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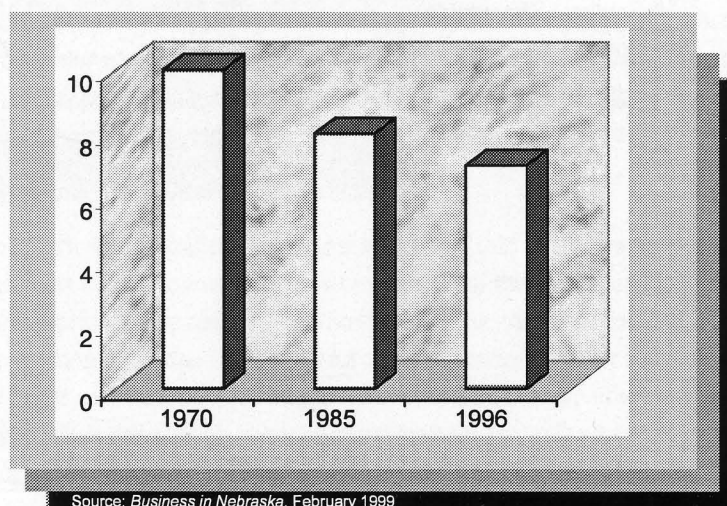
Too Many Here and Not Enough There—Job Shortages in Nebraska's Most Rural Counties

Lisa Darlington

The February 1999 issue of *Business in Nebraska* reported economic and demographic trends in the 52 Nebraska counties classified as *most rural*. Most rural counties contain only towns with fewer than 2,500 residents. This article extends the previous analysis by exploring potential gaps between the working-age population and available nonfarm jobs from 1997 to 2010 and factors that may contribute to working-age outmigration for most rural counties.

On the economic side, the February article reported that while the number of private nonfarm jobs in these counties grew from 1970 to 1996, the most rural share of total private nonfarm jobs declined overall and in most sectors (Figure 1). Further, nearly all of the nonfarm private sector job growth from 1970 to 1996 occurred outside of the most rural counties. If the trend continues unchecked, job growth will lag the rest of the state and, as a result, the most rural counties will continue to account for a decreasing share of nonfarm private employment.

Figure 1
Most Rural Share of Private Nonfarm Employment
Statewide, Selected Years (percent)



Source: *Business in Nebraska*, February 1999

On the demographic side, the populations of the majority of most rural counties have fallen significantly from their peak levels—many of those peaks occurred prior to 1940. However, an 8 percent increase in the prime working-age population (ages 20 to 64) in most rural counties is projected from 1997 to 2010. The slow job growth and declining job share, combined with an increasing labor force, will produce a substantial gap between available jobs and available workers.

In 1997 the prime working-age population in the most rural counties was more than 103,000 (Table 1). Assuming a conservative 75 percent labor force participation rate for this age group, the labor force totaled approximately 77,500. Nonfarm jobs (including government) in establishments located in the most rural counties totaled nearly 54,000, yielding a job deficit of more than 23,500. Assuming an unemployment rate of 2.7 percent¹, more than 75,000 most rural residents available to work were employed in 1997. Thus, it can be concluded that approximately 21,500 of these residents commuted to other counties or metro areas for employment in 1997.

Moving forward to 2010, the prime working-age population is expected to increase approximately 8 percent to 111,000 as the older children and teenagers of today mature to working age. The segments of the working-age population from 20 to 34 years and 50 to 64 will be 36 percent larger in 2010 than the corresponding categories in 1997 (Table 2). These differences will total roughly 10,300 and 11,000, respectively. The growth in the latter category is due primarily to the aging of those already present in the work force, since no significant change in net migration is projected for this group. The segment of the working-age population from 35 to 49 is expected to be 31 percent smaller in 2010 than in 1997 assuming, that no significant change in net migration—specifically, increased immigration—occurs.

Table 1
Job Deficit Analysis—Most Rural Counties, 1997 and 2010

	1997	2010	
Population Ages 20-64	103,234	111,220	
Labor Force	77,426	83,415	(75% participation rate)
Nonfarm Jobs—Most Rural Counties	53,773	58,600	
Job Deficit	23,653	24,815	
Employed Residents	75,335	81,163	(2.7% unemployment rate)
Employed Outside Most Rural Area	21,562	22,563	
Sources: Bureau of Business Research (BBR) Population Projections; Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Force/Work Force Summary			

¹Simple average of 1997 annual unemployment rates for most rural counties.
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Force/Work Force Summary

Again, assuming a 75 percent participation rate, over 83,000 prime working-age individuals will be available for employment in 2010. If the 1990 to 1997 trend continues to 2010, available nonfarm jobs will total roughly 58,600, a 9 percent increase. The job deficit, therefore, will increase to nearly 25,000. Assuming the same level of unemployment, more than 23,000 most rural workers either will commute or relocate to other areas for employment.

Will the excess workers available in the most rural counties continue to commute to surrounding counties and metro areas or will they simply relocate in larger numbers to the

metro areas, thereby eliminating the need to commute? This question cannot be answered directly. Young workers, however, typically are the most mobile segment of the prime working-age population. Given that younger workers account for the majority of the increase expected by 2010, substantial outmigration may occur. Indications that the economic drawing power of metro areas in and around Nebraska will not diminish in the near future certainly do nothing to counter this expectation.

In 1997 nonfarm jobs in the three metro areas in Nebraska—Lincoln, Omaha, and Sioux City—totaled 730,000

Table 2
Change in Prime Working-Age Population,
1997 and 2010

	1997	2010	Percent Change	Difference
Ages 20-34	29,094	39,461	36%	10,367
Ages 35-49	43,731	30,358	-31%	(13,373)
Ages 50-64	30,409	41,401	36%	10,992
Ages 20-64	103,234	111,220	8%	7,986

Source: Bureau of Business Research (BBR) Population Projections

Labor Force Participation

The labor force participation rate reflects the proportion of working-age adults who either are employed or are unemployed and seeking work. Working-age individuals who are not employed and not seeking work are not considered part of the labor force. Any noninstitutionalized person ages 16 to 65 is considered a working-age adult and, therefore, a potential labor force participant. This analysis focuses on a subset of the total working-age population, individuals ages 20 to 64.

The 75 percent participation rate assumed for this analysis is a conservative estimate. A comparison of employment data for residents of the most rural counties and the total number of prime working-age residents indicates that the participation rate currently is greater than 80 percent. Statewide, the 1998 labor force participation rate for the entire working-age population (16 to 65) is estimated to have been well over 80 percent—despite that fact that 16 to 19 years olds typically have a much lower participation rate than the working-age population, as a whole.

(Table 3). The prime working-age population totaled 620,500. Assuming a labor force participation rate of 80 percent, the number of jobs available outnumbered workers by 232,000 in these areas in 1997. The addition of individuals ages 16 to 19 to the labor force calculations, at a 60 percent participation rate, reduced the worker deficit to roughly 192,000.

Data for Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Denver, Colorado, the two metro areas closest to the western third of Nebraska, reveal a worker deficit of more than 375,000 in 1997. The addition of 16- to 19-year old workers reduced this deficit by only 65,000 to roughly 310,000.

By 2010 worker deficits in both sets of metro areas will increase substantially. There will be 284,000 excess jobs in Lincoln, Omaha, and Sioux City, and nearly 445,000 excess jobs in Cheyenne and Denver. As in 1997, the addition of 16- to 19-year old workers does not significantly offset the deficits.

Employers address the problem of worker shortages through such mechanisms as aggressive recruiting, generous signing and performance bonuses, flexible scheduling, and family-friendly benefits such as child care services. These mechanisms can exert considerable pull on workers of all ages.

Adding to the pull exerted by plentiful jobs and generous benefits is the push exerted on wages. Tight labor markets, as seen in the metro areas where jobs outnumber workers, tend to generate relatively high wage levels. In contrast, loose labor markets, as seen in the most rural counties where workers substantially outnumber jobs, tend to depress wages. Data from the most recent Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) lend some support for these generalizations. The combined average hourly wage across industries and occupations in nonmetro Nebraska (including each of the 52 most rural counties) was \$9.42 (Table 4). In contrast, the metro average wage was \$11.81.

If current trends continue, the deficit in jobs available to the prime working-age population in most rural counties will not diminish over the next decade. Residents of most rural counties will continue to commute to other areas of the state for employment. In addition, the expanding shortages of workers in metro areas in and around Nebraska, combined with the lure of expanded benefits and higher wages, may lead to increased outmigration on the part of most rural residents, particularly those in the younger half of the working-age population.

Table 3
Worker Deficit Analysis, Selected Metro Areas,
1997 and 2010

Lincoln, Omaha, and Sioux City

	1997	2010	
Population Ages 20-64	620,582	721,381	
Labor Force	496,466	577,105	(80% participation rate)
Nonfarm Jobs	728,549	861,115	
Worker Deficit	232,083	284,010	

Cheyenne & Denver

	1997	2010	
Population Ages 20-64	1,229,165	1,495,867	
Labor Force	983,332	1,196,694	(80% participation rate)
Nonfarm Jobs	1,361,442	1,641,498	
Worker Deficit	378,110	444,804	

Sources: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.; BBR calculations

Table 4
New Full-time Average Hourly Wages, by Occupation and Sector
Metro, Nonmetro, All Industries, 3rd Quarter 1998

	Metro	Nonmetro
Executives/Administrators	\$21.00	\$17.57
Managers	21.40	15.46
Professional Specialists	18.36	14.48
Marketing/Sales Representatives	15.97	12.81
Administrative Support/Clerical	11.02	9.17
Service Workers	7.73	6.66
Transportation/Material Movers	10.84	9.93
Production/Craft/Repair	13.15	8.79
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	9.29	8.53
Combined Average Hourly Wage	\$11.81	\$9.42

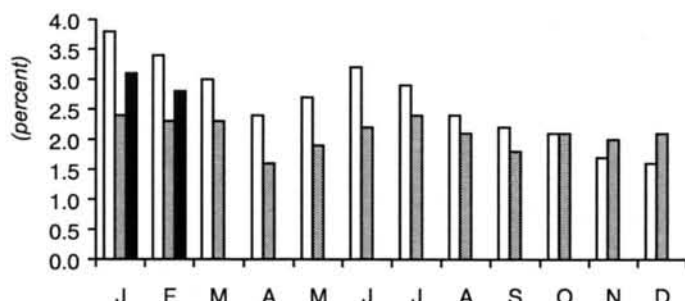
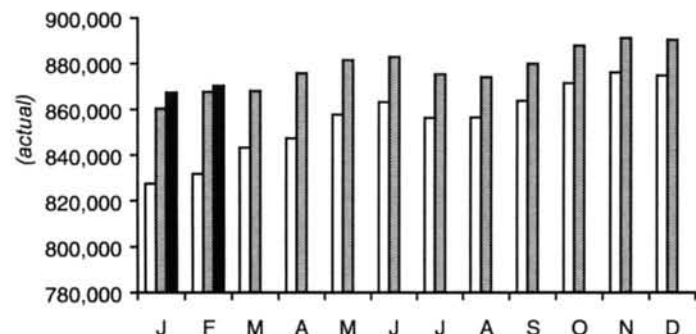
Source: NQBCS, 3rd Quarter 1998

Nebraska Stats

□ 1997 ▒ 1997 ■ 1999

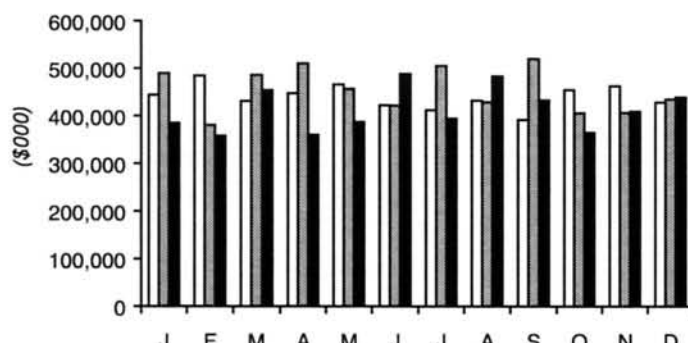
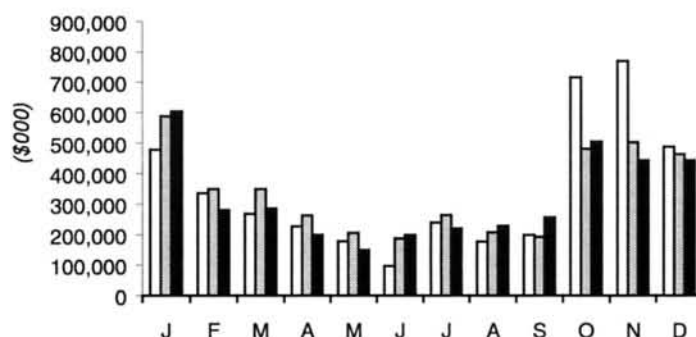
Total Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment

Unemployment Rate



Cash Receipts—Crops

Cash Receipts—Livestock



Net Taxable Retail Sales* for Nebraska Cities (\$000)

	December 1998 (\$000)	YTD (\$000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago		December 1998 (\$000)	YTD (\$000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
Ainsworth, Brown	2,429	22,646	3.2	Kenesaw, Adams	340	2,902	107.9
Albion, Boone	2,459	22,115	0.3	Kimball, Kimball	2,894	20,114	-0.4
Alliance, Box Butte	8,216	73,662	-0.9	La Vista, Sarpy	12,670	106,616	11.9
Alma, Harlan	844	8,245	1.0	Laurel, Cedar	449	4,169	-9.1
Arapahoe, Fumas	851	9,187	5.8	Lexington, Dawson	9,011	86,251	2.5
Arlington, Washington	379	2,432	-2.3	Lincoln, Lancaster	269,715	2,417,656	7.2
Arnold, Custer	368	3,229	0.4	Louisville, Cass	653	8,884	31.8
Ashland, Saunders	1,452	14,822	3.9	Loup City, Sherman	774	7,647	8.0
Atkinson, Holt	1,475	12,272	6.8	Lyons, Burt	647	6,230	4.0
Auburn, Nemaha	3,110	29,086	-2.0	Madison, Madison	1,167	9,529	-0.1
Aurora, Hamilton	3,503	32,060	0.7	McCook, Red Willow	14,814	137,402	4.5
Axtell, Kearney	147	898	-7.6	Milford, Seward	1,070	10,967	0.8
Bassett, Rock	614	5,734	3.7	Minatare, Scotts Bluff	197	1,860	-19.6
Battle Creek, Madison	810	7,667	-2.3	Minden, Kearney	2,304	21,020	-1.0
Bayard, Morrill	556	5,375	6.3	Mitchell, Scotts Bluff	1,210	8,878	-15.4
Beatrice, Gage	14,819	130,377	0.9	Morill, Scotts Bluff	571	5,664	5.3
Beaver City, Fumas	210	1,718	8.4	Nebraska City, Otoe	7,908	79,040	5.7
Bellevue, Sarpy	26,157	230,102	7.1	Neligh, Antelope	1,647	16,814	-5.8
Benkelman, Dundy	802	6,992	6.7	Newman Grove, Madison	355	3,559	-11.7
Bennington, Douglas	825	5,622	19.9	Norfolk, Madison	41,645	355,339	1.3
Blair, Washington	7,863	78,939	3.0	North Bend, Dodge	702	6,025	1.0
Bloomfield, Knox	893	8,083	-0.1	North Platte, Lincoln	30,619	268,903	5.1
Blue Hill, Webster	617	5,748	4.3	O'Neill, Holt	5,711	51,123	-0.2
Bridgeport, Morrill	1,012	12,861	-0.7	Oakland, Burt	854	8,453	6.1
Broken Bow, Custer	4,394	45,311	-2.4	Ogallala, Keith	6,180	68,129	5.2
Burwell, Garfield	1,123	9,591	3.8	Omaha, Douglas	617,106	5,685,583	6.2
Cairo, Hall	317	3,492	18.9	Ord, Valley	2,455	23,674	3.4
Central City, Merrick	2,127	20,931	1.9	Osceola, Polk	913	9,393	0.7
Chadron, Dawes	5,794	54,178	26.4	Oshkosh, Garden	671	5,884	13.8
Chappell, Deuel	603	5,420	6.8	Osmond, Pierce	556	5,601	7.4
Clarkson, Colfax	860	5,550	2.5	Oxford, Fumas	586	5,177	-21.7
Clay Center, Clay	487	4,497	17.3	Papillion, Sarpy	11,616	83,134	9.5
Columbus, Platte	25,057	248,527	3.4	Pawnee City, Pawnee	495	3,811	2.4
Cozad, Dawson	3,559	36,295	0.2	Pender, Thurston	935	8,885	-1.7
Crawford, Dawes	758	6,672	1.5	Pierce, Pierce	914	8,070	-3.5
Creighton, Knox	1,431	13,198	7.8	Plainview, Pierce	1,042	8,111	-4.8
Crete, Saline	4,142	38,838	-0.3	Plattsmouth, Cass	4,388	41,158	3.2
Crofton, Knox	547	4,841	-0.1	Ponca, Dixon	555	6,156	1.6
Curtis, Frontier	462	4,322	10.7	Ralston, Douglas	3,601	39,779	5.4
Dakota City, Dakota	394	4,548	-7.4	Randolph, Cedar	643	5,397	12.6
David City, Butler	1,815	17,254	4.2	Ravenna, Buffalo	902	9,168	-3.6
Deshler, Thayer	507	3,948	40.0	Red Cloud, Webster	978	8,590	-7.1
Dodge, Dodge	395	3,023	-2.5	Rushville, Sheridan	924	6,537	-1.2
Doniphan, Hall	1,040	13,414	54.7	Sargent, Custer	511	2,587	4.0
Eagle, Cass	332	4,695	7.6	Schuyler, Colfax	2,461	23,234	-0.5
Elgin, Antelope	688	5,138	-4.1	Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff	28,975	249,128	-2.7
Elkhorn, Douglas	3,752	29,612	16.2	Scribner, Dodge	659	5,881	-5.9
Elm Creek, Buffalo	715	4,628	16.5	Seward, Seward	5,913	56,971	-3.3
Elwood, Gosper	554	5,258	6.9	Shelby, Polk	419	3,900	-2.2
Fairbury, Jefferson	4,777	39,994	7.8	Shelton, Buffalo	667	7,800	16.4
Farmington, Fillmore	219	2,056	7.7	Sidney, Cheyenne	9,396	92,349	2.4
Falls City, Richardson	3,787	31,292	0.8	South Sioux City, Dakota	9,970	96,024	0.1
Franklin, Franklin	827	6,982	20.0	Springfield, Sarpy	572	5,687	49.4
Fremont, Dodge	28,167	256,707	6.3	St. Paul, Howard	1,418	14,712	-3.7
Friend, Saline	699	5,552	0.8	Stanton, Stanton	804	7,504	4.8
Fullerton, Nance	782	6,346	-5.7	Stromsburg, Polk	1,108	12,153	-4.4
Geneva, Fillmore	2,099	20,826	-0.6	Superior, Nuckolls	2,317	19,283	-1.5
Genoa, Nance	477	3,680	24.7	Sutherland, Lincoln	470	4,018	10.4
Gering, Scotts Bluff	4,430	42,458	6.5	Sutton, Clay	1,280	10,710	-11.3
Gibbon, Buffalo	980	10,147	3.4	Syracuse, Otoe	1,216	13,409	4.0
Gordon, Sheridan	2,524	20,949	-4.9	Tecumseh, Johnson	1,162	10,442	-6.9
Gothenburg, Dawson	2,920	26,978	1.3	Tekamah, Burt	1,509	13,608	2.0
Grand Island, Hall	68,009	613,114	5.7	Tilden, Madison	584	5,296	-1.3
Grant, Perkins	1,184	12,078	2.0	Utica, Seward	424	3,607	28.3
Gretna, Sarpy	4,402	40,034	0.4	Valentine, Cherry	5,329	49,771	5.9
Hartington, Cedar	2,079	19,959	-0.4	Valley, Douglas	1,016	14,435	0.5
Hastings, Adams	28,702	252,071	4.2	Wahoo, Saunders	2,901	28,380	-7.5
Hay Springs, Sheridan	568	4,113	0.6	Wakefield, Dixon	476	4,237	-5.4
Hebron, Thayer	2,201	22,703	-2.8	Wauneta, Chase	518	3,736	-1.2
Henderson, York	1,052	8,043	6.4	Waverly, Lancaster	848	9,566	4.1
Hickman, Lancaster	449	3,232	10.0	Wayne, Wayne	4,644	40,477	7.0
Holdrege, Phelps	5,314	52,699	-3.8	Weeping Water, Cass	855	8,257	7.2
Hooper, Dodge	469	4,264	0.5	West Point, Cuming	4,813	45,722	-1.9
Humboldt, Richardson	588	5,898	-3.4	Wilber, Saline	693	5,529	-2.6
Humphrey, Platte	891	9,378	4.5	Wisner, Cuming	1,032	7,569	-7.7
Imperial, Chase	2,575	24,713	7.1	Wood River, Hall	471	4,854	-6.7
Juniata, Adams	348	2,456	-8.2	Wymore, Gage	481	4,867	-3.1
Kearney, Buffalo	45,244	386,780	8.0	York, York	12,064	123,937	11.3

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

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

Net Taxable Retail Sales for Nebraska Counties (\$000)

Motor Vehicle Sales				Other Sales			Motor Vehicle Sales				Other Sales		
December	YTD	YTD		December	YTD	YTD	December	YTD	YTD	December	YTD	YTD	
1998	YTD	% Chg. vs		1998	YTD	% Chg. vs	1998	YTD	% Chg. vs	1998	YTD	% Chg. vs	
(\$000)	(\$000)	Yr. Ago		(\$000)	(\$000)	Yr. Ago	(\$000)	(\$000)	Yr. Ago	(\$000)	(\$000)	Yr. Ago	
Nebraska	187,480	2,413,445	9.4	1,848,121	16,540,788	6.2	Howard	701	9,074	-6.0	2,098	19,126	-3.1
Adams	3,518	40,372	6.3	29,903	260,881	4.5	Jefferson	979	12,692	8.5	5,854	51,660	7.2
Antelope	1,135	11,652	-7.9	3,329	27,742	-1.7	Johnson	662	7,048	24.3	1,740	14,664	-5.9
Arthur	94	830	33.9	299	(D)	(D)	Kearney	858	11,070	-3.1	2,827	23,800	-1.6
Banner	173	1,505	-10.9	61	(D)	(D)	Keith	1,009	13,030	3.2	6,846	74,903	5.2
Blaine	58	1,276	18.9	147	(D)	(D)	Keya Paha	107	1,249	-17.5	272	1,267	6.6
Boone	642	9,339	-10.0	3,513	28,567	-2.0	Kimball	484	5,710	-6.5	3,049	20,707	-0.4
Box Butte	1,590	18,255	4.1	8,623	77,247	-0.8	Knox	1,081	11,499	-2.0	4,120	34,032	2.4
Boyd	115	2,709	-5.0	1,087	6,834	-7.4	Lancaster	24,610	314,724	15.3	273,613	2,448,036	7.2
Brown	293	4,717	5.6	2,682	23,844	3.0	Lincoln	3,676	48,359	17.3	32,065	280,342	5.0
Buffalo	4,668	58,317	7.4	49,107	423,088	7.7	Logan	151	1,672	37.5	195	(D)	(D)
Burt	991	12,156	1.8	3,398	30,635	3.0	Loup	64	1,054	-3.2	71	(D)	(D)
Butler	1,006	12,244	8.8	2,995	23,635	3.3	McPherson	35	754	-5.6	81	(D)	(D)
Cass	3,058	41,525	13.6	8,004	79,119	6.0	Madison	3,604	48,250	5.2	44,689	382,070	0.8
Cedar	843	13,013	-14.3	3,698	33,759	-0.6	Merrick	835	11,554	6.4	2,916	28,405	3.6
Chase	531	7,284	-6.6	3,180	28,954	5.7	Morrill	475	7,150	-12.5	1,649	18,520	0.8
Cherry	586	10,349	7.8	5,722	52,431	5.8	Nance	415	5,657	-6.3	1,345	10,506	2.8
Cheyenne	1,112	14,111	2.8	9,971	95,865	2.3	Nemaha	909	11,649	15.4	3,693	32,512	-1.5
Clay	1,048	11,030	-0.3	3,410	26,459	0.2	Nuckolls	508	6,623	-10.3	3,424	26,744	1.0
Colfax	989	13,422	5.4	4,191	34,098	-0.4	Otoe	1,700	23,233	9.9	9,700	97,390	5.0
Cuming	987	14,473	-14.6	6,710	60,620	-3.0	Pawnee	393	4,664	10.3	961	6,392	-1.4
Custer	1,227	16,467	-0.2	6,413	57,990	-0.6	Perkins	841	6,450	7.6	1,525	14,513	0.4
Dakota	1,966	25,862	9.9	11,314	108,331	-2.4	Phelps	1,357	15,964	-4.3	5,896	56,349	-3.3
Dawes	1,106	10,363	15.9	6,590	60,904	23.1	Pierce	745	10,498	-12.1	2,694	22,849	-1.4
Dawson	2,119	33,881	4.6	16,135	154,894	1.7	Platte	3,323	43,105	-3.8	27,026	265,490	3.1
Deuel	306	3,269	2.2	1,181	12,048	14.0	Polk	966	9,821	1.8	2,664	27,146	-1.6
Dixon	937	9,668	14.1	1,572	12,240	-0.2	Red Willow	1,322	15,563	3.4	15,273	141,467	4.3
Dodge	3,652	49,391	7.4	30,882	279,608	5.5	Richardson	875	12,275	4.4	4,847	40,250	-1.3
Douglas	50,573	643,381	15.9	628,496	5,795,845	6.1	Rock	245	2,852	1.8	743	6,012	4.2
Dundy	336	4,002	-1.3	926	7,319	5.6	Saline	1,401	18,231	10.2	6,121	54,640	-0.8
Fillmore	602	10,505	-3.5	3,362	30,846	-1.1	Sarpy	13,569	182,602	17.0	57,118	481,881	9.8
Franklin	405	5,021	-2.6	1,333	10,160	13.3	Saunders	2,373	32,430	9.5	8,029	70,629	-1.1
Frontier	371	5,236	9.9	1,000	8,224	1.4	Scotts Bluff	3,764	47,858	3.9	35,535	308,923	-2.0
Furnas	569	8,206	0.3	2,871	26,486	-7.3	Seward	1,914	24,709	12.4	7,967	74,778	-1.7
Gage	2,343	30,985	8.1	16,635	144,961	1.0	Sheridan	815	9,693	8.6	4,382	35,065	-2.8
Garden	380	3,952	10.6	952	8,016	12.9	Sherman	358	4,582	-4.3	1,116	9,304	2.4
Garfield	272	2,788	15.9	1,123	9,588	3.7	Sioux	139	2,731	-3.1	180	1,662	-9.4
Gosper	425	3,801	9.0	664	5,932	5.0	Stanton	660	9,075	0.1	1,012	9,365	1.8
Grant	111	1,595	3.7	353	2,827	17.4	Thayer	823	9,421	-2.5	3,724	33,407	-1.0
Greeley	348	4,234	18.5	969	8,512	0.8	Thomas	109	1,155	-27.2	390	3,624	-27.1
Hall	5,465	75,615	10.4	70,107	638,768	6.3	Thurston	489	5,331	-18.4	1,225	10,499	-3.5
Hamilton	944	13,369	-8.3	4,160	37,024	-0.6	Valley	332	5,885	-4.1	2,854	26,556	4.2
Harlan	441	5,929	13.9	1,196	10,913	3.0	Washington	2,755	33,135	9.0	9,253	87,402	2.5
Hayes	208	1,826	9.2	135	(D)	(D)	Wayne	827	11,725	-5.1	5,073	42,567	6.5
Hitchcock	393	4,496	2.0	1,100	7,408	-3.4	Webster	473	5,251	-4.1	1,865	15,844	-2.5
Holt	1,412	18,030	-1.3	8,433	72,406	1.6	Wheeler	210	1,855	5.8	236	1,333	-9.7
Hooker	93	1,434	47.4	451	4,212	10.7	York	1,369	21,649	-1.2	13,902	137,800	10.1

*Totals may not add due to rounding
(D) Denotes disclosure suppression

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

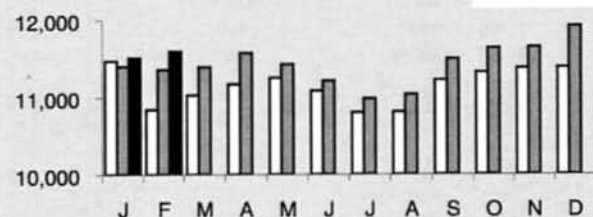
Note on Net Taxable Retail Sales

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* 1997 to February**1999

1997 1998 1999

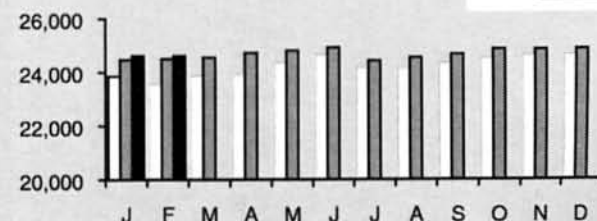
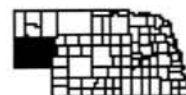
Northwest Panhandle



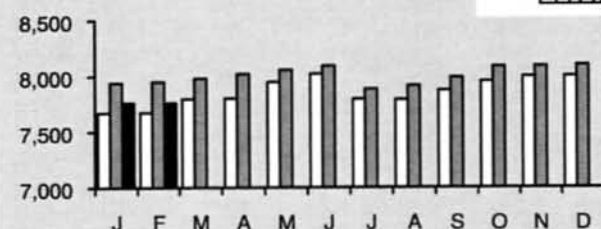
Note to Readers

The charts on pages 8 and 9 report nonfarm employment by place of work for each region.

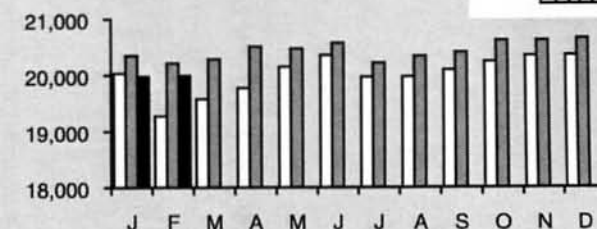
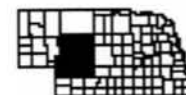
Southwest Panhandle



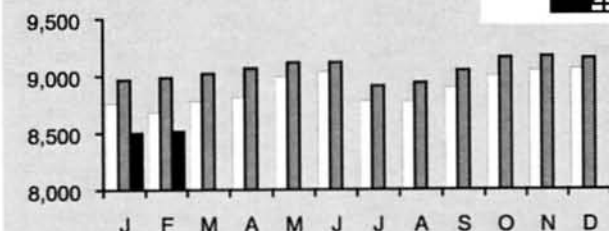
North Central



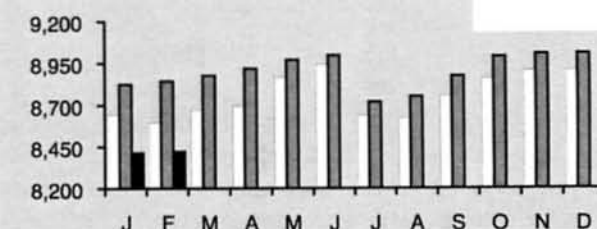
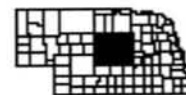
West Central



Southwest Central



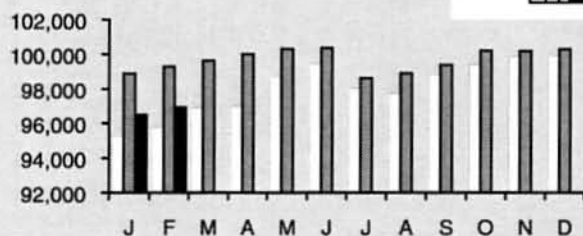
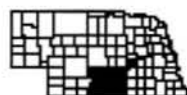
East Central



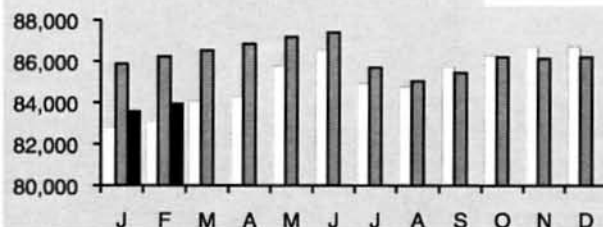
Regional Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment* 1997 to February** 1999

1997 1998 1999

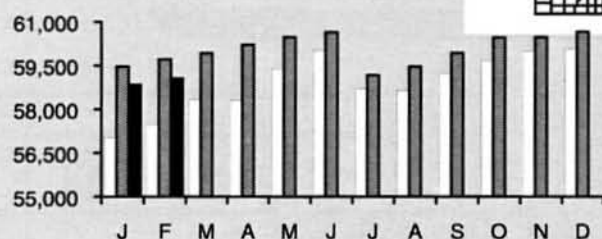
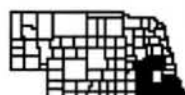
Southeast Central



Northeast

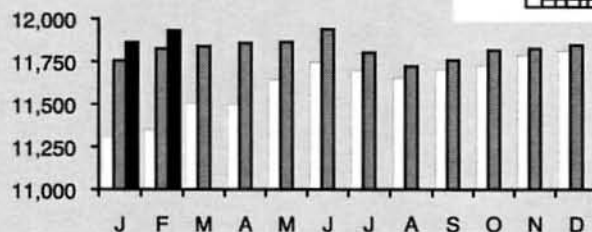
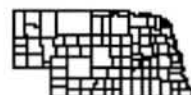


Southeast



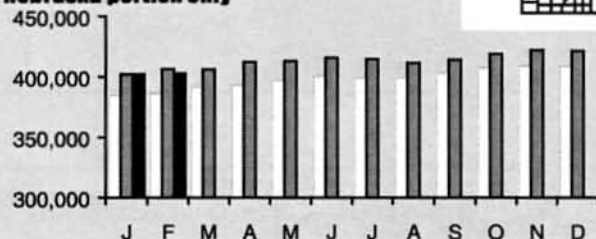
Sioux City MSA

Nebraska portion only

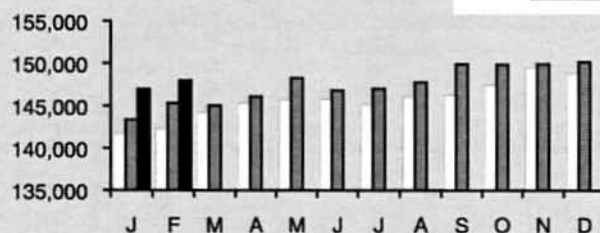
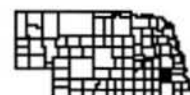


Omaha MSA

Nebraska portion only



Lincoln MSA



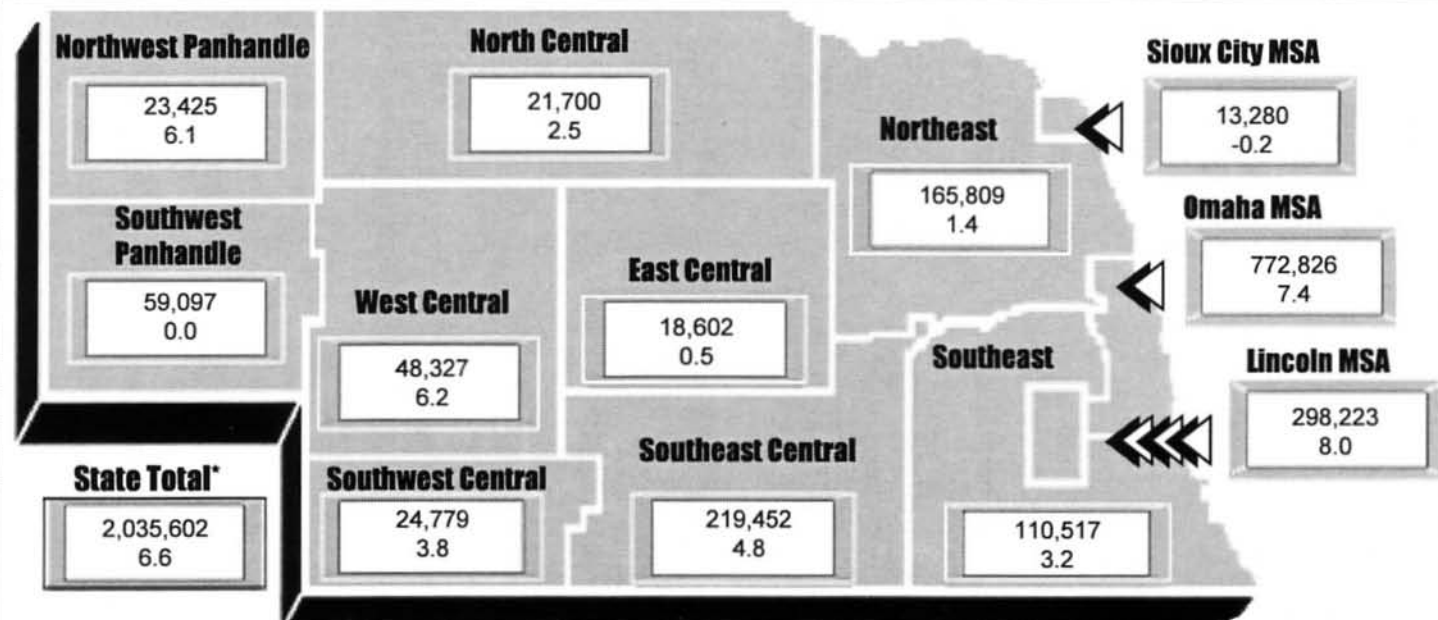
*By place of work

**Current month data are preliminary and subject to revision

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

December 1998 Regional Retail Sales (\$000)

YTD Change vs Yr. Ago



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

State Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment by Industry*

	Preliminary February 1999	Revised January 1999	January % Change vs Yr. Ago
Total	870,389	867,360	0.8
Construction & Mining	39,215	38,591	-0.9
Manufacturing	117,994	117,660	0.1
Durables	56,851	56,944	-0.6
Nondurables	61,143	60,716	0.8
TCU**	57,973	57,579	5.8
Trade	210,081	211,289	-0.7
Wholesale	54,855	54,389	-4.3
Retail	155,226	156,900	0.7
FIRE***	57,895	58,420	4.5
Services	236,237	235,159	2.4
Government	150,994	148,662	-1.7

*By place of work

**Transportation, Communication, and Utilities

***Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

Inflation Rate

1.8

Consumer Price Index

Consumer Price Index - U*
(1982-84 = 100)
(not seasonally adjusted)

	February 1999	% Change vs Yr. Ago	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago (inflation rate)
All Items	164.5	1.6	1.8
Commodities	142.2	0.5	0.6
Services	186.9	2.5	2.5

*U = All urban consumers

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

State Labor Force Summary*

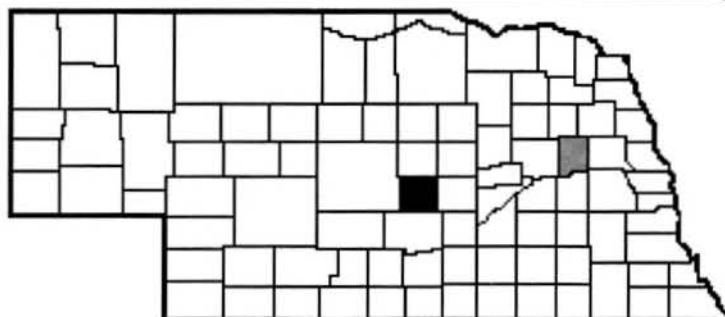
	Preliminary February 1999	Revised January 1999	January % Change vs Yr. Ago
Labor Force	922,140	925,024	1.1
Employment	896,658	896,733	0.4
Unemployment Rate	2.8	3.1	

*By place of residence

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

Sherman

Loup City-County Seat



License plate prefix number: 56

Size of county: 564 square miles, ranks 66th in the state

Population: 3,432 in 1998, a change of -7.7 percent from 1990

Per capita personal income: \$14,123 in 1996, ranks 84th in the state

Net taxable retail sales (\$000): \$13,941 in 1997, a change of 2.4 percent from 1996; \$13,889 from January through December of 1998, a change of 0.1 percent from the same period the previous year

Number of worksites¹: 106 in 1997

Unemployment rate: 2.6 percent in Sherman County, 2.6 percent in Nebraska for 1997

	State	Sherman County
Nonfarm employment (1997) ² :	855,802	764
(wage & salary)	(percent of total)	
Construction and Mining	4.6	2.1
Manufacturing	13.6	3.5
TCU	6.2	1.7
Wholesale Trade	6.4	11.1
Retail Trade	18.1	19.2
FIRE	6.4	3.4
Services	26.8	14.4
Government	17.8	44.4

Agriculture:

Number of farms: 500 in 1992, 576 in 1987

Average farm size: 596 acres in 1992

Market value of farm products sold: \$34.9 million in 1992 (\$69,832 average per farm)

¹Worksites refers to business activity covered under the Nebraska Employment Security Law. Information presented has been extracted from the Employer's Quarterly Contribution Report, Nebraska Form UI-11. For further details about covered worksites, see the Nebraska Employers Guide to Unemployment Insurance.

²By place of work

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Nebraska Department of Labor, Nebraska Department of Revenue.

bulletin board

Population Projections

Nebraska County Population Projections to 2020 are available. This report contains county-level projections by age category. The cost is \$15 per copy which includes postage and handling. Contact BBR to order.

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BBR Special Report

Nebraska's Pattern of
Population Change
in the 1990s

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