# Louisiana Economic Vitals Friday, July 31, 2026

Pictured: Waterford 3 Nuclear Generating Station is a cornerstone of Louisiana's energy leadership. Now, with the U.S. Department of Energy advancing discussions to potentially establish a Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campus in Louisiana, the state is poised to lead the next generation of nuclear innovation and manufacturing.

LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# 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 July 2026 Announcements:

NPK Access Solutions Builds on Nearly 30 Years in Carencro with $40 Million Investment
July 29th, 2026

U.S. DOE, Louisiana Advance Nuclear Discussions
July 28th, 2026

New Public Platform Reveals Economic Expansion Across Northeast Louisiana
July 20th, 2026

Quality Companies Expands Manufacturing Footprint Across Acadiana with Two-Site Investment
July 16th, 2026

Louisiana Dynamism: America's Third Coast Builds the Future
July 14th, 2026

Meta Commits More Than $50 Billion for North Louisiana Project, Becoming One of the Largest Data Centers in History
July 13th, 2026

Louisiana's Moment Became Louisiana Momentum
July 8th, 2026

Pool Products Manufacturer Invests at Least $8 Million for Louisiana Expansion
July 8th, 2026

Louisiana NOW Takes National Stage at the Great American State Fair
July 2nd, 2026

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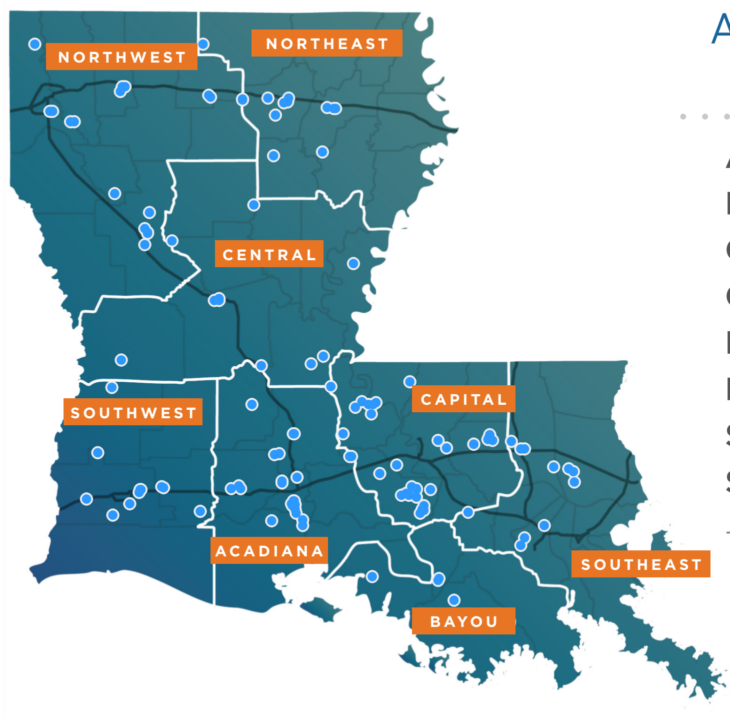
# LED PROJECT PIPELINE

Since Governor Landry took office in January 2024, LED has announced 107 projects representing over $150.4 billion USD in new investment and more than 16,180 direct new jobs across Louisiana.

As of July 30, 2026, LED is actively tracking and involved in 209 distinct projects with a combined value exceeding $319 billion and the potential to create more than 49,620 direct new jobs.

# CERTIFIED SITE PROGRAM

Since the launch of its Certified Sites Program, LED has certified 171 industrial sites, with all or portions of 43 sites advancing into active commerce. At full build-out, these projects represent more than $40.2 billion in capital investment, over 7,140 direct new jobs, and more than $468 million in total annual wages statewide. Currently, there are 130 actively marketed certified sites across every region of Louisiana.




## Active Certified Sites by Region

| | |
|---|---|
| Acadiana | 29 |
| Bayou | 6 |
| Capital | 22 |
| Central | 9 |
| Northeast | 14 |
| Northwest | 18 |
| Southeast | 18 |
| Southwest | 14 |
| TOTAL | 130 |

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# 1. LABOR MARKET ACTIVITY

Figures 1–4 compare Louisiana's private industry employment and average hourly earnings across major industry sectors and metropolitan areas for June 2024, June 2025, and the preliminary June 2026 estimates. Together, these figures provide a snapshot of recent labor market conditions, highlighting changes in employment levels and wage growth across the state and its metropolitan.

Source: bls.gov

## Key Takeaways

- Louisiana's private-sector employment continued to expand through June 2026, with gains occurring in both goods-producing and private service-providing industries.
- Employment growth remained concentrated in the state's largest metropolitan areas. New Orleans–Metairie, Baton Rouge, and Lafayette accounted for the largest private-sector employment bases and generally posted modest year-over-year gains.
- Average hourly earnings continued to trend upward across most industries. Goods-producing industries maintained the highest wages statewide, while private service-providing industries also experienced continued wage growth.
- Metropolitan wage differences remain substantial. Baton Rouge, Slidell–Mandeville, and the New Orleans area continue to report some of the highest average hourly earnings, reflecting differences in industry composition and occupational mix.
- The combination of rising employment and higher wages suggests Louisiana's labor market remained resilient through mid-2026, with continued demand for workers across much of the state's economy.

Figure 1. Louisiana Employment by Industry Sector

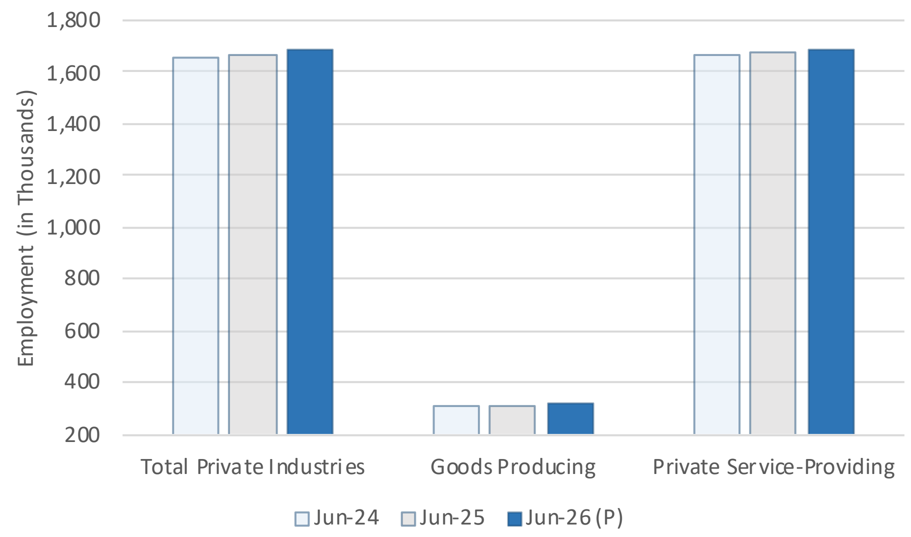
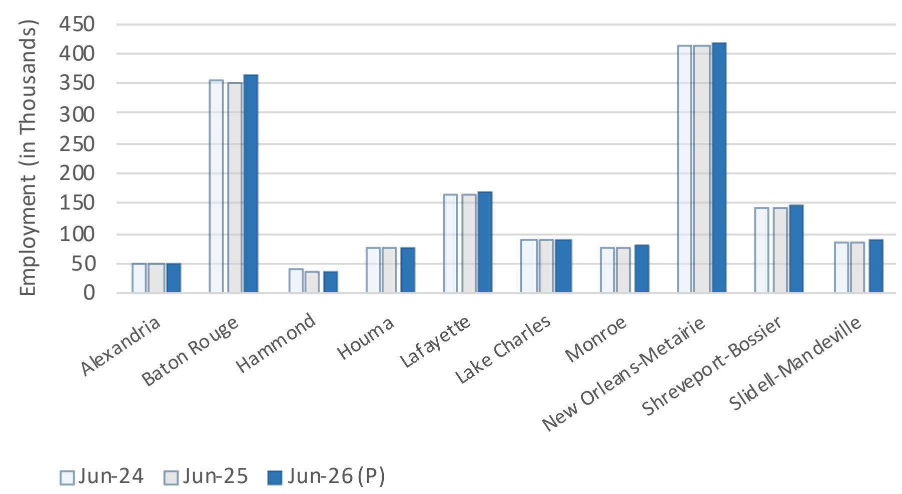



Figure 2. Private Industry Employment by Louisiana Metropolitan Area





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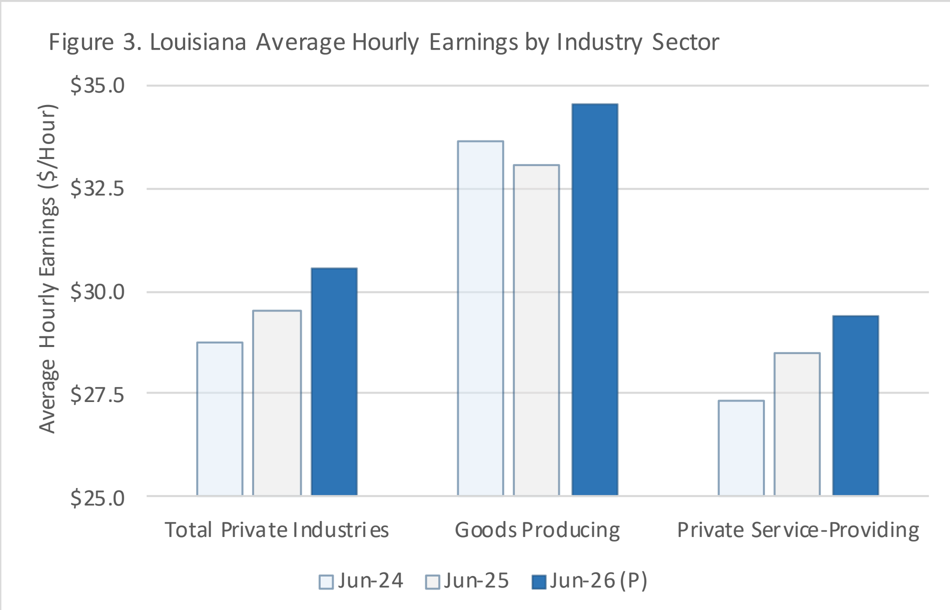


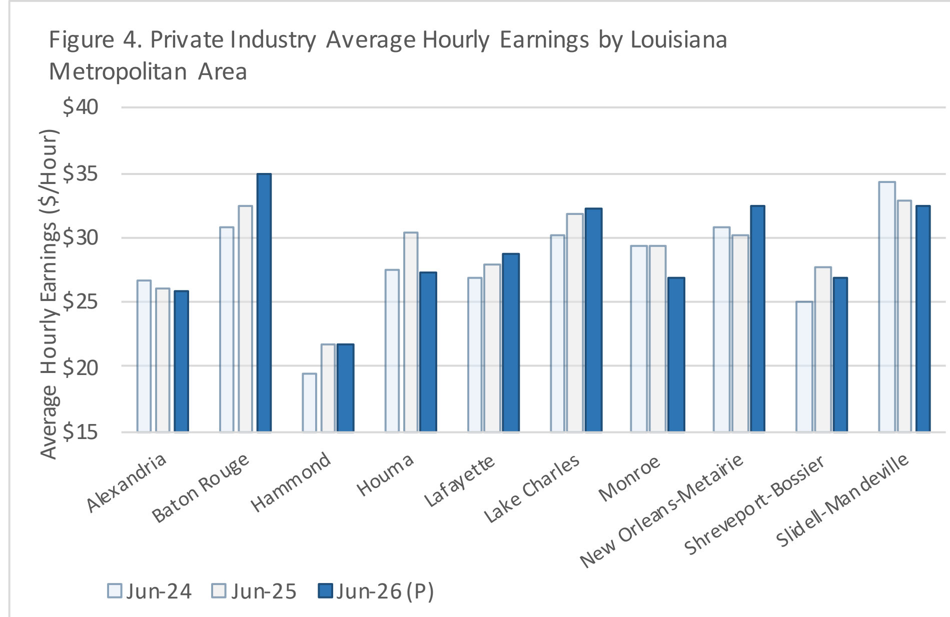


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# 2. COMMODITIES

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 surged again as geopolitical tensions intensified. Both benchmarks are now more than 30% above year-ago levels, reflecting renewed concerns over global oil supply.
- Higher crude oil prices continue to push gasoline prices upward, illustrating the pass-through of higher crude prices to refined fuel markets.
- Natural gas remains the notable exception within the energy complex, indicating that domestic natural gas fundamentals continue to differ from global oil markets.
- The conflict-driven energy price shock has proven persistent and Gulf Coast gasoline prices remain well above their March 2 pre-conflict levels.
- Agricultural commodity prices were mixed. Wheat posted the strongest monthly gain, while soybeans and corn also continued to trade well above last year’s prices.
- Soft commodities continue to diverge. Coffee remained elevated, whereas sugar and orange juice continued their downward corrections from the supply disruptions in previous years.

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| Table 1. Energy Commodities, Weekly | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Change | | |
| Commodity | 7/24/26 | 7/17/26 | 6/26/26 | 7/25/25 | WoW | MoM | YoY |
| Brent Crude Oil Price | $96.12 | $82.93 | $73.63 | $70.09 | 15.9% | 30.5% | 37.1% |
| WTI Crude Oil Price | $88.58 | $80.77 | $73.59 | $67.11 | 9.7% | 20.4% | 32.0% |
| Henry Hub Natural Gas Spot Price | $2.86 | $2.79 | $3.20 | $3.19 | 2.5% | -10.6% | -10.3% |
| U.S. Regular Conventional Gas Price | $3.95 | $3.86 | $3.70 | $3.02 | 2.3% | 6.8% | 30.8% |

| Table 2. Agricultural Commodities, Daily Period of July 30, 2026 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Change | | | |
| Commodity | Listed Price | Dollar ($) | Unit of Measurement | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | YoY |
| Soybeans | $1,182.46 | $11.82 | $/Bu | 0.4% | -4.5% | 5.0% | 23.0% |
| Wheat | $677.69 | $6.78 | $/Bu | 2.6% | -2.4% | 14.8% | 29.9% |
| Lumber | $632.56 | $6.33 | $/MBF | -0.2% | -3.8% | 2.1% | -8.6% |
| Palm Oil | $4,683.00 | $46.83 | $/MT | 0.4% | -0.6% | 2.8% | 10.3% |
| Sugar (No. 11) | $14.53 | $0.15 | $/Lb | 0.1% | -1.0% | -3.0% | -11.1% |
| Coffee | $326.14 | $3.26 | $/Lb | 0.1% | 5.4% | 5.3% | 10.3% |
| Corn | $450.24 | $4.50 | $/Bu | 0.3% | -3.0% | 7.0% | 14.3% |
| Rice | $13.51 | $0.14 | $/CWT | -1.1% | -4.4% | 5.0% | 10.0% |
| Orange Juice | $137.06 | $1.37 | $/Lb | -0.6% | -6.6% | -20.1% | -47.3% |

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Figure 5 displays the daily prices of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil, Brent crude oil, and U.S. Gulf Coast regular gasoline from February 17 through July 27, 2026. Vertical reference lines denote the onset of the conflict (Day 0) and the 30-, 60-, 90-, and 120-day milestones used to illustrate the evolution of energy prices over the first four months following the event.

Figure 5. Daily Crude Oil and Gulf Coast Gasoline Prices During the Iran Conflict

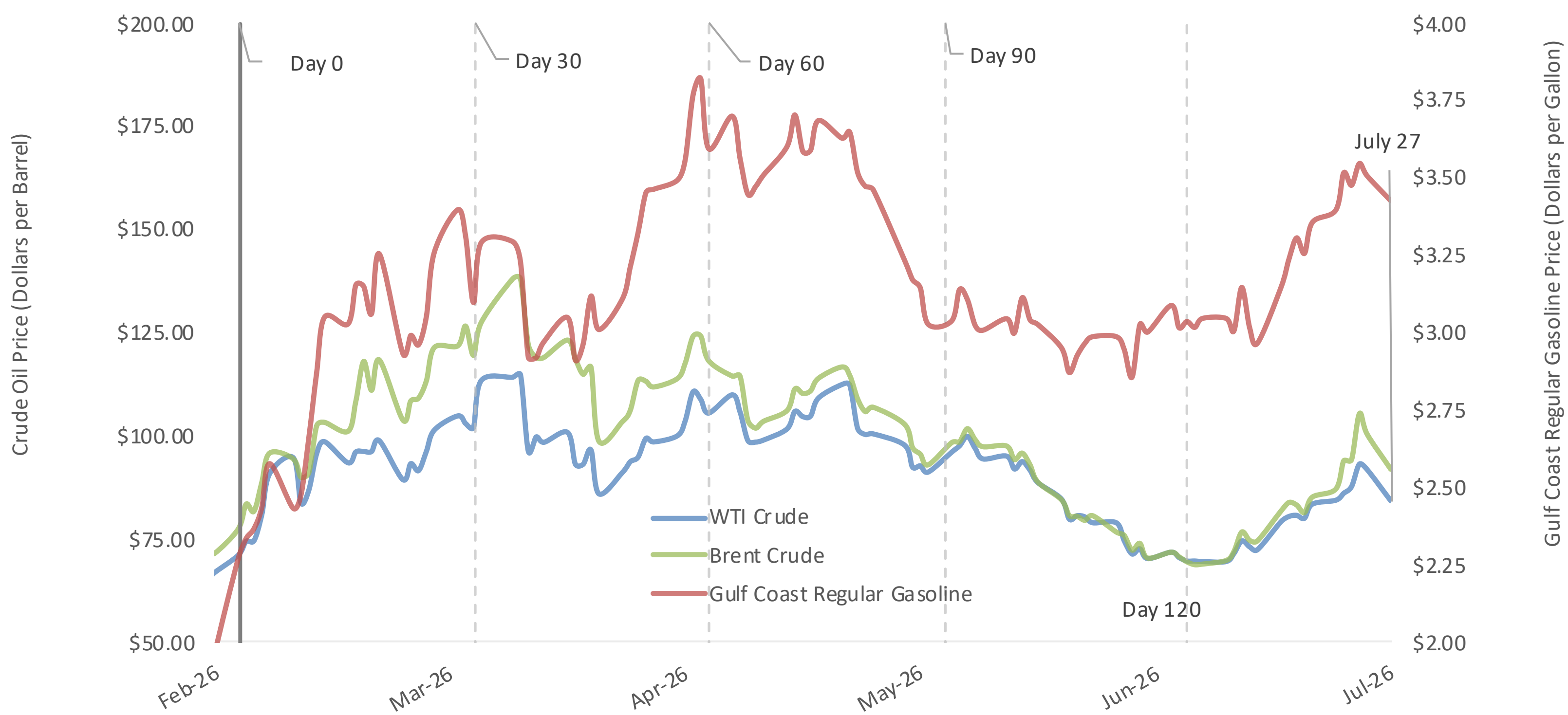


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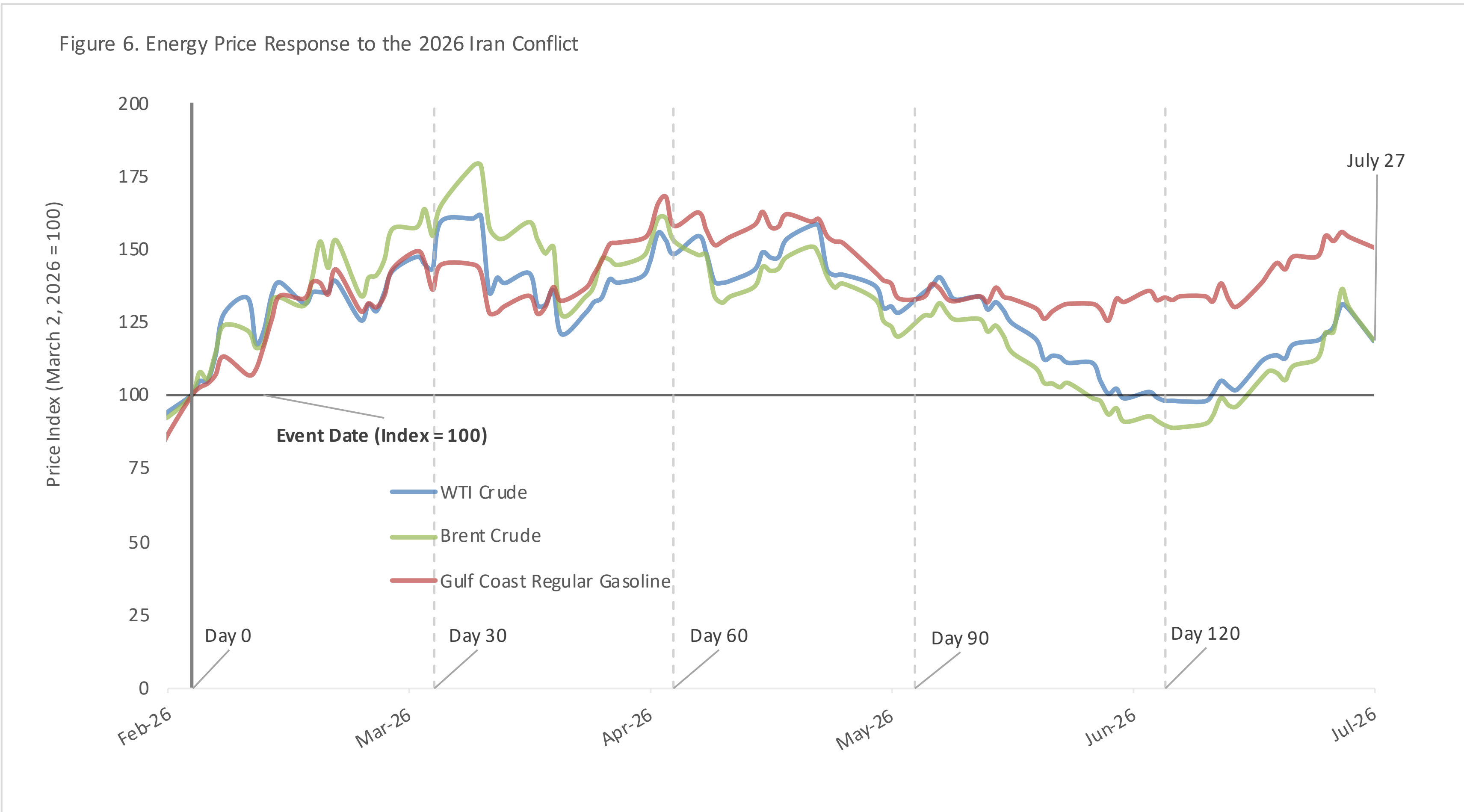
Figure 6 presents the same daily energy price series indexed to their March 2, 2026 values (March 2, 2026 = 100). Indexing each series to a common baseline facilitates comparison of the relative changes in WTI crude oil, Brent crude oil, and U.S. Gulf Coast regular gasoline prices during the period following the onset of the conflict.





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# 3. 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. Note: Percentage changes for categories with very small rig counts should be interpreted with caution, as the addition or removal of one or two rigs can result in large percentage changes.

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

## Key Takeaways

- Louisiana's total rig count declined, down from both the previous week and one year earlier, while the U.S. rig count remained relatively stable and was above year-ago levels.
- Natural gas withdrawals remained relatively robust in 2026, with production generally near the upper end of the historical range for March through June.
- Louisiana crude oil production continued its long-term downward trend, with 2026 volumes remaining well below levels recorded earlier in the period.

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

| Component | 7/24/26 | 7/17/26 | 6/26/26 | 7/25/25 | Change | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | WoW | MoM | YoY |
| Louisiana (Total all areas) | 37 | 39 | 36 | 39 | -5.1% | 2.8% | -5.1% |
| North - Land | 24 | 24 | 24 | 23 | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.3% |
| South Inland - Water | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | -100.0% | -100.0% | -100.0% |
| South Inland - Land | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | -33.3% | -33.3% | -50.0% |
| State Offshore | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Louisiana Federal Offshore | 10 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 0.0% | 42.9% | 11.1% |
| U.S. Total | 587 | 588 | 573 | 542 | -0.2% | 2.4% | 8.3% |

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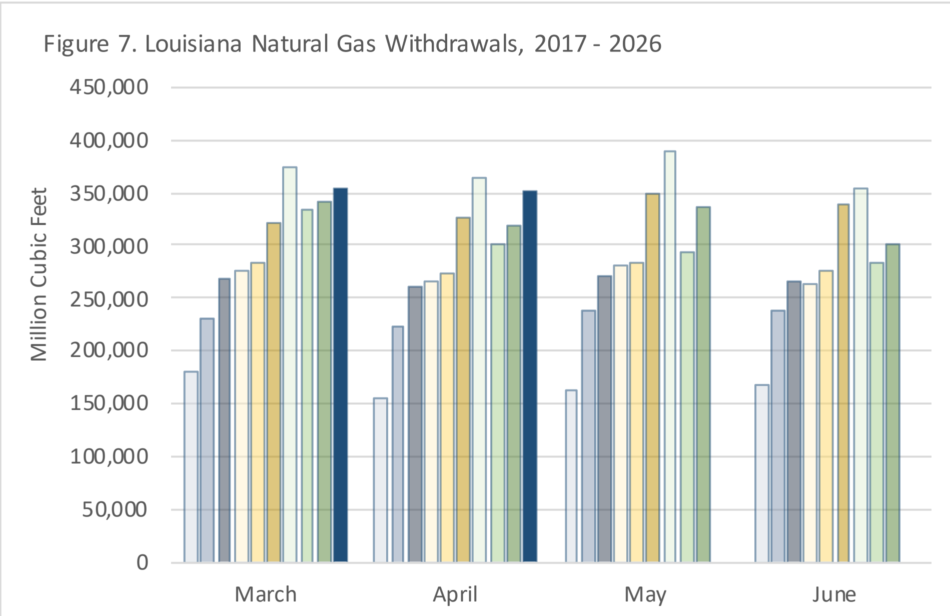
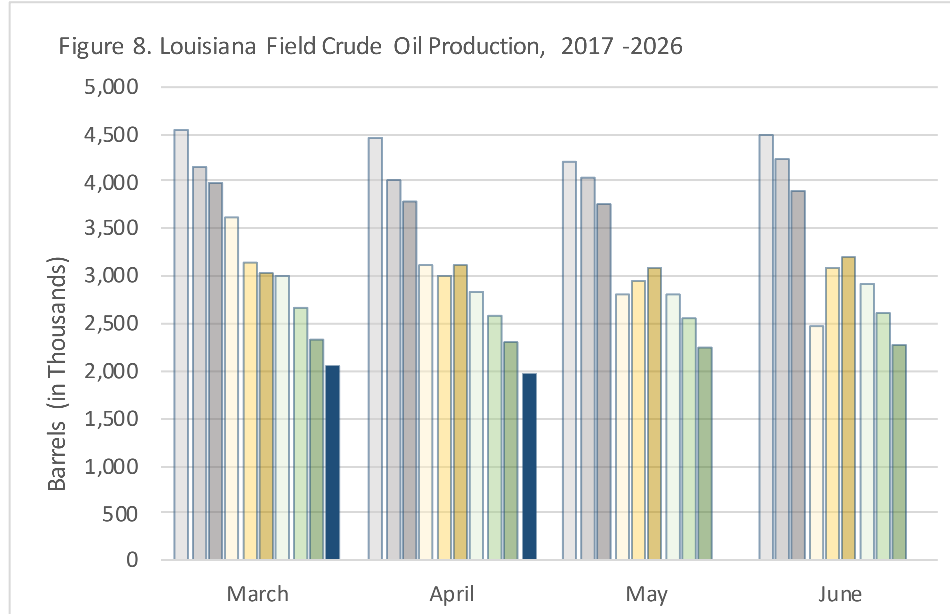
Figures 7 and 8 compare Louisiana's natural gas withdrawals and field crude oil production during the March–June period from 2017 through the preliminary 2026 estimates. Presenting each month across multiple years highlights how current production levels compare with recent historical patterns.

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# 4. U.S. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

Table 4 presents an advanced estimate of U.S. real gross domestic product for the second quarter in 2026. Figure 9 illustrates the breakdown of GDP components that contribute to the annualized change (1.5-percent) in real GDP from 2026:Q1 to 2026:Q2.

Source: bea.gov

## Key Takeaways

- The U.S. economy continued to expand in the second quarter of 2026, with real GDP increasing 0.4 percent from the previous quarter and 2.1 percent from one year earlier.
- Consumer spending remained the primary driver of economic growth, reflecting continued strength in household demand.
- Business investment and exports provided additional support for growth, while government spending was essentially flat.
- On a year-over-year basis, exports, business investment, and personal consumption all increased, indicating that growth remained broadly supported across the private sector.

**Table 4. U.S. Real Gross Domestic Product and Major Expenditure Components, 2026:Q2 (Advance Estimate)**

| Component | 2026:Q1 | 2025:Q4 | 2025:Q1 | Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | QoQ | YoY |
| Gross Domestic Product (GDP) | $6,067.7 | $6,045.1 | $5,942.8 | 0.4% | 2.1% |
| Personal Consumption Expenditures | $4,204.5 | $4,171.9 | $4,111.4 | 0.8% | 2.3% |
| Gross Private Domestic Investment | $1,131.6 | $1,123.2 | $1,095.6 | 0.7% | 3.3% |
| Net Exports of Goods and Services | ($268.8) | ($250.5) | ($264.5) | 7.3% | 1.6% |
| Exports | $696.9 | $689.3 | $661.8 | 1.1% | 5.3% |
| Imports | ($965.6) | ($939.7) | ($926.3) | 2.8% | 4.2% |
| Government Consumption Expenditures and Gross Investment | $998.1 | $1,000.1 | $998.3 | -0.2% | 0.0% |

Note. Data are seasonally adjusted billions of chained (2017) dollars at quarterly rates; Imports are a subtraction in the calculation of GDP, therefore, an increase results in a negative contribution to GDP and are noted in red.

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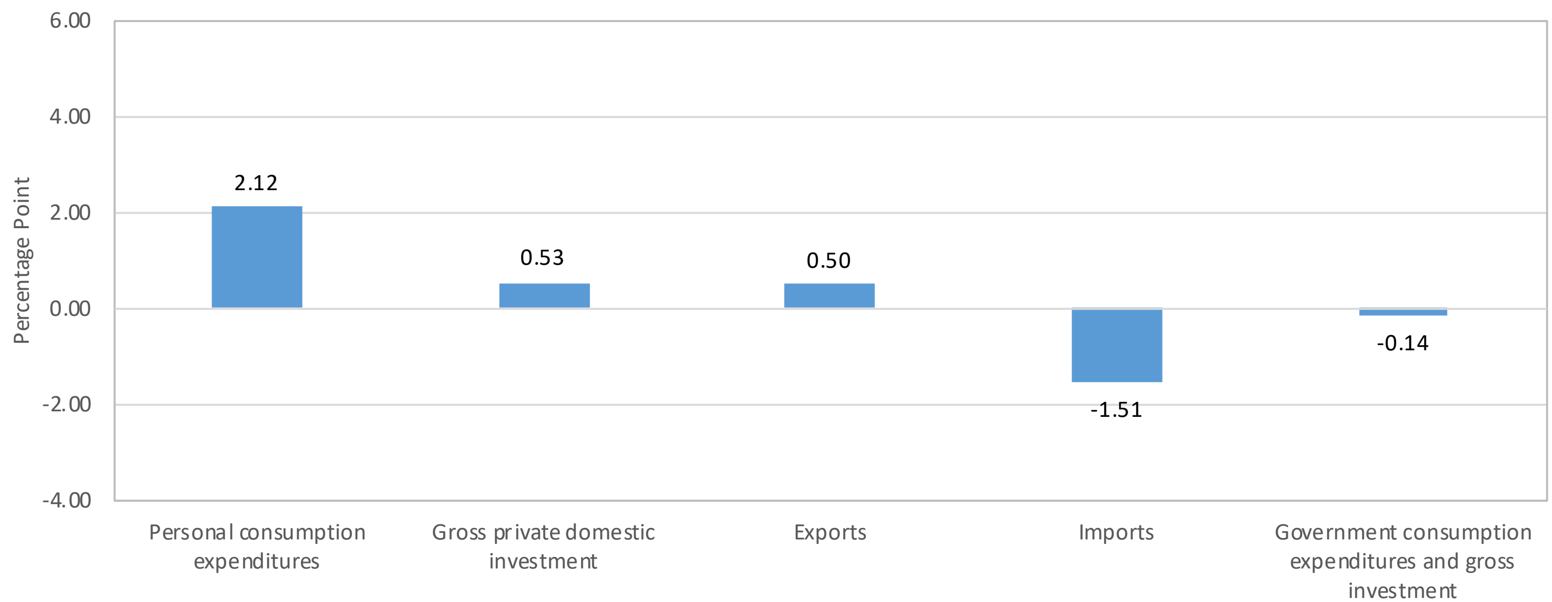
Figure 9. Contribution to Real GDP Growth by Major Expenditure Component, 2026:Q2 (Percentage Points, Annualized Rate)

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# August

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

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3<br>*ISM PMI Manufacturing*<br>*[July]*<br>*Construction Spending*<br>*[June]* | 4<br>*Manufacturing - New Orders*<br>*[June]* | 5<br>*ISM PMI Services*<br>*[July]* | 6<br>*Wholesale Inventory*<br>*[June]* | 7<br>*Employment Situation*<br>*[July]* | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11<br>*NFIB Small Business Report*<br>*[July]* | 12<br>*CPI*<br>*[July]*<br>*Real Earnings*<br>*[July]*<br>*Business Applications*<br>*[July]*<br>*Federal Budget*<br>*[July]* | 13<br>*PPI*<br>*[July]* | 14<br>*Retail & Food Sales*<br>*[July Advance]* | 15 |
| 16 | 17<br>*NAHB HMI*<br>*[August]* | 18<br>*Housing Starts*<br>*[July]*<br>*Pending Home Sales*<br>*[July]*<br>*U.S. Import & Export PI*<br>*[July]*<br>*Industrial Production*<br>*[July]*<br>*New Residential Sales*<br>*[July]* | 19 | 20 | 21<br>*State Employment*<br>*[July]* | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25<br>*The Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index*<br>*[August]* | 26<br>*Manufacturing - New Orders*<br>*[July Advance]*<br>*GDP*<br>*[2026:Q2, 2nd Estimate]* | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |