

A Positive Outlook

CELEBRATING NEVADA'S DIVERSITY



Jeremy Aguero, Consultant



**APPLIED
ANALYSIS**

to the Pew Research Center. Canadians held that designation for a couple of decades before Mexicans took the top spot in 1980. Since then, our nation's southern neighbor has remained the primary source of immigrants in Nevada and nationwide. Hispanics, born either in the U.S. or abroad, represent Nevada's largest minority group, making up 28 percent of the population, a threefold increase from 1990.

The influence of the large and growing Hispanic population is evident from the strip malls of northwest Las Vegas to the Governor's Mansion in Carson City. However, the state has reported significant growth in other minority populations. Over the past decade, the Asian population has grown by 60 percent and now accounts for close to 8 percent of total population, and the African American population, which expanded by 39 percent, also makes up 8 percent of the state's residents. However, neither grew as much as multiracial residents, who grew by 82 percent in the past 10 years, adding more total residents than the state's white population.

The expanding multicultural landscape of the state, and especially southern Nevada, is evident in the annual events calendar, which is peppered with heritage festivals and events that celebrate that diversity. The Chinese New Year, Mexican Independence Day and Cinco de Mayo bring celebrations every year, while locals can enjoy festivals featuring culture and food from Greece, Italy, Hawaii, Japan, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Brazil, among others.

This cultural diversity extends to our neighborhoods and our schools. A recent study by Pennsylvania State University researchers found Las Vegas was the seventh-most diverse metropolitan area in the country. Meanwhile, our flagship institution of higher learning, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, was named the second-most diverse university in the nation in the annual rankings by U.S. News and World Report. It was UNLV's fifth straight year in the top 10.

Our state's growing diversity comes with its challenges, such as educating the large numbers of students learning English. That said, the overall positives far outweigh those challenges and create a richer cultural experience for everyone in the state. The face of Nevada is changing, just as it has always done. It is who we are, and it is who we will be. That's something we should embrace and celebrate.

