

# Humboldt Economic Index

Our Sponsors:



Professor Erick Eschker, Director  
Jonathan Juarez, Assistant Editor  
Isaiah Oliver, Assistant Analyst

The Humboldt Economic Index is produced by the Economics Department at Cal Poly Humboldt University. It measures changes in the local economy using data from local businesses and organizations. The data are compiled into a seasonally adjusted Index that shows changes relative to the base month (January 1994). The composite Index is a weighted combination of six individual sectors of the local economy. The current Index is based on the most recently available data, which is generally data from the previous month.

August 2025

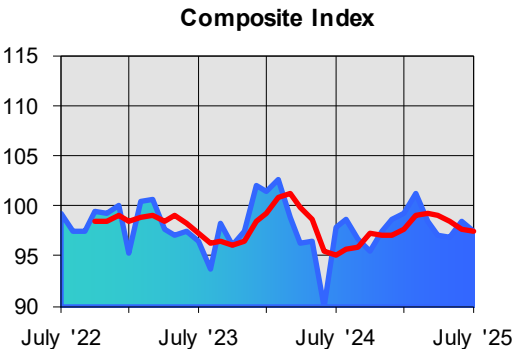
Economic Dip with Positive Outlook

The Composite Index decreased 1.1 percent from last month's value of 98.5 to the current value of 97.4. The Composite is also down 0.5 percent from this time last year. All indicators are mixed this past month.

The Index of Home Sales fell 5.5 percent this month; however, it is 9.9 percent higher than this time last year. Median home prices in Humboldt County rose from \$425,000 to \$449,775 over the past month. Mortgage rates slightly fell, with the average 30-year fixed rate mortgage at 6.72 percent and the average 15-year fixed rate mortgage at 5.85 percent.

Leading indicators are trending upward, signaling optimism for the future economy. A decline in Unemployment Claims, along with increases in Help Wanted Ads and Building Permits, suggest strengthening economic conditions ahead.

Unemployment rates showed mixed movement this month. Humboldt County's seasonally adjusted rate rose by 0.3 points to 6.0 percent, while the state rate remained unchanged at 5.4 percent. Nationally, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged up



slightly by 0.1 points to 4.2 percent. Meanwhile, total employment in the county fell by 1.6 percent, bringing the index down to 104.0.

Gas prices across California reversed their previous decline in September, with most regions experiencing notable increases. Eureka's average price surged 18 cents, reaching a 2025 high of \$5.15. Northern California saw a 6-cent rise, also landing at \$4.81, while the statewide average climbed 12 cents to \$4.60.

| Composite & Sectors                                                                                                                                       |          |                     |                  |                    |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                           |          | Percent change from |                  |                    |                   |
| Index                                                                                                                                                     | Value*** | Last Month          | One Year ago**** | Five Years ago**** | Ten Years ago**** |
| Composite                                                                                                                                                 | 97.4     | -1.1                | -0.5             | -5.0               | -9.4              |
| Home Sales                                                                                                                                                | 123.7    | -5.5                | 9.9              | -23.8              | -3.2              |
| Retail Sales                                                                                                                                              | 146.1    | 1.3                 | -2.8             | -10.6              | -13.1             |
| Hospitality                                                                                                                                               | 91.1     | -4.4                | -0.9             | 5.5                | -0.4              |
| Electricity                                                                                                                                               | 84.4     | 3.8                 | -3.5             | -21.5              | -32.8             |
| Employment                                                                                                                                                | 104.0    | -1.6                | -0.4             | 5.9                | -3.6              |
| Lumber*                                                                                                                                                   | 19.6     |                     |                  |                    |                   |
| Manufacturing**                                                                                                                                           | 870.0    |                     |                  |                    |                   |
| * Formerly "manufacturing"                                                                                                                                |          |                     |                  |                    |                   |
| ** Niche, non-lumber manufacturing. Not a component of the overall composite.                                                                             |          |                     |                  |                    |                   |
| *** These values are adjusted to remove seasonal fluctuation. The base month is January 1994 (January 2013 for manufacturing) with an Index value of 100. |          |                     |                  |                    |                   |
| **** The percent change from the same month one, five and ten years ago.                                                                                  |          |                     |                  |                    |                   |

# The Index – Leading Indicators

## Leading Indicators

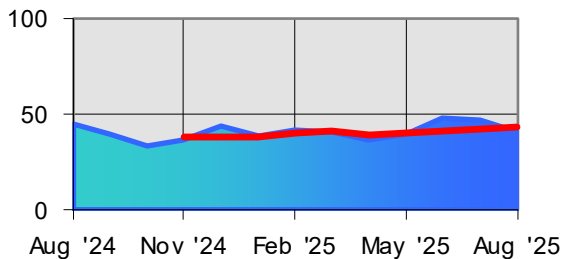
The Index tracks four leading indicators to get a sense of the direction that the county economy may take in the near future. The leading indexes are (1) number of initial claims for unemployment insurance, (2) building permits, and (3) help wanted advertising.

| Leading Indicators                                             |                  |                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Unemployment Claims                                            | Building Permits | Help Wanted Advertising |
| <b>-2.1%</b>                                                   | <b>-61.0%</b>    | <b>21.3%</b>            |
| * Change from prior month. All values are seasonally adjusted. |                  |                         |

| Key Statistics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                |                |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Median Home Price*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Monthly Rent** | Mortgage Rate† | Unemployment Rate‡ |
| \$449,775                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | \$2,089        | 6.75%          | 6.0%               |
| <p>* The Humboldt Association of Realtors provides home price data. MLS is not responsible for accuracy of information. The information published and disseminated by the Service is communicated verbatim, without change by the Service, as filed with the Service by the Participant. The Service does not verify such information provided and disclaims any responsibility for its accuracy. Each Participant agrees to hold the Service harmless against any liability arising from any inaccuracy or inadequacy of the information.</p> <p>** Average rent on 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom houses listed in Craigslist.</p> <p>† 30-year owner occupied conforming conventional fixed rate provided by Umpqua Bank.</p> <p>‡ Seasonally adjusted Humboldt County unemployment rate is based on non-seasonally adjusted preliminary EDD data.</p> |                |                |                    |

**Unemployment Claims** declined by 2.1 percent this month, bringing the index down to 46.7. Compared to the same time last year, when the index stood at 48.6, claims are 3.8 percent lower. The 4-month moving average increased by 3.4 percent, rising from 41.5 to 42.9.

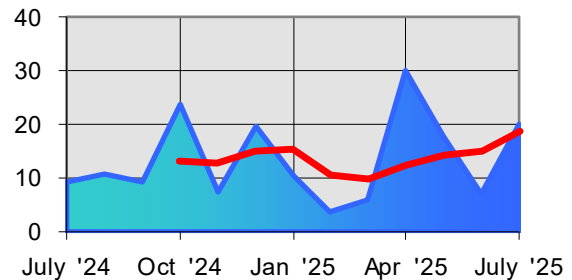
Index of Claims for Unemployment Insurance



**Graphs Explanation:** The blue area represents the seasonally adjusted Index of Unemployment Claims above. The red line shows the four-month moving average which attempts to demonstrate the overall trend in the data with less monthly volatility.

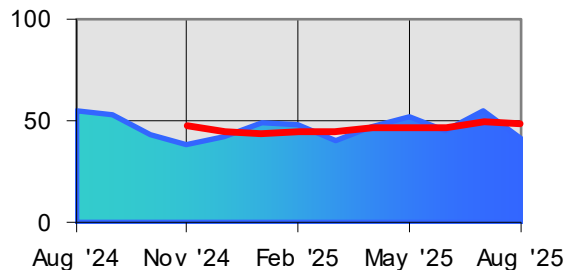
**Building Permits** surged by 187.3 percent, reaching an index value of 20.0, up from 6.9 last month. Compared to the same month last year, the index rose 114.3 percent. The 4-month moving average increased to 18.6, which is 23.4 percent higher than last month's 15.1.

Index of Building Permits Issued



**Help Wanted Advertising** increased to 54.6 this month, marking a 21.3 percent rise from last month. However, compared to the same time last year, the index is down 23.0 percent. The 4-month moving average also went up, rising 7.6 percent from 46.3 to 49.8.

Index of Help Wanted Advertising



## The Index – Individual Sectors

### Home Sales

The Index value of the home sales sector is based on the number of new and existing homes sold in Humboldt County each month as recorded by the Humboldt Association of Realtors.

The Humboldt County Home Sales Index decreased 5.5 percent to a value of 123.7, which is also 9.9 percent higher than this time last year. The county's median home price for the past month rose, to a value of \$449,775, \$24,775 higher than last month's median. The county's median home price at this time last year was \$440,000.

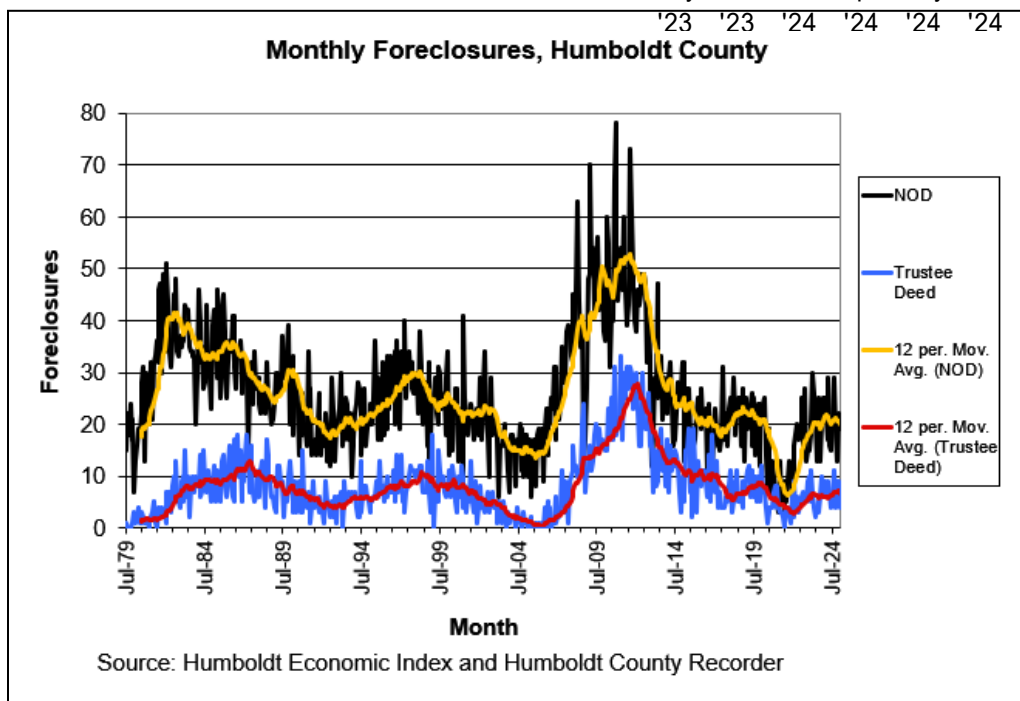
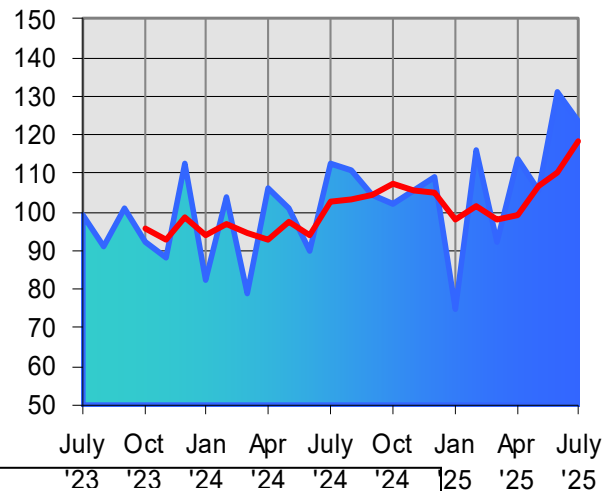
The latest report from the S&P Case-Shiller Home Price Indices highlights continued growth, with the 20-City Composite, 10-City Composite, and National Index showing increases of 1.7%, 1.8%, and 2.3%, respectively. However, in real terms, housing wealth declined, as the national gain of 1.7% in July was outpaced by the 2.7% rise in consumer prices. Additionally, 15 out of the 20 major metropolitan areas experienced month-to-month declines in July, signaling a widespread cooling trend, even during the peak of the buying season.

Nicholas Godec, CFA, CAIA, CIPM, Head of Fixed Income Tradables & Commodities at S&P Dow Jones Indices, noted that July's data shows a clear slowdown in the housing market, with growth now aligning more closely with inflation. He believes the era of 15-20% annual price increases is over, and while this means

slower wealth gains for homeowners, it signals a healthier, more sustainable market. Godec highlighted regional performance differences as another sign of normalization, with stronger local economies outpacing overvalued markets. In short, the market is shifting from rapid growth to stability, which may be disappointing to some sellers but ultimately creates a more balanced foundation for the future.

Mortgage rates increased this month. According to Freddie Mac, the average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage is now 6.72 percent, and the average 15-year fixed-rate mortgage is 5.85 percent for the week ending July 31, 2025. The rates for a 30-year and 15-year fixed mortgage last year at this time were 6.78 and 6.07 respectively.

Home Sales Index



Source: Humboldt Economic Index and Humboldt County Recorder

# The Index – Individual Sectors

## Total County Employment

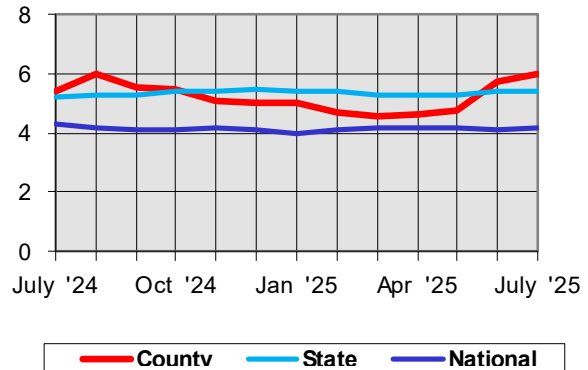
The Index value of the employment sector is based on seasonally adjusted total employment as reported by the Employment Development Department.

Total employment in the county declined by 1.6 percent this month, bringing the index down to 104.0. Humboldt County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased by 0.3 percentage points to 6.0%. Nationally, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose slightly by 0.1 points to 4.2 percent, while the state unemployment rate held steady at 5.4 percent.

The Labor Department's July statistics state that national employment added 73,000 nonfarm payroll jobs, and the unemployment rate was slightly changed at 4.2 percent. National employment rose in health care and in social assistance. Employment continues to decline in the federal government. Health care employment added 55,000 jobs, social assistance added

18,000 jobs, in July, while government employment fell by 12,000 jobs. Employment showed little change over the month in other major industries, including mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; construction; manufacturing; wholesale trade; retail trade; transportation and warehousing; information; financial activities; professional and business services; leisure and hospitality; and other services.

## Unemployment Percentage Rates



## Hospitality

The Index value of the hospitality sector is based on seasonally adjusted average occupancy each month at a cross section of local hotels, motels and inns.

Hospitality fell 4.4 percent this month to a current value of 91.1. July's index value also represents a 0.9 percent decrease over this time last year. The 4-month moving average is also up 0.6 percent over last month with a current value of 92.7.

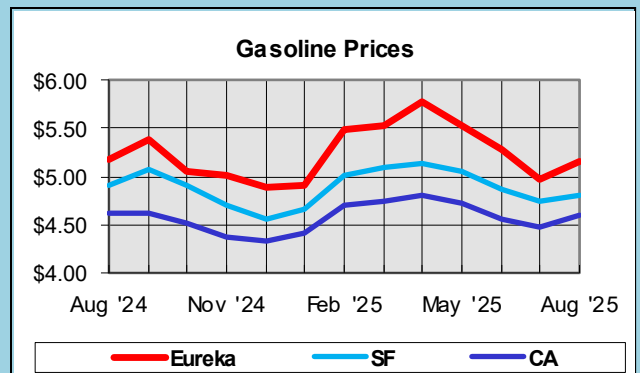
## Gasoline Prices

California's gas prices stopped declining in September, increasing by 12 cents to reach \$4.60. In Northern California, prices went up by 6 cents, averaging \$4.81. In Eureka, gas prices climbed 18 cents during the month, bringing the 2025 average to \$5.15.

According to *The Sacramento Bee* and a recent AAA report, gas prices in California are expected to drop soon as demand decreases heading into fall. This seasonal decline is typical, as refineries transition from more expensive summer-blend fuel to cheaper winter-blend fuel. In California, summer-blend fuel is required through October 31. Prices usually hit their lowest in late fall or early winter before rising again in late winter and early spring, when refineries perform maintenance and begin producing summer-blend fuel again. California leads this switch, causing gas prices on the West Coast to rise earlier than in other regions, as early as February, with some areas requiring summer-blend fuel by April 1.

| Gas Prices              |                |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Prices as of 9/ 1/ 2025 | Average price* | Change from previous month |
| Eureka                  | \$5.15         | \$0.18                     |
| Northern California     | \$4.81         | \$0.06                     |
| California              | \$4.60         | \$0.12                     |

\* Current average price per gallon of self-serve regular unleaded gasoline as reported by the American Automobile Association monthly gas survey ([www.csaa.com](http://www.csaa.com)).



# The Index – Individual Sectors

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## Manufacturing

The index value of this sector is based on a combination of production and employment for a variety of niche manufacturers and is adjusted to account for normal seasonal variations.

Overall Humboldt County manufacturing employment remained constant at 2,100 according to the Employment Development Department.

The Institute for Supply Management reported that U.S. manufacturing activity contracted in July for the fifth straight month, with the PMI falling to 48%, down from 49% in June. This follows a brief two-month expansion after 26 consecutive months of decline. Only three of the 18 manufacturing industries, Nonmetallic Mineral Products, Miscellaneous Manufacturing, and Plastics & Rubber Products, reported growth. New export orders also continued to weaken, dropping slightly to 46.1%, marking the sixth straight month of contraction. In June, Furniture & Related Products was the only industry to see growth in export orders. The PMI reflects manufacturing managers' expectations for near-term business conditions.

In July, the manufacturing sector saw broad weakness, with employment falling in 11 industries and new export orders declining in eight. Key sectors impacted included Paper Products, Primary Metals, Fabricated Metal Products, Electrical Equipment, and Chemical Products. Additionally, eight industries reported no change in export orders, reflecting continued sluggish demand.

This is the first new sector of the Index and was created after listening to local economic development agencies. For a detailed description please visit our [Special Projects page](#).

Since the manufacturing index is so new, and since we do not have much data to create precise seasonal indices, we do not include manufacturing in the overall composite Index. As the amount of data collected grows, we will feel more confident in our monthly seasonal estimates and add niche manufacturing. Lumber-based manufacturing, which was one of the original sectors of the Index, continues to be part of the overall composite Index.

## Electricity Consumption

The Index value of this sector is based on seasonally adjusted kilowatt-hours of electricity consumed each month in Humboldt County. Electricity consumption is a somewhat mixed or ambiguous indicator that usually correlates with economic activity. However, increases in energy efficiency and conservation reduce the sector's index value, while not necessarily indicating a decline in economic activity.

In July, the Electricity Index rose 3.8 percent to a new value of 84.4. The current value is 3.5 percent lower than the value for this time last year.

## Retail Sales

The Index value for the retail sales sector is based on the seasonally adjusted dollar value of sales each month from a cross section of local retail businesses.

The Retail Sales Index rose 1.3 percent to a current value of 146.1, a 2.8 percent decline when compared to this time last year. The 4-month moving average for this index also declined 15.9 percent to a current value of 142.95.

Nationally, consumer confidence rose by 2.0 points in July to 97.2, up from a revised 95.2 in June, marking the second month of stabilization after April's sharp drop. The Present Situation Index, reflecting views on current business and labor conditions, dipped by 1.5 points to 131.5. Meanwhile, the Expectations Index, tracking short-term outlooks for income, business, and jobs, increased by 4.5 points to 74.4 but remained below the recession-warning threshold of 80 for the sixth straight month. Preliminary data was collected through July 20, 2025.

Consumer confidence stabilized in July after rebounding from April's drop but remains below last year's levels, according to The Conference Board's Stephanie Guichard. Optimism about future business conditions, jobs, and income slightly improved, though views on current job availability declined for the seventh month, hitting a low not seen since March 2021.

The Consumer Confidence Index is the average of The Present Situation and The Expectations Index and is a barometer of the health of the U.S. economy from the perspective of the consumer.

## Lumber Manufacturing

Lumber Manufacturing is suspended from the Index until we can obtain a sufficient number of data providers. This sector is 12% of the overall Composite Index. The Lumber Index averaged 19.6 in 2014, the last full year of data. The Index value of this sector is based on a combination of major county lumber companies and is adjusted to account for normal seasonal variations.

# The Index

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**Explanatory Note:** We have been tracking economic activity since January 1994. The Composite Index at the beginning of this report is a weighted average of each of the six sectors described above. Each sectoral index, and the composite index, started at a value of 100 in 1994. Thus, if the retail sectoral index value is currently 150, that means that (inflation-adjusted) retail sales among the firms that report data to us are 50 percent higher than in January 1994. We also seasonally adjust each sector, and the composite index, to correct for "normal" seasonal variation in the data, such as wet season vs. dry season, and so trends in the seasonally adjusted composite index provide a better indication of underlying growth and fundamental change in the economy. Each month's report reflects the most recent data available, which is usually from the previous month. For example, the "August 2006" report reflects mostly data from July 2006. As is common, our initial report is preliminary, and as we receive final data we revise our reports accordingly.

Cal Poly  
**Humboldt.**

C O L L E G E   O F   P R O F E S S I O N A L   S T U D I E S  
■ ■ ■ *realize human potential*

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The Conference Board - Employment Development Department (CA)  
Freddie Mac - [Humboldt Association of Realtors](#)  
Institute for Supply Management – Sacramento Bee

Layout & Design: Matt Hawk

**Contact Info:** Erick Eschker can be contacted at [ee3@humboldt.edu](mailto:ee3@humboldt.edu)

<https://www.humboldt.edu/economic-index>

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