

THE NEBRASKA ECONOMY IN THE SIXTIES

3. Per Capita Personal Income

For purposes of analyzing the performance of an economy total personal income is one of the appropriate measures. This measure was used in the second article in this series, published last September, dealing with the counties and regions of the state.

For purposes of evaluating individual economic welfare, however, personal income figures should be placed on a per capita basis by dividing total income by the number of people. This article presents such figures for the counties and regions of Nebraska.

As readers of this publication know, the Bureau of Business Research has made annual county population estimates during the decade of the sixties. As a whole these estimates proved quite accurate. They have now been revised, however, using the findings of the 1970 Census as a control.¹ Utilization of these revised population estimates makes possible development of more accurate per capita personal income figures for the counties and regions than we have had before. These figures are presented in the table on page 3 for the years 1959, 1965, and 1969.²

In using these figures as a measure of individual economic welfare two cautions should be kept in mind. First, the figures are presented in current dollars and do not take account of the rise in the price level. In order to enable the reader to make allowance for this fact, the change in the Consumer Price Index for each of the periods covered is presented at the bottom of the table. Only to the extent that increases in income exceed these price changes do the figures represent growth in real income. Figures on real per capita personal income can be calculated from the data given, but lack of space precludes their presentation.

The second caution is that the figures represent an average or mean. This average may be pushed upward by a relatively few high incomes. From many studies of income distribution in the United States we know that the median (middle) income, or the income of the average person, is below the mean. The extent to which this disparity in income distribution varies among the counties and regions of the state will not be known until additional information developed from the 1970 Census becomes available.

COUNTY COMPARISONS

With these cautions in mind the figures presented in the table may be examined. It will be noted that all counties showed substantial income growth, that 77 counties exceeded the national

¹These revised population estimates for the intercensal years will not be published but are available upon request.

²Comparable figures for the years 1929, 1940, 1950, 1962, 1966, 1967, and 1968 are available upon request.

growth rate, and that 46 counties more than doubled their per capita personal income during the decade. At the beginning of the decade 12 counties had per capita income in excess of the national average. By the end of the decade this number had increased to 23.

The state as a whole and approximately half of the counties had a higher percentage gain in the last four years of the decade than in the first six, and eight counties experienced actual declines ranging as high as 33 percent in the earlier period. It must be noted, however, that inflation during the last four years was nearly double that of the first six. For the state as a whole it is clear that most of the growth of real per capita income came in the earlier years.

The order in which the counties rank underwent a considerable shuffling during the decade. Grant County retained its position at the top, but Cherry was the only other county in the top ten in 1959 that retained this status in 1969. The metropolitan counties (Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster) were in the top ten at the beginning of the decade but not at the end. At the lower end of the scale there was also notable change. Only four counties in the bottom ten in 1959 remained in this group in 1969.

In considering factors that may be associated with this shuffling it seems appropriate to examine the relationship between income growth and population change and between income growth and urban status of the counties. For this purpose the counties (excluding Dakota because of the lack of data) have been grouped as shown in the tabulations below, using 1960 and 1970 census data. (Urban population means persons living in cities of 2,500 and above.)

During the decade of the sixties there was a positive relationship between population growth of counties and size of income but an inverse relationship between population growth and per capita income growth, as indicated by the following tabulation:

Population Status of Counties 1960-70	Number of Counties in Group	Per Capita Income		
		Number of Counties above Average State Growth	1969 Amount	Percentage Increase 1959-69
Growing (more than 2% increase)	19	10	\$3,632	66.3
Stable (less than 2% change)	10	5	3,490	89.9
Declining (more than 2% decrease)	63	50	3,249	102.4

From the following tabulation it appears that there was also a positive relationship between urbanization of the counties and

amount of income but an inverse relationship between urbanization and per capita income growth:

Urban Status of Counties in 1970	Number of Counties in Group	Per Capita Income		
		Number of Counties above Average State Growth	1969 Amount	Percentage Increase 1959-69
Metropolitan	3	0	\$3,759	60.2
Others more than 50% Urban	18	9	3,532	80.2
Some Urban but less than 50%	19	12	3,180	93.7
No Urban Population	52	44	3,176	111.6

COMPARISON OF THE REGIONS

For the period 1959-69 all but four of the 25 regions for which data are available exceeded the national growth rate in per capita personal income. In six of these regions the income figure more than doubled. Of the four regions that fell below the national rate, two were the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas and the other two were regions with more than 50 percent urban population. Only one was a region of declining population.

As a result of this rapid growth, seven of the regions in 1969 had per capita incomes in excess of the national average, whereas in 1959 only the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas and Region 21, where an abortive oil boom was in progress, had this distinction. In general, the regions with the highest per capita incomes in 1969 were in the eastern half of the state or along the interstate highway.

Only three of the top ten regions in size of income were also among the top ten in rate of growth. Thus there appears to have been some leveling up of per capita incomes in the regions during the decade. For example, Region 7 in the southeastern corner of the state (Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, and Richardson Counties) had the highest rate of growth of any region and moved from twentieth to twelfth place among the regions in size of income.

By way of notable contrast, Region 16 (Dawson, Frontier, and Gosper Counties) had the highest per capita income of any region in 1969 and was second in rate of growth for the decade. Region 19 (Arthur, Chase, Grant, Keith, and Perkins Counties) was second in size of income and ninth in rate of growth. Region 17 (Franklin, Furnas, Harlan, and Phelps Counties) was ninth in size of income and fifth in rate of growth.

CONCLUSION

During the decade covered in this analysis Nebraska moved from a per capita income of less than \$2,000 at the beginning to an even \$3,600 at the end. About one-third of this gain was canceled out by rising prices, but the other two-thirds represented an increase in real income. For the decade as a whole and for each of the two parts presented separately, the rate of growth in real income per person in the state and in most of its counties and regions exceeded that in the nation. In 1959 Nebraska's per capita income was \$185 below the national average; in 1969 the difference was only \$87.

From the evidence presented above it is quite clear that this advance has not come primarily in the areas of urban development and population growth. It is equally obvious that the per capita income growth during the sixties could not have come in the absence of net out-migration. If the improvement of the average income level is to be sustained and net out-migration avoided, additional economic opportunities must be provided.

E. S. WALLACE

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REVIEWS

Financing America's States and Cities, Policy Statement of the American Bankers Association, prepared by Dr. Wray O. Candils. Available from the ABA, 90 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10016.

This study was prepared in the hope that it will provide needed incentive and guidance for public debate on how to alleviate the problems faced by most state and local governments, which find themselves under severe and increasing financial pressure. Such pressures have developed because the services they provide are particularly sensitive to inflationary payroll costs and because revenues have failed to keep up with the increased demand for more and better services.

After depicting the present situation and giving consideration to future needs, the study traces some of the most important trends in state and local taxation and deals with the role of the Federal government in assisting state and local governments. Statistical tables are used effectively to illustrate the present situation and delineate future problems.

Urban Transportation: An Answer, Norman L. Cooper, Institute for Urban Transportation, Series 1, Bureau of Business Research, Graduate School of Business, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1971. Paperback, \$3.00.

In a stable society the longsighted will get together on mechanisms to persuade the shortsighted to fall in with society's long-range needs.
John R. Platt

This quotation is the premise for a study which proposes a change in urban transportation policy to focus on more effective urban planning and plan implementation, improvements in urban transportation technology, advance public land acquisition, locating the appropriate level of government decision making, and professional and citizen opportunity and performance.

Viewing transportation corridors in all cities as major structuring elements, the location and spacing of which have a direct and strong relationship with the quantity, quality, density, and kind of urban development, the author shows that the long-standing practice of purchasing land for such corridors after urban development has been completed has extremely negative effects, both financially and socially.

D. S.

Review and Outlook

In October the general level of business activity in Nebraska failed to advance as it had in previous months. Although the October dollar volume index stood 5 percent above that of the same month of last year, the physical volume index dropped to 2 percent below last year. This development represents a divergence from that anticipated in last month's issue of this publication. Since no major changes in national and state economic conditions have occurred, however, it is believed that this is probably a one-month interruption of the Nebraskan growth pattern.

Two factors contributing to the sluggishness in the state's general economic activity were slackenings of growth in retail and life insurance sales. Although the dollar volume of retail sales con-

tinued strong relative to such sales in the same month of last year, when adjusted for price level changes, retail activity was only slightly above that of October, 1970. Life insurance sales were, however, markedly below last year, down nearly 25 percent. Reflecting in large part the depressed situations in these sectors of the state's economy, bank debits, as adjusted for price changes, fell back in October to a level only 1 percent above that of the previous year.

Giving considerable support to the economy were a continued expansion of construction activity and an improvement in cash farm marketings from last month's depressed condition. Construction in Nebraska has been on the upswing since March, rising

(Continued on page 5)

All figures on Table 1 and 2 are adjusted for seasonal changes, which means that the month-to-month ratios are relative to the normal or expected changes. Figures in Table 1 (except the first line) are adjusted where appropriate for price changes. Gasoline sales for Nebraska are for road use only; for the United States they are production in the previous month.

E. L. HAUSWALD

NEBRASKA'S ECONOMIC INDICATORS

1. CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS YEAR AND PREVIOUS MONTH

OCTOBER, 1971 Indicators	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago		Percent of Preceding Month	
	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume Index	105.2	106.1	91.0	95.2
Physical Volume Index	97.9	114.2	88.6	97.8
Bank debits (checks, etc.)	100.9	103.1	84.6	93.9
Construction activity	127.6	132.9	110.8	100.4
Retail sales	100.4	112.3	91.8	101.5
Life insurance sales	74.9	95.6	79.2	88.7
Cash farm marketings	106.6	103.9	92.2	93.4
Electricity produced	95.4	106.1	93.8	95.9
Newspaper advertising	NA	NA	NA	NA
Manufacturing employment	101.3	96.3	97.9	100.5
Other employment	99.7	101.9	99.8	100.4
Gasoline sales	103.3	103.7	84.5	105.0

2. CHANGES FROM THE 1948 AVERAGE

OCTOBER, 1971 Indicators	Percent of 1948 Average	
	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume Index	361.1	296.7
Physical Volume Index	193.2	256.4
Bank debits (checks, etc.)	255.9	470.5
Construction activity	229.3	214.1
Retail sales	159.4	204.9
Life insurance sales	317.0	446.0
Cash farm marketings	218.5	157.9
Electricity produced	433.5	569.8
Newspaper advertising	NA	NA
Manufacturing employment	168.4	121.4
Other employment	152.1	180.0
Gasoline sales	222.1	262.8

3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES¹ OF NEBRASKA REGIONS (Unadjusted for Price Changes)

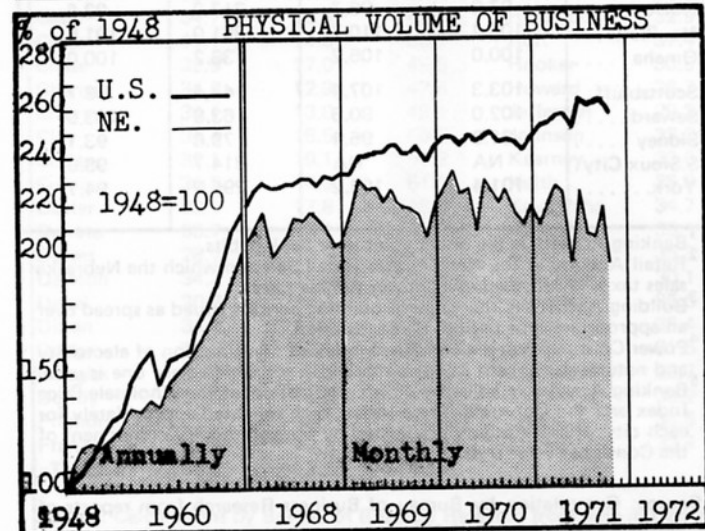
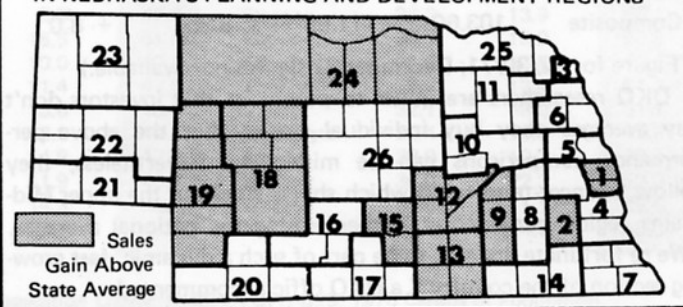
Region ² and Principal Retail Trade Center	October, 1971 as Percent of October, 1970	1971 Year to Date as Percent of 1970 Year to Date
<i>The State</i>	108.6	107.9
1 (Omaha)	111.3	108.3
2 (Lincoln)	107.2	111.0
3 (So. Sioux City)	127.3	104.7
4 (Nebraska City)	106.1	102.8
5 (Fremont)	109.0	106.7
6 (West Point)	119.3	103.4
7 (Falls City)	98.1	104.9
8 (Seward)	112.1	106.4
9 (York)	111.2	109.2
10 (Columbus)	104.1	104.7
11 (Norfolk)	105.8	104.8
12 (Grand Island)	110.0	109.4
13 (Hastings)	99.3	108.1
14 (Beatrice)	107.9	106.4
15 (Kearney)	108.9	111.4
16 (Lexington)	106.3	107.3
17 (Holdrege)	103.4	106.9
18 (North Platte)	118.5	113.5
19 (Ogallala)	106.2	112.0
20 (McCook)	99.8	104.4
21 (Sidney, Kimball)	95.6	100.6
22 (Scottsbluff)	113.1	106.1
23 (Alliance, Chadron)	97.1	107.3
24 (O'Neill)	105.0	110.8
25 (Hartington)	106.8	100.6
26 (Broken Bow)	106.3	105.3

¹Sales on which sales taxes are collected by retailers located in the state, including motor vehicle sales.

²"Planning and development" regions as established by the Nebraska Office of Planning and Programming and shown in the map below.

Source: Compilations by Bureau of Business Research from data provided by the Nebraska Tax Commissioner.

1971 YEAR TO DATE AS PERCENT OF 1970 YEAR TO DATE IN NEBRASKA'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS



(Continued from page 4)

to a level now about 28 percent above that existing in October of last year. Building activity, as measured by value of building permits issued spread over an appropriate period of time, is estimated to be markedly above that of a year ago in such major centers as Omaha, Lincoln, Seward, Hastings, Beatrice, North Platte, Ogallala, Hartington, and Broken Bow. Cash farm marketings, adjusted for price changes, were estimated to be about 6.5 percent higher than last year. Also, continued improvement in both the manufacturing and nonmanufacturing categories of employment was recorded.

The state's dollar volume of net taxable retail sales continued well ahead of last year's. For the 10-month January-October period, 1971's volume was ahead of 1970's by nearly 8 percent. The state's relative increase was exceeded in 9 of its 26 regions. With the exception of Region 23, centering on Alliance and Chadron, all those previously ahead of the state's growth continued to hold this rating. Fourteen of the 26 regions had a more favorable position after October than after September, having gained, therefore, at a greater rate in October than in September.

Nearly half of the state's 25 principal trading centers reported their physical volumes or levels of real retail activity in October at below those of last year. In Table 4 on page 5, it can be seen that these centers are dispersed throughout the state. No single explanation, such as a depressed state of affairs in one particular industry, can explain these situations. Whether or not this is a group of centers experiencing certain common problems in the retail sectors of their economies is open to question.

It is of interest to note that Nebraska is one of several states in an upper Mid-Plains region that has had favorable performance in the stock market. A comparison of the DKQ Regional Index with two leading national stock indexes reveals that investors in common stocks of leading regional companies in 1971 fared three to four times better on average than investors in securities of a broader range of national firms.

The DKQ Regional Index is an indicator of regional stock performance in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Iowa, NEBRASKA, and western Wisconsin. Developed by Dain, Kalman & Quail, Incorporated, a Minneapolis-based investment banking firm, the DKQ Index uses December 31, 1965, as the base period with a value of 100.

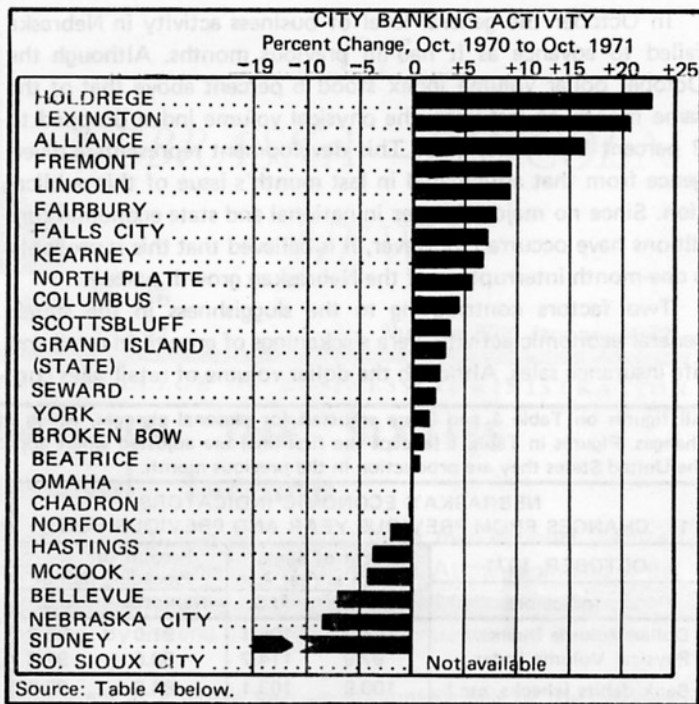
Here is how the comparison shapes up:

	12/31/70	12/31/71	Points Change	% Change Calendar Year 1971
DKQ Regional Composite	112.09	140.64	+28.55	+25.5
Dow-Jones Industrials	838.92	890.20	+51.28	+ 6.1
Value Line Composite	103.60	111.95*	+ 8.35	+ 8.0

(* Figure for 12/30/71; December 31 figures not available.)

DKQ researchers are quick to point out that investors don't buy averages—they buy individual stocks—thus the above performance comparisons can be misleading. Nevertheless, they follow a longer-term trend which shows stocks of the upper Mid-Plains region consistently outperforming the national averages. "We're fortunate, indeed, to be part of such a dynamic, fast growing section of the country," a DKQ official commented.

E. L. H.



4. OCTOBER, 1971, CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS

The State and Its Trading Centers	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago			
	Banking Activity ¹ (Adjusted for Price Change) ⁵	Retail Activity ²	Building Activity ³	Power Consumption ⁴
<i>The State</i>	102.5	103.2	144.3	97.3
Alliance	115.9	91.8	235.5	109.0
Beatrice	100.6	103.3	302.8	81.8
Bellevue	93.5	104.4	132.6	94.0*
Broken Bow	101.0	110.1	67.3	86.0
Chadron	98.8	84.9	68.5	104.8
Columbus	104.6	98.5	40.1	84.1
Fairbury	107.5	89.2	66.8	109.7*
Falls City	107.0	91.5	285.2	92.8
Fremont	109.5	100.8	54.1	117.4
Grand Island	103.0	103.7	106.4	96.6
Hastings	96.0	92.1	190.5	85.9
Holdrege	122.7	99.0	58.1	91.4
Kearney	106.6	102.9	289.4	98.8
Lexington	120.7	101.8	266.5	79.3*
Lincoln	109.2	101.4	170.8	95.4
McCook	95.6	90.2	196.2	88.8
Nebr. City	91.2	92.0	175.1	91.8
Norfolk	97.9	96.7	217.2	93.6
No. Platte	105.4	110.7	351.0	101.8
Omaha	100.0	105.2	136.2	100.0
Scottsbluff	103.3	107.4	147.4	98.7
Seward	102.0	90.5	163.8	133.9
Sidney	81.0	95.4	79.6	93.1
S.Sioux City	NA	NA	314.7	98.9
York	101.4	108.2	295.9	94.7

¹Banking Activity is the dollar volume of bank debits.
²Retail Activity is the Net Taxable Retail Sales on which the Nebraska sales tax is levied, *excluding motor vehicle sales*.
³Building Activity is the value of building permits issued as spread over an appropriate time period of construction.
⁴Power Consumption is a combined index of consumption of electricity and natural gas except in cases marked * for which only one is used.
⁵Banking Activity is adjusted by a combination of the Wholesale Price Index and the Consumer Price Index, each weighted appropriately for each city; Retail Activity is adjusted by the commodity component of the Consumer Price Index.

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

Distribution of Older Persons in Nebraska Counties

Communities throughout Nebraska are endeavoring to improve economic and social conditions in their areas. In this effort they find that they must deal realistically with the problems that arise because there is a disproportionate number of older people in the population.

Analysis of 1970 Census data shows that not only does Nebraska have one of the highest proportions of residents aged 65 and over (12.4 percent) among the 50 states, but in 1970 there were within the state 73 counties in which the percentage in that age group exceeded the state figure. In 49 counties the proportion of older residents was 15 percent or more, and in 6 counties accounted for one-fifth or more of the population.

In 26 of the 73 counties having high percentages of older people in the population, there were also high proportions of persons under 18 years of age—proportions exceeding the state figure, 34.4 percent. Counties having high proportions of persons aged 65 and over and high proportions of those under age 18 thus had below-average proportions of the population in the working-age group. The economic base in those counties was likely to be lower than in counties having larger percentages of population in the prime income-earning age brackets.

There were 36 counties in which 50 percent or more of the population was under age 18 and aged 65 years and over and in an additional 11 counties the proportion was 49 percent or more, which suggests that age distribution of the population presents problems in at least half of the counties of the state, with

disproportionate distribution with respect to older segments of the population in additional counties.

Comparative data on median age also have some significance in this context. In all but three of the 73 counties with higher proportions of residents aged 65 and over, and in seven counties having lower than the state proportion of older residents, the median age exceeded the state median age, 28.6 years.

Despite the increasing number and percentage of senior citizens, this median age figure actually represents a drop from the 30.2 years median age reported in 1960. This is due to the population bulge resulting from high birth rates in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s. All of the 12 Nebraska counties with population above 10,000 show a lower median age in 1970 than in 1960.

But in 60 of the 93 counties the median age is higher than in 1960. It is in these predominantly rural parts of the state that a falling birth rate has been compounded by out-migration in the younger age groups to produce a higher median age. The highest median age in any county in 1960 was 38.7. Ten years later there were six counties in which the figure was above 40.

Not only do these age changes in the Nebraska population have direct bearing on some of the critical fiscal problems that the state now faces, but they also constitute a challenge to find ways in which older residents may make meaningful contributions to the ongoing life of their communities and the state.

DOROTHY SWITZER

NEBRASKA COUNTIES: PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION UNDER AGE 18 AND PERCENTAGE AGED 65 AND OVER, 1970 CENSUS

County	Percent of Total Population			County	Percent of Total Population			County	Percent of Total Population		
	Under 18 Years of Age	Aged 65 and Over	Total Under 18 and 65 and Over		Under 18 Years of Age	Aged 65 and Over	Total Under 18 and 65 and Over		Under 18 Years of Age	Aged 65 and Over	Total Under 18 and 65 and Over
Adams	30.6	15.2	45.8	Frontier	31.5	16.0	47.5	Nance	33.5	19.5	53.0
Antelope	34.3	17.7	52.0	Furnas	28.9	23.2	52.1	Nemaha	27.8	16.1	43.9
Arthur	36.3	9.1	45.4	Gage	31.1	15.3	46.4	Nuckolls	33.3	18.4	51.7
Banner	36.8	8.6	45.4	Garden	31.0	17.4	48.4	Otoe	31.7	17.6	49.3
Blaine	32.3	17.2	49.5	Garfield	30.6	20.0	50.6	Pawnee	29.2	22.7	51.9
Boone	36.9	15.6	52.5	Gosper	34.9	13.0	47.9	Perkins	31.7	16.0	47.7
Box Butte	34.7	15.2	49.9	Grant	39.6	10.4	50.0	Phelps	32.4	16.8	49.2
Boyd	33.5	18.9	52.4	Greeley	38.0	15.9	53.9	Pierce	35.2	15.3	50.5
Brown	33.6	17.0	50.6	Hall	35.1	11.9	47.0	Platte	37.8	10.9	48.7
Buffalo	30.1	12.2	42.3	Hamilton	36.2	14.0	50.2	Polk	31.7	19.2	50.9
Burt	31.6	18.7	50.3	Harlan	31.3	19.5	50.8	Red Willow	33.3	14.9	48.2
Butler	33.6	17.4	51.0	Hayes	35.8	12.5	48.3	Richardson	30.1	20.0	50.1
Cass	34.7	12.8	47.5	Hitchcock	32.9	17.2	50.1	Rock	33.1	17.3	50.4
Cedar	41.1	14.6	55.7	Holt	37.4	14.9	52.3	Saline	27.5	19.4	46.9
Chase	32.9	17.0	49.9	Hooker	30.5	18.5	49.0	Sarpy	44.0	2.9	46.9
Cherry	34.5	12.9	47.4	Howard	36.7	14.8	51.5	Saunders	32.7	15.7	48.4
Cheyenne	36.1	13.0	49.1	Jefferson	29.2	18.9	48.1	Scotts Bluff	34.5	10.3	44.8
Clay	34.4	16.5	50.9	Johnson	32.2	18.0	50.2	Seward	29.5	13.4	42.9
Colfax	32.1	19.1	51.2	Kearney	33.0	16.1	49.1	Sheridan	33.7	16.7	50.4
Cuming	36.5	14.8	51.3	Keith	35.9	12.4	48.3	Sherman	35.3	15.6	50.9
Custer	32.1	17.8	49.9	Keya Paha	34.7	12.5	47.2	Sioux	35.3	10.4	45.7
Dakota	38.7	10.1	48.8	Kimball	39.1	8.5	47.6	Stanton	36.2	13.9	50.1
Dawes	28.7	13.3	42.0	Knox	35.3	16.5	51.8	Thayer	30.9	19.9	50.8
Dawson	34.3	14.0	48.3	Lancaster	30.1	10.0	40.1	Thomas	34.0	13.5	47.5
Deuel	30.8	17.6	48.4	Lincoln	35.6	11.4	47.0	Thurston	38.9	12.4	51.3
Dixon	34.3	17.1	51.4	Logan	35.4	13.0	48.4	Valley	32.1	19.0	51.1
Dodge	34.6	13.1	47.7	Loup	31.5	13.0	44.5	Washington	32.4	13.2	45.6
Douglas	36.1	9.5	45.6	Madison	32.7	14.9	47.6	Wayne	28.0	12.2	40.2
Dundy	28.5	19.5	48.0	McPherson	33.2	11.9	45.1	Webster	30.0	22.3	52.3
Fillmore	32.5	18.7	51.2	Merrick	36.5	14.3	50.8	Wheeler	38.4	11.1	49.5
Franklin	27.4	22.1	49.5	Morrill	33.4	15.3	48.7	York	33.5	14.5	48.0
The State	34.2	12.4	46.6								

Source: Calculations by Bureau of Business Research from data in *General Population Characteristics*, PC(1)-B29, 1970 Census of Population.