

Meeting: 1003, Atlanta, Georgia, MAA CP L1, MAA Session on Using Real-World Data to Illustrate Statistical Concepts, I

1003-L1-1151 **J Travis Hale*** (jthale@mail.utexas.edu). *Using Bureau of Economic Analysis Data in the Statistics Classroom.*

Government websites provide ready access to a great deal of real-world data. Unfortunately, these data are often poorly formatted or difficult to use. One excellent source of public information is the United States Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (<http://www.bea.doc.gov/>), which provides an array of national and regional data on growth, trade, employment, and many other economic characteristics.

Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis has many uses in the introductory statistics classroom. The data lends itself nicely to descriptive statistics, both numerical summary measures and graphical displays. The Regional data at the county level is particularly appropriate for explaining the effects of sample size, sampling distributions, and demonstrations of the Central Limit Theorem. Likewise, Regional data can guide a discussion of weighting procedures, the costs and benefits of using aggregated data, and various ANOVA and regression topics.

Bureau of Economic Analysis data is dense and well formatted. The procedures for downloading files and getting them in usable form are straightforward, and with national and international coverage of several economic indicators, instructors can build problems that stimulate a range of student interests. (Received October 04, 2004)