Harnett COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE







Presented By Ted Abernathy, November 2026

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

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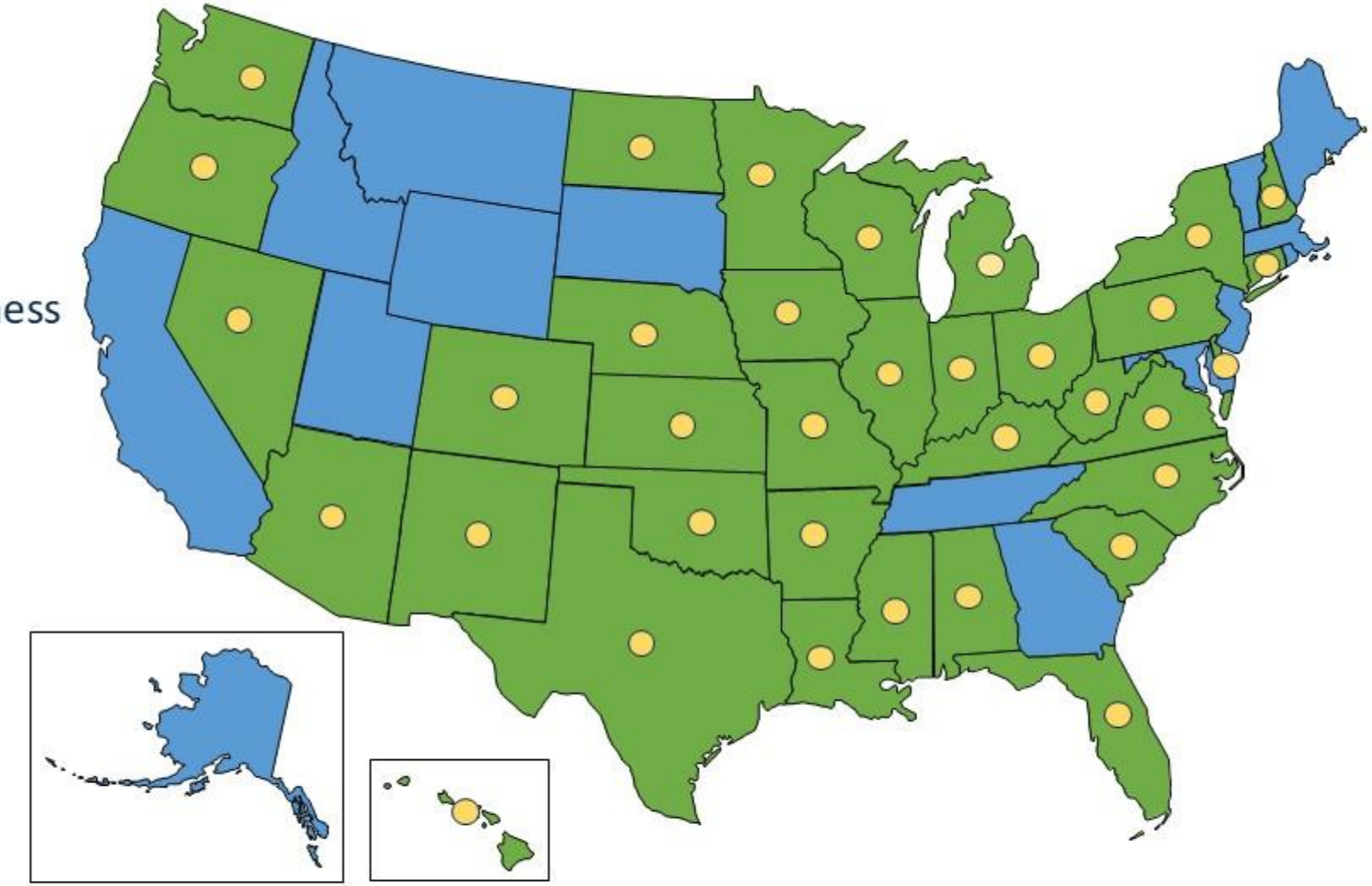
WE BUILD BETTER ECONOMIC LEADERS

Information-Insight-Ideas-Strategy-Skills

ECONOMIC
LEADERSHIP

About Us

- Founded in 2013
- Work in 35 states
- Statewide & Regional Competitiveness and Workforce Strategies
- State Chamber Plans
- Locational Analysis
- Impact Analysis
- Corporate Communications
- Trendspotting
- Leadership Development



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Being Competitive

- Marathon
- Scores are kept
- Lots of competition



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The Six Foundations of Place-Based Competitiveness



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PLACE BASED COMPETITIVENESS



BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Taxes
- Regulatory Climate
- Legal Climate
- Insurance
- Politicians

WORKFORCE

- In-migration
- Education/Skills
- Productivity
- Costs
- QOL

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Power
- Water/Sewer
- Transportation
- Broadband
- Housing/Childcare
- Buildings & Sites

INNOVATION

- Advanced Industries
- R&D
- Start-up Ecosystem
- Automation

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Issues With the Highest Very Important

83% Electric Power Availability at Scale

74% Transmission and Substation Capacity

65% Availability of Skilled Labor

63% Grid Reliability and Redundancy

Over 50% Very Important

- ✓ Site Readiness
- ✓ Zoning Compatibility
- ✓ Political Regulatory Stability
- ✓ Responsive State and Local Government
- ✓ Depth of Tech-Talent Pipeline

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#5-RISK IMPACTS AS COMPETITIVENESS FACTORS

Managing risks today. Strengthening competitiveness tomorrow.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Crime Rates
- Fiscal Stability
- Policy Volatility
- Policy Uncertainty
- Permitting Delays

WORKFORCE

- Out-migration
- Training Budget Reductions
- New Competition

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Unaffordability
- Weather Impacts
- Overgrowth

INNOVATION

- Exiting Talent
- College Struggles
- Funding Cuts

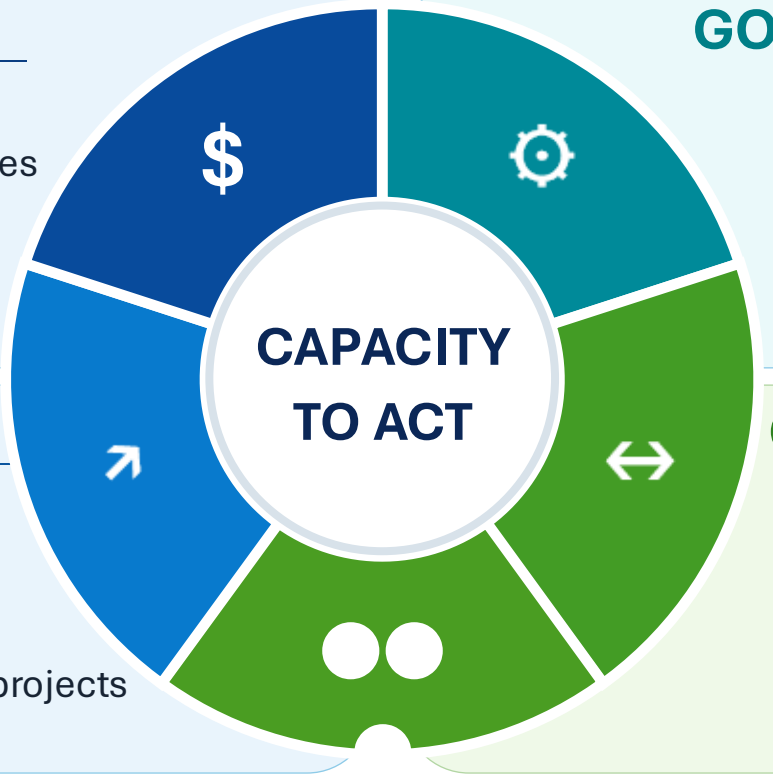
The EMERGING 6th- INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Does your community have the leadership, resources, partnerships, and ability to turn strategy into results?



FISCAL CAPACITY

- Bond rating and debt levels
- Revenue stability and reserves
- Ability to fund priorities
- Long-term financial plan



GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS

- Timely and predictable permitting
- Efficient and responsive services
- Procurement speed
- Leadership continuity





INVESTMENT CAPACITY

- Public and private capital
- Infrastructure investment
- Sites and buildings ready
- Financing and delivering major projects

COLLABORATION & EXECUTION

- Cross-jurisdiction cooperation
- Public-private partnerships
- Alignment of stakeholders
- Track record of results







INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH

- Capable ED organizations, chambers, utilities, universities and workforce partners
- Quality of leadership and governance
- Depth of civic and volunteer leadership
- Philanthropic and civic assets

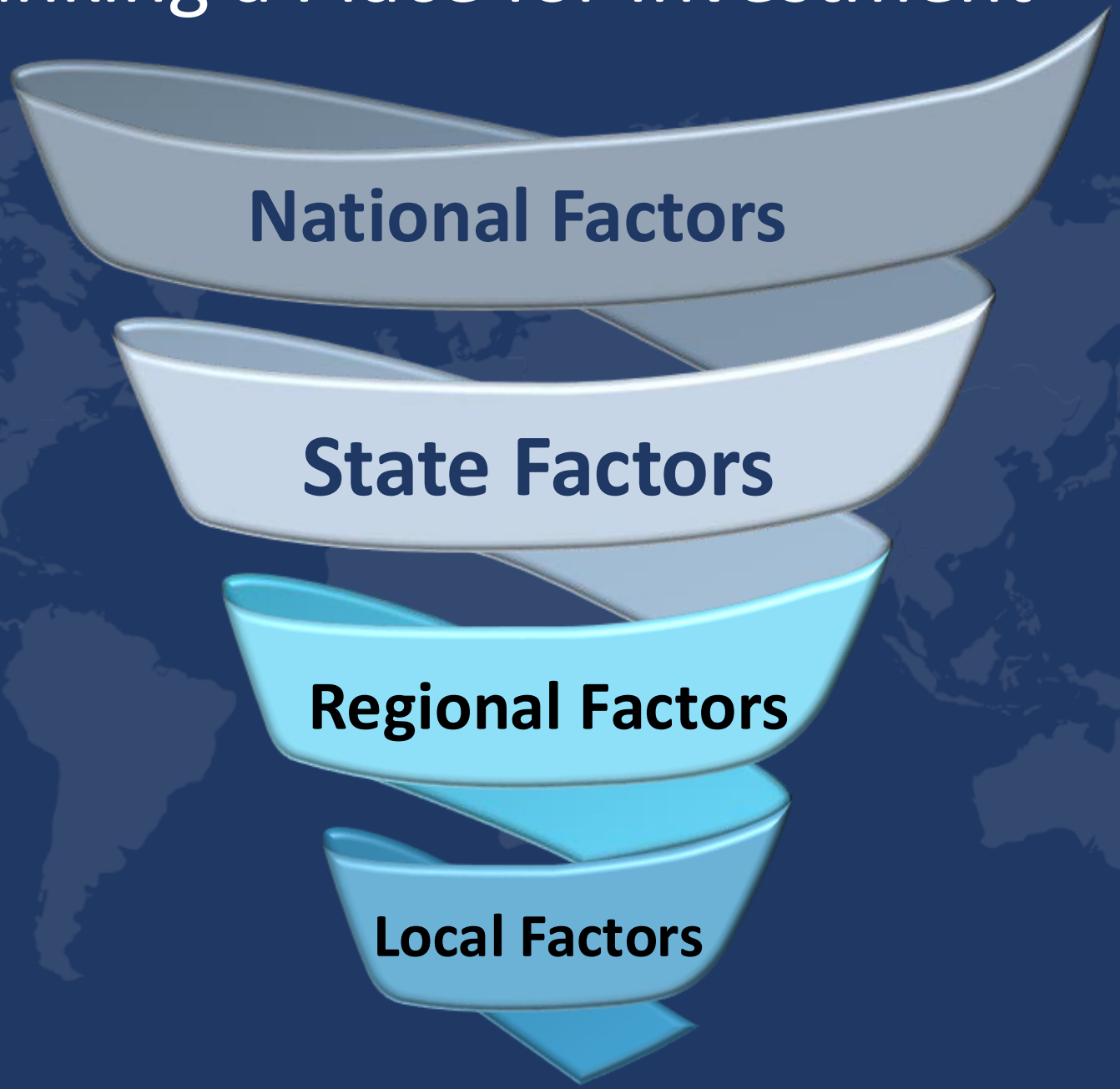
Latest Best States for Business Rankings

	Site Selection	CNBC	CEO Magazine	Business Facilities
1	Texas	Ohio	Texas	Texas
2	North Carolina	North Carolina	Florida	Virginia
3	Georgia	Virginia	Tennessee	North Carolina
4	Virginia	Texas	North Carolina	Florida
5	Florida	Minnesota	Georgia	Tennessee
6	Ohio	Michigan	South Carolina	Georgia
7	Illinois	Georgia	Ohio	Indiana
8	Indiana	Florida	Arizona	Utah
9	Arizona	Tennessee	Indiana	Arizona
10	Colorado	Indiana	Virginia	South Carolina

The 3Q 2026 Metro Indexes

MSA	Momentum Index	Cost and Business Climate Index	Future Index	Global Index	Talent Index	Quality of Place	Total Score	Overall Rank
Austin, TX	1	2	2	7	1	13T	26	1
Raleigh, NC	**20**	**5**	**1**	**12T**	**2**	**6**	46	2
Dallas, TX	15	4	7	8	6	18	58	3
Huntsville, AL	33	28	3	43T	3	5	115	4
Durham, NC	27	24	22	12T	13	19	117	5
Nashville, TN	4	12	9	30	5	59	119	6
Atlanta, GA	45	46	11	15T	7	13T	137	7
Charlotte, NC	32	17T	8	50	4	31	142	8T
Indianapolis, IN	35	17T	10	3	19T	58	142	8T
Des Moines, IA	42	7	18	60	14	4	145	10
Provo, UT	13	22	4	98	8T	3	148	11
Salt Lake City, UT	16	30	5	45	21	34T	151	12
Charleston, SC	3	67	34	23	18	16	161	13
Knoxville, TN	34	3	27	75T	24	13T	176	14T
Tampa, FL	12	49	21	66	8T	20	176	14T
Houston, TX	18T	10	35T	1	47	66T	177	16
Orlando, FL	7	48	28	69	17	10	179	17
Seattle, WA	2	61	12	49	12	57	193	18
Boise, ID	22	43	16	101	16	2	200	19
McAllen, TX	40	6	72	4	51	29T	202	20
Madison, WI	49	39	20	57	30	8	203	21
Fayetteville-Springdale	25	26T	40	86	28	1	206	22T
Greenville, SC	28	58	49	10	27	34T	206	22T
Wichita, KS	68	8	25	20	54T	32	207	24
Miami, FL	10	59	53	15T	48	28	213	25
Phoenix, AZ	24	62	24	38	29	37	214	26
San Antonio, TX	18T	15	41T	26	42	77	219	27
Ogden, UT	23	31	17	96	49	9	225	28

Ranking a Place for Investment



- Market Size
- Trade Regulations

- Corporate Tax Rate
- Legal Environment
- Right To Work
- Brand/Image

- Workforce
- Housing
- Mobility
- Quality Of Life

- Infrastructure

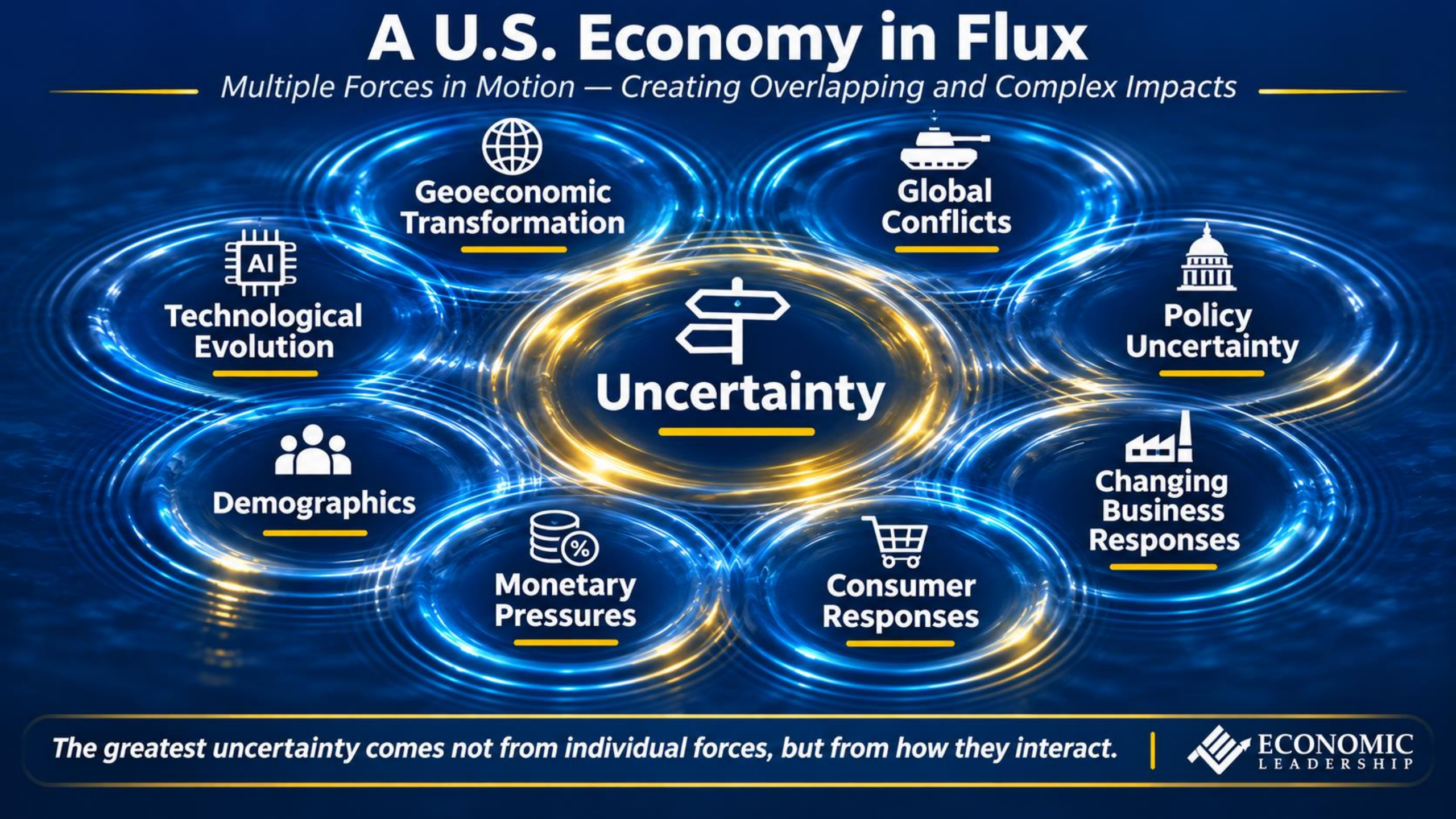
- Buildings And Sites
- Permitting Certainty And Speed

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UNDERSTANDING
THE CURRENT ECONOMY
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A U.S. Economy in Flux

Multiple Forces in Motion — Creating Overlapping and Complex Impacts



The greatest uncertainty comes not from individual forces, but from how they interact.

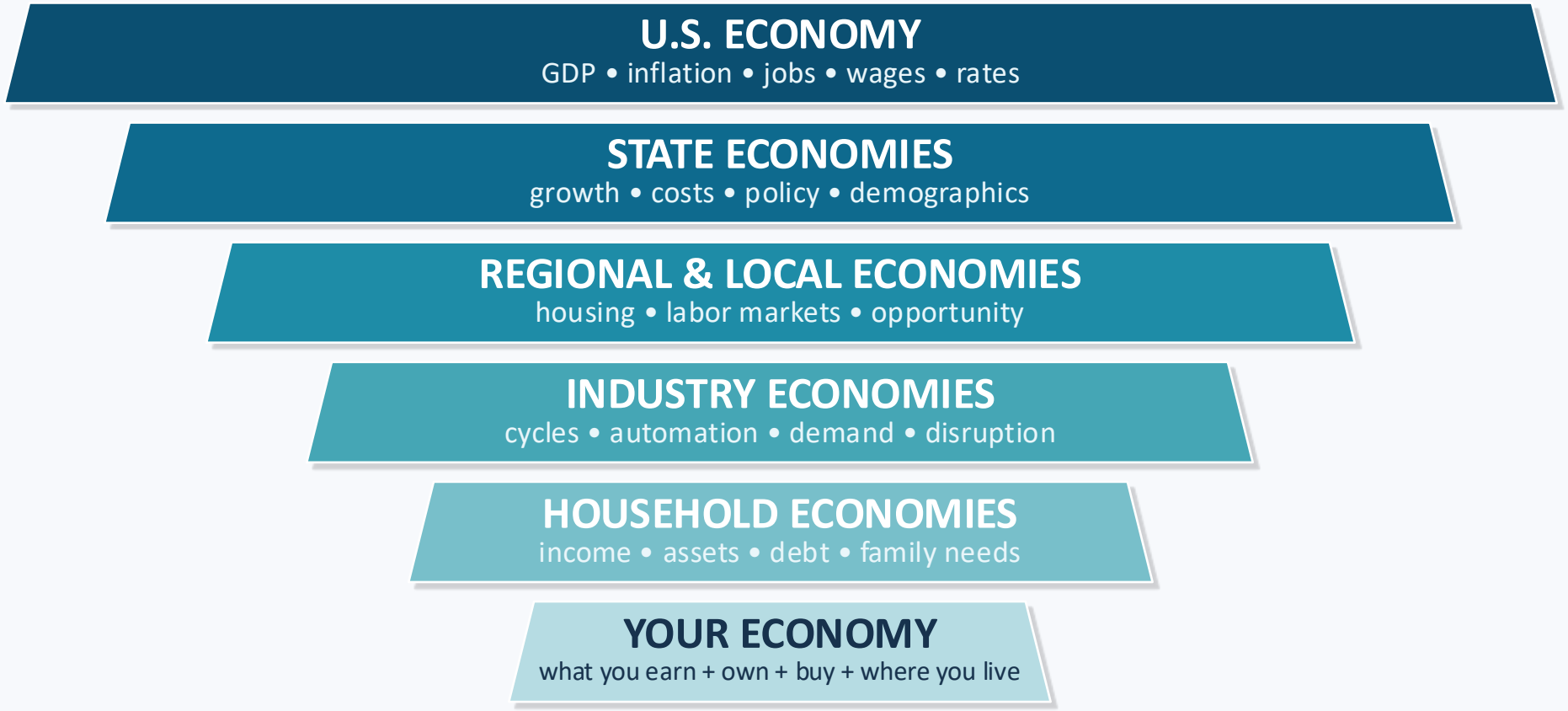
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Oscar Mayer
RESEALABLE
FULLY COOKED
Pumpkin Spice
Bologna
MADE WITH CHICKEN & PORK
& Pumpkin & Cinnamon
80
NET WT 16 OZ (1 LB)

THERE IS NO ONE "ECONOMY"

Averages describe the landscape. People experience the terrain.

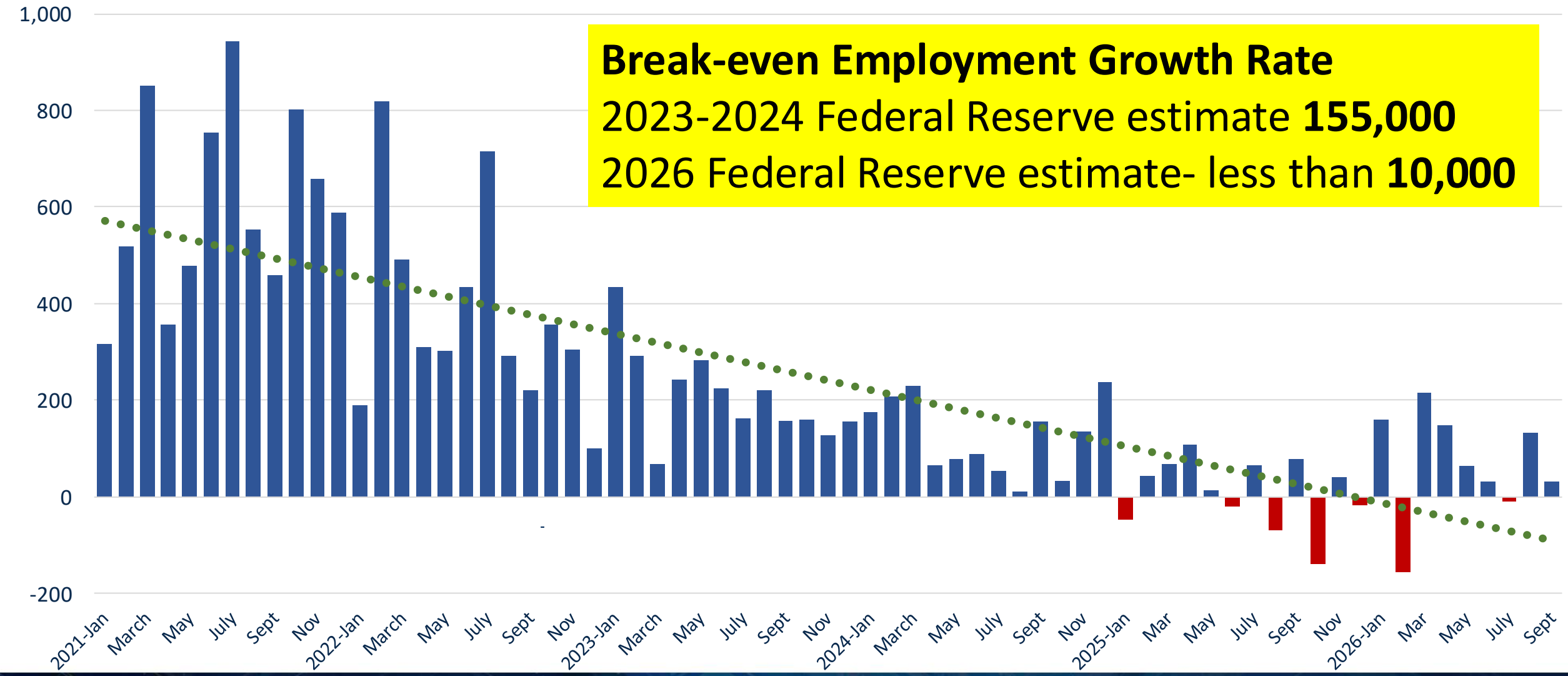
NATIONAL AVERAGE



PERSONAL REALITY

The national average may be true — and still not describe your reality.

USA Nonfarm Payroll Employment (in thousands)



Break-even Employment Growth Rate

2023-2024 Federal Reserve estimate **155,000**

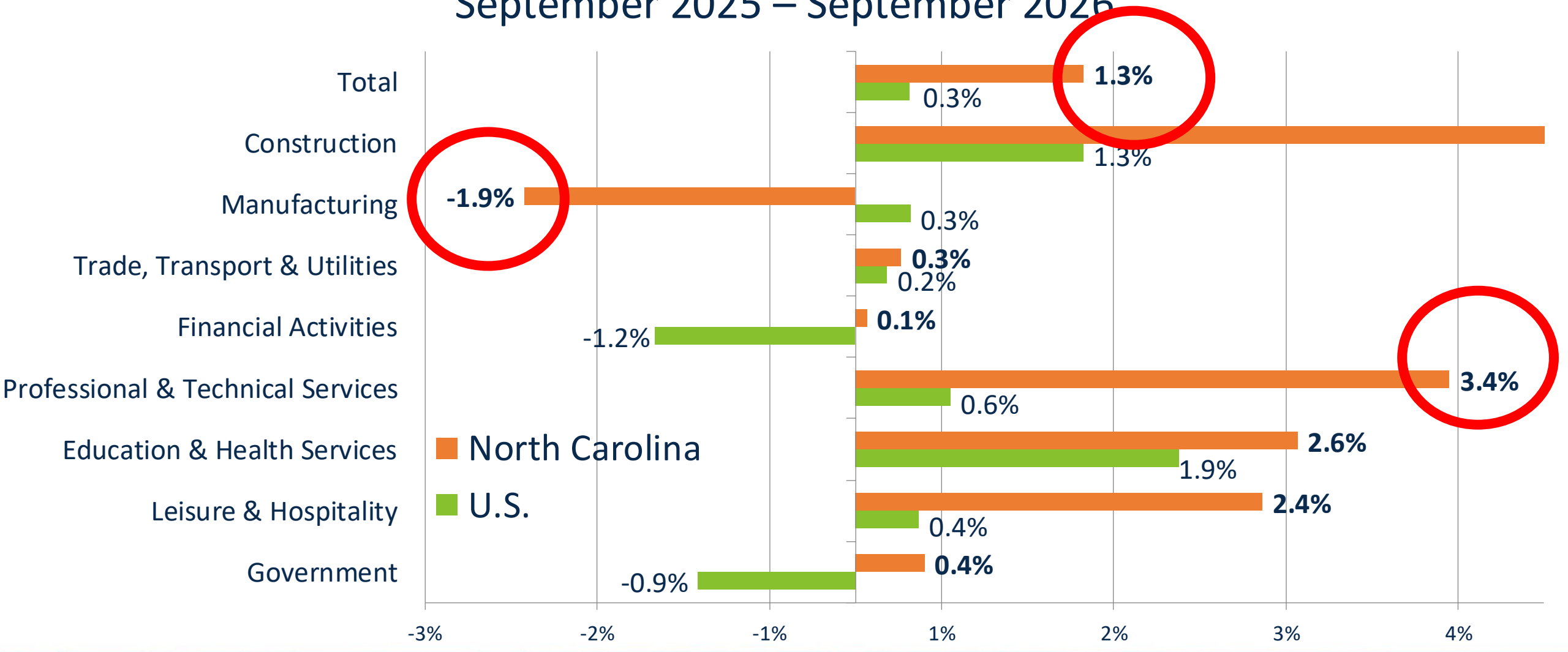
2026 Federal Reserve estimate- less than **10,000**

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

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North Carolina & U.S. Nonfarm Employment Change by Sector

September 2025 – September 2026

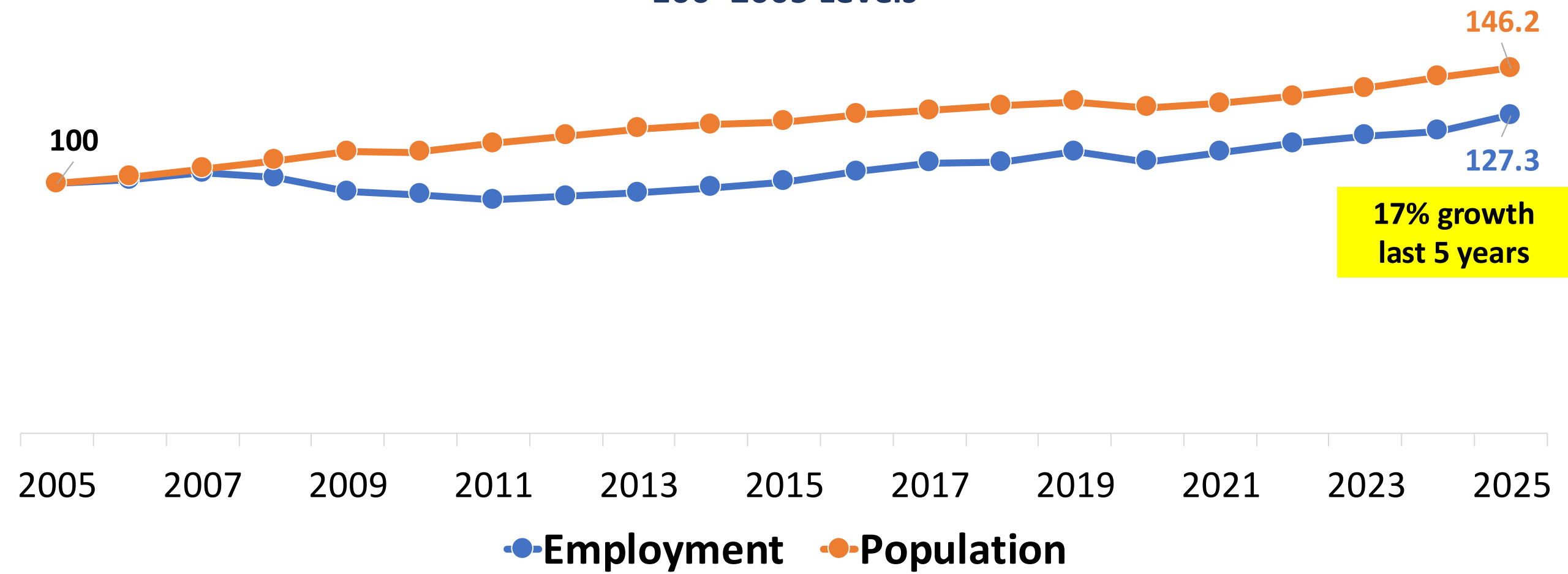


Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Nonfarm Payroll Employment

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Harnett County Employment and Population Growth 2005-2025

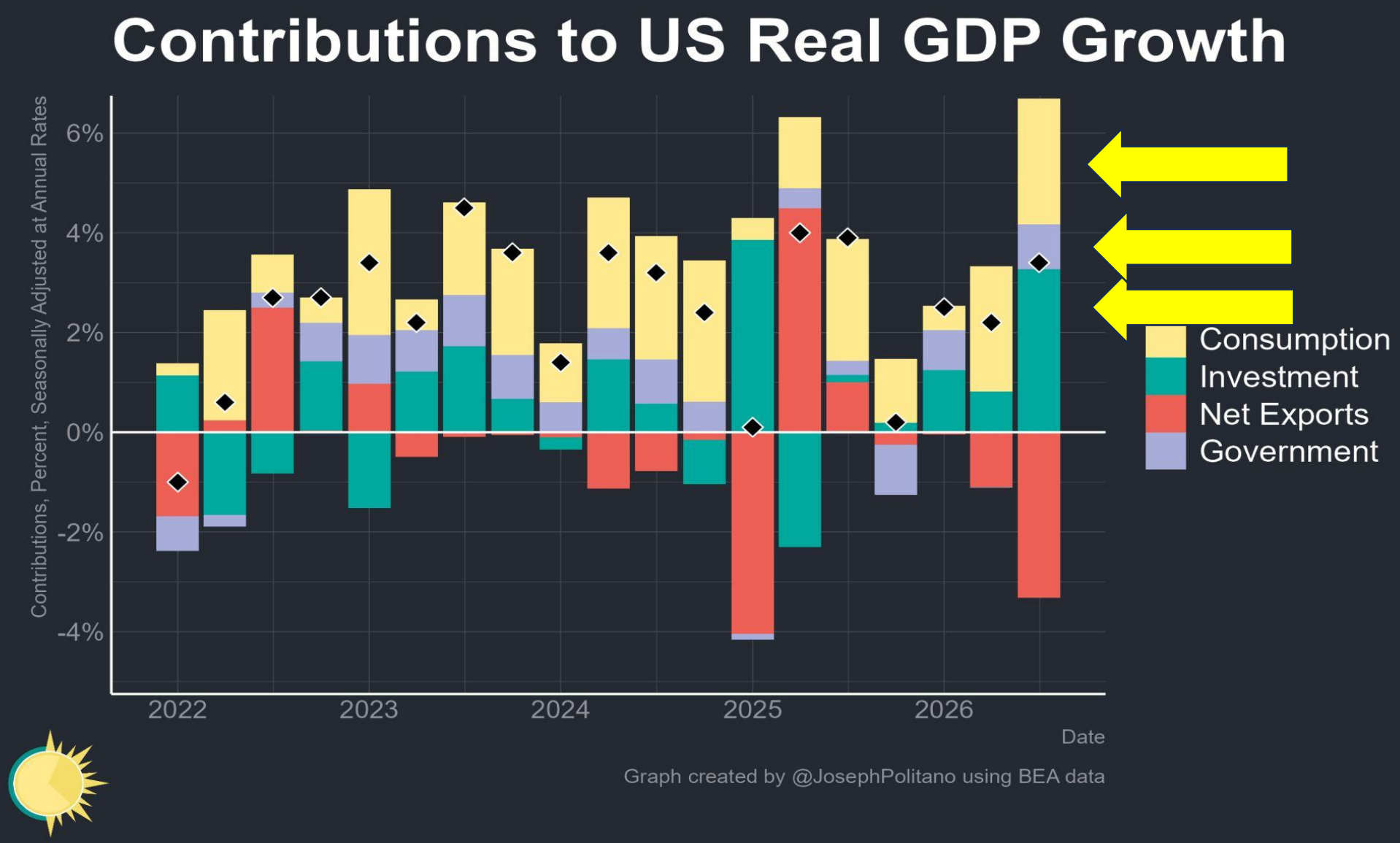
100=2005 Levels



Source: Lightcast 2026.4

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GDP
US GDP %
Growth
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
2.4
2.9
3
2.3
2.5
2.2

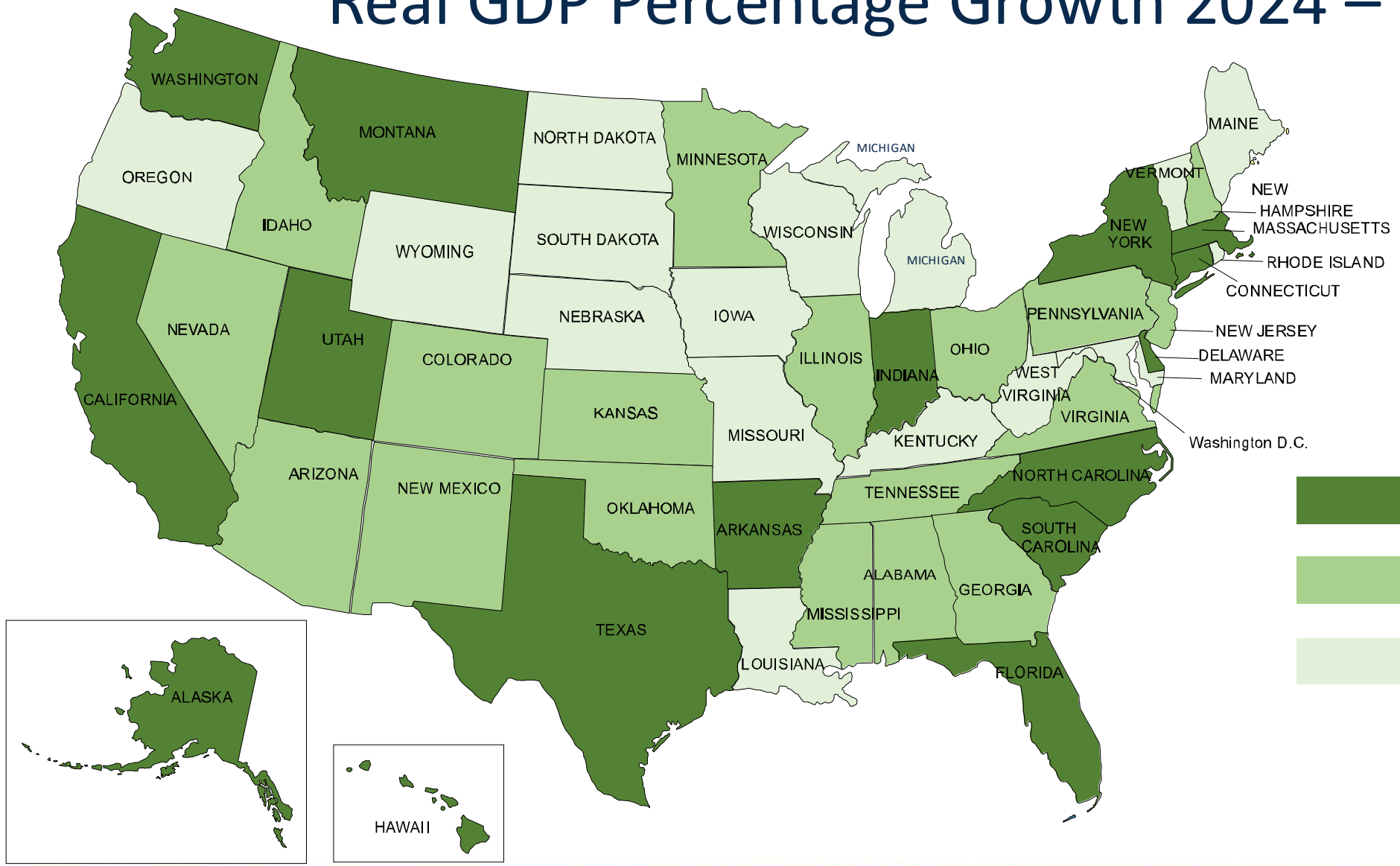


US Real GDP came in at a 3.4% annualized growth rate in Q3 2026 data, well above the 2.2% pace recorded in the second quarter.

Consumer spending rose 3.8% and business investment jumped 12.7% — the fastest in six years — driven largely by AI infrastructure buildout.

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Real GDP Percentage Growth 2024 – 2025



Top Third (over 2.1%)

Middle Third (1.5%-2.1%)

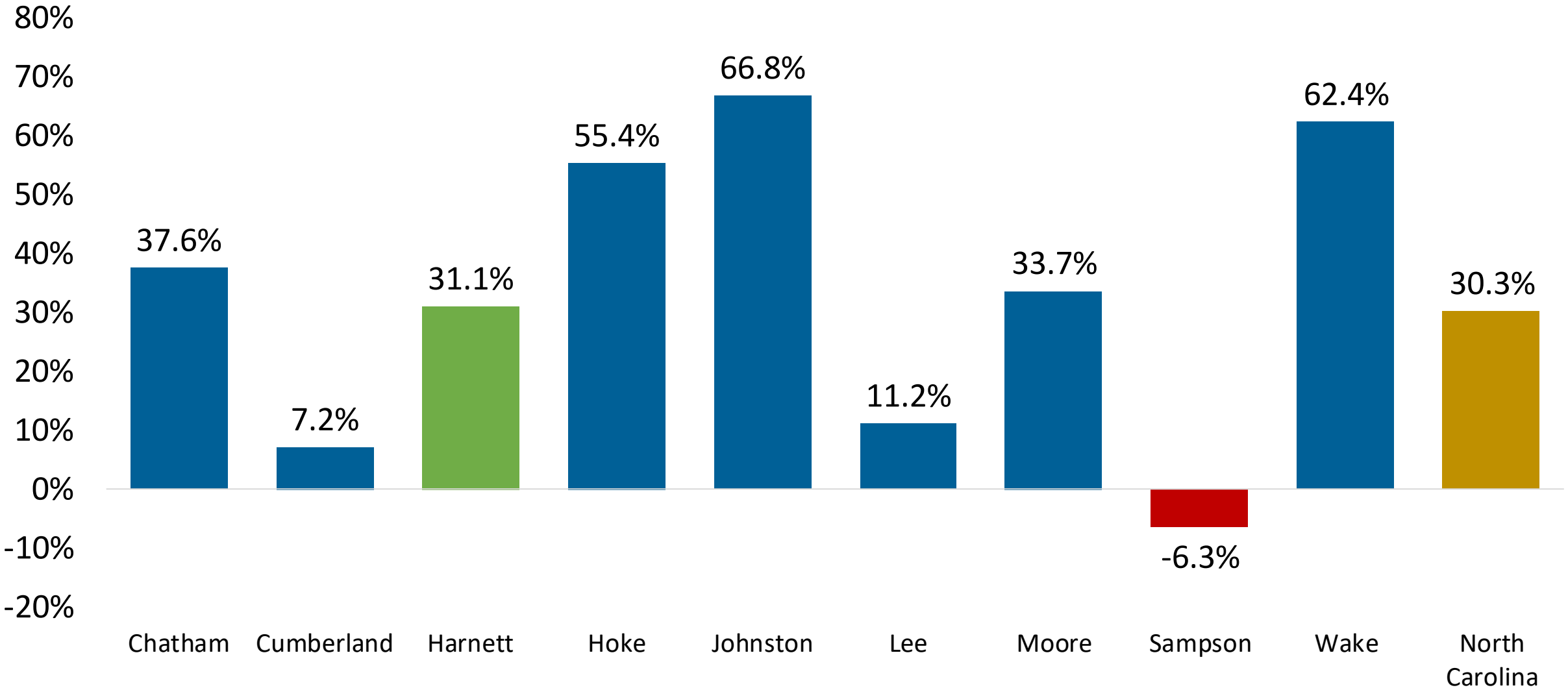
Under 1.5% growth

U.S.	**2.1%**
NC	**2.7%**

Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

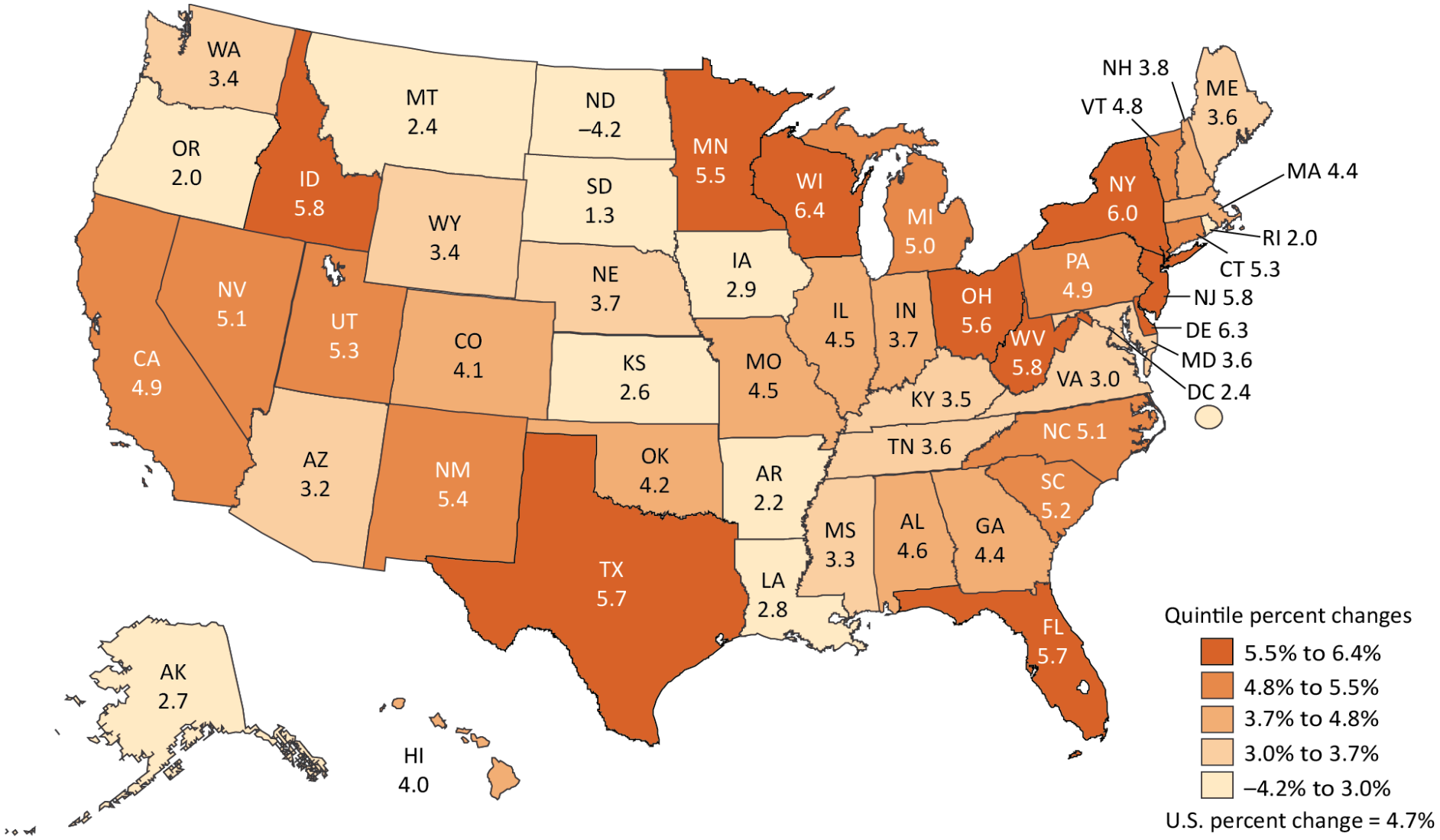
Change in Real GDP by County 2014-2024



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Real GDP: All industry total
(Thousands of chained 2017 dollars)

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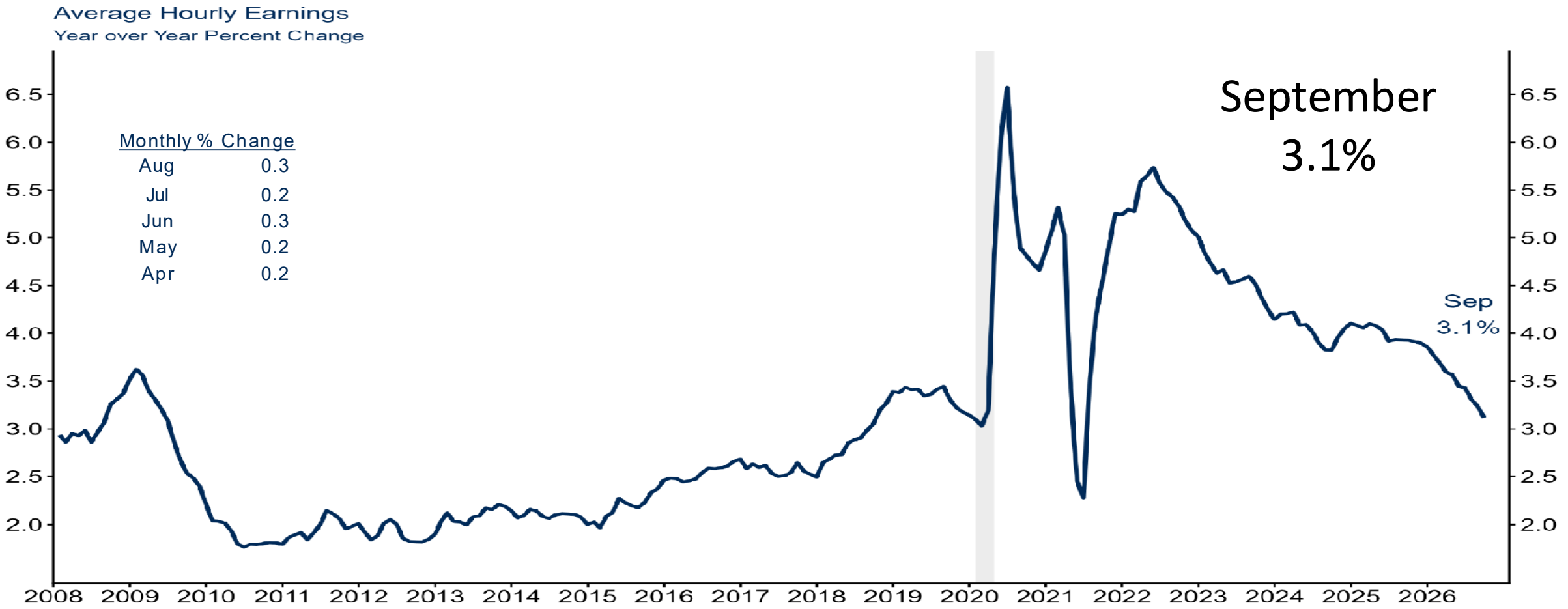
Personal Income: Percent Change at Annual Rate, 2026:Q1–2026:Q2



U.S. 4.7%
NC 5.1%

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Average Hourly Earning



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics via Haver Analytics

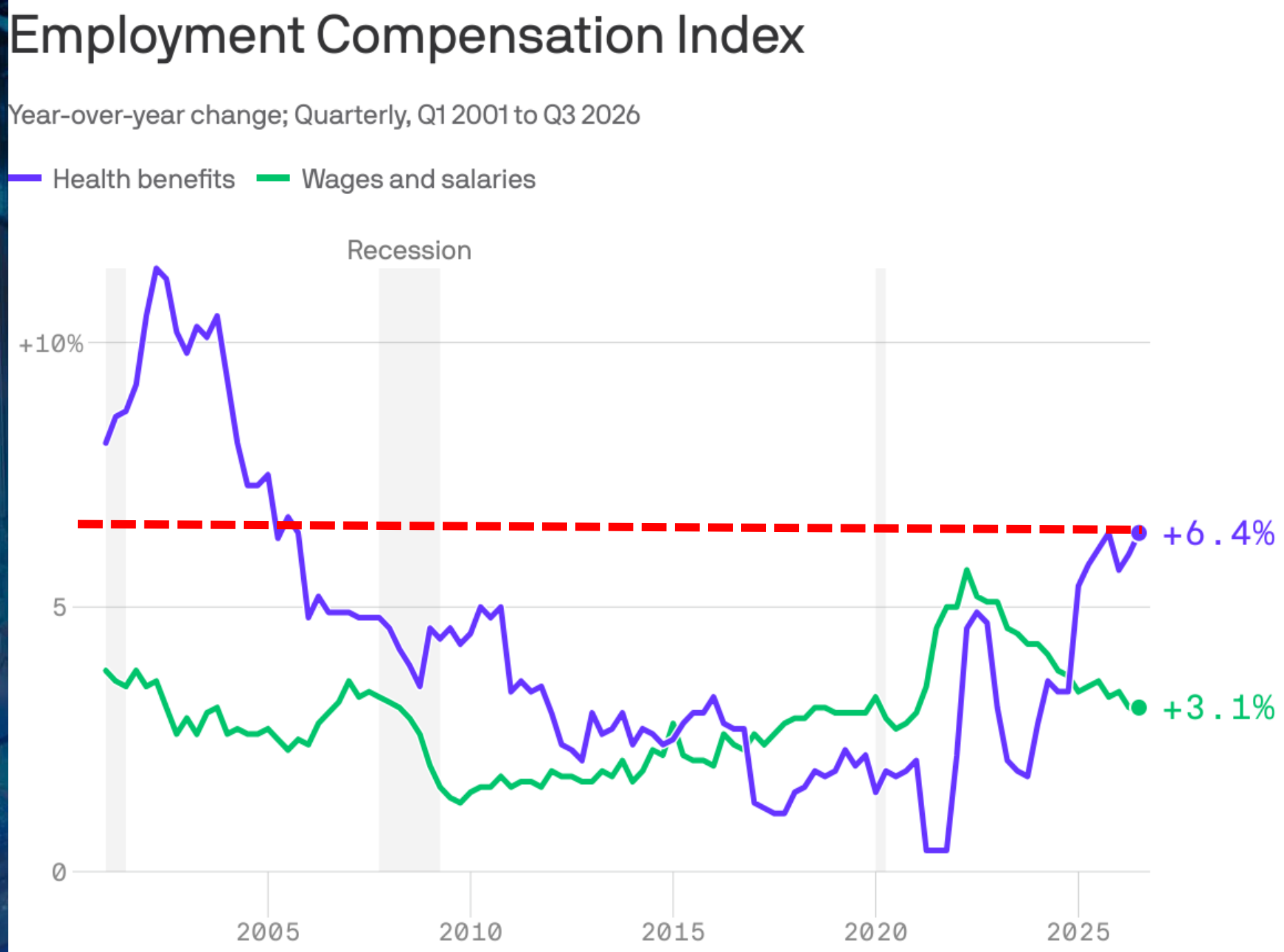
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Overall private compensation costs are up 3.4% over the 12 months ended in September, (3.5% a year ago, same period.)

The difference is wage and salary compensation was up only 3.1% this year, compared with 3.6% a year ago.

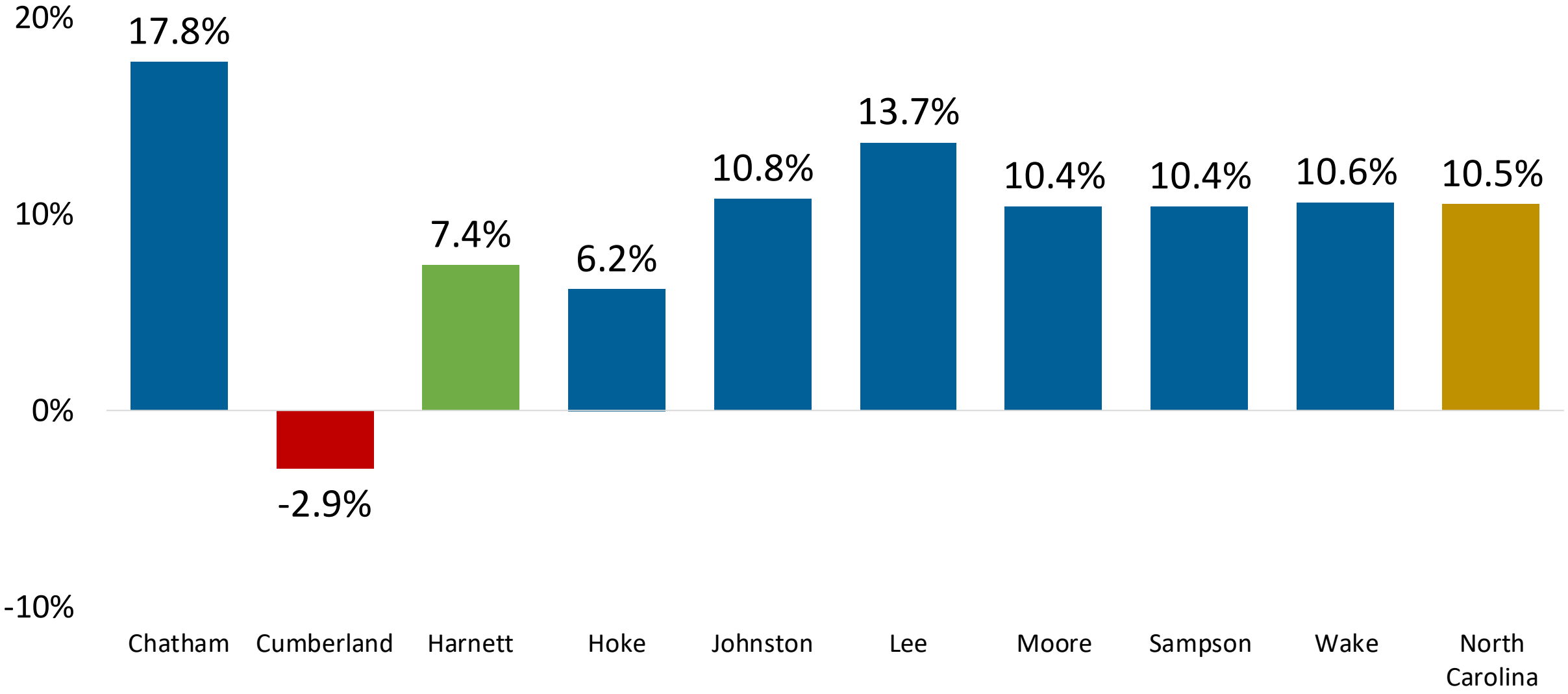
Health benefit costs rose 6.4%, compared with 6.1% in the comparable period ending in September 2025.

Data: Bureau of Labor Statistics;
Chart: Neil Irwin/Axios



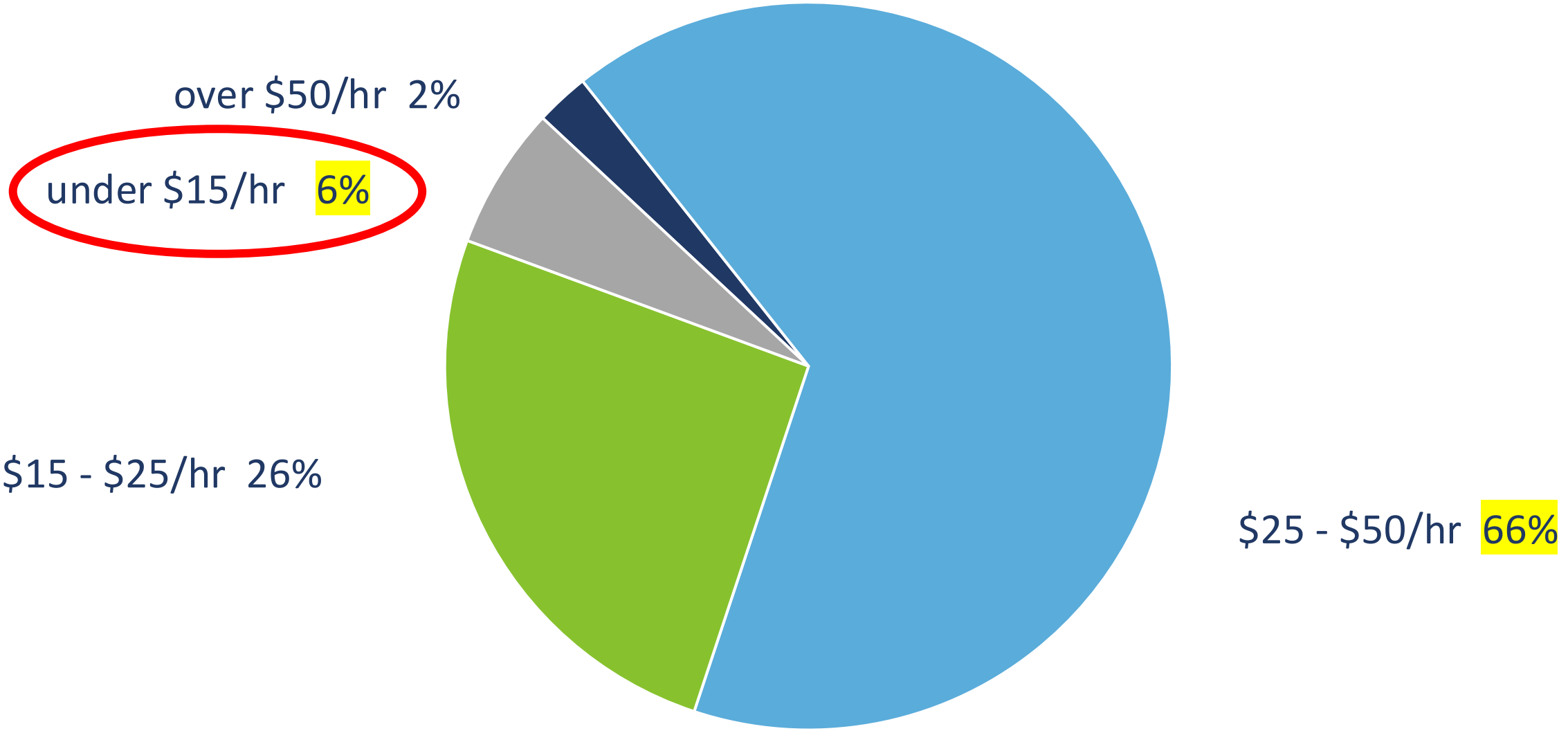
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Change in Real Average Earnings per Job 2015-2025



Source: Lightcast 2026.4

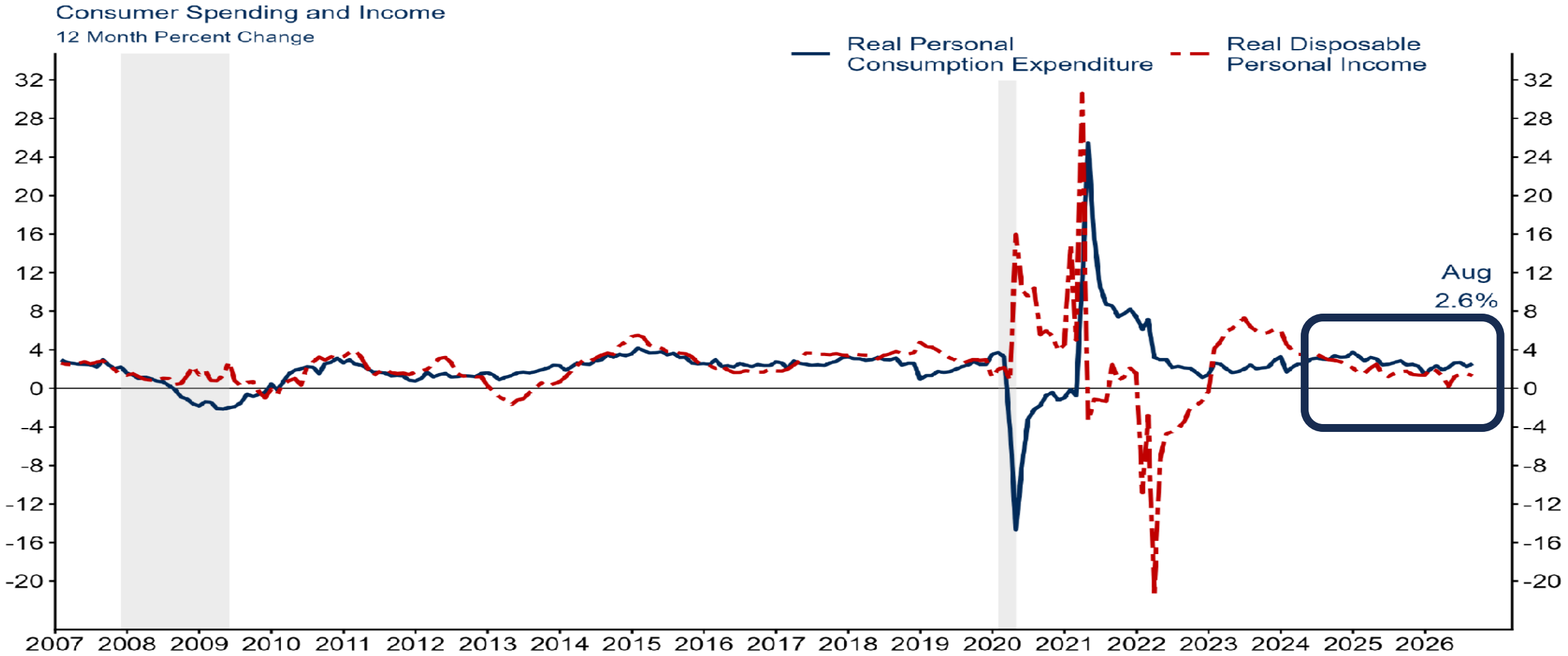
Percentage of 2025 Harnett County Jobs by Wage Group



Source: Lightcast 2026.4

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Consumer Spending and Income

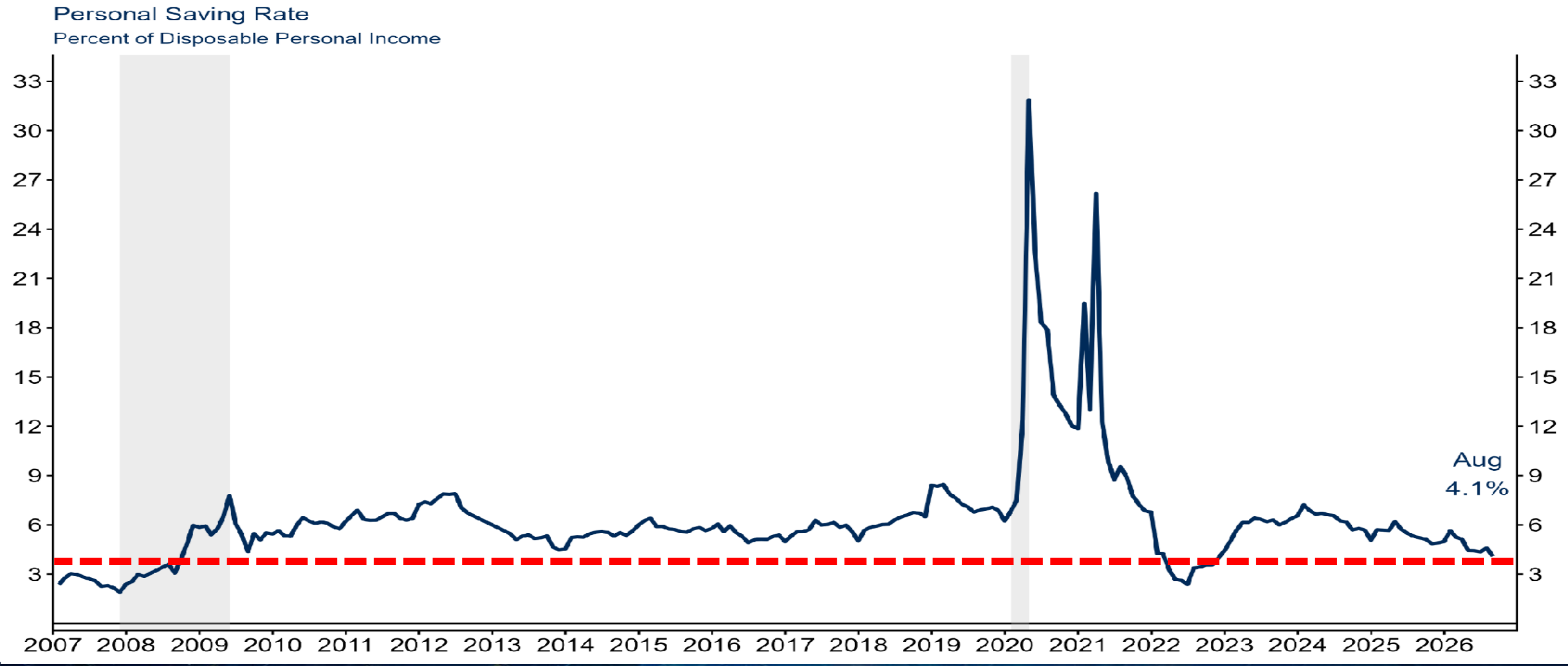


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis via Haver Analytics

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ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

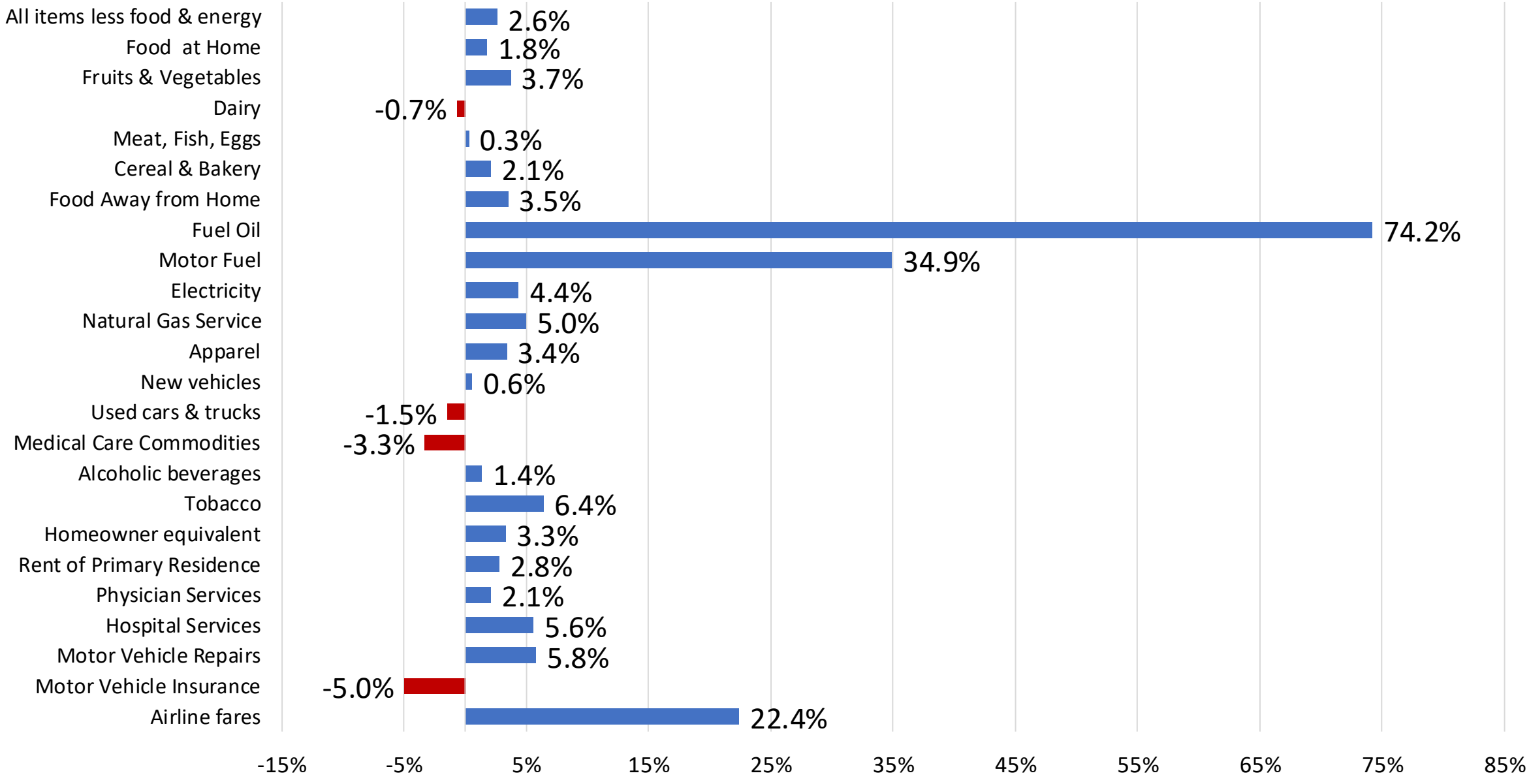
Personal Saving Rate



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis via Haver Analytics

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

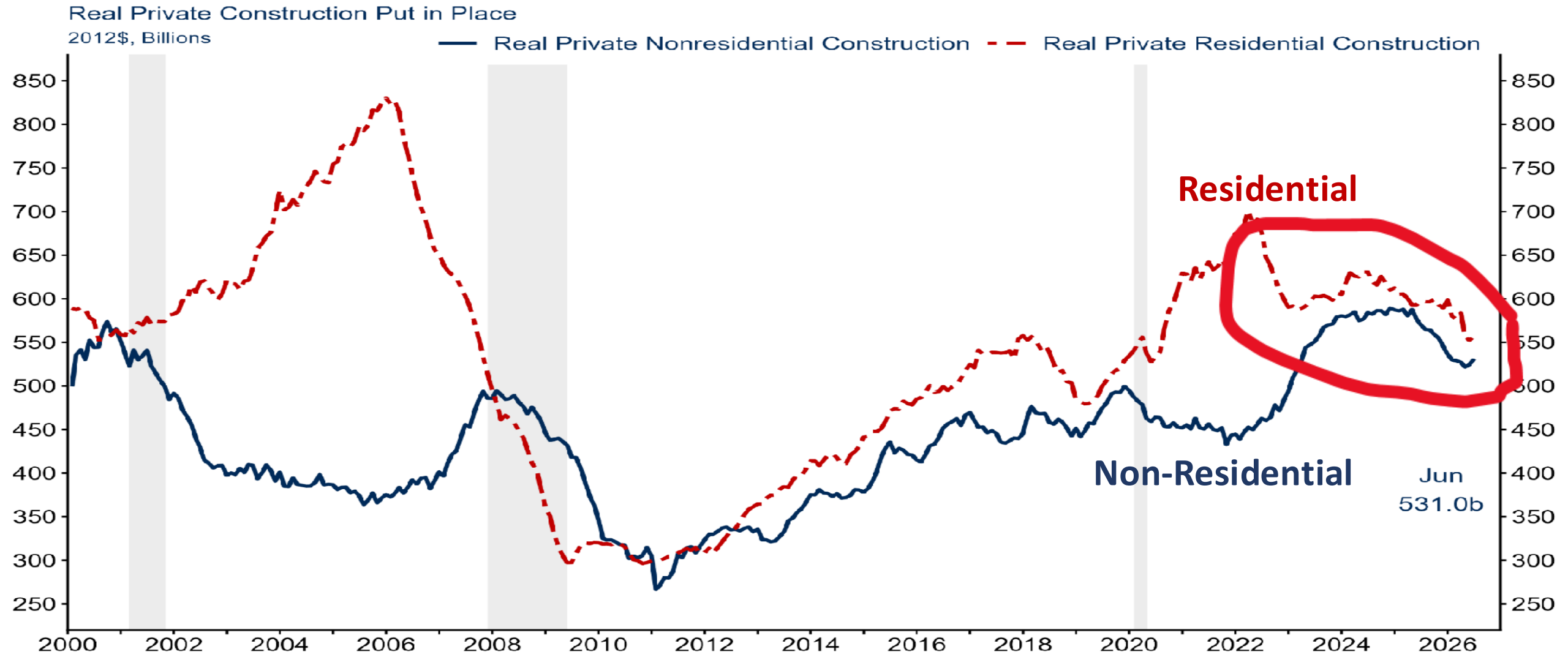
Consumer Price Index Percent Change Sept. 2025 – Sept. 2026



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Real Private Construction Put In Place

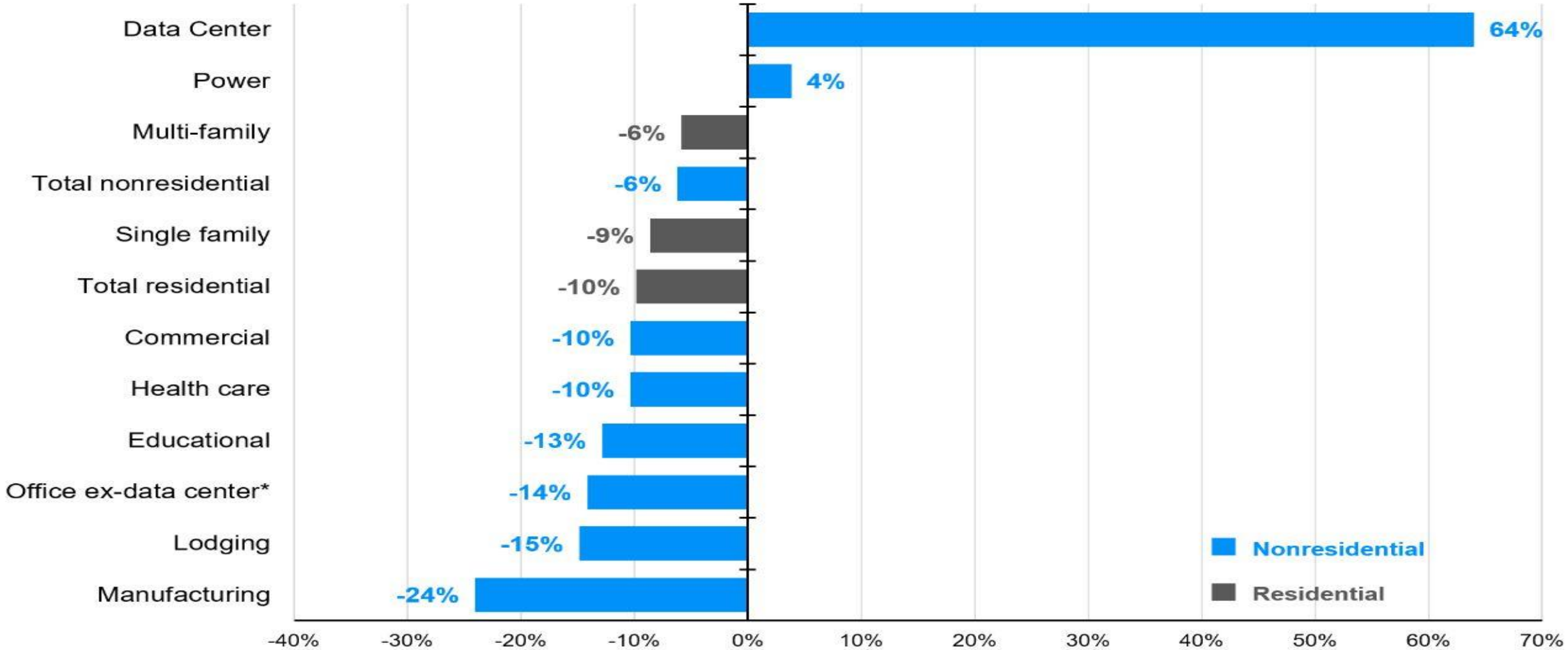


Source: Census Bureau via Haver Analytics

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Construction is falling everywhere except data centers and power

Real private construction spending growth, year-over-year % change



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, BLS, J.P. Morgan Asset Management
Real spending is calculated by deflating nominal spending by the PPI for final demand construction. *Office ex-data center is total office construction excluding data center construction.
Data as of October 13, 2026.

J.P.Morgan
ASSET MANAGEMENT

Residential Construction Is Taking Off

2,205

New Private Housing Structures Authorized by Building Permits for Harnett County, NC in 2025

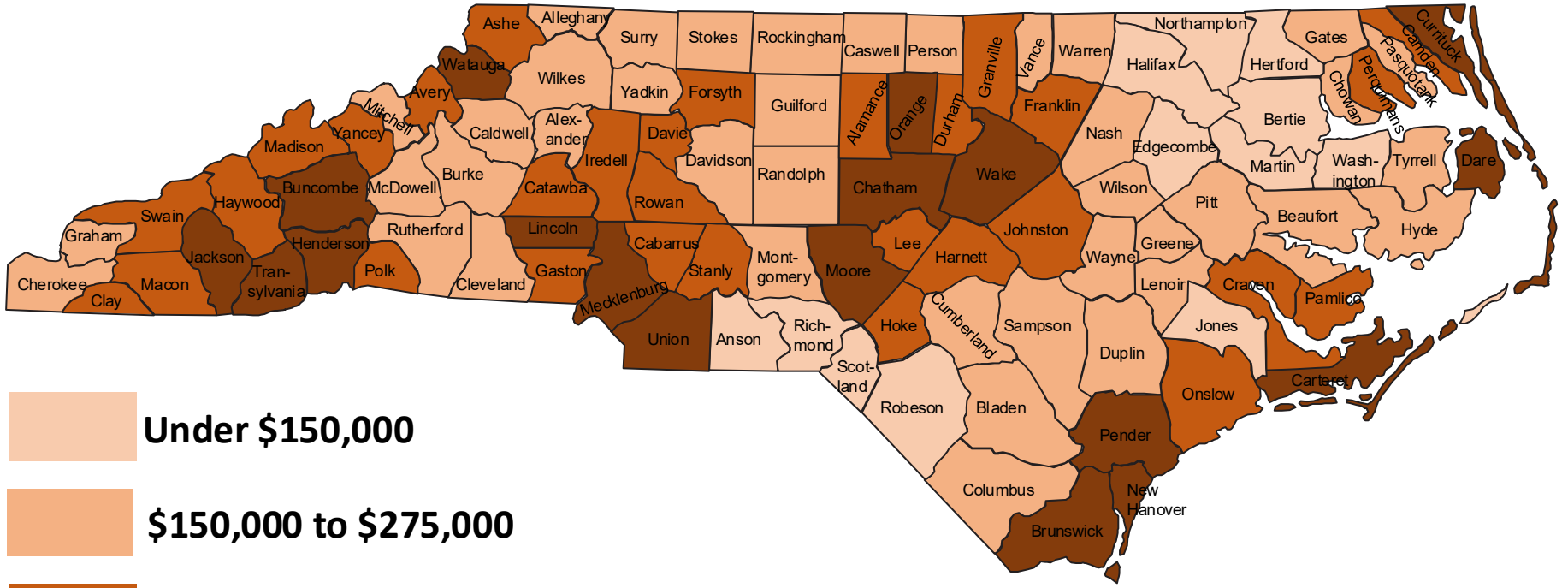
3.5x

As many as 2019 (639)

Source: Census Data through FRED

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Home Values: September 2026
NC Average: $332,159

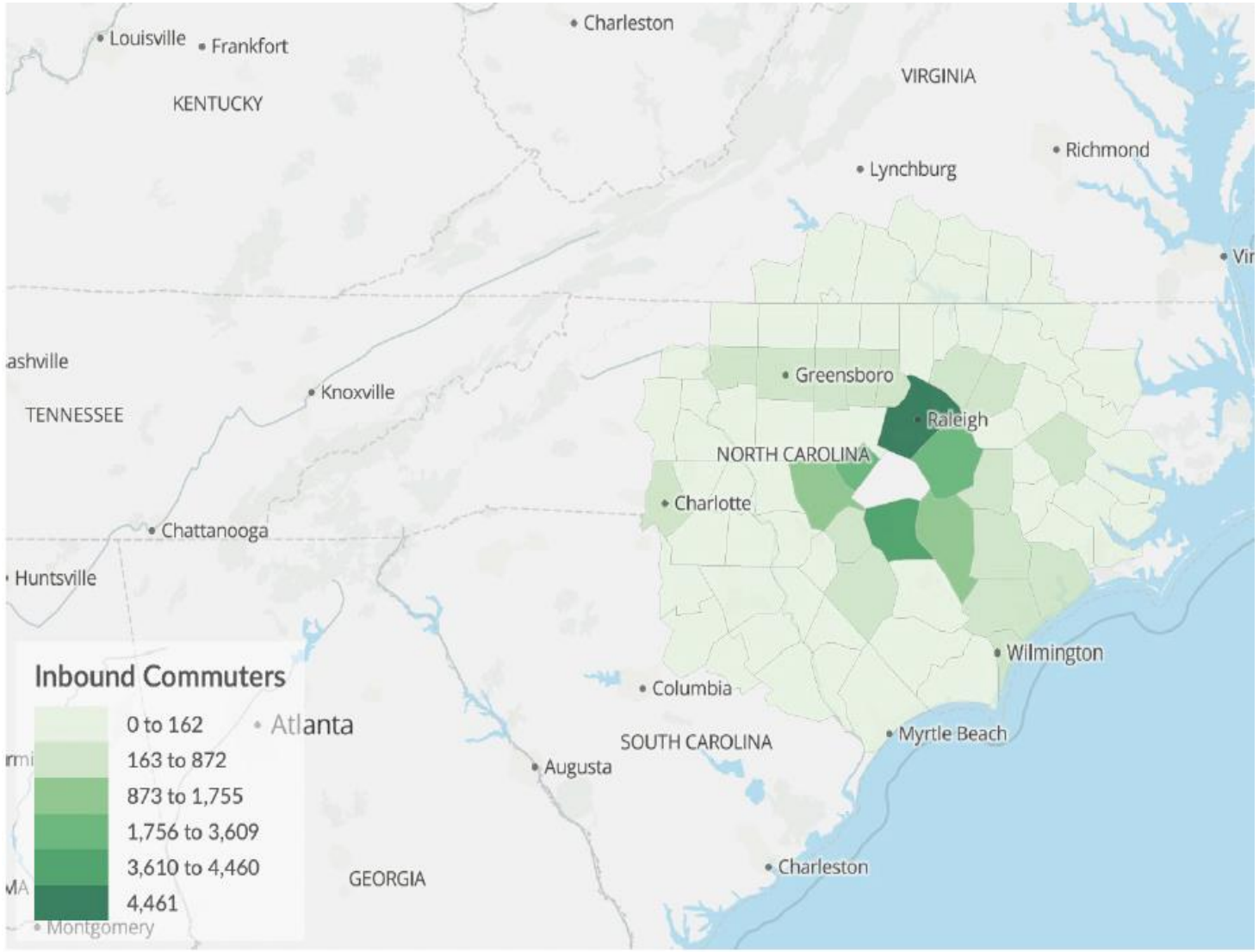


Harnett Co. $292,371

Source: Zillow Research October 2026

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Harnett County Commuting Patterns, 2025



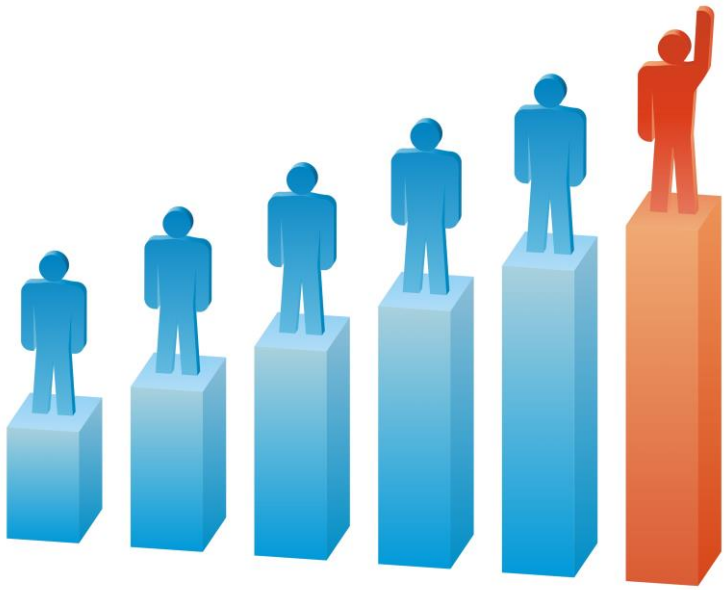
County	Inbound Commuters	Outbound Commuters	Net Commuters
Wake	4,461	13,218	-8,757
Cumberland	3,610	7,108	-3,498
Johnston	2,107	3,632	-1,524
Mecklenburg	304	1,693	-1,390
Durham	414	1,682	-1,268
Lee	1,756	2,736	-980
Moore	873	1,843	-969
Guilford	313	850	-537
Chatham	129	442	-314
New Hanover	236	525	-290
Sampson	1,309	1,580	-271

Source: Lightcast 2026.4

2025 population

150,137

+12.4% since 2020



Employment growth, 2019–24

+8.7%

County-based jobs

Median household income

$71,287

2020–24 ACS

2025 residential permits

2,205

Housing units authorized

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts and Harnett County FY2025 financial report.


FORESIGHT
WILL BE THE MOST
IMPORTANT
“SUCCESS” SKILL
GOING FORWARD!
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Labor Will Be Less Abundant Almost Everywhere

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The US fertility rate reached an all-time low in 2024.

Births per 1,000 women ages 15–44, 1909–2024



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

USAFacts

High school graduation peaked at an estimated 3.9 million in 2025.

It’s projected to decrease by 2041 to an estimated 3.4 million, a drop of nearly 13%, because of a falling birth rate.

College enrollment is projected to follow suit.

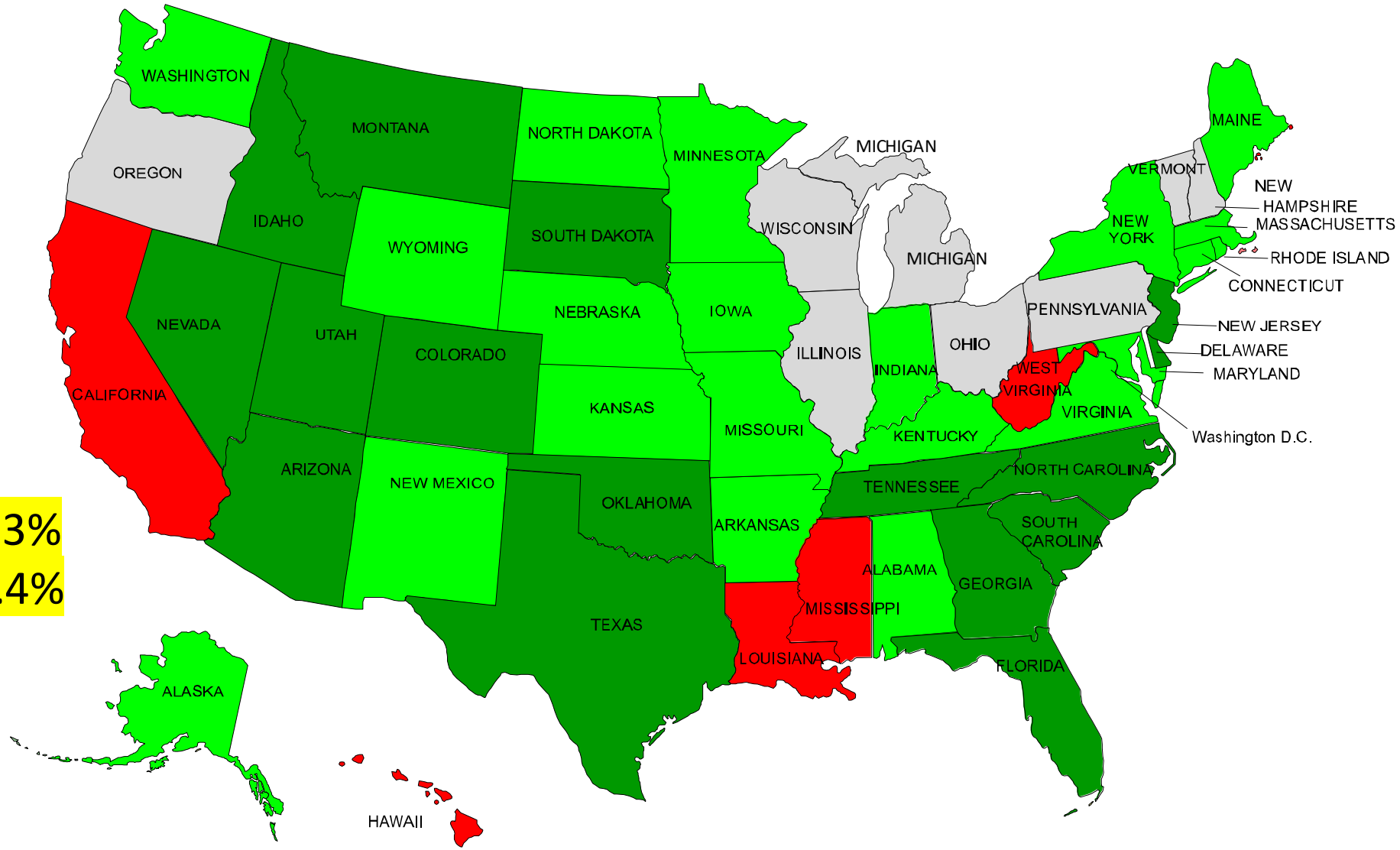
Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

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Projected Population Change 2025–2035 Ages 25-64

- Growth over 7%
- Growth under 7%
- Under 1% change
- Population loss

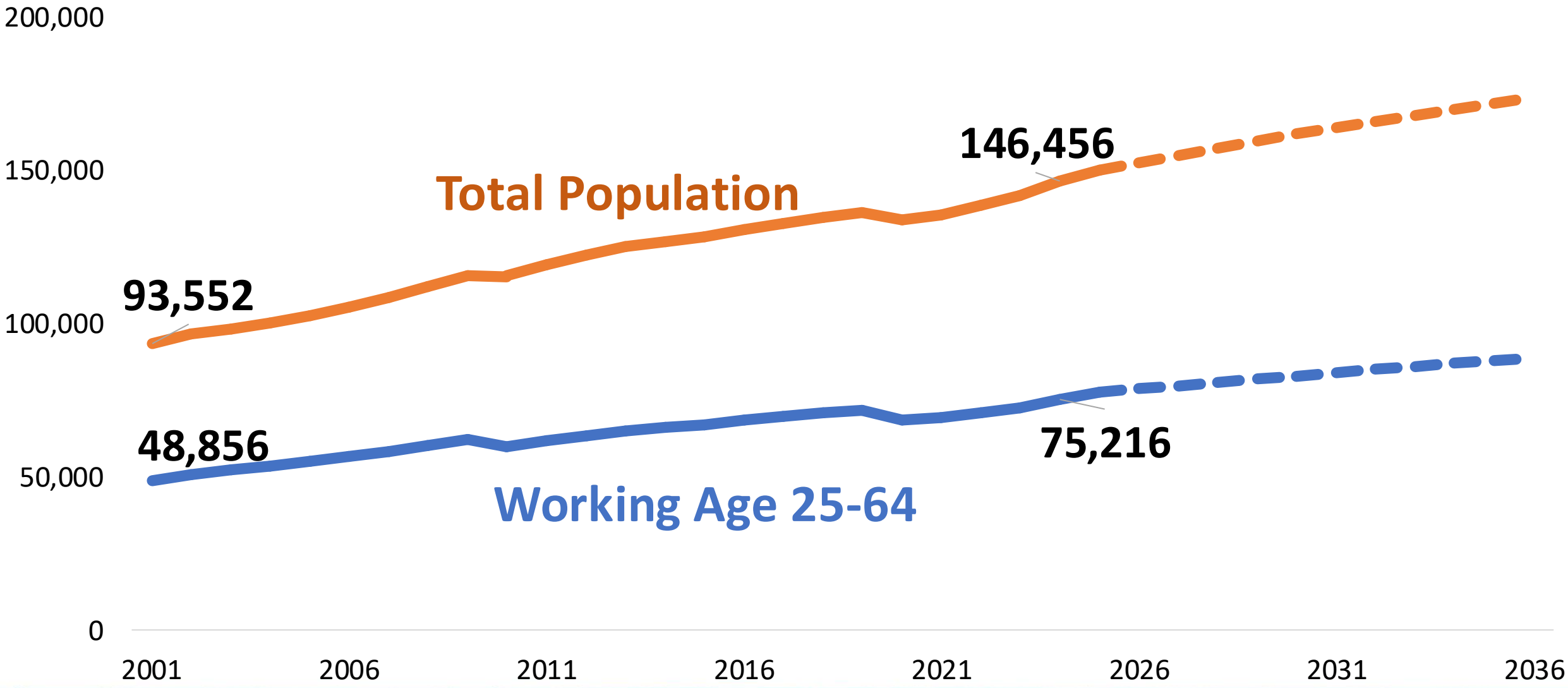


United States	5.3%
North Carolina	9.4%

Sources: Lightcast 2026.4

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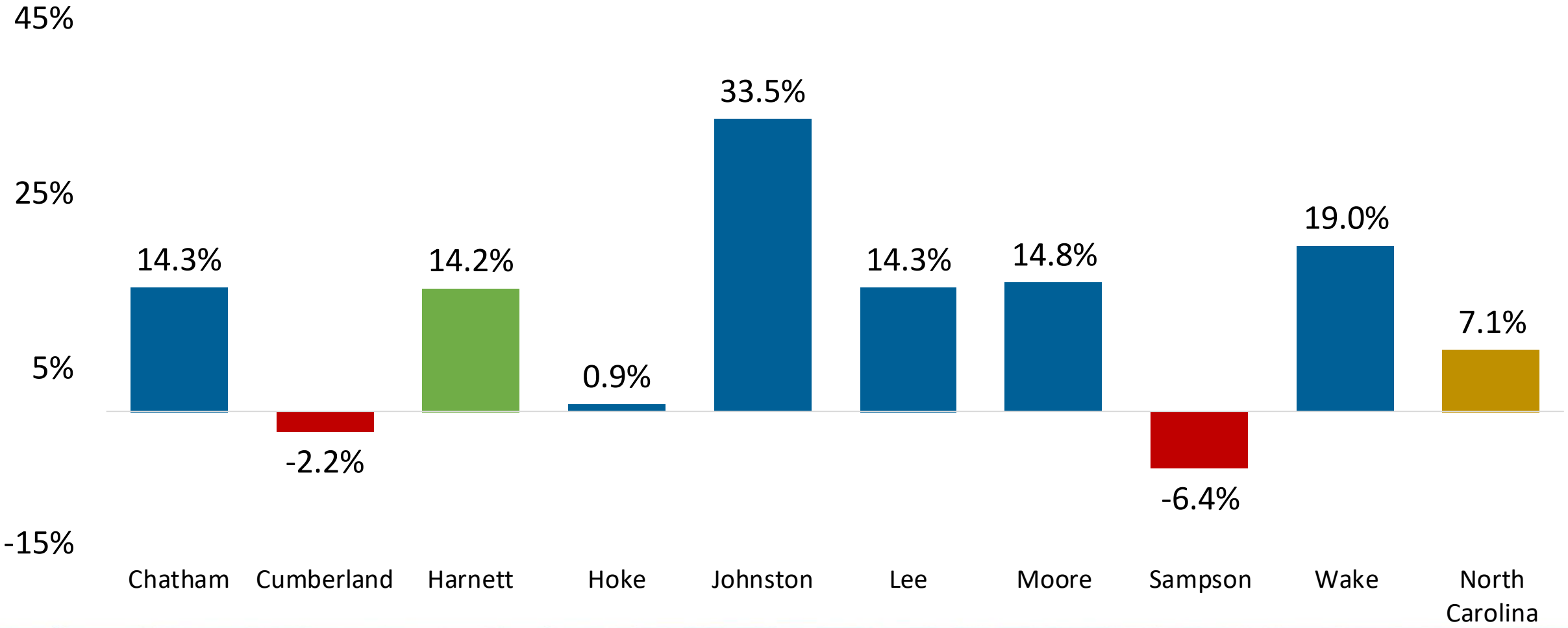
Harnett County Population



Source: Lightcast 2026.4

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

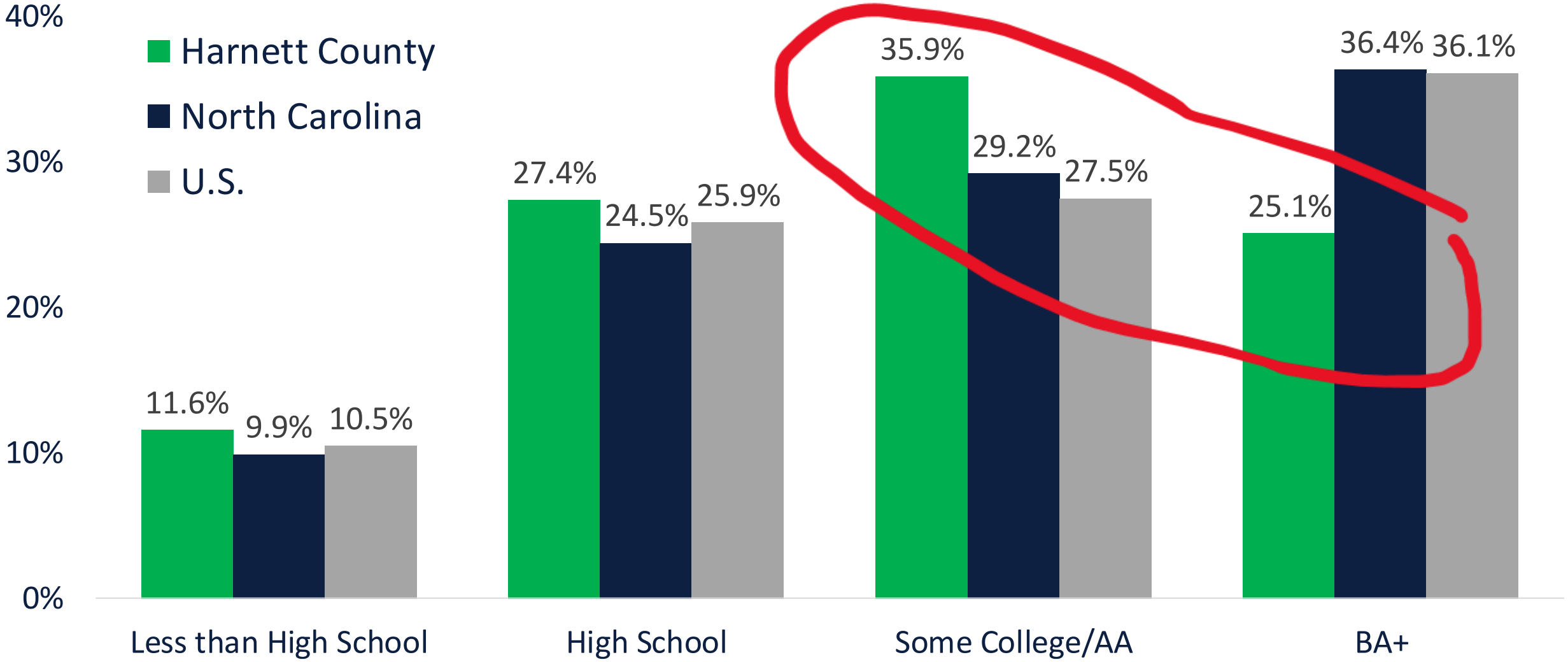
Prime Age (25-54) Labor Force Population Growth 2015-2025



Source: Lightcast 2026.4

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Labor Force By Education 2025



Source: Lightcast 2026.4

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(The second oldest economic development joke I know)

THE FACTORY OF THE FUTURE

It will have
only **two** employees:

A MAN AND A DOG.

The man is there to **feed** the dog.

The dog is there to **keep** the man from touching the equipment.



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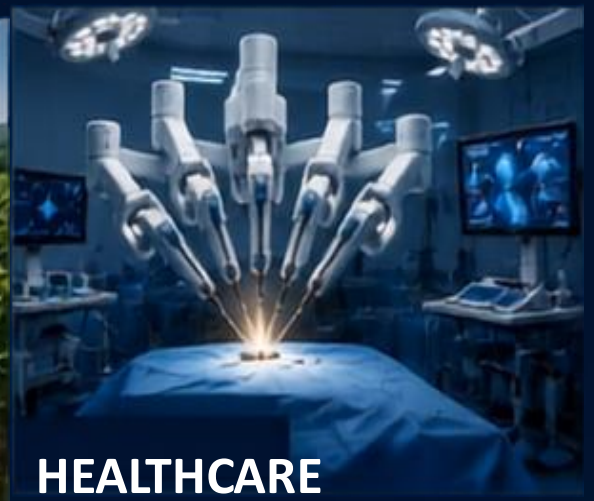
Helping places **compete.**
Helping people **prosper.**

MORE AUTOMATION, INNOVATION & AI

TECHNOLOGIES CHANGING OUR FUTURE



AGRICULTURE



HEALTHCARE



MANUFACTURING



CONSTRUCTION



LOGISTICS



WAREHOUSING & DISTRIBUTION

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Nearly a quarter of tradespeople are 55 or older, and only 11% are under 25.

Only about 48 of every 100 people who start an apprenticeship or community college workforce program finish it.

Source: Jobs for the Future (JFF) and The Burning Glass Institute.

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We are rapidly shifting from needing lots of workers to workers with lots of specific skills.

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SKILLED Nation

MEET THE NEW COLLAR WORKFORCE.

Workers with specialized technical skills—built through certificates, apprenticeships, associate degrees, and hands-on training.
A four-year degree isn't always required.



WHY THEY MATTER

- Connect hands-on expertise with new technology.
- Keep manufacturing, energy, and infrastructure running.
- Help employers meet evolving skill needs.

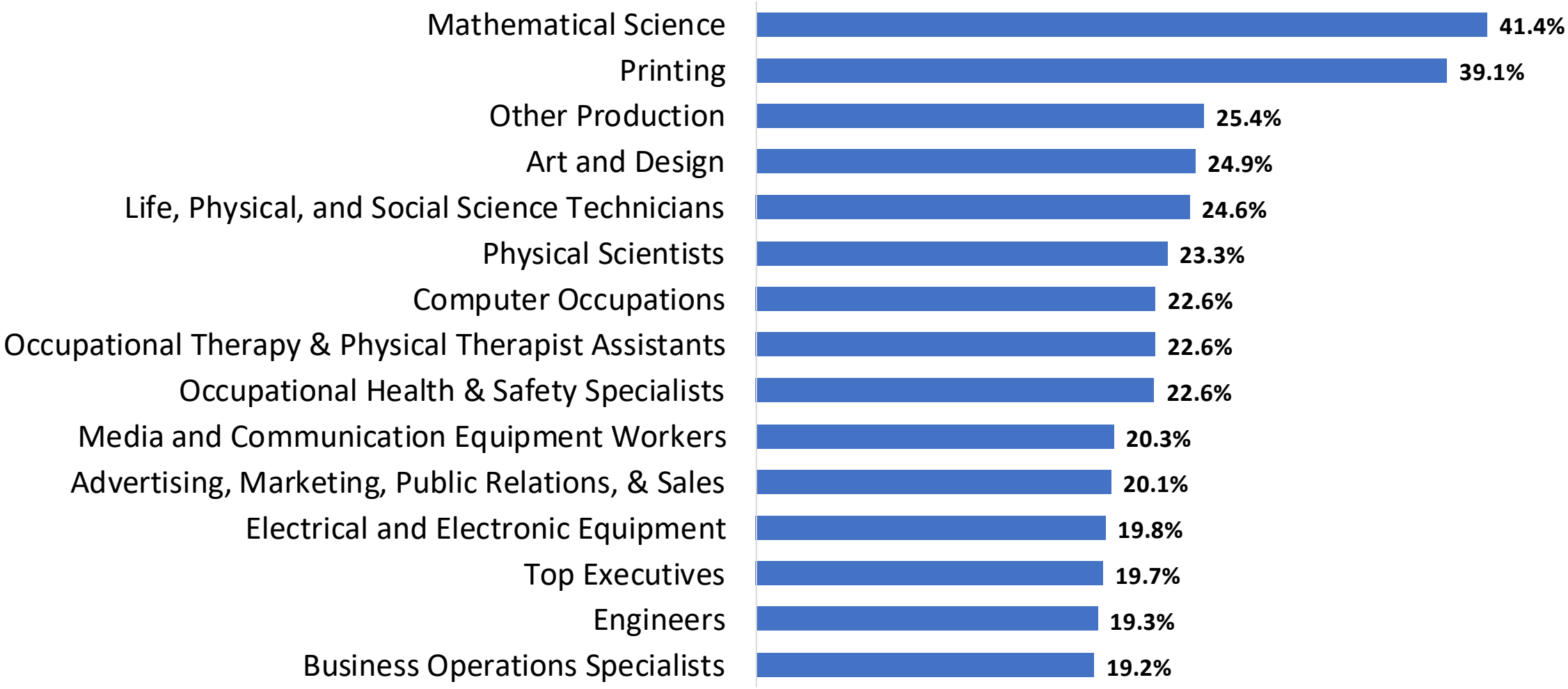
THE FUTURE NEEDS SKILLS. WE HELP PEOPLE BUILD THEM.

Scholarships that help learners complete training and launch careers.

skilled-nation.org

Harnett County Predicted Top Growing Occupations, 2025-2035

Three-Digit



Source: Lightcast 2026.4

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

THE CRITICAL TALENT POOLS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

A relatively small number of occupations can become the binding constraint on economic growth.



DESIGN IT

Create the systems

- Electrical & power engineers
- Industrial & automation engineers
- Mechanical & aerospace engineers
- AI & software talent
- Cybersecurity specialists
- Data & analytics talent



BUILD IT

Turn investment into capacity

- Industrial electricians
- Semiconductor technicians
- Precision machinists
- Advanced welders & pipefitters
- Utility & grid technicians



KEEP IT RUNNING

Protect uptime & productivity

- Automation & robotics technicians
- Mechatronics technicians
- Industrial maintenance technicians
- Controls & instrumentation specialists
- HVAC / thermal management technicians

THE NEW WORKFORCE CHALLENGE: Specialized talent is becoming infrastructure.

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Artificial Intelligence





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SOME OF THE MOST HYPERBOLIC HEADLINES ABOUT AI

(AND THEIR SOURCES)

The Economist — JUNE 11TH 2023

AI could wipe out half of all jobs

It's not just hype. Firms need to act now

Forbes — MARCH 29, 2023

AI Will End Humanity: Meet The 8 Doomers Making That Case

Futurism — AUG 2, 2017

Stephen Hawking Says AI Could Spell The End Of The Human Race

yahoo! finance — FEBRUARY 29, 2024

AI Will Make Humans 'Obsolete'—And It Could Happen Soon

THE VERGE — DEC 18, 2023

Sam Altman says AI could 'cause the end of the world'

Daily Mail — MAY 29, 2023

AI will kill off the human race within THREE years, Google engineer warns

MIT Technology Review — MAY 31, 2023

AI could cause human extinction. This paper explains how

The Sun — JUNE 2, 2023

AI WILL REPLACE HUMANS BY 2060 AND LEAD TO 7.5BILLION JOB LOSSES

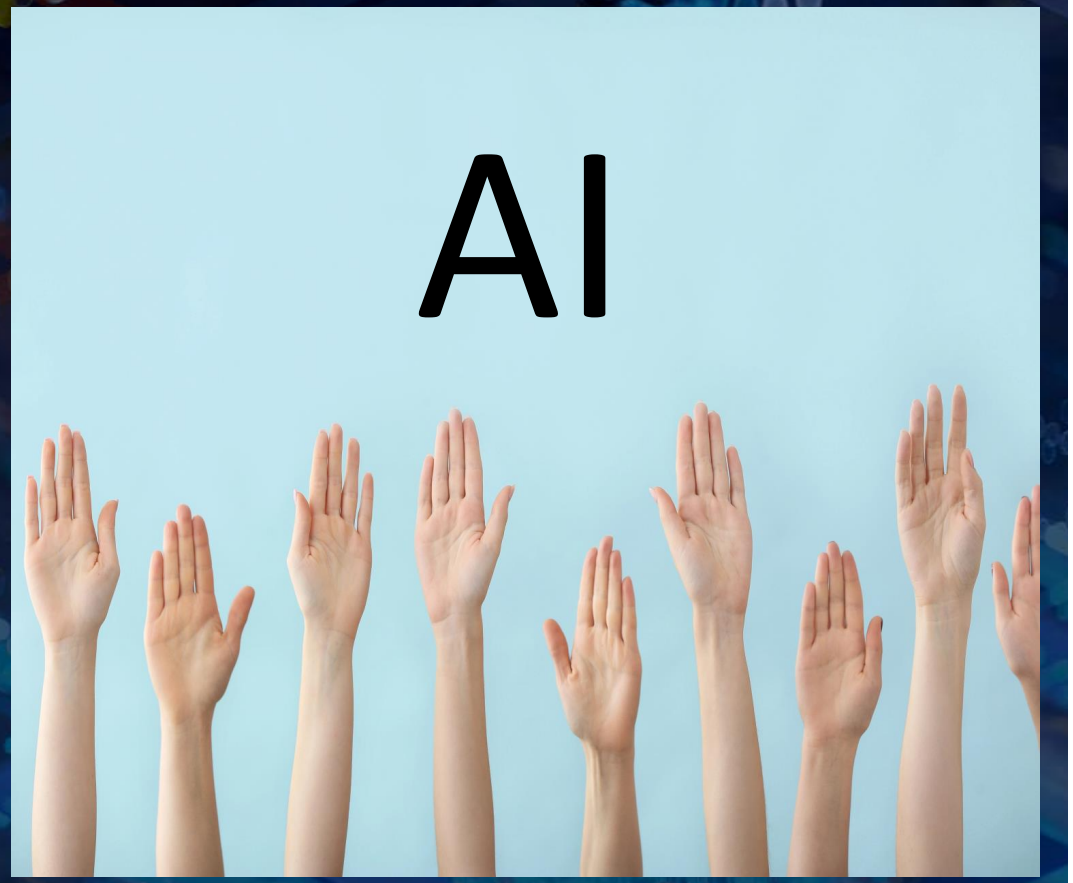
BUSINESS INSIDER — DEC 6, 2023

Elon Musk says AI is 'far more dangerous' than nukes and we need to 'be super careful with it'

NEW YORK POST — JULY 5, 2023

AI will 'exterminate' humans as we know it within 100 years, expert warns

These headlines reflect the views of the authors and do not represent scientific consensus.



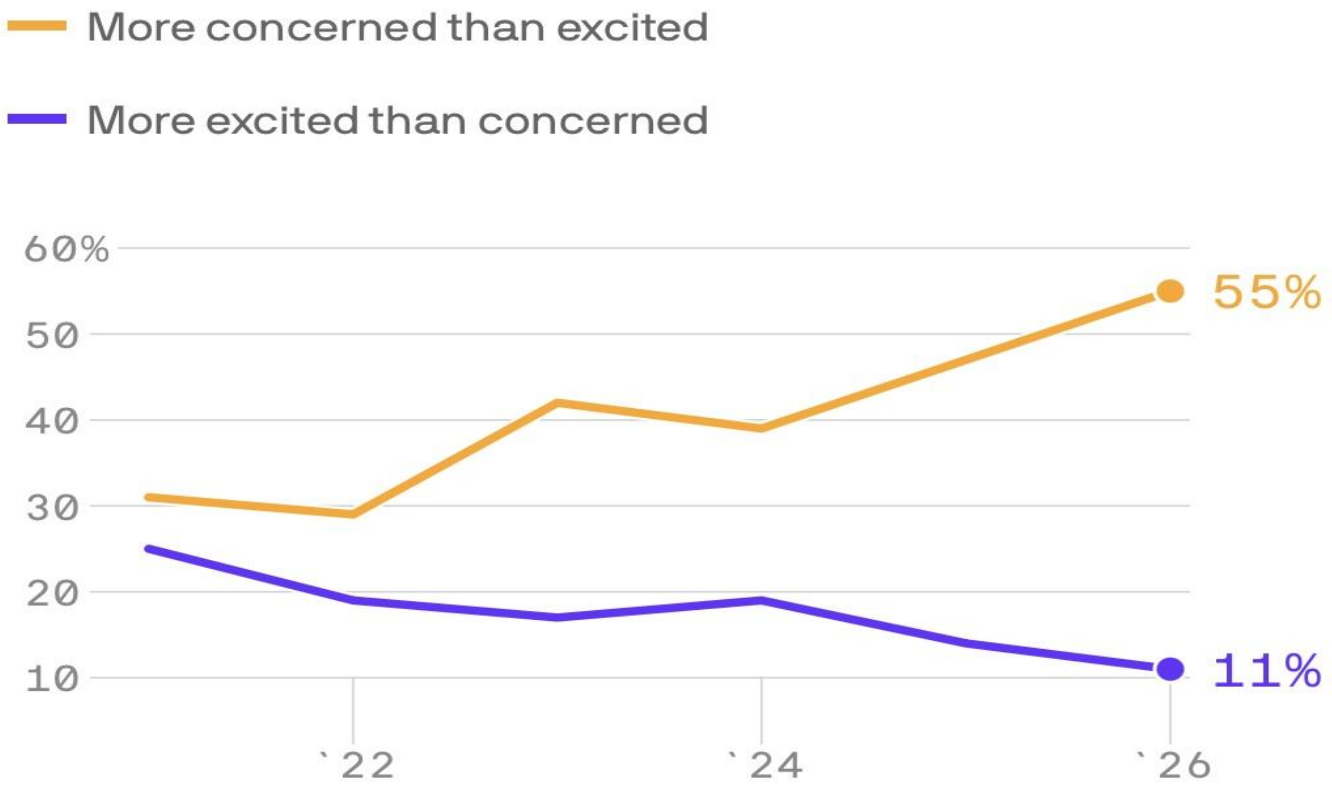
More concerned than excited

More excited than concerned

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How young adults say they feel about AI

Annually since 2021, most recently June 22-28, 2026, with 569 U.S. adults aged 18-29



Data: Pew; Chart: Noah Bressner/Axios

DATA CENTERS



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DATA CENTERS

Why So Many Places Want Them

ECONOMIC GROWTH
Data centers attract billions in investment and create high-paying jobs in construction, operations, and technology.

TAX REVENUE
They generate significant tax revenue for local governments, funding schools, infrastructure, and public services.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
They power the digital economy—supporting AI, cloud services, healthcare, education, and more.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
Communities that attract data centers position themselves as hubs for future industry and talent.



DATA CENTERS

Why They Are So Controversial

WATER USAGE
Data centers consume millions of gallons of water daily for cooling.

ENERGY DEMAND
They require massive amounts of electricity, straining power grids and driving up costs.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
High energy use leads to increased carbon emissions and a larger environmental footprint.

NOISE POLLUTION
Large cooling systems and generators create significant noise.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS
Local communities worry about land use, property values, and quality of life.

ECONOMIC TRADE-OFFS
Questions remain about tax incentives, job quality, and long-term local benefits.



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Data Center Near You



Heatmap, October 26

71%

Oppose a data center near home

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The Cloud Isn't in the Sky—It's a Data Center

We all rely on cloud services every day. The "cloud" is a network of physical data centers.



The Cloud
(Cloud Computing)

- Streaming
- Photos & Storage
- Healthcare Records
- Banking & Payments
- AI Services



What we want

Cloud computing, AI, streaming, digital healthcare, online shopping, and instant access to information.

What it requires

Data centers, electricity generation, transmission lines, cooling systems, land, and significant capital investment.

We want the benefits of the cloud, but the cloud depends on real, physical infrastructure in our communities.

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THE BIGGEST U.S. ENERGY ISSUES

Abundant resources. Rising demand. Real challenges.

1 GROWING DEMAND



Electricity demand is rising fast from:

- AI data centers
- Advanced manufacturing
- Semiconductor plants
- Electric vehicles
- Building electrification
- Population growth

2 THE GRID IS THE BOTTLENECK



Aging transmission, interconnection delays, slow permitting, and regional congestion are delaying projects and increasing costs.

ENERGY FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

Affordable. Reliable. Sustainable.

3 ALL OF THE ABOVE

NATURAL GAS · NUCLEAR · SOLAR · WIND · HYDRO · STORAGE · GEOTHERMAL

No single source can meet future demand.
A diverse energy mix is essential for reliability, affordability and energy security.

4 RELIABILITY MATTERS MOST



Extreme weather, aging infrastructure, and rising demand are pushing the system to its limits.
Businesses and families need power they can count on.

5 PERMITTING & REGULATION SLOW EVERYTHING

Lengthy and unpredictable permitting and regulatory processes delay or derail critical energy projects—from pipelines and transmission to generation and storage.

6 THE POLITICS OF AFFORDABILITY (EMERGING ISSUE)

Balancing affordability, reliability, and the transition to cleaner energy is increasingly political.
Rising costs, rate impacts, and energy choices are shaping public policy—and elections—at every level.

THE BOTTOM LINE:
States and communities that can deliver reliable, affordable energy—fast—will win the jobs, investment, and future.

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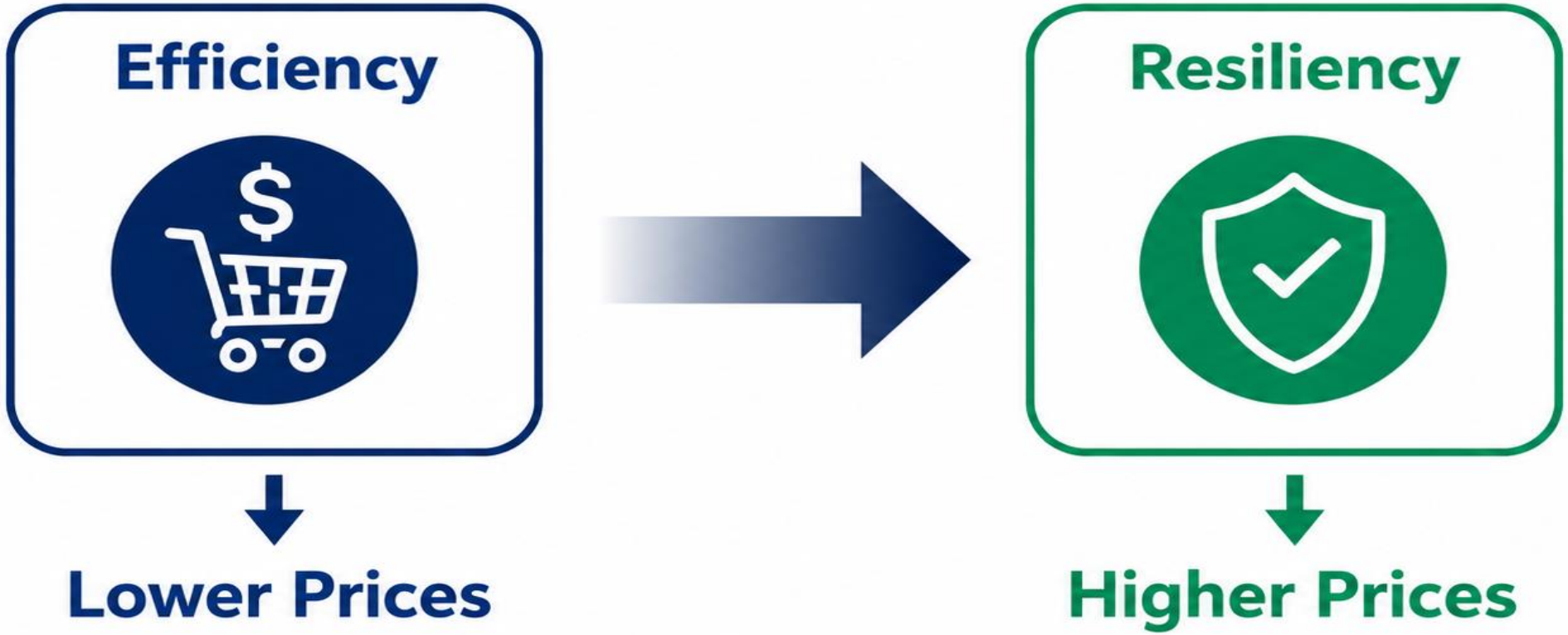
Globalization 3.0 - The Rules Have All Changed

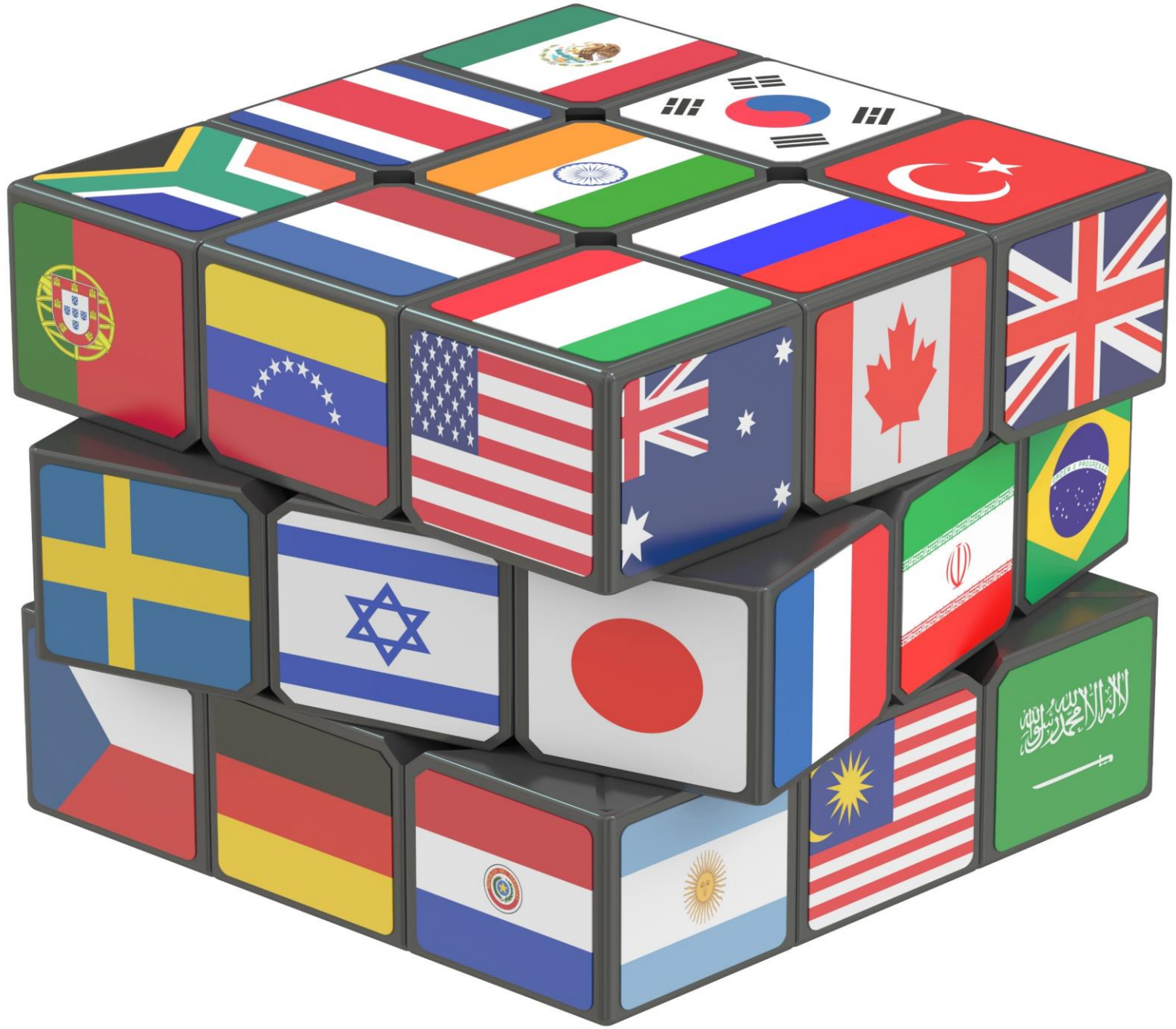


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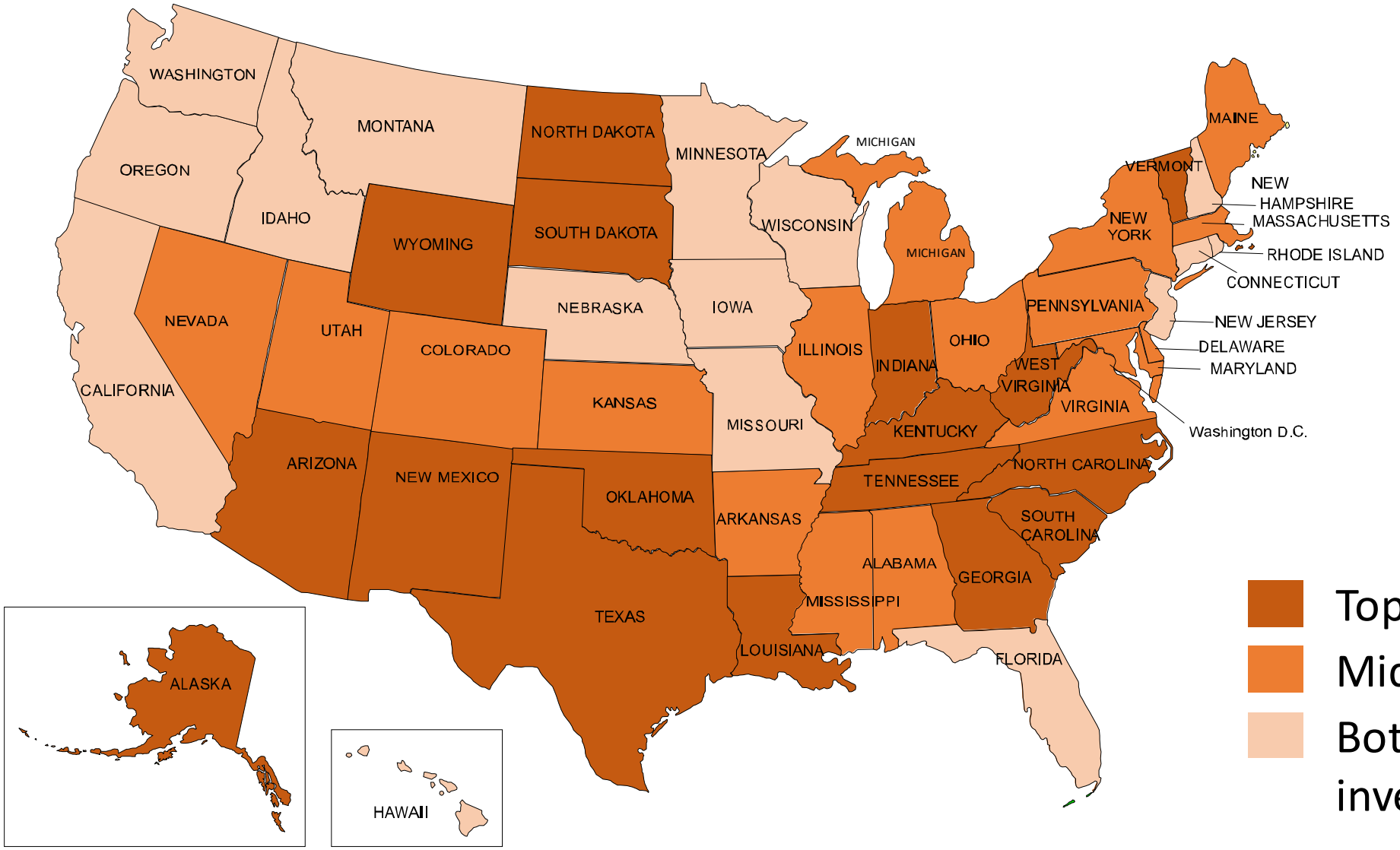
Public Policy and Businesses Are Prioritizing Security, Reliability and Redundancy.

From Efficiency to Resiliency





FDI Per Capita Rank 2020-2025



FDI Capex 2020-2025

1. Arizona
2. Texas
3. North Carolina
4. California
5. Georgia
6. New York

- Top Third – most investment
- Middle Third
- Bottom Third – least investment

Source: Data from FDI Intelligence – Alex Irwin-Hunt April 16, 2026

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THE RISE OF SECURITY ECONOMICS

Investing in What Keeps Our Nation Strong, Resilient and Independent

CRITICAL SECTORS. STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS. STRONGER FUTURE.



Defense Production



Grid Security



Critical Minerals



Ports & Logistics



Chips & Semiconductors





Drones & Autonomy



Cyber Security



Food Security



Energy Security



Pharmaceuticals



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9 Strategic Directions with Relative Certainty Over the Next Decade

Areas where the strategic direction is likely to survive changes in political control.



1. DEFENSE & NATIONAL SECURITY

Sustained emphasis on readiness, weapons, technology and domestic capacity.



2. DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING

Continued pressure to reshore or friend-shore strategically important production.



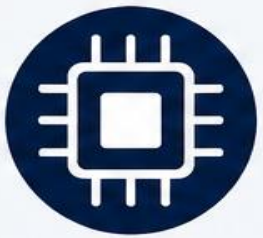
3. ENERGY AVAILABILITY

Growing electricity demand makes additional generation, transmission and grid reliability unavoidable. *Sources may vary.*



4. CRITICAL MINERALS

Bipartisan concern about dependence on China and other foreign sources.



5. SEMICONDUCTORS

Domestic production and R&D increasingly viewed as national-security infrastructure.



6. INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation, ports, water, broadband and grid investment remain competitiveness necessities.



7. CYBERSECURITY

Persistent and evolving threats ensure continued public and private investment.



8. COMPETITION WITH CHINA

Probably the most durable geopolitical assumption of the next decade.



9. ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP

AI, quantum, robotics, autonomous systems, biotech and other strategic technologies increasingly become matters of national competitiveness and security.



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WE BUILD BETTER ECONOMIC LEADERS

Predictable direction does not mean predictable policy.

Both parties may share the same strategic goals, but differ on approaches.

Build long-term strategies around enduring national priorities.



9 Strategic Areas with Much Less Certainty Over the Next Decade

Areas where policy direction could change significantly with elections, litigation and priorities.



1. IMMIGRATION

Levels, enforcement, visa policies and pathways could shift dramatically with administrations and court rulings.



2. CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

Regulatory standards, emissions rules, permitting and climate initiatives could broaden, narrow or reverse.



3. ENERGY TECHNOLOGY PREFERENCES

Federal support, tax incentives and rules for different energy technologies could change substantially.



4. TAXATION

Corporate, individual, capital gains and estate tax policies could change with control of Congress and the White House.



5. HEALTH CARE POLICY

Coverage, entitlement funding, drug pricing, Medicaid rules and health system reforms remain highly unsettled.



6. LABOR REGULATION

Union rules, overtime, minimum wage, workplace mandates and classification rules may change direction frequently.



7. EDUCATION POLICY

Federal role in K–12 and higher education, funding priorities, student debt and curriculum oversight could shift substantially.



8. SOCIAL POLICY

Issues such as abortion, gender policy, DEI, voting rules and other cultural priorities are likely to evolve with political leadership and court decisions.



9. INTERNATIONAL TRADE & RELATIONSHIPS

Tariffs, trade agreements, alliances, sanctions and global engagement strategies can change quickly.



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WE BUILD BETTER ECONOMIC LEADERS

Policy volatility adds risk and raises the cost of long-term decisions.
Stay informed, plan for multiple scenarios, and build flexibility into your strategies and investments.



DATA ANALYTICS CREATES GREATER DISPERSION



Data Analytics Is Driving Greater Dispersion

More data, more transparency, and real-time comparisons help people and businesses find the best options — and that is widening the gap between winners and losers.



Airbnb®

- Real-time reviews, prices and amenities show which places are best.
- Some destinations and communities win more visitors, investment and growth.



Restaurant Ratings

- Millions of reviews and rankings guide where people eat and spend.
- Top-rated restaurants thrive while others struggle to keep up.



Job Sites (LinkedIn, Indeed, etc.)

- Data on jobs, skills, wages and quality of life helps talent choose where to live and work.
- Regions with stronger opportunities attract and retain more talent.



College Rankings (U.S. News, Niche, etc.)

- Comparable data on academics, costs and outcomes drives student choices.
- Top-ranked universities gain more students, research and investment.

The Result: Greater Dispersion

Places, businesses and institutions with better data, higher ratings and stronger performance win — and the gap with others continues to grow.

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

THE NEW ECONOMIC REALITY: DISPERSION WILL GROW

A widening between winners and losers

PLACES POISED TO OUTPERFORM

- Pro-Business Regs and Policy Certainty
- Sufficient Infrastructure
- Highly Productive Workforce
- Ability to Rapidly Retrain Workers
- Available, Attainable Housing
- Low Risk, Low Insurance
- Reliable, Affordable Energy
- Welcoming Attitude to Growth

THE DIVIDE

PLACES AT RISK OF FALLING BEHIND

- High Cost of Doing Business
- Red Tape, Slow Processes
- Weak/Over Capacity Infrastructure
- Talent Shortage, Out-migration & Training Limitations
- Unaffordable Housing
- High Insurance, High Risk
- Unreliable, Expensive or Unplanned Energy

Dispersion is one of the defining economic trends of the next decade.
The gap between successful and struggling regions—and households—will widen.

Harnett County
Key Opportunities and Challenges



Opportunities
What can drive the next phase of growth

Continued population and labor force growth
A larger, younger workforce that supports business investment

Affordability and quality of life
A competitive location for households and employers relative to Wake County

Advanced manufacturing, biotech, and defense
Growing opportunities tied to industrial sites, workforce training, and proximity to Fort Bragg

Two major regional labor markets
Access to the Research Triangle and the Fort Bragg–Fayetteville economy

Strong institutional and economic development assets
Campbell University, Central Carolina Community College, I-95, rail, and a growing portfolio of industrial sites (e.g., Harnett 95)

Challenges
What could constrain future prosperity

Infrastructure and public service capacity
Keeping pace with growth in roads, schools, water, and utilities

Maintaining affordability
Managing rising housing and development costs as growth accelerates

Converting population growth to local jobs
Reducing the sizable net out-commuting and growing higher-wage employment in the county

Workforce skills and talent pipeline
Expanding training and credential pathways in high–demand industries

Coordination and execution
Aligning county and municipal planning, site readiness, and investment to capture regional opportunities

The bottom line: Harnett County has the assets, location, and momentum to accelerate its economy. The challenge is to manage growth and turn it into more local jobs, higher incomes, and stronger communities.

Thank You

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

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Building Better Economic Leaders