

5-1976

Review of Applied Urban Research 1976, Vol. 04, No. 05

Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR)
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Recommended Citation

(CPAR), Center for Public Affairs Research, "Review of Applied Urban Research 1976, Vol. 04, No. 05" (1976). *Publications Archives, 1963-2000*. 425.
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REVIEW OF APPLIED URBAN RESEARCH



Center for Applied Urban Research/University of Nebraska at Omaha

Volume 4

May 1976

Number 5

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS, FIRST QUARTER, 1976

REGIONAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY RATES VARY

Available information about employment, construction activity, wages, telephone customers and department store sales indicate economic recovery in most of the 25 urban areas of the Mid-Continent Region. There are, however, wide differences in the relative economic strength of the recovery among the areas.

Five of the 25 areas employed fewer people in nonagricultural wage and salary jobs during the first quarter of 1976 as compared to the first quarter of 1975. The northwest portion of the region — Rapid City, Billings and Casper — saw the greatest percentage growth in nonagricultural wage and salary employment. All but three areas experienced unemployment rates lower than the United States average during the first three months of 1976. However, unemployment rates increased from December 1975 in all areas except Topeka and Kansas City, where rates declined, and St. Joseph and St. Louis, where rates remained the same.¹

Eight of the 25 areas employed fewer people in contract construction industries the first quarter of 1976 than in the same period of 1975, following a national trend throughout 1975² and the first quarter of 1976. This was not the case in all areas, as increased contract construction employment appears to be making significant contributions to economic recovery in many Mid-Continent metropolitan areas, most notably Topeka, Kansas City, St. Joseph and St. Louis.

Authorized building permits, an economic indicator new to this regional report, usually leads conditions in the construction industry from one to three months. Although not available for all areas of the region, available building permit data reveals 100 percent or more increase in the number of units authorized by permits in Des Moines, Waterloo, St. Joseph, Billings, Lincoln and Oklahoma City for the first quarter of the past two years.

¹Part of this increase results from a change in the formula stipulated by the U.S. Labor Department. As revised, it encompasses persons unemployed beyond their period of eligibility for unemployment compensation. All 1976 figures were revised; those prior to 1976 were not.

²As reported in the *Review* of February 1976, average employment in the construction industry during 1975 was 13.5 percent lower than during 1974.

Change in the number of telephone customers is another indicator of general economic well-being. As seen in Table 1, the number of telephone customers increased in all 25 Mid-Continent areas, percentage growth between the first quarter of 1975 and that of 1976 ranging from 7.9 percent in Minneapolis to 1.5 percent in St. Joseph.

Average weekly earnings of United States production workers in the manufacturing industry increased 11 percent over the first quarter of 1975. Production workers in 11 urban areas of the Mid-Continent Region averaged greater income gains than for the United States as a whole, with Omaha's 18.6 and St. Louis' 16.8 percent gains in production worker wages well above the U.S. average. Overall, wage gains exceeded changes in the cost of living, as prices estimated in the Consumer Price Index increased only 6.1 percent from March 1975 to March 1976.³

During the first quarter there was a sharp increase in department store sales in most metropolitan areas in the region. Seven Mid-Continent areas saw increases in department store sales exceeding 21 percent for the first quarter of 1976 over the same period in 1975.⁴ Of Mid-Continent areas, only Great Falls (6.5 percent) experienced an increase in department store sales less than 11 percent over the first quarter one year ago. Retail activity increased throughout the nation, as the 16.7 percent increase in United States department store sales between the first quarter of 1975 and the first quarter of 1976 more than doubled the increase during 1975 as reported in the February 1976 *Review*.

³The Consumer Price Index of all items increased from 157.8 (1967 = 100) in March 1975 to 167.5 in March 1976.

⁴First quarter figures for department store sales are one-month lagged, using December 1975 and January and February 1976 data.

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SMSA ^{a/}	Average Weekly Earnings of Production Workers ^{d/}		Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment ^{e/} (000)		Construction Industry Employment ^{f/} (000)		Unemployment Rate ^{g/}	Building Permits ^{h/}				Department Store Sales ^{i/} (\$000)		Telephone Customers ^{j/} (000)		Air Passengers ^{k/} (000)	
	First Quarter	Percent Change	First Quarter	Percent Change	First Quarter	Percent Change		Residential		Non-Residential		First Quarter	Percent Change	First Quarter	Percent Change	First Quarter	Percent Change
								First Quarter	Percent Change	First Quarter	Percent Change						
Colorado																	
Denver-Boulder	1976 \$209.10		559.3 ^{e/}	22.3 ^{e/}	5.7 ^{e/}	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$ 153,675		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	1975 191.31	9.3	601.5 ^{e/}	34.9 ^{e/}	5.7 ^{e/}	NA	NA	NA	NA	131,034	17.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Iowa																	
Cedar Rapids	1976 232.13		73.4	3.0	6.2	509	91.4	107	25,335	103.1	103.1	102.2 ^{j/}					
	1975 214.37	8.3	72.7	0.9	5.1	266		111	22,671	98.9	4.3	92.0 ^{j/}	11.1				
Des Moines	1976 232.64		155.2	6.1	6.4	51 ^{k/}	121.7	10	37,658	261.6	2.9	267.9					
	1975 215.71	7.9	154.4	-0.5	5.4	23 ^{k/}		9	33,690	254.3		248.4	7.9				
Dubuque	1976 267.81		39.3	1.1	7.9	28 ^{l/}		2	12,990	52.1		15.2					
	1975 243.93	9.9	40.4	-2.8	6.5	33 ^{l/}	-15.1	1	11,562	49.5	5.3	14.7	3.4				
Sioux City	1976 206.27		49.0	2.7	6.2	31		6	16,234	NA		32.2 ^{iv/}					
	1975 186.29	10.7	48.7	0.6	5.8	NA	NA	NA	13,214	22.9		27.7 ^{iv/}	16.3				
Waterloo-Cedar Falls	1976 279.68		56.9	1.9	8.3	151	268.3	16	19,365	32.8		51.3					
	1975 267.98	4.4	57.4	-1.0	5.2	41		6	15,484	25.1	3.1	49.8	3.0				
Kansas																	
Topeka	1976 212.81		75.6	2.4	5.7	118 ^{e/}		18	17,347	127.1 ^{e/}		11.8 ^{e/}					
	1975 188.02	13.2	74.7	1.2	6.3	66 ^{e/}	78.8 ^{e/}	0 ^{e/}	15,335	13.1	5.7 ^{e/}	11.3 ^{e/}	4.4 ^{e/}				
Wichita	1976 217.73		167.2	7.4	6.0	284	61.4	208	35,395	295.6		210.6					
	1975 203.66	6.9	168.5	-0.8	5.3	176		112	28,489	278.7	6.0	189.9	10.9				
Minnesota																	
Duluth-Superior	1976 189.50		57.8	47.2	12.0	6 ^{e/}	200.0 ^{e/}	19 ^{e/}	22,799	90.6 ^{e/}		33.5 ^{e/}					
	1975 178.13	1.3	57.0	45.6	10.9	2 ^{e/}		56 ^{e/}	18,284	88.1 ^{e/}	-2.8 ^{e/}	31.4 ^{e/}	6.7 ^{e/}				
Minneapolis-St. Paul	1976 229.44		887.8	30.6	6.9	31		4	256,120	1,013.2 ^{e/}		1,172.7 ^{e/}					
	1975 208.19	10.2	884.6	29.7	6.9	30	3.3	7	221,088	939.4 ^{e/}	7.9 ^{e/}	1,025.7 ^{e/}	14.3 ^{e/}				
Missouri																	
Kansas City	1976 224.82		542.5	22.7	7.3	NA	NA	NA	127,263	605.2 ^{e/}		643.4 ^{e/}					
	1975 202.35	11.1	532.6	19.9	8.2	NA	NA	NA	103,782	586.8 ^{e/}	3.1 ^{e/}	584.8 ^{e/}	10.0 ^{e/}				
St. Joseph	1976 193.59		35.0	1.5	5.4	56		141	11,820	33.9		NA					
	1975 180.19	7.4	34.1	1.3	6.2	17	229.4	106	10,277	33.4	1.5	NA	NA				
St. Louis	1976 231.74		896.8 ^{e/}	27.4 ^{e/}	8.4 ^{e/}	NA	NA	NA	245,483	NA		NA					
	1975 198.44	16.8	885.2 ^{e/}	22.7 ^{e/}	8.8 ^{e/}	NA	NA	NA	211,551	NA		NA					
Springfield	1976 167.78		70.2	2.4	5.0	NA	NA	NA	20,727	NA		NA					
	1975 154.77	8.4	68.8	2.0	6.4	NA	NA	NA	17,812	NA		NA					
Montana																	
Billings	1976 215.07 ^{l/}		38.7	1.9	7.4	210		25	9,851	38.3		69.3					
	1975 190.66 ^{l/}	12.8	36.7	5.5	7.9	70	200.0	7	7,855	35.9	6.7	54.8	26.5				
Great Falls	1976 215.07 ^{l/}		27.1	1.2	9.4	NA	NA	NA	6,895	NA		NA					
	1975 190.66 ^{l/}	12.8	26.1	3.8	8.9	NA	NA	NA	6,470	NA		NA					
Nebraska																	
Lincoln	1976 186.14		88.3	3.8	5.8	537		88	21,833	141.2		86.3					
	1975 160.86	15.7	86.4	2.2	5.9	181	196.7	34	19,138	134.4	5.1	72.7	18.7				
Omaha	1976 226.00		230.2	9.9	9.0	650		498	59,035	414.7		370.1					
	1975 190.61	18.6	231.2	-0.5	8.4	333	95.2	240	48,690	404.9	2.4	350.8	7.8				
North Dakota																	
Fargo-Moorhead	1976 190.56		51.6	2.1	5.2	NA	NA	NA	13,100	NA		NA					
	1975 178.15	7.0	49.6	2.1	6.0	NA	NA	NA	11,140	NA		NA					
Oklahoma																	
Oklahoma City	1976 193.30		312.0	15.6	7.4	1,013		NA	63,557	587.0		381.7					
	1975 172.65	12.0	309.3	16.0	5.7	457	121.7	NA	57,011	563.8	4.1	335.2	13.9				
Tulsa	1976 210.35		225.7	12.1	6.9	696		296	51,269	370.7		335.9					
	1975 187.10	12.5	221.2	13.3	5.1	427	63.0	144	43,599	352.3	5.2	294.8	13.9				
South Dakota																	
Rapid City	1976 140.50		24.0	1.7	6.8	117		87	NA	24.9		53.3					
	1975 119.12	18.0	22.3	7.6	6.2	65	80.0	83	NA	23.8	4.6	50.1	6.4				
Sioux Falls	1976 221.97		43.9	2.0	5.3	163		84	12,154	72.1		121.2					
	1975 212.50	4.5	43.1	1.9	5.1	103	58.3	67	10,857	68.5	5.3	112.5	7.7				
Wyoming																	
Casper	1976 247.77		24.9	1.7	3.2	88 ^{e/}		28 ^{e/}	NA	45.9 ^{e/}		30.1 ^{e/}					
	1975 212.37	16.7	23.8	4.6	3.8	52 ^{e/}	69.2 ^{e/}	9 ^{e/}	NA	42.3 ^{e/}	8.5 ^{e/}	27.4 ^{e/}	9.9 ^{e/}				
Cheyenne	1976 199.71		23.4	1.9	4.4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA					
	1975 197.00	1.4	22.7	3.1	5.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA					
United States	1976 201.13		77,150	3,055	8.5	NA	NA	NA	17,201,000	NA		NA					
	1975 181.19	11.0	75,919	3,251	9.1	NA	NA	NA	14,743,000	NA		NA					

^{a/}All except Rapid City, Casper and Cheyenne are Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. These three areas are included to give representation to all states in the region.

^{b/}Employment is reported by place of work in Iowa, Kansas and Montana. All other areas report employment by place of residence.

^{c/}Number of employees in contract construction.

^{d/}Includes arrivals and departures for all areas except Billings, which reports only arrivals.

^{e/}January and February data only.

^{f/}Average weekly income for production workers in the State of Montana.

^{g/}Source: U. S. Department of Labor.

^{h/}Compiled from local sources by the Chamber of Commerce.

^{i/}Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. Quarter figures based on December 1975, January and February, 1976.

^{j/}Source: Cedar Rapids Municipal Airport.

^{k/}Source: City of Des Moines.

^{l/}Source: City of Dubuque.

^{iv/}Source: Sioux City Municipal Airport.

^{v/}Source: Wichita State University Center for Business and Economic Research.

^{vi/}Includes Duluth only.

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OMAHA CONTINUES ITS ECONOMIC UPTURN

Moving into the Bicentennial year of the nation, Omaha's economy continues an economic upturn. The following findings are based upon economic indicators for the first quarter of 1976 compiled by the Center.

Omaha continues to appeal to outsiders as a place to live and work, as indicated by the fact that 747 new householders arrived and only 251 left the city during the quarter (Table 2).

The construction industry has led the upward movement of Omaha's economy, as measured by building permits, mortgages and employment in contract construction. The total number of

single-family building permits increased by 385 during the first quarter of 1976 from a record low of 156 for the first quarter of 1975, a 150 percent increase within one year. In terms of total value, single-family permits increased 173 percent, from \$1.68 million during the first quarter of 1975 to \$4.57 million for the first quarter of 1976. Seventy-three percent of the increase was in Southwest Omaha. There was a large increase in residential improvement permits as well, 120 percent from the first quarter of 1975 in numbers and 329 percent in dollar value. New mortgages increased by 84 percent. Employment in

contract construction was 11 percent higher than one year ago, while total non-agricultural wage and salary employment was down by .5 percent (Table 1). Average weekly earnings of production workers was up 19 percent.

The demand for new automobiles, as measured by new auto and truck registrations, went from 2,573 during the first quarter of 1975 to 2,987 during the first quarter of 1976, a 20 percent increase (Table 2). The 21 percent increase in department store sales also indicates a sharp rise in consumer demand (Table 1).

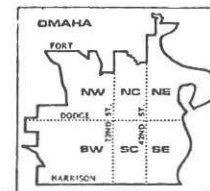
The number of bankruptcy cases leveled off from a record high of 234 during the first quarter of 1975 to 138 during the

first quarter of 1976 (Table 2). The number of unemployment insurance claimants declined from a high of 5,697 persons during the first quarter of 1975 to 3,576 during the fourth quarter of 1975 (Table 2).

The 9.0 percent unemployment rate is disturbing. However, unemployment is one of the "lagging indicators" in a recovery period. The unemployment rate has a historical tendency to recover more slowly than other measures of economic activity after a recession has bottomed out. The question that remains is when, if at all, will the unemployment rate return to its pre-recession level between three and five percent?

Omaha Intra-Urban Demographic & Economic Indicators¹

TABLE 2



Item	Northeast	Southeast	Northcentral	Southcentral	Northwest	Southwest	Total
Subarea							
Population Change							
Births, 4th Quarter, 1975	294	239	272	147	160	233	1,345
Deaths, 4th Quarter, 1975	224	210	129	73	54	75	765
Net Natural Increase: 4th Quarter, 1975	70	29	143	74	106	158	580
4th Quarter, 1974	96	13	136	49	144	270	708
Change: 4th Quarter, 1975—4th Quarter, 1974	- 26	+ 16	+ 7	+ 25	- 38	- 112	- 128
New Householders							
From Same Subarea, 1st Quarter, 1976	134	81	68	20	17	26	346
From Other Subarea, 1st Quarter, 1976	45	40	64	28	46	50	273
New Arrivals, 1st Quarter, 1976	122	136	127	32	94	236	747
From Address Unknown, 1st Quarter, 1976	141	131	121	31	50	92	566
Total New Householders: 1st Quarter, 1976	442	388	380	111	207	404	1,932
1st Quarter, 1975	716	634	478	233	268	454	2,783
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	- 274	- 246	- 98	- 122	- 61	- 50	- 851
Construction Activity							
Single-Family Building Permits							
4th Quarter, 1975	2	0	10	14	114	232	372
1st Quarter, 1976	0	2	11	9	87	276	385
1st Quarter, 1975	0	0	2	6	41	107	156
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 2	+ 2	+ 1	- 5	- 27	+ 44	+ 13
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	0	+ 2	+ 9	+ 3	+ 46	+ 169	+ 229
Total Value of Single-Family Building Permits							
4th Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	22.6	0	102.0	131.1	1,242.6	2,684.3	4,182.6
1st Quarter, 1976 (\$1,000)	0	22.4	194.4	101.1	930.8	3,323.3	4,572.0
1st Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	0	0	17.3	41.9	401.3	1,215.6	1,676.1
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 22.6	+ 22.4	+ 92.4	- 30.0	- 311.8	+ 639.0	+ 389.4
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	0	+ 22.4	+ 177.1	+ 59.2	+ 529.5	+ 2,107.7	+ 2,895.9
Single-Family Demolition Permit							
4th Quarter, 1975	54	40	3	5	3	2	107
1st Quarter, 1976	28	21	5	3	0	0	57
1st Quarter, 1975	32	5	7	0	2	2	48
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 26	- 19	+ 2	- 2	- 3	- 2	- 50
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	- 4	+ 16	- 2	+ 3	- 2	- 2	+ 9
Net Change in Single-Family Housing Units (Building Permits—Demolition Permits)							
4th Quarter, 1975	- 52	- 40	+ 7	+ 9	+ 111	+ 230	+ 285
1st Quarter, 1976	- 28	- 19	+ 6	+ 6	+ 87	+ 276	+ 328
1st Quarter, 1975	- 32	- 5	- 5	+ 6	+ 39	+ 105	+ 108
Multi-Family Building Permits (Units)							
4th Quarter, 1975	0	0	10	0	0	4	14
1st Quarter, 1976	0	0	0	10	2	6	18
1st Quarter, 1975	0	0	0	0	2	8	10
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	0	0	- 10	+ 10	+ 2	+ 2	+ 4
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	0	0	0	+ 10	0	- 2	+ 8
Total Value of Multi-Family Building Permits							
4th Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	0	0	70.2	0	0	59.4	129.7
1st Quarter, 1976 (\$1,000)	0	0	0	43.0	23.8	97.2	164.0
1st Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	0	0	0	0	19.1	131.7	150.8
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	0	0	- 70.2	+ 43.0	+ 23.8	+ 37.8	+ 34.3
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	0	0	0	+ 43.0	+ 4.7	- 34.5	+ 13.2

Item	Subarea						Total
	Northeast	Southeast	Northcentral	Southcentral	Northwest	Southwest	
Multi-Family Demolition Permits (Units)							
4th Quarter, 1975	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
1st Quarter, 1976	16	2	0	0	0	0	18
1st Quarter, 1975	0	14	0	0	0	0	14
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	+ 8	+ 2	0	0	0	0	+ 10
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 16	- 12	0	0	0	0	+ 4
Net Change in Multi-Family Housing Units (Building Permits—Demolition Permits)							
4th Quarter, 1975	- 8	0	+ 10	0	0	+ 4	+ 6
1st Quarter, 1976	- 16	- 2	0	+ 10	+ 2	+ 6	0
1st Quarter, 1975	0	- 14	0	0	+ 2	+ 8	- 4
Residential Improvement Permits (Units)							
4th Quarter, 1975	78	98	133	77	86	129	601
1st Quarter, 1976	80	108	95	70	89	162	604
1st Quarter, 1975	43	67	39	40	30	55	274
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	+ 2	+ 10	- 38	- 7	+ 3	+ 33	+ 3
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 37	+ 41	+ 56	+ 30	+ 59	+ 107	+ 330
Total Value of Residential Improvement Permits							
4th Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	91.6	100.7	269.6	154.5	97.8	271.9	986.1
1st Quarter, 1976 (\$1,000)	138.4	184.9	144.7	92.8	161.9	788.8	1,511.5
1st Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	65.5	79.1	42.8	43.4	46.1	75.7	352.6
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	+ 46.8	+ 84.2	- 124.9	- 61.7	+ 64.1	+ 516.9	+ 525.4
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 72.9	+ 105.8	+ 101.9	+ 49.4	+ 115.8	+ 713.1	+ 1,158.9
Non-Residential Building Permits (Units)							
4th Quarter, 1975	31	64	16	30	46	81	268
1st Quarter, 1976	15	39	11	19	13	54	151
1st Quarter, 1975	22	32	10	18	17	30	129
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 16	25	- 5	- 11	- 33	- 27	- 117
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	- 7	+ 7	+ 1	+ 1	- 4	+ 24	+ 22
Total Value of Non-Residential Building Permits							
4th Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	5,265.9	6,205.0	503.6	4,398.7	1,920.0	3,633.4	21,926.6
1st Quarter, 1976 (\$1,000)	626.1	3,143.8	444.8	817.0	214.5	2,675.1	7,921.3
1st Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	807.0	608.0	67.9	539.8	293.7	533.4	2,849.8
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 4,639.8	- 3,061.2	- 58.8	3,581.7	- 1,705.5	- 958.3	- 14,005.3
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	- 180.9	+ 2,535.8	+ 376.9	+ 277.2	- 79.2	+ 2,141.7	+ 5,071.5
Non-Housing Demolition Permits (Units)							
4th Quarter, 1975	25	33	4	3	1	0	66
1st Quarter, 1976	24	21	6	3	4	3	61
1st Quarter, 1975	16	21	5	0	2	2	46
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 1	- 12	+ 2	0	+ 3	+ 3	- 5
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 8	0	+ 1	3	+ 2	+ 1	+ 15
Mortgages ²							
Number of Mortgages							
4th Quarter, 1975	256	229	335	201	382	849	2,252
1st Quarter, 1976	197	194	291	150	307	928	2,067
1st Quarter, 1975	135	98	176	96	193	426	1,124
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 59	- 35	- 44	- 51	- 75	+ 79	- 17
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 62	+ 96	+ 115	+ 54	+ 114	+ 502	+ 943
Dollar Amount of Mortgages							
4th Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	5,877.6	10,111.3	9,455.0	5,911.4	15,453.6	34,532.7	81,341.6
1st Quarter, 1976 (\$1,000)	4,199.5	11,666.2	5,882.2	4,882.7	15,355.2	32,734.5	74,720.3
1st Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	2,799.3	7,357.1	3,507.2	103,265.0	6,662.7	24,729.8	148,321.1
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 1,678.1	+ 1,554.9	- 3,572.8	- 1,028.7	- 98.4	- 1,799.2	- 6,621.3
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 1,400.2	+ 4,309.1	+ 2,375.0	- 98,382.3	+ 8,682.5	+ 8,004.7	- 73,600.8
Bankruptcy Cases							
4th Quarter, 1975	44	31	28	4	22	21	150
1st Quarter, 1976	35	20	30	9	22	22	138
1st Quarter, 1975	62	68	38	17	21	28	234
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 9	- 11	+ 2	+ 5	0	+ 1	- 12
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	- 27	- 48	- 8	- 8	+ 1	- 6	- 96
New Auto Registration							
Number of New Cars							
4th Quarter, 1975	245	265	307	222	364	623	2,026
1st Quarter, 1976	316	402	409	332	538	990	2,987
1st Quarter, 1975	298	386	320	312	462	795	2,573
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	+ 71	+ 137	+ 102	+ 110	+ 174	+ 367	+ 961
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 18	+ 16	+ 89	+ 20	+ 76	+ 195	+ 414
Number of New Trucks							
4th Quarter, 1975	51	74	54	54	51	119	406
1st Quarter, 1976	74	114	82	83	103	130	586
1st Quarter, 1975	51	95	44	47	70	115	422
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	+ 23	+ 40	+ 28	+ 29	+ 49	+ 11	+ 180
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 23	+ 19	+ 38	+ 36	+ 33	+ 15	+ 134

Item	Northeast	Southeast	Subarea			Northwest	Southwest	Total
			Northcentral	Southcentral				
Mechanic Liens ³								
Number of Mechanic Liens								
4th Quarter, 1975	21	28	27	12	18	54	160	
1st Quarter, 1976	27	17	25	1	23	27	120	
1st Quarter, 1975	12	18	14	6	36	66	152	
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	+ 6	- 11	- 2	- 11	+ 5	- 27	- 40	
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 15	- 1	+ 11	- 5	- 13	- 39	- 32	
Dollar Amount of Mechanic Liens								
4th Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	44.0	46.1	55.1	22.9	31.1	495.5	694.7	
1st Quarter, 1976 (\$1,000)	57.9	27.4	53.4	0.2	59.0	93.7	291.6	
1st Quarter, 1975 (\$1,000)	17.7	26.7	22.1	7.4	428.1	183.3	685.3	
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	+ 13.9	- 18.7	- 1.7	- 22.7	+ 27.9	- 401.8	- 403.1	
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 40.2	+ 0.7	+ 31.3	- 7.2	- 369.1	- 89.8	- 393.7	
Unemployment Insurance Claimants								
Total Number of Claimants								
3rd Quarter, 1975	1,237	859	533	344	476	570	4,019	
4th Quarter, 1975	1,089	772	546	283	441	445	3,576	
4th Quarter, 1974	1,314	893	587	297	466	482	4,039	
Change: 4th Quarter, 1975—3rd Quarter, 1975	- 148	- 87	+ 13	- 61	- 35	- 125	- 443	
4th Quarter, 1975—4th Quarter, 1974	- 225	- 121	- 41	- 14	- 25	- 37	- 463	
U. S. Postal Service								
Number of Families Served								
4th Quarter, 1975	37,291	29,979	21,250	12,090	21,826	23,406	145,842	
1st Quarter, 1976	37,241	30,223	21,253	12,086	21,887	23,563	146,258	
1st Quarter, 1975	37,207	29,982	21,225	12,101	21,057	23,443	145,015	
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 50	+ 249	+ 3	- 4	+ 61	+ 157	+ 416	
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 34	+ 246	+ 28	- 15	+ 830	+ 120	+ 1,243	
Number of Business Served								
4th Quarter, 1975	5,570	1,792	896	750	1,687	1,920	12,615	
1st Quarter, 1976	5,572	1,794	896	756	1,697	1,935	12,550	
1st Quarter, 1975	5,636	1,848	890	692	1,616	1,592	12,274	
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	+ 2	+ 2	0	+ 6	+ 10	+ 15	+ 35	
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	- 64	- 54	+ 6	+ 64	+ 81	+ 343	+ 376	
Public Utilities								
Number of Water Hookups								
4th Quarter, 1975	11	16	14	26	109	276	452	
1st Quarter, 1976	10	21	15	12	105	219	382	
1st Quarter, 1975	5	13	4	10	26	83	141	
Change: 1st Quarter, 1976—4th Quarter, 1975	- 1	+ 5	+ 1	- 14	- 4	- 57	- 70	
1st Quarter, 1976—1st Quarter, 1975	+ 5	+ 8	+ 11	+ 2	+ 79	+ 136	+ 241	

¹This work in part was financed by a grant from the Economic Development Council of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. The data were compiled by CAUR (Dr. Paul S.T. Lee, Robert Henningsen, Patrick L. Brophy, and Frank Flawicz) from data in the *Daily Record* and data made available by (1) Douglas County Health Department, Division of Vital Statistics, (2) City of Omaha, Office of Permits and Inspections, and (3) Nebraska's Department of Labor, Division of Employment.

²Totals do not include 168 mortgages (\$7,925,484) for the first quarter 1976, 69 mortgages (\$7,425,453) for the first quarter 1975, and 140 mortgages (\$8,898,930) for the fourth quarter 1975 not classifiable by subareas.

³Totals do not include 6 mechanic liens (\$17,917) for the first quarter 1976, 1 mechanic lien (\$3,529) for the first quarter 1975 and 18 mechanic liens (\$65,872) for the fourth quarter 1975 not classifiable by subareas.

THE SOUTH OMAHA BUSINESS DISTRICT: A SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION

Public opinion about the South Omaha business district was the target of CAUR telephone interviews with 225 South Omaha residents on March 23 and 24, 1976. Area residents were asked 1) to characterize the amount of their household non-grocery shopping in the South Omaha business district as "almost all," "some," or "none"; 2) to rate overall shopping conditions in the South Omaha business district in one of five categories from "excellent" to "very poor"; and 3) to characterize the amount of their household grocery shopping in the South Omaha business district as "almost all," "some" or "none." Their answers are summarized in Table 1.

Respondents were also asked their reasons for shopping or not shopping in the South Omaha business district, the characteristics they liked most and least about it, and suggestions for improvements.

For items other than groceries, nearly half (45 percent) the South Omaha residents do almost all of their shopping in the South Omaha business district. As a group, those under 25

years of age tend to shop less and those over 65 years of age tend to shop more in South Omaha. In all, more than three-fourths of the area's residents shop at least occasionally in the South Omaha business district.

Among residents who shop almost always in the South Omaha district, more than one of three gave the area's convenience as their reason; another frequent reason was liking the stores or a particular store in the area. Those who shop only "some" in the South Omaha district most often said they don't shop more there because the area and its establishments lack variety. A preference for shopping centers was cited by many who categorized the frequency of their South Omaha district shopping as "some" or "none."

A majority of South Omaha residents rated overall shopping conditions in the South Omaha business district as either excellent or good; only eight percent categorized conditions as "poor" or "very poor."

For grocery shopping, 69 percent of South Omaha's resi-

dents do "almost all" their shopping in the South Omaha business district. This pattern was even stronger among those who have no car, 84 percent of whom almost always shop in the South Omaha business district for groceries.

The characteristic most liked by nearly half (46 percent) of all respondents was that South Omaha is near their homes. More than one-fourth (28 percent) of all respondents cited a favorite store as the attraction for them.

The characteristics liked least were the lack of nighttime

shopping hours, the deteriorating condition of some buildings in the area and the difficulty in parking. Some individuals registered complaints about the types of stores in the area and the prices, often adding that there are too few retail stores now. Asked for suggestions for improving conditions in the area, 68 percent responded that the South Omaha business district needs more retail establishments, often mentioning particular types such as clothing stores, specialty shops and full-line department stores.

TABLE 1
THE SOUTH OMAHA BUSINESS DISTRICT: A SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION

	How much shopping for non-grocery items does your household do in the South Omaha business district?			Overall, would you rate shopping conditions in the South Omaha business district as:						How much grocery shopping does your household do in the South Omaha business district?			All Respondents
	Almost All	Some	None	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion	Almost All	Some	None	
	Percent												Number
Total Respondents	45	35	20	16	45	29	5	3	2	69	17	14	225
Age:													
Under 25	29	32	39	0	50	32	4	0	14	64	18	18	28
25-64	45	40	15	15	42	32	6	5	0	65	21	14	144
65 or over	55	23	22	25	51	19	2	0	3	83	6	11	53
No response													0
Income:													
Under \$4,000	58	26	16	24	46	24	4	2	0	80	14	6	50
\$4,000-\$8,000	56	21	23	20	53	27	0	0	0	79	9	12	34
\$8,000-\$12,000	41	37	22	9	48	30	7	4	2	67	15	18	46
\$12,000-\$16,000	32	46	22	11	38	33	8	5	5	54	30	16	37
\$16,000-\$20,000	24	53	23	12	41	29	0	12	6	71	12	17	17
\$20,000-\$25,000	25	50	25	0	50	50	0	0	0	25	25	50	4
Over \$25,000	33	67	0	0	67	0	33	0	0	67	33	0	3
No response													34
Own Auto:													
Yes	42	38	20	14	46	28	6	3	3	65	18	17	182
No	58	21	21	24	42	30	0	2	2	84	11	5	43
No response													0

REVIEW OF APPLIED URBAN RESEARCH

Vol. 4

May 1976

No. 5

Published monthly by the Center for Applied Urban Research as a public service and mailed free upon request in Nebraska. Annual subscription rate outside Nebraska \$3.60. The views and opinions expressed in the *Review* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Material in this report may be reproduced with proper credit.

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