

From the Mayor...

September 4, 2015

The City of Warsaw has 14,280 residents, according to the latest estimate from the United States Census Bureau. That represents a 5.3% increase in population since the 2010 Census.

If you get on the quickfacts.census.gov website, you can easily check census data for every city, town, and county in Indiana.

Numbers, percentages, and statistics can be used to justify just about any point a person wishes to make. Approval ratings, exit polls, job statistics, and the political polls that we will be seeing for the next 18 months are examples of just that.

I consider population growth a very important measuring stick of vibrancy and progress in a community. Census statistics are like a temperature reading. If the thermometer says 90 degrees, then it is hot. Likewise, if our city is growing in population, then our "climate" is attracting people.

Does our community offer diverse employment opportunity? Is our community safe? Do we have quality schools? Are there ample housing choices for all ages? These are the quality of life issues that "experts" tell us matter when it comes to making a community a desirable place to live.

The United States Census Bureau statistically tracks growth and updates population estimates every year in between actual census taking, which occurs only every ten years.

The State of Indiana has grown 1.7% in the four years since the 2010 census. The City of Warsaw has shown a 5.3% growth in that same period. By way of comparison with similar communities, Goshen has grown 1.9%, Plymouth .6%, Auburn .7%, Columbia City .9%, and Fort Wayne 1.9%. South Bend (.1%), and Mishawaka (-.2%) showed relative stagnation in their growth. To nobody's surprise, the cities surrounding Indianapolis (3.5%) are where large growth in Indiana is occurring. Carmel (9.5%), Greenwood (6.9%), and Noblesville (10.5%) are examples of this.

So how does the Mayor interpret this data? Our percentage of population growth is among the most impressive in the state outside of the Indianapolis area. We are not stagnant. We are not losing population. Warsaw grew 7.89% from 2000 to 2010. It appears we are on track to exceed that rate for this decade at the pace we are going.

Why do I think this is happening? Most important is the diversity of skilled and professional job opportunities that exist in Warsaw. By addressing quality of life issues that attract that workforce, our unique small city way of life becomes an asset to our employers. Our high school graduates might be staying here because of

opportunity for highly specialized technical career paths with locally available training programs to open those doors. Grace College graduates are finding opportunity here as their education opportunities have expanded to meet the needs of our local employers. Our downtown revitalization, the Village at Winona, our beautiful lakes, and a rebounding economy are all factors that matter. This list is by no means all-inclusive as many individuals, groups, and organizations factor into this growth.

I always tell people we can't be what we are not. We don't have an ocean and palm trees. But it does get to 90 degrees in Warsaw and we are growing by 5.3%.