

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Center for Rural Pennsylvania Releases Pennsylvania Population Projections Through 2050

HARRISBURG – The Center for Rural Pennsylvania Board of Directors and staff, along with staff of the Pennsylvania State Data Center, hosted a press conference at the State Capitol in Harrisburg to present Pennsylvania population projections featuring age and gender cohorts for each county through the year of 2050. Changes in Pennsylvania’s population will likely affect a wide range of policy issues, including workforce availability, housing, health care, education, and transportation.

“These projections reveal significant population and demographic changes forthcoming in Pennsylvania, and it is more important now than ever, to start the discussion on long-term solutions to not only preserve and sustain rural areas in the Commonwealth, but also help them to thrive,” said Center for Rural Pennsylvania Board of Directors Chairman, Senator Gene Yaw.

“The population projections will help inform medium and long-term planning at the county, regional, and state levels,” said Center for Rural Pennsylvania Board of Directors Vice Chairman, Representative Eddie Day Pashinski.

“The Center’s population projections present already familiar challenges for our rural areas,” said Center for Rural Pennsylvania Executive Director, Dr. Kyle Kopko. “With the retirement of the Baby Boomer generation, coupled with fewer young people in our rural communities, these projections suggest significant economic and workforce pressures are on the horizon.”

The projections indicate that by 2050, the population within rural counties is expected to shrink by 5.8%. Additionally, the total growth rate for all of Pennsylvania over the next 30 years will be less than what it was between 2010 and 2020. Between 2010 and 2020, the Commonwealth’s population grew at a rate of 2.4%. Between 2020 and 2050, projections suggest an overall growth rate of just 1.6%. Furthermore, the overall population of the Commonwealth is expected to slightly decline between 2040 and 2050 by -0.2%.

The population projections presented are consistent with the findings of similar estimates for Ohio and West Virginia, and likely true of other regions comparable to rural Pennsylvania across the nation. Small population sizes, lower density, and a relatively

older populace will exacerbate pressures in rural communities, which must adapt while managing prolonged decline.

“Now is an opportune time for planners and policymakers to consider these projections and adapt to the changes that are likely to develop across the Commonwealth,” Kopko continued. “Communities should carefully consider the implications of these projections.”

“Given the wide range of policies that are implicated by population change, long-term planning that incorporates the expertise of a variety of stakeholders—including state and local officials, nonprofit groups, business and industry leaders, among others—will ensure that the Commonwealth is prepared for these changes, and that our rural communities remain resilient in the coming decades,” Pashinski continued.

“The Center takes seriously its responsibility in providing statewide research, community outreach, and policy considerations to help inform the General Assembly and rural communities,” Yaw concluded. “These projections are key to taking proactive steps for our rural communities. As chairman of the Center’s Board of Directors, I will continue to support the Center’s research efforts and ensure that these projections serve as a tool to ensure the long-term resiliency of rural Pennsylvania.”

To learn more about this research, visit the Center’s website for its most recent publication, [Pennsylvania Population Projections 2050: A First Look](#).

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