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# Economic Trends Update: Harper County

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## ***Foreword***

The Kansas Center for Community Economic Development (KCCED) is a joint center of the Policy Research Institute at the University of Kansas and the Kansas Center for Rural Initiatives at Kansas State University. Its purpose is to enhance economic development efforts by bringing university expertise to rural Kansas.

KCCED is funded by a grant from the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, and conclusions of this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government, the University of Kansas, or any other individual or organization.

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# Economic Trends Update: Harper County

## Introduction

The following report is an objective look at several key economic trends occurring in Harper County over the last few decades. The Harper County area has seen a steadily-declining population in the last several decades. Specific data on those and other developments will hopefully prove valuable to Harper County's community leaders.

This report looks at variables categorized under the following areas:

- population,
- employment,
- earnings and income,
- retail trade,
- agriculture, and
- education.

Throughout the report, Harper County's performance is compared with the performance of the State of Kansas and other Comparative Counties.<sup>1</sup> It is by no means a comprehensive analysis of economic trends facing Harper County but rather an overview of some key economic and demographic variables.

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<sup>1</sup> "Comparative counties" or "Selected counties" used for comparison in this report are Barber, Kingman, Pratt and Sumner.

## POPULATION

In every community population size and economic activity are closely related. The size of population is directly related to employment opportunities within the area, wage differentials between regions, and a community's overall economic and social conditions. Growing communities are more likely to adapt successfully to a changing economic environment than areas with constant or decreasing population. New residents in a community mean additional consumers, taxpayers, and suppliers of labor. Without population growth, communities face problems of a tightening labor market, lack of new customers for businesses, a shrinking tax base, and an overall decline in economic activity. Generally, areas of population growth are also areas of economic growth, whereas areas of population loss suffered previous economic decline and restructuring.

Characteristics of the region's population are regarded as indicators of economic conditions and economic potential of this region. Past and projected population changes indicate economic trends in the community and can be compared to other counties as well as to the statewide and national averages.

Another characteristic of the economic potential of the region is migration of the population. Migration is linked to job opportunities and demand as well as wage differentials between regions. Counties with low rates of job creation and low wages will face higher worker mobility due to the lack of opportunity, or a "pull" phenomenon by urban areas with higher wages, better job opportunities, and a perceived better quality of life. Age and education also determine regional migration. Generally, the population aged 18 to 45 is the most mobile age group. The effect of education on migration is reflected by the movement of well-educated workers toward better job matches for themselves and their spouses and their attempts to raise their income levels by migrating to areas with employment opportunities.

The following section consists of population tables, figures, and maps, which together illustrate population totals, population growth rates, population by age groups, percent net migration, and population rankings.

### Population: Key Findings

- With the exception of the 1960's, the population of Harper County has declined every decade since 1910. Between 1980 and 1990 Harper County's population decreased by 8 percent, while the growth rate of Kansas was a positive 4.8 percent and that of the U.S. a positive 9.8 percent. In the decade of the 1990's Harper County's population slip was even more pronounced at a negative 9.3 percent. This was the largest decade population decline in the county since 1960. (Table 1 and 2, Figure 1a)
- Of the comparative counties only Barber County has had consistently greater population declines in the last three decades than Harper County. All the

comparative counties and even the state of Kansas saw decreased population growth in the 1980's and, again, only Barber County lost a higher percent of its population than Harper County. In the 1990's, Harper County's population condition worsened, while the population in the comparative counties and the state of Kansas improved. (Table 2 and Figure 1b)

- The largest age group segment in Harper County in 1990 was made up of people in the 25 to 44 year-old range, but by 2000 that age group came in third compared to the 45-64 group and 65 and over group. Over 25 percent of the Harper County population was in the 25 to 44 range in 1990, but only 22 percent was in that range in 2000. The age group which saw the most growth was the 45 to 64 year-old range; this group grew from 19.9 percent of the population in 1990 to 23.5 percent in 2000. In short, the population of Harper County is aging rather rapidly. (Table 3 and 3a and Figure 2)
- Census race data from 2000 can not be directly compared to data from previous years, due to a change in reporting which now allows people to select more than one race. In 2000, 77 people in Harper County indicated they belonged to more than one race. Therefore, the 2000 Census data figures for individual races would probably be slightly higher if the old categorization had been used. Nevertheless, the new data are still useful for indicating trends. (Tables 4 and 4a)
- The population of Harper County has become slightly more racially diverse over time, with the population in the 'Others' group (Asians, Pacific Islanders and Native Americans) growing the most over the last two decades. This group totaled only 23 people in 1980 but nearly quadrupled to 89 in 2000. (Tables 4 and 4a)
- Though their numbers have been decreasing over time, non-Hispanic whites still made up the majority of the county's population in 2000, at 96.7 percent of the total. The black population was the smallest group in the county, comprising only 0.2 percent of the total in 2000. Hispanics made up 1.1 percent of the total population in 2000, and Asians, Pacific Islanders and Native Americans made up 1.4 percent. (Tables 4 and 4a)
- In 1990 the ten-year population growth rate in Harper County was 62<sup>nd</sup> compared to all other counties in the state. In other words, 61 other counties had populations that grew faster than Harper's from 1980 to 1990 (Map 1). Between 1990 and 2000 Harper's -7.9 percent population growth rate was ranked 85<sup>th</sup> in the state (Map 2).
- Except for a short reprieve in the 1980's, Harper County's net migration has been negative for the last thirty years. Net migration is calculated as the change in population less the difference between births and deaths. A negative net migration indicates that more people have moved out of the county than have moved in. Between 1990 and 1999 Harper County's net migration was considerable at a net loss of 551 people, or about 7.6 percent of total population. The trend seems to be that net *out*-migration in Harper County is increasing over time. On the other hand,

net migration in Kansas from 1990 to 1999 was a positive 43,924 people. It was the first time since the 1970's that the state of Kansas had a positive net migration. (Table 5 and Map 3)

- Harper County moved from being the 50<sup>th</sup> most populated county in Kansas in 1940 to being the 59<sup>th</sup> in 2000, out of a total of 105 counties. (Table 6)

**Table 1**  
**Population Totals, Growth Rates, Rank & Share**  
**Harper County and Kansas**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Harper County</u>		<u>Kansas</u>		<u>Harper County Rank in State</u>	<u>Share (%)</u>
	<u>Population Total</u>	<u>Growth Rate</u>	<u>Population Total</u>	<u>Growth Rate</u>		
<b>1890</b>	13,266		1,428,108		49	0.9
<b>1900</b>	10,310	-22.3	1,470,495	3.0	60	0.7
<b>1910</b>	14,748	43.0	1,690,949	15.0	46	0.9
<b>1920</b>	13,656	-7.4	1,769,257	4.6	50	0.8
<b>1930</b>	12,823	-6.1	1,880,999	6.3	53	0.7
<b>1940</b>	12,068	-5.9	1,801,028	-4.3	50	0.7
<b>1950</b>	10,263	-15.0	1,905,299	5.8	55	0.5
<b>1960</b>	6,541	-36.3	2,178,611	14.3	54	0.3
<b>1970</b>	7,871	20.3	2,249,071	3.2	56	0.3
<b>1980</b>	7,822	-0.6	2,364,236	5.1	57	0.3
<b>1990</b>	7,205	-7.9	2,477,588	4.8	57	0.3
<b>1991*</b>	7,018	-2.6	2,495,209	0.7	57	0.3
<b>1992*</b>	6,805	-3.0	2,526,042	1.2	58	0.3
<b>1993*</b>	6,711	-1.4	2,547,605	0.9	59	0.3
<b>1994*</b>	6,633	-1.2	2,569,118	0.8	59	0.3
<b>1995*</b>	6,582	-0.8	2,586,942	0.7	60	0.3
<b>1996*</b>	6,494	-1.3	2,598,266	0.4	60	0.2
<b>1997*</b>	6,493	0.0	2,616,339	0.7	60	0.2
<b>1998*</b>	6,411	-1.3	2,638,667	0.9	60	0.2
<b>1999*</b>	6,305	-1.7	2,654,052	0.6	60	0.2
<b>2000</b>	6,536	3.7	2,688,418	1.3	59	0.2

\* Estimates

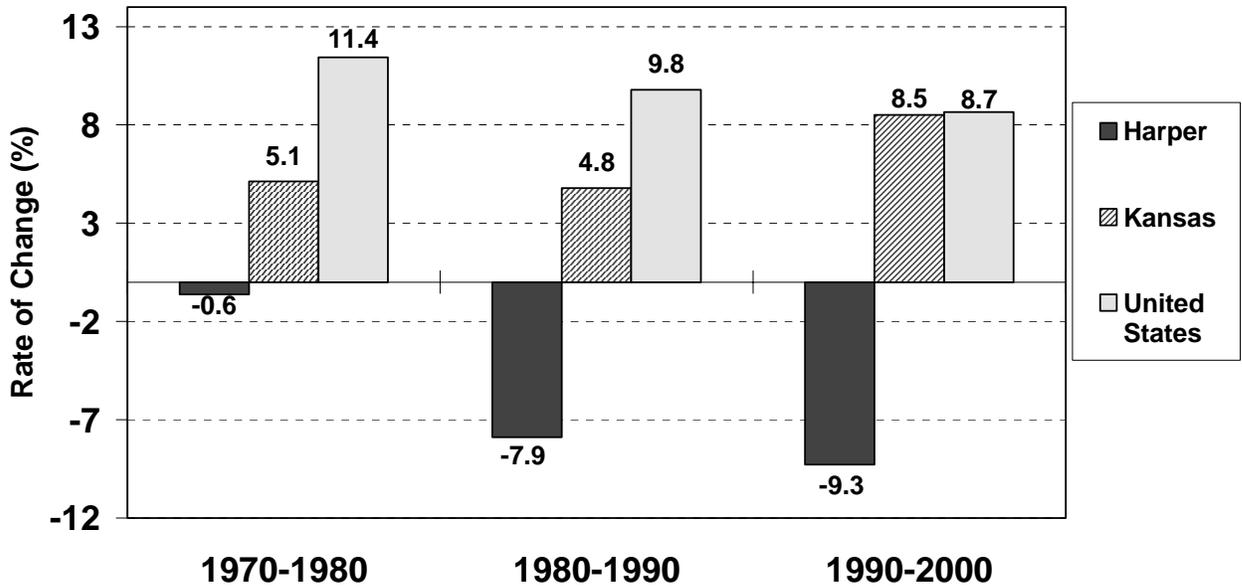
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**Table 2**  
**Population Growth Rates**  
**Harper County, Comparative Counties, Kansas, and United States**  
**1970-2000**

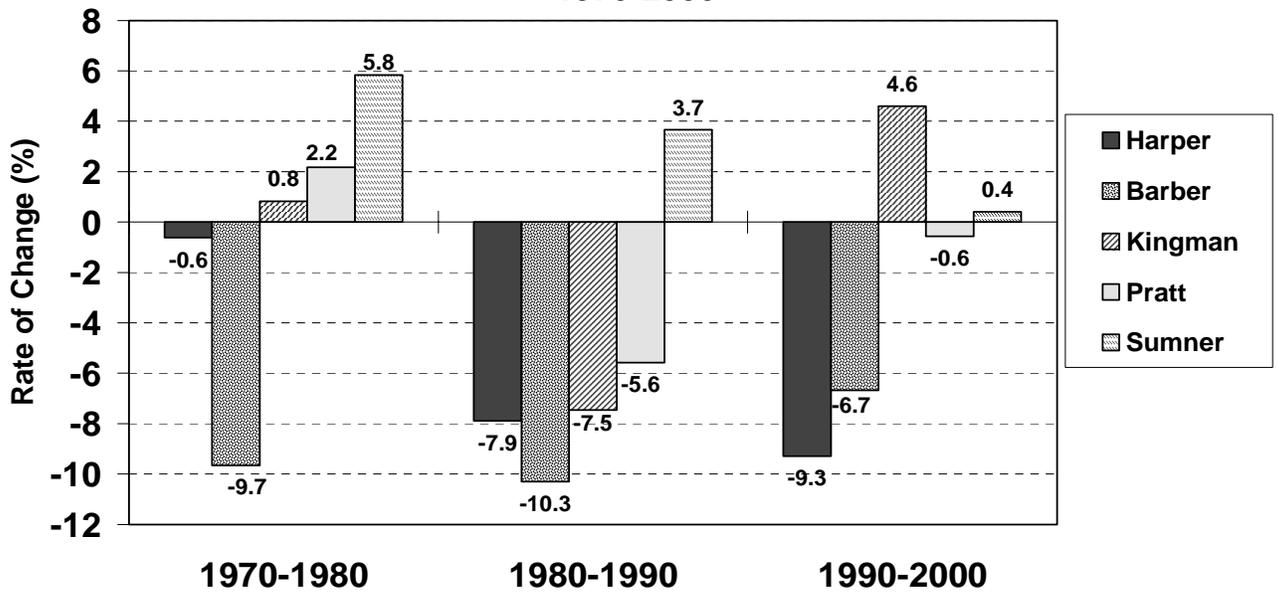
<u>Year</u>	<u>1970-1980</u>	<u>1980-1990</u>	<u>1990-2000</u>
<b>Harper</b>	-0.6	-7.9	-9.3
<b>Barber</b>	-6.7	-10.3	-9.7
<b>Kingman</b>	0.8	-7.5	4.6
<b>Pratt</b>	2.2	-5.6	-0.6
<b>Sumner</b>	5.8	3.7	0.4
<b>Kansas</b>	5.1	4.8	8.5
<b>United States</b>	11.4	9.8	8.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "1980 Census of Population," PC90-1-A; "1990 Decennial Census"; "2000 Decennial Census." Calculations: PRI.

**Figure 1a**  
**Rates of Population Change**  
**Harper County, Kansas, and U.S.**  
**1970-2000**



**Figure 1b**  
**Rates of Population Change**  
**Harper and Comparative Counties**  
**1970-2000**



**Table 3**  
**Population by Selected Age Groups**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1990-2000**

	<b>Age:</b>	<b><u>0-4</u></b>	<b><u>5-17</u></b>	<b><u>18-24</u></b>	<b><u>25-44</u></b>	<b><u>45-64</u></b>	<b><u>65 and over</u></b>
<b>Harper</b>	<b>1990</b>	471	1,327	392	1,831	1,433	1,644
	<b>2000</b>	369	1,243	432	1,436	1,537	1,519
<b>Kansas</b>	<b>1990</b>	189,988	472,267	255,195	776,430	443,877	342,863
	<b>2000</b>	188,708	524,285	275,592	769,204	574,400	356,229

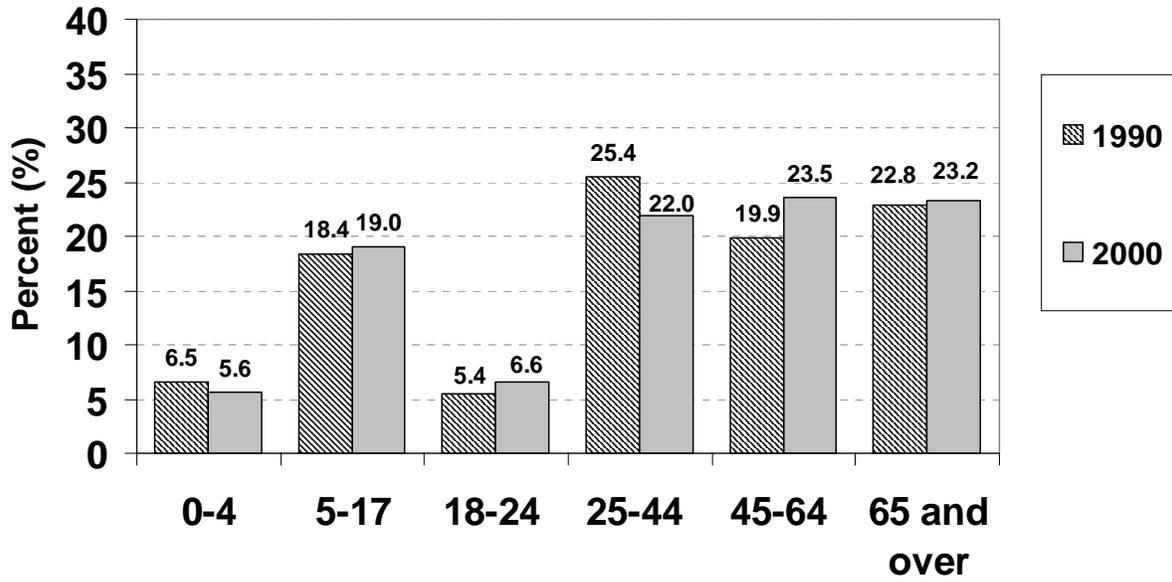
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Table 3a**  
**Population by Selected Age Groups as Percent of Total**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1990-2000**

	<b>Age:</b>	<b><u>0-4</u></b>	<b><u>5-17</u></b>	<b><u>18-24</u></b>	<b><u>25-44</u></b>	<b><u>45-64</u></b>	<b><u>65 and over</u></b>
<b>Harper</b>	<b>1990</b>	6.5 %	18.4 %	5.4 %	25.4 %	19.9 %	22.8 %
	<b>2000</b>	5.6	19.0	6.6	22.0	23.5	23.2
<b>Kansas</b>	<b>1990</b>	7.7	19.1	10.3	31.3	17.9	13.8
	<b>2000</b>	7.0	19.5	10.3	28.6	21.4	13.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Figure 2**  
**Population by Age Group as Percent of Total Population**  
**Harper County**  
**1990-2000**



**Table 4  
Population by Hispanic Origin  
Harper County and Kansas  
1980-2000**

	Year	Total	White		Total Black	Total Hispanic	Others	2 or More Races
			Total	Hispanic				
Harper	1980	7,822	7,700	n/a	n/a	24	75	23
	1990	7,205	7,036	106	6,930	13	105	51
	2000 *	6,536	6,355	33	6,322	15	70	89
Kansas	1980	2,364,236	2,168,221	n/a	n/a	126,127	63,339	69,331
	1990	2,477,588	2,233,897	40,016	2,193,881	143,076	93,670	102,512
	2000 *	2,688,418	2,313,944	79,947	2,233,997	154,198	188,252	163,780

\* 2000 race data is not comparable to previous years due to changes in reporting. See text for more.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Table 4a  
Population by Hispanic Origin as Percent of Total  
Harper County and Kansas  
1980-2000**

	Year	Total	White		Total Black	Total Hispanic	Others	2 or More Races
			Total	Hispanic				
Harper	1980	98.4%	n/a	n/a	0.3%	1.0%	0.3%	
	1990	97.7	1.5	96.2	0.2	1.5	0.7	
	2000 *	97.2	0.5	96.7	0.2	1.1	1.4	1.2
Kansas	1980	91.7%	n/a	n/a	5.3%	2.7%	2.9%	
	1990	90.2	1.6	88.5	5.8	3.8	4.1	
	2000 *	86.1	3.0	83.1	5.7	7.0	6.1	2.1

\* 2000 race data is not comparable to previous years due to changes in reporting. See text for more.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**Table 5  
Net Migration  
1970-1999**

**Harper County**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population Change</u>	<u>Births</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Births - Deaths</u>	<u>Net *** Migration</u>	<u>% Net Migration</u>
1970*	7,871	1,330	n/a	n/a	2,955	-1,625	-24.8
1980*	7,822	-49	n/a	n/a	-158	109	1.4
1990*	7,205	-617	983	1,112	-129	-488	-6.2
1999**	6,305	-900	657	1,006	-349	-551	-7.6

**Kansas**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population Change</u>	<u>Births</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Births - Deaths</u>	<u>Net *** Migration</u>	<u>% Net Migration</u>
1970*	2,249,071	70,460	409,189	219,067	190,122	-119,662	-5.5
1980*	2,364,236	115,165	355,861	218,713	137,148	-21,983	-1.0
1990*	2,477,588	113,352	397,215	220,466	176,749	-63,397	-2.7
1999**	2,654,052	176,464	348,226	215,686	132,540	43,924	1.8

n/a: not available

\* Decade ending

\*\* Population estimate

\*\*\* Net migration = Population change - (births-deaths)

Source: Population Totals: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Census of Population, 1970: Number of Inhabitants; 1980 Census of Population," Vol.1, Chapter A, Part 18; "1990 Census of Population and Housing;" Population Estimates U.S. Bureau of the Census. Calculations: PRI.

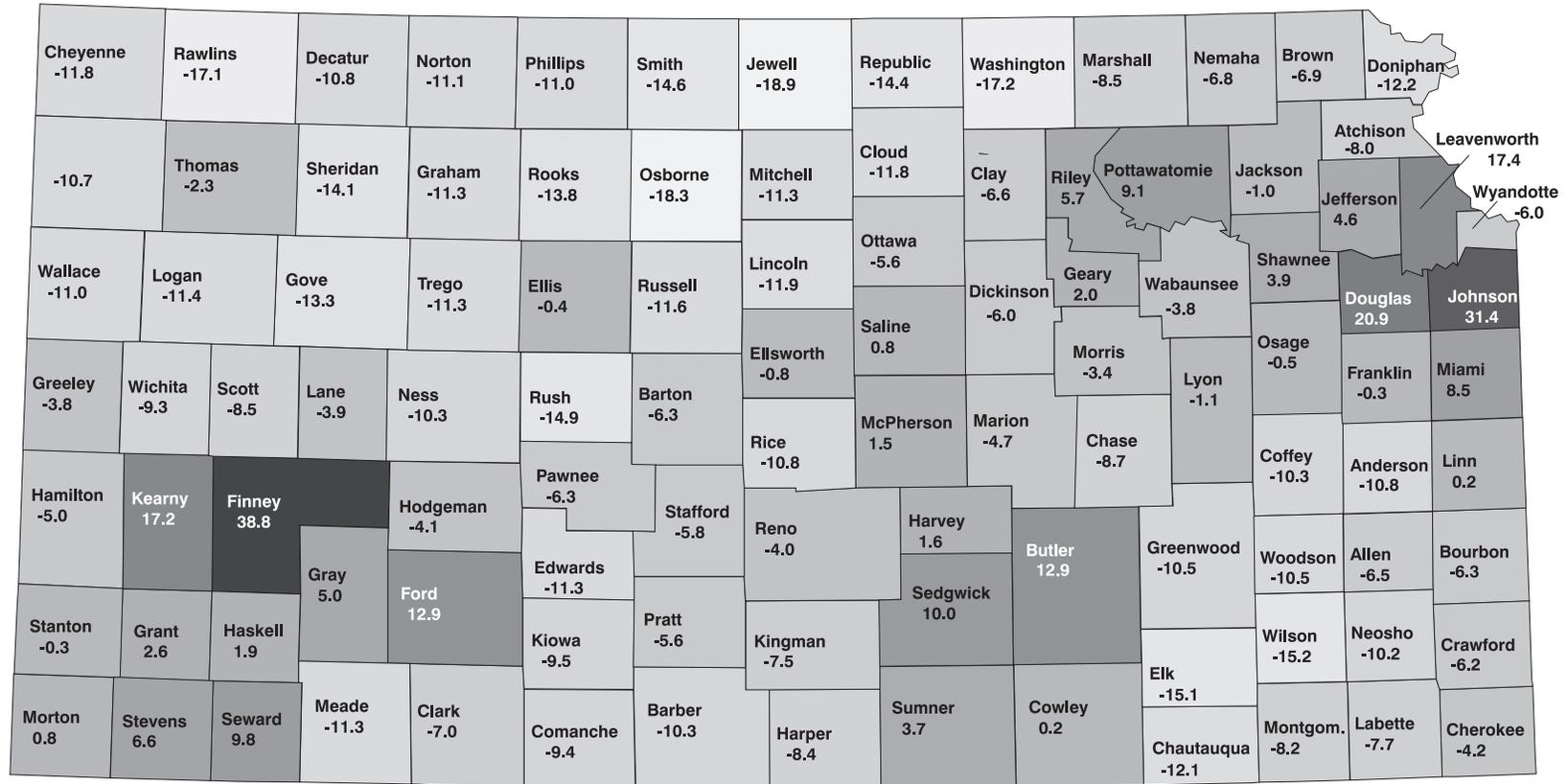
**Table 6**  
**Population of Top Ranking Kansas Counties**  
**(Thousands)**

Rk	1940	Pop.	Rk	1980	Pop.	Rk	1990	Pop.	Rk	2000	Pop.
1	Wyandotte	145	1	Sedgwick	367	1	Sedgwick	404	1	Sedgwick	453
2	Sedgwick	143	2	Johnson	270	2	Johnson	355	2	Johnson	451
3	Shawnee	91	3	Wyandotte	172	3	Wyandotte	162	3	Shawnee	170
4	Reno	52	4	Shawnee	155	4	Shawnee	161	4	Wyandotte	158
5	Montgomery	49	5	Douglas	68	5	Douglas	82	5	Douglas	100
6	Crawford	45	6	Reno	65	6	Riley	67	6	Leavenworth	69
7	Leavenworth	41	7	Riley	64	7	Leavenworth	64	7	Reno	65
8	Cowley	38	8	Leavenworth	55	8	Reno	62	8	Riley	63
9	Johnson	33	9	Saline	49	9	Butler	51	9	Butler	59
10	Butler	32	10	Butler	45	10	Saline	49	10	Saline	54
11	Labette	30	11	Montgomery	42	11	Montgomery	39	11	Finney	41
12	Cherokee	30	12	Crawford	38	12	Cowley	37	12	Crawford	38
13	Saline	30	13	Cowley	37	13	Crawford	36	13	Cowley	36
14	Lyon	26	14	Lyon	35	14	Lyon	35	14	Montgomery	36
15	Sumner	26	15	Barton	31	15	Finney	33	15	Lyon	36
16	Douglas	25	16	Harvey	31	16	Harvey	31	16	Harvey	33
17	Barton	25	17	Geary	30	17	Geary	30	17	Ford	32
18	McPherson	24	18	McPherson	27	18	Barton	29	18	McPherson	30
19	Dickinson	23	19	Ellis	26	19	Ford	27	19	Miami	28
20	Atchison	22	20	Labette	26	20	McPherson	27	20	Barton	28

\* Population Projection

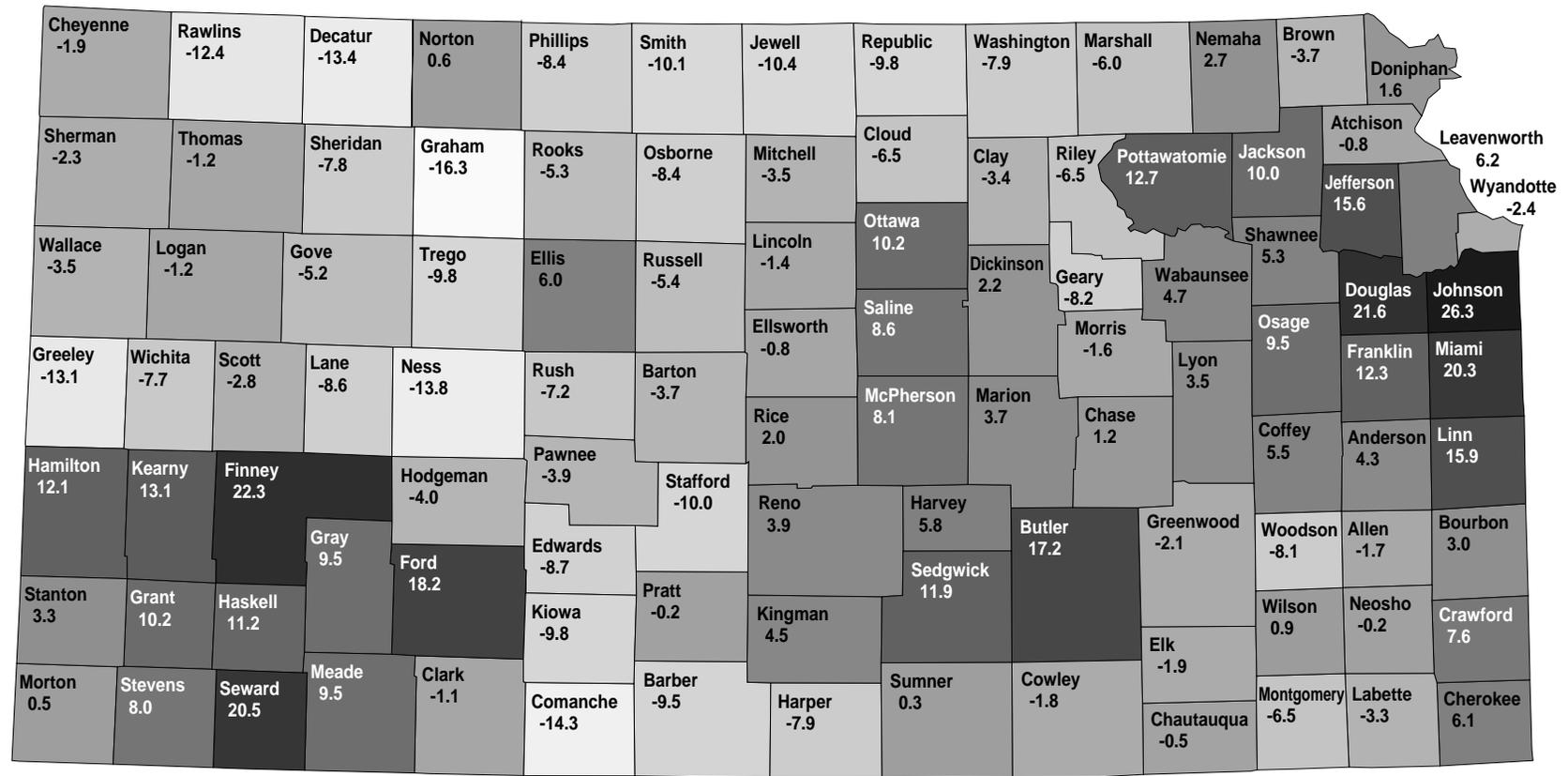
Source: University of Kansas, Policy Research Institute, "Kansas Statistical Abstract," 1992-1993, "Population of Kansas Counties, 1890-1980; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "1990 Census of Population and Housing." Floerchinger, Teresa D., "Kansas Population Projections, 1990-2030," Kansas Division of the Budget, September, 1992. Calculations: PRI.

## Map 1 Percent Population Change: 1980 - 1990



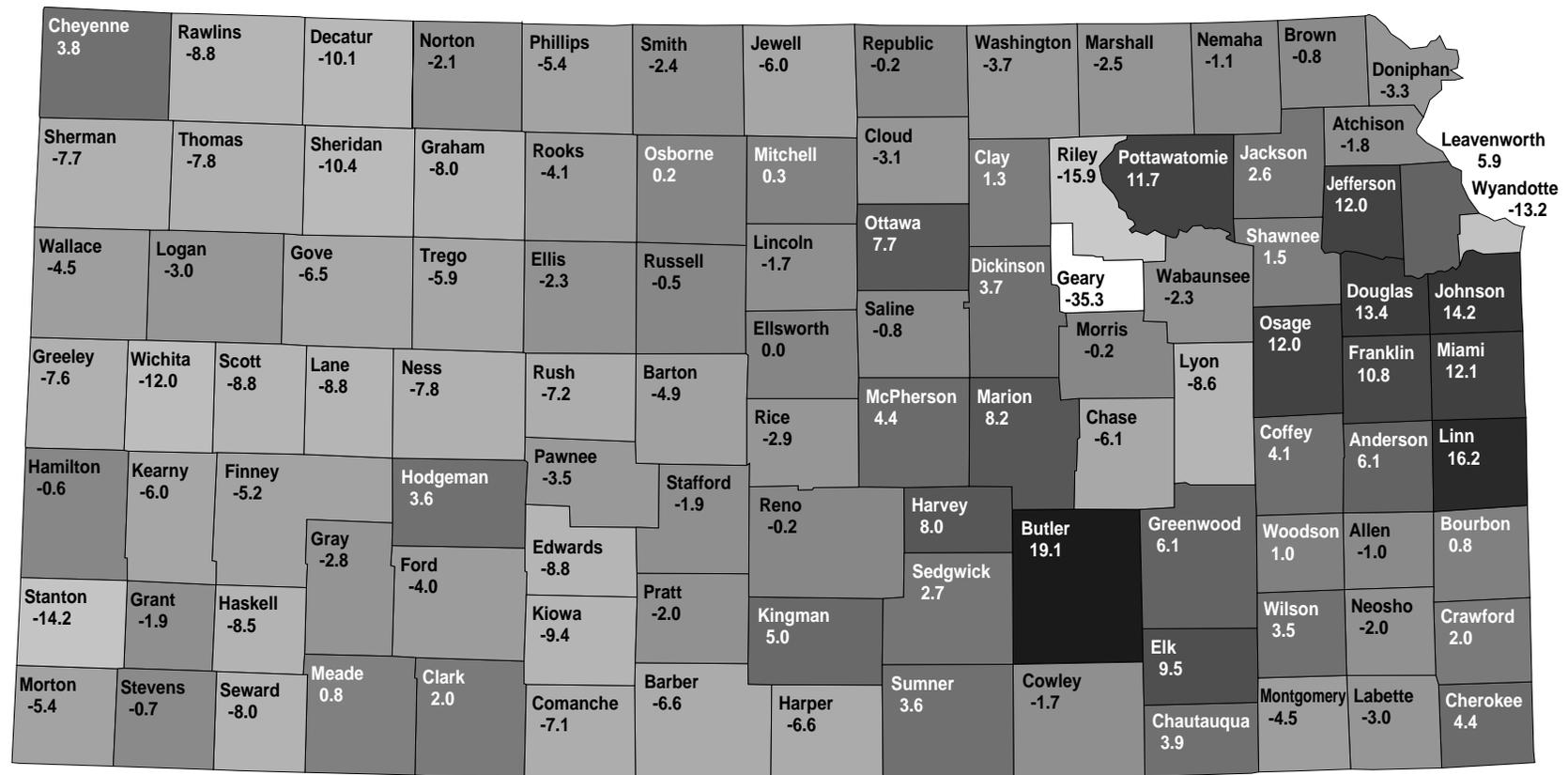
Source: Policy Research Institute, The University of Kansas: data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

## Map 2 Percent Population Change: 1990-2000



Source: Policy Research Institute, The University of Kansas: data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

### Map 3 Percent Net Migration: 1990 - 1999



Source: Policy Research Institute, The University of Kansas: data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

## EMPLOYMENT

Economic vitality of every community is reflected in the employment situation. This section compares the key employment measurements such as labor force size, job creation rate, and unemployment in the Harper County area with its comparative counties and the state of Kansas.

The number of people who are either working or willing to work determines the size of the labor force. This number is influenced not only by the size of population but also by the perceptions of individuals that suitable job opportunities exist within the community. Diverse healthy economies tend to offer the widest variety of job opportunities and thereby attract a large number of job seekers, which increases the size of the labor force.

The unemployment level reflects the amount of economic activity within an area and how well the local market is able to match the supply and demand for labor.

Job creation rates (net change in average annual employment) reflect the growth in employment levels and the range of employment opportunities. As some jobs are lost in a community due to changing economic circumstances, they may be replaced by new jobs. Net job creation reflects the net gain or net loss in jobs over a given period of time.

Place of work data compared to the place of residence data provide the insight of the employment opportunities within the area.

The following data include tables, maps, and graphs on employment growth rates, number of firms by number of employees, percentage distribution of firms by number of employees, employment levels by industry, labor force participation, unemployment rates, and job growth.

### Employment: Key Findings

- The average annual employment in Harper County (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis data by place of work) fell from 3,223 employees in 1990 to 2,786 in 2000. Most of the decline occurred in the first half of the decade, with a drop of 301 employees by 1995 and another 136 by 2000 (Table 7).
- In the first half of the decade (1990-1995) Harper County's employment fell 9.3 percent – a decrease eclipsed only by that in Barber County, at negative 13.1 percent. The rest of the comparative counties saw employment growth in that time, with the most being in Kingman County at 6.6 percent. From 1995 to 2000 Harper County's employment decrease was surpassed again only by one county - this time Pratt County, which saw employment drop 7.7 percent. This compares to a positive

10 percent employment growth in Sumner County and a positive 6.3 percent growth for the state of Kansas over the same five-year period (Table 7, Figures 3 and 3a).

- The number of firms located in Harper County fell 3.8 percent between 1988 and 1998, compared to a 12.6 percent increase for the state of Kansas over the same time period (Table 8).
- The percentage distribution patterns of firms by the number of employees are fairly similar in Harper County compared to the entire state of Kansas (Table 8a). The majority of firms in Harper County (92.6 percent in 1998) are small companies with less than 20 employees. This compares to 86.5 percent of the total number of firms in the state, which are small businesses. However, while the number of small businesses has been growing in the state, Harper County lost ten of them between 1988 and 1998. Harper County only has 16 firms that employ between 20 and 100 people. That number did not change between 1988 and 1998. However, Harper County did gain one medium-sized employer in the last decade (Tables 8 and 8a). These data indicate the importance of small businesses to Harper County's local economy.
- Total industry-level employment for Harper County grew from 3,863 in 1993 to 3,948 in 1998, which represents a growth rate of 2.2 percent, compared with 13.5 percent growth rate for the state of Kansas during the same period of time (Table 9).
- 1998 data for the Construction and Agricultural Services sectors were suppressed because decreases had brought their employment levels to a point low enough to warrant privacy concerns (Table 9).
- The Services sector lost the most jobs over the five-year period from 1993 to 1998, falling 2 percent from 637 to 624 employees. The only other sector that lost jobs was Transportation, but the decline was minor (Table 9).
- Most categories saw modest increases from 1993 to 1998. Finance, Insurance and Real Estate grew the most percentage-wise, moving up 27.5 percent from 167 jobs in 1993 to 213 jobs in 1998. The sector that added the most number of jobs was the Retail sector, which grew by 76 employees. Farm employment increased by 4.4 percent in Harper County, compared to a decrease of 1 percent in Kansas (Table 9 and Figure 4).
- In 1998, the Government sector was the largest employer in Harper County with a 24.4 percent share of total employment. The second largest category was Farming, employing 18.6 percent. Following those were Services that employed 15.8 percent of all workers and Retail Trade at 15.6 percent. All other sectors employed less than ten percent each of the total. The sector that saw its share of employment increase the most since 1993 was the Retail Trade sector (Table 9a).

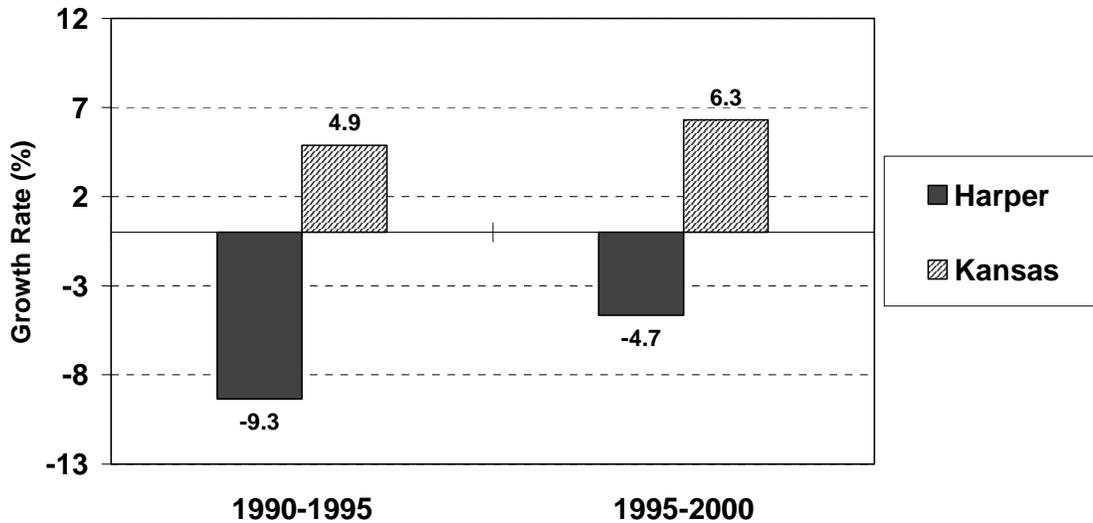
- Recent wage and salary employment estimates based on the place of work data show that employment of all industries in Harper County fell 2.7 percent from 1998 to 1999. Employment estimates for the state of Kansas show a 1.3 percent increase from 1998 to 1999 (Table 9b).
- Place of residence data for Harper County indicates a 0.8 percent annual increase in employment between 1998 and 1999 (these figures are from the Kansas Department of Human Resources, and as the name suggests, are based on the place of residence of individuals rather than their place of work). At the same time the civilian labor force increased by 1.2 percent, leading to an 18.3 percent increase in unemployment in 1999. However, the unemployment rate in Harper County in 1999 was still a very low 2.8 percent (Table 9b).
- Comparing place of residence data and place of work data can indicate commuting trends. Table 9b shows that the number of jobs (place of work data) in Harper County in 1999 was 774 less than the number of people employed in Harper County in 1999 (place of residence data.) This means that 774 people, or 26 percent of the number of employed people in Harper County, commuted to a job outside of the county.
- The unemployment rate in Harper County increased slightly from 2.4 percent in 1998 to 2.8 percent in 1999. This rate was still very low compared to the majority of those seen in the eastern part of the state, but was about normal for those in the surrounding counties (Table 9b and Map 4).
- In the state of Kansas total employment (place of residence data) increased by 2 percent between 1998 and 1999. A much smaller increase in the civilian labor force resulted in a 20.4 percent decrease in the number of unemployed (Table 9b).
- The labor force participation rate is the percentage of population aged 16 and over that is in the labor force. The labor force participation rate in 1990 for Harper County was 58.5 percent (Map 5). This rate compares rather unfavorably with rates seen in the rest of the state, as well as the total Kansas' rate of 65.4 percent and the U.S. rate of 64.4 percent (1990 U.S. Census).

**Table 7**  
**Employment Growth Rates**  
**Harper County, Comparative Counties, Kansas, and United States**  
**Place of Residence Data**  
**1990-2000**

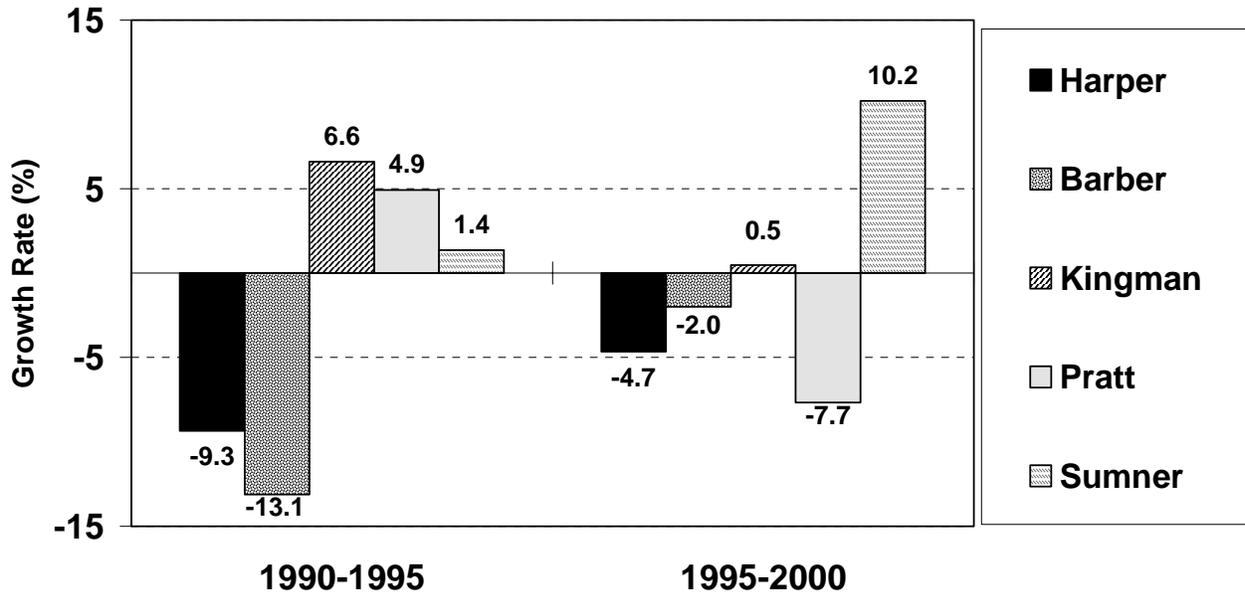
	Average Annual Employment			% Employment Growth	
	<u>1990</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1990-1995</u>	<u>1995-2000</u>
Harper	3,223	2,922	2,786	-9.3 %	-4.7 %
Barber	2,769	2,406	2,358	-13.1	-2.0
Kingman	3,793	4,043	4,062	6.6	0.5
Pratt	4,706	4,938	4,559	4.9	-7.7
Sumner	11,792	11,952	13,171	1.4	10.2
Kansas	1,219,000	1,278,500	1,359,000	4.9	6.3

Source: Kansas Department of Human Resources.

**Figure 3**  
**Employment Growth Rates**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1990-2000**



**Figure 3a**  
**Employment Growth Rates**  
**Harper and Comparative Counties**  
**1990-2000**



**Table 8**  
**Number of Firms, by Number of Employees**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1988-1998**

<u>Employees</u>	<u>Harper</u>			<u>Kansas</u>		
	<u>1988</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>% Change</u>
1 -- 19	224	214	-4.5 %	58,081	64,030	10.2 %
20 -- 99	16	16	0.0	6,604	8,401	27.2
100 -- 499	0	1	n/a	958	1,441	50.4
500+	0	0	n/a	93	147	58.1
<b>Total</b>	240	231	-3.8	65,736	74,019	12.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "County Business Patterns," 1988 and 1998; Policy Research Institute.

**Table 8a**  
**Percentage Distribution of Firms, by Number of Employees**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1988-1998**

<u>Employees</u>	<u>Harper</u>		<u>Kansas</u>	
	<u>1988</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1998</u>
0 - 19	93.3 %	92.6 %	88.4 %	86.5 %
20 - 99	6.7	6.9	10.0	11.3
100 - 499	0.0	0.4	1.5	1.9
500+	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "County Business Patterns," 1988 and 1998; Policy Research Institute. Due to numbers being rounded up, percentages may not equal 100%.

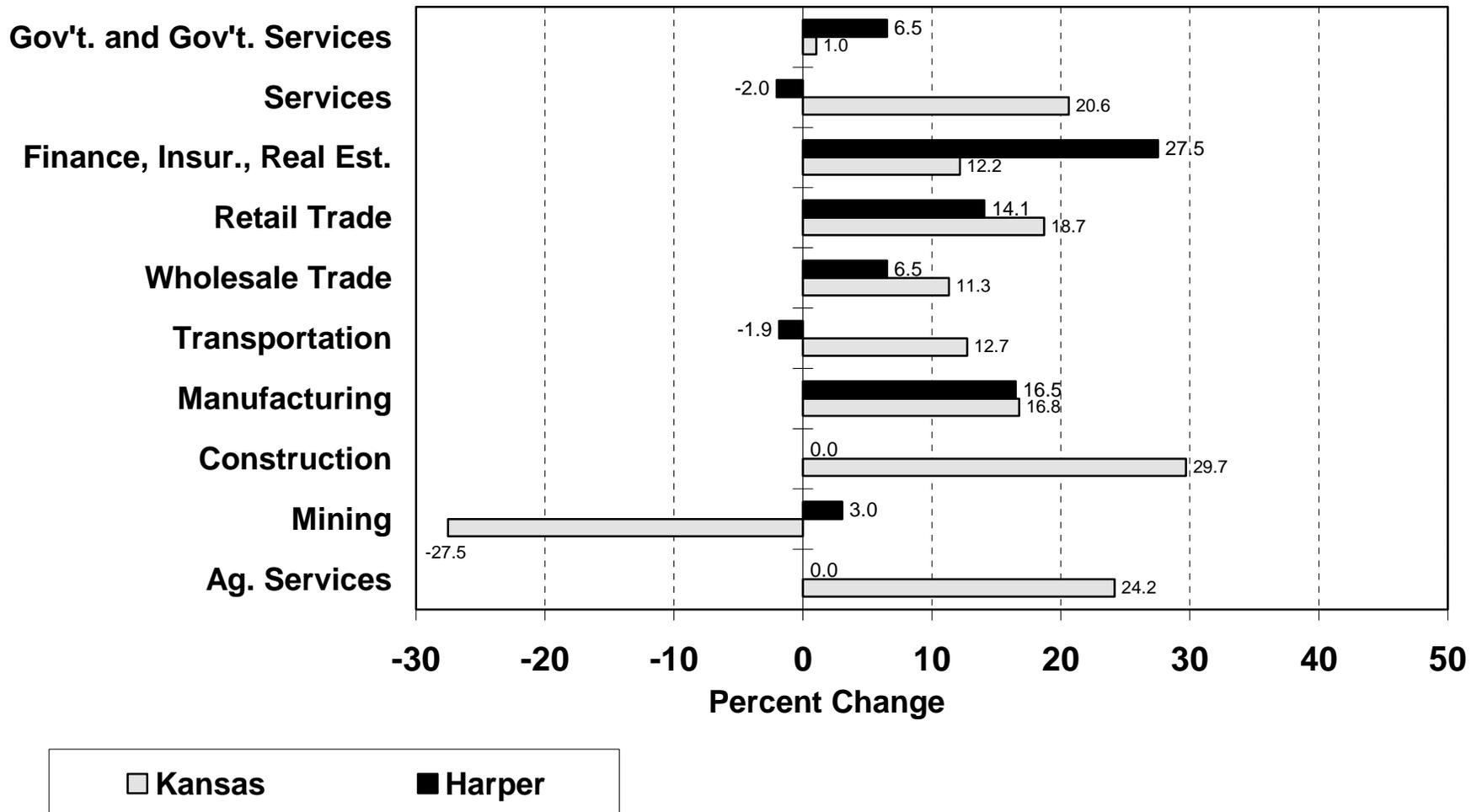
**Table 9**  
**Employment Levels by Industry**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**Place of Work Data**  
**1993-1998**

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Harper</u>				<u>Kansas</u>			
	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
<b>Ag. Services</b>	68	S	n/a	n/a %	17,039	21,159	4,120	24.2 %
<b>Mining</b>	164	169	5	3.0	28,274	20,491	-7,783	-27.5
<b>Construction</b>	107	S	n/a	n/a	69,834	90,576	20,742	29.7
<b>Manufacturing</b>	279	325	46	16.5	187,914	219,402	31,488	16.8
<b>Transportation</b>	107	105	-2	-1.9	75,247	84,832	9,585	12.7
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	184	196	12	6.5	74,037	82,421	8,384	11.3
<b>Retail Trade</b>	540	616	76	14.1	251,571	298,627	47,056	18.7
<b>Finance, Insur., Real Est.</b>	167	213	46	27.5	95,702	107,350	11,648	12.2
<b>Services</b>	637	624	-13	-2.0	387,242	467,121	79,879	20.6
<b>Gov't. and Gov't. Services</b>	906	965	59	6.5	268,035	270,802	2,767	1.0
<b>Subtotal -- Non-Farm</b>	3,159	3,213	54	1.7	1,454,895	1,662,781	207,886	14.3
<b>Farm Employment</b>	704	735	31	4.4	81,070	80,231	-839	-1.0
<b>Total Employment</b>	3,863	3,948	85	2.2	1,535,965	1,743,012	207,047	13.5

S: data suppressed. See text for more.

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (REIS).

**Figure 4**  
**Percent Change in Employment by Industry**  
**1993-1998**



**Table 9a**  
**Employment Percent Share by Industry**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**Place of Work Data**  
**1993-1998**

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Harper</u>			<u>Kansas</u>		
	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>Change</u>
<b>Ag. Services</b>	1.8	S	n/a %	1.1	1.2	0.1 %
<b>Mining</b>	4.2	4.3	0.0	1.8	1.2	-0.7
<b>Construction</b>	2.8	S	n/a	4.5	5.2	0.6
<b>Manufacturing</b>	7.2	8.2	1.0	12.2	12.6	0.4
<b>Transportation</b>	2.8	2.7	-0.1	4.9	4.9	0.0
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	4.8	5.0	0.2	4.8	4.7	-0.1
<b>Retail Trade</b>	14.0	15.6	1.6	16.4	17.1	0.8
<b>Finance, Insur., Real Est.</b>	4.3	5.4	1.1	6.2	6.2	-0.1
<b>Services</b>	16.5	15.8	-0.7	25.2	26.8	1.6
<b>Gov't. and Gov't. Services</b>	23.5	24.4	1.0	17.5	15.5	-1.9
<b>Subtotal -- Non-Farm</b>	81.8	81.4	-0.4	94.7	95.4	0.7
<b>Farm Employment</b>	18.2	18.6	0.4	5.3	4.6	-0.7

S: data suppressed. See text for more.

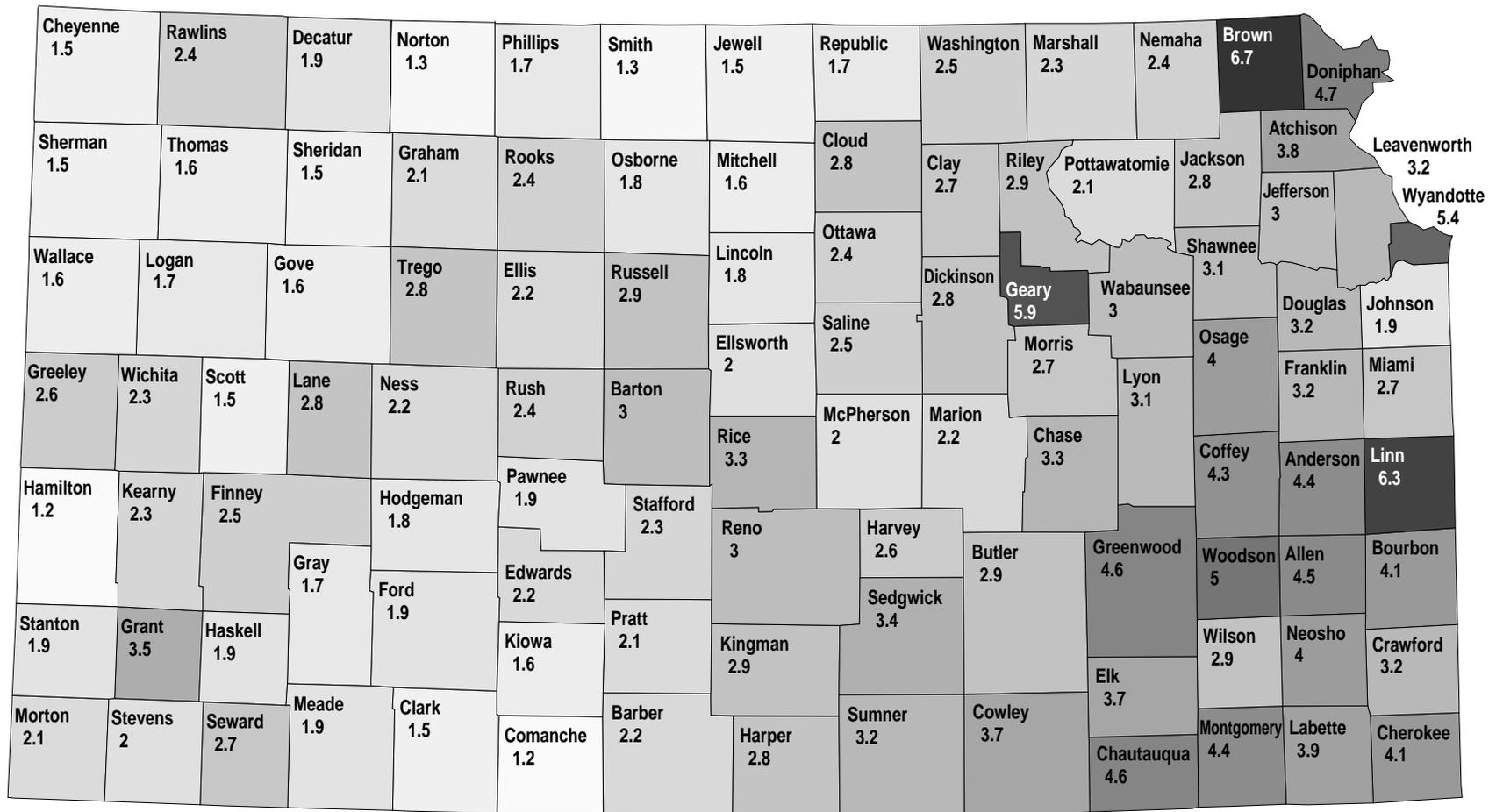
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (REIS).

**Table 9b**  
**Labor Market Summary**  
**1998-1999**

	<u>Harper County</u>			<u>Kansas</u>
	<u>1998</u> <u>Average</u>	<u>1999</u> <u>Average</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>1998-99</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>1998-99</u>
<b><u>Place of Residence Data</u></b>				
Civilian labor force	2,996	3,031	1.2	1.1
Employment	2,925	2,947	0.8	2.0
Unemployment	71	84	18.3	-20.4
Unemployment rate	2.4	2.8	16.7	-21.1
<b><u>Place of Work Data</u></b>				
<b><u>Wage and Salary Employment</u></b>				
All industries	2,233	2,173	-2.7	1.3
Goods producing industries	416	372	-10.6	0.2
Construction and mining	95	81	-14.7	4.1
Manufacturing	300	275	-8.3	-1.2
Service producing industries	1,811	1,797	-0.8	1.6
Transportation & Public utilities	43	43	0.0	7.4
Wholesale & Retail Trade	556	553	-0.5	0.9
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	113	121	7.1	1.1
Services	179	171	-4.5	1.2
Government	920	909	-1.2	1.4

Source: Kansas Department of Human Resources, Labor Market Information Services. Developed in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Map 4 County Unemployment Rates: 1999



*Note:* Employment data are based on an individual's place of residence.

Source: Policy Research Institute, The University of Kansas, "Kansas Statistical Abstract, 1999" using data from Kansas Labor Force Estimates Annual Average, 1999. Kansas Department of Human Resources, Labor Market Information Services, developed in cooperation with U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Map 5 Labor Force Participation: 1990



Source: 1990 U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**Kansas: 65.4%**

## Earnings and Income

The economic base of the community is determined by the income of the community's residents. Higher average wages may indicate a greater number of jobs in high growth, high performance businesses. Low wage growth may indicate a higher concentration of stable or declining industries.

This report looks at two major components of earnings and income: average wage per job and per capita personal income. Average wage per job reflects the productivity of local labor and the performance of local businesses. Per capita personal income indicates the relative wealth of the area compared to the state. As the productivity of business and industry increases, personal per capita income also rises.

### Earnings and Income: Key Findings

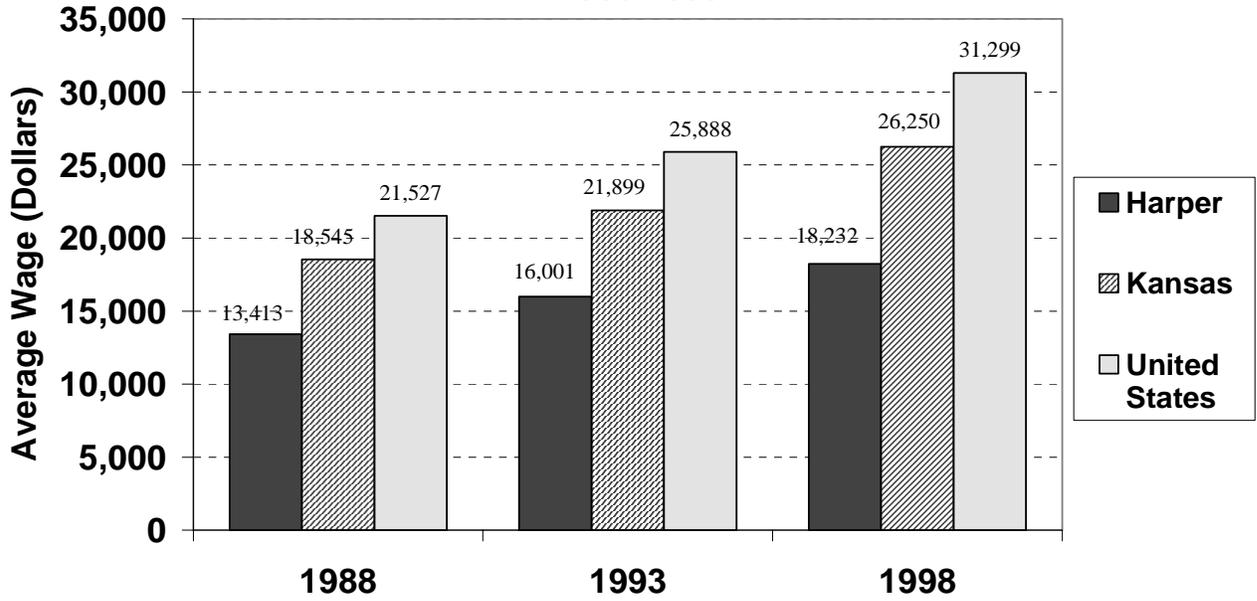
- In 1998 the average wage per job in Harper County was \$18,232. That was \$8,018 less than the average wage for the state of Kansas and \$13,067 less than the national average (Table 10, Figure 5).
- Harper County's average wage per job was the lowest of the comparative counties in 1988 and 1998, though the difference was not as large as that seen between Harper County's average wage and that for the state as a whole. In 1998, Sumner County's average wage was the highest of the comparative counties at \$21,151 (Table 10 and Figure 5a).
- In the five-year period between 1988 and 1993 the average wage per job in Harper County increased 19.3 percent and between 1993 and 1998 it increased 13.9 percent. The percentage increases in Harper County were higher than the increases seen in the comparative counties for the time period between 1988 and 1993, but were the lowest from 1993 to 1998. The respective average wage increases for the state were 18.1 and 19.9 percent (Table 10).
- Per capita personal income in Harper County in 1999 grew slightly faster than the state's rate, but at \$23,021 was still behind the state's average of \$26,705 per year (Table 11). Historical data show that per capita income in Harper County was once higher than the state as a whole, but over time has not increased at the same rate and so is currently lagging behind (Figure 5b).
- Per capita personal income for Harper County in 1999 was in the middle of the comparative counties. Nemaha County had the highest per capita income at \$24,038 (Map 6).

**Table 10**  
**Average Wage Per Job**  
**Harper County, Comparative Counties, Kansas and U.S.**  
**1988-1998**

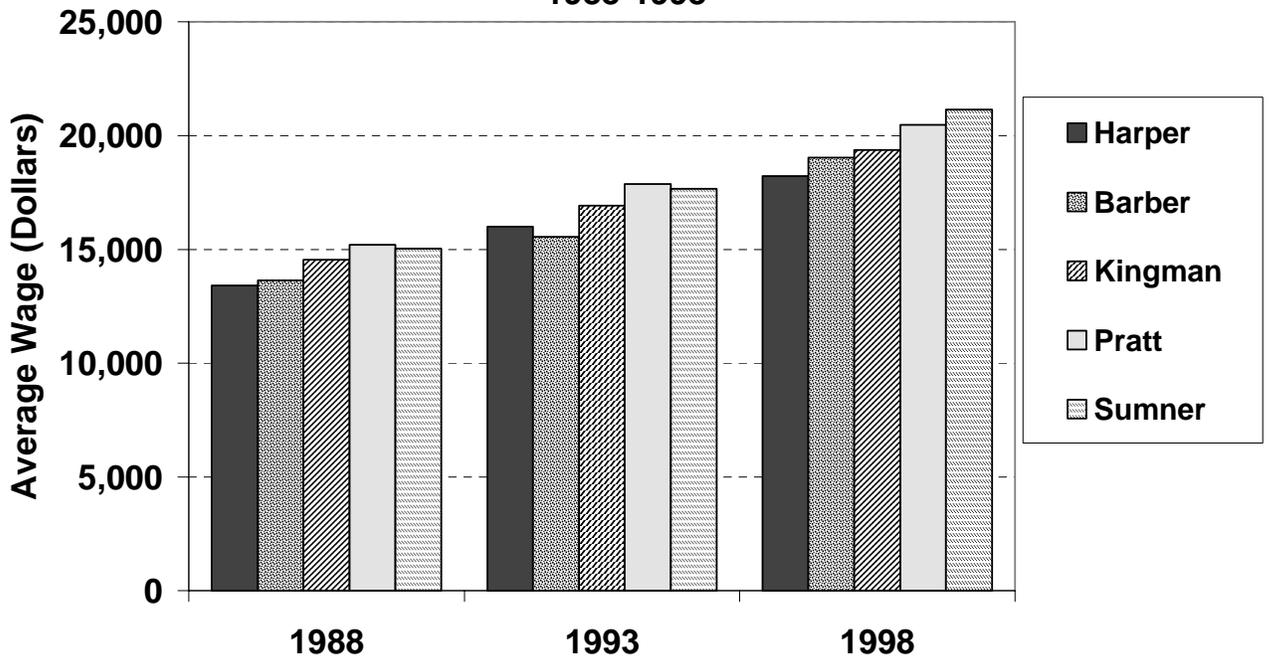
	<u>Average Wage per Job (Dollars)</u>			<u>% Growth</u>	
	<u>1988</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>88-93</u>	<u>93-98</u>
<b>Harper</b>	13,413	16,001	18,232	19.3	13.9
<b>Barber</b>	13,640	15,556	19,039	14.0	22.4
<b>Kingman</b>	14,541	16,919	19,380	16.4	14.5
<b>Pratt</b>	15,195	17,883	20,468	17.7	14.5
<b>Sumner</b>	15,032	17,661	21,151	17.5	19.8
<b>Kansas</b>	18,545	21,899	26,250	18.1	19.9
<b>United States</b>	21,527	25,888	31,299	20.3	20.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (1969-1998), Regional Economic Profile, Table CA30.

**Figure 5**  
**Average Wage Per Job**  
**Harper County, Kansas and United States**  
**1988-1998**



**Figure 5a**  
**Average Wage per Job**  
**Harper and Comparative Counties**  
**1988-1998**

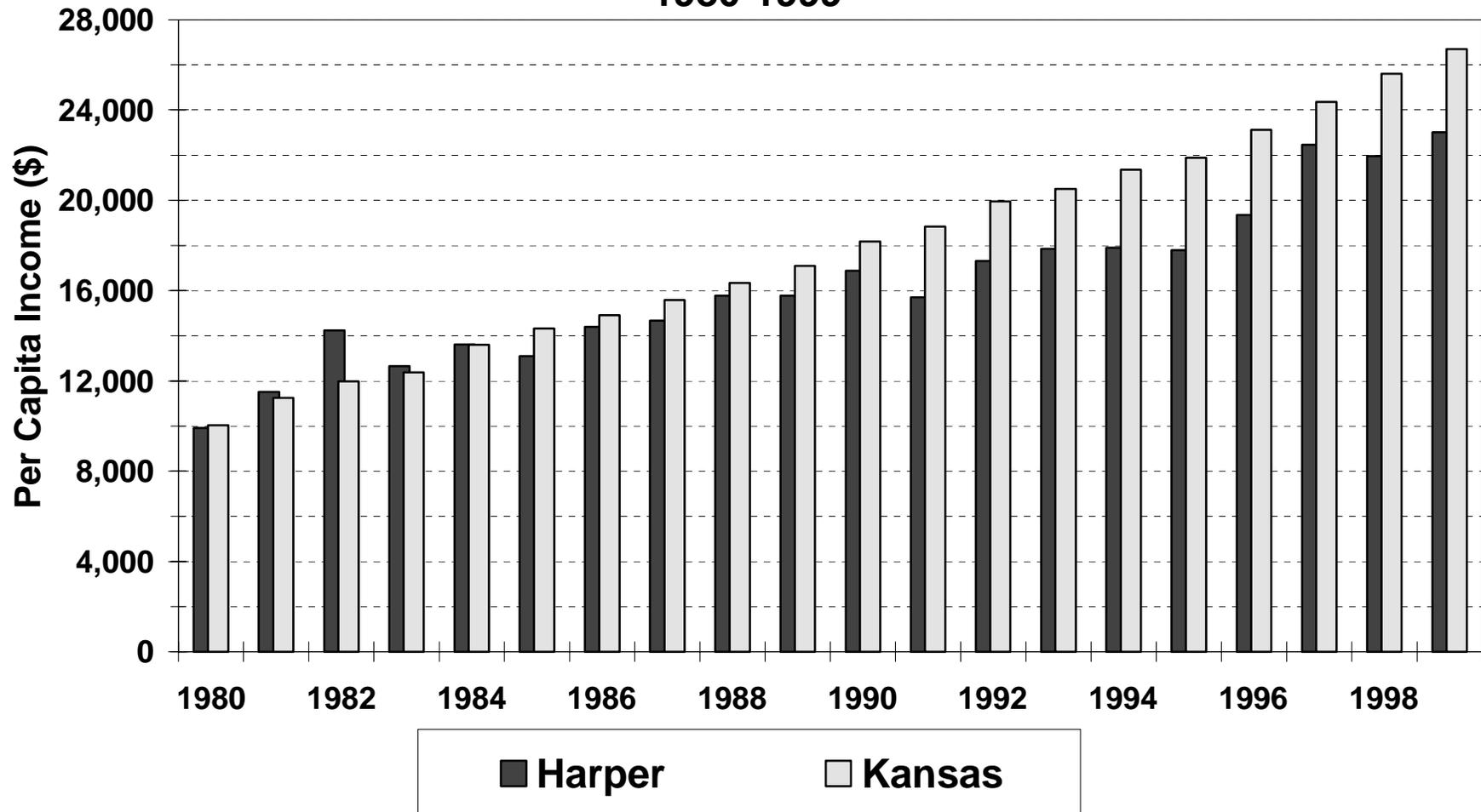


**Table 11**  
**Per Capita Personal Income**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1980-1999**

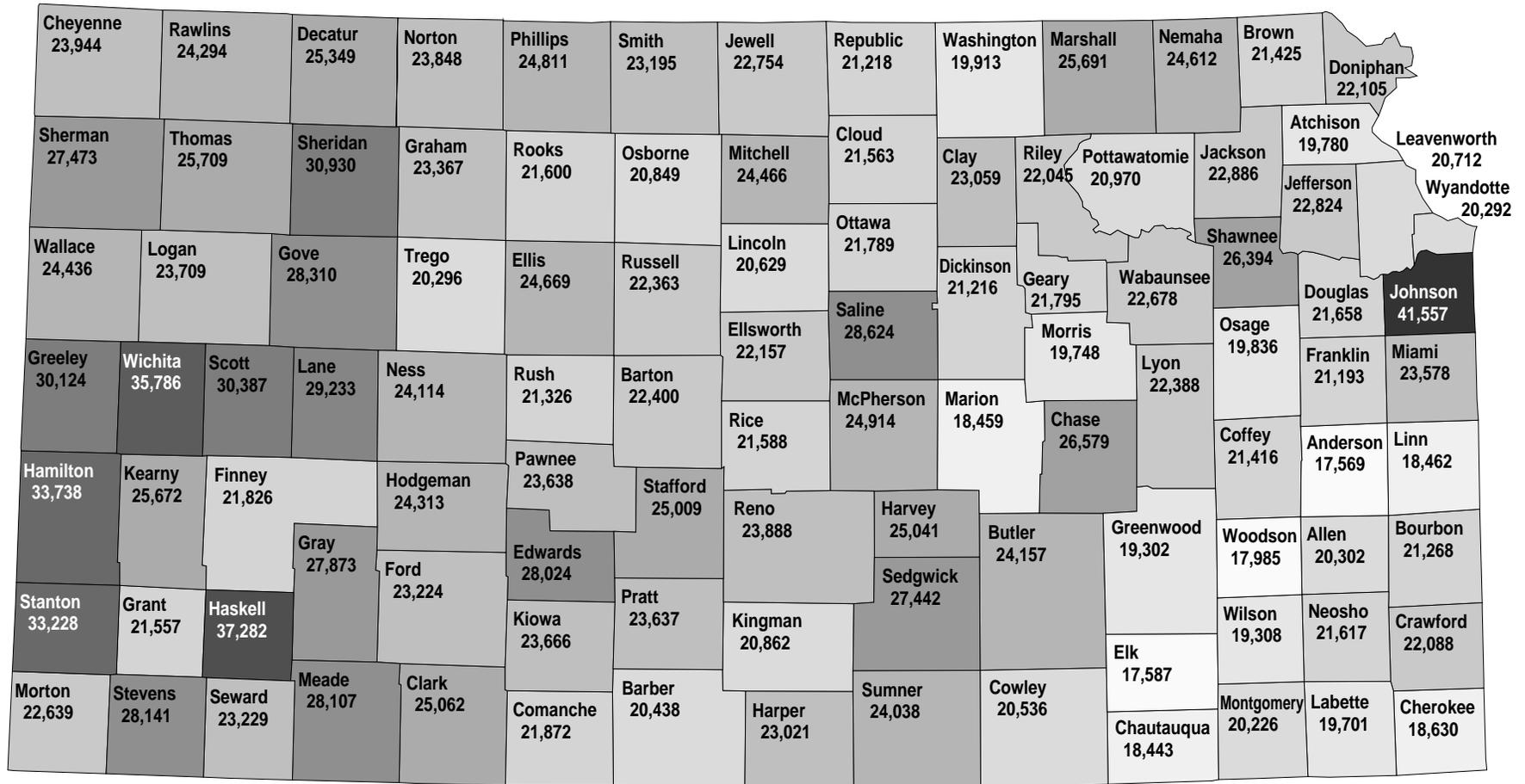
	<u>Income (\$)</u>		<u>Growth Rates</u>	
	<u>Harper</u>	<u>Kansas</u>	<u>Harper</u>	<u>Kansas</u>
<b>1980</b>	9,915	10,038		
<b>1981</b>	11,515	11,248	16.1 %	12.1 %
<b>1982</b>	14,226	11,989	23.5	6.6
<b>1983</b>	12,647	12,373	-11.1	3.2
<b>1984</b>	13,617	13,602	0.0	9.9
<b>1985</b>	13,100	14,330	-3.8	5.4
<b>1986</b>	14,398	14,904	9.9	4.0
<b>1987</b>	14,673	15,583	1.9	4.6
<b>1988</b>	15,778	16,331	7.5	4.8
<b>1989</b>	15,781	17,093	0.0	4.7
<b>1990</b>	16,885	18,182	7.0	6.4
<b>1991</b>	15,706	18,832	-7.0	3.6
<b>1992</b>	17,312	19,955	10.2	6.0
<b>1993</b>	17,848	20,510	3.1	2.8
<b>1994</b>	17,888	21,352	0.2	4.1
<b>1995</b>	17,784	21,889	-0.6	2.5
<b>1996</b>	19,356	23,121	8.8	5.6
<b>1997</b>	22,460	24,358	16.0	5.4
<b>1998</b>	21,966	25,606	-2.2	5.1
<b>1999</b>	23,021	26,705	4.8	4.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (1969-1999), County Summary, Table CA13.

**Figure 5b**  
**Per Capita Personal Income**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1980-1999**



## Map 6 Per Capita Personal Income: 1999



Source: Policy Research Institute, The University of Kansas, using data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, Table CA5, May 2000.

## RETAIL

Retail trade is an important part of a community's business environment as well as a source of revenues for the local governments. Retail trade is affected by a number of factors; for example, past decisions by investors, business managers, taxpayers, and policy makers contribute to a business climate that either promotes or inhibits the productivity of local businesses and therefore affects decisions about growth and expansion. Other contributing factors include the level of competition, the availability of suppliers and supporting industries, the cost of labor, and taxation and regulation within the community. Some types of establishments will thrive in an environment in which other firms cannot operate profitably.

The following section contains a table and a figure, outlining the retail sales growth rates.

### Retail: Key Findings

- Taxable retail sales in Harper County stood at \$38.2 million dollars in 1999, the latest year for which data are available. For the most part retail sales grew during the decade, though in 1999 the amount fell a considerable 8.2 percent. The growth rate from 1990 to 1999 for Harper County was 15.4 percent, compared to 57 percent for the state (Table 12).
- For most of the 1990's the taxable retail sales growth rates in Harper County have been less than those seen statewide. Figure 6 illustrates this trend (Table 12 and Figure 6).
- Harper County's trade pull factor in 2000 was 0.65, which means it lost more retail activity to other counties than it was able to 'pull in'. All of the comparative counties except for Pratt had pull factors of less than one, meaning they too lost more retail trade than they gained. No doubt many residents of these counties travel to Sedgwick County to shop, making it difficult to retain much in the way of retail dollars (Map 7).

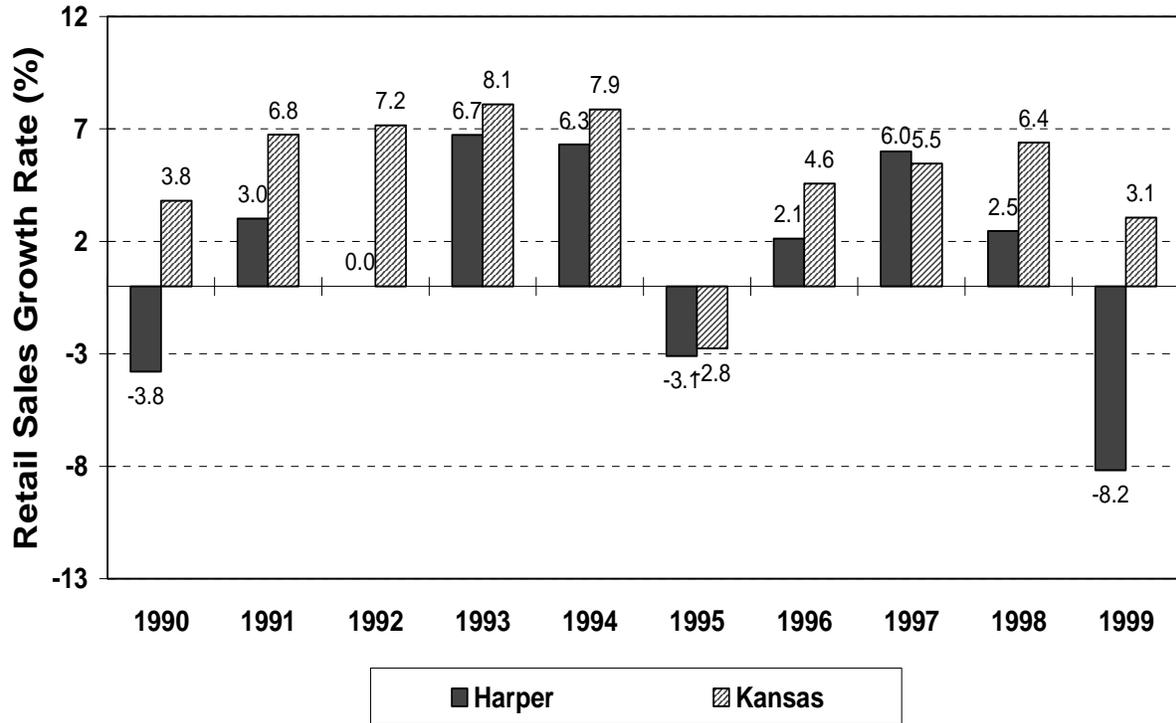
**Table 12**  
**Taxable Retail Sales and Growth Rates**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1989-1999**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Harper</u>		<u>Kansas</u>	
	<u>Nominal Sales (\$Millions)</u>	<u>Growth Rate (%)</u>	<u>Nominal Sales (\$Millions)</u>	<u>Growth Rate (%)</u>
<b>1989</b>	34.4		18,034.4	
<b>1990</b>	33.1	-3.8 %	18,723.3	3.8 %
<b>1991</b>	34.1	3.0	19,988.0	6.8
<b>1992</b>	34.1	0.0	21,421.3	7.2
<b>1993</b>	36.4	6.7	23,154.4	8.1
<b>1994</b>	38.7	6.3	24,979.0	7.9
<b>1995</b>	37.5	-3.1	24,289.1	-2.8
<b>1996</b>	38.3	2.1	25,401.5	4.6
<b>1997</b>	40.6	6.0	26,788.9	5.5
<b>1998</b>	41.6	2.5	28,505.9	6.4
<b>1999</b>	38.2	-8.2	29,380.6	3.1

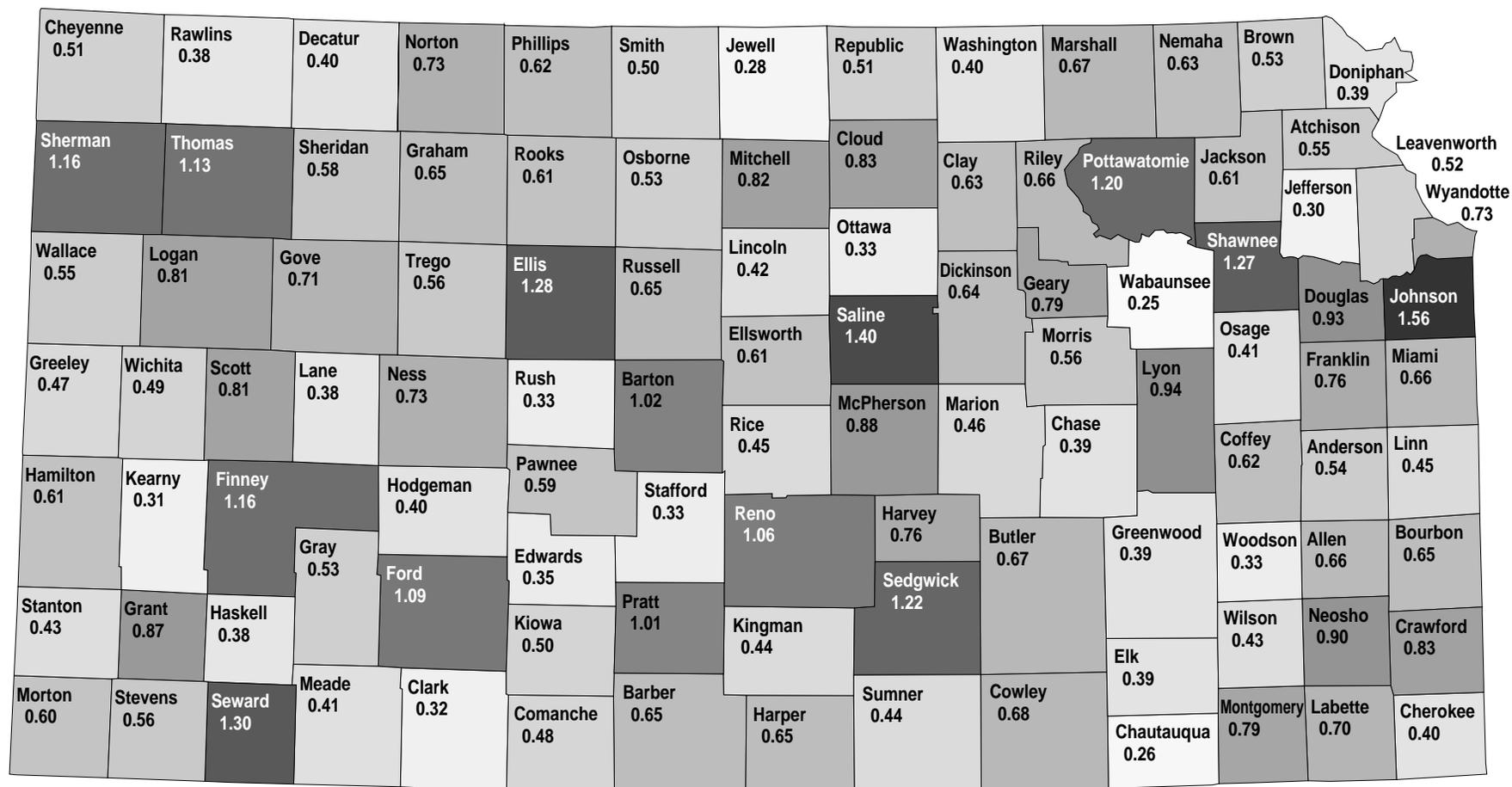
Note: Data from 1994 to 1999 are not comparable to 1987-1993 data.

Source: Kansas Department of Revenue, State Sales Tax Collections by County Classification. Calculations, 1987-1993, CEDBR, W. Frank Barton School of Business, Wichita State University; 1994-1999, PRI, University of Kansas.

**Figure 6**  
**Taxable Retail Sales Growth Rates**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1990-1999**



## Map 7 County Trade Pull Factors: 2000



Note: County Trade Pull Factor (CTPF) = County per capita sales tax collections divided by Kansas per capita sales tax collections. Population data used to compute per capita sales do not include institutionalized population.

Source: "County Trade Pull Factors Annual Report for Fiscal Years 1999 and 2000," by David Darling and Sharon Combes, K-State Research and Extension, Department of Agricultural Economics.

## **AGRICULTURE**

In many rural counties agriculture is a vital part of economic stability. As we saw above, farm employment was the second largest employer in Harper County, with over 18 percent of all jobs in that sector.

The agriculture section contains two tables on the total value of field crops and the total value of livestock and poultry.

### **Agriculture: Key Findings**

- Every comparative county as well as the state as a whole saw sharp declines in the value of field crops in 1998, the last year for which data are available. In Harper County, after reaching a high of \$49.8 million in 1997, the value of field crops fell nearly 31 percent in 1998, bringing the value down to \$34.4 million, which is the same value it was in 1995. The county with the highest valued crops in 1998 was Sumner County at nearly \$62 million, followed by Pratt County at \$48 million (Table 13).
- The total value of livestock and poultry in Harper County in 1998 was \$22.3 million, an increase of 9.2 percent from 1995. During that time period Barber and Pratt counties had livestock values consistently higher than Harper County's. In 1998 Pratt County's livestock and poultry was valued at \$27.1 million, the highest of the comparative counties (Table 14).

**Table 13**  
**Total Value of Field Crops**  
**Harper County, Comparative Counties, and Kansas**  
**1995-1998**

	<b>Total Value of Crops (\$Millions)</b>				<b>Percent Change</b>			
	<b><u>1995</u></b>	<b><u>1996</u></b>	<b><u>1997</u></b>	<b><u>1998</u></b>	<b><u>95-96</u></b>	<b><u>96-97</u></b>	<b><u>97-98</u></b>	<b><u>95-98</u></b>
<b>Harper</b>	34.4	36.3	49.8	34.4	5.5 %	37.1 %	-30.8 %	0.1 %
<b>Barber</b>	21.2	19.6	27.3	23.6	-7.6	39.2	-13.3	11.5
<b>Kingman</b>	37.0	45.3	50.9	34.6	22.5	12.3	-32.0	-6.5
<b>Pratt</b>	51.7	59.0	65.7	48.0	14.1	11.3	-26.9	-7.2
<b>Sumner</b>	62.7	48.5	97.9	61.7	-22.6	101.7	-37.0	-1.7
<b>Kansas</b>	3,525.9	4,154.6	4,474.9	3,594.3	17.8	7.7	-19.7	1.9

Values do not include any government program payments.

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

Source: Kansas Agricultural Statistics, "Kansas Farm Facts"; Kansas County Profile Report, KCCED, The University of Kansas; Calculations: KCCED; National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2000

**Table 14**  
**Total Value of Livestock and Poultry**  
**Harper County, Comparative Counties, and Kansas**  
**1995-1998**

	<b>Total Value of Livestock and Poultry (\$Millions)</b>				<b>Percent Change</b>			
	<b><u>1995</u></b>	<b><u>1996</u></b>	<b><u>1997</u></b>	<b><u>1998</u></b>	<b><u>95-96</u></b>	<b><u>96-97</u></b>	<b><u>97-98</u></b>	<b><u>95-98</u></b>
<b>Harper</b>	20.4	20.3	21.2	22.3	-0.6 %	4.3 %	5.3 %	9.2 %
<b>Barber</b>	25.1	25.3	28.0	23.7	0.8	11.0	-15.6	-5.6
<b>Kingman</b>	17.5	17.8	18.7	15.8	1.7	5.6	-15.9	-9.7
<b>Pratt</b>	36.8	28.7	32.7	27.1	-21.8	13.7	-17.1	-26.4
<b>Sumner</b>	21.1	19.2	18.6	16.5	-9.1	-2.8	-11.5	-21.8
<b>Kansas</b>	2,678.1	2,629.0	2,806.4	2,670.4	-1.8	6.8	-4.8	-0.3

Values do not include any government program payments.

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding

Source: Kansas Agricultural Statistics, "Kansas Farm Facts"; Kansas County Profile Report, KCCED, The University of Kansas; Calculations: KCCED; National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2000

## EDUCATION

The educational level of residents is likely to influence the well-being of the whole community. Communities able to provide a higher-skilled workforce are more likely to benefit from new developing industries. Residents who have a good educational background will be more employable and able to command higher salaries. Employers will benefit as well because they will most likely experience lower turnover and training costs. On the other hand, individuals with lower education levels have a harder time finding jobs that can supply a living wage and may be more likely to use social services.

### Education: Key Findings

- Given the types of jobs available in Harper County it perhaps comes as no surprise that only 8 percent of the county's population possesses a bachelor's degree, compared to 14.2 percent of the over-25 population of the state. These data, however, are from 1990 and as such are somewhat dated. New education data from the 2000 Census will not be released until well into 2002 (Table 15).
- In 1990, 42.6 percent of the over-25 population in Harper County had graduated from high school, compared to only 32.9 percent of the population in Kansas. However, Harper County had a higher percentage of people who had not been able to complete high school than the state as a whole (22 percent compared to 18.7) (Table 15).
- Harper County graduated roughly 85 high school students on average each year from 1990 to 1999. The number of high school dropouts each of those years fluctuated from a low of 4 to a high of 26 (Table 16).
- High school dropouts as a percent of graduates in Harper County averaged about 16 percent a year from 1990 to 1998. This compares quite favorably to the average rate for Kansas, which over the same time period was 23.6 percent. In fact, only once in the last ten years has Harper County had a higher percentage of high-school dropouts than the state (Table 16).

**Table 15**  
**Educational Attainment of Persons over 25**  
**As a Percentage of the Population of Persons over 25**  
**Harper County and Kansas, 1990**

	<u>Completed Less Than 9th Grade</u>	<u>9-12th Grade No Diploma</u>	<u>High School Diploma</u>	<u>Some College</u>	<u>Associate Degree</u>	<u>Bachelor's Degree</u>	<u>Graduate Degree</u>	<u>Pop. Over 25</u>
<b>Harper</b>	493	590	2,094	1,019	228	393	147	4,914
<b>Kansas</b>	120,951	172,321	514,177	342,964	85,146	221,016	109,361	1,561,417

***As a Percent of Population of Persons over 25:***

<b>Harper</b>	10.0%	12.0%	42.6%	20.7%	4.6%	8.0%	3.0%
<b>Kansas</b>	7.7%	11.0%	32.9%	22.0%	5.5%	14.2%	7.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990.

**Table 16**  
**High School Graduates and Drop-Outs**  
**Harper County and Kansas**  
**1990-1999**

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
<b>Harper</b>										
<b>Grads</b>	92	80	65	100	84	89	77	75	89	90
<b>Drops</b>	7	10	12	17	18	26	17	11	4	n/a
<b>Kansas</b>										
<b>Grads</b>	25,367	24,414	24,129	24,720	25,319	26,125	25,786	26,648	27,856	28,543
<b>Drops</b>	4,995	5,738	5,651	6,490	6,698	6,422	6,420	6,042	5,802	n/a
<b><i>High school drop-outs as percent of graduates</i></b>										
<b>Harper</b>	7.6%	12.5%	18.5%	17.0%	21.4%	29.2%	22.1%	14.7%	4.5%	
<b>Kansas</b>	19.7%	23.5%	23.4%	26.3%	26.5%	24.6%	24.9%	22.7%	20.8%	

n/a: Data not available

Grads: High school graduates, year ending:

Drops: High school dropouts, year ending:

Source: Kansas State Department of Education

## CONCLUSION

Economic data are an important tool of the community economic development process because they give community members a better view of the current facts and trends in different areas of economic and demographic performance of the community. However, numbers alone are not enough. The data must be analyzed and interpreted, taking into account the intuition of those within the community as to what the trends really mean. In other words, economic data serve to indicate: 1) what is happening in the community relative to other regions over time, and 2) what potential impacts or consequences can be inferred from the data. A simplified look at the previous data would conclude the following:

Population in Harper County has been declining since the early 1900's. This trend has shown no indication of ameliorating itself. Total employment levels in the county have been falling as well, but so have the number of jobs. The result is that in recent years Harper County has still experienced a very low unemployment rate. This is not necessarily a happy finding. It simply means that, as fewer jobs are available, more people move out of the county (or vice versa).

Overall, the adult population of Harper County is relatively less educated than the state even though Harper County does have a high percentage of high school graduates. This may indicate the types of jobs the county would want to foster. The average wage per job in Harper County is also considerably lower than the state average. This observation is consistent with the low education levels seen in the county, as well as the fact that the primary employers in Harper County are the Government, Retail, and Services sectors, none of which traditionally offer very high wages.

The vitality of most small communities is tied up in their small businesses. The number of small businesses in Harper County fell 4.5 percent over the last decade as population left. Efforts to support small businesses and foster growth in the ones remaining may be a good approach to retaining and attracting new residents. Nevertheless, there is no doubt Harper County will face difficult challenges ahead as it attempts to halt population declines.