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RESEARCH CENTER PROJECTS BENTON COUNTY TO BE MOST POPULOUS IN ARKANSAS BY 2025

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. – Benton County has the potential to be the most populous county in the state by the year 2025, according to a new population report by the Center for Business and Economic Research, Sam M. Walton College of Business, University of Arkansas.

The Center for Business and Economic Research has produced a statistical report, “Arkansas Population Projections – 2003-2025.” The study contains population projections for the state, all 75 counties, the metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), and the state’s planning regions. The report can be ordered on CD through the Center.

The population of Benton County was 165,500 in 2002. It will likely surpass Washington County as the state’s second most populous county in 2003. In 2015, the population of Benton County is projected to be between 264,898 people and 282,801 people. In 2025, the county’s population is projected to range between 382,009 people and 411,270 people. The population of Washington County is projected to be between 211,103 people and 233,048 people in 2015, and in 2025, be between 255,736 people and 299,689 people.

“Obviously, the growth in Northwest Arkansas is being fueled by the rapid growth of major corporations in the area. However, the ramifications of this projected growth are significant for city, county and state governments as well as private businesses,” said Jeff Collins, director for the Center for Business and Economic Research. “Populations projections are essential to
decision-makers who have to plan the future infrastructure – the roads, the water and wastewater treatment, the fire and police protection – accordingly. Already, we see that some of the infrastructure is inadequate in areas of current rapid growth.”

Collins added, “We found that growth the Little Rock-North Little Metropolitan Statistical Area is being driving by population increases in Faulkner and Saline Counties. The population in Southeast Arkansas is projected to continue to decline.”

The population of Pulaski County, currently the state’s most populous county, is projected to be between 373,286 and 376,171 in 2010 and be between 391,758 and 398,634 in 2025.

The population of Arkansas was 2,710,079 in 2002. In 2015, it is expected to grow to between 2,986,679 and 3,206,461. “We do not know exactly how migration will affect this figure,” Collins said.

The population in the Southeast Arkansas planning area is projected to continue to decline through 2025. Population losses are projected to range between 3,786 people and 30,669 people, 1.1 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively, of the area’s 2002 population estimate. Calhoun County, located in south-central Arkansas, is projected to remain the least populous county in Arkansas through 2025.

The proportion of the state’s population living in the Central planning area is projected to increase from 29.3 percent in 2002 to 29.5 percent in 2025, and the proportion living in the Northwest planning area is projected to increase from 28.8 percent in 2002 to 36.0 percent.

The report presents a baseline projection as well as an interval in which the population is projected to lie. The projections are based on raw historical data and population trends, taking into consideration births, deaths and population migration. The report’s sources include the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Intercensal Populations Estimates and the Center for Business and Economic Research.

The Arkansas Department of Economic Development has divided the state into five planning regions, Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest. Each planning region is discussed in the report. The Metropolitan Statistical Areas discussed in the report include the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers MSA, the Fort Smith MSA, the Jonesboro MSA, the Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA, the Memphis MSA, the Pine Bluff MSA, and the Texarkana MSA. The report also presents population projections for the counties and parishes in Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma that border Arkansas.
To order a copy of the “Arkansas Population Projections – 2003-2025” Report on CD, send $50.00 to the Center for Business and Economic Research, Sam M. Walton College of Business, Donald W. Reynolds Center for Enterprise Development, Suite 217, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701. Checks should be made payable to the University of Arkansas, Walton College. Orders may also be placed by credit card by phone at 479-575-4151, by fax at 479-575-7687, or by e-mail at cberinfo@cavern.uark.edu. Web: http://cber.uark.edu

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