JSA ANALYTICS · GAMING ANALYTICS GROUP

EXTERNAL FORCES REPORT

Market Conditions Affecting Casino Patron Behavior

JSA Analytics
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August broke the pattern the last two prints were building toward. Leisure and hospitality payrolls, tracking toward a third straight monthly loss, swung to a gain instead — even as consumer sentiment fell to a fresh low, gas prices climbed back above $4.30, and casino floors turned from July's best same-store month of the year to broad-based softness. The reversal that mattered this month happened in the labor data, not the mood.

Calendar Note: August 2026 gained a Monday and gave back a Friday against August 2025 — a below-average day added, an above-average day lost. Per JSA's day-of-week GGR weighting that swing is worth **−1.6% of revenue capacity vs. August 2025**. Reporting states are down 4.9% same-store; net of the calendar, the residual decline is closer to three points.

GAS · NATIONAL AVG	UMICH SENTIMENT	LEISURE & HOSP. PAYROLLS	RESTAURANT VISITS
$4.06/gal	**47.8**	**+62K**	**(2.4%)**
▲ +$0.93 vs. Aug '25; $4.32 by mid-Sept	▼ down from 51.7 in August, new low	▲ first gain in three months	▼ softest month of the summer

AUGUST GGR YOY VS. AUGUST 2025 · STATES REPORTING (17 OF 30) · SAME-STORE BASIS[1]:

SAME-STORE
17 STATES/SEGMENTS REPORTING

−$129.2M · −4.9%

DE **−1.4%** · IA **−13.1%** · IL **+10.8%** · IN **−14.6%** · KS **−1.8%** · LA **−6.4%** · MD **−6.0%** · MI **+3.0%** · MO **−3.4%** · MS **−8.9%** · NJ **−5.4%** · NM **−10.2%** · NY/VLT **+0.5%** (racino) · NY/Casino **−3.6%** · OH/VLT **+0.5%** (racino) · PA **−6.6%** · VA/HHR **−10.0%** · VA/Casino **−3.1%** · WV **−1.8%**

Market signal — the board turned from July's best same-store month to broad-based softness. Seventeen states are in for August, down 4.9% same-store against a 1.6-point calendar headwind. Decliners outnumber gainers roughly four to one on this cut.

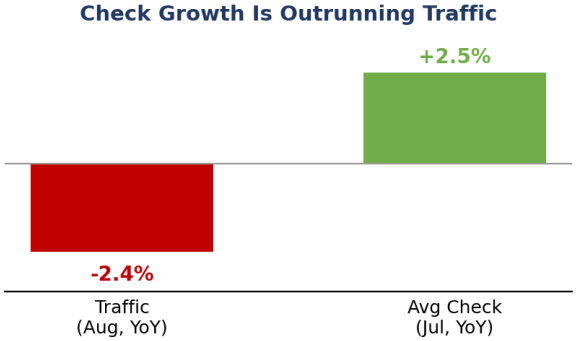
- **New capacity is running well ahead of same-store — and still not enough to flip the board.** Five newly posted or newly opened properties add roughly $69.4M of revenue this month with no comparable same-store base (RWNYC's April 2026 casino conversion alone accounts for $46.6M of net-new table-games revenue); none of it is in the percentages above. NY/VLT, a separate racino segment from NY/Casino, is unaffected by the conversion and essentially flat at +0.5%.

Casino Impact: New supply is cushioning the market's headline number, not driving it — the same-store trend below is the one that reflects your own trip-frequency and reactivation reads, not any single state's new-capacity story.

Data & sources. *August 2026 vs. August 2025, per state (not blended), same-store basis throughout[1] — segments with no valid August 2025 comparison are excluded from every percentage on this page. OH shown VLT/racino only; commercial casinos not yet posted. NY/VLT (racinos) and NY/Casino (commercial casinos) are separate segments, as are VA/HHR (racinos) and VA/Casino (commercial casinos); 3 of NY/Casino's 4 continuing upstate properties are JSA weekly-close estimates. New capacity excluded from the reads above, ~$69.4M this month: RWNYC's April 2026 VLT-to-casino conversion ($46.6M net-new table-games revenue), two newly opened Virginia casinos (Interim Gaming Hall Norfolk, Live! Petersburg, $15.4M), a newly tracked Virginia racino (Roseshire Gaming Parlor, $2.7M), and new properties in Kansas (Gilley's Gambling Hall, $2.4M) and Pennsylvania (Happy Valley Casino, $2.3M). Separately, Virginia's Rosie's at Dumfries closed August 20, 2025 and is excluded from both years. States not yet reporting August are excluded from both years. Sources: state filings and gaming-commission releases; full detail in JSA's Multi-State GGR Tracker.*

1 RESTAURANTS — VISITS KEEP THINNING, THE CHECK KEEPS COVERING FOR IT

Dining visits fell 2.4% year-over-year nationally in August, the softest reading of the summer, though roughly a third of the swing traces to the calendar — Labor Day moved from September 1 last year to September 7 this year, pulling a normally strong pre-holiday dining weekend out of the month entirely. Even allowing for that, guests are visiting less and paying more per trip: traffic ran negative through the summer while average check growth (+2.5%) continued to outpace menu-price inflation (+2.3%). Food-away-from-home prices are now rising faster than grocery prices (3.4% vs. 2.2%), widening the gap that makes cooking at home the rational substitute for a stretched household.

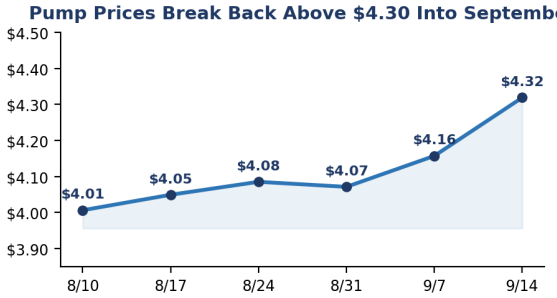


Casino Impact: A dining program funded by check growth rather than traffic is exposed to the same substitution pattern showing up in patron F&B comps — watch redemption mix for a shift toward at-home and off-property alternatives before it shows up in visit counts.

Source: Placer.ai dining visit index, August 2026; Revenue Management Solutions and National Restaurant Association restaurant benchmarking, Q2/July 2026; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI, food-at-home vs. food-away-from-home, July 2026.

2 FUEL — THE AUGUST AVERAGE WAS THE FLOOR, NOT THE CEILING

National regular gasoline averaged $4.06 a gallon in August, up $0.93 (+29.5%) from a year earlier, and it has kept climbing since: the weekly average rose in five of the last six weeks, reaching $4.32 by September 14 — up $0.26 from the August close. That puts pump prices roughly 6% above the August average heading into the fourth quarter, right as the calendar turns toward the holiday drive season.

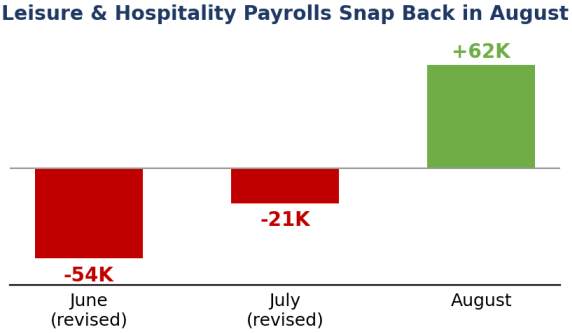


Casino Impact: Fuel taxes trip frequency before it taxes spend per trip — read your outer drive-time bands first. A fourth straight month of rising prices heading into the holidays works directly against your farthest-out segments' visit counts, even if average spend per trip holds.

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, weekly retail gasoline prices and August 2026 Short-Term Energy Outlook.

3 HOSPITALITY PAYROLLS — THE THIRD STRAIGHT LOSS DIDN'T SHOW UP

Leisure and hospitality payrolls looked headed for a third consecutive monthly decline — June and July were revised to −54,000 and −21,000 — but August broke the pattern with a 62,000 gain, almost all of it in food services and drinking places (+59,000), nearly five times its trailing 12-month average monthly gain of 12,000. Total nonfarm payrolls rose 162,000 with unemployment steady at 4.1%. The reversal doesn't erase two months of prior softness, and the size of the revisions is a reminder the freshest print is the least reliable one.

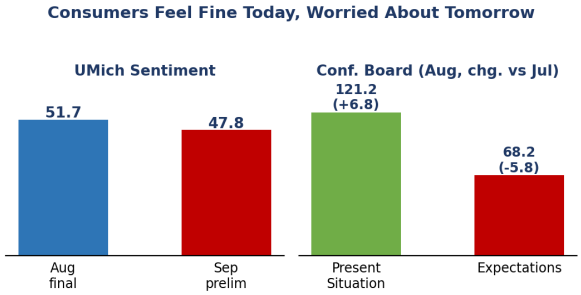


Casino Impact: This cuts both ways — hospitality hiring turning positive again means less wage pressure on the floor, but it also means your value-tier patron base has more income behind it than the last two prints suggested. Don't over-read either direction until September confirms it.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, The Employment Situation, August 2026 (released September 4, 2026).

4 THE CONSUMER — CONFIDENT ABOUT TODAY, BRACING FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Two surveys are telling a similar story from different angles. The Conference Board's August Consumer Confidence Index eased to 89.4, but the composite hides a split: the Present Situation Index rose 6.8 points to 121.2 as more consumers called jobs "plentiful," while the Expectations Index fell 5.8 points to 68.2 on souring views of business conditions and hiring six months out. The University of Michigan's index went further in September, dropping from August's 51.7 to a preliminary 47.8 — a new multi-year low, with respondents citing gas prices and trade tensions. Household credit isn't confirming the mood: flow into serious credit-card delinquency was 6.97% in Q2, essentially flat against 6.93% a year earlier — steady, per the New York Fed, not deteriorating.



Casino Impact: This is the profile that holds up until confidence catches down to it. Present-tense spending is still fine; the six-month-forward numbers are not. Offer response and redemption rates typically move before the trip-frequency line does — track those for the early read.

Source: The Conference Board, Consumer Confidence Index, August 2026; University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers, September 2026 preliminary; Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit, Q2 2026.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Hospitality labor didn't confirm the losing streak.** Leisure and hospitality payrolls were tracking toward a third straight monthly decline; August posted a 62,000 gain instead, almost entirely in food service. Two months of revised losses don't erase, but the trend line just bent the other way.
- **The reporting board turned from July's best month to broad-based softness.** Seventeen states are in for August, same-store down 4.9% against a 1.6-point calendar headwind — the broadest decline of the year, decliners outnumbering gainers roughly four to one.
- **Confidence and behavior are diverging, not confirming each other.** Gas is back above $4.30, UMich sentiment hit a new low in September, and the Conference Board's forward-looking Expectations Index keeps falling — yet restaurant check growth and credit metrics show no sign of retrenchment yet. That gap, not either data point alone, is what to watch heading into the fourth quarter.

Sources: state gaming regulators' releases and JSA's Multi-State GGR Tracker (as of Sept. 17, 2026); EIA Gasoline & Diesel Fuel Update; BLS Employment Situation; UMich Surveys of Consumers; Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index; NY Fed Household Debt and Credit report; Placer.ai dining visit index; Revenue Management Solutions/NRA benchmarking.

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