

## Location is everything.

### *Statistical Areas Explained*

*Reprinted with permission,  
South Carolina Employment Security Commission*

#### News & Announcements

It's that time of the year... and it's better than taxes!

Keep an eye out for the annual ALMIS Database Administrator Survey being emailed to you in February 2005.

This survey is a great opportunity for you to help inform ARC's planning and work activities over the course of the next year.

Thanks in advance for participating!

Starting in January 2005, states will start releasing labor force statistics based on new Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Combined Statistical Areas. The U.S Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published the standards (which were derived from data contained in the 2000 Census) for these areas in a Federal Register Notice in December 2000. The 2000 standards replace and supersede the 1990 standards for defining Metropolitan Areas. OMB's 2000 standards provide for the identification of the following statistical areas in the United States and Puerto Rico:

Metropolitan Statistical Areas have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more in population, coupled with adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core urban area as measured by commuting ties.

Micropolitan Statistical Areas – a new set of statistical areas – have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 in population, combined with adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core urban area as measured by commuting ties.

Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas are defined in terms of whole counties (or equivalent entities). If the specified criteria are met, a Metropolitan Statistical Area containing a single core with a population of 2.5 million or more may be subdivided to form smaller groupings of counties referred to as Metropolitan Divisions.

If specified criteria are met, adjacent Metropolitan and

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- Metropolitan Statistical Areas
- Micropolitan Statistical Areas
- Metropolitan Divisions
- Combined Statistical Areas
- New England City and Town Areas
- New England City and Town Area Divisions
- Combined New England City and Town Areas

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# DBA in the Spotlight

## Curtis Theis

Minnesota Department of  
Economic Security  
St. Paul, MN  
curtis.theis@state.mn.us



### What are your interests outside of work?

Family, basketball (playing not watching), reading, cards, and beer (drinking not making).

### What is your favorite work-related web site?

<http://sqljunkies.com/> is a good site for getting questions answered or seeing what's new with MS SQL Server.

### Do you have any project management tools or tips you'd like to share with other DBAs?

If you use MS SQL Server, use DTS so analysts can do their own loading.

### What training have you taken recently and would you recommend it to other DBAs?

Nothing recently, but my most useful database course was in database design.

### What is the strangest job you ever held?

Stock-cart associate at Wal-Mart. Strange and interesting people shop and work there.

### What is the most challenging aspect of your current job?

Understanding and using undocumented DB2 databases.

### What is the most interesting or awe-inspiring place you've been?

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area is the most tranquil and serene place I've ever had the pleasure of enjoying.

### Read any good books lately (personal or work-related) that you would recommend others read?

*Arrowsmith* by Sinclair Lewis. Gotta love those Nobel prize winners from Sauk Centre.

### How long have you been an ALMIS DBA?

3 years

### Are you originally from Minnesota?

Yes, born and raised in Sauk Centre.

### What is your educational background?

BA in Psychology from Minnesota State University - Moorhead and now starting on a Master's in Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota

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Micropolitan Statistical Areas, in various combinations, may become the components of a new set of areas called Combined Statistical Areas. They include combinations with adjacent areas with an employment interchange of 25 or more; if the interchange is at least 15 but less than 25, the local opinion through Congressional delegations is expressed.

Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas represent the basic set of county-based areas. If specified criteria are met, Metropolitan Divisions are

defined within Metropolitan Statistical Areas that have a single core with a population of at least 2.5 million. Not all Metropolitan Statistical Areas with urbanized areas of this size will contain Metropolitan Divisions. Because Metropolitan Divisions represent subdivisions of Metropolitan Statistical Areas, it is not accurate to rank or compare Metropolitan Divisions with Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas.

Sources:  
U.S. Office of Management and Budget  
U.S. Census Bureau

*Get more info!*

If you would like to learn more about the new geographic definitions, the Brookings Institute recently published an excellent paper on the topic.

You can view the paper online at:

([http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20041115\\_metrodefinitions.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20041115_metrodefinitions.htm))

# New Methodology in Monthly Labor Force Estimates

*Reprinted with permission, Iowa Workforce Development*

**Beginning** with the January 2005 Unemployment Rate News Release, new methodology changes in Monthly Labor Force Estimates will be implemented.

## Background

Labor force estimates for states and local areas are key economic indicators of local economic conditions. For over thirty years, these estimates have been produced by the State employment security agencies in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. The Federal-State cooperative program that is used to develop this economic time series is referred to as the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program. The monthly statistics derived from this program provide labor areas with four estimates: labor force, employment, unemployment and the unemployment rate. The methodologies used to produce the data are consistent from state to state which allows for comparability among the states.

Improvements to the current methodologies for both the states and local areas will be implemented with the calculation of the January 2005 labor force data, which will be released to the public in March 2005. During 2004, the states prepared the monthly labor force estimates using both the current and new

models and then compared the results. The following is a summary of upcoming changes:

## Statewide

Statistical models used to estimate employment and unemployment will be replaced. The move to a “third-generation” model is expected to have several benefits:

- State labor force estimates will sum to national estimates
- Reliability measures will be available to users
- Model will directly yield seasonally adjusted estimates
- “Real-time” benchmarking will result in smaller year-end revisions
- New model will more clearly reveal the relationships among the Current Population Survey (household survey), Unemployment Insurance data, and the nonfarm employment input
- Third-generation model will offer historical data back to 1976

## Sub-state Areas

The new and revised labor area definitions announced by the Office of Management and Budget on June 6, 2003 will be implemented. Also, the Handbook Method will be refined and updated:

- New residency adjustment ratios, based on 2000 Census Commuting Patterns, will be used to adjust nonfarm employment from a place-of-work to a place-of residence concept
- Method for estimating new entrant and reentrant unemployed will be updated
- 2000 Census data will be used to produce monthly agricultural employment, self-employment, unpaid family workers and private household workers

**For further details in the methodology changes**  
[www.bls.gov/lau/lauschanges2005.htm](http://www.bls.gov/lau/lauschanges2005.htm)

# ARC Meeting Highlights

*The ALMIS Resource Center met in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina on November 16-18, 2004.*

## **Subcommittee Updates and Action Items**

**ETA Update** – Olaf Bjorkland reported on the current organization of ETA and the Office of Workforce Investment. Gay Gilbert is now the Office of Workforce Investment director. Funding issues were discussed in regards to electronic tools, labor market information, and ACLnet/AJB.

## **Policy and Procedures**

**Subcommittee** – Bob Cottrell reported that the subcommittee had been looking at whether there should be any changes to core elements in the ALMIS Database given the strategy that was being proposed by ETA in funding One-Stop core products. The decision was made to have all core elements remain the same with the exception of tables associated with the licensure data. There will not be significant changes or additions in terms of populated tables in the database since states may not have the resources to populate the tables. The subcommittee will continue to look at new data resources (e.g. employment dynamics data) as non-standard tables. Regarding ARC funding, there is currently contract/operational authority through March 2005.

Teresa Taylor reported that Iowa is getting calls about using the Employer Database in different ways. She asked that Iowa be kept up to date if states are working with infoUSA for other

purposes so that information could be shared on how the Employer Database is being used.

Roger Therrien asked on behalf of the WIC for a tentative meeting schedule for ARC for 2005. Firm dates had not been established, but tentatively, ARC would be scheduled to meet in February, May, August, and November 2005.

## **Education and Communication**

**Subcommittee** – Vicki Boylston reported that the ARC Web site group was working diligently and the site continues to be updated and new content added. A conference call is held once a month to determine updates and new content for the site. Lately, the focus has been on Employer Database information and the release of the new ALMIS Database structure. With Joanna Hendrickson-Larson's retirement, Steve Rosenow has taken over much of the current Web site work.

ARC was unable to do a workshop at the LMI Forum, however, ARC fact sheets and brochures were distributed in participant's packets and Marilyn Skalberg made a sign-up sheet available for the newsletters and several copies of the newsletters on the publication tables.

A major project underway has been the multimedia presentation that has suffered from unavoidable delays. The

Subcommittee gave a demo of the almost completed product. Comments and feedback included: taking out much of the ALMIS/ARC history and editing the abrupt cuts, supplementing video with individuals from other perspectives. Vicki agreed to investigate the process involved in supplementing the video portions. Bob Cottrell added that several of the filmed excerpts (including presentations and interviews) from the ARC Seminar last November had been sent to ETA. After the release of this first presentation, there will be a number of instructional DVDs released to help administrators and DBAs understand the data going into the system and how it can be used. There is a need to move away from regular classroom training and it is hoped that these forthcoming multimedia products will facilitate that move. For the instructional DVDs, it was decided to explore developing four topics that can be quickly converted into training components: O\*NET and the ALMIS Database, XML, SQL: Basic and Applied, and the ALMIS Database Fundamentals. With minor additions, these filmed workshops from the Seminar should be able to be distributed to states as a training package.

An ALMIS Database Administrator survey will be completed in February 2005 in order to find out any concerns DBAs might have and provide

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## More Local Information Now Available

*Reprinted from the Workforce Information Council, November 2004 Update*

**M**ore information on industries at the county level is now available, resulting from changes by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the presentation of data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (or "ES-202") program.

Beginning with the first quarter 2004 data released in October, BLS is now publishing the number of establishments for every industry and geographic level (counties, metropolitan areas, and states), regardless of the number of establishments.

Previously, the number of establishments was not shown when there were only a few establishments, usually three or fewer. With this change, the number of employers will now be published for about 800,000 industry-by-county cells where it was formerly suppressed. Other information on these small cells--specifically employment and wages--will continue to be suppressed because of confidentiality restrictions. However, the BLS is still evaluating whether sensitive employment and wage data could be published as ranges

rather than being suppressed. The proposal for the change in publishing establishment counts was announced for comment in the Federal Register last spring.

The first quarter data also provide, for the first time, employment and wage information for the new Metropolitan Statistical Area definitions and the related Micropolitan Statistical Areas and the Combined Statistical Areas.

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planning and measurement information for the ARC. The survey will be using the same online polling mechanism as has been used in the past.

Initial discussions have been held regarding the Second ARC Seminar. The plan is to hold one every other year thereby providing a national setting for DBAs and other partners in the system to communicate and share ideas. After subcommittee discussion, Vicki Boylston gave a recommendation to hold the ARC Seminar 2005 in San Diego, CA, the week of August 21, 2005. The recommendation was based on several factors including the opportunity for diverse regional representation as the last seminar was held in the Southeast.

**Structure Subcommittee** – Roger Therrien reported that ALMIS Database Version 2.3 had been released in September 2004. There have been very few emails requesting additional elements or changes.

Roger reported that the group had made changes to the non-standard tables section of the NCSC web site. The group also addressed changes and suggestions since release of Version 2.3 (e.g. New England coding of city and town areas). The Subcommittee went through additional ideas on several tables and reached conclusions on those that will involve some extra research. Beyond the immediate follow-up work, there are two major data tables that are next on the list to work on and those are the Business Employment Dynamics data and Benefits

data. Roger asked for requests for any additional tables that should be considered.

A question came up regarding the existing structure and identifying tables that perhaps states aren't populating. Specifically mentioned were the occupational cluster and analysis tables that provide descriptions of supply and demand. There is a need to assess which tables states are populating in order to identify those tables that are no longer being used and additionally identify those tables that are too difficult to work with, what tables they like to use and what tables they've added on their own. It was suggested to collect that information through the upcoming DBA survey.

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Regarding projections data tables, there are essentially five projection data tables and the suggestion was that if you have the IOMATRIX table can't the other tables be contained within it. There are issues of size and response time that subcommittee members are going to research and there is also the need to communicate with the Projections Managing Partnership about the output.

It was suggested to renew contacts with the BLS program staff in light of the changes with QCEW and LAUS and changes with the Business Employment Dynamics and the systems that produce the extracts.

An addendum will be released for Version 2.3 in the near future with minor changes (primarily typos and corrections of that nature). It was suggested to release the addendum as Version 2.3.1.

### National Crosswalk Service

**Center Update** – Steve Rosenow gave a handout on NCSC's activities. Next summer, NCSC will be phasing out Version 1.1, 2.0, and 2.1. (Six months to a year after Version 2.3 is released). NCSC will also be releasing CPI files soon. They have updated the non-standard tables page, including the QWI tables. NCSC currently has a contractor for minor and some major changes to the Web site. Regarding licensing data, there is a new contractor for ACInet. The last update for ACInet was sent last Saturday.

Joanna gave a brief overview of the ARC Web site and handed out a review of the ARC Portal Summary. The SQL Primer continues to be a very popular online product along with the Employer Database section. There have been a lot of requests for when the next newsletter will be up. Some of the PowerPoint slideshows from training classes are now on the topical pages (e.g. Structure module is on the

Structure page). The most common browser types to visit the site continue to be Internet Explorer and Netscape. One attempt was made to connect with a phone/mobile device. Largest number of visits is on Monday. Most updates are on Friday.

### Miscellaneous

A request was made to send out the attendance/members list to those who were in attendance at the ARC meeting for future reference.

Minutes and action items from the last meeting were reviewed and approved.

The group said farewell to retiring Illinois representative, Rita Lee, and welcomed her new counterpart James Chen.

A recommendation was made to hold the next meeting in Washington D.C. or San Diego, CA in early February 2005.

**ARC** ALMIS  
Resource  
Center

*news*

c/o Employment Security Commission of North Carolina  
700 Wade Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27611

**Editor & Layout:** Marilyn Skalberg  
**Senior Editors:** Vicki Boylston, Steve Rosenow,  
John Pearce, Curtis Theis  
**Contributors This Edition:** Steve Rosenow, Teresa Taylor,  
Curtis Theis, Vicki Boylston  
**Web Page Preparation:** Steve Rosenow

If you have any questions regarding **ARC news** or would like to contribute information, please contact Marilyn Skalberg (541) 434-0334 or Email [mskalberg@yahoo.com](mailto:mskalberg@yahoo.com).

*The ALMIS Database is a normalized, relational database structure developed for the storage and maintenance of labor market, economic, demographic and occupational information. The ALMIS Resource Center is responsible for the ALMIS Database structure development, update, and maintenance. Members include North Carolina (lead), Connecticut, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and ETA, along with support from the National Crosswalk Service Center and the LMI Institute.*