



***Economic Outlook for the Pikes
Peak Region***

29th Annual UCCS
Economic Forum
October 2, 2025

Thank You to Our Partners

Platinum Partner



Thank You to Our Partners

Gold Partners



Thank You to Our Partners

Silver Partners



Thank You to Our Partners



Sustaining Partners

ABC Bank | Blazer Electric Supply Co.
| City of Fountain | Classic Homes |
Financial Planning Assoc. of So.
Colorado | FirstBank Holding |
Housing & Building Assoc. of
Colorado Springs | Integrity Bank &
Trust | InnovaFlex Foundry | Nunn
Construction | Olive Real Estate
Group | Sparks Willson | US Bank |
Visit Colorado Springs

Thank You to Our Partners

Media Partners



Thank You to Event Sponsors



Outline

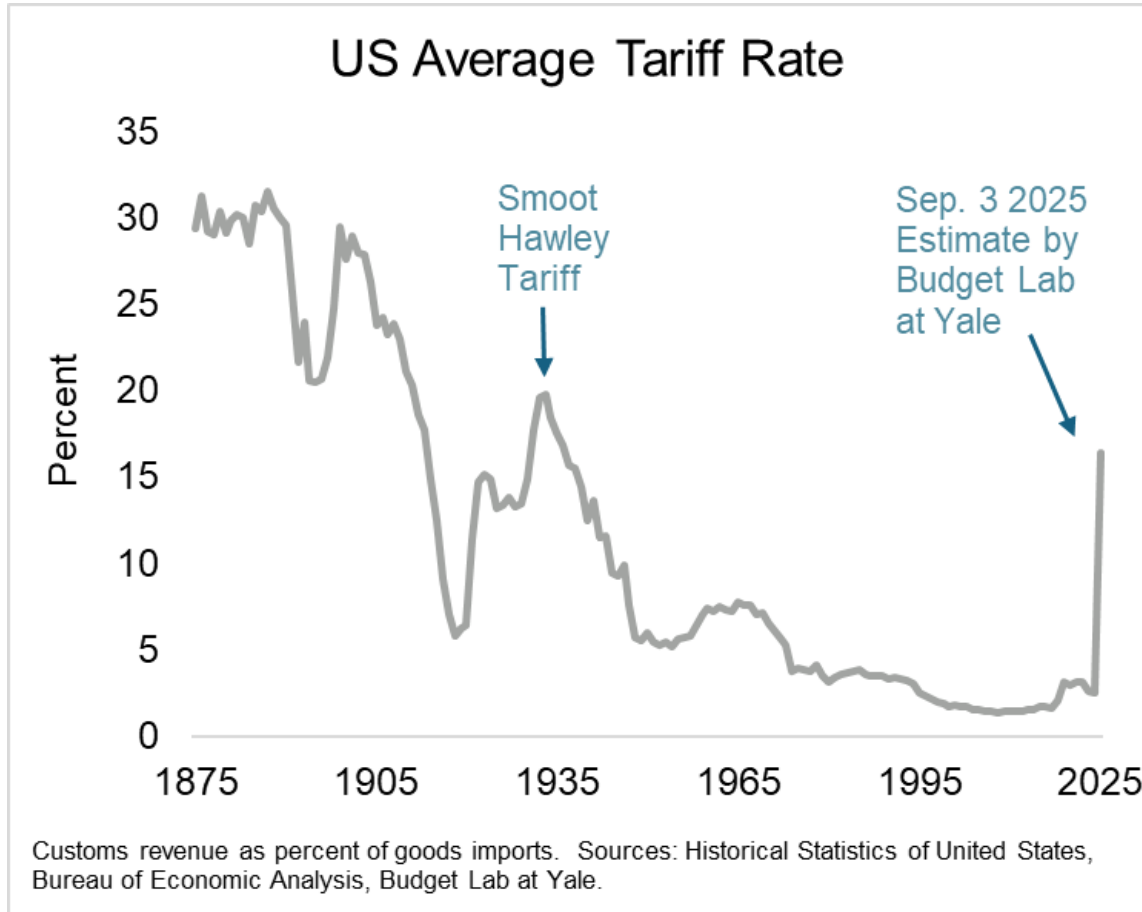
- **The US Economy**
- **The Pikes Peak Region Economy**
- **A Challenge for the Region**
- **A Challenge for the State**

Note: Slides will be available at business.uccs.edu/economic-forum under “Economic Forum Archive”

The US Economy

Still on its Feet, but Staggering

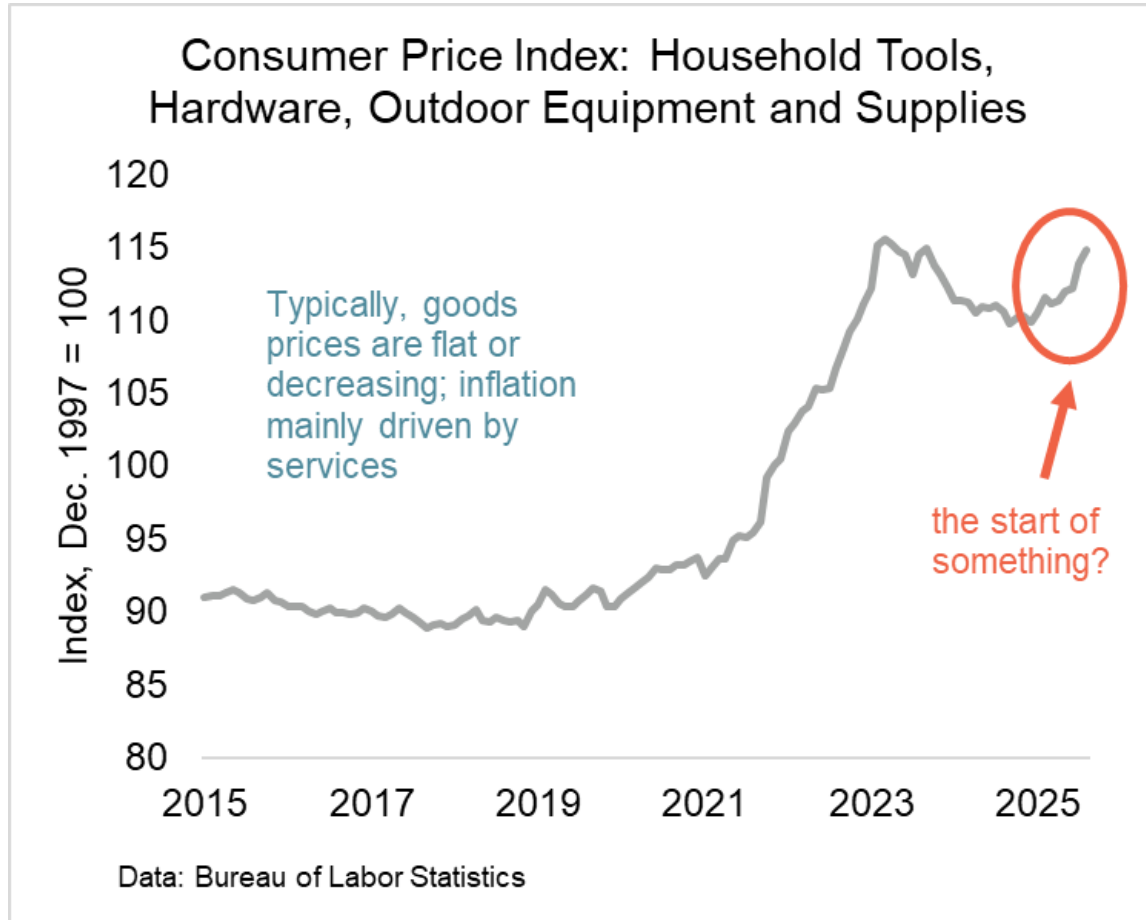
Tariffs in Context



19th Century – tariffs
main source of (small)
Federal revenue

US pursues freer trade
beginning with RTAA in
1934 through exit from
Trans-Pacific Partnership
in 2017

Tariffs, Inflation and Efficiency



Normal people don't like tariffs

- Higher costs for business
- Higher consumer prices

- Estimated \$1900 per household

Budget Lab at Yale, State of US Tariffs: Sept. 4, 2025

Economists don't like tariffs

- Less efficient use of resources
 - Smaller long-run GDP

Population

Most growth of US working-age population is from immigration

US Population, 18-64		
	US-Born	Foreign-Born
2019	166.30 mil.	34.87 mil.
2024	167.84 mil.	37.98 mil.
chg.	+1.54 mil.	+3.11 mil.

Data: Census Bureau

Immigrants are relatively small share of local population

Foreign-Born Population Share	
United States	14.8%
Colorado	10.6%
Pikes Peak Region	7.9%

Data: Census Bureau. Data for 2024.

What is the Economy's “Speed Limit”?

Significantly reduced immigration lowers what we should expect for:

- Monthly employment growth
 - “breakeven” payroll growth with zero immigration est. +27k
- GDP growth

Jed Kolko, “Seeing Economic Data Through the Fog of Immigration Estimates,” Peterson Institute for International Economics, Sep. 4, 2025

Is recent data “dismal” or the “new normal”?

- 1H 2025 GDP growth (ann. rate): 1.4% (vs. 2.8% in 2024)
- Jun.-Aug. avg. monthly payrolls: +29k (vs. +168k* in 2024)

*Will be revised downward with benchmark revision release in early 2026

What matters for standards of living:

- GDP per capita
- Unemployment rate

Labor Force Disruptions?

Unauthorized Immigrant Labor Force Share	
United States	5.6%
Agricultural occupations	41%
Construction occupations	19%
Colorado	4.3%
Data: Pew Research Center, Burning Glass institute. Estimates for 2023.	

Deportations can disrupt employment, customer relationships

Estimated impacts of “secure communities” program (2008-13):

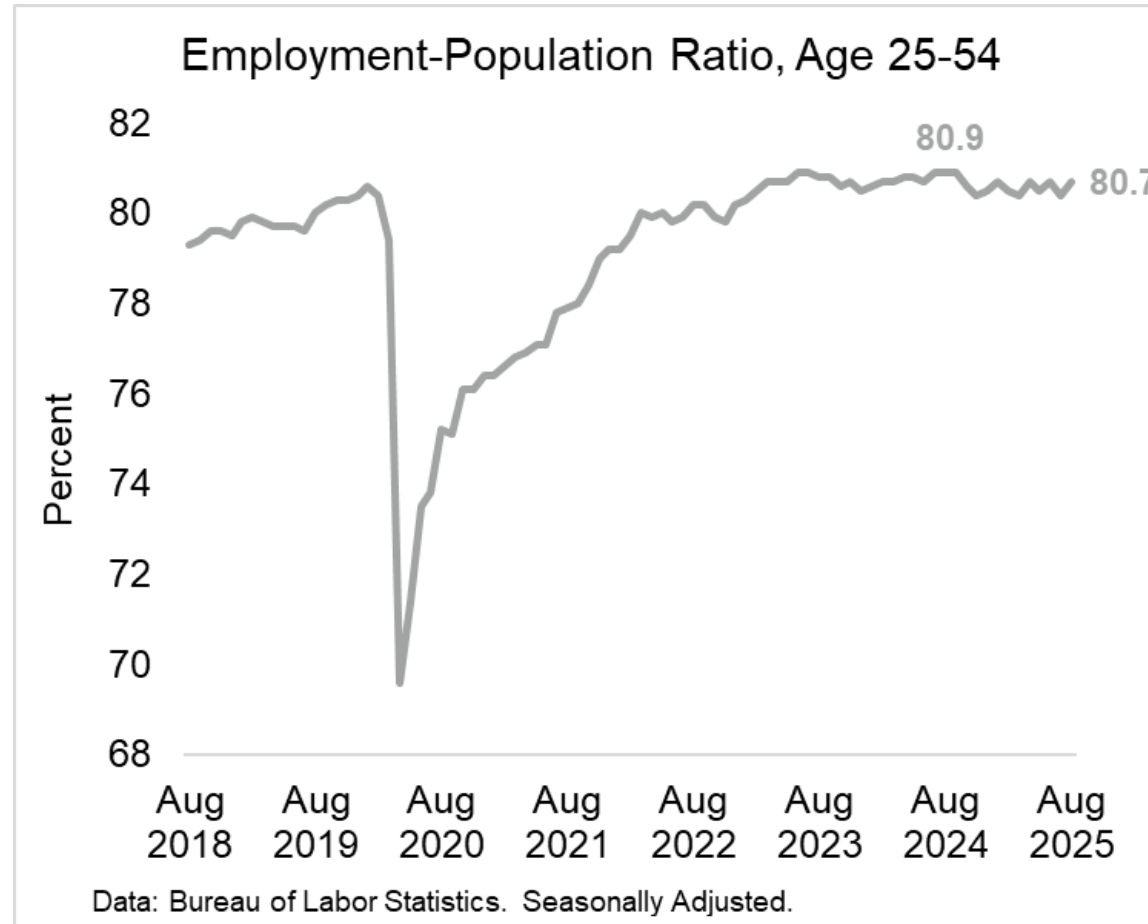
- Noncitizen employment: -3.5%
- Citizen employment: -0.5%

Chloe N. East, Annie L. Hines, Phillip Luck, Hani Mansour and Andrea Velásquez (2023), “The Labor Market Effects of Immigration Enforcement,” *Journal of Labor Economics* 41(4): 957-996

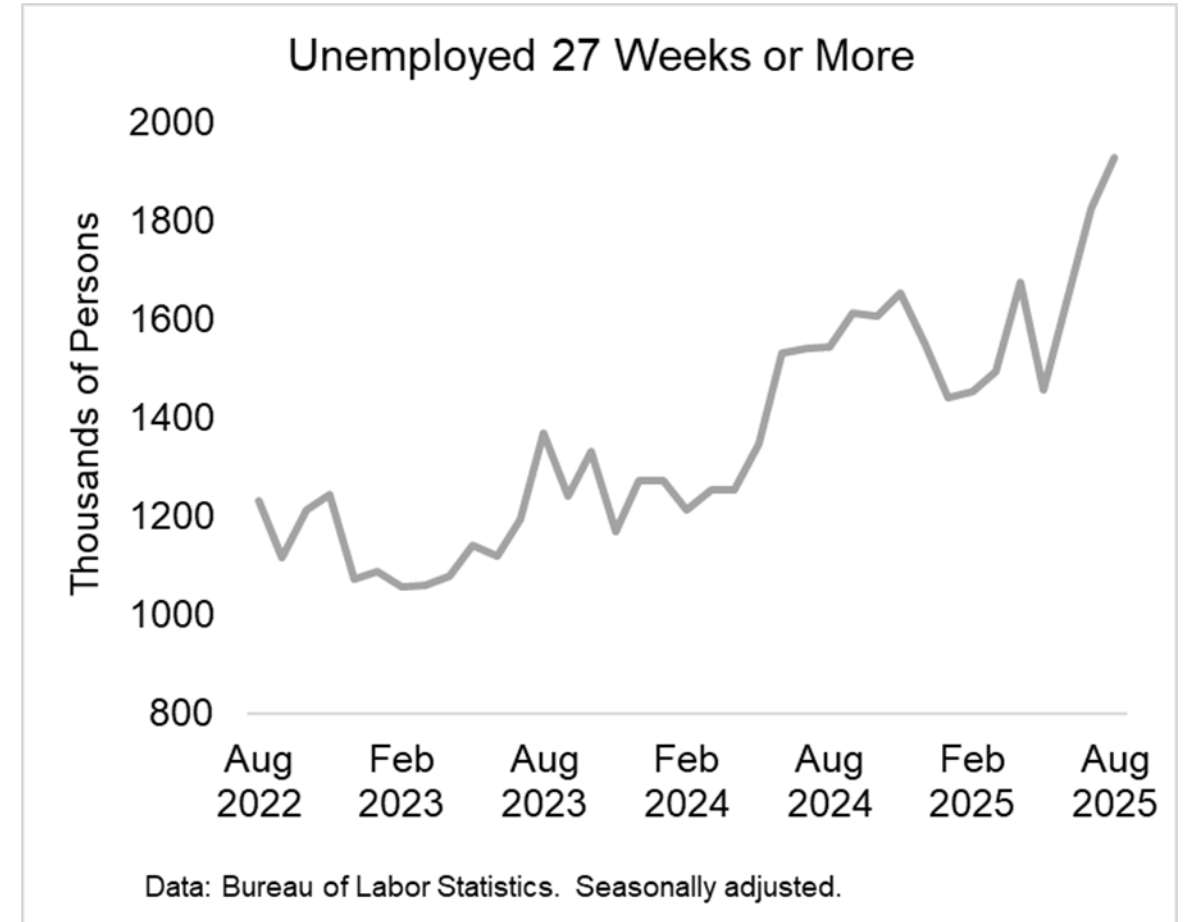
Administration goal: 1 mil. deportations per year
→ US labor force reduction approx. 0.4%

(700k out of labor force of 170k; assuming 70% labor force participation based on estimate of 9.3 mil. in labor force out of total unauthorized pop. of 14.0 mil. in 2023; Pew Research Center, “US Unauthorized Immigrant Population Reached a Record 14 million in 2023,” Aug. 21, 2025)

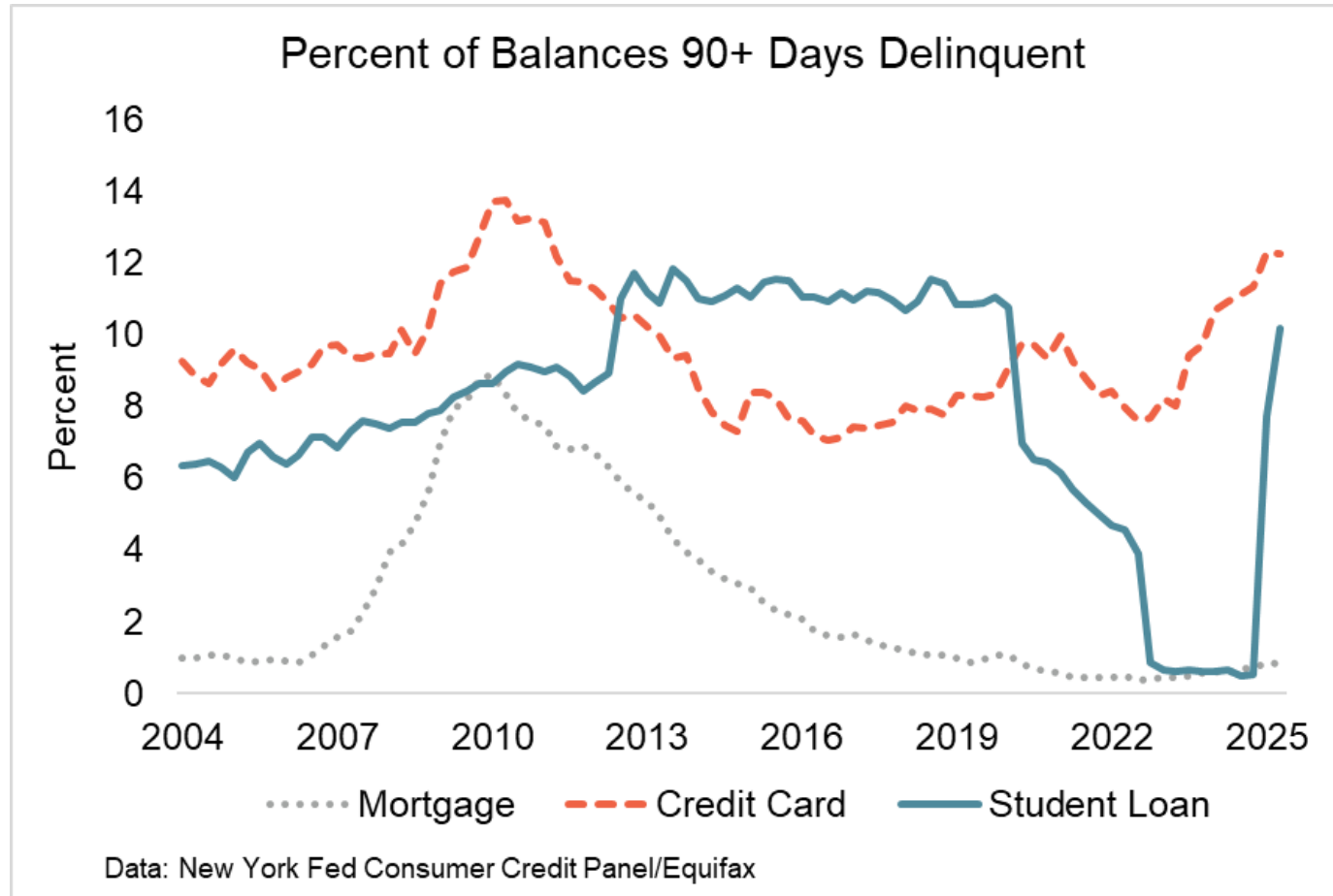
US Labor Market



US Labor Market



US Consumers



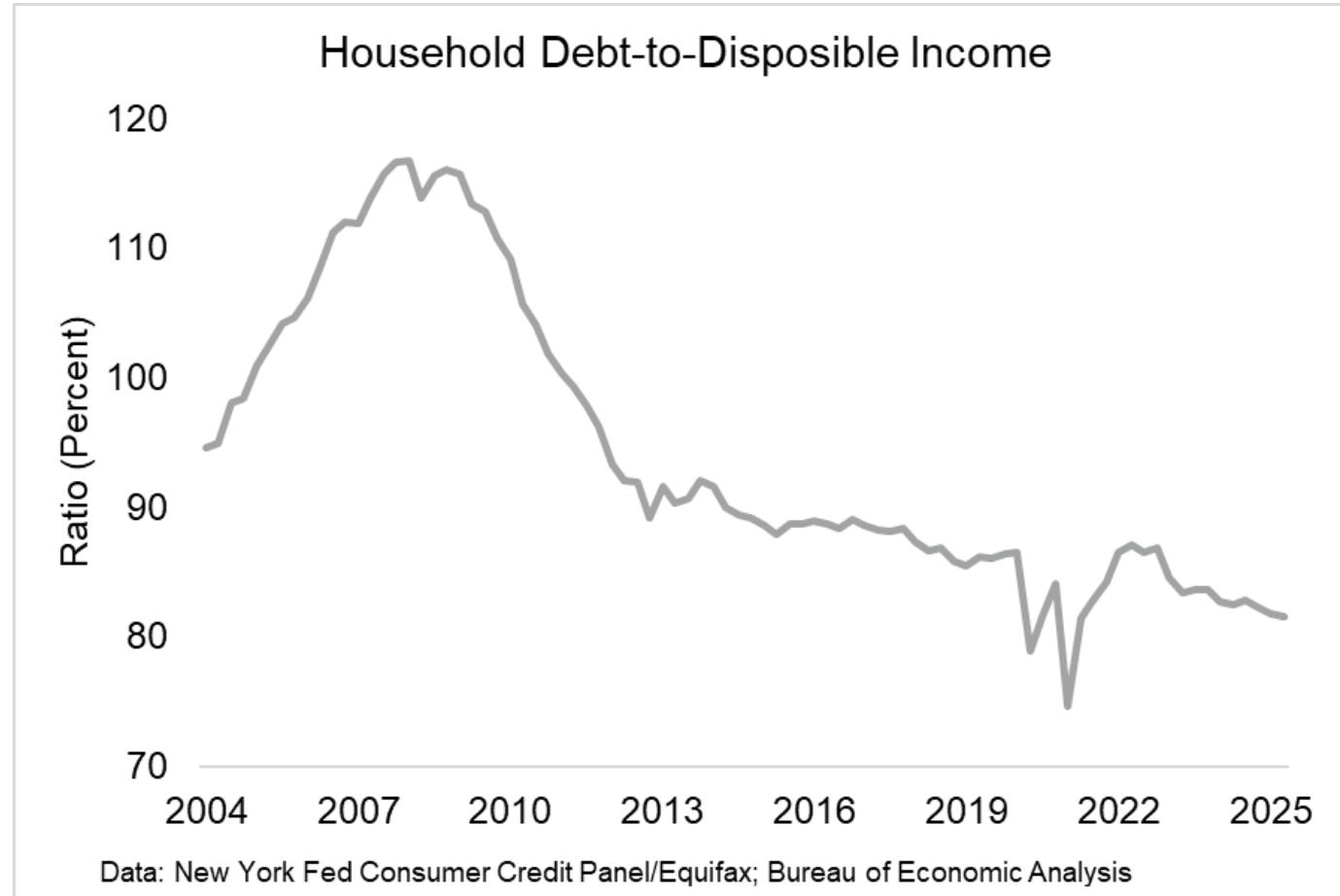
- Credit card delinquency rising
- Student loan delinquency is back
- Mortgage delinquency still low

El Paso County Foreclosures Jan. – Aug.

2024	343
2025	673

Data: El Paso County Public Trustee

US Consumers



The Pikes Peak Region Economy

Prosperous, Slower Recently, Great Prospects

Complacency IS an Option



Complacency IS an Option



	Median Household Income (Rank in Parenthesis)	Share with Bachelor's Degree
Pikes Peak Region	\$90,760 (56)	42.8% (59)
Denver (Metro)	\$108,046 (12)	51.6% (19)
Colorado	\$97,113 (8)	47.8% (2)
United States	\$81,604	36.8%

Data: Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Data for 2024 Bachelor's degree share for age 25 and up.

“Pikes Peak Region”: Colorado Springs Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), El Paso + Teller, Metro ranks out of 387 MSAs

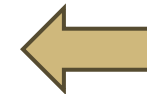
Is Colorado Springs Expensive?

Regional Price Parities (US = 100)			
	Colorado	Denver (Metro)	Pikes Peak Region
Overall	101.4	105.5	97.4
Goods	98.1	101.3	94.3
Housing	130.5	146.1	123.2
Utilities	87.1	96.1	79.6
Other services	96.2	98.9	93.0

Data: Bureau of Economic Analysis. Data for 2023.

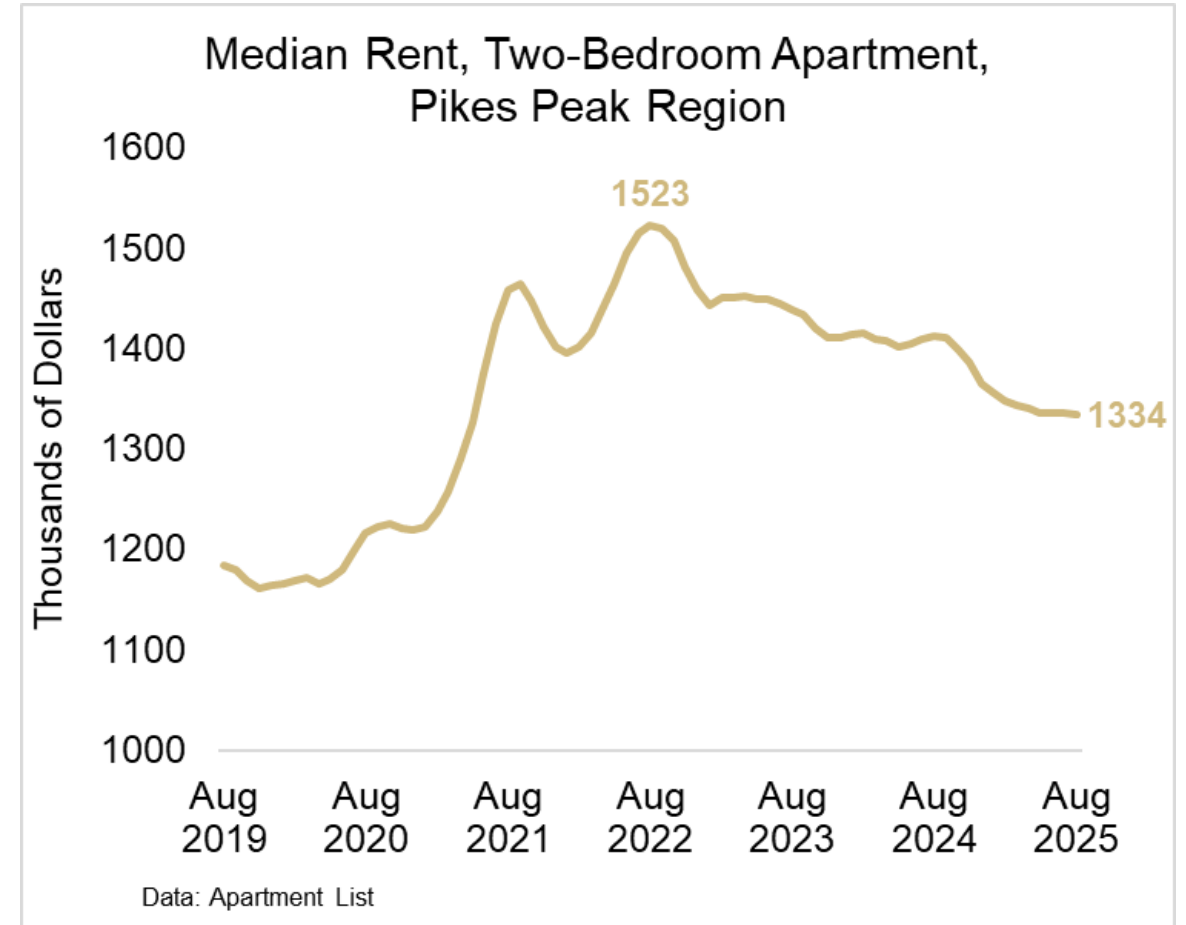
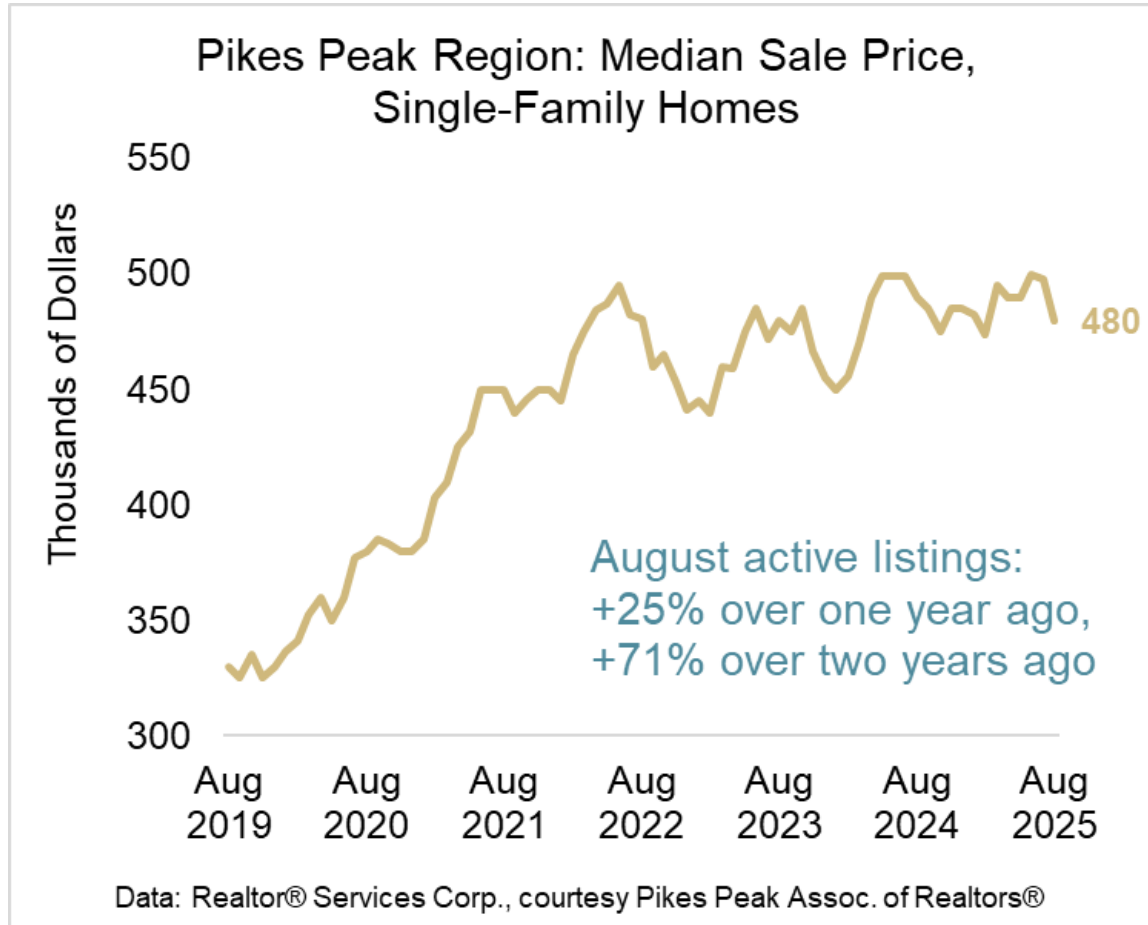
Colorado has the 14th highest RPP

Colorado Springs has the 106th highest RPP (Denver: 34th)

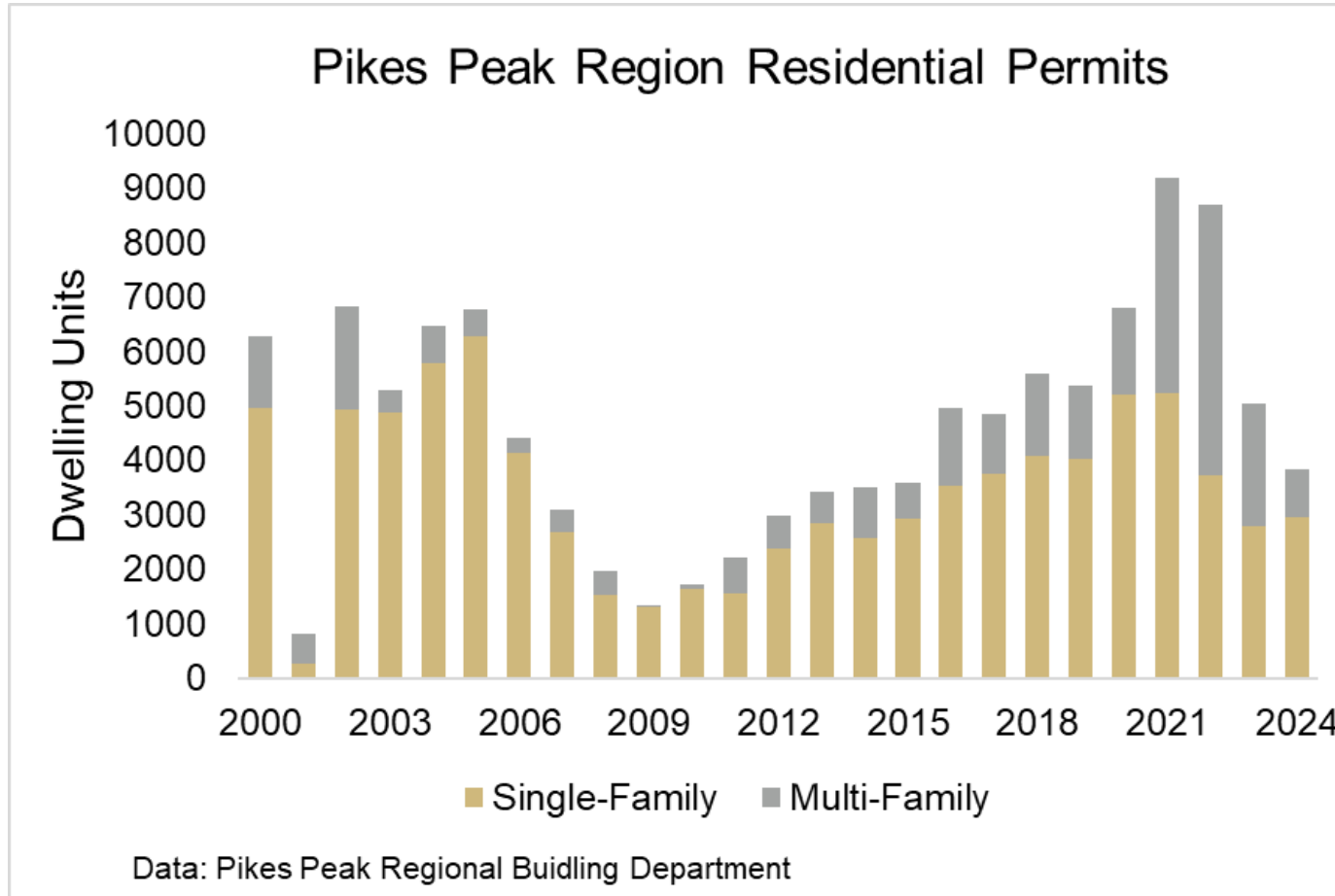


Unweighted average MSA RPP: 94.6

Housing Markets

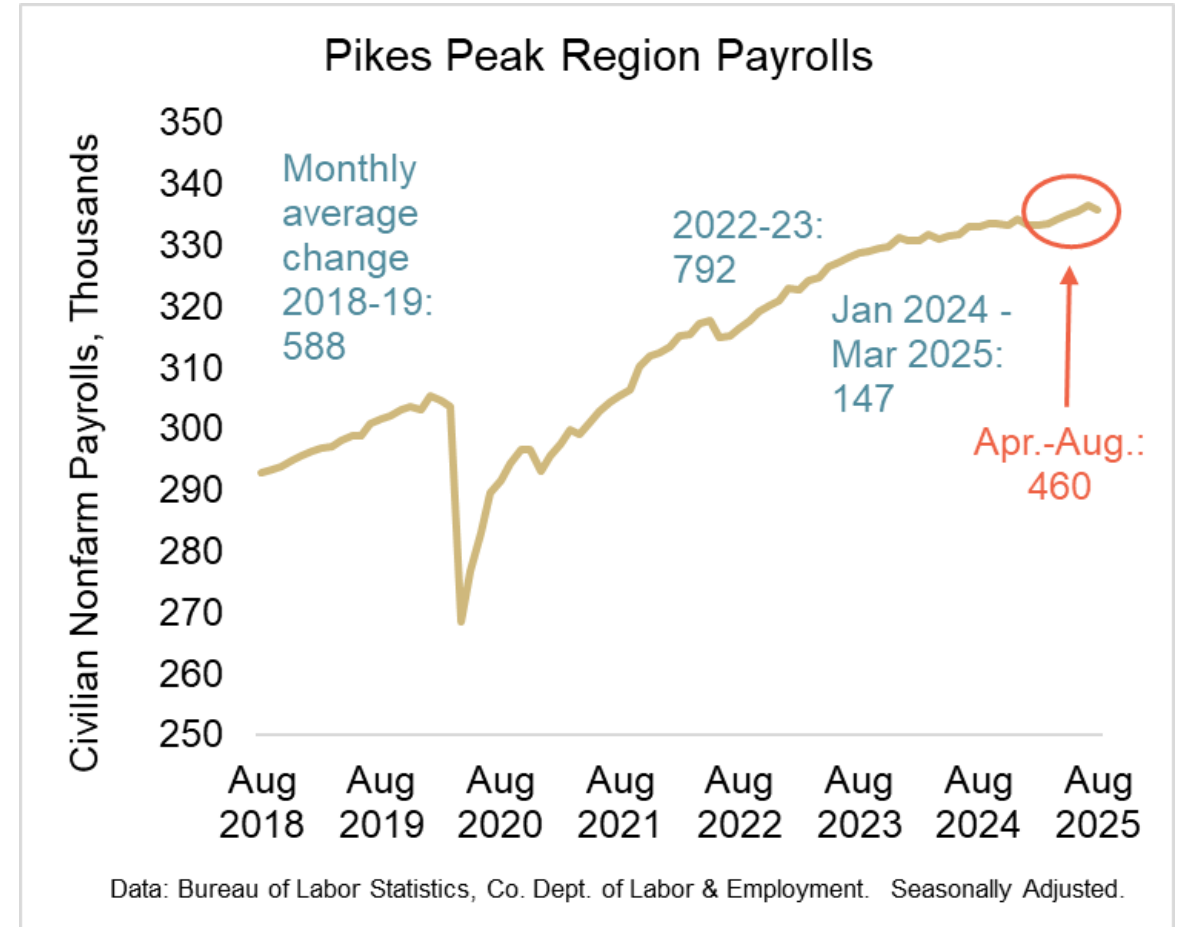
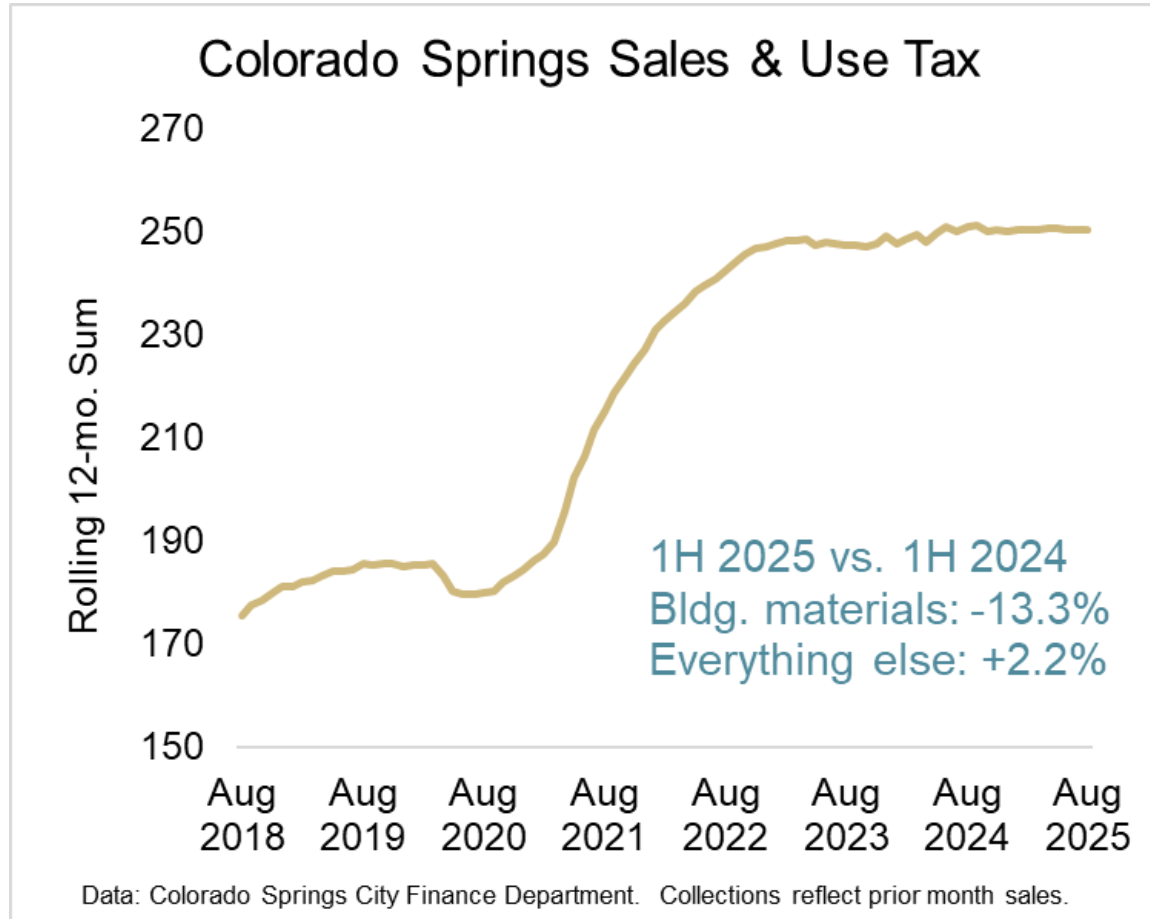


Building Permits



Residential Permits, Jan.-Aug.			
	Single-Family	Multi-Family	Total
2024	2233	547	2780
2025	2038	924	2962

Slower Lately



Travel and Tourism

National Environment



Visitation to Colorado Springs

	Visitation	Spending
2023	24.8 mil.	\$2.9 bil.
2024	25.5 mil.	\$3.1 bil.

Data: Longwoods International Travel USA Visitor Profile Study commissioned by VisitCOS

Colorado Springs LART Revenue

	Jan.-Jul.	June
2024	6.05 mil.	1.19 mil.
2025	5.98 mil.	1.24 mil.
Pct. chg.	-1.1%	+4.1%

Data: Colorado Springs City Finance Department. Reflects month of sale transaction.
LART: Lodgers' and Auto Rental Tax.

Veterans

	Pikes Peak Region	United States
Veteran (civilian 18 and over)	15.5%	5.9%
Median income of veterans	\$72,712	\$55,122
Share of veterans with bachelor's deg.	47.0%	32.8%
Data: Census Bureau. Data for 2024.		

- Veterans are an important part of defense contractor workforce
- Our veteran population is more educated, higher-earning

Ranked 11th among metro areas for veteran share (2nd among metro areas with population > 500,000 behind Killeen-Temple TX)

Defense Industry

Strengths

- Workforce
- Colorado defense / aerospace ecosystem

Opportunity

- Space missile defense - \$25 bil. in budget reconciliation

Military and defense industry is a strength because it does not follow the overall economic cycle, but it does expose region to risk of unfavorable decisions from Washington

Awards and Honors



Colorado Springs:
#5 Best-Performing
Large City



Colorado Springs:
#1 Most Neighborly



El Paso County:
3 Achievement
Awards

- Economic Development
- Communications
- Parks



Pikes Peak SBDC:
Region 8 Small
Business
Development
Center and
Innovation Center
Award



Colorado:
#11 in America's
Best States for
Business

In the Works/On the Drawing Board

Manufacturing/Industrial

- Peak Innovation Park
- Southern Colorado Rail Park

Workforce

- UCCS Hospitality, Tourism, and Resort Management program

Outdoors

- Ring the Peak

Urban projects

- Tejon Street Revitalization
- Union Printers Home
- North Nevada Corridor
- COS Creek Plan

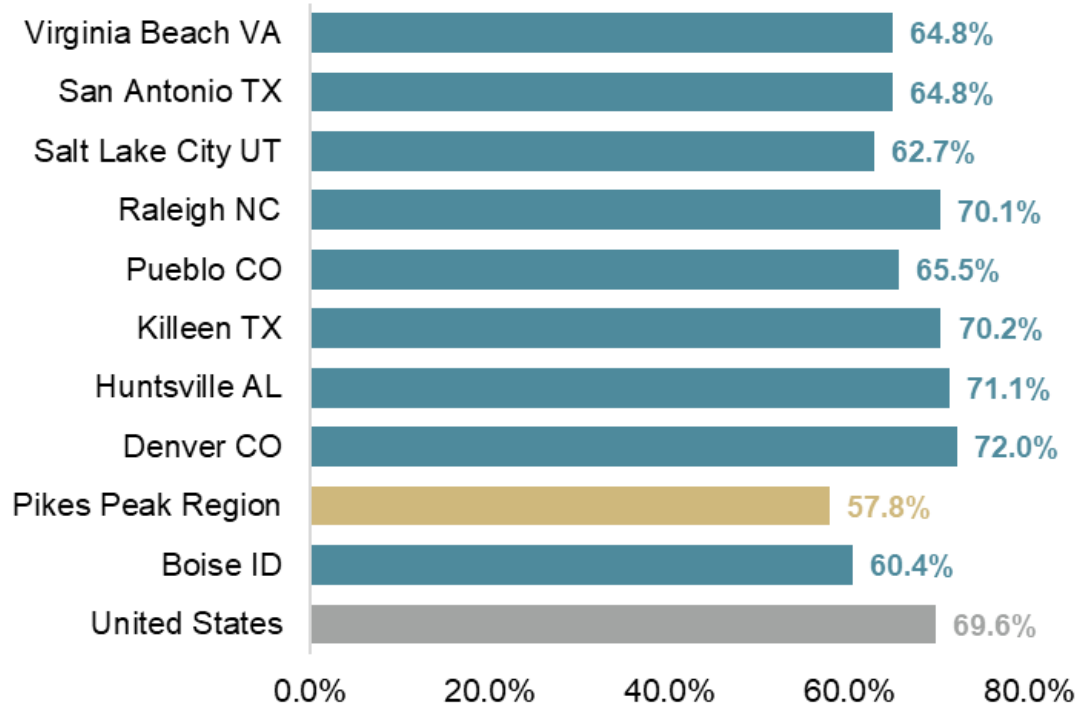
Transportation

- Elevate COS
- Front Range Passenger Rail

A Challenge for the Region

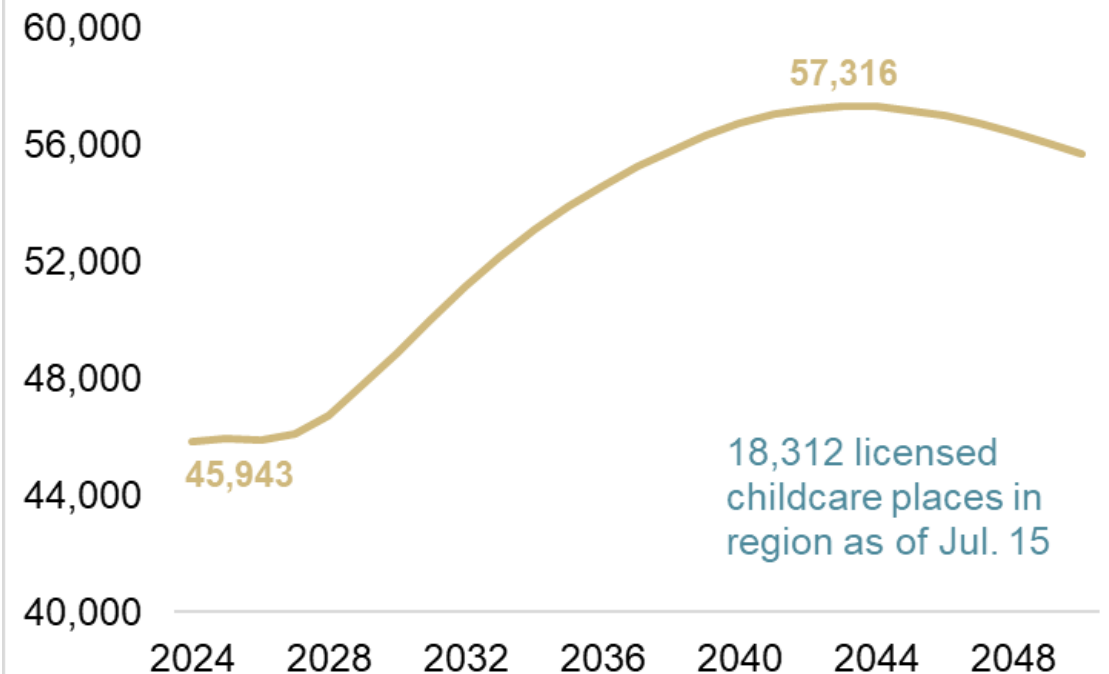
Early Childhood Education

Children Under 6, All Parents in Labor Force



Data for 2024 at the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Level. Source: US Census Bureau.

Pikes Peak Region Population Age 0-4



Data: Colorado State Demography Office forecast

A Challenge for the State

Education and Wages

Median Earnings by Highest Level of Education

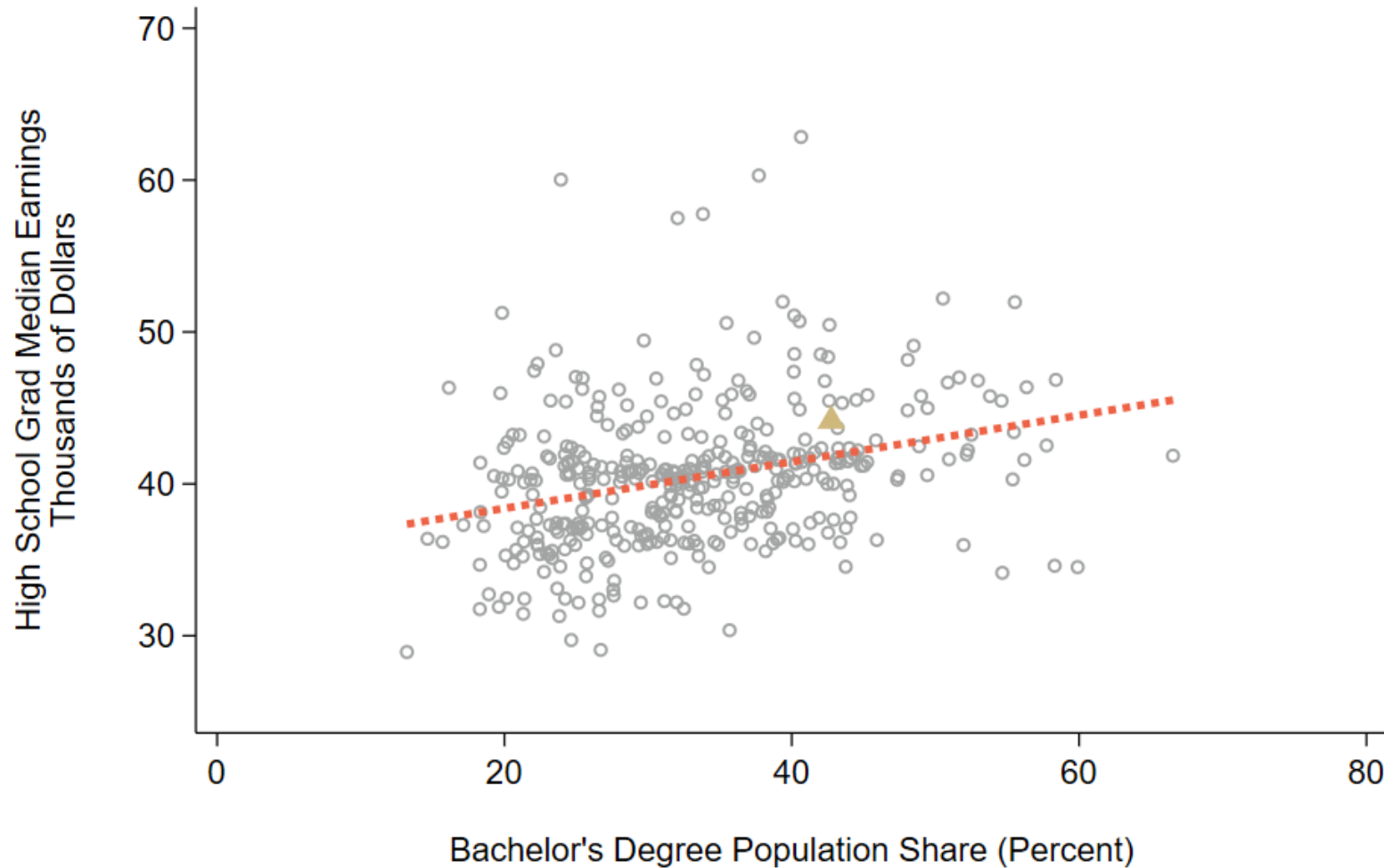
	Pikes Peak Region	Colorado	United States
High School Grad	\$44,163	\$46,010	\$40,684
Some College/Associate's Degree	\$51,113	\$51,247	\$47,953
Bachelor's Degree	\$68,443	\$75,637	\$70,470
Graduate/Professional Degree	\$92,117	\$91,767	\$90,191
<i>College wage premium (Bachelor's vs. HS)</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>73%</i>

Data: Census Bureau. Data for 2024

Rate of
return for
college:
12.5%

Jaison R. Abel and Richard Dietz, "Is College Still Worth It?" Liberty Street Economics, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Apr. 16, 2025

Education and Wages



Source: Census Bureau, Data for 2024

Education: Colorado vs US

	Colorado	United States
High School Graduation Rate (2021-22)	82.3% (40)	86.6%
Public higher ed appropriations per FTE (FY 2024)	\$7,172 (37)	\$10,820
State rank in parenthesis. Data: US Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics; State higher Education Executive Officers Association, State Higher Education Finance Report, National Center for Education Statistics. High School Graduation Rate is four-year cohort-adjusted graduation rate. FTE: full-time enrollment.		

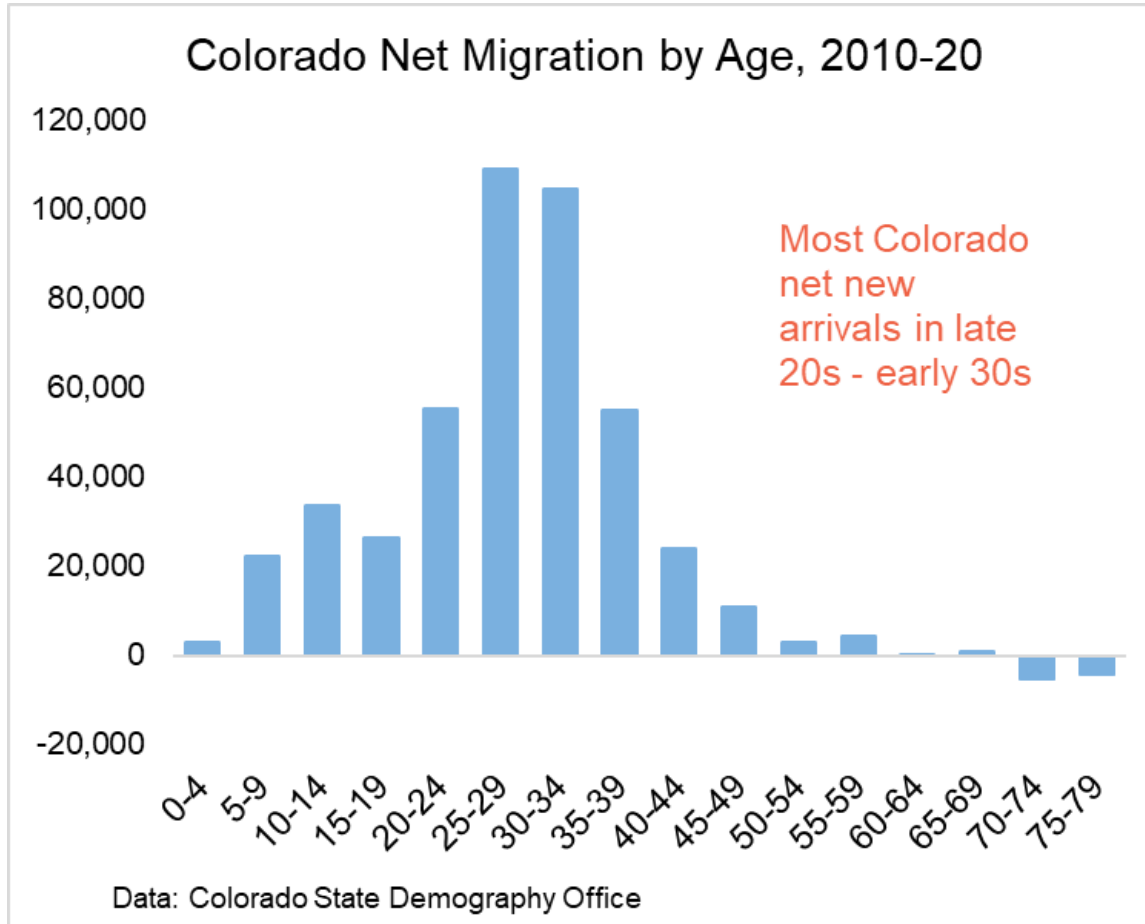
Note: Graduation rate is from National Center for Education Statistics which saw severe staffing cuts earlier this year and data has not been updated

Colorado Matriculation Rates	
2-yr	12.1%
4-yr	39.7%
CTE	8.0%
Military	0.9%
Other	2.3%
Data: Colorado Dept. of Education. Data for 2023. Other are postsecondary programs: ASCENT, P-Tech, TREP	

US Matriculation Rates	
2-yr	20.7%
4-yr	42.1%
Data: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data for 2024.	

!! Caution: Different Data Sources !!

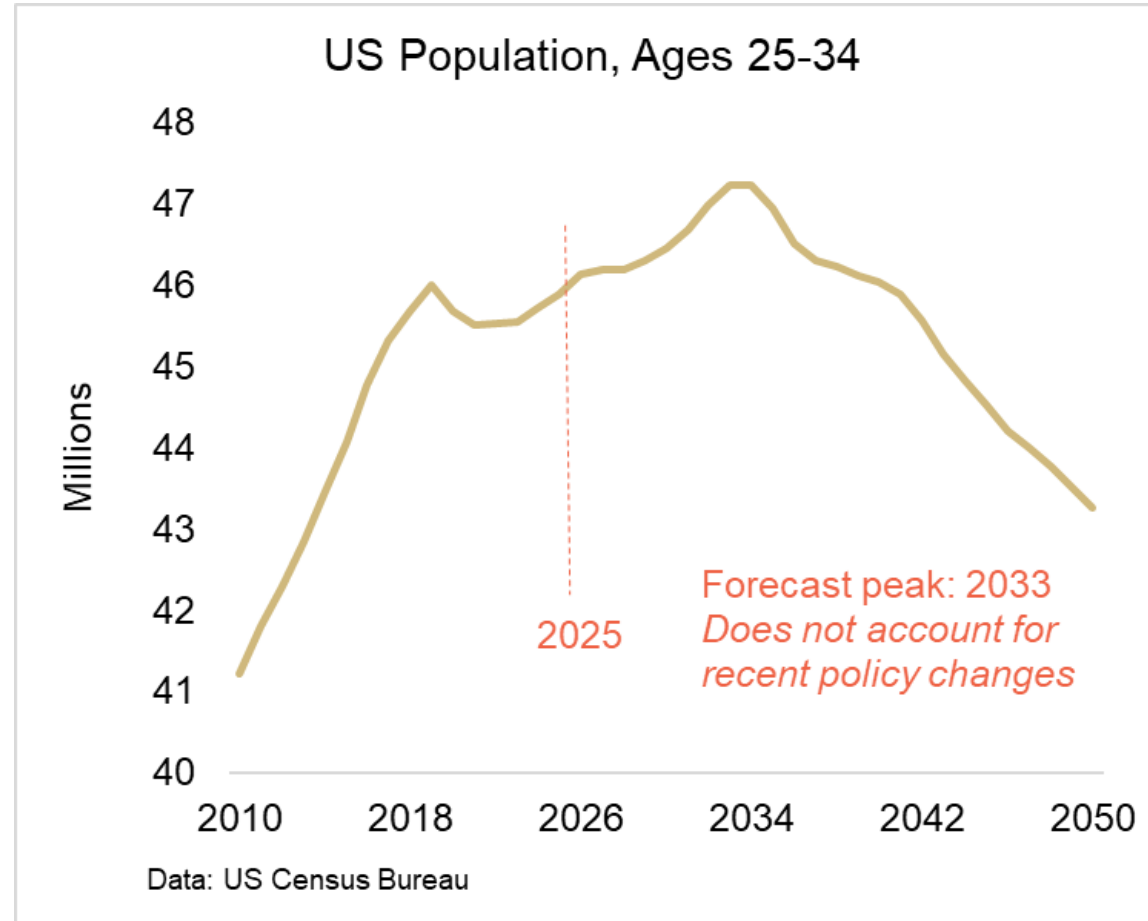
Who is Coming Here?



Colorado is #1 net importer of college graduates among states in percentage terms

Johnathan G. Conzelmann et al. (2023), "Grads on the Go: Measuring College-Specific Labor Markets for Graduates," Journal of Policy Analysis and Management

Can We Keep Importing Graduates?



Thank You!

Questions?

See You Next Year!

Enjoy Happy Hour Courtesy Of



Follow the
Economic
Forum On
LinkedIn!

