



## 1974 AND 1975 NEBRASKA POPULATION ESTIMATES

The mid-decade provisional estimate of Nebraska's resident population is 1,541,713,<sup>1</sup> an increase of 3.8 percent since the 1970 census of population. This article focuses on the provisional July, 1975, and revised 1974 population estimates for the state and its 93 counties and 26 planning regions.

As in past years, the population estimates were prepared jointly by the UN-L Bureau of Business Research and the U.S. Bureau of the Census through the auspices of the Federal-State Cooperative Program for Population Estimates (FSCP).<sup>2</sup> County population estimates are generated by using three separate methods (regression, component method II, and the administrative records methods). The official county estimates are an average of the results of the three methods, adjusted to agree with the state total estimate.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This figure is somewhat lower than the 1975 state total first released in the December, 1975, issue of *Business in Nebraska*. The difference is a subtraction of 4,620 persons from the state's population based on the results of special census counts taken in several Nebraska counties since 1970—chiefly the Sarpy County census in 1974—which indicated lower populations for some of those counties than had been estimated previously.

<sup>2</sup>Previous years' estimates were published in the April, 1975, March, 1974, February, 1973, and April, 1972, issues of *Business in Nebraska*.

<sup>3</sup>See *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, Nos. 427 and 460, for further methodological details.

### STATE-LEVEL PATTERNS

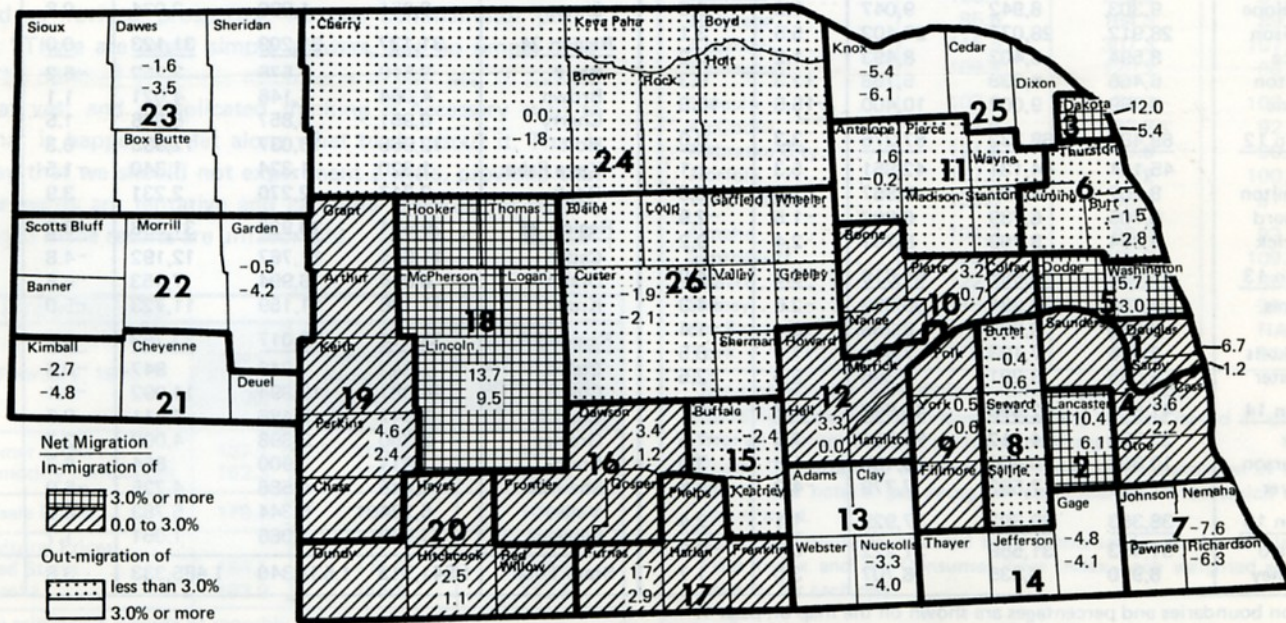
In the years since the last decennial census of population the state of Nebraska is estimated to have added over 56,000 persons to its population. Natural increase and net migration, the two components of population change, comprised 84 percent and 16 percent, respectively, of the increase in population.

Natural increase (the excess of births over deaths) has been the primary component of change contributing to the increases in Nebraska's population in recent decades. During the 1960s and early 1970s, however, the number of births has been declining dramatically. For example, the 22,771 Nebraska births recorded in 1973 represented a decline of about one-third from the 34,544 births recorded in the peak year of 1961. The 1973 crude birth rate was the lowest ever recorded, and the 1974 and 1975 birth rates are still substantially below the levels of recent decades. Relatively little change in levels of recorded deaths occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, so that the drop in births has caused natural growth of the population to plummet from an annual average of around 20,000 during the 1950s to 14,000 during the 1960s and to only 9,000 during the 1970s.

The lack of precise measurements of net migration, the other component of population change, causes much uncertainty in the estimates of its direction and

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POPULATION CHANGE AND NET MIGRATION IN NEBRASKA REGIONS, 1970 TO 1975\*



\*Upper figure: percentage change in population from 1970.  
Lower figure: 1970-1975 net migration as percentage of 1970 population.



**POPULATION OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND COUNTIES<sup>1</sup>**  
**PROVISIONAL 1975 AND REVISED 1974 COMPARED WITH 1970 CENSUS**

Regions and Counties	Provisional July 1, '75	Revised July 1, '74	Census Apr. 1, '70	Percent Change '70-'75	Net Migration Rate <sup>2</sup>	Regions and Counties	Provisional July 1, '75	Revised July 1, '74	Census Apr. 1, '70	Percent Change '70-'75	Net Migration Rate <sup>2</sup>
<b>Region 1</b>	<b>486,189</b>	<b>488,697</b>	<b>455,655</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>Region 16</b>	<b>26,800</b>	<b>26,367</b>	<b>25,931</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>1.2</b>
Douglas	410,997	415,289	389,455	5.5	0.6	Dawson	20,665	20,031	19,771	4.5	1.9
Sarpy	75,192	73,408	66,200	13.6	4.2	Frontier	3,860	4,034	3,982	-3.1	-3.2
<b>Region 2</b>	<b>185,382</b>	<b>182,708</b>	<b>167,972</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	Gosper	2,275	2,302	2,178	4.5	3.1
Lancaster	185,382	182,708	167,972	10.4	6.1	<b>Region 17</b>	<b>25,804</b>	<b>25,188</b>	<b>25,373</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>Region 3</b>	<b>14,713</b>	<b>14,686</b>	<b>13,137</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>5.4</b>	Franklin	4,543	4,548	4,566	-0.5	2.6
Dakota	14,713	14,686	13,137	12.0	5.4	Furnas	6,968	6,845	6,897	1.0	3.0
<b>Region 4</b>	<b>52,513</b>	<b>52,785</b>	<b>50,670</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>2.2</b>	Harlan	4,362	4,162	4,357	0.1	3.2
Cass	19,355	19,681	18,076	7.1	3.5	Phelps	9,931	9,633	9,553	4.0	2.9
Otoe	15,165	15,231	15,576	-2.6	-2.7	<b>Region 18</b>	<b>37,560</b>	<b>37,164</b>	<b>33,045</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Saunders	17,993	17,873	17,018	5.7	5.2	Hooker	990	980	939	5.4	8.2
<b>Region 5</b>	<b>50,853</b>	<b>50,750</b>	<b>48,092</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	Lincoln	33,938	33,564	29,538	14.9	10.3
Dodge	36,198	36,324	34,782	4.1	1.3	Logan	1,030	1,023	991	3.9	1.3
Washington	14,655	14,426	13,310	10.1	7.3	McPherson	634	632	623	1.8	-0.6
<b>Region 6</b>	<b>27,812</b>	<b>27,877</b>	<b>28,223</b>	<b>-1.5</b>	<b>-2.8</b>	Thomas	968	965	954	1.5	0.9
Burt	8,877	8,924	9,247	-4.0	-3.2	<b>Region 19</b>	<b>18,480</b>	<b>17,943</b>	<b>17,664</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>
Cuming	11,681	11,769	12,034	-2.9	-5.0	Arthur	566	574	606	-6.6	-10.6
Thurston	7,254	7,184	6,942	4.5	1.6	Chase	4,394	4,229	4,129	6.4	5.6
<b>Region 7</b>	<b>29,087</b>	<b>29,683</b>	<b>31,469</b>	<b>-7.6</b>	<b>-6.3</b>	Grant	940	955	1,019	-7.8	-11.8
Johnson	5,579	5,447	5,743	-2.9	-1.9	Keith	9,270	8,965	8,487	9.2	6.0
Nemaha	7,812	8,195	8,976	-13.0	-13.6	Perkins	3,310	3,220	3,423	-3.3	-3.8
Pawnee	4,237	4,210	4,473	-5.3	-1.9	<b>Region 20</b>	<b>21,221</b>	<b>20,604</b>	<b>20,698</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>
Richardson	11,459	11,831	12,277	-6.7	-4.7	Dundy	2,804	2,803	2,926	-4.2	-3.2
<b>Region 8</b>	<b>36,603</b>	<b>37,123</b>	<b>36,730</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	Hayes	1,539	1,511	1,530	0.6	-2.2
Butler	8,948	9,129	9,461	-5.4	-5.0	Hitchcock	4,192	3,869	4,051	3.5	2.7
Seward	15,065	15,501	14,460	4.2	2.7	Red Willow	12,686	12,421	12,191	4.1	1.9
Saline	12,590	12,493	12,809	-1.7	-1.0	<b>Region 21</b>	<b>18,986</b>	<b>19,915</b>	<b>19,504</b>	<b>-2.7</b>	<b>-4.8</b>
<b>Region 9</b>	<b>28,442</b>	<b>28,154</b>	<b>28,290</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.6</b>	Cheyenne	10,799	10,850	10,778	0.2	-1.5
Fillmore	7,917	8,064	8,137	-2.7	-1.2	Deuel	2,607	2,582	2,717	-4.0	-4.0
Polk	6,280	6,332	6,468	-2.9	-1.5	Kimball	5,580	6,483	6,009	-7.1	-11.2
York	14,245	13,758	13,685	4.1	2.6	<b>Region 22</b>	<b>45,973</b>	<b>44,869</b>	<b>46,208</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>-4.2</b>
<b>Region 10</b>	<b>50,971</b>	<b>49,749</b>	<b>49,374</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>	Banner	940	958	1,034	-9.1	-13.1
Boone	8,164	7,743	8,190	-0.3	-0.6	Garden	2,812	2,871	2,929	-4.0	-3.5
Colfax	9,698	9,606	9,498	2.1	2.5	Morrill	6,075	5,806	5,813	4.5	3.1
Nance	4,852	4,863	5,142	-5.6	-5.3	Scotts Bluff	36,146	35,234	36,432	-0.8	-5.2
Platte	28,257	27,537	26,544	6.5	1.7	<b>Region 23</b>	<b>28,711</b>	<b>28,449</b>	<b>29,174</b>	<b>-1.6</b>	<b>-3.5</b>
<b>Region 11</b>	<b>62,064</b>	<b>60,662</b>	<b>61,100</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	Box Butte	10,199	9,913	10,094	1.0	-1.0
Antelope	9,303	8,942	9,047	2.8	2.5	Dawes	9,248	9,419	9,761	-5.3	-6.8
Madison	28,912	28,077	27,402	5.5	3.1	Sheridan	7,213	7,227	7,285	-1.0	-2.7
Pierce	8,594	8,403	8,493	1.2	0.2	Sioux	2,051	1,890	2,034	0.8	-2.9
Stanton	6,466	6,238	5,758	12.3	9.3	<b>Region 24</b>	<b>31,137</b>	<b>31,209</b>	<b>31,123</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-1.8</b>
Wayne	8,789	9,002	10,400	-15.5	-16.8	Boyd	3,519	3,575	3,752	-6.2	-4.8
<b>Region 12</b>	<b>69,487</b>	<b>68,332</b>	<b>67,276</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	Brown	4,064	4,146	4,021	1.1	0.5
Hall	45,111	44,131	42,851	5.3	1.1	Cherry	6,951	6,857	6,846	1.5	-1.1
Hamilton	8,707	8,693	8,867	-1.8	-3.3	Holt	12,966	13,037	12,933	0.3	-2.2
Howard	6,705	6,739	6,807	-1.5	-2.9	Keya Paha	1,320	1,324	1,340	-1.5	-4.9
Merrick	8,964	8,769	8,751	2.4	0.2	Rock	2,317	2,270	2,231	3.9	1.6
<b>Region 13</b>	<b>49,899</b>	<b>50,998</b>	<b>51,619</b>	<b>-3.3</b>	<b>-4.0</b>	<b>Region 25</b>	<b>29,691</b>	<b>29,920</b>	<b>31,368</b>	<b>-5.3</b>	<b>-6.1</b>
Adams	29,750	30,381	30,553	-2.6	-4.3	Cedar	11,611	11,767	12,192	-4.8	-6.3
Clay	8,230	8,223	8,266	-0.4	-1.4	Dixon	6,944	6,994	7,453	-6.8	-7.5
Nuckolls	6,876	7,193	7,404	-7.1	-6.5	Knox	11,136	11,159	11,723	-5.0	-4.9
Webster	5,043	5,201	5,396	-6.5	-2.5	<b>Region 26</b>	<b>33,114</b>	<b>33,017</b>	<b>33,763</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>-2.1</b>
<b>Region 14</b>	<b>41,858</b>	<b>42,098</b>	<b>43,946</b>	<b>-4.8</b>	<b>-4.1</b>	Blaine	842	843	847	-0.6	-2.7
Gage	23,784	24,112	25,731	-7.6	-7.5	Custer	14,081	13,894	14,092	-0.1	-0.2
Jefferson	10,604	10,404	10,436	1.6	3.0	Garfield	2,642	2,486	2,411	9.6	10.1
Thayer	7,470	7,582	7,779	-4.0	-2.6	Greeley	3,850	3,898	4,000	-3.7	-3.8
<b>Region 15</b>	<b>38,363</b>	<b>38,393</b>	<b>37,929</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>-2.4</b>	Loup	911	900	854	6.7	5.9
Buffalo	31,453	31,558	31,222	0.7	-3.3	Sherman	4,445	4,586	4,725	-5.9	-6.3
Kearney	6,910	6,835	6,707	3.0	1.7	Valley	5,274	5,344	5,783	-8.8	-8.5
						Wheeler	1,069	1,066	1,051	1.7	-2.2
						<b>State Total</b>	<b>1,541,713</b>	<b>1,537,340</b>	<b>1,485,333</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.6</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) magnitude. The provisional 1975 estimate of migration for Nebraska, however, suggests that the net in-migration indicated by earlier estimates was, at best, a result of temporary phenomena (for example, high farm incomes of the early 1970s, returning Vietnam veterans, and high rates of unemployment in other states), and, at worst, was possibly a result of biases in the estimating procedure used at the state level. The estimated net in-migration to Nebraska between 1970 and 1973 was around 22,000, yet for the five-year, 1970-1975 period it was down to only 9,000, representing a switch from net in- to net out-migration since 1973. Although the 1975 provisional estimate suggests that almost no in-migration has occurred on net since 1970 (0.6 percent), even maintaining a position of zero net migration would represent increased stability for Nebraska when compared to the net out-migration of past decades.

#### METROPOLITAN PATTERNS

Nebraska's metropolitan areas combined (including Douglas, Sarpy, Lancaster, and Dakota counties) showed population growth of 7.8 percent between 1970 and 1975, a growth rate more than twice that of the state and almost ten times that of the nonmetropolitan counties combined. Total net in-migration of about 2.5 percent to the Omaha, Lincoln, and South Sioux City areas was just sufficient to offset the slight net out-migration of 0.8 percent from the nonmetropolitan counties combined and thus allow for the state total net in-migration rate of 0.6 percent since 1970.

Of the three metropolitan areas, the Omaha area appears to have experienced the most dramatic change in 1975 as compared with other years since 1970. In particular, the net in-migration rate for the Douglas-Sarpy region declined from 3.3 percent for the four-year, 1970-1974 period, to 1.2 percent for the five-year, 1970-1975 period. The estimated total population for Douglas County alone declined about 1 percent from 1974 to 1975, while Sarpy County showed a 2.4 percent increase.

A decline of population in Douglas County does not seem improbable in light of related economic indicators. Unemployment rates in Omaha were consistently higher than those of the state or Lincoln during 1975 (and continuing thus far into 1976 as well), and manufacturing plant closeouts and layoffs may have contributed to the population decline. It is difficult as yet, however, to determine whether the estimated population decline in Douglas County is a temporary dip in response to an unfavorable economic climate, or whether Omaha may be beginning to show symptoms of some of the big-city problems (such as busing of school children) which have been associated with more permanent patterns of population decline for other metropolitan areas.

It is somewhat early to assess how much, if any, of the Douglas County population loss may be accruing to Sarpy County. The 1975 county estimate ranks Sarpy as the second-fastest growing county in the state since 1970, with an increase in total population of 13.6 percent. Because Sarpy continues to show a high rate of natural increase, however, the county achieves only 12th place in the ranking of county net migration rates for 1970 to 1975.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Disagreement still exists at this point over the accuracy of the results of the special census taken in Sarpy County in 1974 (which have provided the basis for subsequent FSCP estimates). The special census count was quite low relative to expectations based on other demographic indicators available.

The population of Region 2 (Lancaster County) increased by about 10.4 percent from 1970 to 1975, a growth exceeded only by the increases of Regions 3 and 18. (For region boundaries, see map on page 1.) The 1975 estimates suggest that Lancaster County has accounted for almost two-thirds of Nebraska's metropolitan net in-migration since 1970. Other indicators of economic and demographic activity for Lincoln, such as total and manufacturing employment, confirm that the city has had a lesser degree of economic hardship than was experienced by Omaha or the rest of the state during 1975. According to preliminary annual 1975 labor force figures from the Nebraska Department of Labor, the Lincoln labor force increased slightly from 1974 to 1975, while that of Omaha and of the state as a whole experienced declines. Employment in manufacturing in Lincoln declined by about 4.5 percent from 1974 to 1975, while declining 13.2 percent in Omaha and 8.4 percent for the state.

#### NONMETROPOLITAN PATTERNS

Estimates and interpretations of population developments for the nonmetropolitan portion of Nebraska are subject to a somewhat greater degree of uncertainty than those for the state as a whole or for the metropolitan counties. This is primarily a result of the large number of relatively small counties in Nebraska. In small counties, random fluctuations of demographic variables can cause large percentage changes to occur in the resulting population estimate, whereas in counties with large total populations such random fluctuations have less effect. Despite these difficulties, several developments should be pointed out concerning the 1975 nonmetropolitan areas' estimates.

Region 18 continues to be the fastest-growing region in the state, increasing by 13.7 percent since 1970 (see map on page 1). The 14.9 percent growth of Lincoln County, highest of the 93 county growth rates, provided the primary boost to its region's growth. Expansion of the transportation industry and construction of a power plant continue to contribute to the North Platte area's rapid growth. In addition to Lincoln County, three of the four remaining small counties in Region 18 (Hooker, Logan, and Thomas) experienced net in-migration rates between 1970 and 1975 equal to or above the state average, with the fourth county's (McPherson) rate only slightly below the state rate. Since each of the four small counties was subjected to a special census enumeration during 1975, estimated growth rates are probably quite accurate for these counties (assuming that the special census enumerations were accurate).

Region 5 continues to be the second-fastest growing nonmetropolitan region in the state, increasing by 5.7 percent since 1970, with Washington County's 7.3 percent net in-migration rate accounting for the region's rapid growth. Proximity of Dodge and Washington counties to the Omaha metropolitan area raises the possibility that Region 5 received some of the estimated population movement from Omaha in recent years.

Two regions in the state's southern and western sections have moved up dramatically in the ranks of Nebraska's high in-migration rate areas. Region 17 and Region 19 rank fifth and sixth in the state's 26 planning regions in terms of estimated net in-migration from 1970 to 1975, compared to a ranking of ninth and tenth in 1974. In Region 19, Keith and Chase counties showed net in-migration rates of 6.0 percent and 5.6 percent, respectively, between 1970 and 1975. These rates were about ten times that of the state. In Region 17

(Continued on page 6)

### Review and Outlook

The data for Nebraska in Tables 1 and 2 have been revised for January with respect to construction and the totals of which it is a part. The revised figures are shown in the table to the right.

Considering these changes, the figures in Table 1 for the state are about the same for February as for January. There is some slight betterment, relative to last year, in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and government. In physical volume the same comparisons hold, except that distribution did better and government slightly worse than in January.

In Table 2, relative to the 1967 base, Nebraska's total dollar volume dropped three index points, or 1.3 percent, and 1.5 points, or 1.2 percent, in total physical volume. Activity in the

Corrected Data for Tables 1 and 2, for Nebraska for January, 1976

	In Table 1 Relative to Same Month Previous Year	In Table 2 Relative to 1967
Dollar volume	108.2	224.0
Nonagricultural	107.9	224.2
Construction	90.2	181.5
Physical volume	101.5	129.7
Nonagricultural	101.7	131.5
Construction	87.5	93.6

(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				
February, 1976	Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year		1976 Year to Date as Percent of 1975 Year to Date	
	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	108.3	109.3	108.2	108.7
Agricultural	112.2	112.0	110.9	109.7
Nonagricultural	107.7	109.2	107.8	108.6
Construction	93.3	102.8	91.8	102.1
Manufacturing	102.6	109.1	102.8	107.4
Distributive	111.1	110.1	111.3	110.0
Government	106.9	107.9	107.0	108.0
Physical Volume	101.7	103.4	101.7	102.9
Agricultural	96.9	100.8	97.7	100.3
Nonagricultural	102.4	103.5	102.4	103.0
Construction	90.9	100.1	89.2	99.2
Manufacturing	100.4	104.4	100.7	102.9
Distributive	104.5	103.6	104.5	103.2
Government	99.9	102.7	99.9	103.1

2. CHANGE FROM 1967		
Indicator	Percent of 1967 Average	
	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	221.0	204.8
Agricultural	205.3	208.8
Nonagricultural	223.7	204.6
Construction	181.9	165.2
Manufacturing	237.4	191.8
Distributive	222.6	212.0
Government	225.1	219.2
Physical Volume	128.2	120.5
Agricultural	111.6	113.4
Nonagricultural	131.1	120.7
Construction	93.8	85.1
Manufacturing	134.2	109.2
Distributive	133.2	126.9
Government	131.8	135.7

#### 3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES (Adjusted for Price Changes)

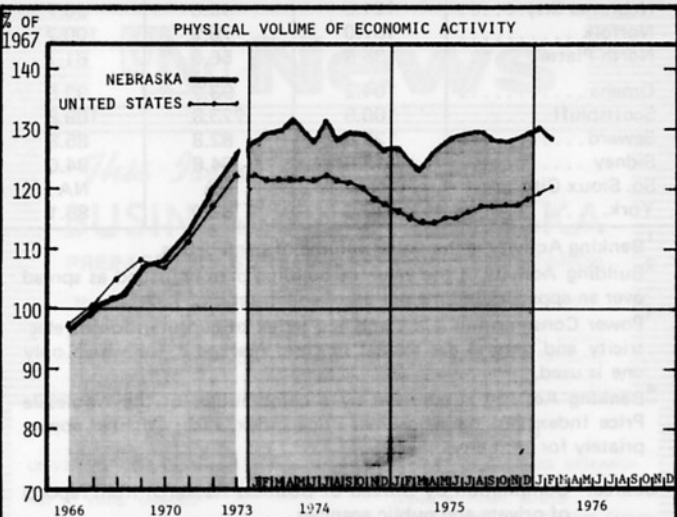
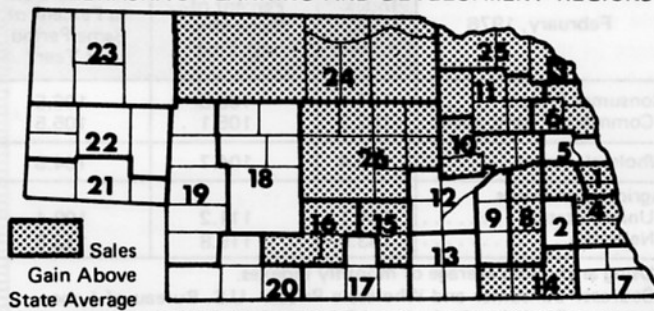
Region Number <sup>1</sup> and City	Sales in Region <sup>2</sup>		
	Feb. 1976 as percent of Feb. 1975	Feb. 1976 as percent of Feb. 1975	Year to date '76 as percent of Year to date '75
<i>The State</i>	107.7	109.7	113.0
1 Omaha	111.7	112.4	114.8
Bellevue	102.0		
2 Lincoln	99.8	102.3	107.7
3 So. Sioux City	114.6	114.9	116.2
4 Nebraska City	103.4	110.0	116.5
5 Fremont	87.5	97.5	108.2
Blair	107.6		
6 West Point	112.4	116.0	121.0
7 Falls City	76.7	97.3	108.3
8 Seward	123.5	113.6	121.6
9 York	108.7	109.2	108.9
10 Columbus	109.5	119.9	125.0
11 Norfolk	112.0	117.8	119.5
12 Grand Island	109.7	108.6	112.8
13 Hastings	88.8	96.0	101.7
14 Beatrice	108.2	113.3	116.7
Fairbury	108.4		
15 Kearney	118.6	118.8	117.5
16 Lexington	115.0	113.5	125.6
17 Holdrege	108.6	114.8	108.6
18 North Platte	108.0	111.8	112.7
19 Ogallala	103.2	99.0	98.1
20 McCook	104.5	112.2	107.9
21 Sidney	98.2	91.5	94.2
Kimball	87.1		
22 Scottsbluff/Gering	110.6	104.8	104.0
23 Alliance	111.3	113.9	110.6
Chadron	109.6		
24 O'Neill	113.2	126.5	121.9
25 Hartington	113.1	119.5	125.6
26 Broken Bow	89.0	110.2	119.8

<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.

#### 1976 YEAR TO DATE AS PERCENT OF 1975 YEAR TO DATE IN NEBRASKA'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS





(Continued from page 4)

agriculture and manufacturing sectors dropped some from the January level, while activity in the other sectors rose. The dollar volume for agriculture was affected by the fall in agricultural prices in Nebraska (Table 5). Thus, Nebraska turned slightly downward on the chart, while the nation continued its slow rise.

Retail sales in February were above February of 1975, but not by as much as in January. Only a few cities or regions did as well compared with the year before as they did last month. The total of the regions, which includes motor vehicle sales, had a better showing than the total of the city sales, which does not include them. Here again, the comparison is not as sharp as it was last month. The map below Table 3 shows about the same regions with sales gains below the state average as in January, except that Regions 5, 7, and 12 have been added to those below.

Banking activity, deflated like retail sales for price inflation, shows a remarkable advance in February over 1975, similar to the advance in December. There had been almost no advance in January. Every city except Holdrege and McCook shared in the recent advance. Banking activity is one of the best indicators of the amount of business done in a city. The leaders were Norfolk, North Platte, Columbus, and Hastings. Omaha and Lincoln had very moderate increases.

Power consumption was less for the total of the cities than a year ago, but the difference was due to a lowering of gas consumption, enough to more than offset a very moderate increase in the use of electricity.

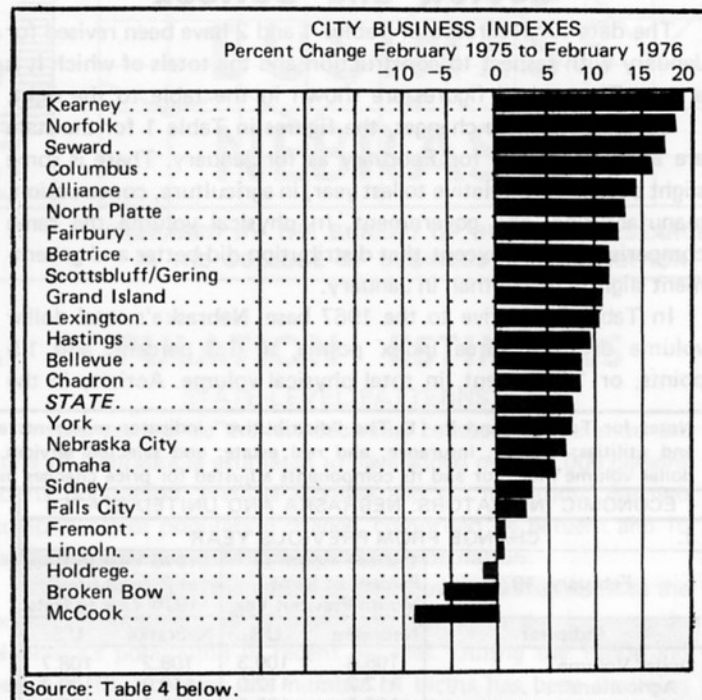
The chart above Table 4, based on the data in Tables 3 and 4, is again very favorable. It shows all cities except three (Broken Bow, McCook, and Holdrege) with a business index above that of a year ago, and the total for the state is 7 percent above. Norfolk is the only city that has been among the top four on this chart consistently since last August.

The exasperatingly slow rise in the national and state economies, and the exasperatingly slow decline in the rate of price inflation, are discouraging to many people, but, compared with the ten years of drought and depression of the 1930s, are not to be despised. Unfortunately, we simply do not know how to insure continued or revived prosperity. As one commentator put it recently, "There are many simple answers, but no simple questions." The national economic machine is so vast and so complicated that vast and complicated thinking is necessary even to know what is happening, let alone what to do about it. That is not to say that we should not experiment a little, provided that the experiments are tentative and carefully checked for results, and changed if the results are unfavorable.

E. Z. P.

5. PRICE INDEXES			
February, 1976	Index (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices . . . . .	167.1	106.3	106.5
Commodity component	162.3	105.1	105.5
Wholesale Prices . . . . .	179.4	104.7	104.5
Agricultural Prices			
United States . . . . .	184.1	111.2	109.4
Nebraska . . . . .	183.9	115.8	113.5

\*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. FEBRUARY CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS			
The State and Its Trading Centers	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago		
	Banking Activity <sup>1</sup> (Adjusted for Price Changes) <sup>4</sup>	Building Activity <sup>2</sup>	Power Consumption <sup>3</sup>
The State . . . . .	110.3	105.3	94.9
Alliance . . . . .	115.0	233.3	99.0
Beatrice . . . . .	111.6	245.8	95.0
Bellevue . . . . .	116.0	147.1	100.1*
Blair . . . . .	NA	NA	NA
Broken Bow . . . . .	105.8	75.2	81.3
Chadron . . . . .	108.7	199.4	85.2
Columbus . . . . .	128.4	132.2	88.4
Fairbury . . . . .	121.0	121.2	98.9*
Falls City . . . . .	118.9	367.9	93.4
Fremont . . . . .	119.4	68.8	93.9*
Grand Island . . . . .	115.2	127.3	99.9
Hastings . . . . .	128.1	213.9	91.8
Holdrege . . . . .	85.5	164.3	89.9
Kearney . . . . .	115.5	307.3	107.0
Lexington . . . . .	109.9	120.2	98.3
Lincoln . . . . .	103.9	71.7	103.4
McCook . . . . .	74.6	132.8	92.6
Nebraska City . . . . .	121.6	49.0	90.7
Norfolk . . . . .	137.0	75.2	100.2
North Platte . . . . .	135.6	56.0	81.7
Omaha . . . . .	104.2	93.2	93.5
Scottsbluff . . . . .	106.5	223.8	109.8
Seward . . . . .	122.8	82.8	85.8
Sidney . . . . .	116.4	64.8	94.0
So. Sioux City . . . . .	NA	NA	NA
York . . . . .	116.0	67.0	86.1

<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.

(Continued from page 3) all four counties showed rates more than four times that of the state.

Perhaps the most dramatic reversal of population trends has occurred in Kimball County, where a Federal government construction project has begun to wind down. The rapid inflow and then outflow of population caused the county's net in-migration rate of 6.5 percent for 1970 to 1974 to drop to a net out-migration rate of 11.2 percent for 1970 to 1975. This shift in net migration caused Region 21 to drop from 11th down to 24th place in the ranking of net migration rates of the 26 planning regions.

Of the fifteen nonmetropolitan counties with net out-migration rates greater than 5 percent from 1970 to 1975, one-third were counties which experienced declining institutional or college populations (Scotts Bluff, Dawes, Gage, Nemaha, and Wayne). Of the remaining ten counties, three (Arthur, Banner, and Grant) were among the very small counties (below 1,500) specially enumerated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census during 1975.<sup>5</sup> One, Kimball, was discussed earlier as the subject of a construction project

wind-down. Estimates for the remaining six counties (Cedar, Dixon, Nance, Nuckolls, Sherman, and Valley) appear to be consistent with a continuation of post-1970 patterns of population levels below those of the 1970 census counts.

According to the 1975 estimates, the remaining three-fourths (73 percent) of Nebraska's nonmetropolitan counties have experienced net migration rates of between +5 and -5 percent since 1970, or average annual net migration rates of almost 1 percent.

#### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

An analysis of the implications of recent population developments, including the implications of these 1975 provisional estimates, for projected state and county populations is currently under way. As a result, a report containing updated state, region, and county population projections for Nebraska will be completed by the Bureau of Business Research in mid-1976.

VICKI STEPP

<sup>5</sup>For a discussion of the results of the special censuses taken in eleven Nebraska counties during 1975, see the March, 1976, issue of *Business in Nebraska*.

### NATIONAL POTPOURRI\*

**URBAN FAMILY BUDGETS RISE.** Costs of three hypothetical family budgets for an urban family of four rose from autumn 1974 to autumn 1975, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. An urban family consisting of a 38-year-old husband employed full time, his nonworking wife, a boy of 13, and a girl of 8 could expect the average cost of an intermediate budget to amount to about \$15,479, an 8.0 percent increase over 1974. Average cost of lower budget amounted to \$9,838, a 7.0 percent increase, while the higher budget amounted to \$22,476, an 8.2 percent increase.

**CONSUMER BUYING PLANS GO BULLISH.** The consumer buying plans index of the Conference Board rose strongly according to the January-February survey. Increases in plans to buy were registered in automobiles and in homes. The buying pattern among major appliances dropped slightly and the vacation plans index was down some. Still, consumer optimism about the future rose, with 27 percent of the respondents expecting better business conditions and 22 percent expecting more jobs six months hence, as opposed to 23 and 20 percent respectively in the November-

December survey. Consumer confidence continued to improve, rising by 7 percent according to the Conference Board's latest Confidence Index.

**HOME MORTGAGE COSTS NOT MUCH CHANGED.** National average effective interest rates for conventional home mortgage loans on new houses were unchanged from early February to early March, but rates on previously occupied houses declined slightly during the same period.

\*Taken from the May, 1976, issue of *Finance Facts*, a monthly publication of the National Consumer Finance Association.

#### CORRECTION

In the table on page 1 of the May issue of *Business in Nebraska*, we mislabeled Column 3 as "Millions of Dollars." As incorrectly labeled, Nebraska's Per Capita Income was \$6,190,000,000. Rich we are, but that rich we are not! Figures should be in dollars; so read as \$6,190 per capita.

## UNL News

*This Issue:*

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