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## 1976 NEBRASKA POPULATION ESTIMATES

The 1976 population estimate for Nebraska, 1,552,858, indicates that the state continues to sustain population stability during the 1970s decade compared to the substantial net out-migrations of earlier decades. While most (more than 80 percent) of the 4.5 percent growth of the state's population since 1970 has resulted from natural increase (the excess of births over deaths), nearly one-fifth of the growth has resulted from net in-migration—a significant departure from the four-decade-long trend for Nebraska to experience net out-migration of population.

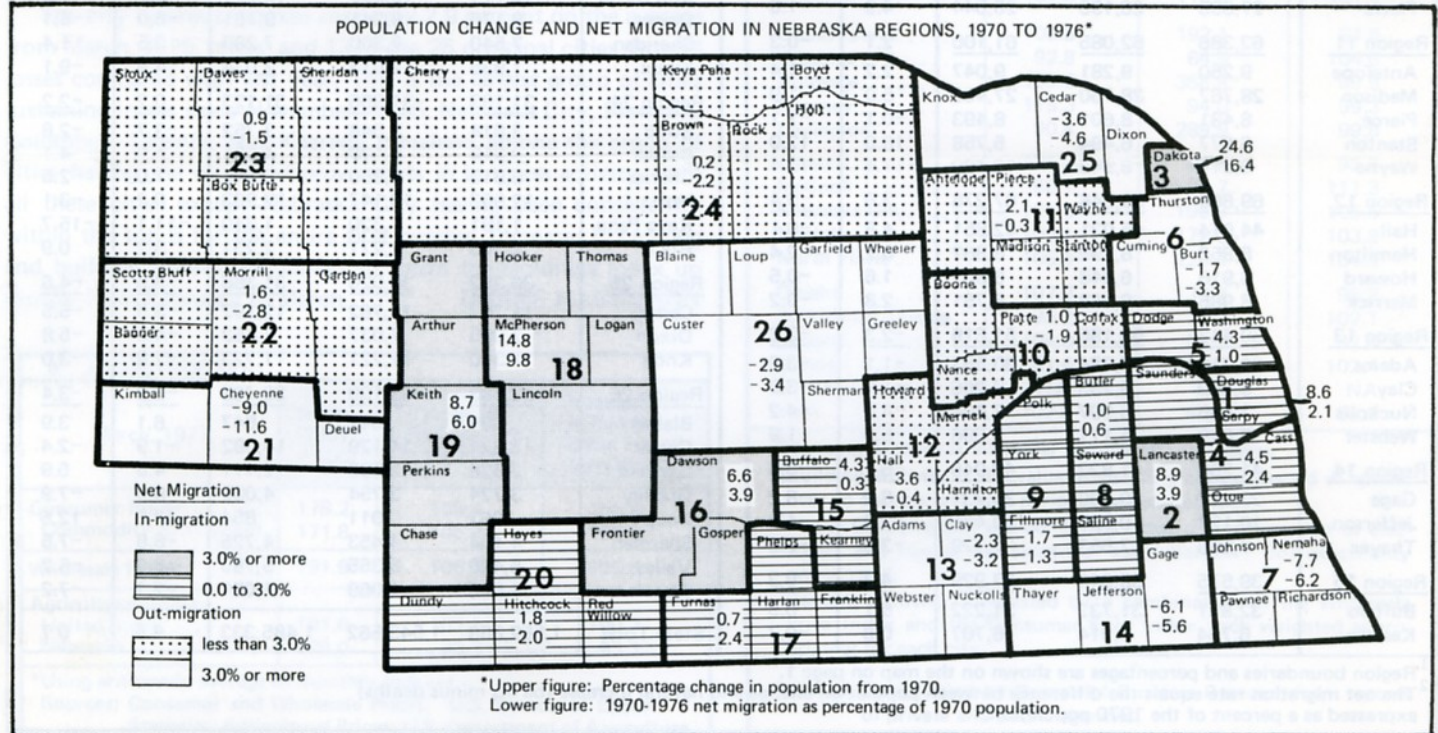
July 1, 1976, population estimates for Nebraska's ninety-three counties, prepared jointly by the Bureau of Business Research and the U.S. Bureau of the Census through the auspices of the Federal-State Cooperative Program for Local Population Estimates, indicate widespread "improvement" in population stability across the state compared to the decade of the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> For example, while eighty-seven of Nebraska's ninety-three counties experienced net out-migration of population during the 1960s, estimates for 1976 show either net in-migration or reduced rates of net out-migration for seventy-eight of those counties. And every region of Nebraska

—the Panhandle, Sandhills, Midlands, and the eastern sections—appears to be sharing in the trend toward increased stability of nonmetropolitan populations, a trend which appears to be emerging nationwide. Moreover, Nebraska's metro areas have thus far escaped the national trend for populations to decline to levels below their 1970 census counts.

### METROPOLITAN POPULATION

The Omaha SMSA and the surrounding counties combined continued to show rapid population growth during the 1970-1976 period. The increase for Douglas, Sarpy, and the three surrounding counties (Washington, Dodge, and Cass) combined was 8.2 percent, raising the five-county region's share of the overall state population to 36.4 percent, compared to 35.1 percent in 1970 and 31.0 percent in 1960. Douglas County experienced a 6.6 percent population increase from 1970 to 1976, despite the fact that Omaha appeared to be harder hit by the recent national recession than were other areas of Nebraska. The manufacturing plant layoffs and closings and the associated high unemployment that occurred during 1974-1975 caused only a temporary lag in population gains. A healthy net in-migration rate of nearly 1 percent since 1970 suggests that the Omaha area has thus far avoided the emerging nationwide trend for metro areas to lose population. For example, of the fifteen cities (Continued on page 3)

<sup>1</sup>For previous years' estimates, see *Business in Nebraska*, June, 1976; April, 1975; March, 1974; February, 1973; and April, 1972. Methods used to produce the estimates are described in *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, Nos. 427 and 460, U.S. Bureau of the Census.



POPULATION OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND COUNTIES<sup>1</sup>  
PROVISIONAL 1976 AND REVISED 1975 COMPARED WITH 1970 CENSUS

| Regions and Counties | Provisional July 1, '76 | Revised July 1, '75 | Census Apr. 1, '70 | Percent Change '70-'76 | Net Migration Rate <sup>2</sup> | Regions and Counties | Provisional July 1, '76 | Revised July 1, '75 | Census Apr. 1, '70 | Percent Change '70-'76 | Net Migration Rate <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Region 1</b>      | <b>494,900</b>          | <b>487,503</b>      | <b>455,655</b>     | <b>8.6</b>             | <b>2.1</b>                      | <b>Region 16</b>     | <b>27,631</b>           | <b>27,070</b>       | <b>25,931</b>      | <b>6.6</b>             | <b>3.9</b>                      |
| Douglas              | 414,988                 | 410,229             | 389,455            | 6.6                    | 0.9                             | Dawson               | 21,169                  | 20,756              | 19,771             | 7.1                    | 3.9                             |
| Sarpy                | 79,912                  | 77,274              | 66,200             | 20.7                   | 9.6                             | Frontier             | 4,052                   | 3,938               | 3,982              | 1.8                    | 0.9                             |
| <b>Region 2</b>      | <b>182,946</b>          | <b>182,589</b>      | <b>167,972</b>     | <b>8.9</b>             | <b>3.9</b>                      | Gosper               | 2,410                   | 2,376               | 2,178              | 10.7                   | 9.0                             |
| Lancaster            | 182,946                 | 182,589             | 167,972            | 8.9                    | 3.9                             | <b>Region 17</b>     | <b>25,549</b>           | <b>25,835</b>       | <b>25,373</b>      | <b>0.7</b>             | <b>2.4</b>                      |
| <b>Region 3</b>      | <b>16,368</b>           | <b>15,802</b>       | <b>13,137</b>      | <b>24.6</b>            | <b>16.4</b>                     | Franklin             | 4,456                   | 4,593               | 4,566              | -2.4                   | 1.6                             |
| Dakota               | 16,368                  | 15,802              | 13,137             | 24.6                   | 16.4                            | Furnas               | 6,719                   | 6,949               | 6,897              | -2.6                   | 0.4                             |
| <b>Region 4</b>      | <b>52,925</b>           | <b>52,674</b>       | <b>50,670</b>      | <b>4.5</b>             | <b>2.4</b>                      | Harlan               | 4,449                   | 4,344               | 4,357              | 2.1                    | 5.1                             |
| Cass                 | 19,791                  | 19,562              | 18,076             | 9.5                    | 4.7                             | Phelps               | 9,925                   | 9,949               | 9,553              | 3.9                    | 2.9                             |
| Otoe                 | 15,120                  | 15,188              | 15,576             | -2.9                   | -2.9                            | <b>Region 18</b>     | <b>37,933</b>           | <b>37,755</b>       | <b>33,045</b>      | <b>14.8</b>            | <b>9.8</b>                      |
| Saunders             | 18,014                  | 17,924              | 17,018             | 5.9                    | 4.9                             | Hooker               | 961                     | 990                 | 939                | 2.3                    | 5.2                             |
| <b>Region 5</b>      | <b>50,139</b>           | <b>50,704</b>       | <b>48,092</b>      | <b>4.3</b>             | <b>1.0</b>                      | Lincoln              | 34,482                  | 34,133              | 29,538             | 16.7                   | 11.3                            |
| Dodge                | 35,459                  | 36,247              | 34,782             | 1.9                    | -1.3                            | Logan                | 1,007                   | 1,030               | 991                | 1.6                    | -2.2                            |
| Washington           | 14,680                  | 14,457              | 13,310             | 10.3                   | 6.9                             | McPherson            | 617                     | 634                 | 623                | -1.0                   | -5.3                            |
| <b>Region 6</b>      | <b>27,747</b>           | <b>27,960</b>       | <b>28,223</b>      | <b>-1.7</b>            | <b>-3.3</b>                     | Thomas               | 866                     | 968                 | 954                | -9.2                   | -11.3                           |
| Burt                 | 8,875                   | 8,929               | 9,247              | -4.0                   | -3.4                            | <b>Region 19</b>     | <b>19,197</b>           | <b>18,541</b>       | <b>17,664</b>      | <b>8.7</b>             | <b>6.0</b>                      |
| Cuming               | 11,637                  | 11,760              | 12,034             | -3.3                   | -5.5                            | Arthur               | 540                     | 566                 | 606                | -10.9                  | -14.5                           |
| Thurston             | 7,235                   | 7,271               | 6,942              | 4.2                    | 0.8                             | Chase                | 4,771                   | 4,451               | 4,129              | 15.5                   | 13.5                            |
| <b>Region 7</b>      | <b>29,054</b>           | <b>29,304</b>       | <b>31,469</b>      | <b>-7.7</b>            | <b>-6.2</b>                     | Grant                | 866                     | 940                 | 1,019              | -15.0                  | -19.5                           |
| Johnson              | 5,335                   | 5,524               | 5,743              | -7.1                   | -6.2                            | Keith                | 9,522                   | 9,241               | 8,487              | 12.2                   | 8.4                             |
| Nemaha               | 8,132                   | 7,995               | 8,976              | -9.4                   | -9.8                            | Perkins              | 3,498                   | 3,343               | 3,423              | 2.2                    | 1.9                             |
| Pawnee               | 3,990                   | 4,222               | 4,473              | -10.8                  | -7.2                            | <b>Region 20</b>     | <b>21,063</b>           | <b>21,196</b>       | <b>20,698</b>      | <b>1.8</b>             | <b>0.2</b>                      |
| Richardson           | 11,597                  | 11,563              | 12,277             | -5.5                   | -3.2                            | Dundy                | 2,846                   | 2,820               | 2,926              | -2.7                   | -0.6                            |
| <b>Region 8</b>      | <b>37,093</b>           | <b>36,791</b>       | <b>36,730</b>      | <b>1.0</b>             | <b>0.6</b>                      | Hayes                | 1,429                   | 1,545               | 1,530              | -6.6                   | -10.4                           |
| Butler               | 9,192                   | 9,060               | 9,461              | -2.8                   | -2.6                            | Hitchcock            | 4,219                   | 4,167               | 4,051              | 4.1                    | 4.0                             |
| Seward               | 14,939                  | 15,176              | 14,460             | 3.3                    | 1.4                             | Red Willow           | 12,569                  | 12,664              | 12,191             | 3.1                    | 0.5                             |
| Saline               | 12,962                  | 12,555              | 12,809             | 1.2                    | 2.2                             | <b>Region 21</b>     | <b>17,753</b>           | <b>18,715</b>       | <b>19,504</b>      | <b>-9.0</b>            | <b>-11.6</b>                    |
| <b>Region 9</b>      | <b>28,764</b>           | <b>28,562</b>       | <b>28,290</b>      | <b>1.7</b>             | <b>1.3</b>                      | Cheyenne             | 9,976                   | 10,491              | 10,778             | -7.4                   | -9.6                            |
| Fillmore             | 8,003                   | 8,007               | 8,137              | -1.6                   | -0.1                            | Deuel                | 2,622                   | 2,616               | 2,717              | -3.5                   | -3.2                            |
| Polk                 | 6,271                   | 6,327               | 6,468              | -3.0                   | -2.1                            | Kimball              | 5,155                   | 5,608               | 6,009              | -14.2                  | -18.8                           |
| York                 | 14,490                  | 14,228              | 13,685             | 5.9                    | 3.8                             | <b>Region 22</b>     | <b>46,955</b>           | <b>45,994</b>       | <b>46,208</b>      | <b>1.6</b>             | <b>-2.8</b>                     |
| <b>Region 10</b>     | <b>49,866</b>           | <b>50,806</b>       | <b>49,374</b>      | <b>1.0</b>             | <b>-1.9</b>                     | Banner               | 1,024                   | 940                 | 1,034              | -1.0                   | -5.9                            |
| Boone                | 7,756                   | 8,066               | 8,190              | -5.3                   | -5.4                            | Garden               | 2,882                   | 2,835               | 2,929              | -1.6                   | -1.1                            |
| Colfax               | 9,606                   | 9,695               | 9,498              | 1.1                    | 1.4                             | Morrill              | 6,055                   | 5,999               | 5,813              | 4.2                    | 2.9                             |
| Nance                | 4,671                   | 4,852               | 5,142              | -9.2                   | -8.6                            | Scotts Bluff         | 36,994                  | 36,220              | 36,432             | 1.5                    | -3.7                            |
| Platte               | 27,833                  | 28,193              | 26,544             | 4.9                    | -1.0                            | <b>Region 23</b>     | <b>29,425</b>           | <b>28,862</b>       | <b>29,174</b>      | <b>0.9</b>             | <b>-1.5</b>                     |
| <b>Region 11</b>     | <b>62,386</b>           | <b>62,085</b>       | <b>61,100</b>      | <b>2.1</b>             | <b>-0.3</b>                     | Box Butte            | 10,774                  | 10,308              | 10,094             | 6.7                    | 4.2                             |
| Antelope             | 9,250                   | 9,281               | 9,047              | 2.2                    | 1.4                             | Dawes                | 9,176                   | 9,241               | 9,761              | -6.0                   | -8.1                            |
| Madison              | 28,767                  | 28,760              | 27,402             | 5.0                    | 1.9                             | Sheridan             | 7,540                   | 7,300               | 7,285              | 3.5                    | 1.4                             |
| Pierce               | 8,481                   | 8,601               | 8,493              | -0.1                   | -1.1                            | Sioux                | 1,935                   | 2,013               | 2,034              | -4.9                   | -9.1                            |
| Stanton              | 6,677                   | 6,494               | 5,758              | 16.0                   | 12.0                            | <b>Region 24</b>     | <b>31,193</b>           | <b>31,356</b>       | <b>31,123</b>      | <b>0.2</b>             | <b>-2.2</b>                     |
| Wayne                | 9,211                   | 8,949               | 10,400             | -11.4                  | -13.4                           | Boyd                 | 3,614                   | 3,548               | 3,752              | -3.7                   | -2.8                            |
| <b>Region 12</b>     | <b>69,668</b>           | <b>69,646</b>       | <b>67,276</b>      | <b>3.6</b>             | <b>-0.4</b>                     | Brown                | 4,219                   | 4,120               | 4,021              | 4.9                    | 4.1                             |
| Hall                 | 44,914                  | 45,031              | 42,851             | 4.8                    | -0.1                            | Cherry               | 6,913                   | 6,950               | 6,846              | 1.0                    | -2.5                            |
| Hamilton             | 8,853                   | 8,799               | 8,867              | -0.2                   | -2.4                            | Holt                 | 12,953                  | 13,147              | 12,933             | 0.2                    | -3.1                            |
| Howard               | 6,916                   | 6,848               | 6,807              | 1.6                    | -0.5                            | Keya Paha            | 1,191                   | 1,320               | 1,340              | -11.1                  | -15.7                           |
| Merrick              | 8,985                   | 8,968               | 8,751              | 2.8                    | -0.2                            | Rock                 | 2,303                   | 2,271               | 2,231              | 3.2                    | 0.9                             |
| <b>Region 13</b>     | <b>50,443</b>           | <b>50,185</b>       | <b>51,619</b>      | <b>-2.3</b>            | <b>-3.2</b>                     | <b>Region 25</b>     | <b>30,252</b>           | <b>30,020</b>       | <b>31,368</b>      | <b>-3.6</b>            | <b>-4.6</b>                     |
| Adams                | 30,210                  | 29,784              | 30,553             | -1.1                   | -3.2                            | Cedar                | 11,767                  | 11,762              | 12,192             | -3.5                   | -5.5                            |
| Clay                 | 8,109                   | 8,293               | 8,266              | -1.9                   | -3.0                            | Dixon                | 7,095                   | 7,037               | 7,453              | -4.8                   | -5.8                            |
| Nuckolls             | 7,045                   | 6,997               | 7,404              | -4.8                   | -4.2                            | Knox                 | 11,390                  | 11,221              | 11,723             | -2.8                   | -3.0                            |
| Webster              | 5,079                   | 5,111               | 5,396              | -5.9                   | -1.9                            | <b>Region 26</b>     | <b>32,783</b>           | <b>33,109</b>       | <b>33,763</b>      | <b>-2.9</b>            | <b>-3.4</b>                     |
| <b>Region 14</b>     | <b>41,250</b>           | <b>41,822</b>       | <b>43,946</b>      | <b>-6.1</b>            | <b>-5.6</b>                     | Blaine               | 899                     | 842                 | 847                | 6.1                    | 3.9                             |
| Gage                 | 23,617                  | 23,680              | 25,731             | -8.2                   | -8.2                            | Custer               | 13,824                  | 14,129              | 14,092             | -1.9                   | -2.4                            |
| Jefferson            | 10,127                  | 10,589              | 10,436             | -3.0                   | -1.8                            | Garfield             | 2,528                   | 2,596               | 2,411              | 4.9                    | 5.9                             |
| Thayer               | 7,506                   | 7,553               | 7,779              | -3.5                   | -2.2                            | Greeley              | 3,724                   | 3,754               | 4,000              | -6.9                   | -7.9                            |
| <b>Region 15</b>     | <b>39,575</b>           | <b>38,646</b>       | <b>37,929</b>      | <b>4.3</b>             | <b>0.3</b>                      | Loup                 | 961                     | 911                 | 854                | 12.5                   | 12.5                            |
| Buffalo              | 32,811                  | 31,732              | 31,222             | 5.1                    | 0.5                             | Sherman              | 4,404                   | 4,453               | 4,725              | -6.8                   | -7.5                            |
| Kearney              | 6,764                   | 6,914               | 6,707              | 0.8                    | -0.7                            | Valley               | 5,420                   | 5,355               | 5,783              | -6.3                   | -6.2                            |
|                      |                         |                     |                    |                        |                                 | Wheeler              | 1,023                   | 1,069               | 1,051              | -2.7                   | -7.2                            |
|                      |                         |                     |                    |                        |                                 | <b>State Total</b>   | <b>1,552,858</b>        | <b>1,543,562</b>    | <b>1,485,333</b>   | <b>4.5</b>             | <b>0.7</b>                      |

<sup>1</sup>Region boundaries and percentages are shown on the map on page 1.

<sup>2</sup>The net migration rate equals the difference between population change and natural increase (births minus deaths) expressed as a percent of the 1970 population.

(Continued from page 1) in the nation of 300,000 to 400,000 population in 1970, only three besides Omaha did not experience population declines by 1975. And those three (El Paso, Miami, and Tulsa) were in rapidly growing southern states.

Douglas County's population growth was surpassed by neighboring Sarpy (20.7 percent), Washington (10.3 percent), and Cass (9.5 percent) counties. Sarpy County has presented difficulties in making population estimates due to its phenomenal growth (more than quadrupling since 1950), and its large military population. Since 1970, Sarpy was the second-fastest growing county in Nebraska. The rate of natural increase (excess of births over deaths) in Sarpy County has been more rapid than in any other Nebraska county, having accounted for more than half of the county's population gain since 1970. Sarpy County also has the fifth highest net in-migration rate in the state, 9.6 percent.

The Lincoln metropolitan area has grown about twice as fast as the state, increasing by 8.9 percent since 1970. This represents a slower rate of growth, however, than was estimated for the area during the early 1970s. The slowing growth rate may be only a temporary phenomenon, related to short-term institutional population adjustments, and lagged responses to economic events (such as the recent recession and a marked slowdown in the construction industry since 1974). The accuracy and permanency of the slowing trend shown by the estimates can be better assessed when additional years' population indicators become available.

#### EASTERN NEBRASKA

The population of the seventeen-county southeastern portion of Nebraska as a whole (Regions 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 14) grew only slightly during the 1970-1976 period, but still showed improvement over the decade of the 1960s when the region recorded virtually no population growth. Two nonmetropolitan counties in southeastern Nebraska, Saunders and York, achieved population growth rates greater than the state rate. Both counties reversed their 1960s trends of slight declines in population, to show population increases of 5.9 percent from 1970 to 1976.

By far the most predominant pattern for the southeastern region was for counties which had shown population declines from 1960 to 1970 to continue to decline in the 1970s, but at a slower rate. This pattern occurred in eight southeastern counties, including Fillmore, Butler, Otoe, Jefferson, Polk, Thayer, Richardson, and Pawnee counties. Accelerated rates of population decline compared to the 1960s were estimated for only three southeastern Nebraska counties—Gage, Nemaha, and Johnson. Substantial institutional (college) population declines have affected post-1970 estimates of Gage and Nemaha counties.

Johnson County, as well as all the other declining counties in the southeastern region and some in other parts of Nebraska, is characterized by "natural decrease" of the population. Natural decrease occurs when the number of deaths exceeds the number of births in a county during a particular time period. Unless the net subtraction from a county's population caused by natural decrease is more than offset by new residents moving into the county, population growth is not possible. While as many as one-third of Nebraska's counties have recorded natural decreases during the 1970s, only seven managed to show population growth from 1970 to 1976 (Perkins, Hooker, Frontier, Hitchcock, Harlan, Saline, and Colfax).

Dakota County, located in northeastern Nebraska, was the fastest-growing county in the state from 1970 to 1976. The

population estimate for Dakota County is quite accurate, since it is based on the results of a special census conducted in 1976. Since 1970, the county has experienced net in-migration of 16.4 percent, compared to net in-migration of just 0.7 percent for the state. Dakota County has grown much more rapidly than the rest of the Sioux City, Iowa, metropolitan area of which it is a part, and more rapidly than the counties in Nebraska's other metropolitan areas. Employment in manufacturing (primarily meat packing and processing) more than doubled in Dakota County from 1970 to 1975, lending support to the reasonableness of the population estimate.

In the northeastern Nebraska area, rapid population growth was also estimated for Stanton County (16.0 percent), Madison County (5.0 percent), and Platte County (4.9 percent). The population boom in Stanton County reflects the growth of Norfolk in adjoining Madison County. Increasing numbers of people may be residing in Stanton County while enjoying the employment, schools, and other services of nearby Norfolk. Madison County itself has reversed its net out-migration of the 1960s and early 1970s and recorded net in-migration of about 1.9 percent since 1970. Platte County's 4.9 percent increase for 1970-1976 indicates a slowing rate of growth compared to the 1960s. Possibly some of the southerly growth of Columbus is occurring in counties south of Platte County's river border.

Wayne County's post-1970 population estimates have reflected significant declines in the institutional (college) population. One encouraging sign, however, was the jump in population shown between 1975 and 1976 for the county, the first increase for Wayne during the 1970s. Future years' estimates for Wayne County should be monitored closely to determine whether the population increase will be temporary, or the signal of a more lasting upward trend.

#### CENTRAL NEBRASKA

Several of Nebraska's rapidly growing counties are located in the central portion of the state. Since 1970, eleven counties in this area have exhibited population increases greater than the state average: Lincoln (16.7 percent), Chase (15.5 percent), Loup (12.5 percent), Keith (12.2 percent), Gosper (10.7 percent), Dawson (7.1 percent), Blaine (6.1 percent), Buffalo (5.1 percent), Brown (4.9 percent), Garfield (4.9 percent), and Hall (4.8 percent).

For some central Nebraska counties, such as those along Interstate 80, rapid population growth has been evident for some time. Lincoln County, for example, was the fastest-growing county in Nebraska in 1974 and ranks third in 1976. The 1976 population estimates reveal, however, that several additional central Nebraska counties have joined the "boom county" category. Notable among these additions are Chase County (5th fastest-growing), Keith County (7th ranking), and Dawson County (12th ranking). As recently as 1974, these counties ranked 21st, 15th, and 27th, respectively, among growth rates of all ninety-three Nebraska counties.

Dramatic changes also appear to be taking place in several of the state's sparsely settled Midlands counties. The out-migration of population recorded during the 1960s in Brown, Rock, Holt, Hooker, Blaine, Loup, and Garfield counties has been reversed, and these counties all recorded slight net in-migration from 1970 to 1976. The 1976 estimates show reduced rates of net out-migration for Cherry, Keya Paha, Boyd, Wheeler, Greeley, Banner, Custer, Logan, and McPherson counties, (Continued on page 6)

# Review and Outlook

News of the Nebraska economy at the end of March was mixed. On the one hand, the state's real output for the first quarter was 5 percent higher than for the same period last year, compared with an increase of 4.2 percent for the nation. On the other hand, declines in several of the Nebraska economic indicators may be signaling the onset of a period of slower growth for the next several months.

Total real output for the state was virtually unchanged from February, and was about 3.8 percent above its level in March, 1976. The sectoral indexes for agriculture and government rose from their February levels, while construction, manufacturing, and the distributive sector all declined. The drop in construction

activity was small and only of a temporary nature, but the recent behavior of the manufacturing, distributive, and agricultural indexes is of more concern.

Although the agricultural index rose throughout the first quarter, the rate of growth decreased in March, and output for the quarter was only some 2.9 percent above the first quarter figure for last year. Using seasonally adjusted data, prices received by Nebraska farmers improved slightly from February to March, but were still more than 6 percent below last year.

Nebraska's manufacturing and construction sectors performed very well in the first quarter compared with their national counterparts. Although manufacturing data are incomplete, it appears that the state's real output rose

(Continued on page 5)

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

| ECONOMIC INDICATORS: NEBRASKA AND UNITED STATES |  |       |   |       |
|---|--|-------|---|-------|
| 1. CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR                    |  |       |   |       |
| March, 1977                                     | Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year |       | 1977 Year to Date as Percent of 1976 Year to Date |       |
| Indicator                                       | Nebraska   | U.S.  | Nebraska  | U.S.  |
| Dollar Volume                                   | 108.7  | 110.5 | 109.7   | 110.1 |
| Agricultural                                    | 93.4   | 101.4 | 96.1  | 101.8 |
| Nonagricultural                                 | 111.4  | 110.8 | 111.9   | 110.5 |
| Construction                                    | 157.1  | 108.4 | 155.5   | 105.4 |
| Manufacturing                                   | 111.2  | 111.6 | 112.2   | 111.4 |
| Distributive                                    | 109.6  | 111.4 | 110.0   | 111.0 |
| Government                                      | 106.1  | 107.7 | 106.6   | 107.9 |
| Physical Volume                                 | 103.8  | 104.1 | 105.0   | 104.2 |
| Agricultural                                    | 99.7   | 99.2  | 102.9   | 101.8 |
| Nonagricultural                                 | 104.5  | 104.2 | 105.3   | 104.3 |
| Construction                                    | 148.7  | 102.6 | 146.6   | 99.4  |
| Manufacturing                                   | 104.8  | 105.1 | 106.7   | 105.5 |
| Distributive                                    | 103.1  | 104.7 | 104.0   | 104.9 |
| Government                                      | 98.7   | 101.0 | 98.1  | 101.0 |

| 2. CHANGE FROM 1967 |                         |       |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Indicator           | Percent of 1967 Average |       |
|                     | Nebraska                | U.S.  |
| Dollar Volume       | 250.1                   | 231.8 |
| Agricultural        | 215.2                   | 222.7 |
| Nonagricultural     | 256.2                   | 232.1 |
| Construction        | 279.0                   | 196.1 |
| Manufacturing       | 269.3                   | 218.5 |
| Distributive        | 249.7                   | 240.9 |
| Government          | 256.9                   | 241.3 |
| Physical Volume     | 136.3                   | 127.6 |
| Agricultural        | 120.2                   | 116.6 |
| Nonagricultural     | 139.1                   | 128.0 |
| Construction        | 136.1                   | 95.6  |
| Manufacturing       | 143.0                   | 116.9 |
| Distributive        | 140.1                   | 135.2 |
| Government          | 130.2                   | 136.2 |

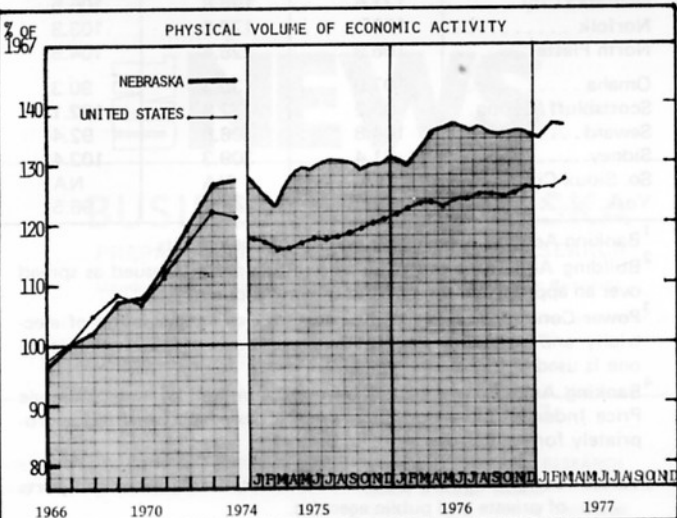
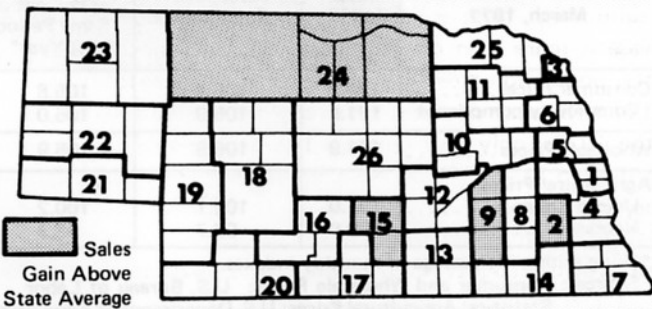
| 3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES (Adjusted for Price Changes) |                                     |                                     |   |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Region Number <sup>1</sup> and City   | City Sales <sup>2</sup>             | Sales in Region <sup>2</sup>        |   |
|   | March 1977 as percent of March 1976 | March 1977 as percent of March 1976 | Year to date '77 as percent of Year to date '76 |
| <i>The State</i>  | 98.2                                | 98.2                                | 99.4  |
| 1 Omaha   | 98.4                                | 99.9                                | 99.3  |
| Bellevue  | 95.6                                |                                     |   |
| 2 Lincoln   | 99.8                                | 100.8                               | 113.9   |
| 3 So. Sioux City  | 96.0                                | 86.8                                | 94.1  |
| 4 Nebraska City   | 99.2                                | 100.8                               | 97.7  |
| 5 Fremont   | 103.6                               | 100.6                               | 98.0  |
| Blair   | 90.6                                |                                     |   |
| 6 West Point  | 84.1                                | 93.7                                | 94.5  |
| 7 Falls City  | 86.0                                | 93.9                                | 96.4  |
| 8 Seward  | 90.7                                | 92.8                                | 94.4  |
| 9 York  | 96.9                                | 100.3                               | 99.8  |
| 10 Columbus   | 103.3                               | 102.0                               | 97.1  |
| 11 Norfolk  | 100.5                               | 97.3                                | 98.4  |
| 12 Grand Island   | 97.4                                | 99.4                                | 96.8  |
| 13 Hastings   | 96.2                                | 95.6                                | 98.9  |
| 14 Beatrice   | 94.1                                | 97.3                                | 98.1  |
| Fairbury  | 88.2                                |                                     |   |
| 15 Kearney  | 102.6                               | 119.3                               | 106.1   |
| 16 Lexington  | 99.1                                | 100.3                               | 94.6  |
| 17 Holdrege   | 91.8                                | 93.7                                | 88.5  |
| 18 North Platte   | 96.9                                | 94.2                                | 96.4  |
| 19 Ogallala   | 109.3                               | 90.5                                | 91.5  |
| 20 McCook   | 86.2                                | 84.8                                | 90.0  |
| 21 Sidney   | 87.4                                | 87.5                                | 89.9  |
| Kimball   | 95.1                                |                                     |   |
| 22 Scottsbluff/Gering   | 87.9                                | 85.5                                | 90.0  |
| 23 Alliance   | 97.6                                | 91.8                                | 97.0  |
| Chadron   | 90.2                                |                                     |   |
| 24 O'Neill  | 88.7                                | 93.3                                | 102.5   |
| 25 Hartington   | 93.4                                | 96.1                                | 92.6  |
| 26 Broken Bow   | 90.6                                | 95.3                                | 94.4  |

<sup>1</sup>See region map below.

<sup>2</sup>Sales on which sales taxes are collected by retailers located in the state. Region totals include motor vehicle sales; city totals exclude motor vehicle sales.

Compiled from data provided by Nebraska Department of Revenue.

1977 YEAR TO DATE AS PERCENT OF 1976 YEAR TO DATE IN NEBRASKA'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS

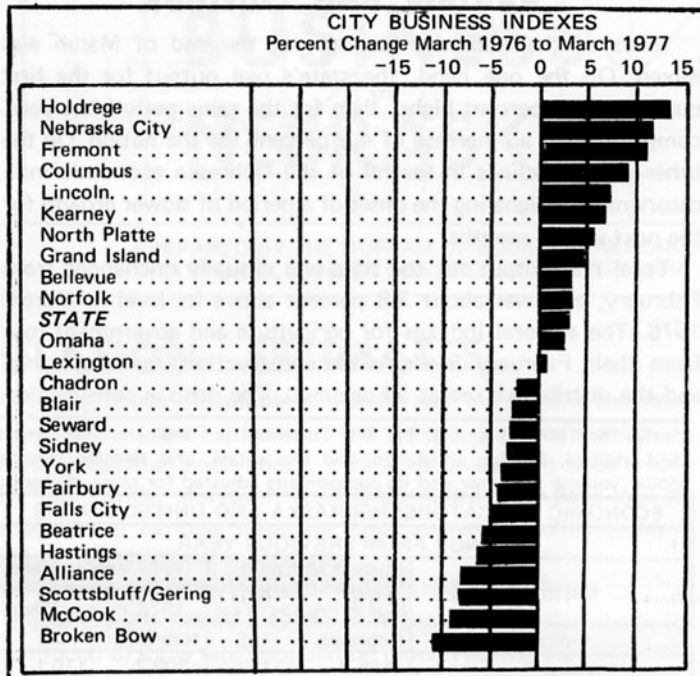


(Continued from page 4) some 6.7 percent above first quarter 1976, while national output increased 5.5 percent. For the same period, Nebraska construction activity registered a 46.6 percent gain, whereas total construction for the nation finished the quarter 0.6 percent below last year's first quarter. Despite the favorable first-quarter results, manufacturing employment in Nebraska decreased in both February and March, while the national sector showed increases.

Nebraska's distributive sector output for March was off slightly from February and finished the quarter 4 percent ahead of last year's first quarter. The national distributive sector posted gains for each of the first three months of the year, resulting in a 4.9 percent aggregate improvement for the quarter in comparison with 1976. The source of the decline in the Nebraska sector was the trade subsector, where seasonally adjusted employment totals dropped 1 percent from February and retail sales were below their March, 1976, level. Retail sales for the first quarter, deflated for price changes, were down 0.6 percent from 1976, and preliminary data for April indicate that the sluggishness in total sales persisted for at least another month. For the nation, first-quarter retail sales were 5.4 percent above 1976 totals for the same period.

Excluding motor vehicle sales, only 5 of the state's principal cities had greater real retail sales volume in March, 1977, than in March, 1976. Ogallala led with a 9.3 percent increase, while Fremont, Columbus, Kearney, and Norfolk had increases ranging from 3.6 percent downward. Possible errors in data reported for Kearney and Perkins counties may cause revisions in the regional sales figures given in Table 3 for Regions 15 (Kearney) and 19 (Ogallala). Omitting the affected counties from the regional totals, Region 15 would show a 1.9 percent increase for March, 1977, compared with March, 1976 (vs. 19.3 percent reported), and Region 19 would show a 0.3 percent increase (vs. a reported decrease of 9.5 percent). Price adjusted total sales for the first quarter exceeded last year's sales in only the Lincoln, O'Neill, and Kearney regions, but the Lincoln area posted an impressive 13.9 percent increase.

The city business indexes rose only 2.9 percent on the average from March, 1976, levels, and 13 of the 25 principal cities showed losses compared with last year. This is the largest group of cities sustaining losses since November, 1975. Nebraska City, Fremont, Columbus, Lincoln, and Kearney remained among the group of cities having the largest improvements in business activity, with all these cities except Nebraska City having been consistently within the top 6 for the entire first quarter. Increases in banking and building activity combined to move the Holdrege index up rapidly from February to March. DUANE HACKMANN



Source: Table 4 below.

| The State and Its Trading Centers | Percent of Same Month a Year Ago   |                                |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                   | Banking Activity <sup>1</sup><br>(Adjusted for Price Changes) <sup>4</sup> | Building Activity <sup>2</sup> | Power Consumption <sup>3</sup> |
| The State                         | 107.5  | 123.6                          | 96.8                           |
| Alliance                          | 79.9   | 127.6                          | 101.5                          |
| Beatrice                          | 96.2   | 97.5                           | 84.8                           |
| Bellevue                          | 115.4  | 88.0                           | 91.9*                          |
| Blair                             | 94.6   | 167.6                          | 110.9                          |
| Broken Bow                        | 91.2   | 50.7                           | 94.3                           |
| Chadron                           | 103.4  | 137.4                          | 88.7                           |
| Columbus                          | 114.0  | 187.5                          | 93.2                           |
| Fairbury                          | 104.6  | 67.8                           | 101.7*                         |
| Falls City                        | 116.0  | 23.9                           | 105.4                          |
| Fremont                           | 109.6  | 116.8                          | 151.1*                         |
| Grand Island                      | 108.3  | 192.1                          | 97.5                           |
| Hastings                          | 92.8   | 64.9                           | 104.6                          |
| Holdrege                          | 130.6  | 368.8                          | 89.9                           |
| Kearney                           | 115.3  | 94.0                           | 99.3                           |
| Lexington                         | 90.4   | 289.9                          | 99.8                           |
| Lincoln                           | 121.3  | 86.0                           | 93.7                           |
| McCook                            | 86.1   | 123.7                          | 111.3                          |
| Nebraska City                     | 121.6  | 196.8                          | 105.5                          |
| Norfolk                           | 100.1  | 172.6                          | 103.8                          |
| North Platte                      | 106.9  | 228.4                          | 104.5                          |
| Omaha                             | 107.9  | 130.3                          | 90.3                           |
| Scottsbluff/Gering                | 95.2   | 72.8                           | 102.1                          |
| Seward                            | 104.8  | 96.0                           | 92.4                           |
| Sidney                            | 91.4   | 309.3                          | 102.4                          |
| So. Sioux City                    | NA   | NA                             | NA                             |
| York                              | 102.0  | 44.1                           | 96.5                           |

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

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

| March, 1977         | Index (1967 = 100) | Percent of Same Month Last Year | Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year* |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Consumer Prices     | 178.2              | 106.4                           | 105.8   |
| Commodity component | 171.8              | 105.9                           | 105.0   |
| Wholesale Prices    | 191.9              | 106.8                           | 105.9   |
| Agricultural Prices |                    |                                 |   |
| United States       | 191.0              | 102.1                           | 100.2   |
| Nebraska            | 179.0              | 93.7                            | 93.3  |

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

(Continued from page 3) compared to their 1960s losses. It appears that the growth of irrigated agriculture and associated agribusinesses has been closely related to increased population stability in central Nebraska.

Normally these small estimated changes would have to be viewed with caution, due to the small total populations of the counties involved. However, special census headcounts conducted during 1975 have provided highly reliable estimates for at least eight of the smallest central-Nebraska counties.

Whether these apparent turnarounds in nonmetropolitan migration are permanent or only temporary trends will be indicated in future years' population estimates. The trends are in line with similar trends observed elsewhere in Nebraska and nationwide, and some demographers believe that these patterns signal the early phases of the resurgence which will lead to increased prosperity in America's nonmetropolitan areas. Others believe that recent patterns of population change are primarily a continuation of past trends toward decentralization of population.

#### PANHANDLE POPULATION

July 1, 1976, population estimates for the Panhandle indicate substantial improvement over the population declines that were estimated for the area earlier in the decade. Box Butte, Morrill, Sheridan, and Scotts Bluff counties are among the fastest growing in the area. As recently as 1974, all four of these counties had estimated populations below their 1970 census counts, but they have apparently made dramatic reversals in the last few years.

The railroad industry boom in Alliance has been increasingly reflected in the Box Butte County population estimates. The

1976 population is more than 1,000 above its 1973 level, and Box Butte's net in-migration of 4.2 percent since 1970 was the highest in the Panhandle region.

Scotts Bluff County's 1976 population estimate shows signs of recovery from the adverse effects associated with the 1971 closing of Hiram Scott College. Special census headcounts showed rapid growth rates in Gering (18.5 percent) and in Terrytown (9.4 percent) from 1970 to 1976.

The recent gains in Morrill and Sheridan counties may be related to employment growth and increased stability of the farm population in these counties.

Dawes County's population estimates reflect continued declines in institutional (college) population since 1970. Kimball and Cheyenne counties, while not decreasing in population as rapidly as they did during the 1960s, suffered large population losses during the 1970-1976 period despite showing growth earlier in the 1970s. Much of the recent decline can probably be attributed to the completion of major construction projects in the Kimball and Sidney areas.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on Nebraska population estimates for 1976, population throughout the state appears to be stabilizing during this decade as compared to previous decades. Net out-migration rates experienced by many nonmetropolitan counties in the 1960s have been reduced or even reversed during the 1970s. Only a few counties are experiencing increased population losses compared to the 1960s, and most of those are experiencing special circumstances.

VICKI S. STEPP

### NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Bureau of Business Research, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has published a new report dealing with sub-county population estimates. The report, *Sub-County Population Estimates, 1973*, represents the Bureau's first attempt to make sub-county population estimates. The volume contains estimates for 530 Nebraska cities and towns and compares these estimates with the revenue sharing estimates prepared by the Bureau of the Census. Special census tallies for Nebraska cities and towns are summarized in the report.

Copies of the new volume are available at \$5.00 per copy from the Bureau of Business Research, 200 CBA Building, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588.

A new publication in the Economic and Business Report series, entitled *Nebraska Retail Sales, 1968-1975*, has been published by the Bureau of Business Research, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The report provides detailed historical information regarding retail sales in Nebraska's 93 counties. The retail sales information is also compiled for many of Nebraska's towns and cities. County rankings in terms of percentage change 1968-1975 are presented in detail.

Several articles will appear in *Business in Nebraska* in the future to analyze this set of information. The volume is available at \$7.50 per copy from the Bureau of Business Research, 200 CBA Building, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588.

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Publications Services & Control  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Nebraska Hall—City Campus 5U  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68588