

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY

The September, 1974, issue of *Business in Nebraska* marked twenty-five years of its publication. A review article seems appropriate to commemorate the occasion. In normal circumstances the article would have been written by the Bureau Director, but, as a former Director, I have been commissioned to the task.

Business in Nebraska has been published since September, 1949. During this time it has carried monthly the statistics for the volume of Nebraska business and for the cities of the state. When I became Director in September, 1946, there was an existing publication, the *Business Review Edition* of the *University of Nebraska News*—a two-page sheet—which had been started in 1941 by the then Director, W. A. Spurr, and continued by his successor, O. F. Litterer, until the latter left the University in the summer of 1943. Thereafter, until the January, 1946, issue, it was continued by the Dean, John R. Clark. I revived it in the November issue of that year. In July, 1948, I began to issue monthly another two-page sheet, the mimeographed *Business in Nebraska Cities*, designed to contain data that were being collected on each of the important cities of the state, and in particular the retail sales figures furnished voluntarily by the merchants.

With the September, 1949, issue, these two sheets were merged into the four-page *Business in Nebraska*. It has been published every month since, although the former *Business Review Edition* had been published only eight times a year, omitting the issues during the summer and for December.

At first the publication contained four pages in each issue, succeeding as it did two publications of two pages each. In August, 1963, a six-page issue appeared, and this format became permanent from June, 1964, on until the February, 1975, issue which had eight pages.

In the November, 1972, issue the fiftieth anniversary of the Bureau of Business Research was observed, with a review of its history. The Bureau (at first called the Committee on Business Research) is one of the oldest in the nation and, as has been the practice of many such bureaus, has always been committed to publishing data related to the state and its communities' activities.

In analyzing the contents of *Business in Nebraska* as they have changed over the twenty-five years, I studied especially the first eight years and the last eight years. In the first period there was an annual report on Nebraska employment and wages, extracted from reports of the Nebraska Division of Employment Security. This gave the number of persons engaged in, and the wages of, each industrial group in the state. The first such report showed that the average annual wage in all industries in 1939 was \$1,205, and in 1949 was \$2,575. The last such report published in *Business in Nebraska* was for 1963, when the average wage was

reported to be \$4,725, an increase from 1939 of 292 percent, and from 1949 of 83 percent. These reports were for "covered employment" only—employment covered by the unemployment compensation system, which in 1949 included slightly more than half of the Nebraska employed and increased in number in later years.

Reports on income in Nebraska were contained in both the early and the later periods. Some of these were based on Census figures and some on data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce. For 1939, a per capita income of \$397 was reported for Nebraska. For 1950, it was \$1,467; for 1959, \$2,162; and for 1969, \$3,600—with some small revisions reported at later times. For 1973, the latest figure available, the per capita personal income was reported to be \$5,042. All the increase was, of course, not in "real" income, but was for income measured in dollars of changing purchasing power. Nevertheless, over the twenty-five years of *Business in Nebraska*, income measured in dollars of constant purchasing power has increased nearly 300 percent.

The early years of the publication contained annual reports on the assets of Nebraska state banks. These did not include the national banks, which do a majority of Nebraska banking, but the data used were more readily available. The last of these reports to be published was for December 31, 1959. The reports for the end of 1958 and 1959, however, do contain figures for the Federal Reserve System member banks in Nebraska, as well as for the state banks. There was a duplication of about 6 percent between the two systems. Loans which the banks were holding were divided by types of security, such as farm, automobile, real estate, and personal loans. Total assets at the end of 1941 in the state banks were \$99 million; at the end of 1948, \$390 million; and at the end of 1959, \$557 million. At the latter date the total for the member banks was \$1,276 million. Eliminating the 6 percent duplication, the grand total for all banks was \$1,800 million. Farm loans were 62 percent of all loans for the state banks, but only 36 percent for the member banks. The state banks were more rural.

Beginning with 1952, an estimate of the population of each county in Nebraska has been perhaps the most important feature of the publication. These estimates were made biennially until 1960, and annually thereafter. They were supplemented, beginning with the 1956 estimates, by figures for the principal cities. The process of making the estimates was revised after each decennial Census, comparing our estimates with the Census figures, and altering our methods to obtain better fit. These intracensal estimates have been of value to many businessmen and governmental units in the allocations among (Continued on page 8)

Review and Outlook

The November figures for the volume of business in the state and nation were not as much below those for October as we expected. The dollar volumes of business, of both Nebraska and the United States, were still considerably above the same month last year. The physical volumes were down less than three percent. Agriculture had a sinking spell, even in physical volume, but construction showed some small signs of revival. Manufacturing and government employment were still apparently doing well in the state, and not so badly in the nation.

The distributive industries showed signs of weakness, however. This weakness is illustrated among the cities, as shown in Table 3. The state's price-adjusted taxable retail sales, excluding automo-

tive sales, were down almost five percent from last year, and two-thirds of the cities, including Omaha and Lincoln, were even further below their last year's levels. York, Grand Island, Kearney, Holdrege, Lexington, and Ogallala—along the Interstate—were still above a year ago, as were Scottsbluff, Norfolk, Alliance, Chadron, and Hartington. Blair and O'Neill were, however, almost 20 percent down from 1973. Some of the places along the Interstate—North Platte, Sidney, and Kimball—did not do so well.

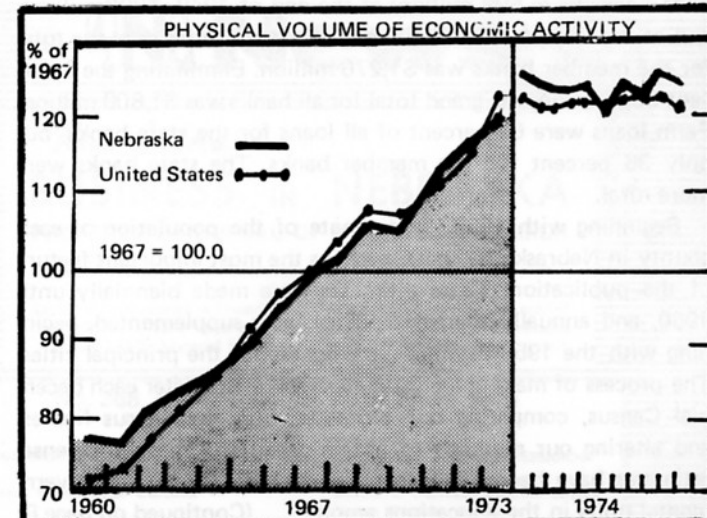
When we turn to the regional figures for retail sales, which include motor vehicle sales, we find the state dropping even more, which is evidence that automobile retailing was suffering in Nebraska as elsewhere. Only six of the 26 regions showed real volumes of sales in November greater (Continued on page 7)

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.

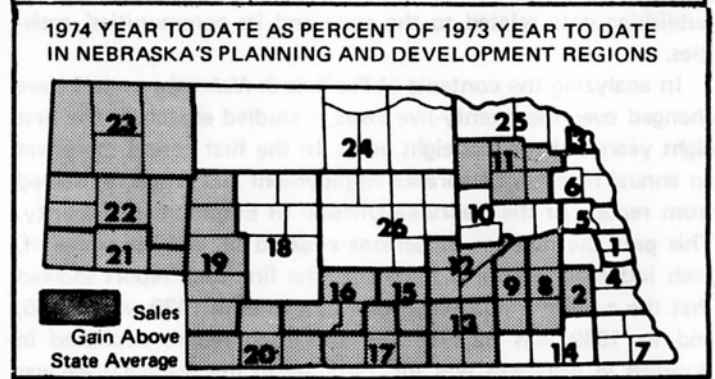
| ECONOMIC INDICATORS: NEBRASKA AND UNITED STATES | | | | |
|---|--|-------|---|-------|
| 1. CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR | | | | |
| November, 1974 | Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year | | 1974 Year to Date as Percent of 1973 Year to Date | |
| | Nebraska | U.S. | Nebraska | U.S. |
| Indicator | | | | |
| Dollar Volume | 106.2 | 110.0 | 111.0 | 111.1 |
| Agricultural | 80.8 | 98.1 | 103.9 | 105.3 |
| Nonagricultural | 113.2 | 110.6 | 112.6 | 111.3 |
| Construction | 110.4 | 96.8 | 97.7 | 99.4 |
| Manufacturing | 127.7 | 118.5 | 126.3 | 120.0 |
| Distributive | 108.7 | 108.1 | 110.9 | 108.7 |
| Government | 111.7 | 108.5 | 108.0 | 108.5 |
| Physical Volume | 97.3 | 97.2 | 101.7 | 99.1 |
| Agricultural | 88.9 | 97.8 | 106.6 | 97.7 |
| Nonagricultural | 99.0 | 97.2 | 100.9 | 99.2 |
| Construction | 96.3 | 84.4 | 86.2 | 87.9 |
| Manufacturing | 101.0 | 96.8 | 105.7 | 100.9 |
| Distributive | 97.0 | 96.4 | 100.1 | 98.0 |
| Government | 106.3 | 105.3 | 103.3 | 104.1 |

| 2. CHANGE FROM 1967 | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Indicator | Percent of 1967 Average | |
| | Nebraska | U.S. |
| Dollar Volume | 202.8 | 191.3 |
| Agricultural | 200.2 | 227.7 |
| Nonagricultural | 203.3 | 190.0 |
| Construction | 221.1 | 167.8 |
| Manufacturing | 238.3 | 194.4 |
| Distributive | 191.0 | 187.8 |
| Government | 200.1 | 195.0 |
| Physical Volume | 124.2 | 120.4 |
| Agricultural | 112.9 | 124.0 |
| Nonagricultural | 126.5 | 120.3 |
| Construction | 122.8 | 93.2 |
| Manufacturing | 136.6 | 117.0 |
| Distributive | 123.8 | 121.7 |
| Government | 124.7 | 131.1 |

| 3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES (Adjusted for Price Changes) | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Region Number ¹ and City | City Sales ² | Sales in Region ² | |
| | Nov., 1974 as percent of Nov., 1973 | Nov., 1974 as percent of Nov., 1973 | Year to Date '74 as percent of Year to Date '73 |
| <i>The State</i> | 95.1 | 93.1 | 100.3 |
| 1 Omaha | 90.2 | 89.0 | 96.7 |
| Bellevue | 96.1 | | |
| 2 Lincoln | 94.9 | 93.2 | 100.7 |
| 3 So. Sioux City | 95.7 | 96.2 | 99.3 |
| 4 Nebraska City | 97.7 | 85.4 | 97.5 |
| 5 Fremont | 91.1 | 86.7 | 99.0 |
| Blair | 80.5 | | |
| 6 West Point | 91.2 | 86.6 | 93.4 |
| 7 Falls City | 93.9 | 86.1 | 94.2 |
| 8 Seward | 86.0 | 98.2 | 101.9 |
| 9 York | 108.1 | 99.6 | 106.6 |
| 10 Columbus | 93.7 | 96.1 | 99.8 |
| 11 Norfolk | 103.7 | 97.4 | 103.0 |
| 12 Grand Island | 104.6 | 106.2 | 106.4 |
| 13 Hastings | 99.5 | 101.4 | 106.3 |
| 14 Beatrice | 87.6 | 91.3 | 100.3 |
| Fairbury | 99.1 | | |
| 15 Kearney | 104.0 | 102.2 | 104.4 |
| 16 Lexington | 114.2 | 110.5 | 107.8 |
| 17 Holdrege | 107.2 | 100.5 | 105.0 |
| 18 North Platte | 91.1 | 88.2 | 96.9 |
| 19 Ogallala | 116.6 | 116.7 | 116.3 |
| 20 McCook | 86.9 | 82.0 | 105.6 |
| 21 Sidney | 94.1 | 99.7 | 107.7 |
| Kimball | 92.0 | | |
| 22 Scottsbluff | 100.9 | 99.1 | 105.3 |
| 23 Alliance | 113.5 | 96.4 | 102.9 |
| Chadron | 103.1 | | |
| 24 O'Neill | 81.7 | 81.2 | 99.2 |
| 25 Hartington | 115.3 | 94.0 | 96.9 |
| 26 Broken Bow | 93.8 | 89.4 | 98.2 |



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



WILL YOU HELP US PLEASE?

In order to increase the usefulness of Business in Nebraska, we need your help. We ask you to give careful consideration to the following comments and questions. This involves for the most part checking answers and will, therefore, take only a small amount of your time.

The indicators published regularly in Business in Nebraska (See Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the accompanying Business in Nebraska) are based on data provided by a variety of federal, state and local organizations. Some of the data are taken from published sources and some are unpublished or are obtained from the issuing agency prior to publication. The variety of data sources causes considerable variation in the timing of the receipt of different data for a particular month. Some of the data which are needed for the composite dollar and physical volume indexes (of Tables 1 and 2) have generally been available nearly two months prior to the time of Business in Nebraska has been scheduled to go to press, while other data have not generally been available until nearly the press date, and occasionally not even then.

In some cases preliminary data based on a small sample of observations become available soon after the end of a reporting period. In other cases release of initial data must await the collection and processing of a larger set of records. In many cases the first data released are subsequently revised as late reports become available or as additional data are made available from other sources. Often complete information is available only for certain "benchmark" periods, such as census periods, and changes for periods between benchmarks are estimated on the basis of incomplete information.

If economic changes occur smoothly and in predictable ways, estimates based on limited information may be relied upon. In times of economic instability, however, such estimates can be quite unreliable. Recent events have brought to light numerous deficiencies in economic data, particularly in data for states and localities.

Deficiencies in existing data have combined with increasing needs for additional data to induce a number of data-producing agencies to undertake major efforts to revamp their data collection and handling procedures. The Nebraska Department of Revenue, for example, has begun to make extensive changes in its procedures for processing tax data. The major emphasis of the new program of the Department of Revenue has been on improving the quality of the sales tax data by incorporating data from late tax reports into figures released. One result of this emphasis has been a delay in the release of the data on retail sales activity. By placing greater emphasis on complete reporting and delaying the release dates, other agencies might also be able to improve data quality. There are, however, tradeoffs between quality and timeliness of

the data which should be evaluated. In addition, the degree of increased accuracy that can be achieved by delaying release will vary from agency to agency.

The Bureau of Business Research in cooperation with the State Office of Planning and Programming is undertaking a systematic review of data sources. The review has so far been concentrated on data produced by state agencies. Other data sources will be reviewed at a later time, except where pressing needs are discovered. The review will involve a comprehensive coverage of data sources relating to population, economic, business, and related developments in Nebraska. Considerable attention will be given to those sources that have the greatest usefulness to the users of the information services provided by the Bureau of Business Research. The gains to be had will reflect the extent to which the usefulness is identified.

The Bureau is not, however, able to judge all the needs of the users of its monthly indicators; only the users, among which are the readers of Business in Nebraska, can do this. You are being asked, therefore, for your opinion. Your response will be most helpful in the process of reviewing and improving our business and economic indicator program--both for use by readers of Business in Nebraska and for use by others.

We would appreciate your immediate attention to the questions below and the return of your replies at the earliest possible moment. You will need only fold these pages as indicated on page 6, staple where shown, and mail. Postage is prepaid.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Questions

Referring to tables 1 through 5 of the accompanying copy of Business in Nebraska, indicate your choice by check (✓) marks.

1. What kinds of indicators do you find most useful? (Rate usefulness on a scale from 1 to 5, Then rank in order of importance using number 1 for highest ranking.)

| | Circle | | | | | Rank items (a) through (j) in order of importance |
|--|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------|--|
| | Degree of Usefulness | | | | | |
| | Not Useful | | | | Very Useful | |
| (a) Overall Composite indicators (e.g. dollar volume index) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (b) Sector Composite indicators (e.g. manufacturing) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (c) Employment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (d) Retail Sales | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (e) Building Activity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (f) Banking Activity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (g) Power Consumption | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (h) Farm Marketings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (i) Price Indexes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (j) Other (specify) _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |

2. How should the comparisons be presented?

| | Circle | | | | | Rank items (a) through (g) in order of importance |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---|-------------|---|---|--|
| | Degree of Usefulness | | | | | |
| | Not Useful | | Very Useful | | | |
| Presented | | | | | | |
| (a) as raw data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| Or as a percent of | | | | | | |
| (b) the previous period | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (c) the same period last year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (d) a given base period (e.g., 1967) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| Or (e) with the year-to-date value | | | | | | |
| as a percent of the same pe- | | | | | | |
| riod in the previous year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| Or (f) as a moving average | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| Or (g) other (Specify) _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |

3. Do you think the presentation of the "Review and Outlook" section of Business in Nebraska should give relatively more emphasis to:

- _____ (a) charts?
- _____ (b) tables?
- _____ (c) written description?
- or _____ (d) maintain its current relative emphasis?

4. Do you think the various tables should give relatively more emphasis to:

- _____ (a) national indicators?
- _____ (b) state indicators?
- _____ (c) local indicators?
- or _____ (d) maintain its current relative emphasis?

5. Should the total space devoted to monthly indicators be:

- _____ (a) increased?
- _____ (b) decreased?
- or _____ (c) maintained at the current level (2 pages)?

6. Should the indicators be published:

- _____ (a) monthly?
- _____ (b) quarterly?
- _____ (c) biannually?

7a. In relation to the timing of receipt and publication of the indicators, do you think:

- _____ (a) all data should refer to the same period and publication should be delayed until all data are received?
- _____ (b) all data should be published for the latest month available at press time?

7b. Since construction of overall or composite indicators must await the data for all the component indicators (unless data for some indicators are estimated), they are often the most difficult indicators to provide on a timely basis. To resolve the problem would you suggest:

- _____ (a) publishing the available components separately when received and dropping the composite indicator?
- _____ (b) reorganizing the composite indicator to eliminate those indicators which are received late?
- _____ (c) estimating missing components?
- _____ (d) waiting for all the component indicators?
- _____ (e) other procedures _____

8. Since the quality and extent of ultimate revision varies considerably among alternative monthly indicators, would you suggest:
- _____ (a) devoting more space to the publication of revisions?
 - _____ (b) dropping particular indicators where problems of quality and revisions are serious?
 - _____ (c) changing the publication date so that fewer preliminary data are published?
 - _____ (d) publishing only quarterly or annual data for those series for which monthly revisions tend to be large?
 - _____ (e) Other (Specify) _____

9. To determine the usefulness of various indicators for your purposes, you may require information on a variety of characteristics affecting data quality. What do you feel are the best ways to provide such information?

| | Circle | | | | | Rank items (a) through (d) in order of importance |
|--|----------------------|---|-------------|---|---|--|
| | Degree of Usefulness | | | | | |
| | Not Useful | | Very Useful | | | |
| (a) expanded technical notes accompanying the data tables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (b) periodic special articles in <u>Business in Nebraska</u> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (c) technical manuals made available on request | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |
| (d) Other (Specify) _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | _____ |

10. Type of work in which you are engaged:

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ (a) farming | _____ (f) chamber of commerce |
| _____ (b) retail trade | _____ (g) educator |
| _____ (c) wholesale trade | _____ (h) government |
| _____ (d) manufacturing | _____ (i) banking, finance, insurance, real estate |
| _____ (e) newspaper or other news medium | _____ (j) construction |
| | _____ (k) other _____ |

11. Other comments and suggestions. (For example, is there other information you think the Bureau of Business Research should make an effort to obtain and publish? On what subject matter should articles be written?) _____

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(Continued from page 2) than in 1973. Again these were mostly along the Interstate. Current dollar sales, which are not shown in the table, were, however, generally higher than last year as a result of the price rises. Only six of the regions' dollar volumes fell below last year's. Even in the year-to-date column of *price-adjusted* sales, including eleven months of 1974, all but eleven of the regions were still ahead of the same months of 1973. Apparently the weakening of retail activity began to be felt in November as it had not been felt before during the year.

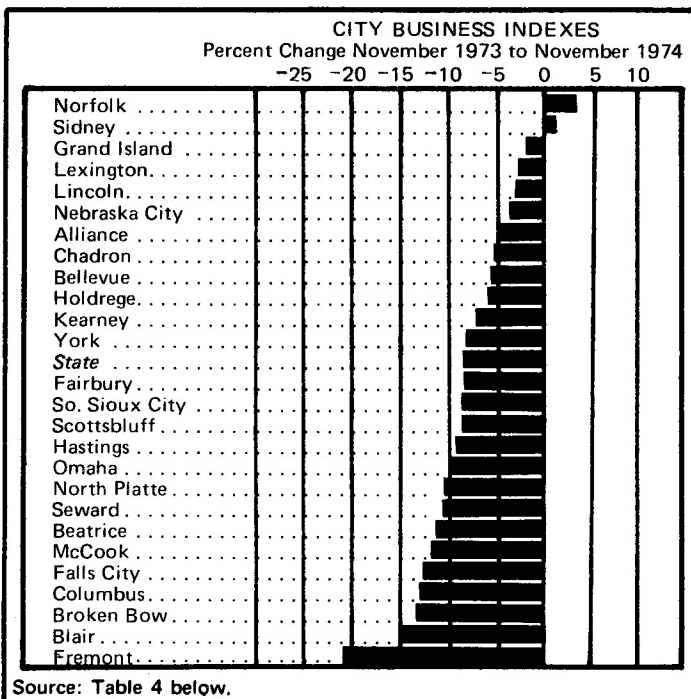
The data in Table 4 show banking activity down by 15 percent from the same month last year on a price-adjusted basis. It is phenomenal that every city in the list showed a drop from last year, with the drops ranging from four-tenths of one percent for Lincoln to almost 35 percent for Falls City. This is the most definite indication we have had of a recession in the state. On the other hand, building activity, as measured by building permits spread over future months to simulate actual activity, has since July proved to be higher than the year before for all cities combined and for the majority of them individually. Power consumption in November was down, but not by as much as has been true in recent months. Economizing of gas and electricity appears to be losing its appeal, although power consumption in a majority of the cities was still below November, 1973. It is probable that the hard winter we are having will show up in a greater use of power over the remainder of the winter months.

The composite indexes for the cities depicted in the chart show the effect of recession, with only two cities having any improvement over 1973. This is also unusual, and rather startling.

A drop in the use of motor vehicle fuels in the state during 1974, as reported by the Department of Roads—indicates some fuel conservation. The total amount of motor fuel imported into or manufactured in Nebraska in the first 11 months of 1974 dropped 3.6 percent from the same period in 1973, and the amount of gasoline was down 4.2 percent for the same period. This reflects less driving and perhaps an increase in the use of smaller cars.

The evidences of the recession are particularly prominent in the city data, but not in the state data in Tables 1 and 2. Some preliminary data that we have received indicate that December will probably show a greater drop in the state and national physical volume figures. It is clear that by now we are in a real recession. Whether it will turn into a depression on the order of the 1930s we will not know for at least six months. The politicians are predicting an upturn by the middle of the year, so that is a critical time.

E. Z. P.



Source: Table 4 below.

| The State and Its Trading Centers | Percent of Same Month a Year Ago | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Banking Activity ¹ (Adjusted for Price Changes) | Building Activity | Power Consumption ³ |
| The State | 85.4 | 128.8 | 98.4 |
| Alliance | 80.7 | 496.1 | 86.6 |
| Beatrice | 83.9 | 74.7 | 101.1 |
| Bellevue | 91.3 | 110.3 | 97.9* |
| Blair | 85.5 | 676.0 | 93.0 |
| Broken Bow | 74.5 | 12.4 | 92.6 |
| Chadron | 84.3 | 126.3 | 99.9 |
| Columbus | 75.9 | 240.1 | 92.4 |
| Fairbury | 82.2 | 295.4 | 96.7* |
| Falls City | 65.5 | 222.8 | 114.6 |
| Fremont | 75.3 | 107.6 | 62.3* |
| Grand Island | 93.5 | 119.9 | 95.3 |
| Hastings | 93.9 | 166.3 | 65.2 |
| Holdrege | 79.0 | 208.0 | 98.9 |
| Kearney | 82.6 | 88.4 | 92.5 |
| Lexington | 82.0 | 53.8 | 94.6 |
| Lincoln | 99.6 | 277.5 | 94.9 |
| McCook | 87.1 | 39.6 | 91.3 |
| Nebraska City | 93.0 | 29.9 | 96.9 |
| Norfolk | 86.1 | 134.1 | 134.6 |
| North Platte | 88.4 | 27.6 | 89.3 |
| Omaha | 81.8 | 172.9 | 106.2 |
| Scottsbluff | 92.9 | 247.2 | 68.8 |
| Seward | 85.4 | 118.8 | 103.8 |
| Sidney | 86.6 | 84.7 | 143.7 |
| So. Sioux City | 86.4 | 25.1 | 92.5 |
| York | 73.1 | 58.3 | 98.8 |

¹ Banking Activity is the dollar volume of bank debits.
² Building Activity is the value of building permits issued as spread over an appropriate time period of construction.
³ Power Consumption is a combined index of consumption of electricity and natural gas except in cases marked * for which only one is used.
⁴ 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.

| November, 1974 | Index (1967 = 100) | Percent of Same Month Last Year | Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year* |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Consumer Prices | 154.3 | 112.1 | 110.9 |
| Commodity component | 152.0 | 112.8 | 111.9 |
| Wholesale Prices | 171.9 | 123.5 | 118.6 |
| Agricultural Prices | | | |
| United States | 183.7 | 100.2 | 107.3 |
| Nebraska | 177.4 | 90.9 | 96.6 |

*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 1) the counties. The system had its greatest triumph when, in 1968, the Congressional districts of the state were reapportioned by court order. Based upon county figures—which were produced by the present Associate Director, Ed Hauswald, who used a modified version of the technique which I had developed—the reapportionment, as shown by the 1970 Census, gave the three districts each between 33 and 34 percent of the state. Nebraska was the only state with more than two Congressmen which did not have to be reapportioned again after that Census. All of this, of course, was reported in various issues of *Business in Nebraska*.

Next to the population estimates, the monthly reports and annual review of retail sales by city and district have been the most important feature of this publication. At first, sales data were gathered monthly from a large sample of merchants over the state. After the retail sales tax was enacted, the data have been based upon reports from the State Tax Commission. Under the original system sales were shown by type of store as well as by locality, but use of the tax reports has made this impossible.

City data, such as those on utilities, building permits, and bank debts, have been collected and published from the beginning, along with retail sales. They have been summarized annually as well, showing the prosperity of each city relative to the others. The city Chambers of Commerce, as well as the firms involved, have been most helpful in developing this information monthly during the whole twenty-five years.

Another very important statistical series carried by *Business in Nebraska* has been the indexes of the volume of business. These have been in two forms, the dollar volume and the physical volume of business, the latter being deflated for price changes. An index of business was shown in graphic form in the first issue of the old *Business Review Edition* in January, 1941, and continued to be shown until the Spring of 1943. It was revived and reconstituted in the April, 1947, issue, and was completely overhauled in a study published in 1972, prepared by Keith Turner, a former employee of the Bureau, and Vernon Renshaw, its present Statistician. A comparable index for the United States is also computed monthly. The index has been computed back to 1924, as given in the June, 1958, issue, although this is not as scientific a basis as the present index.

One annual compilation in the earlier period which has not

been continued was an analysis of the *Directory of Nebraska Manufacturers*. The number of establishments in each of some twenty types of industry was shown. The number of establishments and the number of employees in each type, as given in the *Census of Manufactures*, was shown for comparison.

Special articles on various subjects have appeared throughout the years. In the first eight years we find articles on the national business situation. In fact, in the very first issue the leading article is entitled "Review of the Recession [of 1949]." Other articles dealt with unemployment and inflation, *then as now a serious concern!* Various government reports dealing with Nebraska were reviewed, including many Census reports following 1950 and 1960. Changes in Nebraska laws affecting Nebraska businesses were discussed, and studies of Nebraska taxes were given. As bulletins of the Bureau of Business Research were issued, they were commented upon. The practice of including a resumé and picture of each new professor in the College of Business Administration was started at an early time.

In the last eight of the twenty-five years, under the direction of E. S. Wallace, the various statistical series were continued monthly, and the estimates of city and county populations were given annually. Reviews by Dorothy Switzer and reprints of published material have filled a much larger place than before. Special nonstatistical articles have assumed a major importance. These have dealt with agriculture, manufacturing, the exports of Nebraska products, employment and personnel distributions, and—an entirely new feature—projections into the future of population and economic data. A four-part series of articles on Revenue Sharing, written by Marilyn Mertens, appeared early in 1974. Total and per capita personal income figures for the state have been shown, distributed by planning and development regions and by county. The migration of population between economic areas of the state has been estimated. In 1973 the retirement of Dean Charles Miller and the installation of Dean Ronald Smith were noted. Other articles have detailed the plans and programs of the College of Business Administration.

It is hoped that *Business in Nebraska* will have many more years of life and usefulness to the state. EDGAR Z. PALMER*

*Dr. Palmer, Emeritus Professor of Statistics and former Director of the Bureau of Business Research, now serves as a consultant to the Bureau and writes the monthly "Review and Outlook" section of *Business in Nebraska*.

UNL News

This Issue:

BUSINESS IN NEBRASKA

PREPARED BY BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH

Member, Association for University Business & Economic Research

Business in Nebraska is issued monthly as a public service and mailed free within the State upon request to 200 CBA, University of Nebraska - Lincoln 68508. Material herein may be reproduced with proper credit.

No. 366

March, 1975

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA—LINCOLN

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