

Published once in May, June, and July, twice in Aug., Oct., Nov., and Dec., and 3 times in Jan., Feb., Mar., April, and Sept. by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Dept. of Publications Services and Control, 209 Nebraska Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588. Second-class postage paid Lincoln, Nebraska.

Prepared by the Bureau of Business Research
College of Business Administration

1978 NEBRASKA POPULATION ESTIMATES

Provisional 1978 population estimates for Nebraska indicate that increased population stability and growth for many areas of the state have emerged since the 1960-1970 decade. According to these estimates, prepared by the Bureau of Business Research, the population of Nebraska is 1,565,390, which represents a growth rate of 5.4 percent since the 1970 Census of Population and Housing was taken. Population trends for nonmetropolitan Nebraska continued to show significant improvement since 1970, reversing the widespread population declines that occurred from 1960 to 1970. The estimates show that forty-four Nebraska counties increased in population from 1970 to 1978, whereas only twenty-six counties registered gains between the 1960 and 1970 census counts. Furthermore, more than three-fourths of the state's ninety-three counties have attained either more rapid population growth rates or less rapid rates of decline since 1970, as compared to those recorded for the preceding decade.

Every region of Nebraska appears to be sharing to some extent in the trend toward increased stability of the state's population (see Figure 1). The rate of population increase for both the Omaha area (8.5 percent) and the southcentral region (6.4 percent) have exceeded that for the state (5.4 percent). Southeast Nebraska, while growing at somewhat less than the state rate since 1970, has shown an accelerated rate of population growth during the 1970s, compared to the 1960-1970 period. Both the western and the northeast regions of Nebraska have shown population increases since 1970, reversing earlier patterns of population decline. According to the 1978 estimates, only northcentral Nebraska failed to show a population increase since 1970. But the negligible population loss (-1.4 percent) estimated for that sparsely settled region of the state represents a substantial improvement over the 11.0 percent decline recorded for the region during the 1960s.

POPULATION CHANGE BY REGION

The Omaha Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (Douglas and Sarpy counties) and surrounding counties, comprising approximately one-third of the total state population, increased by 8.5 percent since 1970. Despite its slowdown in the rate of population growth in the 1970s (as compared to the 1960s), the six-county Omaha region has accounted for a majority (slightly more than 57 percent) of Nebraska's population growth since 1970. Approximately 91.2 percent of this region's growth has been a result of natural increase (an excess of births over deaths), although its 0.8 percent net migration rate, which is four times that of the state, also contributed to the area's growth.

Following a slight growth lag in 1977, Douglas County's population has increased and resumed a rate of growth close to that

exhibited during the earlier part of the 1970s. Located in this region is the fastest growing county in Nebraska, Sarpy County at 28.9 percent, which has more than quintupled in growth since 1950. The rate of natural increase is higher for Sarpy County than for any other county in the state. This natural increase—combined with a 14.0 percent rate of net migration—fueled the rapid population growth estimated since 1970.

Despite continued population increases, three of the six counties in this region (Douglas, Sarpy, and Dodge) have shown slower rates of growth during the 1970s than they did during the 1960-1970 decade. The other three counties, however, have shown the opposite pattern. Accelerated rates of growth during the 1970s have been estimated for Cass, Washington, and Saunders counties, with Saunders County having reversed its decline of the 1960s.

CENTRAL REGION

Although central Nebraska's overall growth rate was less than that of the state, it ranked second in regional growth rates in the state since 1970, according to the 1978 estimates. The entire central Nebraska region population increased by 4.5 percent from 1970 to 1978, maintaining the growth rate it exhibited from 1970 to 1977. This represents a dramatic change from the 0.7 percent population decline recorded from 1960 to 1970.

(Continued on page 3)

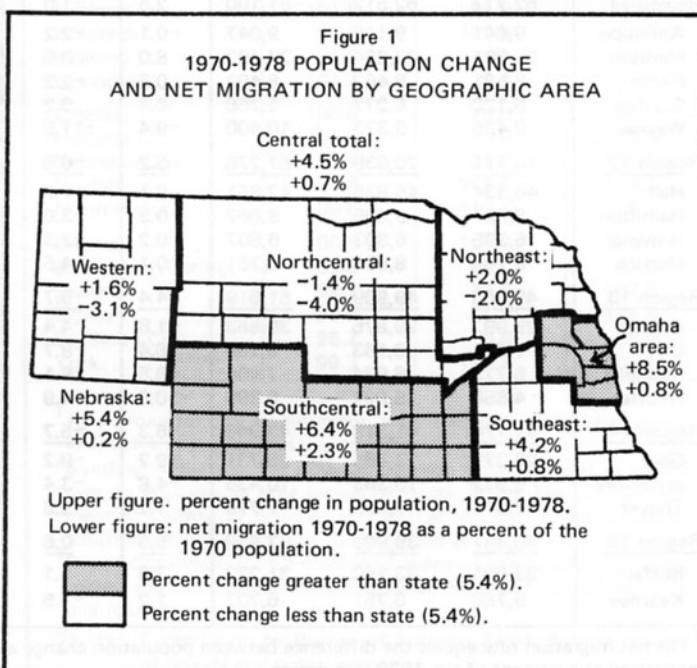


Table 1

POPULATION OF NEBRASKA BY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS AND COUNTIES
PROVISIONAL 1978 AND REVISED 1977 COMPARED WITH 1970 CENSUS

Regions and Counties	Provisional July 1, '78	Revised July 1, '77	Census Apr. 1, '70	Percent Change '70-'78	Net Migration Rate ¹	Regions and Counties	Provisional July 1, '78	Revised July 1, '77	Census Apr. 1, '70	Percent Change '70-'78	Net Migration Rate ¹
Region 1	495,729	490,896	455,655	8.8	0.4	Region 16	28,423	28,123	25,931	9.6	5.2
Douglas	410,425	408,374	389,455	5.4	-2.0	Dawson	21,655	21,522	19,771	9.5	4.4
Sarpy	85,304	82,522	66,200	28.9	14.0	Frontier	4,052	4,031	3,982	1.8	0.2
Region 2	186,179	183,709	167,972	10.8	4.3	Gosper	2,716	2,570	2,178	24.7	20.7
Lancaster	186,179	183,709	167,972	10.8	4.3	Region 17	25,627	25,531	25,373	1.0	2.5
Region 3	16,787	16,594	13,137	27.8	16.7	Franklin	4,517	4,466	4,566	-1.1	3.2
Dakota	16,787	16,594	13,137	27.8	16.7	Furnas	6,667	6,658	6,897	-3.3	0.4
Region 4	53,391	53,640	50,670	5.4	2.3	Harlan	4,556	4,322	4,357	4.6	7.3
Cass	20,025	20,380	18,076	10.8	4.9	Phelps	9,887	10,085	9,553	3.5	1.5
Otoe	15,147	15,118	15,576	-2.8	-3.4	Region 18	40,375	40,037	33,045	22.2	14.7
Saunders	18,219	18,142	17,018	7.1	4.9	Hooker	988	939	939	5.2	7.9
Region 5	50,847	50,730	48,092	5.7	1.5	Lincoln	36,744	36,474	29,538	24.4	16.4
Dodge	35,675	35,617	34,782	2.6	-1.6	Logan	1,057	1,055	991	6.7	1.6
Washington	15,172	15,113	13,310	14.0	9.8	McPherson	644	661	623	3.4	-1.0
Region 6	27,745	27,494	28,223	-1.7	-4.3	Thomas	942	908	954	-1.3	-5.9
Burt	8,742	8,633	9,247	-5.5	-4.6	Region 19	19,822	19,070	17,664	12.2	7.7
Cuming	11,915	11,674	12,034	-1.0	-4.3	Arthur	544	512	606	-10.2	-14.5
Thurston	7,088	7,187	6,942	2.1	-3.7	Chase	4,828	4,716	4,129	16.9	13.9
Region 7	28,629	28,812	31,469	-9.0	-7.3	Grant	840	881	1,019	-17.6	-22.9
Johnson	5,487	5,413	5,743	-4.5	-3.4	Keith	10,089	9,487	8,487	18.9	12.9
Nemaha	8,055	8,002	8,976	-10.3	-11.4	Perkins	3,521	3,474	3,423	2.9	0.3
Pawnee	3,862	3,960	4,473	-13.7	-9.2	Region 20	21,191	21,023	20,698	2.4	-0.2
Richardson	11,225	11,437	12,277	-8.6	-5.5	Dundy	2,831	2,821	2,926	-3.2	-1.9
Region 8	37,436	36,917	36,730	1.9	0.9	Hayes	1,542	1,526	1,530	0.8	-3.8
Butler	9,131	9,041	9,461	-3.5	-3.8	Hitchcock	4,013	4,074	4,051	-0.9	-2.6
Saline	13,034	12,969	12,809	1.8	2.9	Red Willow	12,805	12,602	12,191	5.0	1.4
Seward	15,271	14,907	14,460	5.6	2.2	Region 21	18,060	17,942	19,504	-7.4	-10.8
Region 9	28,868	28,438	28,290	2.0	1.2	Cheyenne	10,485	10,368	10,778	-2.7	-5.8
Fillmore	7,929	7,880	8,137	-2.6	-0.9	Deuel	2,431	2,605	2,717	-10.5	-10.5
Polk	6,330	6,278	6,468	-2.1	-0.9	Kimball	5,144	4,969	6,009	-14.4	-19.9
York	14,609	14,280	13,685	6.8	3.5	Region 22	47,496	47,666	46,208	2.8	-3.3
Region 10	50,143	50,278	49,374	1.6	-3.0	Banner	929	1,031	1,034	-10.2	-16.0
Boone	7,498	7,758	8,190	-8.4	-9.7	Garden	2,884	2,911	2,929	-1.5	-0.7
Colfax	9,648	9,637	9,498	1.6	0.9	Morrill	6,111	6,192	5,813	5.1	3.1
Nance	4,621	4,681	5,142	-10.1	-10.7	Scotts Bluff	37,572	37,532	36,432	3.1	-4.2
Platte	28,276	28,202	26,544	6.9	-0.9	Region 23	30,880	29,598	29,174	5.8	2.3
Region 11	62,717	62,512	61,100	2.6	-1.0	Box Butte	12,395	11,173	10,094	22.8	18.6
Antelope	9,041	9,146	9,047	-0.1	-2.2	Dawes	9,069	9,027	9,761	-7.1	-10.2
Madison	29,601	29,254	27,402	8.0	3.6	Sheridan	7,446	7,475	7,285	2.2	-0.7
Pierce	8,521	8,462	8,493	0.3	-2.2	Sioux	1,970	1,923	2,034	-3.1	-7.8
Stanton	6,128	6,277	5,758	6.4	0.2	Region 24	31,234	31,256	31,123	0.4	-3.5
Wayne	9,426	9,373	10,400	-9.4	-11.9	Boyd	3,486	3,546	3,752	-7.1	-6.5
Region 12	70,771	70,639	67,276	5.2	-0.5	Brown	4,352	4,305	4,021	8.2	5.9
Hall	46,334	45,835	42,851	8.1	1.2	Cherry	6,818	6,709	6,846	-0.4	-5.1
Hamilton	8,897	9,005	8,867	0.3	-3.0	Holt	12,878	13,041	12,933	-0.4	-5.3
Howard	6,795	6,803	6,807	-0.2	-3.3	Keya Paha	1,235	1,280	1,340	-7.8	15.1
Merrick	8,745	8,996	8,751	-0.1	-4.5	Rock	2,465	2,375	2,231	10.5	7.3
Region 13	49,366	49,999	51,619	-4.4	-5.7	Region 25	29,492	30,010	31,368	-6.0	-7.8
Adams	29,997	29,875	30,553	-1.8	-4.4	Cedar	11,311	11,658	12,192	-7.2	-10.5
Clay	7,741	8,163	8,266	-6.4	-8.7	Dixon	7,079	7,076	7,453	-5.0	-6.9
Nuckolls	6,772	6,934	7,404	-8.5	-8.1	Knox	11,102	11,276	11,723	-5.3	-5.6
Webster	4,856	5,027	5,396	-10.0	-4.9	Region 26	32,621	32,719	33,763	-3.4	-4.3
Region 14	41,174	41,318	43,946	-6.3	-5.7	Blaine	837	896	847	-1.2	-4.7
Gage	23,371	23,465	25,731	-9.2	-9.2	Custer	13,808	13,909	14,092	-2.0	-3.3
Jefferson	9,932	10,363	10,436	-4.8	-3.4	Garfield	2,560	2,614	2,411	6.2	8.0
Thayer	7,871	7,490	7,779	1.2	2.6	Greeley	3,681	3,681	4,000	-8.0	-8.8
Region 15	40,387	39,900	37,929	6.5	0.6	Loup	943	899	854	10.4	9.8
Buffalo	33,601	33,149	31,222	7.6	1.1	Sherman	4,338	4,370	4,725	-8.2	-9.3
Kearney	6,786	6,751	6,707	1.2	-1.5	Valley	5,408	5,337	5,783	-6.5	-6.0
						Wheeler	1,046	1,013	1,051	-0.5	-6.6
						State Total	1,565,390	1,554,851	1,485,333	5.4	0.2

¹The 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)

The area in the southcentral portion of the state, including those counties along and south of the Platte River (see Figure 1), increased 6.4 percent since 1970, surpassing the state population growth of 5.4 percent. More than two-thirds of the counties in southcentral Nebraska have shown improved population growth rates during the 1970s, compared to those of the 1960s. Accelerated population growth rates since 1970 have been estimated for Lincoln, Keith, Dawson, Chase, and Gosper counties. Reversals from population declines of the 1960s to growth from 1970 to 1978 were estimated for eight southcentral counties: Chase, Frontier, Gosper, Harlan, Hayes, Perkins, Phelps, and Red Willow.

Lesser rates of population declines since 1970, compared to the 1960s decade, were estimated for Dundy, Franklin, Furnas, Hitchcock, Nuckolls, and Webster counties. Population growth would be difficult for these counties to attain since—except for Hitchcock County—each of these southern border counties has experienced a natural decrease of population over the 1970-1978 period. Unless the subtraction from population caused by the excess of deaths over births is more than offset by net in-migration, population declines are inevitable. Natural decrease is observed in numerous counties of Nebraska, particularly in the southcentral and southeast regions.

Continued population growth, but at a slower rate this decade than last, has occurred in Buffalo and Hall counties, and Kearney County's rate has shown little change. Adams County slipped from a position of growth during the 1960s to a slight loss of population since 1970, partly a consequence of institutional population declines.

Estimates for northcentral Nebraska indicate a decline of 1.4 percent since 1970, a substantial improvement over the 11.0 percent population decline experienced from 1960 to 1970. Reversals from population declines of the 1960s to growth from 1970 to 1978 were estimated for seven northcentral counties: Brown, Garfield, Hooker, Logan, Loup, McPherson, and Rock counties. Twelve of the twenty-two counties showed a slowing of the population declines exhibited in the 1960s. Only three counties (Grant, Howard, and Merrick) are estimated to be experiencing comparatively less favorable growth trends.

SOUTHEAST REGION

Lancaster County recorded the most rapid growth of the southeastern counties, increasing by 10.8 percent from 1970 to 1978. Both Lancaster and York counties have shown accelerated rates of population growth during the 1970s, compared to those of the 1960s. Substantial net in-migrations of population have been estimated for both counties since 1970, reversing the net out-migrations observed from 1960 to 1970.

Seward, Saline, and Thayer counties also showed population increases from 1970 to 1978. Although the rate of population growth for Seward County has slowed slightly since the early 1970s, that for Saline and Thayer counties somewhat counterbalances the irregular growth patterns characterizing these counties in the 1970s.

Of the ten southeastern Nebraska counties where population decreases have been estimated from 1970 to 1978, eight—Butler, Fillmore, Jefferson, Johnson, Otoe, Pawnee, Polk, and Richardson—are estimated to be experiencing either lesser rates of decline or little change from trends of 1960 to 1970. The other two counties, Gage and Nemaha, are estimated to be undergoing higher

rates of decline than indicated by earlier estimates. Both of these counties have experienced substantial institutional population declines since 1970.

NORTHEAST REGION

Nebraska's second fastest growing county, Dakota, is located in the northeast region. Dakota County's population increased an estimated 27.8 percent from 1970 to 1978. As a result of a 1976 special census headcount, Dakota County's estimated population growth since 1970 should be quite accurate. Since 1970 the county has experienced a net in-migration of population of nearly 17.0 percent of its 1970 population, compared to a net in-migration of just 0.2 percent for the state. Employment in manufacturing (primarily meat packing and processing) more than doubled from 1970 to 1975 in Dakota County, lending further support to the rapid growth of population recorded.

Madison and Stanton counties' population growth reflects the rapid growth of Norfolk. Consistent with its behavior of the past few years, Madison County recorded a net in-migration of 3.6 percent. In contrast to its relatively high net in-migration rate of the past few years, for 1970-1978 Stanton County's in-migration rate has slowed to 0.2 percent. However, both Madison and Stanton counties have continued to reverse the net out-migration exhibited in the 1960-1970 decade.

Of the three other northeastern area growth counties, two—Colfax and Thurston—appear to have reversed population declines reported from 1960 to 1970. While the growth rate recorded for Pierce County is relatively small at 0.3 percent, it reflects a reversal of the population loss that characterized it from 1960 to 1970 and throughout most of the 1970s.

Population decreases from 1970 to 1978 were estimated for nine northeastern counties. For most, including Cuming, Knox, Cedar, Dixon, Boone, and Burt, the 1970s rates of decline are somewhat less than or about the same as the 1960s rates. Nance County's rate of decline accelerated slightly during the 1970s, partly as a result of natural decrease of population, a phenomenon observed in numerous Nebraska counties. In contrast to a positive growth rate registered throughout most of the 1970s, Antelope County recorded a slight decline in population for 1970-1978. This is substantially less, however, than the 11.1 percent decline recorded in the 1960-1970 decade. Wayne County's post-1970 population estimates have reflected substantial decreases in the institutional (college) population.

WESTERN REGION

From 1960 to 1970 the western region's population decreased by more than 9 percent. From 1970 to 1978, however, its population increased by 1.6 percent. With few exceptions, the counties in western Nebraska are enjoying either increases in population or slower rates of population decline since 1970, a significant break from the widespread declines recorded during the 1960s.

Among the more rapidly growing counties in the eleven-county western area from 1970 to 1978 were Box Butte (22.8 percent), Morrill (5.1 percent), Scotts Bluff (3.1 percent), and Sheridan (2.2 percent). As recently as 1974, the population estimates for these four counties were below their 1970 census counts, and all but Scotts Bluff County also lost population during the 1960s.

The railroad industry "boom" in Alliance has been increasingly reflected in Box Butte County's population estimates. Gains in Box Butte's population have accelerated since 1973, as the impact

(Continued on page 6)

Review and Outlook

Real output in Nebraska increased in March, with the physical volume index for the state recording a gain of 1.5 percent. The February-to-March increase was the first month-to-month increase in the index during 1979 and resulted in a value which was 43.9 percent above its 1967 base-period level. Compared to its level of March, 1978, the index experienced a 1.2 percent increase.

The March increase in economic activity was broadly based, with four of the five sectors registering gains for the month. The construction sector, with a decline of 1.1 percent, was the only sector recording a loss. The remaining sectors and their February-to-March increases were: distributive, +1.9 percent; agriculture, +1.7 percent; manufacturing, +1.7 percent; and government, +0.3

percent. The composite index of the four nonagricultural sectors experienced a 1.5 percent gain.

As had been the case throughout most of the country in the first quarter of 1979, economic activity was sluggish. The state physical volume index was 2.8 percent lower than the fourth quarter last year and was just 0.8 percent above the first quarter last year. This lackluster performance was shared by all sectors of the economy, with only the manufacturing and government sectors registering growth. Agricultural and construction activity fell, while distributive activity was unchanged.

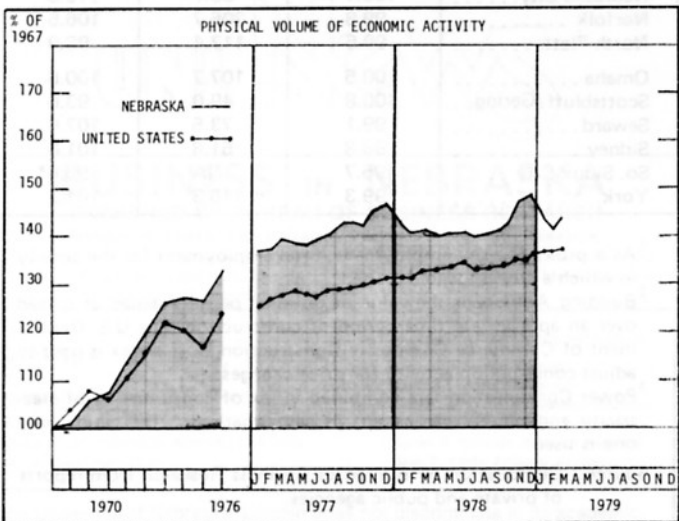
First-quarter developments at the national level were similar to those in Nebraska, with one major exception—agricultural output for the United States showed (Continued on page 5)

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.

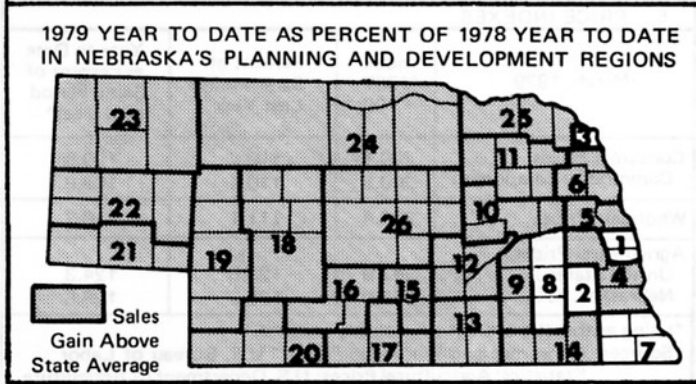
ECONOMIC INDICATORS: NEBRASKA AND UNITED STATES				
1. CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR				
March, 1979	Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year		1979 Year to Date as Percent of 1978 Year to Date	
	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Indicator	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	113.3	114.2	112.6	114.0
Agricultural	119.8	138.1	116.2	129.1
Nonagricultural	112.3	113.4	112.0	113.4
Construction	102.3	114.1	102.2	117.1
Manufacturing	119.8	118.6	119.3	117.3
Distributive	112.6	112.3	112.5	112.8
Government	102.8	106.6	102.6	106.5
Physical Volume	101.2	103.4	100.8	103.5
Agricultural	93.2	111.8	90.3	103.7
Nonagricultural	102.4	103.2	102.5	103.5
Construction	89.1	99.4	89.4	102.5
Manufacturing	108.0	107.5	107.9	106.7
Distributive	102.2	102.0	102.4	102.7
Government	99.8	100.4	99.2	100.7

2. CHANGE FROM 1967		
Indicator	Percent of 1967 Average	
	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	314.2	292.1
Agricultural	300.1	339.5
Nonagricultural	316.6	290.4
Construction	309.9	263.8
Manufacturing	366.8	285.2
Distributive	309.1	300.5
Government	279.3	271.2
Physical Volume	143.9	137.2
Agricultural	116.8	137.4
Nonagricultural	148.6	137.2
Construction	121.5	103.4
Manufacturing	163.6	130.0
Distributive	147.8	143.7
Government	140.4	140.3

3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES (Adjusted for Price Changes)			
Region Number ¹ and City	City Sales ²		Sales in Region ²
	March, 1979 as percent of March, 1978	March, 1979 as percent of March, 1978	Year to date '79 as percent of Year to date '78
<i>The State</i>	99.5	100.1	103.4
1 Omaha	96.8	95.0	98.4
Bellevue	82.7		
2 Lincoln	95.4	95.2	102.2
3 So. Sioux City	88.9	92.2	95.9
4 Nebraska City	92.9	107.0	111.6
5 Fremont	99.6	99.2	107.9
Blair	91.9		
6 West Point	104.7	107.4	112.5
7 Falls City	89.6	94.7	102.6
8 Seward	80.9	93.2	102.4
9 York	103.6	106.9	113.7
10 Columbus	103.5	108.8	110.2
11 Norfolk	96.7	105.7	107.2
12 Grand Island	104.4	104.4	110.4
13 Hastings	95.4	98.8	105.6
14 Beatrice	94.1	102.0	107.9
Fairbury	95.5		
15 Kearney	104.4	106.6	111.5
16 Lexington	105.0	112.8	112.5
17 Holdrege	100.0	106.0	115.8
18 North Platte	104.0	105.8	113.0
19 Ogallala	115.1	103.6	114.4
20 McCook	102.2	103.6	110.2
21 Sidney	107.4	107.1	109.4
Kimball	108.5		
22 Scottsbluff/Gering	106.3	104.2	110.5
23 Alliance	101.8	106.7	110.1
Chadron	119.8		
24 O'Neill	107.7	119.8	121.5
25 Hartington	106.2	104.8	106.5
26 Broken Bow	113.0	112.6	114.7



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



(Continued from page 4) a substantial increase. Overall, the physical volume index for the United States was up 0.8 percent from the fourth quarter of 1978.

Growth in Nebraska manufacturing, which was the primary source of strength in the state economy last year, continued into 1979. First-quarter output was 1.1 percent higher than the previous quarter and was accompanied by an almost equal percent increase in employment. Compared to last March, this month's index showed a robust increase of 8.0 percent. Based upon employment growth, durable goods manufacturing exhibited the greatest improvement over last year.

The index for the government sector rose 0.7 percent in the first quarter, with most of the growth occurring in February. Despite this recent improvement, government activity was down 0.2 percent compared to March, 1978.

The physical volume index for the distributive sector was unchanged this quarter, although there were increases in activity in February and March and a 1.2 percent increase in employment. Compared to March, 1978, real output was up 2.2 percent, giving it the second largest year-to-year increase.

After adjustment for price changes, nineteen of the state's twenty-six planning regions reported retail sales above those of last March. However, only seventeen of the thirty-one principal trading centers had nonmotor vehicle sales exceeding last year's sales. The cities with the largest increases were generally located in the western portion of the state.

Agricultural output dropped sharply in the first quarter of 1979 (-18.3 percent). This was due largely to the exceptionally high levels of the index in the last quarter of 1978. Seasonally adjusted Nebraska cash farm marketings in the first quarter were down 10.7 percent from the previous quarter. In contrast, the marketings for March were 27.1 percent (more than \$100 million) above those of March, 1978. Prices received by Nebraska farmers increased for the eighth consecutive month and were 28.5 percent higher than last March.

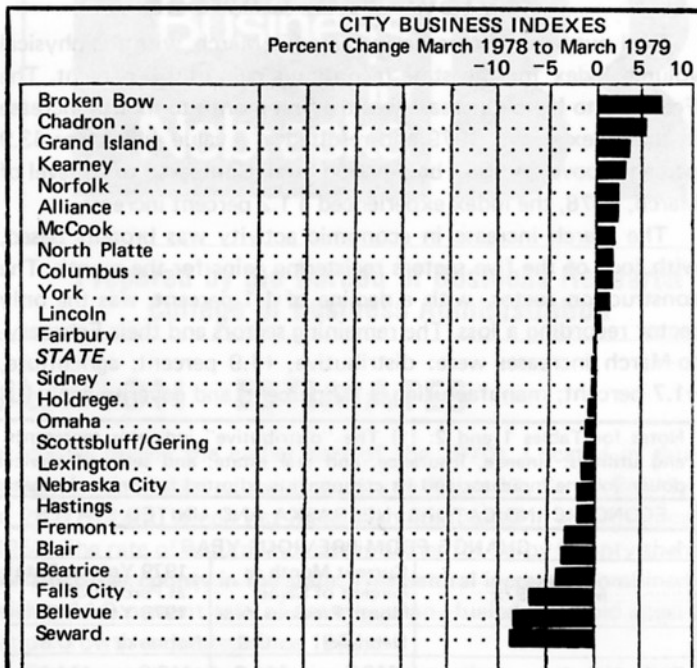
The construction sector continued as one of the weakest sectors in the state economy as seasonally adjusted first-quarter activity was down 7.3 percent from the previous quarter. In addition, the index for March was 10.1 percent below the level of last March, with only eleven of the state's principal cities reporting increases over last year.

In March, eleven of the twenty-five reporting cities experienced increases in business activity relative to March, 1978. Broken Bow posted the largest gain (+6.9 percent). Other cities with March-to-March increases of 3.0 percent or more were Chadron, Grand Island, and Kearney.

J. A. D.

5. PRICE INDEXES			
March, 1979	Index (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices	209.1	110.2	109.8
Commodity component	200.5	110.4	109.9
Wholesale Prices	226.4	111.1	110.7
Agricultural Prices			
United States	247.0	123.5	124.3
Nebraska	257.0	128.5	128.5

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



Source: Table 4 below.

4. MARCH CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS			
The State and Its Trading Centers	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago		
	Employment ¹	Building Activity ²	Power Consumption ³
<i>The State</i>	101.6	86.0	99.9
Alliance	125.1	19.6	86.9
Beatrice	99.6	75.7	94.6
Bellevue	100.5	66.7	100.2*
Blair	93.5	62.3	140.8
Broken Bow	98.9	135.8	108.6
Chadron	93.3	121.1	92.7
Columbus	101.6	107.4	96.6
Fairbury	107.0	69.3	104.6*
Falls City	99.2	61.8	103.1
Fremont	101.7	44.0	98.8*
Grand Island	100.4	114.3	109.3
Hastings	101.5	94.8	94.3
Holdrege	99.9	102.6	95.3
Kearney	98.8	161.1	96.8
Lexington	101.7	39.9	97.6
Lincoln	108.6	76.0	98.3
McCook	101.0	140.6	93.0
Nebraska City	100.1	83.7	115.5
Norfolk	99.8	205.7	106.5
North Platte	99.6	117.4	98.9
Omaha	100.5	107.7	100.6
Scottsbluff/Gering	100.8	49.0	93.6
Seward	99.1	73.5	107.6
Sidney	98.8	51.8	101.6
So. Sioux City	95.7	NA	96.6*
York	99.3	110.3	101.2

¹ As a proxy for city employment, total employment for the county in which a city is located is used.

² Building Activity is the value of building permits issued as spread over an appropriate time period of construction. The U.S. Department of Commerce Composite Construction Cost Index is used to adjust construction activity for price changes.

³ Power Consumption is a combined index of consumption of electricity and natural gas except in cases marked * for which only one is used.

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

NEBRASKA POPULATION TRENDS, 1930-1978

Thirty-six of Nebraska's ninety-three counties consistently lost population from 1930 to 1978. Counties which sustained the greatest loss in population, having at least one decade of a more than 20 percent decrease are: Arthur, Blaine, Franklin, Pawnee, Sioux, Webster, and Wheeler. Twenty-two of these counties experienced a moderate loss of 10 percent or more for approximately three of the decades over the 1930-1978 time period: Antelope, Banner, Boone, Boyd, Cherry, Custer, Deuel, Dixon, Dundy, Fillmore, Furnas, Garden, Greeley, Hitchcock, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Nance, Nuckolls, Richardson, Sherman, and Valley. The remaining seven counties in this group—Burt, Butler, Cedar, Cum- ing, Gage, Otoe, and Polk—generally had less than 10 percent loss in population.

Only five Nebraska counties—Dakota, Douglas, Hall, Lancaster, and Sarpy—have experienced consistent gains in population since 1930. Four others—Buffalo, Dodge, Lincoln, and Madison—exhibited continuous increases in population since 1940. The growth in Dakota, Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy counties can be attributed to their being Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area counties. Each of the other growth counties—Buffalo, Dodge, Hall, and Lincoln—contains a city (Kearney, Fremont, Grand Island, and North Platte, respectively) that has been growing substantially and thus contributed to the counties' increases.

The remaining forty-eight Nebraska counties displayed fluctuating patterns of population growth and loss. Twenty-four of these counties declined in population for all but one of the time periods involved. Sixteen of the twenty-four experienced their first growth from 1970-1978: Chase, Colfax, Frontier, Gosper, Hayes, Logan, Loup, McPherson, Morrill, Perkins, Pierce, Sheridan, Stanton, Thayer, Thurston, and York. Four of the counties—Dawes, Grant, Howard, and Merrick—exhibited growth only from 1960 to 1970, and one—Clay—from 1950 to 1960. Three of these counties—Holt, Keya Paha, and Nemaha—have continually lost population since 1940. Except for Dawson, Keith, and Scotts Bluff counties (which gained in population for all but one of the decades), the remaining twenty-one counties displayed an approximately equal occurrence of population gains and losses.

Although the population of a large portion of nonmetropolitan counties decreased from 1930 to 1978, fewer of these counties are currently losing population. For those still decreasing, the size of the loss is generally smaller than for previous decades. While metropolitan counties have continued to grow, the rate of growth has generally declined. Based on these trends, population throughout the state appears to be stabilizing in the 1970s, as compared to previous decades.

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POPULATION ESTIMATES (Continued from page 3)

of increased population has been more fully reflected in the data series used to produce the county estimates. Box Butte County's net in-migration rate of 18.6 percent since 1970 is the highest in the western region. A 1977 special census in Alliance showed growth of 16.4 percent since 1970, confirming rapid population growth in Box Butte County's largest city.

Of the seven western area counties experiencing population declines since 1970, five—Banner, Cheyenne, Deuel, Garden, and Sioux—appear to be repeating their 1960-1970 trends, but at slower rates of decline. The remaining two counties—Dawes and Kimball—have been affected by special circumstances. Dawes

County's population has been influenced by a declining institutional (college) population since 1970. Kimball County's population estimates, which had shown growth in the earlier years of this decade, may currently reflect the winding down of major construction projects.

CONCLUSION

If the population stability that is emerging in estimates for numerous Nebraska counties during the 1970s continues and is verified by the 1980 census count, it would represent a significant break with past trends. Specifically, the magnitude and permanence of nonmetropolitan population growth will be important indicators of Nebraska counties' future population trends.

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UNL News

BUSINESS IN NEBRASKA

PREPARED BY BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH
Member, Association for University Business & Economic Research

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No. 418 July, 1979

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