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Minorities drove the majority of Minnesota's growth over past decade

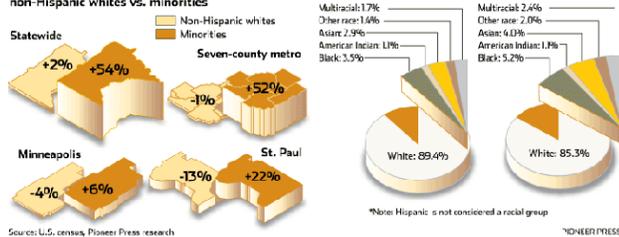
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Statistical shifts in Minnesota's minorities

The growth in the number of minorities in Minnesota outstripped the non-Hispanic white population's growth by more than a 4-to-1 ratio. Most of the state's additional minority residents ended up in the suburbs.

Population change by percent 2000-2010 non-Hispanic whites vs. minorities



its white residents in the past decade, more than 24,000 people, or the equivalent of the population of White Bear Lake.

- The white population in the seven-county metro area dipped slightly, but the minority population grew by more than 50 percent.
- The suburbs added 24 minority residents for every new white resident. More minorities now live in the suburbs than in the central cities. In 2000, whites made up 90 percent of the Twin Cities suburbs. Now nearly one out of five suburban residents is a minority.

CENTRAL CITIES CHANGE The census also showed a contrast in how the racial composition in St. Paul and Minneapolis evolved in the past 10 years. Total population essentially stayed flat in the two central cities; St. Paul lost about 2,000 residents and Minneapolis lost 40. Both lost white residents and gained minority residents, but the change was starker in St. Paul. Compared

Thank God for all those new brown faces around here.

The growth in the state's minority population during the past decade was the chief reason Minnesota will be able to retain all eight of its congressional seats, according to recently released U.S. census data.

As Minnesota's population increased about 8 percent between 2000 and 2010, there were more than four new brown faces for every new white face.

Although the state remains predominantly white — a group that demographers refer to as "non-Hispanic white" — the steady influx of blacks, Asians, Hispanics and people of other races in recent years kept the Twin Cities' suburbs growing and held St. Paul's population steady.

"Minnesota is changing. Our racial and ethnic characteristics are changing," said Minnesota state demographer Tom Gillaspay. "This has been going on for a long time, and it's going to continue for the rest of our lives."

Here's what else the new census numbers reveal about race and diversity in Minnesota:

- St. Paul has lost more than one out of eight of



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First-graders at Royal Oaks Elementary School in Woodbury visit during their 20 minute lunch period Thursday, April 14, 2011. Minnesota barely gained enough population during the last decade to retain all eight of its Congressional seats, and according to a recently released Census data, the growth in the state's minority population was mainly the reason. The state's total population grew 7.8 percent from 2000 to 2010, or nearly 400,000 people. But non-whites accounted for more than two-thirds of that growth. (Pioneer Press: Chris Polydoroff) with Minneapolis, the capital city lost about two-thirds more white residents and gained twice as many minorities. As a result, a St. Paul resident is more likely than a Minneapolis resident to be a minority. It was the other way around 10 years ago. In the past decade, Minneapolis minimized its white population loss because it was more successful than St. Paul at attracting young professionals to live in condo developments in the downtown area, according to Libby Starling, a Metropolitan Council research manager. Minneapolis also benefited from new student housing around the University of Minnesota, said Will Craig, associate director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. An aging population contributed to a decline in white population in St. Paul, Starling and Craig said. In older white households, grown kids moved out or residents moved out for a different kind of housing or a warmer climate. Black population growth in Minneapolis in the past decade was modest, 3 percent. Five suburbs gained more black residents than

Minneapolis did in the same time period, and St. Paul's black population increased 33 percent. The foreclosure crisis forced many blacks out of Minneapolis' North Side, Craig said, and many moved to suburbs like Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, which are considered "majority minority" communities as a result. "There was no obvious migration loss on the east side (of the metropolitan area) the way we saw it in Minneapolis," Starling said. **BIG MINORITY GROWTH IN SUBURBS** The suburbanization of blacks and other minorities is part of a national trend. Minorities are leaving the cities to seek affordable housing in suburbs, to send their kids to what are perceived as better schools or to join a growing minority middle class in cities such as Woodbury, which now has nearly three times as many blacks as it had 10 years ago, according to Craig. "Visually, it's noticeable. You see more black people walking around," said Marquita Stephens, a black woman who moved to Woodbury in 2000 from Kansas City. Back then, African-Americans made up only 2.5 percent of the suburb's population. Now it's 5.6 percent. "Generally, more white people are comfortable with black people, and black people are about the same," Stephens said. "It's easier to strike up conversations and maintain them during a football game and a soccer game than it used to be." "People of color are suburbanizing just as white people did in the past," said Thomas Luce, research director at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Race and Poverty. Gillaspay said Twin Cities

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suburbs that, a generation ago, consisted of homogenous households — primarily young, white families — are now aging. Those communities are now being replaced with a population much more diverse in age, income and race. In the past 10 years, the number of blacks and Hispanics in the suburbs each jumped by about 127 percent. The Asian suburban population grew by 92 percent. Half of the state's growth in Hispanics, two-thirds of its growth in African-Americans and nearly 80 percent of its growth in Asians occurred in the suburbs. Recent immigrants from other countries are more likely to move directly to the suburbs instead of starting in the central cities and moving out later, Luce said. A decade ago, most of the state's black population — 60 percent — was concentrated in the central cities. Now that situation is almost reversed. Suburban and outstate African-Americans now account for 58 percent of the state's population. More than half of the state's Asians live in the suburbs, up from 44 percent a decade ago. There has been a similar increase in the number of Hispanics living in the suburbs. WITH GROWTH COMES DIVERSITY Despite the rapid growth in people of color, Minnesota continues to be one of the whitest states in the country, and the Twin Cities is one of the whitest large metropolitan areas. Non-Hispanic whites make up 83 percent of the state's population, the 13th-highest level in the country and higher than the national rate of 64 percent. But if the state's population is going to continue to grow, it will have to become more diverse. Newcomers from other countries are now from Africa, Asia and Latin American, not Europe, Gillaspay said. Even those who move from other parts of the United States are more likely to resemble the average American, who is much more diverse than the typical Minnesotan. In contrast, "the people who moved out are essentially the Minnesotans of the past," Starling said. "Increasing diversity creates challenges as well as opportunity," Luce said. "In places like Minnesota, people have to learn to live with people they didn't grow up with." "Are they appalled or do they begin to accept this as part of American life?" Craig asked. "I'm an optimist," he said. "I would view most of these things as pretty positive." For example, Craig said, the increasing diversity of the suburbs

can help bridge the gap in interests between the central cities and the suburbs. "There had been this growing schism between the suburbs and central cities: 'You have your problems and keep them,' " Craig said. "This tends to help people think we're all in this together." Richard Chin can be reached at 651-228-5560. MaryJo Webster can be reached at 651-228-5507.

