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NEWS RELEASE

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Houston Now Nation's Sixth Largest Metro "Katrina Effect" Creates Surge

HOUSTON, Texas – The Houston metropolitan area gained 187,380 residents between July 1, 2005, and July 1, 2006, edging past Miami into sixth rank among the nation's largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), estimates released by the Census Bureau today show.

The population of the 10-county Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown MSA stood at 5,539,949 in mid-2006, well above the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach MSA at 5,463,857. Only the New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth and Philadelphia MSAs are larger.

"Today's population estimates go hand-in-hand with the numbers recently released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that show Houston leading the nation in job growth," said Jeff Moseley, president and CEO, Greater Houston Partnership. "Our board's vision of contributing to the creation of 600,000 new jobs and \$60 billion capital investment by 2015 is necessary to prepare for the phenomenal growth our region is experiencing."

Harris County, which grew 3.3 percent over the most recent year, accounted for 66 percent of the population growth in the metropolitan area, but three suburban counties grew faster: Fort Bend, up 5.8 percent; Montgomery, up 5.1 percent; and Brazoria, up 3.6 percent.

Since 2000, the Houston MSA has gained 824,547 residents — a number greater than the total populations of five states and the District of Columbia. The Houston MSA now has more residents than 30 states and the District.

Houston's growth reflects the influx of residents from southern Louisiana in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans in late August 2005. Over the previous five years, Houston's annual gains averaged just 11,200, attributable to migration within the United States. In this most recent 12 months, net domestic migration soared to nearly 87,000.

Among the 247 U.S. counties with populations exceeding 250,000, Fort Bend and Montgomery respectively had the sixth and ninth highest growth rates between 2000 and 2006. Both grew more than twice the 17.5 percent grown of the entire MSA.

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The Greater Houston Partnership is the primary advocate of the Houston-area business community and is dedicated to building regional economic prosperity. It represents 10 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller. With more than 2,000 member organizations, the Partnership represents approximately one fourth of the region's workforce. Visit the Greater Houston Partnership on the World Wide Web at www.houston.org.