

# Census results indicate little change in Jackson County

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While newspapers from around the state lament the decline in population in the state's rural areas, or celebrate the enormous growth in the metro area, there hasn't been much cause for excitement one way or the other for the residents of Jackson County.

According to Ben Pribyl, Jackson County Auditor, the little bit of decline in the population of Jackson County won't affect any of its residents all too much. There was a decline of only 3.5 percent in Jackson County between 1990 and 2000, which equaled out to be a

total of 409 people who left Jackson County in the last 10 years. In fact, as far as money coming into the county is concerned, Pribyl added that there'd be no real noticeable change as property taxes are based on value rather than population.

The one area that will likely be the most affected by the latest census numbers will be the voting precincts. Redistricting will take place if a shift in the population of Jackson County has caused any precincts to rise to more than a 10 percent majority of constituents over other precincts.

Pribyl indicated that the city of Jackson could grow by the next census, but "it depends on our economic development and how aggressive we are." "If you want your community to grow, add incentives," he suggested.

Dean Albrecht, Jackson's city administrator, echoed Pribyl's attitude towards the reduced population in the city. There were 58 fewer people in Jackson for the 2000 census than in 1990, amounting to a loss in population for the city of Jackson of 1.6 percent. Albrecht said that there will be a slight reduction in local government aid which will affect departments such as administra-

tion, police, parks, snow removal, senior center, etc., but "it won't have a real big impact on us."

The loss in aid for the

City of Jackson totaled out to be in the amount of roughly \$15,000, but Albrecht was quick to point out how inconse-

quential an amount of that size is when you figure that the general fund budget is set at \$2 million.

The schools in Jackson

County continue to be the hardest hit by population

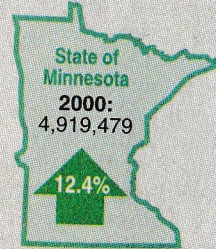
**CENSUS** —

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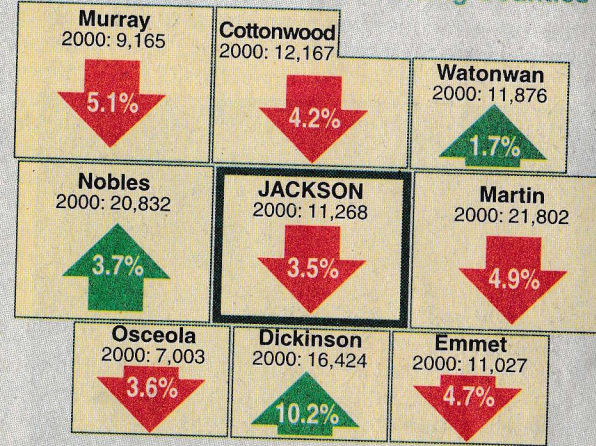
2000  
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## Jackson County's Cities

Location	2000	1990	+/-	Pct.
<b>Jackson County</b>	<b>11,268</b>	<b>11,677</b>	<b>-409</b>	<b>-3.5%</b>
Alpha	126	105	+21	+20.0%
Heron Lake	768	730	+38	+5.2%
Jackson	3,501	3,559	-58	-1.6%
Lakefield	1,721	1,679	+42	+2.5%
Okabena	185	223	-38	-17.0%
Wilder	69	83	-14	-16.9%



## Population Figures for Surrounding Counties



## — CENSUS

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changes taking place around the area. According to Superintendent Gery Arndt, data shows that the enrollment at Jackson County Central will continue to go down and is projected to level off at roughly 75 students per class. What concerns Arndt is that next fall the loss of 52 students will compute to a loss of 57

WADMs. This term means Weighted Average Daily Membership within the JCC school system, and it is figured by assigning different values to students of different ages based on what the potential expenses are to educate them. A kindergarten student, for instance, is calculated at

only .557 WADMs to account for the fact that they are not in school all day like the older students. High school students, who generally need a more technology intensive learning base as well as more varied programs, are calculated at 1.3 WADMs.

At present the formula

dollars average out to an amount of \$3,964. When this figure is multiplied by the 57 WADAMS that represent the 52-student decline in enrollment, it becomes apparent where the funding problems lie for JCC. All told, JCC will see a loss of \$226,948 in formula dollars for the 2001-2002 school year.