Inside this Issue:

Gamers on the Rise
Learn about the gaming industry and its occupations.

Fast Facts: Independence Day

Lincoln Area Labor Reports
Sneak a peek at data from the newly released labor study of the Lincoln Area.
Gamers on the Rise
Learn about the gaming industry and its occupations.

Fast Facts: Independence Day

Map Facts: Ice Cream Shops

Openings and Expansions

Lincoln Area Labor Reports
Sneak a peek at data from the newly released labor study of the Lincoln Area.

Unemployment Data

Economic Indicators
Review data trends from this month’s featured economic indicator:

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Gamers on the Rise

Dawn Carrillo, Research Analyst

There has been a steady rise in the amount of time that people play card, board, or video games since 2003, according to data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Annual Time Use Survey (ATUS), a nationwide survey providing detailed information on how Americans spend their time in daily activities. ATUS data shows that Americans’ time spent playing games has risen by 50 percent since 2003. The average person age 15 and over now spends more time each day playing games (0.24 hours) than participating in religious and spiritual activities (0.16 hours), volunteering (0.13 hours), or attending social events (0.07 hours).¹

Despite popular perceptions of gaming as a male-dominated activity, its popularity among women is on the rise. Since 2003, women age 15 and over have shown the largest percentage increase in time spent playing games per day at 58 percent, compared to men at 50 percent.

![Image](image_url)

Photo by Sabri Tuzcu on Unsplash

When separating the data by age group, Americans age 25-34 had the largest growth in total time spent playing games, with a 133 percent increase in daily gaming since 2003. This age group also followed the overall trend of faster growth among women, with women age 25-34 increasing their average daily time spent gaming by 138 percent, versus men age 25-34 at 118 percent. In 2016, the age group that spent the most overall time playing games was Americans age 15-24, with 0.56 hours per day, followed by the age group of 25-34, with 0.28 hours per day.¹

Women in the 65 and over age group spent substantially more time playing games than their male counterparts, at .34 hours per day and .14 hours per day respectively in 2016. In fact, women age 65 and over, on average, spent more time on games each day than women in any other age group. For men, the age group that spent the most time playing games was age 15-24, with 0.88 hours on average per day.¹
Careers in Game Development

Video gaming is a big business and provides diverse career options. More than 400 colleges throughout the United States offer degrees related to the video game industry. According to the Entertainment Software Association, there are two colleges in Nebraska that offer video game-related degrees, including a bachelor’s degree in computer science with a game programming concentration and various associate degrees in digital design, illustration and game development. Other institutions may offer training that can help lead to a career in the video game industry.

Numerous distinct occupation groups are involved in the video game industry, working together to produce the final end product. Developers are the professionals that imagine the worlds and ideas behind the games. They write thorough descriptions of their concept, including the plot, characters and gameplay. It is then the job of the writers and various designers to make this idea come to life. The writers create the dialogue and story that immerses players into the game. The content designers, game mechanic designers and level designers work under the guidance of the lead designer to make the developer’s vision a reality. Content designers develop the main story and plot of the game, including the characters. Game mechanic designers decide how gameplay will operate. Level designers create the environment surrounding the player to provide a setting for the game’s action and enhance the player’s experience.

Programmers use a variety of coding languages to write code that tells the computer how to run each detail of the game. The coding language used varies according to the platform that the game will be played on, which can include personal computers, consoles, handheld consoles and mobile devices.

Under the supervision of the lead programmer, various types of specialized programmers focus their attentions on every detail of the game. A few of these occupations include artificial intelligence programmers, who decide how computer-controlled characters will respond to the player’s actions and decisions; physics programmers, who write code that determines how the player will interact with the game’s environment and in-game objects; user interface programmers, who create the menus and toolbars the player uses during gameplay to control their character and other aspects of the game’s action; and graphics programmers, who work closely with artists to make the game beautiful. In games that feature an online aspect, network programmers write the code that allows players to interact with others around the world.
Tools programmers also help by simplifying and automating some of the work for others on the game’s production team, such as artists who may not be as skilled in programming.³

Artists are another important occupation in the game development process. They help game designers by illustrating their ideas through various methods that can include traditional art techniques like drawing and sculpting, or the use of digital tools such as 3D modeling software. Under the supervision of the art director, the concept artists, modelers and animators work to create the game’s characters, objects, environment and overall visual style.

Concept artists create concept art to help others visualize the game. Modelers create 3D characters and environments based on the concept art. The animators then bring the 3D models to life on screen by animating the movements in the game’s world, such as how the grass reacts when a character walks through a field.³

The video game industry also includes other major occupations not listed above, such as executives, producers, audio technicians and quality assurance testers. According to the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), there are 2,711 video game company locations currently operating across the United States, with 6 of them located in Nebraska. There are almost 66,000 people nationwide employed in game software publishing occupations, earning an average annual income of $97,000. In 2017, the U.S. video game industry added more than 11.7 Billion dollars to the national GDP.²

Each of these occupations has an important role to play in making the video game designer’s ideas come to fruition. Games, whether they are video or board games, are increasing in popularity as more and more Americans are spending increased time playing them. If these trends continue, we can expect to see plenty of work for employees of gaming companies in future years.

Sources:
Independence Day
Rachel Stevens, Research Analyst

93%
Percentage of employers nationwide who close on July 4 to allow employees to enjoy the holiday.¹

327.8 million
Projected United States population as of July 2018.²

90%
Percentage of U.S. adults who say they are proud to be Americans. A large majority, 75%, rate themselves as ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ proud.³

147 million
Number of people worldwide who say they would move to the United States if they could. This figure is larger than the next four most popular destinations combined, and accounts for 4% of the world’s total adult population.⁴

75%
Percentage of Americans who say they are satisfied with their level of personal freedom.⁵

1870
Year Independence Day was first designated as a federal holiday.⁶

Fast Facts

1870
Year Independence Day was first designated as a federal holiday.

March 1, 1867
Date Nebraska became a state, symbolized by the 37th star added to the American flag.

$27.8 million
Value of American flags exported to foreign nations in 2016. Mexico alone accounted for $26.1 million, the vast majority of the total.

62%
Percentage of U.S. consumers who own an American flag.

$109.3 billion
Value of trade between the United States and the United Kingdom in 2017. The British, our adversary in 1776, are our no. 7 trading partner today.

$260.3 million
Value of trade between Nebraska and the United Kingdom in 2017. The U.K. was the no. 7 largest global importer to Nebraska in 2017, and the no. 19 recipient of goods exported from Nebraska.

143,380
Number of Nebraskans reporting English ancestry. Nationwide, 23,835,787 Americans claim an English heritage.
The Rocket’s Red Glare

Retail Fireworks Stands in Nebraska by City - 2018

696
Total permits issued for retail firework stands in Nebraska in 2018. They were open for business in 220 Nebraska cities, across 83 counties.¹³

46
Number of U.S. states that allow purchases of all types of consumer fireworks. Illinois, Ohio and Vermont limit purchases to wood stick sparklers and other novelty items, while Massachusetts enforces a complete ban.¹⁴

346
Number of permits issued for public fireworks displays in Nebraska for Independence Day 2018. Each of these displays were run by one of the 101 commercial firework operators licensed to work in Nebraska this year.¹³

$885 million
Total revenue from U.S. consumer fireworks purchases in 2017.¹⁵

Cautionary Numbers

192
Number of firework-related injuries reported in Nebraska from June 25 through July 5, 2017.¹³

12,900
Approximate number of Americans injured in firework-related incidents in 2017. About 67% of these injuries occurred in the month surrounding Independence Day festivities.¹⁶

250
Average number of daily emergency room visits for firework-related injuries nationwide in the month surrounding July 4. More than 53% of these injuries are burns.¹⁷

$2,168
National average cost of an emergency room visit.¹⁸

2,000 degrees
Burning temperature of a typical Independence Day sparkler. Sparklers alone were responsible for an estimated 1,200 emergency department visits in 2017, and for nearly half of all fireworks-related injuries in children under 5.¹⁶,¹⁷
# All-American Eats

87%

Percentage of American adults who planned to celebrate Independence Day this year. Nearly 153 million planned a picnic or cookout, while 106 million planned to visit a public firework display or other community celebration and 30 million planned to attend a parade.\(^8\)

$6.9 billion

Total amount Americans were expected to spend on food purchases for Fourth of July celebrations in 2018, for an average of $73.35 per person.\(^8\)

### On the Grill

- **$803.9 million**
  Value of beef purchased in the United States in the two weeks surrounding July 4, 2016. Beef was the no. 1 most popular meat for Independence Day barbeques.\(^19\)

- **6.45 million**
  Cattle raised in Nebraska in 2017. This makes Nebraska the no. 2 cattle-producing state, behind Texas at 12.3 million.\(^20\)

- **150 million**
  Number of hot dogs Americans were expected to eat this Fourth of July. That’s enough to stretch from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles five times!\(^21\)

### Beverages

- **$1.72 billion**
  Estimated spending by U.S. adults on beer, malt beverages and cider for Fourth of July celebrations. Independence Day is the top holiday for sales of alcoholic beverages in this category.\(^22\)

- **49**
  Number of craft breweries operating in Nebraska in 2017. Together, they produce 53,655 barrels of beer per year, generating $465 million in economic activity.\(^23\)

### Popular Produce

- **$40.9 million**
  Corn on the cob sales for Fourth of July celebrations in 2017. This summer classic was the no. 8 most popular produce choice for Independence Day cookouts.\(^19\)

- **1.7 billion**
  Total bushels of corn grown in Nebraska in 2017. Nebraska was the no. 3 largest corn producer nationwide, behind Illinois (2.2 billion) and Iowa (2.6 billion).\(^24\)
Fast Facts Sources:
10. —. Top Trading Partners- December 2017.
17. —. Fireworks Information Center- Fireworks Injuries. 2018.

Map Facts Sources:
On July 2, 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed S.J.Res.298, which proclaimed July as National Ice Cream Month and the third Sunday in July as National Ice Cream Day. This month’s map facts will take a look at ice cream shops across Nebraska. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) classifies ice cream shops as “Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars.”

Other businesses that also fall into this category include doughnut shops, bagel shops, pretzel shops, cookie shops and coffee shops. While many full service and fast food restaurants may also serve ice cream, they fall into a different NAICS category.

The map above shows the concentration of snack and nonalcoholic beverage bars by county in Nebraska. In general, these shops are concentrated in areas of high population. The map also shows that many counties do not have any such establishments. This could be because shops that are only open seasonally, or that have only one or two employees, may not show up in Department of Labor records.

In 2nd Quarter 2017, there were about 5,700 employees at snack and nonalcoholic beverage bars in Nebraska. These workers earned an average weekly wage of $260. Dairies across Nebraska employed 720 workers and paid an average weekly wage of $1,045.
## Openings & Expansions | May*

*Kermit Spade, Research Analyst

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Category</th>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food &amp; Entertainment</strong></td>
<td>Tru by Hilton</td>
<td>North Platte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthcare &amp; Fitness</strong></td>
<td>Nebraska Sports Council</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wagner, Kentz, &amp; Grabouski Orthodontists (expansion)</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sidney Foundry</td>
<td>Sidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retail/Sales</strong></td>
<td>Sears</td>
<td>McCook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love &amp; Threads Boutique</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project Success</td>
<td>Sidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Real Estate, Rental, &amp; Leasing</strong></td>
<td>UNL Panhandle Research and Extension Center (graduate housing units)</td>
<td>Scottsbluff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finance &amp; Insurance</strong></td>
<td>Lincoln Federal Savings (expansion)</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bottom Line Bookkeeping &amp; Payroll</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td>A Posh Affair (new location)</td>
<td>Chadron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flanders Foods</td>
<td>Hastings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classic Wood</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silverhawk Aviation</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woodriver Energy</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home for Funerals</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Henderson Meats (new location)</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farris Engineering</td>
<td>Seward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wedding Storytellers (new ownership)</td>
<td>Sidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cornett Veterinary Hospital</td>
<td>West Point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**
1. Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
2. 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.
Lincoln Area Labor Reports

Each full report listed provides detailed analysis and context about labor availability, hiring and training needs and skills gaps. Below is a small sample of what can be obtained in the full reports.

**Labor Availability Report**
- **36.7%** of active job seekers believe that a lack of training is an obstacle to changing jobs or re-entering the workforce.
- **94.6%** of potential job seekers were willing to attend employer-sponsored training in the next year.
- **88.3%** of potential job seekers were employed, **6.1%** were unemployed, **3.7%** were retired and **1.9%** were homemakers.
- **78.9%** of potential job seekers reported being advanced in their ability to work independently.

**Hiring and Training Needs Report**
- **98.6%** of responding businesses have hired or tried to hire in the last two years.
- **67.8%** of responding businesses have at least one job opening.
- Of the businesses that responded, the average number of current open positions at these locations was **4.7** jobs, but when only considering businesses with at least one current opening, the average increased to **6.9** jobs.

**Skills Gap Report**

“There is a significant surplus of entrants to openings in entry-level white collar occupations in the Lincoln Metropolitan Area even as deficits persist in blue collar and service occupations,” said Dr. Eric Thompson of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research.

“Results indicate that skills gap challenges have increased in the Lincoln area labor market as the local economy has continued to grow. A rising share of workers are concerned that they do not have adequate training to find better employment. Employers have grown slightly more concerned about applicants with a poor work history and an inability to pass a background check. Concerns about wage levels have risen slightly for both employers and workers.”

Check out reports for this and other Nebraska areas on our Labor Market Information Publications page on: 

[NEworks.nebraska.gov](http://NEworks.nebraska.gov)
Unemployment Data | May
Byron Lefler, Research Analyst

May Unemployment Rates by County
*Not seasonally adjusted

NEBRASKA
May Non-farm Total Employment: 1,039,557
Manufacturing: 101,449

Nebraska (smoothed seasonally adjusted)
May Unemployment Rate: 2.8%
Change (OTM): 0.0
Change (OTY): -0.1

Economic Regions (not seasonally adjusted)
Central: 2.6%
Mid Plains: 2.7%
Northeast: 2.7%
Panhandle: 2.9%
Sandhills: 2.6%
Southeast: 2.8%

OMAHA MSA (not seasonally adjusted)
May Unemployment Rate: 2.8%
May Total Non-Farm: 510,188
Manufacturing: 35,052
Largest OTM Increase (private):
Leisure and Hospitality: 3,116 (6.1%)
Trade, Transportation & Utilities: 1,658 (1.7%)

LINCOLN MSA (not seasonally adjusted)
May Unemployment Rate: 2.6%
May Total Non-Farm: 190,894
Manufacturing: 13,235
Largest OTM Increase (Private):
Trade, Transportation & Utilities: 734 (2.2%)
Mining and Construction: 438 (4.6%)

GRAND ISLAND MSA (not seasonally adjusted)
May Unemployment Rate: 2.9%
May Total Non-Farm: 42,986
Change (OTM): 441 (1.0%)
Change (OTY): 504 (1.2%)

Sources:
Want more Labor Market Information?

Visit NEworks.nebraska.gov > Labor Market Analysis to access:

Labor Market Data
Easy access to labor force information, wage estimates, quarterly workforce indicators and Nebraska Advantage Act wages. Go to the Data Download Center for data sets of local area unemployment statistics, industry and occupational projections and the latest Industry Cluster and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) dashboards.

Publications
View all of the publications produced by LMI in easy-to-read PDF format, including the monthly Nebraska Workforce Trends newsletter. Browse Career Ladder and STEM posters. Locate requirements for Nebraska licensed occupations or compare key labor market indicators in the Economic Outlook and Insight publication. Click "Get More" and scroll down to "Archives" to see historical publications.

Resource Library
View contact information for LMI, maps of counties and data regions in Nebraska, related links such as the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, yearly calendar of LMI press and data releases and a comparison chart of the LMI programs.

Career Resources
Explore High Wage, High Demand, High Skill (H3) jobs and more through NELearn and H3; research job skills and training, review sample resumes and interview questions or write job descriptions with CareerOneStop; browse a variety of occupations topics such as tools and technology, skills search or green economy; look up job characteristics, skills, occupation description and definitions in O*NET; or connect to additional online career resources.
In each new issue of Trends, the Economic Indicators section features a chart or graph focused on one of the economic indicators listed in the table on the next page. This month, we are focusing on the Value of Manufacturers’ New Orders: Nondefense Capital Goods Excluding Aircraft.

According to the Conference Board, a business membership and research association, “This index reflects the levels of new orders from customers. As a diffusion index, its value reflects the number of participants reporting increased orders during the previous month compared to the number reporting decreased orders, [...] When the index has a reading of greater than 50 it is an indication that orders have increased during the past month. This index, therefore, tends to lead the business cycle. ISM new orders is based on a monthly survey conducted by Insititution for Supply Management (formerly known as national Association of Puchasing Management). The Conference Board takes normalized value of this index as a measure of its contribution to LEI.”

Source:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Current Time Period</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Midwest Region</th>
<th>Nebraska</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Weekly Manufacturing Hours</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Unemployment Claims</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Manufacturers' New Orders for Consumer Goods</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>+0.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISM Manufacturing: New Orders Index®</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>+4.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Manufacturers' New Orders: Nondefense Capital Goods Excluding Aircraft</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>+1.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S&amp;P 500®</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>+1.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Year Treasury Constant Maturity Minus Federal Funds Rate</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>+1.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan: Consumer Sentiment Index</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Price Index, not seasonally adjusted</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>+0.4%</td>
<td>+0.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Cost Index</td>
<td>1st Quarter 2018</td>
<td>+0.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer Price Index: All Commodities</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>+1.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate, seasonally adjusted</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
<td>+/-0.0%*</td>
<td>+/-0.0%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real GDP, billions of chained 2009 dollars</td>
<td>1st Quarter 2018</td>
<td>+2.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Taxable Sales</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+20.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barrel of Crude Oil, WTI-Cushing, Spot Price</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>+$3.73</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Account Balance (millions of dollars)</td>
<td>4th Quarter 2017</td>
<td>+26.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: