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Population Shrinks in Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson

Since the last census more than ten years ago, the look of the city of Lafayette has changed and modernized, but aside from residents getting slightly older, the data doesn't illustrate any major alterations. In fact, it's amazing how little has changed. Although the number of rainy days, dog walks and great cups of coffee aren't counted - population, age, race and housing occupancy are. The not-so-big news for Lafayette is compared to the prior census in 2000, the population has shrunk by a whopping 15 people. Just over ten years ago 23,908 people called Lafayette home, fast forward a decade and the population has shrunk to 23,893.

Other data reflects the continued homogeneity of Lafayette; according to recent census figures the vast majority of residents are white. Of the 23,893 souls living in Lafayette in 2010, 20,232 identified themselves as Caucasian. In the ten years since the last census was taken the city is ever so slightly, approximately 2%, more diverse. In 2010 there were 2,162 Asian residents, 1,388 total Hispanic or Latino residents and only 166 African American residents. The figures don't exactly balance due to responses of "some other race" and "two or more races."

The census snapshot also tabulated figures on age and housing. Residents are getting older - with the average age shifting upward from 42.3 in 2000 to 45.2 in 2010. Orinda is somewhat older with an average age of 47.8. Moraga can't be considered a spring chicken either, with an average age of 45. The portion of Lafayette residents that identified themselves as between sixty and sixty-five has grown substantially from 4,613 to 5,747. By comparison, the average age county-wide is 38.5 years.

Housing numbers also demonstrate the obvious. In the red hot real estate market of 2000, the average vacancy rate of homes and rental properties town was 1.9%; ten years later it more than doubled to 4.4%. In Contra Costa County the situation was more extreme; in 2000 the average vacancy rate was 2.9 %, in 2010 it was 6.2%.

For the whole story go to the California Department of Finance; they are responsible for the California State Data Center that has all the numbers for California from the 2010 Census. Helpful staffers included data from 2000 on all the data profiles http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/state_census_data_center/census_2010/view.php.

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