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Center for Applied Urban Research (CAUR)  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

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CENTER FOR APPLIED URBAN RESEARCH

# Review

Volume 1  
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## URBAN CONDITIONS RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED

Grant awards for CAUR's Urban Conditions Research Program have been announced.

Each grant will support research to address specific policy issues in one of the following areas: Economic and social conditions, social services delivery, minority conditions, and small town conditions, according to Chris Reed, CAUR associate director.

After reviewing 19 proposals from 12 departments and 6 colleges within the university, CAUR administrators and faculty chose the following proposals:

### From UNO

- The College of Arts and Sciences: Professors Nancy Langworthy, Mary Ann Lamanna, and Michael Lacy, "Teenage Decisionmaking and Unwed Pregnancy in Douglas County, Nebraska," an investigation of the decision process underlying the sexual behavior of unmarried adolescent females.

- The College of Public Affairs and Community Service: Professors Lorie Fridell and Cassia Spohn, "Omaha Crime Survey," a study designed to produce annual estimates of the incidence of crime and its effects in the Omaha metropolitan area.

(continued on back cover)



Photo courtesy Chris Young/Omaha World-Herald

Sens. Bernice Labedz of Omaha and R. Wiley Remmers of Auburn listen to debate at Nebraska legislative issues symposium.

## Legislative Symposium Explores Education, Rural Problems

Addressing the 1987 Nebraska Legislative Issues Symposium, former U.S. Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland said education is a crucial ingredient for successful rural development.

Bergland, executive vice president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, spoke at the December 13-15

symposium, the first of its kind in Nebraska, held at the Peter Kiewit Conference Center in Omaha.

The symposium, attended by 41 of the 49 state legislators, explored issues and options for solving the state's education and rural community development

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## DATA BYTES

### County Business Patterns Aids Economic Studies

In 1985, only 1.5 percent of the business establishments in Nebraska reported 100 or more employees, according to County Business Patterns (CBP).

CBP is an annual series of publications and computer tapes produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, and contains data about establishments, employment, and payroll for the nation and all states and counties.

Data are tabulated by detailed kinds of businesses for most economic divisions within the economy, such as, agricultural services, mining, construction, manufacturing, transportation, wholesale and retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and services. CBP excludes government employees, railroad employees, and self-employed persons.

The data are useful for analyzing the industrial structure of regions, studying basic economics of small areas, and serving other government and business needs.

For information about County Business Patterns and other information services, contact Tim Himberger at 554-8311.

### Legislative Symposium (continued from front cover)

problems through panels, workshops, and presentations by over 66 legislative and academic participants.

Besides Bergland, the symposium featured speakers Alan Rosenthal, director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University; Michael Kirst, professor, Stanford University; Ken Deavers, director, Agriculture and Rural Economy Division, Economic Research Service, USDA; and Frank Newman, president, Education Commission of the States.

CAUR and Nebraska's Legislative Research Division organized the event under the direction of Senator Bernice Labeledz, Chair of the Unicameral's Executive Board.

### Smith Joins State's Industry Targeting Committee

CAUR Director Russell Smith is serving on a committee formed by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) to help in the development of short- and long-term industry targeting programs.

Industrial development and targeting was identified as the top priority for the state at the 1987 Governor's Business Development Summit in July. DED established the committee of Nebraskans to implement recommendations outlined at the summit.

The committee is working to develop a screening model for evaluating U.S. and Nebraska industries to aid in the start-up, attraction, and expansion of business in Nebraska.

For more information, contact Russell Smith at 554-8311.

### NLIS Proceedings Being Developed

Proceedings of the 1987 Nebraska Legislative Issues Symposium are being developed. The proceedings, a joint venture of CAUR and the Legislative Research Division of the Unicameral's Legislative Council, will feature the main issues explored at the symposium--education policy and rural community revitalization.

The proceedings will include edited versions of the featured addresses, summaries of the presentations and workgroup discussions, and copies of the briefing reports that presented background information on key issues. (See back cover.)

The proceedings will be distributed through the Legisla-

tive Research Division and should be available in late March.

For more information, call Russell Smith at 554-8311.

### Workshop Examines Input-Output User's Manual

CAUR and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce sponsored a workshop on December 21 to provide area industrial developers and business economists an orientation to a recently completed input-output study of the Omaha MSA economy and an accompanying *User's Manual*.

About 60 economists, industrial developers, and policymakers in government and private industry attended the workshop. The *User's Manual* will help assess the effects of business changes, such as the loss of a firm or creation of jobs by a company, on the Omaha economy.

Insurance, services (including education and hospitals), and railroads are the top industries in Omaha, based on export of goods and services outside the region, according to the study.

For more information about this study or a copy of the *User's Manual*, call CAUR at 554-8311.

### FOCUS UPDATE

The first issue of *Focus* shows how CAUR's targeting data base can be used to assist local and regional economic development efforts, according to Jerry Deichert, senior research associate and author of the first issue.

His study reveals, among other things, that Nebraska outpaced the nation in three of the five fastest growing industries (computer programming and software services, miscellaneous computer related services, and miscellaneous services) between 1977 and 1984.

"In two of the industries, Nebraska appears to be a net (continued on back cover)

## SURVEYING THE SCENE

### OPS Gets High Marks, Survey Reveals

Omaha's public schools received a grade of A or B by 62 percent of respondents to a recent survey developed by CAUR and faculty from UNO's College of Education.

The study was commissioned by the Community Committee on Marketing the Omaha Public Schools. It was part of an effort to develop recommendations to Superintendent Norbert Schuerman on improving public relations and communication within OPS and the community.

According to the community committee report and chairperson, Joe T. McCartney, "The survey conducted by CAUR contained several important suggestions for new services to the public."

Among the committee's major recommendations were expanding

efforts to provide information about activities in schools and complicated issues in the district, and offering more services to all taxpayers, particularly those without children in school.

The CAUR survey polled samples of parents with children in OPS schools and taxpayers without children in OPS schools. Most parents said too little was being spent to educate children, while nearly 50 percent of taxpayers without children in OPS schools said enough money was being spent.

Both groups agreed that Omaha Public Schools could be improved through higher quality teachers, higher salaries for teachers, smaller classes, improved discipline, and more parent involvement.

For more information about this survey or a copy of the report, call CAUR at 554-8311.

## SPOTLIGHT ON--



### Katherine Kasten

The survey was conducted to determine how Nebraskans' attitudes have changed since LB662 (the bill that called for increasing taxes and consolidating some schools) was defeated in 1986.

Students in a graduate course she teaches defined the purpose of the survey, wrote the questions, and conducted about one-third of the telephone interviews (Midwest Survey, Inc. did the rest).

"I got involved in public school finance against my will," Katherine Kasten, UNO professor of educational administration, said. "But after I got into it, I found it very interesting."

Kasten, who recently completed a statewide survey for CAUR on attitudes toward public financing of education, came to UNO in 1982 to teach school finance, school business management, and organizational theory.

"It was a very good experience for the students. The students found out that people don't understand how schools are organized or where revenue comes from or how it is distributed. Major information sessions are needed in Nebraska to inform the public and to explain the necessity for changing the present school system, and thereby get public support. We found out that most Nebraskans would approve of a tax

## NEBRASKANS GRADE SCHOOLS HIGHLY

A recent survey reveals that Nebraskans give high grades to their local schools. Sixty-nine percent of the survey respondents graded the schools in their communities either A or B, compared with 43 percent of respondents to a recent national poll.

The joint CAUR-Department of Educational Administration survey, conducted by Katherine Kasten, also showed that Nebraskans would support an increase in state taxes to aid schools, particularly if the increase were tied to improved school quality or performance.

For more information about this survey, contact Kasten at 554-3442 or CAUR at 554-8311.

increase if it were tied to improved quality of education, but they opposed consolidation," she said.

Kasten has written several articles on education and coauthored a chapter on financing public schools in *Nebraska Policy Choices: 1987*. "It was a way of pulling together what I had been teaching and thinking about for 4 years and to formalize it," she said.

Kasten grew up in Cedar Falls, Iowa (where her parents still run a corner grocery) and taught school and served as a teacher negotiator before completing her Ph.D. in 1982 at the University of Wisconsin.

Because of her busy schedule, she doesn't have much leisure time, but lists playing the autoharp among her many interests.

"I occasionally play in the privacy of my apartment. I have a 20-year-old cat, Mitten, who is deaf and forgiving of what I do," she said.



## NLIS BRIEFING REPORTS DEVELOPED

Faculty from the UNO and UNL campuses developed the following briefing reports for the Nebraska Legislative Issues Symposium:

**Do We Know What Promotes Quality Local Education?** by Katherine Kasten, UNO associate professor;

**Information Needed to Promote Educational Quality,** Miles T. Bryant, assistant professor, UNL;

**Public School Finance in Nebraska and Selected States,** C. Cale Hudson, UNL professor;

**Recent Trends in Rural Community Development Policy,** Russell L. Smith, director, CAUR;

**A Profile of the Unique Characteristics of Rural Areas and Communities in America,** Russell L. Smith;

**Selected Characteristics of Nebraska's Urban and Rural Areas,** Jerome A. Deichert, senior research associate, CAUR;

**State Targeting of Rural Community Development Assis-**

**tance,** B.J. Reed, chairperson, UNO Department of Public Administration;

**Focusing on Readiness and Capacity in Targeting State Assistance to Rural Communities,** B.J. Reed; and

**Growth Center Strategies for Rural Community Development,** Jerome A. Deichert and Russell L. Smith.

### Focus Update

(continued from page 2)  
exporter to the nation and the region. However, Nebraska seems to be importing computer programming and software services," Deichert said.

For more information about this data base, call Jerry Deichert. To have your name added to the mailing list for *Focus*, call June Turner at 554-8311.

### Urban Conditions

(continued from front cover)

Professors Julie Horney and Ineke Marshall, "**Criminal Careers Study**," a study to determine the prevalence of various criminal behaviors and to attempt a classification of criminal career

types (offenders who commit serious offenses with high frequency over extended periods of time).

- The College of Business Administration: Professors David Ambrose and Louis Pol, "**Population Growth of Small Towns and Rural Areas as Influenced by the Interstate Highway System**," a study to assess the dynamics and influence of the interstate highway system for purposes of predicting future population growth in the state.

### From UNL

- The College of Home Economics: Professor E. Raedene Combs, "**A Holistic Approach to Understanding the Problems and Possibilities of Independent Living for the Elderly in Nebraska**," a study to investigate the interaction between housing and service needs of the elderly, and housing and service provisions within Knox, Saline, and Douglas Counties.

Additional grants for FY 1987-88 will be awarded soon, following revisions of project proposals and budgets.

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