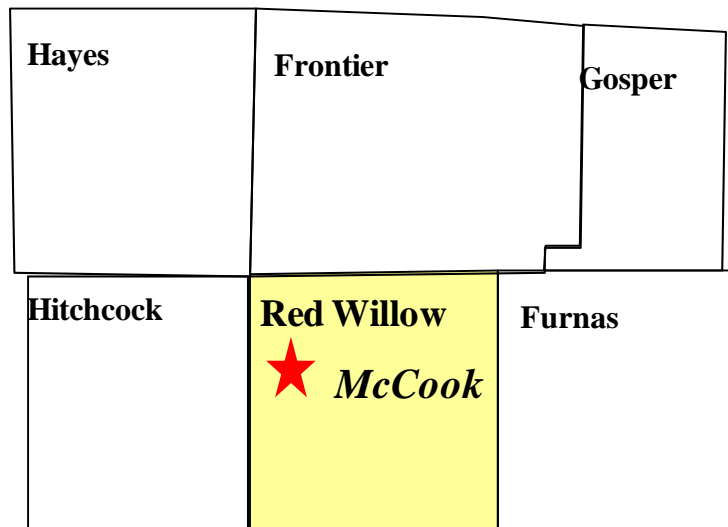


Labor Supply Factors and Labor Availability for the McCook (Red Willow County) Labor Area



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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 McCook and Red Willow 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 McCook Labor Area. Some of the pertinent findings of the report include:

- Population in the McCook Labor Area (Red Willow County plus the five adjacent, Nebraska counties) totaled 23,938 people in 2007, with Red Willow County population totaling 10,748. Population in Red Willow County declined by 6.1 percent during the 2000–2007 period, compared to a population decrease of 8.6 percent for the six-county McCook Labor Area as a whole.
- The labor force for the McCook Labor Area totaled 13,068 in 2007, with 12,704 local residents employed in jobs either within or outside the area. A total of 9,166 persons were employed in nonfarm wage and salary jobs located within the area. These data suggest that a substantial number of residents of the McCook Labor Area were commuting out of the area for employment.
- The number of people who lived in Red Willow County that were employed totaled 5,783 in 2007; and, there were 5,253 persons employed in nonfarm wage and salary jobs within the county. This indicates a small number of Red Willow County residents were commuting to jobs in surrounding counties.
- Average annual wages for all nonfarm wage and salary employees in the McCook Labor Area were \$8,886 less than the Nebraska average. Within the labor area, Hitchcock had the highest average wage, \$28,678 or \$6,195 lower than the Nebraska average. In Red Willow County, average annual salaries were \$9,057 less than the state average.

The basic conclusion of this report, which follows from the data and analysis presented, is that the McCook Labor Area and Red Willow County would be able to provide a significant number of dedicated and skilled workers to meet the needs of employers offering attractive compensation packages to area workers. While this report has not estimated a precise number of people that may be available for a prospective new employer in the McCook 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 McCook (Red Willow County) Labor Area

This report presents selected labor-related and demographic data that provide insights into the labor supply situation in McCook (Red Willow County) and the surrounding area.

In reviewing the data presented in this report, it will be evident that the McCook Labor Area has a sizeable pool of labor to provide for the labor requirements of 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 Red Willow County and for the surrounding counties that make up the potential laborshed area for McCook. Figure One includes a map outlining the geographic area which has been defined as the McCook Labor Area.

An important resource for new or expanding businesses is a readily available supply of workers. Whether an employer requires 5, 50 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 McCook Labor Area.

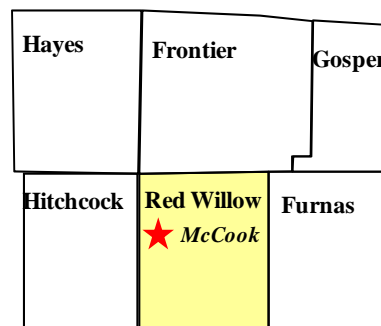
Available labor supply is defined as the number of persons who would potentially apply for employment when a job becomes available. Potential workers are categorized into two groups; those currently employed who would consider other employment opportunities and those who do not currently have a job.

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

**Figure One
McCook Labor Area**



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 no 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 no 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 McCook Labor Area and for Red Willow County for selected years from 2003 to 2007. Data in Table One (Part A and Part B) provide two alternate measures of employment for two distinct areas. Data presented in Table One Part A include labor force, unemployment, employment, and nonfarm wage and salary employment data for the entire McCook 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 fallen, with the area labor force declining by 5.0 percent between 2003 and 2007 and total employment declining by 4.3 percent during the same period.

Table One
Labor Force and Employment, McCook Labor Area^(a)
2003-2007

Part A
Labor Force and Employment, McCook Labor Area^(a), 2003–2007

(Place of Residence)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Chg. 2003–2007
Labor Force^(b)	13,749	13,672	13,452	13,279	13,068	-5.0
Unemployment (#)	468	479	467	371	364	-22.2
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.4	3.5	3.5	2.8	2.8	(N/A)
Employment	13,281	13,193	12,985	12,908	12,704	-4.3
(Place of Work)						
Nonfarm Employment^(c)	9,063	9,038	8,940	9,124	9,166	1.1

^(a) The Red Willow County Labor Area includes Red Willow County and the contiguous counties (Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Hayes, and Hitchcock).

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

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

* 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.

Table One -- Continued
Part B
McCook Labor Area^(a), Labor Force and Employment by Industry
Red Willow County

(Place of Residence)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Chg. 2003-2007
Labor Force^(b)	6,116	6,112	6,036	5,981	5,937	-2.9
Unemployment (#)	209	215	212	161	154	-26.3
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.4	3.5	3.5	2.7	2.6	(N/A)
Employment	5,907	5,897	5,824	5,820	5,783	-2.1
(Place of Work)						
Nonfarm Employment^(c)	5,241	5,211	5,078	5,208	5,253	0.2
Goods Producing	764	748	751	740	756	-1.0
Manufacturing	534 *	542 *	555 *	549 *	536 *	0.4
Mining & Construction	230	206	196	191	220	-4.3
Service Providing	4,476	4,463	4,327	4,468	4,497	0.5
Total Trade	1,258	1,260	1,205	1,207	1,196	-4.9
Wholesale Trade	371	385	389	437	438	18.1
Retail Trade	888	875	816	771	758	-14.6
Trans., Warehousing & Utilities	192	197	83	211	224	16.7
Information	108 *	112	104	86 *	87 *	-19.4
Financial Activities	264	304	319	316	292	10.6
Professional & Business Services	363	287	241	276	301	-17.1
Education & Health Services	525	537	581	565	566	7.8
Leisure and Hospitality	527	519	514	514	524	-0.6
Other Services, except Public	148 *	148	177	170	176	18.9
Total Government	1,091	1,097	1,104	1,123	1,132	3.8
Federal Government	82	78	76	76	78	-4.9
State Government	175	173	173	173	166	-5.1
Local Government	834	846	855	874	888	6.5

^(a) The Red Willow County Labor Area includes Red Willow County and the contiguous counties (Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Hayes, and Hitchcock).

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

^(c) The Nonfarm 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.

* 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.

The second employment measure presented for the McCook Labor Area, nonfarm wage and salary employment, increased from 9,063 in 2003 to 9,166 in 2007, an increase of 1.1 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 nonfarm 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 Red Willow County (Table One Part B) indicate that the total labor force in the county declined by 2.9 percent between 2003 and 2007, with total employment (of people residing in Red Willow County, irrespective of their county of employment) declining by 2.1 percent during this period. It is also of interest to note that unemployment decreased by 26.3 percent, from 209 in 2003 to 154 in 2007, recording an unemployment rate of 2.6 percent in 2007.

As previously noted, the second employment measure presented for Red Willow County, nonfarm wage and salary employment, is based on the county where the person is employed irrespective of their county of residence. Nonfarm wage and salary employment in Red Willow County increased by 0.2 percent between 2003 and 2007. Data presented in Table One Part B show that the fastest growing employment sector in Red Willow County during the 2003–2007 review period was the Other Services, Except Public Sector, recording a 18.9 percent increase between 2003 and 2007. Other economic sectors experiencing significant growth in employment between 2003 and 2007 include the Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities Sector (16.7 percent), the Financial Activities Sector (10.6 percent), and the Education & Health Services Sector (7.8 percent). In the case of the Total Government sector, employment in the Federal Government Sector declined by 4.9 percent while State Sector employment declined by 5.1 percent and Local Government Sector employment grew by 6.5 percent.

Further review of the employment data reported for the McCook Labor Area (Table One Part A) and for Red Willow County (Table One Part B) indicates that for both areas there were differences between the nonfarm 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 McCook Labor Area, nonfarm wage and salary employment was reported to be 9,166 in 2007, which was significantly less (3,538 less) than the reported total employment of persons living within the six-county McCook Labor Area. Recalling that nonfarm wage and salary employment is based on the county of employment while the total employment data is based on the county of residence helps explain how this can occur. It is obvious that a number of persons living within the six-county McCook Labor Area work outside of the area and commute to other areas for employment.

In the case of Red Willow County, a similar situation is evident. Total employment of persons living in Red Willow County (irrespective of their county of employment) was 5,783 in 2007, which was 530 more than the 5,253 nonfarm wage and salary jobs within the county for the same year. These data suggest that some workers are commuting out of Red Willow County for employment on a regular basis. However, the total number of reported employed people living in Red Willow County includes those who are self employed as well as those employed in agriculture. This means the difference between total employment and nonfarm wage and salary jobs (530) likely overstates the number of workers commuting out of Red Willow County.

Included in Table Two are additional employment data for 2007, showing the deviations between total employment and nonfarm wage and salary employment for the McCook Labor Area as a whole and for each county within the area. For the McCook Labor Area as a whole, the total employment of area residents (12,704), irrespective of their place of employment, is 3,538 greater than the nonfarm wage and salary employment working within the area. It appears that much of this difference could be accounted for by agricultural employment, which includes farm proprietors. Agricultural employment shown in the table shows that 2,442 people were employed in agriculture in 2006, the last year that agricultural employment data were available. It is important to note, however, that for Nebraska as a whole, approximately 32 percent of farm operators also have a

full-time job off the farm and 49 percent work off the farm, either in full or part-time employment. Therefore, it is possible that a significant number of people are commuting out of the area for employment.

Table Two
Labor Force, Employment, and Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment,
McCook Labor Area, 2007

County	Labor Force (2007) ^(a)	Total Employment (2007) ^(a)	Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment (2007) ^(b)	Total Employment Minus NF W&S Employment	Agricultural Employment (2006) ^(c)
Red Willow	5,937	5,783	5,253	530	505
Frontier	1,684	1,645	887	758	387
Furnas	2,478	2,399	1,723	676	529
Gosper	1,036	1,002	392	610	315
Hayes	461	444	137	307	350
Hitchcock	1,472	1,431	774	657	356
Labor Area	13,068	12,704	9,166	3,538	2,442

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

^(b) Nonfarm 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 data are for 2006.

Sources: Labor Data - Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information,

[ftp.dol.state.ne.us/lmi/laborforce_workforce](ftp://ftp.dol.state.ne.us/lmi/laborforce_workforce). Farm Employment Data - U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Accounts Data website: <http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/>.

Further review of the data presented in Table Two provides an indication of the commuting patterns for the counties within the McCook Labor Area. It appears that in the McCook Labor Area persons are commuting out of every county in the labor area for employment. In the case of Frontier County, for example, the number of employed persons living in the county is 758 greater than total nonfarm wage and salary employment within the county. Data presented in Table Two suggest that the creation of additional jobs within the McCook Labor Area and Red Willow County would provide opportunities for area residents to work closer to their places of residences instead of having to commute to other areas for employment.

The number of nonfarm wage and salary workers in the McCook Labor Area is shown by major industry sector and by county in Table Three. The reader is reminded that nonfarm 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
Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment, by Industry Sector
McCook Labor Area, by County, 2007**

County	Manufact.	Constr. & Mining	Trans., Whr. & Ut.	Trade	Financial Activities	Other Services	Govt.	Total NF W & S Emp
Red Willow	536 *	220	224	1,196	292	1,653	1,132	5,253
Frontier County	32 *	25 *	57 *	152 *	68	184	369	887
Furnas County	52	94	62	280	83	554	598	1,723
Gosper County	19 *	34	23 *	62 *	39	47	168	392
Hayes County	3 *	2 *	4 *	15 *	4 *	2	107	137
Hitchcock County	135	41 *	101	89	51 *	29	328	774
Total Labor Area	777 *	416	471	1,794	537	2,469	2,702	9,166
Nebraska	101,266	50,457	56,113	148,410	68,981	373,127	164,121	962,475

	Percent of Total NonFarm Wage & Salary Employment							
	Manufact.	Constr. & Mining	Trans., Whr. & Ut.	Trade	Financial Activities	Other Services	Govt.	Total NF W & S Emp
Total Labor Area	8.5	4.5	5.1	19.6	5.9	26.9	29.5	100.0
Nebraska	10.5	5.2	5.8	15.4	7.2	38.8	17.1	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 McCook Labor Area with the distribution for the State of Nebraska. As these data show, the industry distribution of employment for the McCook Labor Area is significantly different than that for Nebraska as a whole.

The most significant deviations between Nebraska and the McCook Labor Area occur in Government Sector employment, with 29.5 percent of nonfarm wage and salary workers in the McCook area employed in that sector, compared to 17.1 percent for Nebraska. Conversely, only 26.9 percent of nonfarm wage and salary workers in the McCook Labor Area are employed in the Other Services Sector, compared to 38.8 percent for Nebraska as a whole.

Table Four Part A provides data showing labor cost comparisons, by county, for all private wage and salary workers for the McCook 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 Red Willow County (\$25,816 for all wage and salary employees for all private industries) are slightly lower than for the McCook Labor Area as a whole. Average annual salaries in Red Willow County are higher than in three of the other counties (Frontier, Gosper, and Hayes Counties) that make up the McCook Labor Area but are significantly lower than the state average. Average annual salaries for the McCook Labor Area (\$25,987) were

\$8,886 (25.5 percent) less than the Nebraska average, with Red Willow County average annual salaries were \$9,057 (26.0 percent) less. These data suggest, of course, there would be a positive labor supply response in Red Willow County to the creation of additional employment opportunities with competitive wages and benefits.

Table Four
Part A
Average Annual Pay and Average Weekly Wages of Wage and Salary Workers
All Covered^(a) Workers and All Industries,
McCook Study Area by County, and Nebraska, 2007

County	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wages	Average Annual Wages
Red Willow	3,976	\$496	\$25,816
Frontier	475	\$458	\$23,799
Furnas	1,176	\$511	\$26,566
Gosper	235	\$496	\$25,795
Hayes	60	\$457	\$23,764
Hitchcock	449	\$551	\$28,678
Labor Area	6,371	\$500	\$25,987
Nebraska	761,873	\$671	\$34,873

Part B
Average Annual Pay of Wage and Salary Workers
Covered^(a) Employers, by Industry Group
McCook Labor Area, by County, and Nebraska, 2007

County	All Goods Producing	Manf.	Nat. Res. & Mining	All Service Providing	Trade Trans & Util	Financial Services	Bus & Prof Services	Leisure & Hospitality
Red Willow	\$33,107	\$35,520	\$29,323	\$23,832	\$25,166	\$31,302	\$17,544	\$9,005
Frontier	\$31,881	-D-	-D-	\$21,961	\$23,376	\$35,649	\$23,316	\$5,561
Furnas	\$31,370	\$34,404	\$29,577	\$25,251	\$21,944	\$31,323	\$26,593	\$6,172
Gosper	\$25,419	\$21,738	\$24,831	\$25,995	\$24,744	\$44,171	\$33,443	\$10,505
Hayes	\$24,728	-D-	-D-	\$22,933	\$24,351	-D-	\$23,091	-D-
Hitchcock	\$36,943	\$37,616	\$37,775	\$21,395	\$23,668	\$34,093	\$26,179	\$6,692
Nebraska	\$38,573	\$39,424	\$27,809	\$33,870	\$30,704	\$46,179	\$43,028	\$11,885

^(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>.

Table Four Part B provides average annual wages, by county and by major industry sector, for the counties that make up the McCook Labor Area. As these data indicate, the highest average annual wages in the area are for wage and salary workers employed in Hitchcock. The average annual wage for all wage and salary workers (working) in Hitchcock was \$28,678 in 2007 in Hitchcock which was \$2,691 (10.4 percent) more than the average for the McCook Labor Area as a whole, and \$6,195 (17.8 percent) less than the Nebraska average. A review of the industry specific data for average annual wages for Hitchcock indicates that the high average annual wage results from high average wages in the Natural Resources & Mining Sector and the Manufacturing Sector.

Commuting Patterns

Table Five provides data from the 2000 Census of Population showing commuting patterns for workers living in the McCook Labor Area. As 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 Red Willow County indicate that 450, or 7.9 percent of the employed workers, commuted to other counties for employment. For all of the other counties in the McCook Labor Area, the percentage of commuters was greater than for Red Willow County, and in most cases substantially greater. In the case of Gosper, 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 for employment include Hitchcock (38.9 percent), Frontier (28.7 percent), Hayes (26.3 percent), and Furnas with 21.2 percent of employed workers commuting out of their county of residence for employment.

Table Five
Commuting Data for Workers in the McCook Labor Area

Part A
Commuting Outside County, 2000

County	Working Outside County	
	Number	Percent
Red Willow	450	7.9
Frontier	459	28.7
Furnas	505	21.2
Gosper	538	51.6
Hayes	137	26.3
Hitchcock	552	38.9

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	%
Red Willow	2,847	52.5	1,771	32.6	402	7.4	203	3.7	203	3.7
Frontier	565	41.0	336	24.4	174	12.6	162	11.7	142	10.3
Furnas	1,081	48.2	530	23.6	200	8.9	251	11.2	180	8.0
Gosper	295	30.3	245	25.2	200	20.6	150	15.4	82	8.4
Hayes	178	42.0	92	21.7	56	13.2	56	13.2	42	9.9
Hitchcock	447	35.7	327	26.1	196	15.6	182	14.5	101	8.1
Labor Area	5,413	46.3	3,301	28.2	1,228	10.5	1,004	8.6	750	6.4
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 Part B provides further data illustrating the willingness of workers in the area to travel for employment. For the McCook Labor Area as a whole, there were 1,754 workers in 2000, or 15.0 percent of residents, employed outside of their home and traveling 30 minutes or more commuting to their place of employment. In the case of Gosper County, 23.8 percent traveled 30 minutes or more to their place of employment,

while for Hayes County the workers traveling 30 minutes or more accounted for 23.1 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 McCook Labor Area, by county, and for Nebraska for the 1950–2007 period. As these data indicate, the population of the McCook Labor Area was 26,193 in 2000. The McCook Labor Area population declined by 32.2 percent from 1950 to 2000 and declined 8.6 percent from 2000 to 2007. Population in Red Willow County totaled 11,448 in 2000 and had declined by 11.8 percent from 1950 to 2000. During the latest Census decade of the 1990s, Red Willow County population decreased by 2.2 percent, compared to the decrease for the McCook Labor Area as a whole of 3.9 percent, and to the State rate of growth of 8.4 percent.

Table Six
Population in the McCook Labor Area, by County, and Nebraska
Selected Years, 1950–2007

COUNTY	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	% Chg.	% Chg.
								1950–2000	2000–07
Nebraska	1,325,510	1,411,330	1,485,333	1,569,825	1,578,385	1,711,263	1,768,331	29.1	3.3
Red Willow	12,977	12,940	12,191	12,615	11,705	11,448	10,748	-11.8	-6.1
Frontier	5,282	4,311	3,982	3,647	3,101	3,099	2,663	-41.3	-14.1
Furnas	9,385	7,711	6,897	6,486	5,553	5,324	4,732	-43.3	-11.1
Gosper	2,734	2,489	2,178	2,140	1,928	2,143	1,971	-21.6	-8.0
Hayes	2,404	1,919	1,530	1,356	1,222	1,068	980	-55.6	-8.2
Hitchcock	5,867	4,829	4,051	4,079	3,750	3,111	2,844	-47.0	-8.6
Labor Area	38,649	34,199	30,829	30,323	27,259	26,193	23,938	-32.2	-8.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population, 1950-2000* and Annual Population Estimates, 2007.

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 McCook Labor Area. In 2006, there were 5,217 people in Red Willow County between the ages of 25 and 64, which represented 48.0 percent of the total population, compared to 47.6 percent of the population for the McCook Labor Area as a whole and 50.8 percent of the Nebraska population in this age range.

Table Seven
Age Characteristics of the Population, McCook Labor Area,
by County, and Nebraska, 2006

COUNTY	0-14		15-24		25-44		45-64		65-Older		Median Age
	Number	% ^(a)	Number	% ^(a)	Number	% ^(a)	Number	% ^(a)	Number	% ^(a)	
Red Willow	2,114	19.5	1,454	13.4	2,307	21.2	2,910	26.8	2,080	19.1	42.2
Frontier	430	15.8	529	19.4	454	16.6	786	28.8	530	19.4	43.7
Furnas	896	17.9	591	11.8	983	19.6	1,370	27.4	1,163	23.2	45.5
Gosper	361	18.3	205	10.4	376	19.0	586	29.6	450	22.8	46.4
Hayes	166	16.1	133	12.9	196	19.0	329	32.0	205	19.9	46.1
Hitchcock	477	16.3	389	13.3	552	18.9	840	28.7	668	22.8	45.7
Labor Area	4,444	18.1	3,301	13.5	4,868	19.8	6,821	27.8	5,096	20.8	44.0
Nebraska	367,141	20.8	264,120	15.0	458,669	26.0	437,021	24.8	234,655	13.3	36.0

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

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Estimates, by Age, 2006*.

Table Eight provides information showing population, the natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration for the 1990–2000 period for Nebraska, for Red Willow County and for the McCook Labor Area. As these data show, the McCook Labor Area as a whole had a small rate of net out-migration during the Census decade of the 1990s, while Furnas and Gosper Counties experienced net in-migration. As indicated in the table, net out-migration for the McCook Labor Area as a whole accounted for population decline of 764 people during the decade, contributing to a population decrease equal to only 2.8 percent of the 1990 population. In the case of Red Willow County, net out-migration during the 1990s totaled 463 people, or 4.0 percent of the 1990 population.

Table Eight
Population, Births, Deaths and Migration, McCook Labor Area,
by County, 1990–2000

County	Population		1990–1999			Net Migration, 1990–2000	
	1990	2000	Births	Deaths	Nat. Incr.	Number	% 1990 Pop.
Red Willow	11,705	11,448	1,465	1,259	206	-463	-3.96
Frontier	3,101	3,099	339	315	24	-26	-0.84
Furnas	5,553	5,324	603	1,008	-405	176	3.17
Gosper	1,928	2,143	237	272	-35	250	12.97
Hayes	1,222	1,068	102	90	12	-166	-13.58
Hitchcock	3,750	3,111	333	437	-104	-535	-14.27
Labor Area	27,259	26,193	3,079	3,381	-302	-764	-2.80
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 2000–2007 period. As these data show, the McCook Labor Area experienced significant net out-migration during this more recent seven-year period. As indicated in the table, out-migration for the McCook Labor Area as a whole accounted for population decline of 2,541 during the 2000–2007 period, contributing to a population decrease equal to 9.7 percent of the 2000 population. In the case of Red Willow County, net out-migration during this seven-year period was 760, or 6.6 percent

of the 2000 population. These data suggest that companies offering good paying jobs with competitive benefits packages will be a key factor in reversing the out-migration of population that has been occurring in Red Willow County, as well as to the other counties that comprise the McCook Labor Area.

Table Nine
Population, Births, Deaths, and Migration, McCook Labor Area,
by County, 2000–2007

County	Population		2000–2007			Net Migration, 2000–2007*	
	2000	2007	Births	Deaths	Nat. Incr.	Number	% 2000 Pop.
Red Willow	11,448	10,748	1,009	949	60	-760	-6.6
Frontier	3,099	2,663	196	184	12	-448	-14.5
Furnas	5,324	4,732	384	560	-176	-416	-7.8
Gosper	2,143	1,971	169	198	-29	-143	-6.7
Hayes	1,068	980	61	50	11	-99	-9.3
Hitchcock	3,111	2,844	1,839	1,431	408	-675	-21.7
Labor Area	26,193	23,938	3,658	3,372	286	-2,541	-9.7
Nebraska	1,711,263	1,768,331	187,564	109,569	77,995	-20,927	-1.2

* Net Migration from the Bureau of the Census estimates, includes residual component not shown separately.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Estimates, 2007, and Components of Population Change, 2000-2007*.

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 McCook Labor Area and in Red Willow County. The expected response to such employment opportunities would be significant, and it is anticipated that there would be an adequate labor supply response for a prospective new employer offering competitive wages and benefits in the McCook area. The labor force, employment, and demographic data presented in this report illustrate quite clearly that there is a sufficiently large labor force and population base living within the McCook 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 McCook Labor Area and Red Willow 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 McCook 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.

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