

December 14, 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

Migration within Nebraska Improved for Douglas and Rural Counties

Suburban housing slowdown and improved farm economy likely key factors in the change

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

- During 2009, Douglas County posted its highest level of net immigration from other Nebraska counties in the past 10 years. The net gain of nearly 850 persons stood in stark contrast to a net loss of over 800 just two years earlier in 2007.
 - Much of the improvement for Douglas County stemmed from changes with Sarpy County – while Douglas County still lost people on net to Sarpy County, the loss in 2009 was less than 400 persons, after being more than a thousand people in each of the prior nine years.
 - Sarpy County, along with Cass, Gage, and Seward Counties, had their worst level of net migration from other Nebraska counties in 2009. Each of these counties is located near a metropolitan center but had relatively fewer people moving there in 2009, an apparent effect of the credit crunch and housing construction slowdown.
- Nebraska has 9 counties that are part of metropolitan areas and an additional 10 counties that are nonmetropolitan regional centers each containing a city of at least 10,000 residents. Nebraska's remaining 74 predominately rural counties as a group had their best net migration level in the past 10 years during 2009. While these more rural counties still lost net residents to other Nebraska areas, the loss of about 1,500 persons in 2009 was considerably smaller than losses of about 2,400 per year earlier in the decade.
 - The mostly rural counties improved via a reduction in outmigrants. The rural economy has benefited from relatively high commodity prices and a smaller rise in unemployment rates, becoming more attractive economically and at least temporarily slowing the decades-long outmigration trend.
- 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.

Migration within Nebraska Improved for Douglas and Rural Counties

Suburban housing slowdown and improved farm economy likely key factors in the change

Omaha – Recently released migration statistics showed that Nebraska counties at both ends of the population size spectrum performed relatively better in 2009 than in the recent past. Douglas County, the state’s most populous county, as well as 74 predominately rural counties combined as a group each had their best net person movement from other locations within the state during the past 10 years.

Douglas County gained nearly 850 residents from other Nebraska locations in 2009, a stark contrast to a loss of over 800 just two years prior in 2007. Douglas County has traditionally lost residents on net to other Nebraska counties, with the only other year in the past ten having net immigration being 2004, when the Gallup Organization moved its headquarters from Lincoln to Omaha.

The gains in Douglas County stemmed from improvements with nearby counties. Douglas County typically has a large outmigration to Sarpy County, but the loss in 2009 was only about 400 persons versus being over a thousand people in each of the prior nine years. Douglas County both pulled in more Sarpy County residents (nearly 5,500 in 2009 versus an average of 4,300 in the prior nine years) as well as had fewer people leave to reside in Sarpy County. Likewise, Douglas County usually has net outmigration to Cass County, but in 2009 Douglas County netted 25 people from Cass County, breaking a nine-year string of outmigration, during which the average loss was more than 100 people per year.

Sarpy and Cass Counties, along with Gage and Seward Counties, each had their worst net migration from other Nebraska locations during 2009. All of these counties are located near a metropolitan center but had relatively fewer people moving there in 2009, an apparent effect of the credit crunch and housing construction slowdown. Sarpy County still gained more than 800 people from other Nebraska counties, but that amount was only half of the average gain in the preceding nine years (1,657).

Other Nebraska counties with at least 10,000 residents had their second best net movement in the past ten years in 2009. Hall County gained 80 residents from other Nebraska counties, below an increase of about 180 in the prior year but those were the only times in the past ten years that had net immigration. Scotts Bluff County gained an even 100 persons from other Nebraska counties, slightly below a

similar increase in the prior year. Colfax, Dawson, and Red Willow Counties each had a net outmigration to other Nebraska areas, but the amount of loss was the second smallest in the past 10 years. While the migration data which are provided by the Internal Revenue Service 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 state's counties performing relatively well in 2009 shared a common characteristic of having a sizeable Hispanic/Latino presence located within the county.

Combining Nebraska's counties into groups shows diverging patterns within the state. Nebraska's nine metropolitan counties typically have a large net immigration as they did in 2009. However, the net gain in 2009 of about 1,900 was 700 less than the average gain over the preceding nine years. Nebraska's ten nonmetropolitan regional centers that have a city of at least 10,000 residents have tended to lose population to other Nebraska places. The level of loss has improved recently, with the average loss in the last five years being less than 400 persons per year versus more than 700 persons annually in the first five years of the decade. Nebraska's remaining 74 mostly rural counties have tended to have large outmigrations to other Nebraska counties. However, the loss in 2009 of about 1,500 was markedly improved from annual losses of about 2,400 earlier in the decade. The 74 mainly rural counties as a group improved their net migration level from 2008 to 2009 (+759), while both Nebraska's metropolitan counties and the ten nonmetropolitan regional centers declined (-462 and -297 respectively).

Improvements in the predominately rural counties stemmed from a reduction in outmigrants. About 600 fewer people left these counties for other Nebraska areas in 2009, while immigrants to the mostly rural counties remained about the same as other recent years. The rural economy has been boosted by relatively higher commodity prices and a relatively small rise in unemployment rates compared to Nebraska's metropolitan areas. These improving economic competitiveness factors appear to be at least temporarily slowing the decades-long outmigration trend from rural Nebraska. The relatively strong agricultural economy that existed in 2010 and 2011 bodes well for rural migration changes since 2009.

Other notable county specific changes include:

- Lincoln County had its worst intrastate movement in the past ten years in 2009 (-67). Four years earlier in 2005 Lincoln County had a net gain of nearly 250 people from other Nebraska locations.

- Lancaster and York Counties each had their 2nd worst net migration in the last ten years in 2009. Lancaster County still gained more than 350 people from other Nebraska locations, but that level has now declined three straight years and is much smaller than the average gain during the prior nine years of +870.
- Red Willow County provides a good example of the trend of migration improvement. While Red Willow County has lost residents to other Nebraska areas each of the past ten years, the loss averaged 92 persons per year during the first eight years before slowing to losses of only 7 and 22 people in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

Douglas County had a few other notable changes, even with counties in other states:

- Looking at county-to-county moves within the Omaha metro area, Douglas County gained residents from Mills County, Iowa for the first time in ten years. Similarly Douglas County gained (+74) from Pottawattamie County, Iowa for the first time since 2001, breaking a string of seven straight outmigration years when the loss averaged nearly 110 persons per year. Douglas County also had its second-best net change with Washington County in 2009. Thus, combined with improvements with Sarpy and Cass Counties, Douglas County showed strength across the board in 2009.
- Evaluating all county-to-county net migrations for Douglas County in 2009, the highest levels of net immigration tend to come from other counties in Nebraska (Lancaster, Dodge, and Buffalo). Seven of the ten best net immigrations are from other Nebraska counties (see page 8). Conversely, seven of the ten worst net outmigrations are to counties outside of Nebraska (a loss of Nebraska residents to other states).

Please note – This is the third release in a series of summaries on the migration topic that the Center for Public Affairs Research will provide. Future releases coming about every three weeks will include 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.

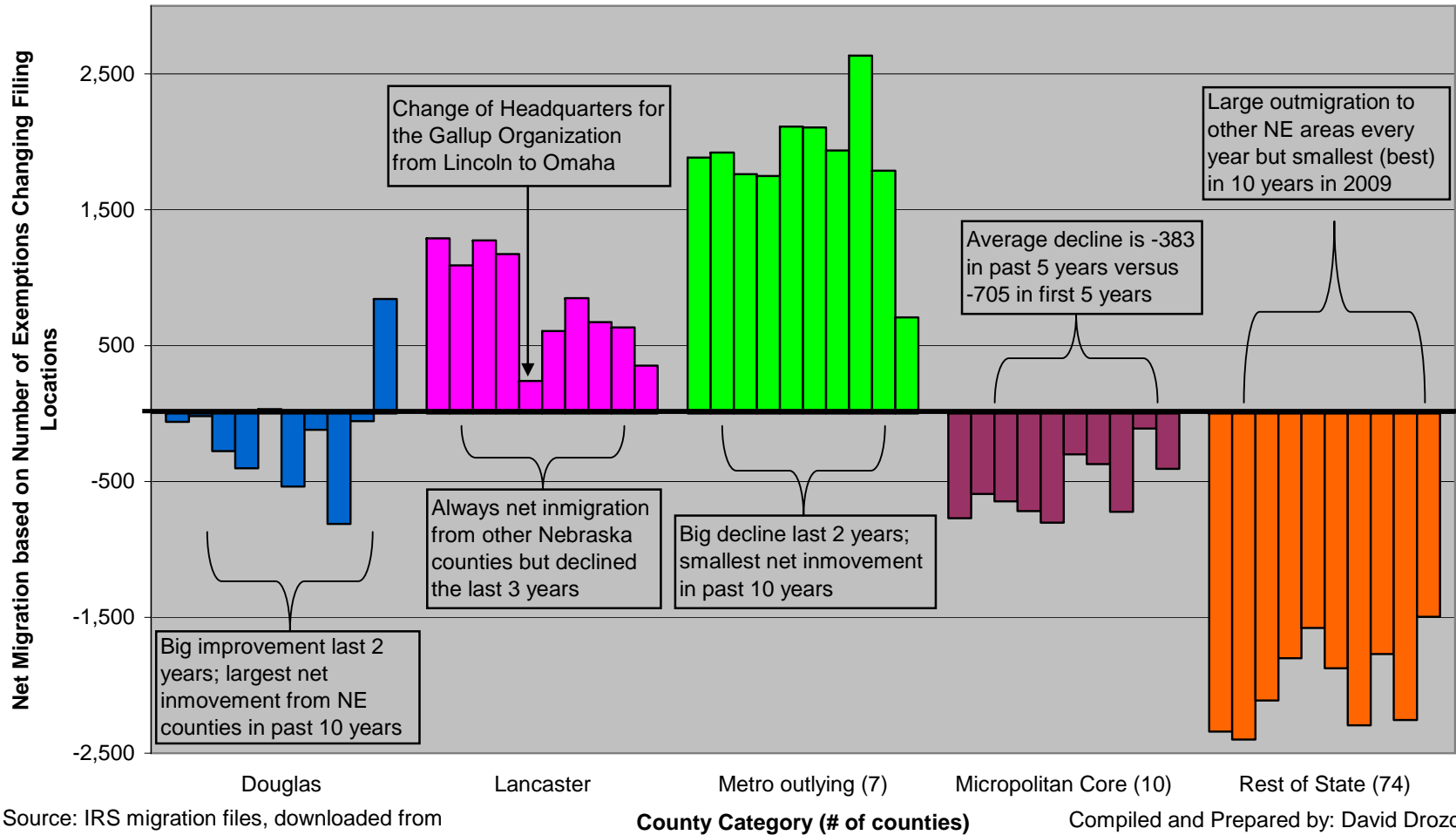
Technically, the data include tax filings through September of the reference year. While most individuals file in the spring of the year, extensions are granted to some individuals. The IRS website states the following “The data used to produce migration data products come from individual income tax 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. 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.

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

Net Migration within Nebraska by County Type Based on the Last 10 Years of IRS Tax Filing Data (2000 to 2009)



Annual Net Migration within Nebraska for Various Nebraska Counties: 2000 to 2009

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

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

| Category | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | Total | Change from 2007 to 2008 | Change from 2008 to 2009 | Change from 2001 to 2009 |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Nebraska* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Metropolitan | 3,111 | 2,991 | 2,758 | 2,518 | 2,382 | 2,174 | 2,666 | 2,494 | 2,365 | 1,903 | 25,362 | -129 | -462 | -1,088 |
| Cass | 269 | 238 | 215 | 287 | 221 | 189 | 143 | 203 | 31 | -7 | 1,789 | -172 | -38 | -245 |
| Dakota | 34 | -69 | -60 | -11 | -60 | -72 | 44 | 133 | -34 | -13 | -108 | -167 | 21 | 56 |
| Dixon | -21 | -85 | -32 | -41 | -66 | 14 | -47 | 12 | -48 | -32 | -346 | -60 | 16 | 53 |
| Douglas | -62 | -19 | -278 | -404 | 31 | -537 | -119 | -812 | -55 | 843 | -1,412 | 757 | 898 | 862 |
| Lancaster | 1,289 | 1,090 | 1,274 | 1,174 | 240 | 606 | 849 | 673 | 633 | 352 | 8,180 | -40 | -281 | -738 |
| Sarpy | 1,393 | 1,586 | 1,547 | 1,146 | 1,769 | 1,729 | 1,675 | 2,206 | 1,861 | 819 | 15,731 | -345 | -1,042 | -767 |
| Saunders | -26 | 66 | 1 | 73 | 143 | 170 | -33 | 87 | -83 | 14 | 412 | -170 | 97 | -52 |
| Seward | 111 | -13 | -18 | 66 | 115 | -34 | 79 | -81 | 123 | -106 | 242 | 204 | -229 | -93 |
| Washington | 124 | 197 | 109 | 228 | -11 | 109 | 75 | 73 | -63 | 33 | 874 | -136 | 96 | -164 |
| Micropolitan Core | -771 | -591 | -646 | -717 | -804 | -300 | -372 | -724 | -110 | -407 | -5,442 | 614 | -297 | 184 |
| Adams | -171 | -68 | -18 | -113 | -159 | 2 | -56 | 9 | 118 | -13 | -469 | 109 | -131 | 55 |
| Buffalo | 202 | 125 | 208 | -41 | 55 | 78 | 93 | 98 | 141 | 117 | 1,076 | 43 | -24 | -8 |
| Dawson | -235 | -282 | -330 | -226 | -236 | -188 | -195 | -209 | -170 | -175 | -2,246 | 39 | -5 | 107 |
| Dodge | 123 | -104 | -124 | 31 | 15 | -39 | -44 | -12 | -128 | -78 | -360 | -116 | 50 | 26 |
| Gage | 106 | 181 | 115 | 145 | -18 | -14 | 75 | 28 | -99 | -168 | 351 | -127 | -69 | -349 |
| Hall | -277 | -230 | -237 | -176 | -168 | -159 | -42 | -87 | 182 | 80 | -1,114 | 269 | -102 | 310 |
| Lincoln | -26 | -19 | -11 | 78 | 90 | 248 | 101 | -14 | -7 | -67 | 373 | 7 | -60 | -48 |
| Madison | -328 | -72 | -39 | -278 | -280 | -176 | -239 | -565 | -176 | -93 | -2,246 | 389 | 83 | -21 |
| Platte | -97 | -109 | -212 | -208 | -85 | -85 | -39 | -48 | -90 | -110 | -1,083 | -42 | -20 | -1 |
| Scotts Bluff | -68 | -13 | 2 | 71 | -18 | 33 | -26 | 76 | 119 | 100 | 276 | 43 | -19 | 113 |
| Rest of State* | -2,340 | -2,400 | -2,112 | -1,801 | -1,578 | -1,874 | -2,294 | -1,770 | -2,255 | -1,496 | -19,920 | -485 | 759 | 904 |
| Below 8 Co. total | -669 | -461 | -706 | -537 | -682 | -225 | -595 | -408 | -522 | -371 | -5,176 | -114 | 151 | 90 |
| Box Butte | -134 | -45 | -70 | -134 | -93 | 5 | -77 | -53 | -30 | -80 | -711 | 23 | -50 | -35 |
| Colfax | -186 | -257 | -225 | -226 | -224 | -193 | -144 | -105 | -60 | -76 | -1,696 | 45 | -16 | 181 |
| Custer | 17 | -111 | -77 | -78 | 46 | -34 | -124 | -73 | 31 | -29 | -432 | 104 | -60 | 82 |
| Holt | -166 | -78 | -70 | -79 | -145 | -10 | -100 | 22 | -66 | -49 | -741 | -88 | 17 | 29 |
| Otoe | 31 | 86 | -9 | 85 | -14 | 24 | 119 | 61 | -155 | 29 | 257 | -216 | 184 | -57 |
| Red Willow | -81 | -24 | -113 | -107 | -180 | -71 | -80 | -83 | -7 | -22 | -768 | 76 | -15 | 2 |
| Saline | -67 | 31 | -47 | 25 | -46 | -60 | -158 | -75 | -109 | -36 | -542 | -34 | 73 | -67 |
| York | -83 | -63 | -95 | -23 | -26 | 114 | -31 | -102 | -126 | -108 | -543 | -24 | 18 | -45 |

* The net migration within Nebraska for Nebraska sums to zero as immigration for one county is outmigration for another. The rest of state shows Nebraska's remaining 74 counties -- the specific counties listed had 10,000+ residents in 2010.

Counties with the Most Inmigration, Outmigration, and Net Migration with Douglas County, NE: 2008-2009

Source: Internal Revenue Service County Migration Files

Downloaded from Missouri Data Center: http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/cgi-bin/uexplore?/pub/data/irsmig/Migration_Profiles

| Rank | Most Inmigration from: | Persons | Most Outmigration to: | Persons | 10 Best/Worst Net Migration Areas: | Persons |
|------|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | 31153 Sarpy | 5,493 | 31153 Sarpy | 5,867 | 31109 Lancaster | 433 |
| 2 | 19155 Pottawattamie , IA | 1,307 | 19155 Pottawattamie , IA | 1,233 | 31053 Dodge | 120 |
| 3 | 31109 Lancaster | 1,149 | 31109 Lancaster | 716 | 31019 Buffalo | 96 |
| 4 | 31053 Dodge | 444 | 31177 Washington | 437 | 19193 Woodbury , IA | 94 |
| 5 | 31177 Washington | 387 | 04013 Maricopa , AZ | 371 | 31119 Madison | 75 |
| 6 | 04013 Maricopa , AZ | 344 | 31053 Dodge | 324 | 19155 Pottawattamie , IA | 74 |
| 7 | 31025 Cass | 289 | 31155 Saunders | 268 | 31141 Platte | 69 |
| 8 | 17031 Cook , IL | 247 | 31025 Cass | 264 | 31079 Hall | 56 |
| 9 | 31155 Saunders | 219 | 17031 Cook , IL | 225 | 06065 Riverside , CA | 48 |
| 10 | 19153 Polk , IA | 204 | 20091 Johnson , KS | 223 | 31001 Adams | 38 |
| 11 | 06037 Los Angeles , CA | 199 | 19153 Polk , IA | 207 | 19085 Harrison , IA | -35 |
| 12 | 19193 Woodbury , IA | 199 | 06037 Los Angeles , CA | 169 | 40143 Tulsa , OK | -37 |
| 13 | 20091 Johnson , KS | 184 | 32003 Clark , NV | 166 | 20091 Johnson , KS | -39 |
| 14 | 31079 Hall | 184 | 19085 Harrison , IA | 137 | 02020 Anchorage Municipality, AK | -39 |
| 15 | 31019 Buffalo | 158 | 48201 Harris , TX | 136 | 31155 Saunders | -49 |
| 16 | 31141 Platte | 151 | 48029 Bexar , TX | 133 | 31177 Washington | -50 |
| 17 | 32003 Clark , NV | 150 | 29095 Jackson , MO | 131 | 08005 Arapahoe , CO | -50 |
| 18 | 31119 Madison | 143 | 06073 San Diego , CA | 129 | 48201 Harris , TX | -54 |
| 19 | 06073 San Diego , CA | 142 | 31079 Hall | 128 | 48029 Bexar , TX | -65 |
| 20 | 29095 Jackson , MO | 134 | 27053 Hennepin , MN | 122 | 31153 Sarpy | -374 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|--|--------|--|-----|
| U.S. Domestic Total | 21,890 | | 21,080 | | 810 |
| Same State (within NE) | 9,833 | | 8,990 | | 843 |
| Different State | 12,057 | | 12,090 | | -33 |