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## Numbers of seniors rising in Central Texas, across the U.S.

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America, your gray is showing. We're talking about you, too, Central Texas.

**The nation's senior population — people 65 and older — is larger than ever before, at 40.3 million, and seniors as a group grew by 15 percent since 2000, faster than the U.S. population as a whole, the Census Bureau said Wednesday.**

The total U.S. population grew 9.7 percent between 2000 and 2010.

**The country's senior population grew fastest in Western states and across the Sun Belt. In Texas, Williamson and Hays counties were among six counties that saw the senior population grow by 70 percent or more.**

Most counties in Texas saw rising numbers of seniors, with the exception of a few dozen rural counties, mostly in West Texas where the overall population has been declining for decades.

Seniors accounted for 13 percent of the total U.S. population in 2010, the largest percentage since the census began and a 5.3 million increase since 2000. In 1900, people 65 and older accounted for 4 percent of the U.S. population.

The Census Bureau said that people ages 85 to 94 accounted for the fastest growth among seniors, increasing from 3.9 million to 5.1 million between 2000 and 2010, a 30 percent gain.

However, another fast-growing age group — people ages 65 to 69 — will key more major growth among the senior population in coming years. That age group represents the leading edge of the baby boom and is expected to grow more rapidly over the next decade as the first baby boomers start turning 65 this year.

"Future growth of the older population is both highly probable and unprecedented in the United States," the census said. Like the rest of the country, Texas is experiencing the effects of an aging baby boomer generation, Steve Murdock, a Rice University professor and former head of the Census Bureau, told the American-Statesman this year.

People born between 1946 and 1964 account for about 25 percent of the Texas and U.S. populations.

Texas, which grew 20.6 percent overall since 2000, had a 25.5 percent increase among residents 65 and older and a 28.3 percent increase among people 85 and older. Texas' 2.6 million population of people 65 and older accounted for about 10 percent of the state's total population.

In the city that radiates a youthful image, the city of the University of Texas' Forty Acres, live music, food trailers and hipster haunts, the numbers of older Austinites grew at rates higher than most other age groups.

**Austin's 65-and-older population grew 27 percent, to 55,695, from 2000 to 2010, according to census data. That accounts for about 7 percent of the city's total population. The group of people ages 60 to 64 grew at the highest rate — 97 percent — of any group between 2000 and 2010.**

**But Austin isn't in any danger of losing its youthful calling card. More than 65 percent of Austinites were 39 or younger in 2010. All age groups grew in the city — which increased its population 20 percent over the past decade, to 790,390 — and people ages 25 to 29 made up the largest group overall in number, 88,116. The population of children younger than 9 grew at a rate of more than 22 percent.**

In 2010, Austin's median age was 31, compared with 33.6 in Texas and 37.2 in the U.S.

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**