

News Release

THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK *of* KANSAS CITY

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COMING HOME TO RURAL AMERICA: DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS IN THE TENTH DISTRICT

The pending retirements of millions of baby boomers and the exodus of young adults threaten to leave rural areas with a large aging population and a shrinking workforce. This demographic shift could limit the economic prospects of many rural communities over the coming years.

However, in the article “Coming Home to Rural America: Demographic Shifts in the Tenth District,” Jason Henderson, Omaha Branch executive, vice president and economist, and Maria Akers, assistant economist, both of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, discover another, more promising trend at work. The article appears in the third quarter edition of the Bank’s *Economic Review*.

Henderson and Akers find that middle-aged residents are returning to rural areas—a hopeful sign for future economic growth and wealth generation. The article analyzes the economic implications of these trends on the communities in the Tenth Federal Reserve District, an area that includes western Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming and northern New Mexico.

Rural areas still must deal with the challenges of an aging population and the loss of younger residents, but the influx of middle-aged residents poses an economic development opportunity, Henderson and Akers write. Enhancing quality-of-life amenities appears to be one way rural communities can benefit from the return of middle-aged residents.

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