The new year started with a thud in terms of local net taxable sales.

The Nebraska Department of Revenue reported that Hamilton County's total for January dipped 13.3 percent from $3.98 million to $3.37 million for the first month of the year. Aurora's total fell further still, down $977,000 (28 percent) to $2.46 million.

It's the third month in a row Aurora has posted lower month-end totals. The December figure was down 10.1 percent from the previous year and November's tally was down 19.1 percent. The last month-end gain was reported in October, where taxable sales rose by 2.1 percent.

The net taxable sales figure includes revenue from a variety of business classifications, including retail, utilities, construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, professional services, health care and social services and several others.

The results were mixed throughout the region. Polk Count reported gains of 9.2 percent, while Merrick County was up 4.3 percent. Hall County's tally rose a slim 1.7 percent as well.

On the downside, York County's total fell by 0.2 percent, and Clay County posted numbers 14 percent below January 2008.

In the metro areas, Douglas County (Omaha) was up 6.5 percent and Lancaster County (Lincoln) down 7.3 percent. Statewide, net taxable sales were down 0.8 percent.

Hamilton County showed slight gains in motor vehicle sales. The total for January was $1,974,372, up 2.6 percent from the same month a year ago.

Elsewhere in the region, vehicle sales were up 84 percent in York County and 11.1 percent in Clay County. Hall County's total fell by 3.3 percent, Polk County 12.5 percent and Merrick

County 30.5 percent.

In the metro areas, Douglas County's total fell by 8.4 percent and Lancaster County weighed in with 3.9 percent fewer sales. Statewide, vehicle sales were down 9.2 percent.