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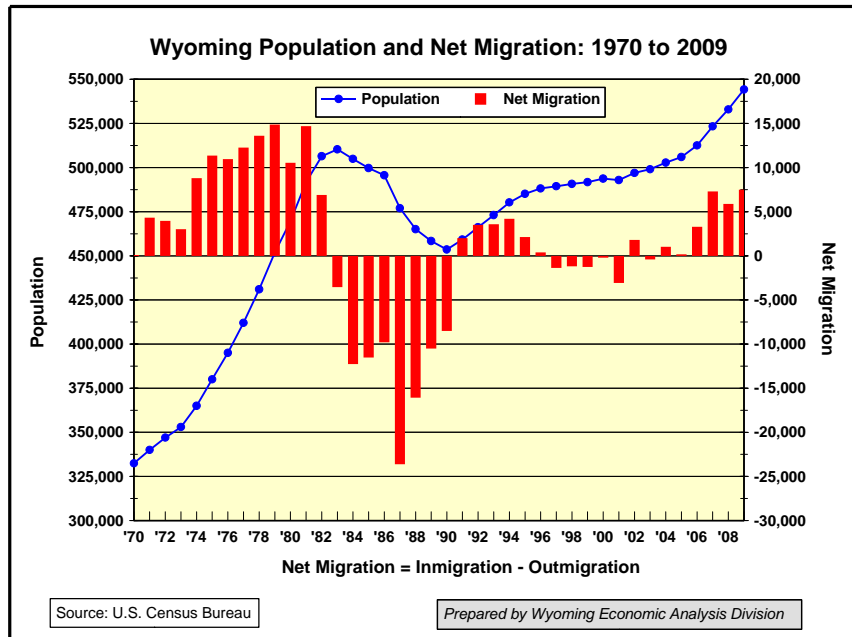
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WYOMING'S 2009 POPULATION GREW THE FASTEST IN THE NATION**

**CHEYENNE** -- Wyoming's total resident population reached 544,270 in July 2009, and it surpassed the previous year's record of 532,981, which is a revised figure, according to estimates just released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The annual increase from 2008 to 2009 was nearly 11,300 persons, or 2.1 percent. The estimated net migration, after accounting for the natural change (births and deaths), indicated that over 7,500 more persons moved into Wyoming than left the State between July 2008 and July 2009. Nationally, the population was an estimated 307.0 million in 2009, an increase of 0.9 percent from the previous year. Wyoming's growth rate was ranked the fastest in the nation. "Overall, recession slows peoples' move across states," said Dr. Wenlin Liu, senior economist with the Economic Analysis Division. "Despite the State's economic recession, which was mainly caused by the downturn in energy exploration, in-migration was still quite strong." The 2.1 percent population expansion was also the State's strongest increase since 1982, the last year of the oil boom.



The population estimate is measured at a point in time, not the average of the calendar year. The 2009 estimate refers to the population figure as of July 1, 2009. The change in population between 2008 and 2009 indicates the population change between July 1, 2008 and July 1, 2009. "I suspect that most of the migrants moved into Wyoming during the second half of 2008. There was no sign of economic recession back then in the State, and the economy was still adding jobs and the unemployment rate was just over 3.0%. People tend to move to areas where economies are viable. Wyoming was one of only a few bright spots in the nation in terms of job markets in 2008. It was definitely attractive to many devastated employment seekers from other areas of the country, such as Michigan, California, Nevada, and Florida," Liu commented.

According to Liu, "With the rapid loss of jobs and a jump in the unemployment rate since the beginning of 2009, the State has been facing the worst economic recession since the late 1980s, therefore the in-migration is probably slower this year, particularly in the second half of 2009. However, unless the national economy recovers much faster than the State's, Wyoming's residents should still be discouraged from leaving in the near future. Comparing the State's current recession with the bust years in mid-1980s, the migration pattern is perhaps the largest difference."

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