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## **St. Tammany EDC Releases First Quarter 2026 Economic Trends Report** *Q1 Data Shows Resilient Labor Conditions, Strong Entrepreneurial Activity, and Continued Consumer Demand*

**COVINGTON, La.** — The latest edition of **The AnalyST**, St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation's quarterly digital economic research publication, provides a data-informed snapshot of economic conditions through the first quarter of 2026. Developed with research insights from Economic Leadership, LLC - a national economic development and strategic planning consultancy - the report explores a range of topics, including inflation, labor market conditions, housing trends, consumer spending, and industry-specific developments.

By analyzing these trends across local, state, and national economies, the report identifies key shifts impacting workforce dynamics, business growth, and consumer behavior.

Key takeaways from this report include:

- **Labor Market:** St. Tammany's unemployment rate rose slightly to 4.2 percent in March 2026 but remains below regional, state, and national levels, with lower unemployment claims suggesting continued labor market stability.
- **Business & Industry:** Entrepreneurial activity remains strong, with 1,143 new business incorporations filed in the first quarter of 2026, exceeding first-quarter levels from the previous two years and averaging approximately 82 new business filings per week.
- **Inflation & Wages:** Inflation in the Southern region accelerated again in April, driven in part by energy and goods prices, while St. Tammany's cost-of-living adjusted earnings remain below regional, state, and national benchmarks.
- **Workforce Participation:** Labor force participation remains below broader benchmarks, highlighting an opportunity to engage more working-age residents and strengthen the local talent pool.
- **Housing & Consumer Activity:** Existing home sales and retail sales tax collections increased, reflecting continued market and consumer activity, even as new residential construction slowed from a year ago.

"St. Tammany's first quarter data shows the fundamentals of a strong and resilient economy," said **Russell Richardson, President and CEO of St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation.**

"Through our partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and business development efforts, we are working to translate that momentum into quality jobs, new investment, expanded opportunities for local businesses, and a stronger economic future for our residents."

This edition of *The AnalyST* can be accessed at [sttammanyedc.org/the-analyst](http://sttammanyedc.org/the-analyst).

**About St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation**

As the economic development organization for St. Tammany, St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation (St. Tammany EDC) serves as the comprehensive resource center for business services throughout the parish. St. Tammany EDC's services include business retention, site selection, workforce development, research and data services, state and local incentives, business attraction, talent retention, certified site development, relocation support, and marketing St. Tammany. Since the organization's launch in 2018, St. Tammany EDC facilitated business expansion and attraction announcements representing over \$437.48 million in capital investment and 3,335 new and retained jobs in St. Tammany Parish. For more information about St. Tammany EDC, visit [sttammanyedc.org](http://sttammanyedc.org).

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