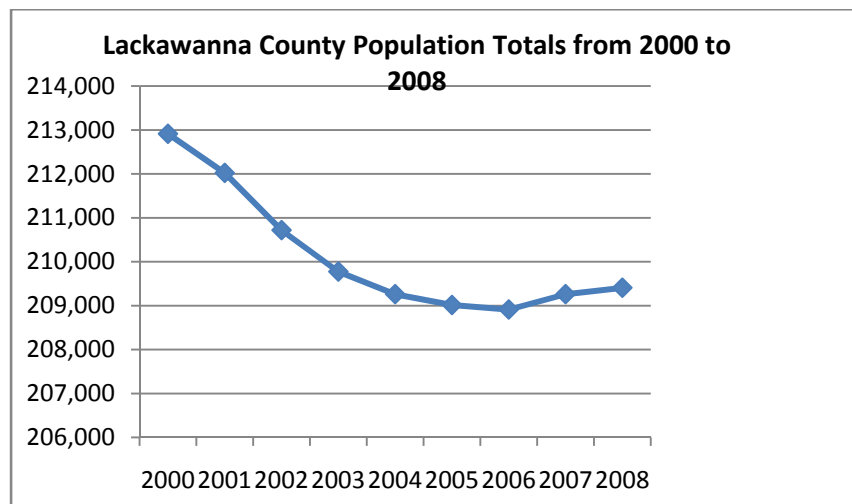
When examining state migration flows to Lackawanna County, data shows that, on average for most states (excluding New York and New Jersey), outward migration accounted for a higher percentage of total migration than inward migration.

In-Migration vs. Out Migration Data: Lackawanna County



Data revealed negative net migration from 1990 through 2001 and positive net migration from 2002 to 2007. 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 2007, inward migration gained ground and outpaced outward migration, but not by more than a few hundred people (according to IRS data).

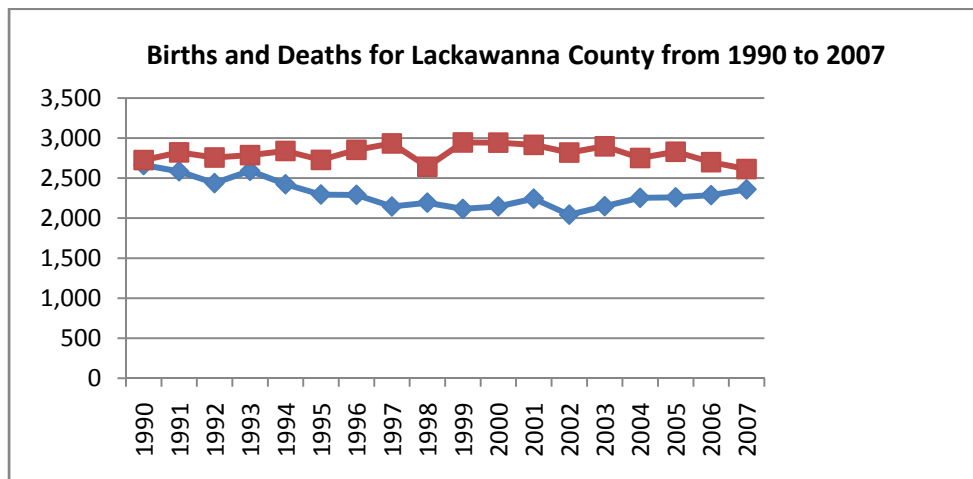
Lackawanna County's total population is on a downward trend, provided that the death rate is greater on average than its combined birth rate and migration into the area. the county's population decreased from 1990 to 2006 and there have been only marginal population increases since then.



Population Growth in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

Data on total population provided by the U.S. Census indicated 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. As such, the Institute concludes that interim Census projections and estimates may under-represent Lackawanna and Luzerne County populations. Interim numbers rely on a formula that is based on the decennial census, and while it incorporates births and deaths and migration, it also uses residual estimates and builds off of prior years.

Lackawanna County's deaths outnumbered its births during the entire seventeen-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.

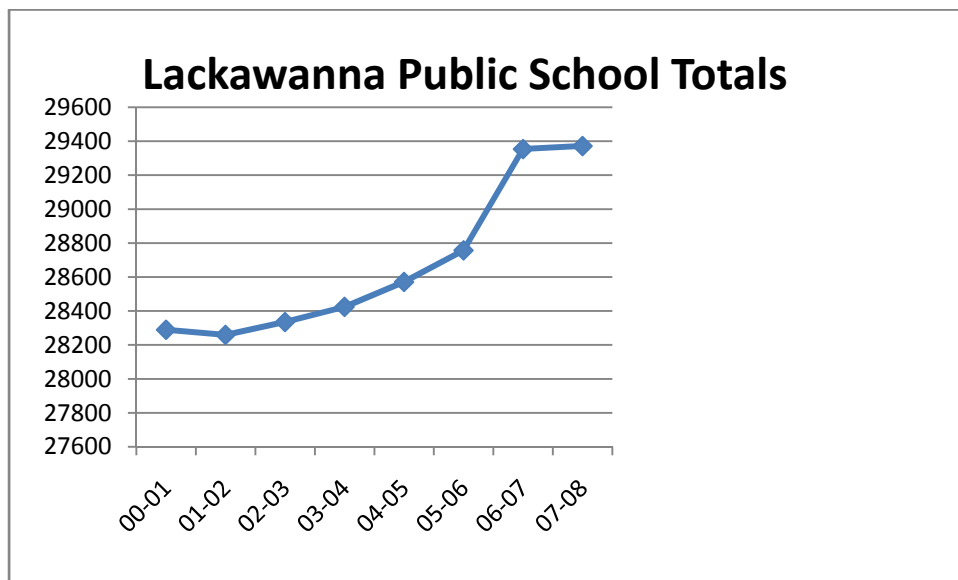
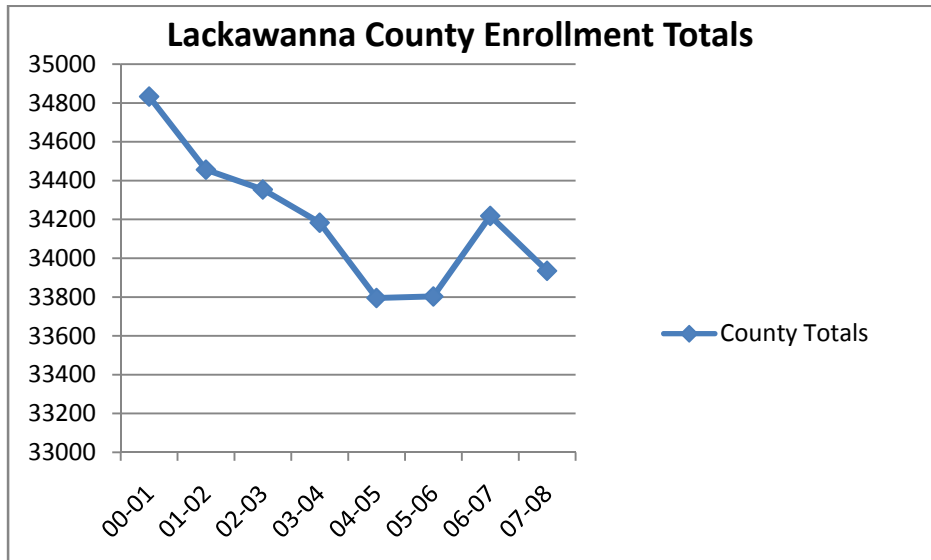


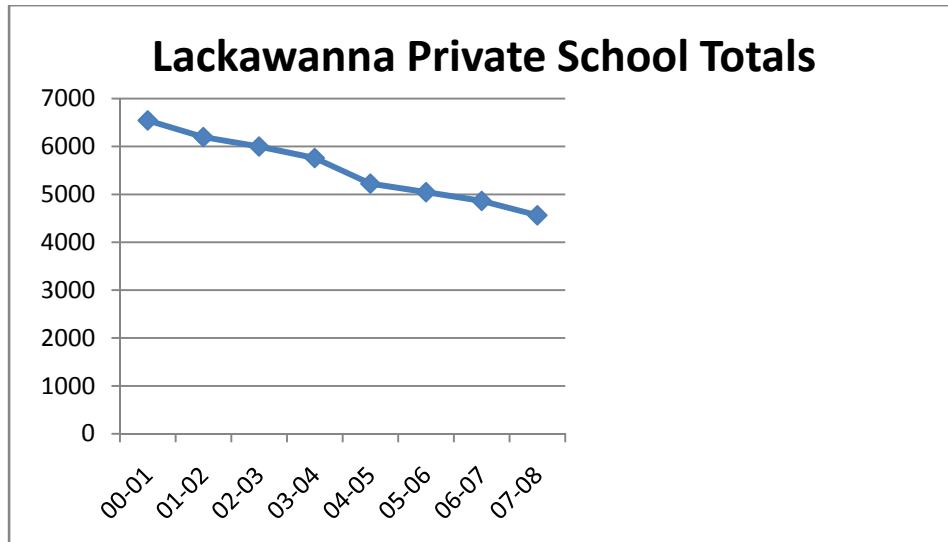
Education

Lackawanna County's overall school enrollment reflects its population decline. School enrollment has dropped from nearly 35,000 in the 2000-2001 school year, to just fewer than 34,000 in the 2007-2008 school year. 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 28,000 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 9,800 students in the 2007-2008 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 2007-2008 school year, private school enrollment dropped to approximately 4,500 students.

Population Growth in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

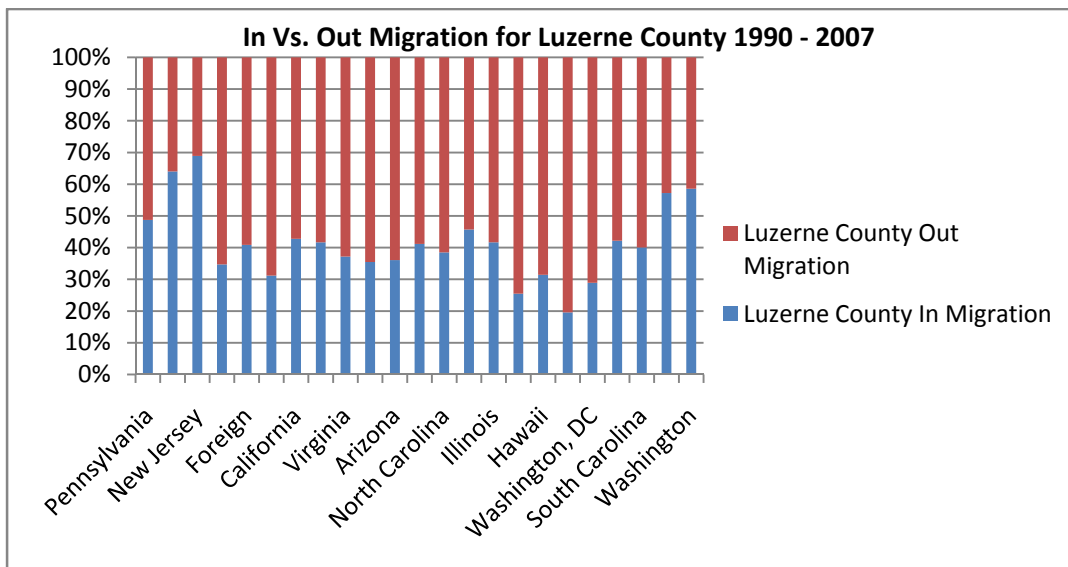
This decrease of nearly 2,000 students greatly affected the county's private school system. As such, several private schools have since merged with other schools, or simply closed. The difference between the private school enrollment decline and the public school enrollment increases shows that Lackawanna County lost roughly 900 students from 2000 to 2008. With a leveling off of the population decline and a continual increase in Lackawanna County's public school enrollment, it is probable that the county's enrollment decline will eventually level off.





Luzerne County

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.

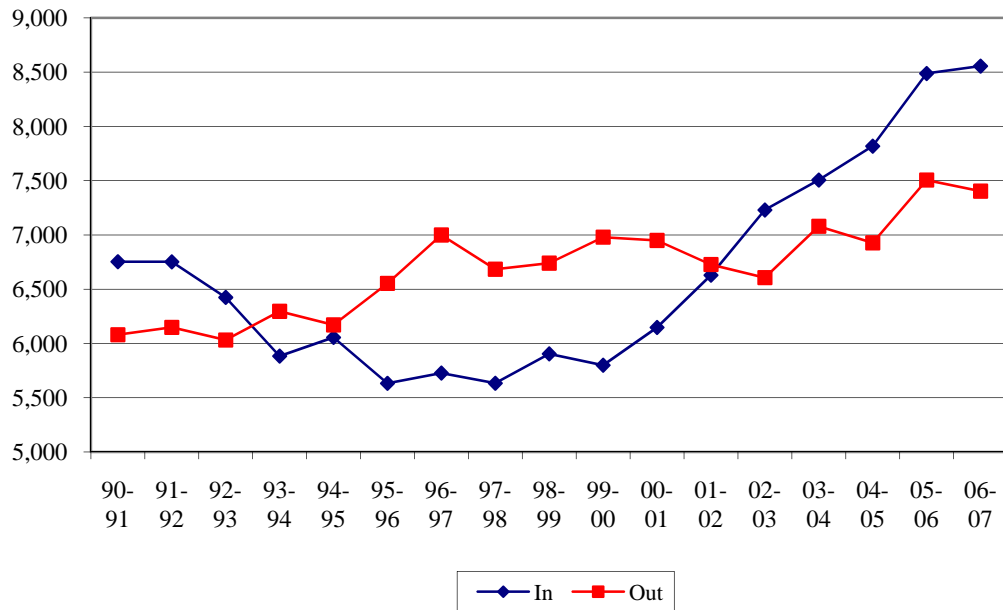


Examining migration flows by contributing states, a trend similar to that in Lackawanna County is evident. New Jersey, New York, and other Pennsylvania counties have been responsible for the most migration into Luzerne County; however, they have also been the destinations of most of Luzerne County's 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

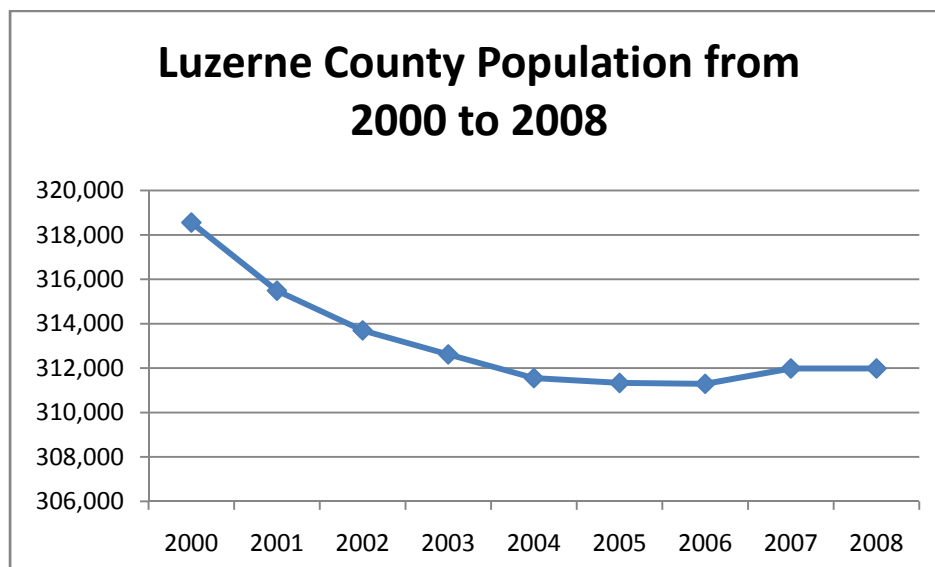
Population Growth in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

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.

Luzerne County: In-Migration vs. Out Migration

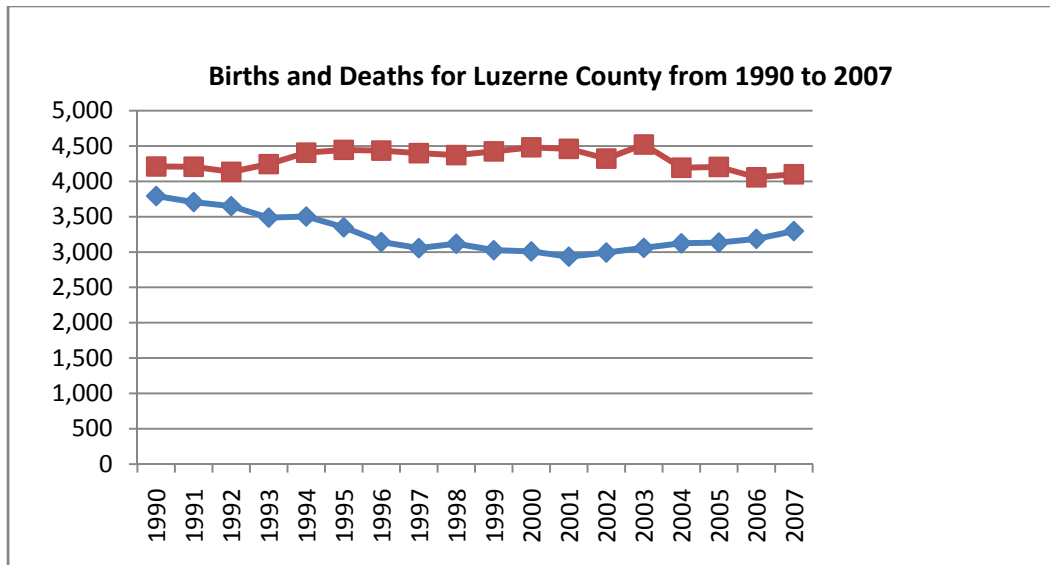


The county's total population rose slightly during the early 1990's, then decreased steadily from the mid-1990's through 2003. It has since reached a plateau. U.S. Census data again showed a population spike from 1990 through 2000. Again, we must call into play the actual Census 2000, which reflects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



Population Growth in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties

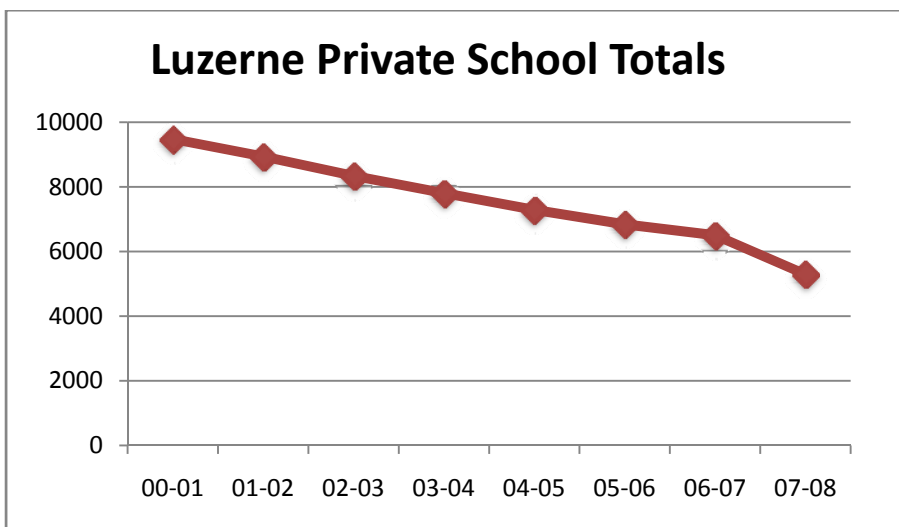
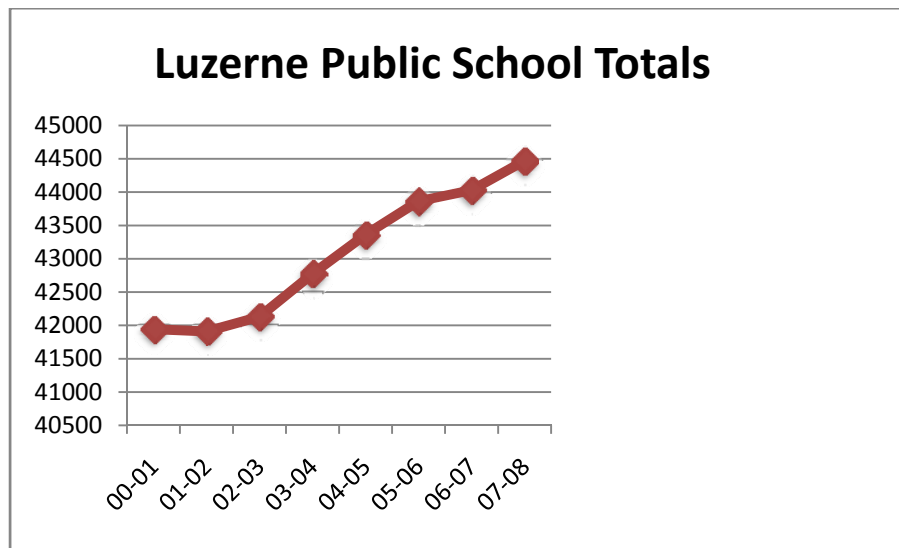
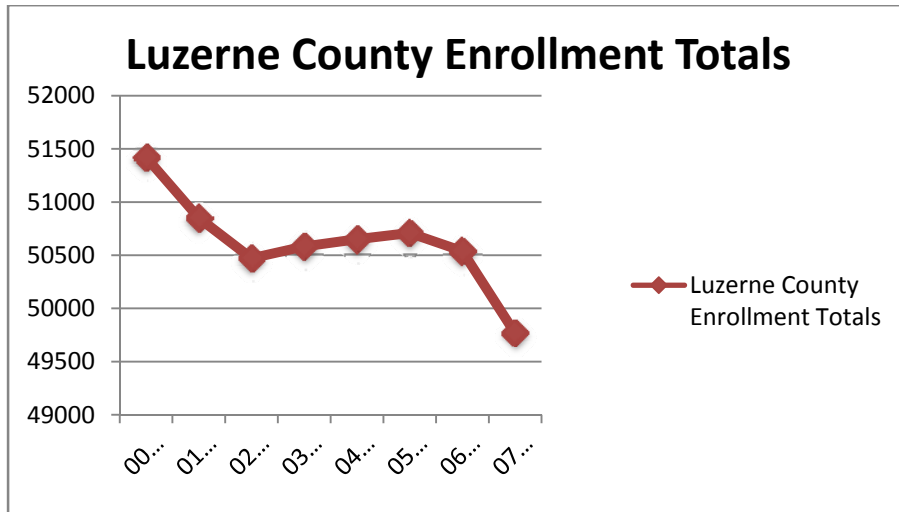
Similar to Lackawanna County, when adjusting total population to reflect migration, birth and death rates, data indicates that there should be a steady downward trend in total population. However, as detailed in the graph below, the population decrease has slowed since 2000 and, as of 2006, now appears to be increasing.



Education

Like Lackawanna County, Luzerne County's overall school enrollment is also declining, although Luzerne County's decline is larger. In all, Luzerne County experienced an approximate 1,700-student enrollment decline, compared with 900 for Lackawanna County. 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 is also rising, though such increase remains much steadier than Lackawanna County's and the increase is expected to continue.

Luzerne County's public school enrollment reached nearly 42,000 in the 2000-2001 school year, and rose to just over 44,000 in the 2007-2008 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 2008, moving from 8,400 students in 2000 to more than 10,400 in 2008. 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 2007-2008 school year, that figure dropped to 5,200. 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.



Conclusions

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 Cited

Internal Revenue Department

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Pennsylvania Department of Health

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development

U.S. Census Department