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NEBRASKA STATE AND LOCAL TAXES IN PERSPECTIVE

Last month we showed how overwhelmingly important the property tax is in the financing of state and local governments in Nebraska. If we are to see Nebraska's state and local finances in perspective, we may compare our state with all states with respect to the percentage of state and local tax revenue obtained from the various tax sources. Of even greater value would be a comparison with our neighbor states. Such is the purpose of this investigation.

The latest report of the Bureau of the Census (for year 1964-65) shows the property tax collections and total tax collections for state and local governments. Using the more detailed data of 1962 for sales and gross receipts taxes and income taxes, we obtain a percentage distribution of state and local taxes as shown in the following tabulation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All States</th>
<th>Nebraska</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property taxes</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and gross receipts taxes</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income taxes</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other taxes</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While additional states have adopted sales or income taxes during the past few years, Nebraska has increased its reliance upon the property tax. Because the 50 states represent such great diversity, a comparison of Nebraska with its neighbor states would seem to be more revealing than the foregoing comparison. The states used for this purpose constitute two groups: a 5-state group consisting of Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota and a 3-state group composed of the Dakotas and Wyoming. Each of the states in the 5-state group has a population substantially in excess of Nebraska's, while the combined population of the 3-state group is only slightly in excess of Nebraska's. The differences in population among these states in the accompanying charts are reflected in the widths of the bars. (See page 4.)

It may come as a surprise to many persons that state and local tax collections per $1000 of personal income are lower in Nebraska than in nearly all of its neighbor states. Only Missouri collected less per $1000 of personal income than Nebraska in 1965 and that by only a few cents. All of the remaining states included in this analysis collected at least $16 (18.6%) more.

Chart 1 shows that each of the states included in the analysis had a slightly lower per capita personal income than Nebraska. For example, the Dakotas and Wyoming had an average per capita income of $117.25, while Nebraska had $2,123. Because the property tax is so important to the financing of state and local government, it seems that more reliance upon the property tax than in the Dakotas and Wyoming would have been expected.

(Continued on page 4)
**Business Summary**

July's dollar volume of business increased in both Nebraska (+12.9%) and the United States (+8.2%) over July 1965. The dollar volume decreased from June 1966 in both the United States (-0.2%) and Nebraska (-5.4%). The physical volume of business also increased in both Nebraska (+10.7%) and the United States (+6.0%) over July 1965. Physical volume increased only slightly over June 1966 in the United States (+0.3%) and decreased slightly in Nebraska (-0.2%). Only two indicators in Nebraska declined from July 1965. These were life insurance sales (-1.3%) and gasoline sales (-0.3%). Construction activity and cash farm marketings both increased significantly greater than the United States as a whole.

Retail sales for the state in August increased 9.1% over August 1965 and increased 6.8% over July 1966 after seasonal adjustments. All of the twenty-two cities reporting increased over last year. Of the individual types of stores in the state variety stores was the only type decreasing from last year. Generally, the larger cities have not increased as much as the smaller cities which in turn have not increased as much as the rural counties.

Unadjusted city indexes rose in 19 of 22 cities over August 1965. The state index was 8.6% above August 1965.

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**I. NEBRASKA and the UNITED STATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Indicators</th>
<th>Nebr. % Change from 1965 Average</th>
<th>% Change from Same Month a Year Ago</th>
<th>% Change from Preceding Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dollar Volume of Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Volume of Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank debits (checks, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life insurance sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash farm marketings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity produced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper advertising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**II. PHYSICAL VOLUME OF BUSINESS % of 1948 Average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Nebr. 1965-6</th>
<th>U.S. 1965-6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>178.6</td>
<td>198.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>181.8</td>
<td>197.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>190.9</td>
<td>200.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>179.9</td>
<td>198.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>179.6</td>
<td>200.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>188.1</td>
<td>203.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>182.6</td>
<td>207.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>194.0</td>
<td>207.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>193.9</td>
<td>210.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>190.3</td>
<td>209.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>186.5</td>
<td>206.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>198.5</td>
<td>209.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>197.7</td>
<td>210.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**III. RETAIL SALES for Selected Cities.** Total, Hard Goods, and Soft Goods Stores. Hard Goods include automobile, building material, furniture, hardware, equipment. Soft Goods include food, gasoline, department, clothing, and miscellaneous stores.

**IV. RETAIL SALES, Other Cities and Rural Counties**

**V. RETAIL SALES, by Subgroups, for the State and Major Divisions**

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*Not including liquor stores **Outside Principal City ***Including Hooker, Grant, Dawes, Cherry, and Sheridan Counties ****Not including Selected Services and Liquor Stores*
VI. CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS

### AUG

#### City Business Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Bank Debits</th>
<th>Building Activity</th>
<th>Retail Sales</th>
<th>Electricity Consumed</th>
<th>Gas Consumed</th>
<th>Water Pumped</th>
<th>Postal Receipts</th>
<th>Newspaper Advertising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The State</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td>106.3</td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>107.9</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>101.6</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>113.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatrice</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>123.1</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>102.5</td>
<td>366.2</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>110.3</td>
<td>101.3</td>
<td>103.2</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>107.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>101.0</td>
<td>109.4</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>103.4</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>139.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Island</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>108.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>105.0</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>104.6</td>
<td>143.3</td>
<td>117.2</td>
<td>107.4</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fremont</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>100.9</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>109.3</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska City</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>110.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>109.9</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>94.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So. Sioux City</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>100.8</td>
<td>118.5</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>107.4</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>104.6</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottsbluff</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>102.5</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>114.9</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>101.7</td>
<td>118.8</td>
<td>113.0</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>108.3</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>127.2</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCook</td>
<td>103.9</td>
<td>104.3</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>104.6</td>
<td>102.7</td>
<td>116.5</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidney</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>103.9</td>
<td>104.9</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>100.5</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>121.3</td>
<td>121.2</td>
<td>122.6</td>
<td>121.9</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>107.4</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska City</td>
<td>110.0</td>
<td>114.7</td>
<td>132.9</td>
<td>116.8</td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>106.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So. Sioux City</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>112.0</td>
<td>148.4</td>
<td>115.0</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>156.0</td>
<td>110.5</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>104.4</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls City</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>103.5</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>107.6</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairbury</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>103.8</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>105.0</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holdrege</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>104.1</td>
<td>125.5</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>139.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chadron</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>123.8</td>
<td>110.6</td>
<td>107.7</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Bow</td>
<td>101.3</td>
<td>105.9</td>
<td>203.3</td>
<td>110.5</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>112.1</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Continued from first page) income in 1965 than the national average of $2,746. Colorado was only $36 lower. Nebraska was $117 lower. All of the others in the 5-state group were in between these two states, ranging from $70 to $107 below the national average. Each of the states in the 3-state group also ranked below the national average. Wyoming was lower by $71; North Dakota by $350; and South Dakota by $416.

Among the activities of state and local governments, the costs of construction and maintenance of highways and the operation of public schools are adversely affected by sparsity of population. It costs almost as much to operate a school with 10 pupils in a sparsely populated area as one with 25 pupils elsewhere because the major item of cost is the teacher's salary. Likewise it takes more miles of highway per resident to service farmers and ranchers in a sparsely settled area.

Since highway and public school costs account for about three-fourths of the entire cost of state and local government, one might reasonably expect that the cost of state and local government in Nebraska would fall somewhere between the averages of the 5-state and the 3-state groups. Chart 2 shows that state and local tax collections in Nebraska in 1965 were substantially below what might have been expected. Whereas seven of the nine states included in the analysis collected more taxes per $1,000 of personal income than the nationwide average, Nebraska and Missouri collected substantially less.

Although the average of state and local tax collections per $1,000 of personal income in the 3-state group was higher than the average in the 5-state group, the inverse relationship between tax collections and population (which might have been anticipated) did not prevail. South Dakota, which in the 3-state group has the largest population, collected more per $1,000 of personal income than either North Dakota or Wyoming.

Minnesota, whose population exceeds that of any state except Missouri in the 5-state group, ranked at the top in state and local tax collections per $1,000 of personal income. Nebraska, whose tax collections were at a rate almost 15 percent below the national average and almost 30 percent below Minnesota's, is farther below the national and regional averages than any other state except Missouri.

One of the important causes for Nebraska's relatively low ranking with respect to state and local tax collections is the comparatively low pay scale for public employees. The annual average salary paid Nebraska public school classroom teachers in 1965 was $1,327 below the national average, $1,003 below the 5-state average, and $190 below the 3-state average.

In contrast to the situation respecting public school teachers, average weekly earnings of production workers in manufacturing industries are fairly uniform among the states included in this analysis. Missouri, Nebraska, and North Dakota ranked below the national average in 1964, while the other six states were somewhat above average. The specific rates were as follows: all-state average, $102.37; Missouri, $101.32; Minnesota, $107.06; Iowa, $109.90; Kansas, $111.24; Colorado, $112.34; Nebraska, $101.93; South Dakota, $106.70; North Dakota, $97.41; and Wyoming, $108.57.

Data concerning other civilian earnings in the various states were not readily available for this study.

A recent study by M. M. Chambers of Indiana University shows that state support to institutions of higher education increased less percentage wise in Nebraska during the past six years than in any other of the 50 states. Reports of
Continued from page 4) employment conditions in other state
institutions in Nebraska reflect a similar situation. Low rates
of employee compensation make possible low tax collections.

This analysis raises questions for which it does not provide the
answers. For example: 1. Do the comparatively low state and
local tax collections in Nebraska indicate efficient governmental
perations, or do these figures provide evidence of exploitation of
public servants? 2. Do these data reveal a major cause of
out-migration of so many of our talented people? 3. Does the
tact that state and local tax collections in seven of the nine states
included in the analysis exceed the national average demonstrate
ack of efficiency in government on the part of the seven? 4. If
evations from the nationwide average reflect differences in effi-
cency, how do we explain the tendency for these deviations to fol-
low regional patterns? Each reader will of course supply his own
answers to these questions.

E. B. SCHMIDT

EMPLOYMENT IN NEBRASKA: 1965

It has been customary to present in these pages annually the
employment figures compiled by the State Department of Labor.
They are tabulated on page 6 in this issue, and percentage com-
parisons are made with 1960 and 1964. Some of the preliminary
figures for 1964, published last year (September, 1965), have now
been revised.

The 1965 figures, for the most part, show a continuation of the
movements evidenced in recent years. The total labor force and
stal employment in the state continued to decline. Nebraska's
civilian labor force reached its peak in 1961, and in 1965 the total
was exactly the same as in 1960. Total employment has been
declining since 1962.

These declines result from the continued drop in agricultural
employment, including operators and unpaid family workers as
well as hired workers. From 1960 to 1965 the reduction in such
employment amounted to more than 20%. We continue to hear that
oner or later this must level off, but so far the decline has con-
cluded without abatement - in fact, at an accelerated pace. From
963 to 1964 the drop was 5%; from 1964 to 1965, nearly 8%.

In spite of this decline, however, agriculture continues as the
largest major segment of the Nebraska economy from the stand-
point of employment, with 20% of the total labor force. This is
approximately three times the percentage for the nation as a whole
and nearly equal to the combined total in manufacturing and the
service industries in Nebraska.

By way of contrast with the 20.5% drop in agricultural employ-
ment in the state from 1960 to 1965, nonagricultural employment
rose 6.5%. Manufacturing employment increased less than 3%
onver. Within the manufacturing sector the largest increases,
oth numerically and percentage wise, have been in machinery and
equipment. In 1960 nearly half of manufacturing employment was
the food industries, but since then this sector has been declining
apidly. The 10% decrease from 1960 to 1965 included a 5% drop
a 1965. The impact of automation is evidenced by the reduction of
to more than 20% in employment in the meat processing and bakery
industries over the five-year period. In the food sector during this
team period only dairying and "other food" manufacture showed
increases, and these increases came to a halt in 1965.

With total employment declining while the population of the state
continues its slow growth, the percentage of the labor force unem-
ployed has been inching upward. This figure has regularly been
substantially below the national level, but the number unemployed
increased approximately one-sixth from 1960 to 1965, and the rate
for the state is now approaching that for the nation.

Other noteworthy facts revealed by the latest figures may be
summarized as follows:
1. Among the major employment categories the largest numerical
and percentage increases, in 1965 as well as over the 5-year
period, have been in the service industries.
2. Within the services the largest sub-categories are professional
services and private schools and organizations, and these have
also shown the largest increases.
3. In 1965 for the first time employment in the service industries
exceeded that in manufacturing.
4. The largest major segment of nonagricultural employment is
trade. Within this segment employment growth has been prin-
cipally at the retail level. All types of stores have shared in this
growth except those selling building supplies and farm equip-
ment, with employment in eating and drinking places up a whop-
ning 25% from 1960 to 1965. Employment in food stores rose
10% over the 5-year period, but dropped 6% in 1965.
5. Employment in transportation, communications, and utilities
continued to show a downward movement in 1965.
6. An almost identical downward movement percentage wise for the
5-year period appears in construction, but in this area em-
ployment was the same in 1965 as in 1964.
7. Total private employment dropped 1% in 1965 and comprised 83%
of the state's labor force as compared with 85% in 1960.
8. Government employment rose 2% in 1965 and 12% over the 5-
year period. Federal government employment in the state,
however, dropped 2% in 1965 to the lowest level since 1960.
9. Most of the growth in state and local employment was in the
field of education, which showed a 5% increase in 1965 and a
10% increase from 1960 to 1965.

In summary, Nebraska is still in need of some impetus to change
its sluggish performance in the field of employment. Nothing has
yet appeared on the horizon to offset or absorb the continued ex-
odus from agriculture.

E. S. WALLACE

THE RETAIL TRADE ECONOMY OF DAVID CITY, NEBRASKA,
authored by Dr. Edward L. Hauswald and Mr. J. Timothy Wilson
of this bureau, is now available on a limited loan basis. This
report can serve as a model for similar studies in other com-
}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE NEBRASKA CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE, 1960, 1964, and 1965</th>
<th>Thousands of Persons*</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
<th>Percent of Total 1965</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Civilian Labor Force</td>
<td>635.1</td>
<td>638.7</td>
<td>635.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>617.7</td>
<td>618.5</td>
<td>614.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>160.0</td>
<td>136.4</td>
<td>127.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonagricultural</td>
<td>457.7</td>
<td>481.5</td>
<td>487.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>67.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Materials</td>
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<td>Metals</td>
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*Figures are monthly averages rounded to the nearest hundred; therefore, changes of 100 are not significant and percentages for such changes have not been calculated. The figure for unemployment includes a few hundred each year involved in labor-management disputes.

1. Agricultural employment includes all hired agricultural workers, operators, and unpaid family workers.
2. Includes crude petroleum and natural gas, stone quarries, and sand and gravel pits.
3. Includes local and intercity passenger service, air transportation, pipe lines, and transportation services.
4. Includes privately owned electric, gas, water, and steam supply companies and irrigation systems. Employees of governmental units supplying these services are included in Government.
5. Includes service stations.
6. Includes medical and other health services, legal services, and miscellaneous services.
7. Includes horticultural and animal husbandry services and hatcheries.
8. Includes proprietors, self-employed, and unpaid family workers in nonagricultural industries, and domestic workers in private households.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Division of Employment.