

# Redrawing the map

## What to expect from Minnesota's redistricting

By **Michael Achterling**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

Residents move in, out and around Minnesota every day.

Births, deaths and permanent residents change every year, in every city, and in every decade.

It's the job of the U.S. Census to account for these decennial changes and



Brower

create a snapshot of the U.S. population. From the official population counts, mandated by the U.S. Constitution, new legislative lines are drawn so every resident has more equal representation through their representative — and lawmakers, in turn, have a better idea as to how many taxpayer dollars should go to a specific geographic area.

The redistricting process has already begun in Minnesota, and even though the lines are far from being finalized, the demographic data tells a broad story of where legislative power will be moving to in the state.

Susan Brower, Minnesota's state demographer and director of the Minnesota State Demographic Center, said the initial census data released over the summer provides lawmakers with a basic understanding of where people are living, their basic racial grouping information and whether they are over the age of 18, all of which are important pieces of information that redistricting committees

need to draw their new maps.

"Our role in the redistricting process is to just make sure people understand the data and understand the population trends that have occurred over the last decade so that the people who are drawing the maps can do their jobs," said Brower.

According to the center, between 2010 and 2020, Minnesota added 402,569 residents, totaling 5,706,494 across the whole state, an increase of 7.6%. Additionally, the entire increase in population came from people who are black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) because the Minnesota white, non-Hispanic demographic lost 51,321 residents during the last 10 years.

The white, non-Hispanic group still made up the largest share, 73.6%, of the state's total population in 2020, with BIPOC communities representing 23.7% of Minnesota residents. In 2010, white, non-Hispanics made up 83.1% of the state's population, with BIPOC communities comprising 16.9% of the state's total, which represents a nearly 10% decrease in the white, non-Hispanic population over the last decade.

The seven-county Twin Cities metro area accounted for 78%, or 313,537 residents, of Minnesota's total population growth over the last 10 years.

In redistricting terms, in 2010, the ideal number of residents-to-representation in Congress

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Photos by Nathan Bowe / Tribune

Tara Ramsey is a full-time employee at Lakes Liquor in Detroit Lakes. She and the rest of the staff at the municipal liquor store have been putting in extra effort to accommodate an increased customer load.

# Liquor store profits a real shot in the arm for Detroit Lakes

By **Nathan Bowe**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

Lakes Liquor in Detroit Lakes has been punching above its weight in profitability — the city-owned liquor store came in No. 6 in the state last year on gross sales, bringing in \$8.9 million before expenses, according to the recently-released State Auditor's report for 2020.

That's up there with Twin Cities-area municipal liquor store operations in places like Eden Prairie, Edina and Apple Valley, some with multiple stores that serve populations four to six times higher than Detroit Lakes.

After expenses, the Detroit Lakes liquor store brought in over \$1.3 million last year. And the Detroit Lakes store did it efficiently, with a profit margin of nearly 15% — one of the highest in the state.

"I credit our liquor store manager, Randy



Wine bottles on display at Lakes Liquor.

Buhr, and his staff for just doing an incredible job," said Detroit Lakes City Administrator Kelcey Klemm. "Throughout the pandemic they stepped up and accommodated extra customers coming in the door, delivering great customer service at every turn."

As a city-owned enterprise, the liquor store generates revenues that help keep property taxes down. Last year the city transferred about \$586,000 in

liquor store profits to the general fund.

The high profit margin is "a testament to Randy and the tight ship they run over there," Klemm said. "And every dollar that's made as profit is either used to offset the tax levy or set aside for other projects — street projects, building projects, infrastructure projects. It's really just a great resource to have to do other projects and programs in town."

Other municipal liquor

stores in the area that did well include:

► Perham, which had net profits of about \$682,000, a profit margin of 15.4%, and transferred about \$196,000 to the city's general fund.

► Frazee saw net profits of about \$30,000, a 5.1% profit margin.

► Ogema made more than \$15,000 from its liquor store last year, with a profit margin of 4.4%.

► Vergas had profits of over \$84,000, with an 11.5% profit margin, and transferred about \$25,000 to its general fund.

► Hitterdal made more than \$9,000 from its liquor store, with a profit margin of 2.6%. Others lost money on their liquor operations.

► Lake Park, which operates an on- and off-sale liquor store and bar, lost more than \$13,000 last year, or 1.6%. "We had a rough

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# Becker County moves to make county recorder position appointed

By **Nathan Bowe**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

Becker County moved forward with plans to make the county recorder position appointed by the County Board, rather than elected.

Only one person showed up at a public hearing Tuesday. Clint Danielson, who lives north of Detroit Lakes in the Spring Lake area, opposed the idea and wanted assurances from commissioners that the proposed change wasn't being mandated by the state.

"Absolutely not," responded

"The most important thing is to have a qualified individual."

**COMMISSIONER LARRY KNUTSON**

Board Chairman Barry Nelson. "The law was changed (some time ago) to allow county boards to make it appointive."

"I feel pretty strongly we need to keep the people's voice in the courthouse, keep it an elected position," Danielson said. "I have concerns about making it appointive, I don't think that's a good thing." He favors keeping all elected

county positions elective.

The position opened up with the recent death of County Recorder Patty Swenson, 51, who worked in the Becker County Zoning Office for over 20 years and was first elected Becker County Recorder in 2014.

Nelson said the board's main reason for wanting to appoint the recorder is to

ensure that a qualified person runs the office. Unlike the sheriff and county attorney, no professional credentials are required to run for county recorder, he said. Swenson was well-qualified because of her background, but there is no guarantee her successor will be, he said.

"Recorders are not generally well known throughout the county," he added. "Patty was an exception — she worked for us (Becker County) for 30 years."

Commissioners Larry Knut-

son and John Okeson agreed. "The most important thing is to have a qualified individual," Knutson said.

"A qualified person is key here," Okeson agreed. "Patty said she had no problem with (the position becoming) appointed."

Commissioner Ben Grimsley, who is active in a statewide association of counties, noted that other counties have faced large legal bills caused by malfeasance by elected department heads. "There's

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# DL's Holy Rosary to host Community Thanksgiving Feast on Thursday

By **Vicki Gerdes**  
Detroit Lakes Tribune

Holy Rosary Catholic Church is gearing up to open its doors to the public this Thursday, Nov. 25, for the annual Community Thanksgiving Feast.

Though the feast was held last year, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions prevented the church from opening up its parish center to the public, and those enjoying the meal had to do so from the comfort of their own home, with only take-out or delivery options

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Community Thanksgiving Feast  
**When:** Thursday, Nov. 25, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
**Where:** Holy Rosary Catholic Church Parish Center, Detroit Lakes  
**How:** There is no cost to attend, though free will donations are gratefully

accepted. In-person, takeout and delivery options are available, though deliveries must be requested no later than end of day on Wednesday, for delivery within the immediate Detroit Lakes area. Call 218-847-1393 and make sure you include the number of meals that you want.

available.

"We're going back to normal this year, where you can sit down and eat right in the parish hall," says Holy Rosary member Matt Brenk, who along with wife Mary,

has organized the event for the past decade or so.

Takeout and delivery options will also be available once again, though Brenk asks that

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MAP

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was 662,991. For the new 2020 congressional maps, the ideal number of residents per district will be 713,312, an increase of 50,321 per congressional district.

However, not all of Minnesota's eight congressional districts grew at the same rate.

The Twin Cities metro area congressional districts grew between 63,486 to 74,908 residents over the last 10 years, while the outstate districts, CD-1, CD-7 and CD-8, only grew between 10,523 to 27,735 residents over the same amount of time. In order to reach the ideal representation number with the new 2020 maps, the outstate districts will have to grow even larger than they currently are, by adding between 23,000 to 40,000 residents, most likely from areas on the outskirts of urban centers.

Brower also pointed out that Minnesota only kept all eight of its congressional delegation by 26 people counted.

"Just imagine how big the districts would have been, with about 100,000 more people (each), had we not kept them," she said.

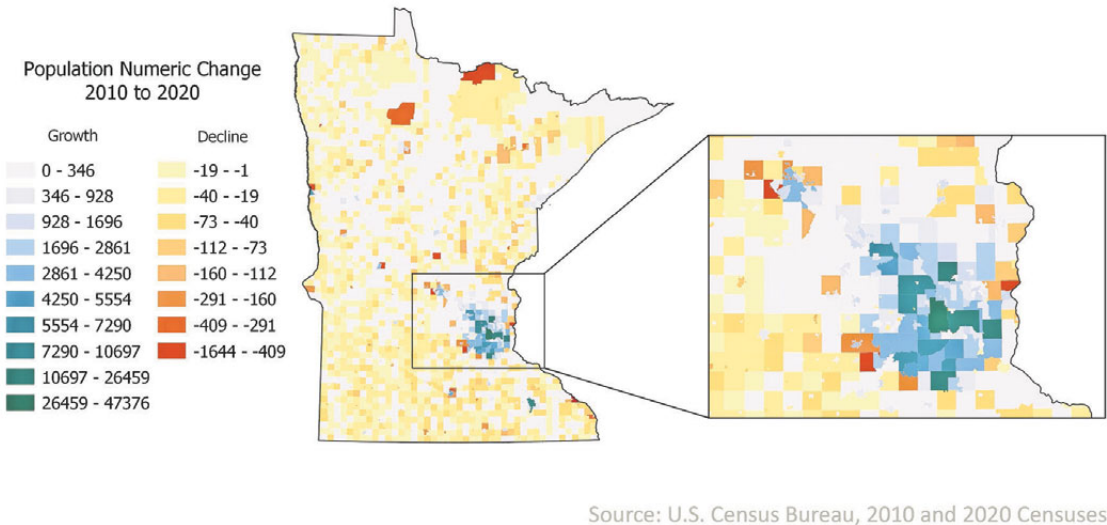
The state senate districts will need to add about 6,000 residents per district to reach the ideal representation number (85,172 residents per district) recommended by the demographic center, but, of the 67 total Minnesota senate districts, only 30 had more than 6,000 residents added to their population total in the 2020 census. Meaning, 37 senate districts will have to be made larger when the new maps are drawn.

David Schultz, a political science professor at Hamline University in St. Paul, said the exodus from rural to more urban areas has been an ongoing movement for the last 100 years, across the country and in Minnesota.

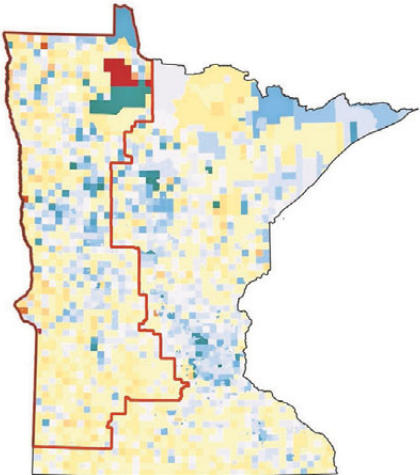
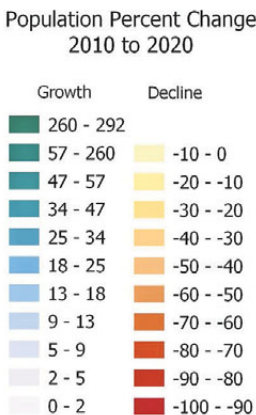
"One hundred years ago, the majority of seats in Minnesota were rural," said Schultz. "The congressional seats more likely favored the rural area, and what's happening is it's now gravitating, and it's accelerating even more rapidly ... that we are seeing such a tremendous growth of the metro area."

Schultz also pointed out that Minnesota is now more diverse than it has ever been in its history, and that diversity creates pressure on redistricting authorities

Change in Total Population by City and Township (Numeric), 2010-2020



Percent Change in the Cities and Townships of Congressional District 7



9/17/2021

Minnesota Department of Administration | mn.gov/admin

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to keep these communities as whole as possible.

"Once they draw the district lines, I'm going to make a guess and I don't know what the answer is yet, but the metro area might pick up three, or four, or five house seats, it might pick up two or three senate seats ... but this is going to come at the expense of Greater Minnesota," Schultz said, "and in Congress, I could see a scenario emerging where it now becomes, essentially, let's say six metro area seats, one northern Minnesota seat for rural and one southern Minnesota seat for rural, and again, it's just the gradual draining away of political power and influence, and it's going to continue to accelerate."

Current party polarization also plays a role in the political power dynamic, he said, with the DFL losing areas of Greater Minnesota and Republicans losing urban and suburban areas.

"As I like to say, it's called the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party, but there is not a lot of labor and there's not a lot of farmers left in the

Democratic party," said Schultz.

He also said the population changes and new district lines may help Democrats offset the mid-term swing back in the 2022 election.

"Even in a year that is probably not going to favor (Democrats) ... the president's party doesn't usually do well in mid-term elections, this might save the Democrats to hold the (Minnesota) House and it might allow the Democrats to flip the Senate," said Schultz. "Candidates still matter, messages still matter, etc., etc., but the redistricting has a major impact on control of the State Legislature."

While redistricting committees are tasked in the Minnesota House and Minnesota Senate to come up with the new maps, the Minnesota court system has decided the final maps in recent decades. Schultz said Minnesota courts have only made marginal changes to the maps in the most recent redraws, and this time, the maps may need a much larger overhaul than usual.

Minnesota State Rep.

Mary Murphy, DFL-Hermantown, chairwoman of the Minnesota House Redistricting Committee, is serving in her 23rd term in the Minnesota House of Representatives and is participating in her fifth legislative line redraw. She said a challenge has already been filed in state court for the redistricting lines that

haven't even been finalized yet.

Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie Gildea appointed a five judge panel in June to handle issues arising out of the redistricting process. The judges have been meeting and holding public events throughout the state in an effort to preempt a lot

of the questions that may come out of the process. The results of those events and submissions can be viewed on the state court's website.

"(The panel) are doing kind of a parallel thing to what the (Minnesota) House is doing and what the Senate is doing," said Murphy.

When asked whether Minnesota's 7th Congressional District can get much bigger, Murphy responded, "Yes it can, and it has to."

"What we've heard is that people want an open process, a transparent process so they know what's going on and they have a chance to respond to the lines before they become voted on by the representatives," said Murphy. "It is my hope that we have a committee bill that's approved by both Democrats and Republicans."

She also said, if Minnesota wanted to move its redistricting process to an independent commission, a new statute would have to be approved by the legislature and signed by the governor before the 2030 census begins.

The Minnesota House Redistricting Committee is expected to reveal their congressional district plan on Nov. 23 at 3 p.m. If you would like to watch the proceedings, they can be viewed through the House Television Webcast. No debate or formal action is expected to be taken during the meeting and public testimony on the measure will take place Dec. 1 and 2.

If you would like to try your hand at redrawing Minnesota's legislative maps, Our Maps MN has provided an interactive tool for anyone to create their own groupings of residents within the state.

Send your story ideas to Michael at: machterling@dlnewspapers.com

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