



WELCOME TO THE 2026 HURON COUNTY ECONOMIC FORUM



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A thick orange horizontal bar with a black shadow underneath, tapering at both ends, serving as a decorative underline for the Janotta & Herner logo.

Thank You Sponsors!



Opening Remarks



**Norwalk
Mayor
David Light**

FEATURED PRESENTATION: ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT



Jacob Duritsky

Vice President
Strategy & Research Team
NEO

Northeast Ohio & Huron County - Economic Outlook

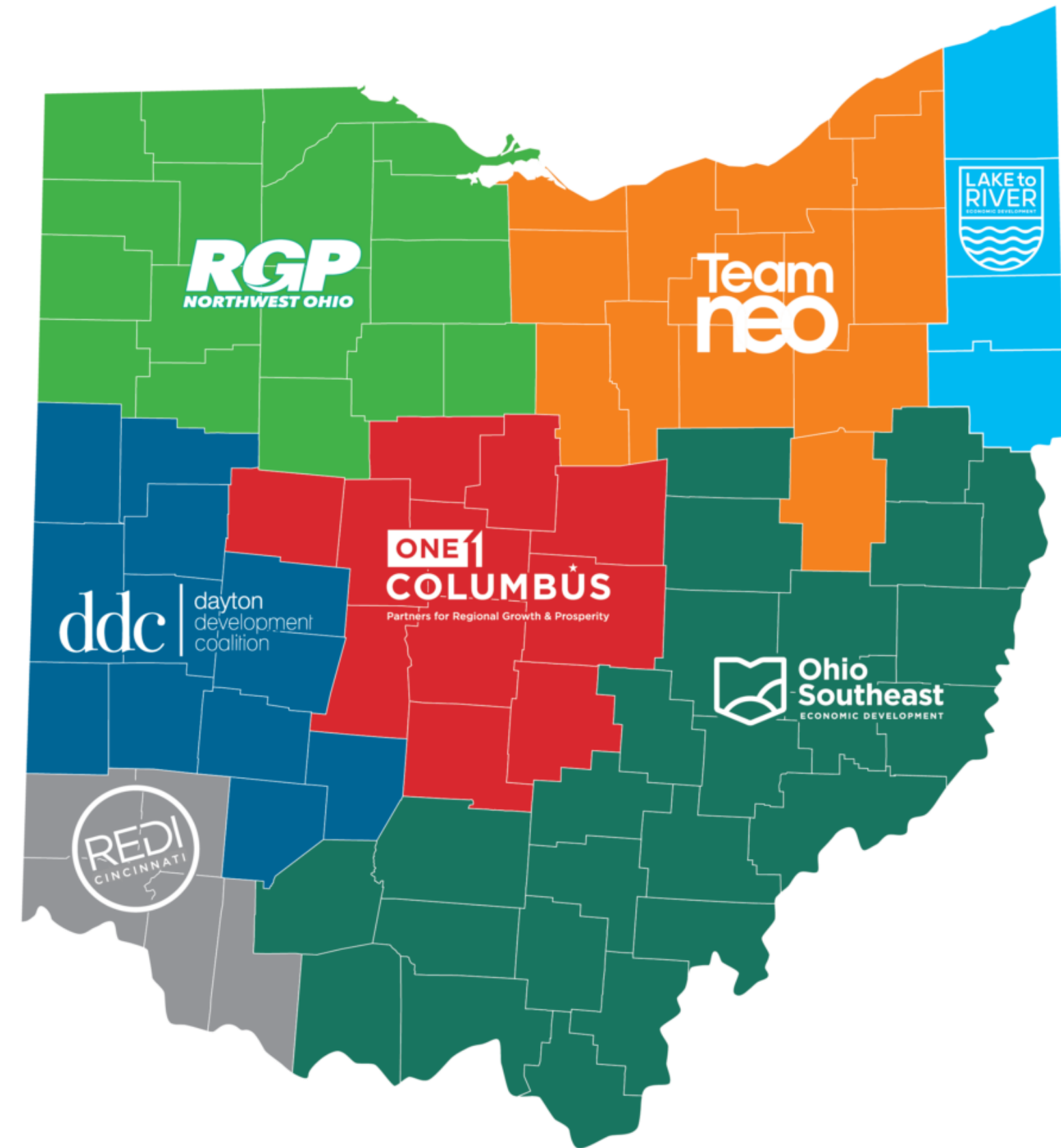
Jacob Duritsky
August 2026

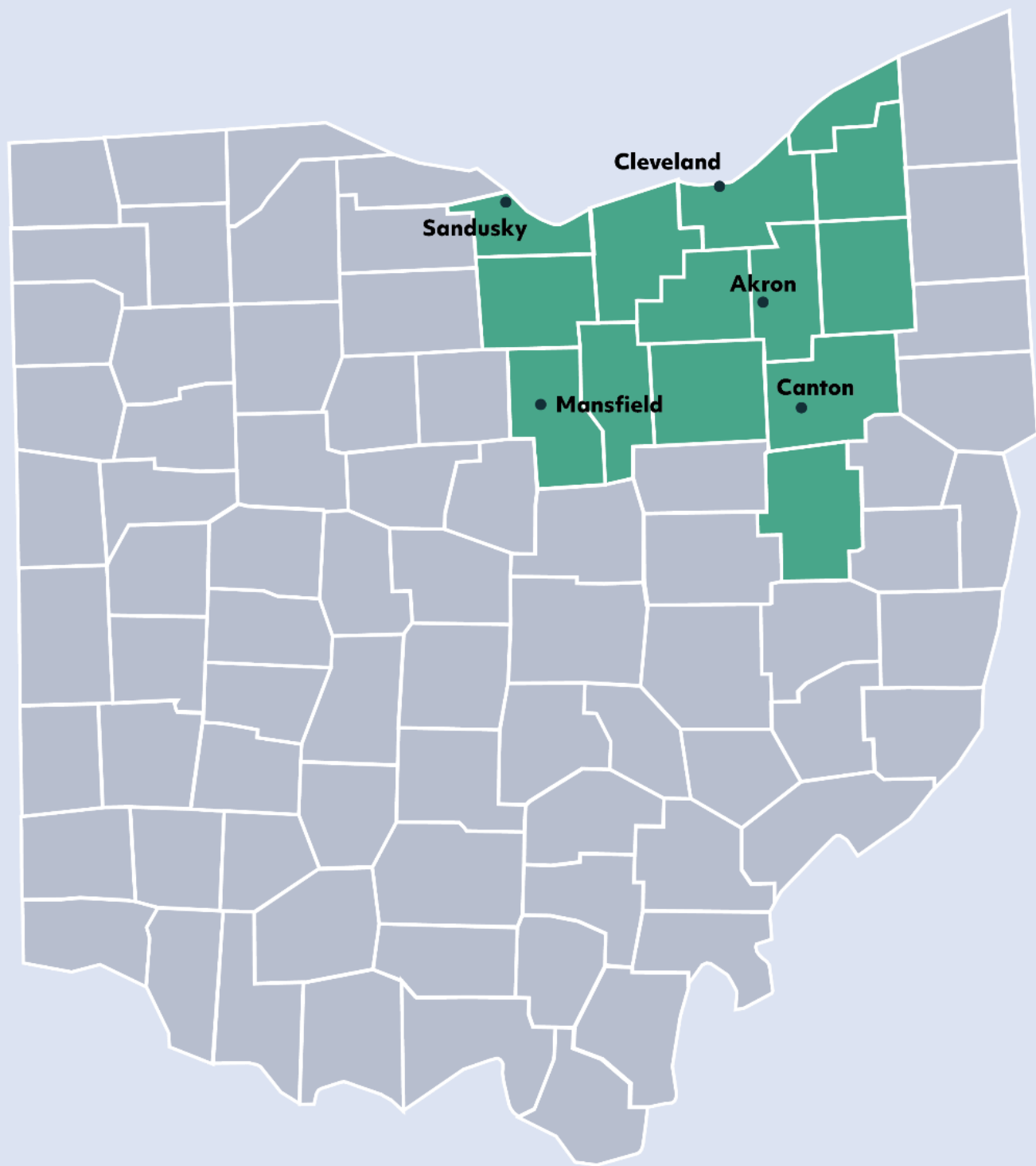
JobsOhio & Team NEO

Team NEO is part of JobsOhio, the state's privatized, non-profit economic development office as one of its 7 regions partners.

Team NEO is the lead economic development organization for Northeast Ohio, which includes Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Mansfield, among others.

We offer JobsOhio services on their behalf and work closely with the other JobsOhio Regions.





Team NEO

ABOUT US

Team NEO is the JobsOhio network partner for Northeast Ohio, advancing business growth and opportunity across 14 counties. We are the only entity designated to align local strategies with state-level priorities through JobsOhio, making us a unique force for economic competitiveness in the region.

Together we work to advance a regional economic competitiveness strategy designed to accelerate economic growth and provide opportunities for all segments of Northeast Ohio’s population.



Market Strength

Northeast Ohio is the 19th largest market in the United States.



Diverse Industry

Northeast Ohio drives nearly 40% of Ohio’s economy with a variety of industries.



Talent Pool

Northeast Ohio has a workforce of 2 million and 25+ higher education institutions.

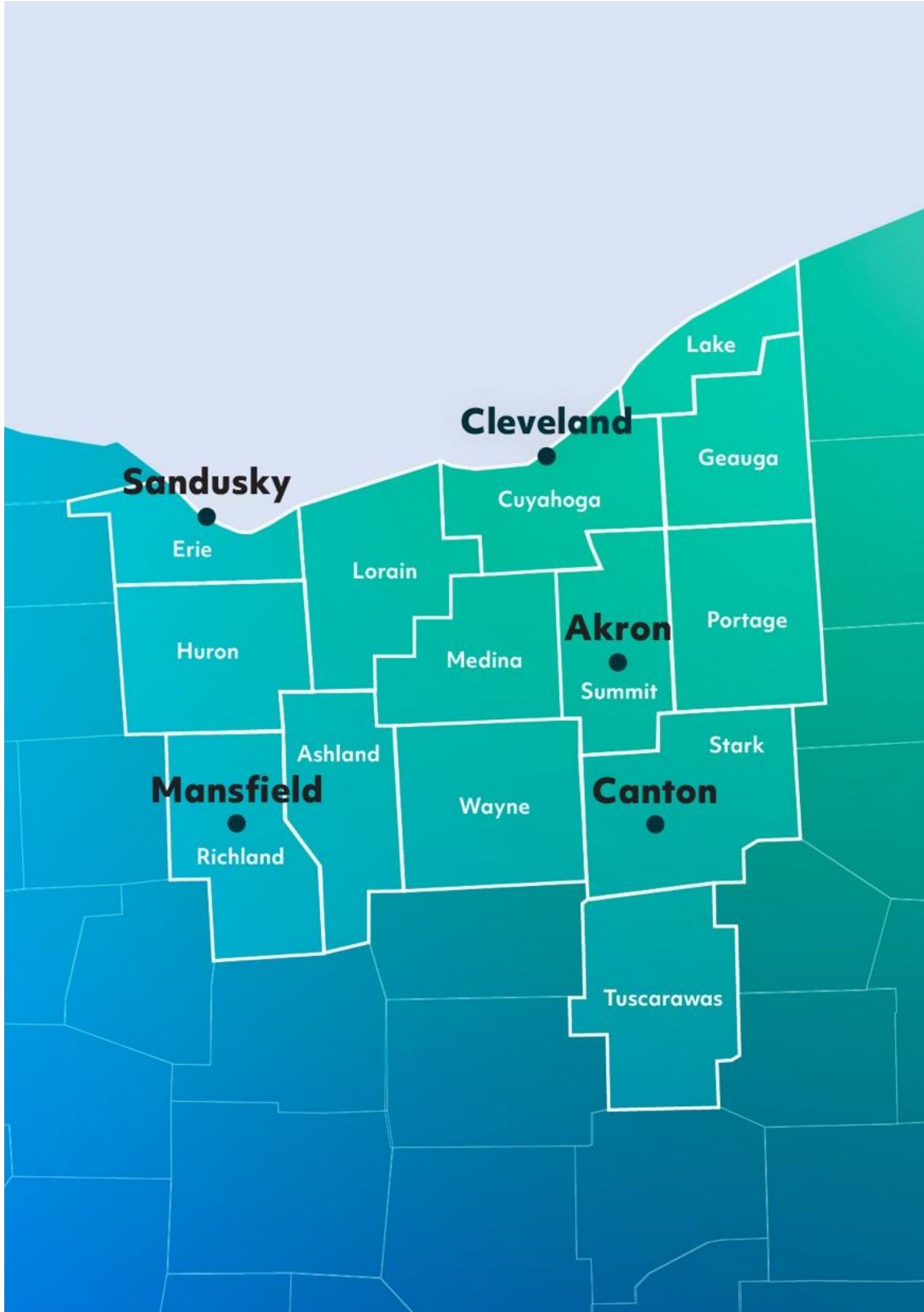
The Value of a Regional Approach

WE DON'T COMPETE COUNTY AGAINST COUNTY—WE
COMPETE AS NORTHEAST OHIO

A core competency of Team NEO is marketing the Cleveland-Akron-Canton region to corporate decision makers as a vibrant region to invest and grow.

As we emerge from the pandemic a more innovative, talented and resilient region, this is Northeast Ohio's opportunity to refresh its brand with an updated marketing platform that communicates our competitiveness in a way that harnesses the collective might of the 14 counties, while honoring the uniqueness of all the communities within it.





Northeast Ohio

TEAM NEO'S FOOTPRINT

 14 Counties	 3.7M People	 1.9M People in the workforce
 \$286B In GRP	 103K Companies	 800+ Foreign-owned firms
 19th Economic region in the U.S.	 13th nationally for headquarters employment	 25+ accredited colleges and universities

Impact in 2025



**91 PROJECT
WINS**

Driving economic growth
across the region



**\$455M IN CAPITAL
INVESTMENT**

Powering industries of the
future



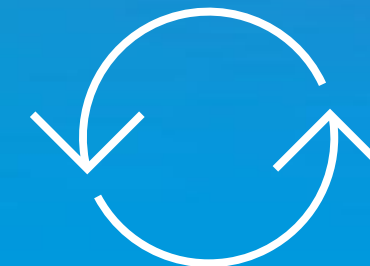
**\$188M ANNUAL
PAYROLL**

Contributing to regional
prosperity



**2,950+ NEW JOBS
CREATED**

Fueling into the regional
workforce



**7197 JOBS
RETAINED**

Preserving robust talent in the
region

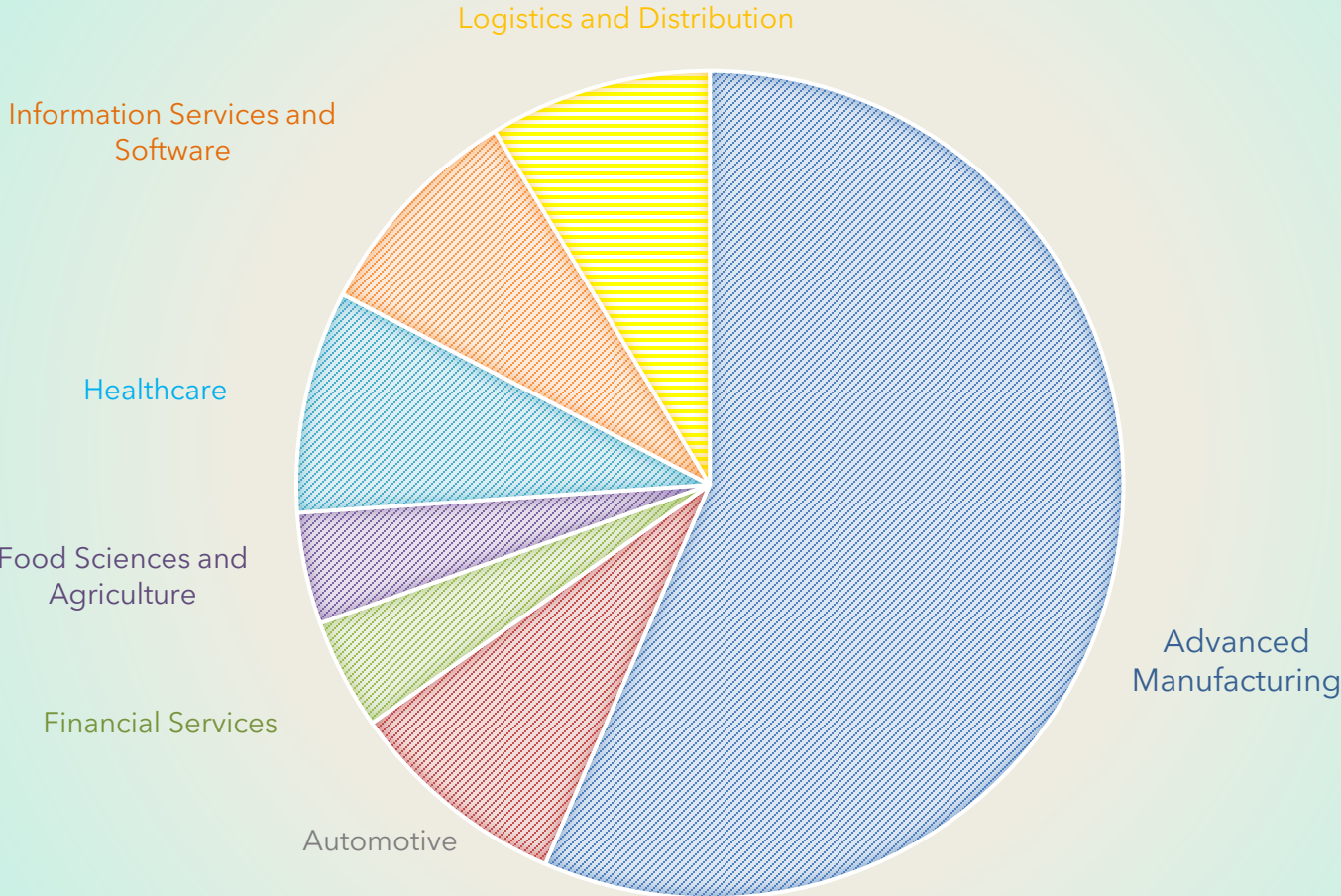
Team NEO 2026 Q2 Deal Flow

INSIGHTS - ON THE GROUND

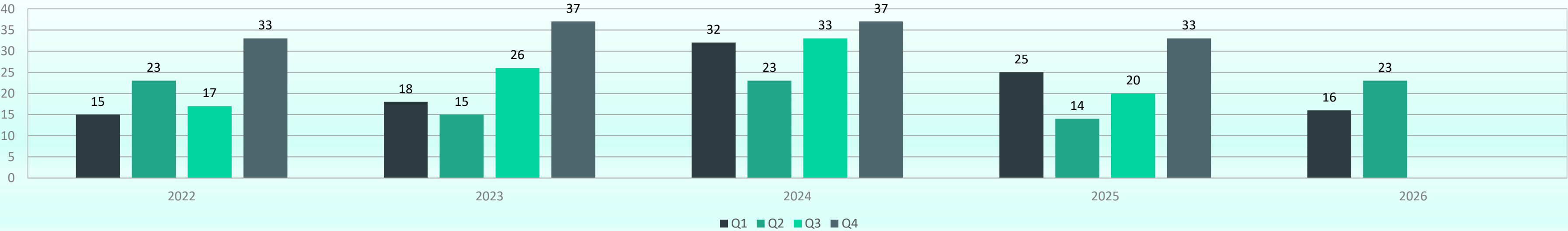
Jobs Created in Huron: **83** Jobs Retained in Huron: **254**

- Talent pressures persist, especially for young talent as the region experiences an aging population
- Site activity remains strong in Q2, led by activity in defense, aerospace & data center supply chain-adjacent manufacturing
- Q2 saw an increased in M&A activity in the Food Processing sector
- Manufacturing activity continued to expand in Q2 for the sixth straight month. Activity is primarily driven by production & supplier activity.
- Demand indicators such as new orders & export demand remain relatively soft amid elevated prices.

NEO WINS BY INDUSTRY



NEO WINS BY QUARTER





Northeast Ohio Economic Projections

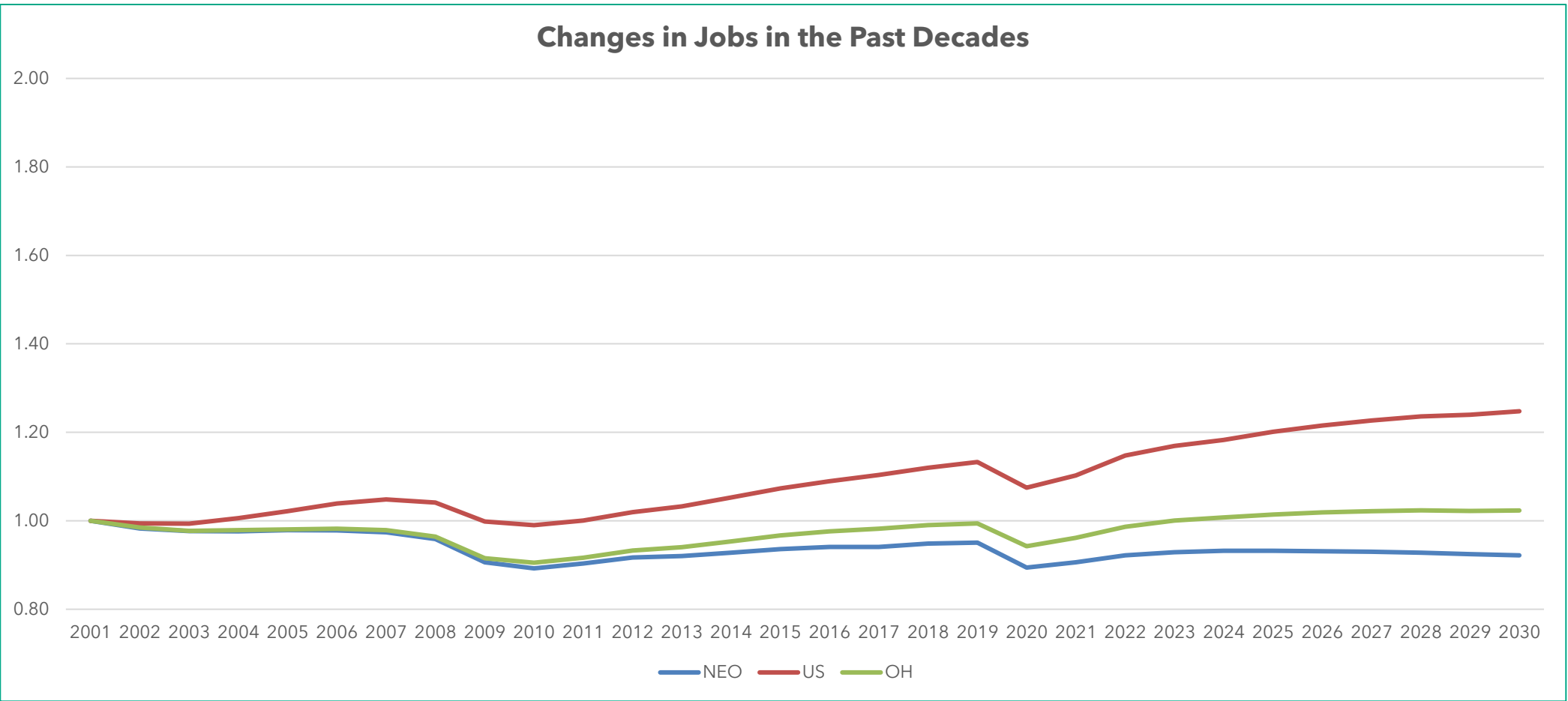
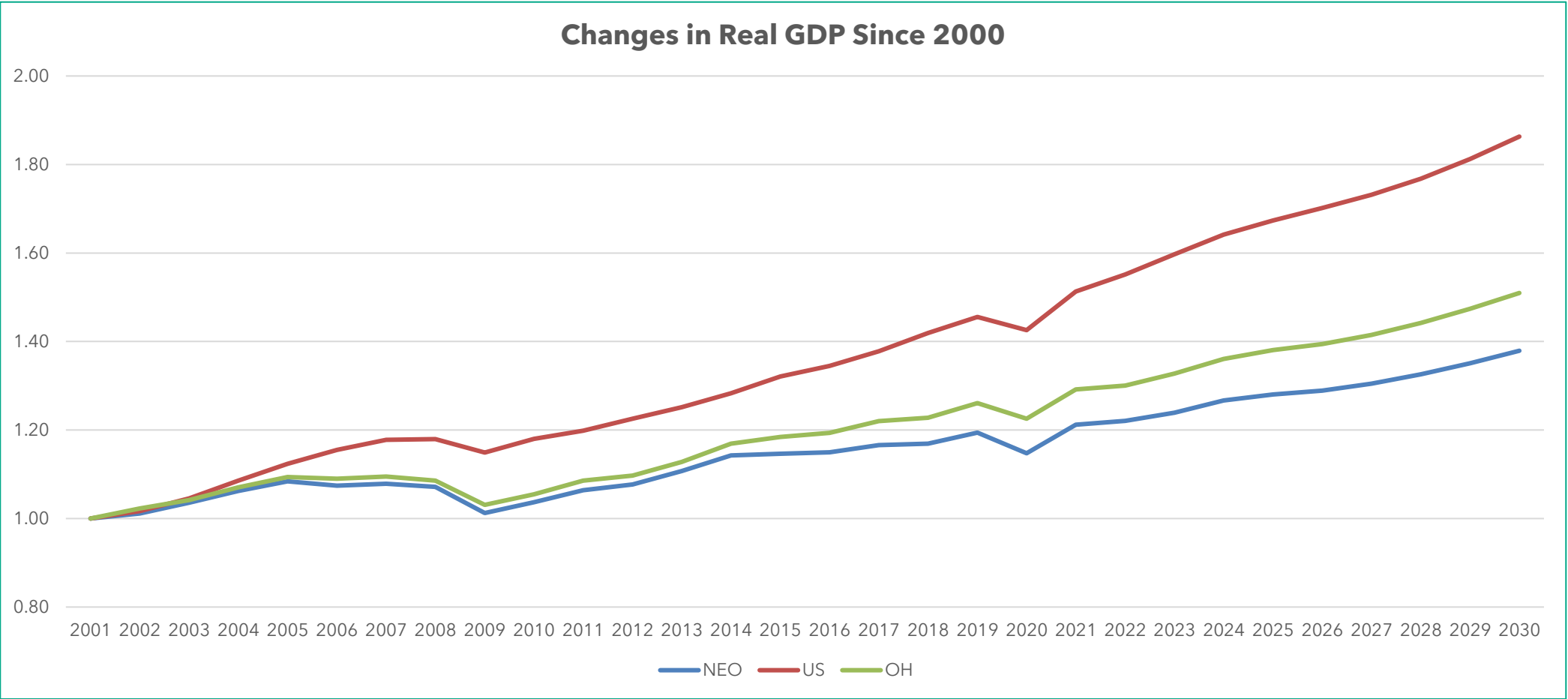


B. Ficht — HEDGEYE

GDP and Jobs Outlook

NORTHEAST OHIO

- GDP and Jobs trends have trailed behind the national and state trends over the past decades.
- However, the 2024-2030 projections (~8% growth in GDP and 1% decline in jobs) for the region suggests productivity gains.
- Leveraging innovation, technology and workforce development will be critical to support long term growth.

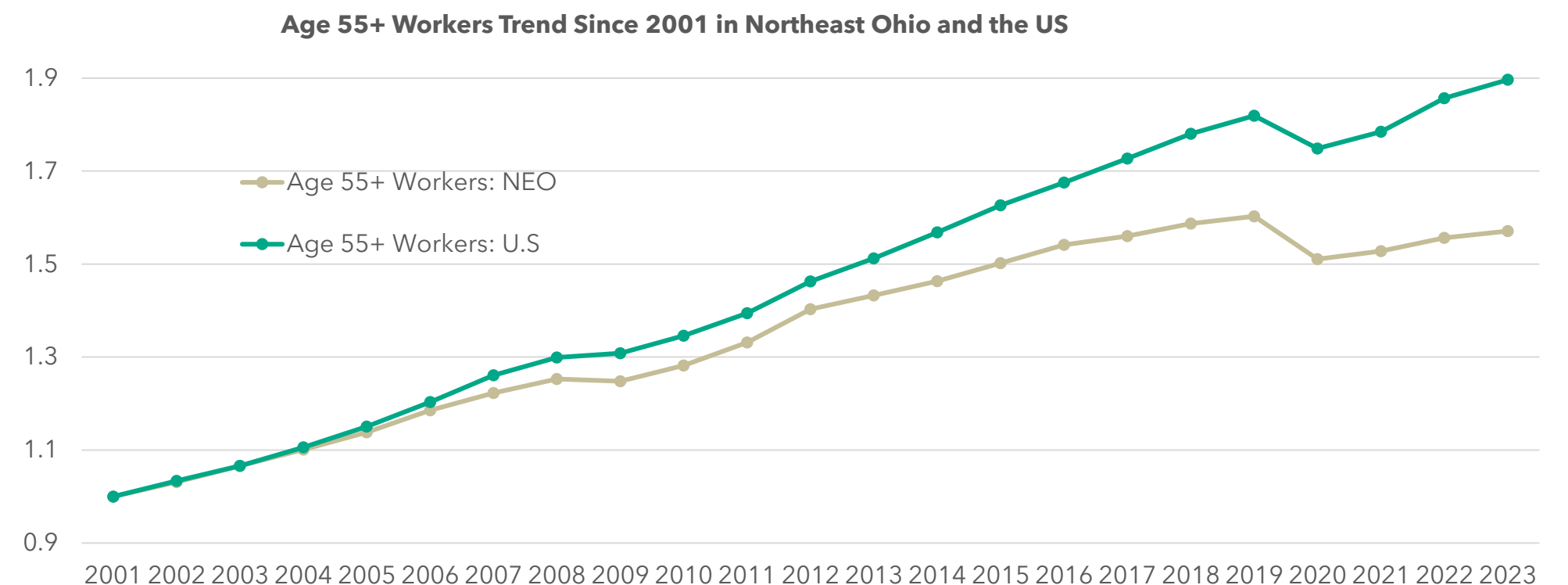
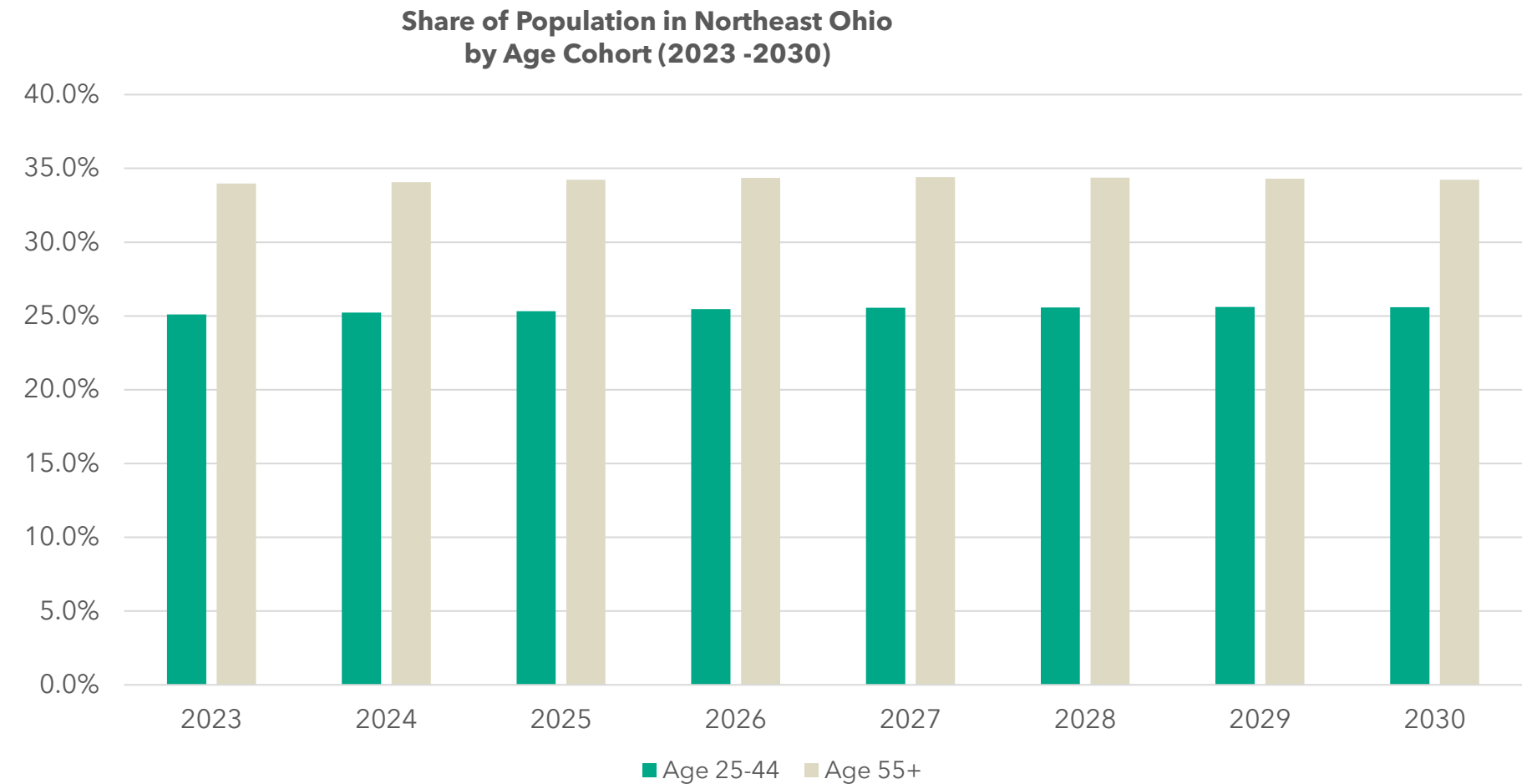


Ageing Workforce

NORTHEAST OHIO

Ageing Population and Workforce:

- While the share of prime working age population (25-44) is being projected to grow by ~2% in Northeast Ohio, their share will remain outpaced by the share of older population (age 55+), till 2030.
- Nationally and regionally, there has also been increasing number of older workers (age 55+) since 2001.
- Building a strong talent pipeline is critical.



Source: Lightcast

Workforce Alignment

NORTHEAST OHIO

The latest supply-demand alignment analysis of key occupational groups in NEO indicated:

Strongest demand remain in **Healthcare, IT,** and **Manufacturing**

The following occupations had **significant share of job postings mentioning AI** (>50%) :

- **Computer & IT workers**
- **Financial Clerks**
- **Financial Specialist**

	Occupation group	Total Demand 2024	Entry Demand 2024	Credentials Awarded 2023	Alignment	Entry Alignment	% Job Postings mentioning AI software
IT	Computer & IT Workers	7,684	3,504	3,520	4,164	-16	50%
Manufacturing	Metal & Plastic Workers	4,372	1,823	670	3,702	1,153	15%
	Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occupations	7,993	3,360	1,423	6,570	1,937	17%
	Skilled Production Workers	13,783	5,117	1,620	12,163	3,497	22%
Healthcare	Health Diagnosing & Treating Practitioners	24,637	10,118	6,553	18,084	3,565	27%
	Health Technologists & Technicians	12,475	5,230	2,663	9,812	2,567	26%
	Healthcare Therapist Aides & Support Workers	1,499	443	605	894	-162	19%
	Nursing, Psychiatric & Home Health Aides	11,451	2,682	2,516	8,935	166	15%
Life Sciences, Education, & Engineering	Architects & Engineering Technicians	1,976	933	2,025	-49	-1,092	35%
	Education	12,669	2,970	7,856	4,813	-4,886	19%
	Engineers	4,084	1,817	3,208	876	-1,391	41%
	Life Science Workers	1,842	663	6,388	-4,546	-5,725	36%
Finance & Business Services	Financial Clerks	4,388	2,450	1,739	2,649	711	52%
	Financial Specialists	5,872	3,171	4,479	1,393	-1,308	51%
	Information & Record Clerks	11,105	4,161	407	10,698	3,754	37%
	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	5,142	2,266	584	4,558	1,682	50%
MGMT	Managers, Professional & Health	13,222	6,101	11,489	1,733	-5,388	32%
	Supervisors of Skilled Workers	5,238	2,931	731	4,507	2,200	39%

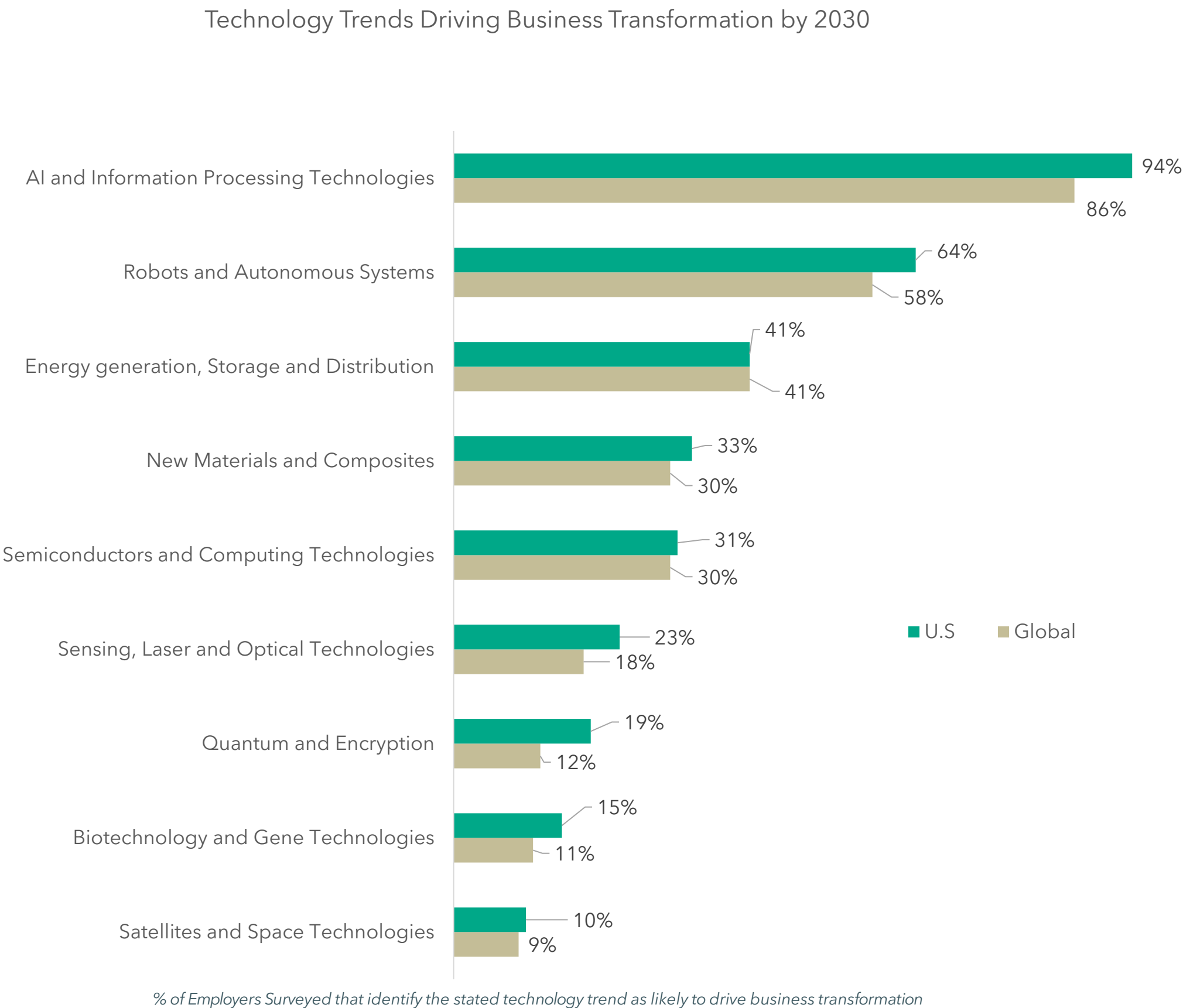
There is more demand than supply of credentials

Demand and supply appear in relative balance

There is more supply of credentials than demand

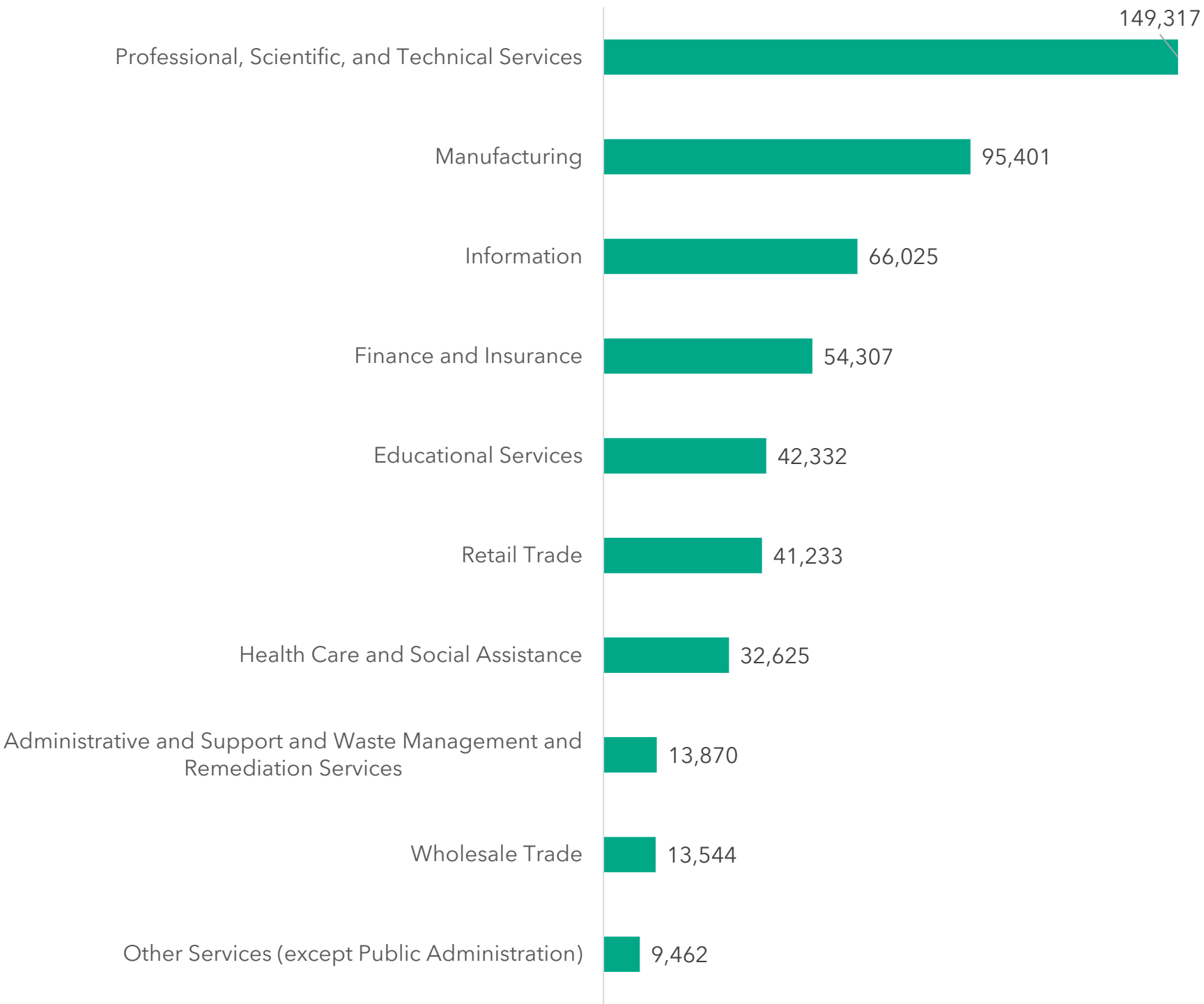
Impact of AI on Businesses

- **United States has been the leading investor in AI** in the past decade (2013- 2024), totaling over \$109 billion in private investment in 2024. (Stanford AI Index Report, 2025)
- The 2024 World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Survey anticipates AI & Automation to drive business transformation by 2030.
- According to the 2024 McKinsey & Company State of AI Report, the use of AI by businesses has significantly increased from 55% in 2023 to 78% in 2024.

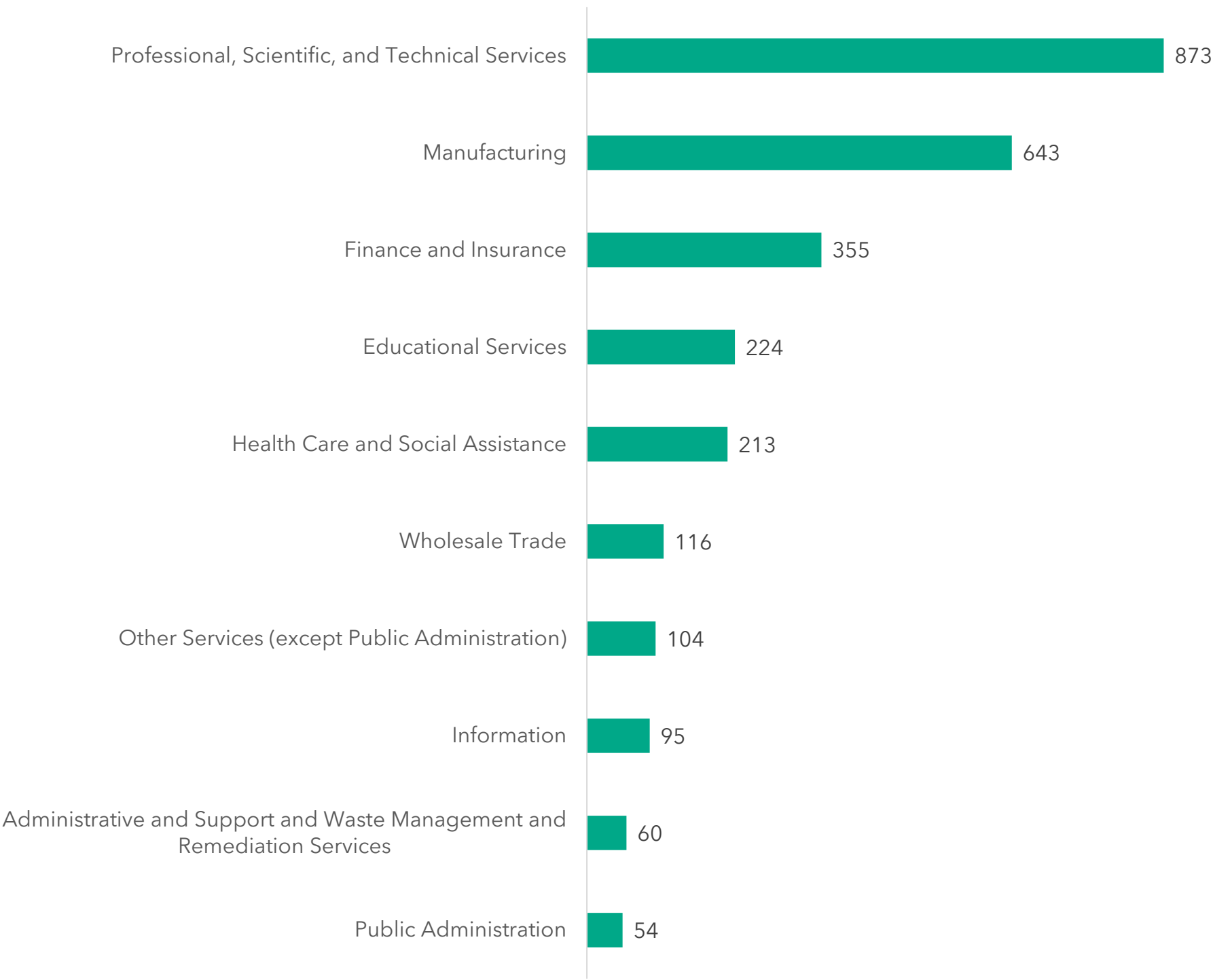


Professional Services and Manufacturing Saw the Highest Demand For AI Skills

Industries With Highest Demand for AI Skills (U.S)



Industries With Highest Demand For AI Skills (NEO)



■ 2024 Unique Postings

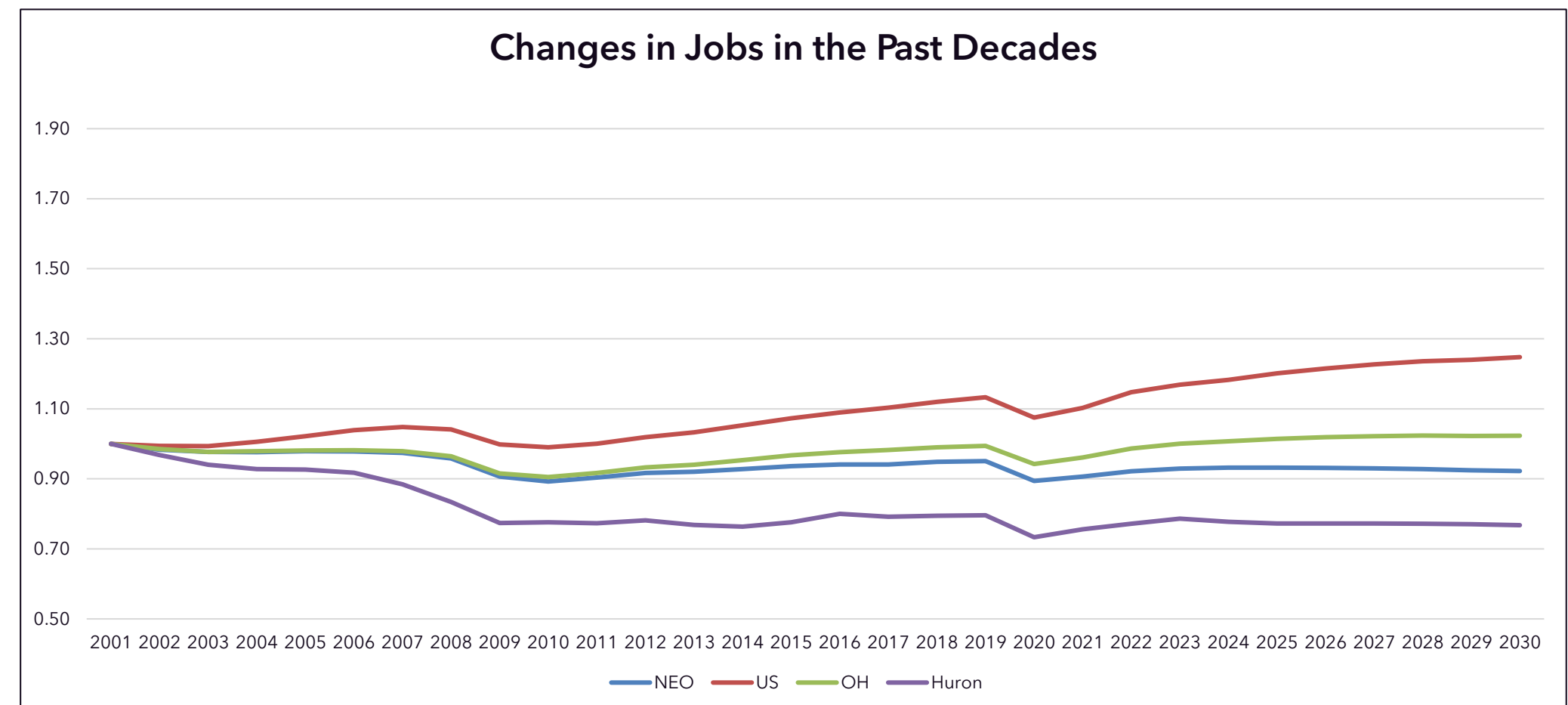
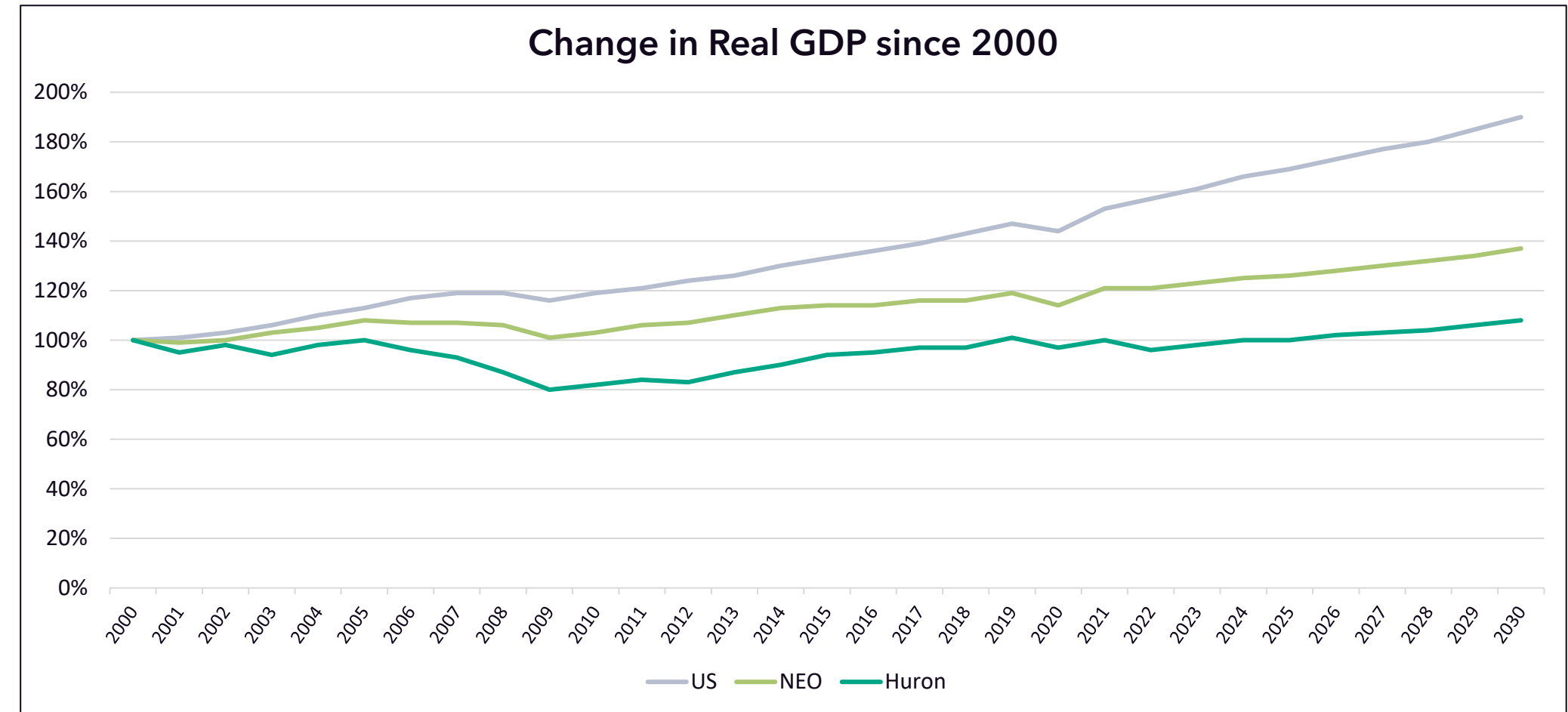
Source: Lightcast Job Posting Analytics



A Deep Dive Into Huron County

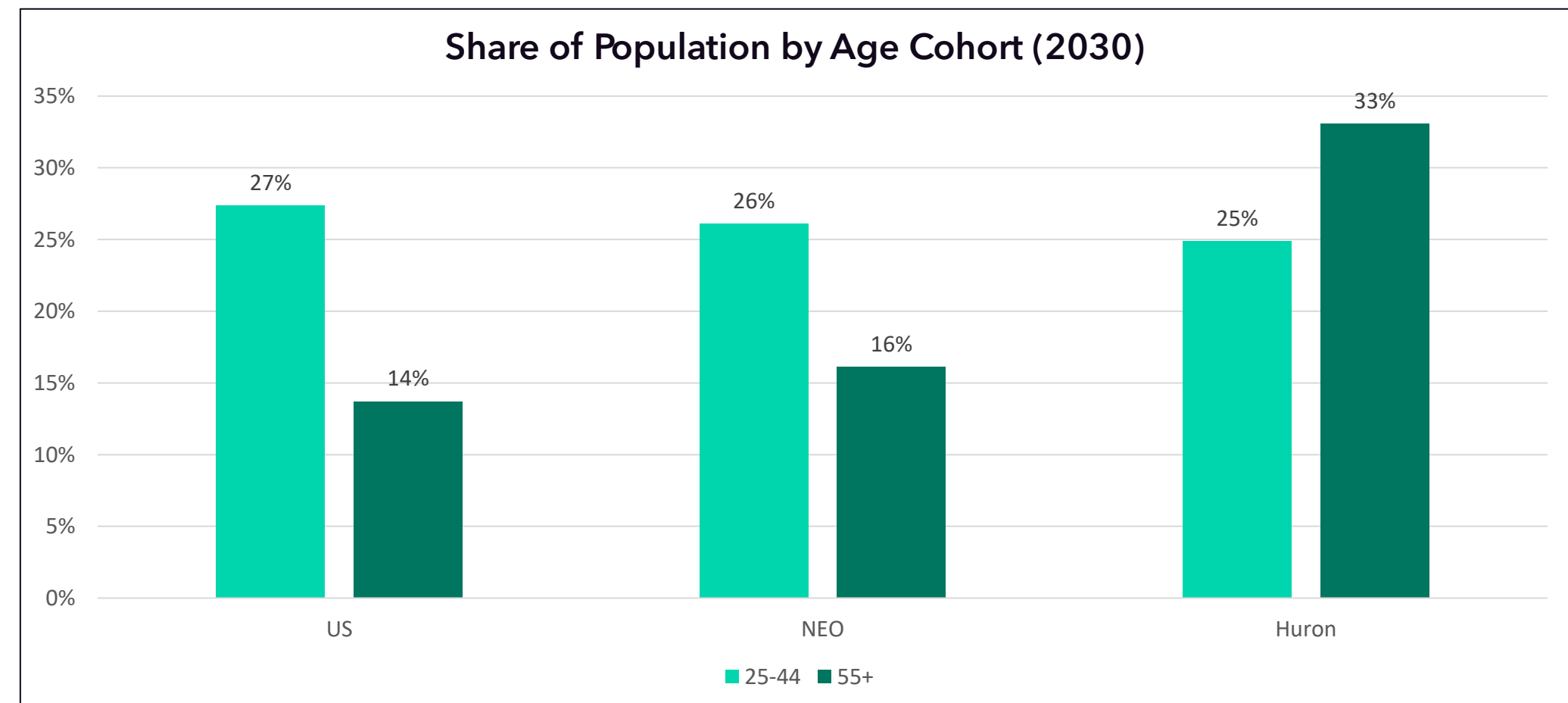
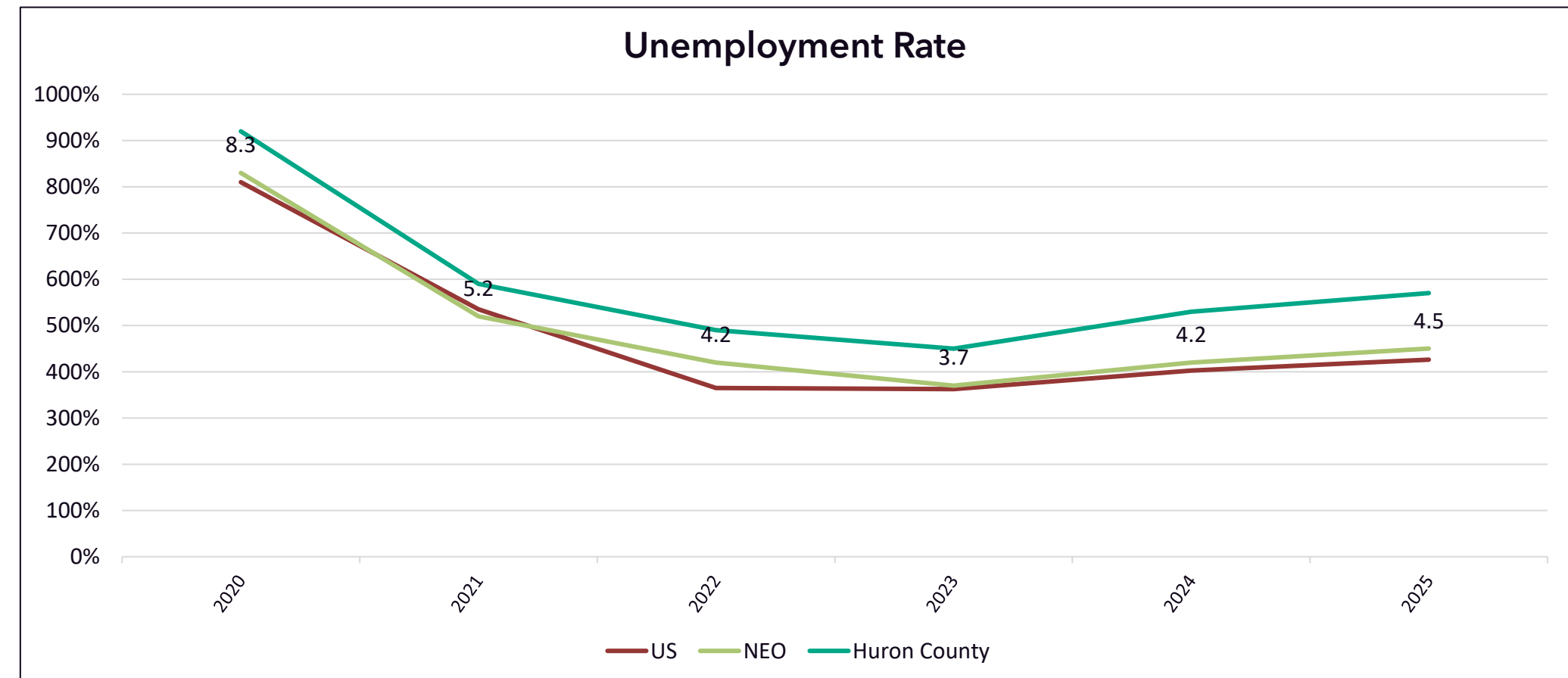
Economic Overview: GDP and Jobs

- Huron County's economy has grown steadily since 2000, at a more modest pace than the region and nation, reflecting the profile of a **specialized county economy** rather than a diversified metro
- The 2008-09 recession hit Huron harder than the US or NEO, but the county has continued to recover and grow along with Job growth which also trends upward through 2030
- Low population numbers, and consequently a lack of scaled traded sectors, continue to be a reason for lower comparative GDP
- Huron's industry strengths in specialized sectors point to an economy that's anchored by **concentrated sectors of strength**

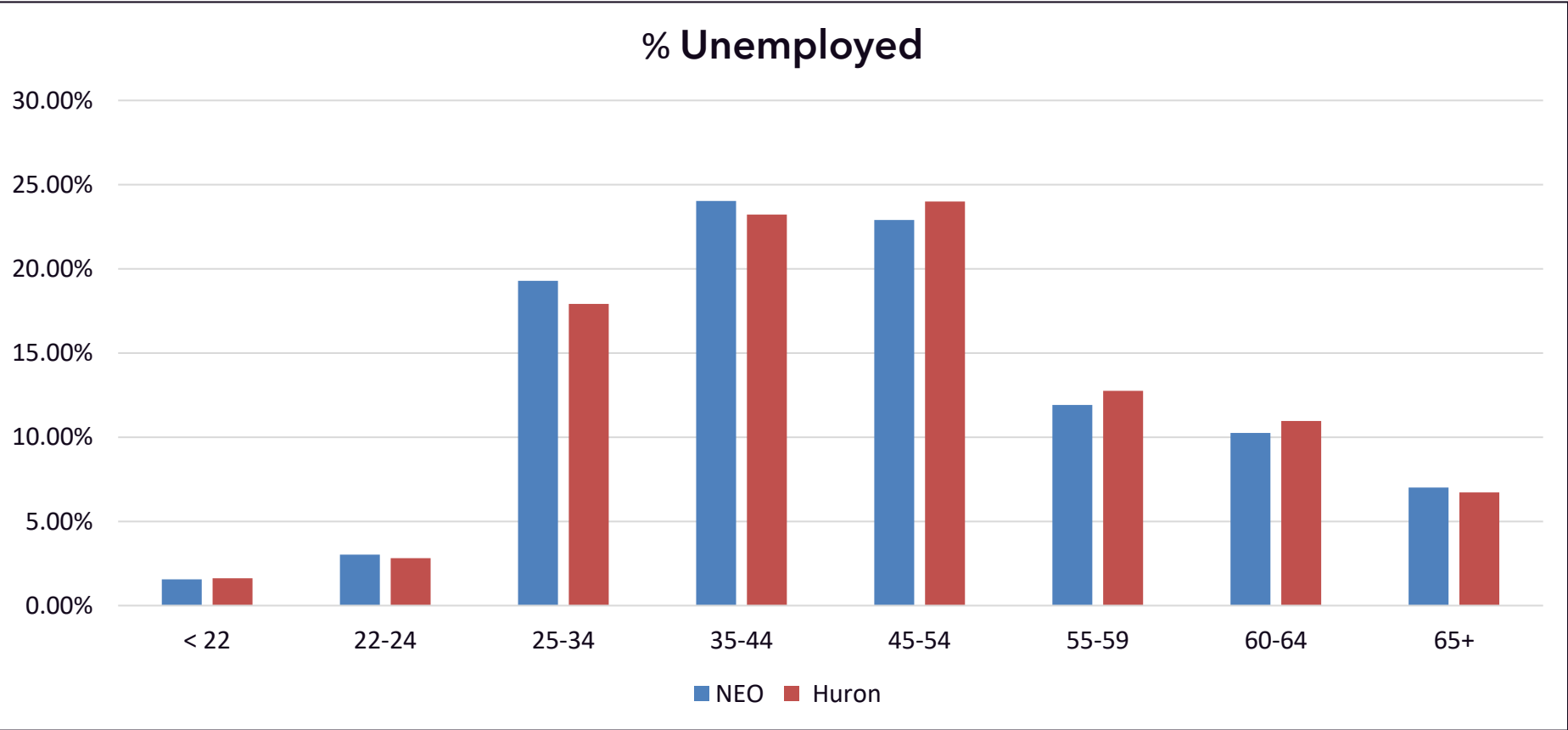


Labor Market Overview

- Huron County's unemployment rate has stayed a bit higher than the region and nation since 2020, though the gap has narrowed by 2025
- Huron's population is aging faster than the region. 1/3rd of residents will be 55 or older by 2030, well above NEO and the US



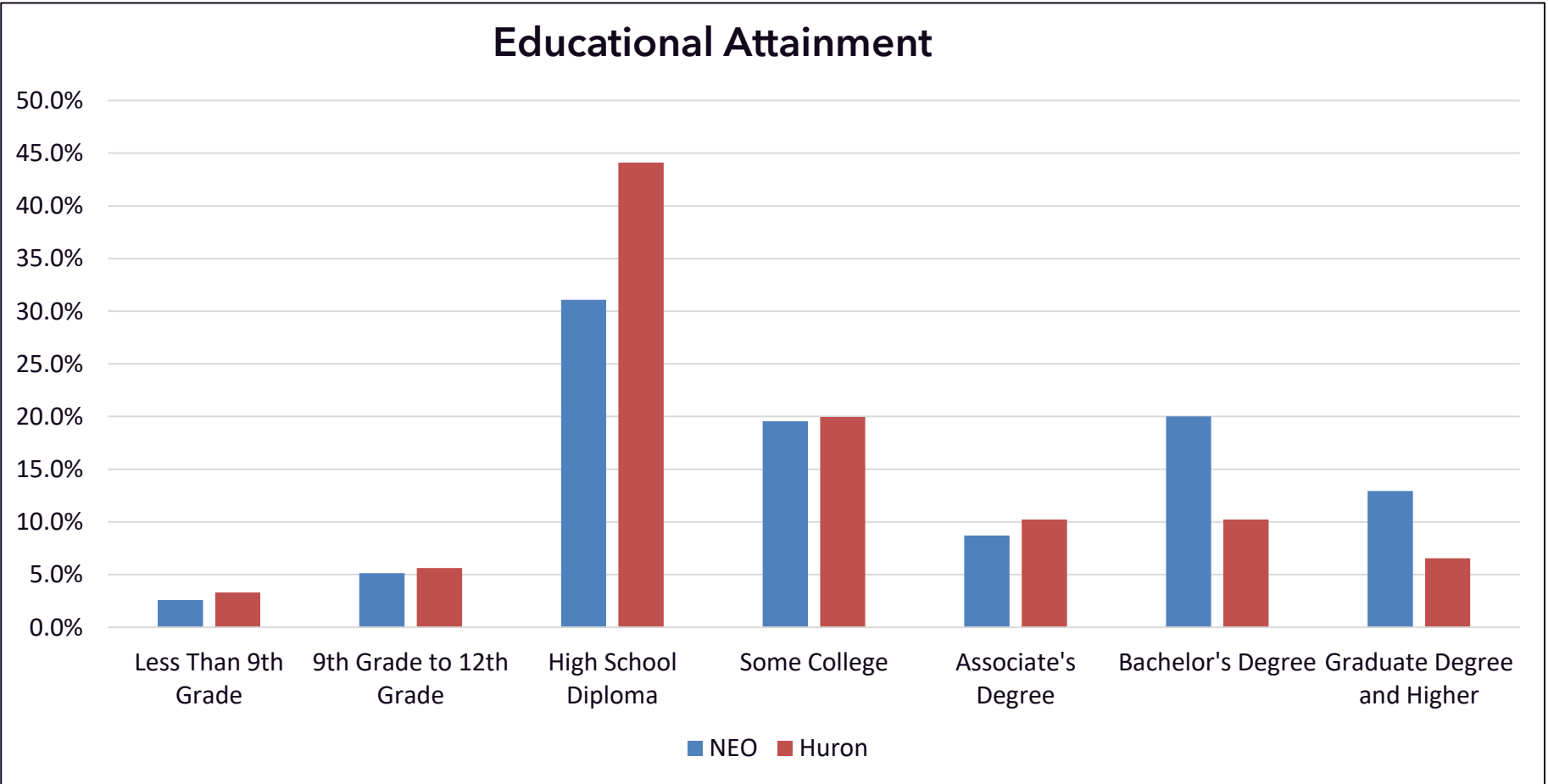
Labor Market Overview - Demographics



Source: Lightcast

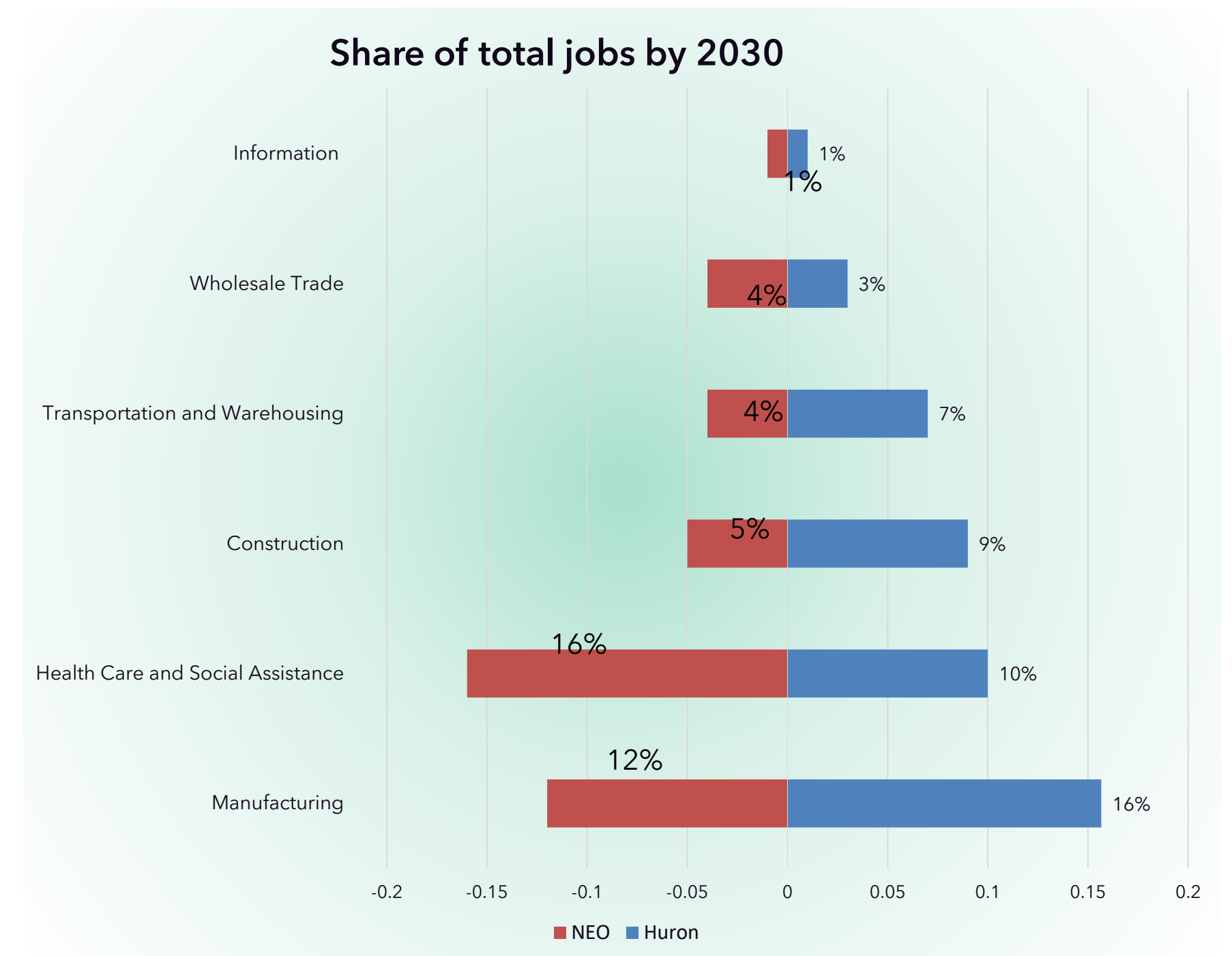
- Huron County's population aged 25-44 shows **stronger workforce engagement** than the NEO region overall
- Although, **unemployment remains higher among younger workers** than older workers, a pattern set against an NEO region that is aging overall

- Overall, Huron's workforce fits well with its **manufacturing** and **traded-sector industries**, but an aging population and fewer highly-educated workers are two trends worth watching going forward



Huron County's Role in Northeast Ohio's Regional Economy

- **Manufacturing** is Huron County's clear economic backbone, far outpacing the region by 4% and the nation by 4x
- Industrial strength carries into **Construction and Transportation/Warehousing**, both of which also outperform regional and national norms, pointing to a broader base in production and goods movement
- **Health Care** is less concentrated than the regional average, but remains one of Huron's largest employment sectors in the county, supporting a meaningful share of local jobs
- **Information** trades at par with the region today, but is projected to grow 20% in Huron County by 2030

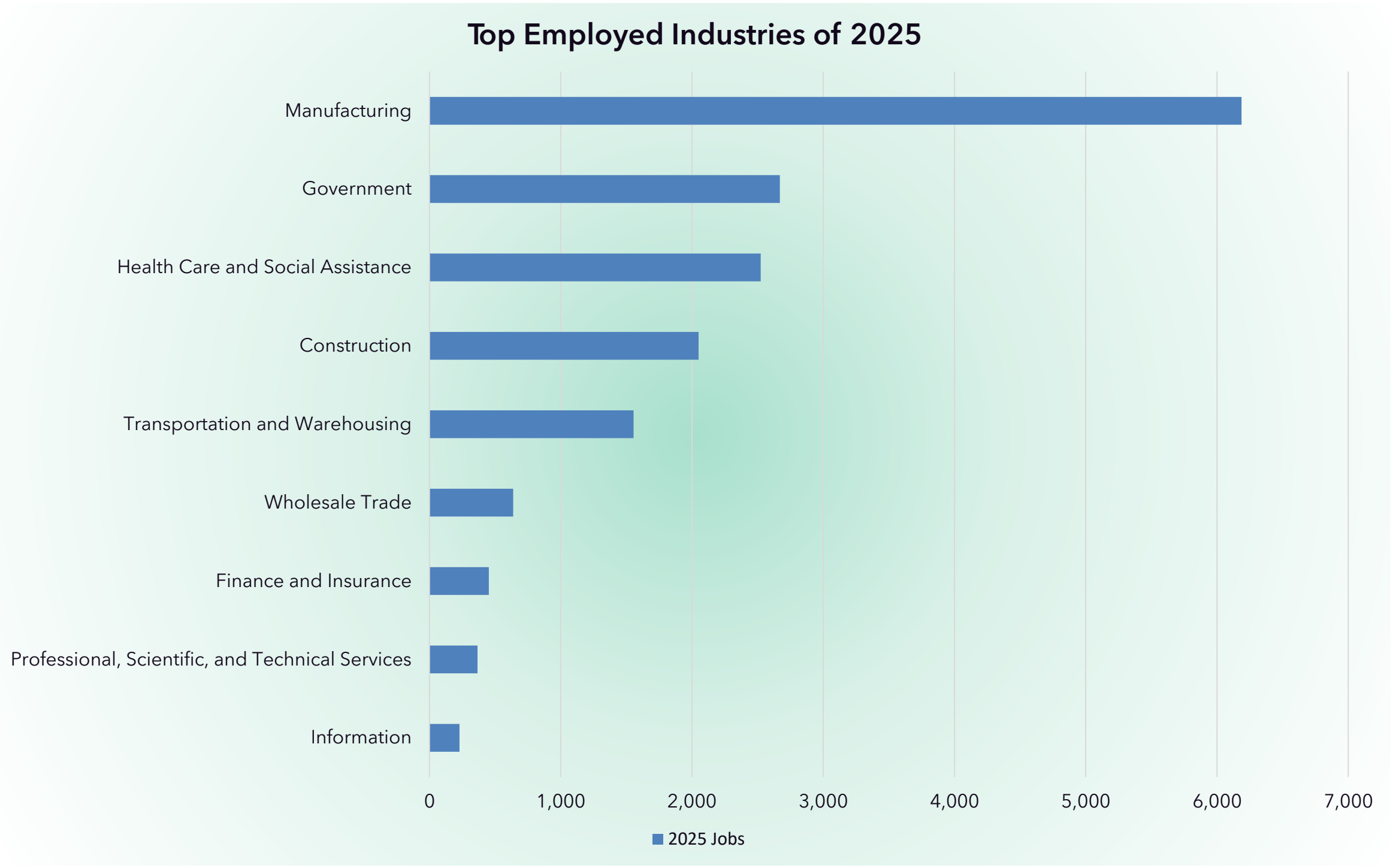


Source: Lightcast

Top Employed Industries

HURON COUNTY

Manufacturing, Government, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Construction are the top employed industries in Huron County in 2025.



Source: Lightcast

2030 Industry Projections

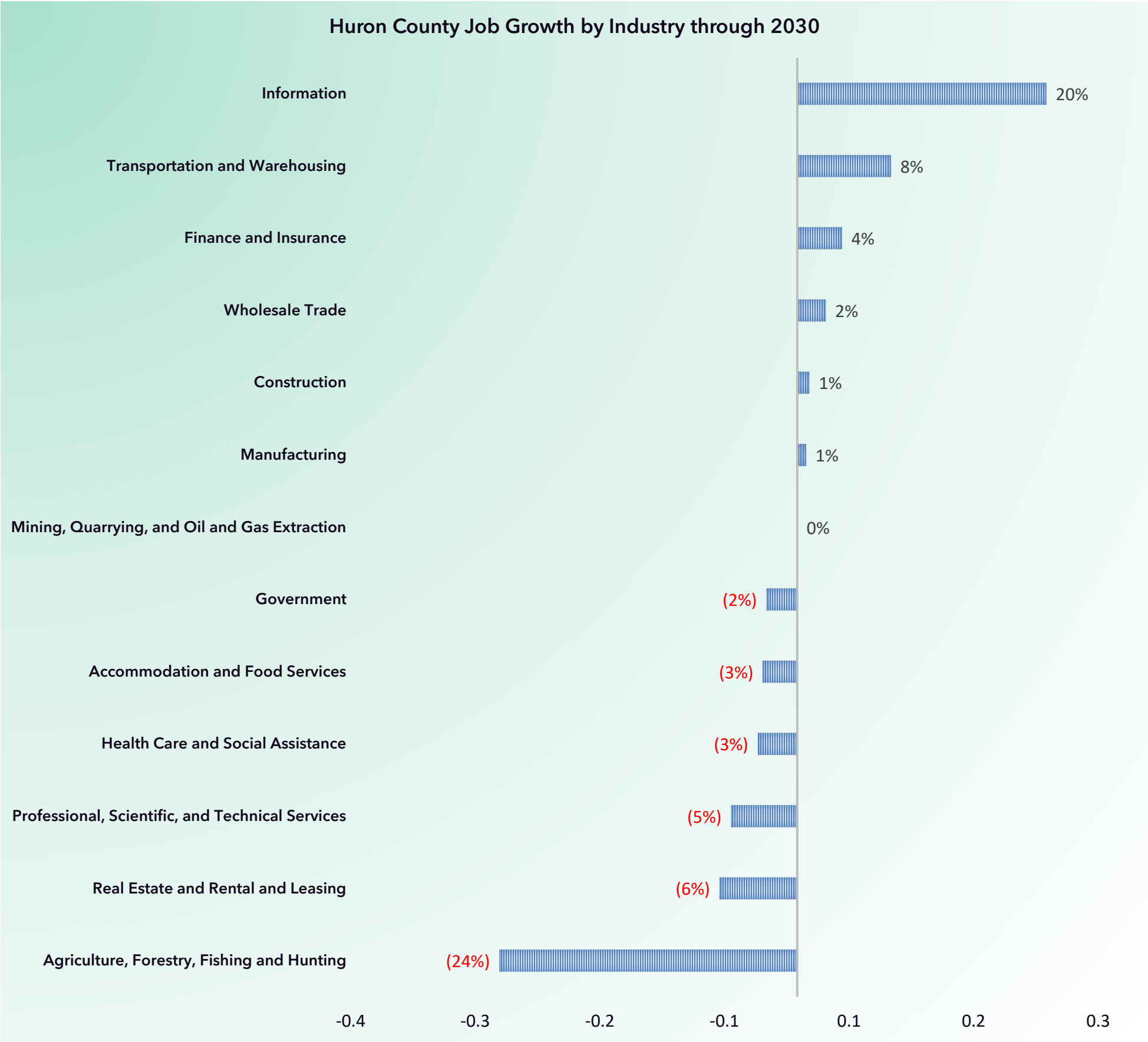
HURON COUNTY

2030 job projections indicate growth in several in-demand industries of Huron County.

These include:

- **Information**
- **Transportation and Warehousing**
- **Finance & Insurance**
- **Wholesale Trade**
- **Construction**
- **Manufacturing**

The region is also projected to see growth in **Arts and Recreational Services** through 2030.



Source: Lightcast

Top Employed Occupations in 2025

HURON COUNTY

Production, Transportation and Material Moving, and Office and Administrative Support Occupations are the top employed occupations in Huron County in 2025



Source: Lightcast

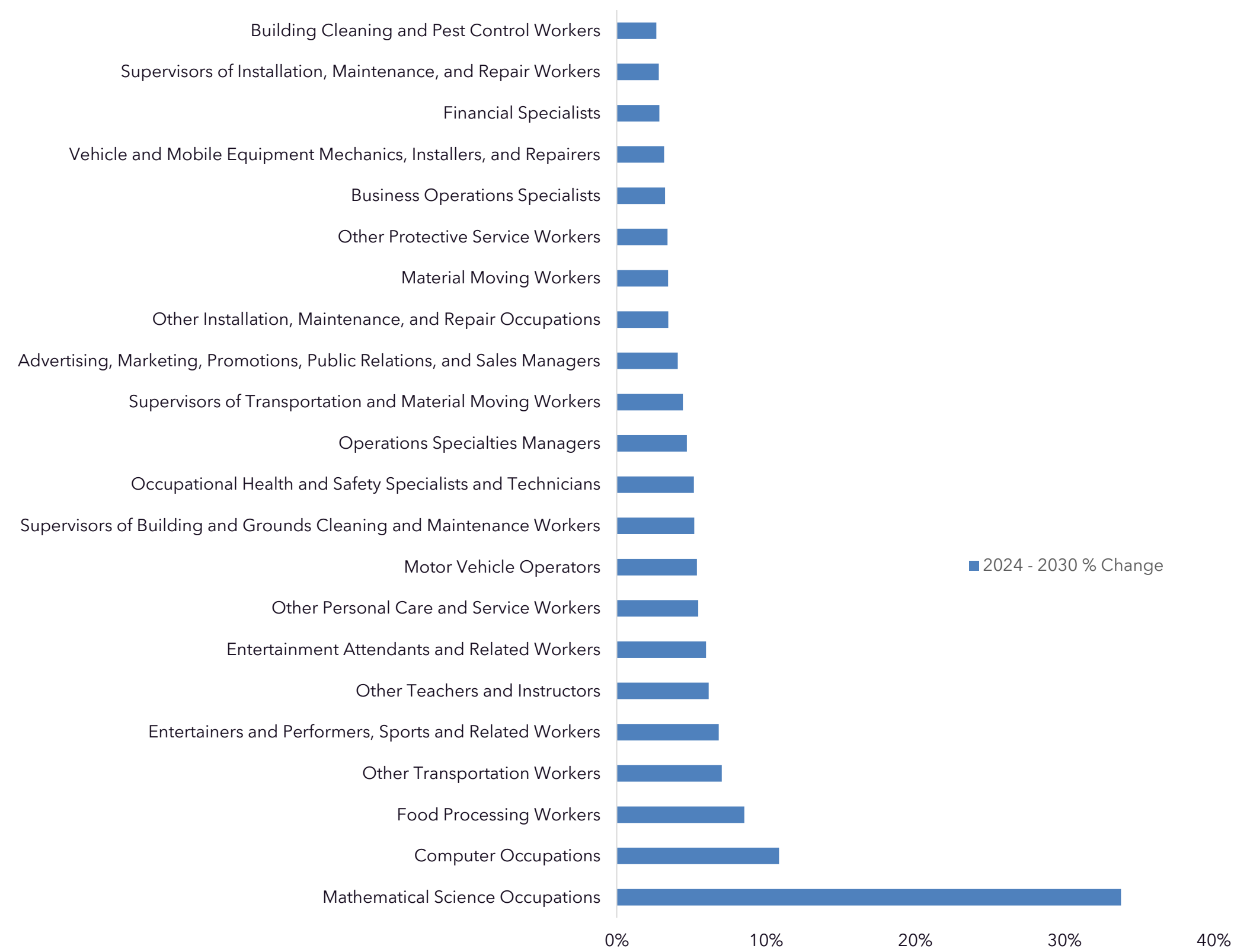
2030 Occupation Projections

HURON COUNTY

Top 5 occupations adding at least over 100 jobs and highest % of job change from 2023 to 2030 in Huron County include:

- **Mathematical Science Occupations**
- **Computer Occupations**
- **Food Processing Workers**
- **Transportation Workers**
- **Entertainers and Performers**

Occupations with Projected Job Growth* through 2030 (Huron County)

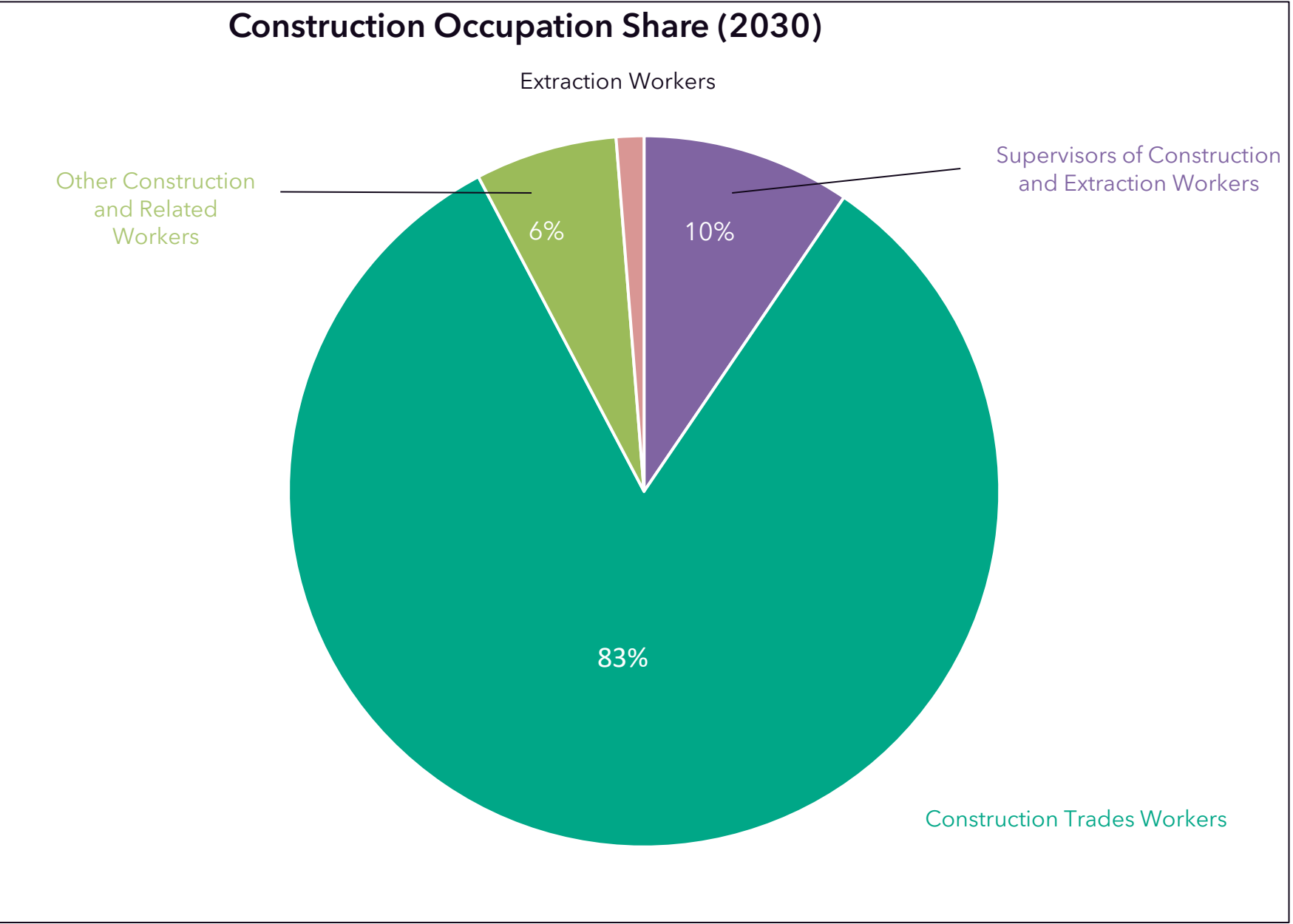
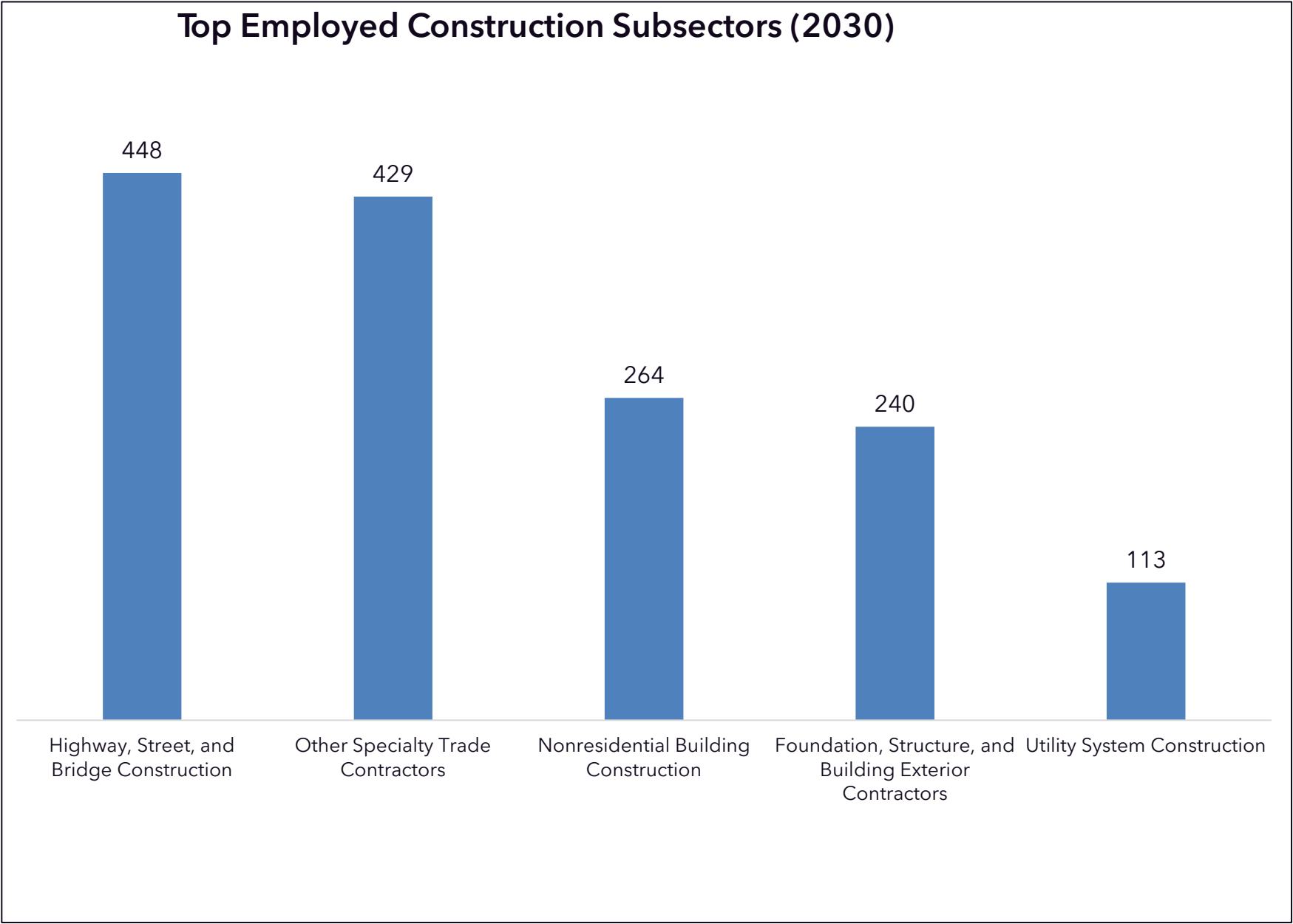


Source: Lightcast. *Occupations are sorted by % change and those projected to have at least 100 more jobs are shown.

Construction Industry Breakdown

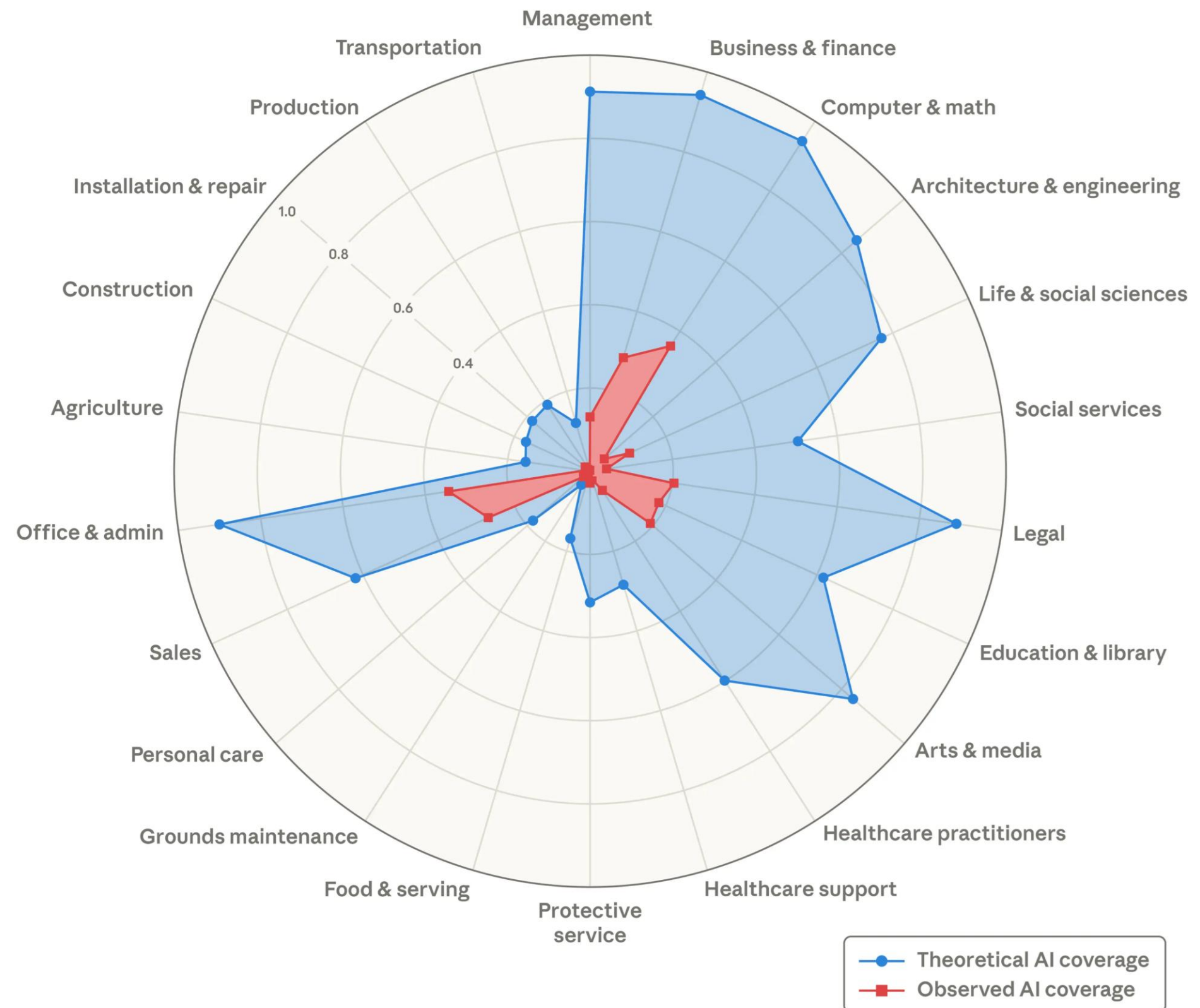
HURON COUNTY

Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction is the top employed Construction subsector in Huron County by 2030 and **Construction Trades Workers** contribute to a large share of the Construction Occupations by 2030



Future Job Market Will Demand Both Tech Fluency and Soft Skill

- AI's growing influence across industries calls for proactive workforce upskilling through targeted training programs
- Rather than replacing, AI is reshaping how core human competencies and soft skills are valued in every industries.



2030 Outlook for Huron County

Industry Strengths:

- The area has exceptionally strong specialization in several manufacturing sub-sectors such as **Printing Activities, plastics, rubbers** and **metal products**, as indicated by their high employment concentrations well-above the national average.
- While the 2030 projections indicate some job declines, especially in Machinery Manufacturing, these sectors remain critical to the regional competitiveness.
- Continued innovation and technology adoption will be critical to support growth.

Subsectors with Highest Employment Concentration in Huron County	2025 Employment Concentration	2024 - 2030 % Change
Printing and Related Support Activities	14.09	2.2%
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	12.44	13.4%
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	8.40	11.9%
Machinery Manufacturing	6.89	(17.0%)
Food Manufacturing	5.80	5.9%
Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	5.40	40.0%
Truck Transportation	5.35	8.9%
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	3.52	(6.6%)

Source: Lightcast

Key Challenges and Opportunities

- **Uneven Growth Amid Trade Headwinds:** Companies continue to navigate cost pressures and trade volatility, with growth impacts varying by industry.
- **Productivity-Led Expansion:** NEO's projected GDP growth (~8%) alongside job decline signals that technology and automation will be the main growth drivers.
- **Demographic Headwinds Intensifying:** An aging workforce and slower population growth are creating structural talent shortages, especially in key sectors.
- **Manufacturing and Polymers are a Competitive Anchor:** Despite job declines, strong specialization in plastics, rubber, metals, keeps the sector essential for Huron County.
- **Growth Concentrated in Key Industries:** Manufacturing, construction, healthcare, and professional services and select creative sectors align with national growth trends.
- **AI/Automation Driving Talent Shifts:** Emerging adoption is increasing demand for tech-enabled roles and upskilling—benefiting early adopters and challenging lagging firms.



Thank You
jduritsky@teamneo.org

ANY QUESTIONS?

LEGISLATIVE PANEL

State Priorities &
Local Impact



Tom Dunlap

Moderator
Huron County
Commissioner



Kellie Deeter

State Representative
House District 54



Theresa Gavarone

State Senator
Senate District 2



Roland Tkach

Huron County Auditor



DJ Swearingen

State Representative
House District 89

FEATURED PRESENTATION: INSIDE LAKESIDE'S INVESTMENT



Eddie Dozier

Human Resources
Lakeside Book Company

Huron County Economic Forum Presentation

Lakeside Book Company

Building the Future: *How Reinvesting in Technology Empowers Willard's Workforce*

Speaker

Eddie Dozier

HR Manager

 Lakeside Book Company

History & Local Foundation | *Built on a Proven Legacy*

150+ Year Legacy

Willard facility has been in continuous operation since 1956.

Holistic Solutions

From concept to distribution, offering end-to-end manufacturing solutions.

1.3M Sq. Footage

Willard facility boasts 1.3 million square feet of operational space.

▶ WATCH: How To Make A Book

Strong Foundation

High local performance and workforce stability made Willard the premier site for major capital reinvestment.

Business Environment

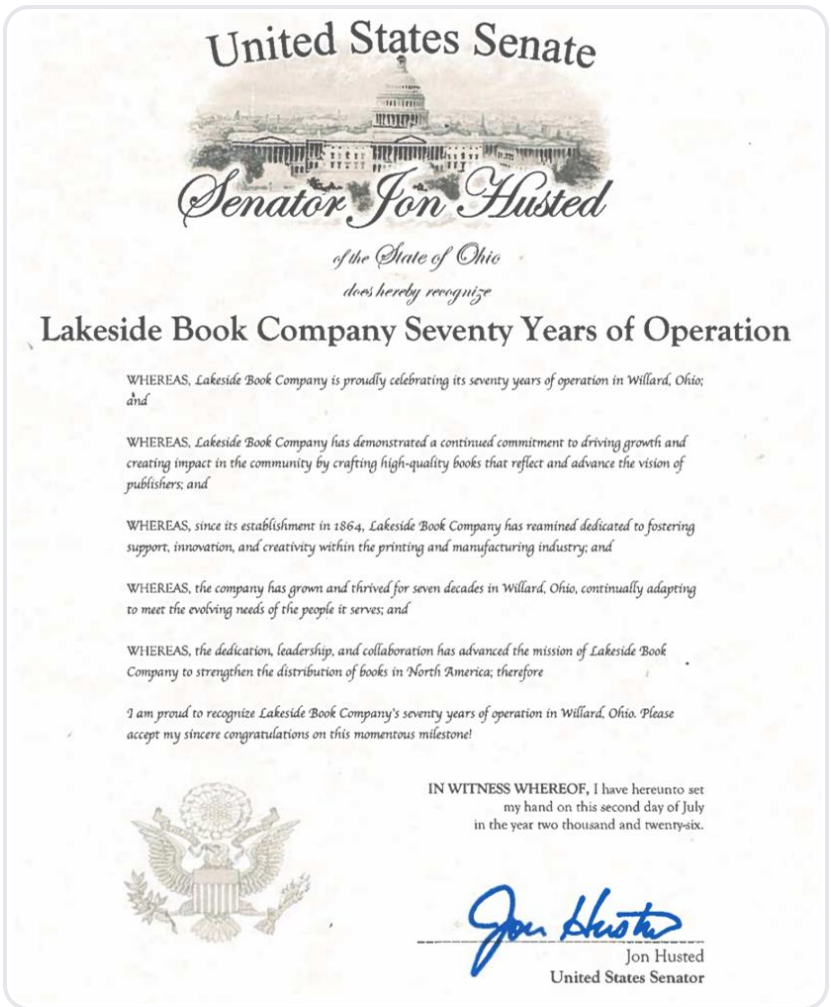
Continuing 70+ years of operational excellence by combining deep institutional knowledge with modern scale.



Willard Facility (1956)



Modern Operational Scale



Senate Recognition: 70 Years of Operation

Capital Investment & Strategy: *Investing in the Next Generation of Manufacturing*



► WATCH: Press 395 Time Elapse

\$22.5M Modernization & Upgrade

- \$22.5M fixed asset investment modernization at Willard facility.
- Core technology upgrade: High-speed Press 395 installation.

Job Creation & Future Growth

- **Commitment:** 100 new jobs created (aligned with JobsOhio through 2034).
- **Sustaining Future Growth:** Capital allocation signals long-term commitment while requiring continued local operational efficiency.

Drivers & Decisions

- **Industry Drivers:** Upgrading technology to meet rising demand for faster production turnarounds, higher efficiency, and advanced print.
- **Data-Driven Decision:** Investment backed by market trends, Willard productivity metrics, and state support via JobsOhio.

Community Partnership | *Deepening Our Roots in Huron County*

Good Neighbor

Lakeside is dedicated to being an active, supportive, and trusted neighbor in the local community.

Community Highlights

Proud sponsor of local sports, the Christmas Parade, Trunk or Treat, and regular donations to key initiatives like the Hope Center.

Huron County Growth Story

Deepening our local roots and maintaining a strong commitment to being an active partner in regional development.

Community as a Retention Driver

Investing heavily in local quality of life directly supports our employee stability and promotes long-term workforce retention.



Workforce & Talent Development: *Empowering Our People Through Technology*



Craftsmanship & Training

- **Craftsmanship as a core value:** Employees are "craftspeople," not just workers.
- **Apprenticeships & Cross-training:** Developing talent from "Day One".

Retention & Balance

- **Retention Focus:** Successful transition of senior staff + onboarding new talent.
- **Balancing Tech & Talent:** Honoring senior craftsmanship while equipping next-gen workers.

Automation & Evolving Skills

- **Automation & Skills:** Advanced machinery (Press 395) automates routine tasks.
- **Bridging the Tech Gap:** Transitioning existing team members into high-tech roles.

Safety Culture: *Protecting Our Most Valuable Asset - Our People*

Safety First Priority

Safety is the #1 business priority, embedded in every aspect of our operations.

Decline in Recordable Incidents

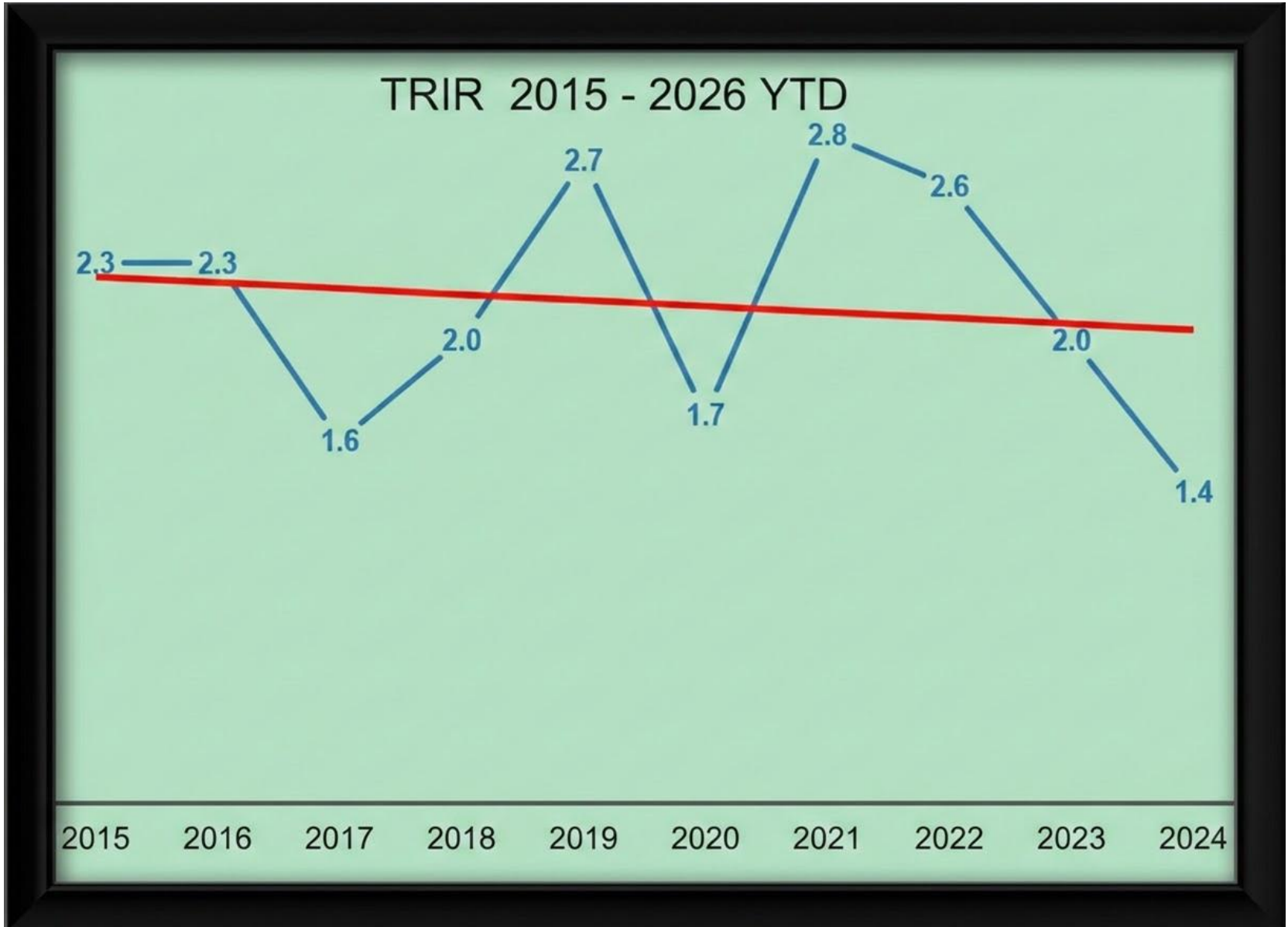
Continuous reduction demonstrates a strong downward trend from 2022–2025.

Proactive Programs

Driving engagement with EHS training, job hazard analysis, and safety suggestions from the floor.

Safer Technology

Modern automation reduces physical strain and hazards, directly reinforcing our safety-first workplace culture.



Conclusion & The Future

Thank you!

lakesidebookcompany.com

"A
Room Without Books
Is Like
A Body Without A
Soul"



Contact Us

person

Representative

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email

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INVESTING IN HURON COUNTY: AN OUTLOOK FROM THE GROUND



Dr. Brent Burkey

Moderator
President & CEO
Fisher Titus



Tony Whitacre

CFO
Oglesby Construction



Keith Mainzer

Controller
Extol of Ohio



Judy Mosher

Partner, CPA
Payne Nickles & Co

Thank You!

- **Join HCGP** - Scan the QR code to learn more & become a member
- Watch for the post-event survey
Check your inbox at **1:00 PM today**
- Read our newsletters -
Members, watch for resources and opportunities
- **Save the Date:** Network After Work - October 7th - 5 - 7pm

Scan to Join Today!



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