



A B F U - P A C K M O V I N G ®

2009 LONG DISTANCE MOVING TRENDS REPORT

I S S U E D J A N U A R Y 2 , 2 0 1 0



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Introduction

Why do [long distance moving](#) trends matter? How could the number of people moving to Houston over the past few years affect residents in Connecticut? Tracking moving trends is more than just determining the possible best places to live. Long distance moving trends, examined over time, offer insight into what statistics the next government census might find. Areas considered the best places to live draw more people and from farther away. These long distance moving trends are important because the census is important. Studying annual trends within the moving industry can offer insight before the census data becomes available. The next U.S. census is in 2010.

Census counts determine the number of electoral votes an area receives and are directly tied to the distribution of federal budgets. These budgets are distributed to communities for things like education funding, affordable housing support, social services, roads, bridges and community development. This provides another dynamic for areas perceived to be the best places to live. Early trends can indicate a future ripple effect for commerce. The best places to live are usually the best places to do business.

There are several annual studies of the best places to live based on a variety of criteria. Most of the major financial publications issue annual lists such as Money, Forbes and Kiplinger. It is a subject of interest for families with young children, college graduates, retirees, investors and businesses alike. While each of these lists and articles may indicate where the best places to live are, trends from moving companies indicate where people are actually moving. Of these “best places to live” which are drawing the most actual relocations? Which areas have sustained significant popularity enough to affect future census counts? When the lists from several sources align a future trend could be developing.

Out-of-state or long distance [relocation](#) can be especially telling. Moving to another part of town is one thing but uprooting one’s whole life to another state or part of the country is another entirely. There is usually a significant reason driving a move like that. And if many people are finding significant reasons for relocation to or from the same places it begs the question, “Why?”

ABF U-Pack Moving is a leader in the moving industry, specializing in interstate relocation exclusively. Most [moving company](#) reports include statistics for intrastate moves. This report will focus only on out-of-state moving trends and reflects U-Pack customer data for the previous 12-month period.

The Official Statistics:

In April of 2009 the U.S. Census Bureau issued a news release announcing that the national mover rate had declined from 13.2 percent in 2007 to 11.9 percent in 2008 – the lowest rate since the bureau began tracking the data in 1948.

Recent events such as the recession, resulting unemployment and the housing crisis could all have a significant affect on moving and even on population shifts in the U.S. People go where the jobs are and where they can most likely afford the American dream of home ownership.

According to the latest available census report, 35.2 million people changed



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residences in the U.S. over a twelve month period. Of those, 13 percent, or about 4,576,000 moved out of state. Roughly half of those made an inter-county, long distance move of 500 or more miles from their previous residence one year ago. This was not materially different in 2008 than in 2007. So, although moving in general declined, long-distance moving remained constant.

The past few years, many [movers](#) have noted a migration from metropolitan areas in the Northeast and an increase in moves to southern states such as Texas. The healthier job markets and affordable housing of these states are driving this trend. It is also indicative of the decline of the automotive industry.

There are some mobility statistics worth reviewing from the 2008 census report that may be affected by the economic and housing events of 2009. Employment and home ownership are two major factors determining long-distance moving trends.

The 2008 data indicated that suburbs continue to grow while metropolitan areas decline. Principal cities within metropolitan areas experienced a net loss of 2 million movers, while the suburbs had a net gain of 2.2 million movers.

The census also indicates that the unemployed experience a higher mobility in general. In civilians 16 and older who were unemployed, 21.3 percent lived in a different residence one year ago. This compares with 12.3 percent of the population who were employed and lived in a different residence one year ago.

In 2008, renters were five times more likely to move than homeowners. More than one in four people (27.7 percent) living in renter-occupied housing units lived in a different residence one year earlier. By comparison, the mover rate of people living in owner-occupied housing units was 5.4 percent.

These statistics come from Geographical Mobility: 2008, a series of tables that describe the comparison between place of residence at the time of the March survey and place of residence one year earlier. The tables include data on types of moves, the characteristics of movers and reasons why people moved.

2009 Moving Trends for ABF U-Pack Customers

Seasonality:

February was the least popular month for U-Pack moves in 2009; however, the historically distinct seasonality of moving seems to be increasingly less pronounced for U-Pack customers. June remains the most popular month to move. There continue to be increases in months that have been less popular in the past such as January.

Distance of Move:

The longest U-Pack move in 2009 was from Rockland, Maine to Lihue, Hawaii, moving a total of 5,675 miles!

Trend overview:

So what cities were considered by ABF U-Pack Moving customers to be the best places to live in 2009? They continued to demonstrate a trend for moving into southern and southeastern states. Texas continues to be the most popular destination state. The trend to migrate from the Northeast, especially from the traditional [Rust Belt](#), also continued. Movement out of California and Florida has slowed somewhat.



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Highest Volume of Moves:

The larger a metropolitan area is, the higher volume of moves it naturally has. U-Pack tracks the number of inbound and outbound moves for cities. This statistic becomes more significant when considering that some cities are unique to only one of the lists. When a major city is on only one of the Top Ten lists, it indicates a potential trend. By tracking these trends over several years we see cities move on and off the Top Ten lists. On the lists below, metros unique to only one of the lists are highlighted.

Texas has two unique cities on the Top Ten Inbound list with Houston and Dallas/Ft. Worth. Las Vegas and Salt Lake are unique to the Top Ten Outbound List.

2009 Top Ten Inbound Move Volume		2009 Top Ten Outbound Move Volume	
1	Phoenix, AZ	1	Phoenix, AZ
2	Denver, CO	2	Denver, CO
3	Houston, TX	3	Oakland, CA
4	Portland, OR	4	Atlanta, GA
5	Atlanta, GA	5	Portland, OR
6	Dallas / Fort Worth, TX	6	Las Vegas, NV
7	Baltimore, MD/Washington, DC	7	Seattle, WA
8	Seattle, WA	8	San Diego, CA
9	Oakland, CA	9	Baltimore, MD/Washington, DC
10	San Diego, CA	10	Salt Lake City, UT

Compare the charts above to charts from previous years which are below and you will see that as Houston and Dallas have moved up the inbound list, Charlotte and Raleigh have moved off. Miami, Orlando and San Bernardino have moved off the high outbound list while Las Vegas has remained and moved up in the list.

Inbound			
2007		2008	
1	Atlanta, GA	1	Phoenix, AZ
2	Phoenix, AZ	2	Denver, CO
3	Charlotte, NC	3	Portland, OR
4	Denver, CO	4	Atlanta, GA
5	Portland, OR	5	Houston, TX
6	Raleigh, NC	6	Baltimore, MD / Washington, DC
7	Houston, TX	7	Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
8	Dallas, TX	8	Charlotte, NC
9	Salt Lake City, UT	9	Raleigh, NC
10	Baltimore, MD / Washington, DC	10	Salt Lake City, UT

Outbound			
2007		2008	
1	Phoenix, AZ	1	Phoenix, AZ
2	Baltimore, MD / Washington, DC	2	Portland, OR
3	San Bernardino, CA	3	Baltimore, MD / Washington, DC
4	Miami, FL	4	Denver, CO
5	Portland, OR	5	Oakland, CA
6	San Diego, CA	6	Salt Lake City, UT
7	Oakland, CA	7	Orlando, FL
8	Denver, CO	8	Atlanta, GA
9	Las Vegas, NV	9	Las Vegas, NV
10	Orlando, FL	10	Miami, FL



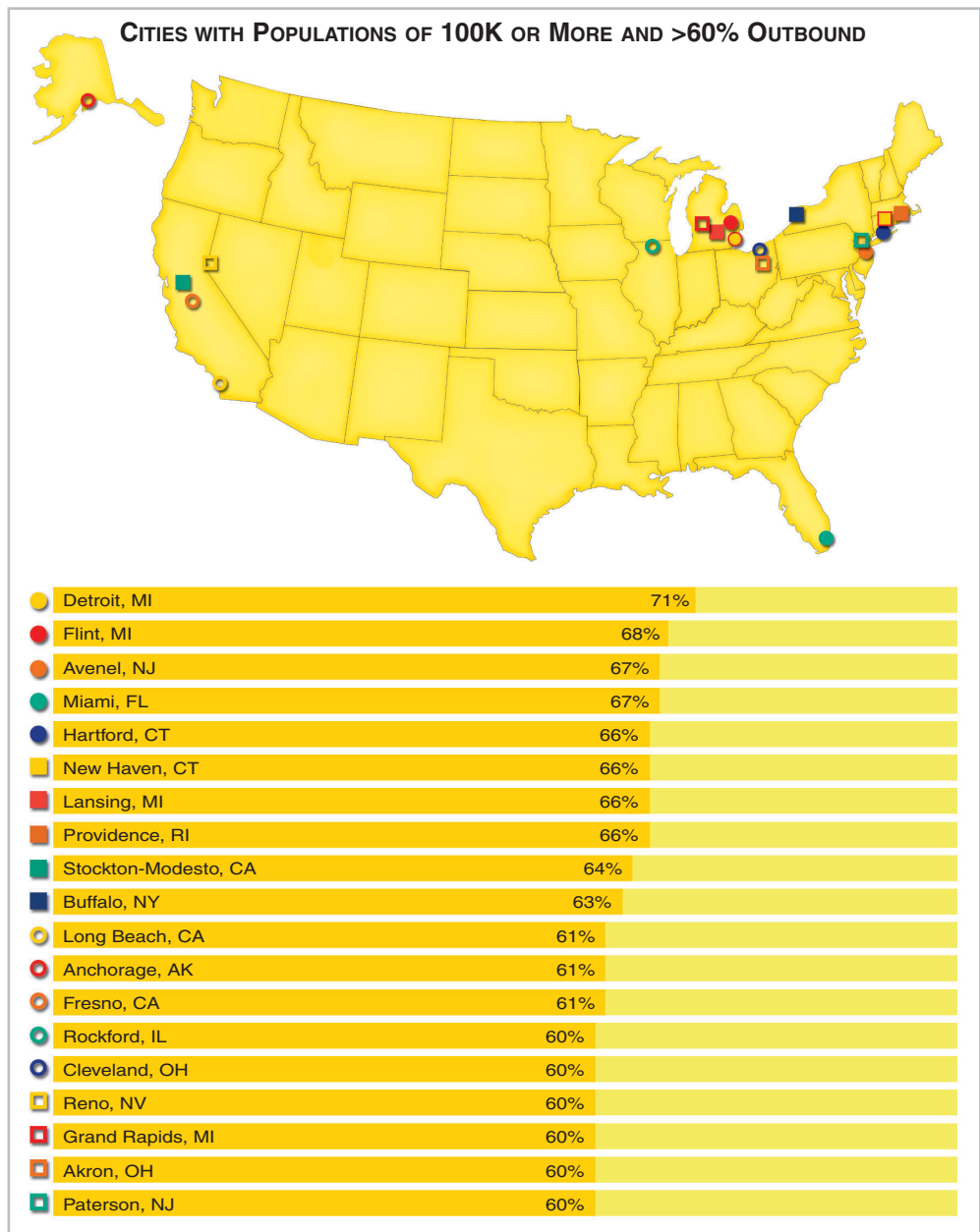
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Ratios:

It is helpful to look at the ratio of inbound to outbound moves. Below are metropolitan areas with populations of 100,000 or more that had a higher percentage of either inbound or outbound moves. When cities have a higher percentage of outbound, long distance moves for several years this could indicate a trend toward a decline in population for that metro and possibly for the state. Conversely, a sustained higher percentage of inbound moves could indicate a city on the rise.

High Outbound Ratio Metros:

The U-Pack customer trend once again indicates a continued migration from Northeast and Midwest cities as well as California, Alaska, Nevada and Florida. The [Rust Belt](#) cities of Detroit and Flint topped the list. Michigan had four metros on the list for 2009 compared to only one last year. Last year California had the most metros on the list with 5 in total, but in 2009 the number has dropped to only 3. Ohio hit the list for the first time this year with two metros. New Jersey added a second metro as did Connecticut. Rhode Island, New York, Alaska and Illinois brought in one metro each. The city of Miami dropped to third position from the highest outbound ratio positions last year.



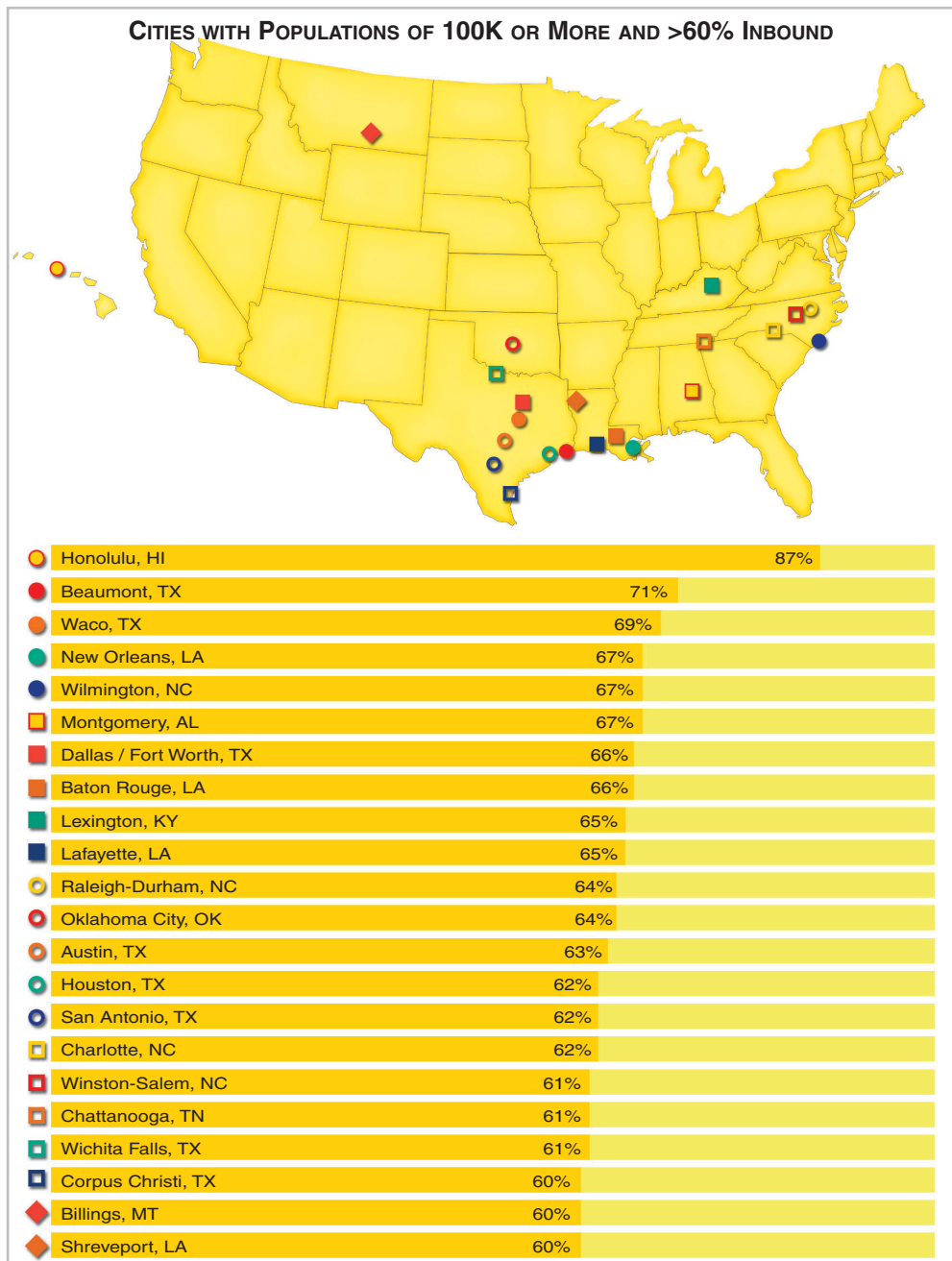


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High Inbound Ratio Metros:

Do more inbound long-distance moves indicate that a city may be one of the best places to live? It certainly indicates that more people were moving into the city than out for at least one national moving service. There must be some reasons for that. Honolulu is always near the top of the list for a higher ratio of inbound moves, after all – who would want to leave paradise? Texas continues to be “the next best thing to paradise” with eight metro areas posting over 60% of the moves as inbound. It is interesting that all of the Texas cities except Dallas/Ft. Worth are new to the list this year. This speaks to a trend for the state as a whole. New Orleans once again shows up on the list as it continues to make a comeback, joined by Baton Rouge, Lafayette and Shreveport. They make Louisiana the second most prevalent state. North Carolina is third with Winston-Salem returning along with Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham as they make their debuts. Oklahoma City and Billings, MT return as well from the ‘08 list. Newcomers Montgomery, AL; Chattanooga, TN and Lexington, KY support the South/Southeastern trend with their appearance. Absent from the list this year compared to ‘08 are Greenville, SC; Charleston, SC and Nashville, TN.

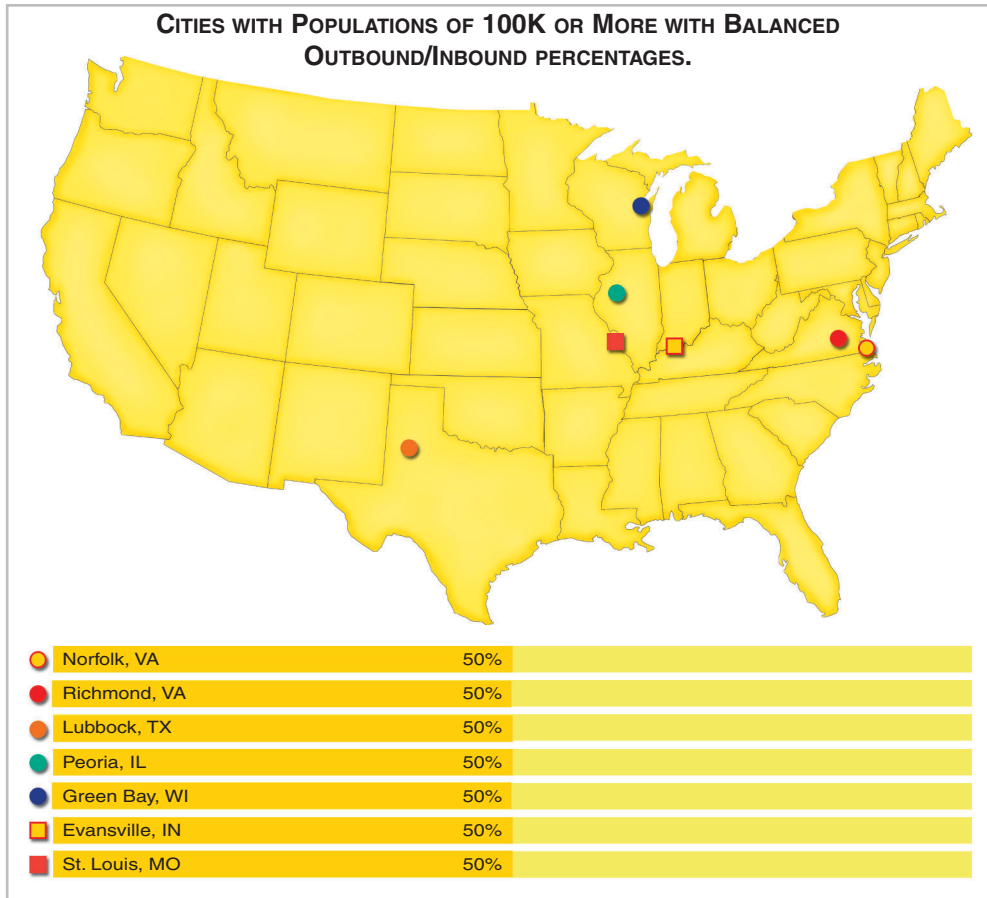




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States with Balanced Percentage

Several metropolitan areas with populations of at least one hundred thousand had even 50/50 percentages of U-Pack inbound and moving in 2009.



Conclusion – Possible New “Best Places to Live”:

So where will the new best places to live be? Which areas of the country will be the new hot spots? Do these U-Pack trends give indications? Most moving services issue reports for their customer base. Where there is a consensus, trend watchers should take note. As always, people are drawn to places they can best pursue the American Dream. The best places to live are the best places to earn a living, own a home and have a good quality of life. The current economy and job market will likely be the primary force behind moving trends over the next twelve months and determining the new best places to live. As states begin to emerge from the recession, their healthier economies will bring population growth. Economy.com predicts that the first to emerge will be states with a high concentration of tech-related industries, states that missed out on the housing bubble and states with good credit ratings. Many cities embodying these qualities are also on the various lists of “Best Places to Live.” These should be the cities to watch. With an upcoming census and a recovering economy, it should be a very interesting year for following moving trends.

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