

# Uintah Basin Economic Report

Business and Leadership Symposium

Vernal, Utah

Henry Pernicelle

April 16, 2026

# LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

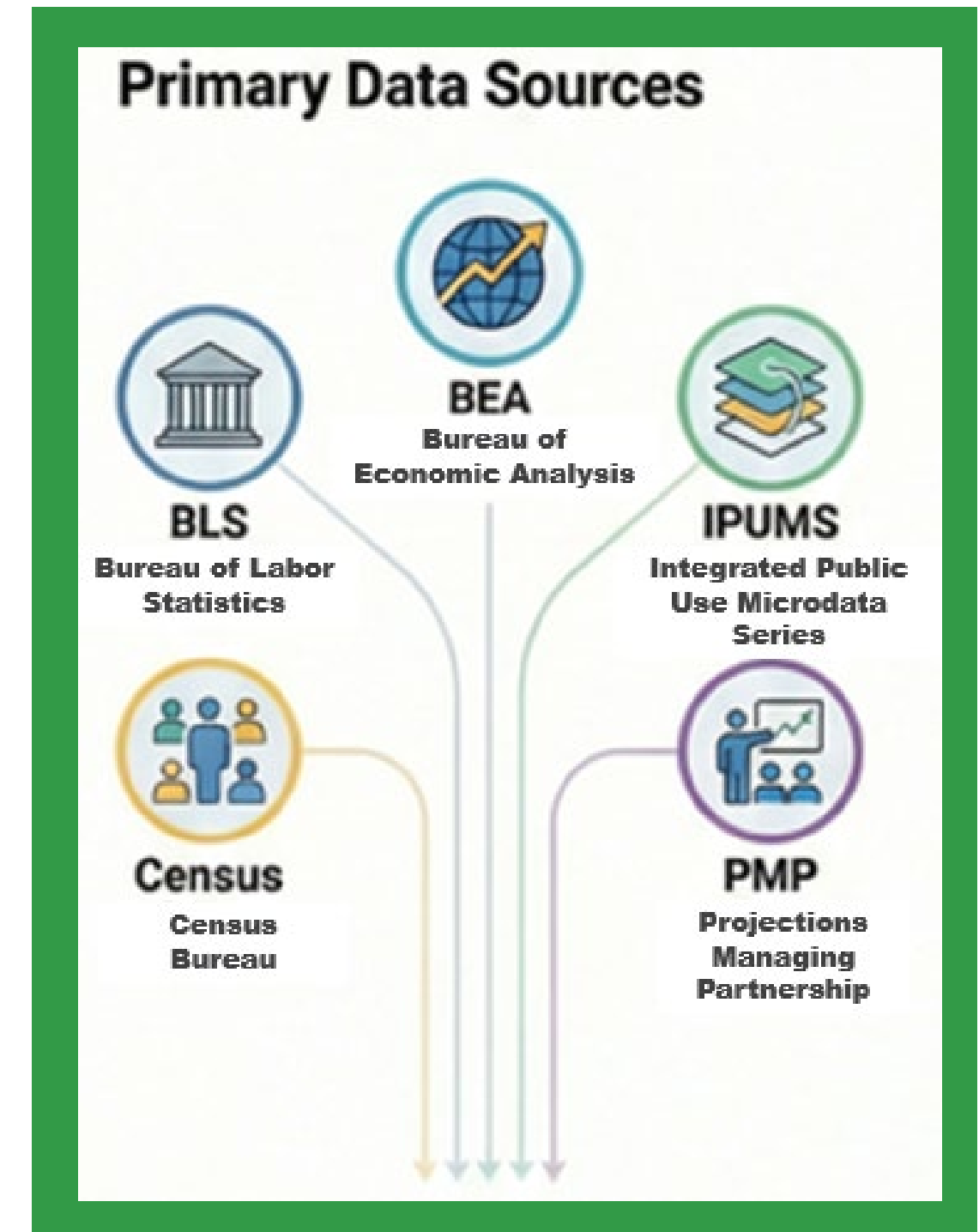
## What is LMI?

Quantitative and qualitative data and analysis related to employment and the workforce



## Examples

- Employment & Unemployment Statistics
- Job Forecasts
- Wages
- Demographic Characteristics



# HOW IS LMI APPLIED?

## Informed Decision Making

- Business Investment
- Career Preparation
- Education & Training
- Job Search
- Hiring
- Public & Private Workforce Investments

## Applications

- Building Data Products
- Informing Policy
- Resource Allocation
- Strategic Planning
- Informing an Audience





# AGENDA

- 1 Where are we?
- 2 How did we get here?
- 3 What Challenges do we face?
- 4 Where are we going?

# Where are we **NOW?**

*Vernal*  
UTAH'S DINOSAUR  
LAND

Photograph by Dennis Brown

# UTAH LABOR MARKETS

January 2026

0.6%

State Job growth rate

3.8%

State Unemployment rate

1.0%

Uintah Basin Job  
growth rate

4.1%

Uintah Basin Unemployment  
rate

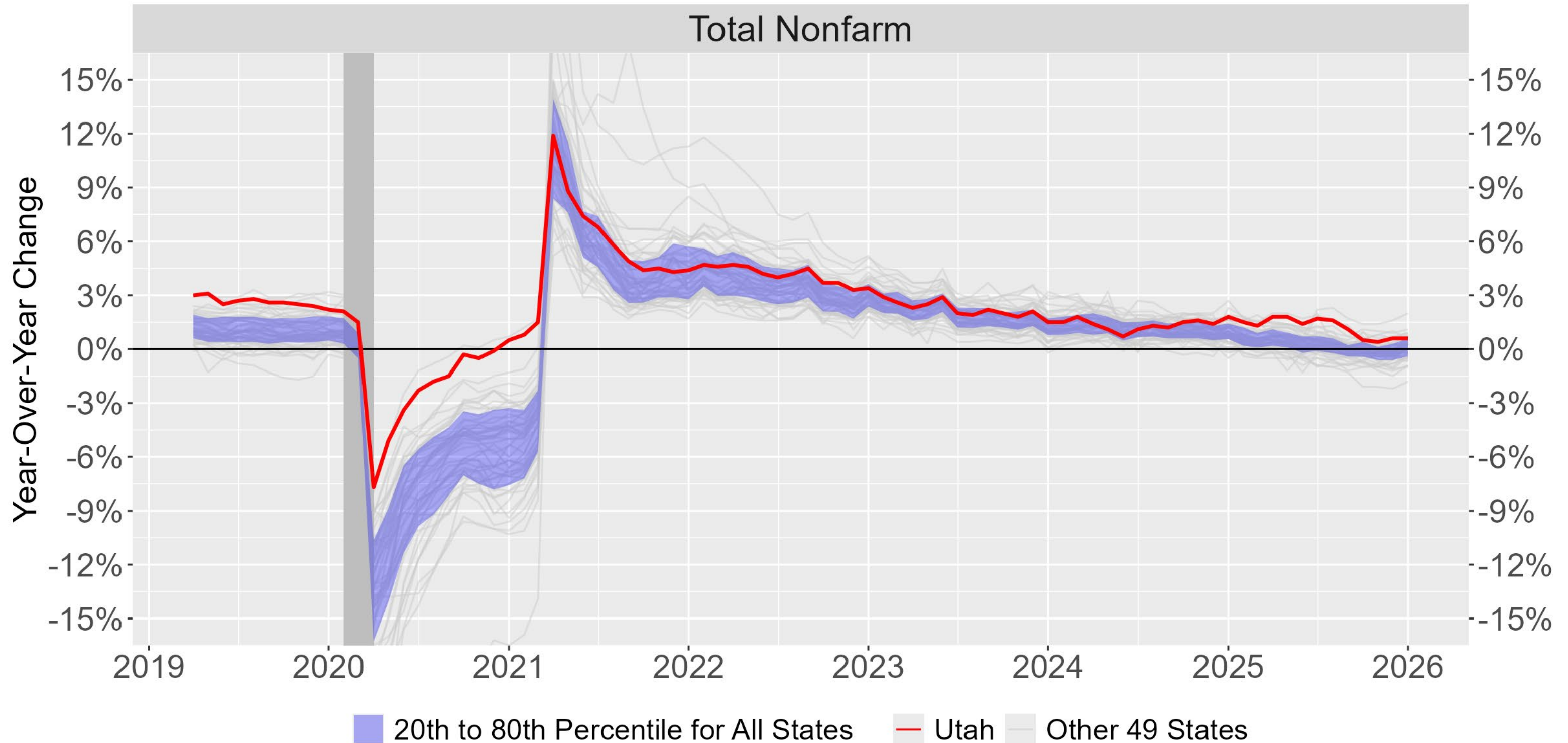


# UTAH JOB GROWTH

## Outpacing Most of the Nation



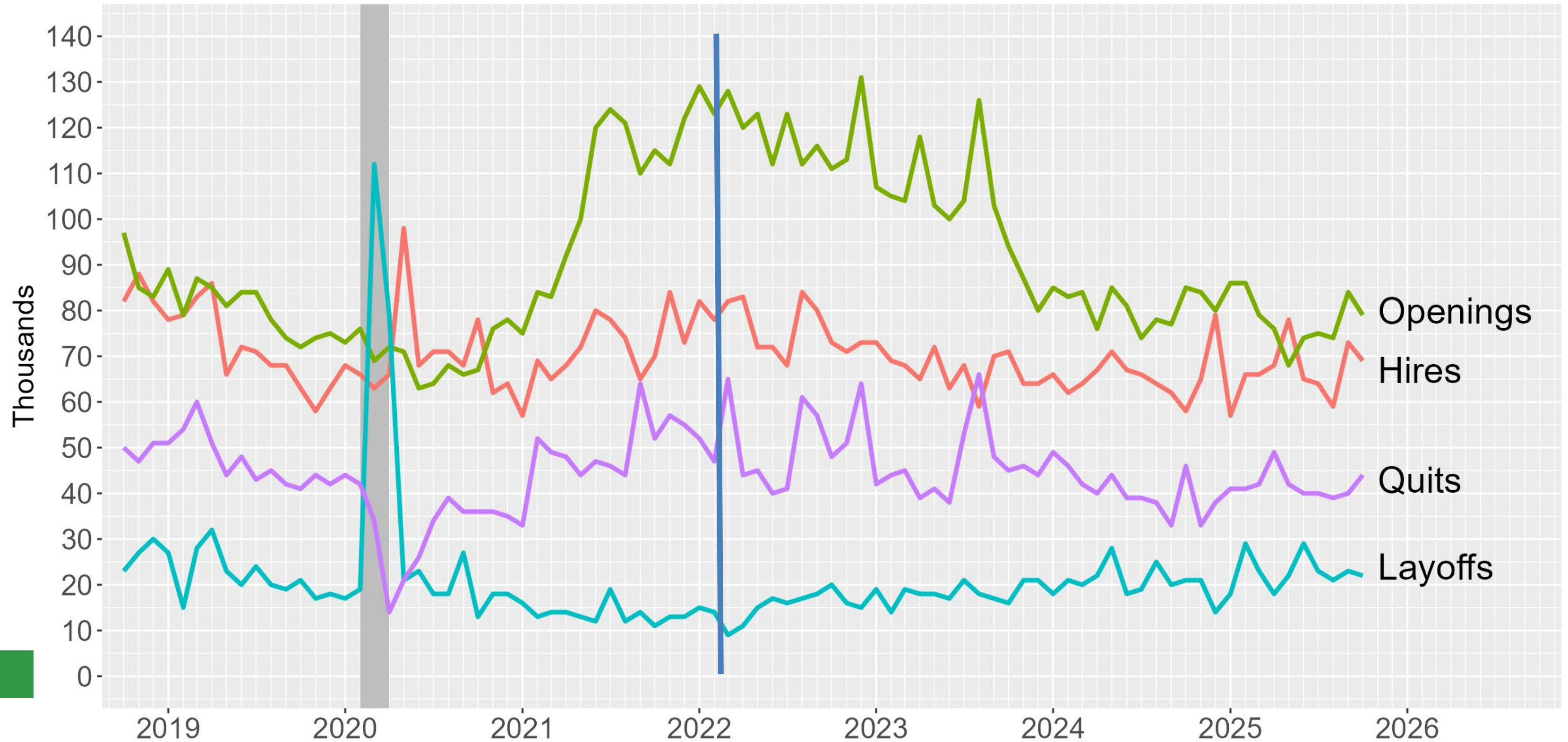
### Job Growth, Utah & Other States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Employment Statistics (CES), not seasonally adjusted

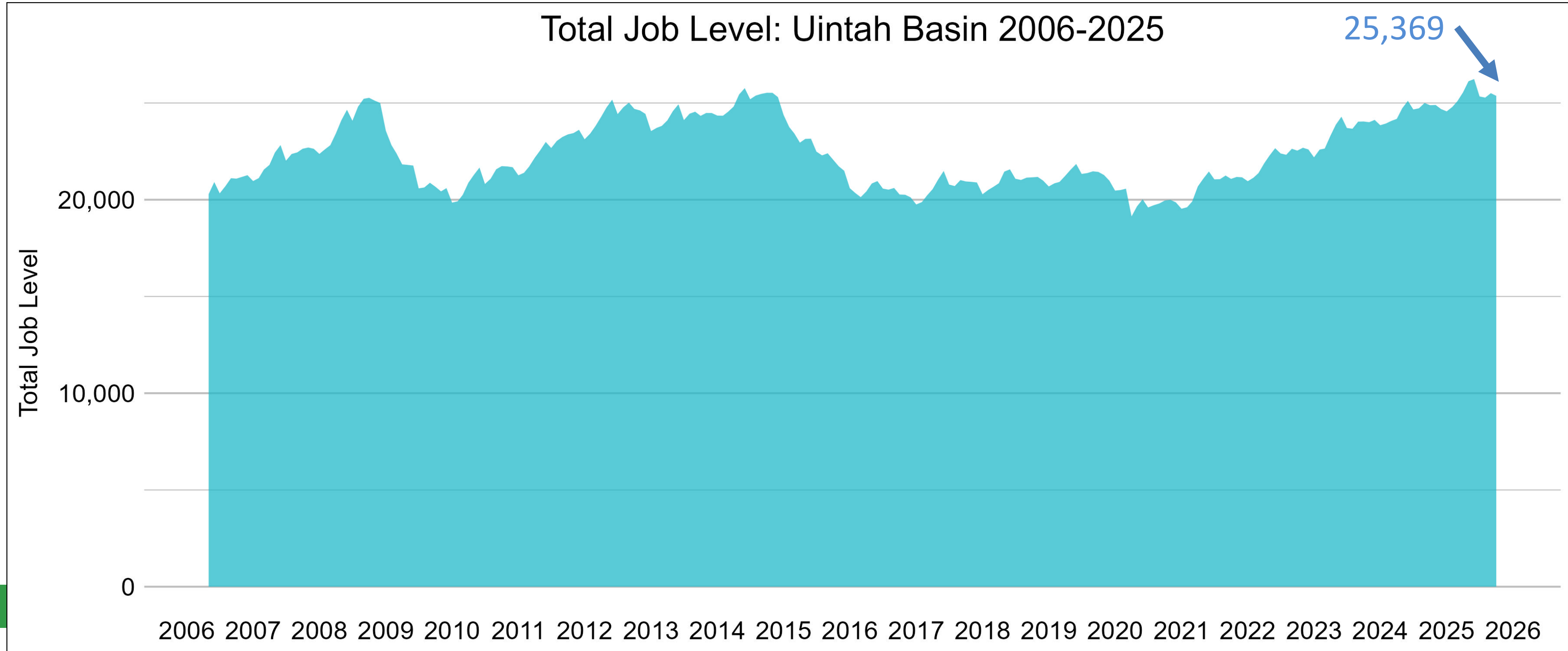
# UTAH JOLTS DATA

## Declining Openings, Higher Layoffs



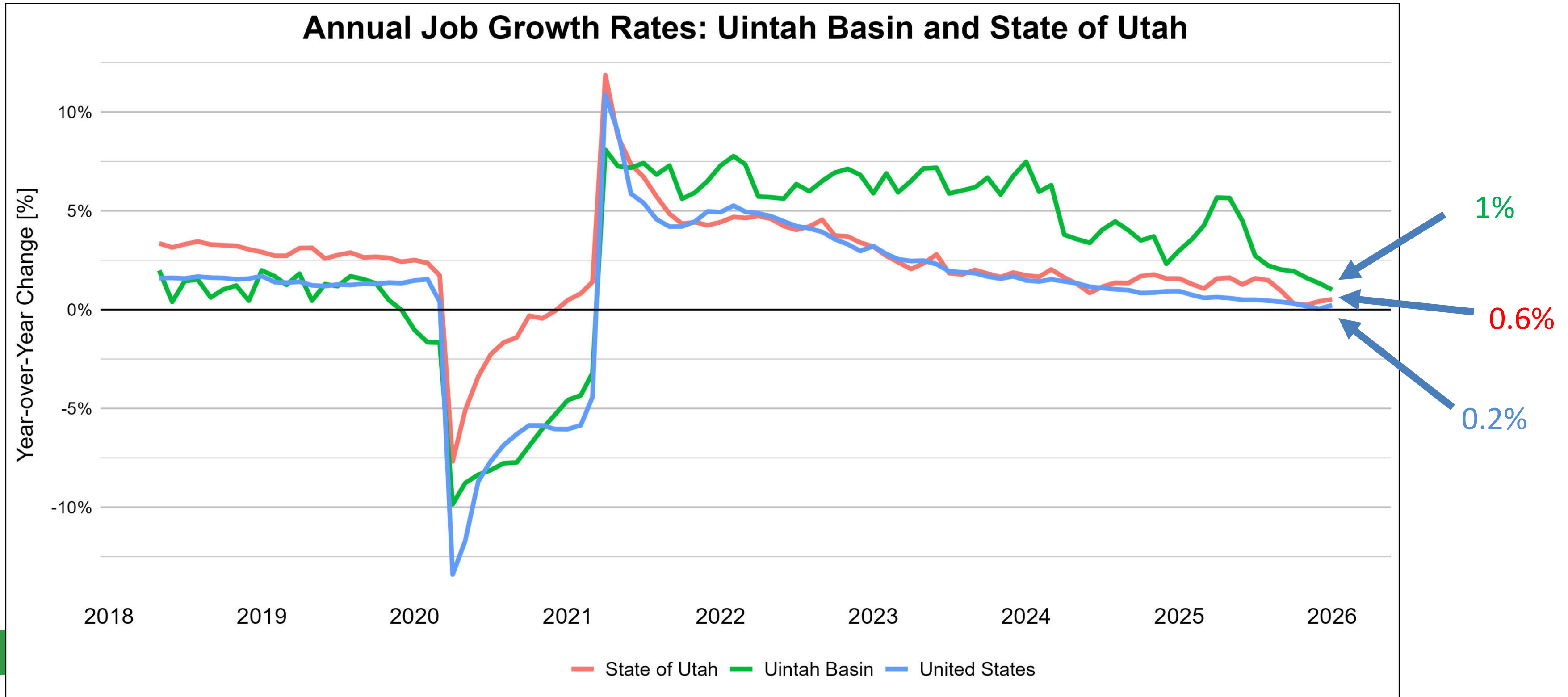
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

# UINTAH BASIN EMPLOYMENT



# JOB GROWTH IN BASIN

## Above average, with some recent slowing



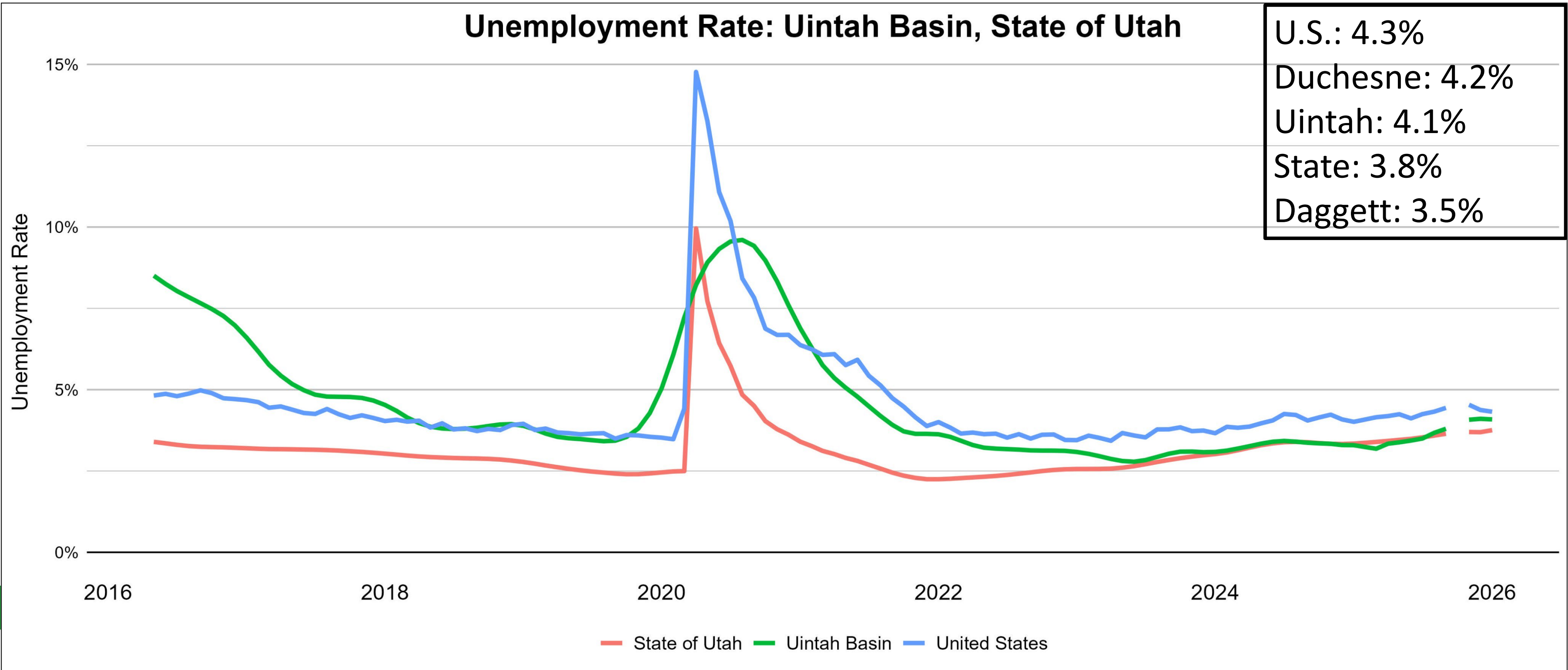
Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services & QCEW

# UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

## The Utah Advantage



Unemployment Rate: Uintah Basin, State of Utah



U.S.: 4.3%  
Duchesne: 4.2%  
Uintah: 4.1%  
State: 3.8%  
Daggett: 3.5%

# UINTAH BASIN

## Unemployment Insurance Claims



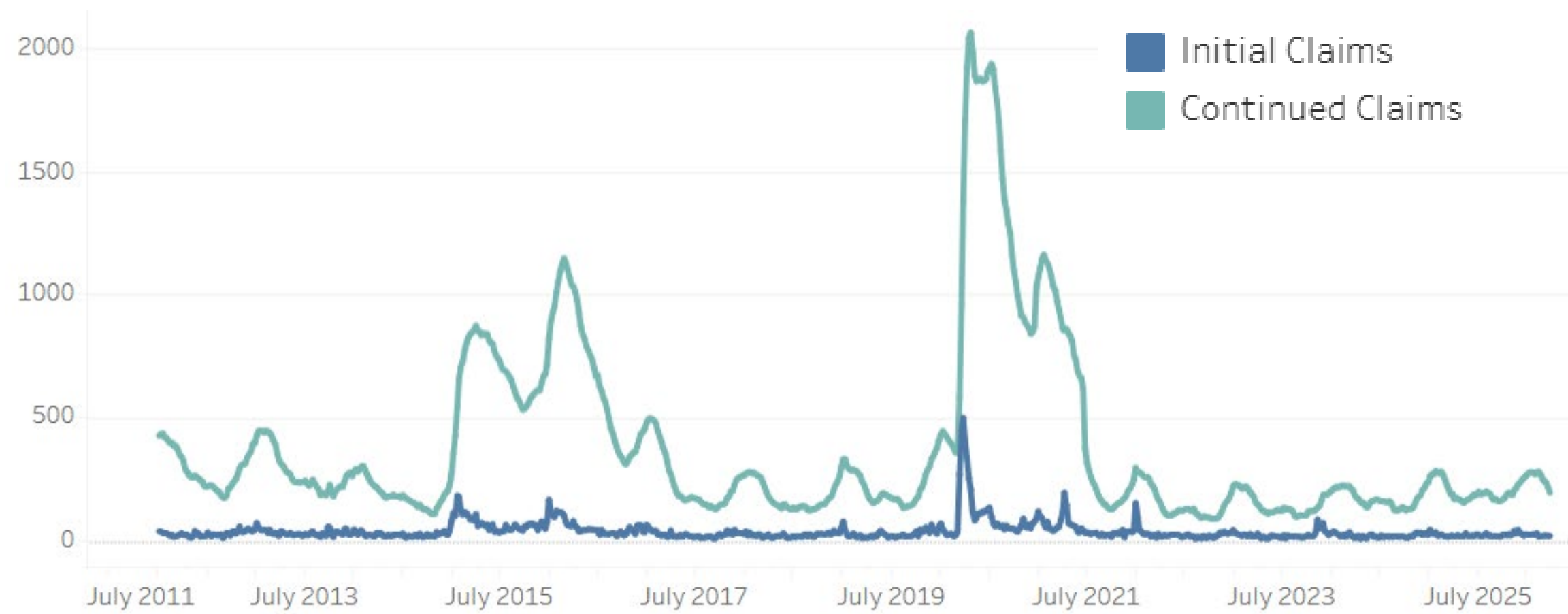
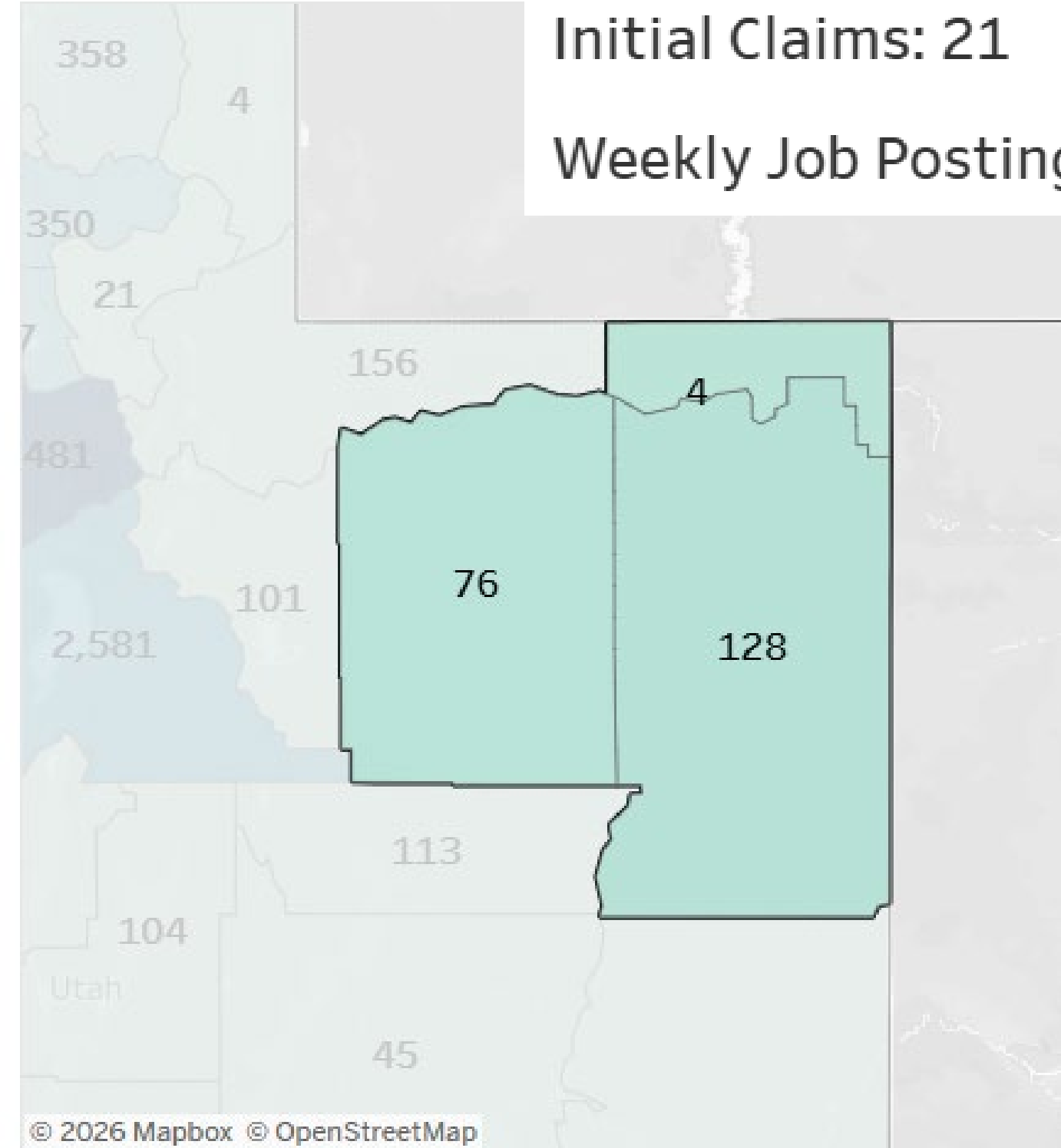
Initial Claims: 21

Continued Claims: 208

Net Claims: -5

Weekly Job Postings: 59

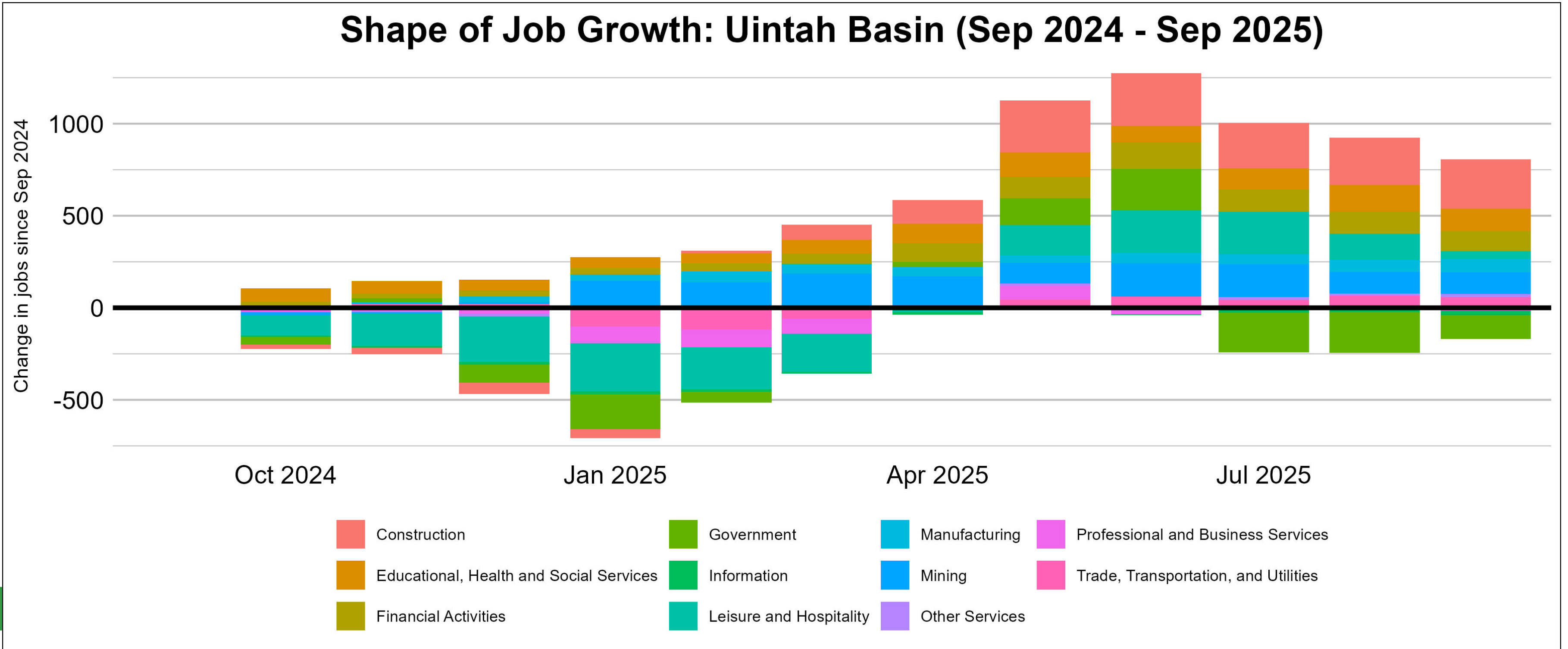
Job Postings Last Month: 242



# JOB GROWTH

## Broad Gains

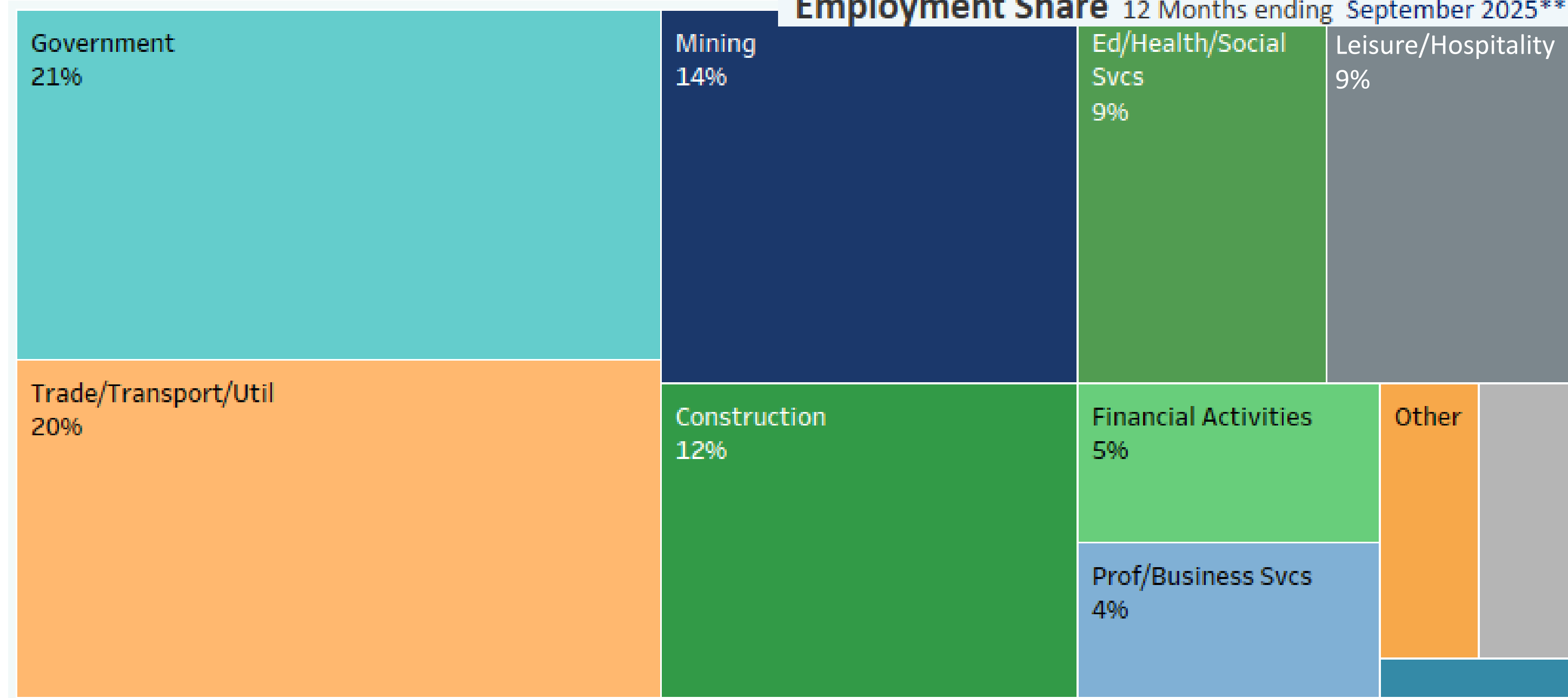
### Shape of Job Growth: Uintah Basin (Sep 2024 - Sep 2025)



# UINTAH EMPLOYMENT

## By Industry

**Employment Share** 12 Months ending September 2025\*\*



Over 40% of all employment in Utah is in 2 supersectors; Trade/Transportation/Utilities and Government.

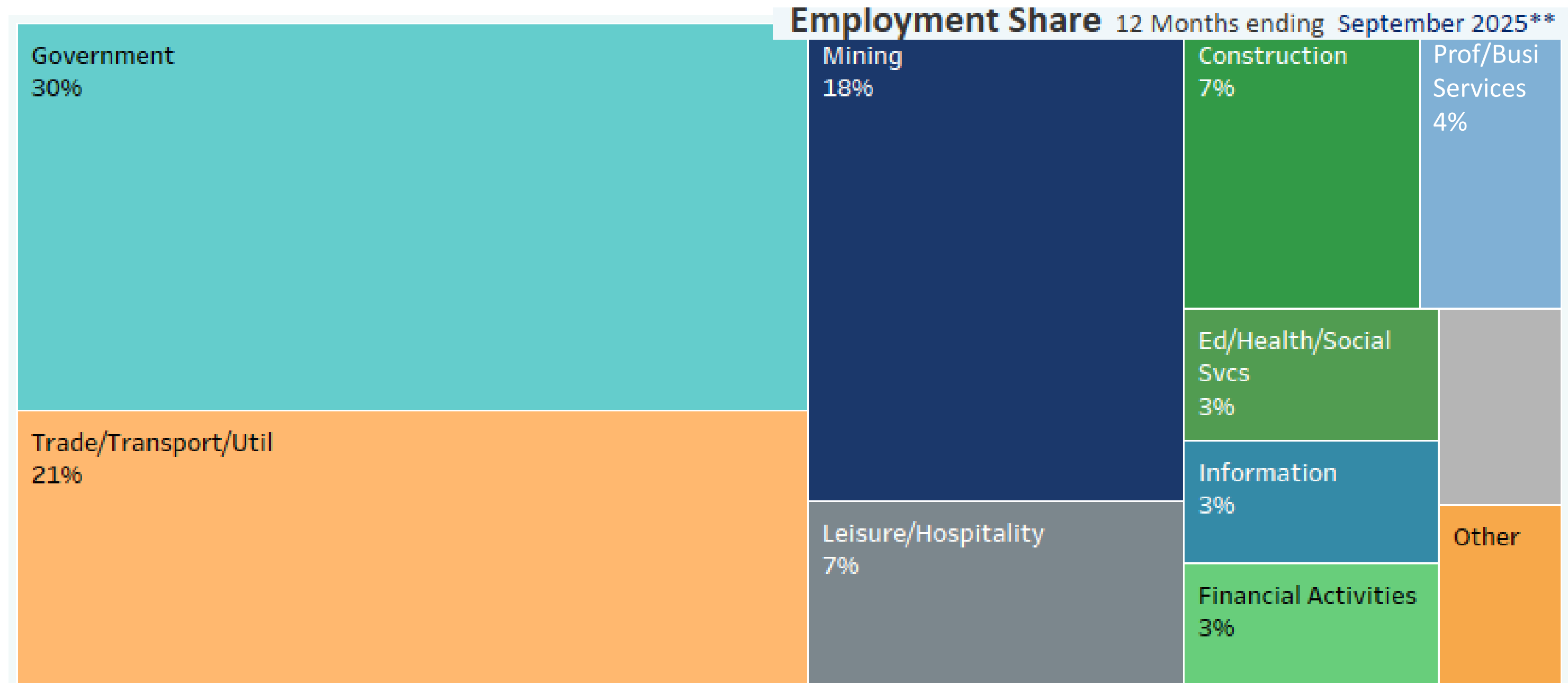
- Trade/Transportation/Utilities is made up of industries such as retail, transportation and warehousing and utilities.
- Government includes local, state and federal positions

# DUCHESNE EMPLOYMENT

## By Industry

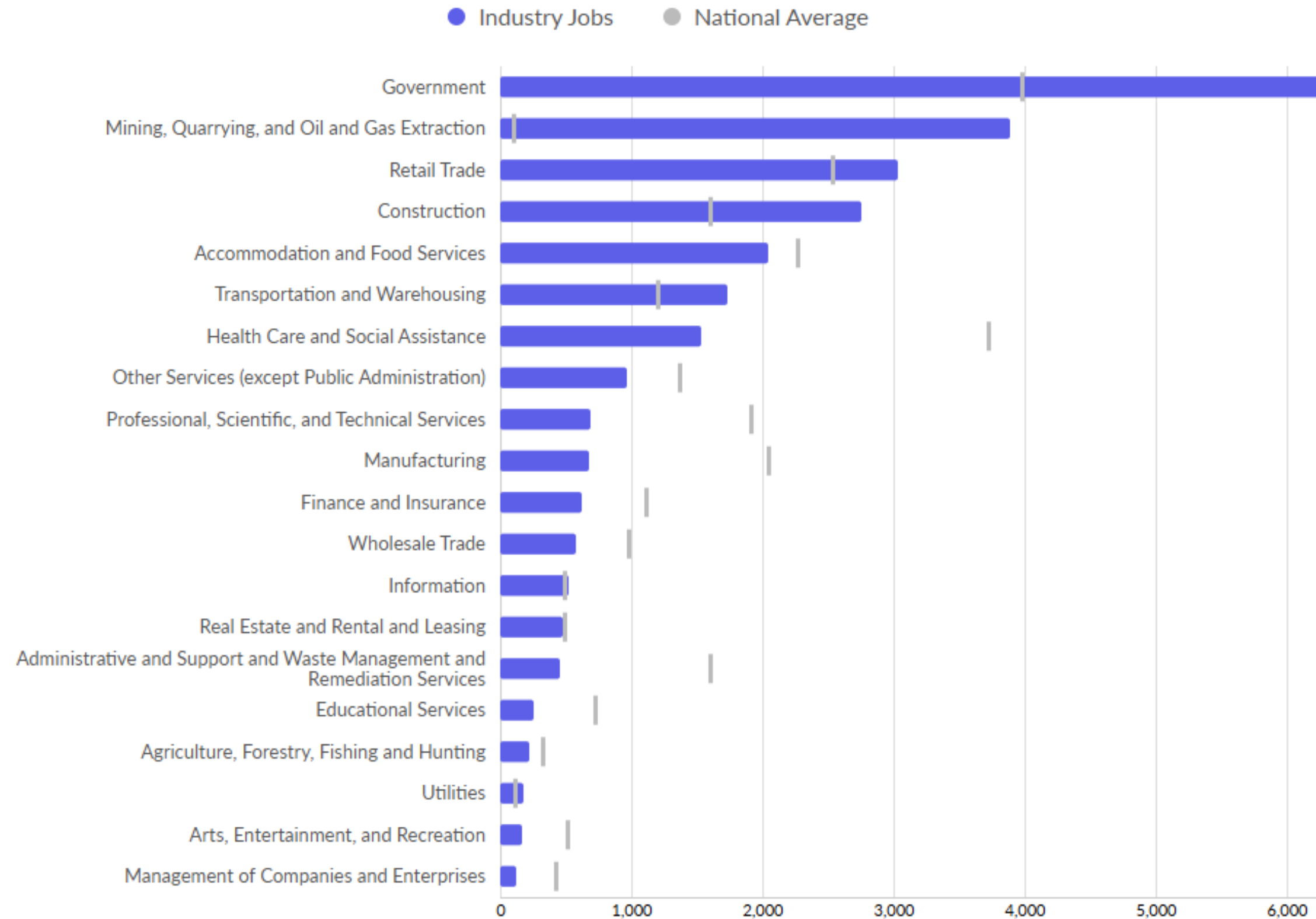
Half of all employment in Duchesne is in 2 supersectors; Trade/Transportation/Utilities and Government.

- Mining is 18% of all jobs in the county, the highest proportion of any county in Utah



# BASIN INDUSTRIES

## Compared to National Average



# UINTAH COUNTY

## Largest Employers



## 2024 Major Employers Uintah County



Select Area

Rank	Company	Industry	Annual Average Employment
1	Uintah School District	Public Education	'500-999
2	BHI	Construction	'500-999
3	Ute Indian Tribe	Local Government	'500-999
4	Wal-Mart	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	'250-499
5	Uintah County	Local Government	'250-499

# DUCHESNE COUNTY

## Largest Employers



## 2024 Major Employers Duchesne County



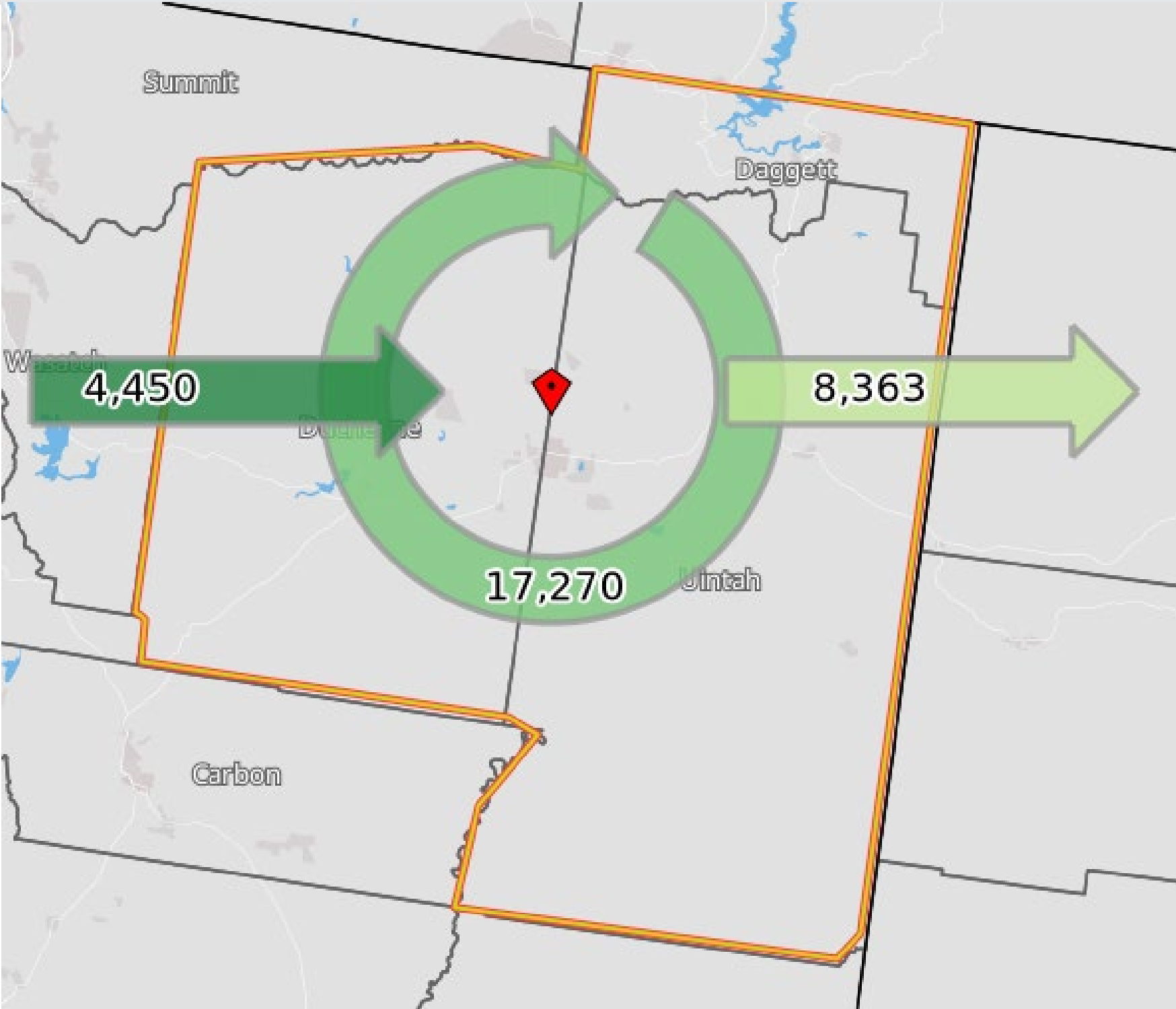
Select Area

Duchesne County

Rank	Company	Industry	Annual Average Employment
1	Uintah Basin Medical Center	Health Care	'500-999
2	Duchesne School District	Public Education	'500-999
3	Duchesne County	Local Government	'100-249
4	Uintah Basin Telecommunications	Telecommunications Resellers	'100-249
5	Finley Resources	Support Activities for Oil and Gas Operations	'100-249

# COMMUTING PATTERNS

## OnTheMap



Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2023  
All Workers



- 4,450 - Employed in Selection Area, Live Outside
- 8,363 - Live in Selection Area, Employed Outside
- 17,270 - Employed and Live in Selection Area

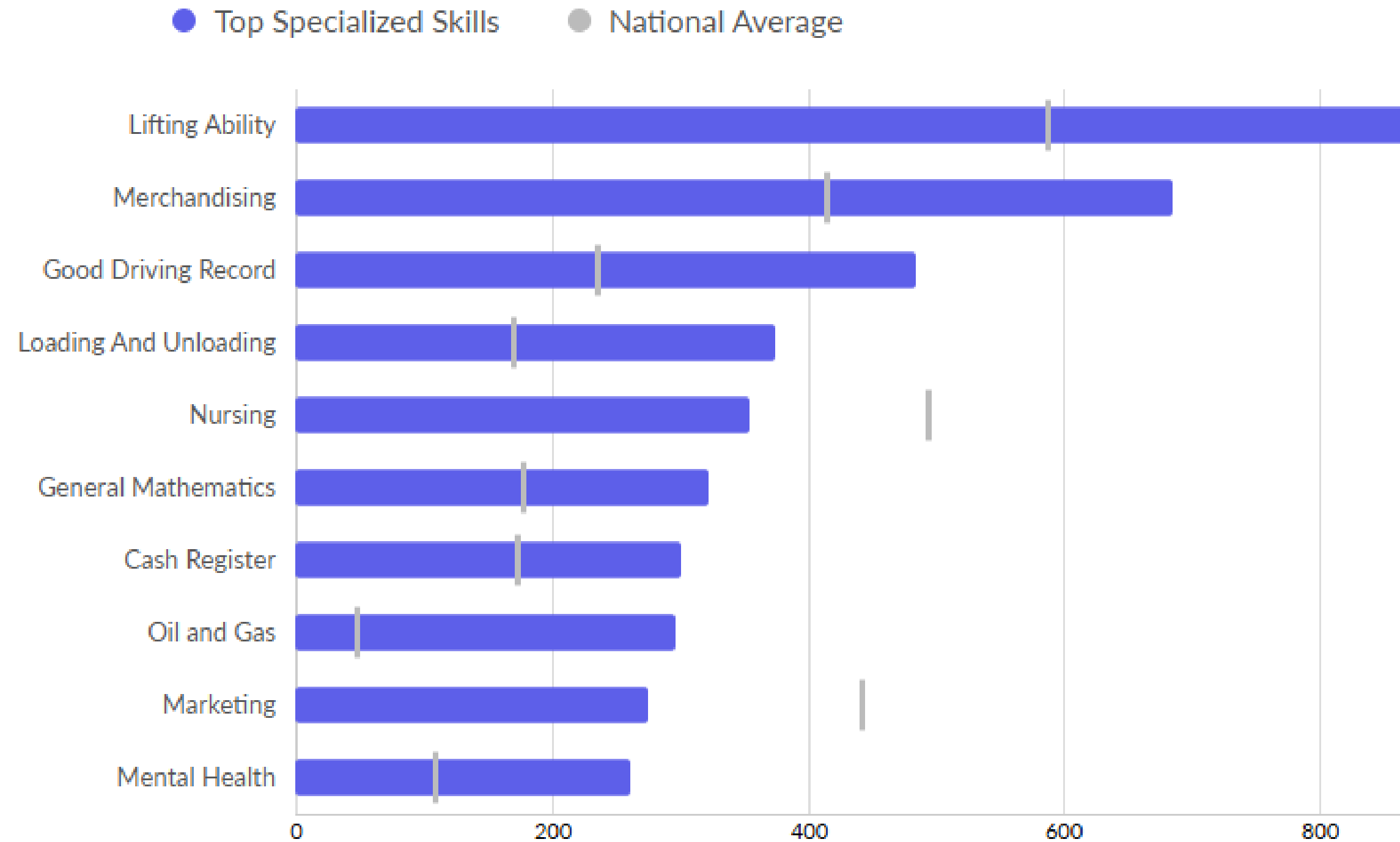
**Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)**  
2023

	Count	Share
<u>Employed in the Selection Area</u>	21,720	100.0%
<u>Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside</u>	4,450	20.5%
<u>Employed and Living in the Selection Area</u>	17,270	79.5%
<u>Living in the Selection Area</u>	25,633	100.0%
<u>Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside</u>	8,363	32.6%
<u>Living and Employed in the Selection Area</u>	17,270	67.4%

Source: LEHD OnTheMap

# BASIN IN-DEMAND SKILLS

## Compared to National Average



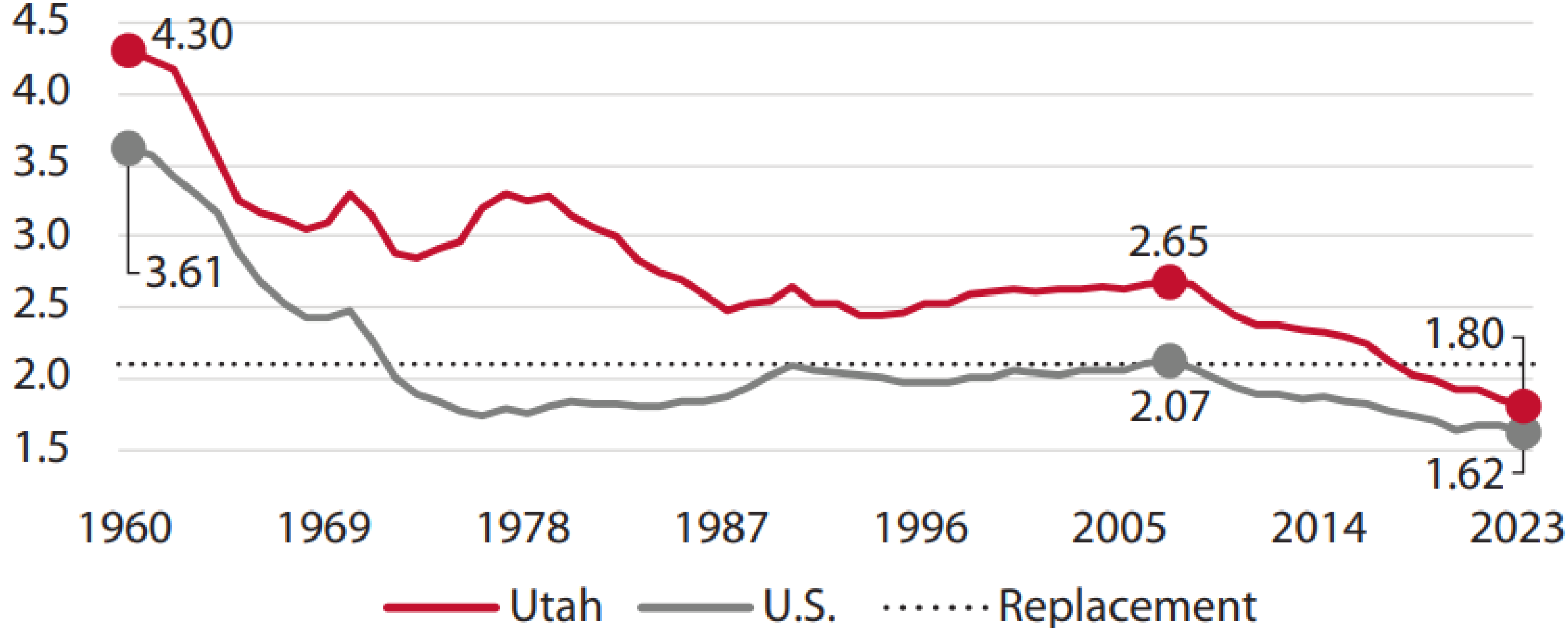


# How did we get **HERE?**

# TOTAL FERTILITY RATE

## 1960 - 2023

**Figure 1: Total Fertility Rate for Utah and the United States, 1960-2023**

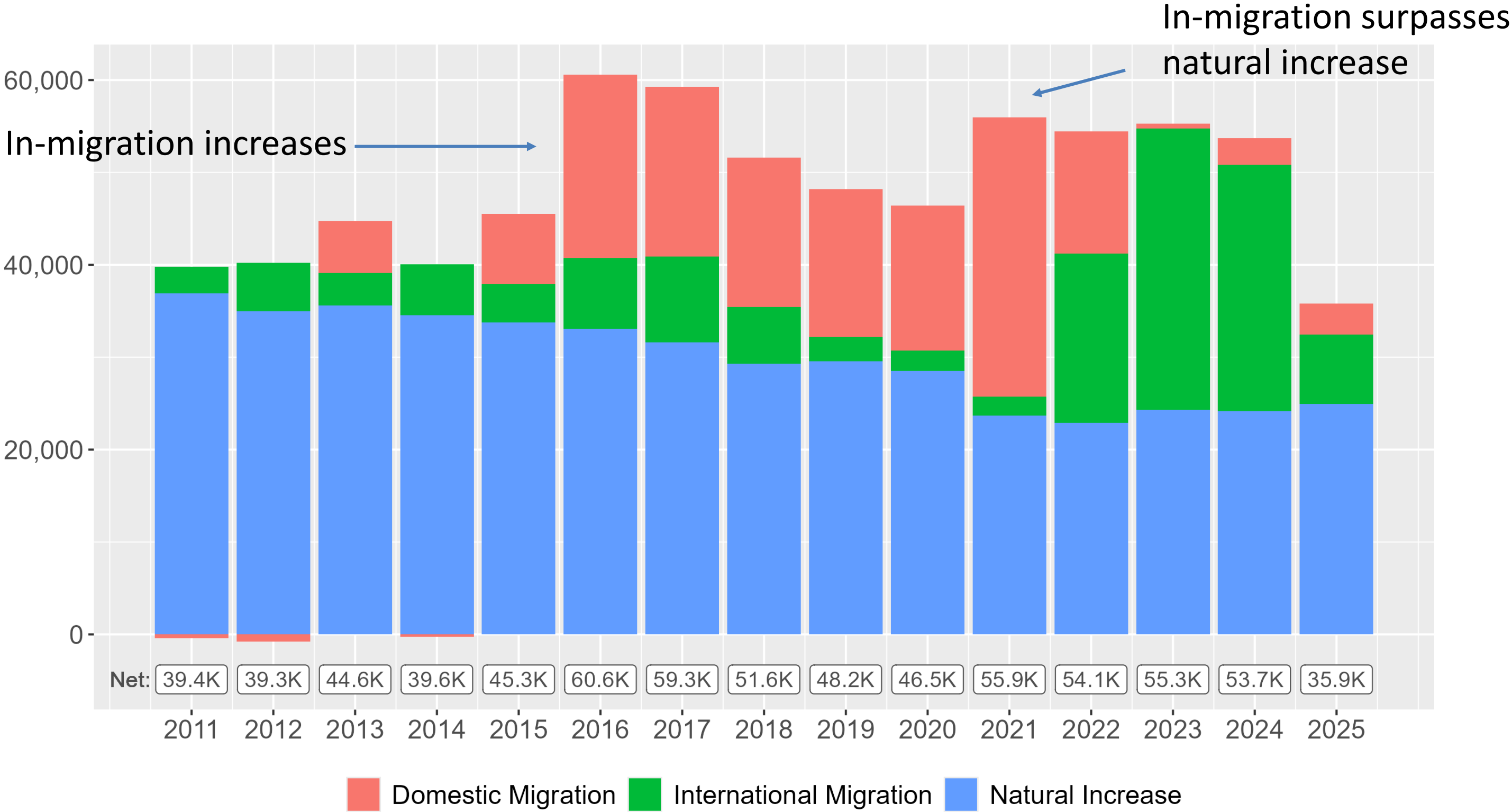


Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Source: Kem C. Gardner, National Center for Health Statistics

# UTAH NET MIGRATION

## 2011-2025



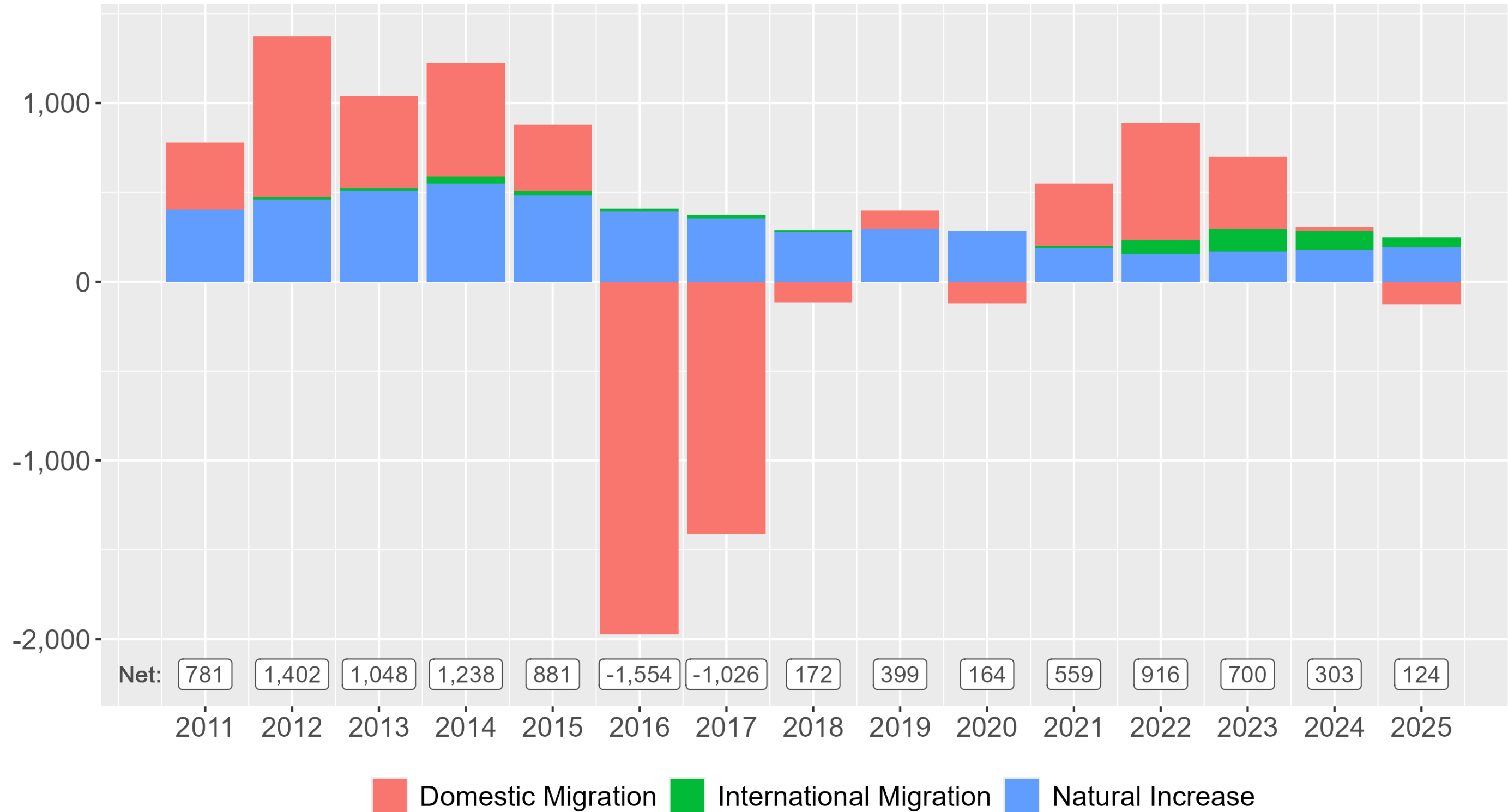
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

# UINTAH COUNTY

## Population Change

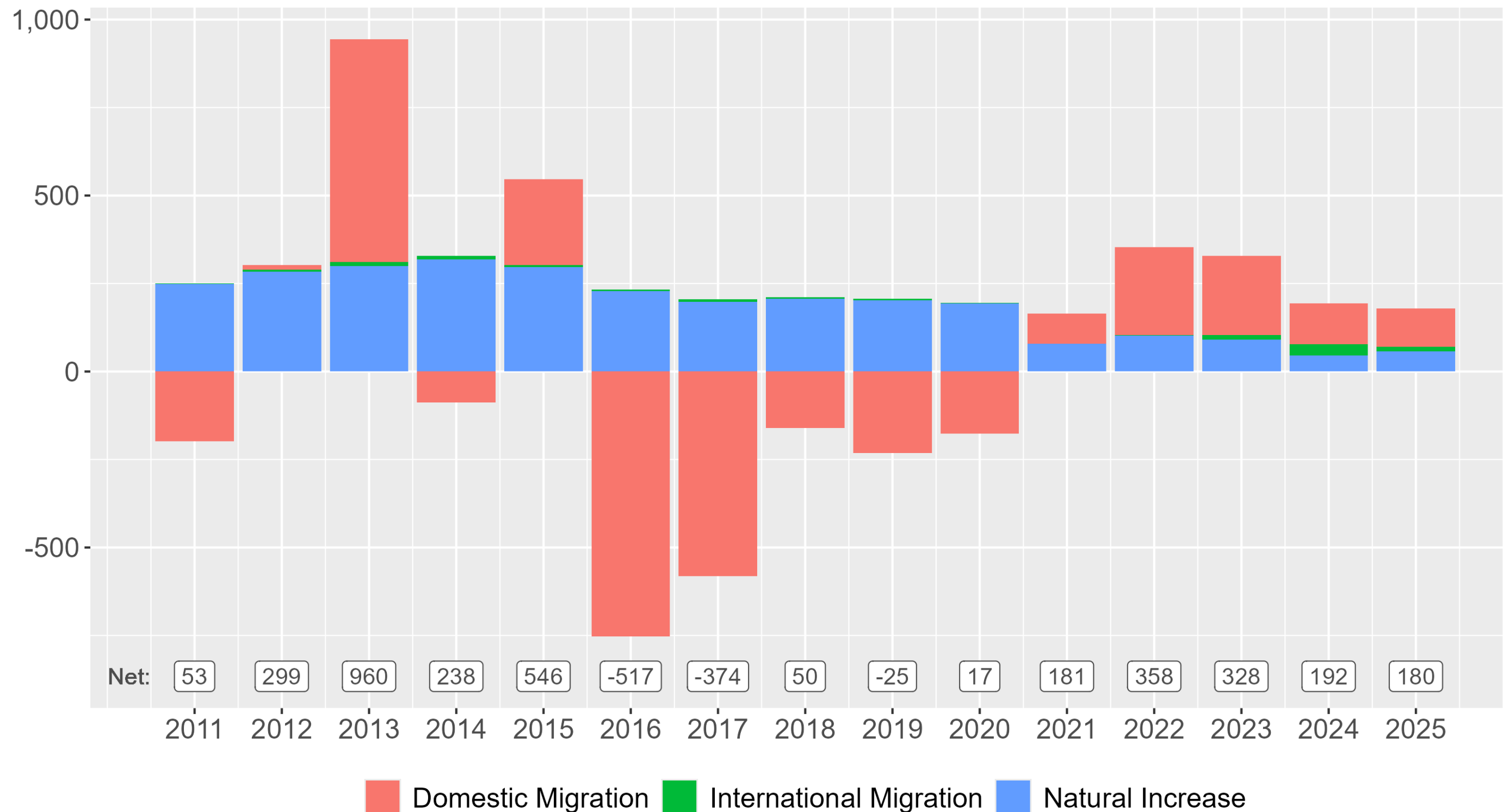
Uintah County: Components of Population Change



# DUCHESNE COUNTY

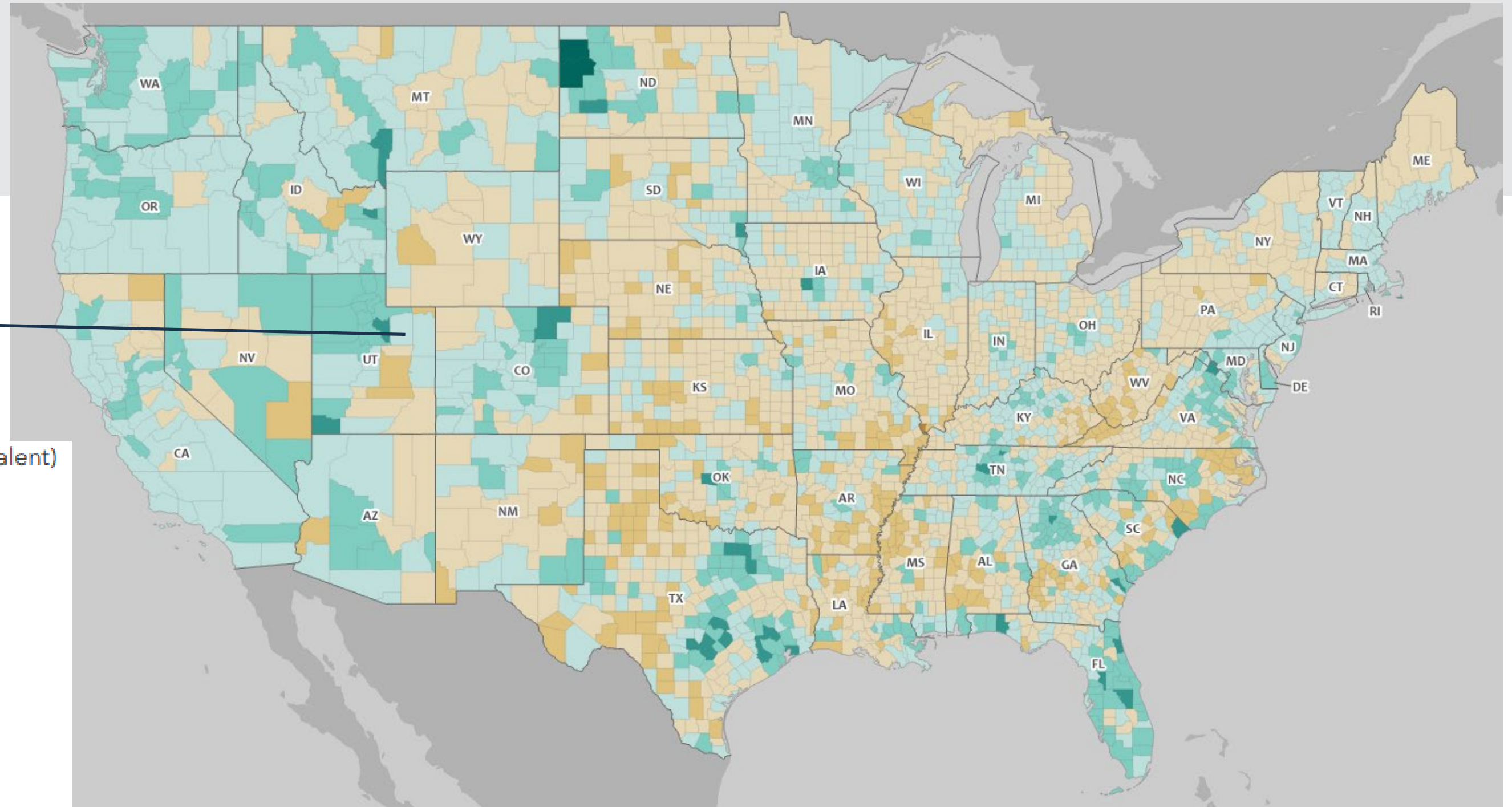
## Population Change

Duchesne County: Components of Population Change

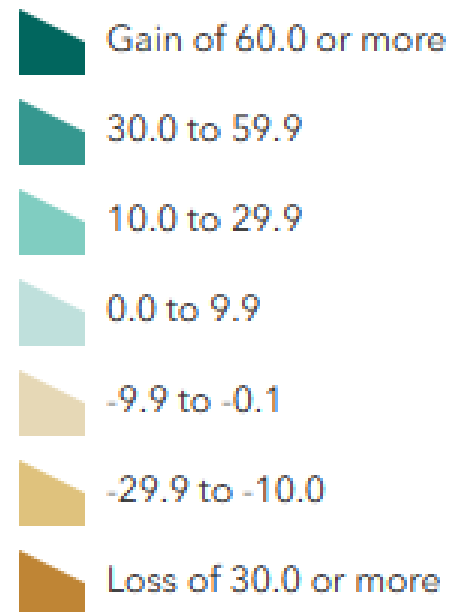


# POPULATION GROWTH

## Centered on Metro Areas



Percent change by county (or county equivalent)



U.S. percent = 7.4

# What Challenges do we **FACE?**

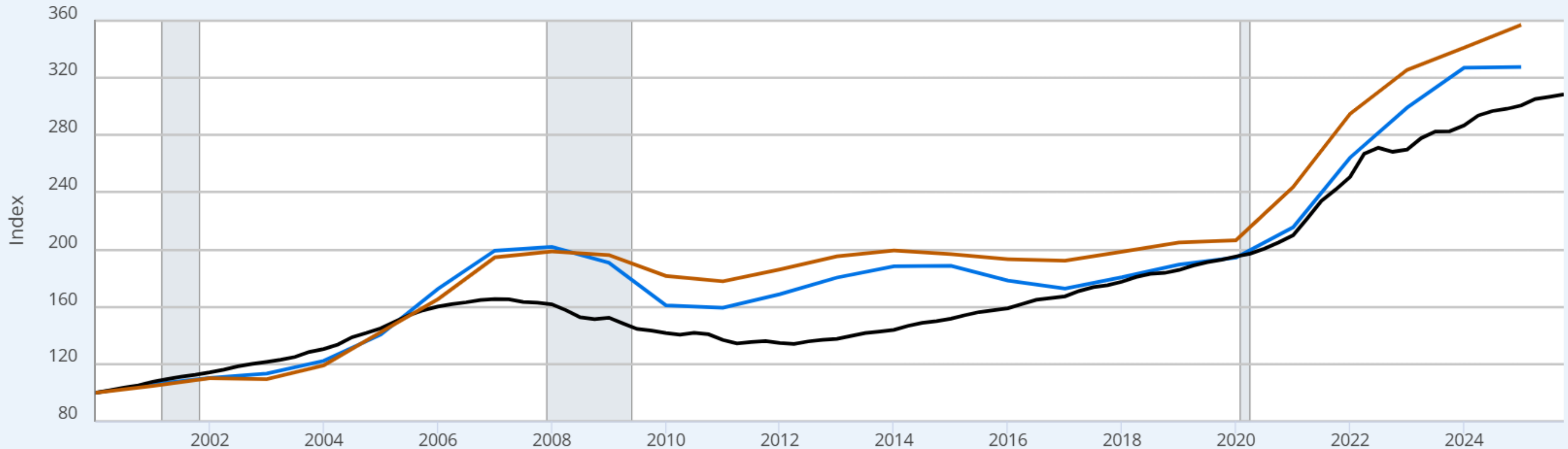


# UINTAH BASIN HOUSING

## Slower Rise in Prices Since 2020

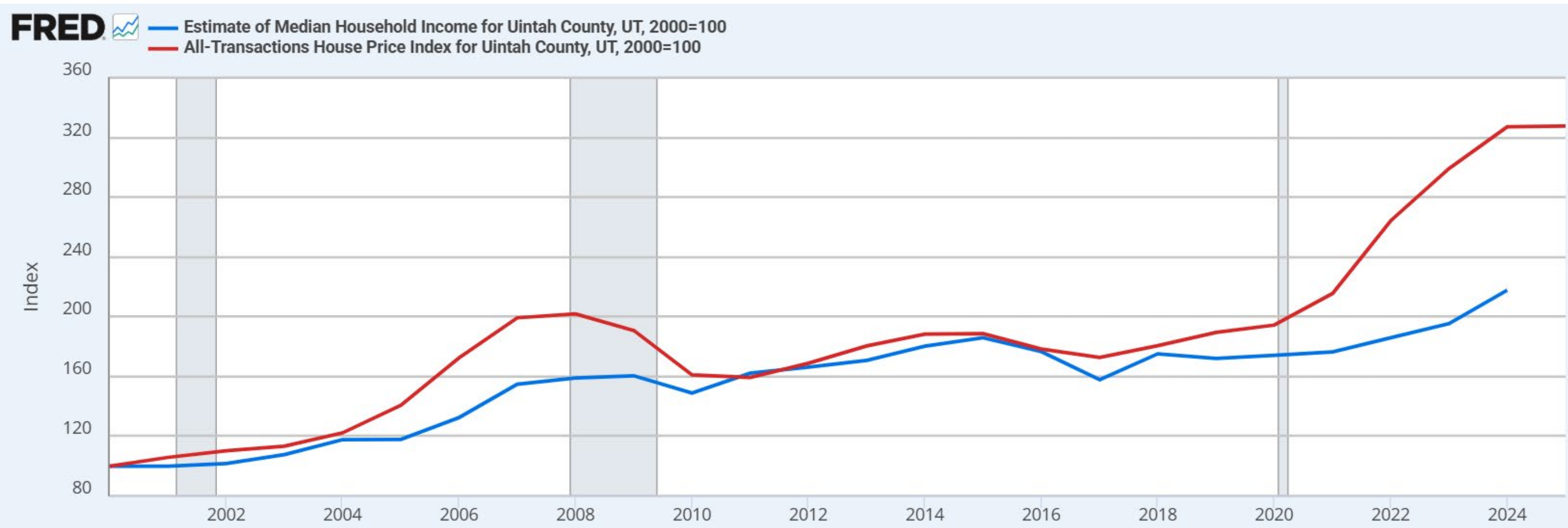
FRED

- All-Transactions House Price Index for Uintah County, UT, 2000=100
- All-Transactions House Price Index for the United States, Q1 2000=100
- All-Transactions House Price Index for Duchesne County, UT, 2000=100



# UINTAH BASIN HOUSING

## Housing Outpacing Wages



# Under Pressure Historic Inflation

*More money chasing fewer goods* → Inflation

February 2026 inflation at 2.4% year-over-year

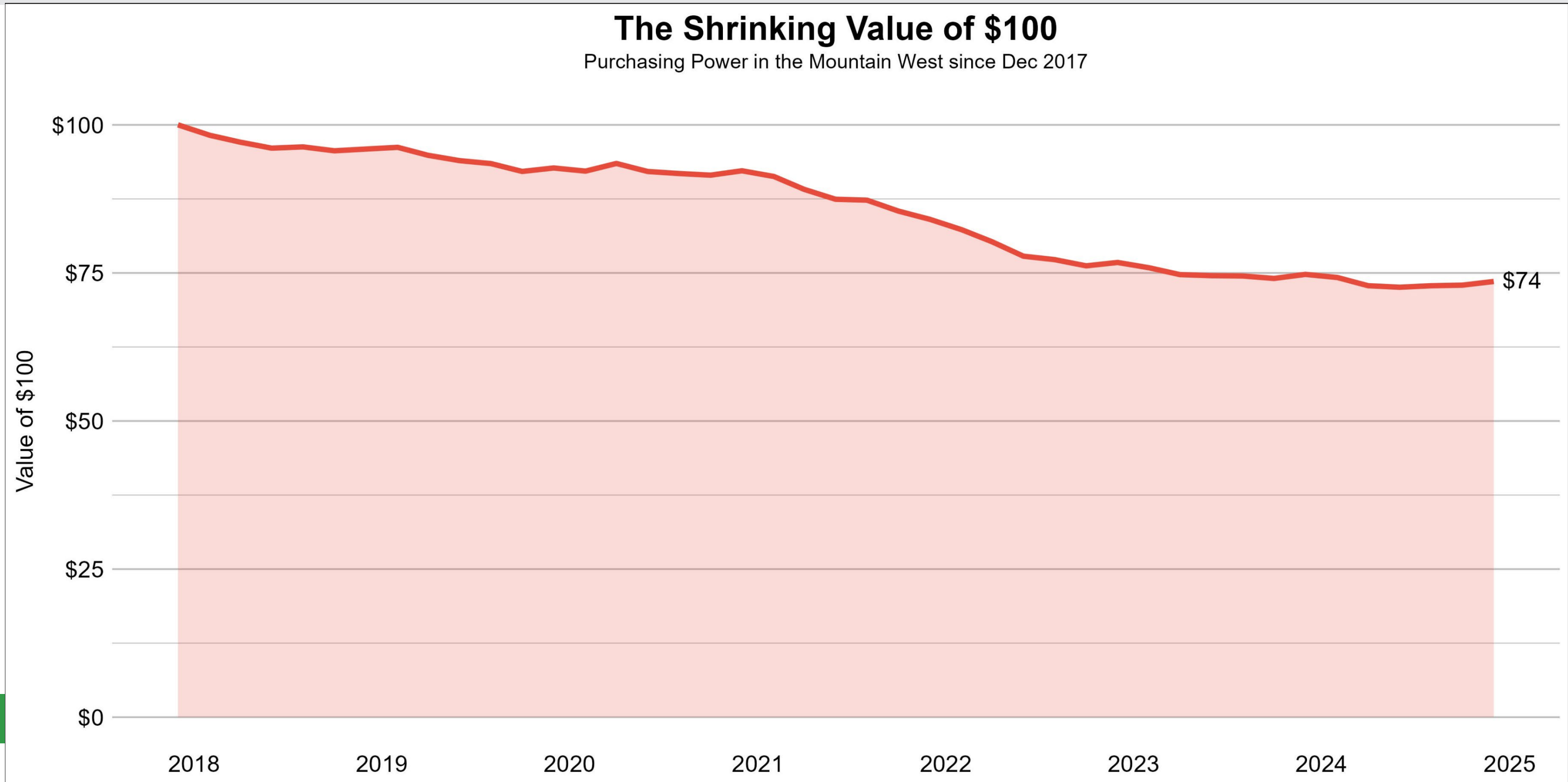
“Inflation has eased from its pandemic-era peak, but progress has stalled over the past year mainly due to tariffs. In addition, I expect elevated energy prices will be reflected in upcoming inflation readings.”

– Phillip N. Jefferson, Vice Chair of Federal Reserve Board of Governors, April 7<sup>th</sup> 2026



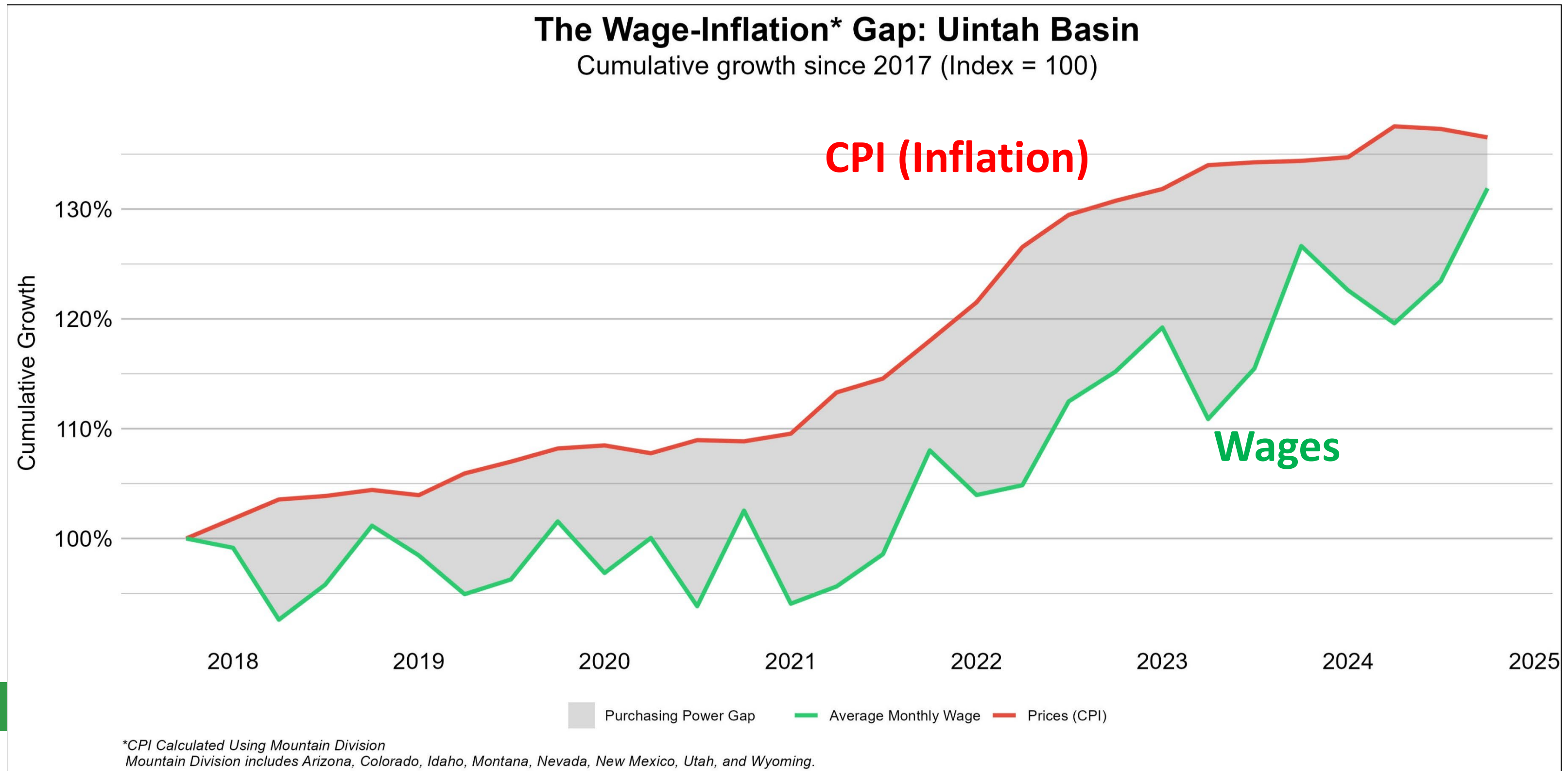
# INFLATION & WAGES

## The Value of A Dollar



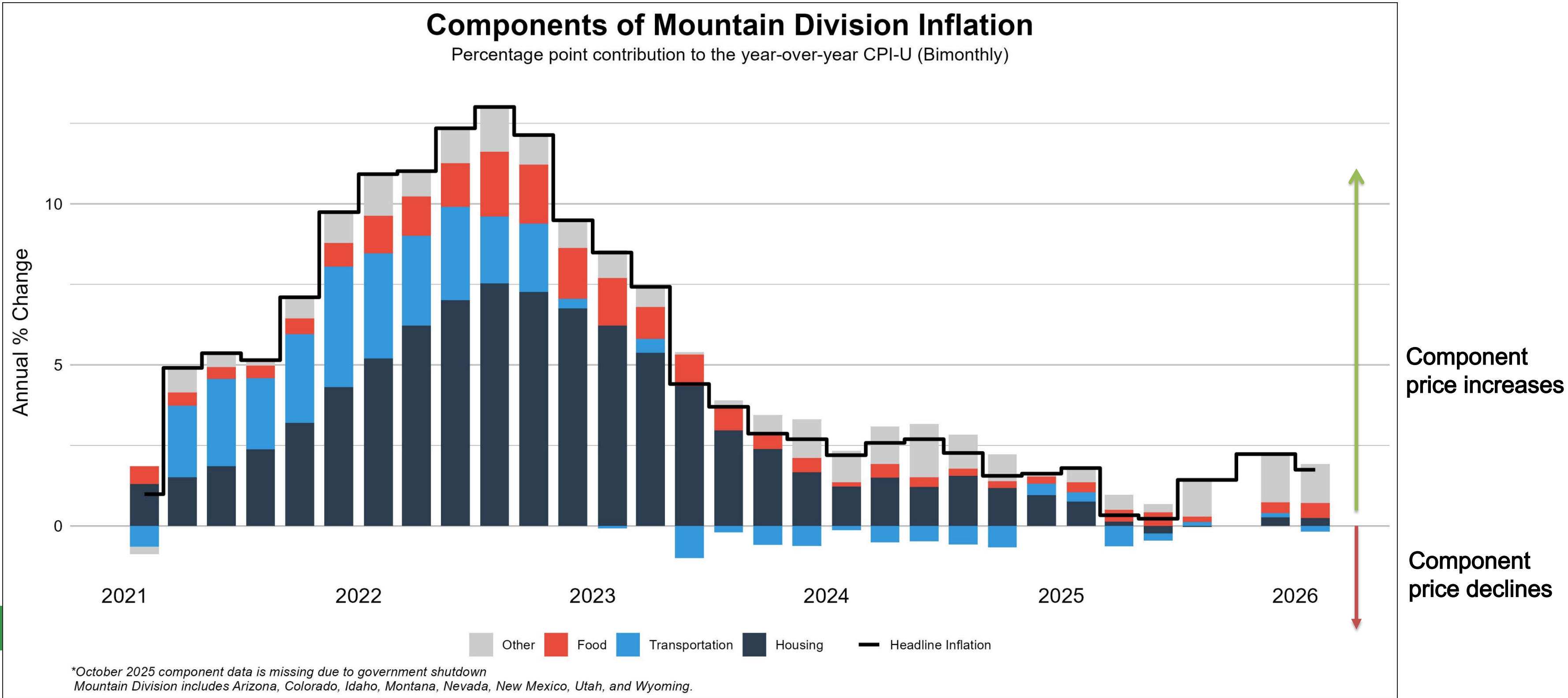
# INFLATION & WAGES

## The Race Between Wages and Inflation



# COMPONENTS OF INFLATION

## Food, Fuel and Shelter



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

# Under Pressure

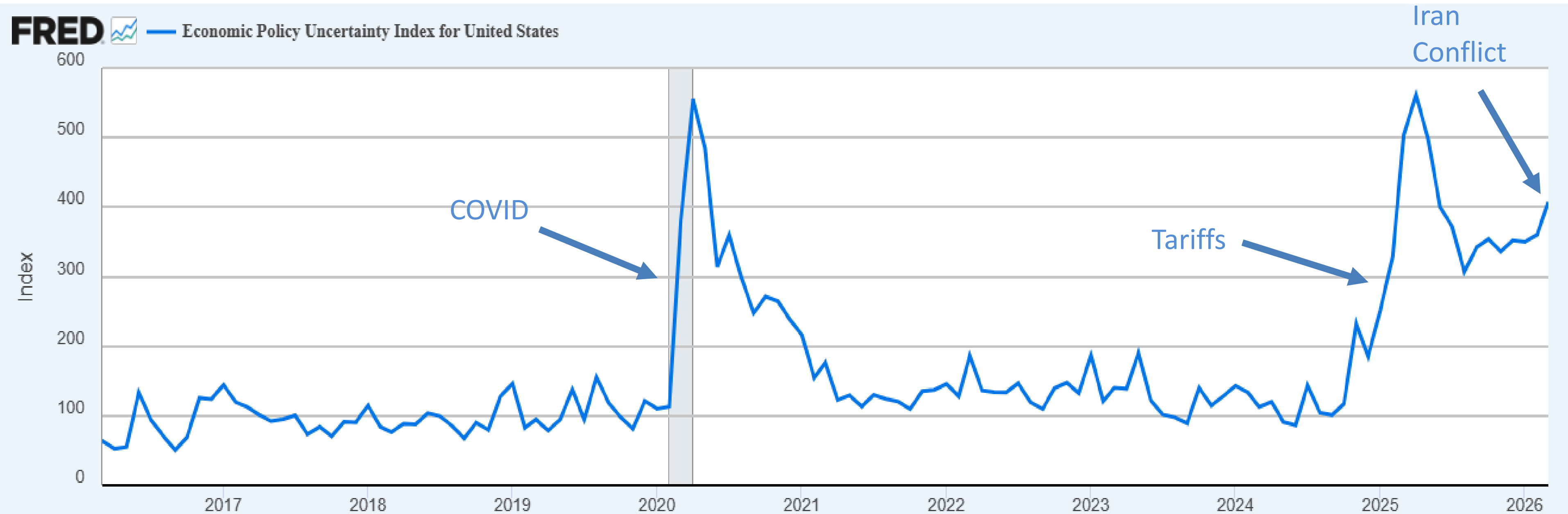
## ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

### Recent market uncertainty

- Uncertainty slows growth as businesses and consumers reduce spending amid unclear economic outlook
  - Reduces consumer spending
  - Delays business investment
  - Disrupts financial markets
- Short-run phenomenon

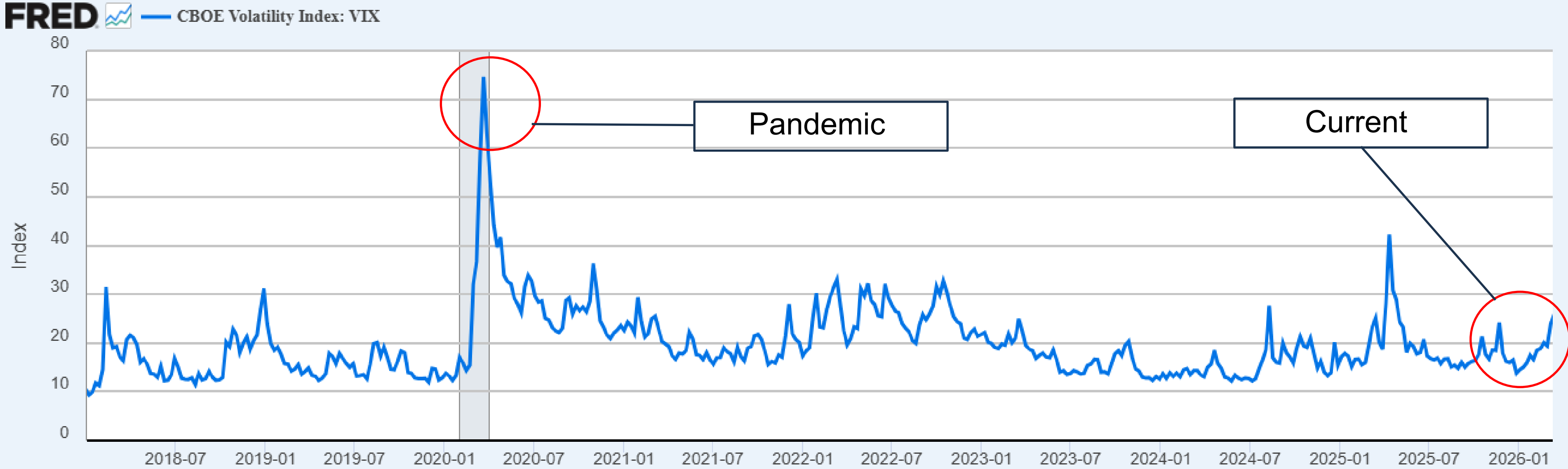


# ECONOMIC POLICY UNCERTAINTY INDEX



# STOCK MARKET VOLATILITY

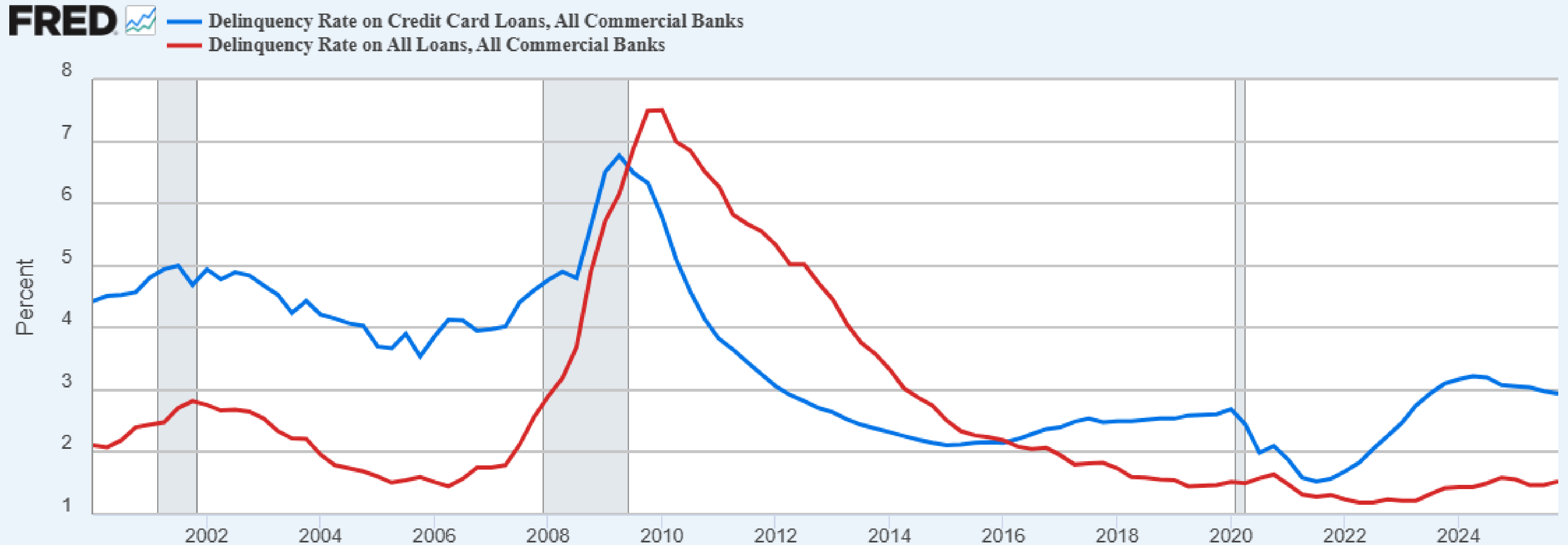
## VIX Index



Source: Chicago Board Options Exchange via FRED

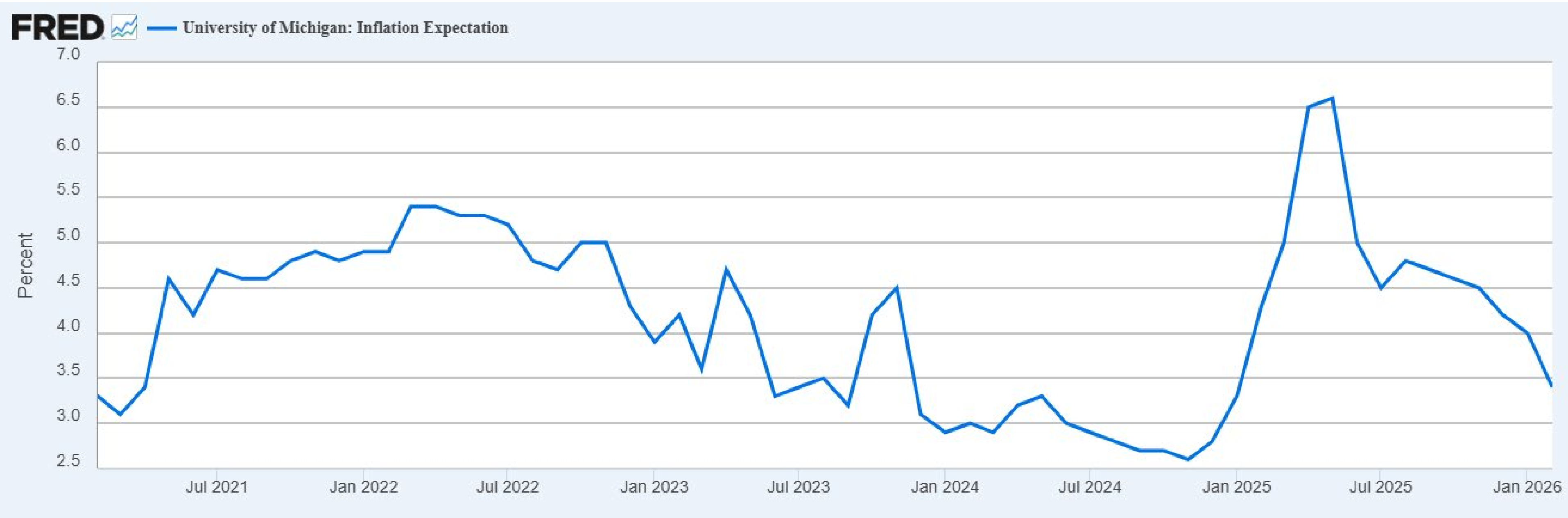
# DEFAULT RATES

## On the Rise



# INFLATION EXPECTATIONS

## Expected to Fall

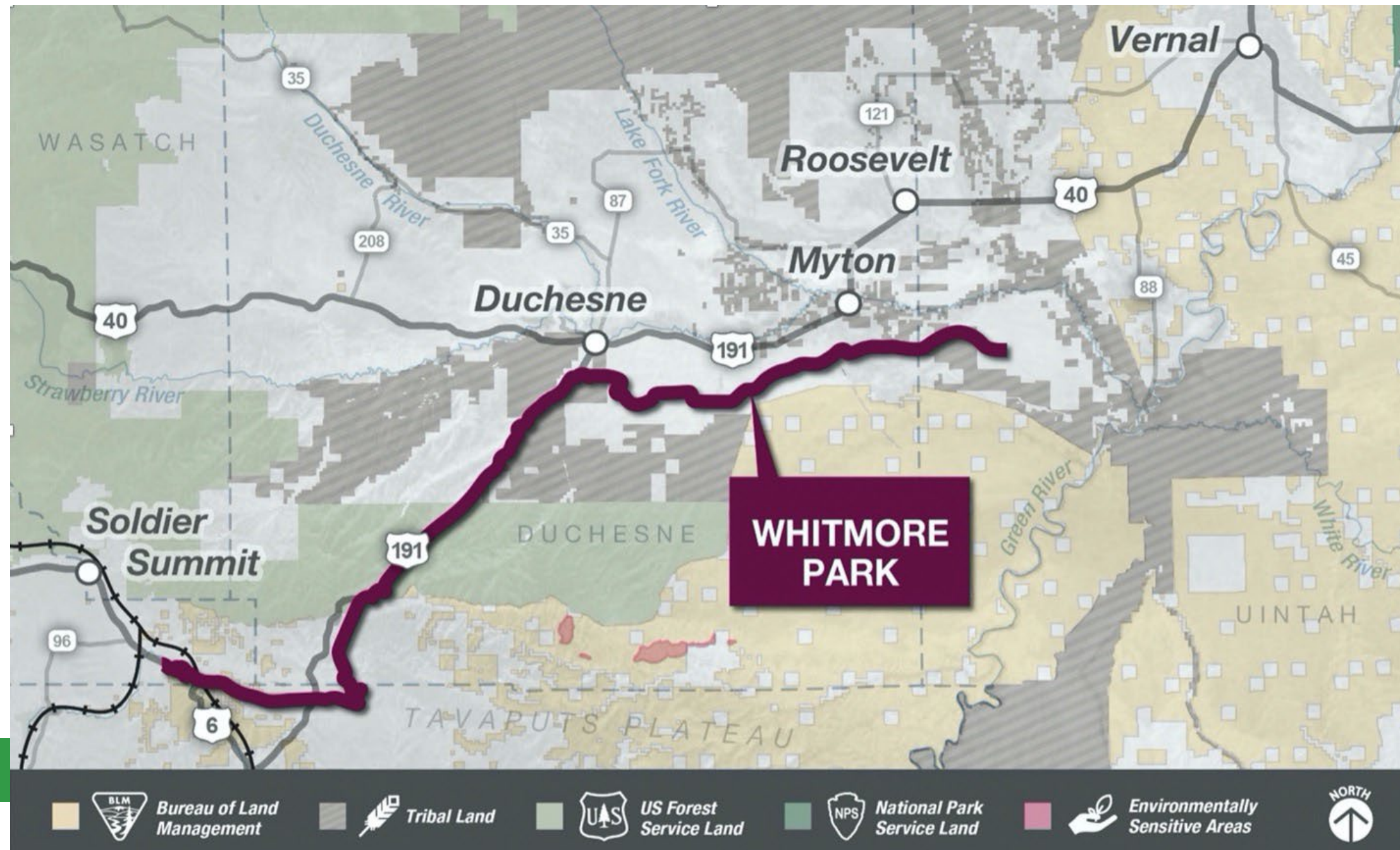


# Where are we **GOING?**



Photograph by Gerson Repreza

# Uinta Basin Railway Whitmore Park Line



- Approved by Surface Transportation Board (STB) in 2021, recommending Whitmore Park Line
- Ruled favorably by U.S. Supreme Court May 2025
- Currently pending additional review by STB
- Estimated completion date: 2027

# Uinta Basin Railway Whitmore Park Line



**STB Estimates for short- and long-term jobs, labor income and value added from the Uinta Basin Railway Whitmore Park Line project.**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Jobs Generated from initial Construction phase</b>	<b>Jobs Generated from Operation and Maintenance*</b>	<b>Labor Income (\$ million)**</b>	<b>Value Added (\$ million)**</b>
<b>Direct</b>	1,630	120-270	\$164.6-\$176.2	\$211.7-\$232
<b>Indirect</b>	760	50-120	\$33.2-\$36.5	\$67.9-\$75.2
<b>Induced</b>	620	30-80	\$21.2-\$22.8	\$49.1-\$52.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>190-470</b>	<b>\$219-\$235.5</b>	<b>\$328.7-\$312.9</b>

*\*Range accounts for low and high rail traffic scenarios following construction  
 \*\*2021 dollars. Includes both Construction and Operation and Maintenance phases.  
 Source: Surface Transportation Board, Office of Environmental Analysis*

# AI and Productivity in Utah

## Regulatory Relief Plan



### Dentacor

#### Using AI to responsibly expand access to essential dental care [Dentacor Mitigation Agreement](#)

Dentacor is addressing one of the most overlooked gaps in healthcare: access to oral health for Utah's most vulnerable populations. Many individuals experiencing homelessness or financial hardship live for years with untreated dental disease — not because treatment is complex, but because access is limited.

Dentacor's mobile dental hygiene model brings care directly to shelters, recovery programs, and transitional housing. Through a pilot with the Utah Office of Artificial Intelligence Policy (OAIP), Dentacor is testing whether AI can safely support this work by increasing clinical capacity without compromising patient safety.

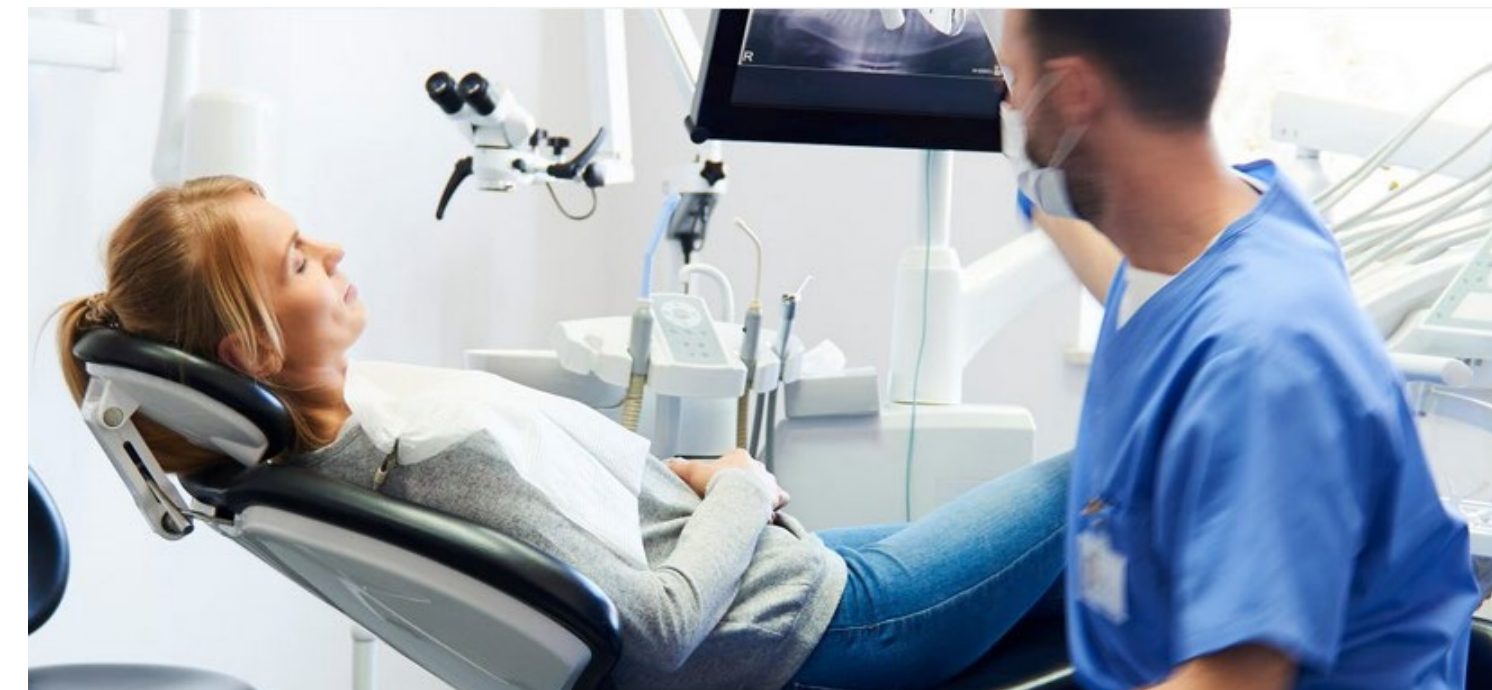
### The Approach

OAIP granted Dentacor a 12-month regulatory mitigation under the AI Learning Laboratory program to test a narrowly defined use of an AI-assisted radiograph diagnostic tool.

Under this pilot:

- Licensed dental hygienists may use AI to assist in diagnosing specific dental conditions
- Diagnoses must be confirmed by both the hygienist and the AI system
- Any disagreement is escalated to a licensed dentist
- Only a limited set of procedures is permitted
- All patients provide informed consent and receive full transparency

AI functions as a clinical support tool, not a replacement for professional judgment.



# Artificial Intelligence



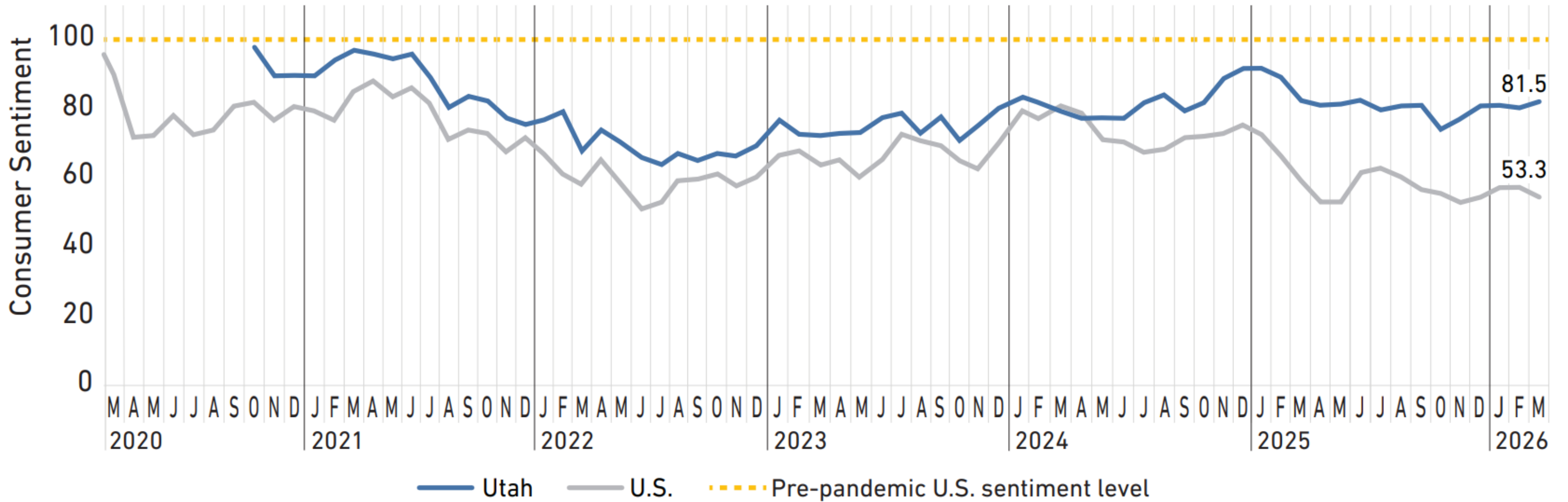
*“Over the last century, disruptive innovation has generally favored the young and the well-educated, because they can adapt to new ways of doing things. AI could be different, but I doubt it.”*

*David J. Deming*

# CONSUMER SENTIMENT INDEX

## Utah Remains Optimistic

Consumer Sentiment Index: Utah and U.S.



Utah

# Economic Outlook

March 2026

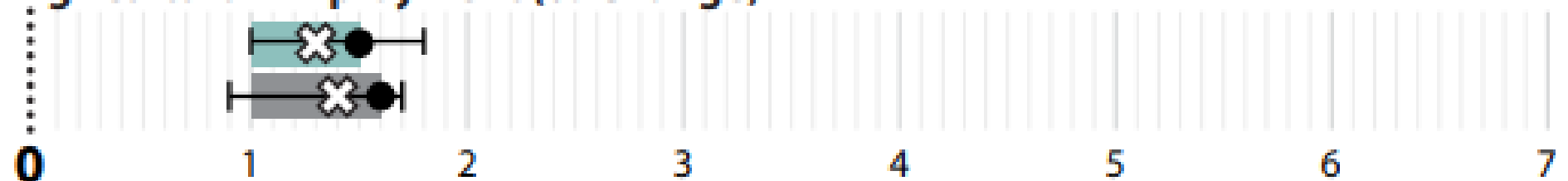
## Utah Unemployment Rate

2026: 3.7%  
2027: 3.7%



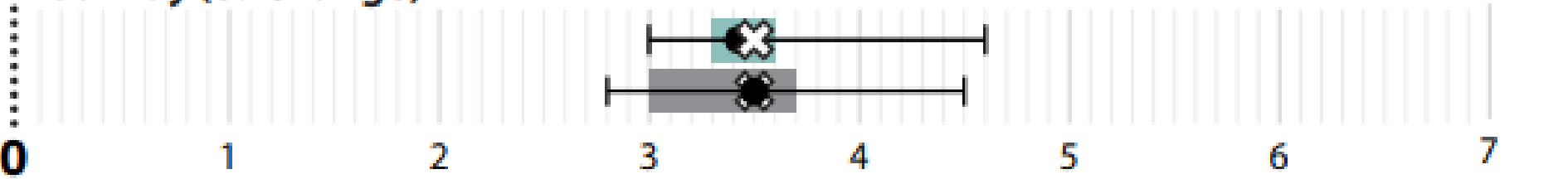
## Utah Total Non-Agricultural Employment (% Change)

2026: 1.3%  
2027: 1.4%



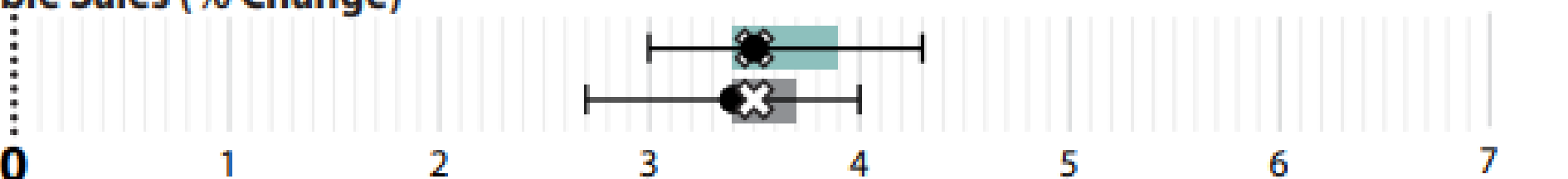
## Utah Average Annual Pay (% Change)

2026: 3.5%  
2027: 3.5%



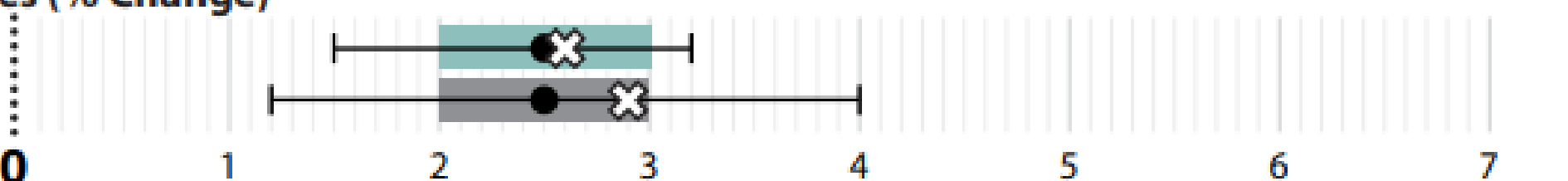
## Utah Total Taxable Sales (% Change)

2026: 3.5%  
2027: 3.5%



## Utah Home Prices (% Change)

2026: 2.6%  
2027: 2.9%



Central Tendency (Middle 50% of Projections)
 
✕ Council Point Forecast
 
|—| Range of Point Projections
 
  
 December 2025 Point Forecast

# Questions?

# THANK YOU

- Henry Pernichele
- 385 - 584 - 6992
- [hpernichele@utah .gov](mailto:hpernichele@utah.gov)
- [Jobs .utah .gov](http://Jobs.utah.gov)