

Noon Release

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DULUTH -- Contrary to the normal trend, the Duluth Business Index for July continued to reflect a strong, steady improvement in the economy of Northeastern Minnesota.

The DBI advanced to 141 (1957-59=100), or four points over the June level, during a period when business activity normally declines by several points.

Construction, grain shipments and general lake cargo made heavy gains. Freight carloadings, postal receipts, iron ore shipments, Duluth employment and area metal mining employment also were up.

The July grain index (53,945,000 bushels) was the highest for that month since 1951. However, shipments so far have not overcome the late start this spring.

Five business indicators (bank debits, kilowatt hours/commercial and residential), coal receipts and department store sales) were down slightly from June levels.

Although the July index was up substantially over the index a year ago (141 against 113), the two cannot be compared on a completely objective basis due to the six-week dock strike that tied up grain shipments last summer.

However, only one of the 15 DBI indicator's was below last year's figures and a 7.7% increase during the first seven months of this year compared to the same period in 1964 supports evidence of overall business growth in 1965.

The DBI is prepared by Dr. Cecil H. Meyers, professor and head of the UMD Department of Economics, and Glenn O. Gronseth, research analyst for the Minnesota State Employment Service, Duluth.