

Another advantage of the Census tract system is the fact that a great deal of other local data are available for these areas for analyses, such as business licenses, land use, construction and demolition, sales, clients, and subscribers, to mention only a few. They also serve as reasonably comparable building blocks in establishing larger areas for marketing purposes and they are a handy device for manipulating and analyzing various potential spatial aggregations for determining sales quotas, potential "walk-in" customer populations, the variety of possible users for a particular site, etc.

Many products are sold mainly to certain groups in the population. The kind or amount of clothing purchased is related to age, sex, occupation and education as well as income. Buying books is related to educational attainment. Certain products are purchased chiefly by house owners. In building a branch store or seeking a new rental quarters a merchandiser needs information on the number of people in the area and their characteristics. Census tract data provide the answer.

Tract data are used by real estate organizations, banking, savings and loan and finance companies, insurance companies, mail advertising firms, and newspapers in their planning decisions. These uses provide a second level of helpful information to the marketer who makes the effort to investigate them.

#### CONSTRUCTION STATISTICS

The Census Bureau collects and tabulates data on building permits from 12,000 permit-issuing jurisdictions in the United States in which 80 to 90 percent of all new residential housing units starts occur as well as 85 percent of all new non-residential building construction. The Census Bureau provides data on the 3,900 most active places each month and all 12,000 places annually. The reports give data on the number of one, two, 3-4 family and 5 or more family buildings authorized. The non-residential authorizations are shown in 15 categories including industrial, schools, hospitals, stores, office buildings, etc. In addition the additions and alterations to existing residential and non-residential buildings and their permit valuations are provided. We plan in the future to have building permits identified by Census tract so that you can tie income, age groups and a host of other Census and non-Census data to new construction statistics.

The Bureau is planning to take the first national Census of Construction this year since 1939. This will cover all the large employer construction establishments and a scientifically selected sample of the smaller ones. It will include contract construction, subdividing and developing, and operative or merchant builders including all types of subcontractors and specialty contractors. The data will also show the types of construction work undertaken, whether the project is publicly or privately owned, the location and the amount of subcontract work done for other contractors. This information represents a new tool for assessing the marketing potential in the construction industry.

#### BUSINESS STATISTICS

In addition to *County Business Patterns* mentioned in the discussion of Census source books, one of the most useful series of publications you could use in analyzing business activity within cities and standard metropolitan statistical areas are the *Major Retail Center* reports from the Business Census. The present series covers 132 Central Business Districts located in the largest 116 SMSAs and more than 1,000 major retail centers in these SMSAs. The Central Business District is that downtown area of very high land valuation characterized by a high concentration of retail businesses, offices, theaters, hotels, and service businesses and an area of high traffic flow. Major retail centers outside the Central Business District are those concentrations of retail stores which include a major general merchandise store—usually a department store. They include not only the planned suburban shopping centers but also the older "string" street and neighborhood developments which meet the above prerequisites. Frequently a major retail center includes the planned center plus stores in adjacent blocks that contain at least one store in the general merchandise, apparel, or furniture-appliance categories. Number of stores and sales are shown for convenience goods stores, shopping goods stores, and all other retail stores. The reports contain maps showing the CBD in street detail, the MRC locations, and a physical description of the area of each MRC. These reports provide a ready index of business growth, comparisons between shopping areas, and over time, portray the financial volume and physical growth of business activity in a city and its surrounding suburbs.