

### LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT IN NEBRASKA, 1971 - 1975

Nebraska's civilian labor force averaged 721,000 persons over the twelve-month, fiscal year period ending June 30, 1975. In the total of persons working and looking for work, this represented an increase of 20,000, or 2.8 percent, from the average monthly labor force of fiscal year 1974 (see table below). The 2.8 percent growth from 1974 to 1975 was considerably lower than the 3.7 percent rates of the two preceding years, yet higher than the 2.1 percent rate from 1971 to 1972.

Employment, which during fiscal year 1975 averaged 685,900 persons, increased 9,700 to a level 1.4 percent above the average number working during fiscal year 1974. The growth from 1974 to 1975 was also considerably below the 2.2, 3.8, and 3.5 rates of the three previous periods. As can be seen in the table below, after holding at between 22,300 and 24,800, or between 3.3 and 3.5 percent of the labor force from 1971 to 1974, unemployment jumped to 35,100, or 4.9 percent of the labor force during fiscal year 1975.

It is noteworthy that the labor force has increased at rates that have been considerably larger than those of the population. Nebraska's population has been increasing in recent years at decreasing rates of increase of 1.5 percent to 0.4 percent.<sup>1</sup> As

<sup>1</sup>Since 1970 the year-to-year rates, based on estimated populations, are: 1970-1971, 1.5; 1971-1972, 1.3; 1972-1973, 0.3; 1973-1974, 0.6; and 1974-1975, 0.4.

noted above, the rates of growth in the labor force have ranged between 2.1 and 3.7 percent, with rates of growth between 1.4 and 3.8 percent in the employed segment. The labor force has been expanding, therefore, as a result of two developments: a larger population and a greater labor force participation.

Total employment, as noted above, has increased considerably since 1971. Nearly all of this increase, of 69,500 persons or slightly over 11 percent, has gone into nonagricultural employment, which absorbed 66,800 or 96 percent of the total increase. Since 1971 this particular category of employment has increased its share of all employment from 73.9 to 76.1 percent—a notable increase considering that it has been over only a four-year period.

One interesting pattern has occurred in agricultural employment. After declining from 91,400 in 1971 to a low of 88,000 in 1973, employment in this sector has climbed to 91,700 in 1975. Even so, this category's share of total employment has continued to decline.

Based on data available elsewhere (see source for table below) about 20 percent of the total employment in fiscal year 1975 was provided in the trade sector of the economy. Slightly more than 16 percent was found in the government sector (including public education and enterprises and utilities operated by governmental agencies). Manufacturing and services provided 12 and 14 percent, respectively.

EDWARD L. HAUSWALD

LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT IN NEBRASKA  
Fiscal Years,<sup>1</sup> 1971-1975

Industry	1971		1972		1973		1974		1975	
	Number <sup>2</sup>	%	Number <sup>2</sup>	%	Number <sup>2</sup>	%	Number <sup>2</sup>	%	Number <sup>2</sup>	%
Total Civilian Labor Force	638,700		652,200	+2.1	676,100	+3.7	701,000	+3.7	721,000	+2.8
% Change from Previous Year		---								
Unemployment	22,300		22,300	0.0	22,600	+1.4	24,800	+9.7	35,100	+41.5
% Change from Previous Year		---								
Unemployment Rate		3.5		3.4		3.3		3.5		4.9
Total Employment	616,400		629,900	+2.2	653,500	+3.8	676,200	+3.5	685,900	+1.4
% Change from Previous Year		---								
% of Total Employment		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0		100.0
Agricultural <sup>3</sup>	91,400		88,700	-3.0	88,000	-0.8	90,500	+2.8	91,700	+1.3
% Change from Previous Year		---								
% of Total Employment		14.8		14.1		13.5		13.3		13.4
All Other Nonagricultural <sup>4</sup>	69,600		71,000	+2.0	70,500	-0.7	71,300	+1.1	72,000	+1.0
% Change from Previous Year		---								
% of Total Employment		11.3		11.3		10.8		10.6		10.5
Nonagricultural Wage and Salary	455,400		470,200	+3.2	495,000	+5.3	514,400	+3.9	522,200	+1.5
% Change from Previous Year		---								
% of Total Employment		73.9		74.6		75.8		76.1		76.1

<sup>1</sup>Fiscal year is for period of July 1-June 30 ending in year noted.

<sup>2</sup>Monthly average over the July 1-June 30, twelve-months period.

<sup>3</sup>Agricultural employment estimates are by the Statistical Reporting Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

<sup>4</sup>All Other Nonagricultural Employment includes proprietors, self-employed and unpaid family workers in nonagricultural industries, and domestic workers in private households.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Division of Employment, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report*, 1975 Fiscal Year.

## ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA PROGRAMS

This article was adapted from an address delivered by the author to the Data User's Seminar in Kansas City, Missouri, December 16, 1975. The seminar was sponsored jointly by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Bureau of the Census. E. L. H.

The Bureau of Business Research has completed a project which systematically identified and analyzed ongoing economic and demographic data collection programs of Nebraska state agencies. The reasons for undertaking such a project are several:

First, economic and demographic data collected by state agencies play an integral role in several of the ongoing internal research programs of the Bureau of Business Research. For example, Bureau programs, such as a state general business activity index, population and economic projections, and the U.S. Census Federal-State Cooperative Program for Population Estimates, rely on administrative data series produced by state agencies. Thus, the Bureau itself needs to know as much as possible about the nature of a number of data series to be able to interpret them precisely and to incorporate them into its research programs.

Second, the Bureau of Business Research provides technical assistance to a variety of other data users, including faculty and students at the University, businessmen, state and local agency researchers, and Federal agency representatives. A comprehensive knowledge of data availability, data collection methods, and data quality is needed to increase the Bureau's ability to provide this kind of assistance.

Third, a growing number of Nebraska state agencies are confronted with requirements to produce planning documents and statistical analyses that require the use of unfamiliar material. Also, with extended amounts of time spent searching for such data, the cost can be high. Search costs may be reduced, however, if a central reference (such as a data guide) or an organization (such as the Bureau of Business Research) can be referred to quickly for information on the production and characteristics of relevant data series, and how and where to obtain them.

Finally, a general awareness is often lacking as to what others are doing in data production and research. In only a few of the state agencies surveyed was anyone found who had a detailed knowledge of all data collection programs operating in the agency. It is also rare to find someone with a broad overview of all such programs in the state. This is not particularly surprising, however, in light of the administrative, rather than academic, nature of most state agencies.

For all these reasons, the Bureau of Business Research, with support from the Nebraska State Office of Planning and Programming, undertook to document systematically the ongoing programs of Nebraska state agencies which generated economic or demographic data. [A documentation of similar programs and activities of departments and colleges within the University of Nebraska system is currently in process. The end result is to be a *Guide to University Research Data Sources*. Publication of this *Guide* is planned for Fall, 1976.]

The approach to such a documentation project proceeded in several steps. Initially, in consultation with the State Office of Planning and Programming, it was determined that 24 Nebraska state agencies administered programs which might be of interest—including agencies such as Agriculture, Banking, Economic Development, Education, Health, Labor, Revenue, and Public Welfare—and an outline of the information needed from each agency was

prepared. The outline included such items as the functions of the agency, its organization, identification of relevant data-generating programs, and an in-depth analysis of each program.

The actual analysis of a particular agency's data-production activities consisted of several steps. Before any contact with the agency was made, all that could be learned about its operations, publications, and programs was gleaned from existing sources, such as annual reports and budget data. Next, key agency administrators were made aware of the project, and their cooperation was enlisted. The task then became one of identifying the programs of interest within the agency, as well as the individuals involved in the data collection, processing, output, and storage aspects of each program.

After a thorough analysis of the information obtained from numerous interviews, from existing publications, from forms used to gather data, and from the statistical output of the program, a written summary of each program was prepared. To meet the needs of both the sophisticated and the more general data users, each written program summary is divided into two complementary parts: (1) a narrative summary, and (2) a data list.

The *narrative summary* includes a description of the scope and nature of the program; the methods used by the agency to collect, process, summarize, and store the data; and copies of important forms used. With this documentation, the more sophisticated data user has some basis for evaluating the quality, possible biases, and suitability of particular data series for meeting particular needs. The accompanying *data lists* are in tabular form to allow users to locate data quickly. The data lists include a listing of each data series produced by a program, the source from which the data series can be obtained, the format in which the data exists (such as printed publications, computer tape, or microfilm), and the detailed characteristics of each data series (such as geographic units and the frequency of collection).

A preliminary copy of each agency summary was sent for review and comment to the appropriate individuals within the agency. A final draft was then prepared, incorporating any necessary revisions.

The 24 agency summaries are compiled into one volume, with a subject index that cross-classifies the data series by subject matter. The completed 277-page publication is packaged in loose-leaf format to allow expansion and updating.

Information on how to receive a copy of the *Nebraska Economic and Demographic Research Data User's Guide* may be obtained by writing to the Nebraska State Office of Planning and Programming, P.O. Box 94601, State Capitol Station, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509. The Bureau of Business Research welcomes any comments which data users may have on the structure and usability of the *Research Data User's Guide*, particularly in view of the similar project currently under way to document economic and demographic data-generating programs of the University of Nebraska.

The Bureau of Business Research expresses its appreciation to all those who assisted in the preparation of the *Guide*.

VICKI STEPP

Although serious legislative work on general revenue sharing is under way in Congress, state and local government officials still do not know if they should plan on receiving additional revenue sharing funds for their 1977 budgets.

Current signals from Capitol Hill indicate that Congress will renew the program for fiscal 1977 and beyond, and it is often said that Congress cannot cut off revenue sharing funds during an election year.

On the other hand, political forecasting can be dangerous, because even the most politically popular bills can be sidetracked by changes in the economy, a legislative deadlock, or shifts in national political priorities.

As a result, the legislative situation on revenue sharing demands that state and local budget-makers be cautious, flexible, and conservative. They should be prepared to reallocate budget resources to the most important activities in case revenue sharing expires with no replacement, but they should also be ready to spend revenue sharing funds that may become available in 1977.

Of course, many states and localities must set firm, final 1977 budgets in the next few months, and they may need tax increases or spending cuts to replace revenue sharing funds.

Governments which can prepare contingency budgets can assume with some safety that the most politically appealing uses of revenue sharing funds, such as public safety or health, will be permitted if the program is continued.

#### FUNDING IN DOUBT

But the key question is the level of funding. It is, of course, impossible to foresee whether Congress will make major changes in the formula for distributing funds or to significantly reduce the number of governments which receive them. It is possible that Congress will phase in major changes by limiting each government's annual gain or loss of funds.

For a crude estimate of likely 1977 payments, recipients can double the six-month allocation figure that will be printed on the planned use reports mailed in April. To account for possible changes, however, officials should not expect to receive more than two-thirds of this estimated amount.

Officials of governments receiving \$5,000 or less a year should bear in mind that several current proposals would eliminate their payments.

If possible, recipients should delay spending and tax decisions until the legislative situation is clearer. It may be possible to delay some activities or to keep them on a small scale in hopes of later expansion when funds become available. Some spending commitments such as pay raises or purchases may be made contingent on receipt of additional revenue sharing funds. Perhaps the wisest rule in budget cuts is to select the ones most easily restored if the program is renewed.

Some governments will, of course, have to increase taxes to fill the gap left by revenue sharing, even temporarily. It is small consolation that, if the program is continued, an increase in taxes may be rewarded through the revenue sharing formula, but officials should remember that the current law forbids the use of revenue sharing funds to rebate taxes.

\*Reprinted with permission from *Revenue Sharing Bulletin* (January, 1976), published by the Revenue Sharing Advisory Service, 1820 Jefferson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

#### BUSINESS FAILURES SLACKEN

The rise in business failures in Nebraska has slowed. The number of units failing during the ten months of 1975 was slightly more than double that of the same period in 1974, after being over three times as great during the first six months. In liabilities, the state's ten-month dollar volume of failures was ahead of the same period of last year by only 64 percent, whereas it had been ahead 118 percent after the first six months.

Nebraska's upward movement, although slowing, was opposite to the downward trends of all but one of the seven states in the East North Central Region. Kansas, like Nebraska, was still experiencing a greater failure situation than in 1974.

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#### NEW BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS ARE AT YEAR-AGO LEVELS

New business incorporations have finally reached a level above that of a year ago—after the severe slump that prevailed throughout the first half of 1975. Overall, new U.S. incorporations were 29,934 in October and topped by 17 percent the 25,615 in October, 1974. This lifted the cumulative total for the ten months of 1975 to 273,568, a fractional 0.2 percent above the 273,152 new units in the comparable 1974 period.

In Nebraska, 232 new firms were incorporated in October, 1975. This topped the 184 of a year ago by 26 percent. However, this lifted Nebraska's cumulative total for the ten months of 1974 to 1,968 units, or only 0.1 percent above the 1,966 units formed in the comparable 1974 period.

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#### PRICES RECEIVED BY FARMERS VERSUS PRICES PAID ARE FAVORABLE

The Index of Prices Received by farmers in Nebraska in December was down 1 percent from a month earlier, but still 10 percent above the December, 1974, index. Both the Livestock and Crops indexes were down by about 1 percent from November. Livestock prices were, however, up 22 percent, on the average, from a year ago, with both dairy and meat animal products groups up by slightly more than 22 percent. Crop prices, on the average, were down 25 percent, with the greatest decline in Food Grains.

Prices Received by farmers in the U.S. as a whole, in December, were at an average level 5.1 percent above that of December, 1974. The level of Prices Paid, Interest, Taxes, and Farm Wage Rates also rose for the U.S. by 5.6 percent. The ratio of Prices Received to Prices Paid stood at 99 in December. Even so, this was some improvement from the November situation, when the ratio had been 98.

Although no index of prices paid is available for Nebraska, it appears that the state's situation was less unfavorable than that of the U.S. as a whole. Only if prices paid in Nebraska were at a much higher level than that of the U.S.—and this is not very likely—would Nebraska's ratio of Prices Received to Prices Paid have been lower than that of the U.S. It appears that the ratio could well be equal to or greater than 100.

(Continued on page 6)

# Review and Outlook

Physical production in the nation has increased almost without halt from April, 1975, through October. This is the best sign we have that the back of the recession, or depression, is broken. A slight advance was registered in October, with the U.S. figure of 117.1 on the 1967 base (Table 2) being slightly higher than it was in September. The production index for Nebraska has been somewhat irregular, yet it, too, has in general been rising. For the state the low point was in March of 1975. The recent surge in the stock market is evidence that many of the more knowledgeable believe that better times are coming, although by the time this is printed the upward movement may have been reversed.

For Nebraska all the bright news in the indexes resides in the

figures for agricultural production. All the other industrial groups except government are down from their showing in September. The upswing in agricultural prices (which may have halted since the figures came out for October) carried over into increased cash farm marketings. The dollar volume of agricultural sales was up 13 percent from 1974. After taking out the price increase, agricultural activity was down more than 2 percent from last year. This is, however, better than being 15 percent down as in September. The other industrial groups resumed their more normal relationships with last year and with 1967, after last month's unusual situations.

Also, the marked rise in retail sales in September from the same month of last year was not (Continued on page 5)

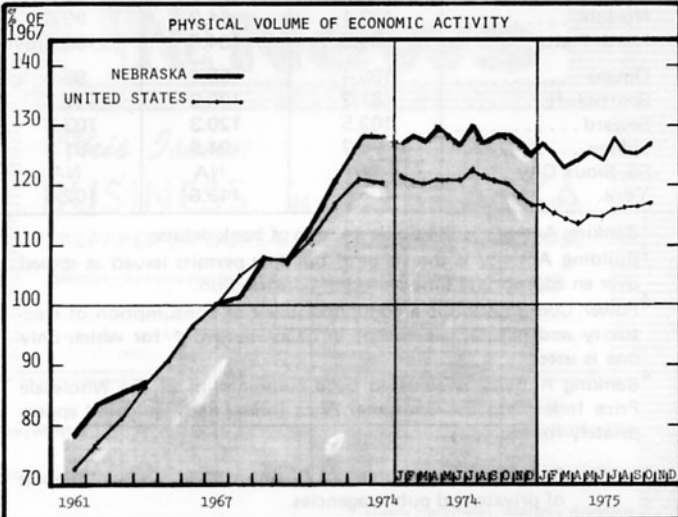
Notes for Tables 1 and 2: (1) The "distributive" indicator represents a composite of wholesale and retail trade; transportation, communication and utilities; finance, insurance, and real estate; and selected services. (2) The "physical volume" indicator and its components represent the dollar volume indicator and its components adjusted for price changes using appropriate price indexes—see Table 5, page 5.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS: NEBRASKA AND UNITED STATES				
1. CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR				
October, 1975	Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year		1975 Year to Date as Percent of 1974 Year to Date	
Indicator	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	106.0	103.6	106.2	104.3
Agricultural	113.1	100.2	98.8	95.8
Nonagricultural	104.5	103.8	107.7	104.6
Construction	86.4	100.4	111.8	94.5
Manufacturing	97.2	95.9	104.1	100.0
Distributive	107.9	107.4	107.7	107.0
Government	110.1	109.1	112.6	108.9
Physical Volume	98.4	97.6	97.6	95.7
Agricultural	97.8	96.8	92.9	98.3
Nonagricultural	98.6	97.6	98.5	95.6
Construction	83.3	96.7	101.6	85.8
Manufacturing	93.3	90.7	93.4	89.0
Distributive	100.3	99.8	98.3	97.7
Government	104.5	104.0	106.8	104.2

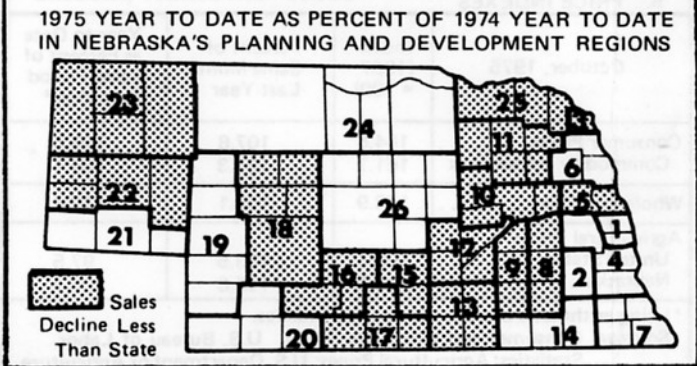
  

2. CHANGE FROM 1967		
Indicator	Percent of 1967 Average	
	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	222.5	197.0
Agricultural	279.0	235.1
Nonagricultural	212.7	195.7
Construction	173.9	168.4
Manufacturing	235.0	185.1
Distributive	206.6	199.9
Government	222.1	213.2
Physical Volume	126.9	117.1
Agricultural	134.2	119.7
Nonagricultural	125.6	117.0
Construction	91.5	88.6
Manufacturing	130.7	106.1
Distributive	125.5	121.4
Government	131.6	135.1

3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES (Adjusted for Price Changes)			
Region Number <sup>1</sup> and City	City Sales <sup>2</sup>		Sales in Region <sup>2</sup>
	Oct., 1975 as percent of Oct., 1974	Oct., 1975 as percent of Oct., 1974	Year to date '75 as percent of Year to date '74
<i>The State</i>	101.1	102.5	96.8
1 Omaha	96.9	98.9	95.1
Bellevue	95.7		
2 Lincoln	104.4	103.2	96.6
3 So. Sioux City	117.1	122.7	99.7
4 Nebraska City	117.7	106.3	93.7
5 Fremont	103.3	103.4	98.5
Blair	98.6		
6 West Point	108.2	116.7	93.9
7 Falls City	98.7	103.8	94.8
8 Seward	106.8	98.3	98.6
9 York	102.1	102.6	99.9
10 Columbus	100.7	103.5	97.5
11 Norfolk	111.4	113.3	100.1
12 Grand Island	100.9	100.4	100.5
13 Hastings	96.0	100.0	97.4
14 Beatrice	96.8	102.4	95.8
Fairbury	106.6		
15 Kearney	104.0	110.7	103.2
16 Lexington	103.2	95.0	98.7
17 Holdrege	133.4	112.7	98.5
18 North Platte	104.6	105.8	100.7
19 Ogallala	111.9	101.1	96.1
20 McCook	103.0	100.8	93.8
21 Sidney	94.0	92.7	91.8
Kimball	103.8		
22 Scottsbluff	106.4	102.7	99.5
23 Alliance	118.7	112.2	98.3
Chadron	107.8		
24 O'Neill	105.8	101.3	91.9
25 Hartington	83.4	112.8	97.1
26 Broken Bow	96.6	102.4	93.5



<sup>1</sup> See region map below.  
<sup>2</sup> Sales on which sales taxes are collected by retailers located in the state. Region totals include motor vehicle sales; city totals exclude motor vehicle sales.  
 Compiled from data provided by Nebraska Department of Revenue.



(Continued from page 4) repeated (Table 3). Only a slight rise in the physical volume of these sales over 1974 was reported for October. Several cities, it is true, reported considerable advances. Notably, Alliance, Nebraska City, South Sioux City, Ogallala, and Norfolk all had more than 10 percent advances. Hartington, one of the leaders last month, is lowest this time, but its region still shows almost a 13 percent advance. This is an anomaly and calls for a further check of the sales tax reported. There was an increase in motor vehicle sales in October over September (not shown in tables). The largest gain occurred in Omaha (13 percent). The smaller regions had larger gains than the larger regions. The more rural areas bought 13 percent more cars, but the less rural purchased only 7 percent more.

Banking activity (Table 4) continues to run ahead of last year, but the gains are not uniformly distributed over the state. Building activity is below a year ago, as it has been for some months, while power consumption is also down somewhat. The city business indexes in the chart are not all positive, as they were in September. Sidney is the only city which is lower than in 1974 in all four categories entering into the index. A large number of cities are higher in all categories. There is a considerable amount of consistency in the rankings on this chart from month to month. The six highest and the six lowest cities are usually very much the same for two consecutive months.

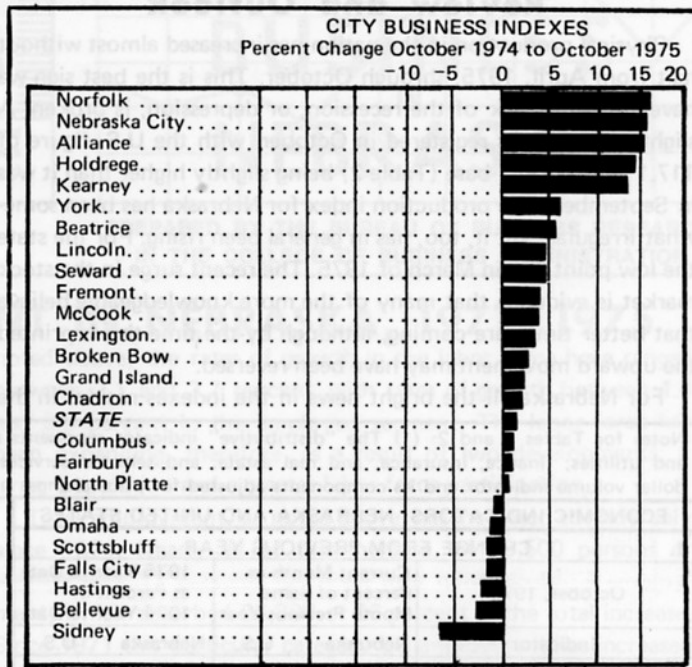
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One needs to consider the possibility that the 1960s were the peak years of our modern materialistic civilization. This may be true for the developed nations, and even for the whole world. It is indeed quite likely that we can never return to the reckless prosperity of recent times, and that we cannot continue either the spread of the cities over vast areas of suburban land or the massive building of high-rise office buildings. The extension of more and more concrete roads over the countryside, and the increasing use of power per capita—all must come to a halt some time, and possibly has done so already. Just as railroad building reached its peak before the end of the last century, so other industries may be faced with a stoppage of expansion in the near future. The world's resources, and in particular the resources available to us, are not, we are realizing, inexhaustible. The ideal, namely that our American standard of living can be extended over the world, could not be realized even now, given the extent of the resources; although the underdeveloped nations are demanding it. That prices are being inflated faster than wages is a sign that our own standard of living may be on the way out, and that there is precious little we can do about it. This does not mean that we will not have prosperity again, but it does mean that the rapid pace of the recent decades may be gone forever.

EDGAR Z. PALMER

5. PRICE INDEXES			
October, 1975	Index (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices . . . . .	164.6	107.6	109.5
Commodity component	161.7	107.3	109.4
Wholesale Prices . . . . .	178.9	105.1	110.4
Agricultural Prices			
United States . . . . .	196.4	103.5	97.5
Nebraska . . . . .	208.0	115.6	106.7

\*Using arithmetic average of monthly indexes.  
Sources: Consumer and Wholesale Prices: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Agricultural Prices: U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Source: Table 4 below.

4. OCTOBER CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS			
The State and Its Trading Centers	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago		
	Banking Activity <sup>1</sup> (Adjusted for Price Changes) <sup>4</sup>	Building Activity <sup>2</sup>	Power Consumption <sup>3</sup>
<i>The State</i> . . . . .	107.2	85.0	97.1
Alliance . . . . .	114.8	89.4	122.1(Est.)
Beatrice . . . . .	112.2	164.1	94.3
Bellevue . . . . .	91.4	179.8	99.7*
Blair . . . . .	106.9	42.9	103.4
Broken Bow . . . . .	97.7	285.4	112.3
Chadron . . . . .	97.9	106.5	100.4
Columbus . . . . .	98.3	188.7	95.8
Fairbury . . . . .	108.2	63.9	76.9*
Falls City . . . . .	98.5	81.8	101.7
Fremont . . . . .	106.8	92.5	105.5*
Grand Island . . . . .	105.2	107.1	99.2
Hastings . . . . .	102.5	92.6	87.9
Holdrege . . . . .	102.1	115.4	95.9
Kearney . . . . .	119.5	259.0	102.7
Lexington . . . . .	109.0	63.8	111.2
Lincoln . . . . .	116.5	52.9	93.5
McCook . . . . .	97.5	217.6	106.3
Nebraska City . . . . .	118.3	135.0	98.9
Norfolk . . . . .	133.1	64.2	99.6
North Platte . . . . .	89.9	164.8	106.4(Est.)
Omaha . . . . .	106.4	55.1	95.9
Scottsbluff . . . . .	81.2	123.8	122.7
Seward . . . . .	102.5	120.3	103.3
Sidney . . . . .	96.2	94.9	81.3
So. Sioux City . . . . .	NA	NA	NA
York . . . . .	106.9	149.6	102.5

<sup>1</sup>Banking Activity is the dollar volume of bank debits.  
<sup>2</sup>Building Activity is the value of building permits issued as spread over an appropriate time period of construction.  
<sup>3</sup>Power Consumption is a combined index of consumption of electricity and natural gas except in cases marked \* for which only one is used.  
<sup>4</sup>Banking Activity is adjusted by a combination of the Wholesale Price Index and the Consumer Price Index, each weighted appropriately for each city.

Source: Compilation by Bureau of Business Research from reports of private and public agencies.

### CROP HARVESTS AND MEAT PRODUCTION SHOW MIXED DEVELOPMENTS\*

Nebraska's farmers harvested 34 percent more *FEED GRAIN* tonnage during 1975 than in 1974. This was 15 percent above the 10-year average production, but 11 percent below the 1973 record. *CORN* production was up 30 percent from the drought-reduced 1974 crop, yet still 9 percent below 1973's record high. *SORGHUM* harvested was up 65 percent from last year's level. *SOYBEAN* production totaled 33.2 million bushels, or 19 percent more than the 1974 crop, for the second-highest crop on record. *HAY* tonnage was 6 percent greater than in 1974. *SUGAR BEET* production was up 29 percent. *DRY EDIBLE BEANS* output fell by 12 percent from 1974's level. *POPCORN* production set a new record at 135.7 million pounds, up 2 percent from 1974.

*COMMERCIAL RED MEAT* production, which totaled 278 million pounds in November, was down 6 percent from the year-ago level. *CATTLE* slaughter was down 7 percent from a year ago—yet the cumulative 11-months' total number slaughtered is slightly above last year's—and total live weight is down 3 percent. *HOGS* slaughtered numbered 252,000, up 13 percent from a year ago, with the cumulative 11-months' total live weight down 11 percent. *SHEEP AND LAMB* kill amounted to 33,500 head during November, down 36 percent from the same month of last year, with the 11-months' total live weight down by 40 percent from that of the same period last year.

*CATTLE ON FEED* numbered 16 percent more than last year on December 1, but 14 percent below 1973. Cattle feeders had 1,380,000 cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market on December 1. Feedlot operators *MARKETED* 215,000 fat cattle for slaughter during November, down 16 percent from last year and 26 percent from two years ago. *CATTLE PLACED INTO FEEDLOTS* during November was up 20 percent from the low level of last year, and 9 percent above November, 1973.

\*This section contains paraphrased excerpts from various monthly publications of the State-Federal Division of Agricultural Statistics, 273 Federal Building, Box 81609, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501.

### FARMS CONTINUE TO DECLINE

The number of farming units in Nebraska fell 1,000, or 1.5 percent, during 1975 to 68,000. The preliminary estimate\* for 1976 is that the number will be unchanged. The average size of farms rose to 706 acres in 1975, after being 696 acres in 1974. Over the 1965-1975 decade the average farm has increased in size from 118 acres, or about 20 percent.

Farm consolidation—the principal cause of the decline in Number of Farms—has been slowing and is estimated to have a negligible impact in 1976.

\*See State-Federal Division of Agricultural Statistics, *Nebraska Number of Farms*, January 5, 1976.

### NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES CLIMBING BACK TO LAST YEAR'S LEVELS

The Dollar Volume of Total Net Taxable Retail Sales in Nebraska for the first 10 months of 1975 was about \$4,535 million, or 5.9 percent above the volume for the same 10-month period in 1974. About \$508 million of the total sales was from motor vehicle sales, which were down for the 10 months by 2.4 percent. Sales other than motor vehicle sales were up by 7 percent.

After adjusting for the inflationary price rises, the deflated dollar or real volume of total sales for the 10-month period was 3.2 percent below the volume for the same period in 1974. Considering that deflated sales for the 10 months of 1974 had been about 0.5 percent above that of the same period in 1973, it can be seen that 1975 has not been a very good year in terms of real sales volumes—at least not through October. On the optimistic side, however, data available elsewhere show a gradual movement back to last year's level since March of 1975, when deflated, real volume of total sales was running at levels nearly 9 percent below those of 1974.

## UN News

*This Issue:*

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February, 1976

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