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Let the Good Times Roll Nebraska's Economic Outlook for the Next Two Years

*John Austin and the Nebraska Business Forecast Council**

While the nation's economy is expected to grow slowly over the next two years, Nebraska's economic health will remain vigorous. The confluence of strong agricultural income and overall strength in Nebraska's nonfarm economy will yield solid advances in employment as well as rapid growth in income and sales. Employment (jobs) will advance 1.8 percent in both 1997 and 1998. Nonfarm personal income will advance 6.7 percent in 1997 and 5.4 percent in 1998. Net taxable retail sales will advance 6.7 percent in 1997 and 6.0 percent in 1998 (Figure 1, Tables 1 and 2). The only concern is whether all employers will be able to recruit enough new workers.

Nebraska's Agricultural Economy

Nebraska's 1996 net farm income (USDA basis) will be at or near record levels when final results are published. A bumper crop of corn sold at good prices, combined with a normalization of cattle feeding profits drove incomes up. Prospects for the next two years call for continued high levels of net farm income.

Nebraska's grain farmers received an unencumbered bonus of approximately \$300 million from the federal government. The payment is part of the new agricultural program that replaces old programs that were tied to crop production and prices. While it is true that the \$300 million payment this year is well under the \$500 million average of the previous five years, the 1996 payment under the old program would have been near zero. Future payments are programmed to decrease.

The 1996 corn harvest was a bumper crop. While cash prices dropped sharply as the harvest came in, a substantial part of the crop was sold in the futures market at higher prices. Further, large operators have increased on-farm storage so that crops can be held off the market during harvest periods when prices traditionally fall, and sold later at higher prices. Thus, revenues from corn operations will be high in 1996 and 1997.

Figure 1
Key Economic Growth Rates
(percent)

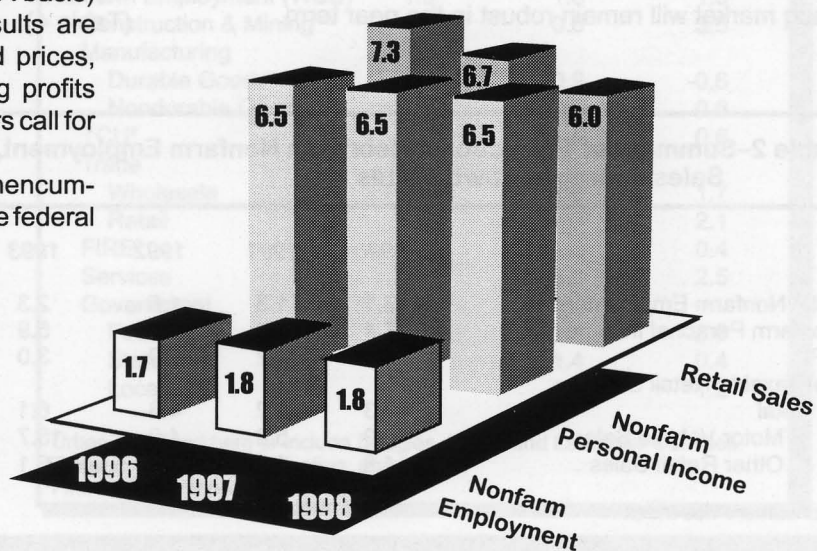


Table 1—Summary of Projections, Nebraska Nonfarm Employment, Nonfarm Personal Income, and Retail Sales Annual Average of Monthly Values

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total Nonfarm Employment*	730,026	739,212	750,153	767,212	795,468	815,089	828,618	843,685	858,699
Nonfarm Personal Income**	25,141	26,371	28,407	(\$ millions)		30,082	31,578	33,902	36,098
Net Taxable Retail Sales***								38,446	40,956
(Annual Averages of Monthly Sales)									
Total	1,029	1,062	1,113	1,181	1,268	1,323	1,419	1,513	1,604
Motor Vehicle Sales	127	120	125	142	151	157	173	186	198
Other Retail Sales	902	942	988	1,039	1,117	1,166	1,246	1,327	1,407

*Number of Jobs

**Annual Totals

***Annual Averages of Monthly Sales

Good growing weather resulted in relatively low operating costs in 1996. Well-timed rains allowed irrigators to reduce pumping. Dryland farmers experienced high yields.

High foreign demand for grains will keep carryover at low levels. Low carryover implies that grain prices will remain high. Consequently, the outlook for Nebraska's grain farmers remains good for the next two years.

There has been some return to profitability in the cattle sector. The price of feeder cattle is now low enough to allow cattle feeders using the futures market to set the cost of feed and the price of finished cattle, ensuring a profit on operations. In recent years, feeders could expect to break even on operations. Further, the drought in the southern Great Plains has forced cattlemen in that area to cut back herd sizes, easing downward price pressures on the cattle market overall.

Although not as large as the cattle market, the hog market in Nebraska returned to profitability for most of 1996. Given strong foreign and domestic demand, the outlook for the hog market will remain robust in the near term.

Nonfarm Employment

Overall levels of nonfarm employment in the state will expand at just under 2 per cent per year over the next two years. Employment growth will continue to put pressure on labor supplies. Total nonfarm employment will near 860,000 by 1998 (Table 3). The following are features of the employment forecast.

The services sector will expand by just over 3.0 percent per year for the next two years. Consequently, the state's largest employment sector will be the fastest growing sector, thus ensuring that it will remain the state's largest employer with 230,000 employees expected in 1998.

Retail trade, the state's second largest employment sector, will grow at half the rate of the services sector.

State and local government, the state's third largest employment sector, will grow by about 1.0 percent per year over the next two years. Growth will not be evenly distributed within this sector since local government employment is expected to grow faster than state government employment (Table 4).

Table 2—Summary of Projections, Nebraska Nonfarm Employment, Nonfarm Personal Income, and Retail Sales Average Growth Rates

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total Nonfarm Employment	3.1	1.3	1.5	2.3	3.7	2.5	1.7	1.8	1.8
Nonfarm Personal Income	7.4	4.9	7.7	5.9	5.0	7.4	6.5	6.5	6.5
CPI*	5.5	4.2	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.8
Net Taxable Retail Sales									
Total	4.3	3.2	4.8	6.1	7.4	4.3	7.3	6.7	6.0
Motor Vehicle Sales	0.9	-5.8	4.0	13.7	6.7	3.8	10.0	8.0	6.0
Other Retail Sales	4.8	4.5	4.9	5.1	7.5	4.4	6.9	6.5	6.0

*Consumer Price Index

Table 3—Number of Jobs and Percent Change by Industry

Annual Averages (whole numbers)

	Const & Mining	Durables	Manufacturing Nondurables	TCU	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	FIRE	Services	Federal Gov't	State & Local Gov't	Total
1990	28,596	48,522	49,286	46,276	53,392	134,144	48,426	177,966	18,040	125,378	730,026
1991	28,728	47,485	52,119	47,414	52,567	135,642	48,576	181,052	17,416	128,213	739,212
1992	29,760	46,922	53,791	47,165	52,362	137,457	49,429	185,605	17,076	130,587	750,153
1993	31,778	48,752	55,032	47,338	51,998	141,160	50,506	191,681	17,312	131,655	767,212
1994	34,772	51,948	56,992	48,278	51,882	147,072	51,541	201,872	17,198	133,931	795,486
1995	35,623	53,862	57,893	49,433	53,239	151,738	52,388	210,402	16,414	134,098	815,089
1996	36,450	54,132	58,997	49,977	54,038	153,858	52,524	216,735	16,067	135,841	828,618
1997	37,423	54,673	60,295	50,628	54,600	156,166	53,129	223,561	15,876	137,335	843,685
1998	38,397	55,220	61,621	51,279	55,162	158,508	53,733	230,386	15,685	138,709	858,699

Percent Changes

1991	0.5	-2.1	5.7	2.5	-1.5	1.1	0.3	1.7	-3.5	2.3	1.3
1992	3.6	-1.2	3.2	-0.5	-0.4	1.3	1.8	2.5	-2.0	1.9	1.5
1993	6.8	3.9	2.3	0.4	-0.7	2.7	2.2	3.3	1.4	0.8	2.3
1994	9.4	6.6	3.6	2.0	-0.2	4.2	2.0	5.3	-0.7	1.7	3.7
1995	2.4	3.7	1.6	2.4	2.6	3.2	1.6	4.2	-4.6	0.1	2.5
1996	2.3	0.5	1.9	1.1	1.5	1.4	0.3	3.0	-2.1	1.3	1.7
1997	2.7	1.0	2.2	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.2	3.1	-1.2	1.1	1.8
1998	2.6	1.0	2.2	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.1	3.1	-1.2	1.0	1.8

Manufacturing employment will expand moderately. Durable goods manufacturing employment growth will slow from its 1993-to-1995 rate because of a shortage of skilled labor. Nondurable manufacturing employment will expand by just over 2.0 percent per year.

Employment in the transportation, communication, and utilities sector will be aided by Union Pacific's addition of 1,000 workers in the state. The growth rate should meet or exceed that of the early 1990s during 1997 and 1998.

The growth rate for the finance, insurance, and real estate sector will be less than half its historical average as the effects from consolidations in banking continue to be resolved.

Construction activity will grow by about a half percentage point less than the growth rate of services. Housing construction will remain at high levels as long-term interest rates remain low and some areas continue to experience high net immigration rates. Highway construction employment in the state's metro areas continues at high levels as interstate bridges and ramps are rebuilt.

(cont'd)

Table 4—Percent Change in Employment January - September 1996 vs January - September 1995

	Growth Rates		
	State Rate	Nonurban Rate	Urban Rate ¹
Nonfarm Employment (W&S)	1.5	1.6	1.5
Construction & Mining	2.2	0.6	3.5
Manufacturing			
Durable Goods	0.2	0.9	-0.6
Nondurable Goods	1.7	2.6	0.6
TCU ²	1.0	1.5	0.6
Trade			
Wholesale	1.7	1.6	1.7
Retail	1.2	0.3	2.1
FIRE ³	-0.0	-1.3	0.4
Services	2.9	3.8	2.5
Government			
Federal	-2.4	-1.4	-3.0
State	0.7	1.4	0.4
Local	1.6	1.9	1.2

¹Urban is defined here to include Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster Counties²Transportation, Communication, and Utilities³Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

Nonfarm Personal Income

Nonfarm personal income will grow 6.5 percent annually over the next two years. With the inflation rate below 3.0 percent per year, over half the gains in personal income will be real gains (Table 5). Key features of the income forecast follow.

Wages and salaries, about two-thirds of nonfarm income, will grow 7.0 percent per year in both 1997 and 1998. Wage rate pressures will continue, especially in the low wage sectors. Overall wage rate increases will exceed the rate of inflation. Wage rates will rise roughly 5.0 percent in each of the next two years.

Other labor income (primarily benefits) will continue to grow more slowly than wages and salaries as employers continue to ask employees to expand their participation in funding benefits, especially medical insurance.

The expansion of dividends, interest, and rents is subject to conflicting forces. High stock market levels imply higher dividends and capital gains. Low interest rates hold down interest payments. In some areas of the state, rents are increasing rapidly as the demand for housing expands.

Transfer payments will grow as the number of retirees increases and the cost of living expands. The forecast for transfer payment growth is near its growth rates for the last decade.

Nonfarm proprietors' income will grow about one percentage point slower than wages and salaries.

Based on estimates of farm income (USDA basis) at or near record levels, it is estimated that 1996 total personal income will be about \$38.5 billion. Therefore, total personal income will grow about 6.0 percent per year in 1997 and 1998.

Net Taxable Retail Sales

Total net taxable retail sales will grow about 7.3 percent in 1996, led by a 10.0 percent growth in motor vehicle sales.

Motor vehicle sales are strong and will remain so in 1997. Part of that strength comes from the grains farmers' need to increase expenses to offset high net incomes. Farm implement sales will not be captured in the net taxable series since they are no longer taxed.

Other net taxable retail sales growth will near 7.0 percent in 1996 and remain above historical growth rates in 1997 and 1998. Retail sales growth will respond to growth in personal income.

**We are grateful for the help of the Nebraska Business Forecast Council: Phil Baker, Nebraska Department of Labor; Bruce Johnson, Department of Agricultural Economics, UNL; Ernie Goss, Department of Economics and Finance, Creighton University; Stu Miller, Nebraska Department of Economic Development; Donis Petersen, Nebraska Public Power District; Franz Schwartz, Nebraska Department of Revenue; Garth Taylor, Panhandle Research and Extension Center, UNL; Keith Turner, Department of Economics, UNO; Charles Lamphear and John Austin, Bureau of Business Research, UNL.*

Table 5—Nonfarm Personal Income and Components, 1990 to 1998

Annual Averages (\$ millions)

	Nonfarm Personal Income	Total Wages & Salaries	Other Labor Income	DIR*	Transfer Payments	Nonfarm Proprietors' Income	PCSI**	Residential Adjustment
1990	25,140,768	14,853,304	1,459,983	5,028,332	3,832,914	1,956,512	(1,395,789)	(358,641)
1991	26,370,709	15,603,916	1,630,861	5,039,207	4,155,636	2,007,135	(1,472,808)	(376,702)
1992	28,407,278	16,552,461	1,853,163	5,485,427	4,554,019	2,134,338	(1,562,333)	(406,530)
1993	30,082,429	17,299,932	2,200,054	6,069,574	4,677,949	2,074,139	(1,603,289)	(421,334)
1994	31,578,048	18,380,592	2,343,009	6,153,410	4,879,030	2,241,989	(1,732,526)	(437,731)
1995	33,901,725	19,616,556	2,482,378	6,743,950	5,200,337	2,423,711	(1,845,103)	(467,501)
1996	36,097,722	20,970,098	2,621,391	7,155,331	5,491,556	2,566,710	(1,944,739)	(504,901)
1997	38,446,301	22,438,005	2,770,810	7,548,874	5,821,049	2,720,713	(2,051,699)	(538,729)
1998	40,955,521	24,008,666	2,928,747	7,964,062	6,170,312	2,883,955	(2,164,543)	(567,821)

Annual Percentage Changes

	Nonfarm Personal Income	Total Wages & Salaries	Other Labor Income	DIR*	Transfer Payments	Nonfarm Proprietors' Income	PCSI**	Residential Adjustment
1991	4.9	5.1	11.7	0.2	8.4	2.6	5.5	5.0
1992	7.7	6.1	13.6	8.9	9.6	6.3	6.1	7.9
1993	5.9	4.5	18.7	10.6	2.7	-2.8	2.6	3.6
1994	5.0	6.2	6.5	1.4	4.3	8.1	8.1	3.9
1995	7.4	6.7	5.9	9.6	6.6	8.1	6.5	6.8
1996	6.5	6.9	5.6	6.1	5.6	5.9	5.4	8.0
1997	6.5	7.0	5.7	5.5	6.0	6.0	5.5	6.7
1998	6.5	7.0	5.7	5.5	6.0	6.0	5.5	5.4

*Dividends, Interest, Rent

**Personal Contribution for Social Insurance

Single-Family Home Starts in Nebraska

Garth Taylor, Panhandle Research and Extension Center

Charles Lamphear, Bureau of Business Research

Nearly 5,000 single-family new home starts were reported in Nebraska for 1995. About 70 percent of the new home starts occurred in Lancaster County and the Omaha area that includes Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties. The average price of a newly constructed single-family home in 1995 was \$93,300. The average price for Lancaster County was \$114,700, which was 23 percent above the state average.



This article reports on the single-family home industry for the state's major urban centers—Lincoln and Omaha—and for several rural counties that contain major trade centers. The focus is on new home starts and average home value. The reader is cautioned about forming conclusions that involve comparisons, since a home does not represent a standardized product. Homes vary in size and quality, depending on buyers' incomes and preferences.

The number of new home starts in the state for 1995 was just a few hundred shy of the average number for the previous three years (Figure 1). But, the 1995 level was more than double the 1982 level, when new home starts reached a low point for the 1980-1995 period. The housing market was depressed in the early 1980s, because of a flat economy and high mortgage rates. However, high mortgage rates and economic downturns only temporarily deter buyers. Over the long run, demographics and income growth largely determine housing starts.

Figure 1
Single-Family Housing Units, Nebraska—1980-1995

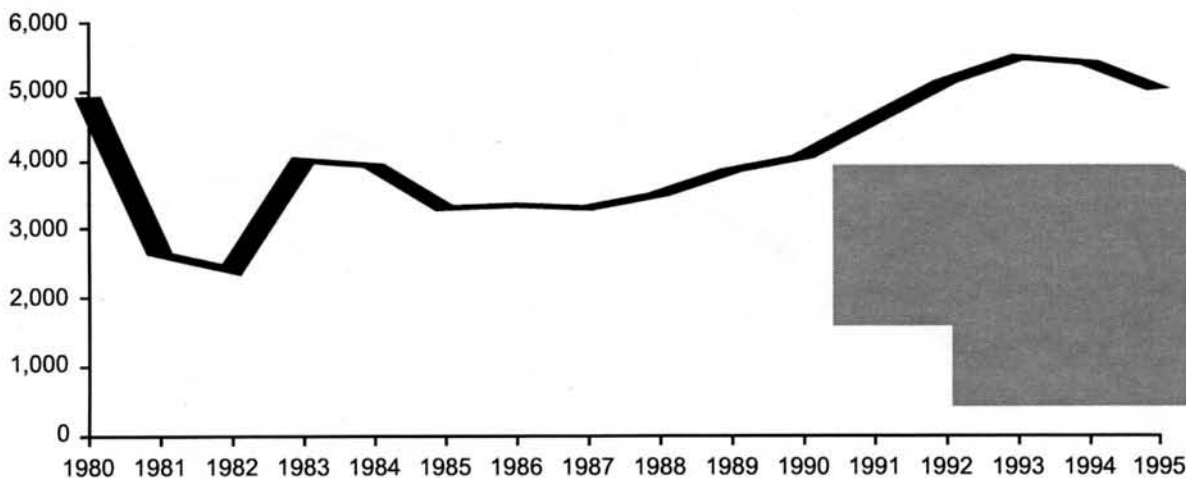
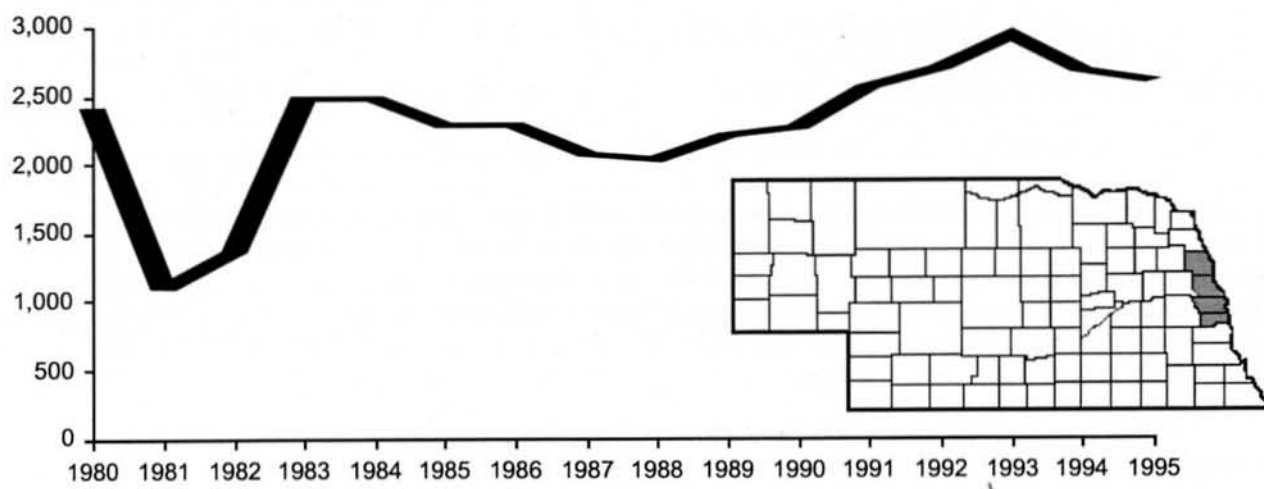


Figure 2
Single-Family Housing Units, Omaha Area—1980-1995



The Omaha area is, by far, the state's largest housing market (Figure 2). Housing starts in the Omaha area have fluctuated between 2,000 and 3,000 since the early 1980s. In 1982 only 1,300 new home starts were reported. A year later the number nearly doubled to 2,500. A record number of new home starts—nearly 3,000—was reported for 1993. Since 1991 over 2,500 new home starts have been reported annually for the Omaha area. New home starts for 1995 were slightly above the 1980 level.

In Lancaster County new home starts averaged about half the number for the Omaha area. Lancaster County's new home starts have grown almost every year since the early 1980s (Figure 3). The number for 1995 was slightly below 1,000, which was about 220 short of the high of 1,200 reached in 1994.

Figure 3
Single-Family Housing Units, Lancaster County—1980-1995

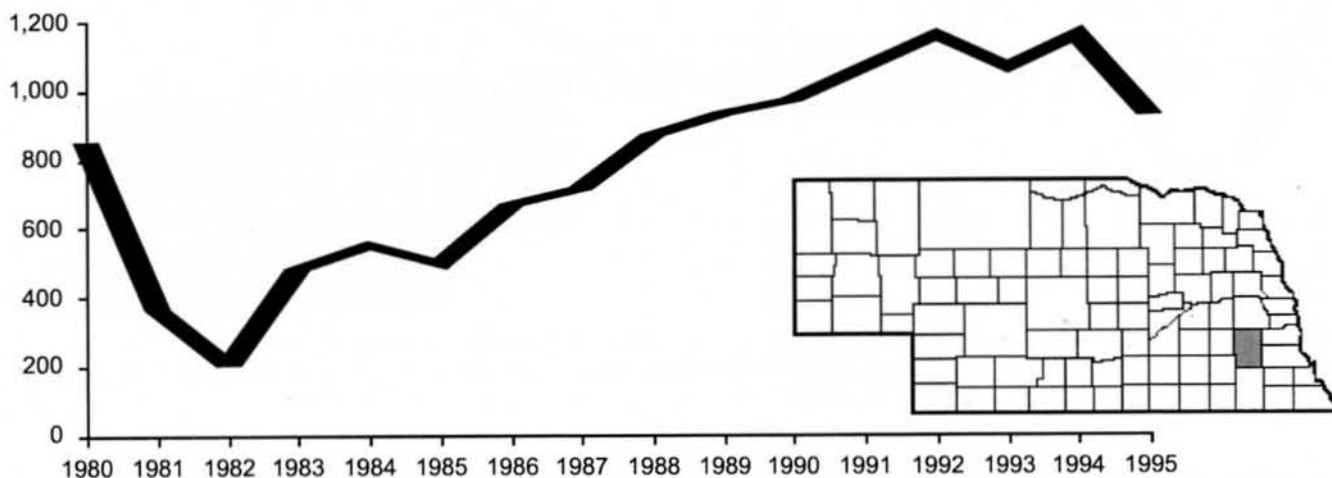
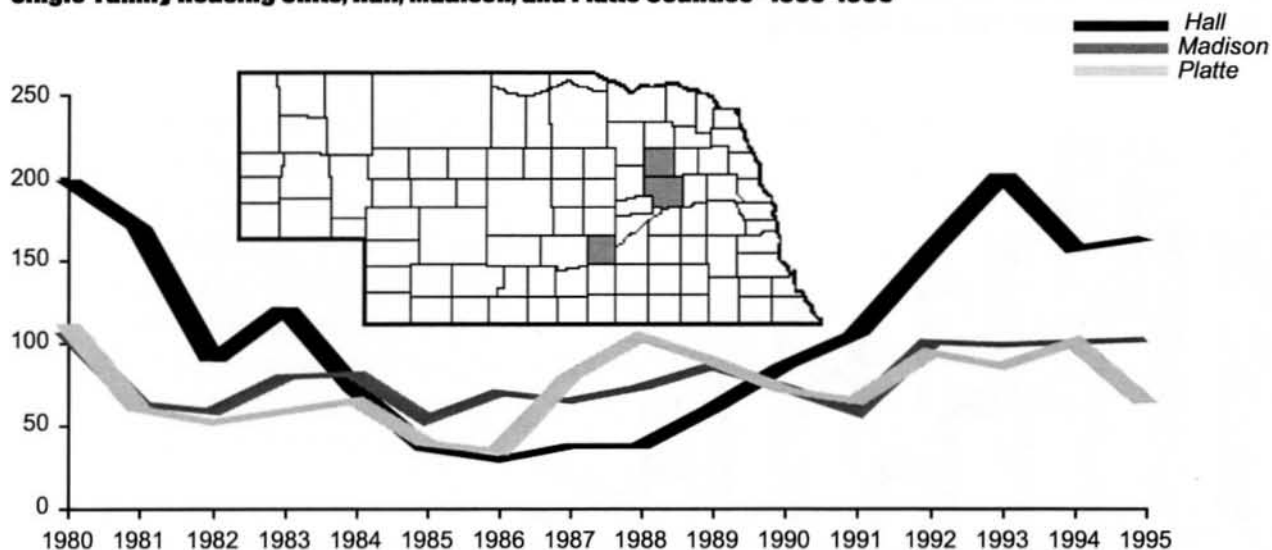


Figure 4
Single-Family Housing Units, Hall, Madison, and Platte Counties—1980-1995



New home starts in rural counties reached lows during the period 1985 to 1988 (Figures 4 and 5), approaching zero for Scotts Bluff and Lincoln Counties. Once the rural housing market recovered, new home starts for Hall and Buffalo Counties remained virtually equal.

Figure 5
Single-Family Housing Units, Buffalo, Lincoln, and Scotts Bluff Counties—1980-1995

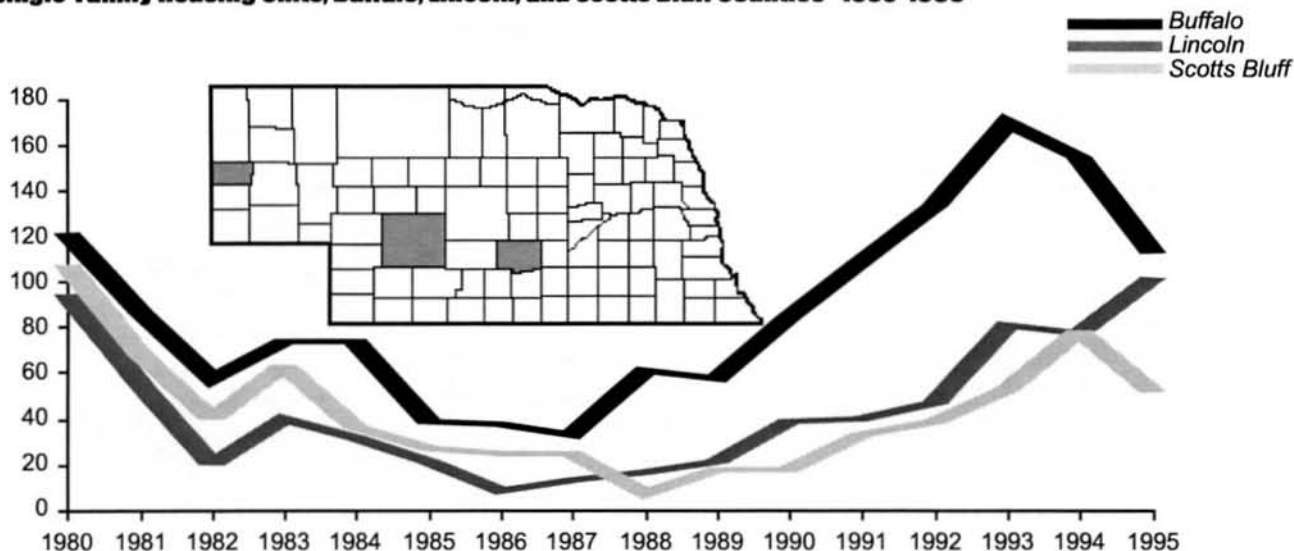
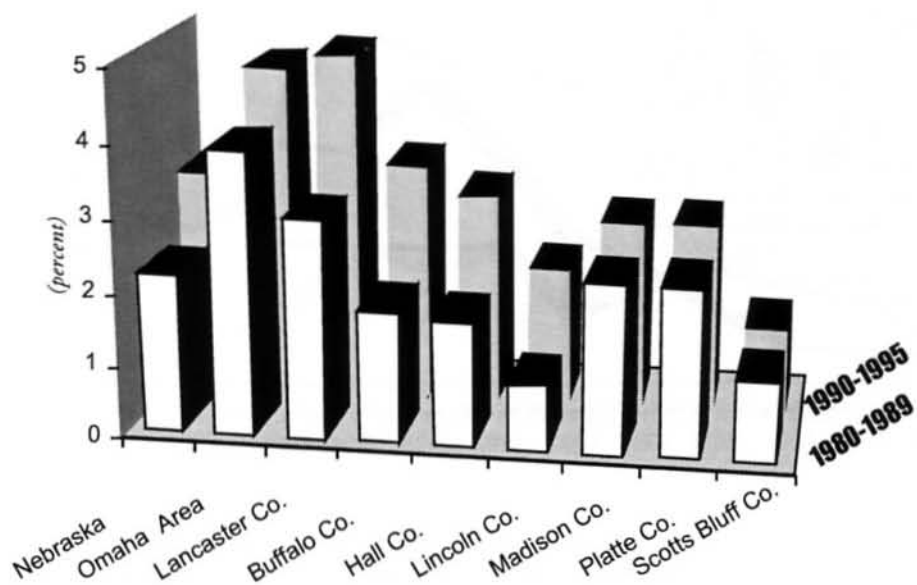


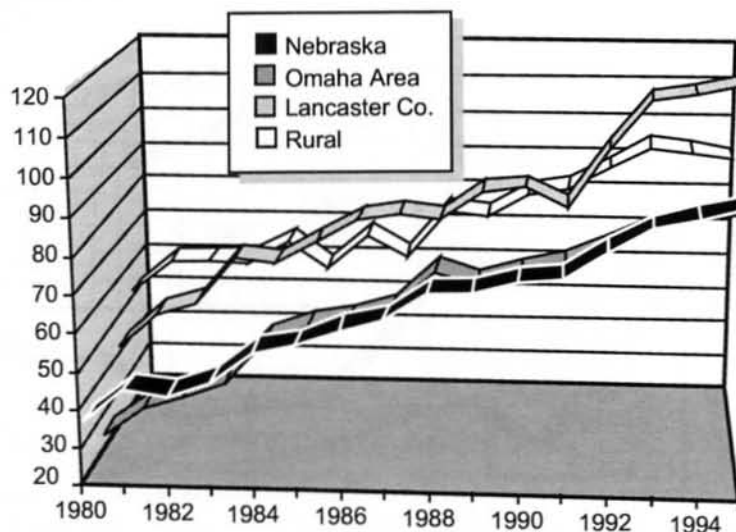
Figure 6
Average Annual Total Single-Family New Home Starts per 1,000 Population for Nebraska and Selected Areas, 1980-1989 and 1990-1995



Adjusting for population differences, new home starts are higher in urban areas than in rural areas. The information on new home starts displayed in Figure 6 is based on 1,000 population. During the 1980s new home starts per 1,000 population for Lincoln County was 0.9. The rate for Scotts Bluff County was 1.1. For the same period, the rate for the Omaha area was 3.9, followed by Lancaster County at 3.0. Scotts Bluff County had the lowest rate during the period 1990 to 1995 at 1.2, followed by Lincoln County at 1.9. Lancaster County had the highest rate at 4.8, followed by the Omaha area at 4.6 new single-family home starts per 1,000 population.

Prices of newly-built homes in Nebraska have grown about 6.7 percent per year since 1980 (Figure 7). A newly-constructed home has more than doubled in price in the last fifteen years. In 1980 a newly-constructed home in Nebraska was priced below \$40,000. By 1995 the price tag for an average new home was over \$90,000. Prices of newly-constructed homes also vary between housing markets. In the early 1980s rural home construction was priced higher than that for Lancaster County or the Omaha area. Since then, rural new home prices have been about equal to the Omaha area prices. For over a decade Lancaster County has had the highest priced homes—reaching nearly \$115,000 in 1995, or about 23 percent above the state average. Data sources for this article include the Nebraska State Home Builders Association and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Figure 7
Single-Family Home Values (\$000)
Nebraska and Selected Areas—1980 to 1995



News Briefs

Twenty-five Years of Change in Household and Family Composition

	1970	1995
Married couples with children	40%	25%
Number of people per household	3.14	2.65
Households with five or more people	1 out of 5	1 out of 10
Households with people living alone	one-sixth	one-fourth
Families maintained by women with no husband present	5.6 million	12.2 million
Families maintained by men with no wife present	1.2 million	3.2 million
Metropolitan area households	2 out of 3	4 out of 5
Families with no children under 18 at home	44%	51%

A *household* is an individual or a group of people who occupy a housing unit, whereas a *family* is a group of two or more people, one of whom is the householder, living together, who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Nebraska Stats

□ 1994 ■ 1995 ■ 1996

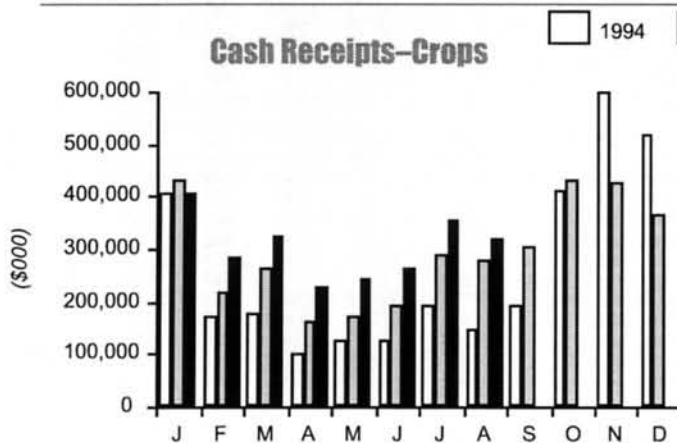
Total Nonfarm Employment



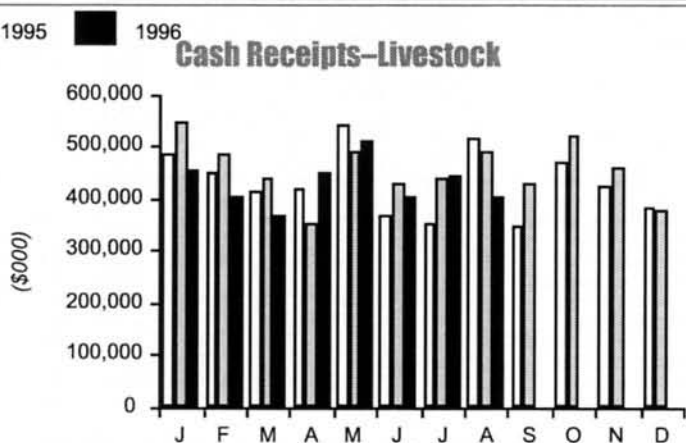
Unemployment Rate



Cash Receipts—Crops



Cash Receipts—Livestock



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

	July \$	YTD \$	YTD % Change	August \$	YTD \$	YTD % Change		July \$	YTD \$	YTD % Change	August \$	YTD \$	YTD % Change
Ainsworth, Brown	1,873	11,226	-5.8	1,770	12,996	-5.3	Kearney, Buffalo	29,487	188,307	5.6	31,624	219,931	5.4
Albion, Boone	2,126	13,461	17.6	1,694	15,155	14.2	Kenesaw, Adams	99	721	3.2	108	829	1.7
Alliance, Box Butte	6,507	38,992	4.4	6,267	45,259	4.9	Kimball, Kimball	1,731	9,771	-9.5	1,719	11,490	-8.8
Alma, Harlan	750	4,645	2.2	667	5,312	1.3	La Vista, Sarpy	7,322	48,774	14.2	7,833	56,607	13.4
Arapahoe, Furnas	651	4,371	4.9	589	4,960	2.7	Laurel, Cedar	330	2,382	4.0	339	2,721	5.7
Arlington, Washington	161	1,196	0.4	144	1,340	-1.4	Lexington, Dawson	7,810	50,293	3.1	7,240	57,533	2.4
Arnold, Custer	263	1,777	-1.3	221	1,998	-3.5	Lincoln, Lancaster	181,628	1,175,806	11.3	186,502	1,362,308	10.7
Ashland, Saunders	953	6,216	2.8	1,085	7,301	3.2	Louisville, Cass	517	2,514	2.8	412	2,926	4.6
Atkinson, Holt	899	5,387	5.0	841	6,228	4.9	Loup City, Sherman	651	3,896	2.4	604	4,500	2.7
Auburn, Nemaha	2,240	16,293	0.5	2,327	18,620	0.8	Lyons, Burt	547	2,868	0.6	469	3,337	-0.2
Aurora, Hamilton	2,530	17,727	1.0	2,364	20,091	0.3	Madison, Madison	729	4,967	19.7	801	5,768	17.4
Axtell, Kearney	68	585	5.8	69	654	4.6	McCook, Red Willow	11,218	69,802	9.4	11,158	80,960	8.7
Bassett, Rock	732	3,185	3.4	452	3,637	0.7	Milford, Seward	898	5,632	7.1	707	6,339	5.8
Battle Creek, Madison	592	4,179	2.8	570	4,749	1.2	Minatare, Scotts Bluff	233	1,310	-19.3	209	1,519	-18.5
Bayard, Morrill	421	2,793	-13.3	413	3,206	-13.2	Minden, Kearney	1,797	10,373	-7.1	1,848	12,221	-5.4
Beatrice, Gage	9,851	64,239	5.5	9,473	73,712	5.0	Mitchell, Scotts Bluff	702	4,768	-16.5	719	5,487	-14.7
Beaver City, Furnas	114	755	-12.0	125	880	-10.3	Morrill, Scotts Bluff	419	2,620	-3.8	438	3,058	-2.0
Bellevue, Sarpy	17,811	114,993	18.5	19,050	134,043	19.2	Nebraska City, Otoe	5,328	35,652	12.2	5,774	41,426	11.1
Benkelman, Dundey	538	3,520	11.5	512	4,032	10.0	Neligh, Antelope	1,411	8,073	-3.5	1,214	9,287	-2.5
Bennington, Douglas	405	2,563	44.8	338	2,901	39.2	Newman Grove, Madison	358	2,244	5.0	294	2,538	4.9
Blair, Washington	6,005	39,759	-0.8	6,221	45,980	0.7	Norfolk, Madison	27,354	180,817	6.9	29,137	209,954	7.1
Bloomfield, Knox	640	3,877	3.7	696	4,573	5.0	North Bend, Dodge	436	3,263	7.4	457	3,720	8.2
Blue Hill, Webster	398	2,657	9.6	447	3,104	10.9	North Platte, Lincoln	21,543	139,184	2.8	22,742	161,926	2.9
Bridgeport, Morrill	1,090	6,371	-7.1	1,185	7,556	-4.4	O'Neill, Holt	4,552	29,623	10.9	4,124	33,747	9.5
Broken Bow, Custer	3,964	30,724	5.7	3,545	34,269	1.4	Oakland, Burt	648	4,140	2.5	614	4,754	1.9
Burwell, Garfield	830	4,472	-2.5	671	5,143	-2.4	Ogallala, Keith	6,768	36,681	5.0	6,284	42,965	5.0
Cairo, Hall	194	1,239	-2.2	180	1,419	-2.9	Omaha, Douglas	429,443	2,844,811	6.2	443,900	3,288,711	5.5
Cambridge, Furnas	1,171	8,219	62.6	810	9,029	51.8	Ord, Valley	1,816	11,806	-4.1	1,739	13,545	-3.7
Central City, Merrick	1,671	10,986	9.4	1,657	12,643	10.1	Oseola, Polk	792	4,833	-5.9	673	5,506	-6.3
Ceresco, Saunders	1,156	7,636	10.4	1,170	8,806	8.7	Oshkosh, Garden	458	2,857	-13.0	436	3,293	-13.5
Chadron, Dawes	3,668	21,326	-5.5	3,892	25,218	-5.4	Osmond, Pierce	551	2,667	6.5	554	3,221	9.8
Chappell, Deuel	442	2,598	-8.4	359	2,957	-10.3	Oxford, Furnas	313	2,013	-13.4	311	2,324	-11.3
Clarkson, Colfax	378	2,849	6.7	435	3,284	7.4	Papillion, Sarpy	5,332	33,949	32.2	5,220	39,169	34.4
Clay Center, Clay	334	1,801	8.9	299	2,100	7.1	Pawnee City, Pawnee	287	1,958	-5.8	240	2,198	-5.9
Columbus, Platte	19,028	131,973	5.1	19,813	151,786	4.4	Pender, Thurston	593	4,274	5.7	746	5,020	9.2
Cozad, Dawson	2,605	18,031	-0.4	2,614	20,645	-0.1	Pierce, Pierce	618	4,213	-2.0	602	4,815	-1.1
Crawford, Dawes	915	3,226	6.2	663	3,889	4.4	Plainview, Pierce	612	3,946	-9.0	587	4,533	-7.6
Craigton, Knox	1,030	6,487	-2.5	1,059	7,546	-2.3	Plattsmouth, Cass	3,172	20,017	3.0	3,101	23,118	2.9
Crete, Saline	3,525	22,656	-3.1	3,730	26,386	-1.9	Ponca, Dixon	579	3,443	8.1	540	3,983	5.4
Crofton, Knox	460	2,749	18.5	410	3,159	18.5	Ralston, Douglas	3,091	19,602	11.7	3,122	22,724	12.0
Curtis, Frontier	299	1,896	-1.6	339	2,235	0.0	Randolph, Cedar	366	2,453	5.8	358	2,811	5.8
Dakota City, Dakota	526	3,909	3.0	573	4,482	3.1	Ravenna, Buffalo	670	4,230	-7.7	634	4,864	-6.6
David City, Butler	1,447	9,912	3.3	1,523	11,435	3.9	Red Cloud, Webster	689	4,235	-9.7	702	4,937	-7.2
Deshler, Thayer	240	1,537	4.6	229	1,766	2.0	Rushville, Sheridan	529	3,581	-2.2	568	4,149	-2.8
Dodge, Dodge	208	1,516	-1.0	189	1,705	0.0	Sargent, Custer	181	1,314	-5.1	180	1,494	-6.2
Doniphan, Hall	514	3,489	3.6	713	4,202	10.4	Schuyler, Colfax	1,913	12,764	4.4	1,782	14,546	4.2
Eagle, Cass	429	2,155	-4.6	359	2,514	-6.9	Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff	19,809	129,537	3.5	20,289	149,826	3.7
Elgin, Antelope	362	2,722	6.5	413	3,135	8.6	Scribner, Dodge	537	3,106	11.5	556	3,662	11.7
Elkhorn, Douglas	1,866	11,822	14.4	1,985	13,807	14.6	Seward, Seward	4,608	30,754	0.9	4,848	35,602	1.1
Elm Creek, Buffalo	287	1,876	47.0	276	2,152	37.4	Shelby, Polk	244	2,116	7.2	295	2,411	6.5
Elwood, Gosper	511	2,619	2.4	536	3,155	3.1	Shelton, Buffalo	712	4,077	0.7	605	4,682	-0.6
Fairbury, Jefferson	3,107	20,296	2.6	2,918	23,214	2.3	Sidney, Cheyenne	8,780	42,768	3.9	8,762	51,530	7.1
Fairmont, Fillmore	108	872	-18.1	117	989	-17.9	South Sioux City, Dakota	7,700	54,286	6.0	7,975	62,261	5.3
Falls City, Richardson	2,271	16,526	3.7	2,515	19,041	5.1	Springfield, Sarpy	270	1,820	45.0	353	2,173	52.6
Franklin, Franklin	434	3,125	-1.1	488	3,613	0.7	St. Paul, Howard	1,251	7,800	0.9	1,194	8,794	1.2
Fremont, Dodge	21,611	140,555	3.9	20,966	161,521	4.3	Stanton, Stanton	568	3,712	4.6	522	4,234	3.2
Friend, Saline	498	3,240	-3.8	441	3,681	-6.0	Stromsburg, Polk	1,231	6,017	9.1	1,125	7,142	8.9
Fullerton, Nance	523	3,297	-8.5	492	3,789	-7.8	Superior, Nuckolls	1,855	9,966	2.4	1,525	11,491	2.8
Geneva, Fillmore	1,782	11,785	1.6	1,655	13,440	1.1	Sutherland, Lincoln	288	1,968	16.4	303	2,271	13.9
Genoa, Nance	269	1,733	8.5	321	2,054	10.9	Sutton, Clay	1,317	8,808	22.9	876	9,684	17.0
Gering, Scotts Bluff	3,453	21,859	0.8	3,886	25,745	3.6	Syracuse, Otoe	1,064	6,659	0.6	987	7,646	0.7
Gibbon, Buffalo	620	4,691	-2.5	642	5,333	-3.0	Tecumseh, Johnson	977	6,885	1.6	964	7,849	1.1
Gordon, Sheridan	1,815	11,181	2.1	1,862	13,043	1.9	Tekamah, Burt	1,018	6,825	2.1	1,171	7,996	2.8
Gothenburg, Dawson	2,321	13,201	-1.8	2,155	15,356	-0.8	Tilden, Madison	457	2,968	3.8	471	3,439	2.9
Grand Island, Hall	45,922	304,972	-0.5	48,696	353,668	0.0	Utica, Seward	249	1,618	5.7	327	1,945	10.8
Grant, Perkins	1,070	6,307	10.8	968	7,275	8.8	Valentine, Cherry	4,165	24,538	5.5	4,176	28,714	5.4
Gretna, Sarpy	3,650	21,821	0.3	4,202	26,023	1.5	Valley, Douglas	1,493	7,523	6.7	1,440	8,963	8.9
Hartington, Cedar	1,527	9,838	-11.6	1,701	11,339	-7.7	Wahoo, Saunders	2,405	15,788	-1.4	2,379	18,167	-1.6
Hastings, Adams	19,385	133,790	3.0	19,895	153,685	2.4	Wakefield, Dixon	348	2,425	2.1	326	2,751	-1.7
Hay Springs, Sheridan	285	2,170	4.8	297	2,467	3.4	Waverly, Chase	276	2,303	16.4	242	2,545	12.3
Hebron, Thayer	1,656	10,513	-6.5	1,644	12,157	-5.9	Wayne, Lancaster	735	4,257	14.2	612	4,869	14.1
Henderson, York	995	4,800	20.4	761	5,561	16.4	Wayne, Wayne	2,837	19,864	1.7	3,238	23,102	2.8
Hickman, Lancaster	285	1,525	6.4	223	1,748	7.4	Weeping Water, Cass	669	3,752	-8.0	647	4,399	-6.8
Holdrege, Phelps	5,150	31,739	2.9	4,940	36,679	4.1	West Point, Cuming	3,574	24,019	10.8	3,751	27,770	10.6
Hooper, Dodge	305	2,087	13.4	287	2,374	12.8	Wilber, Saline	418	2,832	-6.0	473	3,305	-5.5
Humboldt, Richardson	505	3,373	6.1	464	3,837	4.6	Wisner, Cuming	512	3,545	2.4	564	4,109	2.6
Humphrey, Platte	597	4,678	12.1	792	5,470	11.6	Wood River, Hall	437	2,975	9.7	552	3,527	4.8
Imperial, Chase	1,816	11,223	4.7	1,712	12,935	4.1	Wymore, Gage	446	2,748	2.6	445	3,193	4.9
Juniata, Adams	170	1,396	6.5	141	1,537	4.0							

*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			
July 1996 \$	August 1996 \$	YTD \$	YTD % Chg		July 1996 \$	August 1996 \$	YTD \$	YTD % Chg	July 1996 \$	August 1996 \$	YTD \$	YTD % Chg		July 1996 \$	August 1996 \$	YTD \$	YTD % Chg
Nebraska*	194,193	192,741	1,399,678	10.3	1,234,891	1,260,701	9,449,656	6.4	Howard	640	772	5,438	7.4	1,615	1,493	11,547	4.8
Adams	2,858	3,032	23,911	9.2	19,819	20,405	157,961	2.3	Jefferson	1,056	1,139	7,479	6.9	3,992	3,833	29,198	1.4
Antelope	986	1,018	7,607	18.7	2,143	2,045	15,460	1.6	Johnson	444	348	3,609	-1.4	1,217	1,212	10,419	2.4
Arthur	69	37	396	52.3	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	Kearney	907	1,008	7,013	13.7	2,053	2,078	14,129	-3.0
Banner	117	195	1,070	31.0	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	Keith	966	1,104	7,552	-4.3	7,434	6,903	46,879	6.7
Blaine	52	148	538	-3.4	71	83	(D)	(D)	KeyaPaha	83	85	802	1.3	78	95	643	10.9
Boone	1,116	865	6,580	8.4	2,623	2,180	19,032	10.1	Kimball	624	519	3,914	7.6	1,753	1,737	11,731	-8.9
BoxButte	1,547	1,987	12,566	0.1	6,796	6,551	47,366	4.7	Knox	888	1,053	7,723	18.5	2,697	2,738	19,826	4.7
Boyd	222	338	1,681	1.3	518	513	4,441	6.6	Lancaster	25,106	23,228	169,641	13.0	183,449	188,132	1,375,959	10.7
Brown	260	388	2,335	-14.9	1,933	1,816	13,451	-5.4	Lincoln	4,076	3,805	27,703	1.8	22,517	23,663	169,035	2.9
Buffalo	4,598	4,738	34,509	14.9	32,201	34,217	239,688	5.1	Logan	185	86	772	-6.7	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Burt	857	970	7,002	7.2	2,387	2,431	17,584	1.6	Loup	88	39	506	-25.3	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Butler	677	1,146	7,689	13.4	1,787	1,920	14,829	1.3	McPherson	70	77	559	53.2	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
Cass	3,528	3,087	23,257	12.0	6,254	5,783	42,397	1.0	Madison	3,643	3,855	28,761	7.0	29,516	31,305	227,044	7.2
Cedar	1,186	1,391	8,735	5.7	2,570	2,750	19,336	-4.1	Merrick	923	1,129	7,918	33.2	2,318	2,332	16,956	10.8
Chase	351	507	4,157	1.3	2,120	1,982	15,776	5.4	Morrill	601	609	4,480	10.4	1,544	1,638	11,009	-7.5
Cherry	580	794	4,899	-1.9	4,346	4,348	30,317	5.4	Nance	392	513	3,372	5.2	816	835	6,063	-1.9
Cheyenne	1,268	1,159	9,741	14.0	9,019	8,987	53,638	7.0	Nemaha	794	711	6,181	0.7	2,433	2,685	20,617	-0.4
Clay	730	1,057	6,886	10.7	2,621	2,070	18,490	14.4	Nuckolls	474	593	4,505	10.8	2,381	2,035	15,551	3.6
Colfax	1,021	1,186	8,132	14.6	2,658	2,554	21,070	6.0	Otoe	1,839	1,918	13,553	13.0	6,782	7,121	52,021	8.7
Cuming	1,109	1,204	9,416	19.5	4,625	4,891	36,029	9.0	Pawnee	287	518	2,818	53.2	508	410	3,811	-0.8
Custer	1,434	1,352	9,635	4.3	4,876	4,333	41,177	1.2	Perkins	456	334	3,729	19.6	1,260	1,126	8,962	12.2
Dakota	2,322	2,198	16,140	18.3	8,851	9,229	72,133	5.0	Phelps	1,351	1,756	11,725	31.8	5,447	5,166	38,601	3.9
Dawes	946	796	5,647	4.9	4,586	4,561	29,121	-4.2	Pierce	1,035	1,103	7,336	14.6	1,841	1,808	13,180	-0.6
Dawson	2,340	2,486	19,645	4.2	13,161	12,447	96,440	1.2	Platte	3,639	4,069	28,436	10.6	20,262	21,262	161,831	4.7
Deuel	271	280	2,210	34.8	938	829	6,075	-3.1	Polk	604	622	5,696	10.2	2,389	2,184	15,868	0.5
Dixon	475	696	4,726	3.8	1,083	958	7,635	3.3	RedWillow	1,292	1,159	9,772	0.6	11,520	11,463	83,312	8.5
Dodge	4,780	4,652	28,988	14.9	23,327	22,659	175,079	4.6	Richardson	942	997	7,315	7.3	3,018	3,242	25,106	5.6
Douglas	51,851	48,538	359,160	11.0	438,598	452,835	3,352,578	5.6	Rock	302	323	1,548	-2.3	735	454	3,747	1.2
Dundy	332	301	2,851	27.9	568	546	4,310	9.6	Saline	1,433	1,396	11,652	16.5	4,783	4,960	36,160	-2.5
Fillmore	904	888	6,710	9.6	2,794	2,462	20,427	2.4	Sarpy	14,615	13,390	98,785	8.0	34,858	37,228	261,353	18.4
Franklin	355	294	2,835	7.0	665	683	5,640	2.4	Saunders	2,472	2,713	18,570	15.2	5,378	5,571	41,463	2.8
Frontier	228	330	2,679	4.1	599	649	4,692	3.1	ScottsBluff	4,226	4,084	29,410	4.4	24,689	25,613	186,283	2.6
Furnas	688	797	5,247	8.3	2,337	1,914	18,283	18.0	Seward	1,569	1,991	13,435	13.7	5,962	6,061	45,641	1.8
Gage	2,727	2,689	18,329	14.6	10,864	10,481	81,861	5.2	Sheridan	725	611	5,345	24.5	2,902	3,016	21,778	0.2
Garden	283	325	2,398	12.4	675	622	4,577	-10.9	Sherman	310	345	2,849	9.8	809	807	5,863	0.8
Garfield	207	136	1,446	24.2	830	671	5,143	-2.4	Sioux	192	299	1,726	22.5	145	161	1,055	0.0
Gosper	307	332	2,355	22.5	564	582	3,575	3.7	Stanton	837	686	5,445	6.8	690	648	5,549	8.5
Grant	125	113	685	-3.8	189	176	1,309	-0.5	Thayer	772	809	5,527	7.5	2,505	2,519	18,567	-2.5
Greeley	278	407	2,300	-0.7	612	619	4,924	3.6	Thomas	70	50	799	3.9	366	344	2,672	6.7
Hall	6,204	6,308	46,838	14.1	47,522	50,458	365,552	0.0	Thurston	403	562	4,060	13.8	700	853	6,038	7.7
Hamilton	915	1,282	9,523	8.5	3,027	2,742	23,443	1.7	Valley	435	581	3,649	0.4	1,993	1,929	14,905	-3.4
Harlan	394	602	3,804	13.5	1,021	937	7,016	-2.9	Washington	3,034	3,168	20,132	21.8	6,515	6,715	50,508	1.4
Hayes	157	186	1,150	9.0	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	Wayne	905	1,034	7,038	8.4	2,971	3,367	24,259	3.2
Hitchcock	412	531	3,058	14.5	622	638	4,695	2.0	Webster	449	469	3,277	15.6	1,184	1,243	8,868	-0.9
Holt	1,138	1,438	9,439	-2.2	6,057	5,651	44,957	7.6	Wheeler	146	109	1,060	-1.0	67	56	835	9.2
Hooker	176	46	739	55.3	499	454	2,355	19.5	York	1,436	1,726	12,807	0.1	10,033	10,469	74,691	3.5

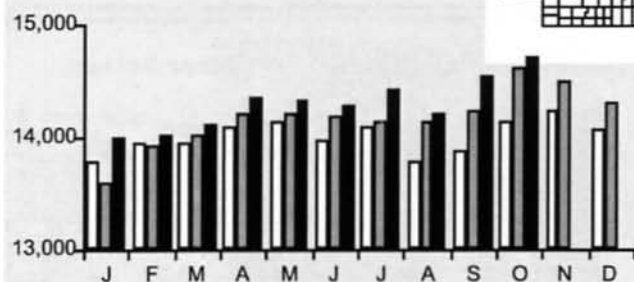
*Totals may not add due to rounding
(D) Denotes disclosure suppression

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

Regional Employment—1994 to October 1996

1994 1995 1996

Northwest Panhandle



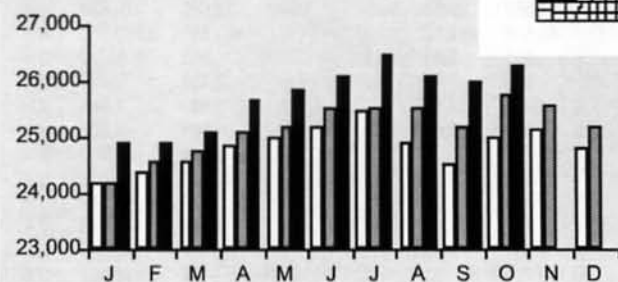
Southwest Panhandle



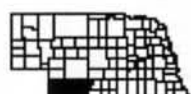
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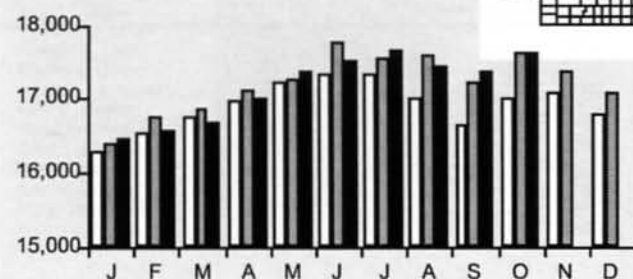
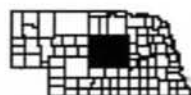
West Central



Southwest Central

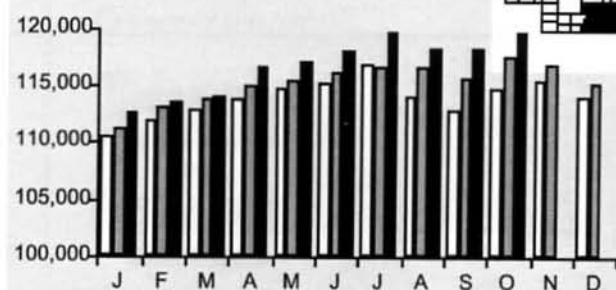


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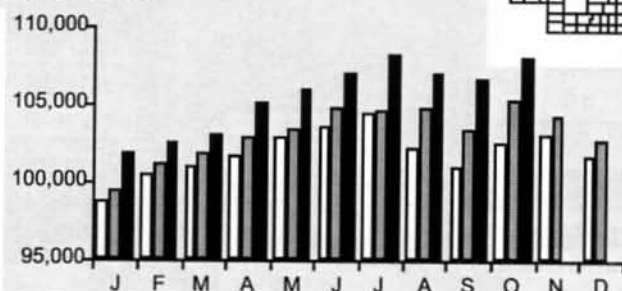


Regional Employment—1994 to October 1996

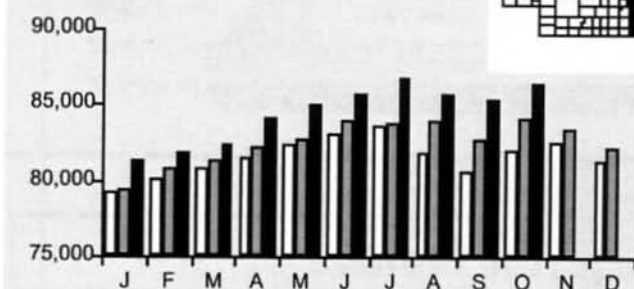
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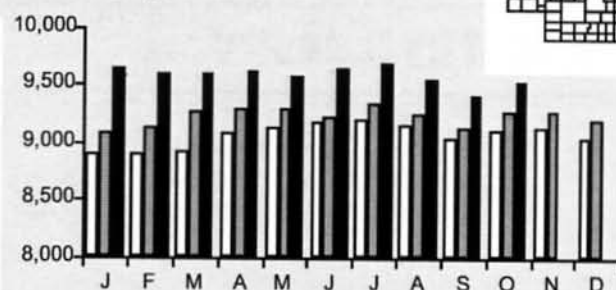
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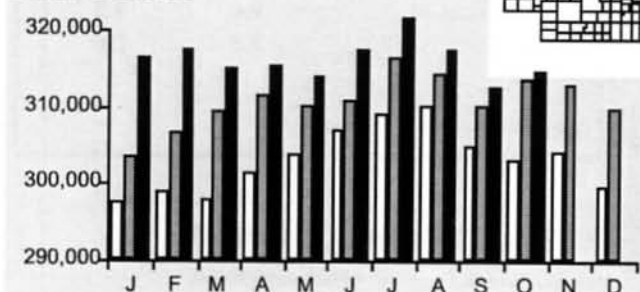
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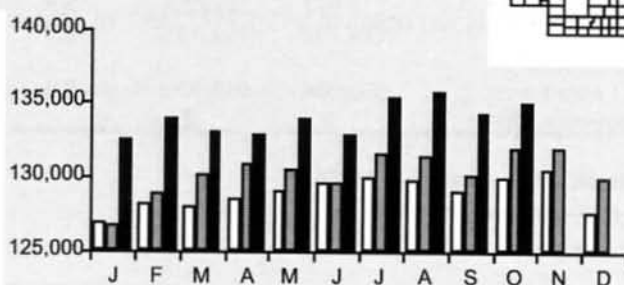
Sioux City MSA



Omaha MSA

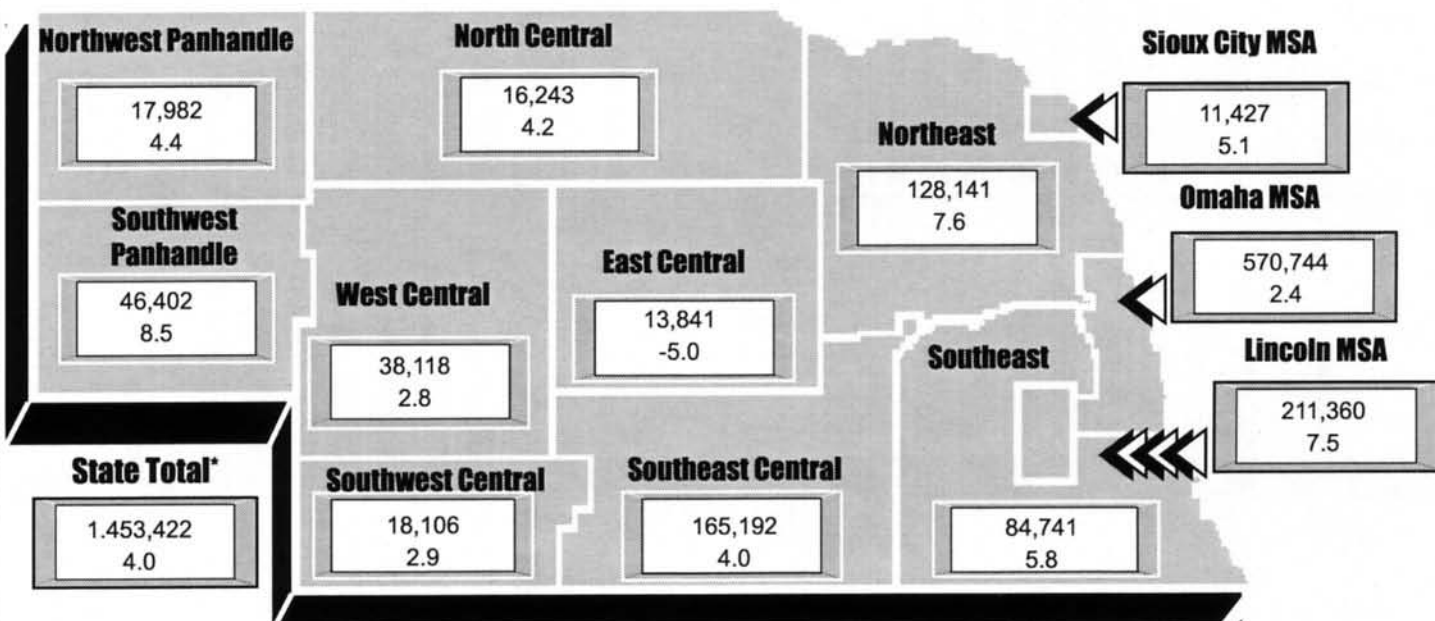


Lincoln MSA



August 1996 Regional Retail Sales (\$000)

Percent Change from Year Ago



*Regional values may not add to state total due to unallocated sales

Employment by Industry

	Revised September 1996	Preliminary October 1996	% Change vs Yr Ago
Place of Work			
Nonfarm	831,339	839,823	1.6
Construction & Mining	38,903	38,696	1.4
Manufacturing	113,638	114,066	1.4
Durables	54,377	54,547	1.2
Nondurables	59,261	59,519	1.6
TCU*	50,019	50,518	0.9
Trade	206,750	209,418	0.8
Wholesale	53,912	55,328	2.7
Retail	152,838	154,090	0.2
FIRE**	52,314	52,551	-0.2
Services	219,973	222,083	3.9
Government	149,742	152,491	0.3
Place of Residence			
Civilian Labor Force	902,044	913,936	0.8
Unemployment Rate	2.1	2.5	

* Transportation, Communication, and Utilities

** Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor

Inflation Rate

Price Indices

Consumer Price Index - U*
(1982-84 = 100)

	November 1996	% Change vs Yr Ago	YTD % Change vs Yr Ago
All Items	158.6	3.0	2.8
Commodities	141.5	2.4	2.3
Services	179.9	3.3	2.6

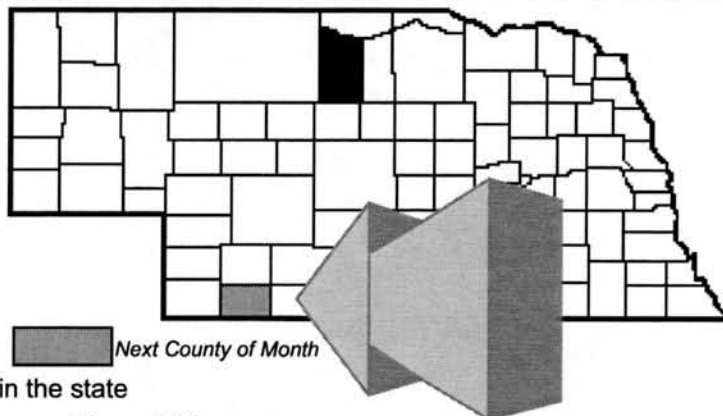
U* = All Urban consumers

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

County of the Month

Brown

Ainsworth - County Seat



License plate prefix number: 75

Size of county: 1,214 square miles, ranks 10th in the state

Population: 3,657 in 1990, a change of -16.5 percent from 1980

Per capita personal income: \$18,683 in 1994, ranks 56th in the state

Net taxable retail sales (\$000): \$25,599 in 1995, a change of -7.2 percent from 1994; \$13,582 during January-July 1996, a change of -7.6 percent from the same period one year ago

Number of business and service establishments: 147 in 1993, 65.3 percent had less than five employees

Unemployment rate: 4.0 percent in Brown County, 2.4 percent in Nebraska for 1995

Nonfarm employment (1995):

	State	Brown County
Wage and Salary workers	815,089	3,495
	<i>(percent of total)</i>	
Construction and Mining	4.4	6.0
Manufacturing	13.7	2.9
TCU	6.1	2.9
Wholesale Trade	6.5	6.5
Retail Trade	18.6	2.5
FIRE	6.4	4.8
Services	25.8	16.0
Government	18.5	35.8

Agriculture:

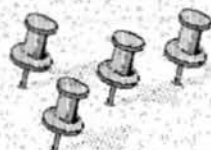
Number of farms: 332 in 1992, 344 in 1987

Average farm size: 1,957 acres in 1992

Market value of farm products sold: \$80.4 million in 1992 (\$242,273 average per farm)

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

bulletin board



Season's Greetings!

Charles Lamphier
Dan Holden
James Mann
Chris Boyd
Jan Spacy
David DeWitt
David Bennett



NU ONRAMP Data Review

One data set on **NU ONRAMP** is the Consumer Price Index (CPI). CPI is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market of goods and services. The Bureau

of Labor Statistics publishes the CPI for two population groups: 1) All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) approximately 80% of the total population; and 2) Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) 32% of the total population.

This data set includes groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers. To find these files on **NU ONRAMP** go to Data Central and choose the subject search. Choose Indexes (170000) then Consumer Price Index (170100) from the subjects menu. Find CPI by using a file name search: CPI.

NU ONRAMP

World Wide Web Address

<http://www.cba.unl.edu/bbr/onramp.html>

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