



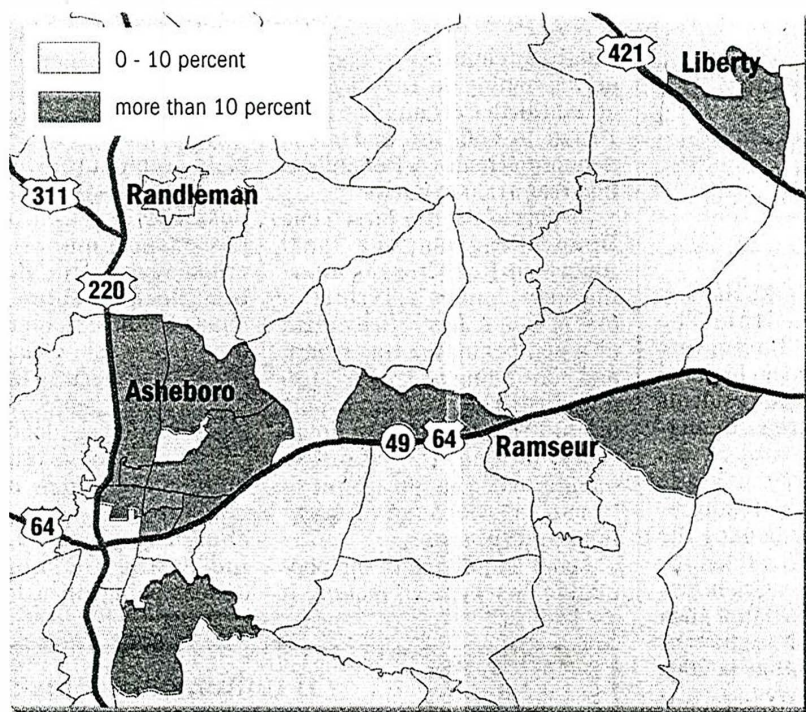
JAMES PARKER/News & Record

Marisol Arsate, 4, (left) plays with the Sanchez sisters, Juana, 2, and Marta, 3, (right) in the North Asheboro Park on Wednesday.

# Putting down roots

## RANDOLPH COUNTY HISPANIC PERCENTAGES

This map shows the census block groups in our area with the highest concentration of Hispanic residents, according to the 2000 Census. A block group usually consists of several city blocks and can range in population from a few hundred to several thousand people. The overall population of the six-county region is about 5 percent Hispanic. The red areas of the map show neighborhoods that are more than 10 percent Hispanic, or at least twice the percentage of the overall Hispanic population for the six counties, Alamance, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph and Rockingham.



DOUG COX AND PAUL GARBEN/News & Record

## Hispanics are buying houses, settling down in Randolph

BY CHRIS HELMS  
Staff Writer

**ASHEBORO** — Ivan Torres, a native of Mexico, has seen a lot of changes since he moved to Asheboro more than a decade ago.

Word from friends about a job at Klaussner Furniture Industries drew Torres to Randolph County from San Antonio in 1989. Today Torres runs La Azteca, a bustling Mexican store on Old Liberty Road.

"When I came here, there were only about 10 Mexicans," Torres says between relaying lunch orders to the kitchen from customers eager for a taste of home.

Recently released 2000 Census figures put Randolph's Hispanic population at more than 8,600. Those figures show a 1,000 percent jump over 1990.

Like most so-called "first wave" migrations, Randolph residents of Hispanic descent tend to live close together. Typically, a friend or relative will help the newcomer find a job and a place to live, said Roxanne Taylor, who has worked with local migrant workers for nine years.

Neighborhood-level census data for

### DISCUSS THE CENSUS

To see past News & Record coverage of the census, visit [www.news-record.com/news/census](http://www.news-record.com/news/census).

To reach the U.S. Census Bureau, go to [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

**CENSUS 2000**

Randolph County show Hispanics settling primarily in or close to Asheboro, with concentrations greater than 20 percent in north, east and west parts of town. Another such area is south of town east of U.S. 220.

One story left untold by the population maps is how Hispanics are putting down roots in Randolph. Instead of moving on to jobs elsewhere or heading back home, more families are buying houses and establishing themselves, Taylor said.

"Most are coming here to stay," she said. "When I first started, the families were more mobile."

Up-to-date numbers on Hispanic

See Hispanics, Page R2

**MORE: A look at the Hispanic population in the region. B1**



# Hispanics

Continued from page R1

home ownership in Randolph won't be released until summer. But if nationwide migration patterns from the mid-1990s hold true for Randolph, the numbers would likely show a sharp rise in the level of Hispanics who have achieved that part of the American dream that includes owning your own home.

A 1997 Census report shows that home ownership levels differ very little among citizens, whether the person is foreign-born or native-born. Rounded off, both groups had a 1996 home ownership rate of 70 percent.

The gap comes when citi-

zens are compared to noncitizens. Only 33 percent of noncitizens owned their own homes.

Among Hispanic citizens, those born on foreign soil were more likely to own their own home than those born in the U.S.

But even for people of Hispanic descent who are just passing through, Randolph County seems to have become a more inviting place over the past decade.

A look around Torres' store, La Azteca, shows produce, canned and dry goods, music, trinkets, candies and other items that speak of the hamlets, mainly in northern Mexico, where so many of the newcomers are from.

"They feel like they're close to Mexico," Torres said. "They always need to be around peo-

ple who understand what they say."

The familiar sound of Spanish spoken with the rolling Mexican accent can now be heard all over Asheboro, said one of Torres' customers, 21-year-old Mike Luna. The Jehovah's Witness missionary came to Asheboro from south Texas three years ago. Now he works for a local furniture maker and ministers to a majority-Hispanic congregation.

"You see Hispanics everywhere," Luna said. "It's becoming a lot more like Texas."

*Staff writer Tom Steadman contributed to this report.*

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# Hispanics

Continued from page R1

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