

July 2003

Nebraska City Visitors Survey

Randolph L. Cantrell

Nebraska Rural Initiative, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, rcantrell1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ruralinitiativepubs>



Part of the [Agricultural and Resource Economics Commons](#)

Cantrell, Randolph L., "Nebraska City Visitors Survey" (2003). *Rural Initiative Publications and Reports*. 9.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ruralinitiativepubs/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Rural Initiative at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rural Initiative Publications and Reports by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Nebraska City Visitors Survey

July, 2003

Prepared by the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative
Randy Cantrell

Introduction

During the month of July, 2003, Nebraska City Tourism and Events and the Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln conducted a survey of visitors to the Nebraska City area.

The survey was designed to provide information related to the activities and experiences of tourists and other visitors to the Nebraska City area, especially as related to the hospitality industry.

Survey Design

Survey crews were assigned to locations where Nebraska City visitors are known to congregate. Crew members wore clothing that identified them as being part of a legitimate, sponsored survey activity. They were instructed to approach individuals at each venue with a very brief checklist designed to determine if the individual was a Nebraska City resident or an out-of-town visitor. Non-residents were asked if they were willing to complete a questionnaire related to their Nebraska City visit. Those who agreed to complete the survey were given copies of an explanatory letter, the survey instrument, and a pre-addressed, stamped envelope. Surveys were to be returned to the CARI offices in Lincoln for analysis.

The investigators set a goal of 100 completed surveys for the month of July. The process in fact netted 90 useable surveys, representing nearly 383 total visitors.

Limitations of the Data

Visitor surveys differ from other forms of survey research in that it is impossible for the investigators to identify all of the members of the potential study population, and it is therefore impossible to draw a true random sample to poll. For this study, the investigators chose to address this problem by sampling locations and times and polling visitors who happened to be at a particular venue at a particular time.

While the 90 respondents do indeed provide us with valuable information regarding the experiences and perceptions of Nebraska City visitors, the fact that we do not know the actual size of the study population means that we cannot properly place confidence intervals around their responses. That is, it is not possible for us to say that X% of all visitors (plus or minus some level of statistical confidence) have a given opinion or characteristic based upon what we know of the opinions and characteristics of the study group.

The reader should interpret the results of this study with the above statistical limitations in mind.

Characteristics of the Respondents

- The survey returned 90 useable questionnaires, representing 383 total visitors..
- Surveys were most often completed by female visitors (69.3%).
- Respondents ranged in age from 22 to 92-years. The median age of the respondent group was 51-years, and the modal age was 50-years (9 respondents).
- Respondents most often characterized their household as being a couple with grown children (48.9%).
- The next most common household description was that of a two-parent family with children (23.9%).
- Single parents, single persons, and others were represented, but in much smaller numbers (all under 8%).
- Respondents most often indicated that their place of residence was Lincoln (21.1%) or Omaha (17.8%), Nebraska.
- Respondents came from 19 states.
- The most common state of residence was Nebraska (58.9%). Iowa and Kansas were each home to 6.7% of the respondents, while Missouri was reported as the residence of another 5.6%.
- Other states represented were: Arizona, California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and Washington.
- Respondents were in general well educated, with 61.4% reporting that they had obtained a four-year college degree or beyond. No respondent reported having not completed high school.
- Respondents reported a range of household income levels. This is often seen as a personal or sensitive question, and 15 respondents (16.7%) chose not to answer it. Of those who did respond, 20% reported incomes of over \$90,000. The most commonly reported income level was between \$55,000 and \$75,000 (22.7%). Only 8% of respondents reported incomes below \$25,000.

Travel Experience

- The great majority (91.1%) of respondents reported that they had taken at least one trip of a week or longer duration during the last two-years.
- The average respondent reported just over three such trips over the last two-years.
- Nature oriented Summer season trips were most commonly reported (37.8%).
- Other commonly reported trip formats were urban sightseeing and entertainment (27.8%), sun destinations and tropical climates (26.7%), visits to friends and relatives in other states (25.6%) and driving tours (22.2%).
- International travel during the last two-years was reported by 21.1% of the respondents.

Characteristics of the Nebraska City Visits

- For 79% of those responding, Nebraska City was their final destination.
- Respondents most often indicated that their reason for being in Nebraska City was “general leisure” (37.8%)
- Other commonly cited reasons for visiting Nebraska City were “touring and passing through” (23.3%), “business” (12.2%) and “personal” activities (11.1%).
- Most respondents were traveling with one other person (57.8%), or in a group of four (14.4%).
- Less than 10% of respondents reported being part of a large tour group (no single group provided more than one respondent).
- When group size is limited to six or fewer, the average group size was 2.6 persons.
- Respondents reported traveling with children age 12-years or younger 18% of the time.
- Respondents reported traveling with teen age children 16% of the time.
- Respondents reported traveling with persons over 70-years of age 12% of the time.
- The majority of those responding (56%) did not plan to stay in Nebraska City overnight.
- Of those planning to spend the night, 64% planned on two or more nights.
- Most respondents who were spending the night were staying in a hotel or motel (64%).
- A cabin or resort accounted for 26% of overnight visitors.

Reasons for Selecting Lodging

Visitors who were spending the night in Nebraska City were asked what lodging attributes influenced their choice of accommodations.

- An unique experience was identified as being either important or very important to the lodging choice of 91.4% of those responding to this question.
- A good value for the price was identified as important or very important by 86.5% of the respondents.
- A nature setting was identified as important or very important by 83.8% of the respondents.
- Also frequently identified as important or very important in the respondents’ lodging selection were biking and hiking access (65.7%), and historical or architectural significance (63.9%).

See Table 1 for a complete listing of reasons for selecting specific lodging.

Table 1

**Reasons for Selecting Specific Lodging
Nebraska City Visitors Survey: July, 2003**

	Very Important	Important OR Very Important	Not Important OR Not Very Important
Unique Experience	51.4%	91.4%	8.6%
Good Value for Price	56.8%	86.5%	13.5%
Nature Setting	56.8%	83.8%	16.2%
Biking/Hiking Access	37.1%	65.7%	34.3%
Historical/Architectural Significance	25.0%	63.9%	36.1%
Indoor Pool	37.1%	60.0%	40.0%
Cable TV	17.6%	55.9%	44.1%
Economy Price	23.5%	55.9%	44.1%
Luxury/Full Service	14.7%	47.1%	52.9%
Previous Stay	22.9%	45.7%	54.3%
Daily Rates	19.4%	38.9%	61.1%
On Lake/River	21.9%	28.1%	71.9%
Recognized Brand/Chain	2.9%	26.5%	73.5%
Outdoor Pool	11.4%	25.7%	74.3%
Golf Course	15.2%	21.2%	78.8%
Lots for Kids to Do	11.8%	20.6%	79.4%
Near Friends/Relatives	11.8%	17.6%	82.4%
Organized Kids Programs	2.9%	8.8%	91.2%

n = 40 Overnight Visitors

Visitor Spending

- The average visitor estimated that their party would spend \$211 while in Nebraska City. Respondents estimated average ***total party daily expenditures*** of:
 - \$96 for lodging (for those spending the night)
 - \$41 for bars and restaurants
 - \$25 for transportation (including fuel)
 - \$18 for miscellaneous items
 - \$14 for groceries
 - \$89 for shopping
 - \$21 for recreation and attractions
- On a per-visitor basis, overnight guests estimated their expenditures to be roughly 3-times that of single day visitors.
- Overnight visitors estimated that they spent approximately \$87 total, and \$49 on non-lodging related items per pers per day.

- Day visitors were estimated to spend approximately \$29 per person while in Nebraska City.

Planning in Advance

- The average respondent indicated that their visit was planned 54-days in advance, and 41% of those responding reported that they had planned their visit 30-days or more prior to arriving in Nebraska City.
- Respondents indicated that they had planned their visit 24-hours or less before arriving in Nebraska City 26% of the time.
- Respondents who made lodging reservations did so 59-days prior to their visit, on average.
- A small number of respondents (9%) made lodging reservations 24-hours or less before their visit, or sought lodging upon their arrival.
- The weather was seen as good to excellent by 68.6% of those responding (2 persons complained about the heat).

Return Visitors

- The majority of survey respondents (70.1%) were repeat visitors, indicating that they had visited Nebraska City on one or more previous occasions.
- A very small number of the repeat visitor group (5%) indicated that they are regular visitors, having been in Nebraska city 50 times or more over the last 5 years.
- Another 35% of repeat visitors indicated that they were in Nebraska City once or twice a year (between 5 and 10 visits over the last five years).
- Very occasional repeat visitors (less than annual) made up 32% of the respondent population.
- Among repeat visitors, 82% reported 10-year or longer histories of visiting the community, while 7.2% of the repeat visitors responding have been coming to Nebraska City for three or fewer years.
- Nearly two-thirds (64.7%) of the repeat visitors reported having made 10 or more lifetime trips to Nebraska City.

Perceptions of Return Visitors

Respondents were asked to identify changes that they perceived as having occurred in Nebraska City in the time that they have known it (see Table 2).

- The majority (66.1%) of respondents indicated that the overall Nebraska City visitor experience has improved, while 30.6% felt that the overall experience was unchanged.
- Only a small number (3.2%) felt that the overall visitor experience had declined.
- Similar results were found for most of the individual items listed for evaluation. Most commonly seen as “improved” were attraction opportunities (78%), access (70.5%),

- recreation opportunities and lodging quality (67.9% each).
- Only in the area of shopping opportunities did as much as 10% of the respondent population perceive decline.

Table 2

**Repeat Visitor Evaluation of Changes in Nebraska City
Nebraska City Visitors Survey: July, 2003**

	Improved	Same	Declined	
Overall Visitor Experience	66.1%	30.6%	3.2%	
Attraction Opportunities	78.0%	18.6%	3.4%	
Access In/Around Area	70.5%	27.9%	1.6%	
Recreation Opportunities	67.9%	25.0%	7.1%	
Lodging Quality	67.9%	26.4%	5.7%	
General Attractiveness	63.9%	32.8%	3.3%	
Natural Environment	63.3%	33.3%	3.3%	
Shopping Opportunities	50.8%	34.4%	14.8%	
Restaurant Selection	44.3%	49.2%	6.6%	<i>n = 64 Repeat Visitors</i>
Hospitality/Service	39.0%	59.3%	1.7%	

Importance of Community Attributes

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 26 community attributes as to their importance in the selection of Nebraska City as a destination or stopping point.

Those attributes that more than half of the respondents labeled as either *important* or *very important* to their decision to visit Nebraska City included:

- Natural Environment (90.4%)
- Scenic Drives (86.1%)
- Outdoor Experience (75.0%)
- Small Town Feel (70.0%)
- Activities and Attractions (64.6%)
- Fall Colors (62.5%)
- Bird/Wildlife Viewing (59.5%)
- A State Park (58.6%)
- Hiking/Biking (55.7%)
- Historical Tour (55.1%)
- Architecture (54.1%)

Those attributes identified as *not important or not very important* by 75% or more of those responding included:

- Concert/Play (76.2%)
- Boating/Water Recreation (78.6%)
- Steamboat Trace (84.4%)
- Specific Campground (84.6%)
- Fishing/Hunting (91.0%)
- Boat Launch (93.5%)

Rating of Community Attributes

Respondents were asked to rate their experience of the same 26 Nebraska Cities attributes *IF* they had in fact had experience with that item.

The Nebraska City attributes most often rated as *good or very good* included:

- Natural Environment (96.3%)
- Fall Colors (88.2%)
- Architecture (88.2%)
- Outdoor Experience (87.8%)
- Specific Hotel/Motel (87.5%)
- Hiking/Biking (86.4%)

The Nebraska City attributes most often rated as *not good or not very good* included:

- Concert or Play (68.3%)
- Boat Launch (65.6%)
- Fishing/Hunting (64.3%)
- Boating/Water Recreation (50.0%)
- Entertainment/Nightlife (41.4%)
- Lakes/Streams/River (37.9%)

In general, respondents appeared to get what they expect from a trip to Nebraska City, rating as good or very good those community attributes that were important to them when selecting a destination, and rating as not good or not very good those items that were less important to them.

The complete listing of the reported importance and rating of all 26 items can be found in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

**Importance of Nebraska City Attributes
Nebraska City Visitors Survey: July 2003**

	Very Important	Important OR Very Important	Not Important OR Not Very Important	
Natural Environment	60.2%	90.4%	8.9%	
Scenic Drives	44.3%	86.1%	13.9%	
Outdoor Experience	40.0%	75.0%	25.0%	
Fall Colors	36.1%	62.5%	37.5%	
Small Town Feel	30.0%	70.0%	30.0%	
A state Park	27.1%	58.6%	41.4%	
Historical Tour	26.1%	55.1%	64.9%	
Many Activities/Attractions	24.1%	64.6%	35.4%	
Specific Resort	23.4%	40.6%	59.4%	
Specific Restaurant	23.1%	43.6%	56.4%	
Specific Hotel/Motel	22.1%	44.1%	55.9%	
Hiking/Biking	21.4%	55.7%	44.3%	
Bird/Wildlife Viewing	20.3%	59.5%	40.5%	
Architecture	20.3%	54.1%	45.9%	
Festival/Event	20.0%	47.7%	52.3%	
Lewis & Clark	18.8%	48.8%	51.2%	
Shopping	17.9%	43.6%	56.4%	
Lakes/Streams/River	14.3%	32.9%	67.1%	
Golf Courses	10.3%	26.5%	73.5%	
Steamboat Trace	7.8%	15.6%	84.4%	
Entertainment/Nightlife	6.8%	21.6%	64.4%	
Specific Campground	6.2%	15.4%	84.6%	
Fishing/Hunting	6.0%	6.0%	91.0%	
Boating/Water Recreation	6.0%	21.4%	78.6%	
Concert/Play	4.8%	23.8%	76.2%	
Boat Launch	4.8%	6.5%	93.5%	<i>n = 90 Visitors</i>

**Table 4 Rating of Nebraska City Attributes
Nebraska City Visitors Survey: July, 2003**

	Very Good	Good OR Very Good	Not Good OR Not Very Good
Natural Environment	70.0%	96.3%	5.7%
Specific Hotel/Motel	60.0%	87.5%	12.5%
Specific Resort	46.9%	84.8%	15.6%
Fall Colors	44.1%	88.2%	11.8%
Scenic Drives	38.8%	83.6%	16.4%
Specific Restaurant	38.8%	75.5%	24.5%
Outdoor Experience	37.8%	87.8%	12.2%
Historical Tour	37.8%	81.1%	18.9%
Bird/Wildlife Viewing	37.5%	81.3%	18.7%
Hiking/Biking	36.4%	86.4%	15.6%
Architecture	35.3%	88.2%	11.8%
A state Park	34.1%	81.8%	12.2%
Small Town Feel	33.3%	81.8%	18.2%
Festival/Event	27.6%	82.8%	17.2%
Golf Courses	25.0%	75.0%	25.0%
Shopping	21.4%	71.4%	28.6%
Lakes/Streams/River	20.7%	62.1%	37.9%
Many Activities/Attractions	18.5%	70.8%	29.2%
Lewis & Clark	16.7%	61.1%	28.9%
Steamboat Trace	16.7%	75.0%	25.0%
Specific Campground	16.7%	66.7%	33.3%
Boating/Water Recreation	14.3%	50.0%	50.0%
Entertainment/Nightlife	10.3%	58.6%	41.4%
Fishing/Hunting	7.1%	35.7%	64.3%
Concert/Play	0.0%	41.7%	68.3%
Boat Launch	0.0%	44.4%	65.6%

n = 90 Visitors

Planning to Return

- Over 3/4 (77.6%) of respondents indicated that it was likely or very likely that they would return to Nebraska City. Only one person indicated that they would definitely not be back.
- Of the respondents who indicated that they would return, 51.4% felt that they would do so within the year, and 77.7% within two-years.
- The most popular season for hypothetical visits was Autumn. 93.2% of those interested in returning indicated that they would be interested or very interested in a Fall visit.
- Respondents also indicated that they would be interested or very interested in returning in the Summer (83.1%), Spring (73.5%) and Winter (50.8%).

Learning About Nebraska City

Respondents were asked what information resources helped them to become aware of Nebraska City.

- A previous visit or visits was the most frequently identified method of learning about Nebraska City. Respondents indicated that such experience was important or very important to creating awareness of the community 73.8% of the time.
- Information or recommendations received from friends or relatives was reported as being important or very important in creating awareness of Nebraska City 54.9% of the time.\
- The nine information sources offered and the proportion of respondents indicating that they were either *important or very important* to creating awareness of Nebraska City were:

•	Previous Visits	(73.8%)
•	Friends/Relatives	(54.9%)
•	Articles/Documentaries/News	(40.0%)
•	State Tourism Information	(34.8%)
•	Internet	(31.8%)
•	Area Chamber/Tourist Information	(26.2%)
•	Sport Show	(16.1%)
•	Radio/TV Ads	(19.0%)
•	Newspaper/Magazine Ads	(16.9%)

- When asked if they were interested in receiving information and updates about Nebraska City through electronic mail, (75%) of respondents indicated that they were **not**.
- Of those who indicated that they were interested in such information and updates, 83.3% felt that it should be provided by a single organization or source.
- When asked if they would like to receive specific kinds of information about activities and opportunities in Nebraska City, more people indicated an interest. The information items listed and the proportion of respondents interested in receiving such information were:

•	Festivals and Events	(34.4%)
•	Special Lodging Deals	(27.8%)
•	Autumn Packages	(21.1%)
•	Special Shopping/Sales	(18.9%)
•	Lodging Vacancy	(17.8%)
•	Golf/Special Packages	(11.1%)
•	Area Conditions	(6.7%)

Planning Their Trip to Nebraska City

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the same nine-information resources in

planning this particular trip to Nebraska City. Previous visits and information received from friends and relatives continued to be the items most often identified as important or very important.

Information sources rated as *important or very important* to plans for their current trip were:

- Previous Visits (68.3%)
- Friends/Relatives (46.9%)
- Articles/Documentaries/News (35.0%)
- State Tourism Information (33.3%)
- Internet (30.6%)
- Area Chamber/Tourist Information (30.5%)
- Newspaper/Magazine Ads (28.8%)
- Radio/TV Ads (16.1%)
- Sport Show (7.0%)

These data suggest that the most productive time to provide information regarding Nebraska City to people is while they are there. However, to reach the maximum number of potential visitors, a broad and balanced marketing scheme will be required.

Nebraska City's Appeal to Others

Respondents were asked to estimate how appealing Nebraska City might be to various types of visitors.

- The majority of respondents felt that Nebraska City would be seen as appealing or very appealing by an array of audiences. According to the respondents, Nebraska City would be seen as *appealing or very appealing* by:
 - Women (87.2%)
 - Seniors (86.7%)
 - People Similar to Self (83.1%)
 - Couples (78.8%)
 - Men (76.9%)
 - Sports Persons (65.8%)
 - Young Professionals (59.0%)
 - Children (55.0%)
 - College Age Persons (37.7%)