

# GENERATIONAL PULL

A weather eye on Gen X gains and losses indicates hot “post-cool” areas.

**G**enerations move in different directions. Gen Xers—building careers and “settling down” to the extent that this notoriously independent generation will ever be tied to one place—are blazing new migration trails. The news is that pricey, glitzy, lifestyle-only cities are not cutting it with Gen X, according to the maze of migration flows across state and metro destinations, recently released from the 2000 census for the 1995-2000 period.

Other generations provide a backdrop. Baby Boomers are largely settled in long-term residences, befitting their middle-aged status—although there is some “to-ing” and “fro-ing” among those who have one eye on retirement. For the pre-Boomer generations, born before 1945, retirement is a primary migration consideration. Those under 25 years old, who tend to make transitory, discretionary moves, head to and from college, to new jobs and often to places where the social life is attractive to young singles.

Yet, to get the truest picture of where the nation’s economic opportunities are emerging, follow the recent migration leads of Gen X. In the 25-to-39 age range, they are running out their string of “discretionary” moves. Focused more on career and family, long-term employment opportunities and amenities factor into their destinations. Gen X moves differ from the more Sun Belt, Florida and Arizona-oriented retirees and older Baby Boomers, and from the “cool city” destinations of the youngest adults.

Rather, Gen Xers select a mix of interior and coastal states with metro areas known for their New Economy, knowledge jobs and general employment growth, without the sting of high housing costs. In contrast to retirement magnets like Florida, Arizona, Nevada and North Carolina, which are attracting large numbers of their elders, the dominant destination states for Gen Xers are Georgia, Texas and Colorado.

## GENERATIONAL MAGNETS

Between 1995 and 2000, more Gen Xers moved to Atlanta than any other U.S. metro area.

### GREATEST GEN X METROPOLITAN MIGRATION GAINERS\* (NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION GAINS, 1995-2000)

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Atlanta, GA MSA                         | 98,019 |
| Dallas, TX PMSA                         | 58,774 |
| Phoenix/Mesa, AZ MSA                    | 55,774 |
| Denver, CO PMSA                         | 53,795 |
| Las Vegas, NV/AZ MSA                    | 47,824 |
| Charlotte/Gastonia/Rock Hill, NC/SC MSA | 37,363 |
| Portland/Vancouver, OR/WA PMSA          | 34,696 |
| Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN/WI MSA         | 34,204 |
| Washington, DC/MD/VA/WV PMSA            | 29,597 |
| Seattle/Bellevue/Everett, WA PMSA       | 27,201 |

### GREATEST GEN X METROPOLITAN MIGRATION LOSERS\* (NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION GAINS, 1995-2000)

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA PMSA                | -83,013 |
| New York, NY PMSA                              | -63,659 |
| Miami, FL PMSA                                 | -35,120 |
| Honolulu, HI MSA                               | -23,316 |
| San Diego, CA MSA                              | -22,105 |
| Norfolk/Virginia Beach/Newport News, VA/NC MSA | -16,725 |
| Pittsburgh, PA MSA                             | -15,109 |
| Buffalo/Niagara Falls, NY MSA                  | -14,891 |
| Boston, MA/NH PMSA                             | -14,791 |
| Nassau/Suffolk, NY PMSA                        | -14,440 |

\* among metropolitan areas greater than 500,000 population it looks at the highlights of the changes in people’s spending habits.

Source: William H. Frey analysis

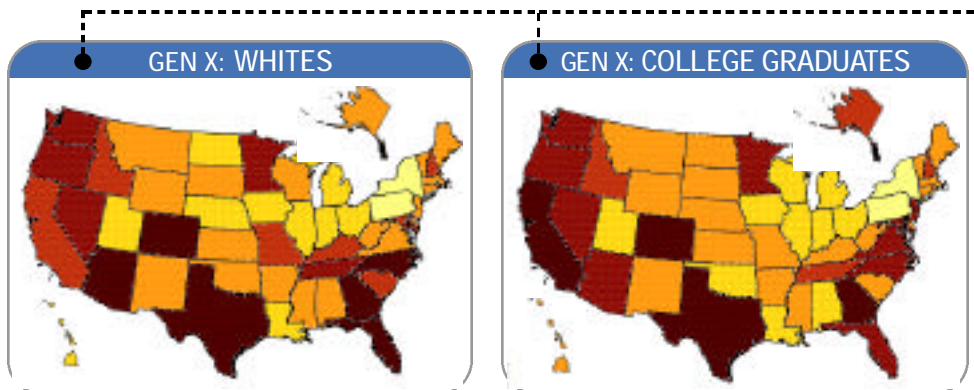
Atlanta, Dallas and Denver are among the top four metro magnets (along with Phoenix) for this group. Also attractive are the “techie” centers, Minneapolis-St. Paul and Seattle, as

well as growing, yet affordable places, such as Las Vegas, Charlotte, N.C., Portland, Ore. and Kansas City. Back when they were this age, the more audacious Baby Boomers were prone to select pricey, cosmopolitan coastal areas. Two of these, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, are also on the list of gaining destinations for Gen Xers, though low in ranking (No. 9 and No. 24, respectively)

Late Boomers (35 to 44 years old) share Atlanta as their No. 1 destination, but other Xer top choices, Denver and Dallas, are further down their list. Post-Xer generation young adults (15- to 24-year-olds), share Phoenix, Atlanta and Las Vegas with Xers, on their top 10 list (ranked Nos. 3, 5 and 7). But they tend to be more Sun Belt and “fun city”-oriented. Austin, Texas and San Diego lead with greatest migration gains, on a list that also contains attractive college towns both large (Boston) and small (Ann Arbor, Mich.).

Among college grad Gen Xers, coastal locations tend to be more attractive than for the generation as a whole. Aside from sharing a penchant for Colorado, and to a lesser extent, Minnesota, college grad Gen Xers head for the prosperous coasts, including their No. 1 destination, California. African American Gen Xers are partial to the South, following a general black migration return to this region. In contrast, destinations among white Gen Xers are more balanced between the South and the West.

The greatest exodus of Gen Xers occurs from places with high housing costs or with stagnating economies. New York state has both, and leads all



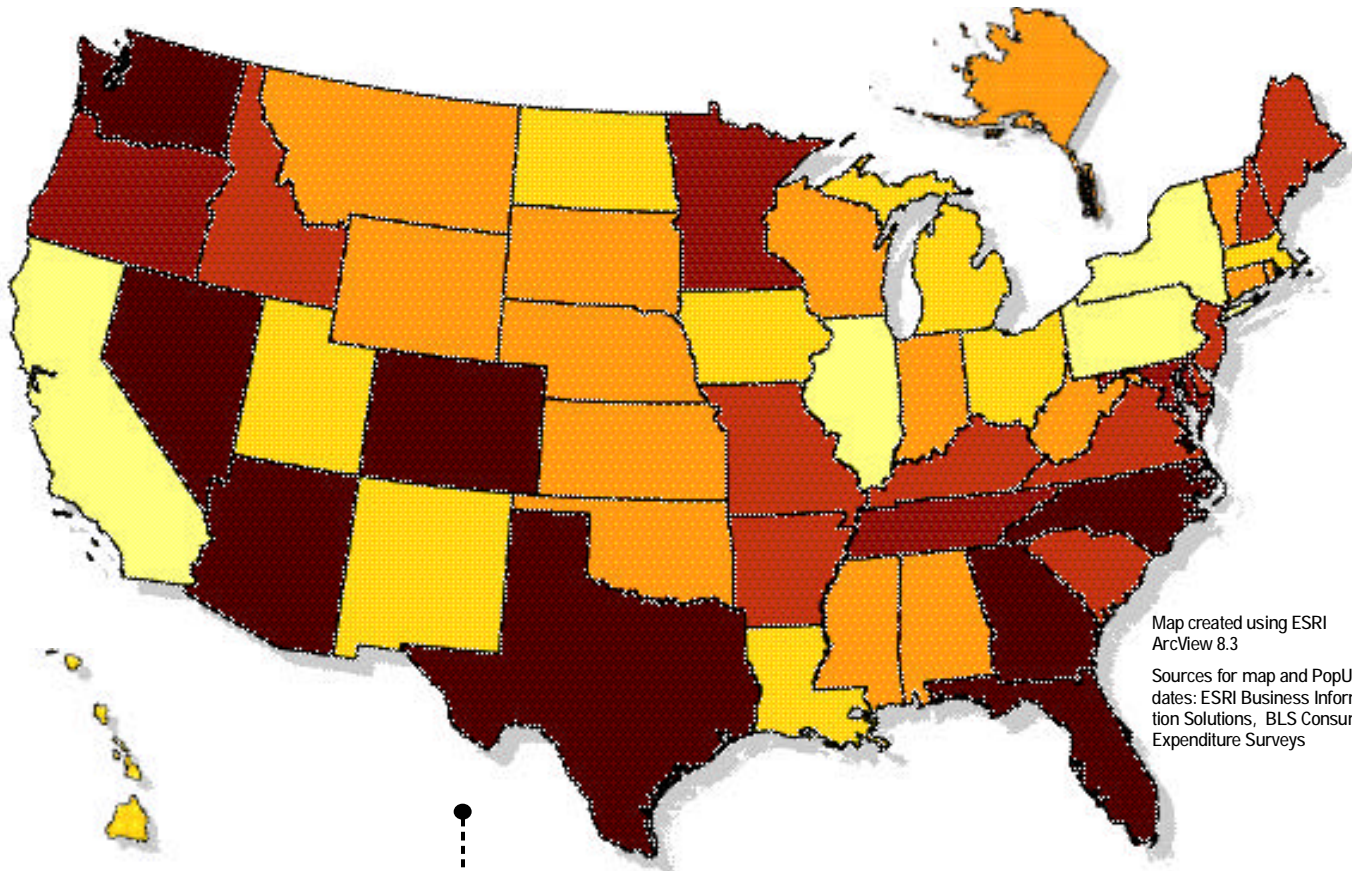
others in their loss of 154,000 Gen Xers in the last half of the 1990s. Downsizing upstate New York locales, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester and Albany, together lost 40,000 Gen Xers; as well, the pricey New York metro region lost over 63,000. Among the other attractive but expensive metros losing large numbers of Xers

were Los Angeles, Miami, Honolulu and San Diego. ■

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## X COUNTRY MOVES: AGES 25-34



Map created using ESRI ArcView 8.3

Sources for map and PopUpdates: ESRI Business Information Solutions, BLS Consumer Expenditure Surveys

