

Executive Summary



**NEBRASKA PROFILE 2012:
TRENDS AND
COMPARISONS IN KEY
POLICY INDICATORS**

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Nebraska Legislative Planning Committee

The Nebraska Legislature's Planning Committee was created in 2009 with the passage of LB 653, in order to help establish a process of long-term state planning with the Nebraska Legislature.

The committee's charge is to assist state government in identifying emerging trends, assets, and challenges of the state and the long-term implications of the decisions made by the Nebraska Legislature.

Nebraska Legislative Planning Database

- The goals and benchmarks in the database were developed and approved by the Legislature's Planning Committee to present a common-sense and data-driven assessment of key areas important to Nebraskans' quality of life.
- This database is a joint initiative with the Nebraska Legislature's Planning Committee and the University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Public Affairs and Community Service.

Benchmarks

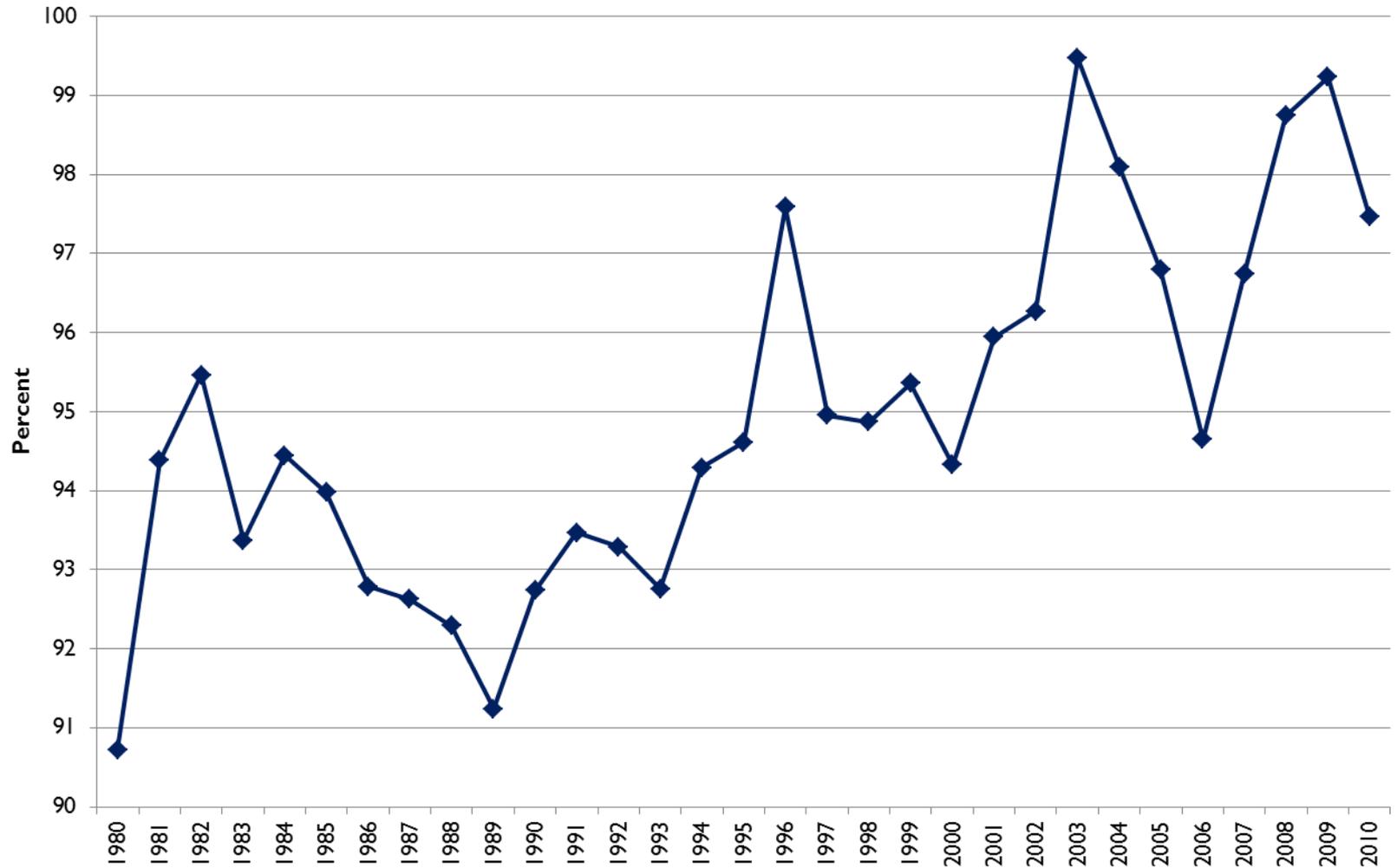
There are nine areas of policy indicators:

- Economy
- Agriculture
- Natural Resources
- State and Local Government
- Education
- Health and Human Services
- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Telecommunications

Economy

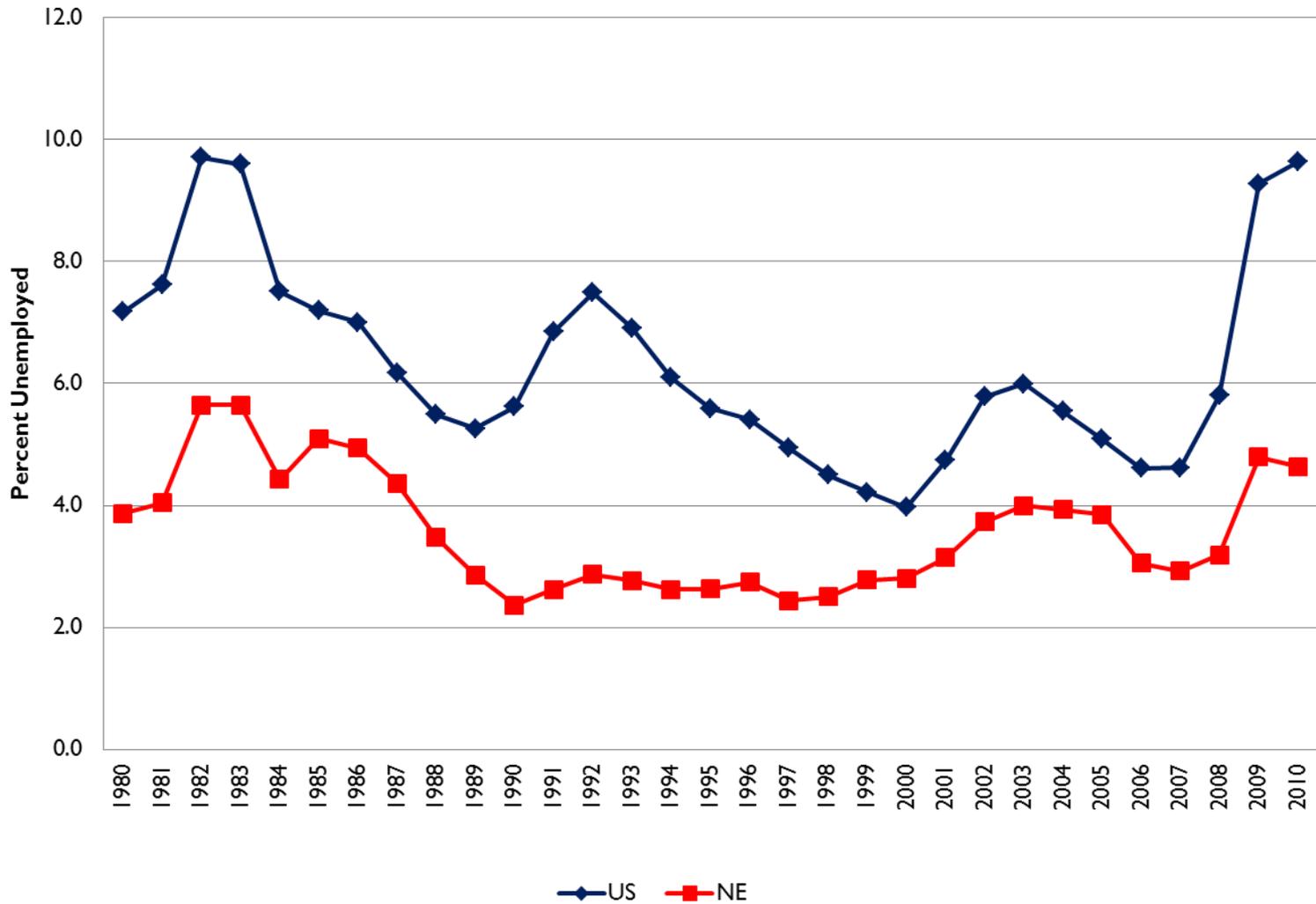
- Income, poverty, and comparative costs
 - Nebraska lags the nation in per capita and average income and average wages and salaries.
 - Poverty rates are lower than the nation.
 - Relative cost of housing (compared to income) is lower than the nation.
 - Income inequality is lower than the national average.
- Employment
 - Unemployment rates are lower than the nation, but long-term employment growth lags the national average.
 - 2010 unemployment—US 9.6%, NE 4.7%

Nebraska Per Capita Personal Income as a Percentage of the United States: 1970 to 2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Oct 2011

Annual Unemployment Rate for Nebraska and the US: 1980-2010

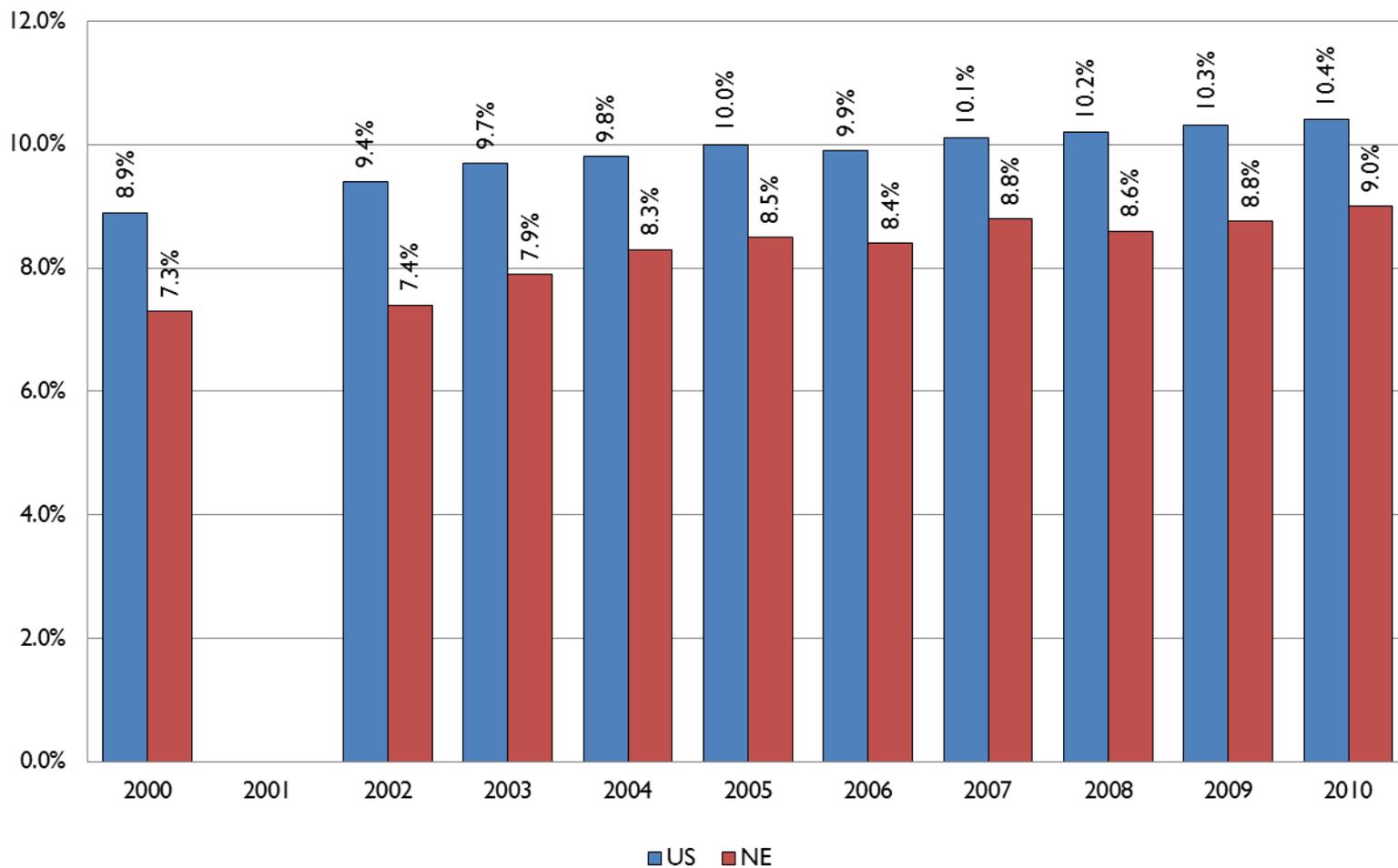


Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Jun 2011

Economy

- Business climate and business start-ups
 - Although the business climate is good, entrepreneurship and technology and innovation rank below most states.
 - Most rankings declined in the past year.
- Workforce quality, technology, and innovation
 - Nebraska has relatively high levels of high school graduates but low percentages of persons with advanced degrees and in science and engineering occupations.

Percent of People 25 Years and Over Who Have Completed an Advanced Degree: 2000-2010

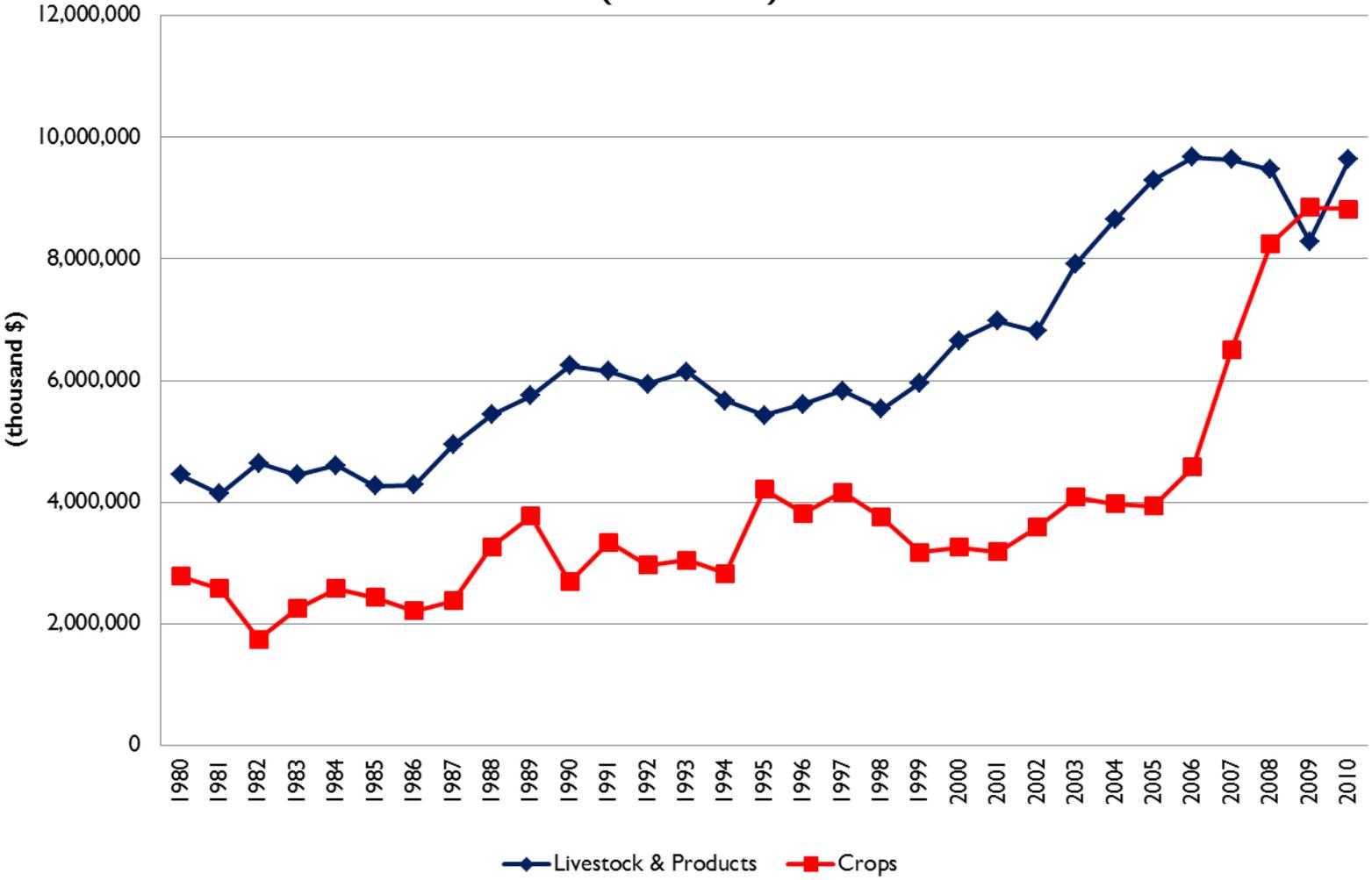


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2002-2010 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Nov 2011

Agriculture

- Farm income
 - Depending upon the measure, rural Nebraskans generally fare better economically than the typical rural resident nationally.
 - Per capita incomes are comparable, but poverty and unemployment rates are considerably lower.
- Farm receipts
 - In 2010, farm marketings brought 18.5 billion dollars into the state and production agriculture provided over 50 thousand jobs.
 - Realized net farm income hit a record 4.4 billion dollars.
 - With the exception of 2009, cash receipts from livestock and products have consistently exceed those from crops.
 - Farm employment increased slightly in 2010.

Cash Receipts from Livestock and Products and Crops: Nebraska (1980-2010)

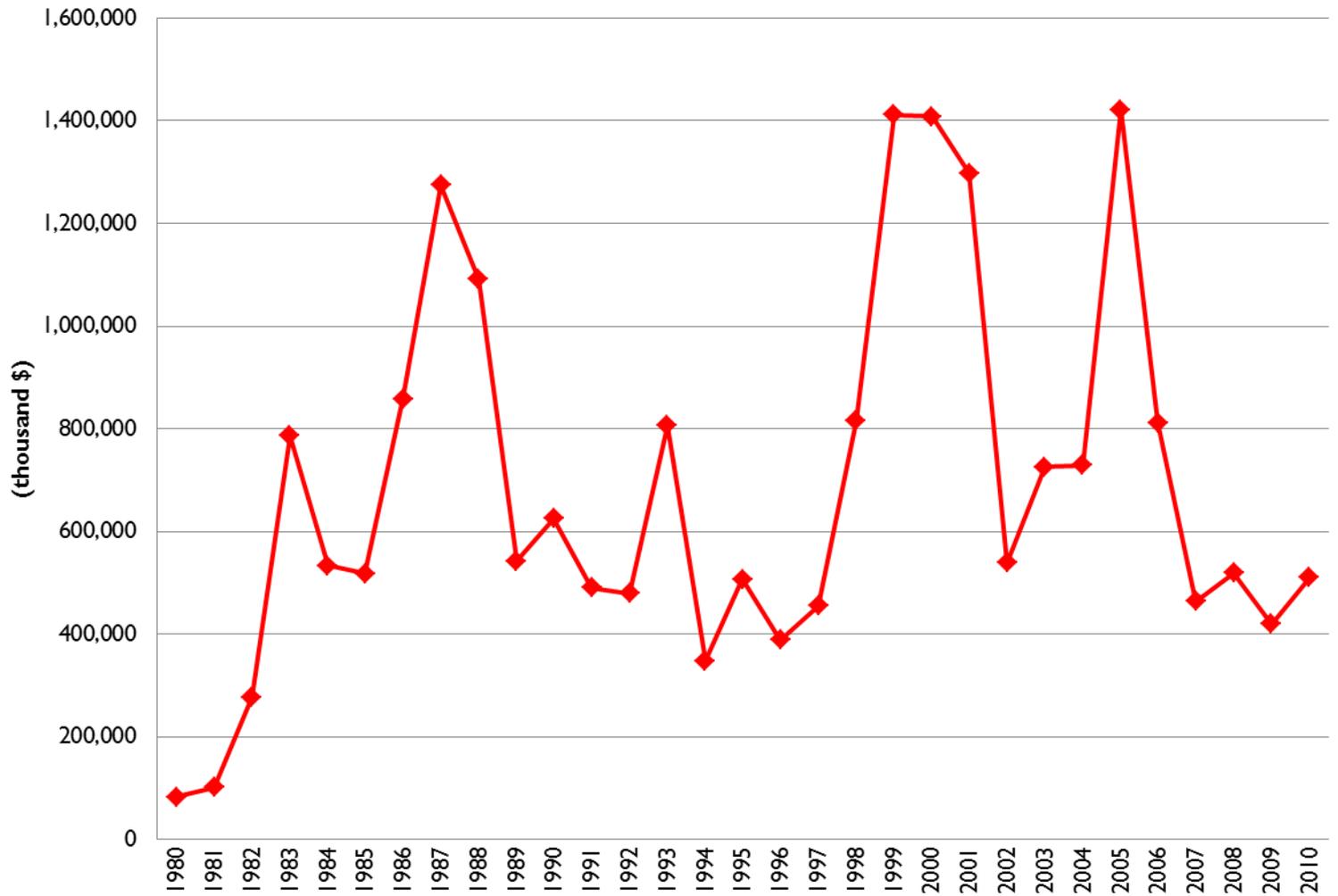


Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, REIS; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO, Oct 2011

Agriculture

- Federal government farm payments have a sizable and variable impact on net farm income.
 - In twelve of the years since 1980, government payments accounted for more than half of Nebraska's net farm income.
 - Impact is much smaller in the last 4 years.
- Farm operations
 - Similar to the nation as a whole but in contrast to most of the region, Nebraska farms are getting larger and fewer in numbers.
- Agricultural diversity
 - Top five agricultural commodities produced in Nebraska were: Cattle and calves, corn, soybeans, hogs, and wheat.

Government Farm Payment: Nebraska (1980-2010)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, REIS; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO, Oct 2011

Natural Resources

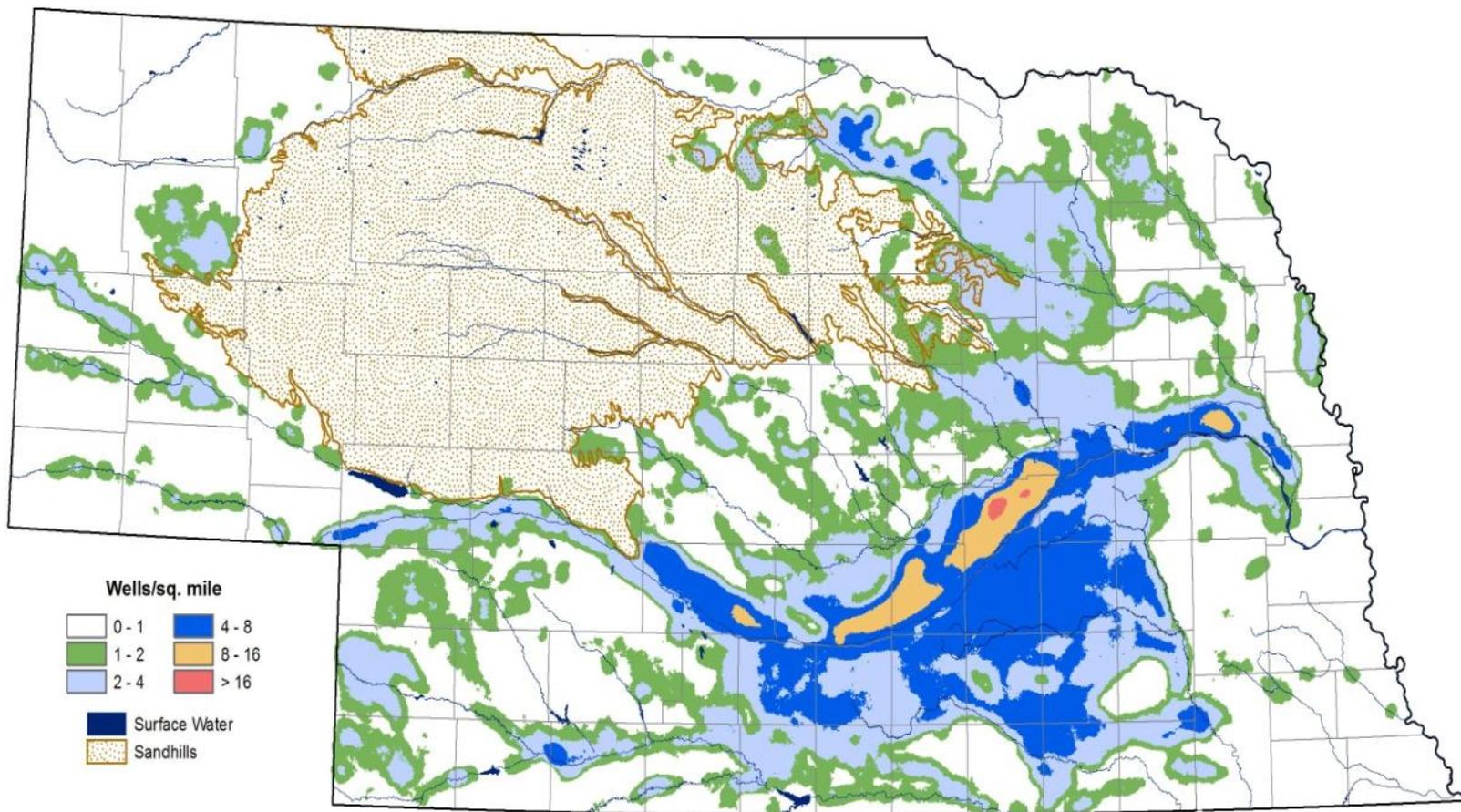
- Air Quality

- Fine particle emissions per cubic meter rose slightly from 8.0 to 8.1 in 2010. Nebraska ranks 41st in the nation, and in the middle for the region.
- Toxic air emissions in Nebraska were also at the median of the region, 31st in the nation.
- CO₂ emissions in Nebraska have increased by 12.7% since 2000. Almost one-half of these emissions are produced through the generation of electricity and about one-quarter are produced by transportation.

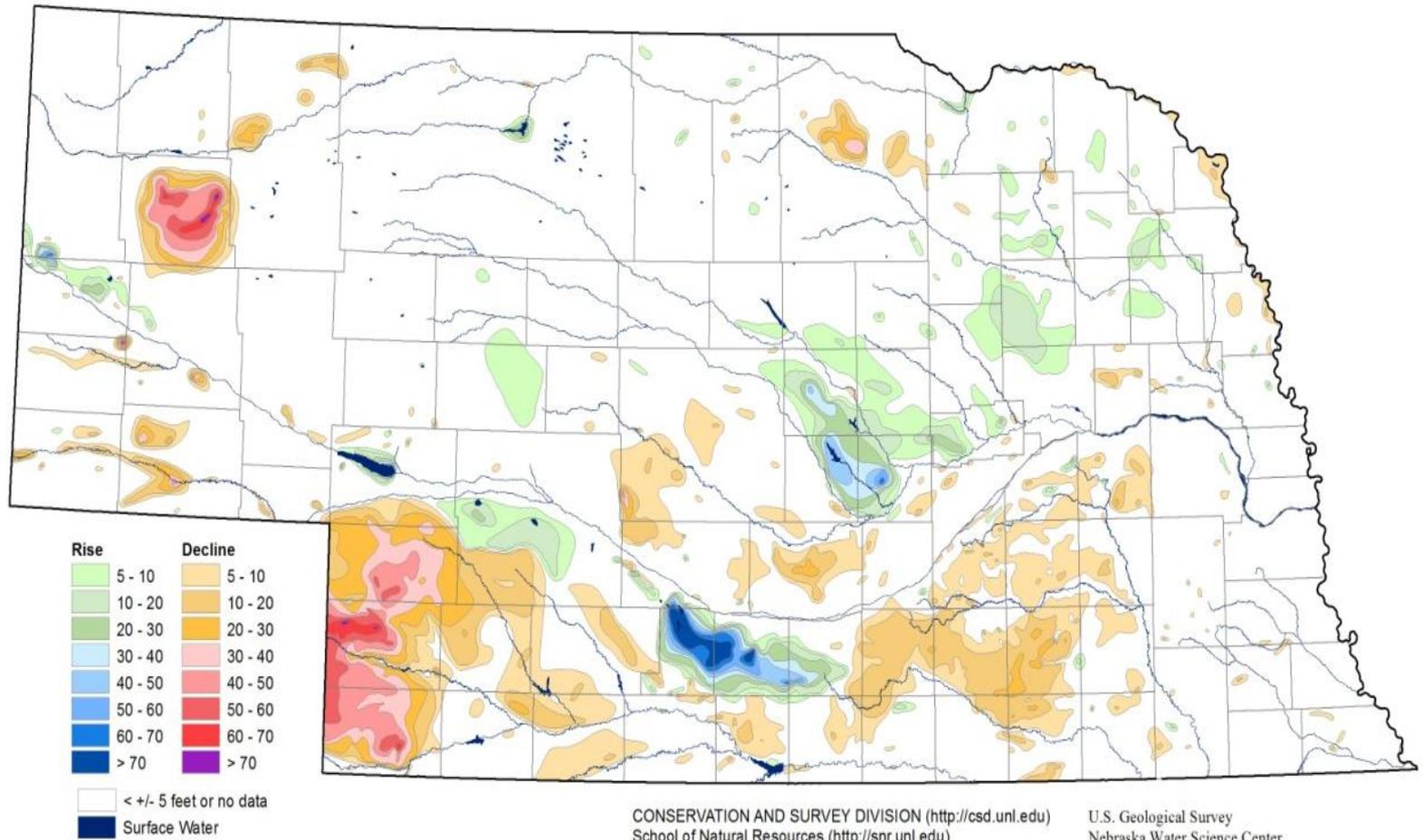
- Land Quality and Waste

- Toxic chemical releases increased by 2.5% compared to a 5.5% decrease nationally. Nebraska ranks third in the region and 30th nationally.
- Nebraska ranked first in the region and second in the nation for toxic surface water discharges Nebraska in 2009. Compared to 2007, the amount of toxic releases fell by 12.8% while the United States total dropped by 11.4%.

Density of Irrigation Wells January 2009



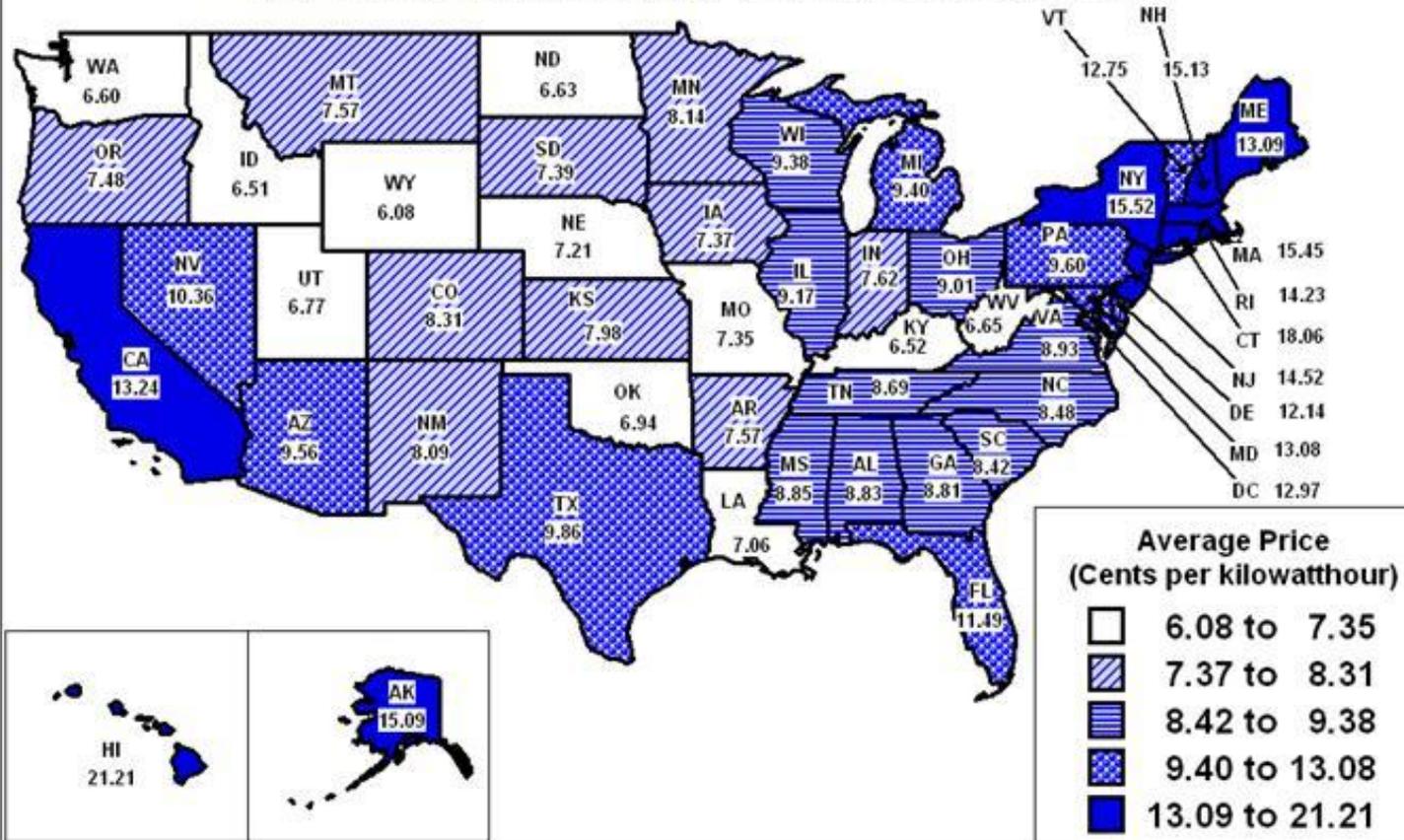
Change in Groundwater levels Pre-development to Spring 2009



Natural Resources - Energy

- The price of electricity in Nebraska is 73% of the national average, but is rising faster (+9.6% compared to +0.8%)
- Energy consumption rose by 4.8% in Nebraska. Combined with the price increase, total spending on energy rose 10.4%.
- Prices vary by a factor of six within the state.
- Nebraska ranked 43rd in the generation of electricity using renewable resources at 2.6% of total generation (up from 1.9%) compared to 10.6% nationally (up from 8.5%).

U.S. Total Average Price per kilowatt-hour is 9.83 Cents



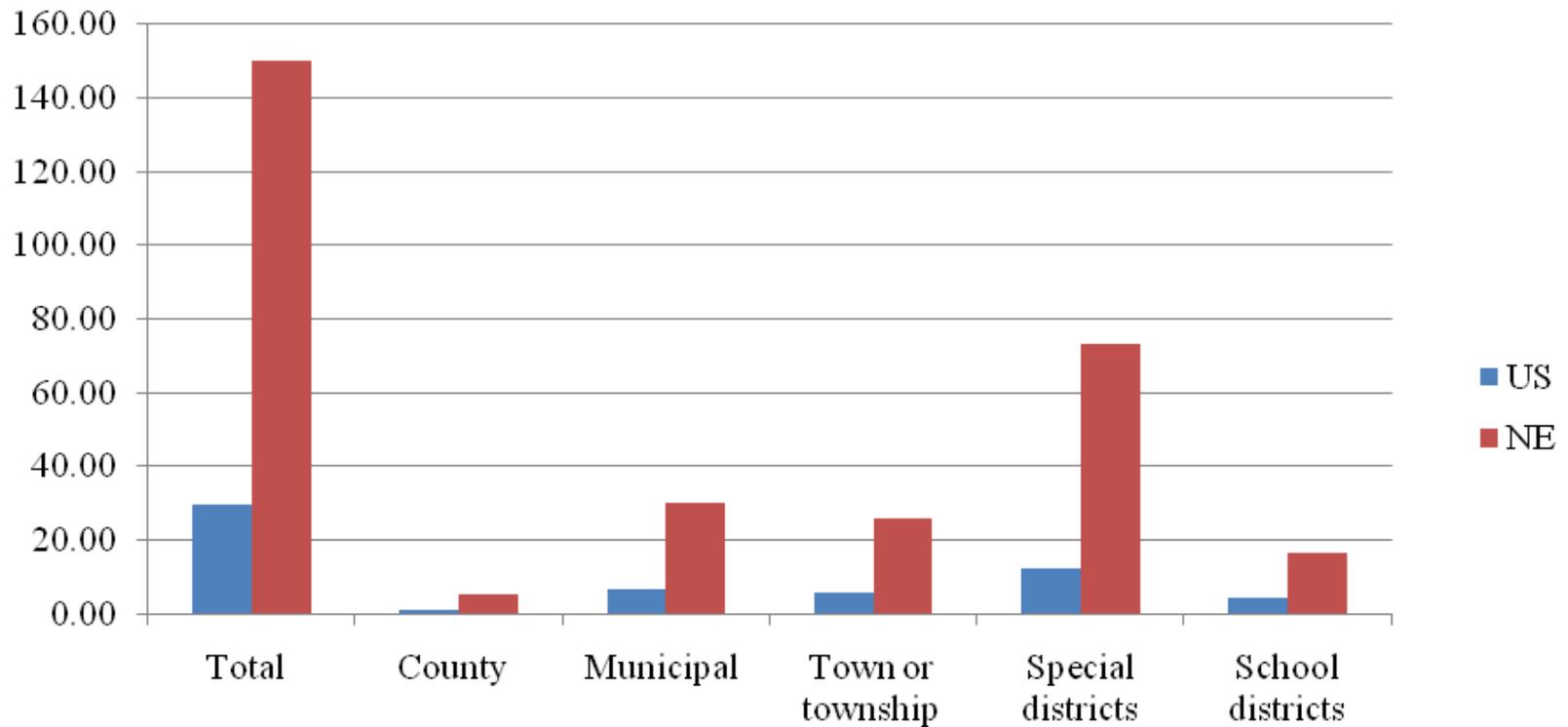
Note: Data are displayed as 5 groups of 10 States and the District of Columbia.

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Form EIA-861, "Annual Electric Power Industry Report."

State and Local Government

- **Units of Government**
 - Nebraska is high in the number of local governments, particularly special districts and counties.
- **Employment & Payroll**
 - Generally state and local employment is above average. Pay is below average for all functions but local utilities.
 - At the state level, employment is higher than average in all functional categories except government administration and utilities. It is more than twice the national average in utilities, and public works, planning & recreation.
 - Local government employment is above average in government administration, transportation, leisure & planning, education, and utilities. It is below average for public safety, public welfare & health, and public works.
- **Federal Expenditures**
 - Nebraska is low in federal procurement spending, grants and salaries and wages and high in “other direct payments” (includes Medicare, unemployment compensation, agricultural assistance and the earned income tax credit). Nebraska is close to the US average in retirement and disability payments.
 - Nebraska ranks eighth out of nine in the region in federal spending.

Local Government Units Per 100,000 Population by Type: the United States vs. Nebraska: 2007

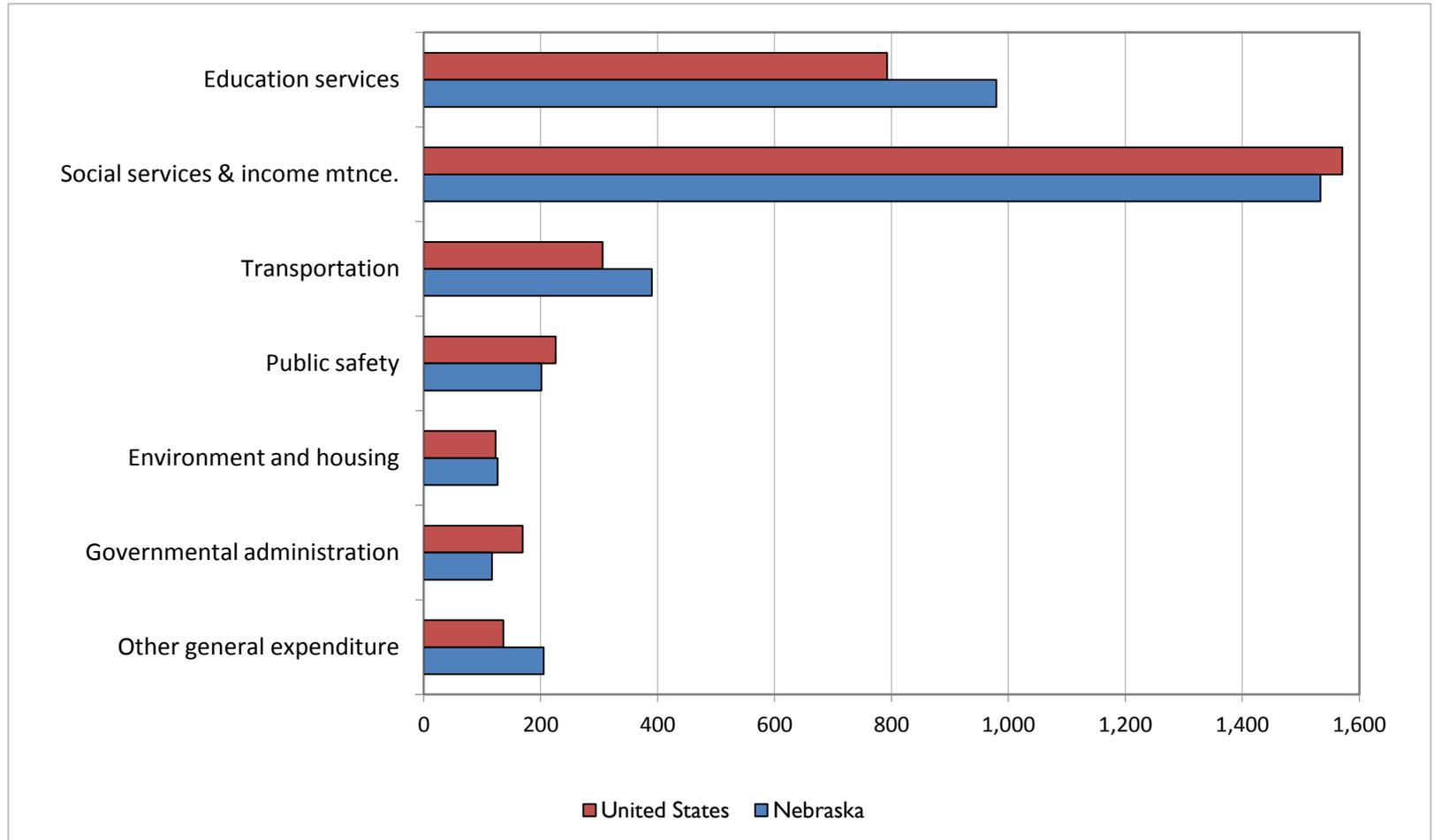


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007; Prepared by Center for Public Affairs Research, UNO; Jun. 2010

State and Local Fiscal Policy

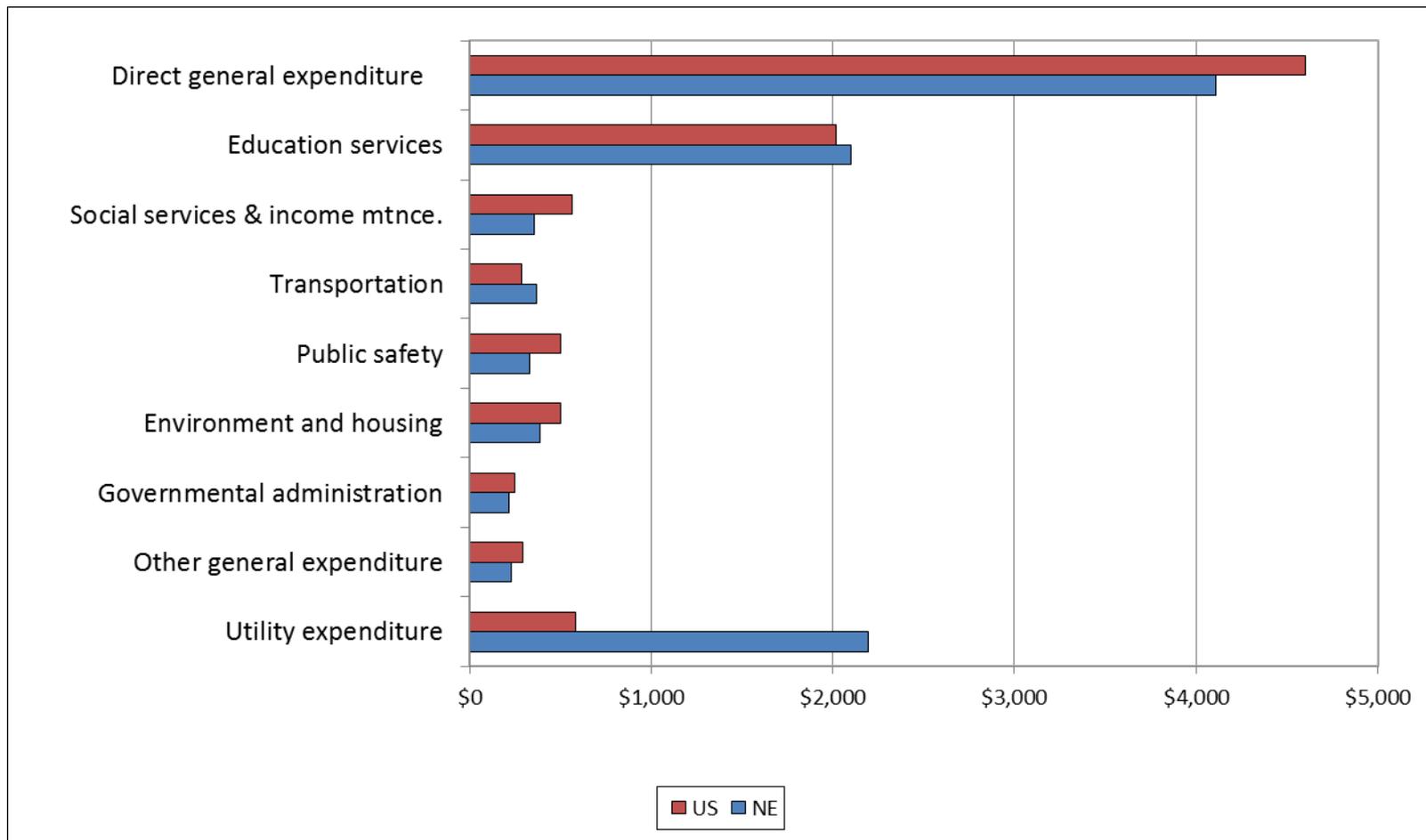
- Expenditures
 - Total state spending is 4% above the national average.
 - Education, transportation, and environment and housing spending is higher than average.
 - Spending was lower than average for public safety, social services and income maintenance, and government administration.
 - Local spending is 11% below the national average.
 - Spending on all functions is lower than average with the exception of education, transportation and utilities.
- Revenue: In general Nebraska is in the middle (99.6% of US average)
 - State revenue per capita is 32nd nationally, down from 28th
 - Local revenue per capita is 11th nationally, down from tenth.
 - We are high in property tax, and state personal income tax and general sales tax.
 - We are low in selective sales taxes, corporate income taxes and local general sales tax.
 - The absence of a local income tax draws our comparative personal income tax burden close to the average.
- Debt
 - State debt outstanding is the lowest in the region while local debt is fourth in the region.

State Government Expenditures Per Capita by Function Nebraska and the United States: 2008-2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Government Finance Statistics; prepared by UNO Center for Public Affairs Research, November 2011

Local Government Expenditure Per Capita by Function Nebraska and the United States: 2008-2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009; prepared by UNO Center for Public Affairs Research, June 2011

Education

- P-16 Initiative Goals
 - Nebraska has a comparatively large percentage of its high school graduates attending a degree granting institution and most of them attend a college in Nebraska.
 - In 2007-08, 65.5% attended and 53.5% were in Nebraska
- Access
 - Compared to the nation and region, Nebraska lags in the percentage of children aged 3 and 4 who are enrolled in an early childhood education program.
 - 47.8% NE ranked 24th
 - Nebraska compares favorably to the nation and region in the cost of higher education.
 - For 2009-10 4-year public:
 - NE -- \$13,265; U. S. -- \$15,014; NE ranked 31st
 - State and local appropriations for higher education per FTE student in Nebraska are above the national average.

Education

- Assessment
 - Looking at reading and mathematics scores for Nebraska's fourth and eighth graders, it appears that Nebraska generally ranks in the middle third of the states but ranks toward the bottom of its peer states.
 - Nebraska ranks lower in math than in reading
- Funding Stability
 - Nebraska's per pupil spending for public elementary and secondary education in the top half nationally and is among the highest in the region. For 2007-08:
 - NE -- \$12,287; U.S. -- \$11,950; NE ranked 17th
- In recent years, Nebraska has been attracting college educated people from other states.

Health and Human Services

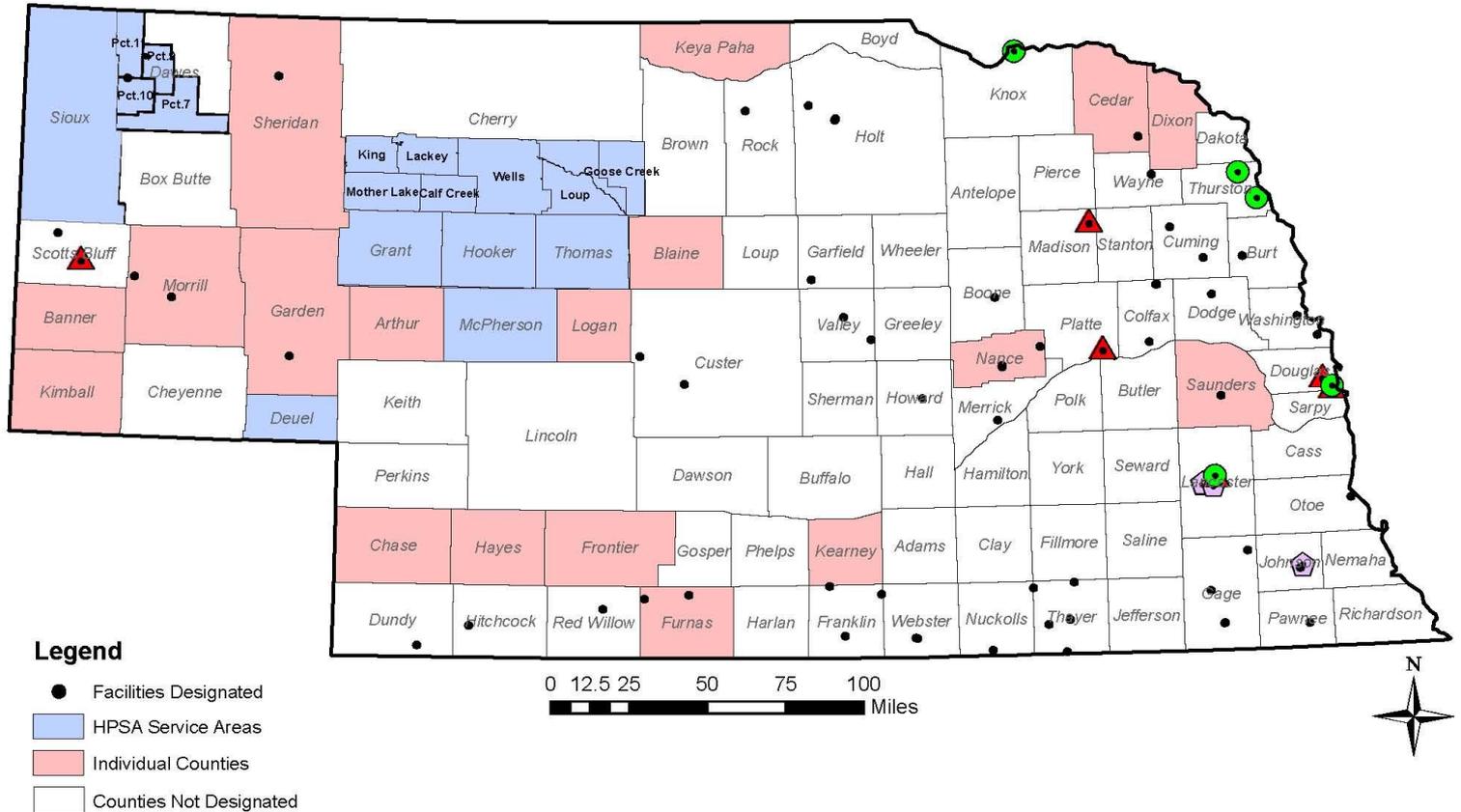
- Health Access

- Nebraska has more of its citizens covered by insurance.
 - 2010 uninsurance rates:
 - Total – NE 11.5%; U.S. 15.5%; Rank 37th
 - Children under 18 – NE 5.6%; U.S. 8.0%; Rank 32nd
- Many of the areas of the state (particularly rural areas) have shortages of medical professionals.

- Health Status

- The number of tobacco users in Nebraska generally has been decreasing.
- Nebraska's adult obesity rate has been increasing, and is consistently higher than national rate, but child obesity has been lower than the nation.
- Nearly three-fourths of Nebraska mothers received prenatal care in the 1st trimester, and the 2010 infant mortality rate is the lowest in the past five years (5.4 per 1000 live births).

Health Professional Shortage Areas Primary Care 2010



Source: HRSA - BHP - Office of Shortage Designation
<http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/> Last Updated 7/20/2010

Cartography: Michael Gilligan, Community Planning Intern
 For Tom Rauner, PCO Director, Office of Rural Health
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Health and Human Services

- Family Welfare
 - The poverty rate for Nebraska's children and for female headed families with no husband present increased during the past two years, but are still among the lowest in the nation.
 - 2010 child poverty – NE 18.2%; U.S. 21.6%; Rank 32nd
 - Number of TANF enrollees also has increased during the past two years.

Health and Human Services

- Cost

- Per capita state and per capita local government expenditures for public welfare were toward the middle of the states. (State -- \$1,192; Rank 32nd)
- The largest share of Medicaid and CHIP expenditures was for the blind and disabled, followed by children, aged, & ADC adult. The largest increases in expenditures were for the blind and disabled and for children.
- Per eligible person, the highest expenditures were still for the blind and disabled, but were nearly equaled by the expenditures for the aged. Total expenditures for children were the lowest on an eligible person basis.

Public Safety

- Crime
 - Nebraska's crime rate reached a historic high in 1995, and generally has been dropping since then.
 - The Nebraska murder rate dropped by 42% in 2009. Nebraska ranks 41st.
 - Violent crime dropped by 7.3% and property crime by 4.1%. Nebraska is below the average in both.
 - Arrests for drug abuse violations dropped by 6.7% compared to 2.3% nationally.
- Juvenile Justice
 - Juvenile arrests in Nebraska are 44% higher than the national average for property crime, and 17% higher for drug abuse, but less than half the national rate for violent crime.
 - Property crime and drug abuse arrests among juveniles is decreasing, however violent crime is over 30% higher since 2005.

Public Safety

- Recidivism
 - From FY 2005 to FY 2007, the recidivism rate in Nebraska Correctional facilities fell for both parolees (to 33.5%) and those with mandatory discharges (to 19.1%). This is true of both men and women.
 - Juvenile recidivism at both the Kearney and Geneva youth centers decreased in FY 2010-11.
- Spending
 - Nebraska's per capita state and local spending on public safety is lower than the national average. For per capita local public safety spending we rank 39th and for state spending we rank 30th nationally.
 - The largest portion of public safety spending in Nebraska is on police, followed by corrections, fire protection, and protective inspection and regulation.
 - The most expensive correctional facility was the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility at \$67,247 per person per year.

Transportation

- **Transportation Infrastructure Quality**

- Pavement quality for Nebraska's interstate highways is high: 99% of these roads are rated as smooth.
- The Reason Foundation measures state highway cost effectiveness, which compares highway system performance to state spending per mile for state roads. Nebraska ranked fifth nationally because of its high quality of pavement and relatively low spending.
- The Federal Highway Administration reported that 24.7% of Nebraska's bridges were rated as deficient in 2010, slightly higher than the national average.

- **Safety**

- The number of railroad accidents and incidents in Nebraska is high but falling. In 2009, Nebraska ranked 12th highest in the nation in accidents, and highest in the region. However this value dropped by 20 percent, compared to a 12 percent drop nationally.
- Nebraska's highway traffic fatality rate is lower than the national average, and unchanged from last year. The percentage of fatalities involving high blood alcohol levels rose, but were lower than the national average.

Transportation

- Spending

- Per capita local spending on highways decreased by 7% in FY 2008 but is 50% higher than the national average. State highway spending rose 19% and is 31.5% higher than the average.
- The state government ranks high in highway cost effectiveness. The high spending is in part explained by diseconomies of scale due to a lower population density.

- Access

- Less than 1% of Nebraskans used public transit to travel to work, 43rd in the nation.
- In Nebraska, 80.4% drove to work alone, 10.2% carpooled, 3.3% walked, 1.1% travelled by other means and 4.4% worked at home.
- Average commuting time in Nebraska is 17.9 minutes, the 5th lowest in the nation.
- Air travel boardings dropped by 2.9% in the state in 2009. Omaha has 91% of the state's boardings, followed by Lincoln and Grand Island, where boardings increased by 153%.

Telecommunications

- Telephone/Cell Phone Penetration
 - Almost all Nebraska households have telephone service (land line or cell phone), but Nebraska still ranks low nationally and last among its neighbors in telephone service. There are nearly 1.6 million cell phones in Nebraska.
- Internet Access
 - The issue in Nebraska is not access to internet service but rather the average download speed. The vast majority have access to high speed internet service. However, the average download speed ranks in the bottom third nationally.
- Sustainability of Statewide Services
 - One way to make sure advanced telecommunication services such as broadband are available to all Nebraskans is through the Universal Service Fund which was established by the Nebraska Legislature in 1997.
 - In 2010, Nebraska Universal Service Fund expenditures were \$39.9 million.