

Louisiana Economic Vitals Friday, May 22, 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 Accelerates Industrial Growth at Port of Vinton with FastSites Investment](#)

May 21st, 2026

[Shell's Mars Platform Reaches Historic 1 Billion Barrel Milestone in Gulf of America](#)

May 20th, 2026

[Hut 8 Commits \\$16 Million to Expand Water Infrastructure in West Feliciana Parish](#)

May 19th, 2026

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

May 15th, 2026

[Graduates. Louisiana has a place for you](#)

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

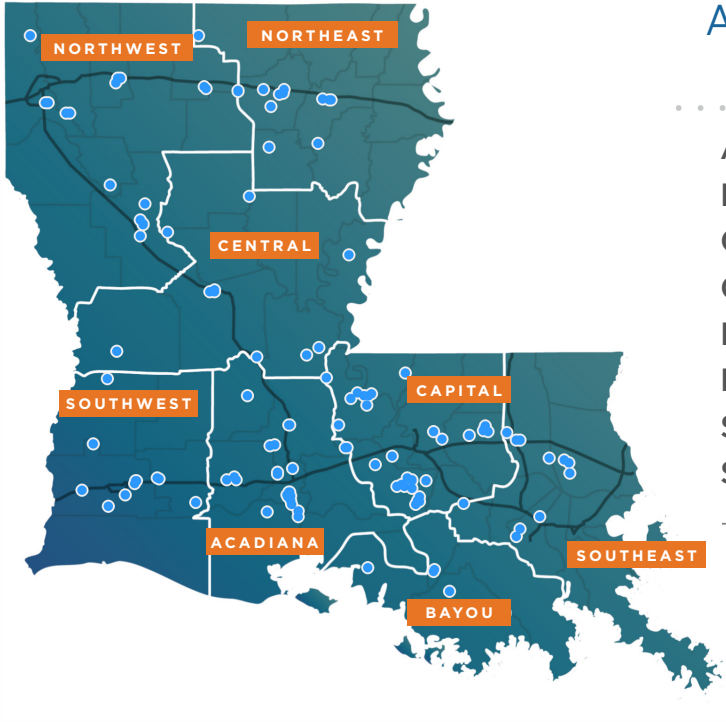
LED PROJECT PIPELINE

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 22, 2026, LED is actively tracking and involved in 179 distinct projects with a combined value exceeding \$332.7 billion and the potential to create more than 52,800 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

1. LOUISIANA'S CAPEX EXPANSION & SKILLED LABOR CRUNCH

Louisiana is attracting massive physical capital investment in LNG, petrochemicals, hydrogen, shipbuilding, AI/data centers, and advanced manufacturing — but workforce shortages are becoming a limiting factor. This investment is reshaping Louisiana's economy, but workforce capacity may determine whether the state captures the full economic benefit. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate announced industrial projects tracked by Louisiana Economic Development (LED). Figures 3 and 4 compare projected net employment change and estimated workforce exits for Industrial Skilled Trades occupations across Louisiana metropolitan areas (MSAs) and selected states. Figures 5 and 6 display an Industrial Workforce Intensity measure (IWI) across Louisiana MSAs and selected states. A higher IWI indicates the number of job openings as a ratio of total jobs is increasing.

Source: <https://lightcast.io/> and author's calculations. See: 1012industryreport.com & nesfircroft.com

Key Takeaways

- Louisiana's industrial investment pipeline in LNG, manufacturing, energy transition, and AI/data center projects continues to expand rapidly.
- Growth in announced industrial projects and capital investment has increased demand for Industrial Skilled Trades workers across Louisiana, even as projected direct employment gains remain comparatively moderate.
- Energy, manufacturing, and emerging AI/data center infrastructure projects increasingly rely on the same skilled labor pool of electricians, pipefitters, welders, millwrights, and industrial maintenance workers.
- Hiring pressure remains elevated even where employment growth is limited or declining due to substantial workforce exits, including retirements and occupational separations.
- Industrial Workforce Intensity (IWI) measures suggest some Louisiana regions face higher concentrations of hiring demand relative to their existing Industrial Skilled Trades workforce.

Figure 1. Announced Industrial Projects and Capital Investment in Louisiana

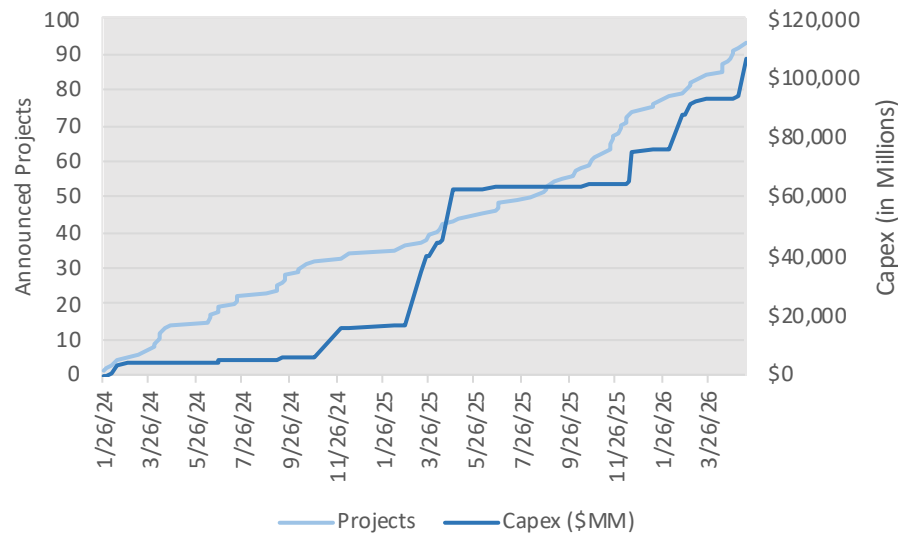


Figure 2. Announced Industrial Projects and Projected Direct Employment in Louisiana

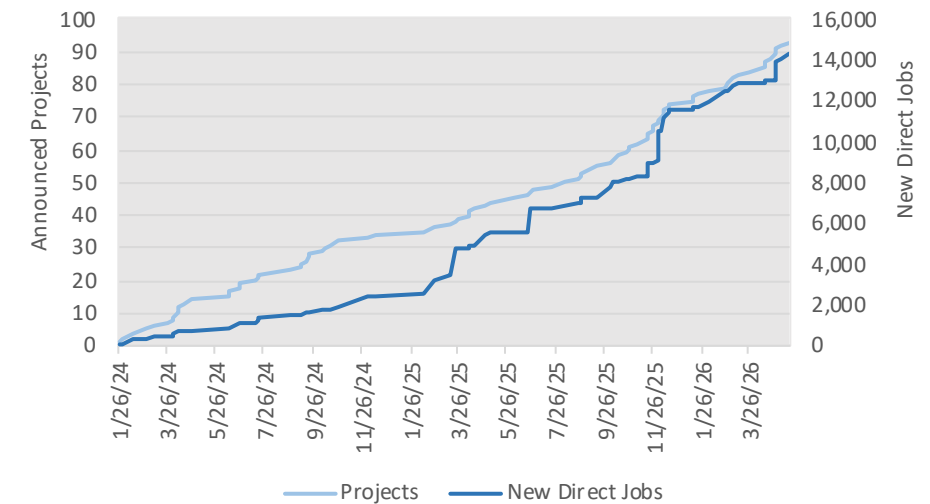


Figure 3. Industrial Skilled Trades Labor Dynamics, Louisiana MSAs, Net Employment Change vs. Estimated Workforce Exits, 2024 - 2025

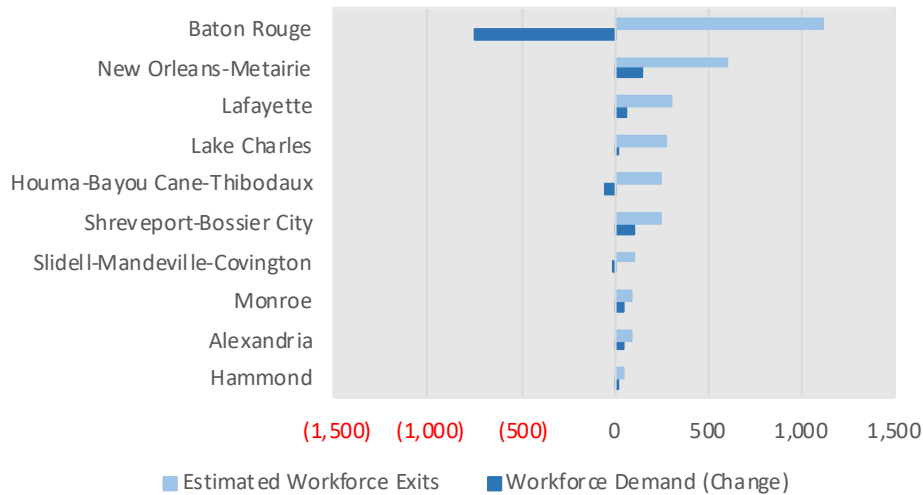


Figure 4. Industrial Skilled Trades Labor Dynamics, Selected States, Net Employment Change vs. Estimated Workforce Exits, 2024 - 2025

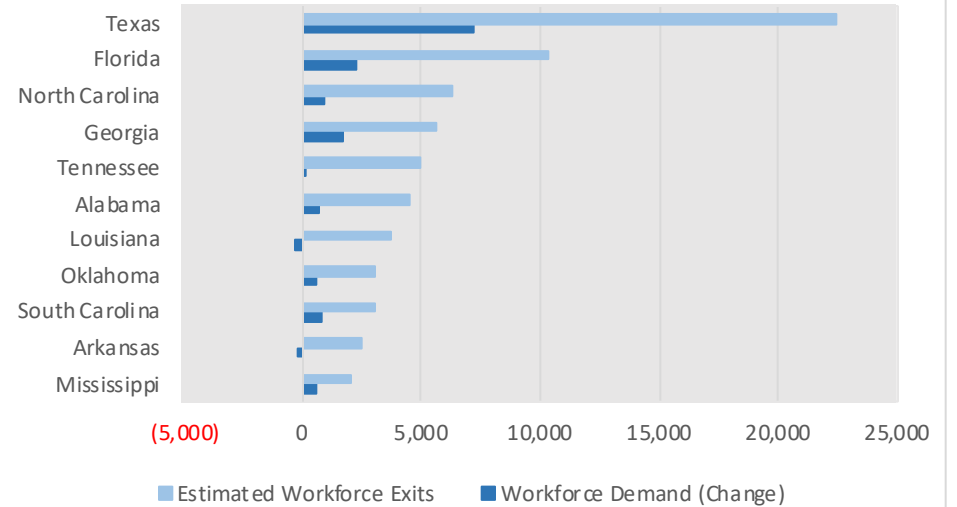


Figure 5. Industrial Workforce Intensity (IWI) Across Louisiana Metropolitan Areas

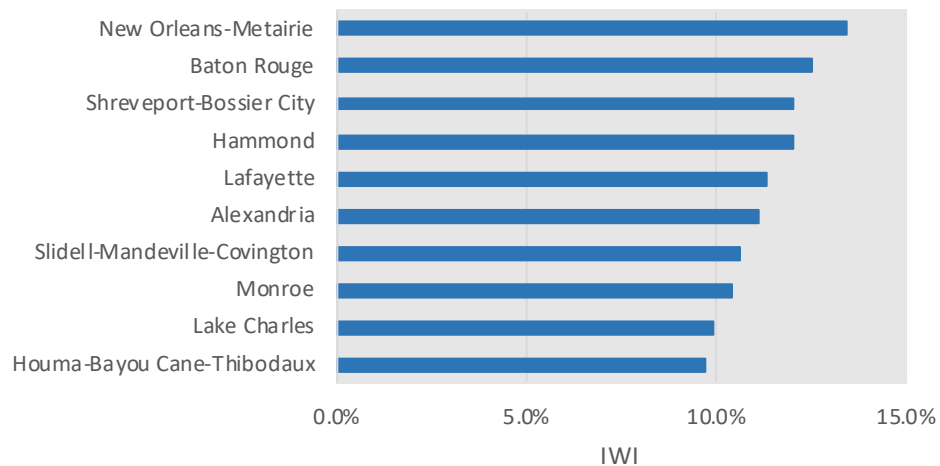
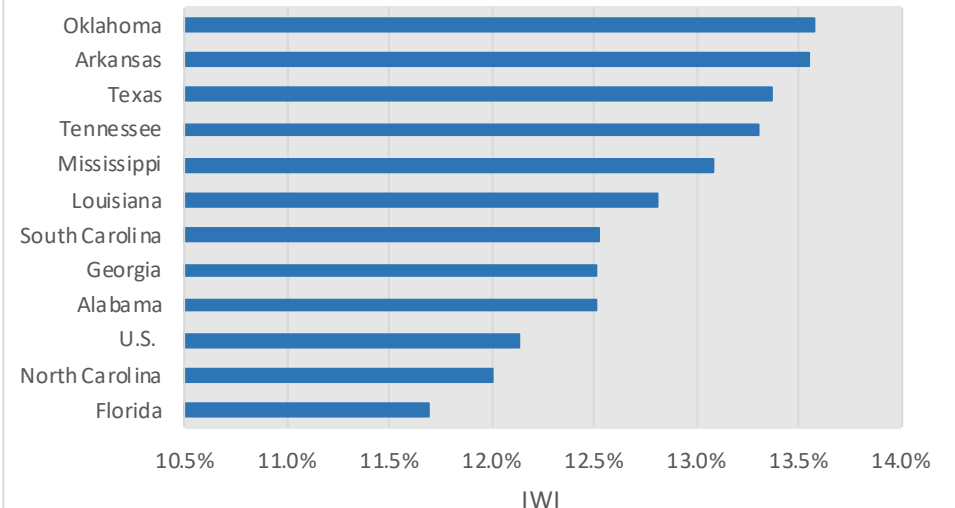


Figure 6. Industrial Workforce Intensity (IWI) Across Selected States



2. LABOR MARKET ACTIVITY

The Current Employment Statistics (CES) program produces detailed industry estimates of nonfarm employment, hours, and earnings of workers on payrolls. Each month, CES surveys approximately 119,000 businesses and government agencies, representing approximately 622,000 individual worksites. The following figures illustrate total nonfarm employment for March and April, with the net change over those periods shown in dark blue, for 2016 - 2026 (April 2026 released next month) for Louisiana and its metropolitan areas.

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

Key Takeaways

- Louisiana’s labor market continued to show steady seasonal growth in April, with statewide employment rising above 2.0 million and most metro areas posting monthly gains.
- New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Lafayette remained key drivers of statewide labor market activity, collectively adding thousands of jobs compared to March levels.
- The latest labor market trends, combined with improving housing indicators such as Pending Home Sales Indexes (PHSIs), suggest Louisiana’s economy continues to expand at a measured but stable pace entering mid-2026.

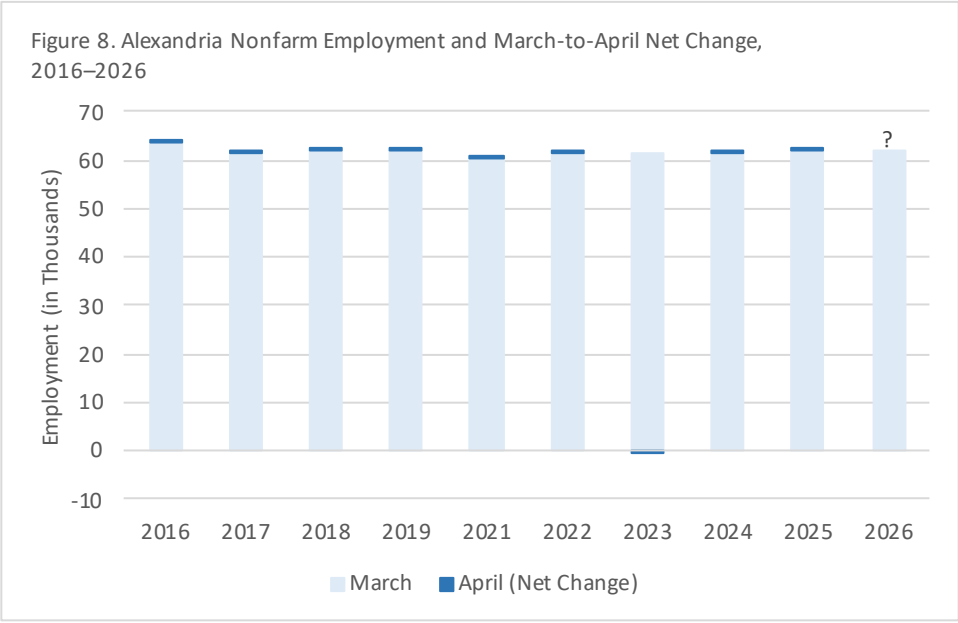
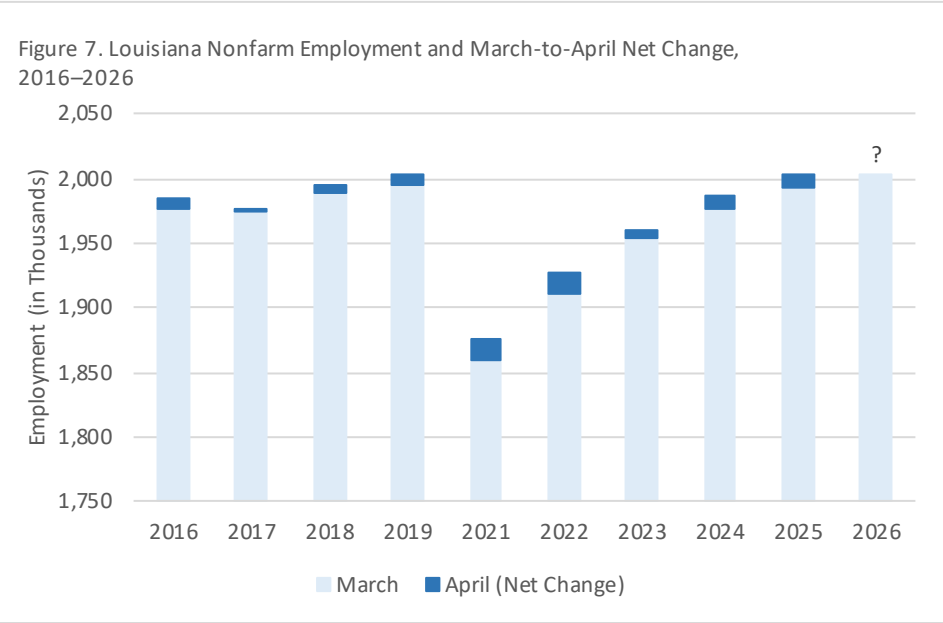


Figure 9. Baton Rouge Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026

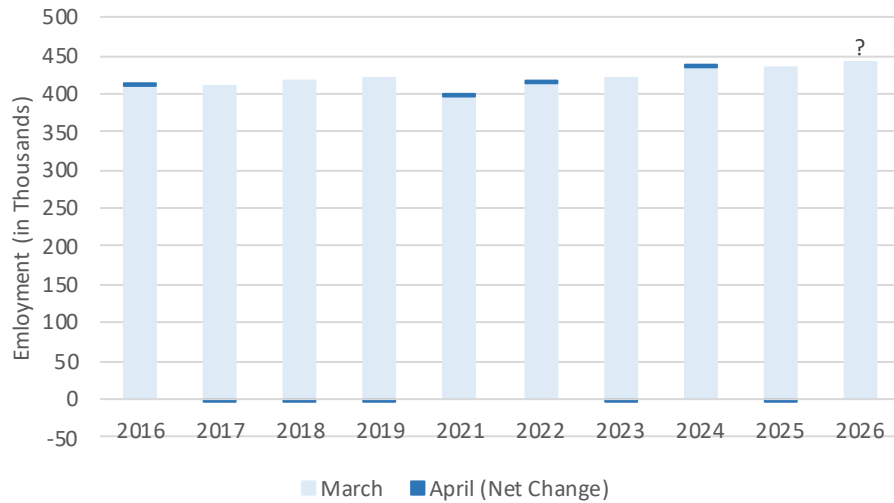


Figure 10. Hammond Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026

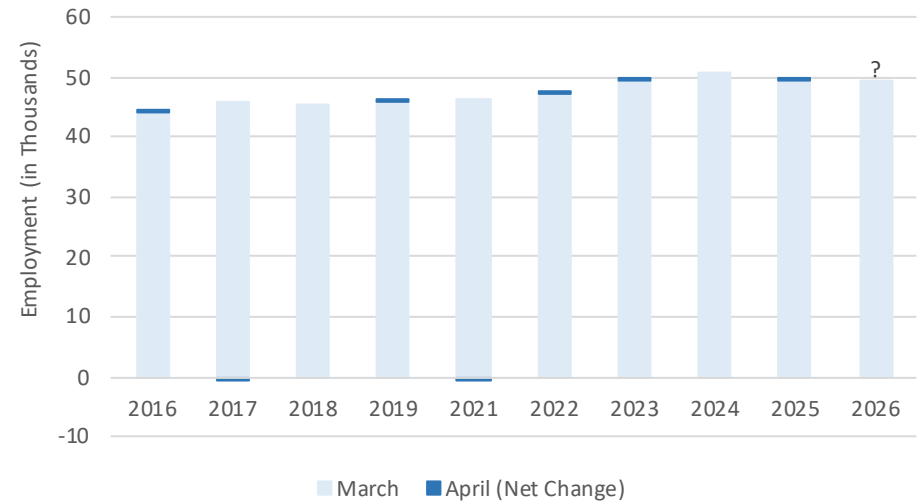


Figure 11. Houma-Bayou Cane-Thibodaux Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026

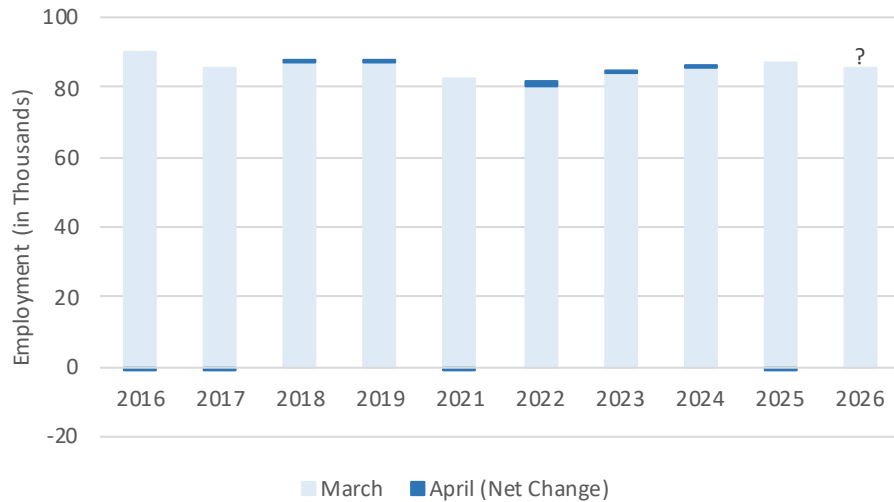


Figure 12. Lafayette Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026

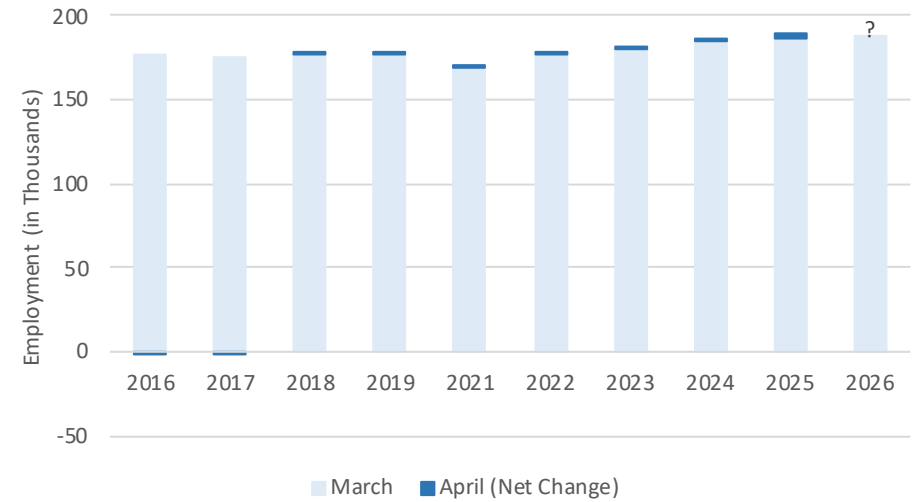


Figure 13. Lake Charles Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026

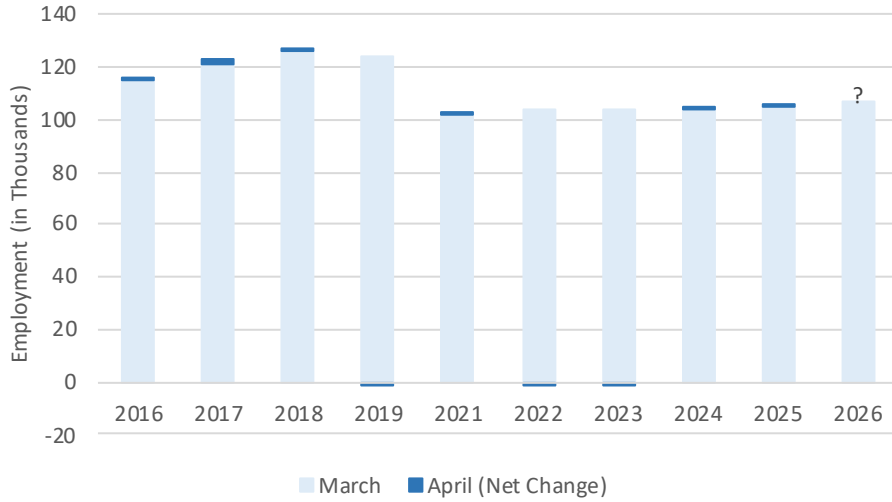


Figure 14. Monroe Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026

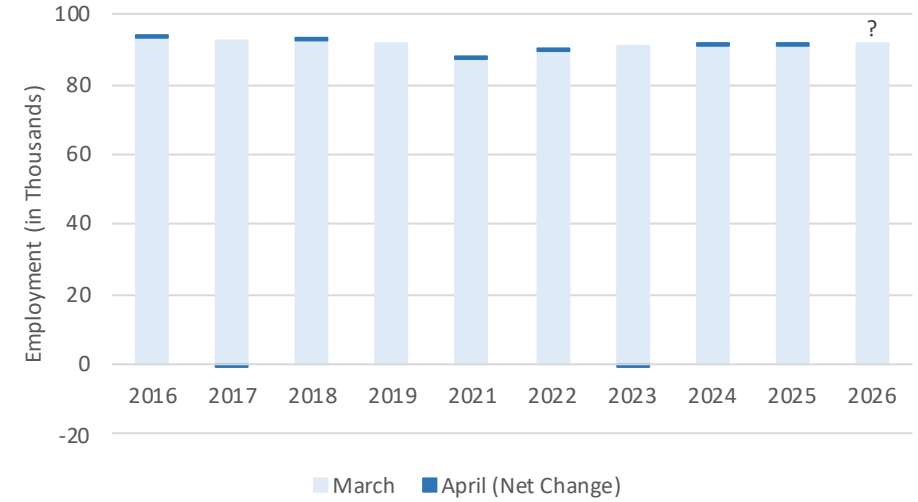


Figure 15. New Orleans-Metairie Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026

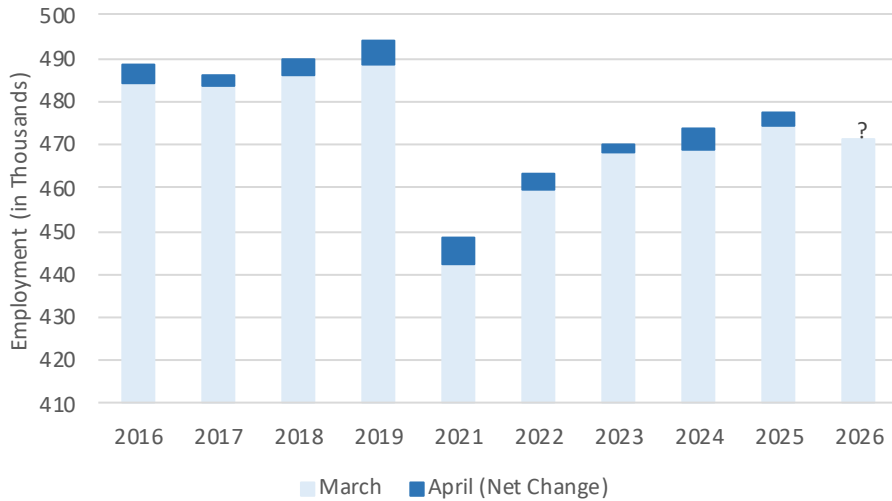


Figure 16. Shreveport-Bossier Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026

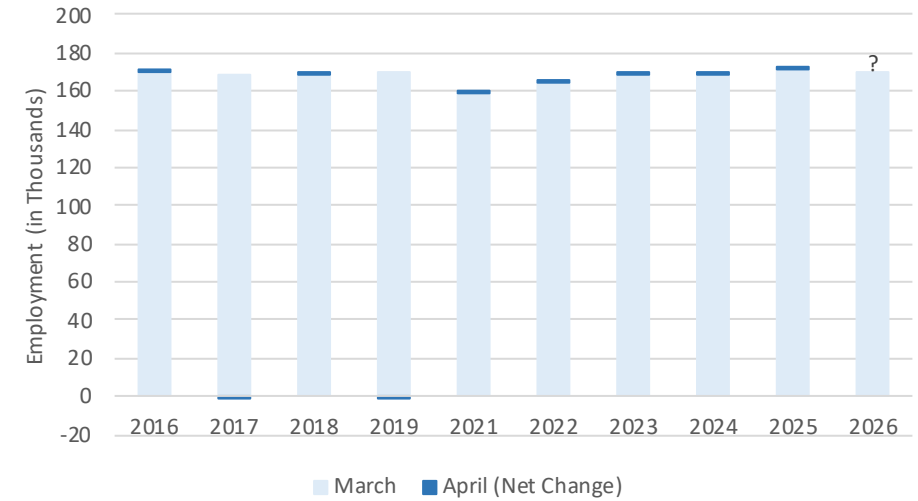
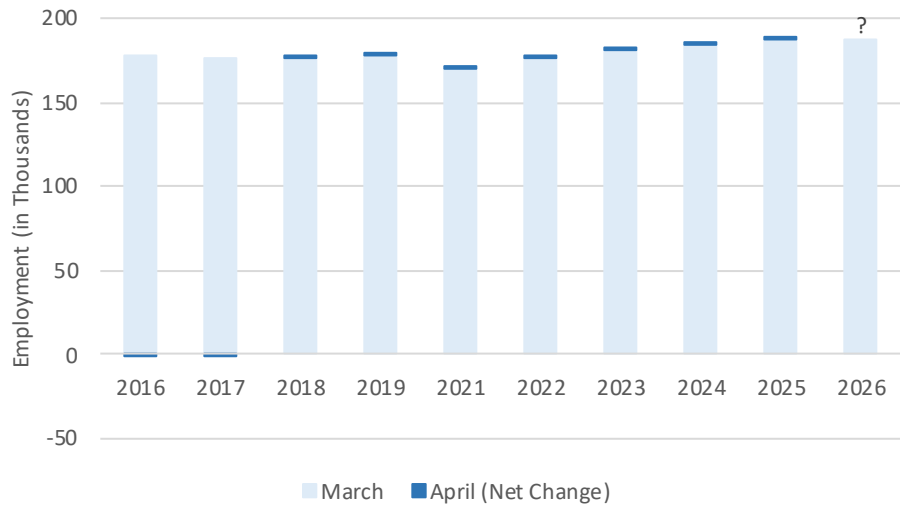


Figure 17. Slidell-Mandeville-Covington Nonfarm Employment and March-to-April Net Change, 2016–2026



3. 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 compared to a year ago, with both Brent and WTI crude oil prices rising more than 60% year over year despite some recent monthly softening.
- Natural gas prices showed mixed trends, as Henry Hub gas prices declined from year-ago levels while retail gasoline prices remained significantly higher than last year.
- Agricultural commodity prices were mixed in May, with wheat, soybeans, and rice posting solid year-over-year gains while coffee, sugar, and orange juice prices continued to decline.

Table 1. Energy Commodities, Weekly

Commodity	5/15/26	5/8/26	4/17/26	5/16/25	Change		
					WoW	MoM	YoY
Brent Crude Oil Price	\$110.53	\$105.88	\$114.43	\$65.54	4.4%	-3.4%	68.6%
WTI Crude Oil Price	\$105.10	\$102.28	\$93.84	\$63.94	2.8%	12.0%	64.4%
Henry Hub Natural Gas Spot Price	\$2.86	\$2.74	\$2.77	\$3.20	4.4%	3.2%	-10.6%
U.S. Regular Conventional Gas Price	\$4.33	\$4.35	\$3.89	\$3.04	-0.5%	11.3%	42.4%

Table 2. Agricultural Commodities, Daily Period of May 21, 2026

Commodity	Listed Price	Dollar (\$)	Unit of Measurement	Change			
				Daily	Weekly	Monthly	YoY
Soybeans	\$1,195.14	\$11.95	\$/Bu	-0.4%	0.2%	2.6%	11.9%
Wheat	\$648.95	\$6.49	\$/Bu	-1.8%	-1.3%	8.3%	19.2%
Lumber	\$584.01	\$5.84	\$/MBF	-0.9%	-0.3%	0.1%	-2.0%
Palm Oil	\$4,458.00	\$44.58	\$/MT	-2.7%	1.5%	-3.7%	16.7%
Sugar (No. 11)	\$14.90	\$0.15	\$/Lb	1.2%	-0.6%	7.9%	-14.3%
Coffee	\$273.26	\$2.73	\$/Lb	1.9%	-1.0%	-5.6%	-24.4%
Corn	\$463.51	\$4.64	\$/Bu	-0.5%	-0.9%	2.0%	0.1%
Rice	\$12.97	\$0.13	\$/CWT	0.6%	1.7%	16.9%	0.4%
Orange Juice	\$166.06	\$1.66	\$/Lb	6.0%	-7.9%	-3.6%	-42.3%

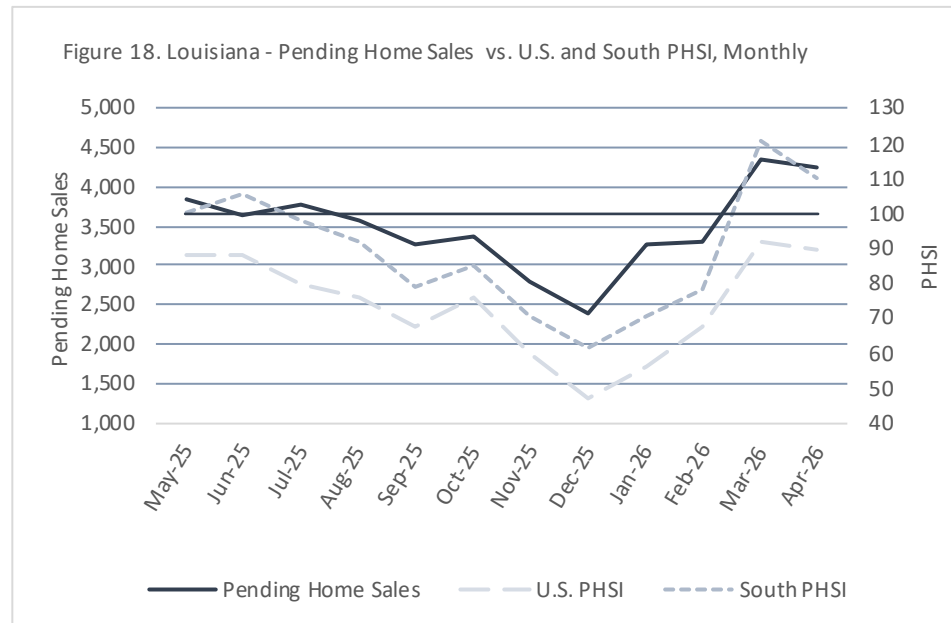
4. LOUISIANA REAL ESTATE

Louisiana Realtors® produces monthly reports on local market updates for the state and its regions. The following figures illustrate state and regional pending sales mapped against the Pending Home Sales Index (PHSI) for the U.S. and the South, by month. For Louisiana Realtors®, pending home sales includes accepted contract offers, and for the National Association of Realtors®, pending homes sales is based on signed real estate contracts. The PHSI base year (2001 = 100) is chosen based on the first of four consecutive years of record-level existing home sales. Included in the South is: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Source: louisiana.stats.showingtime.com & nar.realtor

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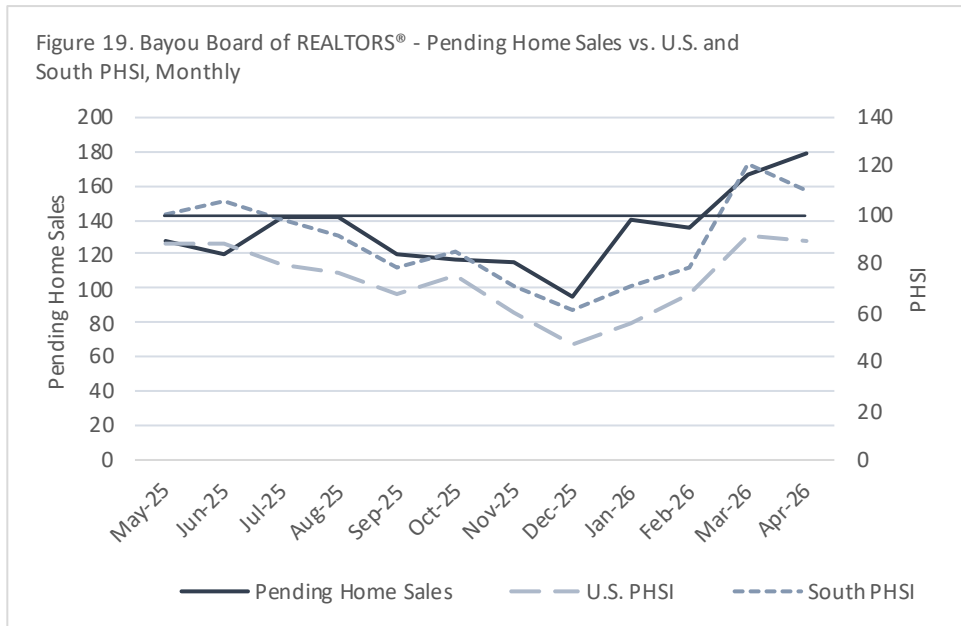


Dr. Christopher Coombs, Economist, Economic Competitiveness

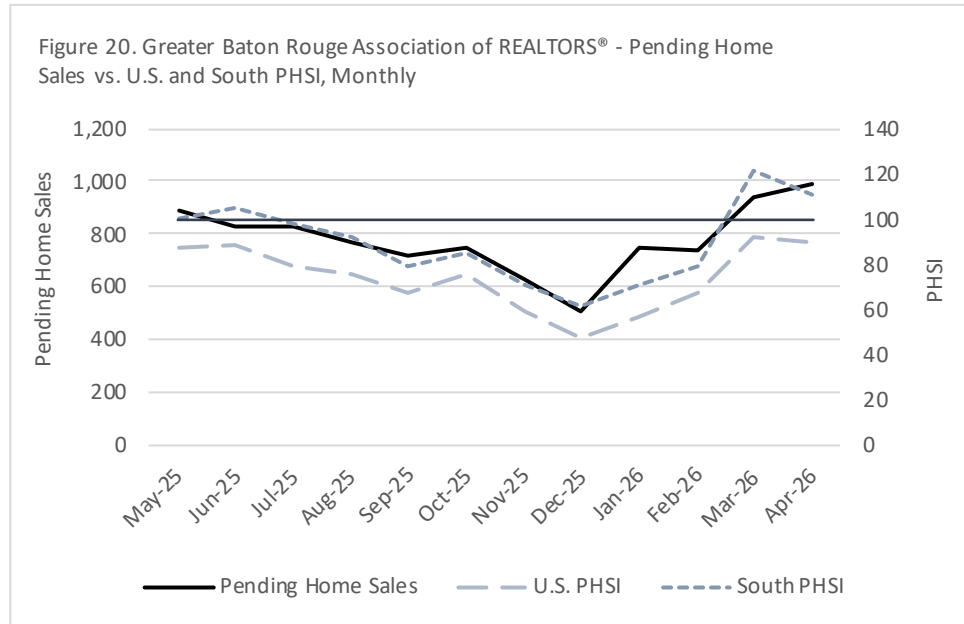
E: Christopher.Coombs@la.gov T: 225.342.5410



Bayou Board of REALTORS® - Assumption, Lafourche, St. Mary, Terrebonne

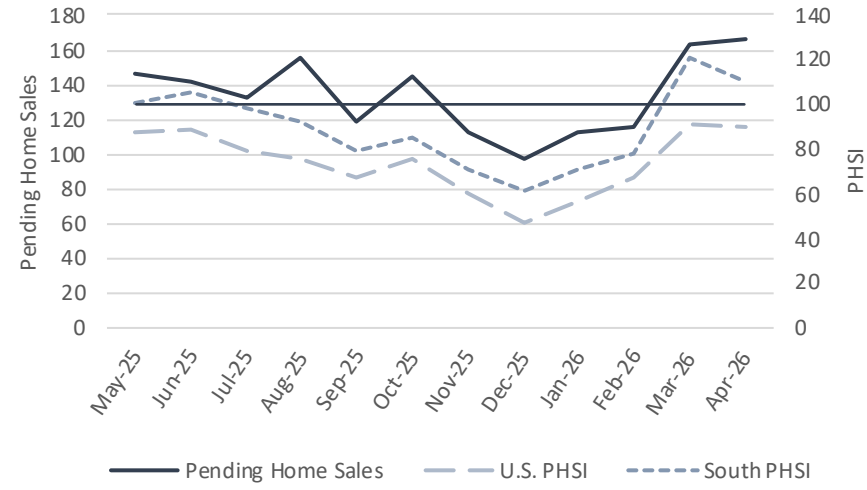


Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors® - Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana



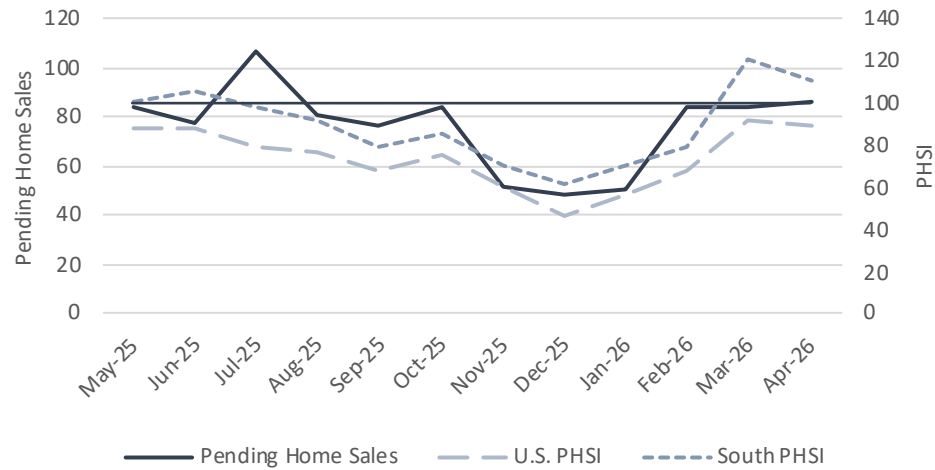
Greater Central Louisiana Realtors® Association - Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Evangeline, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Winn

Figure 21. Greater Central Louisiana Realtors® Association - Pending Home Sales vs. U.S. and South PHSI, Monthly

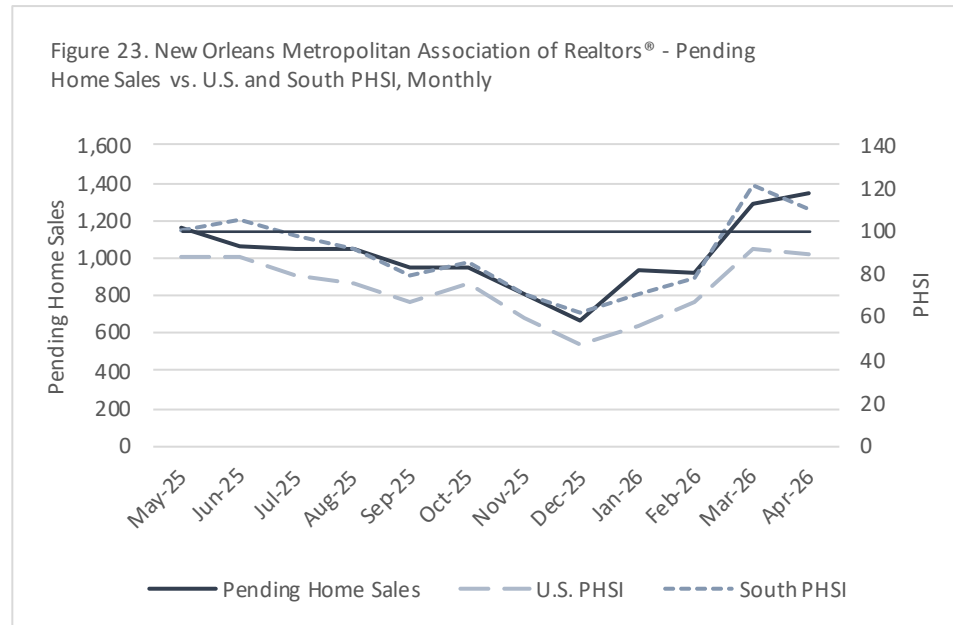


Greater Fort Polk Area Realtors® - Beauregard, Sabine, Vernon

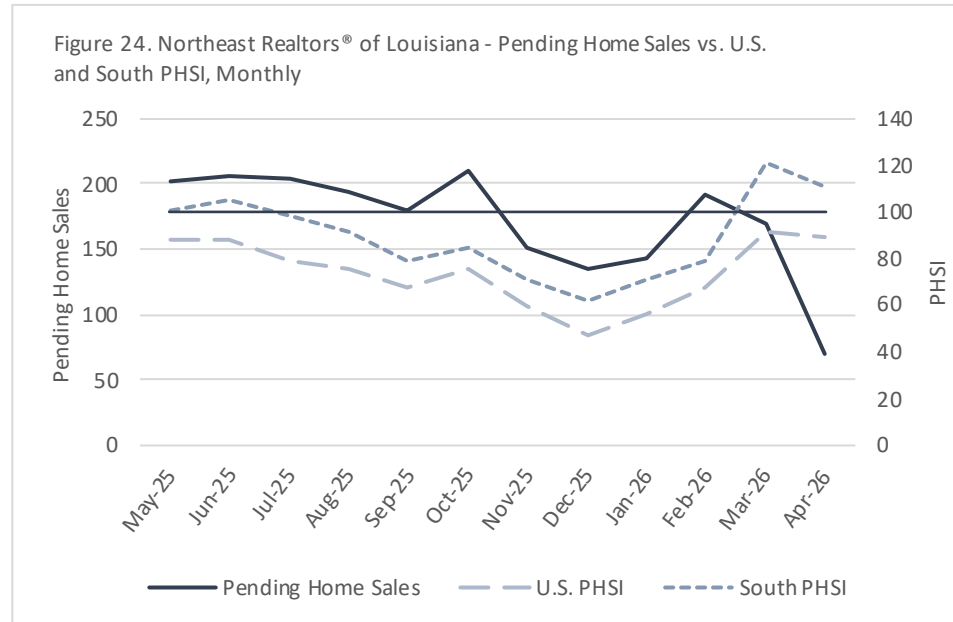
Figure 22. Greater Fort Polk Area Realtors® - Pending Home Sales vs. U.S. and South PHSI, Monthly



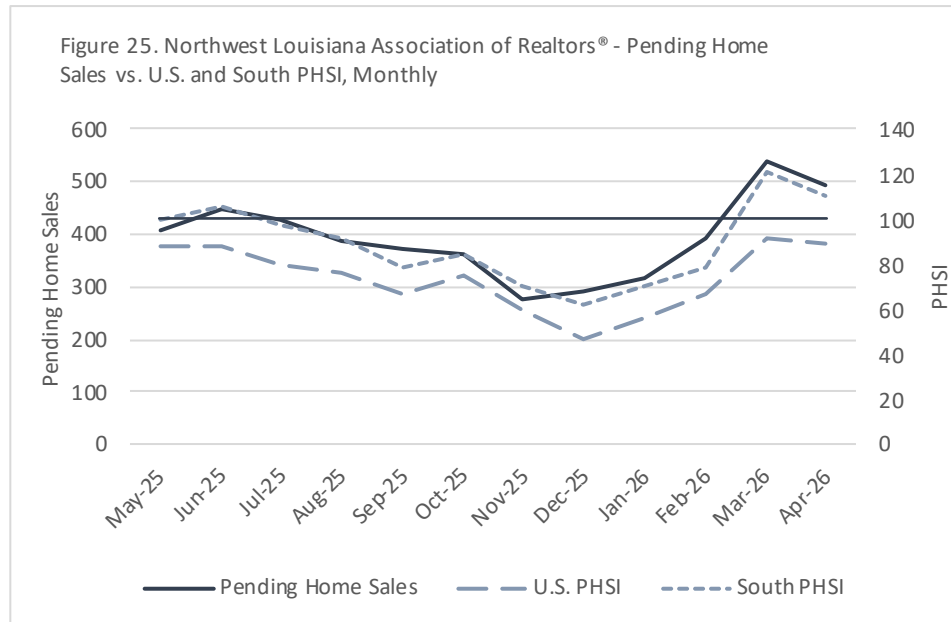
New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors® - Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John



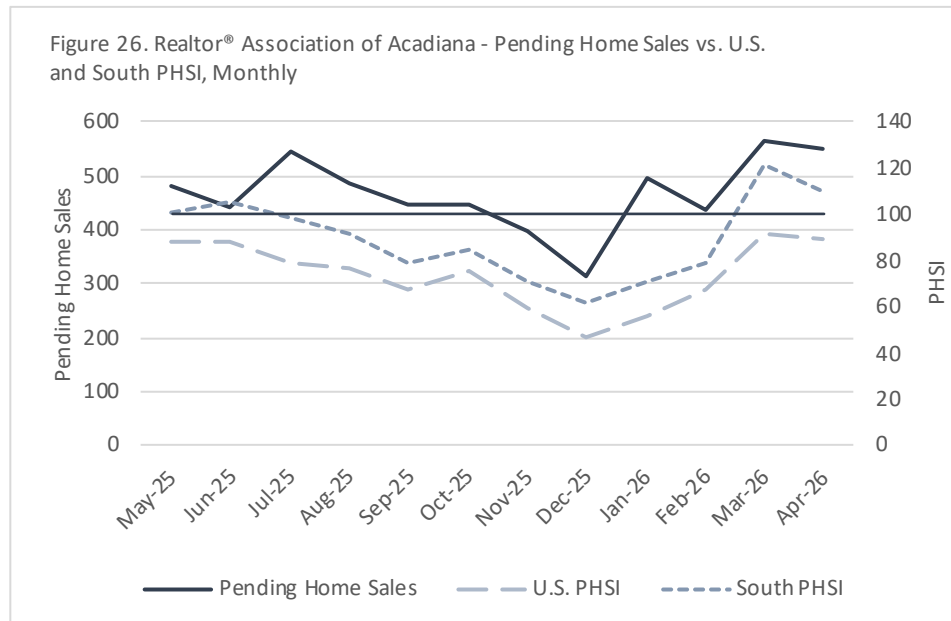
Northeast Realtors® of Louisiana - Caldwell, Concordia, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, West Carroll



Northwest Louisiana Association of Realtors® - Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Red River, Webster



Realtor® Association of Acadiana - Acadia, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, Vermilion



Southwest Louisiana Association of Realtors® - Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis

