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**December 2022**

# **U.S. Construction Outlook: Recession or Resurgence?**

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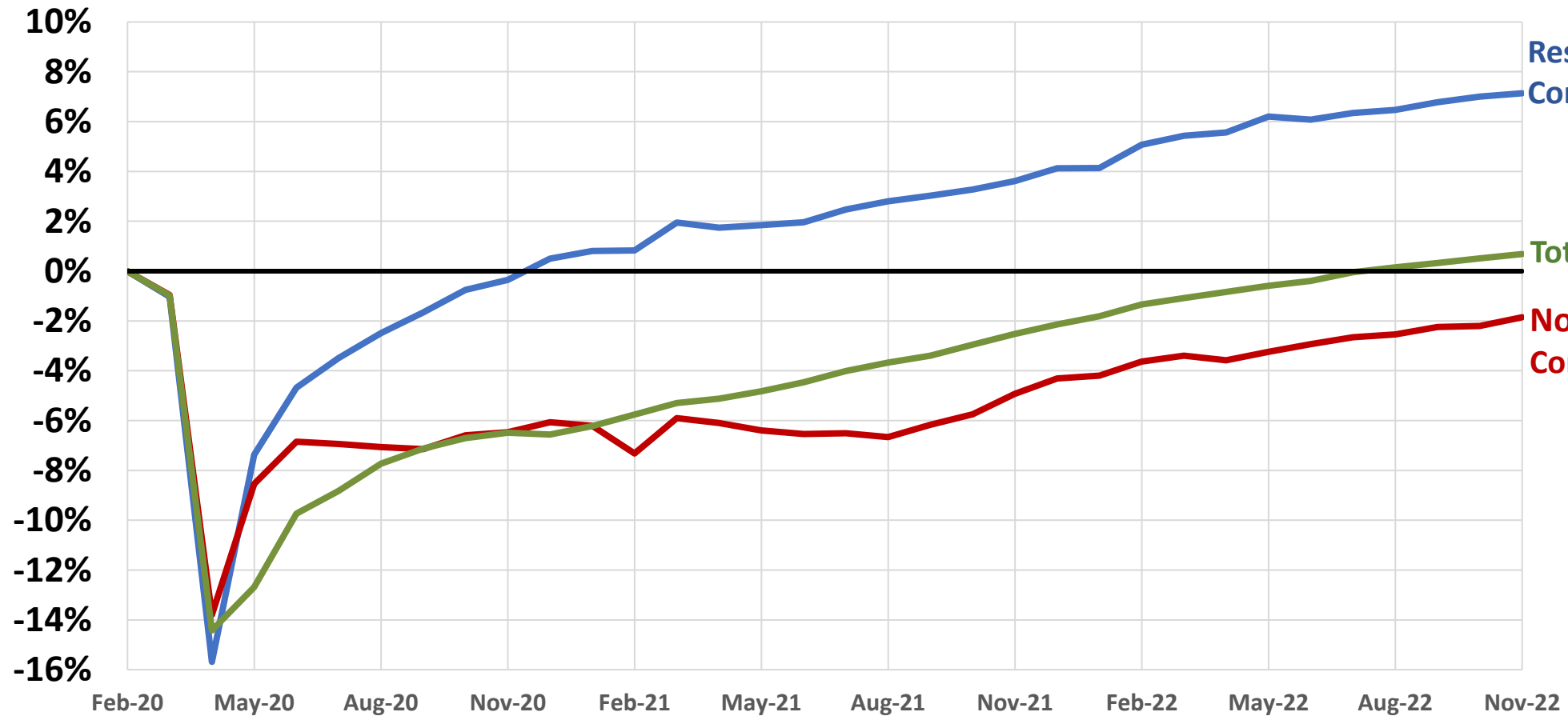
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# Total nonfarm & construction employment, Feb. 2020–Nov. 2022

cumulative change (seasonally adjusted)



**Change since Feb. 2020:**  
Number Percent

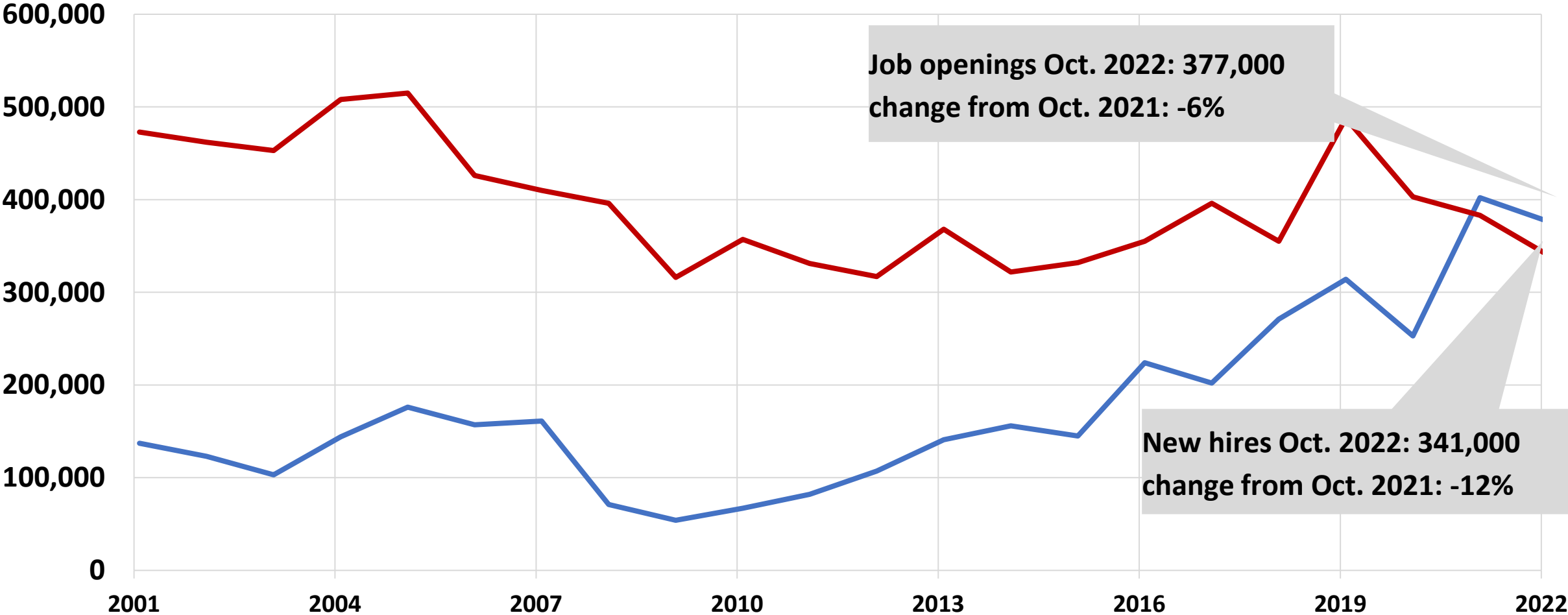


<b>Residential Construction</b>	<b>212,300</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>1,044,000</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>Nonresidential Construction</b>	<b>-86,000</b>	<b>-1.8%</b>

# Construction job openings & new hires



Job openings and hires, Oct. 2001-Oct. 2022, not seasonally adjusted

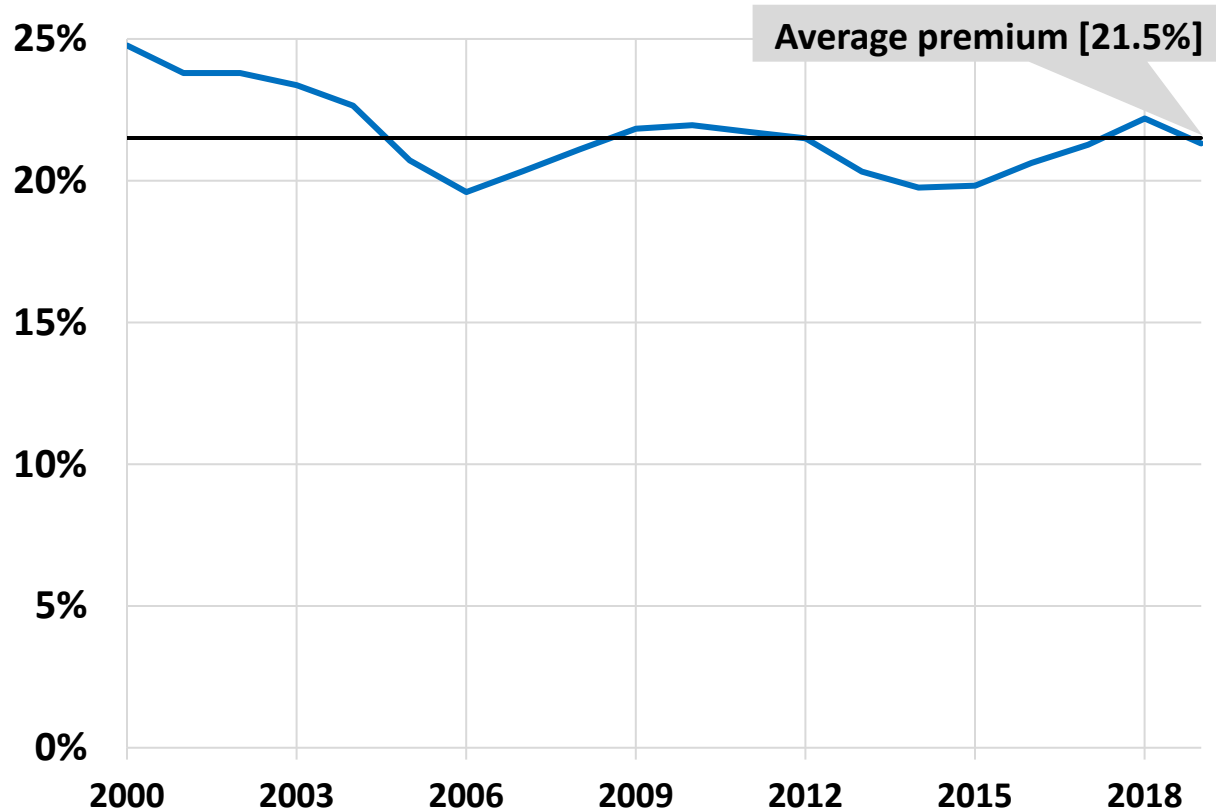


# Construction wage “premium” vs. total private sector

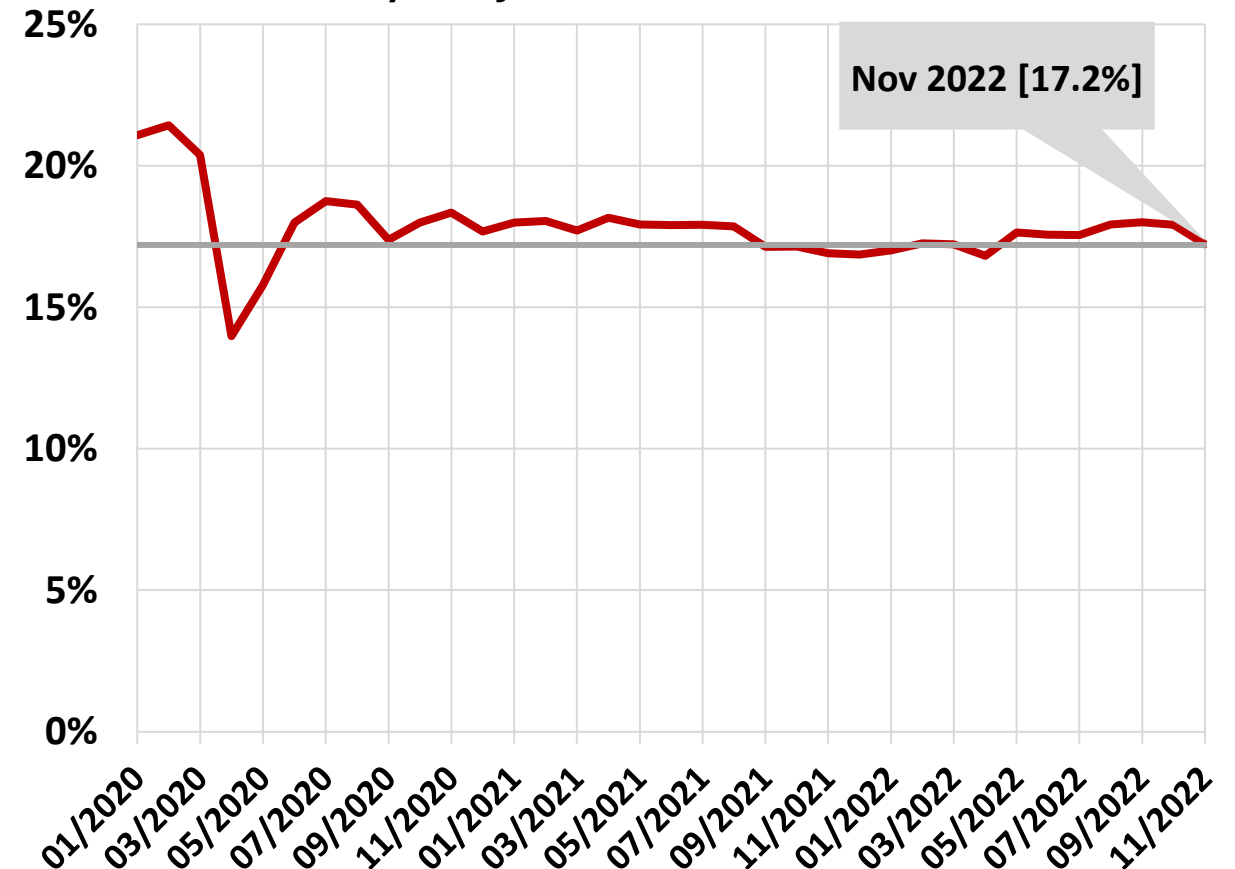
Excess of average hourly earnings for production/ nonsupervisory employees in construction vs. private sector



## Annual premium, 2000–2019



## Monthly premium, Jan 2020–Nov 2022 (seasonally adjusted)

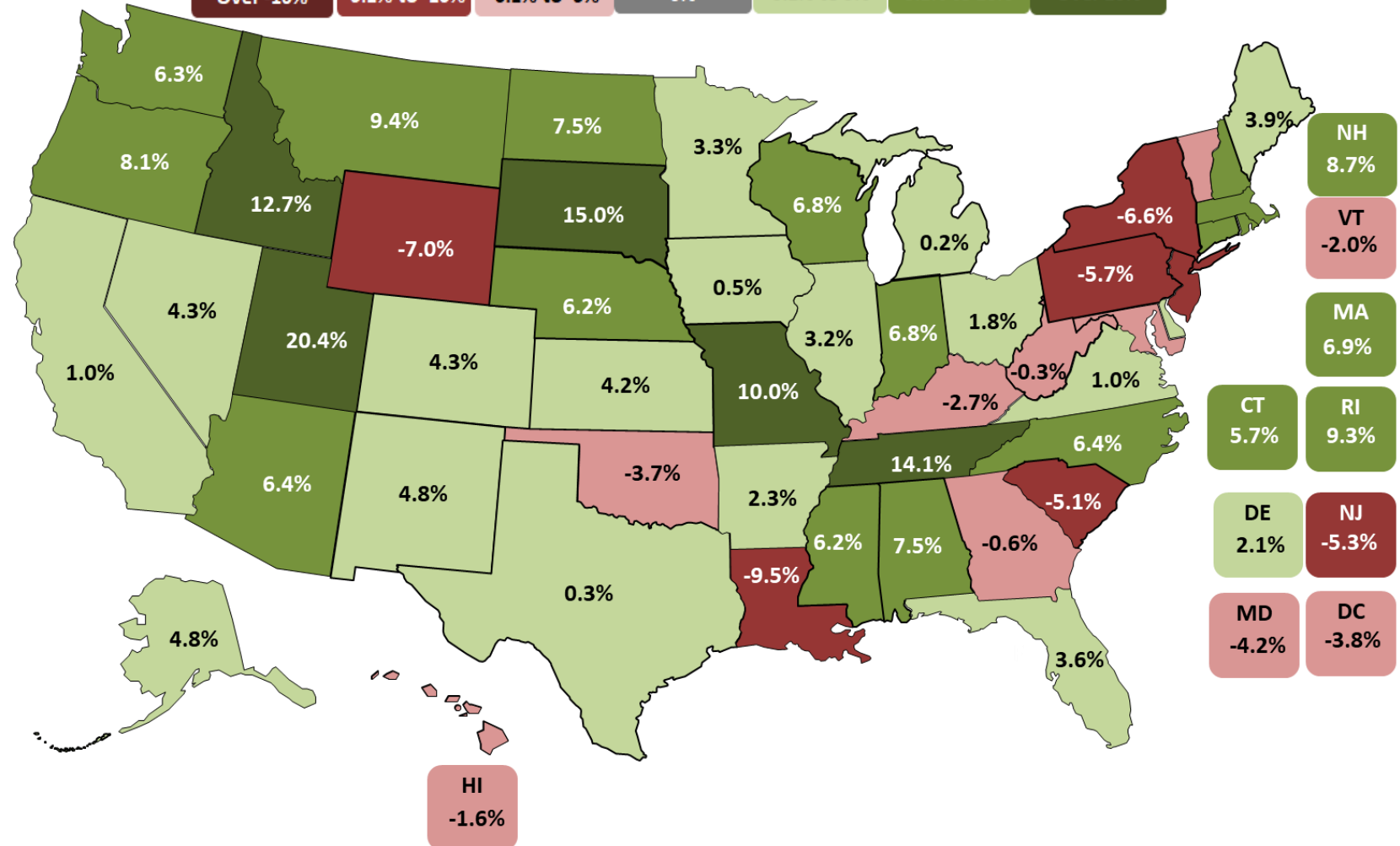
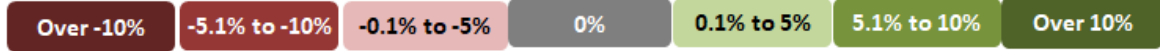


# Construction employment change by state, February 2020-October 2022

37 states **up**, 13 states + DC **down**, 0 unchanged (**U.S.: 1.4%**)



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## Top 5

UT	20.4%
SD	15.0%
TN	14.1%
ID	12.7%
MO	10.0%

## Bottom 5

LA	-9.5%
WY	-7.0%
NY	-6.6%
PA	-5.7%
NJ	-5.3%

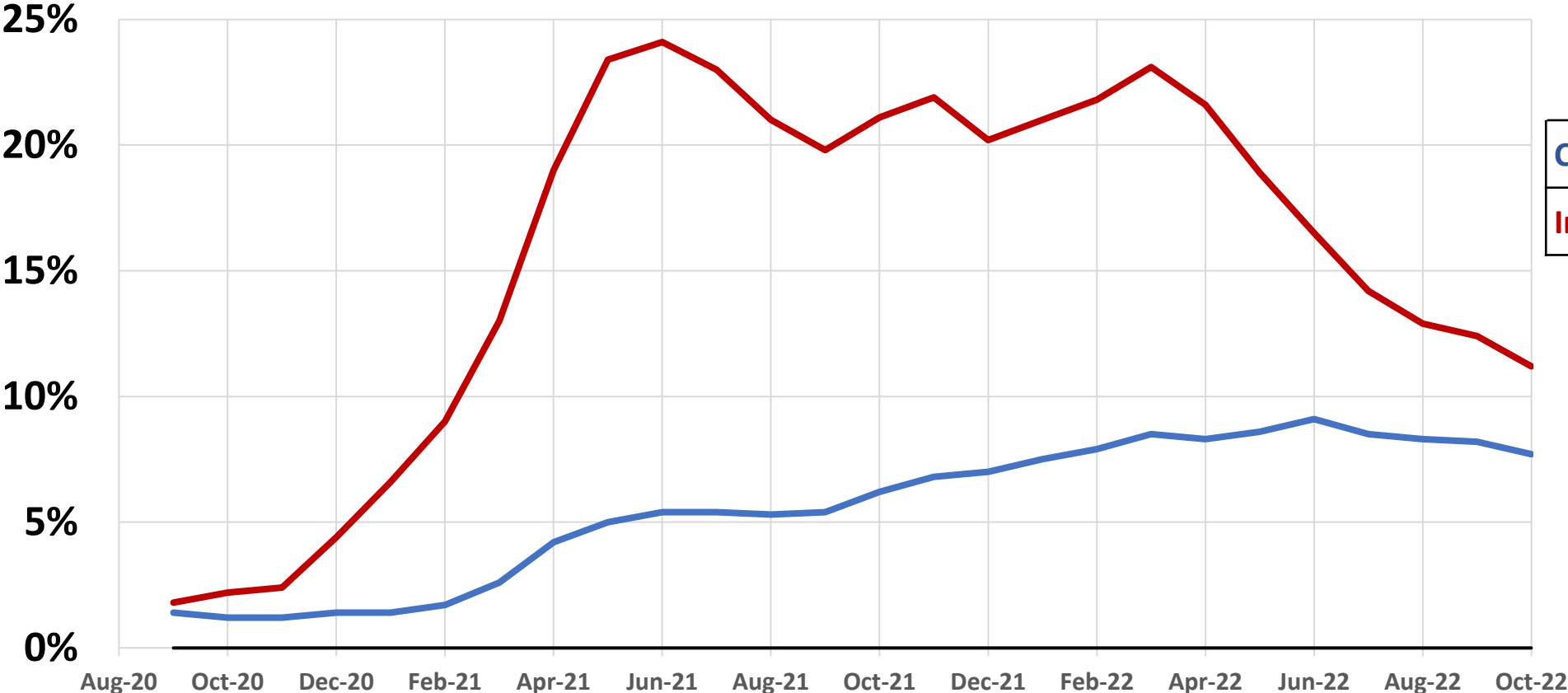
# Costs for new nonresidential construction vs. consumer prices

Year-over-year change in PPI for construction inputs and CPI

August 2020 - October 2022, not seasonally adjusted



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	12 months to:	
	Aug-20	Oct-22
<b>CPI</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
<b>Inputs PPI</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>



# Wide variation in construction input cost trends

change in producer price indexes (not seasonally adjusted)

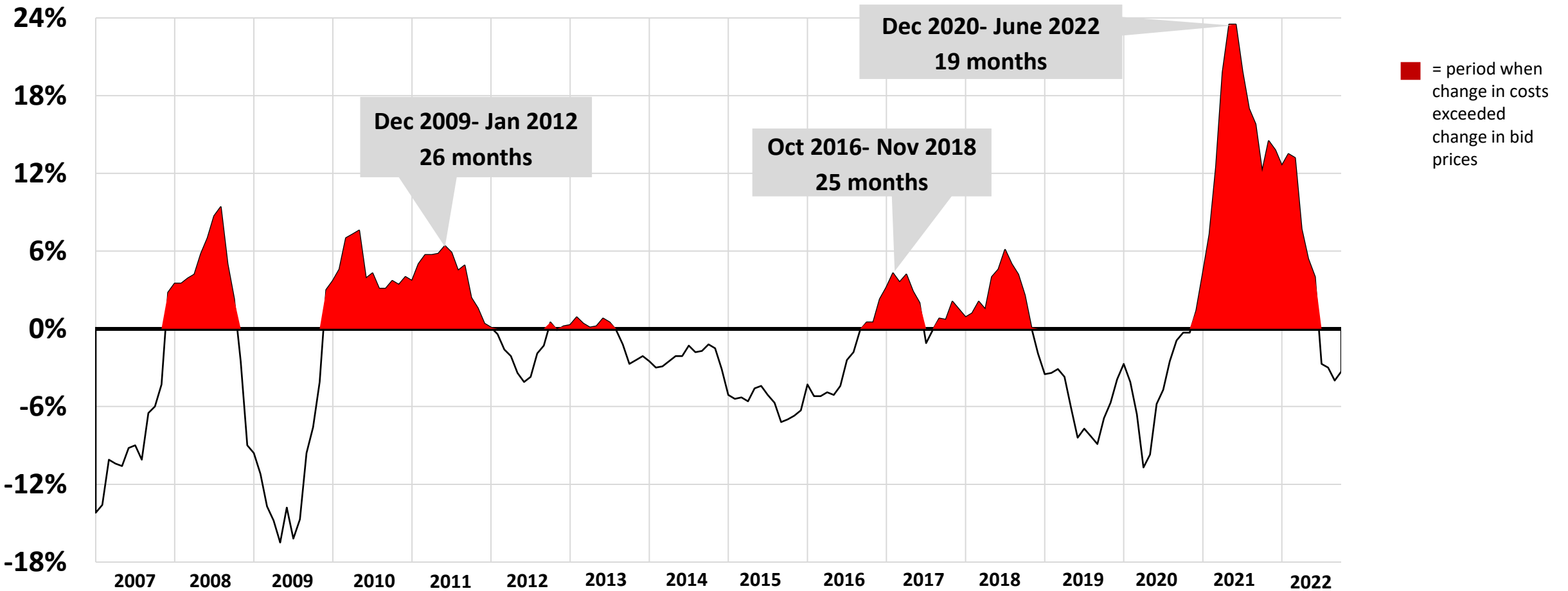
	<u>Oct 2022 change from:</u>	
	<u>Sep</u> <u>2022</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>2021</u>
#2 diesel fuel	9.8%	61.5%
Architectural coatings (paint, etc.)	1.1%	27.5%
Asphalt paving mixtures and blocks	-0.7%	20.7%
Concrete products	0.1%	14.1%
<u>Subcontractor price indexes, nonresidential building work</u>		
Roofing contractors	1.9%	21.5%
Electrical contractors	2.1%	18.8%
Plumbing contractors	3.7%	15.7%
Concrete contractors	1.1%	10.9%

# Cost squeeze on contractors can last two years or more

Difference between year-over-year change in materials costs vs. bid prices, Jan 2007-Oct 2022



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# Change (+/-) in construction spending: October 2022 vs. October 2021

current (not inflation-adjusted) dollars, seasonally adjusted



- Total 9%: private res 9% (**single-family -5%**; multi 2%; improvements 33%); private nonres 10%; public 10%

Largest segments (in descending order of October 2022 spending)

- Commercial 22% (warehouse 22%; retail 26%; farm 13%)
- Highway and street 12%
- Mfg. 33% (computer/electronic 170%; **chemical -26%**; food/beverage/tobacco 18%; transp. equip. 27%)
- **Power -10%** (**electric -9%**; **oil/gas fields & pipelines -12%**)
- Education 5% (primary/secondary 6%; higher ed 4%)
- Office 1%
- Transportation 2% (**air -12%**; freight rail/trucking 20%; mass transit 7%)
- Health care 8% (hospital 6%; medical building 7%; **special care -6%**)
- Sewage and waste disposal 17%
- Water supply 33%

# Forward-looking indicators



<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Latest date</b>	<b>Current value</b>	<b>Year-ago value</b>
Architecture Billings Index (ABI)	Oct.	47.7	53.9
Dodge Momentum Index (DMI)	Oct.	200	156
Multifamily permits not yet started	Oct.	146,000	111,000

# Medium-term outlook for construction



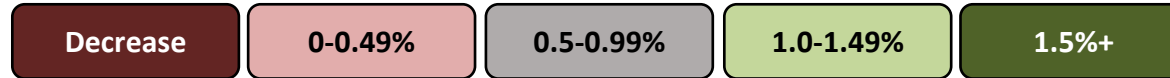
- Economic recovery should continue but likelihood of recession remains high
- Homebuilding is likely to fall for several months until prices, interest rates flatten
- Multifamily, warehouse, retail, office, lodging are at risk from slowdown, rising rates
- Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, “Chips+” Act, Inflation Reduction Act will give major boost to infrastructure, manufacturing, and power construction. BUT
  - money will be slow to turn into construction awards and spending
  - Buy America(n), labor, environmental strings may tie up project starts for years
- Materials cost and lead time trends are mixed, no longer all upward
- Labor availability has resumed being the #1 challenge for many contractors

# Long-run construction outlook (post-pandemic)



- Finding workers will be a challenge for much longer than materials costs or supply
- Slower population growth means slower demand growth for most construction
- Slowing demand for K-12, decline for higher ed construction
- Permanent shift from retail to e-commerce/distribution structures
- More specialized and online healthcare facilities; fewer hospitals, nursing homes
- More wind, solar, battery storage and charging facilities, and related manufacturing
- Not clear if offices will decentralize or remain in less demand
- Not clear if recent urban/rural or state-to-state migration will remain or reverse

# Population change by state, July 2020–July 2021 (U.S.: 0.12%)

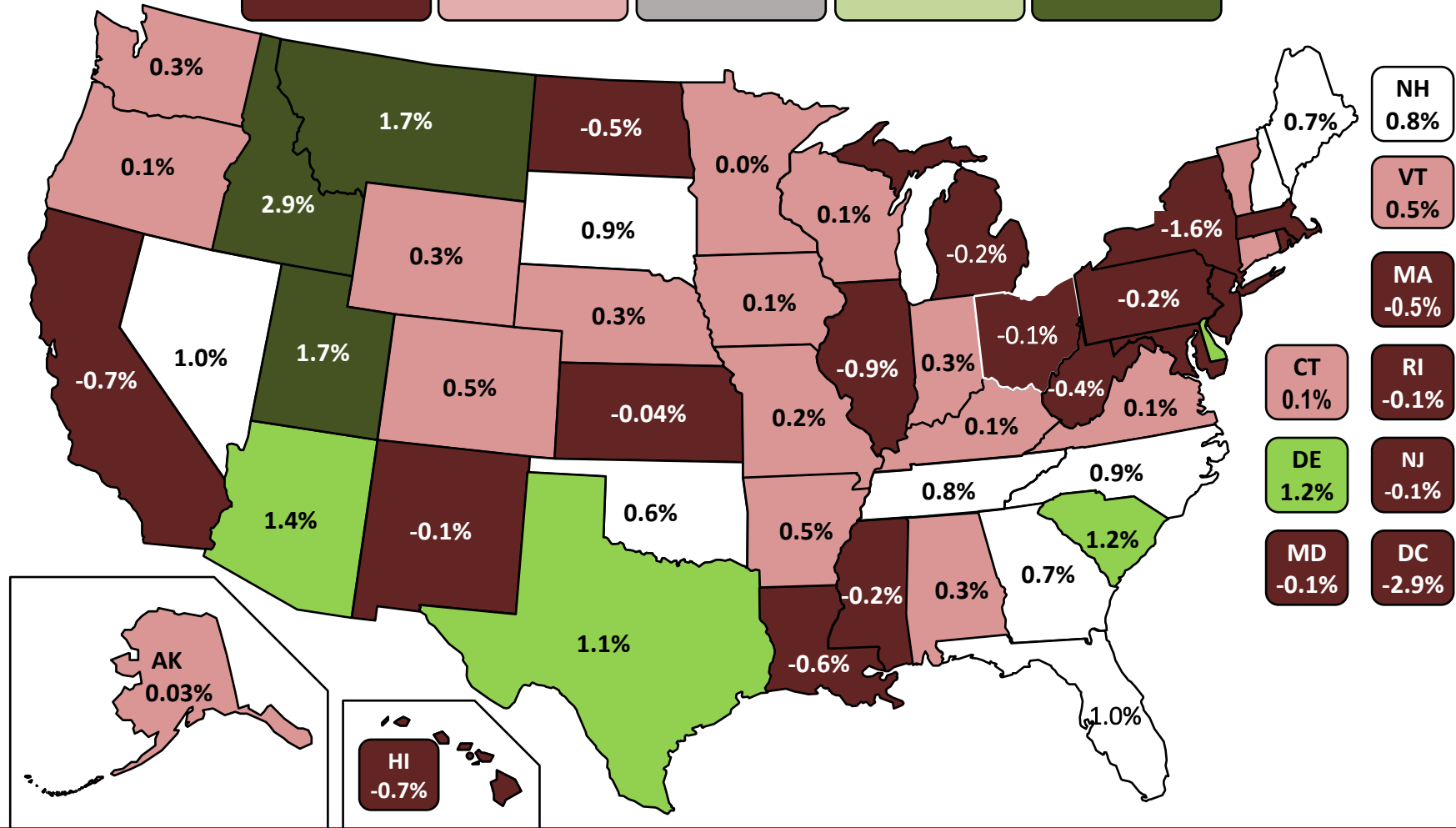


## Top 6

ID	2.9%
UT	1.7%
MT	1.7%
AZ	1.4%
SC, DE	1.2%

## Bottom 5

DC	-2.9%
NY	-1.6%
IL	-0.9%
HI	-0.7%
CA	-0.7%



# AGC economic resources

(email [ken.simonson@agc.org](mailto:ken.simonson@agc.org))



- *The Data DiGest*: weekly 1-page email (subscribe at <http://store.agc.org>)
- *Construction Inflation Alert*:  
<https://www.agc.org/learn/construction-data/agc-construction-inflation-alert>
- ConsensusDocs Price Escalation Resource Center:  
<https://www.consensusdocs.org/price-escalation-clause/>
- Surveys, state and metro data, fact sheets: [www.agc.org/learn/construction-data](http://www.agc.org/learn/construction-data)
- Monthly press releases: construction spending; producer price indexes; national, state, metro employment with rankings:  
<https://www.agc.org/newsroom>

