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Nebraska's Outdoor Recreation Workforce

Employment in Nebraska's Rural Economic Regions

Occupational Profile: Agricultural Engineers
June Openings & Expansions
Kermit Spade, Research Analyst

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Category</th>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Big H Home Services, LLC (Opening)</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, &amp; Rental/Leasing</td>
<td>Hoppe Development Antelope Tower (Opening)</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q Sisters Bounce, LLC (Opening)</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Services</td>
<td>Hatchett Jaxx (Opening)</td>
<td>Plattsmouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedal Pub Therapy (Opening)</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pita and Naan (Opening)</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>CHI Health St. Elizabeth (Cardiac Rehab) (Opening)</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heartland Center for Reproductive Medicine (Opening)</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Vyve Business Solutions (Opening)</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Prime Metal Products (Expansion)</td>
<td>Gering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>Firestone Complete Auto Care (Opening)</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tommy's Car Wash (Opening)</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade</td>
<td>Bend the Trend (Opening)</td>
<td>Norfolk</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.
Nebraska's Outdoor Recreation Workforce
Nancy Arroyo-Petri, Research Analyst

There are a wide variety of things to do outside in Nebraska. Outdoor recreation contributes greatly to our quality of life and economy. According to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's 2021 annual report, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and state park visitation supports more than 24,000 Nebraska jobs and has an economic impact of more than $2.64 billion annually. (1)

Nebraska's state park system is made up of 78 areas encompassing 105,366 acres, including eight states parks, 58 state recreation areas, 10 state historical parks, and 2 state recreation trails. (1) The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission directly employs nearly 1,500 workers during peak summer months, and many more Nebraska jobs are supported directly or indirectly by outdoor recreation. (2) Nebraska's outdoor recreation workforce is employed in a wide range of occupations.

To keep the state's parks and recreation areas safe, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission employed 68 fulltime conservation officers in 2021. (1) Primary job duties for conservation officers include:

- Patrolling assigned areas to enforce game, fish, or boating laws or to manage wildlife programs, lakes, or land;
- compiling and presenting evidence for court action;
- investigating hunting accidents or report of fish or game law violation;
- protecting and preserving native wildlife and plants of ecosystems.

Prospective conservation officers typically require several years of related experience and/or vocational or on-the-job training to qualify, and some positions may require a bachelor's degree. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Nebraska conservation officers earned an average annual wage of $59,570 in 2021, or $28.64 per hour. (3)
Zoologists and wildlife biologists also play an important role in maintaining the health of Nebraska’s outdoor spaces and visitors’ ability to enjoy them. As of May 2021 data, there were an estimated 140 of them working in Nebraska across all industries, including both public and private sector employment. (4) Their typical job duties include:

- Collecting and analyzing biological data to determine the environmental effects of present and potential use of land and water habitats;
- making recommendations on management systems and planning for wildlife populations and habitat;
- inventorying or estimating plant and wildlife populations;
- disseminating information, making presentations, and giving talks for schools, clubs, interest groups and park interpretive programs;
- checking for, and ensuring compliance with, environmental laws, and notifying law enforcement when violations are identified.

Zoologists and wildlife biologists earned an average of $53,230 annually in Nebraska in 2021. These jobs typically require at least a bachelor’s degree, and may require a master's or doctorate degree. (3)

Working alongside wildlife biologists are forest and conservation technicians, with approximately 100 people employed in this occupation across all industries statewide in May 2021. (4) Their job duties typically involve providing assistance with managing, protecting, and improving habitats and natural resources and maintaining recreational facilities. In Nebraska, the 2021 average annual wage for forest and conservation technicians was $41,140. These jobs usually require some combination of on-the-job training, vocational school training, and/or an associate degree. (3)

Outdoor recreation in Nebraska supports 24,000 jobs and $2.64 billion in annual economic activity.

With so much to do outside, it’s no wonder that outdoor recreation in Nebraska supports 24,000 jobs and $2.64 billion in annual economic activity. Whether you want to take a walk, catch some fish, or are looking for a job that allows you to connect with nature, Nebraska’s parks and outdoor recreation spaces have much to offer.

Sources:
**Occupational Profile: Agricultural Engineers**

Rachel Eckloff, Research Analyst

Agricultural engineers “apply knowledge of engineering technology and biological science to agricultural problems concerned with power and machinery, electrification, structures, soil and water conservation, and processing of agricultural products.” (1)

As of May 2021 data, there were an estimated 70 agricultural engineers working in Nebraska. (2)

**Duties:**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), typical duties for coaches and scouts include (1):

- using computer software to design equipment, systems, or structures;
- modifying environmental factors that affect animal or crop production, such as airflow in a barn or runoff patterns on a field;
- testing equipment to ensure its safety and reliability;
- overseeing construction and production operations;
- planning and working together with clients, contractors, consultants, and other engineers to ensure effective and desirable outcomes.

**Educational Requirements:**

Most jobs for agricultural engineers require at least a bachelor’s degree, as well as several years of work-related experience or on-the-job training. When asked what level of educational attainment was necessary to qualify for their jobs, about 69% of agricultural engineers nationwide reported needing a bachelor’s degree. Some agricultural engineering positions may also require advanced educational credentials, such as a master’s degree (12% of jobs nationwide) or post-baccalaureate certificate (12% of jobs nationwide). (1)

Many agricultural engineers will also need to obtain a professional engineering license, which allows them to “oversee the work of other engineers, sign off on projects, and provide services directly to the public.” (3) In addition to completing an engineering degree from an accredited program, licensure in Nebraska requires passage of the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam (FE) and the Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) Exam, as well as an exam covering Nebraska rules and regulations, and at least four years of progressive engineering experience. (4)

For more information on engineering licenses in Nebraska, consult NDOL's guide to Licensed Occupations in Nebraska or the State of Nebraska Board of Engineers and Architects.

1 in 4 Share of all jobs in Nebraska that are in some way related to agriculture. (5)
Nebraska Wages:
The median annual wage for coaches and scouts in Nebraska was $98,434 as of the first quarter of 2022. This was higher than the median wage for all occupations, which was $40,352. (2)

Nebraska Wages for Agricultural Engineers, Q1 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Engineers</td>
<td>$98,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Occupations</td>
<td>$40,352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Industry of Employment:
The top industry of employment for Nebraska’s agricultural engineers as of first-quarter 2022 data was professional, scientific, and technical services (57.1%). Machinery manufacturing (42.9%) was also a major employer of workers in this occupation.

Nebraska Industry of Employment for Agricultural Engineers, Q1 2022*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Machinery Manufacturing</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Publishable data only.

Nebraska Employment** and Wages by Top Industries of Employment for Agricultural Engineers, Q1 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>$101,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery Manufacturing</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$79,482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment estimates are as of May 2021 data.

Share of the total land area of Nebraska used for farming and ranching. (5)
While 64.8% of Nebraska’s population resides in the economic regions associated with the Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), Nebraska’s Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages provides plenty of data covering the rural economic regions of the state and how they compare to each other and the metropolitan areas. (1) Nebraska has six rural economic regions: Northeast, Southeast, Central, Mid Plains, Sandhills, and Panhandle. Data comes from the third quarter (July-September) of 2021.
Central Region

In the Central Region, the industry sector with the highest weekly wages as of the third quarter of 2021 was utilities ($1,525), which was $343 below the statewide average weekly pay in utilities ($1,868), and $589 below the average weekly wage for utilities workers in the Omaha metropolitan area ($2,114), who earned the state’s highest wages in utilities. Average utilities wages were slightly higher in two other rural regions, Mid-Plains ($1,611) and Northeast ($1,585), than they were in the Central Region. Management of companies and enterprises ($1,130) paid the Central Region’s second-highest wages, followed by finance and insurance ($1,094).

The industry sectors with the highest number of establishments in the Central Region were health care and social assistance (765), retail trade (614), and construction (550). The Central Region ranked #2 for most health care and social assistance establishments among Nebraska’s rural regions, trailing only the Northeast Region (1,046 establishments). There were a total of 11,061 health care and social assistance establishments statewide, with the largest number found in the Omaha MSA (4,329) and the Lincoln MSA (2,220). The Grand Island MSA had a number of health care and social assistance establishments comparable with the state’s rural regions, at 420.

Mid-Plains Region

In the Mid-Plains Region, utilities led the way in highest average weekly wages, followed by management of companies and enterprises, and wholesale trade. The Mid-Plains Region ranked first among the rural regions for average pay in the utilities industry sector.

The sectors with the most establishments in the Mid-Plains Region were health care and social assistance; retail trade; and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting. The Mid-Plains Region ranked fourth among the six rural regions for number of health care and social assistance establishments. The Northeast Region had the largest number of construction industry establishments of any rural region (876), while the Sandhills had the fewest (110). In the state’s metropolitan areas, the Grand Island MSA had 333 construction industry establishments, the Lincoln MSA had 126, and the Omaha MSA had 2,993.

Northeast Region

The Northeast Region had the highest all-industries weekly wage of Nebraska’s six rural economic regions ($902), and also had the largest total number of establishments (8,229).

In the Northeast Region, the industry sectors with the highest average weekly wages were management of companies and enterprises, followed by utilities, and manufacturing. The average weekly wage for management of companies and enterprises workers in the Northeast was $1,853. This was the highest of all the rural regions, and also exceeded the Grand Island MSA, which had an average weekly wage of $1,182 for management of companies and enterprises. Average weekly wages in this sector in the Lincoln and Omaha MSAs were $1,586 and $2,076 respectively. The overall state average in management of companies and enterprises was $1,921.

The sector with the highest number of establishments in the Northeast Region was health care and social assistance, followed by retail trade, and construction. The Northeast Region had more health care and social assistance establishments (1,046) than any other rural region. The Panhandle Region had the second-most health care and social assistance establishments (671), and the Mid-Plains Region ranked third (578).
Panhandle Region

For the Panhandle Region of the state, we again see management of companies and enterprises leading the way for highest weekly wage ($1,363). The Panhandle had the #2 highest average weekly wages in this sector among the state’s rural regions, behind the Northeast Region ($1,853). The utilities sector had the second-highest average weekly wage in the Panhandle Region ($1,349), followed by mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction ($1,149).

Health care and social assistance had the most establishments, followed by retail trade and accommodation and food service. This was the only region where accommodation and food service establishments ranked in the top three. However, when compared to other rural regions in Nebraska, the Panhandle had the smallest number of establishments in the accommodation and food service sector.

Sandhills Region

In the Sandhills Region, the industry sectors with the highest average weekly wages were utilities; management of companies and enterprises; and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction. This was the only region statewide where the mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction sector ranked in the top three. In the Central and Northeast Regions, the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sector fell into the middle of the pack, and last or near-last in the remaining three rural regions.

The highest number of establishments in the Sandhills Region were found in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; retail trade; and health care and social assistance. This was the only region where the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry ranked first in number of establishments, with 179. However, the Sandhills Region still had fewer total establishments in this sector than any other rural region. The Northeast Region had the most establishments in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, at 541.

Southeast Region

In the Southeast Region, management of companies and enterprises led the way for highest weekly wage, followed by wholesale trade; and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction. The wholesale trade sector ranked second for this region, its highest rank among the state’s rural regions. Comparing wages with the other rural regions, wholesale trade in the Southeast Region was the third-highest ($1,148), trailing the Northeast ($1,159) and Mid-Plains ($1,190) Regions.

Health care and social assistance had the highest number of establishments of any sector in the Southeast Region, followed by retail trade, and construction. The retail trade sector ranked second in number of establishments for this region, and also ranked second for all of the other rural regions. The Northeast Region had the most total retail establishments at 950.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Weekly Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>$899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>$860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mid-Plains</td>
<td>$842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>$839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Panhandle</td>
<td>$801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sandhills</td>
<td>$720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Establishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>8,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>5,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mid-Plains</td>
<td>4,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>4,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Panhandle</td>
<td>3,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sandhills</td>
<td>1,447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Final Word

Looking at the overall top average weekly wage by sector, management of companies and enterprises ranked first or second in all six rural regions. Utilities had the highest average weekly wage in three regions: Central, Mid Plains, and Sandhills.

In terms of number of establishments, health care and social assistance ranked first in all rural regions except for the Sandhills, where it ranked third, and retail trade ranked second in all six rural regions. Construction ranked third in the Central, Northeast and Southeast Regions. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting ranked first in the Sandhills and third in the Mid-Plains Regions.

Industry Sectors with Most Establishments by Economic Region

Industry Sectors with Highest Average Weekly Wage by Economic Region

Sources:
Economic Indicators
Kermit Spade, Research Analyst

**Unemployment Rate**
Seasonally Adjusted

- **Nebraska Current** (June 2022): 1.9%
- NE 10-Year High (April 2020): 8.2%
- NE 10-Year Avg.: 3.2%
- United States Current (June 2022): 3.6%

**Initial Unemployment Claims**
Monthly Avg. Number of Claims per Week

- **430** NE 10-Year Low (Sept. 2019)
- **561** Nebraska Current (July 2022)
- **15,946** NE 10-Year High (April 2020)
- **236,856** United States Current (July 2022)

**Labor Force Participation Rate**
Seasonally Adjusted

- **72.0%** NE 10-Year High (Nov. 2012)
- **70.2%** NE 10-Year Avg.
- **70.0%** Nebraska Current (June 2022)
- **69.1%** NE 10-Year Low (Sept. 2019)
- **62.2%** United States Current (June 2022)

The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed persons as a share of the labor force. Unemployed persons are those ages 16 years and older who had no work during the reference period, but who were available for and actively seeking work.

(For more on defining ‘labor force,’ see Labor Force Participation Rate.)

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.

The labor force participation rate measures the labor force (people working or looking for work) as a percentage of the total civilian, noninstitutionalized population, age 16 and over.


**Data Sources:** [Retrieved: June 2022.]
### Economic Indicators

Kermit Spade, Research Analyst

#### Avg. Weekly Earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States Current (June 2022)</th>
<th>NE 10-Year High (May 2022)</th>
<th>Nebraska Current (June 2022)</th>
<th>NE 10-Year Avg.</th>
<th>NE 10-Year Low (June 2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Weekly Earnings All Private Employees Not Seasonally Adjusted</td>
<td>$1,097.79</td>
<td>$994.28</td>
<td>$982.23</td>
<td>$817.62</td>
<td>$700.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **UP 7.1%** NE vs. Last Year
- **DOWN -1.2%** NE vs. Last Month

Average weekly earnings represents the mean pay received by workers for services performed over the course of one week.4

#### Avg. Hourly Earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States Current (April 2022)</th>
<th>NE 10-Year High (Jan. 2022)</th>
<th>Nebraska Current (June 2022)</th>
<th>NE 10-Year Avg.</th>
<th>NE 10-Year Low (July 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Hourly Earnings All Private Employees Not Seasonally Adjusted</td>
<td>$31.82</td>
<td>$30.06</td>
<td>$29.06</td>
<td>$24.24</td>
<td>$20.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **UP 6.5%** NE vs. Last Year
- **DOWN -2.1%** NE vs. Last Month

Average hourly earnings represents the mean pay received by workers for services performed during one hour of work.5

#### Consumer Price Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NE 10-Year Low (April 2015)</th>
<th>Midwest 10-Year Avg.</th>
<th>9.5%</th>
<th>United States Current</th>
<th>Midwest Current</th>
<th>9.5%</th>
<th>12-Month % Change</th>
<th>Not Seasonally Adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Price Index</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Urban Consumers: All Items Index 1982 = 100

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

Data Sources: [Retrieved: July 2022.]

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Nonfarm employment, a count of filled jobs, was 1,038,733 in June, up 3,664 over the month and up 21,630 over the year. Private industries with the most growth month to month were leisure and hospitality (up 2,781), mining and construction (up 2,677), and manufacturing (up 1,402). Private industries with the most growth year to year were education and health services (up 5,430); trade, transportation, and utilities (up 4,785); and leisure and hospitality (up 3,722).

Data Source:

52,199
Job count on NEworks as of August 11, 2022

87,343
Total job count on NEworks for the month of June 2022
This number reflects the number of job openings advertised online in Nebraska as of June 2022. It is de-duplicated for statistical analysis.

Data Source:
NE- Nebraska Department of Labor. Online advertised jobs data. NEworks. neworks.nebraska.gov.

Labor market information is updated continuously. For the latest data, visit neworks.nebraska.gov or contact us at 800-876-1377 or email lmi_ne@nebraska.gov.

Nebraska Workforce Trends is published by the Nebraska Department of Labor in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.