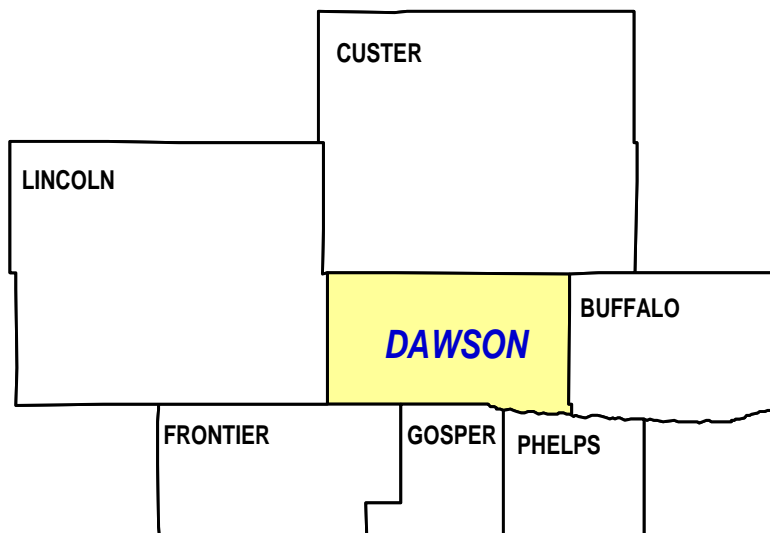


Labor Supply Factors and Labor Availability for the Dawson County Labor Area



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Executive Summary

The information provided in this report indicates that a prospective new employer providing job opportunities with competitive wages and benefits and offering career opportunities would be a welcome addition to the employment base in Dawson County. The response to such employment opportunities would be substantial, and as this report shows, there is a sizeable labor force and population base living within the Dawson County Labor Area. Some of the pertinent findings of the report include:

- Population in the Dawson County Labor Area (Dawson County plus the six contiguous counties) totaled 129,499 people in 2005, with the Dawson County population totaling 24,617. Population in Dawson County grew by 1.0 percent during the 2000-2005 period, compared to a population increase of 1.1 percent for the seven-county Dawson County Labor Area as a whole.
- The labor force for the Dawson County Labor Area totaled 75,709 in 2005, with 73,274 local residents employed in jobs either within or outside the area. A total of 61,957 persons were employed in non-farm wage and salary jobs located within the area. In 2005, 11,925 of the people living in Dawson County were employed; and, there were 10,841 persons employed in non-farm wage and salary jobs within the county.
- Average annual wages for all non-farm wage and salary employees in the Dawson County Labor Area were \$5,138 less than the Nebraska average. Within the labor area, Buffalo County had the highest average wage, \$28,695 or -\$3,727 lower than the Nebraska average. In Dawson County, average annual salaries were \$5,384 less than the state average.

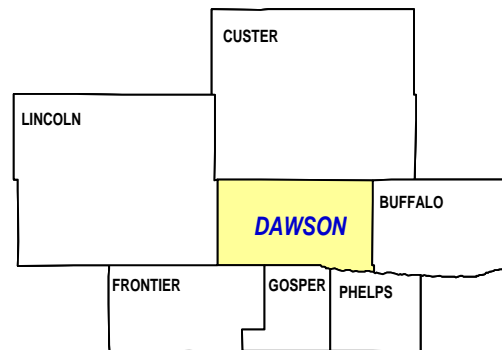
The basic conclusion of this report, which follows from the data and analysis presented, is that the Dawson County Labor Area and Dawson County would be able to provide a significant number of dedicated and skilled workers to meet the needs of additional employers in the area. While this report has not estimated a precise number of people that may be available for a prospective new employer in the Dawson area, it is anticipated that if attractive working conditions with competitive wages and employee benefits were offered, a prospective new employer would be able to select their workforce from a substantial pool of applicants.

Labor Supply Factors and Labor Availability for the Dawson County Labor Area

This report presents selected labor-related and demographic data that provide insights into the labor supply situation in Dawson County and the surrounding area.

In reviewing the data presented in this report, it will be evident that the Dawson County Labor Area has a sizeable pool of labor to provide for the labor requirements of additional employers in the area, both in the near term and over the long run. Data presented in this report includes tables on labor force, employment, and population for Dawson County and for the surrounding counties that make up the potential laborshed. Figure One includes a map outlining the geographic area which has been defined as the Dawson County Labor Area.

FIGURE ONE
Dawson County Labor Area



An important resource for new or expanding businesses is a readily available supply of workers. Whether an employer requires 5 or 500 workers, they need to have confidence there will be a sufficient number of workers available to meet their labor requirements. This report is provided as a key analytical tool to identify and quantify the number and selected characteristics of workers available in the Dawson County Labor Area.

Available labor supply is defined as the number of persons who would potentially apply for employment when a job becomes available. Potential workers are categorized into two groups; those currently employed who would consider other employment opportunities and those who do not currently have a job.

One factor contributing to the available supply of workers is the willingness of workers already employed to change jobs. Factors influencing this decision are related to wages, fringe benefits, hours, and working conditions. Generally, workers are more inclined to change jobs when the wages and benefits for the potential new job are better and/or when they are optimistic about the economy.

Factors contributing to the available supply of people without jobs include the unemployment rate, labor force participation, and migration. To be classified as unemployed, an individual must have been actively looking for work in the last four weeks, unless they were expecting recall from a layoff or waiting to start a job within 30 days.

There are also potential workers that are classified as not presently in the labor force. These individuals may not be participating in the labor force as employed or unemployed workers for various reasons. They may be unable to work because of school or family responsibilities or they may have an illness that has prevented them from becoming part of the labor force. There may also be workers who have not been able to find employment in the past and have become discouraged or who are no longer actively seeking employment because they perceive there are not attractive job opportunities available in the area. Retired persons are also classified as not in the labor force, although this population group often can provide substantial labor resources for selected business operations. Within the group of persons not currently in the labor force, and therefore not actively seeking employment, are many individuals who would accept a job with attractive working conditions, competitive wages and employee benefits if one became available.

Population migration is another factor that affects the available labor supply of potential workers who are not presently employed (and may not be seeking work within the local labor market). Persons without jobs and who perceive that there are not job opportunities available locally are the most likely to leave (migrate out) the area for employment opportunities elsewhere.

Labor Force and Employment

Table One provides data showing labor force and employment trends for the Dawson County Labor Area and for Dawson County for selected years from 2001 to 2005. The data in Table One (Part A and Part B) provide two alternate measures of employment for two distinct areas. Presented in Table One Part A are labor force, unemployment, employment, and non-farm wage and salary employment data for the entire Dawson County Labor Area (see Figure One). As these data indicate, both the total labor force and total employment for the laborshed area as a whole have increased, with the area labor force growing by 5.1 percent between 2001 and 2005 and total employment growing by 4.7 percent during the same period.

Table One
Labor Force and Employment, Dawson County Labor Area
2001-2005

Part A
Labor Force and Employment
Dawson County Labor Area^(a), 2001-2005

(Place of Residence)	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Chg. 2001-2005
Labor Force^(b)	72,011	73,706	75,126	75,898	75,709	5.1
Unemployment (#)	2,028	2,242	2,449	2,535	2,435	20.1
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.2	(N/A)
Employment	69,983	71,464	72,677	73,363	73,274	4.7
(Place of Work)						
Nonfarm Employment^(c)	59,622	60,652	61,036	61,286	61,957	3.9

Table One -- Continued
Part B
Labor Force and Employment by Industry
Dawson County

(Place of Residence)	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Chg. 2001-2005
Labor Force^(b)	12,291	12,449	12,722	12,771	12,471	1.5
Unemployment (#)	440	494	531	545	546	24.1
Unemployment Rate	3.6	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	(N/A)
Employment	11,851	11,955	12,191	12,226	11,925	0.6
(Place of Work)						
Nonfarm Employment^(c)	10,947	10,987	11,081	11,051	10,841	-1.0
Manufacturing ^(d)	4,099	3,981	3,935	3,811	3,664	-10.6
Mining & Construction	275	278	276	261	263	-4.4
Total Trade	1,854	1,861	1,849	1,867	1,782	-3.9
Wholesale Trade	481	528	515	557	499	3.7
Retail Trade	1,372	1,333	1,335	1,310	1,283	-6.5
Trans., Warehousing & Utilities	254	299	379	378	383	50.8
Information	114	115	111	105	104	-8.8
Financial Activities	366	349	367	376	357	-2.5
Professional & Business Services	439	534	536	568	593	35.1
Education & Health Services	682	663	682	677	685	0.4
Leisure and Hospitality	746	761	762	761	741	-0.7
Other Services, except Public	210	207	224	251	259	23.3
Total Government	1,908	1,940	1,961	1,996	2,009	5.3
Federal Government	110	107	106	110	110	0.0
State Government	104	101	100	98	96	-7.7
Local Government	1,693	1,732	1,755	1,788	1,804	6.6

^(a) The Dawson County labor area includes Dawson County and the contiguous counties (Buffalo, Custer, Frontier, Gosper, Lincoln, and Phelps).

^(b) The labor force data are measured based on the county of residence, irrespective of the county of employment.

^(c) The Non Agricultural Employment data are for wage and salary employment and are based on the place (county) where the individual is employed, irrespective of the the county of residence.

^(d) Manufacturing values suppressed by U.S. Department of Labor; values in table estimated by Ken Lemke, NPPD. Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, (ftp.dol.state.ne.us/lmi/laborforce_workforce).

The second employment measure presented for the Dawson County Labor Area, non-farm wage and salary employment, increased from 59,622 in 2001 to 61,957 in 2005, an increase of 3.9 percent. In the case of the labor force data (labor force, unemployment and employment), the respective measures are based on the county of residence. The non-farm wage and salary employment data are measured based on the county of employment, irrespective of the place of residence of the workers.

The labor force and employment measures presented for Dawson County (Part B of Table One) indicate that the total labor force in the county grew by 1.5 percent between 2001 and 2005, with total employment (of people residing in Dawson County, irrespective of their county of employment) growing by 0.6 percent during this period. It

is also of interest to note that unemployment increased by 24.1 percent, from 440 in 2001 to 546 in 2005, recording an unemployment rate of 4.4 percent in 2005.

As previously noted, the second employment measure presented for Dawson County, non-farm wage and salary employment, is based on the county where the person is employed irrespective of their county of residence. Non-farm wage and salary employment in Dawson County decreased by 1.0 percent between 2001 and 2005. The data presented in Table One Part B show that the fastest growing employment sector in Dawson County during the 2001-2005 review period was the Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities sector, recording a 50.8 percent increase between 2001 and 2005. Other economic sectors experiencing significant growth in employment between 2001 and 2005 include, Professional & Business Services (35.1 percent) and Other Services, except Public sector (23.3 percent). In the case of the Total Government sector, employment grew by 5.3 percent, with local government employment increasing by 6.6 percent, federal employment unchanged, and state government employment declining by 7.7 percent.

Further review of the employment data reported for the Dawson County Labor Area (Table One Part A) and for Dawson County (Table One Part B) indicates that for both areas there were differences between the non-farm wage and salary employment reported in the areas and the total employment of persons living in the respective areas. In the case of the entire Dawson County Labor Area, non-farm wage and salary employment was reported to be 61,957 in 2005, which was significantly less (11,317 less) than the reported total employment of persons living within the nine-county Dawson County Labor Area. Recalling that non-farm wage and salary employment is based on the county of employment while the total employment data are based on the county of residence helps explain how this can occur. It is obvious that a number of people living within the nine-county Dawson County Labor Area work outside of the area and commute to other areas for employment.

In the case of Dawson County, the same situation is evident. Total employment of persons living in Dawson County (irrespective of their county of employment) was 11,925 in 2005, which was 1,084 more than the 10,841 non-farm wage and salary jobs within the county for the same year. These data suggest that a number of workers are commuting out of Dawson County for employment on a regular basis. It must be noted, however, the total number of reported employed people living in Dawson County includes those who are self employed as well as those employed in agriculture. This means the difference between total employment and non-farm wage and salary jobs (1,084) likely overstates the number of workers commuting out of Dawson County.

Included in Table Two are additional employment data for 2005, showing the deviations between total employment and non-farm wage and salary employment for the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole and for each county within the area. For the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole, the total employment of area residents (73,274), irrespective of their place of employment, is 11,317 greater than the non-farm wage and salary employees working within the area.

Also shown in Table Two are agricultural employment and non-farm proprietor data for 2004, the latest year for which these data are available. Farm employment and proprietor data can reflect place of residence, place of employment, or a location other than place of residence or employment. However, it is assumed proprietor data largely indicate place of residence.

Table Two
Labor Force, Employment and Non-Farm Wage and Salary Employment,
Dawson County Labor Area, 2005

	Labor Force (2005) ^(a)	Total Employment (2005) ^(a)	Non-Farm Wage & Salary Employment (2005) ^(b)	Total Employment Minus NF W&S Employment	Agricultural Employment (2004) ^(c)	Non-farm Proprietors (2004) ^(c)
Dawson County	12,471	11,925	10,841	1,084	1,125	2,589
Buffalo County	27,142	26,398	25,206	1,192	1,189	5,852
Custer County	6,363	6,183	3,659	2,524	1,562	1,675
Frontier County	1,815	1,769	916	853	396	425
Gosper County	1,085	1,047	387	660	328	229
Lincoln County	21,495	20,765	16,537	4,228	1,310	3,556
Phelps County	5,338	5,187	4,411	776	693	1,185
Labor Area	75,709	73,274	61,957	11,317	6,603	15,511

^(a) Labor force and employment data are measured based on the county of residence.

^(b) Non Agricultural Employment data are for wage and salary employment and are based on the place (county) where the individual is employed, irrespective of the the county of residence.

^(c) Agricultural employment and non-farm proprietor data are for 2004.

Sources: Labor Data - Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, (ftp.dol.state.ne.us/lmi/laborforce_workforce). Farm Employment Data - U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Site Regional Accounts Data WEB (<http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/>).

The total of agricultural employment and non-farm proprietors for the Dawson County Labor Area, 22,114, is almost twice the difference, 11,317, between total employment of area residents and non-farm wage and salary employees within the area. These data indicate more workers are commuting into the Dawson County Labor Area for employment than are commuting to jobs outside the area. It is important to note that proprietor data reflect the total number of sole proprietorships or partnerships active at any time during a year and can include a significant number of small, seasonal businesses. This means many sole proprietors, especially those in the farm sector, often work at other jobs. For example, approximately 49 percent of Nebraska farm operators work off the farm with 32 percent having a full-time job off the farm. Therefore, it is likely the number of people commuting into the Dawson County Labor Area is much smaller than the difference, 10,797, between total employment and the sum of non-farm wage and salary jobs, agricultural employment, and non-farm proprietors.

Further review of the data presented in Table Two provides an indication of the commuting patterns for the counties within the Dawson County Labor Area. It is evident that a significant percentage of the employed people are commuting out of Frontier and Gosper counties for employment. Data in Table Two also indicates that a significant number of people are commuting into Buffalo and Dawson counties.

The number of non-farm wage and salary workers in the Dawson County Labor Area is shown by major industry sector and by county in Table Three. The reader is reminded that non-farm wage and salary workers are counted in the county where they are employed. Individuals with more than one job are counted at each establishment (and in each county) where they work. Table Three provides information about the number of workers in the labor area, by county and major industry category.

Table Three
Non-Farm Wage and Salary Employment, by Industry Sector
Dawson County Labor Area, by County, 2005

County	Constr. & Trans.		Trade	Financial Activities	Other Services	Govt.	Total NF W. & S. Emp	
	Manufact.	Mining						
Dawson County	3,664*	263	383	1,782	357	2,383*	2,009	10,841
Buffalo County	4,047	1,110	638	4,521	867	9,714*	4,309	25,206
Custer County	490*	163	120	631	171	1,161*	923	3,659
Frontier County	24*	37*	42	113	36*	270*	394	916
Gosper County	16*	15*	4	64	37	67*	184	387
Lincoln County	351	695	2,757*	3,474*	800	5,632*	2,828	16,537
Phelps County	799*	191	23	23	196	1,514*	831	4,411
Total Labor Area	9,391	2,474	4,064	11,345	2,464	20,741	11,478	61,957
Nebraska	101,514	47,535	52,323	147,712	64,533	360,967	161,267	935,851

	Percent of Total NonFarm Wage & Salary Employment							Total NF W. & S. Emp
	Manufact.	Constr. & Mining	Trans. Whr. & Ut.	Trade	Financial Activities	Services	Govt.	
Total Labor Area	15.2	4.0	6.6	18.3	4.0	33.5	18.5	100.0
Nebraska	10.8	5.1	5.6	15.8	6.9	38.6	17.2	100.0

* Employment estimated for county sectors where data have been withheld; values estimated by Ken Lemke, NPPD.
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, (ftp.dol.state.ne.us/lmi/laborforce_workforce).

In addition to displaying the number of workers by major industry sector, Table Three also compares the percentage distribution of workers by industry in the Dawson County Labor Area with the distribution for the State of Nebraska. As these data show, the industry distribution of employment for the Dawson County Labor Area is significantly different than that for Nebraska as a whole.

The most significant deviations between Nebraska and the Dawson County Labor Area occur in Manufacturing sector employment, with 15.2 percent of non-farm wage and salary workers in the Dawson County Labor Area employed in that sector, compared to 10.8 percent for Nebraska. In the case of the Other Services sector, only 33.5 percent of non-farm wage and salary workers in the Dawson County Labor Area are employed in that sector, compared to 38.6 percent for Nebraska as a whole.

Table Four provides data showing labor cost comparisons, by county, for all wage and salary workers subject to Nebraska Employment Security Laws for the Dawson County Labor Area. It is important to remember that the wage and salary employment is reported by county of employment, and does not provide an indication of the average weekly and annual wage for residents of the respective counties. Obviously, labor cost is an important consideration in any analysis of the labor availability in an area. Pay data

for workers covered by unemployment insurance laws in Nebraska are the source of the labor cost information. Average annual pay is calculated by dividing the total payroll for wage and salary workers by the number of employees.

A review of the data in Table Four Part A indicates that average annual salaries in Dawson County (\$27,038 for all wage and salary employees for all industries) are slightly lower than for the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole (\$27,284), significantly less than the state average, but higher than four of the other six counties that make up the area. Average annual salaries for the Dawson County Labor Area are \$5,138 (15.8 percent) less than the Nebraska average, with Dawson County average annual salaries \$5,384 (16.6 percent) less. These data suggest, of course, there would be a positive labor supply response in Dawson County to the creation of additional employment opportunities with competitive wages and benefits.

Table Four Part B provides average annual wages, by county and by major industry sector, for the counties that make up the Dawson County Labor Area. As these data indicate, the highest average annual wages in the area are for wage and salary workers employed in Buffalo County. The average annual wage for all wage and salary workers working in Buffalo County was \$28,695 in 2005, which was \$1,411 (5.2 percent) more than the average for the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole, but \$3,727 (11.5 percent) less than the Nebraska average. A review of the industry specific data for average annual wages for Buffalo County indicates that the high average annual wage results from the high average wage (\$38,205) in the manufacturing sector.

Table Four
Part A
Average Annual Pay and Average Weekly Wages of Wage and Salary Workers
All Covered^(a) Workers and All Industries, by County, and Nebraska, 2005

County	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages	Average Annual Wages
Dawson County	10,926	\$520	\$27,038
Buffalo County	24,916	\$552	\$28,695
Custer County	3,785	\$469	\$24,391
Frontier County	849	\$434	\$22,593
Gosper County	382	\$390	\$20,277
Lincoln County	14,269	\$502	\$26,113
Phelps County	4,510	\$533	\$27,696
Labor Area	59,637	\$523	\$27,284
Nebraska	892,397	\$624	\$32,422

Table Four -- Continued
Part B

**Average Annual Pay of Wage and Salary Workers, Covered^(a) Employers, by Industry Group
Dawson County Labor Area, by County, and Nebraska, 2005**

County	All Goods Producing	Manf.	Other Good-Prd	All Service Providing	Trans & Util	Trade	Financ Actv	Other Svc-Prv
Dawson County	\$31,442	\$32,267	\$26,256	\$21,633	\$34,187	\$22,483	\$30,052	\$21,258
Buffalo County	\$35,860	\$38,205	\$29,466	\$25,181	\$31,268	\$21,154	\$31,615	\$13,482
Custer County	\$32,861	\$36,818	\$28,805	\$19,311	\$28,685	\$17,808	\$28,068	\$21,315
Frontier County	\$29,949	\$23,270	\$31,761	\$20,426	-D-	-D-	\$35,883	\$18,436
Gosper County	\$19,861	\$17,688	\$20,540	\$20,469	-D-	\$19,271	\$34,446	\$21,752
Lincoln County	\$27,927	\$27,913	\$27,932	\$23,273	-D-	-D-	\$28,880	\$18,752
Phelps County	\$36,616	-D-	-D-	\$23,282	\$29,514	\$27,223	\$28,586	-D-
Nebraska	\$35,478	\$36,569	\$33,575	\$31,050	\$35,959	\$26,423	\$44,102	\$29,048

^(a) Includes employers that are subject to Nebraska Employment Security Laws.

-D-: Data withheld by U.S. Department of Labor.

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (<http://www.bls.gov/cew/>) and

Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information (<http://www.dol.state.ne.us/lmiindustry/index.asp>).

Commuting Patterns

Table Five provides data from the 2000 Census of Population showing commuting patterns for workers living in the Dawson County Labor Area. As the data in Table Five Part A indicate, a significant number (and percentage) of workers in the area commuted outside of their county of residence for employment. Data for Dawson County indicate that 1,100, or 9.9 percent of the employed workers, commuted to other counties for employment. Four of the other six counties, in the Dawson County Labor Area, had higher commuter percentages than Dawson County. In the case of Gosper County, 538, or 51.6 percent of employed workers commuted out of their county of residence for employment. Other counties with a high percentage of employed workers commuting to other counties include Frontier (28.7 percent), Phelps (15.0 percent), and Custer with 11.1 percent of employed workers commuting out of their county of residence for employment.

Table Five

Commuting Data for Workers in the Dawson County Labor Area

Part A
Commuting Outside County

County	Worked Outside County	
	Number	Percent
Dawson County	1,100	9.9
Buffalo County	2,042	8.8
Custer County	630	11.1
Frontier County	459	28.7
Gosper County	538	51.6
Lincoln County	800	4.8
Phelps County	735	15.0

Part B
Commuting Times of Workers

County	Less Than 10 Minutes		10 - 19 Minutes		20 - 29 Minutes		30 - 44 Minutes		45 + Minutes	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Dawson County	4,916	46.0	3,504	32.8	1,023	9.6	727	6.8	506	4.7
Buffalo County	7,843	35.3	9,560	43.0	2,063	9.3	1,537	6.9	1,221	5.5
Custer County	2,172	43.8	1,416	28.6	450	9.1	482	9.7	437	8.8
Frontier County	565	41.0	336	24.4	174	12.6	162	11.7	142	10.3
Gosper County	295	30.3	245	25.2	200	20.6	150	15.4	82	8.4
Lincoln County	5,062	31.6	7,094	44.3	1,907	11.9	1,180	7.4	754	4.7
Phelps County	2,271	49.0	1,320	28.5	373	8.1	348	7.5	319	6.9
Labor Area	23,124	38.0	23,475	38.6	6,190	10.2	4,586	7.5	3,461	5.7
Nebraska	214,676	25.8	318,145	38.2	161,468	19.4	88,452	10.6	49,940	6.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population, 2000*.

Table Five (B) provides further data illustrating the willingness of workers in the area to travel for employment. For the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole, there were 8,047 workers in 2000, or 13.2 percent of residents employed outside of their home, which traveled 30 minutes or more commuting to their place of employment. In the case of Gosper County, 23.9 percent traveled 30 minutes or more to their place of employment, while for Frontier County the workers traveling 30 minutes or more accounted for 22.0 percent. For Nebraska as a whole, the comparable percentage (traveling 30 minutes or more for employment) was 16.6 percent.

Population Trends

The data provided in Table Six show population trends for the Dawson County Labor Area, by county, and for Nebraska for the 1950-2005 period. As these data indicate, the population of the Dawson County Labor Area was 128,038 in 2000. The Dawson County Labor Area population grew by 18.4 percent from 1950 to 2000 and grew by 1.1 percent from 2000 to 2005. Population in Dawson County totaled 24,365 in 2000 and had grown by 25.6 percent from 1950 to 2000. During the latest Census decade, the Dawson County population increased by 22.2 percent, compared to the increase for the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole of 9.5 percent, and to the State rate of growth of 8.4 percent.

Table Six
Population in the Dawson County Labor Area, by County, and Nebraska
Selected Years, 1950-2005

COUNTY	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	% Chg.	
								1950-2000	2000-05
Nebraska	1,325,510	1,411,330	1,485,333	1,569,825	1,578,417	1,711,263	1,758,787	29.1	2.8
Dawson County	19,393	19,405	19,467	22,304	19,940	24,365	24,617	25.6	1.0
Buffalo County	25,134	26,236	31,222	34,797	37,447	42,259	43,572	68.1	3.1
Custer County	19,170	16,517	14,092	13,877	12,270	11,793	11,410	-38.5	-3.2
Frontier County	5,282	4,311	3,982	3,647	3,101	3,099	2,795	-41.3	-9.8
Gosper County	2,734	2,489	2,178	2,140	1,928	2,143	2,020	-21.6	-5.7
Lincoln County	27,380	28,491	29,538	36,455	32,508	34,632	35,636	26.5	2.9
Phelps County	9,048	9,800	9,553	9,769	9,715	9,747	9,449	7.7	-3.1
Labor Area	108,141	107,249	110,032	122,989	116,909	128,038	129,499	18.4	1.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population, 1950-2000* and Annual Population Estimates, 2005.

Table Seven shows the age distribution of the resident population. Obviously, the age distribution of the population is important when evaluating the potential labor supply in an area. A key variable is the number of people in the working age populations of the counties making up the Dawson County Labor Area. In 2005, there were 12,208 people in Dawson County between the ages of 25 and 64, which represented 49.6 percent of the total population, compared to 49.7 percent of the population for the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole and 51.3 percent of the Nebraska population in this age range.

Table Seven
Age Characteristics of the Population, Dawson County Labor Area,
by County, and Nebraska, 2005

COUNTY	0 - 14		15 - 24		25 - 44		45 - 64		65 - Older		Median Age
	Number	% ^(a)	Number	% ^(a)	Number	% ^(a)	Number	% ^(a)	Number	% ^(a)	
Dawson County	5,952	24.2	3,269	13.3	6,203	25.2	6,005	24.4	3,188	13.0	35.8
Buffalo County	8,184	18.8	9,323	21.4	11,785	27.0	9,351	21.5	4,929	11.3	30.7
Custer County	2,134	18.7	1,468	12.9	2,374	20.8	3,120	27.3	2,314	20.3	43.5
Frontier County	448	16.0	500	17.9	520	18.6	789	28.2	538	19.2	43.4
Gosper County	334	16.5	233	11.5	407	20.1	585	29.0	461	22.8	46.3
Lincoln County	7,043	19.8	4,752	13.3	9,131	25.6	9,369	26.3	5,341	15.0	38.5
Phelps County	1,796	19.0	1,193	12.6	2,155	22.8	2,567	27.2	1,738	18.4	42.3
Labor Area	25,891	20.0	20,738	16.0	32,575	25.2	31,786	24.5	18,509	14.3	36.3
Nebraska	355,732	20.2	266,513	15.2	473,399	26.9	429,593	24.4	233,550	13.3	36.2

^(a) Percent of total population for each respective area.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Estimates, by Age, 2005*.

Table Eight provides information showing population, the natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration for the 1990-2000 period for Nebraska, for Dawson County and for the Dawson County Labor Area. As these data show, the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole experienced a high rate of net in-migration, relative to the state, during the Census decade of the 1990s, while Custer, Frontier and Phelps counties experienced net out-migration. As indicated in the table, net in-migration for the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole accounted for population growth of 6,175 people during the decade, contributing to a population increase equal to 5.3 percent of the 1990 population.

In the case of Dawson County, net in-migration during the 1990s totaled 2,934 people, or 14.7 percent of the 1990 population.

Table Eight
Population, Births, Deaths and Migration, Dawson County Labor Area,
by County, 1990-2000

County	Population		1990 - 1999			Net Migration, 1990 - 2000	
	1990	2000	Births	Deaths	Nat. Incr.	Number	% 1990 Pop.
Dawson County	19,940	24,365	3,840	2,349	1,491	2,934	14.71
Buffalo County	37,447	42,259	5,516	3,016	2,500	2,312	6.17
Custer County	12,270	11,793	1,455	1,725	-270	-207	-1.69
Frontier County	3,101	3,099	339	315	24	-26	-0.84
Gosper County	1,928	2,143	237	272	-35	250	12.97
Lincoln County	32,508	34,632	4,468	3,321	1,147	977	3.01
Phelps County	9,715	9,747	1,281	1,184	97	-65	-0.67
Labor Area	116,909	128,038	17,136	12,182	4,954	6,175	5.28
Nebraska	1,578,385	1,711,263	235,210	150,599	84,611	48,267	3.06

Sources: Population (1990, 2000) - U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1990, 2000;
Births, Deaths, Natural Increase - Nebraska Department of Health; Migration - computed using
population and vital statistics data.

Table Nine provides information showing population, the natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration for the 2000-2005 period. As these data show, the Dawson County Labor Area experienced net out-migration during this more recent five-year period. As indicated in the table, out-migration for the Dawson County Labor Area as a whole accounted for population decline of 1,590 during the 2000-2005 period, contributing to a population decrease equal to 1.2 percent of the 2000 population. In the case of Dawson County, net out-migration during this five-year period was 898, or 3.7 percent of the 2000 population.

Table Nine
Population, Births, Deaths and Migration, Dawson County Labor area,
by County, 2000-2005

County	Population		2000-2005			Net Migration, 2000-2005*	
	2000	2005	Births	Deaths	Nat. Incr.	Number	% 2000 Pop.
Dawson County	24,365	24,617	2,326	1,176	1,150	-898	-3.70
Buffalo County	42,259	43,572	3,191	1,791	1,400	-87	-0.20
Custer County	11,793	11,410	704	831	-127	-256	-2.20
Frontier County	3,099	2,795	138	141	-3	-301	-9.70
Gosper County	2,143	2,020	124	158	-34	-89	-4.20
Lincoln County	34,632	35,636	2,501	1,824	677	327	0.90
Phelps County	9,747	9,449	577	589	-12	-286	-2.90
Labor Area	128,038	129,499	9,561	6,510	3,051	-1,590	-1.20
Nebraska	1,711,263	1,758,787	132,394	80,290	52,104	-4,580	-0.30

* Net Migration from the Bureau of the Census estimates, includes residual component not shown separately.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Estimates, 2005, and Components of Population Change, 2000-2005*.

Competitive Employment and Career Opportunities

An employer providing jobs with competitive wages and benefits and offering career opportunities would be a welcome addition to the employment base in the Dawson County Labor Area and in Dawson County. The expected response to such employment opportunities would be significant, and it is anticipated there would be an adequate labor supply response for a prospective new employer offering competitive wages and benefits in the Dawson County area. The labor force, employment, and demographic data presented in this report illustrate quite clearly that there is a large labor force and population base living within the Dawson County Labor Area, and that significant numbers of persons living in the area are commuting to other areas for employment.

In conclusion, the data and analysis presented in this report indicate that the Dawson County Labor Area and Dawson County would be able to provide a significant number of dedicated and skilled workers to meet the needs of additional employers in the area. While this report has not estimated a precise number of people that might be available to a prospective new employer in the Dawson area, it is anticipated that if attractive working conditions with competitive wages and employee benefits were offered, a prospective new employer would be able to select their workforce from a substantial pool of applicants.

Questions concerning this report and the supporting data should be addressed to:

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