South Plains Region

Regional Needs and Opportunities:
A Conversation Opener

BAILEY   LAMB   HALE   FLOYD   MOTLEY

COCHRAN   HOCKLEY   LUBBOCK   CROSBY   DICKENS   KING

YOAKUM   TERRY   LYNN   GARZA
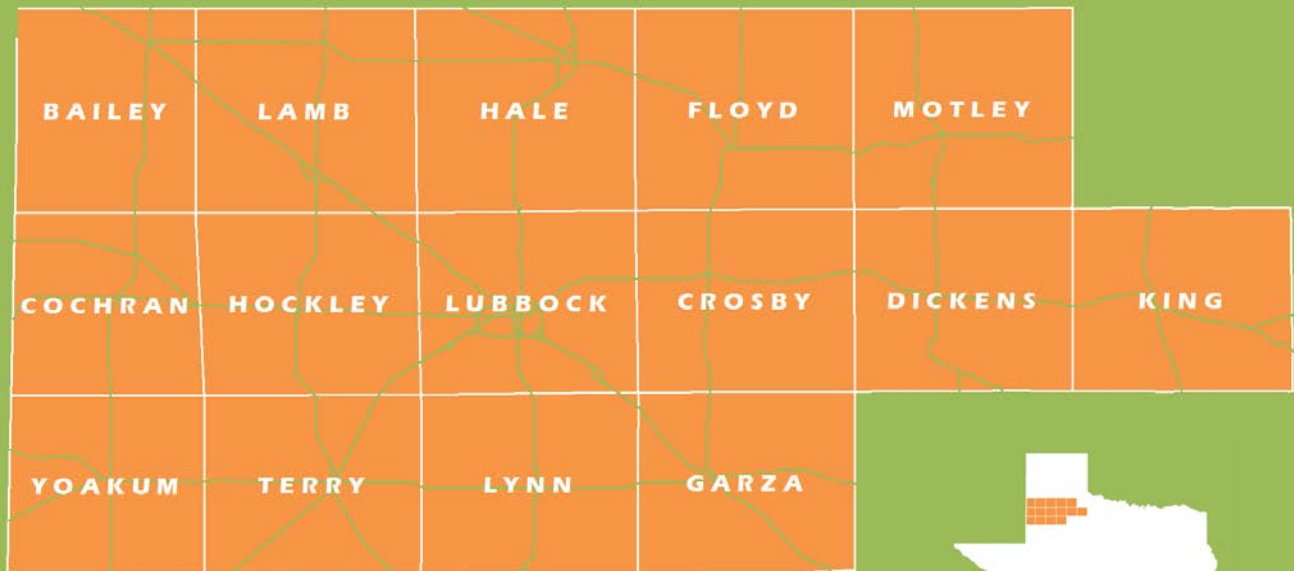
What is it like living today in the **South Plains of Texas–** and what **opportunities** and **challenges** face us as we forge a future together? What **resources** can we tap to move our Region ahead?

This is a conversation worth having. The facts and figures and perspective offered in this report are meant to help open that conversation. Armed with insights about your community, you can begin a community process that includes setting bold goals and harnessing all your resources to help the residents of the Region get ahead, stay ahead and leave behind a stronger community for their children.

July 2015

In the 100-year-old tradition of community foundations across the country, the **Lubbock Area Foundation** harnesses the collective generosity of thousands of West Texans to give to causes and concerns in the Region. The Foundation stewards the gifts placed in its care with an eye toward permanence and growth, and from the investment earnings, awards over $1 million in grants and scholarships in the Region every year. As a philanthropic leader, the Lubbock Area Foundation seeks solutions and promotes innovation across a broad array of issue areas including arts and culture, education and youth, civic, social and community development, basic needs and self-sufficiency. The Foundation believes that the success of this Region requires visionary community leadership, innovation and a commitment to the common good.

LubbockAreaFoundation.org

The **Center for Rural Entrepreneurship** helps community leaders build a prosperous future by supporting and empowering business, social and civic entrepreneurs. With its roots and hearts in rural America, the Center helps communities of all sizes and interests by bringing together research, community engagement and strategy development. The Center's Solution Area Teams empower communities to discover their own answers to the challenges and opportunities they face.

The **Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group** helps rural, urban and suburban communities act together to create more vibrant regions that advance and sustain prosperity and wellbeing for local people, places and firms, including those on the economic margins. Aspen CSG connects community and economic development leaders across the nation to motivate each other, and equips them with good ideas, tools and strategies to improve results and prospects for their regions.

Table of Contents

Using this Booklet as a Conversation Guide

Please use this booklet with regional organizations, groups, family or neighbors to start a discussion about how the Region is doing today, and what we might want to address together to make the Region an even better place tomorrow – to live in, work and raise a family.

There are reflection questions at the end of each section – and some Overall Priority Questions on the back cover. We encourage you to work with community groups or residents to answer these questions individually, and then share your answers with each other before you answer the Overall Priority Questions.

The Lubbock Area Foundation wants to better target their grantmaking and action on priorities set by the Region. So the Foundation is eager to hear from any group or individual who has used this guide. We would especially like to hear:

- When you used it – and with what group and how many people.
- Your group's answers to the Overall Priority Questions.
- Any other ideas you have about the top priorities people in our area should take on together that will build a better future for the South Plains.

Please send the Lubbock Area Foundation your ideas – contact information is on the back cover of this booklet.

About the Data

This report is intended to start a conversation about regional opportunities and needs. As a result, the data included provides a general overview of the Region's people, the place and the economy using simple graphs and estimates.

Every indicator is listed with its date and data source. If a particular indicator interests you, we recommend accessing the original data source. The source will provide additional information including margins of error and more nuanced discussion on how to interpret the estimates.

If you want someone to help organize or facilitate a group conversation or discussion, help is available! Please contact Tami Swoboda at 806-762-8061 or at tami@lubbockareafoundation.org.

What resources can the South Plains Region tap to support community betterment?

Finding the resources to support community development is a pressing challenge. But, every community has financial assets that, when developed and managed properly, can create a lasting community impact. How big is that opportunity?

Resources for Development

Successful communities regularly reinvest in themselves. In the Region, community philanthropy represents one of the greatest underdeveloped resources for furthering community betterment projects and programs. One important way of assessing your capacity to give is to look at the Region's **Transfer of Wealth** (TOW). TOW is the process of passing estates from one generation to the next.

Current and former residents who care deeply about their hometown are likely interested in leaving some of their wealth to support community betterment well after they are gone. Giving from one's accumulated wealth or estate creates a permanent legacy that supports the hometown forever. Understanding the tremendous size of the Region's TOW is the first step in capturing its potential for community development.

South Plains' Transfer of Wealth

$7.38 Billion

will transfer between generations in the next 10 years

$369 Million

is 5%, which, if captured to support community betterment, could generate $18.4 Million annually

$180 Million

is what the Region could generate over a decade if it captures and endows just 5%. Imagine what that could do for your community!

a. Average household net worth

Region — $400
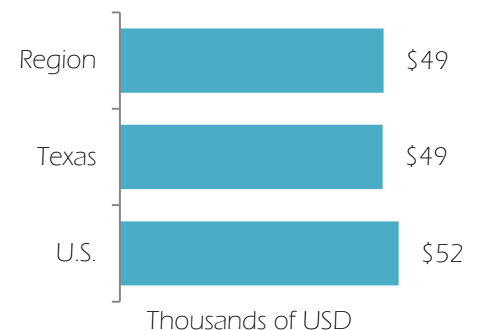Texas — $521
U.S. — $547
Thousands of USD
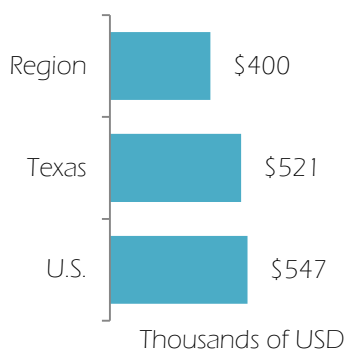
Why it matters: Most communities and community residents see themselves as poor. Many believe they don't have the financial means to make their place better. Understanding that every community—even in your Region—has wealth, can shift attitudes from "the glass is half empty" to "the glass is half full" and motivate action.

How the Region stacks up: The South Plains of Texas has lower per household wealth when compared to both the United States and to Texas. This is to be expected. As an average value, there are many households with little or no household wealth, but there are others with significant ability to give back to their hometown and the Region.

b. 10-year TOW Opportunity (per household)

Why it matters: Understanding how much wealth is likely to transfer in the short term is important to communities. This allows communities to set specific goals to work towards. Those communities with specific goals tend to do better in achieving or exceeding them.

How the Region stacks up: Over the next 10 years (2011-2020), the Region's residents are estimated to transfer $7.38 billion (or $48,700 per household). Within the Region, there are counties with higher and lower per household wealth reflecting variations in wealth holding (e.g., oil, businesses & ag lands, etc.) across the Region.

Region — $49
Texas — $49
U.S. — $52
Thousands of USD

c. 50-year TOW Opportunity (per household)

Region — $400
Texas — $521
U.S. — $547

Thousands of USD
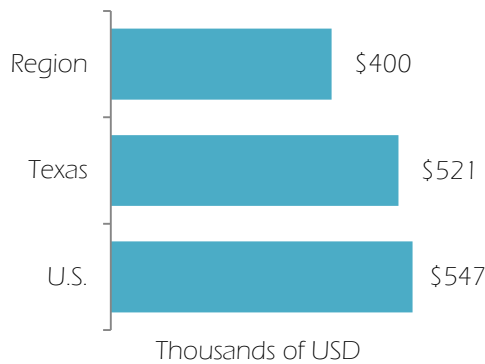
Why it matters: *Understanding how much wealth will transfer in the long-term is important. It can encourage communities into a more proactive approach to economic development. This allows communities to envision where they want to be in the long-term and start building a pool of funding to achieve their vision.*

How the Region stacks up: *Between 2011 and 2060, residents of the Region are estimated to transfer $68.21 billion (or $450,165 per household). While per household giving over this period is smaller when compared to the U.S. and Texas, there is still a remarkable opportunity for philanthropic giving and community betterment endowment building.*

Trends and Data of Note

- The transfer of wealth estimates for the South Plains are conservative – because they reflect only measures of permanent resident household wealth, which do not include corporate or former resident wealth.

- For this Region, former residents represent a significant donor pool. In other parts of the country, community "alumni" have demonstrated both capacity and desire to give back to their hometowns.

- Other likely donors that would contribute to community endowments in the South Plains include:

  - **Closely-Held Family Businesses**. Family-owned—or what are referred to as closely-held family businesses—are a big part of the economy of the Region. Family business owners are often multi-generational and deeply rooted in their hometowns. These potential donors have both capacity to give, as well as motivation and a history of supporting their chosen communities.

  - **Land Wealth**. Throughout this Region of Texas, land wealth is significant. When land is transitioned from one generation to the next, or to a new land owner, the potential exists to give some or all of it (or proceeds from its sale) to the community. While such donations typically represent just a small portion of the land wealth being transitioned or sold, they can collectively be significant.

  - **Energy Royalty Wealth**. Mineral rights ownership and associated leasing payments and royalties are a potential source of wealth in parts of the Region. Anticipated future and long-term energy production within the Region will likely increase this source of wealth and potential sources of giving to the Region's communities.

  - **Thrifty Retirees**. For aging generational groups there is a culture of working hard, spending less than you make, saving for the future and often investing long and well. While most retirees are not wealthy, they do have assets. They are often very rooted in their home communities and have the capacity and desire to leave a legacy.

Discussion Questions

1.1 What one or two things most __surprised__ you in this data about the Transfer of Wealth?

1.2 What one trend in this data or idea in this discussion gives you the most __hope__ for the South Plains?

1.3 What one trend, fact or idea in this data and discussion causes you the most __concern__ – for any reason?

2 What do we think about the South Plains?

Everybody has thoughts and opinions about their community and region. Taken together, local opinions can offer a "reality check" on what is working and what is not.

From July 25, 2014 to March 30, 2015 the Lubbock Area Foundation fielded two surveys in fifteen West Texas counties. The survey responses both identify regional trends and highlight opportunities and challenges for the South Plains Region.

Who answered the survey? 2,389 people responded to the two surveys. 65% of responses came from women and 35% came from men. 28% of respondents had lived in the Region less than 10 years. 36% had lived in the Region 30 years or more. 80% of respondents were 35 or older (54% of the population is under 35). About 2% of surveys were completed in Spanish (10% of the survey area's population—almost entirely Spanish speakers—cannot speak English "very well").

a. Ranking community strengths and weaknesses

All survey takers were presented with the same 17 positive statements about their community and were asked if the statements were always, mostly, occasionally, very seldom, or never true.
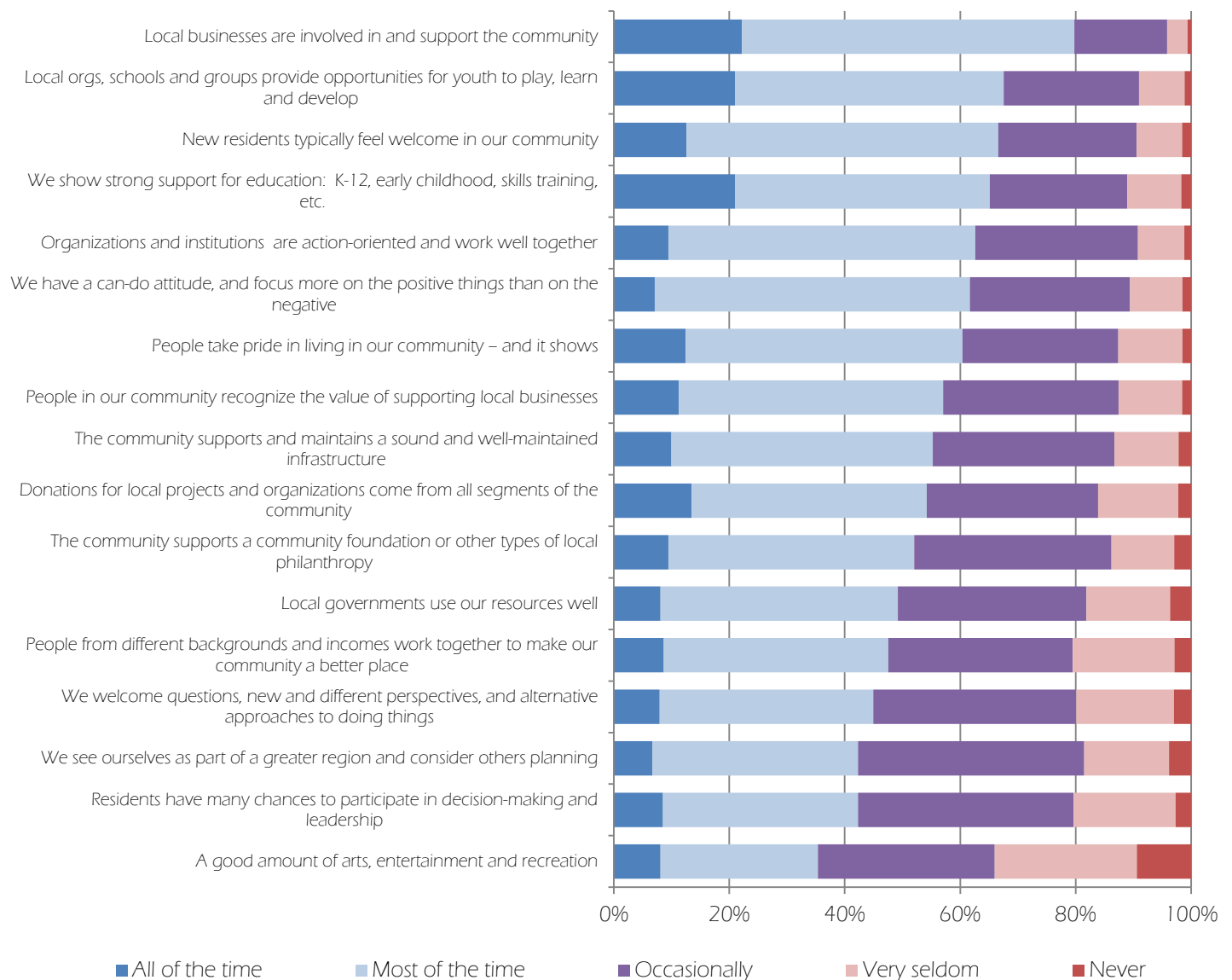
b. Open-ended reflections

Based on your experience, what are the one or two very best things about living in your community?

<u>The people and the community's character (68%)</u>
Respondents said that they have a close-knit, caring, and supportive community that is willing to help people in times of need. Some mentioned a strong sense of community pride.

<u>Size (26%)</u>
Respondents said that the "small size" or "small-town living/atmosphere" was one of the best things about their community.

<u>Education (13%)</u>
Respondents listed either quality K through 12 education or colleges and universities as community strengths.

<u>Low cost of living (6%)</u>
Respondents listed affordability/the low cost of living as the best thing about their community.

<u>Safety (5%)</u>
Respondents said that they feel safe. Many said children were safe because others would watch out for them.

What are the one or two most challenging things about living in your community?

<u>Lack of amenities (36%)</u>
Respondents cited a lack of amenities, such as shopping, dining, family-oriented entertainment, and medical facilities as one of the most challenging things in their community. Many cited having to travel to find what they need.

<u>Jobs/economy (12%)</u>
Respondents cited a lack of jobs or "the economy" as the most challenging thing about their community. Many said that there are not enough "white-collar" or "professional" jobs available.

<u>Weather/wind/sand/water (9%)</u>
Respondents said weather or drought - sometimes wind or sand - was a challenge.

<u>Driving distance (6%)</u>
Respondents mentioned that their home's location required lots of time on the road to get to work or to access important amenities.

<u>Housing/Infrastructure (5%)</u>
Respondents said that failing infrastructure and a lack of housing (sometimes "affordable" housing) were challenging.

If you could wave a magic wand to change just one thing in your community, what would it be?

<u>Grow and attract amenities (28%)</u>
Respondents wanted to bring more restaurants, shopping destinations, and entertainment venues to the community. Some mentioned specific chains that they hoped would open in the community while others were more general and expressed desire for a vibrant business district with activities for families.

<u>Beautify, construct parks (17%)</u>
Respondents hoped to make the community more beautiful, to build more parks, plant more trees, and create more outdoor recreational spaces.

<u>Nurture pride, civic engagement (13%)</u>
Respondents wrote about fixing a wide range of resident morale challenges they see hindering community advancement.
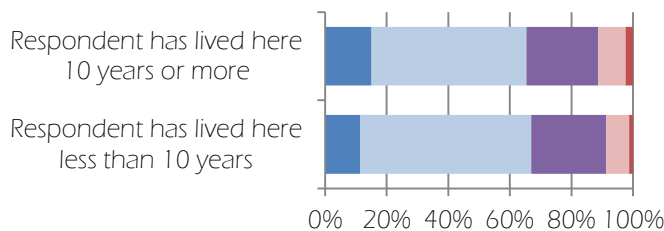
<u>Create jobs (12%)</u>
Respondents imagined an economy with diverse industries, more jobs, and higher wages.

<u>Repair infrastructure (12%)</u>
Respondents wrote about improving infrastructure, fixing up abandoned buildings or repairing damaged roads.

c. Regional demographic trends of note

New residents typically feel welcome in our community

Our community offers a good amount of arts, entertainment and recreation for our residents (by <u>age</u>)

Legend:
- ■ Never
- ■ Very seldom
- ■ Occasionally
- ■ Most of the time
- ■ All of the time
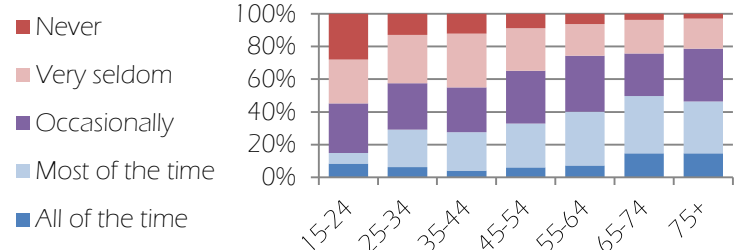
Discussion Questions

2.1 What one or two things most <u>**surprised**</u> you in this data about the area?

2.2 What one trend in this data or idea in this discussion gives you the most <u>**hope**</u> for the area?

2.3 What one trend or fact or idea in this data and discussion causes you the most <u>**concern**</u>?

2.4 Which fact in this data would you most like to <u>**change**</u> – and why?

Who is living in the Region?

Any examination or conversation about a region starts with a few key facts about who is living there now – and how that is different from the past and might soon change.

a. Population
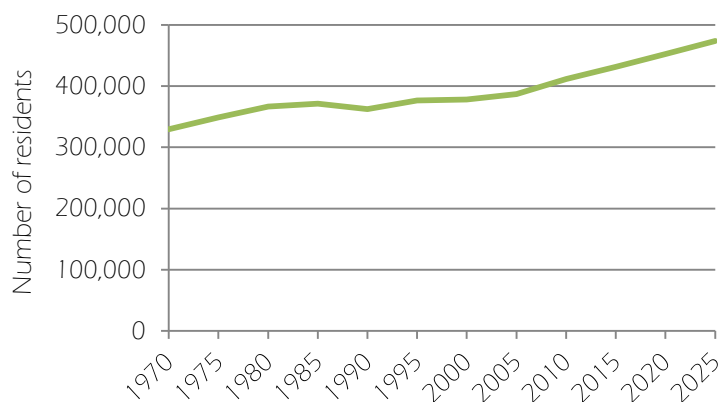
Why it matters: Changes in a region's population can signal economic activity, expansion or contraction of sectors or institutions, and migration trends. Population shifts can also bring to light potential opportunities and challenges – like growth, decline, need for housing, schools and the like.

How the Region stacks up: Between 1970 and 2013, the South Plains Region has seen slow but steady growth. Some counties are struggling to maintain population while the Lubbock area is witnessing relatively strong growth. The Texas demographer is projecting the Region to continue to grow through 2025 at a higher rate of growth.

Source: Texas State Data Center, 2012

Why it matters: A population with balanced age groups is an indicator of community health and vitality. Do families think this is a good place to have children? As young people grow up, do they find the education, amenities and employment to build a life? And as they age, do they have the support and community culture they need and want to stay there?
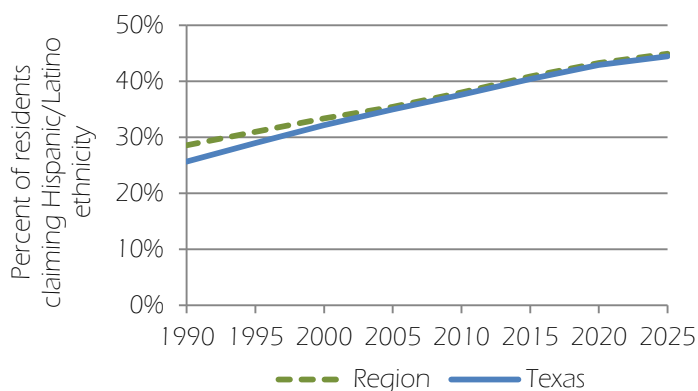
How the Region stacks up: The Region has an age structure comparable to Texas. It is aging like Texas and the rest of the nation but still has a large population of young residents. Age composition changes will impact consumer spending, demand for services and amenities and weaken overall workforce availability.

Source: Texas State Data Center, 2012

b. Age composition

Under 45: Green   Over 45: Blue

■ <25 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65-74 ■ 75+
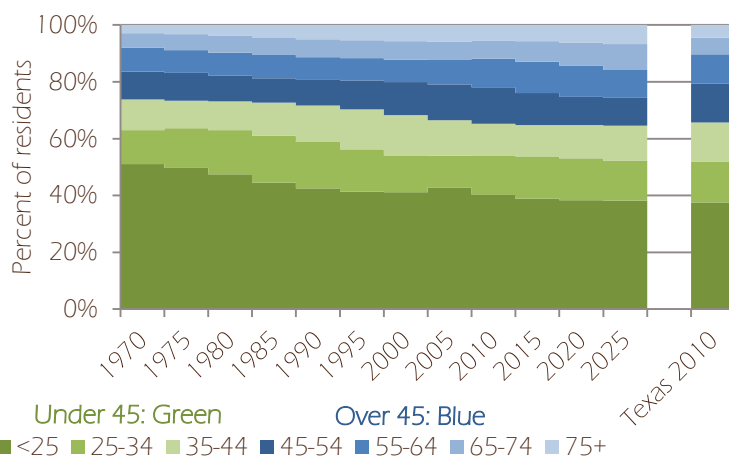
c. Hispanic/Latino population
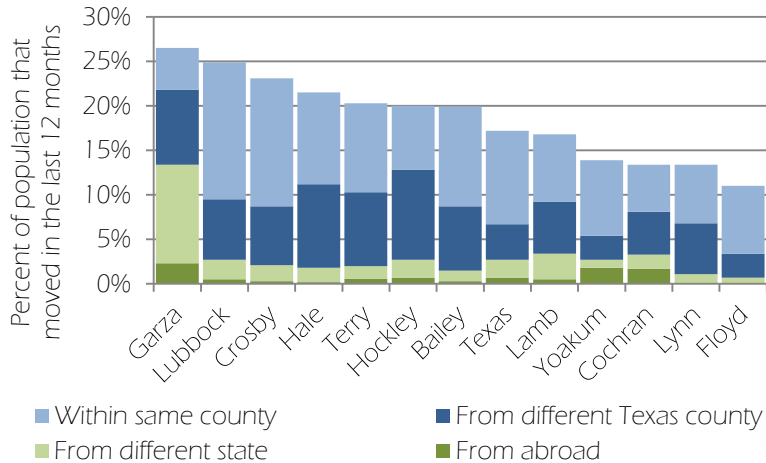

- - - Region   —— Texas

Why it matters: One dynamic demographic trend shaping America's future is Hispanic/Latino population growth. America is becoming more diverse, and the Hispanic/Latino population is driving this change in many regions.

How the Region stacks up: The South Plains is seeing strong growth in Hispanic/Latino residents. The trend lines are comparable to those in Texas. Beyond 2025, the Region is likely to become minority majority, with more than 50% of its residents having Hispanic/Latino heritage. There are already counties in the South Plains that are minority majority.

Source: Texas State Data Center, 2012

d. Migration

Percent of population that moved in the last 12 months

Legend:
- Within same county
- From different state
- From different Texas county
- From abroad

Counties (left to right): Garza, Lubbock, Crosby, Hale, Terry, Hockley, Bailey, Texas, Lamb, Yoakum, Cochran, Lynn, Floyd

Why it matters: Movement of people inside the United States can tell you a lot about relative economic prosperity and quality of life. Counties with large numbers of new residents can be a sign of a booming economy. It can also be a sign of improved amenities.

How the Region stacks up: Nine counties in the Region have a larger portion of new-county residents than the Texas average. In many cases, that is a sign of a growing economy or an improving quality of life. However, in some extreme cases like Garza County, it was the result of a large detention facility being built in Post.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013
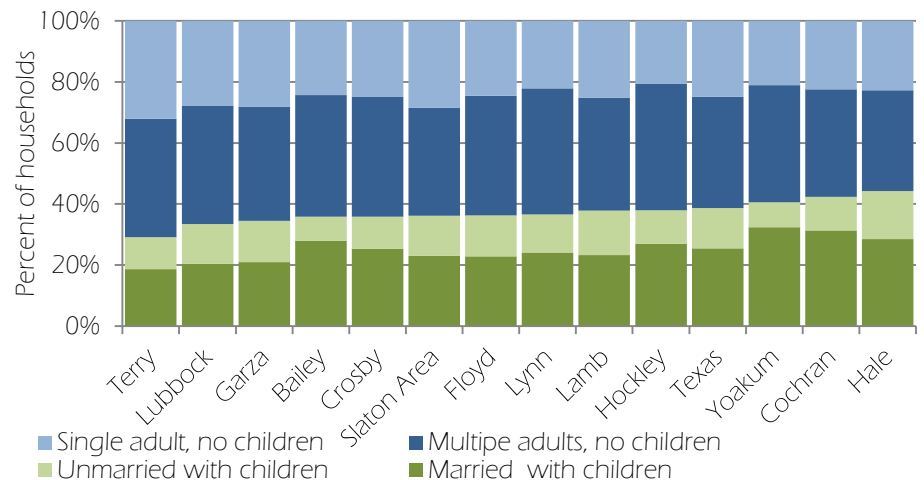

Why it matters: Today, the fact that there is a wide range of household types reflects emerging trends in American society. For example, there are fewer married couples with children and more single-adult households. Different household types may call for different services and signal future trends or changes in the community.

How the Region stacks up:

Throughout the Region, households that are married with children are in the minority. This pattern is reflecting both a Texas and U.S. trend with increasing numbers of households that are single adults with no children, unmarried with children and multi-adult but unmarried households.

Source: American Community Survey
5-year estimates, 2012

e. Household structure

Percent of households

Legend:
- Single adult, no children
- Unmarried with children
- Multipe adults, no children
- Married with children

Counties (left to right): Terry, Lubbock, Garza, Bailey, Crosby, Slaton Area, Floyd, Lynn, Lamb, Hockley, Texas, Yoakum, Cochran, Hale


Discussion Questions

3.1   What one or two things most __surprised__ you in this data about who is living in the South Plains?

3.2   What one trend in this data gives you the most __hope__ for the South Plains?

3.3   What one trend in this data causes you the most __concern__ – for any reason?

3.4   Which fact in this data would you most like to __change__ – and why?

4

How are the Region's people doing?
Once you understand who lives in a region, the work of trying to help a region get ahead must consider and address how those people are doing.

a. Household income distribution
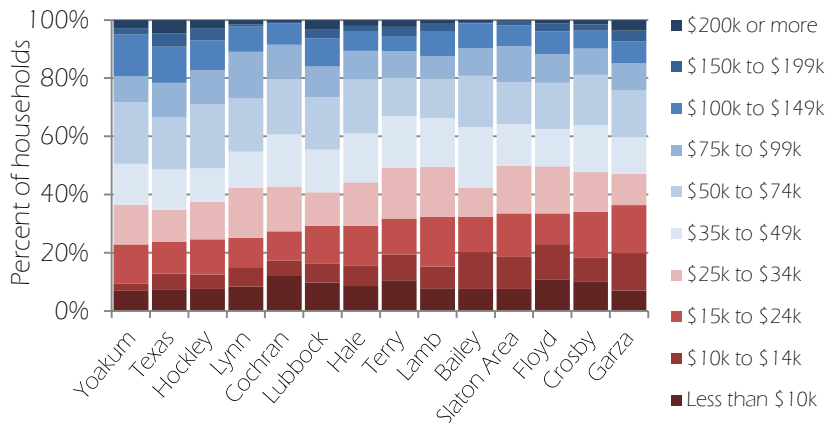
Why it matters: Household income provides a general indicator of well-being. It correlates with health, educational outcomes and happiness.

How the Region stacks up:
Compared to the U.S. and Texas, most of the counties in the South Plains Region have more households that are low income and fewer households that are higher income. Household income sets consumer spending and the level of private and public assistance required to sustain households. Nevertheless, there are clusters of high income and higher wealth households with significant capacity for philanthropic giving.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2012

Why it matters: Poverty is a well-established benchmark of how a community's residents are doing economically. Rising or declining poverty rates can indicate changes in resident well-being as well as the extent to which the area's economy provides economic opportunity.

How the Region stacks up: Between 1960 and 1980, poverty rates in both Texas and the South Plains declined significantly. Since the early 1980s, poverty rates have fluctuated, floating below and above 20% or one in five persons. This is a relatively high rate of poverty when compared to the U.S.

Source: Decennial Censuses and American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2012

b. Poverty rate
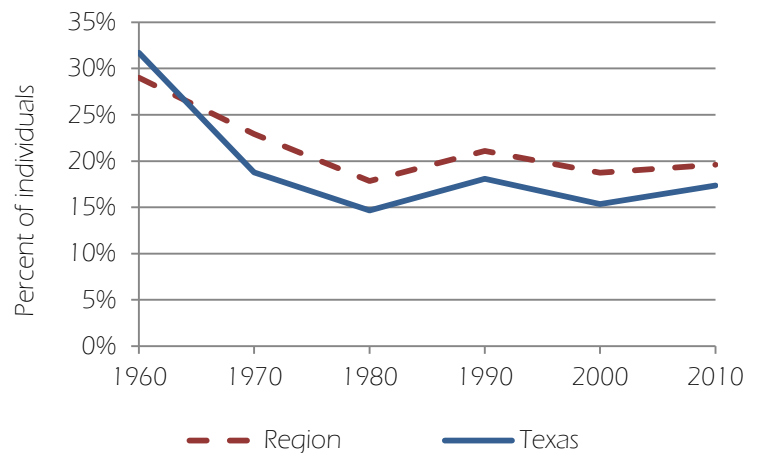

c. Income and poverty
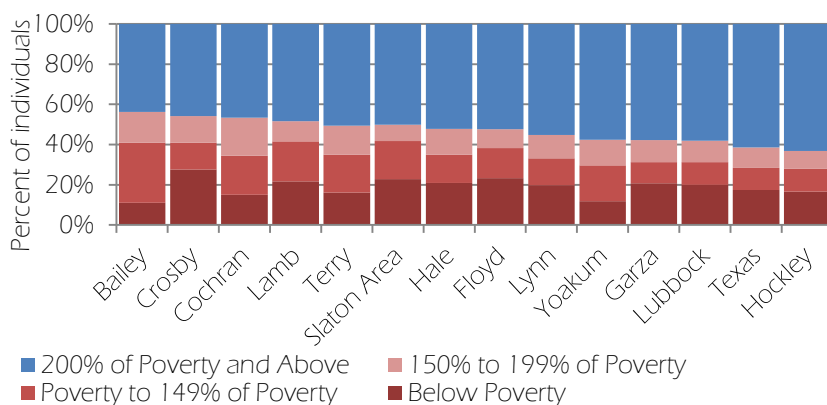
Why it matters: Many who track individual and family economic well-being use 200% of the poverty rate as a better measure – which, today, amounts to annual income of $47,700 for a family of four.

How the Region stacks up: Up to a half of the Region's residents live within 200% or less of the poverty rate. Often, persons in these categories of income constitute working poor or low-income. They are likely struggling to be financially self-sufficient, let alone being able to save for education, retirement and other long-term goals.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2012

d. Health factors
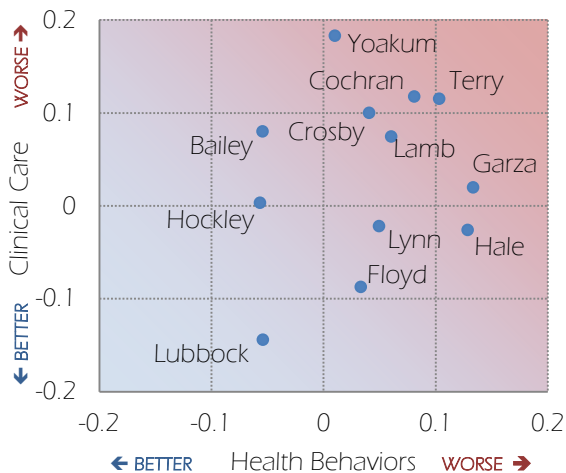
Why it matters: Indicators like health status, happiness and attitude shed light on people's current and future well-being. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation assigns counties a standardized health behavior score (the Texas average score is 0) taking into account factors such as obesity, smoking and sexually transmitted infection rates. It also assigns a clinical care score including factors such as the ratio of residents to doctors and dentists and rate of preventative care screenings.

How the Region stacks up: With the exception of Lubbock and Hockley, the Region's counties lag the state either in health behavior score or clinical care score. Terry and Cochran Counties are of particular concern as both counties significantly underperform on both metrics.

Source: Robert Wood Johnson's County Health Rankings, 2013

Why it matters: Abuse and neglect of children includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse as well as abandonment, medical neglect, and neglectful supervision. High rates of abuse are correlated with historical abuse, mental health challenges, substance abuse, economic stress, social isolation, and violent surroundings.

How the Region stacks up: From 2009 to 2013, the Region had more than 10,000 confirmed cases of abuse and neglect. Every year, approximately 2 out of every 100 young people have been verifiably abused or neglected.

Source: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2009-2013

# e. Abuse and neglect of children

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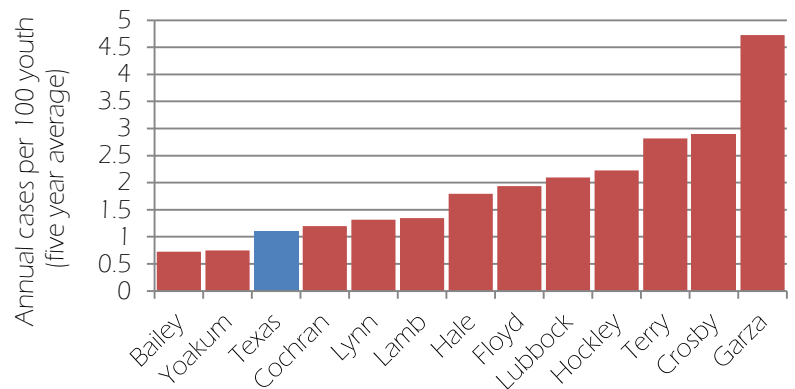
Discussion Questions

4.1   What one or two things most <u>surprised</u> you in this data about how people are doing in the Region?

4.2   What one trend in this data gives you the most <u>hope</u> for the Region?

4.3   What one trend in this data causes you the most <u>concern</u> – for any reason?

4.4   Which fact in this data would you most like to <u>change</u> – and why?

How is the Region's economy doing?

The factors that drive or drain a local economy – specific industry sectors, the education and skills of residents, the sources of the income people spend – all affect the future.

a. Employment by sector
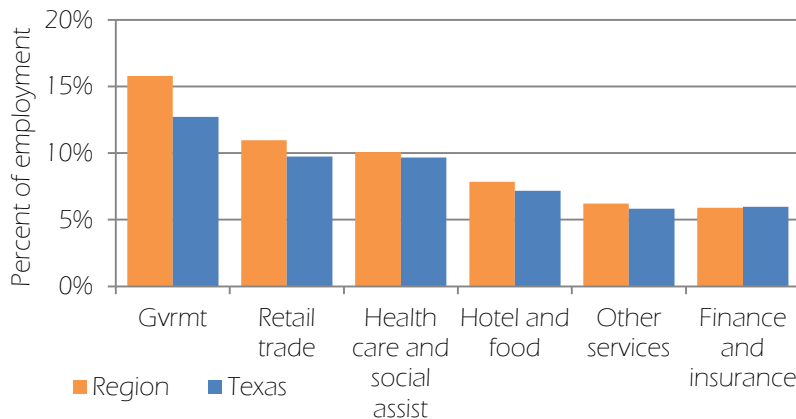
Why it matters: Every economy has a unique set of industry sectors. Rural areas typically have less diversity, relying on fewer sectors than metro economies to provide jobs. Understanding which sectors drive a local economy is essential.

How the Region stacks up: Government, retail trade and health care and social assistance are the largest employers in the South Plains. Primary industries such as agriculture, energy and manufacturing are critically important but do not fall among the largest employers.

*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2014*

Why it matters: Another way to understand a region's economy is by looking at which sectors produce the most income for residents. Here we've included income sources not traditionally considered "sectors" – like retirement income.

How the Region stacks up: Income earned by retired residents is the largest economic driver in the Region followed by government salaries, salaries for health care and social assistance workers and farm incomes.

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2014

b. Personal income by sector
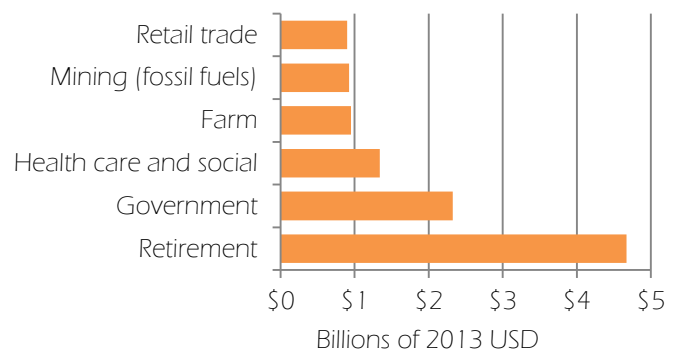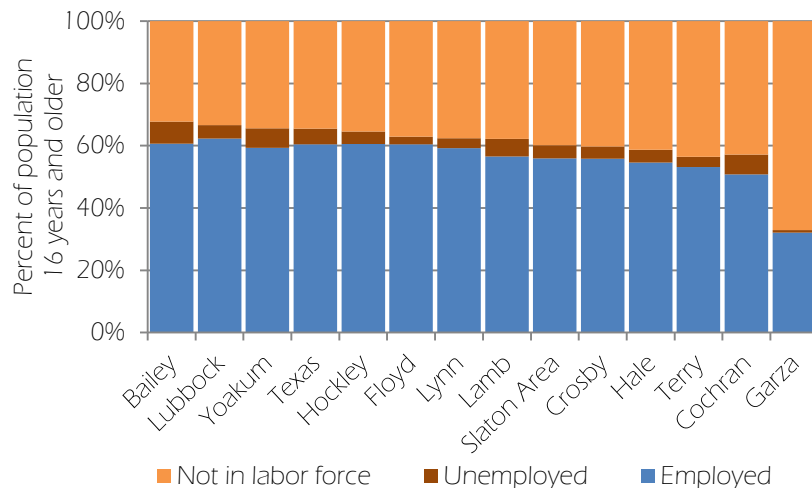

c. Educational attainment
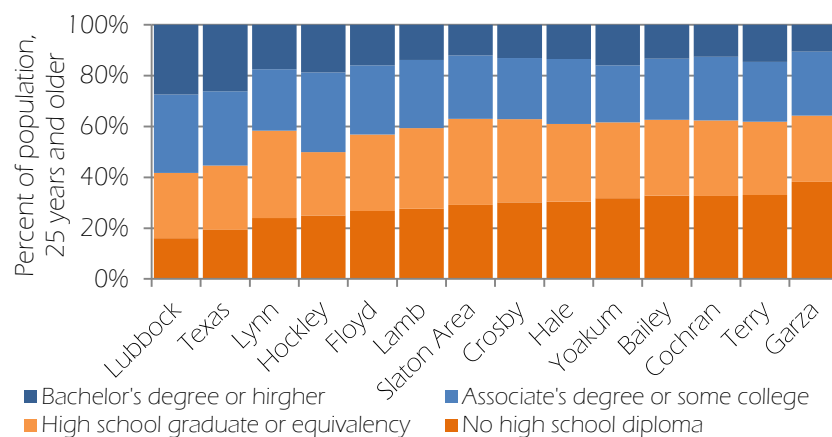
Why it matters: A leading factor shaping any economy is educational attainment. Higher education levels within a community typically result in higher incomes, more wealth formation and even healthier residents.

How the Region stacks up: Educational attainment is the highest in Lubbock County, the home of Texas Tech University. It is lowest in Garza County. Increasing educational attainment, including trade and vocational skills and certificates, is increasingly important to meeting the workforce needs of the Region and its communities.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2012

d. Labor force participation

Percent of population 16 years and older

Legend: Not in labor force, Unemployed, Employed

Counties (left to right): Bailey, Lubbock, Yoakum, Texas, Hockley, Floyd, Lynn, Lamb, Slaton Area, Crosby, Hale, Terry, Cochran, Garza

Why it matters: *Aging communities and communities experiencing economic distress typically have lower labor force participation rates. Conversely, communities that are growing, younger and doing better economically have higher labor force participation rates and lower unemployment rates.*

How the Region stacks up: *Labor force participation and employment is highest in Bailey and Lubbock Counties and lowest in Cochran and Garza. Unemployment rates are relatively low and well below U.S. levels. High rates of non-participation in the Labor Force are due to an aging and retired population. Numbers in Garza County are due to a large prison population relative to a small county population.*

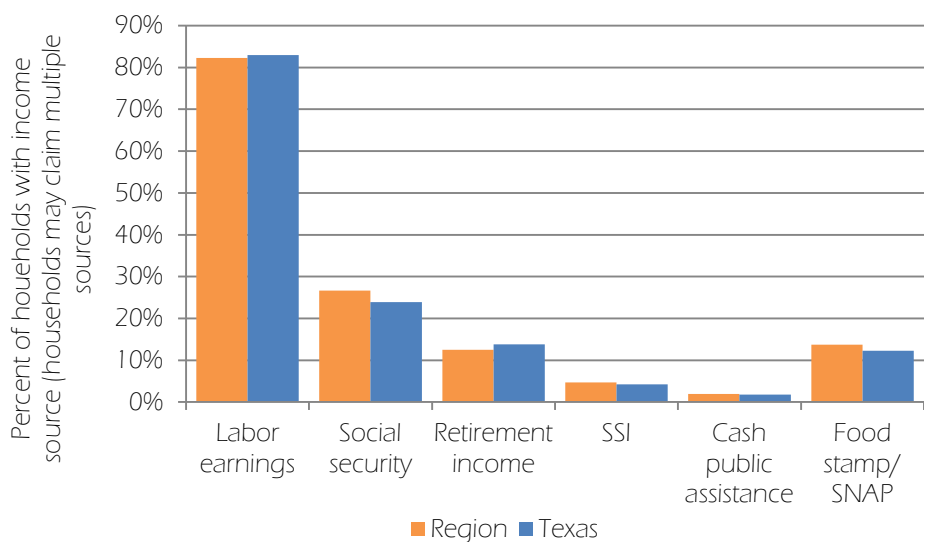Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2012

Why it matters: *Labor earnings include income generated by working. Other forms of income represent retirement income from investments and transfer payments associated with Social Security, farm programs and those receiving help due to illness or unemployment.*

How the Region stacks up:

Compared to the Nation, the South Plains and Texas continue to have very high Labor Earnings indicating an active working population. Retiree-related income such as Social Security and SNAP are somewhat higher in the Region when compared to Texas.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2012

e. Labor and non-labor earnings

Percent of households with income source (households may claim multiple sources)

Categories: Labor earnings, Social security, Retirement income, SSI, Cash public assistance, Food stamp/SNAP

Legend: Region, Texas

Discussion Questions

5.1 What one or two things most __surprised__ you in this data about how the regional economy is doing?

5.2 What one trend in this data gives you the most __hope__ for the Region?

5.3 What one trend in this data causes you the most __concern__ – for any reason?

5.4 Which fact in this data would you most like to __change__ – and why?

How is South Plains, the place, doing?

The natural resources, buildings and amenities in a place, as well as where people live and shop, make a difference in the quality of life.

a. Value of housing
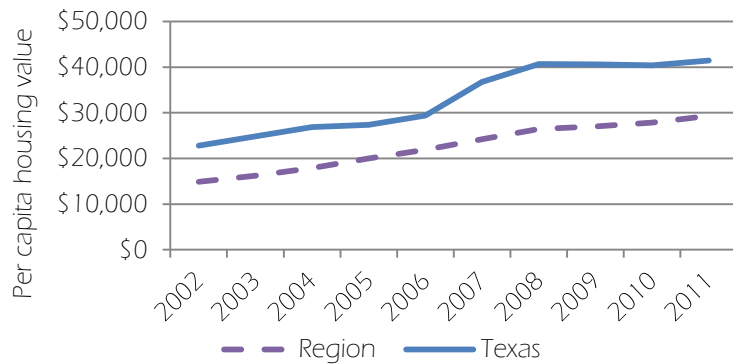
Why it matters: In America, home ownership is the single most important household asset. Consequently, housing values can be an important core indicator for both household and community well-being.

How the Region stacks up: Housing values in the South Plains are lower when compared to Texas. This is to be expected given the metropolitan areas in Texas where housing values are significantly higher. Since 2002, housing values have increased steadily. The housing crash during the Great Recession was less significant in the Region.

Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Property Tax Survey Data and Reports

Why it matters: An adequate housing unit has complete plumbing, a kitchen, is not overcrowded, and is affordable for either its owner or renter. Housing adequacy rates highlight critical health and safety issues. High rates of poor housing stock can be a red flag.

How the Region stacks up: Overall, housing adequacy is stronger in the South Plains when compared to Texas. Only Lubbock County has a somewhat lower housing adequacy score when compared to the State. This is due to housing affordability challenges for low income families.

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2012

b. Housing adequacy
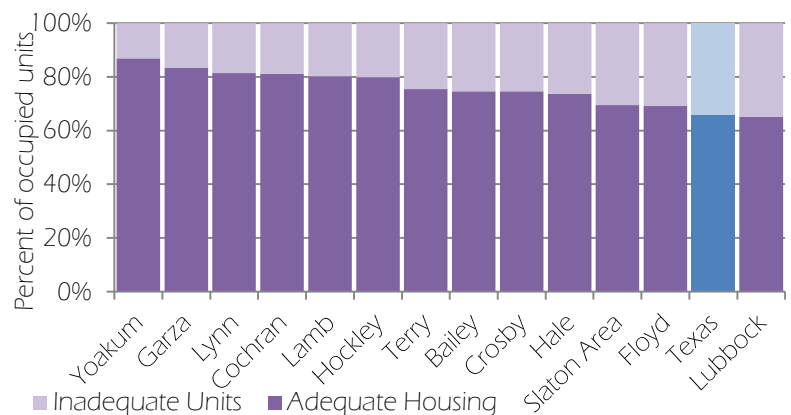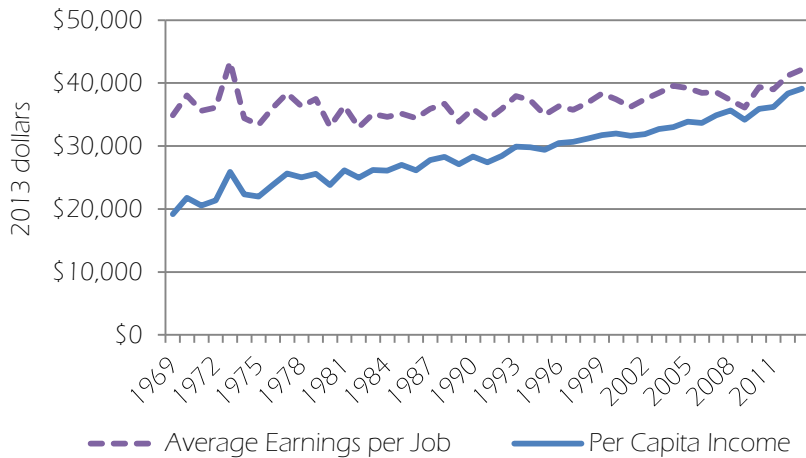

c. Commuting and spending
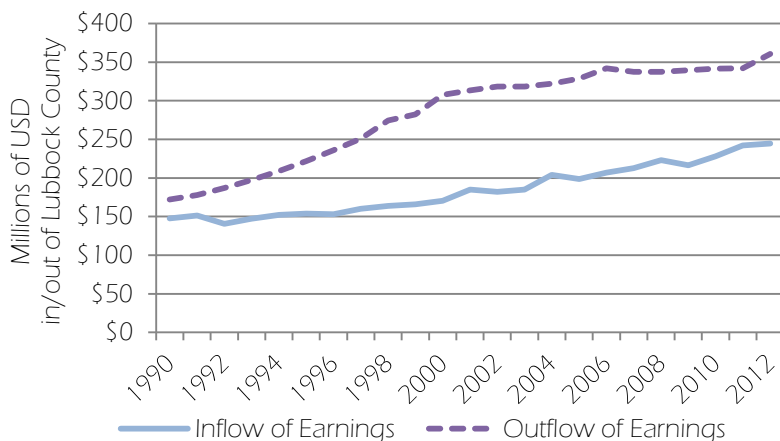
Why it matters: Many Americans commute to work, entertainment and shopping. People who work in one county but live in another county tend to spend more of their paycheck in the county where they live, creating an "outflow of earnings" – and vice versa.

How the Region stacks up: Commuting information is not available at a regional level. The chart to the left is for Lubbock County. Commuting is significant in the South Plains. Residents often live in one county and travel large distances to work in Lubbock. This pattern highlights how communities within the Region are interconnected.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. Multiple Years Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System. Tables CA30 & CA91.

d. Average earnings and income

2013 dollars (y-axis, $0 – $50,000)

x-axis years: 1969, 1972, 1975, 1978, 1981, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011

- - - Average Earnings per Job   —— Per Capita Income

Why it matters: Average earnings per job is a measure of the compensation of the average job and an indicator of the quality of local employment. Per capita income is a measure of income per person and a measure of economic well-being.

How the Region stacks up: Average earnings in the South Plains have been relatively flat in inflation adjusted terms over the past four decades. This is consistent with flat real earnings nationally. Fluctuating real earnings are due to variations in energy and agriculture. Per capita income has been rising due mostly to an increasing retiree population.
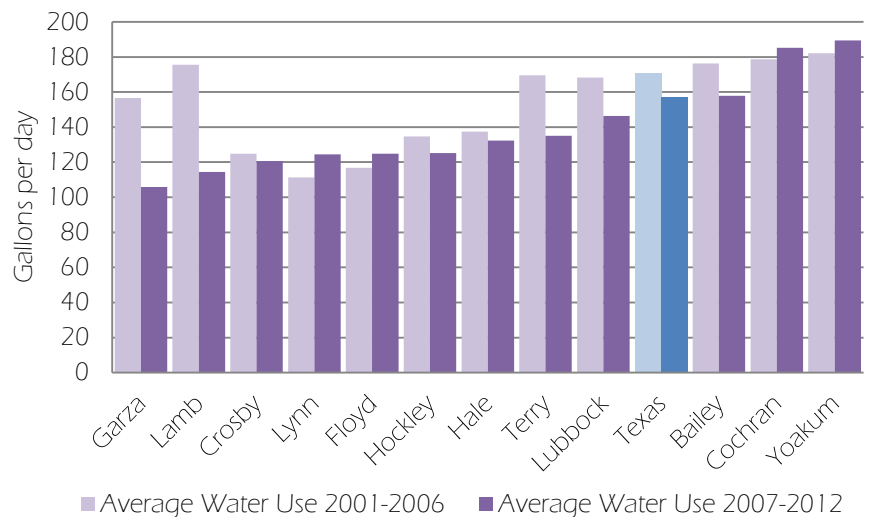
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, Tables CA30, 2014

e. Daily water use

Why it matters: Measures of per capita consumption help assess efficient use of water. Household conservation is one of the lowest cost strategies for increasing water availability in the Region.

How the Region stacks up: Most of the counties in the South Plains have lower residential water use when compared to Texas. Overall, most counties have seen reductions in per capita residential water use between the 2001-2006 and the 2007-2012 periods. Efficient use of water is a huge development issue in this Region.

Source: Texas Water Development Board, 2011

Gallons per day (y-axis, 0 – 200)

Counties: Garza, Lamb, Crosby, Lynn, Floyd, Hockley, Hale, Terry, Lubbock, Texas, Bailey, Cochran, Yoakum

■ Average Water Use 2001-2006   ■ Average Water Use 2007-2012

Discussion Questions

6.1   What one or two things most **surprised** you in this data about how the South Plains, the place, is doing?

6.2   What one trend in this data gives you the most **hope** for the Region?

6.3   What one trend in this data causes you the most **concern** – for any reason?

6.4   Which fact in this data would you most like to **change** – and why?

Overall Priority Questions:
Looking Forward

This Assessment is offered as a conversation opener – a tool that can help open a discussion about what is good and what is challenging today in the area, and what we want to work on to make a better future for our people, economy and place.

You may review this by yourself, or work with a community group or other regional residents to answer the questions at the end of each of the six sections in the Assessment. Having done that, we recommend one final reflection.

Thinking across all six sections of this Assessment, and taking into account all your insights when you reviewed them, answer these final two Overall Priority questions:

1   What do this data – and your reflections – suggest should be the Region's top two or three priorities for action over the next five years?

2   For each priority you listed, what other information or deeper data do you think would be very useful or critical to know before exploring and choosing a good strategy to address that priority?

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