

# Arkansas' Retirement-Age Migration: A Statewide Overview

Wayne Miller  
Professor - Extension  
Economist

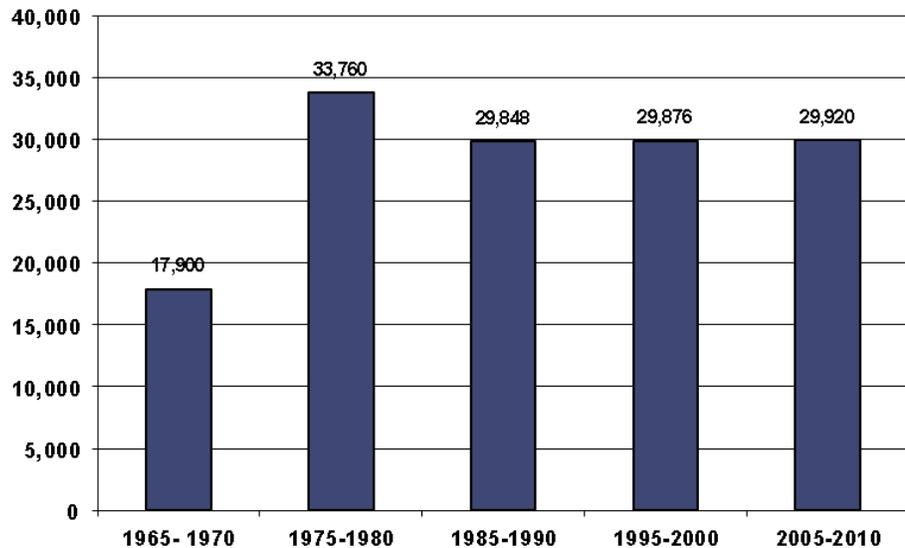
Abby Davidson  
Research Assistant -  
Community and  
Economic Development

Projections suggest that as “baby boomers” begin to retire, the number of people 60 years of age and older who move to another state will increase dramatically. Arkansas has attracted retirees to the state for several decades – due to its friendly people, picturesque scenery, lakes, recreational opportunities and four distinct seasons – and has the potential to attract an increasing number of retirees as the baby boomers retire. These retirees provide numerous social and economic benefits to the communities where they locate. To continue to attract retirees, Arkansas needs to aggressively market to people who desire the living environment the state offers.

Other states also aggressively market their states as retirement destination areas, so Arkansas will need to identify and market its unique and desirable amenities.

We have developed this publication to help local leaders, decision-makers and developers understand what types of retirees migrate to Arkansas and where they originate. In this publication, readers will discover easy-to-read and easy-to-interpret charts and data detailing the trends, characteristics and demographics of Arkansas' retirement-age migration from the late 1960s up to the present time.

**Figure 1. In-Migration of Individuals Aged 60 and Older to Arkansas, 1965 to 2010**



Source: Computed from County to County Migration Flows, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Figure 1 illustrates the number of retirement-age people relocating into the state of Arkansas in five-year periods from 1965 until 2010.**

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## In-Migration

Arkansas has been a popular retirement state since the late 1960s when relocation after retirement began increasing nationwide. In the 1970s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture designated 36 of Arkansas' 75 counties as "retirement destination" areas. Although Arkansas has experienced a decline in retiree in-migration since the 1970s, Arkansas continued to attract people 60 years of age and older who relocated to Arkansas from other states during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. Census Bureau estimates indicate that the number of people in this age group relocating to Arkansas was nearly 30,000<sup>1</sup> between 2005 and 2010 (Figure 1, page 1).

When in-migration figures for ages 65 and over for the state of Arkansas are compared to other

states across the nation, Arkansas ranks 23rd. However, Arkansas ranks 13th in terms of the in-migration rate for these same ages.<sup>2</sup> The in-migration rate provides an accurate assessment of in-migration relative to the population of this age group.

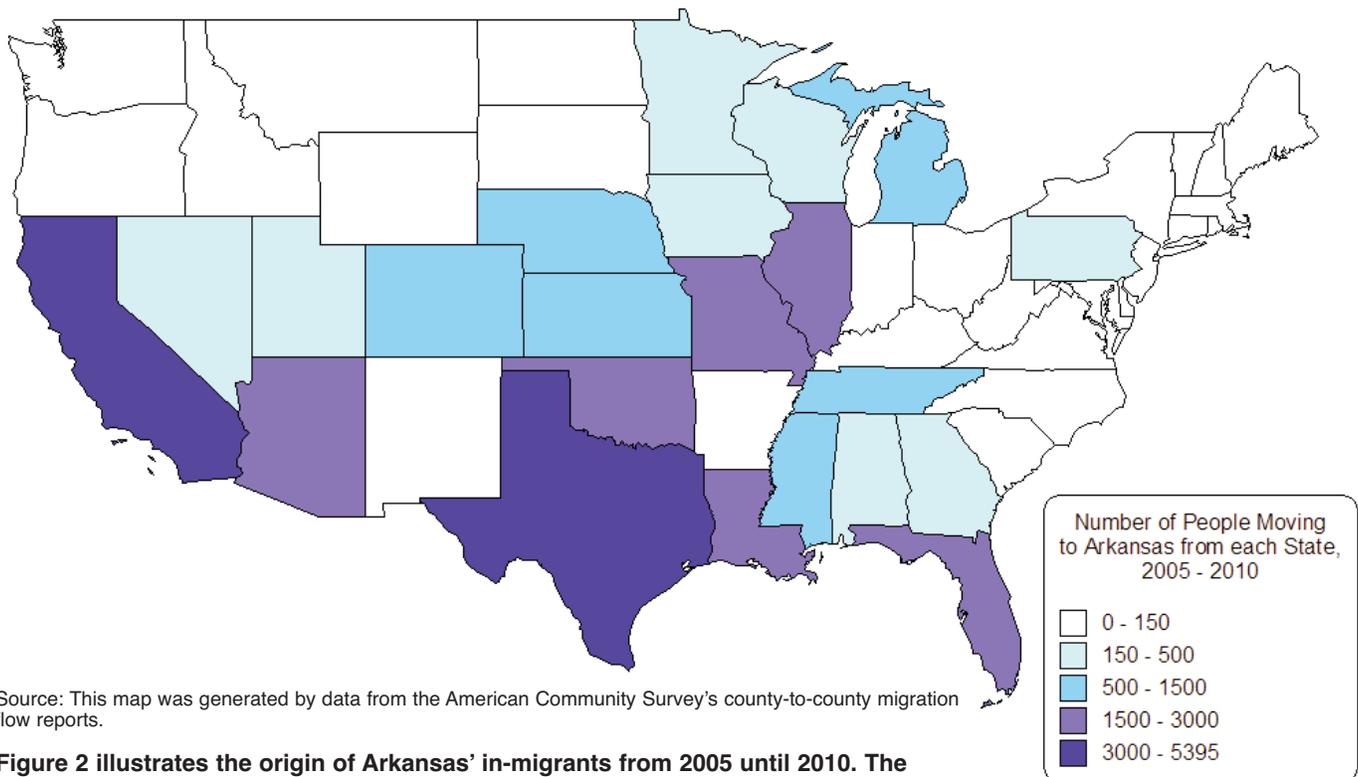
### Origin of In-Migrants

From 2005 to 2010, more than one-fourth of all in-migrating retirement-age people (60 years and older) moved to Arkansas from either Texas or California. Approximately 5,400 people in this age group moved from Texas and 3,100 from California (Figure 2). This was a slight increase in the number of retirement-age people moving to Arkansas from Texas compared to a decade earlier (1995 to 2000), whereas the number of people moving from California declined since the previous decade.

A large number of retirement-age in-migrants also came from Oklahoma, Illinois, Missouri and Florida. One-third (33 percent) or nearly 10,000 retirement-age people relocated to Arkansas from these four states. Only five other states – Louisiana, Arizona, Kansas, Mississippi and Michigan – had 1,000 or more of their retirement-age residents relocate to Arkansas. These states accounted for 23 percent of all retirement-age people who relocated to Arkansas between 2005 and 2010.

Some states provided more retirement-age in-migrants to Arkansas from 2005 to 2010 compared to a decade earlier, while other states had fewer residents who relocated to Arkansas. Three states, Texas, Oklahoma and Florida, had over 1,000 more retirement-age people relocate

**Figure 2. In-Migration of People Aged 60 and Older to Arkansas, 2005 to 2010**



Source: This map was generated by data from the American Community Survey's county-to-county migration flow reports.

**Figure 2 illustrates the origin of Arkansas' in-migrants from 2005 until 2010. The majority of Arkansas' in-migrants originated from Texas, California, Missouri, Illinois and Oklahoma.**

<sup>1</sup>Migration estimates for the 2005 to 2010 time period are from the county to county migration flow data, 2006-2010 American Community Survey. The data are estimates based on five-year samples and, therefore, have substantial margin of errors for sparsely populated areas. Previous years data were Census values, not estimates.

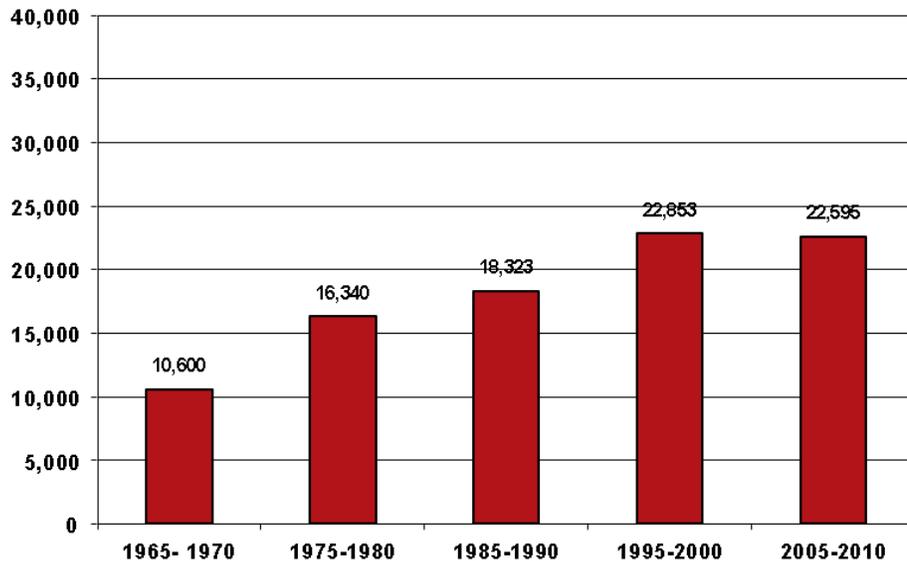
<sup>2</sup>The rankings provided are from the Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey which provides estimates of migration from 2004 – 2005 for the population aged 65 and over.

in Arkansas, while another four states had an increase of at least 500 more individuals in this age group moving to Arkansas from 2005 to 2010 as compared to 1995 to 2000. These four states included

Arizona, Michigan, Louisiana and Mississippi. However, there were over 500 fewer retirement-age people who moved to Arkansas from each of four states including California, Iowa, Indiana and

Tennessee compared to a decade earlier. There was also a considerable decline in the number of retirement-age people who moved to Arkansas from Wisconsin and Ohio compared to the previous decade.

**Figure 3. Out-Migration of Individuals Aged 60 and Over From Arkansas, 1965 to 2010**



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 3 shows the totals for Arkansas' out-migration from 1965 until 2010. Out-migration increased during this time.

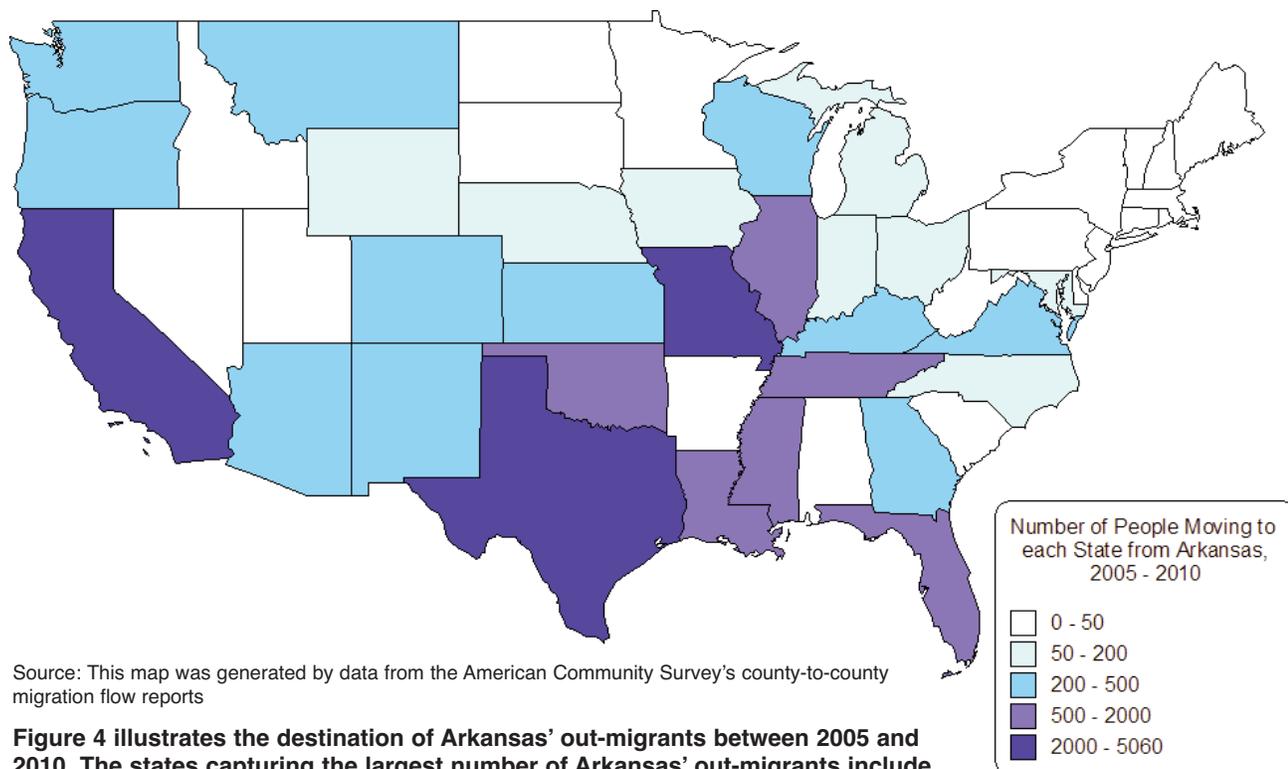
### Out-Migration

While in-migration of people aged 60 and older to Arkansas did not change much from the 1980s to the 2000s, out-migration of people in this age group from Arkansas to other states increased from about 18,300 from 1985 to 1990 to approximately 22,600 from 2005 to 2010 (Figure 3).

### Destination of Out-Migrants

Over 5,000 (5,060) Arkansas residents, or 22 percent of this age group who moved to another state between 2005 and 2010, moved to Texas. Missouri and California were also major recipients of Arkansas residents, receiving approximately 3,100 and 2,900 retirement-age people from Arkansas between 2005 and 2010 (Figure 4). Another three

**Figure 4. Out-Migration of People Aged 60 and Older From Arkansas, 2005 to 2010**



Source: This map was generated by data from the American Community Survey's county-to-county migration flow reports

Figure 4 illustrates the destination of Arkansas' out-migrants between 2005 and 2010. The states capturing the largest number of Arkansas' out-migrants include Texas, Missouri and California.

states, Oklahoma, Florida and Tennessee, were each recipients of more than 1,000 retirement-age Arkansas residents.

California and Texas experienced the largest increases in the number of retirement-age Arkansas residents who relocated in their states between the 1995-2000 and 2005-2010 time periods. California had an increase of about 1,500 Arkansas retirement-age residents relocating in the state, and Texas saw an increase of 850. However, approximately 560 fewer Arkansas retirement-age residents moved to Michigan, and 15 other states received between 100 and 400 fewer Arkansas residents in this age category as compared to the previous decade.

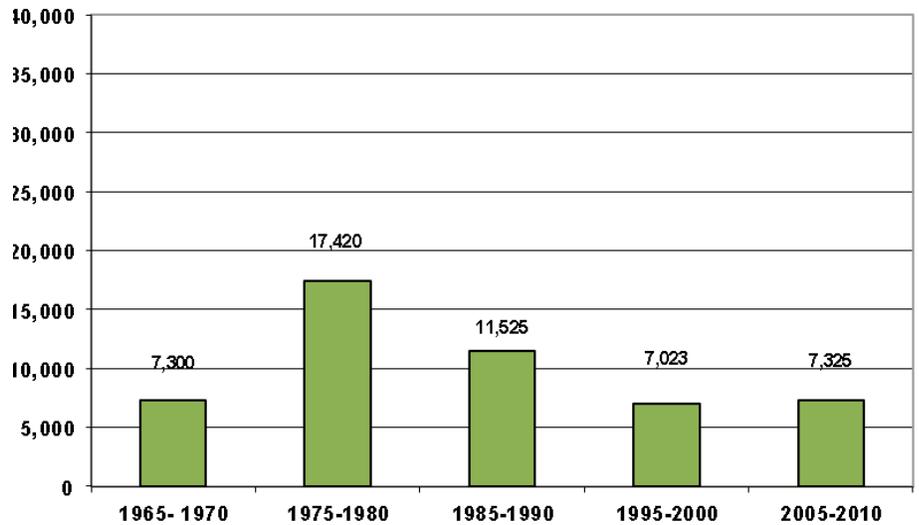
Six states received two-thirds of all Arkansas residents aged 60 and over leaving the state between 1975 and 2010. Texas, California, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Florida each received 900 or more persons aged 60 and older from Arkansas during each time period: 1975-1980, 1985-1990, 1995-2000 and 2005-2010.

### Net In-Migration

The number of people 60 years and older in-migrating to Arkansas stayed about the same from 1985 to 2010, while the number of people in this age group leaving Arkansas increased, causing the net in-migration of retirement-age people to decline. There was a net in-migration of about 7,300 people aged 60 and older between 2005 and 2010 as compared to 11,500 two decades earlier (Figure 5). Although net in-migration of the retirement-age population has declined since 1980, Arkansas continues to receive more retirement-age in-migrants compared with out-migrating Arkansans aged 60 years and older.

### Age of In-Migrants and Out-Migrants

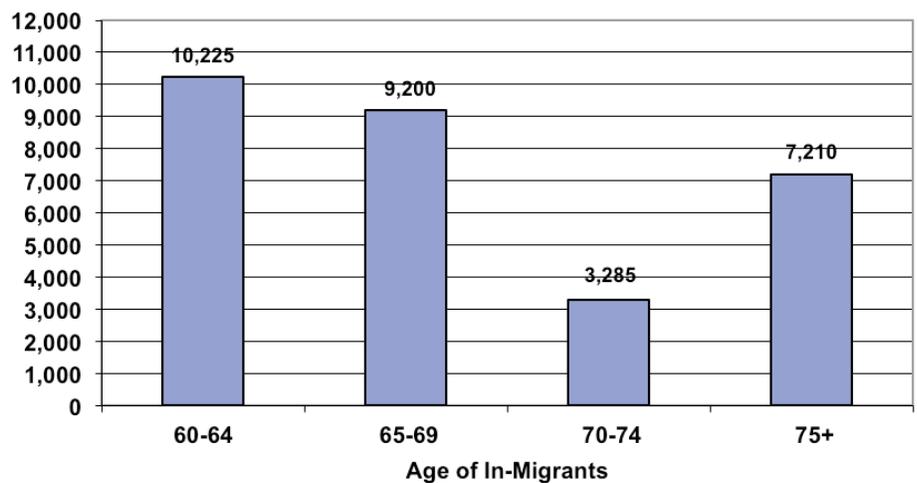
The majority of elderly in-migrants who moved to Arkansas between 2005 and 2010 were younger than 70 years of age. Over 19,000 people aged between



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 5 captures the “net” number of age 60+ in-migrants – this number being the difference between in-migrating retirement-age new-comers to the state and out-migrating retirement-age Arkansans. While Arkansas maintained a positive net in-migration in 2010, net in-migration has decreased since 1980.

### Figure 6. In-Migration to Arkansas by Age, 2005 to 2010



Source: Computed from County to County Migration Flows, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

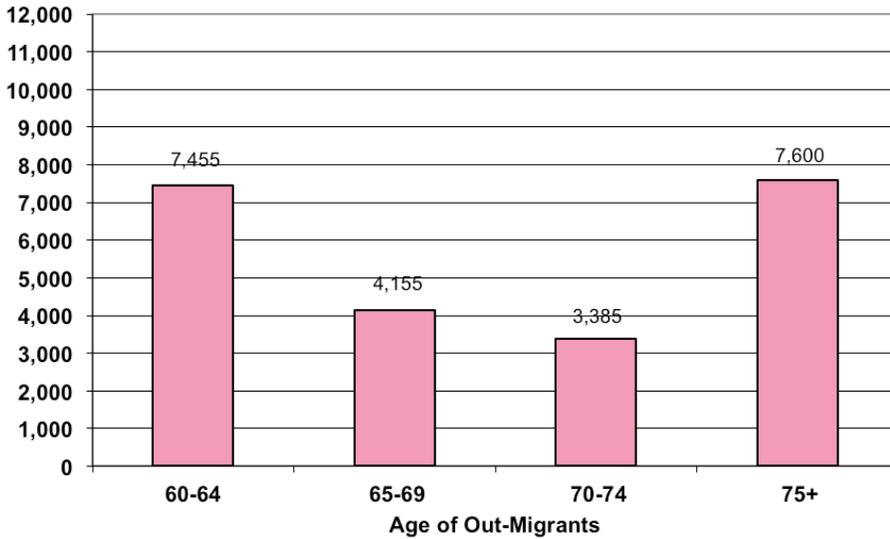
60 and 69 relocated to Arkansas during this time. They made up nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of the total in-migrants over 60 years old. Approximately 11 percent of the in-migrants were between 70 and 74 years of age, and approximately 24 percent were aged 75 and older (Figure 6).

When considering out-migration, the split is much more even. Approximately 11,600 (51 percent) of the elderly out-migrants were less than 70 years of age, and about 11,000 elderly

out-migrants were 70 years of age or older (Figure 7).

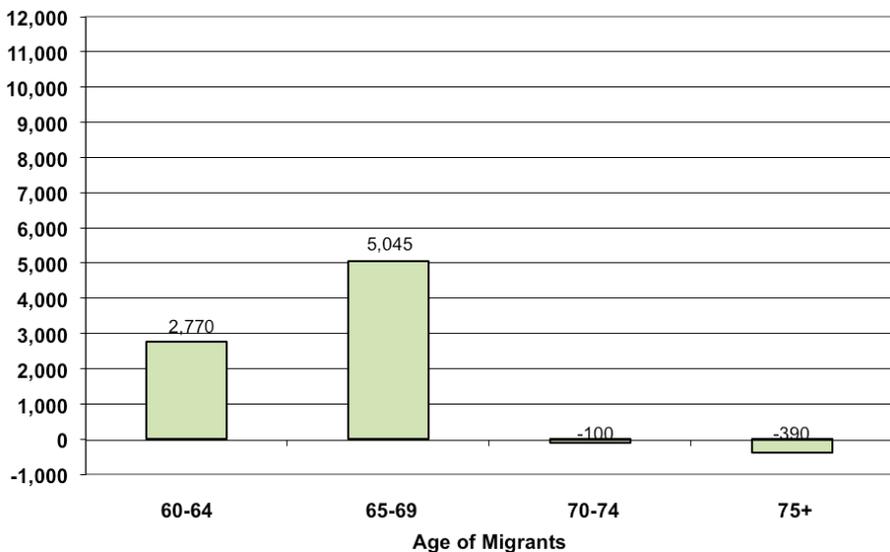
Net in-migration into Arkansas between 2005 and 2010 was positive for ages 60 to 69 and negative for ages 70 and older. The largest net in-migration consisted of elderly people between 65 and 69 years of age. Between 2005 and 2010, Arkansas gained nearly 2,800 citizens between the ages of 60 and 64 and over 5,000 citizens between 65 to 69 years of age (Figure 8).

**Figure 7. Out-Migration From Arkansas by Age, 2005 to 2010**



Source: Computed from County to County Migration Flows, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Figure 8. Arkansas Net In-Migration by Age, 2005 to 2010**



Source: Computed from County to County Migration Flows, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

## Summary

Arkansas has attracted a large number of people who want the amenities and lifestyle offered by many Arkansas communities, including a relaxed and scenic environment and abundant outdoor recreational opportunities. During the 1960s, Arkansas experienced a large influx of elderly in-migrants. This influx increased dramatically during the 1970s and declined slightly in the 1980s. Meanwhile, the number of elderly people leaving Arkansas has risen steadily since 1970. As a result, net elderly in-migration has declined in Arkansas since the 1970s, although in-migration levels remain about the same as they were from 1965 to 1970.

The majority of retirement-age in-migrants to Arkansas come from Texas, California, Florida and states contiguous with Arkansas. States that share borders with Arkansas are states of origin as well as destinations for migrants moving in and out of Arkansas.

Many of the elderly in-migrants (65 percent) are less than 70 years of age, while only a slight majority of out-migrants (51 percent) are less than 70 years of age.

The impact of elderly migration on Arkansas' population structure is substantial. Arkansas gained over 7,000 people 60 years of age and older from 2005 to 2010 due to state-to-state migration. Though net in-migration has declined since 1980, the state of Arkansas nevertheless possesses the qualities that attract retirees – scenic beauty, low cost of living, quality medical care and recreational opportunities. Communities wishing to attract retirees to their area should adopt aggressive marketing strategies to promote their qualities and assets.

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**DR. WAYNE MILLER** is a professor - Extension economist with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Little Rock.  
**ABBY DAVIDSON** is a research assistant - community and economic development with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Fayetteville.

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