


MONTHLY RESEARCH UPDATE

March 2026 Review

 (877) 629-4386

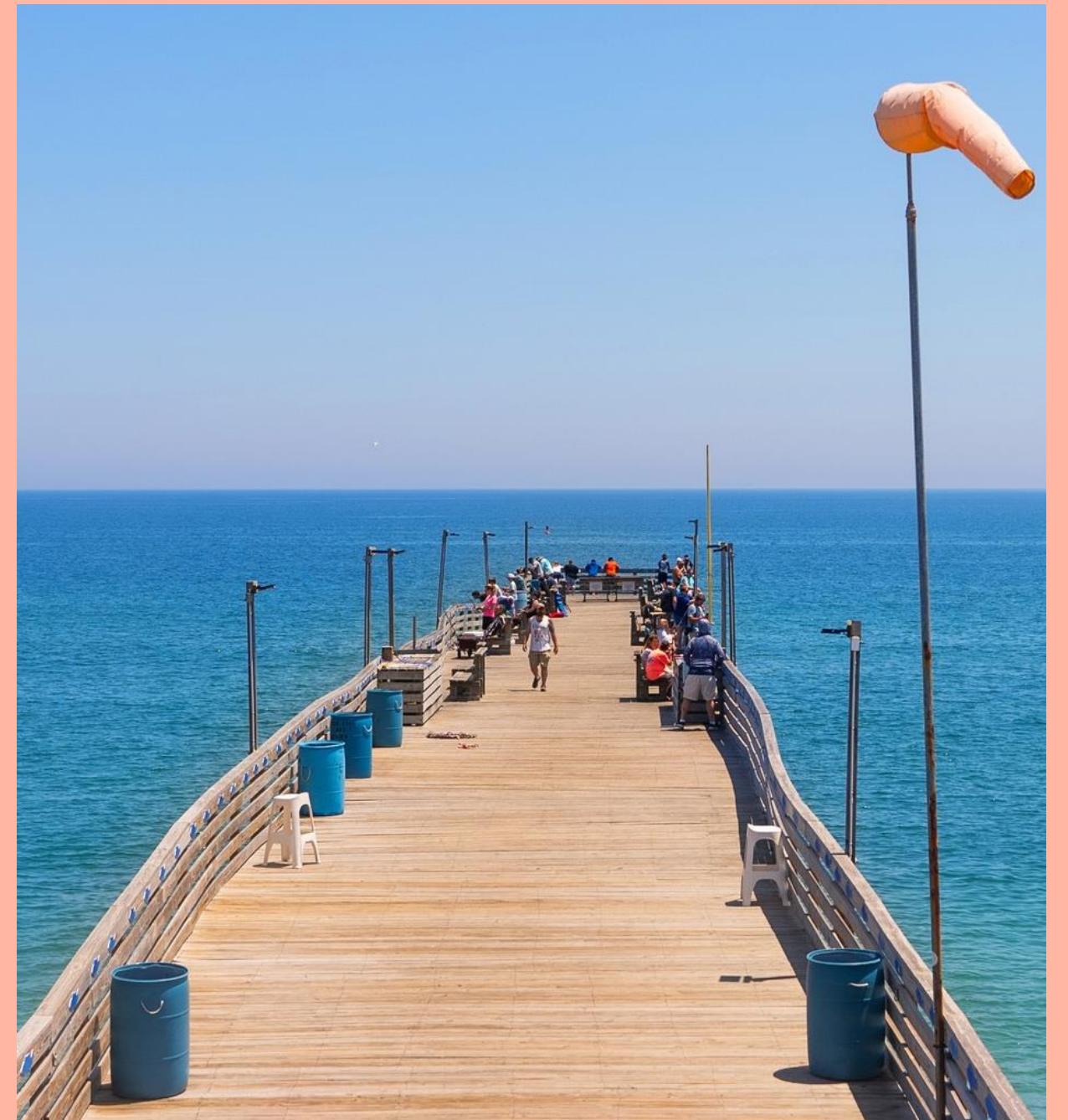
 One Visitors Center Circle, Manteo, NC 27954

 www.outerbanks.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In March, guest Demand among Dare County's short-term lodging properties fell by 9.7% compared to last year, while Owner Nights & Holds dropped by 9.0% Year-over-Year (YoY). As a result, Adjusted Paid Occupancy for the month decreased by 2.3% compared to last March. Adjusted Paid Occupancy came to 20.6% throughout the county for the month.
 - Northern Beaches was the only region within Dare County to see Adjusted Paid Occupancy increase in March compared to last year. Rentals on Roanoke Island saw the highest average Adjusted Paid Occupancy at 24.6%, followed by Northern Beaches at 19.4%, and Hatteras Island at 17.6%.
 - Throughout Dare County, Average Daily Rate (ADR) increased by 14.3% YoY to \$181. Northern Beaches and Hatteras Island both saw ADR rise significantly compared to last year, to \$202 and \$139 respectively, while Roanoke Island was relatively flat at \$127.
- Guest Demand among Dare County's hotels dipped slightly in March, decreasing by 1.8% YoY, pulling Paid Occupancy down with it. Hotels averaged 63.3% Occupancy for the month, a 1.8% decline from last year.
 - Conversely, hotel ADR rose moderately, rising by 4.8% YoY to average \$125 for the month. The increase in rate was enough to overpower the weakened Demand and kept hotel Revenue buoyant. Revenue rose by 2.9% YoY to \$1.8 million in March.
- In-market visitor spending on Visa cards totaled \$18.6 million in March 2026, a slight 1.7% increase compared to the same month last year.
 - Visitor spending was a mix of increases and decreases across major domestic markets. Spending from the largest market, the Virginia Beach MSA, decreased 7.0% YoY, while the Washington DC-VA-MD-WV MSA grew significantly by 22.2% YoY. Spending from the Richmond MSA increased by 4.6% YoY.
 - Overall, domestic visitor spending rose 1.8% YoY in March, while international visitor spending dropped 13.9% YoY for the month.

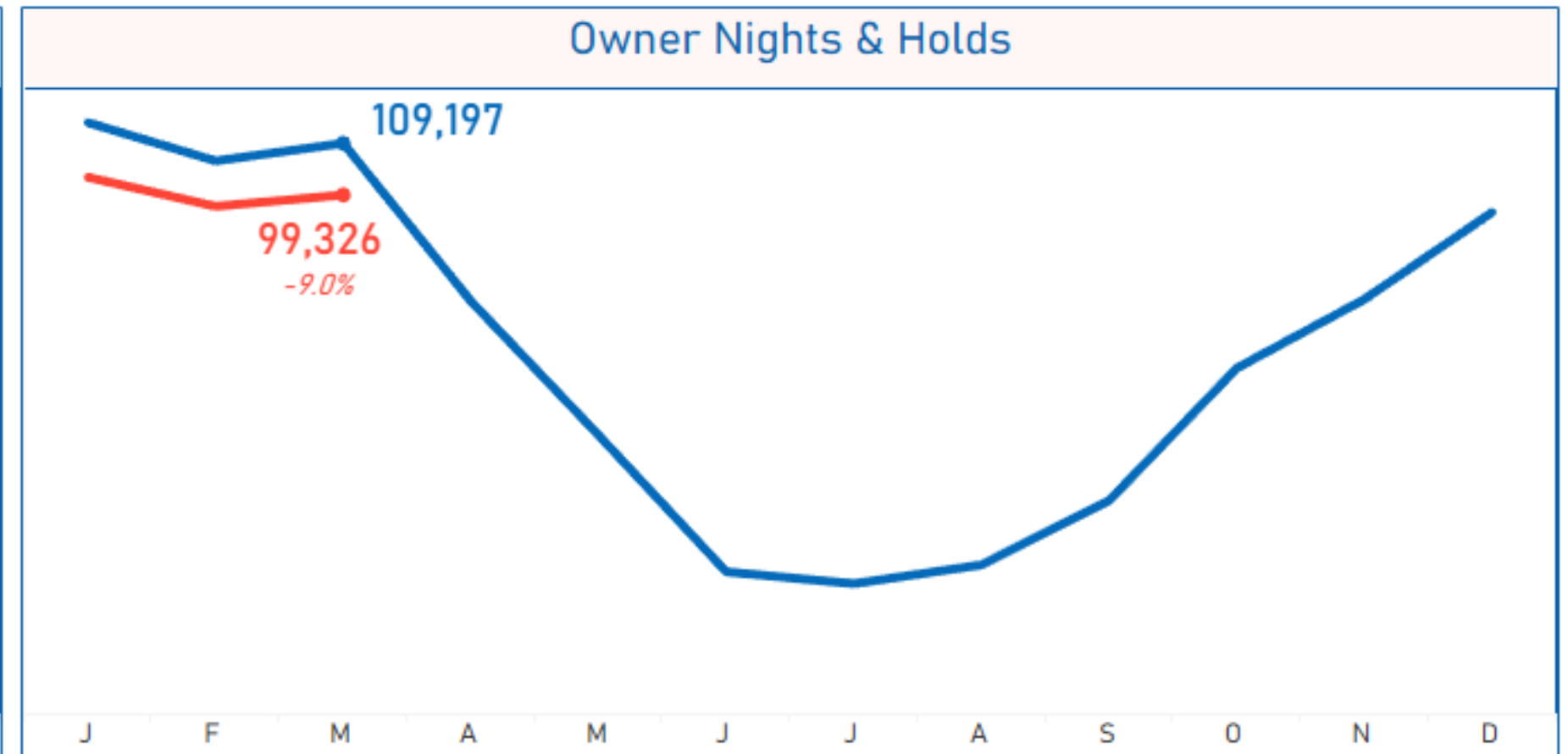
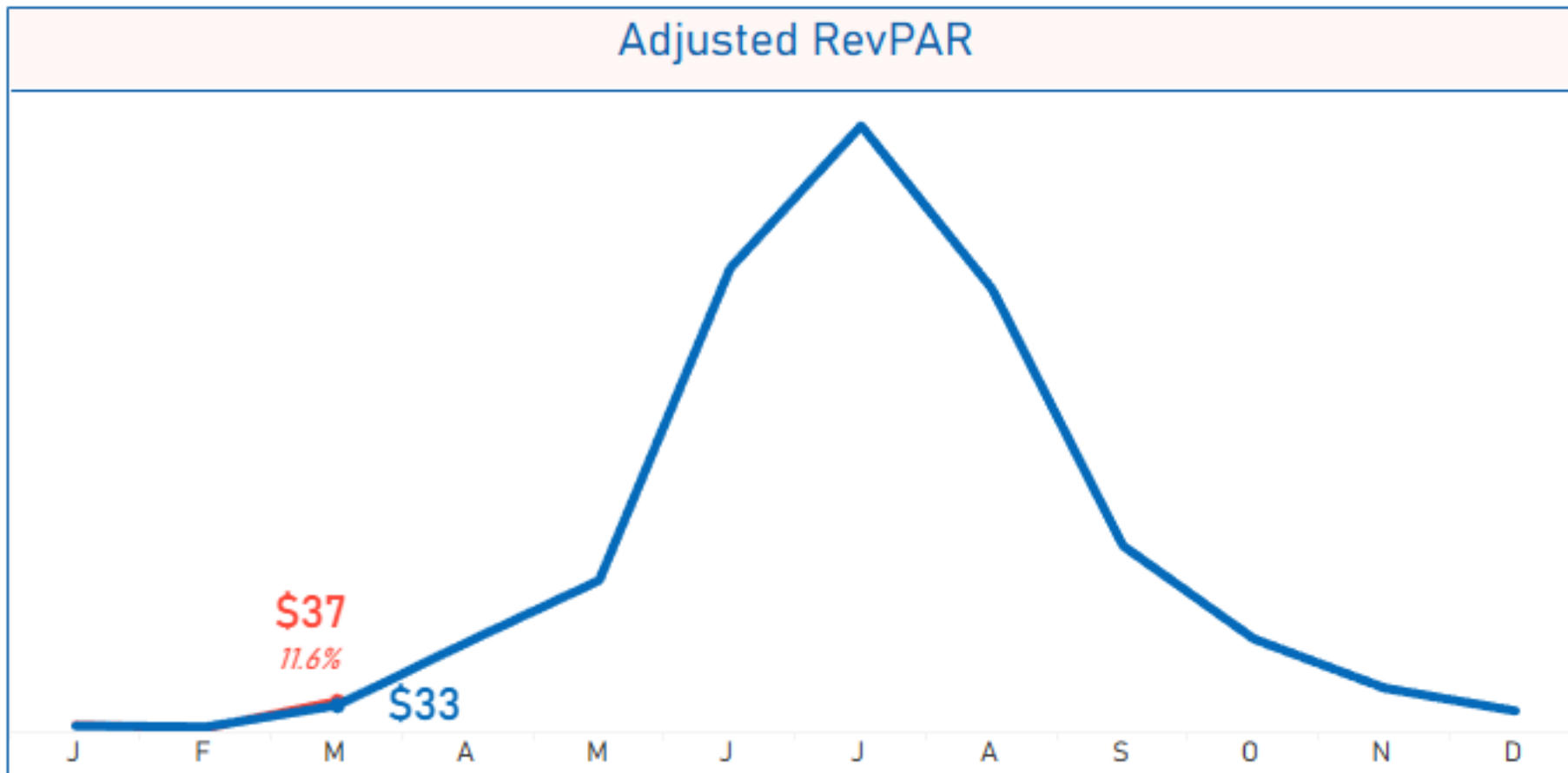
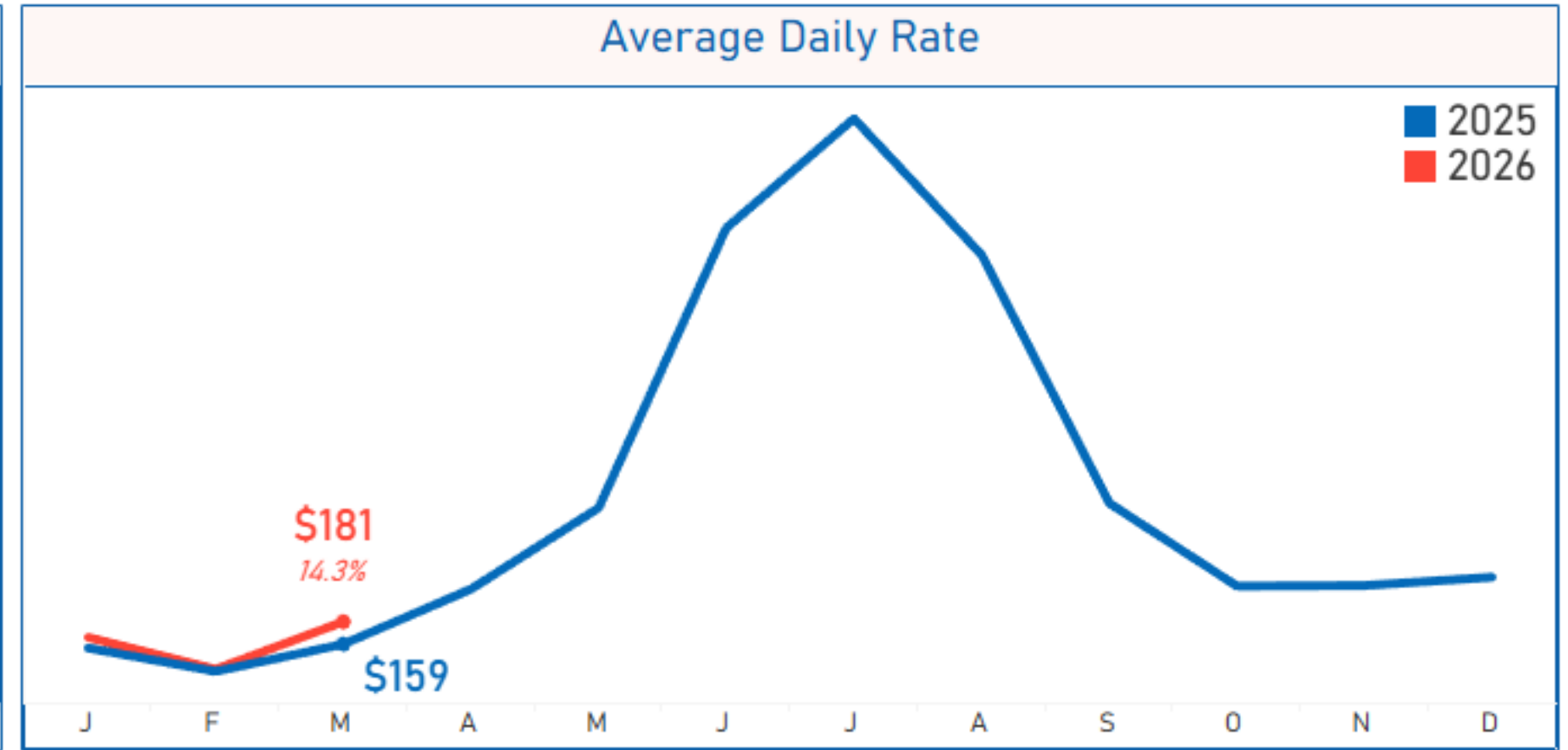
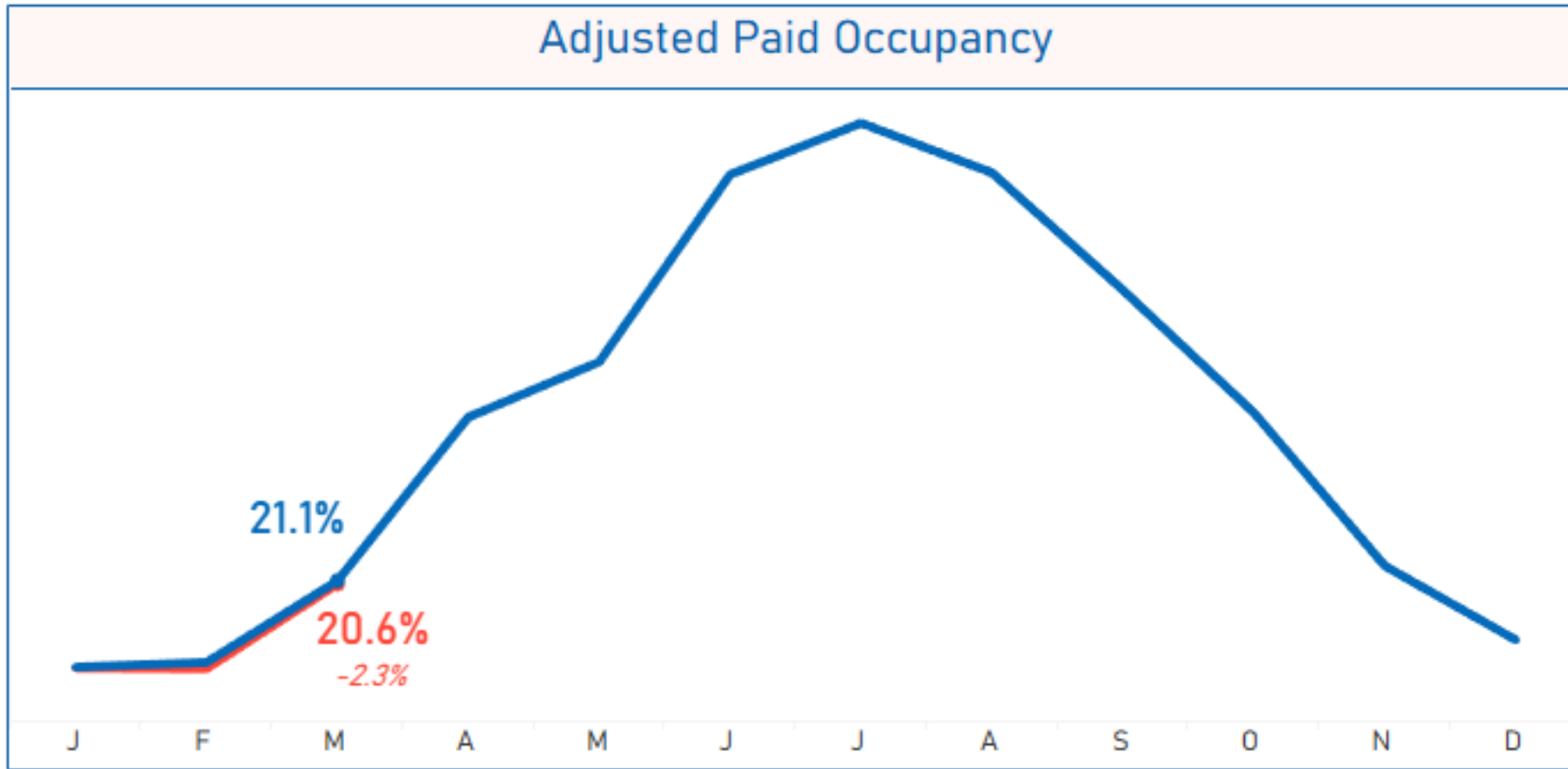
HISTORICAL SHORT-TERM RENTAL DATA



Dare County Monthly Short-Term Rental Performance

March 2026

Source: KeyData



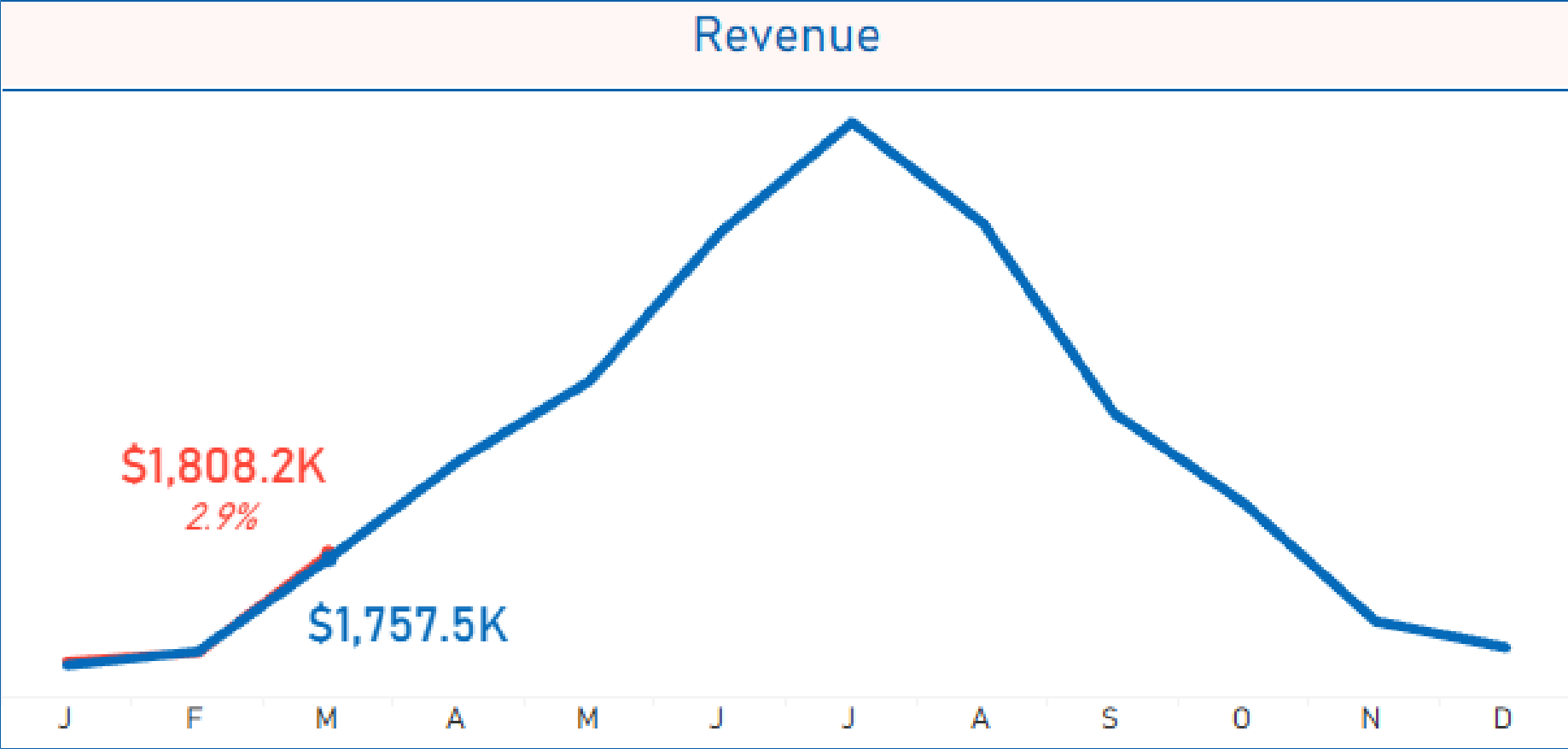
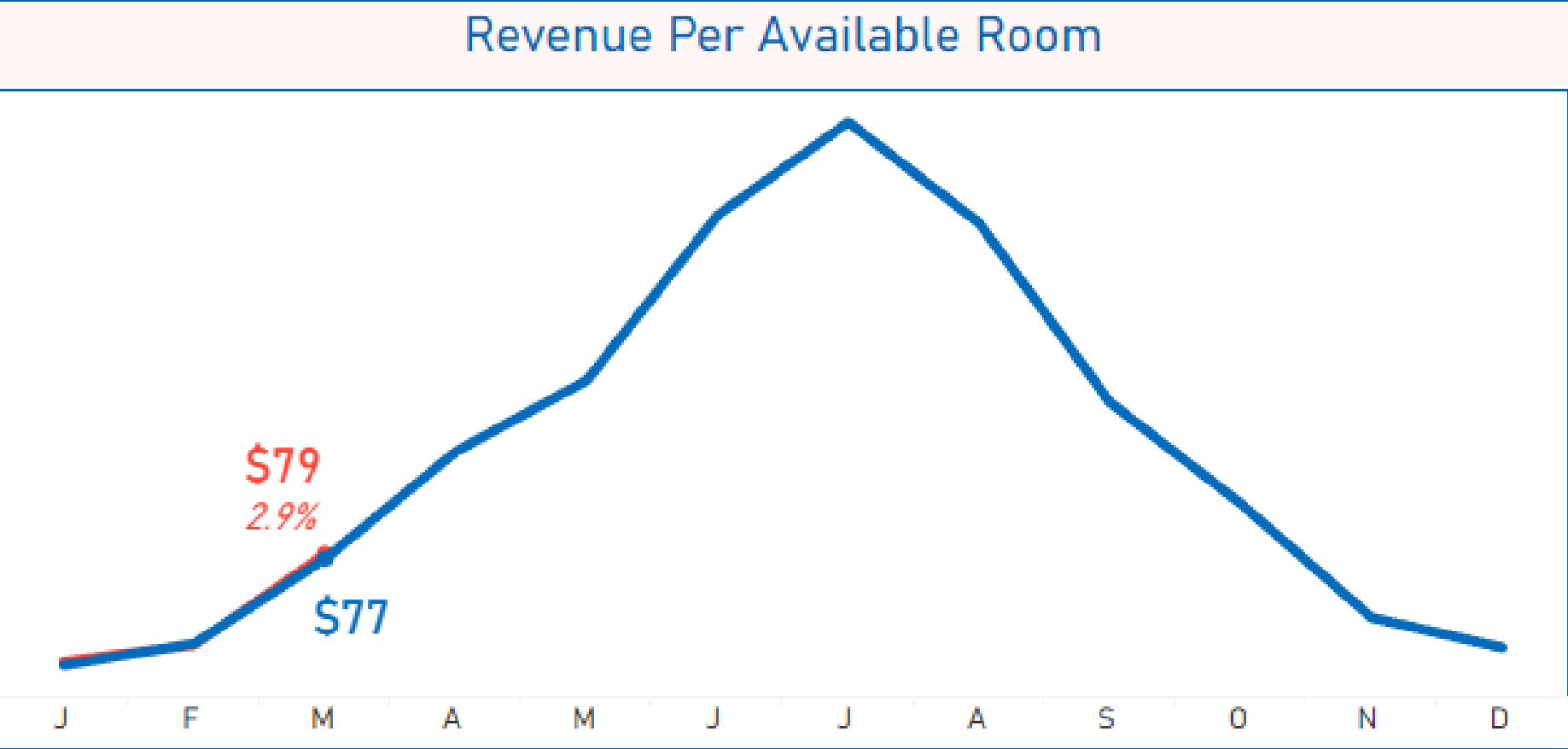
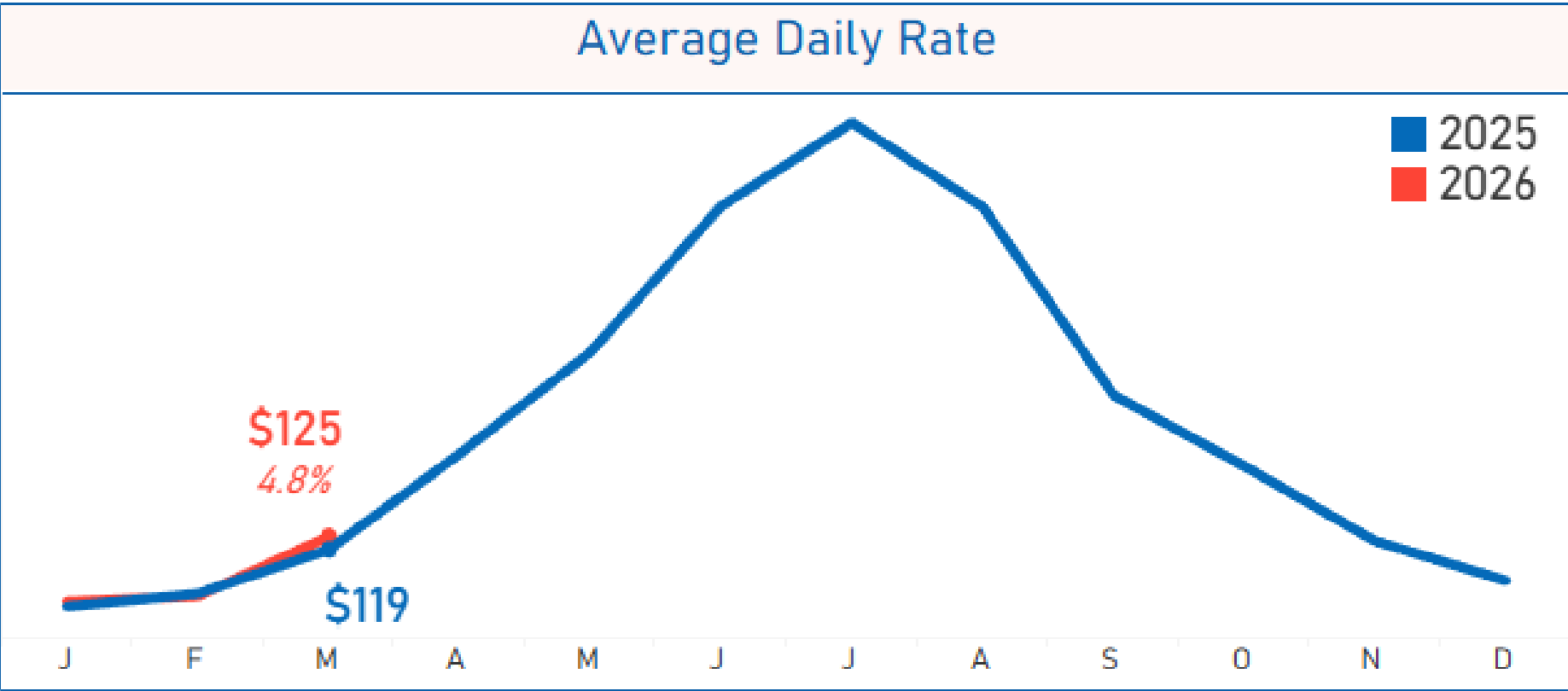
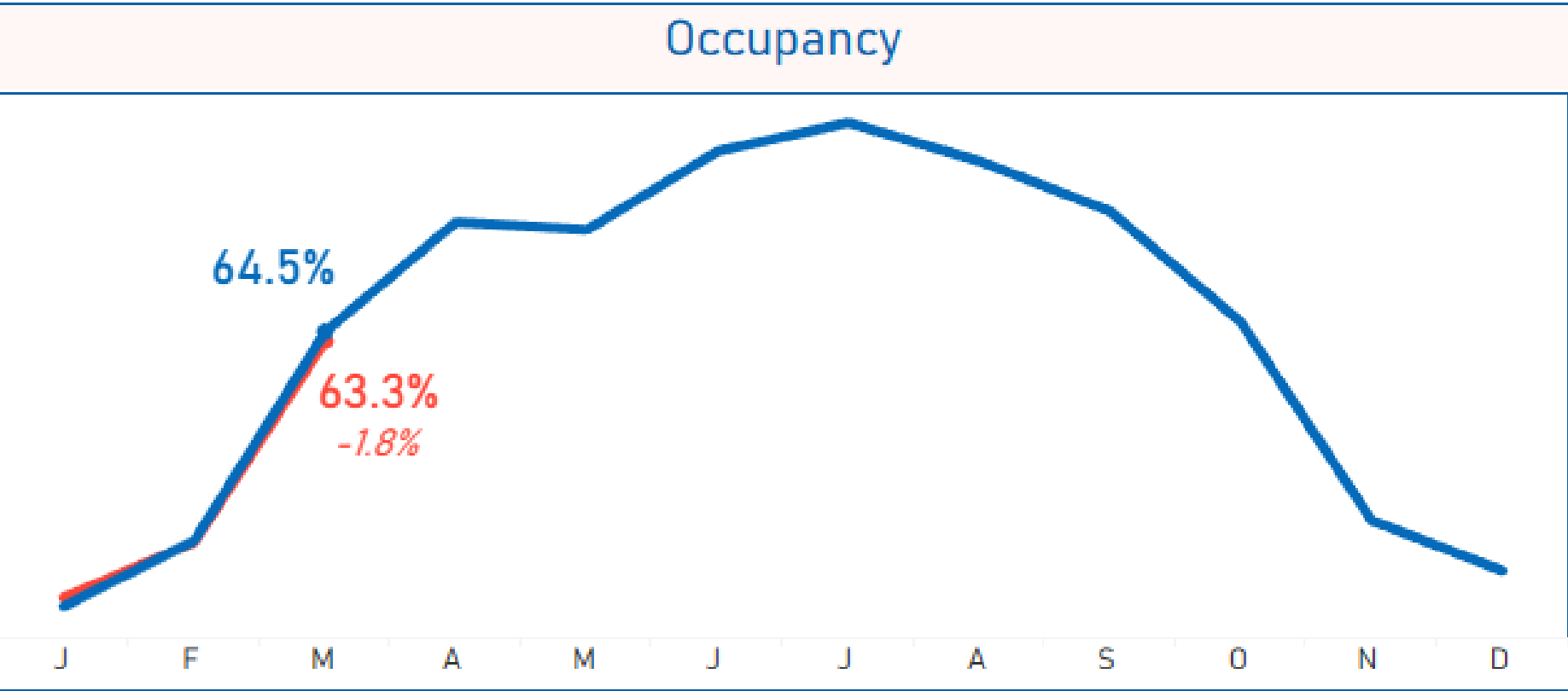
HISTORICAL HOTEL DATA



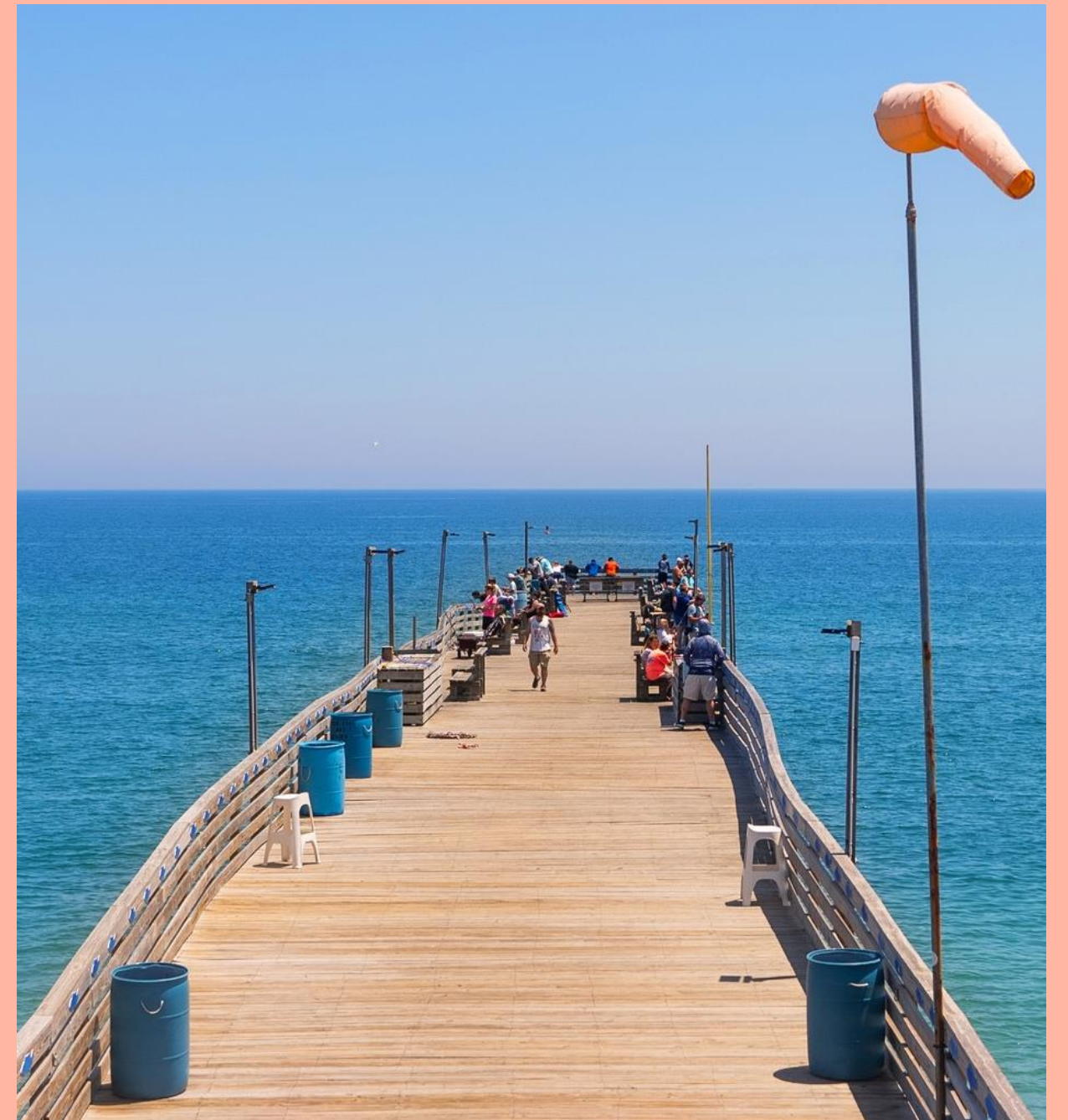
Dare County Monthly Hotel Performance

March 2026

Source: KeyData (sample: 12 hotels; 1,496 rooms)



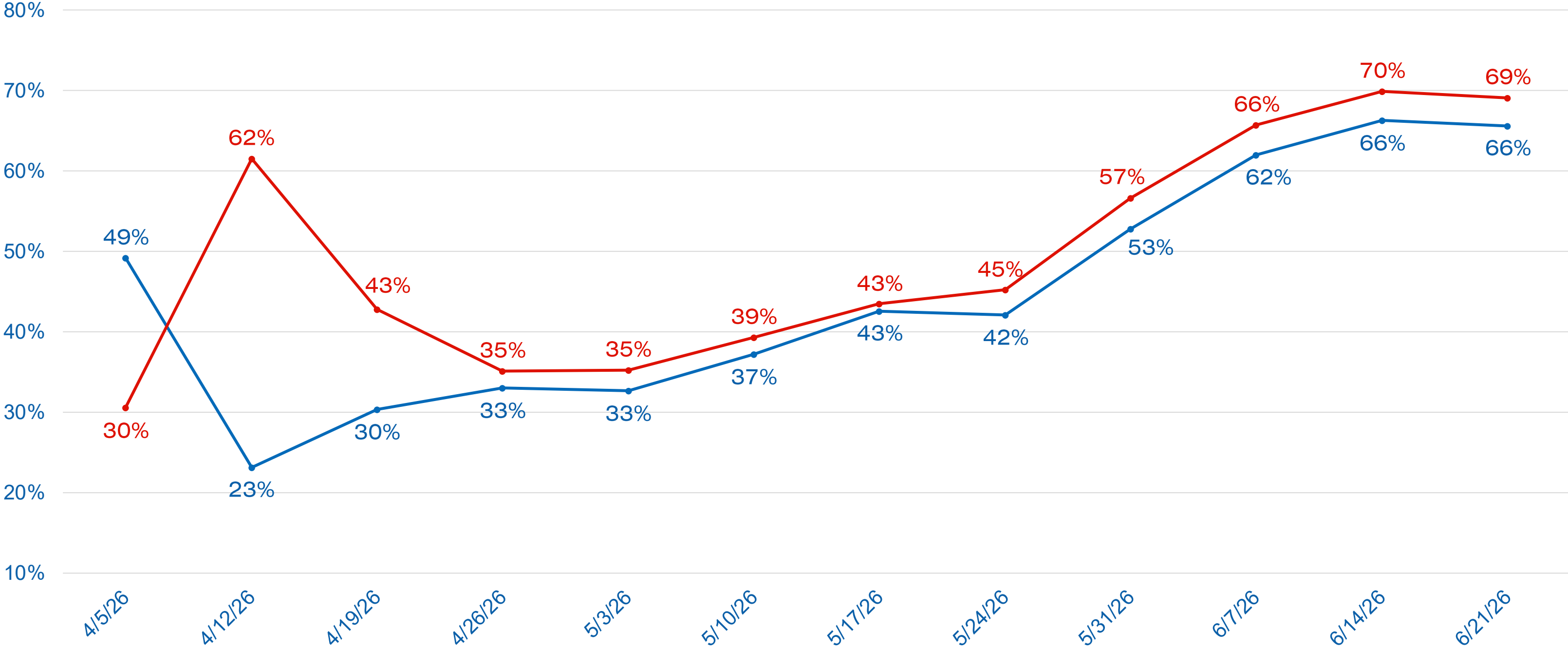
SHORT-TERM RENTAL PACING DATA



DARE COUNTY – PROJECTED ADJUSTED PAID OCCUPANCY BY WEEK

Pace by Week – Projected Adjusted Paid Occupancy (%)

—●— Current Year —●— Previous Year

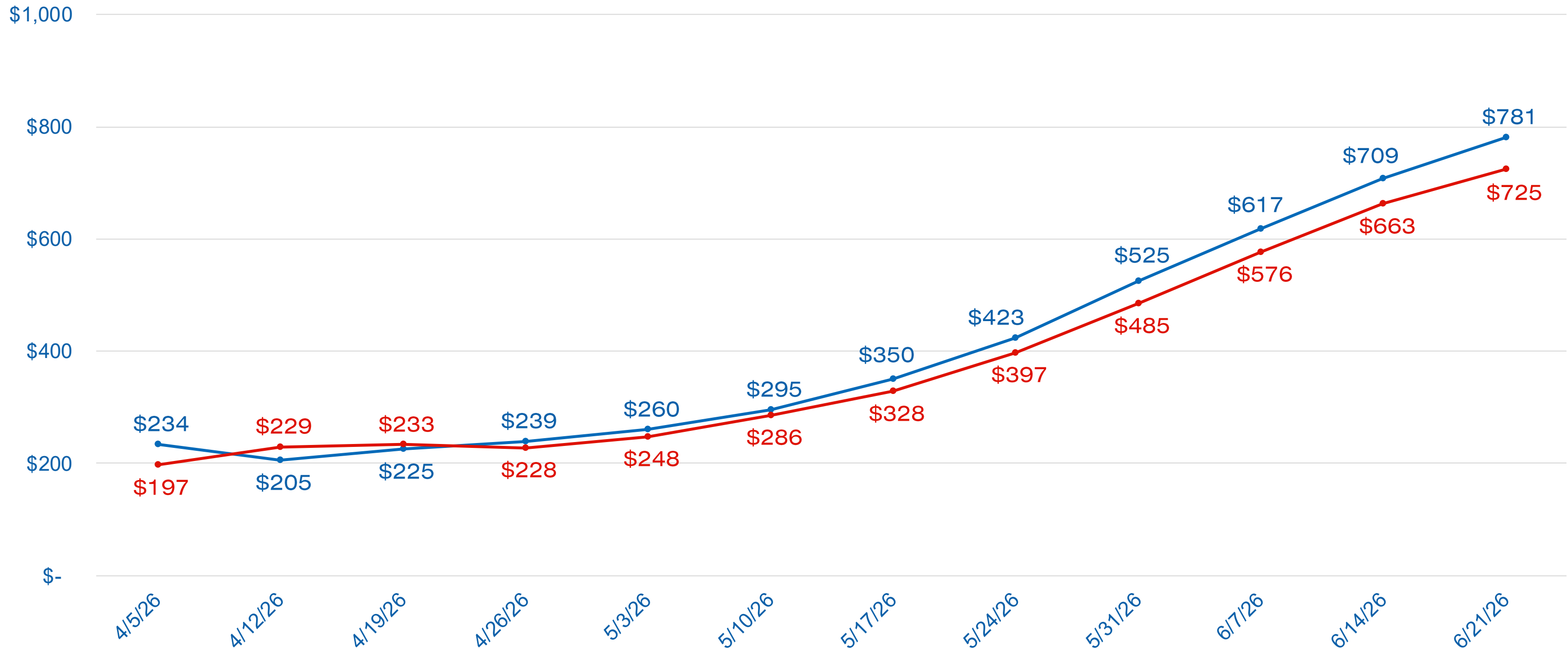


Source: Key Data (as of 4/6/2026)

DARE COUNTY – PROJECTED AVERAGE DAILY RATE

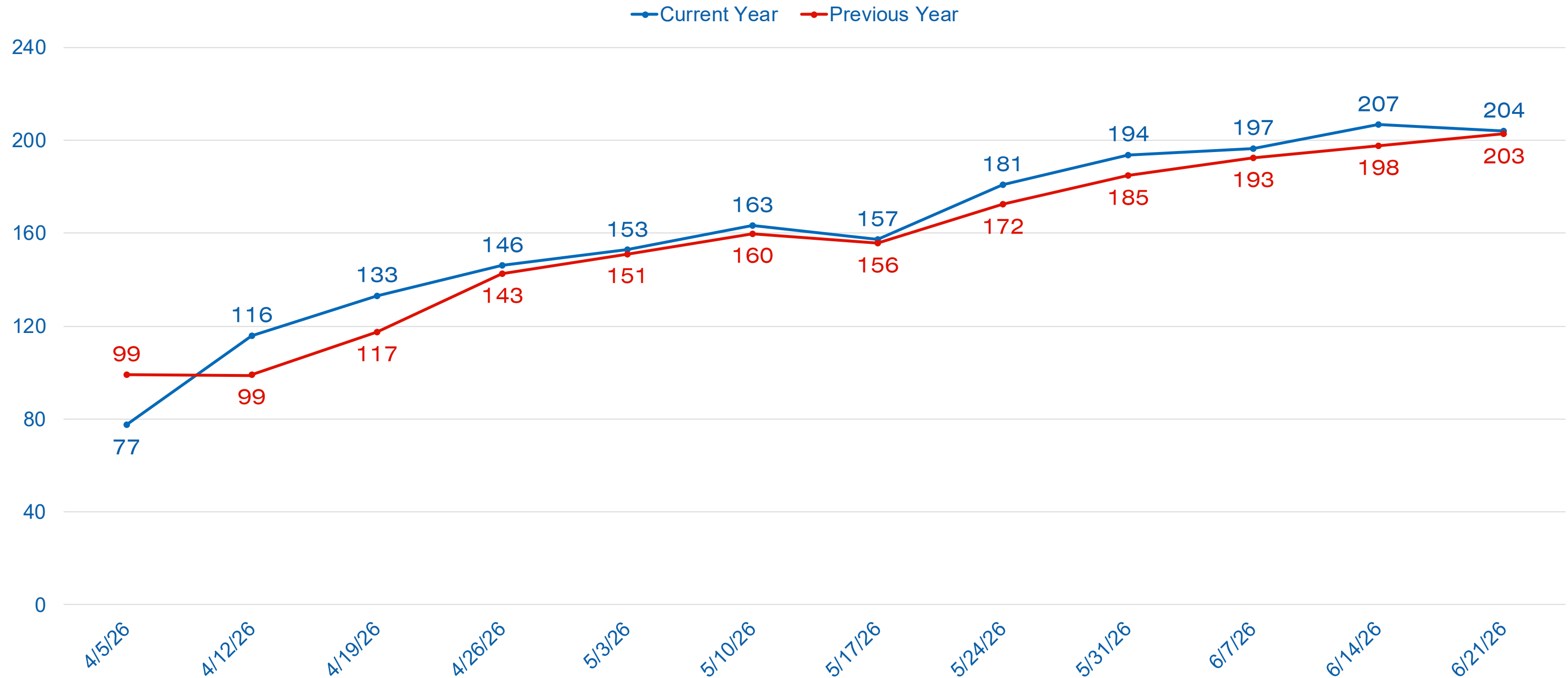
Pace by Week – Projected Average Daily Rate (\$)

—●— Current Year —●— Previous Year



DARE COUNTY – PROJECTED AVERAGE BOOKING WINDOW (DAYS)

Pace by Week – Projected Average Booking Window (Days)



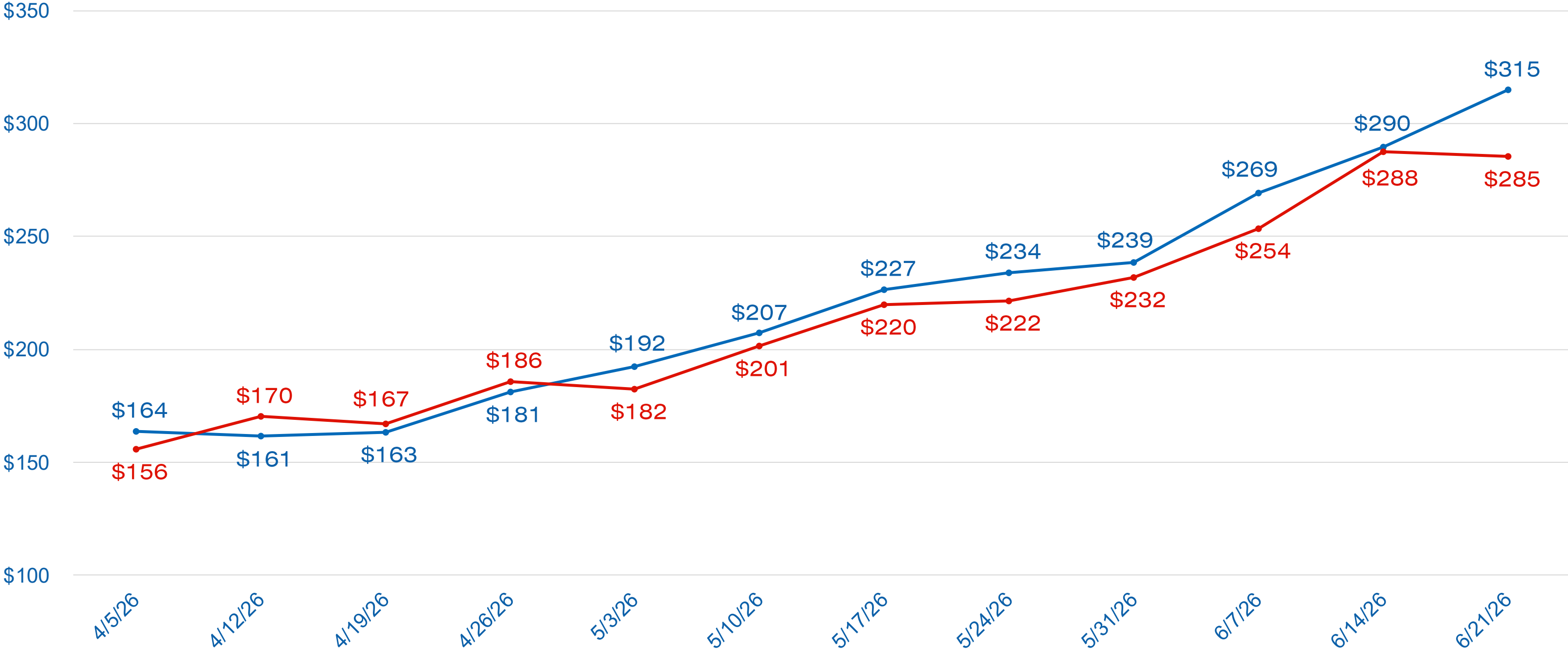
HOTEL PACING DATA



DARE COUNTY HOTELS – AVERAGE DAILY RATE

Pace by Week – Projected Average Daily Rate (\$)

— Current Year — Previous Year

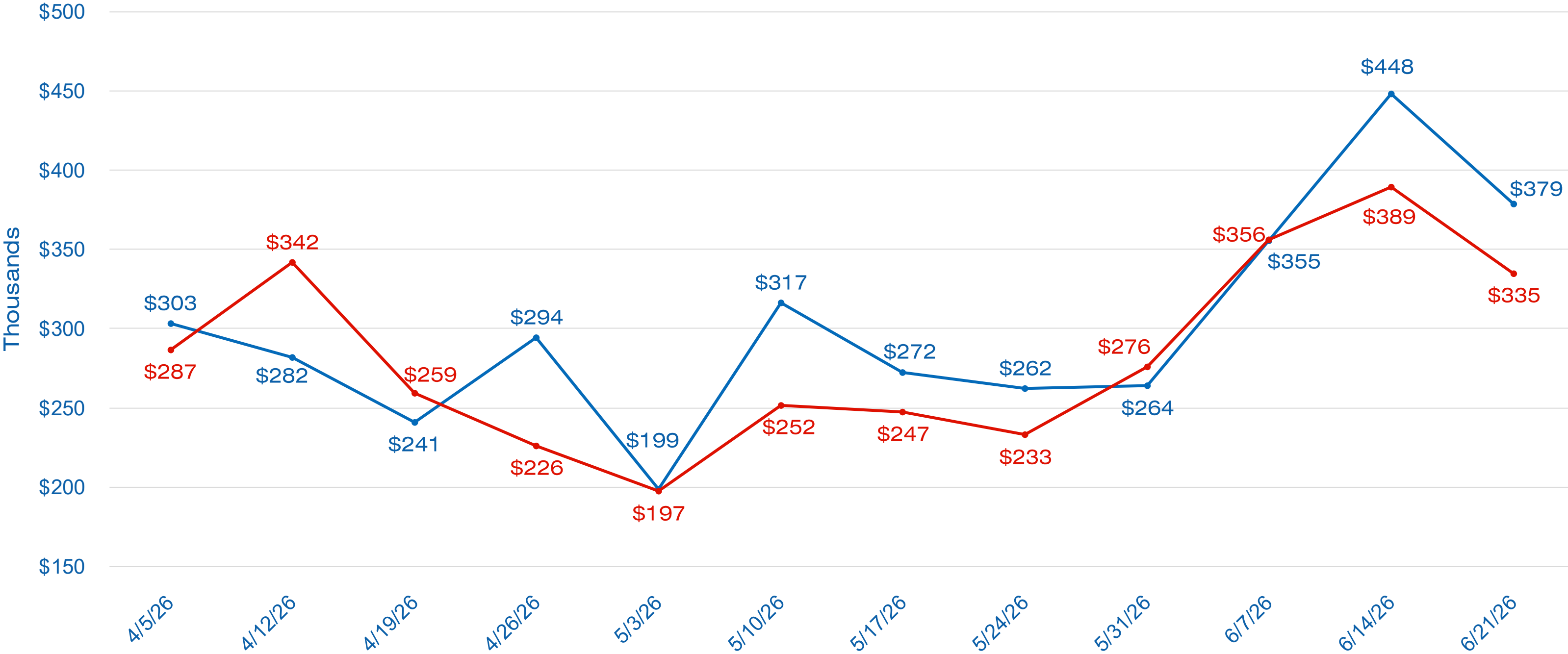


Source: Key Data (as of 4/6/2026, Sample = 12 hotels, 1,496 rooms)

DARE COUNTY HOTELS – REVENUE

Pace by Week – Projected Revenue (\$)

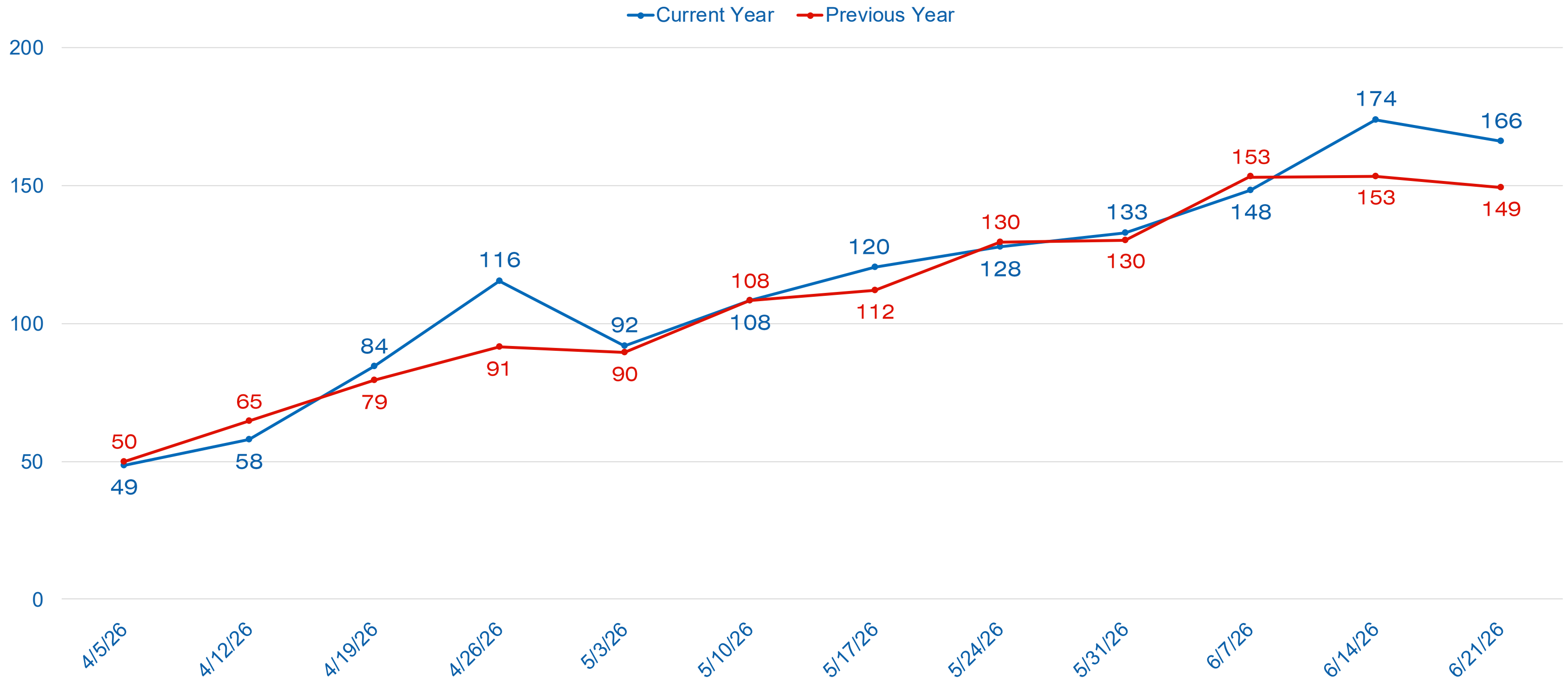
— Current Year — Previous Year



Source: Key Data (as of 4/6/2026, Sample = 12 hotels, 1,496 rooms)

DARE COUNTY HOTELS – AVERAGE BOOKING WINDOW (DAYS)

Pace by Week – Projected Average Booking Window (Days)



Source: Key Data (as of 4/6/2026, Sample = 12 hotels, 1,496 rooms)

VISA DESTINATION INSIGHTS

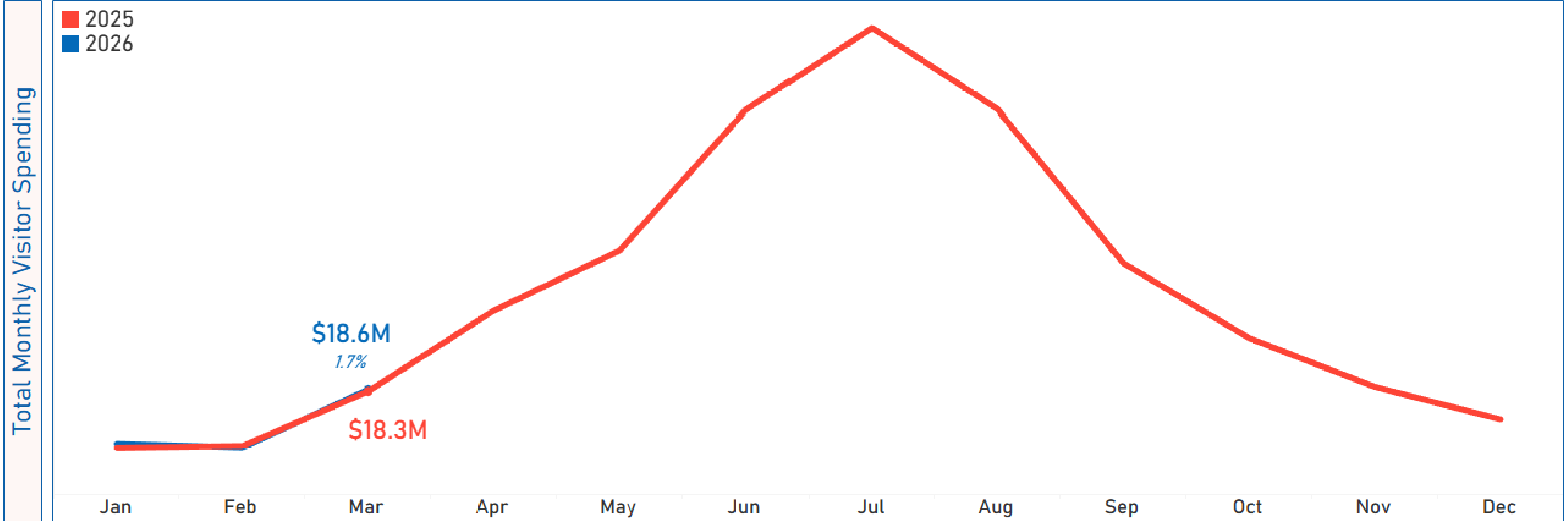


Outer Banks Monthly Visitor Spending

March 2026

Source: Visa - please note these values only reflect in-market spending and does not include any online purchases or prepaid spending.

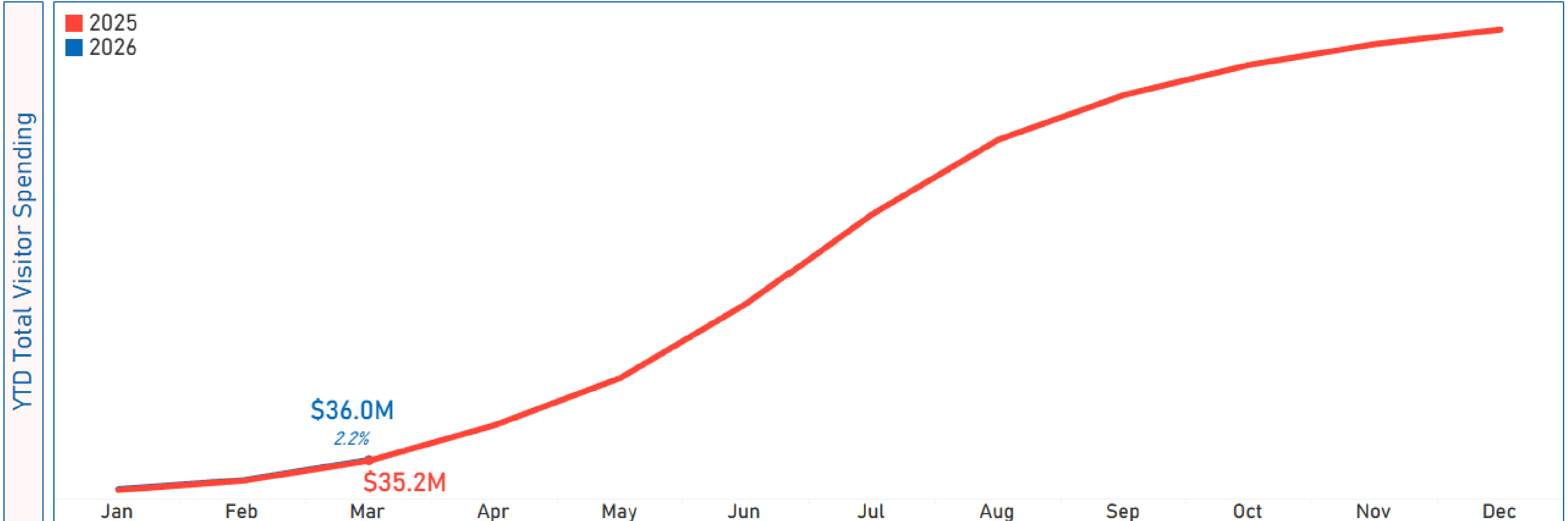
YOY	Domestic Visitor		International Visitor		Visitor Grand Total	
	Spend Amount	Card Count	Spend Amount	Card Count	Spend Amount	Card Count
Mar '26	\$18,522,807	106,515	\$115,546	510	\$18,638,353	107,025
	1.8%	-0.7%	-13.9%	-10.5%	1.7%	-0.8%



Outer Banks Monthly Visitor Spending Calendar YTD Through March 2026

Source: Visa - please note these values only reflect in-market spending and does not include any online purchases or prepaid spending.

YTD '26	Domestic Visitor		International Visitor		Visitor Grand Total	
	Spend Amount	Card Count	Spend Amount	Card Count	Spend Amount	Card Count
	\$35,773,367	219,409	\$202,865	815	\$35,976,232	220,224
YOY	2.3%	0.1%	-12.6%	-19.5%	2.2%	0.0%



Outer Banks Monthly Visitor Spending

Top Domestic Origin Markets - March 2026

Source: Visa - please note these values only reflect in-market spending and does not include any online purchases or prepaid spending.

	Spend Amount	≡	YOY % Change	Card Count	YOY % Change
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	\$3,893,392		-7.0%	24,721	-7.6%
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	\$2,089,881		22.2%	10,046	25.3%
Richmond, VA	\$1,629,652		4.6%	8,471	4.0%
Raleigh-Cary, NC	\$853,035		4.6%	5,172	-3.9%
Elizabeth City, NC	\$744,817		9.0%	5,850	3.3%
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	\$434,057		29.2%	2,082	16.5%
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	\$371,462		30.1%	2,244	10.3%
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	\$332,775		29.7%	1,865	20.2%
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	\$320,107		-3.9%	1,946	-3.7%
Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	\$244,098		-4.7%	1,571	-4.6%
Greenville, NC	\$242,025		-2.6%	1,750	-9.2%
Winston-Salem, NC	\$162,390		-18.0%	878	-30.4%
Greensboro-High Point, NC	\$157,976		-6.8%	1,081	-9.6%
Washington, NC	\$144,194		-12.5%	1,094	-5.8%
Charlottesville, VA	\$139,668		-31.1%	741	-34.5%

DIGITAL MARKETING METRICS



Outer Banks Visitors

Bureau

FY25-26 Paid Media

March 2026 Dashboard



campaign insights

This dashboard highlights Outer Banks Visitors Bureau's analytics, managed and audited by Hoffman York. It includes delivery highlights for paid media campaigns and outerbanks.org website activity.

- **Delivery trends:** Reviews FY25-26 year-to-date (FYTD) versus prior fiscal year-to-date totals.
- **Website analytics overview:** Reviews key KPIs/events tracked and website content viewed.
- **Campaign summary, search overview & email marketing performance overview:** Reviews topline delivery metrics for paid media campaigns and email marketing.

March 2026 Highlights

- **Paid Media:** Video views are up 85%, and impressions are up 42% over last year, primarily due to an extended Spring-Summer flight and the inclusion of the Outside Custom Partnership.
 - Spring-Summer: The Outside Custom Partnership launched across multiple channels, including the 1-hour Outer Edge feature episode on linear and streaming TV, a custom landing page, and supporting promotional tactics in online video, high-impact, banner display, and social media. All media, aside from the Outside Custom Partnership and Google Guidebook, ended at the end of March.
 - Continuity: Native supported Outer Edge (2x creatives), Spring Break, Nags Head, and Travel Deals. The Nags Head creative earned the highest CTR at 0.39%. Users in the Site Retargeting audience who clicked on the Travel Deals creative spent an average of 1 minute 59 seconds on the website, making it among the top 10 creatives this FY based on time spent on the website.
- **Website:** Total monthly sessions were down 16% YoY, primarily driven by a decline in organic traffic.
 - The /plan-your-trip/ page saw the largest volume increase at +27.5K page views or +11%, while the /edge/ page also saw strong growth at +29% or +21.5K page views. High Impact paid media made up the majority of sessions to these pages at 50% and 75%, respectively.
 - March generated 3.1K travel guide requests (tracked) on the site, and 3.5K PDF travel guide requests.
 - *Note: A tracking issue affecting travel guide request events was resolved on 3/19 after going down on 2/21. Reported events understate the true number of requests.*
- **Email:** 97K emails were sent across consumer marketing contact sublists and various workflows, achieving an overall 17% open rate, 13% CTR (opens), and 0.54% bounce rate.
 - A Featured Foodie newsletter A/B test was deployed to both the Foodie workflow audience and the general contact list, replacing the standard monthly email, to evaluate how niche content would perform with a broader audience.
 - The Foodie audience achieved a 23% open rate and 19% CTR (opens), while the general audience saw a 15% open rate and 9% CTR (opens), indicating stronger performance among users with an existing interest in foodie content.
 - The test results support maintaining general content, such as events and travel specials, for monthly emails moving forward.
 - Among workflows, the Foodie workflow performed the best, achieving a 33% open rate and 51% CTR (opens).

Dashboard was updated on 4/8/26. Data is reviewed and validated through - Media, Email, and Website: 3/31/26.

FYTD = Fiscal Year Total To-Date (includes all data from July 2025 through the listed 'reviewed and validated date').

Monthly Delivered v. Previous Year = Month Of v. Same Month Previous Year i.e. July 2025 vs. July 2024

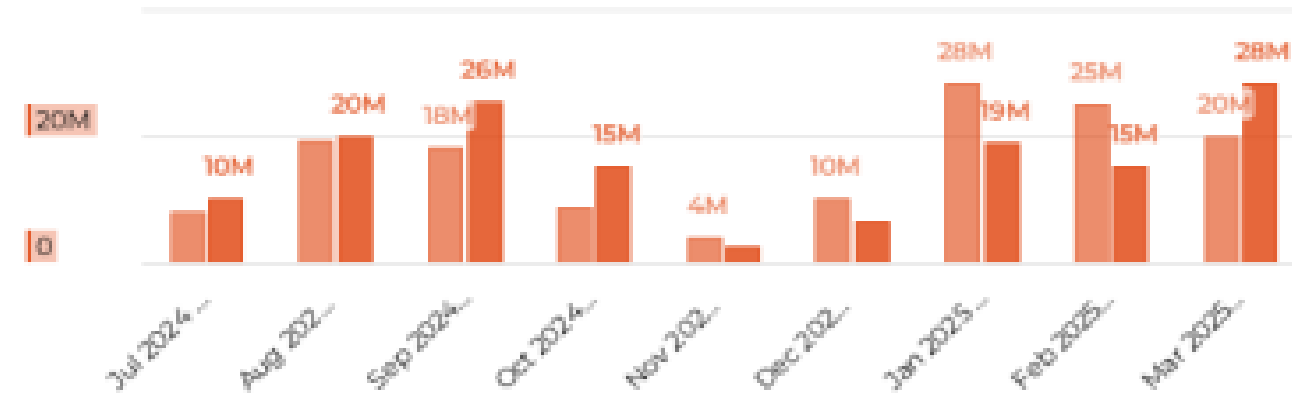
delivery trends

FYTD: Impressions

142,642,665
 ▲ 0.34% (489,001)

Monthly Impressions Delivered vs. Previous Year

Impressions

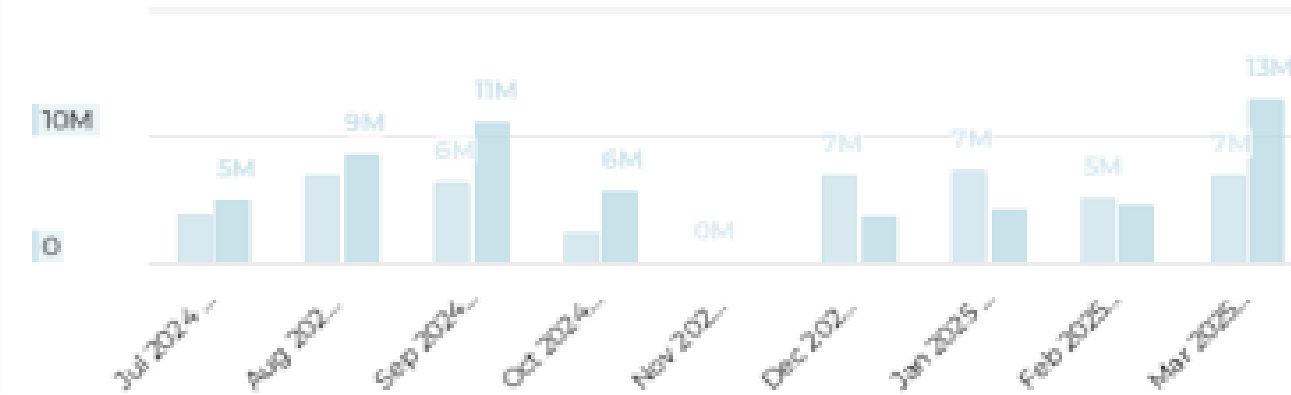


FYTD: Video Views

55,448,825
 ▲ 21.43% (9,784,285)

Monthly Video Views Delivered vs. Previous Year

Video Views



FYTD: Email Opens

180,663
 ▼ -19.50% (-43,770)

Monthly Email Opens v. Previous Year

Email Opens

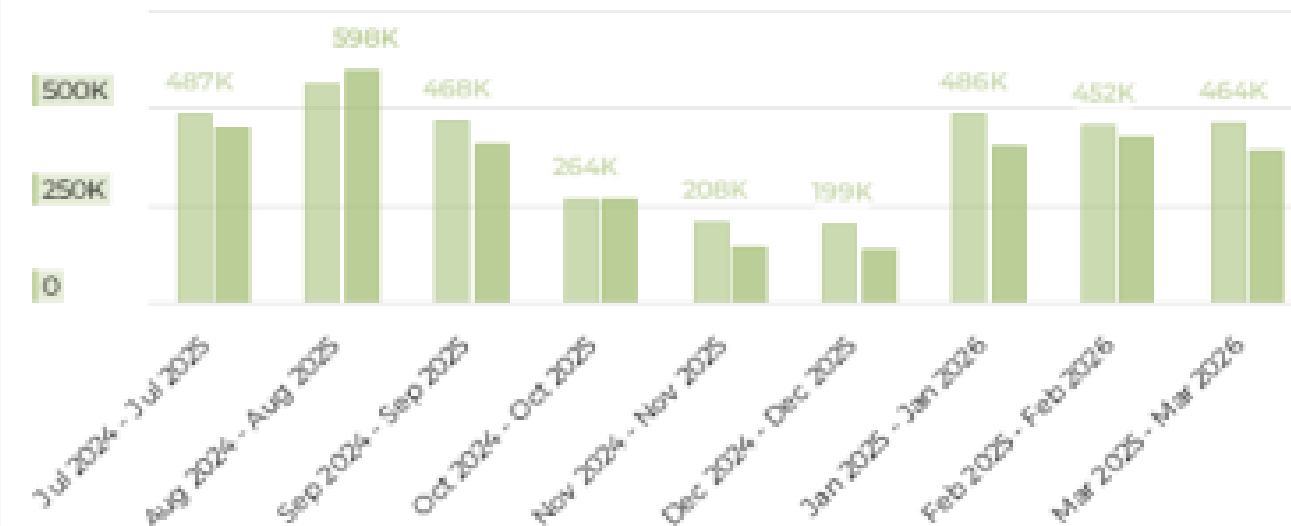


FYTD: Website Sessions

3,207,371
 ▼ -10.61% (-380,593)

Monthly Website Sessions v. Previous Year

Sessions





Executive Summary

Drive Awareness

KPI: Impressions

Performance As Of:	Mar 2026	Mar 2025	Base Goal	Stretch Goal
Current Month	5,237,894	7,502,843	5,516,449	7,463,431
Cumulative Fiscal	40,696,031	46,219,339	38,525,573	52,122,834
Cumulative % To Target		88%	106%	78%

Drive Intent

KPI: Website Sessions Referred by Social Sources

Performance As Of:	Mar 2026	Mar 2025	Base Goal	Stretch Goal
Current Month	55,667	46,847	34,830	42,371
Cumulative Fiscal	333,711	285,545	278,903	339,284
Cumulative % To Target		117%	120%	98%

Engage

KPI: Likes, Comments, Shares, Saves/Favorites, Video Views, Link Clicks, Media Clicks

Performance As Of:	Mar 2026	Mar 2025	Base Goal	Stretch Goal
Current Month	331,469	456,926	268,938	328,702
Cumulative Fiscal	2,655,146	2,010,238	1,962,213	2,398,260
Cumulative % To Target		132%	135%	111%

Convert

KPI: Mini-Guide Requests, Physical Guide Requests, Guide PDF Downloads, eNews Sign-Ups

Performance As Of:	Mar 2026	Mar 2025	Base Goal	Stretch Goal
Current Month	6,009	2,032	3,675	4,293
Cumulative Fiscal	26,858	19,646	19,222	22,456
Cumulative % To Target		137%	140%	120%

Key Messaging:

- NC Aquarium
- Taste of the Beach
- Safety
- Continued promotion of Outer Edge Season 2 content.

Performance Overview:

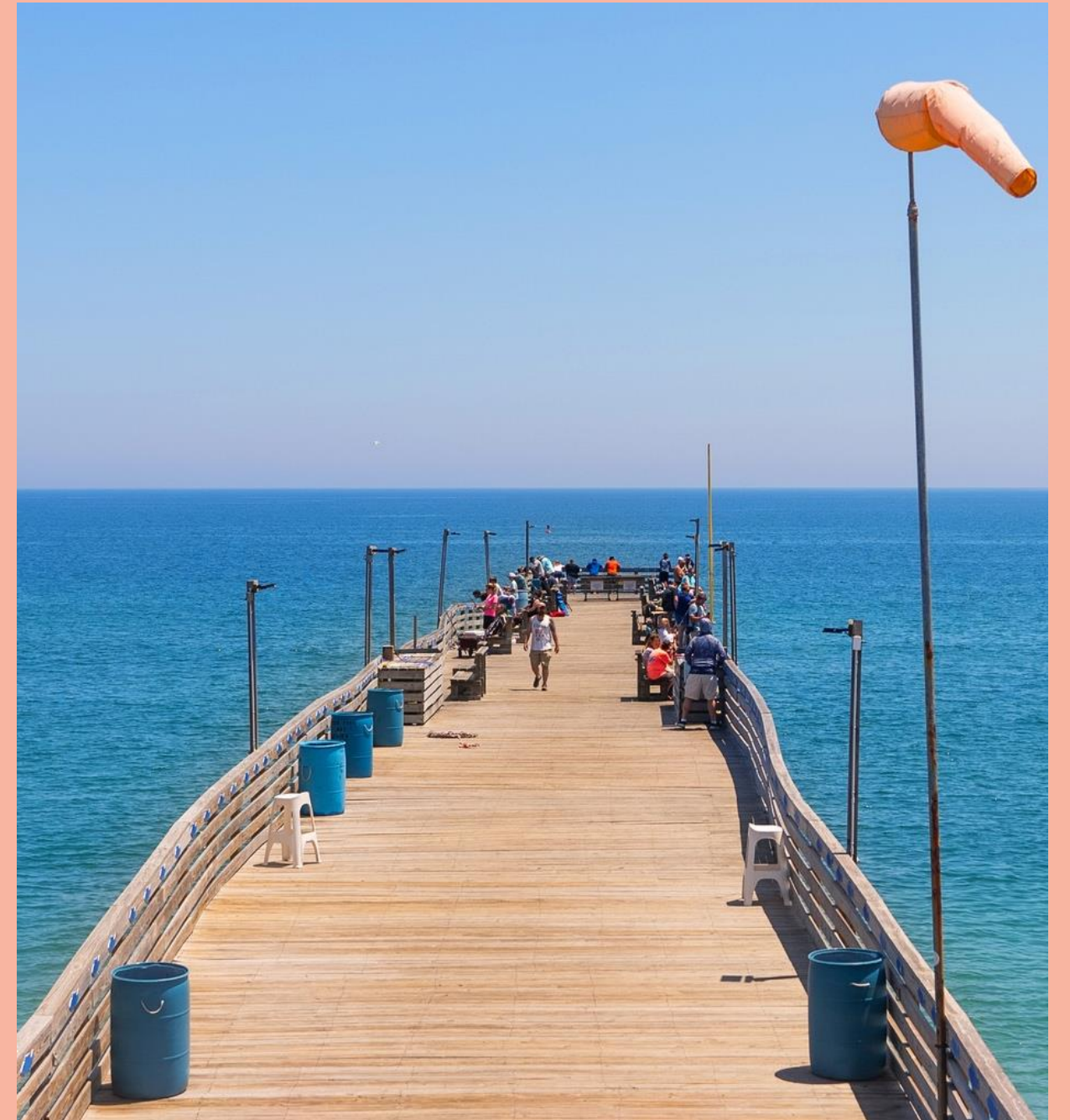
- All KPIs are currently trending above the YTD base goal. Additionally, engagements and conversions are trending above the YTD stretch goal.
- Conversions have surpassed the FY24/25 fiscal total by 9% with three months left in the year and are just 1K shy of surpassing the EOY stretch goal.
- Engagements surpassed the FY24/25 fiscal by 5K with three months left. Engagements are also expected to surpass the EOY stretch goal with only 443K left to go.

Next Steps & Recommendations:

- Upcoming messaging around spring activities, fishing, and events (e.g., Soft-Shell Crab Week in May) as well as counting down to summer.
- Testing new Pinterest design styles based on previous success of list & travel help content.
- Developing content emphasizing accessibility in late spring into summer.

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau

BUREAU FULFILLMENT

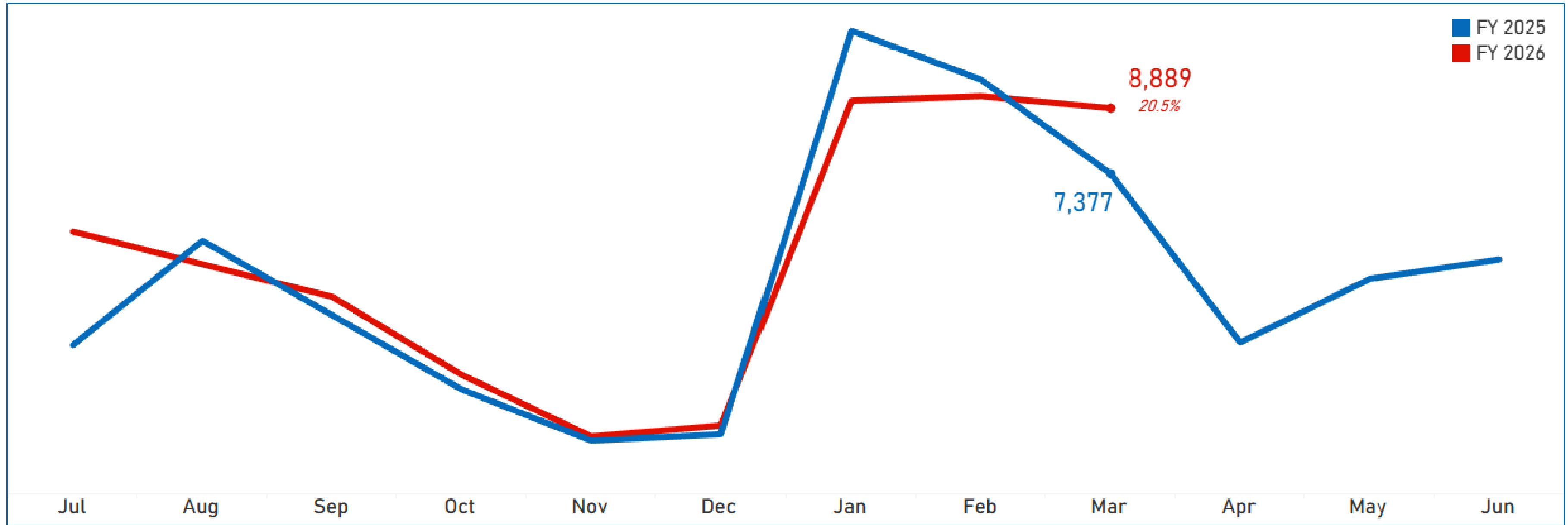


Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Monthly Fulfillment March 2026

YOY Mar '26

Type of Request						Total
Calls	Print	Online	eGuide	Mail		
75	0	3,062	5,751	1	8,889	
114.3%	-100.0%	-44.2%	216.0%		20.5%	

Total Fulfillment



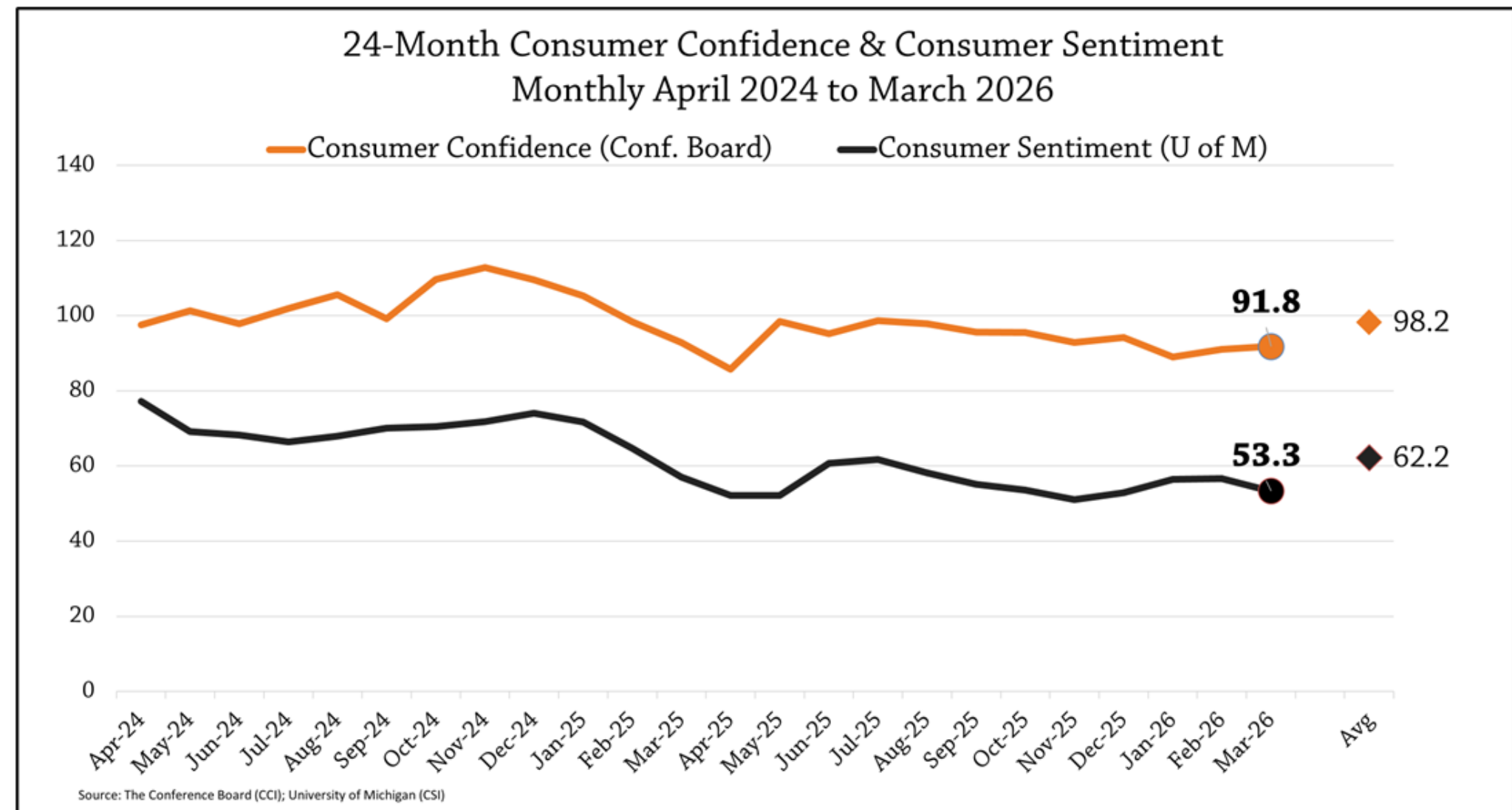
U.S. MARKET REVIEW



CONSUMER SENTIMENT

The Consumer Confidence and Consumer Sentiment Index

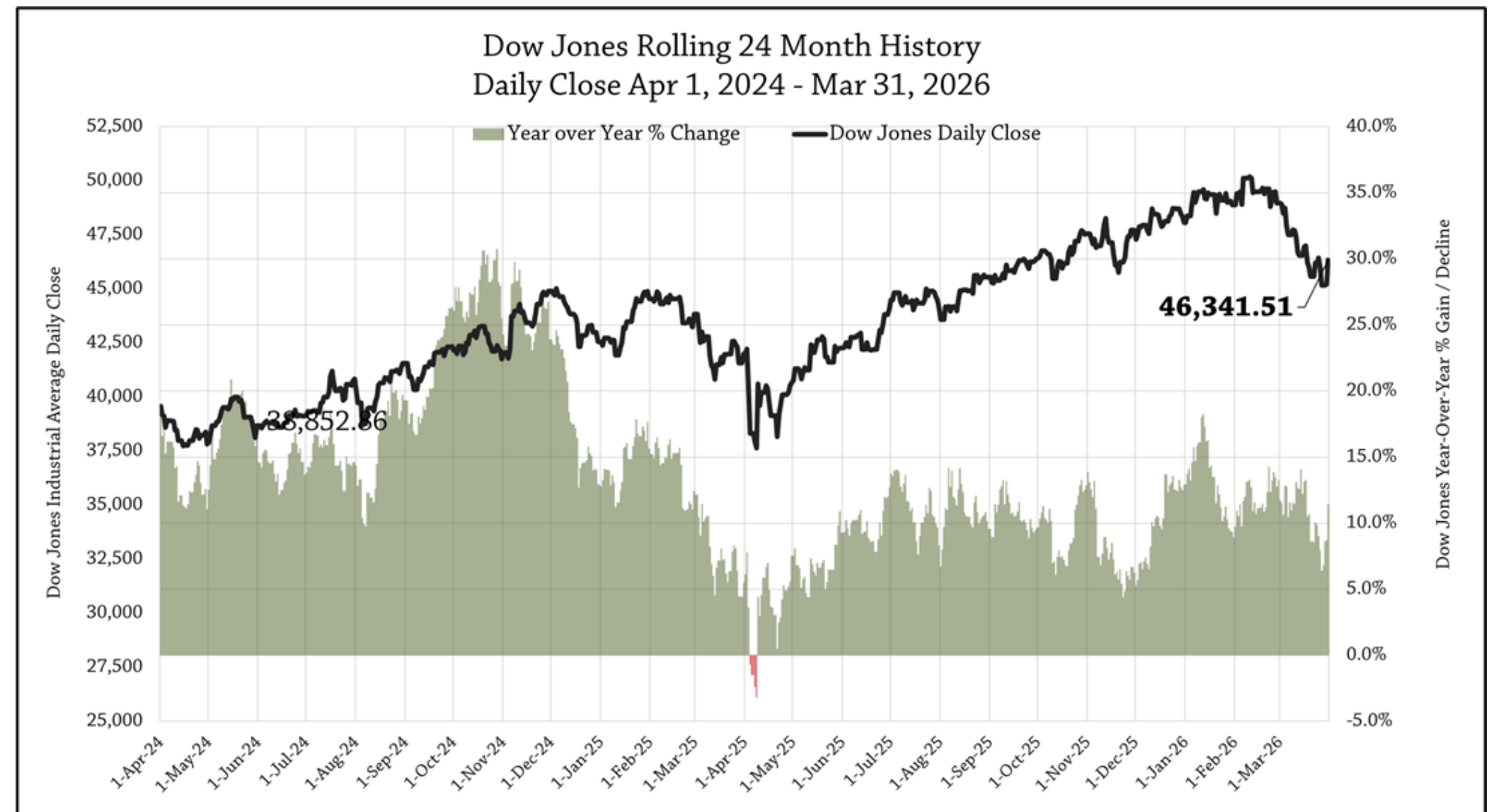
- “The CCI and CSI went in opposite directions in March, and both remain well below their 24-month averages.”
- “The Conference Board’s CCI edged up a slight 0.8 points to finish the month at 91.8 points, however it has been on a generally downward trend since late 2021.”
- “The University of Michigan’s CSI declined this month, down 3.3 points--or 6%--to finish at 53.3 points, the lowest reading since last December.”



ECONOMIC REVIEW

The Dow Jones Industrial Average

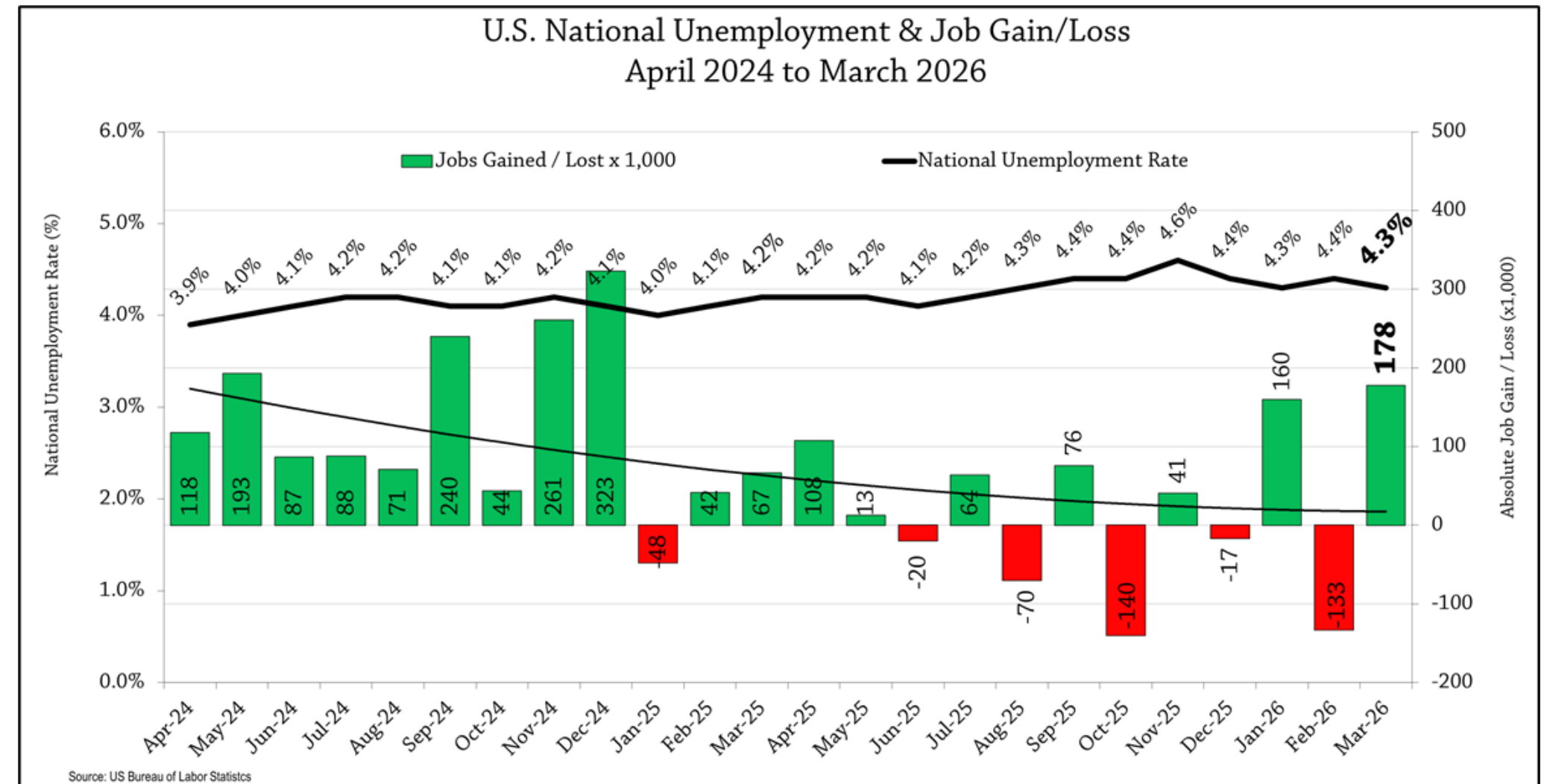
- “The DJIA dropped dramatically in March after a mostly uneventful February, losing 2,636.41 points, or -5.4%, to finish the month at 46,341.51 points.”
- “This is the lowest monthly close for the Dow since August 2025.”
- “While the DJIA was down, the S&P 500, which is more closely tied to consumers’ retirement and savings accounts, was down - 5.1%.”
- “Though only about 60% of consumers are invested in Wall Street, this month’s performance on Wall Street reflects factors that impact consumers across the entire economic spectrum.”



ECONOMIC REVIEW

The National Unemployment Rate

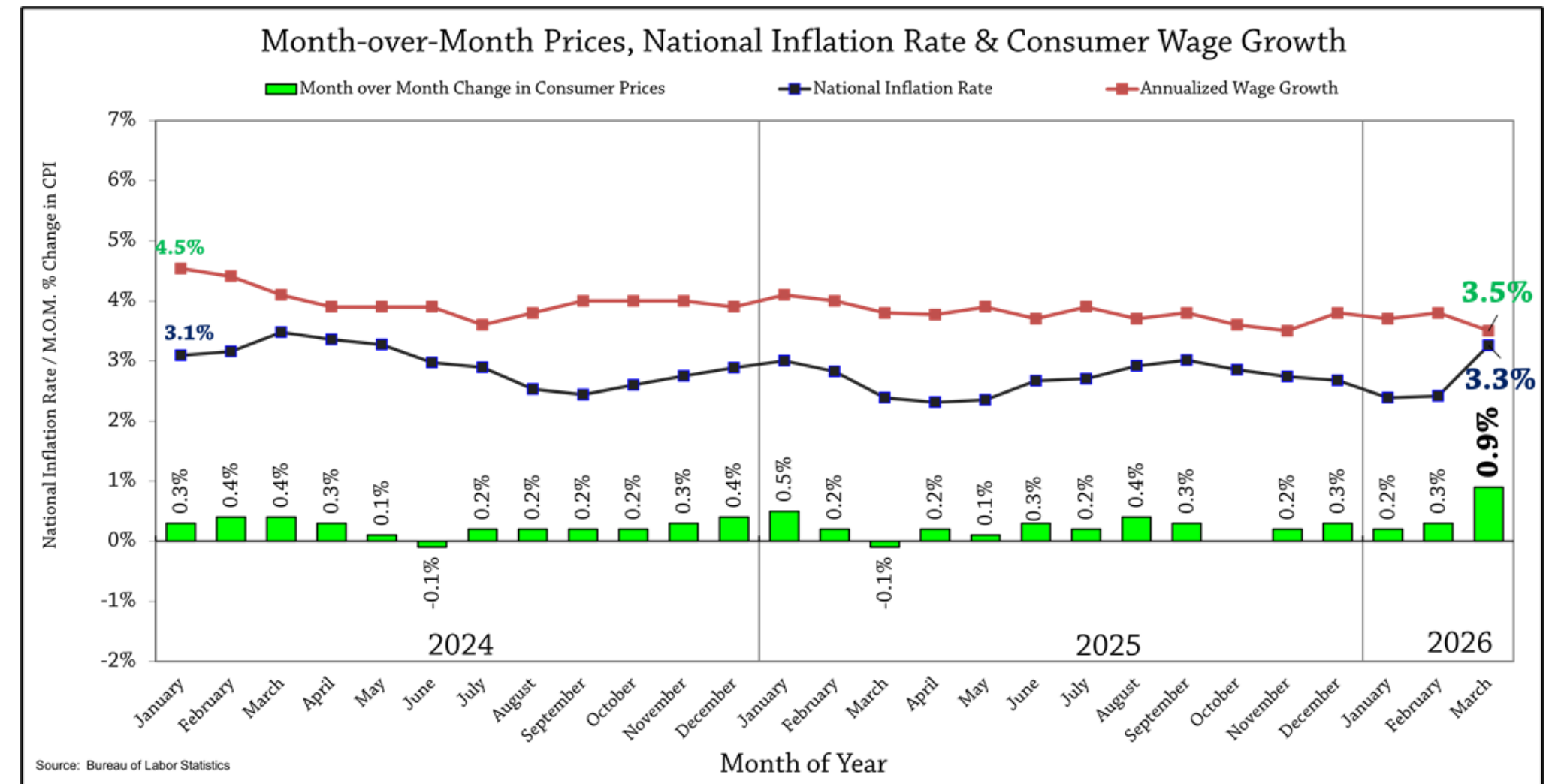
- “Job Creation and the National Unemployment Rate were both better in March, with payrolls expanding by a strong 178,000 positions, considerably higher than most analysts were predicting.”
- “The unemployment rate softened to 4.3%, down from 4.4% in February.”
- “Wages were also up during the month, gaining 3.5% year-over-year.”
- “The Accommodations subsector added 7,900 jobs in March, while Food/Drinking Services added a strong 21,500 positions.”



ECONOMIC REVIEW

The National Inflation Rate

- “National Inflation Rate and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose dramatically in March, with consumer prices jumping 0.9 percentage points from February.”
- “The national inflation rate is now at 3.3%, the highest since May 2024.”
- “Gasoline prices are up 24.1% versus last month, while airfares were up 2.7% between February and March, but are now up 15.0% YoY.”
- “The 0.2% gap between wages, up 3.5%, and inflation is the smallest since 2024, and puts pressure on consumers.”

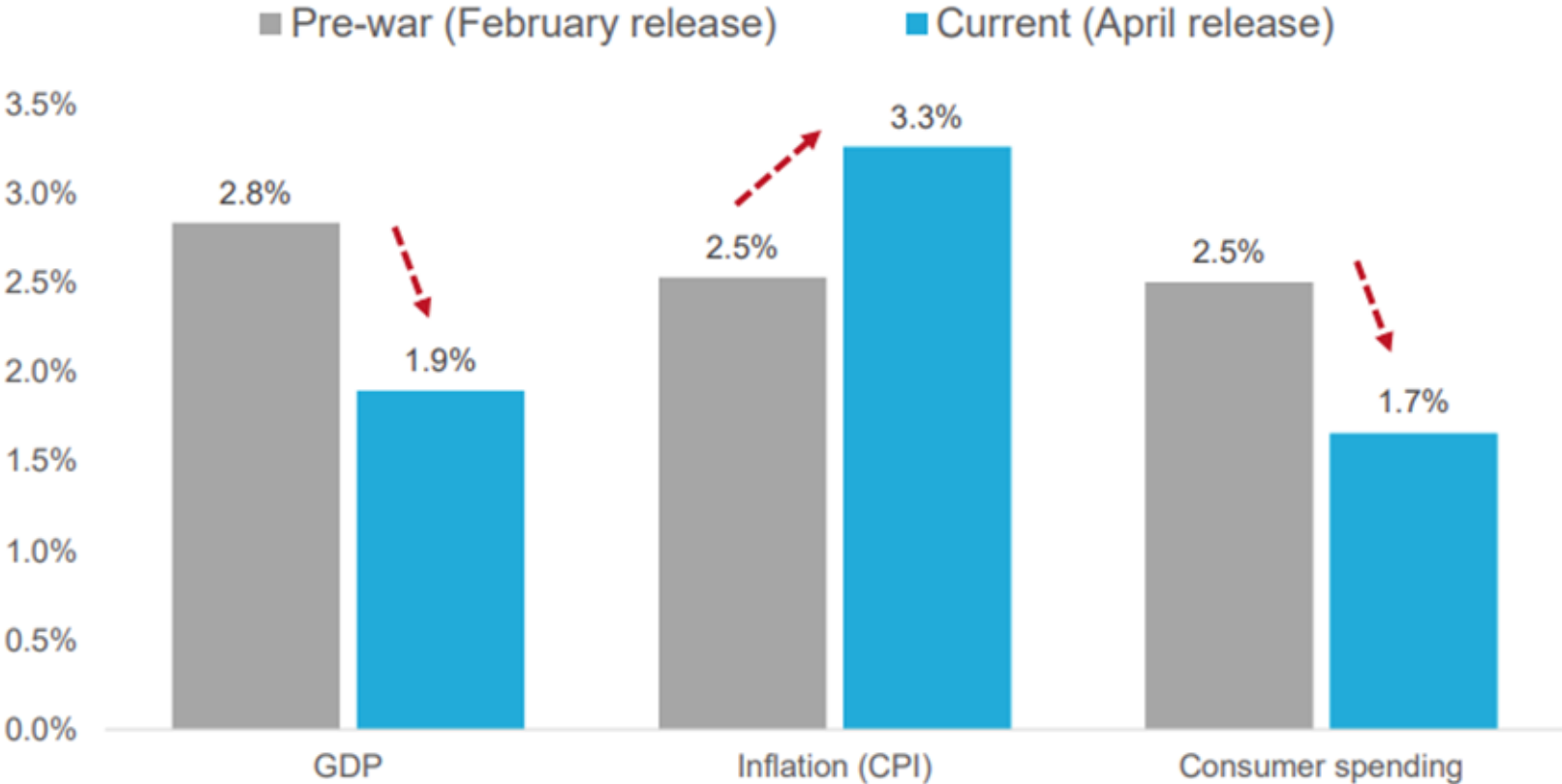


U.S. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Middle East conflict brings higher inflation and slower growth

Economic Outlook: US

Annual growth, 2026



More spent on energy, means less other spending and saving.

US GDP downgrade includes weaker-than-anticipated activity at the start of this year

Note: Real GDP, real consumer spending. Source: Oxford Economics

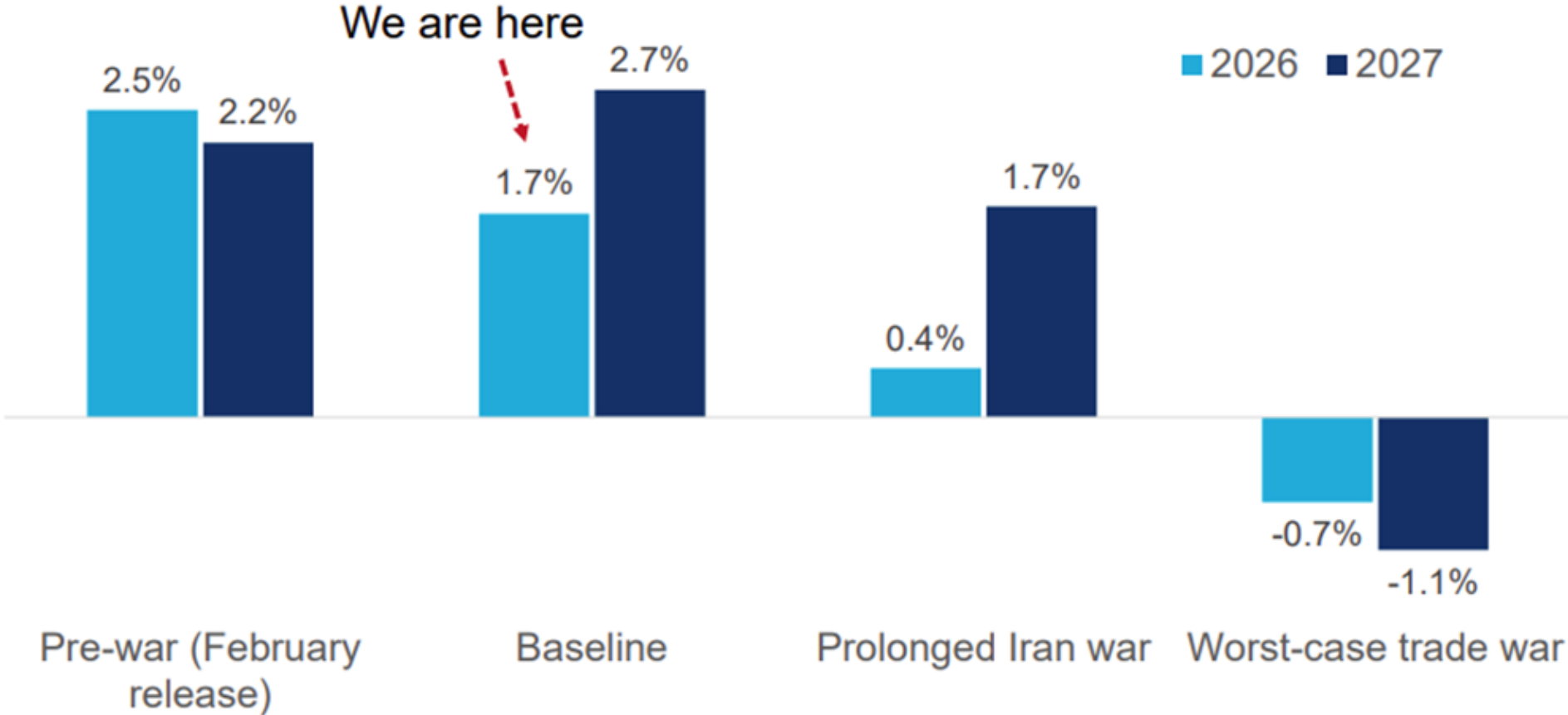


U.S. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Downside scenarios: Prolonged war or severe trade war

Scenario Outlook: US Consumer Spending

Real, annual growth



Separate from Iran... a worst-case trade war would bring an actual contraction...

...as trading partners retaliate with tariffs on US exports.

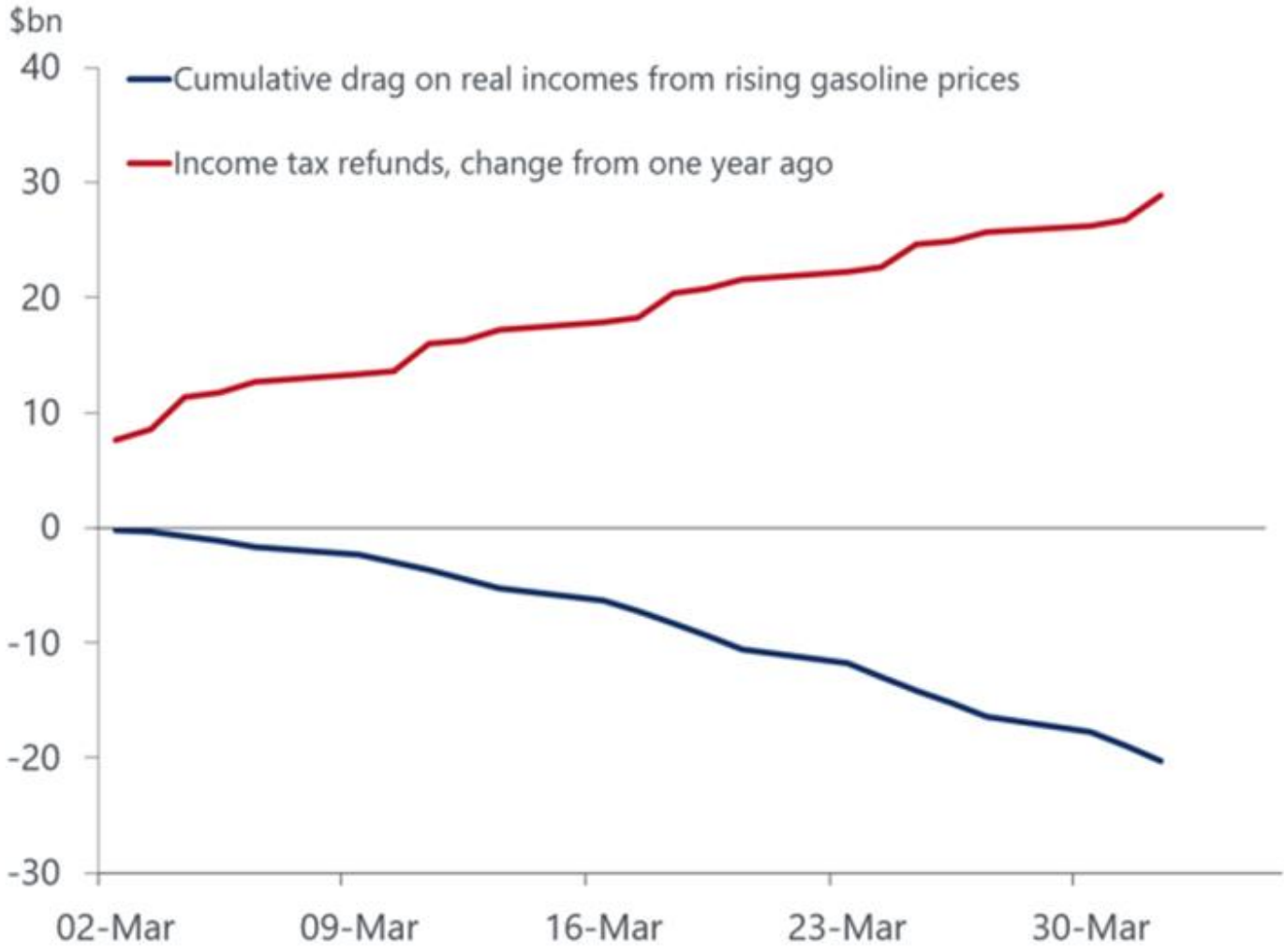
Source: Oxford Economics (Global Scenario Service, April 2026 release)



TAX REFUNDS & GAS PRICE EFFECTS

Drag from higher gas prices will offset increased tax refunds soon

US: Impact of tax refunds and gas prices on real incomes



By end of March, consumers received \$30bn increase in tax refunds but paid \$20bn additional on gas.

Source: Oxford Economics, Haver Analytics

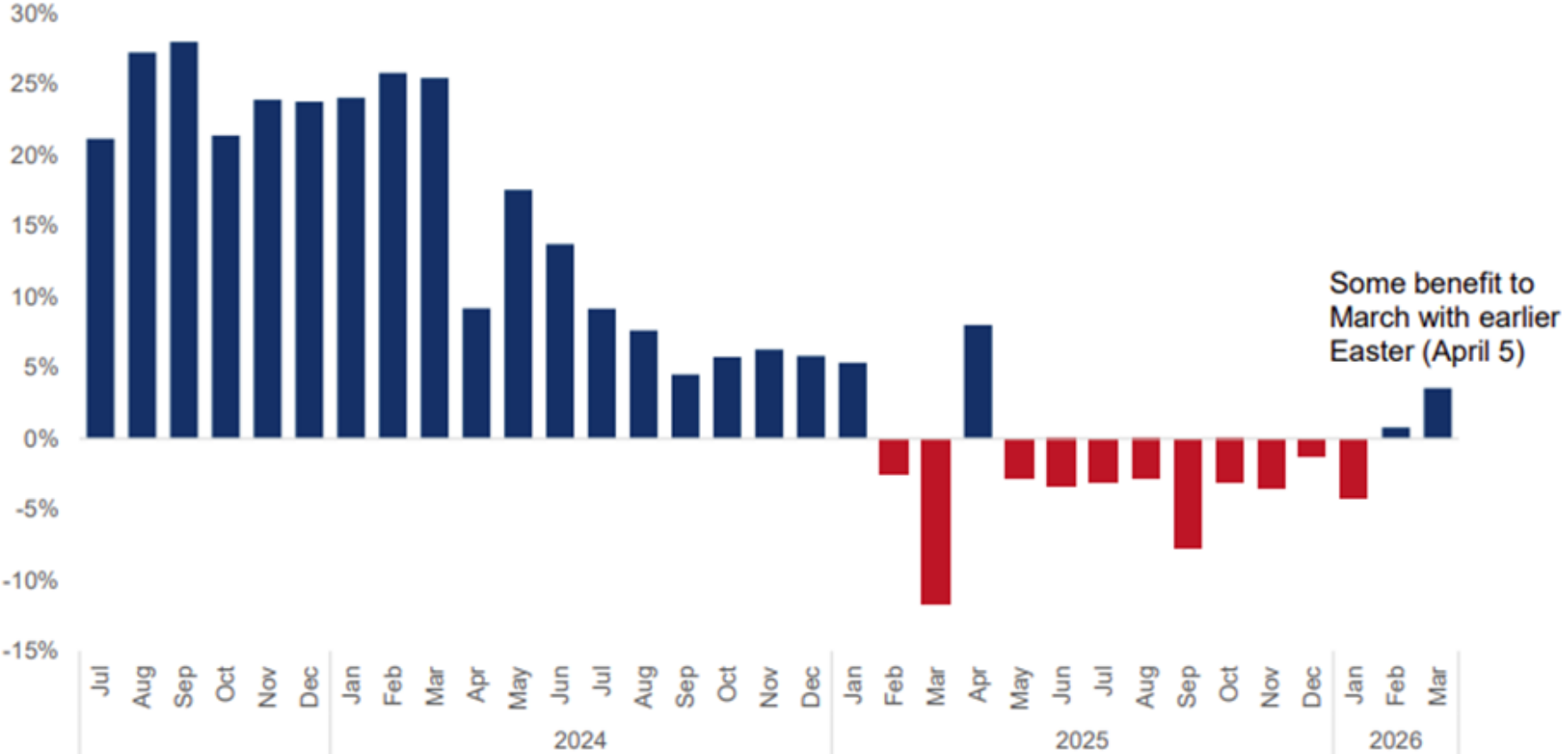


INTERNATIONAL INBOUND REVIEW

Sentiment matters, US arrivals slowed last year

Overseas visitor arrivals to US

Year-over-year change



Source: National Travel and Tourism Office

- Charged rhetoric and policy negatively impacted inbound travel
- 2.5% drop in overseas arrivals last year, with a **5.5% drop in total international arrivals**



CANADA INBOUND REVIEW

US visits from Canada remain weak

Canadian visitor arrivals to the US

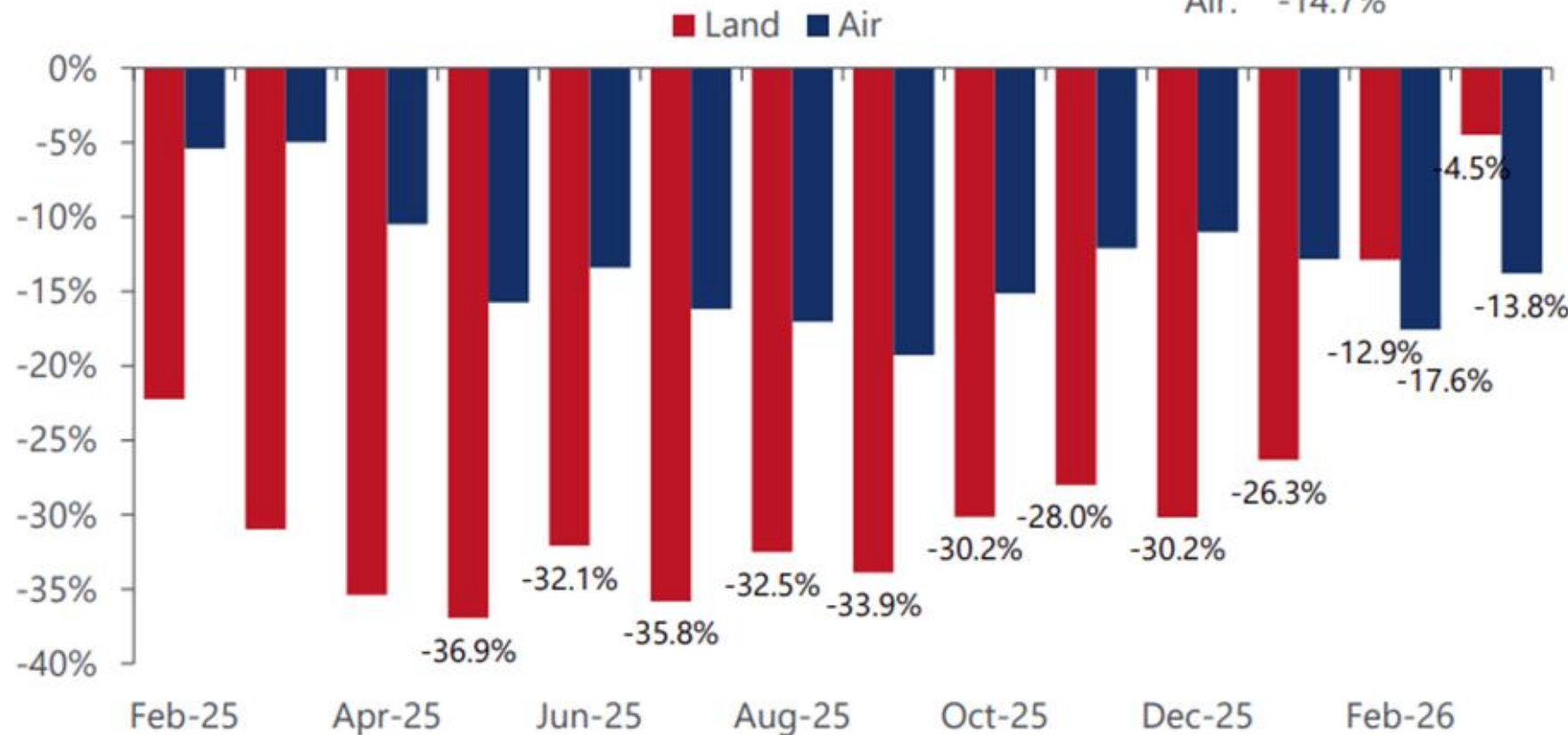
Year-over-year change

March 2026 YTD

Total: -14.8%

Land: -15.0%

Air: -14.7%



Canadian travel to other world regions increased 9% last year (-21% to US).

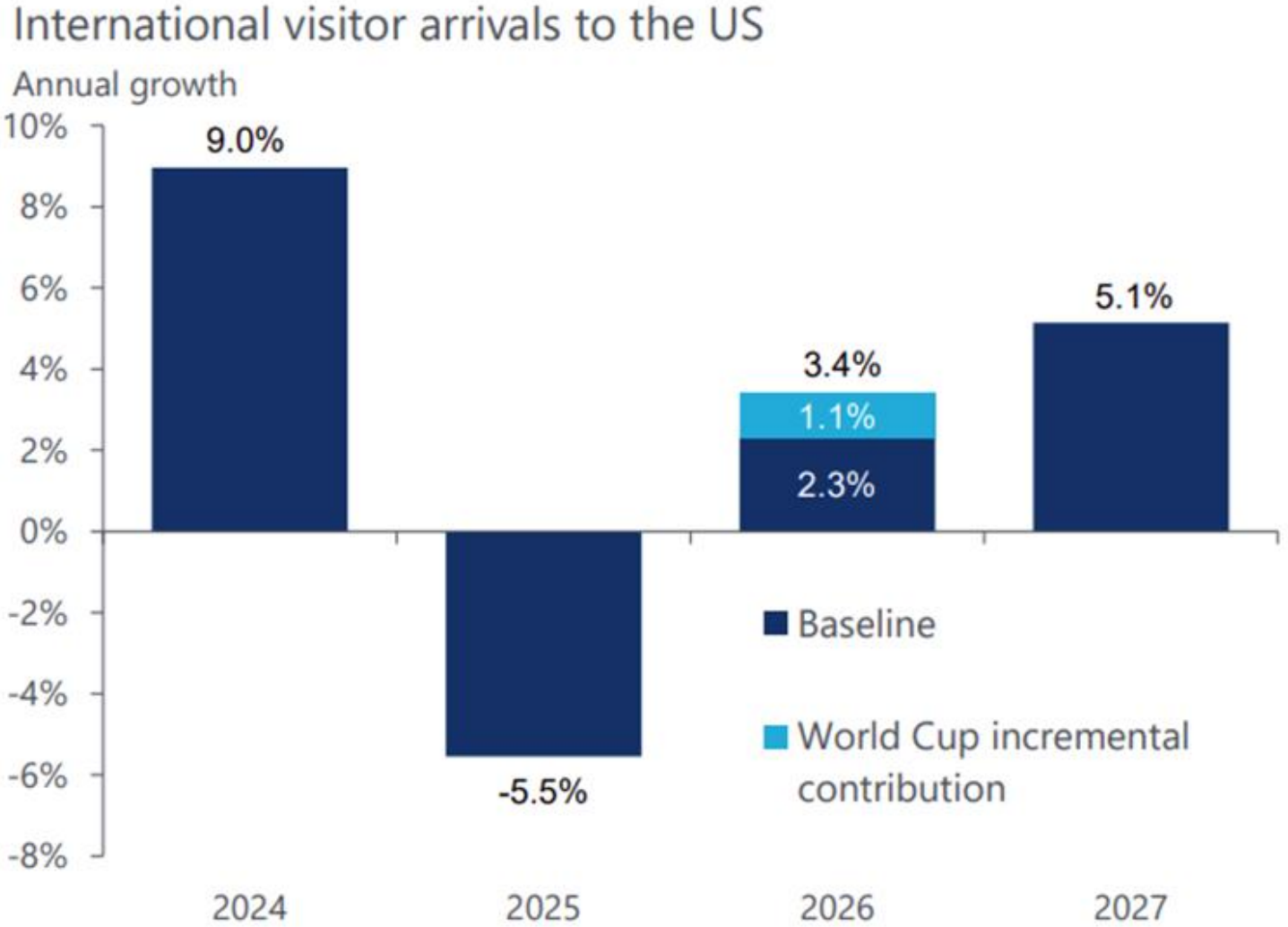
Source: Statistics Canada

Feb and Mar 2026 data based on leading indicator data measuring Canadian-resident US return trips.



INTERNATIONAL VISITATION FORECAST

Path to 3.4% inbound growth this year



- Underpinnings:
- Global economic recovery and positive travel demand
 - US is less dependent on Middle East
 - World Cup boost
 - Reversion toward prior norms, such as with sentiment fatigue

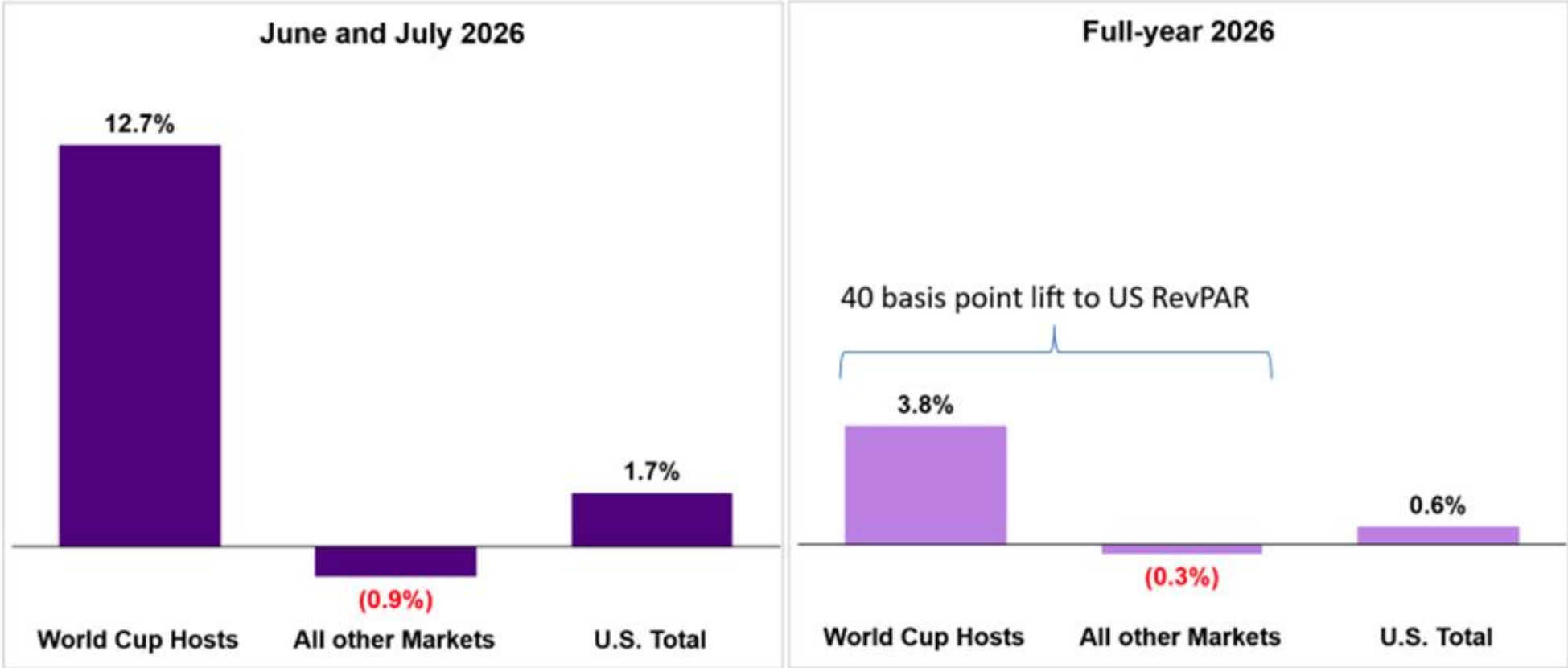
Source: Tourism Economics (Global Travel Service - April 2026 release)



U.S. HOTEL WORLD CUP FORECAST

What will World Cup mean for hotels?

World Cup to drive 2026 U.S. RevPAR growth
U.S. RevPAR, YoY % change



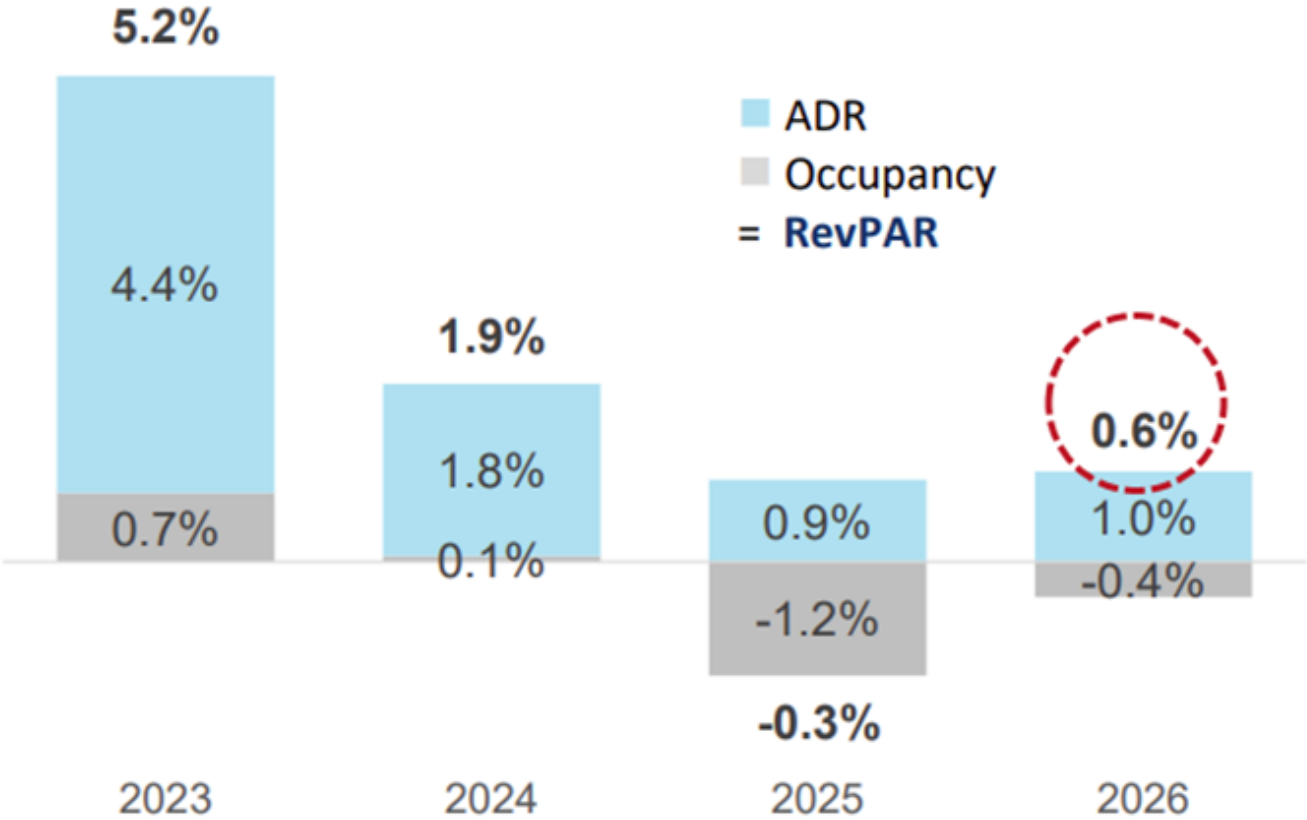
Source: STR, © 2026 CoStar Group



U.S. HOTEL MARKET REVIEW

RevPAR growth: Slow, but positive in 2026

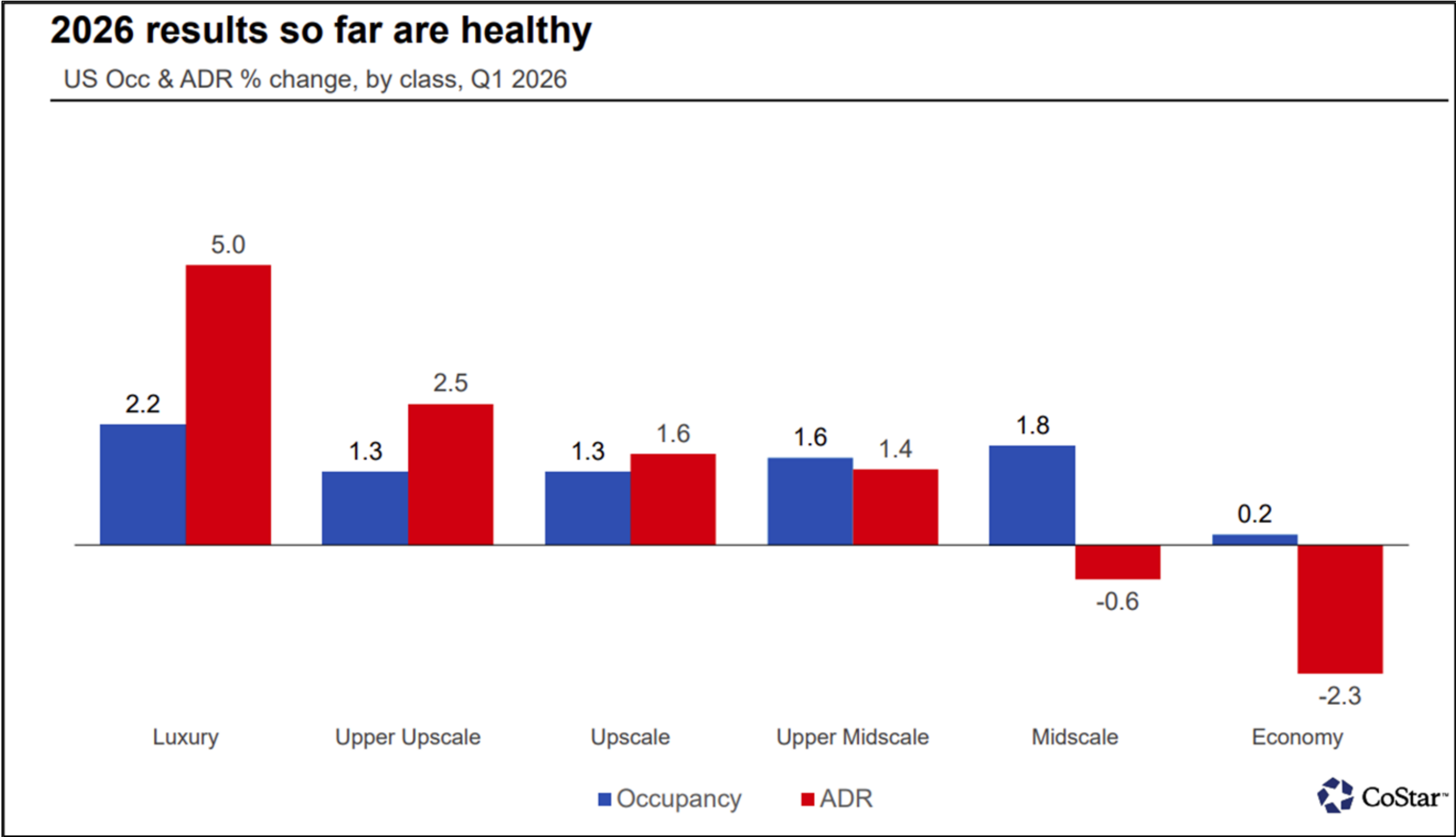
RevPAR growth composition
US



RevPAR growth
Long-term average: 4.0%
2026: 0.6%

Source: CoStar-STR; Tourism Economics

U.S. HOTEL MARKET REVIEW



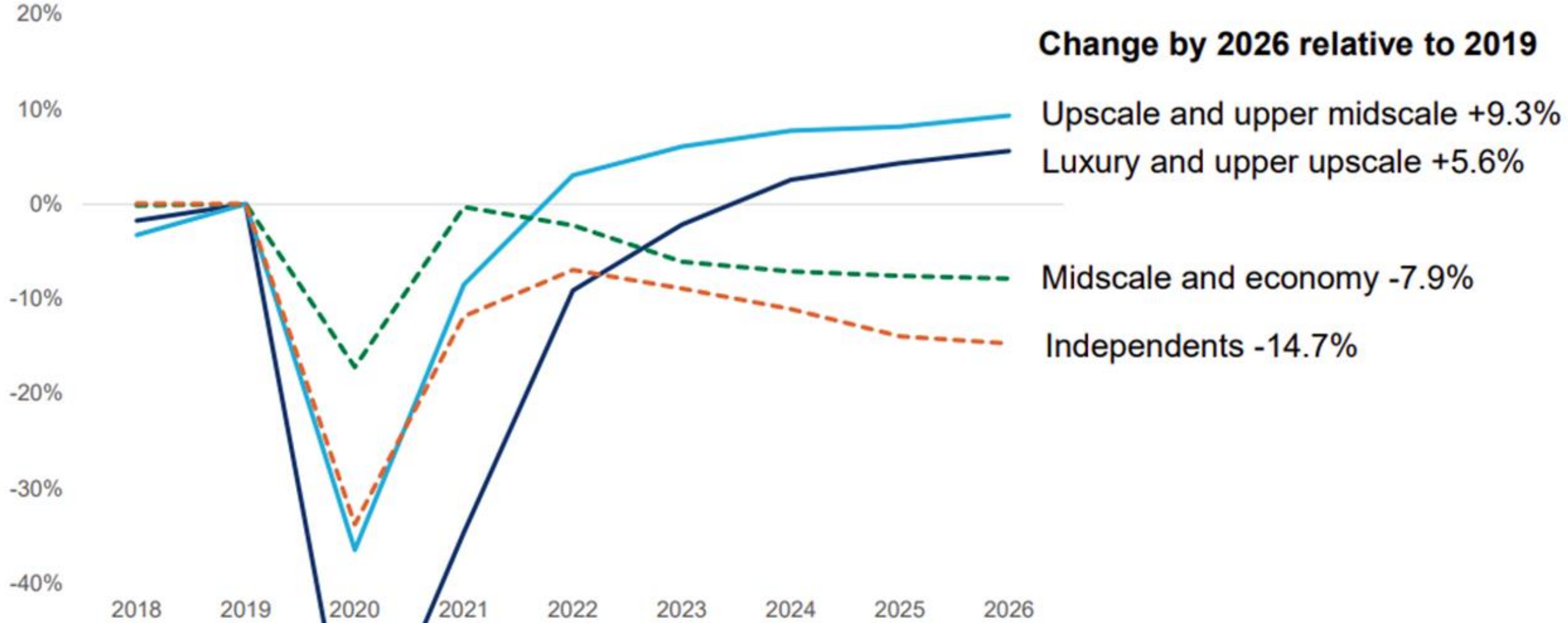
Source: CoStar (4/20/2026)

U.S. HOTEL MARKET REVIEW

Higher-priced segments continue to outperform

Demand relative to 2019

By chain scale groups



Note: Examples of supply include luxury (Ritz-Carlton), upper upscale (Marriott), upscale (Courtyard), upper midscale (Holiday Inn Express), midscale (Quality Inn), and economy (Motel 6).
Source: CoStar-STR; Tourism Economics



U.S. MARKET REVIEW

March 2026 Economic Review Summary

- “The continuing conflict in Iran dominated much of the economic discussion in March, with fears that disruptions to oil shipping could reignite inflation seeming to be borne out. Inflation, which had dropped to a relatively cool 2.4% in January and February, rose by nearly a full point to 3.3% in March. This dramatic swing, producing the highest inflation rate in nearly two years, was driven primarily by the food and energy segment, in particular gasoline. Still, core inflation, which strips out food and energy prices, also increased to 2.6%, up from 2.5% in February.”
- “Inflation concerns have weighed heavily on consumers and markets since very high rates following supply chain disruptions post-Covid crimped budgets. In 2025, the Trump Administration’s “Liberation Day” tariff increases again pushed inflation higher, as international producers passed on significant portions of the tax burden to consumers. These effects were expected to be transitory and had largely passed by the beginning of March. Now, a new supply chain disruption in the Strait of Hormuz is again pushing inflation up.”

U.S. MARKET REVIEW

March 2026 Economic Review Summary (continued)

- “While tax returns in 2026 reflected additional cuts and initially had stimulatory promise, these returns may eventually be consumed by higher prices instead. Currently, gasoline prices have increased, but over time additional price increases will pass through to goods from higher input costs such as raw materials, freight, and energy.”
- “Not only does the additional expense of inflation cause direct harm, but it also motivates the Federal Reserve to either delay additional rate cuts or, if inflation reaches a high enough threshold, begin raising rates again.”

U.S. SHORT TERM RENTALS REVIEW

Short Term Rentals Update March 2026

- “March 2026 saw the U.S. short-term rental market begin to stabilize, with demand rebounding after a weaker start to the year and supply growth showing signs of leveling off. While occupancy remained slightly below last year’s levels, the gap has continued to narrow as booking activity improved and demand strengthened across most location types.”
- “Much of this shift reflects a normalization in travel patterns following the volatility of late 2025, with demand becoming more responsive to seasonal drivers and external factors such as weather. At the same time, broader economic uncertainty, particularly rising inflation driven by energy prices, continues to weigh on consumer sentiment and may influence short-term travel decisions.”
- “Despite these pressures, forward pacing points to a more positive outlook. Stronger bookings tied to Spring Break travel, major summer events, and the upcoming World Cup are already supporting demand growth into Q2. As a result, while near-term performance remains mixed, the underlying signals suggest a more stable and potentially stronger market in the months ahead.”

U.S. SHORT TERM RENTALS REVIEW

Short Term Rentals Update March 2026 (continued)

Key U.S. Short Term Rental Performance Metrics for March 2026

- Available listings reached 1.68 million, a 3.3% increase YoY
- Demand nights were up 2.0%
- Occupancy averaged 61.3%, down -0.3% YoY
- Average Daily Rates (ADR) climbed to \$269.34, up 2.6% from last year
- Revenue per Available Rental (RevPAR) increased 2.3% year-over-year (YoY) to \$165.14

TRAVELER SENTIMENT



AMERICAN TRAVEL SENTIMENT STUDY (WAVE 106)

*Survey fielded April 7-8, 2026; US National Sample of 1,000 adults 18+

American Travel Sentiment Wave 106 Highlights

Key Findings:

- 1. Concerns About Gas Prices Highest Since July 2022**

Concerns about gas prices greatly impacting travel decisions has reached 33%, up 12.6 points from March 2026 (21%) and the highest since July 2022 (43%). Due to gas prices, four in ten travelers (41%) are choosing destinations closer to home and 36% are reducing the number of trips they're taking. Travelers are also reducing their spending on entertainment and recreation (35%), retail purchases (33%), and food and beverage (29%). Nearly one in ten (8%) are canceling their trips.
- 2. Iran War Influencing International Travel Plans**

A third of travelers (33%) plan to travel internationally in the next 12 months. However, the Iran war is impacting international travel plans, with 27% indicating they are less likely to travel internationally due to the war. Among travelers who indicated the Iran war is influencing their international travel plans, 40% will postpone their international trip and 31% plan to replace their international trip with a domestic trip. One in five (19%) will cancel their international trip.

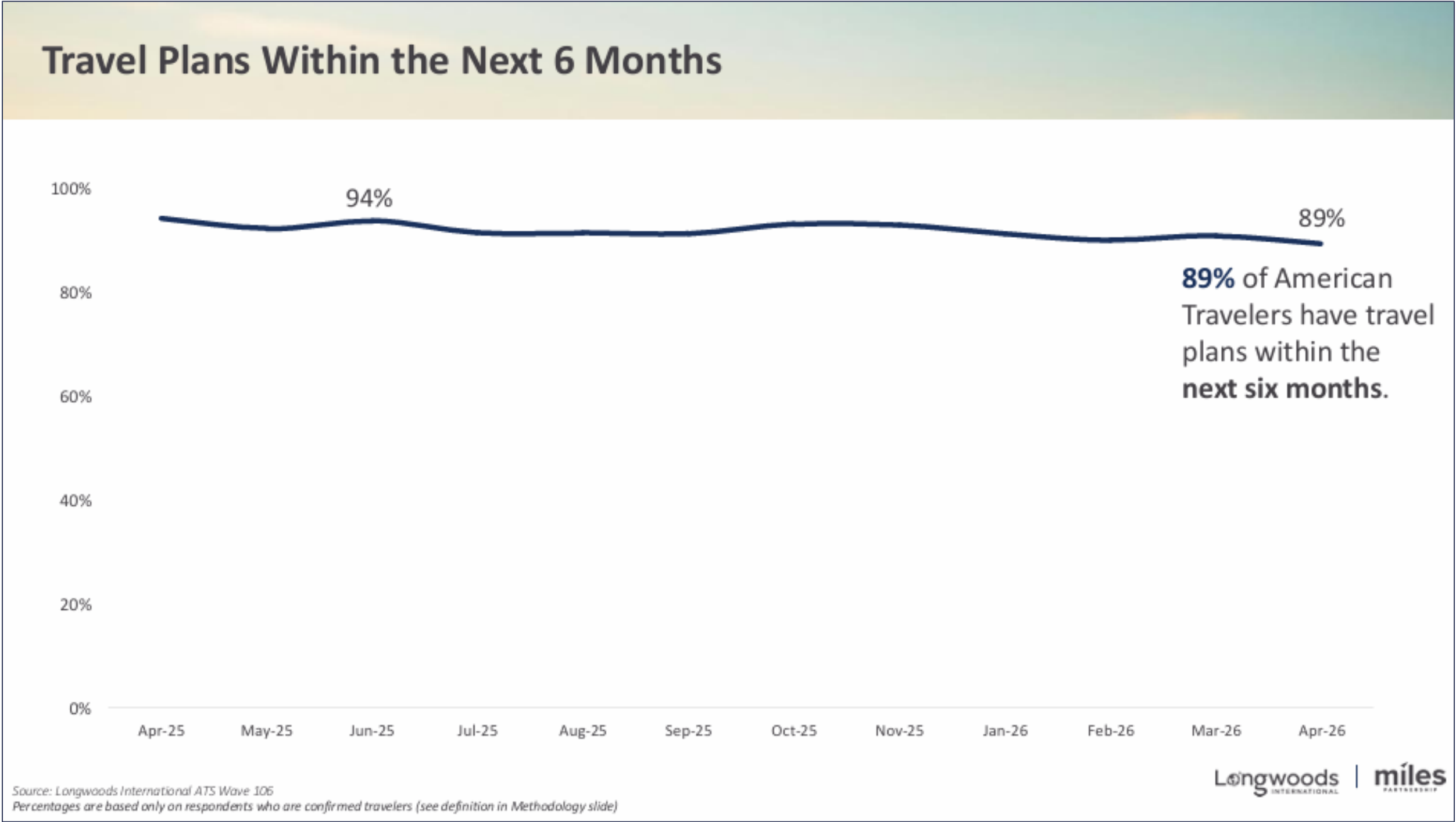


Source: Longwoods International ATS Wave 106

Longwoods INTERNATIONAL | miles PARTNERSHIP

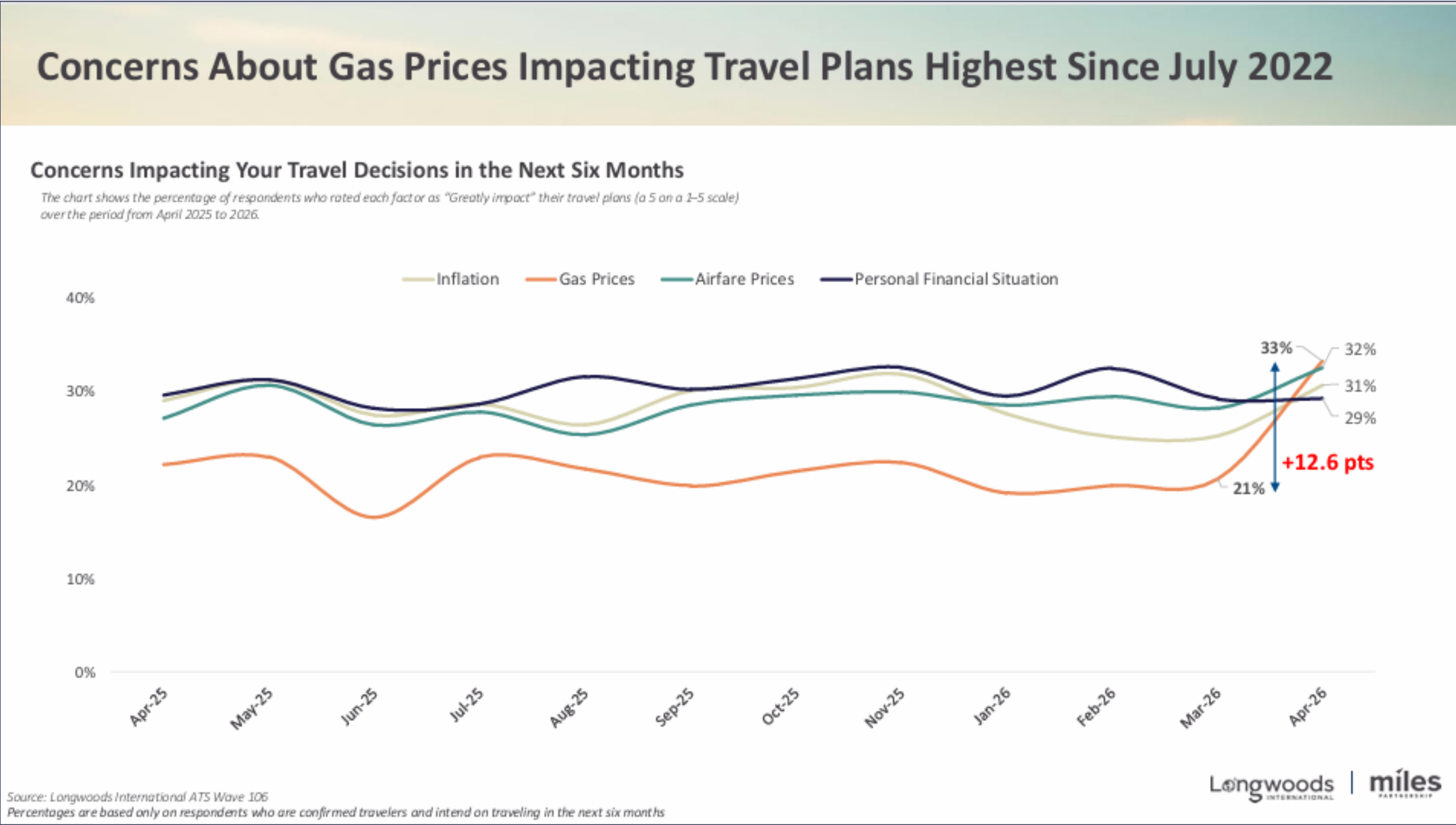
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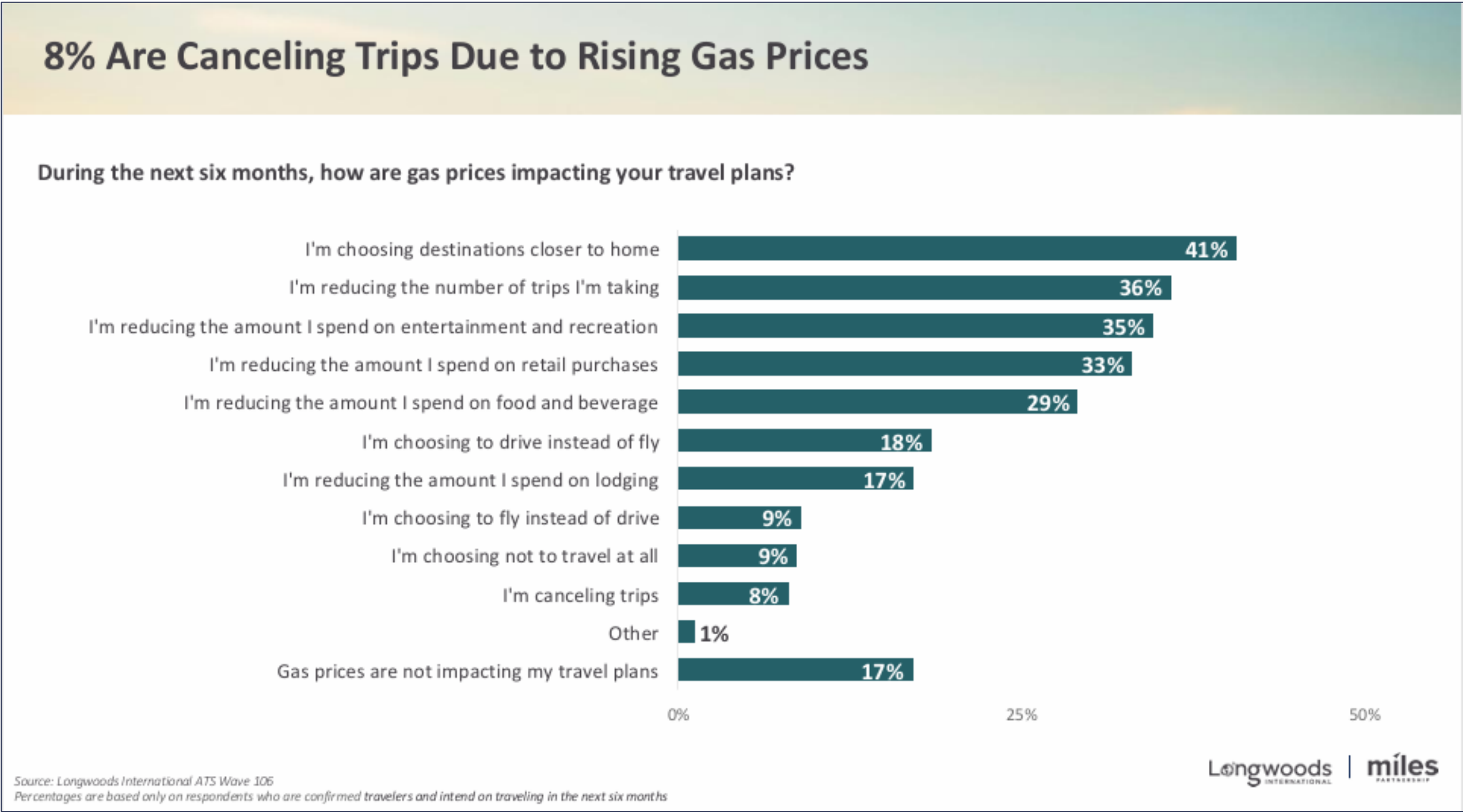
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American Travel Sentiment Methodology

The American National Travel Sentiment Study is the most comprehensive and longest-running survey of its kind, offering valuable insights into the factors influencing American travel behaviors.

Key Details:

- Survey Date: April 7 – 8, 2026
- Sample Size: 1,000 U.S. adults (18+)
- Margin of Error: $\pm 3\%$
- Representative of U.S. population demographics (age, gender, region)

Travelers are only respondents that have taken a trip in the last 3 years and intend to take a trip in the next 2 years.

Conducted with support from Miles Partnership, this study remains a vital tool for understanding the dynamic landscape of American travel.

