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## Openings & Expansions October

**Kermit Spade, Research Analyst**

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<td>Makovicka Physical Therapy (Opening)</td>
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<td>Norfolk</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four 30 Salon and Boutique (Opening)</td>
<td>Plattsmouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Nebraska Department of Labor

Openings and expansions listed are a sampling of activity reported for that month. Some activity may have occurred outside the month. If you have an opening or expansion to report, contact us at LMI_NE@nebraska.gov.
The holiday season is here, and for many that means visions of a white Christmas. The featured map shows the probability of having an inch or more of snow cover on the ground on December 25. (1) This data was based on the 1981-2010 U.S. Climate Normals produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In Nebraska, the probability of a white Christmas ranged from 12% in Paxton to 58% in Laurel. The median probability statewide was 35%. An interactive version of this map, produced by NOAA, can be found online.

Map Facts
Jodie Meyer, Research Analyst

Dreaming of a White Christmas

Probability of a ‘White Christmas’ by State

Historical probability of a ‘White Christmas’ (Greater Than 1 Inch of Snow on the Ground)

Forecasting the chance of snow on Christmas is one of the many job duties of the 120 atmospheric and space scientists who were employed in Nebraska as of the third quarter of 2019. These workers earned an average of $44.55 an hour, or $92,650 annually. (2) According to the Nebraska Department of Labor’s 2016-2026 long-term occupational projections, this occupation is projected to grown by 13.5% (15 jobs) by 2026. (3)

When forecasters tell us that snow is on the way, workers in other occupations prepare to clear streets and walkways so people can travel safely. The job of clearing streets generally falls on highway maintenance workers, while clearing sidewalks and walkways in public areas is often performed by janitors and cleaners, or landscapers and groundskeepers.

In the third quarter of 2019, there were 2,250 highway maintenance workers employed in Nebraska. On average, workers in this occupation made $18.39 per hour, or $38,255 annually. (2) This occupation is expected to grow by 5.8% from 2016-2026, for a total increase of 151 jobs. (3)

Nebraska was also home to 14,340 janitors and cleaners, who made an average of $13.79 per hour, or $28,671 annually. (2) Through 2026, this occupation is projected to grow by 10.4% (1,636 jobs). (3)

The 5,780 landscaping and groundskeeping workers employed in the state during the third quarter of 2019 made an average of $15.48 an hour, or $32,183 annually. (2) From 2016-2026, this occupation is expected to grow by 12.8% (929 jobs). (3)

If we do have a white Christmas this year, remember the workers out there clearing the snow to help keep you and your family safe this holiday season!

Image by Michal Jarmoluk from Pixabay

Sources:
Seasonal Shopping & Retail Employment
Dillon Cornett, Research Analyst

Consumers and retailers nationwide are preparing for the annual holiday shopping season. This month, we’ll examine seasonal shopping data in the United States and retail employment trends from around the country and at home in Nebraska.

Seasonal Shopping

The U.S. Census Bureau measures seasonal shopping patterns with the Monthly Retail Trade Survey Report. In 2017, 8.7% of the approximately $5.7 trillion in total retail and food services sales in the United States was generated during November, and an additional 9.8% was generated in December. Consumers spent more than $6 trillion in total retail and food service in 2018, but the in December’s share of those sales (9.4%) declined in comparison to 2017. As seen the chart below, retail and food services sales were greatest in the months of November ($499.5 billion) and December ($560.4 billion) in 2017. In 2018, however, slightly more sales were observed in August ($523.9 billion) than in November ($522.8 billion), but December ($563.5 billion) remained the top selling month of the year. (1)

Monthly US Retail & Food Services Sales (in Billions of Dollars), 2017 – 2018


* Monthly sales estimates are not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading day differences.
The chart to the left shows sales data for three retail industries which primarily sell products commonly given as holiday gifts. In each of these industries, substantial increases in sales were observed in the months of November and December in both 2017 and 2018. (1) Of the nearly $18 billion in sales for hobby, toy, and game stores in 2017, 12.2% came in the month of November, and 17.7% came in December. Jewelry store sales increased to more than $33 billion in 2018, and 18.2% of those sales took place during the month of December. In 2018, department store sales dropped slightly to $47.7 billion, with 10.8% of those sales taking place in November, and 14.6% in December. (1)

### Seasonal Retail Employment

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides industry employment figures via the Current Employment Statistics survey. The chart on page 8 displays employment in the U.S. and Nebraska retail trade industry sector from January 2009 to September 2019, with employment totals during the months of November and December highlighted for each year. Employment in retail trade has historically increased during the final months of each year during the annual surge of seasonal sales associated with holiday shopping. This growth is typically followed by a drop in employment during January and February. Employment then generally rises during the summer months, but to a lesser extent than the increases observed in the lead up to the holiday shopping season. (2)
In December of 2009, employment in America’s retail trade industry sector reached 14.8 million, before falling to 14.1 million in February 2010. Since then, retail employment has steadily increased to 16.3 million in December 2018, until receding again to 15.5 million in February of 2019. (2)

**US & NE Retail Sector Employment (in Thousands), 2009 – 2019**


In Nebraska, similarly to national data, employment in the retail trade sector increased during the final months of each year during the annual surge of seasonal sales. Unlike the U.S., Nebraska’s retail industry employment appears to have decreased overall from a high point in 2015. In December of 2015, retail employment reached 114,200. Since then, Nebraska retail industry employment has increased during holiday season, but has not again reached 2015 levels. (3)

The state’s seasonal retail employment surge may have been weaker during the past few holiday shopping periods than in earlier years at least partially due to the rapid growth in ecommerce as a percentage of all retail sales. In the fourth quarter of 2015, at Nebraska’s seasonal employment peak, online shopping accounted for 8.7% of all U.S. retail purchases. By the fourth quarter of 2018, ecommerce made up 11.4% of the total. (4) Since online retailers can ship goods all over the world without employing staff in every community where there is consumer demand, this may explain why seasonal retail employment growth has been relatively modest in Nebraska in recent years, while largely continuing to match historical patterns nationwide.
The Final Word

Consistently, retail and food services sales have tended to increase during the final months of the year, with this increase being even more pronounced in certain industry subsectors. In both the U.S. and Nebraska, employment in the retail trade industry has also typically increased during November and December. The decline in retail trade industry employment observed recently in Nebraska may be due to an increase in the prevalence of online shopping trading off with traditional retail options. Whether it's online or at your favorite brick-and-mortar store, though, one thing is for certain: 'tis the season for shopping!

Sources:
The five-year survival rate for new Nebraska businesses established during the first quarter of 2013, according to a Nebraska Department of Labor analysis published in the January issue of Nebraska Workforce Trends. New businesses in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry had the highest five-year survival rate at 79.7%. (1)

The expected growth in employment of wind turbine service technicians in Nebraska between 2016 and 2026, based on employment projections for green jobs discussed in the April issue. Other in-demand green jobs included soil and plant scientists and environmental engineers, projected to increase by 12.3% and 13.8% respectively. (4)

The number of residents in ‘Jobsville, Nebraska,’ a hypothetical scale model of the working population of Nebraska, used in the May issue to represent statewide employment patterns. For example, if Nebraska’s entire workforce were reduced to just 100 jobs, 16 of them would be in the office and administrative support occupational group, which was the largest group of occupations in the state. Retail salespersons, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, and cashiers would each account for three of the 100 total jobs in Jobsville. (5)

The number of Nebraskans who were employed in computer-related occupations in 2016, according to an analysis of technology jobs published in the June issue. Employment in this group of 13 occupations is projected to grow by 15% by 2026, about 67% faster than the overall 9% growth rate for all occupations statewide. (6)
The percentage of families in Nebraska found to be living in areas with substantial child care shortages, according to a study published by the Center for American Progress in 2018. Nebraska ranked #7 out of the 50 states and Washington, D.C. for the lowest share of families experiencing such shortages. The November issue featured an analysis of Nebraska's child care landscape, including an interactive child care dashboard showing data at the city and ZIP code level for communities statewide. (11)

The number of employees working in Nebraska's retail trade sector as of December 2018. This is down from a ten-year peak of 114,200 in December of 2015, according to an analysis of seasonal employment and retail sales in 2019's final issue of Nebraska Workforce Trends.

The number of fatal occupational injuries in Nebraska in 2017, according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. The October issue of Trends also analyzed the number and rate of nonfatal injuries and illnesses by occupation across Nebraska and the U.S. as a whole. (10)
Economic Indicators
Kermit Spade, Research Analyst

Initial Unemployment Claims
Monthly Avg. Number of Claims per Week

- Nebraska Current 2019: 1,355 NE 10-Year Avg.
- NE 10-Year Low (Sept. 2019): 430

Avg. Weekly Earnings
All Private Employees Not Seasonally Adjusted

- Nebraska Current 2019: $758.37 NE 10-Year Avg.
- NE 10-Year High (Sept. 2019): $964.52
- NE 10-Year Low (Sept. 2009): $673.99

Gas Prices
Avg. Retail Price per Gallon (Regular-Grade Unleaded Gasoline)

- Nebraska Current 2019: $2.48 NE 10-Year High (May 2011)
- NE 10-Year Low (Feb. 2016): $1.68

An initial claim is a request for determination of UI program eligibility filed by an unemployed individual following a separation from an employer. It can serve as an indicator of emerging labor market conditions in the area.¹

Average weekly earnings represents the mean pay received by workers for services performed over the course of one week.²

Data Sources: [Retrieved: November 2019.]

This figure represents the average price consumers paid at the pump for a gallon of regular-grade, unleaded gasoline during the specified timeframe. The main components affecting the retail price of gasoline are crude oil prices; costs and profits associated with refining, distribution, and marketing; fluctuations in supply and demand; and federal, state, and local taxes.³

Data Sources: [Retrieved: November 2019.]
Economic Indicators

**Labor Force Participation Rate**
Seasonally Adjusted

**Consumer Price Index**
12-Month % Change
Not Seasonally Adjusted

**Housing Prices**
4-Quarter % Change
Seasonally Adjusted

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The labor force is comprised of all persons age 16 and over in the civilian, noninstitutional population who are either employed or unemployed but available for work and actively seeking employment. It excludes people doing unpaid homemaking or volunteer work, retired people, and people who are not employed and not actively seeking work. The labor force participation rate measures the labor force as a percentage of the total civilian, noninstitutional population, age 16 and over.¹

The consumer price index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by consumers for goods and services. It is used to determine the real purchasing power of consumers’ dollars, and as a measure of inflation.⁶

The housing price index (HPI) measures the movement of single-family house prices, based on purchases involving conventional mortgages purchased or securitized by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. "Four-quarter" change is relative to the same quarter one year earlier. HPI data are often considered useful for estimating housing affordability and projecting future changes in mortgage default rates.⁴

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**Data Sources:**
NEBRASKA WORKFORCE TRENDS

Employment Data | October

October 2019 County Unemployment Rates

**NEBRASKA**

- **October Non-Farm Total Employment:** 1,045,902
- **Manufacturing:** 100,309

**Nebraska**

- **(Smooth Seasonally Adjusted)**
- **October Unemployment Rate:** 3.1%
- **Change (OTM):** 0.0
- **Change (OTY):** -0.4

**Economic Region**

- **(Not Seasonally Adjusted)**
  - Central: 2.9%
  - Mid Plains: 3.1%
  - Northeast: 2.8%
  - Panhandle: 3.3%
  - Sandhills: 2.7%
  - Southeast: 3.5%

**OMAHA MSA**

- **(Not Seasonally Adjusted)**
  - October Unemployment Rate: 2.8%
  - October Total Non-Farm Employment: 521,651
  - Manufacturing: 33,194

**Largest OTM Increase (Private)**

- Professional & Business Services: 1,343 (1.8%)
- Mining & Construction: 1,040 (3.0%)

**Largest OTY Increase (Private)**

- Mining & Construction: 5,919 (20.0%)
- Professional & Business Services: 3,540 (4.8%)

**GRAND ISLAND MSA**

- **(Not Seasonally Adjusted)**
  - October Unemployment Rate: 4.4%
  - October Total Non-Farm Employment: 42,661
  - Change (OTM): -264 (-0.6%)
  - Change (OTY): 419 (1.0%)

**Largest OTY Increase (Private)**

- Leisure & Hospitality: 819 (4.3%)
- Education & Health Services: 391 (1.3%)

**LINCOLN MSA**

- **(Not Seasonally Adjusted)**
  - October Unemployment Rate: 2.7%
  - October Total Non-Farm Employment: 186,917
  - Manufacturing: 13,683

**Largest OTM Increase (Private)**

- Trade, Transportation & Utilities: 218 (0.7%)
- Education & Health Services: 207 (0.7%)

**Grand Island MSA**

- **(Not Seasonally Adjusted)**
  - October Unemployment Rate: 4.4%
  - October Total Non-Farm Employment: 42,661
  - Change (OTM): -264 (-0.6%)
  - Change (OTY): 419 (1.0%)

**Largest OTY Increase (Private)**

- Leisure & Hospitality: 819 (4.3%)
- Education & Health Services: 391 (1.3%)

**Sources:**

Lincoln MSA

October Unemployment Rate: 2.7%

October Total Non-Farm Employment: 186,917

Manufacturing: 13,683

Largest OTM Increase (Private)
- Trade, Transportation & Utilities: 218 (0.7%)
- Education & Health Services: 207 (0.7%)

Largest OTY Increase (Private)
- Leisure & Hospitality: 819 (4.3%)
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