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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Cochise County's economy sends mixed signals as online sales pull dollars away from local stores

BENSON— Cochise County's economy delivered another month of mixed signals in March, with retail, restaurant, and lodging activity all moving on separate tracks. After adjusting for inflation, retail sales in the county rose 0.5% from March 2025 — a better showing than Arizona's 0.4% decline — but the momentum didn't carry through the full quarter. For January through March, county retail slipped 0.4%, compared to flat statewide performance.

Inflation played a decisive role in reshaping the numbers. March's nominal retail growth of 3.8% shrank to 0.5% after a 3.3-point CPI-U adjustment, and first-quarter nominal growth of 2.3% fell to -0.4% once inflation was factored in.

One category, however, continues to surge: remote sales. Online sellers with no physical presence in Arizona posted a 14.1% increase in Cochise County in March and 14.6% for the first quarter, roughly mirroring statewide gains of 17.0% and 13.4%, respectively.

But this growth comes with a cost. Every dollar spent with a remote seller is a dollar not circulating through Cochise County's own businesses, workers, and supply chains. While the county still collects tax revenue, the local economic multiplier — the recirculation of money through wages, rent, services, and local vendors — is largely lost. As online spending accelerates, it increasingly competes with the brick-and-mortar stores that anchor local economies.

Restaurants and bars had a difficult March, falling 5.2%, though the first quarter still managed a 0.8% gain. Lodging fared worse: hotel and motel receipts dropped 13.1% in March and 4.6% for the quarter, even as statewide lodging rose 4.3% in March and 6.1% year-to-date.

At the city level, the picture becomes even more uneven.

Benson saw declines across all sectors, with retail down 4.1% in March and 3.6% for the quarter. Restaurant and bar sales fell 15.4% in March and 10.2% year-to-date, while hotel receipts plunged 52.0% in March and 23.1% for the quarter.

Bisbee posted steep March declines — retail down 16.6% and restaurants down 17.7% — but the quarter told a different story. Restaurant and bar sales rose 9.9% for the first three months, and hotel receipts increased 9.3%.

Douglas was the county's strongest performer, with retail up 9.8% in March and 10.9% for the quarter. Restaurant and bar sales rose 1.3% in March and 1.7% year-to-date.

Huachuca City saw retail fall 17.6% in March and 11.1% for the quarter.

Sierra Vista posted a slight 0.2% retail decline in March and a 1.7% drop for the quarter. Restaurant and bar sales fell 4.6% in March but rose 1.2% year-to-date. Hotel receipts dropped 22.6% in March and 12.0% for the quarter.

Tombstone saw retail rise 5.6% in March and 3.7% for the quarter, while restaurant and bar sales fell 9.5% in March and 1.0% year-to-date. Lodging dipped 0.5% in March and 1.8% for the quarter.

Willcox delivered the sharpest contrast: retail surged 29.8% in March and 13.2% for the quarter, even as restaurant and bar sales fell 9.9% in March and 10.2% year-to-date. Hotel receipts dropped 27.4% in March and 23.6% for the quarter.

Taken together, Cochise County's early-2026 economy is a patchwork — part resilience, part retrenchment. Inflation continues to blur the picture, hospitality remains under pressure, and online spending is rising rapidly. The challenge ahead is clear: as more consumer dollars flow to remote sellers, fewer remain to support the local businesses that keep Cochise County's economy running.

For more information on the Cochise County economy, including current and historical data, visit [CochiseEconomy.com](http://CochiseEconomy.com), a partnership project of Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group, Arizona G&T Cooperatives, and community sponsors.

## Major industry sales

	March 2026	March 2025	Year-over-year Growth	Year-over-year Inflation-adjusted Growth	Year-to-date 2026	Year-to-date 2025	Year-to-date Annual Growth	Year-to-date Inflation-adjusted Growth
<b>ARIZONA</b>								
Retail	\$9,677,844,068	\$9,406,481,986	2.9%	-0.4%	\$26,436,539,354	\$25,737,030,171	2.7%	0.0%
Restaurant/Bar	\$2,272,102,800	\$2,260,881,806	0.5%	-2.8%	\$6,358,505,413	\$6,090,837,910	4.4%	1.7%
Hotel/Motel	\$753,687,030	\$700,474,571	7.6%	4.3%	\$1,959,937,575	\$1,802,451,188	8.7%	6.1%
Remote Seller*	\$1,605,337,583	\$1,335,248,725	20.2%	17.0%	\$4,391,809,062	\$3,784,260,214	16.1%	13.4%
<b>COCHISE COUNTY</b>								
Retail	\$112,259,486	\$108,165,269	3.8%	0.5%	\$297,702,263	\$291,077,738	2.3%	-0.4%
Restaurant/Bar	\$21,920,276	\$22,350,823	-1.9%	-5.2%	\$58,833,139	\$56,848,421	3.5%	0.8%
Hotel/Motel	\$5,592,818	\$6,200,648	-9.8%	-13.1%	\$14,683,089	\$14,970,898	-1.9%	-4.6%
Remote Seller*	\$23,780,173	\$20,256,370	17.4%	14.1%	\$65,796,798	\$56,104,066	17.3%	14.6%
<b>BENSON</b>								
Retail**	\$7,631,909	\$7,693,793	-0.8%	-4.1%	\$21,819,139	\$22,028,220	-0.9%	-3.6%
Restaurant/Bar	\$2,004,998	\$2,281,719	-12.1%	-15.4%	\$5,069,093	\$5,482,051	-7.5%	-10.2%
Hotel/Motel	\$236,531	\$461,571	-48.8%	-52.0%	\$923,081	\$1,160,461	-20.5%	-23.1%
<b>BISBEE</b>								
Retail	\$3,592,803	\$4,147,128	-13.4%	-16.6%	\$9,863,820	\$10,387,777	-5.0%	-7.7%
Restaurant/Bar	\$1,688,075	\$1,973,761	-14.5%	-17.7%	\$4,471,699	\$3,973,142	12.5%	9.9%
Hotel/Motel	\$858,405	\$836,127	2.7%	-0.6%	\$2,008,786	\$1,794,044	12.0%	9.3%
<b>DOUGLAS</b>								
Retail***	\$11,702,197	\$10,353,166	13.0%	9.8%	\$31,364,193	\$27,600,744	13.6%	10.9%
Restaurant/Bar	\$2,028,218	\$1,938,917	4.6%	1.3%	\$5,870,354	\$5,621,299	4.4%	1.7%
<b>HUACHUCA CITY</b>								
Retail	\$712,124	\$831,084	-14.3%	-17.6%	\$2,345,996	\$2,562,092	-8.4%	-11.1%
<b>SIERRA VISTA</b>								
Retail	\$60,498,325	\$58,708,926	3.0%	-0.2%	\$163,049,952	\$161,462,044	1.0%	-1.7%
Restaurant/Bar	\$11,498,033	\$11,650,884	-1.3%	-4.6%	\$32,449,133	\$31,238,413	3.9%	1.2%
Hotel/Motel	\$2,111,563	\$2,616,967	-19.3%	-22.6%	\$5,728,655	\$6,314,311	-9.3%	-12.0%
<b>TOMBSTONE</b>								
Retail	\$2,163,955	\$1,988,481	8.8%	5.6%	\$5,234,684	\$4,919,834	6.4%	3.7%
Restaurant/Bar	\$1,215,195	\$1,295,873	-6.2%	-9.5%	\$3,050,361	\$2,999,608	1.7%	-1.0%
Hotel/Motel	\$768,564	\$748,051	2.7%	-0.5%	\$1,736,030	\$1,720,056	0.9%	-1.8%
<b>WILLCOX</b>								
Retail****	\$6,057,299	\$4,551,123	33.1%	29.8%	\$16,190,391	\$13,975,694	15.8%	13.2%
Restaurant/Bar	\$1,649,187	\$1,767,451	-6.7%	-9.9%	\$3,754,920	\$4,060,137	-7.5%	-10.2%
Hotel/Motel	\$542,137	\$714,301	-24.1%	-27.4%	\$1,745,495	\$2,207,201	-20.9%	-23.6%

Source: Estimates by US Economic Research based on Arizona Department of Revenue tax collection data.

Note: Inflation adjustments made using CPI-U. Retail excludes food for home consumption. \* Includes sales from sellers without a physical presence in Arizona and annual gross sales in-state of \$100,000 or more. \*\*Excludes single Items over \$5,000.

\*\*\*Excludes single Items over \$10,000. \*\*\*\*Excludes single Items over \$1,250.

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