Business in Nebraska

Volume 54, No. 638 presented by Bureau of Business Research (BBR) March 1999

An Economic Slowdown—Not A Downturn—Is Underway

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The latest Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) for 4th quarter 1998 shows that the percent of businesses reporting revenue gains over year-ago levels was down from comparable 3rd quarter survey results. The percent of businesses that expect 1st quarter 1999 revenues to exceed 1st quarter 1998 levels was down even more. An increasing number of businesses, especially those located in the state's nonmetro regions, are seeing little or no growth in business revenues, and they expect this situation to continue through at least 1st quarter 1999. But, the percent of respondents statewide that reported an actual decline in business revenues for 4th quarter compared to year-ago levels remained virtually unchanged. In short, the latest survey results indicate a moderate slowdown, not a downturn, in the state's economy that is mostly limited to the nonmetro regions, at present. The state's economy should continue to grow, but at a slower rate.

The 4th quarter NQBCS represents approximately 1,350 private sector businesses with a combined employment of about 75,000 workers. The NQBCS is the only regular statewide gauge of current business conditions. Quarterly results of the NQBCS are reported in the January, March, June, and September issues of *Business in Nebraska (BIN)*. Regional summaries of the NQBCS results are available on three internet sites that are listed at the end of this article, along with regional definitions.

Tables 1 and 2 provide summaries of current and previous survey results on business revenues for industry groups and regions. These tables provide some indication of

Table 1
Revenue Activity for 1997, 1998, 4th Quarter 1998, and 1st Quarter 1999, by Industry Group *(percent)*

	1997		1998				1999	
	Quarterly Average		Quarterly Average		4th Quarter		1st Quarter[1]	
	▲	▼	▲	▼	▲	▼	▲	▼
All Industries	48	26	42	27	39	29	31	17
Manufacturing	55	24	39	31	34	36	32	19
Wholesale Trade	47	26	38	36	37	42	28	16
Retail Trade	43	29	43	26	40	26	27	30
FIRE[2]	59	18	53	18	45	27	31	15
TCU[3]	59	22	46	20	43	18	34	14
Services	49	25	46	23	45	21	38	12
Other	42	23	31	34	19	46	22	58

Notes: ▲ = Increase in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.

▼ = Decrease in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.

[1]Expected changes
[2]Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
[3]Transportation, Communications, and Utilities

Table 2
Revenue Activity for 1997, 1998, 4th Quarter 1998, and 1st Quarter 1999, by Region *(percent)*

	1997 Quarterly Average ▲	1997 Quarterly Average ▼	1998 Quarterly Average ▲	1998 Quarterly Average ▼	1998 4th Quarter ▲	1998 4th Quarter ▼	1999 1st Quarter[1] ▲	1999 1st Quarter[1] ▼
Metro								
Lincoln MSA[2]	52	26	42	26	26	29	39	13
Omaha MSA[3]	51	26	47	24	43	25	36	13
Nonmetro								
Central	46	28	40	31	34	34	28	20
Mid Plains	38	21	38	27	37	30	25	20
Northeast	47	25	40	28	34	29	43	23
Panhandle	48	26	36	25	34	34	22	21
Southeast	49	23	37	32	40	32	27	20

Notes: ▲ = Increase in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.

▼ = Decrease in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.

[1]Expected changes
[2]Lancaster County
[3]Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties

a slowdown. The regional tables available on the internet sites provide greater evidence of a slowdown.

The slowdown is due to several factors, starting with the impact of farm prices. The recent slump in farm commodity prices has spread to other nonmetro businesses. The first evidence of the price impact was detected in the 2nd quarter 1998 NQBCS results that were reported in the September 1998 issue of *BIN*. The 2nd quarter 1998 NQBCS results revealed a substantial decline in wholesale trade revenues for nonmetro businesses. By definition, wholesale trade includes farm implement dealers and grain handlers. It also was reported in the September 1998 issue of *BIN* that the agriculture problem likely would spread to at least the nonmetro retail trade sector and that has happened. Sixty-three percent of the 4th quarter respondents for nonmetro retail trade reported no growth in retail sales over year-ago levels. The same respondents expect 1st quarter 1999 sales not to exceed year-ago levels. The impact of low farm prices appears to have spread to other nonmetro sectors. Sixty-four percent of the nonmetro respondents for the transportation, communication, and utilities (TCU) sector reported no growth in 4th quarter revenues over year-ago levels. Eighty percent of that sector's respondents expect 1st quarter 1999 sales not to exceed year-ago levels. A majority of nonmetro respondents for the finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) sector and the services sector also reported no growth in 4th quarter revenues over year-ago levels. The same respondents expect a similar outcome for 1st quarter 1999.

Another year of low farm prices could turn the current slowdown into a rural economic recession. The recent plunge in the farm price for milk is not a good way to start the year.

A second reason for the current economic slowdown is a return to the long-term growth trend for the construction sector, from its torrid growth of the last several years. Only 19 percent of the nonmetro respondents for the construction sector reported gains in 4th quarter 1998 revenues over year-ago levels. Fourteen percent of the respondents expect 1st quarter 1999 revenues to surpass year-ago levels. Most expect revenues to remain unchanged. A third factor is scattered weakness in sales revenues for nonmetro manufacturing establishments. This weakness, which is likely due to national and international market conditions, is mostly concentrated in the Central and Northeast regions of the state. A fourth factor is widespread worker shortages. Businesses can't grow if they can't hire. The shortage appears more acute in the state's nonmetro regions. Finally, some of the slowdown in business revenue growth is due to the current low inflation rate. Big price increases (*i.e.,* high rates of inflation) can produce big increases in business revenues and high growth rates. But, big price increases are not occurring at the present time. Rather, small price increases and modest revenue growth are apparent.

The 4th quarter 1998 survey results show little change in business revenues for the state's two metro regions. The business climate in the state's metro regions remains healthy, with one possible exception. Respondents for the Lincoln MSA wholesale trade sector report weak growth. Only 15 percent of the respondents expect 1st quarter 1999 revenues to surpass year-ago levels.

Table 3 summarizes state estimates of new job and replacement hires since 1997. The figures for 1997 and 1998 represent four-quarter averages for each year. State estimates for 4th quarter 1998 are in the last column of the table. Table 3 shows a downward trend in new job hires for metro and nonmetro regions. Between 1997 and 1998, the annual estimate of quarterly averages for new job hires declined 16 percent for the metro regions and 31 percent for the nonmetro regions. The state quarterly average for replacement hires increased 9 percent from 1997 to 1998. The state increase was a result of the 24 percent growth for metro regions. The quarterly average for nonmetro regions declined by 12 percent between 1997 and 1998.

Even with the slowdown in business activity and job hires, especially in the nonmetro regions, the state's labor market remains very tight. Table 4 shows that an estimated 10,178 jobs were unfilled during 4th quarter 1998. The 4th quarter estimate, however, is down about 10 percent from the annual quarterly average for 1998 (not shown). Most of the decline has occurred in the metro regions. Quarterly estimates of unfilled jobs for 1998 for the state's nonmetro regions remained nearly constant. The tighter labor market for nonmetro regions may be due, in part, to the attraction of higher wages in metro labor markets.

Table 3
Full-time Job Hires for 1997, 1998, and 4th Quarter 1998

	1997	1998	
	Quarterly Average[1]	*Quarterly Average*[1]	*4th Quarter*
New Job Hires			
Metro[2]	13,548	11,415	10,309
Nonmetro	9,595	6,642	5,802
State	23,143	18,057	16,111
Replacement Hires			
Metro	18,127	22,412	21,732
Nonmetro	12,712	11,228	7,597
State	30,839	33,640	29,329

[1]Estimates based on Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) results since 1997.
[2]Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Table 4
Total Unfilled Positions and Positions Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants (Full-time Positions) [1] 4th Quarter 1998

Occupation	State: Total Unfilled	State: Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants	Metro[2]: Total Unfilled	Metro[2]: Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants	Nonmetro: Total Unfilled	Nonmetro: Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants
Executives/Administrators	296	30	296	30	0	0
Managers	375	178	227	79	148	99
Professional Specialists	1,520	849	1,017	464	503	385
Marketing/Sales	662	316	316	188	346	128
Administrative Support/Clerical	958	306	790	257	168	49
Service Workers	2,132	1,214	1,175	819	957	395
Transportation/Material Movers	1,017	731	217	119	800	612
Production/Craft/Repair	1,747	1,076	1,214	879	533	197
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	1,471	809	1,086	622	385	187
Total	10,178	5,509	6,338	3,457	3,840	2,052

[1]Estimates based on 4th quarter 1998 survey results.
[2]Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

The lack of qualified applicants remains a problem across the state where over half (54 percent) of the estimated total of unfilled jobs is due to the lack of qualified applicants. The metro and nonmetro rates are equal to the state average (Table 4).

Table 5 summarizes wages for full-time new hires and replacement hires for 1997 and 1998. The overall wage level for new job hires increased only slightly between 1997 and 1998 from $11.46 in 1997 to $11.57 in 1998. The small increase was due to the decline in the wage levels for new job hires in the nonmetro regions. The average hourly wage levels for new job hires for nonmetro regions declined by approximately 50 cents between 1997 and 1998. This decline may be entirely due to year-to-year changes in the mix of job hires. In other words, it may not reflect a decline in occupational wages in nonmetro regions. The average wage for new hires in metro regions increased 2 percent between 1997 and 1998.

Detailed regional reports for the five nonmetro regions and two metro regions for the 4th quarter survey are available on the following internet sites:

www.bbr.unl.edu
www.ded.state.ne.us
www.dol.state.ne.us

Table 5
Average Hourly Wages for Full-time New and Replacement Hires for 1997, 1998, and 4th Quarter 1998

	1997 Quarterly Average: New Hires	1997 Quarterly Average: Replacement Hires	1998 Quarterly Average: New Hires	1998 Quarterly Average: Replacement Hires	1998 4th Quarter: New Hires	1998 4th Quarter: Replacement Hires
State	$11.46	$9.06	$11.57	$9.38	$12.33	$9.88
Metro[1]	$12.48	$9.35	$12.73	$9.58	$13.26	$10.22
Nonmetro	$10.35	$8.69	$9.82	$9.06	$11.26	$9.23

[1]Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Regional Composition

Omaha MSA–Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties

Lincoln MSA—Lancaster County

Northeast—Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Colfax, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Platte, Rock, Stanton, Thurston, and Wayne Counties

Southeast—Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Polk, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward, Thayer, and York Counties

Central—Adams, Blaine, Buffalo, Clay, Custer, Franklin, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Harlan, Howard, Kearney, Loup, Merrick, Nance, Nuckolls, Phelps, Sherman, Valley, Webster, and Wheeler Counties

Mid-Plains—Arthur, Chase, Cherry, Dawson, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, and Thomas Counties

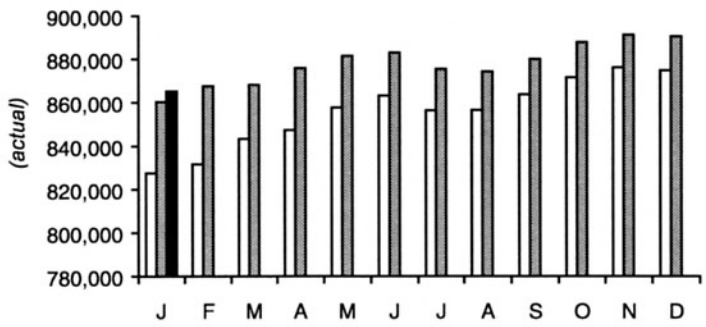
Panhandle—Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, and Sioux Counties

NQBCS is a joint project of the Nebraska Departments of Economic Development and Labor, and BBR. The following individuals contributed to the completion of this report: Phil Baker, Jolee Wheatley, Jane Sutherland, and Clarence Waldman, Nebraska Department of Labor; Tom Doering and Stu Miller, Nebraska Department of Economic Development; and David Bennett and Charles Lamphear, BBR.

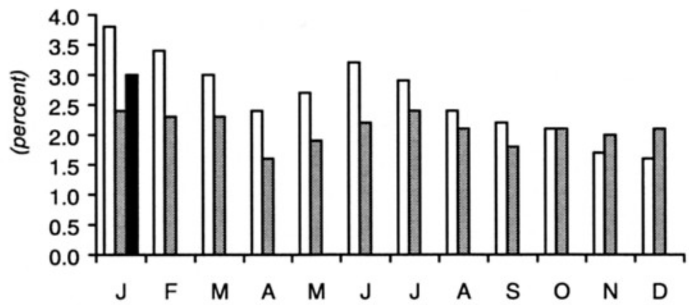
Nebraska Stats

1997 1998 1999

Total Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment

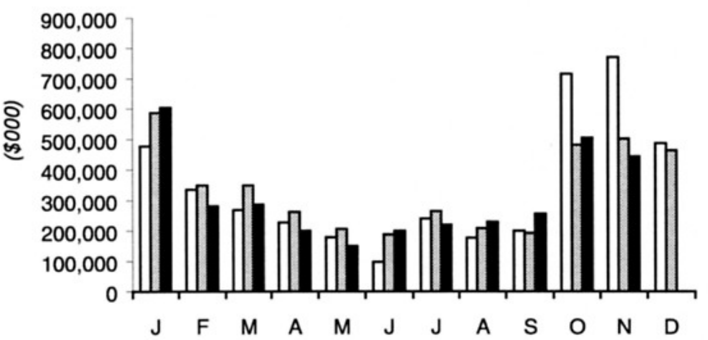


Unemployment Rate

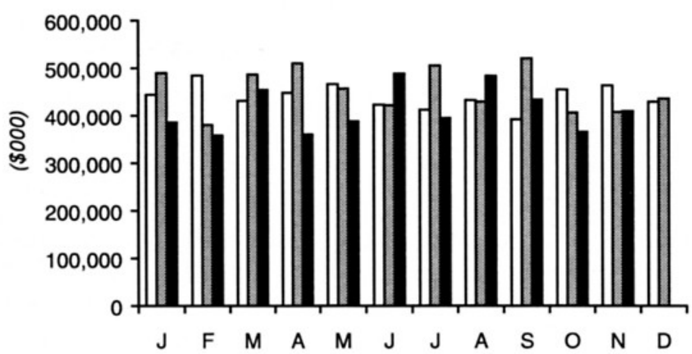


1996 1997 1998

Cash Receipts—Crops



Cash Receipts—Livestock



Net Taxable Retail Sales* for Nebraska Cities ($000)

	November 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
Ainsworth, Brown	1,816	20,217	3.1
Albion, Boone	1,606	19,656	-0.2
Alliance, Box Butte	5,774	65,446	-1.2
Alma, Harlan	529	7,401	1.2
Arapahoe, Furnas	677	8,336	5.8
Arlington, Washington	172	2,053	-0.6
Arnold, Custer	238	2,861	1.2
Ashland, Saunders	893	13,370	4.4
Atkinson, Holt	762	10,797	8.3
Auburn, Nemaha	2,240	25,976	-2.3
Aurora, Hamilton	2,419	28,557	0.6
Axtell, Kearney	65	751	-9.6
Bassett, Rock	378	5,120	5.2
Battle Creek, Madison	635	6,857	-2.0
Bayard, Morrill	391	4,819	7.5
Beatrice, Gage	10,737	115,558	0.9
Beaver City, Furnas	128	1,508	11.5
Bellevue, Sarpy	19,561	203,945	6.6
Benkelman, Dundy	466	6,190	6.5
Bennington, Douglas	329	4,797	13.3
Blair, Washington	6,523	71,076	3.6
Bloomfield, Knox	584	7,190	1.1
Blue Hill, Webster	428	5,131	4.1
Bridgeport, Morrill	960	11,849	0.1
Broken Bow, Custer	3,263	40,917	-1.8
Burwell, Garfield	713	8,468	3.5
Cairo, Hall	231	3,175	26.1
Central City, Merrick	1,428	18,804	2.3
Chadron, Dawes	4,153	48,384	25.8
Chappell, Deuel	439	4,817	7.5
Clarkson, Colfax	569	4,690	-4.5
Clay Center, Clay	318	4,010	17.5
Columbus, Platte	20,416	223,470	3.6
Cozad, Dawson	2,903	32,736	0.3
Crawford, Dawes	443	5,914	0.0
Creighton, Knox	999	11,767	7.1
Crete, Saline	3,073	34,696	-1.2
Crofton, Knox	285	4,294	-1.0
Curtis, Frontier	307	3,860	9.9
Dakota City, Dakota	394	4,154	-6.3
David City, Butler	1,382	15,439	3.7
Deshler, Thayer	236	3,441	43.4
Dodge, Dodge	189	2,628	0.1
Doniphan, Hall	569	12,374	59.6
Eagle, Cass	182	4,363	8.4
Elgin, Antelope	386	4,450	-3.2
Elkhorn, Douglas	2,113	25,860	12.6
Elm Creek, Buffalo	313	3,913	14.3
Elwood, Gosper	289	4,704	3.7
Fairbury, Jefferson	3,403	35,217	8.7
Fairmont, Fillmore	158	1,837	7.8
Falls City, Richardson	2,440	27,505	-0.4
Franklin, Franklin	475	6,155	23.5
Fremont, Dodge	21,396	228,540	5.7
Friend, Saline	395	4,853	0.2
Fullerton, Nance	485	5,564	-6.0
Geneva, Fillmore	1,373	18,727	-1.3
Genoa, Nance	246	3,203	23.3
Gering, Scotts Bluff	3,083	38,028	6.6
Gibbon, Buffalo	747	9,167	4.5
Gordon, Sheridan	1,599	18,425	-5.8
Gothenburg, Dawson	1,912	24,058	0.9
Grand Island, Hall	50,829	545,105	5.6
Grant, Perkins	898	10,894	1.6
Gretna, Sarpy	3,311	35,632	-0.7
Hartington, Cedar	1,606	17,880	1.1
Hastings, Adams	20,731	223,369	3.5
Hay Springs, Sheridan	344	3,545	-1.0
Hebron, Thayer	1,693	20,502	-2.2
Henderson, York	454	6,991	7.0
Hickman, Lancaster	235	2,783	9.7
Holdrege, Phelps	4,158	47,385	-3.3
Hooper, Dodge	325	3,795	1.3
Humboldt, Richardson	372	5,310	-2.7
Humphrey, Platte	706	8,487	5.5
Imperial, Chase	1,754	22,138	7.3
Juniata, Adams	162	2,108	-10.3
Kearney, Buffalo	33,070	341,536	7.6
Kenesaw, Adams	238	2,562	107.1
Kimball, Kimball	1,333	17,220	-2.4
La Vista, Sarpy	9,951	93,946	12.1
Laurel, Cedar	321	3,720	-10.4
Lexington, Dawson	6,547	77,240	2.1
Lincoln, Lancaster	198,059	2,147,941	6.6
Louisville, Cass	393	8,231	33.6
Loup City, Sherman	524	6,873	10.8
Lyons, Burt	555	5,583	4.4
Madison, Madison	700	8,362	1.7
McCook, Red Willow	11,186	122,588	4.2
Milford, Seward	667	9,897	1.4
Minatare, Scotts Bluff	130	1,663	-21.4
Minden, Kearney	1,400	18,716	-2.1
Mitchell, Scotts Bluff	608	7,668	-15.1
Morrill, Scotts Bluff	363	5,093	6.4
Nebraska City, Otoe	6,380	71,132	6.2
Neligh, Antelope	1,209	15,167	-5.1
Newman Grove, Madison	288	3,204	-11.9
Norfolk, Madison	29,772	313,694	0.9
North Bend, Dodge	380	5,323	0.4
North Platte, Lincoln	21,497	238,284	4.6
O'Neill, Holt	3,939	45,412	-0.7
Oakland, Burt	598	7,599	7.3
Ogallala, Keith	5,152	61,949	5.5
Omaha, Douglas	463,559	5,068,477	6.5
Ord, Valley	1,883	21,219	4.1
Osceola, Polk	532	8,480	1.5
Oshkosh, Garden	447	5,213	14.6
Osmond, Pierce	350	5,045	9.7
Oxford, Furnas	398	4,591	-20.1
Papillion, Sarpy	6,697	71,518	9.5
Pawnee City, Pawnee	304	3,316	0.8
Pender, Thurston	666	7,950	-2.3
Pierce, Pierce	561	7,156	-2.2
Plainview, Pierce	658	7,069	-5.7
Plattsmouth, Cass	3,334	36,770	3.7
Ponca, Dixon	378	5,601	2.8
Ralston, Douglas	3,075	36,178	4.9
Randolph, Cedar	383	4,754	13.6
Ravenna, Buffalo	588	8,266	-3.1
Red Cloud, Webster	640	7,612	-7.7
Rushville, Sheridan	455	5,613	-1.8
Sargent, Custer	154	2,076	-1.6
Schuyler, Colfax	1,688	20,773	1.2
Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff	20,076	220,153	-2.9
Scribner, Dodge	475	5,222	-5.1
Seward, Seward	4,456	51,058	-3.7
Shelby, Polk	308	3,481	-3.5
Shelton, Buffalo	523	7,133	17.2
Sidney, Cheyenne	8,636	82,953	1.5
South Sioux City, Dakota	7,718	86,054	-0.6
Springfield, Sarpy	420	5,115	51.9
St. Paul, Howard	1,083	13,294	-3.4
Stanton, Stanton	612	6,700	5.5
Stromsburg, Polk	1,011	11,045	-5.8
Superior, Nuckolls	1,477	16,966	-2.3
Sutherland, Lincoln	258	3,548	12.3
Sutton, Clay	783	9,430	-11.9
Syracuse, Otoe	955	12,193	5.0
Tecumseh, Johnson	769	9,280	-7.3
Tekamah, Burt	1,023	12,099	1.4
Tilden, Madison	340	4,712	-0.9
Utica, Seward	337	3,183	26.2
Valentine, Cherry	3,751	44,442	6.0
Valley, Douglas	1,029	13,419	1.5
Wahoo, Saunders	2,000	25,479	-8.6
Wakefield, Dixon	313	3,761	-4.4
Wauneta, Chase	225	3,218	-1.9
Waverly, Lancaster	565	8,718	8.7
Wayne, Wayne	3,116	35,833	6.4
Weeping Water, Cass	624	7,402	5.3
West Point, Cuming	3,673	40,909	-2.2
Wilber, Saline	382	4,836	-3.7
Wisner, Cuming	569	6,537	-9.2
Wood River, Hall	260	4,383	-7.7
Wymore, Gage	401	4,386	-1.9
York, York	9,871	111,873	12.5

*Does not include motor vehicle sales. Motor vehicle net taxable retail sales are reported by county only.

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

Net Taxable Retail Sales for Nebraska Counties ($000)

	Motor Vehicle Sales November 1998 ($000)	Motor Vehicle Sales YTD ($000)	Motor Vehicle Sales YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago	Other Sales November 1998 ($000)	Other Sales YTD ($000)	Other Sales YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago
Nebraska	177,327	2,225,965	9.5	1,325,149	14,692,667	6.5
Adams	2,590	36,854	4.8	21,328	230,978	3.8
Antelope	690	10,517	-9.2	2,007	24,413	-1.3
Arthur	31	736	35.3	(D)	(D)	(D)
Banner	179	1,332	-14.7	(D)	(D)	(D)
Blaine	158	1,218	20.8	51	646	-26.3
Boone	507	8,697	-10.0	2,076	25,054	-2.7
Box Butte	1,298	16,665	3.6	6,040	68,624	-1.1
Boyd	200	2,594	0.0	457	5,747	-7.9
Brown	290	4,424	7.9	1,871	21,162	2.7
Buffalo	3,821	53,649	6.8	35,549	373,981	7.4
Burt	767	11,165	1.9	2,346	27,237	2.9
Butler	1,217	11,238	10.7	1,736	20,640	2.7
Cass	3,458	38,467	14.4	5,680	71,115	6.4
Cedar	628	12,170	-11.0	2,578	30,061	0.3
Chase	529	6,753	-6.1	1,988	25,774	5.7
Cherry	598	9,763	13.1	3,908	46,709	6.0
Cheyenne	1,170	12,999	2.9	8,873	85,894	1.4
Clay	651	9,982	-1.5	1,659	23,049	-0.9
Colfax	763	12,433	5.1	2,645	29,907	0.3
Cuming	914	13,486	-13.5	4,858	53,910	-3.1
Custer	1,068	15,240	-0.5	4,070	51,577	-0.3
Dakota	2,004	23,896	8.8	8,677	97,017	-2.9
Dawes	511	9,257	12.8	4,596	54,314	22.4
Dawson	2,416	31,762	5.3	11,780	138,759	1.3
Deuel	227	2,963	-1.5	960	10,867	15.3
Dixon	495	8,731	11.1	788	10,668	-0.7
Dodge	3,926	45,739	7.2	23,033	248,726	5.0
Douglas	50,337	592,808	16.3	471,827	5,167,349	6.4
Dundy	259	3,666	1.3	477	6,393	4.4
Fillmore	566	9,903	-1.4	1,947	27,484	-1.4
Franklin	316	4,616	-3.8	674	8,827	15.6
Frontier	399	4,865	7.1	579	7,224	2.8
Furnas	545	7,637	1.9	1,963	23,615	-6.3
Gage	2,156	28,642	8.9	11,907	128,326	1.0
Garden	217	3,572	10.1	606	7,064	14.3
Garfield	259	2,516	12.0	712	8,465	3.4
Gosper	233	3,376	8.8	342	5,268	1.9
Grant	49	1,484	3.8	226	2,474	19.1
Greeley	410	3,886	17.5	556	7,543	4.2
Hall	5,664	70,150	11.6	52,199	568,661	6.3
Hamilton	929	12,425	-7.2	2,710	32,864	-0.3
Harlan	444	5,488	15.7	675	9,717	2.9
Hayes	132	1,618	3.2	(D)	(D)	(D)
Hitchcock	189	4,103	4.1	540	6,308	-5.8
Holt	1,091	16,618	1.1	5,268	63,973	1.6
Hooker	55	1,341	53.3	182	3,761	12.0

	Motor Vehicle Sales November 1998 ($000)	Motor Vehicle Sales YTD ($000)	Motor Vehicle Sales YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago	Other Sales November 1998 ($000)	Other Sales YTD ($000)	Other Sales YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago
Howard	502	8,373	-6.6	1,393	17,028	-3.2
Jefferson	724	11,713	6.4	4,258	45,806	8.2
Johnson	551	6,386	21.1	1,065	12,924	-4.5
Kearney	603	10,212	-4.5	1,574	20,973	-2.6
Keith	883	12,021	3.0	5,604	68,057	5.6
Keya Paha	79	1,142	-17.2	80	995	6.4
Kimball	306	5,226	-8.3	1,356	17,658	-2.5
Knox	483	10,418	-3.8	2,400	29,912	2.2
Lancaster	23,583	290,114	15.3	199,957	2,174,423	6.6
Lincoln	3,407	44,683	17.7	22,281	248,277	4.5
Logan	119	1,521	43.9	(D)	(D)	(D)
Loup	93	990	-1.3	(D)	(D)	(D)
McPherson	61	719	-1.4	(D)	(D)	(D)
Madison	3,457	44,646	5.4	31,784	337,381	0.5
Merrick	798	10,719	7.1	1,938	25,489	3.9
Morrill	582	6,675	-10.3	1,362	16,871	1.5
Nance	382	5,242	-5.2	752	9,161	2.5
Nemaha	1,024	10,740	15.2	2,448	28,819	-2.0
Nuckolls	485	6,115	-10.7	2,084	23,320	-0.7
Otoe	1,571	21,533	8.7	7,683	87,690	5.5
Pawnee	364	4,271	9.8	454	5,431	-1.7
Perkins	449	5,609	4.5	1,037	12,988	0.3
Phelps	1,021	14,607	-6.3	4,369	50,453	-2.7
Pierce	670	9,753	-9.0	1,655	20,155	-1.0
Platte	3,265	39,782	-4.5	21,680	238,464	3.3
Polk	712	8,855	-1.3	2,014	24,482	-2.2
Red Willow	986	14,241	2.0	11,461	126,194	4.2
Richardson	910	11,400	5.9	3,036	35,403	-2.2
Rock	234	2,607	2.7	386	5,269	5.4
Saline	1,469	16,830	11.2	4,175	48,519	-1.3
Sarpy	14,875	169,033	17.0	41,622	424,763	9.6
Saunders	2,319	30,057	9.5	4,715	62,600	-1.9
Scotts Bluff	3,857	44,094	4.1	24,320	273,388	-2.1
Seward	1,732	22,795	12.8	5,656	66,811	-2.0
Sheridan	852	8,878	7.1	2,654	30,683	-3.6
Sherman	244	4,224	-4.9	623	8,188	4.4
Sioux	151	2,592	2.5	108	1,482	-9.7
Stanton	691	8,415	2.0	784	8,353	2.9
Thayer	632	8,598	-4.1	2,366	29,683	-1.0
Thomas	89	1,046	-25.9	261	3,234	-29.2
Thurston	491	4,842	-20.2	782	9,274	-4.4
Valley	359	5,553	-3.1	2,119	23,702	5.4
Washington	2,347	30,380	8.0	7,085	78,149	3.5
Wayne	667	10,898	-4.5	3,274	37,494	5.5
Webster	513	4,778	-6.4	1,181	13,979	-3.2
Wheeler	112	1,645	-0.6	92	1,097	-11.3
York	1,365	20,280	-0.3	10,674	123,898	11.2

*Totals may not add due to rounding
(D) Denotes disclosure suppression
*County values may not add to state total due to unallocated sales and disclosure suppression.
Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

Note on Net Taxable Retail Sales

Users of this series should be aware that taxable retail sales are not generated exclusively by traditional outlets such as clothing, discount, and hardware stores. While businesses classified as retail trade firms account for, on average, slightly more than half of total taxable sales, sizable portions of taxable sales are generated by service establishments, electric and gas utilities, wholesalers, telephone and cable companies, and manufacturers.

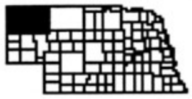
Regional Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment* 1997 to January** 1999

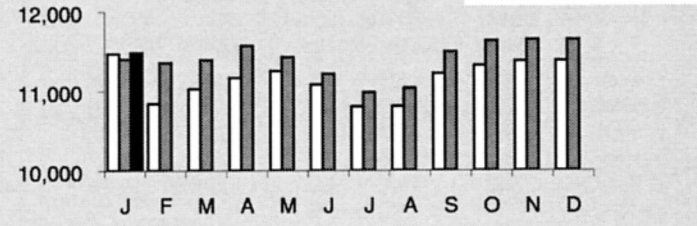
1997 1998 1999

Note to Readers

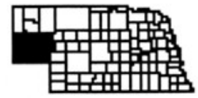
The charts on pages 8 and 9 report nonfarm employment by place of work for each region.

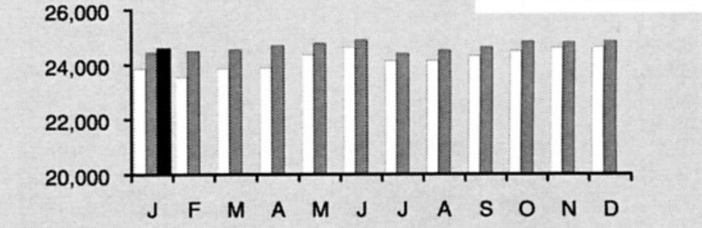
Northwest Panhandle



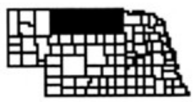


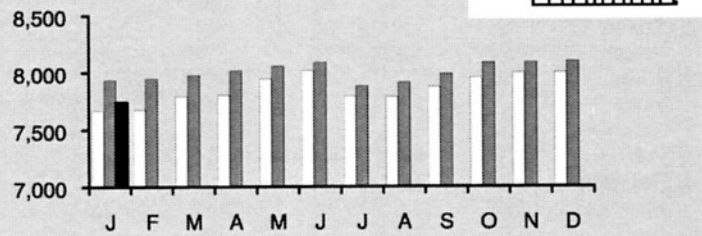
Southwest Panhandle





North Central





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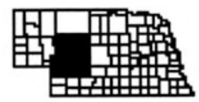

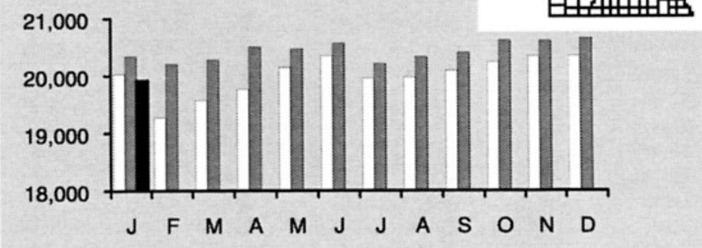

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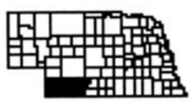

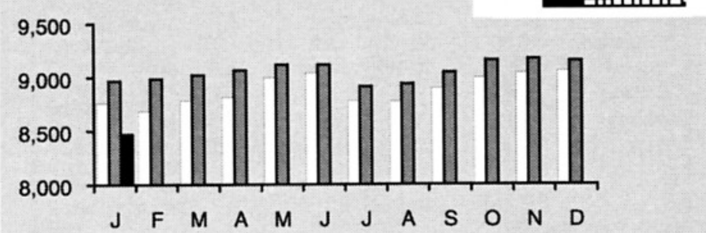

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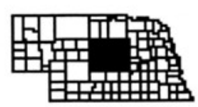
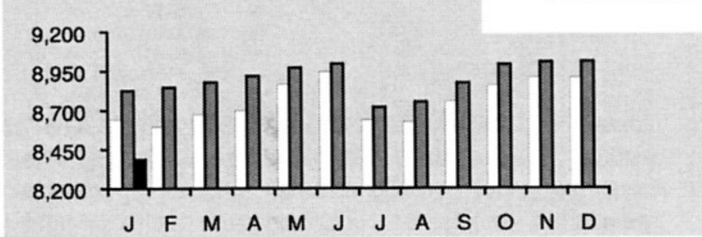
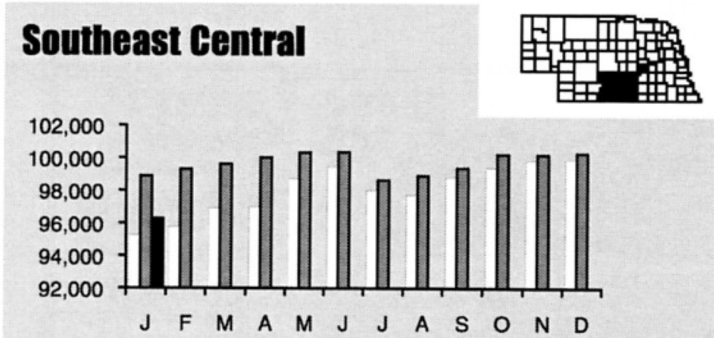
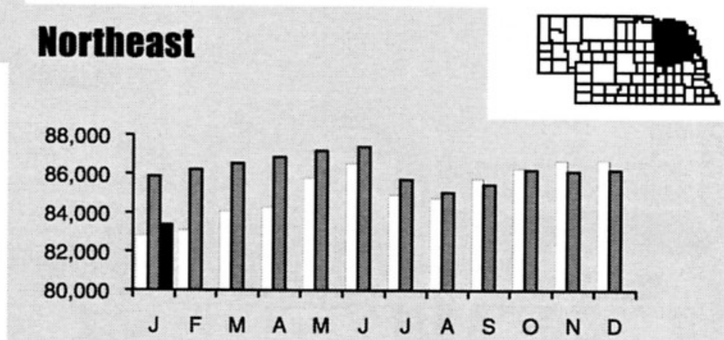


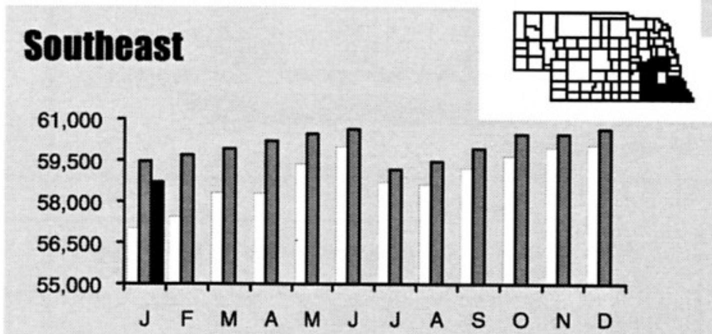


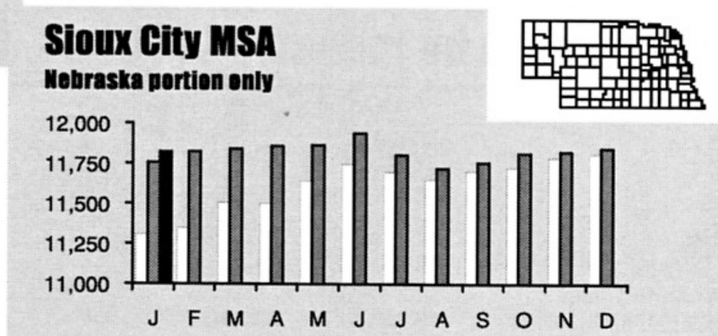
Regional Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment* 1997 to January** 1999

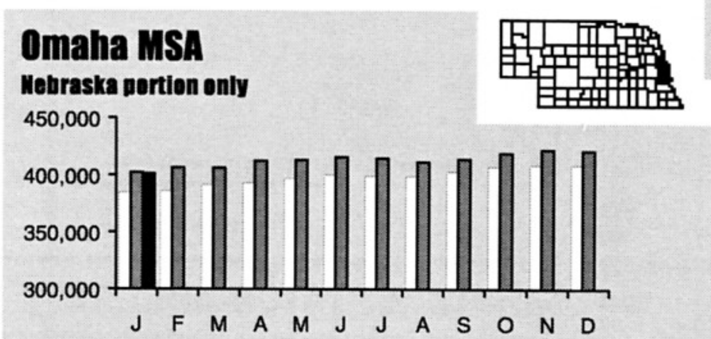
1997 1998 1999

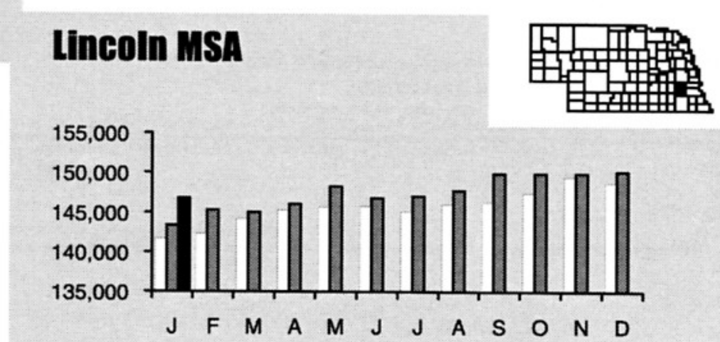










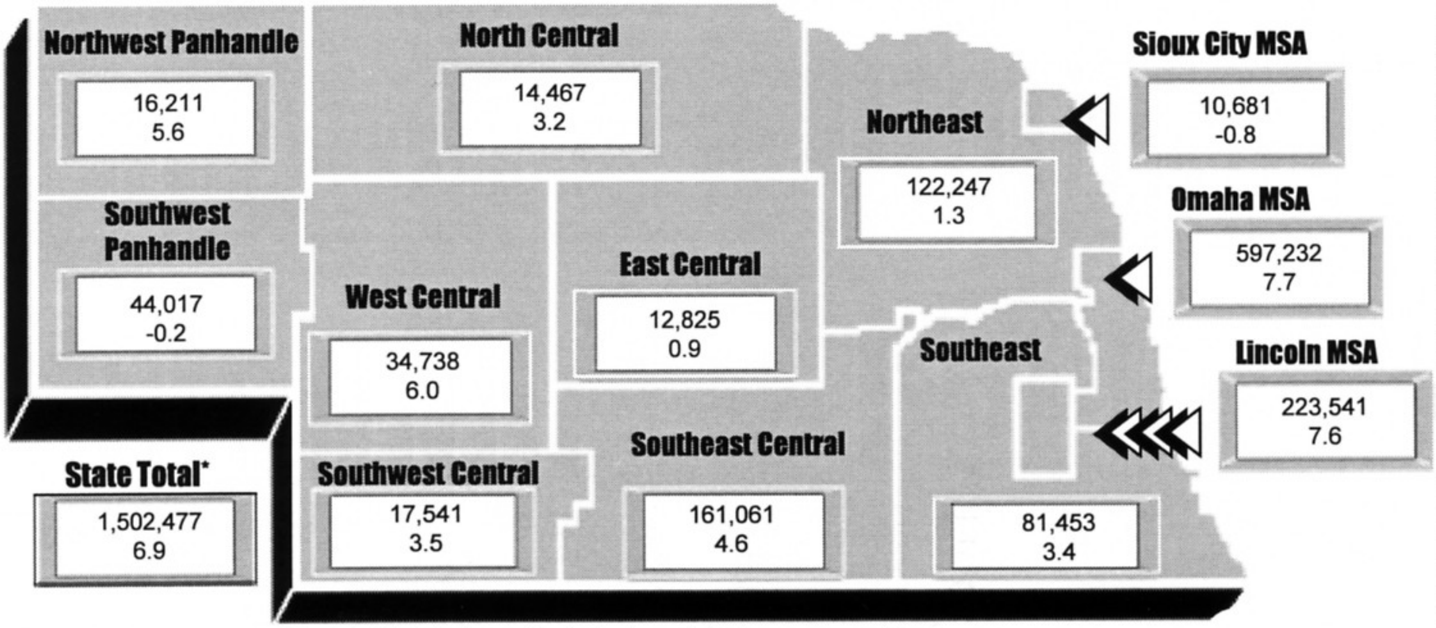


*By place of work

**Current month data are preliminary and subject to revision.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

November 1998 Regional Retail Sales ($000)
YTD Percent Change vs Yr. Ago



*Regional values may not add to state total due to unallocated sales and disclosure suppression.
Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

State Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment by Industry*

	Preliminary January 1999	Revised December 1998	December % Change vs Yr. Ago
Total	865,191	892,342	2.0
Construction & Mining	38,556	42,739	5.0
Manufacturing	117,407	118,059	0.4
Durables	57,018	57,352	-0.4
Nondurables	60,389	60,707	1.0
TCU*	57,720	58,482	6.4
Trade	210,211	219,182	1.2
Wholesale	54,200	55,388	-2.9
Retail	156,011	163,794	2.7
FIRE***	58,443	58,709	4.9
Services	234,486	243,049	4.3
Government	148,368	152,122	-2.5

*By place of work
**Transportation, Communication, and Utilities
***Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

Consumer Price Index

*Consumer Price Index - U**
(1982-84 = 100)
(not seasonally adjusted)

	January 1999	% Change vs Yr. Ago	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago (inflation rate)
All Items	164.3	2.0	2.0
Commodities	142.5	0.6	0.6
Services	186.3	2.5	2.5

*U = All urban consumers
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

State Labor Force Summary*

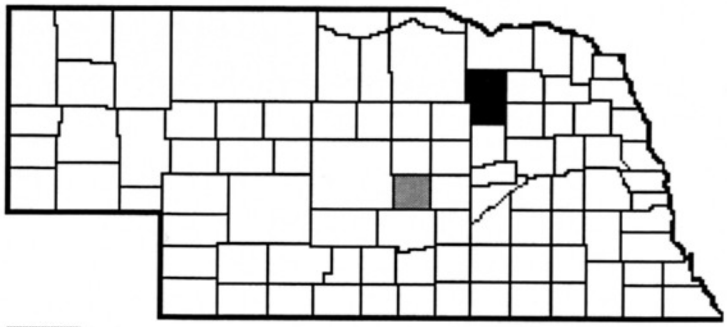
	Preliminary January 1999	Revised December 1998	December % Change vs Yr. Ago
Labor Force	923,661	930,512	1.5
Employment	895,728	910,639	0.9
Unemployment Rate	3.0	2.1	

*By place of residence
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

County of the Month

Antelope

Loup City-County Seat



Next County of Month

License plate prefix number: 26

Size of county: 859 square miles, ranks 24th in the state

Population: 7,181 in 1998, a change of –9.8 percent from 1990

Per capita personal Income: $21,157 in 1996, ranks 33rd in the state

Net taxable retail sales ($000): $40,995 in 1997, a change of 12.2 percent from 1996; $34,932 from January through November of 1998, a change of –3.8 percent from the same period the previous year.

Number of worksites[1]: 275 in 1997

Unemployment rate: 3.4 percent in Antelope County, 2.6 percent in Nebraska for 1997

	State	Antelope County
Nonfarm employment (1997):	855,802	1,870
(wage & salary)	*(percent of total)*	
Construction and Mining	4.6	3.4
Manufacturing	13.6	7.1
TCU	6.2	2.4
Wholesale Trade	6.4	11.4
Retail Trade	18.1	21.7
FIRE	6.4	4.3
Services	26.8	19.6
Government	17.8	30.2

Agriculture:

Number of farms: 891 in 1992, 1,009 in 1987

Average farm size: 549 acres in 1992

Market value of farm products sold: $121.7 million in 1992 ($136,552 average per farm)

[1]Worksites refers to business activity covered under the Nebraska Employment Security Law. Information presented has been extracted from the Employer's Quarterly Contribution Report, Nebraska Form UI-11. For further details about covered worksites, see the Nebraska Employers Guide to Unemployment Insurance.

[2]By place of work

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Nebraska Department of Labor, Nebraska Department of Revenue.

bulletin board

The Decade of the 90s So Far— Demographic Trends for Nebraska

The Census Bureau's latest population estimates reveal how Nebraska's population has changed over the last eight years. Highlights include:

- So far this decade, the population in metro Nebraska has grown 9.5 percent, nearly eight times faster than nonmetro Nebraska (1.2 percent).
- Metro Nebraska added 19,267 residents as a result of net inmigration, compared to only 110 residents for nonmetro counties. In part, this was because metro Nebraska gained 6,168 residents from domestic migration while nonmetro Nebraska lost 4,649.
- Net inmigration to Nebraska accounted for 23 percent of the state's population growth so far this decade, and 72 percent of the migration was international in origin.

For a full report on these trends, visit BBR's home page: www.bbr.unl.edu.

Reminder!
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See www.census.gov for the latest news from the Census Bureau, including newly released information from the 1997 Economic Census.

 ISSN 0007-683X. *Business in Nebraska* is published in ten issues per year by the Bureau of Business Research. Subscription orders and inquiries should be directed to Bureau of Business Research, 114 CBA, University of Nebraska-Lincoln 68588-0406. Annual subscription rate is $10.

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