

Prepared by the Bureau of Business Research
College of Business Administration

NEBRASKA RETAIL SALES, 1980-81

Nebraska's net taxable retail sales were \$9,464 million in 1981, up \$544 million over 1980's total of \$8,921 (see Table 2, page 2). Retail sales increased 6.1 percent in 1981 on a dollar volume basis, up from the 2.1 percent increase recorded in 1980. Substantially larger dollar volume gains in retail sales were recorded in Nebraska in 1979, 12 percent, and in 1978, 11.1 percent.

When adjustments are made for price increases, the gain in retail sales is eliminated. Using the commodity component of the consumer price index, retail sales were down 2.1 percent in 1981 compared with 1980. While this represents a decline in real retail sales, it is a considerable improvement from 1980 when real retail sales declined by 9.0 percent. Real retail sales recorded a very small increase in 1979, 0.6 percent, and a larger increase in 1978, 3.7 percent.

The geographical distribution of changes in retail sales is summarized in Table 2. Only four regions—Region 1, Region 2, Region 20, and Region 21—recorded increases above the state average of 6.1 percent. Most regions managed about the same dollar volume in 1981 as in 1980. It should be noted that regional comparisons are not affected by use of dollar volume or price

adjusted data. Since the method of adjusting for price increases involves using the same deflator, the commodity component of the consumer price index, each area would be deflated by exactly the same amount.

Counties recording an increase in retail sales in excess of the state's average gain of 6.1 percent are indicated in Map 1 (page 3) by the shaded areas. The major metropolitan areas, Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster counties, did somewhat better than the state as a whole, although the difference was small. Gage and Johnson counties also recorded gains above the state average.

Another area which did better than the state is concentrated around the Norfolk-Columbus area. Platte, Madison, Pierce, Antelope, and Boone counties all had gains in excess of the state's average of 6.1 percent. Red Willow County, Phelps County, and Rock County in central Nebraska all recorded increases above the state's average in 1981.

The remaining counties with gains in excess of the state's average in 1981 are concentrated in the western portion and include Arthur, Keith, Deuel, Cheyenne, Kimball, Box Butte, and Sioux counties.

(continued on page 3)

Table 1
NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES¹ IN SELECTED NEBRASKA TRADING CENTERS, 1980 AND 1981
WITH PERCENTAGE CHANGES FOR SALES UNADJUSTED AND ADJUSTED FOR PRICE CHANGES

Trade Center	Region ²	Unadjusted for Price Changes			Adjusted for Prices ³	Trade Center	Region ²	Unadjusted for Price Changes			Adjusted for Prices ³
		Thousands of Dollars		Percent of Change	Percent of Change			Thousands of Dollars		Percent of Change	Percent of Change
		1980	1981					1980	1981		
Alliance	23	63,768	70,793	+11.0	+2.4	Lincoln	2	960,523	1,024,303	+ 6.6	-1.6
Beatrice	14	84,484	90,019	+ 6.6	-1.7	McCook	20	78,047	84,212	+ 7.9	-0.5
Bellevue	1	96,017	108,361	+12.9	+4.1	Nebraska City	4	45,026	46,737	+ 3.8	-4.3
Broken Bow	26	40,409	43,781	+ 8.3	-0.1	Norfolk	11	167,030	179,521	+ 7.5	-0.9
Chadron	23	35,624	38,199	+ 7.2	-1.1	North Platte	18	173,262	177,725	+ 2.6	-5.4
Columbus	10	140,353	153,394	+ 9.3	+0.8	Ogallala	19	50,102	53,723	+ 7.2	-1.1
Fairbury	14	33,344	33,677	+ 1.0	-6.8	O'Neill	24	42,587	45,172	+ 6.1	-2.2
Falls City	7	31,401	32,739	+ 4.3	-3.8	Omaha	1	2,331,895	2,516,193	+ 7.9	-0.5
Fremont	5	152,271	164,108	+ 7.8	-0.6	Scottsbluff/Gering ²²	2	194,279	208,356	+ 7.2	-1.1
Grand Island	12	339,871	353,103	+ 3.9	-4.2	Seward	8	40,264	41,967	+ 4.2	-3.9
Hartington	25	17,176	18,247	+ 6.2	-2.0	Sidney	21	38,872	42,213	+ 8.6	+0.2
Hastings	13	167,281	174,986	+ 4.6	-3.5	So. Sioux City	3	38,094	41,199	+ 8.2	-0.3
Holdrege	17	55,524	61,793	+11.3	+2.6	Wayne	11	34,506	35,602	+ 3.2	-4.8
Kearney	15	161,580	173,041	+ 7.1	-1.2	West Point	6	29,062	29,618	+ 1.9	-6.0
Kimball	21	34,617	38,616	+11.6	+2.9	York	9	69,852	72,661	+ 4.0	-4.1
Lexington	16	56,584	60,802	+ 7.5	-0.9	Total 30 Centers		5,803,705	6,214,861	+ 7.1	-1.2
						Total State⁴		8,099,608	8,620,878	+ 6.4	-1.8

¹ Excluding motor vehicle sales.

² Nebraska Planning and Development Regions.

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

⁴ 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 SALES¹ IN NEBRASKA'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS, 1980 AND 1981
BY COUNTIES, WITH PERCENTAGE CHANGES FOR SALES UNADJUSTED AND ADJUSTED FOR PRICE CHANGES

Region and County	Unadjusted for Price Changes			Adjusted for Prices ²	Region and County	Unadjusted for Price Changes			Adjusted for Prices ²
	Thousands of Dollars		Percent of Change	Percent of Change		Thousands of Dollars		Percent of Change	Percent of Change
	1980	1981				1980	1981		
Region 1	<u>2,754,605</u>	<u>3,002,496</u>	+ 9.0	+ 0.5	Region 16	<u>152,358</u>	<u>156,213</u>	+ 2.5	- 5.4
Douglas	2,573,622	2,782,656	+ 8.1	- 0.3	Dawson	131,112	135,408	+ 3.3	- 4.7
Sarpy	180,983	219,840	+21.5	+12.0	Frontier	11,241	11,614	+ 3.3	- 4.7
Region 2	<u>1,059,509</u>	<u>1,128,815</u>	+ 6.5	- 1.7	Gosper	10,005	9,191	- 8.1	-15.3
Lancaster	1,059,509	1,128,815	+ 6.5	- 1.7	Region 17	<u>132,238</u>	<u>138,281</u>	+ 4.6	- 3.6
Region 3	<u>57,479</u>	<u>60,827</u>	+ 5.8	- 2.4	Franklin	16,818	16,182	- 3.8	-11.3
Dakota	57,479	60,827	+ 5.8	- 2.4	Furnas	27,975	28,844	+ 3.1	- 4.9
Region 4	<u>189,340</u>	<u>194,509</u>	+ 2.7	- 5.3	Harlan	17,768	18,374	+ 3.4	- 4.6
Cass	54,664	57,805	+ 5.7	- 2.5	Phelps	69,677	74,881	+ 7.5	- 0.9
Otoe	74,705	74,667	+ 0.4	- 7.8	Region 18	<u>214,360</u>	<u>217,783</u>	+ 1.6	- 6.3
Saunders	60,271	62,037	+ 2.9	- 5.1	Hooker	3,780	3,839	+ 1.6	- 6.3
Region 5	<u>260,870</u>	<u>271,435</u>	+ 4.0	- 4.0	Lincoln	203,902	207,748	+ 1.9	- 6.0
Dodge	202,844	211,460	+ 4.2	- 3.9	Logan	1,963	1,750	-10.9	-17.8
Washington	58,026	59,975	+ 3.4	- 4.7	McPherson	694	634	- 8.6	-15.7
Region 6	<u>104,767</u>	<u>104,103</u>	- 0.6	- 8.4	Thomas	4,021	3,812	- 5.2	-12.6
Burt	37,048	35,715	- 3.6	-11.1	Region 19	<u>122,000</u>	<u>127,565</u>	+ 4.6	- 3.6
Cuming	53,965	55,576	+ 3.0	- 5.0	Arthur	1,161	1,326	+14.2	+ 5.3
Thurston	13,754	12,812	- 6.8	-14.1	Chase	33,388	34,064	+ 2.0	- 5.9
Region 7	<u>108,583</u>	<u>112,785</u>	+ 3.9	- 4.2	Grant	3,902	3,673	- 5.9	-13.2
Johnson	19,375	20,573	+ 6.2	- 2.1	Keith	62,124	66,571	+ 7.2	- 1.2
Nemaha	31,056	32,576	+ 4.9	- 3.3	Perkins	21,425	21,931	+ 2.4	- 5.6
Pawnee	11,333	11,206	- 1.1	- 8.8	Region 20	<u>118,715</u>	<u>126,033</u>	+ 6.2	- 1.1
Richardson	46,819	48,430	+ 3.4	- 4.6	Dundy	12,480	12,757	+ 2.2	- 5.7
Region 8	<u>152,371</u>	<u>153,921</u>	+ 1.0	- 6.8	Hayes	2,361	2,030	-14.0	-20.7
Butler	30,553	29,956	- 2.0	- 9.6	Hitchcock	11,729	11,736	+ 0.1	- 7.7
Seward	61,890	64,437	+ 4.1	- 4.0	Red Willow	92,145	99,510	+ 8.0	- 0.4
Saline	59,928	59,528	- 0.7	- 8.4	Region 21	<u>100,184</u>	<u>109,192</u>	+ 9.0	+ 0.5
Region 9	<u>158,159</u>	<u>157,685</u>	- 0.3	- 8.0	Cheyenne	49,858	53,589	+ 7.5	- 0.9
Fillmore	39,372	38,072	- 3.3	-10.8	Deuel	10,545	11,329	+ 7.4	- 0.9
Polk	24,957	24,731	- 0.9	- 8.6	Kimball	39,781	44,274	+11.3	+ 2.6
York	93,830	94,882	+ 1.1	- 6.7	Region 22	<u>283,479</u>	<u>295,136</u>	+ 4.1	- 4.0
Region 10	<u>272,773</u>	<u>288,510</u>	+ 5.8	- 2.4	Banner	1,671	1,555	- 6.9	-14.2
Boone	34,894	37,007	+ 6.1	- 2.2	Garden	10,730	9,976	- 7.0	-14.2
Colfax	44,698	46,137	+ 3.2	- 4.8	Morrill	32,197	31,971	- 0.7	- 8.4
Nance	15,010	14,479	- 3.5	-11.0	Scotts Bluff	238,881	251,634	+ 5.3	- 2.8
Platte	178,171	190,887	+ 7.1	- 1.2	Region 23	<u>171,374</u>	<u>180,675</u>	+ 5.4	- 2.8
Region 11	<u>326,042</u>	<u>347,305</u>	+ 6.5	- 1.8	Box Butte	76,177	82,549	+ 8.4	- 0.1
Antelope	34,742	37,509	+ 8.0	- 0.4	Dawes	46,467	49,074	+ 5.6	- 2.6
Madison	210,868	225,812	+ 7.1	- 1.2	Sheridan	44,995	45,089	+ 0.2	- 7.6
Pierce	28,243	30,669	+ 8.6	+ 0.2	Sioux	3,735	3,963	+ 6.1	- 2.1
Stanton	11,048	11,048	0.0	- 7.8	Region 24	<u>164,300</u>	<u>168,226</u>	+ 2.4	- 5.6
Wayne	41,141	42,267	+ 2.7	- 5.2	Boyd	10,323	9,566	- 7.3	-14.5
Region 12	<u>478,173</u>	<u>485,322</u>	+ 1.5	- 6.4	Brown	26,392	26,117	- 1.0	- 8.7
Hall	380,197	388,833	+ 2.3	- 5.7	Cherry	34,817	35,586	+ 2.2	- 5.7
Hamilton	39,087	37,140	- 5.0	-12.4	Holt	75,348	76,844	+ 2.0	- 5.9
Howard	24,364	23,881	- 2.0	- 9.6	Keya Paha	2,601	2,467	- 5.2	-12.5
Merrick	34,525	35,468	+ 2.7	- 5.2	Rock	14,819	17,646	+19.1	+ 9.8
Region 13	<u>277,294</u>	<u>286,776</u>	+ 3.4	- 4.6	Region 25	<u>100,807</u>	<u>101,142</u>	+ 0.3	- 7.5
Adams	190,895	198,850	+ 4.2	- 3.9	Cedar	42,146	43,278	+ 2.7	- 5.3
Clay	34,731	34,285	- 1.3	- 9.0	Dixon	15,311	15,444	+ 0.9	- 7.0
Nuckolls	34,162	35,374	+ 3.5	- 4.5	Knox	43,350	42,420	- 2.1	- 9.7
Webster	17,506	18,267	+ 4.3	- 3.8	Region 26	<u>139,932</u>	<u>140,091</u>	+ 0.1	- 7.7
Region 14	<u>193,718</u>	<u>202,467</u>	+ 4.5	- 3.6	Blaine	2,305	2,393	+ 3.8	- 4.2
Gage	111,885	118,804	+ 6.2	- 2.1	Custer	67,976	70,780	+ 4.1	- 4.0
Jefferson	48,326	48,418	+ 0.2	- 7.6	Garfield	12,175	11,542	- 5.2	-12.6
Thayer	33,507	35,245	+ 5.2	- 3.0	Greeley	11,732	11,022	- 6.1	-13.3
Region 15	<u>245,860</u>	<u>257,327</u>	+ 4.7	- 3.5	Loup	1,486	1,410	- 5.1	-12.5
Buffalo	213,860	225,294	+ 5.3	- 2.8	Sherman	13,780	12,861	- 6.7	-13.9
Kearney	32,000	32,033	+ 0.1	- 7.7	Valley	27,717	27,583	- 0.5	- 8.2
					Wheeler	2,761	2,500	- 9.5	-16.5
					State Total³	8,920,736	9,464,525	+ 6.1	- 2.1

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

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

³ 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)

If one takes a longer perspective in examining shifts in retail sales over the decade 1971-81, the larger percentage gains have been largely in the nonmetropolitan areas of Nebraska. Sarpy County was the only metropolitan county to record an increase in retail sales above the state's average increase over the interval 1971-81. The remaining counties recording gains above the state's average include Wayne, Pierce, Madison, Platte, Hall, Buffalo, Dawson, Phelps, Red Willow, Wheeler, Holt, Rock, Brown, Chase, Perkins, Kimball, Banner, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Box Butte, and Sioux. Some of these counties with gains in excess of the state's average have very small retail trade volumes, but others like Hall, Platte, Buffalo, Dawson, Red Willow, Scotts Bluff, and Box Butte had and continue to build from substantial retail sales bases.

The tendency toward increased concentration in retail sales was very apparent over the ten-year interval 1971-81. Larger volume areas tended to expand their retail sales somewhat faster than the smaller retail trade centers. For instance, counties with less than \$10 million in retail sales in 1971 recorded a decade increase of approximately 120 percent in retail sales, compared with a statewide average of 162 percent. Counties with retail sales in excess of \$100 million in 1971 recorded decade gains of approximately 154 percent, somewhat less than the average increase for the state.

There are important exceptions, of course, to any generalization, and some smaller retail trade centers in Nebraska did exceedingly well during the decade 1971-81. Rock County, for instance,

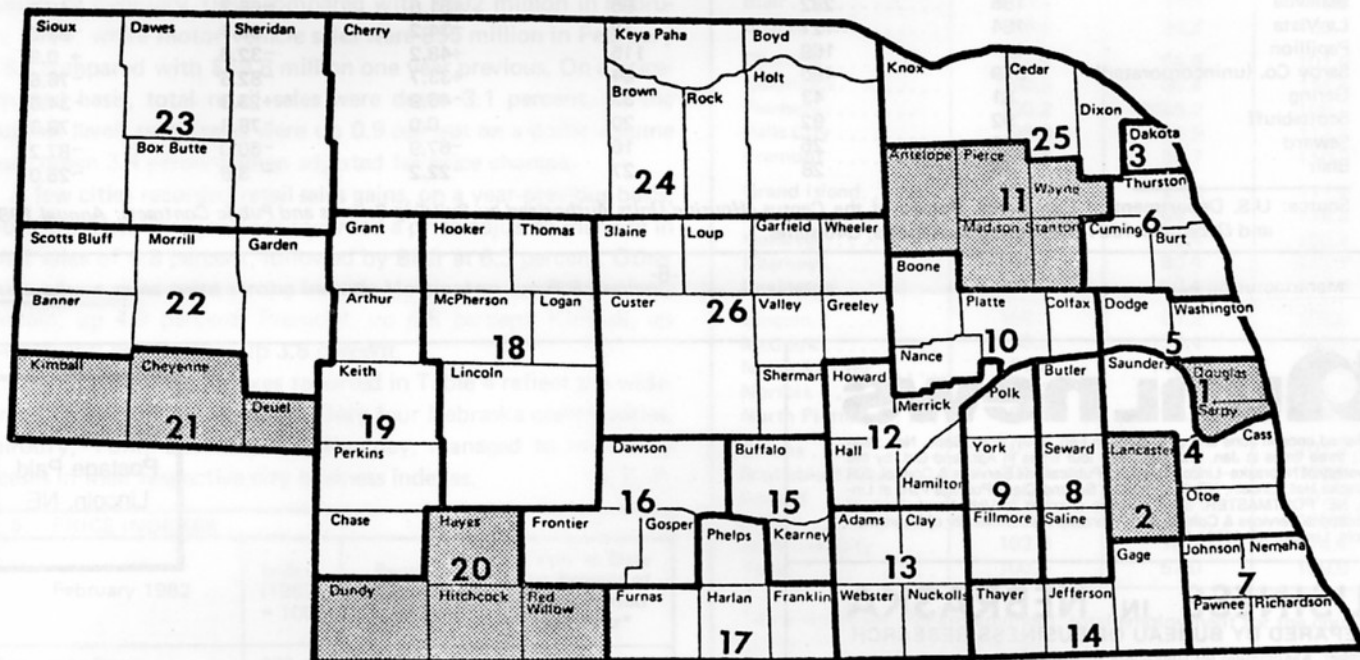
had a retail sales base of \$5.8 million in 1971 which expanded to \$17.6 million by 1981, an increase of 203 percent. Chase County had a retail sales base of \$10.8 million in 1971 which expanded to \$34.1 million in 1981, a 216 percent increase. There are other important exceptions, but in general the tendency was for retail sales to become increasingly concentrated in the larger dollar volume trade centers.


Data in Table 1 summarize retail sales for 1980 and 1981 for 30 Nebraska trade centers. Note that information in Table 1 excludes motor vehicle sales, while data in Table 2 include motor vehicle sales.

The 30 trade centers recorded an increase in dollar volume retail sales of 7.1 percent, somewhat better than the 6.4 percent recorded for the state (these data refer only to nonmotor vehicle retail sales). When adjusted for price changes, nonmotor vehicle retail sales were down slightly over 1 percent among the 30 trade centers. Larger gains were recorded in Bellevue, 12.9 percent; Kimball, 11.6 percent; Holdrege, 11.3 percent; and Alliance, 11.0 percent. Other trade centers which recorded gains above the 7.1 percent average for the 30 trade centers include Broken Bow, 8.3 percent; Chadron, 7.2 percent; Columbus, 9.3 percent; Fremont, 7.8 percent; Lexington, 7.5 percent; McCook, 7.9 percent; Norfolk, 7.5 percent; Ogallala, 7.2 percent; Omaha, 7.9 percent; Scottsbluff-Gering, 7.2 percent; Sidney, 8.6 percent; and South Sioux City, 8.2 percent. Kearney recorded an increase of 7.1 percent, exactly that recorded by the 30 trade centers combined.

D. E. P.

Map 1
REGIONS RECORDING ABOVE-STATE-AVERAGE GAINS
IN RETAIL SALES DOLLAR VOLUME, 1980-1981



 Increase above state average.

Review and Outlook

Real output increased a scant 0.2 percent in Nebraska in February. This small increase January-February follows a sizable January decline in the state's physical volume index. The February increase resulted from a mixed picture across the sectors of the Nebraska economy. The agriculture component of the index declined 0.9 percent and construction declined 3.0 percent. Manufacturing recorded a 1.0 percent increase and the distributive trade sector recorded a 0.6 percent gain.

The Nebraska economy peaked in July of 1981. Two monthly declines were followed by increases in the index in October and November and a further slight increase in December. January 1982 brought a decline of 1.9 percent in the index. The February

1982-February 1981 reading of the index indicates that there has been little change in the state's real output. A comparison with two years previous, February 1980, indicates that output is down 3.6 percent.

The agriculture component was down 0.9 percent January-February 1982. The February reading of the agriculture component is well above the February 1981 and 1980 levels.

Nebraska cash farm marketings were down \$49 million January-February 1982 (unadjusted for seasonal variation). On a year-previous basis, cash farm marketings were up nearly \$196 million. This component should show some improvement in the months ahead because of the rise in cattle and hog prices which has developed since February 1982. (continued on page 5)

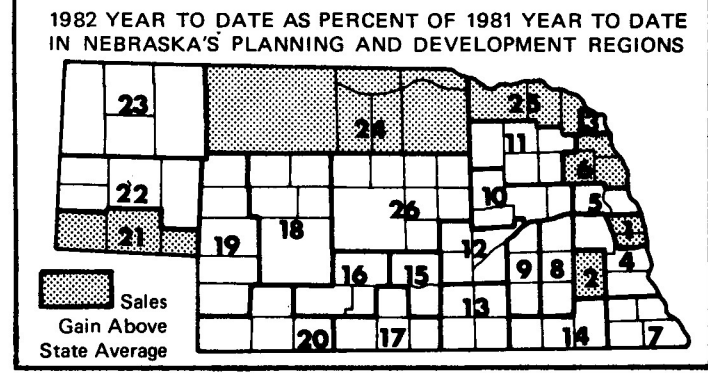
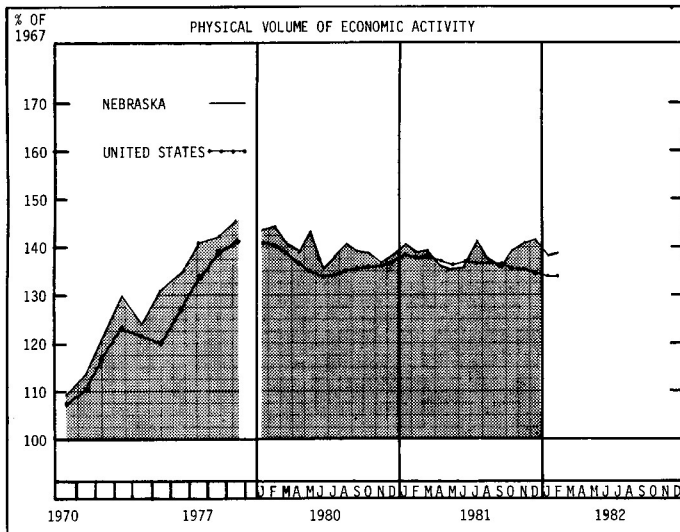
Notes for Tables 1 and 2: (1) The "distributive" indicator represents a composite of wholesale and retail trade; transportation, communication and utilities; finance, insurance, and real estate; and selected services. (2) The "physical volume" indicator and its components represent the dollar volume 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 1982	Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year		1982 Year to Date as Percent of 1981 Year to Date	
	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Indicator	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	104.6	103.5	103.6	103.7
Agricultural	119.3	104.9	112.6	101.1
Nonagricultural	102.6	103.5	102.4	103.7
Construction	70.7	90.5	74.1	90.2
Manufacturing	99.4	98.5	98.7	99.1
Distributive	104.9	106.0	104.4	106.2
Government	108.2	107.4	108.3	107.6
Physical Volume	100.1	97.1	99.2	97.1
Agricultural	128.0	113.1	123.3	110.0
Nonagricultural	96.5	96.7	96.0	96.7
Construction	67.7	86.7	70.9	86.4
Manufacturing	96.3	94.2	95.3	94.5
Distributive	97.4	98.4	96.6	98.3
Government	101.2	97.7	101.3	97.8

2. CHANGE FROM 1967		
Indicator	Percent of 1967 Average	
	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	370.7	358.2
Agricultural	373.3	330.5
Nonagricultural	370.1	359.1
Construction	221.1	306.8
Manufacturing	354.5	303.4
Distributive	391.0	396.7
Government	378.3	351.8
Physical Volume	138.4	134.0
Agricultural	151.7	136.6
Nonagricultural	136.3	133.9
Construction	66.6	92.4
Manufacturing	149.2	124.0
Distributive	138.0	140.0
Government	145.7	147.5

3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES (Adjusted for Price Changes)			
Region Number and City	City Sales*	Sales in Region*	
	Feb. 1982 as percent of Feb. 1981	Feb. 1982 as percent of Feb. 1981	Year to date '82 as percent of Year to date '81
<i>The State</i>	97.8	96.9	90.7
1 Omaha	97.9	96.4	94.3
Bellevue	78.8		
2 Lincoln	104.9	103.8	93.0
3 So. Sioux City	95.8	92.3	84.6
4 Nebraska City	90.7	91.8	85.0
5 Fremont	104.8	98.5	87.0
Blair	101.3		
6 West Point	97.6	100.5	92.4
7 Falls City	100.8	94.0	87.6
8 Seward	96.3	94.5	85.8
9 York	106.8	92.2	86.8
10 Columbus	94.9	89.7	76.4
11 Norfolk	94.5	92.0	87.3
Wayne	85.5		
12 Grand Island	91.0	88.2	81.9
13 Hastings	89.5	90.7	84.1
14 Beatrice	98.2	91.4	83.1
Fairbury	92.3		
15 Kearney	100.2	96.4	87.9
16 Lexington	89.4	88.5	88.1
17 Holdrege	90.0	92.7	87.5
18 North Platte	85.5	83.7	81.7
19 Ogallala	81.2	84.0	84.5
20 McCook	92.8	92.6	84.9
21 Sidney	103.8	101.2	94.8
Kimball	104.4		
22 Scottsbluff/Gering	92.3	89.4	82.8
23 Alliance	95.0	95.4	86.7
Chadron	86.7		
24 O'Neill	97.5	93.1	90.4
25 Hartington	105.8	95.8	89.5
26 Broken Bow	92.6	93.1	86.6

*State totals include sales not allocated to cities or regions. The year-to-year ratios for city and region sales may be misleading because of changes in the portion of unallocated sales. Region totals include, and city totals exclude, motor vehicle sales. Sales are those on which sales taxes are collected by retailers located in the state. Compiled from data provided by Nebraska Department of Revenue.



(continued from page 4)

The nonagriculture components of the Nebraska economy increased 0.4 percent January-February 1982. The construction component of the index declined 3.0 percent and stands at its lowest level since June 1980. The construction component of the index is well below February 1981 and February 1980 levels. This component of the index peaked in February 1981 and has since declined by more than 35 percent.

The manufacturing component of the index increased 1.0 percent in February 1982. The index now stands at 149.2 percent (1967=100). Manufacturing output in Nebraska continues to lag year-previous levels. The index is down approximately 3.7 percent from February 1981 and is down 15 percent from the February 1980 level. The manufacturing component of the Nebraska physical volume index also peaked in July at 166.8 percent and has moved erratically downward since that time.

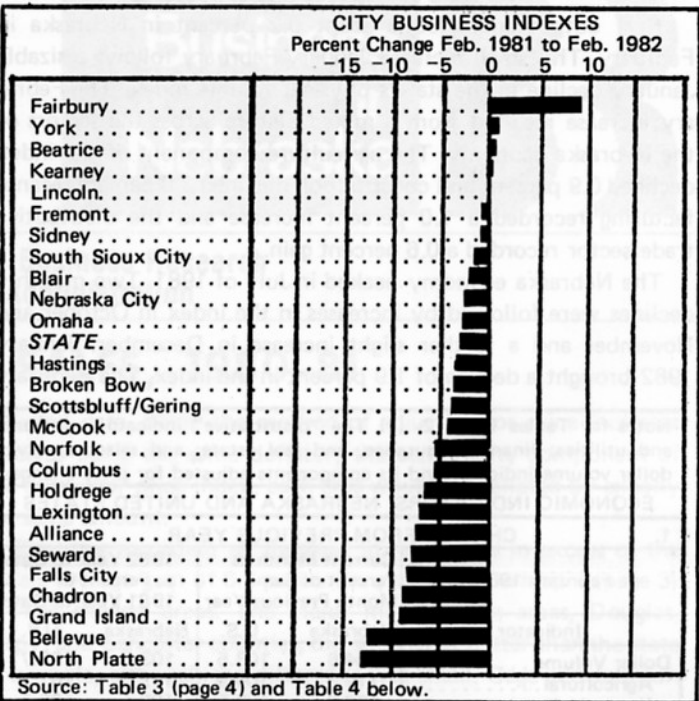
The distributive trade index increased 0.6 percent January-February 1982. This index is also below year-previous levels by approximately 2.6 percent. Output in this sector has changed very little since September 1981.

The government component of the index was down 0.3 percent in February 1982. The index stood at 145.7 percent, which compares with an index value of 144.1 percent in February 1981 and 145.9 percent in February 1980. Output, as measured by this index, has changed little in the past three years.

Retail sales managed a 1.3 percent increase in February 1982 compared with year-previous levels. Nonvehicle retail sales were up 2.2 percent while motor vehicle sales continued to decline, down 8.9 percent. Retail sales totaled \$660 million in February compared with \$652 million one year previous. The vehicle-nonvehicle breakdown indicates nonvehicle retail sales at \$605 million in February 1982 compared with \$592 million in February 1981, while motor vehicle sales were \$55 million in February 1982 compared with \$59.8 million one year previous. On a price-adjusted basis, total retail sales were down 3.1 percent. At the national level, retail sales were up 0.9 percent on a dollar volume basis, down 3.4 percent when adjusted for price changes.

A few cities recorded retail sales gains, on a year-previous basis, above the state change. York recorded a price-adjusted increase in retail sales of 6.8 percent, followed by Blair at 6.3 percent. Other cities where sales were strong include Hartington, up 5.8 percent; Lincoln, up 4.9 percent; Fremont, up 4.8 percent; Kimball, up 4.4 percent; and Sidney, up 3.8 percent.

The city business indexes reported in Table 4 reflect the widespread extent of the recession. Only four Nebraska communities, Fairbury, York, Beatrice, and Kearney, managed to record increases in their respective city business indexes. D. E. P.



Source: Table 3 (page 4) and Table 4 below.

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>	100.3	56.2	110.4
Alliance	90.4	86.2	107.3
Beatrice	103.0	93.5	109.5
Bellevue	101.3	38.8	117.3
Blair	100.2	47.2	117.3
Broken Bow	98.4	94.3	106.7
Chadron	101.4	54.6	101.9
Columbus	99.8	56.4	114.5
Fairbury	100.2	1035.2	106.7
Falls City	98.9	20.9	113.3
Fremont	100.5	55.7	110.2*
Grand Island	102.2	26.2	111.4
Hastings	104.9	69.8	176.8
Holdrege	97.9	85.4	108.3
Kearney	102.3	80.4	117.1
Lexington	101.3	60.4	112.8
Lincoln	100.3	61.8	108.0
McCook	93.3	139.4	105.9
Nebraska City	97.8	148.7	106.3
Norfolk	99.2	62.0	111.1
North Platte	97.8	27.6	114.5
Omaha	101.3	52.9	107.7
Scottsbluff/Gering ..	101.5	71.2	101.9
Seward	95.8	43.2	107.7
Sidney	97.9	76.4	109.3
So. Sioux City	102.0	78.1	114.4
York	100.6	57.0	109.0

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.

February 1982	Index (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices	283.4	107.7	108.1
Commodity component	259.5	104.5	105.0
Wholesale Prices	298.5	103.8	108.0
Agricultural Prices			
United States	242.0	92.7	92.0
Nebraska	246.0	93.2	91.4

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

HOUSING UNITS AUTHORIZED IN MAJOR NEBRASKA CITIES, 1979-81

The fact that the construction industry has been experiencing hard times in recent years comes as a surprise to no one. What is not so well known is the extent of the decline. Listed in the accompanying table are the numbers of new privately owned housing units authorized by building permits, as released by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Although this does not translate directly into private housing units built in any given year, the numbers are likely to be close estimates. Caution should be used when interpreting percentage changes where the total number of permits issued is small. In these situations, small absolute changes may produce large percentage changes.

In both Omaha and Lincoln the number of building permits in 1981 was well under half the number issued in 1979. Other cities with declines of more than 50 percent in the number of permits issued over the period 1979-81 were La Vista, -93.5 percent;

Seward, -87.2 percent; Fremont, -81.0 percent; Alliance, -79.1 percent; Scottsbluff, -78.3 percent; South Sioux City, -74.1 percent; Beatrice, -62.9 percent; North Platte, -55.6 percent; Kearney, -53.1 percent; and Columbus, -52.2 percent. As one would expect, the majority of cities experienced the greatest declines in 1980 and 1981.

Plattsmouth and Papillion were the only two cities to show increases in building permits issued from 1979 to 1981. Although the number of permits issued for Papillion dropped in 1981 from the previous year's level, Plattsmouth experienced increases during the entire period. Only Plattsmouth, Grand Island, McCook, and Gering showed increases in 1981 over the 1980 levels. Grand Island's rebuilding following the 1980 tornado is no doubt partially responsible for the slight increase in building permits issued in 1981 over the 1980 level.

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NUMBER OF NEW PRIVATELY OWNED HOUSING UNITS AUTHORIZED BY BUILDING PERMITS

	1979	1980	1981	Percent Change		
				1979 to 1980	1980 to 1981	1979 to 1981
Alliance	211	202	44	- 4.3	-78.2	-79.1
Kearney	256	236	120	- 7.8	-49.1	-53.1
Plattsmouth	19	26	44	+36.8	+69.2	+131.2
South Sioux City	81	78	21	- 3.7	-73.1	-74.1
Lexington	39	37	21	- 5.1	-43.2	-46.2
Fremont	163	66	31	-59.5	-53.0	-81.0
Omaha	1,989	1,471	805	-26.0	-45.3	-59.5
Beatrice	116	46	43	-60.3	- 6.5	-62.9
Grand Island	509	272	276	-46.6	+ 1.5	-45.8
Lincoln	1,456	1,043	629	-28.4	-39.7	-56.8
North Platte	234	159	104	-32.1	-34.6	-55.6
Norfolk	N/A	92 (9 months)	77			
Columbus	245	183	117	-25.3	-36.1	-52.2
McCook	40	27	28	-32.5	+ 3.7	-30.0
Crete	28	88	14	+214.3	-84.1	-50.0
Bellevue	186	282	95	+51.6	-66.3	-48.9
La Vista	184	121	12	-34.2	-90.1	-93.5
Papillion	114	169	115	+48.2	-32.0	+ 0.9
Sarpy Co. (unincorporated)	359	480	84	+33.7	-82.5	-76.6
Gering	81	43	53	-46.9	+23.3	-34.6
Scottsbluff	92	92	20	0.0	-78.3	-78.3
Seward	78	25	10	-67.9	-60.0	-87.2
Blair	36	28	27	-22.2	- 3.6	-25.0

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits and Public Contracts: Annual 1980 and December 1981*, Construction Reports, C40 series.

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