

Business in Nebraska

Volume 56, No. 656

presented by Bureau of Business Research (BBR)

April 2001

Family Farms Not the Key to Small Town Sustainability

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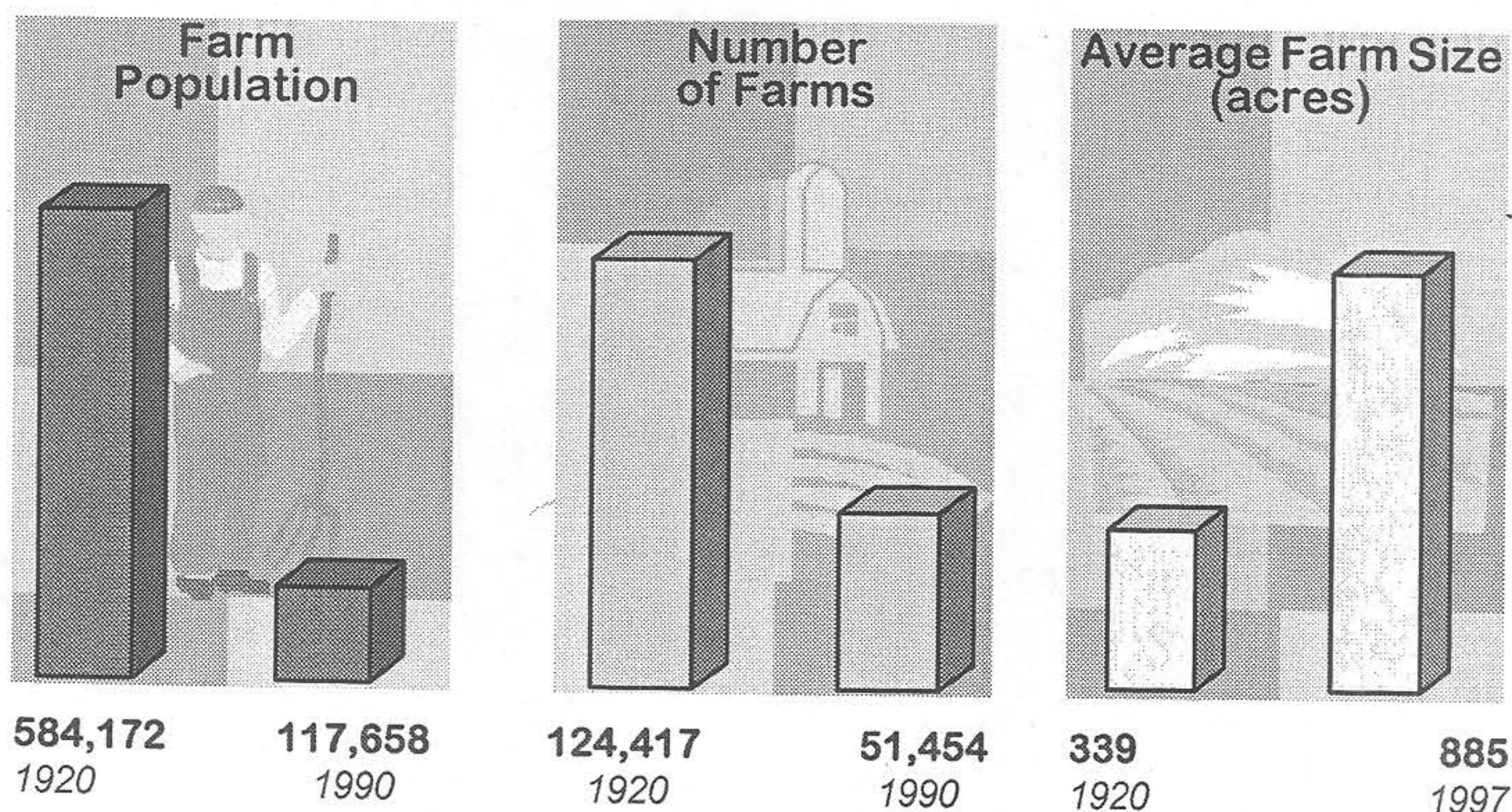
Many rural communities in Nebraska have been losing population and their importance as trade centers for decades. At the same time, the number of family farms has been decreasing, resulting in larger operations run by fewer people. A common assumption is that the decline of small towns in the state, as evidenced by

declining population and retail activity, is directly linked to the consolidation of small family farms into larger farms. Conversely, therefore, it is assumed that promoting stability of small farms and even promoting the growth in the number of small farms will lead to a revival of rural communities. While these seem to be logical assumptions on the surface, they

overlook economics of agricultural production, marketing, and retail trade that have occurred over the past 70 years.

In 1920 there were nearly 600,000 people living on nearly 125,000 farms in Nebraska (Figure 1). By 1990 the farm population was just under 120,000 persons on approximately 51,000 farms. The average farm size in acres increased from 339 in 1920 to 885 in 1997. The total amount of land in farms increased three million acres over the 1920-1997 period.

Figure 1
Farm Population and Number of Farms, 1920 and 1990, and
Average Farm Size, 1920 and 1997



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census of Agriculture, 1945, 1950, 1997; Census of Population, 1990

The farm family of the early 20th century produced a substantial portion of the goods (food, clothing, fuel, etc.) used in households and for farm operations. Surveys conducted in the 1920s by the USDA¹ revealed that the average north central U.S. farm household utilized \$1,600 worth of goods and services (including clothing and personal items, fuel, food, health care, and education) annually from 1922 to 1924. Of that total, approximately \$950, or 58 percent, were purchased goods and services. Thus, 42 percent of household goods and services was produced on the farm. In 1997 terms the annual off-farm expenditure totaled \$1.1 billion (Table 1). Farmers spent an additional \$875 million (in 1997 dollars) on feed for livestock/poultry and wages for hired labor.

In contrast the modern farm family may produce only one or two commodities, less than 1 percent of which, on average, is used for home consumption. All of the other goods and services used in the household and for farm operations are purchased off the farm. Estimates suggest that it currently takes at least \$37,000 annually to meet the household needs of a farm family of four in Nebraska. That figure is equivalent to more than \$1.9 billion in total household expenditures annually. On the farm production side, expenditures for wages and feed alone totaled \$1.7 billion in 1997.

A comparison of the 1920s to the 1990s shows that while the number of farms dropped nearly 60 percent over the period, household consumption by farm families increased 73 percent and wages and feed expenditures increased 95 percent in real terms (1997 dollars).

At the same time the value of goods and services demanded by farm families and farm operations increased substantially, the value of goods produced and sold by the farm also increased substantially (Table 2). The total market value of agricultural products sold (crops and livestock) by Nebraska farmers increased nearly 350 percent in real terms (1997 dollars) from 1940² to 1997. The value of crops sold increased more than seven fold over the period.

Nebraska farms, therefore, currently are demanding and supplying significantly more that can add to potential economic activity off the farm than in the days when farms were far more numerous. Despite these notable increases in economic activity, the population and levels of economic activities, particularly retail trade, in small towns in Nebraska have steadily decreased for decades. Both supply and demand factors account for these decreases.

Table 1
Estimated Total Expenditures for Nebraska Farm Households and Operations,
1920s and 1990s (1997 dollars) (\$000)

	1920s	1990s	Change
Household Consumption Expenditures	1,099,809	1,903,798	73%
Selected Farm Production Expenditures	875,034	1,709,380	95%
Total	1,974,843	3,613,178	83%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census of Agriculture, 1950 and 1997, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index

¹USDA Department Bulletin No. 1466, November 1926

²Comparable data for years prior to 1940 are not available.

Table 2
Total Market Value of Nebraska Agricultural Products Sold,
1940 and 1990 (1997 dollars) (\$000)

	1940	1997	Change
Total	2,213,054	9,831,519	344%
Livestock, Poultry, and Related Products	1,496,233	3,798,462	154%
All Crops	716,821	6,033,057	742%

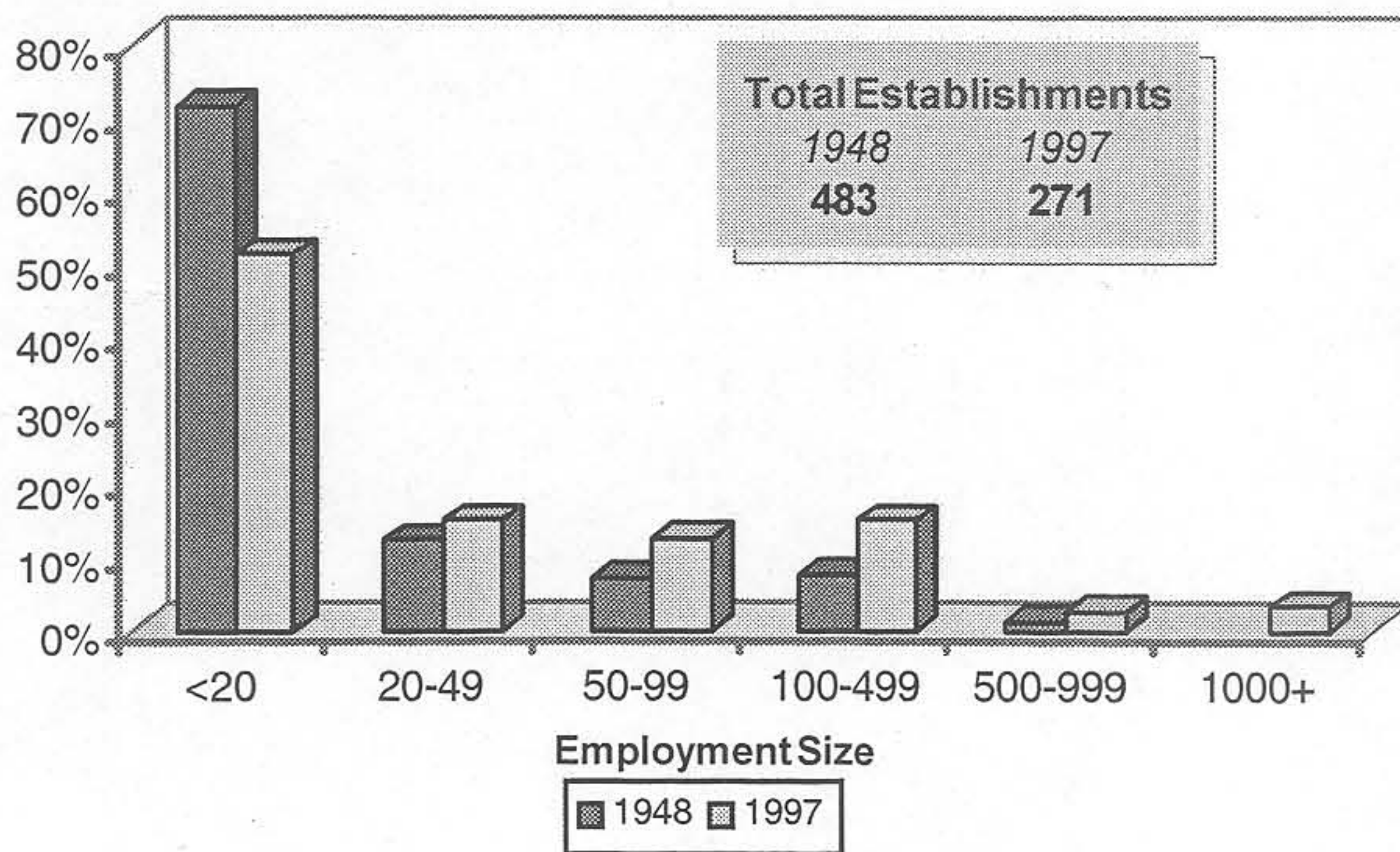


Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census of Agriculture, 1964 and 1997; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index

On the supply side, despite the substantial increase in crop and livestock output, improvements in transportation and economies of scale in the collection of agricultural output have resulted in fewer and larger collection points. Nowhere is that more evident than in the state's food processing sector. In 1948 there were nearly 500 food processing establishments in Nebraska (Figure 2). More than 70 percent of these establishments employed fewer than 20 workers. Just 9 percent employed more than 100 workers. The total number of food processing establishments had decreased 44 percent

by 1997. The proportion of establishments with fewer than 20 employees dropped to 51 percent while the proportion employing more than 100 employees increased to 21 percent. Concentration also is evident in agriculture-related wholesale trade. For example, the number of grain wholesalers in Nebraska (including elevators) decreased roughly 22 percent from 1948 to 1997, while employment in these establishments increased approximately 26 percent.

Figure 2
Distribution of Nebraska's Food Processing Establishments
by Employment Size, 1948 and 1997



On the demand side, changes in farm household consumption and operations began to affect small town economies early in the 20th century. A 1927 University of Nebraska study analyzing community retail trade activity from 1903 to 1925 in Nebraska stated the following:

It seems to be quite evident...that, since 1917...establishments dealing in other than the more staple goods have been decreasing in number in the smaller towns...When it is considered that the smaller villages have been showing a decrease in population in spite of the fact that so many retired farmers are moving to such places, it is evident that the decreases in population shown by these places are of even greater significance. Hence, at the very start there is presumptive evidence that at least the towns of under 1,000 population are losing their importance in favor of the larger towns as distributing centers.

The study, titled *The Influence of Automobiles and Good Roads on Retail Trade Centers*³, found that improvements in transportation had a profound impact on shopping behavior in Nebraska in the early 20th century. Farm families were no different from their town-dwelling neighbors in their willingness to drive longer distances to shop where a wider variety of goods was available.

The automobile now makes it possible for people to go five times as far in an hour as they did when they used the horse-drawn vehicle...And meanwhile, the continuing improvement in the character of rural roads invites more and longer drives...It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the automobile and the improvement in roads, affects profoundly the distances people travel and consequently their shopping habits, have been important factors in...shifts in population.

In addition to transportation, the 1927 study cited the influence of a number of other factors, including the impact of advertising on rural consumption behavior, as well as rural mail

deliveries and access to telephones—factors that more closely linked the farm to larger trade centers. Other studies throughout the decades have shown the impacts of technology and changing retirement behavior among farmers on populations in small communities. Technology reduced the need for both hired and unpaid farm labor. The latter influenced, in part, the decreasing size of farm families. In addition, farmers who may have traditionally retired to town, instead began to head south to warmer climates with greater recreational opportunities. Fewer people, meant fewer demands for local goods and services and, consequently, less business and social activity to sustain communities.

Overall, the farm economy apparently does not have strong direct links to small town health, as evidenced by retail activity in the latter third of the 20th century. A study⁴ by the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UNL showed that retail sales declined in many small towns from 1970 to 1998, regardless of the strength or weakness of the state's farm economy. In fact, the study concluded:

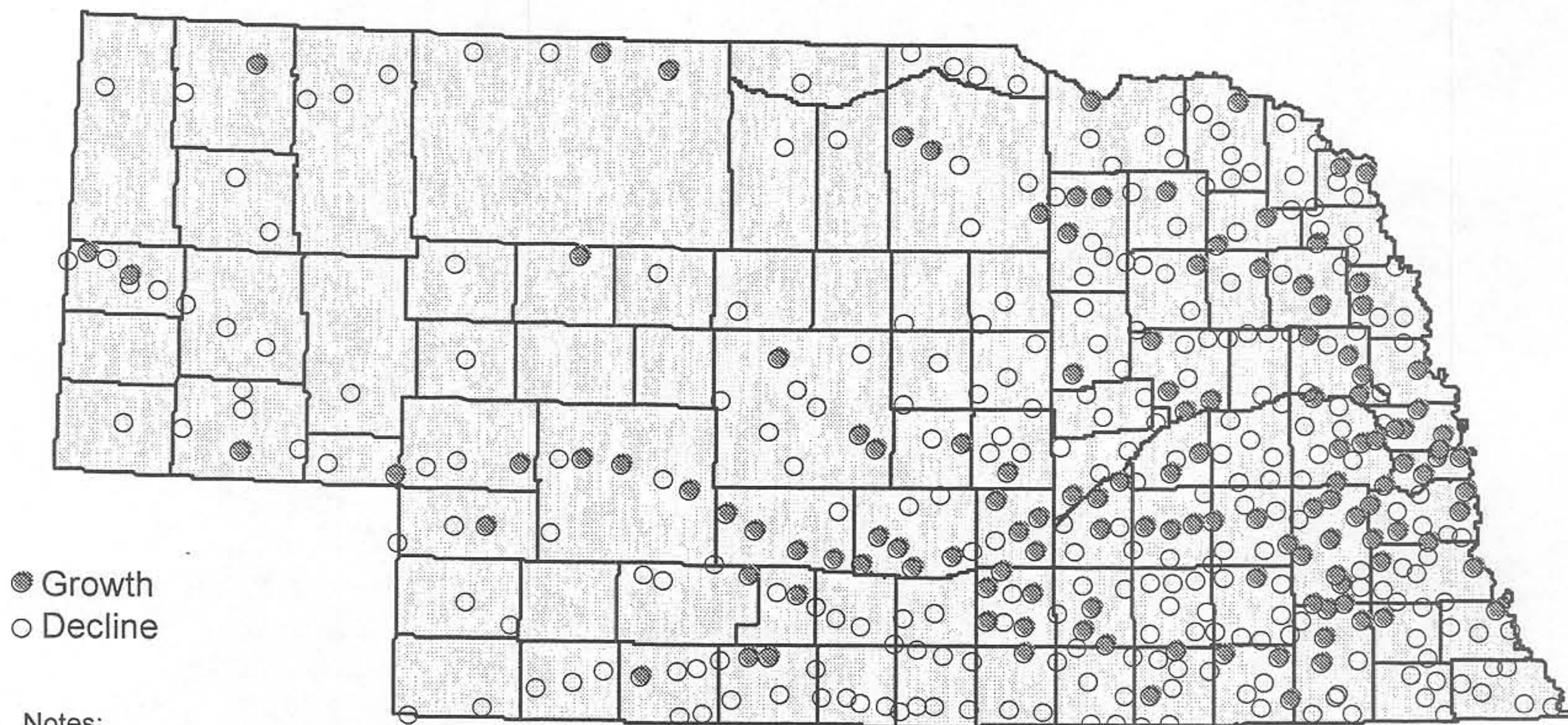
Retail sales dropped significantly in the 1990s despite several years of good farm prices that traditionally buoyed rural merchants.

Despite the emotional appeal of such a notion, a renaissance in small family farms is not the key to sustaining Nebraska's small towns. Rural communities, even those with similar populations, are not homogeneous. Factors that have influenced and continue to influence the sustainability of small towns in Nebraska include proximity to larger towns with more sophisticated and varied retail and service establishments; economic diversity; potential self-sufficiency; cohesiveness of the population; the nature of social networks; land tenure; and strength of institutions, particularly churches. A development solution focused on bolstering family farms in the area may prove to have some benefit for one community, but not another. For example, if there is not a commitment on the part of residents—farm and nonfarm—to support the community's central business and institutional core in the face of intense competition from larger communities, then no amount of support directed to preserving individual family farms will sustain the community.

³Nebraska Studies in Business, No. 18, Committee on Business Research, University of Nebraska, March 1927.

⁴Decline in Rural Retail Sales Accelerating, by Bruce Johnson and Brandon Raddatz in Research Nebraska, March 2000

Growing and Declining Retail Trade Communities, 1985-1999



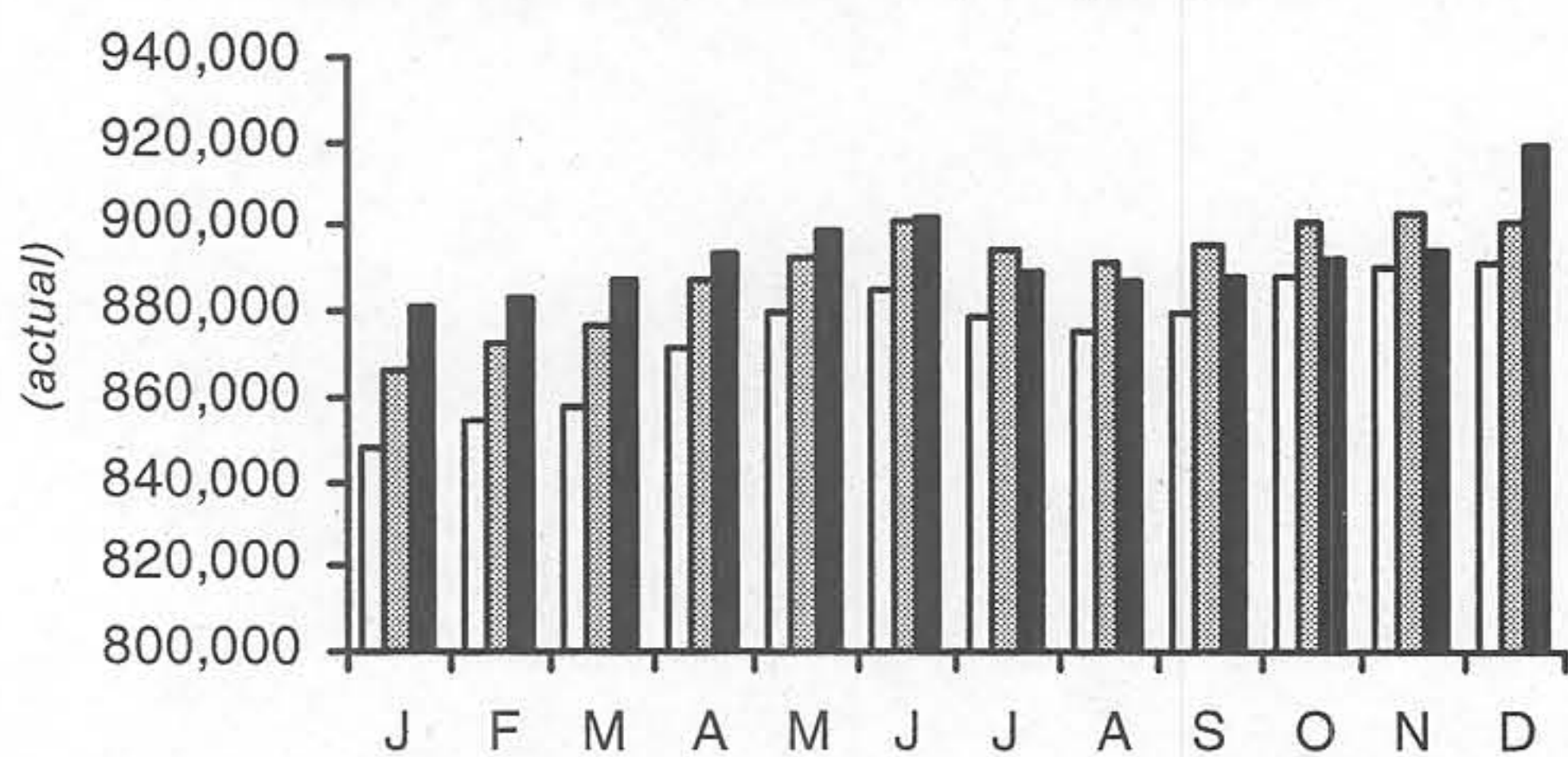
● Growth
○ Decline

- Notes:
 1) Some communities have been omitted because of incomplete data
 2) Net taxable retail sales in constant dollars
 3) Motor vehicle retail sales are excluded

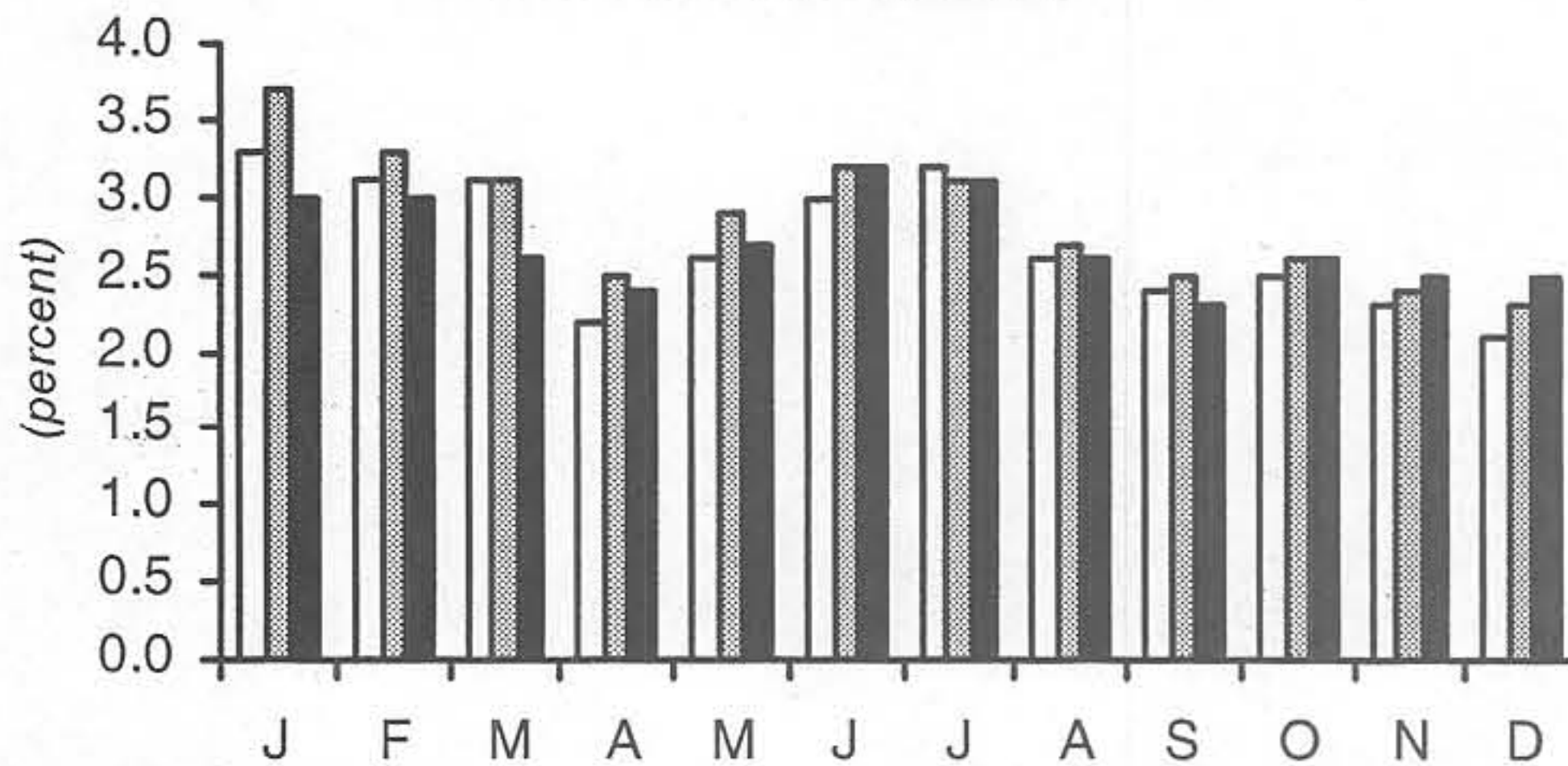
Nebraska Stats

□ 1998 ▨ 1999 ■ 2000

Total Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment

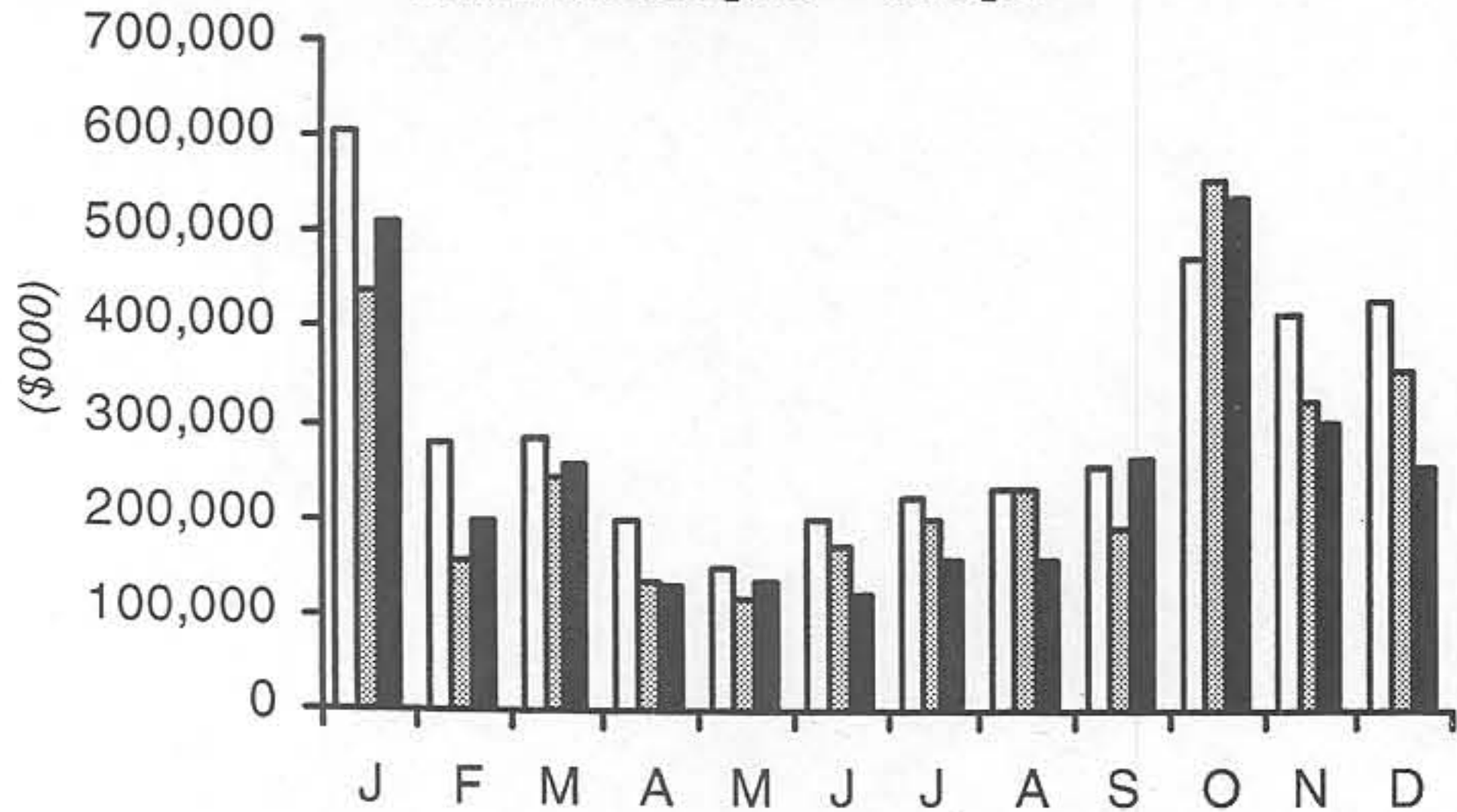


Unemployment Rate

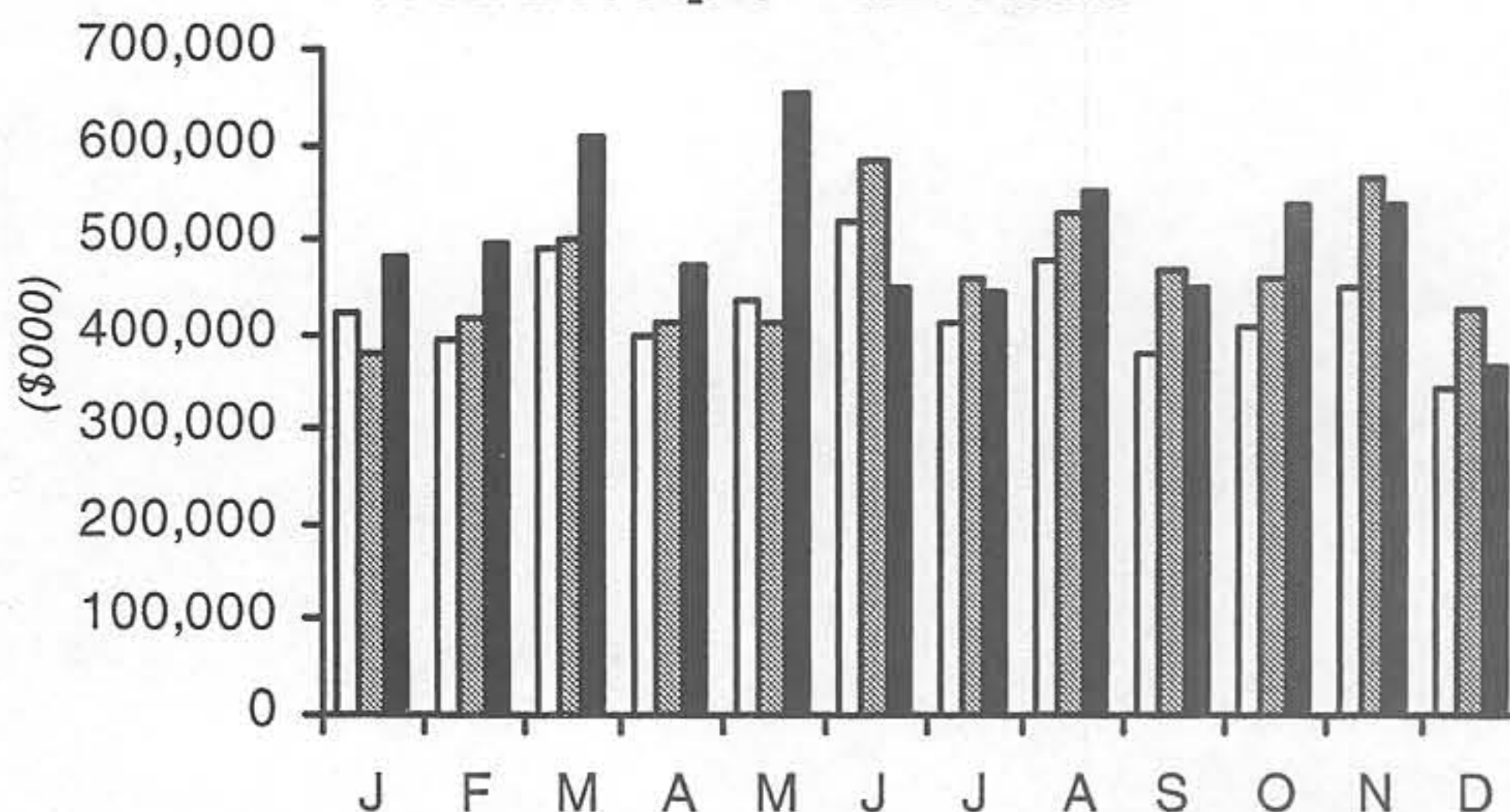


Note: All 1999 and 2000 monthly employment data are considered estimates until benchmarked. Data shown for 1999 and 2000 are the most current revised estimates available. Final benchmarked monthly data for 1999 are expected to be released by the Nebraska Department of Labor in mid-2000.

Cash Receipts—Crops



Cash Receipts—Livestock



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

	November 2000 (\$000)	YTD (\$000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago		November 2000 (\$000)	YTD (\$000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
Ainsworth, Brown	1,595	17,299	-9.4	Kenesaw, Adams	286	2,428	1.8
Albion, Boone	1,376	18,013	-5.8	Kimball, Kimball	1,719	19,901	5.4
Alliance, Box Butte	5,583	63,051	-0.8	La Vista, Sarpy	11,123	112,165	9.3
Alma, Harlan	487	6,146	-14.4	Laurel, Cedar	326	4,042	2.5
Arapahoe, Furnas	749	9,076	11.7	Lexington, Dawson	7,246	82,598	7.3
Arlington, Washington	209	2,435	5.6	Lincoln, Lancaster	227,767	2,396,487	4.8
Arnold, Custer	259	3,147	5.6	Louisville, Cass	375	5,880	-3.8
Ashland, Saunders	1,065	14,921	8.5	Loup City, Sherman	416	4,774	-28.1
Atkinson, Holt	841	11,209	5.6	Lyons, Burt	442	4,961	-4.9
Auburn, Nemaha	2,161	26,244	2.8	Madison, Madison	728	9,021	7.2
Aurora, Hamilton	2,212	25,699	-7.4	McCook, Red Willow	9,466	126,441	-0.1
Axtell, Kearney	51	673	5.3	Milford, Seward	673	9,571	-4.2
Bassett, Rock	384	5,259	2.3	Minatare, Scotts Bluff	137	1,732	5.0
Battle Creek, Madison	753	7,414	5.6	Minden, Kearney	1,665	19,972	-0.2
Bayard, Morrill	409	4,800	4.2	Mitchell, Scotts Bluff	469	6,363	-16.4
Beatrice, Gage	12,165	128,501	9.9	Morrill, Scotts Bluff	463	5,965	11.7
Beaver City, Furnas	111	1,438	0.6	Nebraska City, Otoe	5,887	68,371	-4.1
Bellevue, Sarpy	19,840	223,730	3.3	Neligh, Antelope	1,150	14,668	-0.8
Benkelman, Dundy	514	6,404	5.2	Newman Grove, Madison	226	3,075	-0.1
Bennington, Douglas	466	6,728	13.0	Norfolk, Madison	32,135	341,675	5.3
Blair, Washington	5,947	75,130	1.4	North Bend, Dodge	408	5,491	2.9
Bloomfield, Knox	473	5,679	-14.8	North Platte, Lincoln	23,863	262,683	4.8
Blue Hill, Webster	457	4,672	-4.5	O'Neill, Holt	4,008	48,786	4.4
Bridgeport, Morrill	952	12,550	0.8	Oakland, Burt	575	6,420	-14.2
Broken Bow, Custer	3,515	41,936	4.8	Ogallala, Keith	4,894	61,849	-2.4
Burwell, Garfield	740	9,040	8.0	Omaha, Douglas	485,486	5,427,847	2.5
Cairo, Hall	273	3,437	23.3	Ord, Valley	1,900	22,222	7.0
Central City, Merrick	1,589	19,229	-1.6	Osceola, Polk	361	5,491	-26.8
Ceresco, Saunders	1,442	14,564	-5.2	Oshkosh, Garden	451	4,661	-4.9
Chadron, Dawes	4,733	53,308	3.8	Osmond, Pierce	245	4,677	-13.2
Chappell, Deuel	507	5,237	-2.7	Oxford, Furnas	391	4,722	-4.1
Clarkson, Colfax	435	4,569	0.3	Papillion, Sarpy	7,356	80,330	0.9
Clay Center, Clay	255	2,991	-23.9	Pawnee City, Pawnee	314	3,205	-7.3
Columbus, Platte	19,725	229,096	2.0	Pender, Thurston	683	8,424	1.4
Cozad, Dawson	2,921	33,617	0.5	Pierce, Pierce	680	6,964	-1.4
Crawford, Dawes	585	6,558	6.4	Plainview, Pierce	818	7,497	9.7
Creighton, Knox	1,055	11,036	-13.6	Plattsmouth, Cass	3,125	37,704	-0.4
Crete, Saline	2,705	30,859	-16.2	Ponca, Dixon	215	2,772	-46.7
Crofton, Knox	306	4,134	-8.2	Ralston, Douglas	2,769	36,040	0.4
Curtis, Frontier	316	3,862	1.7	Randolph, Cedar	359	4,331	0.3
Dakota City, Dakota	367	4,859	9.0	Ravenna, Buffalo	565	6,250	-14.6
David City, Butler	1,510	17,547	6.8	Red Cloud, Webster	601	7,405	1.5
Deshler, Thayer	295	3,306	9.8	Rushville, Sheridan	413	4,674	-13.3
Dodge, Dodge	177	2,651	1.2	Sargent, Custer	181	2,344	6.7
Doniphan, Hall	582	9,863	1.1	Schuyler, Colfax	1,750	20,277	3.9
Eagle, Cass	189	4,416	-2.0	Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff	22,286	241,687	2.3
Elgin, Antelope	419	4,518	0.3	Scribner, Dodge	376	4,372	-12.5
Elkhorn, Douglas	1,873	25,610	-7.9	Seward, Seward	4,528	52,188	0.8
Elm Creek, Buffalo	380	4,146	-4.9	Shelby, Polk	352	4,355	10.6
Elwood, Gosper	256	3,298	-30.7	Shelton, Buffalo	396	4,630	-27.2
Fairbury, Jefferson	3,029	34,697	-4.3	Sidney, Cheyenne	12,050	105,897	6.6
Fairmont, Fillmore	150	2,084	22.7	South Sioux City, Dakota	7,723	86,351	-2.0
Falls City, Richardson	2,349	27,737	-1.0	Springfield, Sarpy	563	7,051	15.8
Franklin, Franklin	577	6,137	1.9	St. Paul, Howard	1,236	13,955	3.2
Fremont, Dodge	23,463	260,976	4.5	Stanton, Stanton	585	6,731	1.0
Friend, Saline	548	5,352	3.4	Stromsburg, Polk	884	11,428	13.9
Fullerton, Nance	436	5,791	3.1	Superior, Nuckolls	1,446	16,717	-2.3
Geneva, Fillmore	1,165	15,393	-11.5	Sutherland, Lincoln	425	4,446	8.1
Genoa, Nance	327	3,191	3.4	Sutton, Clay	775	9,123	1.1
Gering, Scotts Bluff	4,099	46,260	8.0	Syracuse, Otoe	1,026	12,895	3.3
Gibbon, Buffalo	807	9,024	0.1	Tecumseh, Johnson	814	9,311	-4.6
Gordon, Sheridan	1,494	17,541	-5.2	Tekamah, Burt	949	11,142	-10.1
Gothenburg, Dawson	2,315	27,112	5.1	Tilden, Madison	209	3,016	-33.1
Grand Island, Hall	52,591	585,616	5.8	Utica, Seward	305	3,410	5.0
Grant, Perkins	910	12,156	10.1	Valentine, Cherry	5,006	49,810	8.6
Gretna, Sarpy	2,619	32,254	-5.2	Valley, Douglas	901	18,286	27.1
Hartington, Cedar	1,695	16,726	-3.8	Wahoo, Saunders	2,113	25,714	3.7
Hastings, Adams	19,862	229,044	1.2	Wakefield, Dixon	280	3,771	7.0
Hay Springs, Sheridan	360	4,061	6.2	Wauneta, Chase	328	3,373	2.8
Hebron, Thayer	937	14,616	-25.5	Waverly, Lancaster	864	9,113	20.6
Henderson, York	509	7,318	11.8	Wayne, Wayne	3,451	40,939	1.5
Hickman, Lancaster	266	2,773	2.4	Weeping Water, Cass	523	6,746	-8.6
Holdrege, Phelps	4,053	48,948	3.3	West Point, Cuming	4,643	41,859	6.5
Hooper, Dodge	463	4,373	11.2	Wilber, Saline	422	4,853	-7.0
Humboldt, Richardson	229	3,534	-32.3	Wisner, Cuming	573	7,198	4.6
Humphrey, Platte	662	8,207	1.3	Wood River, Hall	339	4,357	0.6
Imperial, Chase	1,547	19,544	-9.9	Wymore, Gage	437	4,746	2.7
Juniata, Adams	249	2,490	5.8	York, York	9,467	111,505	0.2
Kearney, Buffalo	35,558	387,374	6.3				

*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		
	November 2000 (\$000)	YTD (\$000)	% Chg. vs Yr. Ago	November 2000 (\$000)	YTD (\$000)	% Chg. vs Yr. Ago		November 2000 (\$000)	YTD (\$000)	% Chg. vs Yr. Ago	November 2000 (\$000)	YTD (\$000)	% Chg. vs Yr. Ago
Nebraska	200,414	2,427,820	4.1	1,410,744	15,851,361	3.5	Howard	841	10,100	14.9	1,581	17,972	3.1
Adams	3,044	41,186	4.5	20,555	236,718	1.0	Jefferson	1,051	12,814	11.6	3,945	46,132	-2.5
Antelope	1,156	11,273	9.9	1,932	23,401	-2.2	Johnson	371	5,656	-9.2	1,172	12,927	-3.2
Arthur	20	735	-10.5	(D)	(D)	(D)	Kearney	1,032	11,318	12.8	1,815	21,963	-0.5
Banner	166	1,682	26.7	(D)	(D)	(D)	Keith	1,000	15,107	2.4	5,290	68,186	-2.4
Blaine	83	1,380	56.8	(D)	(D)	(D)	Keya Paha	152	1,795	40.8	130	1,307	18.4
Boone	888	9,736	8.2	1,803	23,356	-4.0	Kimball	654	7,394	29.9	1,741	20,340	5.5
Box Butte	906	16,930	1.9	5,909	66,420	-0.4	Knox	1,247	12,776	14.5	2,555	28,357	-8.2
Boyd	204	2,884	8.2	454	6,002	-1.8	Lancaster	26,317	319,945	4.9	230,883	2,430,054	5.1
Brown	392	5,692	12.2	1,682	18,542	-8.6	Lincoln	3,729	48,470	-0.9	24,829	273,823	4.8
Buffalo	4,040	59,843	8.7	38,057	416,059	5.1	Logan	130	1,618	2.3	(D)	(D)	(D)
Burt	1,184	11,904	7.1	2,232	25,079	-8.1	Loup	108	1,009	21.7	(D)	(D)	(D)
Butler	1,199	11,728	-6.5	1,992	22,487	6.0	McPherson	107	1,045	37.5	(D)	(D)	(D)
Cass	3,517	41,363	-0.6	5,675	72,672	-0.1	Madison	3,635	44,942	-1.6	34,111	364,874	4.8
Cedar	1,038	14,733	9.7	2,665	28,358	-2.1	Merrick	1,009	12,009	2.6	2,152	26,791	1.7
Chase	873	8,527	16.8	1,893	23,474	-7.4	Morrill	644	8,554	4.3	1,377	17,623	1.8
Cherry	1,010	10,244	9.3	5,237	52,230	8.4	Nance	337	5,555	9.0	797	9,312	3.4
Cheyenne	1,355	17,232	6.2	12,357	109,344	6.7	Nemaha	930	10,927	4.8	2,358	29,357	4.0
Clay	1,128	11,862	11.0	1,817	22,771	-2.7	Nuckolls	632	7,115	2.8	2,240	25,012	6.4
Colfax	1,231	13,945	6.1	2,656	29,844	5.2	Otoe	1,929	22,880	4.2	7,256	85,985	-3.0
Cuming	1,280	16,278	23.8	5,675	55,015	5.3	Pawnee	435	4,323	6.5	504	5,340	-7.0
Custer	1,502	18,206	14.5	4,509	54,229	5.8	Perkins	619	6,627	0.1	1,112	14,672	9.4
Dakota	2,101	26,057	-2.7	8,641	97,667	-1.6	Phelps	1,477	16,835	13.4	4,300	51,913	3.4
Dawes	757	10,169	-3.2	5,318	59,874	4.1	Pierce	759	10,981	2.1	1,804	20,052	-0.7
Dawson	2,916	37,403	21.1	12,943	148,767	5.6	Platte	4,221	47,279	1.9	20,962	244,405	2.2
Deuel	228	3,779	27.5	1,125	11,971	1.5	Polk	828	10,510	16.3	1,729	22,771	-1.6
Dixon	704	8,572	-3.2	596	7,811	-21.4	Red Willow	1,374	18,032	9.8	9,778	130,339	0.1
Dodge	4,276	49,422	4.1	25,121	281,105	4.2	Richardson	857	12,404	11.1	2,789	33,625	-5.2
Douglas	50,444	609,083	0.0	492,932	5,534,320	2.5	Rock	292	3,302	21.1	397	5,442	1.5
Dundy	336	4,099	10.9	524	6,578	5.5	Saline	1,545	18,586	9.0	4,015	45,103	-12.4
Fillmore	1,043	11,218	24.9	1,987	25,551	-1.4	Sarpy	15,896	189,379	3.8	44,253	491,398	6.7
Franklin	469	5,409	15.2	842	8,839	0.8	Saunders	3,261	32,589	6.4	5,880	69,494	6.1
Frontier	629	5,402	16.7	647	7,358	1.5	Scotts Bluff	4,078	50,158	-3.7	27,525	302,959	2.9
Furnas	732	9,359	22.2	2,152	24,617	6.2	Seward	2,092	23,392	0.6	5,730	67,851	0.3
Gage	2,491	30,630	6.4	13,643	142,416	9.7	Sheridan	689	9,276	15.1	2,571	29,579	-3.8
Garden	457	3,605	16.0	609	6,945	0.4	Sherman	401	4,726	5.2	515	6,282	-21.9
Garfield	202	2,518	-1.6	740	9,040	8.0	Sioux	332	3,276	13.6	115	1,462	5.0
Gosper	225	4,010	13.5	327	3,970	-27.0	Stanton	549	8,017	-7.5	798	8,610	-1.3
Grant	176	1,624	-3.0	318	2,929	16.4	Thayer	977	9,052	8.6	1,716	24,212	-14.9
Greeley	407	3,978	14.6	592	7,237	1.0	Thomas	76	1,549	8.5	281	2,956	-4.4
Hall	6,246	76,813	8.6	54,134	607,425	5.8	Thurston	332	4,940	-1.2	849	9,985	3.2
Hamilton	1,205	15,718	7.5	2,471	29,437	-7.0	Valley	386	6,567	12.6	2,147	24,877	6.7
Harlan	371	5,639	-5.2	610	8,694	-9.6	Washington	2,955	33,379	1.1	6,728	83,452	2.7
Hayes	273	2,125	11.8	(D)	(D)	(D)	Wayne	924	11,819	9.2	3,604	42,524	0.9
Hitchcock	604	5,681	20.7	599	6,930	4.7	Webster	446	5,963	18.2	1,140	13,540	1.0
Holt	1,482	18,337	13.4	5,481	67,491	4.0	Wheeler	111	1,603	10.6	71	1,161	15.2
Hooker	118	1,332	10.8	289	4,513	13.3	York	1,835	21,677	10.4	10,353	123,925	1.0

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

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

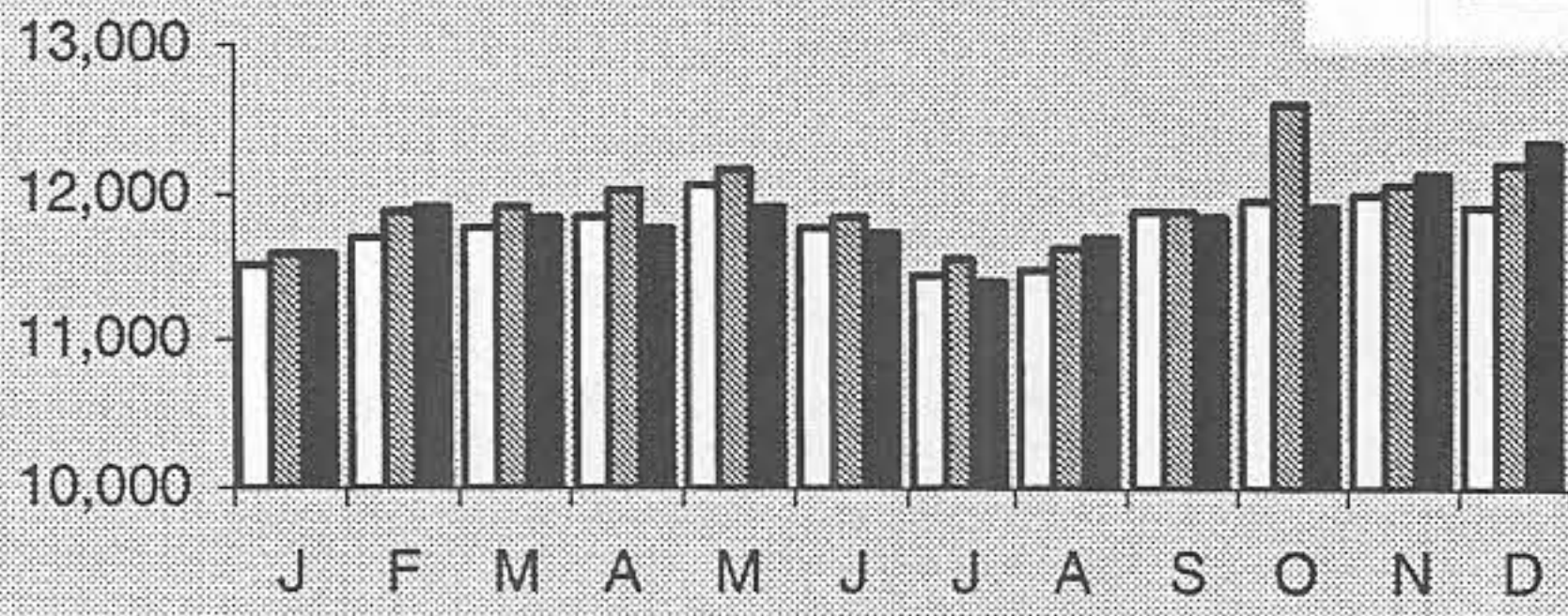
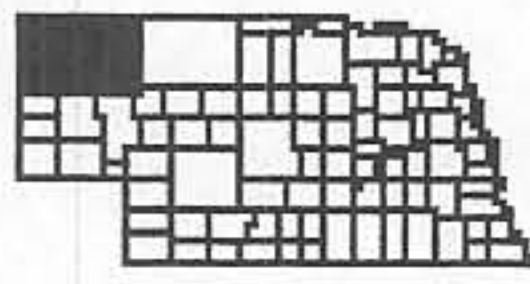
Note on Net Taxable Retail Sales

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* 1998 to December** 2000

1998 1999 2000

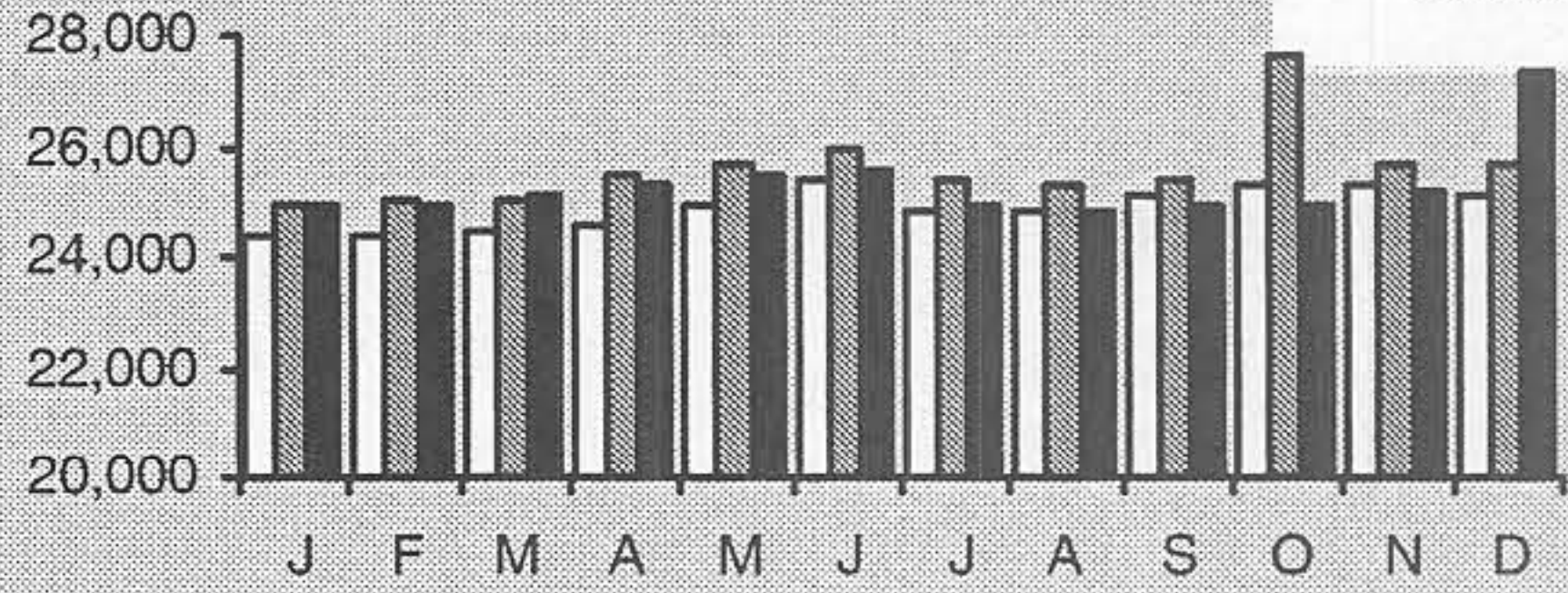
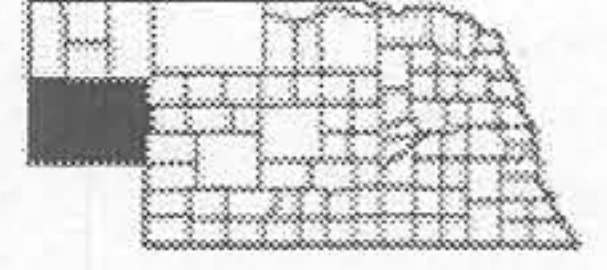
Northwest Panhandle



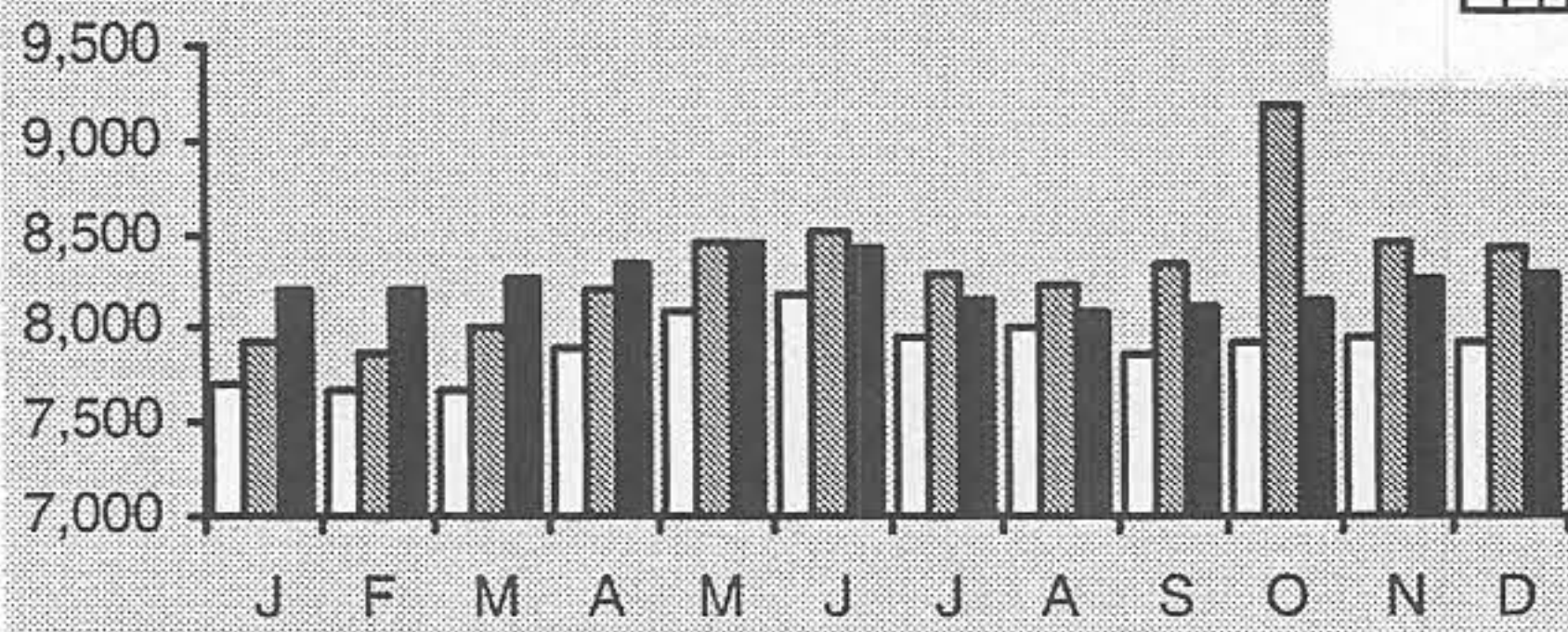
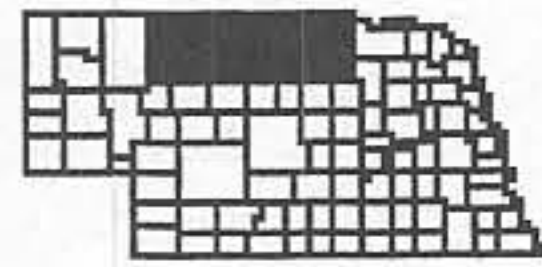
Note to Readers

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

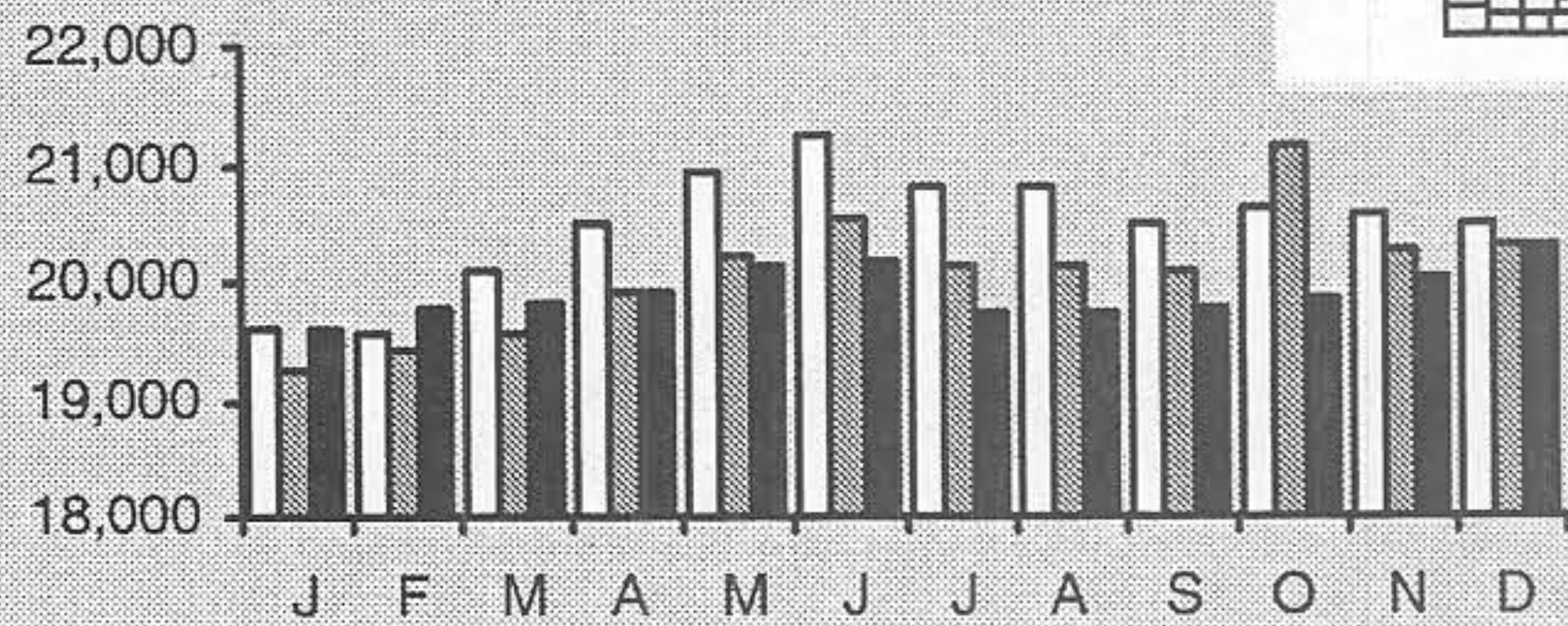
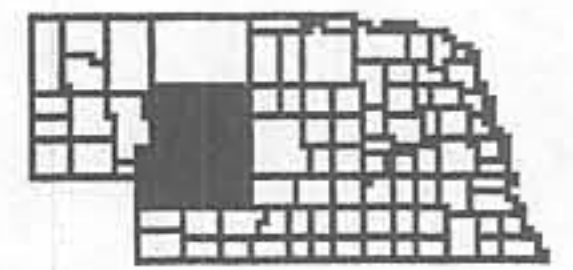
Southwest Panhandle



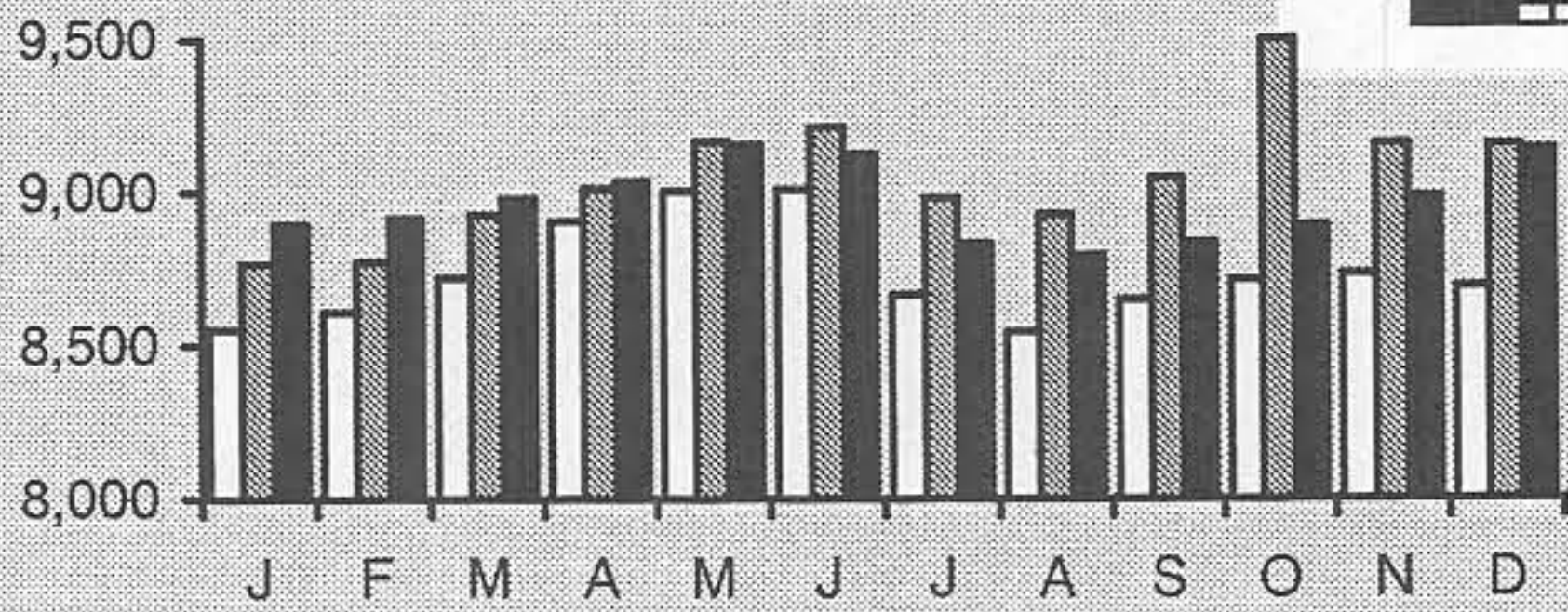
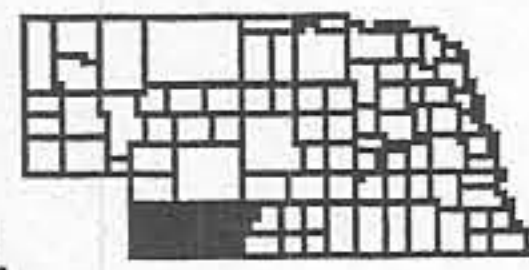
North Central



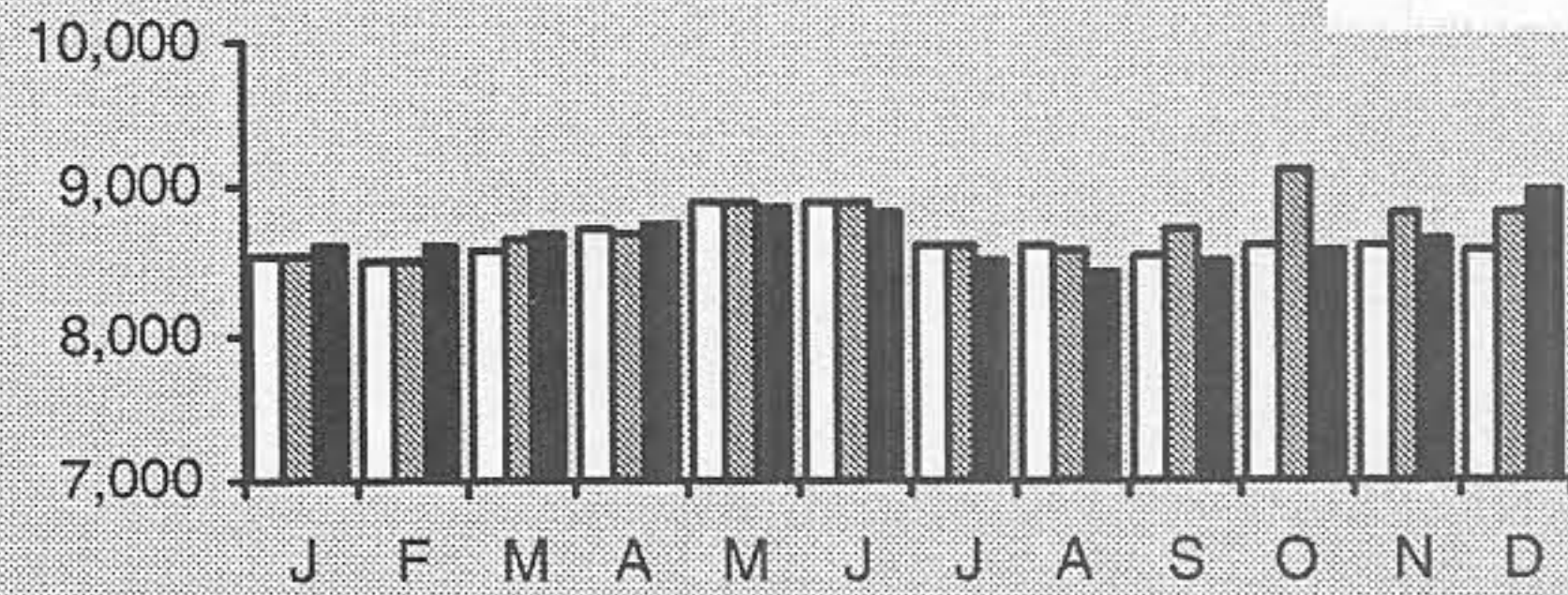
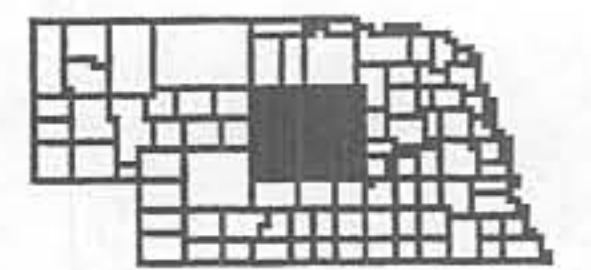
West Central



Southwest Central

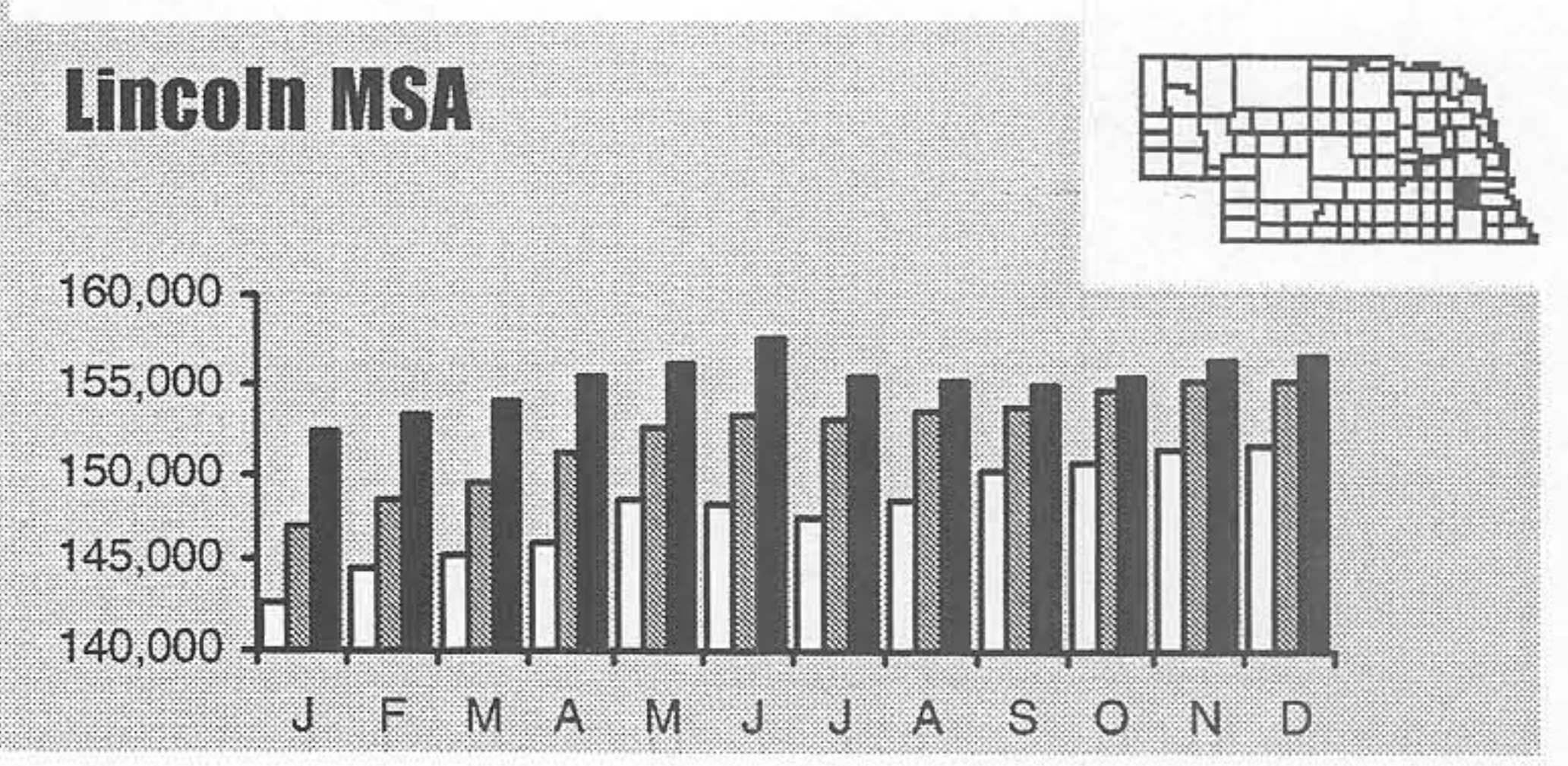
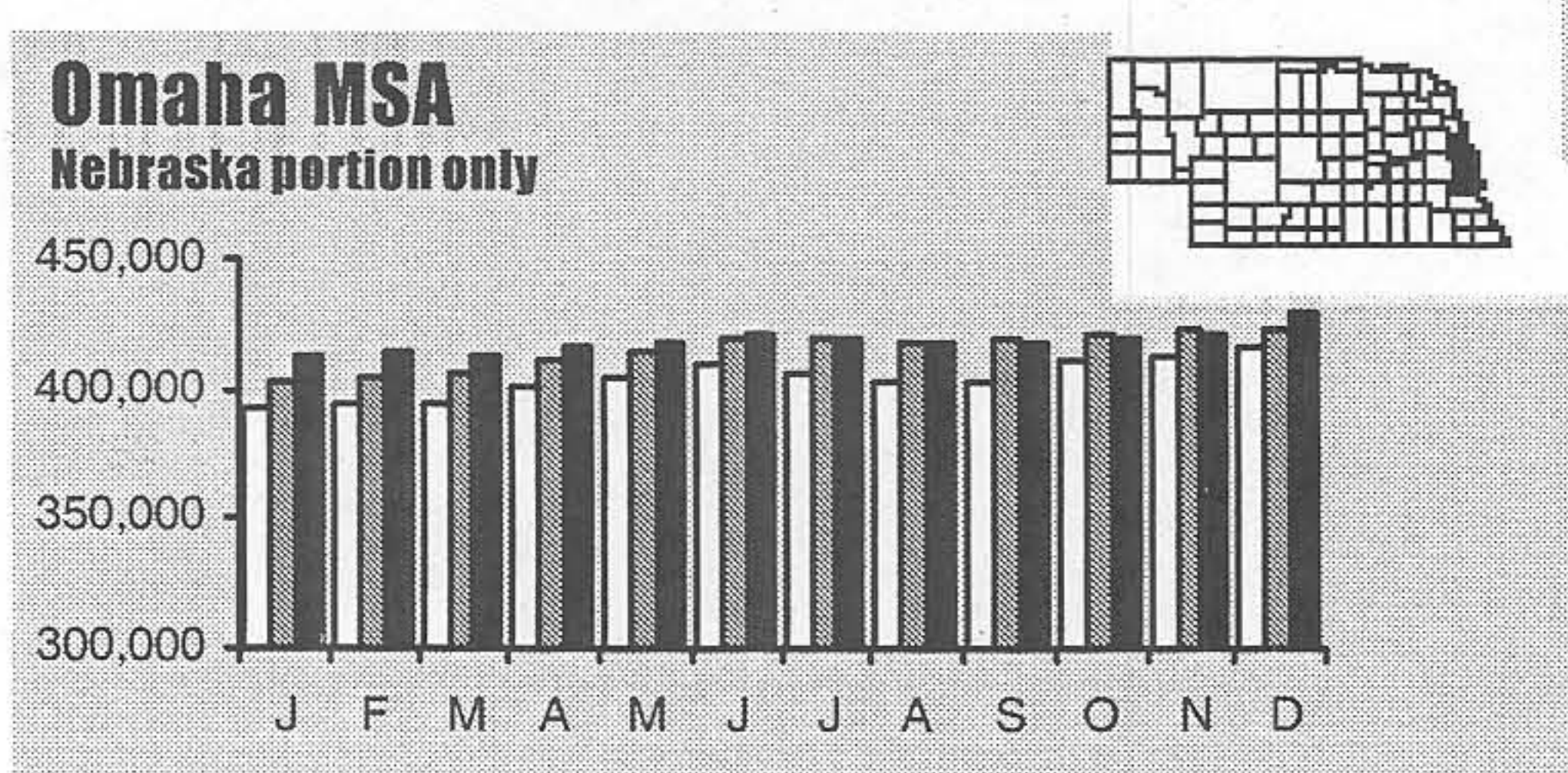
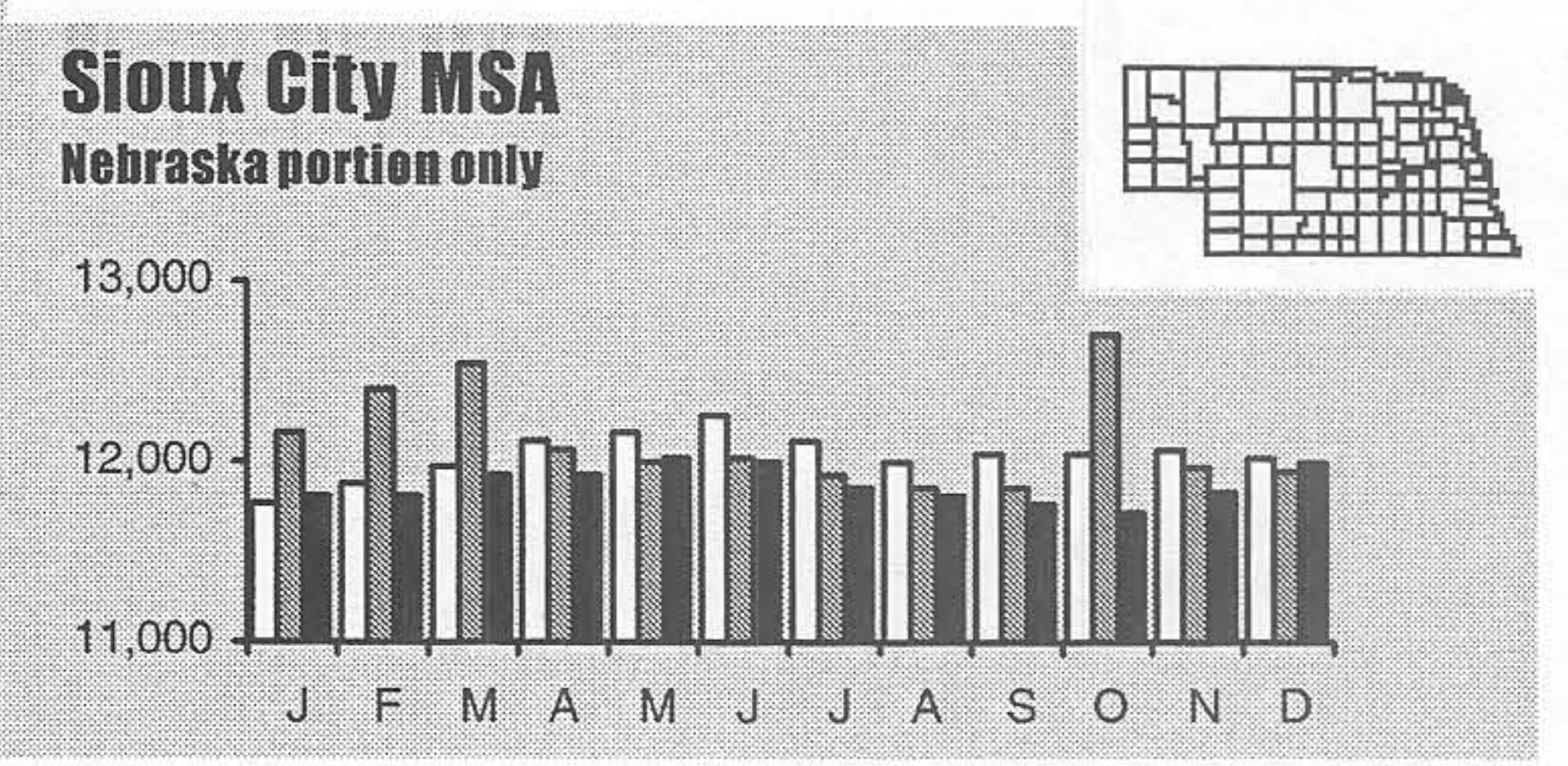
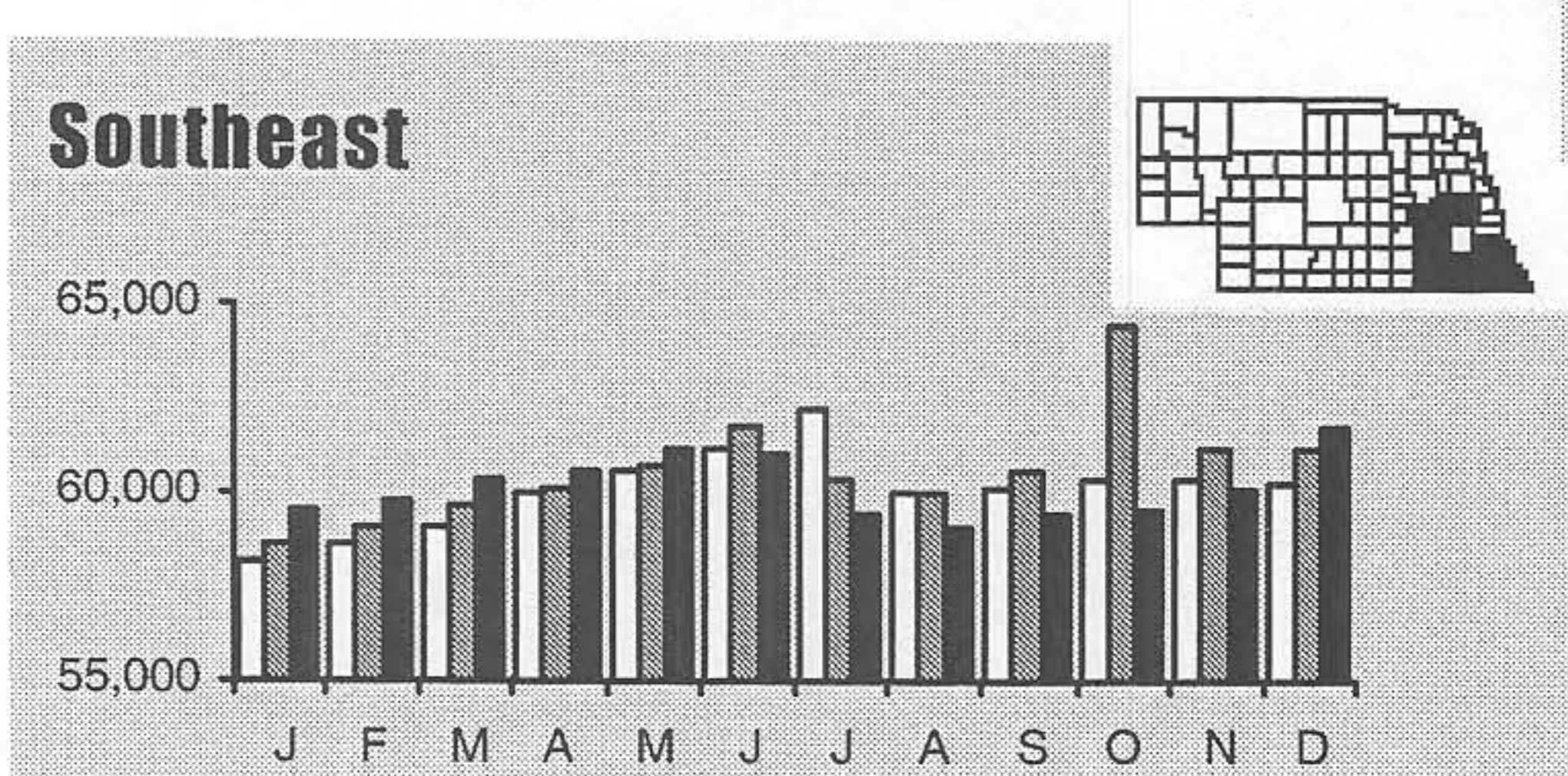
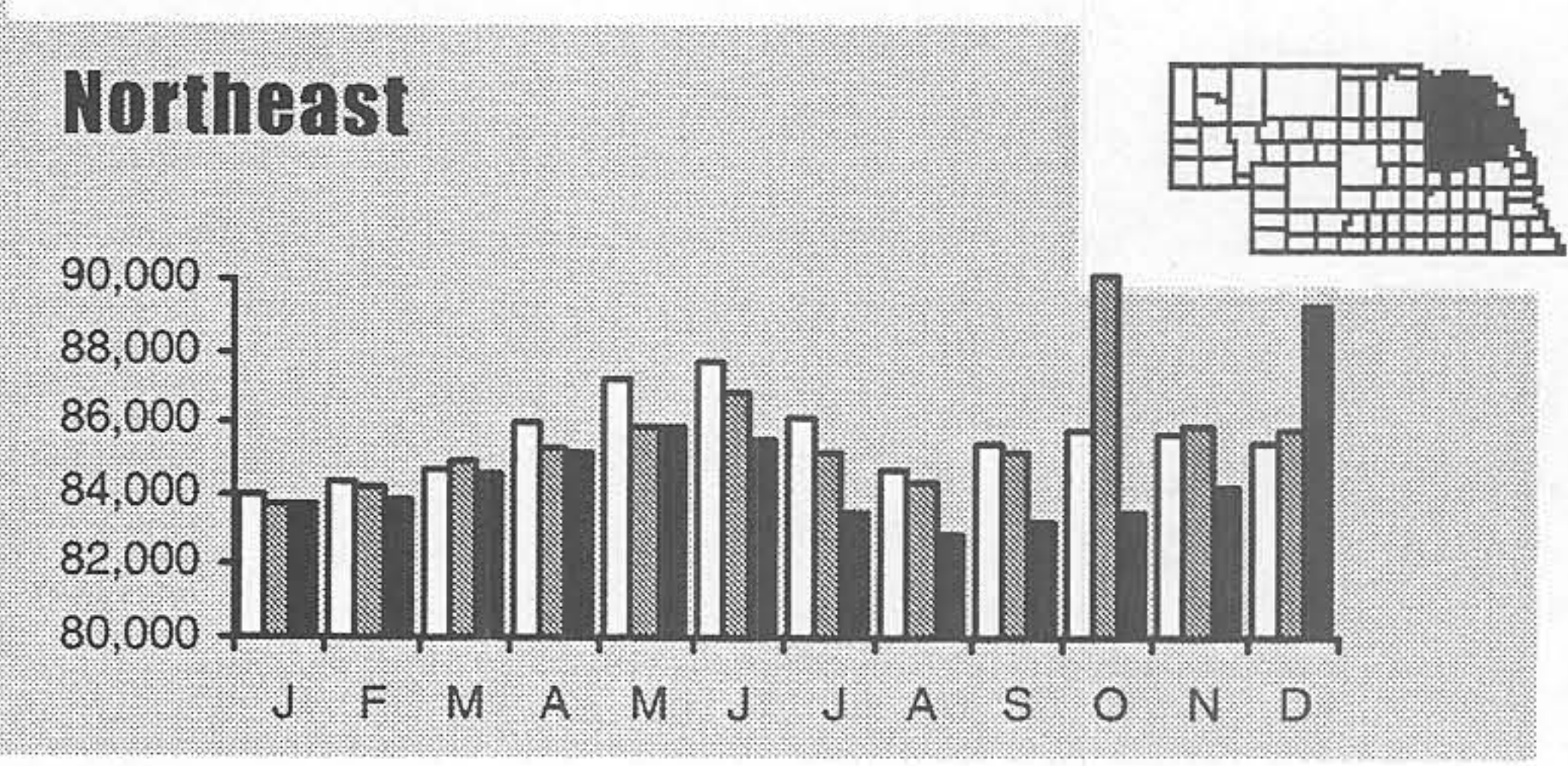
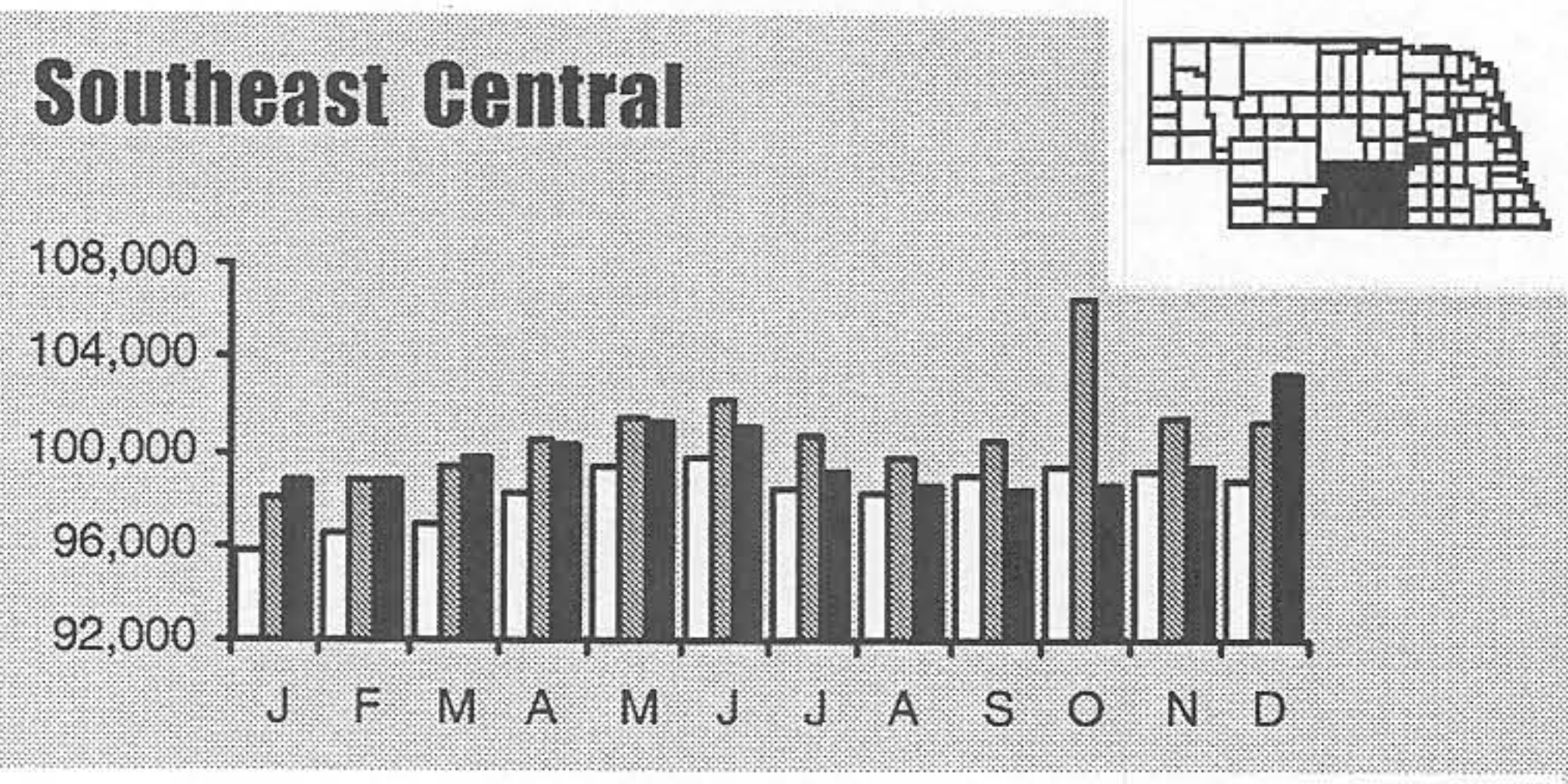


East Central



Regional Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment* 1998 to December** 2000

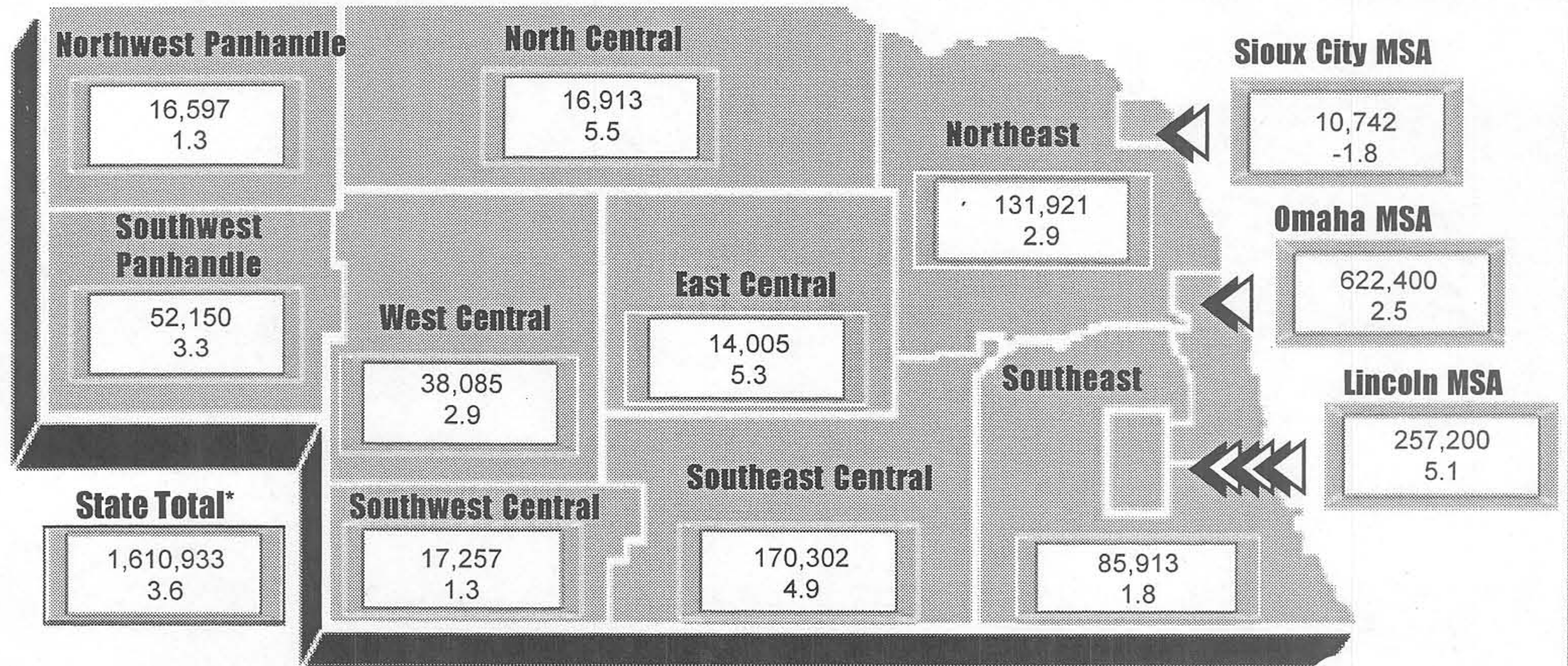
1998 1999 2000



*By place of work
 **Current month data are preliminary and subject to revision
 Note: All 2000 monthly employment data are considered estimates until benchmarked. Data shown for 2000 are the most current revised estimates available. Final benchmarked monthly data for 2000 are expected to be released by the Nebraska Department of Labor in early 2002.
 Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information - Kathy Copas

November 2000 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*

	December 2000
Nonfarm Emp (W&S)	919,980
Construction & Mining	43,353
Manufacturing	120,188
Durable Goods	58,234
Nondurable Goods	61,954
TCU**	58,674
Trade	224,589
Wholesale	55,064
Retail	169,525
FIRE***	61,266
Services	255,909
Government	156,001

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

Note: All 2000 monthly employment and labor force data are considered estimates until benchmarked. Data shown for 2000 are the most current revised estimates available. Final benchmarked monthly data for 2000 are expected to be released by the Nebraska Department of Labor in mid-2001.

Consumer Price Index

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

	January 2001	% Change vs Yr. Ago	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago (inflation rate)
All Items	175.1	3.8	3.8
Commodities	150.0	2.6	2.6
Services	200.2	4.6	4.6

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

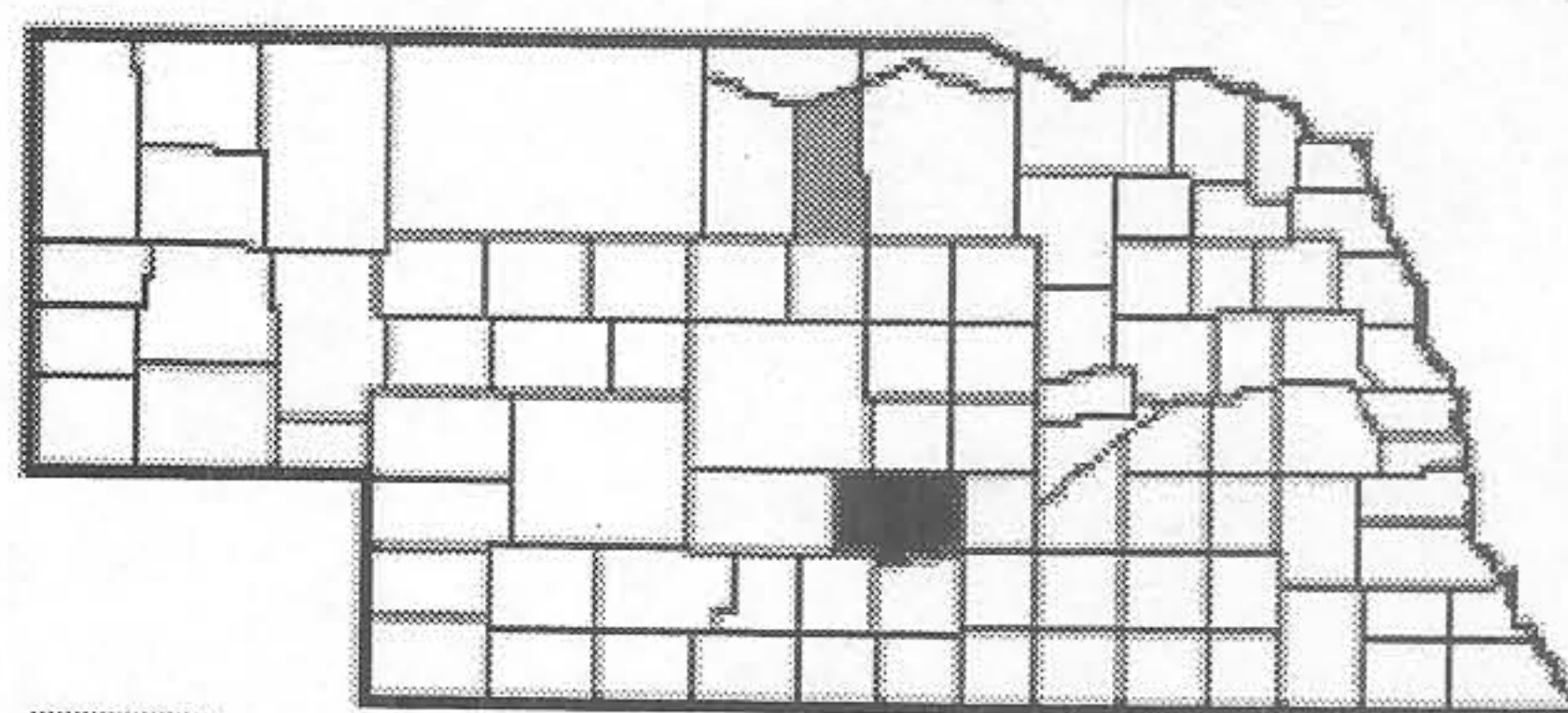
Inflation Rate

3.8

State Labor Force Summary*

	December 2000
Labor Force	931,978
Employment	909,131
Unemployment Rate	2.5

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

*County of the Month***Adams
Hastings - County Seat****License plate prefix number:** 14**Size of county:** 564 square miles, ranks 65th in the state**Population:** 31,151 in 2000, a change of 5.2 percent from 1990**Per capita personal income:** \$24,280 in 1998, ranks 15th in the state**Net taxable retail sales (\$000):** \$306,307 in 1999 a change of 1.5 percent from 1998; \$277,904 from January through November of 2000, a change of 1.5 percent from the same period the previous year.**Unemployment rate:** 2.2 percent in Adams County, 2.9 percent in Nebraska in 1999

■ *Next County of Month*

	State	Adams County
Nonfarm employment (1999)¹:	890,821	16,015
(wage & salary)	(percent of total)	
Construction and Mining	5.0	5.5
Manufacturing	13.2	18.9
TCU	6.4	3.8
Wholesale Trade	6.2	6.6
Retail Trade	18.0	20.6
FIRE	6.8	2.9
Services	27.3	25.7
Government	17.1	16.0

Agriculture:

Number of farms: 623 in 1997; 657 in 1992; 780 in 1987

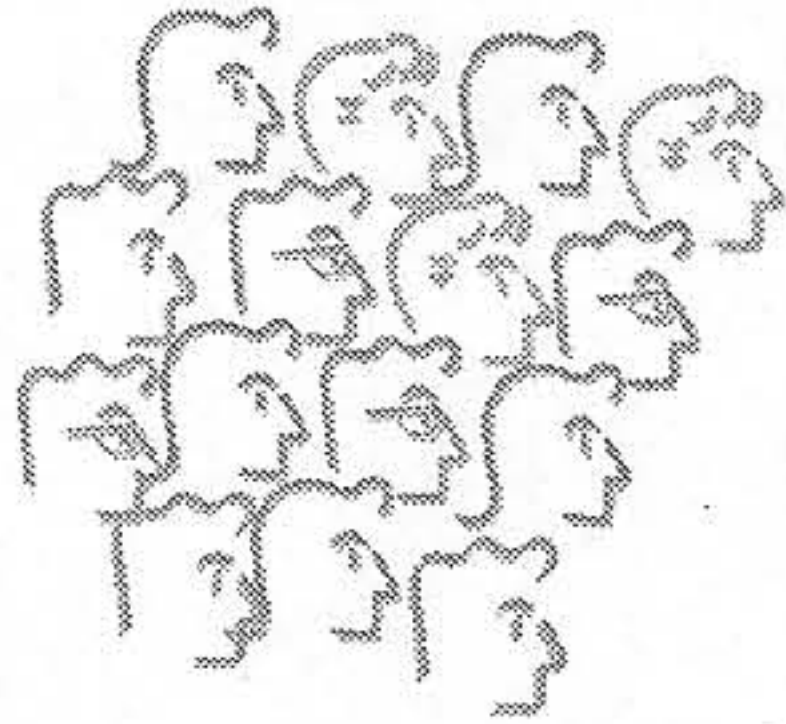
Average farm size: 885 acres in 1997; 839 acres in 1992

Market value of farm products sold: \$159.4 million in 1997 (\$255,384 average per farm);
\$153.6 million in 1992 (\$233,739 average per farm)

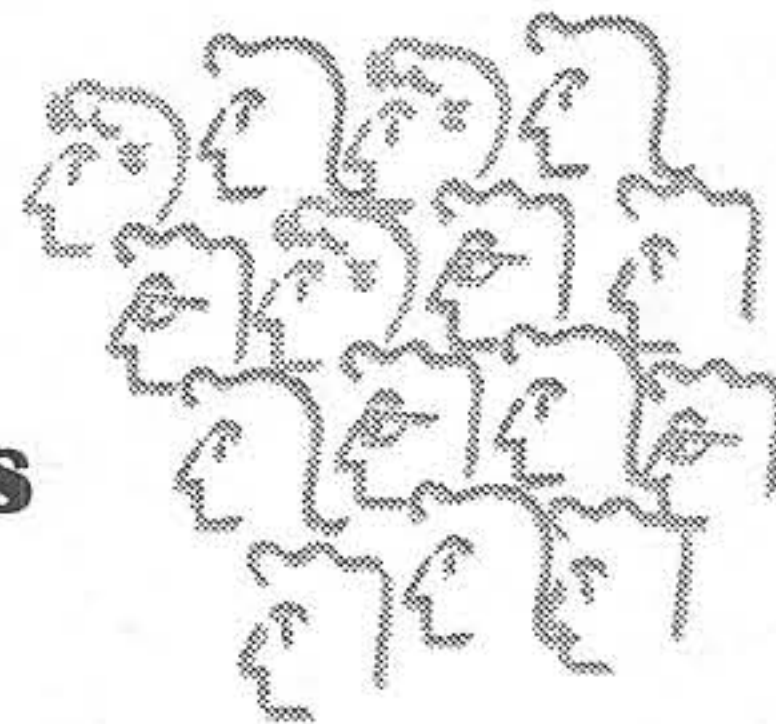
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Nebraska Department of Labor, Nebraska Department of Revenue.

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Census 2000 Release Schedule* Sample-Based Results




----Results from long form received by about 1 in 6 households----

Release Date	Data Products	Geography
March-May 2002	Demographic Profile: Demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics tables	Places/Tracts
June-September 2002	Summary File 3: Population counts by ancestry; selected population and housing characteristics	Tracts/ Block Groups
June 2002-February 2003	Quick Tables: User specifies geography and population group for population and housing characteristics tables	Tracts
October 2002-February 2003	Summary File 4: Population and housing characteristics for many detailed race and Hispanic categories	Tracts/Blocks

*This abridged schedule shows the date released on the Census Bureau website: www.census.gov.

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