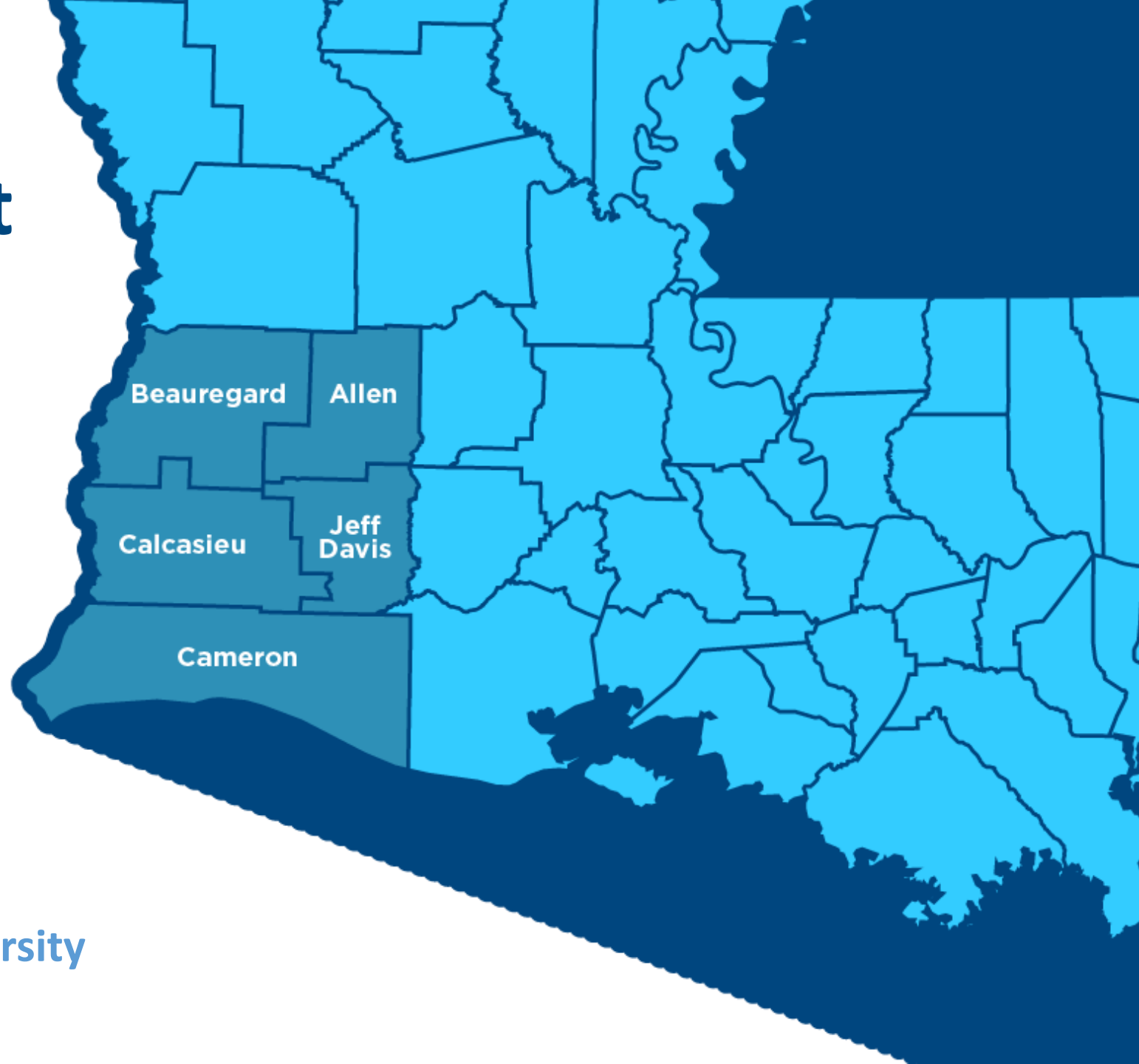


State of Southwest Louisiana | 2026

Economic Overview

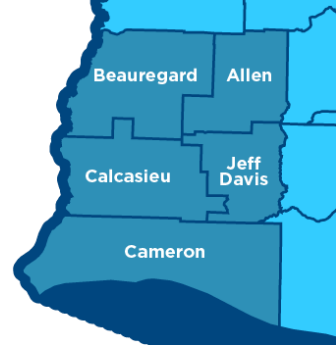
Dr. Daniel Groft

Economist | McNeese State University



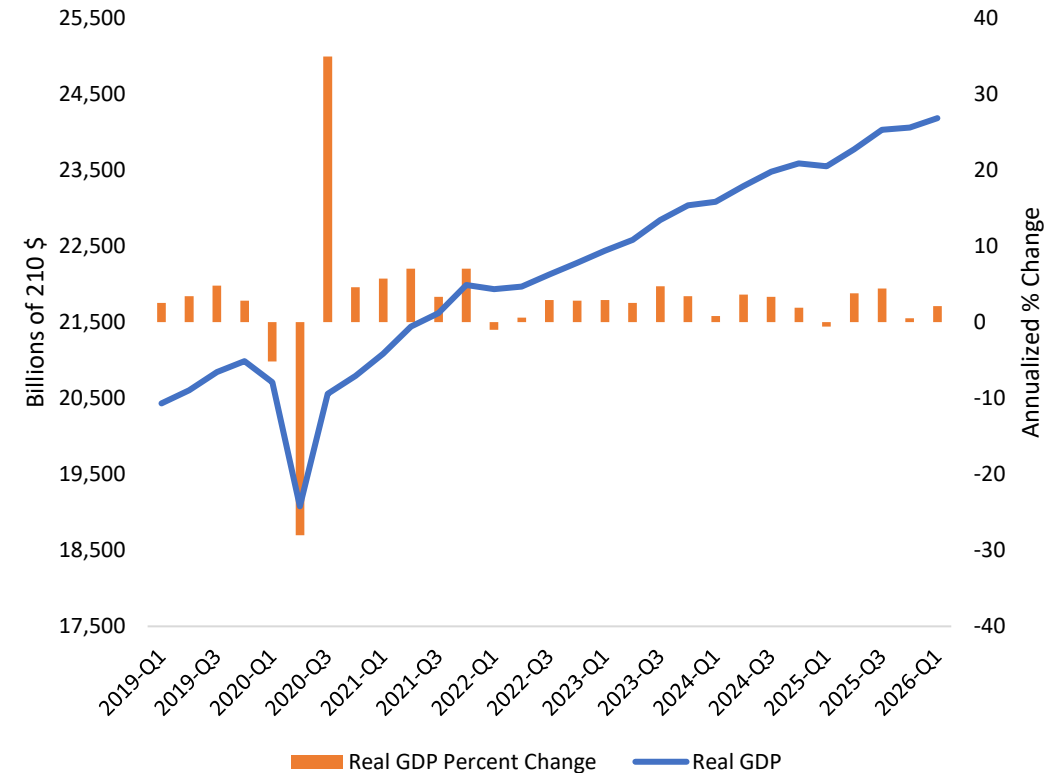
State of Southwest Louisiana

National Economy



- The national economy has been growing since 2020 in terms of real GDP
 - Slight drops in 2022-Q1 and 2025-Q1
- As predicted, we saw a quick turnaround in 2025-Q2 and Q3
- Hopefully, geopolitical events will settle

US Real GDP



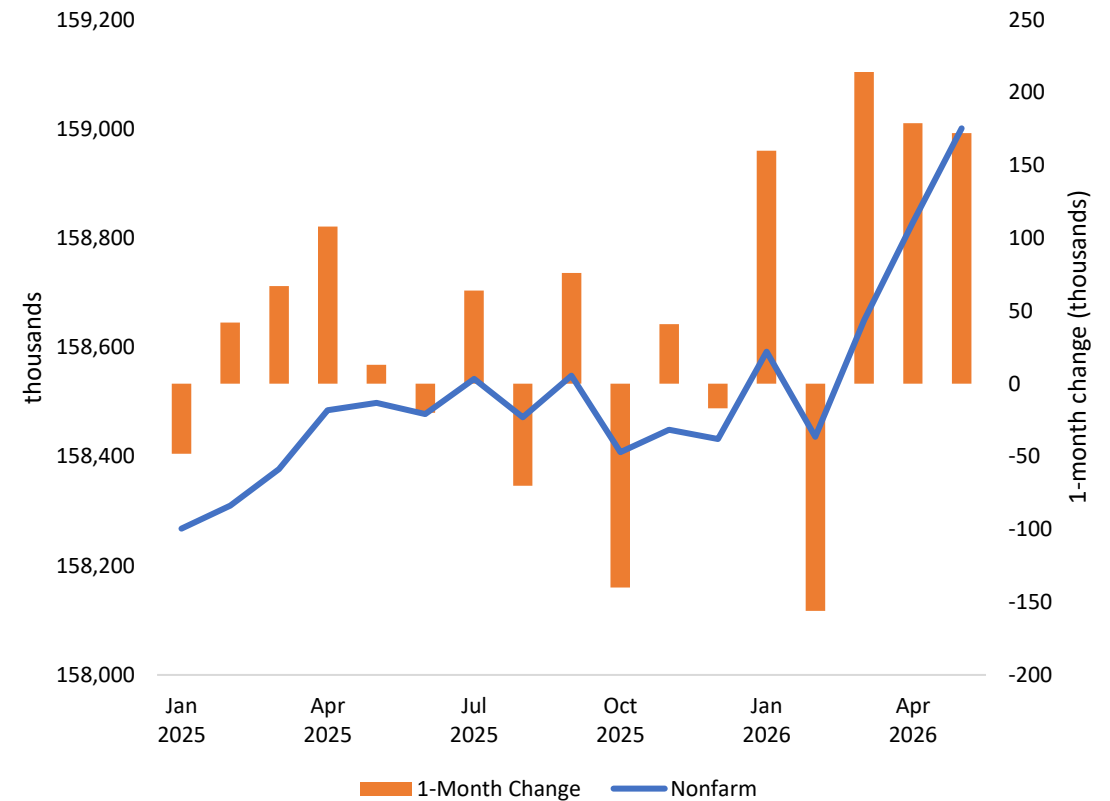
State of Southwest Louisiana

National Economy

- Total nonfarm employment continues to grow and started to experience much more volatility in 2025
- However, we are seeing what seems to be more stable the last few months



National Employment

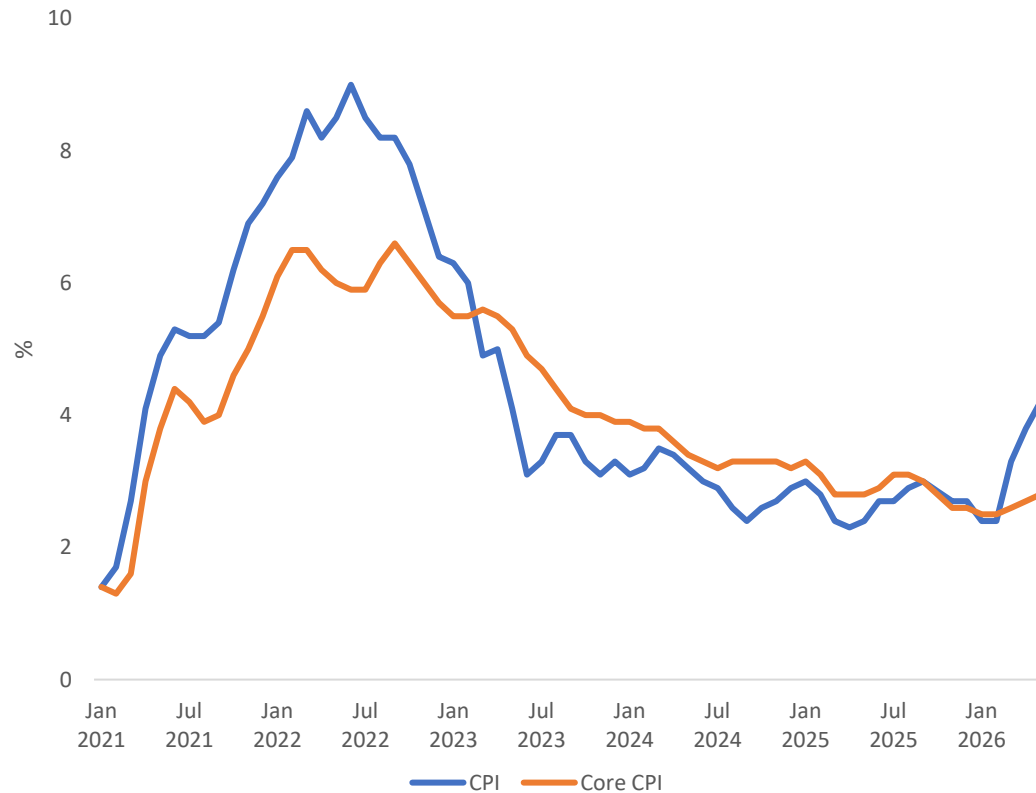


State of Southwest Louisiana

National Economy



Year-Over-Year Inflation



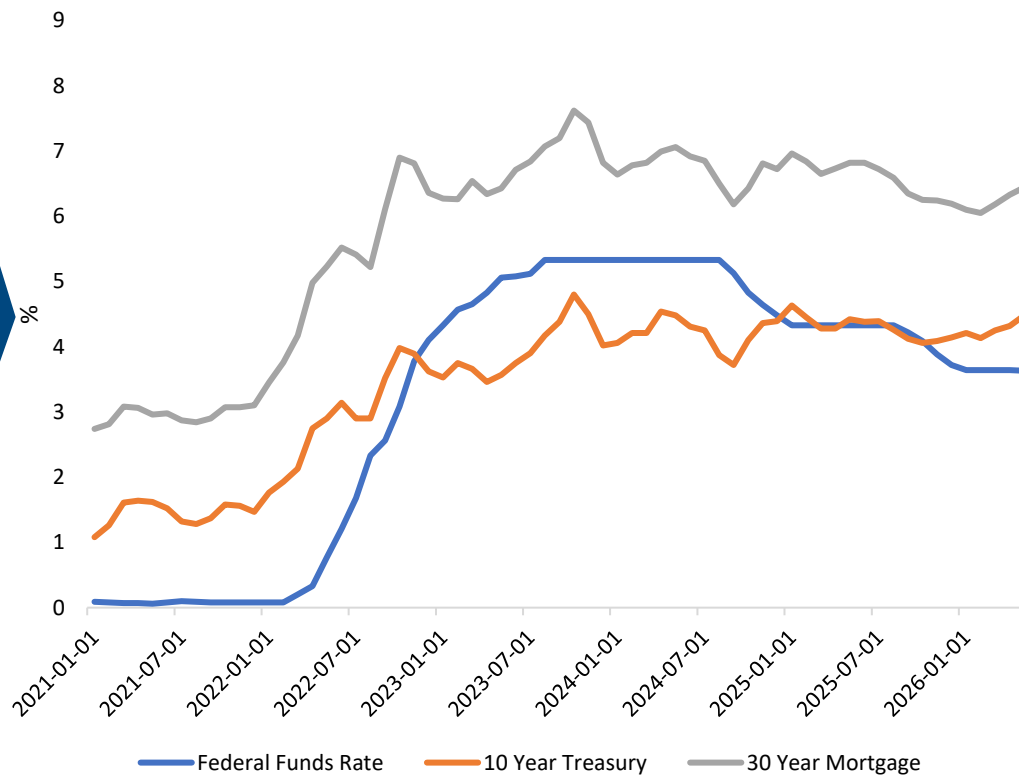
- Inflation was on a dramatic upward path but started to fall toward target rates
- Recent events caused a dramatic uptake in headline inflation
 - Core did not raise as much
- Leads to more uncertainty regarding future Federal Reserve actions

State of Southwest Louisiana

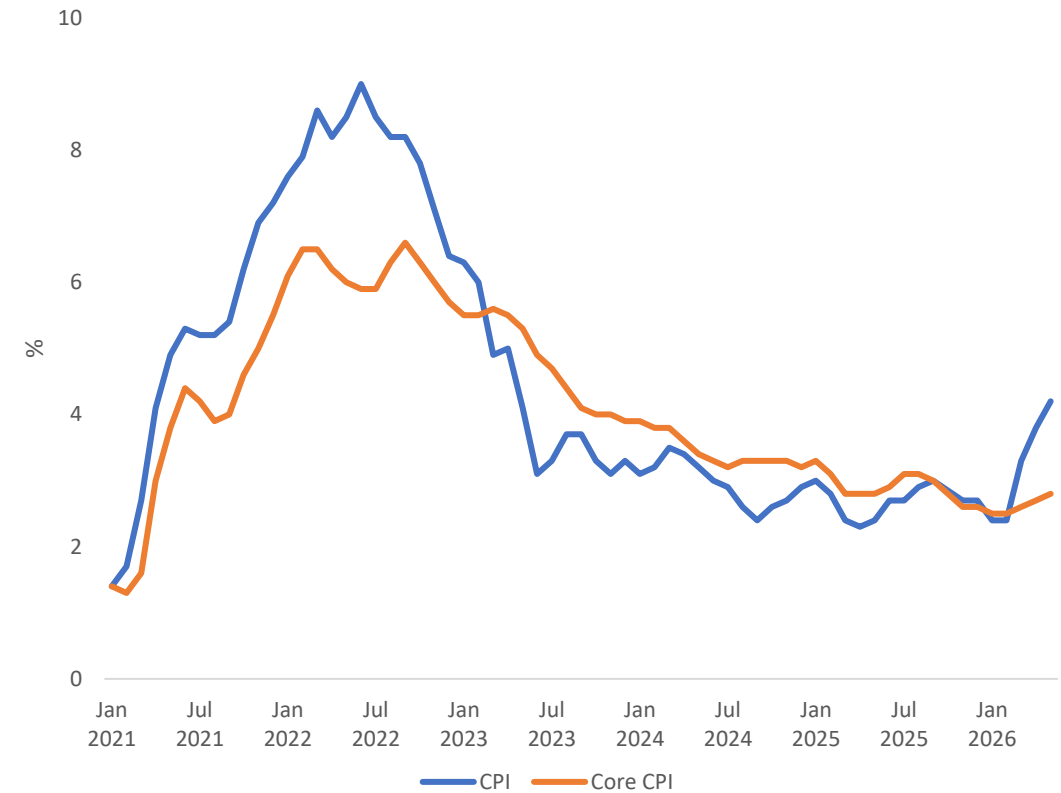
National Economy



Interest Rates

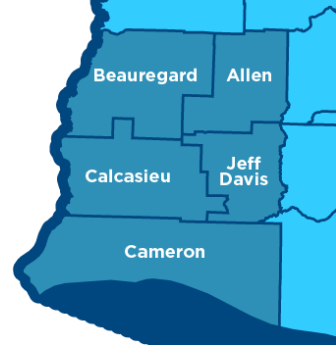


Year-Over-Year Inflation



State of Southwest Louisiana

National Economy



- To combat inflation, the Fed had been increasing interest rates
- More expensive to borrow (mortgages, cars, etc.)
 - Higher returns to saving
- New Fed Chairperson
 - Many thought lower rates
 - Recent upticks in inflation have put that on hold
 - Some see one more increase

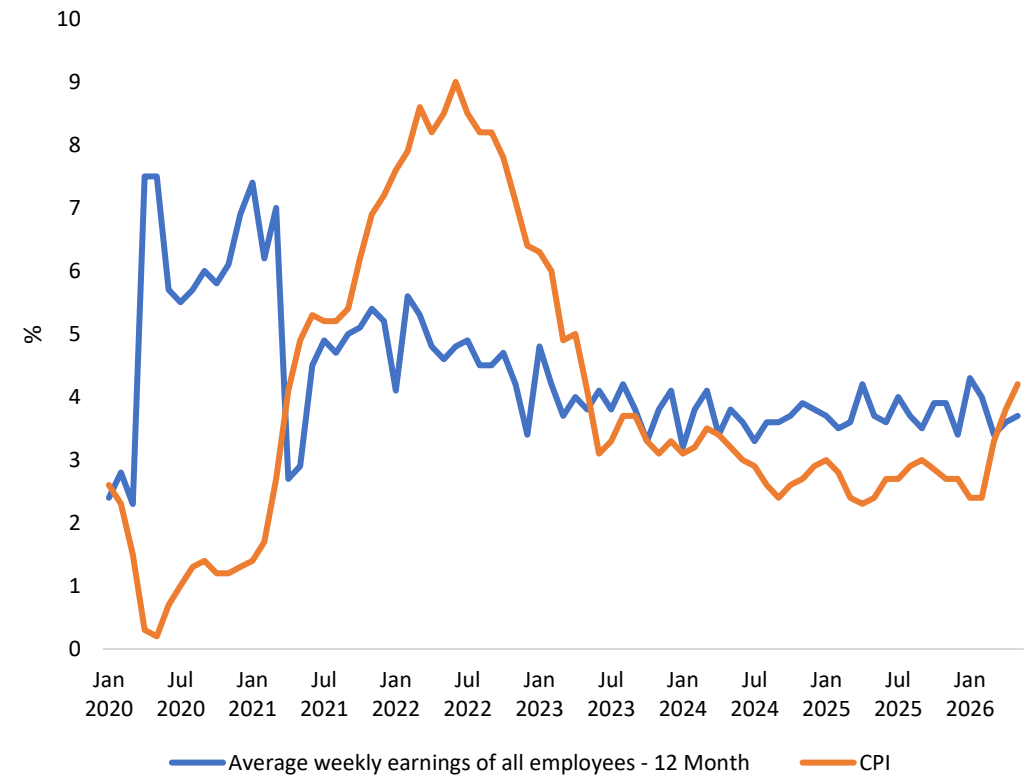
State of Southwest Louisiana

National Economy

- Inflation was rising dramatically and wages were growing as fast
- Through most of 2023 – 2025, wages were growing faster than inflation and catching up
- These last couple months have had the inverse where inflation rose faster than wages
 - Hopefully, temporary

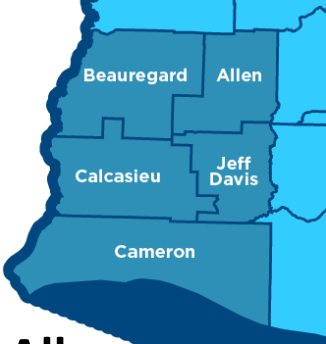


Earnings vs. Inflation

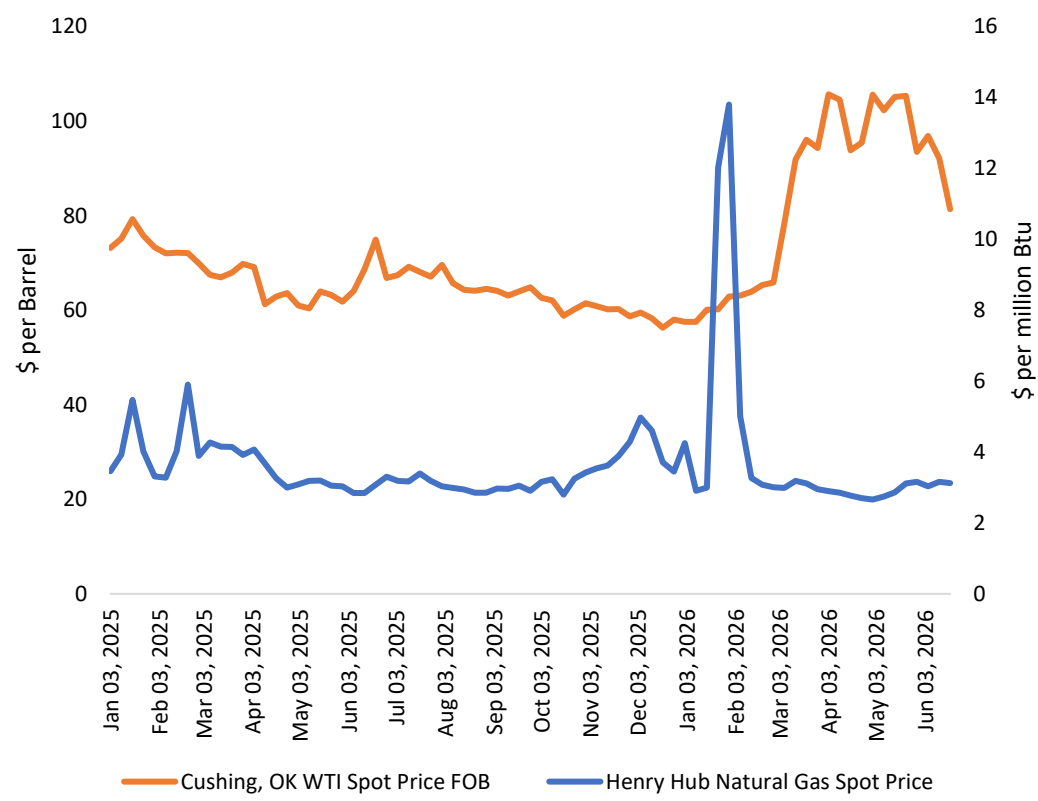


State of Southwest Louisiana

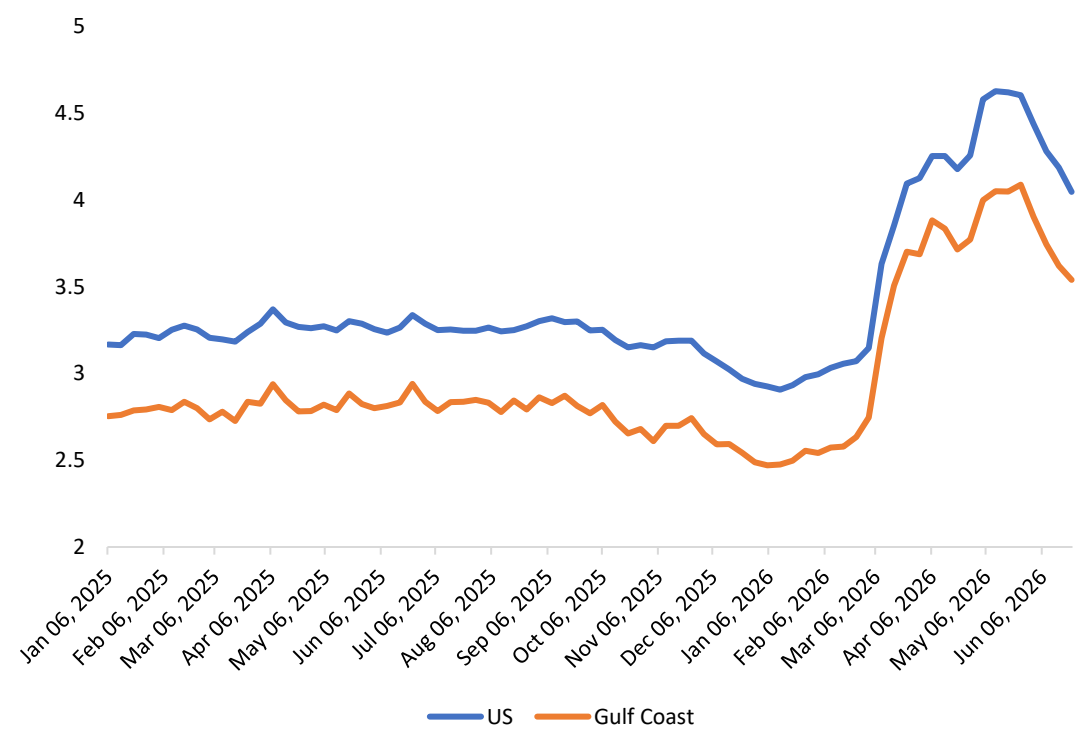
Energy



Weekly Oil and Natural Gas Prices

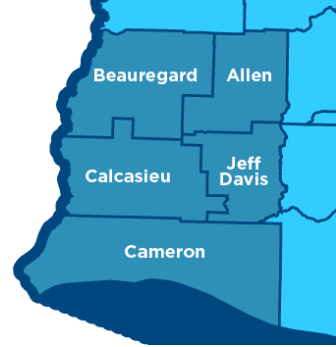


Weekly Retail Gasoline Prices - All Grades



State of Southwest Louisiana

National Economy

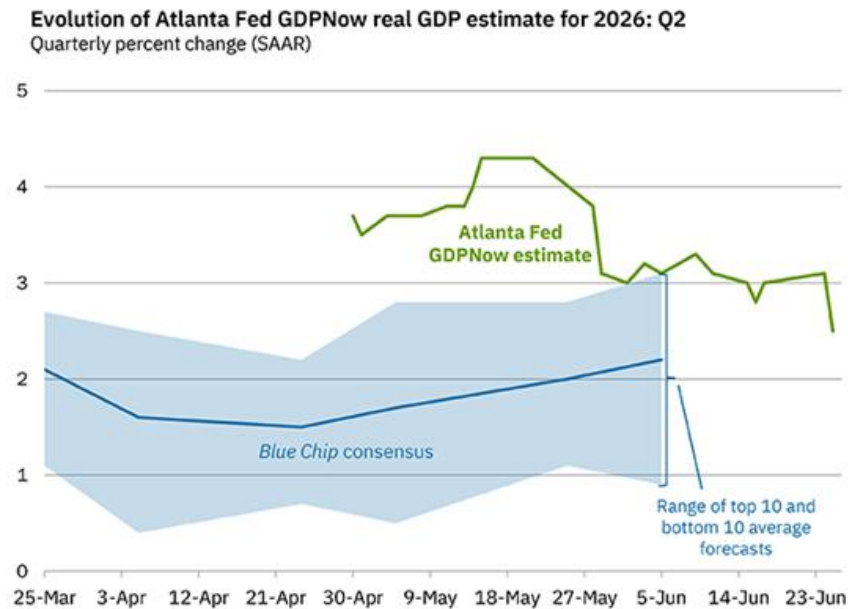


June 25, 2026

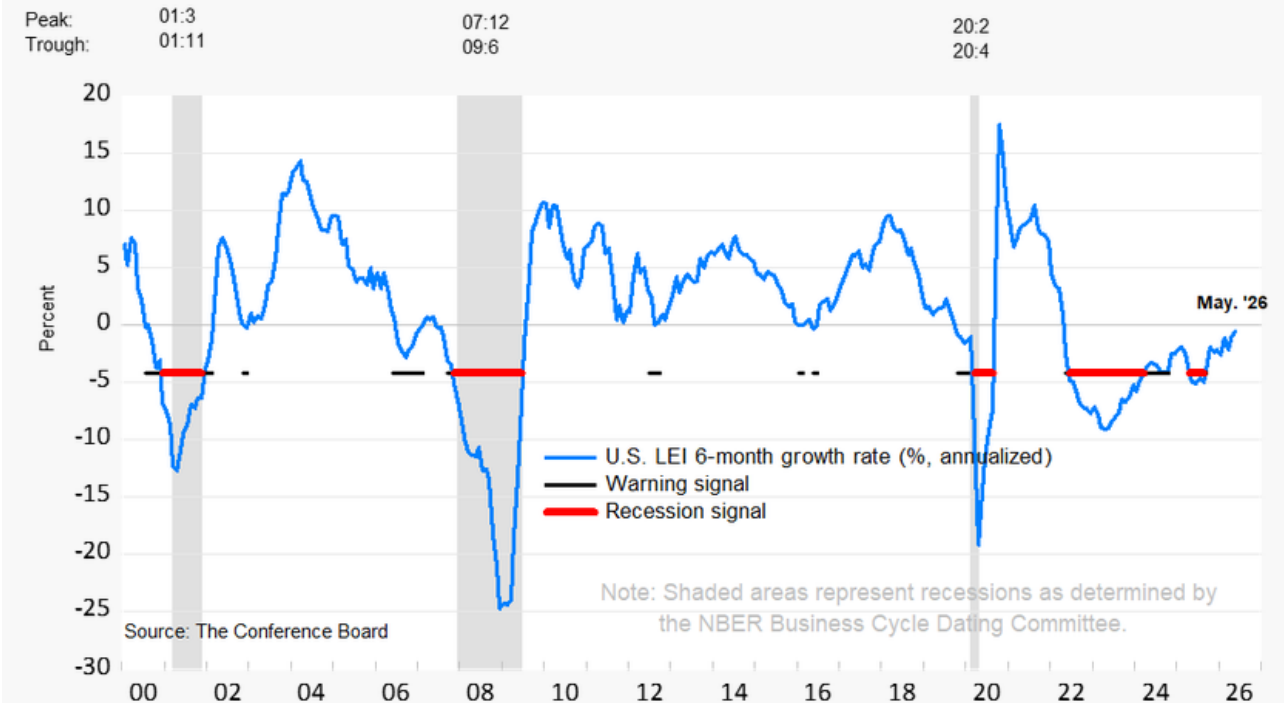
Second-Quarter GDP Growth Estimate Decreased

On June 25, the GDPNow model estimate for real GDP growth in the second quarter of 2026 is 2.5 percent, down from 3.0 percent on June 17.

The next GDPNow update is **Wednesday, July 1**.



The LEI's six-month growth rate improved, but remains negative, suggesting slower economic expansion ahead

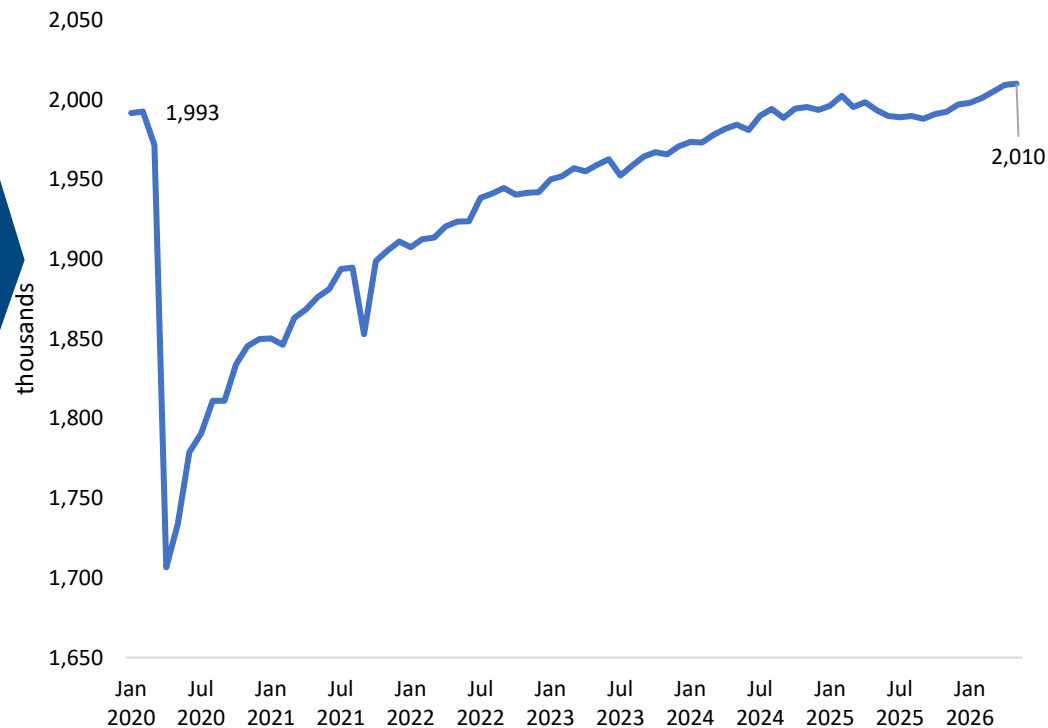


State of Southwest Louisiana

Louisiana Economy



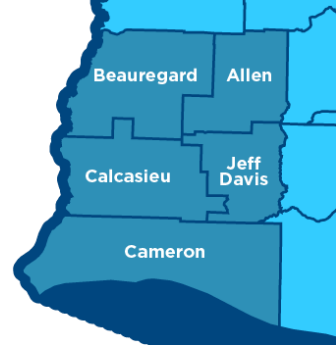
Louisiana Nonfarm Employment Measure



- The state is finally above pre-pandemic levels of employment
- 17,400 (+0.9%) above February 2020 levels
- Last 3 months have averaged growth of over 12,000 jobs year-over-year
- Currently at 2,010,200 nonfarm jobs

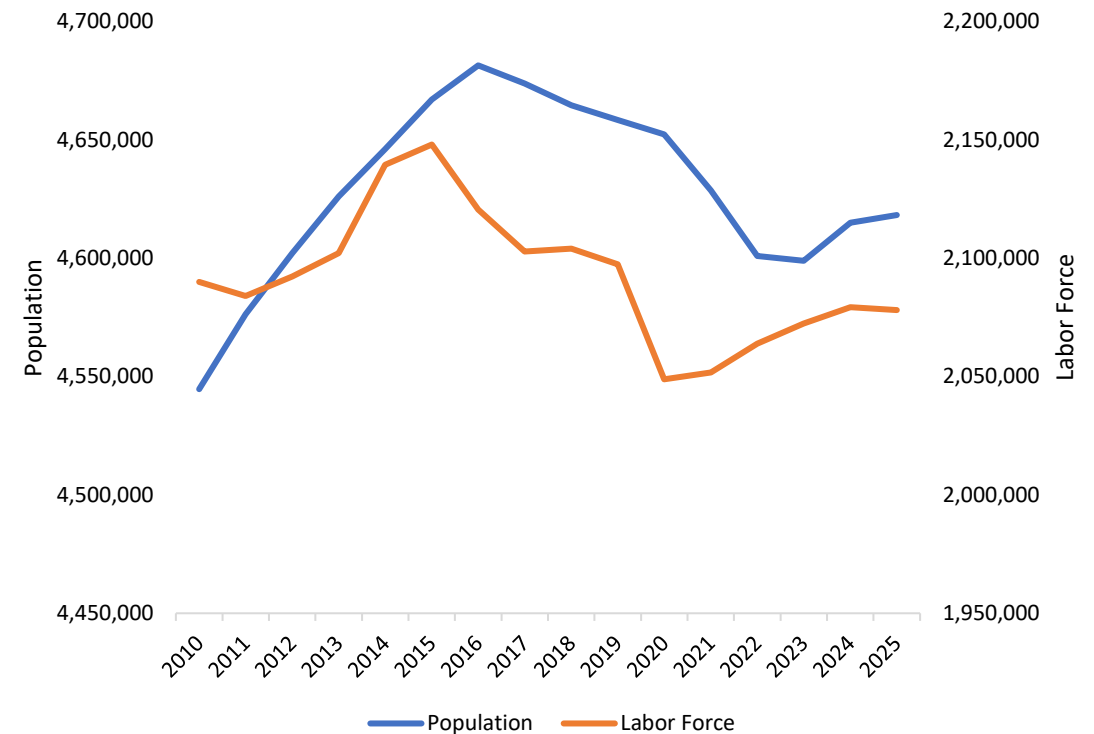
State of Southwest Louisiana

Louisiana Economy



- After 7 straight years of population loss, the state has finally seen increases in population in 2024 and 2025
 - Hopefully, this trend will continue and lead to continued increases in the labor force
- Many stories will point out the drops since 2020, but there have been upward movements the past two years

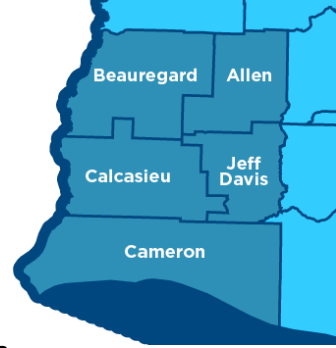
Louisiana Population and Labor Force



SWLA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ALLIANCE

State of Southwest Louisiana

Louisiana Economy



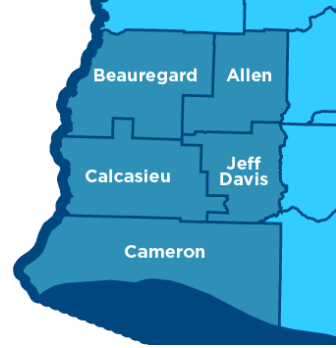
- Although domestic migration is still negative, the international migration and natural (births – deaths) have made up for it
- Will be interesting to see what lower immigration into the US will do in future estimates

Louisiana Population Change and Components

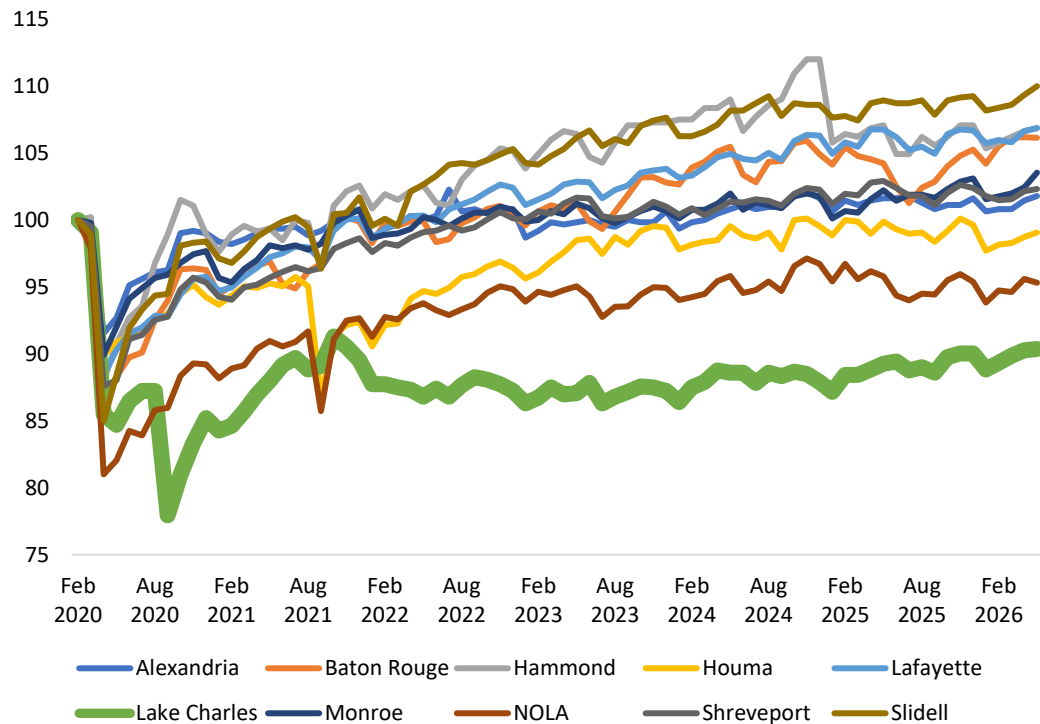


State of Southwest Louisiana

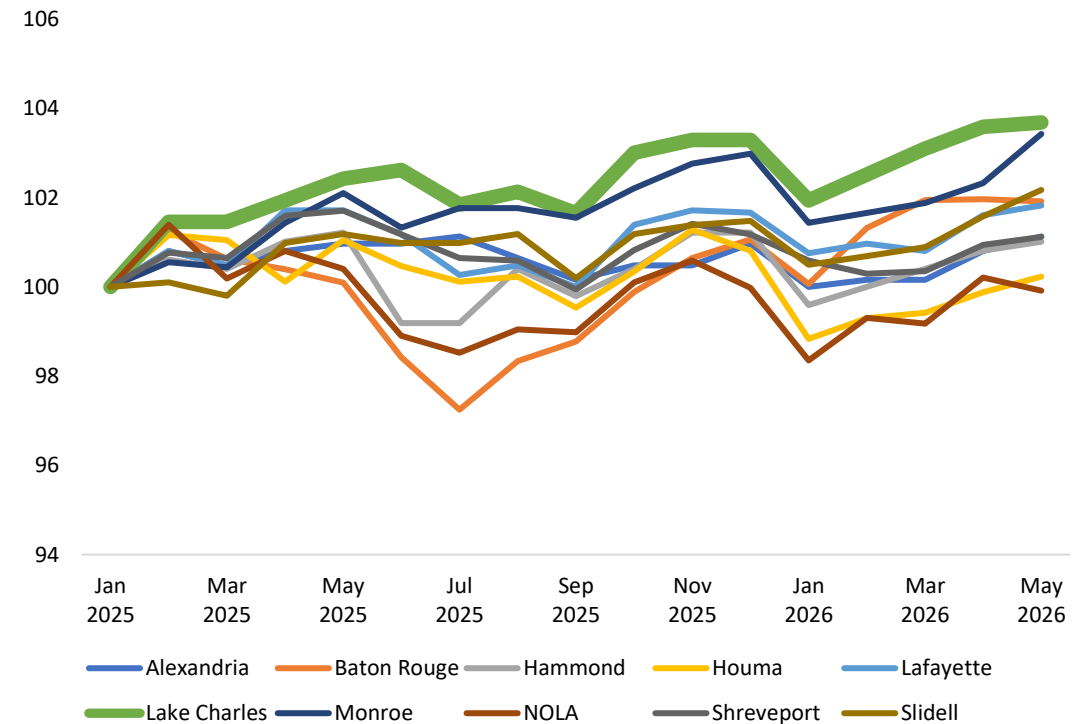
Louisiana Economy



**Louisiana MSA Nonfarm Employment
(Feb 2020 = 100)**



**Louisiana MSA Nonfarm Employment
(Jan 2025 = 100)**

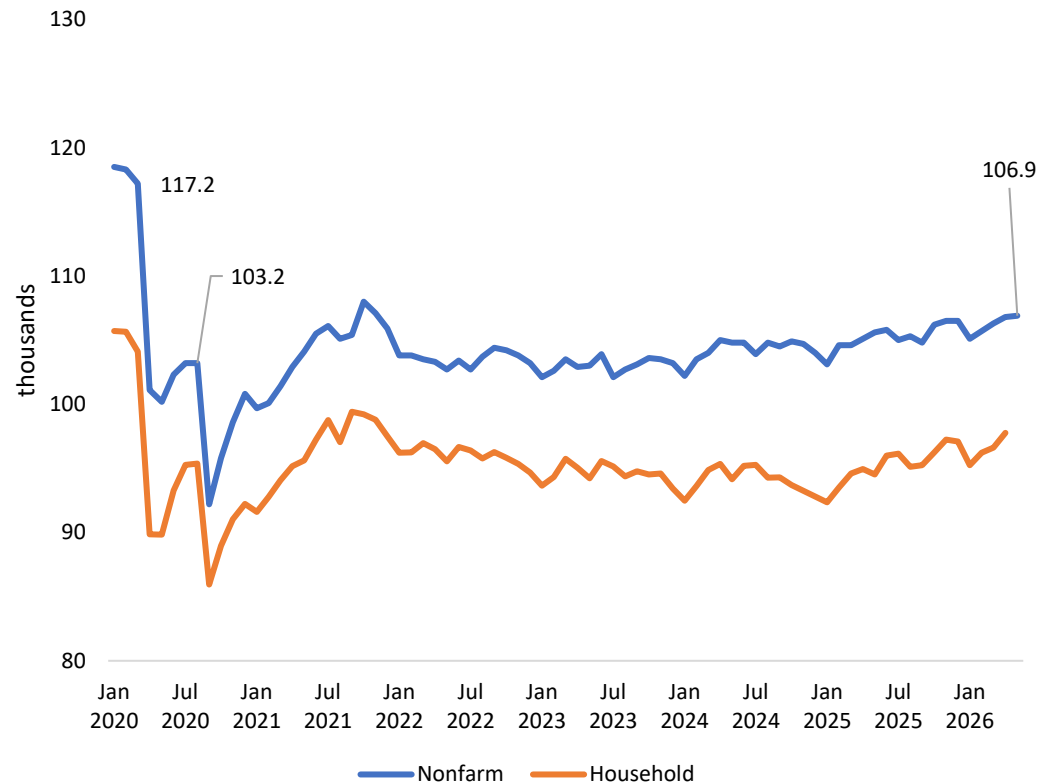


State of Southwest Louisiana

Lake Charles MSA



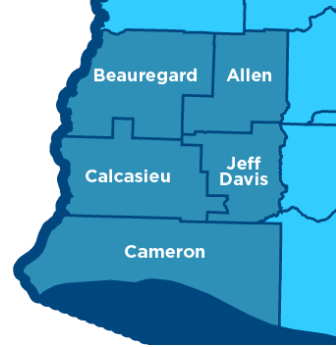
Lake Charles MSA



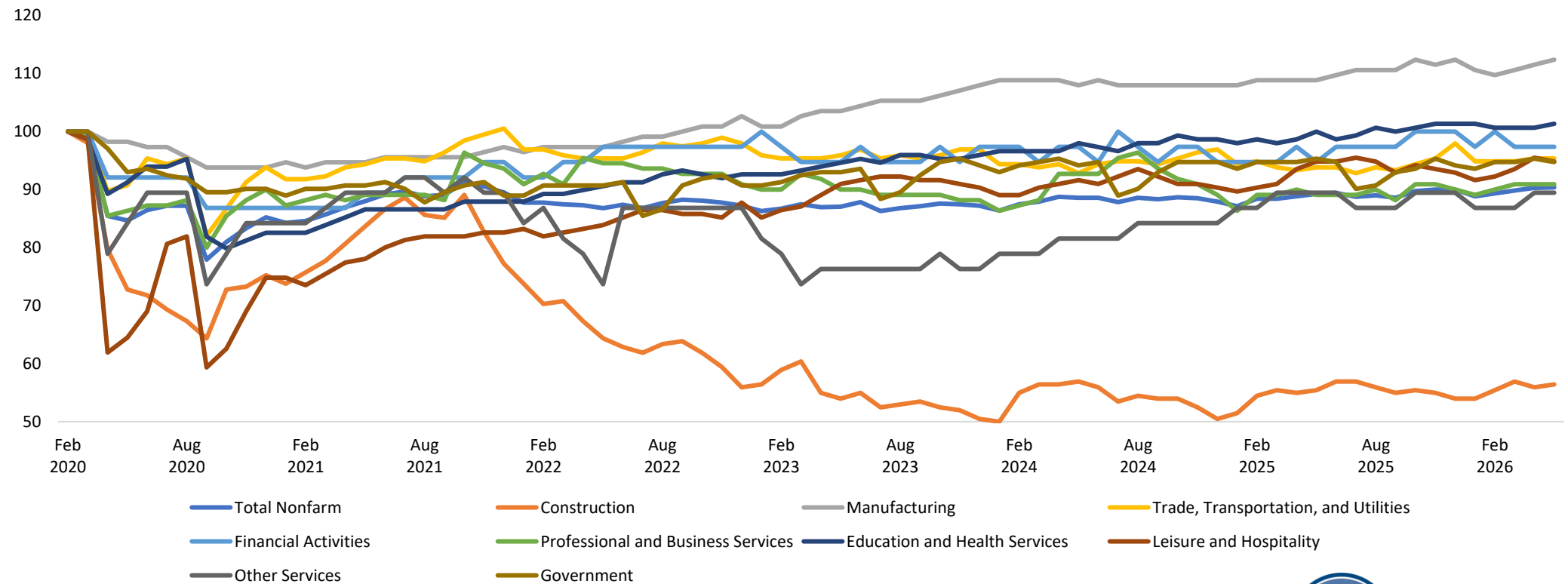
- The annual benchmark revisions revised our jobs numbers up slightly
 - We were doing better than originally thought
- 11,400 (-11%) below February 2020 levels , 3,700 (+3.6%) jobs above August 2020 levels, and up 1,300 (+1.2%) jobs year-over year
- We are finally seeing an upward trend through 2025 and half of 2026

State of Southwest Louisiana

Lake Charles MSA

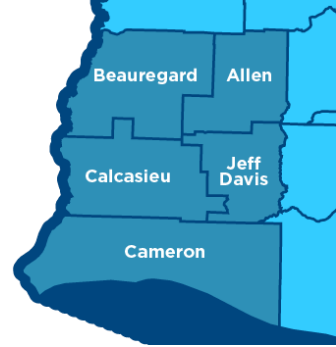


Lake Charles MSA Industry Employment
Feb 2020 = 100

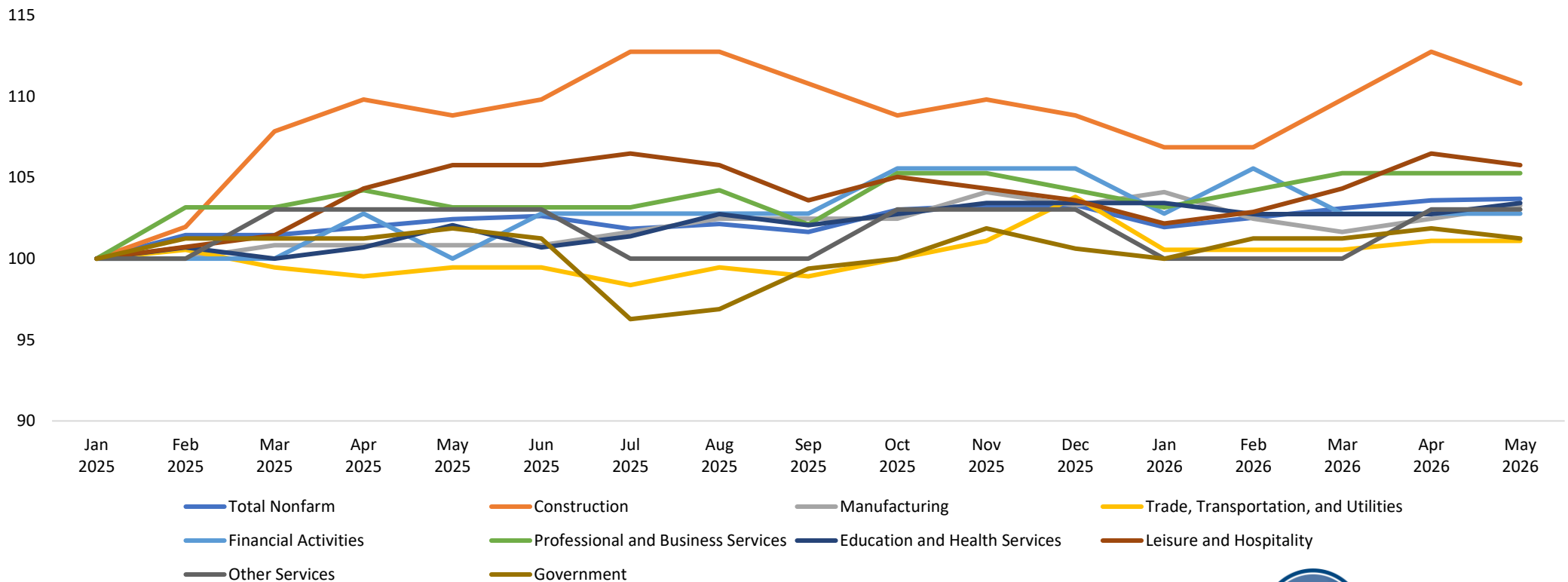


State of Southwest Louisiana

Lake Charles MSA

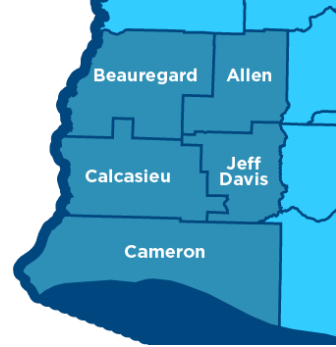


Lake Charles MSA Industry Employment
Jan 2025 = 100

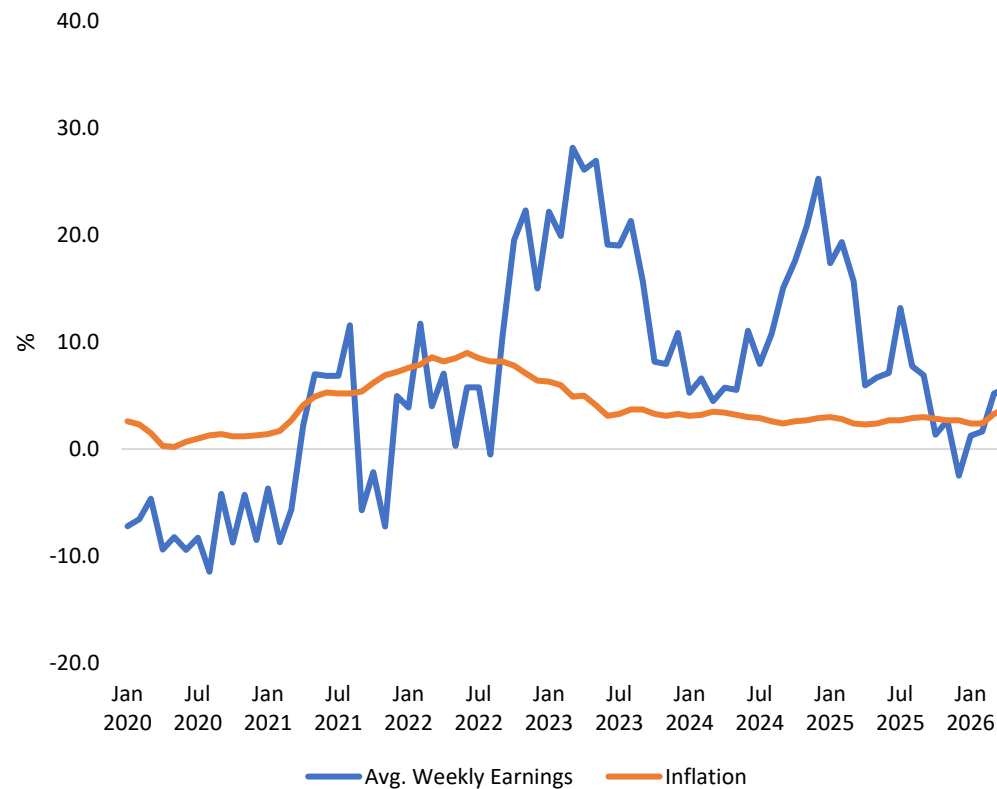


State of Southwest Louisiana

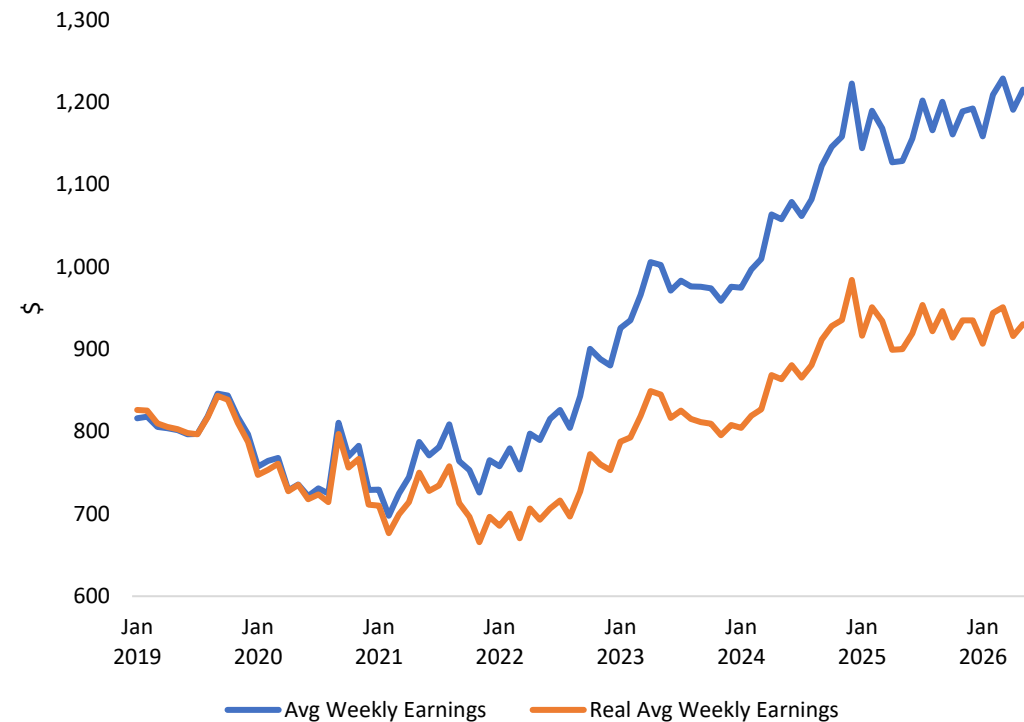
Lake Charles MSA



LC MSA Earnings vs. Inflation



Lake Charles MSA Earnings (2019 = 100)

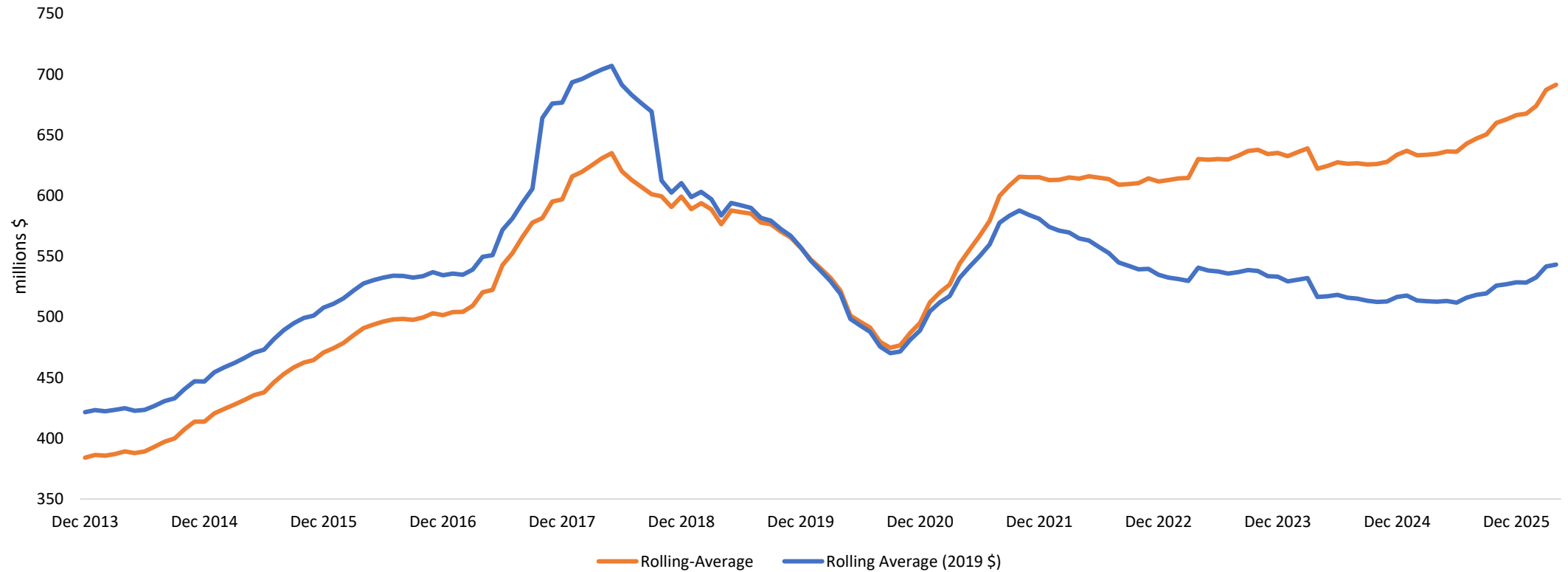


State of Southwest Louisiana

Taxable Sales

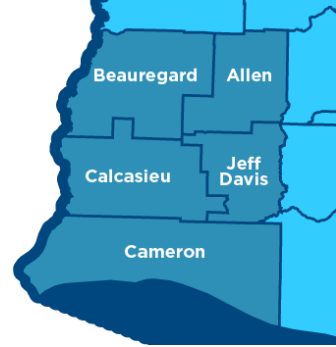


Calcasieu Parish Taxable Sales

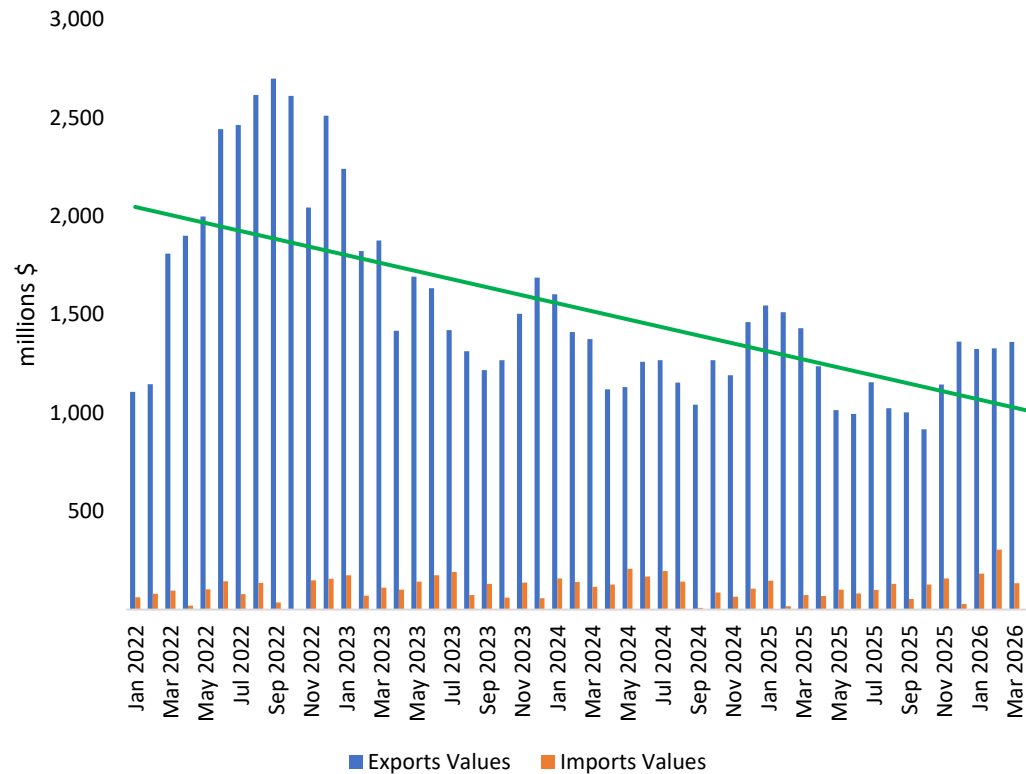


State of Southwest Louisiana

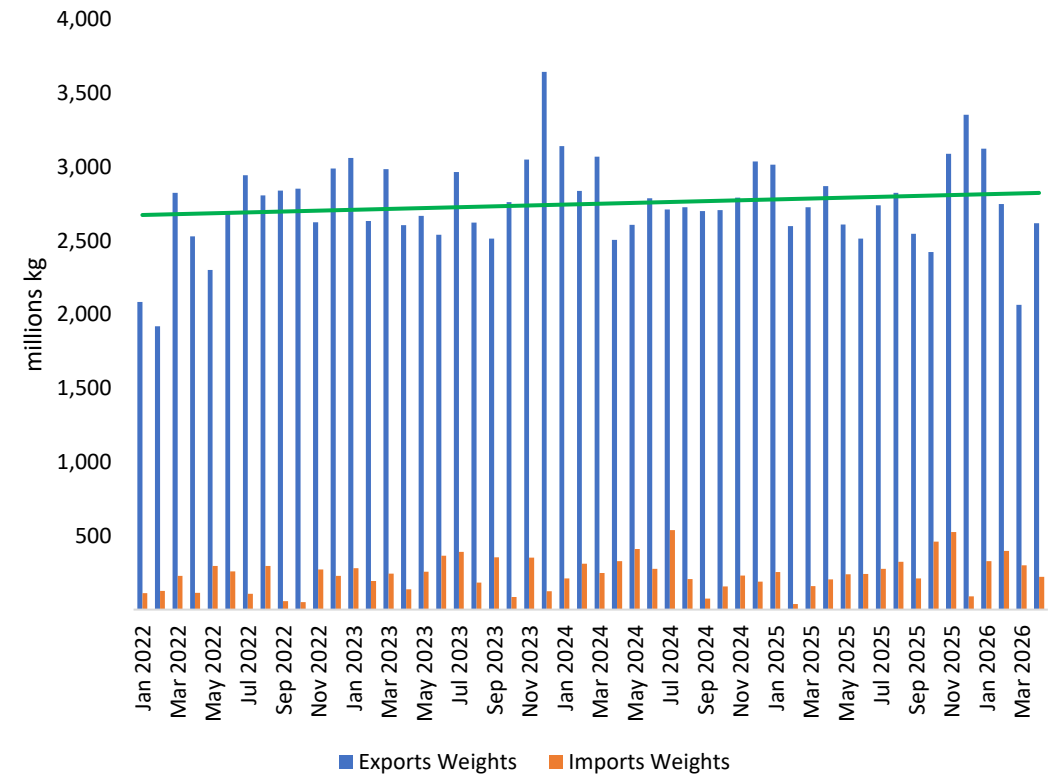
Exports and Imports



Trade Values

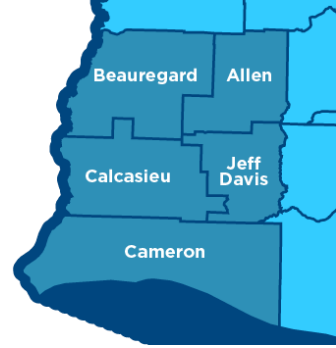


Trade Weights

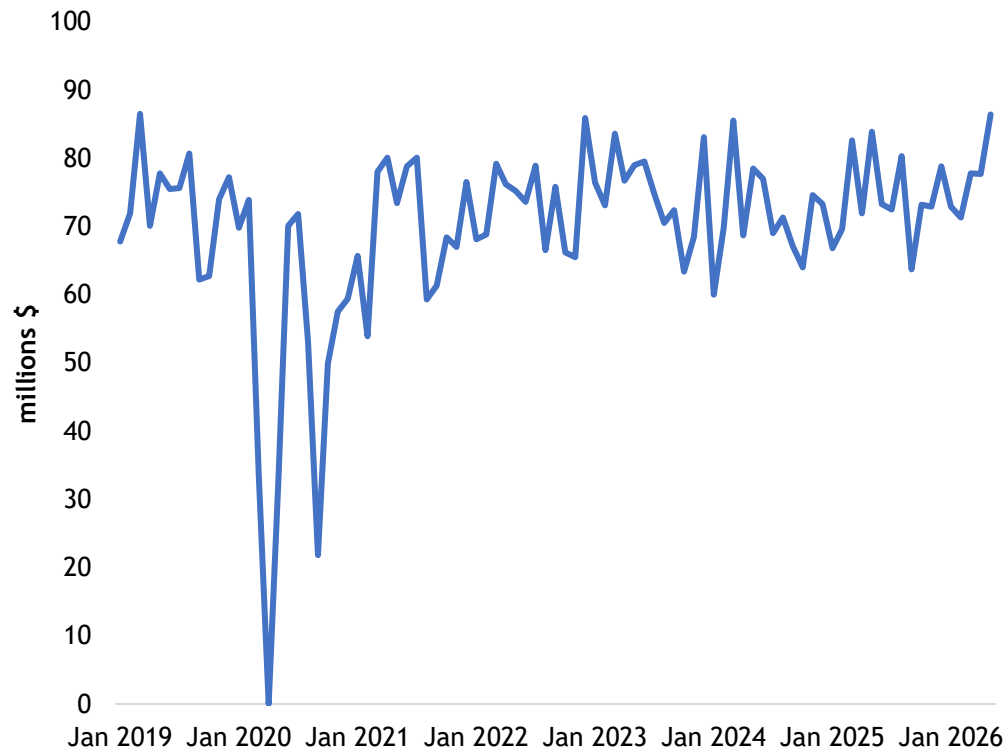


State of Southwest Louisiana

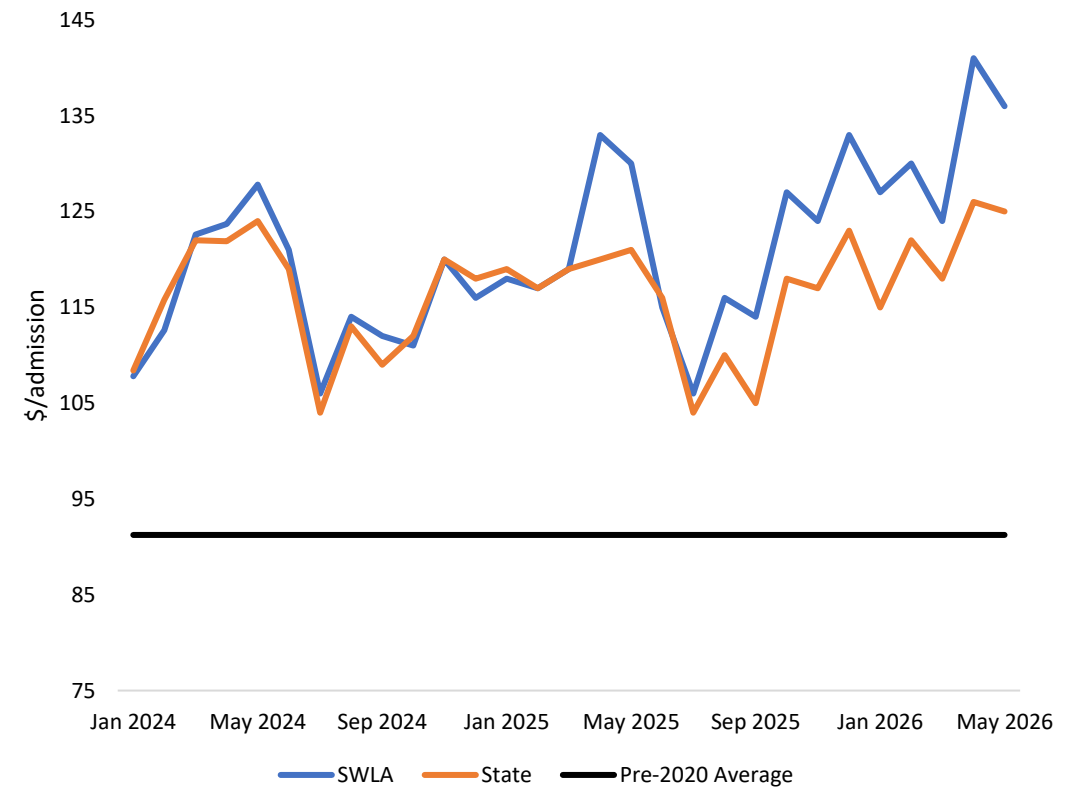
Gaming Revenues



Total SWLA Riverboats and Slots at Tracks AGR

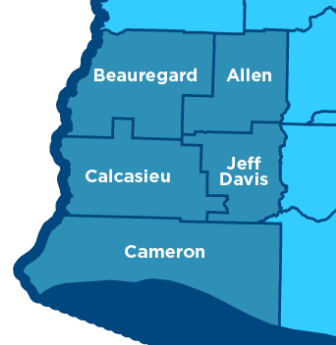


AGR Per Admission



State of Southwest Louisiana

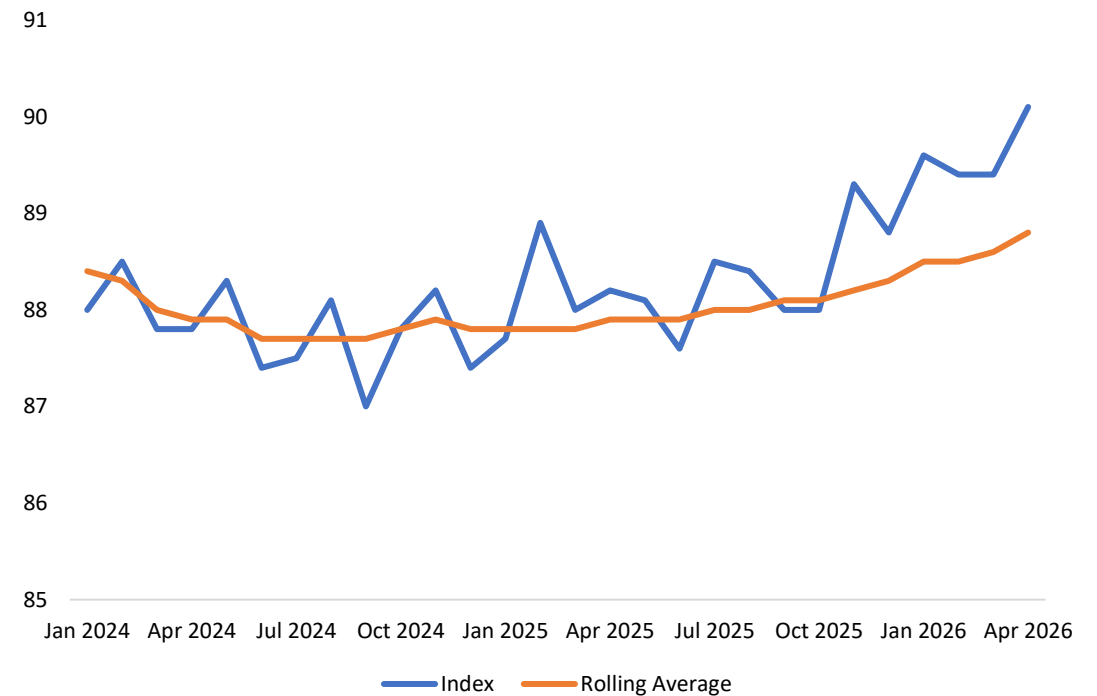
SWLA Coincident Economic Index



Monthly (2017=100)

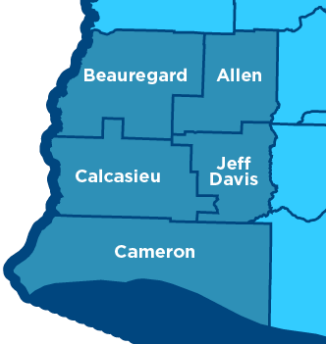


Monthly (2017=100)

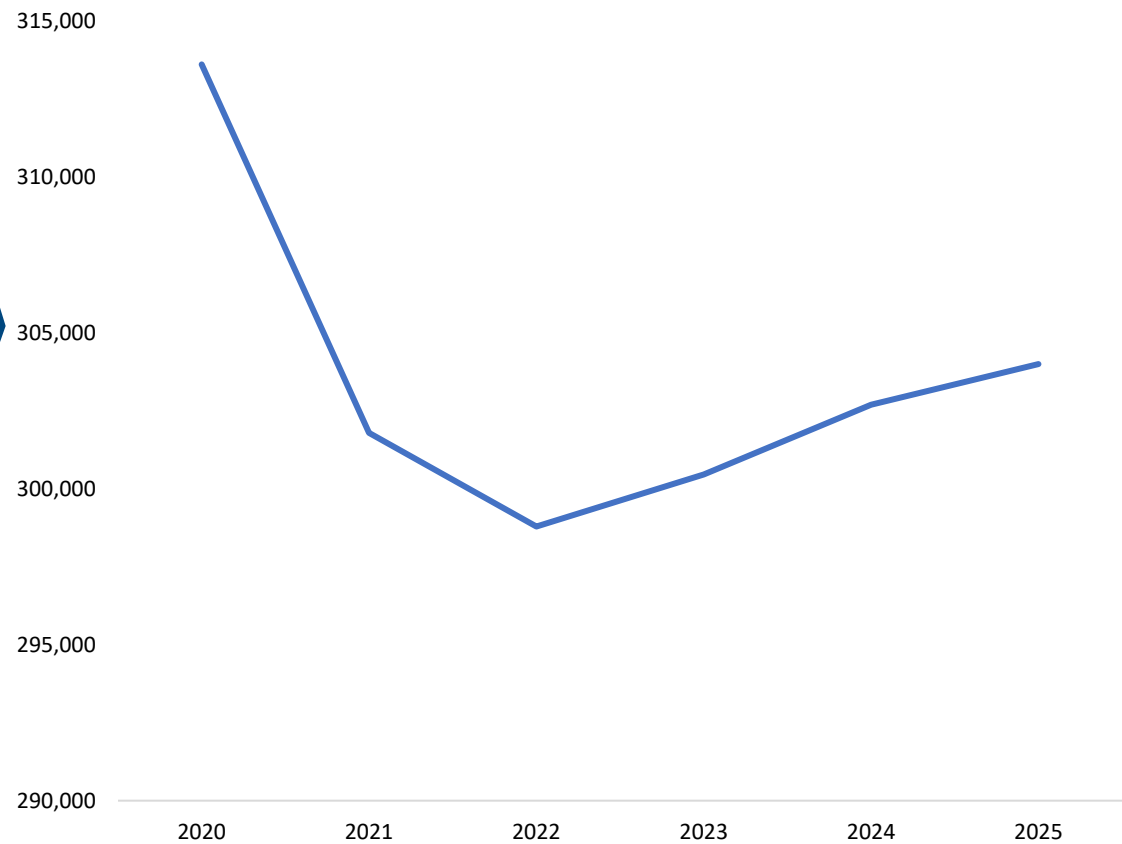


State of Southwest Louisiana

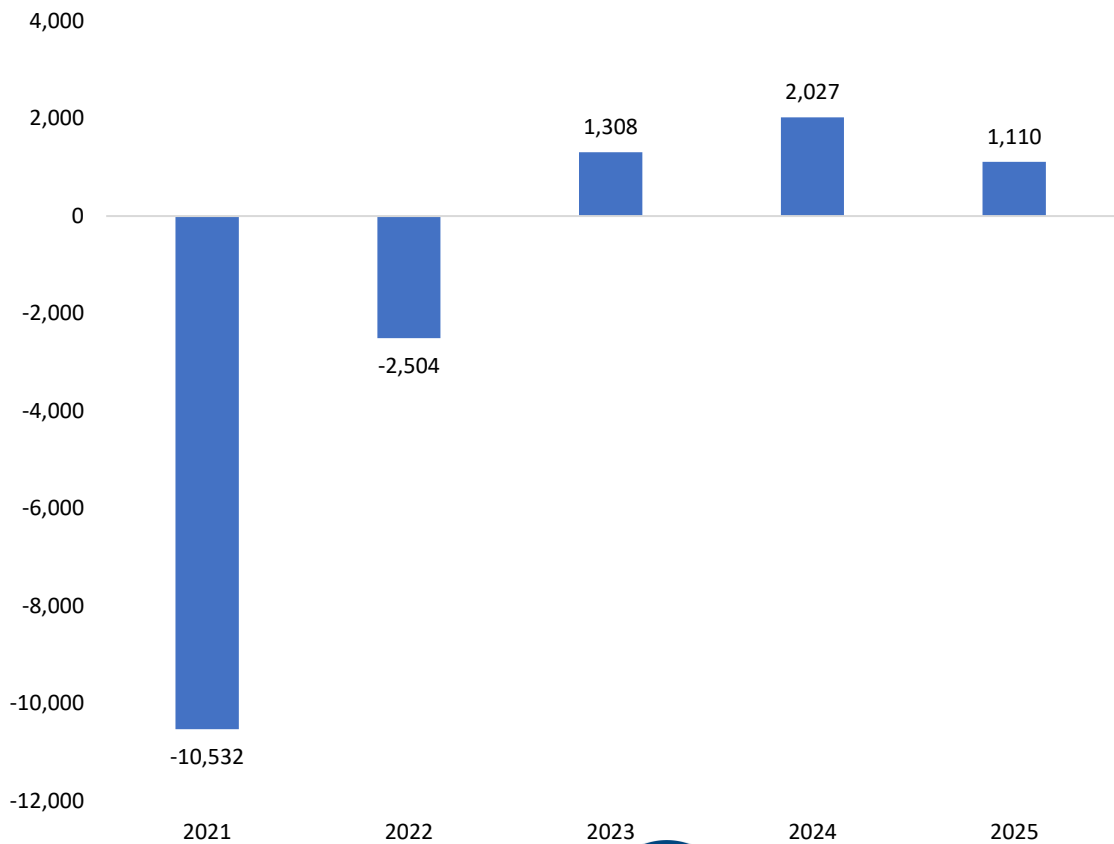
Population



SWLA Population



Calcasieu Net Migration



State of Southwest Louisiana

Population

- Along with the state, our area had seen large drops in population

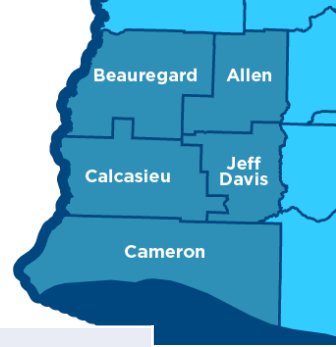


Population Estimates (as of July 1)										
	2021 Change	2022 Change	2023 Change	2024 Change	2025 Change	2021 % Change	2022 % Change	2023 % Change	2024 % Change	2025 % Change
Louisiana	-23,550	-27,703	-2,115	16,101	3,311	-0.5%	-0.6%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%
Allen	-83	-163	97	212	-62	-0.4%	-0.7%	0.4%	0.9%	-0.3%
Beauregard	81	-86	214	-176	35	0.2%	-0.2%	0.6%	-0.5%	0.1%
Calcasieu	-11,465	-2,188	1,807	2,399	1,439	-5.3%	-1.1%	0.9%	1.2%	0.7%
Cameron	-527	-162	-111	-48	-55	-9.4%	-3.2%	-2.3%	-1.0%	-1.2%
Jefferson Davis	180	-405	-342	-143	-56	0.6%	-1.2%	-1.1%	-0.5%	-0.2%
LC MSA	-11,812	-2,755	1,354	2,208	1,328	-4.6%	-1.1%	0.6%	0.9%	0.5%
SWLA	-11,814	-3,004	1,665	2,244	1,301	-3.8%	-1.0%	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%

- Good news is that from 2023 through 2025, the region (driven by Calcasieu) is seeing continual increases

State of Southwest Louisiana

Population

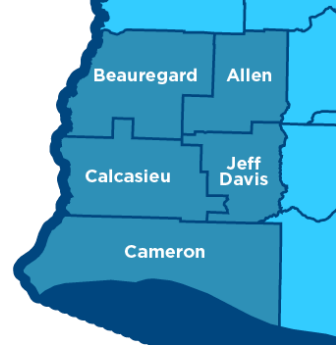


Population Estimates (as of July 1)							
	2022	2023	2024	2025		2022 - 2025 Change	2022 - 2025 % Change
Lake Charles	79,432	80,179	81,454	82,676		3,244	4.1%
Sulphur	20,353	20,461	20,555	20,492		139	0.7%
DeRidder	9,697	9,661	9,561	9,503		-194	-2.0%
Jennings	9,567	9,378	9,300	9,235		-332	-3.5%
Oakdale	6,564	6,558	6,579	6,526		-38	-0.6%
Westlake	4,680	4,690	4,747	4,763		83	1.8%

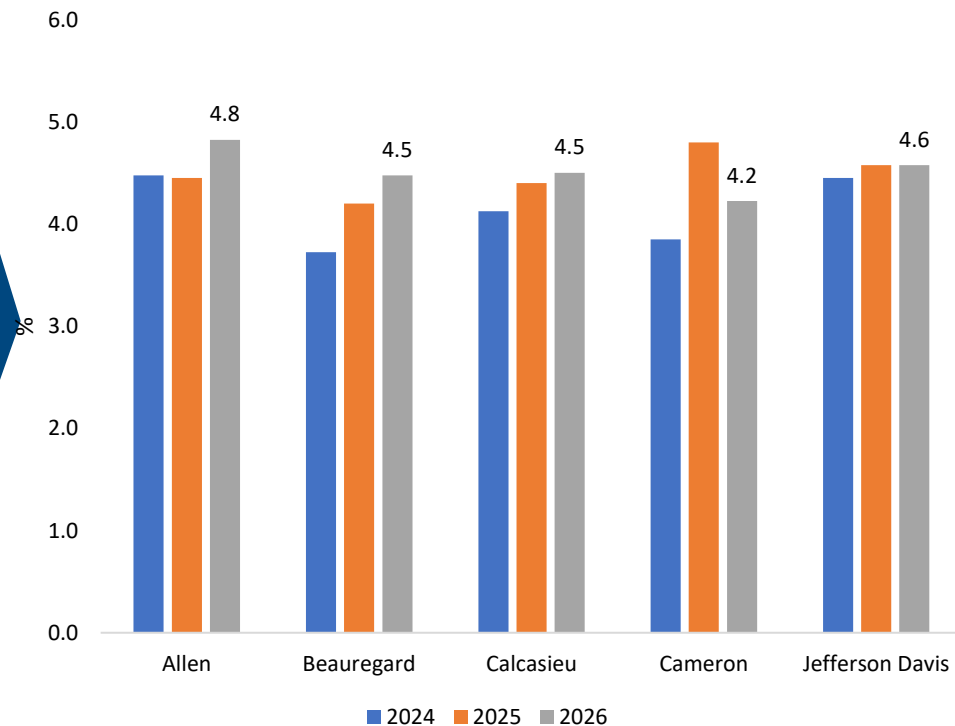
- From 2023 - 2025, the City of Lake Charles has added 3,244 people
 - Ranked #1 of all incorporated places in Louisiana

State of Southwest Louisiana

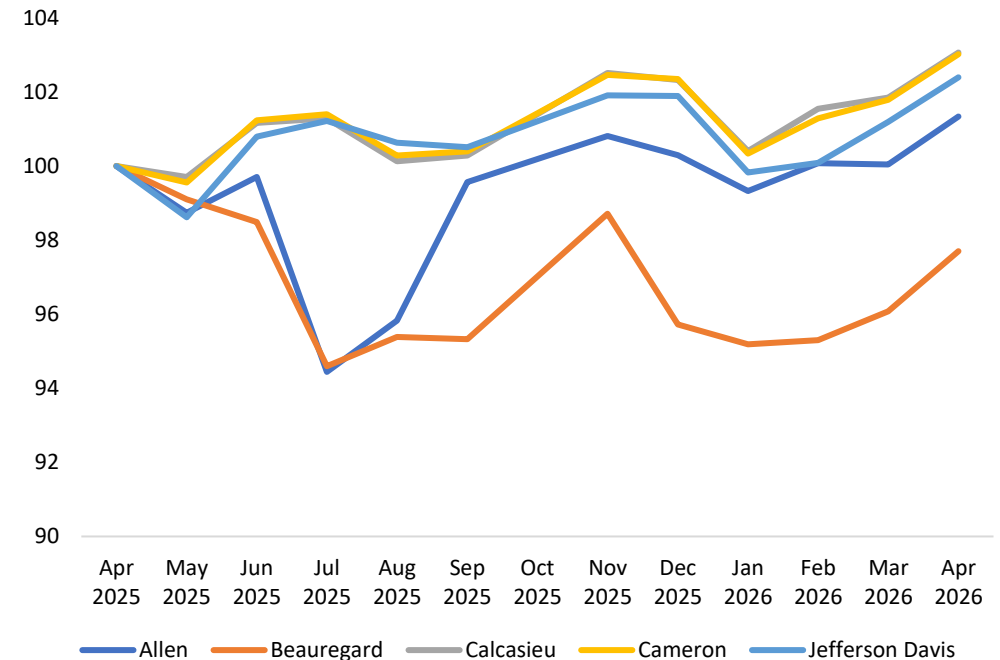
Parish Employment Measures



Parish YTD Unemployment Rates

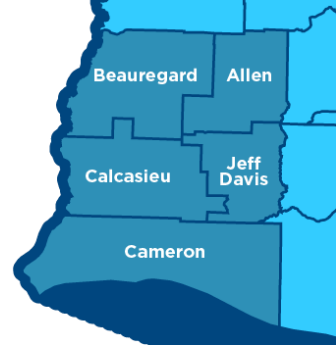


Parish Employment Measures Apr 2025 = 100

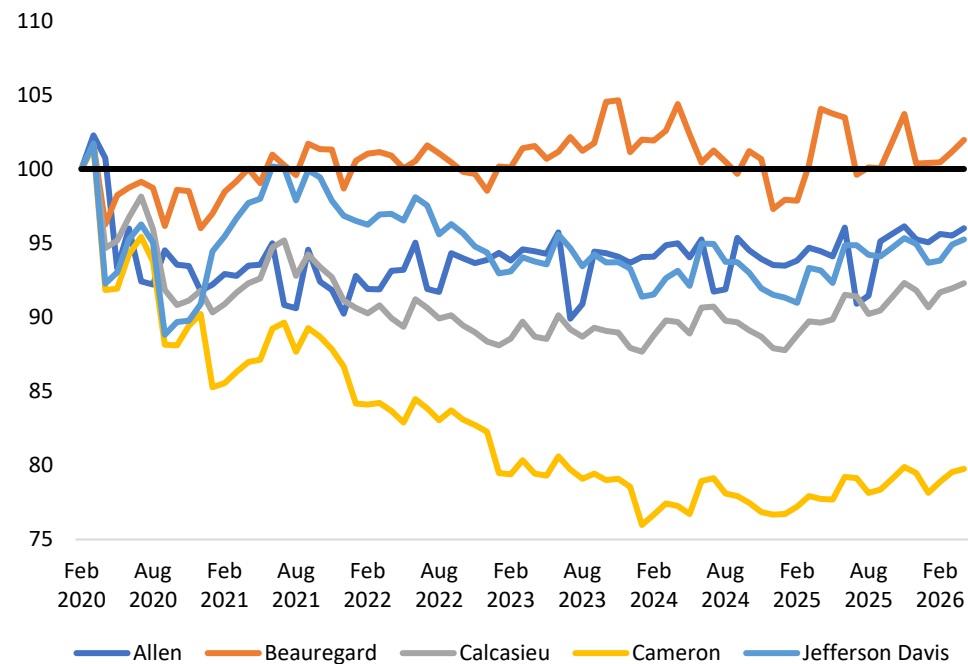


State of Southwest Louisiana

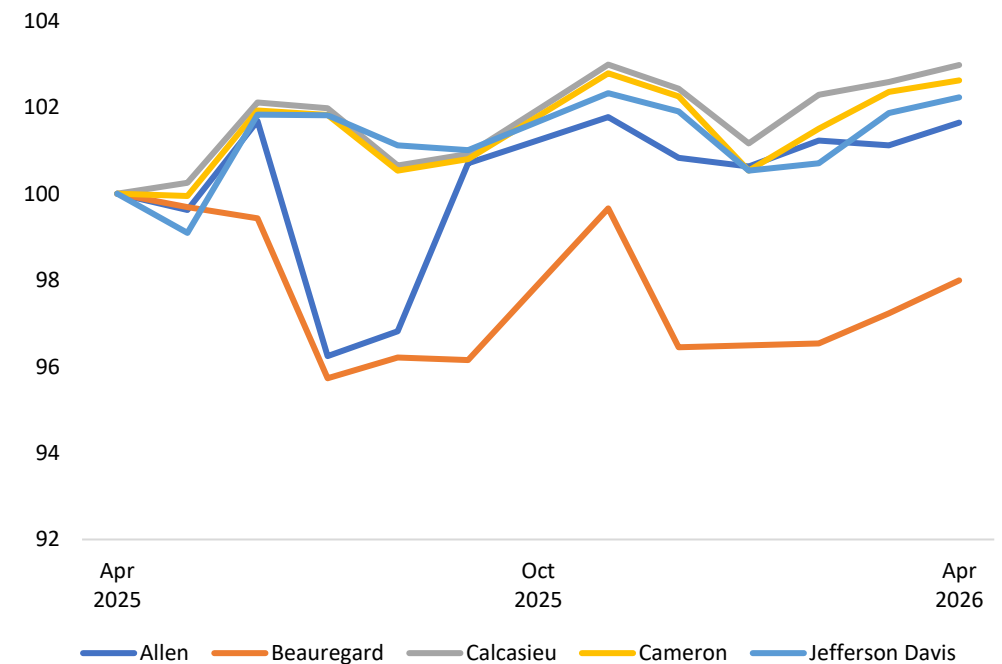
Lake Charles MSA



**Parish Labor Force
(Feb 2020 = 100)**



**Parish Labor Force
(Apr 2025 = 100)**



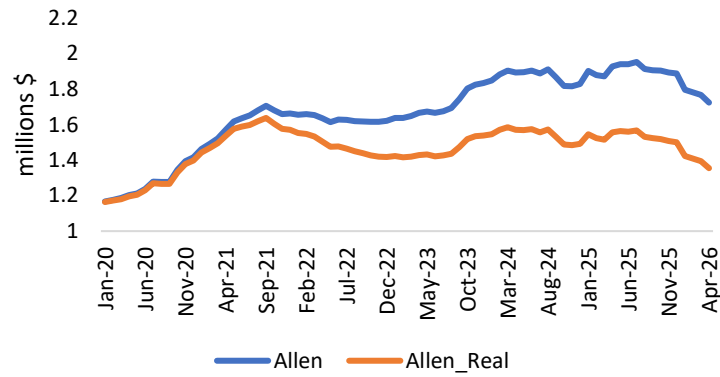
State of Southwest Louisiana

Parish Sales Tax Collections

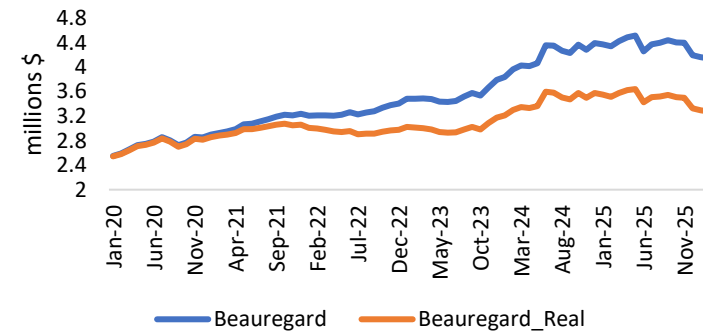
- Sales tax collections in all parishes (Cameron collects no local sales tax) have been increasing since 2020, but many have leveled off and are falling in real terms due to inflation



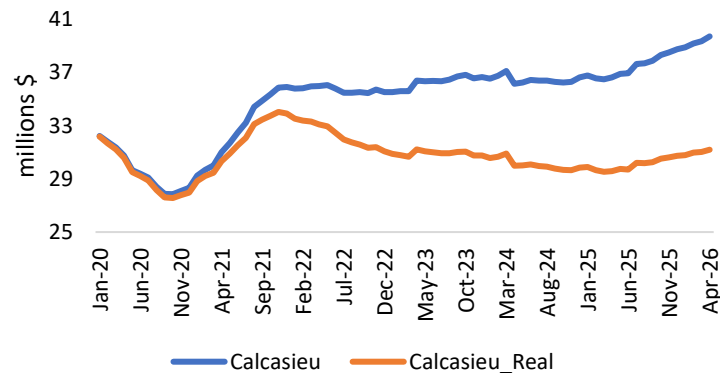
Allen



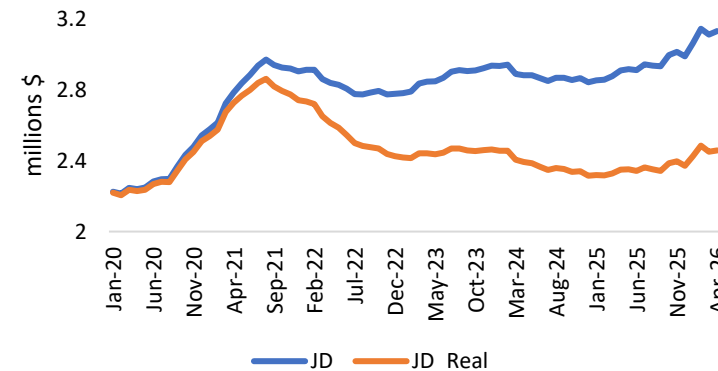
Beauregard



Calcasieu



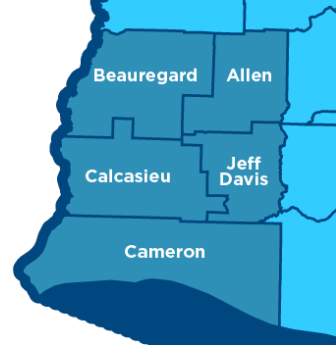
Jefferson Davis



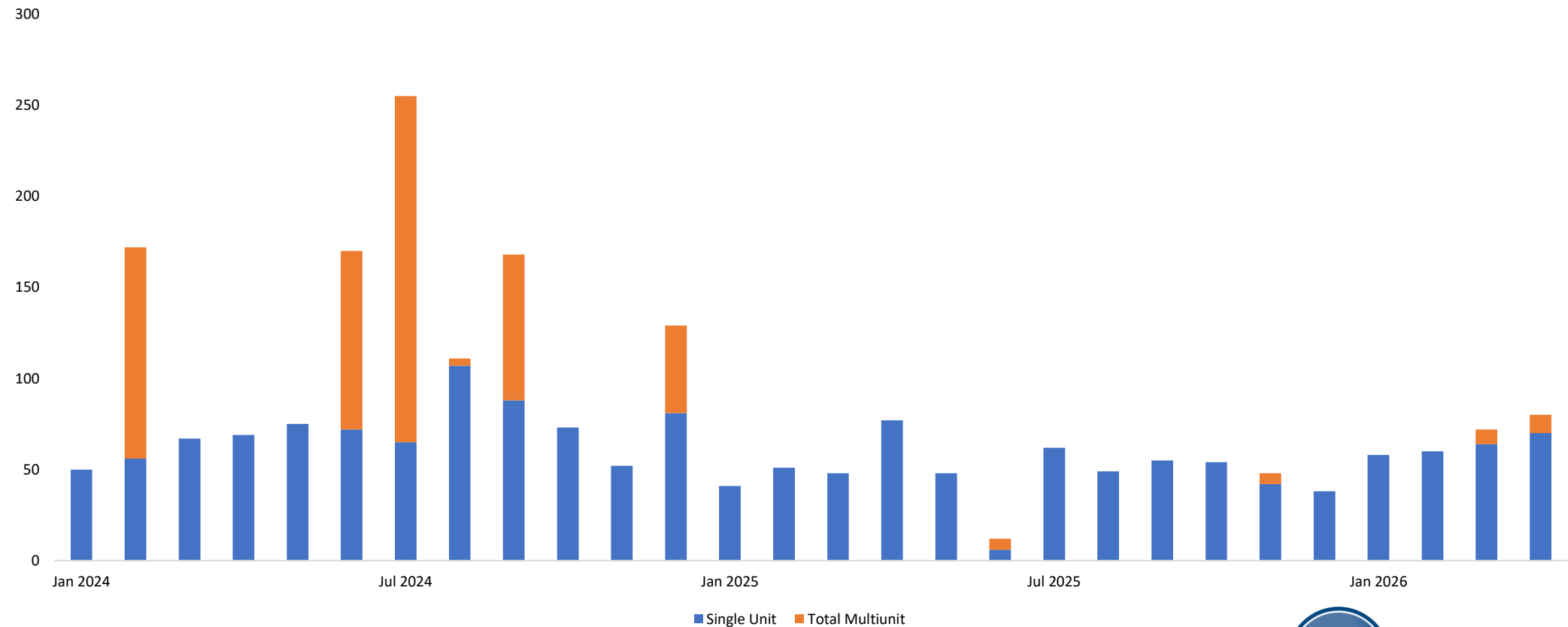
SWLA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ALLIANCE

State of Southwest Louisiana

Housing

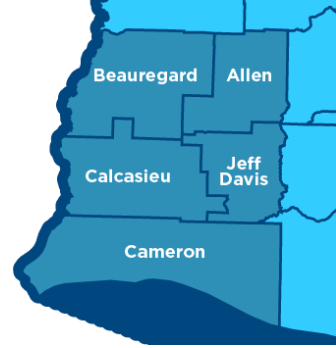


MSA Building Permits



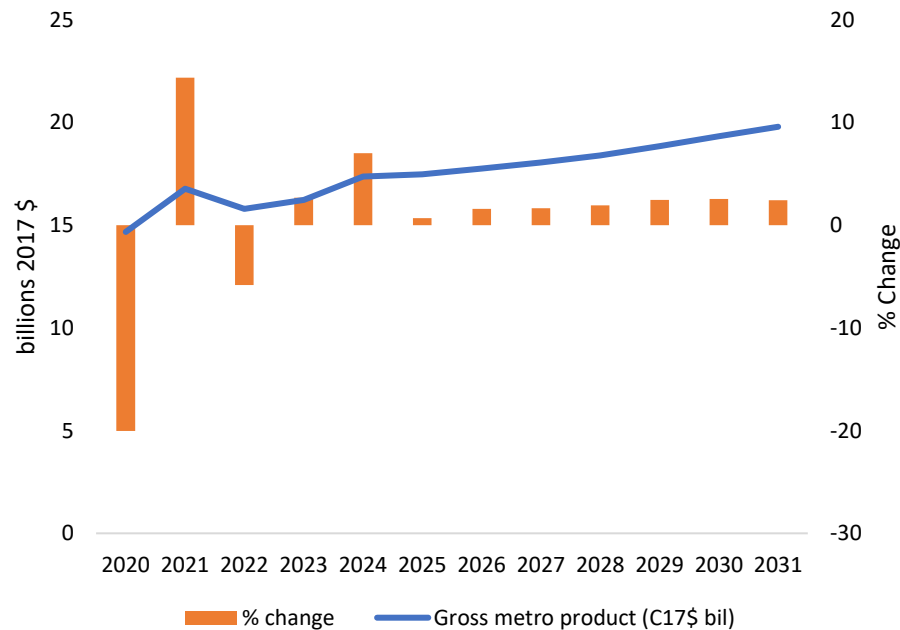
State of Southwest Louisiana

Lake Charles Economy - Future

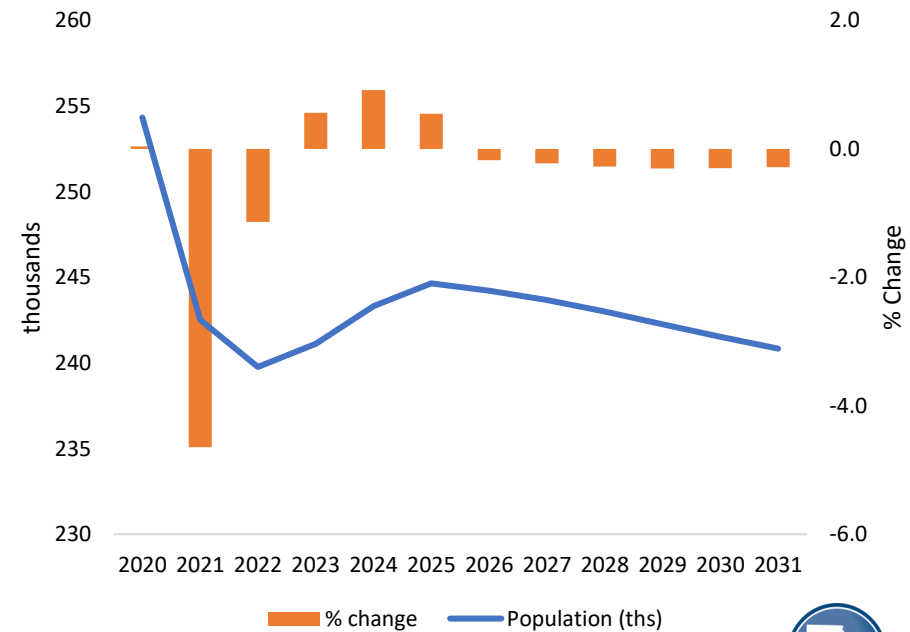


- “Lake Charles is picking up the pace...Lake Charles will taper off this year. ” – Moody’s, May 2026
 - Much better than previous reports stating, “Lake Charles is going nowhere.”

Real GDP

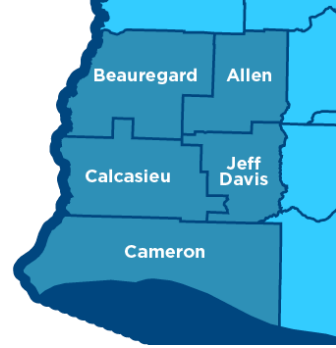


Population



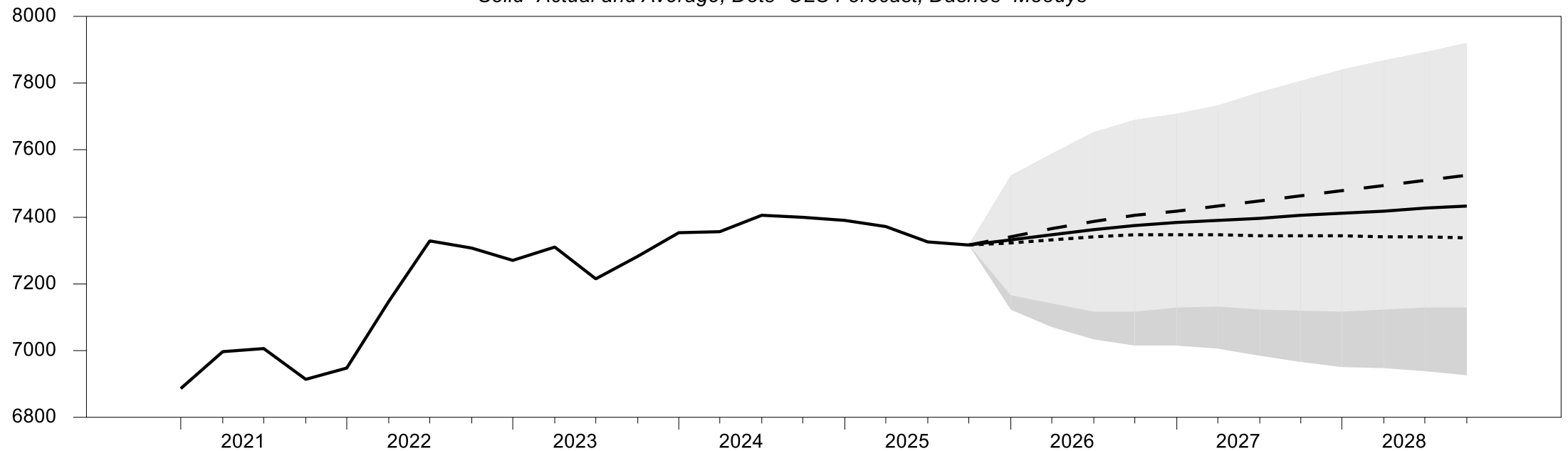
State of Southwest Louisiana

DREW CBEA Forecasting Model



Allen Parish Employment: Average Forecast 2026:01-2028:04

Solid=Actual and Average, Dots=OLS Forecast, Dashes=Moody's



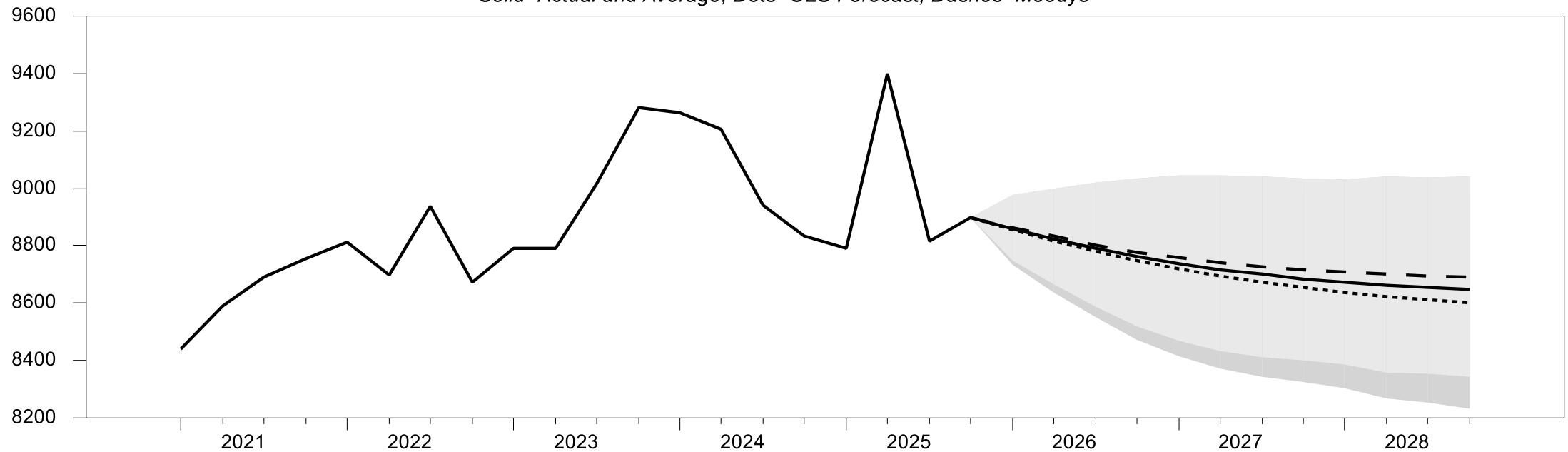
State of Southwest Louisiana

DREW CBEA Forecasting Model



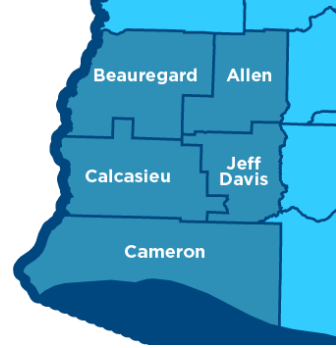
Beauregard Parish Employment: Average Forecast 2026:01-2028:04

Solid=Actual and Average, Dots=OLS Forecast, Dashes=Moody's



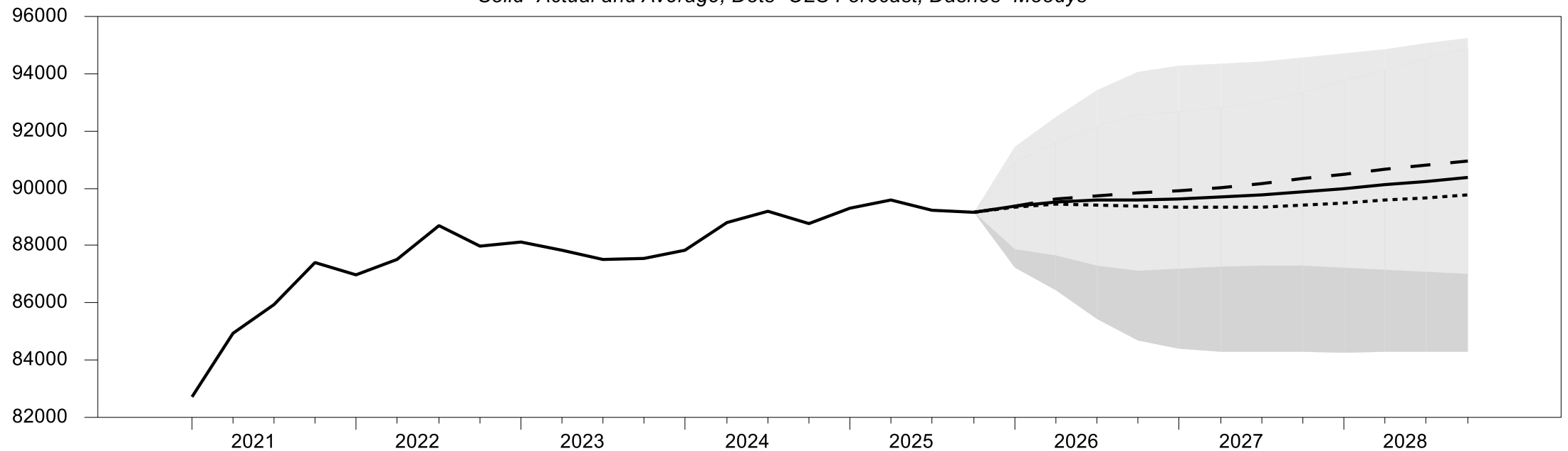
State of Southwest Louisiana

DREW CBEA Forecasting Model



Calcasieu Parish Employment: Average Forecast 2026:01-2028:04

Solid=Actual and Average, Dots=OLS Forecast, Dashes=Moody's



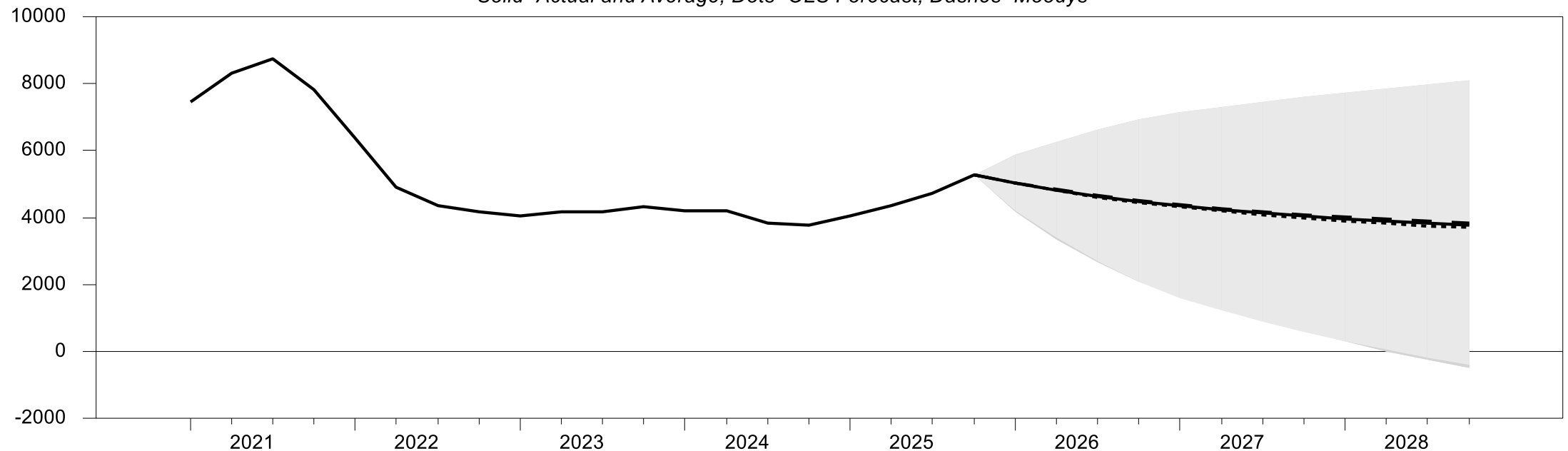
State of Southwest Louisiana

DREW CBEA Forecasting Model



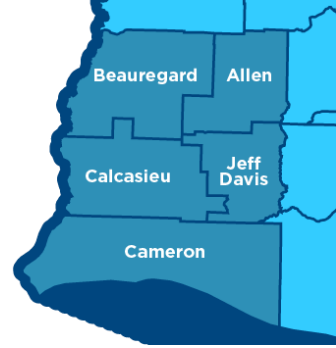
Cameron Parish Employment: Average Forecast 2026:01-2028:04

Solid=Actual and Average, Dots=OLS Forecast, Dashes=Moody's



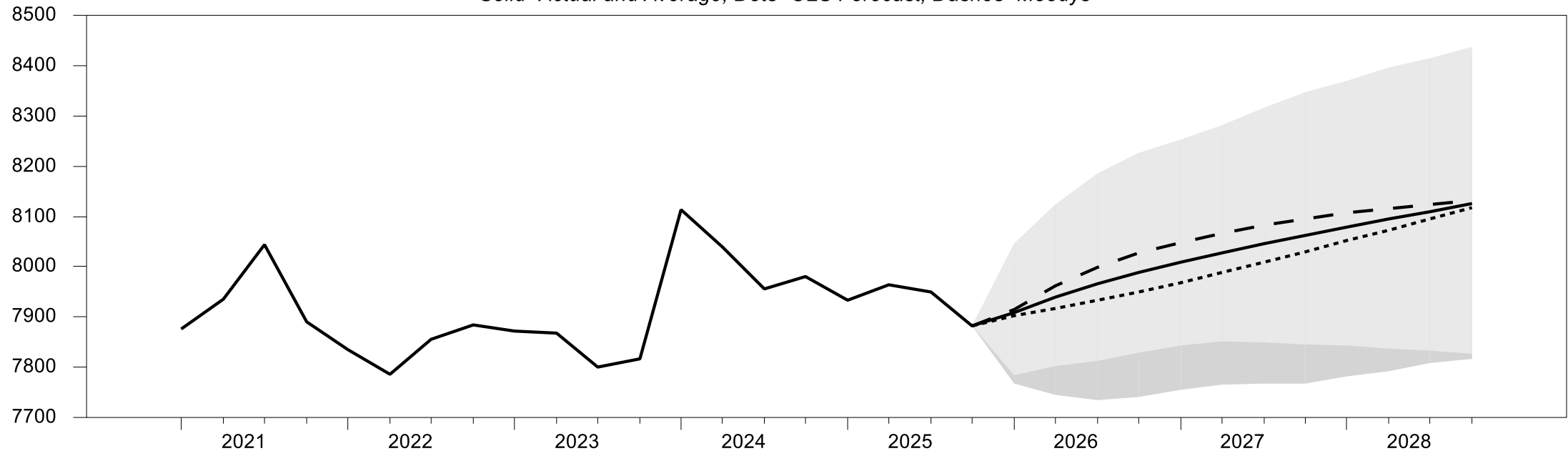
State of Southwest Louisiana

DREW CBEA Forecasting Model



Jefferson Davis Parish Employment: Average Forecast 2026:01-2028:04

Solid=Actual and Average, Dots=OLS Forecast, Dashes=Moody's



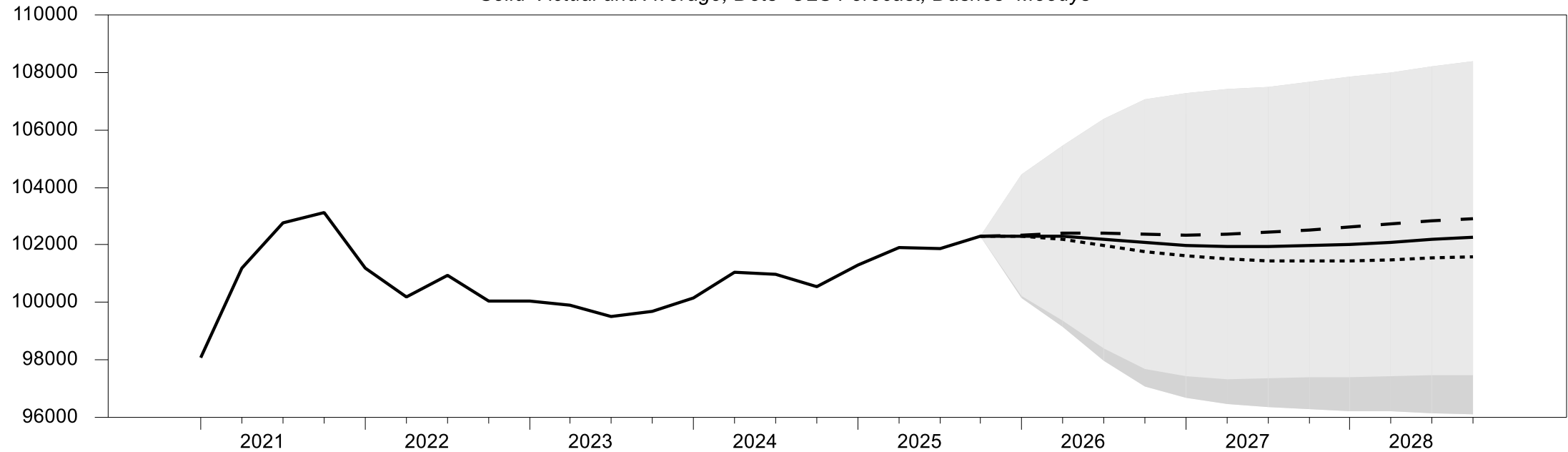
State of Southwest Louisiana

DREW CBEA Forecasting Model



Lake Charles MSA Employment: Average Forecast 2026:01-2028:04

Solid=Actual and Average, Dots=OLS Forecast, Dashes=Moody's

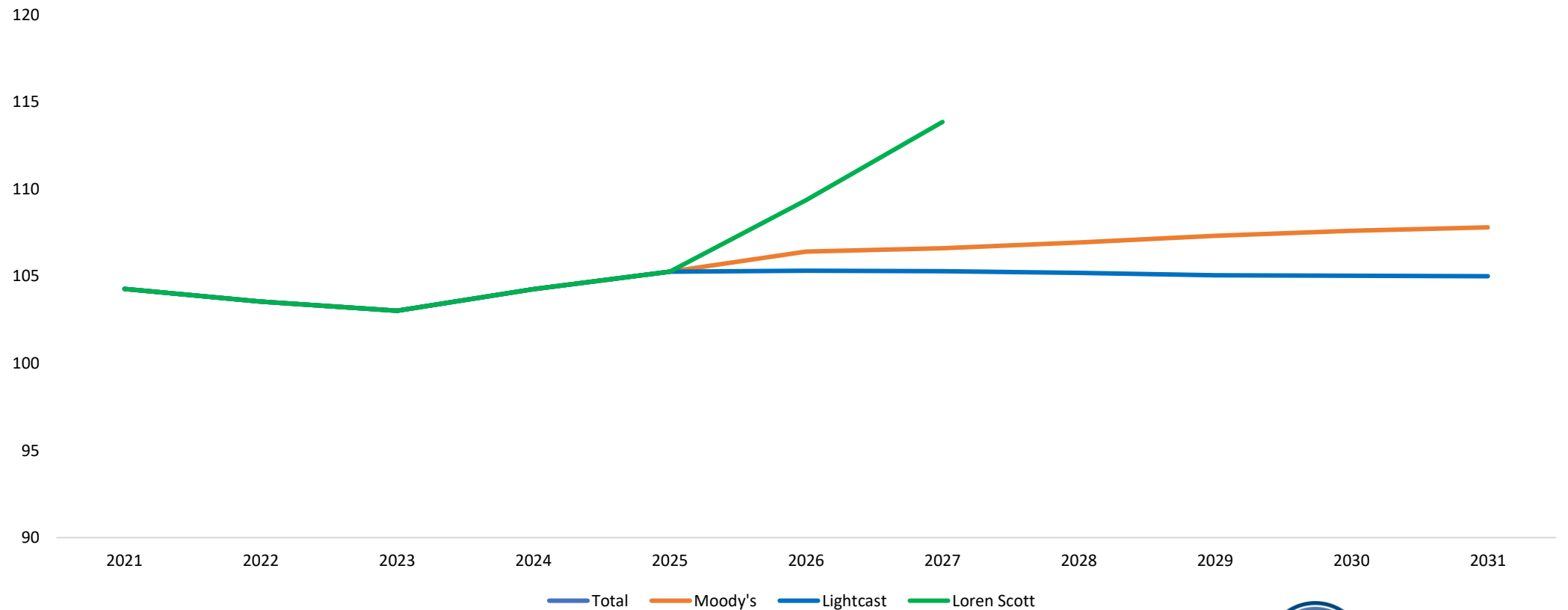


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Lake Charles Economy - Future

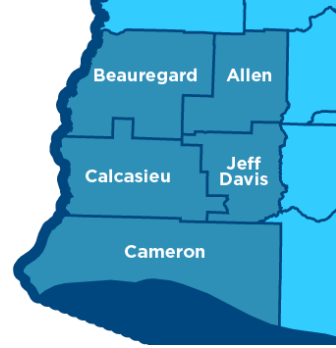


Lake Charles Employment Forecast Comparison

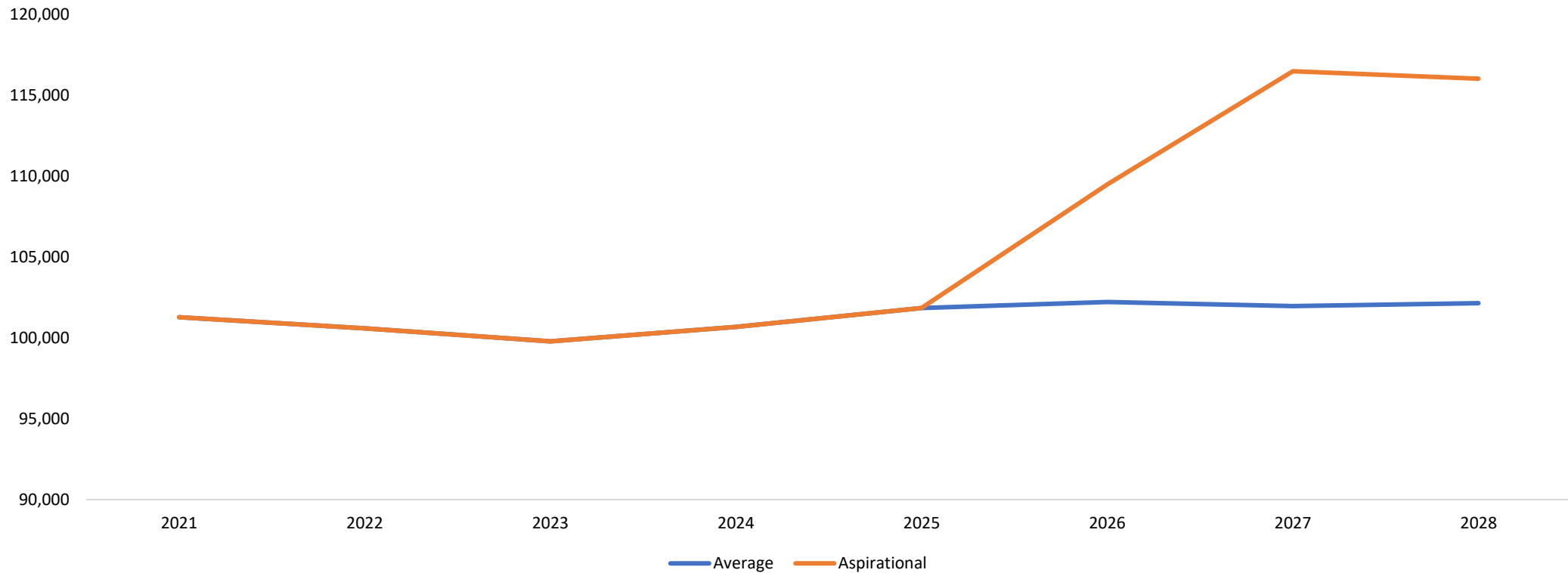


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DREW CBEA Forecasting Model



Lake Charles MSA Forecasts



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Where Are We Headed?



- All forecasts show continued growth in the area
- Whatever comes, I'm sure the spirit of SWLA will remain intact

‘Today’ touts Lake Charles as a summer destination to consider

"You've got everything you have in Vegas, plus this sort of Cajun, bayou, Creole overlay, which to me is a little extra je ne sais quoi,"