

# Experts predicting mini-boom in babies

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

The "Echo Generation" will start kicking up southeast Michigan's population during the 1980s.

An echo, the U.S. Census Bureau says, is what follows a boom. The

"Baby Boom Generation" of the post-World War II years is getting married, and the boom they produce will start filling up housing in this decade.

House builders, suffering badly since 1975, are looking forward to it. At the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, a seven-county regional plan-

ning agency, they're saying, "Keep some of your closed school buildings on ice."

THE BOOM is defined as 1946, the year after the war ended, to 1964, when America's involvement in Vietnam began and child-bearing declined.

In that era, 226 million children were born, leading to one of the biggest booms in suburban housing, education spending, school and college building, and general consumerism the world has ever known.

The Boom Generation may not be as prolific as its post-war parents. Anything approaching normal reproduction, however, will be significant.

At the moment, it is hard to put numbers behind these educated guesses: Census figures by age groups in southeast Michigan won't be known until September or October.

IN A NUTSHELL, however, it can be said that during the 1970s the number of households continued to increase faster than the population. Indeed, for some communities, households increased even as population declined.

Some local examples:

- Lathrup Village's population dropped almost one percent to 4,639 as its number of housing units increased by 16 percent to 1,545.
- Southfield's population grew 9 percent to 75,568 as its housing stock jumped more than 46 percent to 31,289.
- Canton Township's population soared 341 percent to 48,616 as its number of housing units jumped 400 percent to 16,885.
- Garden City saw its population drop 15 percent to 35,460 as its housing stock rose 7 percent to 11,329.
- Livonia saw its population slip 5 percent to 104,814 but kept on adding houses, which were up 17 percent to 33,012.
- The city of Plymouth's population

fell 15 percent to 9,98 as its housing stock held fairly with a 4.5 percent increase to 4,058.

- Plymouth Township continued growing, with a population up 32 percent to 22,929 and a housing stock up 55 percent to 7,778.
- Redford Township experienced a population decline almost severe as Detroit's and Hamtramck's. Redford's population fell 19 percent to 58,441 as its housing stock remained fairly stable, rising 1.6 percent to 20,309 units.
- Westland's dreams of reaching the 100,000 mark faded as its population slipped 2.5 percent to 84,603 and its housing stock rose 27 percent to 29,953 units.

## AM General gets contract

AM General Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of American Motors Corp. of Southfield, has been awarded a contract from the U.S. Army Tank-Automotive Command to deliver 11 prototypes of a newly designed 1-1/4-ton tactical wheeled vehicle.

The new vehicle is designed to meet the military requirement for a family of versatile cross-country vehicles capable of performing various combat and combat-support roles.

One version is an anti-tank missile carrier. Other versions would serve as an ambulance and in a reconnaissance, fire support, communications and command role. The Army's plan is to selectively replace certain existing vehicles

in the 1-1/4 to 1-1/2-ton range which are less mobile.

The AM General prototypes will be delivered to the Army by early 1982. They will undergo extensive testing and evaluation in competition with the vehicles of two other manufacturers who received similar prototype contracts. Upon completion of the test program and following evaluation of production cost proposals in late 1982, the Army will select one of the three competing entries for the initial production contract.

George W. Scharbach, vice president of engineering and product development for AM General, said the compa-

ny's vehicle was designed to exceed the expectations of the user.

"Our engineers started with a clean sheet of paper and designed an all-new vehicle from the ground up," Scharbach said.

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