

Rural and Small Town Alberta¹: Population Change

	Change (%)			
	1991-2006	2001-2006	1996-2001	1991-1996
Alberta	29.3	10.6	10.3	5.9
Urban	36.3	15.5	12.1	5.3
Rural and Small Town	8.4	-4.5	5.2	7.8
Strong MIZ	-28.7	-39.3	15.1	2.1
Moderate MIZ	38.2	11.2	19.1	4.4
Weak MIZ	6.8	1.7	-4.9	10.5
No MIZ	5.8	-23.6	15.5	19.9

Data Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population, 2006, 2001, 1996, and 1991

- Rural and small town Alberta's population increased by 8.4% between 1991 and 2006 compared to 36.3% for urban Alberta. As a result of the slower rural growth, the rural share of the total provincial population declined from 25.3% in 1991 to 21.2% in 2006.
- Rural and small town Alberta has shifted from population growth (over 5% for 1991 – 2001) to decline (-4.5% for 2001-2006). This recent decline is largely due to population losses in communities that are strongly integrated with the urban economy (-39.3% for Strong MIZ) and those that are not at all integrated with the urban economy (-23.6% for No MIZ).
- Compared to rural Canada, rural Alberta's population experienced stronger growth between 1991 and 2001 but decreased more dramatically in the most recent 2001-2006 census cycle (-4.8% for Alberta compared to -3.0% for Canada).

¹ **Rural and Small Town:** Includes rural communities that have a population of less than 10,000 and where less than 50% of employed individuals commute to a Census Metropolitan Area or Census Agglomeration.

MIZ stands for "Metropolitan Influence Zone" and denotes the level of integration of rural communities with urban economies, as measured by work commuting flows. The larger the proportion of the working population commuting to an urban centre, the stronger the level of integration with the urban economy. The level of commuting defining each MIZ is as follows:

Strong MIZ: 30% to 49%; **Moderate MIZ:** 5% to 29%; **Weak MIZ:** 1% to 4%; **No MIZ:** 0%