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Thursday 29 May, 2008

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**Slump may not stunt growth**  
**Expert: Pinal to expand despite housing market**

By SUSAN RANDALL, Staff Writer

May 22, 2008

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**SIGNAL PEAK - Demographer Rick Brammer told the Central Arizona College Governing Board Tuesday that more than 150,000 people moved into Pinal County between 2000 and 2007.**

And in spite of the current housing slump, he believes the county will have more than 1.1 million residents by 2025.

"Growth and development go in cycles," he said. "You have to separate those cycles from the long-term trends."

Brammer, a partner in Applied Economics, said Pinal County is located between two metropolitan areas - a strong indicator for growth.

It has available land, quality projects and a beautiful natural environment that ranges from low deserts to mountains.

"That's a major drawing card," he said.

Two things threaten the county's continued growth - transportation problems and few jobs, he said. The Arizona Department of Transportation and other agencies are working on transportation plans, and CAC is playing an important role in developing the quality of the labor force, which attracts employers.

CAC President Dennis Jenkins said that four years ago Applied Economics thought the county would have 990,000 residents by 2025, and that was before the housing slump.

Brammer said the estimates are higher today because there are more known projects and better quality planning to support the growth.

Applied Economics came to its conclusions, he said, after looking at existing demographics and housing information; active, planned and proposed residential developments; demographic trends in eight study areas inside Pinal County; and six study areas adjacent to Pinal County.

It also looked at trends inside the county's high school districts and worked with the Central Arizona Association of Governments, Arizona State University and the University of Arizona on a long-term growth study for the Sun Corridor Analysis, which is sponsored by CAAG.

Projections are that the Casa Grande/Coolidge/Eloy study area could have 332,000 people by 2025, the Florence study area 360,000 people, the Maricopa/Stansfield area 214,000 people, the Red Rock area 24,000 people and the Apache Junction/Gold Canyon area 180,000 people.

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