

# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

March 29, 2022

Lead Researchers:  
Andrew Fitzgerald and Jake Polansky



Baton Rouge Area Chamber®

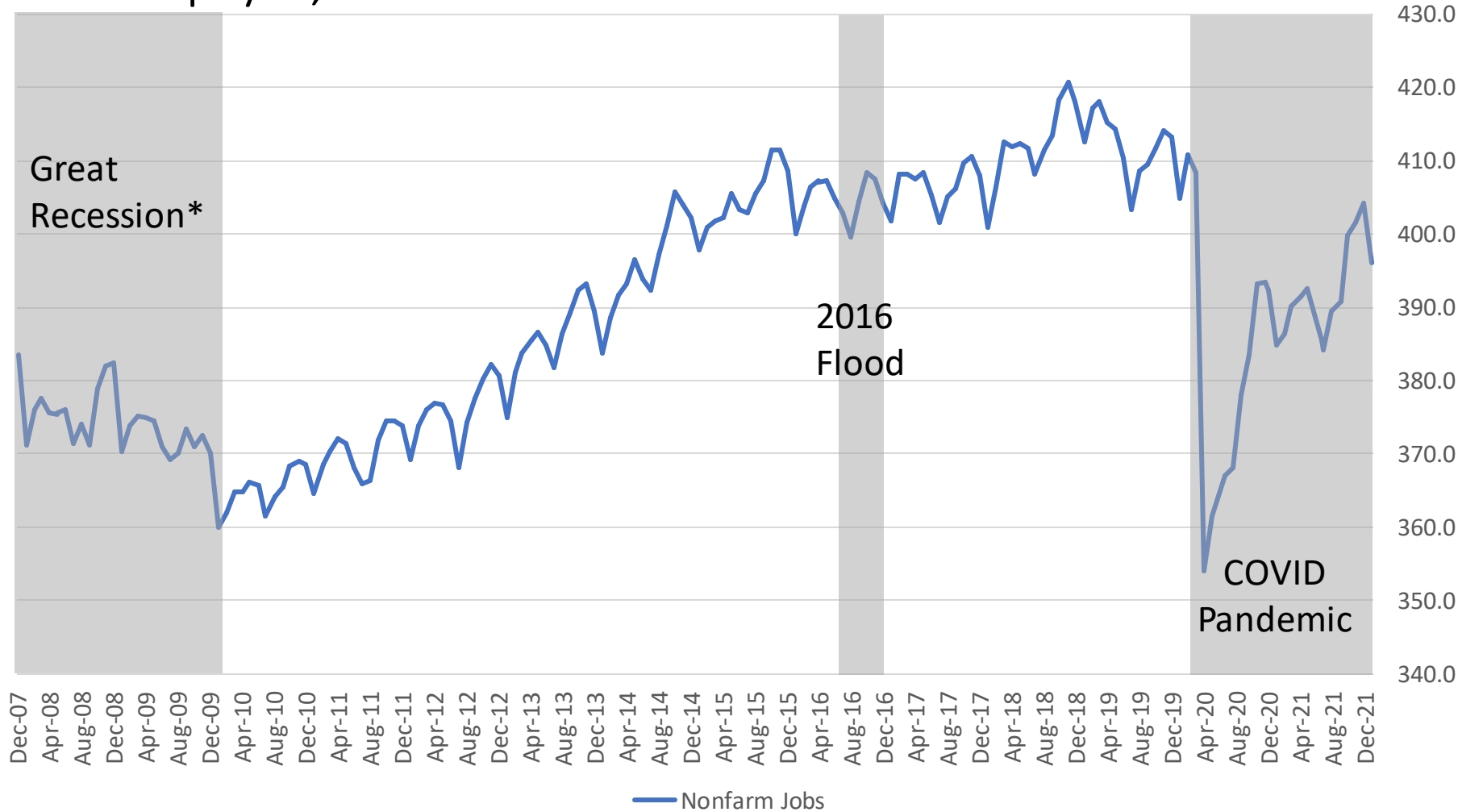
# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

## Key takeaways from this month's data

- Demand for travel in Baton Rouge has remained strong for nearly half a year; hotel occupancy throughout the metro was nearly 10% higher than the national average in mid-March (slide 8).
- Seasonal employment ending caused some expected job losses, while the leisure & hospitality industry avoided that trend and added 200 jobs in January (slide 4).
- The Professional and Business Services industry is showing sustained job growth through the pandemic, adding 1,600 new jobs in fields like scientific R&D and management consulting since March 2020 (slide 4).
- All peer metros faced job losses in January, and no peer metros have more jobs now than they did pre-pandemic (slide 5).
- Travel to workplaces is at its highest level since Feb. '21, and rebounded since the omicron variant. Workplace commutes are down 10% regionally, and 23% in East Baton Rouge, compared to pre-pandemic, possibly linked to increased remote/hybrid work options (slide 9).
- Rents are rising, and fewer homes for sale are driving up prices. The Baton Rouge metro should encourage new development to offset rising prices and retain young talent (slide 10).

# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

Seasonal unemployment ending caused some anticipated job losses, while end-of-2021 jobs figures were revised up by ~5,000



## Major BR MSA Job Losses

- Covid-19 Pandemic loss, as of January 2022: -3.0%
- Lowest point in COVID, in April 2020: -13.2%
- Great Recession\*: -6.2%
- 2016 Flood: -1.0%

# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

Leisure & Hospitality added 200 jobs in January while overall figures dipped for the month

## Major industries in the Capital Region

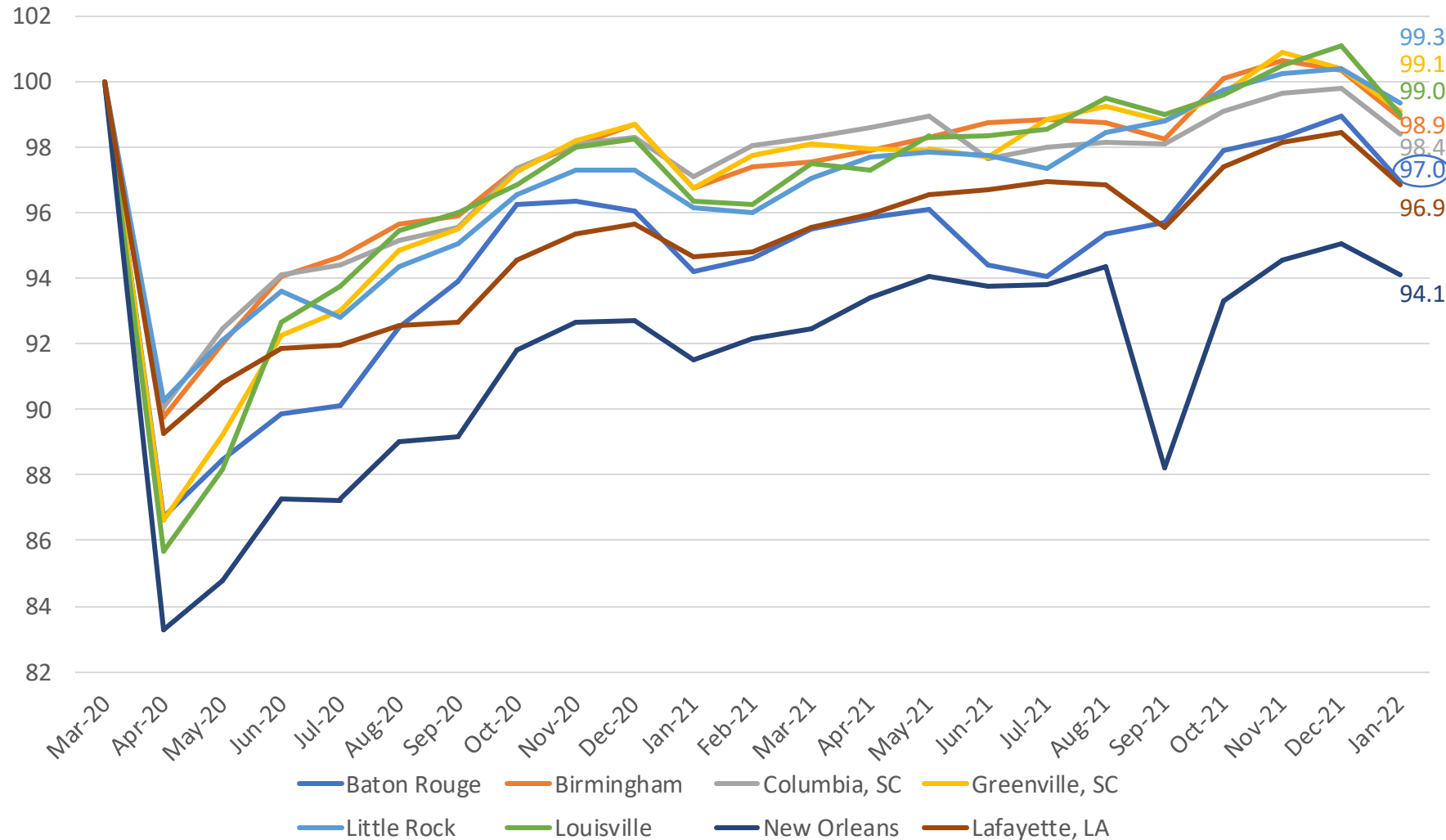
| Industry                          | COVID Job Change | %age Change |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Construction                      | -7,600           | -16.0%      |
| Professional Services             | +1,600           | +3.2%       |
| Education & Healthcare            | -600             | -1.1%       |
| Leisure & Hospitality             | no change        | 0.0%        |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | +900             | +0.4%       |
| Manufacturing                     | -1,500           | -5.0%       |
| Government                        | -3,700           | -4.8%       |

- As is the case in most years, January job figures fell, likely from seasonal employment
- Dec. 2021 job figures were revised up from 399.8k to 404.1k, the region's highest job level since the pandemic
- Leisure & Hospitality industry added 200 jobs in January, bucking typical seasonal unemployment trends
- Professional Services is a bright spot for recovery, with scientific R&D jobs up 10% and mgmt. consultants up 8%, among others

# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

Nonfarm jobs fell by 1.5% on average for all peer metros in January

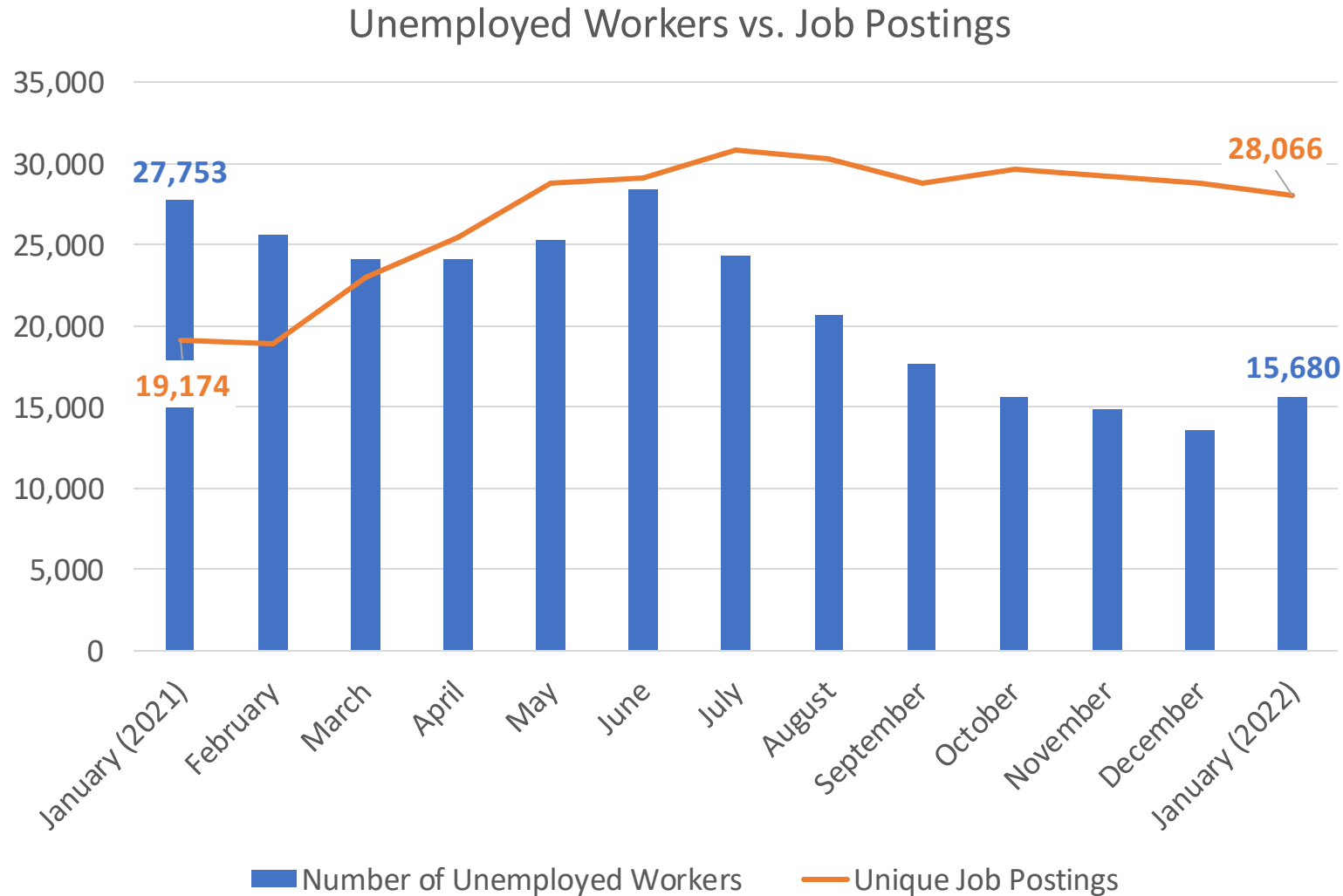
Metro Area Employment Index



- Baton Rouge is within 3% of a full job recovery, in the middle of peer metros
- While all peer metros currently have less jobs than pre-pandemic, Little Rock and Greenville are leading the pack
- Louisiana metros continue to lag peer metros in recovering jobs lost during the pandemic

# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

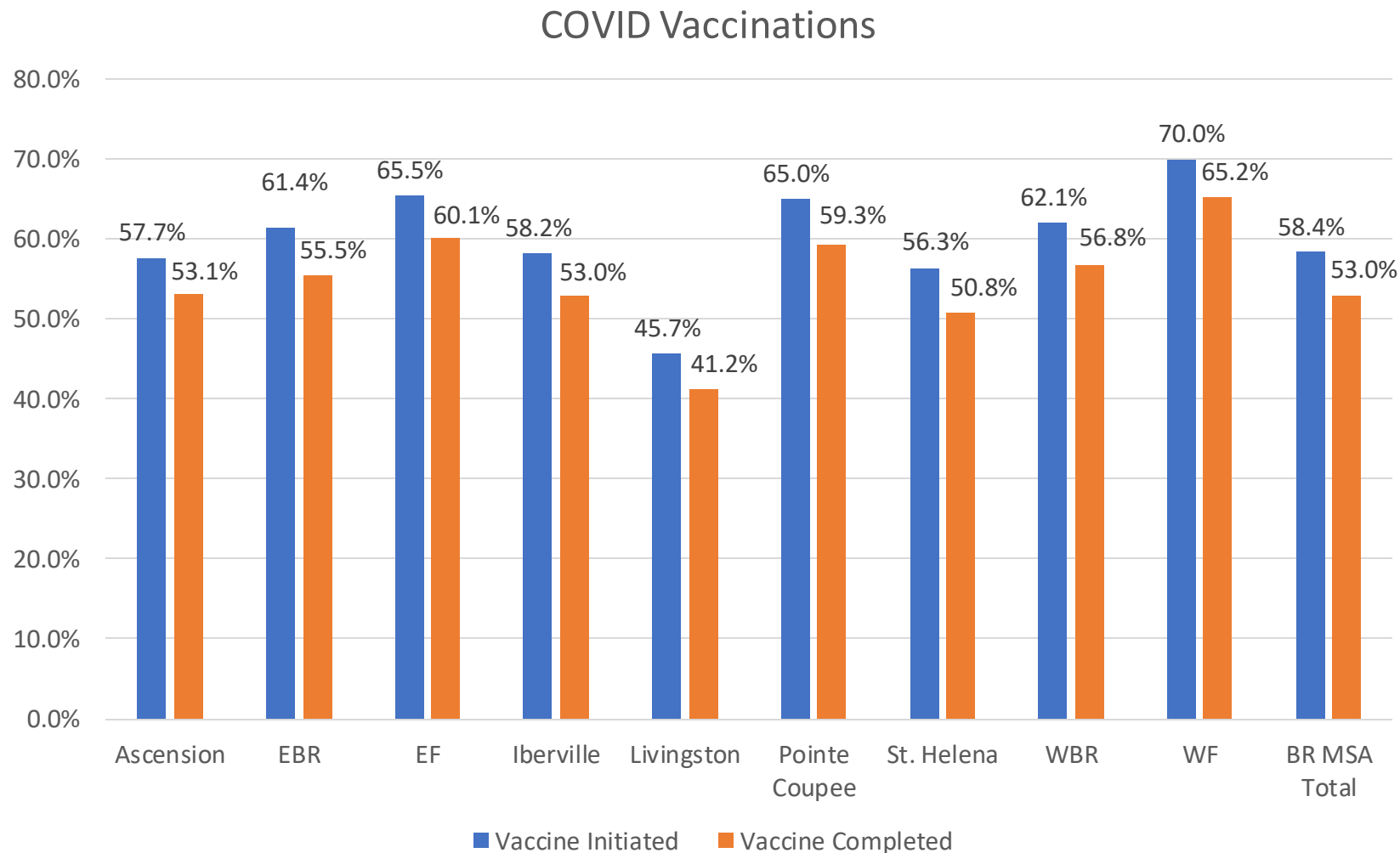
Job postings continue to outnumber unemployed workers nearly two-to-one



- Job postings in January are up 46% year-over-year, but declining slightly since October
- Unemployment rate remains low, although slightly up in January
- Nurses, retail workers, and sales reps are the most in-demand occupations
- Unemployment claims have fallen more than 78% over the year
- The median advertised wage in job postings declined from \$45.2k in Nov 2021 to \$42.2k in Jan 2022

# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

Vaccine uptake varies significantly among Capital Region parishes



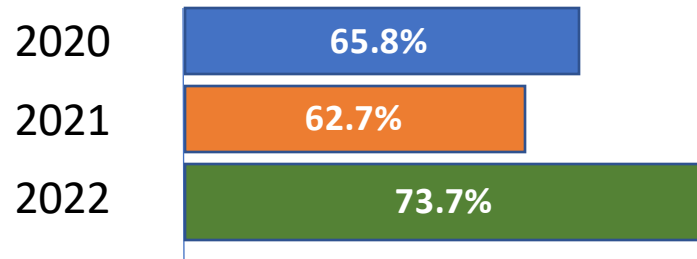
- New COVID cases are down significantly. BR metro averaged ~8 cases per day from March 16 - 19 (LDH)
- An additional 1% of the metro became fully vaccinated over last month
- About 28% of kids ages 5-17 are fully vaccinated in region
- 18–29 year olds remain the least-vaccinated adult age group (40.5% fully vax'd)
- 1 in 4 people who live in BR metro have had COVID

# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

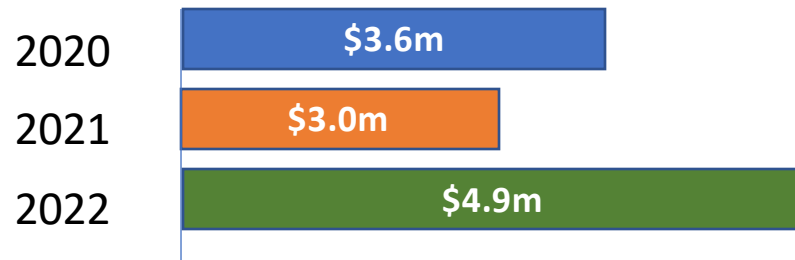
How has travel been impacted during the pandemic?

## Hotel Occupancy

March 6 - 12



Revenue March 6 - 12



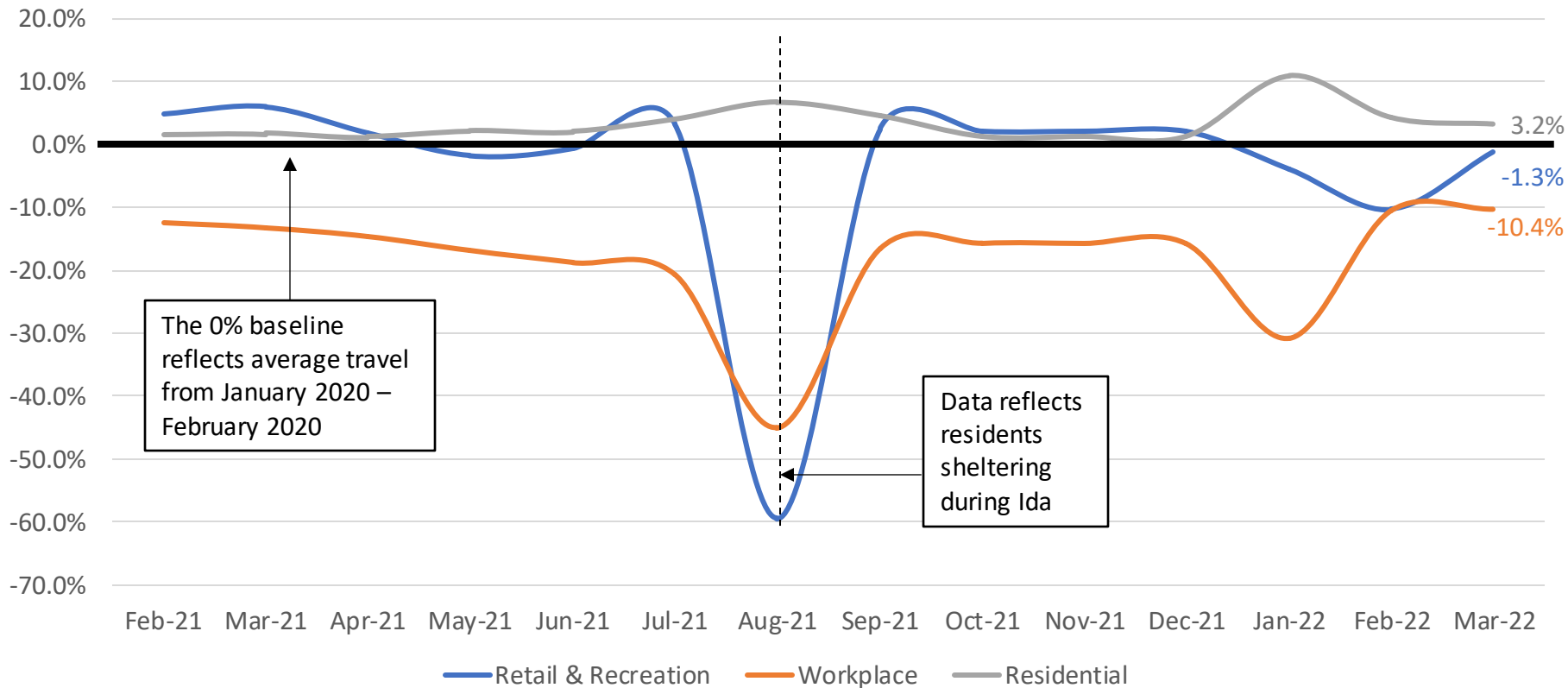
- Baton Rouge occupancy for the week ending March 12 was more than 10% higher than the national average.
- The week ending March 12 was the final week before the shutdown in 2020 – demand for travel remains stronger than “normal” weeks from 2+ years ago.
- Hotel occupancy is fully recovered from COVID impacts. Since October, hotel occupancy and revenues have consistently remained above comparable weeks from the previous two years.



# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

How has travel been impacted during the pandemic?

## Travel across the Capital Region, Previous 12 Months

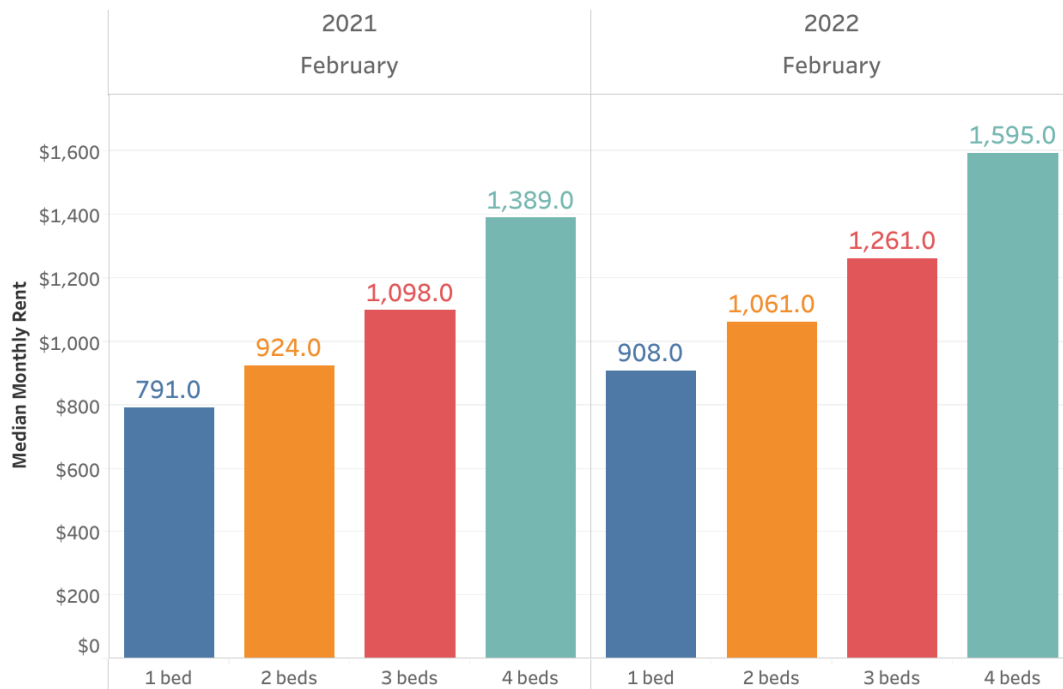


- Workplace travel is 23% lower in EBR, and 10% regionally, relative to pre-pandemic, potentially reflecting business shifts to remote/hybrid work
- Travel to retail and recreation spots increased this month, but is down from pre-pandemic
- Travel to residential locations is above pre-pandemic levels

# Capital Region Economic Indicator Dashboard

Housing has become significantly more expensive over the last year for both owners and renters

Baton Rouge Median Rent



Baton Rouge Housing Data Points

|   | February 2021 | February 2022 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Housing Affordability Index                       | 128           | 110           |
| Inventory of Homes for Sale                       | 2,065         | 1,112         |
| Median Sales Price of Existing Single-Family Home | \$229,950     | \$254,000     |

- Rents increased on average 15% year-over-year and the region’s availability of for-sale homes plummeted by more than 46%
- The housing affordability index “measures housing affordability for the region. For example, an index of 120 means the median household income is 120% of what is necessary to qualify for the median-priced home under prevailing interest rates. A higher number means greater affordability”
- The most effective way to combat rising housing costs is to increase both owner-occupied and rental housing stock