



184 N. Lancaster Street, Athens, Ohio 45701
(740) 797-2523 1-800-762-3775

<http://jfs.athenscountygovernment.com>

COMMISSIONERS: Lenny Eliason, Larry Payne, Mark Sullivan

DIRECTOR: Jack Frech

An Equal Opportunity Employer / Service Provider

For Immediate Release

May 28, 2009

Contact: Nick Claussen, Community Relations Coordinator

(740) 797-2523

NEWS RELEASE

Community preparing for 2010 Census

Athens County residents will be asked to come to their Census in 2010.

The U.S. Census count will be held on April 1, 2010, and already local officials are planning for this important event. On Wednesday, May 27, representatives from a wide range of agencies and organizations in Athens County met to discuss the best ways to get everyone to fill out the forms and to promote just how important it is to have an accurate count.

Athens County Job and Family Services Director Jack Frech is leading the local planning committee for the Census, and he explained at the meeting that state and federal funding levels for hundreds of local programs are determined by the population counts in the Census reports.

“This is a message that we have to get out,” Frech said.

Every year, more than \$300 billion in federal funds are awarded to states and communities based on U.S. Census data. The Census information is used as a guide for community planning efforts such as where to build new roads, hospitals and schools. It is also used for funding programs such as emergency food shelters, public transportation, senior citizens programs, social service programs and planning for development.

The Census figures also determine how many seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives as well as the redistricting of state legislatures, city councils and voting districts.

In Athens County, for example, the Census figures for the cities of Nelsonville and Athens could be crucial in determining how they are run. In Nelsonville, the population in the 2000 Census was 5,230 people. For Nelsonville to retain its city status and not be classified as a village, it needs to have a population that is over 5,000 people in the 2010 Census.

In Athens, the 2000 Census showed a population of 21,342. In the 2005-2007 figures from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, Athens was estimated to have a population of 23,772.

If the Athens population climbs over 25,000 in the 2010 Census, it would increase the number of people who serve on Athens City Council and also increase the number of political wards in the city.

Athens Mayor Paul Wiehl said during the meeting that the number of liquor permits for bars and carry-outs in Athens could also be changed by the Census figures.

Cynthia King, southern Ohio partnership specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau, added that the Census count also provides important information about the people who live in Athens County. This information will be used by local, state and federal programs to provide services for the people of Athens County, she said.

One item that is being stressed with the 2010 Census count is that all residents will receive the short form to fill out.

“It literally takes 5 to 10 minutes to fill out,” King said. Much of the remainder of 2009 will be spent informing the public about the Census, and preparing for the count.

During the week of March 8, 2010, all U.S. households will receive letters in the mail about the upcoming Census count, King explained.

During the week of March 15, 2010, the Census questionnaires will be sent to households across the country. All people living in the U.S. will be asked to fill out the forms where they are living and return them.

Reminder postcards will be sent out during the week of March 22 asking people to send in the forms.

Although the count is for where people are living on April 1, 2010, all U.S. residents will be asked to have their forms turned back in before April 1.

Replacement forms will be sent in April to the homes that have not returned their forms by April 1. If the homes do not fill out the replacement forms, Census workers will visit their homes in order to obtain the needed information.

Students at Ohio University and Hocking College will all be counted as residents of wherever they are living on April 1, 2010. For example, the students living on campus at Ohio University will be counted as residents of the city of Athens. The on-campus students will not receive Census forms in the mail, but will be given the forms by the university. All students who live off-campus will receive the forms in the mail and will be counted as residents of wherever they are living.

Each home will receive one form, but there will be room for each of the residents to fill out his or her information on the form.

International students will also be part of the count. The only people who will not be counted are visitors from other countries who are just traveling in the U.S., King said.

“Other than that, we want to know that you are here,” King said.

The U.S. Census Bureau and the local committee will be working with all of the schools, colleges and preschools in the county to encourage people to take part in the count. The local committee will also be working with social service agencies, faith-based groups, local governments and other organizations in order to get the most accurate count as possible for Athens County.

For more information on the 2010 Census, or if you have any questions about the count, call Nick Claussen at Athens County Job and Family Services at 797-2523 or e-mail him at clausn@odjfs.state.oh.us.