These maps show relative population change over the decade of the 1980s. Larger percent changes are shown in more intense colors -- black for growth and red for decline. The maps are based on Census of Population data, acquired from the University of Minnesota's Machine Readable Data Center. A Macintosh desktop mapping program, Atlas*Pro, was used to produce the basic maps -- this low end technology sometimes causes graphic distortions, but the data remain correct. Tiling and other graphic improvements were added by the University's Cartography Lab.

Mapping units for the state map are cities, townships, and "unorganized territories," which are remote geographic areas delineated by the Census Bureau. Cities crossing county boundaries were, nonetheless, treated as single entities. If a city had annexed a significant part of an adjoining township during the decade, the city and township were combined and treated as a new area for both 1980 and 1990; this approach kept us from showing phantom gains and losses. Substantial changes in the boundaries of some unorganized territories called for a similar need to combine territories. Mapping units in the metro inset map are slightly different. The separate parts of those cities crossing county boundaries are treated separately; this approach solves the problem of presenting data for New Prague, for example, and other cities that straddle the metro/outstate boundary.

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