

Local Sales Tax and The Economic Outlook for Lewis and Clark County

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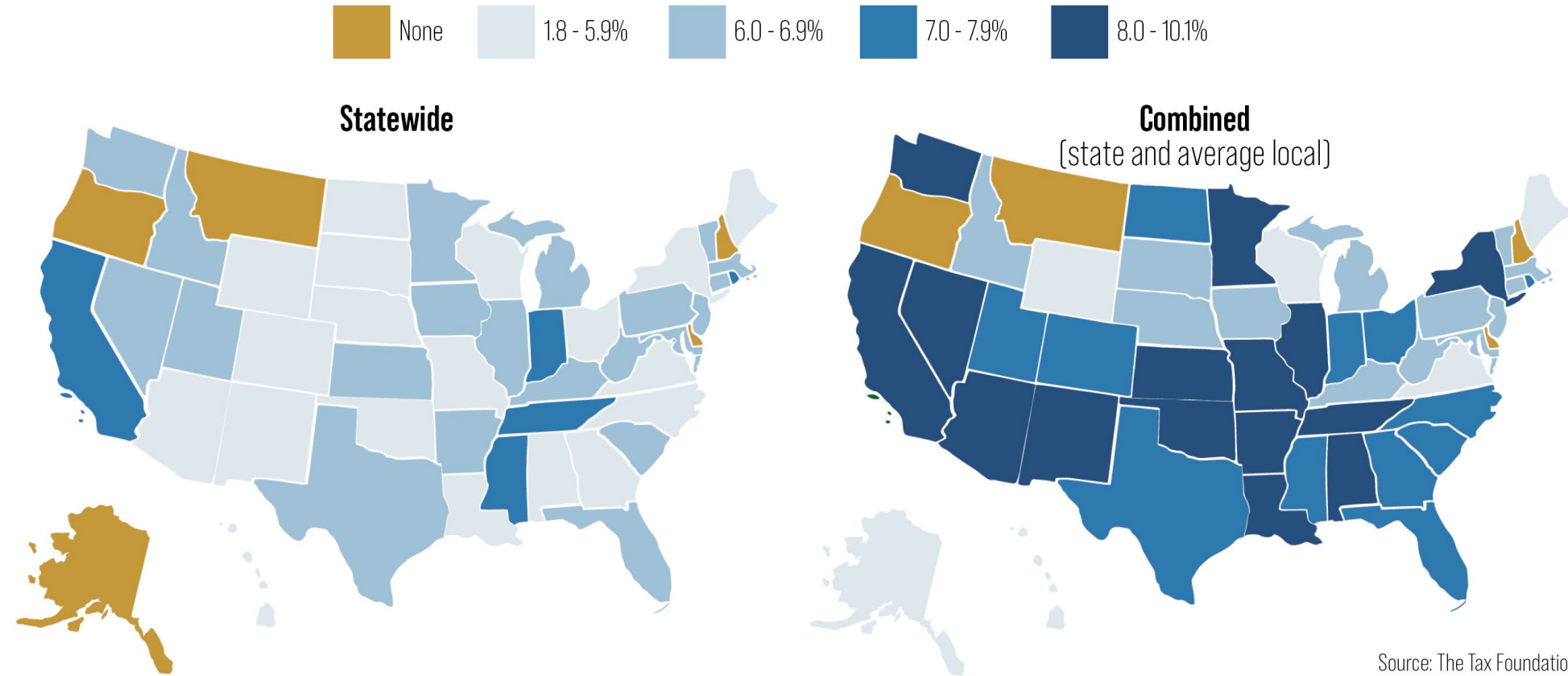


**BUREAU OF BUSINESS AND
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Lewis and Clark Outlook

In Many States, Local Sales Taxes Are Large: About $\frac{3}{4}$ of State's Allow Local Sales Tax

Sales tax rates, July 2025



Local Option Sales Tax Problem 1: Large Inequities Across Areas

Illustrated With Former Home County:
All areas have the same sales tax rate.

Differences are due to

- 1) major highways/tourist traffic
- 2) location of shopping centers
(incentives)
- 3) housing (less is better!)

Jurisdictional competition for sales tax is not
economic development: a zero-sum regional game.

Placer County Communities	Sales Tax Revenue Per Capita
County Unincorporated	\$155.87
Auburn	\$550.70
Colfax	\$679.37
Lincoln	\$80.66
Loomis	\$182.52
Rocklin	\$222.49
Roseville	\$393.86

Source: California City Finance, 2018-19.



Local Option Sales Tax Problem 2: Negative Fiscal Incentives For Local Governments Especially When Paired With Property Tax Restrictions

Hospitality, Entertainment, & Recreation Incentive Program

The Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation (HER) incentive offers a sales tax rebate or direct financial assistance, building and planning fee rebates, and/or transient occupancy tax rebates and is available to unique retailer(s) who offer a full-service establishment with hospitality, recreation, and entertainment venues. To qualify, a business must:

A minimum of \$10 million in annual sales qualifies for a 20% rebate of the portion of tax collected by the City, growing to a sales tax rebate of 50% for businesses generating \$30 million or more in annual sales.

Citywide Retail Incentive Program

Sales Tax and Building & Plan Fee rebate incentives used to attract “unique business” to Tracy. Qualified businesses must:

- Engage in “retail sales” within the City limits of Tracy
- Classify as a “unique business”
- Provide 5 years of actual annual sales for its 2 closest locations
- Identify the City of Tracy as the point of sale

Example: City of Tracy Charges \$75,000 In Impact Fees On A New House But Rebates Up To 50% of Sales Taxes To Attract New Retail and Hospitality.

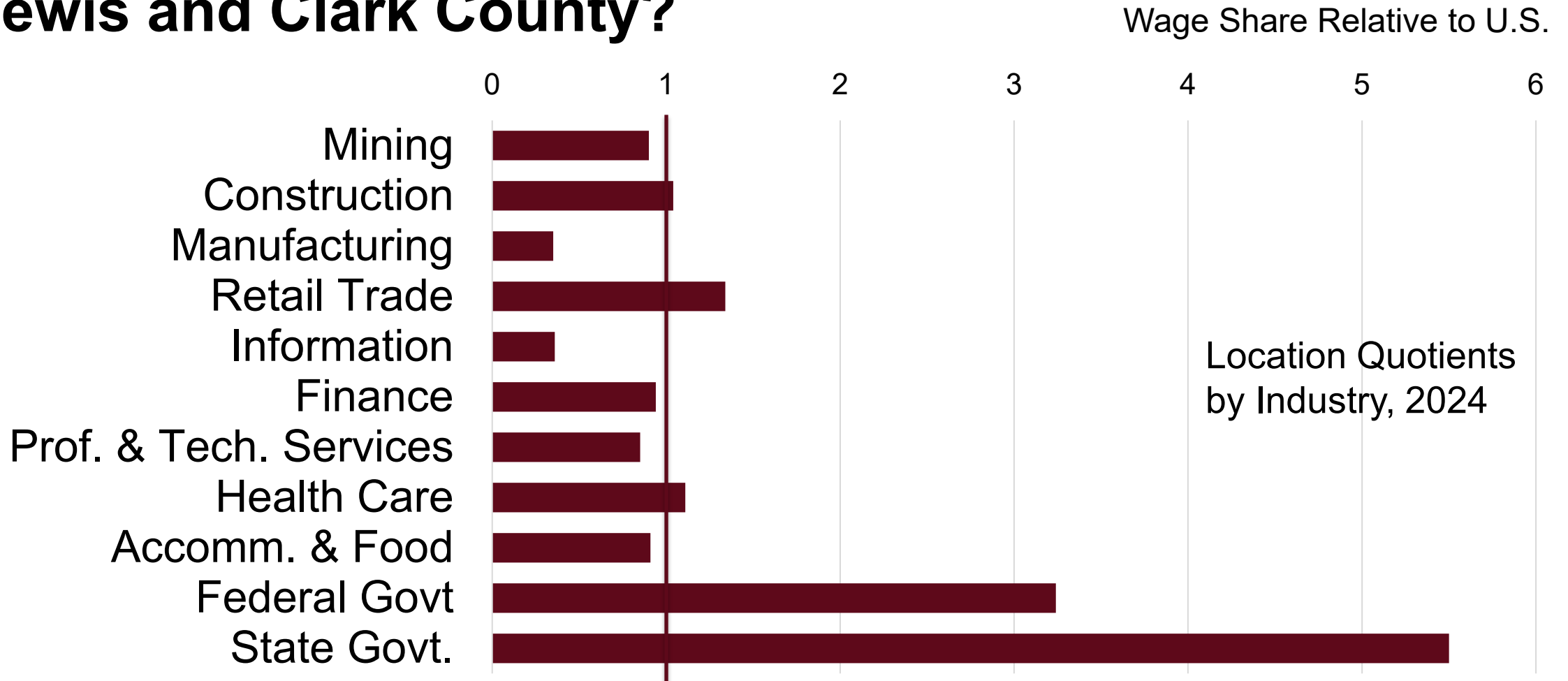


Is The Helena Growth Burst Over?

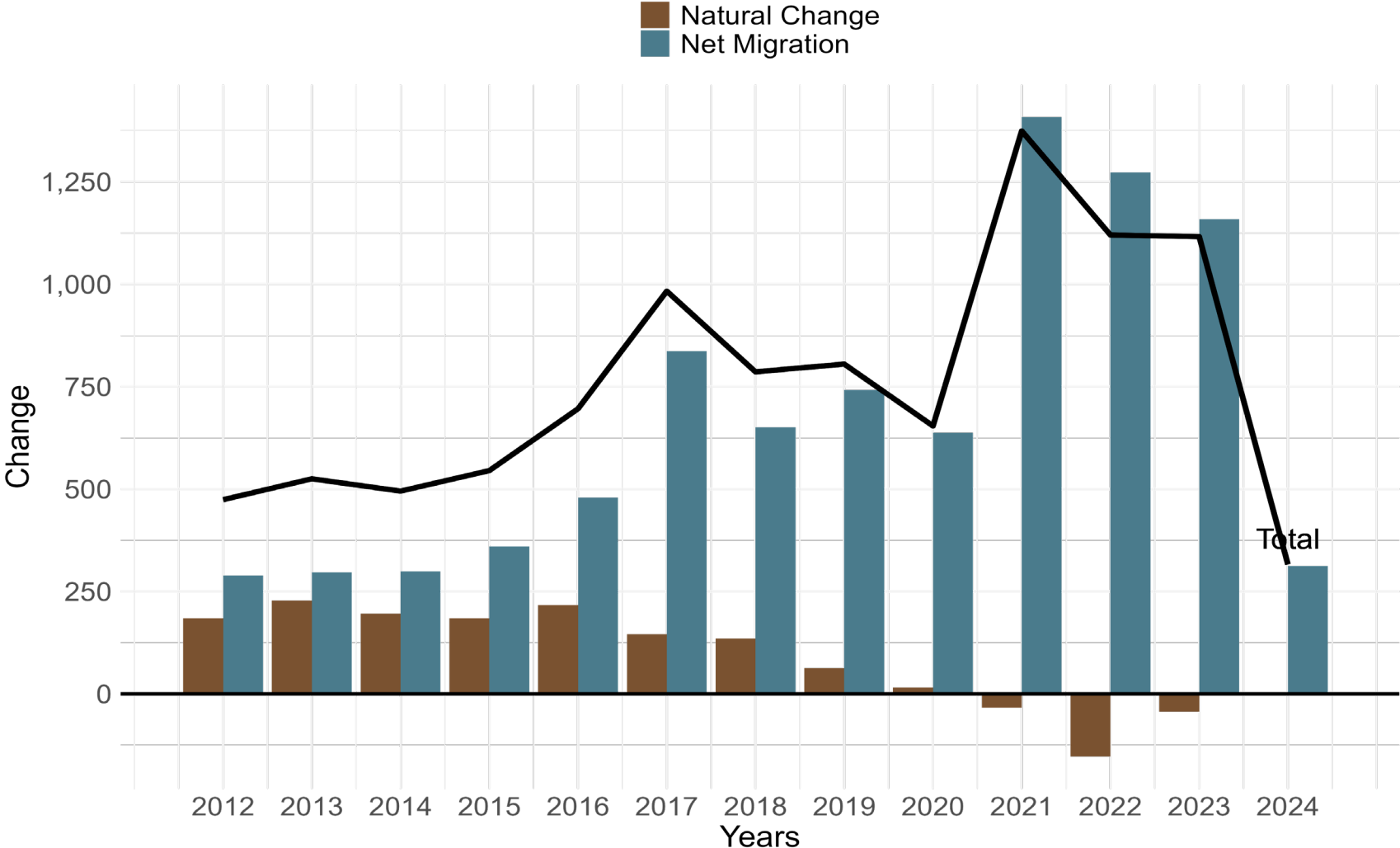
- Jobs experience small dip after multiple years of large gains. Federal cutbacks are a risk.
- The surge of in-migration has abated.
- Income gains are solid, beating inflation.



What Are the Most Prominent Industries in Lewis and Clark County?



Components of Population Change, Lewis and Clark County

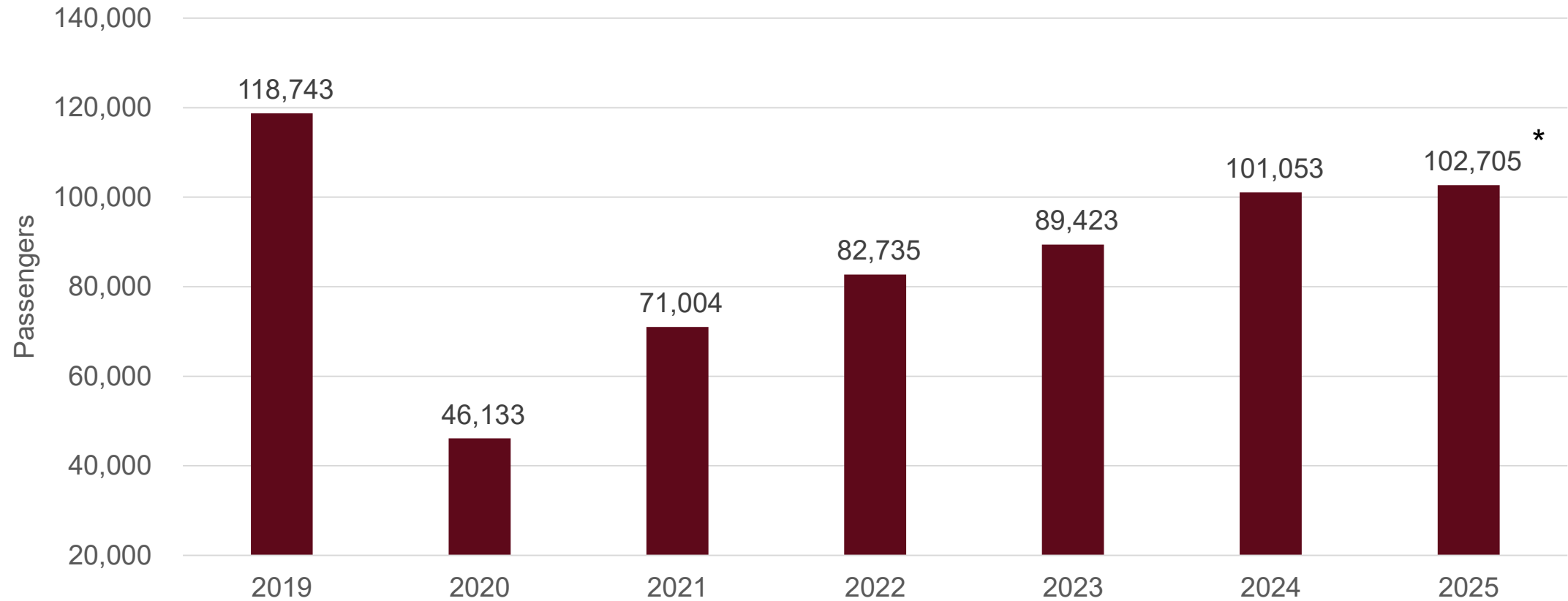


Source: U.S. Census - Population and Housing Units Estimates (PEP)



Airport Steady in 2025

Enplanements, Helena Regional Airport



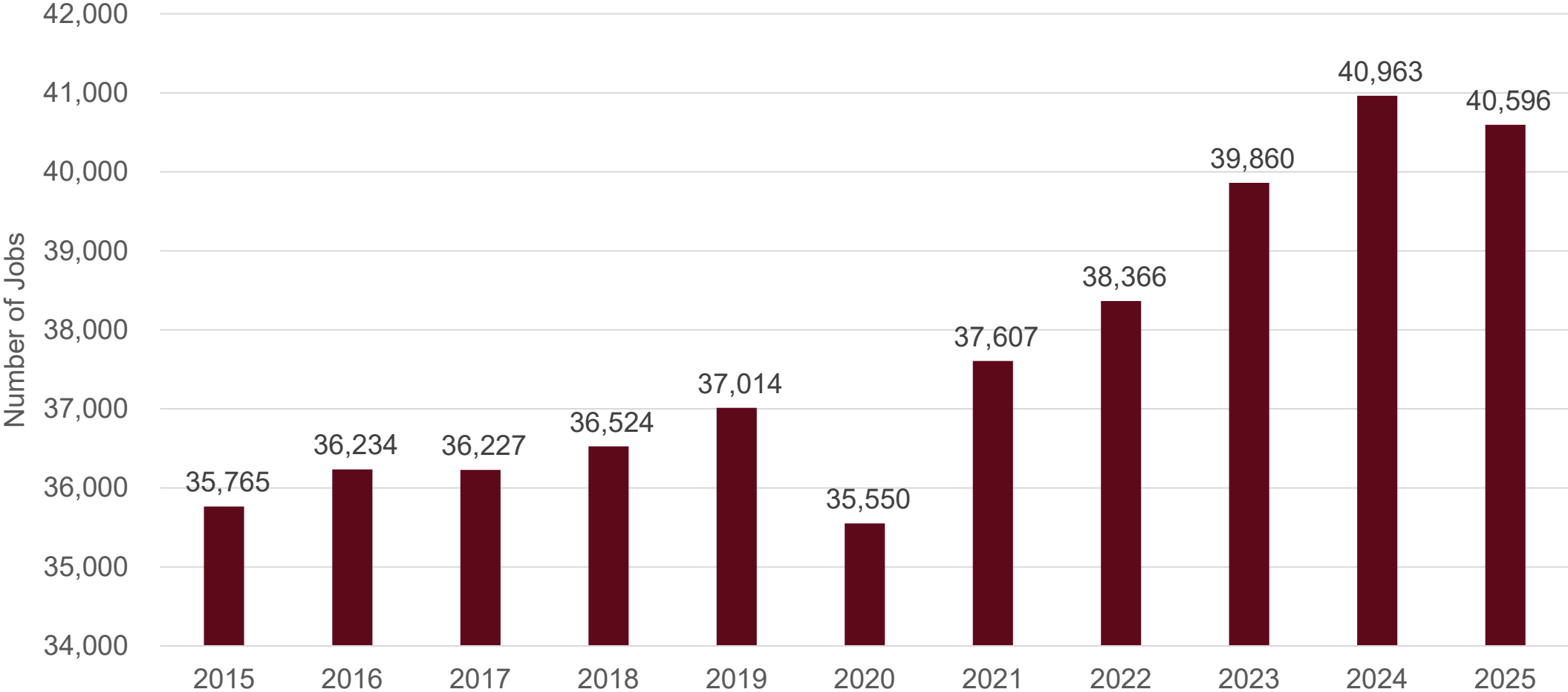
Source: Montana Dept of Transportation Statistics

* Projected

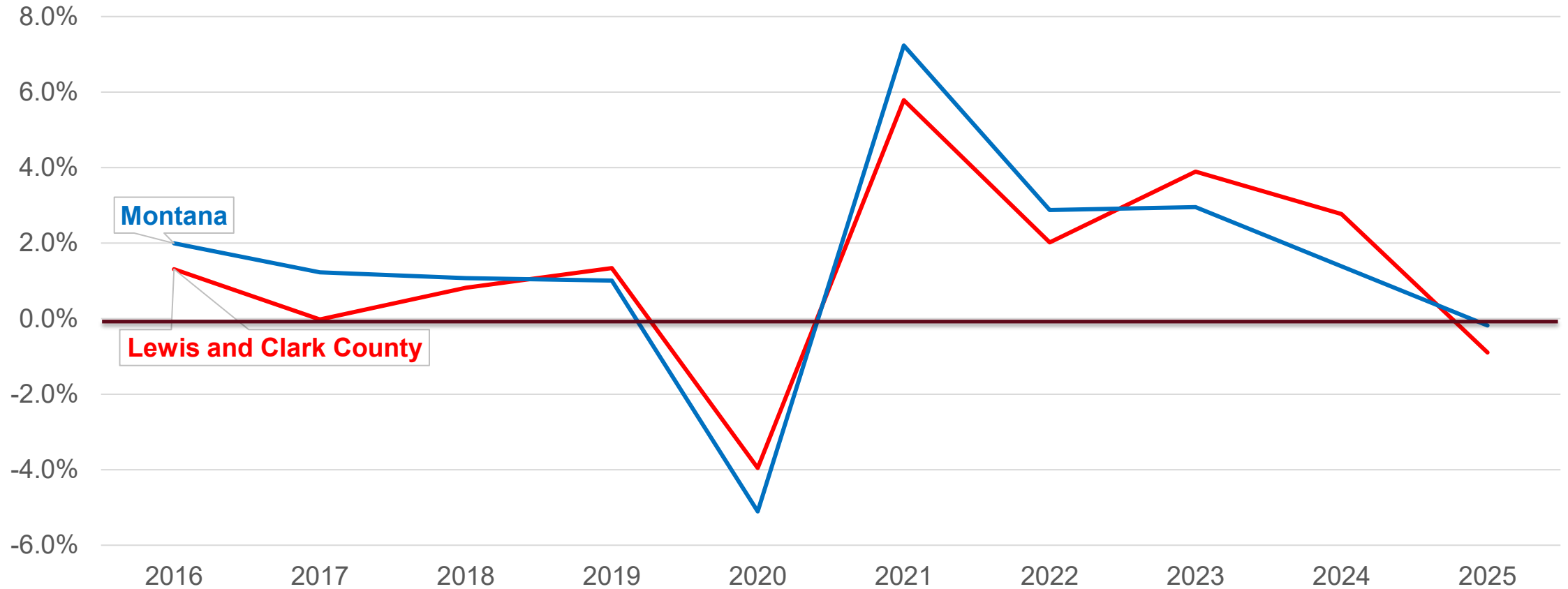


Lewis and Clark County Employment:

(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW. Data is June each year)

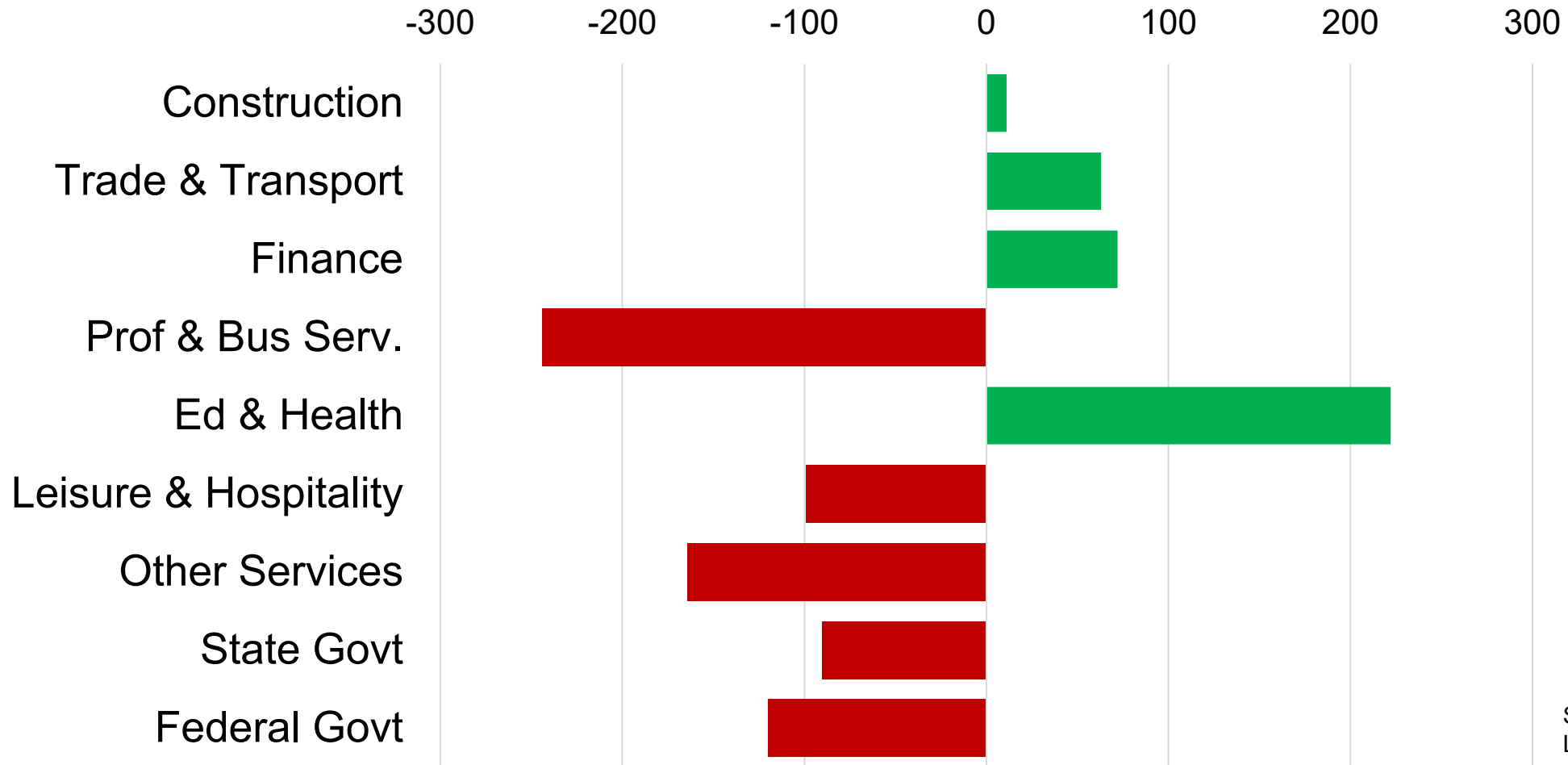


Annual % Change in Jobs – Lewis and Clark County



Government and Professional Services Lose Jobs

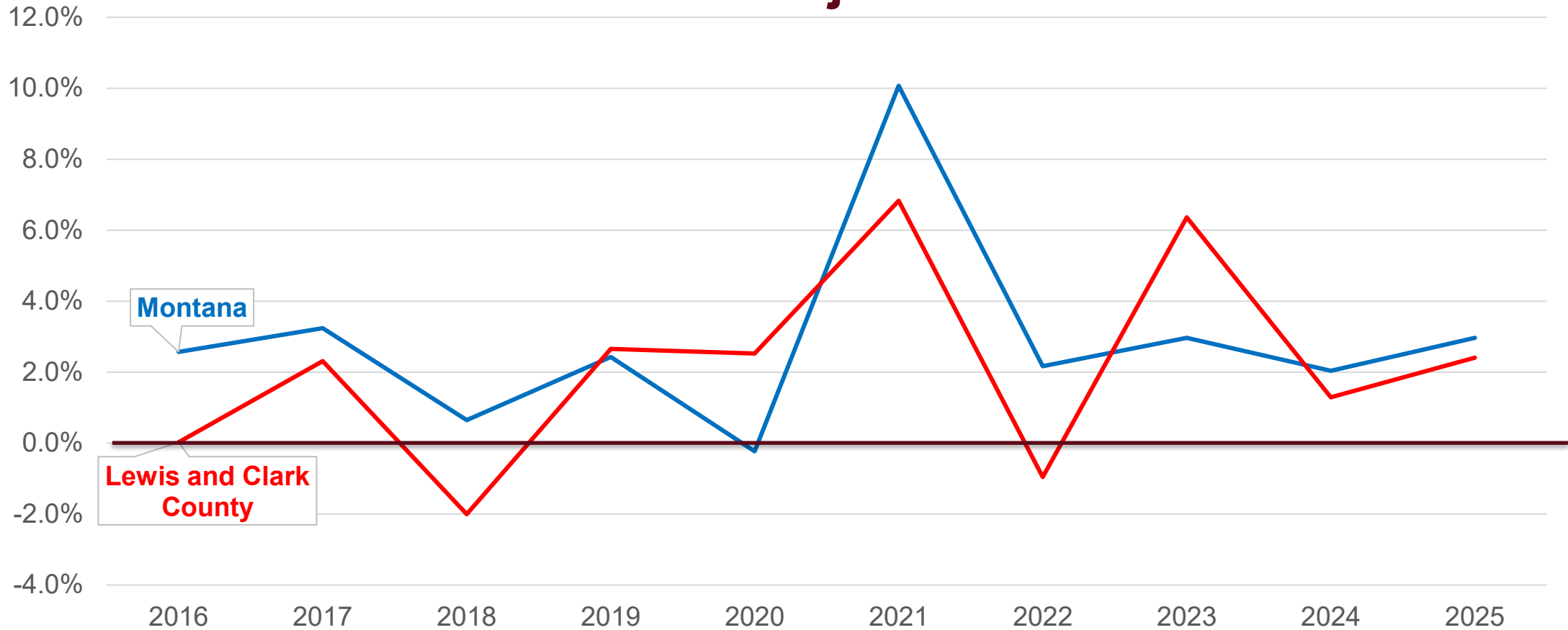
Change in Jobs: June 2025 – 2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



% Change in Total Wages – Lewis and Clark County Inflation Adjusted



% Change in Average Weekly Wage - Lewis and Clark County Inflation Adjusted

