



Demographics

The Upper East Texas region's population is growing, but not as quickly as that of the state as a whole. Upper East Texas is 71 percent white and has a population that is older on average than Texas'. Personal income in the region grew 28 percent from 2001 to 2006, nearly matching the growth experienced statewide.

Metropolitan/Nonmetropolitan

The Upper East Texas region is a 23-county area containing three metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) — Tyler (Smith County), Longview (Gregg, Rusk and Upshur counties), and Texarkana (Bowie County). Delta

County is part of the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington MSA. Defined by the federal government, a metropolitan area contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more population, accompanied by adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social interaction with that core (as measured by commuting to work).¹ **Exhibit 11** illustrates the region's metro counties and the county seats for each county in the region.

Upper East Texas is much more rural than Texas as a whole. In 2007, metropolitan counties accounted for just 46 percent of the region's population. By contrast, 87 percent of all Texas residents lived in metro areas in 2007.²

Population Growth

Given the largely rural character of Upper East Texas, it is no surprise that its regional

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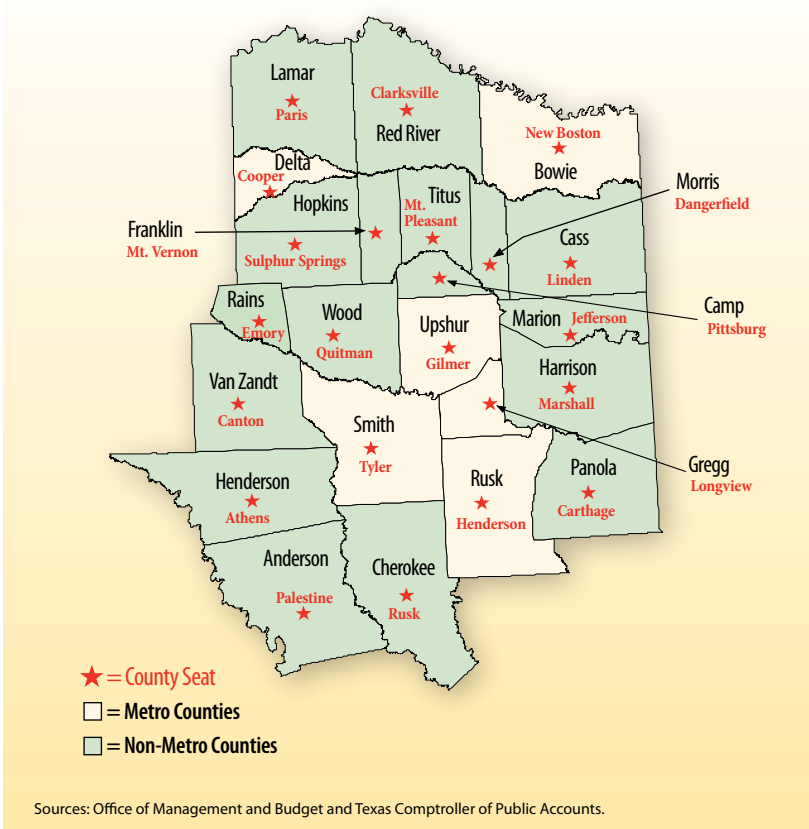
Panola College Tyson Scholarship award winners

PHOTO: Panola college



Exhibit 11

Upper East Texas Metro Counties



population gains trail those of the state.

Exhibit 12 shows growth indices for Texas and the region with 2002 as a base year. The regional population increased 5.3 percent between 2002 and 2007, compared to 9.8 percent for Texas. The Tyler MSA nearly matched state growth with a 9.7 percent increase, or 1.8 percent annually. The metro counties' populations grew by 5.6 percent over this period, compared with 4.8 percent for the region's non-metro counties.

Age

The Upper East Texas region's population is older on average than those of the state and the nation. In 2007, 33.5 percent of the region's population was under the age of 25; 51.5 percent were aged 25 to 64; and 15 percent were 65 or older. The 65+ age group accounted for 15 percent of the region's population, considerably more than the state's 10 percent share. In the U.S. as a whole, 12.5 percent were aged 65 or older in 2007 (**Exhibit 13**).

Longview: One of the Nation's Best Communities for Youth

In January 2008, the city of Longview was named one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People by America's Promise Alliance. Founded by Colin Powell, America's Promise Alliance is a partnership of corporations, foundations, policymakers, advocacy organizations and faith groups "committed to seeing that children receive the fundamental resources they need to succeed." The award recognizes community efforts to develop and improve the lives of its youth.

The city earned its distinction in large part due to its Forever Friends & Co-Pilots mentoring programs, recognizing the powerful impact a mentor can have on a young person's life. Mentors commit one year to the program, meeting weekly with students at school and participating in activities outside of school such as field trips and sporting events. The program has trained more than 200 adults who donate more than 4,000 hours of their time per school year.³

Ethnicity

Exhibit 14 compares the regional population's ethnicity with those of Texas and the U.S. The region is predominantly white, accounting for 71 percent of residents in 2007. Blacks made up 15.6 percent and Hispanics accounted for 11 percent. The remaining 2 percent fall in the "other" category, which includes persons of American Indian, Asian and Native Hawaiian descent and those claiming descent from two or more races.

The region's population share of Hispanics is far lower than in the state as a whole and the nation. Its Hispanic population is, however, expected to increase more quickly



Exhibit 12

Upper East Texas Actual and Projected Population Increase, 2002-2012

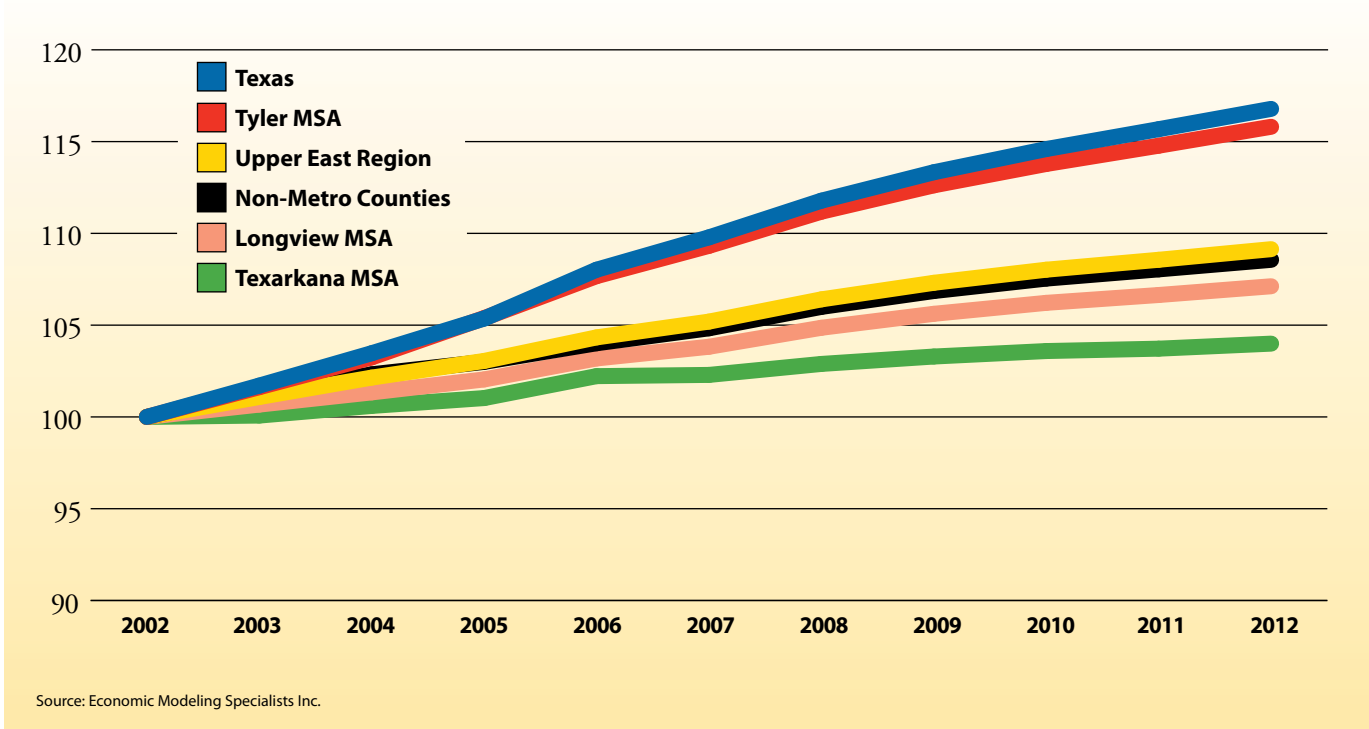


Exhibit 13

Upper East Region, Texas and U.S. Population by Age, 2007

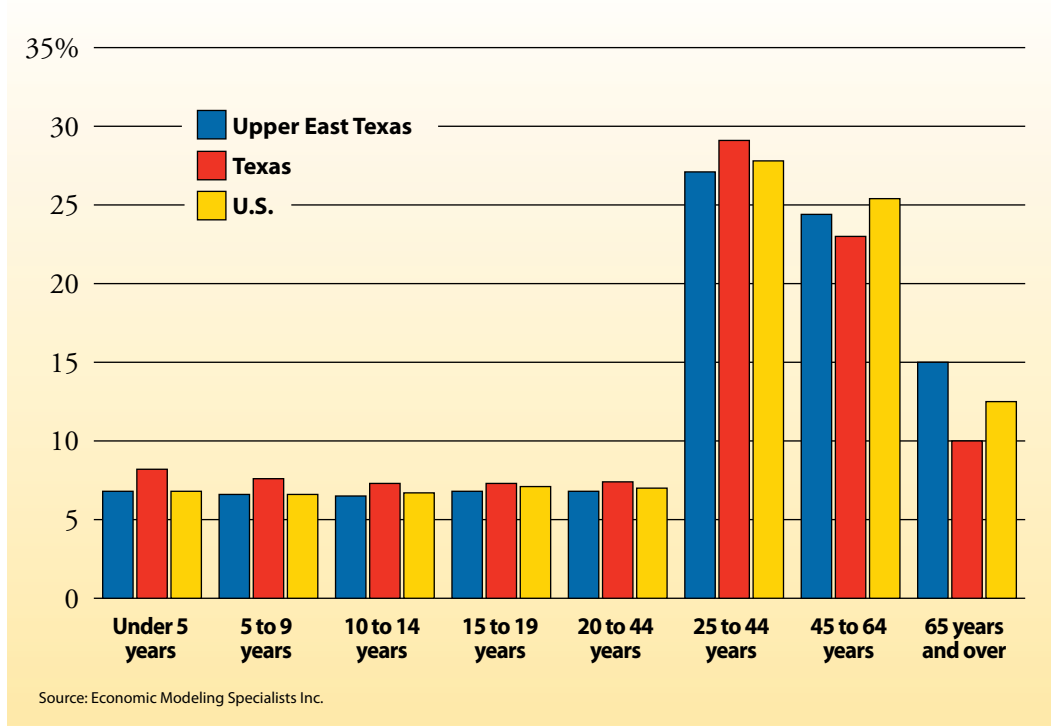
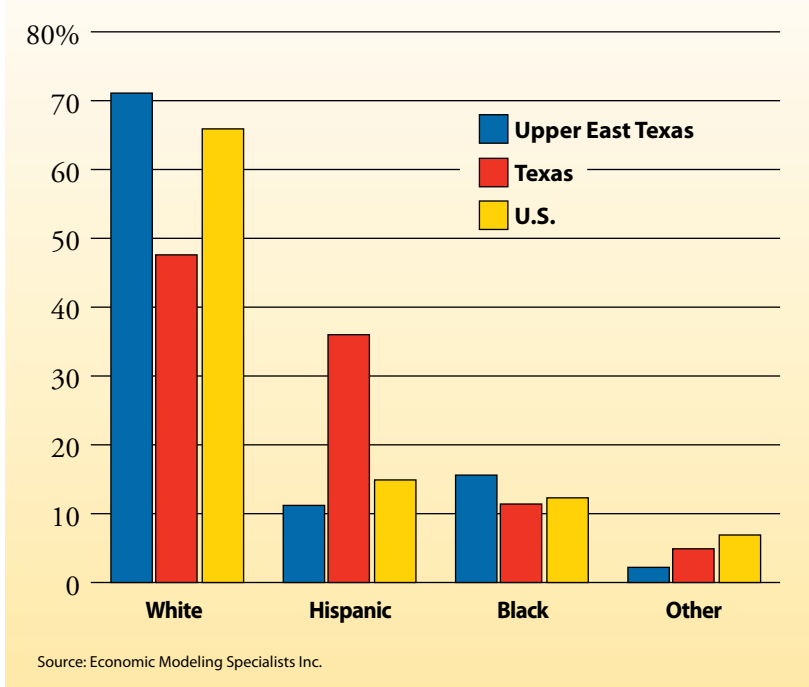




Exhibit 14

Upper East Region, Texas and U.S. Population by Ethnicity, 2007



than other ethnic groups, rising by 21.4 percent by 2015, while the white population is expected to rise by 3.0 percent and the black population by 2.2 percent.⁴

Educational Attainment

In 2007, 22 percent of the Upper East Texas region’s population had less than a high school degree. This proportion is much higher than the U.S. average, but nearly equal with Texas figures. The region trails the state, however, in its share of the population holding a bachelor’s degree. Only 11 percent of the region’s residents have earned a bachelor’s degree, compared with 17 percent in Texas and 18 percent in the U.S. (Exhibit 15).

Income

The median income for all Texas households in 2005 (most recent data available) was

Certified Retirement Communities

The Upper East Texas region has seven communities — the cities of Athens, Longview, Pittsburg, Texarkana and Winsboro and the counties of Franklin and Panola — that have been certified as retirement communities. The Certified Retirement Community (CRC) program, established by the 2005 Texas Legislature and administered through the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), helps Texas communities encourage retirees and potential retirees to make their homes in their areas. Athens received its certification in November 2006, becoming one of the first certified communities in Texas. The city has used the program’s assistance to develop a Web site, www.athenstxretirement.com, that promotes Athens as a perfect place to retire.

Texas communities interested in becoming a certified retirement community must apply for certification through TDA. The certification process requires an application form listing the amenities the community can offer retirees or potential retirees. The form requests information on topics such as health and medical services, affordable housing, recreational opportunities, educational resources, public safety and the community’s tax structure. TDA uses the form to determine the very best communities for retirees or potential retirees.

Once a community is chosen, TDA assists the community with statewide and national marketing campaigns (through print, Web sites and trade shows) to attract retirees and tourists; provides technical assistance with industry experts; provides economic development and tourism training for local staff and volunteers; and allows the community to participate in CRC program issues such as the development of the statewide marketing plans, conference/tradeshows, logos and others program issues.



Public Safety in the Upper East Texas Region

Public safety is one of the key elements determining a region's quality of life. Crime rates in the Upper East Texas region, as in the rest of the state, fell from 2005 to 2006. Violent and property crime rates in the Upper East Texas region were both significantly lower than the state average in 2005 and 2006 and also declined more than the state average.⁵

Crime Rates, Upper East Texas Region, 2005-2006

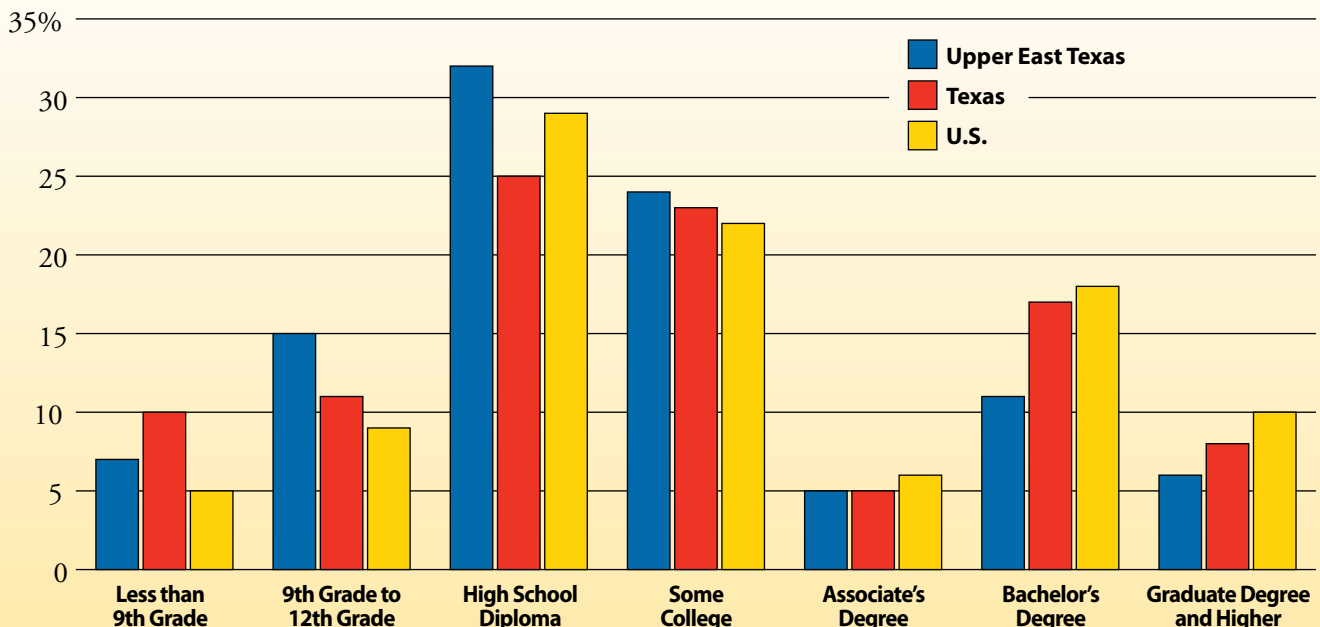
	2005 Upper East Texas Crime Rate	2005 Texas Crime Rate	2006 Upper East Texas Crime Rate	2006 Texas Crime Rate	Upper East Texas % Change in Crime Rate	Texas % Change in Crime Rate
Murder	4.7	6.1	5.1	5.9	8.5	-3.3
Rape	44.6	37.2	37.6	35.8	-15.7	-3.8
Robbery	59.0	156.5	52.1	158.5	-11.7	1.3
Assault	348.8	329.6	346.3	316.8	-0.7	-3.9
Violent Crime Rate	457.1	529.5	441.1	531.6	-3.5	0.4
Burglary	890.5	960.6	854.3	916.3	-4.1	-4.6
Larceny	2,235.1	2956.0	2,064.1	2,752.8	-7.7	-6.9
Auto Theft	243.3	408.7	222.2	407.0	-8.7	-0.4
Property Crime Rate	3,368.9	4,325.3	3,140.6	4,191.6	-6.8	-3.1
Total Crime Rate	3,826.0	4,854.8	3,581.7	4,593.1	-6.4	-5.4

Note: All crime rates are reported per 100,000 population.
Source: Texas Department of Public Safety.

The Comptroller's office estimates that public safety and criminal justice accounted for more than 10,000 jobs in the region and more than \$388 million in earnings in 2007.⁶

Exhibit 15

Educational Attainment for Population Over the Age of 25, 2007 Upper East Texas, Texas and U.S. Averages

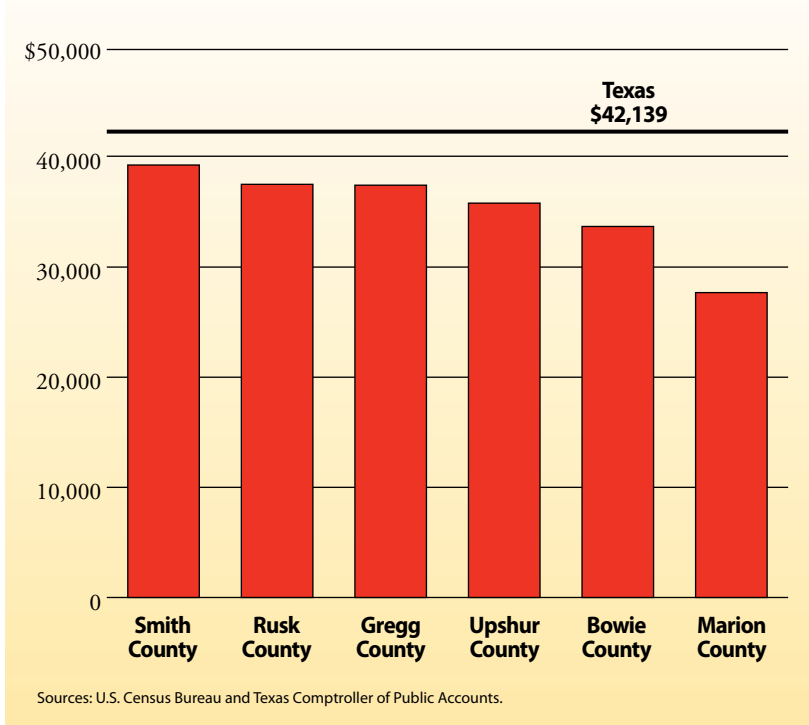


Source: Economic Modeling Specialists Inc.



Exhibit 16

Median Household Income, State of Texas and Selected Counties, 2005



\$42,139.⁷ In the Upper East Texas region, Smith County, where Tyler is located, had the highest median household income at \$39,267. Marion County had the lowest, at \$27,683. The counties representing Longview MSA (Gregg, Rusk and Upshur) had a median income of between \$36,000 and \$37,500. Bowie County, home to Texarkana, had the lowest income of the metropolitan areas at nearly \$33,700 (**Exhibit 16**).⁸

While the region’s median household incomes are lower than the statewide average, such measures do not take the cost of living into account. A cost-of-living adjustment can facilitate a more accurate comparison of income.

For instance, a person earning an annual salary of \$37,000 in Longview has the equivalent purchasing power as a person living in Dallas earning \$45,738, or 24 percent

Famous People from Upper East Texas

Upper East Texas has been called home by a number of celebrities, including athletes such as Hall of Fame football running back Earl Campbell, four-time All-Star Major League Baseball player Eddie Robinson, two-time World Heavyweight Boxing Champion George Foreman and Minnesota Vikings football running back Adrian Peterson. It is also the birthplace of great political figures such as John Nance Garner, Vice President under Franklin D. Roosevelt; Lady Bird Johnson, wife of President Lyndon Baines Johnson; Ross Perot, presidential candidate in 1992 and 1996; and state senator Margie Elizabeth Neal, the first woman elected to the Texas Senate in 1926.

The region also produced some of the nation’s most creative entertainers. Well-known musicians from Upper East Texas include ragtime composer and piano player Scott Joplin, Eagles band member Don Henley and the classical pianist Van Cliburn. The region also has a number of country stars, including Tex Ritter and Ray Price, both members of the Country Music Hall of Fame; Lee Ann Womack, the Country Music Association’s 2001 Female Vocalist of the Year; and Johnny Gimble, whose fiddle playing made him a five-time Country Music Association Instrumentalist of the Year. Emmy award-winning journalist Bill Moyers and actor Dan Blocker, who portrayed Hoss Cartwright on the “Bonanza” television series, both hail from Upper East Texas.

Sources: Encyclopedia Britannica Online, The Handbook of Texas Online and Biography.com.



more. The purchasing equivalency in Austin is a salary of \$47,313.⁹

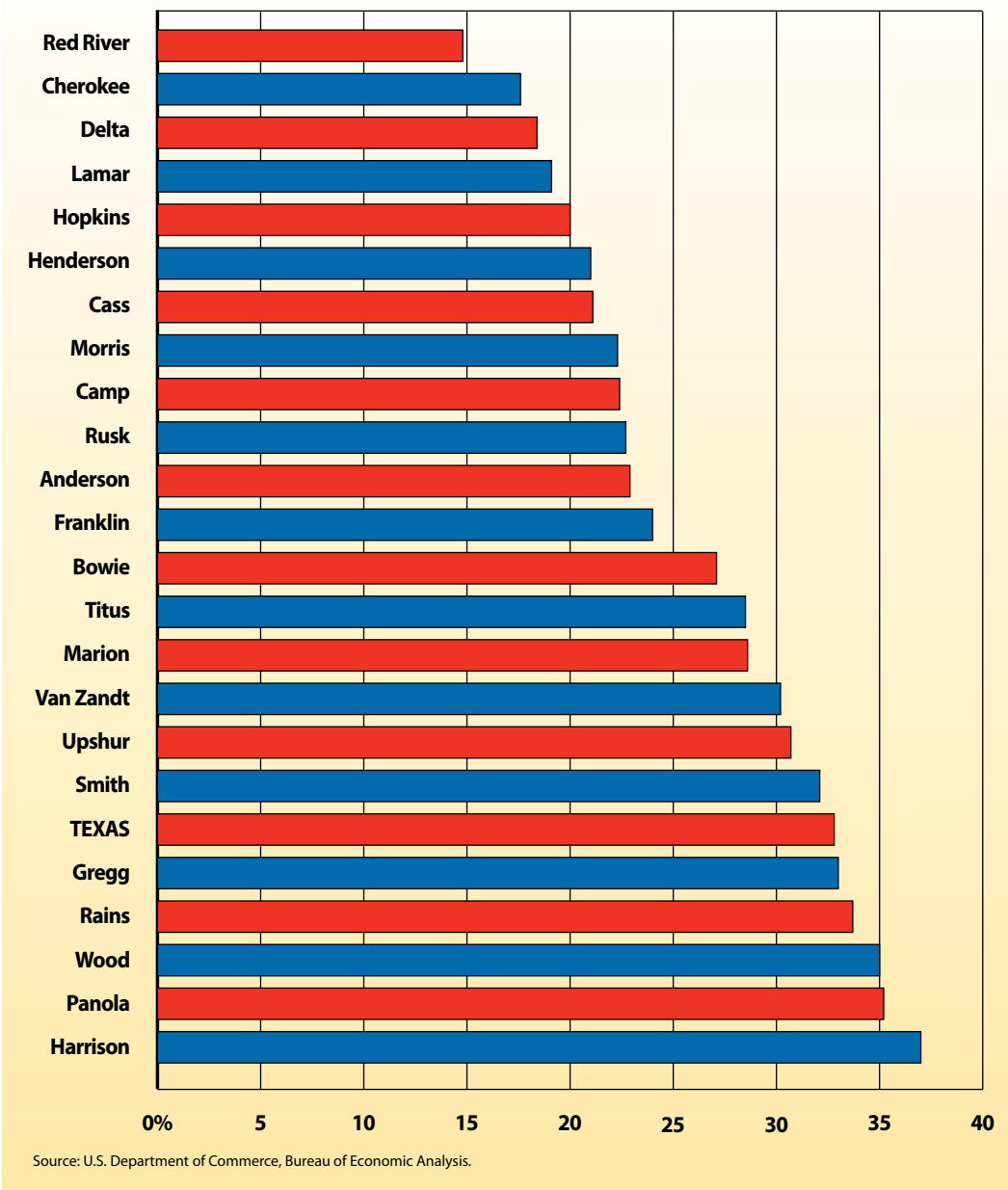
Total personal income in the region rose by 28.0 percent between 2001 and 2006, compared with 32.8 percent for the state as a whole. Five counties in the region out-

paced the state average during this period (**Exhibit 17**).

Per capita personal income in the region averaged nearly \$29,200 in 2006, or 83 percent of the state average of \$35,166. Only Gregg County had a higher average than the state.¹⁰

Exhibit 17

Upper East Texas Per Capita Personal Income Percent Increase 2001-2006



The 65+ age group accounted for 15 percent of the region's population, considerably more than the state's 10 percent share.



Endnotes

- ¹ U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *OMB Bulletin No. 08-01: Update of Statistical Area Definitions and Guidance on Their Uses* (Washington, D.C., November 20, 2007), pp. 2, 30, 39, 51, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/bulletins/fy2008/b08-01.pdf>. (Last visited September 23, 2008.)
- ² Data provided by Economic Modeling Specialists Inc., (EMSI), for rural population data.
- ³ America's Promise Alliance, "The 2008 100 Best Communities for Young People: Longview, Texas," p. 1, <http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=11094&terms=Longview+Texas>. (Last visited September 23, 2008.)
- ⁴ Data provided by EMSI for age and ethnicity data.
- ⁵ Texas Department of Public Safety, Uniform Crime Reporting Bureau, "2005 and 2006 Statewide and Upper East Texas Index of Crimes," A custom query was created.
- ⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, "Code 9221: Justice, Public Order, and Safety Related Employment for Upper East Texas." A custom query was created.
- ⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, "Household Income—Distribution by Income Level and State: 2005," p.1, <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/08s0684.xls>. (Last visited September 23, 2008.)
- ⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates—State and County Estimates." A custom query was created for Upper East Texas counties.
- ⁹ Sperling's Best Places, "Cost of Living Calculator," <http://www.bestplaces.net/col/>. (Last visited September 24, 2008.)
- ¹⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Texas Per Capita Personal Income and Population by County for 2006." A custom database query was created with Texas Comptroller office calculations.