Low Per Capita Personal Income in Nebraska and the Great Plains

John Austin

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Low Per Capita Personal Income in Nebraska and the Great Plains

John Austin

Overview

Over the past 30 years, there has been a major shift in the location of low per capita personal income counties within the U. S. Thirty years ago, poverty was primarily associated with the southeast states. In the period from 1969 to 1973, 76 percent of the nation's low per capita personal income counties were in the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Southeast region.

From the initial period until the most recent five-year period, 1994-1998, there was a major shift in U.S. counties in the lowest quintile of per capita personal income (Figure 1). The net movement was 164 counties and the lion's share (95) went from the Southeast to the Great Plains. The Great Plains now has 184 of the 622 U.S. counties in the lowest quintile.

In the 1994-1998 period, there were 17 Nebraska counties in the lowest quintile of per capita personal income. Most were ranching counties in the Sandhills. Since cattle prices have improved from the 1994-1998 period, it is likely that these ranching counties will work their way off the list of lowest per capita personal income counties. However, there is concern that some other Nebraska counties may replace them.

Figure 1

1The Southeast region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.
The picture is less clear for the Great Plains as a whole. Many Great Plains counties were impacted by low cattle prices, but a majority of the Great Plains low per capita personal income counties had relatively high minority populations. These populations typically receive lower incomes than nonminority populations. A major reversal of these income differentials is unlikely in the near future.

Major personal income components are:
- other labor income
- wages and salaries
- dividends, interest, and rent
- transfer payments
- nonfarm proprietors' income
- farm proprietors' income
- farm income

Per capita personal income is the total of personal income from all sources, divided by total population including all adults and children.

Quintiles of county per capita personal income result from first sorting the county per capita personal income from highest to lowest, then dividing the sorted data into five groups. Each group contains 20 percent of all counties. There are 3,109 counties in the U.S. and each quintile contains about 622 counties.

The principle data source for this study is the personal income data from the BEA. Annual county data were available for total personal income and major components from 1969 to 1998. The availability of population data for all the counties allows the calculation of per capita personal income figures for all the major components of personal income and enables the comparison of counties. In order to eliminate some of the random disturbances in the data, the data were grouped into five-year periods and averaged, then divided into quintiles.

The Nebraska Experience

In the 1969 to 1973 period Nebraska had no counties in the bottom quintile of per capita personal income. Over the past three decades, Nebraska has shared in the Great Plains acquisition of low per capita personal income counties. Yet, the local response in those counties to this news was disbelief. In the 1994-1998 period, Nebraska had 17 of the lowest quintile counties in the U.S. (Figure 2).

The primary force behind the descent in per capita personal income was a major drop in farm income in the 17 counties, specifically, livestock operations.

Figure 2
Nebraska Counties in the Lowest Per Capita Personal Income Quintile, 1994-1998

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An issue in per capita analysis is data accuracy. Use of five-year averages mitigates the problem somewhat. County population data are based on intercensal estimates. Some intercensal estimates differ substantially with the 2000 census. Errors exceed 5 percent for 6 of the 17 Nebraska counties examined.

There are some characteristics in common among the 17 counties. All but one—Dawes—are classified in the lowest quintile of average population in the U.S. It is ranked 630th, just eight from the bottom of the second lowest quintile. All the counties are classified as nonmetro. Nine of 10 of the state’s smallest population counties are on the list of lowest per capita personal income counties. Ten of the 17 are in the Sandhills.

All but two low per capita personal income counties are classified as farm dependent by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Fifteen are cattle counties where farm income is a large percentage of total income and above average shares of farm receipts are from livestock. Table 1 displays the percentage of farm cash receipts from livestock and products, the percent of pastureland, and the average farm size in the 17 low per capita personal income counties. This reinforces the idea that most are ranching counties. All but Thurston County have percents of pastureland above the state average. All but three—Thurston, Sherman, and Boyd—have average farm sizes above the state average.

Table 2 shows per capita farm income during the 1994-1998 period to be in the lowest U.S. quintile for 11 of the 17. In fact, all had negative farm incomes in that period. However, the farm income story is not uniform across the 17 counties. Of the remaining six counties, four had per capita farm income rankings in the top quintile, and none were in the fourth quintile.

Matching the poor performance in farm income rankings during the period, 11 counties had per capita wages and salaries rankings in the lowest quintile. The six remaining counties were evenly split between the third and fourth quintiles. There are few nonfarm employment opportunities available in these counties. Farm dependency for these counties and others like them implies that they are especially vulnerable to agricultural cycles.

Farm dependent counties are defined as nonmetro counties with 20 percent or more labor and proprietors’ income from farming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Percent of Cash Receipts from Livestock</th>
<th>Percent Pastureland</th>
<th>Average Farm Size (acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arthur</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>5,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>2,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaine</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>3,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyd</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>822*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>5,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawes</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>1,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>5,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooker</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>4,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keya Paha</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>2,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>2,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loup</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>2,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McPherson</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>3,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheridan</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>2,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>45.0*</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>671*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sioux</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>3,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>4,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurston</td>
<td>49.2*</td>
<td>10.1*</td>
<td>499*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nebraska 60.1 52.6 885

Note: * Indicates that the county average is below the state average.

Table 2
Average Per Capita Farm Income, Selected Nebraska Counties 1994-1998 ($)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Arthur</th>
<th>Loup</th>
<th>Hooker</th>
<th>McPherson</th>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Thomas</th>
<th>Blaine</th>
<th>Dawes</th>
<th>Sheridan</th>
<th>Sioux</th>
<th>Cherry</th>
<th>Keya Paha</th>
<th>Boyd</th>
<th>Sherman</th>
<th>Thurston</th>
<th>Logan</th>
<th>Banner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-7,588</td>
<td>-5,729</td>
<td>-4,903</td>
<td>-4,763</td>
<td>-4,189</td>
<td>-3,117</td>
<td>-2,771</td>
<td>-728</td>
<td>-640</td>
<td>-509</td>
<td>-38</td>
<td>-169</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>1,397</td>
<td>1,901</td>
<td>2,484</td>
<td>4,813</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These counties were exceptional in their per capita dividends, interest, and rent (DIR) rankings. Only Thurston County ranked in the lowest quintile, while six counties were in the top quintile. One theory that explains the DIR positioning is that these counties have populations that generally are older than average. Older persons tend to have relatively high levels of wealth.

As is often the case for agricultural dependent counties, the average ages in the counties are high. That implies that a relatively small percentage of the population is in the prime working-age group—ages 18 to 65. It also implies diminished small future population growth and reliance upon transfer incomes, principally Social Security. All but two counties had a median age above the state's average. Further, the counties have aged rapidly in the last 30 years.

The demographics of these counties indicate that the per capita transfer payments should be relatively high. However, seven of the 17 have per capita transfer payments in the lowest U.S. quintile. These relatively low Social Security payments are tied to the relative importance of wages and salaries. Low wage and salary employment opportunities mean low contributions to the Social Security System; hence, low Social Security payments.

Since cattle prices have already recovered from the depths experienced in the 1994-1998 period it is likely that the 15 cattle counties will have moved out of the lowest quintile when the data for 1999 and 2003 are released. Of the remaining two counties, it is not clear that either will move from the list. Sherman County is a farm dependent grain county. The near future of grain farming income is not promising. Farm income from farm dependent grain counties is likely to be low when the data for 1999 to 2003 are released. Diversification for such counties is imperative if they are to avoid low incomes in the future.

Thurston County may remain on the list of low per capita personal income counties. Native Americans comprise 52 percent of the Thurston County population. Low incomes often are associated with minority populations. Like similar counties in other states, the prospects for higher incomes are small unless employment can be increased. Some progress has been made in this area, based on funds received from an Iowa casino owned by a tribe in Thurston County, Nebraska.

The Great Plains Experience

In the 1994-1998 period, 184 Great Plains counties were in the lowest quintile of per capita personal income (Figure 3). Some of the counties noted in Figure 3 are not in an area strictly defined as the Great Plains. Counties in western Montana, Colorado, and New Mexico are not considered part of the Great Plains. However, for purposes of this article, these counties are enumerated as part of the Great Plains. Groups of low per capita personal income counties are found along the Texas border, southern Oklahoma, western Nebraska, the western Dakotas, western and eastern Montana. There were no low per capita personal income counties in Wyoming during the period.

The Great Plains low per capita personal income counties are not similar to their corresponding Nebraska counties in their dependence on farm income. The majority of low per capita personal income Great Plains counties are nonfarm dependent counties. Table 3 displays the farm dependency status of the 184 Great Plains counties in the lowest quintile of the per capita personal income distribution.

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*Transfer payments in personal income accounts are dominated by Social Security and Aid to Families with Dependent Children payments. Farm transfer payments are accounted for in the farm income data.*
Table 3
Farm Dependence and Farm Receipts Type, Selected Great Plains Counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Nonfarm Dependent</th>
<th>Farm Dependent</th>
<th>Grain</th>
<th>Livestock</th>
<th>State Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Great Plains Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>184</strong></td>
<td><strong>184</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only two of Nebraska’s counties are classed as nonfarm dependent. In the Great Plains, 108 of the 184 counties are classed as nonfarm dependent. Fourteen of Nebraska’s 15 farm dependent counties receive over 50 percent of their marketing dollars from livestock. In the Great Plains, 57 of the 76 farm dependent counties receive over 50 percent of their marketing dollars from livestock. Thus, only 31 percent (57 out of 184) of the Great Plains counties share the cattle county syndrome with Nebraska. Prospects for these cattle counties are that the low per capita personal income status will not persist as long as the cattle markets remain healthy.

In order to establish common characteristics of the low per capita personal income Great Plains counties, their distribution by major per capita personal income categories is presented in Table 4.

Per capita wages and salaries are near the bottom of the income distribution, with 83.1 percent of the per capita wages and salaries in the bottom two quintiles. Such a representation indicates that the problem of low per capita personal income in the Great Plains may not be a temporary one, since it could take years for this positioning at the low end of the wages and salaries spectrum to be reversed.

Table 4
Rankings For 184 Great Plains Counties With Lowest Per Capita Total Personal Income, by Major Personal Income Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quintile</th>
<th>Wages &amp; Salaries</th>
<th>Dividends, Interest, &amp; Rent</th>
<th>Transfer Payments</th>
<th>Nonfarm Proprietors’ Income</th>
<th>Farm Proprietors’ Income</th>
<th>Farm Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First (highest)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth (lowest)</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total         | 100              | 100                          | 100               | 100                        | 100                      | 100         |
In contrast to corresponding low per capita personal income Nebraska counties, low per capita personal income Great Plains counties are somewhat weighted toward the bottom of the per capita DIR category. This distribution indicates that there is a tendency toward low per capita wealth. Low wealth, in turn, indicates that improvement of low incomes will be difficult.

The distribution of per capita transfer payment income is nearly uniform in the Great Plains. Transfer payments help to mitigate the impact of low income levels. Nonfarm proprietors’ income is the income of small businesses and some professionals who have formed unincorporated businesses. The per capita distribution is similar to the distribution of DIR.

Per capita farm proprietors’ income is biased toward the low end of the distribution. Fifty-four percent of the counties are in the lowest quintile of farm proprietors’ income. In fact, farm proprietors’ income was negative for 101 of the 184 low per capita personal income counties in the Great Plains.

The results for per capita farm income are similar to that in farm proprietors’ income. The difference between the two is farm wages. Since farm wages are positive, there are fewer counties with negative farm income (72) than with negative farm proprietors’ income.

In summary, the low per capita personal income Great Plains counties are diverse, but there is a tendency toward low wages and salaries, lower wealth, and lower farm income. Not all low per capita personal income counties share these problems.

Since minority status often is associated with low per capita incomes, an enumeration of minority status among the low per capita personal income Great Plains counties was undertaken (Table 5). The table has been arranged into southern and northern Great Plains states. The dominant minority is Native American in the northern Great Plains and Hispanic in the southern Great Plains, except in Oklahoma.

Unlike Nebraska where only one county of the 17 has a significant minority population, 122 of the 184 Great Plains counties contain a minority population that exceeds 10 per-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5</th>
<th>Minority Status, Selected Great Plains Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Counties with Over 20 Percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number of Counties with Over 10 Percent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Great Plains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Great Plains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cent. Ninety counties have minority populations of 20 percent or more. To the extent that minority populations are paid less than their nonminority counterparts, low per capita personal incomes likely will persist in these counties.

Low per capita personal income Great Plains counties are sorted by farm dependence and minority status (Table 6). In farm dependent counties, 36 of 76, or nearly half, have significant minority populations. For nonfarm dependent counties, 86 of 108, or nearly 80 percent, have significant minority populations.

The 22 counties that are neither farm dependent nor have a relatively large minority group are geographically dispersed and are nonmetro. Livestock is the primary source of farm marketing receipts. Low cattle prices explain low per capita personal incomes, though these counties are not fully farm dependent.

**Lessons to Learn**

A large number of low per capita personal income, nonfarm dependent Great Plains counties are concentrated in Texas and Oklahoma. To the extent that low per capita personal incomes are associated with minority populations, low per capita personal income status likely will persist. A primary concern is whether that low per capita personal income status will shift to Nebraska. Since the low per capita personal income status of those Great Plains counties is associated with relatively high minority populations and since Nebraska has few counties with high minority concentrations, it is unlikely that Nebraska will experience an increase in the number of low per capita personal income, nonfarm dependent counties.

Instead, Nebraska's low per capita personal income situation largely concerned the cattle cycle. But, the low income status of farm dependent counties could shift to small rural grain farming counties. Grain markets are suffering from high production and low demand. International demand is low due to the weakened state of the world's economies. Further, international competition in the supply of grain is increasing. The future of government supports for farming is unknown. Without supports, last year's net farm income in Nebraska would have been negative. If federal payments are reduced, farm income from grain operations will be depressed. Low population nonmetro counties that continue to be dependent on grain farming run the risk of becoming low per capita personal income counties.

Many farm dependent counties in Nebraska and the Great Plains run the risk of falling into the lowest level of per capita income distribution. Few of the Great Plains small population nonmetro counties have sizeable income from wages and salaries. Relief is available if they diversify employment into private nonfarm activities that are compatible with the available resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minority Status</th>
<th>Farm Dependent</th>
<th>Nonfarm Dependent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>Grain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: High minority status means that at least 10 percent of a single minority group lives in the county.

The 11 states with the fastest growth in real gross state product (GSP) were Arizona, Oregon, Colorado, Idaho, New Hampshire, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Georgia, Texas, and North Carolina. Together, these states accounted for about 30 percent of the U.S. growth from 1992 to 1999 (Figure 1).

In all the fast growth states except Nevada and Utah, growth was very strong in business services (includes software development, data processing services, and computer rental and leasing) and in two high-tech manufacturing industries, electronics and electrical devices (includes semiconductor manufacturing and related products); and industrial machinery and computer equipment (includes computer and related hardware manufacturing). In addition:

- In Colorado, Georgia, and Texas, communications (includes telephone, satellite, and multimedia services) contributed significantly to the growth in real GSP.

- In New Hampshire, Utah, and North Carolina, depository institutions (includes banks and other financial institutions) contributed significantly.

- In Nevada hotels and other lodging places contributed significantly, reflecting strength in tourism.

- In New Mexico oil and gas extraction contributed significantly.

Noticeably absent from the group of western states with rapid growth were California and Washington. In California which accounts for the largest share (13 percent) of the nation’s GSP and has a heavy concentration of high-tech industries, yet real GSP grew only 3.9 percent. The slow growth in California mainly reflected its longer-than-average recovery from the 1990-91 recession and weakness in federal government (both military and civilian); defense related durables manufacturing, mainly other transportation equipment; health services; and finance, insurance, and real estate, mainly insurance carriers and depository institutions.

In Washington real GSP grew 4.7 percent; strength in business services, trade, and real estate was partly offset by declines in depository institutions, transportation equipment excluding motor vehicles, lumber and wood products, and printing and publishing.

The 12 states with the slowest growth in real GSP were Hawaii, Alaska, West Virginia, Wyoming, North Dakota, Maine, Montana, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Vermont, Maryland, and Rhode Island. Together, these states accounted for less than 10 percent of the U.S. growth in the 1992-1999 period.

Of the 12 slowest growing states, seven were in the eastern part of the nation; all 12 states had population growth below or near the national average of 1 percent.

In these 12 states contributions from business services and high-tech manufacturing were offset by weakness in more traditional industries: agriculture, forestry, and fishing (mainly farms); manufacturing (mainly food and related products, apparel and textile products, lumber and wood products, printing and publishing, and instruments and scientific products); finance, insurance, and real estate (mainly depository institutions and insurance carriers); services (mainly legal and repair services); and government (mainly federal military and civilian government). In addition:

- In Alaska, Vermont, and Maryland, declines in paper products contributed significantly to the slow growth in real GSP.

- In Alaska, Wyoming, and Montana, declines in oil and gas extraction contributed significantly to the slow growth in real GSP; the declines in oil and gas extraction mainly reflected low crude oil prices in the late 1990s. In Wyoming nonmetallic minerals also declined.

- In Hawaii weakness in all major industries contributed to the decline in real GSP. The decline reflected the state’s slow recovery from the 1990-91 recession and impacts from the 1998 Asian financial crisis, which affected growth in tourism, in exportable agriculture-related products, and in the construction industries.

1Copied from a recent U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis report.
Figure 1
Average Annual Percent Change in Real Gross State Product, 1992-1999

- States with fastest growth rates
- States with slowest growth rates
- All other states

Note: The 11 fastest growing states (and 12 slow-growing states) were picked because their average annual growth rates in 1992-99 in real GSP are more than one-half of one standard deviation above or below the average annual GSP growth rates for all states.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Nebraska Stats

Total Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment

Unemployment Rate

Note: All 1999 and 2000 monthly employment data are considered estimates until benchmarked. Data shown for 1999 and 2000 are the most current revised estimates available. Final benchmarked monthly data for 1999 are expected to be released by the Nebraska Department of Labor in mid-2000.
## Net Taxable Retail Sales* for Nebraska Cities ($000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February YTD</th>
<th>YTD %</th>
<th>March YTD</th>
<th>YTD %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>($000)</td>
<td></td>
<td>($000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include motor vehicle sales. Motor vehicle net taxable sales are reported by county only.

### Source:
Nebraska Department of Revenue
### Net Taxable Retail Sales for Nebraska Counties ($000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>March 2001 YTD</th>
<th>YTD % Chg.</th>
<th>Other Sales</th>
<th>March 2001 YTD</th>
<th>YTD % Chg.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
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<td>1,217,814</td>
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<td>1,183</td>
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<td>Garfield</td>
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<tr>
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<td>292</td>
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<td>712</td>
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<td>1,537</td>
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<td>6,190</td>
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<td>Hooker</td>
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<td>132</td>
<td>387,72</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note on Net Taxable Retail Sales**

Users of this series should be aware that taxable retail sales are not generated exclusively by traditional outlets such as clothing, discount, and hardware stores. While businesses classified as retail trade firms account for, on average, slightly more than half of total taxable sales, sizable portions of taxable sales are generated by service establishments, electric and gas utilities, wholesalers, telephone and cable companies, and manufacturers.
Regional Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment '1999 to March'' 2001

Note to Readers
The charts on pages 8 and 9 report nonfarm employment by place of work for each region.
Regional Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment* 1999 to March** 2001

*By place of work
**Current month data are preliminary and subject to revision
Note: January-March 2000 monthly employment data are benchmarked. April 2000-March 2001 data are estimates and will be benchmarked in early 2002. Data for April-December 2001 are estimates until benchmarked in early 2003. All estimates are the most current revised data available.
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information - Kathy Copes
March 2001 Regional Retail Sales ($000)
YTD Change vs Yr. Ago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>YR 2001</th>
<th>Change vs Yr. Ago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Panhandle</td>
<td>20,332</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>50,082</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central</td>
<td>41,366</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Central</td>
<td>16,958</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Central</td>
<td>187,515</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total*</td>
<td>1,744,875</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Regional values may not add to state total due to unallocated sales
Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

State Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment by Industry*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>March 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>905,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction &amp; Mining</td>
<td>41,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>118,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durables</td>
<td>56,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nondurables</td>
<td>61,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCU**</td>
<td>58,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>213,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale</td>
<td>53,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>160,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE***</td>
<td>60,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>255,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>157,317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*By place of work
**Transportation, Communication, and Utilities
***Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

Consumer Price Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>May 2001</th>
<th>% Change YR Ago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Items</td>
<td>177.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commodities</td>
<td>152.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>202.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*U = All urban consumers
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

State Labor Force Summary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>March 2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force</td>
<td>943,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>913,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*By place of residence
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

Note: January-March 2000 monthly employment data are benchmarked. April 2000-March 2001 data are estimates and will be benchmarked in early 2002. Data for April-December 2001 are estimates until benchmarked in early 2003. All estimates are the most current revised data available. Labor force data for 2000 and 2001 will be revised.
County of the Month

Perkins
Grant County Seat

License plate prefix number: 74
Size of county: 885 square miles, ranks 22nd in the state
Population: 3,200 in 2000, a change of −5.0 percent from 1990
Per capita personal income: $24,466 in 1999, ranks 14th in the state
Net taxable retail sales ($000): $23,523 in 2000, a change of 6.4 percent from 1999; $5,865 from January through March 2001, a change of 2.4 percent from the same period the previous year.
Unemployment rate: 2.7 percent in Perkins County, 2.9 percent in Nebraska in 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Perkins County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonfarm employment (1999)†</td>
<td>890,621 950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(wage &amp; salary)</td>
<td>(percent of total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Mining</td>
<td>5.0 6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>13.2 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCU</td>
<td>6.4 4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>6.2 20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>18.0 12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRE</td>
<td>6.8 4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>27.3 8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>17.1 41.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agriculture:
- Number of farms: 490 in 1997; 479 in 1992; 591 in 1987
- Average farm size: 1,128 acres in 1997; 1,113 acres in 1992
- Market value of farm products sold: $64.9 million in 1997 ($132,353 average per farm); $50.0 million in 1992 ($104,572 average per farm)

†By place of work

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Nebraska Department of Labor, Nebraska Department of Revenue.
ChartMaker is a new feature in NU ONRAMP that enables users to select a row of data and a series of years, view the information in a chart, format a chart title, and save the chart to a hard drive or print it directly from the website.

ChartMaker currently is applicable to Nebraska income and employment data. Later, other data sets will be added to the feature to give ChartMaker users a broader range of data.