# News

## RECESSION MIGRATION PUTS S.J. NEAR TOP IN DOWNWARD MOBILITY

## SHORT-DISTANCE MOVES A SIGN OF ECONOMIC SLIDE

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A new report finds that during the Great Recession, U.S. residents made fewer long-range moves, but there was an increase in moving locally.

According to the study released Wednesday by US 2010, metropolitan areas with high unemployment and high foreclosure rates generally saw greater rates of local moves. Unlike in past decades, when local movers were moving up economically - such as from an apartment to a house or from one house to a better one - the recent movers sliding economically were generally seeking cheaper housing.

So it's not surprising that in 2010, San Joaquin County ranked fourth highest nationally with more than 15 percent of the populace making local moves when compared to others of the nation's 100 largest metro areas.

That year overall, 9 percent of U.S. residents moved locally, the highest level in a decade, the study found. At the same time, fewer than 2 percent of Americans made longer moves, crossing county or state lines, the lowest level in the same period.

"Most distressing is the evidence that black residents have been particularly affected by this trend - more likely to be pushed into a short-distance move by these economic conditions," said Michael A. Stoll, author of the brief and a public policy professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

James Casey, owner of Casey Moving Systems, based in Ceres but which serves San Joaquin County from offices in Stockton, said Wednesday he'd certainly seen a steep decline in interstate moves, but that business has turned around.

"It was down as much as 40 percent, and now it's on a rebound," he said.

Casey said he also saw a smaller decline - a 10 to 15 percent drop - in intrastate and local moves.

But at the same time, he noted that people who lost jobs or were forced to move because of a foreclosure generally didn't have the money to hire professional movers.

"The (wave of) foreclosures was a negative impact on our business," Casey said.

However, for the Central Valley at least, most of the professional moving business is in short-distance jobs.

"The truth of the matter is, in a normal setting in our particular part of the world, the number of local moves has always been more than interstate moving. ... It has always been much greater," Casey said.

The Great Recession affected U.S. moving patterns in several ways, the report said.

"Because the recession was nationwide, it shut off the lure of 'better job pastures' elsewhere," the report said. "People seeking better jobs (or even jobs) could not simply move West, South, East or North."

Also contributing were "the high cost of interstate moves and falling housing prices that cemented homeowners (particularly those with underwater mortgages) in place," it said.

The report, "Great Recession Spurs a Shift to Local Moves," was released by US 2010, a program of research on changes in American society, led by John Logan, a professor of sociology at Brown University, and supported by the Russell Sage Foundation and Brown University.

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