

Every 10 Years, McCully and Staff Become Very Popular

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Cathy McCully's recent weeklong trip for the Census Bureau took her from Michigan down to Louisiana and Mississippi, then up to New England and back down to Richmond, Va. After a brief break, she was off to Tallahassee, Fla. Over time, she will cover the country.

As chief of the Census Redistricting Data Office, she shares her redistricting and voting rights expertise with elected officials, community leaders and various organizations at least four times a month. She is a very popular person this time of the decade.

"I provide folks with a background on the census and then break down the collection and tabulation efforts. I bring it all together by providing detail on the data products we produce in support of statewide redistricting," McCully said. "Many folks are surprised that the American Community Survey (ACS) also plays a part in analyzing redistricting plans. The ACS data on characteristics are used to prepare special tabulations in support of national redistricting efforts."

A culmination of more than nine years of work, the Census Bureau will provide key demographic data to the states in a nonpartisan manner so the governments can redraw the boundaries of their U.S. congressional and state legislative districts. Along with Assistant Chief James Whitehorne, who joined the redistricting office last April after four years in the Geography Division, and a dedicated group of administrative support, McCully has been following state elections very closely.

"We have these huge databases that flipped because of the elections," McCully said. "We have to keep track of elected officials — who is coming in, and who is going out."

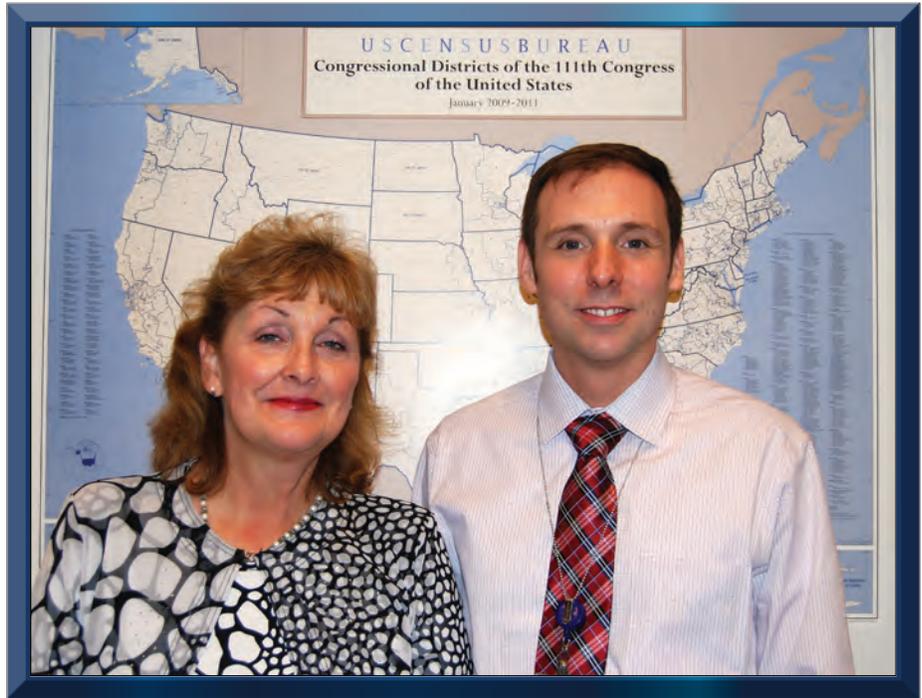


Photo by Heather Schmaedeke

Cathy McCully (left) and James Whitehorne oversee a very important service for the nation this month — providing state and local governments with redistricting data.

According to Public Law 94-171, the Census Bureau must provide redistricting data to the 50 states within a year following Census Day, which was April 1, 2010. Starting this month, the Census Bureau will deliver the data state-by-state on a flow basis to meet this mandate. Data will also be provided to the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

"We started meeting weekly with the Public Information Office to get the synchronization of all the responsibilities of all the divisions," McCully said. "Our goal is to come together to ensure a smooth landing in getting the data into the hands of the legislators in a bipartisan manner and out to the public within 24 hours of that receipt."

McCully said it's all highly coordinated between numerous divisions, such as Population, Housing and Household Economic Statistics, Administrative and Customer Services, Geography, Decennial Systems and Processing, Decennial Management, Data Access

and Dissemination Systems, Field and Budget.

This is McCully's fourth census while working at Suitland headquarters, starting out as a clerk typist in 1977 and then moving on to the Geography Division to help tabulate data for redistricting. Along the way, she has seen enormous technological development and innovation — from hand-drawn maps to sophisticated computer graphics — and made a lot of lifelong friends and memories.

"This place is so very special to me and all of my friends are here — friends who attended my wedding and watched me run around here pregnant in flip-flops," McCully said. "A lot of us shared the babysitter who used to be across the street."

The Waldorf, Md., resident enjoys her time with her daughters, 26-year-old Shannon and 24-year-old Heather, and a son, 21-year-old Joey. Her husband, Joe, passed away two years ago.

"My life has always been about work and family," McCully said.