Existing Sources of Small Business Information and Future Research Needs

by

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EXISTING SOURCES OF SMALL BUSINESS
INFORMATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

It is the intent of this paper to identify some sources, possible uses, and future needs for economic data by the typical small businessman. The regional area composed of the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas (SBA Region VI) is emphasized in this study with sources listed in the attached appendix. Federal government data sources and comparable state agencies for states other than Region VI generally extend the application of this work.

Operation of a typical small business often requires preparation of sales forecast, loan application packaging, market research, location studies, development of sales promotions campaigns, and growth projections. These endeavors require many different data sources. Primary data sources (direct interviews or questionnaires with principals) are expensive and require too much time to be acceptable to the small business manager. In addition, primary research projects are often difficult to design and the results are open to interpretation. Fortunately, secondary source information about the economy is available from federal, state, and local sources and is readily adapted to common needs of small business managers if the information can be found quickly. Thus, the major purpose here is to point out a wide range of sources and to describe how those sources may be used to benefit the operation of a small business.

Acceptable reports for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA) are easily generated because the data are complete and accessible.
For the construction of similar studies for smaller towns and rural counties the researcher will find a marked reduction of available information. An additional purpose of this paper is to present descriptions of some data sources for rural and small area regional analysis outside the SMSA. An appendix contains some of the major data sources for Region VI, both for SMSAs and areas with smaller populations.

The appendix and the body of this paper is organized according to sources of data. Three major divisions are: (1) Federal data, (2) state and local government data and University Bureau of Business Research Agency publications, and (3) data from trade or industry publications.

I. Federal Data for Small Business

Until publication of the indices listed in the paragraphs below, access to U.S. Government publications was very difficult. The indices are of two types, commercially published and federally published materials. The indices are available in printed form and are also accessible for nominal fees from computerized data bases, a service available at most large libraries. The commercial services are the American Statistics Index and the Congressional Information Service Index, and the federally published services are the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications and The Government Reports, Announcements and Index.

A. The American Statistical Index (ASI)

ASI began publication in 1975, but the listed publications go back to the 1960s and cover nearly all federal reports with
abstracts summarizing reports. ASI also publishes an index of state and local information.

B. **Congressional and Information Service Index (CIS)**

As the name implies, CIS deals primarily with Congressional hearings, reports, staff studies, and legislation. Unlike some other indices on Congressional topics, individuals appearing before committees and the subjects of reports are listed by name and subject. Annotation of the entries enables the business person to gain some information about the topic without going directly to the primary source.

C. **Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications**

Of the various indices and catalogs of government data, this publication by the Government Printing Office is the most likely to be found in smaller libraries. In each issue new government materials published during the month are listed by subject; and in the December issue of the catalog, a summary of that year's publication is presented. With the call number obtained from the Monthly Catalog, the publication may be ordered from the Government Printing Office.

D. **Government Reports, Announcements and Index**

Published by the National Technical Information Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, this index lists government sponsored projects at the federal, state, and local level, and in some cases privately sponsored research is included. There are currently available over one million titles contained in the several
volumes of the index. Most of these titles are available in
the form of photo copies or microfiche from the agency. Little
title duplication of materials listed in the Monthly Catalog
occurs so that in fact these two federally published catalogs
of data sources are independent, one of the other.

E. Some Publications of Federal Agencies

Analysis of business and economic data proceeds at two levels.
First, it is important to be informed about economic trends of
the national economy and within that context, the major emphasis
of this paper, trends of the regional situation.

The single most important source for national trends (macro-
economic trends) is the United States Department of Commerce
publication titled Business Conditions Digest. Inspection of a
recent issue will turn up charts or tables of data about every
major macroeconomic statistic.

The United States Department of Commerce houses the Bureau
of Economic Analysis, publishing in the form of a computer print-
out information for 3,618 regional areas (usually counties) in
the United States. The information consists of annual levels of
employment by industry, income by source, population estimates
between census years, and location quotients for the regional
areas. These data are available for previous ten-year periods.
A methodology titled A Summary Description of the Sources and
Methods Used in Estimating County Personal Income is available
from the Bureau and explains the data printout.

The bureau of the Census, also part of the U.S. Department of
Commerce, compiles information useful for rural region studies. Census tract data for SMSAs are equivalent to "enumeration districts" in smaller towns and contain information similar to census tracts. The Series P-25, Population Estimates and Projections are published several times between the decade census. Number 691 for Texas was issued in April, 1977, and shows county population and community population estimates within those counties. Estimated per capita income figures are also shown for counties and communities.

Additional county data appears in County Business Patterns, a Bureau of the Census publication, and the County and City Data Book of the U.S. Department of Commerce. These two publications, along with the Statistical Abstract of the United States are well known and can be found at the reference desk of any library.

Various publications of the Small Business Administration, especially the series of Small Business Bibliography and Small Marketer's Aids, will be important sources to the manager.

Additional materials published by the federal government are listed in the appendix.

II. State Government Data

As stated earlier, Region VI of the Small Business Administration is composed of the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. A sample of small business data sources included here represents the types of sources which are generally available for other states as well.

An important index for all state publications (the 50 states plus
The Association of State Officials) is the Monthly Checklist of State Publications available from the Exchange and Gift Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The entries are arranged by states and according to the state agency which publishes the document.

The state governments in Region VI all provide important sources for the small business manager. The sources listed in the appendix show that there are employment and wage studies, industrial and manufacturing data, state and local taxation documents, economic development information, and many other categories of data. Generally the pattern of sources for one state in Region VI is repeated in other states. Therefore, the data sources for the state of Texas only are described here although selected sources for all five states in the region are listed in the appendix.

A. Texas

In the State of Texas the most complete data bank is the Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) which is an interagency system with many state agencies cooperating. An estimate of the size and nature of the data bank is obtained from the following list of participating agencies: Included are the Texas Water Development Board, General Land Office, Texas Air Control Board, Texas Forest Service, Texas Industrial Commission, Texas Department of Health Resources, Texas Water Quality Board, Bureau of Economic Geology—University of Texas at Austin, Railroad Commission of Texas, Texas Department of Agriculture, State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board,
Texas Water Rights Commission, and the Texas Coastal and Marine Council. The information contained in TNRIS computer files is a basic source and is available to state agencies at nominal fees.

The Texas Industrial Commission publishes a series of General Community Profiles for Texas communities with population greater than 5,000 people. The typical study runs to over 200 pages and income, employment, sales, local government data, transportation and other services are tabulated. The Commission has also published some local area labor surveys with results sometimes showing slightly higher employment than Federal estimates.

The Texas Employment Commission compiles employment and wage data, on a quarterly basis, in Covered Employment and Wages by Industry and County. The periodical is valuable for its comparison of weekly wages by county and county labor force.

For a small fee the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation will send traffic count maps showing the average vehicular traffic for 24-hour periods on state maintained roadways. Major roads within cities have been measured and special traffic surveys are available for some cities.

The Industrial Economics Research Division of Texas A&M University has made many studies of a regional nature, often related to the local resource base and to the oil industry specifically. Also housed at Texas A&M University is the Texas Real Estate Research Center providing information for appraisal and local development trends. Addresses for both of these sources are shown in the appendix to this paper.
The Division of Planning Coordination and the Office of Information Services, both housed in the Texas Governor's office, generate much regional data for the state. The Texas State and Region Newsletter, with special reports on specific topics, and a regional and statewide input-output model are representative of publications from the Governor's office. The input-output model has the title: The Structure of the Texas Economy and shows production coefficients for 1967, soon to be updated to 1972. An input-output model shows the sources of raw materials and consumers of finished product by industries.

The Comptroller of Public Accounts, Texas Water Development Board, and The Trinity River Authority have been added to the list of addresses and are representative of other information sources at the state level. Between state and local agencies are the Texas Municipal League and the various regional councils of governments. Addresses for some of these agencies are found in the appendix.

For many small and large cities, federal money from the Department of Housing and Urban Development has funded "Comprehensive City Plans." These studies are usually undertaken by private research corporations and are available from city governments. The studies contain information on historical background, economic structure, population, land use, neighborhoods, housing, utilities, and transportation.

There are other private studies which are not published and access depends on personal acquaintance with the owners of such studies. Most commercial banks have economic base studies to support their charter applications. Bond issues for public
hospital districts often require supporting information on the
region. These studies may be difficult to obtain because they
may contain proprietary information, but they may be some of the
best studies of small regions and towns.

As stated above, the other states in Region VI, Arkansas, Louisiana,
New Mexico, and Oklahoma, provide information similar to the examples
from Texas. However, some additional information is in order for
Louisiana.

In Louisiana, an important source of information concerning that
state's business climate, taxation, and political issues related to
business are the publications of the Public Affairs Research Council (PAR).
PAR is a non-profit organization funded by subscriptions from its members,
and its publications are of high quality. In the past, several PAR
publications have offered information which evaluated the Louisiana small
business climate. These PAR publications are listed in the appendix.

At present, some 40 libraries in Louisiana are classified as state
document depositories in addition to the Library of Congress. The state
libraries so designated are required by state to allow any person to
examine its holding of Louisiana state publications.

The Office of the State Library publishes a bibliography of state
documents for Louisiana every six months, entitled Public Documents.
The bibliography is divided into the following topic areas: Banking,
Business Enterprise and Manufacturing, Employment and Labor, State
Government, and Reference Materials. Some data sources for Louisiana
are shown according to this breakdown in the appendix to this paper.

A very important source of data and of other services to small
business is the Bureaus of Business and Economic Research which are
often organized as part of the Colleges of Business Administration of state universities. Of all state agencies discussed here, these Bureaus are the only agencies organized specifically to assist the business community. In many instances the Bureaus participate in programs funded by the Small Business Administration to help with the problems of starting and operating a small business. A complete list of all Bureaus of Business and Economic Research in Region VI, with their publications is shown in the appendix.

IV. Trade and Industry Publications

As a service to the community, many commercial banks publish regular statements about economic and business conditions in the community. San Antonio Business Highlights from the National Bank of Commerce, Texas Facts and Figures from Texas Commerce Bancshares, and Financial Facts published by First City Bancorporation are a few examples from larger cities.

Brief but easily obtained economic profiles for many smaller cities come from utility companies and from local chambers of commerce.

Sales and Marketing Management, a national marketing periodical, has published county data for the United States for some time. The June or July issues each year contain population estimates, numbers of households, retail sales by product classification, and estimates of personal income. Beginning in 1977, the Sales Management Data Service combines the data which was published over several issues of the magazine with age breakdown, income classifications, and buying power estimates for regional areas and small communities.
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VI. Future Research Needs

At least two major problems exist in regard to the utilization of information for the purposes of small business managers. First, the data often are not broken down far enough for use in smaller geographic areas or they fail to be applicable to specific industries. Second, the interval of time between tabulation and publication of the data is too long, especially for federal data.

In the future, we need to gather data according to some standardized
geographic division, preferably as small as the postal "zip" code areas. Also, industrial data could use the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) number.

The time lag between tabulation and publication could be reduced by the use of preliminary figures or by estimation techniques which would later be adjusted when all data were complete.
APPENDIX
DATA SOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESS
IN REGION VI

Federal Data


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Guide to Foreign Trade Statistics.


State Quarterly Economic Developments.


Federal Mailing Addresses

U.S. Department of Commerce
Bureau of the Census
Population Division, Statistical Information
Washington, D.C. 20233
(301) 763-5002 or 763-5020

U.S. Department of Commerce
Bureau of Economic Analysis
Washington, D.C. 20230
(202) 523-0901

U.S. Small Business Administration
1414 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20416

State Data

Arkansas

Contractors Licensing Board. Roster of Licensed Contractors 1978-79
Little Rock
Employment Security Division
Arkansas Industrial Progress
1970-77
Little Rock, 1978

Applicants and Job Openings
(Various SMSA's) 1978

Labor Force Statistics
Little Rock, August 1978

State Highway and Transportation Department
1977 Traffic Volumes Map
Little Rock, 1978

Louisiana
Banking, Finance and Insurance


Reports of the Homestead and Building and Loan Associations in the State of Louisiana...At the Close of Business December 31, 1977. 1978. 79 p. (Annual, 1899-)

Reports of the State Banks and Trust Companies in the State of Louisiana...at the Close of Business December 31, 1977. 1978. 223 p. (Annual, 1899-)

Department of Commerce. Real Estate Commission. Contact.
(Newsletter issued quarterly, 1944-)

Commissioner of Securities. Securities Bulletin. (Monthly, 1959-)

Business Enterprise and Manufacturing

Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans. New Orleans Port Record. (Monthly, 1942-)


Employment and Labor


Labor Area Trends. (Monthly, 1957- )

State Government Finance Sources


Governor's Office. Department of the State Register. Louisiana Register. (Monthly, 1975- )

Reference Sources


New Mexico

Agricultural Experiment Station

Land Use Planning

Las Cruces, 1976

An Interindustry Economic Analysis of Northwestern New Mexico 1977

Economic Development Division

Directory of New Mexico Manufacturing and Mining 1978-79

Santa Fe

State Library. New Mexico State Documents Classification System

1978
A Checklist of State and Local Texas, Permits and Licenses
Santa Fe

Oklahoma

Agricultural Experiment Station

Department of Economic and Community Affairs
CETA Comprehensive Employment Training Act of 1973, How It Works For You
Oklahoma City

County Employment and Wage Data, 1977
Oklahoma City

An Economic Development Process of Oklahoma, 1978
Oklahoma City

Real Estate Commission
Oklahoma Manual for Real Estate Brokers and Sales Associates
1978
Oklahoma City

Texas

Brees, Mina Akins. Directories in the Legislative Reference Library. Austin, Texas: Legislative Reference Library, 1974


Clark, Charles T.; Willis, James E.; and Pieper, Charles W. The Highland Lakes of Texas: A Study in Economic Development. Austin, Texas: Bureau of Business Research, The University of Texas at Austin, 1967

Directory of Texas Professional Industrial Developers.
Austin, Texas: Texas Industrial Commission, n.d.


Texas Industrial, Development, Expansion and Sites Newsletter. Issued monthly. Austin, Texas: Texas Industrial Commission


Texas Land: Quality and Quantity. Austin, Texas: Council of State Planning Agencies and Office of the Governor, Division of Planning Coordination

Texas Resources and Industries. Austin, Texas: Bureau of Business Research, The University of Texas at Austin, 1975.

Texas Data Mailing Addresses

Central Texas Council of Governments
Bell County Courthouse Annex East
P.O. Box 729
Belton, Texas 76513
(817) 939-1801

Comptroller of Public Accounts
State of Texas
Office of Planning and Research
LBJ Building, Room 601
111 E. 17th Street
Austin, Texas 78774

Deep East Texas Council of Governments
Economic Development District
272 East Lamar Street
Jasper, Texas 75951
(713) 384-5704

Director
Texas Real Estate Research Center
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77843

Natural Resources Information System Task Force
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 475-3321
Office of the Governor
Office of Information Services
Box 13224
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 454-3731

State Department of Highways and Public Transportation
Austin, Texas 78763

Trinity River Authority of Texas
Southern Division Office
1117 Tenth Street
P.O. Box 1554
Huntsville, Texas 77340
(713) 295-5485

Texas A&M University
Industrial Economics Research Division
P.O. Box 83 EE
College Station, Texas 77843
(713) 845-5711

Texas Employment Commission
Congress Avenue and 15th Street
Austin, Texas 78711

Texas Industrial Commission
814 Sam Houston State Office Building
Box JJ, Capital Station
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 475-4431

Texas Municipal League
1020 Southwest Tower
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 478-6601

Texas State and Region Newsletter
Office of the Governor
Division of Planning Coordination

Texas Water Development Board
P.O. Box 12386
Austin, Texas 78711
REGION VI STATE UNIVERSITY CENTERS FOR
BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH

Arkansas

Bureau of Business and Economic Research
College of Business Administration
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
501/575-4151

Periodicals: Arkansas Business and Economic Review - quarterly

Industrial Research and Extension Center
College of Business Administration
University of Arkansas
P.O. Box 3017
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203
501/371-1971

Office of Business and Economic Research
College of Arkansas at Little Rock
33rd and University Avenue
Little Rock, Arkansas 72204
501/569-3354

Louisiana

Center for Business and Economic Research
College of Business Administration
Northeast Louisiana University
Monroe, Louisiana 71209
318/342/2123

Periodicals: Northeast Louisiana Business Review - semiannually

Center for Business and Economic Research
Southeastern Louisiana University
P.O. Box 813
Hammond, Louisiana 70402
504/549-2086

Periodicals: Proceedings of Annual Economic Symposium - annually

College of Business Administration
Louisiana State University, Shreveport
8515 Youree Drive
Shreveport, Louisiana 71105
318/865-7121
Division of Research
College of Business Administration
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803
504/388-5830

Periodicals: Louisiana Business Review - monthly
Baton Rouge Consumer Price Index - quarterly

Division of Business and Economic Research
College of Business Administration
University of New Orleans
Lakefront
New Orleans, Louisiana 70122
504/283-0248

Periodicals: Louisiana Business Survey - quarterly
Review of Business and Economic Research - triannually
Statistical Abstract of Louisiana - triannually
Research Studies and Occasional Papers - irregularly

Research Division
College of Administration and Business
Louisiana Tech University
Ruston, Louisiana 71272
318/257-3701

Periodicals: The Louisiana Economy - quarterly

New Mexico

Center for Business Research and Services
College of Business Administration and Economics
New Mexico State University
Box 3CR
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003
505/646-1434

Periodicals: Consumer Price Indices - monthly

Institute for Applied Research Services
The University of New Mexico
1920 Lomas, NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131
505/277-5934

Periodicals: New Mexico Business - monthly
Technology Updates - quarterly
Oklahoma

Center for Economic and Management Research
The University of Oklahoma
307 West Brooks, Room 4 - Adams Hall
Normal, Oklahoma 73019
405/325-2931

Periodicals: Oklahoma Business Bulletin - 10 times a year
Regional Review - semiannually
Statistical Abstract - biennially

Division of Business and Economic Research
College of Business Administration
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074
405/624-5125

Texas

Bureau of Business Research
The University of Texas at Austin
P.O. Box 7459, University Station
Austin, Texas 78712
512/471-1616

Periodicals: Texas Business Review - monthly
Texas Industrial Expansion - monthly
Directory of Texas Manufacturers - annually
Texas Trade and Professional Associations - annually

Bureau of Business and Economic Research
The University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, Texas 79968
915/747-5122

Bureau of Business and Economic Research
School of Business Administration
Pan American University
Edinburg, Texas 78539
512/381-3361

Bureau of Business and Economic Research
School of Business
Stephen F. Austin State University
Box 3009 SFASU Station
Nacogdoches, Texas 75962

Bureau of Business and Economic Research
Hankamer School of Business
Baylor University
P.O. Box 6278
Waco, Texas 76706
817/755-3495
Center for Business and Economic Research
Sam Houston State University
College of Business Administration
Huntsville, Texas  77341
713/295-6211, ext. 2857

Center for Business and Economic Research
School of Business
West Texas State University
Canyon, Texas  79016
806/656-2880

Center for Studies in Business, Economics and Human Resources
College of Business
University of Texas at San Antonio
San Antonio, Texas  78285
512/691-4317

College of Business Administration
University of Houston
Houston, Texas  77004
713/749-3341

Office of Applied Business Research
College of Business Administration
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, Texas  79409
806/742-3947

School of Professional Studies Research Library
University of Houston at Clear Lake City
2700 Bay Area Blvd.
713/488-9420

Periodicals:  Bay Area Business Review - quarterly
Trade and Industry Publications

Community Development Survey. Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Electric Service Company

Directory of Chambers of Commerce in Texas. Issued three times a year. Longview, Texas: East Texas Chamber of Commerce. Telephone lists, addresses, and population of all Texas Chambers of Commerce areas. Also gives officers of each Chamber of Commerce.

First City Bancorporation of Texas, Inc. Economics Department P.O. Box 2387 Houston, Texas 77001 (713) 658-6017


News and Business Communicator National Bank of Commerce of San Antonio P.O. Drawer 121 San Antonio, Texas 78291


Sales and Marketing Management 633 Third Avenue New York, New York 10017

South Texas Industrial Data File. Corpus Christi, Texas: Central Power and Light Company.

Texas Facts and Figures Texas Commerce Bancshares, Inc. P.O. Box 2558 Houston, Texas 77001 (713) 236-4865

Chamber of Commerce Publications


Austin. Issued monthly. Austin, Texas: Austin Chamber of Commerce.
Corpus Christi Today. Issued monthly. Corpus Christi, Texas: Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce.

Dallas. Issued monthly. Dallas, Texas: Dallas Chamber of Commerce.


Fort Worth. Issued monthly. Fort Worth, Texas: Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce.

Greater Lubbock. Issued monthly. Lubbock, Texas: Lubbock Chamber of Commerce and Board of City Development.


Progressive Tyler. Issued monthly. Tyler, Texas: Tyler Chamber of Commerce.


Sequence of a Typical Inquiry

Business Organization

Business Problem

Specific Question

Information Required

Library

Locate Reference

Locate in Another Library

Locally Accessible

Yes

Search Ends

No

Federal Source

ASI CIS Monthly Catalog...

State Source

Checklist of State Pub.

Industry Source

Trade or Industry Reference

Computer Search by Key Word Various Data Bases

TNISO

Request Through Inter-Library Loan