Nebraska Thriving Index

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Outline

1. Project Contributors & Context
2. A Tool for a Thriving Rural Future
3. Nebraska Regions & Comparison Regions
4. Regional Results – Advantages & Concerns
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UNL Bureau Scholars (students)

UNK research assistant
Context – “The Barometer”

- An economic scorecard of the Omaha region
- Gauges eight key economic and performance-related areas

- Growth
- Human Capital
- Quality of Life
- Entrepreneurship
- Innovation
- Infrastructure Capacity
- Business Cost
- Private Capital
A Tool for a Thriving Rural Future
Nebraska Thriving Index

- **Purpose**: Benchmarking tool for the non-metropolitan and small metropolitan regions of Nebraska
  - Eight Nebraska regions are compared on economic and quality of life indicators with peer regions located around the northern Plains

- **Value**: Will help to identify areas of economic strength in Nebraska’s regions and areas where Nebraska regions lag
  - Allows community and state leaders to develop future-focused strategies to build on regional advantages and address areas of concern
Nebraska Thriving Index

Compared according to three indexes of economic prosperity

**Growth Index**: Measures total employment growth, private employment, private wage growth, growth in households with children, and growth in dividend, interest and rent income (5 variables)

**Economic Opportunity & Diversity Index**: Measures entrepreneurial activity, industry diversity, occupation diversity and share of telecommuters (7 variables)

**Other Prosperity Index**: Measures non-farm proprietor personal income, total personal income stability, life span, percent in poverty and share of income from dividends, interest and rent (5 variables)
Nebraska Thriving Index

Compared according to five indexes of economic conditions

Demographic Growth & Renewal Index: Measures long-term population growth, dependency ratio, median age, millennial and Gen Z balance, and population diversity (6 variables)

Education & Skill Index: Measures high school and college education attainment, labor force participation and employment in knowledge-based occupations (4 variables)

Infrastructure & Cost of Doing Business Index: Measures access to broadband, interstate highways and universities as well as wage rates, marginal tax rates and the presence of opportunity zones (6 variables)

Quality of Life Index: Measures the appeal of living and working in a region including commute times, housing, relative wages, public safety, climate and recreational amenities, access to health care, day care, parks, and arts and cultural activity (10 variables)

Social Capital Index: Measures involvement with volunteer organizations, programs to build the community environment, and voter participation (5 variables)
Thriving Index Regions & Comparison Regions
Nebraska Regions

- Selected in an iterative process which considered:
  - Nebraska Extension’s Community Vitality Initiative Accountability Regions
  - Nebraska Economic Development Regions
  - Nebraska Economic Development Districts
  - Information from the Nebraska Department of Labor
  - Expertise of project participants
Nebraska Regions

Note: Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Saunders, Washington, Lancaster and Seward counties are not included in any of the eight regions.
Comparison Regions

- Either other Nebraska regions or U.S. Economic Development Administration regions located in another northern Plains state:
  - Iowa, South Dakota, Kansas, Minnesota, (western) Illinois, (eastern) Colorado and (eastern) Wyoming

- Used the Mahalanobis matching technique to identify comparison regions based on the fundamental economic characteristics of the region:
  - **Total population**
  - **Economic structure**: farming share of income, ranching share of income, and manufacturing share of employment
  - **Urban orientation**: percent of population in a micropolitan area, distance to a small MSA (population <250,000) and distance to a large MSA (population > 250,000)
Results Related to Early Care
Growth in Households With Children

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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

- North 81 (6)
- Northeast (6)
- Panhandle (7)
- Sandhills (6)
- Siouxland (6)
- Southeast (9)
- Southwest (7)
- Tri-Cities (7)
Day Care Providers Per Capita

- **1st**: North 81 (6), 349
- **2nd**: Northeast (6), 284
- **3rd**: Panhandle (7), 139
- **4th**: Sandhills (6), 86
- **5th**: Siouxland (6), 102
- **6th**: Southeast (9), -27 (value is negative)
- **7th**: Southwest (7), 8th, 34
- **8th**: Tri-Cities (7), 34

Source: ruralfutures.nebraska.edu
Regional Results
Interpreting an Index Value

- 100 means that the Nebraska region is at the average value of its peers
- 0 means that a Nebraska region is one standard deviation behind its peers
- 200 means that a Nebraska region is one standard deviation ahead of its peers
Regional Patterns – Advantage #1

Economic Growth Index Rank by Region

Rank vs. Comparison Regions, Value

1st 203 151 104 228 160 85 161
2nd 104 3rd 2nd 4th
7th

North 81 Northeast Panhandle Sandhills Siouxland Southeast Southwest Tri-Cities

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Regional Patterns – Advantage #2

Quality of Life Index Rank by Region

Rank vs. Comparison Regions, Value

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<th>Region</th>
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</table>
Regional Patterns – Advantage #3

Social Capital Index Rank by Region

Rank vs. Comparison Regions, Value

North 81: 212
Northeast: 127
Panhandle: 133
Sandhills: 214
Siouxland: 191
Southeast: 149
Southwest: 127
Tri-Cities: 110

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Regional Patterns – Concern

Education & Skill Index Rank by Region

Rank vs. Comparison Regions, Value

North 81: 1st
Northeast: 4th
Panhandle: 3rd
Sandhills: 2nd
Siouxland: 6th
Southeast: 6th
Southwest: 7th
Tri-Cities: 5th

181 89 112 165 22 96 13 81
Results by Region: NORTH 81
North 81 Region & Comparison Regions

Region Key
1. NEBRASKA: North 81 Region
2. IOWA: Area 15 Regional Planning Commission
3. ILLINOIS: Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation and Development
4. MISSOURI: Pioneer Trails Regional Planning Commission
5. MINNESOTA: Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
6. MISSOURI: Mark Twain Regional Council of Governments
North 81 Region – Nebraska Thriving Index & Component Index Rank & Value

Neb. Thriving Index: 144
Ranks 1st Among Peers

1st Growth
1st Economic Opportunity & Diversity
1st Education & Skill
1st Quality of Life

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Results by Region:
NORTHEAST
Northeast Region & Comparison Regions

Region Key

1. NEBRASKA: Northeast Region
2. IOWA: Region XII Council of Governments
3. IOWA: Northwest Iowa Planning & Development Commission
4. NEBRASKA: Panhandle Region
5. IOWA: Mid-Iowa Development Association Council of Governments
6. NEBRASKA: Southwest Region
Northeast Region –
Nebraska Thriving Index & Component Index Rank & Value

Neb. Thriving Index: 103
Ranks 3rd Among Peers

2nd Growth
2nd Social Capital
2nd Other Prosperity
3rd Demographic Growth & Renewal

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Results by Region:
PANHANDLE
Panhandle Region
& Comparison Regions

Region Key
1. NEBRASKA: Panhandle Region
2. NEBRASKA: Northeast Region
3. WYOMING: Southeast Wyoming Economic Development District
4. COLORADO: Southern Colorado Economic Development District
5. NEBRASKA: Southwest Region
6. IOWA: Mid-Iowa Development Association Council of Governments
7. NEBRASKA: Tri-Cities Region
Panhandle Region – Nebraska Thriving Index & Component Index Rank & Value

Neb. Thriving Index: 98
Ranks 3rd Among Peers

1st Economic Opportunity & Diversity
3rd Education & Skill
3rd Infrastructure & Cost of Doing Business
3rd Quality of Life
Results by Region:
SANDHILLS
Sandhills Region & Comparison Regions

Region Key

1. NEBRASKA: Sandhills Region
2. NEBRASKA: Northeast Region
3. IOWA: Northwest Iowa Planning & Development Commission
4. NEBRASKA: Southwest Region
5. NEBRASKA: Panhandle Region
6. KANSAS: Great Plains Development Inc.
Sandhills Region –
Nebraska Thriving Index & Component Index Rank & Value

Neb. Thriving Index: 109
Ranks 2nd Among Peers

1st  Social Capital
1st  Economic Opportunity & Diversity
2nd  Education & Skill
2nd  Other Prosperity

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Results by Region:
SIOUXLAND
Siouxland Region
& Comparison Regions
Siouxland Region –
Nebraska Thriving Index & Component Index Rank & Value

Neb. Thriving Index: 105
Ranks 3rd Among Peers

1st Demographic Growth & Renewal
1st Growth
1st Quality of Life
2nd Social Capital
Results by Region:
SOUTHEAST
Southeast Region – Nebraska Thriving Index & Component Index Rank & Value

Neb. Thriving Index: 112
Ranks 3rd Among Peers

2nd Growth
2nd Other Prosperity
3rd Social Capital
Results by Region: SOUTHWEST
Southwest Region & Comparison Regions

Region Key
1. NEBRASKA: Southwest Region
2. IOWA: Northwest Iowa Planning & Development Commission
3. NEBRASKA: Panhandle Region
4. NEBRASKA: Northeast Region
5. IOWA: Region XII Council of Governments
6. MINNESOTA: Southwest Regional Development Commission
7. IOWA: Mid-Iowa Development Association Council of Governments
Southwest Region –
Nebraska Thriving Index & Component Index Rank & Value

Neb. Thriving Index: 95
Ranks 5th Among Peers

1st  Quality of Life
2nd  Social Capital
2nd  Infrastructure & Cost of Doing Business
Results by Region:
TRI-CITIES
Tri-Cities Region & Comparison Regions

Region Key
1. NEBRASKA: Tri-Cities Region
2. MINNESOTA: Region Nine Development Commission
3. IOWA: East Central Intergovernmental Association
4. IOWA: Mid-Iowa Development Association
5. KANSAS: Flint Hills Economic Development District
6. IOWA: Region 6 Planning Commission
7. MINNESOTA: Minnesota West Central Initiative
Tri-Cities Region – Nebraska Thriving Index & Component Index Rank & Value

Neb. Thriving Index: 136
Ranks 1st Among Peers

1st Growth
1st Economic Opportunity & Diversity
1st Quality of Life

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Nebraska Thriving Index – Summary

Uses

- **Benchmarking:** To help identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the region
- **Prioritization:** To help identify areas that are important and urgent from those that are important but less urgent
- **Data/Evidence:** To help motivate/justify current and/or sought after initiatives (e.g., targeted recruitment of tech workers)
- **Evaluation:** Could be used as direct measures to evaluate the effectiveness of strategic goals/objectives
Question?

- Website: ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/nethrivingindex
  - Where you can find the Nebraska Thriving Index data
  - Where you can share feedback with us and find our upcoming in-person presentations and webinars