Cultivating Maine's Food Sector Workforce

TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND RESOURCES TO GROW SHARED PROSPERITY

Maine's food sector is poised for growth. With an emerging reputation for producing high-quality foods harvested from unspoiled landscapes and picturesque working waterfronts, Maine's food sector holds promise to be a force for statewide economic development. From the nationally recognized restaurants in Greater Portland and the storied seafood heritage in coastal communities, to the growing number of farms in the state's rural regions, Maine has a unique brand. Expanded food production and value-added processing is widely recognized as a key opportunity for Maine's future.

A skilled and abundant workforce is necessary to fuel the growth of Maine's food sector. The state's labor market is tight and food sector businesses face challenges to attract, train, and retain an adequate workforce. Long term population and demographic trends are projected to exacerbate these challenges as Maine's population ages and low birth rates and limited in-migration of workers fail to match the number of "baby boomers" departing the workforce for retirement.

To begin to address the food sector's workforce challenges, Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) convened a series of stakeholder meetings throughout Maine to explore the state's employment trends, learn from business leaders about success stories in employee development and retention, and identify opportunities and resources to cultivate a robust workforce for the future. The meetings were designed as a shared learning process for participants. Northern Girl in Aroostook County, Ducktrap River of Maine in the Midcoast region, Borealis Breads in Southern Maine, and Baxter Brewing Company in Central Maine generously hosted the meetings. Funding for the project was provided by the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, Broadreach Foundation, and Jane's Trust.

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1. Share the key findings, challenges, successes, opportunities, and resource needs that emerged from stakeholders during the shared learning process meetings; and
- 2. Create a foundation of shared understanding for ongoing collaboration among businesses, workforce service organizations, public policy leaders, and food system support organizations to catalyze growth for businesses and quality jobs for Maine people within the State's food sector.



KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Maine's workforce is shrinking, and, absent coordinated intervention via public and private sector leadership, the rate of workforce contraction will accelerate as the "baby boom" generation ages out of the workforce. (See Addendum 1, page 6)
- 2. Maine's labor market is at full employment* and food sector employers in all regions of the state and in every position within supply chains are struggling to find workers to maintain current levels of production.
- 3. Maine's food sector is poised for growth and demand for Maine products is strong, but shortages in Maine's workforce and uncertainty about future labor supply are having a chilling effect on new investment in sector growth.
- 4. While anecdotal evidence suggests that food sector wages and compensation are rising, food businesses are exploring new human resource practices to position themselves as an "employer of choice" and to secure a productive workforce in Maine's competitive labor market.
- 5. A long term strategy to foster an adequate workforce for Maine's food sector businesses must include renewed public and private investment and planning to provide adequate workforce housing, transportation, and skills training.
- 6. Maine must develop programs and incentives to attract in-migration by new workers, and private and public sector leaders should anticipate competition for new workers from neighboring states that face similar demographic trends and workforce challenges.
- 7. Recent immigrants are an important labor resource for Maine food sector employers, and expanding opportunities for job skills and English language training programs for these "new Mainers" will benefit the food sector and economic development generally.
- 8. Companies that obtain premium prices for value-added, Maine-branded products are often able to offer higher wages and benefits, better working environments, and goods and services embedded with a social "mission," which tend to increase employee satisfaction and retention.
 - * "Full employment" describes the condition in which virtually all who are able and willing to work are employed.

Employers of Choice

develop company programs and cultures to earn reputations for valuing their employees and creating positive work environments. Being recognized as a good place to work creates a competitive advantage for companies seeking to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Opportunities for professional development and advancement, compensation increases and incentives, predictable work schedules, and work/life balance, among other factors, distinguish companies as employers of choice.

CHALLENGES

- 1. Relatively low wages, demanding physical labor, and uncomfortable work environments associated with many food sector jobs lead to high employee turnover at food businesses in Maine's tight labor market.
- 2. Food sector wages are rising, particularly for value-added processing employees, but stiff competition exists from employers in other sectors of the economy in this tight labor market.
- 3. Many food sector positions are perceived to be "dead-end" jobs and do not offer career pathways for advancement, professional development, and higher compensation, contributing to limited employee loyalty.
- 4. Lack of "work ready" skills, reliability, and dedication are common issues among the traditionally low-income and low-wealth populations seeking employment in Maine's food sector.
- 5. Affordable housing in reasonable proximity to employers is lacking and reduces the available pool of potential employees, particularly for urban employers that rely on workers who walk to work.
- 6. Reliable and affordable transportation for workers is a common barrier for food sector businesses, particularly for employers in rural Maine where workers commute long distances and public transportation is lacking.
- 7. The pool of "frontline" production floor managers who possess the "soft" interpersonal skills necessary to create positive work environments and collaborative team dynamics is limited.
- 8. The seasonality of labor needs for many businesses in the food sector prevents employers from offering year-round employment, which reduces stability for workers and increases turnover for employers.

Work Ready

refers to individuals who possess the foundational skills needed to be minimally qualified for a specific occupation. Punctuality, reliability, and the ability to focus on tasks and interact positively and professionally with co-workers are important components valued by employers. In addition, sanitation and food safety knowledge are fundamental skills prized by food sector employers.



SUCCESSES

- Maine is fortunate to have local, regional, and statewide workforce service organizations that provide expertise and resources to support local businesses and workers.
- 2. Training workshops and individual counseling are available to job seekers to develop and refine their job application skills, such as resume writing and job interview preparation.
- 3. Employee retention increases when employers and front line managers focus on treating all workers with respect and providing a pleasant, team-oriented working environment.
- 4. Food sector businesses are implementing employee wage incentives, recognition programs, and team building events to reward good work performance and improve employee engagement and retention.
- To attract workers, food sector employers are investing in skill development programs, such as English as a Second Language training, that help motivated employees to improve their work skills and prepare for future career advancement.
- 6. Food sector employers take pride when they can play an important role in returning chronically unemployed or under-employed individuals to the workforce by extending opportunities to those individuals to build a track record of employment and work references.
- 7. Food sector businesses recognize that workforce supply challenges cannot be solved at the individual employer level, and that the scope of the challenge requires a collaborative, sector-wide approach.
- 8. "Millennial-generation" workers, a pool of labor that grows in importance as they replace retiring workers in the labor market, are perceived by some employers as lacking work ethic, while other employers perceive Millennials as dedicated employees if they believe that their work outputs provide authentic contributions to society.

OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. Attract new workers to migrate to Maine by developing welcoming immigration policies and investing in strategies to promote the state's unique quality of life.
- 2. Enhance coordination between food sector businesses and workforce service organizations to tailor existing training and counseling programs to the needs of chronically unemployed or under-employed individuals in Maine.
- 3. Incorporate "work ready" programming into all secondary education and community college curricula to foster fundamental employment skills throughout Maine's workforce.
- 4. Expand public resources available to food sector businesses to host on-the-job training programs for underemployed segments of Maine's population, such as individuals transitioning from the criminal justice system, individuals with disabilities, and individuals recovering from substance abuse, will expand hiring options for food sector employers, while achieving important public health and community development goals.
- 5. Invest in infrastructure for Maine's rural regions, especially high-speed internet, to expand opportunities for food sector entrepreneurs who stimulate economic development and to stem the southward flow of workers from the State's rapidly depopulating rural communities.
- 6. Develop workforce training programs focused on specialized, value-added food handling, processing, preparation and packaging skills through partnerships involving trade associations, businesses, state agencies, colleges and universities, and cooperative extension programs.
- 7. Design and promote a product-of-origin brand for Maine targeting high-end markets with input from businesses and trade associations from all segments of the State's food sectors.

ADDENDUMS

| I. | Department of Labor Slides: WORKFORCE OUTLOOK TO 2024, FOOD JOB TRENDS IN MAINE | Page 6 |
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WHO WE ARE

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) helps to create good jobs, environmentally-sustainable enterprises, and shared prosperity in Maine and in rural regions across the country by providing financing, business and industry expertise, and policy solutions.

CEI envisions a world in which communities are economically and environmentally healthy, enabling all people, especially those with low incomes, to reach their full potential.

CEI has financed 2,649 businesses, advised 53,143 people, impacted 35,707 jobs and leveraged \$2.55 billion in financing with \$1.27 billion in loans and investments.

Workforce Outlook to 2024 (in brief)

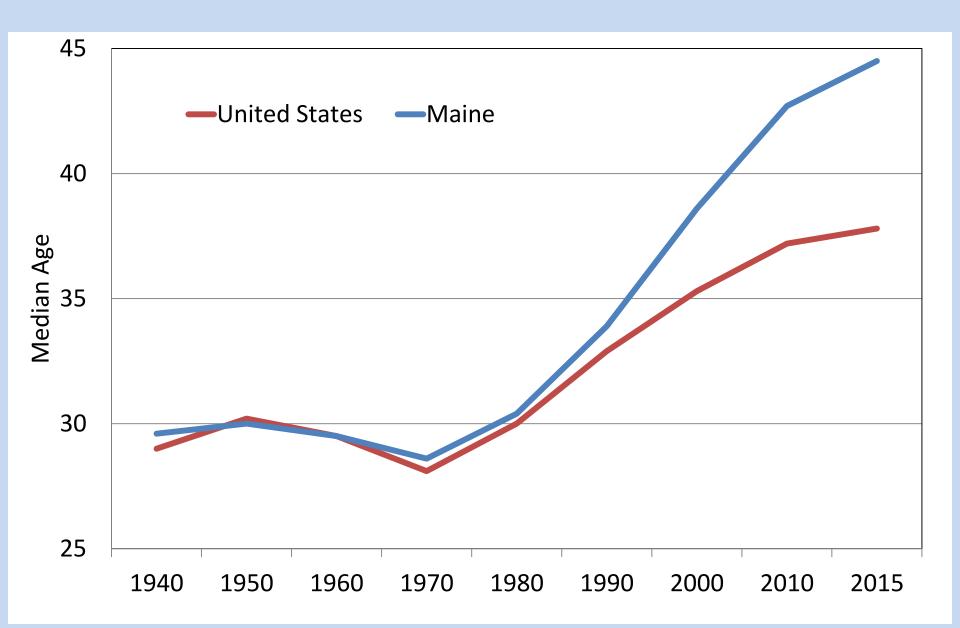
Food Jobs Trends in Maine



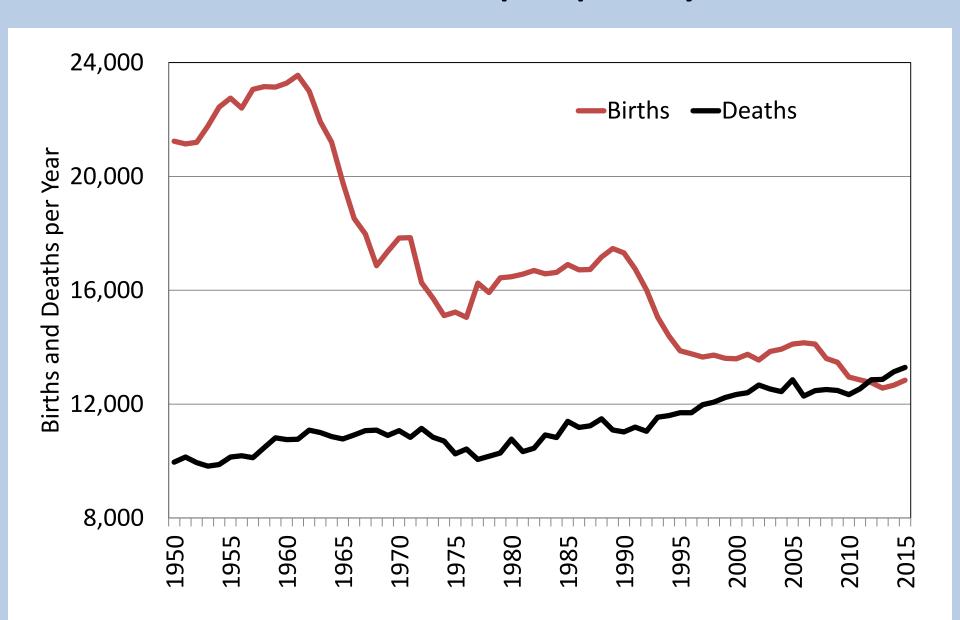
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Demographic Trends & the Labor Force Outlook in Maine

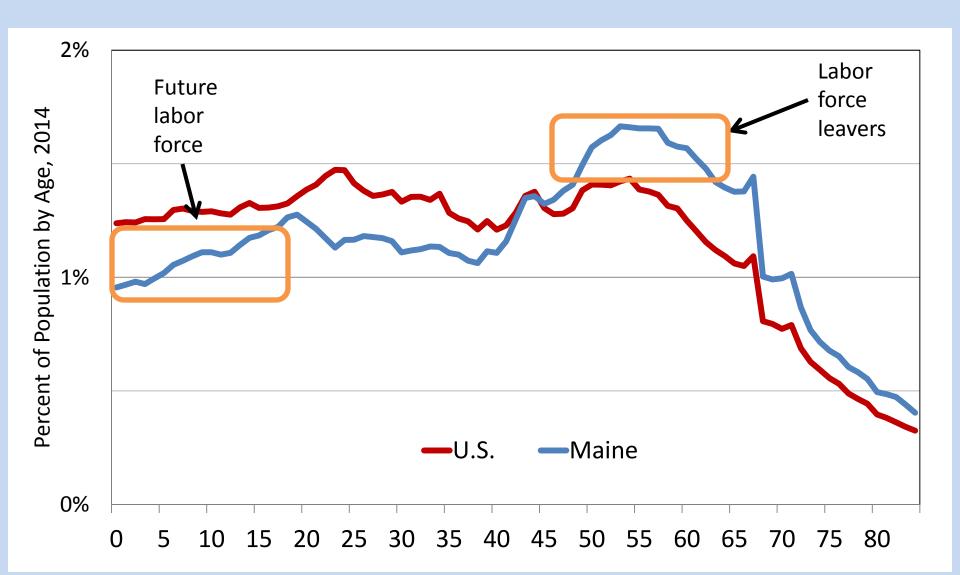
The median age in Maine increased sharply over the last four decades



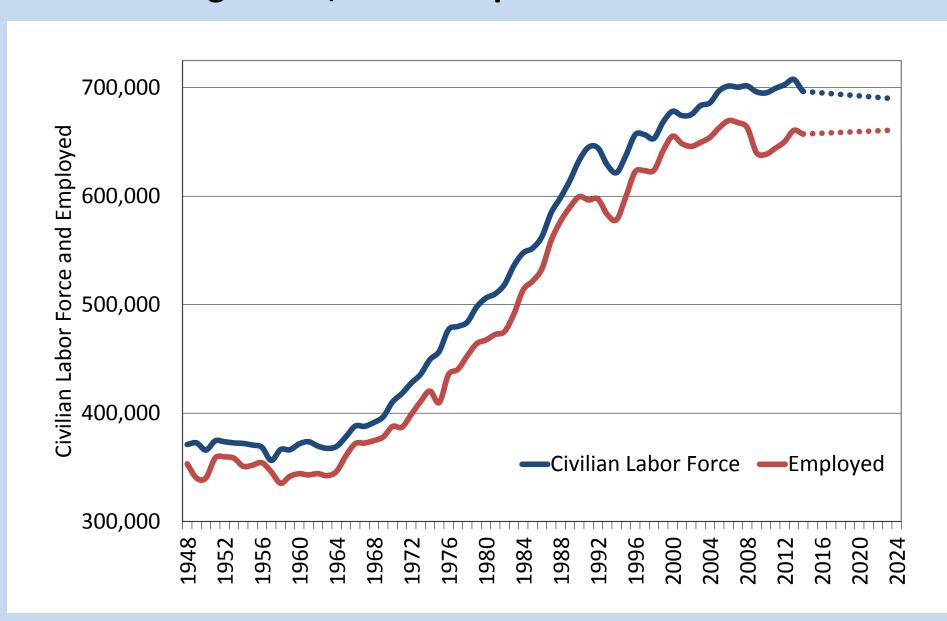
The population is aging because births declined precipitously



Fewer births caused an imbalance in our population structure. Many more will be retiring than entering the workforce over the next two decades.

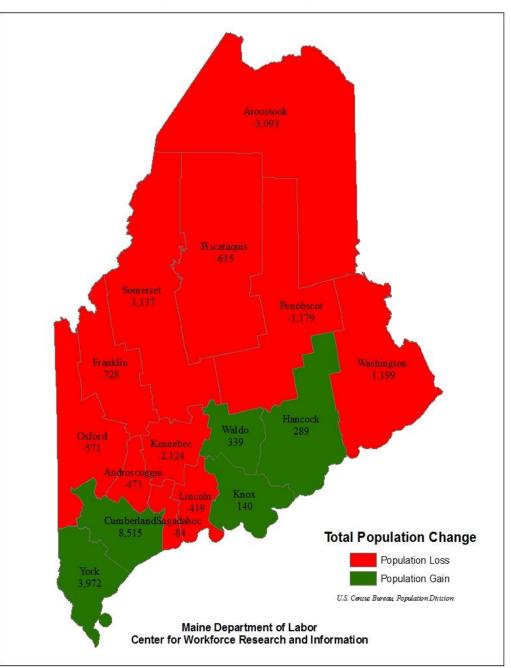


As a result, the labor force is expected to decline slightly through 2024, with sharper declines after that



The population is declining in most areas of the state from a combination of lower than replacement birth rates and outmigration of young people. This has left northern Maine as the oldest, most rapidly aging region in the nation and a contracting labor force.

Total Population Change 2010-2015

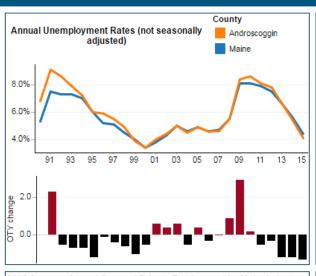


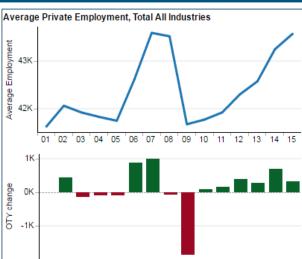
Regional Conditions

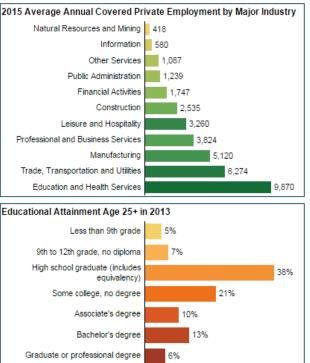
Androscoggin **Androscoggin County** Aroostook Cumberland Franklin Hancock Kennebec ■ Knox Lincoln Oxford Penobscot Piscataguis Sagadahoc Somerset Waldo Washington York 2014 Median Household Income char Androscoggin Maine United States \$53,657 \$46,701 Population 108K 105K 103K 100K 98K 95K 93K 74 77 80 83 86 89 92 95 98 01 04 07 10 13 2014 Population by Age 59 2014 Poverty Rates United States Androscoggin Maine

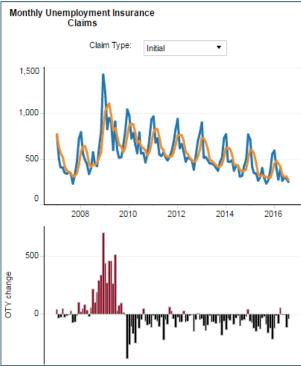
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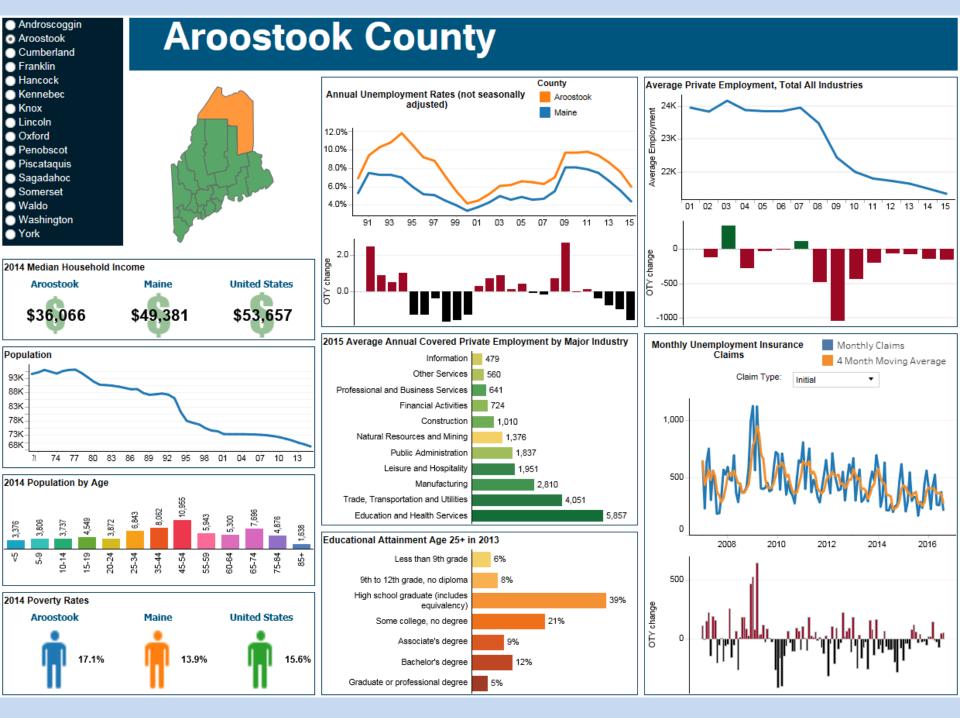
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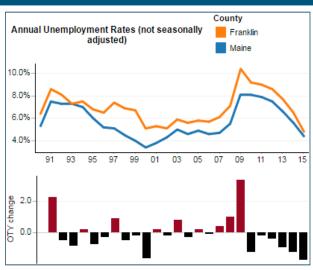






Androscoggin **Cumberland County** Aroostook Cumberland Franklin Hancock County Average Private Employment, Total All Industries Kennebec Annual Unemployment Rates (not seasonally Cumberland adjusted) Knox Maine 155K Lincoln Employn 8.0%-Oxford Penobscot 6.0% Piscataquis Sagadahoc 4.0% Somerset Waldo 05 06 08 07 09 10 ['] 11 ['] 12 ['] 13 ['] 14 ['] 15 2.0% Washington 95 01 03 05 07 09 11 13 2K York 1K 2.0 0K OTY change OTY change 2014 Median Household Income -1K -2K Cumberland Maine United States -3K 0.0 -4K \$53,657 -5K \$61,436 -1.02015 Average Annual Covered Private Employment by Major Industry Monthly Unemployment Insurance Monthly Claims Population Claims Natural Resources and Mining 373 4 Month Moving Average Information 3.058 Claim Type: 278K Initial 263K Public Administration 4.448 248K Other Services 233K 2,000 Construction 218K 203K Manufacturing Professional and Business Services 10,615 80 83 86 89 92 95 98 01 04 07 Financial Activities 1,000 2014 Population by Age Leisure and Hospitality 16.594 Trade, Transportation and Utilities 22.035 23,590 33,180 Education and Health Services Educational Attainment Age 25+ in 2013 2008 2010 2012 2014 2016 Less than 9th grade 1,000 9th to 12th grade, no diploma High school graduate (includes 2014 Poverty Rates 24% 500 equivalency) Cumberland Maine United States Some college, no degree Associate's degree 13.9% 15.6% 26% Bachelor's degree Graduate or professional degree 15% -500

Androscoggin **Franklin County** Aroostook Cumberland Franklin Hancock Kennebec Lincoln Oxford Penobscot Piscataguis Sagadahoc Somerset Waldo Washington York 2014 Median Household Income Franklin United States Maine Ę \$41,035 \$53,657 2015 Average Annual Covered Private Employment by Major Industry Population 30K 28K 25K 23K 83 86 89 92 95 98 01 04 2014 Population by Age 2014 Poverty Rates Franklin Maine United States 15.6% 13.9%



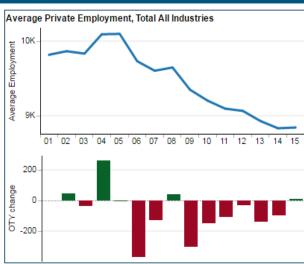
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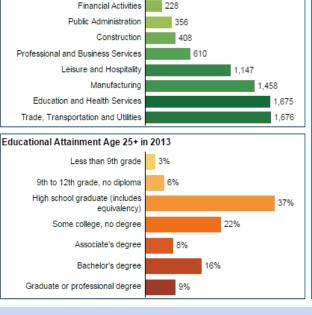
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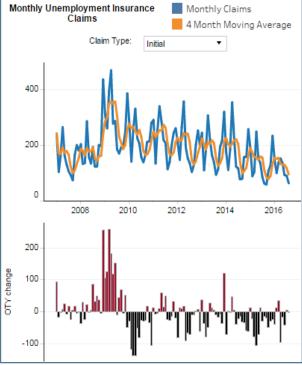
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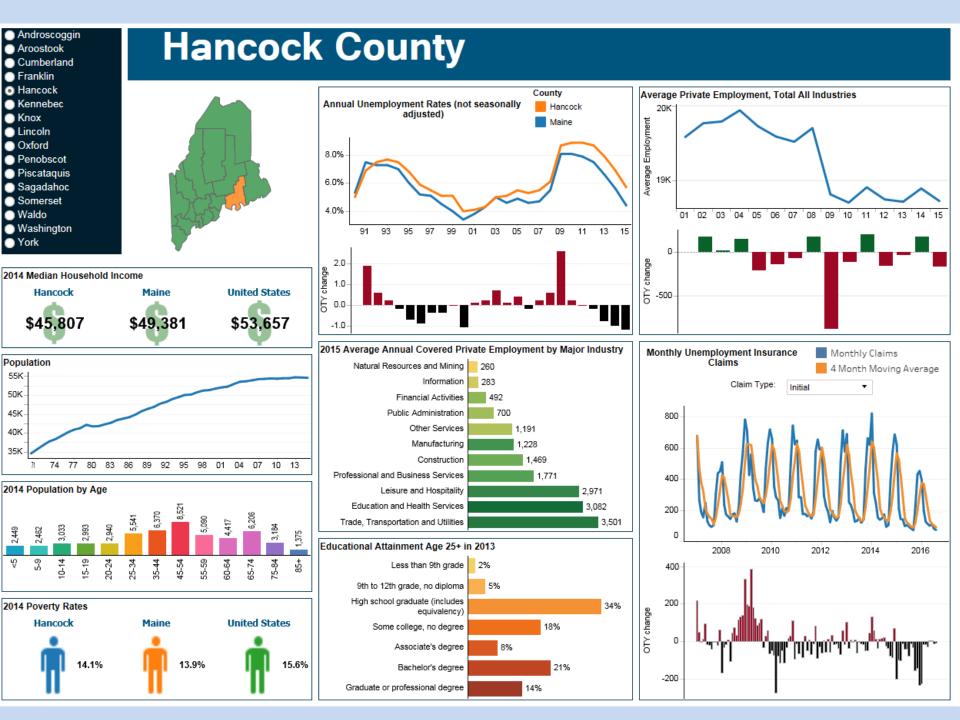
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Natural Resources and Mining



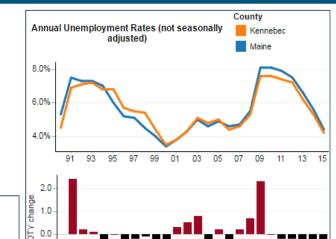


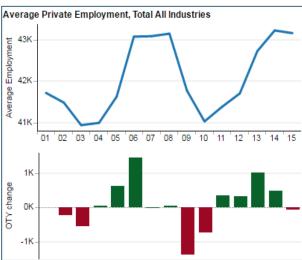


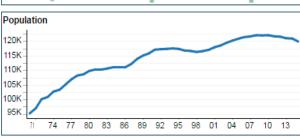


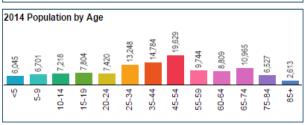
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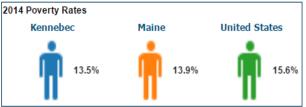
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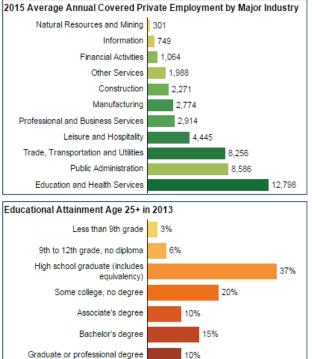


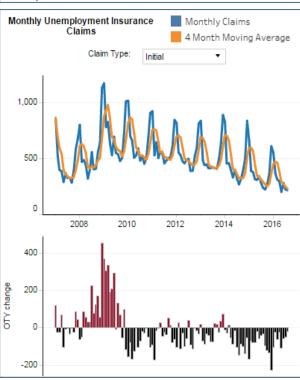


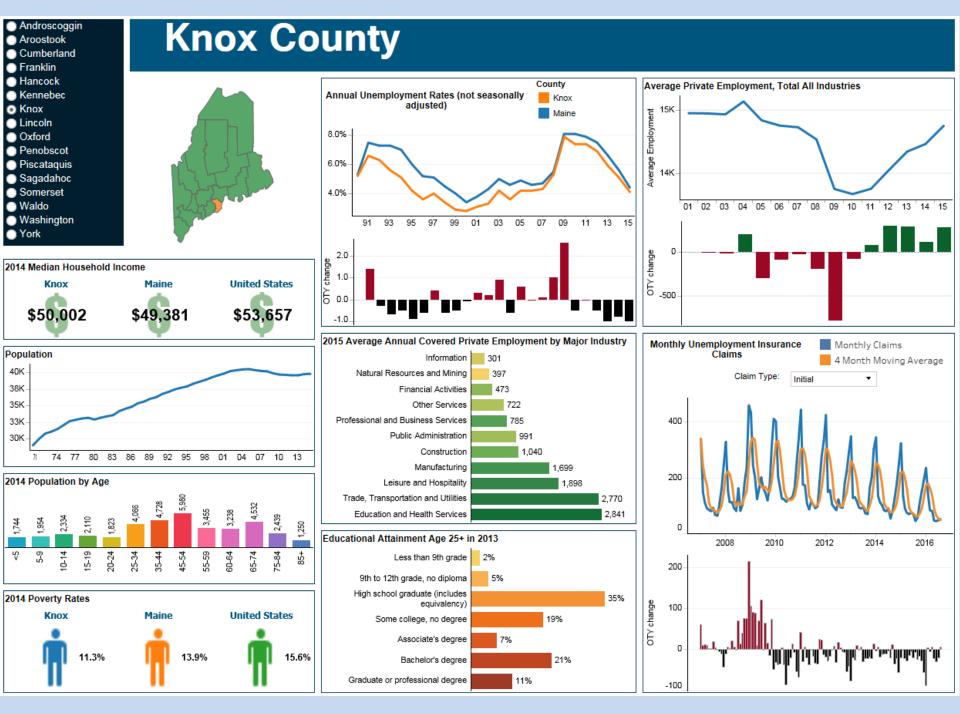


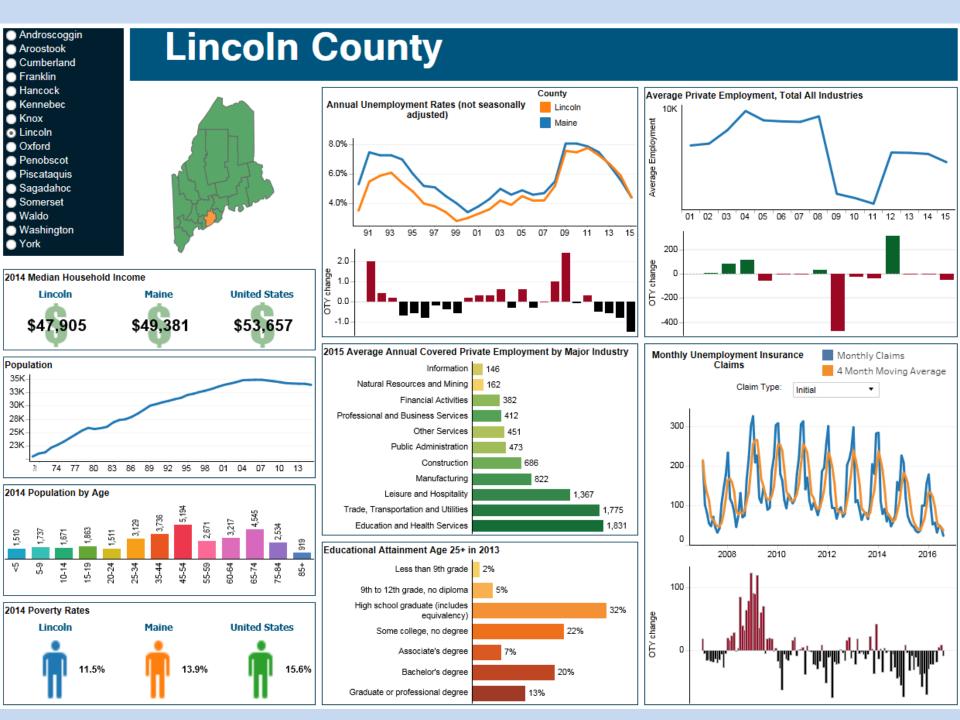








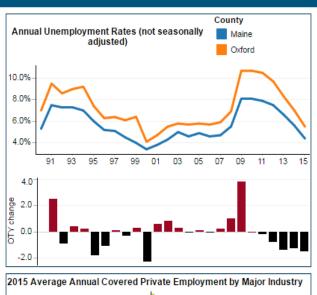


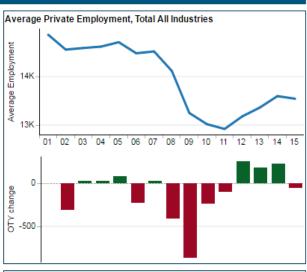


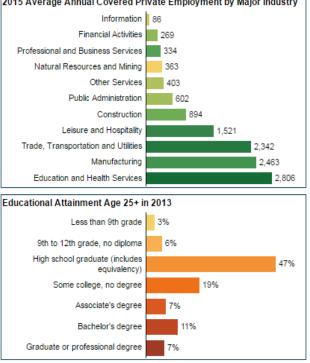
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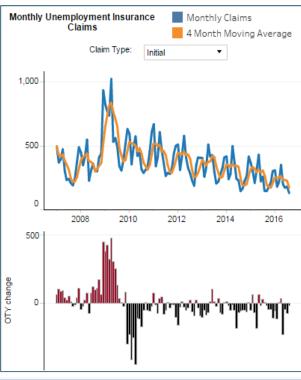
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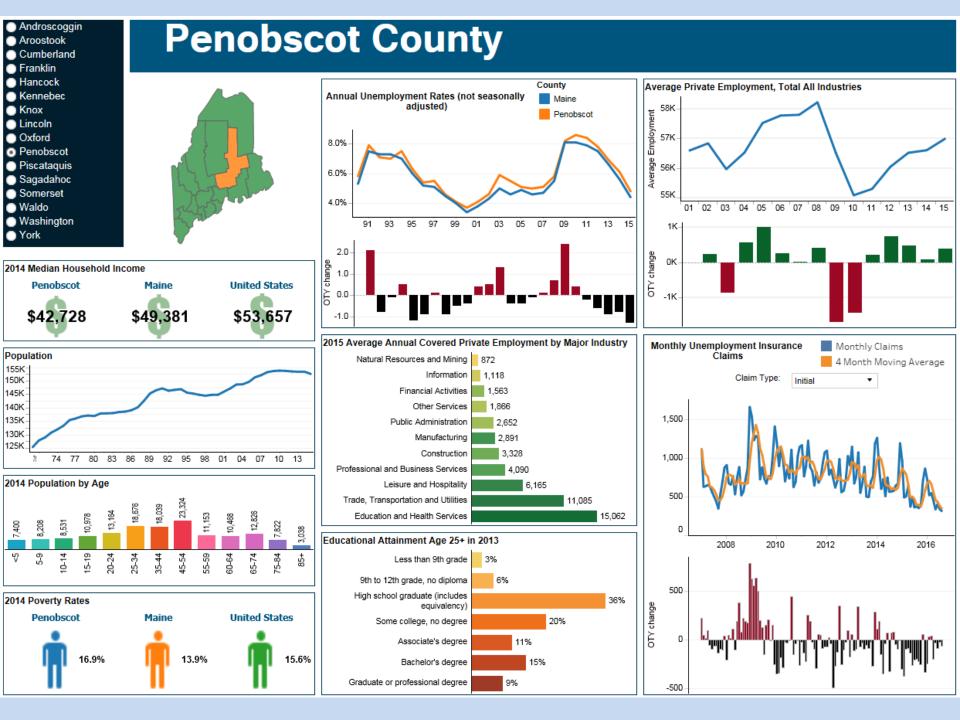
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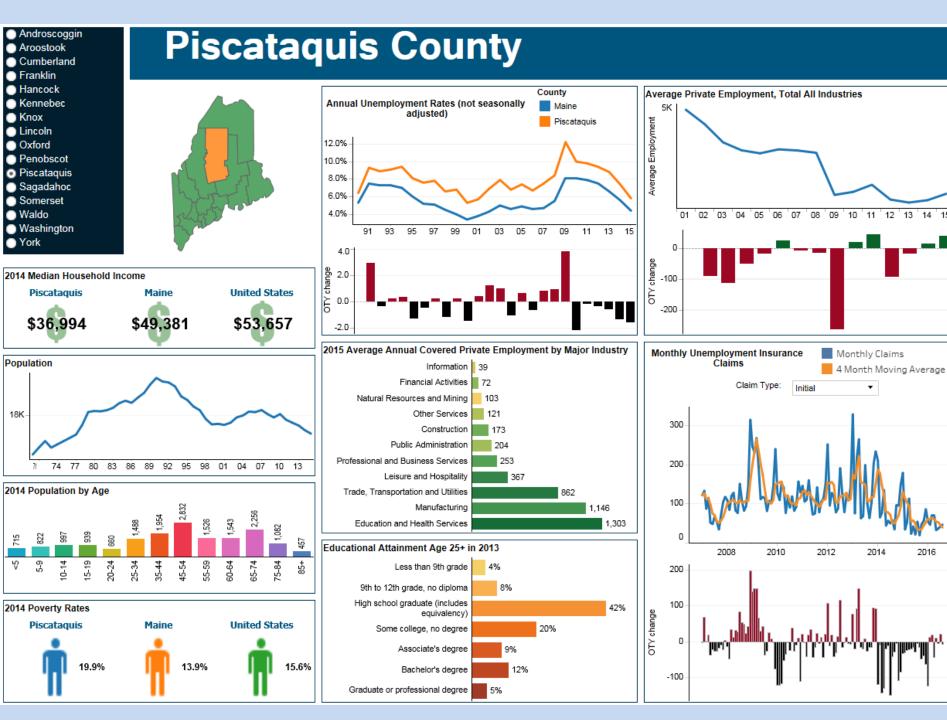












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2014 Median Household Income

Sagadahoc

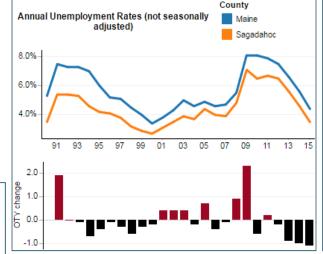
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Sagadahoc County

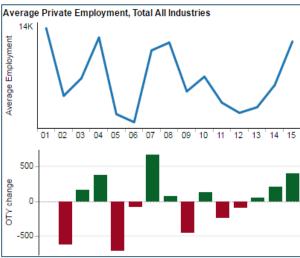


United States

\$53,657

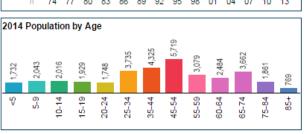


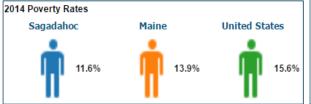
2015 Average Annual Covered Private Employment by Major Industry

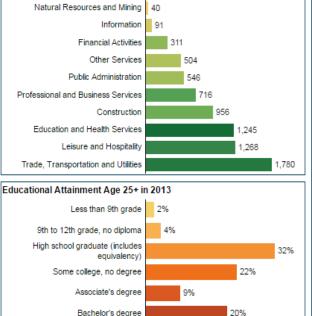




Maine

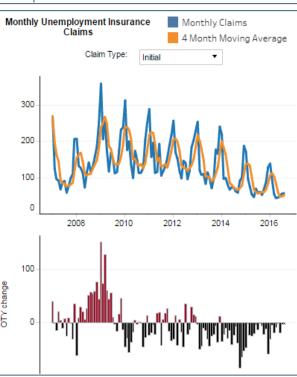






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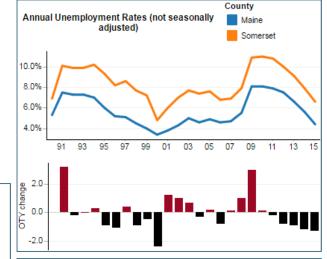
Graduate or professional degree

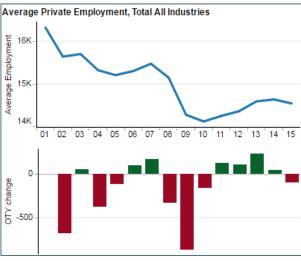


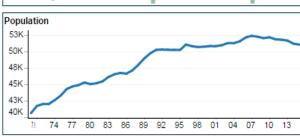
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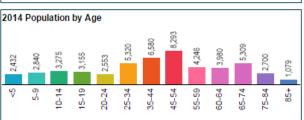
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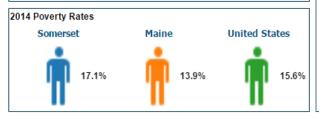


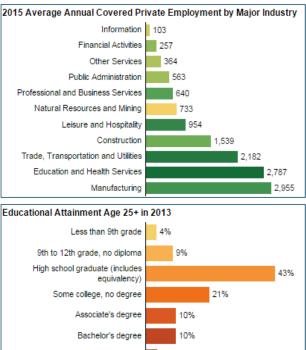




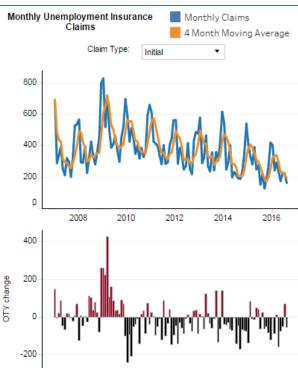


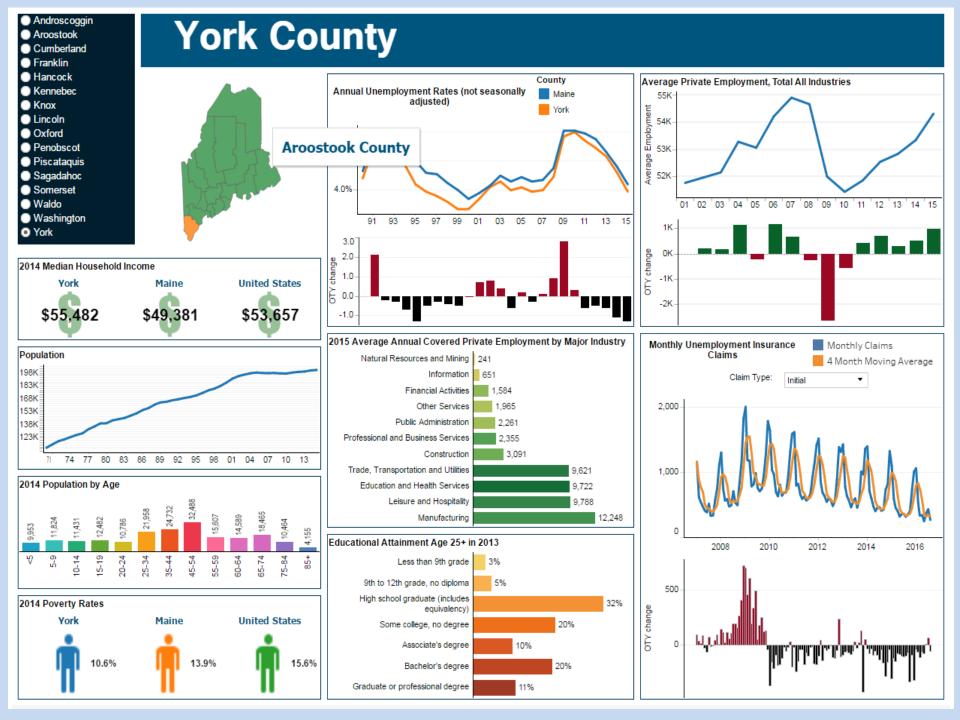


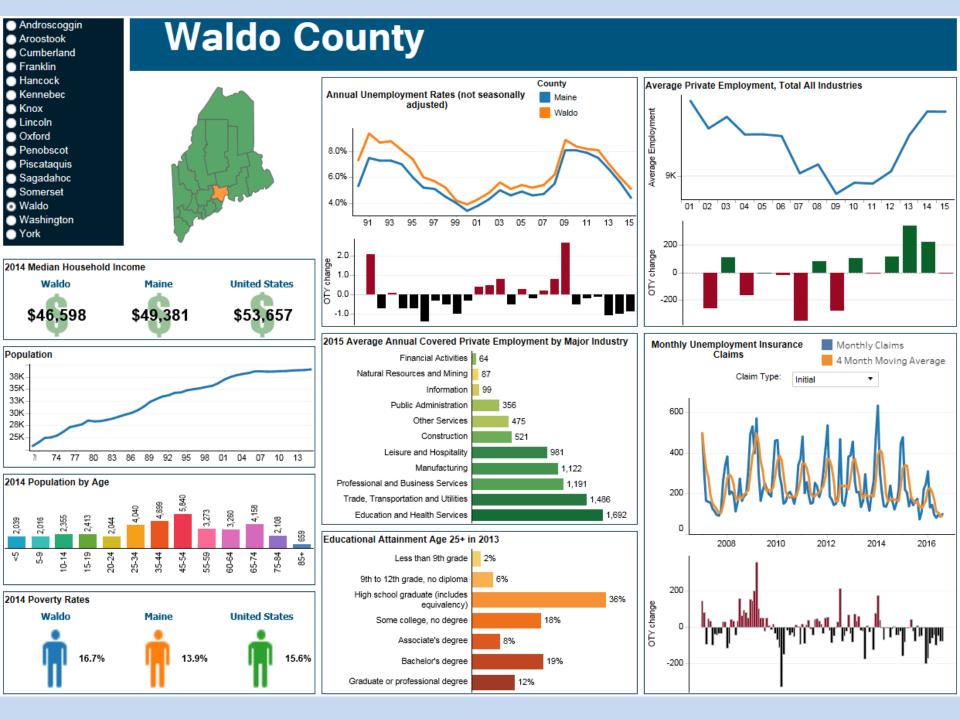


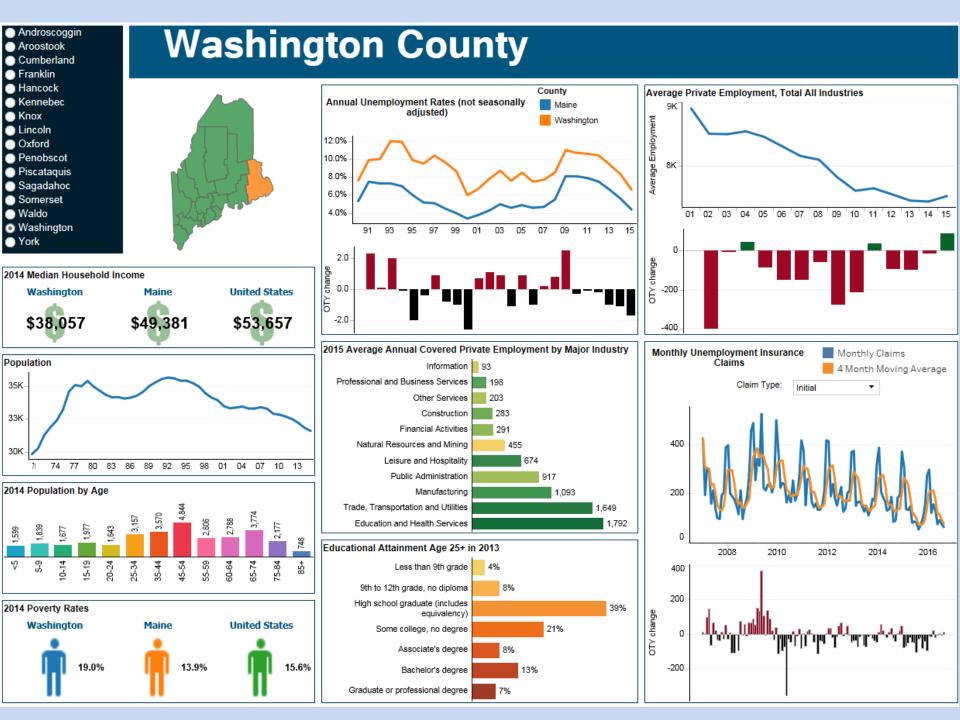


Graduate or professional degree



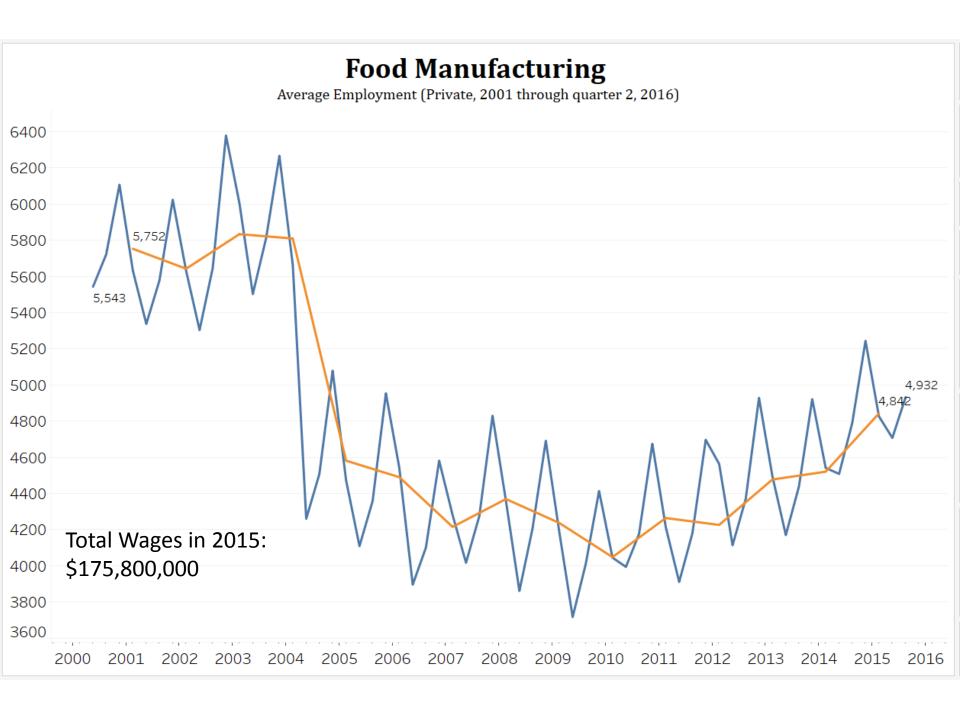


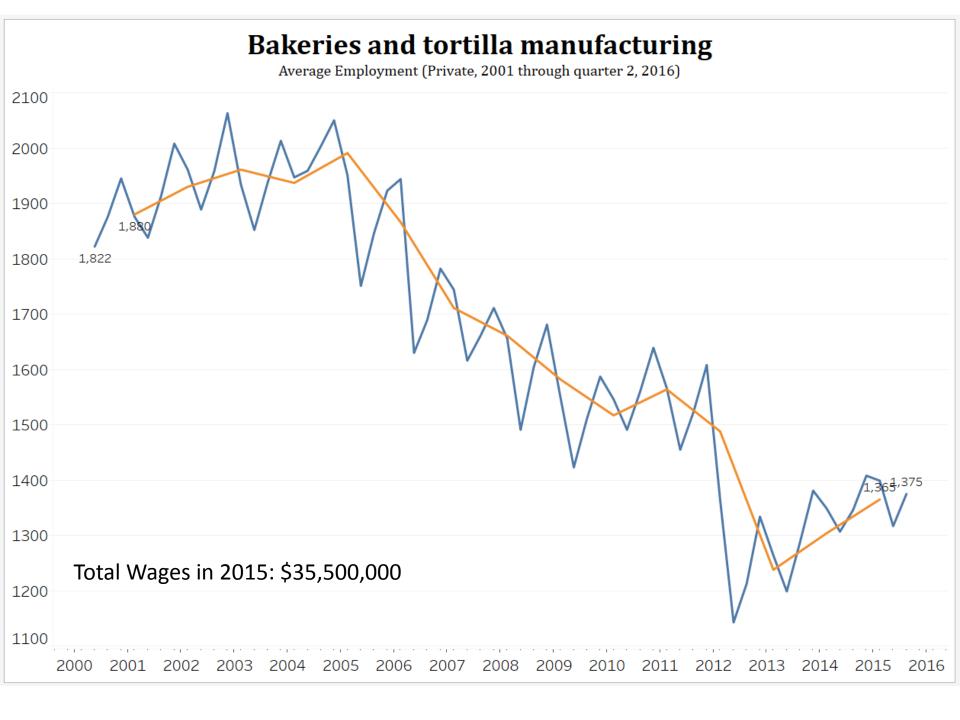


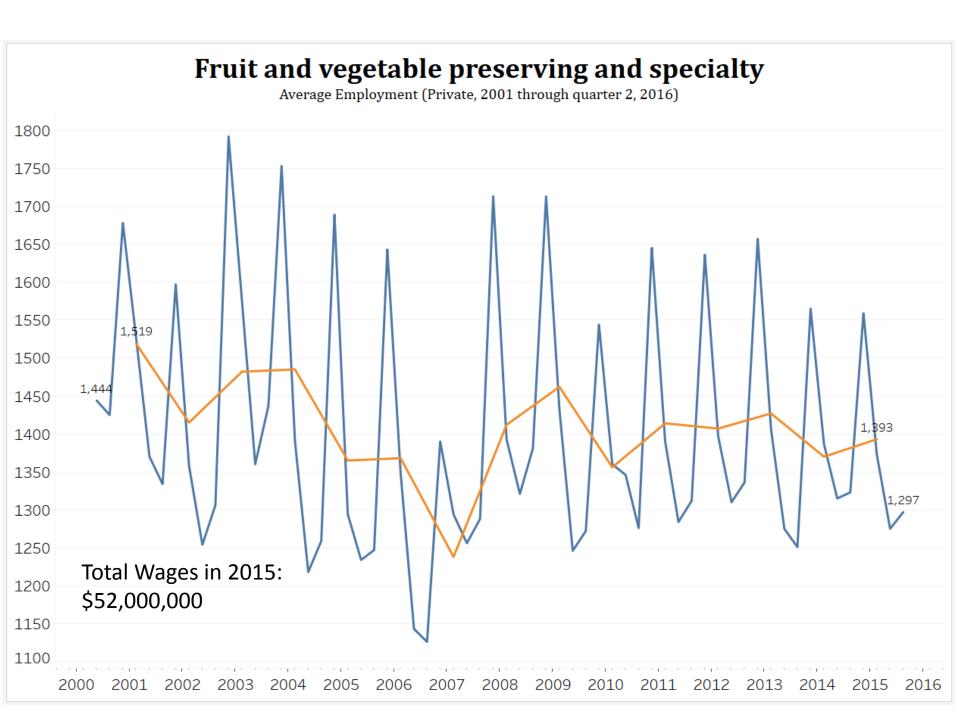


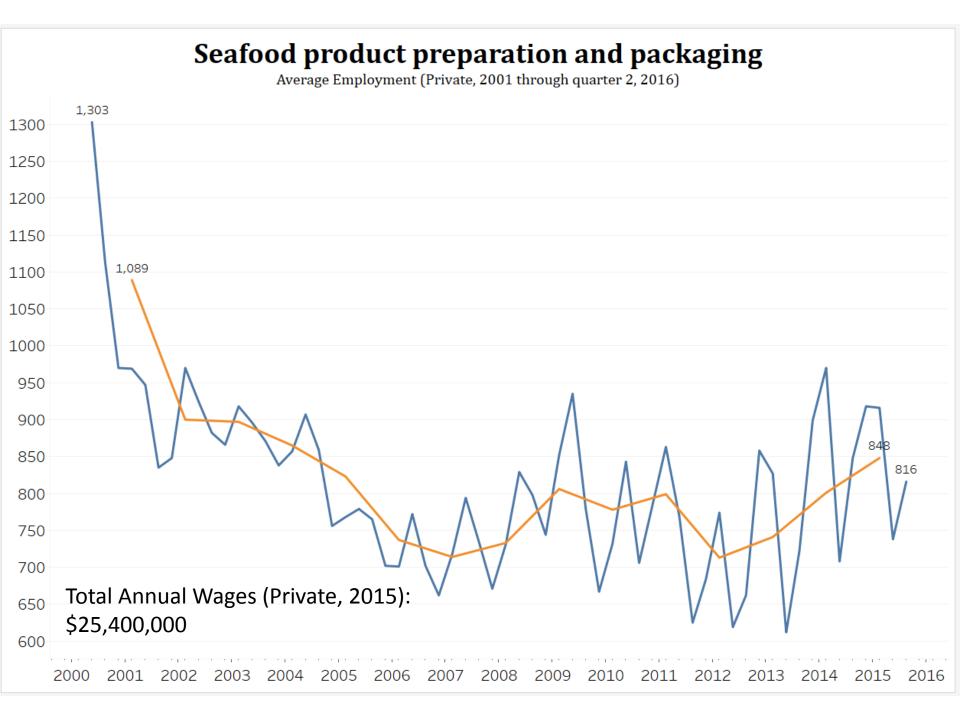
Food-Related Job Trends

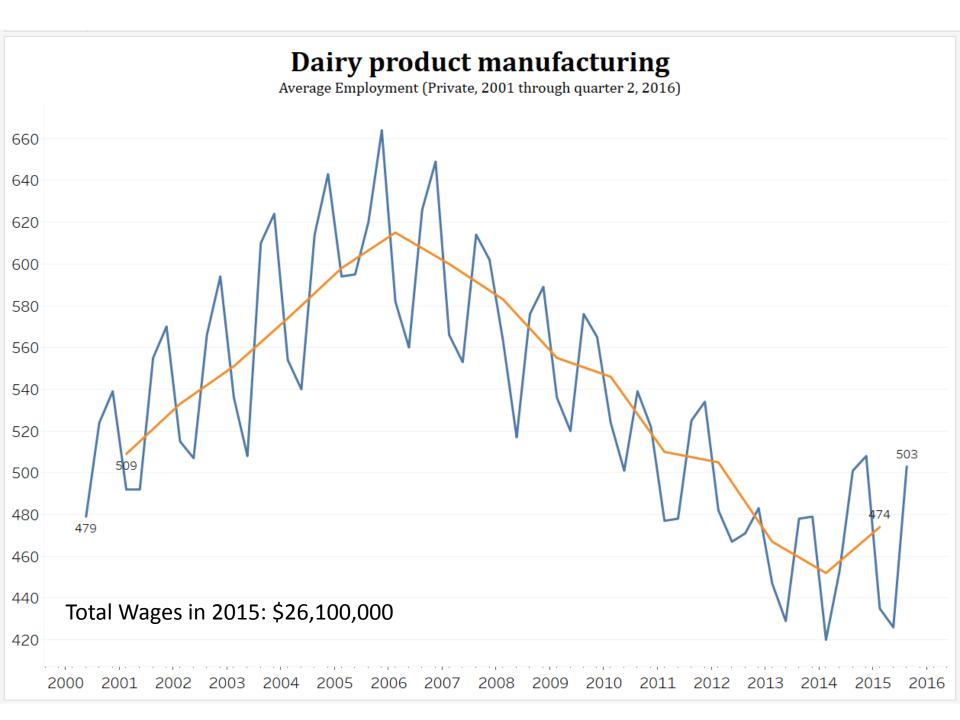
1. Manufacturing
2. Crops
3. Livestock & Fisheries

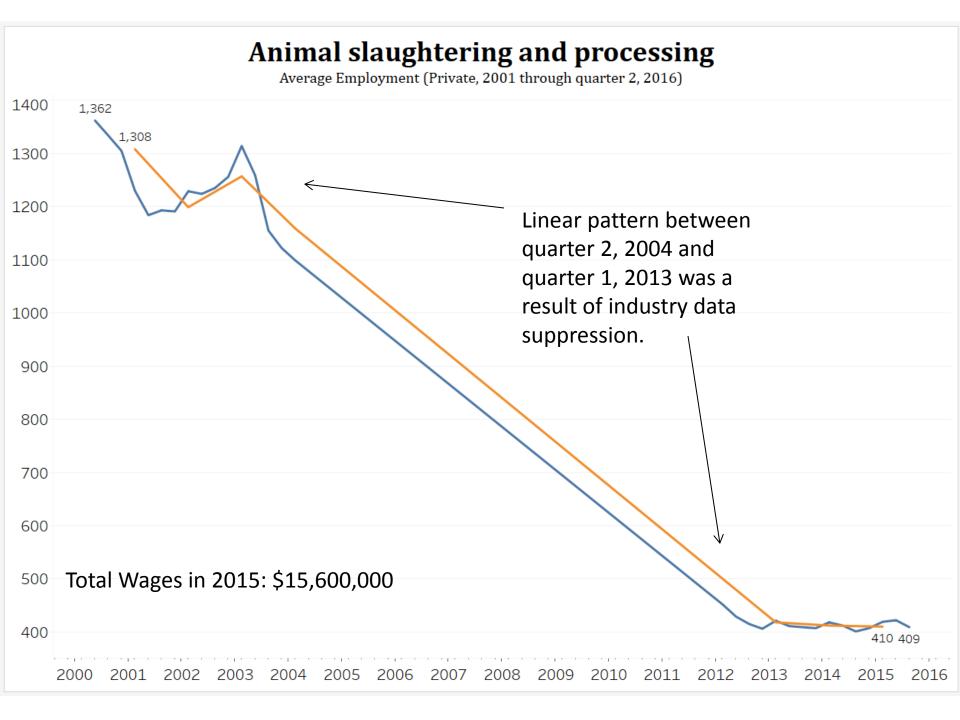


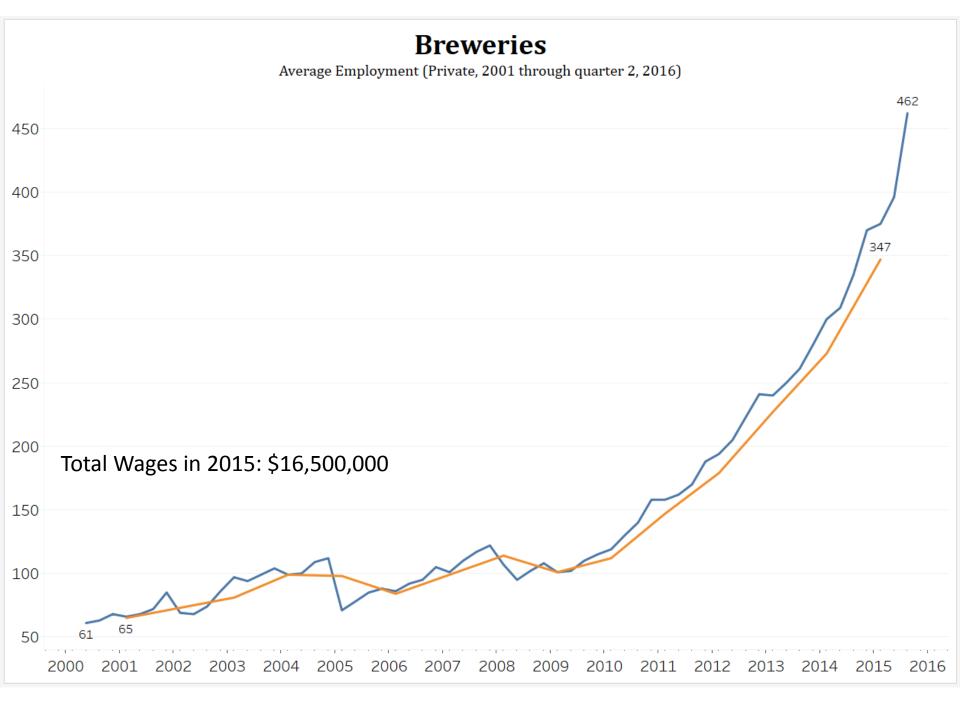


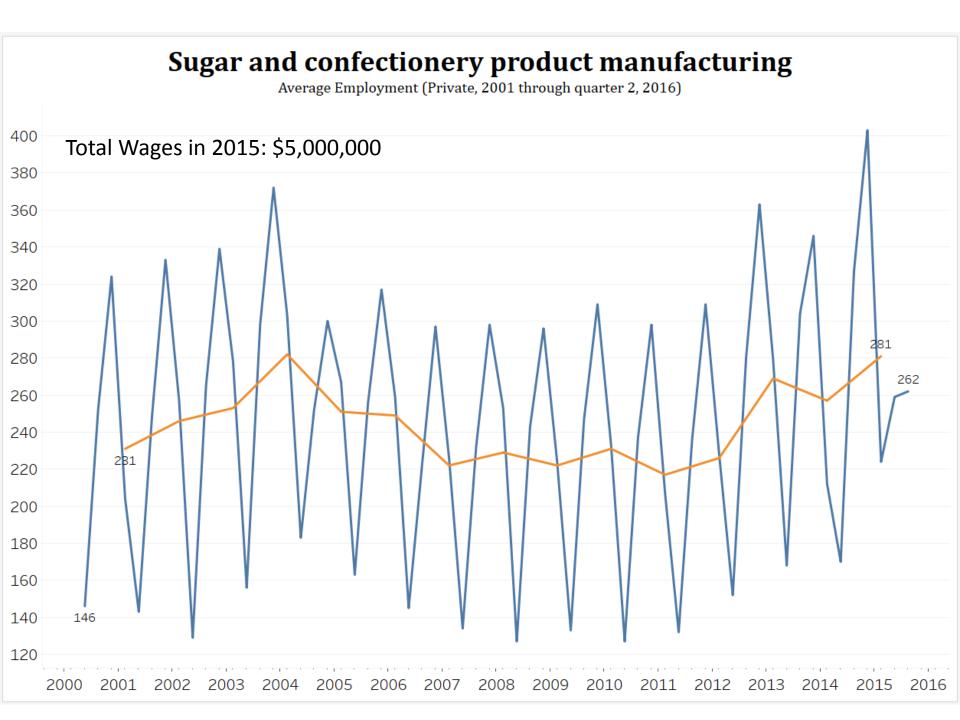


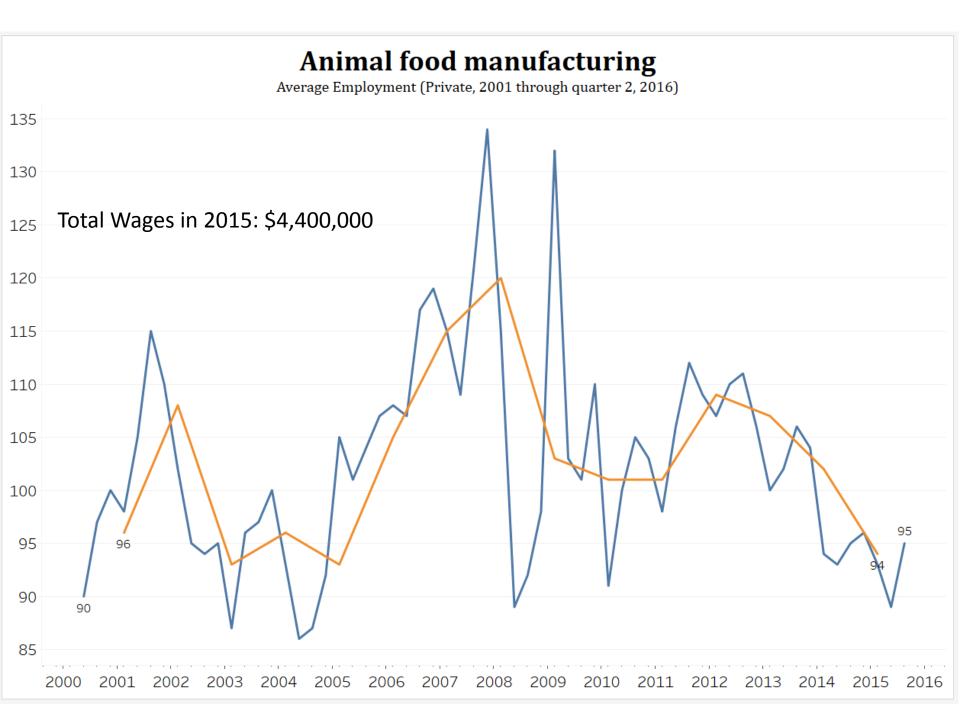


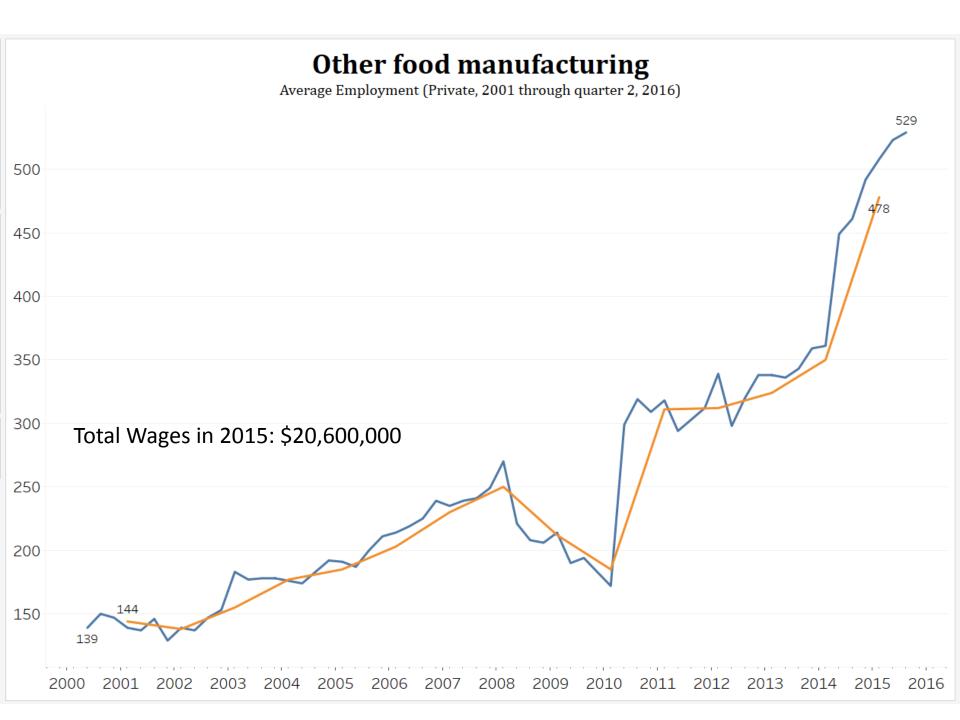








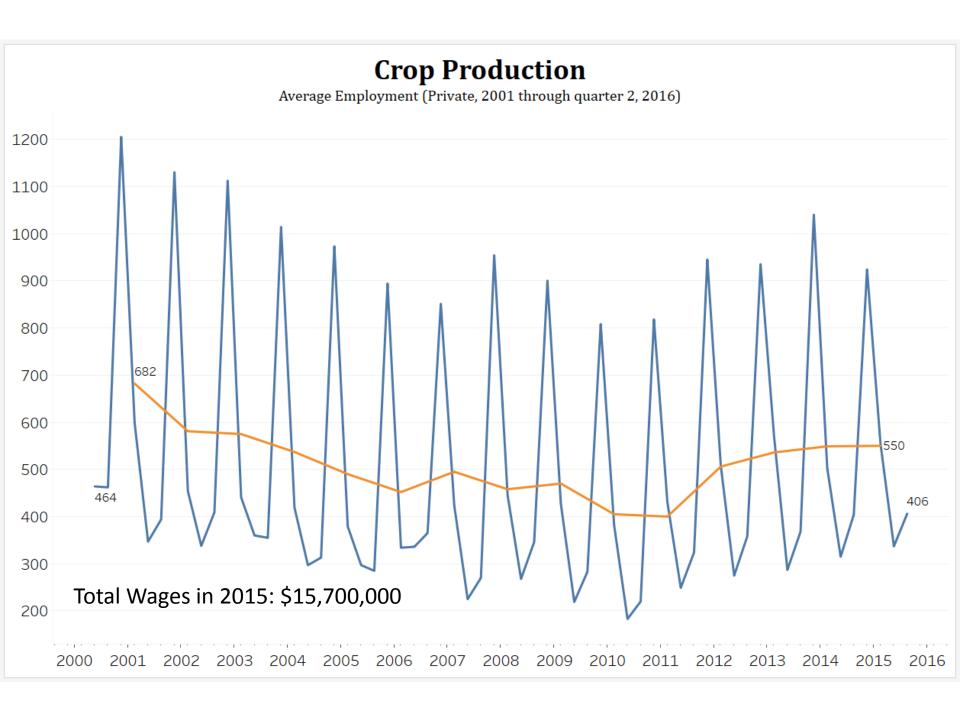


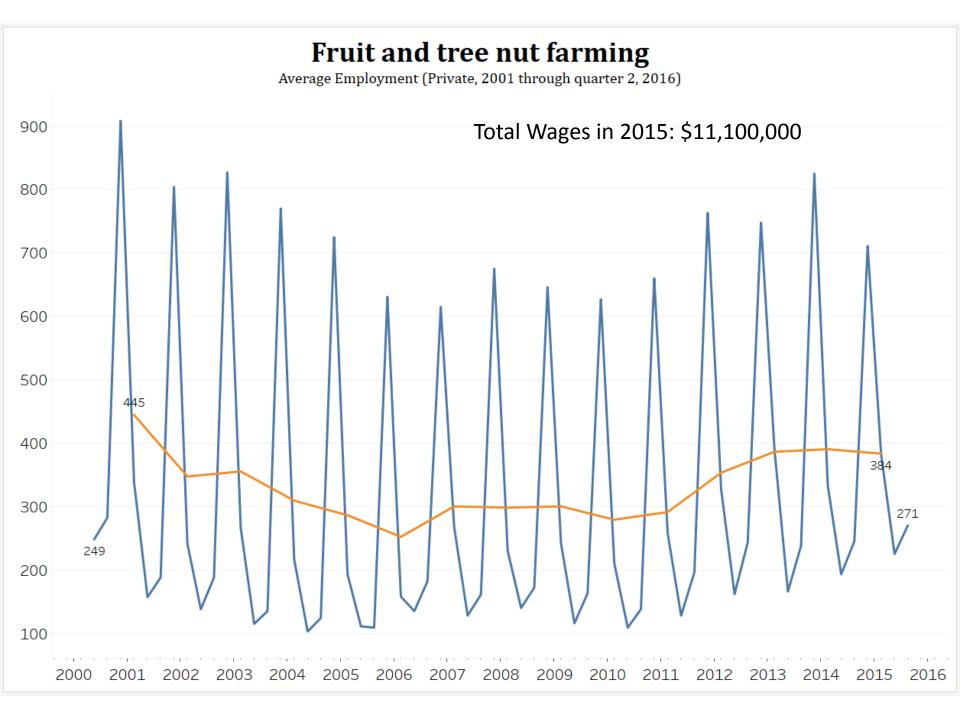


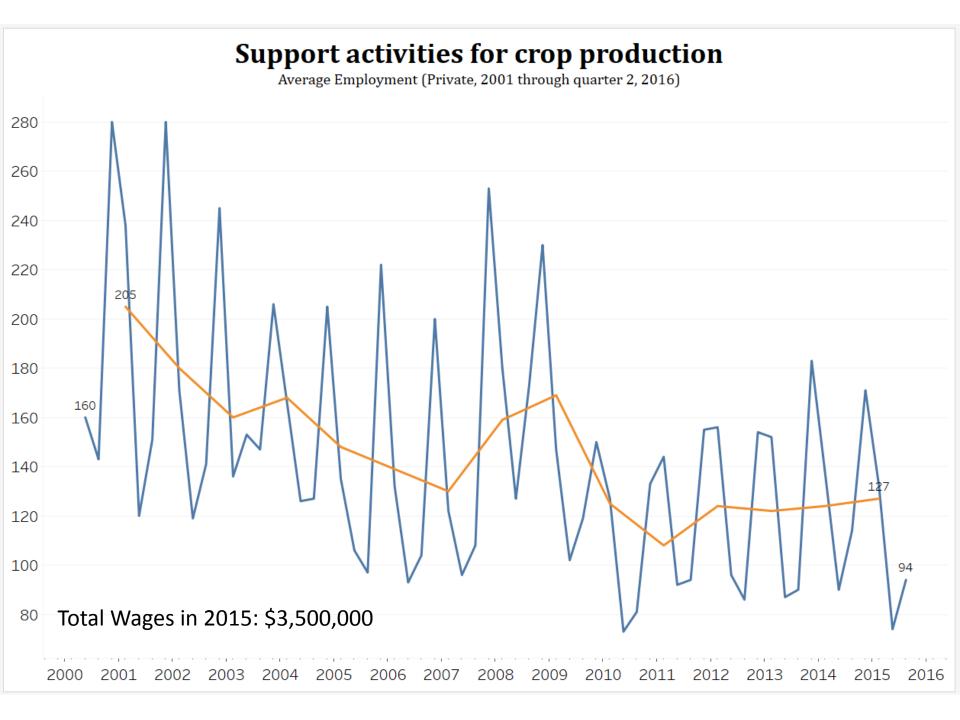
Food-Related Job Trends

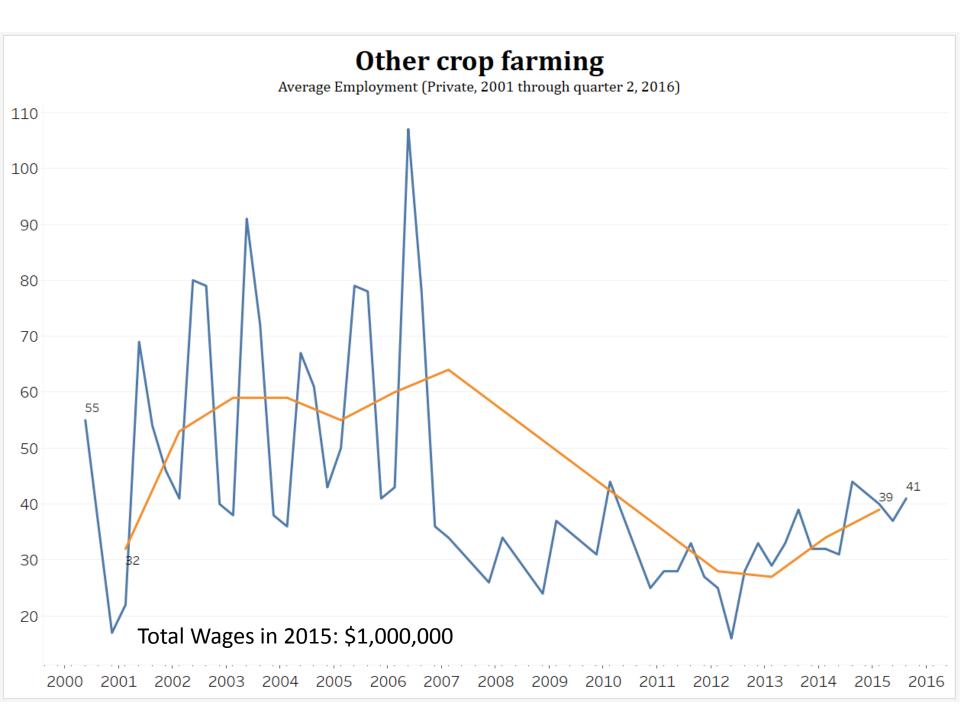
1. Manufacturing
2. Crops

3. Livestock & Fisheries





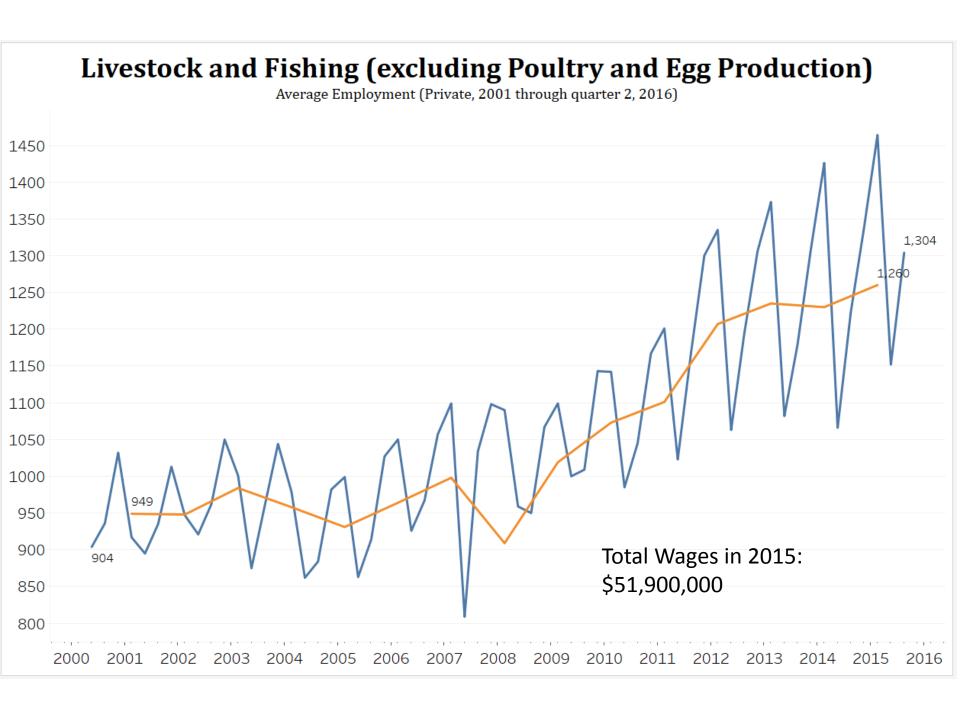


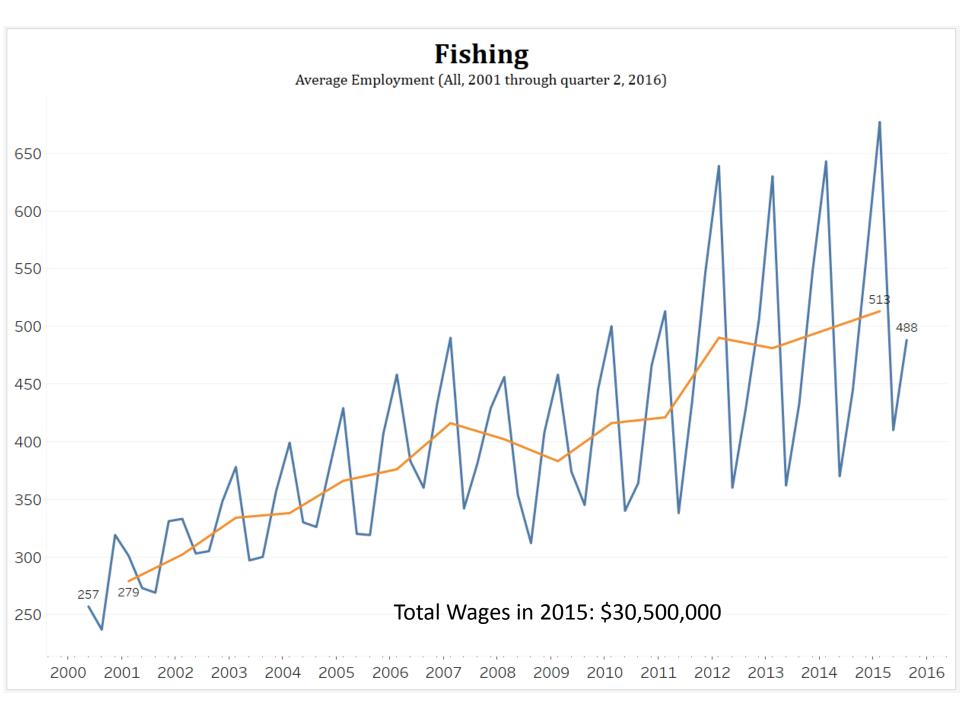


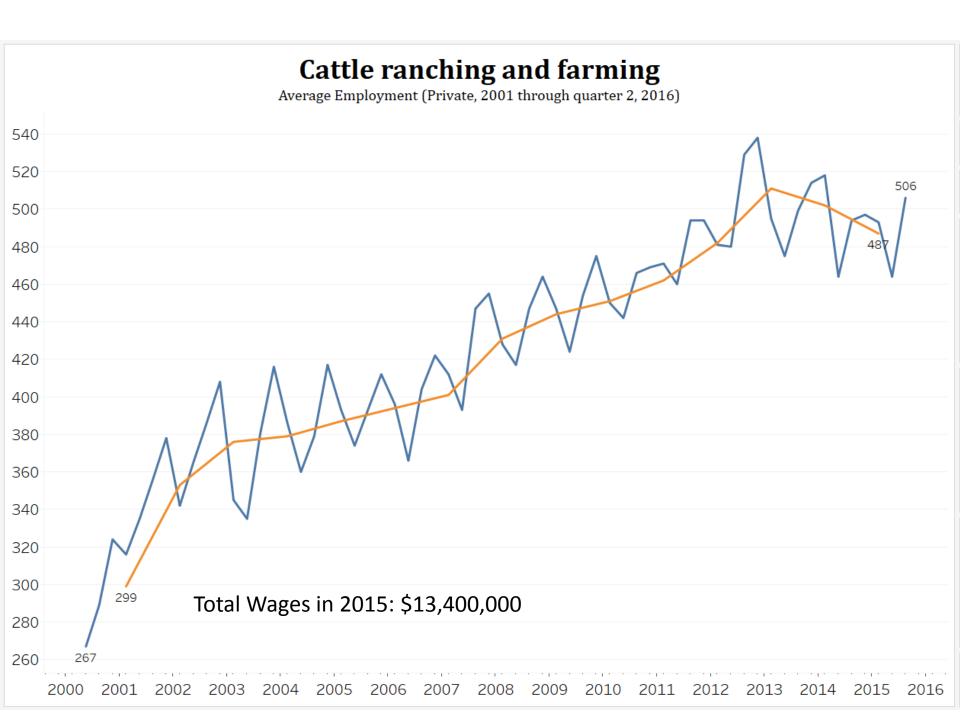
Food-Related Job Trends

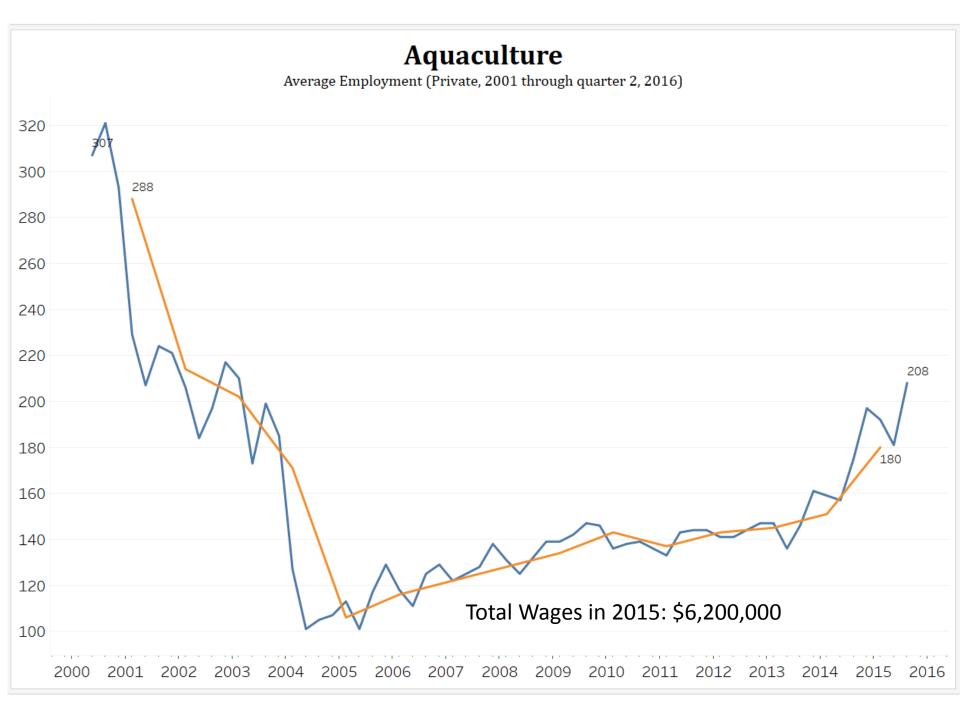
1. Manufacturing
2. Crops

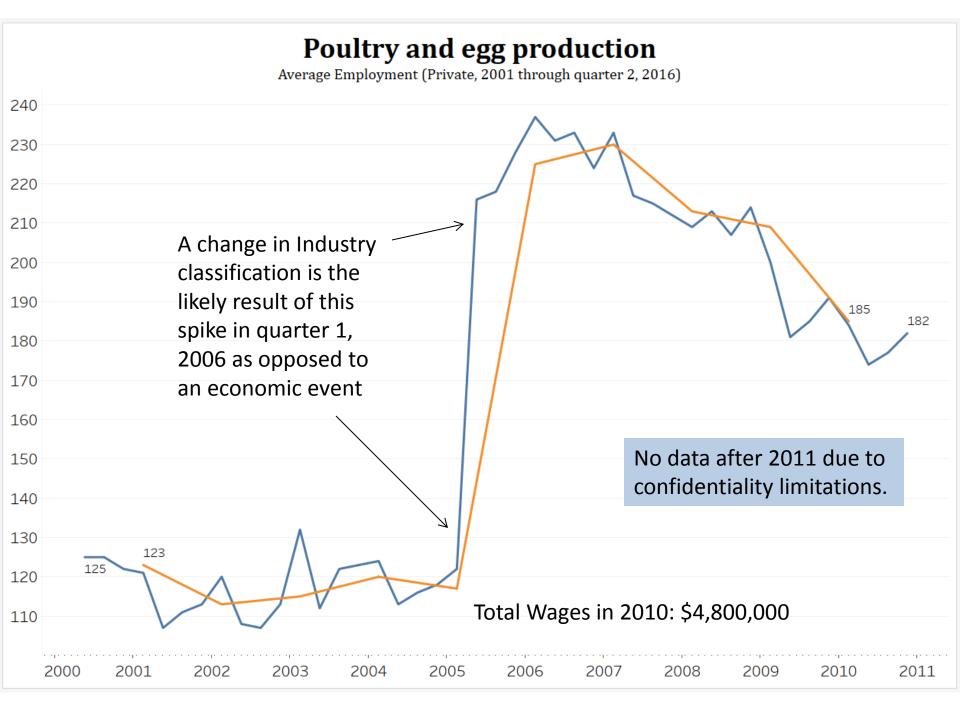
3. Livestock & Fisheries

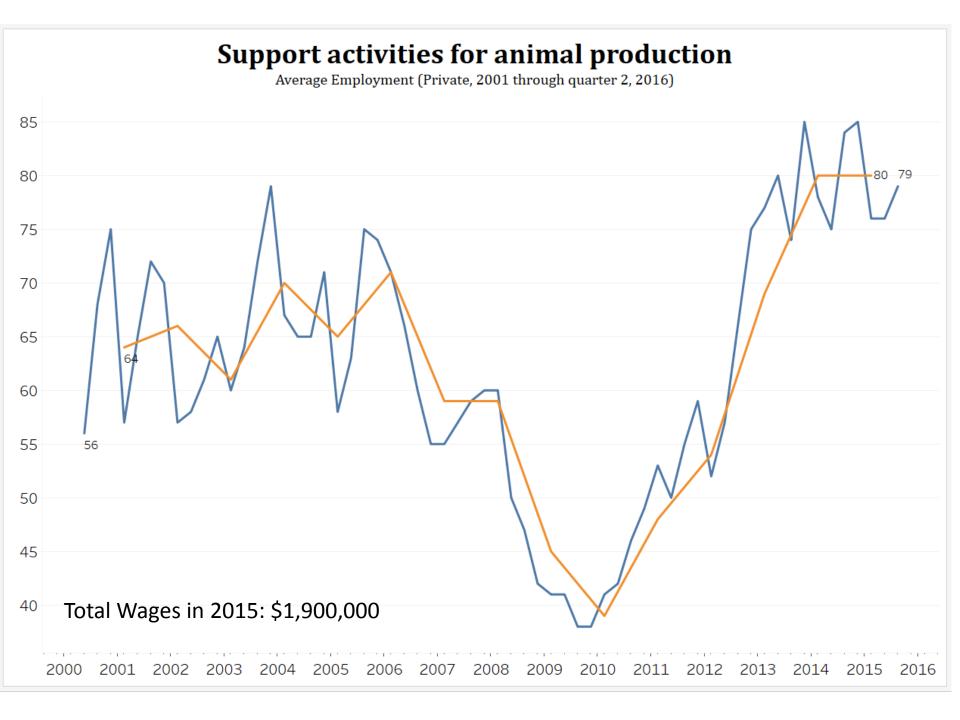


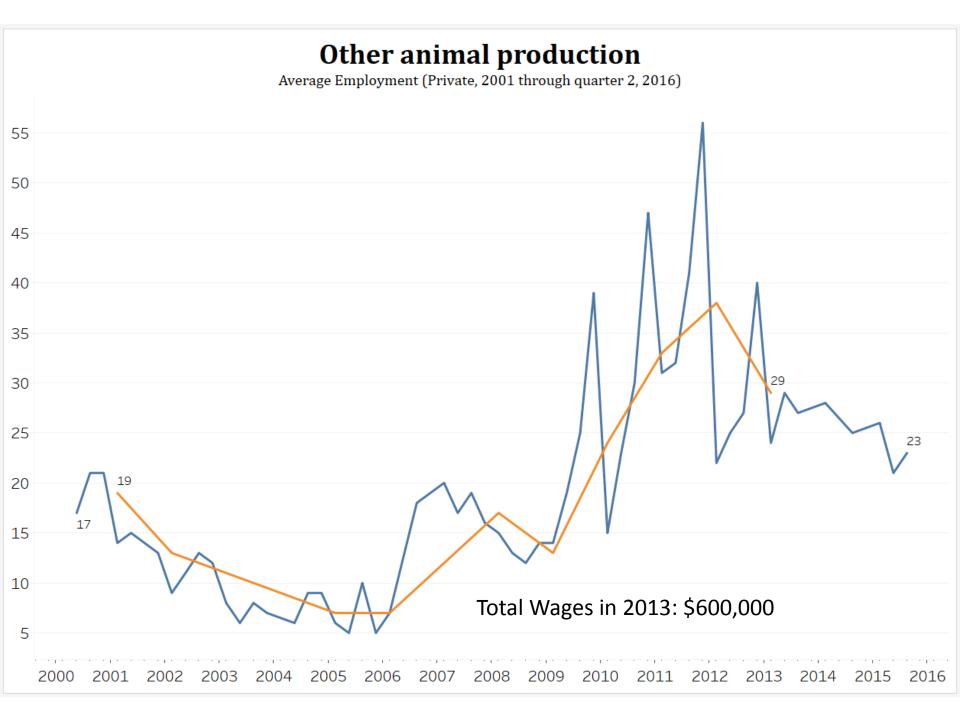












Gross domestic product (GDP) by state (millions of current dollars) Levels

| Fips | Area | IndCode | Industry | 2014 |
|------|--------|---------|--|--------|
| 2300 | 0 Main | e 1 | All industry total | 55,250 |
| 2300 | 0 Main | e 3 | Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting | 866 |
| 2300 | 0 Main | e 4 | Farms | 317 |
| 2300 | 0 Main | e 5 | Forestry, fishing, and related activities | 549 |
| 2300 | 0 Main | e 26 | Food and beverage and tobacco products manufacturing | 775 |

Addendum 2. MEETING AGENDA

Quality Food Jobs Project Agenda

January and February 2017, Maine

Goals for the Meetings

These meetings are designed to convene business leaders in the food processing sector throughout Maine to accomplish the following goals:

- Learn about emerging labor market trends and the implications for your business;
- Gain insights about best practices to attract, train, and retain a skilled team; and
- Discuss sector opportunities, challenges, and resource needs for growth.

Agenda

2:00

Adjourn

| 0 | |
|-------|--|
| 11:00 | Welcome and Introductions Brett Richardson, Associate Director of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems at CEI and Paul Scalzone, CEI's Workforce Solutions Director will welcome the group. Facilitator Leigh Tillman will lead the group in introductions. |
| 11:25 | Overview of Agenda and Goals Leigh will review the agenda and goals for our time together. |
| 11:30 | Tour of Host Location |
| 12:00 | Working Lunch and Presentations 12:00 – Labor Market Trends and Implications (Maine Dept. of Labor) 12:20 – What is a Quality Job? (Workforce professional) 12:40 – How my company attracts good people (Host principal for HR manager) |
| 1:00 | Open Discussion Convened business owners to share their experiences and brainstorm opportunities. We will begin by sharing successes and challenges of current practices of attracting, training, and retaining a skilled workforce. We will then discuss opportunities, needed resources, and potential next steps in exploring these opportunities. |
| 1:45 | Closing Comments Each person will have an opportunity to make a brief closing comment, perhaps a reflection about the meeting or a hope going forward. |
| 1:55 | Closing Remarks by Brett and Paul |

Addendum 3: FURTHER READING

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMMIGRANTS IN MAINE'S WORKFORCE

Building Maine's Economy. How Maine Can Embrace Immigrants and Strengthen the Economy.

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. March 2016 Available at: www.ceimaine.org

Immigrants: An Important Part of Maine's Economic Development Strategy

Prepared by Coastal Enterprises, Inc. for the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. January 2017. Available at: www.bostonfed.org/publications/communities-and-banking/2017/winter.aspx

Maine's Labor Shortage: New Mainers and Diversity.

Maine Development Foundation and Maine State Chamber of Commerce. September 2016.

Available at: www.mdf.org/documents

WORKFORCE CONSIDERATIONS FOR BECOMING AN "EMPLOYER OF CHOICE" & SECTOR-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Make Bad Jobs Better.

Dawson, Stephen L. The Pinkerton Papers. June 2016.

Available at: http://www.thepinkertonfoundation.org/paper

Restore the Promise of Work.

Conway, Maureen and Dawson, Stephen L. The Aspen Institute. April 2016.

Available at: http://www.aspenwsi.org/resource/

Sector Strategies in Brief.

Conway, Maureen. The Aspen Institute. November 2007.

Available at: http://www.aspenwsi.org/resource/

Addendum 4. PARTICIPANTS

JOEL ALEX, Blue Ox Malthouse, Lisbon Falls

JIM AMARAL, Borealis Breads, Wells

RYAN ANDERSON, Goodwill Industries of Northern New England Workforce Solutions, Biddeford

VARUN AVASTHI, Sodexo, Lewiston

DUSTY BATLEY, Ducktrap River of Maine, Belfast

KEITH BISSON, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Brunswick

JAMES BLACKSTONE, Circle B Farms, Caribou

SAM BLACKSTONE, Circle B Farms, Caribou

Anna Carver, Maine Fairtrade Lobster, Prospect Harbor

RUTH CASH-SMITH, Maine Small Business Development Centers, Machias

JOHN CHARTIER, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Aroostook County

LEAH COOK, Northern Girl, Van Buren

DON CYNEWSKI, Ducktrap River of Maine, Belfast

CHRISTY DAGGETT, Aroostook County Action Program, Presque Isle

JIM DARROCH, Backyard Farms, Madison

JIM GERRITSEN, Wood Prairie Family Farm, Bridgewater

SARAH GUERETTE, Women's Business Center, Portland

CHRIS HALLWEAVER, Northern Girl, Van Buren

PETER HARRIMAN, Maine Small Business Development Center, Portland

ROY HEBERT, Maine Small Business Development Center, York County

WILLIAM JACKSON, Maine Fairtrade Lobster, Prospect Harbor

ROLAND JACQUES, Cozy Harbor, Portland

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ANN McAlhany, Maine Small Business Development Centers, Bangor

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DONNA MURRAY, Bristol Seafood, Portland

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CARL PRATT, Northern Girl, Van Buren

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