

Shelby County, TN — #1 of 10: Net Households Gained From a Single County

Shelby County, TN leads all counties in net household inflow to Knoxville

Source: ALEX Intelligence, 2023

Swipe for insights →

THE DATA

126

Net Households Gained From a Single County (2023)

Shelby County, TN is the top source of net household inflow into the Knoxville market, with a surplus of 126 households.

This inflow marks a structural shift in regional migration, with Knoxville emerging as a primary destination for residents from Shelby County—despite the latter's proximity to Memphis. The data reflects a growing divergence from traditional regional anchors, suggesting that Knoxville is becoming a preferred alternative for those seeking affordability, quality of life, and urban-rural balance.

Source: U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Statistics of Income Migration Data, county-to-county inflows, 2022-23 · ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-29-knoxville-mig-net-partner>

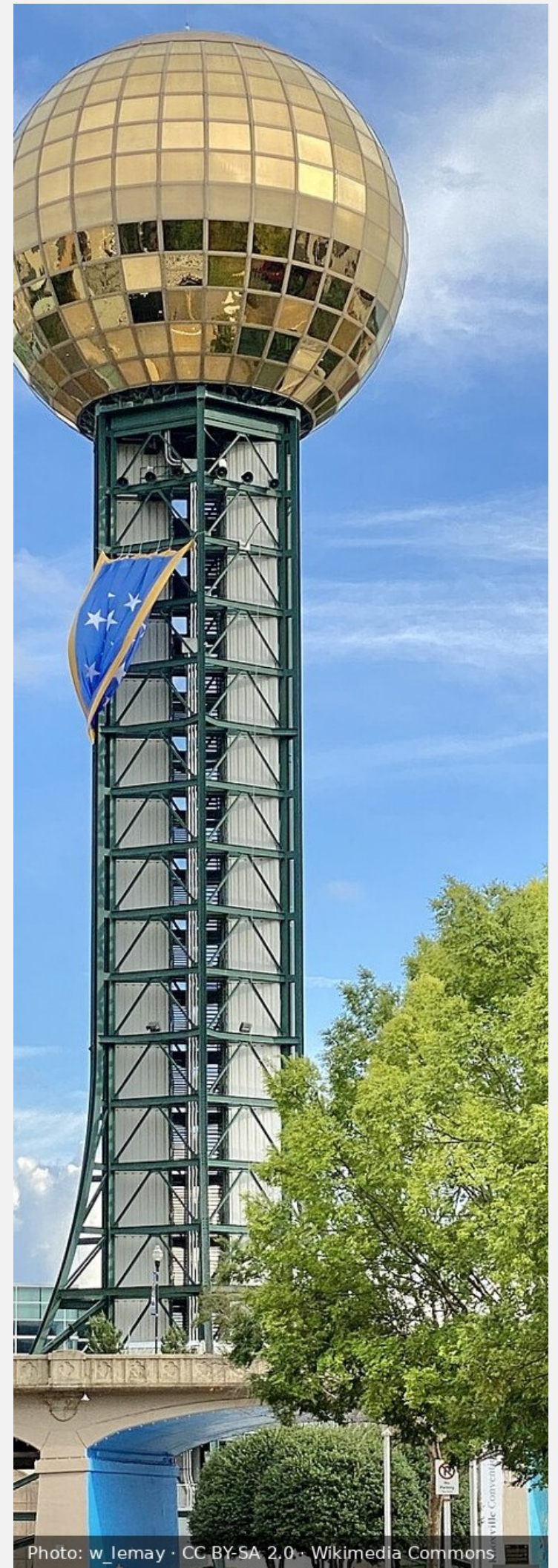


Photo: w_lemay · CC BY-SA 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons



01

Migration is redefining Knoxville's growth engine

The fact that Shelby County, TN—the most populous county in Tennessee—leads in net household outflow to Knoxville signals a fundamental shift in inter-county mobility. This is not just a demographic trend; it's a strategic realignment of where people choose to live, work, and raise families. The exodus from Shelby County suggests that Knoxville is increasingly perceived as a more viable long-term home than Memphis, even for those who once viewed the latter as the regional hub.

02

Knoxville is becoming a sanctuary for displaced urbanites

The dominance of Shelby County in household inflow indicates that Knoxville is serving as a refuge for individuals and families leaving the high-pressure environment of Memphis. This migration is not driven by affordability alone but by the city's expanding cultural offerings, growing tech and healthcare sectors, and a perceived lower cost of living in both housing and daily life. The data reveals a deeper trend: Knoxville is not just attracting people—it's becoming a preferred alternative to the region's dominant urban center.



Photo: EIToAn123 · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Real Estate Strategy & Intelligence Leader. Democratized Blue Ocean Strategist & Operator.

Diane Hart Alexander, MBA, MHA

Chair & CEO, ALEX Companies

Designated Broker, Alexander Tiffany Southwest, LLC dba ALEX.realestate, et.al.

Texas License #574877-B · Broker License #565194-BB

diane@alex.realestate · +1 713.591.9902



ALEX Intelligence
deep intelligence

ALEX Real Estate
genius real estate

ALEX Advisory
uncontested strategy

ALEX Cares
purposeful philanthropy

