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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, December 22, 2006

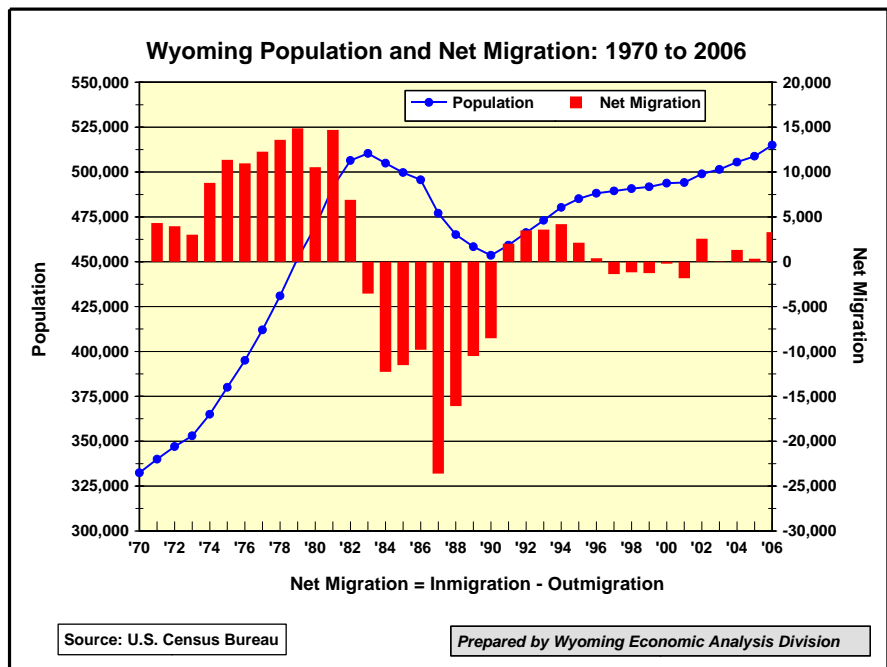
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WYOMING'S POPULATION IN 2006 IS THE HIGHEST EVER

CHEYENNE -- Wyoming's total resident population reached 515,004 in July 2006, which surpassed the previous record level of 510,361 in 1983, according to estimates just released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The annual increase from 2005 to 2006 was 6,206 persons, or 1.2 percent. The estimated net migration, after accounting for the natural change (births and deaths), indicated that over 3,400 more persons moved into Wyoming than left the state during the year. Nationally, the population was estimated at 299.4 million in 2006, an increase of 1.0 percent from the previous year. Wyoming's growth rate was higher than the northern and eastern neighboring states, but lower than the western and southern bordering states.

"The 1.2 percent population expansion in the state was the strongest increase since 1994," said Wenlin Liu, senior economist with the Economic Analysis Division. "This was not a surprise because Wyoming's population growth has been lagging behind the job increase for quite a few years. It is a good news for the state, and a good news for employers. Certainly the increase was somewhat an alleviation to the serious laborforce shortage the state has been recently facing," said Wenlin Liu.

"The estimated population only includes residents, it does not count non-resident or out-of-state workers, which have been contributing to a significant portion of the state's workforce, particularly in the energy related industries during the recent boom. As the mining industry (including oil and gas extraction) has been booming, many of those out-of-state workers chose to settle down in Wyoming and may have brought their families with them too. Even though the 2006 county population will not be released until March 2007, I suspect that most of the increase was in the areas closely associated with energy sector (particularly natural gas and coalbed methane), such as Sublette, Sweetwater, Campbell, and Johnson counties," Liu commented. "As long as the energy industries continue to grow, Wyoming should expect stronger migration increase in the near future," Liu continued.



The complete figures are available online at <http://eadiv.state.wy.us/> or U.S. Census Bureau website at <http://www.census.gov/>