

= Omaha , Nebraska =

Omaha ( / ˈoʊmɑːhə / OH @-@ m? @-@ hah ) is the largest city in the state of Nebraska and the county seat of Douglas County . Omaha is located in the Midwestern United States on the Missouri River , about 10 miles ( 15 km ) north of the mouth of the Platte River . Omaha is the anchor of the Omaha @-@ Council Bluffs metropolitan area , which includes Council Bluffs , Iowa , across the Missouri River from Omaha . According to the 2010 census , Omaha 's population was 408 @,@ 958 , making it the nation 's 43rd @-@ largest city . According to the 2014 Population Estimates , Omaha 's population was 446 @,@ 599 . Including its suburbs , Omaha formed the 60th @-@ largest metropolitan area in the United States in 2013 , with an estimated population of 895 @,@ 151 residing in eight counties . The Omaha @-@ Council Bluffs @-@ Fremont , Nebraska @-@ IA Combined Statistical Area is 931 @,@ 667 , according to the U.S. Census Bureau 's 2013 estimate . There are nearly 1 @.@ 3 million residents within the Greater Omaha area , comprising a 50 @-@ mile ( 80 km ) radius of Downtown Omaha , the city 's center .

Omaha 's pioneer period began in 1854 , when the city was founded by speculators from neighboring Council Bluffs , Iowa . The city was founded along the Missouri River , and a crossing called Lone Tree Ferry earned the city its nickname , the " Gateway to the West " . Omaha introduced this new West to the world in 1898 , when it played host to the World 's Fair , dubbed the Trans @-@ Mississippi Exposition . During the 19th century , Omaha 's central location in the United States spurred the city to become an important national transportation hub . Throughout the rest of the 19th century , the transportation and jobbing sectors were important in the city , along with its railroads and breweries . In the 20th century , the Omaha Stockyards , once the world 's largest , and its meatpacking plants gained international prominence .

Today , Omaha is the home to the headquarters of five Fortune 500 companies : mega @-@ conglomerate Berkshire Hathaway ; packaged @-@ food giant ConAgra Foods ; one of the world 's largest construction companies , Kiewit Corporation ; insurance and financial firm Mutual of Omaha ; and the United States ' largest railroad operator , Union Pacific Corporation . Berkshire Hathaway is headed by local investor Warren Buffett , one of the richest people in the world , according to a decade 's worth of Forbes Magazine rankings , some of which have ranked him as high as No. 1 . Omaha is also the home to five Fortune 1000 headquarters : Green Plains Renewable Energy , TD Ameritrade , Valmont Industries , Werner Enterprises , and West Corporation . Also headquartered in Omaha are First National Bank of Omaha , the largest privately held bank in the United States ; three of the nation 's largest 10 architecture / engineering firms : DLR Group , HDR , Inc . , and Leo A Daly ; the Gallup Organization , of Gallup Poll fame ; and its riverfront Gallup University . Enron began in Omaha as Northern Natural Gas in 1930 , before taking over a smaller Houston company in 1985 to form InterNorth , which Kenneth Lay moved permanently to Houston , in 1987 .

The modern economy of Omaha is diverse and built on skilled knowledge jobs . In 2009 , Forbes identified Omaha as the nation 's number one " Best Bang @-@ For @-@ The Buck City " and ranked it number one on " America 's Fastest @-@ Recovering Cities " list . Tourism in Omaha benefits the city 's economy greatly , with the annual College World Series providing important revenue and the city 's Henry Doorly Zoo serving as the top attraction in Nebraska as well as being named the best zoo in the world by Trip Advisor in 2014 . Also , Omaha hosted the U.S. Olympic swim trials in 2008 , 2012 and 2016 . There is speculation that the swim trials , which serve as a major tourist attraction , will take place in Omaha again in 2020

Notable modern Omaha inventions include : the bobby pin and the " pink hair curler " , at Omaha 's Tip Top ; Butter Brickle Ice Cream and the Reuben sandwich , conceived by a chef at the then @-@ Blackstone Hotel on 33rd and Farnam Streets ; cake mix , developed by Duncan Hines , then a division of Omaha 's Nebraska Consolidated Mills , the forerunner to today 's ConAgra Foods ; center @-@ pivot irrigation by the Omaha company now known as Valmont Corporation ; Raisin Bran , developed by Omaha 's Skinner Macaroni Co . ; the ski lift , in 1936 , by Omaha 's Union Pacific Corp ; the " Top 40 " radio format , pioneered by Todd Storz , scion of Omaha 's Storz Brewing Co . , and head of Storz Broadcasting , which was the first in the U.S. to use the " Top 40 " format at Omaha 's KOWH Radio ; and the TV dinner , developed by Omaha 's Carl Swanson Co .

A character in a Rudyard Kipling essay claimed " dice were invented in Omaha , and the man who invented ' em , he made a colossal fortune . "

= = History = =

Various Native American tribes had lived in the land that became Omaha , including since the 17th century , the Omaha and Ponca , Dhegian @-@ Siouan @-@ language people who had originated in the lower Ohio River valley and migrated west by the early 17th century ; Pawnee , Otoe , Missouri , and Ioway . The word Omaha ( actually Umo?ho? or Uma?ha? ) means " Dwellers on the bluff " .

In 1804 the Lewis and Clark Expedition passed by the riverbanks where the city of Omaha would be built . Between July 30 and August 3 , 1804 , members of the expedition , including Meriwether Lewis and William Clark , met with Oto and Missouri tribal leaders at the Council Bluff at a point about 20 miles ( 30 km ) north of present @-@ day Omaha . Immediately south of that area , Americans built several fur trading outposts in succeeding years , including Fort Lisa in 1812 ; Fort Atkinson in 1819 ; Cabanné 's Trading Post , built in 1822 , and Fontenelle 's Post in 1823 , in what became Bellevue . There was fierce competition among fur traders until John Jacob Astor created the monopoly of the American Fur Company . The Mormons built a town called Cutler 's Park in the area in 1846 . While it was temporary , the settlement provided the basis for further development in the future .

Through 26 separate treaties with the United States federal government , Native American tribes in Nebraska gradually ceded the lands currently comprising the state . The treaty and cession involving the Omaha area occurred in 1854 when the Omaha Tribe ceded most of east @-@ central Nebraska . Logan Fontenelle , an interpreter for the Omaha and signatory to the 1854 treaty , played an essential role in those proceedings .

= = = Pioneer Omaha = = =

Before it was legal to claim land in Indian Country , William D. Brown was operating the Lone Tree Ferry to bring settlers from Council Bluffs , Iowa to the area that became Omaha . Brown is generally credited as having the first vision for a city where Omaha now sits . The passage of the Kansas ? Nebraska Act in 1854 was presaged by the staking out of claims around the area to become Omaha by residents from neighboring Council Bluffs . On July 4 , 1854 , the city was informally established at a picnic on Capital Hill , current site of Omaha Central High School . Soon after , the Omaha Claim Club was formed to provide vigilante justice for claim jumpers and others who infringed on the land of many of the city 's founding fathers . Some of this land , which now wraps around Downtown Omaha , was later used to entice Nebraska Territorial legislators to an area called Scriptown . The Territorial capitol was located in Omaha , but when Nebraska became a state in 1867 , the capital was relocated to Lincoln , 53 miles ( 85 km ) south @-@ west of Omaha . The U.S. Supreme Court later ruled against numerous landowners whose violent actions were condemned in *Baker v. Morton* .

Many of Omaha 's founding figures stayed at the Douglas House or the Cozzens House Hotel . Dodge Street was important early in the city 's early commercial history ; North 24th Street and South 24th Street developed independently as business districts , as well . Early pioneers were buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery and Cedar Hill Cemetery . Cedar Hill closed in the 1860s and its graves were moved to Prospect Hill , where pioneers were later joined by soldiers from Fort Omaha , African Americans and early European immigrants . There are several other historical cemeteries in Omaha , historical Jewish synagogues and historical Christian churches dating from the pioneer era , as well . The city 's pioneering history is celebrated at two sculpture parks , Pioneer Courage and Spirit of Nebraska 's Wilderness and The Transcontinental Railroad .

= = = 19th century = = =

The economy of Omaha boomed and busted through its early years . Omaha was a stopping point for settlers and prospectors heading west , either overland or via the Missouri River . The steamboat Bertrand sank north of Omaha on its way to the goldfields in 1865 . Its massive collection of artifacts is on display at the nearby Desoto National Wildlife Refuge . The jobbing and wholesaling district brought new jobs , followed by the railroads and the stockyards . Groundbreaking for the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1863 , provided an essential developmental boom for the city . The Union Pacific Railroad was authorized by the U.S. Congress to begin building westward railways in 1862 ; in January 1866 it commenced construction out of Omaha .

Equally as important , the Union Stockyards were founded in 1883 . Within twenty years of the founding of the Union Stockyards in South Omaha , four of the five major meatpacking companies in the United States were located in Omaha . By the 1950s , half the city 's workforce was employed in meatpacking and processing . Meatpacking , jobbing and railroads were responsible for most of the growth in the city from the late 19th century through the early decades of the 20th century .

Immigrants soon created ethnic enclaves throughout the city , including Irish in Sheelytown in South Omaha ; Germans in the Near North Side , joined by the European Jews and black migrants from the South ; Little Italy and Little Bohemia in South Omaha . Beginning in the late 19th century , Omaha 's upper class lived in posh enclaves throughout the city , including the south and north Gold Coast neighborhoods , Bemis Park , Kountze Place , Field Club and throughout Midtown Omaha . They traveled the city 's sprawling park system on boulevards designed by renowned landscape architect Horace Cleveland . The Omaha Horse Railway first carried passengers throughout the city , as did the later Omaha Cable Tramway Company and several similar companies . In 1888 , the Omaha and Council Bluffs Railway and Bridge Company built the Douglas Street Bridge , the first pedestrian and wagon bridge between Omaha and Council Bluffs . Gambling , drinking and prostitution were widespread in the 19th century , first rampant in the city 's Burnt District and later in the Sporting District . Controlled by Omaha 's political boss Tom Dennison by 1890 , criminal elements enjoyed support from Omaha 's " perpetual " mayor , " Cowboy Jim " Dahlman , nicknamed for his eight terms as mayor . Calamities such as the Great Flood of 1881 did not slow down the city 's violence . In 1882 , the Camp Dump Strike pitted state militia against unionized strikers , drawing national attention to Omaha 's labor troubles . The Governor of Nebraska had to call in U.S. Army troops from nearby Fort Omaha to protect strikebreakers for the Burlington Railroad , bringing along Gatling guns and a cannon for defense . When the event ended , one man was dead and several were wounded . In 1891 , a mob hanged Joe Coe , an African @-@ American porter after he was accused of raping a white girl . There were several other riots and civil unrest events in Omaha during this period as well .

In 1898 , Omaha 's leaders , under the guidance of Gurdon Wattles , held the Trans @-@ Mississippi and International Exposition , touted as a celebration of agricultural and industrial growth throughout the Midwest . The Indian Congress , which drew more than 500 American Indians from across the country , was held simultaneously . More than 2 million visitors attended these events , located at Kountze Park and the Omaha Driving Park in the Kountze Place neighborhood .

= = = 20th century = = =

With dramatically increasing population in the 20th century , there was major civil unrest in Omaha , resulting from competition and fierce labor struggles . In 1900 , Omaha was the center of a national uproar over the kidnapping of Edward Cudahy , Jr . , the son of a local meatpacking magnate .

The city 's labor and management clashed in bitter strikes , racial tension escalated as blacks were hired as strikebreakers , and ethnic strife broke out . A major riot by ethnic whites in South Omaha destroyed the city 's Greek Town in 1909 , completely driving out the Greek population .

The civil rights movement in Omaha has roots that extend back to 1912 , when the first chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People west of the Mississippi River was founded in the city .

The Omaha Easter Sunday Tornado of 1913 destroyed much of the city 's African @-@ American community , in addition to much of Midtown Omaha .

Six years later , in 1919 , the city was caught up in the Red Summer riots when thousands of ethnic whites marched from South Omaha to the courthouse to lynch a black worker , Willy Brown , a suspect in an alleged rape of a white woman . The mob burned the Douglas County Courthouse to get the prisoner , causing more than \$ 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 damage . They hung and shot Will Brown , then burned his body . Troops were called in from Fort Omaha to quell the riot , prevent more crowds gathering in South Omaha , and to protect the black community in North Omaha .

The culture of North Omaha thrived throughout the 1920s through 1950s , with several creative figures , including Tillie Olsen , Wallace Thurman , Lloyd Hunter , and Anna Mae Winburn emerging from the vibrant Near North Side .

Musicians created their own world in Omaha , and also joined national bands and groups that toured and appeared in the city .

After the tumultuous Great Depression of the 1930s , Omaha rebounded with the development of Offutt Air Force Base just south of the city . The Glenn L. Martin Company operated a factory there in the 1940s that produced 521 B @-@ 29 Superfortresses , including the Enola Gay and Bockscar used in the atomic bombing of Japan in World War II .

The construction of Interstates 80 , 480 and 680 , along with the North Omaha Freeway , spurred development . There was also controversy , particularly in North Omaha , where several neighborhoods were bisected by new routes . Creighton University hosted the DePorres Club , an early civil rights group whose sit @-@ in strategies for integration of public facilities predated the national movement , starting in 1947 .

Following the development of the Glenn L. Martin Company bomber manufacturing plant in Bellevue at the beginning of World War II , the relocation of the Strategic Air Command to the Omaha suburb in 1948 provided a major economic boost to the area .

From the 1950s through the 1960s , more than 40 insurance companies were headquartered in Omaha , including Woodmen of the World and Mutual of Omaha . By the late 1960s , the city rivaled , but never surpassed , the United States insurance centers of Hartford , Connecticut , New York City and Boston , Massachusetts .

After surpassing Chicago in meat processing by the late 1950s , Omaha suffered the loss of 10 @,@ 000 jobs as both the railroad and meatpacking industries restructured . The city struggled for decades to shift its economy as workers suffered . Poverty became more entrenched among families who remained in North Omaha .

In the 1960s , three major race riots along North 24th Street destroyed the Near North Side 's economic base , with recovery slow for decades . In 1969 , Woodmen Tower was completed and became Omaha 's tallest building and first major skyscraper at 478 feet ( 146 m ) , a sign of renewal .

Since the 1970s , Omaha has continued expanding and growing , mostly to available land to the west . West Omaha has become home to the majority of the city 's population . North and South Omaha 's populations continue to be centers of new immigrants , with economic and racial diversity . In 1975 a major tornado , along with a major blizzard , caused more than \$ 100 million in damages in 1975 dollars .

Downtown Omaha has since been rejuvenated in numerous ways , starting with the development of Gene Leahy Mall and W. Dale Clark Library in the late 1970s . In the 1980s , Omaha 's fruit warehouses were converted into a shopping area called the Old Market .

The demolition of Jobber 's Canyon in 1989 led to the creation of the ConAgra Foods campus . Several nearby buildings , including the Nash Block , have been converted into condominiums . The stockyards were taken down ; the only surviving building is the Livestock Exchange Building , which was converted to multi @-@ use and listed on the National Register of Historic Places .

A historic preservation movement in Omaha has led to a number of historic structures and districts being designated Omaha Landmarks or listed on the National Register of Historic Places . Much of the push toward preservation came after Omaha gained the notorious designation of having , in 1989 , demolished the largest @-@ ever National Register historic district in the United States , a record that still stands as of 2013 . The Jobbers Canyon Historic District , along the Missouri River , was felled for a new headquarters campus for ConAgra Foods , a company which threatened to

relocate if Omaha did not allow them to raze the city 's historic district . The Jobber 's Canyon warehouses had before then been allowed to deteriorate and were the scene of several fires set by the homeless population that had come to live in the abandoned buildings . At the time , there were no plans in place for revitalizing the buildings .

In the 1980s and 1990s , Omaha also saw major company headquarters leave the city , including Enron , founded in the city in 1930 and taken to Houston in 1987 by the now @-@ notorious Kenneth Lay . First Data Corporation , a large credit @-@ card processor , also was founded in Omaha in 1969 ; as of 2009 , its headquarters are in Atlanta .

Inacom , founded in Omaha in 1991 , was a technology company that customized computer systems for large businesses , and was on the Fortune 500 list from 1997 until 2000 , when it filed for bankruptcy . Northwestern Bell , the Bell System affiliate for Northwestern states , had its headquarters in Omaha from its founding in 1896 until it moved to Denver in 1991 as US West . Level 3 Communications , a large Tier 1 network provider , was founded in Omaha in 1985 as Kiewit Diversified Group , a division of Kiewit Corporation , a Fortune 500 construction and mining company still headquartered in Omaha ; Level 3 moved to Denver in 1998 . World Com was founded by a merger with Omaha 's MFS Communications , started as Metropolitan Fiber Systems in 1993 . MFS , backed by Kiewit Corporation CEO Walter Scott and Warren Buffett , purchased UUNET , one of the largest Internet backbones in the world , for \$ 2 billion in 1996 . The now @-@ infamous Bernie Ebbers purchased the much larger MFS for \$ 14 @.@ 3 billion in 1997 under his World Com . He moved headquarters of the merged company from Omaha to Mississippi .

= = = 21st century = = =

Around the start of the 21st century , several new downtown skyscrapers and cultural institutions were built . One First National Center was completed in 2002 , surpassing the Woodmen Tower as the tallest building in Omaha as well as in the state at 634 feet ( 193 m ) . The creation of the city 's new North Downtown included the construction of the CenturyLink Center and the Slowdown / Film Streams development at North 14th and Webster Streets . Construction of the new TD Ameritrade Park began in 2009 and was completed in 2011 , also in the North Downtown area , near the CenturyLink Center .

New construction has occurred throughout the city since the start of the 21st century . Important retail and office developments have occurred in West Omaha such as the Village Pointe shopping center and several business parks including First National Business Park and parks for Bank of the West and C & A Industries , Inc and Morgan Stanley Smith Barney and several others . Downtown and Midtown Omaha have both seen the development of a significant number of condominiums in recent years . In Midtown Omaha significant mixed @-@ use projects are underway . The site of the former Ak @-@ Sar @-@ Ben arena has been redeveloped into a mixed use development Aksarben Village . In January 2009 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska announced plans to build a new 10 story , \$ 98 million headquarters , in the Aksarben Village , completed in Spring 2011 . Gordmans is also currently building their new corporate headquarters in Aksarben . The other major mixed @-@ use development is Midtown Crossing at Turner Park . Developed by Mutual of Omaha , the development includes several condominium towers and retail businesses built around Omaha 's Turner Park .

The Holland Performing Arts Center opened in 2005 near the Gene Leahy Mall and the Union Pacific Center opened in 2004 .

There have also been several developments along the Missouri River waterfront in downtown . The Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge was opened to foot and bicycle traffic on September 28 , 2008 . Started in 2003 , RiverFront Place Condos first phase was completed in 2006 and is fully occupied and the second phase was opened in 2011 . The development along Omaha 's riverfront is attributed with prompting the City of Council Bluffs to move their own riverfront development time line forward .

In the summers of 2008 , 2012 and 2016 the United States Olympic Team swimming trials were held in Omaha , at the Qwest / Century Link Center . The event was a highlight in the city 's sports

community , as well as a showcase for redevelopment in the downtown area .

= = Geography = =

See also : Geography of Omaha , Omaha @-@ Council Bluffs metropolitan area .

Omaha is located at 41 ° 15 ' N 96 ° 0 ' W. According to the United States Census Bureau , the city has a total area of 130 @. @ 58 square miles ( 338 @. @ 20 km<sup>2</sup> ) , of which 127 @. @ 09 square miles ( 329 @. @ 16 km<sup>2</sup> ) is land and 3 @. @ 49 square miles ( 9 @. @ 04 km<sup>2</sup> ) is water . Situated in the Midwestern United States on the bank of the Missouri River in eastern Nebraska , much of Omaha is built in the Missouri River Valley . Other significant bodies of water in the Omaha @-@ Council Bluffs metropolitan area include Lake Manawa , Papillion Creek , Carter Lake , Platte River and the Glenn Cunningham Lake . The city 's land has been altered considerably with substantial land grading throughout Downtown Omaha and scattered across the city . East Omaha sits on a flood plain west of the Missouri River . The area is the location of Carter Lake , an oxbow lake . The lake was once the site of East Omaha Island and Florence Lake , which dried up in the 1920s .

The Omaha @-@ Council Bluffs metropolitan area consists of eight counties ; five in Nebraska and three in Iowa . The metropolitan area now includes Harrison , Pottawattamie , and Mills Counties in Iowa and Washington , Douglas , Sarpy , Cass , and Saunders Counties in Nebraska . This area was formerly referred to only as the Omaha Metropolitan Statistical Area and consisted of only five counties : Pottawattamie in Iowa , and Washington , Douglas , Cass , and Sarpy in Nebraska . The Omaha @-@ Council Bluffs combined statistical area comprises the Omaha @-@ Council Bluffs metropolitan statistical area and the Fremont Micropolitan statistical area ; the CSA has a population of 858 @, @ 720 ( 2005 Census Bureau estimate ) . Omaha ranks as the 42nd @-@ largest city in the United States , and is the core city of its 60th @-@ largest metropolitan area . There are currently no consolidated city @-@ counties in the area ; the City of Omaha studied the possibility extensively through 2003 and concluded , " The City of Omaha and Douglas County should merge into a municipal county , work to commence immediately , and that functional consolidations begin immediately in as many departments as possible , including but not limited to parks , fleet management , facilities management , local planning , purchasing and personnel . "

Geographically , Omaha is considered as being located in the " Heartland " of the United States . Important environmental impacts on the natural habitat in the area include the spread of invasive plant species , restoring prairies and bur oak savanna habitats , and managing the whitetail deer population .

Omaha is home to several hospitals , located mostly along Dodge St ( US6 ) . Being the county seat , it is also the location of the county courthouse .

= = = Neighborhoods = = =

Omaha is generally divided into six geographic areas : Downtown , Midtown , North Omaha , South Omaha , West Omaha , and East Omaha . West Omaha includes the Miracle Hills , Boys Town , Regency , and Gateway areas . There is also a small community in East Omaha . The city has a wide range of historical and new neighborhoods and suburbs that reflect its socioeconomic diversity . Early neighborhood development happened in ethnic enclaves , including Little Italy , Little Bohemia , Little Mexico and Greek Town . According to U.S. Census data , five European ethnic enclaves existed in Omaha in 1880 , expanding to nine in 1900 .

Around the start of the 20th century. the City of Omaha annexed several surrounding communities , including Florence , Dundee and Benson . At the same time , the city annexed all of South Omaha , including the Dahlman and Burlington Road neighborhoods . From its first annexation in 1857 ( of East Omaha ) to its recent and controversial annexation of Elkhorn , Omaha has continually had an eye towards growth .

Starting in the 1950s , development of highways and new housing led to movement of middle class to suburbs in West Omaha . Some of the movement was designated as white flight from racial

unrest in the 1960s . Newer and poorer migrants lived in older housing close to downtown ; those residents who were more established moved west into newer housing . Some suburbs are gated communities or have become edge cities . Recently , Omahans have made strides to revitalize the downtown and Midtown areas with the redevelopment of the Old Market , Turner Park , Gifford Park , and the designation of the Omaha Rail and Commerce Historic District .

== Landmark preservation ==

Omaha is home to dozens of nationally , regionally and locally significant landmarks . The city has more than a dozen historic districts , including Fort Omaha Historic District , Gold Coast Historic District , Omaha Quartermaster Depot Historic District , Field Club Historic District , Bemis Park Historic District , and the South Omaha Main Street Historic District . Omaha is notorious for its 1989 demolition of 24 buildings in the Jobbers Canyon Historic District , which represents to date the largest loss of buildings on the National Register . The only original building surviving of that complex is the Nash Block .

Omaha has almost one hundred individual properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places , including the Bank of Florence , Holy Family Church , the Christian Specht Building and the Joslyn Castle . There are also three properties designated as National Historic Landmarks .

Locally designated landmarks , including residential , commercial , religious , educational , agricultural and socially significant locations across the city , honor Omaha 's cultural legacy and important history . The City of Omaha Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission is the government body that works with the mayor of Omaha and the Omaha City Council to protect historic places . Important history organizations in the community include the Douglas County Historical Society .

== Climate ==

Omaha , due to its latitude of 41 @. 26 ° N and location far from moderating bodies of water or mountain ranges , displays a humid continental climate ( Köppen Dfa ) , with hot summers and mild to cold , relatively dry winters . July averages 76 @. 7 ° F ( 24 @. 8 ° C ) , with moderate , to sometimes high humidity which then leads to relatively frequent thunderstorms . Temperatures reach 90 ° F ( 32 ° C ) on 29 days and 100 ° F ( 38 ° C ) on 1 @. 7 days annually . The January daily average is 23 @. 5 ° F ( ? 4 @. 7 ° C ) , with lows reaching 0 ° F ( ? 18 ° C ) on 11 days annually . The lowest temperature recorded in the city was ? 32 ° F ( ? 36 ° C ) on January 5 , 1884 , and the highest 114 ° F ( 46 ° C ) on July 25 , 1936 . Average yearly precipitation is 30 @. 6 inches ( 777 mm ) , falling mostly in the warmer months . What precipitation that does fall in winter usually takes the form of snow , with average seasonal snowfall being 28 @. 7 inches ( 73 cm ) .

Based on 30 @-@ year averages obtained from NOAA 's National Climatic Data Center for the months of December , January and February , Weather Channel ranked Omaha the 5th coldest major U.S. city as of 2014 .

== Demographics ==

== 2010 census ==

As of the census of 2010 , there were 408 @, 958 people , 162 @, 627 households , and 96 @, 477 families residing in the city . The population density was 3 @, 217 @. 9 inhabitants per square mile ( 1 @, 242 @. 4 / km2 ) . There were 177 @, 518 housing units at an average density of 1 @, 396 @. 8 per square mile ( 539 @. 3 / km2 ) . The racial makeup of the city was 73 @. 1 % White , 13 @. 7 % African American , 0 @. 8 % Native American , 2 @. 4 % Asian , 0 @. 1 % Pacific Islander , 6 @. 9 % from other races , and 3 @. 0 % from two or more races . Hispanic or Latino of any race were 13 @. 1 % of the population . Non @-

Hispanic Whites were 68 @. @ 0 % of the population .

There were 162 @, @ 627 households of which 31 @. @ 3 % had children under the age of 18 living with them , 40 @. @ 6 % were married couples living together , 13 @. @ 7 % had a female householder with no husband present , 4 @. @ 9 % had a male householder with no wife present , and 40 @. @ 7 % were non @-@ families . 32 @. @ 3 % of all households were made up of individuals and 9 @. @ 3 % had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older . The average household size was 2 @. @ 45 and the average family size was 3 @. @ 14 .

The median age in the city was 33 @. @ 5 years . 25 @. @ 1 % of residents were under the age of 18 ; 11 @. @ 4 % were between the ages of 18 and 24 ; 27 @. @ 9 % were from 25 to 44 ; 24 @. @ 4 % were from 45 to 64 ; and 11 @. @ 4 % were 65 years of age or older . The gender makeup of the city was 49 @. @ 2 % male and 50 @. @ 8 % female .

== 2000 census ==

As of the census of 2000 , there were 390 @, @ 007 people , 156 @, @ 738 households , and 94 @, @ 983 families residing within city limits . The population density was 3 @, @ 370 @. @ 7 people per square mile ( 1 @, @ 301 @. @ 5 / km<sup>2</sup> ) . There were 165 @, @ 731 housing units at an average density of 1 @, @ 432 @. @ 4 per square mile ( 553 @. @ 1 / km<sup>2</sup> ) . The racial makeup of the city was 78 @. @ 4 % White , 13 @. @ 3 % African American , 0 @. @ 7 % Native American , 1 @. @ 7 % Asian , 0 @. @ 1 % Pacific Islander , 3 @. @ 9 % from other races , and 1 @. @ 9 % from two or more races . 7 @. @ 5 % of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race .

The median income for a household in the city was US \$ 40 @, @ 006 , and the median income for a family was \$ 50 @, @ 821 . Males had a median income of \$ 34 @, @ 301 versus \$ 26 @, @ 652 for females . The per capita income for the city was \$ 21 @, @ 756 . 11 @. @ 3 % of the population and 7 @. @ 8 % of families lived below the poverty line . Out of the total population , 15 @. @ 6 % of those under the age of 18 and 7 @. @ 4 % of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line .

== People ==

Native Americans were the first residents of the Omaha area . The city of Omaha was established by European Americans from neighboring Council Bluffs who arrived from the Northeast United States a few years earlier . While much of the early population was of Yankee stock , over the next 100 years numerous ethnic groups moved to the city . In 1910 , the Census Bureau reported Omaha 's population as 96 @. @ 4 % White and 3 @. @ 6 % Black . Irish immigrants in Omaha originally moved to an area in present @-@ day North Omaha called " Gophertown " , as they lived in dirt dugouts . That population was followed by Polish immigrants in the Sheelytown neighborhood , and many immigrants were recruited for jobs in South Omaha 's stockyards and meatpacking industry . The German community in Omaha was largely responsible for founding its once @-@ thriving beer industry , including the Metz , Krug , Falstaff and the Storz breweries .

Since its founding , ethnic groups in the city have clustered in enclaves in north , south and downtown Omaha . In its early days , the sometimes lawless nature of a new frontier city included crime , such as illicit gambling and riots .

In the early 20th century , Jewish immigrants set up numerous businesses along the North 24th Street commercial area . It suffered with the loss of industrial jobs in the 1960s and later , the shifting of population west of the city . The commercial area is now the center of the African American community , concentrated in North Omaha . The African @-@ American community has maintained its social and religious base , while it is currently experiencing an economic revitalization .

The Little Italy neighborhood grew south of downtown , as many Italian immigrants came to the city to work in the Union Pacific shops . Scandinavians first came to Omaha as Mormon settlers in the Florence neighborhood . Czechs had a strong political and cultural voice in Omaha , and were involved in a variety of trades and businesses , including banks , wholesale houses , and funeral homes . The Notre Dame Academy and Convent and Czechoslovak Museum are legacies of their



residence . Today the legacy of the city 's early European immigrant populations is evident in many social and cultural institutions in Downtown and South Omaha .

Mexicans originally immigrated to Omaha to work in the rail yards . Today they compose the majority of South Omaha 's Hispanic population and many have taken jobs in meat processing . Other significant early ethnic populations in Omaha included Danes , Poles , and Swedes .

A growing number of African immigrants have made their homes in Omaha in the last twenty years . There are approximately 8 @, @ 500 Sudanese living in Omaha , comprising the largest population of Sudanese refugees in the United States . Most have immigrated since 1995 because of warfare in their nation . Ten different tribes are represented , including the Nuer , Dinka , Equatorians , Maubans and Nubians . Most Sudanese people in Omaha speak the Nuer language . Other Africans have immigrated to Omaha as well , with one @-@ third from Nigeria , and significant populations from Kenya , Togo , Cameroon and Ghana .

With the expansion of railroad and industrial jobs in meatpacking , Omaha attracted many new immigrants and migrants . As the major city in Nebraska , it has historically been more racially and ethnically diverse than the rest of the state . At times rapid population change , overcrowded housing and job competition have aroused racial and ethnic tensions . Around the start of the 20th century , violence towards new immigrants in Omaha often erupted out of suspicions and fears .

The Greek Town Riot in 1909 flared after increased Greek immigration , Greeks ' working as strikebreakers , and the killing of an Irish policeman provoked violence among earlier immigrants such as ethnic Irish . That mob violence forced the Greek immigrant population to flee from the city . By 1910 , 53 @. @ 7 % of Omaha 's residents and 64 @. @ 2 % of South Omaha 's residents were foreign born or had at least one parent born outside of America . Six years after the Greek Town Riot , in 1915 , a Mexican immigrant named Juan Gonzalez was killed by a mob near Scribner , a town in the Greater Omaha metropolitan area . The event occurred after an Omaha Police Department officer was investigating a criminal operation selling goods stolen from the nearby railroad yards . Racial profiling targeted Gonzalez as the culprit . After escaping the city , he was trapped along the Elkhorn River , where the mob , including several policemen from Omaha , shot him more than twenty times . Afterward it was discovered that Gonzalez was unarmed , and that he had a reliable alibi for the time of the murder . Nobody was ever indicted for his lynching . In the fall of 1919 , following Red Summer , postwar social and economic tensions , the earlier hiring of blacks as strikebreakers , and job uncertainty contributed to a mob from South Omaha lynching Willy Brown and the ensuing Omaha Race Riot . Trying to defend Brown , the city 's mayor , Edward Parsons Smith , was lynched also , surviving only after a quick rescue .

Similar to other industrial cities in the U.S. , Omaha suffered severe job losses in the 1950s , more than 10 @, @ 000 in total , as both the railroad and meatpacking industries restructured . Stockyards and packing plants were located closer to ranches , and union achievements were lost as wages declined in surviving jobs . Many workers left the area if they could get to other jobs . Poverty deepened in areas of the city whose residents had depended on those jobs , specifically North and South Omaha . At the same time , with reduced revenues , the city had less financial ability to respond to longstanding problems . Despair after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King , Jr. in April 1968 contributed to riots in North Omaha , including one at the Logan Fontenelle Housing Project . For some , the Civil Rights Movement in Omaha , Nebraska evolved towards black nationalism , as the Black Panther Party was involved in tensions in the late 1960s . Organizations such as the Black Association for Nationalism Through Unity became popular among the city 's African @-@ American youth . This tension culminated in the cause célèbre trial of the Rice / Poindexter Case , in which an Omaha Police Department officer was killed by a bomb while answering an emergency call .

Whites in Omaha have followed the white flight pattern , suburbanizing to West Omaha over time . In the late 1990s and early 2000s , gang violence and incidents between the Omaha Police and black residents undermined relations between groups in North and South Omaha . More recent Hispanic immigrants , concentrated in South Omaha , have struggled to earn living wages in meatpacking , adapt to a new society , and deal with discrimination .

## == Economy ==

According to USA Today , Omaha ranks eighth among the nation 's 50 largest cities in both per @-@ capita billionaires and Fortune 500 companies . With diversification in several industries , including banking , insurance , telecommunications , architecture / construction , and transportation , Omaha 's economy has grown dramatically since the early 1990s . In 2001 Newsweek identified Omaha as one of the Top 10 high @-@ tech havens in the nation . Six national fiber optic networks converge in Omaha .

Omaha 's most prominent businessman is Warren Buffett , nicknamed the " Oracle of Omaha " , who is regularly ranked one of the richest people in the world . Five Omaha @-@ based companies : Berkshire Hathaway , ConAgra Foods , Union Pacific Railroad , Mutual of Omaha , and Kiewit Corporation , are among the Fortune 500 .

Omaha is the headquarters of several other major corporations , including the Gallup Organization , TD Ameritrade , infoGROUP , Werner Enterprises , First National Bank , Gavigon and First Comp Insurance . Many large technology firms have major operations or operational headquarters in Omaha , including Bank of the West , First Data , PayPal and LinkedIn . The city is also home to three of the 30 largest architecture firms in the United States , including HDR , Inc . , DLR Group , Inc . , and Leo A Daly . Omaha has the fifth highest percentage of low @-@ income African Americans in the country . In 2013 , Forbes ' named Omaha among its list of the Best Places for Business and Careers .

## === Top employers ===

According to the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership , the largest regional employers are :

## === Tourism ===

Tourist attractions in Omaha include history , sports , outdoors and cultural experiences . Its principal tourist attractions are the Henry Doorly Zoo and the College World Series . The Old Market in Downtown Omaha is another major attraction and is important to the city 's retail economy . The city has been a tourist destination for many years . Famous early visitors included British author Rudyard Kipling and General George Crook . In 1883 Omaha hosted the first official performance of the Buffalo Bill 's Wild West Show for eight thousand attendees . In 1898 the city hosted more than 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 visitors from across the United States at the Trans @-@ Mississippi and International Exposition , a world 's fair that lasted for more than half the year .

Research on leisure and hospitality situates Omaha in the same tier for tourists as the neighboring cities of Des Moines , Iowa , Topeka , Kansas , Kansas City , Missouri , Oklahoma City , Oklahoma , Denver , Colorado , and Sioux Falls , South Dakota . A recent study found that investment of \$ 1 million in cultural tourism generated approximately \$ 83 @,@ 000 in state and local taxes , and provided support for hundreds of jobs for the metropolitan area , which in turn led to additional tax revenue for government .

## == Culture ==

The city 's historical and cultural attractions have been lauded by numerous national newspapers , including the Boston Globe and The New York Times . Omaha is home to the Omaha Community Playhouse , the largest community theater in the United States . The Omaha Symphony Orchestra and its modern Holland Performing Arts Center , the Opera Omaha at the Orpheum theater , the Blue Barn Theatre , and The Rose Theater form the backbone of Omaha 's performing arts community . Opened in 1931 , the Joslyn Art Museum has significant art collections . Since its inception in 1976 , Omaha Children 's Museum has been a place where children can challenge themselves , discover how the world works and learn through play . The Bemis Center for

Contemporary Arts , one of the nation 's premier urban artist colonies , was founded in Omaha in 1981 , and the Durham Museum is accredited with the Smithsonian Institution for traveling exhibits . The city is also home to the largest singly funded mural in the nation , " Fertile Ground " , by Meg Saligman . The annual Omaha Blues , Jazz , & Gospel Festival celebrates local music along with the Omaha Black Music Hall of Fame .

In 1955 Omaha 's Union Stockyards overtook Chicago 's stockyards as the United States ' meat packing center . This legacy is reflected in the cuisine of Omaha , with renowned steakhouses such as Gorat 's and the recently closed Mister C 's , as well as the retail chain Omaha Steaks .

= = = Henry Doorly Zoo = = =

The Henry Doorly Zoo is widely considered one of the premier zoos in the world . The zoo is home to the world 's largest nocturnal exhibit and indoor swamp ; the world 's largest indoor rainforest , the world 's largest indoor desert , and the largest geodesic dome in the world ( 13 stories tall ) . The Zoo is Nebraska 's number one paid attendance attraction and has welcomed more than 25 million visitors over the past 40 years .

= = = Old Market = = =

The Old Market is a major historic district in Downtown Omaha listed on the National Register of Historical Places . Today , its warehouses and other buildings house shops , restaurants , bars , coffee shops , and art galleries . Downtown is also the location of the Omaha Rail and Commerce Historic District , which has several art galleries and restaurants as well . The Omaha Botanical Gardens features 100 acres ( 40 ha ) with a variety of landscaping , and the new Kenefick Park recognizes Union Pacific Railroad 's long history in Omaha . North Omaha has several historical cultural attractions including the Dreamland Historical Project , Love 's Jazz and Art Center , and the John Beasley Theater . The annual River City Roundup is celebrated at Fort Omaha , and the neighborhood of Florence celebrates its history during " Florence Days " . Native Omaha Days is a biennial event celebrating Near North Side heritage .

Religious institutions reflect the city 's heritage . The city 's Christian community has several historical churches dating from the founding of the city . There are also all sizes of congregations , including small , medium and megachurches . Omaha hosts the only Church of Jesus Christ of Latter @-@ day Saints temple in Nebraska , along with a significant Jewish community . There are 152 parishes in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Omaha , and several Orthodox Christian congregations throughout the city .

= = = Music = = =

Omaha 's rich history in rhythm and blues , and jazz gave rise to a number of influential bands , including Anna Mae Winburn 's Cotton Club Boys and Lloyd Hunter 's Seranaders . Rock and roll pioneer Wynonie Harris ; jazz great Preston Love ; drummer Buddy Miles ; and Luigi Waites are among the city 's homegrown talent . Doug Ingle from the late 1960s band Iron Butterfly was born in Omaha as was indie @-@ folk singer / songwriter Elliott Smith , though both were raised elsewhere .

Today , the diverse culture of Omaha includes a variety of performance venues , museums , and musical heritage , including the historically significant jazz scene in North Omaha and the modern and influential " Omaha Sound " .

Contemporary music groups either located in or originally from Omaha include Mannheim Steamroller , Bright Eyes , The Faint , Cursive , Azure Ray , Tilly and the Wall and 311 . During the late 1990s , Omaha became nationally known as the birthplace of Saddle Creek Records , and the subsequent " Omaha Sound " was born from their bands ' collective style .

Omaha also has a fledgling hip hop scene . Long @-@ time bastion Houston Alexander , a one @-@ time graffiti artist and professional Mixed Martial Arts competitor , is currently a local hip @-@

hop radio show host . Cerone Thompson , known as " Scrybe " , has had a number one single on college radio stations across the United States . He has also had several number one hits on the local hip hop station respectively titled , " Lose Control " and " Do What U Do " . More recently , in 2009 Eric Scheid , also known as " Titus " , released a single called " What Do You Believe " featuring Bizzy Bone from the nationally known hip hop group Bone Thugs @-@ n @-@ Harmony . The single was produced by Omaha producer J Keez . The record was released by Smashmode Publishing and Timeless Keys Music Publishing which are two Omaha @-@ based music publishing companies . South Omaha 's OTR Familia , consisting of MOC and Xpreshin aka XP , have worked with Fat Joes Terror Squad on several songs and have participated in summer concerts with Pitbull , Nicky Jam , and Aventura .

A long heritage of ethnic and cultural bands have come from Omaha . The Omaha Black Music Hall of Fame celebrates the city 's long history of African @-@ American music and the Strathdon Caledonia Pipe Band carries on a Scottish legacy . Internationally renowned composer Antonín Dvořák wrote his Ninth ( " New World " ) Symphony in 1893 based on his impressions of the region after visiting Omaha 's robust Czech community . In the period surrounding World War I Valentin J. Peter encouraged Germans in Omaha to celebrate their rich musical heritage , too . Frederick Metz , Gottlieb Storz and Frederick Krug were influential brewers whose beer gardens kept many German bands active .

= = = Popular culture = = =

In 1939 , the world premiere of the film Union Pacific was held in Omaha , Nebraska and the accompanying three @-@ day celebration drew 250 @,@ 000 people . A special train from Hollywood carried director Cecil B. DeMille and stars Barbara Stanwyck and Joel McCrea . Omaha 's Boys Town was made famous by the Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney movie Boys Town . Omaha has been featured in recent years by a handful of relatively big budget motion pictures . The city 's most extensive exposure can be accredited to Omaha native Alexander Payne , the Oscar @-@ nominated director who shot parts of About Schmidt , Citizen Ruth and Election in the city and suburbs of Papillion and La Vista .

Built in 1962 , Omaha 's Cinerama was called Indian Hills Theater . Its demolition in 2001 by the Nebraska Methodist Health System was unpopular , with objections from local historical and cultural groups and luminaries from around the world . The Dundee Theatre is the lone surviving single @-@ screen movie theater in Omaha and still shows films . A recent development to the Omaha film scene was the addition of Film Streams 's Ruth Sokolof Theater in North Downtown . The two @-@ screen theater is part of the Slowdown facility . It features new American independents , foreign films , documentaries , classics , themed series , and director retrospectives . There are many new theaters opening in Omaha . In addition to the five Douglas Theatres venues in Omaha , two more are opening , including Midtown Crossing Theatres , located on 32nd and Farnam Streets by the Mutual of Omaha Building . Westroads Mall has opened a new multiplex movie theater with 14 screens , operated by Rave Motion Pictures .

Songs about Omaha include " Omaha " by Moby Grape , " Omaha " , by the indie rock band Tapes ' n Tapes , " Omaha " by Counting Crows , " Omaha Celebration " by Pat Metheny , " Omaha " sung by Waylon Jennings , " Greater Omaha " by Desaparecidos , " Omaha Stylee " by 311 and " ( Ready Or Not ) Omaha Nebraska " by Bowling for Soup .

Popular young adult novel " Eleanor & Park " by Rainbow Rowell ( St. Martin 's Press , 2013 ) takes place in Omaha .

The 1935 winner of the Triple Crown of Thoroughbred Racing was named Omaha , and after traveling the world the horse eventually retired to a farm south of the city . The horse made promotional appearances at Ak @-@ Sar @-@ Ben during the 1950s and following his death in 1959 was buried at the racetrack 's Circle of Champions .

= = Sports and recreation = =

Sports have been important in Omaha for more than a century , and the city currently plays host to three minor @-@ league professional sports teams . It is perhaps more known as the home of the College World Series , to which it has played host since 1950 . The Kings , an NBA franchise , called Omaha and Kansas City home from 1972 to 1978 . The Kansas City @-@ Omaha Kings split their time between the two cities , playing at Kansas City 's Municipal Auditorium and the Omaha Civic Auditorium , before decamping solely to Kansas City until 1985 , when the team moved to its current home of Sacramento .

The Omaha Sports Commission is a quasi @-@ governmental nonprofit organization that coordinates much of the professional and amateur athletic activity in the city , including the 2008 , 2012 and 2016 US Olympic Swimming Team Trials and the building of a new stadium in North Downtown . The University of Nebraska and the Commission co @-@ hosted the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association ( NCAA ) Division One Women 's Volleyball Championship in December of that year . The 2016 Big 10 Baseball Championship was also played at the College World Series Stadium . Another quasi @-@ governmental board , the Metropolitan Entertainment and Convention Authority ( MECA ) , was created by city voters in 2000 , and is responsible for maintaining the CenturyLink Center Omaha .

Omaha 's Johnny Rosenblatt Stadium was home to the Omaha Storm Chasers ( at the time known as the Omaha Royals ) minor @-@ league baseball team ( the AAA affiliate of the Kansas City Royals ) . From 1950 to 2010 , it hosted the annual NCAA College World Series , or CWS , men 's baseball tournament in mid @-@ June .

After Rosenblatt Stadium closed , its tenants moved to new venues . On April 16 , 2011 , the Omaha Storm Chasers moved to Werner Park . The CWS moved to the downtown TD Ameritrade Park in 2011 . Omaha is also home to the Omaha Diamond Spirit , a collegiate summer baseball team that plays in the MINK league .

Omaha was home to a new expansion team in the United Football League that play from 2010 to 2011 . The Omaha Beef indoor football team played at the Omaha Civic Auditorium until 2012 when they moved to the new Ralston Arena .

The Creighton University Bluejays compete in a number of NCAA Division I sports as members of the Big East Conference . Baseball is played at TD Ameritrade Park Omaha , soccer is played at Morrison Stadium , and basketball is played at the 18 @,@ 000 seat CenturyLink Center . The Jays annually rank in the top 15 in attendance each year , averaging more than 16 @,@ 000 people per game . The Omaha Mavericks , representing the University of Nebraska Omaha ( UNO ) , also play Basketball , Baseball and Soccer in NCAA Division I as members of The Summit League . The UNO men 's ice hockey team plays in the National Collegiate Hockey Conference .

Ice hockey is a popular spectator sport in Omaha and there are two Omaha @-@ area teams . The Omaha Lancers , a United States Hockey League team play at the Ralston Arena . The Omaha Mavericks play in the on @-@ campus Baxter Arena .

Omaha has a thriving running community and many miles of paved running and biking trails throughout the city and surrounding communities . The Omaha Marathon involves a half @-@ marathon and a 10 @-@ kilometer ( 6 @.@ 2 mi ) race that take place annually in September . Omaha also has a history of curling , including multiple junior national champions . The city 's historic boulevards were originally designed by Horace Cleveland in 1889 to work with the parks to create a seamless flow of trees , grass and flowers throughout the city . Florence Boulevard and Fontenelle Boulevard are among the remnants of this system . Omaha boasts more than 80 miles ( 129 km ) of trails for pedestrians , bicyclists and hikers . They include the American Discovery Trail , which traverses the entire United States , and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail passes through Omaha as it travels 3 @,@ 700 miles ( 5 @,@ 950 km ) westward from Illinois to Oregon . Trails throughout the area are included in comprehensive plans for the city of Omaha , the Omaha metropolitan area , Douglas County , and long @-@ distance coordinated plans between the municipalities of southeast Nebraska .

= = Government and politics = =

Omaha has a strong mayor form of government , along with a city council that is elected from seven districts across the city . The current mayor is Jean Stothert , who was elected in May 2013 . The longest serving mayor in Omaha 's history was " Cowboy " Jim Dahlman , who served 20 years over eight terms . He was regarded as the " wettest mayor in America " because of the flourishing number of bars in Omaha during his tenure . Dahlman was a close associate of political boss Tom Dennison . During Dahlman 's tenure , the city switched from its original strong @-@ mayor form of government to a city commission government . In 1956 , the city switched back .

The city clerk is Buster Brown . The City of Omaha administers twelve departments , including finance , police , human rights , libraries and planning . The Omaha City Council is the legislative branch and is made up seven members elected from districts across the city . The council enacts local ordinances and approves the city budget . Government priorities and activities are established in a budget ordinance approved annually . The council takes official action through the passage of ordinances and resolutions . Nebraska 's constitution grants the option of home rule to cities with more than 5 @, @ 000 residents , meaning they may operate under their own charters . Omaha is one of only three cities in Nebraska to use this option , out of 17 eligible . The City of Omaha is currently considering consolidating with Douglas County government .

Although registered Republicans outnumbered Democrats in the 2nd congressional district , which includes Omaha , Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama opened three campaign offices in the city with 15 staff members to cover the state in fall 2008 . Mike Fahey , the former Democratic mayor of Omaha , said he would do whatever it took to deliver the district 's electoral vote to Obama ; and the Obama campaign considered the district " in play " . Former Nebraska U.S. Senator Bob Kerrey and former Senator Ben Nelson campaigned in the city for Obama , and in November 2008 Obama won the district 's electoral vote . This was an exceptional win , because with Nebraska 's split electoral vote system Obama became the first Democratic presidential candidate to win an electoral vote in Nebraska since 1964 .

In 2011 , Nebraska lawmakers moved Offutt Air Force Base and the town of Bellevue ? an area with a large minority population ? out of the Omaha @-@ based 2nd District and shifted in the Republican @-@ heavy Omaha suburbs in Sarpy County . The move is expected to dilute the city 's urban Democratic vote .

= = = Crime = = =

Omaha 's rate of violent crimes per 100 @, @ 000 residents has been lower than the average rates of three dozen United States cities of similar size . Unlike Omaha , those cities have experienced an increase in violent crime overall since 2003 . Rates for property crime have decreased for both Omaha and its peer cities during the same time period . In 2006 , Omaha was ranked for homicides as 46th out of the 72 cities in the United States of more than 250 @, @ 000 in population .

As a major industrial city into the mid @-@ 20th century , Omaha shared in social tensions of larger cities that accompanied rapid growth and many new immigrants and migrants . By the 1950s , Omaha was a center for illegal gambling , while experiencing dramatic job losses and unemployment because of dramatic restructuring of the railroads and the meatpacking industry , as well as other sectors . Persistent poverty resulting from racial discrimination and job losses generated different crimes in the late 20th century , with drug trade and drug abuse becoming associated with violent crime rates , which climbed after 1986 as Los Angeles gangs made affiliates in the city . Gambling in Omaha has been significant throughout the city 's history . From its founding in the 1850s through the 1930s , the city was known as a " wide @-@ open " town , meaning that gambling of all sorts was accepted either openly or in closed quarters . By the mid @-@ 20th century , Omaha reportedly had more illicit gambling per capita than any other city in the nation . From the 1930s through the 1970s the city 's gambling was controlled by an Italian criminal element . Today , gambling in Omaha is limited to keno , lotteries , and parimutuel betting , leaving Omahans to drive across the Missouri River to Council Bluffs , Iowa , where casinos are legal and there are numerous businesses operating currently . Recently a controversial proposal by the Ponca tribe of Nebraska was approved by the National Indian Gaming Commission . It will allow the tribe to build a

casino in Carter Lake , Iowa , which sits geographically on the west side of the Missouri River , adjacent to Omaha , where casinos are illegal .

#### = = Education = =

Education in Omaha is provided by many private and public institutions . Omaha Public Schools is the largest public school district in Nebraska , with more than 47 @, @ 750 students in more than 75 schools . After a contentious period of uncertainty , in 2007 the Nebraska Legislature approved a plan to create a learning community for Omaha @-@ area school districts with a central administrative board . The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Omaha maintains numerous private Catholic schools with 21 @, @ 500 students in 32 elementary schools and nine high schools . St. Cecilia Grade School at 3869 Webster St. in Midtown Omaha and St. Stephen the Martyr School at 168th and Q street in western Omaha earned national distinction when they received the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School award . Omaha is also home to Brownell @-@ Talbot School , the only preschool through grade 12 , independent college preparatory school in the state of Nebraska .

There are eleven colleges and universities among Omaha 's higher education institutions , including the University of Nebraska Omaha . The University of Nebraska Medical Center is located in midtown Omaha and is home to the Eppley Cancer Center , one of 66 designated Cancer Centers by the National Cancer Institute in the United States . The University of Nebraska College of Medicine , also located on the UNMC campus , is ranked 7th in the country by US News and World Report for primary care medical education . Omaha 's Creighton University is ranked the top non @-@ doctoral regional university in the Midwestern United States by U.S. News and World Report . Creighton maintains a 132 @-@ acre ( 0 @. @ 5 km2 ) campus just outside Downtown Omaha in the new North Downtown district , and the Jesuit institution has an enrollment of around 6 @, @ 700 in its undergraduate , graduate , medical , and law schools . There are more than 10 other colleges and universities in Omaha in the Omaha metro area .

#### = = Media = =

The city is the focus of the Omaha designated market area , and is the 76th largest in the United States .

##### Magazines

Omaha Magazine ( a weekly )

##### Newspapers

The major daily newspaper in Nebraska is the Omaha World @-@ Herald , which is the largest employee @-@ owned newspaper in the United States . Weeklies in the city include the Midlands Business Journal ( weekly business publication ) ; American Classifieds ( Formerly Thrifty Nickel ) , a weekly classified newspaper ; The Reader , as well as The Omaha Star . Founded in 1938 in North Omaha , the Star is Nebraska 's only African @-@ American newspaper .

##### Television networks and cable TV

Omaha 's four television news stations were found not to represent the city 's racial composition in a 2007 study . Cox Communications provides cable television services throughout the metropolitan area .

#### = = Infrastructure = =

In 2008 Kiplinger 's Personal Finance magazine ranked Omaha the No. 3 best city in the United States to " live , work and play " . Omaha 's growth has required the constant development of new urban infrastructure that influence , allow and encourage the constant expansion of the city .

Retail natural gas and water public utilities in Omaha are provided by the Metropolitan Utilities District . Nebraska is the only public power state in the nation . All electric utilities are non @-@ profit and customer @-@ owned . Electricity in the city is provided by the Omaha Public Power

District . Public housing is governed by the Omaha Housing Authority , and public transportation is provided by Metro Area Transit . CenturyLink and Cox provide local telephone and internet services . The City of Omaha maintains two modern sewage treatment plants .

Portions of the Enron corporation began as Northern Natural Gas Company in Omaha . Northern currently provides three natural gas lines to Omaha . Enron formerly owned UtiliCorp United , Inc . , which became Aquila , Inc . . Peoples Natural Gas , a division of Aquila , Inc . , currently serves several surrounding communities around the Omaha metropolitan area , including Plattsmouth .

There are several hospitals in Omaha . Research hospitals include the Boys Town National Research Hospital , the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the Creighton University Medical Center . The Boys Town facility is well known for researchers in hearing @-@ related research and treatment . The University of Nebraska Medical Center hosts the Eppley Institute for Research in Cancer and Allied Diseases , a world @-@ renowned cancer treatment facility named in honor of Omahan Eugene Eppley .

= = = Transportation = = =

Omaha 's central role in the history of transportation across America earned it the nickname " Gate City of the West . " Despite President Lincoln 's decree that Council Bluffs , Iowa , be the starting point for the Union Pacific Railroad , construction began from Omaha on the eastern portion of the first transcontinental railroad . By the middle of the 20th century , Omaha was served by almost every major railroad . Today , the Omaha Rail and Commerce Historic District celebrates this connection , along with the listing of the Burlington Train Station and the Union Station on the National Register of Historic Places . First housed in the former Herndon House , the Union Pacific Railroad 's corporate headquarters have been in Omaha since the company began . Their new headquarters , the Union Pacific Center , was opened in Downtown Omaha in 2004 . Amtrak , the national passenger rail system , provides service through Omaha . The Greyhound lines terminal is at 1601 Jackson St in downtown Omaha . Megabus has a stop at Crossroads Mall ? N 72nd St between Dodge St and Cass St , and provides service to Des Moines , Iowa City , and Chicago . Metro Transit , previously known as Metro Area Transit , is the local bus .

Omaha 's position as a transportation center was finalized with the 1872 opening of the Union Pacific Missouri River Bridge linking the transcontinental railroad to the railroads terminating in Council Bluffs . In 1888 , the first road bridge , the Douglas Street Bridge , opened . In the 1890s , the Illinois Central drawbridge opened as the largest bridge of its type in the world . Omaha 's Missouri River road bridges are now entering their second generation , including the Works Progress Administration @-@ financed South Omaha Bridge , now called Veteran 's Memorial Bridge , which was added to the National Register of Historic Places . In 2006 , Omaha and Council Bluffs announced joint plans to build the Missouri River Pedestrian Bridge , which opened in 2008 .

Today , the primary mode of transportation in Omaha is by automobile , with I @-@ 80 , I @-@ 480 , I @-@ 680 , I @-@ 29 , and U.S. Route 75 ( JFK Freeway and North Freeway ) providing freeway service across the metropolitan area . The expressway along West Dodge Road ( U.S. Route 6 and Nebraska Link 28B ) and U.S. Route 275 has been upgraded to freeway standards from I @-@ 680 to Fremont . City owned Metro Transit formerly as MAT Metro Area Transit provides public bus service to hundreds of locations throughout the Metro .

A 2011 study by Walk Score ranked Omaha 21st most walkable of fifty largest U.S. cities . There is an extensive trail system throughout the city for walkers , runners , bicyclists , and other pedestrian modes of transportation .

Omaha is laid out on a grid plan , with 12 blocks to the mile with a north @-@ to @-@ south house numbering system . Omaha is the location of a historic boulevard system designed by H.W.S. Cleveland who sought to combine the beauty of parks with the pleasure of driving cars . The historic Florence and Fontenelle Boulevards , as well as the modern Sorenson Parkway , are important elements in this system .

Eppley Airfield , Omaha 's airport , serves the region with over 4 @.@ 2 million passengers in 2006 . United Airlines , Southwest Airlines , Delta Air Lines , American Airlines , Alaska Airlines , Allegiant



Air and Frontier Airlines serve the airport with direct and connecting service . Eppley is situated in East Omaha , with many users driving through Carter Lake , Iowa and getting a view of Carter Lake before getting there . General aviation airports serving the area are the Millard Municipal Airport , North Omaha Airport and the Council Bluffs Airport . Offutt Air Force Base continues to serve as a military airbase ; it is located at the southern edge of Bellevue , which in turn lies immediately south of Omaha .

= = Notable people = =

= = Sister cities = =

Omaha has six sister cities :

Braunschweig , Lower Saxony , Germany

Naas , County Kildare , Leinster , Ireland

Yantai , Shandong , China

Šiauliai , Lithuania

Xalapa , Veracruz , Mexico

Shizuoka , Shizuoka , Japan