

About the Center

The H.C. Drew Center for Business and Economic Analysis (Drew CBEA) collects, tracks, and analyzes data relevant to the economy of Southwest Louisiana.

A joint venture between McNeese State University and the SWLA Alliance, the center strives to serve the community with high quality economic analysis, reports, and data collections.

Visit our website and follow us on social media to see what we have to offer.

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1st Quarter 2024 Issue

This issue shows that where we are as we adjust to a newer state of lower (although slightly elevated) state of inflation. Most tax collection measures have shown increases in the 1st quarter of 2024. The remaining variables show slow and steady growth throughout all the parishes which will hopefully continue throughout the year. One interesting concern are increases in the number of unemployed we in the area and the parishes. Gaming revenues did have a another drop, but they are at relatively high levels. Finally, employment has been relatively flat over the past year.

The final piece of this report contains a piece written by the Drew CBEA Director, Dan Groft remembering the former director of the Drew CBEA and economics professor at McNeese State University, Dr. Michael Kurth. Mike was a great economist and person. He will truly be missed and so many owe so much to him.

Thank you for reading and, as always, if you have any questions, feel free to contact the Drew CBEA with any questions.

Dan Groft, Ph.D.

Director, H.C. Drew Center for Business and Economic Analysis

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Selected Employment Indicators – Lake Charles MSA

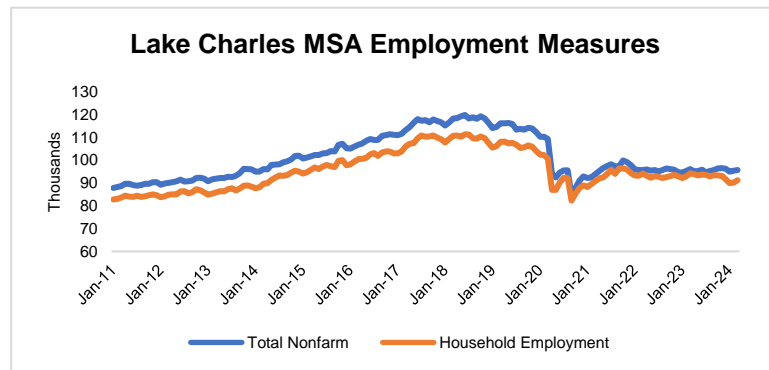
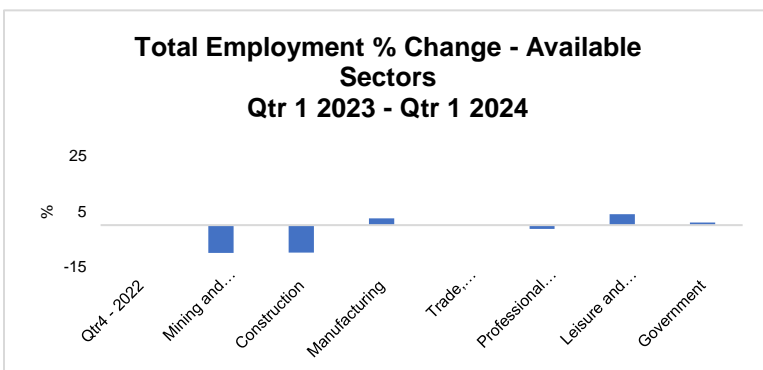
(measures in thousands of workers)	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Total Nonfarm	95.3	95.4	95.2	96.4	95.3
Year-Over-Year Change	-0.4	-0.3	-0.4	0.8	0.0
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.5	-0.3	-0.5	0.9	0.0
Mining and Logging	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Year-Over-Year Change	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Year-Over-Year % Change	11.1	0.0	-10.0	0.0	-10.0
Construction	11.4	11.0	10.6	10.5	10.3
Year-Over-Year Change	-2.7	-1.8	-1.6	-1.0	-1.1
Year-Over-Year % Change	-18.9	-13.9	-13.3	-8.4	-9.9
Manufacturing	11.1	11.4	11.3	11.3	11.4
Year-Over-Year Change	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.3
Year-Over-Year % Change	4.7	6.2	3.7	2.1	2.4
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	16.9	16.9	16.8	17.2	16.9
Year-Over-Year Change	-0.1	0.1	-0.4	-0.2	0.0
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.4	0.6	-2.1	-1.0	-0.2
Professional and Business Services	9.6	9.4	9.6	9.6	9.4
Year-Over-Year Change	0.0	-0.6	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1
Year-Over-Year % Change	0.0	-6.3	-2.4	-0.7	-1.4
Leisure and Hospitality	12.8	13.3	13.8	13.6	13.3
Year-Over-Year Change	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.5
Year-Over-Year % Change	5.5	6.7	7.8	7.3	3.9
Government	14.0	14.1	13.6	14.2	14.1
Year-Over-Year Change	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.1
Year-Over-Year % Change	2.4	1.9	2.0	2.6	1.0
Average Weekly Earnings (All Employees)	942.41	993.28	978.54	969.56	993.53
Year-Over-Year Change	178.7	192.4	153.9	80.0	51.1
Year-Over-Year % Change	23.4	24.0	18.7	9.0	5.4
Average Hourly Earnings (All Employees)	27.74	29.01	28.53	28.24	28.9
Year-Over-Year Change	2.5	3.6	3.0	1.6	1.2
Year-Over-Year % Change	10.1	14.2	11.8	6.0	4.3

In the 1st quarter of 2023, the Lake Charles MSA (consisting of Calcasieu and Cameron parishes) experienced a similar outcome compared to the same quarter the previous year. After benchmark revisions, there have been drops almost every quarter, but the jobs have been ticking up.

Total nonfarm employment (presented in thousands of jobs in the table) did not see growth over the year. Looking at the industries, most had increases or no change while Construction had the largest decline of 1,100 jobs (-9.9%). Leisure and Hospitality experienced the largest industry gain of 500 workers (+3.9%), followed by Manufacturing with an increase of 300 workers (+2.4%). The Government sector had an increase of 100 jobs (+1.0%). Professional and Business Services saw a 100-worker decrease (-1.4%), and Mining and Logging saw a

10% decrease in workers.

While there was a gain in employment, there were also increases in earnings measures. The average weekly earnings of all employees rose 5.4% and average hourly earnings rose 4.3%. Although not shown, average weekly hours of all employees in the 1st quarter rose 1.1% over the year.

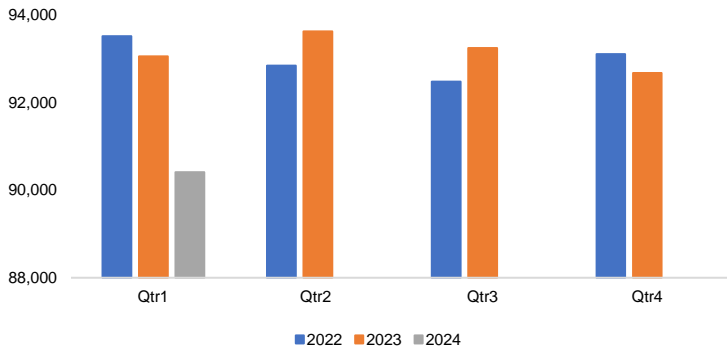


Selected Employment Indicators – Lake Charles MSA

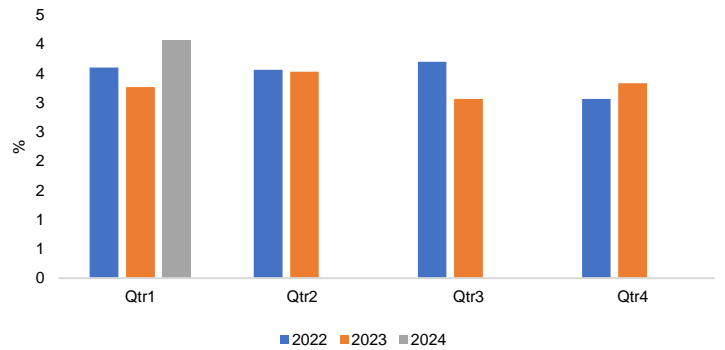
	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Household Employment	93,050	93,619	93,240	92,668	90,408
Year-Over-Year Change	-461	782	765	-429	-2,642
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.5	0.8	0.8	-0.5	-2.8
Household Unemployment	3,149	3,424	2,940	3,198	3,819
Year-Over-Year Change	-334	-17	-601	258	670
Year-Over-Year % Change	-9.6	-0.5	-17.0	8.8	21.3
Labor Force	96,199	97,043	96,180	95,866	94,227
Year-Over-Year Change	-795	765	164	-171	-1,972
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.8	0.8	0.2	-0.2	-2.1
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.3	4.1
Year-Over-Year Change	-0.3	0.0	-0.6	0.3	0.8

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Total Job Openings	6,337	5,991	5,248	4,939	4,821
Year-Over-Year Change	-691	-765	-1,895	-1,265	-1,516
Year-Over-Year % Change	-9.8	-11.3	-26.5	-20.4	-23.9

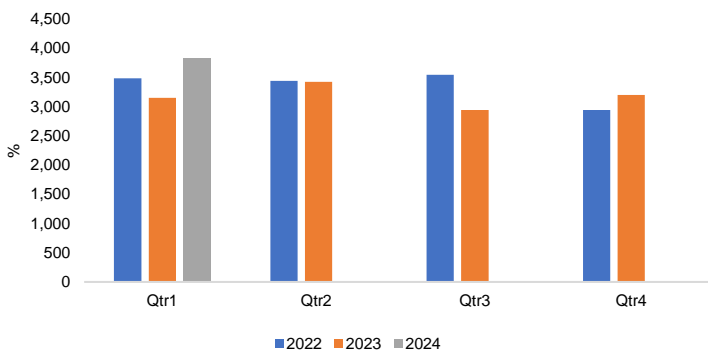
Lake Charles MSA Employment



Lake Charles MSA Unemployment Rate



Lake Charles MSA Unemployment Rate



The quarterly average unemployment rate in the MSA currently sits at 4.1%, which represents a 0.8 percentage point increase from a year ago. The household employment measure decreased by 2,642 over the year for a 2.8% decrease. The number of unemployed increased by 670. This represented a 21.3% increase. As the labor force is the total of unemployed and employed, the total change in the labor force was a decrease of 1,972 (-2.1%). More labor will be needed for long-term growth so future developments in this measure should be watched closely

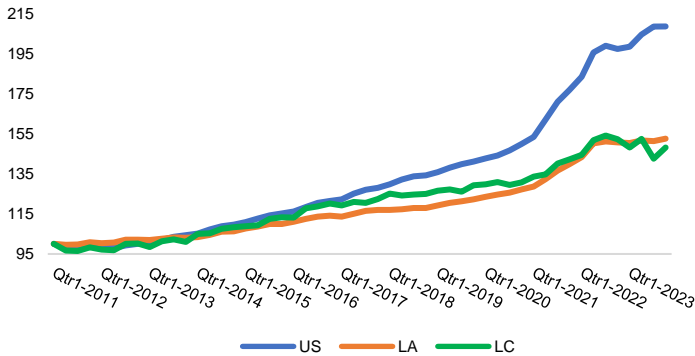
Openings decreased by 1,516 (-23.9%) over the year.

Job openings in the 1st quarter of 2024 averaged 4,821.

Jobs have been increasing but are still below pre-pandemic levels. Fortunately, the area is above pre-Laura levels.

Housing Statistics

FHFA Quarterly Housing Price Indexes
(Qtr1-2011 = 100)

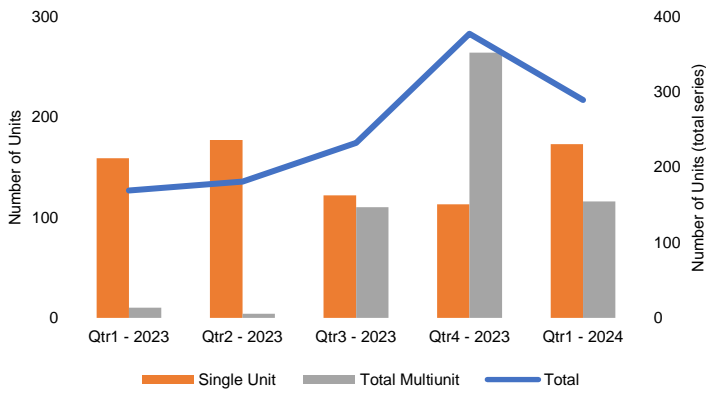


Home Price Index Comparisons	Qtr4 – 2022	Qtr4 - 2023	Year-over-Year % Change
Lake Charles HPI	152.4	148.2	-2.8
Louisiana HPI	150.7	152.6	1.3
US HPI	197.5	208.7	5.7

As housing prices have been rising dramatically in recent years, they have flattened and the prices in the area were falling while there were slower increases in the state and the nation. Looking at price changes over-the-year, from the 4th quarter of 2022 to the same quarter in 2023, housing prices have fallen 2.8% in the Lake Charles MSA compared to increases of 1.3% in LA and 5.7% in the US.

Housing Permits – Lake Charles MSA

Lake Charles MSA Building Permits



In the 1st quarter of 2024, single unit permits rose by 14 over-the-year while multi-unit permits had an increase of 106, therefore the total increase was 120. This represented a 71% increase. The YTD figures show some different results with an increase in single units of 173 and multi-unit permits increasing by 116 for a total increase of 289 over the year in the first quarter. The total percentage increase in YTD was 71%. In terms of valuation, single unit permits rose by \$2.8 million while multi-unit permit valuations rose by \$22.2 million for a total increase of \$25.1 million. This represented a 73.5% increase year-over-year in the 1st quarter of 2024 for valuation of all permits. In terms of YTD numbers, the numbers will be the

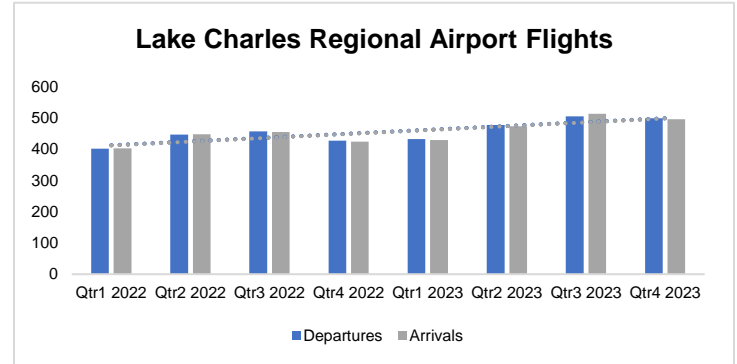
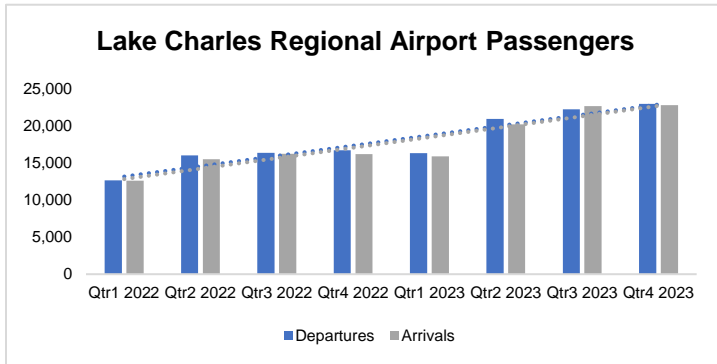
same as this is the first quarter of 2024.

The graph of building permits shows that single-unit permits have been consistent from the 1st quarter of 2023 to the 1st quarter of 2024, taking a downward direction after Q2 in 2023 before increasing in the latest quarter. Multi-unit permits have been increasing since bottoming out in the 2nd quarter of 2023. The 4th quarter saw a dramatic increase in multi-unit permits, with a drop in the first quarter of 2024. The blue line shows the total permits, and it has been drastically increasing since the beginning of 2023 until now because of a decreasing multi-unit permits.

	Qtr-1 2023	Qtr-1 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change	Qtr-1 2023 YTD	Qtr-1 2024 YTD	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Number								
Total	169	289	120	71.0	169	289	120	71.0
Single	159	173	14	8.8	159	173	14	8.8
Multi-unit	10	116	106	1,060.0	10	116	106	1,060.0
Valuation (thousands \$)								
Total	34,116	59,182	25,066	73.5	34,116	59,182	25,066	73.5
Single	33,319	36,210	2,891	8.7	33,319	36,210	2,891	8.7
Multi-unit	797	22,972	22,175	2,782.3	797	22,972	22,175	2,782.3

Transportation Statistics

Lake Charles Regional Airport



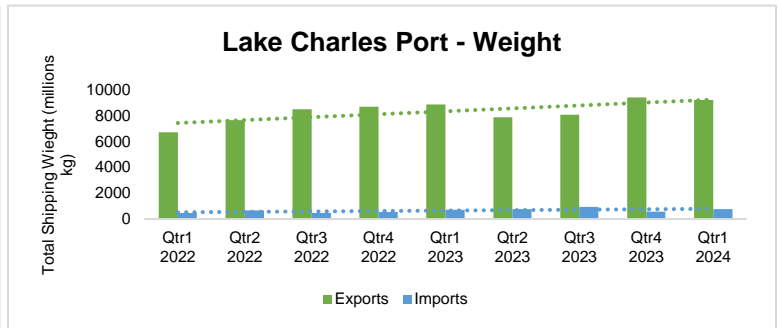
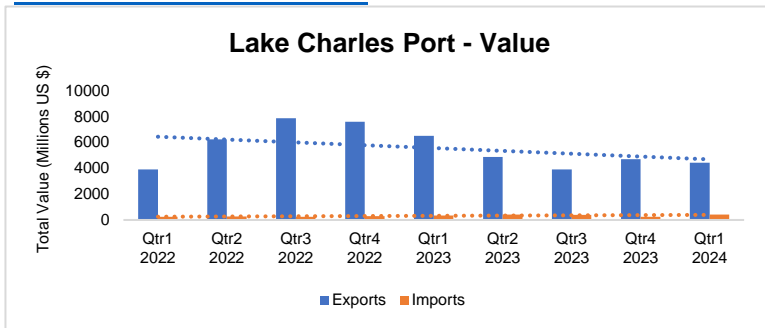
The Lake Charles regional airport experienced a continued uptick in activity during the 4th quarter of 2023 compared to the same quarter the previous year. Activity has increased during 2023 as the airport and area recover from the storms and flights have resumed out of LCH.

	Qtr-4 2022	Qtr-4 2023	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Passengers				
Departures	16,699	22,961	6,262	37.5
Arrivals	16,166	22,799	6,633	41.0
Flights				
Departures	427	499	72	16.9
Arrivals	424	496	72	17.0

Passengers departing in the 4th quarter of 2023 rose 6,262 (+37.5%) since the 4th quarter of 2022 and those arriving have increased 6,633 (+41%). In terms of flights, there has been an increase of 72 flights (+16.9%) departing Lake Charles over that same period while the number

of flights arriving has risen by 72 (+17%) as well. Flights and passengers have been steadily increasing since 2020.

Lake Charles Port Statistics

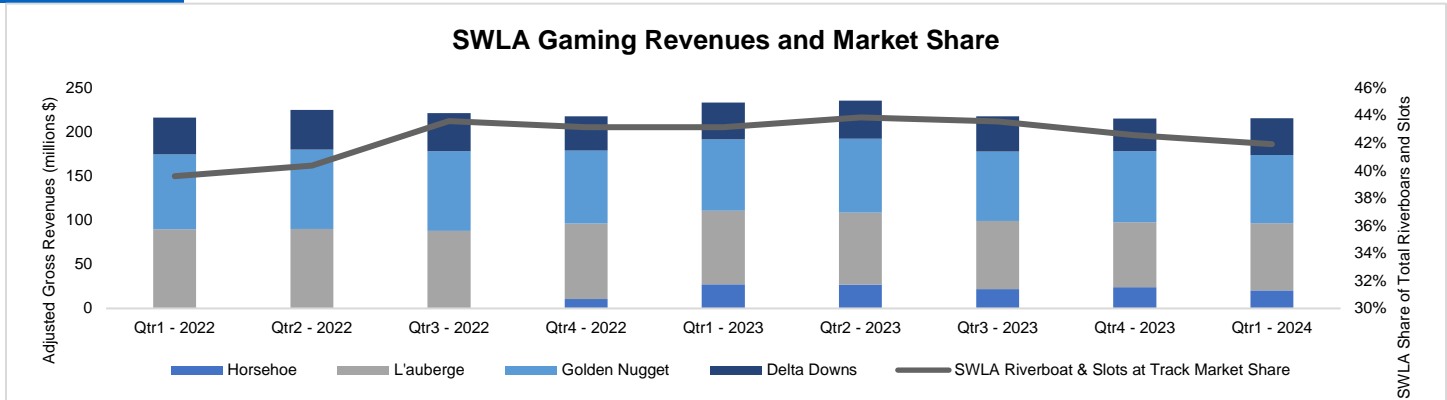


The Lake Charles port has seen some decreases in export and import values in the 1st quarter of 2024. The figures in the table below show the value of exports fell \$2.078 billion (-31.9%) over the year while the total value of imports increased by \$61 million (17.2%) The total weight of all exports rose 347 million kg (+3.9%) while the total weight of all imports rose 51 million kg (+7.1%). While values have fallen (due to falling energy prices), total weight has been

	Qtr-1 2023	Qtr-1 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Value (millions \$)				
Exports	6,509	4,431	-2,078	-31.9
Imports	354	415	61	17.2
Shipping Weight (millions kg)				
Exports	8,855	9,202	347	3.9
Imports	720	771	51	7.1

steady and even increased over the year.

Gaming Statistics



	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Total State AGR (millions)	540.8	536.6	499.9	505.0	513.6
Year-Over-Year Change (millions)	-5.2	-20.8	-8.0	0.7	-27.1
Year-Over-Year % Change	-1.0	-3.7	-1.6	0.1	-5.0
Total SWLA AGR (millions)	233.2	235.3	217.7	214.9	215.3
Year-Over-Year Change (millions)	17.1	10.3	-3.6	-2.6	-18.0
Year-Over-Year % Change	7.9	4.6	-1.6	-1.2	-7.7
Total AGR (millions)					
Horseshoe	27.3	26.8	21.9	23.9	20.4
Year-Over-Year Change (millions)	27.3	26.8	21.9	13.3	-6.9
Year-Over-Year % Change	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	125.8	-25.3
L'Auberge	83.3	81.6	77.3	73.9	75.9
Year-Over-Year Change (millions)	-6.4	-8.3	-10.5	-11.8	-7.4
Year-Over-Year % Change	-7.1	-9.2	-12.0	-13.7	-8.9
Golden Nugget	80.8	83.7	78.5	80.2	77.2
Year-Over-Year Change (millions)	-4.1	-6.1	-11.8	-2.5	-3.6
Year-Over-Year % Change	-4.8	-6.8	-13.1	-3.1	-4.4
Delta Downs	41.8	43.2	39.9	37.0	41.7
Year-Over-Year Change (millions)	0.2	-2.0	-3.2	-1.6	-0.1
Year-Over-Year % Change	0.4	-4.5	-7.5	-4.2	-0.2
Share of Total SWLA AGR					
Isle of Capri	11.7%	11.4%	10.1%	11.1%	9.5%
L'Auberge	35.7%	34.7%	35.5%	34.4%	35.3%
Golden Nugget	34.6%	35.6%	36.1%	37.3%	35.9%
Delta Downs	17.9%	18.4%	18.3%	17.2%	19.4%
Share of Total State AGR					
Isle of Capri	5.1%	5.0%	4.4%	4.7%	4.0%
L'Auberge	15.4%	15.2%	15.5%	14.6%	14.8%
Golden Nugget	14.9%	15.6%	15.7%	15.9%	15.0%
Delta Downs	7.7%	8.1%	8.0%	7.3%	8.1%
SWLA Total AGR	43.1%	43.8%	43.5%	42.6%	41.9%

In terms of revenues, gaming establishments have rebounded from the pandemic and hurricanes and the Horseshoe has now been open for year-over-year comparisons. Revenues in SWLA were about 18% lower than the 1st quarter of 2024 and statewide AGR in 2023 was 27.1% higher than Q1 2024. Total revenues in SWLA for the 1st quarter of 2024 were \$215.3 million, or a 7.7% percent decrease from the previous year.

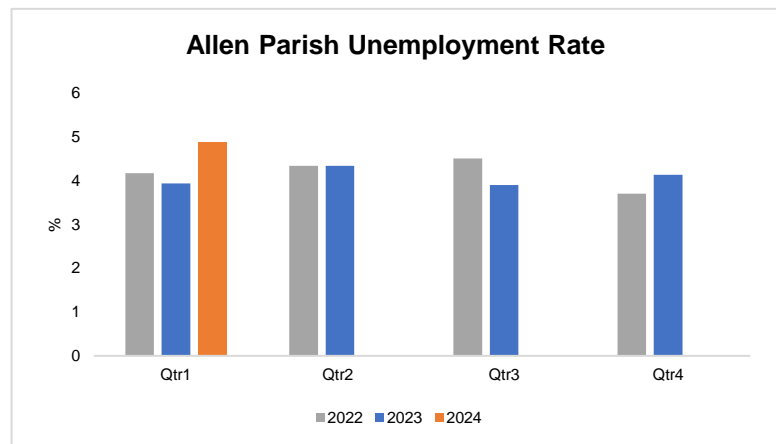
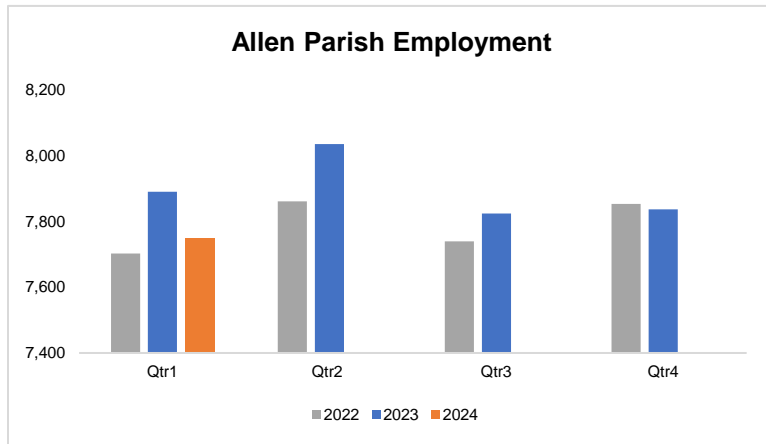
Horseshoe collected \$20.4 million in revenue in the 1st quarter of 2024. L 'Auberge had a decrease of \$7.4 million for an 8.9% decrease. The Golden Nugget had an annual percentage drop in AGR of 4.4% with an absolute decrease of 3.6 million. Delta Downs experienced a \$0.1 million decrease in AGR over the year for a 0.2% decrease. These figures still indicate a solid recovery in the gaming market from 2020,

however, things have been slowing in terms of Q1 year-over-year changes. This may be due to people making less frequent visits due to higher transportation costs (gasoline prices), more spending on other goods due to inflation, and weather events in the 1st quarter. Also, some of the increased activity at the Horseshoe may be eating into nearby casino AGR. The four SWLA establishments made up 41.9% of the total AGR from riverboats and slots and tracks in the state, which is a 1.2% percentage point decrease from the 1st quarter of 2023.

Selected Employment Indicators – Allen Parish

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Household Employment	7,890	8,035	7,824	7,836	7,748
Year-Over-Year Change	188	174	85	-17	-142
Year-Over-Year % Change	2.4	2.2	1.1	-0.2	-1.8
Household Unemployment	326	364	318	337	396
Year-Over-Year Change	-8	10	-48	36	70
Year-Over-Year % Change	-2.4	2.7	-13.0	11.8	21.5
Labor Force	8,216	8,399	8,142	8,174	8,144
Year-Over-Year Change	180	184	37	19	-72
Year-Over-Year % Change	2.2	2.2	0.5	0.2	-0.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.9	4.3	3.9	4.1	4.9
Year-Over-Year Change	-0.2	0.0	-0.6	0.4	0.9

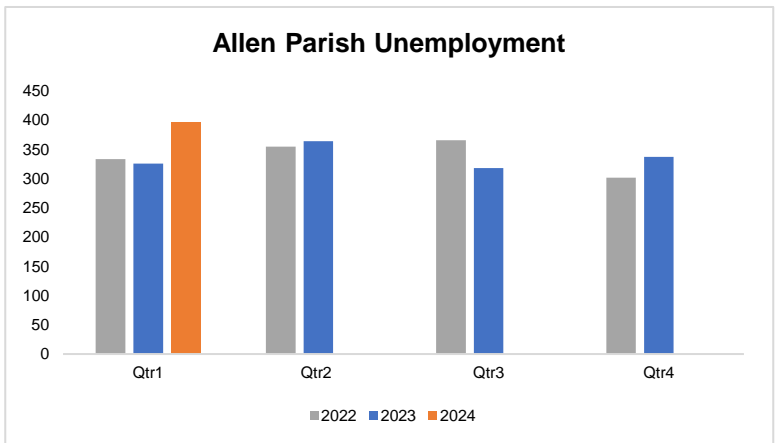
	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Total Job Openings	265	241	235	227	261
Year-Over-Year Change	-31	-62	-67	-16	-4
Year-Over-Year % Change	-10.4	-20.4	-22.3	-6.7	-1.5



In the 1st quarter of 2023, Allen parish saw a drop in the labor force of 72 (-0.9%). This was broken down by an increase in household unemployment of 70 over the year (+21.5%) while the number of employed persons fell 142 (-1.8%) over the year. The unemployment rate rose over the year by ten percentage points to 4.9%.

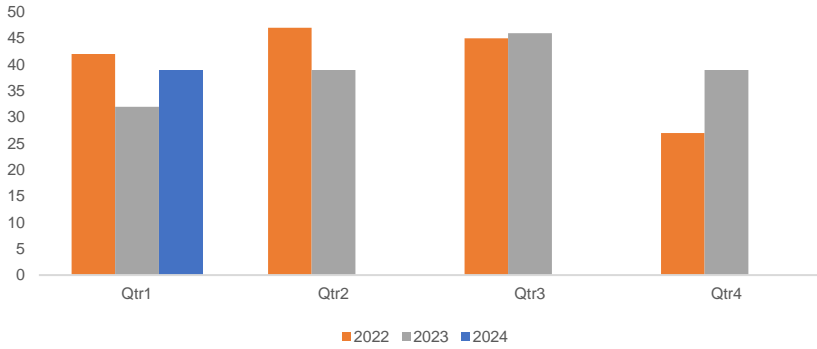
Job openings in the 1st quarter of 204 averaged 261. Openings fell by 4 (-1.5%) over the year.

The graphs show the levels of household employment, unemployment, and the unemployment rate for each quarter compared to the same quarter the previous two years. In the 1st quarter of 2024, Allen has had slightly lower employment compared to previous year levels and higher unemployment levels compared to previous years.



New Business Filings

Allen Parish New Domestic Business Filings



The graph to the left shows the number of new business filings each quarter compared to the same quarter in the previous two years.

The number of new business filings in Allen parish was 39 in the 1st quarter of 2024 which was 7 more than the same quarter in 2023 and 3 less than the same quarter 2 years ago. The YTD total for the 1st quarter of 2024 was 39. This was 7 businesses greater than the 1st quarter of 2023 YTD and 3 businesses fewer than the 1st quarter of 2022 YTD.

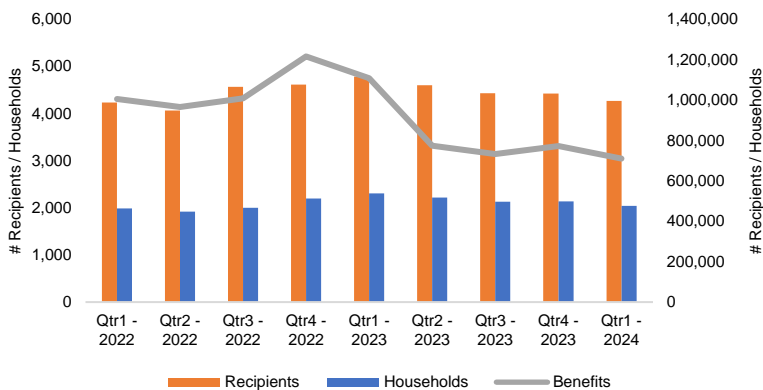
Qtrly New Business Filings	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	42	47	45	27
2023	32	39	46	39
2024	39			

Qtrly New Business Filings YTD	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	42	89	134	161
2023	32	71	117	156
2024	39			

SNAP Benefits

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Recipients	4,782	4,595	4,426	4,423	4,262	-520	-10.9
Households	2,301	2,218	2,130	2,135	2,037	-264	-11.5
Benefits	1,107,740	772,732	732,265	771,253	709,687	-398,053	-35.9

Allen Parish SNAP Data



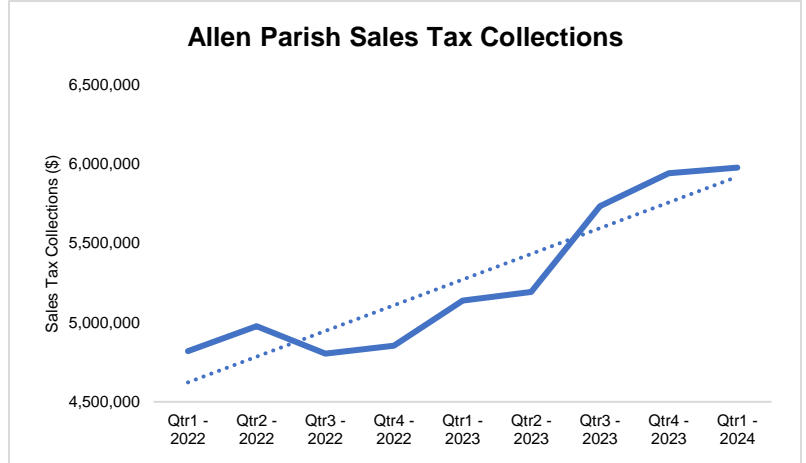
Allen parish had a decrease in SNAP recipients and an increase in households, along with a decrease in benefits over the year. The parish had an average of 4,262 recipients of SNAP benefits in the 1st quarter of 2024. 520 fewer people received benefits compared to the 1st quarter of 2024 for a 10.9% decrease over this time. The total number of third quarter households receiving SNAP was 2,037, which was 264 less than the same quarter in the previous year. This represented an 11.5% decrease. In terms of benefits, the parish received \$709,687 in total during the 1st quarter of 2024, which was a \$398 thousand decrease over-the-year. This was a 35.9% decrease in benefits in the parish. March

marked a large drop in total benefits to bring down the whole of quarter 1 due to emergency benefits expiring and that showed up markedly in the 2nd and 3rd quarters. This lower level should be persistent in future quarters, as it has begun to show in quarter 4 and quarter 1 in 2024.

Tax Collections

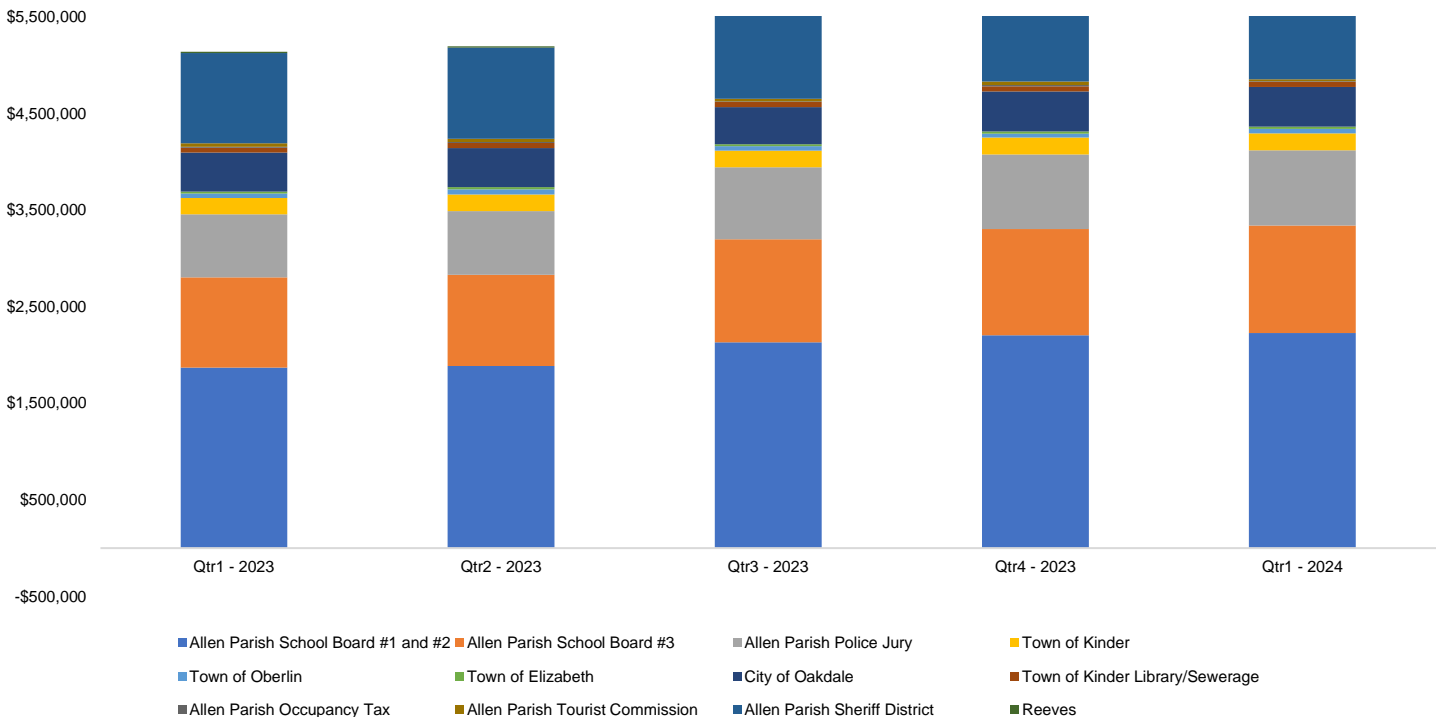
The Drew CBEA has built a history of Allen Parish sales tax collections with the help of the Allen Parish School Board. The numbers show an upward trend throughout the 1st quarter of 2024.

Compared to the 1st quarter of 2023, Allen parish has seen an overall increase in tax collections. Total tax collections increased \$839 thousand for a 16.3% increase. This is mostly likely due to the recent inflation the nation has been experiencing as a recent 1 percentage point increase in the local sales tax rate has been normalized.



Allen Parish Sales Tax Collections by Entity	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2- 2023	Qtr3- 2023	Qtr4- 2023	Qtr1- 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Allen Parish School Board #1 and #2	1,868,524	1,886,324	2,131,197	2,202,262	2,225,820	357,296	19.1
Allen Parish School Board #3	934,164	943,062	1,065,488	1,101,908	1,112,876	178,711	19.1
Allen Parish Police Jury	653,917	660,145	745,843	771,337	779,014	125,097	19.1
Town of Kinder	167,213	172,722	173,283	176,428	175,340	8,127	4.9
Town of Oberlin	46,164	53,249	45,675	38,941	48,068	1,904	4.1
Town of Elizabeth	21,394	23,229	19,459	23,500	21,951	556	2.6
City of Oakdale	402,664	402,859	383,862	414,736	411,305	8,640	2.1
Town of Kinder Library/Sewerage	50,164	51,907	51,985	52,929	52,602	2,438	4.9
Allen Parish Occupancy Tax	11,772	10,988	8,615	11,648	6,732	-5,040	-42.8
Allen Parish Tourist Commission	35,316	32,963	25,844	34,943	20,197	-15,120	-42.8
Allen Parish Sheriff District	934,164	943,062	1,065,488	1,101,907	1,112,876	178,711	19.1
Reeves	14,044	13,309	18,098	13,506	11,944	-2,099	-14.9
Total	5,139,501	5,193,727	5,734,837	5,944,045	5,978,724	839,223	16.3

Allen Parish Tax Collections by Entity



Selected Employment Indicators – Beauregard Parish

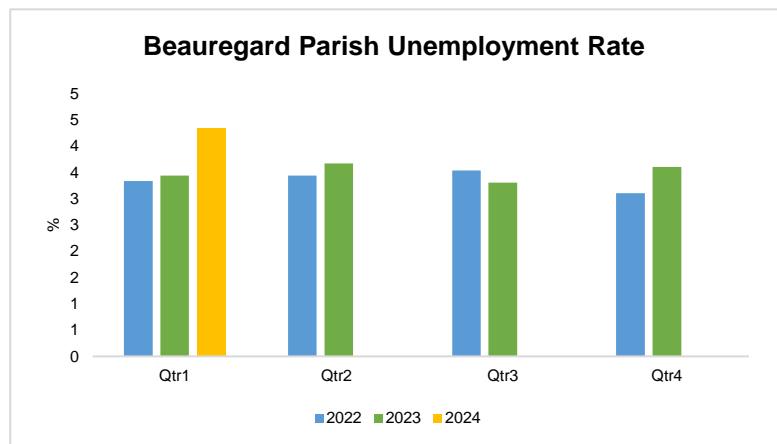
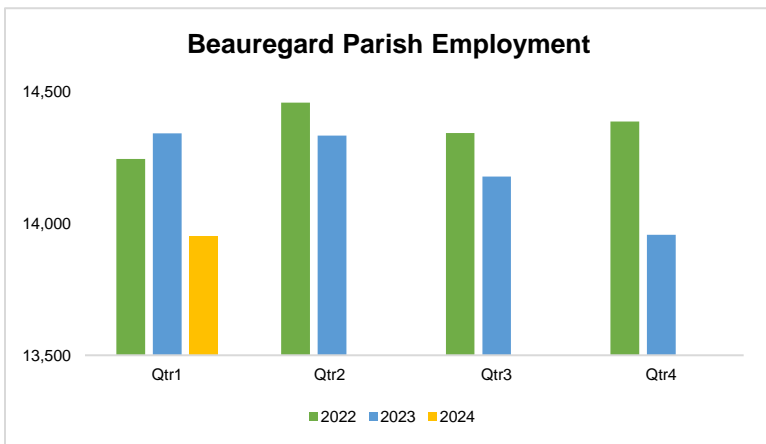
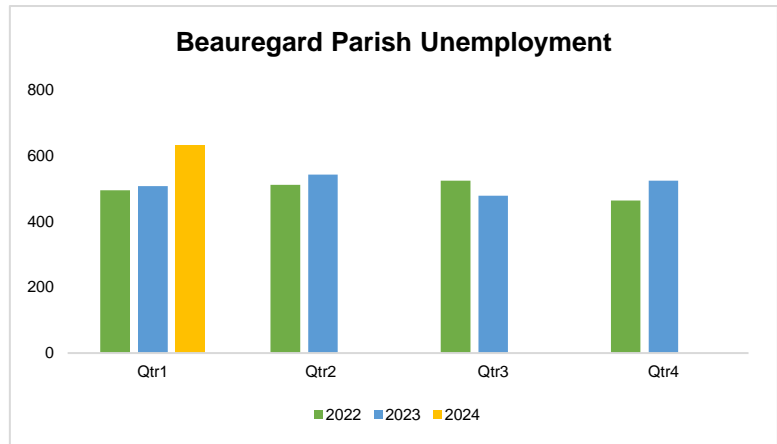
	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Household Employment	14,344	14,336	14,179	13,958	13,954
Year-Over-Year Change	98	-125	-166	-431	-390
Year-Over-Year % Change	0.7	-0.9	-1.2	-3.0	-2.7
Household Unemployment	508	542	479	524	631
Year-Over-Year Change	13	31	-46	60	123
Year-Over-Year % Change	2.6	6.1	-8.8	12.9	24.1
Labor Force	14,852	14,878	14,658	14,482	14,584
Year-Over-Year Change	110	-94	-212	-371	-268
Year-Over-Year % Change	0.7	-0.6	-1.4	-2.5	-1.8
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.6	4.3
Year-Over-Year Change	0.1	0.2	-0.2	0.5	0.9

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Total Job Openings	501	470	397	374	395
Year-Over-Year Change	34	32	-173	-176	-106
Year-Over-Year % Change	7.2	7.3	-30.3	-32.0	-21.1

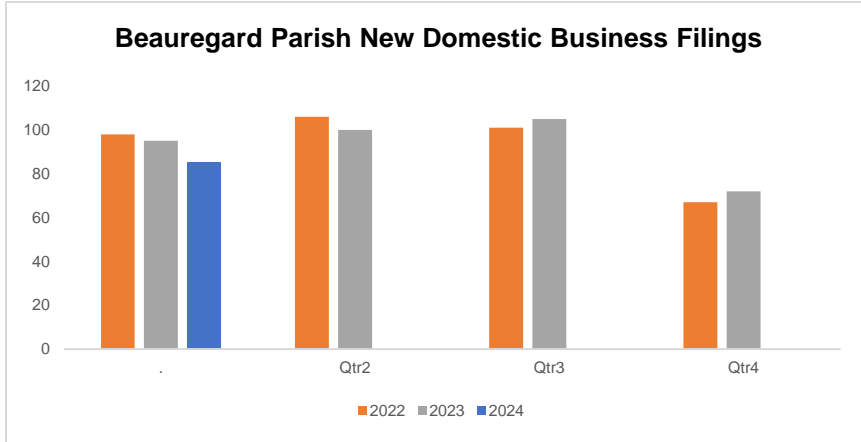
In the 1st quarter of 2024, Beauregard parish saw a drop in household employment of 390 over the year (-2.7%) while the number of unemployed persons rose by 123 (+24.1%) over the year. This led to a decrease of 268 (-1.8%) in the total labor force. The unemployment rate rose by 0.9 percentage points over the year to 4.3%.

Job openings in the 1st quarter averaged 395. Openings fell by 106 (-21.1%) over the year.

The graphs show the levels of household employment, unemployment, and the unemployment rate for each quarter compared to the same quarter the previous two years. In the 1st quarter of 2024, Beauregard has slightly higher unemployment and lower employment figures.



New Business Filings



The graph shows the number of new business filings each quarter compared to the same quarter in the previous two years.

The number of new business filings in Beauregard parish was 85 in the 1st quarter of 2024 which was 10 less than the same quarter in 2023 and 13 less compared to the same quarter 2 years ago. The YTD total for the 1st quarter of 2023 was 85. There were 10 less businesses in the 1st quarter of 2024 than in 2023 YTD and 13 businesses less than the 1st quarter of 2022 YTD.

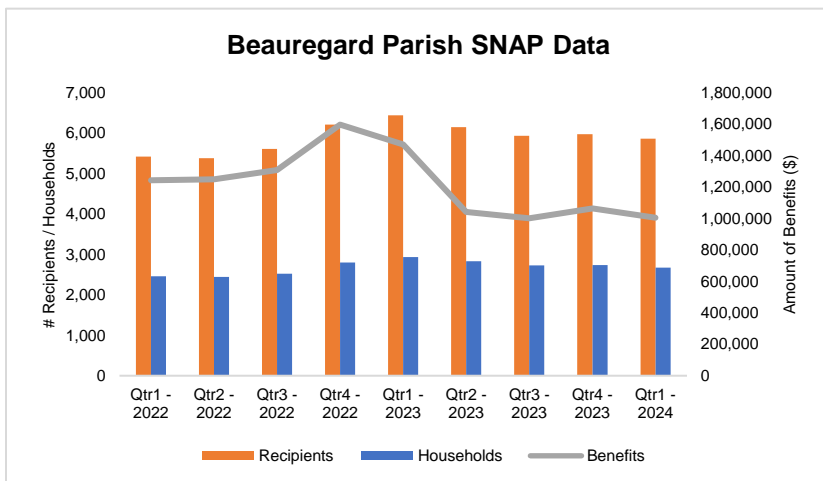
Qtrly New Business Filings	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	98	106	101	67
2023	95	100	105	72
2024	85			

Qtrly New Business Filings YTD	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	98	204	305	372
2023	95	195	300	372
2024	85			

SNAP Benefits

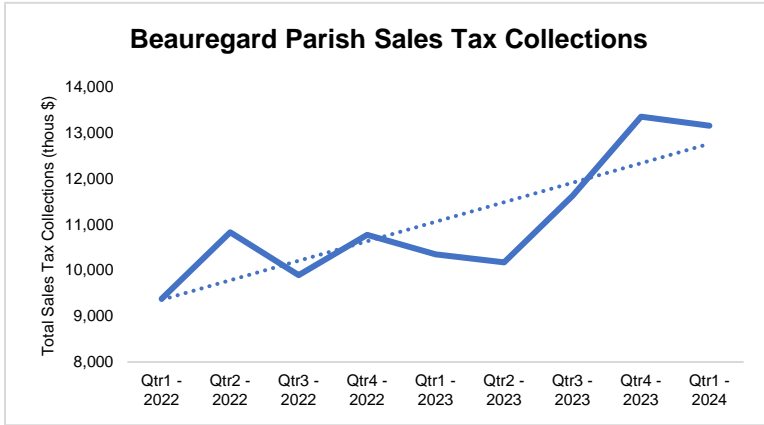
	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Recipients	6,441	6,145	5,935	5,973	5,865	-576	-8.9
Households	2,932	2,829	2,732	2,735	2,675	-257	-8.8
Benefits	1,470,816	1,041,943	1,000,963	1,062,906	1,005,277	-465,539	-31.7

Beauregard parish has experienced decreases in SNAP recipients, households and drops in benefits over the year. The parish had an average of 5,865 recipients of SNAP benefits in the 1st quarter of 2024. 576 less people received benefits compared to the 1st quarter of 2023 for an 8.9% decrease over this time. The total number of households receiving SNAP averaged 2,675, which was 257 less than the same quarter in the previous year. This represented an 8.8% decrease. In terms of benefits, the parish received an average of \$1.005 million in total during the 1st quarter of 2024, which was a \$465.54 thousand decrease over-the-year. This was a 31.7% decrease in benefits in the parish.



Looking at the graph illustrates a slightly increasing trend in benefits, households, and recipients, over the past two years. The later trends seem to show all the variables slightly falling throughout 2023 then raising again towards the end of the year. March marked a large drop in total benefits to bring down the whole of quarter 1 due to emergency benefits expiring, and that will show in future quarters.

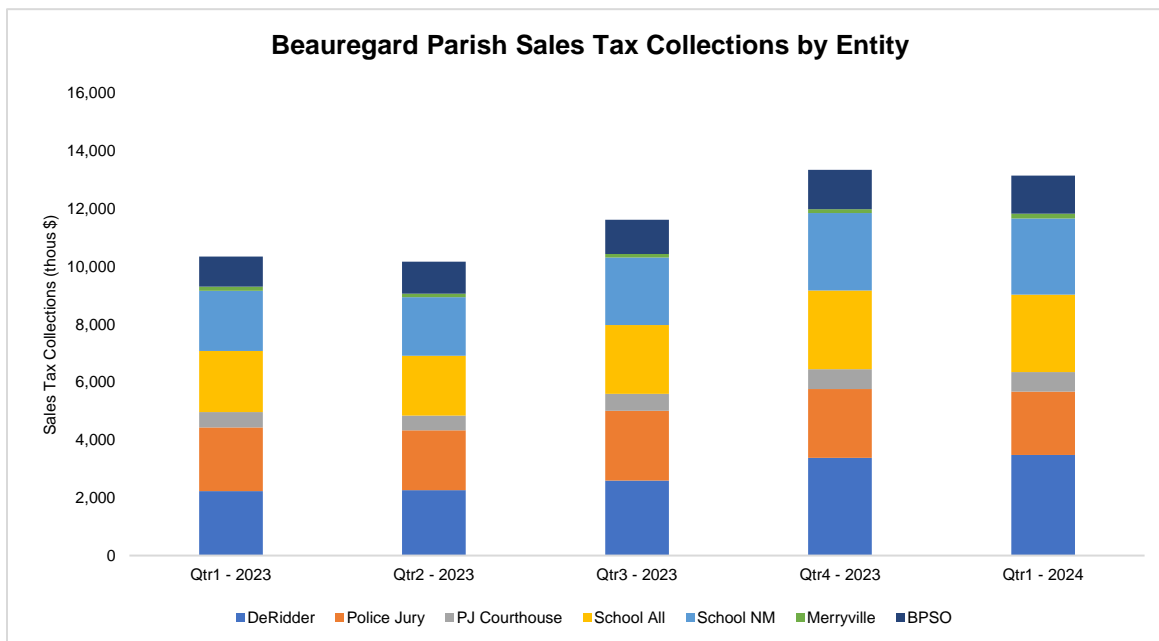
Tax Collections



Beauregard parish has seen an overall decrease in its sales tax collections in the 1st quarter of 2024, compared to the same quarter the previous year. Sales tax collections rose by \$2.8 million over the year for a 27.1% increase. Looking at the entities that receive sales tax distributions shows that DeRidder collects the most revenue, but other areas are close. The DeRidder category saw a notable year-over-year increase of \$1.24 million (+55.7%) over the year. Another large increase came from the PJ Courthouse, with an absolute rise of \$140.5 thousand, or a 26.6% increase. School board revenues rose by roughly \$2.7 million (+26.5%) and

\$2.63 million (+26.5%) for All and NM, respectively. BPSO collections rose by \$280.9 thousand (+26.8%) and Police Jury fell \$1.3 thousand (-0.1%). Merryville tax collections saw a rise in sales taxes of \$164.4 thousand, with a large notable increase in percent change over the year of 26.8%.

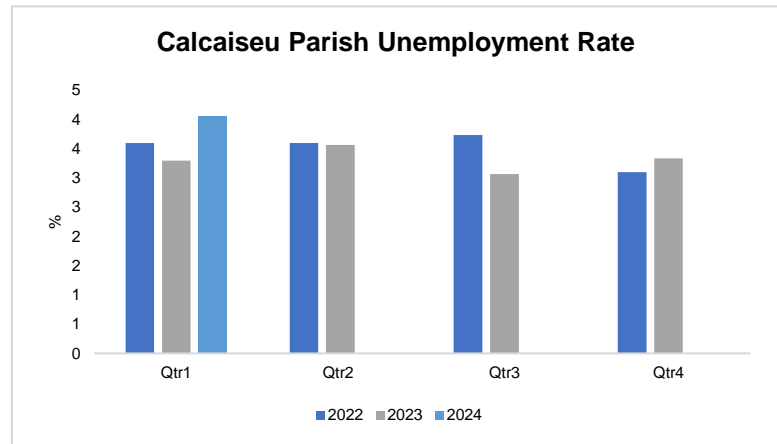
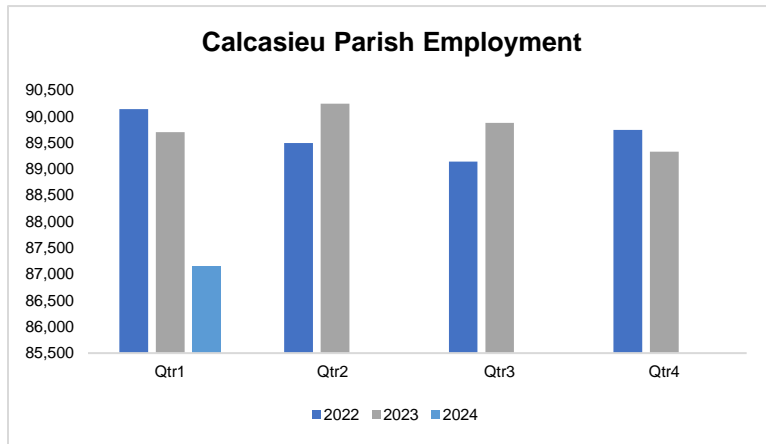
Sales Tax Collections (thous \$)	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
DeRidder	2,234.6	2,267.0	2,599.8	3,382.3	3,478.9	1,244.2	55.7
Police Jury	2,199.2	2,066.2	2,404.3	2,382.7	2,197.8	-1.3	-0.1
PJ Courthouse	528.6	514.8	593.6	679.8	669.1	140.5	26.6
School All	2,122.9	2,065.0	2,378.2	2,724.0	2,685.1	562.1	26.5
School NM	2,075.2	2,025.3	2,341.0	2,682.7	2,629.8	554.6	26.7
Merryville	140.3	124.9	117.2	131.5	164.4	24.1	17.1
BPSO	1,047.4	1,108.7	1,190.2	1,366.3	1,328.3	280.9	26.8
Total	10,348.3	10,171.9	11,624.3	13,349.3	13,153.4	2,805.1	27.1



Selected Employment Indicators – Calcasieu Parish

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Household Employment	89,697	90,242	89,876	89,328	87,152
Year-Over-Year Change	-443	752	736	-416	-2,545
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.5	0.8	0.8	-0.5	-2.8
Household Unemployment	3,049	3,324	2,859	3,110	3,708
Year-Over-Year Change	-335	-20	-582	264	659
Year-Over-Year % Change	-9.9	-0.6	-16.9	9.3	21.6
Labor Force	92,746	93,566	92,735	92,438	90,860
Year-Over-Year Change	-778	732	153	-152	-1,886
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.8	0.8	0.2	-0.2	-2.0
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.3	3.6	3.1	3.3	4.1
Year-Over-Year Change	-0.3	0.0	-0.7	0.2	0.8

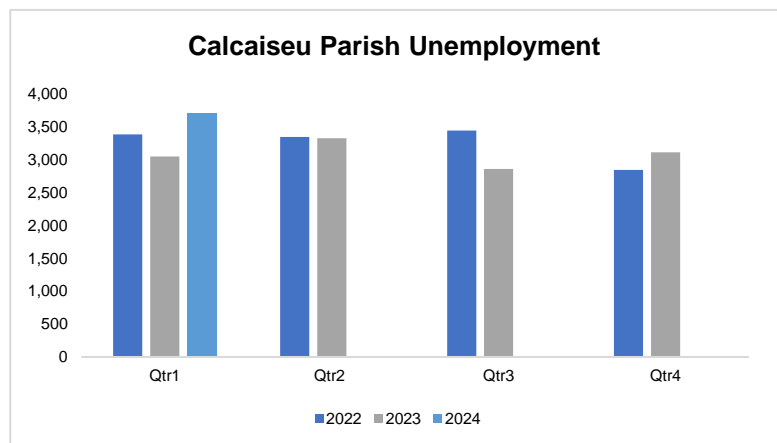
	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Total Job Openings	6,266	5,886	5,071	4,748	4,585
Year-Over-Year Change	-668	-803	-1,995	-1,392	-1,681
Year-Over-Year % Change	-9.6	-12.0	-28.2	-22.7	-26.8



In the 1st quarter of 2024, Calcasieu parish saw a decrease in the labor force of 1,886 (-2%). This was due to a decrease in household employment of 2,545 over the year (-2.8%) while the number of unemployed people rose by 659 (+21.6%). The unemployment rate rose 0.8 percentage points over the year to 4.1%.

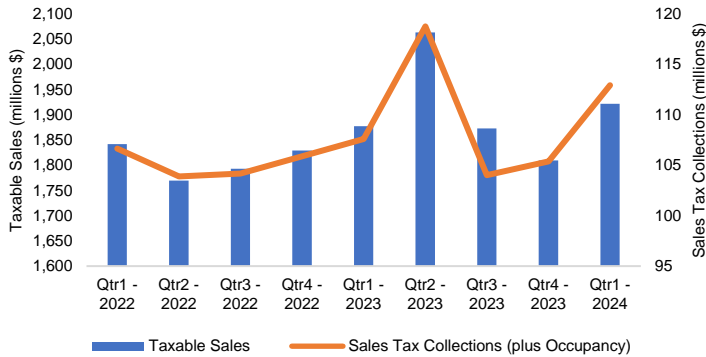
Job openings in the 1st quarter of 2024 averaged 4,585. Openings fell by 1,681 (-26.8%) over the year.

The graphs show the levels of household employment, unemployment, and the unemployment rate for each quarter compared to the same quarter the previous two years. Calcasieu had a much lower employment level in the 1st quarter of 2024 compared to 2023. The unemployment level is higher than the 1st quarter of 2023.

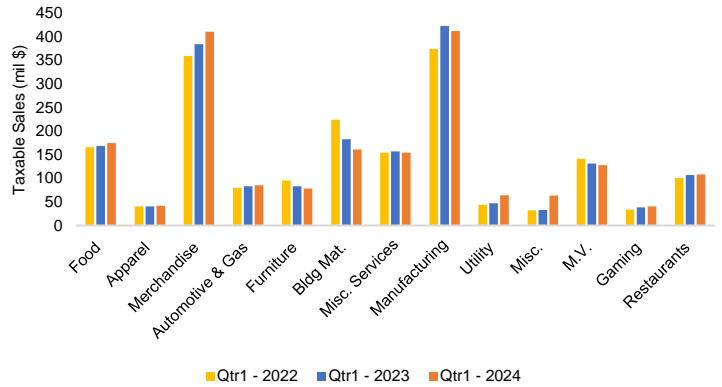


Tax Collections

Calcasieu Parish Taxable Sales and Sales Tax Collections



Calcasieu Parish Taxable Sales - Qtr 1 YTD



Collections (mil \$)	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Food	168.3	168.7	158.6	161.8	174.4	6.1	3.6
Apparel	40.3	35.9	33.2	35.5	41.7	1.5	3.7
Merchandise	384.1	376.6	357.5	370.5	410.5	26.4	6.9
Automotive & Gas	82.8	93.2	97.8	88.6	85.4	2.5	3.0
Furniture	83.1	77.8	71.4	74.0	78.5	-4.6	-5.5
Bldg Mat.	182.8	185.0	198.6	167.0	161.2	-21.6	-11.8
Misc. Services	156.8	307.2	167.3	180.0	154.1	-2.7	-1.7
Manufacturing	422.6	442.1	401.3	376.9	412.1	-10.6	-2.5
Utility	47.4	36.7	36.4	38.3	64.2	16.8	35.5
Misc.	33.1	34.0	41.4	29.1	63.6	30.5	92.3
M.V.	130.9	146.7	150.0	137.0	127.7	-3.2	-2.5
Gaming	38.5	44.8	51.0	44.3	40.1	1.7	4.3
Restaurants	106.4	114.4	108.2	106.4	108.2	1.8	1.6
Total	1,877.1	2,063.2	1,872.7	1,809.4	1,921.8	44.6	2.4

Taxable sales in Calcasieu parish have flattened out after the major upticks following the storms. This flattening has occurred even with inflation.

Collections experienced a smaller uptick in the

1st quarter of 2024 due to a settlement. Looking at the 1st quarter, compared to the same quarter the previous year, sales tax collections, plus occupancy, have fallen by \$900 thousand over the year for a 3.3% increase. General sales taxes rose by \$111.2 million (+5.1%) over the year. Occupancy taxes decreased. These taxes fell by \$1.7 million for a 4.2% decrease. This occurred as total taxable sales in the parish rose \$112.9 million (+4.9%) over the year. Miscellaneous rose the largest in absolute terms and percentage points (+\$30.5 million, +92.3%). Gaming rose in percentage terms (+4.3%) and Utilities rose (+35.5%). Food (+3.6%), Restaurants (+1.6%), Automotive and gas (+3%), Merchandise (+6.9%), Gaming (+4.3%), and Apparel (+3.7%) all had increases. Furniture (-5.5%), Manufacturing (-2.5%), Motor Vehicles (-2.5%) fell along with Building Materials (-11.8%). However, these categories are recovering with much higher levels that were seen during COVID and storm recovery

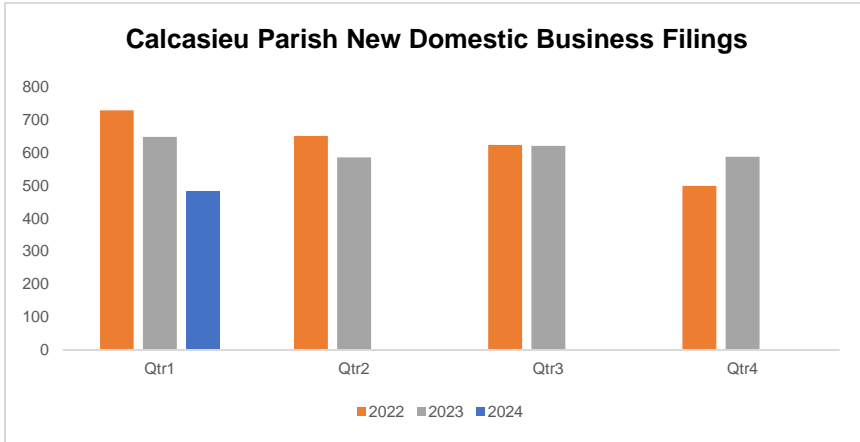
Collections (mil \$)	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
General Sales Tax Collections	105.8	116.6	106.1	103.4	111.2	5.4	5.1
Occupancy Taxes	1.8	1.6	2.1	2.0	1.7	-0.1	-4.2
Sales Tax Collections	107.6	118.1	108.2	105.4	112.9	5.3	4.9

YTD figures show that total taxable sales have risen in the parish by \$44.6 million compared to the 1st quarter of 2023 YTD figure for a 2.4% increase. There was a \$5.3 million increase in sales tax collections (+4.9%) YTD.

Taxable Sales YTD (mil \$)	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
2022	1,841.8	3,717.5	5,510.5	7,339.5
2023	1,877.1	3,940.3	5,813.0	7,622.4
2024	1,921.8			

Sales Tax YTD (mil \$)	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
2022	106.7	210.5	314.7	420.6
2023	107.6	226.3	330.3	435.7
2024	112.9			

New Business Filings



The graph shows the number of new business filings each quarter compared to the same quarter in the previous two years.

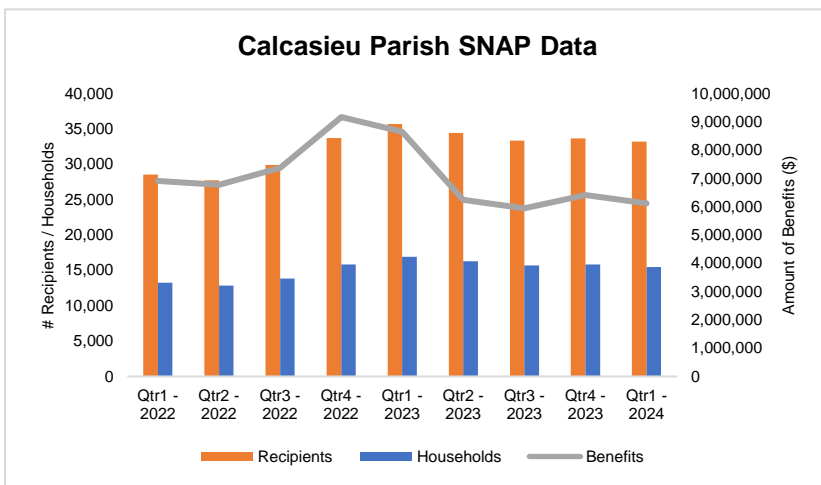
The number of new business filings in Calcasieu parish was 483 in the 1st quarter of 2024 which was 165 less than the same quarter in 2023 and 246 less than the same quarter 2 years ago. The YTD total for the 1st quarter of 2024 was 283. This was 165 businesses less than the 1st quarter of 2023 YTD and 246 businesses less than the 1st quarter of 2022 YTD.

Qtrly New Business Filings	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	729	651	624	499
2023	648	586	621	588
2024	483			

Qtrly New Business Filings YTD	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	729	1,380	2,004	2,503
2023	648	1,234	1,855	2,443
2024	483			

SNAP Benefits

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Recipients	35,679	34,416	33,299	33,649	33,173	-2,506	-7.0
Households	16,905	16,257	15,666	15,803	15,444	-1,461	-8.6
Benefits	8,644,742	6,234,293	5,939,100	6,409,417	6,118,961	-2,525,781	-29.2



Calcasieu parish has had decreases in SNAP recipients, households, and a drop in benefits over the year. The parish had an average of 33,173 recipients of SNAP benefits in the 1st quarter of 2024. This was 2,506 less people receiving benefits compared to the 1st quarter of 2023 for a 7% decrease over this time. The total number of households receiving SNAP averaged 15,444 which was 1,461 fewer than the same quarter in the previous year. This represented an 8.6% decrease. In terms of benefits, the parish received an average of \$6.1 million in total during the 1st quarter of 2024, which was a \$29.2 million decrease over-the-year. This was a 30% decrease in benefits in the parish.

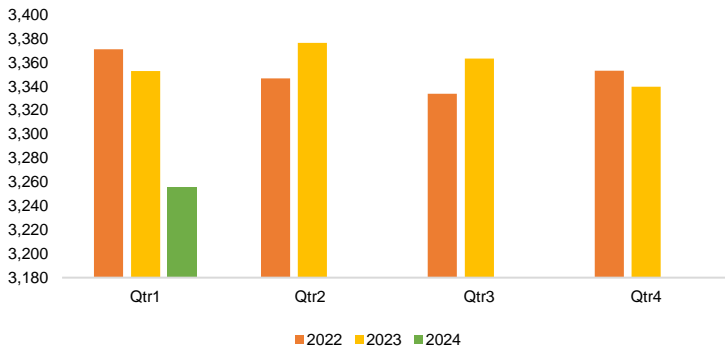
Looking at the graph illustrates a rising trend in benefits from 2021 before peaking in the 4th quarter of 2022. The later trends seem to show all the variables rising indicating more citizens are receiving assistance. March marked a large drop in total benefits to bring down the whole of quarter 1 due to emergency benefits expiring, and that will show in future quarters. Throughout 2023, the variables are showing slight drops and a subsequent upward shift in Q4 2023 and decreasing afterwards.

Selected Employment Indicators – Cameron Parish

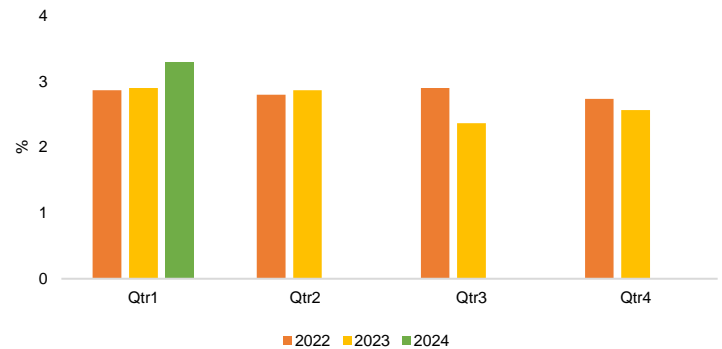
	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Household Employment	3,353	3,376	3,363	3,340	3,256
Year-Over-Year Change	-18	30	30	-13	-97
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.5	0.9	0.9	-0.4	-2.9
Household Unemployment	100	100	81	88	111
Year-Over-Year Change	2	3	-19	-6	11
Year-Over-Year % Change	1.7	3.4	-18.9	-6.1	10.6
Labor Force	3,453	3,477	3,445	3,427	3,367
Year-Over-Year Change	-17	33	11	-19	-86
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.5	1.0	0.3	-0.6	-2.5
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.6	3.3
Year-Over-Year Change	0.0	0.1	-0.5	-0.2	0.4

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Total Job Openings	71	105	177	191	236
Year-Over-Year Change	-22	38	100	127	165
Year-Over-Year % Change	-23.9	55.7	128.9	200.0	231.9

Cameron Parish Employment



Cameron Parish Unemployment Rate

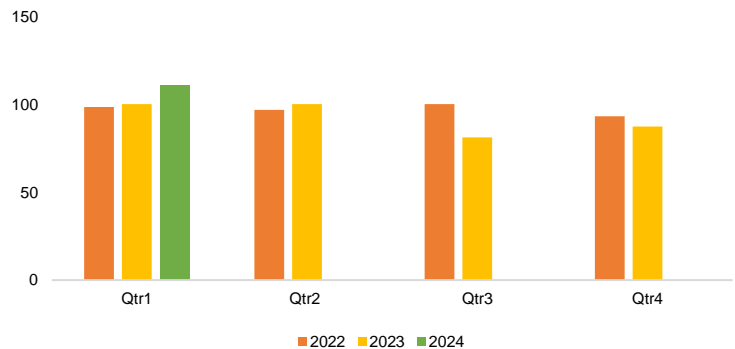


In the 1st quarter of 2024, Cameron parish had a decrease in household employment of 97 over the year (-2.9%) while the number of unemployed persons rose by 11 (+10.6%). This meant a decrease of 86 (-2.5%) in the total labor force. The unemployment rate rose 0.4 percentage points over the year to 3.3%.

Job openings in the 1st quarter of 2024 averaged 236. Openings rose by 165 (+231.9%) over the year.

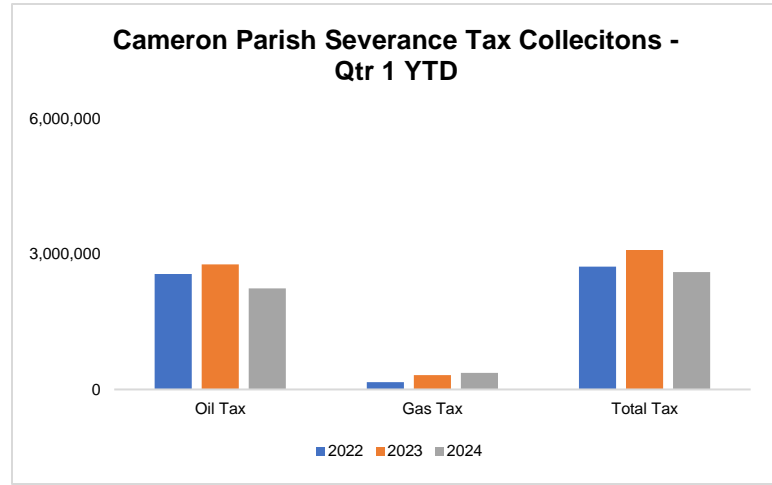
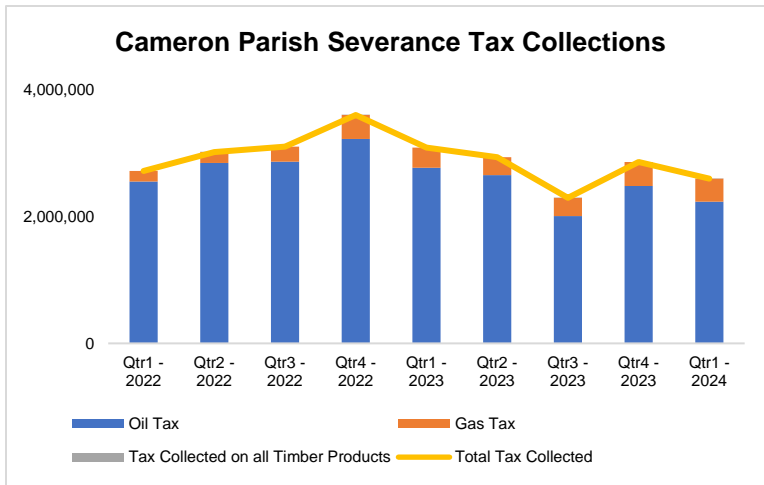
Cameron Parish had a lower employment level in the 1st quarter of 2024 compared to the same quarter the previous year while the unemployment measures turned higher. The benchmark revisions show that Cameron Parish has had falling labor force over the year.

Cameron Parish Unemployment



Tax Collections

Cameron parish collects no local sales tax, so it is not possible to show the monthly or quarterly trends in those tax collections in the parish. However, Cameron is the parish in SWLA that is generally responsible for the highest amount of state severance tax collections. To give some view into the severance tax collections in the parish, below are figures and data relating to the recent severance tax collections by category for Cameron.



The graph on the above left shows the total severance tax collections from each source with the line representing total collections. The graph on the upper right shows the latest 1st quarter YTD figures for each severance tax type (as well as total) over the past three years. Total severance tax collections have been slowly falling since the end of 2022.

Severance Tax Collections	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Oil Tax	2,769,987	2,657,018	2,009,809	2,482,637	2,236,829	-533,159	-19.2
Gas Tax	320,832	282,844	287,780	378,931	364,202	43,370	13.5
Tax Collected on all Timber Products	0	0	38	0	14	14	NA
Total Tax Collected	3,090,819	2,939,862	2,297,628	2,861,568	2,601,045	-489,775	-15.8

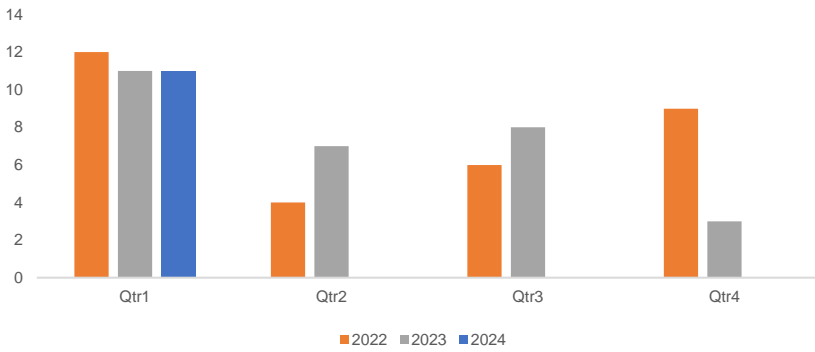
Total Severance Tax Collections (YTD)	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	2,720,428	5,738,572	8,845,014	12,450,008
2023	3,090,819	6,030,682	8,328,309	11,189,877
2024	2,601,045			

The largest amount of severance tax collections from Cameron are taxes on oil. Oil tax collections in the 1st quarter of 2024 fell by \$533.2 thousand compared to the same quarter the previous year. This represented a 19.2% decrease as oil prices have recently decreased and production picked up from the pandemic. In terms of gas collections, those rose \$43.4 thousand over that period for a 13.5% increase. Timber product collections were 14 in the 1st quarter. The 1st quarter of 2024 saw some increases in gas severance taxes collected while the biggest component continued its declines.

The YTD figures show in 2024 there was a decline in 1st quarter total severance taxes collected compared to the same quarter in the previous year. In the 1st quarter 2024 YTD, severance taxes fell \$489.8 thousand for a decrease of 15.8%.

New Business Filings

Cameron Parish New Domestic Business Filings



The graph shows the amount of new business filings each quarter compared to the same quarter in the previous two years.

The number of new business filings in Cameron parish was 11 in the 1st quarter of 2024 which was identical to the same quarter in 2023 and 1 less compared to the same quarter 2 years ago. The YTD total for the 1st quarter of 2024 was 11. This was the same number businesses as the 1st quarter of 2023 YTD and 1 business less than the 1st quarter of 2022 YTD.

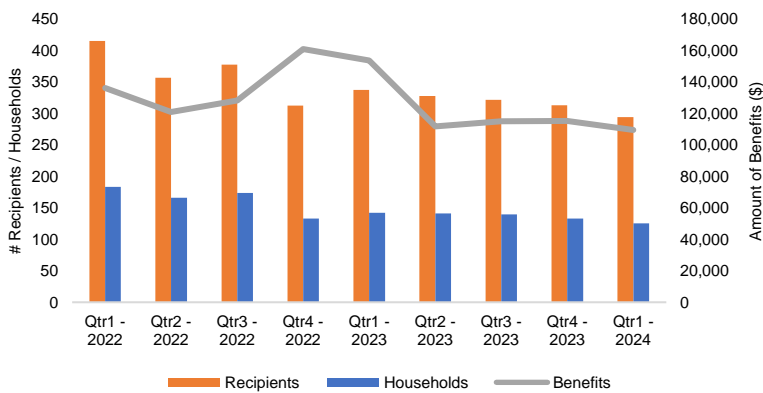
Qtrly New Business Filings	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	12	4	6	9
2023	11	7	8	3
2024	11			

Qtrly New Business Filings YTD	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	12	16	22	31
2023	11	18	26	29
2024	11			

SNAP Benefits

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Recipients	338	328	322	313	294	-43	-12.8
Households	142	141	140	133	125	-17	-11.9
Benefits	153,850	111,832	115,091	115,340	109,559	-44,291	-28.8

Cameron Parish SNAP Data



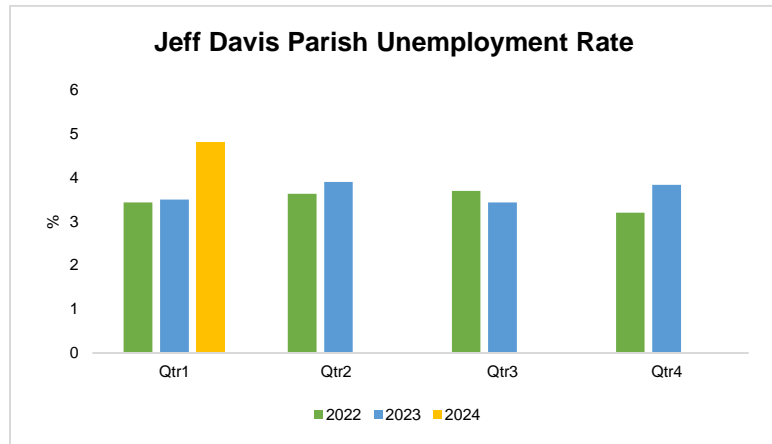
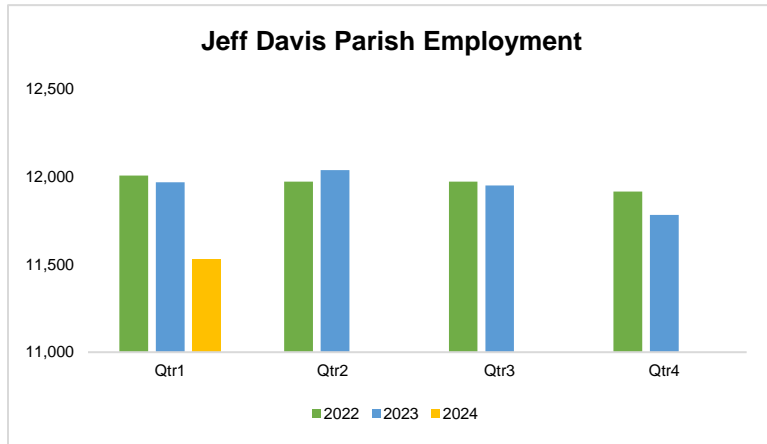
Cameron parish has had drops in SNAP recipients and households, and benefits over the year. The parish had an average of 294 recipients of SNAP benefits in the 1st quarter of 2024. This was 43 less than the amount of people receiving benefits in the 1st quarter of 2023 for a 12.8% decrease over this time. The total number of households receiving SNAP averaged 125, which was 17 fewer than the 1st quarter of 2023. This represented an 11.9% decrease. The parish received an average of \$109.5 thousand in total during the 1st quarter of 2024, which was a \$44.3 thousand decrease over-the-year. This was a 28.8% decrease in benefits in the

parish. Looking at the graph illustrates recipients, households, and benefits falling throughout end of 2022 and 2023. Part of this falling participation is most likely due to population loss from the storms. Benefits have risen recently due to adjustments in the amounts, but the overall trends are declines in from 2021 until the recent spike. March marked a large drop in total benefits to bring down the whole of quarter 1 due to emergency benefits expiring, and that will show in future quarters.

Selected Employment Indicators – Jefferson Davis Parish

	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Household Employment	11,968	12,038	11,950	11,783	11,528
Year-Over-Year Change	-39	65	-22	-133	-440
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.3	0.5	-0.2	-1.1	-3.7
Household Unemployment	434	490	424	467	585
Year-Over-Year Change	5	41	-34	72	151
Year-Over-Year % Change	1.2	9.2	-7.4	18.2	34.8
Labor Force	12,402	12,528	12,374	12,251	12,113
Year-Over-Year Change	-34	106	-56	-61	-289
Year-Over-Year % Change	-0.3	0.9	-0.5	-0.5	-2.3
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.5	3.9	3.4	3.8	4.8
Year-Over-Year Change	0.1	0.3	-0.3	0.6	1.3

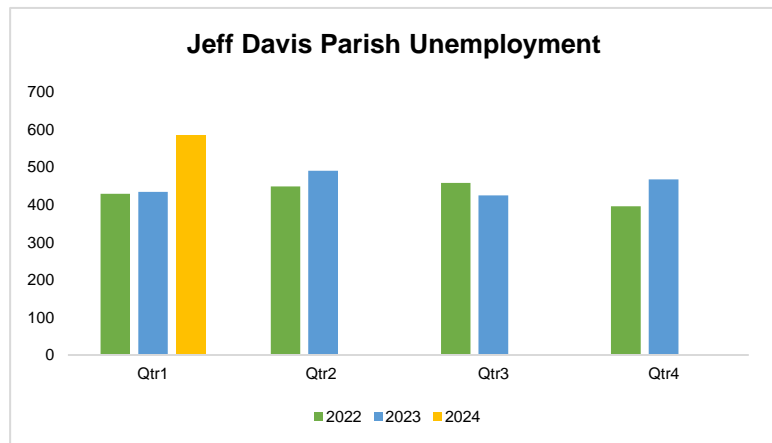
	Qtr1 - 2023	Qtr2 - 2023	Qtr3 - 2023	Qtr4 - 2023	Qtr1 - 2024
Total Job Openings	532	500	412	461	453
Year-Over-Year Change	146	115	48	82	-80
Year-Over-Year % Change	37.8	29.9	13.1	21.5	-15.0



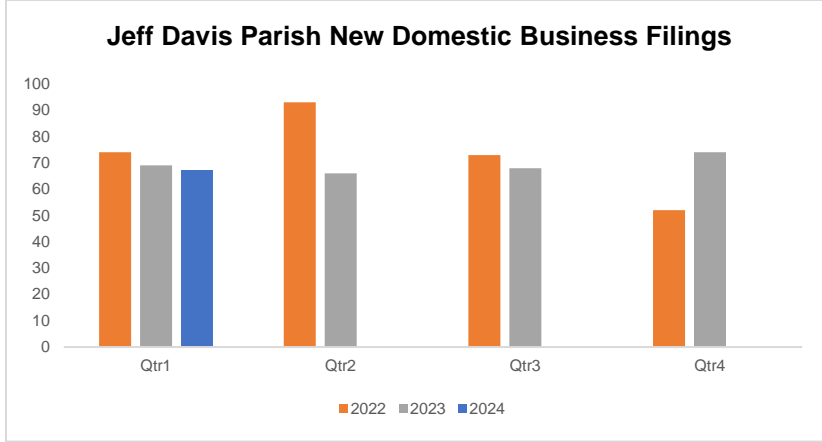
In the 1st quarter of 2024, Jefferson Davis parish saw a decrease of 289 (-2.5%) in the total labor force. This was broken down by a decrease in household employment of 440 over the year (-3.7%) while the number of unemployed persons rose by 151 (+34.8%). The unemployment rate rose 1.3 percentage points over the year to 4.8%.

Job openings in the 1st quarter of 2024 averaged 453. Openings fell by 80 (-15%) over the year.

The graphs show the levels of household employment, unemployment, and the unemployment rate for each quarter compared to the same quarter the previous two years. Jeff Davis parish had lower figures for employment in the 1st quarter of 2024 compared to 2023, with higher unemployment figures.



New Business Filings



The graph shows the amount of new business filings each quarter compared to the same quarter in the previous two years.

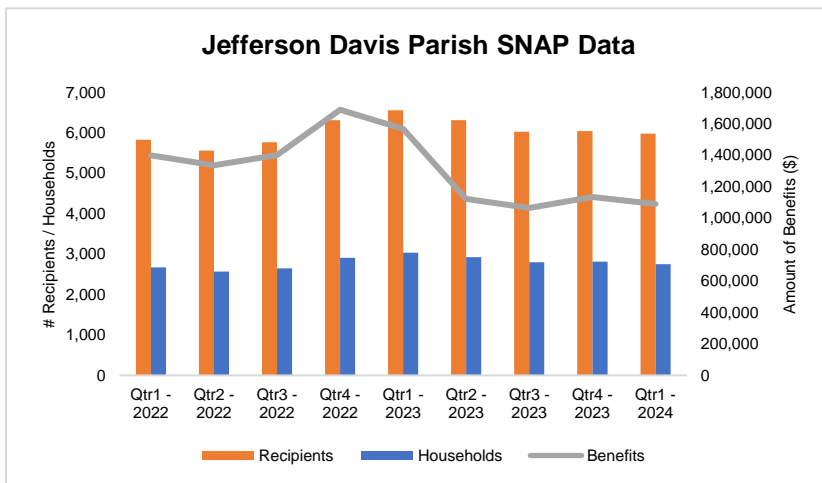
The number of new business filings in Jefferson Davis parish was 67 in the 1st quarter of 2024 which was 2 fewer than the same quarter in 2023 and 7 fewer compared to the same quarter 2 years ago. The YTD total for the 1st quarter of 2024 was 67. This was 2 businesses less than the 1st quarter of 2023 YTD and 7 businesses less than the 1st quarter of 2022 YTD.

Qtrly New Business Filings	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	74	93	73	52
2023	69	66	68	74
2024	67			

Qtrly New Business Filings YTD	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
2022	74	167	240	292
2023	69	135	203	277
2024	67			

SNAP Benefits

	Qtr1- 2023	Qtr2- 2023	Qtr3- 2023	Qtr4- 2023	Qtr1- 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Recipients	6,556	6,309	6,027	6,044	5,980	-576	-8.8
Households	3,032	2,921	2,800	2,816	2,754	-278	-9.2
Benefits	1,567,634	1,121,286	1,065,011	1,133,535	1,089,672	-477,962	-30.5

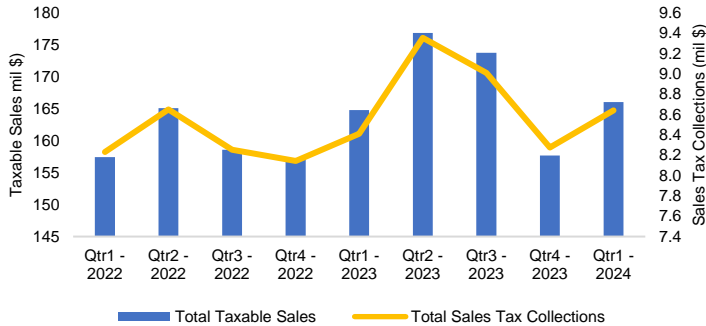


Jefferson Davis parish has had decreases in SNAP recipients, households, and drops in benefits over the year. The parish had an average of 5,980 recipients of SNAP benefits in the 1st quarter of 2024. This was 576 less people receiving benefits compared to the 1st quarter of 2023 for an 8.8% decrease over this time. The total number of households receiving SNAP averaged 2,754, which was 278 less than the same quarter in the previous year. This represented a 9.2% decrease. In terms of benefits, the parish received \$1.09 million in total during the 1st quarter of 2024, which was a \$477.9 thousand decrease over-the-year. This was a 30.5% decrease in benefits in the parish.

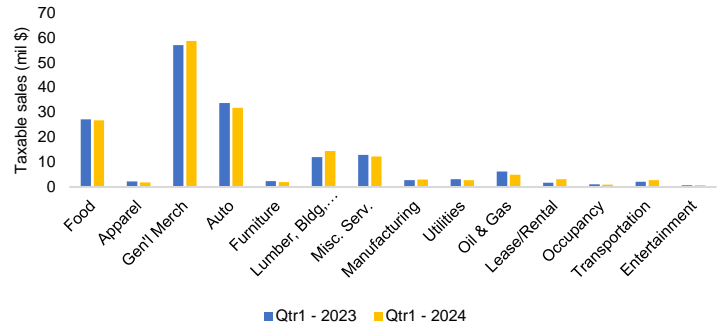
Looking at the graph illustrates an overall flat trend in benefits since the second quarter of 2021. The number of households and recipients receiving benefits has been flat before increasing in the final two quarters of 2022. March marked a large drop in total benefits to bring down the whole of quarter 1 due to emergency benefits expiring, and that will show in future quarters. The variables have been slightly falling throughout 2023 and into the start of 2024.

Tax Collections

Jefferson Davis Parish Taxable Sales and Sales Tax Collections



Jeff Davis Parish Taxable Sales - 1st Quarter YTD



Taxable Sales (mil \$)	Qtr1- 2023	Qtr2- 2023	Qtr3- 2023	Qtr4- 2023	Qtr1- 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Food	27.1	29.4	27.8	26.4	26.8	-0.3	-1.1
Apparel	2.2	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.9	-0.3	-12.5
Gen'l Merch	56.9	56.3	54.1	53.8	58.7	1.7	3.0
Auto	33.7	42.5	41.0	33.0	31.8	-2.0	-5.8
Furniture	2.4	2.0	2.0	1.6	2.0	-0.4	-14.9
Lumber, Bldg, Contractors	11.9	17.6	16.8	11.6	14.5	2.5	21.2
Misc. Serv.	12.9	12.9	11.8	11.5	12.3	-0.7	-5.1
Manufacturing	2.8	1.9	2.3	3.1	3.0	0.3	10.1
Utilities	3.1	3.1	2.8	3.1	2.8	-0.3	-10.3
Oil & Gas	6.2	3.3	4.7	4.3	4.9	-1.3	-20.7
Lease/Rental	1.7	2.0	2.5	2.7	3.1	1.4	83.2
Occupancy	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9	-0.1	-12.1
Transportation	2.1	2.3	4.8	2.8	2.7	0.6	27.0
Entertainment	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.0	4.1
Total	164.8	176.9	173.8	157.7	166.1	1.2	0.8

Tax Collections (mil \$)	Qtr1- 2023	Qtr2- 2023	Qtr3- 2023	Qtr4- 2023	Qtr1- 2024	YoY Change	YoY % Change
Total Sales Tax Collections	8.4	9.4	9.0	8.3	8.6	0.2	2.7

Taxable Sales YTD (mil \$)	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
2022	157.4	322.5	481.1	638.4
2023	164.8	341.7	515.5	673.1
2024	166.1			

Sales Tax YTD (mil \$)	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
2022	8.2	16.9	25.1	33.3
2023	8.4	17.8	26.8	35.1
2024	8.6			

Jefferson Davis Parish saw a 2.7% increase in its sales tax collections in the 1st quarter of 2024, compared to the same quarter the previous year. Sales tax collections have risen by approximately \$166 thousand over the year for a 1.2% increase. This occurred as taxable sales in the parish rose by \$1.2 million (+0.8%) over the year. The largest percentage increase occurred in Lease/Rental (+1.4 million, +83.2%), followed by Transportation (+\$0.6 million, +27%). Lumber experienced an increase in taxable sales (+\$2.5 million, +21.2%). General Merchandise (+\$1.7 million, +3%) also had increases in sales. Additional drops occurred in Furniture (-\$0.4 million, -14.9%), Apparel (-\$0.3 million, -12.5%), Utilities (-\$0.3 million, -10.3%), and Occupancy (-\$0.1 million, -12.1%). The largest absolute drop occurred in Auto (-\$2 million, -5.8%). Entertainment (+\$0.0 million, -1%) had no monetary change, but rose by 4.1% from 2023. Food was the other category that had a drop in sales over the year (-\$0.9 million, -3.2%).

The 1st quarter of 2024 YTD figures show that total taxable sales have increased in the parish by \$1.2 million compared to the same quarter in 2023 for a 0.8% increase. There was a \$0.2 million decrease in 2024 YTD sales tax collections (+2.7%).

Last week, former Director of the Drew CBEA, Dr. Michael Kurth, suddenly passed away. Mike hired me years ago as a new Ph.D. out of LSU. I had been working at a small college in Wisconsin and really wanted to get back to Louisiana. I had heard of a job opening at McNeese and emailed as soon as I could. Mike responded and I was on the way to Lake Charles for the interview. Mike met me at O'Charley's (the first of many lunch meetings there) and showed me around the city and campus. McNeese was in the NIT tournament that year and he got me tickets to my first Cowboy basketball game at the Burton Coliseum. For a basketball fan, visiting campus and then attending a national tournament game was a pretty good selling point to me. I happily accepted the job and got to work alongside Mike for two years. I learned so much about the local economy and the science of economics in general from him in such a short time. After I left to work for the state, we kept in touch and when I returned to McNeese, we were able to work together again. I am so thankful for being able to call him a co-worker and friend. There's so much more I could write about Mike, but I think his [obituary](#) sums it up perfectly.

Michael Kurth, beloved husband, father, grandfather, professor, writer, economist, community organizer, and raconteur, passed away on April 30, 2024. He was born in Oak Park, IL on April 2nd, 1946 and spent his formative years in Michigan.

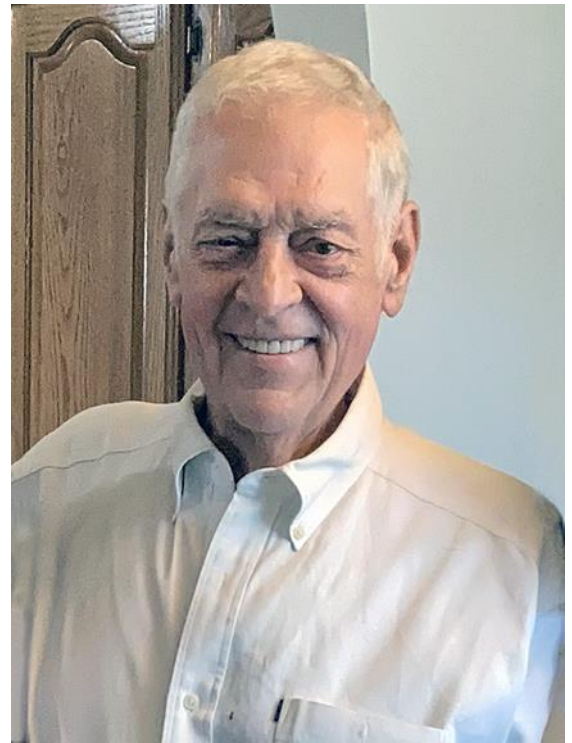
Mike, as most people knew him, studied Russian at the Defense Language Institute in 1965, and the School for International Service at American University in 1968, using his skills as a Russian linguist to monitor Soviet radio transmissions for the US Army. He received his BA in 1977 from Monterey Institute for International Studies, majoring in International Economics, with minors in Russian and German, and graduating as salutatorian. He went on to receive his M.S. and Ph.D. in Economics from Virginia Tech, where he studied public finance and public choice under Nobel Laureate James Buchanan.

Mike taught approximately 12,000 students in his 35 years as a professor—he adored teaching and stayed in touch with many students for years after graduation, offering deeply appreciated guidance and support. He served for eight years as Economics Department Head at McNeese State University, and Directed the H.C. Drew Center for Business and Economic Analysis, and The Pavers Guild, a project for student entrepreneurs.

With his own entrepreneurial spirit, Mike owned and operated Magnolia Plaza as President of CKDA Properties, and served as Principal of Kurth & Associates, offering economic consulting and analysis. As a consultant, Mike facilitated over 50 economic impact and benefit/cost studies, was an expert witness in approximately 200 legal cases, and authored “The Rita Report” for the Louisiana Recovery Authority, and indigent defense study for the American Bar Association, and a healthcare reform plan for Louisiana.

Mike was a prolific writer—he published 14 peer reviewed journal publications, receiving the Duncan Black Award for the best paper published in Public Choice in 1986. He penned upwards of 400 editorials, op-ed pieces and columns, including his beloved and often hilarious column at Lagniappe (a final one will appear posthumously.)

Mike was a deeply engaged and generous community member. He served on the Board of Trustees of Lake Charles Charter Academy, and was elected to the Calcasieu Parish Executive Committee of the Republican Party and the Republican State Central Committee, where he received 72% of the vote. He gave his expertise to the United Way Finance Committee from 2012-2016. and was on the Phillips 66 (formerly Conoco) Citizen Advisory Panel for 30 years. He also acted as President of the Board of Directors for Rebuilding Together – Calcasieu,



served on two of Governor Jindal's transition teams (*Hurricane Recovery and Fiscal Reform*) in 2008 and was on the Board of Directors at ACTS Community Theater from 1990-1998 and 2007-2009. He helped plan events for Republican Rally-by-the-Lake with Mark Geist. Constitution Day with Judge Jenine Pirro, Presidents' Day with Allen West, Presidents' Day with Gov. Mike Huckabee, the Homes for the Holidays Christmas fundraiser for Rebuilding Together-Calcasieu, 2011, 2012 & 2013, Krewe du Grande Bois Mardi Gras Ball, 2012 & 2014, and Republican Roundtable monthly forums from 2012-2016. He offered around 150 presentations to civic clubs and organizations, and gave approximately 500 interviews in newspapers, and on television and radio. He and Cathy served as King and Queen of their Mardi Gras Krewe, Krewe du Grande Bois in 2020.

Anyone who knew Mike knew if you sat down for a conversation with him, you might not get up for hours—he loved to wax rhapsodic about everything from economics to how airplanes fly. He loved to cook for his family, and opened his doors to anyone who needed help, inviting kids in rough situations to stay with the family as long as they needed.

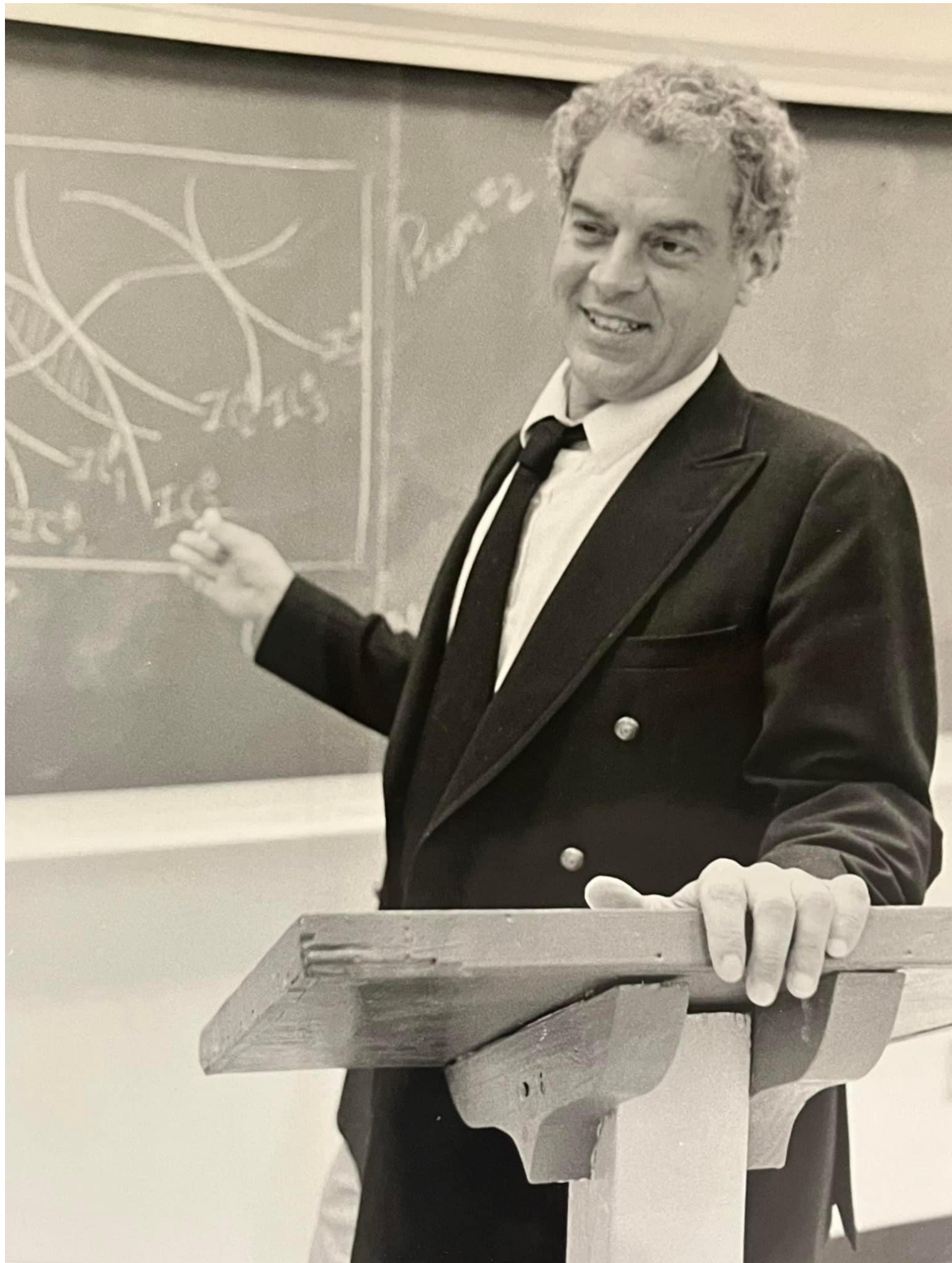
He is survived by his wife Cathy Kurth, his children Mette (Jeff) Kurth Frotton, Michael (Gayle) Kurth Brandeis, Lexi (Justin) Kurth Fontenot, Ryan Kurth, Traci (Jude) Kurth Frederick, and Billy Kurth, and his grandchildren Justin and Spencer Underwood, Ava, Aubrey, Parker, and Kobe Frederick, Asher Brandeis, and Caden, Collin, Rhett, Jolie, JJ, and Rhys Fontenot. He will be missed forever.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests contributions be made to the McNeese Foundation to the Dr. Michael M. Kurth Scholarship or Dr. Michael Kurth Scholarship in Finance. Donations may be made online at <https://mcneesefoundation.org> or checks may be made payable to "McNeese Foundation" and mailed to Box 91989, Lake Charles, LA 70609

Dr. Michael M. Kurth Scholarship – designated for sophomores, juniors, seniors or graduate students in the College of Science, Engineering and Mathematics.

Dr. Michael Kurth Scholarship in Finance – designated for juniors or seniors majoring in Finance.

Mike will be missed by so many as he leaves behind a legacy of learning, family, and generosity. A life well-lived.



The following sources were utilized for each of the graphs and tables shown in the report. Data transformations are described in the footnotes, and it should be noted some of the totals in the report may be off due to rounding. The monthly data used for the report, and more not shown, is available at our website, mcneesedrewecon.org/.

1. Lake Charles MSA Employment Indicators – BLS CES/SAE and LAUS^a

Total nonfarm employment, average weekly hours, and average weekly earnings statistics for the area come from the BLS State and Metro Area Employment, Hours, & Earnings (SAE) measures which are derived from the Current Employment Statistics (CES). The household employment measures for the MSA (and parishes) come from the BLS Local Area Employment Statistics (LAUS). The CES/SAE measures are derived from a survey of businesses while LAUS figures come from a survey of households that become part of a BLS formula/model to derive the household employment statistics. For more information, please contact the Drew CBEA.

2. Quarterly Housing Price Indexes - Federal Housing Finance Agency (rebased to have the first quarter of 2011 equal 100)

3. Lake Charles MSA Building Permits – Census Building Permits Survey (BPS)^b

Note: While the building permit YTD figures in this report are calculated by summing up the monthly values, they may not match the YTD values given from pulling data directly from the Census BPS. The YTD monthly values at the BPS are changed due to late and missed filings. However, the monthly values of permits and valuations, which this report uses, are not changed at the Census BPS. These differences appear to be fairly minor, however. For more information, please contact the Drew CBEA.

4. Lake Charles Regional Airport Statistics – Bureau of Transportation Statistics, TranStats^b

5. Lake Charles Port Statistics – Census USA Trade Online^b

6. Lake Charles Gaming Statistics – Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections, Louisiana Gaming Control Board^b

7. Parish Employment Indicators – BLS LAUS^a

The labor force is the sum of household employment and household unemployment.

8. Parish Job Openings – Louisiana Workforce Commission^a

9. New Business Filings – Louisiana Secretary of State^b

10. Parish SNAP Benefits – Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services^a

11. Allen Parish Tax Collections – Allen Parish School Board^b

12. Beauregard Parish Tax Collections – Beauregard Parish Sheriff's Office^b

13. Calcasieu Parish Tax Collections – Calcasieu Parish School Board^b

14. Cameron Parish Severance Tax Collections – Louisiana Department of Revenue^b

15. Jefferson Davis Parish Tax Collections – Jefferson Davis Parish School Board^b

16. Unemployment Insurance Claims – Louisiana Workforce Commission

a. Quarterly values are obtained from averaging the monthly values

b. Quarterly values are obtained from summing the monthly values