

Rising Food Prices, Soaring Gold, and Unemployment Updates

October 21, 2024

- **The Food Price Fight Continues** – The Consumer Price Index increased 0.2% in September 2024, bringing the 12-month average to 2.4%. The food index increased 0.4% and the shelter index rose 0.2%, making up a majority of the increase. These increases were partially offset by a 1.9% decline in the energy index (source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- **Staying Steady** – The ISM Manufacturing PMI remained unchanged at 47.2% in September 2024. New orders and inventories contracted from 44.6% to 46.1% and 50.3% to 43.9%, respectively, in September 2024. Production also contracted from 44.8% to 49.8%, indicating less output (source: Institute for Supply Management).
- **Rising Revenue** – JPMorgan Chase released its third quarter earnings call, citing revenue of \$43.3 billion, a \$2.6 billion year-over-year increase from Q3 2023. However, net income was down 2% from Q3 2023 at \$12.9 billion (source: JPMorgan Chase).
- **A Decimal Decline** – The unemployment rate declined 0.1%, to 4.1% in September 2024. Total nonfarm payroll increased 254,000. Notable additions were in food services and drinking places, which added 69,000 jobs, health care with 45,000 additions, and government with 31,000 positions added (source: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- **Battling Boeing** – Boeing announced 17,000 job cuts and \$5 billion in earnings charges as the machinist strike enters its fifth week. Boeing's new product, the 777X, has now been delayed over a year, with major customers, like Emirates Airline, not happy about the delay (source: Reuters).
- **Make it Local** – August 2024 exports totaled \$271.8 billion, which was \$5.3 billion higher than July 2024. In addition, August 2024 imports were \$3.2 billion lower than July 2024 at \$342.2 billion (source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis).
- **Still Golden** – The price of gold increased 5.9% in September 2024, setting another all-time high at \$2,661.90. The price ended the month at \$2,630.00 per ounce (source: Y Charts).
- **Ford Fiasco** – The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) opened a preliminary evaluation of 35,950 Ford Flex vehicles over rear-camera failure. NHTSA says it received 23 reports alleging rear-camera issues on 2019 model vehicles (source: Reuters).
- **The Rocket Race** – Elon Musk's Starship rocket was able to successfully catch a booster rocket on the launch pad. This is the first time a rocket has been able to be caught on the

landing pad, which preserves the device's hardware and results in more rapid deployment in the future (source: BBC News).

- **Milton Makes History** – Hurricane Milton became the fifth most rapidly intensifying hurricane ever seen in the Atlantic Ocean, fueled by record to near-record warmth across the Gulf of Mexico. Milton follows Hurricane Beryl in July as a Category 5 hurricane. There have only been five other years on record with more than one Category 5 hurricane in a single season (source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

Definitions and Indexes

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