

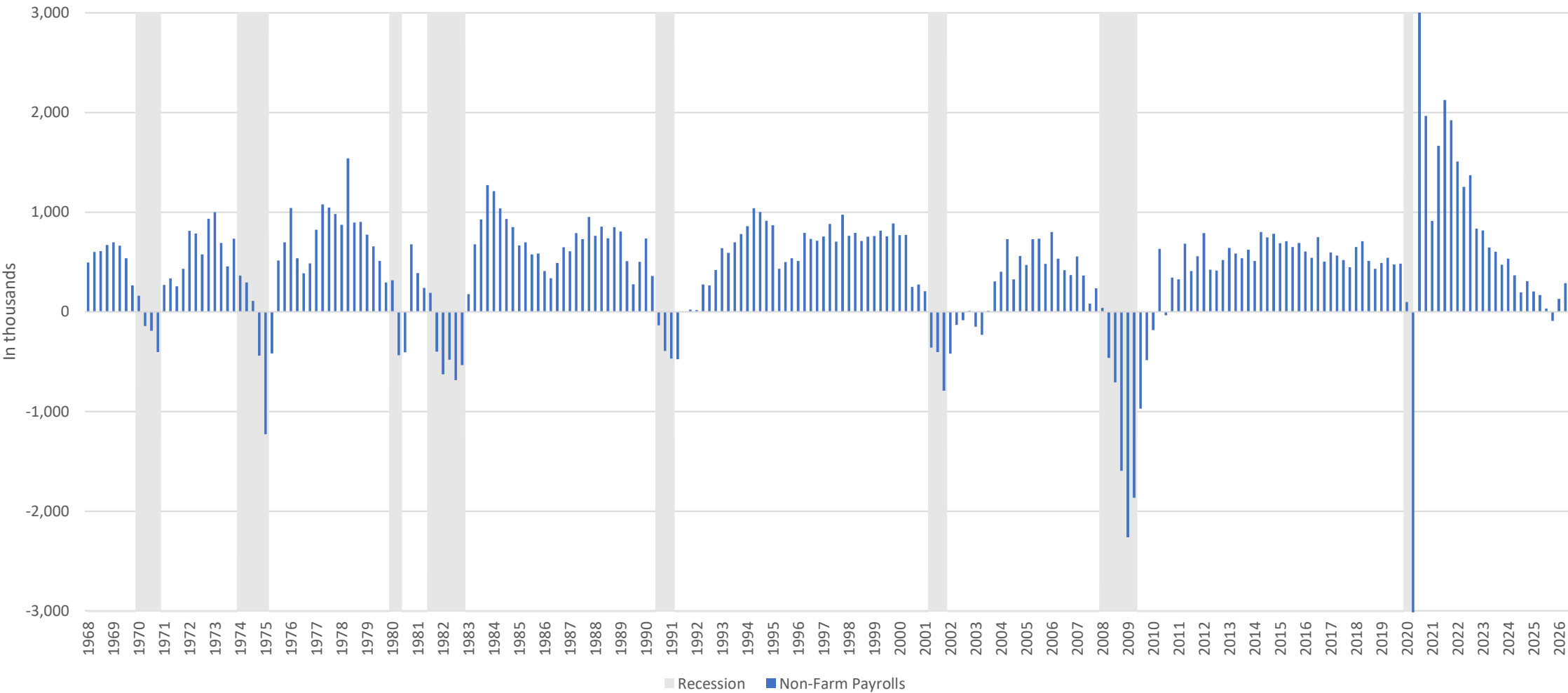
Economic Update: AGNC 8.19.26

By Nathan Perry, PhD.: Professor of Economics, Davis School of Business,
Colorado Mesa University

National Themes

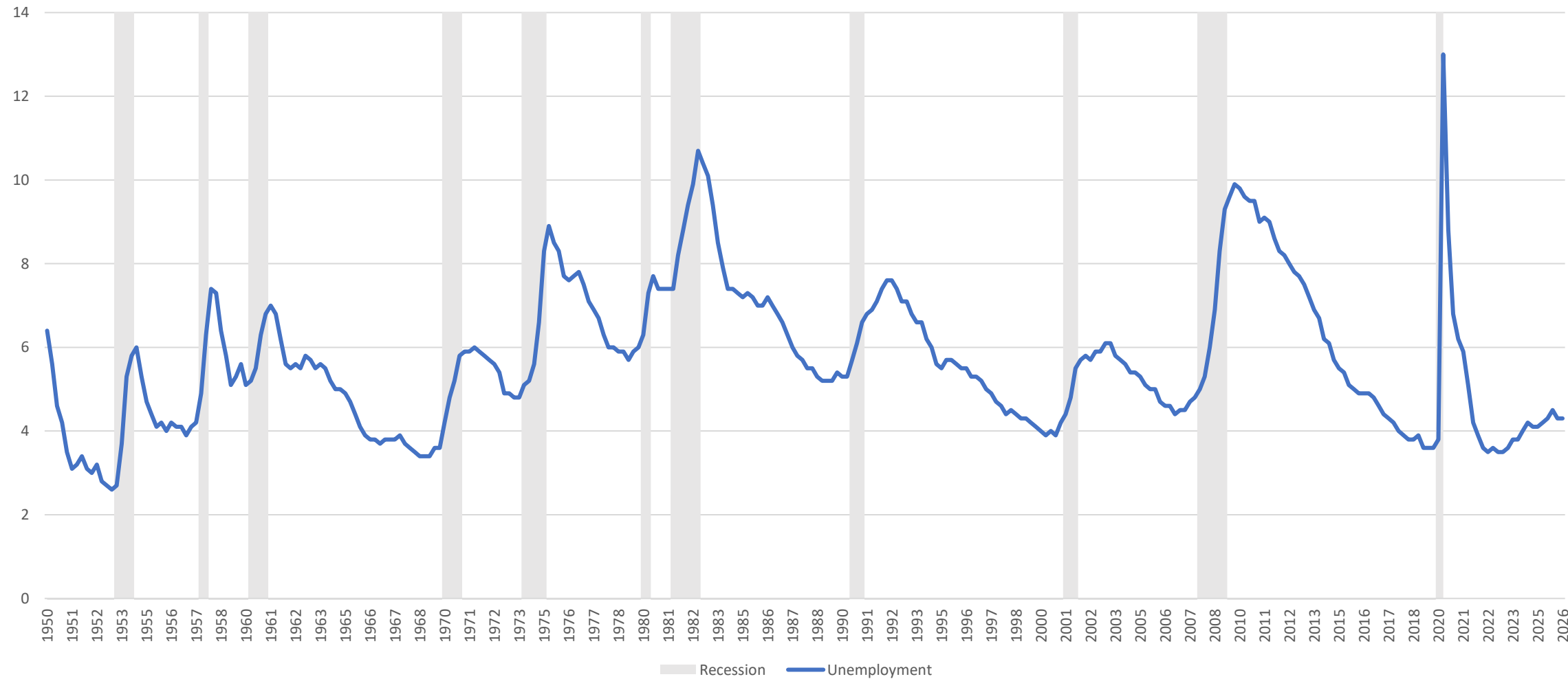
- 1) Softening labor market: Hiring has stalled (three month average near zero, July negative), but a shrinking labor force keeps unemployment low at 4.1%
- 2) Oil and geopolitics key near term swing factor: WTI spiked past \$100 this spring and drove inflation to 4.2%; the retreat to \$80 is now unwinding it
- 3) Inflation back up, Fed boxed in. The Fed has held at 3.6% all year; the 10 year has risen half a point since October.
- 4) The 2026 puzzle: GDP is tracking 4% while hiring is flat and sentiment sits near record lows, growth without hiring.
- 5) Housing is still a major macro and generational problem: mortgages up to 6.7%, single family prices at record highs while the condo segment slumps

Non-Farm Payrolls



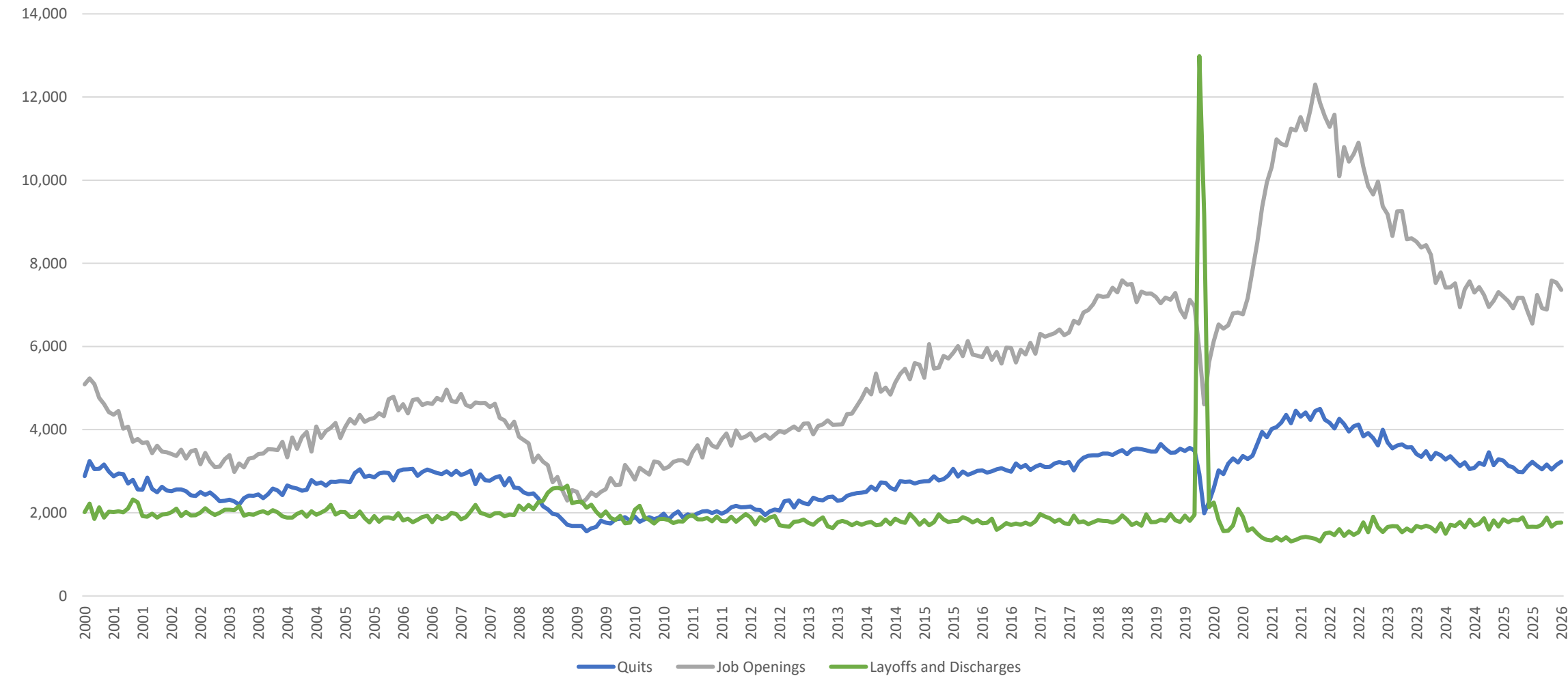
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, nonfarm payrolls, monthly through July 2026 (via FRED).

Unemployment Rate



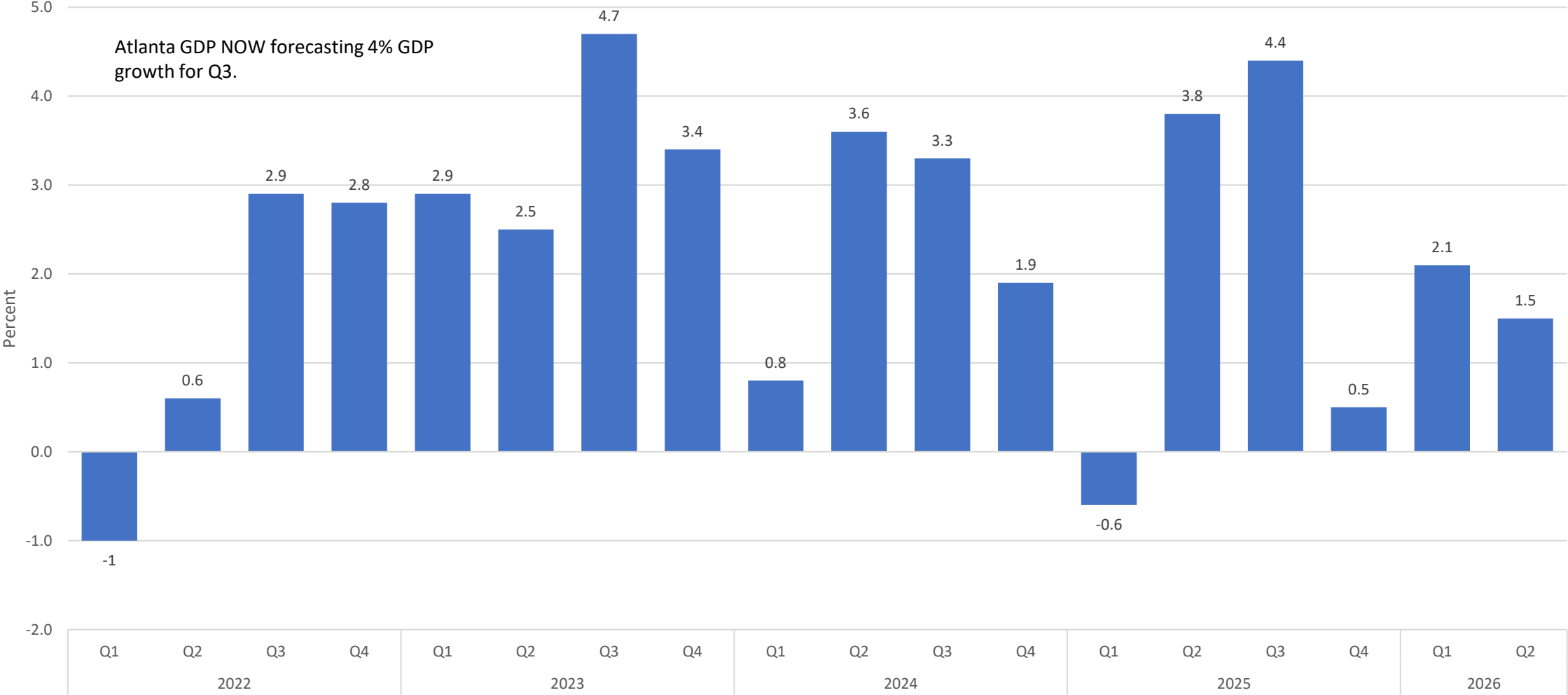
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment rate, quarterly averages through Q2 2026 (via FRED).

Job Openings and Quits (JOLTS)



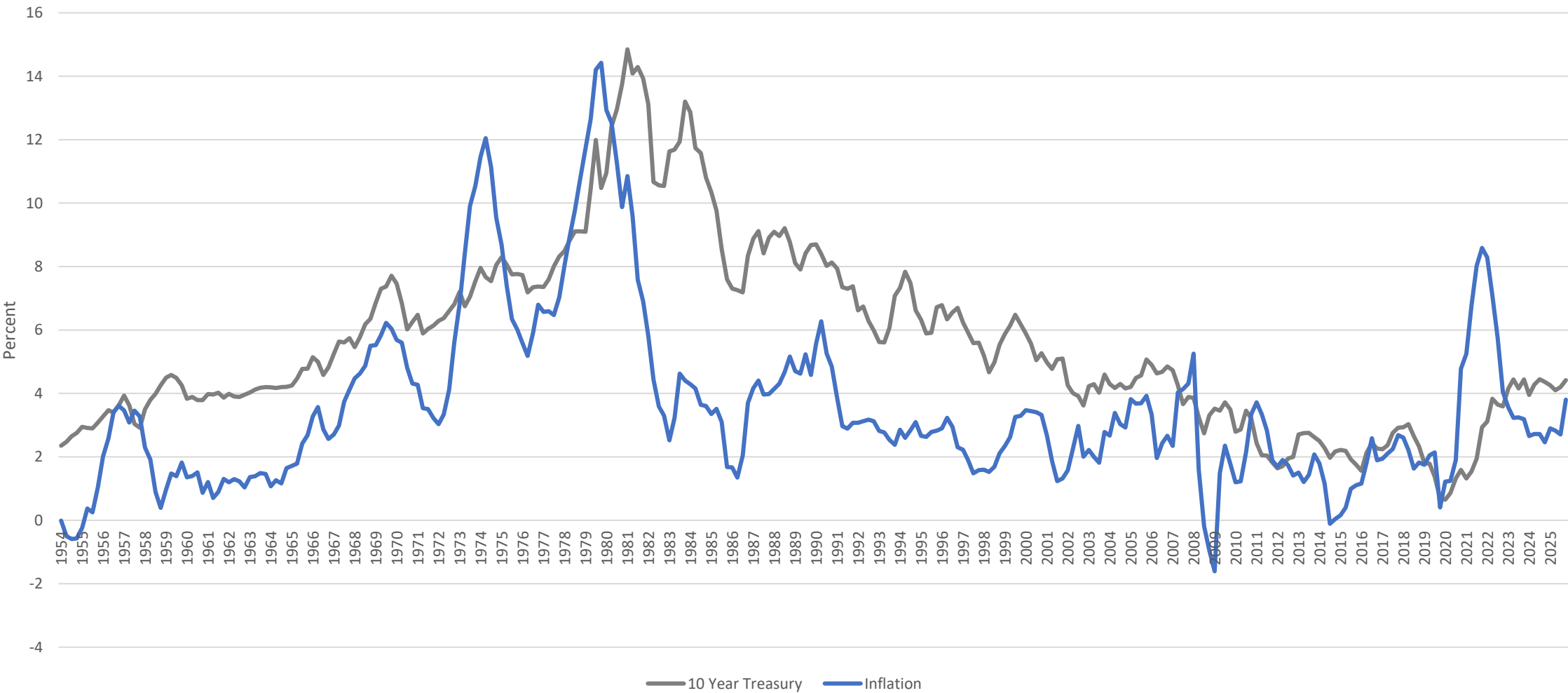
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, through June 2026 (via FRED).

National GDP



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, real GDP; Atlanta Fed GDPNow as of August 18, 2026.

Inflation and the 10 Year Treasury



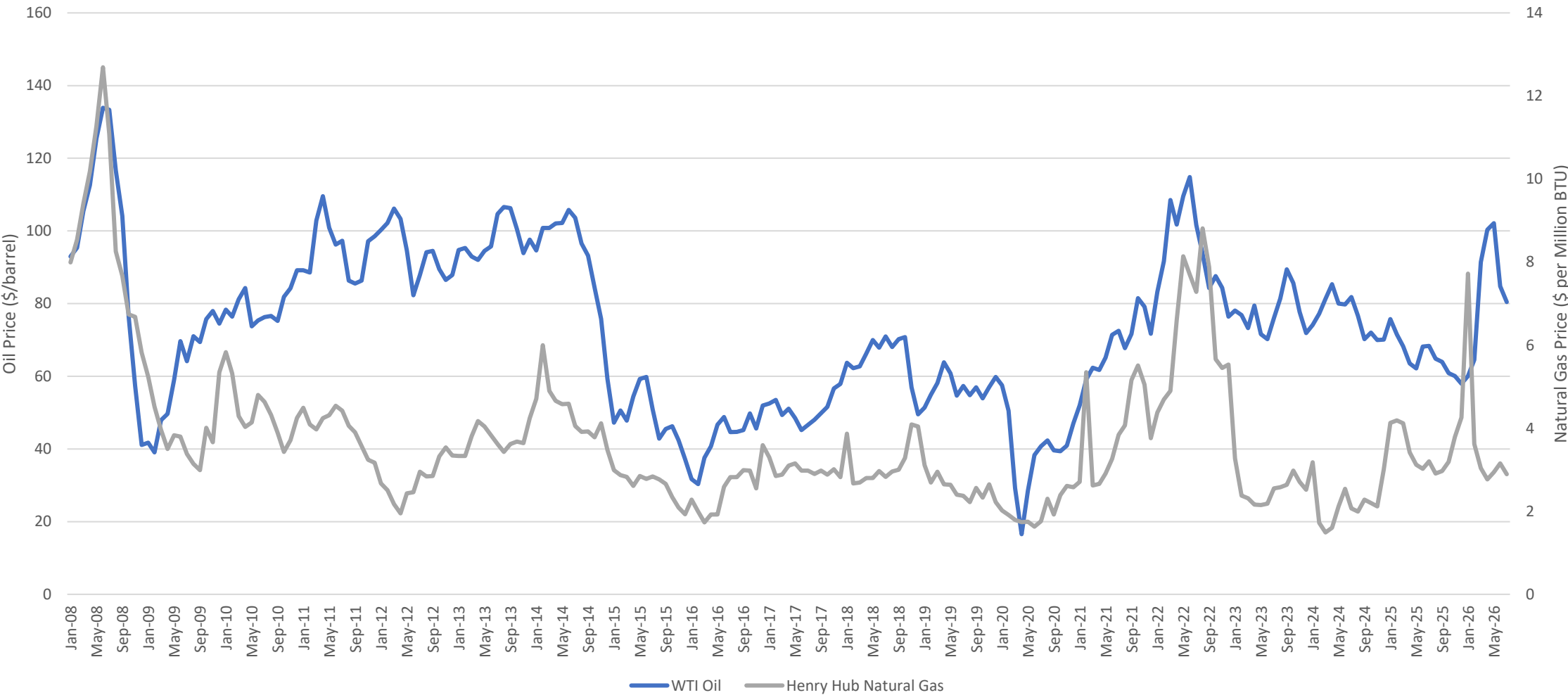
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI and Federal Reserve, quarterly through Q2 2026 (via FRED).

What's Driving Inflation?

Headline 3.4%, core 2.5%: this is an oil story

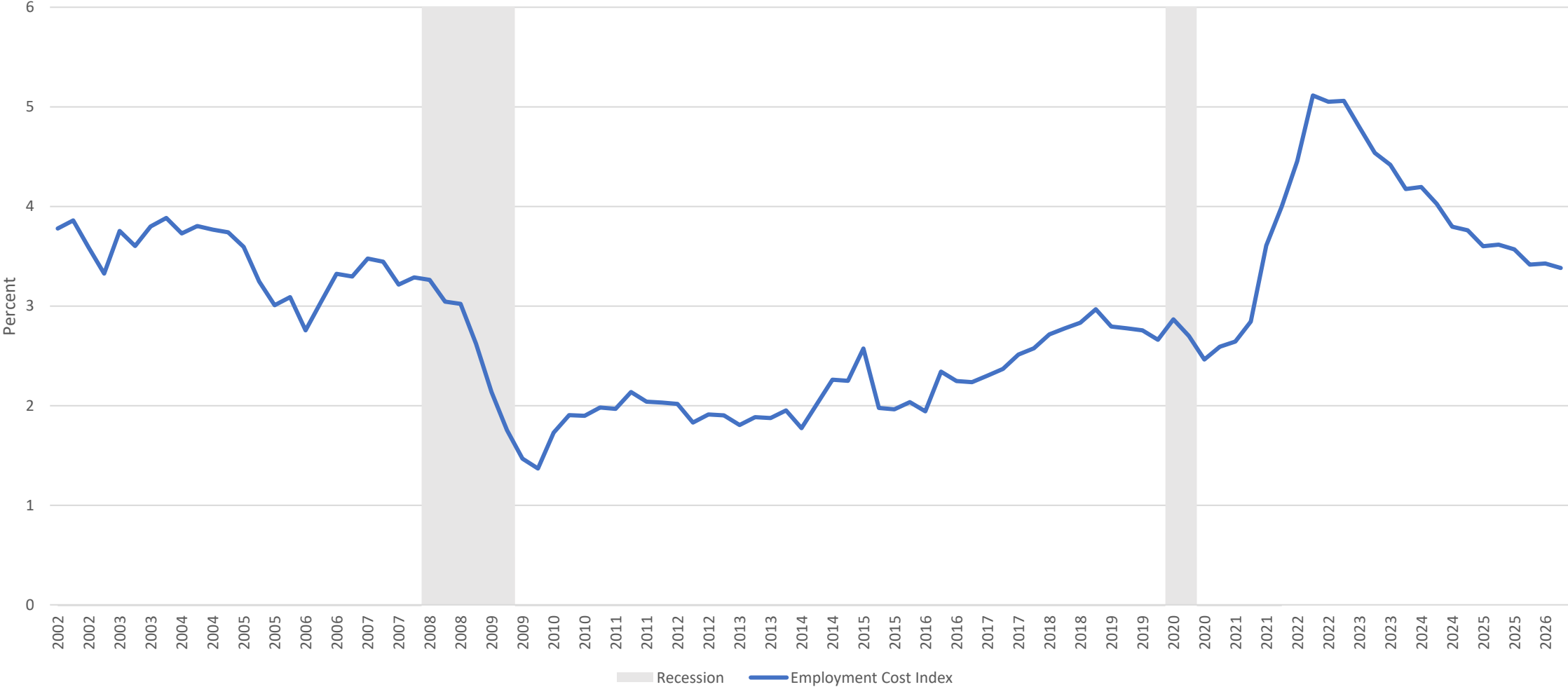
- **Gasoline up 24.6% over the year**, the echo of WTI passing \$100 in April and May, the single biggest driver
- **Airline fares up 25.5%**, the jet fuel passthrough from the same spike
- **Shelter up just 3.2%**, back near its historical norm after driving inflation in 2023 and 2024
- **Food is moderate:** groceries up 2.7%, restaurants 3.4%; used vehicles and auto insurance are falling
- **The cause is already unwinding:** energy fell 1.5% in July alone as oil retreated to about \$80

Oil/Gas Prices



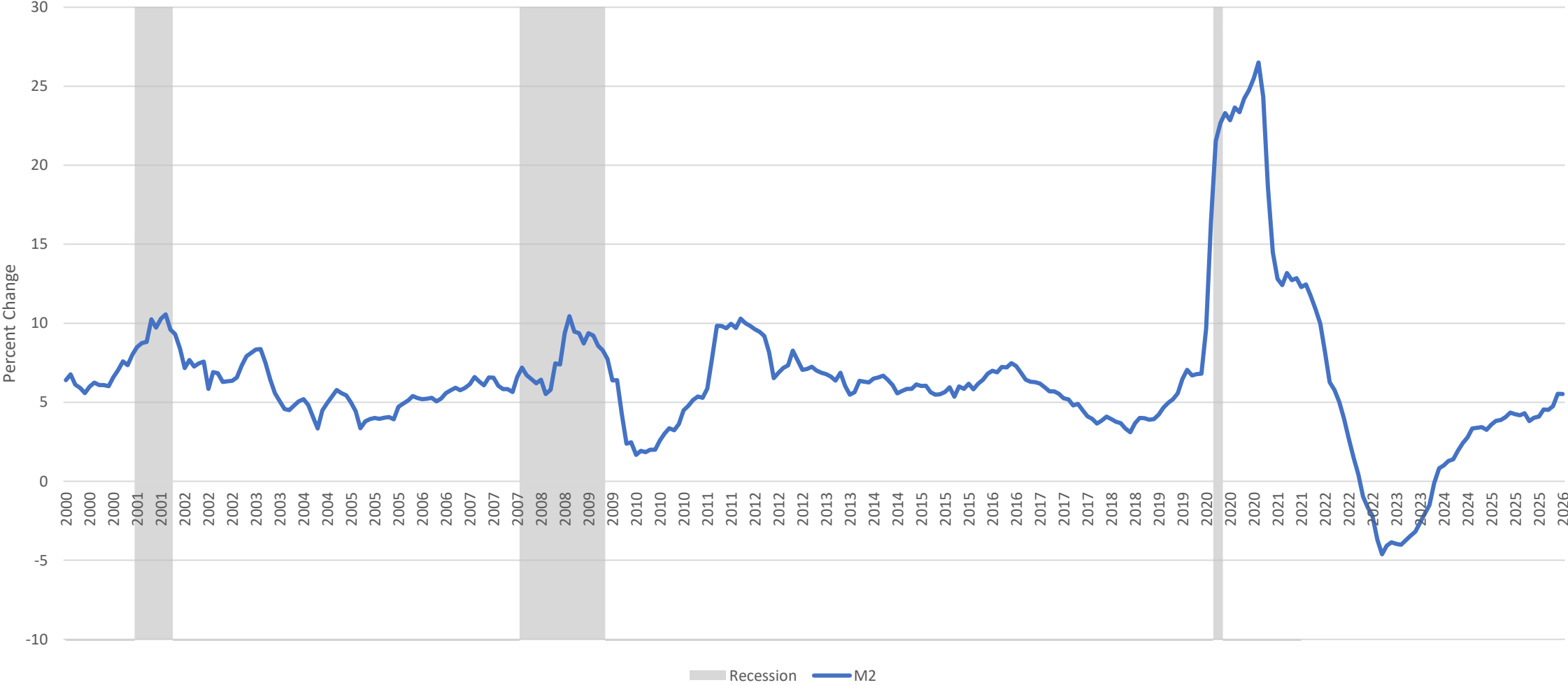
Source: FRED, WTI spot and Henry Hub monthly averages through July 2026.

Employment Cost Index



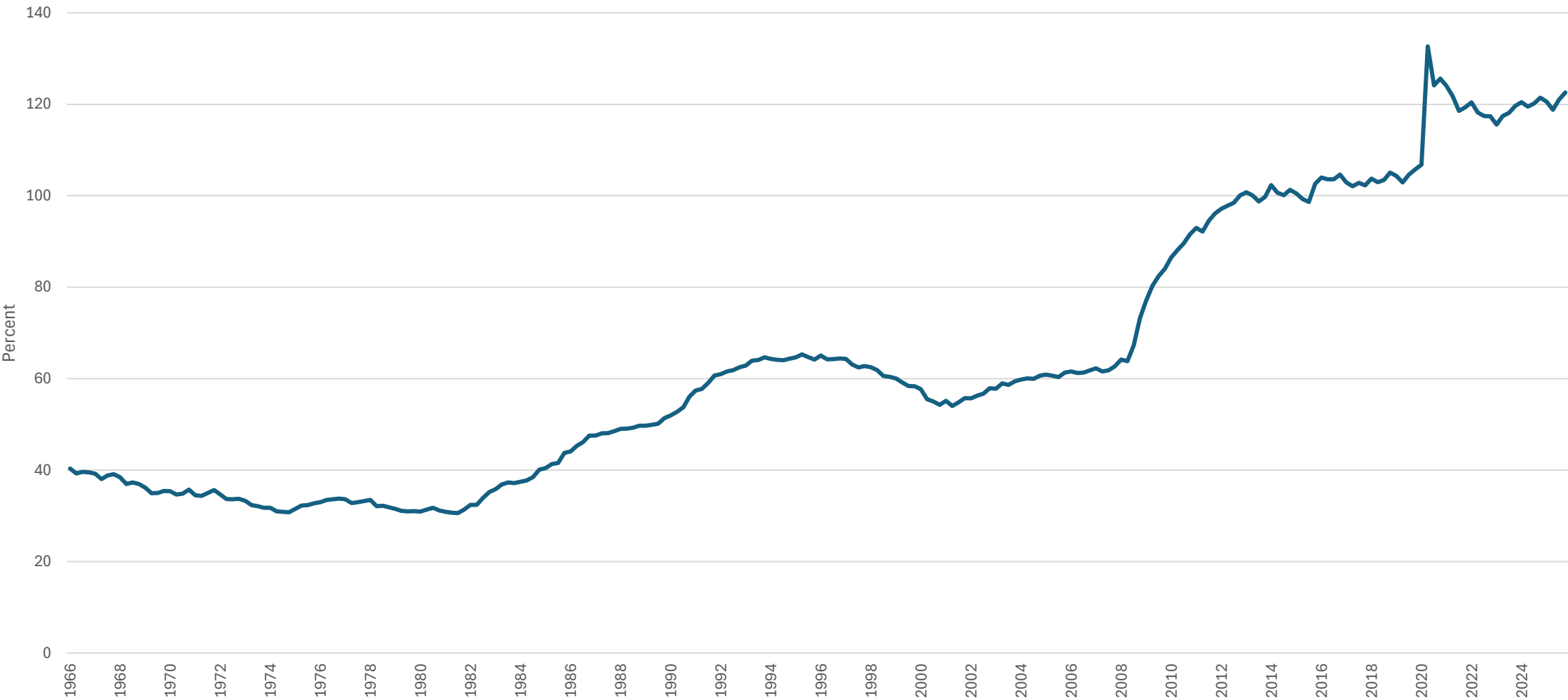
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Cost Index (via FRED).

Change in M2



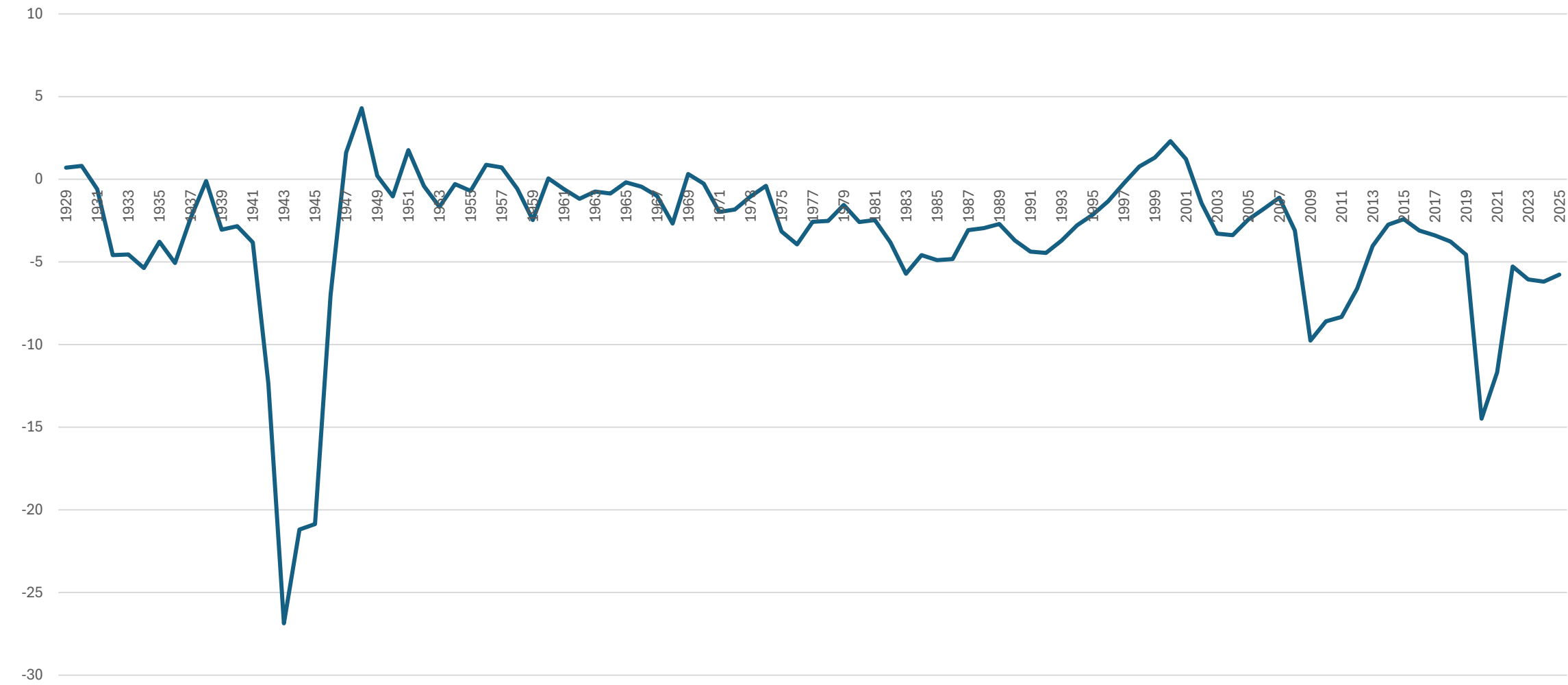
Source: Federal Reserve Board, M2 money stock (via FRED).

Debt/GDP



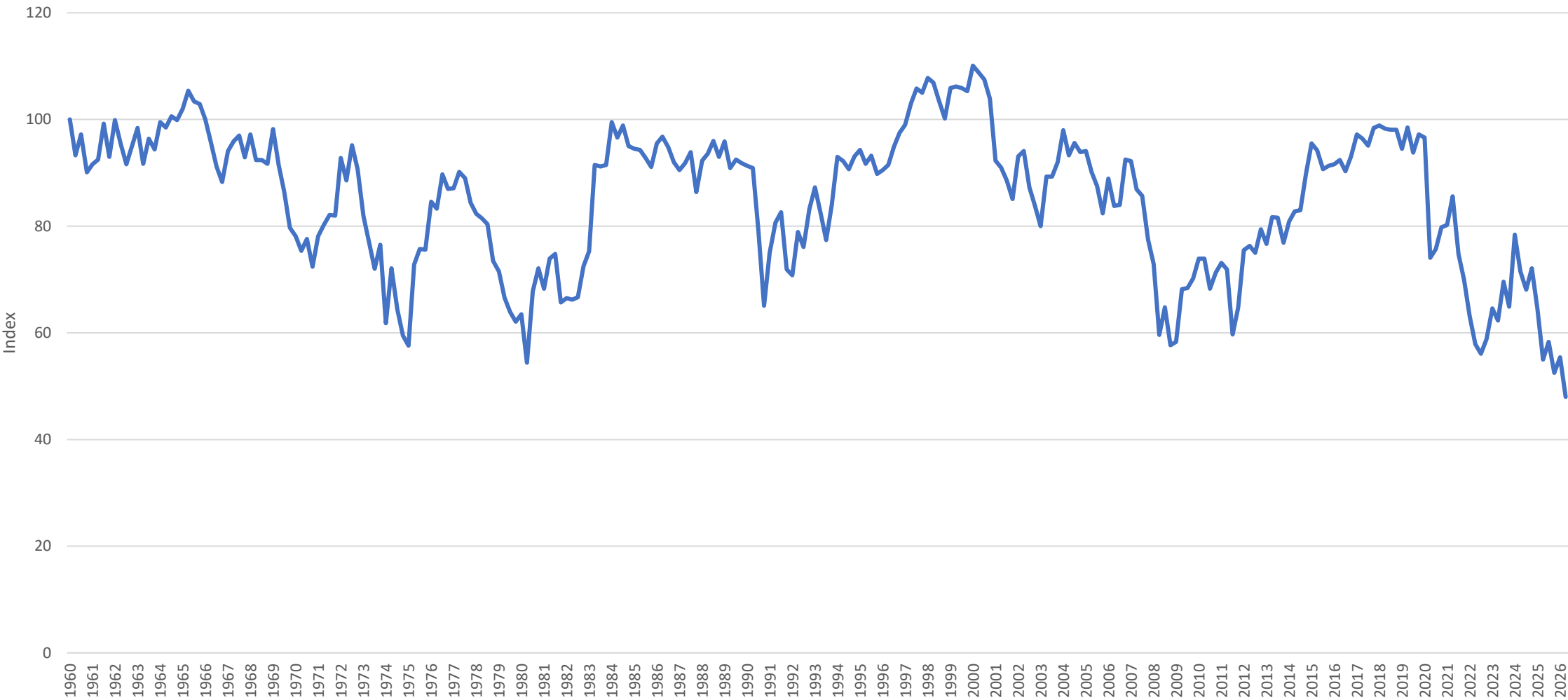
Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, federal debt as a share of GDP.

Deficit/GDP



Source: Office of Management and Budget, federal surplus or deficit as a share of GDP (via FRED).

National Consumer Confidence (U of Mich)



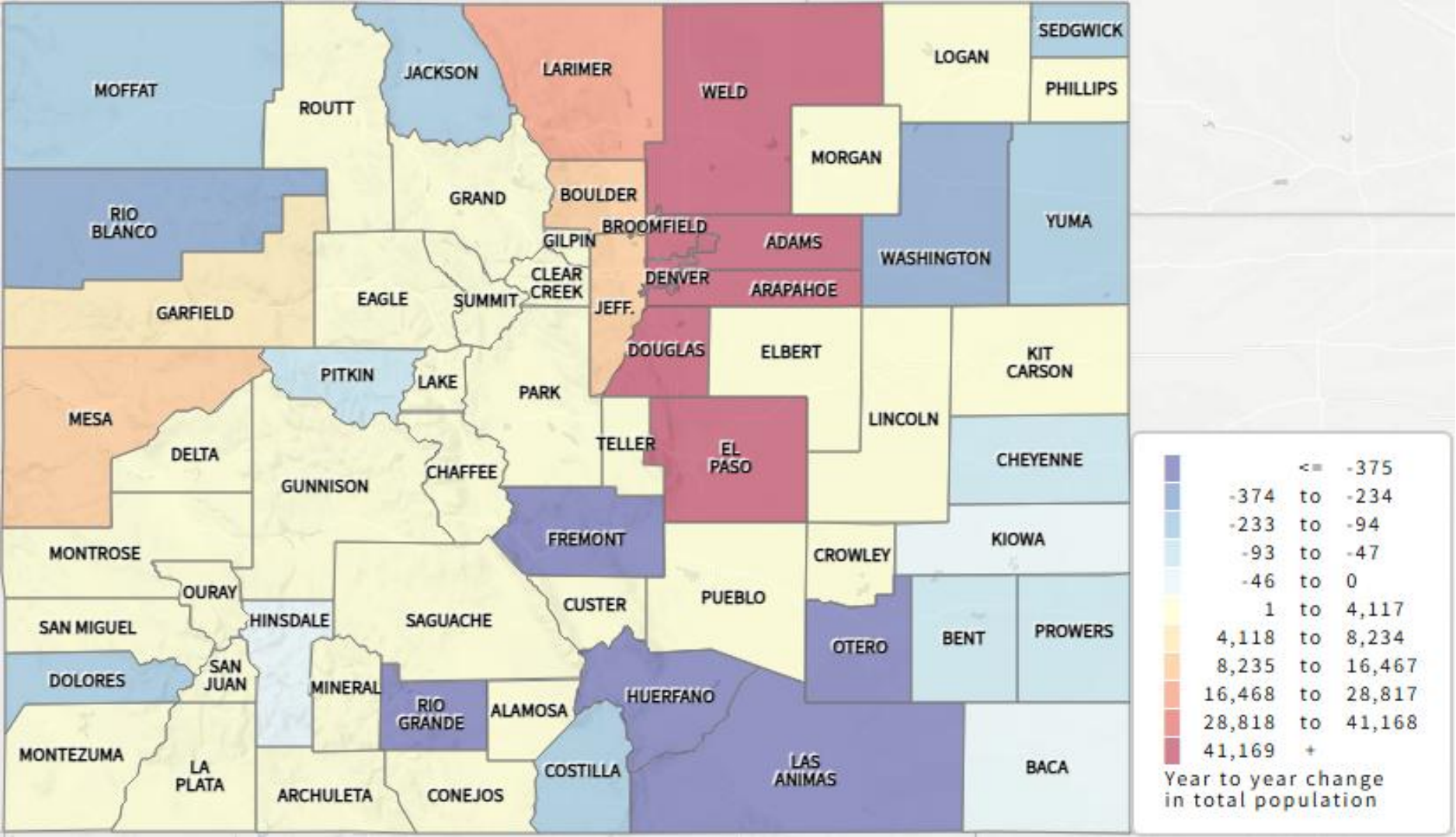
Source: University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers, quarterly through Q2 2026 (via FRED).

Population Estimates 2025-2050

	Mesa	Montrose	Delta	Garfield	Rio Blanco	Moffat	Routt
2025	162,593	45,102	32,776	63,220	6,602	13,067	25,229
2030	167,904	46,389	33,657	65,876	6,490	13,014	25,887
2035	175,980	48,324	34,769	70,684	6,255	13,021	26,996
2040	181,530	49,824	35,665	75,562	6,028	13,043	27,878
2045	185,292	50,878	36,440	79,987	5,792	13,041	28,459
2050	188,565	51,573	37,200	83,161	5,540	12,989	28,775
Change	+16%	+14%	+13%	+32%	-16%	-1%	+14%

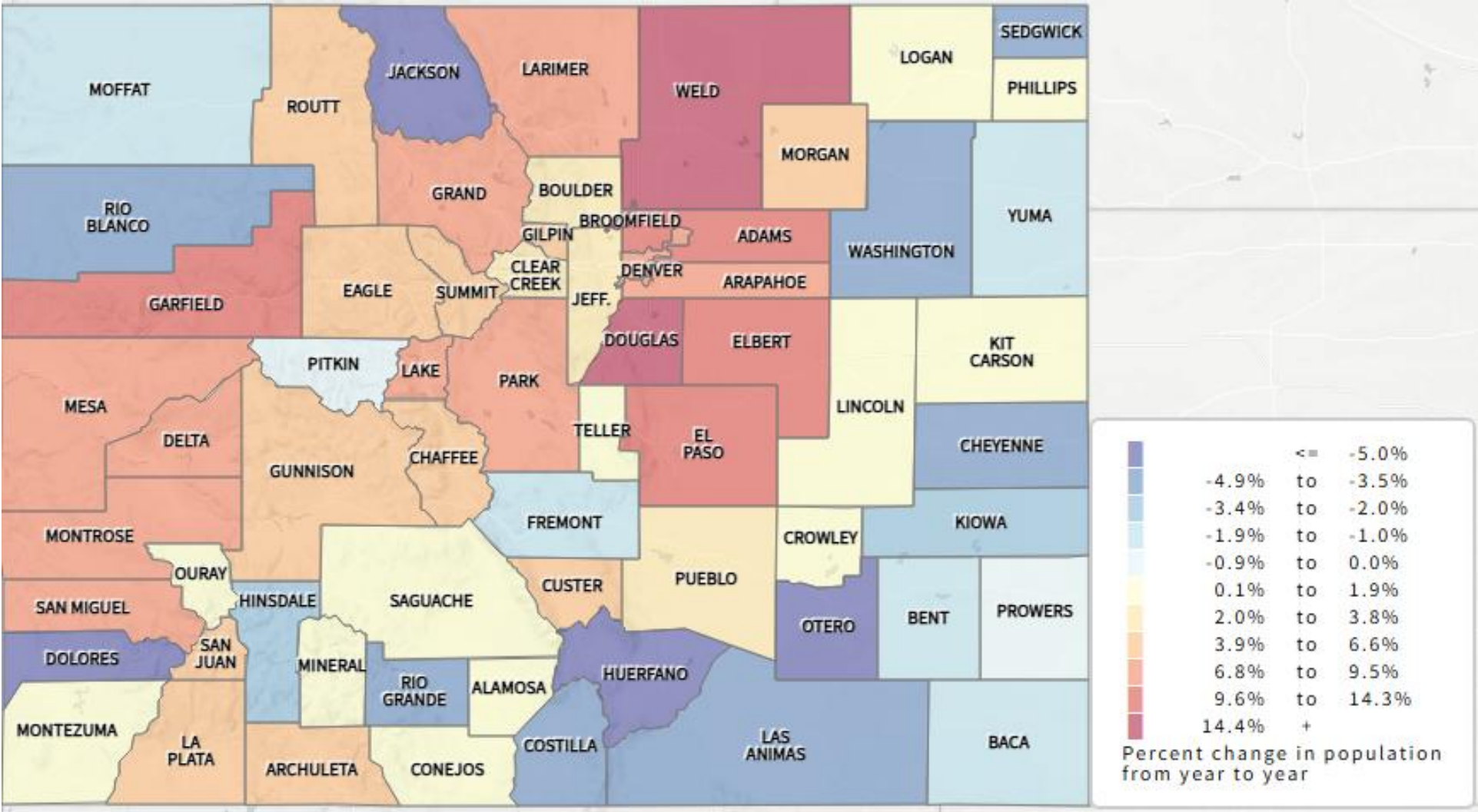
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2024 population forecasts (prepared October 2025). Change is 2025 to 2050.

Total Population Change 2024-2034



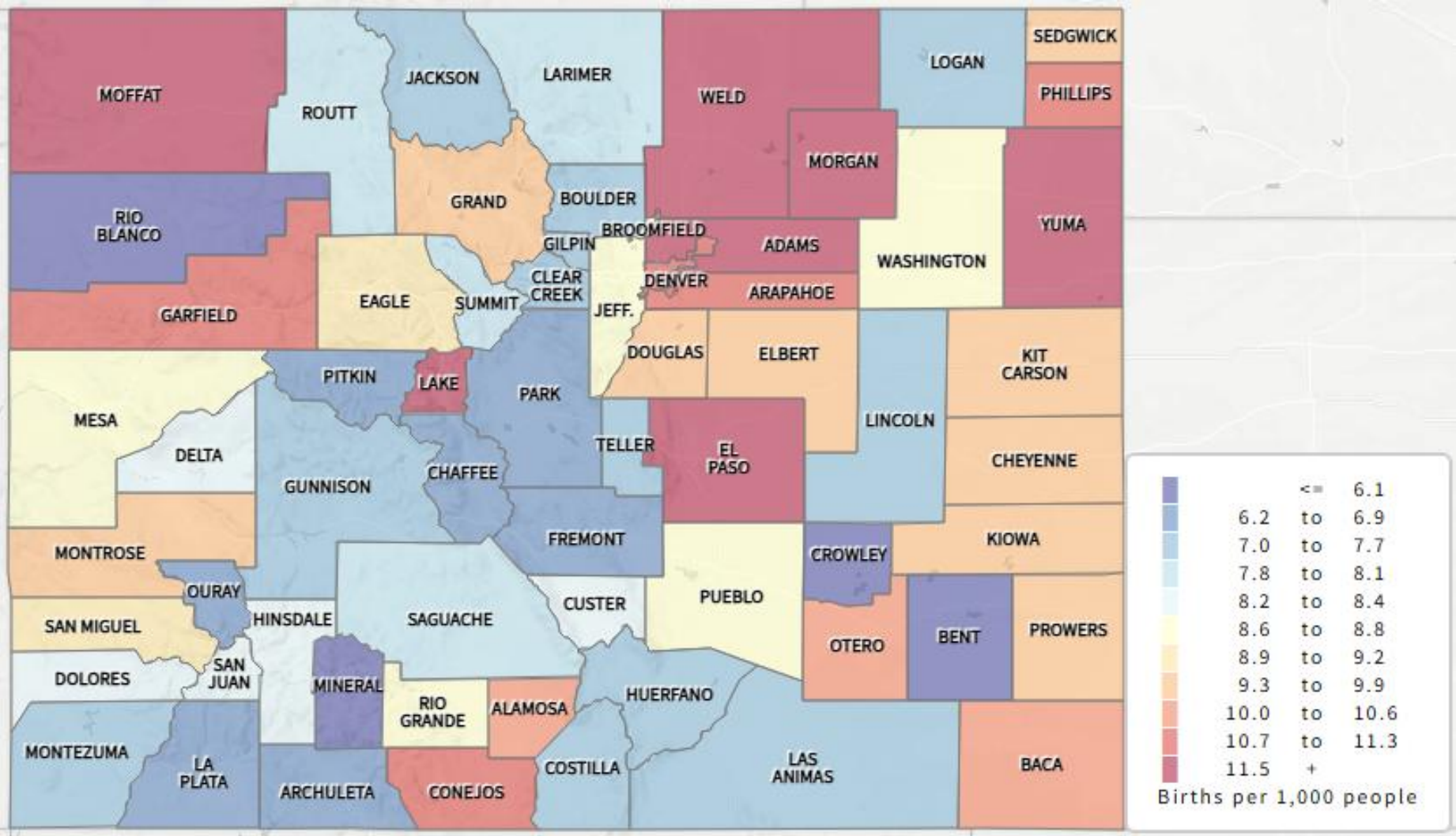
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2024 forecasts.

Percent Population Change 2024-2034



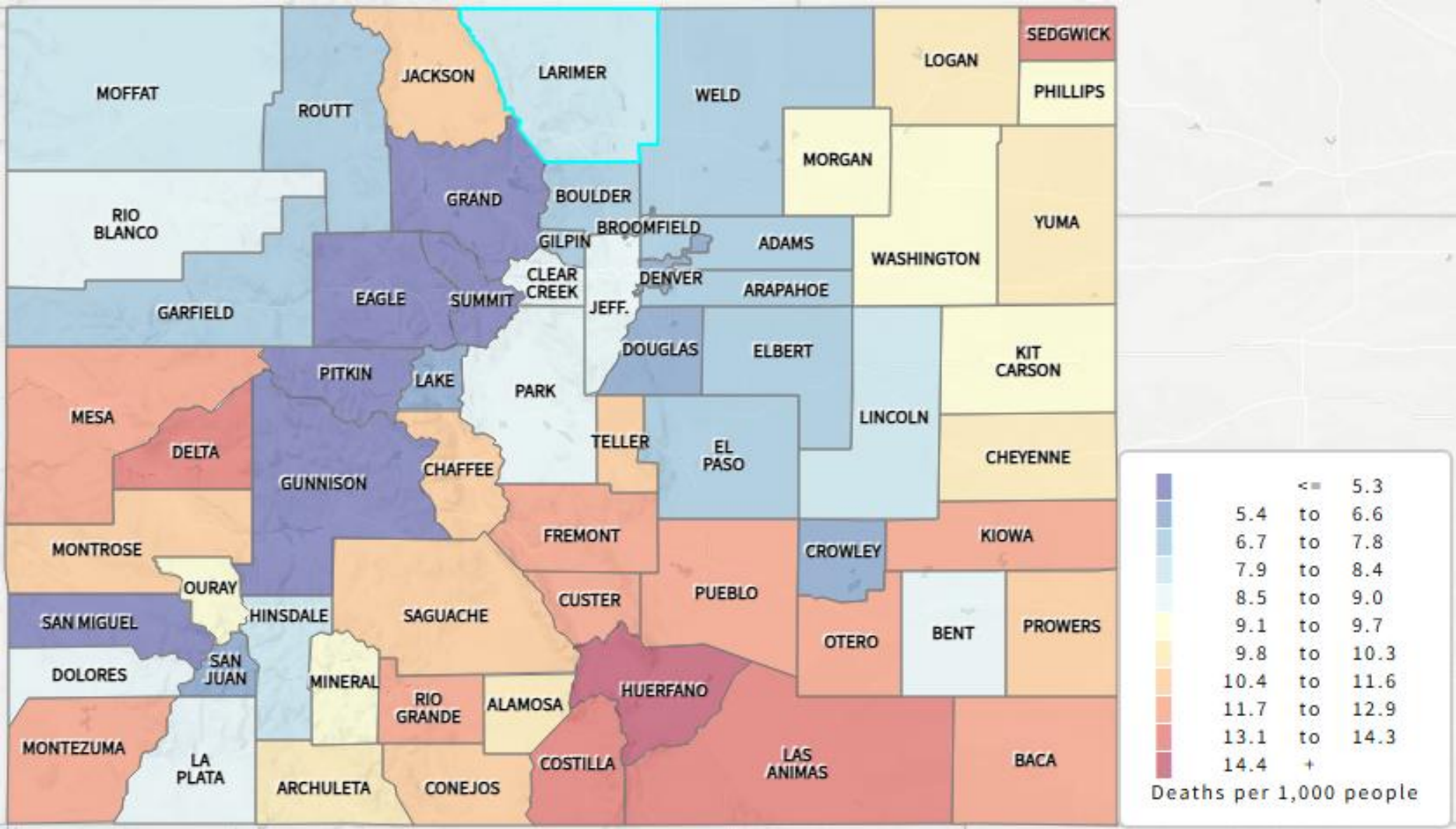
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2024 forecasts.

Birth Rate 2024-2034



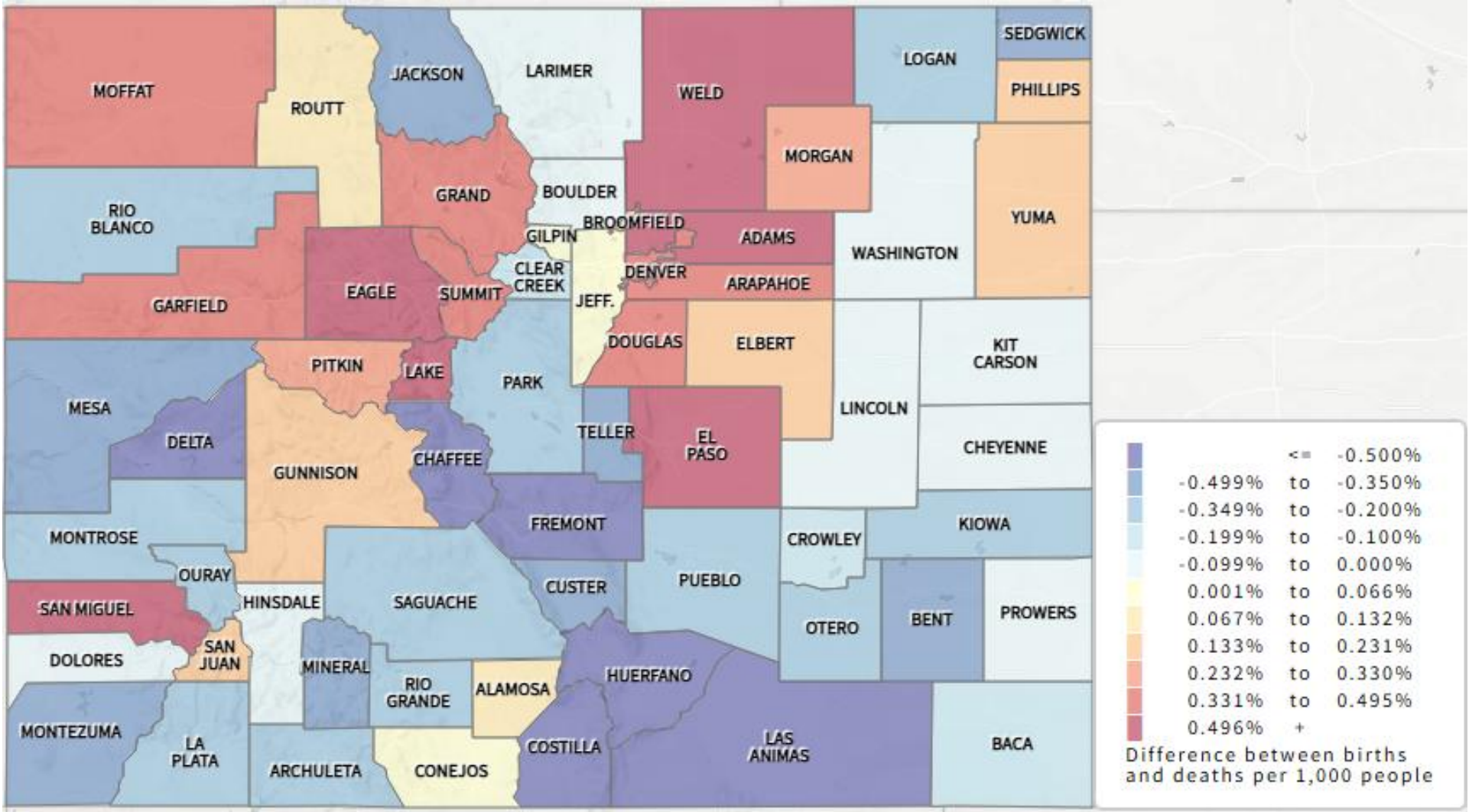
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2024 forecasts.

Death Rate 2024-2034



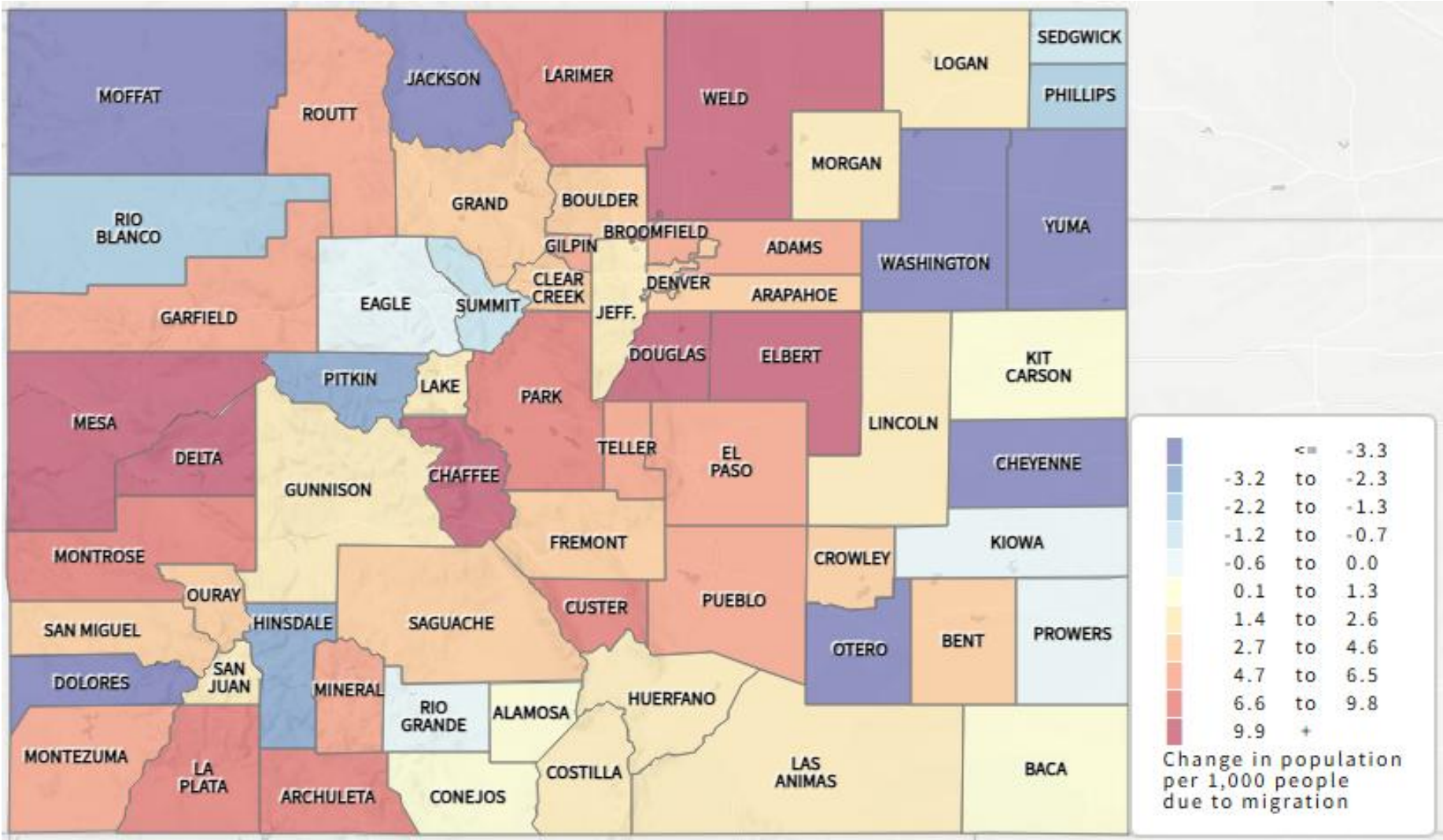
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2024 forecasts.

Rate of Natural Increase 2024-2034



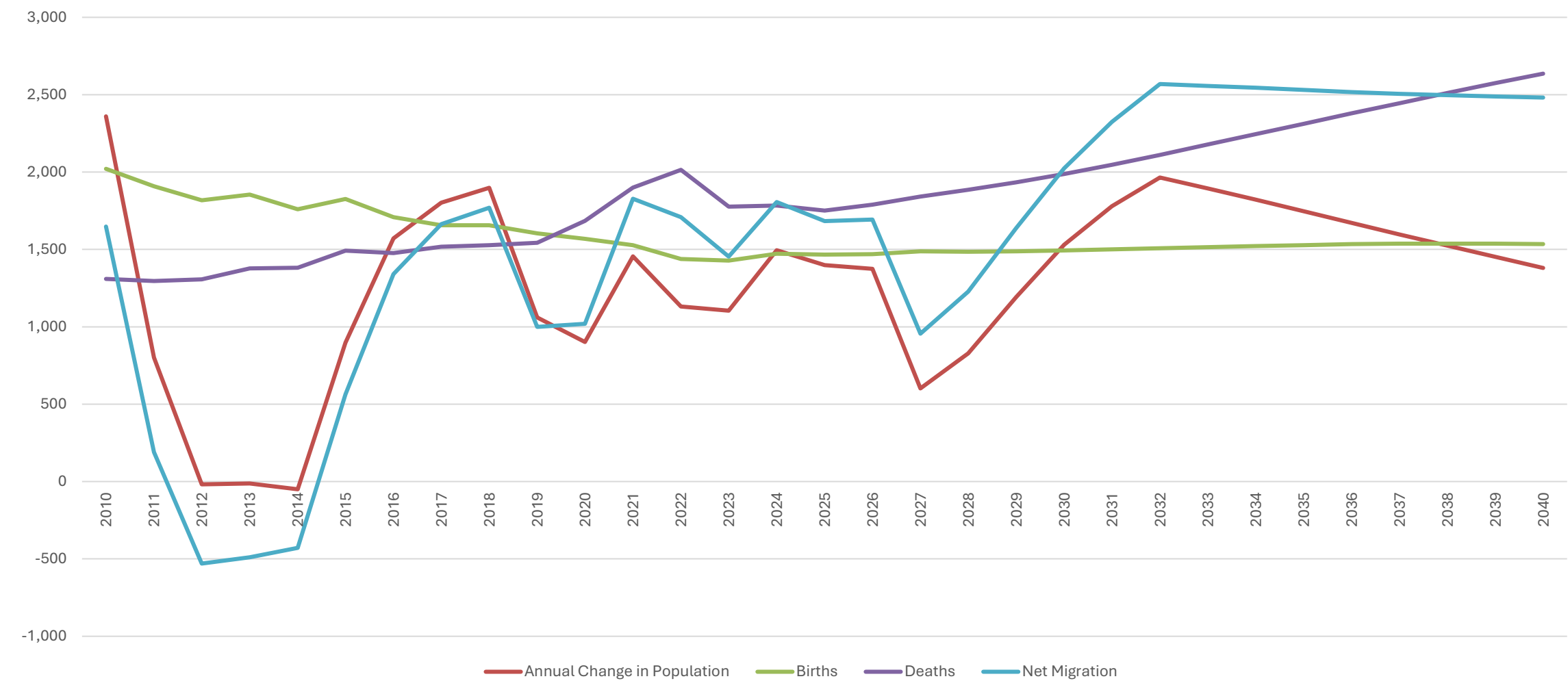
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2024 forecasts.

Migration Rate 2024-2034



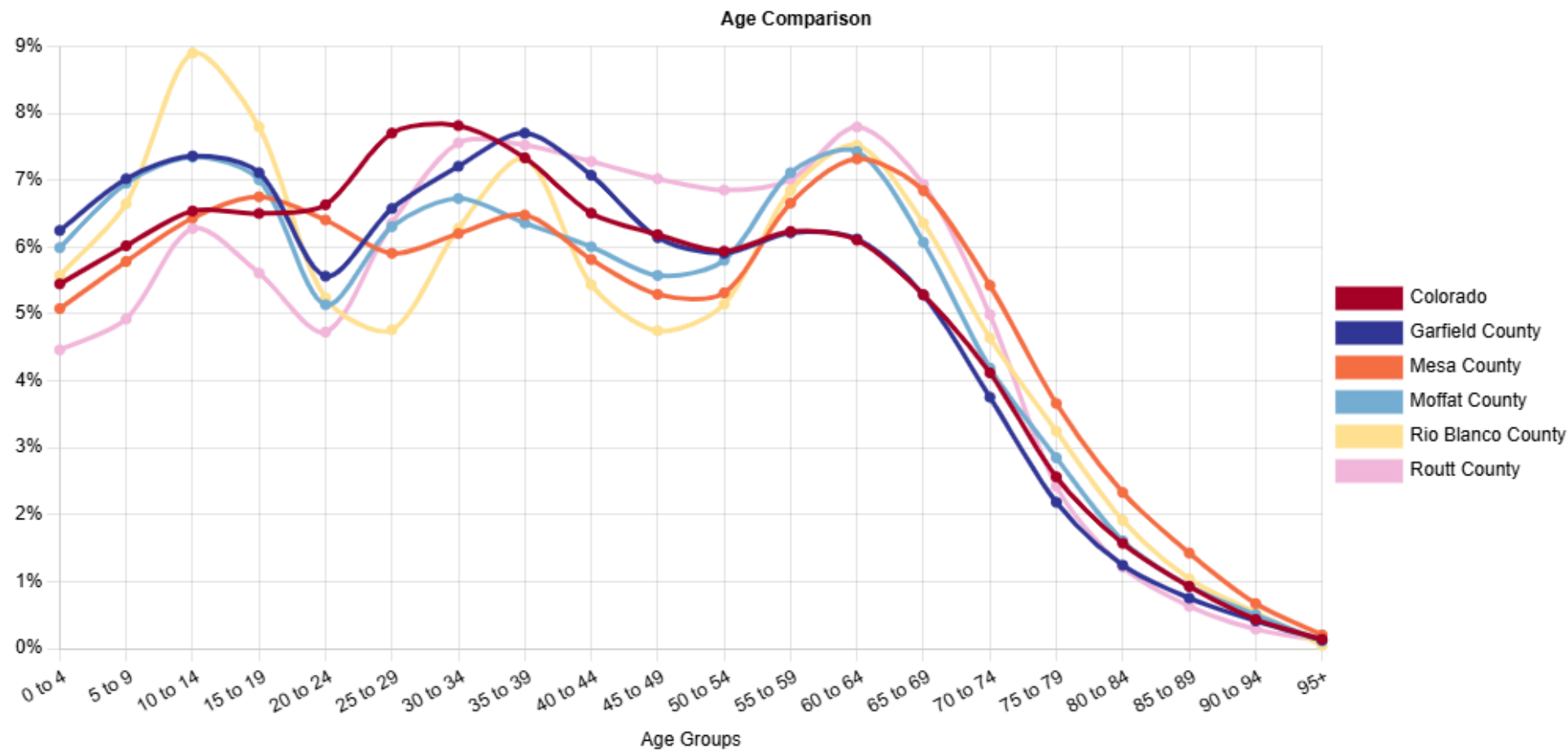
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2024 forecasts.

AGNC Combined Components of Change



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, components of change, Vintage 2024.

Age Distribution

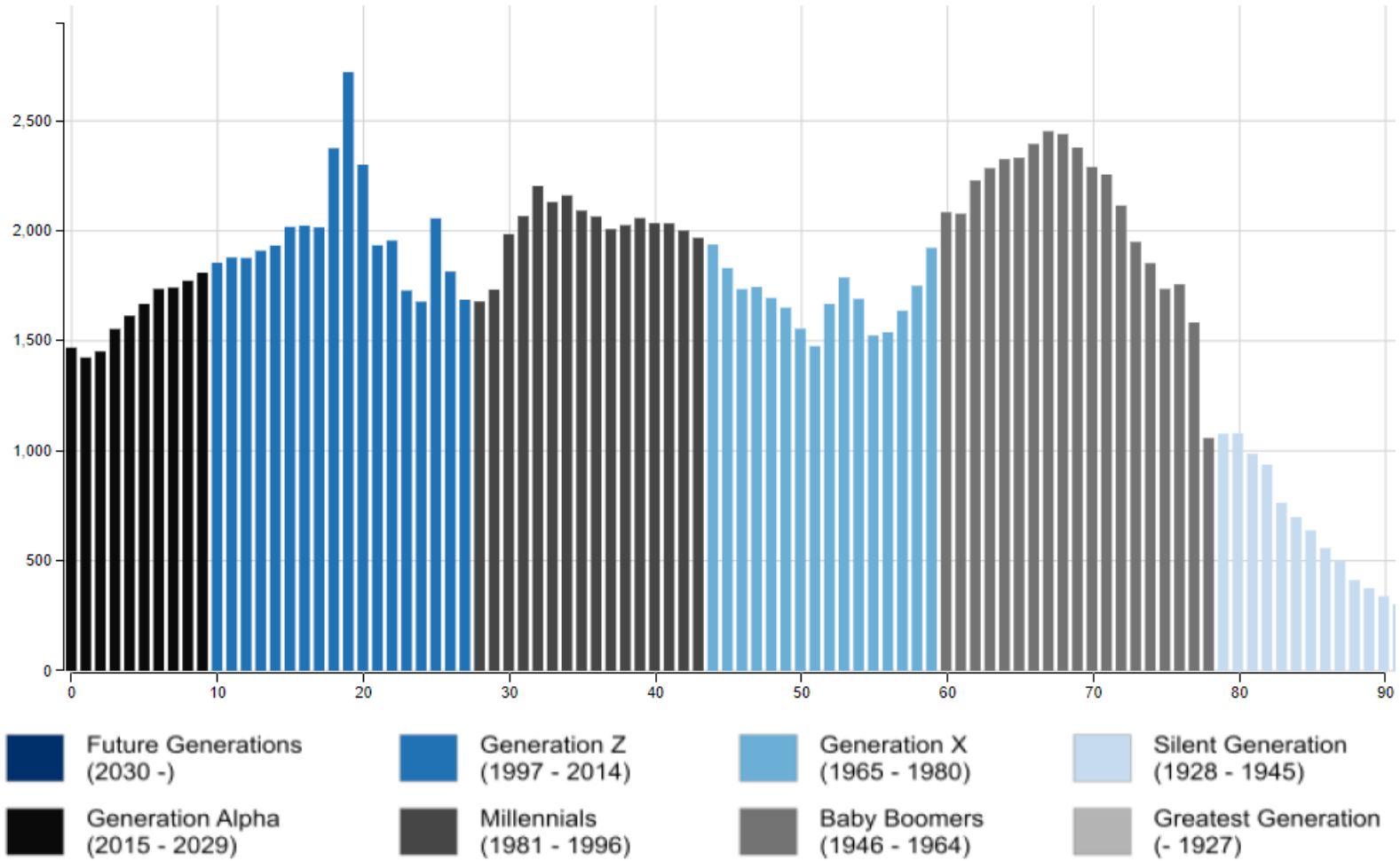


Source: US Census Bureau 2020 DHC, Visualization by Colorado State Demography Office. Print date: August 18, 2026

Mesa Age Distribution by Generation

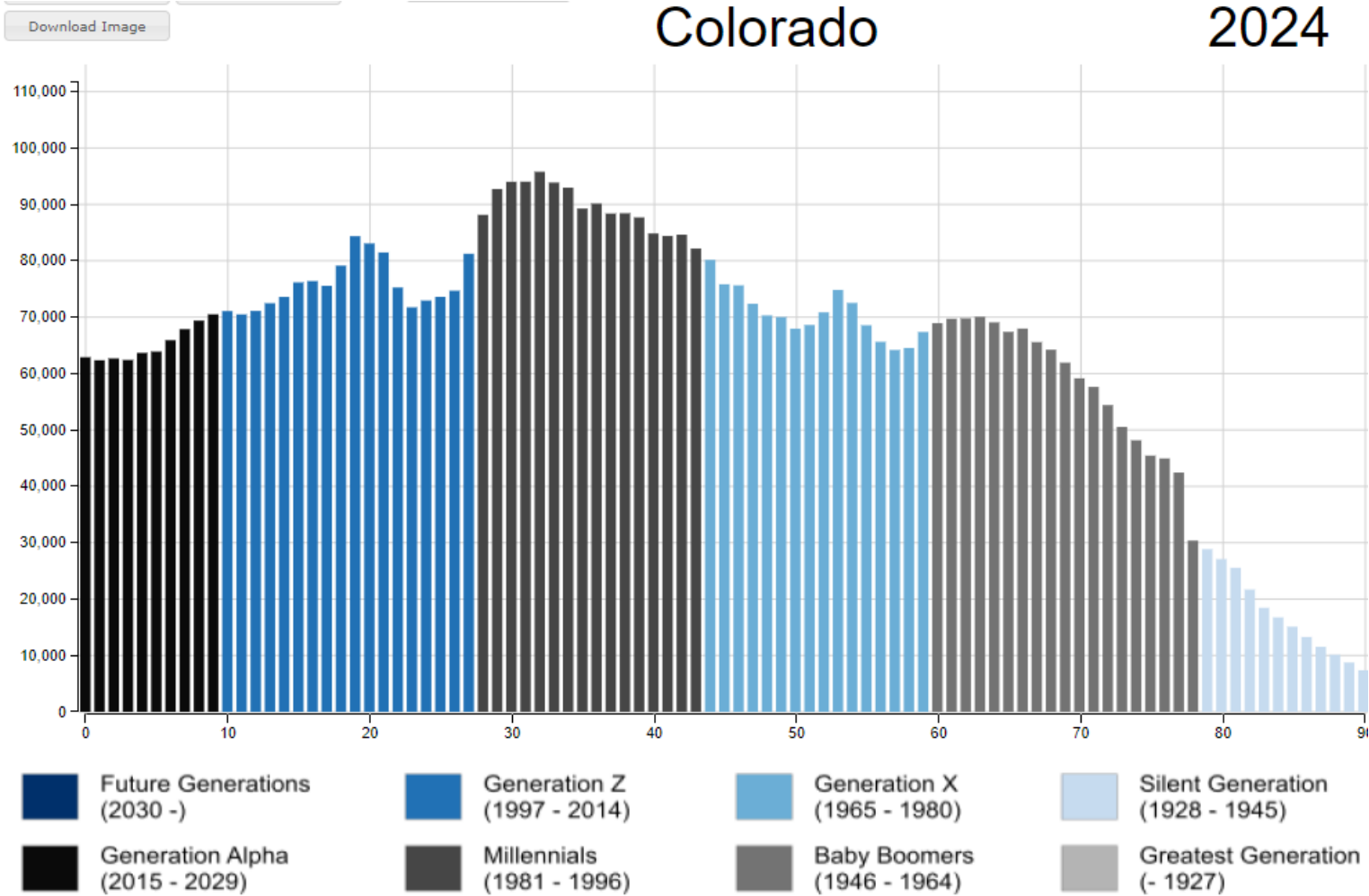
Mesa County2024

Download Image



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2023 estimates

Colorado Age Distribution by Generation



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2023 estimates

Cohort Share of County Population

County	0-4	5-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Mesa	4.7%	15.2%	8.8%	25.2%	22.3%	23.8%
Garfield	5.9%	17.9%	8.0%	28.7%	23.7%	15.9%
Moffat	5.4%	19.1%	8.7%	26.1%	23.6%	17.1%
Rio Blanco	4.5%	19.5%	9.1%	26.7%	21.6%	18.6%
Routt	4.0%	13.9%	5.8%	30.1%	26.5%	19.7%
AGNC Region	4.9%	16.0%	8.4%	26.5%	23.1%	21.1%

Source: Colorado State Demography Office and U.S. Census Bureau ACS.

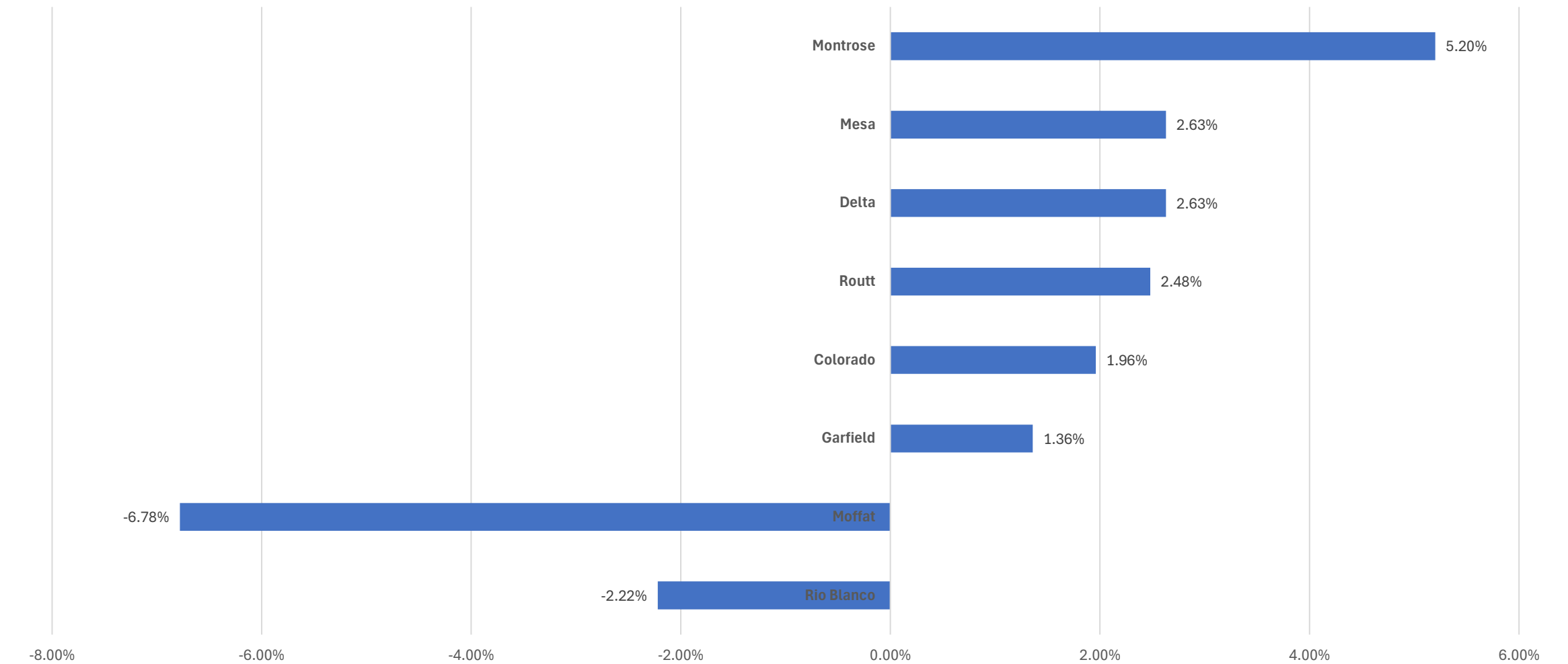
Colorado Economic Overview

- **Economy:** Colorado was a top 5 state economy from 2009 to 2024 (5th fastest real GDP growth) but has slipped to the middle of the pack. 2025 added just 12,500 jobs; the 2026 forecast is 0.6% growth, about 17,500 jobs, well below the long run average. (CU Leeds Outlook, Dec 2025)
- **Population:** Passed 6 million in 2025, but growth of 0.4% was the slowest since 1989. Colorado lost about 12,000 residents to other states, its first domestic outflow in decades. (State Demography Office; Census)
- **Migration:** International arrivals collapsed from more than 50,000 a year to roughly 15,000, removing a key source of labor force growth. (Census Bureau)
- **Budget:** The legislature closed a nearly \$1.5 billion gap this session. The June forecast improved: revenue growing 8.9%, a 13.6% reserve, and small TABOR refunds returning in FY 2026-27, though pressure returns in FY 2027-28. (Legislative Council Staff, June 2026)

Colorado Economic Overview

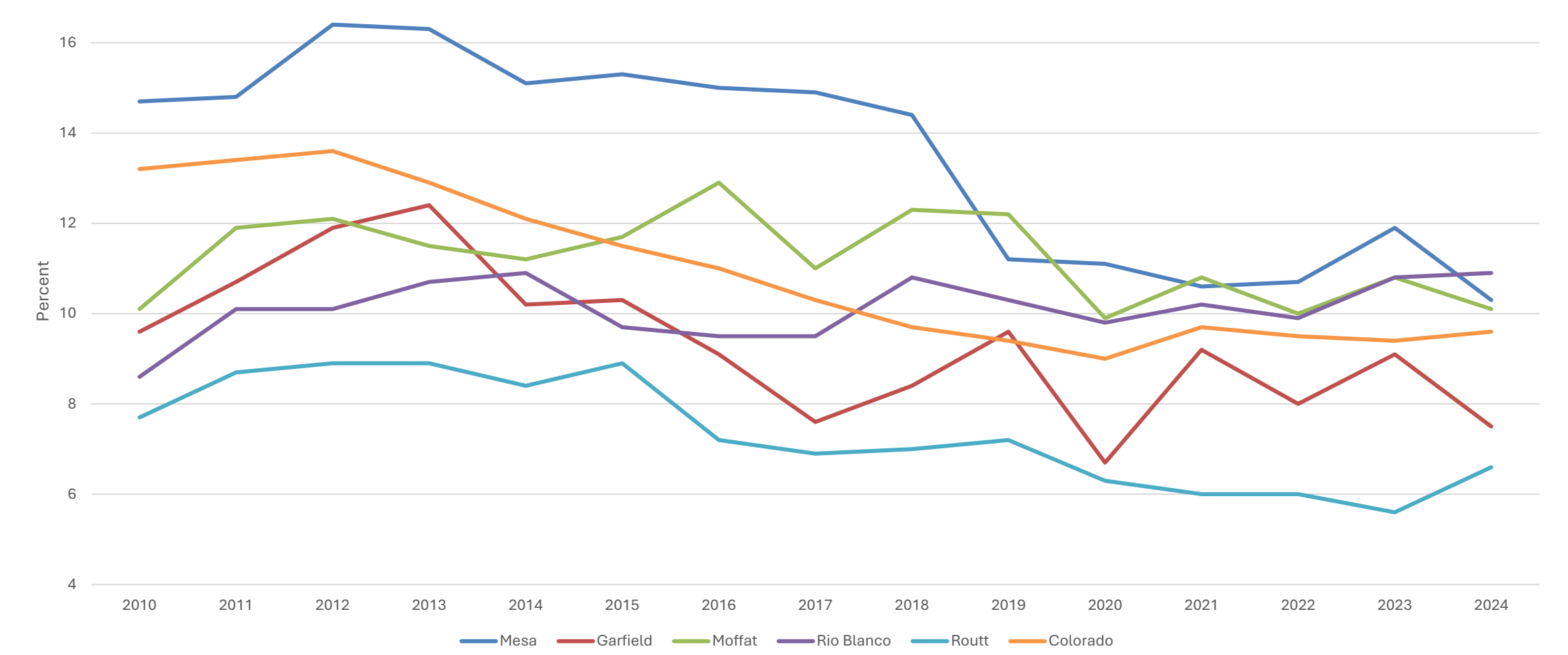
- **Housing:** The market has split. Single family prices are holding near record highs statewide, while the attached segment is genuinely weak: Denver condo prices are 14% below their 2020 to 2022 peak, sales are at 2008 levels, and units take nearly seven weeks to sell. (CAR, July 2026; Denver Gazette)
- **Oil and Gas:** A tale of two states. In 2025, Weld County recorded 507 of Colorado's 703 well starts, while the entire Piceance Basin (Garfield, Mesa, Rio Blanco) had 118 combined. Garfield hit a multi-decade low of 22 starts in 2024 before rebounding to 51 in 2025. (ECMC)
- **Federal Workforce:** Colorado has about 57,000 federal workers and has seen significant losses over the past year through layoffs, buyouts, and deferred resignations. (CDLE; Partnership for Public Service)

Regional GDP Comparison



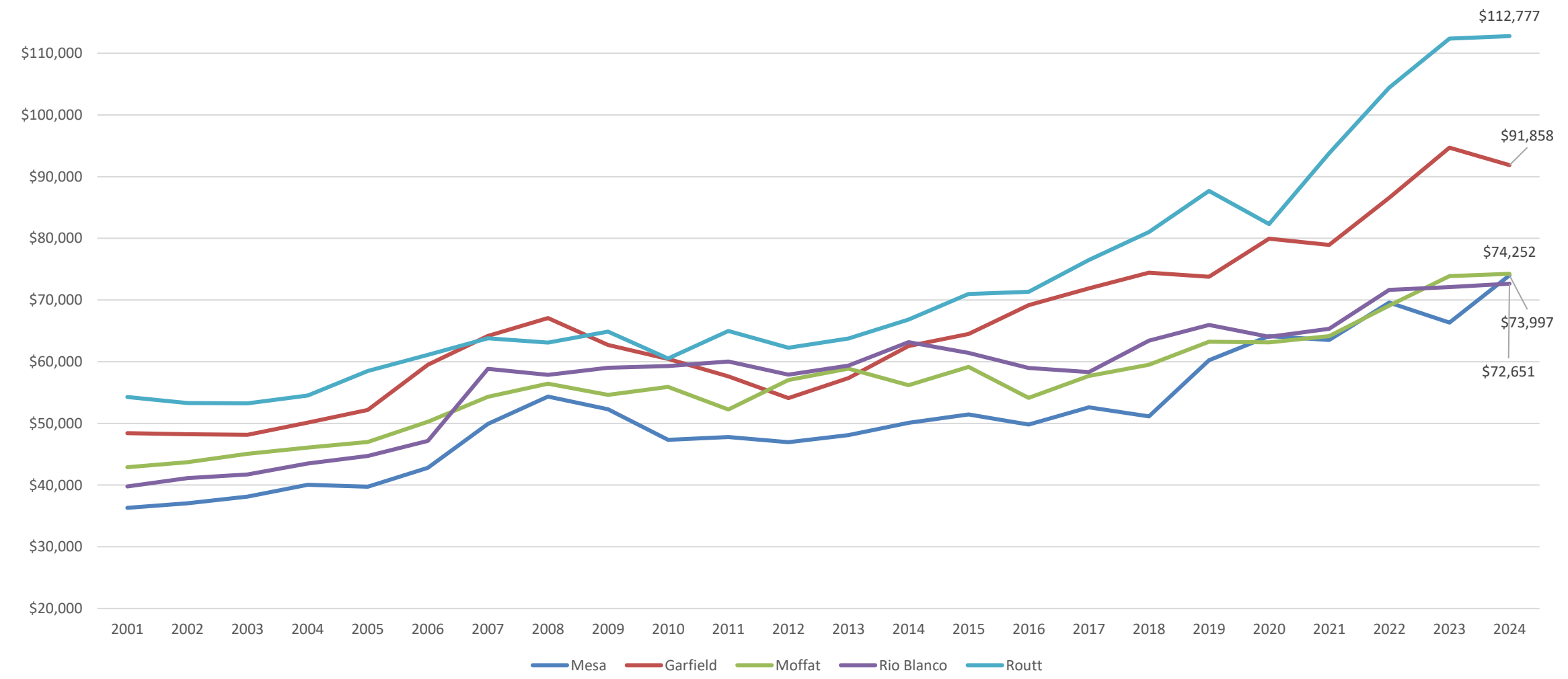
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, CAGDP9 real GDP by county, February 2026 vintage.

Poverty Rate



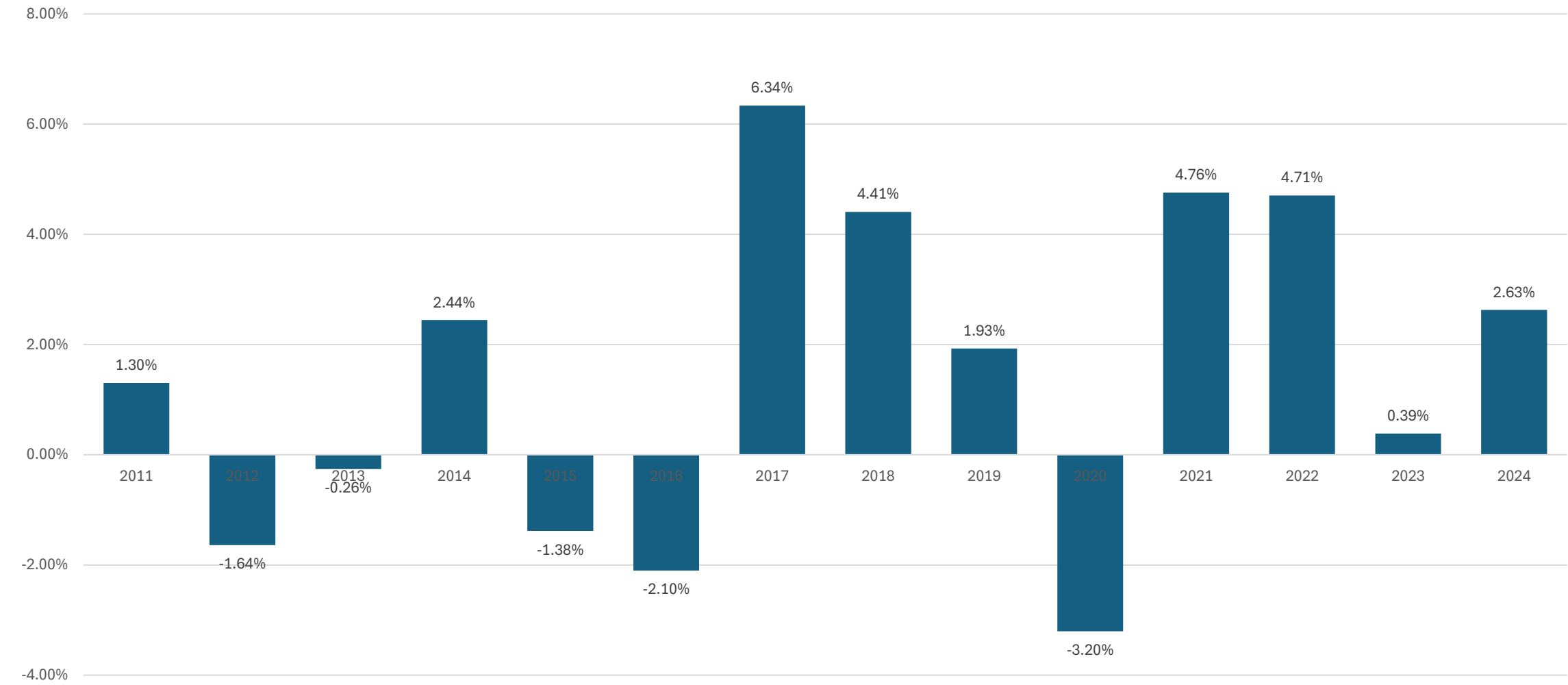
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2024.

Median Household Income



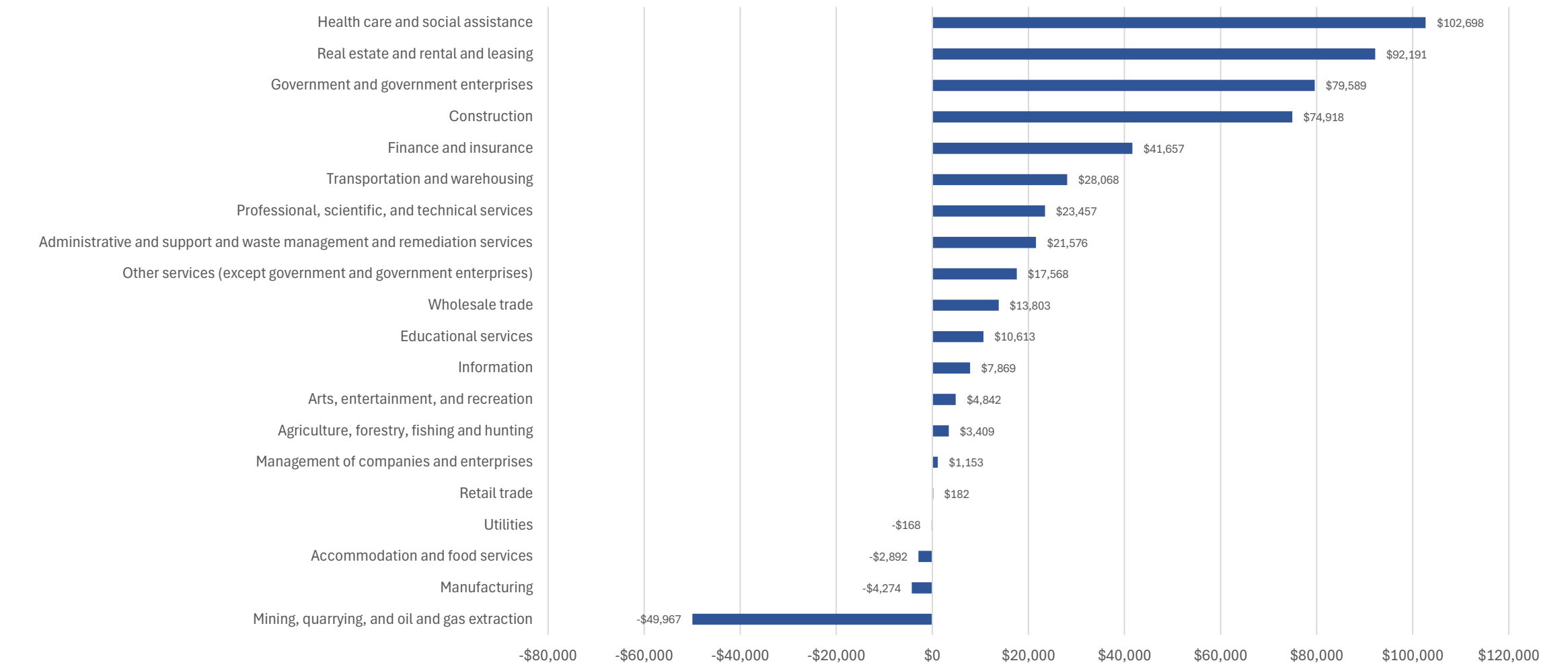
Source: U.S. Census Bureau SAIPE, 2001 to 2024 (via FRED). Values verified against county masters.

Mesa Real GDP



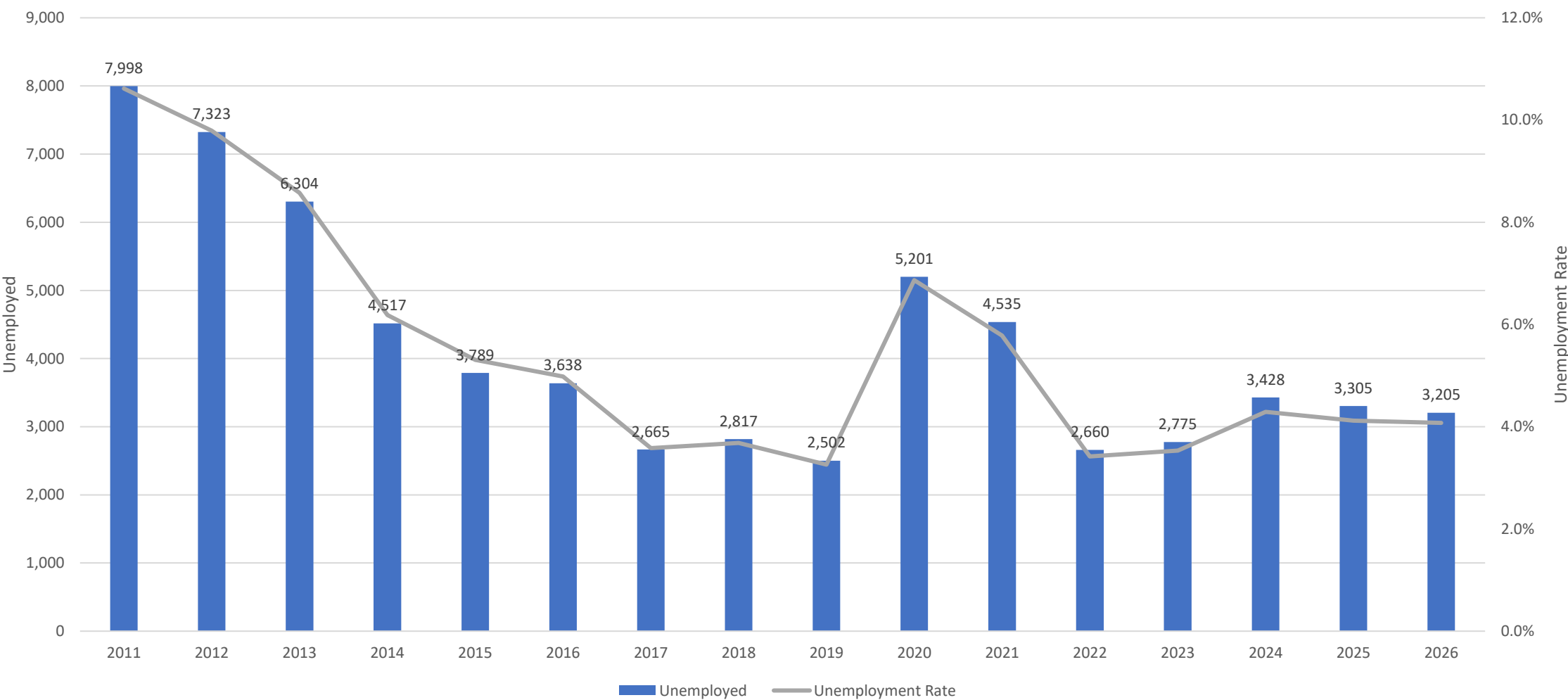
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, CAGDP9 real GDP (chained 2017 dollars), February 2026 vintage.

Changes in Mesa GDP (in thousands)



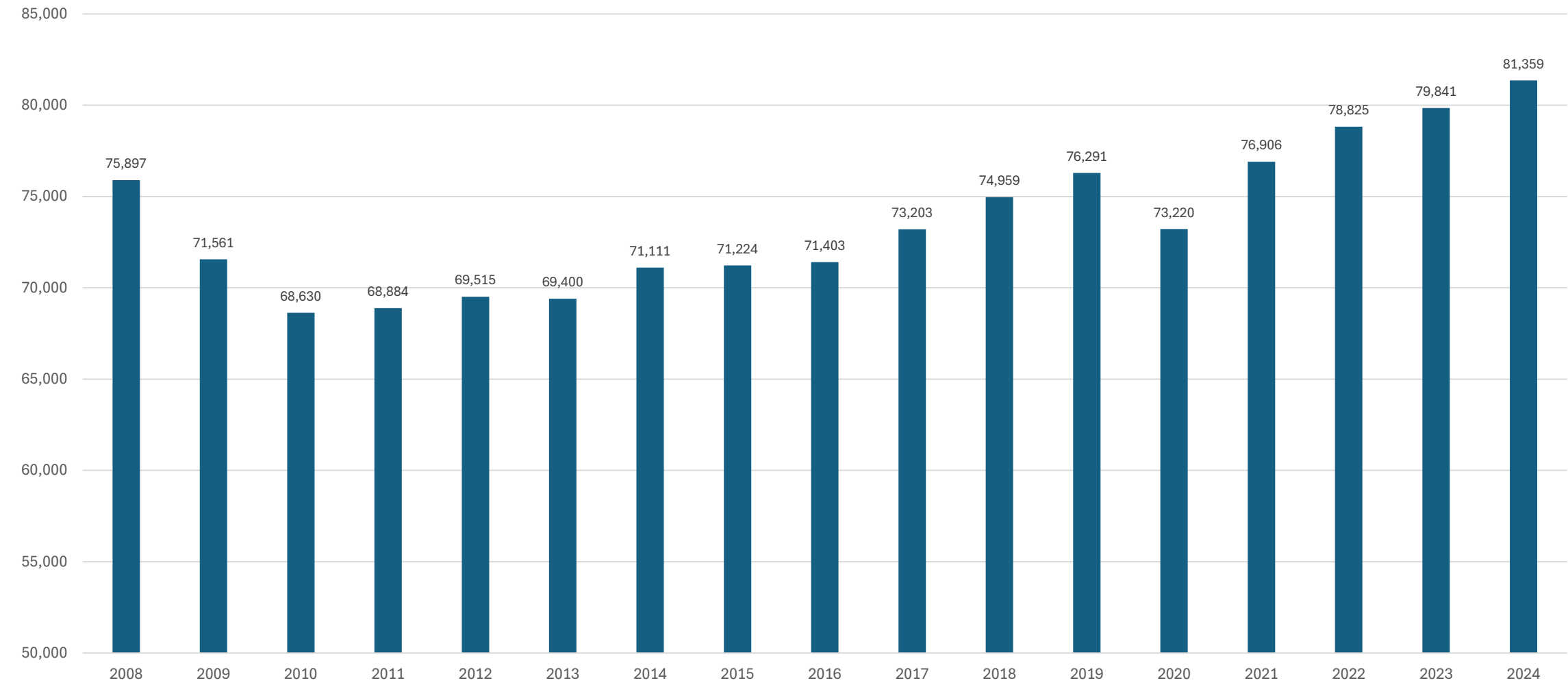
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, CAGDP2 current dollar GDP, February 2026 vintage.

Unemployed/Unemployment Rate



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics LAUS via Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

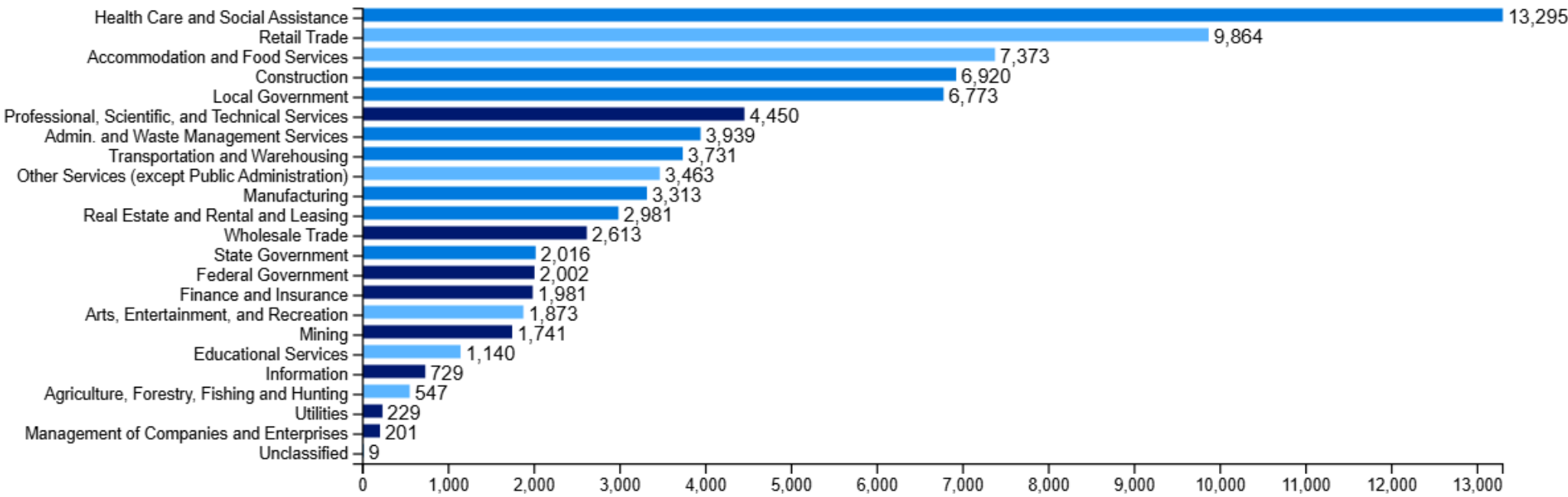
Mesa Jobs



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Mesa County Jobs by Sector

Jobs by Sector: Mesa County, 2024



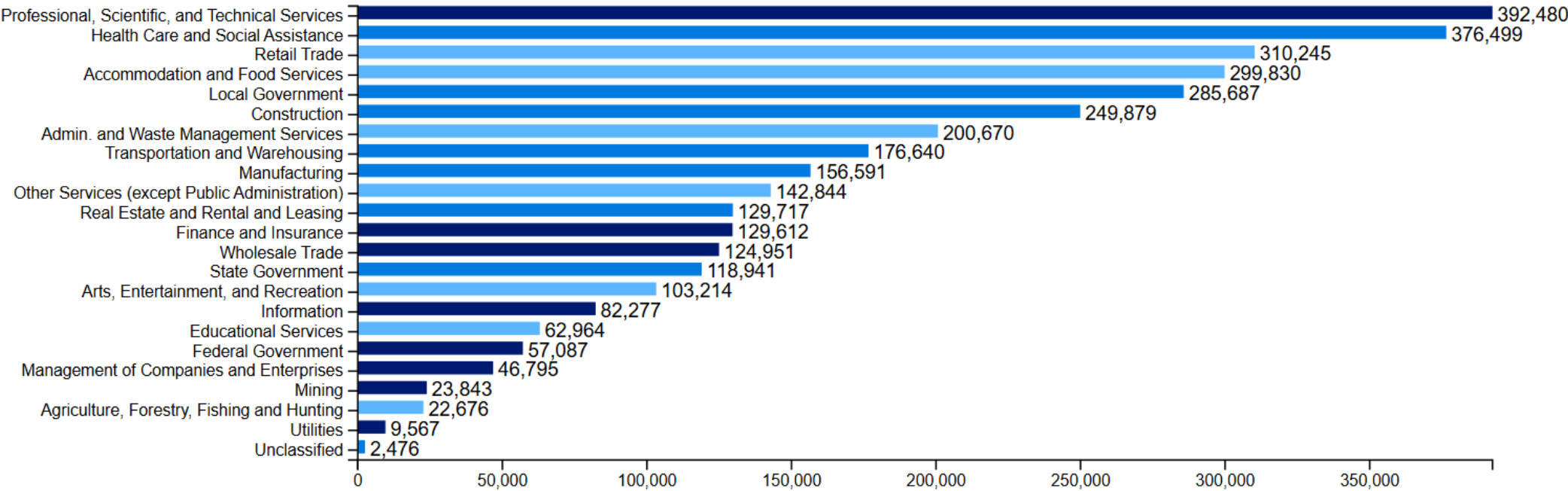
Data Source: State Demography Office and Bureau of Labor Statistics
Vintage 2024 Estimates.
Visualization by the State Demography Office, Print Date: 04/16/2026

81,184 Total Estimated Jobs
\$57,315 Average Annual Wage
2024 Employment Share by Wage

- Low Wage Jobs: (Less Than \$45,852) 29.9%
- Mid Wage Jobs: (\$45,852 to \$68,777) 53.0%
- High Wage Jobs: (More Than \$68,777) 17.2%

Colorado Jobs by Sector

Jobs by Sector: Colorado, 2024

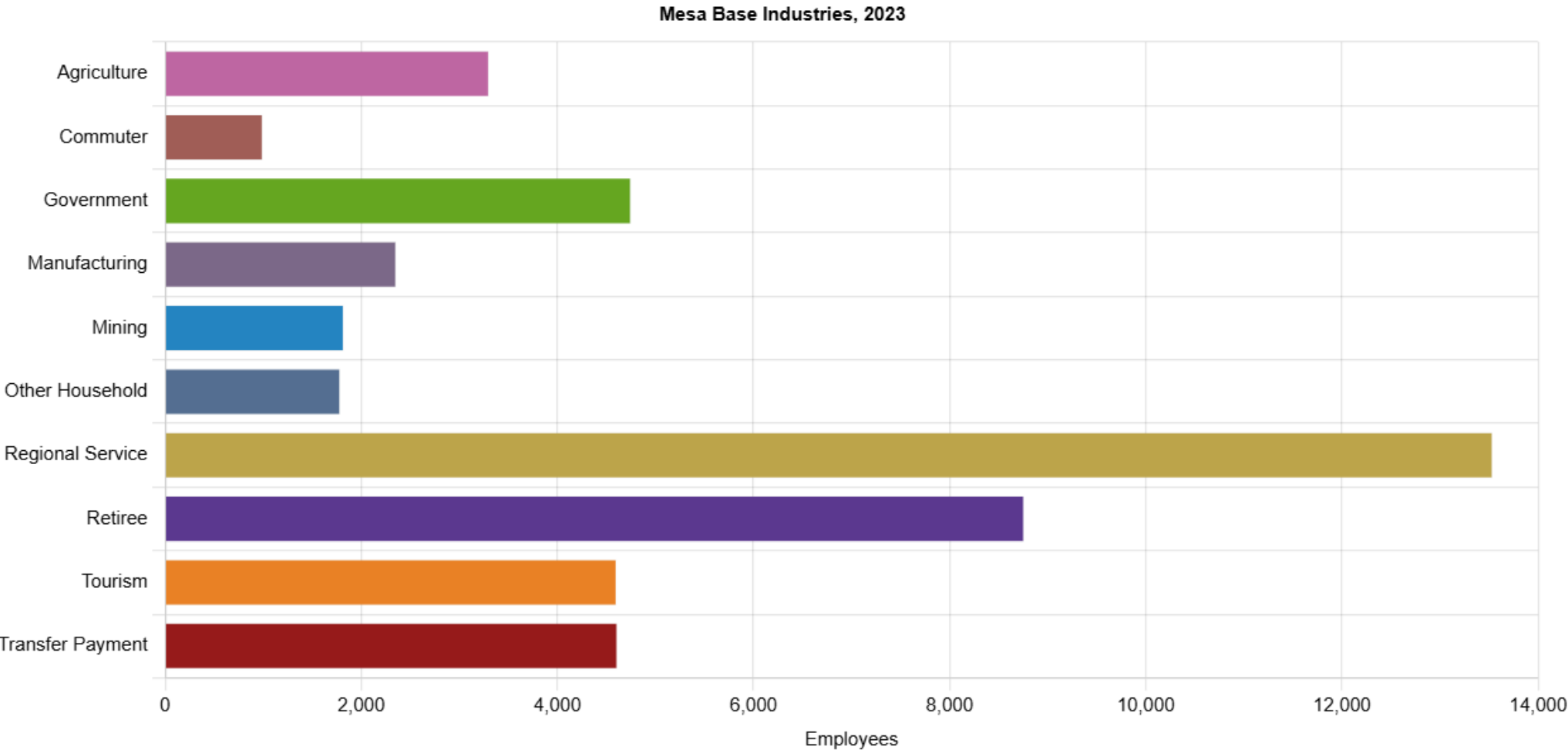


Data Source: State Demography Office and Bureau of Labor Statistics
Vintage 2024 Estimates.
Visualization by the State Demography Office, Print Date: 04/16/2026

3.51 Million Total Estimated Jobs
\$80,291 Average Annual Wage
2024 Employment Share by Wage

- Low Wage Jobs: (Less Than \$64,233) 32.6%
- Mid Wage Jobs: (\$64,233 to \$96,349) 42.7%
- High Wage Jobs: (More Than \$96,349) 24.7%

Mesa Base Industries



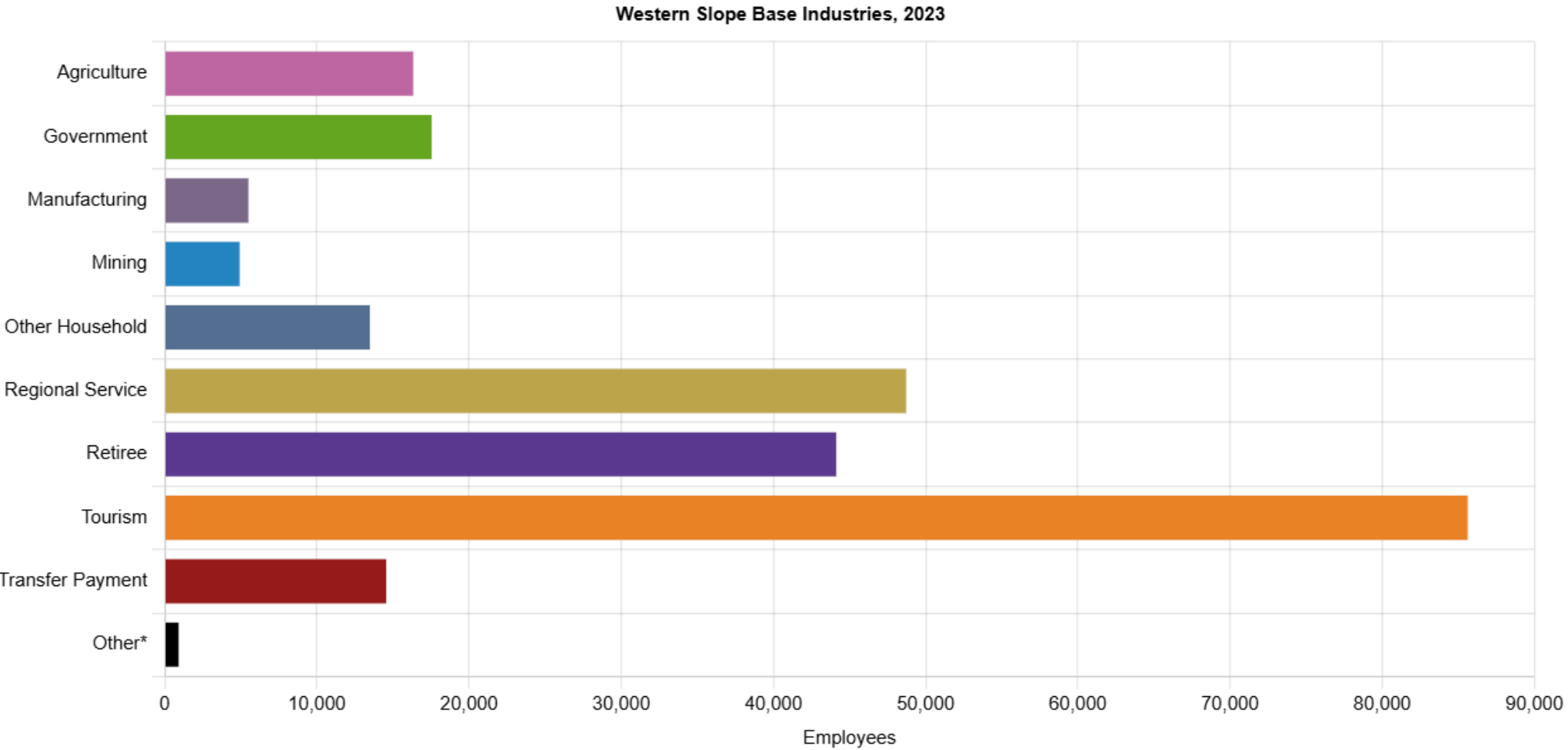
US Bureau of Labor Statistics QCEW, Visualization by Colorado State Demography Office. Print date: April 16, 2026

Source: Colorado State Demography Office, base analysis.

Base Industry Definitions

- **Agriculture:** Jobs in agricultural production, inputs, processing, and related activities, as well as jobs supported by the agriculture industry.
- **Government:** Jobs in federal and state government, including higher education and military, along with jobs supported by government employment.
- **Manufacturing:** Jobs in manufacturing establishments and additional jobs supported by manufacturing activities.
- **Other Household Income:** Jobs providing local services and supported by resident spending of unearned income from dividends, interest, and rents.
- **Regional Service:** Jobs in construction, communications, trade & transportation, professional & business services, finance & insurance, private education & healthcare that serve a multi-county region or the nation, including jobs supported by these industries.
- **Retirees:** Jobs providing local services to retirees and supported by retiree spending from sources like Social Security, pensions, and investment income.
- **Tourism:** Jobs at resorts, tourist attraction, lodging, restaurants, retail, entertainment venues, and transportation services related to tourism, as well as additional jobs supported by tourist spending.
- **Transfer Payments:** Jobs providing services to recipients of public assistance programs and supported by their spending or transfer payment income.
- **Mining:** Jobs in mine operations, and mining support activities, as well as other jobs supported by the mining industry.
- **Commuter:** Jobs providing local services to and supported by the spending of income earned by residents who commute to jobs outside the region.

Western Slope Base Industries



US Bureau of Labor Statistics QCEW, Visualization by Colorado State Demography Office. Print date: April 16, 2026

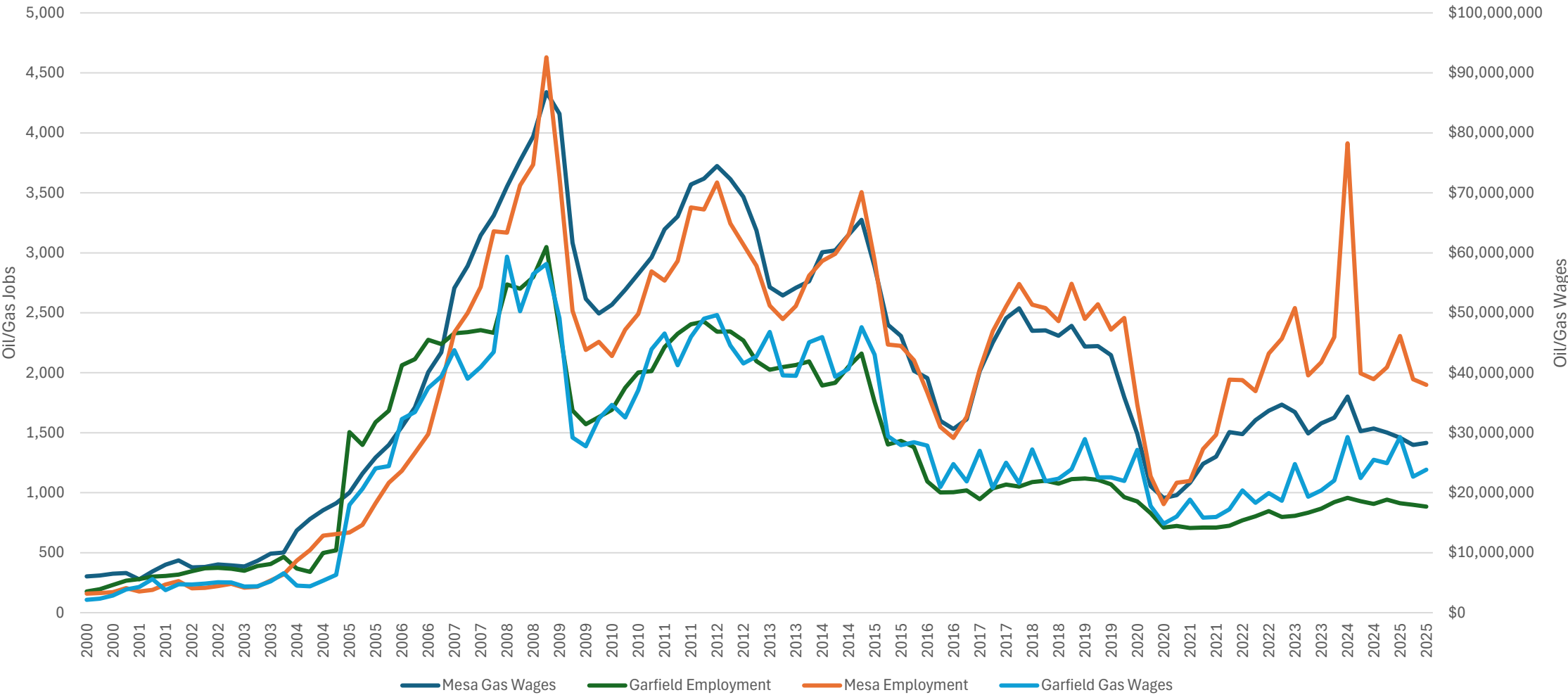
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, base analysis.

Mesa Industry Trends

The Diversification Success Story

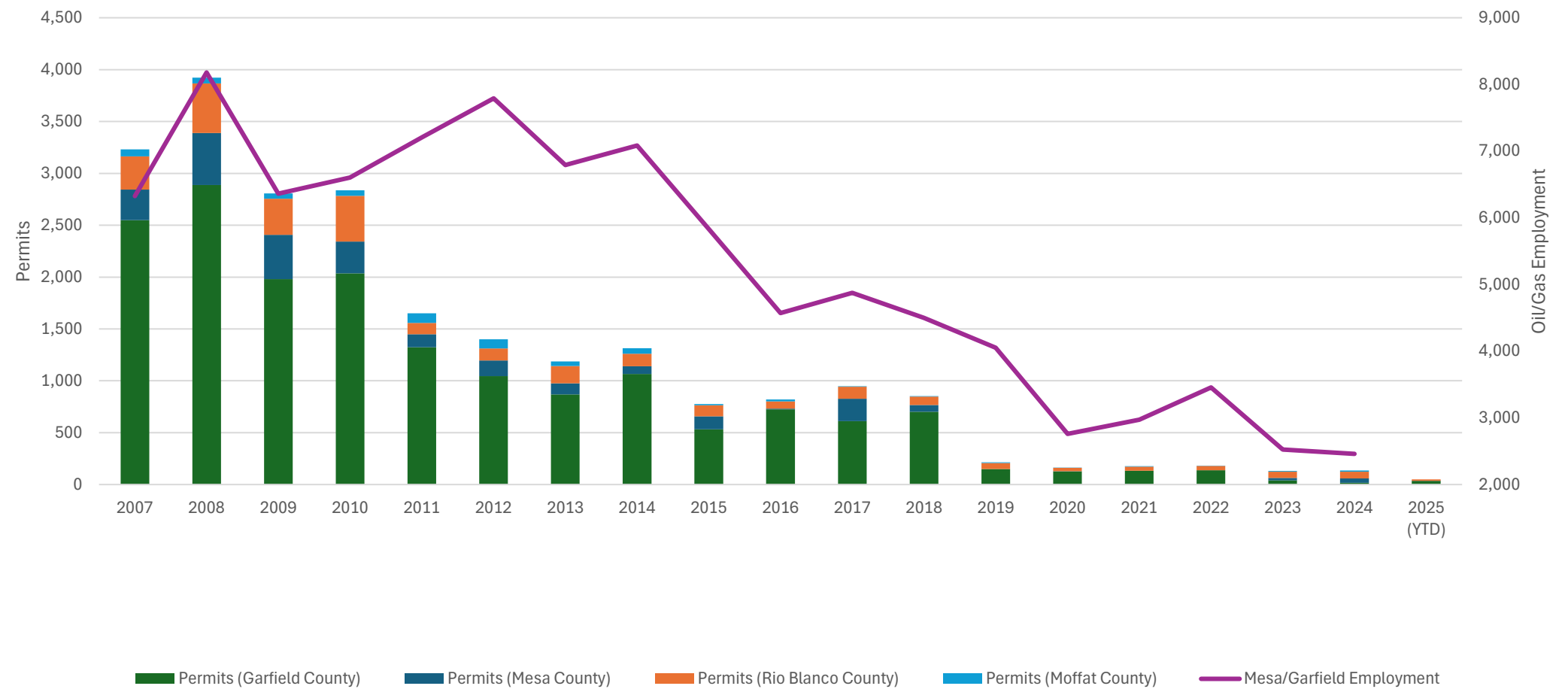
- **Private jobs up 33% since 2000:** 42,160 to 56,095
- **Health care nearly doubled to 12,556**, now the largest industry and still setting records
- **Transportation and warehousing up 69%** to a 2025 record of 2,996 jobs, an emerging logistics hub
- **Structural declines:** manufacturing remains below its 2000 level, information down 45%
- **2025 was flat vs 2024**, the first pause since 2020: health care and logistics still growing, retail and finance softening

Mesa/Garfield Oil Gas QCEW Data



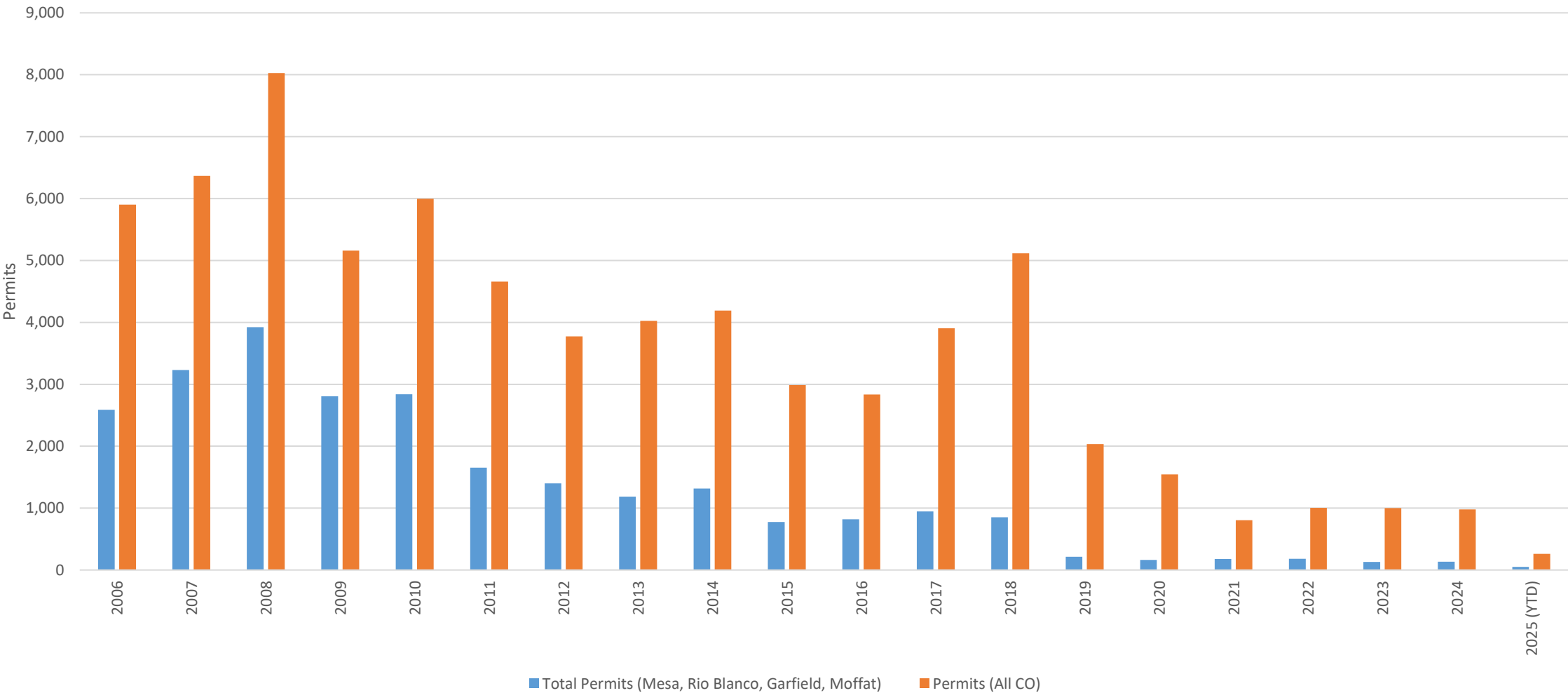
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics QCEW (CO LMI Gateway), oil and gas employment.

Western Slope Drilling Permits and Jobs



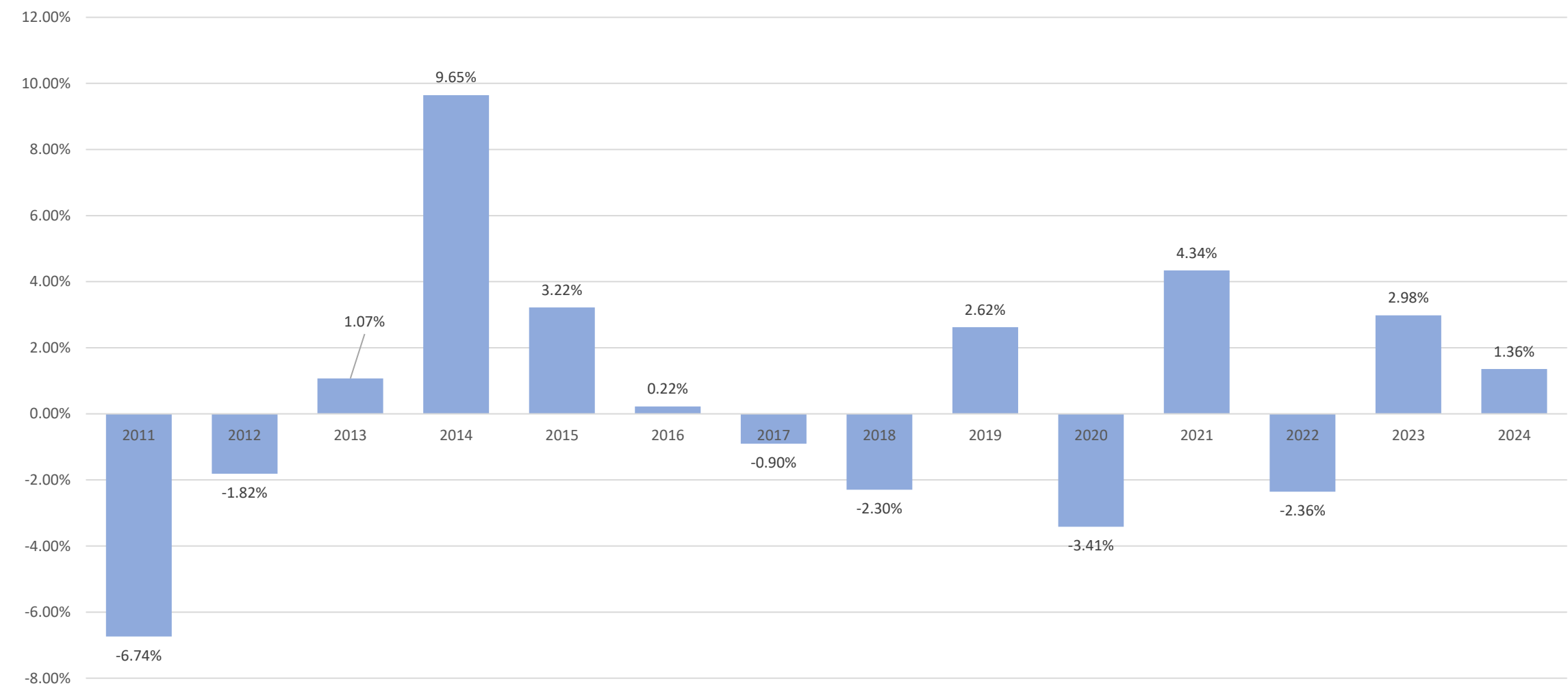
Source: Colorado Energy and Carbon Management Commission permits; SDO jobs data.

Drilling Permits



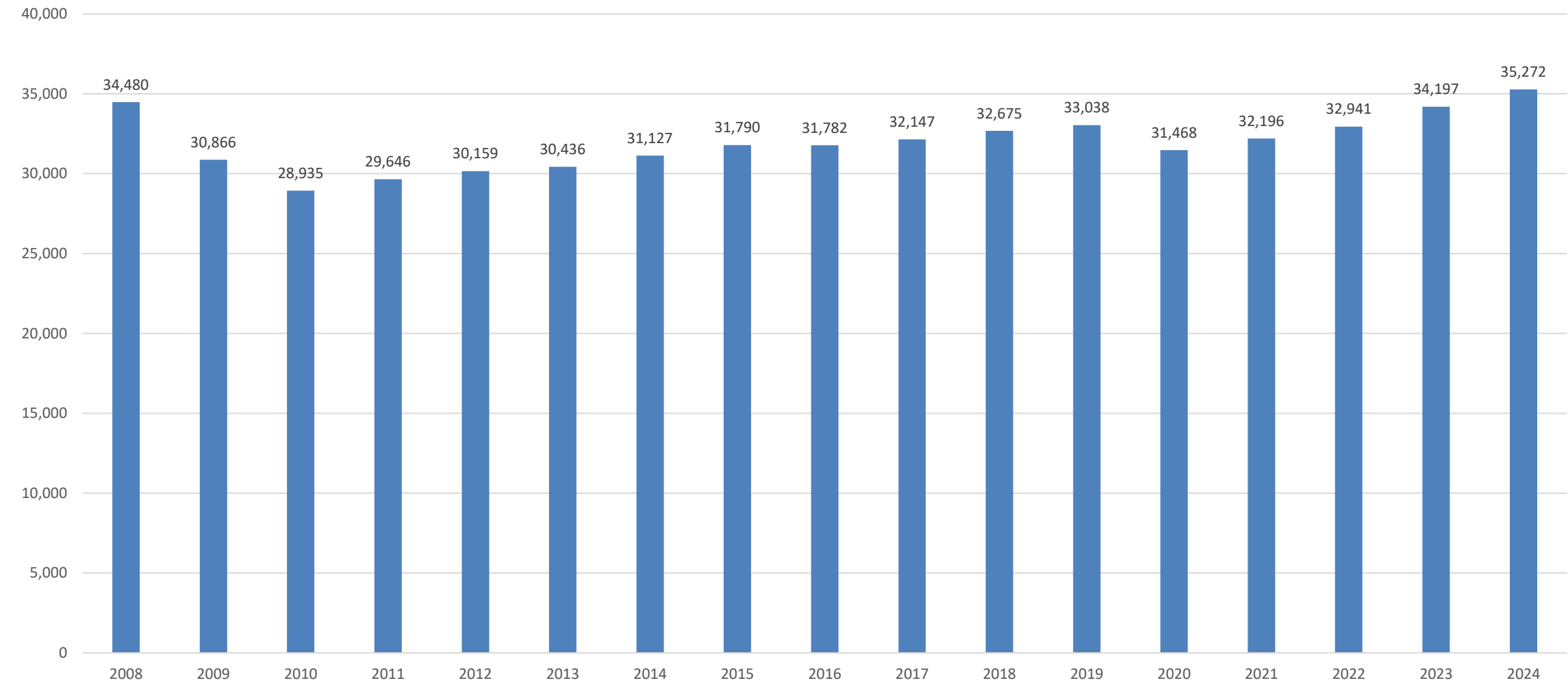
Source: Colorado Energy and Carbon Management Commission, drilling permits.

Garfield County GDP



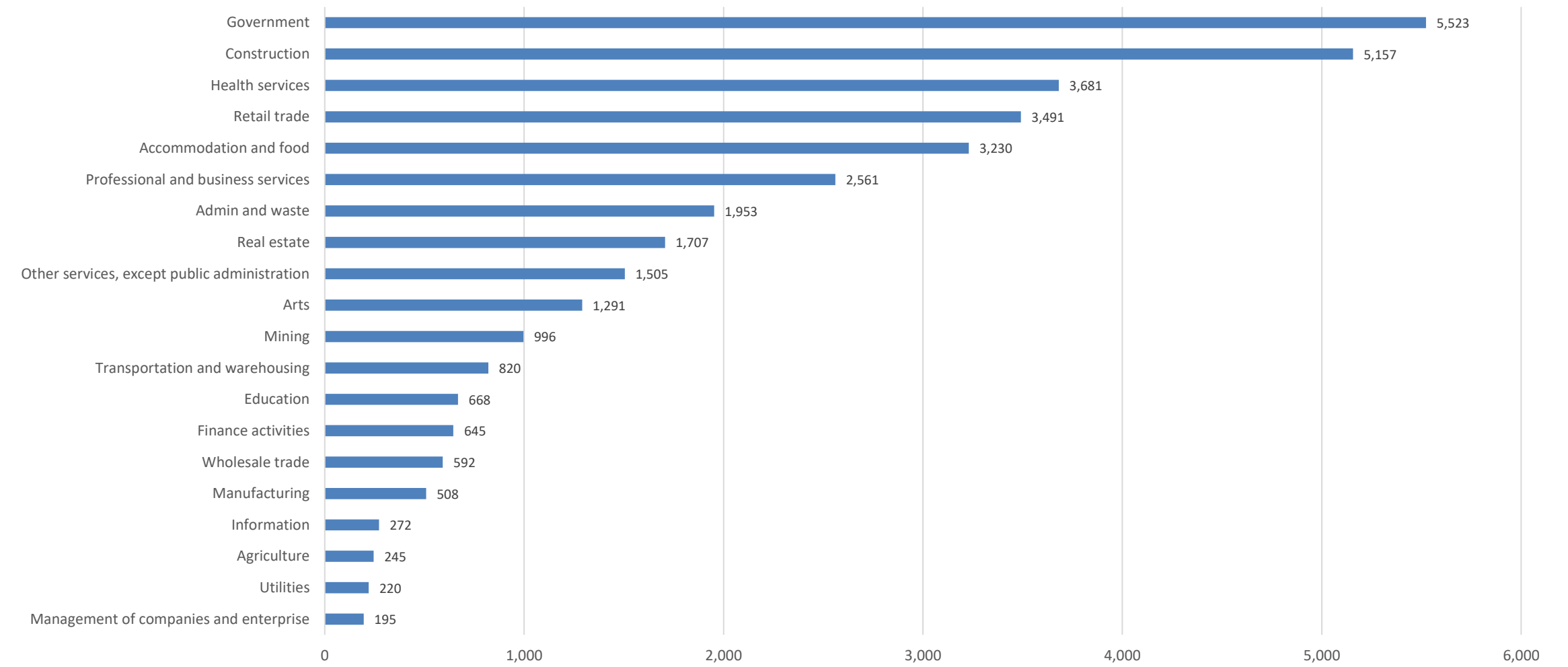
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, CAGDP9 real GDP (chained 2017 dollars), February 2026 vintage.

Garfield Jobs



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Garfield Jobs per Industry



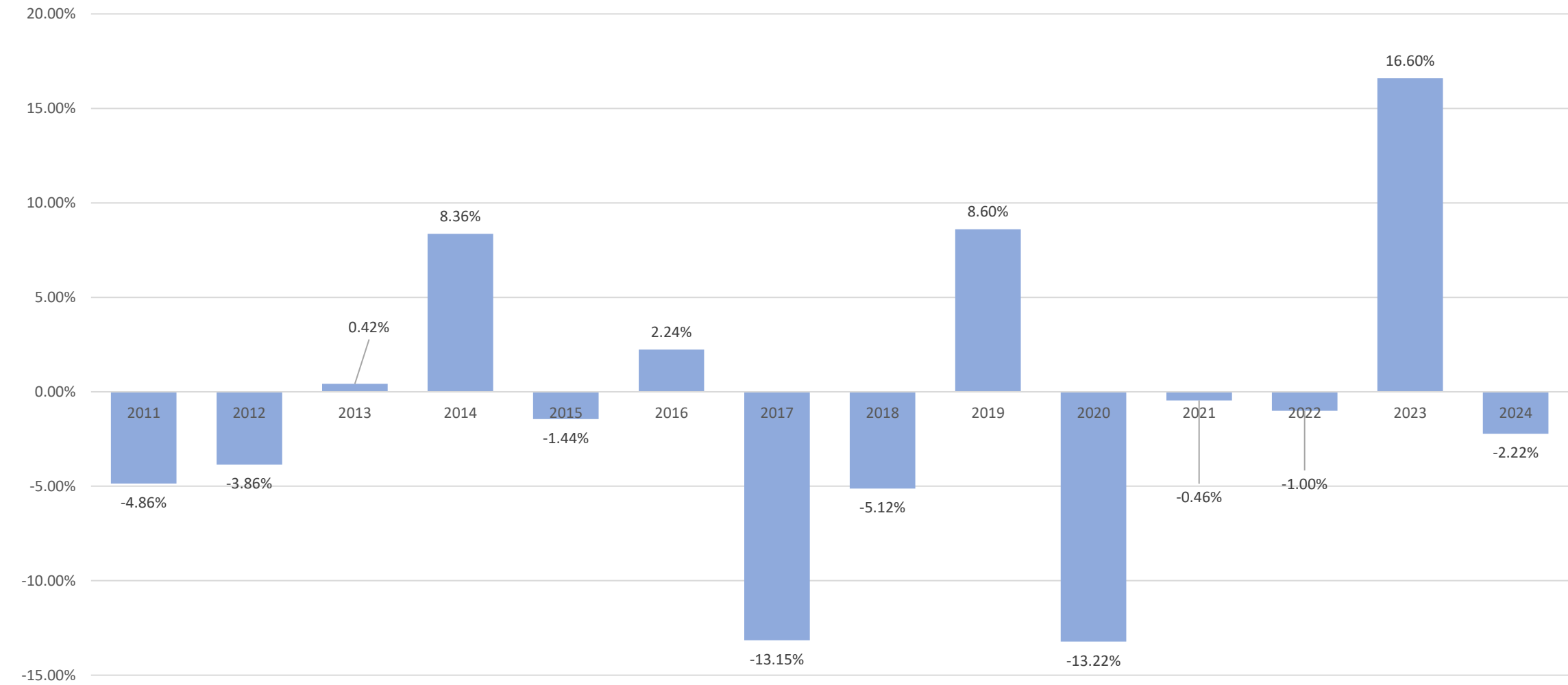
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Garfield Industry Trends

The Boom Scar

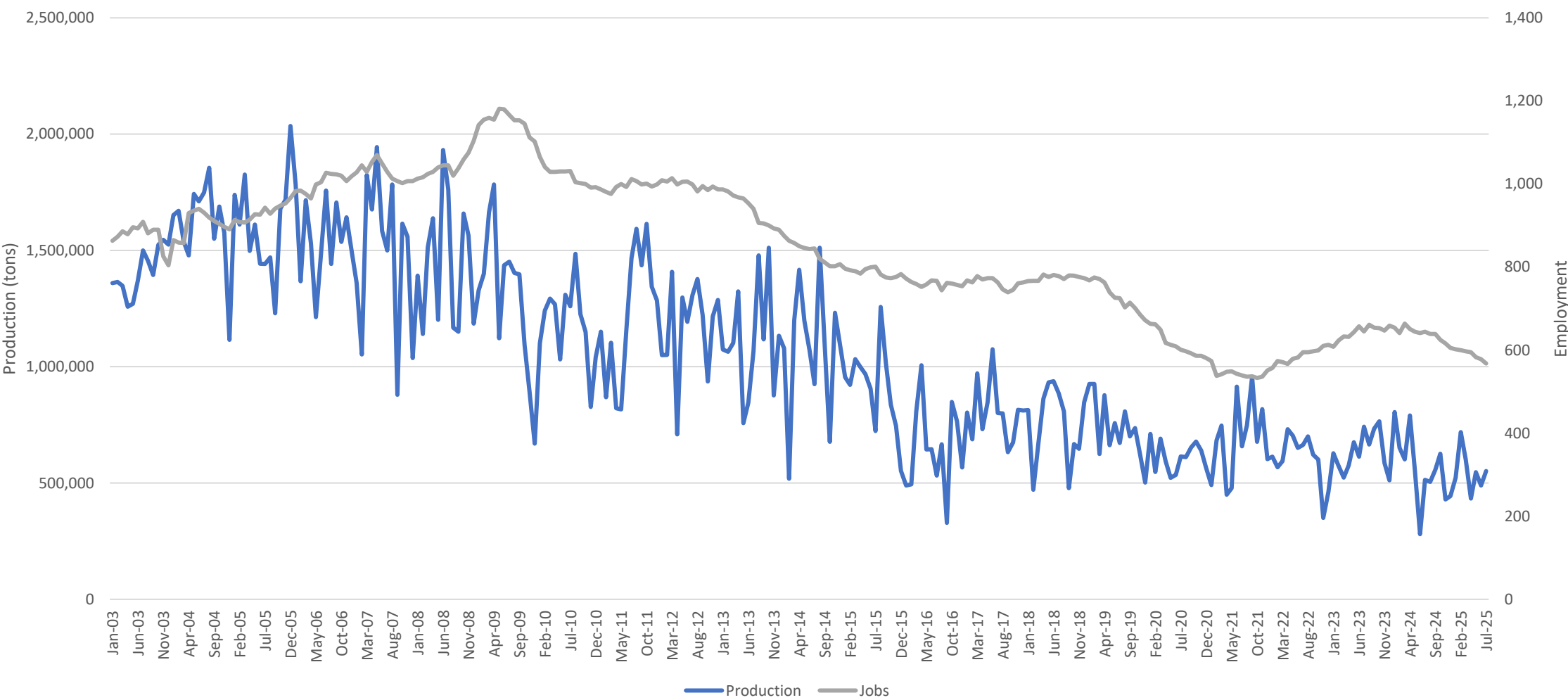
- **Jobs peaked at 24,127 in 2008**, collapsed to 18,335 by 2010, and remain below peak today at 22,243
- **Mining: 218 jobs in 2000, 2,821 at the peak, 897 today**
- **Rebuilt on different work:** health care up 129% (1,365 to 3,130), professional and technical services doubled to a 2025 record
- **Lodging and dining sit below the 2019 peak**, echoing the 2024 decline in median household income

Rio Blanco County GDP



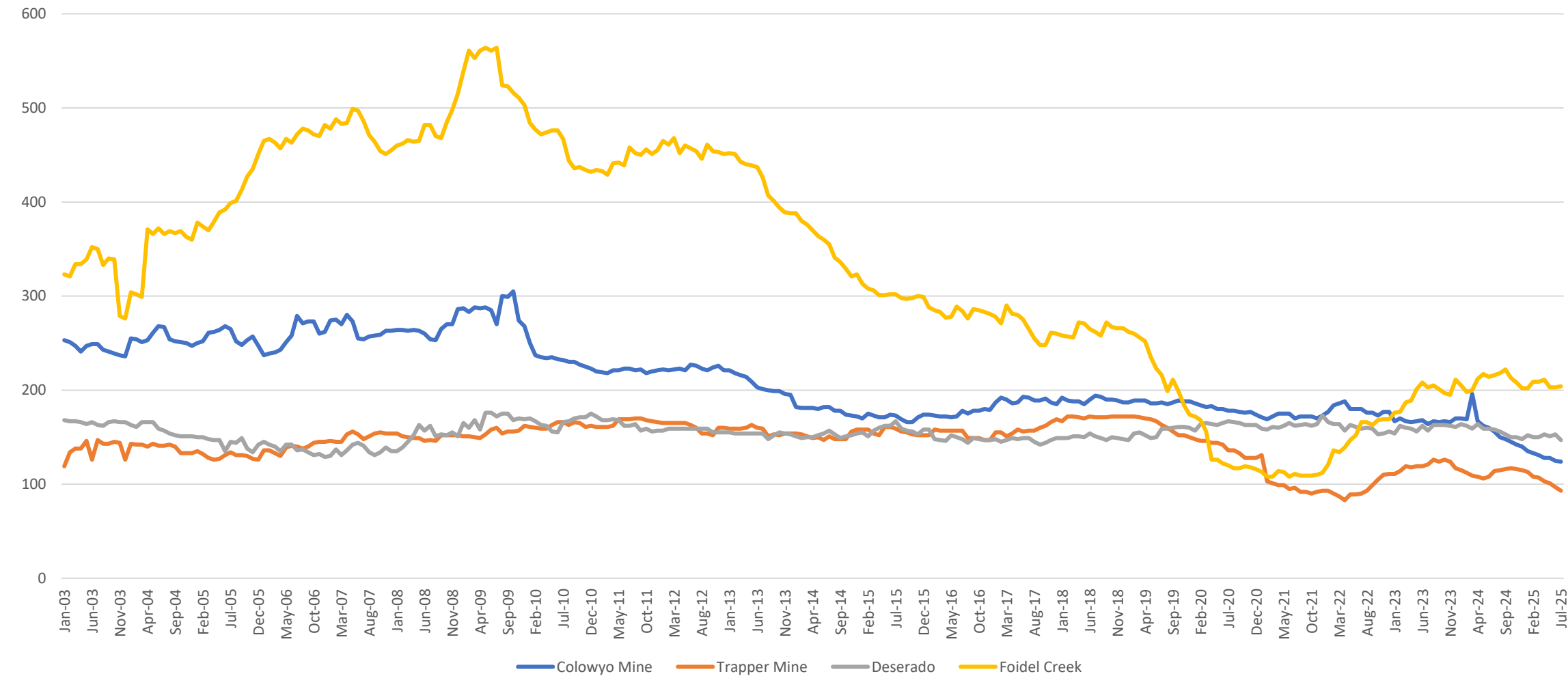
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, CAGDP9 real GDP (chained 2017 dollars), February 2026 vintage.

NW Colorado Coal



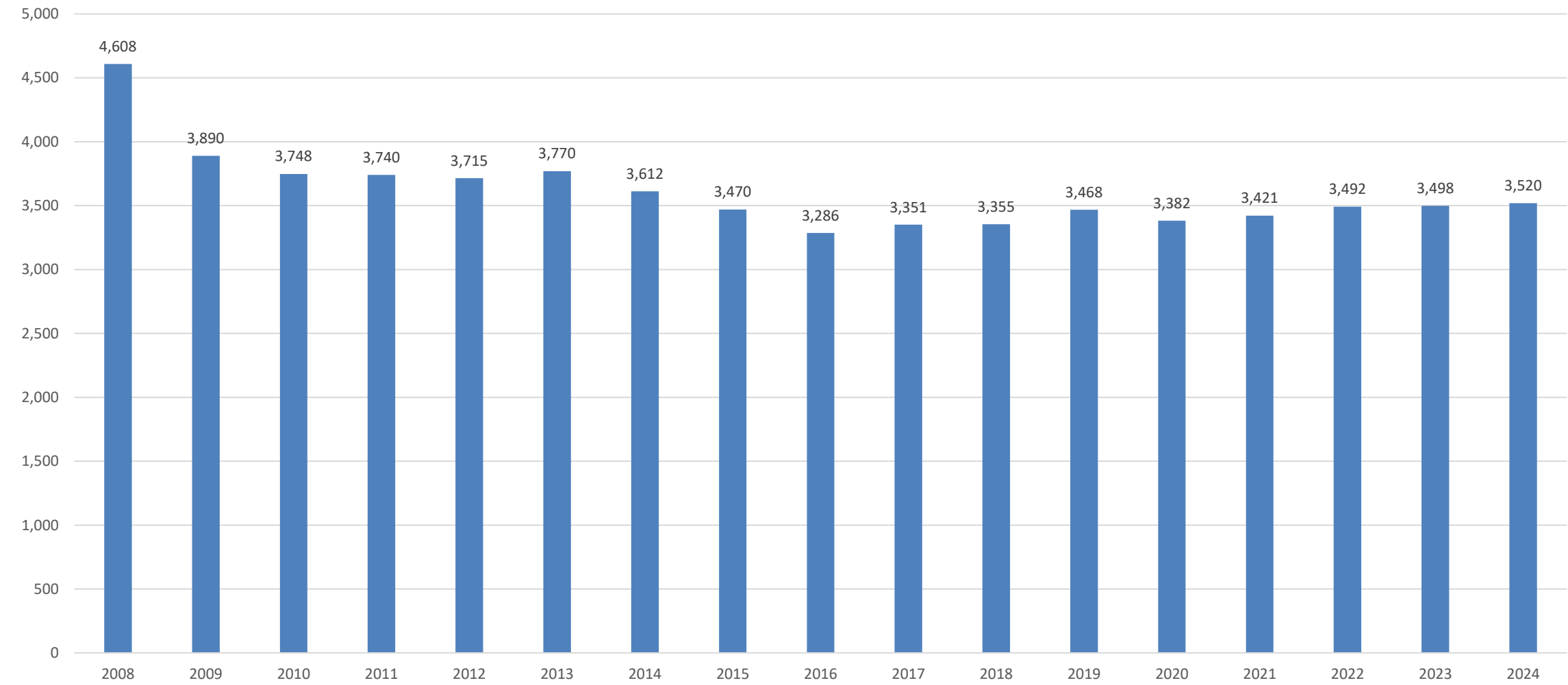
Source: Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety; MSHA coal production reports.

Jobs per Mine



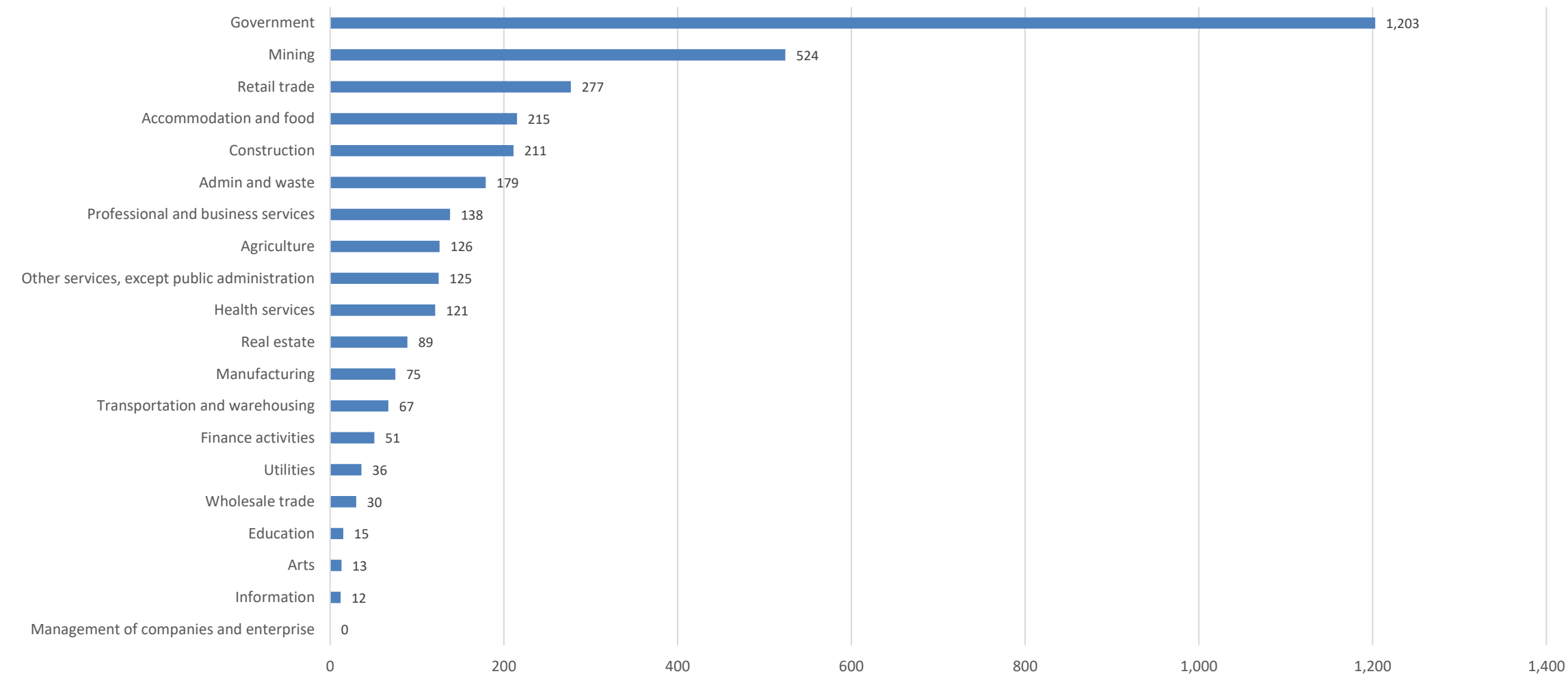
Source: Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety; MSHA.

Rio Blanco Jobs



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Rio Blanco Jobs by Industry



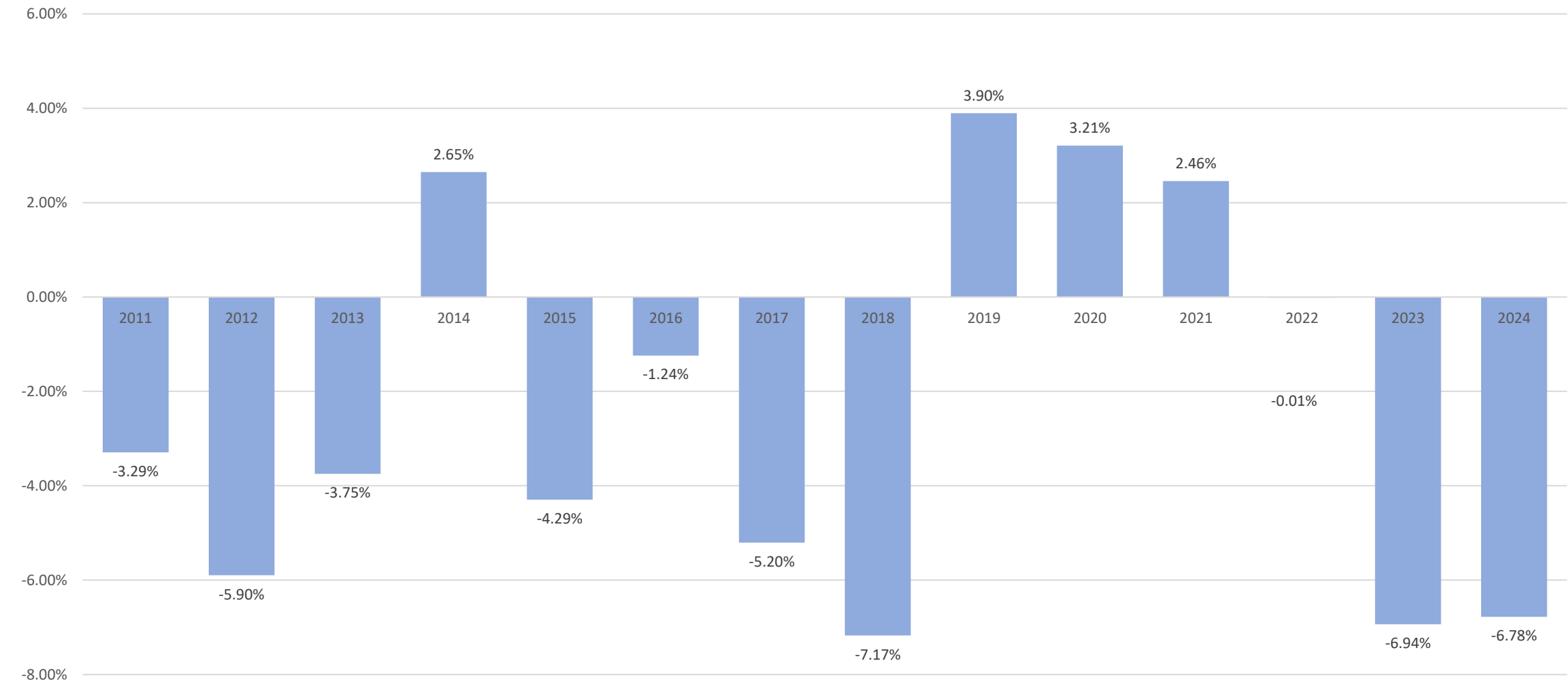
Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Rio Blanco Industry Trends

The Deepest Boom and Bust

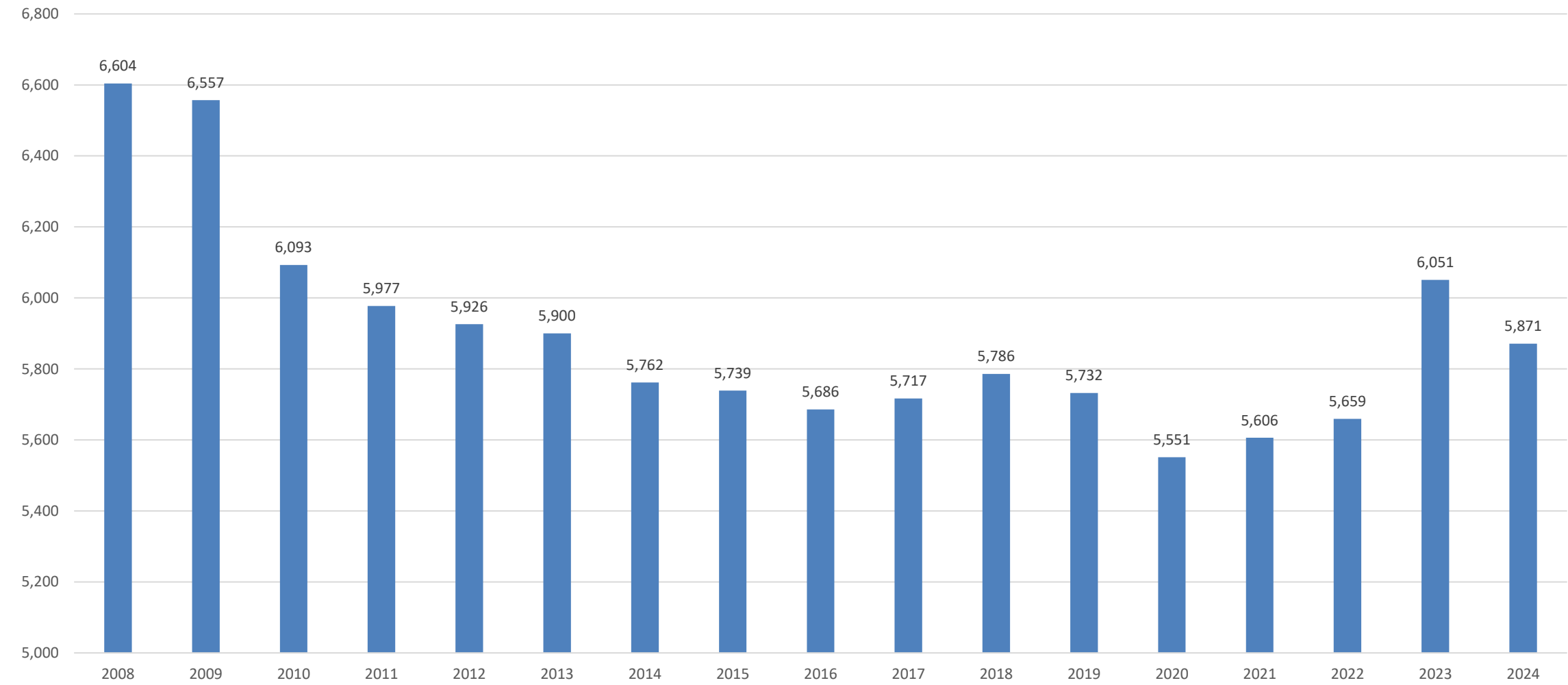
- **Jobs nearly doubled to 3,142 by 2007** on the Piceance gas play, all given back by 2016, flat since (1,675 in 2025)
- **Construction is the boom's fossil record:** 1,096 jobs in 2007, 131 today
- **Mining (511) is half its 2006 peak** but still the largest private industry
- **Green shoots are small but real:** health care up from 29 to 72, manufacturing at a record 73

Moffat GDP



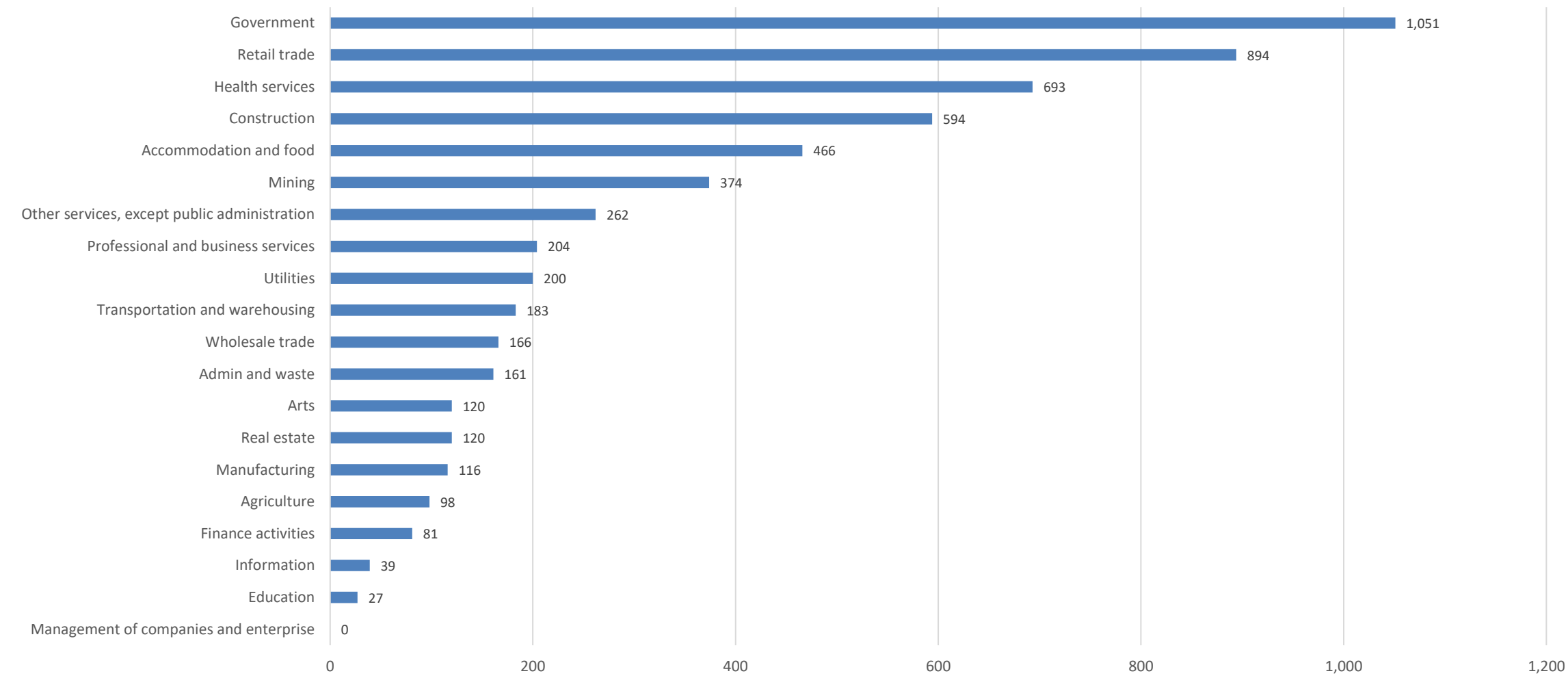
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, CAGDP9 real GDP (chained 2017 dollars), February 2026 vintage.

Moffat Jobs



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Moffat Jobs by Industry



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Moffat Industry Trends

Flat Line, Churn Underneath

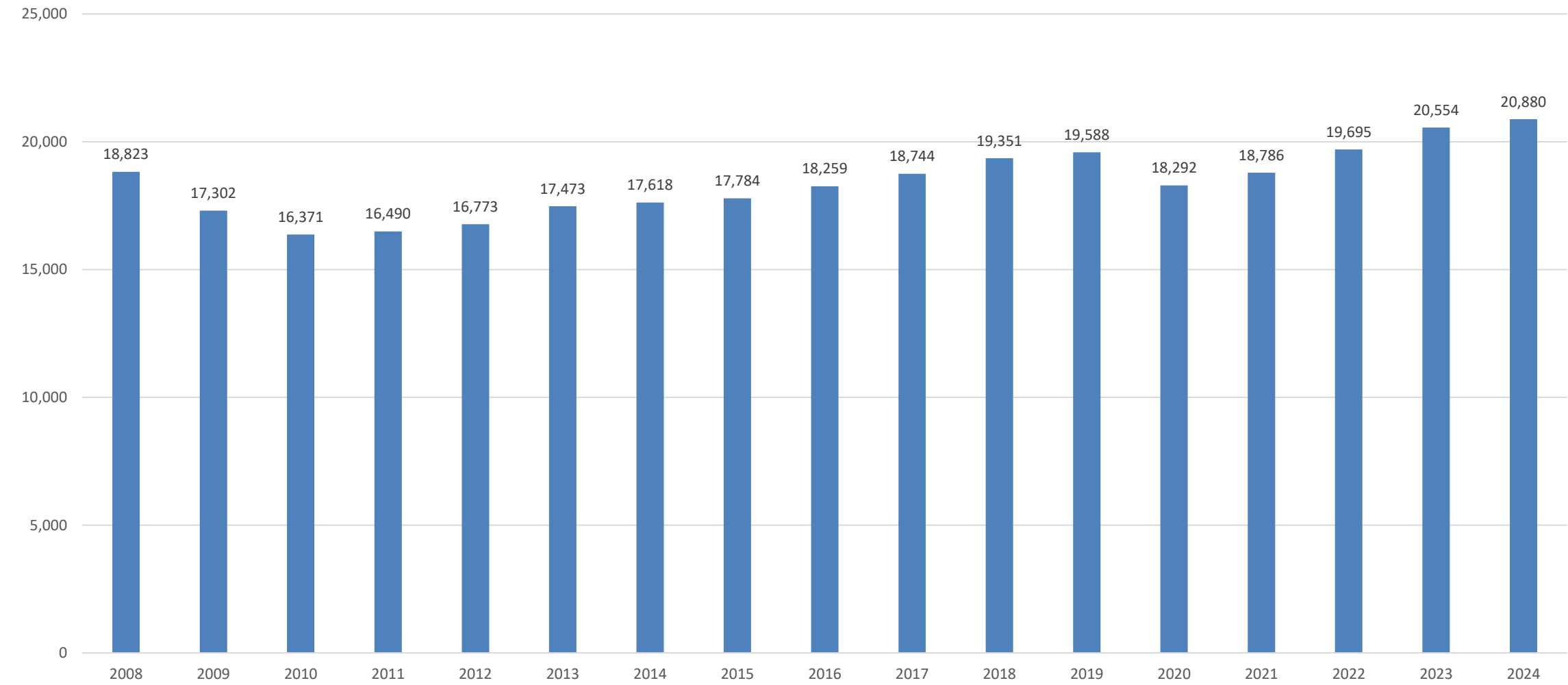
- **Zero net growth in 25 years:** 3,536 private jobs in both 2000 and 2025, alone in the region
- **Mining down 43% (505 to 290);** wholesale, admin services, and lodging below 2000 levels
- **The offsets:** construction doubled (147 to 316), retail at a record, health care up a third
- **Craig Station is confidential in QCEW,** so the data understates both the base and the transition risk
- **2025 slipped 111 jobs from 2024**

Routt GDP



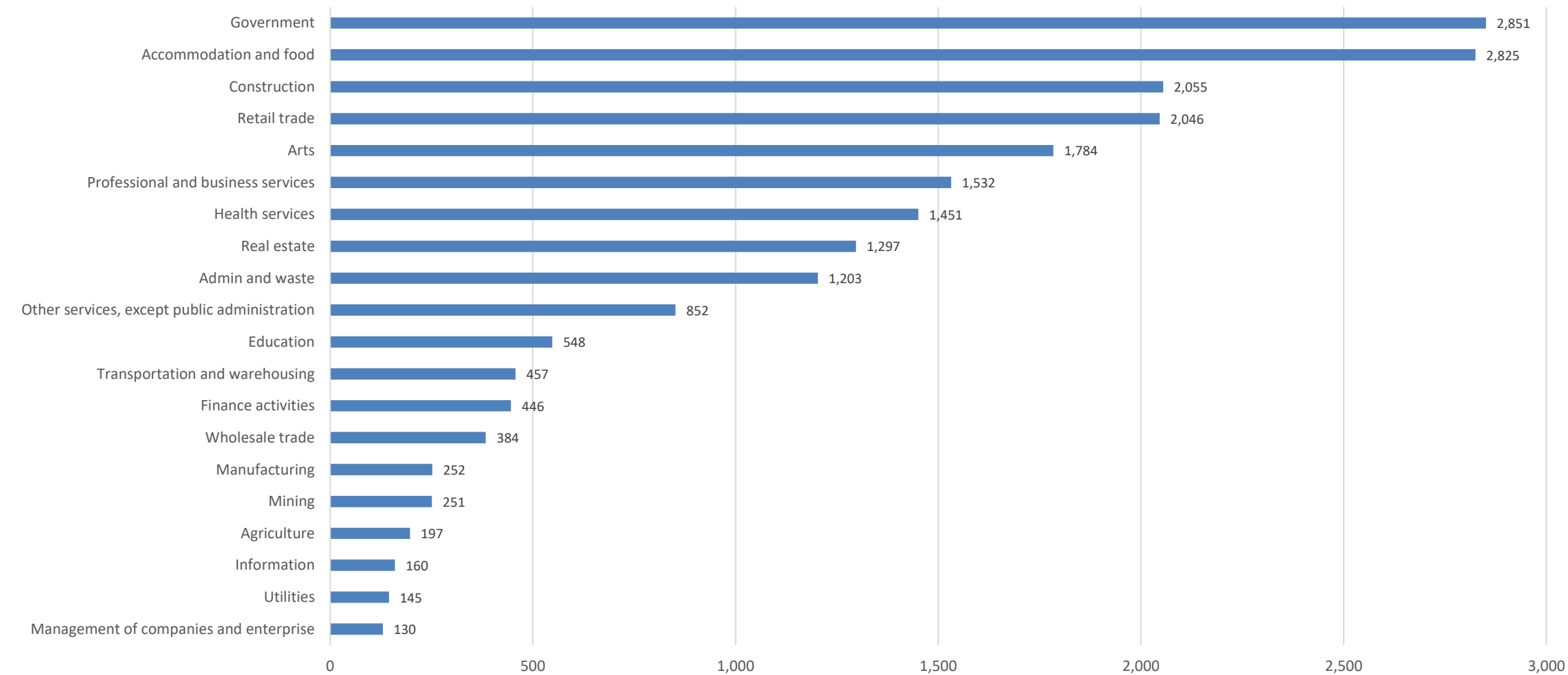
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, CAGDP9 real GDP (chained 2017 dollars), February 2026 vintage.

Routt Jobs



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Routt Jobs by Industry



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, jobs by sector, Vintage 2024.

Routt Industry Trends

Tourism at Full Throttle, Housing in the Shadow

- **Record employment in 2024 and 2025:** roughly 13,900 private jobs
- **Arts, entertainment, and recreation up 154% since 2000;** lodging and dining at record levels
- **Construction still down 738 jobs from 2000,** a third below its 2007 peak
- **Mining halved since 2019 (304 to 232)** as the coal wind down proceeds