

NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH



Contact: Craig Lewis
2861 Duke Street, Suite 36
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703.370.9510 / Fax: 703.370.9514
media@npg.org / www.NPG.org

Press Release

For immediate release

New NPG Forum Paper Examines America’s New Boom-and-Bust Cycle

How Data Centers and Big Tech Are Shaping America’s Fastest-Growing Communities

Alexandria, VA, (March 5, 2026): Negative Population Growth, Inc. (NPG) has published a new Forum paper by journalist and researcher Mark Cromer examining the explosive rise of America’s modern boomtowns—and the very real risk that today’s growth hotspots could become tomorrow’s ghost towns.

Titled [*Tomorrow’s Tumbleweeds: Will 21st Century Boomtowns Go Bust?*](#), the paper traces a familiar American pattern: rapid expansion fueled by speculation, technology, and migration, followed by economic and environmental strain that can leave communities vulnerable to sudden decline. As Cromer writes, “America’s history is rich with cities that exploded across the landscape before collapsing. Does runaway population growth foretell that phenomena again?”

Cromer explores how this boom-and-bust cycle is re-emerging in the 21st century, with data centers, Big Tech, and speculative development replacing gold strikes and oil fields as the primary engines of growth. From Frisco, Texas, to Loudoun County, Virginia, the paper documents how once-small communities are being transformed at breathtaking speed—often with lasting consequences for land use, infrastructure, and quality of life.

“By any estimation, Frisco’s growth amounted to a massive sonic boom—cumulative over time, but sudden in its effects,” Cromer writes. “The town’s history has been, in many respects, not so much transformed by the boom but rather buried by it, as much of the rich farm and ranch land of Frisco was simply sold off, paved over and built out.”

The paper also highlights Northern Virginia’s Loudoun County, where population growth has surged alongside the expansion of data centers and major technology employers. “In 1990, the population was 86,000,” Cromer notes. “By 2000 the county had grown to nearly 170,000... By 2010, Loudoun’s population had spiked to 312,000... and then raced past 420,000 people by 2020.”

While the drivers of growth have changed, Cromer argues that the underlying risks have not. “As for boomtowns, there can be little doubt that they will continue to emerge across America, driven by data centers and other presently unknown variables that are sure to emerge,” he writes. “We should remember that a decade

ago few people were talking about data centers or calculating their impact on the nation.”

Tomorrow’s Tumbleweeds asks a timely and unsettling question: are today’s booming communities building durable futures—or setting themselves up for the next great American bust?

Since 1972, NPG has worked to educate both the public and policy leaders about the impacts of overpopulation. With a steadfast commitment to reducing population growth to achieve a sustainable balance with our environmental resources, NPG continues to be a leading voice of reason in a world often driven by the pursuit of perpetual growth. NPG advocates for the adoption of its [Proposed National Population Policy](#), with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today’s. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at [NPG.org](https://www.npg.org), follow us on Facebook [@NegativePopulationGrowth](#) or follow us on X [@npg_org](#).