

# Mass exodus of young people from rural areas

By Leah Todd, High Country News

Across the West, more young people are moving out of rural communities than in. In every decade since 1980, most rural counties in the 11 Western states lost twentysomethings, without an influx of other young adults to make up for the loss, according to an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau migration data by the Bozeman-based Headwaters Economics.

A few managed to attract young people with the lure of some nearby metro area like Albuquerque or Denver, or a roaring tourism industry like Jackson Hole, Wyo., but the undeniable trend has been a slow march to cities, where, especially in the West, jobs and people are increasingly concentrated.

In New Mexico, all but two rural counties have lost far more twentysomethings than they've gained since 1990.

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