Business in Nebraska

Volume 54, No. 636 · presented by Bureau of Business Research (BBR) · January 1999

Latest Business Survey Shows that Economy Remains Strong But Evidence of Scattered Weakness Mounts

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The latest Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) for 3rd quarter 1998 shows that, overall, the state's economy remains strong (Table 1). Most of the strength, however, is found in five metro counties—Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington. In contrast, there is mounting evidence of some economic weakness in a few of the state's nonmetro regions.

Economic weakness appears mostly limited to businesses engaged in agriculture services and wholesale trade. Those who regularly read *Business in Nebraska (BIN)* will recall that the first evidence of scattered economic weakness was detected in 2nd quarter 1998 NQBCS results as reported in the September issue of *Business in Nebraska*. The NQBCS is the only regular statewide gauge of current business conditions. Quarterly results of the NQBCS are reported in the January, March, June, and September issues of *BIN*.

The 3rd quarter NQBCS represents 1,519 nonfarm, private sector businesses, with combined employment of slightly over 93,000 workers. The 1,519 reporting businesses are divided equally between the state's five metro counties in the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas and the remaining 88 nonmetro counties. The survey does

Table 1
Revenue Activity 3rd Quarter 1998[1]

	3rd Quarter Compared to 2nd Quarter 1998	3rd Quarter Compared to 3rd Quarter 1997
All Establishments—*number reporting*	1,519	
Revenues increased	36	40
Revenues decreased	29	28
Revenues stayed the same	35	32
Manufacturing—*number reporting*	199	
Revenues increased	30	36
Revenues decreased	33	34
Revenues stayed the same	37	30
Wholesale Trade—*number reporting*	167	
Revenues increased	33	32
Revenues decreased	42	40
Revenues stayed the same	25	28
Retail Trade—*number reporting*	388	
Revenues increased	34	41
Revenues decreased	31	27
Revenues stayed the same	35	32
FIRE—*number reporting*	104	
Revenues increased	40	51
Revenues decreased	21	18
Revenues stayed the same	39	31
TCU—*number reporting*	102	
Revenues increased	35	40
Revenues decreased	23	22
Revenues stayed the same	42	38
Services—*number reporting*	368	
Revenues increased	43	45
Revenues decreased	22	24
Revenues stayed the same	35	31
Other—*number reporting*	191	
Revenues increased	33	35
Revenues decreased	28	33
Revenues stayed the same	39	32

[1]Based on survey responses through December 5, 1998.

not include farming and ranching, government operations, or enterprises such as government service agencies, public education, and public utilities. Moreover, the survey does not include nonfarm, private sector businesses that employ less than ten employees.

Forty percent of the businesses that participated in the latest quarterly survey indicated an increase in 3rd quarter 1998 revenues over year-ago levels (Table 1). Twenty-eight percent indicated a drop in revenues over year-ago levels. Fifty-one percent of the respondents for the FIRE group (finance, insurance, and real estate) indicated increases in 3rd quarter revenues over year-ago levels, and 32 percent of the respondents for the wholesale trade sector indicated 3rd quarter revenue gains over year-ago levels. But, 40 percent of the respondents for the wholesale trade sector reported declines in 3rd quarter revenues compared to year-ago levels.

Scattered weakness in 3rd quarter business revenues is more evident from an examination of regional survey results. The number of businesses reporting revenue increases outnumbered those reporting revenue decreases in five of seven regions, but not in the Panhandle or Southeast Nebraska regions. Such an examination shows that the state's weakest area appears to be the Panhandle region (Tables 2 and 4). NQBCS regions are defined on page 13.

The arrows shown in the column headings of Table 2 indicate direction of revenue change. The percent of respondents that reported no change in 3rd quarter 1998 revenues over year-ago levels is determined by subtracting the sum of percentages reporting gains and losses from 100 percent. For example, 33 percent of the respondents for the wholesale trade sector from the Panhandle region indicated no change in 3rd quarter 1998 revenues over year-ago levels.

Table 2 also gives evidence of scattered economic weakness in other regions and sectors, including the Mid-Plains region (manufacturing), the Central region (wholesale trade), and the Northeast region (TCU). But, in most sectors, in most regions, the businesses reporting revenue increases outnumbered those reporting revenue decreases. Indeed, there is no apparent indication of economic weakness for the state's metro counties, with the possible exception of wholesale trade in the Lincoln MSA (Lancaster County).

Table 3 gives a summary of survey results since the NQBCS was first conducted for 3rd quarter 1996. With nine quarters of survey data, there is sufficient data to detect any discontinuities in trends. Nine quarters of survey results for all respondents (first row of Table 3) indicate a very stable pattern. The percent of respondents reporting gains in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels has remained virtually

Table 2
Revenue Activity 3rd Quarter 1998 Compared to 3rd Quarter 1997 *(percent)*

	Omaha MSA		*Lincoln MSA*		*Central*		*Mid Plains*		*Northeast*		*Panhandle*		*Southeast*	
	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓
All Establishments	45	25	45	27	38	33	35	28	39	29	27	29	32	36
Manufacturing	42	29	39	29	40	40	11	56	38	30	20	20	28	44
Wholesale Trade	44	28	22	44	17	55	39	31	45	31	0	67	17	58
Retail Trade	41	23	40	32	46	30	36	32	42	27	27	20	41	24
FIRE[1]	50	20	57	24	33	20	25	0	64	0	75	25	55	18
TCU[2]	41	28	64	7	42	8	NA	NA	21	43	33	67	60	20
Services	46	25	49	23	44	27	55	14	42	26	42	0	24	41

Notes: ↑ = Increase in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.
↓ = Decrease in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.
NA = Not available

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

Table 3
Current Quarter Revenues by Industry Group Compared to Year-Ago Levels *(percent)*

	1996				1997								1998					
	3rd Qtr		*4th Qtr*		*1st Qtr*		*2nd Qtr*		*3rd Qtr*		*4th Qtr*		*1st Qtr*		*2nd Qtr*		*3rd Qtr*	
	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓
All Respondents	52	25	51	27	47	27	48	25	49	26	49	24	43	28	46	23	40	28
Manufacturing	52	29	55	26	53	23	57	26	53	26	55	22	42	27	43	27	36	34
Wholesale Trade	49	22	48	31	44	29	50	26	46	26	48	24	41	32	41	31	32	40
Retail Trade	46	31	43	33	40	33	44	28	42	29	44	27	39	31	50	21	41	27
FIRE[1]	63	12	57	18	60	15	54	18	57	24	64	14	57	14	57	14	51	18
TCU[2]	NA	NA	73	11	65	16	51	29	55	24	63	20	53	22	49	17	40	22
Services	55	24	52	27	48	26	47	25	52	26	50	24	47	26	47	22	45	24
Other	NA	NA	44	22	45	26	39	20	48	21	37	24	33	32	37	25	35	33

Notes: ↑ = Increase in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.

↓ = Decrease in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.

NA = Not available

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

Table 4
Current Quarter Revenues by Region
Compared to Year-Ago Levels for All Respondents *(percent)*

	1997								1998					
	1st Qtr		*2nd Qtr*		*3rd Qtr*		*4th Qtr*		*1st Qtr*		*2nd Qtr*		*3rd Qtr*	
	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓
Metro														
Lincoln MSA[1]	47	25	53	27	53	29	53	22	46	26	49	21	45	27
Omaha MSA[2]	48	30	48	29	51	24	57	19	47	25	51	21	45	25
Nonmetro														
Central	49	27	45	23	47	32	43	28	40	33	46	25	38	33
Mid Plains	40	19	35	17	35	27	43	22	39	31	42	27	35	28
Northeast	51	24	49	21	47	25	41	31	38	28	40	24	39	29
Panhandle	44	29	48	27	52	22	46	26	42	25	42	21	27	29
Southeast	45	26	52	20	53	21	45	25	38	32	37	28	32	36

Notes: ↑ = Increase in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.

↓ = Decrease in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.

[1]Includes Lancaster County
[2]Includes Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties

constant. The quarter-to-quarter variation largely is due to survey error. However, a different conclusion emerges at the sector level. For example, a break in the trend for the manufacturing sector occurred following 4th quarter 1997 results. The percent of respondents that reported revenue gains over year-ago levels averaged 40 percent for the first three quarters of 1998. The manufacturing sector's respondents for the first six quarters of the NQBCS, from 3rd quarter 1996 through 4th quarter 1997, averaged 54 percent. As another example, a break in the trend for the wholesale trade sector appears in the latest survey results, where only 32 percent of the respondents indicated 3rd quarter 1998 revenue gains over year-ago levels. The previous eight-quarter average was 46 percent.

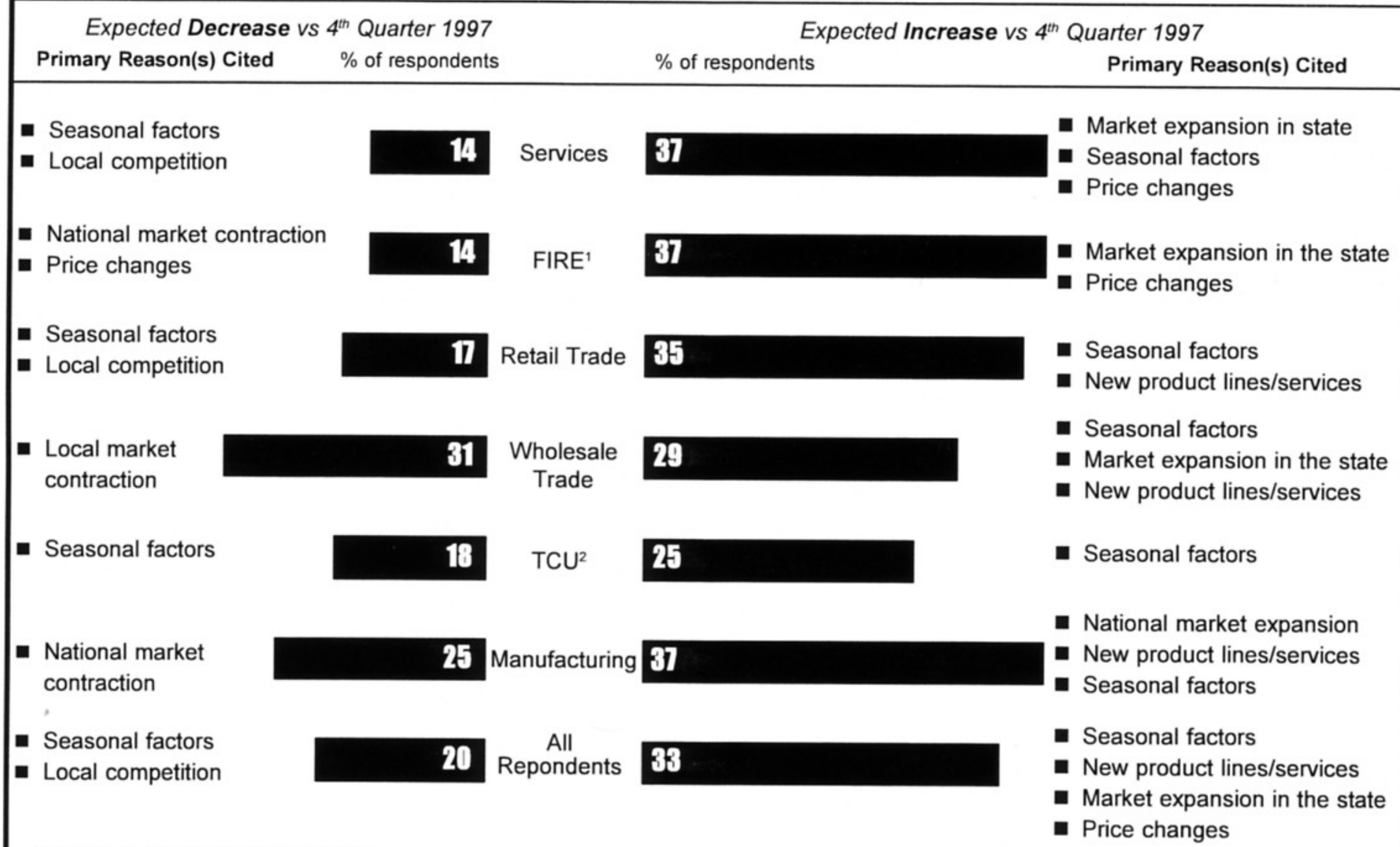
Figure 1 shows the percent of respondents by sector that expect 4th quarter 1998 revenues to increase or decrease over 4th quarter 1997 levels. These are expected, rather than actual, outcomes since respondents were completing the survey prior to the end of 4th quarter 1998. Thirty-three percent of all respondents expect 4th quarter 1998 revenues to exceed year-ago levels. That is the lowest rate reported since the NQBCS was first conducted for 3rd quarter 1996. The record low rate of 33 percent mainly is due to respondent reports from two sectors—wholesale trade and TCU. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents for the wholesale trade sector expect 4th quarter 1998 revenues to exceed year-ago levels. However, 31 percent of the sector's respondents expect 4th quarter revenues to fall short of year-ago levels. These 4th quarter rates for the wholesale trade sector are consistent with 3rd quarter reports, and they support the notion that a break in the wholesale sector's trend occurred after 2nd quarter 1998 (Table 3).

Figure 1 shows that only 25 percent of all respondents for the TCU group expect 4th quarter 1998 revenues to exceed year-ago levels. This low rate was not anticipated. A further examination of NQBCS regional survey results shows that the low rate is almost entirely due to reports of nonmetro TCU respondents. Only 16 percent of the nonmetro respondents for the TCU group expected gains in 4th quarter 1998 revenues over year-ago levels (not shown). Moreover, 25 percent of the nonmetro TCU respondents expect 4th quarter 1998 revenues to fall short of year-ago levels (not shown). Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the percent of respondents that expect losses exceeds the percent of respondents that expect gains in 4th quarter revenues over year-ago levels. This reported 4th quarter expectation is consistent with realized revenues for 3rd quarter 1998, summarized in Table 2.

This latest quarterly survey report shows that Nebraska's economy remains strong, but there is mounting evidence of weakness. Thus, caution is in order. However, signs of business weakness appear confined to a few sectors and to nonmetro counties. With the exception of mining, businesses that are indicating weakness are directly tied to the agriculture sector. The plunge in agriculture prices to levels not seen in ten or more years has impacted at least two nonmetro sectors—agriculture services and wholesale trade. Wholesale trade includes farm implement dealers and handlers of farm raw products. The full impact of the depressed farm sector probably will not be realized until mid-1999. The state's crude oil producers that are included in the mining sector have been hammered by the recent slide in crude oil prices. Although crude oil producers represent a very small portion of the state's total economy, their present grim situation is impacting local businesses, especially those located in nearby nonmetro communities.

Very little of the current weakness in business revenues for nonmetro businesses is expected to spread to the state's metro areas. Other national and international factors will determine revenues for most metro businesses. Further prosperity for the state's metro businesses and the need for additional workers could, however, exacerbate business conditions for nonmetro businesses by attracting more job seekers to metro areas.

Figure 1
Respondents Expecting Revenue Change in 4th Quarter 1998



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

Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey Reports 3rd Quarter Hires

Charles Lamphear

An estimated 21,571 new full- and part-time new job hires (17,387 + 4,184) resulted during 3rd quarter 1998 (Table 1). These hires represent new jobs added to the state's nonfarm private sector employment base during the 3rd quarter. The 21,571 estimate does not represent *net* new job growth since some jobs were eliminated during the quarter. Approximately 56 percent of the full- and part-time new job hires took place in five metro counties.

Statewide, nearly 82 percent of all 3rd quarter new job hires were full-time jobs. The Omaha and Lincoln metro counties accounted for about 59 percent of the 17,387 new full-time job hires.

Approximately 86 percent of the total (full- and part-time) new job hires in the metro counties were full-time jobs. The comparable percent for nonmetro counties was 74 percent.

Combined, the nonfarm, private sector businesses statewide hired an estimated 54,209 full- and part-time workers to fill existing jobs. The metro counties accounted for nearly 65 percent (35,103) of the total replacement hires.

At the state level, slightly over 65 percent of the total 54,209 replacement hires were full-time hires. The metro and nonmetro county rates of full-time replacement hires to total replacement hires nearly equaled the state average of 65 percent.

The total estimates presented in Table 1 as well as total estimates that appear in later tables are subject to sampling error, since they are based on survey results from the 1,519 participating businesses. All estimates presented here are believed to be reasonable approximations of total hiring activity for all nonfarm, private sector businesses during 3rd quarter 1998.

Total estimates of full-time new and replacement hires by occupation for 3rd quarter 1998 are shown in Table 2. Statewide, about 17 percent (2,955) of new full-time job hires represent professional occupations. For metro coun-

Table 1
Estimate of New and Replacement Hires for All Nonfarm Private Sector Businesses
3rd Quarter 1998

	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Replacement hires	35,464	18,745	22,791	12,312	12,673	6,433
New job hires	17,387	4,184	10,263	1,712	7,124	2,472
Total	52,851	22,929	33,054	14,024	19,797	8,905

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

ties, the rate was slightly over 17 percent (1,750); for nonmetro counties, the rate was slightly under 17 percent (1,205). Statistically, however, the metro and nonmetro rates equal the state average of 17 percent. Professional occupations include executives/administrators; managers; professional specialists; and marketing/sales jobs.

Approximately 15 percent (5,412) of the total estimated number of full-time placement hires statewide were professional occupations. For the metro counties, the ratio (percent) of replacement hires for professional occupations to the total number of replacement hires was 17 percent (3,915). The comparable nonmetro county rate was slightly under 12 percent (1,497).

One measure of business performance is an index of the number of job hires per 1,000 existing jobs, referred to here as an employment index. Table 3 presents two sets of employment indexes for selected industry groups. One set for new hires measures business strength. The second set for replacement hires measures job turnover.

A comparison of employment indexes of new hires for metro and nonmetro counties shows generally higher indexes for metro counties. This is one indication that metro county businesses were more prosperous during the 3rd quarter than were nonmetro county businesses.

A comparison of employment indexes of replacement hires for metro and nonmetro counties also shows generally higher indexes for metro counties. This is an indication that labor markets were more fluid in metro counties than in nonmetro counties during the 3rd quarter.

Table 4 provides a summary of full-time new job hires since 1st quarter 1997. Quarterly estimates for 1997 and for the first half of 1998 are presented as quarterly averages. The quarterly estimates of new job hires indicate a general decline in full-time new job hires. In relative terms, the decline is about the same for both metro and nonmetro counties (or, 25 percent). Several factors can be cited for this apparent decline. The single most important factor probably is the labor shortage.

Table 2
Number of New and Replacement Hires by Occupation
3rd Quarter 1998 (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	361	276	207	223	154	54
Managers	767	1,221	445	1,044	322	177
Professional Specialists	1,121	2,126	783	1,305	338	821
Marketing/Sales	706	1,789	315	1,343	391	445
Administrative Support/Clerical	967	2,564	560	1,743	407	821
Service Workers	4,292	9,503	3,186	6,747	1,105	2,756
Transportation/Material Movers	438	1,835	146	576	292	1,259
Production/Craft/Repair	4,974	6,271	3,285	3,692	1,689	2,579
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	3,761	9,879	1,336	6,118	2,426	3,761
Total	17,387	35,464	10,263	22,791	7,124	12,673

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

Table 3
Hires Per 1,000 Jobs, by Industry, for Metro and Nonmetro Regions
3rd Quarter 1998

	New Hires			Replacement Hires		
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Total*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Total*
All Industries						
Metro	26	4	30	58	31	90
Nonmetro	22	8	30	39	20	59
Construction						
Metro	80	2	82	87	4	91
Nonmetro	23	7	30	35	6	41
Manufacturing						
Metro	36	3	39	74	10	84
Nonmetro	31	2	33	39	1	40
TCU						
Metro	3	1	4	43	5	48
Nonmetro	6	1	7	69	7	76
Wholesale Trade						
Metro	19	3	22	38	2	40
Nonmetro	24	6	30	44	4	48
Retail Trade						
Metro	35	11	46	60	115	175
Nonmetro	22	21	43	34	44	78
FIRE						
Metro	21	7	28	38	13	51
Nonmetro	6	4	10	30	11	41
Services						
Metro	22	3	25	62	28	90
Nonmetro	10	10	20	37	51	88

Third quarter 1998 estimates of unfilled jobs by occupation are shown in Table 5. At the state level, occupations where 60 percent or more of the jobs are unfilled due to lack of qualified workers include managers; professional specialists; marketing/sales; transportation/material movers; production/craft/repair; and operators/fabricators/laborers. These high rates of unfilled jobs can be traced to the job market situation in the state's nonmetro counties. Eighty-seven percent of unfilled jobs in the operators/fabricators/laborers category for nonmetro counties is due to the lack of qualified applicants. The rate is 85 percent for nonmetro occupations in the transportation/material movers category.

Table 4
Estimates of Statewide Full-time New Job Hires
3rd Quarter 1998

	1997	1998	
	Quarterly Average	*1st and 2nd Quarter Average*	*3rd Quarter*
Metro[1]	13,548	11,937	10,263
Nonmetro	9,595	7,936	7,124
State	23,143	19,873	17,387

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

Table 5
Total Unfilled Positions and Positions Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants (Full-time Positions) 3rd Quarter 1998

Occupation	State: Total Unfilled	State: Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants	Metro[1]: Total Unfilled	Metro[1]: Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants	Nonmetro: Total Unfilled	Nonmetro: Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants
Executives/Administrators	169	54	85	54	84	0
Managers	576	353	407	246	169	107
Professional Specialists	1,382	852	983	630	399	222
Marketing/Sales	821	552	729	506	92	46
Administrative Support/Clerical	507	223	401	215	106	8
Service Workers	2,725	1,451	1,804	960	921	491
Transportation/Material Movers	1,021	798	376	246	645	552
Production/Craft/Repair	1,743	1,136	1,290	991	453	145
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	2,172	1,374	1,328	637	844	737
Total	11,116	6,793	7,403	4,485	3,713	2,308

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

Table 6 shows the pattern of unfilled full-time jobs since first quarter 1997. With one exception, the pattern has remained unchanged. There was a dramatic jump in the number of unfilled nonprofessional jobs (called *Other* in Table 6) in 2nd quarter 1998. This anomaly affected the quarterly averages for the first half of 1998.

There is mounting evidence of a gradual increase in the number of unfilled jobs in nonmetro counties. Most likely, workers are leaving nonmetro counties in search of better jobs elsewhere. Work force migration will continue as long as the perception of better jobs elsewhere persists and one factor that feeds this perception is higher wages. The following article on 3rd quarter wages indicates that a substantial wage differential continues to exist between comparable metro and nonmetro occupations in Nebraska.

Table 6
Estimates of Unfilled Full-time Jobs for 1997, 1st and 2nd Quarter 1998 Average, and 3rd Quarter 1998

	1997 Quarterly Average: Professional	1997 Quarterly Average: Other	1998 1st and 2nd Quarter Average: Professional	1998 1st and 2nd Quarter Average: Other	1998 3rd Quarter: Professional	1998 3rd Quarter: Other
Metro[1]	2,097	5,214	2,702	6,349	2,146	5,197
Nonmetro	864	2,465	989	4,918	802	2,971
State	2,961	7,679	3,691	11,267	2,948	8,168

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

New Jobs Continue to Pay More But the Gap Has Narrowed

Charles Lamphear

Third quarter NQBCS results for full-time jobs shows that the statewide hourly wage gap between new hires (new jobs) and replacement hires (existing jobs) is about $1.60, down from over $2.00 in earlier quarters (Tables 1 and 2). The current hourly wage gap for metro counties is somewhat higher at nearly $2.50. Survey results from earlier quarters show that the wage gap was over $3.00 per hour.

The wage gap is lowest for nonmetro counties. Presently, the gap is less than $0.50 per hour. In earlier quarters, the nonmetro county wage gap was over $1.50 per hour.

The wage gap has gradually narrowed mainly because wages for new hires (new jobs) have remained virtually constant, but wages for replacement hires (existing jobs) have increased. This increase is due to very competitive local, regional, and national labor markets. Employers are finding it necessary to raise wages of existing jobs to attract qualified replacement workers.

Nonmetro county employers are having difficulty in filling job vacancies. Workers are being attracted to the higher paying jobs in the state's metro counties. The current hourly

Table 1
Average Hourly Wages for New and Replacement Hires
3rd Quarter 1998

	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
Replacement hires	$9.25	$6.46	$9.35	$6.52	$9.09	$6.36
New hires	$10.83	$7.07	$11.81	$8.03	$9.42	$6.41

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

Table 2
Average Hourly Wages for Full-time New and Replacement Hires for 1997, 1st and 2nd Quarter 1998 Average, and 3rd Quarter 1998

	1997		1998			
	Quarterly Average		*1st and 2nd Quarter Average*		*3rd Quarter*	
	New Hires	*Replacement Hires*	*New Hires*	*Replacement Hires*	*New Hires*	*Replacement Hires*
State	$11.46	$9.06	$11.57	$9.19	$10.83	$9.25
Metro[1]	$12.48	$9.35	$12.93	$9.38	$11.81	$9.35
Nonmetro	$10.35	$8.69	$9.30	$8.96	$9.42	$9.09

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

wage differential between metro and nonmetro counties for new full-time hires is about $2.40 (Table 1). That hourly wage differential results in an annual salary differential of nearly $5,000. An annual salary differential of $5,000 is sufficient reason to move. Survey results from earlier quarters indicate that the differential between metro and nonmetro counties for new hires was in the $2.00-to-$2.50 range. Taking survey error into account, the wage gap between metro and nonmetro counties for new hires has remained unchanged.

The present wage differential between metro and nonmetro county replacement hires (existing jobs) does not appear significant at about $0.25 per hour (Table 1). Survey error can account for most of the difference. In earlier quarters, the differential was about $0.70 per hour, which would amount to an annual salary differential of approximately $1,500.

Tables 3 and 4 summarize 3rd quarter wages by occupation for new and replacement hires, respectively. Empty cells in the tables indicate insufficient survey data to calculate average hourly wages. On an occupation basis, the largest hourly wage gap between metro and nonmetro counties for new full-time hires is in the production/craft/repair jobs. The present gap is over $4.00 per hour (Table 3). Earlier survey results indicate that the gap was in the $2.00-to-$3.00 range (Table 5). A $4.00 per hour wage differential is equal to least 40 percent of the current average hourly wage for new hires in nometro production/craft/repair jobs. In other words, skilled production/craft/repair workers can, on average, increase their pay by as much as 60 percent by taking new metro jobs. Similar observations can be drawn from Tables 3 through 5 plus comparable tables for earlier NQBCS reports published in *BIN*. Such observations, however, are based on average wages. For specific jobs, the wage gap can be more or less than the occupation average. Average wages simply give a general indication of prevailing wages.

Table 3
Average Hourly Wages for New Position Hires by Occupation
3rd Quarter 1998

Occupation	State		Metro[1]		Nonmetro	
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
Executives/Administrators	$19.54	—	$21.00	—	$17.57	—
Managers	$18.91	$18.28	$21.40	$18.40	$15.46	—
Professional Specialists	$17.19	$14.51	$18.36	$13.09	$14.48	$17.04
Marketing/Sales	$14.22	$9.28	$15.97	$10.20	$12.81	$7.03
Administrative Support/Clerical	$10.24	$7.58	$11.02	$9.01	$9.17	$6.67
Service Workers	$7.45	$5.87	$7.73	$6.38	$6.66	$5.51
Transportation/Material Movers	$10.23	$8.81	$10.84	$9.91	$9.93	$7.70
Production/Craft/Repair	$11.67	$5.88	$13.15	$6.22	$8.79	$5.62
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	$8.80	$6.12	$9.29	$6.50	$8.53	$6.03

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

Table 4
Average Hourly Wages for Replacement Hires by Occupation 3rd Quarter 1998

Occupation	State Full-time	State Part-time	Metro[1] Full-time	Metro[1] Part-time	Nonmetro Full-time	Nonmetro Part-time
Executives/Administrators	$22.63	—	$23.06	—	$20.85	—
Managers	$16.43	$11.50	$16.78	$12.50	$14.35	—
Professional Specialists	$14.94	$12.01	$16.50	$13.77	$12.48	$11.56
Marketing/Sales	$9.35	$6.42	$9.48	$6.50	$8.96	$6.12
Administrative Support/Clerical	$9.62	$7.24	$9.73	$7.33	$9.38	$6.99
Service Workers	$6.94	$5.94	$7.08	$6.11	$6.58	$5.67
Transportation/Material Movers	$13.14	$7.40	$10.68	$7.21	$14.26	$8.40
Production/Craft/Repair	$9.47	$8.06	$9.75	$7.24	$9.06	$13.02
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	$8.04	$6.49	$8.06	$6.77	$8.02	$6.08

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

Nebraska's labor market is actually two markets. Metro county employers are offering qualified applicants wages that, in most cases, are at least 20 percent higher than the wages offered by nonmetro county employers. Such wage differentials create very strong incentives for nonmetro workers to commute to metro jobs, and possibly, to eventually move to metro areas. Nonmetro residents, especially younger residents, are not only being attracted to the state's metro areas, but also, they are being attracted to other metropolitan areas nationwide where there are major labor shortages.

This national labor shortage has produced a recruiting frenzy among companies. Businesses are using recruiting tactics that once applied only to top student athletes. The most aggressive recruiting, however, is on college and university campuses. But, it affects all labor markets for both skilled and unskilled jobs and in both metro and nonmetro communities. No doubt, the ability to compete for available labor especially is a growing concern for many nonmetro independent business owners.

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 5
Wage Comparisons for Full-time New and Replacement Hires, by Occupation for 1997, 1st and 2nd Quarter 1998 Average, and 3rd Quarter 1998

	1997 Quarterly Average		1998 1st and 2nd Quarter Average		1998 3rd Quarter	
	New Hires	Replacement Hires	New Hires	Replacement Hires	New Hires	Replacement Hires
Executives/Administrators	$20.11	$21.95	$22.12	$22.76	$19.54	$22.63
Managers	$16.72	$16.63	$16.32	$16.38	$18.91	$16.43
Professional Specialists	$17.22	$14.90	$16.38	$14.84	$17.19	$14.94
Marketing/Sales	$13.01	$9.70	$12.78	$9.27	$14.22	$9.35
Administrative Support/Clerical	$9.51	$8.85	$9.35	$8.87	$10.24	$9.62
Service Workers	$8.64	$6.86	$9.42	$7.26	$7.45	$6.94
Transportation/Material Movers	$10.08	$12.43	$12.02	$13.64	$10.23	$13.14
Production/Craft/Repair	$9.58	$8.63	$11.51	$8.31	$11.67	$9.47
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	$9.35	$7.90	$9.01	$8.14	$8.80	$8.04

Regional Composition

Omaha MSA–Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties

Lincoln MSA—Lancaster County

Northeast—Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Colfax, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Platte, Rock, Stanton, Thurston, and Wayne Counties.

Southeast—Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Polk, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward, Thayer, and York Counties.

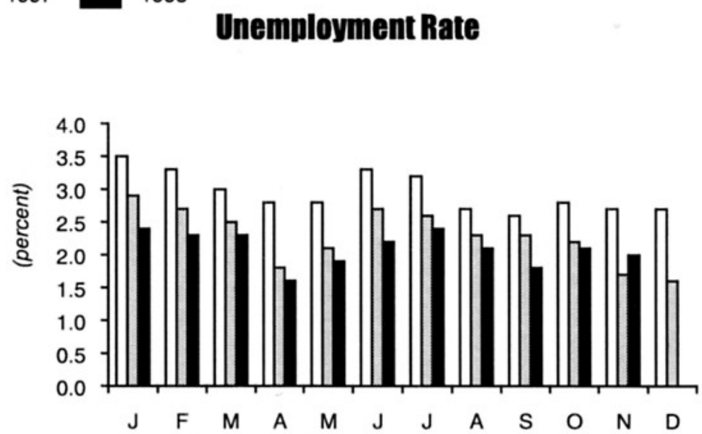
Central—Adams, Blaine, Buffalo, Clay, Custer, Franklin, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Howard, Kearney, Loup, Merrick, Nance, Nuckolls, Phelps, Sherman, Valley, Webster, and Wheeler Counties.

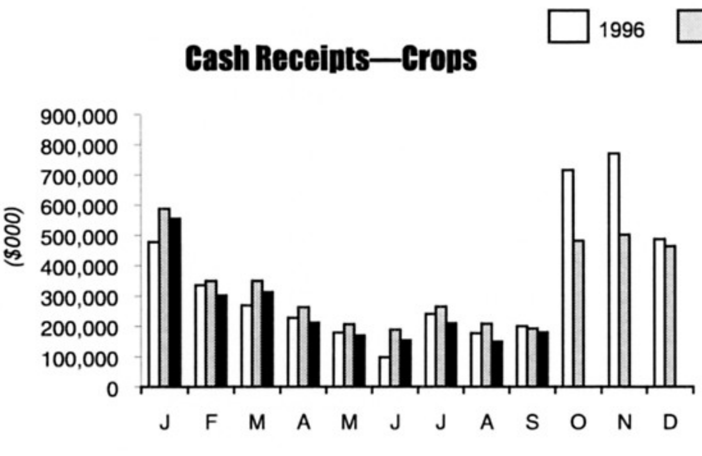
Mid-Plains—Arthur, Chase, Cherry, Dawson, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, and Thomas Counties.

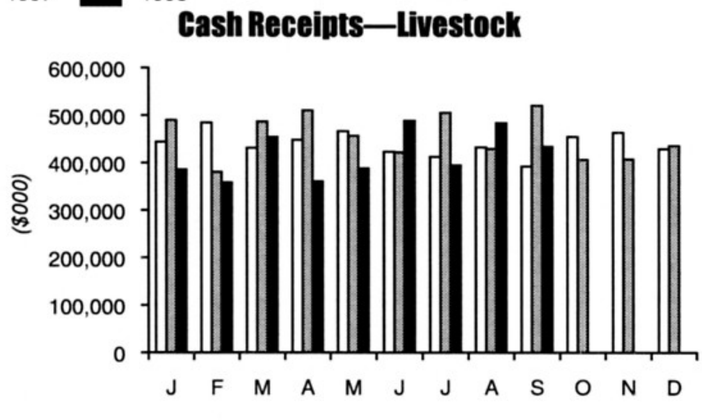
Panhandle—Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, and Sioux Counties.

NQBCS is a joint project of the Nebraska Departments of Economic Development and Labor, and BBR. The following individuals contributed to the completion of 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 and Charles Lamphear, BBR.

Nebraska Stats







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

	September 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
Ainsworth, Brown	2,063	16,636	4.7
Albion, Boone	1,992	16,221	1.5
Alliance, Box Butte	6,139	53,778	-0.5
Alma, Harlan	823	6,326	3.6
Arapahoe, Furnas	884	6,949	10.0
Arlington, Washington	177	1,658	0.7
Arnold, Custer	317	2,422	3.9
Ashland, Saunders	1,513	11,268	2.7
Atkinson, Holt	1,136	9,228	9.9
Auburn, Nemaha	2,592	21,411	-1.7
Aurora, Hamilton	2,816	23,643	1.2
Axtell, Kearney	72	613	-12.8
Bassett, Rock	563	4,272	4.6
Battle Creek, Madison	776	5,687	-0.5
Bayard, Morrill	492	4,109	9.8
Beatrice, Gage	10,887	94,055	1.1
Beaver City, Furnas	176	1,249	11.6
Bellevue, Sarpy	19,290	165,349	6.2
Benkelman, Dundy	693	5,227	7.3
Bennington, Douglas	564	3,970	15.6
Blair, Washington	6,922	58,420	3.9
Bloomfield, Knox	791	6,041	3.9
Blue Hill, Webster	507	4,237	5.3
Bridgeport, Morrill	1,075	9,864	0.6
Broken Bow, Custer	3,865	34,087	0.3
Burwell, Garfield	976	7,035	4.1
Cairo, Hall	241	2,710	31.4
Central City, Merrick	2,041	15,699	5.1
Chadron, Dawes	4,506	39,963	26.2
Chappell, Deuel	463	3,969	5.6
Clarkson, Colfax	525	3,737	-6.8
Clay Center, Clay	436	3,326	15.6
Columbus, Platte	21,936	183,045	3.5
Cozad, Dawson	3,095	26,848	1.4
Crawford, Dawes	611	5,025	-0.2
Creighton, Knox	1,233	9,662	9.5
Crete, Saline	3,462	28,213	-0.8
Crofton, Knox	514	3,619	0.5
Curtis, Frontier	449	3,242	11.1
Dakota City, Dakota	366	3,422	-7.9
David City, Butler	1,532	12,397	1.7
Deshler, Thayer	392	2,987	45.6
Dodge, Dodge	338	2,224	2.3
Doniphan, Hall	805	10,303	64.1
Eagle, Cass	503	3,920	9.2
Elgin, Antelope	478	3,729	-1.6
Elkhorn, Douglas	3,294	21,454	11.9
Elm Creek, Buffalo	387	3,140	14.3
Elwood, Gosper	419	4,080	3.5
Fairbury, Jefferson	3,534	28,433	9.5
Fairmont, Fillmore	302	1,510	5.0
Falls City, Richardson	2,822	22,364	-1.6
Franklin, Franklin	698	5,151	26.7
Fremont, Dodge	21,492	185,037	5.1
Friend, Saline	381	3,999	-3.3
Fullerton, Nance	523	4,633	-5.6
Geneva, Fillmore	1,916	15,697	-0.5
Genoa, Nance	359	2,706	25.2
Gering, Scotts Bluff	3,692	31,532	8.3
Gibbon, Buffalo	1,001	7,549	4.8
Gordon, Sheridan	1,839	15,181	-5.2
Gothenburg, Dawson	2,305	19,988	2.5
Grand Island, Hall	50,942	445,371	6.0
Grant, Perkins	1,095	9,075	-1.5
Gretna, Sarpy	3,620	28,942	-1.4
Hartington, Cedar	1,779	14,713	1.9
Hastings, Adams	21,586	182,600	3.5
Hay Springs, Sheridan	327	2,872	-1.2
Hebron, Thayer	2,130	17,113	-0.7
Henderson, York	740	5,908	7.1
Hickman, Lancaster	348	2,307	10.0
Holdrege, Phelps	4,456	39,214	-3.0
Hooper, Dodge	359	3,141	-0.1
Humboldt, Richardson	633	4,489	-2.2
Humphrey, Platte	1,151	7,014	7.9
Imperial, Chase	2,032	18,400	8.2
Juniata, Adams	227	1,764	-10.5
Kearney, Buffalo	31,683	276,966	7.5

	September 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
Kenesaw, Adams	138	2,163	106.8
Kimball, Kimball	1,693	14,474	-0.8
La Vista, Sarpy	8,751	75,044	13.2
Laurel, Cedar	475	2,999	-11.6
Lexington, Dawson	7,473	63,936	2.7
Lincoln, Lancaster	211,232	1,751,680	7.0
Louisville, Cass	1,056	7,092	34.1
Loup City, Sherman	743	5,759	10.3
Lyons, Burt	713	4,505	2.8
Madison, Madison	955	6,901	2.2
McCook, Red Willow	11,630	99,946	4.3
Milford, Seward	932	8,043	1.2
Minatare, Scotts Bluff	176	1,399	-23.0
Minden, Kearney	2,034	15,653	-1.4
Mitchell, Scotts Bluff	633	6,379	-15.9
Morrill, Scotts Bluff	519	4,331	6.8
Nebraska City, Otoe	7,334	57,794	6.4
Neligh, Antelope	1,403	12,494	-5.5
Newman Grove, Madison	310	2,681	-12.2
Norfolk, Madison	29,186	255,147	1.0
North Bend, Dodge	563	4,491	1.4
North Platte, Lincoln	23,273	195,675	4.8
O'Neill, Holt	4,403	37,318	-0.5
Oakland, Burt	767	6,339	8.2
Ogallala, Keith	6,057	51,557	5.8
Omaha, Douglas	495,516	4,141,749	6.9
Ord, Valley	2,037	17,367	4.1
Osceola, Polk	969	7,103	4.2
Oshkosh, Garden	583	4,290	13.8
Osmond, Pierce	749	4,201	12.1
Oxford, Furnas	492	3,839	-19.1
Papillion, Sarpy	7,157	58,799	10.4
Pawnee City, Pawnee	331	2,718	0.7
Pender, Thurston	897	6,439	-3.6
Pierce, Pierce	813	6,008	-0.5
Plainview, Pierce	765	5,820	-6.2
Plattsmouth, Cass	3,701	30,014	2.9
Ponca, Dixon	670	4,807	4.2
Ralston, Douglas	3,892	29,333	4.0
Randolph, Cedar	517	3,978	15.7
Ravenna, Buffalo	835	7,044	1.3
Red Cloud, Webster	797	6,299	-7.8
Rushville, Sheridan	551	4,679	-1.6
Sargent, Custer	236	1,716	-0.8
Schuyler, Colfax	2,071	17,336	3.5
Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff	20,292	180,111	-3.3
Scribner, Dodge	574	4,292	-4.0
Seward, Seward	5,022	41,490	-3.3
Shelby, Polk	418	2,842	-1.5
Shelton, Buffalo	698	6,051	20.1
Sidney, Cheyenne	7,933	65,472	1.9
South Sioux City, Dakota	7,984	70,411	-1.0
Springfield, Sarpy	628	4,112	51.5
St. Paul, Howard	1,329	10,980	-1.9
Stanton, Stanton	672	5,510	6.6
Stromsburg, Polk	1,315	9,000	-8.3
Superior, Nuckolls	1,544	14,159	-1.0
Sutherland, Lincoln	422	2,970	11.7
Sutton, Clay	1,007	7,887	-12.3
Syracuse, Otoe	1,342	10,058	5.4
Tecumseh, Johnson	963	7,626	-9.1
Tekamah, Burt	1,289	9,934	0.9
Tilden, Madison	476	3,963	-0.9
Utica, Seward	287	2,560	26.5
Valentine, Cherry	4,449	36,686	6.3
Valley, Douglas	1,499	10,512	-4.7
Wahoo, Saunders	2,765	21,091	-9.9
Wakefield, Dixon	411	3,155	-3.8
Wauneta, Chase	335	2,743	0.5
Waverly, Lancaster	924	7,499	13.5
Wayne, Wayne	4,196	29,050	5.9
Weeping Water, Cass	704	6,083	5.9
West Point, Cuming	3,880	33,500	-2.4
Wilber, Saline	472	4,018	-3.8
Wisner, Cuming	700	5,318	-9.6
Wood River, Hall	390	3,822	-6.1
Wymore, Gage	510	3,612	-3.9
York, York	11,300	91,881	14.6

*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 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago	September 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago
Nebraska	198,429	1,847,087	9.1	1,456,451	12,034,657	7.0
Adams	3,454	31,093	4.2	22,240	189,066	3.8
Antelope	756	9,087	-6.5	2,493	20,133	-1.8
Arthur	96	616	44.0	69	(D)	(D)
Banner	55	985	-21.3	(D)	(D)	(D)
Blaine	160	928	14.5	106	(D)	(D)
Boone	776	7,610	-4.1	2,594	20,647	-1.5
Box Butte	1,412	13,973	4.0	6,467	56,433	-0.4
Boyd	222	2,202	4.2	695	4,836	-7.3
Brown	419	3,801	12.3	2,226	17,466	4.7
Buffalo	4,688	44,820	7.5	35,009	304,040	7.4
Burt	1,131	9,386	2.3	3,023	22,387	2.7
Butler	932	9,306	8.2	2,246	16,868	2.0
Cass	3,780	31,255	12.5	7,744	59,050	5.5
Cedar	895	10,688	-7.8	3,211	24,821	1.0
Chase	467	5,452	-12.7	2,439	21,545	7.0
Cherry	890	8,328	17.3	4,697	38,606	6.6
Cheyenne	1,033	10,740	1.9	8,270	67,914	1.7
Clay	815	8,662	0.2	2,324	19,438	-0.3
Colfax	1,063	10,640	6.9	3,077	24,720	1.3
Cuming	1,139	11,546	-10.1	5,364	44,069	-3.3
Custer	1,179	13,147	3.5	5,126	43,103	1.9
Dakota	2,416	19,762	8.1	9,064	79,461	-3.3
Dawes	1,097	7,741	16.3	5,121	45,005	22.6
Dawson	2,457	26,525	2.0	13,490	114,629	2.2
Deuel	247	2,368	-8.2	1,003	8,902	15.7
Dixon	654	7,492	13.9	1,231	9,053	0.6
Dodge	4,374	37,578	5.1	23,714	201,889	4.6
Douglas	56,153	484,863	14.6	506,450	4,222,139	6.7
Dundy	266	3,012	0.2	718	5,415	5.3
Fillmore	814	8,605	3.9	2,878	23,295	-0.7
Franklin	284	3,970	-1.5	1,050	7,415	18.2
Frontier	421	4,191	10.6	813	6,059	2.5
Furnas	558	6,553	4.7	2,524	19,674	-5.5
Gage	2,739	24,328	10.6	12,213	104,230	1.0
Garden	438	3,118	12.3	783	5,817	12.2
Garfield	272	2,059	17.9	976	7,035	4.1
Gosper	135	2,857	9.8	490	4,538	2.0
Grant	154	1,248	23.6	281	2,063	24.4
Greeley	346	3,308	20.7	1,018	6,257	6.0
Hall	6,418	58,038	12.0	52,758	465,198	6.8
Hamilton	1,059	10,368	-8.9	3,328	27,254	0.8
Harlan	420	4,592	8.8	1,083	8,334	4.7
Hayes	81	1,343	-1.4	102	(D)	(D)
Hitchcock	364	3,564	8.0	745	5,245	-6.5
Holt	1,468	14,349	3.0	6,615	53,138	2.3
Hooker	193	1,144	57.4	580	3,243	11.5

	Motor Vehicle Sales			Other Sales		
	September 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago	September 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago
Howard	671	7,099	-4.5	1,828	14,096	-2.3
Jefferson	887	10,018	8.4	4,687	37,114	9.2
Johnson	487	5,184	22.8	1,398	10,695	-5.3
Kearney	896	8,973	-1.1	2,247	17,552	-1.9
Keith	1,175	10,063	5.7	6,749	56,753	5.9
Keya Paha	103	966	1.2	139	832	6.2
Kimball	444	4,307	-10.7	1,750	14,861	-1.0
Knox	581	8,899	-3.8	3,372	24,885	4.1
Lancaster	28,199	239,596	14.3	214,138	1,774,112	7.1
Lincoln	3,827	37,210	18.3	24,309	203,968	4.7
Logan	142	1,306	60.6	142	(D)	(D)
Loup	90	796	-4.6	(D)	(D)	(D)
McPherson	84	600	6.4	(D)	(D)	(D)
Madison	3,397	37,250	7.2	31,763	274,840	0.5
Merrick	762	8,922	4.5	2,793	21,285	5.6
Morrill	544	5,402	-11.4	1,611	14,129	2.1
Nance	472	4,476	-2.3	941	7,692	3.4
Nemaha	824	8,725	10.4	2,929	23,809	-1.4
Nuckolls	515	5,300	-7.7	2,283	19,339	0.1
Otoe	1,890	18,220	10.0	9,151	71,516	5.7
Pawnee	257	3,609	11.9	657	4,500	-1.0
Perkins	355	4,668	8.1	1,309	10,855	-2.4
Phelps	1,336	12,465	-7.5	4,825	41,822	-2.4
Pierce	888	8,353	-8.0	2,439	16,747	-0.1
Platte	53	33,162	-4.3	23,912	195,553	3.3
Polk	755	7,393	-2.1	2,823	20,132	-2.2
Red Willow	1,120	11,796	5.3	12,015	103,001	4.3
Richardson	791	9,602	5.8	3,760	28,986	-3.6
Rock	137	2,216	3.6	601	4,405	4.5
Saline	1,417	13,866	10.7	4,819	39,710	-1.4
Sarpy	16,445	138,059	14.4	41,035	343,247	9.3
Saunders	2,947	25,183	9.1	6,974	52,705	-1.7
Scotts Bluff	3,738	36,281	3.2	25,424	224,434	-2.3
Seward	2,176	19,097	14.6	6,538	54,349	-1.6
Sheridan	747	7,251	7.2	3,049	25,315	-3.0
Sherman	353	3,565	-4.1	954	6,893	3.4
Sioux	164	2,334	14.6	197	1,242	-8.1
Stanton	769	7,106	4.1	875	6,846	3.1
Thayer	660	7,364	-3.2	3,133	24,916	0.1
Thomas	98	860	-23.5	334	2,678	-31.6
Thurston	316	3,893	-22.2	1,041	7,554	-5.9
Valley	498	4,764	1.3	2,339	19,410	5.7
Washington	2,884	25,541	11.0	7,700	64,127	3.6
Wayne	1,010	9,280	-0.8	4,368	30,385	5.3
Webster	396	3,854	-14.0	1,481	11,545	-3.3
Wheeler	100	1,421	-4.9	119	912	-4.9
York	1,790	17,104	-0.5	12,717	102,056	13.4

*Totals may not add due to rounding
(D) Denotes disclosure suppression
*County values may not add to state total due to unallocated sales and disclosure suppression
Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

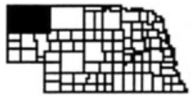
Note on Net Taxable Retail Sales

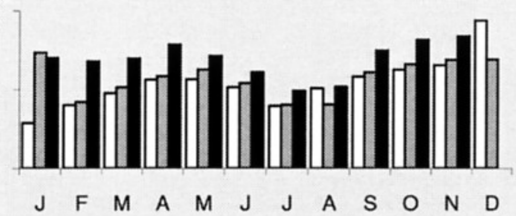
Users of this series should be aware that taxable retail sales are not generated exclusively by traditional outlets such as clothing, discount, and hardware stores. While businesses classified as retail trade firms account for, on average, slightly more than half of total taxable sales, sizable portions of taxable sales are generated by service establishments, electric and gas utilities, wholesalers, telephone and cable companies, and manufacturers.

Regional Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment* 1996 to November** 1998

1996 1997 1998

Northwest Panhandle

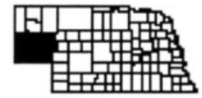


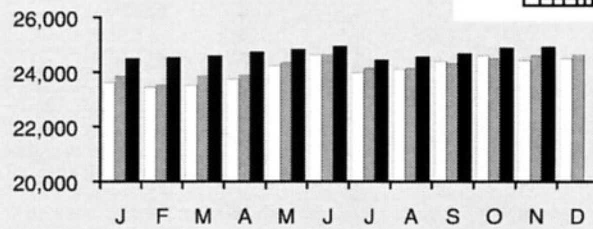


Note to Readers

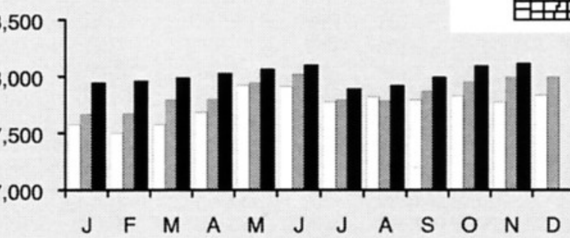
The charts on pages 8 and 9 now report nonfarm employment by place of work for each region. Prior to the November/December 1998 issue, employment was reported by place of residence.

Southwest Panhandle

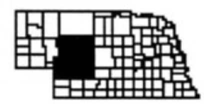


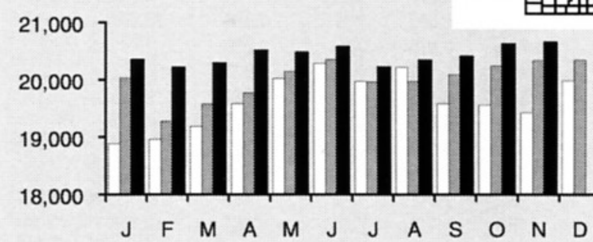


North Central



West Central





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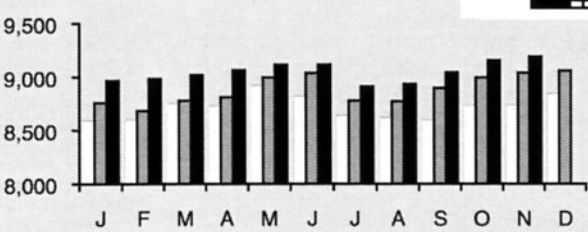

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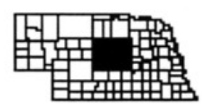
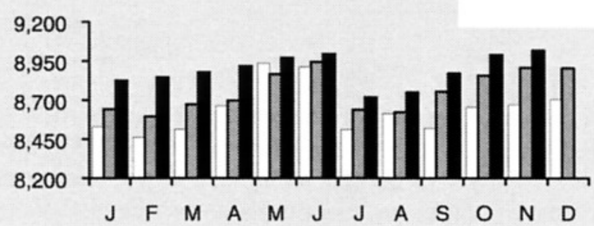
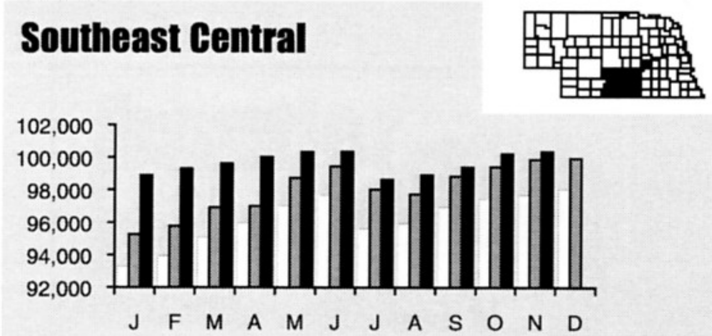




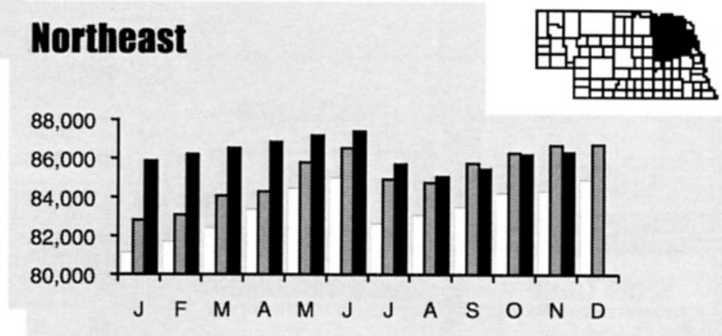
Regional Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment* 1996 to November** 1998

1996 1997 1998

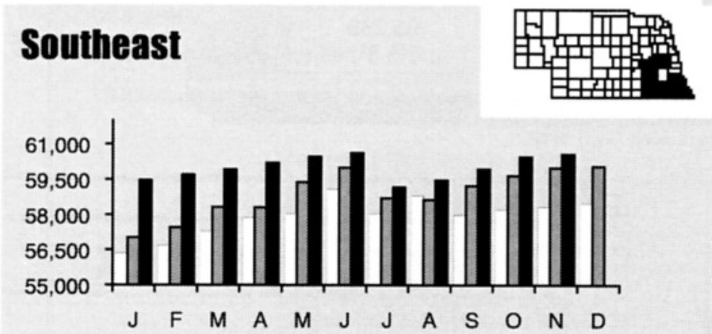
Southeast Central



Northeast

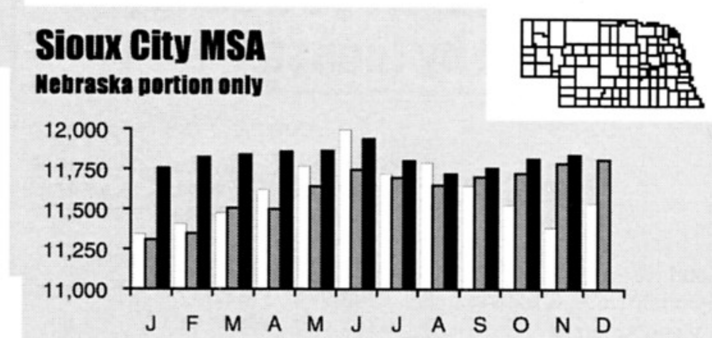


Southeast



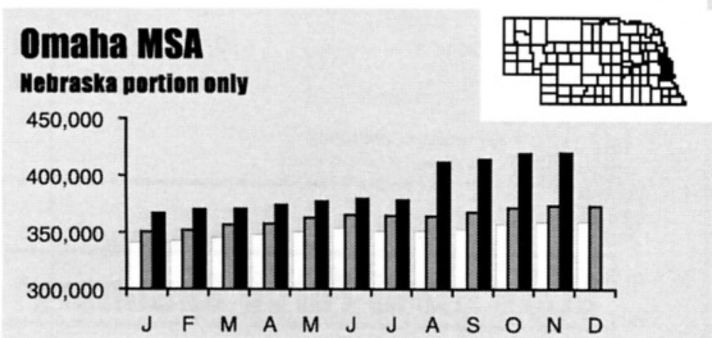
Sioux City MSA

Nebraska portion only

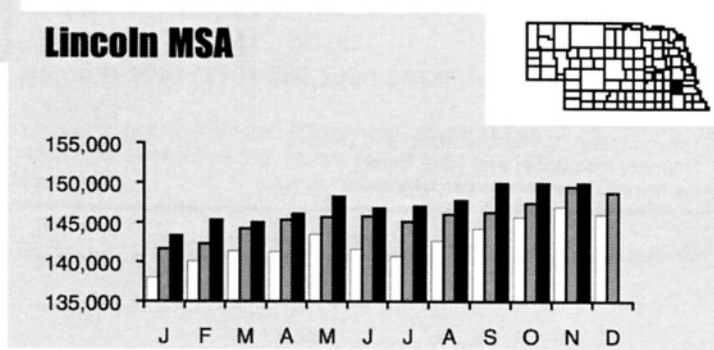


Omaha MSA

Nebraska portion only



Lincoln MSA

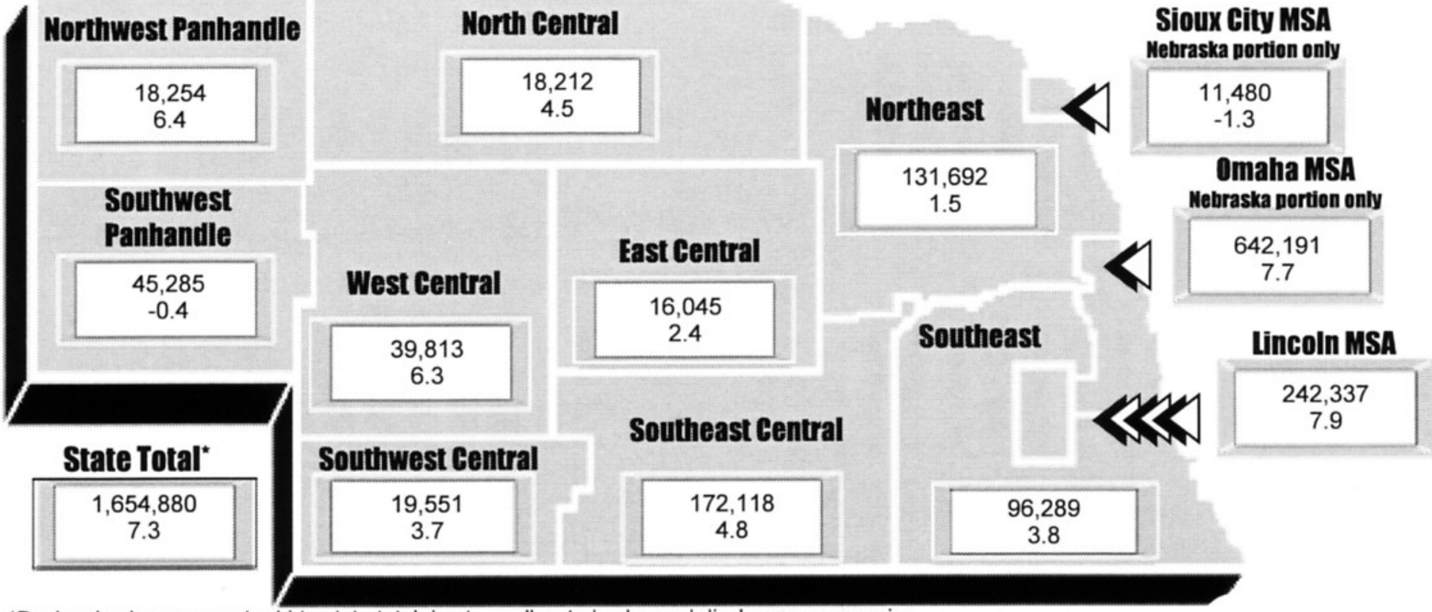


*By place of work

**Current month data are preliminary and subject to revision

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

September 1998 Regional Retail Sales ($000) YTD Percent Change vs Yr. Ago



*Regional values may not add to state total due to unallocated sales and disclosure suppression.
Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

State Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment by Industry*

	Preliminary November 1998	Revised October 1998	October % Change vs Yr. Ago
Total	889,312	887,874	1.9
Construction & Mining	43,374	44,302	3.7
Manufacturing	117,962	118,257	1.4
Durables	56,777	57,079	0.2
Nondurables	61,185	61,178	2.5
TCU	56,940	56,843	4.8
Trade	218,857	217,299	1.8
Wholesale	58,125	58,525	1.3
Retail	160,732	158,774	2.0
FIRE	58,468	58,053	4.7
Services	238,675	238,757	1.7
Government	155,036	154,363	0.1

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

Consumer Price Index

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

	November 1998	% Change vs Yr. Ago	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago (inflation rate)
All Items	164.0	1.5	1.5
Commodities	142.5	0.1	0.0
Services	185.6	2.5	2.7

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

State Labor Force Summary*

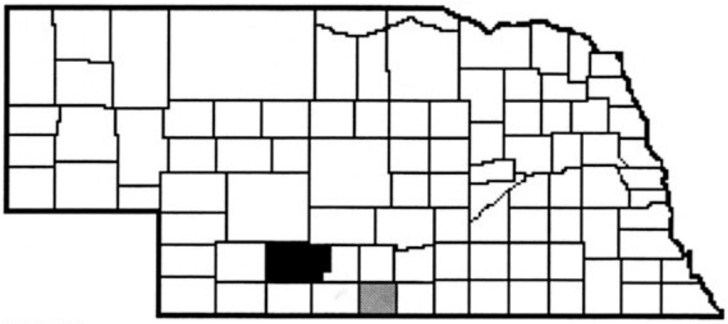
	Preliminary November 1998	Revised October 1998	October % Change vs Yr. Ago
Labor Force	935,208	933,736	1.9
Employment	916,255	914,271	1.9
Unemployment Rate	2.0	2.1	

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

County of the Month

Frontier

Stockville-County Seat



Next County of Month

License plate prefix number: 60

Size of county: 976 square miles, ranks 17th in the state

Population: 3,180 in 1997, a change of 2.7 percent from 1990

Per capita personal Income: $16,967 in 1996, ranks 76th in the state

Net taxable retail sales ($000): $13,321 in 1997, a change of 14.5 percent from 1996; $10,250 from January through September of 1998, a change of 5.7 percent from the same period the previous year.

Number of worksites[1]: 99 in 1997

Unemployment rate: 3.0 percent in Frontier County, 2.6 percent in Nebraska for 1997

	State	Frontier County
Nonfarm employment (1997)[2]:	855,802	797
(wage & salary)	*(percent of total)*	
Construction and Mining	4.6	4.5
Manufacturing	13.6	(D)
TCU	6.2	2.3
Wholesale Trade	6.4	(D)
Retail Trade	18.1	(D)
FIRE	6.4	(D)
Services	26.8	17.1
Government	17.8	48.3

(D) = disclosure supression

Agriculture:

Number of farms: 419 in 1992, 496 in 1987

Average farm size: 1,257 acres in 1992

Market value of farm products sold: $42.6 million in 1992 ($101,582 average per farm)

[1]Worksites refers to business activity covered under the Nebraska Employment Security Law. Information presented has been extracted from the Employer's Quarterly Contribution Report, Nebraska Form UI-11. For further details about covered worksites, see the Nebraska Employers Guide to Unemployment Insurance.

[2]By place of work

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

bulletin board

New

Nebraska County Population Projections to 2020 **are now available. This report contains county-level projections by age category. The cost is $15 per copy which includes postage and handling.**
Contact BBR to order.

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