

## Make Troup count

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by By Scott Turk

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If you haven't returned your census form, we just wanted to let you know how incredibly important it is to you and Troup County that everyone gets counted. Here's just a few reasons why:

- 1) The census is required by the U.S. Constitution.
  
- 2) There is a direct relationship between returning those census forms and whether or not our community gets adequate money for schools, parks, fire stations, courts, roads and bridges, senior services and all kinds of other state and federal grant funding. Each form is basically worth over \$1,400. For every little 10-minute questionnaire that doesn't get returned, we basically have to either make up the lost grant money with local tax/fee dollars - or service cuts - to keep critical services up with population growth. At \$233 per minute in potential funding, it's a very valuable 10 minutes. Just 1½ percent of our population isn't counted, that's \$1.4 million in money we won't get back.
  
- 3) The information that goes to the census is also used by retailers and developers when deciding where to put a new Whole Foods, Best Buy, Target, PetSmart or Olive Garden. (They count people and "rooftops." Period.) If you're tired of driving to Newnan, Auburn or Columbus for major shopping, make sure these retailers know you're here by sending in that Census form. It's vital to Troup's economic growth not to mention our SPLOST-funded projects like parks and ball fields.
  
- 4) And speaking of economic growth, that includes new jobs too. Companies that are looking for new locations to expand use census information to help find cities and counties with a population of potential employees. Of the five main reasons businesses site for choosing a new location, labor and work force issues are the No. 1 reason. Being this close to graduation time really highlights how important it is to let these companies know we have people (your kids) for their jobs.
  
- 5) Lastly, population data from the census forms is used to create and redraw new political districts. There's a better than average chance that Georgia can gain new seats in the US House of Representatives, and Georgia could gain electoral votes for the next presidential election. If you want to make sure that you have the opportunity to vote for candidates that share your ideals, be sure and send your form back in. Of the top returning states so far, only one Southeastern town is in the top 50, and it's in Kentucky.

Follow how Troup County is doing with an online interactive map. Go to [troupcountyga.org](http://troupcountyga.org) and click on the census 2010 banner. You can even drill down and find out how your own neighborhood is doing. As of this writing, Harris County moved

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into the 60 percent range, leaving Troup behind still. If you're active in a social or civic organization, church, business, club or school, there are toolkits you or your organization can use to get the word out, then please go to this link : <http://2010.census.gov/partners/toolkits/> and get some ideas about how to help get Troup's numbers up.

If you're making out your To Do List, first, make sure you've sent back your form. Then, make sure your co-workers, family, neighbors, friends, church or club members have done their part to "Make Troup Count."

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