

# THE MORGAN COUNTY NEWS

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## Guest Editorial: The Growth Question

12 July 08

by Bruce Sanders

According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, Morgan County is likely to grow to about 25,000 residents by 2030. In other words, for every 10 people today in the county, we'll have around 25 by 2030! While some of these will be folks moving here, the majority will be our children and grandchildren. That's why I'm pleased the public has come together through the Envision Morgan effort to shape future growth. (You can find more information about this process at [www.envisionmorgan.org](http://www.envisionmorgan.org).)

It's hard to believe, but, historically, places in Utah tend to grow even more quickly than predicted by the Governor's office. Morgan County is anticipated to grow at an average annual rate of 3.8% through 2050. Only Washington County (the St. George area) is expected to grow more rapidly.

So, will we grow? Yes. The state projections mentioned above point to growth. So does our zoning. We have approximately 1,500 unbuilt but planned or approved homes and about 7,300 additional unbuilt but zoned units on the books. These 7,300 units represent homes that will house as many as 25,000 new residents! It's really not a question of if we will grow but rather when. The market will have a lot to do with that.

Perhaps the best question is actually this: How will we grow? The answer is ours to figure out so that as growth happens, we'll be ready. Over 600 citizens participated in Envision Morgan through workshops, presentations and on-line surveys. Through this process, we are wrestling with other growth-related questions:

- What should growth look like?
- What kind of housing should we provide?
- What sort of economy do we envision?
- What lands should be permanently conserved?

In sum: what kind of place do we want to create for our children and grandchildren? It is they who will constitute most of our growth. These are big issues, all related to our central question: How will we grow? Given those we're planning for, it's a question that's well worth consideration.

The first round of Envision Morgan workshops wrapped up in June, but we'll have many other opportunities for engaging in this dialogue. Right now, Envision Utah is analyzing the preferences voiced by county residents. These results will be presented in upcoming workshops for additional fine-tuning by residents. We hope you will join the Envision Morgan conversation through workshops and the web! Your ideas matter.

*By Bruce Sanders, Chair, Morgan County Council and a member of the Envision Morgan Steering Committee*