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GUESTS IN OWN HOMES

By AUSTIN FENNER

September 12, 2007 -- Home ownership in New York City is barely half the rate of the rest of the country, new figures show.

More than two-thirds, or 67.3 percent, of single-family homes, co-ops and condos nationwide were owner-occupied in 2006, the last year for which figures were available.

The figure here was just 34.4 percent, according to a Census Bureau report released yesterday.

About 1 million New Yorkers owned their own homes last year. The New York housing market consists of approximately 3 million residences.

"New York City has a low home-ownership rate compared to other large urban areas," said NYU professor Ingrid Ellen.

The figures do not reflect the recent crisis in the mortgage market.

The collapse led to foreclosures on homes bought by so-called subprime borrowers who couldn't keep up their payments.

"What's going to be interesting to see is what's going to happen to home ownership rates in the face of the upheaval," Ellen said.

Although many New York neighborhoods have been affected, the problem has been less severe here - because real estate in much of the city, especially Manhattan, has held or even increased in value, experts said.

The Census report, called the American Community Survey, also includes 2006 data on other economic and social issues.

* Out of the roughly 17 million people living in the city and its suburbs, one of three spoke a language at home other than English.

Nationally, the figure was around one in five.

* The percentage of married-with-children American families in New York was 16.6 percent.

Nationwide, it was 21.6 percent.

* People around the country are staying in the workforce longer.

Nationally, 23.2 percent of people over age 65 still held jobs in 2006, an increase of 3.6 percent since 2000.

No figures were immediately available for people postponing retirement in the New York area.

Politics and government jobs seem to keep people wanting to work.

The city with the highest percentage of senior citizens in the workforce past age 65 was Washington, D.C.

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