America’s ‘heartland’ is shifting westward

By Jorge Vanegas

The Associated Press

America’s population growth is shifting away from the Midwest, prompted by Hispanic growth in the Southwest and the flight of young workers to the Sun Belt states.

The nation’s economic heartland is changing, with the West gaining ground at the expense of the Rust Belt, the Midwest and the Northeast.

The growth of Hispanic populations in the Sun Belt states has reshaped the nation’s population dynamics, said population demographer Ross Hynes, associate professor of sociology at the University of Colorado-Boulder.

In 2000, Hispanics accounted for 11.3% of the population. By 2010, their share had risen to 16.3%, Hynes said.

The nation’s population is expected to increase by 23% from 2010 to 2060, with the Sun Belt states expected to see a 50% increase in population over the same period, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

In the West, the population is expected to increase by 35%, with the Southwest and the Mountain West states expected to see the largest growth.

In the Midwest, the population is expected to increase by 22%, with the Great Plains states expected to see the largest growth.

In the Northeast, the population is expected to increase by 12%, with the New England states expected to see the smallest growth.

The shift in the nation’s population is expected to have a significant impact on the nation’s political and economic landscape.

The Sun Belt states are expected to become more politically competitive, with the growing Hispanic population expected to tilt the balance of power in those states.

In the Midwest, the population is expected to continue to decline, with the states of the Great Plains expected to see the largest declines.

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