

1972 AND 1973 NEBRASKA POPULATION ESTIMATES

This article is part of a continuing series on population trends in Nebraska. Readers may find it useful to compare the estimates presented here with earlier estimates and projections, particularly with the provisional 1972 and revised 1971 estimates appearing in the February, 1973, issue of *Business in Nebraska*.¹

THE STATE

The United States Bureau of the Census provisional estimate of the Nebraska population as of July, 1973, was 1,542,496. The revised July, 1972, estimate was 1,527,684.² Based on the official 1970 census population count (1,483,791—which is slightly below the most recent, corrected count of 1,485,333) the Nebraska population is estimated to have increased 4 percent from 1970 to 1973. This rate of increase compares with a national increase of 3.3 percent and an increase of 1.8 percent for the North Central census region. In fact, Nebraska is estimated to have been the

fastest growing state in the entire North Central region since 1970. These estimated changes represent a sharp contrast to the pattern of change in the 1960s when Nebraska grew at a rate well under half the national average and only slightly over half the regional average.

The National Growth Pattern

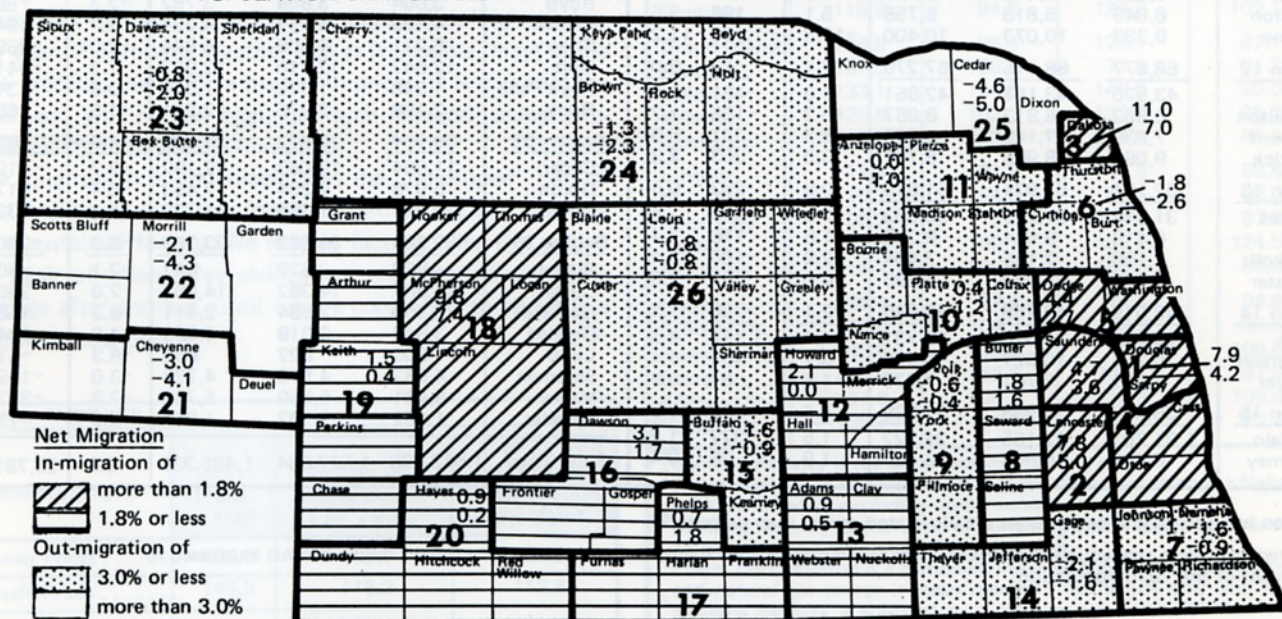
The apparent sharp reversal in the Nebraska population growth rate relative to the nation since 1970 is associated with relative declines in the rate of population growth in California and the big-city states of the East and Midwest. The population of New York State, for example, is estimated to have increased by only .1 percent from 1970 to 1973 after having increased at nearly two-thirds the national rate during the 1960s, and the California growth rate (3.2 percent) actually was below the national rate for the 1970-1973 period after having been over twice the national rate in the 1960s. While California appears to have moved to a growth rate slightly in excess of the national average in the last year of the 1970-1973 period, the trend toward relative decline in the eastern big-city states may even be accelerating. Each of the three largest states east of Nebraska (New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois), for example, was estimated to have declined slightly in population from 1972 to 1973.

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¹ It is also informative to compare the estimated growth trends since 1970 with recent projections of growth trends. A detailed report entitled *Nebraska Population Projections* is available free upon request.

² These estimates, rounded to the nearest thousand, along with estimates for other states, appear in "Estimates of the Population of States: July 1, 1972 and 1973 (Advance Report)," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 508, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November, 1973.

POPULATION CHANGE AND NET MIGRATION IN NEBRASKA REGIONS 1970 TO 1973*



*Upper figure: percentage change in population from 1970.

Lower figure: 1970-73 migration as percentage of 1970 population.

POPULATION OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND COUNTIES¹
REVISED 1972 AND PROVISIONAL 1973 COMPARED WITH 1970 CENSUS

Regions and Counties	Provisional July 1, '73	Revised July 1, '72	Census Apr. 1, '70	Percent Change '70-'73	Net Migration 1970-1973 ²		Regions and Counties	Provisional July 1, '73	Revised July 1, '72	Census Apr. 1, '70	Percent Change '70-'73	Net Migration 1970-1973 ²	
Region 1	491,678	479,765	455,655	7.9	19,338	4.2	Region 16	26,737	26,966	25,931	3.1	445	1.7
Douglas	415,366	408,012	389,455	6.7	12,948	3.4	Dawson	20,233	20,466	19,771	2.3	124	0.6
Sarpy	76,312	71,753	66,200	15.3	6,390	9.7	Frontier	4,050	4,085	3,982	1.7	60	1.5
Region 2	181,049	180,335	167,972	7.8	8,447	5.0	Gosper	2,454	2,415	2,178	12.7	261	12.0
Lancaster	181,049	180,335	167,972	7.8	8,447	5.0	Region 17	25,563	25,368	25,373	0.7	447	1.8
Region 3	14,588	13,858	13,137	11.0	914	7.0	Franklin	4,526	4,551	4,566	-0.9	57	1.2
Dakota	14,588	13,858	13,137	11.0	914	7.0	Furnas	6,886	6,814	6,897	-0.2	101	1.5
Region 4	53,067	51,943	50,670	4.7	1,834	3.6	Harlan	4,283	4,389	4,357	-1.7	25	0.6
Cass	19,827	18,994	18,076	9.7	1,306	7.2	Phelps	9,868	9,614	9,553	3.3	264	2.8
Otoe	15,453	15,439	15,576	-0.8	-188	-1.2	Region 18	36,293	35,544	33,045	9.8	2,455	7.4
Saunders	17,787	17,510	17,018	4.5	716	4.2	Hooker	921	909	939	-1.9	-7	-0.7
Region 5	50,210	49,922	48,092	4.4	1,289	2.7	Lincoln	32,815	31,977	29,538	11.1	2,495	8.4
Dodge	35,452	35,524	34,782	1.9	69	0.2	Logan	999	1,010	991	0.8	-5	-0.5
Washington	14,758	14,398	13,310	10.9	1,220	9.2	McPherson	622	632	623	-0.2	-10	-1.6
Region 6	27,726	27,701	28,223	-1.8	-720	-2.6	Thomas	936	1,016	954	-1.9	-18	-1.9
Burt	8,767	8,859	9,247	-5.2	-454	-4.9	Region 19	17,921	17,708	17,664	1.5	77	0.4
Cuming	11,967	12,000	12,034	-0.6	-182	-1.5	Arthur	559	558	606	-7.8	-69	-11.4
Thurston	6,992	6,842	6,942	0.7	-84	-1.2	Chase	4,201	4,178	4,129	1.7	60	1.5
Region 7	30,978	31,088	31,469	-1.6	-275	-0.9	Grant	1,128	1,152	1,019	10.7	90	8.8
Johnson	5,708	5,651	5,743	-0.6	15	0.3	Keith	8,736	8,596	8,487	2.9	96	1.1
Nemaha	8,608	8,925	8,976	-4.1	-379	-4.2	Perkins	3,297	3,224	3,423	-3.7	-100	-2.9
Pawnee	4,317	4,427	4,473	-3.5	-40	-0.9	Region 20	20,880	21,068	20,698	0.9	32	0.2
Richardson	12,345	12,085	12,277	0.6	129	1.1	Dundy	2,941	2,874	2,926	0.5	10	0.3
Region 8	37,392	37,321	36,730	1.8	591	1.6	Hayes	1,534	1,657	1,530	0.3	-16	-1.0
Butler	9,107	9,215	9,461	-3.7	-323	-3.4	Hitchcock	3,919	4,007	4,051	-3.3	-132	-3.3
Seward	15,730	15,289	14,460	8.8	1,140	7.9	Red Willow	12,486	12,530	12,191	2.4	170	1.4
Saline	12,555	12,817	12,809	-2.0	-226	-1.8	Region 21	18,913	18,949	19,504	-3.0	-809	-4.1
Region 9	28,130	27,786	28,290	-0.6	-109	-0.4	Cheyenne	10,615	10,696	10,778	-1.5	-267	-2.5
Fillmore	8,124	7,972	8,137	-0.2	95	1.2	Deuel	2,819	2,723	2,717	3.8	116	4.3
Polk	6,342	6,375	6,468	-1.9	-70	-1.1	Kimball	5,479	5,530	6,009	-8.8	-658	-11.0
York	13,664	13,439	13,685	-0.2	-134	-1.0	Region 22	45,228	44,564	46,208	-2.1	-1,999	-4.3
Region 10	49,583	50,030	49,374	0.4	-600	-1.2	Banner	970	1,036	1,034	-6.2	-79	-7.6
Boone	7,770	8,100	8,190	-5.1	-451	-5.5	Garden	2,914	2,911	2,929	-0.5	-28	-1.0
Colfax	9,508	9,773	9,498	0.1	18	0.2	Morrill	5,921	5,816	5,813	1.9	58	1.0
Nance	4,874	4,927	5,142	-5.2	-251	-4.9	Scotts Bluff	35,423	34,801	36,432	-2.8	-1,950	-5.4
Platte	27,431	27,230	26,544	3.3	84	0.3	Region 23	28,933	29,384	29,174	-0.8	-597	-2.0
Region 11	61,116	60,825	61,100	0.0	-429	-1.0	Box Butte	9,755	10,046	10,094	-3.4	-412	-4.1
Antelope	9,069	9,146	9,047	0.2	-12	-0.1	Dawes	9,472	9,906	9,761	-3.0	-440	-4.5
Madison	28,075	27,341	27,402	2.5	322	1.2	Sheridan	7,616	7,385	7,285	4.5	252	3.5
Pierce	8,591	8,452	8,493	1.2	22	0.3	Sioux	2,090	2,047	2,034	2.8	3	0.1
Stanton	6,049	5,813	5,758	5.1	199	3.5	Region 24	30,737	30,883	31,123	-1.3	-704	-2.3
Wayne	9,332	10,073	10,400	-10.3	-1,160	-11.2	Boyd	3,664	3,654	3,752	-2.3	-59	-1.6
Region 12	68,677	68,115	67,276	2.1	-12	0.0	Brown	4,169	4,117	4,021	3.7	164	4.1
Hall	43,525	43,167	42,851	1.6	-431	-1.0	Cherry	6,711	6,806	6,846	-2.0	-269	-3.9
Hamilton	8,852	8,813	8,867	-0.2	-155	-1.7	Holt	12,647	12,715	12,933	-2.2	-441	-3.4
Howard	7,239	7,149	6,807	6.3	371	5.5	Keya Paha	1,348	1,316	1,340	0.6	-31	-2.3
Merrick	9,061	8,986	8,751	3.5	203	2.3	Rock	2,198	2,275	2,231	-1.5	-68	-3.0
Region 13	52,104	51,971	51,619	0.9	283	0.5	Region 25	29,934	30,672	31,368	-4.6	-1,568	-5.0
Adams	31,316	31,219	30,553	2.5	428	1.4	Cedar	11,864	12,083	12,192	-2.7	-419	-3.4
Clay	8,418	8,514	8,266	1.8	116	1.4	Dixon	6,978	7,204	7,453	-6.4	-517	-6.9
Nuckolls	7,190	7,166	7,404	-2.9	-180	-2.4	Knox	11,092	11,385	11,723	-5.4	-632	-5.4
Webster	5,180	5,072	5,396	-4.0	-81	-1.5	Region 26	33,503	33,662	33,763	-0.8	-280	-0.8
Region 14	43,019	43,258	43,946	-2.1	-720	-1.6	Blaine	829	829	847	-2.1	-30	-3.5
Gage	24,601	24,970	25,731	-4.4	-1,114	-4.3	Custer	14,367	14,382	14,092	2.0	265	1.9
Jefferson	10,767	10,527	10,436	3.2	461	4.4	Garfield	2,560	2,534	2,411	6.2	158	6.6
Thayer	7,651	7,761	7,779	-1.6	-67	-0.9	Greeley	3,842	3,819	4,000	-4.0	-124	-3.1
Region 15	38,537	38,998	37,929	1.6	-349	-0.9	Loup	800	827	854	-6.3	-61	-7.1
Buffalo	31,701	32,155	31,222	1.5	-377	-1.2	Sherman	4,582	4,510	4,725	-3.0	-169	-3.6
Kearney	6,836	6,843	6,707	1.9	28	0.4	Valley	5,441	5,659	5,783	-7.8	-332	-7.6
							Wheeler	1,082	1,102	1,051	2.9	13	1.2
State Total	1,542,496	1,527,684	1,485,333	3.8	26,781	1.8							

¹ Region boundaries and percentages are illustrated on the map on page 1.

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

Nearly all small and rural states have been influenced by the apparent outward movement from the largest states. The fastest growing states are generally in the South and among the Mountain states, but Midwest agricultural states other than Nebraska have also increased their growth rates since 1970. The Dakotas, for example, reversed from population declines in the 1960s to growth since 1970. In addition, Iowa is estimated to have grown more in population from 1970 to 1973 than during the entire decade of the 1960s. Thus, although many of the rural, agricultural states continue to experience slower growth rates than the nation, there appears to be a clear trend toward faster growth in such states and slower growth in the more densely settled states.

If, as would appear, there is a significant amount of net out-migration from the larger metropolitan areas, a question arises concerning the destination of these migrants. Generally, the estimates show the fastest growing areas to be small- and medium-size metropolitan areas and nonmetropolitan areas in close proximity to metropolitan areas. The growth rate of all nonmetropolitan areas as a group now appears to exceed the average growth rate for all metropolitan areas, but there are still sizable areas where nonmetropolitan growth continues to lag. Nevertheless, the apparent extent of the reversal in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan growth patterns represents a sharp departure from most past predictions concerning future regional growth patterns.

The Nebraska Migration Pattern

Since significant changes in regional population growth patterns carry with them numerous implications for public policy, it is important both to assess the reliability of the estimates of change and to determine the reasons for the change. A slowdown in the growth rate of California and most of the northern industrial states, accompanied by increasing growth in parts of the South, was apparent throughout much of the 1960s, so it is primarily the extent of the changes in relative growth rates since 1970 rather than the direction of the change which is surprising. In Nebraska, for example, net out-migration slowed during the 1960s, but still amounted to nearly two-thirds of the net out-migration of the 1950s. Since 1970, however, nearly half of the estimated growth of Nebraska population is attributable to a *net in-migration* of 27,000 people. If the estimated in-migration is correct and the trend continues through the decade, net in-migration in the 1970s would exceed the net out-migration of the 1960s.

Because of prospects for continuing agricultural prosperity and mounting problems of congestion and pollution in large cities, it is entirely possible that Nebraska will experience continuing net in-migration during the 1970s. At the same time, however, there are reasons for remaining skeptical that the estimated net in-migration since 1970 indicates a continuing trend. In the first place, there are special circumstances which may have led to temporary net in-migration in the early 1970s, and second, there are potential sources of error and bias in the estimates.

One special circumstance contributing to a possible net in-migration for Nebraska has been a general reduction in military forces since 1970. Based on one estimation method, returning veterans have accounted for more than a third of the net in-migration into Nebraska since 1970. In addition, Nebraska may have experienced some temporary net in-migration in the early 1970s because its economy was affected less by the 1970 recession and subsequent high unemployment than were the economies

of the more industrialized states.

The provisional 1973 estimate, however, shows net in-migration into Nebraska continuing through the nationwide economic recovery of 1972-1973; so it is entirely possible that at least a part of the estimated net in-migration for Nebraska has resulted from long-term forces which may be expected to continue. More evidence on the stability of the apparent trend of net in-migration should be provided in a few months when the data to make revised 1973 state estimates become available, but in light of the current high degree of uncertainty facing the national economy, prediction of future net migration patterns will remain hazardous.

While it is difficult to determine whether the major forces leading toward net in-migration into Nebraska are short-run or long-run, it is at least equally difficult to determine how accurate the estimates of in-migration are. Population estimates can be no better than the available data, and in most cases these data are not ideally suited for making population estimates. The published state estimate is a simple average of two independent estimates.³ In the case of Nebraska the two separate estimates differed by about 12,000 people for 1973. The difference in the results of the two methods does not necessarily mean that the average of the two methods will be wrong, but it does tend to indicate some degree of inaccuracy in at least one of the two estimates.

Currently the possibility of upward bias in both estimates is being reviewed. Even if allowance for such bias is made, however, it is almost certain that there has been some net in-migration into Nebraska since 1970 (if only because of returning veterans). It also would appear highly likely that there will not be a return to the net out-migration patterns of the 1950s or 1960s. The question of whether or not there will be sustained net migration into Nebraska during the 1970s, however, is much more uncertain at the moment.

COUNTY ESTIMATES

Methodology

The county estimates published herewith are based on an average of two methods—the Census Bureau's Component Method II and the regression method. Component Method II is based on separate estimates of various components of population change. For the civilian population under age 65 natural increase (births minus deaths) is estimated from vital statistics data, and net migration is estimated from school enrollment data. Change in the population over age 65 is estimated from Medicare data. Total resident population is obtained by adding estimated military station strength to the civilian population estimate.

The regression method relates changes in various indicator data series to change in population distribution. The indicator series used for the estimates presented here are drivers' licenses issued, total elementary and secondary school enrollment, school census ages 5-18, and Social Security beneficiaries. County estimates published in previous years in *Business in Nebraska* have all been based solely on some variant of the regression method. Because the estimates shown here for 1972 are an average of the two

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³The methods are Component Method II and the regression method. The basic methods are described in *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 437. Changes in the methods are to be described in a forthcoming report in the P-25 series.

Review and Outlook

It may seem strange that the dollar volume of business increased more in Nebraska than in the United States between December, 1972, and December, 1973, but that the physical volume of business rose a bit more slowly in the state than in the nation (Table 1). The reason is that the price indexes used for Nebraska (except in agriculture) rose faster in the state. In agricultural prices, because of weakness in cattle prices, the situation was reversed. Consequently, the physical volume for agriculture rose more in the state than in the United States.

Similar observations hold for the whole of 1973 as compared with 1972. Agriculture did not improve in physical volume over the year, however, either in the state or in the nation. The great

increase in farm dollars was entirely a matter of the high prices received. Only in the fields of construction and distribution did the state do better than the nation over the entire year in physical terms.

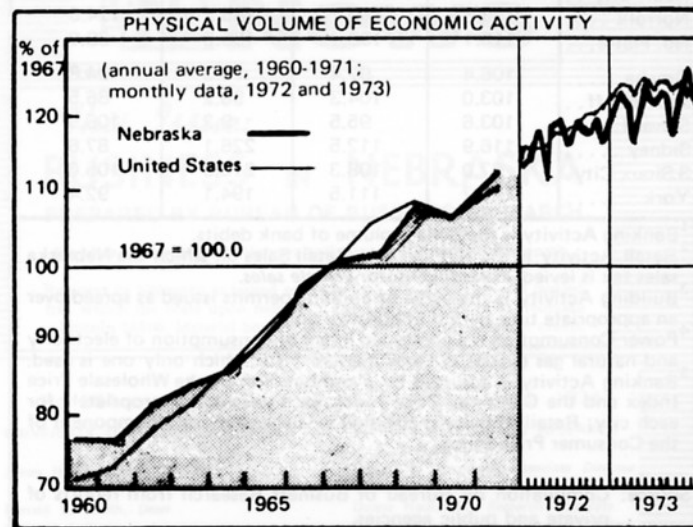
A special study of motor vehicle sales, from sales tax records, indicates that every area in the state except the Omaha and Lincoln regions increased its dollar volume of such sales in December over December, 1972. The decline in motor vehicle sales in the nation, resulting from the gasoline shortage, has not yet affected the rural areas of Nebraska. We shall watch with interest what happens to these figures in January and February when data become available. A similar study of gasoline tax receipts for Nebraska in December yields

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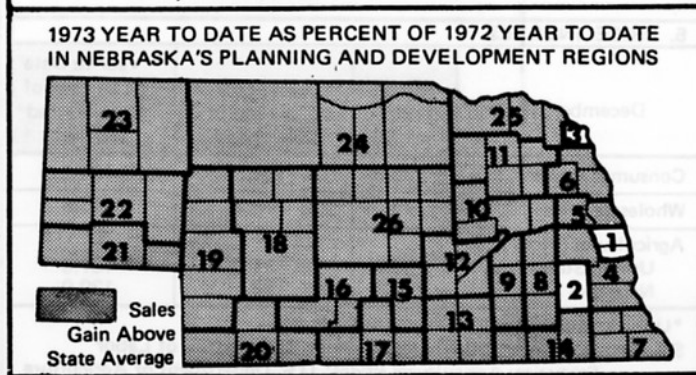
Notes for Tables 1 and 2: (1) The "distributive" indicator represents a composite of wholesale and retail trade; transportation, communication, and utilities; finance, insurance, and real estate; and selected services. (2) The "physical volume" indicator and its components represent the dollar volume 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				
December, 1973	Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year		1973 Year to Date as Percent of 1972 Year to Date	
	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Indicator	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	115.6	113.6	116.0	113.5
Agricultural	137.5	142.1	138.4	136.0
Nonagricultural	111.0	112.6	111.9	112.7
Construction	99.6	101.5	113.6	109.4
Manufacturing	118.4	123.5	115.3	119.7
Distributive	110.5	109.3	111.1	110.7
Government	108.4	109.1	110.0	108.3
Physical Volume	102.2	102.4	102.9	104.9
Agricultural	109.7	105.6	98.8	99.3
Nonagricultural	100.8	102.3	103.6	105.1
Construction	92.0	93.7	104.1	100.2
Manufacturing	101.4	106.9	102.1	108.4
Distributive	101.5	100.5	104.6	104.3
Government	100.5	103.0	101.3	102.8
2. CHANGE FROM 1967				
Indicator	Percent of 1967 Average			
	Nebraska	U.S.		
Dollar Volume	183.4	174.4		
Agricultural	226.8	215.1		
Nonagricultural	174.9	173.0		
Construction	189.3	170.7		
Manufacturing	182.2	167.7		
Distributive	169.8	174.1		
Government	181.0	179.7		
Physical Volume	122.0	123.1		
Agricultural	118.8	115.8		
Nonagricultural	122.7	123.4		
Construction	121.4	109.4		
Manufacturing	126.6	120.3		
Distributive	122.6	125.7		
Government	117.7	125.0		

3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES ¹ OF NEBRASKA REGIONS (Unadjusted for Price Changes)		
Region ² and Principal Retail Trade Center	December, 1973 as percent of December, 1972	1973 Year to Date as percent of 1972 Year to Date
<i>The State</i>	111.5	115.7
1 (Omaha)	106.3	109.7
2 (Lincoln)	102.8	113.2
3 (So. Sioux City)	112.3	102.4
4 (Nebraska City)	110.8	120.5
5 (Fremont)	106.6	116.2
6 (West Point)	120.5	124.8
7 (Falls City)	115.2	118.6
8 (Seward)	117.1	122.0
9 (York)	119.8	125.1
10 (Columbus)	118.8	124.1
11 (Norfolk)	122.5	123.2
12 (Grand Island)	111.0	117.7
13 (Hastings)	114.4	117.0
14 (Beatrice)	126.1	120.5
15 (Kearney)	116.0	118.1
16 (Lexington)	124.6	122.8
17 (Holdrege)	111.1	120.7
18 (North Platte)	110.7	119.2
19 (Ogallala)	125.4	124.3
20 (McCook)	110.9	122.0
21 (Sidney, Kimball)	123.7	118.6
22 (Scottsbluff)	113.2	120.2
23 (Alliance, Chadron)	122.6	118.7
24 (O'Neill)	131.7	126.4
25 (Hartington)	126.9	126.8
26 (Broken Bow)	114.3	120.9



¹Sales on which sales taxes are collected by retailers located in the state, including motor vehicle sales.
²"Planning and development" regions as established by the Nebraska Office of Planning and Programming and shown in the map below.
 Source: Compilations by Bureau of Business Research from data provided by the Nebraska Tax Commissioner.



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a 3 percent increase over December, 1972, in gallons sold. Apparently the gasoline shortage had not yet reached the state.

The consumption of electricity and gas (not shown separately in Table 4) were both down in December in Nebraska cities, compared with the year before, but gas dropped 11 percent and electricity only 5 percent. Only Norfolk showed a substantial increase in power consumption over 1972, and this was mainly in electricity. This city's figures for power consumption have been high since September. In the state as a whole it would seem that the saving of fuel, of gas especially, is a reality.

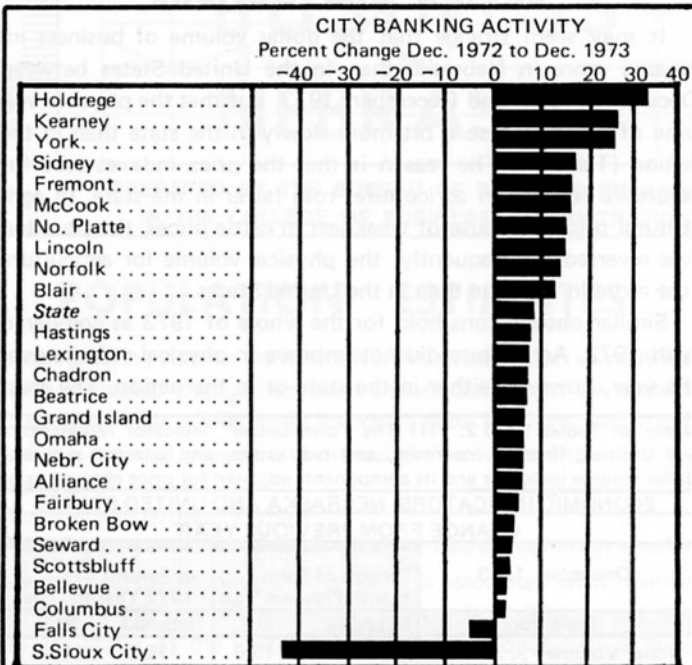
In Table 2 December retail sales show an 11.5 percent rise for the state over December, 1972. For the year as a whole the increase was 15.7 percent. Thus the rate of growth has slowed. Price inflation accounted for three-fourths of the December rise and 40 percent of the increase for the year as a whole. The areas of South Sioux City, Lincoln, and Omaha were low, and every other area was above the state average for the year as a whole. If corrected for inflation, South Sioux City would be shown to have had less sales in 1973 than in 1972.

Retail activity, corrected for price inflation, actually dropped in ten of the twenty-six cities in December, as compared with the year before, and in two there was no change. In bank debits, which are an index of total business and financial activity in the city, only Falls City and South Sioux City were below a year ago, even after correction for price changes.

Our general conclusion is that the recession, if such it is for the nation, has not touched the agricultural regions of the state as yet, and has not greatly affected the urban regions. Although the farms have had some ups and downs during the year, agricultural prosperity has in general buoyed the economic condition of Nebraska. If the nation should sink into a general recession, as many economists predict, it is inevitable that Nebraska will also feel the effects. Again, agricultural prosperity, whether due to high prices for farm products or to high production, or both, has in the past been followed by agricultural depression. High production this year, if favorable weather makes it possible, may, as the President predicts, make for a decline in prices. It is true that the world demand will remain high, but such demand, unless supported by ability to pay, is ineffective.

In the long run, it is undeniable that the "developed" part of the world is using up resources (not only petroleum) at a rate that cannot be sustained forever. We may in fact be living in a golden age, the peak of present day civilization, and after us will come one shortage after another, until we are compelled to revert to a more primitive economy.

E. Z. P.



Source: Table 4 below.

4. DECEMBER CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS

The State and its Trading Centers	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago			
	Banking Activity ¹	Retail Activity ²	Building Activity ³	Power Consumption ⁴
	(Adjusted for Price Change) ⁵			
The State	108.3	101.0	95.1	92.0
Alliance	106.1	110.9	110.9	87.5
Beatrice	107.1	119.5	30.6	60.5
Bellevue	102.4	90.6	125.0	95.7*
Blair	112.9	97.8	83.1	95.6
Broken Bow	103.8	99.0	201.8	83.9
Chadron	107.2	103.4	113.0	82.8
Columbus	102.1	102.2	78.1	96.6
Fairbury	105.5	93.0	64.2	106.4*
Falls City	95.1	100.0	40.4	86.6
Fremont	115.8	94.2	127.8	102.1*
Grand Island	106.8	96.4	128.7	87.1
Hastings	107.5	100.0	71.8	81.3
Holdrege	133.1	104.6	146.9	89.0
Kearney	126.8	103.3	132.3	95.2
Lexington	107.3	113.5	564.5	85.3
Lincoln	114.9	91.9	44.8	98.6
McCook	115.7	94.3	60.5	92.0
Nebr. City	106.3	112.7	227.3	97.8
Norfolk	113.6	109.7	185.2	124.5
No. Platte	115.1	100.7	485.6	88.0
Omaha	106.4	97.4	74.3	94.8
Scottsbluff	103.0	104.3	98.2	86.5
Seward	103.6	95.5	9.2	106.5
Sidney	116.9	112.5	226.1	87.6
S. Sioux City	67.0	108.3	210.3	105.0
York	125.7	111.5	194.1	92.4

¹ Banking Activity is the dollar volume of bank debits.
² Retail Activity is the Net Taxable Retail Sales on which the Nebraska sales tax is levied, excluding motor vehicle sales.
³ Building Activity is the value of building permits issued as spread over an appropriate time period of construction.
⁴ Power Consumption is a combined index of consumption of electricity and natural gas except in cases marked * for which only one is used.
⁵ Banking Activity is adjusted by a combination of the Wholesale Price Index and the Consumer Price Index, each weighted appropriately for each city; Retail Activity is adjusted by the commodity component of the Consumer Price Index.

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

December, 1973	Index* (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices	138.5	108.8	106.2
Wholesale Prices	145.3	118.2	113.8
Agricultural Prices			
United States	185.7	134.6	137.0
Nebraska	190.8	125.3	139.9

*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)

methods, therefore, they will differ somewhat from those published last year, which were based on a single method.⁴

Even the regression method itself, however, has been changed from the one used to derive the estimates published last year. This change was necessitated by data problems which forced elimination of the food tax credit data series as one of the regression indicators. Since this series has shown considerable promise as an indicator, it is hoped that it will be possible to resolve the problems associated with the use of the series and restore it to use as an indicator in future years.

The County Figures

Provisional 1973 and revised 1972 county population estimates for Nebraska appear in the table on page 2, along with totals for Nebraska's twenty-six planning regions,⁵ and the regional figures are depicted in the map on page 1. As in the case of the state estimate, it is important to keep in mind the potential for bias and errors in the county estimates. In fact, the potential for error at the county level, especially for small counties, would generally be expected to be greater than at the state level. Nevertheless, there are some features of the estimates which appear sufficiently clear to justify comment.

Possibly the clearest feature of the county estimates is the dominant role of the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas in the total population growth of the state. The combined population increase of the three Nebraska counties (Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster) in these areas was 49,100 compared with an increase of 57,163 for the entire state. Of the remaining five counties

⁴Provisional 1972 estimates based on an average of two methods were published by the U.S. Census Bureau (*Current Population Reports*, Series P-26, No. 25). Copies of this report are available from the Bureau of Business Research upon request.

⁵The county estimates were prepared jointly by the Bureau of Business Research and the U.S. Bureau of the Census as a part of the Federal-State Cooperative Program for Local Population Estimates. The same estimates rounded to the nearest hundred will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Current Population Reports*, Series P-26, published by the Bureau of the Census. The numbers in the table are not rounded, but this fact should not be interpreted as an indication that estimates are deemed to be accurate within a hundred residents for most counties.

which registered estimated increases of more than 1,000 from 1970 to 1973, three (Cass, Seward, and Washington) are adjacent to the Omaha or Lincoln metropolitan areas, one (Dakota) is part of another metropolitan area, and the other (Lincoln) has experienced considerable expansion associated with railroad investments. Thus the estimates show few concentrations of significant population growth outside the Omaha and Lincoln areas.

The estimated 1970-1973 population growth in the Omaha and Lincoln areas shows a significant acceleration from the 1960s. If the estimates are accurate, both the Lincoln and Omaha metropolitan areas have increased at more than twice the national rate since 1970, while during the 1960s the Lincoln area grew more slowly than the nation and the Omaha area grew at less than one and one-half times the national rate. By contrast with the metropolitan areas, the Grand Island-Kearney area, which was the only part of the state aside from the Omaha area to grow faster than the nation in the 1960s, appears to have dropped below the national rate of growth since 1970. If this estimated slowdown is correct, it has probably resulted from declining enrollments at Kearney State College and curtailment of ordnance production in Grand Island.

In general, the population estimates show little population growth outside the metropolitan areas, but this fact does not indicate that there has been no reduction in the rate of out-migration from outstate Nebraska. The 1973 estimates show forty-six of the ninety-three counties increasing in population since 1970, compared with only twenty-five counties increasing during the 1960s. Because of falling birthrates, however, this population-change comparison understates the changes in net migration—forty-four counties are estimated to have net in-migration from 1970 to 1973, compared with only five during the 1960s.

Because the accuracy of population estimates for small counties often leaves much to be desired and because most of the estimated county changes are small, it is not appropriate to impute much significance to the estimates of change for most of the individual counties. If the state estimate is accurate, however, it would appear that the Omaha and Lincoln areas are experiencing rapid growth with significant net in-migration, while most of the rest of the state is experiencing relatively little population change or net migration.

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