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Openings & Expansions March
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Category</th>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>Busboom Truck Repair (Expansion)</td>
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<td>Construction, Mining, &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>Scottsbluff II Solar Farm (Opening)</td>
<td>Scottsbluff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor
Openings and expansions listed are a sampling of activity reported for that month. Some activity may have occurred outside the month. If you have an opening or expansion to report, contact us at LMI_NE@nebraska.gov.
The effect that COVID-19 has had on the United States economy is reflected in the number of individuals who filed for unemployment insurance during mid-March and April of 2020. The spike in claims first emerged during the week ending March 21, 2020 (covering March 15-21). During this week, there were 2,920,160 (not seasonally adjusted) initial claims filed nationwide. This constituted an increase of 2,668,744 initial claims over the previous week. The following week saw even more initial unemployment claims being filed. For the week ending March 28, 2020 (March 22-28), there were a revised 6,015,821 (not seasonally adjusted) initial claims filed, an increase of 106% over the previous week.

The last two weeks of March saw nearly as many initial claims filed nationally (8,935,981; not seasonally adjusted) as there were initial claims filed in all of 2019 (11,297,784). Prior to these two weeks, the week with the highest number of initial claims filed in the U.S. was the week ending January 9, 1982, with 1,073,500 initial claims filed. In the last 20 years, the highest nationwide number of weekly initial claims occurred during the week ending January 10, 2009 (956,791).

In Nebraska, the week ending March 21, 2020 (March 15-21) saw 15,666 (not seasonally adjusted) initial claims filed, for an increase of 14,870 more initial claims than in the previous week. The following week, total initial claims for the week ending March 28, 2020 were even higher, with 24,533 initial claims filed during that week — a 57% increase. The last two weeks of March 2020 had almost as many initial claims filed (40,193) in Nebraska as in all of 2019 (41,7272). The state’s previous historical high for weekly initial claims occurred during the week ending on January 9, 2010, at 4,003.
Since COVID-19 began to significantly impact employment both nationally and in Nebraska, the week with the highest number of initial claims filed was the week ending April 4, 2020 (March 29-April 4). Nationally, the week of April 4, 2020 saw 6,211,399 initial claims filed, for an increase of 3% over the prior week. In Nebraska there were 26,539 initial claims filed during the week of April 4, 2020, an increase of 8% from the previous week.

Both nationally and in Nebraska, the week ending April 11, 2020 saw the first over-the-week decrease in initial unemployment claims since the week ending on March 21. Nationwide, the number of initial claims filed during the week of April 11, 2020 (April 5-11) was 4,971,823, a decrease of 20% from the week before. In Nebraska, initial unemployment claims fell to 12,045, a decrease of 24% since the previous week.

Though claims remain at a historically high level, the week of April 18, 2020 (April 12-18) marked the second week of decreasing initial unemployment claims both nationally and in Nebraska. There were 4,267,395 initial unemployment claims in the U.S. for the week ending April 18, 2020, a decrease of 14% from the week before. In Nebraska, initial unemployment claims fell to 12,045, a decrease of 24% since the previous week.

National unemployment claims data can be found at oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/DataDashboard.asp. Nebraska claims data is available at neworks.nebraska.gov/gsipub/index.asp?docid=710.

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**Top Industries by Initial Claims, March 21 - April 25, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>18,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>13,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>12,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>6,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative &amp; Waste Services</td>
<td>5,197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top Occupations by Initial Claims, March 21 - April 25, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waiters &amp; Waitresses</td>
<td>4,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers, Hairstylists, &amp; Cosmetologists</td>
<td>4,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>3,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare Workers</td>
<td>2,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartenders</td>
<td>2,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
<td>2,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Representatives</td>
<td>1,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks, Restaurant</td>
<td>1,920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Chart Source: Nebraska Department of Labor. UI Claims Program
For many Nebraskans, obtaining unemployment benefits has recently become a top priority. After being laid-off or having their work hours drastically cut, some Nebraskans are finding themselves needing to claim unemployment for the very first time. With the COVID-19 pandemic bringing in a huge number of new claimants, many people are experiencing unique and unprecedented challenges.

To put the situation into perspective, before the onset of the pandemic, Nebraska’s largest week for new initial claims in 2020 had been the first week in January, with 1,149. During the week of April 4, the number jumped to 26,539 initial claims, an all-time high for the state. This spike in initial claims constituted an increase of 2,210%. In 2019, there were a total of 41,727 initial claims filed throughout the entire year; there have already been over 100,000 filed since the COVID-19 pandemic began impacting Nebraska.

As another way to look at the increased workload this huge increase in claims entails, imagine that you were a barber, who could typically cut 100 people’s hair per month. Then, next month you had to figure out how to provide 2,210 haircuts. That would likely seem like an almost impossible feat to accomplish. This is the type of massive spike in demand that the Nebraska Department of Labor is currently facing.

Counts of new claims filed in the prior week are released weekly on Thursdays. These numbers can be accessed here. This web page also includes an interactive dashboard displaying data on claims related to COVID-19, and breakdowns by county, industry, and occupations.

Due to the pandemic, unemployment benefits were extended to the self-employed, agricultural workers, and gig-economy workers through the federal CARES Act. These are all groups of workers who normally would not qualify for unemployment benefits. More information about the federal benefits is available here.
As was the case in other states, the Nebraska Department of Labor’s IT systems were updated in order to process this new category of claims. NDOL has been working to streamline the claims process in other ways. Through an Executive Order, Governor Ricketts has waived the normal waiting week and work-search eligibility requirements. More information about these waivers can be found here: dol.nebraska.gov/PressRelease. A separate Executive Order also allowed for accelerated claim processing.

Employers have been utilizing the Short-Time Compensation program, which helps prevent layoffs by allowing businesses to uniformly reduce affected employees’ hours by 10% to 60% while permitting the employees to receive a prorated unemployment benefit.

Information and instructions regarding the CARES Act and various NDOL resources are available at dol.nebraska.gov/Ubenefits and dol.nebraska.gov/covid19. Press releases issued by the Department can be found here: dol.nebraska.gov/PressRelease.

COVID-19 has created tremendous challenges for everyone, here in Nebraska and around the world. While adapting to the crisis continues to involve a number of growing pains, the Nebraska Department of Labor is committed to doing everything in its power to provide Nebraskans with the assistance they need. We’re all in this together.
COVID-19 & Employment Projections

Jodie Meyer, Research Analyst

Through funding from the federal Workforce Information Grant, the Nebraska Department of Labor’s Labor Market Information office produces employment projections, both by industry and occupation, for two time periods: short-term (two years into the future) and long-term (ten years into the future). (1)

Short-term projections are produced annually, while long-term projections are produced biennially in even-numbered years. New short-term projections for 2019-2021 were released on March 6, 2020. NDOL’s most current long-term projections cover 2016-2026, with new data for 2018-2028 scheduled to be released on July 7, 2020.

Employment projections are primarily based on historical data. Every attempt is made to incorporate current and near-future events, such as recent business closings, layoffs, openings, and expansions. However, it is not possible to predict all factors that might influence labor market conditions. Events that take place after the projections base-period ends, or late-breaking announcements concerning new business openings, expansions, closings, or layoffs, are unable to be reflected in the forecasts.

A global pandemic is an example of the sort of unexpected, disruptive event that is typically not factored in when creating employment projections. As a result, the COVID-19 outbreak was not taken into account in the recently released short-term industry and occupational projections for the 2019-2021 time frame. The virus had only begun to emerge in the United States at the time that these data were produced, and not enough information to reliably predict its potential effects was available. The Nebraska Department of Labor has no plan to alter or adjust these projections based on current events at this time.

Short-term projections are produced each year, and new data that would account for the COVID-19 pandemic will not be available until March of 2021.

Long-term projections are produced every-other year, and new projections for 2018-2028 are currently in production and are set to be released on July 7, 2020. It is unknown at this time how COVID-19 will impact this new dataset. One of the inputs into the long-term projections is national data for 2018-2028, produced by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in September of 2019, well before the crisis emerged. At the time of publication, NDOL had not received notice from BLS of any alterations to these national data as a result of the current pandemic.

One of the ways NDOL uses its long-term projections data is to determine an occupation’s demand ranking, which forms the ‘high demand’ aspect of NDOL’s list of H3 (high wage, high skill, and high demand) occupations. (2) This list is updated every two years, using the newly released set of long-term projections. The most recent list, currently being displayed on the H3 website, was compiled in 2018. The next list of H3 occupations is planned for publication in the fall of 2020. Since this list is based upon projections data, the same notes regarding the COVID-19 pandemic apply to the H3 occupations list, as well.
Though the overall impact of COVID-19 on employment conditions in Nebraska and nationwide remains largely unknown and difficult to predict, the basic economic trends underlying the recently released short-term projections and the current long-term projections are likely to remain accurate in most cases. The direction of projected change—whether the number of openings in a particular occupation are expected to grow or decline relative to the base year—seems likely to be reliable despite pandemic-related disruptions. However, the precise amount and rate of change are more likely to be impacted by the virus. This is primarily a concern for the reliability of the short-term projections; the ten-year time frame of the long-term projections should be far enough out as to allow for economic recovery and a return to more normal economic conditions.

Health officials remain uncertain as to how long the COVID-19 pandemic will last, and the situation is constantly changing. There are still numerous unknowns. As time passes and our understanding of the economic ramifications of COVID-19 improves, this knowledge will be applied to future employment projections publications.

Sources:
The Impact of COVID-19 on Current Employment Statistics (CES) Survey Data

Janet Rezac, Research Analyst

The Current Employment Statistics program (CES) is a monthly survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). It is a federal and state cooperative program that provides employment, hours, and earnings estimates for states and metropolitan areas based on payroll records of business establishments.

CES produces detailed estimates by industry for workers on nonfarm payrolls at each geographical level. Individuals are counted at their place of work, rather than at their place of residence. Those appearing on more than one payroll are counted on each payroll.

March 2020 data from the CES establishment survey broadly reflect some of the early effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on labor markets. However, these data cannot precisely quantify the effects of the virus on state and local job markets during the month of March. It is clear, though, that decreases in employment and working hours and increases in unemployment can be ascribed to effects of the illness and efforts to contain the virus. It is important to keep in mind that the March survey reference periods predated many coronavirus-related business and school closures that began during the second half of the month.

In the CES establishment survey, workers who were paid by their employer for all or any part of the pay period including the twelfth of the month are counted as employed, even if they were not actually present at their work locations during this time. Workers who were temporarily or permanently absent from their jobs, and who were not being paid, are not counted as employed, even if they continued to receive benefits, such as health insurance, through an employer. The length of the reference period does vary among survey respondents; about 30% of respondents had a weekly pay period, while just over 40% used a bi-weekly pay period, about 20% semi-monthly, and a small amount monthly.

CES data collection was affected by the coronavirus. In the establishment survey, about one-fifth of the data is generally collected by telephone at four regional data collection centers. Although these centers were closed during the collection period, efforts were made to collect data electronically. The collection rate for the survey, at 66%, was about 9 percentage points lower than average.

In anticipation of issues due to the pandemic, BLS carefully reviewed all estimation and methodological procedures for the establishment survey, which included a review of the data, estimation processes, the application of birth/death models, and seasonal adjustment. No changes were made; the estimation process for the production of the March 2020 establishment survey estimates followed standard protocol. Outlier detection is a usual part of the seasonal adjustment process. Outliers for seasonal adjustment are identified in the establishment survey seasonal adjustment documentation, which is available at www.bls.gov/sae/seasonal-adjustment/home.htm.

The Labor Availability Study (LAS) is a collaborative research project, conducted through a partnership between the Nebraska Departments of Labor and Economic Development, that surveys businesses and households in communities throughout the state to gain insight into employer needs, labor availability, and any potential skills gaps that may affect Nebraska’s labor markets and economy.

Studies are conducted on a rotating basis in communities across Nebraska. The most recent reports were published in 2019 and presented results from surveys conducted in the O’Neill and Valentine areas during the fall of 2018. In June 2019, a statewide report was also published, combining data from surveys conducted throughout the state between 2015 and 2018.

In the fall of 2019, before the spread of COVID-19 began in the United States, surveys were conducted in three regions of the state, encompassing areas of the Panhandle, as well as sections of southwestern and central Nebraska. Data from these surveys will be published in the coming months.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the surveying of new areas is being delayed indefinitely. The process of designing, mailing out, and receiving LAS questionnaires, and analyzing the resulting data, has historically been carried out in cycles spanning roughly half a year, resulting in published reports considered to be current for up to 24 months. As the impact of COVID-19 ripples across the state, it is clear that surveys conducted during or immediately after the pandemic would not be directly comparable to those completed before.

Future labor availability studies will, no doubt, take into consideration the lasting impacts of COVID-19 on Nebraska’s employers and labor force. Contingency planning, telecommuting, and childcare availability, for example, may be of increasing interest, while traditional hiring challenges and skills gaps will continue to be areas of focus.

Previously published Labor Availability Reports are available online at neworks.nebraska.gov/gsipub/index.asp?docid=802.
The chart below shows the five recessions (gray columns) that occurred between 1981 and 2009 and the effect that these recessions had on the unemployment rate for the Nebraska and the United States as a whole. The light blue column shows the effects of the blizzard and floods that occurred in Nebraska in 2019 on the state's unemployment rate.

**Economic Recessions, 1981-2009**

Labor force data for Nebraska first began being published in 1975, just in time to see the effects of the 1980 and 1981-1982 recessions. The duration of the 1980 recession was 6 months, while the 1981-1982 recession lasted 16 months. Both recessions were generally considered to be the result of changes in the monetary policy meant to fight mounting recession. (1)

During the 1980 recession, the national unemployment rate grew from 6.3% in January to 7.8% in July, an increase of 1.5 percentage points. In Nebraska, the rate went from 3.2% to 4.3%, an increase of 1.1 percentage points. The unemployment rate remained at this level until four months after the recession ended. (2)

**U.S. & NE Unemployment Rates (Seasonally Adjusted), 1976 - 2020**

Before the country could fully recover from the recession of 1980, the recession of 1981-1982 began, and then lasted for 16 months. During this time, the unemployment rate in the United States went from 7.2% at the start of the recession to 10.8% by the end, an increase of 3.6 percentage points. Nebraska started this recession with a rate of 4.2%, then climbed to 6.1%, an increase of 1.9 percentage points. (2)

The 1991-1992 recession, which lasted eight months, was understood to be the result of several factors occurring during the 1980s, including a real estate bubble, savings and loan crisis, stock market crash of 1987, and restrictive monetary policy. (1) During this recession, the unemployment rate for the United States grew from 6.8% to 7.4%, an increase of 0.6 percentage points. In Nebraska, the rate changed very little during this recession, going from 2.7% at the start of the recession and ending at 2.8%; however, Nebraska’s unemployment rate stayed at 2.9% for most of 1992 and into the start of 1993. (2)

March of 2002 marked the start of yet another recession, which lasted about eight months. During this recession, the United States rate went from 5.7% to 5.9% unemployment, an increase of 0.2 percentage points. Nebraska’s rate started the recession at 3.7%, dipped to 3.6% for four months, then peaked at 3.7%, but continued to climb until it reached 4.0% five months after the end of the recession. (1; 2)

The Great Recession of 2008-2009, the longest-lasting of the recessions included in this analysis, started in December of 2007 and ended in June of 2009, a total of 18 months. The unemployment rate in the United States started this recession at 5.0%, but had climbed to 9.5% by the end, for an increase of 4.5 percentage points. Nebraska’s rate, which started at 3.0%, peaked at 4.7%, but continued to rise past the end of the recession period, until it reached 4.9% in January of 2010. (1; 2)

The Blizzard & Floods of 2019

Another series of disruptive events that affected Nebraska’s economy were the floods of 2019 (shown as a light blue column in the chart on the previous page). Winter Storm Ulmer reached the Central Plains on March 12, 2019 and western Nebraska the following day, and massive floods followed.

How did these events effect Nebraska’s unemployment rate? The answer is, not much. Looking at Nebraska’s unemployment rates for all of 2019, we can see that the rate started out at 3.0% in January, reached 3.1% in February, and remained at this level until September, then ended the year at 2.9%. (2)

Given the scale of the damage and much-reported business closures, why didn’t these historic floods make a significant impact on Nebraska’s unemployment rate? For the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program (LAUS), workers are considered ‘employed’ if they worked at least one hour during the reference week (which includes the twelfth of the month). This means that the timing of the storms largely prevented their effects from being reflected in the data. People were working when the storms hit, so LAUS counted them as employed.

Some of the workers affected by this weather event and the subsequent flood filed for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA). The number of DUA claims were fairly low and didn’t rise to a high enough number to make adjustments to the sub-state workforce estimates become necessary.
The COVID-19 Pandemic

Now, in 2020, we are facing the COVID-19 pandemic. While economic recessions and natural disasters aren’t precisely comparable to a world-wide pandemic, it is useful to consider earlier crises when trying to understand an ongoing situation. The blizzard and floods of 2019 also provide insight into how the timing of an event and its official declaration as a disaster can affect how unemployment claims are counted.

Can we use this knowledge of past events or the news of business closures due to COVID-19 to predict what may happen to Nebraska’s labor force data in the coming months? The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides the answer in its newly published “COVID-19 Questions and Answers” publication, available on the BLS website: “BLS does not make predictions about labor market data that we produce and distribute.” The FAQ can be found [here](https://www.bls.gov/bls/bls-covid-19-questions-and-answers.htm).

However, while we cannot predict the effects the pandemic may have on Nebraska’s labor force in the coming months, we can look at the increase of 14,065 in seasonally-adjusted unemployment claims that occurred in March of 2020, and attribute some of this rise to the early effects of the virus and efforts to contain it. It is necessary to keep in mind, though, that many business and school closures related to COVID-19 occurred during the second half of the month, after the reference week for LAUS data.

Right now, the Nebraska Department of Labor is in the early stages of gathering the necessary data to produce estimates for April. Once this step is completed, the data will be transmitted to BLS in Washington, D.C., where labor force estimates for every state are produced. After this, states will load, review, edit, analyze, and then produce the sub-state data including data for the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, cities, and all other areas produced by the LAUS program in this state.

The state-level data currently being collected is due to the National office on Friday, May 15, 2020. One week later, on Friday, May 22, Nebraska will release its statewide and sub-state labor force estimates, including March (final) and April (preliminary).

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**Sources:**

As Nebraskans scramble to adjust to social distancing, closure of schools and businesses, and widespread anxiety and uncertainty as result of the emergence of COVID-19, the Nebraska Department of Labor’s Occupational Employment Statistics program (OES) has been working to capture data regarding what is happening around the state, and determine which obstacles OES may face due to disruptions caused by the virus. The OES program is preparing to survey approximately 1,730 businesses throughout Nebraska beginning in May 2020, providing critical data to enable analysis of the circumstances facing workers and businesses alike. OES can also capture wage data by occupation, which should help to shed light on labor market conditions beyond what unemployment figures alone can provide.

The OES program publishes occupation and wage estimates on a quarterly basis, using data collected by the states, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), during the months of May and November of each year. As a result, OES data reflecting the effects of COVID-19 on Nebraska businesses will not be available for publication until May of 2021.

Additionally, OES estimates must adhere to strict guidelines for suppression of personally identifying information in all public releases, meaning it is sometimes impossible to publish data for certain regions or occupation titles, in order to ensure that neither individuals nor business establishments can be identified via OES estimates. For example, if there are only two surgeons working in a particular region of the state, OES would be unable to release wage data for that occupation in that area. Regardless, Nebraska typically does release data for nearly all occupations on a statewide level, as well as estimates of how many workers in a given occupation are employed in each industry sector.

With COVID-19 disrupting normal business operations, however, several aspects of the data collection process may prove to be unusually difficult. Some employers throughout Nebraska were forced to close, resulting in widespread furloughs and layoffs for workers, and forcing other businesses to scramble to reorganize employees and operations in order to adapt to the crisis. As a result, as OES gears up to begin the survey process for its May reports, it may be a challenge to find accurate contact information for each of the roughly 1,600 businesses located throughout Nebraska that must be surveyed. OES staff will likely find it difficult to determine which employers are closed or cut staff, and whether individuals who remain employed are working from their regular work locations or from their homes during the pandemic.

At the time of publication, the guidance to the states from the federal BLS is to keep marching forward, and do everything possible to continue collecting this important data. NDOL is committed to doing everything possible to help Nebraska’s workers and employers alike, and find the most efficient and least disruptive methods for businesses to submit their information to OES during this trying time.
The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program (QCEW) is the single most comprehensive collection of wage and employment data at the county, state, and federal levels, and is able to capture fluctuations during major economic events such as recessions, wildfires, hurricanes, and pandemics. The QCEW program assigns industry, county, and ownership codes to new businesses and verifies employment and wage data for unemployment insurance-covered employers. This procedure continues despite the current crisis. Over time, quarterly workforce records will show changes to Nebraska’s economy caused by COVID-19.

Social Distancing & Data Processing

Many state and federal employees now telework in order to maintain services during the COVID-19 outbreak. Usually, each state uploads its new business accounts to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on a monthly basis. However, in March of 2020, BLS requested that states upload their most current data weekly, in case there was an interruption in federal or state processing caused by the pandemic.

At this time, the Nebraska Department of Labor’s QCEW program is practicing social distancing, with staff working from home or on alternate schedules, but all deadlines continue to be met. Because of quality control measures and updates, BLS-collected data are published about five months after they occur. While these statistics are a tremendous tool to observe the effects of past events like the Great Recession of 2007-2009, they do not generally provide immediate snapshots of the state’s workforce.

Concerns for 2020 Data

QCEW staff are committed to processing employment and wage figures on-time. However, the quality of data depends upon the ability to obtain accurate information from businesses. Without these reports, QCEW analysts cannot determine whether the person who would typically file a particular establishment’s information has failed to respond due to their inability to work, because their workforce has been temporarily laid off, or because the business has permanently closed. Delayed and missing data caused by the virus may make it difficult for QCEW statistics to accurately show business growth, downsizing, or closures in the preliminary data for 2020.

Questions on Economic Impacts

The QCEW team documents new business openings and the total number of establishments by industry. When Nebraska wage and employment numbers are ready for release, they are published on NEworks.nebraska.gov. State data feeds
into national statistics that are used to determine business growth rates and the gross domestic product. In time, records will answer these and other important questions:

• During the COVID-19 pandemic, how were the food service, entertainment, and accommodation industries impacted?
• Was there an expansion in the healthcare service and social assistance sector?
• How did wage and employment data change for small and large businesses?
• Which Nebraska counties and economic regions were hit the hardest?
• How quickly did workforce figures rebound in our state and nation?

While workers and employers throughout the state will want to know how COVID-19 affected Nebraska’s labor markets, BLS points out that “its effects cannot be separated from other influences on the economy.” (2)

Nebraska’s office of Labor Market Information collects QCEW data on over 95% of the state’s workforce. New businesses continue to open weekly, but the rate and range of industries may change during this economically trying time.

Sources:
**Economic Indicators**

*Kermit Spade, Research Analyst*

### Avg. Weekly Earnings

**All Private Employees**

Not Seasonally Adjusted

- **$1,200**
  - NE 10-Year High (Mar. 2020)
  - United States Current 2020

- **$991.06**
  - NE 10-Year High (May 2011)
  - Nebraska Current 2020

- **$907.19**
  - NE 10-Year High (Mar. 2020)
  - Nebraska Current 2020

- **$767.70**
  - NE 10-Year Avg.

- **$700.06**
  - NE 10-Year Low (Jun. 2012)

- **$600**

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**Gas Prices**

Avg. Retail Price per Gallon

(Regular-Grade Unleaded Gasoline)

- **$5.00**
  - NE 10-Year High (May 2011)
  - Nebraska Current 2020

- **$2.86**
  - NE 10-Year Avg.

- **$2.23**
  - United States Current 2020

- **$2.16**
  - NE 10-Year High (Mar. 2020)

- **$1.68**
  - NE 10-Year Low (Feb. 2016)

- **$0**

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**Labor Force Participation Rate**

Seasonally Adjusted

- **80%**
  - NE 10-Year High (Dec. 2009)
  - Nebraska Current 2020

- **70.5%**
  - NE 10-Year Avg.

- **69.1%**
  - NE 10-Year Low (Mar. 2017)

- **62.7%**
  - United States Current 2020

- **50%**

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Average weekly earnings represents the mean pay received by workers for services performed over the course of one week.²

**Data Sources:** [Retrieved: March 2020.]


This figure represents the average price consumers paid at the pump for a gallon of regular-grade, unleaded gasoline during the specified timeframe. The main components affecting the retail price of gasoline are crude oil prices; costs and profits associated with refining, distribution, and marketing; fluctuations in supply and demand; and federal, state, and local taxes.³

**Data Sources:** [Retrieved: March 2020.]


The labor force is comprised of all persons age 16 and over in the civilian, noninstitutional population who are either employed or unemployed but available for work and actively seeking employment. It excludes people doing unpaid homemaking or volunteer work, retired people, and people who are not employed and not actively seeking work. The labor force participation rate measures the labor force as a percentage of the total civilian, noninstitutional population, age 16 and over.¹

**Data Sources:** [Retrieved: March 2020.]

Economic Indicators
Kermit Spade, Research Analyst

Consumer Price Index
12-Month % Change
Not Seasonally Adjusted

-2.5%
-1.1% Midwest 10-Year Low (Apr. 2015)
+1.5% Midwest Region 10-Year Avg.
+1.5% Midwest 10-Year High (Sept. 2011)
+3.9% Midwest 10-Year High (Sept. 2011)
+1.5% United States Current 2020
+1.0% Midwest Region Current 2020
5.0%

All Urban Consumers:
All Items Index 1982–1984 = 100

The consumer price index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by consumers for goods and services. It is used to determine the real purchasing power of consumers’ dollars, and as a measure of inflation.6

Data Sources: [Retrieved: March 2020.]
https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CUUR0200SA0.
https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CPIAUCNS.

Housing Prices
4-Quarter % Change
Seasonally Adjusted

-10%
-3.3% NE 10-Year Low (Q4 2010)
+3.9% Nebraska Current 2020
+5.1% United States Current 2020
+8.6% NE 10-Year High (Q1 2018)

FHFA Purchase-Only Housing Price Index

The housing price index (HPI) measures the movement of single-family house prices, based on purchases involving conventional mortgages purchased or securitized by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. “Four-quarter” change is relative to the same quarter one year earlier. HPI data are often considered useful for estimating housing affordability and projecting future changes in mortgage default rates.5

Data Source: [Retrieved: March 2020.]
https://www.fhfa.gov/DataTools/Downloads/Pages/House-Price-Index-Datasets.aspx#po
Are you interested in detasseling opportunities this season? Contact your local NDOL office to learn more, or visit NEworks.nebraska.gov.

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Labor market information is updated continuously. For the latest data, contact us at 800-876-1377 or email lmi_ne@nebraska.gov.