

## Student figures might double *CG elementary growth to slow, then soar in 10 years, expert says*

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**Enrollment in the Casa Grande Elementary School District is expected to grow slowly for the next two or three years, the Governing Board was told Tuesday. But after the vacant houses sell, builders will start building again, and CGESD can expect its enrollment to double in the next 10 years to 15,000 students, said Rick Brammer, a partner with Applied Economics.**

Roughly 52,000 single-family homes are listed for sale in Maricopa County and western Pinal County, according to the Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service, he said.

That is compared to fewer than 3,000 listings in March 2005.

So a lot of builders have stopped building, he said. Some have sold their land.

And those that are still building are requesting fewer building permits. The number in the district dropped from 2,504 in 2005-06 to 980 in 2007-08. And it is expected to drop again in 2008-09.

Brammer said the speed of recovery will depend on how fast the excess inventory is sold. That depends on employment opportunities and transportation.

Lack of transportation corridors will stifle growth in much of Pinal County, he said, and improvements are probably 15 to 20 years away.

Casa Grande has the best transportation network, and that will attract developers.

The Daisy Brand Foods manufacturing plant and Pepsi distribution center are under construction and will add 160 to 180 jobs.

Double-tracking the Union Pacific Railroad line will provide opportunities for more spurs to serve more companies.

And Frito-Lay's new ecological production facility will attract attention to the city.

Brammer believes the district will start growing again at its former rate by 2012-13, unless some new economic catastrophe occurs.

The year 2025 is the tipping point, he said. The area has an assured water supply until then. After 2025 it will be hard to obtain water for new developments.

Meanwhile, the potential exists to develop another 228,000 housing units in the district, said Don Graves, database analyst with Applied Economics. That is 600,000 more people

More than 85 percent, fortunately, will not be built this decade.

Growth in district enrollment was about 8 percent this year, Brammer said.

He expects growth in enrollment to be around 5 percent next school year, 3 percent in 2009-10, more than 3 percent in 2010-11 and almost 5 percent in 2011-12.

Then he expects it to jump to almost 8 percent in 2012-13 and more than 10 percent a year for the next three years.

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