Business in Nebraska

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Nebraska's Economy Continues Strong Performance

Charles Lamphear

Nebraska's economic momentum continued for another quarter by drawing strength from major sectors that include manufacturing, the FIRE group (finance, insurance, and real estate), retail trade, and services. However, some slowdown by the end of the year or early 1999 is likely as scattered weaknesses now being observed ripple through the rest of the economy. The overall impact is expected to be minimal.

Forty-six percent of all the businesses that participated in the latest Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) indicted an increase in 2nd quarter 1998 revenues over year-ago levels (Table 1). The economic significance of this latest report on business revenues is apparent after observing similar reports for previous quarters (Table 2). In short, the state's business climate has remained virtually constant since the NQBCS was first conducted for 3rd quarter 1996. The state's current economic climate, best characterized as prosperous, growing, and stable, provides ideal conditions for strategic business planning.

However, scattered parts of the state's economy are showing signs of weakness. At present, the most apparent weakness is in agricultural services. For two consecutive quarters (1st and 2nd quarters 1998), the percent of businesses reporting a decline in revenues over year-ago levels exceeded the percent of busi-

Table 1
Revenue Activity 2nd Quarter 1998[1]

	2nd Quarter Compared to	
	1st Quarter 1998	*2nd Quarter 1997*
All Establishments—*number reporting*	1,532	
Revenues increased	49	46
Revenues decreased	20	23
Revenues stayed the same	31	31
Manufacturing—*number reporting*	204	
Revenues increased	40	43
Revenues decreased	31	27
Revenues stayed the same	29	30
Wholesale Trade—*number reporting*	177	
Revenues increased	50	41
Revenues decreased	22	31
Revenues stayed the same	28	28
Retail Trade—*number reporting*	387	
Revenues increased	58	50
Revenues decreased	15	21
Revenues stayed the same	27	29
FIRE—*number reporting*	111	
Revenues increased	53	57
Revenues decreased	12	14
Revenues stayed the same	35	29
TCU—*number reporting*	98	
Revenues increased	53	49
Revenues decreased	11	17
Revenues stayed the same	36	34
Services—*number reporting*	361	
Revenues increased	41	47
Revenues decreased	23	22
Revenues stayed the same	36	31
Other—*number reporting*	194	
Revenues increased	50	37
Revenues decreased	18	25
Revenues stayed the same	32	38

[1] Based on survey responses through September 4, 1998

Table 2
Current Quarter Revenues by Industry Group
Compared to Year-Ago Levels (percent)

	1996				1997								1998			
	3rd Qtr		4th Qtr		1st Qtr		2nd Qtr		3rd Qtr		4th Qtr		1st Qtr		2nd Qtr	
	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓
All Respondents	52	25	51	27	47	27	48	25	49	26	49	24	43	28	46	23
Manufacturing	52	29	55	26	53	23	57	26	53	26	55	22	42	27	43	27
Wholesale Trade	49	22	48	31	44	29	50	26	46	26	48	24	41	32	41	31
Retail Trade	46	31	43	33	40	33	44	28	42	29	44	27	39	31	50	21
FIRE[1]	63	12	57	18	60	15	54	18	57	24	64	14	57	14	57	14
TCU[2]	NA	NA	73	11	65	16	51	29	55	24	63	20	53	22	49	17
Services	55	24	52	27	48	26	47	25	52	26	50	24	47	26	47	22
Other	NA	NA	44	22	45	26	39	20	48	21	37	24	33	32	37	25

Notes: ↑ = Increase in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.
↓ = Decrease in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.
NA = Not available

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

nesses reporting revenue gains. The greatest regional impact from declining agricultural service revenues is found in the state's rural regions where most agricultural services are located. Agricultural services accounts for only 1.4 percent of the state's total employment.

The wholesale trade sector is also showing signs of weakness. For two consecutive quarters, the percent of businesses reporting declines in revenues over year-ago levels has exceeded the percent of businesses reporting gains in revenues in three of the state's seven reporting regions:

Table 3
Current Quarter Revenues by Region
Compared to Year-Ago Levels For All Respondents (percent)

	1997								1998			
	1st Qtr		2nd Qtr		3rd Qtr		4th Qtr		1st Qtr		2nd Qtr	
	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓
Metro												
Lincoln MSA[1]	47	25	53	27	53	29	53	22	46	26	49	21
Omaha MSA[2]	48	30	48	29	51	24	57	19	47	25	51	21
Nonmetro												
Central	49	27	45	23	47	32	43	28	40	33	46	25
Mid Plains	40	19	35	17	35	27	43	22	39	31	42	27
Northeast	51	24	49	21	47	25	41	31	38	28	40	24
Panhandle	44	29	48	27	52	22	46	26	42	25	42	21
Southeast	45	26	52	20	53	21	45	25	38	32	37	28

Notes: ↑ = Increase in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.
↓ = Decrease in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels.
NA = Not available

[1]Includes Lancaster County
[2]Includes Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties

southeast, northeast, and Lincoln MSA. The wholesale trade sector represents about 5.0 percent of the state's total employment.

These scattered weaknesses in the state's economy are due to several factors, including low farm commodity prices, the recently settled GM strike, the ongoing financial and economic ills in Asia and Latin America, the Russian financial and political debacle, and the severe labor shortage in Nebraska. Considering all current factors, the one factor that will most likely have the greatest adverse impact on the state's economy in the foreseeable future is the labor shortage. The impact will be most severe for rural communities and for small businesses, especially businesses that depend on unskilled workers.

Returning to Table 2, the table summarizes business revenue reports for the entire survey period of 3rd quarter 1996 through 2nd quarter 1998. The percent of respondents statewide who reported gains in current quarter revenues over year-ago levels changed little from quarter to quarter.

Table 3 summarizes business revenue conditions at the regional level for 1997 and 1st and 2nd quarters of 1998. As with the industry-level comparisons shown in Table 2, little change is seen in the revenue gains and losses across the quarters shown.

Figure 1 shows the percent of respondents by sector that expect 3rd quarter 1998 revenues to increase or decrease over 3rd quarter 1998 levels. These are expected, rather than actual, outcomes since respondents were completing the survey prior to the end of 3rd quarter 1998. Thirty-seven percent of all respondents expect 3rd quarter 1998 revenues to exceed year-ago (3rd quarter 1997) levels. The 37 percent figure is not statistically different from comparable rates for previous quarterly reports, continued evidence that the business climate remains healthy statewide.

Figure 1
Respondents Expecting Revenue Changes in 3rd Quarter 1998

Expected Decrease vs 3rd Quarter 1997 Primary Reason(s) Cited	% of respondents		*Expected Increase vs 3rd Quarter 1997* % of respondents	Primary Reason(s) Cited
•Seasonal factors •Local competition	15	Services	38	•Market expansion in the state •Seasonal factors •Price Changes
•Local competition •Price changes	11	FIRE[1]	50	•Market expansion in the state
•Seasonal factors •Local competition	13	Retail Trade	37	•Seasonal factors •New product lines/services •Price changes
•Seasonal factors •National market contrac	22	Wholesale Trade	33	•Market expansion in the state •New product lines/services •Seasonal factors
•Seasonal factors	8	TCU[2]	35	•Market expansion in the state
•National market contrac •International market con	16	Manufacturing	38	•National market expansion •New product lines/services •Seasona factors
•Seasonal factors •Local competition •National market contrac	15	All Respondents	37	•Seasonal factors •Market expansion in the state •New product lines/services

[1]Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
[2]Transportation, Communication, and Utilities

Second Quarter Job Growth and Unqualified Applicants

Charles Lamphear

Over the last several months, one of the topics featured in *Business in Nebraska* has been the state's growing labor shortage and the related problem of unqualified applicants. The principal source of information for these reports is the Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS).

The latest NQBCS for 2nd quarter 1998 shows that, in general, businesses are not seeing any letup in the labor shortage situation. The demand for workers remains high mainly because of the long period of uninterrupted economic growth. At the same time, the supply of qualified workers remains low, largely because of the low growth rate of the state's working-age population, coupled with perceived skill deficiencies.

The 2nd quarter 1998 survey results indicate that the respondents hired nearly 4, 000 workers to fill new full- and part-time jobs during the three-month period (Table 1). In addition, they hired slightly over 6,500 workers to fill existing full- and part-time jobs. Total hires for the period equaled nearly 10,500. Sixty-three percent of the total hires were reported by businesses that are located in the state's Omaha and Lincoln area metro counties—Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington.

To put the reported new-job hires into perspective, consider that the respondents' total number of jobs at the beginning of the 2nd quarter was approximately 90,000. Based on the survey results, therefore, total job count increased to nearly 94,000 by the end of 2nd quarter for a 4.4 percent increase. This brisk job growth for 2nd quarter likely was influenced by seasonal factors.

An estimated 23,012 new full-time jobs were created statewide during the 2nd quarter (Table 2). Statistically, the 2nd quarter 1998 estimate of 23,012 new full-time jobs equals the quarterly average for 1997.

Table 3 gives survey results for new and replacement full-time hires by occupation. Thirty-five percent of new-position hires were in the professional group that includes executives/administrators, managers, professional specialists, and marketing/sales. Comparable percentages for the state's metro and nonmetro counties are statistically the same; that is, equal to the state average.

Table 4 (page 6) shows that survey respondents reported a total of 1,599 full-time jobs unfilled during 2nd quarter 1998. Expanding the survey results for a statewide estimate, 13,179 jobs remained unfilled during the quarter (Table 5, page 6). Respondents indicated that 47 percent of these jobs remained unfilled because of the lack of qualified applicants. The 47 percent figure for 2nd quarter 1998 falls well within the range of survey error, indicating that the relative level of unqualified applicants has remained constant from quarter to quarter. In other words, the magnitude of the problem of unqualified applicants remains unchanged.

Table 1
Number of New and Replacement Hires
2nd Quarter 1998[1]

	State		Metro[2]		Nonmetro	
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
Replacement hires	4,515	2,029	3,071	1,302	1,444	727
New job hires	2,792	1,098	1,738	480	1,054	618
Total	7,307	3,127	4,809	1,782	2,498	1,345

[1]Based on a survey of over 1,500 reporting businesses with combined employment of approximately 88,000 workers.
[2]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Table 2
Estimates of Statewide Full-time New Job Hires

	1997 Quarterly Average	1998 2nd Quarter
Metro[1]	13,548	15,274
Nonmetro	9,595	7,738
State	23,143	23,012

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

The following are selected quotes from respondents' written comments.

"We are downsizing due to the difficulty of getting qualified workers."

"Lack of applicants period—qualified or unqualified."

"Due to tight labor market not enough applicants for positions."

"This is the most critical [labor] shortage I have seen in forty years of business in Omaha."

"Very difficult to recruit in our business. Often ads are not answered."

"We need to find qualified administrative support in Lincoln and Omaha."

"We continually struggle to find unskilled labor to fill positions in our hotel."

"Have a tough time finding qualified applicants or those willing to start at entry level positions."

"We simply cannot find reliable qualified help. We turn business away. It's really a different situation."

"There is a severe lack of qualified applicants in electrical and plumbing trades."

"Have no problem finding workers."

Table 3
Number of New and Replacement Hires by Occupation
2nd Quarter 1998 (Full-time Positions)[1]

	State		Metro[2]		Nonmetro	
Occupation	New Position Hires	Replacement Hires	New Position Hires	Replacement Hires	New Position Hires	Replacement Hires
Executives/Administrators	154	40	128	30	26	10
Managers	134	83	70	61	64	22
Professional Specialists	295	261	257	168	38	93
Marketing/Sales	398	304	149	236	249	68
Administrative Support/Clerical	322	358	270	240	52	118
Service Workers	510	837	350	658	160	179
Transportation/Material Movers	68	237	50	113	18	124
Production/Craft/Repair	398	1,175	240	672	158	503
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	513	1,220	224	893	289	327
Total	2,792	4,515	1,738	3,071	1,054	1,444

[1]Based on a survey of over 1,500 businesses with combined employment of approximately 88,000 workers.
[2]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Table 4
Total Unfilled Positions and Positions Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants 2nd Quarter 1998 (Full-time Positions)[1]

Occupation	State		Metro[2]		Nonmetro	
	Total Unfilled	Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants	Total Unfilled	Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants	Total Unfilled	Unfilled Due to Lack of Qualified Applicants
Executives/Administrators	11	6	8	5	3	1
Managers	68	28	51	23	16	5
Professional Specialists	186	96	123	54	63	42
Marketing/Sales	178	61	143	53	35	8
Administrative Support/Clerical	111	26	92	22	19	4
Service Workers	455	217	288	89	167	128
Transportation/Material Movers	82	35	59	26	23	9
Production/Craft/Repair	203	121	124	74	79	47
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	305	162	204	89	101	73
Total	1,599	752	1,092	435	506	317

[1]Based on a survey of over 1,500 reporting businesses with combined employment of approximately 88,000 workers.
[2]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Table 5
Estimates of Unfilled Full-time Jobs for 1997 and 2nd Quarter 1998

	1997 Quarterly Average		1998 2nd Quarter	
	Professional	Other	Professional	Other
Metro[1]	2,097	5,214	2,807	6,693
Nonmetro	864	2,465	844	2,835
State	2,961	7,679	3,651	9,528

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

Good Jobs and Good Pay in Nebraska but Labor Shortages Remain a Problem

Charles Lamphear

Second quarter 1998 Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) results indicate that the average hourly wage rate for new full-time position hires was $11.62 for the three-month period (Tables 1 and 2). The $11.62 rate is statistically unchanged from the average for 1st quarter 1998 and the quarterly average for all of 1997.

The state average hourly rate for replacement hires for 2nd quarter 1998 was $9.00, which was down somewhat from the 1st quarter average of $9.38, but statistically equal to the 1998 quarterly average. Significant quarter-to-quarter variations in the average wage rates can occur because of the quarterly variation in the occupational hiring mix. The main observations from Table 2 are: 1) the average wage rate for new hires is consistently higher than the average rate for replacement hires, and 2) the average wage rate for metro counties is consistently higher than the average rate for nonmetro counties.

It appears that for the nonmetro counties the wage gap between new hires and replacement hires has virtually disappeared.

Tables 3 and 4 show average hourly wages by occupation for new hires and replacement hires for 2nd quarter 1998. Table 5 gives state level 1997 and 1st and 2nd quarter 1998 wage comparisons by occupation for new and replacement hires.

NQBCS is a joint project of the Nebraska Departments of Economic Developmemt and Labor and BBR. The following individuals contributed either to the oversight of conducting the 2nd quarter survey or to the tabulation of survey results used in 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.

Table 1
Average Hourly Wages for New and Replacement Hires
2nd Quarter 1998[1]

	State		Metro[2]		Nonmetro	
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
Replacement hires	$ 9.00	$6.58	$ 9.04	$6.86	$8.94	$6.03
New hires	11.62	7.19	13.20	7.72	9.02	6.78

[1]Based on a survey of over 1,500 reporting businesses with combined employment of approximately 88,000 workers.
[2]Metro includes Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, and Washington Counties.

Table 2
Average Hourly Wages for Full-time New and Replacement Hires for 1997 and 1st and 2nd Quarters 1998

	1997		1998			
	Annual Average		1st Quarter		2nd Quarter	
	New Hires	*Replacement Hires*	*New Hires*	*Replacement Hires*	*New Hires*	*Replacement Hires*
State	$11.46	$9.06	$11.51	$9.38	$11.62	$9.00
Metro[1]	12.48	9.35	12.66	9.71	13.20	9.04
Nonmetro	10.35	8.69	9.58	8.97	9.02	8.94

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

Table 3
Average Hourly Wages for New Position Hires, by Occupation
2nd Quarter 1998[1]

Occupation	State Full-time	State Part-time	Metro[1] Full-time	Metro[1] Part-time	Nonmetro Full-time	Nonmetro Part-time
Executives/Administrators	$22.03	$ —	$23.05	$ —	$17.01	$ —
Managers	17.47	—	18.96	—	15.85	—
Professional Specialists	16.03	13.75	16.21	14.17	14.78	13.50
Marketing/Sales	9.05	6.74	10.21	7.44	8.36	6.24
Administrative Support/Clerical	9.35	11.40	9.65	9.25	7.78	13.38
Service Workers	10.15	6.05	11.48	6.87	7.25	5.50
Transportation/Material Movers	11.55	9.77	12.32	9.00	9.41	12.50
Production/Craft/Repair	12.66	8.36	14.60	8.60	9.72	7.03
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	8.56	6.40	10.04	6.98	7.42	6.22

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

Table 4
Average Hourly Wages For Replacement Hires, by Occupation
2nd Quarter 1998[1]

Occupation	State Full-time	State Part-time	Metro[1] Full-time	Metro[1] Part-time	Nonmetro Full-time	Nonmetro Part-time
Executives/Administrators	$22.66	$ —	$23.01	$ —	$21.60	$ —
Managers	15.98	—	16.60	—	14.27	—
Professional Specialists	14.73	9.56	15.99	8.78	12.45	9.71
Marketing/Sales	9.44	6.47	9.76	6.91	8.36	5.41
Administrative Support/Clerical	8.71	6.61	9.04	6.59	7.95	6.67
Service Workers	7.30	6.08	7.53	6.38	6.42	5.72
Transportation/Material Movers	13.57	8.62	10.43	8.54	16.44	9.33
Production/Craft/Repair	8.13	7.46	8.56	8.12	7.56	5.82
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	7.97	7.19	7.84	7.16	8.37	7.38

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

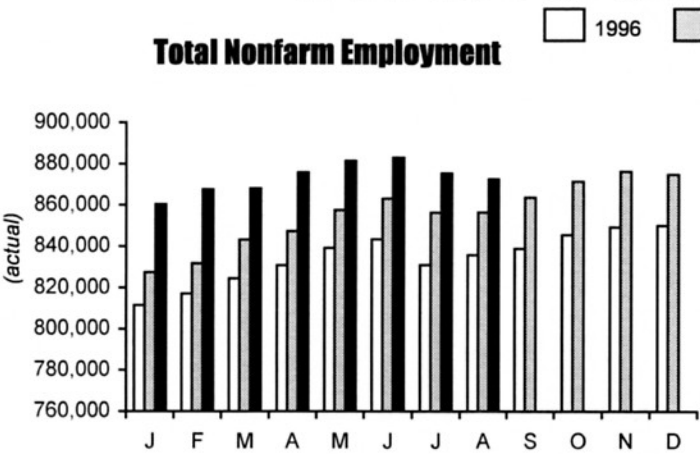
Table 5
Wage Comparisons for Full-time New and Replacement Hires, by Occupation for 1997 and 1st and 2nd Quarters 1998

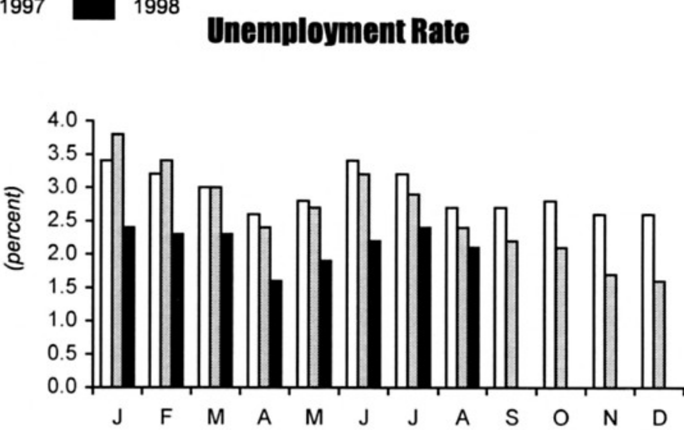
	1997 Annual Average		1st Quarter 1998		2nd Quarter 1998	
	New Hires	Replacement Hires	New Hires	Replacement Hires	New Hires	Replacement Hires
Executives/Administrators	$20.11	$21.95	$22.21	$22.86	$22.03	$22.66
Managers	16.72	16.63	15.16	16.77	17.47	15.98
Professional Specialists	17.22	14.90	16.73	14.94	16.03	14.73
Marketing/Sales	13.01	9.70	16.51	9.10	9.05	9.44
Administrative Support/Clerical	9.51	8.85	9.34	9.02	9.35	8.71
Service Workers	8.64	6.86	8.68	7.22	10.15	7.30
Transportation/Material Movers	10.08	12.43	12.48	13.70	11.55	13.57
Production/Craft/Repair	9.58	8.63	10.35	8.48	12.66	8.13
Operators/Fabricators/Laborers	9.35	7.90	9.45	8.31	8.56	7.97

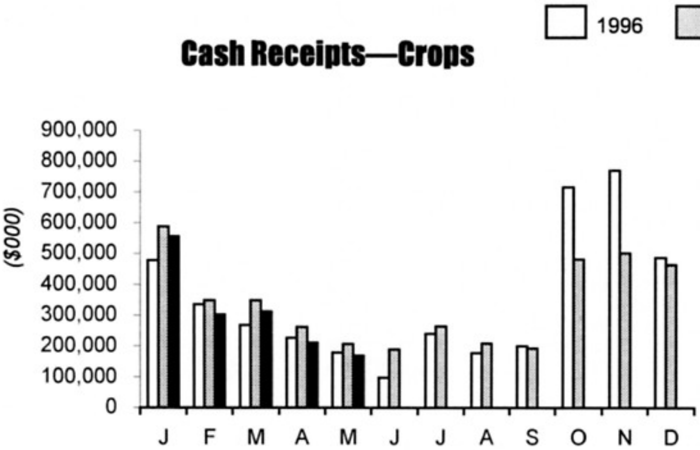
Recent Highlights from NQBCS

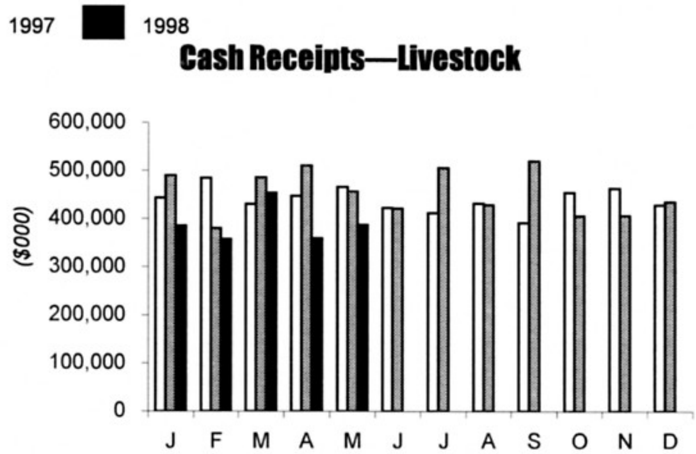
- NQBCS shows jobs aplenty in Nebraska for all regions, for all industries, and for all occupation groups.
- The state's current labor market is tight, and it will remain tight in the foreseeable future, with some possible loosening in the near-term if a national slowdown occurs.
- The tight labor market situation is nationwide, mostly caused by:
  - •• A change in key population and demographic factors, including
    - A slowdown in population growth, and
    - A drop in labor force participation rates, where
      * The change in the male participation rate is negative, and
      * The growth in the female participation rate is slowing down.
- An additional factor affecting the workforce for many rural communities is net out-migration of young, working-age adults.
- The average wages for new jobs in Nebraska are running $2-to-$4 ahead of the average wages for existing jobs. The wage differential is greatest for metro counties.
- The average wages for both new and existing jobs are highest in the state's metro counties.
- A recent state comparison shows that after adjusting for cost of living, Nebraska's wages are competitive.
- The percent of unfilled jobs in the state appears to be increasing, as is the percent of jobs that go unfilled due to unqualified applicants.

Nebraska Stats









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

	May 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
Ainsworth, Brown	1,788	8,443	1.3
Albion, Boone	1,740	8,350	4.4
Alliance, Box Butte	6,061	28,415	-0.5
Alma, Harlan	679	3,152	2.0
Arapahoe, Furnas	819	3,547	8.0
Arlington, Washington	143	892	-2.2
Arnold, Custer	213	1,300	4.7
Ashland, Saunders	1,418	4,993	-1.8
Atkinson, Holt	1,003	4,741	14.8
Auburn, Nemaha	2,483	11,603	-2.7
Aurora, Hamilton	2,717	12,672	0.9
Axtell, Kearney	54	338	-4.8
Bassett, Rock	448	1,944	3.7
Battle Creek, Madison	498	2,907	-4.8
Bayard, Morrill	371	2,182	14.1
Beatrice, Gage	10,711	50,346	-0.1
Beaver City, Furnas	143	603	11.9
Bellevue, Sarpy	20,704	87,189	7.1
Benkelman, Dundy	607	2,665	7.2
Bennington, Douglas	590	2,061	15.7
Blair, Washington	7,309	31,810	3.8
Bloomfield, Knox	616	3,119	9.9
Blue Hill, Webster	411	2,217	5.0
Bridgeport, Morrill	1,017	5,139	-1.8
Broken Bow, Custer	3,858	18,144	-0.9
Burwell, Garfield	709	3,366	11.4
Cairo, Hall	567	1,508	55.9
Central City, Merrick	1,748	8,253	2.7
Chadron, Dawes	4,786	20,831	28.5
Chappell, Deuel	363	2,111	9.8
Clarkson, Colfax	472	2,058	-2.8
Clay Center, Clay	267	1,645	19.5
Columbus, Platte	21,158	95,782	1.4
Cozad, Dawson	2,976	14,265	1.4
Crawford, Dawes	510	2,174	1.8
Creighton, Knox	943	5,093	12.9
Crete, Saline	3,174	14,766	-4.8
Crofton, Knox	444	1,692	-1.7
Curtis, Frontier	311	1,678	19.4
Dakota City, Dakota	458	2,000	3.0
David City, Butler	1,337	6,554	-0.3
Deshler, Thayer	244	1,528	46.9
Dodge, Dodge	214	1,073	6.4
Doniphan, Hall	1,362	4,760	33.0
Eagle, Cass	549	1,509	8.6
Elgin, Antelope	313	1,972	-6.6
Elkhorn, Douglas	2,593	10,051	6.5
Elm Creek, Buffalo	295	1,431	3.5
Elwood, Gosper	398	1,922	12.6
Fairbury, Jefferson	3,169	14,611	1.3
Fairmont, Fillmore	116	640	-15.6
Falls City, Richardson	2,519	11,675	-6.9
Franklin, Franklin	456	2,700	37.4
Fremont, Dodge	22,054	98,003	4.9
Friend, Saline	419	2,198	-11.2
Fullerton, Nance	448	2,513	-7.2
Geneva, Fillmore	1,739	8,099	-7.9
Genoa, Nance	235	1,432	28.7
Gering, Scotts Bluff	3,389	16,634	11.1
Gibbon, Buffalo	747	3,919	-1.4
Gordon, Sheridan	1,635	7,739	-7.1
Gothenburg, Dawson	2,225	10,368	2.5
Grand Island, Hall	50,900	239,135	6.5
Grant, Perkins	918	4,774	-3.7
Gretna, Sarpy	3,403	14,149	-3.4
Hartington, Cedar	1,511	7,668	1.3
Hastings, Adams	21,097	95,947	-0.2
Hay Springs, Sheridan	305	1,548	1.0
Hebron, Thayer	1,775	9,104	0.1
Henderson, York	729	2,806	5.9
Hickman, Lancaster	199	1,076	6.9
Holdrege, Phelps	4,870	20,817	-4.9
Hooper, Dodge	304	1,658	1.4
Humboldt, Richardson	442	2,268	-6.6
Humphrey, Platte	838	3,368	2.5
Imperial, Chase	2,122	9,831	11.1
Juniata, Adams	164	961	-13.8
Kearney, Buffalo	32,013	143,892	6.4
Kenesaw, Adams	117	1,416	199.4
Kimball, Kimball	1,572	7,398	-0.2
La Vista, Sarpy	9,323	40,066	13.1
Laurel, Cedar	372	1,591	-10.1
Lexington, Dawson	7,102	34,086	0.7
Lincoln, Lancaster	197,408	915,364	5.2
Louisville, Cass	827	2,562	1.6
Loup City, Sherman	558	2,981	13.0
Lyons, Burt	511	2,124	3.2
Madison, Madison	694	3,617	-0.9
McCook, Red Willow	11,327	52,826	2.4
Milford, Seward	640	4,360	-0.8
Minatare, Scotts Bluff	150	749	-30.1
Minden, Kearney	1,744	7,912	-1.7
Mitchell, Scotts Bluff	702	3,611	-20.3
Morrill, Scotts Bluff	500	2,320	9.2
Nebraska City, Otoe	6,538	30,038	7.2
Neligh, Antelope	1,444	6,733	-3.7
Newman Grove, Madison	243	1,401	-16.3
Norfolk, Madison	28,940	136,200	1.6
North Bend, Dodge	477	2,421	2.2
North Platte, Lincoln	22,031	100,998	3.6
O'Neill, Holt	4,581	19,956	1.0
Oakland, Burt	636	3,188	7.0
Ogallala, Keith	5,814	24,604	2.1
Omaha, Douglas	460,562	2,164,038	5.2
Ord, Valley	1,914	9,218	2.0
Osceola, Polk	787	3,616	4.2
Oshkosh, Garden	431	2,146	10.2
Osmond, Pierce	520	1,795	8.6
Oxford, Furnas	357	2,139	-23.5
Papillion, Sarpy	6,855	30,616	8.7
Pawnee City, Pawnee	299	1,486	-3.7
Pender, Thurston	674	3,131	-6.2
Pierce, Pierce	645	3,079	1.1
Plainview, Pierce	623	3,121	-10.9
Plattsmouth, Cass	3,628	15,719	1.6
Ponca, Dixon	447	2,401	2.5
Ralston, Douglas	3,581	15,264	1.3
Randolph, Cedar	382	2,050	19.8
Ravenna, Buffalo	691	3,790	7.6
Red Cloud, Webster	708	3,215	-13.9
Rushville, Sheridan	498	2,507	3.4
Sargent, Custer	162	844	-10.9
Schuyler, Colfax	1,800	9,176	3.2
Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff	20,431	95,968	-4.0
Scribner, Dodge	424	2,051	-2.2
Seward, Seward	4,922	22,204	-2.7
Shelby, Polk	301	1,448	-6.6
Shelton, Buffalo	638	3,202	23.7
Sidney, Cheyenne	7,230	31,771	3.0
South Sioux City, Dakota	8,210	38,059	-0.6
Springfield, Sarpy	570	1,651	32.1
St. Paul, Howard	1,155	5,787	-3.0
Stanton, Stanton	584	2,884	4.9
Stromsburg, Polk	1,060	4,004	-17.8
Superior, Nuckolls	1,730	7,482	-6.1
Sutherland, Lincoln	274	1,527	19.0
Sutton, Clay	749	4,095	-20.3
Syracuse, Otoe	1,069	5,169	7.3
Tecumseh, Johnson	868	4,003	-15.7
Tekamah, Burt	1,091	5,144	1.7
Tilden, Madison	375	1,986	-2.8
Utica, Seward	250	1,427	37.9
Valentine, Cherry	4,050	18,106	4.0
Valley, Douglas	1,429	5,012	-12.5
Wahoo, Saunders	2,514	11,005	-11.3
Wakefield, Dixon	369	1,656	-5.0
Wauneta, Chase	247	1,473	-3.5
Waverly, Lancaster	805	3,860	3.0
Wayne, Wayne	3,473	14,656	-0.9
Weeping Water, Cass	643	3,247	6.7
West Point, Cuming	3,754	18,204	-3.0
Wilber, Saline	428	2,146	-3.1
Wisner, Cuming	577	2,662	-7.1
Wood River, Hall	397	1,971	-0.8
Wymore, Gage	386	1,903	-4.9
York, York	10,845	47,491	12.3

*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			Other Sales		
	May 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago	May 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago
Nebraska *	211,206	945,330	6.4	1,339,252	6,308,568	6.1
Adams	3,729	15,649	-2.5	21,622	99,612	0.7
Antelope	1,078	5,211	-2.2	2,176	10,524	-2.0
Arthur	87	341	79.5	(D)	(D)	(D)
Banner	147	623	-16.3	(D)	(D)	(D)
Blaine	57	352	-22.5	75	286	-24.5
Boone	831	4,280	-8.7	2,175	10,651	0.7
Box Butte	1,447	7,619	9.3	6,324	29,766	-0.6
Boyd	207	1,184	18.9	527	2,439	-10.5
Brown	382	2,036	13.5	1,870	8,775	1.8
Buffalo	5,498	23,001	6.0	34,729	157,796	6.5
Burt	906	4,979	-0.3	2,393	11,277	2.6
Butler	987	5,093	10.0	1,718	8,815	-0.6
Cass	3,735	15,537	2.3	6,879	28,516	0.3
Cedar	1,039	6,011	4.6	2,633	12,763	1.8
Chase	577	3,166	-3.6	2,409	11,483	8.8
Cherry	820	4,405	14.1	4,222	19,038	4.4
Cheyenne	1,297	5,644	-2.9	7,457	32,978	2.6
Clay	1,007	4,984	4.3	1,830	10,232	-1.9
Colfax	1,251	5,606	2.1	2,629	13,198	1.7
Cuming	1,360	6,251	-13.3	4,911	23,504	-3.0
Custer	1,778	7,352	6.3	4,728	22,821	1.2
Dakota	2,395	9,965	6.8	9,240	43,073	-2.7
Dawes	857	3,911	21.0	5,297	23,010	25.4
Dawson	3,237	15,005	1.0	12,716	60,436	1.0
Deuel	330	1,419	-5.8	904	4,569	24.4
Dixon	808	3,963	13.5	913	4,642	0.0
Dodge	4,594	19,140	1.0	23,807	106,570	4.6
Douglas	54,853	239,469	12.7	470,471	2,204,028	5.1
Dundy	316	1,635	-7.4	622	2,773	5.2
Fillmore	838	4,793	1.4	2,608	11,964	-8.4
Franklin	282	2,236	2.6	655	3,788	21.8
Frontier	351	2,028	-6.5	615	3,133	6.0
Furnas	556	3,732	12.7	2,067	10,361	-12.7
Gage	2,801	12,896	7.3	11,728	55,783	-0.2
Garden	251	1,605	10.5	570	2,774	9.6
Garfield	110	956	9.4	709	3,366	11.4
Gosper	301	1,584	1.0	447	2,155	9.3
Grant	147	623	34.8	203	1,023	51.3
Greeley	426	1,762	9.8	684	2,980	-0.3
Hall	6,700	29,194	9.2	53,566	248,787	6.9
Hamilton	1,114	5,748	-13.6	3,053	14,556	0.8
Harlan	442	2,159	-7.7	939	3,968	3.7
Hayes	122	886	11.9	(D)	(D)	(D)
Hitchcock	360	1,980	11.7	479	2,648	-7.8
Holt	1,765	7,744	7.3	6,417	27,829	4.5
Hooker	133	582	51.2	238	968	-1.8

	Motor Vehicle Sales			Other Sales		
	May 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago	May 1998 ($000)	YTD ($000)	YTD % Chg. vs Yr. Ago
Howard	720	3,817	-9.4	1,416	7,311	-3.9
Jefferson	1,166	5,609	7.1	4,088	19,176	2.9
Johnson	526	2,812	20.6	1,155	5,588	-11.5
Kearney	839	4,930	-3.7	1,923	8,826	-2.3
Keith	986	4,916	-12.3	6,381	26,861	2.8
Keya Paha	164	551	19.3	60	333	-16.1
Kimball	503	2,078	-16.4	1,593	7,614	0.2
Knox	1,026	5,253	0.2	2,570	12,610	6.1
Lancaster	29,194	117,764	11.0	199,831	927,400	5.3
Lincoln	3,964	18,872	16.4	22,899	105,271	3.8
Logan	128	691	51.9	84	370	178.2
Loup	88	459	-14.5	(D)	(D)	(D)
McPherson	30	322	12.6	(D)	(D)	(D)
Madison	4,884	19,692	10.3	30,786	146,394	1.1
Merrick	964	4,911	6.0	2,401	10,870	3.9
Morrill	580	2,887	-15.8	1,402	7,389	0.7
Nance	473	2,431	-5.5	718	4,089	3.6
Nemaha	995	4,677	19.3	2,678	12,880	-2.3
Nuckolls	470	2,878	-8.0	2,215	10,049	-3.8
Otoe	1,895	9,283	4.4	7,998	37,108	6.6
Pawnee	416	2,091	20.6	432	2,360	-5.6
Perkins	433	2,597	10.0	1,143	5,714	-3.2
Phelps	1,319	6,421	-19.7	5,099	22,207	-3.3
Pierce	856	4,452	-9.2	1,864	8,333	-2.9
Platte	4,397	19,670	7.7	22,448	101,883	1.0
Polk	791	4,028	-5.2	2,238	9,798	-6.5
Red Willow	1,095	6,566	0.6	11,660	54,379	2.4
Richardson	1,176	4,864	0.1	3,130	15,105	-8.2
Rock	194	1,274	14.6	450	1,970	3.0
Saline	1,530	7,235	8.2	4,361	21,024	-5.1
Sarpy	16,553	66,285	8.7	41,799	178,712	9.0
Saunders	2,803	13,044	5.3	5,933	26,257	-3.9
Scotts Bluff	4,137	19,475	3.6	25,233	119,603	-2.8
Seward	1,940	9,580	7.2	6,048	29,210	-0.8
Sheridan	971	4,077	14.2	2,733	13,134	-3.0
Sherman	443	2,151	4.2	652	3,473	3.4
Sioux	280	1,371	23.2	128	575	-10.9
Stanton	621	3,588	1.6	718	3,606	2.3
Thayer	774	4,157	-3.3	2,503	13,005	1.4
Thomas	47	471	4.9	313	1,316	-15.6
Thurston	429	2,368	-13.1	778	3,767	-7.8
Valley	511	2,572	-3.2	2,102	10,096	3.1
Washington	3,111	13,168	16.0	7,865	34,760	3.1
Wayne	970	4,985	0.9	3,609	15,358	-1.1
Webster	322	2,127	-15.4	1,205	5,927	-6.8
Wheeler	129	819	-14.6	87	458	-5.4
York	1,734	8,903	-11.9	11,970	52,316	10.9

*Totals may not add due to rounding
(D) Denotes disclosure suppression

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue

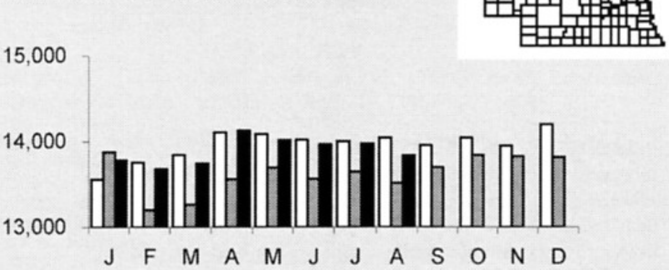
Note on Net Taxable Retail Sales

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.

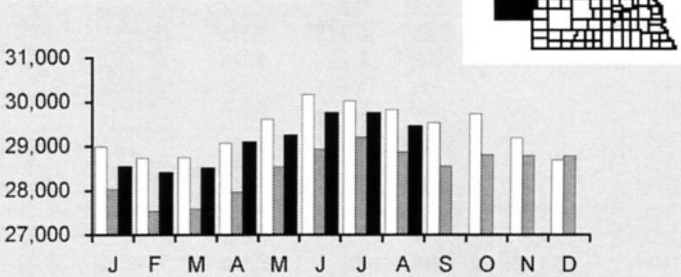
Regional Employment—1996 to August 1998

1996 1997 1998

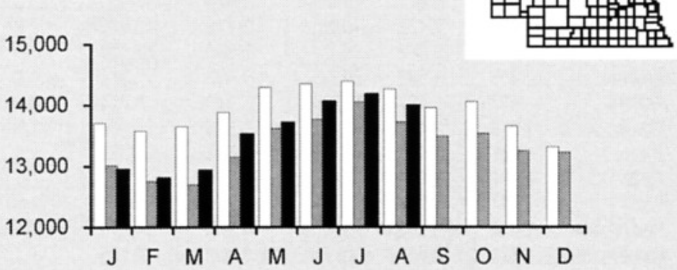
Northwest Panhandle



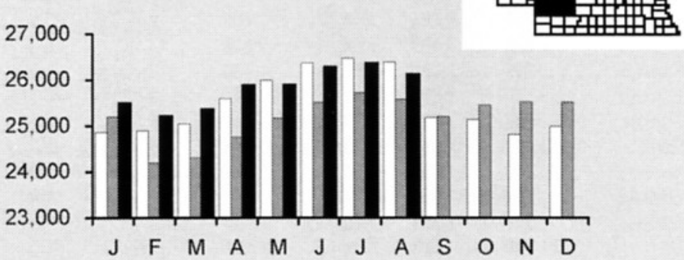
Southwest Panhandle



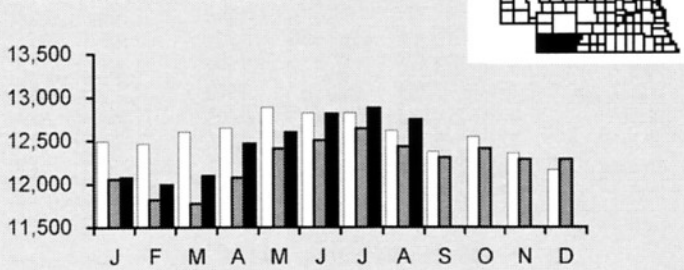
North Central



West Central



Southwest Central



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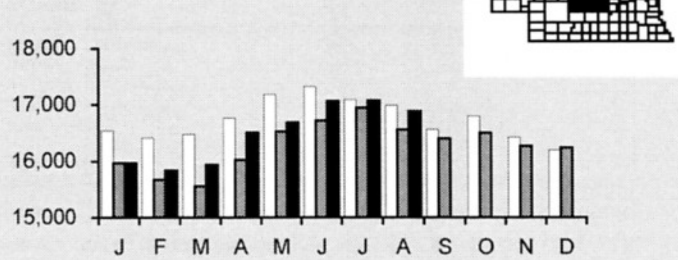
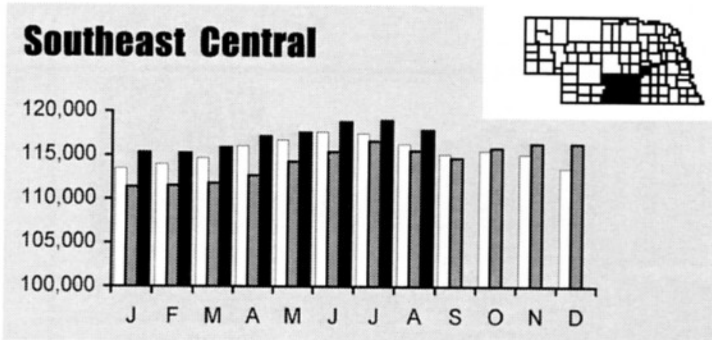
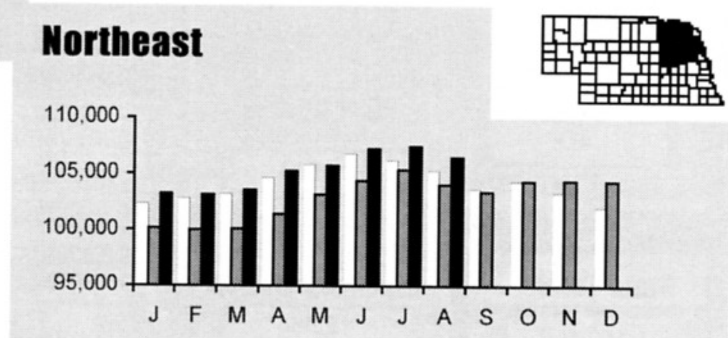
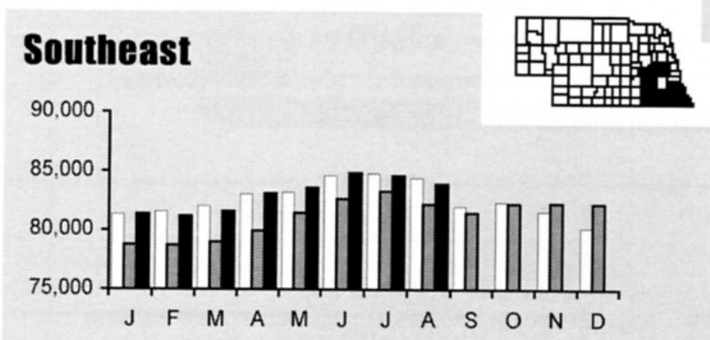


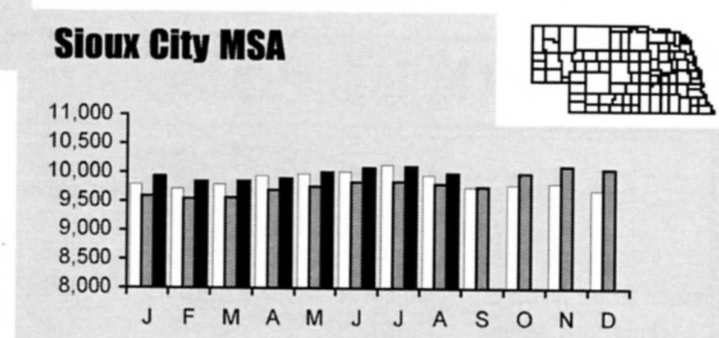
Regional Employment—1996 to August 1998

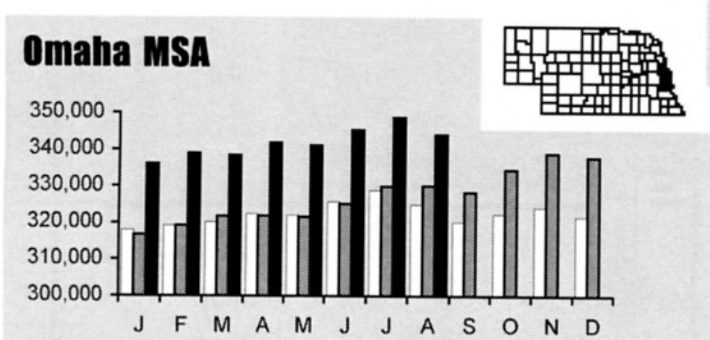
1996 1997 1998

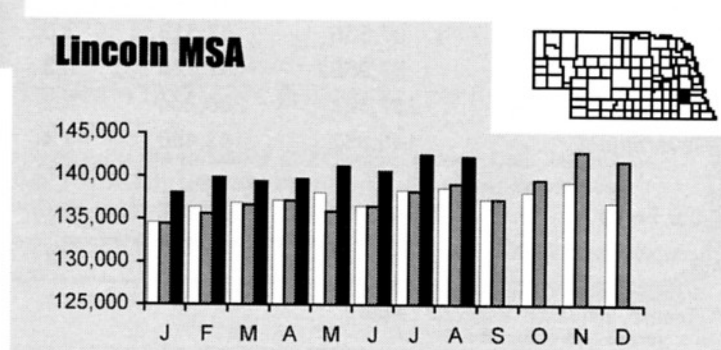




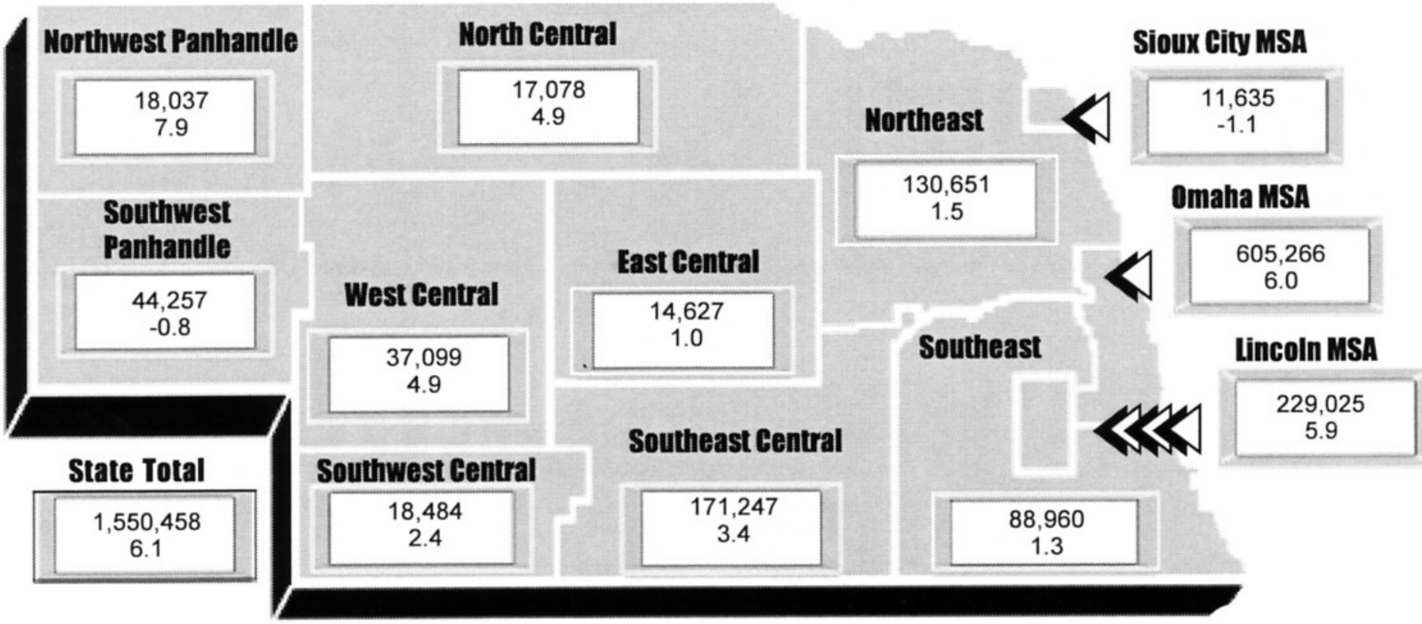








May 1998 Regional Retail Sales ($000) Percent Change from Year Ago



*Regional values may not add to state total due to unallocated sales

Employment by Industry

	Revised July 1998	Preliminary August 1998	% Change vs Yr. Ago
Nonfarm Emp. (W&S)	875,376	872,571	1.9
Construction & Mining	45,091	45,468	5.1
Manufacturing	119,535	119,719	2.7
Durables	62,025	62,014	4.2
Nondurables	57,510	57,705	1.1
TCU*	55981	56,105	4.4
Trade	213,593	213,704	1.3
Wholesale	156,058	156,391	0.7
Retail	57,535	57,313	3.0
FIRE**	57,966	57,825	5.2
Services	237,827	236,254	2.2
Government	145,383	143,496	-1.4
Labor Force	949,764	937,036	2.6
Unemployment Rate	2.4	2.1	

* Transportation, Communication, and Utilities
** Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor

Price Indices

*Consumer Price Index - U**
(1982-84 = 100)

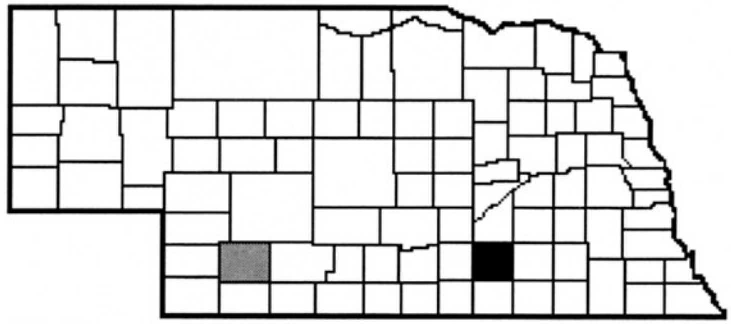
	July 1998	% Change vs Yr. Ago	YTD % Change vs Yr. Ago
All Items	163.2	1.7	1.5
Commodities	141.6	0.4	0.0
Service	184.9	2.7	2.7

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

County of the Month

Clay

Clay Center-County Seat



Next County of Month

License plate prefix number: 30

Size of county: 574 square miles, ranks 59th in the state

Population: 7,153 in 1997, a change of 0.6 percent from 1990

Per capita personal income: $23,651 in 1996, ranks 12th in the state

Net taxable retail sales ($000): $37,504 in 1997, a change of –4.8 percent from 1996; $15,216 from January through May of 1998, a change of 0.0 percent from the same period the previous year.

Number of covered business and service worksites[1]: 235 in 1997

Unemployment rate: 2.2 percent in Clay County, 2.6 percent in Nebraska for 1997

	State	Clay County
Nonfarm employment (1997):	827,935	2,174
	(percent of total)	
Construction and Mining	4.8	4.4
Manufacturing	14.2	5.3
TCU	5.2	9.4
Wholesale Trade	6.6	15.3
Retail Trade	19.2	10.0
FIRE	6.4	3.7
Services	26.2	13.5
Government	17.5	38.3

Agriculture:

- **Number of farms:** 592 in 1992, 710 in 1987
- **Average farm size:** 603 acres in 1992
- **Market value of farm products sold**: $126.8 million in 1992 ($214,096 average per farm)

[1]Covered worksites and employment refer 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 and employment, see the Nebraska Employers Guide to Unemployment Insurance.

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

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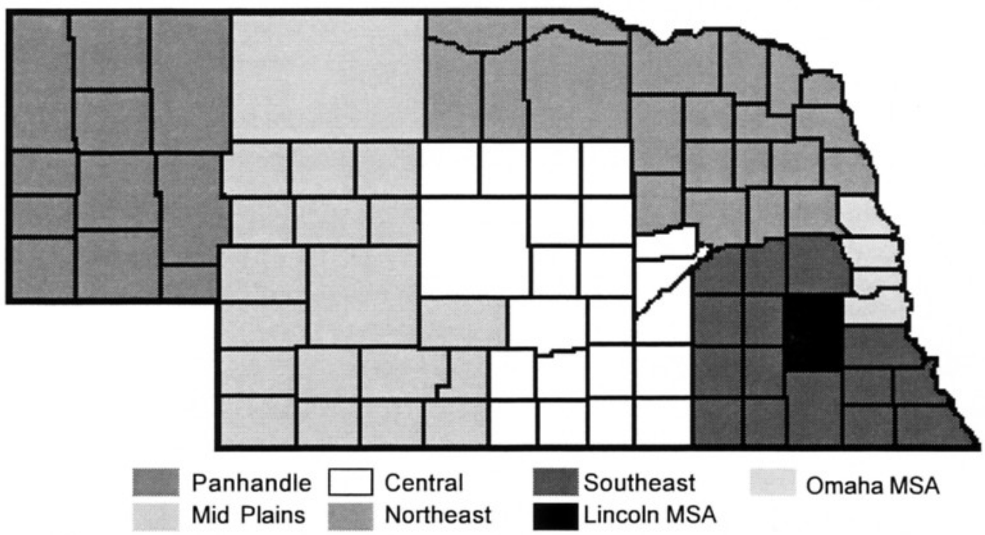
Click—Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey. A map similar to the one below will appear.
Click—the name of the region* in the map legend to see the list of tables for that region.
Click—the title of the table and it will be viewable in a portable document format (PDF).

*In addition to individual regions, detailed tables for the entire state, metro, and nonmetro counties are available.

Nebraska Quarterly Business Conditions Survey (NQBCS) Regions



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