## East Jordan Michigan's most rapidly growing city

By TAMARA BURLEY News-Review staff writer

EAST JORDAN — Michigan's fastest growing city in the 1990s is located on the south arm of Lake Charlevoix.

According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, more than 450 new residents arrived in East Jordan between 1990 and 1992, boosting its population to 2,694.

East Jordan's growth can be largely credited to a big upswing at the city's main employer, East Jordan Iron Works, which manufacturers truck brake drums, fire hydrants, manhole covers, grates and valves. The iron works distributes worldwide.

"We did have a good year for housing starts," said mayor Russ Peck. "The iron works has a lot to do with it, along with the beauty of our community, being on the Jordan River and the south arm of the lake."

"This area offers affordable property on a lake and is centrally located near all the other attractions up here, from skiing to golf," Peck said.

Tad Malpass, vice-president of East Jordan Iron Works, credits the community as well as the company for attracting more people to the small town.

"There are other things in the community other than what we are doing," Malpass said. "Some of the programs the schools and the community have been doing are very positive, and it results in a high percentage of our employees moving here."

Adding a boat harbor and the activities of the arts council are a few of the things Malpass sees as making East Jordan more desirable.

"East Jordan is a small town, hidden away a little, and mainly it's a nice place to raise a family," Malpass said.

Most of the people looking for work are of a young family age, Malpass said, and when they accept a position with the company they bring their family with them.

The company has steadily increased its work force over the past few years, Malpass said, with the biggest increase happening in 1993.

"In the last year alone we've hired 150 to 200 people," Malpass said. "We're real fortunate to be as busy as we are."

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The iron works' industry is reliant upon the construction industry and housing starts. Maipass said, which has caused an increase in demand for street casting products. The trucking industry is also very busy right now, he said.

Malpass said he doesn't expect their growth trend to continue, however, because the company can't do more than it is doing right now.

"Output is topped out right now," Malpass said.

Michigan's total population grew 1.5 percent from 1990 to 1992, to 9.4 million, with counties in the northern Lower Peninsula growing the fastest.