Changes in North Dakota’s Housing Stock

The Census Bureau counted just under 290,000 housing units in North Dakota in 2000, including single detached homes, duplexes, apartments. The housing count had grown to 317,500 units by 2010, a change of nearly 9 percent. While this growth may seem significant, the state’s growth in housing was near the bottom nationwide. Only Vermont and Rhode Island added fewer housing units in the decade prior to 2010. By percentage change, North Dakota was ranked 35th of the 50 states for housing growth.

North Dakota’s best year in the decade was 2005, when the state added an estimated 3,655 new units, having increased every year from 2000, but began trending down through the remainder of the decade until 2010. Only 11 of the state’s 53 counties saw a growth in housing each year. Burleigh and Cass counties accounted for nearly 75 percent of the growth in the state’s change in the number of housing units. Contrast this rate of growth to the time-frame after the 2010 Census.

From April 1, 2010 to June 30, 2013, North Dakota added an estimated 21,815 additional housing units in the state, more than double the change respectively. By percentage of growth, Williams was the highest at 40 percent compared to less than 7 percent growth in Cass County.

Nationally, six of the 11 counties with the highest percentage of growth are in North Dakota. Williams had the highest percentage, Stark second and McKenzie third. Other North Dakota counties that are included in this list are Ward, Mountrail and Divide.

Cass and Williams Counties Gain Most Housing Units

From April 1, 2010 to June 30, 2013, North Dakota’s housing stock is estimated to have increased by 21,800 units. Increases in Cass and William Counties accounted for about 40 percent of that growth at 4,546 and 4,209 additional units respectively. By percentage of growth, Williams was the highest at 40 percent compared to less than 7 percent growth in Cass County.

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Number of Persons Sharing House Increasing – Since 2008, the number of individuals sharing an owner occupied home or an apartment has consistently risen. In 1990 there was an average of 2.42 persons per occupied housing unit and by the year 2000 that had declined to 2.3. As of 2013, the number has risen to 2.34. The Ward County area appeared to have the highest concentrations of persons per unit, at nearly 3, likely a result of both the 2011 flood and the influx of oil field workers since 2010.
Occupied Housing Experiences Highest Increase in Median Value – In 2010, the median value of owner occupied housing in North Dakota was estimated to be $123,000. By 2013 that figure had risen to $155,400, a rise of 26.3 percent or 8.6% when adjusted for inflation. No other state came close to seeing this level of rise in value. Wyoming was estimated to have the second highest increase of 10.2 percent during this time-frame, from $180,100 to $195,500. Thirty-two states saw a decrease in value during this time-frame.

Joe Cicha
Census Specialist

Phone 701-328-7283
E-mail jcicha@nd.gov
Web NDCensus.gov

Housing Value Rises, Rent Appears a Comparative Bargain

The median reported value of owner occupied housing in North Dakota during the 2000 Census was $74,400, the fourth lowest of the 50 states. By 2005 that figure had grown to $88,600, an average increase of only about 5 percent when adjusted for inflation. By 2013, the median value had increased to $155,400, an increase of about 15 percent over the year 2000 figure when adjusted for inflation (now 27th highest of the 50 states). The most rapid change appears to be in the past few years, when the median value increased by nearly $13,000 between 2012 and 2013. Western North Dakota areas tended to see higher increases in value than those in the east.

In 2000, the Census Bureau estimated the number of housing units in the state with a value of more than $300,000 at less than 1,000 or less than 1 percent of the housing inventory. By 2013 that number had increased to about 25,000, about 13 percent of the state’s housing units. While some of this change is a result of inflation and replacement of older units with new construction, increases in market value appear to play a significant part in this change.

Similar to the value of owner occupied housing, the cost of rent has also increased, but remains surprisingly inexpensive when compared to the rates found in other states. In the 2000 Census, median rent was $412, the second lowest of any state. By 2010 that figure had grown to $583, an increase of about 12 percent when adjusted for inflation, and still the second lowest of the 50 states. The 2013 median rent was $690, and increase of about 24 percent over the Census 2000 figure, and 11 percent over the 2010 figure when adjusted for inflation. Still, the 2013 median cost of rent for North Dakotans was ranked sixth lowest of the 50 states.