Business in Nebraska

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3rd Quarter 1997 Nebraska Business Conditions Survey Results Show: Nebraska Businesses Keep the Economy Growing and Prospering

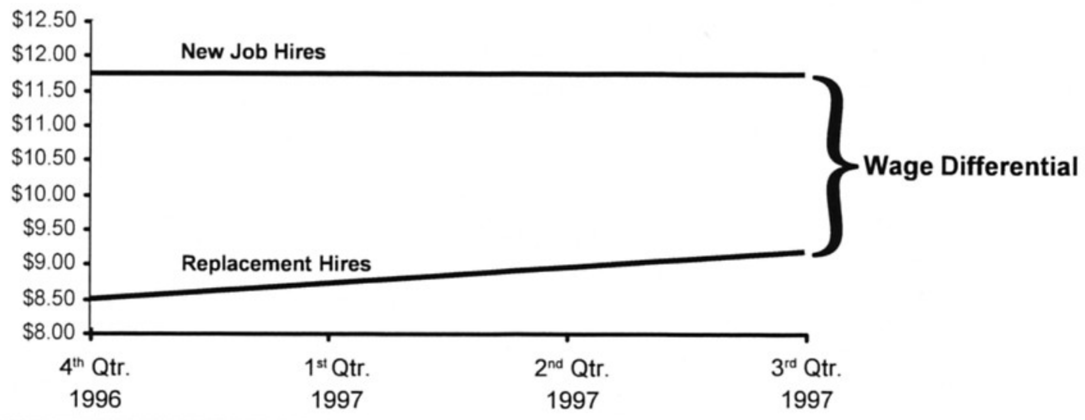
Charles Lamphear

Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) 3rd quarter results indicate that the state's economy continues to do well in both metro and nonmetro counties. But, progress is being hampered by labor shortages, especially by the lack of qualified applicants for a relatively high number of job openings, across the state.

Forty-two percent of the businesses reporting in the 3rd quarter 1997 business conditions survey indicated gains in 3rd quarter revenues over 2nd quarter revenues, equaling the percent reported a year ago for 3rd quarter gains. The 3rd quarter 1996 survey was the first quarterly survey conducted in Nebraska. Since the inauguration of the NQBCS in October 1996, the percent of businesses reporting quarterly gains in revenues has remained virtually unchanged.

Third quarter wages for full-time new job hires averaged $11.08 for the state, $11.95 for metro counties, and $10.10 for nonmetro counties. The average for full-time replacement hires was $9.27 for the state, $9.50 for metro counties, and $8.95 for nonmetro counties. A four-quarter trend in state average wages for full-time new job hires and replacement hires is illustrated in Figure 1. A marked increase is seen in the average wage for replacement hires for the four-quarter period, resulting in a reduction in the wage differential between new job hires and replacement hires. This is not surprising, especially in light of the current tight labor market. Also, Figure 1 indicates that the wage trend for new job hires is nearly flat. This observation may be an early indication of a wage ceiling, possibly due to narrowed profit margins.

Figure 1
State Average Wage Differential for Full-time New and Replacement Hires
3rd Quarter 1997



The problem of unfilled jobs persists across the state. Respondents indicated that 1,029 full-time jobs went unfilled during the 3rd quarter. Seventy percent of that total were not filled because of a reported lack of qualified applicants. Comparable rates for the previous three quarters are shown in Table 1. The four quarter averages given in Table 1 indicate that the problem is slightly greater for the state's nonmetro counties. This estimate for 3rd quarter is unchanged from the 2nd quarter estimate.

The survey number of 1,029 unfilled full-time jobs is equivalent to an estimated 10,600 job openings at the state level that remained unfilled at the end of 3rd quarter. One of the biggest concerns of businesses throughout the state is finding an adequate number of qualified workers to fill job openings.

The 3rd quarter survey, July-September 1997, represents nearly 1,300 participating businesses and organizations with a combined employment base of approximately 68,000 workers. The survey covers the nonfarm, private sector of the state's economy. Businesses and organizations excluded from the NQBCS include agricultural producers, local, state, and federal government units, and nonprofit organizations.

Revenues

Third-quarter 1997 business revenues are compared with 2nd quarter 1997 revenues and year-ago (3rd quarter 1996) revenues by sector in Table 2. The FIRE group (finance, insurance, and real estate) had the highest percent of respondents—48 percent—reporting gains in 3rd quarter over 2nd quarter revenues. Manufacturing and TCU (transportation, communications, and utilities) closely followed, each with 46 percent. Based on five quarters of survey results (3rd quarter 1996 through 3rd quarter 1997), an average 52 percent of respondents for TCU indicated gains in quarterly revenues, closely followed by manufacturing and FIRE, each with an average of 48 percent of the respondents reporting quarterly revenue gains.

Fifty-seven percent of the FIRE group respondents indicated higher 3rd quarter revenues compared to year-ago levels (Table 2). Fifty-five percent of TCU respondents indicated higher 3rd quarter revenues compared to year-ago levels, followed by manufacturing, 53 percent, and services, 52 percent. Based on five quarters of survey data, an average 61 percent of the TCU respondents indicated higher quarterly revenues compared to same quarter a year ago. Other sectors where at least an average 50 percent of the respondents reported quarterly gains in revenues over year-ago levels include FIRE, 57 percent, manufacturing, 55 percent, and services, 50 percent. The fact that TCU, FIRE, and manufacturing have been leading other sectors in the percent of respondents reporting revenue gains is very good news for the state's entire business community. TCU, FIRE, and manufacturing belong to a class of sectors called export base indus-

Table 1
Percent of Unfilled Jobs
Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants

	4th Quarter 1996	1st Quarter 1997	2nd Quarter 1997	3rd Quarter 1997	Average
State	69%	64%	52%	70%	64%
Metro[1]	66%	66%	49%	65%	62%
Nonmetro	73%	57%	61%	78%	67%

[1]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Table 2
Revenue Activity 3rd Quarter 1997

	3rd Quarter Compared to 2nd Quarter 1997	3rd Quarter Compared to 3rd Quarter 1997
All Establishments—*number reporting*	1,246	
Revenues increased	42%	49%
Revenues decreased	27%	26%
Revenues stayed the same	31%	25%
Manufacturing—*number reporting*	177	
Revenues increased	46%	53%
Revenues decreased	30%	26%
Revenues stayed the same	24%	21%
Wholesale Trade—*number reporting*	143	
Revenues increased	40%	46%
Revenues decreased	33%	26%
Revenues stayed the same	27%	28%
Retail Trade—*number reporting*	321	
Revenues increased	39%	42%
Revenues decreased	31%	29%
Revenues stayed the same	30%	29%
FIRE—*number reporting*	82	
Revenues increased	48%	57%
Revenues decreased	12%	24%
Revenues stayed the same	40%	19%
TCU—*number reporting*	76	
Revenues increased	46%	55%
Revenues decreased	21%	24%
Revenues stayed the same	33%	21%
Services—*number reporting*	291	
Revenues increased	43%	52%
Revenues decreased	26%	26%
Revenues stayed the same	31%	22%
Other—*number reporting*	156	
Revenues increased	37%	48%
Revenues decreased	21%	21%
Revenues stayed the same	42%	31%

tries. Export base industries derive most of their revenues from outside the local economy. Export base industries bring *new* dollars to the local economy that indirectly stimulate other local businesses, such as retail trade establishments.

Figure 2 shows the percent of respondents by sector that expect 4th quarter revenues to increase (or decrease) over 4th quarter 1996 levels. These are expected outcomes since 4th quarter revenues are not actually known until sometime after the end of the quarter. Actual data will be reported in the 4th business conditions survey. Forty-three percent of respondents representing the FIRE group expect 4th quarter 1997 revenues to exceed year-ago levels. Thirty-six percent of all respondents expect 4th quarter revenues to exceed year-ago levels. Five quarters of survey results indicate that, overall, businesses are quite accurate in predicting changes in quarterly revenues. This accuracy can be explained in part by the stability of the economy.

Although growing at a healthy rate, Nebraska's economy remains remarkably stable. This is good news, especially for the state's policy makers. Stable economic growth makes it somewhat easier to deal with issues such as labor shortages.

Figure 2
Respondents Expecting Revenue Change in 4th Quarter 1997

*Expected **Decrease** vs 4th Quarter 1997*			*Expected **Increase** vs 4th Quarter 1996*	
Primary Reason(s) Cited	*% of respondents*		*% of respondents*	**Primary Reason(s) Cited**
• Seasonal factors • Competition	17	**Services**	38	• Seasonal factors • Market expansion in state • Price changes
• Competition • Seasonal factors	15	**FIRE**[1]	43	• Seasonal factors • Market expansion in state
• Seasonal factors • Competition • Price changes	19	**Retail Trade**	37	• Seasonal factors • Market expansion in state • New product lines/services
• Seasonal factors • Price changes • Competition	15	**Wholesale Trade**	34	• Seasonal factors • Market expansion in state • New product lines/services
• Seasonal factors • Competition	17	**TCU**[2]	31	• Seasonal factors • Market expansion in state • National market expansion
• Seasonal factors • National competition	12	**Manufacturing**	38	• Seasonal factors • National market expansion • New product lines/services
• Seasonal factors • Competition	16	**All Respondents**	36	• Seasonal factors • Market expansion in state

[1]Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
[2]Transportation, Communication, and Utilities

Job Creation and Replacement Hires

Survey respondents reported creation of slightly over 2,200 new full-time jobs during 3rd quarter 1997 (Table 3) or the equivalent of 33 new full-time jobs per 1,000 employees (Table 4). The average of 33 new full-time jobs per 1,000 employees compares with a combined 1st and 2nd quarter 1997 average of 32 new full-time jobs per 1,000 employees. The 3rd quarter average for the state's metro counties was 34, compared with an average of 32 for the state's nonmetro counties. Averages for individual nonmetro regions ranged from 49 for the Mid Plains region to 25 for the Panhandle region. See map at the end of this article for region composition.

Survey respondents reported a total of 3,449 full-time replacement hires during 3rd quarter 1997 (Table 3). Replacement hires represent workers who were hired during the quarter to fill existing jobs. Table 4 shows that the state's full-time job replacement rate for 3rd quarter 1997 was 51 hires per 1,000 employees. The rate for metro counties was 58 replacement hires per 1,000 employees, which was significantly higher than 44 hires per 1,000 employees for the state's nonmetro counties. This difference was largely due to Lincoln's (Lancaster County) relatively high rate of 62 full-time replacement hires per 1,000 employees, and relatively low rates for two nonmetro regions—Mid Plains, 25 and Southeast, 32.

Replacement rates are one measure of job turnover. The estimated total number of replacement hires (turnover) in the entire state during 3rd quarter is 35,913. Job turnover can be due to a number of factors, including new job opportunities, promotions, wage levels, and industry mix. Survey error also is a potential factor.

Nearly 5,700 total new and replacement full-time hires were reported for 3rd quarter 1997 (Table 3). About two out of every five full-time hires (39 percent) represented new job hires. The combined ratio for the 1st and 2nd quarters was also two out of every five full-time hires. The ratio of full-time new job hires for 3rd quarter 1997 for the state's metro counties was 37 percent. The comparable ratio for the state's nonmetro

Table 3
Number of New and Replacement Hires
3rd Quarter 1997

	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
Replacement hires	3,449	1,963	1,986	1,133	1,463	830
New job hires	2,248	1,021	1,182	484	1,066	537
Total	5,697	2,984	3,168	1,617	2,529	1,367

[1]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.
Note: Sum of Metro and Nonmetro may not add to State total because some businesses' activities are not restricted to a single county or region.

Table 4
Job Hire Rates for Full-time New and Replacement Positions per 1,000 Employees for 3rd Quarter 1997 Compared to the Average for 1st and 2nd Quarters 1997

	3rd Quarter		1st and 2nd Quarter Average	
	New Hires	*Replacement Hires*	*New Hires*	*Replacement Hires*
State	33	51	32	44
Metro	34	58	30	48
Nonmetro	32	44	34	38
Regions[1]				
Omaha MSA	36	56	31	51
Lincoln MSA	33	62	29	42
Northeast	29	57	47	31
Southeast	29	32	22	31
Central	31	45	30	51
Mid Plains	49	25	24	30
Panhandle	25	45	25	41

[1]See region composition map at end of article.

counties was 42 percent. The five percentage point difference (37 percent vs 42 percent) is not statistically significant.

Substantial new job growth occurred in all nine occupational groups (Table 5). At the state level, 26 percent of all full-time hires for new jobs occurred in the professional groups (executives/administrators, managers/professional specialists, and marketing/sales). Replacement hires for the professional group was about 18 percent. This pattern is virtually unchanged from previous survey findings. Taken together, the five quarters of survey data show that the ratio of professional jobs to total jobs in Nebraska is increasing.

Wages

Survey results for wages for 3rd quarter 1997 are reported in Tables 6 through 8. Table 6 shows average hourly wages without regard to occupation. Tables 7 and 8 show average hourly wages by occupation. Results of this survey, plus the results from previous surveys, show a consistent, substantial wage differential between full-time new hires and full-time replacement hires. At the state level, the average hourly wage differential for full-time hires is $1.81 (Table 6). The 2nd quarter 1997 survey results (*Business in Nebraska,* September 1997) indicated an hourly wage differential of $2.83. Variations in quarter-to-quarter average wage differences likely are due to occupational differences in the mix of full-time new job hires and full-time replacement hires. However, the wage gap between new job hires and replacement hires can be expected to narrow, because of tight labor market conditions across the state (Figure 1). Wages for existing jobs tend to catch up with wages for comparable new jobs. Increases in job turnover rates help accelerate lowering of wage differentials for comparable jobs. See Tables 7 and 8 for average wages by occupation for the metro and nonmetro counties and the state for 3rd quarter 1997.

Table 5
Number of New and Replacement Hires by Occupation
3rd Quarter 1997 (Full-time Positions)

	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
Occupation	New Position Hires	Replacement Hires	New Position Hires	Replacement Hires	New Position Hires	Replacement Hires
Executives/Administrators	103	27	57	13	46	14
Managers	172	72	100	45	72	27
Professional Specialists	206	244	153	166	53	78
Marketing/Sales	106	268	44	182	62	86
Administrative Support/Clerical	234	225	173	160	61	65
Service Workers	432	750	232	492	200	258
Transportation/Material Movers	58	176	27	42	31	134
Production/Craft/Repair	477	839	233	518	244	321
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	460	848	163	368	297	480
Total	2,248	3,449	1,182	1,986	1,066	1,463

[1]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Note: Sum of Metro and Nonmetro may not add to State total because some businesses' activities are not restricted to a single county or region.

Table 6
Average Hourly Wages for New and Replacement Hires
3rd Quarter 1997

	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Replacement hires	$9.27	$6.13	$9.50	$6.28	$8.95	$5.92
New hires	$11.08	$6.95	$11.95	$7.84	$10.10	$6.14

[1]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Table 7
Average Hourly Wages for Replacement Hires by Occupation
3rd Quarter 1997

	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
Occupation	**Full-time**	**Part-time**	**Full-time**	**Part-time**	**Full-time**	**Part-time**
Executives/Administrators	$24.22	—	$23.15	—	$25.21	—
Managers	$17.04	—	$17.13	—	$16.90	—
Professional Specialists	$14.38	$7.66	$14.12	$6.48	$14.96	$10.68
Marketing/Sales	$8.91	$6.45	$9.38	$6.61	$7.92	$5.65
Administrative Support/Clerical	$9.10	$6.46	$9.73	$7.10	$7.56	$5.86
Service Workers	$6.96	$5.78	$7.25	$5.94	$6.40	$5.57
Transportation/Material Movers	$14.01	$6.97	$9.45	$7.47	$15.44	$6.51
Production/Craft/Repair	$9.36	$7.55	$9.92	$7.03	$8.45	$9.17
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	$7.79	$6.24	$8.39	$8.15	$7.33	$5.70

[1]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Unfilled Positions

Respondents reported that 1,029 open full-time positions went unfilled during 3rd quarter 1997 (Table 9). Of that total 725 (70 percent) were not filled due to a reported lack of qualified applicants. A proportionately higher number of unfilled jobs occurred in the state's nonmetro counties (78 percent). The comparable rate for the state's metro counties was 65 percent.

Increasingly, Nebraska businesses are showing that they can successfully compete in the new information economy, global markets, and high-tech ventures. Unfilled jobs combined with large numbers of unqualified applicants can hamper future success. Solving the labor shortage problem will require a cooperative effort on the part of businesses, public policy makers, and educators. Investing in education and job training produces the highest pay back during times of tight labor markets. Greater emphasis should now be given to the education and training needs of the state, perhaps in new, real-time, and unconventional ways. In addition, greater emphasis should be given to dispelling the notion that higher paying jobs can only be found outside the state's borders. This will be a topic for an article in next month's issue of *Business in Nebraska*.

Detailed regional reports for the five nonmetro regions and two metro regions for the 3rd quarter survey are available on the following internet sites:

www.bbr.unl.edu
www.ded.state.ne.us
www.dol.state.ne.us

Table 8
Average Hourly Wages for New Position Hires by Occupation
3rd Quarter 1997

	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
Occupation	**Full-time**	**Part-time**	**Full-time**	**Part-time**	**Full-time**	**Part-time**
Executives/Administrators	$17.54	—	$16.74	—	$18.54	—
Managers	$16.26	—	$17.91	—	$13.95	—
Professional Specialists	$18.55	$11.56	$19.21	$11.92	$16.62	$10.40
Marketing/Sales	$14.53	$6.93	$15.60	$7.03	$13.76	—
Administrative Support/Clerical	$9.18	$7.56	$9.32	$7.87	$8.77	$6.97
Service Workers	$9.21	$6.42	$8.59	$7.13	$9.91	$5.88
Transportation/Material Movers	$9.57	$6.78	$10.11	$7.26	$9.10	$6.15
Production/Craft/Repair	$9.29	$6.56	$9.96	$6.84	$8.63	$6.32
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	$8.33	$7.13	$9.55	$9.38	$7.66	$6.03

[1]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Table 9
Total Unfilled Positions and Positions Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants (Full-time Positions) 3rd Quarter 1997

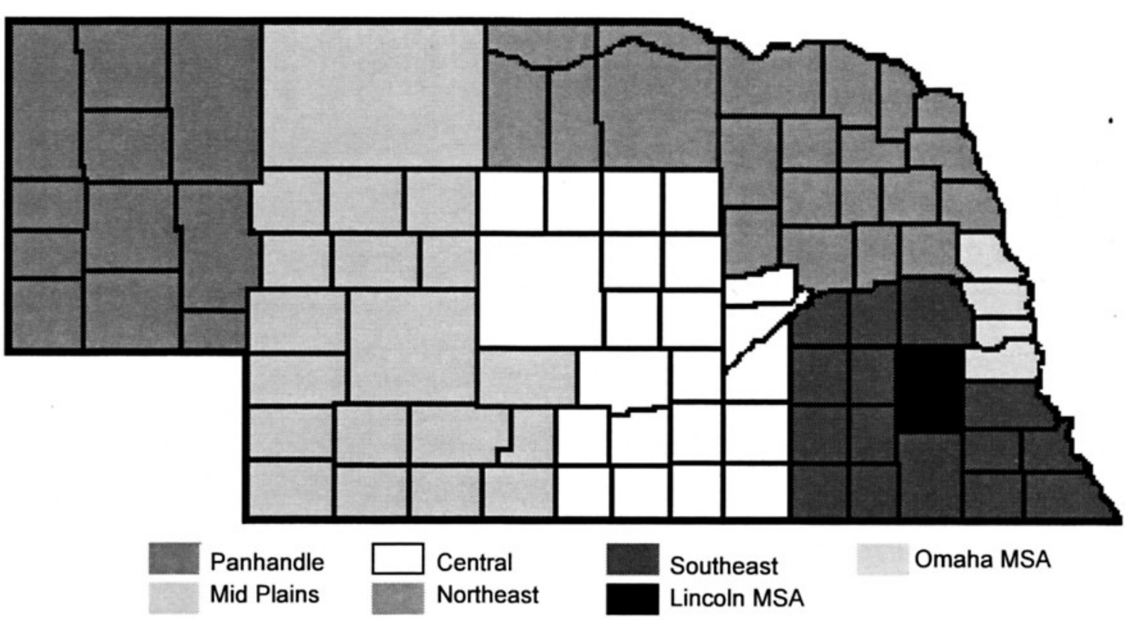
	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
Occupation	Total Unfilled	Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants	Total Unfilled	Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants	Total Unfilled	Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants
Executives/Administrators	6	3	4	2	2	1
Managers	33	17	20	11	13	6
Professional Specialists	100	65	67	48	33	17
Marketing/Sales	119	49	74	41	45	8
Administrative Support/Clerical	36	9	23	5	13	4
Service Workers	218	128	116	66	102	62
Transportation/Material Movers	67	55	17	10	50	45
Production/Craft/Repair	233	181	155	108	78	73
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	217	218	121	97	96	121
Total	1,029	725	597	388	432	337

[1]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Note: Sum of Metro and Nonmetro may not add to State total because some businesses' activities are not restricted to a single county or region.

NQBCS is a joint project of the Nebraska Departments of Economic Development and Labor, and BBR. The following individuals contributed either to the oversight of conducting the 3rd quarter survey or to the tabulation of survey results used in this report: Phil Baker, Jolee Wheatley, Jane Sutherland, and Clarence Waldman, Nebraska Department of Labor; Tom Doering and Stu Miller, Nebraska Department of Economic Development; and David Bennett, Annette Miller, and Charles Lamphear, BBR

NQBCS Region Composition



The Meaning of the Unemployment Rate

John Austin

The monthly unemployment rate is the second-most closely watched index of the nation's economic performance after the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The unemployment rate is the percent of the civilian labor force that is unemployed.

$$\text{Unemployment Rate} = \frac{\text{Unemployed}}{\text{Labor Force}} \times 100$$

The civilian labor force is comprised of noninstitutionalized persons age 16 years or over who are employed or not employed and actively seeking work.

Although the basic theory underlying the calculation of state/local area and national unemployment rates is the same, the actual estimation procedures differ. In addition, the interpretation of local rates is more ambiguous because local areas experience a considerable amount of inter-area movement (e.g., migration, commuting, and business relocation) not found at the national level. These movements add complexity to the meaning of local unemployment rates. Consider the following example.

In Year I Community B appears better off than Community A, due to a lower unemployment rate. By Year II the population of Community A has grown by 15,000. The labor force of Community A grew by a total of 10,000 persons, 9,000 of whom have found jobs. In contrast, Community B experienced no population growth and unemployment remained the same.

Year I

Community A	*Community B*
Population 300,000	Population 300,000
Labor Force 200,000	Labor Force 200,000
Unemployed 10,000	Unemployed 6,000
Unemployment rate 5.0%	Unemployment rate 3.0%

Year II

Community A	*Community B*
Population 315,000	Population 300,000
Labor Force 210,000	Labor Force 200,000
Unemployed 11,000	Unemployed 6,000
Unemployment rate 5.2%	Unemployment rate 3.0%
Population growth 5.0%	Population growth 0.0%
Labor Force growth 5.0%	Labor force growth 0.0%
Employment growth 4.7 %	Employment growth 0.0%

The difference between national and state/local area unemployment rate statistics is that the national unemployment rate is based on a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics residential survey of 50,000 people. A person is counted as employed if holding one or more full- or part-time jobs during the week containing the 12th of the month. This large survey assures a reasonably accurate estimate of the national unemployment rate.

The number of households sampled in each state is not always large enough for a high degree of statistical accuracy so state unemployment rates are estimated by different methods than those used for the nation. Estimates of state unemployment rates rely on unemployment insurance claims, along with trend and seasonal components. Thus, Nebraska and other state unemployment rates are estimates.

A primary source of information for the calculation of state employment is data collected from employers, a subtle but important change in data source from the residential survey. The employer-based employment count is a count of jobs, not people. Further, both a full-time job and a part-time job each count as one job. Data from the household survey and the employers is blended together with trend and seasonal components to create an estimate of monthly employment on a labor-force basis.

The working-age population and the labor force are not the same. The working ages generally are viewed as those from 16 to 65. Not all people in the working ages work or seek work. Many, especially in the lower working ages are full-time students that do not work. Some people retire early for personal or medical reasons. Others remain at home doing unpaid work. Some are in institutions, and others simply choose not to or are unable to work. About two-thirds of the total adult population (all ages) is in the labor force. The percent of working-age persons in the labor force is called the participation rate. Nebraska's 74 percent participation rate in 1995 was second only to that of Minnesota. The high participation rate implies that further employment growth will rely on a population increase through the slow process of natural expansion or through net inmigration.

Despite its lower unemployment rate in Year II, it is not clear that Community B is better off. In Year II Community A has an unemployment rate of 5.2 percent, but both its population and labor force have grown 5.0 percent and total employment has grown 4.7 percent. The growing community could be more attractive to an outside employer

Consider the following data from selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs).

MSA	*Wage & Salary Employment Growth (Jobs) 1995 to 1996*	*Unemployment Rate November 1996*
United States	2.0	5.0
Champaign-Urbana, IL	1.3	2.9
Las Vegas, NV	8.5	5.0
Lincoln, NE	3.0	2.4
Omaha, NE	3.1	2.9

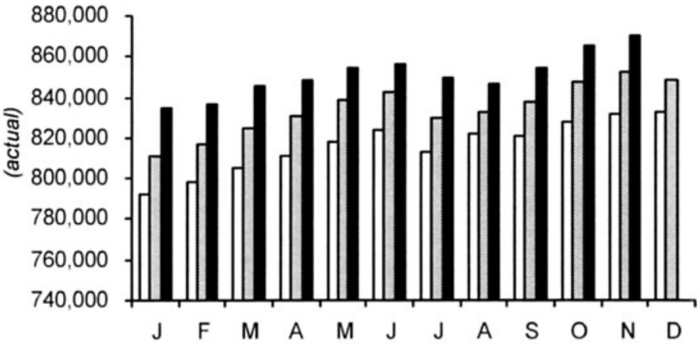
Champaign-Urbana, IL had an unemployment rate a full two percentage points below the nation's unemployment rate. Its employment (jobs) growth rate, however, lagged the nation's growth by nearly one percentage point. In contrast Las Vegas, NV experienced job growth at 8.5 percent, despite an unemployment rate of 5.0 percent. Low unemployment rates, therefore, do not necessarily guarantee high job growth rates, nor do high job growth rates automatically mean that unemployment rates will be low. Lincoln and Omaha have employment growth rates above the national rate and unemployment rates below the national rate.

Business relocation or expansion decisions are driven by far more than just a single statistic. A low unemployment rate could signal to potential employers that local labor markets are tight and that there may be difficulty in attracting workers without offering premium wages. If an employer views areas, such as Community A and Community B, as equal in all other aspects, the employer may be more likely to locate in the area with the higher unemployment rate.

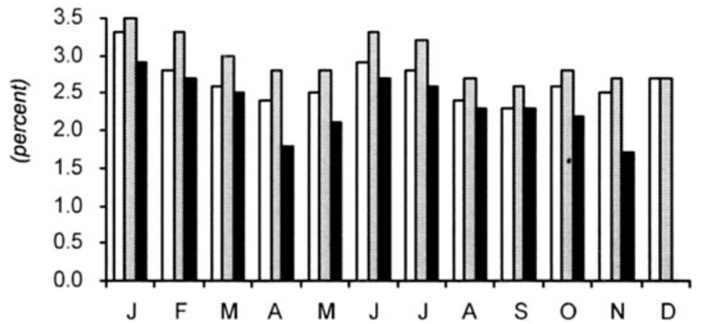
Nebraska Stats

1995 1996 1997

Total Nonfarm Employment

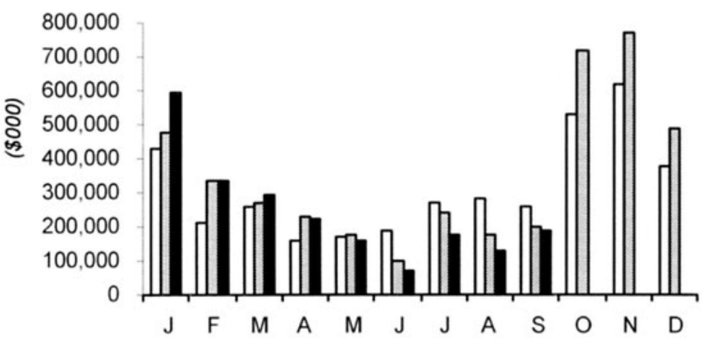


Unemployment Rate

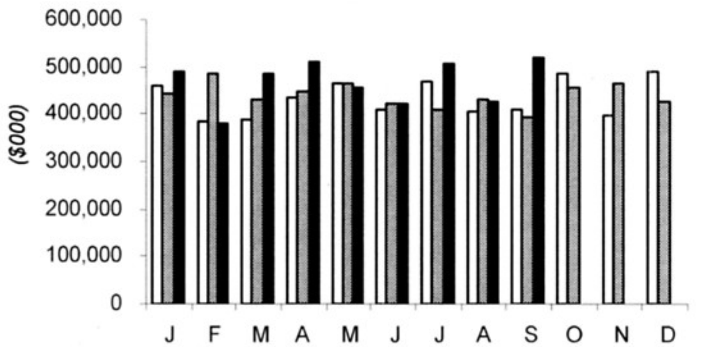


1995 1996 1997

Cash Receipts—Crops



Cash Receipts—Livestock



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

	September 1997 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
Ainsworth, Brown	1,817	15,888	7.5
Albion, Boone	1,873	15,987	-7.3
Alliance, Box Butte	6,122	54,024	5.3
Alma, Harlan	719	6,108	2.2
Arapahoe, Furnas	768	6,315	12.2
Arlington, Washington	204	1,646	5.0
Arnold, Custer	286	2,331	1.9
Ashland, Saunders	1,344	10,970	31.3
Atkinson, Holt	1,163	8,394	15.7
Auburn, Nemaha	2,604	21,784	1.4
Aurora, Hamilton	2,826	23,353	1.2
Axtell, Kearney	97	703	-8.8
Bassett, Rock	503	4,086	0.3
Battle Creek, Madison	694	5,715	6.7
Bayard, Morrill	464	3,742	1.4
Beatrice, Gage	10,351	92,996	11.5
Beaver City, Furnas	180	1,119	6.7
Bellevue, Sarpy	17,887	155,720	1.9
Benkelman, Dundy	639	4,872	5.4
Bennington, Douglas	391	3,434	2.2
Blair, Washington	6,317	56,218	7.9
Bloomfield, Knox	819	5,816	9.1
Blue Hill, Webster	487	4,023	12.0
Bridgeport, Morrill	1,051	9,809	16.0
Broken Bow, Custer	4,217	33,969	-10.5
Burwell, Garfield	900	6,761	10.8
Cairo, Hall	274	2,063	25.6
Cambridge, Furnas	768	7,213	-26.7
Central City, Merrick	1,697	14,934	2.2
Chadron, Dawes	3,608	31,662	10.6
Chappell, Deuel	521	3,758	12.0
Clarkson, Colfax	458	4,010	6.6
Clay Center, Clay	434	2,877	16.0
Columbus, Platte	19,846	176,813	3.2
Cozad, Dawson	3,065	26,475	13.0
Crawford, Dawes	515	5,037	13.1
Creighton, Knox	1,094	8,824	2.2
Crete, Saline	3,071	28,439	-5.2
Crofton, Knox	453	3,601	-1.6
Curtis, Frontier	424	2,918	13.5
Dakota City, Dakota	475	3,716	-25.8
David City, Butler	1,444	12,191	-7.3
Deshler, Thayer	276	2,051	1.5
Dodge, Dodge	337	2,174	8.5
Doniphan, Hall	774	6,279	25.4
Eagle, Cass	457	3,590	25.8
Elgin, Antelope	502	3,790	4.5
Elkhorn, Douglas	2,357	19,177	19.2
Elm Creek, Buffalo	344	2,746	13.0
Elwood, Gosper	491	3,942	8.3
Fairbury, Jefferson	3,033	25,972	-1.6
Fairmont, Fillmore	157	1,438	22.1
Falls City, Richardson	2,874	22,728	4.3
Franklin, Franklin	638	4,065	-2.2
Fremont, Dodge	19,737	176,038	-3.2
Friend, Saline	424	4,136	0.0
Fullerton, Nance	568	4,909	13.2
Geneva, Fillmore	1,697	15,768	4.3
Genoa, Nance	268	2,161	-8.4
Gering, Scotts Bluff	3,425	29,125	-2.5
Gibbon, Buffalo	885	7,203	16.7
Gordon, Sheridan	1,810	16,011	8.4
Gothenburg, Dawson	2,209	19,494	10.1
Grand Island, Hall	48,634	420,063	5.0
Grant, Perkins	1,063	9,210	12.3
Gretna, Sarpy	3,611	29,363	-1.8
Hartington, Cedar	1,792	14,437	10.3
Hastings, Adams	20,341	176,403	2.1
Hay Springs, Sheridan	369	2,908	3.3
Hebron, Thayer	2,116	17,237	23.5
Henderson, York	631	5,515	-11.1
Hickman, Lancaster	291	2,098	5.1
Holdrege, Phelps	4,144	40,417	-2.5
Hooper, Dodge	459	3,144	14.6
Humboldt, Richardson	627	4,588	5.2
Humphrey, Platte	869	6,498	1.7
Imperial, Chase	2,000	16,998	17.1
Juniata, Adams	214	1,971	8.2
Kearney, Buffalo	29,644	257,687	3.6
Kenesaw, Adams	119	1,046	12.8
Kimball, Kimball	1,629	14,595	11.3
La Vista, Sarpy	7,287	66,312	4.0
Laurel, Cedar	522	3,393	5.7
Lexington, Dawson	6,904	62,238	-3.7
Lincoln, Lancaster	193,919	1,637,327	5.8
Louisville, Cass	1,123	5,288	38.6
Loup City, Sherman	736	5,222	-0.8
Lyons, Burt	732	4,384	12.0
Madison, Madison	933	6,755	-0.2
McCook, Red Willow	10,279	95,802	4.7
Milford, Seward	904	7,944	9.8
Minatare, Scotts Bluff	180	1,818	3.5
Minden, Kearney	1,894	15,881	13.4
Mitchell, Scotts Bluff	720	7,585	20.4
Morrill, Scotts Bluff	570	4,055	15.3
Nebraska City, Otoe	7,014	54,300	12.9
Neligh, Antelope	1,527	13,225	24.1
Newman Grove, Madison	458	3,053	6.1
Norfolk, Madison	29,150	252,681	5.9
North Bend, Dodge	536	4,431	4.1
North Platte, Lincoln	21,494	186,748	2.0
O'Neill, Holt	4,291	37,501	-1.5
Oakland, Burt	736	5,861	6.2
Ogallala, Keith	5,340	48,712	0.5
Omaha, Douglas	461,123	3,875,616	4.1
Ord, Valley	1,773	16,680	8.7
Osceola, Polk	928	6,814	7.9
Oshkosh, Garden	444	3,769	0.5
Osmond, Pierce	583	3,748	-1.7
Oxford, Furnas	540	4,746	76.1
Papillion, Sarpy	6,483	53,243	20.0
Pawnee City, Pawnee	314	2,700	8.7
Pender, Thurston	923	6,676	14.6
Pierce, Pierce	882	6,040	9.5
Plainview, Pierce	762	6,206	19.0
Plattsmouth, Cass	3,305	29,182	9.5
Ponca, Dixon	575	4,615	2.1
Ralston, Douglas	3,318	28,194	10.4
Randolph, Cedar	486	3,437	5.2
Ravenna, Buffalo	864	6,957	26.0
Red Cloud, Webster	738	6,834	19.0
Rushville, Sheridan	622	4,755	-0.5
Sargent, Custer	238	1,729	1.4
Schuyler, Colfax	1,981	16,746	0.8
Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff	20,788	186,254	9.7
Scribner, Dodge	696	4,472	6.2
Seward, Seward	5,237	42,908	5.4
Shelby, Polk	357	2,885	4.2
Shelton, Buffalo	598	5,037	-5.5
Sidney, Cheyenne	7,969	64,224	7.9
South Sioux City, Dakota	8,034	71,122	1.5
Springfield, Sarpy	440	2,714	7.6
St. Paul, Howard	1,228	11,198	11.0
Stanton, Stanton	605	5,167	7.9
Stromsburg, Polk	1,283	9,816	15.1
Superior, Nuckolls	1,494	14,306	8.2
Sutherland, Lincoln	412	2,658	-1.0
Sutton, Clay	989	8,996	-17.4
Syracuse, Otoe	1,239	9,540	8.7
Tecumseh, Johnson	883	8,393	-6.0
Tekamah, Burt	1,192	9,844	6.3
Tilden, Madison	516	3,997	1.4
Utica, Seward	263	2,023	-12.9
Valentine, Cherry	3,945	34,496	5.5
Valley, Douglas	1,051	11,034	6.0
Wahoo, Saunders	2,779	23,413	12.6
Wakefield, Dixon	378	3,280	0.9
Wauneta, Chase	310	2,728	-5.4
Waverly, Lancaster	887	6,606	19.7
Wayne, Wayne	3,449	27,433	3.1
Weeping Water, Cass	709	5,745	14.1
West Point, Cuming	3,869	34,314	7.7
Wilber, Saline	551	4,175	9.5
Wisner, Cuming	814	5,885	25.1
Wood River, Hall	472	4,071	2.9
Wymore, Gage	525	3,759	3.4
York, York	9,231	80,148	8.0

*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		
	September 1997 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago	September 1997 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago
Nebraska*	200,738	1,693,305	7.2	1,350,039	11,247,270	4.9
Adams	3,681	29,843	8.9	21,072	182,065	2.5
Antelope	1,212	9,722	11.1	2,581	20,505	14.3
Arthur	38	428	-0.7	69	(D)	(D)
Banner	102	1,252	-1.6	(D)	(D)	(D)
Blaine	47	811	26.5	85	(D)	(D)
Boone	839	7,932	8.7	2,567	20,966	-3.8
Box Butte	1,477	13,434	-4.7	6,443	56,665	5.5
Boyd	213	2,113	13.4	717	5,218	1.6
Brown	426	3,385	22.8	1,963	16,681	8.4
Buffalo	5,006	41,698	8.0	32,835	283,027	4.3
Burt	1,105	9,174	10.8	2,886	21,801	6.5
Butler	1,001	8,604	0.1	2,158	16,533	-4.5
Cass	3,212	27,788	3.6	6,863	55,949	12.6
Cedar	1,503	11,597	15.7	3,252	24,582	9.5
Chase	955	6,244	34.2	2,367	20,137	13.3
Cherry	821	7,101	32.0	4,163	36,207	4.7
Cheyenne	1,217	10,535	-3.8	8,342	66,761	7.6
Clay	1,062	8,647	7.6	2,360	19,503	-7.1
Colfax	936	9,953	10.4	2,934	24,404	0.9
Cuming	1,430	12,839	18.0	5,547	45,582	10.0
Custer	1,275	12,704	20.9	5,370	42,295	-8.1
Dakota	2,175	18,279	0.6	9,390	82,200	1.3
Dawes	964	6,656	7.0	4,124	36,714	10.9
Dawson	2,849	25,998	17.2	12,754	112,202	2.8
Deuel	211	2,581	4.0	1,077	7,693	11.8
Dixon	800	6,578	24.7	1,120	9,002	1.7
Dodge	4,191	35,754	8.3	22,328	193,081	-2.2
Douglas	53,442	423,163	4.5	470,054	3,955,736	4.2
Dundy	459	3,006	-4.4	666	5,142	4.0
Fillmore	1,113	8,286	7.8	2,565	23,459	1.4
Franklin	588	4,029	31.7	922	6,273	-3.5
Frontier	357	3,790	23.2	853	5,910	9.7
Furnas	775	6,258	9.4	2,423	20,811	1.6
Gage	2,137	21,988	7.7	11,639	103,179	11.2
Garden	358	2,776	6.4	682	5,186	-0.8
Garfield	294	1,746	8.2	900	6,761	10.8
Gosper	286	2,601	-1.4	561	4,450	8.0
Grant	77	1,010	30.3	235	1,658	10.2
Greeley	239	2,742	6.0	854	5,901	2.5
Hall	6,143	51,808	-1.2	50,495	435,653	5.3
Hamilton	1,262	11,378	7.0	3,340	27,046	0.3
Harlan	675	4,222	-1.8	959	7,957	0.3
Hayes	117	1,362	5.1	117	(D)	(D)
Hitchcock	396	3,301	-0.9	732	5,611	19.5
Holt	1,925	13,925	27.0	6,589	51,965	1.4
Hooker	104	727	-14.5	498	2,909	1.1
Howard	823	7,433	23.0	1,700	14,422	8.6
Jefferson	1,140	9,241	11.7	4,176	33,991	1.6
Johnson	420	4,220	4.6	1,302	11,297	-5.9
Kearney	1,026	9,075	13.3	2,140	17,894	10.1
Keith	806	9,519	8.7	6,041	53,576	1.0
Keya Paha	107	954	0.2	120	783	6.1
Kimball	639	4,822	11.1	1,718	15,011	11.9
Knox	1,022	9,255	5.0	3,246	23,909	4.0
Lancaster	23,819	209,585	9.4	196,793	1,657,085	6.0
Lincoln	3,687	31,460	0.5	22,662	194,735	1.8
Logan	64	813	-9.1	100	(D)	(D)
Loup	58	835	44.2	34	(D)	(D)
McPherson	37	564	-6.2	(D)	(D)	(D)
Madison	4,248	34,747	8.1	31,830	273,375	5.9
Merrick	1,194	8,536	-1.8	2,394	20,155	2.7
Morrill	545	6,099	20.4	1,540	13,832	11.2
Nance	527	4,581	12.8	936	7,436	6.3
Nemaha	958	7,902	15.2	2,958	24,151	1.7
Nuckolls	676	5,740	13.1	2,222	19,318	8.0
Otoe	1,732	16,558	10.3	8,783	67,660	12.2
Pawnee	287	3,225	4.5	605	4,545	1.5
Perkins	520	4,317	4.1	1,352	11,118	9.6
Phelps	1,400	13,478	0.2	4,561	42,836	-2.1
Pierce	1,000	9,084	10.9	2,308	16,762	9.8
Platte	4,116	34,645	7.2	21,468	189,295	3.4
Polk	793	7,552	18.0	2,707	20,583	11.0
Red Willow	1,161	11,201	3.2	10,740	98,773	4.8
Richardson	908	9,072	9.9	3,861	30,081	4.5
Rock	224	2,139	24.0	547	4,216	-0.1
Saline	1,405	12,527	-4.7	4,470	40,257	-2.1
Sarpy	14,601	120,726	7.9	36,689	313,957	5.6
Saunders	2,984	23,092	8.8	6,542	53,628	13.0
Scotts Bluff	4,006	35,153	6.0	25,803	229,605	8.3
Seward	1,980	16,662	11.0	6,765	55,249	5.6
Sheridan	654	6,767	12.4	3,081	26,111	5.5
Sherman	390	3,718	17.4	959	6,664	-3.0
Sioux	400	2,036	9.6	206	1,351	9.3
Stanton	846	6,826	11.9	882	6,639	5.7
Thayer	941	7,605	20.2	3,181	24,899	16.5
Thomas	250	1,124	30.5	659	3,918	28.3
Thurston	531	5,001	10.1	1,143	8,025	14.8
Valley	500	4,703	12.7	2,070	18,369	8.6
Washington	2,863	23,005	1.5	7,160	61,922	7.9
Wayne	1,156	9,359	17.1	3,632	28,850	3.1
Webster	526	4,484	22.7	1,423	11,934	16.0
Wheeler	116	1,495	26.2	167	959	-0.4
York	1,955	17,182	17.6	10,529	90,032	6.4

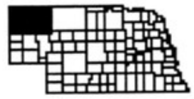
*Totals may not add due to rounding
(D) Denotes disclosure suppression

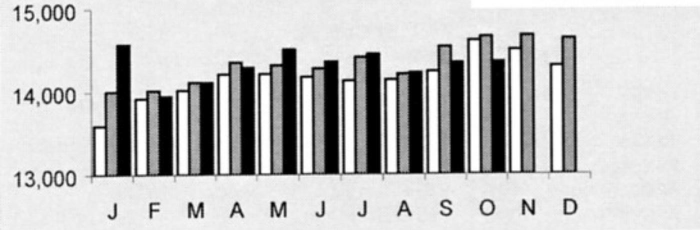
Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

Regional Employment—1995 to October 1997

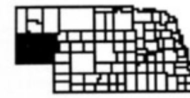
1995 1996 1997

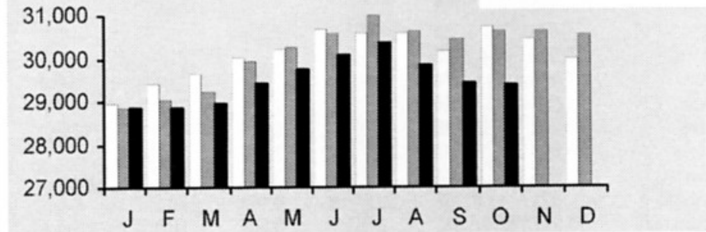
Northwest Panhandle



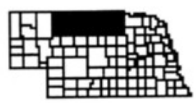


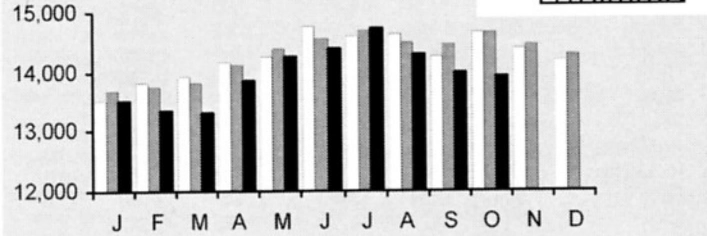
Southwest Panhandle



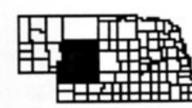


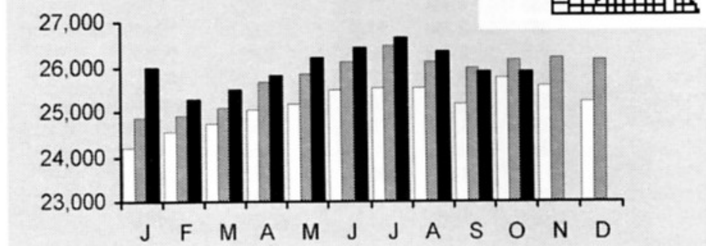
North Central



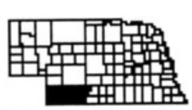


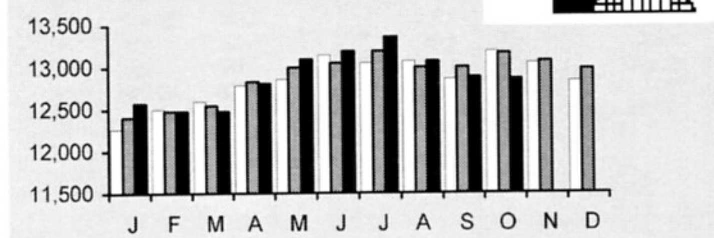
West Central



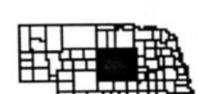


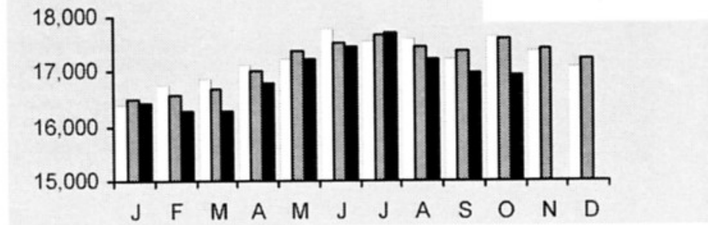
Southwest Central





East Central

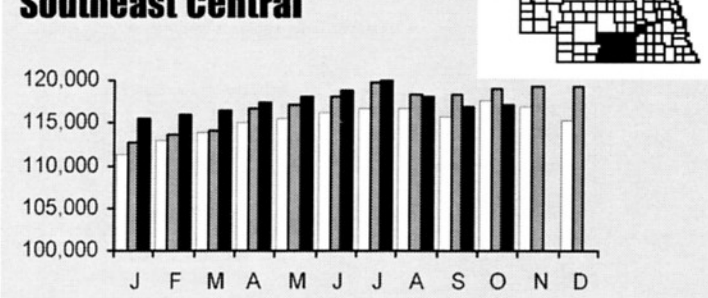




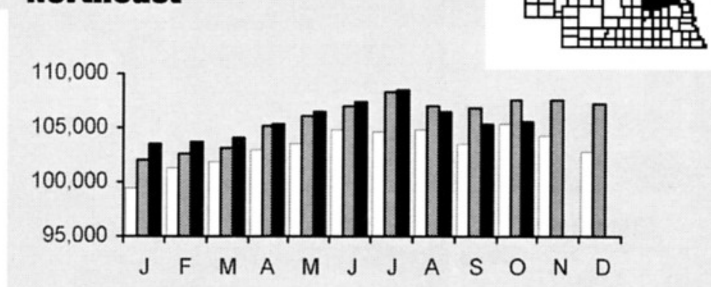
Regional Employment—1995 to October 1997

1995 1996 1997

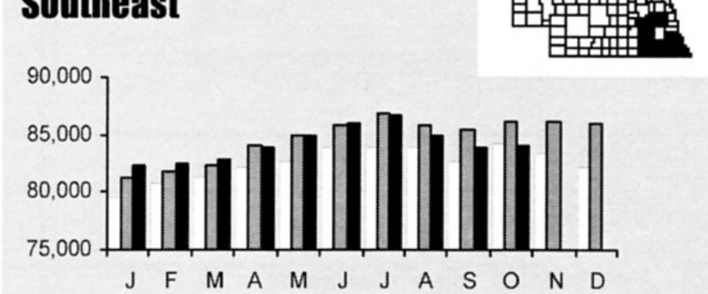
Southeast Central



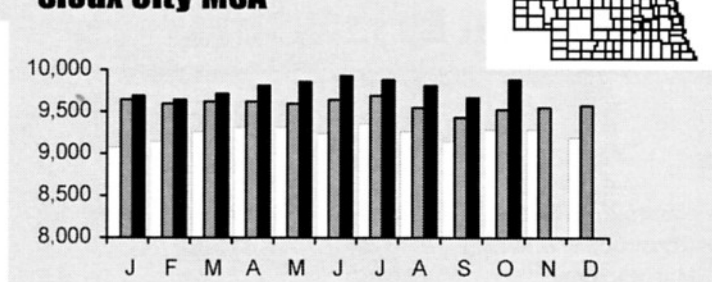
Northeast



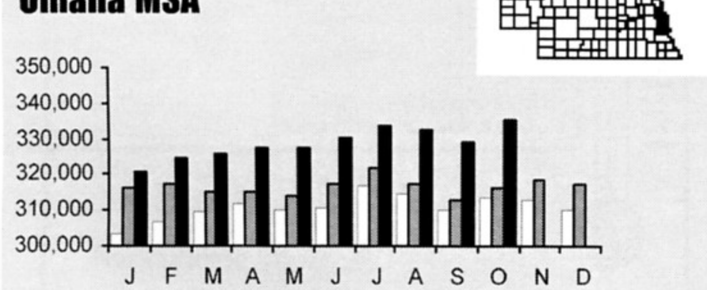
Southeast



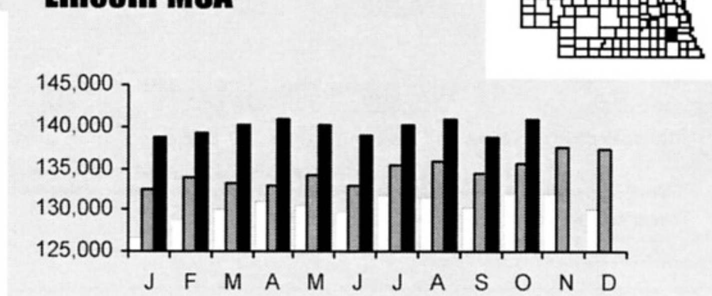
Sioux City MSA



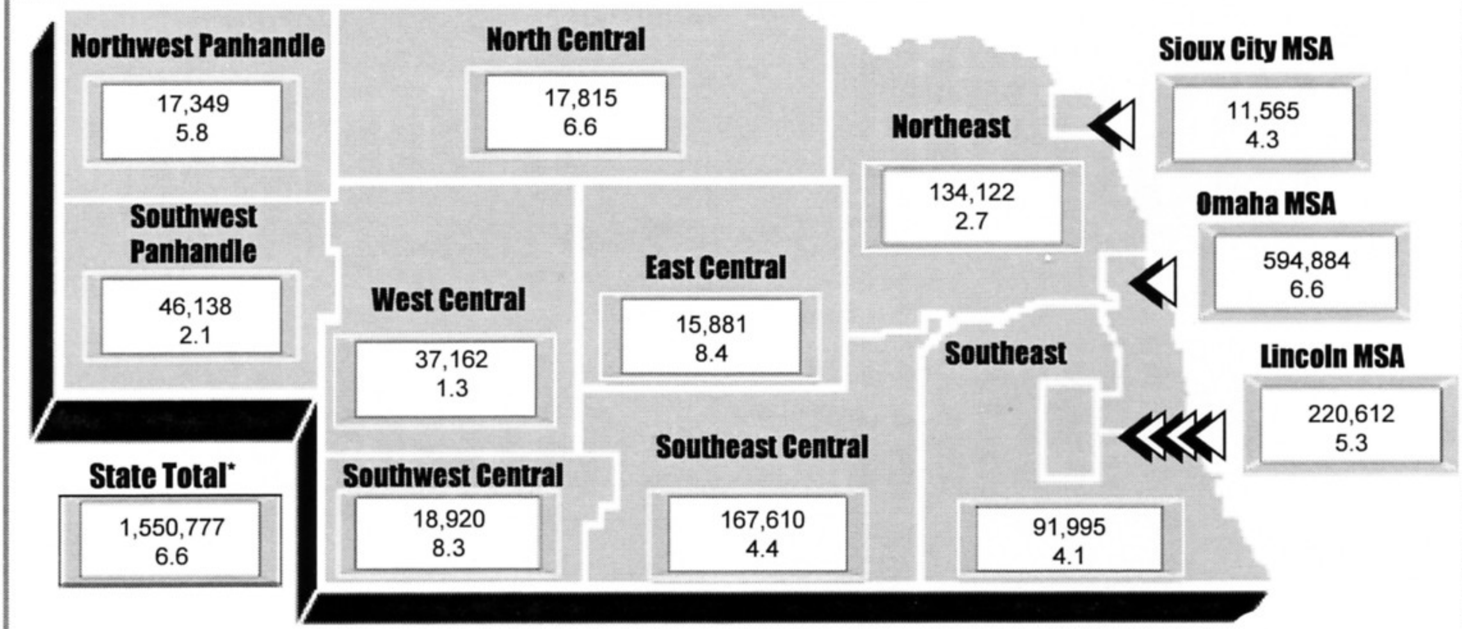
Omaha MSA



Lincoln MSA



September 1997 Regional Retail Sales ($000)
Percent Change from Year Ago

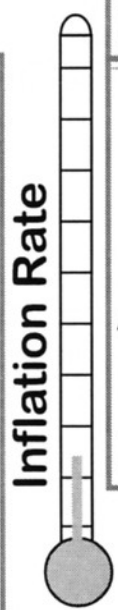


*Regional values may not add to state total due to unallocated sales

Employment by Industry

	Revised September 1997	Preliminary October 1997	% Change vs Yr. Ago
Nonfarm Emp (W&S)	853,913	859,984	1.5
Construction & Mining	41,013	41,150	2.6
Manufacturing	115,026	115,034	0.6
Durables	56,084	56,157	2.3
Nondurables	58,942	58,877	-1.1
TCU*	51,001	50,649	0.0
Trade	209,923	210,300	-0.1
Retail	154,085	154,836	-0.5
Wholesale	55,838	55,464	0.9
FIRE**	55,566	55,758	4.8
Services	231,364	233,880	4.3
Government	150,020	153,213	-0.7
Place of Residence			
Labor Force	918,539	926,561	0.8
Unemployment Rate	2.3	2.2	

* Transportation, Communication, and Utilities
** Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor



Price Indices

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

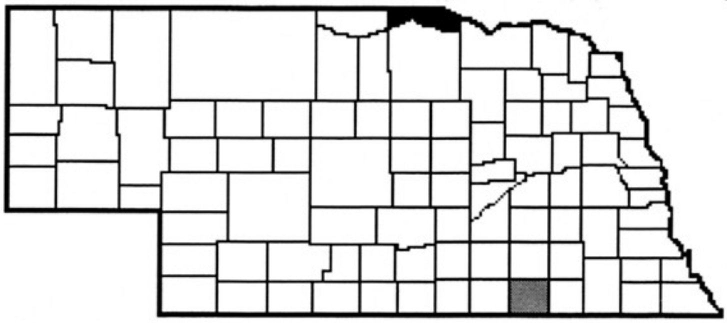
	November 1997	% Change vs Yr. Ago	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
All items	161.5	1.8	2.4
Commodities	142.3	0.6	1.5
Services	181.0	2.9	3.1

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

County of the Month

Boyd

Butte-County Seat



Next County of Month

License plate prefix number: 63

Size of county: 532 square miles, ranks 74th in the state

Population: 2,746 in 1996, a change of -3.1 percent from 1990

Per capita personal income: $17,031 in 1995, ranks 64th in the state

Net taxable retail sales ($000): $9,761 in 1996, a change of 2.1 percent from 1995; $7,331 from January through September of 1997, a change of 4.7 percent from the same period the previous year.

Number of business and service establishments: 88 in 1994, 71.6 percent had less than five employees

Unemployment rate: 3.0 percent in Boyd County, 2.9 percent in Nebraska for 1996

	State	Boyd County
Nonfarm employment (1996):	834,336	658
	(percent of total)	
Construction and Mining	4.5	(D)
Manufacturing	13.6	(D)
TCU	6.0	5.6
Wholesale Trade	6.4	7.4
Retail Trade	18.5	12.3
FIRE	6.4	5.3
Services	26.4	16.6
Government	18.2	48.0

Agriculture:

Number of farms: 821 in 1992, 898 in 1987

Average farm size: 509 acres in 1992

Market value of farm products sold: $191.3 million in 1992 ($232,991 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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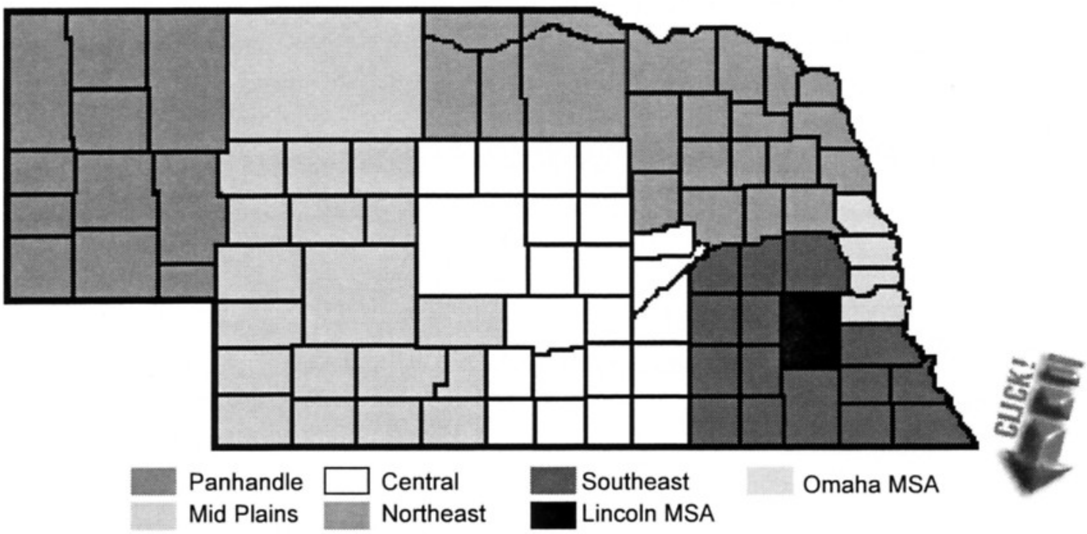
Click—Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey. A map similar to the one below will appear.

Click—the name of the region* in the map legend to see the list of tables for that region.

Click—the title of the table and it will be viewable in a portable document format (PDF).

*In addition to individual regions, detailed tables for the entire state, metro, and nonmetro counties are available.

Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) Regions



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