

# Economic Reporter

Promoting Economic Development in Southeast Louisiana

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**NATIONAL**

**U.S. Economy**

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The U. S. real gross domestic product rose at a 2.8 percent annual rate during the third quarter of 2009 but dropped 2.5 percent in comparison to the third quarter of 2008. Total civilian employment for the third quarter fell 4 percent compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. A survey of forecasters by the Reserve Bank of

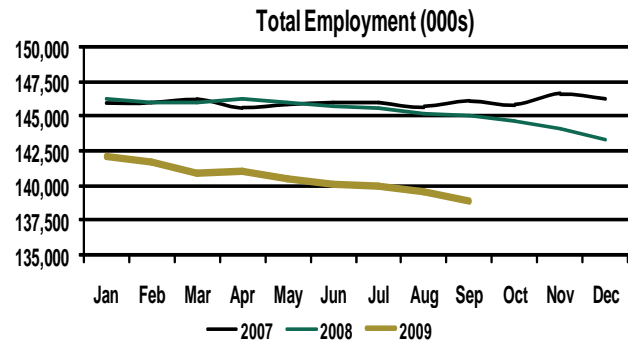
Philadelphia predicts the U.S. economy to contract 2.5 percent in 2009 and grow 2.4 percent and 3.1 percent in 2010 and 2011, respectively. An alternative set of forecasts published by the Wachovia Bank indicates a drop of 2.5 percent in 2009 and gains of 2.4 percent per year in 2010 and 2011.

**EMPLOYMENT (Seasonally Adjusted)**

**UNITED STATES (Numbers in Thousands)**

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Labor Force	154,878	154,620	154,447	153,716	154,214	154,048	154,731	155,081	154,926	154,504	154,577	154,006
% Change vs Prior Year	1.1%	0.5%	0.4%	-0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%	-0.2%	-0.4%
Total Employment	144,657	144,144	143,338	142,099	141,748	140,887	141,007	140,570	140,196	140,041	139,649	138,864
% Change vs Prior Year	-0.8%	-1.7%	-2.0%	-2.9%	-3.0%	-3.5%	-3.6%	-3.7%	-3.8%	-3.8%	-3.9%	-4.3%
Total Nonfarm Emp.	136,352	135,755	135,074	134,333	133,652	133,000	132,481	132,178	131,715	131,411	131,257	131,038
% Change vs Prior Year	-1.1%	-1.6%	-2.2%	-2.7%	-3.1%	-3.5%	-3.8%	-3.9%	-4.1%	-4.2%	-4.2%	-4.2%
Unemployment Rate	6.6%	6.8%	7.2%	7.6%	8.1%	8.5%	8.9%	9.4%	9.5%	9.4%	9.7%	9.8%
Change vs Prior Year	1.8%	2.1%	2.2%	2.7%	3.3%	3.4%	3.9%	3.8%	3.9%	3.6%	3.5%	3.6%

	4QT-08	1QT-09	2QT-09	3QT-09
Labor Force	154,648	153,993	154,913	154,913
% Change vs Prior Year	0.7%	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%
Total Employment	144,046	141,578	140,591	140,591
% Change vs Prior Year	-1.5%	-3.1%	-3.7%	-3.7%
Total Nonfarm Emp.	135,727	133,662	132,125	132,125
% Change vs Prior Year	-1.6%	-3.1%	-3.9%	-3.9%
Unemployment Rate	6.9%	8.1%	9.2%	9.2%
Change vs Prior Year	2.1%	3.1%	3.9%	3.9%



Source: U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

## STATE

### Louisiana Economy

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Total state employment for the third quarter of 2009 declined 1.4 percent from the previous quarter and 3.9 percent from the level of the third quarter of 2008. The unemployment rate for the third quarter was 7.5 percent, compared to a 4.9 percent rate for the same period in 2008. Although the state experienced a rise in the unemployment rate, it was still significantly below the 9.6 percent national rate.

Our forecasts indicate that statewide employment should start recovering during the second quarter of 2010.

State sales tax collections for the third quarter were down 15.3 percent compared to the prior quarter, and were 20.1 percent lower than for the third quarter of 2008.

The quarter-to-quarter and year-over-year declines reflect the general economic slowdown as the impacts of the national recession have taken hold in Louisiana. The quarter-to-quarter drop may have also been impacted to some degree by the state sales tax holiday in August.

Personal income in Louisiana dropped 0.4 percent from the second to the third quarter of 2009, the worst performance among all 50 states.

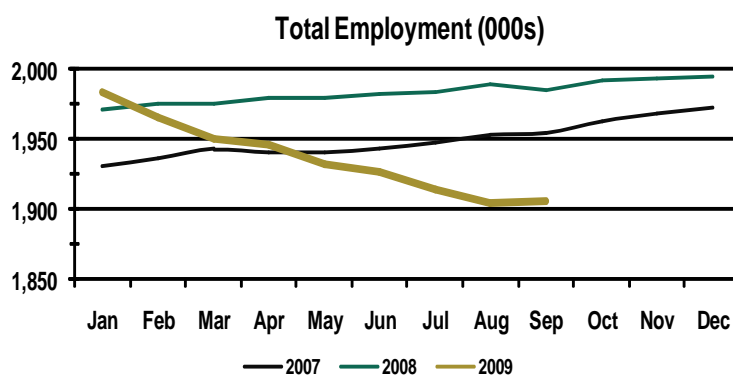
#### EMPLOYMENT (Seasonally Adjusted)

##### LOUISIANA (Numbers in Thousands)

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Labor Force	2,107	2,105	2,111	2,091	2,085	2,071	2,074	2,069	2,067	2,066	2,065	2,059
% Change vs Prior Year	3.6%	3.0%	2.9%	2.1%	1.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	-0.4%	-1.2%	-2.0%
Total Employment	1,992	1,993	1,994	1,984	1,966	1,950	1,946	1,933	1,927	1,914	1,904	1,906
% Change vs Prior Year	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%	0.7%	-0.5%	-1.3%	-1.6%	-2.4%	-2.8%	-3.5%	-4.3%	-3.9%
Total Nonfarm Emp.	1,950	1,948	1,949	1,942	1,944	1,939	1,932	1,931	1,928	1,922	1,921	1,910
% Change vs Prior Year	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	-0.4%	-0.6%	-0.6%	-1.0%	-1.5%	-1.0%
Unemployment Rate	5.5%	5.3%	5.5%	5.1%	5.7%	5.8%	6.2%	6.6%	6.8%	7.4%	7.8%	7.4%
Change vs Prior Year	2.0%	1.6%	1.6%	1.3%	1.9%	1.6%	2.1%	2.5%	2.6%	3.0%	3.0%	1.8%

	4QT-08	1QT-09	2QT-09	3QT-09
Labor Force	2,108	2,082	2,070	2,064
% Change vs Prior Year	3.2%	1.4%	0.2%	-1.2%
Total Employment	1,993	1,967	1,935	1,908
% Change vs Prior Year	1.3%	-0.4%	-2.3%	-3.9%
Total Nonfarm Emp.	1,949	1,942	1,930	1,918
% Change vs Prior Year	0.8%	0.4%	-0.6%	-1.2%
Unemployment Rate	5.4%	5.6%	6.5%	7.5%
Change vs Prior Year	1.7%	1.6%	2.4%	2.6%

Source: Louisiana Department of Labor, Labor Market Statistics



## REGIONAL

### Northshore Employment

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Total employment in the Northshore Region (the five parishes of Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington) declined 1.5 percent during the third quarter of 2009 and was 3.4 percent lower compared to the same period of 2008.

The total civilian work force fell 0.6 percent when compared to the previous quarter and 0.9 percent versus the third quarter of 2008.

The unemployment rate for the third quarter of 2009 was 6.9 percent. In comparison,

unemployment rates were 6 percent in the previous quarter and 4.5 percent during the third quarter of 2008.

Our forecasts indicate that Northshore employment should resume growth in the second quarter of 2010.

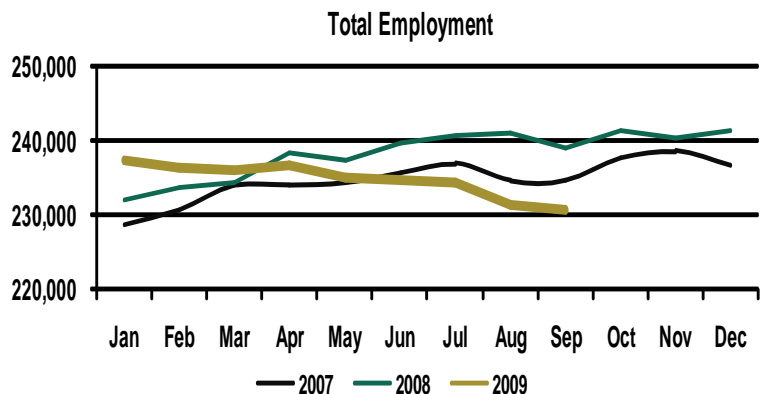
(Note: All regional and parish employment analysis is based on unadjusted employment data. Seasonally-adjusted data are not available at the parish level.)

### EMPLOYMENT (Not seasonally adjusted)

#### NORTHSHORE REGION

	<u>Oct 08</u>	<u>Nov 08</u>	<u>Dec 08</u>	<u>Jan 09</u>	<u>Feb 09</u>	<u>Mar 09</u>	<u>Apr 09</u>	<u>May 09</u>	<u>Jun 09</u>	<u>Jul 09</u>	<u>Aug 09</u>	<u>Sep 09</u>
Labor Force	253,624	251,665	254,286	250,803	248,942	248,408	248,879	249,418	252,781	251,193	248,842	247,084
% Change vs Prior Year	3.5%	2.1%	3.8%	3.5%	3.1%	1.9%	1.2%	1.5%	0.6%	0.2%	-1.3%	-1.5%
Total Employment	241,415	240,373	241,491	237,549	236,547	236,125	236,719	235,100	234,852	234,408	231,456	230,690
% Change vs Prior Year	1.5%	0.7%	2.1%	2.4%	1.2%	0.8%	-0.7%	-0.9%	-2.1%	-2.6%	-4.0%	-3.5%
Unemployment Rate	4.8%	4.6%	5.2%	5.3%	5.0%	5.1%	5.0%	5.7%	7.1%	6.9%	7.2%	6.6%
Change vs Prior Year	1.7%	1.4%	1.7%	1.0%	1.8%	1.1%	1.8%	2.3%	2.5%	2.8%	2.6%	2.0%

	<u>4QT-08</u>	<u>1QT-09</u>	<u>2QT-09</u>	<u>3QT-09</u>
Labor Force	253,192	249,384	250,359	249,040
% Change vs Prior Year	3.1%	2.8%	1.1%	-0.9%
Total Employment	241,093	236,740	235,557	232,185
% Change vs Prior Year	1.4%	1.5%	-1.2%	-3.4%
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	5.1%	6.0%	6.9%
Change vs Prior Year	1.6%	1.3%	2.2%	2.4%



Source: Labor Market Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program

# Economic Reporter

## Estimated Retail Sales in the Northshore Region

Total value of taxable sales in the region fell 6.8 percent from the previous quarter and 7.1 percent from the third quarter of 2008.

Only St. Helena Parish experienced a gain in the current quarter (+15.5 percent), while the other parishes experienced declines in sales tax collections ranging from -4.7 percent in Livingston Parish to -20.3 percent in Washington Parish. (Note: The Washington Parish Sheriff's

Office had staff layoffs and office closures in the third quarter which may have falsely depressed sales tax collections.)

Tangipahoa Parish had a smaller year-over-year drop (-5.8 percent) than the region, while St. Tammany's decline (-7.0 percent) was almost equal to the regions' -7.1 percent drop. The other three parishes suffered reductions worse than the Northshore average.

### ESTIMATED RETAIL SALES

#### NORTHSHORE REGION

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Est. Retail Sales (Mil.)	\$595.84	\$560.34	\$745.59	\$550.20	\$545.39	\$644.44	\$595.58	\$582.28	\$621.21	\$566.65	\$547.32	\$562.21
% Change vs Prior Month	-0.4%	-6.0%	33.1%	-26.2%	-0.9%	18.2%	-7.6%	-2.2%	6.7%	-8.8%	-3.4%	2.7%
% Change vs. Prior Year	-1.8%	-9.8%	-5.5%	-1.1%	-8.2%	-4.5%	-3.9%	-6.7%	-10.4%	-8.5%	-6.7%	-6.0%
Quarterly Average Sales (Mil.)			\$633.93			\$580.01			\$599.69			\$558.73
% Change vs. Prior Quarter			5.4%			-8.5%			3.4%			-6.8%
% Change vs Prior Year			-5.8%			-4.7%			-7.1%			-7.1%

Note: Washington Parish received one-time audit settlements of approximately \$2 million in July 2007 and \$1 million in December 2007.

Sources: Livingston Parish School Board - Sales and Use Tax Division, St. Helena Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office - Sales and Use Tax Department, Tangipahoa Parish School Board - Sales and Use Tax Division, Washington Parish Sheriff's Office - Sales and Use Tax Dept.

## Residential Building Permits in the Northshore Region

The value of residential building permits in the region for the third quarter of 2009 rose 26.9 percent over the prior quarter and 3.0 percent over the third quarter of 2008, projecting some recovery in construction activities for the coming months. It

should be noted that the value of permits in Livingston Parish, as well as both the number of units and values in St. Helena and Washington parishes, were estimated based on data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

### RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

#### NORTHSHORE REGION

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Units	207	164	194	156	125	283	197	232	226	231	319	227
% Change vs Prior Year	-34.3%	-11.8%	-28.4%	-44.3%	-31.3%	-6.3%	-45.3%	0.4%	-36.9%	-11.2%	15.6%	22.7%
Total Value (\$000s)	30,792	24,038	23,615	17,578	20,168	47,542	27,451	30,522	35,313	30,934	55,514	31,927
% Change vs Prior Year	-38.9%	-47.1%	-40.7%	-53.0%	-20.7%	9.0%	-37.4%	-8.2%	-25.5%	-26.1%	29.6%	5.6%
Unincorp. Units	189	151	185	144	111	269	176	221	208	199	287	207
% Change vs Prior Year	-31.5%	-5.6%	-20.6%	-24.2%	-35.5%	0.0%	-42.9%	18.8%	-2.3%	-14.2%	13.0%	35.3%
Uninc. Value (\$000s)	28,218	21,603	21,948	16,148	17,921	45,003	24,284	28,261	32,539	26,346	50,056	29,528
% Change vs Prior Year	-37.8%	-45.0%	-36.2%	-42.9%	-26.2%	15.2%	-34.1%	9.0%	6.8%	-26.8%	30.2%	8.7%
Incorporated Units	18	13	9	12	14	14	21	11	18	23	22	9
% Change vs Prior Year	-53.8%	-50.0%	-76.3%	-86.7%	40.0%	-57.6%	-59.6%	-75.6%	-87.6%	-17.9%	0.0%	-71.9%
Inc. Value (\$000s)	2,574	2,436	1,667	1,430	2,247	2,539	3,167	2,261	2,774	3,675	3,591	993
% Change vs Prior Year	-48.2%	-60.1%	-69.2%	-84.3%	92.2%	-44.2%	-54.8%	-69.1%	-83.6%	-37.8%	-18.3%	-67.5%

Sources: Livingston Parish -- Livingston Parish Permit Office, Town of Albany, City of Denham Springs, Town of Livingston, Town of Walker, <http://censtats.census.gov>

St. Helena Parish -- <http://censtats.census.gov> (estimates with imputation)

St. Tammany Parish -- St. Tammany Parish Permit Office, Town of Abita Springs, Village of Folsom, Town of Madisonville, City of Mandeville, Town of Pearl River, City of Slidell, <http://censtats.census.gov>

Tangipahoa Parish -- Tangipahoa Parish Permit Office, City of Hammond, City of Ponchatoula

Washington Parish -- Washington Parish Permit Office, City of Bogalusa, Town of Franklinton, <http://censtats.census.gov>

## REGIONAL

### A Look at University Student Shopping: Internet vs. Brick and Mortar

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Regardless of whether or not someone enjoys shopping, regardless of motivation, and regardless of location or method, on some level everyone shops. Today's society is bombarded with new ways to shop. The Internet has revolutionized retailing and created avenues to serve customers that were previously impossible. Dunne and Lusch (p. 11; 2008) recognize that the changing face of retailing requires entrepreneurs capable of forging new approaches to serve emerging market opportunities. Indeed, they mention a study (p. 4) that concluded many CEOs lost their positions due to their inability to manage change.

When contemplating the world of shopping, there are many areas to be examined. Shopping is a vast subject matter, which has been intently studied by people from many walks of life with varying interests. This research project focused on the shopping behavior of college students, specifically as it relates to clothing purchases in retail stores versus Internet retailers.

#### METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was developed to gather information on the shopping habits of students. The questions varied from simple "yes" or "no" responses to open-ended questions. The survey was administered to graduate and undergraduate students at Southeastern Louisiana University. A total of 144 usable questionnaires were collected in a convenience sample during a two-week period in spring 2009. The written questions were answered anonymously.

#### FINDINGS

##### Characteristics of Respondents

Age ranges of the respondents varied, with 17-21 year olds accounting for 37 percent of the sample, 22 to 25 years old represented 48 percent, while the remaining 15 percent were 26 years of age and older. By college year classification, freshmen made up 12.5 percent of the respondents, sophomores 10.4 percent, juniors 20.1 percent, seniors 25.0 percent, and graduate students 31.9 percent. The sample was comprised of 39.6 percent male and 60.4 percent female respondents. On the campus, female students represent about 2/3 of all students, so the sample's gender breakdown was similar to that of the general student population. The majority of respondents (63.9 percent) indicated their main source of income was earned by themselves.

##### You Can Have Whatever You Like: Shopping Preferences

Overall, 78.5 percent of respondents indicated that they liked shopping. Females were more likely to enjoy shopping than males, with 92 percent of females indicating that they liked to shop compared to 58 percent of males.

The findings indicate that enjoyment of shopping declines with age. While 86.5 percent of respondents from the ages of 17 to 21 enjoyed shopping, the percentage declined to 78.3 percent of respondents from the ages of 22 to 25, and only 59.1 percent of those 26 years of age or older.

Note: This is an abridged version of an article entitled "University Student Shopping Patterns: Internet vs. Brick and Mortar" that appeared in the January/February 2010 issue of [The Journal of Applied Business Research](#).

## A Look at University Student Shopping... (continued)

Also, 92 percent of respondents whose main source of income was reported as parents and/or relatives enjoyed shopping. Younger students may enjoy shopping more, at least partially, because they are spending funds that were given to them. Younger students were also primarily female, while the majority of male respondents were older, which may have skewed the results.

**Table 1**

Do you like shopping?	Age			All
	17-21	22-25	26+	
Yes	46 (86.8%)	54 (78.3%)	13 (59.1%)	113

### Online vs. Stores

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were more likely to make clothing purchases online or in a store. Pearse (2009) reported that over two-thirds of consumers believed online shopping to be both cheaper and offer better value than a brick and mortar store. Still, in this study, 80.6 percent of respondents reported making their clothing purchases in-store. This makes sense to some degree given the nature of clothing and the requirement for many items to be tried on for fit; however, Ott (2005) found that only 51 percent of panelists strongly agreed with the statement "I prefer to purchase inside the store, rather than online or by catalog". Most respondents who enjoy shopping are likely to make in-store clothing purchases.

Male respondents were more likely to shop for clothing online than women. A higher percentage of male students, 24.6 percent, reported purchasing most of their clothing online, while only 16.1 percent of female students reported purchasing clothing online.

### Pick Your Poison: Clothing Items and Where They are Bought

Respondents were found to purchase different clothing articles from stores than from online retailers. Court (2006) finds that today's consumers use a combination of shopping channels to meet their needs. Court mentions that a key question relates to whether an online purchase is replacing an in-store purchase or whether the purchase is one that might not have been made given a lack of Internet access.

Even though the Internet is a very powerful tool, the percentage of respondents that do not shop online was surprisingly high. Of 144 respondents, 27.1 percent responded they do not shop online at all.

Only 18.9 percent of respondents in this study reported purchasing clothing off the Internet. When respondents were asked what clothing article they would most likely purchase online, 33.3 percent responded they would most likely purchase a shirt/blouse. However, only 6.9 percent responded they are most likely to buy pants and/or a skirt from the Internet. However, when purchasing clothing articles in a store, the largest percentage of the respondents (35.4 percent) are most likely to purchase pants and/or skirts. These findings seem to lead to the conclusion that some purchases made online do not replace purchases made in stores.

Table 2 reports the number/percentage of respondents indicating the source of clothing purchases and the clothing article they are likely to purchase. As mentioned earlier, 27 of the 143 respondents (18.9 percent) reported making their clothing purchases online. Of those 27 respondents, 55.5 percent are likely to pur-

## A Look at University Student Shopping... (continued)

chase a shirt and/or blouse; 18.5 percent are likely to purchase pants; another 18.5 percent are likely to purchase shoes; while only 7.4 percent are likely to purchase underwear and/or lingerie.

**Table 2**

	Shirt/Blouse	Pants/Skirt	Shoes	Underwear/ Lingerie	Total
Internet	15 (55.5%)	5 (18.5%)	5 (18.5%)	2 (7.4%)	27 (100.0%)
Store	43 (37.0%)	35 (30.1%)	30 (25.8%)	8 (6.89%)	116 (100.0%)
Store/Internet	2.9x	7.0x	6.0x	4.0x	4.3x

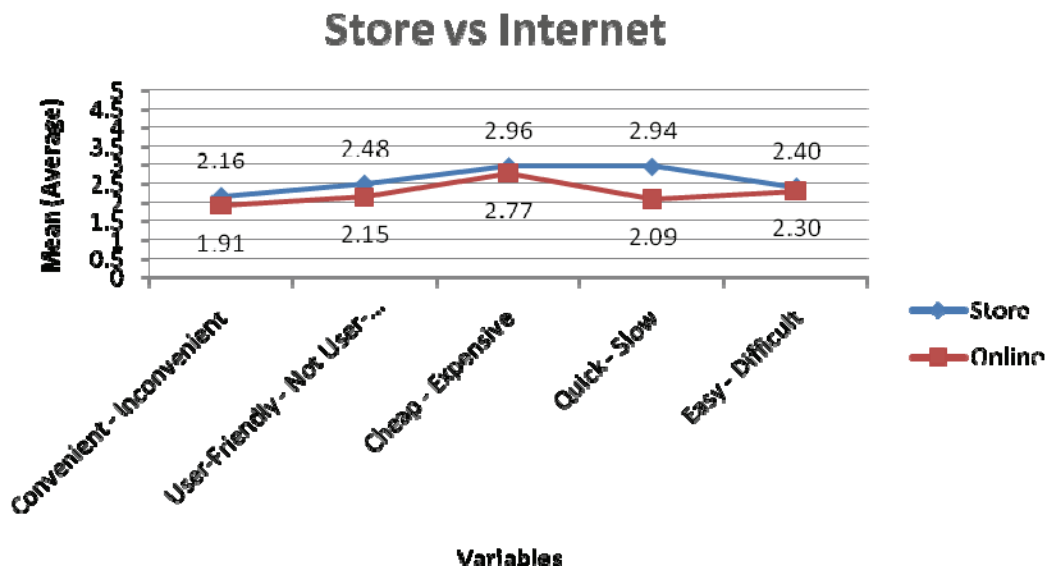
Of the 143 students responding, 116 expressed a preference to purchase clothing articles in a store. Table 2 indicates that 37.0 percent are likely to purchase a shirt and/or blouse, indicating that students are more likely to purchase a shirt and/or blouse from both stores and the Internet than any of the other clothing categories. The second most popular category for in-store purchases was pants/skirts, likely to be purchased by 35 of the 116 (30.1 percent) store shoppers.

The third row of Table 2 includes simple ratios of the number of respondents who shop in stores in each clothing category divided by the number who shop online. The overall ratio of “store shoppers” to “online shoppers” is 4.3, as shown in the far right “Total” column. Ratios by clothing categories range from 2.9 for “Shirt/Blouse” to 7.0 for “Pants/Skirt”. The range of ratios indicate that an acceptable fit is apparently easier to obtain for such items as shirts/blouses and underwear/lingerie without trying them on than for pants/skirts or shoes, thereby making the first two categories more amenable to online purchases. (Indeed, underwear is typically not even tried on in stores, but is normally purchased by size in sealed packages.)

### Online vs. Store: Semantic Differential

A comparison was made to evaluate the preferences of online shopping versus store shopping. Given the increasing popularity of online shopping, the findings are interesting. The results for the semantic differential comparison are displayed in the graph on the following page. Ratings on the scale above 3.0 indicate negative traits and numbers under 3.0 indicate positive traits: The lower the rating number, the more positive the perceived value of the variable. A rating of 3.0 would be a neutral rating. As shown, the data implies respondents generally think more favorably of online shopping than in-store shopping. There is a significant difference in opinion when it comes to the speed of shopping. Respondents consider online shopping quicker than store shopping. Online shopping is considered more convenient, user-friendly, cheaper, and easier than in-store shopping. All opinions of stores lean more toward neutral (3.0) than do opinions of online shopping. Respondents indicated a more favorable overall attitude toward online shopping – though most shopping is done in brick and mortar stores.

## A Look at University Student Shopping... (continued)



### Limitations

Generalizations of these findings should be approached with caution. The sample was a convenience sample administered in the form of an anonymous survey to students at one university. It is recommended that additional study be conducted of a larger and more representative college student sample, in order to shed further light on the shopping behavior of college students.

### CONCLUSION

The research conducted found most Southeastern students surveyed enjoy shopping. In the study, female respondents indicated they enjoy shopping at a greater percentage than do males. The research suggests the most popular item for purchase both in-stores and online was a shirt or blouse.

Respondents indicated they are more likely to shop in stores as opposed to on the Internet. However, respondents do consider online shopping to be more convenient, user-friendly, cheaper, quicker, and easier. Since shopping is a source of entertainment for many individuals, the traditional store will likely never be obsolete, but may face increasing competition as Internet retailers continue to increase their market presence and share.

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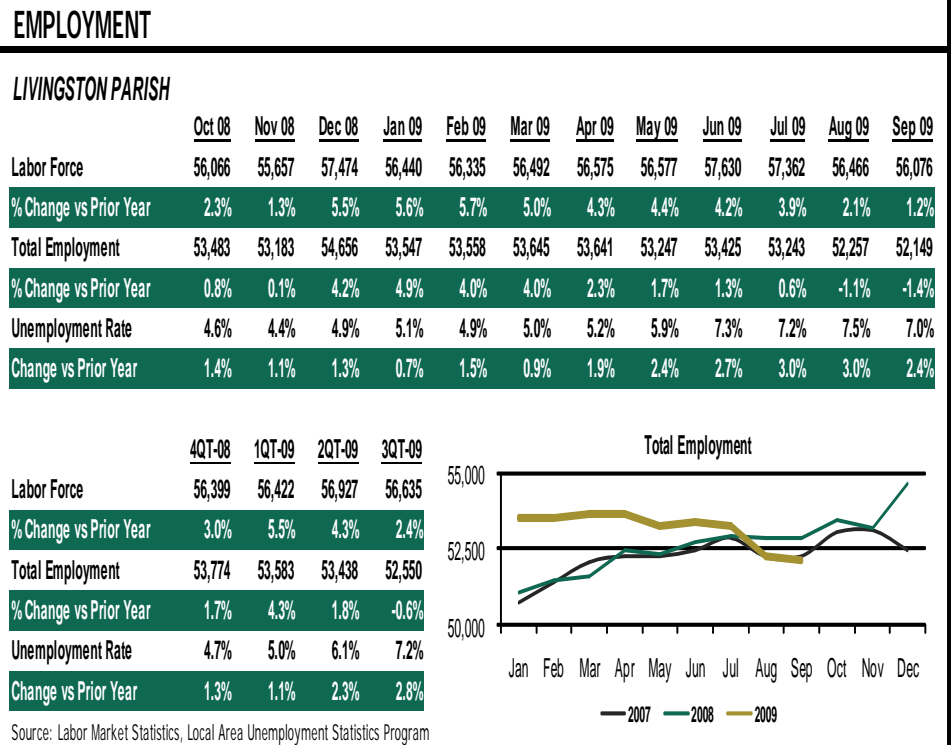
## LOCAL

### Livingston Parish

Livingston Parish experienced a 0.6 percent reduction in employment compared to the third quarter of 2008. Since the labor force grew at a 2.4 percent rate, the unemployment rate rose to 7.2 percent.

Taxable retail sales fell 11.6 percent compared to the third quarter of 2008, a more pronounced drop than the regional average (-7.1 percent).

The value of residential building permits rose 69.6 percent compared to the third quarter of 2008. The value of permits in August was 257% higher than a year ago, while July and September were both slightly down.



### ESTIMATED RETAIL SALES

#### LIVINGSTON PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Est. Retail Sales (Mil.)	\$107.23	\$96.45	\$138.47	\$100.51	\$95.96	\$117.77	\$105.13	\$102.28	\$108.15	\$96.33	\$97.99	\$93.97
% Change vs Prior Month	0.2%	-10.1%	43.6%	-27.4%	-4.5%	22.7%	-10.7%	-2.7%	5.7%	-10.9%	1.7%	-4.1%
% Change vs. Prior Year	4.0%	-16.8%	9.5%	7.1%	-0.2%	5.5%	2.1%	-8.0%	-5.7%	-11.5%	-11.1%	-12.2%
Quarterly Average Sales (Mil.)	\$114.05			\$104.75			\$105.19			\$96.10		
% Change vs. Prior Quarter	4.9%			-8.2%			0.4%			-8.6%		
% Change vs Prior Year	-0.9%			4.2%			-4.0%			-11.6%		

Source: Livingston Parish School Board - Sales and Use Tax Division

### RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

#### LIVINGSTON PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Units	54	40	21	62	32	148	70	103	111	57	189	54
% Change vs Prior Year	-30.8%	-7.0%	-68.2%	29.2%	-39.6%	127.7%	-34.0%	18.4%	40.5%	-3.4%	256.6%	-1.8%
Total Value (\$000s)	9,518	7,550	3,730	10,854	5,781	26,206	8,991	12,917	14,052	6,941	33,627	9,201
% Change vs Prior Year	54.1%	78.6%	-36.0%	138.7%	33.7%	373.6%	-3.3%	63.9%	115.9%	-36.1%	281.3%	-4.7%
Unincorp. Units	50	36	19	60	30	145	62	102	109	55	179	48
% Change vs Prior Year	-35.1%	-10.0%	-71.2%	33.3%	-42.3%	123.1%	-35.4%	30.8%	60.3%	-5.2%	251.0%	-9.4%
Uninc. Value (\$000s)	8,822	6,352	3,352	10,586	5,293	25,584	7,791	12,817	13,697	6,488	32,242	8,646
% Change vs Prior Year	45.3%	88.5%	-42.5%	177.0%	28.0%	362.4%	-3.1%	106.1%	152.6%	-36.6%	281.3%	-7.5%
Incorporated Units	4	4	2	2	2	3	8	1	2	2	10	6
% Change vs Prior Year	300.0%	33.3%	n/a	-33.3%	100.0%	n/a	-20.0%	-88.9%	n/a	100.0%	400.0%	n/a
Inc. Value (\$000s)	696	1,199	378	268	488	622	1,200	100	355	453	1,385	555
% Change vs Prior Year	560.8%	39.6%	n/a	-63.0%	162.1%	n/a	-4.6%	-94.0%	n/a	-27.8%	280.5%	n/a

Sources: La Dept. of Econ. Dev., Livingston Parish Permit Office, Town of Albany, City of Denham Springs, Town of Livingston, Town of Walker, U.S. Census Bureau

**Note:** Valuation estimation procedure discontinued by Livingston Parish Permit Office after June 2008. Unincorporated values from July 2008 forward are based on values estimated by the La. Dept. of Economic Development or U.S. Census Bureau. Comparisons to values in prior periods are not valid.

# Economic Reporter

## St. Helena Parish

Employment in St. Helena Parish in the third quarter of 2009 declined 3.4 percent compared to the same months of the previous year, and 1.7 percent from the second quarter of 2009. The unemployment rate for the quarter was 12.6 percent, up from 10.3 percent in the previous quarter.

Sales tax collections were up 15.5 percent from the second quarter, but fell 8 percent compared to the third quarter of 2008.

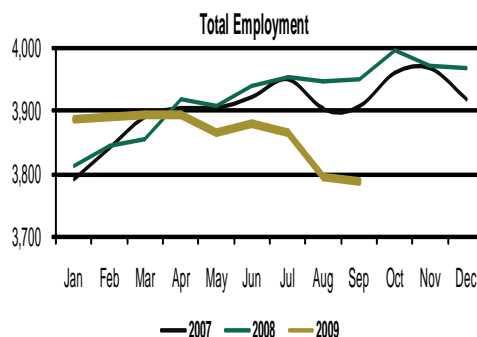
Building permit data is not available from St. Helena Parish, but the Census Bureau's estimated value of building permits fell 11.5 percent over the past twelve months.

### EMPLOYMENT

#### ST. HELENA PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Labor Force	4,399	4,363	4,422	4,330	4,252	4,247	4,250	4,285	4,440	4,430	4,365	4,292
% Change vs Prior Year	-4.9%	-5.4%	-6.4%	3.9%	4.1%	-6.2%	-6.7%	-7.0%	-10.3%	-10.9%	-13.0%	-14.0%
Total Employment	3,994	3,971	3,968	3,887	3,888	3,894	3,894	3,865	3,878	3,865	3,793	3,786
% Change vs Prior Year	0.9%	0.1%	1.3%	1.9%	1.1%	1.1%	-0.6%	-1.1%	-1.5%	-2.3%	-3.9%	-4.1%
Unemployment Rate	9.2%	9.0%	10.3%	10.2%	8.6%	8.3%	8.4%	9.8%	12.7%	12.8%	13.1%	11.8%
Change vs Prior Year	3.5%	3.5%	2.7%	1.7%	2.7%	1.1%	2.2%	3.9%	3.8%	3.9%	3.6%	1.5%

	4QT-08	1QT-09	2QT-09	3QT-09
Labor Force	4,395	4,276	4,325	4,362
% Change vs Prior Year	4.3%	3.5%	2.6%	-0.1%
Total Employment	3,978	3,890	3,879	3,815
% Change vs Prior Year	0.7%	1.4%	-1.1%	-3.4%
Unemployment Rate	9.5%	9.0%	10.3%	12.6%
Change vs Prior Year	3.2%	1.9%	3.3%	3.0%



Source: Labor Market Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program

### ESTIMATED RETAIL SALES

#### ST. HELENA PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Est. Retail Sales (Mil.)	\$6.51	\$6.20	\$9.15	\$5.23	\$4.78	\$5.85	\$4.33	\$5.29	\$4.93	\$5.31	\$4.93	\$6.57
% Change vs Prior Month	7.5%	-4.7%	47.5%	-42.9%	-8.5%	22.3%	-26.1%	22.2%	-6.8%	7.7%	-7.1%	33.3%
% Change vs. Prior Year	20.8%	-2.2%	21.2%	5.0%	0.7%	-9.6%	-14.0%	-3.9%	-27.3%	-21.4%	-9.8%	8.5%
Quarterly Average Sales (Mil.)			\$7.29			\$5.29			\$4.85			\$5.60
% Change vs. Prior Quarter			19.7%			-27.5%			-8.3%			15.5%
% Change vs Prior Year			13.4%			-2.1%			-16.0%			-8.0%

Source: Sales tax collections from St. Helena Parish Sheriff's Office expanded using tax rate of .05 (5%) Sept 2009 = ESTIMATED by BRC based on combined Sept/

### RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

#### ST. HELENA PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Units	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
% Change vs Prior Year	0.0%	-50.0%	-50.0%	-50.0%	-50.0%	-66.7%	-50.0%	-50.0%	-50.0%	-50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Value (\$000s)	254	127	127	127	127	127	150	150	150	150	150	150
% Change vs Prior Year	1.8%	-49.1%	-49.1%	-49.1%	-49.1%	-66.1%	-41.0%	-40.9%	-41.0%	-41.0%	18.0%	18.0%

Source: Louisiana Department of Economic Development or U.S. Census Bureau (estimates with imputation)

## St. Tammany Parish

Total employment in St. Tammany Parish in the third quarter of 2009 fell 4.5 percent compared to a year ago, a steeper decline than the regional drop of -1.5 percent. The workforce declined by 2.6 percent, and the unemployment rate increased to 5.4 percent, which is still the lowest rate in the region and well below the Northshore average of 6.9 percent.

Retail sales fell 7 percent compared to the third quarter of 2008, almost equaling the -7.1 percent decline for the region.

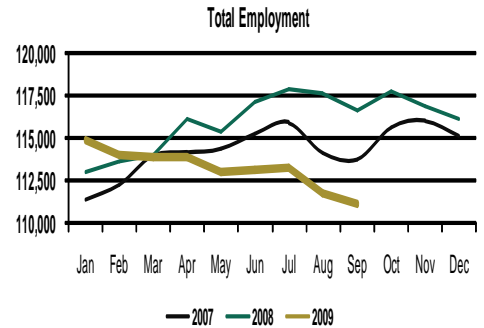
The value of building permits dropped 37.4 percent compared to the third quarter of 2008, but increased 36.4 percent compared to the previous quarter.

### EMPLOYMENT

#### ST. TAMMANY PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Labor Force	122,654	121,546	121,216	120,073	118,984	118,826	118,714	118,547	119,953	119,656	118,515	117,315
% Change vs Prior Year	3.4%	1.9%	2.3%	2.5%	1.9%	0.7%	-0.5%	-0.3%	-1.5%	-1.8%	-3.0%	-3.0%
Total Employment	117,825	116,915	116,119	114,944	114,021	113,879	113,911	113,005	113,154	113,293	111,746	111,209
% Change vs Prior Year	1.9%	0.7%	0.9%	1.7%	0.3%	-0.1%	-1.9%	-2.1%	-3.5%	-3.9%	-5.0%	-4.7%
Unemployment Rate	3.9%	3.8%	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%	4.2%	4.0%	4.7%	5.7%	5.3%	5.7%	5.2%
Change vs Prior Year	1.4%	1.1%	1.4%	0.8%	1.5%	0.9%	1.4%	1.8%	1.9%	2.1%	1.9%	1.7%

	4QT-08	1QT-09	2QT-09	3QT-09
Labor Force	121,805	119,294	119,071	118,495
% Change vs Prior Year	2.6%	1.7%	-0.8%	-2.6%
Total Employment	116,953	114,281	113,357	112,083
% Change vs Prior Year	1.2%	0.6%	-2.5%	-4.5%
Unemployment Rate	4.0%	4.2%	4.8%	5.4%
Change vs Prior Year	1.3%	1.0%	1.7%	1.9%



Source: Labor Market Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program

### ESTIMATED RETAIL SALES

#### ST. TAMMANY PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Est. Retail Sales (Mil.)	\$314.63	\$310.41	\$401.88	\$289.72	\$283.70	\$340.81	\$313.36	\$311.86	\$336.61	\$301.70	\$290.37	\$303.83
% Change vs Prior Month	-1.3%	-1.3%	29.5%	-27.9%	-2.1%	20.1%	-8.1%	-0.5%	7.9%	-10.4%	-3.8%	4.6%
% Change vs. Prior Year	-5.9%	-7.6%	-10.9%	-6.2%	-11.5%	-7.1%	-7.9%	-6.9%	-9.9%	-9.1%	-6.9%	-4.7%
Quarterly Average Sales (Mil.)			\$342.31			\$304.74			\$320.61			\$298.63
% Change vs. Prior Quarter			6.7%			-11.0%			5.2%			-6.9%
% Change vs Prior Year			-8.4%			-8.2%			-8.3%			-7.0%

Source: Sales tax collections from St. Tammany Parish Sales and Use Tax Department expanded using an average tax rate of .04825 (4.825%)

### RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

#### ST. TAMMANY PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Units	42	31	80	54	33	64	38	40	49	50	63	62
% Change vs Prior Year	-65.9%	-64.8%	-23.8%	-62.2%	-47.6%	-57.0%	-66.4%	-44.4%	-73.7%	-47.9%	-49.6%	-22.5%
Total Value (\$000s)	7,873	6,603	8,940	1,606	6,369	13,150	6,921	6,945	11,057	10,264	13,783	9,937
% Change vs Prior Year	-70.6%	-80.4%	-58.2%	-92.9%	-49.7%	-48.5%	-62.1%	-56.9%	-62.3%	-41.1%	-37.8%	-32.4%
Unincorp. Units	35	29	73	46	28	56	33	35	37	39	58	59
% Change vs Prior Year	-63.5%	-60.3%	-16.1%	-52.1%	-50.9%	-56.9%	-59.8%	-34.0%	-53.2%	-50.6%	-50.8%	5.4%
Uninc. Value (\$000s)	6,862	6,230	7,651	651	5,289	11,596	6,223	5,640	9,058	8,107	12,415	9,500
% Change vs Prior Year	-71.4%	-78.8%	-57.3%	-96.3%	-55.5%	-49.0%	-54.4%	-54.8%	-40.1%	-37.9%	-36.4%	-22.8%
Incorporated Units	7	2	7	8	5	8	5	5	12	11	5	3
% Change vs Prior Year	-74.1%	-86.7%	-61.1%	-83.0%	-16.7%	-57.9%	-83.9%	-73.7%	-88.8%	-35.3%	-28.6%	-87.5%
Inc. Value (\$000s)	1,011	373	1,289	955	1,081	1,553	698	1,306	1,999	2,156	1,367	438
% Change vs Prior Year	-63.8%	-91.2%	-62.7%	-80.3%	39.8%	-44.4%	-84.8%	-63.9%	-85.9%	-50.6%	-48.1%	-81.7%

Sources: <http://censtats.census.gov>, St. Tammany Parish Permit Office, Town of Abita Springs, Village of Folsom, Town of Madisonville, City of Mandeville, Town of Pearl River, City of Slidell

# Economic Reporter

## Tangipahoa Parish

Employment in Tangipahoa Parish in the third quarter of 2009 declined 3.3 percent compared to the third quarter of the previous year. The work force declined only 0.2 percent, leading to a higher unemployment rate of 8.5 percent for the quarter.

Retail sales dropped 5.7 percent from the previous quarter and 5.8 percent compared to third quarter of 2008, which was a smaller drop than the 7.1 percent year-over-year decline for the region.

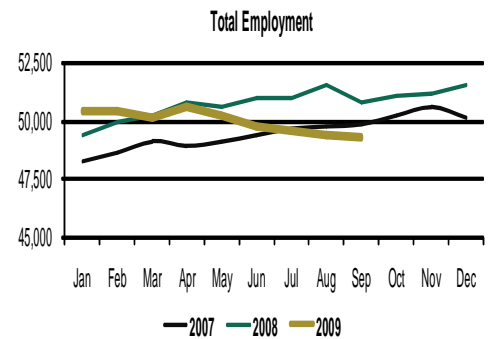
The value of building permits rose 2.3 percent from the prior quarter and 13.7 percent from the third quarter of 2008.

### EMPLOYMENT

#### TANGIPAHOA PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Labor Force	54,324	54,282	55,223	54,010	53,586	53,446	53,827	53,948	54,483	54,239	54,099	53,606
% Change vs Prior Year	4.3%	3.4%	5.4%	3.9%	3.3%	1.5%	2.2%	2.4%	1.2%	1.0%	-0.8%	-1.0%
Total Employment	51,054	51,144	51,557	50,358	50,378	50,064	50,534	50,196	49,734	49,519	49,333	49,270
% Change vs Prior Year	1.6%	1.1%	2.8%	2.0%	0.9%	-0.4%	-0.4%	-0.8%	-2.4%	-2.8%	-4.2%	-2.9%
Unemployment Rate	6.0%	5.8%	6.6%	6.8%	6.0%	6.3%	6.1%	7.0%	8.7%	8.7%	8.8%	8.1%
Change vs Prior Year	2.5%	2.1%	2.3%	1.7%	2.3%	1.7%	2.4%	3.0%	3.3%	3.6%	3.3%	1.8%

	4QT-08	1QT-09	2QT-09	3QT-09
Labor Force	54,610	53,681	54,086	53,981
% Change vs Prior Year	4.4%	2.9%	1.9%	-0.2%
Total Employment	51,252	50,267	50,155	49,374
% Change vs Prior Year	1.9%	0.8%	-1.2%	-3.3%
Unemployment Rate	6.1%	6.4%	7.3%	8.5%
Change vs Prior Year	2.3%	1.9%	2.9%	2.9%



Source: Labor Market Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program

### ESTIMATED RETAIL SALES

#### TANGIPAHOA PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Est. Retail Sales (Mil.)	\$131.16	\$122.04	\$162.58	\$123.17	\$122.29	\$143.42	\$131.90	\$129.08	\$139.80	\$126.65	\$123.32	\$127.96
% Change vs Prior Month	-1.5%	-7.0%	33.2%	-24.2%	-0.7%	17.3%	-8.0%	-2.1%	8.3%	-9.4%	-2.6%	3.8%
% Change vs. Prior Year	-2.3%	-5.5%	7.5%	0.2%	-9.0%	-4.7%	-3.6%	-5.9%	-11.5%	-7.3%	-6.1%	-3.9%
Quarterly Average Sales (Mil.)	\$138.59			\$129.63			\$133.59			\$125.98		
% Change vs. Prior Quarter	3.7%			-6.5%			3.1%			-5.7%		
% Change vs Prior Year	0.3%			-4.6%			-7.2%			-5.8%		

Source: Sales tax collections from the Tangipahoa Parish School Board - Sales and Use Tax Division expanded using a tax rate of .02 (2%)

### RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

#### TANGIPAHOA PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Units	100	89	84	31	48	62	88	83	49	114	56	99
% Change vs Prior Year	-5.7%	97.8%	16.7%	-60.3%	-9.4%	-15.1%	-31.3%	53.7%	-39.5%	31.0%	-38.5%	141.5%
Total Value (\$000s)	11,487	9,528	9,837	4,058	6,452	6,992	11,389	9,808	8,119	12,666	6,087	11,232
% Change vs Prior Year	-28.6%	51.3%	-1.5%	-54.3%	-2.8%	-34.0%	-22.6%	38.0%	-19.5%	15.0%	-44.2%	153.3%
Unincorp. Units	94	85	84	31	43	60	80	79	45	104	49	99
% Change vs Prior Year	-1.1%	123.7%	52.7%	-20.5%	-14.0%	-4.8%	-33.3%	102.6%	-18.2%	28.4%	-38.0%	175.0%
Uninc. Value (\$000s)	10,695	8,894	9,837	4,058	5,848	6,787	10,120	9,158	7,699	11,600	5,248	11,232
% Change vs Prior Year	-23.7%	65.7%	18.8%	-26.9%	-9.1%	-27.6%	-26.8%	74.5%	-9.1%	11.1%	-45.0%	169.8%
Incorporated Units	6	4	0	0	5	2	8	4	4	10	7	0
% Change vs Prior Year	-45.5%	-42.9%	-100.0%	-100.0%	66.7%	-80.0%	0.0%	-73.3%	-84.6%	66.7%	-41.7%	-100.0%
Inc. Value (\$000s)	792	634	0	0	604	205	1,269	650	420	1,066	839	0
% Change vs Prior Year	-61.7%	-31.7%	-100.0%	-100.0%	187.6%	-83.2%	42.6%	-65.1%	-74.1%	85.8%	-38.6%	-100.0%

Sources: Tangipahoa Parish Permit Office, City of Hammond, and City of Ponchatoula

## Washington Parish

Employment in Washington Parish in the third quarter of 2009 fell 4.2 percent compared to the previous year. This translates to approximately 600 fewer people being employed in the parish. The labor force fell only 0.6 percent, causing the unemployment rate to rise to 9.9 percent.

Sales tax collections were 20.3 percent lower for the quarter and 11.8 percent lower compared to the third quarter 2008, but may have been falsely depressed by collection office closures and staff layoffs.

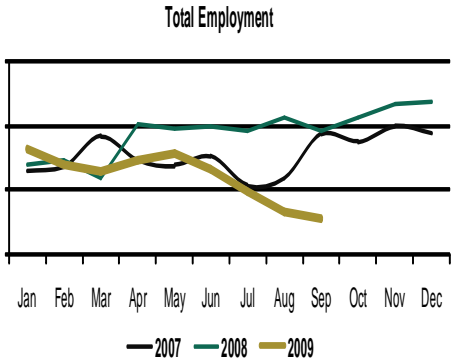
The value of building permits rose 58.8 percent from the prior quarter, but fell 5.9 percent in comparison to the third quarter of 2008.

### EMPLOYMENT

#### WASHINGTON PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Labor Force	16,181	16,209	16,405	15,950	15,785	15,750	15,869	16,061	16,275	16,071	15,969	15,795
% Change vs Prior Year	3.7%	2.9%	4.1%	1.9%	2.1%	1.8%	0.9%	2.0%	1.3%	0.6%	-1.3%	-1.0%
Total Employment	15,059	15,160	15,191	14,813	14,702	14,643	14,739	14,787	14,661	14,488	14,327	14,276
% Change vs Prior Year	1.2%	1.1%	1.7%	0.8%	-0.2%	0.3%	-1.8%	-1.2%	-2.2%	-3.1%	-4.8%	-4.5%
Unemployment Rate	6.9%	6.5%	7.4%	7.1%	6.9%	7.0%	7.1%	7.9%	9.9%	9.9%	10.3%	9.6%
Change vs Prior Year	2.2%	1.7%	2.2%	1.0%	2.2%	1.4%	2.6%	3.0%	3.2%	3.5%	3.4%	3.3%

	4QT-08	1QT-09	2QT-09	3QT-09
Labor Force	16,265	15,828	16,068	15,945
% Change vs Prior Year	3.6%	2.0%	1.4%	-0.6%
Total Employment	15,137	14,719	14,729	14,364
% Change vs Prior Year	1.3%	0.3%	-1.8%	-4.2%
Unemployment Rate	6.9%	7.0%	8.3%	9.9%
Change vs Prior Year	2.1%	1.5%	3.0%	3.4%



Source: Labor Market Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program

### ESTIMATED RETAIL SALES

#### WASHINGTON PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Est. Retail Sales (Mil.)	\$36.31	\$25.24	\$33.51	\$31.58	\$38.67	\$36.59	\$40.86	\$33.78	\$31.72	\$36.66	\$30.71	\$17.43
% Change vs Prior Month	10.2%	-30.5%	32.8%	-5.8%	22.5%	-5.4%	11.7%	-17.3%	-6.1%	15.6%	-16.3%	-43.2%
% Change vs. Prior Year	21.2%	-26.5%	-36.7%	23.0%	0.7%	-6.9%	17.4%	-3.6%	-22.0%	3.8%	10.0%	-47.1%
Quarterly Average Sales (Mil.)			\$31.69			\$35.61			\$35.45			\$28.27
% Change vs. Prior Quarter			-1.2%			12.4%			-0.5%			-20.3%
% Change vs Prior Year			-19.0%			3.3%			-3.7%			-11.8%

Source: Washington Parish Sheriff's Office - Sales and Use Tax Department. Sept. 2009 collections down partially due to office closures and staff layoffs in October 2009.

### RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

#### WASHINGTON PARISH

	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mar 09	Apr 09	May 09	Jun 09	Jul 09	Aug 09	Sep 09
Total Units	9	3	8	8	11	8	-	5	16	9	10	11
% Change vs Prior Year	50.0%	-62.5%	-69.2%	-11.1%	0.0%	-33.3%	-100.0%	-68.8%	60.0%	-43.8%	66.7%	37.5%
Total Value (\$000s)	1,660	230	980	932	1,439	1,067	0	701	1,936	913	1,867	1,406
% Change vs Prior Year	55.7%	-75.9%	-59.4%	-16.4%	-8.3%	-33.4%	-100.0%	-63.2%	51.1%	-60.9%	130.5%	7.8%

Sources: Washington Parish Permit Office, City of Bogalusa, Town of Franklinton, <http://censtats.census.gov>

## SOUTHEASTERN

### **NORTH SHORE RESIDENTS REVEAL SATISFACTIONS, DISSATISFACTIONS WITH QUALITY OF LIFE IN AREA**

#### **North shore residents generally satisfied with quality of life**

Nearly seven out of 10 respondents to a survey conducted in five north shore parishes indicate they are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of life in the area, according to a report released by Southeastern.

However, the results differ widely when examined on a parish-by-parish level, with Livingston Parish respondents registering the highest levels of satisfaction (74.5 percent) compared to Washington Parish, where less than half -- approximately 44 percent -- say they are satisfied or very satisfied. About 71 percent of St. Tammany respondents and 68.5 percent in Tangipahoa expressed satisfaction with their quality of life. Responses from St. Helena Parish were too few to be compared individually, but were included in overall totals.

The quality of life survey was conducted by the Southeastern Social Science Research Center (SSSRC). Responses were solicited from 5,000 randomly selected residents in the five north shore parishes of Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington. The mail survey had a response of 1,150 completed questionnaires, a 23 percent response rate.

Copies of the report are being distributed to area governing bodies and organizations such as chambers of commerce and economic development agencies. The report is also available online at [www.selu.edu/sssrc](http://www.selu.edu/sssrc).

"The intent of the study is to provide decision makers and the general public with valuable social science data that can be used in efforts to build stronger, safer and more economically viable communities in our region," said Southeastern President John L. Crain.

"This area has seen some of the state's fastest growth, so we anticipate the findings will be valuable to the communities in the area," said Crain. "We are all focused on growth and economic development, but it's important that we preserve those features of our culture that contribute to our overall quality of life, while identifying those areas that need greater attention."

Sociology professor Bonnie Lewis, director of the SSSRC and one of the authors of the study, said the survey was also designed to explore whether residents thought quality of life had improved or deteriorated over the last three years, and whether they thought their communities would become a better or worse place to live in the next three years.

The report indicates that respondents in Livingston (50 percent), St. Tammany (43 percent), and Tangipahoa (40 percent) parishes are the most positive.

In addition to an overall evaluation of quality of life, respondents were asked to rate various types of services, the effects of rapid growth and change in their communities, environmental conditions, and their per-

## SOUTHEASTERN

ceptions of levels of crime in their areas.

Overall, a majority of respondents in the four parishes rate education, child care, health care, parks and recreation areas, and youth recreation services as excellent or good.

“However, similar majorities rate affordable housing, care for the elderly, and public transportation as only fair or poor,” Lewis added.

When addressing government services, a majority of respondents as a whole rated as “excellent” or “good” five out of 14 service areas: fire protection, police protection, emergency preparedness, parks and recreation, and government services in general.

Lewis said that majorities in these parishes overall rate as “fair” or “poor” a number of other government-provided services, including planning for business development, attracting jobs, building inspections, traffic safety and management, street and roads, services for the poor, planning for residential development, drainage, and citizen involvement in planning.

“More residents anticipate that the quality of life in their specific parish will get better or much better over the next three years than think it will get worse,” Lewis said. “In all the parishes combined, about 42 percent of the respondents expect quality of life to improve, while 29 percent say it will stay the same and another 29 percent predict it will get worse or much worse.”

However, reflecting on the past three years, nearly 50 percent of respondents overall indicated that their parish had become a worse or much worse place to live, while only 30 percent said their parish had become a better or much better place to live. The biggest negatives came from Washington and St. Tammany parishes where more than 61 percent and 55 percent, respectively, feel their parish has become a worse or much worse place to live over that period. In Livingston Parish, slightly more than 37 percent of respondents said the parish had become a worse or much worse place to live.

Other findings in the study include:

- Overall, a vast majority of respondents – 84 percent – say they feel safe or very safe walking in their neighborhood during the day, with a parish-by-parish breakdown showing the highest level of security among St. Tammany residents (91 percent), and the lowest among those in Washington Parish (61 percent).

- In rating certain potential problem areas in their parishes, majorities indicated that road traffic, population growth, and loss of forested areas pose a moderate-to-major problem for the quality of life in their parish.

- Areas considered no more than “somewhat of a problem” in the parishes included parish planning, waterway pollution, employment opportunities, poverty, government leadership, crime, sewage treatment, insufficient government revenue, race relations, and air pollution.

# Economic Reporter

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-- Perception on the quality of education showed that public elementary, junior high and high school education is rated as good-to-excellent by a super majority of respondents, primarily because of the high ratings given to those schools by residents in St. Tammany and Livingston parishes, which rank among the top performing school systems in the state. Public education ratings of respondents in Tangipahoa and Washington parishes are more negative. Private education at all levels is rated overwhelmingly good-to-excellent across the board.

Lewis said that in analyzing the responses, some variables proved to be significant predictors of quality of life.

"Annual family income seems to be a significant factor," she said. "Individuals who reported earning less money annually were more likely to report dissatisfaction with their overall quality of life. A negative association was also revealed when the number of years in residence was evaluated. As the length of time at an address increased so did satisfaction in perceived quality of life."

The Southeastern Social Science Research Center provides research, education and support for regional and local development. The center specializes in survey research and conducts periodic studies including political polls, fear of crime surveys, and other reports.

*(Article courtesy of Southeastern's Office of Public Information.)*



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**Building permit offices of the following municipalities:**

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City of Denham Springs  
Village of Folsom  
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Town of Livingston**

**Town of Madisonville  
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City of Slidell  
Town of Walker**