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Stronger Economies Together Work in Southeast Nebraska

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Cornhusker Economics

Stronger Economies Together Work in Southeast Nebraska

Market Report	Year Ago	4 Wks Ago	2-10-17
Livestock and Products,			
Weekly Average			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.	132.00	117.97	119.36
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	198.24	155.15	162.03
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	165.76	137.84	133.83
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	226.24	201.84	189.39
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated	51.55	57.97	72.52
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass 51-52% Lean.	69.65	79.12	87.74
Slaughter Lambs, woolled and shorn, 135-165 lb. National.	143.71	141.36	140.06
National Carcass Lamb Cutout FOB.	359.79	347.30	339.86
Crops,			
Daily Spot Prices			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.	3.93	2.97	3.30
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Columbus, bu.	3.33	3.17	3.32
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Columbus, bu.	8.21	9.10	9.57
Grain Sorghum, No.2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.	5.48	4.82	5.19
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, Mn, bu.	2.66	2.88	2.95
Feed			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	250.00	NA	NA
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	82.50	70.00	65.00
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.	85.00	65.00	65.00
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture Nebraska Average.	134.50	110.00	103.50
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture Nebraska Average.	51.50	43.50	43.75
* No Market			

In July 2015, the University embarked on a collaborative project with five southeast Nebraska counties for the purpose of developing an economic development plan for the region. Today, community-led teams are implementing the goals to create their vision – *To realize our potential as an innovative and vibrant business and industry hub and destination for cultural tourism, supported by an entrepreneurial spirit.*

Stronger Economies Together. The Nebraska Extension program, Stronger Economies Together (SET) was first launched in 2009 by the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development in collaboration with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers and their land-grant university partners. The purpose of SET is to strengthen the capacity of rural America communities to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint.

The Southeast Nebraska Partners for Progress partnership (P4P) embraced the SET program for the purpose of creating an economic roadmap that incorporated the area's unique strengths. The region, consisting of Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee and Richardson counties, is rich with natural and historical resources, light manufacturing and dedicated people who acknowledged that by working together, they can strengthen the economic viability of their entire region. More than 110 individuals, representing education, nonprofit and for-profit

businesses, local and state government, elected officials, economic development organizations, and media provided input for the development and writing of the plan.

P4P SET Process. As with most successful community engagement processes, SET started with a small steering team that helped determine overall objectives for the project, meeting dates and locations, key stakeholders who needed to be invited, and marketing efforts. To kick-off SET, individuals from the five counties participated in a day-long tour of the region. The “road crew” gained valuable insights from the tour that laid the groundwork for future planning sessions. In addition, nearly 70 citizens participated in an open discussion and shared their ideas around regional opportunities and assets. Over the next six months an average of 40 leaders studied regional demographics and economic data, shared ideas and expertise, and developed a plan that leaders are now using to grow this rural area.

The final regional economic plan identified two industry cluster goals and two foundational support goals:

Manufacturing Goal. The manufacturing cluster is the largest private employment sector for the region, accounting for 2,256 or 16% of the region’s jobs. Of the 43 employers, there is one employer with 500+ employees and 21 with 250-499 employees. Food production accounts for 30% of all products manufactured in the region. The manufacturing goal focuses on building a regional consortium of large and small companies to increase their competitiveness by combining efforts that enhance employee education and training, technology, and value chain development. Assisting these large and small companies to become more competitive will help the cluster grow and decrease its dependence on commodity agriculture.

Arts & Entertainment Goal. The Arts & Entertainment cluster is growing in the P4P Region, specifically in the cultural tourism area. Nebraska City leads the way with the Arbor Day Foundation, the Lied Lodge, and Kimmel Orchards. Brownville has a burgeoning artisan sector that draws tourists from four states and Pawnee County is expanding tourism with a growing Amish Community. The region is ideally located within 150 miles of nearly 5.4 million people, including Omaha, Kansas City and Des Moines. Although the cluster provides lower wages, it has the potential to expand the region’s economic reach and increase outside revenue streams.

Workforce Goal. A significant challenge for the region’s manufacturers is a sufficient and qualified workforce. One regional manufacturer estimated a potential 30 percent employment gap in their business alone by 2021. Compounding the workforce issue is a lower earnings average and 50 percent of the resident population working outside of the region. To grow the region’s economic base, workforce attraction and development must be a foundational goal. By providing education and increasing career awareness, industries can affect their available workforce shortage and create higher quality jobs to support a trained workforce.

Entrepreneurship Goal. Fundamental to growing the Manufacturing/Industry and Arts & Entertainment clusters is the development of small businesses that contribute to the local manufacturing supply chain and support and provide the retail experiences that build a regional tourism culture. The P4P Region has nearly 93 percent of all businesses with less than 10 employees and 45 percent of these businesses are non-employee sole proprietors. Thirty-two percent of the region’s occupations are categorized as the Creative Class. This is a growing sector that can provide innovation and knowledge to help the region “grow their own” youth and adult businesses, leading to a stronger and diverse economic base for the region.

Preliminary Regional Impacts. Most of the P4P goal work has yet to occur; however, impacts are already seen throughout the region as identified by the P4P SET Team:

- Leadership from different communities, counties and economic sectors came together to plan together – there were new people attending and new groups formed.
- Town Hall meetings held across the region gained local government endorsement of the plan.
- Held first Manufacturing Day in October 2016, with 300 students attending from three school districts.
- New housing brochure created for Nemaha County for use in workforce recruitment. Housing brochures will be available for all counties.

- SET collaboration and work continues to grow with new partnerships and activities underway.
 - ◊ Manufacturing Summit planned for April 2017.
 - ◊ Entrepreneurship training planned for June 2017. Collaboration between Peru State College and local Education Service Unit and schools.
 - ◊ Tourism needs assessment and hospitality training planned for spring 2017.
- Awarded small seed funding from National SET to kick-off goal activities.

For more information on SET or other community engagement programs, visit the Nebraska Extension Community Vitality Initiative website at: <http://communityvitality.unl.edu/category/creating-21st-century-communities>.

Partners for Progress Economic Plan (<http://go.unl.edu/8oue>)

Sources:

Regional data calculated by Drs. Indraneel Kumar and Bo Beaulieu, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907 in customized reports:

- Regional Snapshot, Partner for Progress Region, NE, September 2015
- Target Industry Cluster Analysis, Partner for Progress Region, NE, September 2015
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