Louisiana Economic Vitals

Friday, August 7, 2026

Pictured: The $1.8 billion Louisiana International Terminal (LIT), a 400-acre deepwater container facility under development in Violet, St. Bernard Parish, approximately 17 miles downriver from New Orleans. Scheduled to open in 2028, the terminal is strategically located below the Mississippi River's upriver bridge height restrictions, enabling it to accommodate the world's largest container vessels serving the Gulf Coast. Designed to handle up to 1.2 million containers annually, the LIT is the largest public economic development project in Louisiana's history.

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 August 2026 Announcements:

From Farmland to Future Business Hub: McLeod Business Park Receives FastSites Investment

August 5th, 2026

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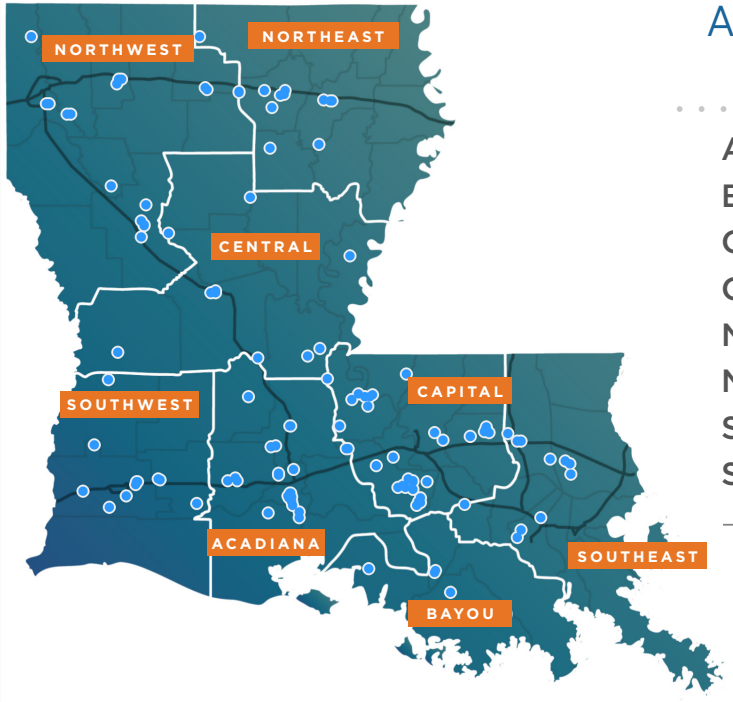
LED PROJECT PIPELINE

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 August 6, 2026, LED is actively tracking and involved in 211 distinct projects with a combined value exceeding $320 billion and the potential to create more than 46,740 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 131 actively marketed certified sites across every region of Louisiana.



Active Certified Sites by Region

Acadiana	29
Bayou	6
Capital	23
Central	9
Northeast	14
Northwest	18
Southeast	18
Southwest	14
TOTAL	131

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1. LOGISTICS COMPETITIVENESS

Louisiana's competitive position depends not only on the availability of ports, but also on the logistics capabilities those ports provide to manufacturers, exporters, and other freight-intensive industries. To better understand these capabilities, we developed a logistics accessibility framework that measures the proximity of certified industrial sites to key deep water port functions supporting the state's target industries. The framework evaluates accessibility to specific logistics capabilities, including container terminals, project cargo, breakbulk, dry bulk, liquid bulk, roll-on/roll-off (Ro/Ro), and direct marine–rail connections

Table 1 summarizes the documented logistics capabilities available at Louisiana's six deep water ports. Using these capabilities as the analytical foundation, the accessibility of every certified industrial site was measured using great-circle (Haversine) distances to the nearest port offering each capability. Table 2 summarizes the distribution of those distances using the 25th percentile, median, and 75th percentile, providing an objective measure of how broadly each logistics capability is accessible across Louisiana's certified industrial site inventory.

Source: Collaborative Marketing Strategy for the Five Deep-Water Ports of the Lower Mississippi River: Data Repository (Polaris Analytics & Consulting for the Louisiana Ports and Waterways Investment Commission, 2026), dotd.la.gov & portlc.com

Key Takeaways

- Louisiana's competitive advantage lies not simply in having deep water ports, but in providing certified industrial sites with access to the specialized logistics capabilities required by modern industry.
- Louisiana's certified industrial sites have broad access to core freight capabilities, including project cargo, breakbulk, dry bulk, liquid bulk, and direct marine–rail connections.
- Container terminal service and roll-on/roll-off capabilities are concentrated at relatively few locations, reflecting their specialized role within Louisiana's port system.

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Table 1. Logistics Capabilities of Louisiana's Deepwater Ports						
Logistics Capability	**Greater Baton Rouge**	**South Louisiana**	**New Orleans / LIT**	**St. Bernard**	**Plaquemines (Louisiana Gateway)**	**Lake Charles**
Container Terminal	—	✓*	✓	—	—	—
Project Cargo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Breakbulk	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dry Bulk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Liquid Bulk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Roll-on / Roll-off (Ro/Ro)	—	—	✓	—	—	—
Direct Rail Access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: A check mark (✓) indicates a documented logistics capability; a dash (—) indicates that the capability is not documented. *The Globalplex Intermodal Terminal has the physical capability to handle containerized cargo, although no container traffic has been handled there in approximately 20 years because most containerized freight moves only as far upriver as the Port of New Orleans. Accordingly, South Louisiana is identified as having container capability, but not regular container terminal service.

Table 2. Accessibility of Louisiana Certified Industrial Sites to Deepwater Port Logistics Capabilities			
Port	**25% of Sites are Within (mi)**	**Median Distance (mi)**	**75% of Sites are Within (mi)**
Container Terminal	37.4	89.1	175
Project Cargo	24.3	48.9	100.1
Breakbulk	30.7	70.1	103.4
Dry Bulk	24.3	48.9	100.1
Liquid Bulk	32.3	51.3	132.2
Roll-on / Roll-off (Ro/Ro)	62.6	120.3	199.6
Direct Rail Access	24.3	48.9	100.1

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2. AI INVESTMENT AND THE NEUTRAL RATE

The charts below illustrate several stylized facts that have emerged during the recent expansion of generative AI. Recent advances in generative AI have been accompanied by a sharp increase in investment in data center infrastructure. Over roughly the same period, estimates of the neutral real interest rate (r*) have moved higher, while household saving and broader nonresidential investment have changed more gradually. Because r* reflects expectations about the future return on productive capital, these trends are consistent with the hypothesis that sustained AI-related investment may be contributing to a higher long-run equilibrium real interest rate.

Note: The vertical dashed line denotes October 2022, marking the beginning of the widespread commercialization of generative AI. It serves as a common reference point for visual comparison across figures and does not imply a causal relationship.

Source: bea.gov & newyorkfed.org

Key Takeaways

- AI-related capital expenditures have increased dramatically since 2022.
- Household saving has not experienced a comparable sustained increase.
- The estimated neutral real interest rate (r*) has increased over roughly the same period.
- Overall nonresidential investment has increased much more gradually than AI-related capital expenditures, indicating the recent investment surge has been concentrated in data center infrastructure.

Figure 1. Real Investment in Data Centers (2020:Q1 = 100)

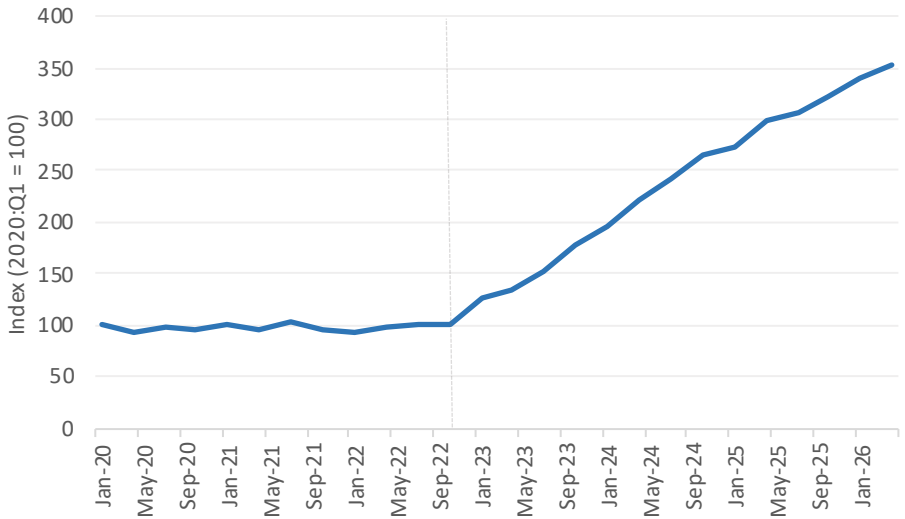

Figure 2. Estimated Neutral Real Interest Rate (r*)

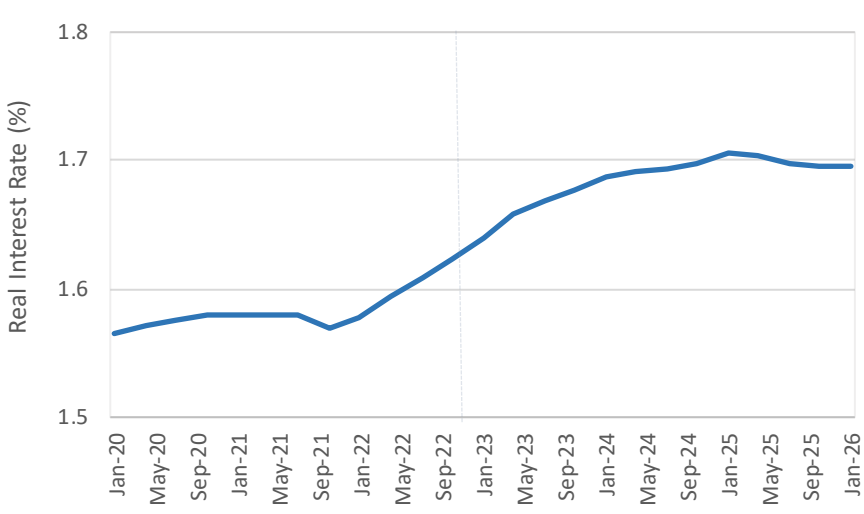

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Figure 3. Personal Saving Rate

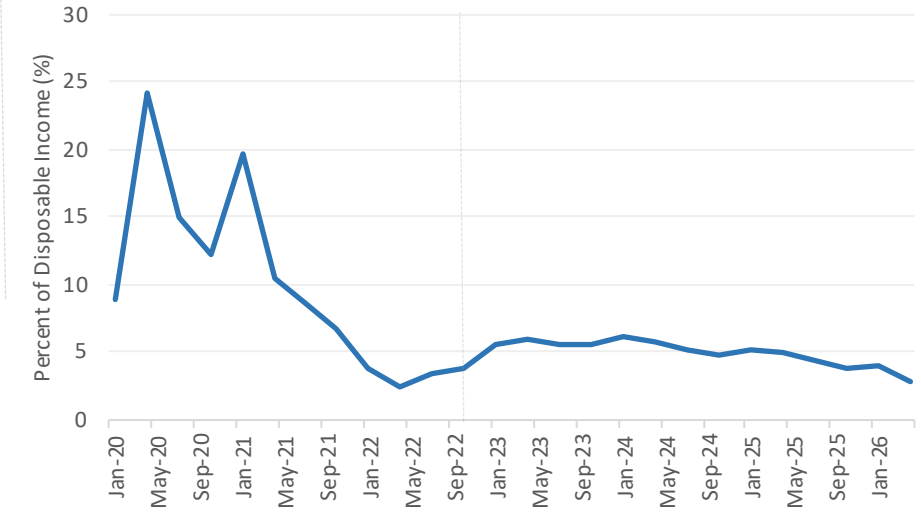
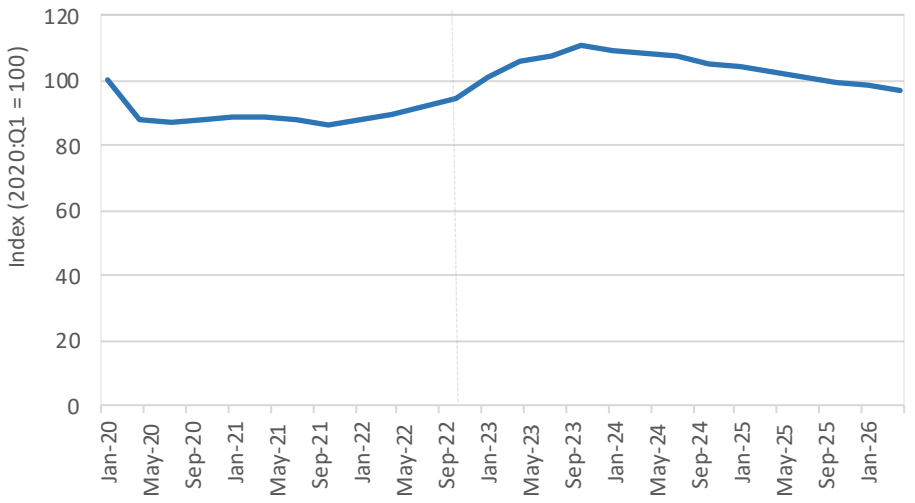


Figure 4. Real Private Nonresidential Fixed Investment (2020:Q1 = 100)



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3. COMMODITIES

The following tables (3 & 4) 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 pulled back during the week but remain elevated relative to earlier this year.
- Retail gasoline prices were relatively stable despite lower crude oil prices.
- Although crude oil and gasoline prices have retreated from their recent peaks, all three series remain above their March 2 pre-conflict levels nearly five months after the onset of the Iran conflict.
- Agricultural commodity prices remained mixed. Soybeans, wheat, corn, and rice continue to post solid year-over-year gains, while lumber and orange juice remained well below year-ago prices.
- Weekly movements in agricultural markets were modest overall, suggesting commodity prices are stabilizing after the heightened volatility experienced earlier in the year.

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Table 3. Energy Commodities, Weekly							
					Change		
Commodity	7/31/26	7/24/26	7/3/26	8/1/25	WoW	MoM	YoY
Brent Crude Oil Price	$91.63	$96.12	$69.70	$72.41	-4.7%	31.5%	26.5%
WTI Crude Oil Price	$84.51	$88.58	$70.48	$69.58	-4.6%	19.9%	21.5%
Henry Hub Natural Gas Spot Price	$2.62	$2.86	$3.34	$3.03	-8.4%	-21.6%	-13.5%
U.S. Regular Conventional Gas Price	$3.94	$3.95	$3.65	$3.04	-0.3%	7.9%	29.6%

Table 4. Agricultural Commodities, Daily Period of August 6, 2026							
				Change			
Commodity	Listed Price	Dollar ($)	Unit of Measurement	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	YoY
Soybeans	$1,154.94	$11.55	$/Bu	0.3%	-1.9%	-3.5%	18.9%
Wheat	$630.78	$6.31	$/Bu	-1.8%	-4.9%	3.5%	21.7%
Lumber	$576.56	$5.77	$/MBF	-0.5%	-7.8%	-7.7%	-11.8%
Palm Oil	$4,686.00	$46.86	$/MT	-0.3%	0.1%	3.1%	10.5%
Sugar (No. 11)	$15.58	$0.16	$/Lb	2.8%	8.0%	2.9%	-2.7%
Coffee	$308.25	$3.08	$/Lb	-1.0%	-4.6%	-2.9%	3.5%
Corn	$438.93	$4.39	$/Bu	0.5%	-1.5%	-0.8%	14.2%
Rice	$14.17	$0.14	$/CWT	0.8%	2.9%	7.2%	11.5%
Orange Juice	$152.55	$1.53	$/Lb	-3.3%	4.5%	-2.7%	-32.3%

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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 August 3, 2026. Vertical reference lines denote the onset of the conflict (Day 0) and the 30-day incremental milestones used to illustrate the evolution of energy prices over the fivemonths following the event.

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

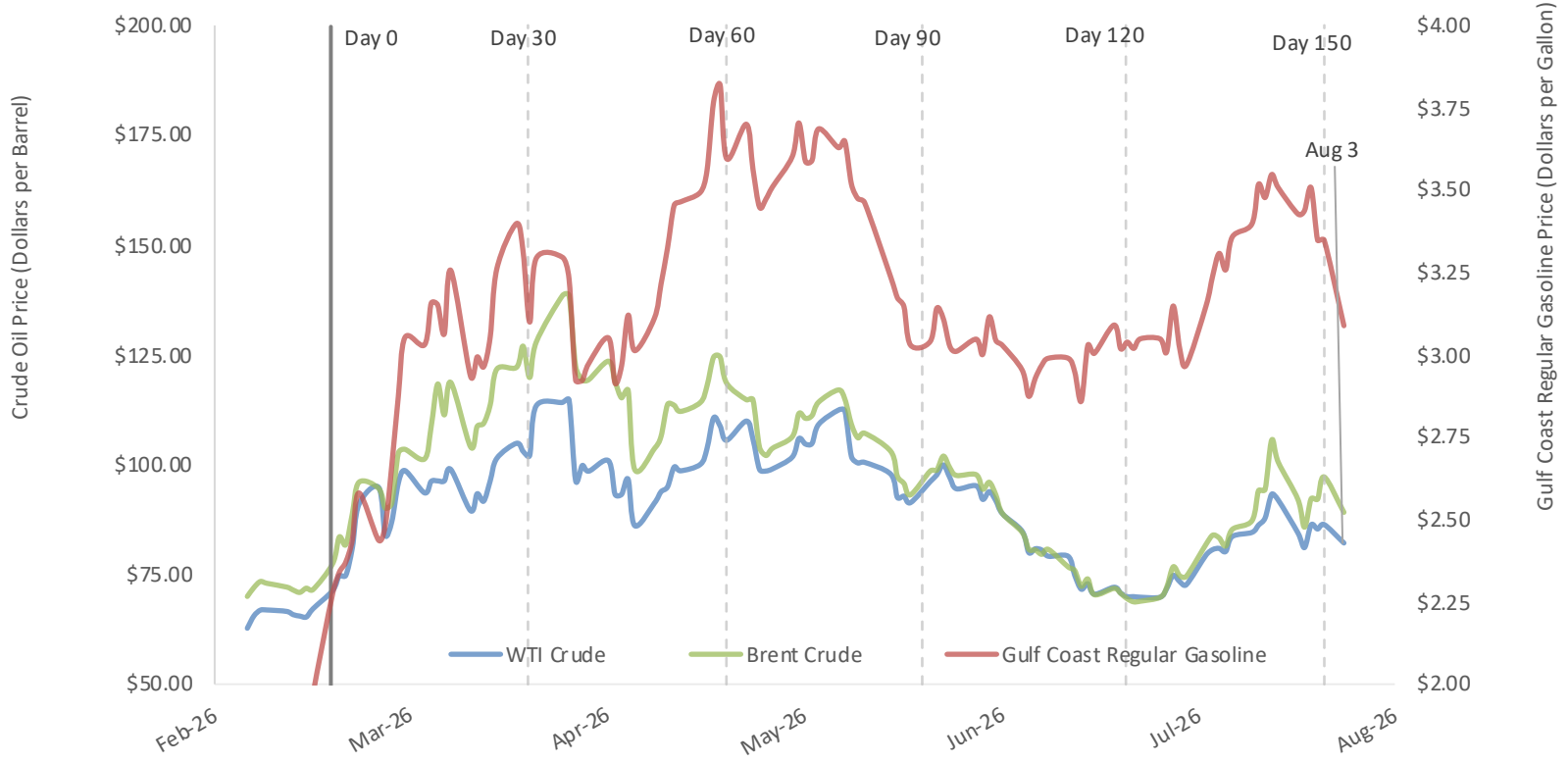

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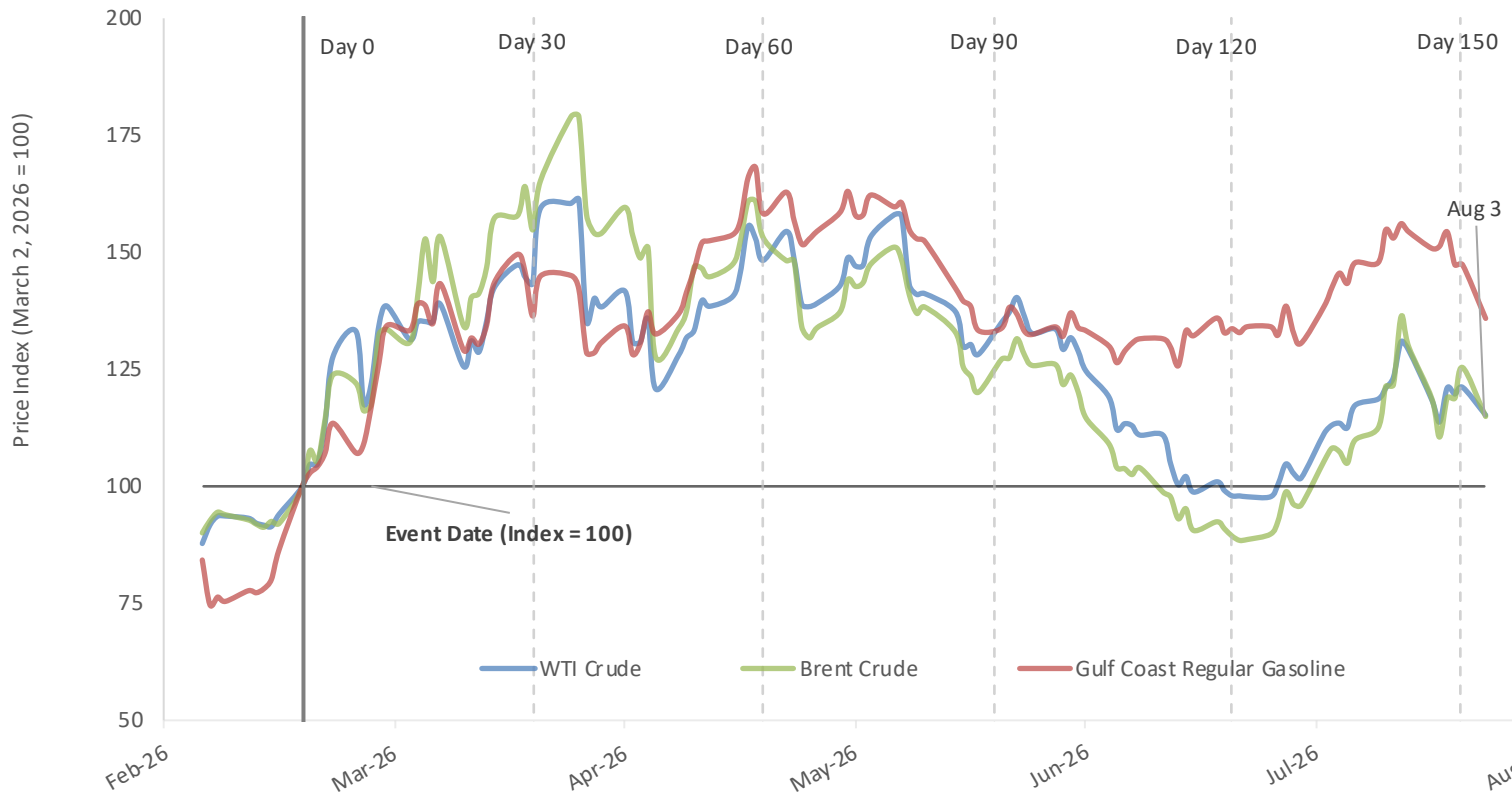
Figure 6 presents the same daily energy price series indexed to their March 2, 2026 values (March 2, 2026 = 100). Indexing each series to a common baseline facilitates comparison of the relative changes in WTI crude oil, Brent crude oil, and U.S. Gulf Coast regular gasoline prices during the period following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

Figure 6. Energy Price Response to the 2026 Iran Conflict



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4. LABOR MARKET ACTIVITY

Tables 5 and 6 provide an overview of recent labor market conditions in the United States and Louisiana. The national figures include total nonfarm payroll employment from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program, along with labor force, labor force participation, and unemployment measures. Louisiana figures reflect employment and labor force conditions among state residents as measured through the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program. Note: U.S. employment and labor force is in thousands;

Source: bls.gov

Key Takeaways

- Louisiana employment is growing: Employment increased 0.5% both monthly and annually.
- More Louisianans are entering the labor force: Labor force growth outpaced employment growth, and the participation rate increased.
- That labor-force growth helps explain the higher unemployment rate.
- National conditions appear softer: U.S. payroll employment declined from June, while labor force participation also edged lower.

Table 5. U.S. Employment Situation - July 2026

Series	Jul-26	Jun-26	Jul-25	Change	
				MoM	YoY
Total Nonfarm Employment	158,649	159,748	158,267	-0.7%	0.2%
Civilian Labor Force	170,235	170,198	171,646	0.02%	-0.8%
LFPR	61.8%	61.9%	62.7%	-0.2%	-1.4%
Unemployment Rate	4.4%	4.4%	4.6%	0	-0.2

Table 6. Louisiana Employment Situation - June 2026

Series	Jul-26	Jun-26	Jul-25	Change	
				MoM	YoY
Total Employment	2,014,439	2,004,648	2,004,708	0.5%	0.5%
State Labor Force	2,117,813	2,101,294	2,106,168	0.8%	0.6%
LFPR	58.7%	58.3%	58.5%	0.4	0.2
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	4.6%	4.8%	0.3	0.1

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