Exploring Census Data Webinar Series: "Economic Geography"
June 16, 2020

Coordinator: And thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are on listen-only mode until our question-and-answer session. At that time if you would like to ask a question please press Star then 1. Please be advised that today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. And now I would like to turn the meeting over to Ms. Lynda Lee, you may begin.

Lynda Lee: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Lynda Lee and I'd like to welcome everyone to the Exploring Census Data Webinar Series. For anyone who may not be familiar with our format the Exploring Census Data Webinar Series is a set of webinars presented on a monthly basis based on popular topics. The webinars are presented by a subject matter experts with opportunity for Q&A at the end of each session. All webinars and Q&A sessions are recorded and will be accessible from the Census Academy's Webinar tab once the recording and transcripts are available.

Today's webinar on economic geography is the fourth in our series for this year. This is our third installment of the series. We have all of the webinars from our previous series archived on census.gov. Or you can also access them using the link provided here.

Now in light of recent transition to 100% telework we are utilizing technology off-site to continue operations. And we aim to minimize interruptions as much as possible. And we appreciate your patience if we experience any technical delays. Please utilize our chat feature to notify us of issues should any arise and we will do our best to address and mitigate them.

Also please note today we will be focusing on information used and obtained from the Census Bureau related to economic geography. We want you to be aware of all census products and programs on this topic. The webinar will not focus on additional topics such as hiring for the 2020 census or our partnership programs.

If you need information on any topic pertaining to the 2020 census, please visit the 2020 resource site on census.gov. Today's webinar will be presented by Mr. Andrew Hait and Mr. Caleb Hopler. Mr. Hopler is an economist with over 30 years of experience with the Census Bureau to include his current capacity as a Project Manager for the Census Business Builder. Mr. Hopler is a statistician with our demographic program the American Community Survey.

So our first objective for the day is to provide you with information on geographic areas published in the Economic Census and other business programs. Our second objective is to show you how to use the geographic area's data and provide its relation to other census programs.

In today's webinar we will go over a high-level overview about the Census Bureau and the structure of our program. Then Mr. Hait will dive into the Economic Census geographies at the state, metro areas, counties, economic cases and other geographic areas closing out the section with resources on geographic changes. Then we will flip over to our demographic counterpart where you will learn about geographies as they relate to the American Community Survey.

Mr. Hopler will present geographic area information on similarities and differences between economic and demographic programs pointing out unique characteristics from demographic programs. Finally we will close out with a

Q&A session.

The Census Bureau is the federal government's largest statistical agency. We conduct over 130 surveys each year with our well known surveys listed here. Collecting data on the nation's people is the Decennial Census which takes place every 10 years. Now as, you know, the 2020 Census is going on right now. So please remember to respond because your response is critically important. At the end of the webinar we've included contact information in case you may have questions about the 2020 Decennial.

Next is the American Community Survey which is a program that collects demographic data annually. And in a moment Caleb will dive into more details about this program. And for business statistics the Economic Census is our most comprehensive program taking place every five years in the years ending in two and seven. We also have Census of Government which is a public counterpart of the Economic Census.

So this pyramid is a good illustration of the relationship between time and details from our business or economic programs. We primarily conduct monthly, quarterly and annual surveys. Now I mention it's important to know that the more current the data the less amount of details. There's more details available from programs categorized in the middle and bottom of the pyramid. With that being said the Economic Census is a periodic survey that takes place every five years. It is illustrated here at the bottom of the pyramid because it is the most comprehensive program when you're looking for business data.

As you move up the pyramid you'll find that you can use these statistics for analyzing trends. And finally at the very top of the pyramid from the monthly and quarterly program is where you can obtain timely data.

And before I turn the presentation over to our presenters here are some key terms and items that will helpful to know when you use our data. First is a North American Industry Classification System also commonly known referred to as the NAICS. The NAICS is our system that we use to classify every business in the United States and is the primary dimension of our business employment data.

Each physical business location is assigned its own six-digit NAICS code based on the primary business activities at that location. Each individual business data are then turned into summaries that we publish by industry and geography. In the reference section we've included slides to illustrate the system. And if you'd like more information beyond the reference material please visit our site census.gov where you can access additional material.

Next is the term establishment as opposed to company or firm. Most of our employment data is collected and published on an establishment level. Selecting the data this way allows us to provide the most accurate picture of business activity. So for instance if a company has both manufacturing and retail locations in many states separate data is captured for each location and not the company as a whole. If we didn't collect data this way we would lose the accuracy and geographic and industry details.

Third we collect data from both employer and non-employer establishments. Some programs only cover employer businesses while others cover both. Employer businesses are those that have at least one paid employee while non-employer businesses have no paid employees. So depending on the industry you're looking at the non-employer statistics could represent a big portion of the sector. So it’s good to be aware of this distinction.

And finally we are bound by Title 13 and 26 to uphold and protect privacy. As

a result we are able to provide high-quality data because respondents are more likely to provide information knowing that their privacy will be protected.

And now it's time for me to turn over the webinar to our first speaker Mr. Andrew Hait.

Andrew Hait: Great thank you so much Lynda. So again thank you so much Lynda for giving me the opportunity to present today. My name again is Andy Hait and I'm an Economist here at the U.S. Census Bureau. I've been working at the Census Bureau for a little over 30 years. And I've spent my entire career working in what we call our economic demographics - excuse me our economic directorate. The economic directorate is the program area that covers all of our business surveys.

So today we're going to be talking a little bit about the geographic areas that we publish at the Census Bureau and how those are specifically related to our economic programs. And I just want to mention this is just one of a seven part webinar series that unlike the other six webinars that we are conducting this program - this webinar is not going to actually provide a lot of detail about data. Instead it can be talking about the geographies that we publish.

When I think about the underlying characteristics or a property that our consensus across all of our programs that we conduct at the Census Bureau. The only principle that is constant across all of our programs is geography. Even in our monthly survey we publish data at the national level which of course is geography.

So any presentation that I do talking about economic geography I always like to start off with this slide. This slide provides an illustration of the types of geographies published at the Census Bureau. This is not a comprehensive list.

There are actually some additional ones that are not shown on here. This slide also provides information about the hierarchy of those geographies. So as you can see census tracks some of the counties whereas places are actually not some to counties - places some to states. That's because places can actually straddle county boundaries.

When you look at this slide the geographies highlighted in red are those geographies that we published in our economic programs at the Census Bureau. Caleb is going to be talking about some of the other geographies that we don't publish in our economic area that are published instead on the American Community Survey, census tract, and block groups. And the question I often get is why don't you guys publish business data down to these other geographies? Why don't we publish urban area or school district or legislative district data for our business data?

And the short answer to that question is privacy. The Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the U.S. Code to protect the privacy of people and businesses who respond to our surveys. If we were allowed to -- if we tried to -- tabulate and publish our business data down to small levels of geography, like, school districts of census tracts because of the small number of businesses there are in the United States - there's about 8 million employer businesses in the U.S., if we were to try to publish that data down to that fine level of geography, we would very, very frequently find cases where there may only be one or two gas stations or grocery stores or doctors' offices or some other type of business in that very small level of geography.

In those cases we would have to suppress the data for that geography because if we had published this we'd be violating the privacy of those businesses that responded to our survey. If Lynda and I for example there are only two gas stations in our town and we publish the total for gas stations she could easily

subtract her employment and her payroll and her revenue for her business from the total and know exactly how much I paid my employees and know exactly how much revenue I made or generate.

So we only publish this subset of geography. I've also highlighted on this slide two of the geographies that are slightly different between our demographic program's area and our economic program's area. Those are zip codes or what we also call zip code tabulation areas. Caleb will talk a little bit about that as well as myself and also places. And then we'll talk about what we mean by a place in just a moment.

So let's talk about economic geography. When we think about economic geography the first geography we automatically think of is states. The Economic Census covers data for the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. D.C. is considered as data equivalent. Also in the Economic Census we provide a breakout of how much of that state is in the metropolitan area versus a non-metropolitan area.

So for example if you were studying the economy of the state of Maryland and you wanted to know how much of the businesses, how many of the businesses, what share of the sale of employment in metropolitan counties as opposed to non-metro counties, that breakout is available in the Economic Census.

Now we also conduct an Economic Census of island areas which covers data for American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virginia Islands. These five U.S. territories are also considered state equivalents in our economic programs. Now you're going to hear me say throughout the presentation today that understanding whether or not the boundaries do or don't change is an important factor when you're doing

comparisons of data over time. I never cease to be amazed when I talk to users who are saying or comparing the economy of their county over the last 20 years. And they want to talk about how much that economy has grown in the last 20 years.

Ensuring that the boundaries of the geography that you're comparing and are comparable is an important part of doing that comparison. And this is true not only when you're looking at Census Bureau economic data but even other sources of data or other sources of non-economic data. When it comes to states the boundaries of U.S. states have not changed in a long time. And we haven't actually vetted any dates for the U.S. for a very long time.

However your fun fact for the day is that you actually looked at the FIPS state codes -- the Federal Information Processing System codes -- for each state. There's actually been states less in the FIPS state codes just in case the day ever comes that American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands become states as opposed to territories. The map we're looking at here on the slide just to see is looking at employment in the home healthcare industry by states from our 2017 Economic Census.

The next slide I want to talk about is metropolitan areas. In general terms a metropolitan area is divided into four different types of metros. And the graphic on the left-hand side gives you some information about the hierarchy of those metros. At the very top of the metropolitan hierarchy is what they call the Combined Statistical Area or the CSA. These are the sort of mega metropolitan areas, like, the Washington, D.C. Combined Statistical Area.

CSAs are made up of one or more metropolitan statistical areas or micro pods statistical areas and/or metro statistical areas. Metro statistical areas are defined based upon their population as are metropolitan areas. Micro area

tends to be smaller than metropolitan statistical areas. And because metropolitan areas can be so big metropolitan statistical areas are further broken out into what we call metropolitan divisions.

Whether we're talking about a metro division, a metro statistical area or a micro area, the building block of all of these geographies are counties. In fact the New England states used to be built from cities and towns. In fact they're actually still is in flavor if you will of metropolitan called New England City Town Areas - NECTAs. But in the Economic Census we only publish county based areas.

Now in publishing metropolitan areas when you have a metropolitan area that straddles state boundaries. For example the Washington, D.C. metropolitan statistical area straddles five states. We not only published the total for that D.C. metro area but we also then published the state parts of that metro area. So if you wanted to know of all the businesses in the Washington, D.C. CSA how many of them are in Maryland, D.C., Virginia, West Virginia and even Pennsylvania, those state parts are published in the Economic Census.

Now because metropolitan area boundaries do change over time we actually have to take a point in time for which we publish those metropolitan area boundaries. So for the 2017 Economic Census those metropolitan areas are built as of December 31, 2016. And this is an important point because when we baseline and benchmark the Economic Census to the latest geographies when we conduct the Economic Census, those boundaries are then frozen if you will for the next five years until the next Economic Census.

So for example the monthly and quarterly and annual programs that are published on the years immediately after the Economic Census are baselined back to that previous Economic Census. So for the 2012 Economic Census,

the 2013, '14, '15 and '16 annual programs were baselined and benchmarked back to that previous Economic Census.

Bottom right-hand side of the slide I just have a quick example of a particular metropolitan area. In this case we're looking at the Los Angeles combined statistical area which is made up of three pieces. So the Los Angeles metropolitan statistical area, the Oxnard metropolitan statistical area and the Riverside metropolitan statistical area. Because the Los Angeles metro area is so large it is further broken out into the Anaheim metropolitan division and the Los Angeles metropolitan division.

Now at the very bottom of the slide you'll notice that I have mentioned something here called a CFS area. CFS stands for Commodity Flow Survey. The survey program that we conduct at the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. And we'll talk a little bit about how CFS areas are related to these metros in just a moment.

Now when it comes to counties we include a number of geographies as county equivalents. Of course counties themselves are what we typically think of. But independent cities like the city of Baltimore are actually considered county equivalent in our economic program. So for example we would publish data for Baltimore County which is the piece of Baltimore County that is outside of the city of Baltimore. And then as a county equivalent we also publish Baltimore City.

There's actually more independent cities in Virginia than in any other state. This probably dates back to colonial era where individual cities and towns wanted to have their own identity. So looking at this map here on the slide you can see these little spots. For example, right smack in the middle of Fairfax County its Fairfax Independent City. That is its county equivalent.

Now of course we see Parish is in Louisiana and census area in Alaska also as county equivalents. And then in the Economic Census of island areas we treat the municipios in Puerto Rico and the three islands in the U.S. Virgin Islands also as county equivalents.

Now there's an interesting type of geography that we publish in our county data in something - in one of our programs called County Business Patterns, called statewide counties. So if you can think about a business that straddles multiple counties. Let me give you an example. A pipeline that may start in one county, go through a second county and end in a third county what county would you assign that pipeline to? That business that is a pipeline what county what that pipeline be assigned to?

In the County Business Pattern's program we actually don't assign it to a county. We assign it to something called the statewide county. So if that pipeline went through three counties in Maryland it would be published in the statewide county for the state of Maryland. That way again we don't have to worry about assigning that business to a particular geography.

Now it is very important to note that while we typically think of counties as being fairly static the boundaries of counties can change. So whenever you're using data understanding whether or not the geography you're comparing in this case a county has changed or not is an important thing that you need to do before you're saying yes the data for that county are comparable and therefore I can then compare the data over time. And we'll talk in just a moment about the actual resources that we have available to you to help you understand and be aware of those boundary changes.

So the next type of geography that we publish and it's probably one of the

most complicated geographies we publish. It's something called the Economic Place. And you may have noticed on that earlier slide the word place appears there. Economic places are for the most part a subset of all of the places that we recognize in our demographic programs, like, American Community Survey. And Caleb will actually talk a little bit about these places and highlight the differences.

But in terms of our economic program, economic places not only include incorporated cities but also include unincorporated areas. Incorporated cities would be what we typically think of as a municipality. The city of Annapolis, Maryland for example has its own government. It has a mayor. It has a complete governing board. People who live in the city of Annapolis pay taxes to the city of Annapolis. And the city of Annapolis provides services in exchange for paying those taxes. Those incorporated cities are all included in the Economic Census.

But we also recognize that in many states unincorporated areas are also very, very important. For example in Anne Arundel County where I live there is only one incorporated city - the city of Annapolis. And yet the city of Glen Burnie, Maryland is nearly the same size as the city of Annapolis and some would argue has more business in it.

So if we only publish data for incorporated cities what would we do about data for businesses in these unincorporated area. So the Census Bureau has something called a Census Designated Place or a CDP. And we include both unincorporated areas and incorporated areas as an economic place.

Now there's a couple of interesting tweaks to all of this. In the New England states plus Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin or what we typically think of as the 12 strong MCD states - MCD stands for Minor Civil Divisions. We

publish those Minor Civil Divisions in those 12 states in place of the regular incorporated cities and unincorporated area. So for example in the state of Pennsylvania we would publish the data for the townships and not the small towns and boroughs and things, like, that that make up those townships.

For the most part we decided to choose those Minor Civil Divisions in the New England states because number one they are legally recognize geographies. However we also selected them because they tend to be larger than the places that make up those Minor Civil Divisions - those county subdivisions. And therefore the chance of us being able to publish data due to our privacy laws and our economic program is greater than those larger geographies than it would be if we published the smaller levels of geographies.

As Caleb will point out in just a moment while we only publish minor civil divisions and county subdivisions in those 12 states, the American Community Survey published both the minor subdivisions and the regular places. So they have both sets of data.

And when you think about a typical county you're going to have parts of that county that are an unincorporated city or town or village or borough. You're going to have parts of that county that are in an incorporated area. And finally you're going to have parts of the county that are outside of both of those types of geography. They are neither in an incorporated area or in an unincorporated area. They tend to be more rural section of a particular county. But often that remainder of the county can actually be quite large.

So in the Economic Census we publish something called the balance of county which is the piece of the county that is left when you take out the incorporated city and the unincorporated areas within that county that we recognize. Now it

is important to note that what we call a balance of county in our economic programs is not quite the same as what the American Community Survey and other programs call the remainder of the county.

And the reason why they aren't the same is we use a size cut off in our economic programs to define geographies that qualify or don't qualify to be separately published in the Economic Census. We use a cut off of 2,500 population or 2,500 jobs. So for example if a small town has at least 2,500 people living there or 2,500 people working there we would recognize that town as being valid for inclusion, valid for publication in the Economic Census.

A very small town that has fewer than 2,500 people still would have businesses but we wouldn't actually recognize that small town in the Economic Census. Instead those businesses located in those small towns of less than 2,500 population would be included in with the balance of county. So that's again why balance of county isn't the same as remainder because balance of county includes some places that are published in the American Community Survey that are not published in the Economic Census because they're so small.

Now it is very, very important to note that the boundaries of places often change. In fact for the 2017 Economic Census more than half of the economic places that we publish in 2012 changed - had some type of change between 2012 and 2017. The town that I live in had a boundary change. And in that boundary change some land was added to the town that I live in. On that land are some businesses that have been there for decades. But those businesses previously were not included as part of the town because the boundaries of that town did not specifically include those businesses.

So when those businesses were then added to the boundaries of our town the economy of the town that I live in grew but that growth is a figment if you will of the boundary change not real economic growth. So it's important that we are comparing data over time and you want to make sure that something is comparable, that you use the resources that are available to you to be able to tell has a boundary change occurred and if the boundary has actually changed is that change significant for your purposes.

At the Census Bureau any boundary change to us would be considered significant. If it is not 100% comparable we would say you can't compare it. But maybe for your particular purposes the boundary change doesn't need to be perfect. So for example in the example that I was just giving that boundary change only impacted the businesses that are in my town. There were no homes. There were no residences, no apartments that were located in that piece of land that is now in my town but used to not be in my town.

So from a demographic perspective yes there's been a boundary change. But that boundary change really did not affect the comparability of the data for my particular town. So we were using these geographic resources to be able to understand these changes. It is important to think of local knowledge to actually know something about that geography to be able to make sense of whether or not that change is significant or not.

Now in the Economic Census we also publish something called a Consolidated City. There are only seven of them in the United States so I'm not going to spend any time talking about them. But they are actually published separate from Places.

So the last couple of geographies I want to talk about before we talk about geographic change is geographies like Regions and Divisions. We publish

data for the four U.S. Regions and the non-U.S. Divisions and those geographies are only published in the Economic Census for the construction sector. We do not publish Region - and Division-level data for any of the other 17 North American Industry Classification System sectors.

We also publish something called Commercial Regions in Puerto Rico, and for the mining sector in the Economic Census, we publish something called the Offshore Area. So, if you wanted to know something about oil and gas platforms, and you wanted to be able to look at oil and gas drilling platforms that are onshore, that are on the land, versus those that are out in the Gulf of Mexico or off the coast of Florida or off the West Coast, we would ask for public data on offshore activities in the mining sector only.

Now we all can probably think of some businesses that are in the water and we might then wonder, well, what about fishing vessels? Or what about gambling cruise boats or some of the other types of businesses that are actually in the water?

In the Economic Census, we actually geo-code those businesses to the port that they are based out of. So, that fishing vessel that leaves the Port of Anacortes, Washington, that business, that boat, while it might be out in the North Atlantic, or off the North Pacific for six-to-nine months out of the year, we would actually geo-code that actual activity as if it was occurring in Anacortes, Washington.

Now on the Economic Census, we don't publish Zip Codes, but in one of our programs, Zip Code Business Patterns, we do publish Zip Codes. And these are the good old fashioned U.S. Postal Service Zip Codes.

We do have a couple of exclusions. We typically don't publish data on P.O.

boxes and for single business Zip Codes. So, if you've ever applied for a rebate and sent your rebate form into Young American, Minnesota, there apparently is no Young American, Minnesota. That is a Zip Code that created specifically so that business that's processing those rebate submissions to ask you to please hold our mail to their own particular Zip Code.

Zip Codes are not quite the same as Zip Code Tabulation Areas, which is what the American Community Survey publishes, but I will tell you that for most Users, they are close enough. When you deal with things like the P.O. boxes and the single-business Zip Codes that we actually in some of our data tools including Census Business Builder mash together a Zip Code and zip the data together. I just want to make you all aware that they are not always perfectly the same, but they're pretty close.

Now we mentioned before something called a CFS area. The CFS area is a Commodity Flow Survey area. They are like metropolitan areas. In fact, they are subsets of the metropolitan area. So, the Commodities Flow Survey publishes detailed data on businesses that are transporting goods. And you can look at that data tabulated by State and by Metro, et cetera.

Because they are unable to publish from the sample guides, all Metros in the United States, the Commodities Flow Survey program pulls a subset of those Metro areas, and they are called CFS areas.

So, the next point I want to make is that when we think about the geographic data published in the Economic Census, the levels of Geography that are shown vary from sector to sector. For example, for the Retail Trade Sector, we publish data at the National and State level, Metro area, County, and even Place level. The full geographic hierarchy that we have in the Economic Programs Area.

However, for the Manufacturing sector, we only go down to County, and for sectors like Mining, we only show National and State level. And some of you may be wondering well, why is that?

Well, with only 14,000 mining businesses in the United States, and the fact that we do publish data broken up by the type of mine, whether it's a coal mine or some other type of mining or oil and gas facility, if we tried to publish data below the State level - let's say, the County level - they may only be one strip mine or one coal mine or one rock quarry located in that County, so we would not be able to publish the data for those lower rungs of Geography. So, some of the sectors, you can see we don't publish the full hierarchy; others, we do.

Now, this chart gives you some information about the levels of Geography we're showing across each of the programs that we conduct in the Economic Program area. At the bottom of the slide I have included the links to each of the programs that we conduct and sort of a nice little cheat sheet that says if I'm interested in data from the Annual Business Survey, those data are published at the National, State, Metro, County and Place levels.

Whereas, the Annual Cap-Level Expenditure Survey only shows data at the National level. These presentation materials will be posted to our Web site later, and you are certainly more than welcome to download this information and to be able to review these particular resources available to you.

So, let's now talk about those geographic changes I've been referring to. As I mentioned, the boundaries of geographies constantly change. The post office can change the boundaries of geographies of Zip Codes every month. We would do the updates in USPS every month of Zip Codes that have changed in

that one month.

But again, in the Economic Census and back in the programs area, we lock down those geographies down to every five years, and then for the intra-Census years, those geographies are then held.

Geography change occurs for a number of reasons. A town can annex or detach a piece of land. So, you know, the area that I live there where some boundary change because of an annexation that occurred. That now includes some land that used to be outside of the town that I live in that's now actually included in the town.

Incorporation for different corporations can also have an impact on the boundaries of a particular Geography, as can other kinds of legal things treaties and executive orders, court orders, et cetera.

When it comes to Metropolitan areas, though, the definition of the Metropolitan area can change because of community pattern data and population change. So, when you think about some updates, more rural areas around Washington, D.C., when enough people start driving from those rural areas into the center city, into Washington, D.C., or into Baltimore, those increases in population, those changes in commuting patterns can have an impact on the definition of a Metropolitan area because Metro areas are defined, based upon population and commuting patterns. So, there are lots of reasons why they can change.

Over on the right-hand side of the slide are a couple of Resources links that we have. The top link is to our Geographies page for our Economics website. On this Geographies page, we have a number of resources.

First, we have Change Notes. These are files that are State-specific that tell Users about the changes that have occurred in that particular State. So, for example, if I wanted to look at data from the State of Maryland, and I wanted to find out did any of the Metro areas, did any of the Counties, did any of the Places in the State of Maryland change between 2012 and 2017, I can turn to this Change resources page, look at these notes, and find out, yes, there is a number of places that changed, and this is what the change was during that area gain or this area loss.

It was a code change with no content change. It was a brand new place that knew that that now qualifies because of population growth that used to not qualify.

So the Change Notes are text-based documents, but we also have something called TIGERweb Econ that allows you to look at those changes in a map-based interface. And that application, TIGERweb Econ can be very, very helpful to then make sense of whether or not that change is or is not significant to me.

Sometimes a river can change its course, and because of that course change, the boundary of the town that that river serves at the edge of has now changed. Now maybe for me as a User, I don't care about that change. That change didn't affect the comparability of the data. You can now see that book and see that boundary change using TIGERweb Econ.

And then the last part I have on here is that we have something called the GARF, the Geographic Area of Reference File. It is a complete list of every Geography that we recognize in the Economic Census. And when you go to our Change Notes file and you see the United States, as a menu option, if you go there, that's where you will actually find the GARF file. And that would

have a full list of all those geographies. It explains the hierarchy; it shows what places add to the Counties, and what are the places that straddle County boundaries, et cetera - a great resource.

If you were to go to that Change Notes page for the State of Florida, this is a little piece of what you would see. At the top of the slide, it's a piece of the Metropolitan Area Change Notes files that highlights the fact that there's a brand new combined statistical area in 2017 Economic Census.

The Pensacola-Ferry Pass and Brent statistical area was created after the 2012 Economic Census. That's a brand new combined statistical area. It is comprised of a brand new micro-area plus a 2012 Metro area. So, you can see that's made up of a micro and the Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, Florida Metro Area, which was a previously-existing 2012 Metro.

So, if I was trying to compare the data for the principal Pensacola CSA between 2012 and 2018, I would not find that CSA in the 2012 Economic Census. But I could sort of build that CSA data by taking the Pensacola-Ferry Pass data from 2012 and adding in the data for Escambia County, Florida, which used to not be in the Metropolitan area, to now essentially create a comparable file of pieces of data for 2012 that now is comparable to the 2017 Metro.

In the bottom-left-hand corner is a screenshot of one of our (unintelligible) Place Change Notes requests. This file lists all of the Places that we have now added in the 2017 Economic Census. These are all places that used to have population less than 2,500 but now have grown enough that they now qualify. So, for example, the town of Verona Walk is a Census-Designated Place in Collier County. It used to not qualify, and now it does.

Sometimes, though because of population decline, a Geography that used to qualify now doesn't. So, the list at the bottom of that slide of dropped places show all of the towns that we used to publish in 2012 Economic Census that now don't qualify. So, Alva CDP is a town that we did publish in the 2012 Economic Census. Now for 2017, those businesses that are located there are to be included in the Balance of County.

And finally, on the right-hand side is just a small piece through the Letter B of the Geo Notes file for Florida. In the State of Florida, there are more than 600 places that have some type of boundary change. This is a little piece of the files, so as you can see, Bartow City, which is in Polk County, had area gain. I could then go to that TIGERweb Econ file to see how much area did it gain? Where did it gain it? And maybe by looking at Google maps, I could then say, "Oh, okay, the area gain, you know, did not affect comparability of the data because we have no businesses there." It's farm land, or it's, you know, a swamp, or whatever.

So, this is the type of information that we have available, and again, I don't want to harp on this too much, but again, it's really important when you're looking at comparability of data over time to make sure that what you're comparing is in fact comparable.

So, with that, I would like to now turn it over to my colleague, Caleb Hopler, so he could talk about those geographies from the American Community Survey.

Caleb Hopler: Thanks, Andy. I'll go ahead and show my slide here. Okay. My name is Caleb Hopler. I am Survey Statistician for the Outreach and Education Branch in the American Community Survey Office. Here to talk about, of course, the American Community Survey, or for short, ACS.

Now a lot of my slides will have resources or links on the slides, whether to the right or on the bottom. This is a quick reminder in this Chat, our host, Lisa West, has placed on the link where the slides will be sent at a later date. So, you'll be able to check out these slides later and copy and paste into your browser the resources and links that I will have available.

So, going into the American Community Survey, a brief background onto who we are. We are the Nation's most current, reliable and accessible data source for social, Economic, housing and Demographic data at many, many geographic levels. And we have data for such topics like age, commuting, income, employment, et cetera. We actually have a lot more that I will go over in the next slide.

So, I want to quickly bring your attention over to the right to our three key annual data releases. So, our data does have population thresholds at the type of estimates. So, our 1-year estimates have a population threshold at 65,000. So, that means our data for 1-year estimates have data for populations 65,000 or more, and our 1-year supplemental estimates provide extra estimates down to a population of 20,000 or more.

And then, finally, our 5-year estimates - because there are no population thresholds there, we are able to provide data at very granular levels, such as Census tracts, Block groups, which I'll explain later. So, basically, the very small populations.

Going over some of our data topics, we do offer 40-plus topics. Generally, we have population and housing types, but a little more specifically, we have social, Demographic, Economic and housing.

Just some examples are language spoken at home, or school enrollment, or disability status, such as in the social categories, age, sex, race for Demographics. Economics, we offer commuting, the class of workers incomes, industry and occupation, or for housing, heating fuel - what is used as the source of heating for your home, the structure of the home, the year built and the year moved in.

I want to direct your attention real quick first to what is straight down the line. So, the geographic types connected by lines are nested within each other. So, for example, a line extending - a line extends from County to Census tract because a County is completely comprised of Census tracts. And a single Census tract cannot cross a County boundary.

But once when you look over to the right or to the left, you can start seeing that we have other areas that provide data that don't necessarily lie within a legal boundary, but more statistical boundaries. So, that includes Places, School Districts, Urban Areas, State Legislative Districts.

The great thing about the American Community Survey is that it's able to provide so much data at so many geographic levels, and that's what makes the ACS so truly as a data source because you can get data for over 800,000 geographic areas which reach over to more than 35,000 communities.

So, now to check out some of the differences in our geographies between the Census Economic programs and then the Demographic programs for the American Community Survey. So, these two geographic - these levels can be similar, but maybe not exactly the same. And so I want to direct you first to Places and Zip Codes.

So, first I'll talk about Places, which FYI is short. Places is for Incorporated

Places and Census-Designated Places. So, essentially we're talking about cities and towns.

So, for the majority of places in the United States, they are the same, between these Economic programs and the ACS, but in the 12 New England States, Econ programs treat minor civil divisions as Econ places, whereas ACS publishes those places and minor civil divisions, which are County subdivisions.

The Economic programs, as Andy had mentioned earlier, also set population threshold of 2500 or more for Economic Places. At ACS, we don't place a population threshold at this geographic level. So, when you're looking at our ACS 5-year estimate, you're able to see all the tiny towns.

And then, also, the next one is the Zip Codes. So, Zip Codes correlate to the USPS Zip Code boundaries. And these are what Econ programs set their data to. But on the ACS side, we set it to Zip Code Tabulation Area, or ZCTA, for short. And these boundaries are actually set by the U.S. Census Bureau and are created to help ensure enough households within each ZCTA.

So, most ZCTAs are actually about the same as their Zip Code counterpart for an area. And they are not really all that different. But be sure that you are choosing the right Geography when you're searching for your data. I'll actually show you in a live demo a little bit later on where to find these in data.census.gov.

So, also for Tribal Geography, Econ programs treat them as Tribal-owned businesses. And these are within regular geographies, if you will. But the ACS, we produce Tribal data - American Indian in the last and Native data as a race - and also publish this data by Tribal geographies. So, these areas are

specific and outside of the quote/unquote regular geographies that you will find in surrounding areas in the United States.

Economic programs also publish data on schools and governments in their public sector data. But that is more limited to the institutions themselves. ACS data, we have for the areas, so we look at the School Districts or State Legislative districts or even Congressional districts as our geographies.

And then, looking at a little bit of extra geographies the ACS has that the Economic program does not, and this is not an exhaustive list, but we do have Census tracts. We provide data for Urban or Rural, and also PUMAs, which - PUMAs are actually the smallest geographies in our micro data for access.

So, as Andy mentioned earlier, there are a lot of data Users who would like to use business data in these Econ geographic areas, but the reason why it's better to actually look at it on the Demographic side is that you're less likely to have suppressions than if you're just doing it within businesses.

So, to look a little bit more into how our geographic concepts kind of fit into one another, so let's say you are going to be working with data for the County of El Paso. Of course, that is within the State of Texas. So, you can see the State of Texas right from the far left, but then you get into the County, and you can compare the County of El Paso to all of the other Counties within that State of Texas.

If you want to start getting more granular within the County, you can start looking into the Census tracts within that County, so you can see there that - maximize - that is the County of El Paso, right under Census tract, but it's divided by the Census tract.

So, there are larger and smaller, so the smaller ones are in the more populous areas, so that will give a City of El Paso. Then you get to a little bit more of the Rural Census tracts. So, that's why it's larger. And you can look within a Census tract to find the makeup for the Block groups.

All right. So, now I'm going to give a quick little live demo on how to find some of these Places and geographic levels, so let's go to data.census.gov. And so the first thing I'm going to do is click Advanced Search here.

And so, within Advanced Search, you can go for a topic and geographies and et cetera, but right now, I'm going to start within our Geography, and I'm going to share how to find our different types of data.

So, I mentioned how we have Places and - let me find that real quick. So, if you're looking at the Demographic for ACS data at the Place level, remember to hit actual Place, and here you can go ahead and select through for your data.

But for the Economic Place, you're actually going to scroll down towards the bottom. And we have here, Economic Census Place. And so this is where you're going to get the Economic data.

And if I scroll back to the top, I can find another similar difference where for ACS, you're going to go to Zip Code Tabulation Area, or ZCTA - five digits - and click through the geographies to get your ZCTA, or if you're looking for a business or Economic data, you're going to go down and find the five-digit Zip Code. And here you can select through there.

And then, also, for our Tribal geographies, if you start off at the top and scroll down just a little bit, we're going to find the American Indian Area, Alaska

Native Area and Hawaiian Homeland. And so if I were just to click, like, a couple of them, if I clicked first, let's see where it goes to ACS data for these Tribal areas.

So, also I want to share real quick that if you are looking for something, you don't go through Advanced Search. You can go more general. Or if, you know, the specific Table Title, you can go through the Single Search bar.

So, there are topics that will be shared amongst the Demographic side of ACS and Economic programs. So, for instance, if I was going to look at Industry of - and Andy mentioned Baltimore City earlier; Baltimore County. So, let's just pick one of those. Baltimore County, Maryland. And I just picked first.

So, I'm going to go over to - so first of all, this brings me to the Tables and Maps and more. I'm going to click Tables. And over on the left is the list of Tables. And you can see here that the first is with American Community Survey. But if I keep scrolling - and I think I'm only going to need to do this one or two clicks - we will get out of American Community Survey and we will get to starting to get to the Economic - here we go. Economic - Annual Economic Surveys.

So, of course, if you were to go for a specific topic that only pertains to the Demographic side or the Economic side, it would give you those tables. But there are things such as Industry that will pertain to both, which is why you may see all the different types of our programs. There's the American Community Survey and Economic programs.

I also wanted to show you, actually, so here, as you can see is where it says S-2403. So, S stands for the Subject Tables, and we have at ACS different types of tables that may not go down to the same geographic level.

So, S is for Subject, but we also have B Tables. B as in Boy. And B is our Detailed Tables. These go down to almost all of our Detailed Tables go down to our Block groups. But then, other tables, such as the Subject Tables, or our Data Profiles, which will be DP, those go down to the Census tracts.

So, if you wanted to do a quick check on how to find what type of table goes down to the lowest Geography, go into our actual Web site, Census.gov. And I'm going to go to Surveys and Programs to get to American Community Survey, or ACS. And I'm going to go to News and Updates. So, for ACS, where we are placing our data release updates and news, we send it right here. And you can click on the Data Release Schedule.

So, this one is for our upcoming 2019 Release. So, here you can see what - the one year goes down to 65,000 or more, but then our 5-year, which covers everything, our Data Profiles, the lowest geographies level is Census tracts. But then, like I said earlier, Detailed Tables gets down to Block groups.

So, if you wanted to see a lot more information and specific information on the ACS geographies, here, I'm going to go back to the ACS landing page. And if I were to click here, Geographies ACS, this is our - a really good resource because it was actually just updated very recently. We have our Geographic Handbook. So, we've updated, and we're in the process of updating a lot of our data User Handbooks that are specific to different parts of data Users, different research focuses, as well as this one here on Geography.

So, I encourage you to click here and it will download as a PDF. But then, also here, you can check out all the areas that we publish here in the ACS. Our Geography boundaries by year and the Geography changes. A lot of reference

materials. All through the Contents and Definitions that are shared. This may be specific to ACS in Geography or shared amongst the Census programs for Geography.

And then, last, check out Geography Tools. So, if you wanted to map your data, I would encourage you to go to Geography Tools and learn more about mapping on data.census.gov. So, it's a little preview of data.census.gov and its mapping capabilities.

You can also go to TIGERweb, where it's a mapping application that does utilize different geocodes that bring our data together in the geography. So speaking of that, if you want tiger line shapefiles that's already paired with ACS 5-year estimate, check out the tiger line selected demographic and economic data. And then in general we have the tiger line shapefiles that are and are not preloaded with ACS data.

I'm going to go back here to our - my presentation. I want to go over different ways to access data. I went over data.census.gov very briefly, but I want to share that we also have different routes and avenues to put into ACS data. So our quick facts -- as the name implies -- is a great way to quickly get the information that you are looking for. So say you're running to a meeting, you have to grab data really quickly. This is a nice way to get that type of data. And then also if you want specific data that's only within Congressional districts or tribal areas, you're able to check out those in those specific tools as well as for emergency management. And so that is how to - what we call on the map.

We also have Census Business Builder, which utilized census economic data. I'm sure you're pretty aware of how great Census Business Builder is for accessing not only economic data but it also has a lot of pre-loaded ACS data

as well. I mentioned the tiger line shapefiles, so you can map the data yourself. And then also API or the Application Programming Interface. A nice way to pool data and add the data for your online tools.

So as I'm wrapping up, a couple considerations for ACS data. So we are a demographic or more specifically we are a household-based survey. So whereas the economic data is going to be looking at the institutions and where they are, ACS data is based on not where people work but where people live. Of course, it does not share specific people, but it shows general areas of data within an area based on the households.

So when we're talking about people and where they work, we do include all types of workers. So that's employer businesses, self-employed, and those that work for government, as examples. But for the vast majority, most ACS tables are based on where they live. We do have tables that is based on the workplace geography. But that will specifically say it in the table. So if you are looking at an ACS table, mostly I would go ahead and assume that it's based on their - where they live.

And also, I stress in the beginning our geographic levels, and a lot of that is based on the 1-year and 5-year estimates. So when you are in - you know what, I'm actually going to run over to data.census.gov again, just do a random table, here. It's very important when you're checking out a table, here where it says product, here is - it's almost always going to automatically set you to 1-year estimates, unless you've selected a geography in the beginning. So like it's automatically going to set you to the United States -- the largest we have for geography levels -- and then the 1-year. So click here and you can choose your year as well as choose the 1-year and the 5-year.

So if you were to click the 5-year first, then you can go to geography and you

can change -- so let's say if you want to look at track level and you go to State of California -- and we'll just do all business tracks within this county here, now we'll be able to test it. So it's going to - I need to refresh it. Okay, there we go. So I don't really know what's going on - oh, here we go. It's right here. So yes, if you were in 1-year estimates to begin with, you will not be able to get that data. Data not available. Or it might not even show up here.

Lastly, I want to say that for our industry data in ACS, we break out industry using census code. So APSI is not based off of NAICS. So if you do have questions -- as a reminder -- these slides will be provided later at the link that Lisa West was kind enough to put in the chat box. But you can sign up for alerts within Gov Delivery. We provide a lot of our updates through Gov Delivery and you can choose the different type of e-mails that you want to get for updates on ACS and its program.

Of course, check out census.gov/acs where you'll be able to access all of our technical documentation, links to our data, and other updates. If you have questions, please reach out to us at our census customer service center or reach out via e-mail and this is acso.users.support@census.gov. And if you're utilizing our data, we encourage you to please source us. It's great that other people can know where there - you're getting that information and that they can access it as well.

So lastly, as I'm leaving here, you know, data tells stories. So if you would like to stay in touch with us by letting us know how you use ACS data, that would be really, really great on both ends. Because for example, have you or your organization used the ACS to make an important decision, help your community, or expand your business? So if you have, if you visit the link at the bottom here and share that story, we would love to not only learn how data enthusiasts across the country are using ACS data, but it also helps provide

further support for the importance of the data that we collect here at the Census Bureau. So it's a great way to further promote the ACS data. So I will now turn the presentation back. Moving into our Q & A session.

Lynda Lee: Thank you Andy and Caleb for presenting our audience with information on geographic areas available from the Census Bureau and how to distinguish and use the data. Thank you, everyone, for the interest in our data and for attending today's webinar. Before we begin our Q & A, if you have questions regarding the 2020 Decennial Census, please feel free to send your question at the contact information provided here. Also listed here for you is information for our Data Dissemination Specialists. And this is for anyone who may be interested in having a hands-on, in-person training. We have specialists assigned by geography that will be able to provide this service.

And as a reminder, we're focusing our Q & A on today's topic and we'll be accepting questions regarding geographic areas data. If you have questions on other topics, please feel free to send an e-mail to us at census.askdata@census.gov. And now we'd like to open up our lines for Q & A portion of this session. Operator, at this time, do we have questions in the queue?

Coordinator: And as a reminder, if you would like to ask a question over the phone, please press star, then one, and record your name clearly when prompted. If you need to withdraw your question, you may do so by pressing star, then two. One moment as we wait for the first question.

Lynda Lee: And while we're waiting, Caleb, we did receive a question. Can you explain the difference between block groups and census tracts?

(Caleb): Yes. Yes, I can. So it looks like I'm still sharing my screen. Let me go into -

so block groups and census track are two different geographic levels. And so tracks are a little bit larger than the block groups. So I believe off the top of my head the census tracks cover areas of 1,200 to about 3,000. And block groups cover I believe it's 600 over to 1,200. I don't quite remember off the top of my head. But if you were to look at areas published, you can see here that they are two different levels. And so census tracks are -- again -- going to be a little bit larger. So block groups are - they fit within the census tracks. I hope that answers your question.

Lynda Lee: Thank you, Caleb. Operator, do we have questions in the queue?

Coordinator: At this time, there are no questions on the phone.

Lynda Lee: Okay.

(Andy): So, Lynda, this is Andy. There were a couple of questions that -- well, a couple -- there were a lot of questions that came in via the chat. And for the most part, I think I answered most if not all of them, but there was a couple that we received multiple times from people. So maybe I'll just take a moment to just talk about one of those questions, which seems to be a pretty common theme. And that is about building of custom geographies. A lot of users are often interested in looking at data -- demographic and business data -- aggregated to their own particular boundaries. And the question I often get is how can I do that using Census Bureau data?

The short answer is so long as the pieces - so long as the boundaries of the area that you are trying to build are - represent real Census Bureau geographies - so, for example, let's say I wanted to look at 25 zip codes in the City of Chicago that are all adjacent to each other. And those 25 zip codes comprise a particular Chamber of Commerce that represents a part of the City

of Chicago. We have data tools that allow users to build a custom geography from one or more Census Bureau recognized areas. So one or more counties, one or more cities and towns, one or more zip codes, one or more census tracks. Census Business Builders that Caleb actually mentioned is one of those tools the Regional Analyst Edition that lets you build your own custom geography.

So again, so long as the boundaries of what you're trying to build are in fact regular recognized geographies, absolutely you can do that. What you can't do with Census data with only really one exception is you can't build your own custom geography where you define it of areas that are not recognized. So let's say you wanted to drop a pin at my house. And I wanted to draw a five-mile circle around my house to find out how many people live within five miles of my house. That circle that I would draw would cut through multiple Census Bureau recognized geographies and it would also include Census Bureau recognized geographies that are completely within the circle.

In our data tools that allow you to do that, they automatically would select the entire geography that that circle cuts through, not just the piece of the geography that's inside the circle. And that may result in an area that might be quite a bit bigger than what you had originally intended. Maybe getting more people and more businesses than what you originally wanted. But the simple fact is we don't allow you to build a custom geography like drawing that circle because to do so correctly -- statistically accurately -- we would have to give you the micro-level data that would allow you to build that total on the fly. And if we did that, we would have to send you to jail because - or we would go to jail because that would be a violation of the privacy of the people whose businesses and people - the data that we would give you - we cannot release the micro-level data in that kind of a way.

There are a few data providers out there that attempt to create what you're looking for. You drop that pin, draw that five-mile circle and it grabs the data just within the five-mile circle. But with only a very small number of instructions. The way they do that is -- and I'm going to say it this way -- cheating. It is assuming that the people and businesses in that circle are evenly distributed. So let's say your circle cuts off 22% of a particular city, let's say. They would then take 22% of the data for that geography and allocate it to that particular circle. And I think you all can probably think of areas where we live or where we work where you have clusters of businesses in some places and nothing somewhere else. You drive five miles out of my town and you're in farmland. There's no businesses there. But in my town, there's lots of businesses right there.

So we don't let you build your own custom geography where you are truly defining the boundaries unless the boundaries are recognized by the Census Bureau. By the pieces of those areas are recognized. So hopefully that answered that question for the five or six users attending today who asked that question.

Lynda Lee: Thank you, Andy. That was very helpful, actually. For myself as well. Operator, at this time, are there any other additional questions on the phone?

Coordinator: No questions on the phone.

Lynda Lee: Okay, without any additional questions, I want to thank everyone and I would like to express our thanks to everyone again for attending today's webinar. And this concludes today's presentation. Have a great day.

Coordinator: Thank you for your participation in today’s conference. All participants may disconnect at this time.

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