

## CHAPTER 2 – COMMUNITY PROFILE

A leader in the dairy industry, the City of Stephenville, Texas is a community rich in culture and history. In planning for its future, the City faces the challenge of preserving and enhancing its existing character and environment while addressing the increasing demands of future growth and development. Before looking at Stephenville’s future, consideration must be given to its past and where it is today. The Community Profile chapter of the Comprehensive Plan serves as an introduction to the City and documents its existing conditions and characteristics, regional setting, local features, historical and current population; demographic characteristics, and educational attributes. An important component of this chapter is the population projections for the City to the year 2030. An understanding of existing population characteristics and future population demands is essential in determining the anticipated growth and the resulting demands on community services in terms of future land use, transportation, and park and recreation needs.

### Regional Setting

Stephenville, the County seat of Erath County, is on the North Bosque River at the junction of U.S. Highways 67, 281, and 377, 100 miles southwest of Dallas. Located on the northern edge of the Texas Hill Country, Stephenville lies in the heart of the Texas. Stephenville and the surrounding vicinity is located in an area known as the Western Cross Timbers, which is dominated by hardwood trees (post oaks) and a soil surface of sandy and red clay. Deposits of bituminous coal, fireclay, oil, and natural gas can also be found. Animal life includes badgers, civet cats, grey foxes, minks, wolves, mockingbirds, woodpeckers, and quail. Stephenville’s altitude is 1,321 feet; the rainfall averages twenty-nine inches a year; the average temperature ranges from a low of 34° F during January to 96° in July, and the growing season lasts 238 days. Two major streams, the Paluxy and Bosque rivers, are tributaries of the Brazos River, located to the east. Interstate Highway 20 provides transportation, 21 miles to the north, and U.S. Highways 67, 281 and 377 directly serve Stephenville. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe and the Texas Central railroads provide rail access. Neighboring towns include Mineral Wells to

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the north, Dublin to the south, Granbury and Glen Rose to the east and Brownwood to the west.

### History

Stephenville is named for John M. Stephen, who settled the area in 1854 and donated the land for the town site laid out by George B. Erath when the County was organized in 1856. Stephen donated an additional fifty acres of timber to promote the development of the community and became the first postmaster in 1857. By 1858, when the population had grown to 766, Comanche raids were common. The turmoil caused by these Indian raids and by the Civil War and its aftermath reduced the population to 300 by 1871. Thereafter, the town grew steadily as a center for agricultural and livestock production. After 1886 the area was also a center for coal mining, an important industry there for the next thirty years. The *Texas Pacific*, the County's first newspaper, began in Stephenville in 1870. The town was permanently incorporated in 1889, the year the Fort Worth and Rio Grande Railway arrived. Most of the stone buildings on the town square date from the 1890s, the decade in which John Tarleton Agricultural College (now Tarleton State University) opened. Another newspaper, the *Tribune*, also began at that time; it later merged with the town's original paper, which had become the *Empire*, to form the *Empire-Tribune*.

Stephenville and Erath County had an oil boom from 1918 to 1920, but the important fields lay outside the County, and the expectations of great fortunes in petroleum soon faded. The town grew slowly in the next decades, from a population of 3,891 in 1920 to 4,768 in 1940. In 1953, an industrial foundation was formed and within ten years Stephenville had industries including a creamery, hatcheries, feed mills, meatpacking plants, a garment factory, and nurseries. By the early 1970s, the town had more than 200 businesses and a population of more than 9,000. In 1983, a population of 11,881 supported 320 businesses. Industrial products included coated abrasives, clothing, automobile parts, mobile homes, and electrical products. Tarleton State University was the town's largest employer. In 1990, the population was 13,502.

Today, the City has a population of approximately 15,000 and is the regional center for retail, medical, educational facilities, as well as for the dairy and agriculture industries. A Council/Mayor form of government, with council members and the mayor elected at large governs the City.

## Population

Past and current population characteristics are important in understanding a community and in planning for its future. The following section examines population characteristics including historical population, population density, population projections, age and gender distribution, income, and racial composition.

## Historical Population

**Table 2.1 – Historical Population Stephenville & Erath County** displays the historical population from 1920 to 2000. The County experienced periods of population growth, decline, and stagnation throughout the twentieth century. The City experienced periods of population growth and stagnation, but no declines in population. Due to oil and gas field development, tremendous growth occurred in Stephenville during the early 1900s. A period of growth occurred in the 1950's following the discovery of coal in the surrounding area. Stagnation in the 1930s and 1960s occurred due to declines in oil and coal production respectively. In the 1970s and 1980s, City growth outpaced County growth. Since 1990, County growth has outpaced City growth. The City's share of the County's population has also decreased over recent years. In 1990, Stephenville accounted for 48.2 percent of Erath County's population, and only 45.2 percent in 2000.

**TABLE 2.1  
HISTORICAL POPULATION STEPHENVILLE AND ERATH COUNTY  
1920 – 2000**

Year	Stephenville	Percent change	Erath County	Percent change	Stephenville's Percent of County
1920	3,891	-	28,385	-	13.7%
1930	3,944	1.4%	20,804	-26.7%	18.9%
1940	4,768	20.9%	20,760	-0.2%	22.9%
1950	7,155	50.0%	18,434	-11.2%	38.8%
1960	7,359	2.9%	16,236	-11.9%	45.3%
1970	9,227	25.4%	18,141	11.7%	50.8%
1980	11,881	28.8%	22,560	24.4%	52.6%
1990	13,502	16.3%	27,991	24.1%	48.2%
2000	14,921	10.5%	33,001	17.9%	45.2%

Source U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Real Estate Center-Texas A&M University

## Population Density

The Census Bureau, as part of the 2000 Census, calculated population density for Stephenville and Erath County. **Table 2.2 – Population Density** displays the area, population density, housing unit density and population rank in Texas for both Stephenville and Erath County.

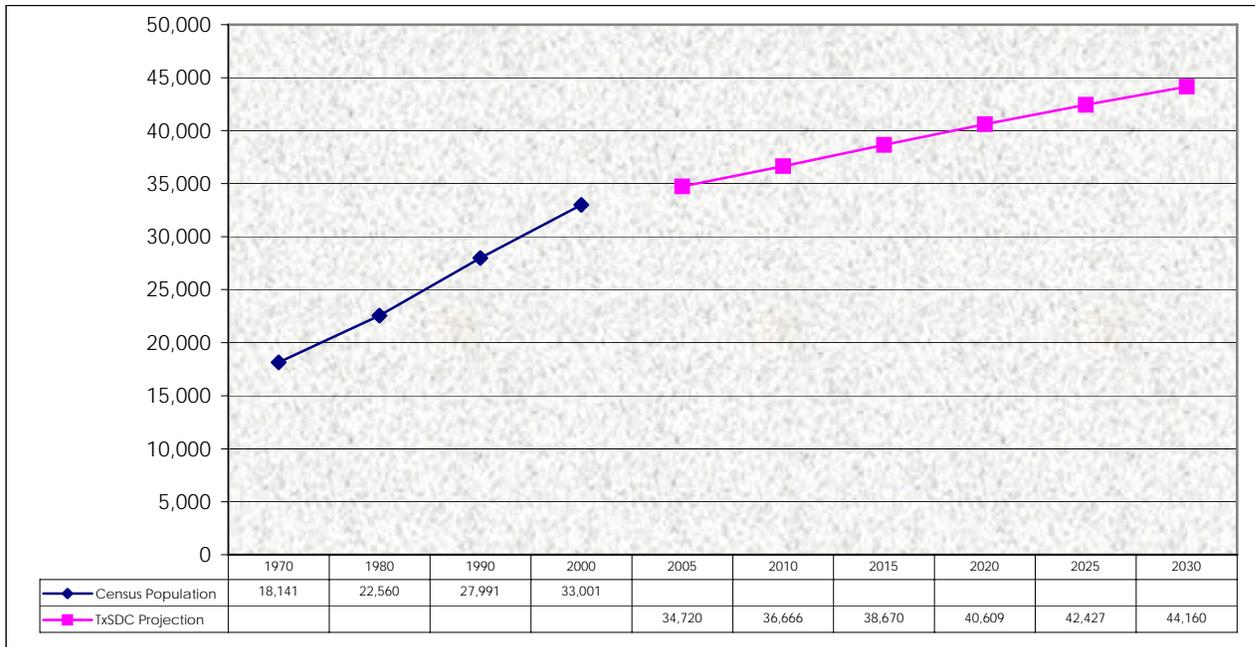
**TABLE 2.2  
POPULATION DENSITY  
2000**

	Area (in Square Miles)	Population Density/Square Mile	Number of Housing Units/Square Mile	Rank (Texas)
Stephenville	10.4	1,488.3	661.5	148
Erath County	30.4	1,089.8	13.3	81

## Population Projections

The Texas State Data Center (TxSDC) at Texas A&M University is one of many public and private entities that prepare population projections for counties using statistical models. **Figure 2.1 - Historical and Projected Population - Erath County** displays data through 2030. The TxSDC has projected Erath County's 2030 population at 44,160.

**FIGURE 2.1  
HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED POPULATION - ERATH COUNTY  
1970-2030**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Texas State Data Center, Texas A&M University

Population projections are not available below the County level, however population forecasts can be developed for the City through a variety of methods and techniques. **Figure 2.2 – Population Projections Stephenville**, displays alternative projections for the City based on differing methods and techniques. The alternative projections are as follows:

**Step down method** is a ratio-share technique, where a ratio is established between the County’s population and the City’s. Through maintaining the City’s proportional relationship to the County from the 2000 Census (45.2%) the population of Stephenville would equal 19,966 in 2030.

**Linear regression** is a trend extrapolation technique that aggregates data from the past to project future values. This technique produced a projection of 19,178 in 2030, and suggests that the City’s share of the County’s population will gradually decline.

**Linear regression on the City’s proportional relationship to the County** is also a trend extrapolation technique. This method showed the City’s

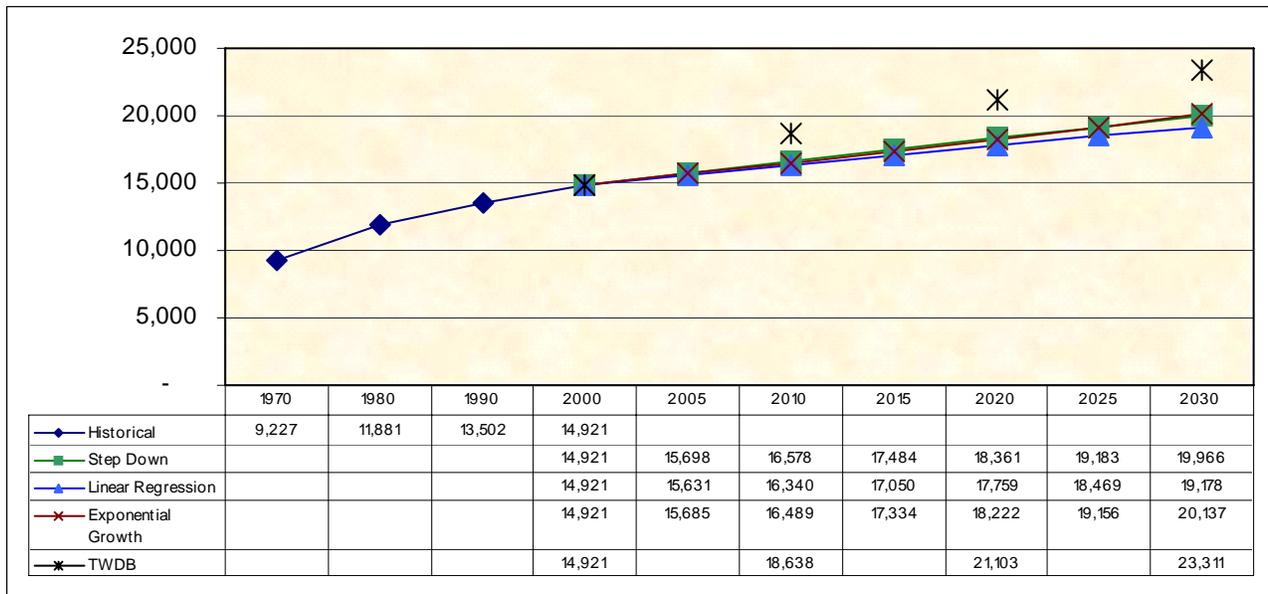
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share of County population decreasing over time and produced the most conservative projection of 17,350 in the year 2030.

**Exponential Growth** is a trend extrapolation technique that produced the highest projection, 20,137 in the year 2030.

As to which projection is the most appropriate and reasonable forecast for the future, consideration must be given to factors that will influence future population trends in the Stephenville area including economic forecasts, employment, build-out capacities, and possible annexations of developed areas. Based on the historic and current trends, the most likely scenario is one derived using the “step down” method.

**FIGURE 2.2  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS - STEPHENVILLE**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Wilbur Smith Associates Consultant Team

## Racial and Ethnic Composition

Stephenville's racial and ethnic characteristics are displayed in **Table 2.3 - Racial Composition Stephenville 1990 - 2000**. As displayed in the table, 90.8 percent of the 2000 population was white, compared with 93.1 percent in 1990. People of mixed or other races accounted for 6.4 percent in 2000, compared with 4.4 percent, while 1.5 percent was Black in 2000, compared with 1.3% in 1990. A very small percentage of the

population was American Indian or Asian/Pacific Islander in both 2000 and 1990.

**TABLE 2.3  
RACIAL COMPOSITION STEPHENVILLE  
1990 - 2000**

Category	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total
White	12,571	93.1%	13,554	90.8%
Black	179	1.3%	219	1.5%
American Indian	63	0.5%	86	0.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	95	0.7%	105	0.7%
Other Race	594	4.4%	671	4.5%
Two or More Races	NA	NA	286	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,502</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14,921</b>	<b>100%</b>
Hispanic (included in all races)	NA	NA	1,725	11.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, North Central Texas Council of Governments  
 Note: The 1990 Census did not include categories "Two or More Races" and "Hispanic".

### Age Distribution

**Table 2.4 - Population by Age** displays Stephenville's 1990 and 2000 population by age. In 2000 the percent of the population in the 25-34-age cohort declined while the percent of the population in the 45-54-age cohort increased, reflecting a slightly older population in Stephenville in 2000 than in 1990.

**TABLE 2.4  
POPULATION BY AGE STEPHENVILLE 1990 AND 2000**

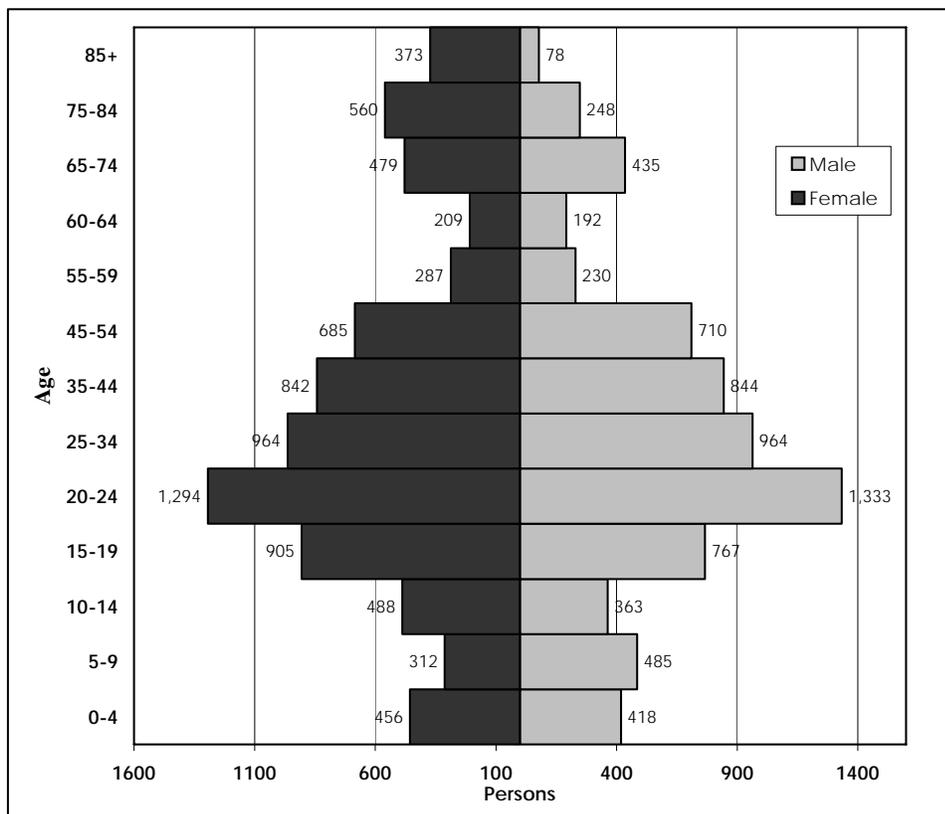
Age	1990		2000	
0-4	804	5.9%	874	5.9%
5-9	819	6.1%	797	5.3%
10-14	694	5.1%	851	5.7%
15-19	1,462	10.8%	1,672	11.2%
20-24	2,337	17.3%	2,627	17.6%
25-34	2,033	15.1%	1,928	12.9%
35-44	1,443	10.7%	1,686	11.3%
45-54	933	6.9%	1,395	9.3%
55-59	389	2.8%	517	3.5%
60-64	510	3.8%	401	2.7%
65-74	968	7.2%	914	6.1%
75-84	812	6.1%	808	5.4%
85+	298	2.2%	451	3.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,502</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>14,921</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1990 and 2000

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The distribution by age and gender is displayed in **Figure 2.3 - Age and Gender Population Pyramid**. Stephenville's population in 2000 was concentrated in the 20-24-age cohort. This is most likely due to the student population at Tarleton State University.

**FIGURE 2.3**  
**AGE AND GENDER POPULATION PYRAMID**  
**STEPHENVILLE - 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

## Household Composition

According to the 2000 Census, approximately 51 percent of households consisted of family households either with a married couple or a single head of household with or without children, and almost 49 percent consisted of non-family households. Composition of households in Stephenville is displayed in Table 2.5 – Household Composition 2000.

**TABLE 2.5**  
**HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION 2000**

Household Type	Number of Households	Percentage of Households
<b>Family Households:</b>		
Married Couple, With Children	1,157	19.5%
Married Couple, No Children	1,376	23.3%
Female Householder, With Children	289	4.9%
Female Householder, No Children	189	3.2%
Non-Family Households	2,895	49.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,906</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Although family households accounted for the majority of households in the City with 3,011, or 50.9 percent, of the total number, only 19.5 percent of the households in the City included the traditional family of married couples with children. The largest percentage of households in the City consisted of non-family households (that is, all households with two or more persons, not related) at 49.1 percent. This is likely due to the presence of Tarleton State University.

### **Housing Characteristics**

A preliminary step in determining housing needs is to analyze current conditions. As shown in **Table 2.6 – Housing Characteristics**, a total of 10,000 housing units were reported for the City in the 2000 Census. The majority of the housing units in the City were owner-occupied.

**TABLE 2.6  
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS 2000**

	Stephenville	Erath County
Total Number of Housing Units	6,632	14,422
Median Year Structure Built	1975	1979
Total Occupied	5,906	12,568
Owner-Occupied	3,069	7,937
Renter-Occupied	2,837	4,631
Single-Family – Detached	4,258	9,275
Duplex	189	267
Triplex and Quadraplex	355	438
Apartment Units	1,210	1,374
Mobile Home	418	2,695
Median Value	\$67,600	\$67,600

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

## Employment

Stephenville’s employment characteristics are displayed in **Table 2.7 – Employment – 2000**. The sample of Stephenville’s population used for employment data was 16 years of age and over. The labor force totaled 6,764 in 2000. Sixty-Seven and one-half (67.5) percent were employed. Of those that were employed, 33.8 percent were employed in professional occupations, 22.6 percent in sales, 17.5 percent in service, 15.8 percent in production, 8.4 percent in construction and 1.9 percent were employed in farming occupations.

**TABLE 2.7**  
**EMPLOYMENT- 2000**

Occupation	Stephenville	Percent of Work Force	Erath County	Percent of Work Force	Texas	Percent of Work Force
Professional	2,287	33.8%	4,906	32.9%	3,078,757	33.3%
Service	1,181	17.5%	2,228	14.9%	1,351,270	14.6%
Sales	1,531	22.6%	3,294	22.1%	2,515,596	27.2%
Farming	129	1.9%	693	4.6%	61,486	0.7%
Construction	569	8.4%	1,473	9.9%	1,008,353	10.9%
Production	1,067	15.8%	2,332	15.6%	1,218,910	13.2%
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	<b>6,764</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>14,926</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,234,372</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

### Income

According to the 2000 Census, Texas' median household income ranked 30th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The median household income for Stephenville was lower than for Texas and Erath County. The median household income for Stephenville was \$27,489; Erath County was \$30,708; Texas was \$39,927. The United States median household income was \$41,994.

Stephenville's per capita personal income was also lower than both that of Texas and Erath County. In 1999, Stephenville's per capita personal income was \$15,108; Erath County's was \$16,655 and Texas' was \$17,261.

In 1999, the median family income in Stephenville was \$40,115. This is slightly higher than Erath County, \$39,491 but lower than that of Texas, \$45,861. Income properties in Stephenville are displayed in **Table 2.8 - Income - 2000**.

**TABLE 2.8**  
**INCOME - 2000**

Category	Stephenville	Erath County	Texas
Median Household Income	\$27,489	\$30,708	\$39,927
Per Capita Personal Income	\$15,108	\$16,655	\$17,261
Median Family Income	\$40,115	\$39,491	\$45,861

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

## Education

### Tarleton State University

Tarleton State University is a fully accredited four-year university offering over 148 degree and certificate programs. There were 7,610 students enrolled in the 2001-2002 academic year. Degree areas include agriculture, business administration, teacher education, allied health, the fine arts, social sciences, physical and biological sciences, humanities, mathematics and technology. Community facilities provided by the College include a planetarium, community meeting rooms, and the Clyde H. Wells Fine Arts Center.

### Public Schools

The City of Stephenville is served by the Stephenville Independent School District. **Table 2.9 – Education Statistics**, displays information about Stephenville ISD and two nearby school districts, Dublin ISD and Morgan Mill ISD.

**TABLE 2.9  
EDUCATION STATISTICS  
2000-2001**

School District	Enrollment	Attendance Rate	Student/Teacher Ratio	Number of Graduates	SAT Mean Total Score	ACT Composite Score	% Passing TAAS
<b>Stephenville</b>	<b>3,353</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>1007</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>91.4</b>
Dublin	1,281	95.9	13.1	67	926	19.3	78.6
Morgan Mill	95	96.6	13.4	NA	NA	NA	96.4

Source: Texas Education Agency

In 2000, 78 percent of persons 18 years and older graduated from high school in Stephenville. This is comparable to both County and state averages. The percentage of the population eighteen years and older graduating with an associate, bachelor's or graduate degree in Texas and Stephenville equaled 25.0 percent and 29.1 percent respectively, which was higher than the County average of 25.0 percent.

The following table represents how Stephenville compares to similar cities around Texas.

**TABLE 2.10  
TEXAS CITIES COMPARISON**

City	Population	Largest Age Cohort	Median Household Income	Per Capita Personal Income	Median Family Income
<b>Stephenville</b>	<b>14,921</b>	<b>20-24</b>	<b>\$27,489</b>	<b>\$15,108</b>	<b>\$40,115</b>
San Angelo	88,439	35-44	\$32,232	\$17,289	\$38,665
San Marcos	34,733	20-24	\$25,809	\$13,468	\$37,113
Huntsville	35,078	20-24	\$27,025	\$13,576	\$40,562
Nacogdoches	29,914	20-24	\$22,700	\$14,456	\$37,020
Wichita Falls	104,197	35-44	\$32,554	\$16,761	\$39,911

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

As Stephenville continues to grow, this Community Profile will be updated. Subsequent state and local studies will also be useful in understanding the changes that will occur in the population.

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