

From: AlmanacV@CBC.CA [mailto:AlmanacV@CBC.CA]
Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007 8:46 AM
To: lwmunroe@shaw.ca
Subject: Stats

Hello Warren,

Please clarify: the numbers we used yesterday were Stat Canada census numbers, not BC Stats. Correct?

Cheers
Mark

SENT: Thu 12/6/2007 8:02 AM

Hello Mark,

Yes, they were Statistics Canada 2006 Census (20% sample....one in five households received the long census form) release numbers. I was referring to your comment that BC Stats and Statistics Canada work closely together. In fact, they do not work closely together, and indeed, should be considered to be at odds with each other. As mentioned, it is because BC has it's own statistical agency doing population estimates that Statistics Canada standards do not extend into this province. Therefore, British Columbians are paying extra for, and working with, population information sub-standard to the rest of Canada.

The low quality and lack of accountability causes many problems, from meetings with parents about closing schools to BC Hydro's power generation plans. We would all benefit from understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the population numbers we use.

When I was employed by BC Stats from 2002 to 2006 as a Population Analyst and the expert on migration to the local level, part of my job was to resolve the differences between BC Stats numbers and those from Statistics Canada. I had many open and frank discussions with Statistics Canada Analysts about methods and models but was met with the opposite from the members of BC Stats Population Section. Indeed, methods papers were not revised to let the public know how BC Stats creates their population numbers (e.g. the use of Telus and splitting municipalities into two groups).

The differences between the numbers generated by BC Stats and Statistics Canada were many and large. For example, Statistics Canada estimated 24,000 migrants (net) to the GVRD in 2005, while BC Stats estimated 8,000.

Perhaps a public debate on the reliability of the information and on accountability would help motivate improvements to work being done by BC Stats. These numbers are important and should be of the highest quality. Many decisions (transportation, electric power generation, public and private services, etc.) are made based on the population estimates and forecasts. I would be glad to participate in such a debate.

Just some personal background, I completed a Master of Arts (Geography) degree from Carleton University in Ottawa in 2001 where I was able to work with many Adjunct Professors from Statistics Canada on migration issues, measurement, data sets, methods, and modeling. Currently, I am an independent Population Analyst specializing in Migration. I also contribute to a monthly publication.

Attached are some articles done for BC Stats found at
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/pr_mig.asp

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/mig/mig053fa.pdf>

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/mig/mig052fa.pdf>

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/mig/mig051fa.pdf>

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/mig/mig042fa.pdf>

Hope this helps,

Warren

SENT: Thu 12/6/2007 9:22 AM

Hello Mark,

Just to clarify...

Statistics Canada produces the census every five years without BC Stats involvement.

Statistics Canada also produces annual population estimates for Regional Districts and CMAs without BC Stats involvement.

BC Stats also produces annual population estimates for Regional Districts as well, and for municipalities, health areas, school districts etc. using it's own indicators and methods which are not being made available to the public and other government ministries.

As mentioned, there are many differences between to the population estimates made by the two separate statistical agencies.

BC Stats also creates 30 year population forecasts every year. These numbers are subject to various Ministries interests; as mentioned, the Ministry of Finance lowered the number of migrants by 7,000 below the model forecast, thus deflating population growth during the up-turn in the economic cycle. The Ministries of Health and Education use these figures to justify opening and closing facilities. Indeed, many schools are being planned for closure based on corrupted population forecasts.

I hope this helps. Please let me know if anything else needs clarification.

Warren