

APRIL 2026



Welcome to the April issue of *ECO – financed by First Horizon Bank*, the Knoxville Chamber’s monthly economic outlook analysis. Each month, we provide a varied list of economic indicators with subsequent insight into how the data and information may impact the region. We include traditional labor market, housing, sales tax, and airport information as well as impromptu information as it becomes available. We hope that *ECO – financed by First Horizon Bank*, will help our regional business community make more-informed decisions as they run their businesses.

Labor Market Information

Data note – due to the federal government shutdown, October 2025 data has been canceled. March and April 2026 data will both be released in May.

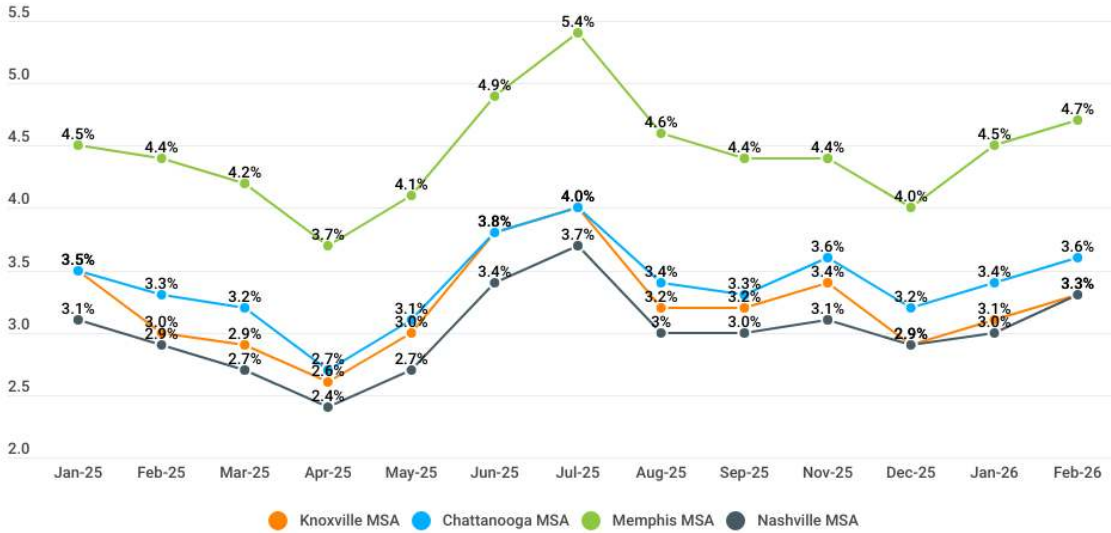
The Knoxville MSA’s unemployment rate in February was 3.3% (up from 3.1% in January and up from 3.0% in February 2025.) Knox County’s unemployment rate in February was 3.1% (up from 2.9% in January and up from 2.8% in February 2025.) Tennessee’s unemployment rate was 3.8% in February (up from 3.6% in January and up from 3.5% in last February.) The U.S. unemployment rate was 4.7% in February (unchanged from January and up from 4.5% in last February.)

Knox County’s labor force slightly decreased from 261,250 in January to 261,158 in February. The Knoxville MSA’s labor force slightly decreased from 465,196 in January to 465,144 in February. Tennessee’s labor force slightly decreased 0.2% from 3,488,871 in January to 3,482,335 in February. The national labor force slightly increased 0.4% from 169,612,000 in January to 170,206,000 in February.

Below is the 13-month unemployment rates trending comparison for the four largest MSA’s in Tennessee -

Unemployment Rates - Tennessee MSA

13-Month Trending Comparison



(Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development)

Job Market

For the month of March, there were 10,441 unique new job postings in the Knoxville MSA (up 11.6% from February and up 11.4% from last March.) There were 6,339 unique new job postings in Knox County (up 4.2% from January and up 6.8% from this time last year.)

The Top 10 industries (by number of job postings) in the Knoxville MSA in March were –

Top Ten Industries by Number of Postings

Industry	Number of Postings
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,716
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,382
Retail Trade	1,074
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	759
Manufacturing	574
Accommodation and Food Services	537
Educational Services	383
Finance and Insurance	357
Construction	355
Transportation and Warehousing	297

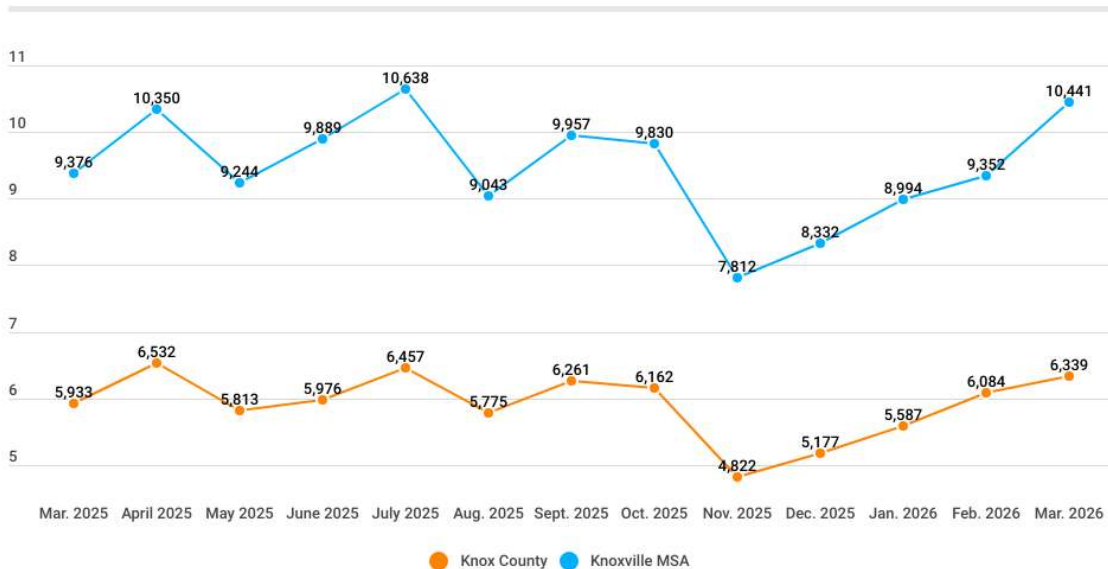
The Top 10 occupations (by number of job postings) in the Knoxville MSA in March were –

Top Ten Occupations by Number of Postings

Occupation	Number of Postings
Registered Nurses	610
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	312
Retail Salespersons	291
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Workers	268
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	221
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	161
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	143
Medical and Health Services Managers	141
Customer Service Representatives	139
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	138

You can view the 13-month job postings trend for Knox County and the Knoxville MSA below.

Unique New Job Postings



(Source: Lightcast – formerly Emsi Burning Glass)

Tennessee Ranks in Near Bottom on WalletHub’s Best States for Nurses

WalletHub, WalletHub, the personal finance website, recently released its Best States for Nurses rankings. To compare the 50 states, WalletHub evaluated 20 relevant metrics across the two key categories of “Opportunity and Competition” and “Work Environment.” “Opportunity and Competition” included monthly average starting salaries for nurses, average annual salaries for nurses, health-care facilities per capita, share of population living in a primary care HPSA, projected share of elderly population in 2050, quality of nursing schools, tuition cost per credit for BSN online program, nursing job openings per capita, nurses per 1,000 residents, and

projected competition in 2032. “Work Environment” included mandatory overtime restrictions, ratio of nurses to hospital beds, nurses job growth (2024 vs 2020), presence of nursing licensure compact law, regulatory requirement for nurse practitioners, share of Best Nursing Homes (U.S. News & World Report), quality of public hospital system, friendliness toward working moms, average number of work hours, and average commute time.

Tennessee ranked #44 overall, #33 for “Opportunity and Competition,” and #43 for “Work Environment.” The top ten states were #1 Maine, #2 New Hampshire, #3 Washington, #4 Oregon, #5 Arizona, #6 West Virginia, #7 Minnesota, #8 Montana, #9 Connecticut, and #10 Florida. Rankings of other southeast states were #20 South Carolina, #25 North Carolina, #33 Georgia, #34 Kentucky, #41 Virginia, #43 Arkansas, #45 Louisiana, #47 Mississippi, and #48 Alabama. You can read more [here](#).

ADP National Employment Report®

Each month, ADP, a large-scale payroll and human resources company, in collaboration with the Stanford Digital Economy Lab, releases the National Employment Report®, which provides a high-level look at month-over-month private-sector employment changes across the country.

The April report shows a net gain of 109,000 jobs in private-sector employment (up from the 62,000 net jobs gain in March). Industry sectors showing positive job growth in April include Education and Health Services (+61,000), Trade/Transportation/Utilities (+25,000), Construction (+10,000), Financial Activities (+9,000), Information (+4,000), Leisure and Hospitality (+4,000), Natural Resources and Mining (+3,000), and Manufacturing (+2,000).

The industry sectors that showed job losses in April were Professional and Business Services (-8,000) and Other Services (-1,000).

By establishment size, “Very Small” businesses (with 1-19 employees) gained 43,000 jobs, large businesses (with 500+ employees) gained 42,000 jobs, “Other Small” businesses (with 20-49 employees) gained 22,000 jobs, and mid-sized businesses (with 50-249 employees) gained 5,000 jobs. Mid-sized businesses (with 250-499 employees) lost 3,000 jobs.

(Source: ADP)

Intuit QuickBooks Small Business Index

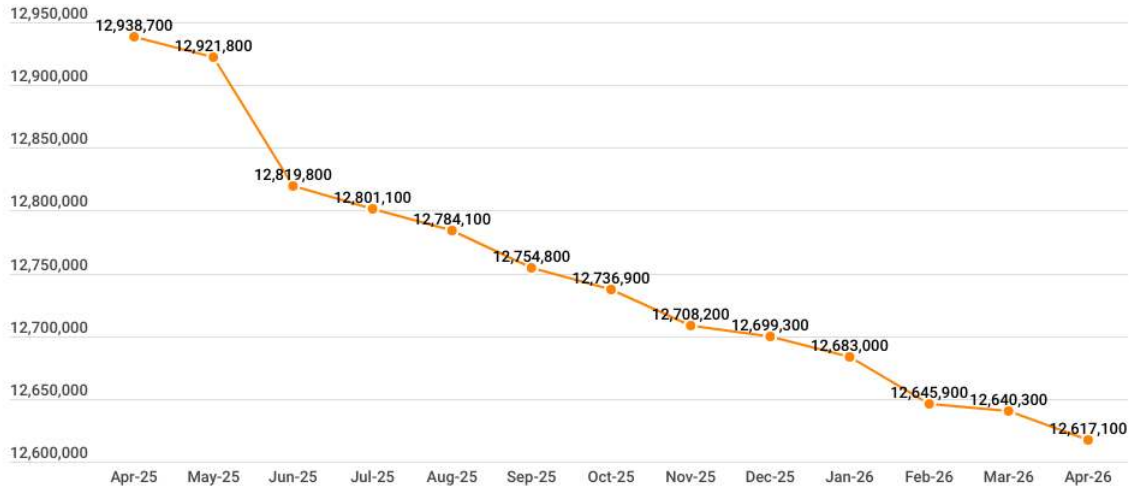
Each month, Intuit QuickBooks, the accounting software provider for small and medium-sized businesses, releases the Small Business Index Report, which analyzes employment and revenue trends for small businesses in the U.S. with one to nine employees across twelve industry sectors.

In April, there were 12,617,100 people employed by U.S. small businesses with one to nine employees, down 23,200 from March. Jobs decreased in all twelve industry sectors tracked by the Index including Leisure and Hospitality (-4,300), Professional and Business Services (-3,600), Education and Health Services (-3,300), Retail Trade (-3,300), Manufacturing (-2,200), Finance and Real Estate (-1,700), Construction (-1,500), Wholesale Trade (-1,200), Transportation and Warehousing (-1,100), Information (-500), Agriculture/Natural Resources/Mining (-400), and Utilities (-100).

Below is the 13-month total employment trend for U.S. small businesses with one to nine employees -

Total Employment of U.S. Small Businesses (with 1 to 9 employees)

Knox County



* Please note that all monthly small business employment estimates are subject to revision.

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You can access the full report [here](#).

Source: Intuit QuickBooks

Worker Shortage Update

The labor shortages are persisting longer than many economists expected. There continues to be high job demand and slower workforce growth resulting in fierce competition for talent and many open jobs going unfilled. According to the latest data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the nation had 6.9 million jobs to fill and only 5.6 million hires in March, leaving 1.3 million jobs unfilled.

In March, the largest increases in U.S. job openings were in financial activities (+101,000), health care and social assistance (+87,000), retail trade (+52,000), construction (+23,000), manufacturing (+19,000), private educational services (+19,000), accommodation and food services (+13,000), and information (+1,000).

The largest decreases in job openings were in professional and business services (-318,000), other services (-41,000), wholesale trade (-13,000), and transportation/warehousing/utilities (-1,000). The arts/entertainment/recreation sector was unchanged.

It will take time for this mismatch between labor demand and supply to align. In the meantime, wages will continue to rise as businesses compete to attract talent. You can read the latest job openings summary from BLS [here](#).

Consumer Price Index (CPI - Inflation Rates)

Data note – due to the federal government shutdown, October data has been canceled.

The national inflation rate from March 2025 to March 2026 is 3.3% (up from 2.4% in the February 2025 to February 2026 period. Last year, the national inflation rate was 2.4% from March 2024 to March 2025.

The March CPI report marks the 45th straight month that year-over-year inflation is below the June 2022 CPI peak high of 9.1%. High prices for some items will likely linger longer.

From a year ago, gasoline prices are up 18.9%, airline fares are up 14.9%, hospital services are up 6.4%, natural gas prices are up 6.4%, auto repair services are up 6.1%, electricity costs are up 4.6%, eating out prices are up 3.8%, apparel is up 3.4%, housing prices are up 3.0%, rent is up 2.6%, physicians' services are up 2.4%, groceries are up 1.9%, auto insurance is up 0.8%, and new vehicle prices are up 0.5%.

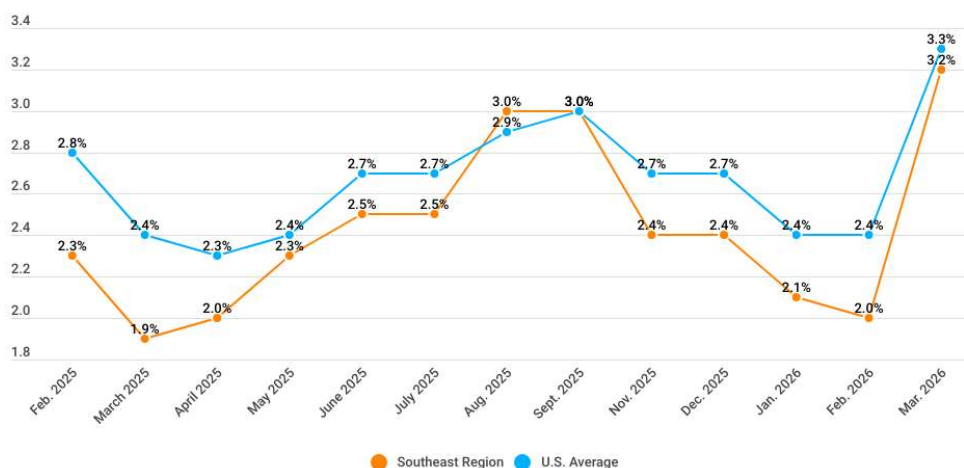
From a year ago, only used car prices are down 3.2%.

The Federal Reserve decided to maintain the target range of the federal funds rate at 3 ½ to 3 ¾ percent at its Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) policy-setting meeting April 28-29. The Fed stated that “economic activity has been expanding at a solid pace. Job gains have remained low, on average, and the unemployment rate has been little changed in recent months. Inflation remains somewhat elevated, in part reflecting the recent increase in global energy prices.” The committee seeks to achieve maximum employment and inflation at the rate of 2 percent over the longer run. You can read more [here](#).

Knoxville falls into the South Size Class B/C (population of 2.5 million or less) grouping. The current inflation rate for this region is 3.2% for the March 2025 to March 2026 period (up from 2.0% in the February 2025 to February 2026 period. Last year, the rate was 1.9% from March 2024 to March 2025.

Inflation Rates

Consumer Price Index - All Items



(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Consumer Price Index; Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Housing Market

March home sales in East Tennessee were down 4.5% from March 2025 and down 9.8% over February at a seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR) of 18,296, but cumulatively Q1 2026 sales showed an increase of 5.3% over 2025.

March home sales in Knox County decreased 19.5% month over month and 15.7% from March 2025, at a seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR) of 6,384. Actual sales increased 6.5% over February; sales bucked the typical seasonal trend, but cumulatively Q1 Knox County sales showed an increase of 3.1% over 2025.

The median home sales price across the East Tennessee region was \$364,450 in March, down 3% from 2025. Knox County's median home sale price held steady at \$390,000, down 1% from March 2025.

Half of the homes sold across the East Tennessee region went under contract in 40 days or less, up from 33 days last year.

Active inventory in the East Tennessee region was up 10% from the previous year.

Months of inventory for East Tennessee, or the number of months it would take to exhaust active listings at the current sales rate, held steady at 4.1.

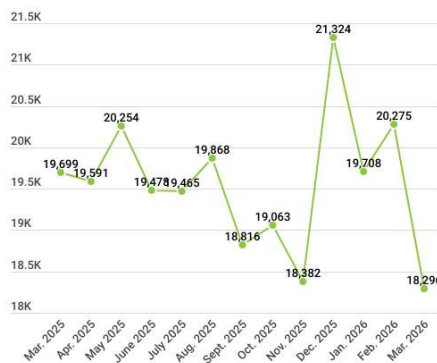
You can subscribe to the East Tennessee REALTORS® monthly *Market Pulse Newsletter* [here](#).

East Tennessee REALTORS® reports monthly home sales patterns using a seasonally adjusted annualized rate (SAAR), an adjusted rate that considers typical seasonal fluctuations in data and is expressed as an annual total. Comparing month-over-month housing market data using this method provides a more accurate depiction of home sales.

Home Sales

Seasonally Adjusted, Annualized Rate of Home Sales

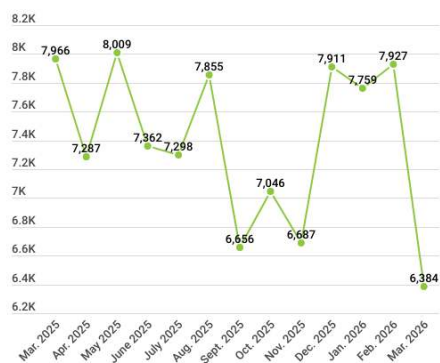
Knoxville Area



Home Sales

Seasonally Adjusted, Annualized Rate of Home Sales

Knox County



Knoxville Area Housing Market

Knoxville Area

	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	Aug. 2025	Sept. 2025	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025	Dec. 2025	Jan. 2026	Feb. 2026	Mar. 2026
Active Listings Inventory	5,595	6,176	6,402	6,919	7,295	7,367	7,705	7,278	7,286	7,026	6,392	6,275	6,387
Median Home Sales Price	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$370,000	\$377,000	\$374,900	\$376,200	\$380,000	\$367,500	\$365,000	\$370,000	\$360,000	\$370,000	\$364,450
Months Inventory	4.00	4.00	3.90	4.20	4.1	4.0	4.5	4.5	5.2	3.9	4.1	3.7	4.1

Knox County

	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	Aug. 2025	Sept. 2025	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025	Dec. 2025	Jan. 2026	Feb. 2026	Mar. 2026
Active Listings Inventory	1,241	1,399	1,541	1,684	1,663	1,676	1,802	1,870	1,925	1,566	1,493	1,502	1,600
Median Home Sales Price	\$399,450	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$414,900	\$395,000	\$390,000	\$404,000	\$382,500	\$392,500	\$385,000	\$385,000	\$385,000	\$390,000

(Sources: National Association of REALTORS®; East Tennessee REALTORS®)

National Retail Sales

The total advance monthly retail sales estimate for March 2026 was \$759.588 billion (up 16.2% from February and up 3.0% from last March.)

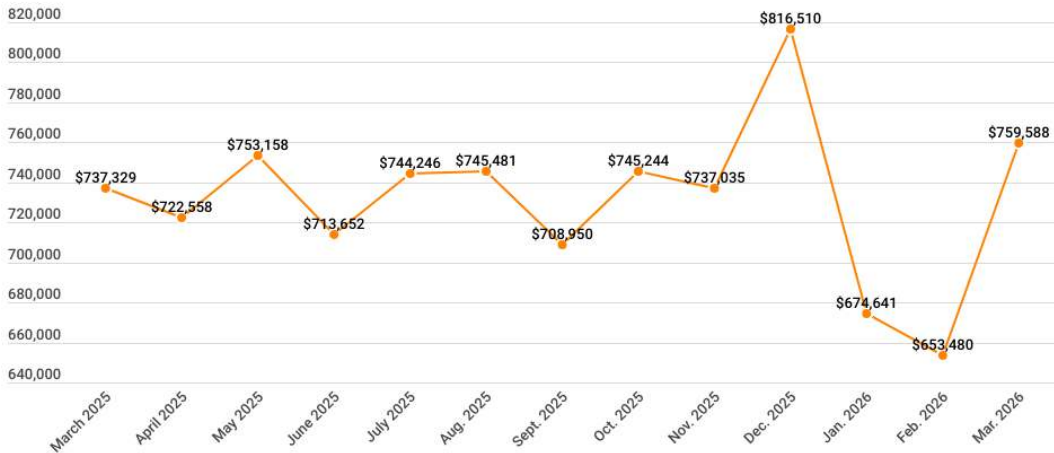
The retail sectors that showed sales growth from last March were Gasoline Stations (+18.1%), Non-store Retailers (+10.0%), Clothing Stores (+4.9%), Electronics and Appliance Stores (+4.4%), Building Materials (+3.8%), Health and Personal Care Stores (+3.7%), General Merchandise Stores (+1.6%), Sporting Goods/Books/Hobby/Music Stores (+1.6%), and Food Services and Drinking Places (+1.2%).

The retail sectors that showed a decline in sales from last March were Motor Vehicles and Parts Sales (-3.5%), Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores (-1.5%), Food and Beverage Stores (-0.8%), and Miscellaneous Stores (-0.1%).

National Retail Sales

in Millions of Dollars

Total Retail Sales



(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Advance Monthly Retail Trade Reports; Not Adjusted)

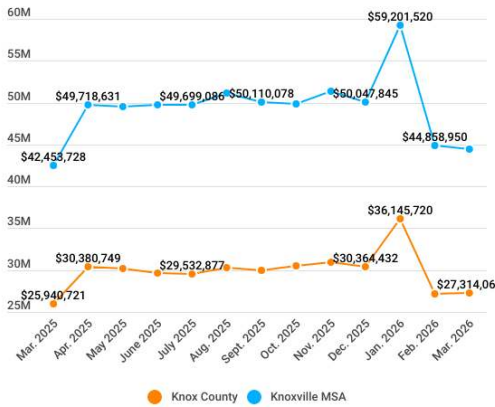
Tennessee State and Local Sales Tax Collections

The Knoxville MSA region collected \$120.072 million in state sales taxes in March (up 5.0% from February and up 4.1% from last March) and Knox County collected \$79.012 million in March (up 7.1% from February and up 4.3% from last March.) The state of Tennessee collected \$1.130 billion in state sales taxes in March (up 3.5% from February and up 5.9% from last March.)

The Knoxville MSA collected \$44.424 million in local sales taxes in March (down 1.0% from February and up 5.2% from last March) and Knox County collected \$27.314 million in March (up 0.7% from February and up 5.3% from last March.)

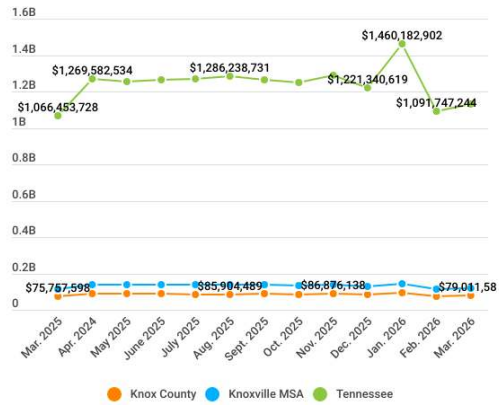
Sales Tax Revenue

Local Sales Tax



Sales Tax Revenue

State Sales Tax



(Source: Tennessee Department of Revenue)

Recent Business Expansions and New Business Announcements in the Knoxville Region

In this section of *ECO*, we share announcements of businesses that are expanding their existing operations or locating a new facility in the Knoxville region. If you would like to share your business expansion announcement with us, please send your info to jriley@knoxvillechamber.com.

New and existing industries continue to invest in the Knoxville region.

April 16, 2026 – **Analysis and Measurement Services Corporation (AMS)**, a Knoxville-based nuclear engineering consulting firm specializing in testing instrumentation and control systems of nuclear facilities, announced the addition of six new employees over the past six months to support operations across engineering, sales, field services, data analysis, and software development. You can read more [here](#).

Knox County Business Licenses

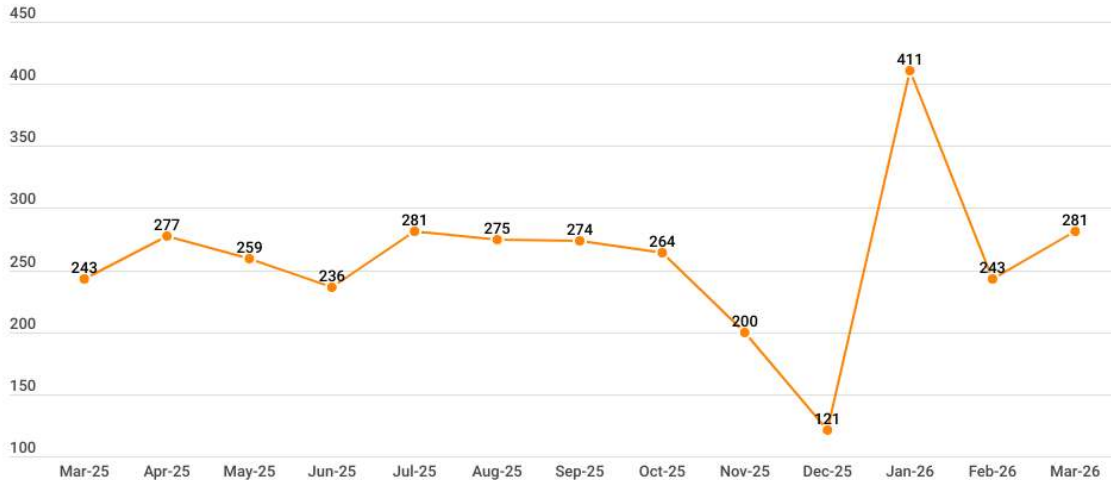
New business licenses issued in March 2026 by Knox County are up 15.6% from February and are up 15.6% from March 2025.

A total of 281 new business licenses were issued in March 2026 compared to 243 in February and 243 in March 2025. The top industry sectors for which business licenses were issued in February 2026 were services, retail, and construction.

Below is a chart showing the 13-month trend of business licenses issued by Knox County.

Business Licenses

Knox County



(Source: Knox County Clerk)

McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS) Passenger and Freight Trends

The Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority recorded 317,809 passengers in March (up 8.6% from March 2025.) Year-to-date (12 months-to-date) passenger traffic through March is 3,646,490 (up 5.7% from year-to-date passenger traffic through March 2025.)

The total freight recorded in March at TYS was 4,546,868 pounds (down 40.9% from March 2025.)

According to the Transportation Security Administration, the average daily number of passengers passing through the nation's TSA checkpoints in March was 2,533,649 (up 1.7% from the March 2025 daily passenger average of 2,491,279 and up 7.3% from the pre-COVID March 2019 average of 2,360,683.) You can view the daily TSA checkpoint travel numbers [here](#).

According to the [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\)](#), "In the U.S., domestic RPK (Revenue Passenger Kilometers) increased by 1.4% YoY in March, a slight improvement from the 0.8% in February. Capacity remained stable, leading to a 1.1 percentage points increase in the load factor to 82.4%." You can read more [here](#).

(Sources: Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority; U.S. Transportation Security Administration; International Air Transport Association)