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## NEBRASKA RETAIL SALES, 1977-1978

Net taxable retail sales in Nebraska were \$7,801 million in 1978 (see Table 2, page 2). This represents a dollar volume increase of \$780 million over the revised 1977 figure of \$7,020 million.

A substantial portion of this increase was related to rising commodity prices. On an unadjusted basis, net taxable retail sales were up 11.1 percent. During 1978, commodity price increases were approximately 7 percent, which substantially reduces the adjusted or real gain in retail sales. When 1978 retail sales are deflated for price changes, sales were 3.7 percent above the 1977 level. (Unless otherwise indicated, retail sales are expressed in current dollars, unadjusted for price changes. Price change adjustment amounts to dividing by a constant which alters all areas equally.)

The data in Table 2 indicate that eighteen of the state's twenty-six regions had sales gain in excess of the state dollar volume average increase of 11.1 percent. Regions showing growth above the state average included Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, and 26.

Region 23 recorded the largest gain with a dollar volume increase of 19.5 percent. After adjustments for price changes, the real increase in retail sales in Region 23 led the state with a substantial 11.6 percent increase. Region 3 recorded a 16.7 percent dollar volume increase in 1978 over 1977 and Region 21 recorded a 16.4 percent increase in 1978. Regions lagging the state's average by the largest margin include Region 16 with a dollar volume increase of 5.4 percent, Region 2 with a 7.0 percent dollar volume increase, and Region 9 with a 7.5 percent dollar volume increase. While the gains were unevenly distributed across the state, it is important to note the wide geographical disbursement of gains (see Map 1, page 6) and the rather large number of regions which had substantial dollar volume increases in retail sales.

Retail sales in Nebraska have shown consistent improvement during 1978. The fourth-quarter dollar volume increase was 16 percent above the fourth quarter of 1977. Third-quarter sales were 14 percent above those recorded in the third quarter of 1977, while second-quarter 1978 retail sales were 9 percent above year-earlier levels. During the (Continued on page 3)

Table 1  
NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES<sup>1</sup> IN SELECTED NEBRASKA TRADING CENTERS, 1977 AND 1978  
WITH PERCENTAGE CHANGES FOR SALES UNADJUSTED AND ADJUSTED FOR PRICE CHANGES

Trade Center	Region <sup>2</sup>	Unadjusted for Price Changes			Adjusted for Prices <sup>3</sup> Percent of Change	Trade Center	Region <sup>2</sup>	Unadjusted for Price Changes			Adjusted for Prices <sup>3</sup> Percent of Change
		Thousands of Dollars		Percent of Change				Thousands of Dollars		Percent of Change	
		1977	1978					1977	1978		
Alliance	23	42,335	53,179	25.6	17.3	Lincoln	2	751,685	803,133	6.8	-0.3
Beatrice	14	66,956	73,513	9.8	2.5	McCook	20	58,577	64,729	10.5	3.2
Bellevue	1	82,078	91,012	10.9	3.6	Nebraska City	4	38,555	43,041	11.6	4.2
Broken Bow	26	30,128	32,885	9.2	2.0	Norfolk	11	135,947	148,425	9.2	2.0
Chadron	23	26,938	31,926	18.5	10.6	North Platte	18	141,936	157,939	11.3	3.9
Columbus	10	103,697	118,092	13.9	6.4	Ogallala	19	41,028	44,436	8.3	1.1
Fairbury	14	29,009	31,605	8.9	1.7	O'Neill	24	34,661	36,215	4.5	-2.4
Falls City	7	26,515	29,030	9.5	2.2	Omaha	1	1,790,918	2,002,951	11.8	4.4
Fremont	5	125,167	136,053	8.7	1.5	Scottsbluff	22	143,971	158,210	9.9	2.6
Grand Island	12	249,830	279,530	11.9	4.5	Seward	8	30,461	34,513	13.3	5.8
Hartington	25	13,361	15,192	13.7	6.2	Sidney	21	28,561	33,344	16.7	9.0
Hastings	13	140,873	149,701	6.3	-0.7	So. Sioux City	3	32,178	35,851	11.4	4.0
Holdrege	17	43,440	48,237	11.0	3.6	West Point	6	22,099	25,790	16.7	9.0
Kearney	15	122,834	135,620	10.4	3.1	York	9	53,313	57,150	7.2	0.1
Kimball	21	22,442	25,344	12.9	5.4	<b>Total 30 Centers</b>		<b>4,475,436</b>	<b>4,946,156</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Lexington	16	45,943	49,510	7.8	0.7	<b>Total State<sup>4</sup></b>		<b>6,270,149</b>	<b>6,924,243</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>

<sup>1</sup> Excluding motor vehicle sales.

<sup>2</sup> Nebraska Planning and Development Regions.

<sup>3</sup> Current dollar sales adjusted (deflated) for price changes using commodity prices component of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index.

<sup>4</sup> Total state retail sales include some retail sales that cannot be allocated to cities, counties, or regions.

Source: Compilations by Bureau of Business Research from special tabulations provided by Nebraska Tax Commissioner.

Table 2

NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES<sup>1</sup> IN NEBRASKA'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS, 1977 AND 1978  
BY COUNTIES, WITH PERCENTAGE CHANGES FOR SALES UNADJUSTED AND ADJUSTED FOR PRICE CHANGES

Region and County	Unadjusted for Price Changes			Adjusted for Prices <sup>2</sup> Percent of Change	Region and County	Unadjusted for Price Changes			Adjusted for Prices <sup>2</sup> Percent of Change
	Thousands of Dollars		Percent of Change			Thousands of Dollars		Percent of Change	
	1977	1978				1977	1978		
<b>Region 1</b>	<u>2,170,806</u>	<u>2,432,986</u>	+12.1	+ 4.7	<b>Region 16</b>	<u>125,022</u>	<u>131,755</u>	+ 5.4	- 1.6
Douglas	2,019,227	2,265,330	+12.2	+ 4.8	Dawson	108,140	114,546	+ 5.9	- 1.1
Sarpy	151,579	167,656	+10.6	+ 3.3	Frontier	8,776	9,380	+ 6.9	- 0.2
<b>Region 2</b>	<u>846,054</u>	<u>905,028</u>	+ 7.0	- 0.1	Gosper	8,106	7,829	- 3.4	- 9.8
Lancaster	846,054	905,028	+ 7.0	- 0.1	<b>Region 17</b>	<u>102,766</u>	<u>116,774</u>	+13.6	+ 6.1
<b>Region 3</b>	<u>48,502</u>	<u>56,611</u>	+16.7	+ 9.0	Franklin	13,980	15,933	+14.0	+ 6.4
Dakota	48,502	56,611	+16.7	+ 9.0	Furnas	20,382	23,755	+16.5	+ 8.8
<b>Region 4</b>	<u>156,640</u>	<u>179,946</u>	+14.9	+ 7.3	Harlan	13,168	15,706	+19.3	+11.4
Cass	43,269	50,350	+16.4	+ 8.7	Phelps	55,236	61,380	+11.1	+ 3.7
Otoe	63,016	70,786	+12.3	+ 4.9	<b>Region 18</b>	<u>177,852</u>	<u>200,142</u>	+12.5	+ 5.0
Saunders	50,355	58,810	+16.8	+ 9.1	Hooker	2,776	3,340	+20.3	+12.3
<b>Region 5</b>	<u>213,909</u>	<u>240,120</u>	+12.3	+ 4.9	Lincoln	169,846	190,475	+12.1	+ 4.7
Dodge	167,887	185,964	+10.8	+ 3.5	Logan	1,825	1,893	+ 3.7	- 3.2
Washington	46,022	54,156	+17.7	+ 9.9	McPherson	540	754	+39.6	+30.3
<b>Region 6</b>	<u>86,530</u>	<u>99,760</u>	+15.3	+ 7.7	Thomas	2,865	3,680	+28.4	+19.9
Burt	31,151	34,713	+11.4	+ 4.0	<b>Region 19</b>	<u>94,607</u>	<u>105,793</u>	+11.8	+ 4.4
Cuming	43,174	50,966	+18.0	+10.2	Arthur	924	1,148	+24.2	+16.0
Thurston	12,205	14,081	+15.4	+ 7.8	Chase	23,561	26,985	+14.5	+ 6.9
<b>Region 7</b>	<u>91,029</u>	<u>103,641</u>	+13.9	+ 6.4	Grant	2,487	3,124	+25.6	+17.3
Johnson	15,525	18,270	+17.7	+ 9.9	Keith	51,111	55,692	+ 9.0	+ 1.8
Nemaha	26,117	29,708	+13.7	+ 6.2	Perkins	16,524	18,844	+14.0	+ 6.4
Pawnee	9,687	10,777	+11.3	+ 3.9	<b>Region 20</b>	<u>88,678</u>	<u>99,288</u>	+12.0	+ 4.6
Richardson	39,700	44,886	+13.1	+ 5.6	Dundy	8,932	10,867	+21.7	+13.6
<b>Region 8</b>	<u>124,707</u>	<u>139,088</u>	+11.5	+ 4.1	Hayes	1,544	1,935	+25.3	+17.0
Butler	25,504	28,117	+10.2	+ 2.9	Hitchcock	8,507	8,810	+ 3.6	- 3.3
Seward	50,638	55,934	+10.5	+ 3.2	Red Willow	69,695	77,676	+11.5	+ 4.1
Saline	48,565	55,037	+13.3	+ 5.8	<b>Region 21</b>	<u>71,263</u>	<u>82,951</u>	+16.4	+ 8.7
<b>Region 9</b>	<u>128,439</u>	<u>138,099</u>	+ 7.5	+ 0.4	Cheyenne	36,155	43,371	+20.0	+12.0
Fillmore	31,734	35,173	+10.8	+ 3.5	Deuel	8,820	9,931	+12.6	+ 5.1
Polk	20,330	23,568	+15.9	+ 8.2	Kimball	26,288	29,649	+12.8	+ 5.3
York	76,375	79,358	+ 3.9	- 3.0	<b>Region 22</b>	<u>208,073</u>	<u>236,877</u>	+13.8	+ 6.3
<b>Region 10</b>	<u>213,444</u>	<u>242,077</u>	+13.4	+ 5.9	Banner	1,152	1,264	+ 9.7	+ 2.4
Boone	28,802	32,238	+11.9	+ 4.5	Garden	8,367	10,174	+21.6	+13.5
Colfax	35,931	39,795	+10.8	+ 3.5	Morrill	21,134	27,747	+31.3	+22.6
Nance	11,162	13,368	+19.8	+11.9	Scotts Bluff	177,420	197,692	+11.4	+ 4.0
Platte	137,549	156,676	+13.9	+ 6.4	<b>Region 23</b>	<u>123,409</u>	<u>147,474</u>	+19.5	+11.6
<b>Region 11</b>	<u>270,554</u>	<u>300,375</u>	+11.0	+ 3.6	Box Butte	51,510	64,086	+24.4	+16.2
Antelope	30,144	31,708	+ 5.2	- 1.8	Dawes	35,559	41,482	+16.7	+ 9.0
Madison	175,518	193,556	+10.3	+ 3.0	Sheridan	33,802	38,740	+14.6	+ 7.0
Pierce	24,574	26,541	+ 8.0	+ 0.8	Sioux	2,538	3,166	+24.7	+16.4
Stanton	9,417	11,163	+18.5	+10.6	<b>Region 24</b>	<u>133,889</u>	<u>143,674</u>	+ 7.3	+ 0.2
Wayne	30,901	37,407	+21.1	+13.1	Boyd	8,410	9,981	+18.7	+10.8
<b>Region 12</b>	<u>363,835</u>	<u>404,756</u>	+11.2	+ 3.8	Brown	22,369	22,926	+ 2.5	- 4.3
Hall	282,484	317,581	+12.4	+ 5.0	Cherry	27,200	31,006	+14.0	+ 6.4
Hamilton	30,555	33,618	+10.0	+ 2.7	Holt	59,243	63,544	+ 7.3	+ 0.2
Howard	19,780	22,019	+11.3	+ 3.9	Keya Paha	2,248	2,415	+ 7.4	+ 0.3
Merrick	31,016	31,538	+ 1.7	- 5.0	Rock	14,419	13,802	- 4.3	-10.6
<b>Region 13</b>	<u>230,081</u>	<u>251,244</u>	+ 9.2	+ 2.0	<b>Region 25</b>	<u>83,060</u>	<u>95,103</u>	+14.5	+ 6.9
Adams	161,601	172,666	+ 6.8	- 0.3	Cedar	35,081	39,705	+13.2	+ 5.7
Clay	28,363	31,598	+11.4	+ 4.0	Dixon	13,556	15,802	+16.6	+ 8.9
Nuckolls	26,431	30,615	+15.8	+ 8.1	Knox	34,423	39,596	+15.0	+ 7.4
Webster	13,686	16,365	+19.6	+11.7	<b>Region 26</b>	<u>108,810</u>	<u>121,404</u>	+11.6	+ 4.2
<b>Region 14</b>	<u>158,809</u>	<u>176,319</u>	+11.0	+ 3.6	Blaine	1,557	1,944	+24.9	+16.6
Gage	89,855	100,908	+12.3	+ 4.9	Custer	51,311	56,321	+ 9.8	+ 2.5
Jefferson	41,771	45,905	+ 9.9	+ 2.6	Garfield	9,543	10,142	+ 6.3	- 0.7
Thayer	27,183	29,506	+ 8.5	+ 1.3	Greeley	8,565	9,917	+15.8	+ 8.1
<b>Region 15</b>	<u>192,168</u>	<u>210,093</u>	+ 9.3	+ 2.1	Loup	1,023	1,347	+31.7	+23.0
Buffalo	165,595	182,253	+10.1	+ 2.8	Sherman	11,552	13,248	+14.7	+ 7.1
Kearney	26,573	27,840	+ 4.8	+ 2.1	Valley	23,219	26,171	+12.7	+ 5.2
					Wheeler	2,040	2,314	+13.4	+ 5.9
					<b>State Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>7,019,650</b>	<b>7,801,152</b>	<b>+11.1</b>	<b>+ 3.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> Motor vehicle sales are recorded as in counties in which the vehicles were first registered regardless of point of sale.

<sup>2</sup> Current dollar sales adjusted (deflated) for price changes using commodity prices component of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index.

<sup>3</sup> Total state retail sales include some retail sales that cannot be allocated to cities, counties, or regions.

Source: Compilation by Bureau of Business Research, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, from tabulations provided by the Nebraska Tax Commissioner.

(Continued from page 1) first quarter of 1978, dollar volume of retail sales was 4 percent above year-previous levels. Retail sales have momentum in Nebraska and can be expected to improve further as livestock prices rise to record levels and as grain prices show modest improvements.

Net taxable retail sales for the thirty major trade centers are summarized in Table 1, page 1. For these centers, total retail sales were up 10.5 percent on a dollar volume basis. When adjusted for

price changes, real retail sales increased 3.2 percent (the data in Table 1 exclude motor vehicle sales). Trade centers with above-average increases in retail sales on a dollar volume basis include Alliance, Bellevue, Chadron, Columbus, Hartington, Holdrege, Kimball, McCook, Nebraska City, North Platte, Omaha, Seward, Sidney, South Sioux City, and West Point. Alliance led the thirty trade centers with a substantial 25.6 percent increase in the dollar volume of retail sales. Dollar volume (Continued on page 6)

Table 3  
NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES, 1968-1978  
BY COUNTY

County	1968	1978	Percent of Increase 1968-1978	County	1968	1978	Percent of Increase 1968-1978
	(millions of dollars)				(millions of dollars)		
Adams	76	173	128	Jefferson	21	46	119
Antelope	13	32	146	Johnson	8	18	125
Arthur	0.5	1.1	120	Kearney	11	28	155
Banner	0.5	1.3	160	Keith	21	56	167
Blaine	1	1.9	90	Keya Paha	1	2	100
Boone	14	32	129	Kimball	13	30	131
Box Butte	21	64	205	Knox	15	40	167
Boyd	5	10	100	Lancaster	339	905	167
Brown	8	23	188	Lincoln	63	190	202
Buffalo	59	182	208	Logan	1	2	100
Burt	15	35	133	Loup	0.6	1.3	117
Butler	12	28	133	Madison	65	194	198
Cass	22	50	127	McPherson	0.3	0.8	167
Cedar	15	40	167	Merrick	13	32	146
Chase	8	27	238	Morrill	10	28	180
Cherry	13	31	138	Nance	6	13	117
Cheyenne	20	43	115	Nemaha	13	30	131
Clay	12	32	167	Nuckolls	13	31	138
Colfax	16	40	150	Otoe	30	71	137
Cuming	18	51	183	Pawnee	5	11	120
Custer	25	56	124	Perkins	6	19	217
Dakota	24	57	138	Phelps	22	61	177
Dawes	16	41	156	Pierce	10	27	170
Dawson	42	115	174	Platte	55	157	185
Deuel	5	10	100	Polk	9	24	167
Dixon	7	16	129	Red Willow	31	78	152
Dodge	76	186	145	Richardson	19	45	137
Douglas	967	2,265	134	Rock	4	14	250
Dundy	4	11	175	Saline	21	55	162
Fillmore	17	35	100	Sarpy	57	168	195
Franklin	7	16	129	Saunders	25	59	136
Frontier	4	9	125	Scotts Bluff	78	198	154
Furnas	12	24	100	Seward	23	56	143
Gage	42	101	141	Sheridan	16	39	144
Garden	4	10	150	Sherman	6	13	117
Garfield	4	10	150	Sioux	1	3	200
Gosper	3	8	167	Stanton	6	11	83
Grant	1.6	3	88	Thayer	14	30	114
Greeley	6	10	67	Thomas	1	4	300
Hall	106	318	200	Thurston	8	14	75
Hamilton	14	34	143	Valley	11	26	136
Harlan	6	16	167	Washington	19	54	184
Hayes	1	1.9	90	Wayne	13	37	185
Hitchcock	5	9	80	Webster	8	16	100
Holt	22	64	191	Wheeler	1	2	100
Hooker	2	3	50	York	31	79	155
Howard	8	22	175	STATE	2,917	7,801 <sup>1</sup>	168

<sup>1</sup> Total state retail sales include some retail sales that cannot be allocated to cities, counties, or regions.

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

## Review and Outlook

Real output in Nebraska fell for the second consecutive month in February. The physical volume index for the state declined 1.2 percent during the month, resulting in a value which was 41.0 percent above its 1967 base-period level (see Table 2). Compared to its level of February, 1978, however, the index experienced a 0.5 percent increase.

Most of the January-to-February reduction in state economic activity was centered in the agricultural sector, where output fell 13.5 percent. In contrast, nonagricultural output rose 0.7 percent, with three of the four nonagricultural sectors registering increases. The month-to-month percentage changes for the nonagricultural sectors were: manufacturing, +1.6 percent; government, +1.4 per-

cent; distributive, +0.5 percent; and construction, -1.5 percent.

Following a pause in December and January, manufacturing activity resumed its trend of steady expansion which began in December, 1977. During this fifteen-month interval, output in this sector has fallen only twice. The index for the manufacturing sector was 7.6 percent above its February, 1978, level. An indication of the strength of this sector is the increase in employment that has occurred. Preliminary data show that manufacturing added 600 workers in February for a total additional employment of 4,400 workers over last year.

The index for Nebraska agriculture (as measured by the volume of seasonally adjusted cash farm marketings) declined for the second consecutive month and was (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.

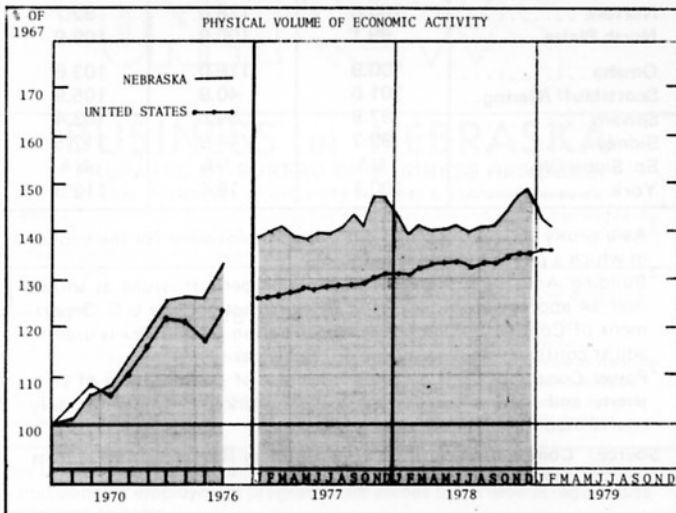
### ECONOMIC INDICATORS: NEBRASKA AND UNITED STATES

1. CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR				
February, 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				
Dollar Volume	111.9	113.9	111.5	113.7
Agricultural	114.9	128.6	114.5	124.5
Nonagricultural	111.5	113.4	111.1	113.4
Construction	100.9	115.7	102.1	118.7
Manufacturing	119.1	117.2	118.9	116.3
Distributive	112.2	112.9	111.5	113.0
Government	101.2	106.3	101.0	106.5
Physical Volume	100.5	103.5	100.0	103.5
Agricultural	90.0	103.2	89.0	99.7
Nonagricultural	102.1	103.5	101.9	103.7
Construction	88.2	101.1	89.6	104.1
Manufacturing	107.6	106.7	107.6	106.1
Distributive	102.1	102.7	101.7	103.1
Government	99.1	101.0	98.7	101.0

2. CHANGE FROM 1967		
Indicator	Percent of 1967 Average	
	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	303.9	286.8
Agricultural	280.3	305.6
Nonagricultural	308.0	286.2
Construction	312.2	256.2
Manufacturing	355.1	280.0
Distributive	298.4	296.3
Government	279.8	270.1
Physical Volume	141.0	136.1
Agricultural	114.9	125.8
Nonagricultural	145.6	136.5
Construction	122.9	100.9
Manufacturing	160.3	128.9
Distributive	144.1	143.1
Government	139.3	140.3

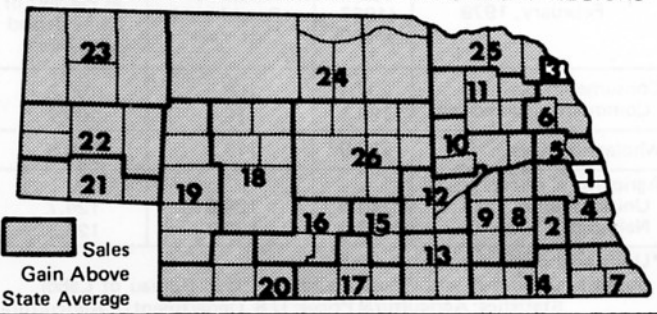
### 3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES (Adjusted for Price Changes)

Region Number <sup>1</sup> and City	Sales in Region <sup>2</sup>		
	Feb. 1979 as percent of Feb. 1978	Feb. 1979 as percent of Feb. 1978	Year to date '79 as percent of Year to date '78
<i>The State</i>	106.0	107.4	105.5
1 Omaha	104.2	104.4	100.5
Bellevue	114.7		
2 Lincoln	109.7	110.5	106.5
3 So. Sioux City	92.2	99.0	98.2
4 Nebraska City	111.0	120.4	114.6
5 Fremont	118.0	119.5	113.5
Blair	117.6		
6 West Point	107.9	115.1	115.8
7 Falls City	101.3	110.2	107.8
8 Seward	134.5	115.2	108.3
9 York	128.9	122.8	118.0
10 Columbus	120.2	120.1	111.0
11 Norfolk	121.2	113.3	108.1
12 Grand Island	118.6	119.2	114.4
13 Hastings	117.8	115.6	110.0
14 Beatrice	115.5	116.5	111.6
Fairbury	103.1		
15 Kearney	116.1	124.6	114.6
16 Lexington	110.5	117.4	112.2
17 Holdrege	141.5	134.5	122.3
18 North Platte	119.7	121.1	117.7
19 Ogallala	134.2	128.6	121.8
20 McCook	128.5	124.4	114.3
21 Sidney	116.7	117.7	110.8
Kimball	112.4		
22 Scottsbluff /Gering	112.3	115.4	114.7
23 Alliance	118.5	118.6	112.1
Chadron	120.5		
24 O'Neill	122.5	121.9	122.4
25 Hartington	133.5	121.6	107.6
26 Broken Bow	126.3	126.1	116.0



<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.

### 1979 YEAR TO DATE AS PERCENT OF 1978 YEAR TO DATE IN NEBRASKA'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS



(Continued from page 4) 10.0 percent below the level of a year earlier. Monthly declines in this sector during the first few months of 1979 are to be expected because of the record level of marketings in the fourth quarter of 1978. Led by increases in livestock prices, seasonally adjusted prices received by Nebraska farmers rose for the seventh consecutive month and were 2.5 percent higher than January and 27.7 percent above February, 1978.

In February, the index of activity for the government sector regained some of the loss incurred last month but was still 0.9 percent below the level of last February. Government employment in Nebraska at all levels—federal, state, and local—was down 1,200 workers from last February, with most of the reduction occurring at the local level.

The physical volume of construction activity continued its downward movement, falling 11.8 percent below February of 1978. This decline was especially felt by the state's principal cities, where only eight cities recorded increases over last year. The cities with the largest increases were: Kearney, Norfolk, Grand Island, and Broken Bow.

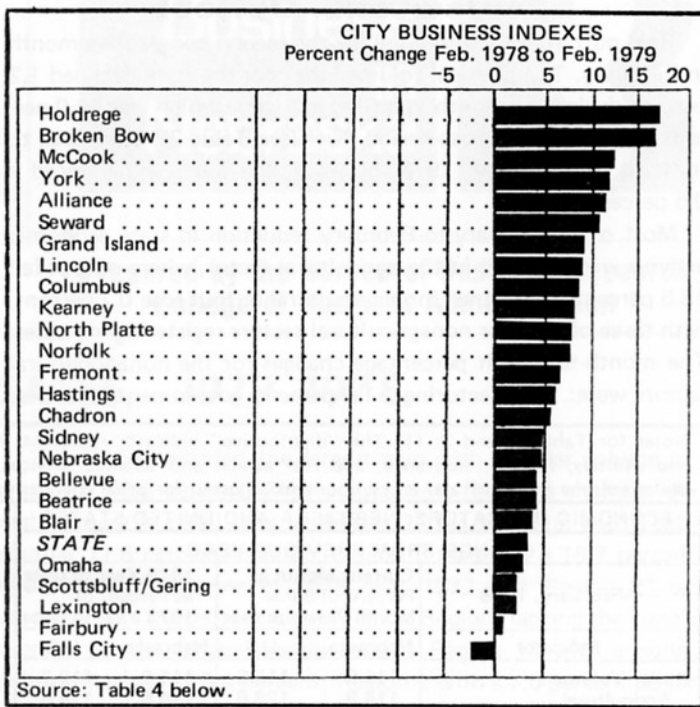
Real output in Nebraska's distributive sector was up 2.1 percent from its year-earlier level, giving it the second highest year-to-year increase for the five sectors. Employment was 600 persons above January's figures and 6,700 persons above last February's. Based upon employment growth, the most rapidly expanding areas were transportation, communication, and utilities, and services.

After adjustment for price changes, twenty-five of the state's twenty-six planning regions had total retail sales above the sales of February, 1978. Moreover, nonmotor vehicle sales in thirty of the thirty-one principal trading centers were higher than last year. Holdrege, Seward, Ogallala, and Hartington had increases of 30 percent or more, and York, McCook, Broken Bow, O'Neill, Norfolk, Chadron, and Columbus all posted increases exceeding 20 percent.

Relative to February, 1978, the city business indexes rose an average of 3.4 percent, with twenty-four of the twenty-five reporting cities registering gains. Most of the cities achieved their increases through growth in retail sales, employment, and power consumption. As a result of its sizable growth in retail sales, Holdrege posted the largest gain in activity, with an increase of 17.1 percent. Other cities with substantial February-to-February increases were: Broken Bow, +16.6 percent; McCook, +12.3 percent; York, +11.8 percent; Alliance, +11.4 percent; and Seward, +10.7 percent.

The physical volume index for the U.S. economy fell 0.2 percent during February, but it was 3.5 percent above the level of February, 1978.

J. A. D.



Source: Table 4 below.

**4. FEBRUARY CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS**

The State and Its Trading Centers	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago		
	Employment <sup>1</sup>	Building Activity <sup>2</sup>	Power Consumption <sup>3</sup>
<i>The State</i> . . . . .	102.9	85.6	102.3
Alliance . . . . .	127.1	18.1	105.9
Beatrice . . . . .	100.4	75.5	91.6
Bellevue . . . . .	100.9	57.4	105.1*
Blair . . . . .	98.8	59.8	97.8
Broken Bow . . . . .	99.3	120.0	155.8
Chadron . . . . .	93.7	76.5	112.3
Columbus . . . . .	101.4	102.1	102.0
Fairbury . . . . .	100.9	74.1	105.2*
Falls City . . . . .	99.6	59.0	98.4
Fremont . . . . .	102.8	64.1	104.4*
Grand Island . . . . .	100.8	120.8	106.9
Hastings . . . . .	101.6	92.5	87.5
Holdrege . . . . .	100.0	100.8	104.7
Kearney . . . . .	99.2	151.1	106.8
Lexington . . . . .	102.2	32.9	119.9
Lincoln . . . . .	115.5	83.4	99.1
McCook . . . . .	101.4	108.3	100.1
Nebraska City . . . . .	100.6	76.8	113.1
Norfolk . . . . .	100.6	138.0	82.7
North Platte . . . . .	99.1	100.9	109.9
Omaha . . . . .	100.9	116.0	103.6
Scottsbluff/Gering . . . . .	101.6	40.9	105.9
Seward . . . . .	97.9	54.6	103.4
Sidney . . . . .	99.7	44.8	117.5
So. Sioux City . . . . .	NA	NA	NA
York . . . . .	100.1	78.4	112.5

<sup>1</sup> As a proxy for city employment, total employment for the county in which a city is located is used.  
<sup>2</sup> 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.  
<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.

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

**5. PRICE INDEXES**

February, 1979	Index (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices . . . . .	207.1	109.9	109.6
Commodity component	198.3	110.0	109.7
Wholesale Prices . . . . .	223.9	110.8	110.5
Agricultural Prices			
United States . . . . .	243.0	124.6	124.7
Nebraska . . . . .	244.0	127.7	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.

(Continued from page 3) increases in excess of 15 percent include Chadron, Sidney, and West Point.

Omaha sales were up 11.8 percent in 1978 over 1977, making Omaha the only large metropolitan center among the thirty major trade centers to exceed the state average. Lincoln, the state's second retail trade center, showed a dollar volume increase of 6.8 percent in 1978 over 1977. When adjusted for price changes, retail sales showed a decrease in Lincoln. Grand Island, the state's third largest retail trade center, recorded an 11.9 percent increase in the dollar volume of retail sales.

The data in Table 3, page 3, summarize net taxable retail sales gains over the 1968-1978 decade by county.<sup>1</sup> Nine counties

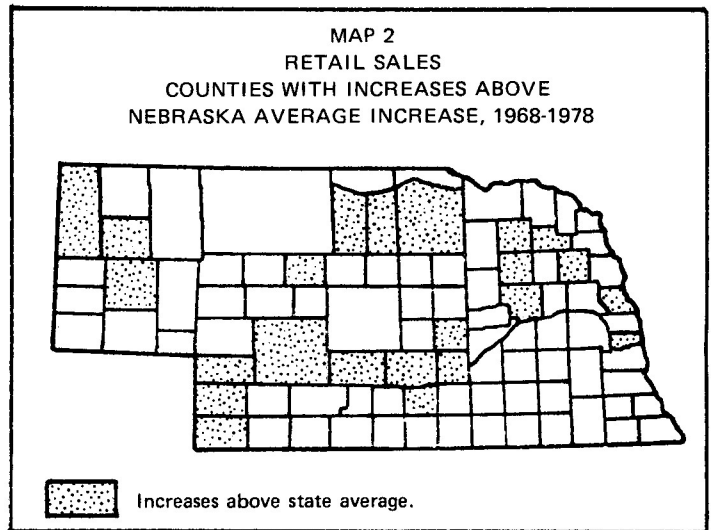
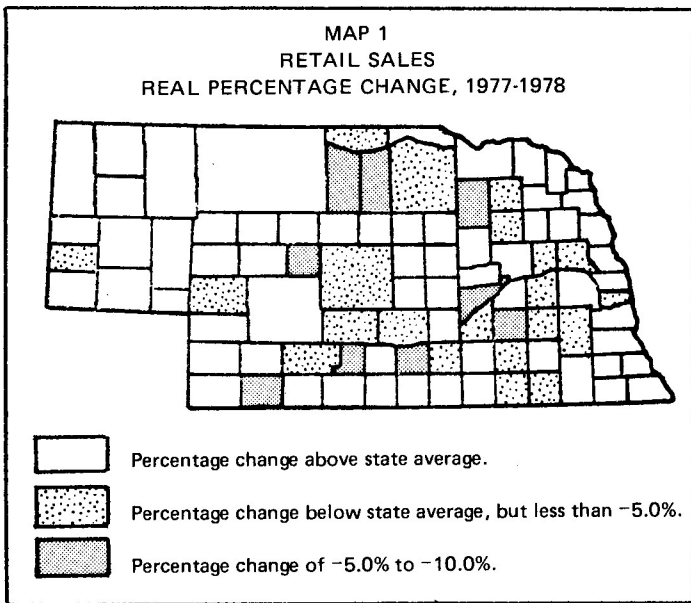
<sup>1</sup>Slight discrepancies in the 1978 county totals and the totals for the state are due to the fact that some retail sales cannot be allocated to counties because of coding problems. These unallocated sales are believed to be insignificant in county totals.

recorded a 200 percent or more increase in net taxable retail sales over the period 1968-1978. Thomas County had the largest percentage increase, but the dollar volume is relatively small. Among counties with a larger base, Box Butte County recorded a 205 percent increase, Lincoln County a 202 percent increase, and Hall County a 200 percent increase.

Twelve counties recorded an increase in retail sales of 175 to 199 percent over this interval. Most of these counties were non-metropolitan, with the exception of Sarpy County which seemed to reflect a shift in retail sales within the metropolitan Omaha area. Douglas County recorded an increase in retail sales of 134 percent, and Lancaster an increase of 167 percent over the decade 1968-1978.

Commodity price increases over this ten-year period amounted to 63 percent. All Nebraska counties recorded gains in real retail sales, 1968-1978.

D. E. P.



# UNL NEWS

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