



Burgundy Book

A report on economic conditions in the Louisville zone

Third Quarter 2015

The Louisville zone of the Federal Reserve comprises southern Indiana and western Kentucky and a total population of approximately 3.4 million people, including the almost 1.3 million who live in the Louisville MSA.

Strong Growth of Employment and Wages in Several Areas of the Louisville Zone

By Kevin L. Kliesen, *Business Economist and Research Officer*

Compared with three months earlier, an August survey of business contacts revealed slightly less optimism about local economic conditions. However, the vast majority expect conditions in 2015 to be better or similar to those that prevailed in 2014.

Several areas of the Louisville zone registered strong growth of nonfarm payroll employment and average hourly wages in the second quarter. In particular, employment growth exceeded the national average in the Louisville, Evansville, and Bowling Green MSAs. Manufacturers in Indiana and Kentucky expanded their payrolls at a brisk pace in the second quarter, while Indiana transportation services employment rose at its fastest pace since the mid-1990s.

The Louisville zone's unemployment rate dipped below 5 percent in the second quarter. At 4.9 percent, the zone's average unemployment rate fell to its lowest level since the first quarter of 2001.

Residential and nonresidential real estate activity continued to improve in the second quarter. House prices rose in the second quarter in most areas, though at a slower pace than seen nationally.

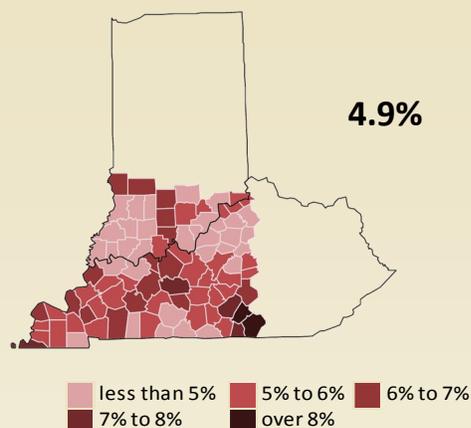
Mortgage delinquency rates in the Louisville zone fell to their lowest level in six years in the second quarter.

Return on average assets was mostly unchanged at Kentucky commercial banks in the second quarter of 2015, but improved modestly at Indiana banks. The majority of bankers expect little change in loan demand in the fourth quarter relative to a year earlier.

This year's corn crop is expected to be 20 percent lower in Indiana and about 2 percent lower in Kentucky. Yields in Indiana appear to have been reduced because of excessive moisture in June and July.

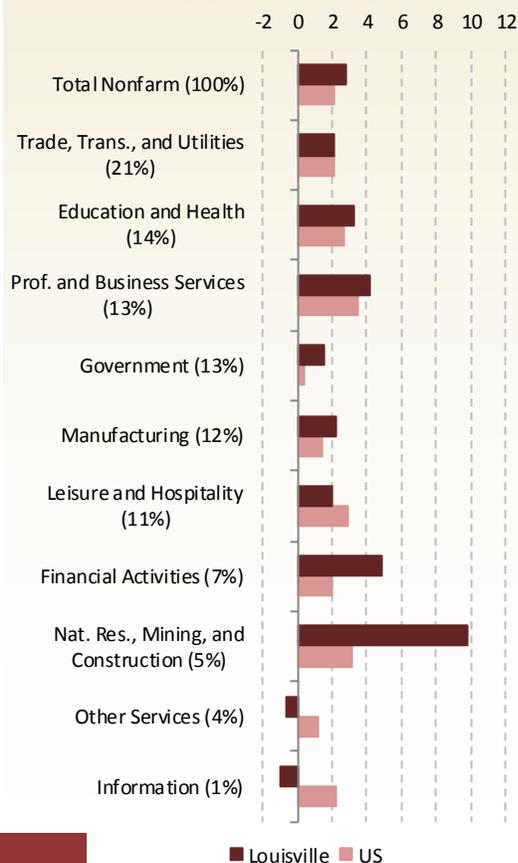
Data Snapshot

County unemployment rates (SA, Q2-15)



Nonfarm payroll employment by industry

Percent change from one year ago (Q2-15)



How to read this report

Unless otherwise noted, **city names** refer to the metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), which are geographic areas that include cities and their surrounding suburbs, as defined by the Census Bureau.

Statistics for the Louisville zone are based on data availability and are calculated as weighted averages of either the 88 counties in the zone or the five MSAs. As of 2012, approximately 60 percent of the zone's labor force was located in an MSA. Specifically: 39 percent in Louisville, 11 percent in Evansville, 4 percent in Bowling Green, 4 percent in Owensboro, and 3 percent in Elizabethtown; 40 percent of the zone's labor force was located in non-metropolitan areas.

Arrows in the tables are used to identify significant trends in the data. The direction of the arrow indicates the sign (up/down) and the color indicates the economic significance (green = good, red = poor). Arrows appear only when the change from previous quarter is greater than 1 standard deviation. For example, the standard deviation of the change in the US unemployment rate is 0.4 percent. If the US unemployment rate declined from 8.4 percent to 8.2 percent, no arrow would appear; but if it declined from 8.4 percent to 7.9 percent, a green down arrow would appear in the table.

Selected **variable definitions** are located in the appendix.

Selected quotes from business contacts are generally verbatim, but some are lightly edited to improve readability.

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Table of Contents

Labor Markets	3
Manufacturing and Transportation	4
Real Estate and Construction	5
Household Sector	6
Banking and Finance	7
Agriculture and Natural Resources	8
Appendix	9

Join Our Panel of Business Contacts

The anecdotal information in this report was provided by our panel of business contacts, who were surveyed between August 7 and August 16.

If you're interested in becoming a member of our panel, follow this link to complete a trial survey:

<http://research.stlouisfed.org/outlooksurvey>

or email us at beigebook@stls.frb.org.

Views expressed do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Federal Reserve System.

Construction Sector Remains Strong, Wages Continue To Grow

By Maria A. Arias, Senior Research Associate

"While the rate of unemployment locally seems very low, there seem to be many who are either not satisfied with their hours (part time) or are working jobs for which they are over-qualified."

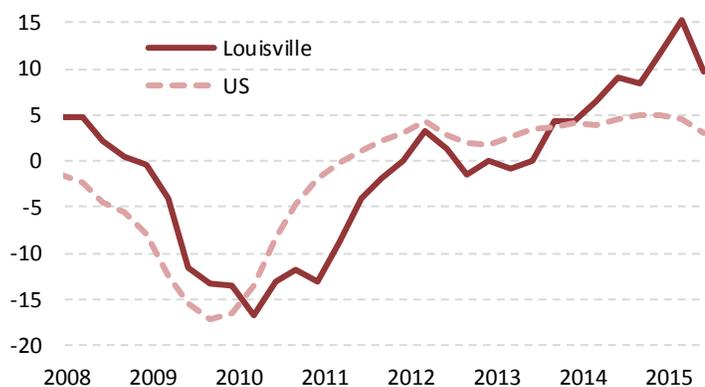
— Louisville area banker

"Our customers' operations are improving; they are reporting higher sales, payrolls, and capital expenditures for the first time in 5 years."

— Louisville area insurer

Construction employment continues to grow at a strong pace in Louisville

Construction employment, Percent change from year ago



Source: BLS.

- Employment growth across the Louisville zone remains strong and above the national average in most MSAs, despite having slowed from the previous quarter (see table). In particular, growth in the construction industry has remained strong, driving growth in the goods-producing sector (see figure).
- Average weekly hours worked across the zone remained almost unchanged during the second quarter, compared with the same period last year. The changes ranged from a 2 percent decline in hours worked in Owensboro to a 1.6 percent increase in Evansville, compared with no growth across the nation overall.
- Average hourly earnings growth for private-sector employees continued to outpace the nation in all MSAs but one, with the largest gains seen in Louisville (5.6 percent higher than a year ago, compared with a 2.1 percent increase nationwide). The only exception is Evansville, where wages declined 2.6 percent from last year.
- A survey of 50 business contacts in the area suggested labor market trends will continue. Most contacts expect hours worked and employment to remain about the same as a year ago throughout the rest of the year. About half of contacts surveyed expect labor costs and wages to remain about the same, while the remaining half expect they will be slightly higher than last year.

	Louisville	Evansville	Bowling Green	Elizabethtown	Owensboro	US
Unemployment rate (Q2-15) (%)	4.7	4.4 ▼	4.8	5.3	4.9	5.4
Nonfarm employment (Q2-15)	2.8 ▼	2.2	2.3 ▼	2.0	0.2	2.1
Goods-producing sector	4.3 ▼	4.8 ▼	5.0	6.9	1.2 ▼	2.1
Private service-providing sector	2.8 ▼	1.7	2.0 ▼	2.3 ▼	0.2	2.6
Government sector	1.6	0.4	0.5	-1.3 ▲	-1.4	0.3

Note: Unless otherwise noted, values are percent change from one year ago. Arrows indicate a significant (± 1 standard deviation) change from the previous quarter. See appendix for notes and sources.

Manufacturing Exports from Kentucky Continue To Climb

By Daniel Eubanks, Senior Research Associate

“The main factor [in borrowing for capital expansion] is how borrowers feel about the prospects for their own businesses. Companies who seem to be upbeat are usually involved in the bourbon industry . . . The bourbon industry boom seems to be continuing unabated.”

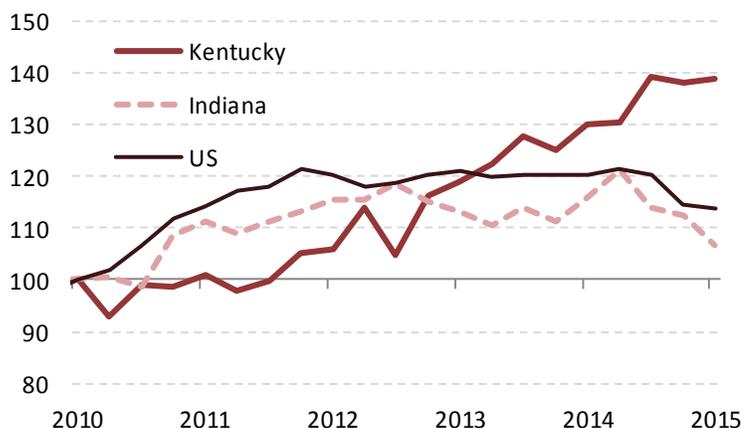
— Central Kentucky commercial banker

“Sales fell short of expectations because of the high value of the dollar and low oil prices. All steel tube mills have basically shut down because of a lack of business.”

— Louisville area metals processor

Kentucky export trend diverges from Indiana and US

Real value of manufacturing exports, SA (Index 2010 Q2 = 100)



Source: WISER, Census Bureau

- Growth in manufacturing exports from Kentucky slowed but remained strong in the second quarter even as exports from Indiana and the U.S. as a whole have contracted. Growth was driven by exports of chemical products and transportation equipment, although it was tempered by declines in exports of machinery and computer/electronic products.
- Over the past five years, manufacturing exports from Kentucky have increased nearly 40 percent, compared with a 7 percent increase for Indiana and a 14 percent increase for the US overall (see figure).
- After exceptional growth in the first quarter, manufacturing employment growth in Louisville slowed significantly in the second quarter and is now growing at rates similar to Kentucky and Indiana.
- Following a sharp increase in the second quarter, transportation employment in Indiana is now growing at over twice the national rate. In contrast, growth slowed in Kentucky for the second consecutive quarter.
- Contacts report strong growth in the bourbon industry (see quote). Kentucky exports of beverages and tobacco are up nearly 10 percent over last year. However, this category accounts for only 1.5 percent of total exports from Kentucky.
- Contacts in the metals industry report a reduction in exports and a reduction in demand from the energy sector (see quote).

	Louisville	Kentucky	Indiana	US
Transportation employment (Q2-15)	2.0	3.1	7.4 ▲	3.0
Manufacturing employment (Q2-15)	2.3 ▼	2.1	2.5	1.4
Durable goods	3.4	4.5	2.9	1.9
Nondurable goods	0.0	-1.9	1.4	0.7
Manufacturing exports (Q2-15)	--	7.9	-7.1 ▼	-4.6

Note: Values are percent change from one year ago. Arrows indicate a significant (± 1 standard deviation) change from the previous quarter; see appendix for notes and sources.

Louisville's Commercial Real Estate Activity Strengthens

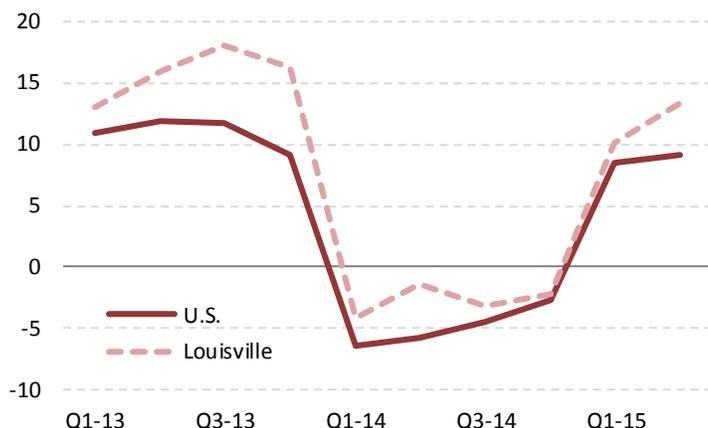
By Usa Kerdnunvong, *Research Associate*

"I think we are going to have a surge [in construction] over the next few years...opportunities abound every direction you turn."

— Louisville area construction contact

Home sales increasing at a faster pace than the nation's

Percent change from one year ago, year-to-date



Source: Census Bureau and Greater Louisville Association of Realtors.

- Commercial and industrial real estate market activity is strong. Contacts reported higher demand in all sectors. Commercial and industrial construction activity was very active this quarter and is anticipated to continue to be strong throughout the year (see quote). Contacts noted renovations, announcements, and ongoing activity for healthcare facilities, the convention center, and multi-family buildings, mainly in Jefferson County, Kentucky.
- The residential real estate market continued to improve in the second quarter. Year-to-date home sales continued to increase at a faster pace than the nation (see figure and table). Home prices increased from a year ago across all MSAs. Contacts from the area noted high demand and low inventory.
- Residential construction market conditions were mixed. Year-to-date single-family building permits increased in three of the four MSAs compared with a year ago. Contacts commented on the increase in construction activity and anticipate slightly higher activity in the fourth quarter.

Non-residential market (Louisville, Q2-15)	Apartment	Office	Retail	Industrial
Vacancy rate (%)	5.0	15.1	10.4	6.2
Asking rent <i>Percent change from one year ago</i>	1.2	0.2	0.6	16.2

Note: Apartment, office, and retail values are from Reis.com. Industrial values are estimates from DTZ.

Residential market (Q2-15)	Louisville	Clarksville	Elizabethtown	Evansville	US
CoreLogic Home Price Index	3.8	0.4 ▼	3.9	1.4 ▼	5.7
Single-family building permits	3.6	-20.0	37.8	17.9	9.7
New and existing home sales	13.4	--	--	--	9.1

Note: Sales and permits data are year-to-date percent change. Prices are percent change from one year ago. Arrows indicate a significant (±1 standard deviation) change from previous quarter. See appendix for notes and sources.

Personal Income Increases, Mortgage Delinquency Rates Fall

By Joseph McGillicuddy, *Research Associate*

“Sales have more than met expectations. Economy is strong, market [is] strong, which allows more discretionary income for travel, both corporate and leisure.”

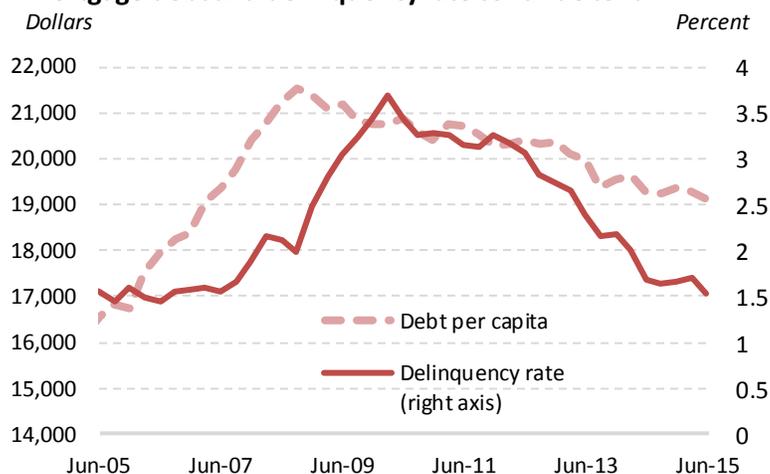
— Louisville area travel agent

“There has been some increase in consumer borrowing, but borrowers remain cautious.”

— Owensboro area banker

- Personal income growth remained strong in both Indiana and Kentucky in the first quarter of 2015. Indiana personal income grew by 4.6 percent over the past year while Kentucky personal income grew by 4.3 percent. Both rates surpassed that of the nation; Kentucky has outpaced the nation for the sixth consecutive quarter.
- Following the trend in recent years, mortgage debt balances and the zone’s mortgage delinquency rate declined in the second quarter of 2015. Both values are close to their pre-recession levels (see figure).
- Similar to the nation, zone auto debt growth remained relatively high and the auto loan delinquency rate remained fairly constant compared with the previous quarter. Anecdotal information from local auto dealers is mixed. One contact reported sales below expectations while another indicated record sales of high-end models into the third quarter.
- Zone credit card debt growth continued to be slightly positive, and the credit card delinquency rate remained nearly unchanged. A local commercial banker noted that consumers are borrowing more but remain cautious.

Mortgage debt and delinquency rate continue to fall



Source: FRBNY Consumer Credit Panel and Equifax.

	Louisville Zone	Indiana	Kentucky	US
Per capita personal income (Q1-15)	--	4.6	4.3	3.5
Per capita debt balances (Q2-15)				
Mortgage	-0.8	-0.6	-1.3	-1.3
Credit card	1.9	2.2	1.5	2.8
Auto loan	6.6	7.9	6.4	9.0
90+ day delinquency rates (Q2-15) (%)				
Mortgage	1.5 ▼	1.7 ▼	1.6 ▼	2.2
Credit card	6.4	6.4	6.8	8.1
Auto loan	2.8	3.4	3.2	3.2

Note: Unless otherwise noted, values are percent change from one year ago. Arrows indicate a significant (± 1 standard deviation) change from the previous quarter. See appendix for notes and sources.

Banking Conditions Stable in Louisville Zone

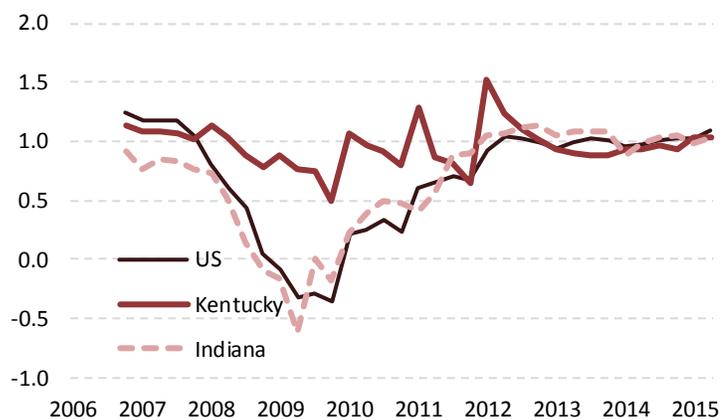
By Michelle Neely, *Economist*, and Hannah Shell, *Research Associate*

“There is some increase in consumer borrowing but borrowers remain cautious.”

—Kentucky banker

Profit rates steady at Indiana, Kentucky banks

Return on average assets at commercial banks, percent



Source: FRED.

- Of eleven local bankers surveyed, eight reported loan demand was unchanged in the third quarter relative to the same time last year. Of the remaining respondents, two reported slightly higher demand and one reported slightly lower demand. Bankers predict demand will remain unchanged in the fourth quarter relative to the same period last year.
- Competition remains strong for commercial and industrial (C&I) loans. Most bankers say C&I loan demand is unchanged; about one-quarter of those surveyed reported loan demand was slightly higher in the third quarter compared with the same time last year.
- Profitability was mostly unchanged at Kentucky and Indiana banks in the second quarter. Return on average assets (ROA) was up slightly at Indiana banks and essentially unchanged at Kentucky banks. Average ROA in both states is above the District average.
- Asset quality continues to improve at area banks. The ratio of nonperforming loans to total loans continues to fall at Kentucky banks as they catch up with District and national peers. Asset quality at Indiana banks is high relative to peers.
- More than half of bankers surveyed report delinquency rates in the third quarter were lower than the same time last year. The rest report they were mostly unchanged. Bankers predict delinquency rates will be unchanged to slightly lower in the fourth quarter.

Banking performance (Q2-15)	Kentucky	Indiana	8th District	US Peer Banks
Return on average assets	1.03	1.04	0.99	1.09
Net interest margin	3.78	3.67	3.73	3.76
Nonperforming loans / total loans	1.28	1.10	1.16	1.19
Loan loss reserve coverage ratio	107.03	117.27	115.52	115.13

Note: Values are percentage points. Arrows indicate a significant (± 1 standard deviation) change from the previous quarter. See appendix for notes and sources.

Coal Industry Continues To Decline; Indiana’s Crops Damaged by Weather

By Lowell R. Ricketts, *Senior Research Associate*

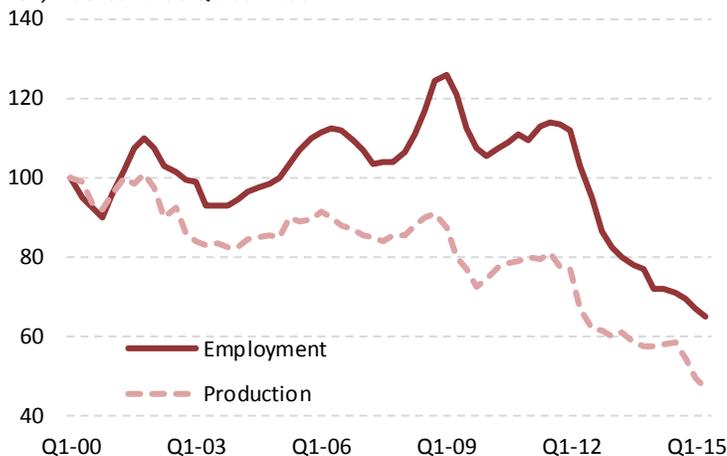
“The nation’s recent recession, cheaper natural gas, and federal regulatory impediments have hit the coal industry and the Appalachian region especially hard. According to the most recent state coal report, this is the first time we have seen fewer than 10,000 Kentucky coal miners.”

—Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear

- Kentucky’s coal industry has suffered a severe decline in both employment and production over the past three years (see figure). The declines registered for both employment and production in the second quarter are only modestly worse than the previous quarter’s decline (see table).
- Contacts noted that new rules passed by the Environmental Protection Agency intended to curb carbon emissions will likely exacerbate existing headwinds in the industry. Consistent with the narrative for Kentucky, Indiana and the nation as a whole had similar declines in both coal production and employment in the mining and logging industries.
- Corn production in Indiana is expected to fall by 20 percent this year relative to last year (see table). In addition, soybean production will decline despite increased acreage as the average crop is expected to yield 9 percent less than last year. Much of the decline in yields is the lasting result of excessive precipitation in June and July. Indiana farmers affected by the weather are concerned because the rest of the corn belt is projected to see exceptional yields. In contrast, Kentucky fared better with only a modest expected decline in corn production and over a 9 percent gain in soybean production.

Kentucky coal industry quickly sheds jobs, drops output

SA, indexed value Q1-00 = 100



Source: BLS.

	Indiana	Kentucky	US
Natural resources (Q2-15)			
Mining and logging employment	-6.0 ▼	-7.9	-4.4 ▼
Coal production	-16.0 ▼	-18.3	-14.3 ▼
Estimated Production (2015)			
Corn	-20.0	-2.2	-3.7
Cotton	--	--	-19.8 ▼
Rice	--	--	-7.2 ▼
Sorghum	--	--	32.4
Soybean	-9.3	9.5	-1.3

Note: Values are percent change from one year ago. Arrows indicate a significant (± 1 standard deviation) change from the previous quarter or year. See appendix for notes and sources.

Cover Page

Sources

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Unemployment rate, nonfarm payroll employment.

Labor Markets

Table Sources

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Unemployment rate. Nonfarm employment and contributions by sector.

Notes

Goods-producing sector comprises the manufacturing and natural resources, mining, and construction sectors.

Private service-providing sector includes the following sectors: Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; Information; Financial Activities; Professional and Business Services; Education and Health Services; Leisure and Hospitality; and Other Services.

Unemployment rate data are seasonally adjusted.

Average hourly earnings are in current dollars.

Manufacturing and Transportation

Table Sources

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Transportation employment: includes transportation and warehousing industries.

Manufacturing employment: total, durable, and nondurable goods.

World Institute for Strategic Economic Research

Manufacturing exports: dollar value.

Notes

Transportation employment in Louisville covers transportation, warehousing, and utility industries. About 90 percent of the reported jobs are contributed by transportation and warehousing industries.

Manufacturing exports are defined as the total dollar amount of exports by the manufacturing industries.

Durable goods manufacturing sector is defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as industries with a NAICS classification code of 321 (Wood Product Manufacturing); 327 (Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing); 331 (Primary Metal Manufacturing); 332 (Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing); 333 (Machinery Manufacturing); 334 (Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing); 335 (Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing); 336 (Transportation Equipment Manufacturing); 337 (Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing); and 339 (Misc. Manufacturing).

Nondurable goods manufacturing sector is defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as industries with a NAICS classification code of 311 (Food Manufacturing); 312 (Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufac-

turing); 313 (Textile Mills); 314 (Textile Product Mills); 315 (Apparel Manufacturing); 316 (Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing); 322 (Paper Manufacturing); 323 (Printing and Related Support Activities); 324 (Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing); 325 (Chemical Manufacturing); and 326 (Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing).

Real Estate and Construction

Table Sources

CoreLogic

Home price index, including distressed sales.

Census Bureau

Year-to-date single-family building permits.

Greater Louisville Association of Realtors

Year-to-date new and existing home sales.

Notes

Asking rent is the publicized asking rent price. Data are in current dollars.

Vacancy rate is the percentage of total inventory physically vacant as of the survey date, including direct vacant and sublease space.

New and existing home sales consists of single-family home sales.

Household Sector

Table Sources

Equifax based on authors' calculations

All figures are based on a 5 percent sample of individual credit reports. Balances are geographic averages of various debt categories. The mortgage category includes first mortgages and home equity installment loans, but home equity lines of credit are omitted. Auto loans include those financed by finance company or bank loans. Credit cards are revolving accounts at banks, bankcard companies, national credit card companies, credit unions, and savings and loan associations.

Haver Analytics

Per capita income.

Notes

Delinquency rates are calculated as the percentage of payments past due by more than 90 days, weighted by the dollar value of the loan.

Banking and Finance

Table Sources

Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council

Return on average assets: USL15ROA. Net interest margin: USL15NIM. Nonperforming loans: USL15NPTL. Loan loss reserve/Total loans: USL15LLRTL. Net loan losses/Average total loans: USL15LSTL.

Note: The data available in the table can be found in FRED.

Notes

Loan loss provisions are expenses banks set aside as an allowance for bad loans.

Nonperforming loans are those loans managers classify as 90 days or more past due or nonaccrual, which means they are more likely to default.

Loan loss coverage ratio is loan loss reserves divided by nonperforming loans.

US peer banks are those commercial banks with assets of less than \$15 billion.

Due to the seasonal nature of bank return on average assets and net interest margin, the **arrows** in the table denote significant changes from one year ago.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Sources

Energy Information Administration (EIA)

Coal production. Note: Production trends identified in report may be inconsistent with previous reports due to data revisions.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Mining and logging employment.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Production estimates as of August 2015.

Notes

The results of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis *Agricultural Finance Monitor* are not reported due to a low response rate for the Louisville zone.