

Population Estimates: The Utah Experience
September 21, 1999

Natalie Gochnour, Chairperson
Utah Population Estimates Committee

This paper was written as part of the official proceedings of the Yun Kim Symposium on Population and Development held at Utah State University on July 23, 1999. Dr. Kim served on the Utah Population Estimates Committee from 1966 to 1996. The author wishes to thank Dr. Kim and others for helping to piece together selected aspects of the Committee's history. Ken Jensen, Frank Hachman, and Brad Barber were particularly helpful. Much of the content of this paper has been drawn from interviews with these and other former or current Committee members, as well as the Utah Economic and Business Review which provides a consistent reference for Committee estimates and activities.

In the United States the decennial census provides an actual enumeration of the population every ten years. Estimates are made in intercensal years by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and by most states to provide an indication of population change on a more frequent basis. Together, census counts and intercensal estimates inform a variety of planning and policy decisions made in all facets of public and private decision making.

The Bureau of the Census is the primary generator of population estimates for the United States and Utah. The Bureau produces annual estimates of population at the state and county-level, and sub-county estimates irregularly.¹ In Utah, the Bureau of the Census' estimates are complemented and augmented by the work of the Utah Population Estimates Committee – a committee established by Executive Order and referenced in state statute – and the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates – a partnership between the Bureau and the states designed to improve the accuracy and utility of population estimates. In Utah, both the Estimates Committee and the Federal-State Cooperative are staffed and coordinated by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.

The State of Utah's experience with population estimation relates closely to the activities of the Utah Population Estimates Committee. The Committee has enjoyed a rich history, stretching

¹Sub-county in this paper refers to cities, towns, and the unincorporated balance of counties. The Bureau of the Census tries to adhere to an annual release schedule of sub-county estimates, but in reality has released them irregularly.

over four decades and nearly five censuses. This paper documents selected aspects of the Committee's history with a focus on the challenges, milestones, and accomplishments of the past 44 years.

Estimates Committee – An Overview

The Utah Population Estimates Committee prepares the state's official population estimates and provides feedback to the Governor on population issues. Currently, the Committee prepares annual mid-year population estimates for the state and 29 counties.

The Committee also prepares sub-county population estimates for new cities and major annexations. These sub-county estimates are interim estimates used in state funding distribution formulas until the Bureau of the Census can update its geographic base file and prepare its own estimates.

In addition to preparing estimates, the Committee provides feedback to the Governor on Bureau of the Census population estimates and programs, including the decennial census and the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates.

The Committee is comprised of individuals knowledgeable about the data and methods used to prepare population estimates. Currently, there are 13 members of the Committee, all of whom have been appointed by the Governor.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget staffs the Committee, a role which it has held since about 1981 when the responsibilities were transferred from the Utah Department of Workforce Services.² The Committee meets several times a year, but its work is concentrated in the October-December period when the data for the current year's estimate becomes available. State and county-level estimates are generally published in January. Sub-county estimates are prepared as needed throughout the year.

Historical Context – Enduring Through Change

The Committee has prepared population estimates during a time of tremendous economic and demographic change.³ On the demographic side, for instance, fertility rates have fluctuated. Utah, like the nation, experienced very high fertility rates during the post-World War II Baby Boom, and much lower rates after the Baby Boom. Contrary to national trends, however, Utah experienced a "mini-Baby Boom" from 1976 until 1982. And currently, Utah's fertility rate, like

²Known prior to 1996 as the Utah Department of Employment Security

³While there are many sources for information about the timing, extent, and impact of these occurrences, the *Economic Report to the Governor*, published annually by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, provides historical data and additional background.

that of the nation's, remains relatively stable.⁴ These changes and variations from national norms have complicated the estimation process.

On the economic side, activity has also fluctuated as a variety of new industries have emerged, while others have contracted. Construction of the federal highway system in Utah and water projects such as the Flaming Gorge and Glen Canyon Dams affected the economy in the late 1950s and 1960s. Utah's defense/aerospace program originated during this time with companies such as Sperry-Univac (currently Unisys), Thiokol, Hercules (currently Alliant Techsystems), and Evans and Sutherland forming in Utah. During the 1970s, Utah was impacted dramatically by the rise and fall of energy and natural resource prices and the emergence of the computer software industry. WordPerfect was founded in 1976. The 1980s brought other high technology companies such as Novell and Iomega. Utah's defense industry also expanded during the 1980s, only to experience severe contractions in the 1990s. Despite these contractions, Utah experienced an unprecedented economic expansion in the 1990s measured most notably by large, sustained increases in the rate of job growth. This expansion has now moderated to slower-than-average job growth.

All of these economic and demographic changes have provided a dynamic environment for estimating and understanding population change. Throughout all of these changes, the Estimates Committee has prepared estimates consistently for the past 44 years. These estimates provide an enduring legacy of the Committee's work.

Early History – Removal of Parochial Interests

The Estimates Committee was organized in 1955 through the commanding leadership of Sherrill Neville. Neville was then Chief Statistician with the Utah Department of Workforce Services and was widely respected for his technical abilities and leadership. Formation of the Committee was motivated by the volume of requests for county-level estimates at a time when the U.S. Bureau of the Census did not produce them. Analysts felt the need for an indication of sub-state population trends in post-census years.

Originally, the Committee organization was casual and ad hoc. Frank Hachman, a current and long-time Committee member, described the collaboration by saying, "if you had resources you helped." The original Committee was large, including 24 members representing state and federal agencies, academia, utilities, local government, and non-profit entities such as the Utah Foundation and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Committee members shared a background in the data and methods used to prepare population estimates.

The original Committee included several state, federal, academic, and utility representatives.

⁴Demographers generally consider the U.S. Baby Boom to include children born between 1946 and 1964, the Baby Bust to include children born 1965 to 1976, and the Baby Boomlet to include children born 1977 to 1994. Births in Utah varied in some instances from this general pattern.

But, it also include representation from the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce, as well as county and city governments. These local government and economic development representatives comprised approximately 40% of the original Committee. These representatives had a vested interest (whether acted upon or not) in influencing the estimates for their area of concern. The result was occasional competition among local representatives for more population in their respective areas.

Past members speak of the spirited debates about whether Utah County or Weber County had a larger population. In 1957, both counties were very close in size (according to the Committee's numbers the Utah County population was 102,000 and the Weber County population was 99,000).⁵ Committee members of the time describe the debate as more than a technical discussion about the estimation technique and data employed. Rather, it is characterized as competition among local representatives for their own parochial interests.

This problem with parochial boosterism, however, was quickly remedied. The Committee Chairperson, Sherrill Neville, is credited with keeping the Committee's focus on the accuracy of the estimates rather than on the politically expedient concerns of local representatives on the Committee.

By 1963, the Committee's membership had been transformed to more adequately focus on technical issues and the statewide interest of accurate, unbiased population estimates. The Committee membership was reduced to 11 members – five from state government, three from academia, two from public utilities, and one from a non-profit entity. Representation from parochial interests was completely eliminated. The focus and composition of the Committee is similar today. These changes prompted current Committee member, Ken Jensen, who first became involved with the Committee in 1968, to observe that "... the considerable wrangling of the early days has been replaced with a trend toward consensus."

First Crisis and Milestone – Mr. Million

The Committee's weeding out of parochial interests occurred just in time for the first crisis and milestone – reaching the one-million population mark. This occasion provides an interesting example of the interplay between political interests and estimation error.

Utah's economy in 1964 was having one of its worst years in post-World War II history. Nonagricultural job growth actually experienced a tiny loss of one-tenth of a percentage point. To date, a net loss in jobs has only occurred twice since 1950 – once in 1954 when the state experienced a substantial loss related to the Korean War, and once in 1964 when an already stagnant economy was disrupted by the demise of the Minute Man Missile program of the federal

⁵The data and methods have long since resolved this debate as Utah County has now more than tripled in population, while Weber County has not yet doubled in population size.

government.

Then, like now, population data were used for economic development purposes. The one-million milestone was viewed as a positive development during a period of sluggish economic growth. A newspaper article at the time speaks of Utah's millionth resident as representing the "... hopes of Utah's million that stronger industry and economy will bring new prosperity to the state."⁶ The same article refers to the one-million milestone as a "symbolic launching point for increased and revitalized industrial and economic growth for the state."

The Committee first considered the one-million milestone in late 1963 when the state's population appeared to be approaching that level. However, the Committee's input data and methods reflected a leveling off of job opportunities and migration. Consequently, the Committee decided that the January 1, 1964 population estimate⁷ would be 991,000, just short of the one-million mark.

It is clear from interviews with members of the Committee, as well as from the contents of the population estimate articles in the 1964 and 1965 editions of the *Utah Economic and Business Review*, that delaying the declaration of one million residents required discipline. The authors write at length about their interpretation of the data and why the 1964 estimate falls 9,000 short of the heralded milestone. It is clear that the Committee felt pressure to estimate a million Utahns, but would not until the data and methods agreed.

The Committee continued to meet throughout the year and finally concluded that the anticipated one-million population level would be reached by mid-year 1964, 117 years after the Mormon pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley. This declaration was all the local economic development community needed to organize a big public campaign to celebrate Utah's one-millionth resident. This campaign came to be known as Mr. Million.

The Mr. Million campaign was headed by David Evans, a local advertising executive. The group initiated an investigation to see if a large company was in the process of transferring or hiring employees and bringing them to Utah. The promotion committee discovered that Marquardt Corp. was relocating a marketing expert to its Ogden plant. The promoters selected 44-year-old Morris M. Arnold, a native of Kentucky, as Mr. Million. A surprise welcome party was planned.

When Mr. Arnold's Western Airlines 720 fan jet arrived at the Salt Lake Municipal Airport, it

⁶*Salt Lake Tribune*, Page One, September 25, 1964

⁷In the early years the Utah Population Estimates Committee utilized a January 1 standard for the date of population estimates. The Committee held to this standard until 1967 when they switched to the current standard of a mid-year estimate for July 1.

was greeted by a 60-piece band.⁸ As Mr. Arnold deplaned, he was presented with a proclamation, skis, and other gifts. He was invited on a whirlwind tour of the state, making appearances at the Utah State Fairgrounds, football games, and other events. More than a dozen newspaper articles in 1964 publicized the campaign. An editorial considered when the two-million mark would be reached, and another suggested that the real meaning of Mr. Million was as a reminder to keep the state “productive, prosperous, and progressive.”⁹

Unfortunately, and in a lesson that reminds demographic researchers that population estimates are just that ... estimates, the Bureau of the Census July 1 estimate for 1964 tallied only 973,000. Several years later, the 1970 Census and subsequent intercensal estimates¹⁰ verified that the state really didn’t reach the one-million population milestone until 1966. Thus, even the focus on technical issues and the re-crafting of the Committee didn’t preclude it from making a sizeable and visible miscalculation. How much of this miscalculation was due to the methods and how much was due to the political pressure of the time is not known.

An Important Hallmark – Collaboration with the Bureau of the Census

The Estimates Committee has always benefitted from a close working relationship with the Bureau of the Census. The collaboration began formally in 1967, the year that the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates (FSCPE) was constituted. This Cooperative was designed to promote cooperation (reduce duplication and facilitate joint research efforts) between the Bureau and states, improve the data and methods used to generate population estimates, and elevate the level of use and understanding of demographic work.¹¹

Under the auspices of the Cooperative, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget – which also staffs the Committee – provides local vital statistics and group quarters data to the Bureau and facilitates and conducts its own review of input data and preliminary estimates.

Past Committee Chairperson, John Brockert, is credited with promoting this collaboration during his leadership years with the Committee during the 1970s. According to Committee members, Brockert skillfully kept the Committee and the Bureau working together productively during his tenure and set the stage for future cooperation.

⁸Conducted coincidentally by the author’s father-in-law, Ralph Gochnour (something that the author discovered while reading a newspaper account of the celebration).

⁹*Deseret News*, Editorial Page, September 25, 1964.

¹⁰Once a decennial census provides a beginning and an end point (in this case the 1960 Census and the 1970 Census) it is helpful to redo the intercensal estimates so that the path from the beginning to the end point makes intuitive sense. The Utah Population Estimates Committee and the Bureau of the Census both follow this practice. These intercensal estimates supercede any previous estimates and are considered to be the official series.

¹¹See the By-Laws for the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates

One notable interaction occurred in the mid-1980s when the Bureau dropped the use of a badly-performing method in Utah, making Utah the only state in the country at the time whose estimate was derived from a single method rather than an average of two. And, in this case, it was the state of Utah lobbying for a *lower* population estimate, reinforcing the notion that the emphasis of the Committee is on accuracy rather than on promoting a higher population estimate.

In 1984 the Bureau of the Census estimate series began deviating from that of the Committee. In a letter dated July 3, 1984, Brad Barber, the Estimates Committee Chairman at the time, pointed out that the Bureau's July 1, 1982 estimate of 1,571,431 was higher than the locally produced estimate of 1,560,000. While the difference was less than one-percent difference, it was unusually high for an estimate so close to a census year and grew larger in subsequent years.

Upon closer examination, the Committee and the Bureau were able to determine that the Bureau's Composite Method – a method which combined component and regression techniques to estimate various age groups – significantly overstated Utah's 15-64 year old population. In a handwritten note to Brad Barber, Ed Byerly, then Chief of the Bureau's Population Division, announced that the Bureau would only use the Administrative Records Method¹² for Utah, making Utah the only state for which the final estimate was not an average of two methods.

The Bureau's and the Committee's numbers quickly converged, resulting in less confusion for data users, more informed planning, and more accurate funds distribution.

This type of collaboration continues today as the Bureau and the Committee (via staff in the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget) interact routinely and meet together twice a year in the bi-annual meetings of the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates.

Data and Methods – A Characterization

The methods and data utilized by the Committee share similarities and differences with national standards of the time. The Committee, like the Bureau of the Census, has always relied heavily on the Component Method of population estimation. This method follows the standard demographic accounting equation of:

$$P_t = P_{t-1} + B_t - D_t + M_t$$

where P = population
B = births
D = deaths
M = net migration
t = time

¹²See the discussion on methods in the next section.

For example, in the Committee method, migration is estimated by comparing the actual and expected school-age population and relating this difference to the total population and total migration.¹³ This method is referred to in Utah as the School Enrollment Method and it is a slightly modified version of what is commonly referred to in the literature as the Component II Method.¹⁴

In Utah, the Component II Method or School Enrollment Method is strengthened by the quality of the school enrollment data collected in the state. Utah's public school system is unique in that it serves an unusually high percentage of the total kindergarten through 12th grade enrollment (97.4% of total enrollment in Utah in 1995 was public – second highest among states – compared with 89.9% nationwide¹⁵). In addition, the public school system encompasses a large percentage of the total population (Utah, with 24% of its population 5-17 years old, has the highest percentage of its population of elementary and secondary school age of any state). Moreover, the public school system receives independent audits of enrollment data due to the equalized education funding mechanism utilized in the state.

For most of its history, the Committee has also relied on a second method called the LDS Membership Method. This method utilizes a data source uniquely relevant in Utah – membership records of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (frequently called LDS or Mormons). The Mormon Church graciously provides this confidential data in aggregate form; this means no names or individual records are revealed, but numerical counts by county are furnished. This data is provided for exclusive use in the formulation of population estimates and is *not shared by the Committee*. This method simply applies the growth rate in LDS membership in a particular county to the previous year's estimate for the county.¹⁶

The Committee is very fortunate to have access to the LDS membership data for estimate purposes. Approximately 69% of Utah's population is included in the membership counts of the

¹³The Bureau currently utilizes a Component Method referred to as the Tax Return Method. This is an administrative records methodology that utilizes exemptions reported on Internal Revenue Service tax returns as an indicator of migration.

¹⁴The fundamental characteristic of the Component II Method is that migration of the total population is estimated based on (1) a comparison of the actual and the expected (survived) school-age population; and, (2) the historical relationship between school-age migration and total migration. There are many varieties of this fundamental method, including detailed estimation for subgroups of the population such as the population under age 65, population age 65 and over, and special military and institutional population groups. Utah's method is modified in the sense that it employs a level of detail (ie. components) and input data (ie. target grades and survival rate) that reflect Committee input.

¹⁵Calculated from data provided by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center of Education Statistics. These calculations were published in *State Fact Finder 1999: Rankings Across America*, Congressional Quarterly.

¹⁶For more detail on all of the Utah Population Estimates Committee's methods see www/governor.state.ut.us/dea.

LDS Church. These counts include every member of record, including children. The counts are not limited to those who attend church regularly. Rather, they include any member assigned to a local unit (church or ward) regardless of a given member's involvement with the organization.

In addition to the broad coverage, the utility of the data is strengthened by its timeliness and quality. The originating file is a live, active file and an extract can be taken at any time. For estimation purposes this means that there is essentially no delay or lag time between when the data are released and the reporting period. The accuracy of the data is ensured by the careful record-keeping of church officials. Within the Mormon faith, leaders from each local unit (church or ward) have ecclesiastical responsibility for the individuals assigned. Hence, there is a religious stewardship that accompanies each membership record. This improves the accuracy of the aggregate data.

Over the years the Committee has also utilized other methods to estimate population. In the early years (1957-1982) a labor force ratio method was applied. This method was eventually abandoned because of erratic swings in the data that did not correlate well with population change.

In recent years the Committee has utilized the Tax Exemption Method. This method uses the growth in exemptions as reported on tax returns filed with the Internal Revenue Service as an indicator of population change. The Committee developed the method after realizing that the School Enrollment and LDS Membership Methods were yielding unrealistically low population estimates during a time of significant economic expansion. Committee members felt that the estimates would be more accurate by incorporating a more economically sensitive methodology.

Beyond Methods – Judgement and Voting

In addition to the methods, two features of the Committee's estimation process deserve highlighting: the application of professional judgement and the practice of voting on an estimate.

In each year's estimate cycle, the Committee evaluates and considers a variety of data sources that are not used explicitly in their established methods. The established methods rely on birth, death, school enrollment, tax exemptions, and LDS membership data. Committee members also examine utility connections, job counts, building permits, higher education enrollment, drivers licenses, survey data, and other symptomatic indicators of population change. These data sources serve to instill confidence in the output of the current methods or, conversely, raise important validation questions that must be considered.

The 1990s provide a good example of the use of judgement in the estimation process. The Committee began to observe a mounting divergence in the estimates produced by the School Enrollment Method and the LDS Membership Method, particularly in some counties. In some instances, the Committee choose to utilize only one of these methods – such as drop the LDS Membership Method estimate in Summit County where the proportion of the population that is

LDS is relatively small. It was during this time that the Committee added the Tax Exemption Method to help resolve the discrepancy caused by the divergence of the methods. It was concluded that a third method would provide another valuable indication of population change and help Committee members discern which methods were appropriate to apply in which counties.

Beginning with the 1995 estimates, the Committee adopted the practice of generating the estimates at the county-level with the three primary techniques – School Enrollment Method, LDS Membership Method, and Tax Exemption Method – and determining which, if any, of the methods produced an outlier from the average of the three.¹⁷ In counties where an outlier was present the Committee generally agreed to an average of the remaining two estimates or to a single estimate if deemed appropriate.

This procedure, as well as the informal consideration of other data related to population change, underscores the role of expert judgement in the estimation process. Committee members literally examine information about the population in each county, carefully considering the output of the three methods and a variety of symptomatic data. Throughout the estimation process, each Committee member is free to make observations and, ultimately, recommendations on what the population for any given county should be.

The Committee also employs the unique feature of voting on an estimate. Dialogue with representatives of other states at biannual meetings of the Federal-State Cooperative of Population Estimates has only uncovered one other state that utilizes a voting procedure in its estimation process.¹⁸

While many think of voting as an unusual way for a technical committee to conduct its work, past and current Committee members who were interviewed consider voting as a way to bring closure to a lively and informative discussion about the merits and concerns associated with each method and the corresponding estimates. One member spoke of voting as a “tool” to reach consensus. Voting was also seen as a way to formally share the responsibility of generating estimates with other committee members. One Committee member commented that voting ensured that the estimates were not just the output of mechanical methods but the result of the seasoned judgement of the professional practitioners engaged in making the estimates. And, one current, long-time Committee member, wondered if the “congenial process enjoyed here could be replicated anywhere else.”

At any rate, the practice of voting on population estimates has worked admirably in Utah.

¹⁷The 1998 round of estimates, for instance, defined an outlier as any estimate that had a 2% deviation from the average of the three methods. Four counties – Daggett, Piute, San Juan, and Wasatch – had at least one method as an outlier in this year.

¹⁸According to June Nogle, the FSCPE Representative from Florida, Florida utilizes a voting procedure to determine a state control total.

Committee members discuss the data and methods used, review estimates county by county, instruct staff to prepare additional analysis, and – only when the estimates appear satisfactory – make a motion and vote, thus formalizing the estimates and bringing closure to the discussion. This procedure has worked well in Utah for the entire 44-year history of the Committee.

Utah Population Estimates Committee – Today

Utah remains among the fastest-growing states in the nation, and population estimates are as important today as 44 years ago. In 1996, the Estimates Committee determined that Utah's population surpassed the two-million mark. This time the milestone was celebrated in a much more modest fashion. In recognition that most of Utah's growth is generated from births, Governor Leavitt visited the LDS Hospital on June 12, 1996 and honored the first baby born on that day, a girl named Charity, as the state's two-millionth resident. Like before, the Committee will have to wait until after the decennial census and the preparation of intercensal estimates to learn if it estimated correctly.

After operating for most of its history as a state department-formed committee, Governor Leavitt officially sanctioned the Committee and clarified its purpose and responsibilities in an Executive Order dated September 22, 1997 (see Appendix I). The formalization of the Committee was just in time for the next challenge for the Committee – the swath of new municipal incorporations and large annexations emerging in the state.

Utah enters the 21st Century with a movement towards incorporation, referred to by some as the wall-to-wall cities drive. This issue is particularly relevant in Salt Lake County where 40% of the state's population resides and where the county provides municipal services to residents in the unincorporated area.¹⁹ During the 1980s, only one city in Salt Lake County incorporated, West Valley City. During the 1990s, three have incorporated – Taylorsville, Holiday-Cottonwood, and Herriman – and two others have made major annexations – Midvale and South Salt Lake. As more cities incorporate and annex additional area, the competition for commercial tax base intensifies. The wall-to-wall cities movement is motivated by the realization that the county will ultimately lose the revenue necessary to provide municipal services as more municipalities emerge or expand.

New incorporations are also occurring outside of Salt Lake County. Since 1990 the residents of Eagle Mountain, Saratoga Springs, Rocky Ridge, Hanksville, West Haven, and Marriott-Slaterville have all opted for more local control by incorporating.

These incorporations and annexations create additional work for the Estimates Committee because the local-option sales taxes and state highway funding that each of these entities receives depends, in part, on their population estimate. State statute identifies the Bureau of the Census as the source for these estimates, but the Bureau requires time to update its geographic base file and

¹⁹Municipal services in many unincorporated areas are provided by special service districts.

incorporate these new areas into its estimation procedure. This can mean a significant lag between the time a city incorporates or annexes and the release of a population estimate. For instance, Eagle Mountain incorporated in December 1996 but still did not have an estimate from the Bureau of the Census in the June 1999 release of July 1, 1998 sub-county estimates.

In instances like this, the Utah Population Estimates Committee prepares the population estimate required. This marks the first time the Committee's work has been used for funds distribution, which raises a whole new level of scrutiny and visibility on the work of the Committee.

A high priority of the Committee in the next few years is to increase its technical capability to prepare credible sub-county estimates. Staff within the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget are assembling an improved building permit and group quarters database that can be used to make these estimates. The Committee also plans to prepare intercensal estimates at the county level for the 1990s and assess the accuracy of its methods once 2000 Census results are available. A potential improvement proposed by some Committee members is to add a sub-county population estimate specialist to the Committee. The seven Associations of Government in Utah, which help with regional coordination and planning issues, have considerable expertise in preparing local population estimates. A representative or two from the largest of these – where most incorporations or new annexations are occurring – may be a helpful addition to the current make-up of the Committee.

Conclusion

The Utah Population Estimates Committee has a rich, enduring legacy of preparing population estimates at the state and county level. This legacy stretches over 44 years. During this time significant economic and demographic changes have occurred. In an effort to prepare accurate and unbiased estimates, the Committee has transformed its membership, collaborated with the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and refined its techniques, including the application of sound judgment and voting as a tool to reach consensus. Despite these positive developments, the Committee's work is still vulnerable to estimation error. The most visible of these was the declaration that Utah had reached one million people in 1964; subsequent work indicated this did not occur until 1966. Nevertheless, the Committee is recognized as the source of Utah's official population estimates. Recent interest in new incorporations and annexations presents the most recent major challenge to the Committee. Local area data development, as well as intercensal and accuracy estimates after the 2000 Census, will be the major areas of focus for the Committee in the coming years.