

Nebraska population to stabilize in coming years

The population of the Lincoln metropolitan area has grown about twice as fast as the rest of Nebraska's since 1970, according to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Bureau of Business Research.

The Lincoln metropolitan area population has increased by 8.9 per cent, while the rest of the state recorded a 4.5 per cent population increase since the 1970 census.

The bureau, in the July issue of *Business in Nebraska*, reports that Nebraska's population appears to be stabilizing during the 1970s. Most of the growth since 1970 resulted from natural increase, but migration into the state accounts for about 20 per cent, the report said.

This is a significant departure from the four-decade-long trend for Nebraska to experience net out-migration of population, the report said.

Nebraska's metropolitan areas have escaped the national trend for city populations to decline below

their 1970 census levels. Douglas county, the report says, had a net in-migration rate of almost one per cent since 1970.

During the 1960's, the Bureau reported, 87 of Nebraska's 93 counties experienced net out-migration. In contrast, estimates for 1976 show either reduced rates of net out-migration or a reversal to net in-migration for 76 of those counties.

Every region of Nebraska—the panhandle, sandhills, midlands and eastern—appears to be sharing the nationwide trend toward increased stability of non-city populations, the report said.

The bureau reported the growth for each region as follows:

—Metropolitan Populations: The Omaha metropolitan area continued to show rapid growth during the 1970-76 period. The increase for Douglas, Sarpy, Washington, Dodge and Cass counties combined was 8.2 per cent,

raising the five-county region's 1976 share of the state population to 36.4 per cent, compared to 35.1 per cent in 1970.

The 8.9 per cent growth rate for Lincoln was not as high as was estimated for the area during the early 1970s. The slowing growth rate may only be temporary and related to the recent recession and a marked slowdown in the construction industry since 1974.

—Eastern Nebraska: The population of 17 southeastern counties grew only slightly during the six-year period. Counties which had shown population declines from 1960 to 1970 continued to decline: Fillmore, Butler, Otoe, Jefferson, Polk, Thayer, Richardson, Pawnee, Gage, Nemaha and Johnson counties all lost population.

Dakota County in northeastern Nebraska was the fastest growing county in the state since 1970. Its population increased by 24.6 per cent.

—Midlands: Since 1970, 11 central Nebraskan counties have shown population increases greater than the state average: Lincoln, Chase, Loup, Keith, Gosper, Dawson, Blaine, Buffalo, Brown, Garfield and Hall. In several midland counties the out-migration recorded during the 1960s has been reversed, with slight net in-migration recorded for Brown, Rock, Holt, Hooker, Blaine, Loup and Garfield.

—Panhandle: 1976 population estimates indicate substantial improvement over the declines that were estimated earlier in the 1970s. Box Butte, Morrill, Sheridan and Scotts Bluff counties were the fastest growing in the area.

Nebraska's population estimate for 1976 is 1,552,858.

Epley feels 'married to his work'

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football players, athletes from 15 other sports and other UNL students all making use of the weight facilities, there are frequent breakdowns.

Such a breakdown occurred last June when Epley, Bob Schmidt and Steve Manstedt were lifting weights. Schmidt and Epley were trying to see who could do more lateral pull-downs with 220 pounds (all the machine could handle).

Epley said he'd already done 12 repetitions, but Manstedt—the supposedly impartial judge—under Schmidt's prompting, had declared some of them invalid.

Schmidt then did eight—declared valid by Manstedt—and Epley was doing a set of eight to match Schmidt when the cable gave up and snapped. The weights crashed harmlessly to the floor, but the heavy pulldown bar smashes into Epley's skull, causing a two and half inch gash.

Epley shrugs that one off today. His biggest regret seems to be that he didn't win the Coke that went to the victor.

Epley constantly receives weight lifting challenges from UNL players as well as from ex-Huskies now playing pro football that are in Lincoln for the summer. "So far I've been pretty lucky," he said, "but Mike Fultz has just issued a challenge in the bench press, and he might beat me. He bench pressed 400 pounds the other day."

Up early every morning, Epley runs at least one and a half miles before starting work at UNL. He tries to work out every day.

Epley's work load is mind boggling. He revised conditioning and recruiting booklets he's written for the football program, makes videotapes for use in conditioning programs, teaches advanced

weightlifting and coed body conditioning, helps with on-campus football recruiting, puts out an off-season weightlifting newsletter for football players, and is co-director of the Nebraska Football School in the summer.

He's also helping some ex-Huskies start a health club with a weight training room similar to UNL's circuit training room. His system of training may soon be nationally recognized as the "Epley system".

Epley said he sometimes feels married to his work and blames a divorce partially on that devotion.

Looking back over the past five years at UNL, Epley says he has no regrets, although he sometimes feels the urge to compete in weight lifting or body building again.

Two years ago he turned down a position as strength coach for the Detroit Lions. The position paid more than twice as much as his salary at UNL and included a new Thunderbird each year.

Last year he turned down an offer to go on a speaking tour at an amount double his \$17,000 UNL salary.

Ultimately, Epley said, he'd like to become an assistant athletic director, since he enjoys administrative responsibilities.

Asked about his plans, Epley said, "For the time being I feel an obligation to Coach (Tom) Osborne to finish what I've started here. A time will come for me to re-examine my priorities, but I'm happy here now."

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