

Weddings down, poverty up in Nevada

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Nevada, which leads the nation in both home foreclosures and the percentage of its residents unemployed, also is at the forefront of a national decrease in marriages and a record boom in food stamp recipients, according to the latest census updates.

The economic slump is being blamed for the number of American marriages sinking to their lowest ebb in 100 years and for more families receiving food stamps than ever before.

Washoe County, where marriage became big business in the 1930s, has lost its popularity as a hitching post. With U.S. weddings at an all-time low, the number of people tying the knot in Washoe County has dropped 64 percent in 30 years, according to the county clerk's office.

"Marriage licenses are way, way down," said Karen Erickson, marriage division supervisor, who said the number of licenses issued annually in the county dropped by 6,479 in the last four years alone. At the county's wedding peak in 1978, the clerk's office reported, 36,794 marriage licenses were issued as compared to 10,264 licenses issued last year.

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