

Kirksville gains in census turnout

BY STEPHANIE HALL
Staff Reporter

Kirksville residents attained an 83 percent mail-in participation rate during the 2010 census — a 2 percent increase from the 2000 census.

Missouri's overall rate of participation was 74 percent, and Adair County's was 81 percent. Participation nationwide was at 74 percent, which was the same as in 2000, according to the Census Bureau's website.

The north Midwestern states did particularly well in the 2010 census. The highest mail-in participation rates were Wisconsin with 82 percent and Minnesota with 81 percent. Iowa and Indiana tied with 79 percent.

Regional Director Dennis Johnson said cities benefit financially by participating in the census because federal budgeting is based on area population.

"A more complete and accurate count will make sure the state is getting back what it deserves," Johnson said.

Johnson said the response rates for cities across Missouri varied greatly. He said a factor inhibiting some cities was geographic location. In cities where residents use a post office box to receive mail, citizens had difficulties receiving the census because the postal service does not deliver census questionnaires to post office boxes.

Johnson said that because of this policy, some cities did not get counted at all. Beginning in May, workers visited residences that had not turned in their mail-in census forms in order to collect the data.

"Folks that work for the census, we had cooperation not only during the mail-back phase but also when our census-takers went out to collect the information," Johnson said.

Truman alumna Jackie Gonzalez worked as an administrative intern for the city of Kirksville and focused on making Truman students more aware of the census.

"My primary goal was to reach out to students and tell students they count for the census," Gonzalez said. "A lot of students didn't know that at all. The student population of Kirksville is pretty significant to the population of the city as a whole."

Gonzalez said she targeted Truman students by working with Student Senate to create a census kickoff and participating in other campus events. She said she also answered students' questions about the questionnaires and to clear up misconceptions.

"I feel like that percentage really demonstrated students listened and paid attention, and it was a great example about how Kirksville cares about their community," Gonzalez said.

Cherie Bryant, assistant to the city manager, worked as part of the Complete Count Committee that was formed to help with census marketing. The committee first looked at areas where people might not receive the census, like nursing homes or dorm rooms.

The group's second task was marketing the census to the community. Bryant said members participated in all of the parades and distributed products like pencils, signs, fans and cups. They also participated in the Chamber of Commerce Spring Expo and answered question about the census forms.

She said the census affects funding directed toward the city, schools, county and state.

"The higher the population, the more funding we will receive," Bryant said. "In these times, it's crucial to get the most accurate count."



Clinics offer Planned Parenthood alternatives

BY JACKIE KINEALY
Staff Reporter

One year ago this month, the Kirksville branch of Planned Parenthood closed its doors, but affordable sexual health services are still available in Kirksville.

The Truman Student Health Center, the Adair County Health Department and the Northeast Missouri Health Council have adjusted to the change since Planned Parenthood closed.

Brenda Higgins, director of the Student Health Center, said she had expected to see more patients after Planned Parenthood closed and that she prepared for the anticipated increase in traffic by filling an open position at the health center with a women's health nurse practitioner.

The Adair County Health Department has also seen an increase in patient volume since Planned Parenthood's closing last fall, clinic supervisor Lori Guffey said. She said the health department has expanded its hours on Wednesday evenings until 6 p.m. to meet the increased demand.

Angie Snyder, office manager at the Northeast Missouri Health Council, said it is difficult to count the number of former Planned Parenthood patients who now use the NEMO Health Council clinic, but she said the clinic hopes to attract more patients now that Planned Parenthood is no longer open.

The Lifeline Pregnancy Help Center, which Executive Director Breanne Hunt describes as a "life-affirming organization," has also seen a small increase in patients seeking pregnancy tests or ultrasound services since last October.

One of the reasons Tri-Rivers Planned Parenthood decided to close its Kirksville location was the competition for patients from the Student Health center, Northeast Missouri Health Council and county health departments, said Lisa Ecsi-Davis, director of Education and Public Affairs for Tri-Rivers Planned Parenthood.

The Kirksville clinic served approximately 1,800 patients in 2000, but by 2009 the number had dropped to less than 600 patients, according to statistics provided by Davis.

When open, the Kirksville branch of Planned Parenthood offered services including different forms of birth control, emergency contraceptives, pregnancy tests, gynecological exams and sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment, Davis said.

Equivalents for most of the services at Planned Parenthood are offered at the Student Health Center, Adair County Health Department and Northeast Missouri Health Council.

"I think we provide most reproductive health services," Higgins said. "We don't offer abortion but we do offer birth control, well-woman care, pelvic exams, STI diagnosis and treatment and emergency contraceptives."

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The Student Health center no longer directly dispenses birth control pills, but students can go to the health center for a gynecological exam and a prescription for birth control to have filled at a pharmacy like Walgreens or Hy-Vee for \$8 a month, Higgins said.

Students can bill their insurance company for services through the health center, like pelvic and breast exams, pap smears and pregnancy tests, she said.

Higgins said STI tests and pap tests, for example, generally are considered preventative care and are fully covered by most insurance, she said.

The co-pay is charged to the student's account after the insurance has been processed, so students do not need to pay up-front at the health center, Higgins said.

"Then, if there's a person who absolutely cannot afford those fees, we make arrangements according to that person's need," Higgins said.

The health center also can write a prescription for the Gardasil vaccine and administer the shot after the student picks up the vaccine at a pharmacy, Higgins said.

The Adair County Health Department

has offered reproductive health services for the last decade but expanded its family planning program this October when it began receiving federal funding from the Title X family planning program, Guffey said.

Title X is a federal grant program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides funding for family planning services for low-income families and individuals, according to the HHS website.

"Our services include physical exams, women's health services, cancer screenings, men's health services, birth control supply, pregnancy testing, emergency contraception, testing for sexually transmitted diseases, HIV-AIDS testing, counseling, community health education referral and immunization, which includes Gardasil and other immunizations," Guffey said.

Guffey said the Gardasil vaccine is available for \$20.

"Our focus is on family planning education, preventative care and public health," Guffey said.

Like Planned Parenthood, the Adair County Health Department charges patients on a sliding fee scale for services like birth control pills and charges a flat fee for others, Guffey said.

Guffey said the health department offers testing for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia free of charge through a state-funded program on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Guffey said no one in need of care will be turned away from the health center, regardless of ability to pay or insurance status.

"Our goal is to be there for someone who needs us," she said.

The Northeast Missouri Health Council services include gynecological care, birth control options, STD testing and treatment, pregnancy tests and emergency contraceptives, all offered on a sliding fee scale, Snyder said.

The Lifeline Pregnancy Help Center offers services including pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, counseling, referrals to prenatal care and adoption services and post-abortion support and counseling, Hunt said.

"All services are 100 percent free of charge and confidential," she said.

More information on Kirksville area clinics and reproductive health services post-Planned Parenthood can be found in the brochure "Parallels to Planned Parenthood" published by the Women's Resource Center, in the WRC office on the first floor of the Student Union Building.

Census mail-in participation			
	Kirksville	Adair	Missouri
2010	83%	81%	74%
2000	81%	79%	76%

Statistics provided by the Census Bureau's website



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