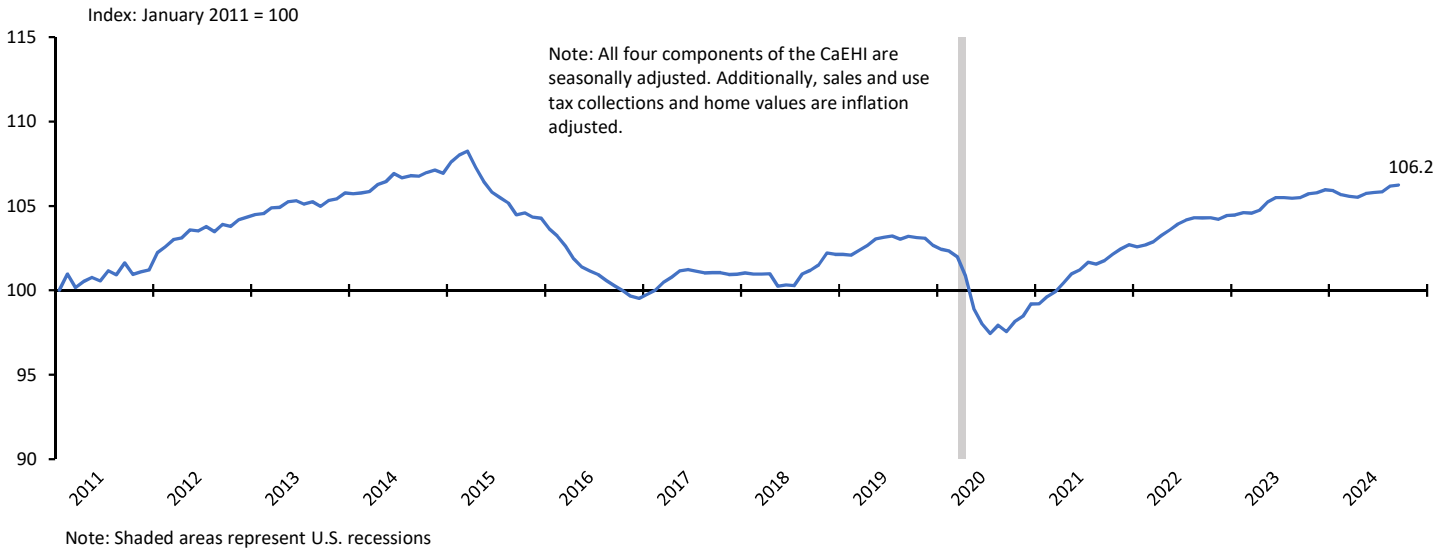▸ Figure 1: Casper Economic Health Index as of September 2024
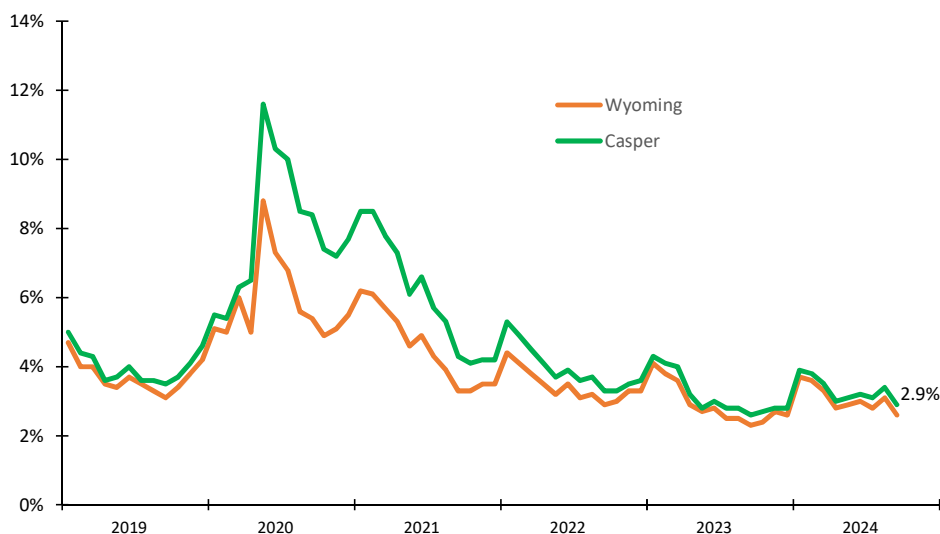
Index: January 2011 = 100

Note: All four components of the CaEHI are seasonally adjusted. Additionally, sales and use tax collections and home values are inflation adjusted.

106.2

Note: Shaded areas represent U.S. recessions

▸ Figure 2: Change in CaEHI - Last 6 Months

Year-over-year percent change

Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%	0.7%
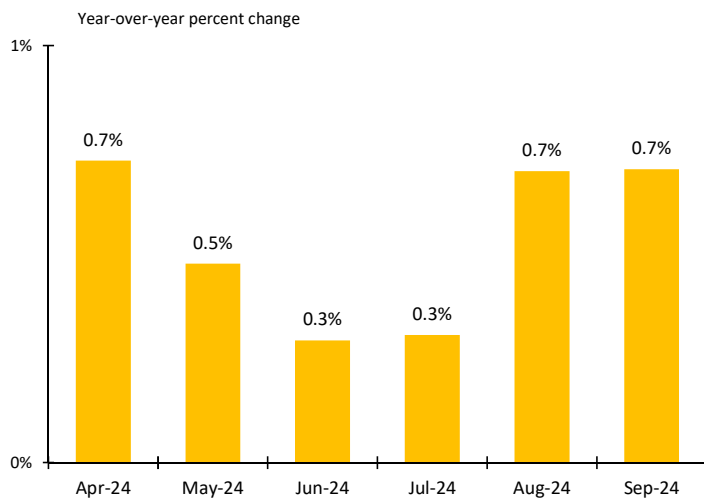
▸ Figure 3: Change in Components of CaEHI - September 2024

Year-over-year percent change

Employment Rate (60%)	Total Employment (20%)	Total S&U Taxes (5%)	Average Home Value (15%)
-0.3%	1.2%	5.1%	2.2%

Note: Values in parantheses are the weights for each component of the CaEHI.
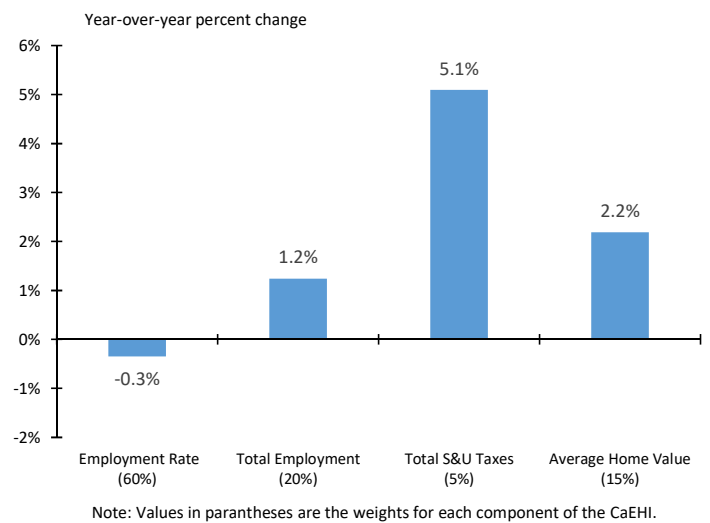
▸ Figure 4: Natrona County and Wyoming Unemployment Rate (Not Seasonally Adjusted or NSA)

Wyoming
Casper

2.9%

▸▸ SUMMARY: The Casper Economic Health Index (CaEHI) reported a value of 106.2 in September 2024 (see Figure 1). This value is higher than the September 2023 value of 105.5.

▸▸ As seen in Figure 2, in each of the past six months (April 2024 - September 2024), the CaEHI reported year-over-year increases, with the largest increases occurring in April, August, and September.

▸▸ Three of the four CaEHI components improved in September 2024 compared to September 2023. (see Figure 3). Total sales & use tax collections saw the largest increase, up 5.1%.

▸▸ The unemployment rate (NSA) for Natrona County in September 2024 was 2.9%, higher than the September 2023 rate of 2.6% and the state-wide September 2024 rate of 2.6% (see Figure 4).

Note: Both unemployment rates in Figure 4 are not seasonally adjusted.

▸ Figure 5. Natrona County Total Nonfarm Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)

Thousands of jobs
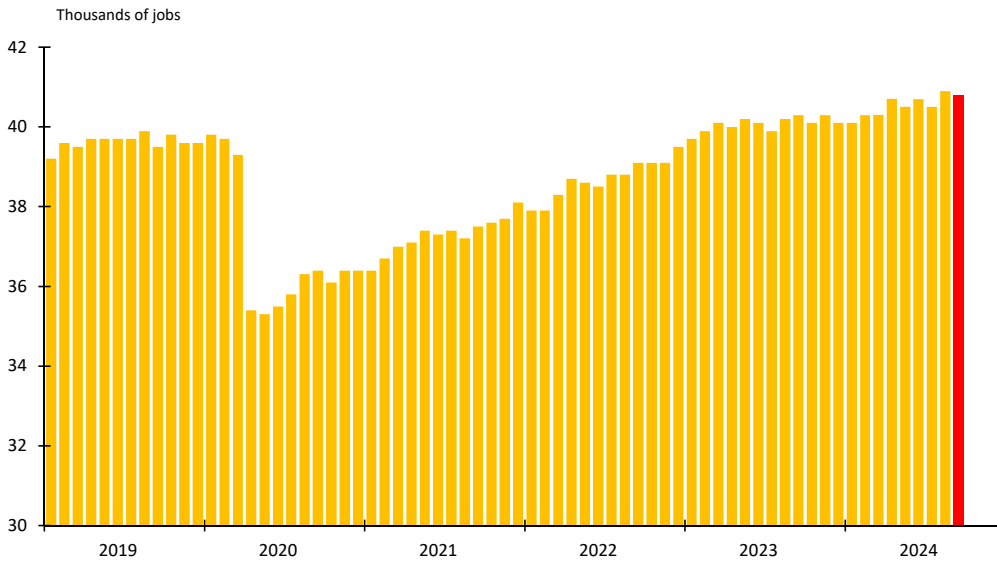
▸▸ The total number of nonfarm payroll jobs in September 2024 was 40,800, higher than the September 2023 number by 500 (+1.2%) (see Figure 5).

▸▸ NOTE: MSA stands for Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Casper MSA covers all of Natrona County.

▸ Figure 6. Natrona County 4% Sales and Use Tax Collections (1-Month Lag)

Millions of Dollars
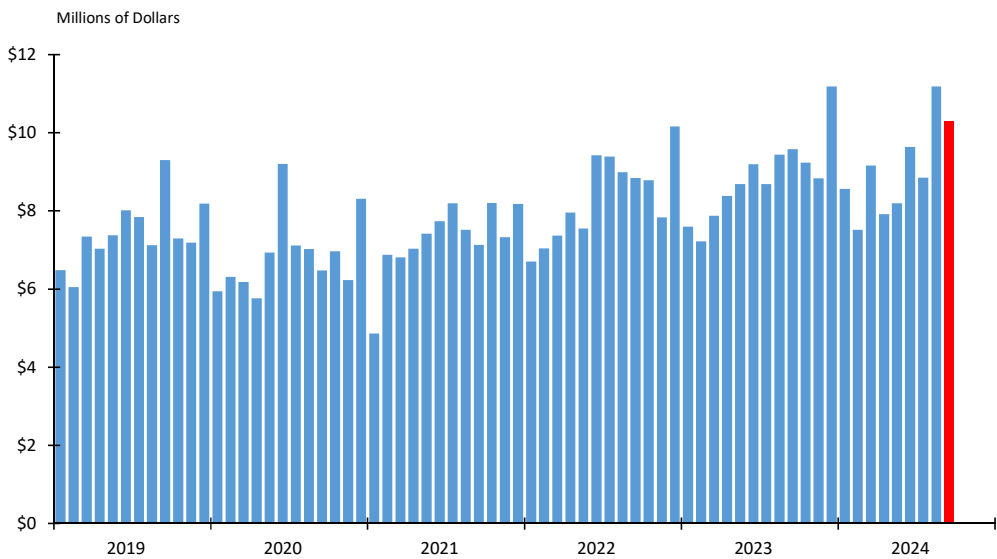
▸▸ Natrona County's collection of the 4% sales and use tax was $10.3 million in September 2024, $0.7 million more (+7.6%) than September 2023 (see Figure 6).

Note: The value for September 2024 in Figure 6 is actually collections from October 2024 because there is approximately a 1-month lag between collections and sales activity.

▸ Figure 7. Change in Natrona County Average Home Value

Year-over-year percent change
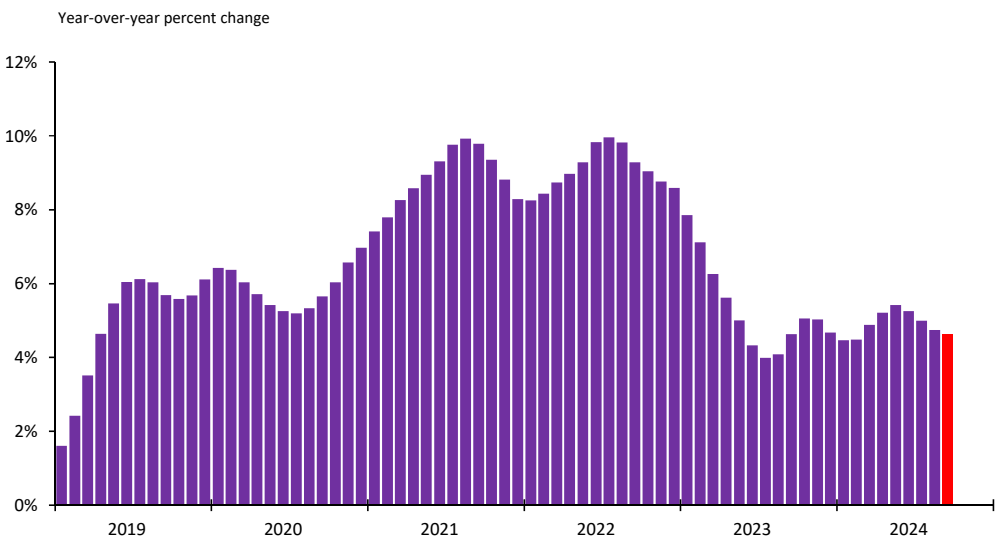
▸▸ Natrona County's average home value was $296,100 in September 2024, 4.6% higher than September 2023 (see Figure 7).

Casper Economic Health Index Addendum

The Casper Economic Health Index (CaEHI) is a coincident economic indicator designed to provide a current assessment of Natrona County's economy. There are four components of the CaEHI. The first two components, unemployment rate and total nonfarm employment, are included to capture overall labor market activity for Natrona County. The third component, sales and use tax collections, captures economic activity related to taxable sales in Natrona County. The fourth component, average home value, serves as a proxy for the housing market.

Unemployment Rate: The first component of the CaEHI is the unemployment rate. This statistic measures the percentage of people in Natrona County actively looking for work but do not have jobs. In the CaEHI model, the employment rate (100% minus the unemployment rate) is indexed rather than the unemployment rate because an increase in the employment rate, similar to an increase in total employment, sales and use tax collections, and home prices, is considered to be a positive for the county's economy. The unemployment rate is available monthly, not seasonally adjusted, from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data is then seasonally adjusted.

Total Nonfarm Employment: The second component of the CaEHI is total nonfarm employment. This statistic measures the number of people who have wage or salary jobs in Natrona County. The total nonfarm employment is available monthly, seasonally adjusted, from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Sales & Use Tax: The third component of the CaEHI is the sales and use tax collected from the state's 4 percent tax rate. Because sales and use tax collections the county receives for a given month represent transactions that took place 4 to 6 weeks prior, the data is lagged one month in the CaEHI model. This statistic is available monthly from the State of Wyoming's Department of Revenue. The data is adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data is also seasonally adjusted.

Average Home Value: The fourth component of the CaEHI is the average home value. This statistic is available monthly from Zillow. This variable is defined as the average home value for a single family home. The data is adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data is also seasonally adjusted.

Methodology: Each series for the components discussed above are standardized starting in January 2005, resulting in a value of 100 for each component and the CaEHI. As each component changes from month to month, the CaEHI value changes. Next, the standard deviation of each component's standardized series values is calculated, followed by the calculation of the inverse of each component's standard deviation. Lastly, the individual inverse standard deviations are standardized, resulting in weights that sum to 1. The rationale for this weighting approach is that the components that are more stable over time will have a smaller standard deviation and thus, a larger inverse standard deviation and weight. A large shift in a typically stable data series would provide a better signal of a change in the economy than a large shift in a data series that typically has large fluctuations. Therefore, this weighting approach allows the CaEHI to put a larger weight on the more stable components so that if they do experience a large shift, the CaEHI's value will be affected more to represent the change in the county's economic conditions. Lastly, a 3-month moving average is used in order to smooth out the index. This helps eliminate large "spikes" that may occur due to a certain component recording an unusually high or low value in a given month.