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Newsflash: Population tsunami headed toward North Carolina. Run!

by [Rebecca Bowe](#) on 05/24/2007

Asheville Mayor **Terry Bellamy** appeared at a news conference yesterday in Raleigh as part of a new coalition called the [Partnership for North Carolina's Future](#). Members of the partnership are advocates for increased state investments in school construction, affordable housing, roads, land and water conservation, and water and sewer services. Yesterday, the group urged the General Assembly to begin preparing for what they called a "population tsunami."

According to **Tom Lambeth**, a member of the partnership and chair of the Rural Economic Development Center, four million new people are expected to settle in North Carolina from 2000 to 2030 — which would be like our state absorbing almost the entire population of South Carolina.

"Whether it's rapid growth, poor roads, worn-out school buildings, or aging sewer lines and the lack of clean water, this state needs to make the necessary investment to repair, replace and get ready," Bellamy said at the news conference.

Noting that the state is falling behind in the face of this population pressure, Lambeth highlighted the following stats:

- More than 178,000 K-12 students go to school every day in mobile units.
- More than 3,000 miles of streams and rivers do not meet clean water standards.
- More than 100,000 acres of forests, farmlands and natural areas are lost annually to development.
- Jammed roads and long-delayed highway construction plague cities and towns statewide.
- Rural communities with inadequate and aging water and sewer services that create potential public health hazards.
- More than two million people living in substandard housing or housing they can't afford, which contributes to health problems in children.

- *Rebecca Bowe*