A large commercial airplane engine is the central focus of the image, shown in a hangar. A man in a black shirt and khaki shorts is standing on a metal platform, working on the engine's internal components. The engine's large, white, circular nacelle is prominent, with the dark, multi-bladed fan visible inside. The hangar's interior is visible, with a high ceiling and various structural elements.

Louisiana Economic Vitals Friday, May 15, 2026

PREFACE

Louisiana Economic Vitals is a weekly report prepared by LED's State Economic Competitiveness (SEC) team. This report provides readers with data from federal and state governmental entities, as well as other credible third-party sources. All data has been independently analyzed and summarized to ensure clarity, brevity, and practical utilization.

LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MAY 2026 ANNOUNCEMENTS:

[Louisiana Surpasses \\$100 Billion in New Investment Following Commonwealth LNG Final Investment Decision](#)

May 15th, 2026

[Spotlight Louisiana Awards Highlight Small Businesses Driving Growth and Innovation](#)

May 8th, 2026

[Louisiana Impact Fund Launches cXo Leadership Program to Develop the Next Generation of Louisiana Business Leaders](#)

May 7th, 2026

[As Louisiana Grows, So Do Our Businesses](#)

May 5th, 2026

[American Sugar Refining, Inc. Breaks Ground on First Phase of Modernization Project at Domino® Sugar Chalmette Refinery](#)

May 5th, 2026

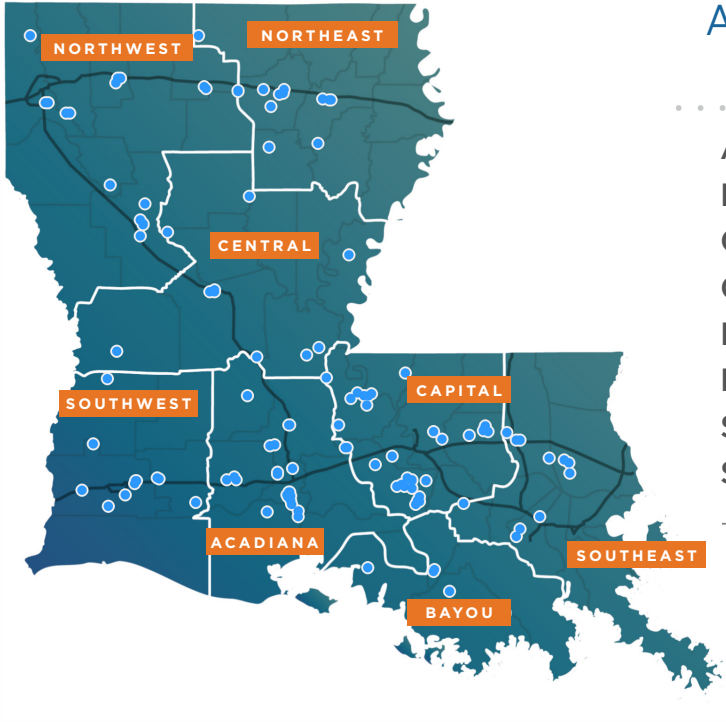
LED PROJECT PIPELINE

Since Governor Landry took office in January 2024, LED has announced 93 projects representing over \$106.8 billion USD in new investment and more than 13,970 direct new jobs across Louisiana.

As of May 15, 2026, LED is actively tracking and involved in 188 distinct projects with a combined value exceeding \$294.2 billion and the potential to create more than 54,780 direct new jobs.

CERTIFIED SITE PROGRAM

Since the launch of its Certified Sites Program, LED has certified 167 industrial sites, with all or portions of 39 sites advancing into active commerce. At full build-out, these projects represent more than \$40 billion in capital investment, over 6,600 direct new jobs, and more than \$440 million in total annual wages statewide. Currently, there are 125 actively marketed certified sites across every region of Louisiana.



Active Certified Sites by Region

Acadiana	26
Bayou	6
Capital	22
Central	9
Northeast	13
Northwest	17
Southeast	18
Southwest	14

TOTAL 125

LOUISIANA COMPETES NOW

Louisiana ranks #8 in nation for Site Selections 2026 Prosperity Cup

The 2026 Site Selection Prosperity Cup rankings highlight the nation’s top-performing states for business investment competitiveness, with strong performances tied to workforce readiness, infrastructure, and project activity. The rankings also reinforce the growing importance of long-term economic development fundamentals—particularly workforce development, tax climate, and business recruitment strategy—in shaping state competitiveness.

- Louisiana ranks in the **Top 10** nationally for economic competitiveness and business climate performance
- **LED FastStart** and related workforce development initiatives serve as key competitive differentiators through customized training and talent pipeline alignment
- **Southern states continue to lead in economic development competitiveness**, driven by infrastructure, workforce availability, energy access, and pro-growth business environments



2026 SITE SELECTION PROSPERITY CUP RANKINGS: TOP 10 STATES

RANK	STATE
1	TEXAS
2	NORTH CAROLINA
3	SOUTH CAROLINA
4	GEORGIA
5	TENNESSEE
6	ALABAMA
7	VIRGINIA
8	LOUISIANA
9	FLORIDA
10	KENTUCKY

Source: siterelection.com

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1. LABOR MARKET ACTIVITY

Using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), the two graphs below show Labor Force and Employment figures for the U.S., Louisiana and selected states, focusing on year-over-year differences for March 2026 compared to March 2025. The next two figures show labor force and employment data for Louisiana using the averages for each month over the last year. Moreover, each shaded circle represents the percentage difference from the previous month's average. Data are not seasonally adjusted, March 2026 data are preliminary, and March 2025 data were subject to revision on April 8, 2026.

Source: [bls.gov/cps](https://www.bls.gov/cps) & [bls.gov/lau](https://www.bls.gov/lau)

Key Takeaways

- Continued labor force and employment growth through early 2026, reflecting **gradual expansion in Louisiana's labor market**
- **Stable labor market** conditions despite modest upticks in unemployment, with rates remaining near historical norms
- Modest improvement in workforce engagement, with **gains in labor force participation and employment-population ratios** over the year
- **Larger share of working-age residents** participating in Louisiana's labor market compared to year-ago levels

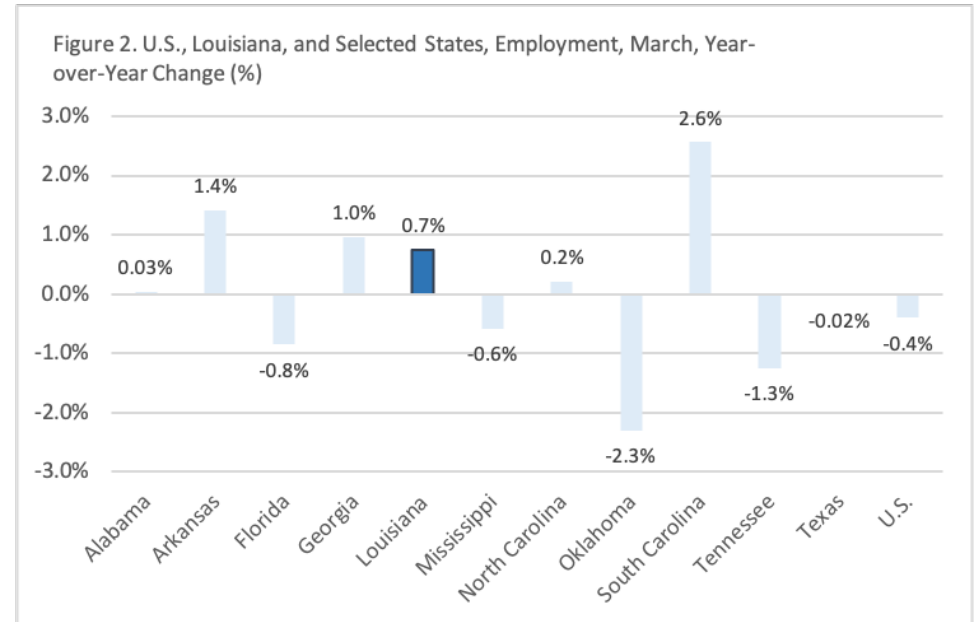
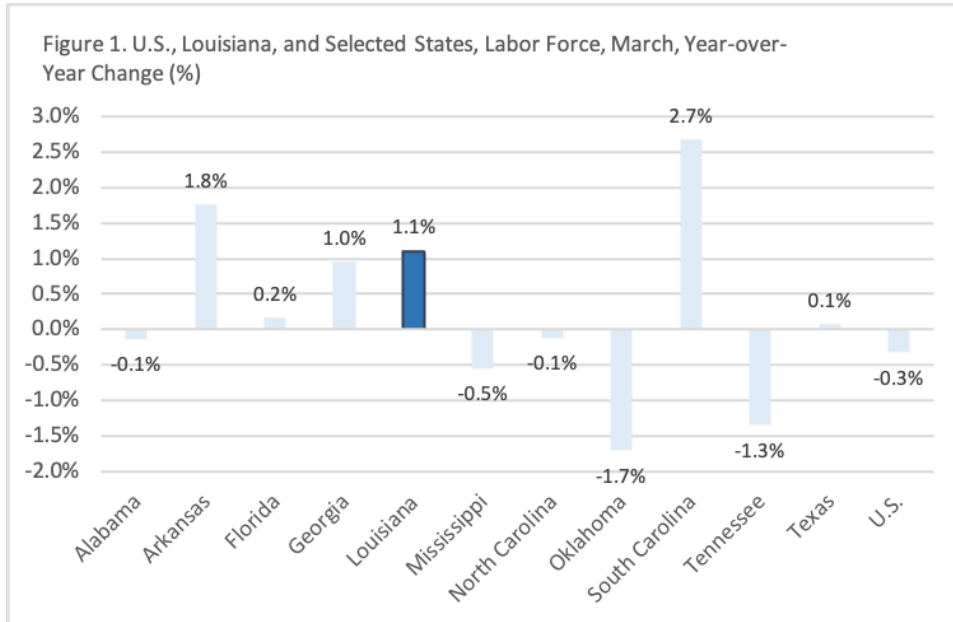


Figure 3. Louisiana Labor Force, Monthly (2-Year Averages) and Differences (Month-to-Month, %)

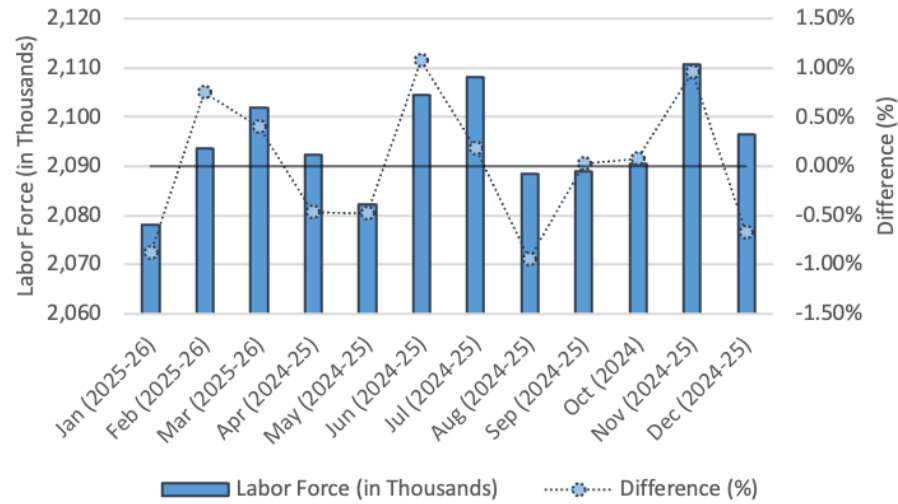
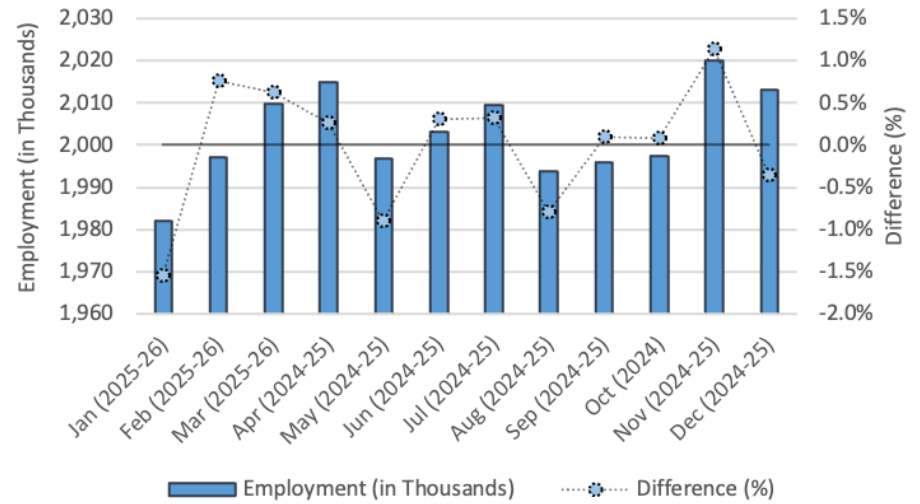


Figure 4. Louisiana Employment, Monthly (2-Year Averages) and Differences (Month-to-Month, %)



2. COMMODITIES

The following tables present weekly prices for key energy and agricultural commodities. Spot prices reflect the market price for immediate delivery. WTI crude is the primary U.S. oil benchmark priced at Cushing, Oklahoma, while Brent crude reflects global oil markets. Henry Hub natural gas prices are based at Louisiana's major pipeline interchange, the largest natural gas trading hub in North America. U.S. regular gasoline prices represent average retail pump prices, including taxes, from a nationwide weekly survey.

Source: eia.gov & tradingeconomics.com

Key Takeaways

- Energy prices remained **elevated** year-over-year despite recent moderation in oil markets
- Weekly and monthly declines in Brent and WTI crude prices **signaling short-term easing following earlier price spikes**
- **Natural gas markets diverging from crude oil trends**, reflecting different supply-demand dynamics and softer pricing conditions
- **Mixed performance across agricultural commodities**, with grains strengthening while several consumer-oriented commodities weakened
- Continued **pricing strength** in staple grain markets alongside **softer conditions** for beverage and sweetener commodities

Table 1. Energy Commodities, Weekly

Commodity	5/8/26	5/1/26	4/10/26	5/9/25	Change		
					WoW	MoM	YoY
Brent Crude Oil Price	\$105.88	\$119.63	\$124.61	\$62.29	-11.5%	-15.0%	70.0%
WTI Crude Oil Price	\$102.28	\$105.57	\$104.54	\$60.39	-3.1%	-2.2%	69.4%
Henry Hub Natural Gas Spot Price	\$2.74	\$2.66	\$2.85	\$3.19	3.0%	-3.9%	-14.1%
U.S. Regular Conventional Gas Price	\$4.35	\$4.31	\$3.96	\$2.99	0.9%	9.8%	45.5%

Table 2. Agricultural Commodities, Daily Period of May 14, 2026

Commodity	Listed Price	Dollar (\$)	Unit of Measurement	Change			
				Daily	Weekly	Monthly	YoY
Soybeans	\$1,184.26	\$11.84	\$/Bu	-3.6%	0.6%	1.5%	12.6%
Wheat	\$656.59	\$6.57	\$/Bu	-2.9%	9.1%	10.6%	23.3%
Lumber	\$580.03	\$5.80	\$/MBF	0.5%	0.6%	-0.2%	-3.9%
Palm Oil	\$4,393.00	\$43.93	\$/MT	-1.0%	-3.3%	-1.8%	13.8%
Sugar (No. 11)	\$14.99	\$0.15	\$/Lb	-2.6%	3.1%	9.5%	-15.1%
Coffee	\$275.82	\$2.76	\$/Lb	-1.8%	1.0%	-7.5%	-27.9%
Corn	\$465.08	\$4.65	\$/Bu	-3.1%	2.9%	3.3%	3.9%
Rice	\$12.72	\$0.13	\$/CWT	0.2%	9.0%	16.6%	-1.5%
Orange Juice	\$181.30	\$1.81	\$/Lb	-5.2%	4.7%	-1.8%	-31.9%

3. LOUISIANA AIRPORTS

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics publishes monthly airport and passenger statistics. The figures below provide passenger enplanement data for all carriers for Louisiana’s regional and international airports by month for March 2025 through February 2026 overlaid with monthly passenger data from March 2024 through February 2025.

Source: transtats.bts.gov

Key Takeaways

- **Regional passenger traffic strengthened across Louisiana**, with Alexandria (+12.8%), Monroe (+11.5%), and Lafayette (+9.0%) leading statewide growth among commercial airports
- **New Orleans (MSY) remained Louisiana’s primary air travel hub**, serving more than 6 million passengers despite a 4.2% year-over-year decline in traffic
- **Regional markets outpaced larger airports in growth rates**, signaling **continued momentum and recovery in smaller commercial aviation markets across the state**



Figure 7. Lafayette Airport, Passengers, by Month, Year-over-Year Comparison

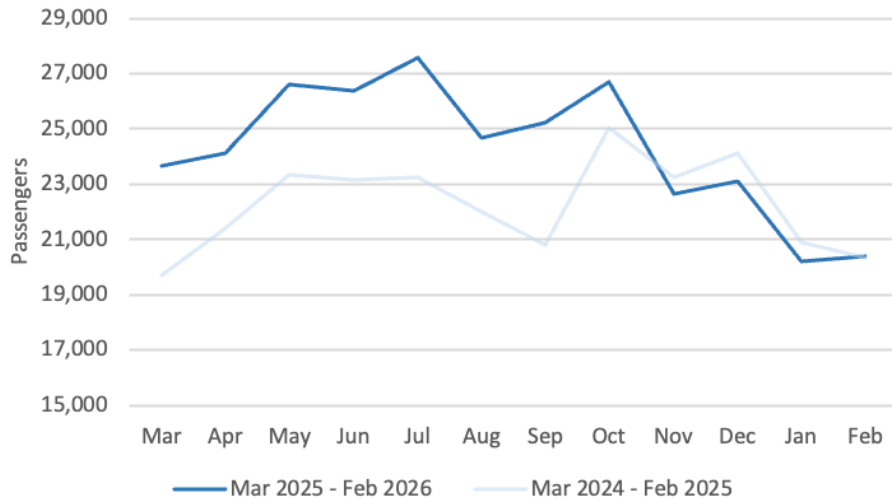


Figure 8. Lake Charles Airport, Passengers, by Month, Year-over-Year Comparison

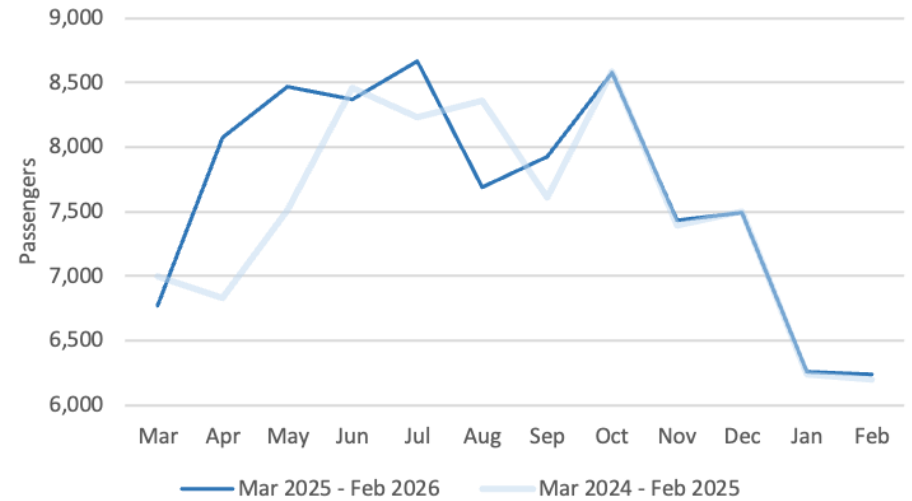


Figure 9. Monroe Airport, Passengers, by Month, Year-over-Year Comparison

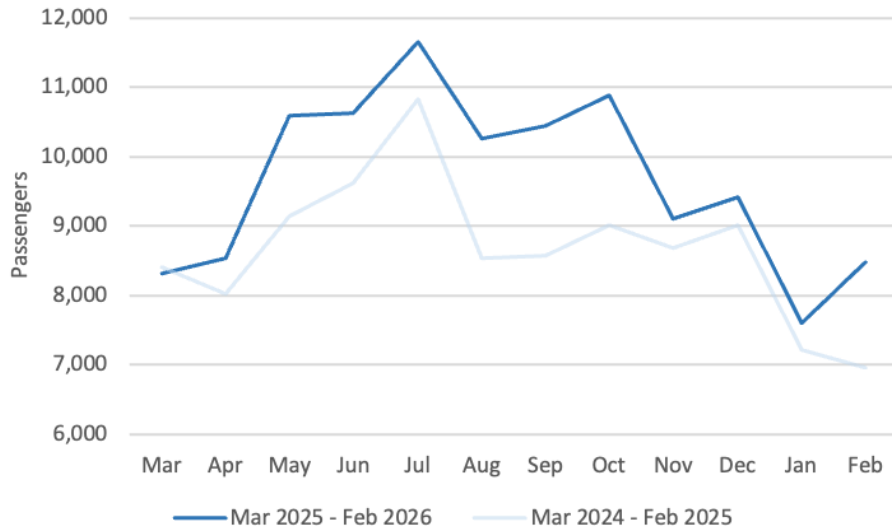


Figure 10. New Orleans Airport, Passengers, by Month, Year-over-Year Comparison

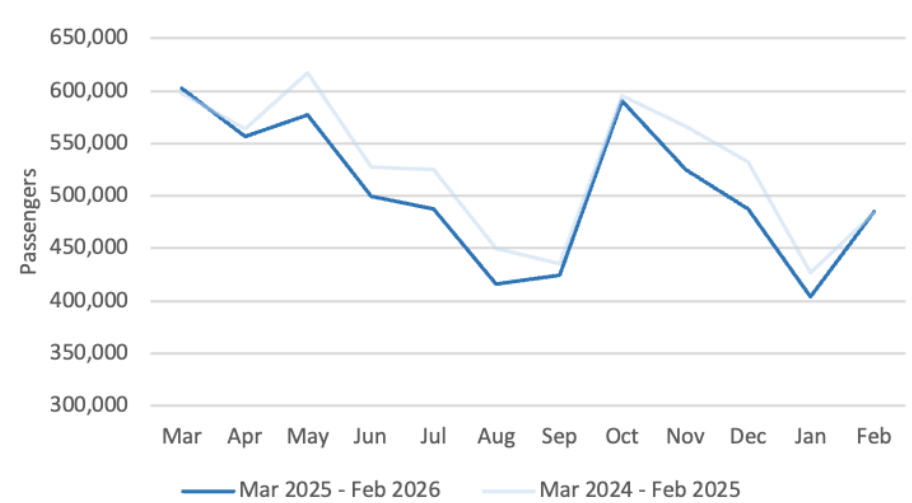
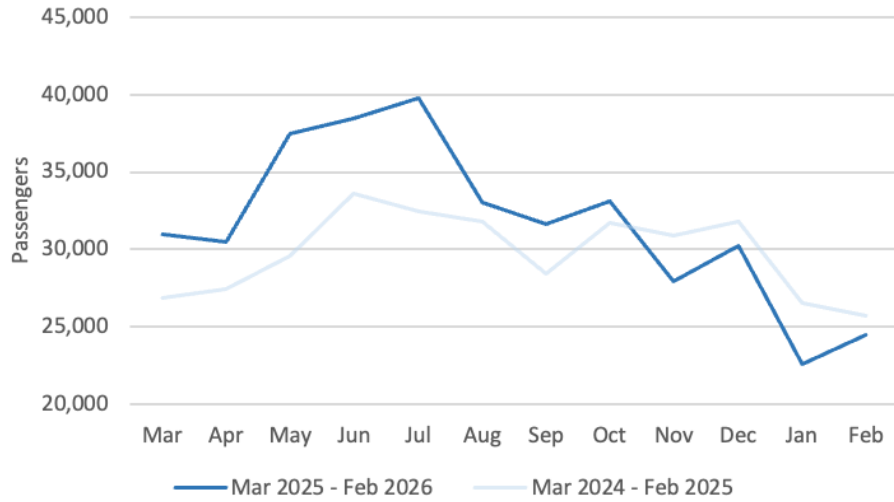


Figure 11. Shreveport Airport, Passengers, by Month, Year-over-Year Comparison



4. CPI AND INFLATION

The Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) tracks the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a basket of goods and services. It's one of the most widely used indicators of inflation in the United States. The following table presents the monthly rate of change in the cost of the basket in addition to subsets of the basket for March and April 2026, as well as the annual percentage-change in the basket price. Table 5 shows price indicators through the supply chain of beef that affect downstream retail prices. Note: Base period Boxed beef cutouts are measured in cwt.

Source: [bls.gov](https://www.bls.gov)

Key Takeaways

- Inflation trends remained relatively contained, with **year-over-year price growth continuing to moderate despite modest month-to-month volatility**
- **Upstream beef-price cost pressures persisted across the supply chain**, with double-digit increases in producer, wholesale, and consumer beef prices indicating continued pass-through into retail food costs
- Energy price movements remained mixed, with modest gasoline increases and softer year-over-year producer energy prices, **reducing the sector's broader inflationary impact compared to prior years**

Table 3. Change in CPI-U, U.S. City Average by Month, Seasonally Adjusted

Location	Apr-26	Mar-26	Change	
			MoM	Since Apr-25 ¹
All Items (Headline)	0.6	0.9	-0.3	3.3%
All Items Less Food and Energy (Core CPI)	0.4	0.2	0.2	2.6%
Medical Care Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7%

Note: ¹Not Seasonally Adjusted. Base Period: 1982-84=100.

Table 4. Selected Beef Supply Chain Price Indicators

Category	4/10/26	3/9/26	4/10/25	Change	
				MoM	YoY
Beef Processing PPI (NAICS 311611)	364.088	366.504	320.001	-0.7%	13.8%
USDA Choice Boxed Beef Cutout	386.41	379	336.49	2.0%	14.8%
Beef and Veal CPI	520.433	504.885	453.243	3.1%	14.8%

Figure 12 – Seasonally Adjusted (SA) Core Inflation tracks price changes after removing two things: the predictable seasonal swings that happen every year on a regular calendar schedule, and the costs of food and energy. This figure is intended as the signal — it shows where inflation is actually trending.

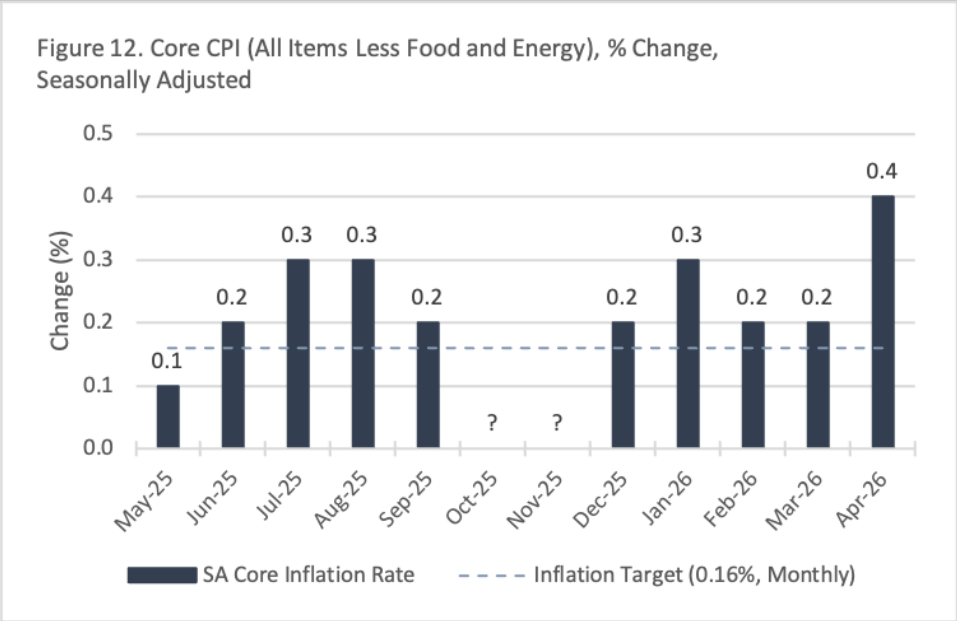


Figure 13 – Non-Seasonally Adjusted (NSA) Headline Inflation reflects what consumers actually paid for a broad basket of goods and services, including food and energy, without any adjustments. This figure is intended as the reality check.

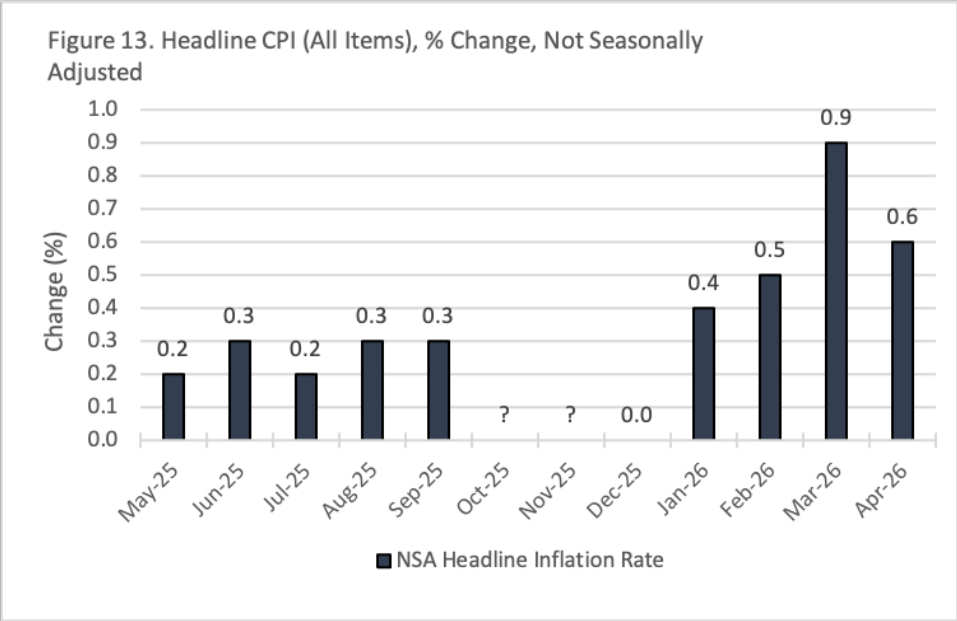


Figure 14 – The **spread** (SA Core minus NSA Headline) is positive if monthly core inflation is higher than monthly headline inflation and negative if food and/or energy prices are elevated.

