

# COVID and the Humboldt County Economy through Spring'22

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Humboldt Economic Index

**Southwest Eureka Rotary Club** Presentation

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[econindex.humboldt.edu](http://econindex.humboldt.edu)

# Outline

- Intro to Index
- COVID timeline
- Humboldt County Economic Indicators and California and US comparisons
- Questions?

# What is the Index?

- Started in 1996
- Four sponsors
- Tracks employment, housing, retail, energy, hotels, niche manufacturing
- Two student assistants at any time
- Over twenty have interned
- Gone on to graduate school, work, and started own business



# Feb 2022 Edition of the Index

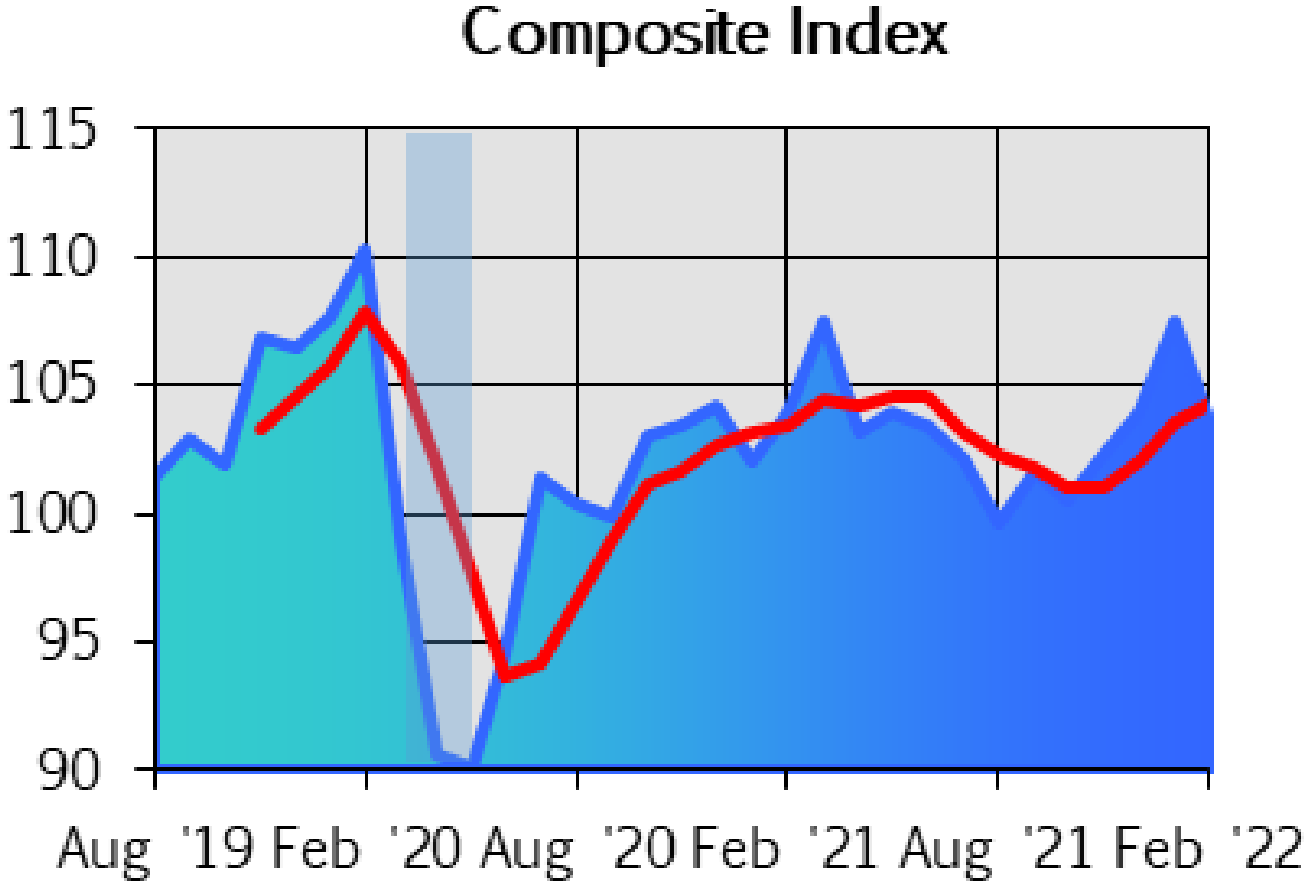
Composite & Sectors					
		Percent change from			
Index	Value***	Last Month	One Year ago****	Five Years ago****	Ten Years ago****
<b>Composite</b>	<b>103.5</b>	<b>-3.8</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>
Home Sales	106.8	-14.6	-18.1	0.0	-8.1
Retail Sales	142.0	-1.9	-6.3	-3.7	-2.1
Hospitality	119.8	-0.9	14.3	48.2	39.1
Electricity	103.0	-10.4	-4.1	-6.8	-20.3
Employment	106.0	-1.7	2.5	-4.7	5.6
Lumber*	26.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	-18.7
Manufacturing**	100.7	10.7	5.7	-	-

\* Formerly “manufacturing”  
 \*\* Niche, non-lumber manufacturing. Not a component of the overall composite.  
 \*\*\* These values are adjusted to remove seasonal fluctuation. The base month is January 1994 (January 2013 for manufacturing) with an Index value of 100.  
 \*\*\*\* The percent change from the same month one, five and ten years ago.

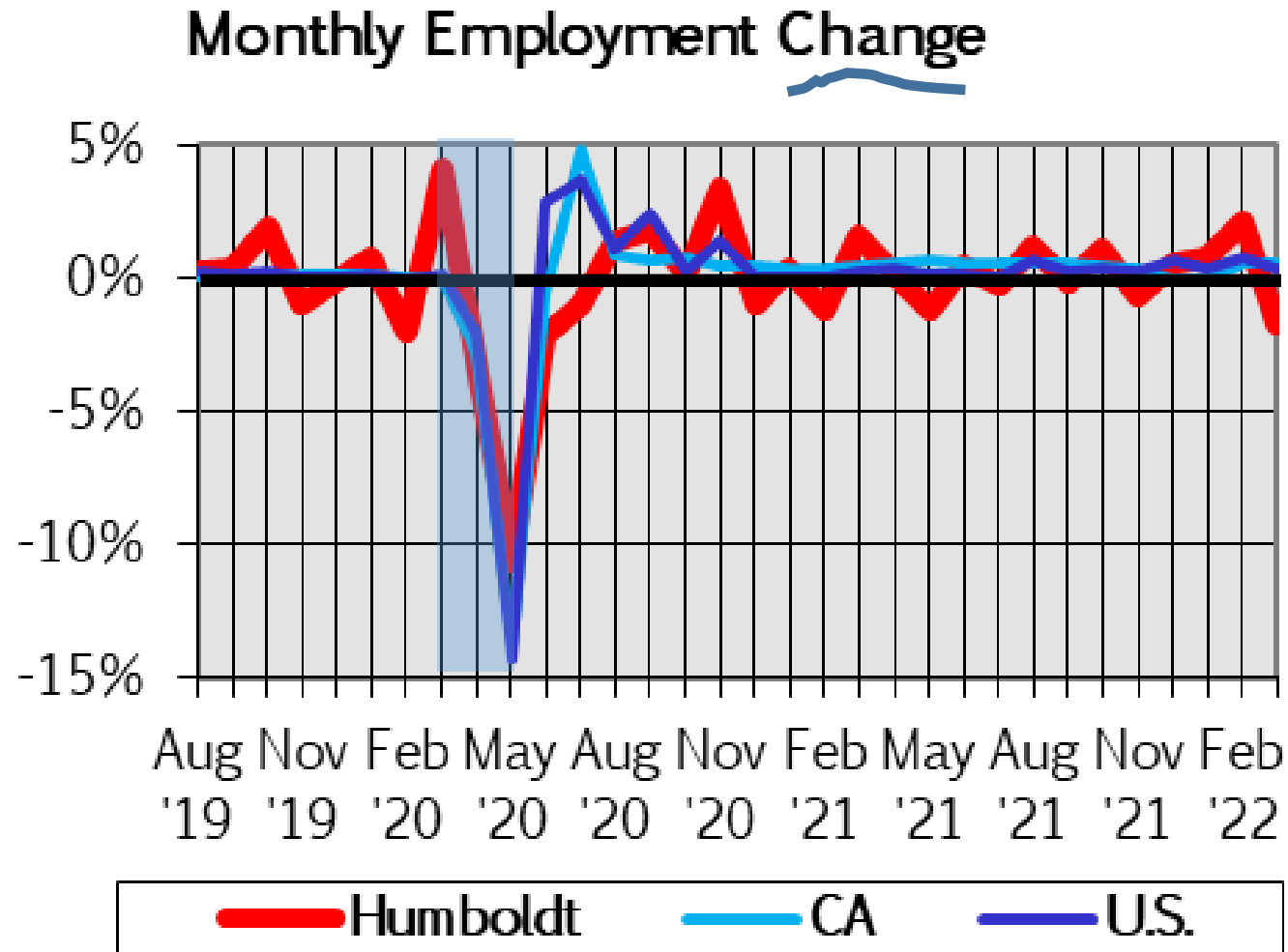
# COVID Timeline

- Humboldt County was Covid ground zero
- It had its first confirmed Covid case by Feb 20, 2020, when there were only 7 confirmed cases in the entire US! (<https://krcrtv.com/north-coast-news/eureka-local-news/first-case-of-novel-coronavirus-confirmed-in-humboldt-county>;  
<https://covidtracking.com/data/national>)
- The real economic effects from Covid have far less to do with the disease than the government response (Shelter in place orders and restricting businesses)
- ***We expect to see the BIGGEST IMPACT of Covid at end of March through beginning of May, 2020 (centered in the month of April)***

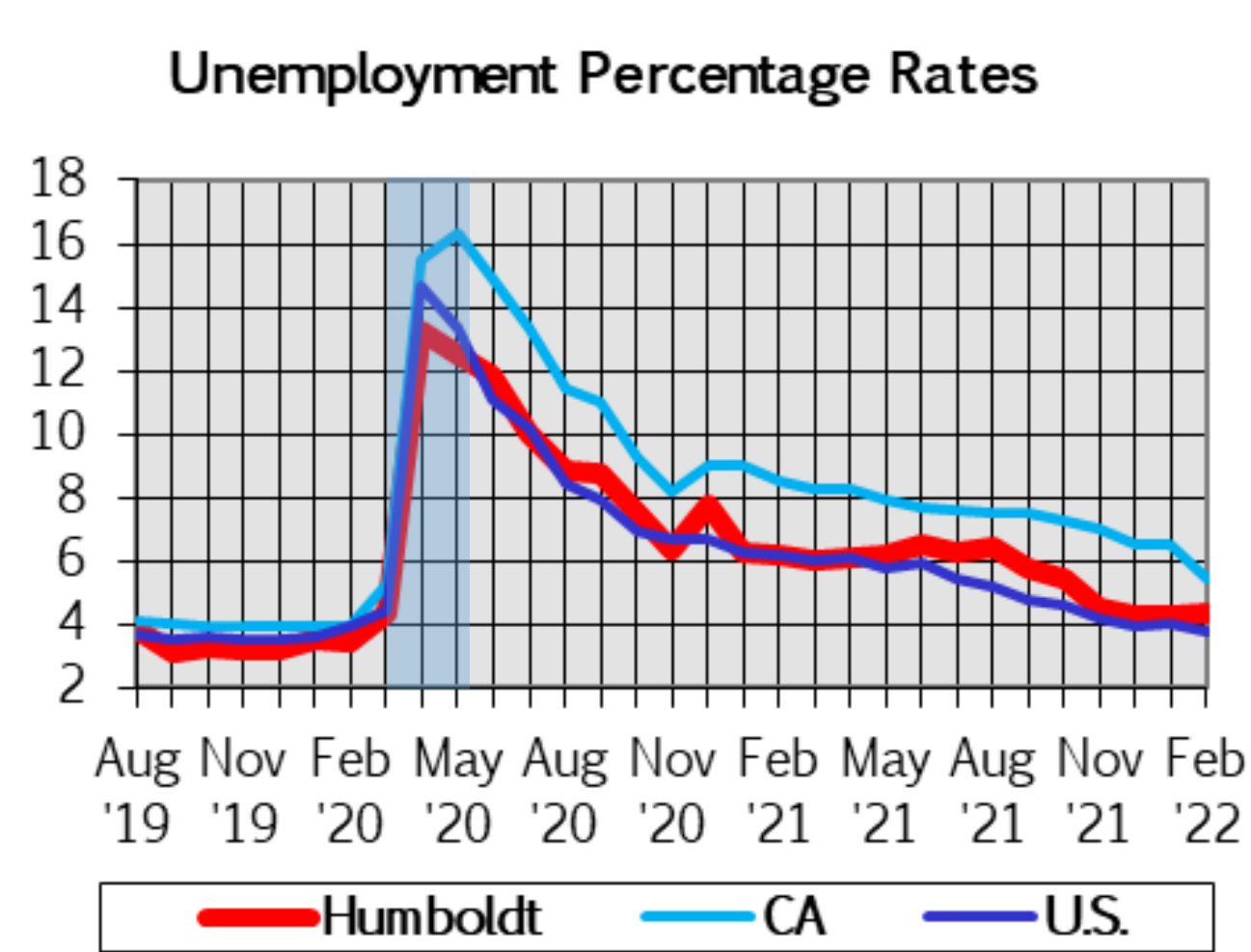
# Humboldt County overall economic activity has almost rebounded



# Shelter in place impacts on employment similar



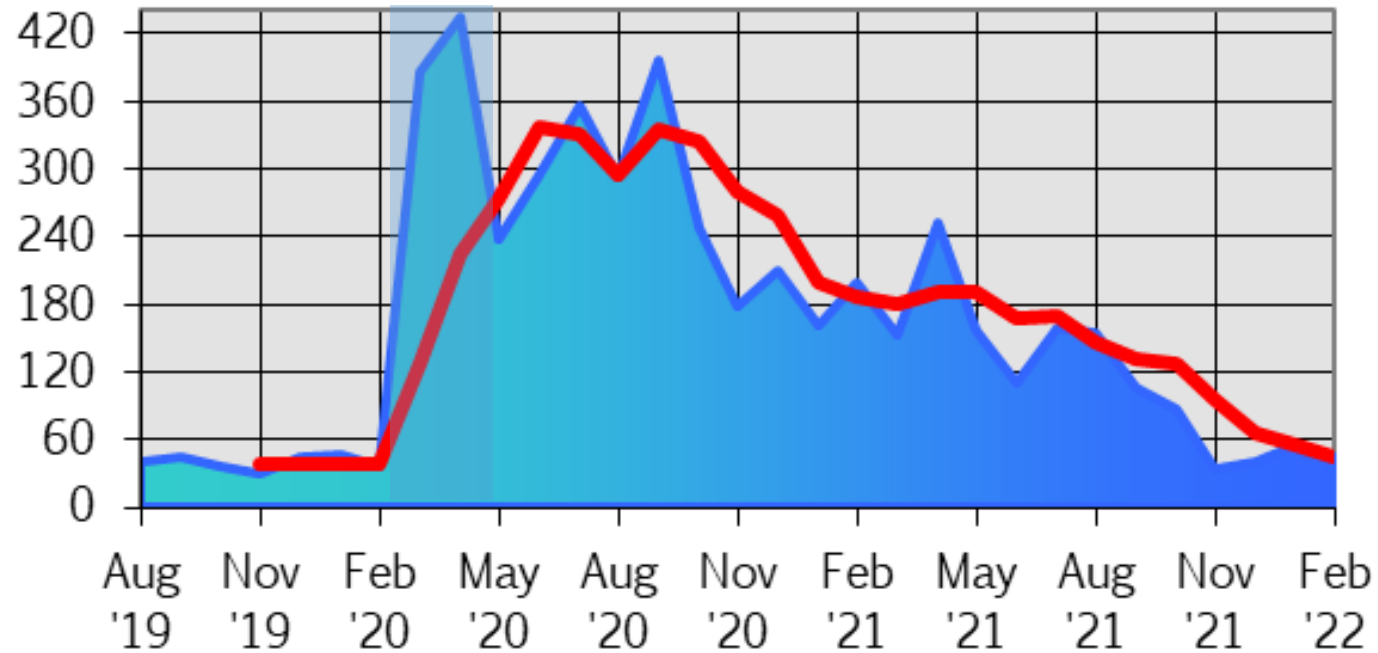
# Unemployment rates are almost back to pre-Covid levels





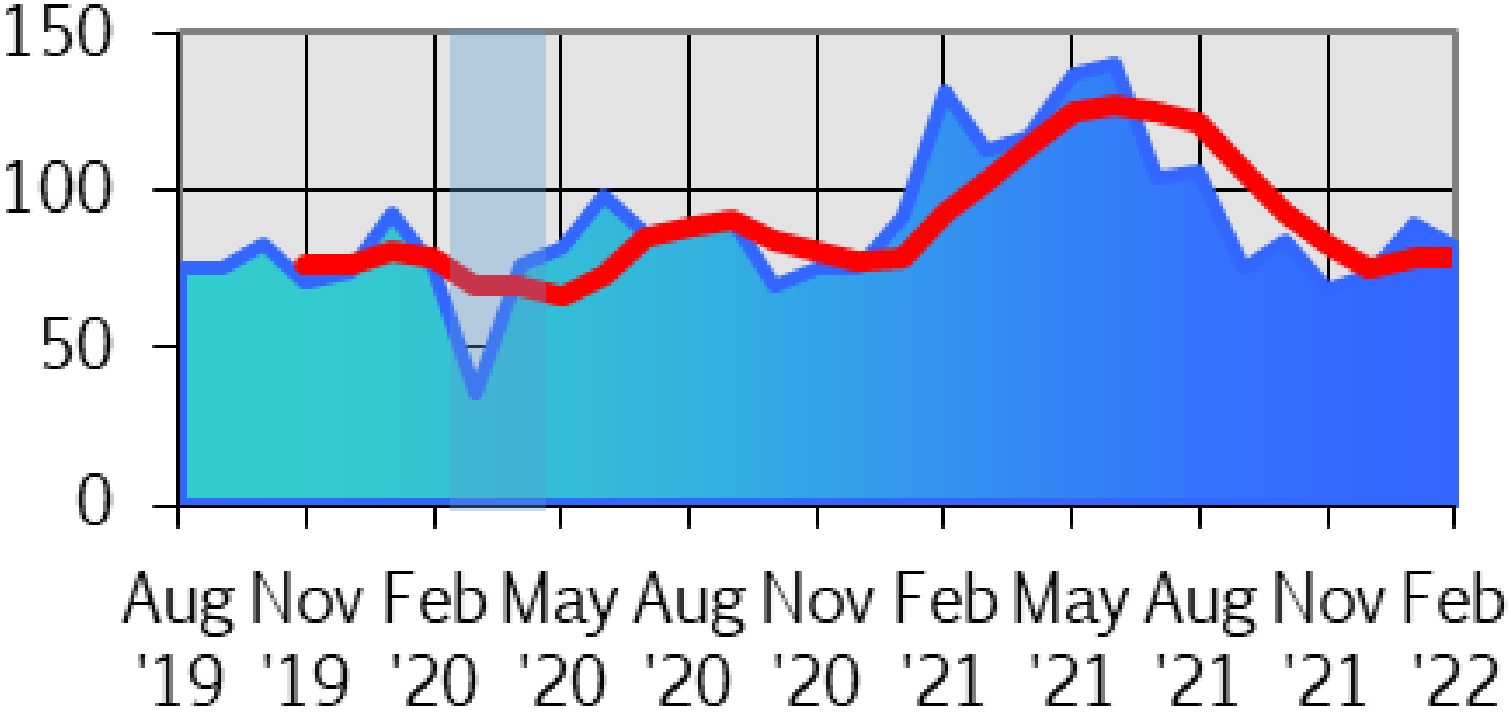
# Initial claims for unemployment insurance are back to normal

Index of New Claims for Unemployment Insurance



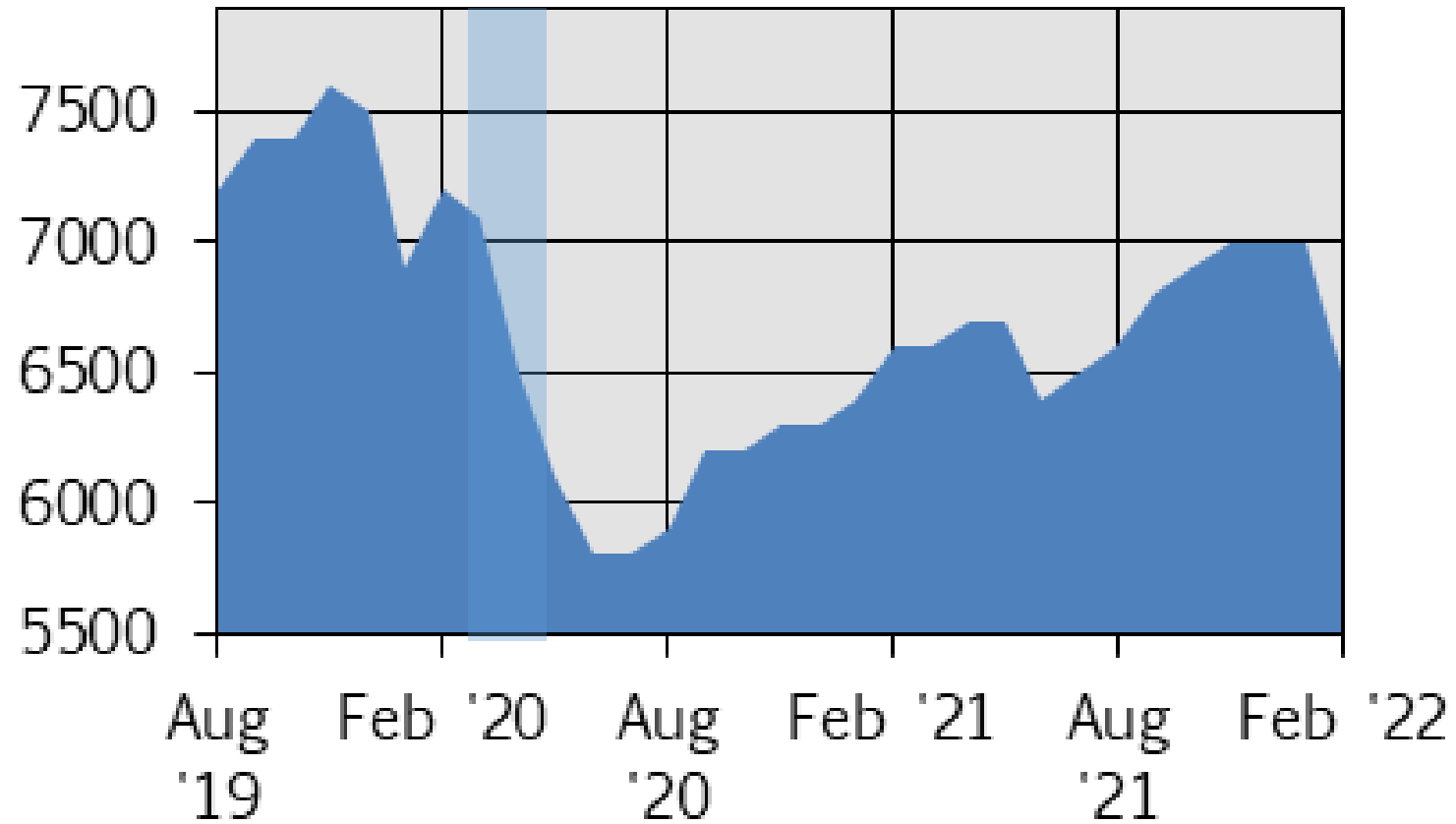
Only one month when Help Wanted Ads fell,  
and they are finally back to normal

Index of Help Wanted Advertising



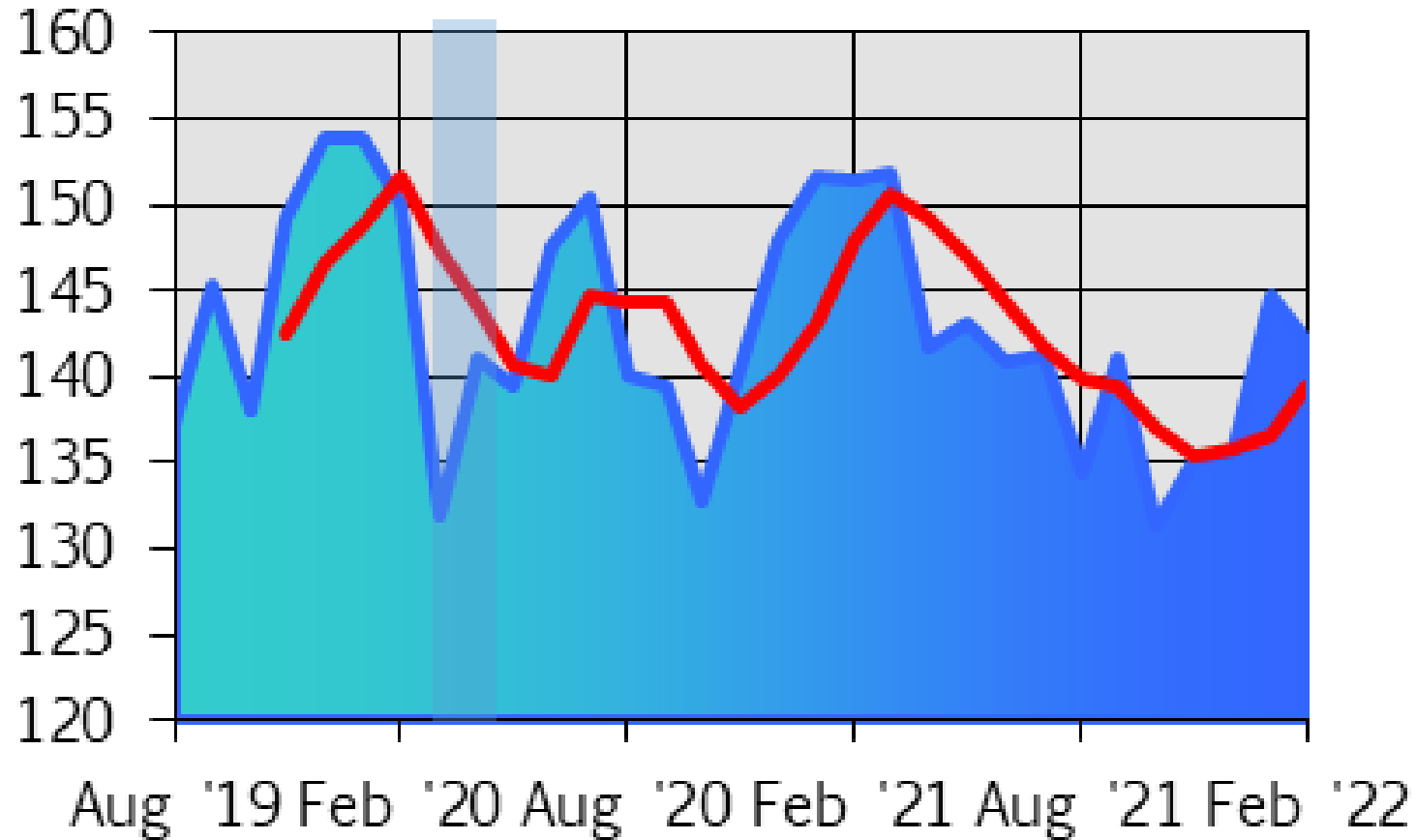
# Retail Employment is slowly recovering

## Retail Employment



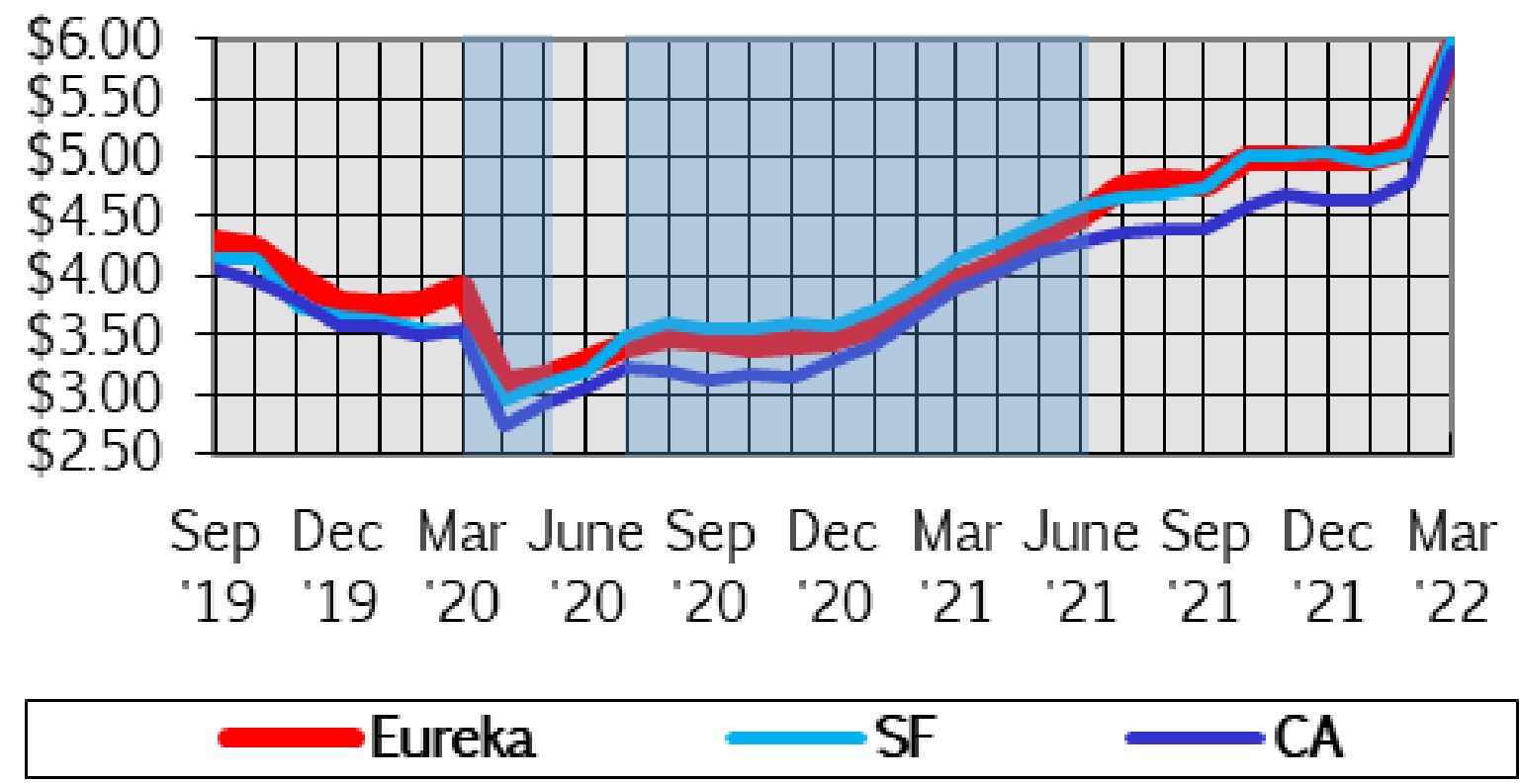
# But Retail Sales recovered quicker

## Retail Index

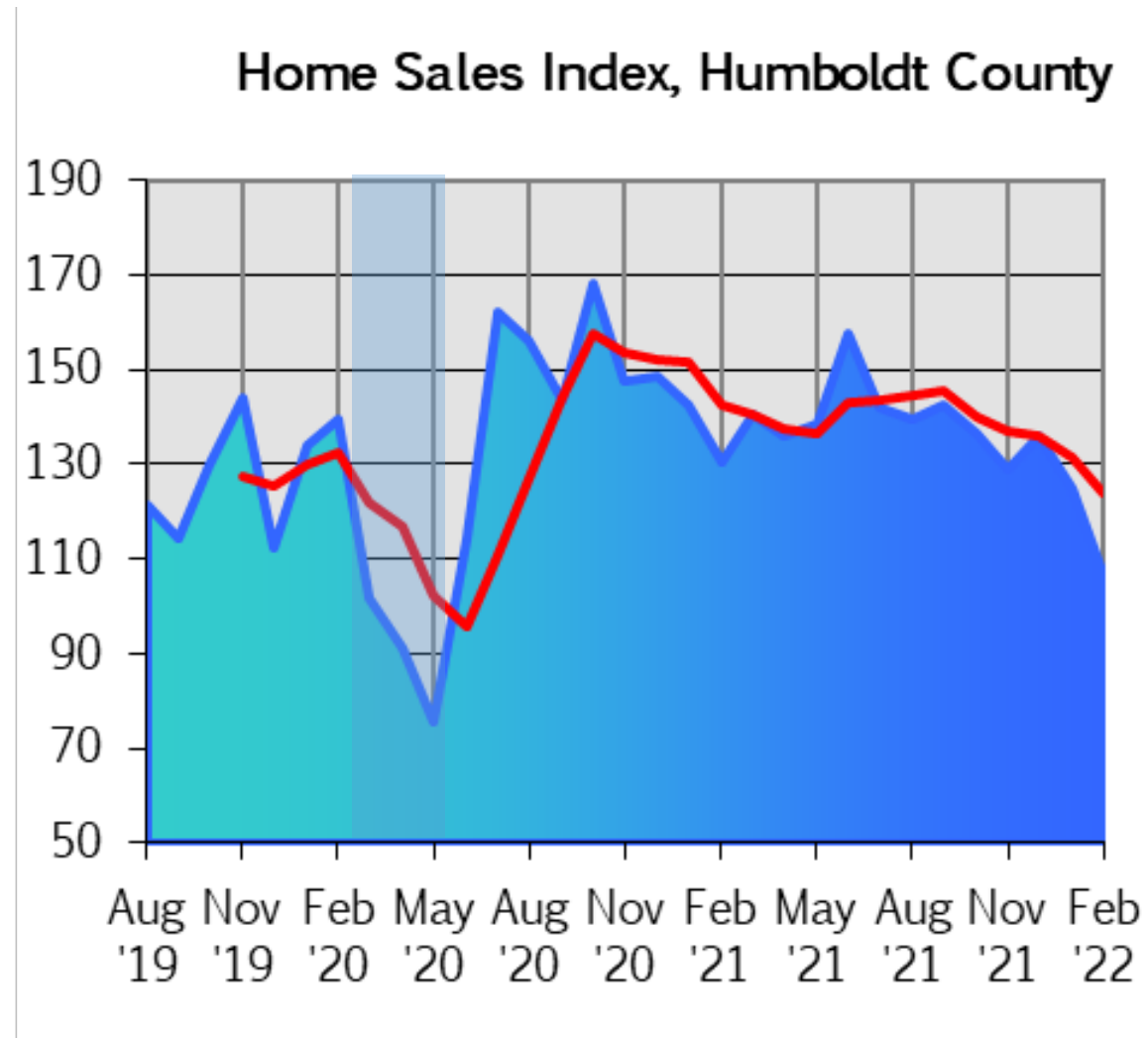


For the first time ever, Humboldt gas prices below SF for an entire year

Gasoline Prices

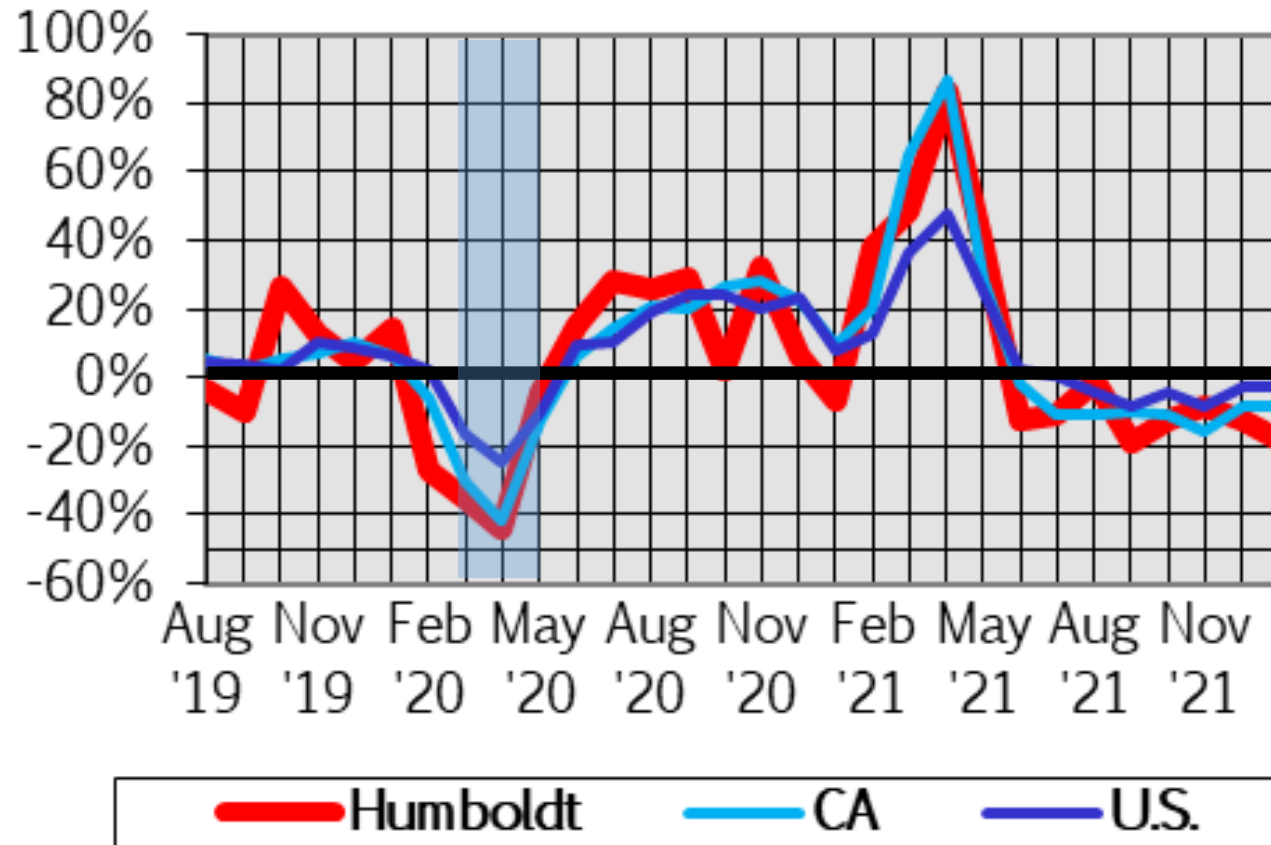


# Home Sales hit historic highs but are falling



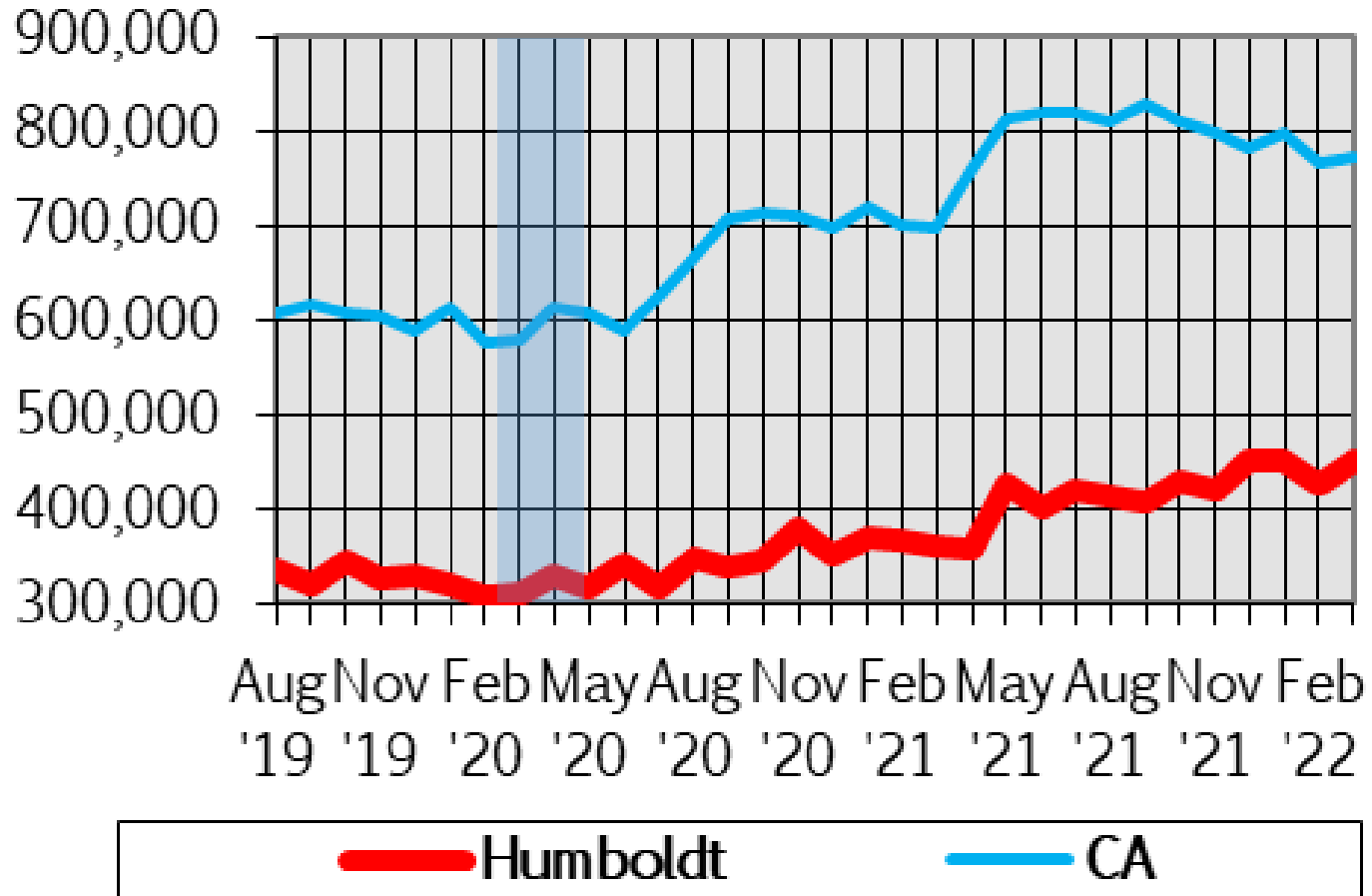
# California and US Home Sales also surged for a while

## Year to Year Home Sales Change



# Home Prices rose

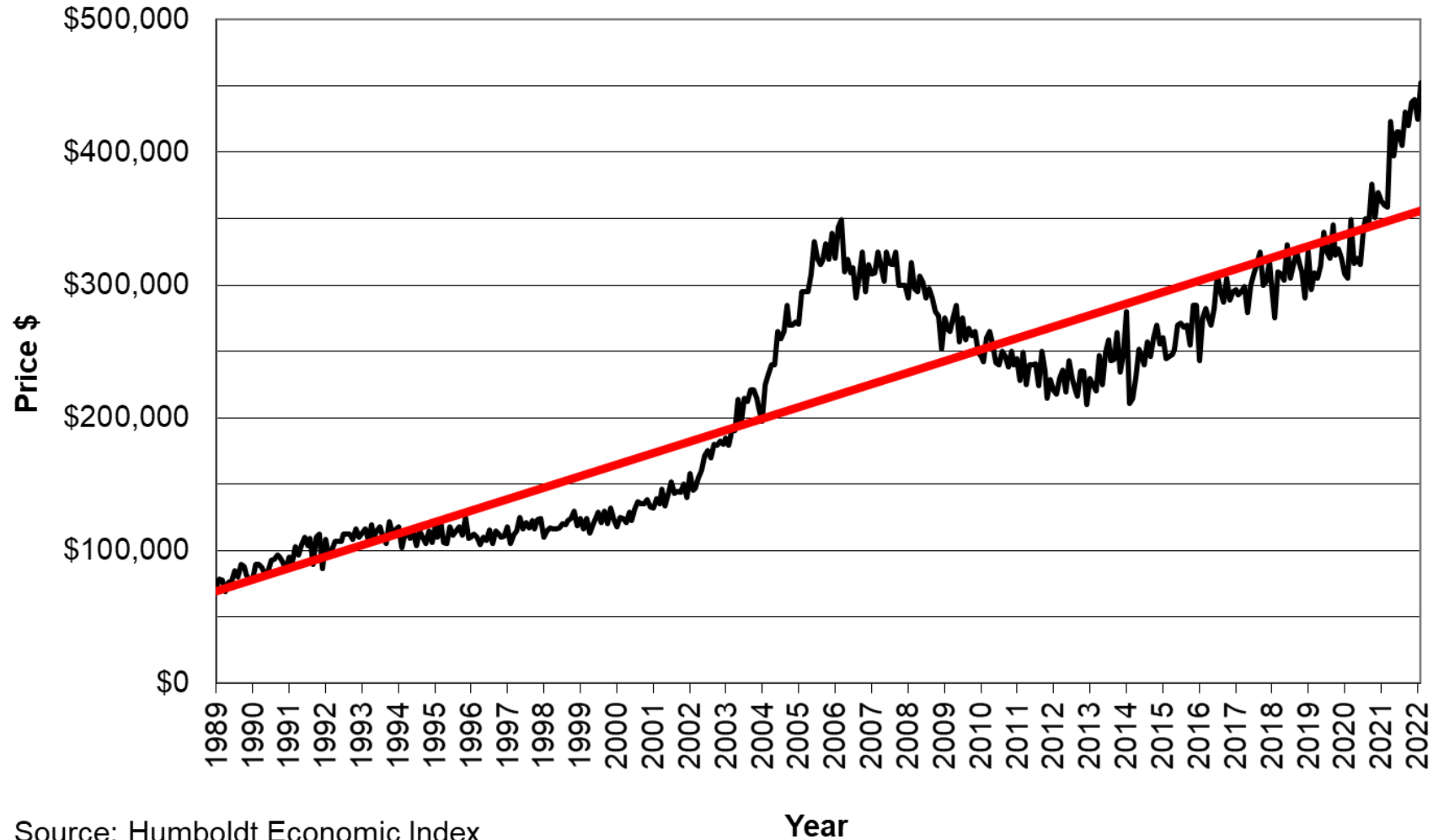
## Median Home Prices





# Home Prices are rising above trend just since last Spring

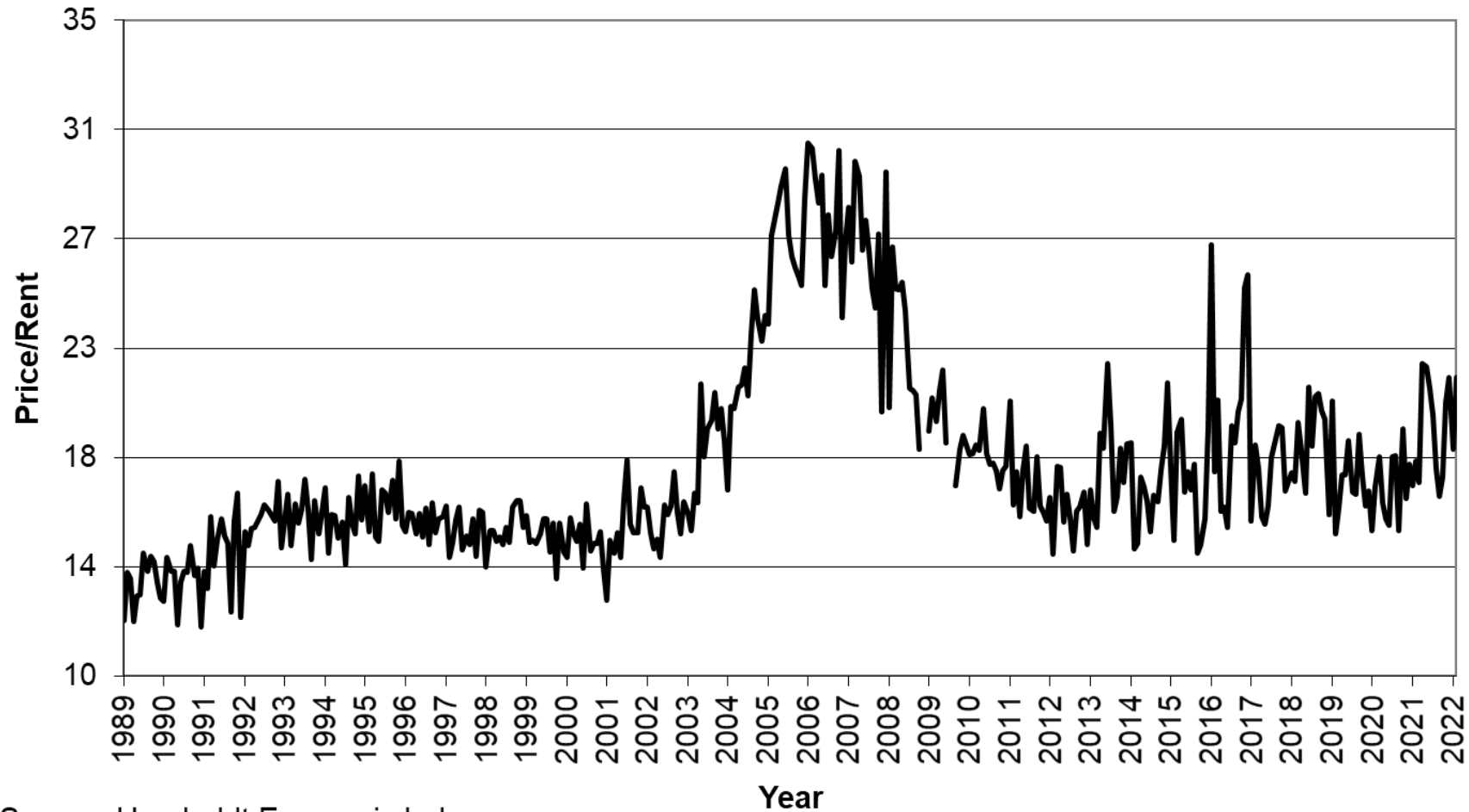
## Humboldt County Median Price of Houses Sold



Source: Humboldt Economic Index

# But the Price to rent ratio stays low

Humboldt County Housing Price to Rent Ratio, 1989-2021  
(medium home price/mean rent, adjusted for expenses)



Source: Humboldt Economic Index

# Where is the economy headed?

- What will the Federal and State Government do?
  - Will the Fed raise short term interest rates more quickly to combat rising inflation?
  - Will shelter in place return and Covid mandates return/continue?

# We need more data providers!

- Please contact me if you know of a local business (manufacturing, retail, hospitality) willing to share monthly data!

