New data released by the U.S. Census Bureau give more than 2,500 midsized counties, cities and towns nationwide (those with populations between 20,000 and 64,999) their first statistical “portrait” since the 2000 Census on a wide range of key socioeconomic and housing topics. These are the first American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that combine three years of survey responses (2005-2007) to produce data. The technique makes it possible to release a new set of multiyear estimates annually for smaller geographic areas.

“Communities are no longer limited to a once-a-decade look at their population’s characteristics. The ACS’s multiyear data will allow small towns and communities to track how they are changing on an ongoing basis,” said former Census Bureau Director Steve H. Murdock.

Previously, only 1-year surveys of places with populations larger than 65,000 were available. In Tennessee, this meant that only 19 of 95 counties and 6 of 347 cities had the social, economic and housing data that we all find so useful. With the recent data release, 64 Tennessee counties and 29 Tennessee cities are now included in the detailed ACS. By 2010, the Census Bureau plans to have data available for all areas in the country.

Almost all of us are familiar with the 10-year census. The last census occurred in 2000 and every household in the country received a questionnaire. Most households in 2000 received a “short form,” which contained seven basic questions. A sample of households received a “long form,” which contained additional questions on social, economic and demographic attributes.

The American Community Survey (ACS), part of the U.S. Census Bureau’s effort to streamline and improve the census, is replacing the long form and providing communities a vibrant, moving picture every year instead of once every 10 years.

One local official said, “We are in very fast moving times now and 10 years is like an eternity. If we wait for data for 10 years, we are spending five years putting in resources where we may not need them and missing places where we really should be putting our resources.”

(Continued on page 2)
Since July 2004, one household out of 480 throughout America has received a monthly survey. No household will receive a survey more often than once every five years. The first ACS estimates were released in November 2006, representing 2005 data for all states and cities or counties of at least 65,000 people. In December of 2008, the second major step in the ACS rollout was the release of 3-year estimates for cities and counties with populations greater than 20,000. Each year, new data are released for both the 1-year areas and the 3-year areas. The final step, in 2010 will be the release of ACS data covering every political entity in the U.S. From then on, every city, county and tribal area will have current data available for planning, analysis and research.

Four facts about how ACS multiyear estimates are produced:

1 - Interview Collection Periods
ACS 1-year estimates are based on data collected in one specific calendar year. For the 2007 ACS estimates, the data from all sample interviews that were obtained between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007 are pooled to produce the 1-year data products. Multiyear ACS estimates are based on the data collected over multiple consecutive calendar years. Data from sample interviews collected between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007 are pooled to produce the 2005–2007 estimates.

2 - Geographic Boundaries
For the ACS 1-year estimates, the geography is based on the boundaries defined on January 1 of the year being tabulated. For the ACS multiyear estimates, the geography is based on the boundaries defined on January 1 of the final year in the multi-year period.

3 - Weighting Methodology - Use of Population Estimates
The ACS 1-year estimates of total population are controlled by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin to conform to the official population estimates from the Population Estimates Program. These controls are for the reference date of July 1 of the tabulation year and are updated annually. The ACS 3-year estimates are controlled to conform to a simple average over the 3-year period.

4 - Inflation Adjustments
Monetary values for the ACS 1-year, 3-year and 5-year estimates are inflation adjusted to the final year of the period. For example, the 2005–2007 ACS 3-year estimates are tabulated using 2007 adjusted dollars. These adjustments use the national Consumer Price Index (CPI)


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Tennessee State Data Center News

In November 2008, the Center for Business and Economic Research welcomed Randy Gustafson as the new director of the State Data Center. Randy has served Tennessee at the Department of Revenue, the Municipal Technical Advisory Service and Middle Tennessee State University for the past 10 years.

Many thanks to Vickie Cunningham, who served as the interim director of the TN SDC. Vickie added SDC duties to her already very full plate and has worked behind the scenes with the TN SDC since 1988.

Contact information for the TN SDC remains the same: tnsdc@utk.edu and 865-974-5441. Randy's direct line is 865-974-6070.
Tennessee Counties Published in the 2008 ACS

Counties:
- Anderson
- Bedford
- * Blount
- * Bradley
- Campbell
- Carroll
- Cheatham
- Claiborne
- Cocke
- Coffee
- Cumberland
- * Davidson
- Dickson
- Dyer
- Fayette
- Franklin
- Gibson
- Giles
- Grainger
- * Greene
- Hamblen
- * Hamilton
- Hardeman
- Hardin
- Hawkins
- Henderson
- Henry
- Hickman
- Jefferson
- * Knox
- Lauderdale
- Lawrence
- Lincoln
- Loudon
- Macon
- * Madison
- Marion
- Marshall
- * Maury
- McMinn
- McNairy
- Monroe
- * Montgomery
- Morgan
- Obion
- Overton
- * Putnam
- Rhea
- Roane
- Robertson
- * Rutherford
- Scott
- * Sevier
- * Shelby
- * Sullivan
- * Sumner
- Tipton
- Warren
- * Washington
- Weakley
- White
- * Williamson
- * Wilson
- * Knox
- Lauderdale
- Lawrence
- Lincoln
- Loudon
- Macon
- * Madison
- Marion
- Marshall
- * Maury
- McMinn
- McNairy
- Monroe
- * Montgomery
- Morgan
- Obion
- Overton
- * Putnam
- Rhea
- Roane
- Robertson
- * Rutherford
- Scott
- * Sevier
- * Shelby
- * Sullivan
- * Sumner
- Tipton
- Warren
- * Washington
- Weakley
- White
- * Williamson
- * Wilson

Cities:
- Bartlett
- Brentwood
- Bristol
- * Chattanooga
- * Clarksville
- Cleveland
- Collierville
- Columbia
- Cookeville
- Farragut
- Franklin
- Gallatin
- Germantown
- Hendersonville
- Jackson
- Johnson City
- Kingsport
- * Knoxville
- La Vergne
- Lebanon
- Maryville
- * Memphis
- Morristown
- Mount Juliet
- * Murfreesboro
- * Nashville
- Oak Ridge
- Smyrna
- Spring Hill

Places marked with * are available in both 1-year and 3-year datasets.
The Census Bureau State Data Center (SDC) program is a state/Census Bureau cooperative program that disseminates census and other data to the public through a network of over 1,800 state and local agencies, libraries, universities, chambers of commerce and others. Currently, the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) serves as the lead agency for this program in Tennessee. The remainder of the Tennessee SDC is comprised of 19 affiliates statewide. The goal of the Tennessee SDC is to provide timely demographic and economic data to the citizens, businesses and government agencies of Tennessee. CBER also serves as the state’s liaison to the Census Bureau and as the representative to the Federal-State Cooperative Programs for Population Estimates and Projections.