

NEBRASKA POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Bureau of Business Research and the Center for Applied Urban Research at the University of Nebraska at Omaha have recently completed a set of population projections for Nebraska and its counties and communities. The projections were made under a contract with the State Office of Planning and Programming and are intended, at least partly, to serve as planning aids for state agencies. It is not possible to list and review the entire set of projections here, but some of their more important features will be discussed.¹

The projections for the state were made using a cohort-survival method, while ratio methods were used in projections for counties and communities. The basic inputs into cohort-survival projections are assumed values for birth, death, and net migration rates. Three alternative series of projections (high, medium, and low) were made for the state based on different assumptions about future birth and net migration rates. The medium birth-rate assumption corresponds to the "long-term replacement rate" (an average of 2.1 children per woman), and the medium net-migration-rate assumption is one of no further net migration for the state. Since the medium assumptions are felt to represent the most likely course of future events, the discussion here will focus on the projections that result from these assumptions.

Nebraska birth rates have never been as low as those assumed for the medium projections. In 1972, however, birth rates fell close to the assumed level in Nebraska and below that level nationally. The historical volatility of birth rates and the lack of precedent for the current low rates suggest a considerable element of risk in predicting that such low rates will continue. Given the uncertainty and economic problems (such as inflation, high borrowing costs, and tight housing and job markets) facing many young people currently considering family formation, however, it is perhaps more likely that birth rates will remain below the replacement level than above it over the next few years. In addition, a case can be made that social and economic pressures related to the "population crisis" will tend to keep birth rates from rising substantially above replacement levels for extended periods of time in the future.

MIGRATION PATTERNS

The historical pattern of migration for Nebraska has been one of consistent and substantial net out-migration. In recent years, however, there has been a noticeable shift toward reduced net out-

migration and, since 1970, perhaps even toward net in-migration. Although state population estimates for 1971 and 1972 suggest this possibility, it would be premature to predict a continuing pattern of net in-migration. Temporary circumstances such as returning servicemen accompanying reduced fighting in Vietnam or reduced out-migration accompanying abnormally high unemployment in areas such as California, where many Nebraskans traditionally migrate, may well have accounted for any net in-migration into Nebraska during the 1970-1972 period. A variety of factors such as the recent strength of the state's agricultural sector and the increased size of the rapidly growing urban parts of the state relative to the traditionally declining rural parts, however, raise the distinct possibility that Nebraska will no longer generate more rural-urban migrants than can be absorbed within the state.

Within Nebraska there has been a long trend of migration from rural areas to urban centers, particularly the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas. This pattern of internal population redistribution was assumed to continue, but at a declining rate because of the prospects for stabilization of opportunities in agriculture and because the reduced birth rates of recent years limit the number of likely future out-migrants from rural areas.

THE PROJECTIONS

Given the high degree of uncertainty associated with future birth and migration rates, projecting population is far from an exact science. Nevertheless it is often useful to examine the implications of assumptions such as those indicated above for changes in the size and composition of the population. In Table 1 projections for the nation, Nebraska, the Omaha and Lincoln planning regions, and the remainder of the state are presented for 1980 and 1990 with breakdowns into selected age groups. For comparison purposes data from the 1950, 1960, and 1970 censuses are also presented.

The projections in Table 1 indicate a population growth rate for Nebraska slightly greater over the next two decades than has been true of the last two decades. Total population for the state is projected to increase by 14.8 percent during the 1970-1990 period compared with a growth of 12.1 percent for the 1950-1970 period. In spite of the assumption of no further net out-migration, however, the Nebraska growth rate is likely to remain below the national growth rate in the near future. The U.S. Bureau of the Census Series E projections of national population in Table 1, for example, which also assume replacement level birth rates, show

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¹The complete report (Nebraska Economic and Business Report No. 6) is available from the Bureau free upon request.

TABLE 1
POPULATION BY AGE

Ages	United States			Nebraska			Omaha-Lincoln			Rest of State		
	Number	Percent of Total	Percent Change in Decade	Number	Percent of Total	Percent Change in Decade	Number	Percent of Total	Percent Change in Decade	Number	Percent of Total	Percent Change in Decade
1950												
Total	151,299,702	100.0		1,325,510	100.0		416,455	100.0		909,055	100.0	
0-17	46,976,482	31.1		406,405	30.7		113,949	27.4		292,456	32.2	
18-44	61,304,277	40.5		503,007	37.9		175,789	42.2		327,218	36.0	
45-64	30,724,245	20.3		285,719	21.6		90,005	21.6		195,714	21.5	
65 and Over	12,294,698	8.1		130,379	9.8		367,712	8.8		93,667	10.3	
Dependency Ratio*	.64			.68			.57			.74		
1960												
Total	179,323,175	100.0	18.5	1,411,330	100.0	6.5	530,043	100.0	27.3	881,287	100.0	- 3.1
0-17	64,202,010	35.8	36.7	499,907	35.4	23.0	185,854	35.1	63.1	314,053	35.6	7.4
18-44	62,503,829	34.9	2.0	459,262	32.6	-8.7	197,725	37.3	12.5	261,537	29.7	-20.1
45-64	36,057,756	20.1	17.4	288,005	20.4	.8	98,099	18.5	9.0	189,906	21.5	- 3.0
65 and Over	16,559,580	9.2	34.7	164,156	11.6	25.9	48,365	9.1	31.7	115,791	13.1	23.6
Dependency Ratio*	.82			.89			.79			.95		
1970												
Total	203,211,926	100.0	13.3	1,485,333	100.0	5.2	623,627	100.0	17.7	861,706	100.0	- 2.2
0-17	69,644,081	34.2	8.5	508,412	34.2	1.7	220,072	35.3	18.4	288,340	33.5	- 8.2
18-44	71,692,574	35.3	14.7	497,802	33.5	8.4	238,488	38.2	20.6	259,314	30.1	- .8
45-64	41,809,769	20.6	16.0	295,710	19.9	2.7	109,583	17.6	11.7	186,127	21.6	- 2.0
65 and Over	20,065,502	9.9	21.2	183,409	12.4	11.7	55,584	8.9	14.7	127,925	14.8	10.5
Dependency Ratio*	.79			.87			.79			.93		
1980**												
Total	227,765,000	100.0	12.1	1,593,187	100.0	7.3	735,376	100.0	17.9	857,811	100.0	- .5
0-17	68,832,000	30.2	-1.2	469,734	29.5	-7.6	224,588	30.6	2.1	245,146	28.6	-15.0
18-44	91,717,000	40.3	27.9	642,027	40.3	29.0	324,608	44.1	36.1	317,419	37.0	22.4
45-64	43,513,000	19.1	4.1	294,194	18.5	-5	123,662	16.8	12.8	170,532	19.9	- 8.4
65 and Over	23,703,000	10.4	18.1	187,232	11.7	2.1	62,518	8.5	12.7	124,714	14.5	- 2.5
Dependency Ratio*	.68			.70			.64			.76		
1990**												
Total	251,429,000	100.0	10.4	1,705,077	100.0	7.0	825,575	100.0	12.3	879,502	100.0	2.5
0-17	74,965,000	29.8	8.9	494,530	29.0	5.3	244,620	29.6	8.9	249,910	28.4	1.9
18-44	103,785,000	41.3	13.2	724,573	42.5	12.9	375,698	45.5	15.7	348,875	39.7	9.9
45-64	45,170,000	18.0	3.8	295,102	17.3	.3	135,209	16.4	9.3	159,893	18.2	- 6.2
65 and Over	27,509,000	10.9	16.1	190,872	11.2	1.9	70,048	8.5	12.0	120,824	13.7	- 3.1
Dependency Ratio*	.69			.67			.62			.73		

*Dependency Ratio equals population 0-17 and 65-and-over divided by population 18-44 and 45-64.

** Projections: U.S. projections are taken from "Projections of the Population of the United States, by Age and Sex: 1970-2020," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 470, November, 1971, (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census).

(Continued from page 1)

a 1970-1990 population increase of 23.7 percent. Much of the discrepancy between the projected Nebraska and national population growth rates arises because the national projections assume a continuation of net immigration from abroad, but the projected Nebraska growth also lags behind projected national growth because the older age structure in Nebraska is less conducive to natural increase of the population than is the national age structure. The Nebraska growth rate, however, is projected to move closer to the national rate over time.

Within Nebraska the Omaha-Lincoln area (state planning regions 1 and 2) is projected to continue growing at a rate faster than either the state or the nation over the 1970-1990 period. Growth in this area is projected to be especially strong in the 1970s because of in-migration of young people from rural areas, but to fall toward the national growth rate in the 1980s because of the depletion of potential rural-urban migrants. The rest of the state, by contrast, is projected to continue to lose population in the 1970s (because relatively large numbers of young people will be reaching the age at which they normally leave rural areas), but to switch to slow population growth in the 1980s as projected out-migration diminishes.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Although the rate of population growth in Nebraska is not projected to be much different over the next two decades than has been true of the past two decades, the composition of that population change is projected to be very different. During the "baby boom" of the 1950s, for example, the population under age 18 in the state increased by 23 percent while population in the 18-44 age group declined by 8.7 percent. During the 1970s, by contrast, it is projected that the under-18 age group will decline by 7.6 percent while the 18-44 group will increase by 29 percent. The expected decline in the under-18 age group results from the falling birth rates of the 1960s and the anticipation of continuing low birth rates in the 1970s. The expected rapid increase in the 18-44 age group results both from the fact that children born during the baby boom of the 1950s will enter this age group in the 1970s and from the assumption that there will be no significant net out-migration of young adults as there was in the 1950s and the 1960s.

In 1970 34.2 percent of Nebraska's population was under age 18 and 33.5 percent was in the 18-44 age group. By 1980 the under-18 proportion is expected to fall to 29.5 percent while the 18-44 proportion rises to 40.3 percent. Such sharp changes in the age distribution of the population have important implications for public policies. The baby boom of the 1950s, for example, resulted in the need for additional teachers and school construction in many parts of the state, while the current decline in birth rates is resulting in a surplus of teachers and pressures for school consolidation in many areas.

The large number of young people currently entering the 18-44 age group also has important implications for the labor and housing markets as young people form families and seek housing and jobs. In addition, the large increase in young-adult population is the major reason population growth is expected to continue in spite of the anticipated reduction of average family size to the long-term replacement level.

Generally, changes in the age structure of the Nebraska population have paralleled national changes. There are, however, some significant differences between the age structure of the Nebraska

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and national populations. In 1970 the 65-and-over age group constituted 12.4 percent of Nebraska's population compared with only 9.9 percent nationally. In all other age groups listed in Table 1 the share of total Nebraska population was smaller than was the corresponding national share. Compared with the nation in 1970 Nebraska's greatest relative deficit was in the 18-44 age group and the smallest deficit in the under-18 group. Since 1950 Nebraska has increased its relative surplus in the 65-and-over group and has switched from a relative surplus to a relative deficit in the 45-64 group.

The projections to 1990 show a decline in the proportion of population in the 65-and-over age group in Nebraska (from 12.4 to 11.2 percent) and a rise in the national proportion in that age group (from 9.9 to 10.9 percent), resulting in a large drop in the relative surplus of older population in Nebraska. On the other hand, the 18-44 age group in Nebraska is projected to move from a position of relative deficit compared to the nation to a position of relative surplus by 1990. The under-18 and 45-64 age groups in Nebraska are projected to remain in a relative deficit position compared to the nation through 1990.

In part, the projected decline in the proportion of population in the 65-and-over age group in Nebraska can be attributed to the current relative deficit in the 45-64 age group, which will tend to restrict the number of people turning 65 over the next two decades. The most important factor, however, is the assumed elimination of net out-migration in the 18-44 age group. If the young people who "normally" leave Nebraska in large net numbers do remain in the state, there will not only be a significant increase in the number of young adults in the state, but this increase will also operate to reduce the proportion of older people in the population.

DEPENDENCY RATIOS

The change in the projected age structure for Nebraska relative to the nation can also be seen by examining the "dependency ratios" shown in Table 1. These ratios were calculated by dividing the proportion of the population in the under-18 and 65-and-over age groups by the proportion of the population in the 18-64 group. In 1970 that ratio was .87 for Nebraska compared with a national ratio of .79, but by 1990 the projections yield a ratio of .67 for Nebraska and .69 for the nation. The low expected birth rates lead to a significant drop in dependency for both Nebraska and the nation, but a decline in net out-migration will mean a much sharper drop in the dependency ratio in Nebraska than nationally.

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Review and Outlook

Nearly all of the business indicators for Nebraska increased from June to July. The overall dollar-volume index was at a level of 175.9 percent of the 1967 average compared with a (revised) level of 171.3 in June. Each of the five individual sector indexes increased from June to July. The agricultural and construction indexes both increased by more than ten percentage points to lead the advance. Since agriculture and construction are traditionally volatile and are currently faced with more than usual uncertainty, however, it is difficult to interpret the significance of the sharp one-month increases in those sectors.

The national dollar-volume index rose from a (revised) level of 165.7 in June to 167.2 in July. All national sectors except manu-

facturing increased from June to July. The slight dip in the manufacturing index was the first monthly decline since 1971. Retail activity at the national level moved up strongly in July after a June dip and recent indications suggest the June-to-July dip in the manufacturing index may have been temporary.

Business indicators at both the state and national level continue to be well above 1972 levels. From July, 1972, to July, 1973, the Nebraska dollar-volume index increased 18.7 percent and the national dollar-volume index increased 14 percent. For both Nebraska and the nation the agricultural index increased more than the other sector indexes, followed in order by the manufacturing, construction, distributive, and government sectors.

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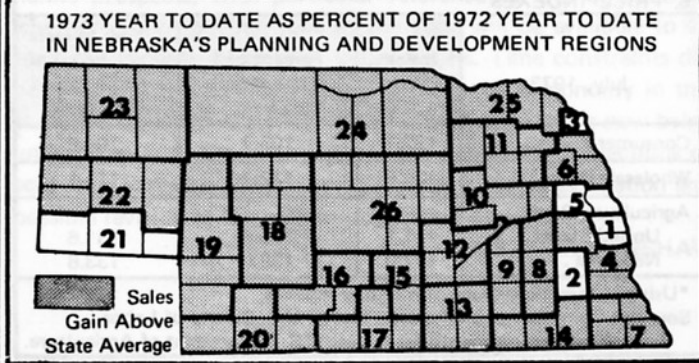
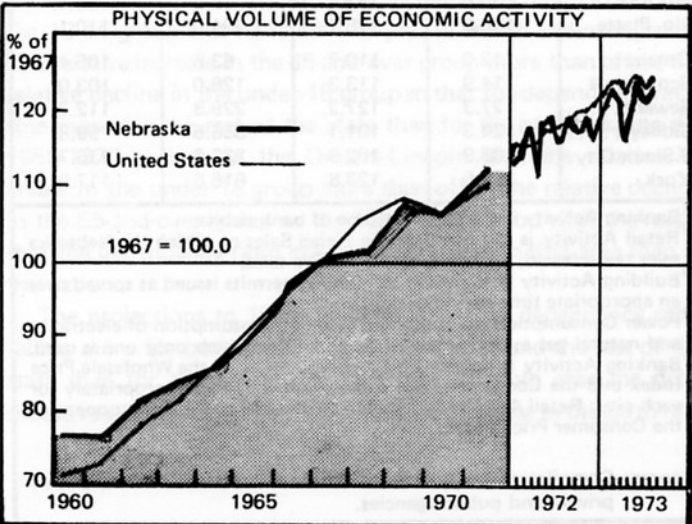
Notes for Tables 1 and 2: (1) The "distributive" indicator represents a composite of wholesale and retail trade; transportation, communication, and utilities; finance, insurance, and real estate; and selected services. (2) The "physical volume" indicator and its components represent the dollar volume 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				
July 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.
Dollar Volume	118.7	114.0	115.1	113.2
Agricultural	152.2	138.4	137.9	131.4
Nonagricultural	113.1	113.2	111.2	112.6
Construction	113.7	114.0	119.4	112.3
Manufacturing	119.1	120.1	113.7	118.4
Distributive	112.5	111.1	111.1	111.0
Government	107.9	108.4	106.0	108.1
Physical Volume	105.9	105.8	104.6	106.1
Agricultural	110.3	102.1	103.3	99.9
Nonagricultural	105.1	106.0	104.9	106.3
Construction	104.6	104.9	110.4	103.9
Manufacturing	104.0	109.4	102.5	109.4
Distributive	106.4	105.1	105.8	105.8
Government	101.4	102.9	101.7	103.0

2. CHANGE FROM 1967		
Indicator	Percent of 1967 Average	
	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	175.9	167.2
Agricultural	195.0	183.5
Nonagricultural	172.1	166.6
Construction	227.5	180.9
Manufacturing	161.4	152.3
Distributive	168.5	171.6
Government	182.1	172.3
Physical Volume	123.4	124.1
Agricultural	110.2	107.3
Nonagricultural	126.1	124.7
Construction	151.7	120.6
Manufacturing	121.4	117.4
Distributive	127.0	129.4
Government	119.1	122.9

3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES ¹ OF NEBRASKA REGIONS (Unadjusted for Price Changes)		
Region ² and Principal Retail Trade Center	July, 1973 as percent of July, 1972	1973 Year to Date as percent of 1972 Year to Date
<i>The State</i>	121.9	115.4
1 (Omaha)	118.4	110.4
2 (Lincoln)	120.5	115.0
3 (So. Sioux City)	99.7	99.3
4 (Nebraska City)	125.5	119.1
5 (Fremont)	121.4	115.1
6 (West Point)	129.2	121.7
7 (Falls City)	123.1	115.5
8 (Seward)	129.1	121.4
9 (York)	132.3	121.7
10 (Columbus)	128.5	122.1
11 (Norfolk)	123.3	122.2
12 (Grand Island)	125.1	118.1
13 (Hastings)	120.4	116.2
14 (Beatrice)	125.6	118.2
15 (Kearney)	123.7	116.8
16 (Lexington)	130.1	121.1
17 (Holdrege)	125.9	118.9
18 (North Platte)	137.6	121.0
19 (Ogallala)	124.2	120.3
20 (McCook)	123.9	119.3
21 (Sidney, Kimball)	110.6	115.3
22 (Scottsbluff)	121.4	119.1
23 (Alliance, Chadron)	108.3	117.1
24 (O'Neill)	133.2	122.7
25 (Hartington)	125.7	127.8
26 (Broken Bow)	126.5	119.9

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.



(Continued from page 4)

Since inflation has accelerated during 1973, a large share of the dollar-volume increases can be attributed to price increases. The Nebraska physical-volume index increased only 5.9 percent from July, 1972, to July, 1973, while the national physical-volume index increased only 5.8 percent during the same period. Over this period agricultural prices increased 38 percent in Nebraska and 35.6 percent nationally, while national consumer prices increased 5.7 percent and wholesale prices increased 12.7 percent.

From the first seven months of 1972 to the first seven months of 1973 the Nebraska dollar-volume index increased 15.1 percent and the national index increased 13.2 percent. As in the July-to-July comparisons the agricultural index has had the greatest increases of any of the sectors in the year-to-date comparisons. The agricultural physical-volume growth, however, has lagged behind the physical-volume growth of most other sectors in Nebraska, and nationally there has been no growth at all in the agricultural physical-volume index so far in 1973.

In Table 3 it can be seen that retail activity in July was very strong throughout most of the state. Total sales were up 21.9 percent from July, 1972. Four of the state planning regions had July-to-July increases exceeding 30 percent. Although both the Omaha and Lincoln planning regions had substantial increases in sales from July, 1972, to July, 1973, both regions continue to lag behind the rest of the state in terms of sales growth. It is probable that the high farm incomes of the past year are contributing to the very rapid growth of sales in the nonmetropolitan parts of Nebraska.

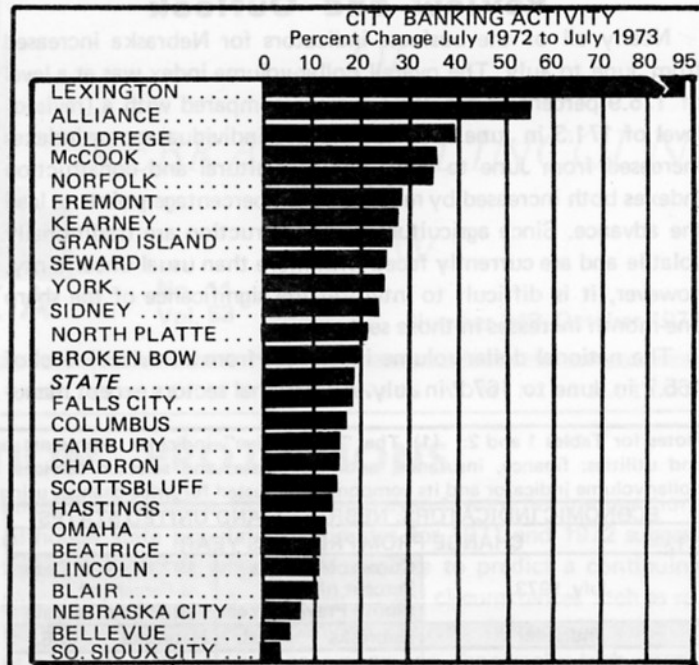
From the first seven months of 1972 to the first seven months of 1973 retail sales increased 15.4 percent for the state. Ten of the planning regions had increases exceeding 20 percent. Five of these regions (Hartington, O'Neill, Norfolk, Columbus, and West Point) are in the northeast part of the state, and five of the regions (York, Seward, Lexington, North Platte, and Ogallala) have principal trade centers along the interstate highway.

Banking activity was exceptionally strong in July. In Table 4 it can be seen that, even allowing for price increases, there was an 18.1 percent increase in banking activity for the state from July, 1972, to July, 1973. Nearly all of the principal cities in the state had significant increases in banking activity over this period. V. R.

Correction: The Falls City banking activity ratio for May (in the August *Business in Nebraska*) was incorrectly published as 84.2. The ratio should have been 123.5.

5. PRICE INDEXES			
July, 1973	Index* (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices	132.7	105.7	104.9
Wholesale Prices	134.9	112.7	111.1
Agricultural Prices			
United States	171.1	135.6	131.6
Nebraska	177.0	138.0	133.6

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



Source: Table 4 below.

4. JULY 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	118.1	113.1	112.3	107.4
Alliance	155.2	100.7	221.1	106.7
Beatrice	110.9	102.4	80.3	104.2
Bellevue	105.4	118.1	452.3	92.8
Blair	110.5	114.5	184.5	129.8
Broken Bow	119.2	112.3	237.7	103.2
Chadron	114.9	95.0	256.2	96.1
Columbus	116.7	116.6	158.7	112.4
Fairbury	115.4	115.2	221.2	110.9
Falls City	117.9	116.7	11.1	114.0
Fremont	128.8	112.2	200.4	120.9
Grand Island	127.6	114.5	144.6	120.5
Hastings	113.7	111.1	76.9	112.5
Holdrege	139.6	111.5	279.5	117.8
Kearney	128.2	115.8	139.4	129.3
Lexington	194.4	115.3	153.4	118.4
Lincoln	110.8	113.1	93.5	108.8
McCook	136.4	109.5	116.1	109.9
Nebr. City	106.6	104.0	28.8	90.1
Norfolk	135.0	112.6	74.8	103.4
No. Platte	120.5	128.7	394.0	110.1
Omaha	113.0	110.7	63.6	105.4
Scottsbluff	114.9	113.3	128.0	103.0
Seward	127.3	127.2	229.8	112.7
Sidney	124.3	101.1	336.5	99.8
S.Sioux City	103.9	102.8	233.6	116.7
York	126.5	123.8	616.6	117.9

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.

(Continued from page 3)

The actual changes in the dependency ratio will depend on not only the level but also the age structure of future net migration. The assumption for Nebraska was that with no overall net migration there would also be no net migration for each age group separately. Often areas, particularly nonmetropolitan areas that have experienced sharp reductions in net out-migration, follow a pattern of continued significant net out-migration of people in their twenties accompanied by net in-migration of older age groups. This pattern seems to have held in parts of Nebraska in the 1960s as net out-migration in those areas declined from the high rates of the 1950s. The Omaha and Lincoln areas, however, have tended to show significant net in-migration of people in their twenties with much less in-migration or net out-migration for older groups.

For the state as a whole, therefore, there is no clear indication that a level of zero net migration is likely to result from net out-migration in certain age groups with offsetting net in-migration in other groups. But should the state experience, for example, a continuing net out-migration of young people with net in-migration of older groups, the projected age distribution in Table 1 could be wrong, even if the projected state totals are fairly accurate.

VARIATIONS IN AGE STRUCTURE WITHIN NEBRASKA

Within Nebraska there is a significant difference in the age structure of the Omaha-Lincoln area compared with the rest of the state. In 1970 the Omaha-Lincoln area had higher proportions of its population in the under-18 and 18-44 age groups than did the nation as whole, while it had lower proportions than the nation in the 45-64 and 65-and-over age groups. Exactly the opposite pattern was true for the rest of the state. In 1950 the Omaha-Lincoln area had surpluses compared to the nation in both the 45-64 and 65-and-over age groups as well as in the 18-44 group. These surpluses were offset by a large deficit in the under-18 age group. The 1950-1970 shift in the Omaha-Lincoln age distribution relative to the nation was the result of high birth rates in the area combined with heavy net in-migration of young adults (resulting in part from growth of the University of Nebraska), and net out-migration in older age groups.

Changes in the age structure of the rest of the state relative to the nation have not been as dramatic as the changes in the Omaha-Lincoln area. There has, however, been a steady trend toward an older age structure in the rest of the state compared to the nation. In particular, since 1950 the rest of the state has moved from a position of relative surplus to relative deficit in the under-18 age group at the same time that it has increased its relative deficit in the 18-44 group and its relative surplus in the 65-and-over group. The relative increase in the 65-and-over group more than offset the relative decline in the under-18 group so that the dependency ratio rose more for the rest of the state than for the nation during the 1950-1970 period. In the Omaha-Lincoln area the relative increase in the under-18 group more than offset the relative decline in the 65-and-over group in the 1950-1970 period with the result that the dependency ratio also increased more in that area than in the nation.

The projections to 1990, however, show the dependency ratio falling more for both the Omaha-Lincoln area and the rest of the state than for the nation. In the Omaha-Lincoln area the drop should result primarily from an anticipated decline in the birth rate

and continuing net in-migration of young adults from rural areas. (Many of the young people in rural Nebraska who would have formerly migrated out of the state may instead migrate to Omaha or Lincoln.) In addition, the relative deficit in 1970 in the 45-64 age group is likely to mean a slower growth in the 65-and-over group for the Omaha-Lincoln area than for the nation. The relative decline in the dependency ratio in the rest of the state should result primarily from a falling rate of net out-migration of people in the working ages (accompanying the trend toward stabilization of economic opportunities), and from natural attrition among the large numbers of people in these areas who are already over age 65.

The data in Table 1 reveal many sharp contrasts between the change in the age composition of population during the 1950-1970 period and the projected change over the 1970-1990 period. One of the best illustrations of the sharpness of the contrast can be seen by examining the changes for the 18-44 age group in the part of Nebraska outside the Omaha-Lincoln area. During the 1950-1970 period this area experienced a 20.8 percent decline in the 18-44 group while the other age groups were increasing by 3.5 percent. The projections for the 1970-1990 period show a 34.5 percent increase in the 18-44 group and an 11.9 percent decrease in the other age groups. Thus the projections indicate a dramatic reversal in the trend toward an older and older age structure in nonmetropolitan Nebraska. The nonmetropolitan parts of the state should still have an older population age structure than the nation in 1990, but the difference in the age structures could be reduced substantially.

The projected rapid growth of young-adult population compared to other age groups in nonmetropolitan areas does not indicate a large in-migration into those areas. Rather, it reflects a continuation of trends toward reduced out-migration accompanied by a large nationwide increase in the young adult population, continuing low birth rates, and natural attrition among the large concentrations of elderly people in nonmetropolitan areas. In absolute terms the young adult population should continue to grow faster in the nation as a whole than in nonmetropolitan Nebraska even though the adult population of nonmetropolitan areas is expected to become younger relative to the national adult population. The growth of young adult population will be greater in the larger nonmetropolitan cities (such as Grand Island) than in rural areas, but nearly all parts of Nebraska should be affected by the large nationwide increase in the number of young adults.

FUTURE PLANS

The projections shown in Table 1 are based largely on an analysis of demographic trends. There was little direct analysis of economic forces which may influence future net migration or birth rates. The assumptions concerning future net migration and birth must, at least implicitly, involve an assessment of future economic prospects, with particular reference to the question of whether or not enough jobs in the state will be available to attract the growing number of young adults. Time constraints did not permit a thorough analysis of the Nebraska economy in this study, but a detailed economic analysis of the state is now being undertaken with the intention of both permitting projections of economic variables and providing a better basis for evaluation and possible revision of the present population projections.

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