

September 12, 2011 – For Immediate Release
Contact: David Drozd, Research Coordinator
Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska Omaha
Phone: 402-554-2132; email: ddrozd@unomaha.edu

Domestic Migration Improvements Widespread among Nebraska Counties

Recession leads to a net gain of residents from other states for many Nebraska counties

Bullet point summary of highlights from this release (full release follows):

- During 2009, the following counties had their best state-to-state net migration in the past 10 years, and each had a net gain of persons from other states: Colfax, Custer, Dakota, Dodge, Hall, Holt, Platte, and Saline counties
 - Platte County's net gain stood out, as it was relatively sizeable (+325) and a change from net outmigrations that occurred in the prior 9 years.
 - Many counties that had improved net state-to-state migrations in 2009 also had a relatively large Hispanic population. Gains occurred from places hard-hit in the economic and housing downturn (Arizona, Florida, California, etc.).
- Large, medium, and small Nebraska counties in terms of population all had improvements in their state-to-state migration flows from 2008 to 2009.
 - Gains were relatively strong for Nebraska's nonmetropolitan counties that had a city of 10,000 people or more (micropolitan core counties).
 - Improvements for Nebraska's rural area provide stability and some hope for reversing what in some areas is a decades-long outmigration trend.
- Migration gains tend to stem from both more residents coming to Nebraska from other states as well as fewer Nebraskans leaving for other U.S. locations. Nebraska's 10 micropolitan core counties as a group had their highest level of immigrants and lowest level of outmigrants in the last 10 years; metro counties had their smallest outflow while the rest of the state had its highest inflow from other states in the past 10 years.
- The information comes from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), who compares where households file their tax returns from one year to the next. The Center for Public Affairs Research has analyzed these IRS records for counties over a 10-year period for which they were readily accessible.

Domestic Migration Improvements Widespread among Nebraska Counties

Recession leads to a net gain of residents from other states for many Nebraska counties

Omaha – Recently released migration statistics showed that Nebraska had its best net domestic person movement in 13 years in 2009, including a net gain of residents from Arizona and Florida for the first time in over 20 years of available data. A new analysis of county-specific figures shows that many Nebraska counties had a net immigration of persons with other states, deviating from a decade-long pattern of net domestic outmigration.

Colfax, Custer, Dakota, Dodge, Hall, Holt, Platte, and Saline counties all had state-to-state net immigration from 2008 to 2009, and the level in 2009 was the highest in 10 years. A net gain of 325 people from other states for Platte County stood out, as it had experienced net outmigration in each of the preceding nine years. Likewise, net gains from other states of about 100 people in both Dakota and Holt counties stood in contrast to nine straight years of net outmigration. Hall and Colfax counties each netted more than 200 residents from other U.S. locations and have had net immigration each of the last three years, with the level improving in each annual period. The net immigration into Dodge County broke a string of eight straight years of having more residents leave for other states than move in from different states.

Other Nebraska counties in 2009 had their second best net state-to-state movement in the past 10 years. Sarpy County gained about 270 residents from other states, slightly below a similar increase in the prior year. Madison County broke a string of six straight outmigration years, which included a decline of nearly 800 people after a food processing plant closed in 2006. Scotts Bluff County only netted 2 people from other states in 2009, but that broke a string of eight straight outmigration years in which the average loss was about 185 people.

The state's most populous counties of Douglas and Lancaster also both had their second best net state-to-state movement in the last decade. While both counties still had a net outmigration to other states, the level of decline vastly improved. Douglas County almost turned positive, and the net loss of 33 people was small in comparison to an average loss of over 1,000 in the prior nine years. Lancaster County often has large annual state-to-state net outmigration as people frequently leave the state after finishing college, but the 2009 decline of about 750 persons was only about half the average loss of about 1,300 in the nine preceding years.

Combining Nebraska's counties into groups shows that large, medium, and small counties in terms of population have participated in the domestic migration improvement. The state's nine metropolitan counties, ten core micropolitan counties (nonmetro counties containing a city of at least 10,000 people) and the remaining 74 counties as a group each had their best net state-to-state movement in the past 10 years. The micropolitan counties turned an outmigration of nearly 600 in 2008 into an immigration of over 400 in 2009, the first net immigration in 10 years. Net migration has improved in metro counties each of the past three years while the rest of the state has witnessed improvements for the last five years. The trend of improvements for the rest of the state provides some hope for an eventual turnaround to outmigration losses that have plagued rural Nebraska for decades. Typical losses to other U.S. locations for the "rest of the state" during the 2000s have averaged about 700 per year but now are only 100 in 2009, providing some relative stability to parts of the state that have tended to experience population loss.

Nebraska's net domestic migration has improved by about 2,100 persons each of the past two years. Among county categories, metropolitan and core micropolitan counties each contributed about 45 percent of the gains, with increases in the rest of the state accounting for the remaining 10 percent of the overall change. Given that the state's metro counties contain three times the population of the micropolitan core counties, the equal shares of contribution to the migration gains show the relative strength of improvements in micropolitan areas. Each of Nebraska's ten regional centers besides Lincoln County showed an improvement in their state-to-state migration from 2008 to 2009.

While the migration data which are provided by the IRS based upon where households file their tax returns from one year to the next do not contain any statistics on the characteristics of the movers, it is worth noting that many of the counties with the best net migration levels in 2009 or best improvements from 2008 to 2009 occurred in areas with a relatively large Hispanic population (Platte, Hall, Dodge, Madison, Scotts Bluff, Dakota, Colfax, and Saline counties). It is likely that some people came to Nebraska for jobs, as the state has maintained a relatively low unemployment rate throughout the past several years of economic turmoil. The housing and construction industries, which employ a relatively high percentage of Hispanics, were among the first and hardest-hit industries in the economic downturn, especially in southwestern U.S states and in Florida.

The 2009 data show 233 immigrants came from Miami Dade County, Florida into Hall, Platte, Madison, and Colfax counties (112, 73, 26, and 22 respectively) after

not having data released in 2008 due to not meeting the minimum IRS movement threshold. Likewise 94 immigrants came into Dawson, Platte, and Colfax counties (38, 29, and 27 respectively) from Los Angeles County, California in 2009 while 2008 information was suppressed for not meeting the confidentiality-related minimum movement threshold of ten county-to-county moves.

A detailed look at Nebraska's first net immigration from Arizona shows that Nebraska's largest counties generally had both more immigrants from and fewer outmigrants to the Grand Canyon state's Maricopa County. Like the prior nine years, Douglas County had a net outflow to this Phoenix-area county in 2009, but the level was reduced as there were 42 more immigrants and 27 fewer outmigrants to Maricopa County. Lancaster County had a net gain (+36) from Maricopa County for the first time in ten years, with the improvement stemming from 9 more immigrants and 75 fewer outmigrants. Immigrants from Maricopa County to Scotts Bluff County soared from 32 in 2008 to 73 in 2009 while at the same time a small drop in outmigrants from Scotts Bluff also helped lead to the best ever net change (+54) between these two counties. Hall County had its smallest number of outmigrants to Maricopa County in 2009, leading to its second best net immigration from the Phoenix area.

Other notable county specific changes include:

- Adams County had its second best net state-to-state movement in 2009, but the net level of movement was still an outmigration (-21).
- Gage County experienced its eighth state-to-state outmigration in the past ten years, with the decline of 28 being similar to the prior nine-year average.
- One county not participating in the migration improvement was Cass County (Plattsmouth). After having its best state-to-state immigration in 2008 of 64 people, it reverted to an outmigration of 201 in 2009. While Cass County has now lost net residents to other states in eight of the last 10 years, the outmigration in 2009 was the largest over that time period.
- Improvements in metro counties stemmed from the smallest outflow of Nebraskans to other states while micropolitan core counties had both their smallest outflow and largest inflow from other locations in the past 10 years. The rest of the state improved by having its best level of immigrants from other states in the last 10 years. (see page 8 of this document for details)

Please note – This is the second release in a series of summaries on the migration topic that the Center for Public Affairs Research will provide. Future releases coming about every two or three weeks will include similar IRS tax filing statistics

for interstate moves among Nebraska counties, a profile of the characteristics of movers (age, marital status, etc.), and an update for the 2010 year to annual information on migration for those with Bachelor's Degrees or more education ("Brain Gain/Drain").

The Center for Public Affairs Research is an analytical community outreach unit of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service at the University of Nebraska Omaha. The Center leads the Nebraska State Data Center, compiling and disseminating various data for Nebraska and its communities that add to policy-making discussions.

A broader description of the data follows. A few tables and graphs are provided below for reference. Additional information or charts for specific counties would be available upon request.

**Migration into and out of Nebraska counties based on IRS tax filing data:
New 2009 information in addition to historic annual data since 2000**

Description of the Data

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) compiles tax return data each year. The IRS matches returns from one year to the next utilizing the social security number of the primary filer on the return. The new data for 2009 were released in late July 2011. {This represents a delay of about 9 months versus prior releases – the 2008 data was released in October 2009.} The 2009 data should be interpreted as tax returns filed in the spring of 2009 (April 2009) for tax year 2008. The comparison is made between where people filed in the current year versus their address when filing in the prior year (spring of 2008 for the 2007 tax year). The data are limited to tax filers, which tends to under-represent certain groups, such as new immigrants, the elderly, and the poor.

Technically, the data include tax filings through September of the reference year. While most individuals file in the spring of the year, extensions are granted to some individuals. The IRS website states the following "The data used to produce migration data products come from individual income tax returns filed prior to late September of each calendar year and represent between 95 and 98 percent of total annual filings."¹ Thus, the data represent nearly all tax returns filed, although matches are not always made between one year and the next. For example, spouses filing jointly in one year but separately in the other would not provide a unique match for both individuals based on the methods that IRS takes to match the returns. However, even with these limitations IRS documents state "The county-to-county migration data may be the largest dataset that tracks movement of both households and people from county to county".² The county to county movement is aggregated to show moves within a state and between states.

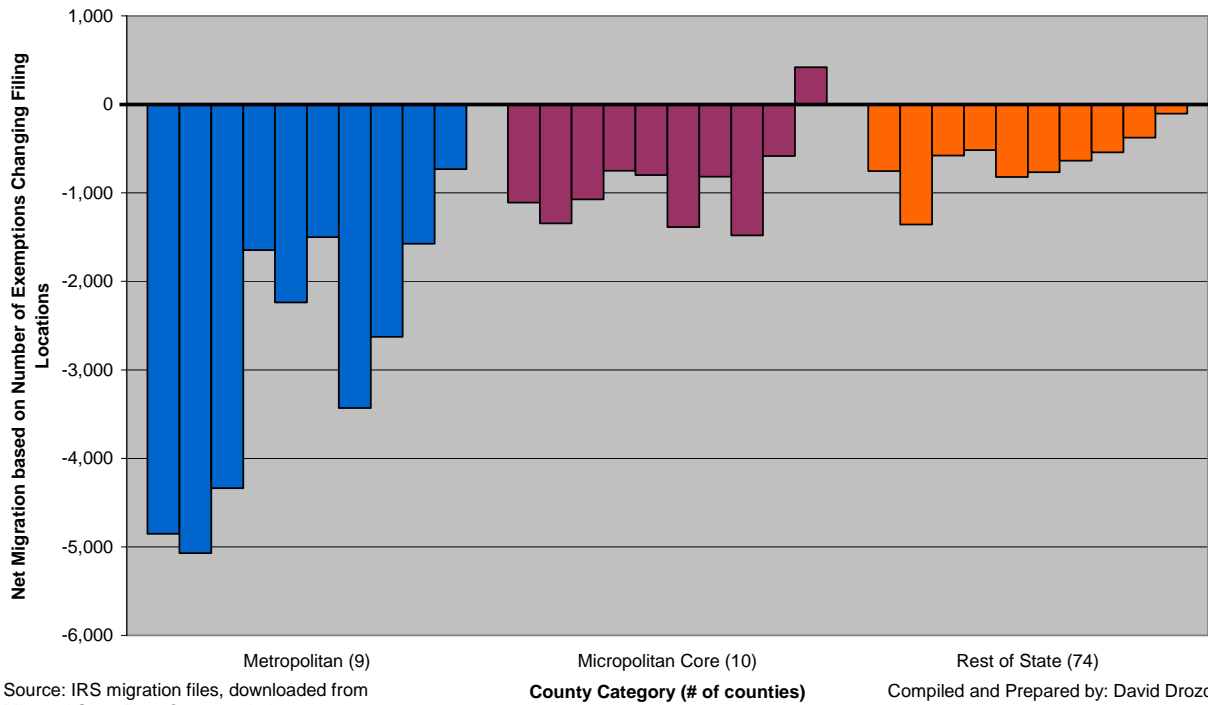
¹ <http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/article/0,,id=212683,00.html> accessed October 21, 2009

² http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-soi/99gross_update.doc accessed October 21, 2009

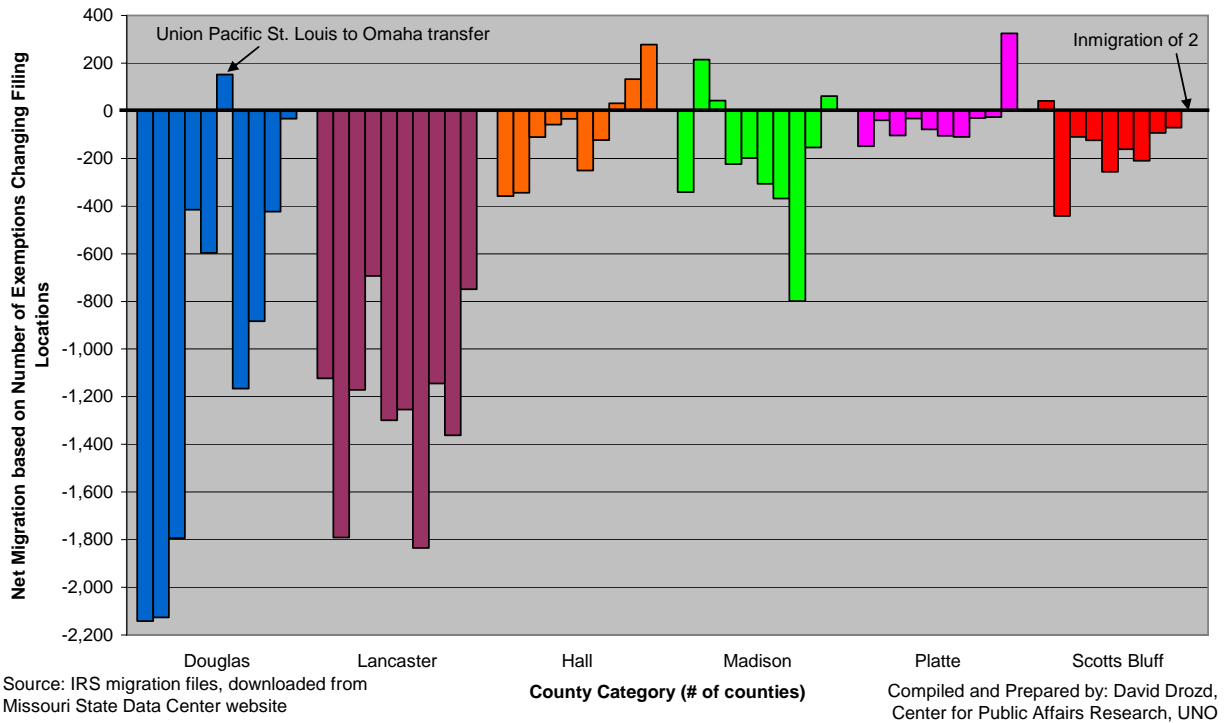
The IRS utilizes a threshold of having at least 10 returns change residence between two specific counties in order for information to be released.

This data series has annual information readily available since 2000. The information through 2009 represents ten comparable annual periods. The variable migration is measured by compares the number of exemptions that moved, which is a proxy for the total number of persons (total migrating population). The data do not indicate any demographics about the movers such as age, gender or race, so there is no way to know exactly who is moving (i.e. college or early working-age persons, retirees, mid-career married couples with kids, etc.). Thus, the information provides a general sense of migration levels and whether Nebraska (or another state) and its counties are having a net inflow or outflow of persons with other specific areas on an annual basis.

Nebraska State-to-State Net Migration by County Type Based on the Last 10 Years of IRS Tax Filing Data (1999-00 to 2008-09)



State-to-State Net Migration for Specific Nebraska Counties Based on the Last 10 Years of IRS Tax Filing Data (1999-00 to 2008-09)



Inflow, Outflow, and Net Migration with Other States by County Type for Nebraska: 2000 to 2009

Source: IRS county-to-county migration flow files

Compiled and Prepared by: David Drozd, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research on September 9, 2011

Note: Orange shading shows the best level of movement for Nebraska in the 10 years of information.

Year	Inflow from other states	Outflow of Nebraskans to other states	Net Migration
Nebraska			
2000	39,265	45,980	-6,715
2001	37,871	45,643	-7,772
2002	38,298	44,288	-5,990
2003	37,756	40,671	-2,915
2004	37,434	41,292	-3,858
2005	38,282	41,935	-3,653
2006	37,638	42,520	-4,882
2007	37,117	41,769	-4,652
2008	39,315	41,848	-2,533
2009	39,865	40,282	-417
Metropolitan counties (9)			
2000	25,340	30,192	-4,852
2001	24,500	29,570	-5,070
2002	24,337	28,673	-4,336
2003	24,642	26,289	-1,647
2004	24,758	26,996	-2,238
2005	26,060	27,561	-1,501
2006	24,877	28,308	-3,431
2007	24,627	27,255	-2,628
2008	25,734	27,308	-1,574
2009	25,513	26,245	-732
Micropolitan core counties (10)			
2000	7,004	8,113	-1,109
2001	6,770	8,115	-1,345
2002	7,051	8,125	-1,074
2003	6,680	7,430	-750
2004	6,448	7,248	-800
2005	6,195	7,581	-1,386
2006	6,565	7,381	-816
2007	6,211	7,692	-1,481
2008	6,704	7,287	-583
2009	7,344	6,925	419
Rest of the state (74)			
2000	6,921	7,675	-754
2001	6,601	7,958	-1,357
2002	6,910	7,490	-580
2003	6,434	6,952	-518
2004	6,228	7,048	-820
2005	6,027	6,793	-766
2006	6,196	6,831	-635
2007	6,279	6,822	-543
2008	6,877	7,253	-376
2009	7,008	7,112	-104

Comparison of County-to-County Migrations with Maricopa County, Arizona

Source: IRS county-to-county migration flow files

Compiled and Prepared by: David Drozd, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research

Note: ** shows suppressed data due to the minimum threshold of 10 returns changing between the counties not being met. Net migration cells with ** mean that either the inflow or the outflow had less than 10 returns so the net migration calculation could not be made. The "Big 3" counties are Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy counties. Orange shading shows the best level of movement in the 10 years of information while gold shading shows the second-best level.

Inmigrants	Douglas	Lancaster	Sarpy	Hall	Scotts Bluff	Buffalo	Dodge	Dakota	"Big 3" sum
2000	214	101	63	56	**	**	**	**	378
2001	217	101	63	22	**	**	**	**	381
2002	224	126	60	19	18	**	**	**	410
2003	201	130	44	**	**	**	**	**	375
2004	225	102	63	28	19	**	**	**	390
2005	296	85	44	**	**	**	**	**	425
2006	325	94	74	23	25	17	**	**	493
2007	232	110	70	46	**	**	**	**	412
2008	302	157	91	**	32	**	20	**	550
2009	344	166	78	30	73	**	**	20	588
Outmigrants									
2000	538	199	122	46	43	34	39	**	859
2001	539	177	106	48	32	22	31	35	822
2002	481	191	119	34	32	30	30	25	791
2003	373	164	62	44	42	35	21	**	599
2004	467	174	97	26	13	27	26	**	738
2005	526	221	141	22	23	28	23	**	888
2006	393	241	98	38	45	29	15	**	732
2007	381	197	80	27	17	21	26	**	658
2008	398	205	110	**	25	23	14	**	713
2009	371	130	91	17	19	**	**	**	592
Net Migration									
2000	-324	-98	-59	10	**	**	**	**	-481
2001	-322	-76	-43	-26	**	**	**	**	-441
2002	-257	-65	-59	-15	-14	**	**	**	-381
2003	-172	-34	-18	**	**	**	**	**	-224
2004	-242	-72	-34	2	6	**	**	**	-348
2005	-230	-136	-97	**	**	**	**	**	-463
2006	-68	-147	-24	-15	-20	-12	**	**	-239
2007	-149	-87	-10	19	**	**	**	**	-246
2008	-96	-48	-19	**	7	**	6	**	-163
2009	-27	36	-13	13	54	**	**	**	-4

Annual Net Migration with other U.S. States for Various Nebraska Counties: 1999-00 to 2008-09

Source: IRS migration flow files; downloaded from Missouri State Data Center website

Note: these data show changes with other states only - they do not include migration with other Nebraska counties.

Category	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Total	Change	Change	Change
												from 06-07 to 07-08	from 07-08 to 08-09	from 00-01 to 08-09
Nebraska	-6,715	-7,772	-5,990	-2,915	-3,858	-3,653	-4,882	-4,652	-2,533	-417	-43,387	2,119	2,116	7,355
Metropolitan	-4,852	-5,070	-4,336	-1,647	-2,238	-1,501	-3,431	-2,628	-1,574	-732	-27,277	1,054	842	4,338
Cass	-187	-134	-139	-40	11	-53	-123	-146	64	-201	-948	210	-265	-67
Dakota	-246	-200	-296	-204	-335	-398	-78	-129	-164	101	-1,949	-35	265	301
Dixon	-88	-7	-38	-34	13	-29	-34	-50	-13	-20	-300	37	-7	-13
Douglas	-2,141	-2,126	-1,793	-415	-597	152	-1,166	-883	-423	-33	-9,425	460	390	2,093
Lancaster	-1,123	-1,791	-1,171	-693	-1,299	-1,254	-1,835	-1,145	-1,362	-749	-12,422	-217	613	1,042
Sarpy	-955	-704	-731	-178	-39	55	-73	-264	332	269	-2,288	596	-63	973
Saunders	9	-12	-95	-14	-20	0	-84	-30	15	-21	-252	45	-36	-9
Seward	-45	-91	-42	-74	20	-24	-21	25	24	-51	-279	-1	-75	40
Washington	-76	-5	-31	5	8	50	-17	-6	-47	-27	-146	-41	20	-22
Micropolitan Core	-1,109	-1,345	-1,074	-750	-800	-1,386	-816	-1,481	-583	419	-9,344	898	1,002	1,764
Adams	-45	-152	-179	-104	-103	-24	12	-100	-95	-21	-811	5	74	131
Buffalo	-277	-313	-167	-157	-61	-169	-154	-135	-202	-148	-1,783	-67	54	165
Dawson	42	4	-140	-8	-137	-162	116	-152	-102	3	-536	50	105	-1
Dodge	40	-91	-86	-116	-90	-98	-55	-111	-25	74	-558	86	99	165
Gage	-66	-40	-15	-28	60	-131	-18	42	-79	-28	-303	-121	51	12
Hall	-358	-344	-110	-58	-34	-251	-123	31	133	278	-836	102	145	622
Lincoln	5	-142	-207	101	97	23	92	-134	39	-127	-253	173	-166	15
Madison	-342	215	43	-224	-198	-307	-368	-799	-154	61	-2,073	645	215	-154
Platte	-149	-40	-104	-32	-78	-105	-109	-30	-27	325	-349	3	352	365
Scotts Bluff	41	-442	-109	-124	-256	-162	-209	-93	-71	2	-1,423	22	73	444
Rest of State*	-754	-1,357	-580	-518	-820	-766	-635	-543	-376	-104	-6,349	167	272	1,253
Box Butte	-170	-215	-58	-132	-170	-95	-73	44	39	-145	-975	-5	-184	70
Colfax	16	9	11	-17	-10	-77	-55	10	57	215	159	47	158	206
Custer	30	-9	-9	39	-42	-9	4	10	-47	80	47	-57	127	89
Holt	-40	-32	-60	-26	-27	-12	-53	-64	-2	99	-217	62	101	131
Otoe	82	-37	-44	-95	64	-8	39	6	12	-147	-128	6	-159	-110
Red Willow	52	-14	-13	27	92	-3	-68	-1	-15	-7	50	-14	8	7
Saline	3	-10	57	42	5	-29	-7	-31	22	98	150	53	76	108
York	-35	-61	-112	-65	-82	-47	28	-23	-56	-30	-483	-33	26	31
8 county total	-62	-369	-228	-227	-170	-280	-185	-49	10	163	-1,397	59	153	532

* Rest of State refers to Nebraska's 74 other counties; the specific counties listed had 10,000+ residents in 2010.