Louisiana

Economic Vitals

Friday, May 8, 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 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

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LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

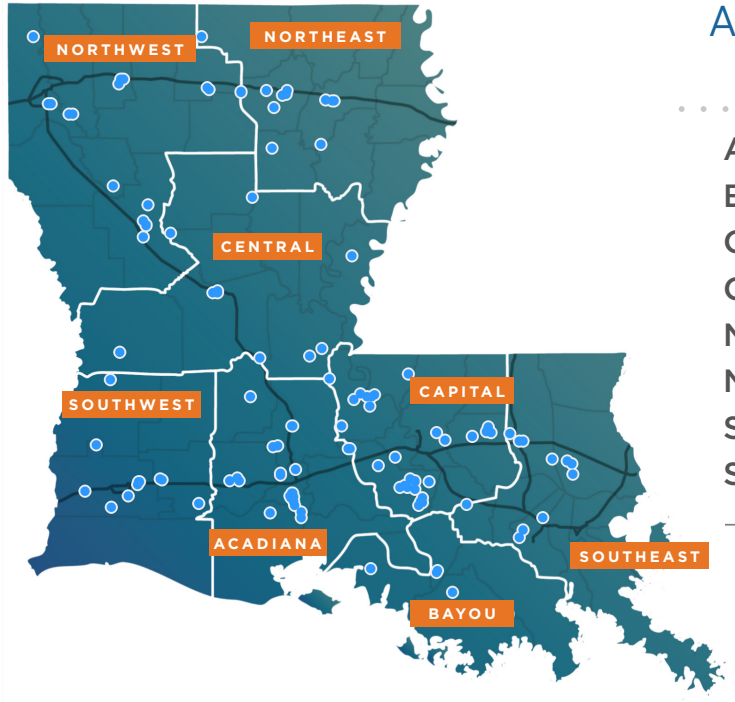
LED PROJECT PIPELINE

Since Governor Landry took office in January 2024, LED has announced 92 projects representing over $93.8 billion USD in new investment and more than 13,970 direct new jobs across Louisiana.

As of May 7, 2026, LED is actively tracking and involved in 189 distinct projects with a combined value exceeding $257.3 billion and the potential to create more than 50,810 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 36 sites advancing into active commerce. At full build-out, these projects represent more than $34.5 billion in capital investment, over 6,350 direct new jobs, and more than $423 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

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1. LNG LIQUEFACTION FACILITIES AND EXPORTS

The following analysis covers monthly data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration over the period January 2024 through February 2026. Figure 1 illustrates the LNG Export Utilization Ratio for Louisiana and Texas. It is calculated using reported LNG exports from commercial export terminals as a ratio of baseload liquefaction capacity for Louisiana and Texas. The baseload nameplate capacity of a liquefaction facility specifies the amount of liquefied natural gas produced in a calendar year under normal operating conditions based on the engineering design of a facility. Ratios may exceed 100% (>1.00) in some periods due to shipment timing and operational performance. The **ratio can be used to measure how intensively a state's LNG export infrastructure is being utilized to move LNG into global markets**. Figure 2 shows the average daily LNG exports for each month, for Louisiana and Texas, measured in billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d), which is a summation of LNG exports at each state's liquefaction facilities that are in commercial operation. As an indicator that **shows the operational intensity of a state's LNG export infrastructure**, monthly exports may exceed baseload nameplate capacity due to cargo timing, operational efficiency, and differences between sustained design capacity and observed shipment flows (Bcf/d is a flow rate not a unit of storage). To better understand the scale, at peak periods, Louisiana exported enough LNG each day to supply energy equivalent to the daily consumption of several large countries. Source: eia.gov

Key Takeaways

- **Louisiana continues to anchor U.S. LNG export activity through a large, mature, and heavily utilized export system. Louisiana LNG exports represent a massive daily transfer of energy used globally for electricity generation, industrial production, heating, and manufacturing. Louisiana exported an average of 7.4 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day in liquefied form.**
- **Louisiana LNG facilities are operating at consistently high utilization rates, highlighting strong international demand for U.S. natural gas exports. Monthly LNG exports frequently approached—and occasionally exceeded—baseload nameplate capacity.**
- **Louisiana is not only the leading LNG export state today, but also remains positioned for continued growth as additional Gulf Coast export capacity comes online. EIA data indicate Louisiana continues to lead the nation in both operational LNG export infrastructure and the pipeline of future LNG development projects.**

Figure 1. LNG Export Utilization Rate: Louisiana vs. Texas

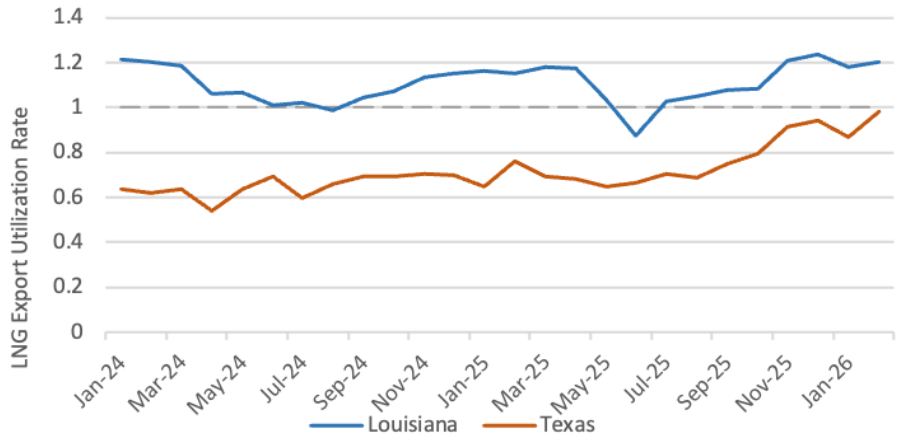
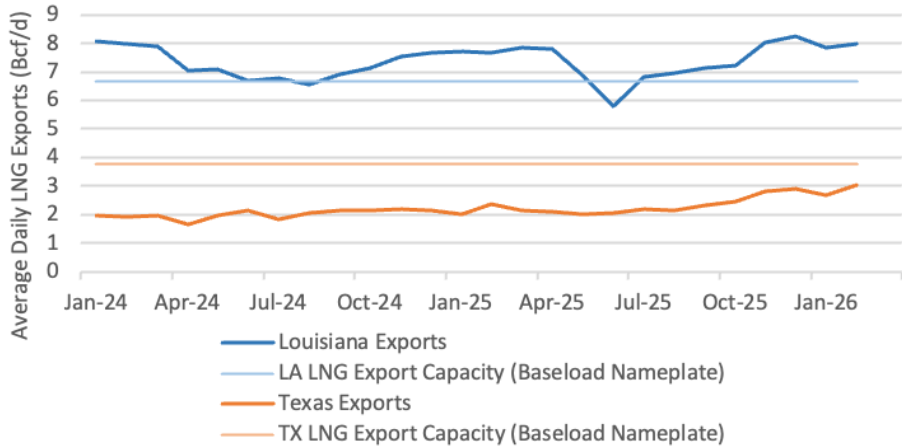


Figure 2. LNG Export Utilization: Louisiana vs. Texas



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2. LABOR MARKET ACTIVITY

The Current Employment Statistics (CES) program produces detailed industry estimates of employment, hours, and earnings of workers on nonfarm payrolls each month, by surveying approximately 119,000 businesses and government agencies, representing 622,000 individual worksites. The figures blow illustrate total nonfarm employment levels for each Louisiana MSA and the state by month for the 2025-2026 period overlaid with the 2024-2025 period. The data are not seasonally adjusted and are shown in thousands of workers.

Source: bls.gov

Key Takeaways

- **Louisiana labor markets remain broadly stable across most metro areas. Most Louisiana MSAs show relatively steady labor market conditions over the past year, with only modest month-to-month fluctuations. Larger metros such as Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Lafayette are generally maintaining employment levels close to or slightly above year-ago levels, suggesting continued resilience in regional labor demand.**
- **Several smaller and mid-sized metros show gradual improvement entering 2026. Areas such as Alexandria, Houma-Thibodaux, and Lake Charles experiencing modest gains or stabilization compared to late 2025 levels. While growth remains moderate, the data suggest labor market conditions improved slightly in early 2026 after softer conditions during parts of the second half of 2025.**
- **Employment trends continue to reflect a slow-growth, steady-expansion environment. The figures overall point to a labor market that is continuing to expand at a measured pace rather than overheating or weakening sharply. Most metro areas remain within a narrow range of movement year over year, indicating continued economic stability despite ongoing national uncertainty and slower hiring trends.**

Figure 3. Alexandria MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

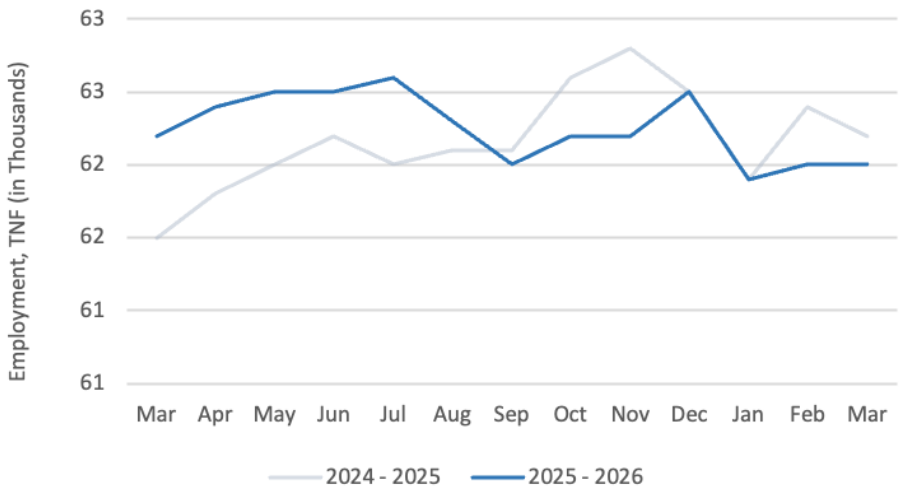

Figure 4. Baton Rouge MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

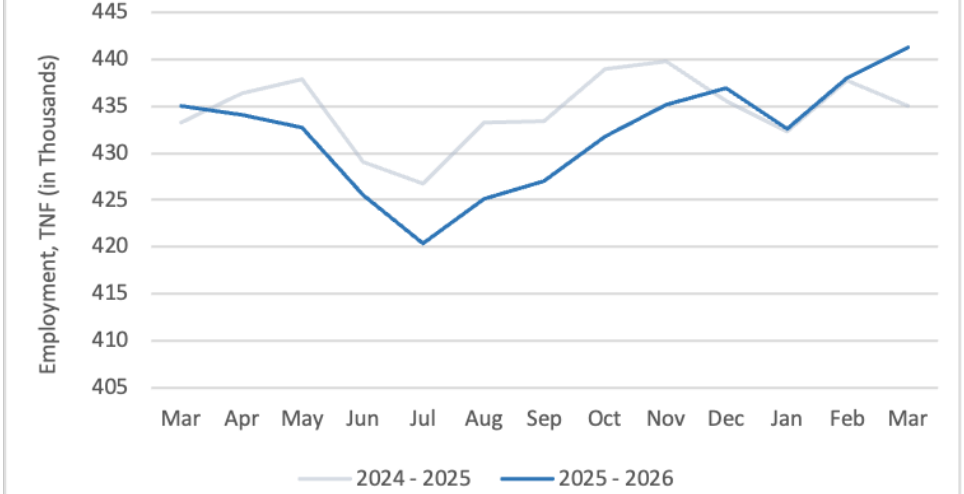

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Figure 5. Hammond MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

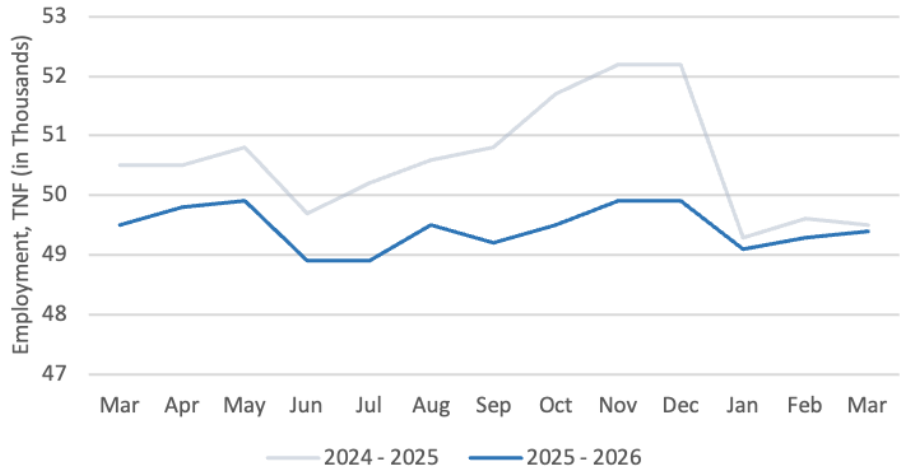

Figure 6. Houma-Bayou Cane-Thibodaux MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

Figure 7. Lafayette MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

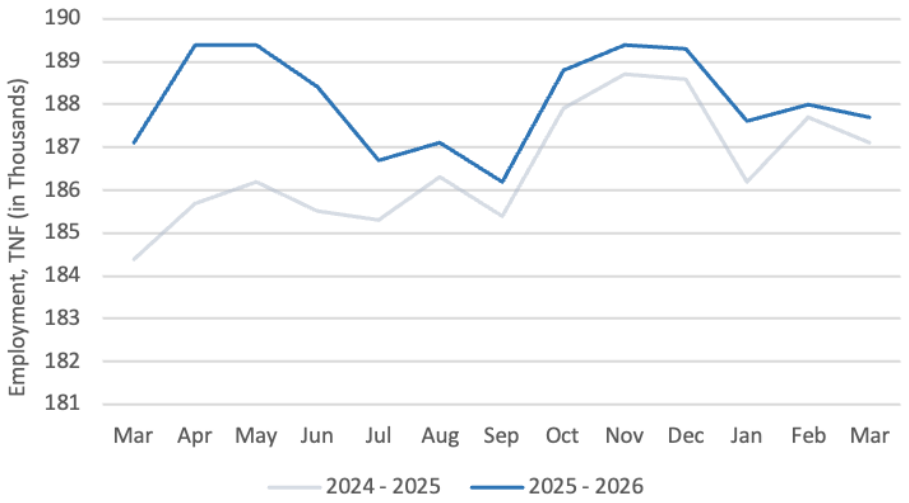

Figure 8. Lake Charles MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

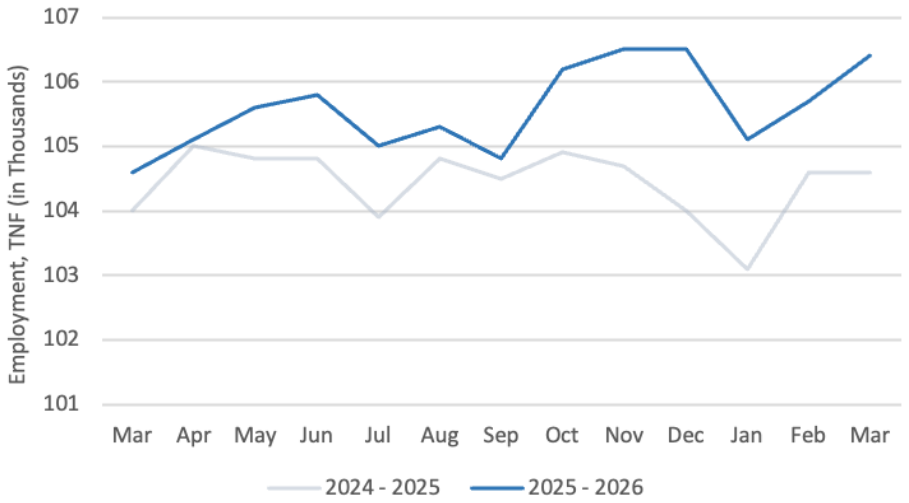

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Figure 9. Monroe MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

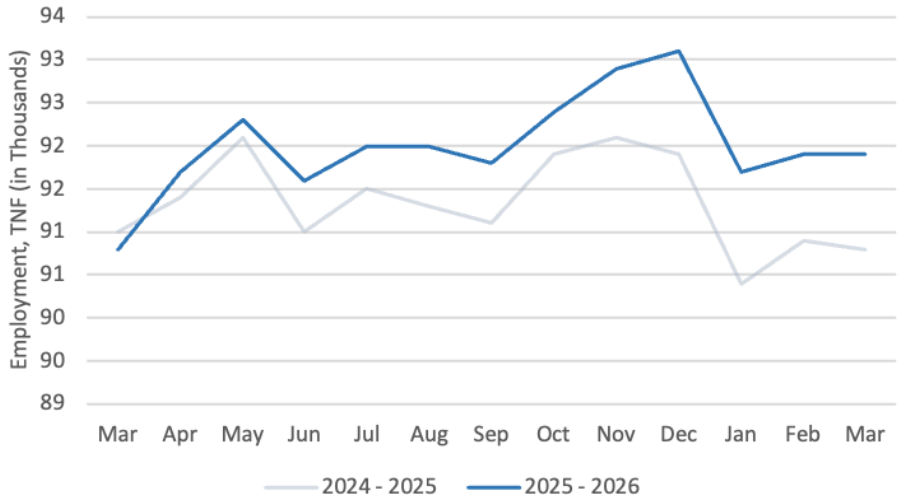


Figure 10. New Orleans-Metairie MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

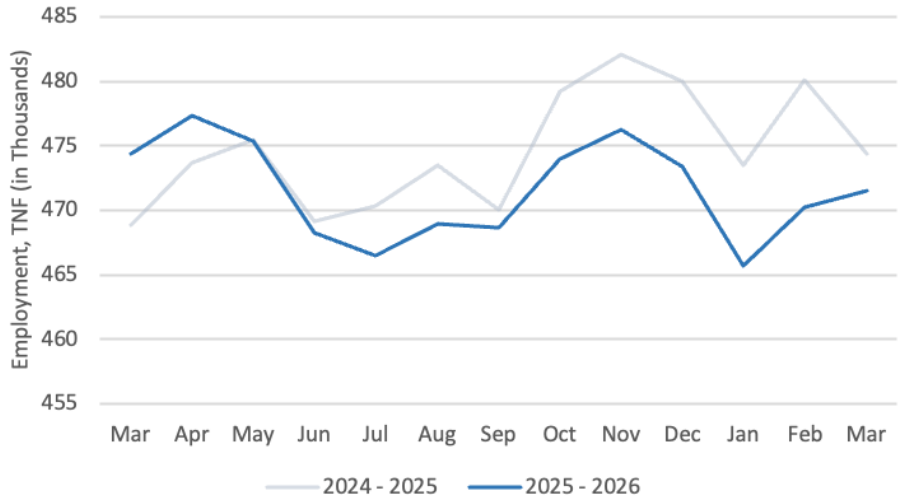


Figure 11. Shreveport-Bossier MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison

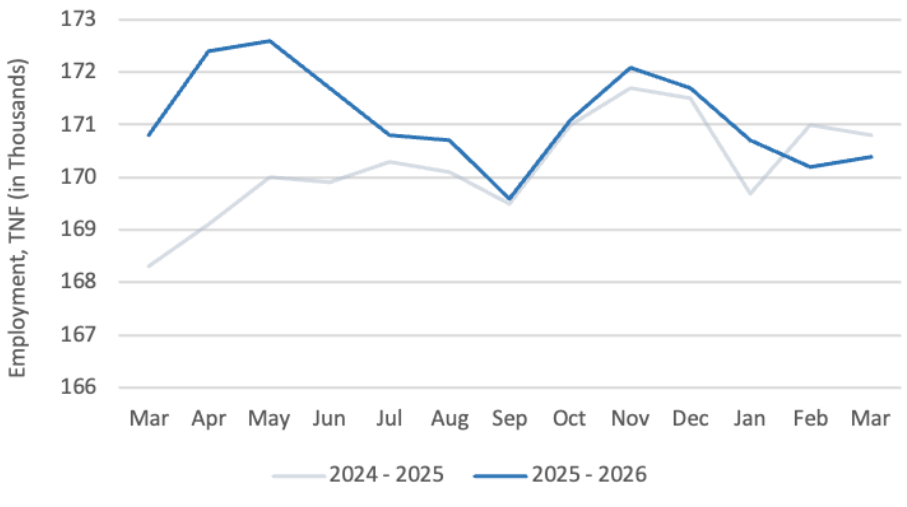
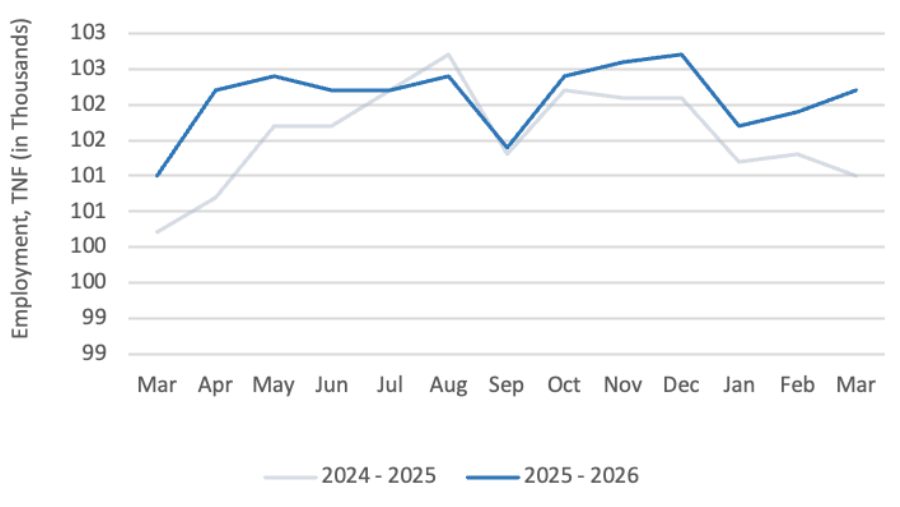


Figure 12. Slidell-Mandeville-Covington MSA Employment, Total Nonfarm, by Month (in Thousands) - with Year Over Year Comparison



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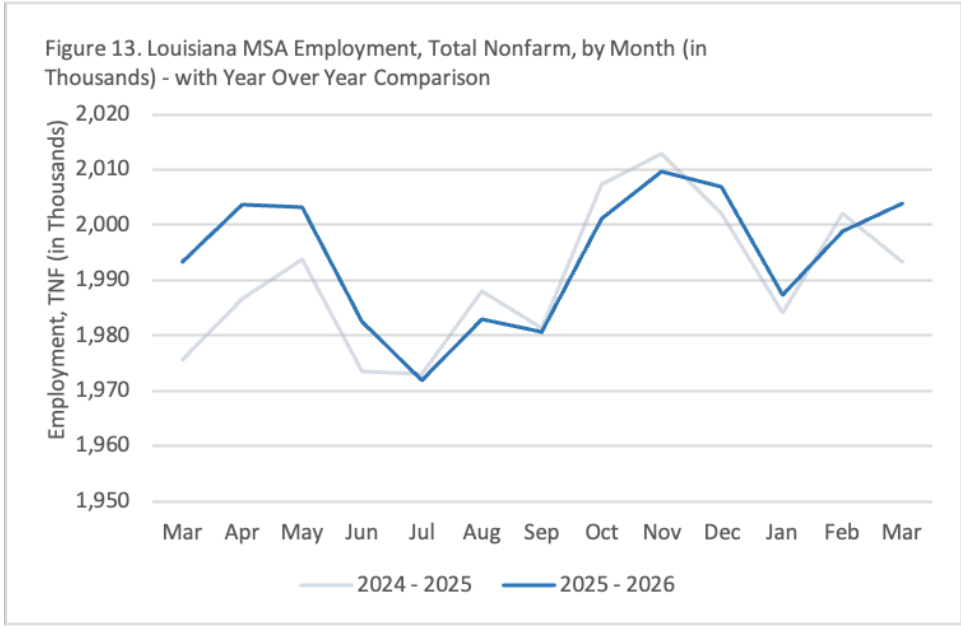

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3. COMMODITIES

The following tables provide data on the weekly prices of energy and agricultural commodities, reflecting the broader economic performance of these sectors.

The spot price is the price for immediate delivery, as agreed right now in the market. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude spot price is for delivery at Cushing, Oklahoma, a pipeline hub. WTI is a light, sweet (low sulfur) crude and is the primary U.S. benchmark. It is landlocked at Cushing. The Brent Crude spot price refers to crude loaded onto tankers at offshore terminals in the North Sea (originally from the Brent oilfield, a blend of several North Sea crudes). Because it is seaborne, it more directly reflects the global market price. The Henry Hub Natural Gas spot price is for natural gas delivered at the Henry Hub pipeline interchange in Louisiana, the largest natural gas trading hub in North America. The U.S. regular conventional gasoline price is the retail price paid at the pump, including taxes, based on a weekly survey of retail stations across the country. It covers regular grade - lowest octane - and does not include reformulated gasoline areas.

Source: eia.gov & tradingeconomics.com

Key Takeaways

- **Energy prices remained volatile but generally lower than recent highs. Crude oil and natural gas prices continued to fluctuate through early 2026, but most energy commodity prices remained below the elevated levels seen during prior peak periods. Lower energy costs may help ease input and transportation expenses for businesses and consumers, although continued volatility remains a risk for energy-producing regions like Louisiana.**
- **Agricultural commodity prices showed mixed trends across major products. Commodity markets reflected uneven performance among agricultural products, with some prices stabilizing while others softened compared to year-ago levels. This suggests moderating inflation pressures in portions of the food supply chain, though producers continue to face uncertainty tied to weather, global demand, and trade conditions.**
- **Broader commodity trends point to easing inflationary pressure compared to prior years. Across several major commodity categories, price growth appears more subdued than during the rapid inflationary period of 2021–2023. While some commodities remain elevated relative to long-term averages, recent movements indicate a more balanced pricing environment entering mid-2026.**

Table 1. Energy Commodities, Weekly

Commodity	5/1/26	4/24/26	4/3/26	5/2/25	Change		
					WoW	MoM	YoY
Brent Crude Oil Price	$119.63	$109.62	$123.94	$63.50	9.1%	-3.5%	88.4%
WTI Crude Oil Price	$105.57	$95.43	$105.67	$60.99	10.6%	-0.1%	73.1%
Henry Hub Natural Gas Spot Price	$2.66	$2.70	$2.90	$3.09	-1.5%	-8.3%	-13.9%
U.S. Regular Conventional Gas Price	$4.31	$3.95	$3.95	$3.03	9.1%	9.1%	42.2%

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Table 2. Agricultural Commodities, Daily Period of May 7, 2026							
Commodity	Listed Price	Dollar ($)	Unit of Measure-ment	Change			
				Daily	Weekly	Monthly	YoY
Soybeans	$1,176.36	$11.76	$/Bu	-0.3%	-0.6%	1.2%	13.4%
Wheat	$599.19	$5.99	$/Bu	-1.0%	-3.9%	3.4%	16.9%
Lumber	$578.48	$5.78	$/MBF	0.1%	1.2%	-2.0%	4.3%
Palm Oil	$4,541.00	$45.41	$/MT	0.3%	-0.6%	-1.0%	19.5%
Sugar (No. 11)	$14.53	$0.15	$/Lb	-1.7%	-0.6%	2.0%	-17.1%
Coffee	$272.37	$2.72	$/Lb	-4.1%	-4.4%	-5.6%	-31.1%
Corn	$451.98	$4.52	$/Bu	-0.1%	-2.1%	1.0%	2.9%
Rice	$11.65	$0.12	$/CWT	-1.4%	7.9%	5.4%	-6.6%
Orange Juice	$174.64	$1.75	$/Lb	-3.1%	-8.3%	-15.0%	-35.7%

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4. LOUISIANA OIL AND GAS

Oil and Gas rig counts signal future oil and gas production levels. More rigs usually mean companies are ramping up drilling, expecting either higher prices or rising demand. A declining rig count may suggest lower future supply, possibly due to falling prices or reduced demand. Also, high rig counts often reflect strong capital investment in energy infrastructure, signaling confidence in the market while a sharp drop might indicate companies are pulling back spending, which can reflect broader economic uncertainty. Because energy is a key input for nearly all economic activity, changes in rig counts can correlate with GDP growth, industrial production, and transportation activity.

Source: State of Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources & U.S. Energy Information Administration

Key Takeaways

- **Louisiana rig activity remains well above year-ago levels despite recent stabilization. Louisiana's total oil and gas rig count reached 45 rigs in early May 2026, up nearly 36% from a year earlier. While activity eased slightly from April levels, the broader trend suggests drilling activity remains stronger than it was in 2025, particularly in North Louisiana land-based operations.**
- **Natural gas production continues to outperform crude oil production. Louisiana natural gas production increased roughly 12% year over year in February 2026, even as monthly production declined slightly from January levels. In contrast, crude oil production fell both month over month and year over year, indicating continued strength in the state's natural gas sector relative to oil production.**
- **Louisiana energy activity remains comparatively resilient despite softer national trends. While total U.S. rig counts were down modestly from a year ago, Louisiana rig activity increased substantially over the same period. This suggests Louisiana's energy sector has remained relatively competitive and active entering 2026, supported in part by continued natural gas demand and ongoing Gulf Coast energy infrastructure advantages.**

Table 3. Louisiana and U.S. Oil & Gas Rig Counts

Location	5/1/26	4/24/26	4/3/26	5/2/25	Change		
					WoW	MoM	YoY
Louisiana (Total all areas)	45	46	46	33	-2.2%	-2.2%	36.4%
North - Land	31	30	29	20	3.3%	6.9%	55.0%
South Inland - Water	2	2	2	1	0.0%	0.0%	
South Inland - Land	2	3	4	2	-33.3%	-50.0%	
State Offshore	0	1	1	0	-100.0%		
Louisiana Federal Offshore	10	10	10	10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
U.S. Total	547	542	544	584	0.9%	0.6%	-6.3%

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Table 3. Louisiana and U.S. Oil & Gas Rig Counts					
				Change	
Location	5/1/26	4/24/26	4/3/26	MoM	YoY
Crude Oil[1]	1,796	2,008	2,101	-10.6%	-14.5%
Natural Gas[2]	296,346	325,833	264,494	-9.0%	12.0%
Note: [1]Thousand Barrels; [2]Million Cubic Feet					

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May 2026

Economic Calendar

The *Louisiana Economic Vitals* economic calendar provides insights into upcoming events and data releases. It includes information on national economic indicators, such as GDP, employment figures, inflation rates, and central bank meetings in addition to state and local data.
Links to sources are included.

The May calendar will be revised when dates for additional data are announced.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 ISM PMI Manufacturing [Apr]	2
3	4 Manufactured Goods (New Orders) [Mar]	5 Int'l Trade Deficit in Goods & Services [Mar] ISM PMI Services [Apr] JOLTS [Mar]	6 State Employment [Mar]	7 Construction Spending [Feb]	8 Employment [Apr] Wholesale Inventories [Mar] U. of Michigan's Consumer Confidence [May]	9
10	11	12 CPI [Apr] Real Earnings [Apr] Federal Budget [Apr] NFIB Small Business Optimism Index [Apr]	13 Business Applications [Apr] PPI [Apr]	14 Manufacturing & Trade Inventory & Sales [Mar] Retail & Food Services Sales [Adv. Apr] Business Inventories [Mar] Import/Export Prices [Apr]	15 Industrial Production [Apr] ISM Supply Supply Chain Planning Forecast [Semiannual]	16
17	18 NAHB HMI [May]	19 Metro Area Employment [Mar] Pending Home Sales [Apr]	20	21 Housing Starts [Apr]	22 State Employment [Apr]	23
24	25	26 The Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index [May]	27	28 GDP [2026:Q1, 2nd Estimate]	29 Durable Goods [Apr]	30
31						