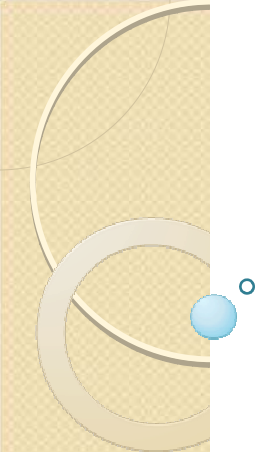


Executive Summary



# **NEBRASKA LEGISLATIVE PLANNING DATABASE**



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# Nebraska Legislative Planning Committee

The Nebraska Legislature's Planning Committee was created in 2009 with the passage of LB 653, in order to help establish a process of long-term state planning with the Nebraska Legislature.



# Nebraska Legislative Planning Committee

- The committee was created to assist state government in identifying emerging trends, assets, and challenges of the state and the long-term implications of the decisions made by the Nebraska Legislature.
- The Legislature's Planning Committee is comprised of the Speaker of the Legislature, the Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council, the Chairperson of the Appropriations Committee and six other members of the Legislature.



# Nebraska Legislative Planning Database

- The goals and benchmarks in the database were developed and approved by the Legislature's Planning Committee to present a common-sense and data-driven assessment of key areas important to Nebraskans' quality of life.
- This database is a joint initiative with the Nebraska Legislature's Planning Committee and the University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Public Affairs and Community Service.



# Benchmarks

There are nine primary benchmarks:

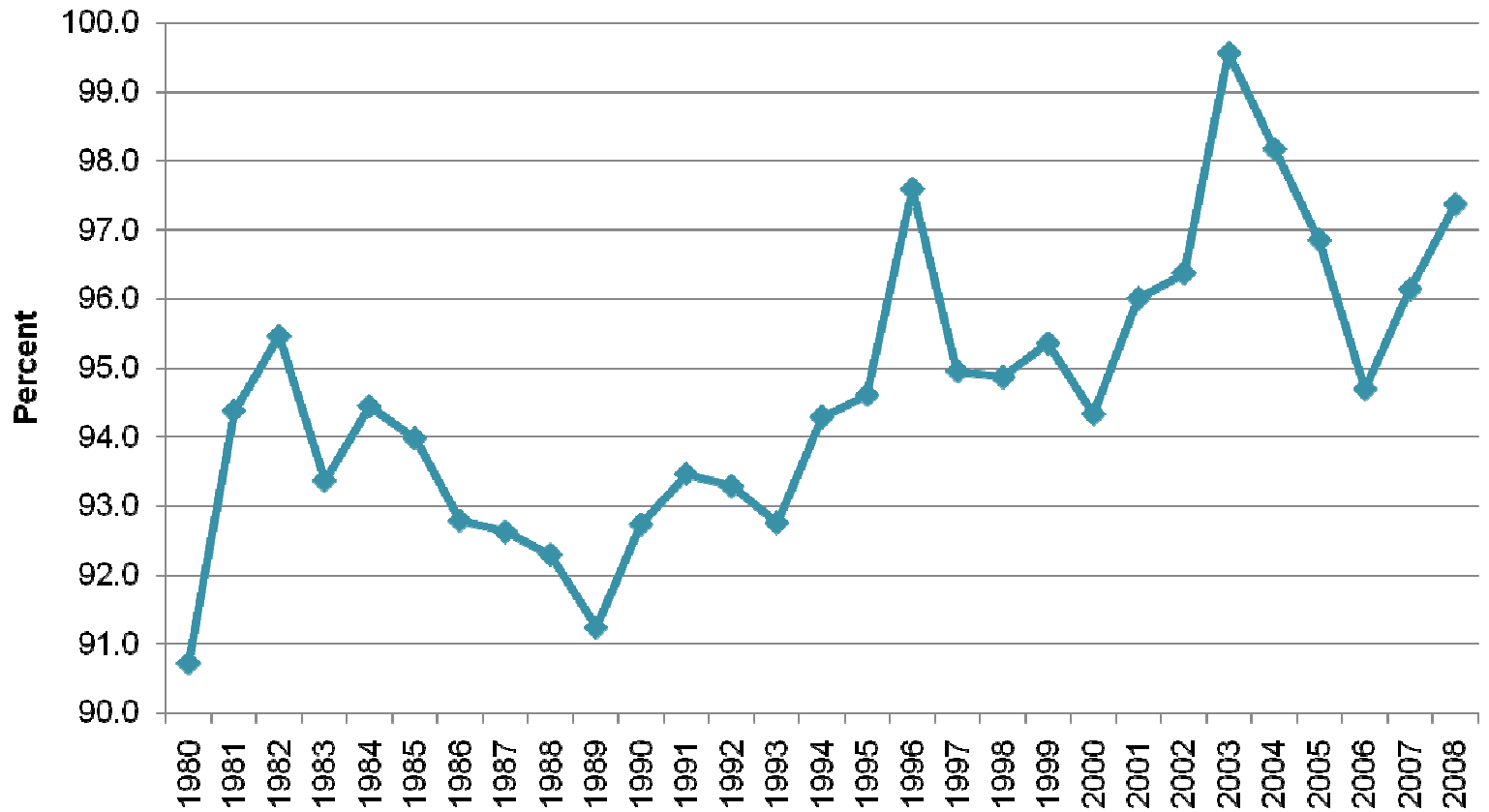
- Economy
- Agriculture
- Natural Resources
- State and Local Government
- Education
- Health and Human Services
- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Telecommunications



# Economy

- Income, poverty, and comparative costs
  - Nebraska lags the nation in per capita and average income and average wages and salaries.
  - Poverty rates are lower than the nation.
  - Relative cost of housing (compared to income) is lower than the nation.
- Employment
  - Unemployment rates are lower than the nation, but long-term employment growth lags the national average.

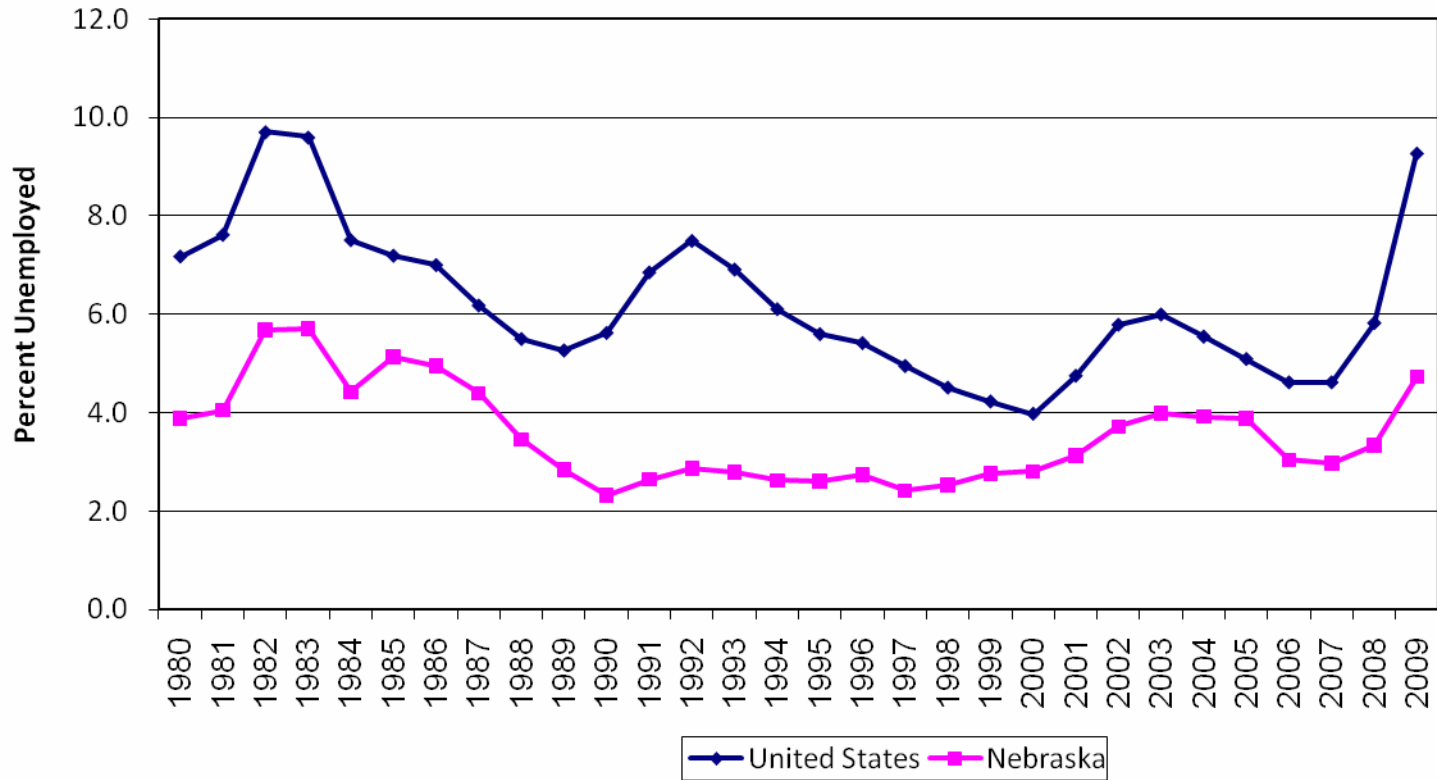
### Nebraska Per Capita Personal Income as a Percentage of United States Per Capita Personal Income: 1980-2008



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, REIS; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Feb. 2010



## Annual Unemployment Rates for Nebraska and the United States: 1980-2009



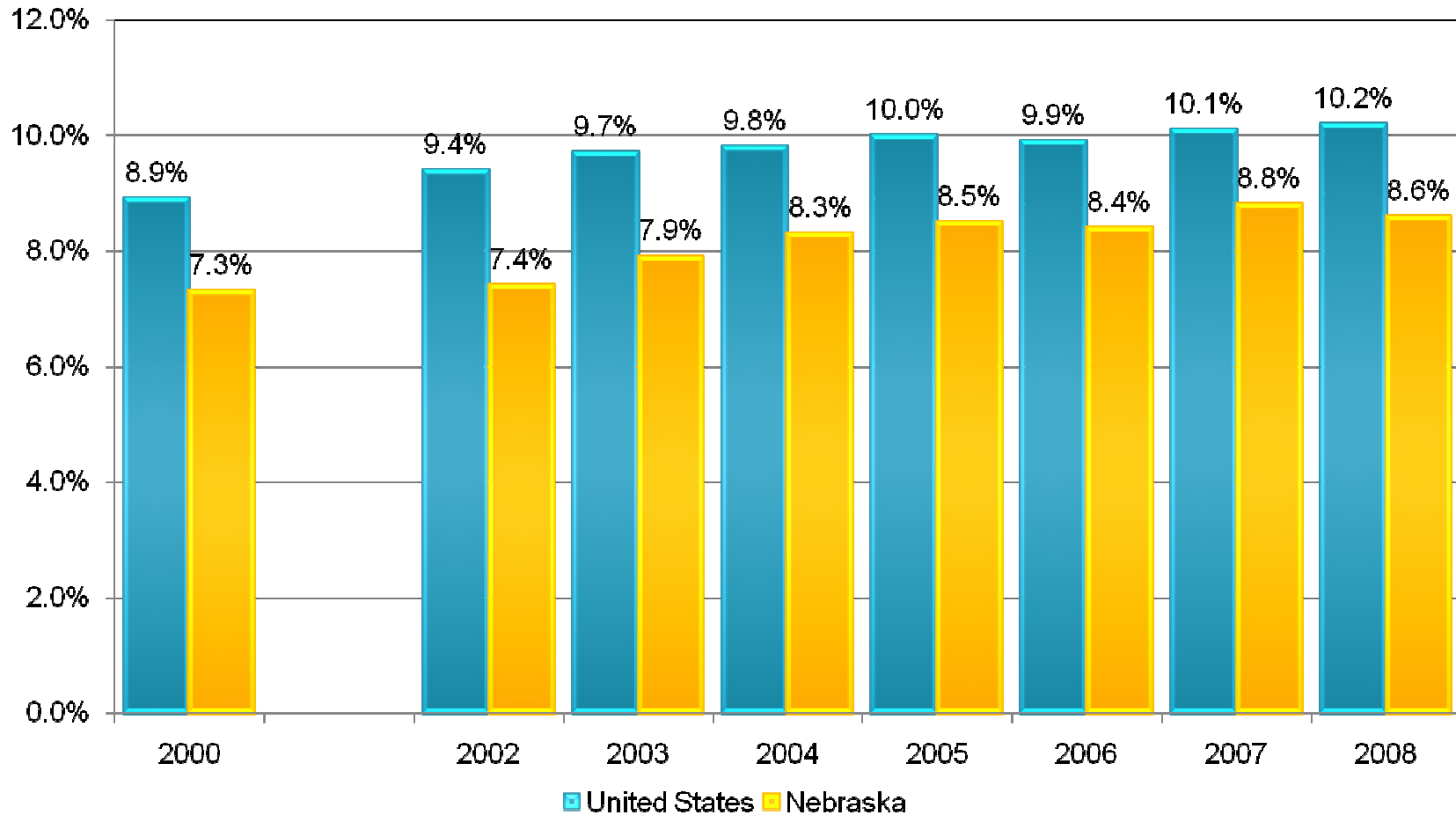
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Mar. 2010



# Economy

- Business climate and business start-ups
  - Although the business climate is good, entrepreneurship and technology and innovation rank below most states.
- Workforce quality, technology, and innovation
  - Nebraska has relatively high levels of high school graduates but low percentages of persons with advanced degrees and in science and engineering occupations.

### Percentage of People 25 Years and Over Who Have Completed an Advanced Degree for the United States and Nebraska: 2000-08

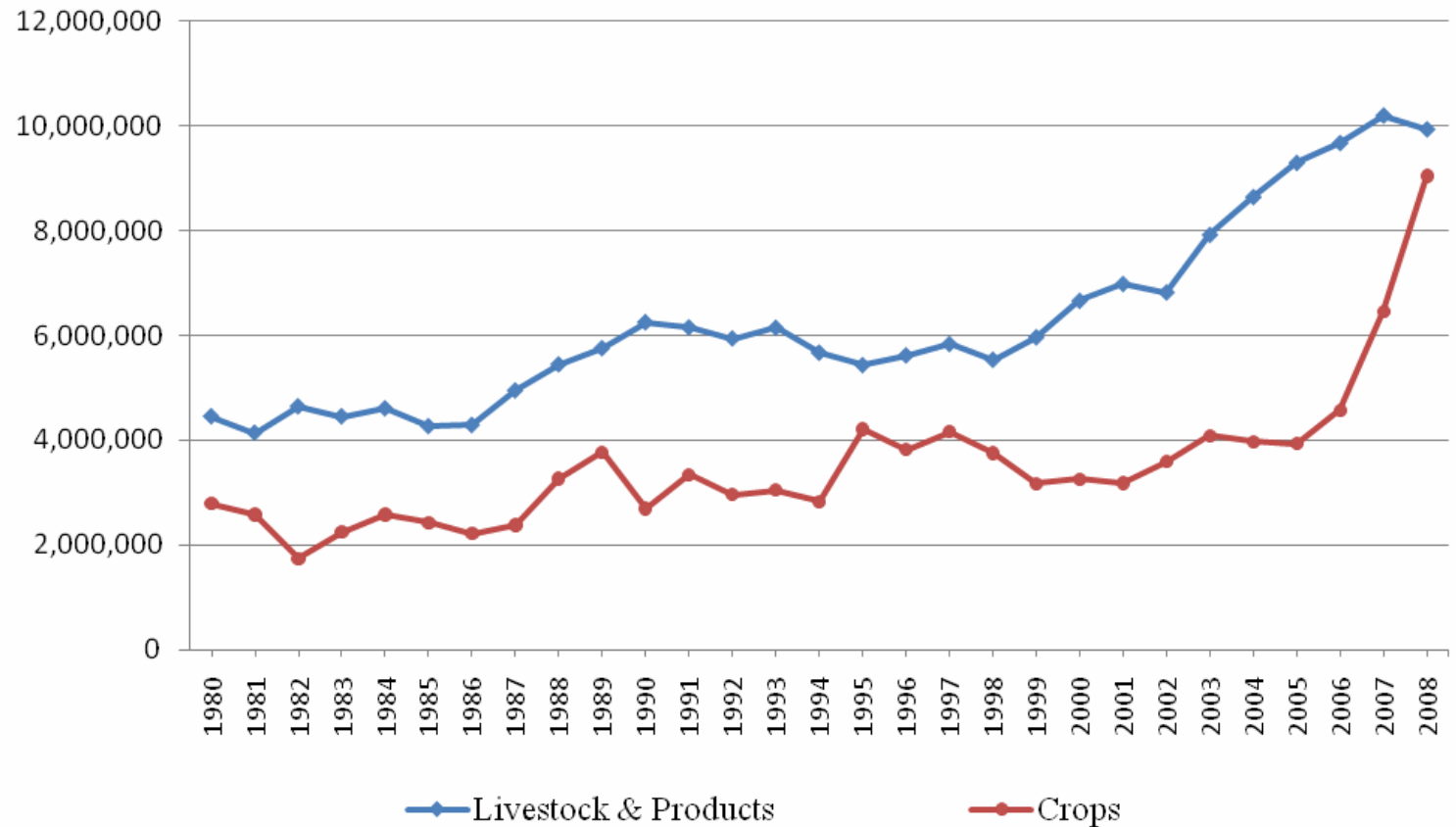


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2002-2008 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing;  
Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Feb. 2010

# Agriculture

- Farm income
  - Depending upon the measure, rural Nebraskans generally fare better economically than the typical rural resident nationally.
  - Per capita incomes are comparable, but poverty and unemployment rates are considerably lower.
- Farm receipts
  - In 2008, farm marketings brought nearly 19 billion dollars into the state and production agriculture provided nearly 50 thousand jobs.
  - Historically, cash receipts from livestock and products have consistently exceed those from crops.

## Cash Receipts from Livestock and Products and Crops (\$000): Nebraska (1980-2008)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2008; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Jun. 2010

# Agriculture

- Federal government farm payments have a sizable and variable impact on net farm income.
  - In twelve of the years since 1980, government payments accounted for more than half of Nebraska's net farm income.
- Farm operations
  - Similar to the nation as a whole but in contrast to most of the region, Nebraska farms are getting larger and fewer in numbers.
- Agricultural diversity
  - Top five agricultural commodities produced in Nebraska were: Cattle and calves, corn, soybeans, hogs, and wheat.



# Natural Resources

- Air Quality

- Fine particle emissions are an important measure of air quality; Nebraska rates well on that indicator.
- The other criteria that determine air quality are nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, and lead. Although the Omaha metropolitan area currently meets the ozone standard, it is trending toward nonattainment.

- Land Quality and Waste

- The EPA's Toxic Chemical Release Inventory shows that in 2009 the largest sources of toxic chemical releases in Nebraska are surface water discharges, landfills and point source air emissions. Surface water discharges in Nebraska are the highest in the region.



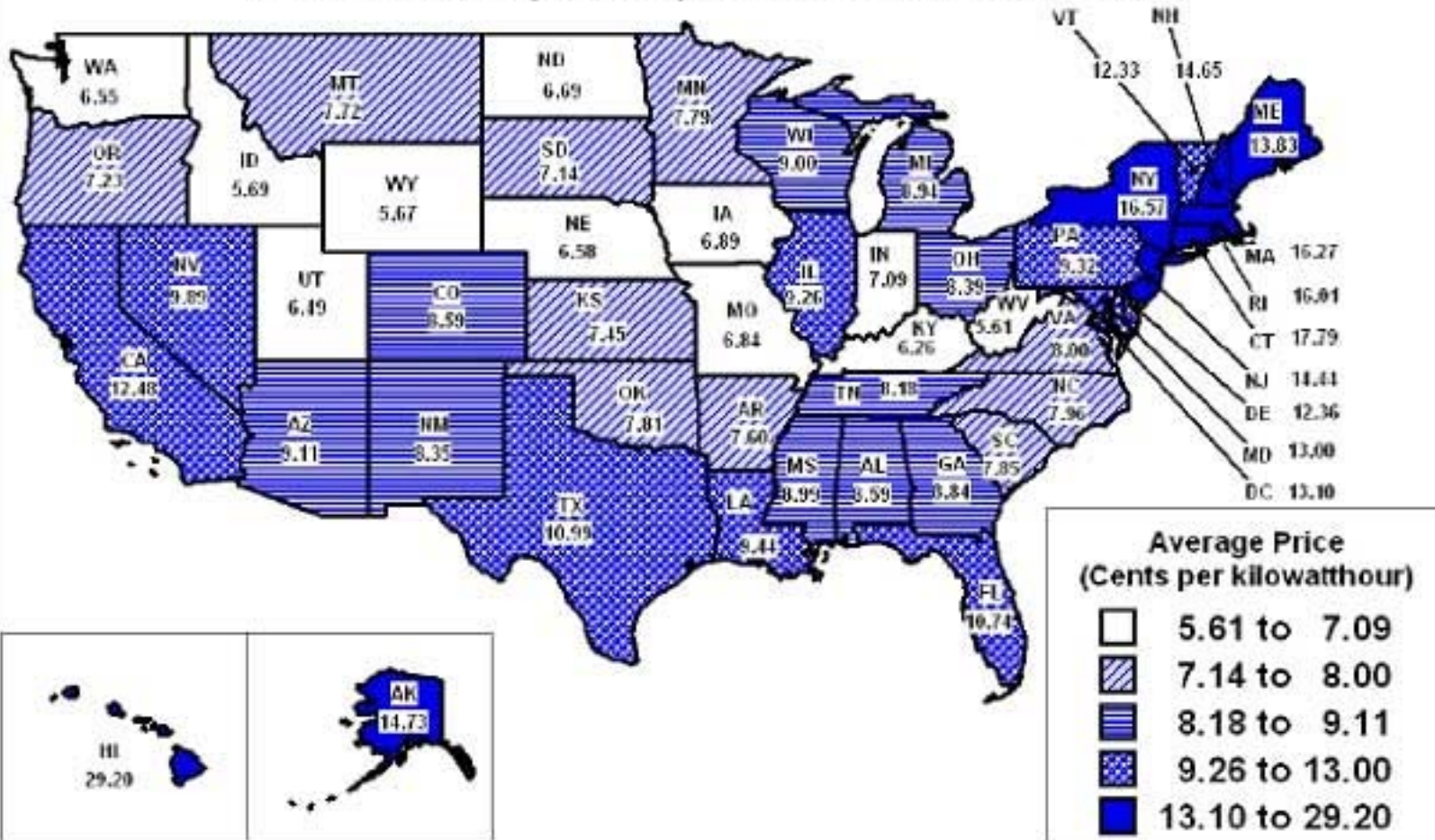
# Natural Resources

- Energy

- The price of electricity in Nebraska two-thirds of the national average. Perhaps as a result of this lower price, consumption is higher. While lower electricity costs have many advantages, this also inhibits conservation and the development of alternative sources of energy.
- Prices vary by a factor of six within the state.
- Nebraska ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in the generation of electricity using renewable resources. So while Nebraska is in a good position now, it is vulnerable to long-term changes in the energy market because of its reliance on non-renewable sources of energy.



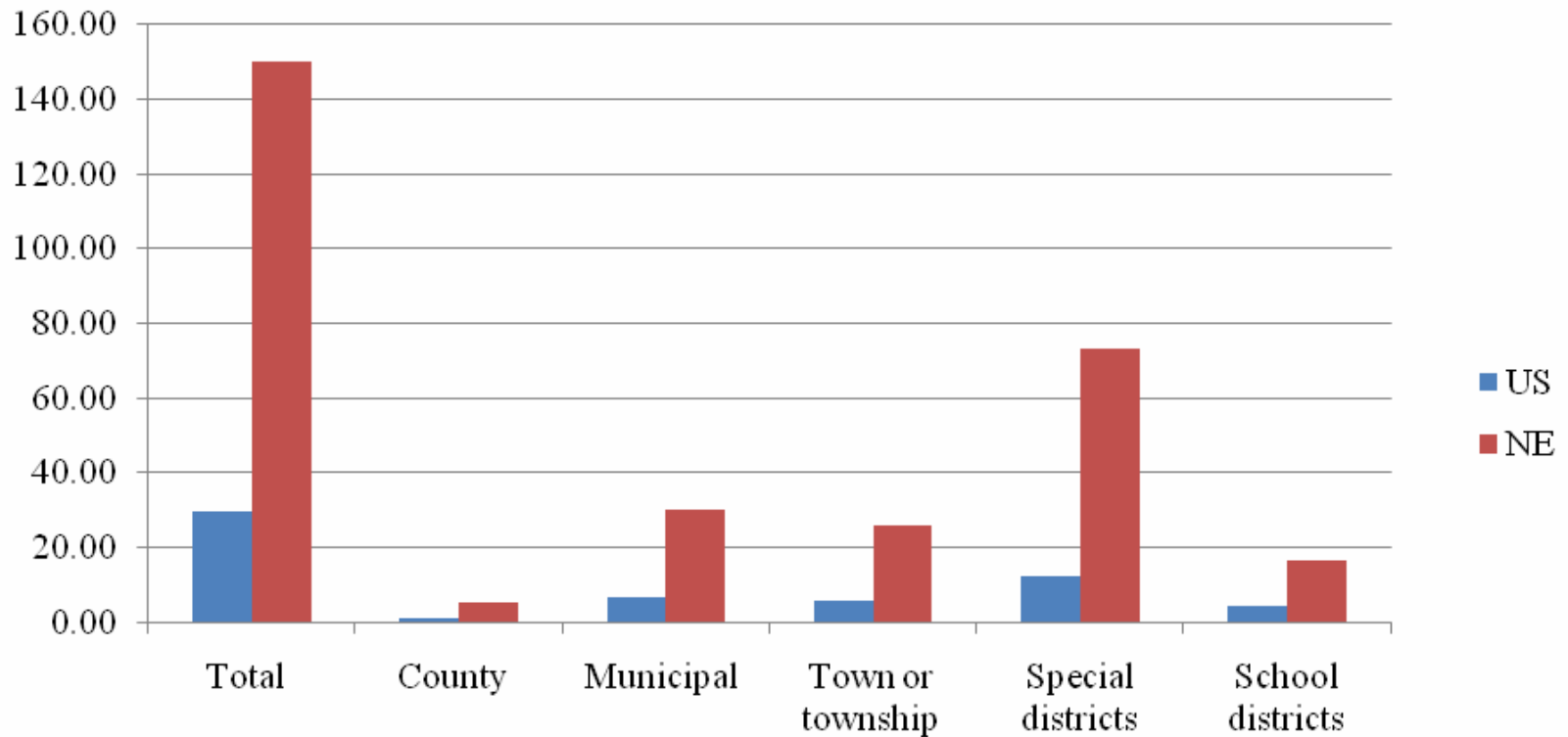
## U.S. Total Average Price per kilowatthour is 9.74 Cents



# State and Local Government

- Units of Government
  - Nebraska is high in the number of local governments, particularly special districts and counties. Options to reduce expense include: functional consolidation, inter-local agreements, and regional districts replacing small special districts.
- Employment & Payroll
  - Generally state and local employment is above average. Pay is below average for all functions but utilities.
    - At the state level, employment is higher than average in all functional categories except government administration. It is more than twice the national average in utilities, and public works, planning & recreation.
    - Local government employment is above average in government administration, transportation, planning & recreation, education and utilities. It is below average for public safety, public welfare & health, and public works.
- Federal Expenditures
  - Nebraska is low in federal procurement spending and high in grants received and “other direct payments” (includes Medicare, unemployment compensation, agricultural assistance and the earned income tax credit). Overall, Nebraska is slightly less than the average.

### Local Government Units Per 100,000 Population by Type: the United States vs. Nebraska: 2007

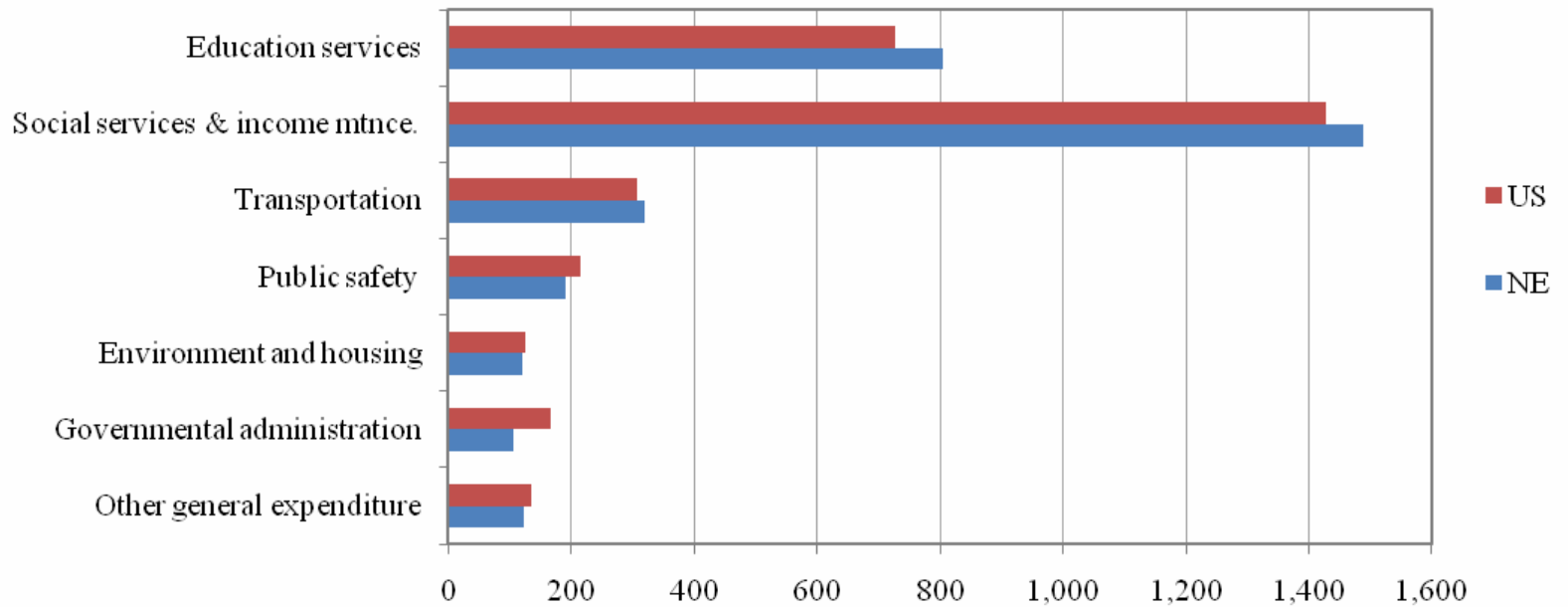


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Jun. 2010

# State and Local Fiscal Policy

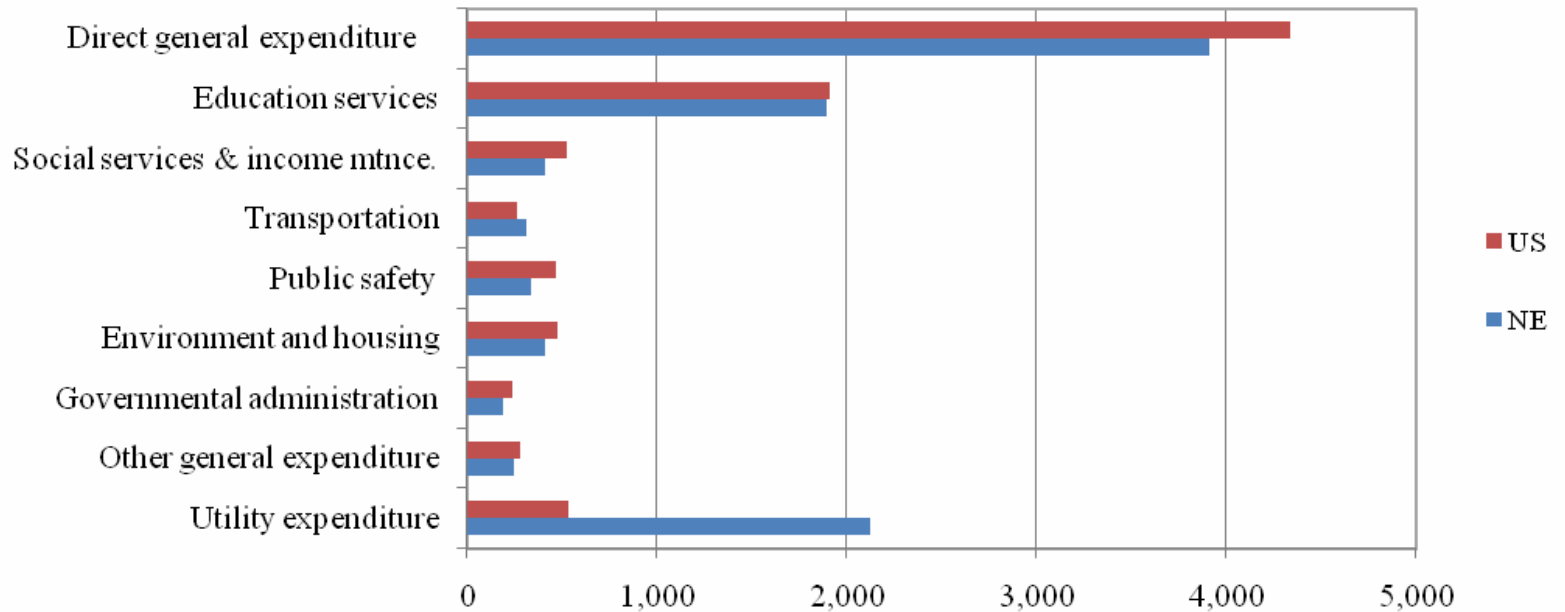
- Expenditures
  - Total state spending is slightly below the national average.
    - Education, social services & income maintenance, and transportation, spending is higher than average.
    - Spending was lower than average for public safety, environment and housing, and government administration.
  - Local spending is below average.
    - Spending on all functions is lower than average with the exception of transportation and utilities.
- Revenue: In general Nebraska is in the middle.
  - We are high in property tax, and state personal income tax and general sales tax.
  - We are low in selective sales taxes, corporate income taxes and local general sales tax.
  - The absence of a local income tax draws our comparative personal income tax burden below the average.
- Debt
  - State debt is the lowest in the region while local debt is high.

### State Government Expenditures Per Capita by Function: the United States and Nebraska: 2006-07



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Jun. 2010

### Local Government Expenditures Per Capita by Function: the United States and Nebraska: 2006-07



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Jun. 2010

# Education

- P-16 Initiative Goals
  - Nebraska has a comparatively large percentage of its high school graduates attending a degree granting institution and most of them attend a college in Nebraska.
- Access
  - Compared to the nation and region, Nebraska lags in the percentage of children aged 3 and 4 who are enrolled in an early childhood education program.
  - Nebraska compares favorably to the nation and region in the cost of higher education.
  - State and local appropriations for higher education per FTE student in Nebraska are above the national average.



# Education

- Assessment
  - Looking at reading and mathematics scores for Nebraska's fourth and eighth graders, it appears that Nebraska generally ranks in the middle third of the states but ranks toward the bottom of its peer states.
- Funding Stability
  - Nebraska's per pupil spending for public elementary and secondary education in the top half nationally and is among the highest in the region.
- In recent years, Nebraska has been attracting college educated people from other states.

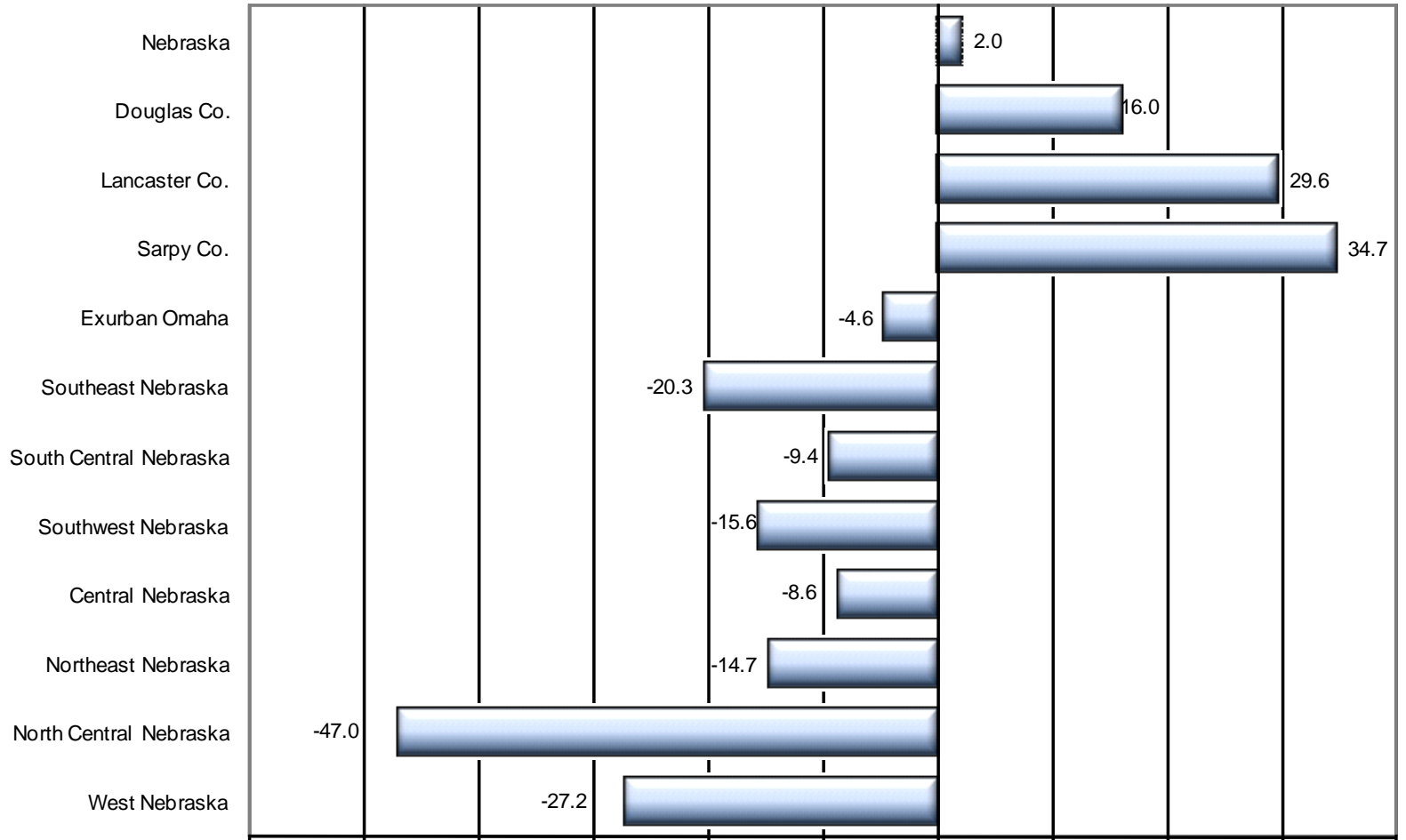




# Births and Potential Enrollments

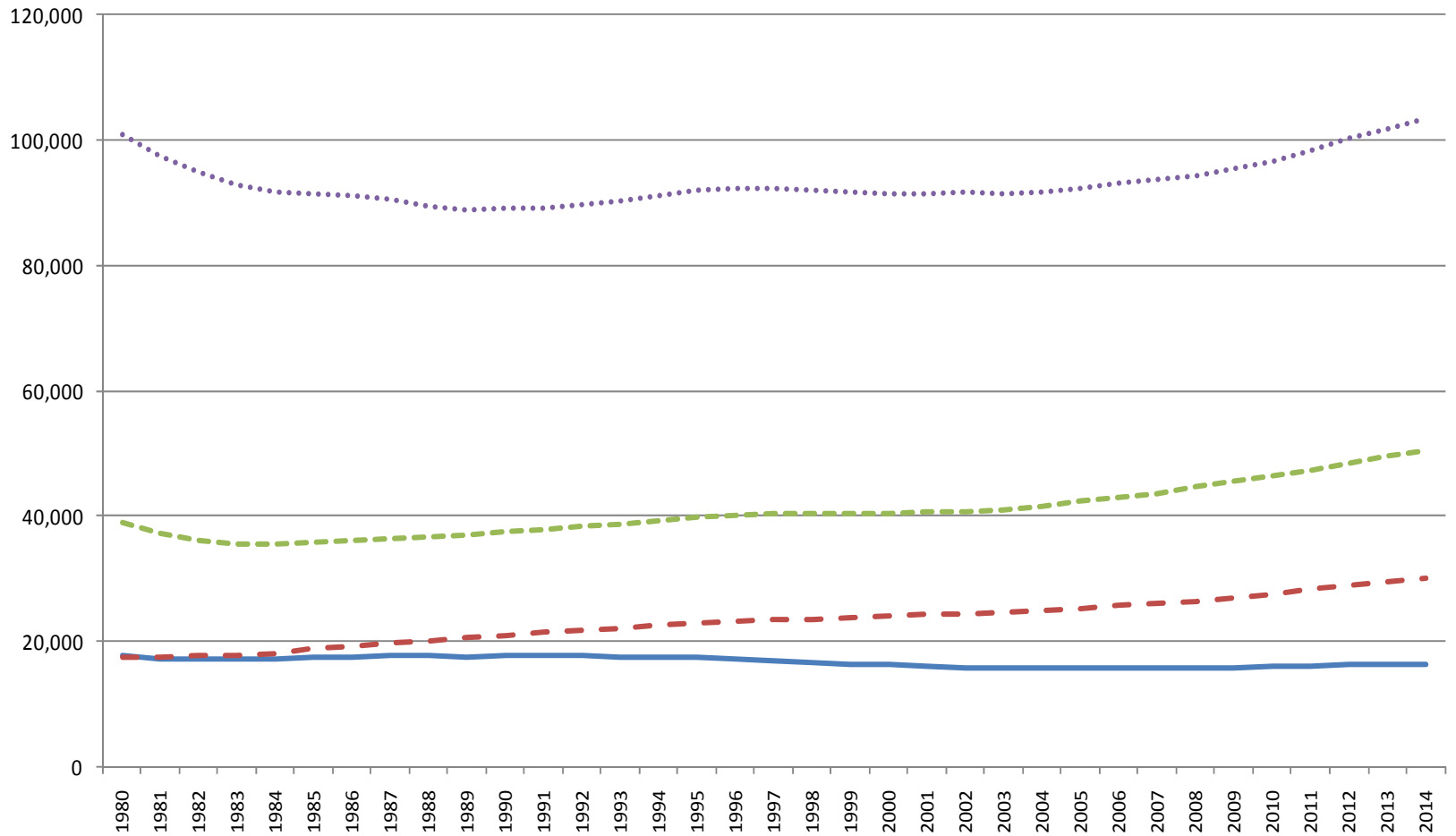
- Comparing the decade of the 2000s to the 1980s, the state's three most populous counties recorded increases in births, while the other groups of counties all recorded declines.
  - Children who were born during the 1980s would have attended school during the last half of the 1980s through the late 1990s. Children born during the 2000s currently are attending school and will be attending through the late 2010s.
- Since the early 1980s, birth-based estimates of school age population have been increasing in Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster Counties.
- Birth-based estimates of the school age population in the nonmetropolitan groups of counties peaked in the early 1990s, then declined until the early 2000s, and have been relatively stable for the rest of the decade.
- It is likely that school enrollments in Nebraska's three most populous county will continue to grow in both absolute number and as a percentage of the state's total enrollment.

### Percentage Change in the Number of Births in Nebraska: 1980s decade Versus 2000s decade



Source: Vital Statistics Reports, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Oct 2010

**Potential School Age (K-12) Population based on 13-Year Periods of Births to Residents of Nebraska  
Metropolitan Areas (Based on Births between 1963 and 2009)**

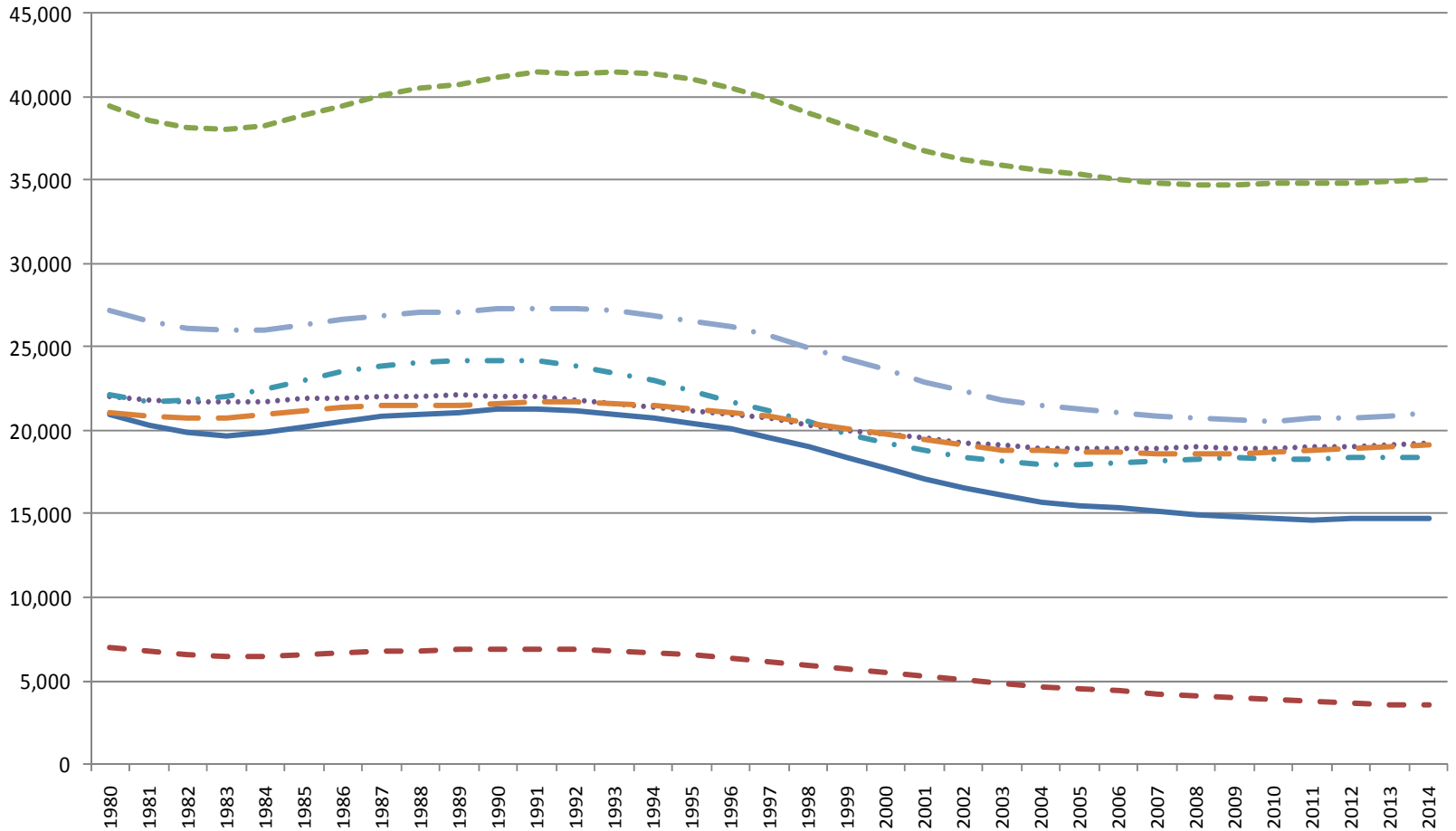


Note: Persons aged 5 to 17 in 1980 were born between 1963 and 1975.

— Exurban Omaha    - - Sarpy Co.    - - - Lancaster Co.    ····· Douglas Co.

Note: Persons aged 5 to 17 in 2014 were born between 1997 and 2009.

**Potential School Age (K-12) Population based on 13-Year Periods of Births to Residents of Nebraska  
Nonmetropolitan Areas (Based on Births between 1963 and 2009)**



Note: Persons aged 5 to 17 in 1980 were born between 1963 and 1975.

- West Nebraska
- North Central Nebraska
- Northeast Nebraska
- Central Nebraska
- Southwest Nebraska
- Southeast Nebraska
- South Central Nebraska

Note: Persons aged 5 to 17 in 1963 were born between 1997 and 2009.

Source: Vital Statistics, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Oct. 2010

# Health and Human Services

- Health Status

- The number of tobacco users in Nebraska generally has been decreasing.
- Nebraska's adult obesity rate has been increasing, and is consistently higher than national rate, but child obesity has been lower than the nation.
- Nearly three-fourths of Nebraska mothers received prenatal care in the 1st trimester, and the infant mortality rate is the lowest in the past five years.

- Poverty

- The poverty rate for Nebraska's children and for female headed families with no husband present are among the lowest in the nation.
- The number of TANF enrollees has been declining steadily.

# Health and Human Services

- Cost
  - Per capita state and per capita local government expenditures for public welfare were toward the middle of the states.
  - The largest share of Medicaid and CHIP expenditures was for the blind and disabled, followed by children, aged, & ADC adult. The largest increases in expenditures were for the blind and disabled and for children.
  - Per eligible person, the highest expenditures were still for the blind and disabled, but were nearly equaled by the expenditures for the aged. Total expenditures for children were the lowest on an eligible person basis.

# Public Safety

- Crime

- Nebraska's total crime rate reached a historic high in 1995, fluctuated in the late 1990's, and then decreased by 30% since 2001. We are below the national average in violent crime, murder and property crime.

- Juvenile

- Juvenile arrests in Nebraska are 44% higher than the national average for property crime, and 17% higher for drug abuse, but less than half the national rate for violent crime.
- Property crime and drug abuse arrests among juveniles is decreasing, however violent crime is over 30% higher since 2005.

# Public Safety

- Recidivism
  - Due to the increase in crime rates in Nebraska in the late 1990's and prison crowding, in 2003 the Legislature created the Community Corrections Council which created various approaches to community-based corrections for non-violent offenders such as drug treatment, behavior modification, and other efforts to facilitate successful reentry into the community.
- Spending
  - Nebraska's per capita state and local spending on public safety is lower than the national average. The largest portion of public safety spending in Nebraska is on police, followed by corrections, fire protection, and protective inspection and regulation.
  - Compared to national totals, Nebraska spends a larger portion of public safety spending on police and fire protection, less on corrections, and the same portion on inspection and regulation.
  - Cost per inmate is lower at community corrections centers. The approach of the Community Corrections Council attempts to move offenders to these facilities which could reduce costs and prison over-crowding.



# Transportation

- **Transportation Infrastructure Quality**
  - Pavement quality for Nebraska's interstate highways is high and has been improving since 2004.
  - The Reason Foundation measures state highway cost effectiveness, which compares highway system performance to state spending per mile for state-controlled roads. Nebraska ranked fifth nationally because of its high quality of pavement and relatively low spending.
  - Nebraska has a higher share of structurally deficient bridges than the nation, which is more common with rural states
- **Safety**
  - Nebraska ranks higher than any other state in the region in railroad accidents.
  - Nebraska's highway traffic fatalities are relatively low. Fatalities involving high blood alcohol levels were lower in Nebraska than the national average. Nebraska safety belt use is at the national average. However, Nebraska does have a higher percentage of fatalities involving large trucks.

# Transportation

- **Spending**

- Per capita state and local spending on highways is higher than the national average; however the state government ranks high in highway cost effectiveness. The high spending is in part explained by diseconomies of scale due to a lower population density.

- **Access**

- Omaha and Lincoln are different than the rest of the state in access to transit. Over half of all transit vehicles in the state are Metro Area Transit (MAT) vehicles (serving the Omaha metropolitan area) or StarTran (serving Lincoln). These two systems have relatively high passenger revenue per mile, and higher average cost per mile.
- Air travel is also heavily concentrated in Omaha, and to a lesser degree in Lincoln. This raises access concerns for those outside of these cities.



# Telecommunications

- Telephone/Cell Phone Penetration
  - Almost all Nebraska households have telephone service (land line or cell phone), but Nebraska still ranks low nationally and last among its neighbors in telephone service. Nearly 1.5 million Nebraskans have a cell phone.
- Internet Access
  - The issue in Nebraska is not access to internet service but rather the average download speed. The vast majority have access to high speed internet service. However, the average download speed ranks in the bottom third nationally.
- Sustainability of Statewide Services
  - One way to make sure advanced telecommunication services such as broadband are available to all Nebraskans is through the Universal Service Fund which was established by the Nebraska Legislature in 1997.
  - In 2009, Nebraska Universal Service Fund expenditures were \$47.5 million.