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## **Borderplex Business Barometer, Volume 5, Number 5**

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T.M. Fullerton, Jr., S.L. Fullerton, and A.P. Gutierrez-Zubiate, 2021, "Borderplex Bifurcation"  
*Borderplex Business Barometer* 5(5), 1-57.

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# BORDERPLEX BUSINESS BAROMETER

**May 2021**

**Border Region Modeling Project**

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*Border Commerce & Economics*

**Borderplex Business Barometer, Volume 5, Number 5**

**Borderplex Bifurcation**

The Covid-19 lockdown recession of 2020 was triggered by the first global disease pandemic in more than a century. The pandemic placed human capital at risk throughout the world as well as within the Borderplex regional economy. Controlling the Covid-19 infection rate has always been the key first step toward eventual economic recovery from the pandemic. By the fourth week of May 2021, more than 819 thousand vaccines have been administered in El Paso County. Approximately 360 thousand El Paso residents have received full doses of one of the vaccines, with nearly 459 thousand recipients of one dose.

In response to similar progress across Texas, many state and local commercial restrictions have now been lifted. In response, the El Paso labor market has re-gained many of the jobs that were lost beginning in March 2020. Revised data indicate that the 6.9 percent April 2021 El Paso unemployment rate is less than one-half of its prior-year level. Leading the chargeback to normalcy in April was the leisure and hospitality sector as restaurants, hotels, and entertainment businesses continued to post sales increases.

Similar progress has also been achieved in Doña Ana County. New Mexico Department of Health data indicate that by the fourth week of May 2021, more than 89 thousand county residents have completed one of the Novel Coronavirus vaccination series. With fewer than 8 cases per 100 thousand people for the previous four consecutive weeks, Doña Ana County reached the "turquoise" level of lockdown restrictions during the first week of May. Among other things, reaching the turquoise level means that commerce can expand with restaurants in the Las Cruces metropolitan economy allowed to operate at 75 percent of capacity.

While still under the "green" level of lockdown restrictions, the county labor market posted some notable improvements. In April, substantial job gains were achieved within the restaurant, hotel, and retail trade segments. As shown in the accompanying graphs, those increases helped the greater Las Cruces jobless rate drop to 7.7 percent, a 200 basis point drop from 12 months earlier. Turquoise related commercial acceleration may lead to similar developments in the May statistical estimates, as well.

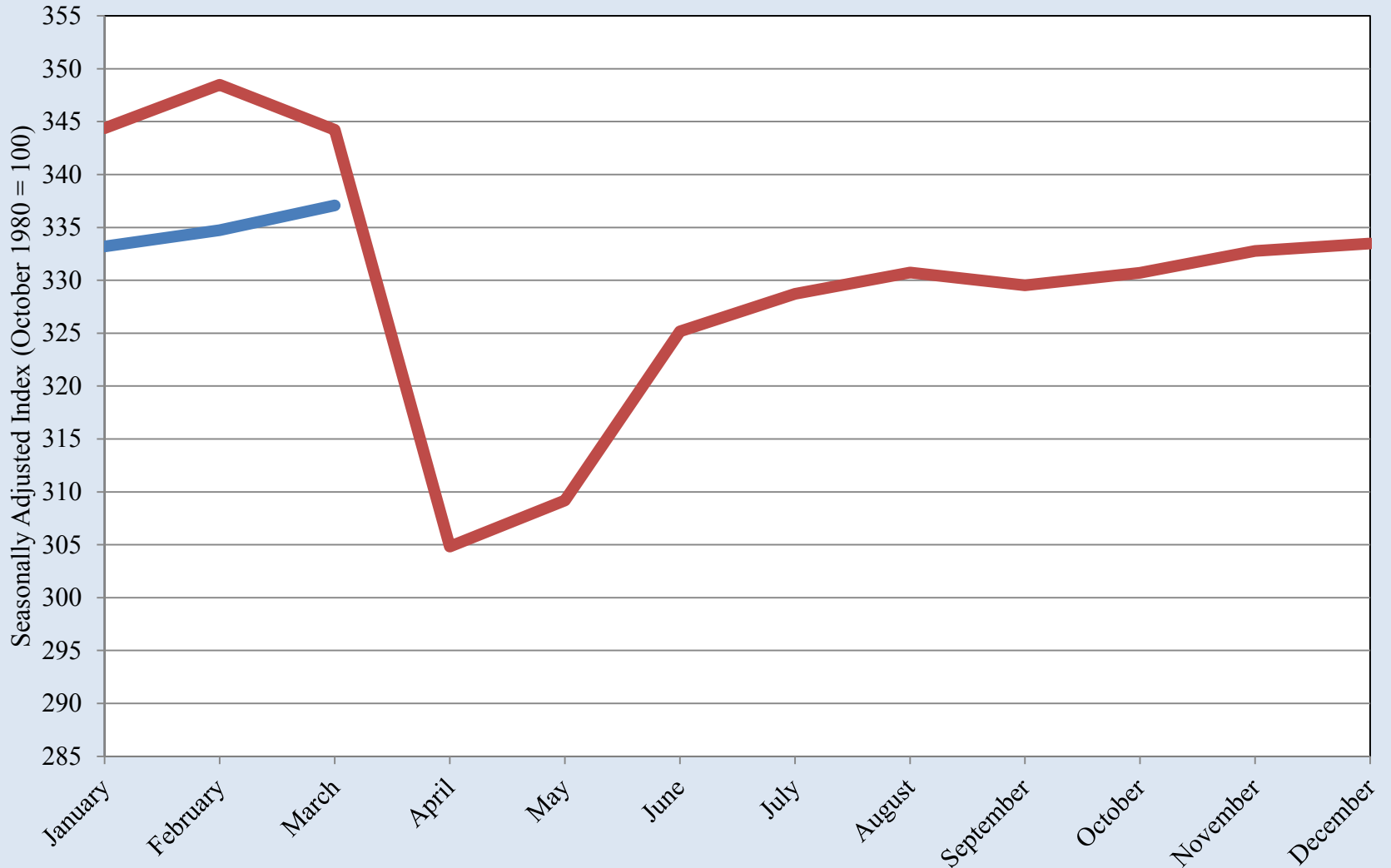
Although the nascent turnarounds in El Paso and Las Cruces are welcome news, similar progress has yet to materialize in Ciudad Juarez or Chihuahua City. Relatively high Covid-19 infection rates have periodically caused curfews to be implemented in both cities during the last 12 months. Nationally, less than 10 percent of the population in Mexico has been fully vaccinated by the fourth week of May. In recent weeks, export manufacturing companies have been coordinating efforts with the Chihuahua State Public Health officials to administer vaccines to 50- to 59-year-old workers in both cities. Until the vaccination program extends to the population in general, commerce will continue to operate at levels that are well below

full capacity.

All of the above manifest themselves in various manners in the accompanying graphs that appear in this month's report. While many commercial data aggregates remain well below historical norms, Borderplex region industrial activity has been largely shielded from the impacts of the Coronavirus lockdown. Airfreight volumes remain intact, but commercial passenger flows are substantially below pre-pandemic levels. International bridge cargo traffic has generally exceeded year-ago totals in recent months, while automobile and pedestrian volumes have been deliberately reduced by a tri-lateral agreement between Ottawa, Washington, and Mexico City. Manufacturing activity and payrolls have remained strong across the State of Chihuahua, but commercial sector weakness caused overall economic activity to fall in 2020 with additional difficulties on deck in 2021. Until the rate of vaccinations accelerates in the southern half of the region, the odd patterns depicted in many of the graphs shown below will persist throughout the remainder of 2021 and maybe longer.

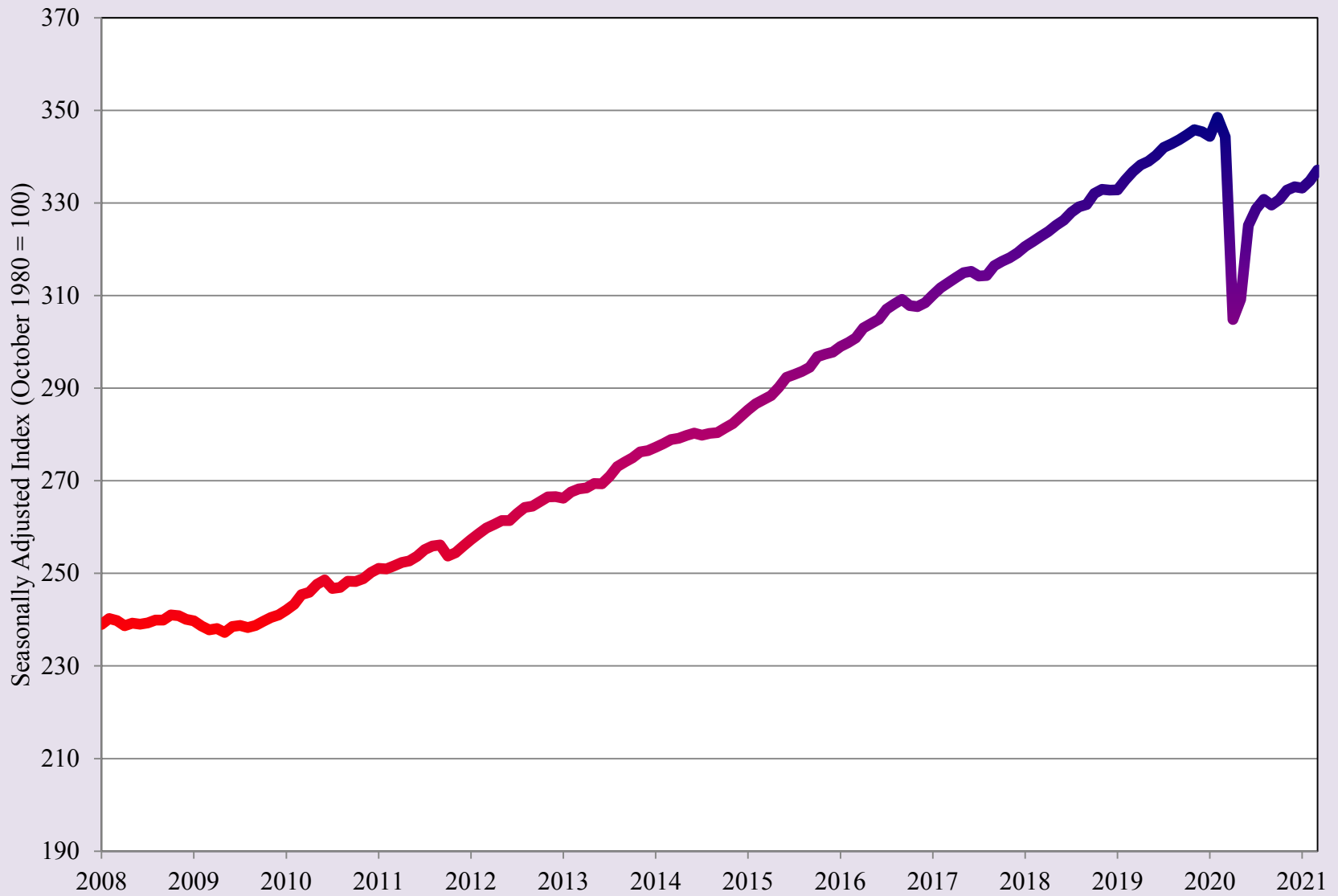
## El Paso Metropolitan Business Cycle Index

2020 2021



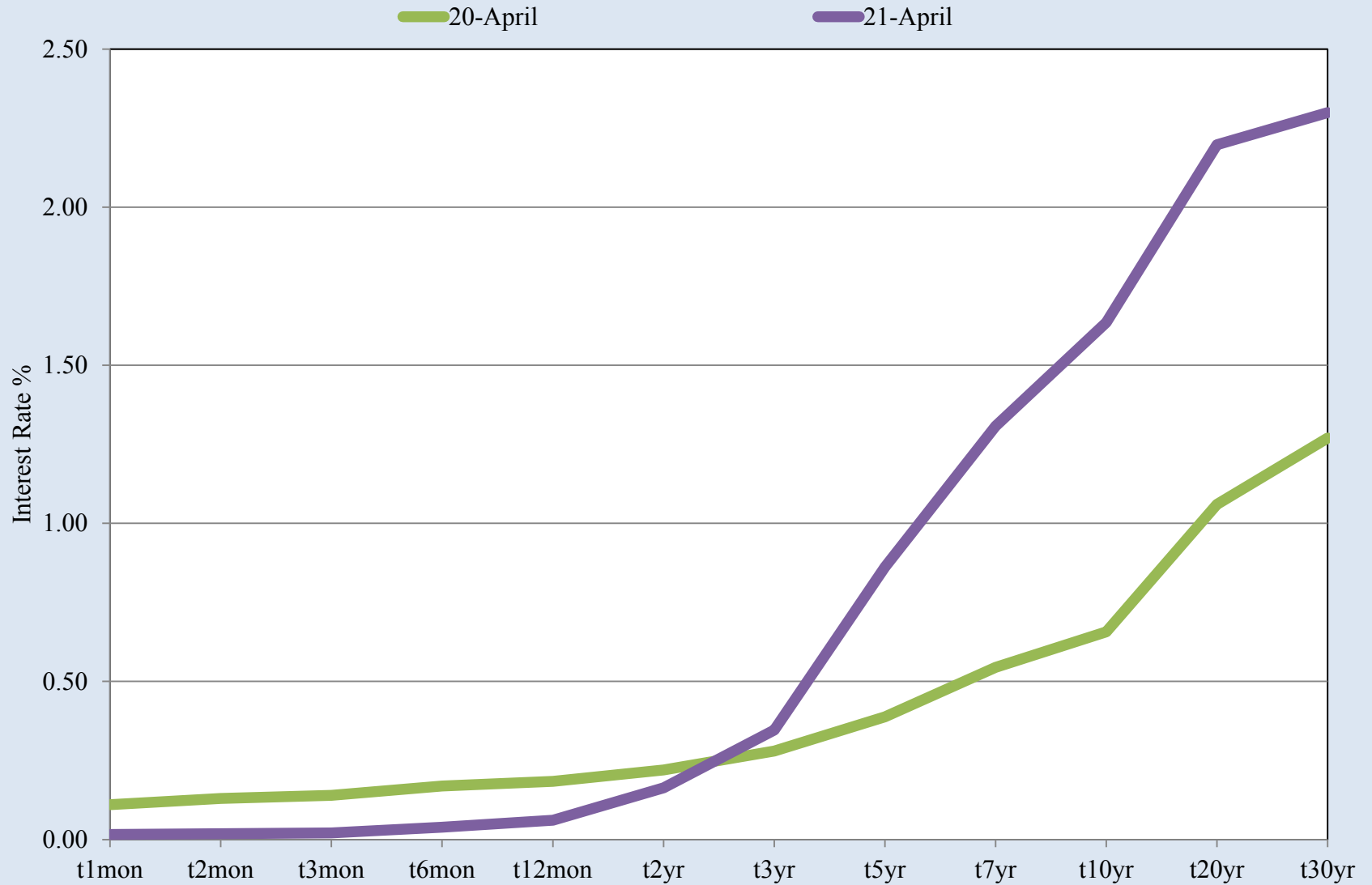
Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

## El Paso Metropolitan Business Cycle Index



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

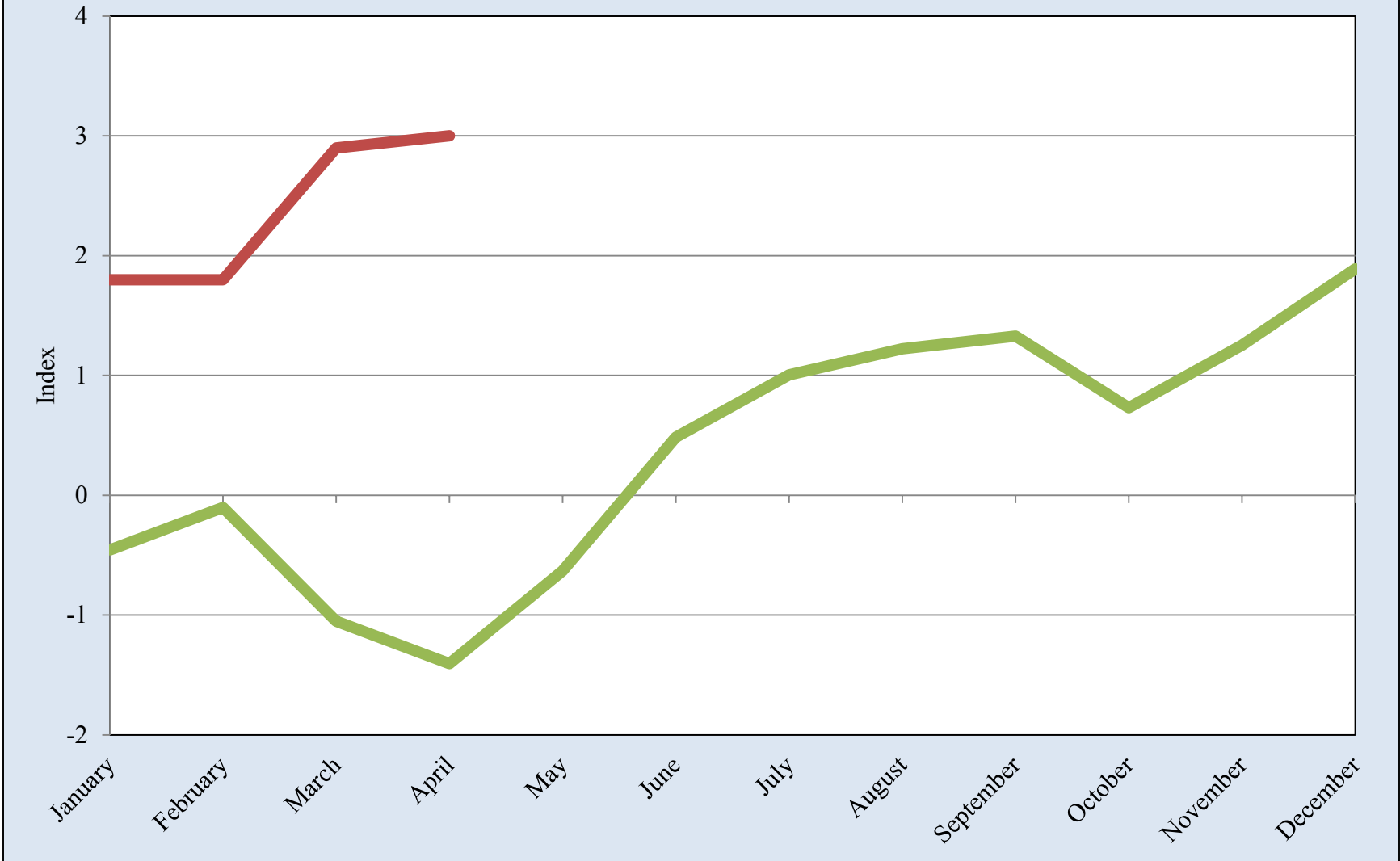
## Average Treasury Yield Curve Rates



Source: U.S. Treasury, Daily Treasury Yield Curve Rates and BRMP Calculations

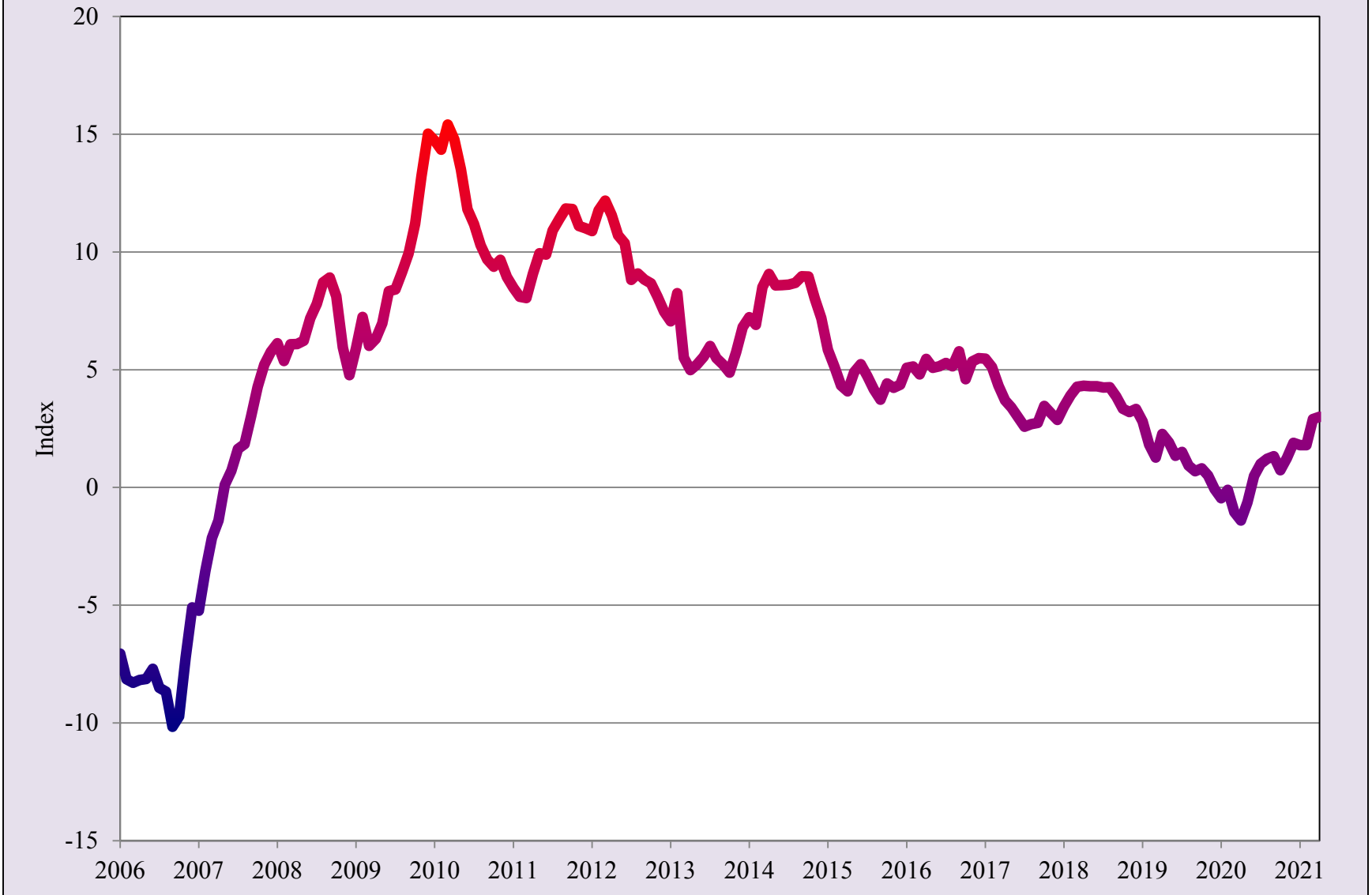
# El Paso Household Economic Stress Index

2020 2021



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project

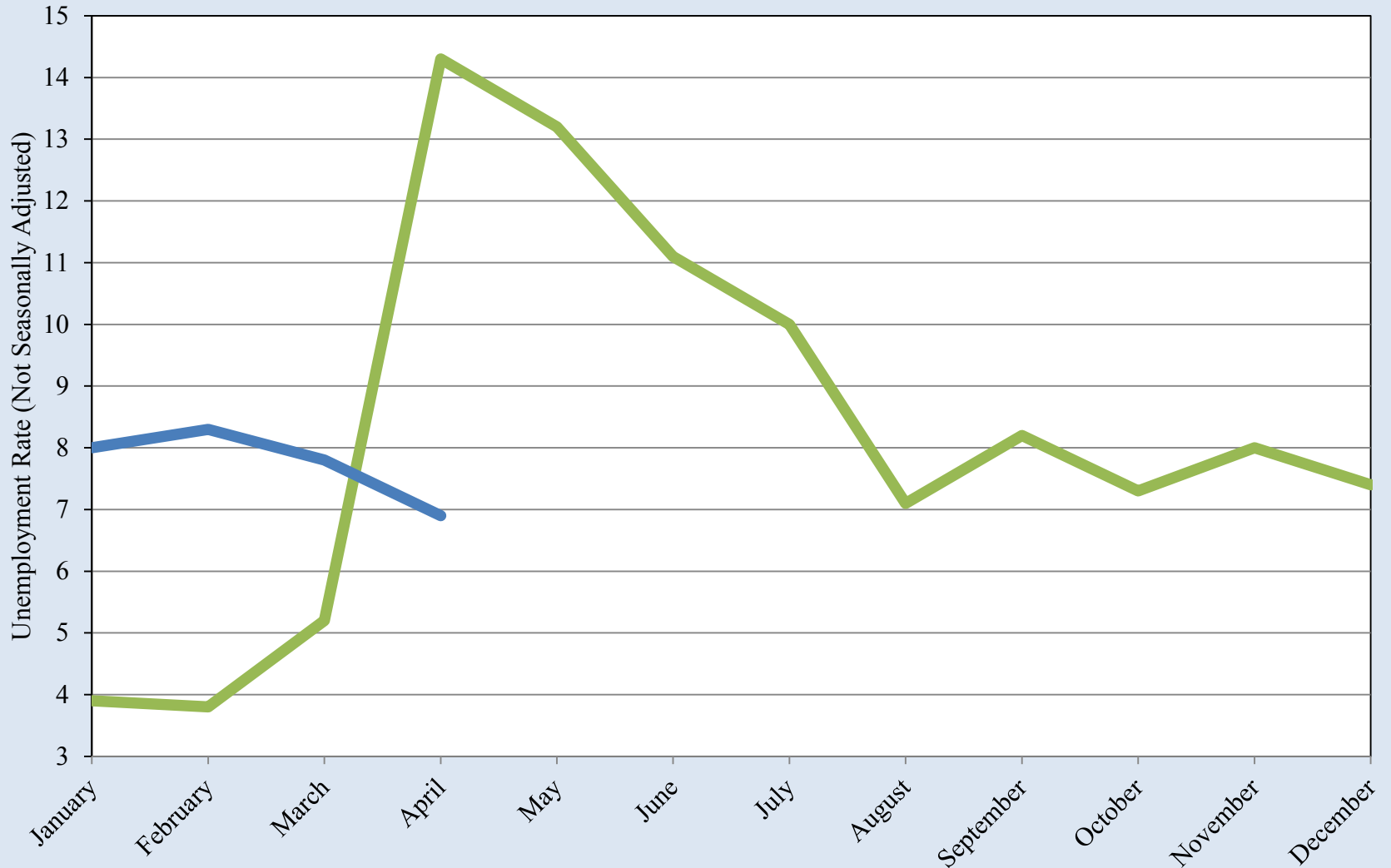
## El Paso Household Economic Stress Index



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project

## El Paso County Unemployment Rate

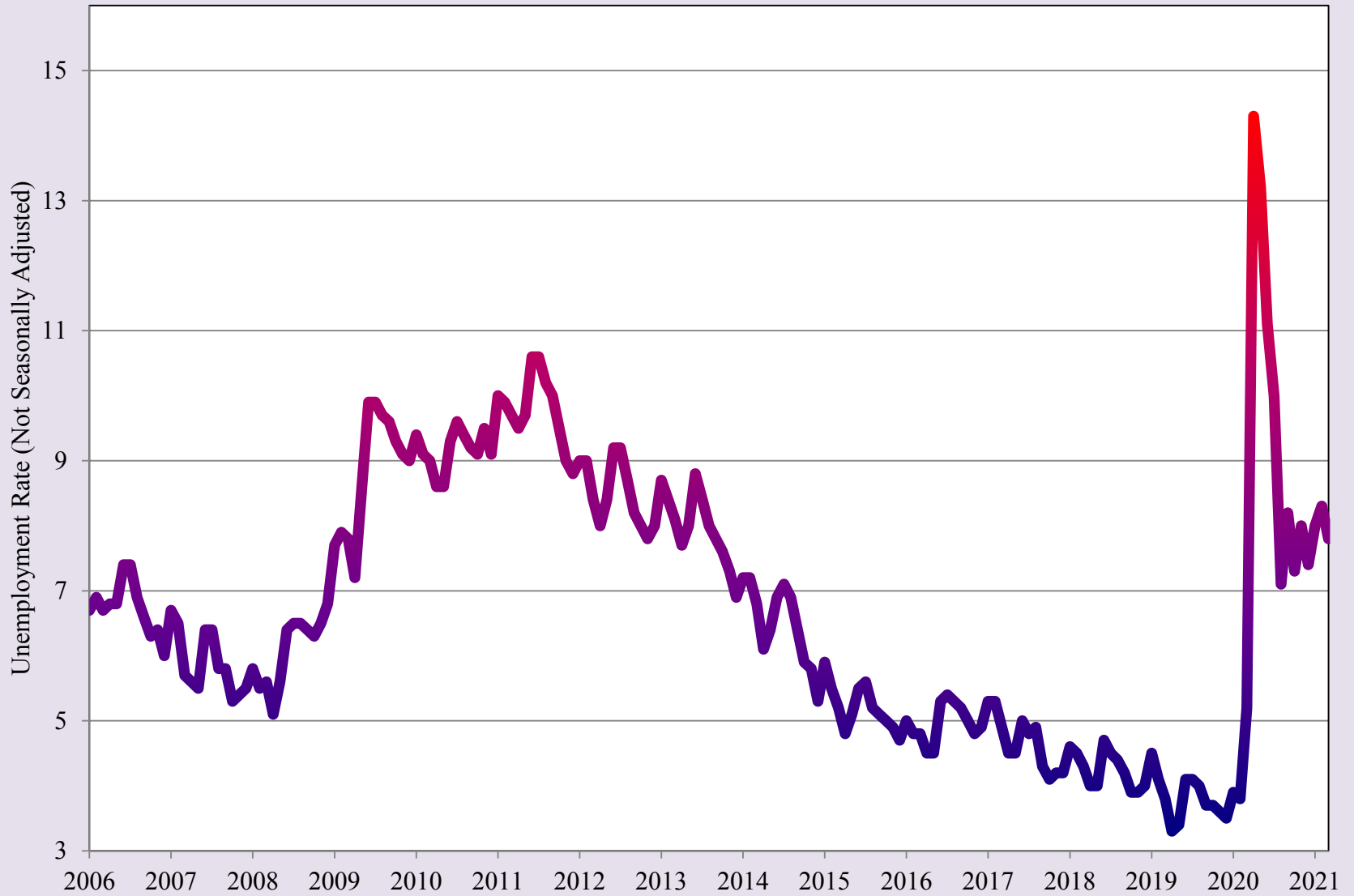
2020 2021



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

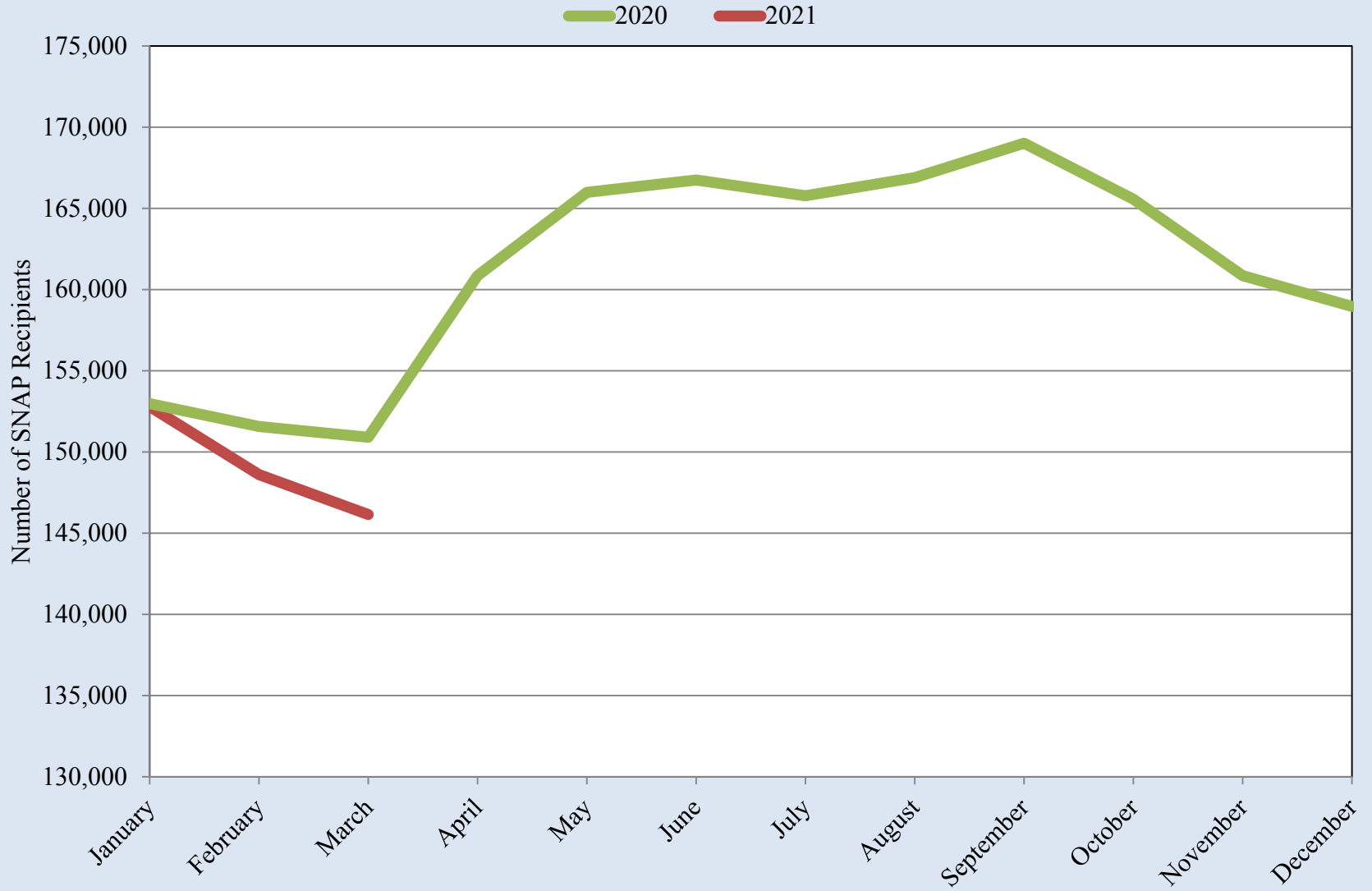


## El Paso County Unemployment Rate



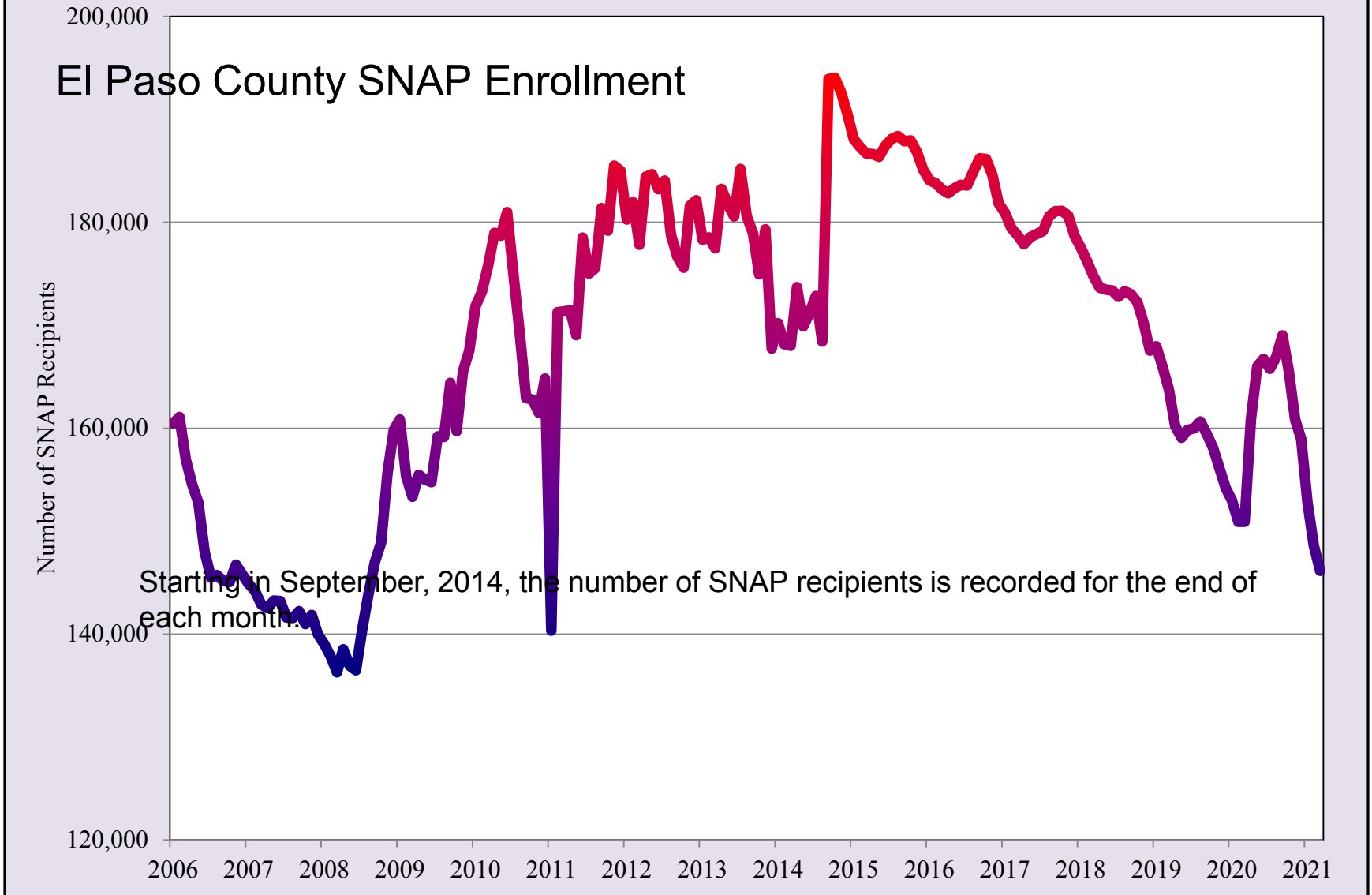
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## El Paso County SNAP (Food Stamp) Enrollment



Source: Texas Health and Human Services Commission

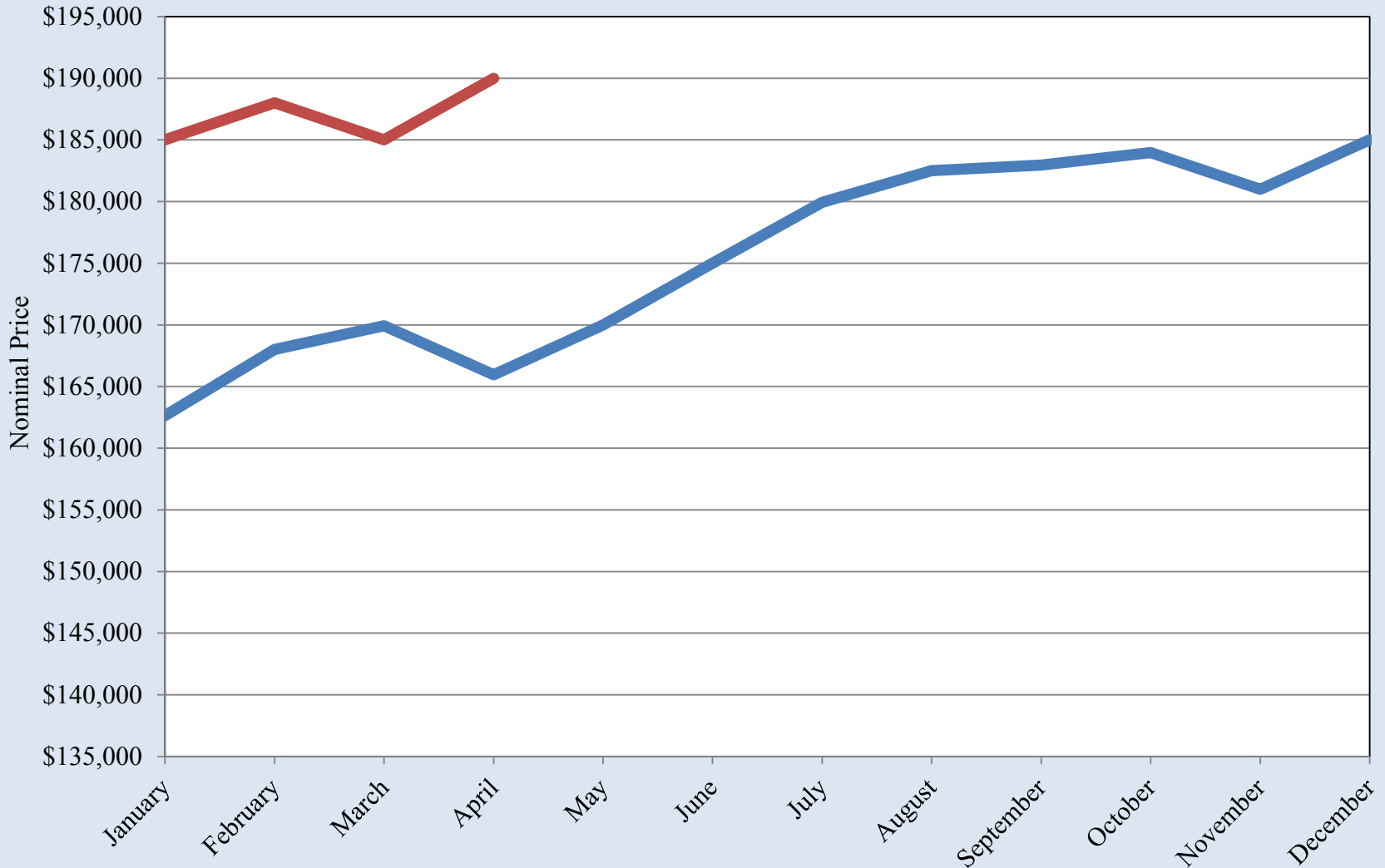
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Source: Texas Health and Human Services Commission

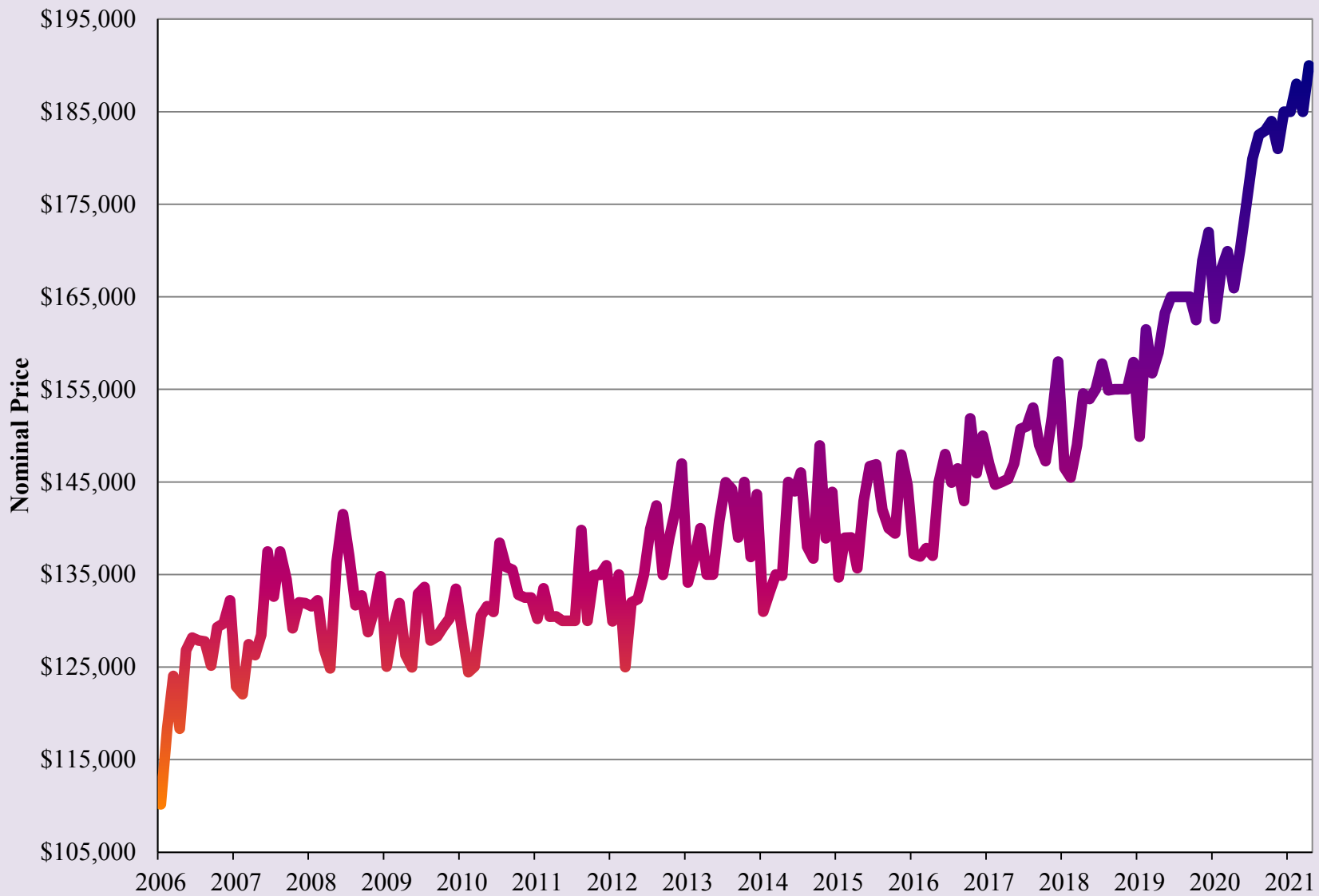
## El Paso Median Housing Prices

— 2020 — 2021



Source: Texas A&M Real Estate Center

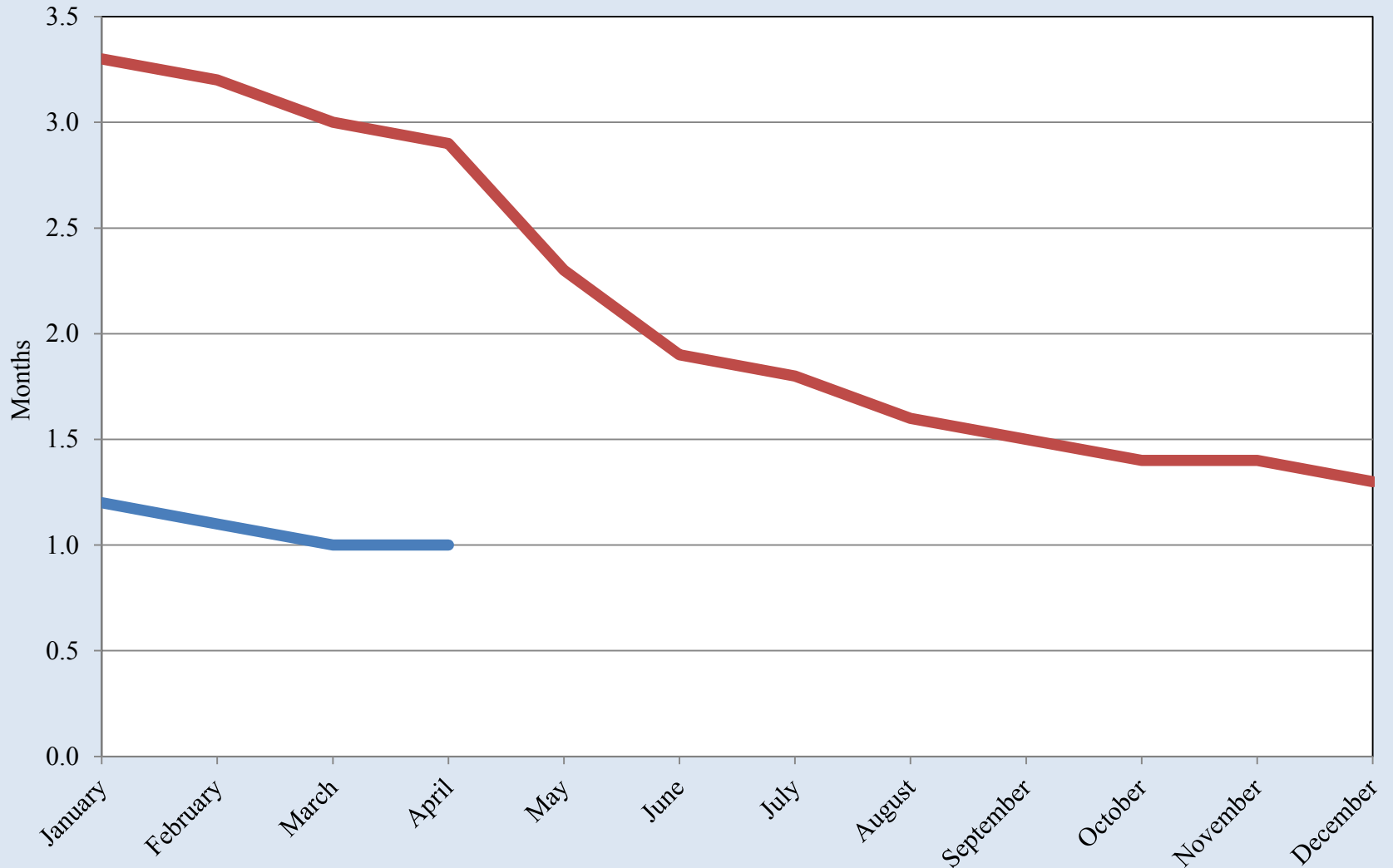
## El Paso Median Housing Prices



Source: Texas A&M Real Estate Center

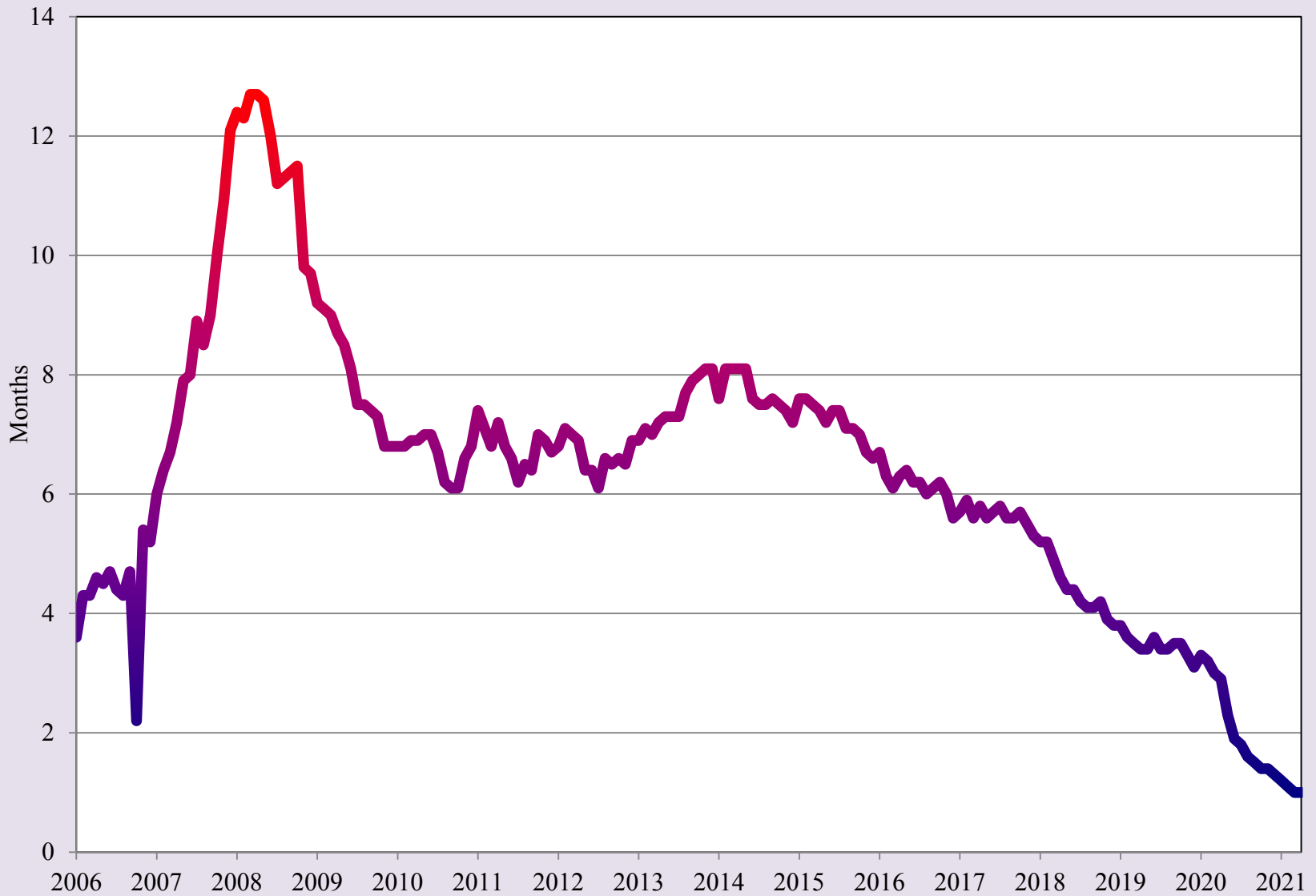
## Months of Housing Inventory for El Paso

2020 2021



Source: Texas A&M Real Estate Center

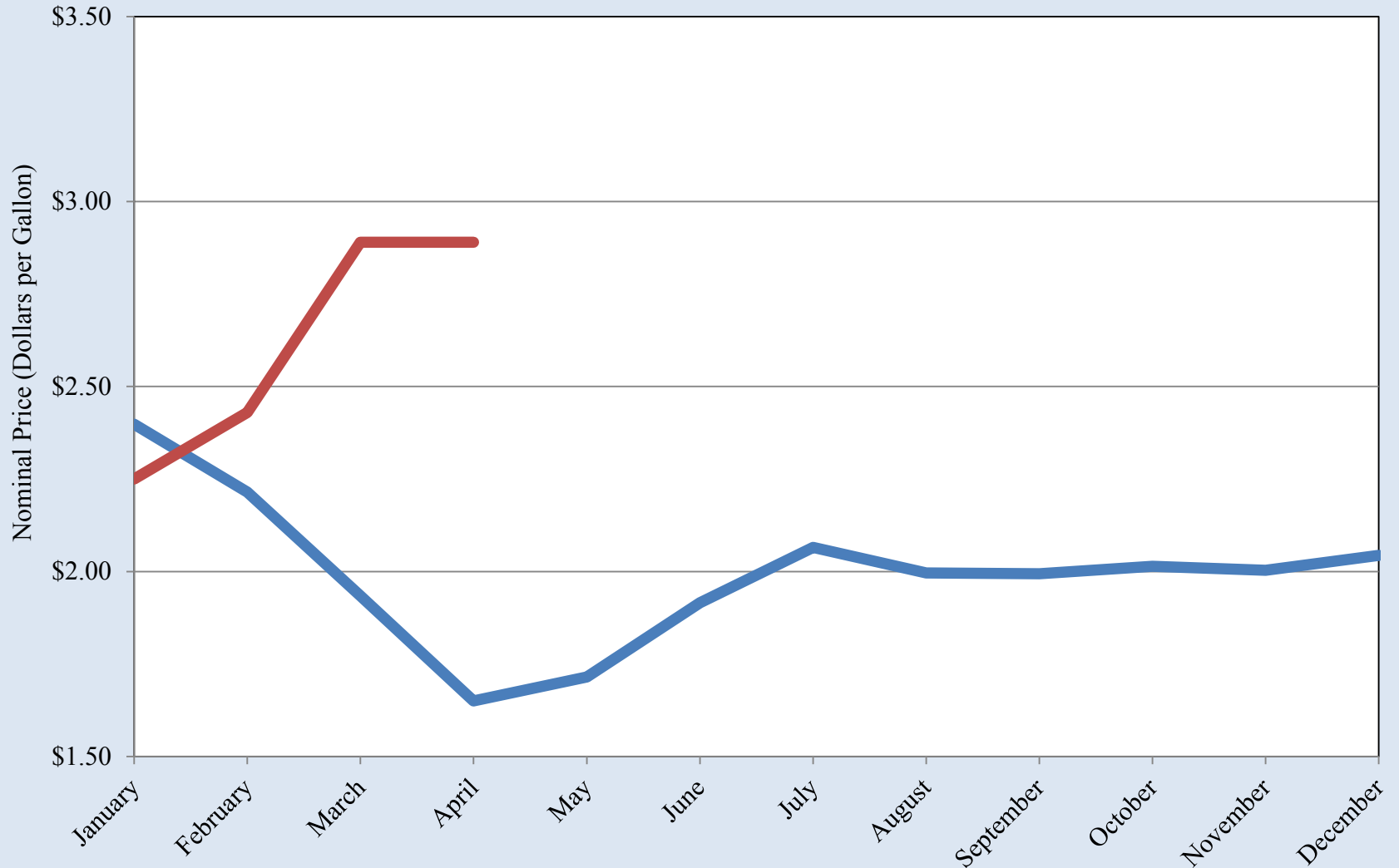
## Months of Housing Inventory for El Paso



Source: Texas A&M Real Estate Center

## El Paso Gasoline Prices

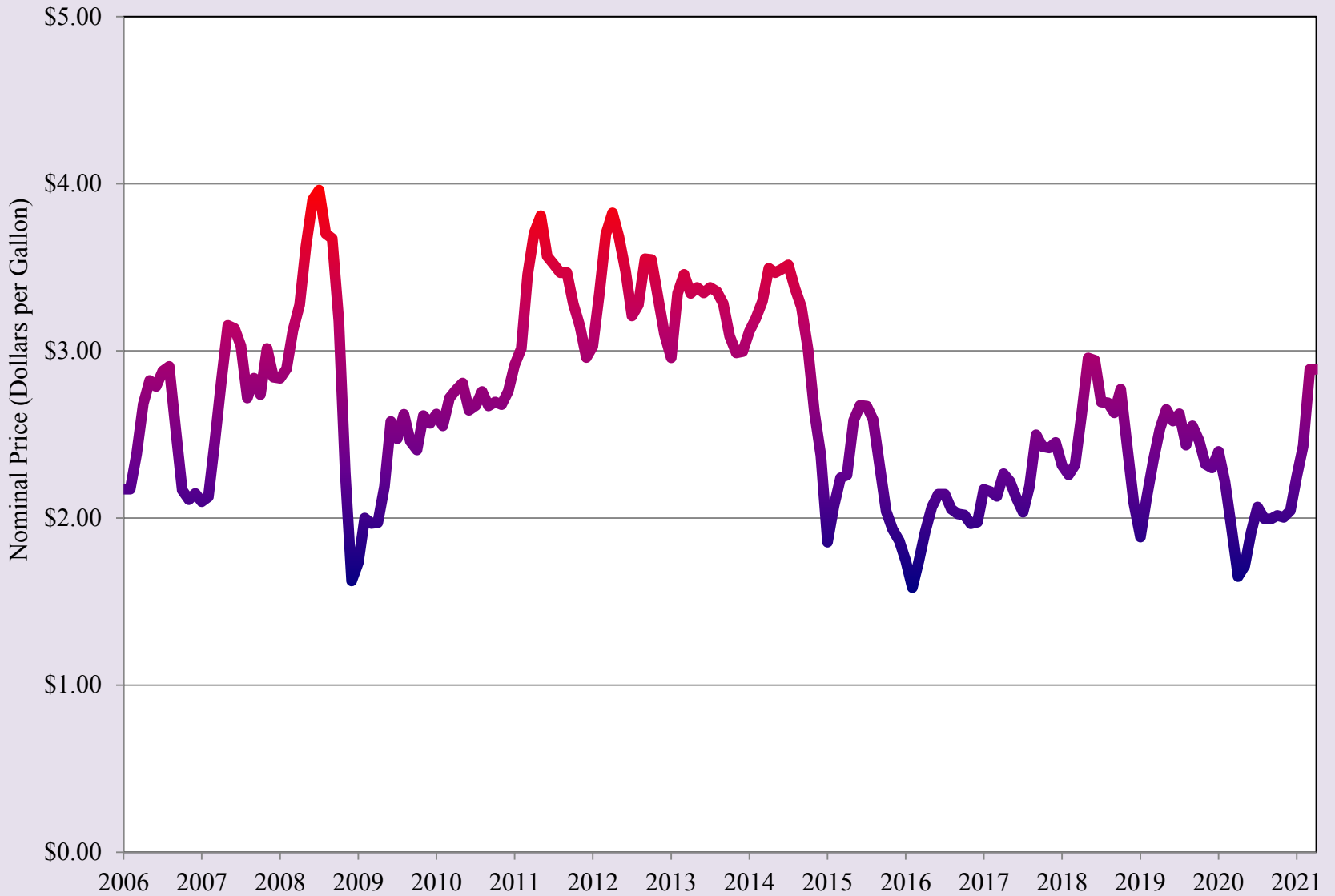
— 2020 — 2021



Source: GasBuddy.com



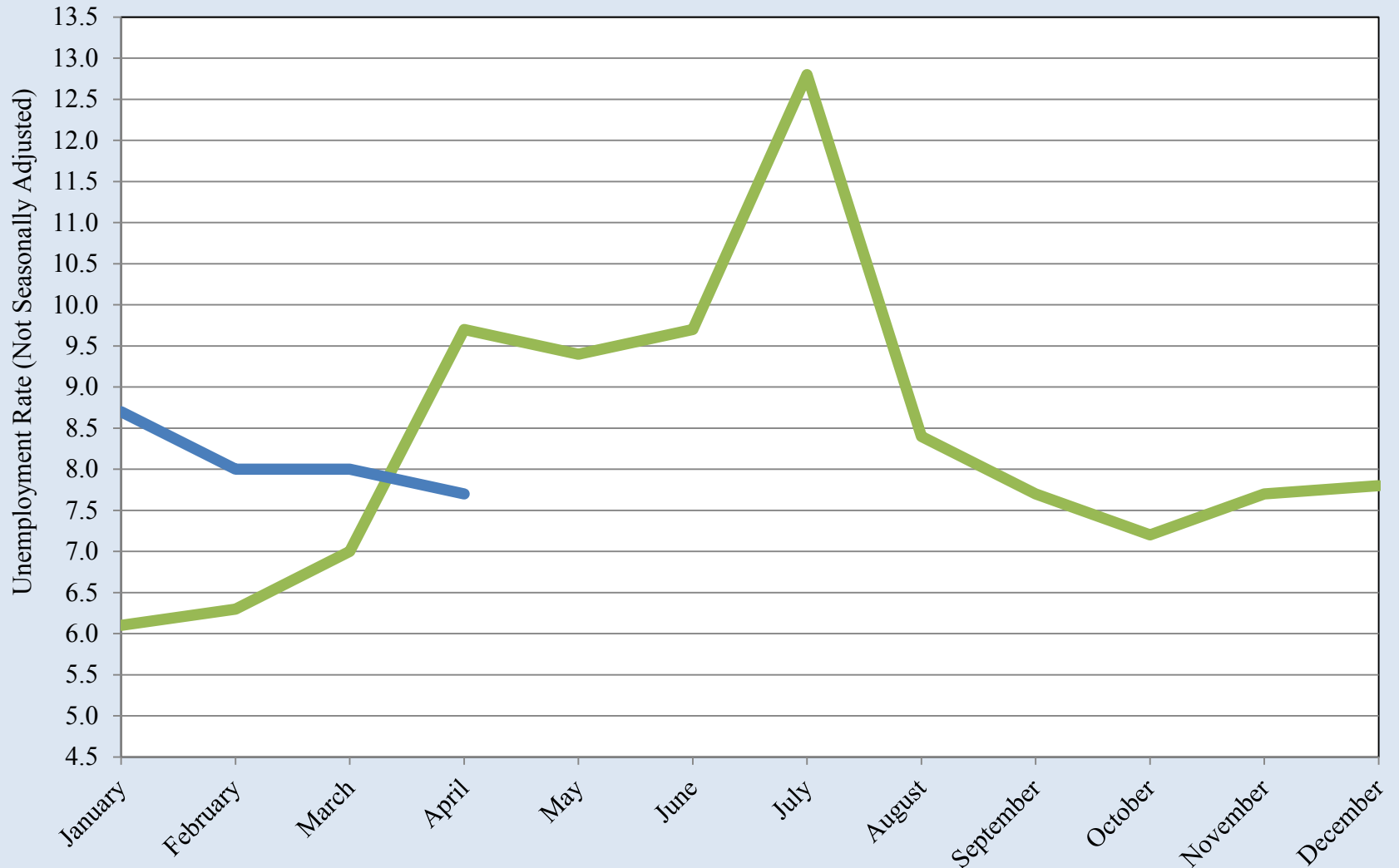
## El Paso Gasoline Prices



Source: GasBuddy.com

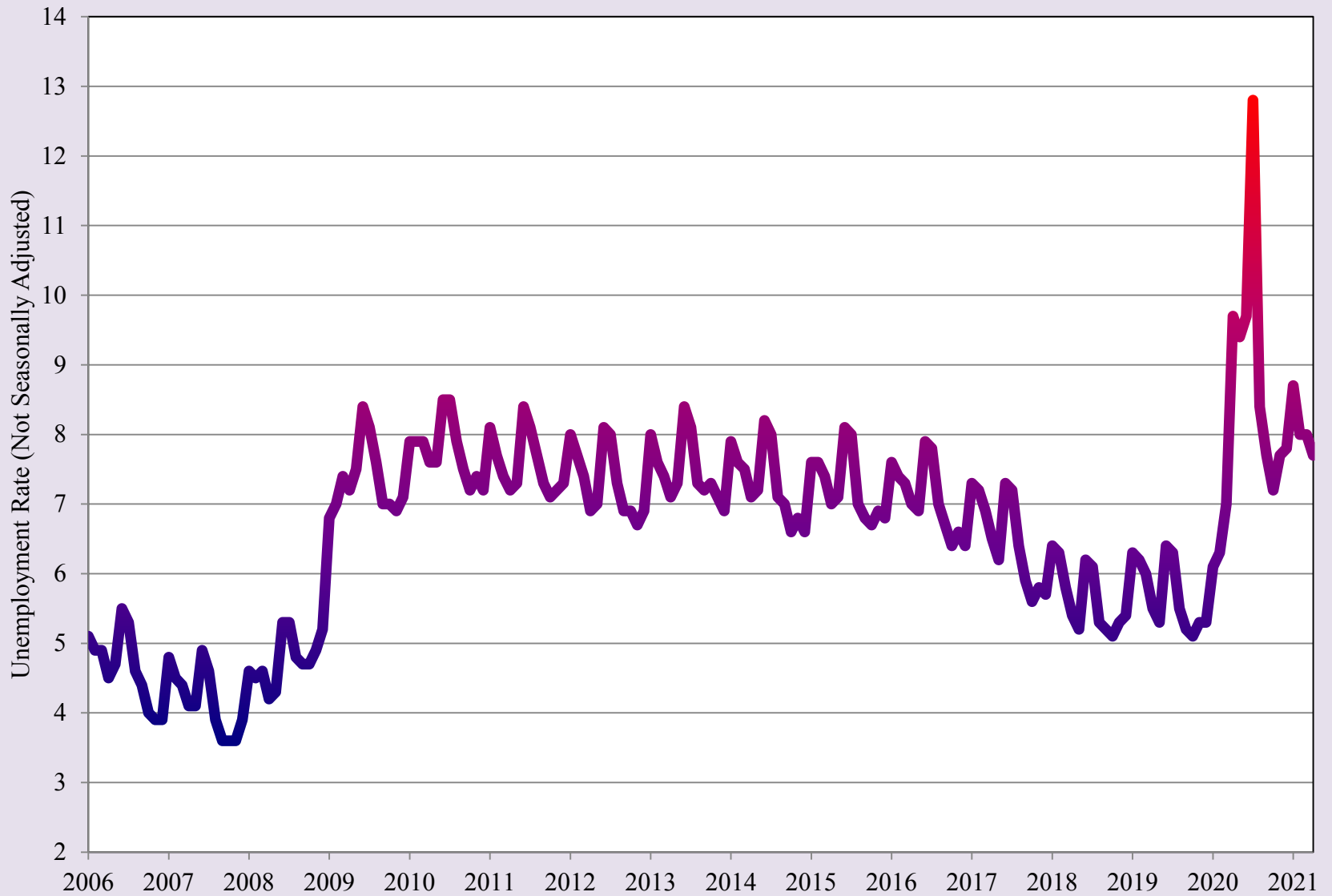
## Doña Ana County Unemployment Rate

2020 2021



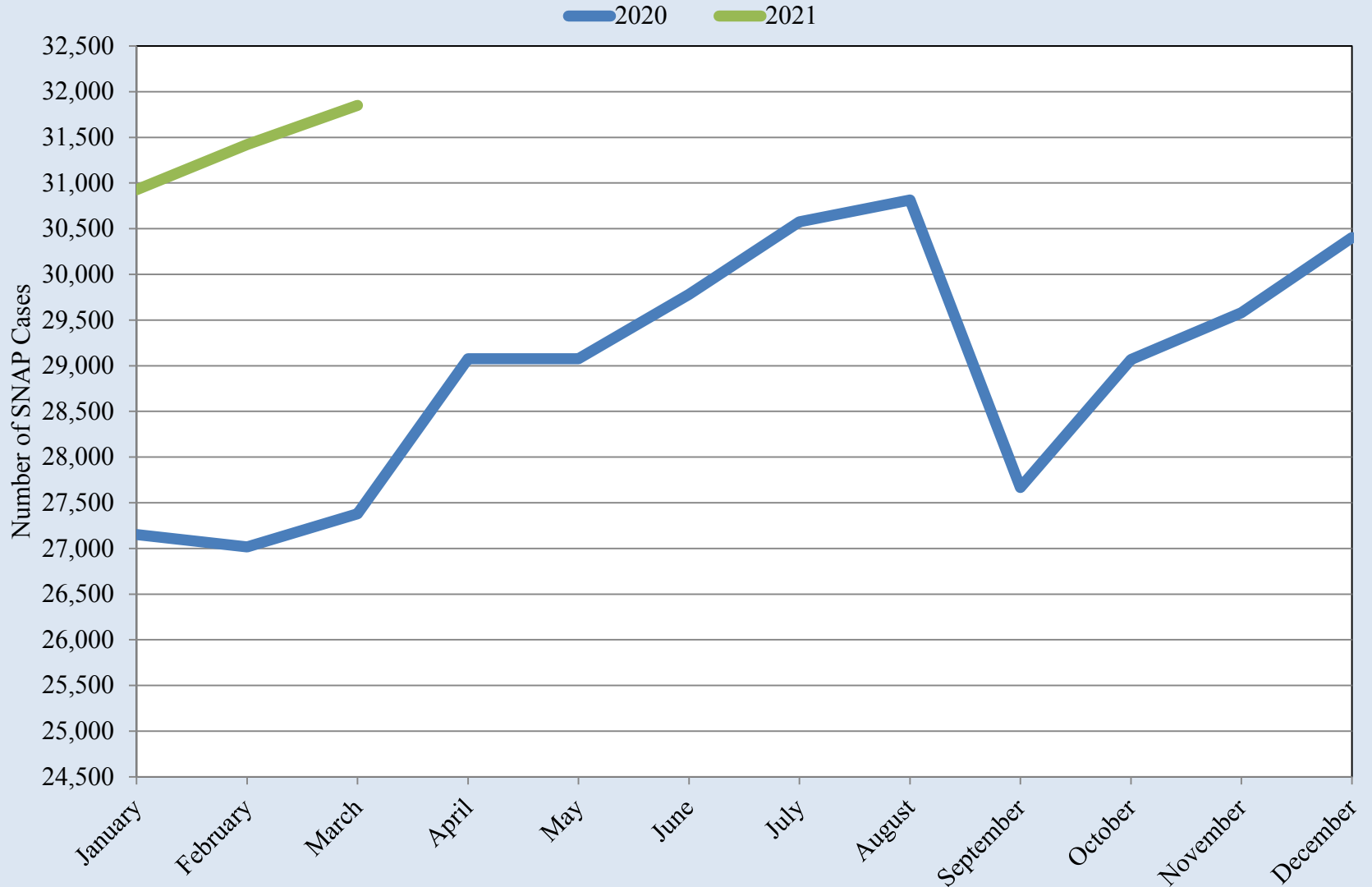
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Doña Ana County Unemployment Rate



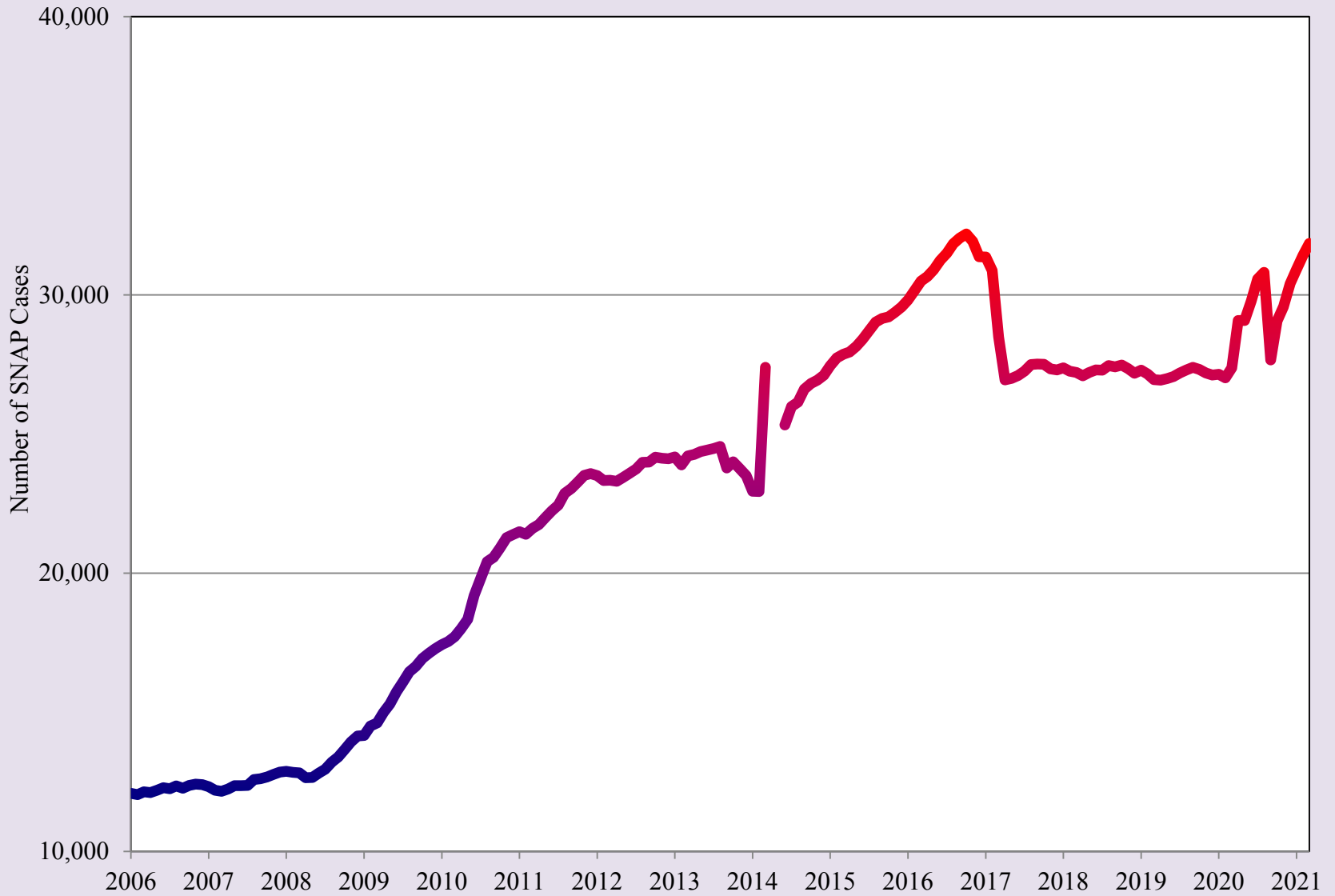
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Las Cruces Area SNAP (Food Stamp) Cases



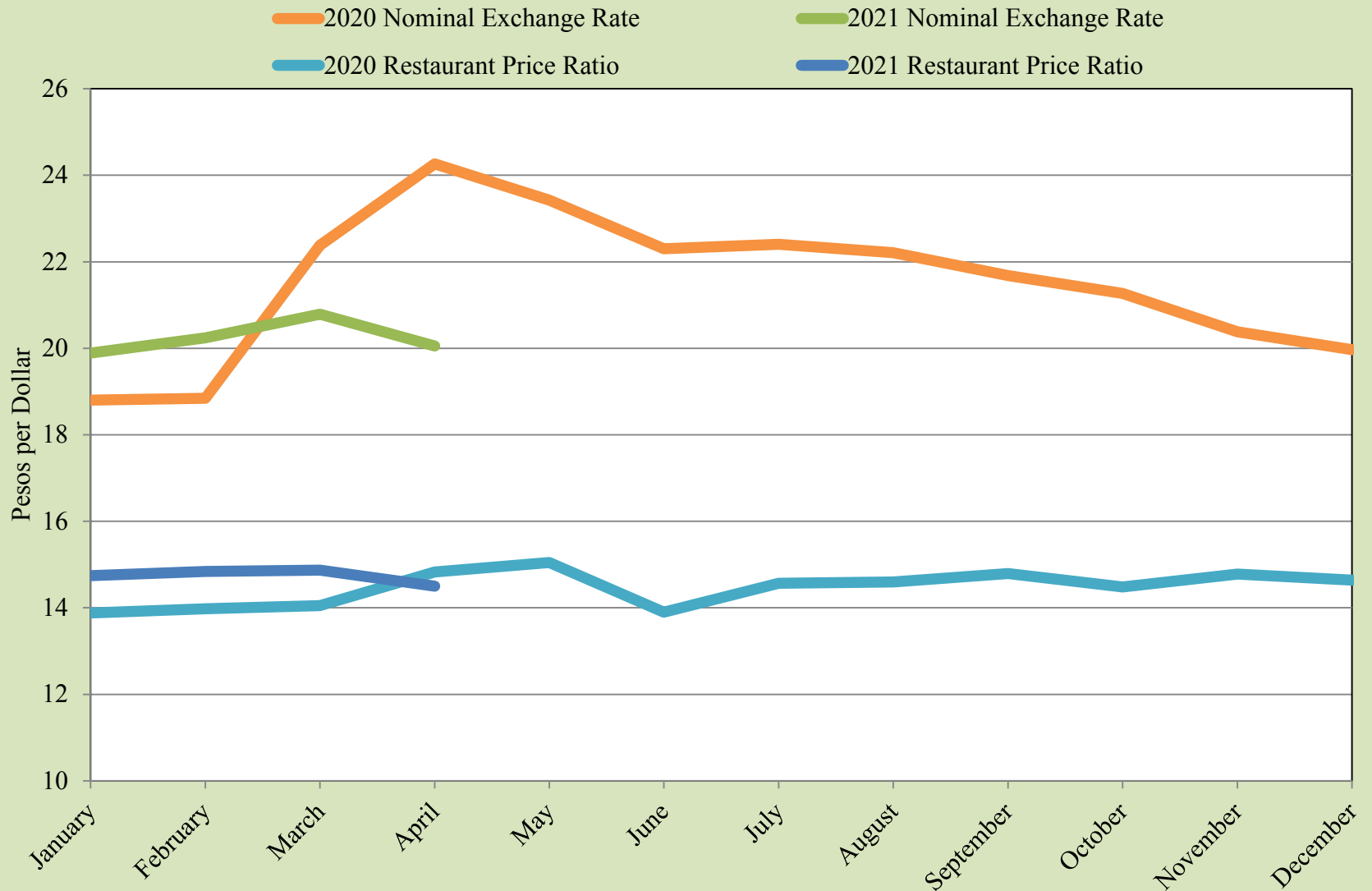
Source: New Mexico Human Services Department

## Las Cruces Area SNAP (Food Stamp) Cases



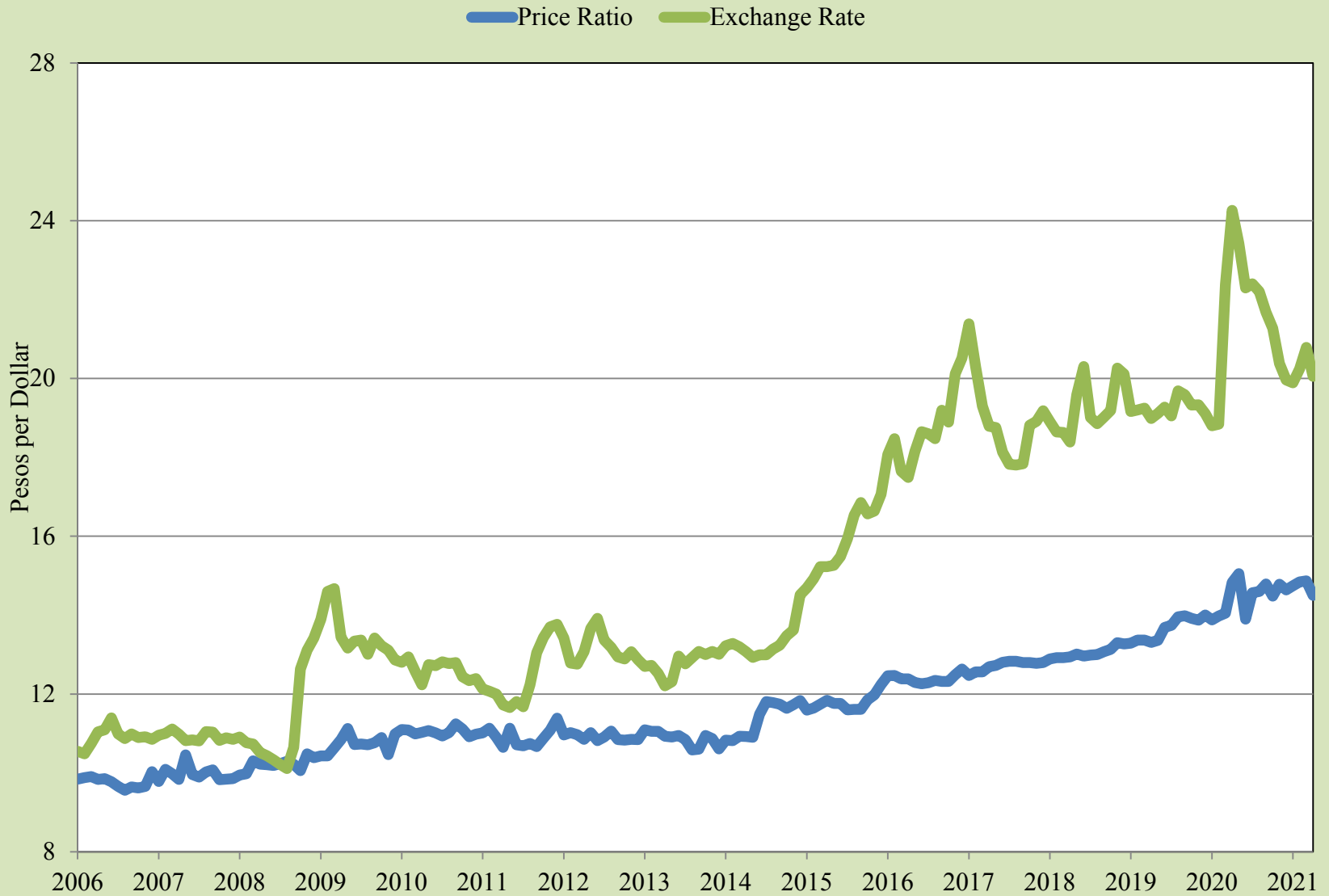
Source: New Mexico Human Services Department

## Restaurant Price Ratio and Exchange Rate



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project and Banco de Mexico

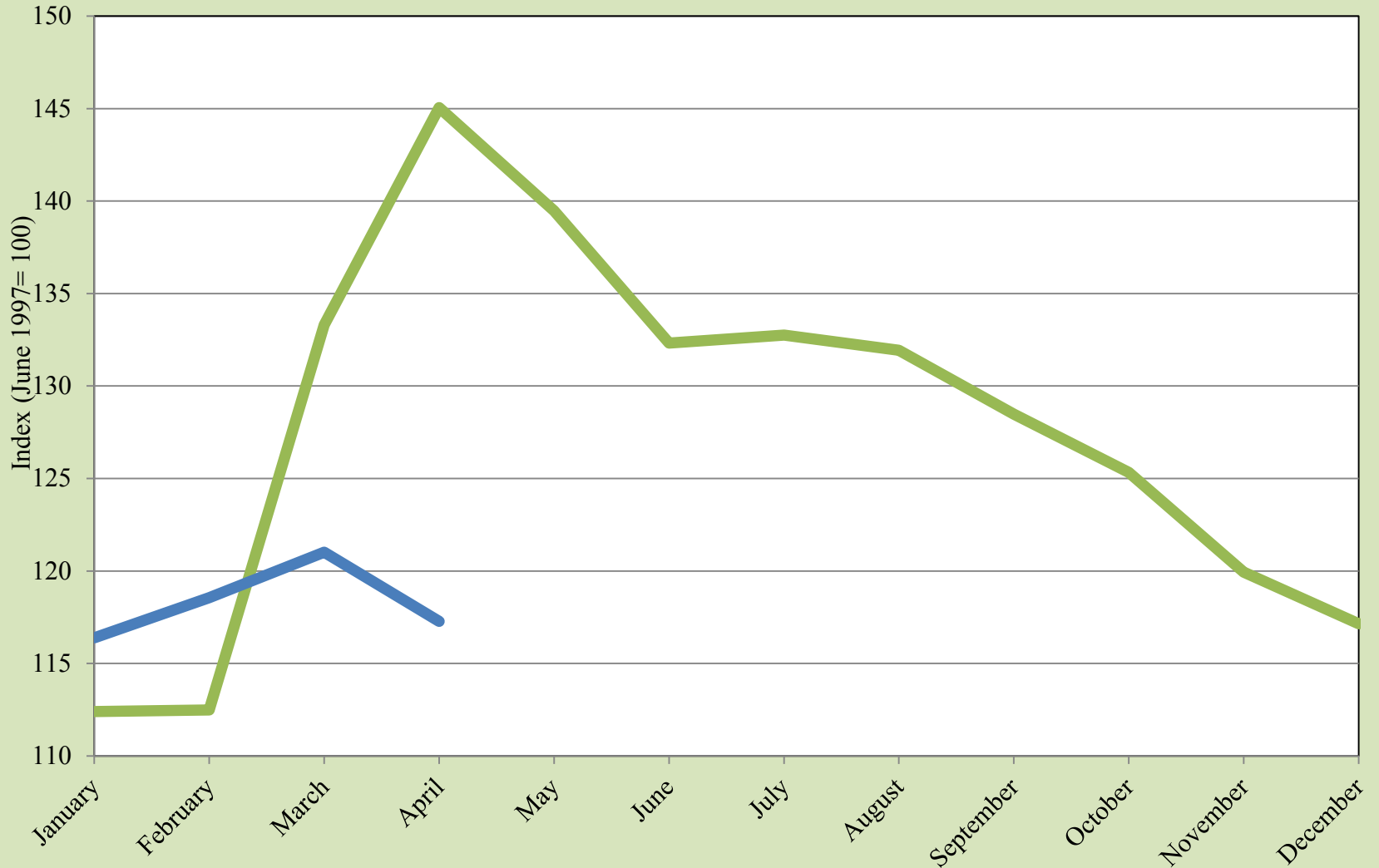
## Restaurant Price Ratio and Exchange Rate



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project and Banco de Mexico

## Real Peso-per-Dollar Exchange Rate Index

— 2020 — 2021



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project

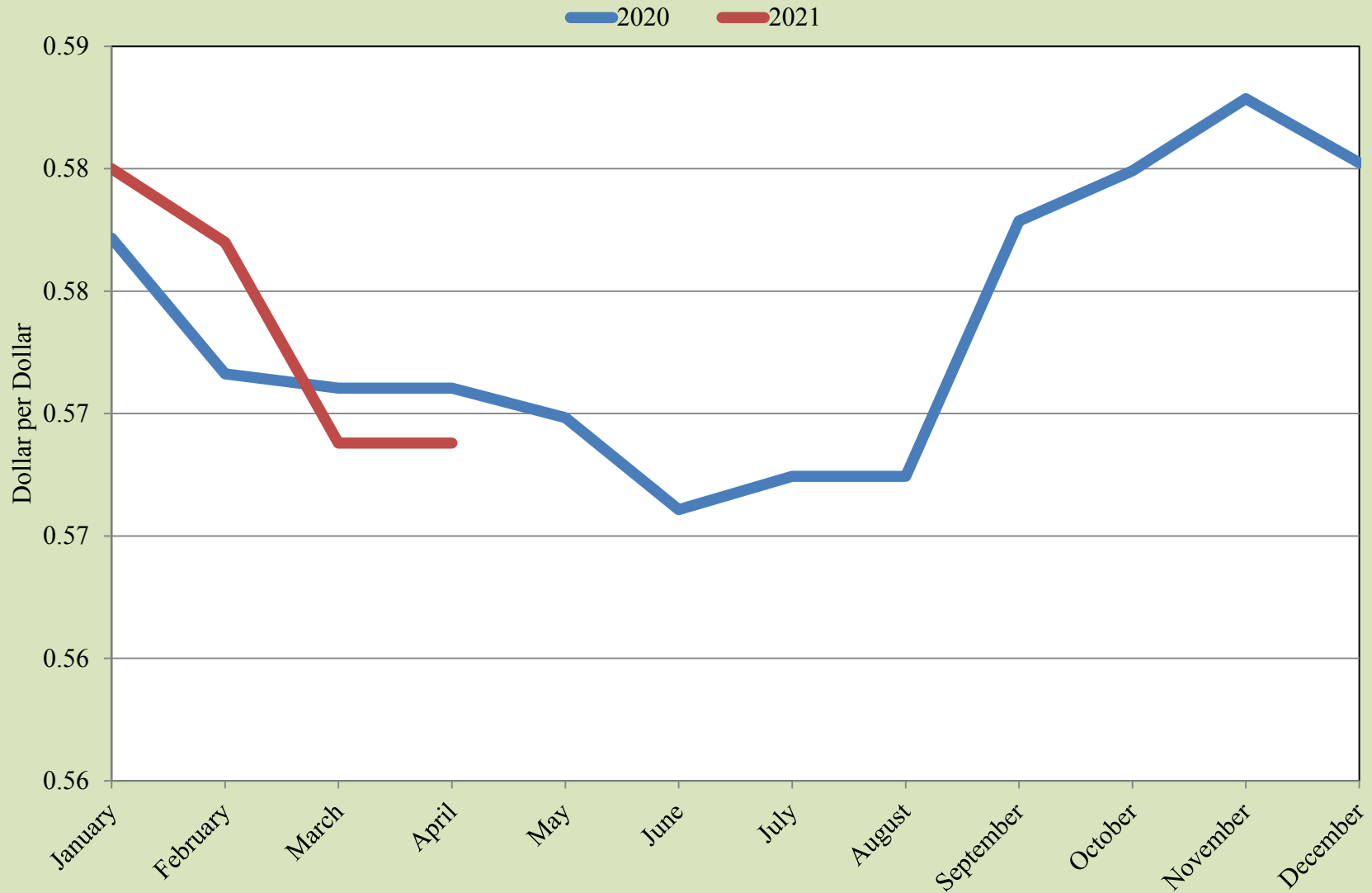


## Real Peso-per-Dollar Exchange Rate Index



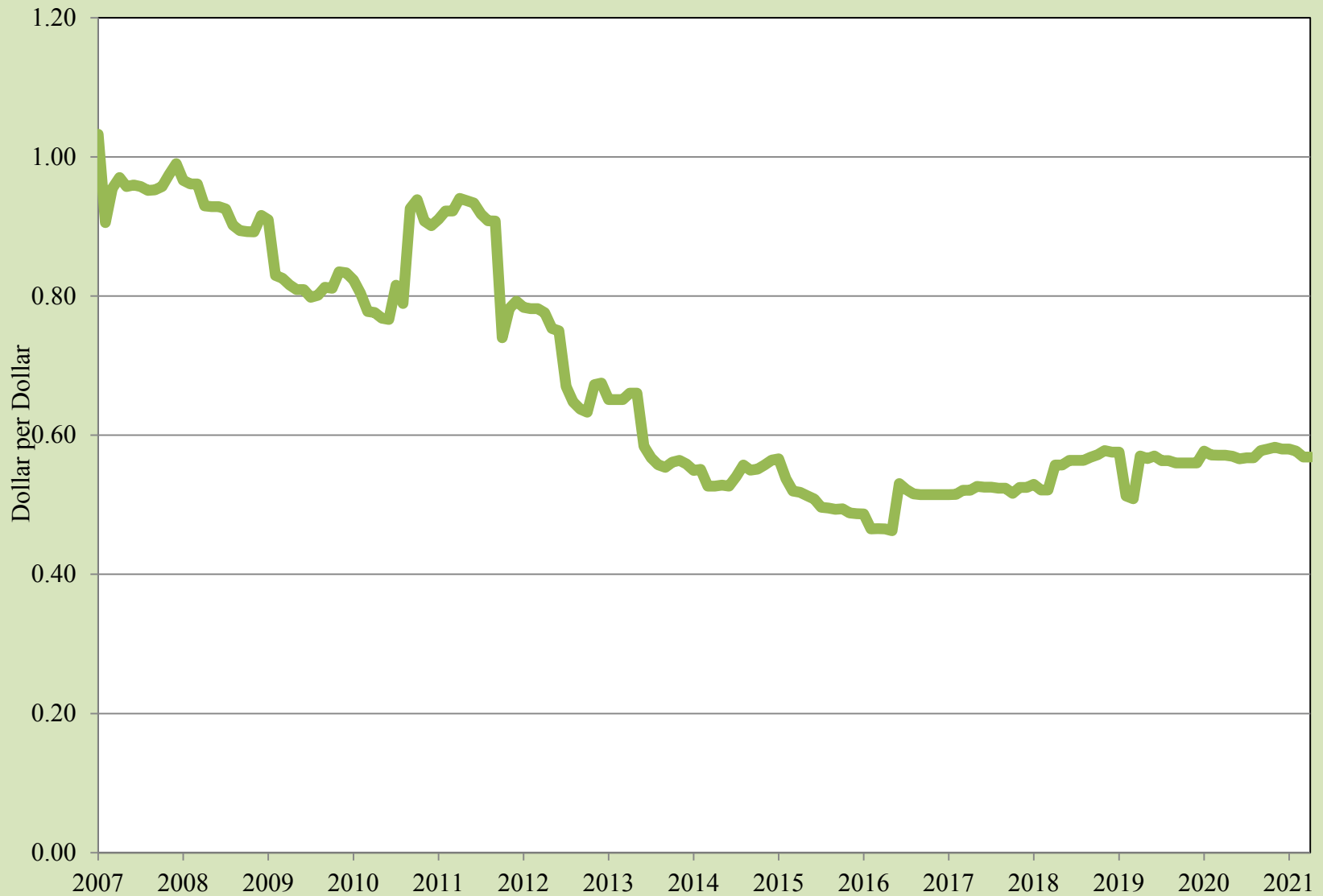
Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project

## Pharmaceutical Nominal Price Ratio in the USA and Mexico



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project, [healthwarehouse.com](http://healthwarehouse.com), [medicinesmexico.com](http://medicinesmexico.com), [medsmex.com](http://medsmex.com)

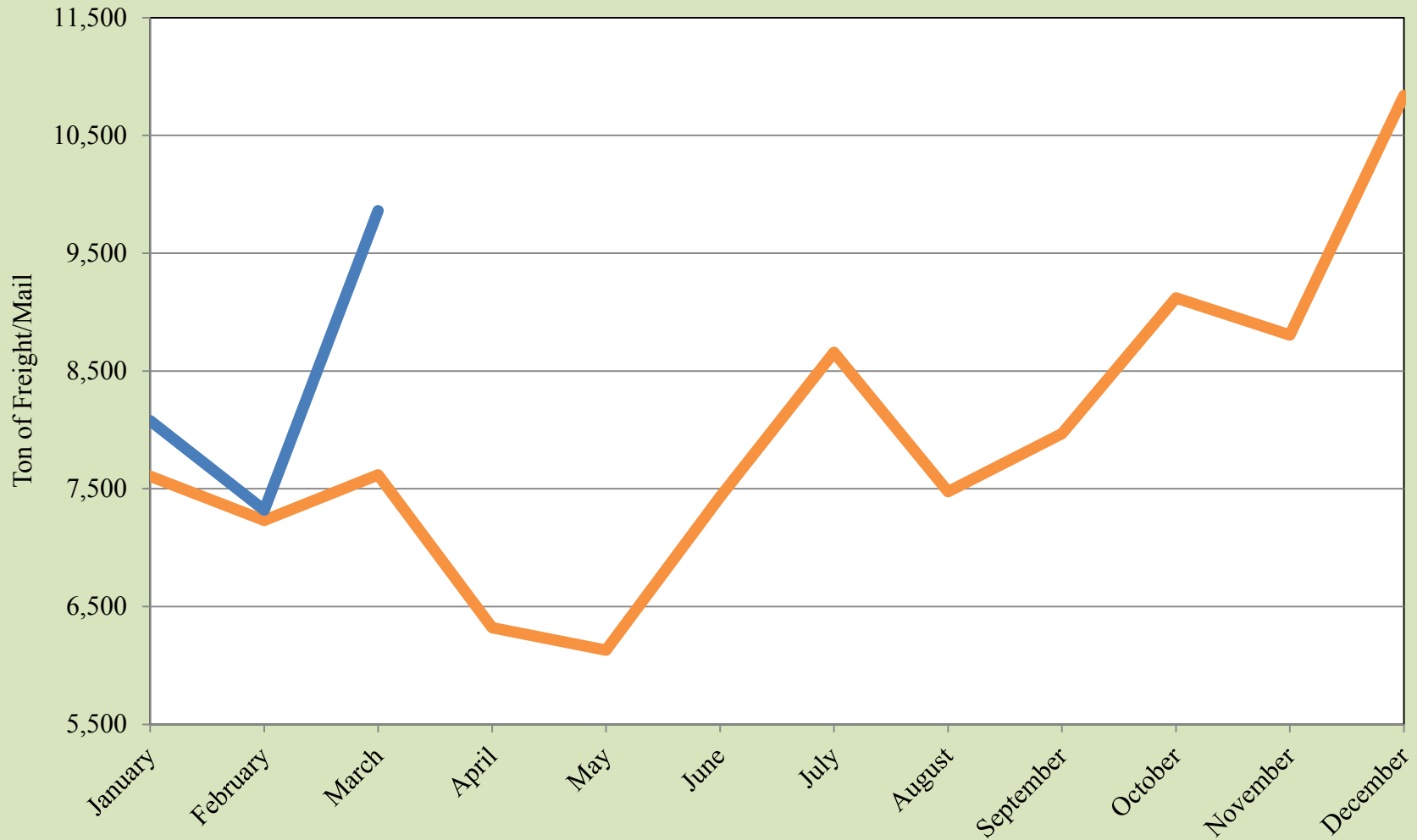
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Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project, [healthwarehouse.com](http://healthwarehouse.com), [medicinesmexico.com](http://medicinesmexico.com), [medsmex.com](http://medsmex.com)

# EPIA Freight and Mail

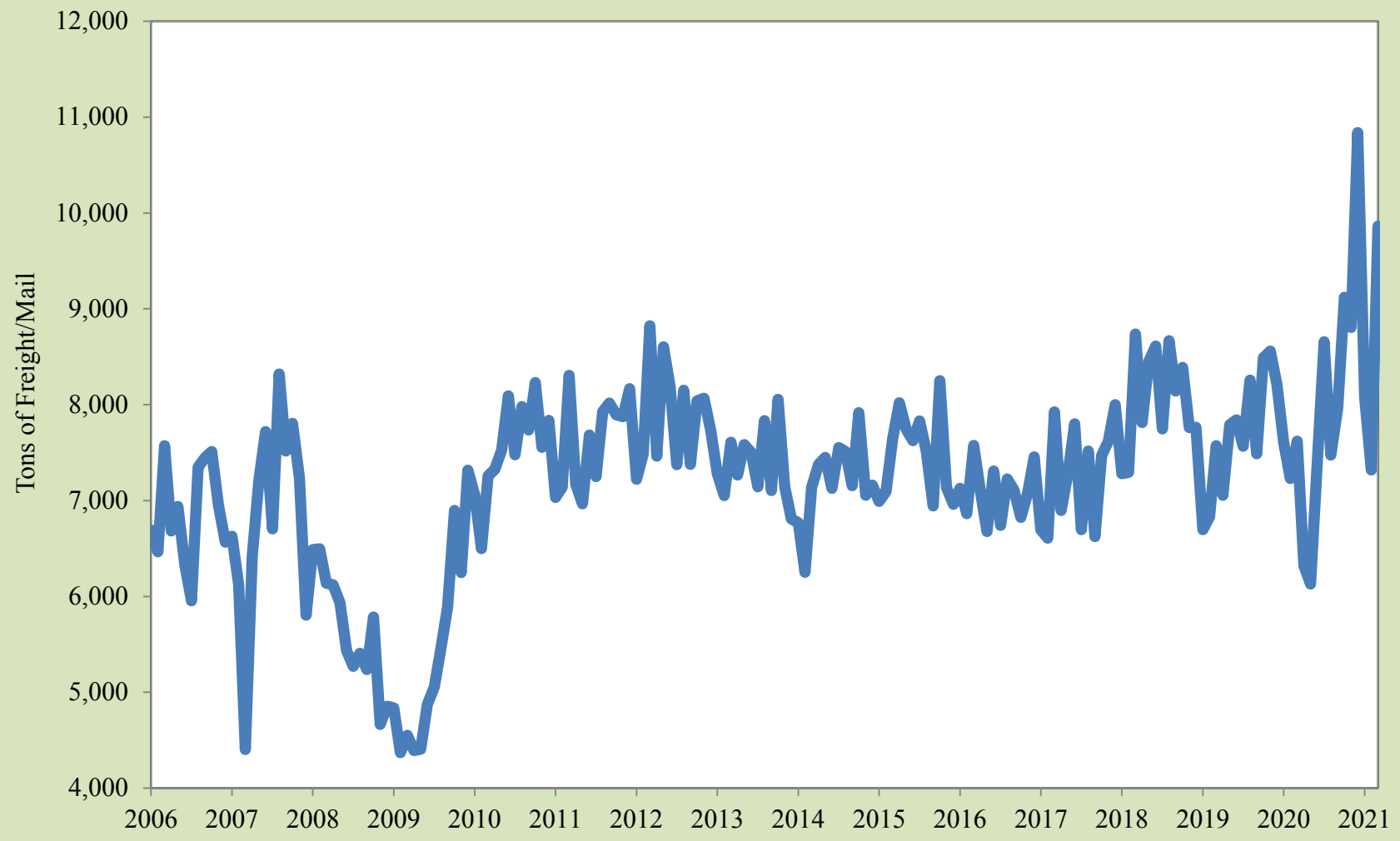
Total 2020      Total 2021



Source: EPIA Operations

# EPIA Freight and Mail

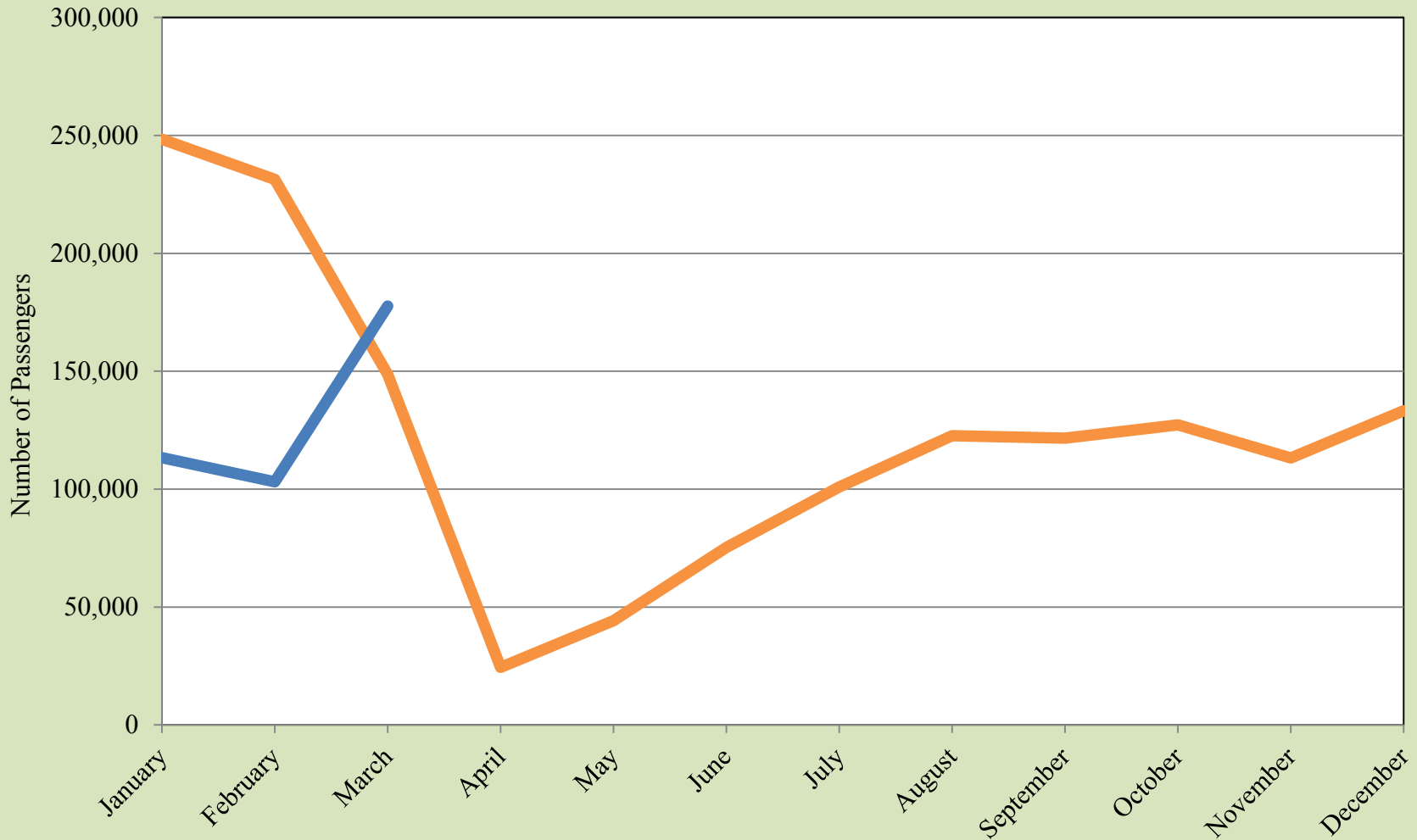
Inbound+Outbound



Source: EPIA Operations

# EPIA Passengers

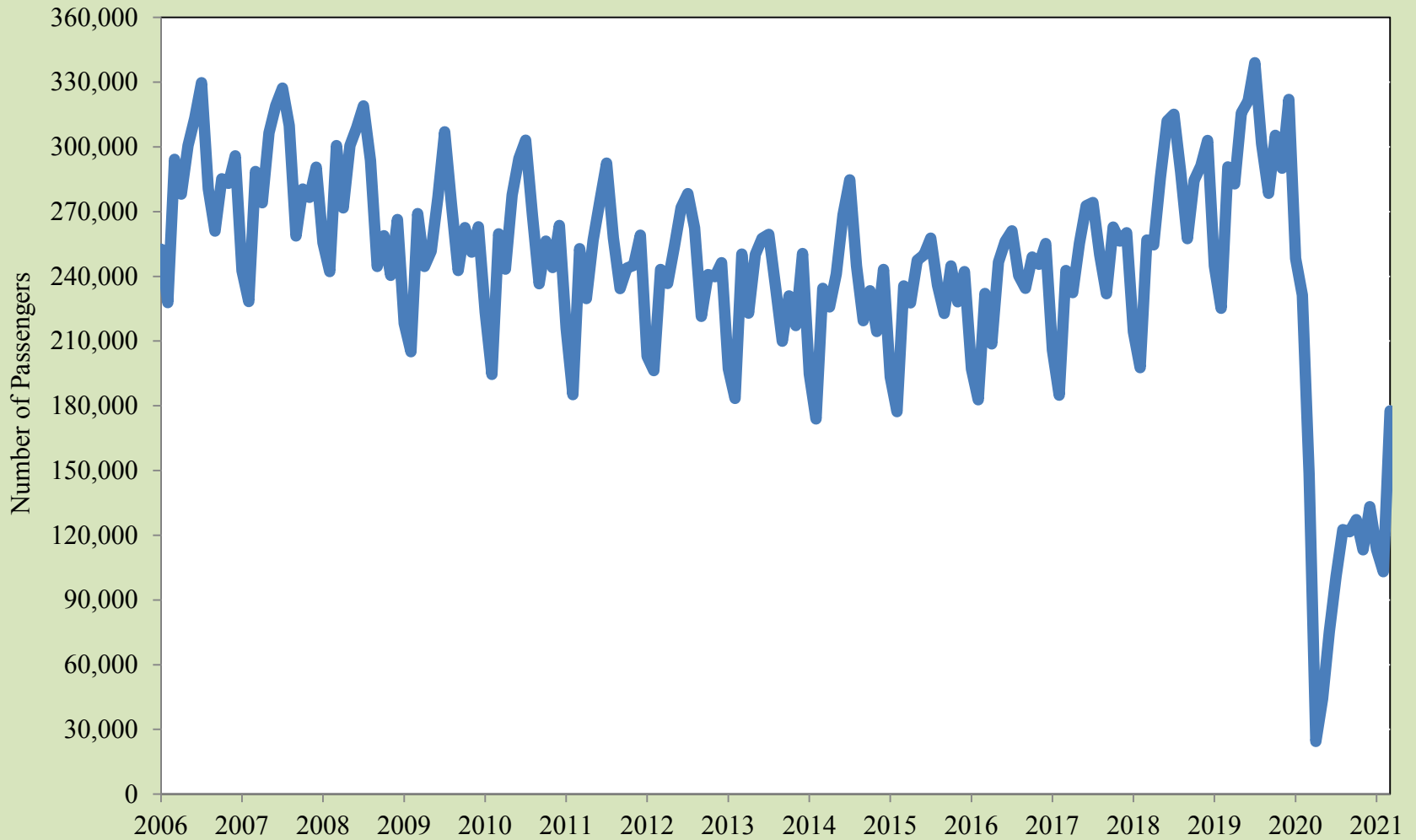
Total 2020      Total 2021



Source: EPIA Operations

# EPIA Passengers

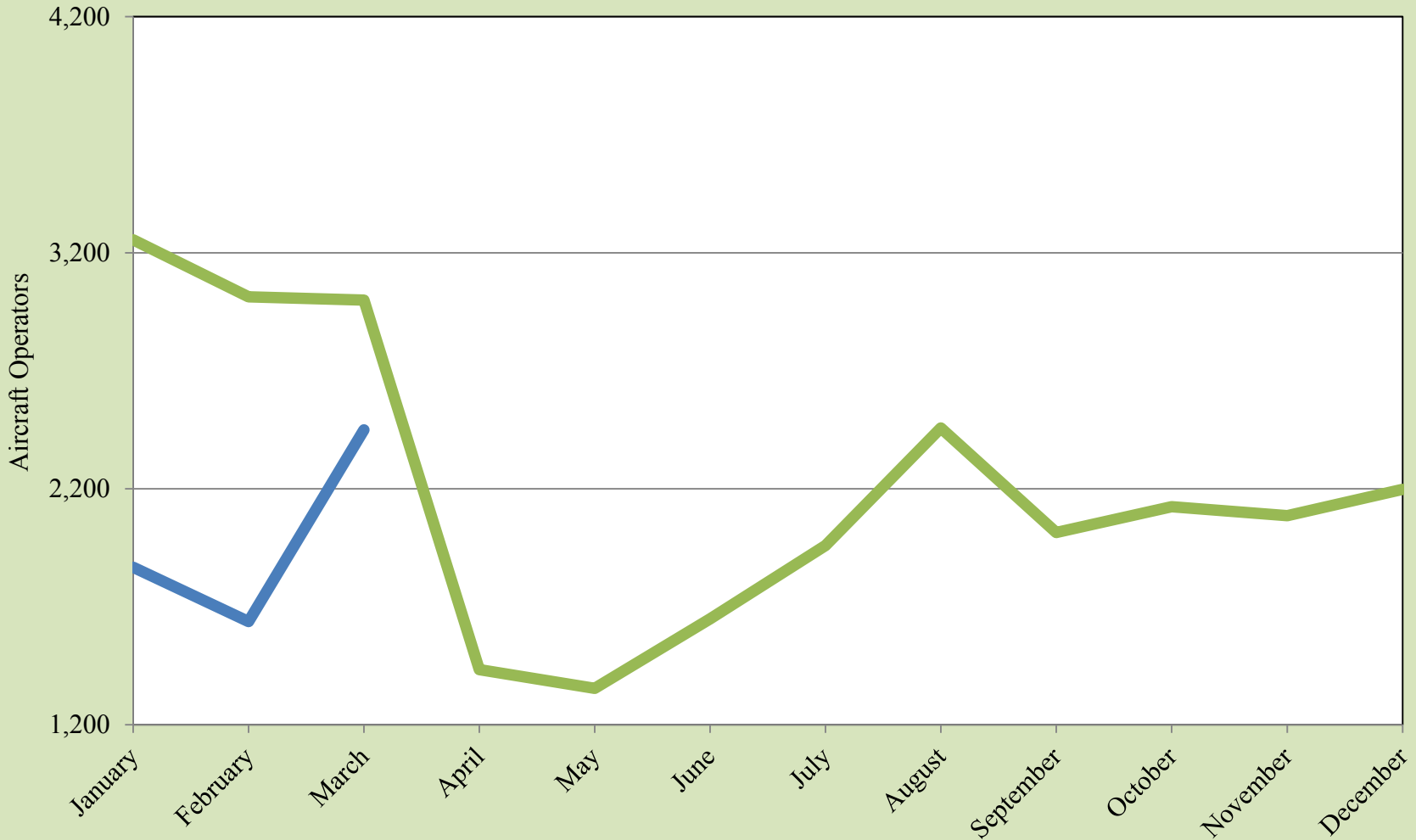
— Inbound+Outbound



Source: EPIA Operations

# EPIA Air Carrier Operations

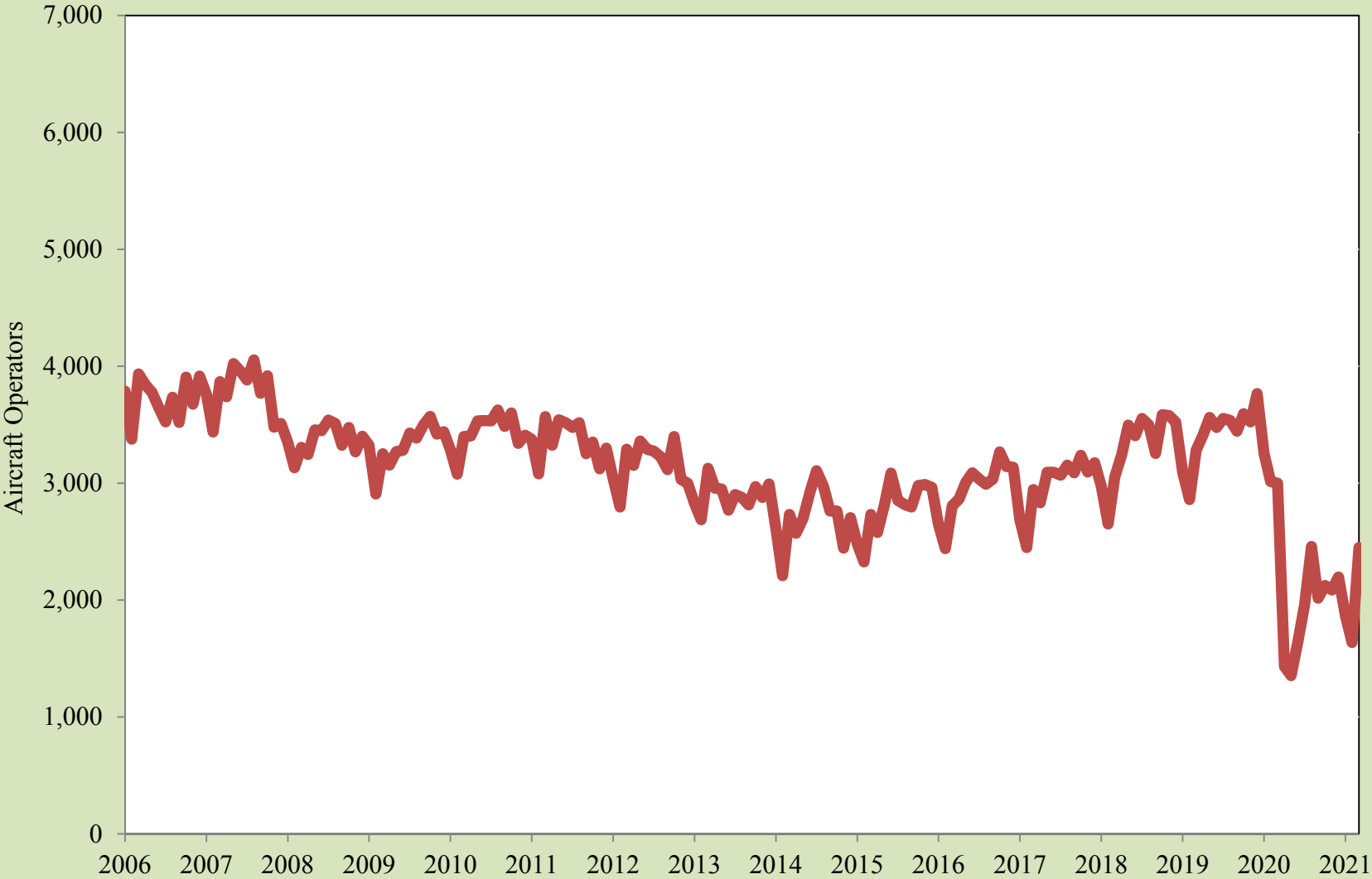
20-Air Carriers      21-Air Carriers



Source: EPIA Operations



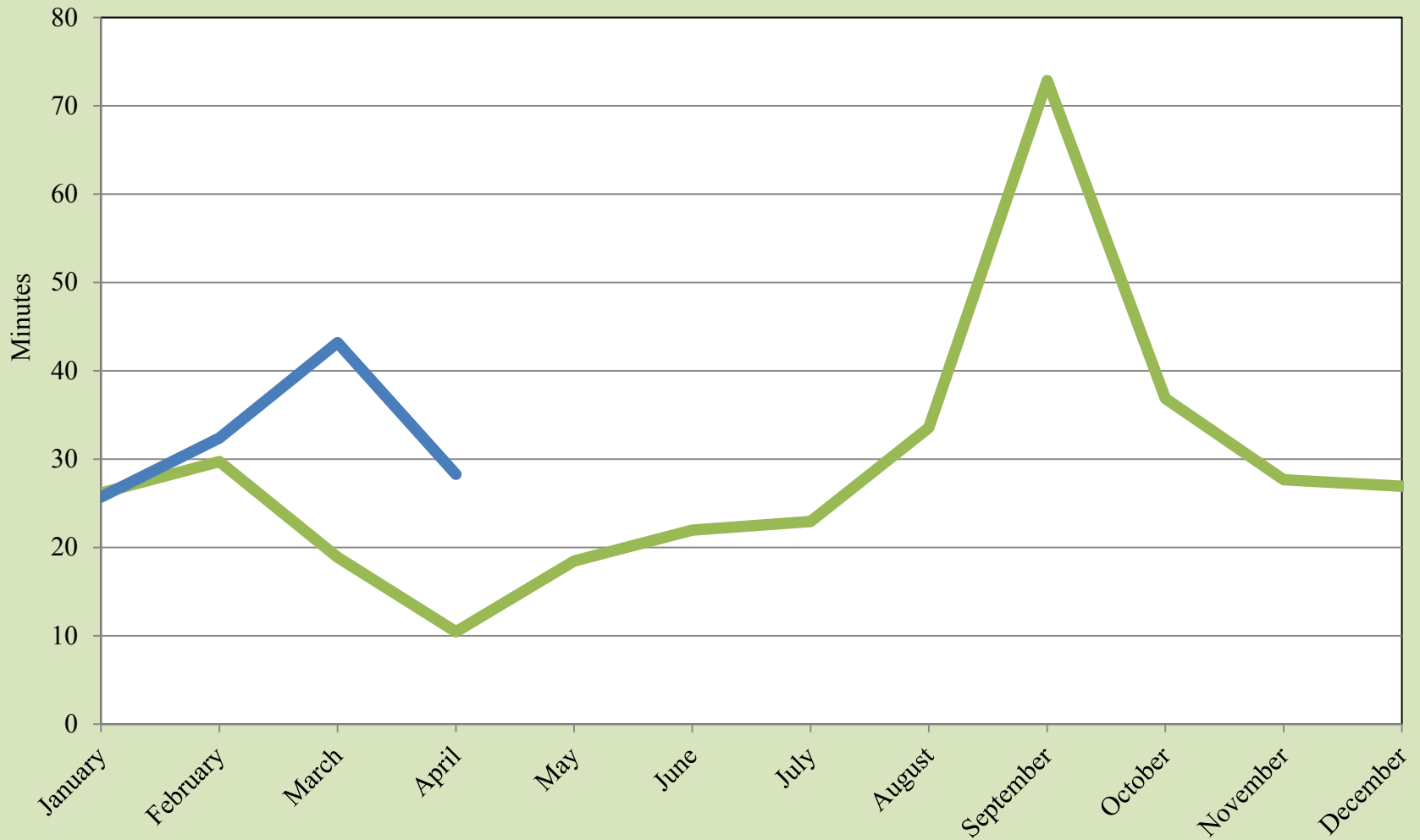
# EPIA Air Carrier Operations



Source: EPIA Operations

## Paso del Norte Monthly Wait Times

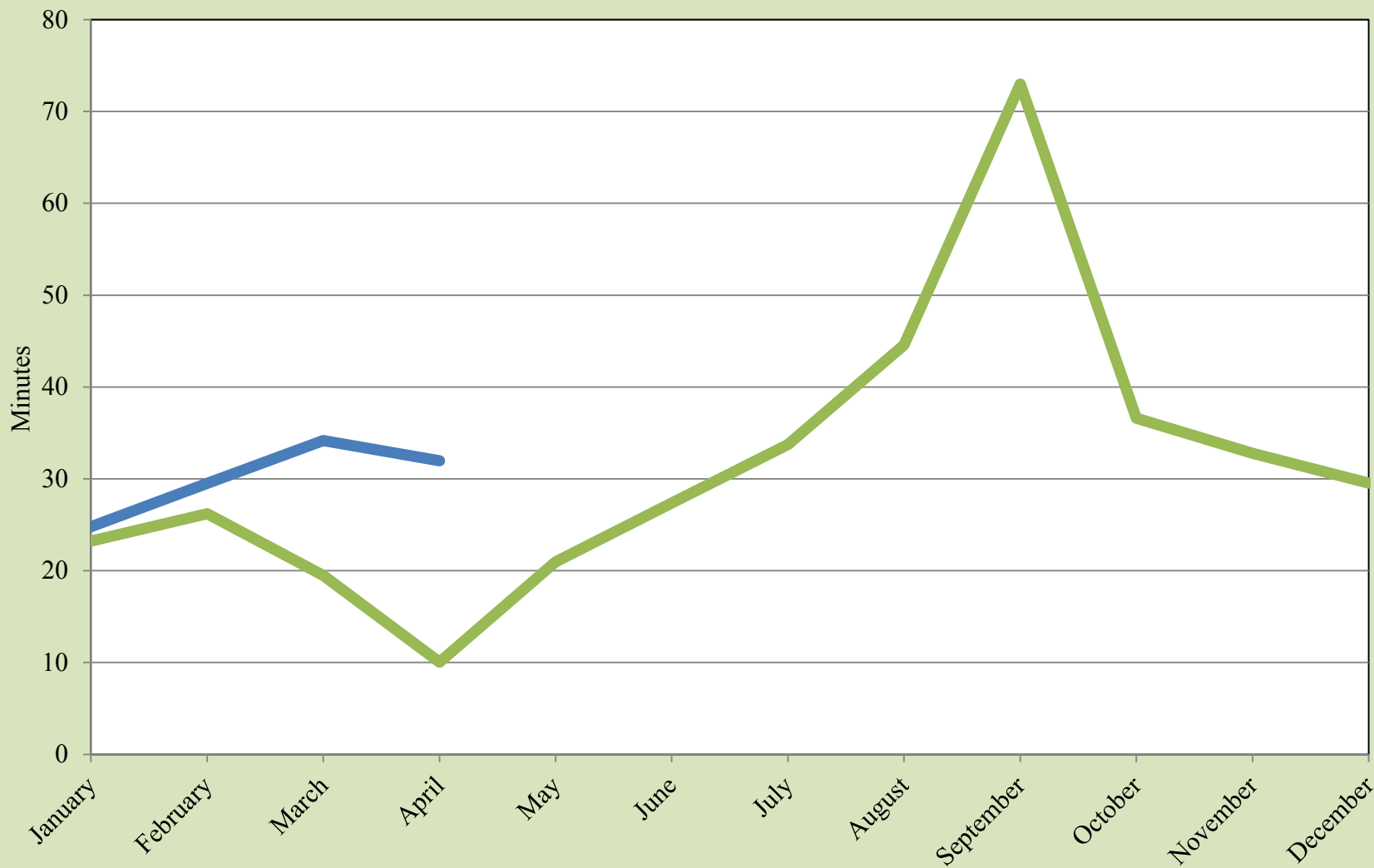
2020 2021



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project

## Ysleta Monthly Wait Times

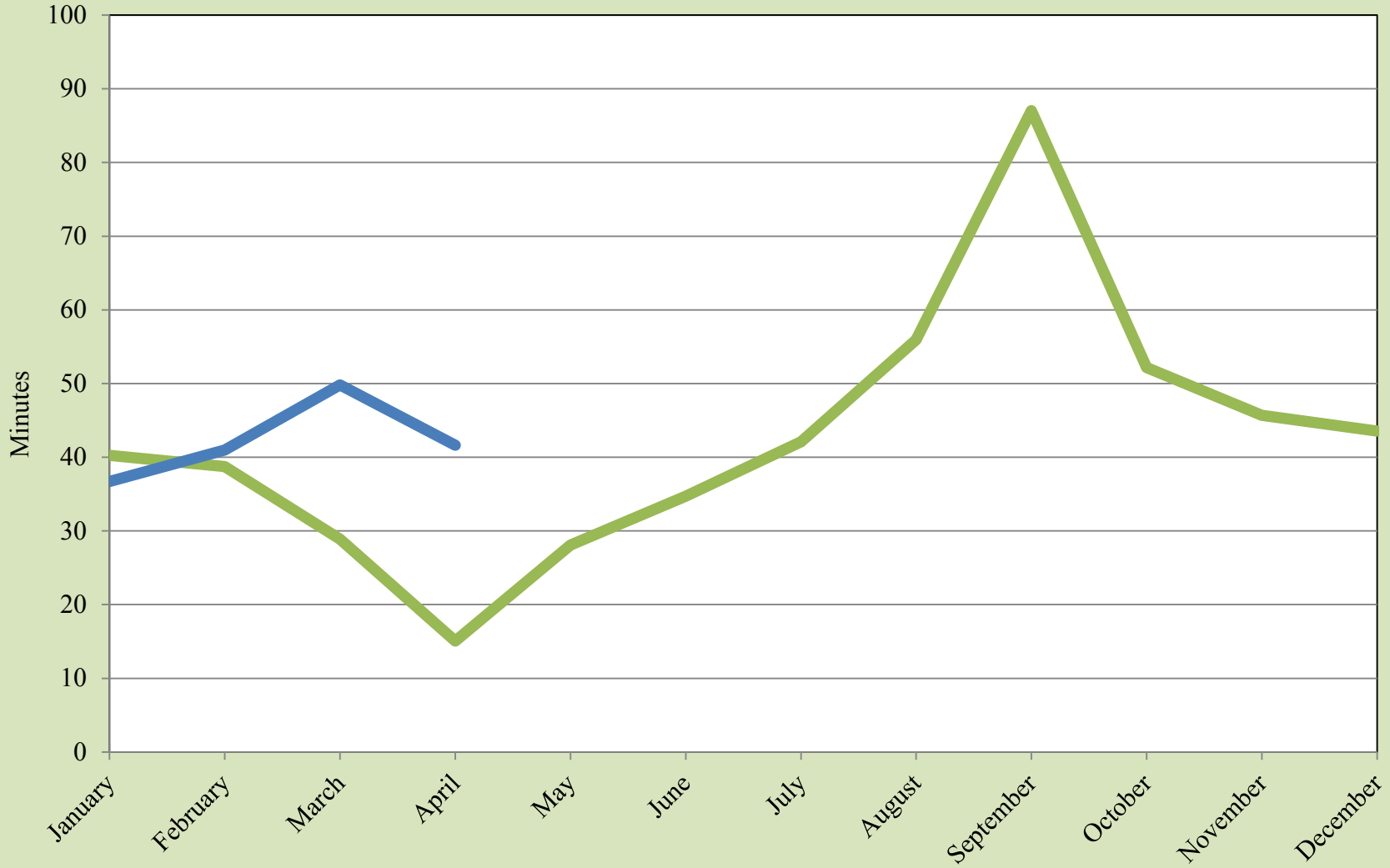
— 2020 — 2021



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project

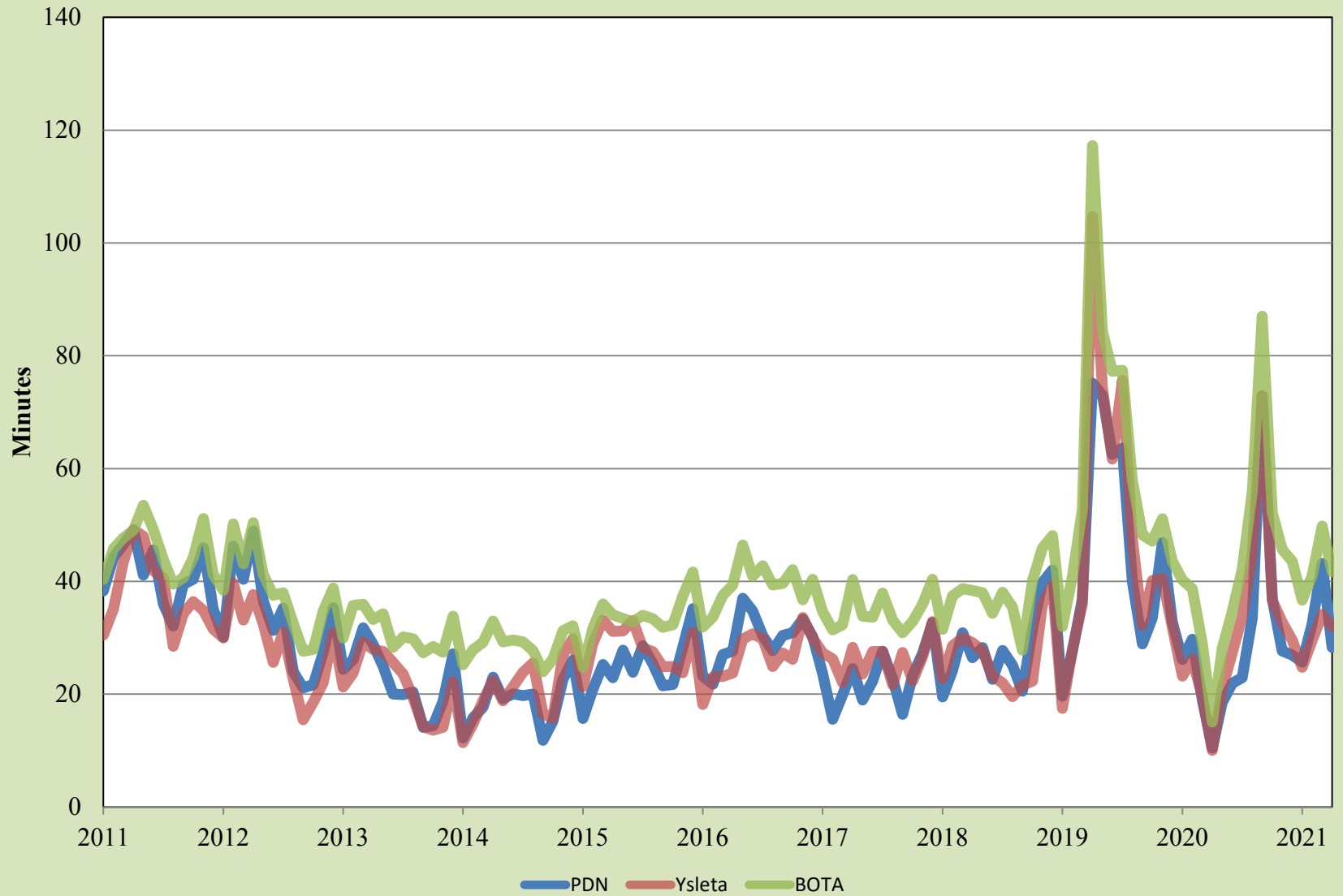
# Bridge of the Americas Monthly Wait Times

2020 2021



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project

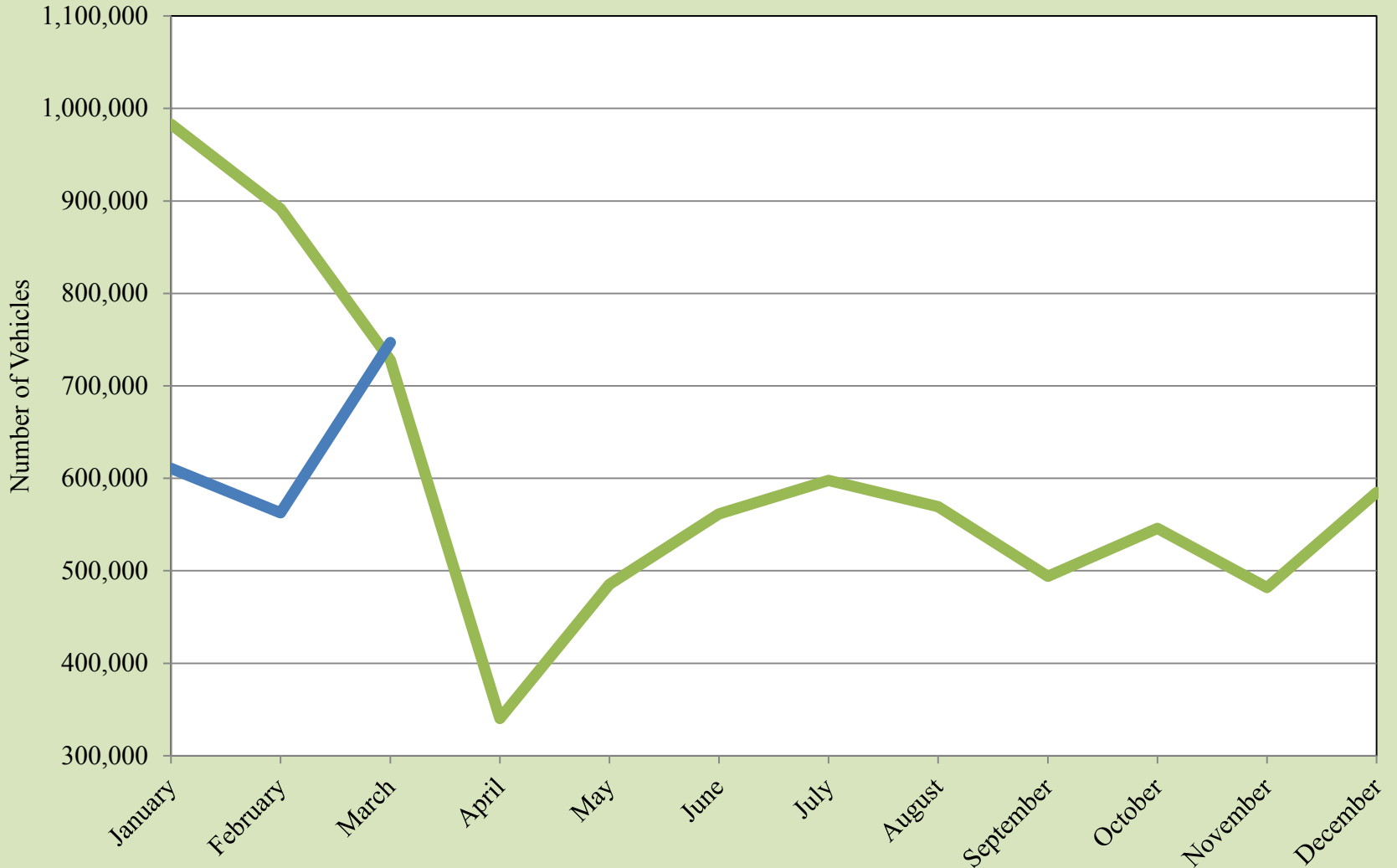
## Monthly Border Wait Times



Source: UTEP Border Region Modeling Project

## Personal Vehicle International Bridge Crossings to El Paso

— 2020 — 2021



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics and U.S. Customs and Border Protection

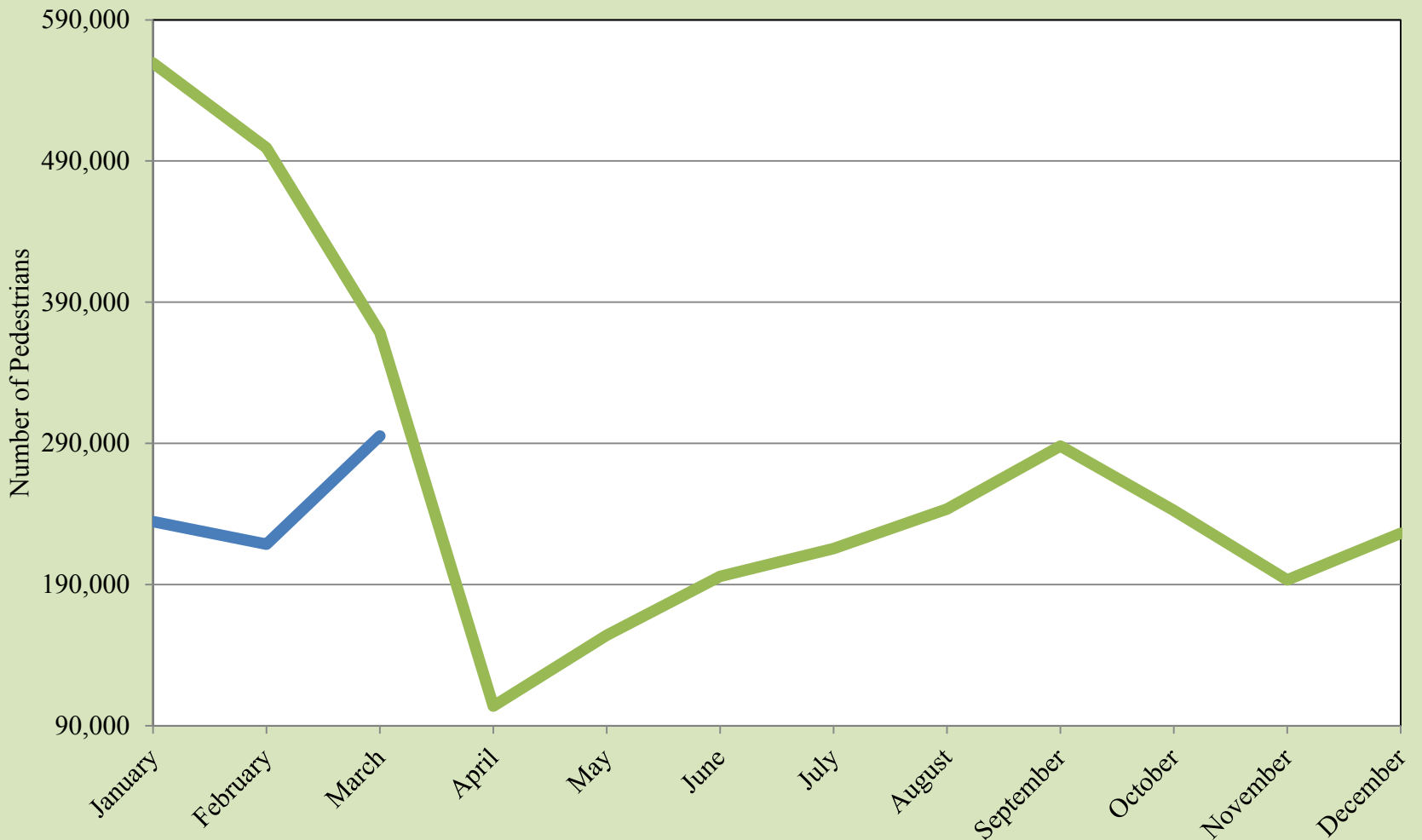
## Personal Vehicle International Bridge Crossings to El Paso



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics and U.S. Customs and Border Protection

## Pedestrian International Bridge Crossings to El Paso

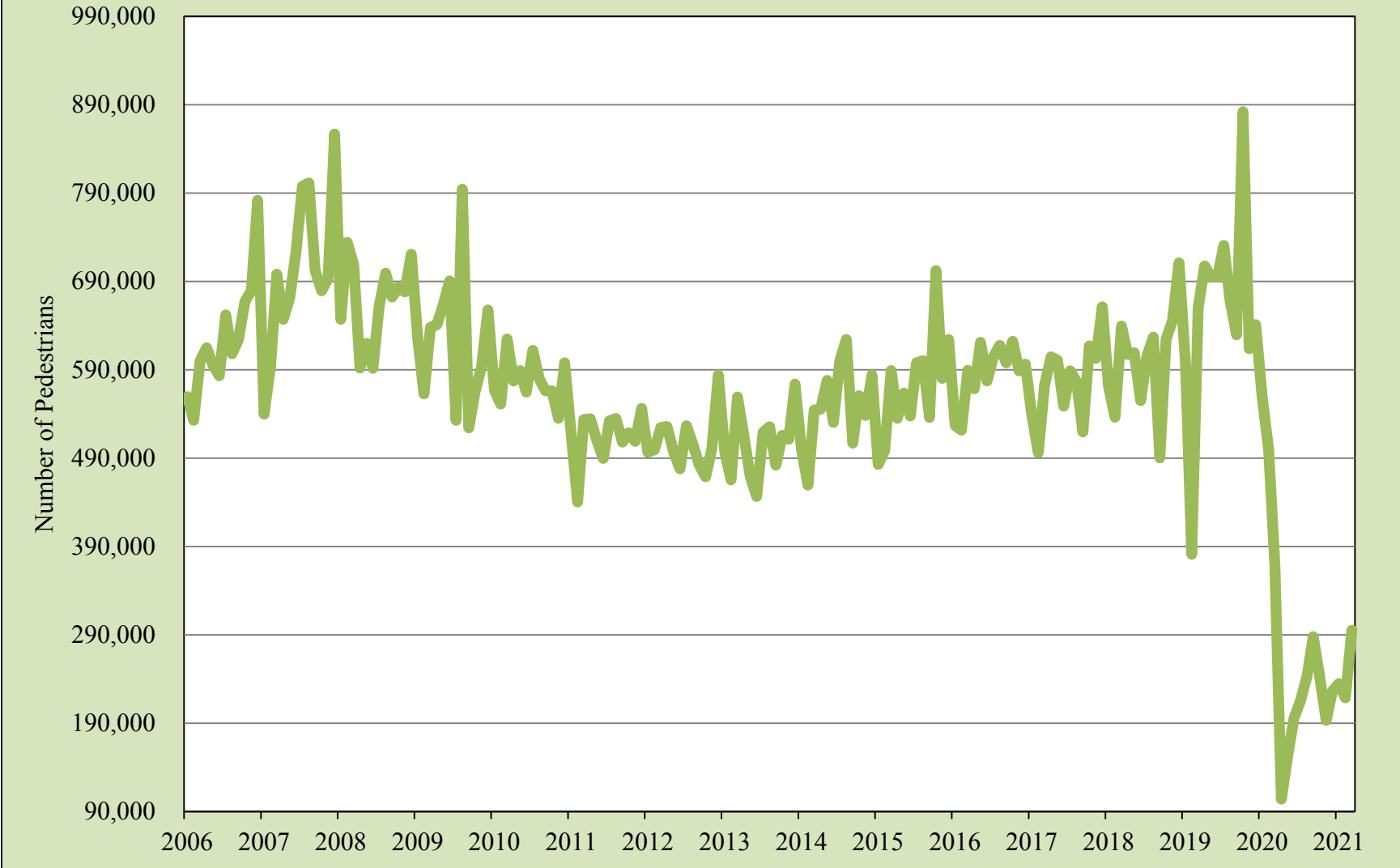
— 2020 — 2021



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics and U.S. Customs and Border Protection



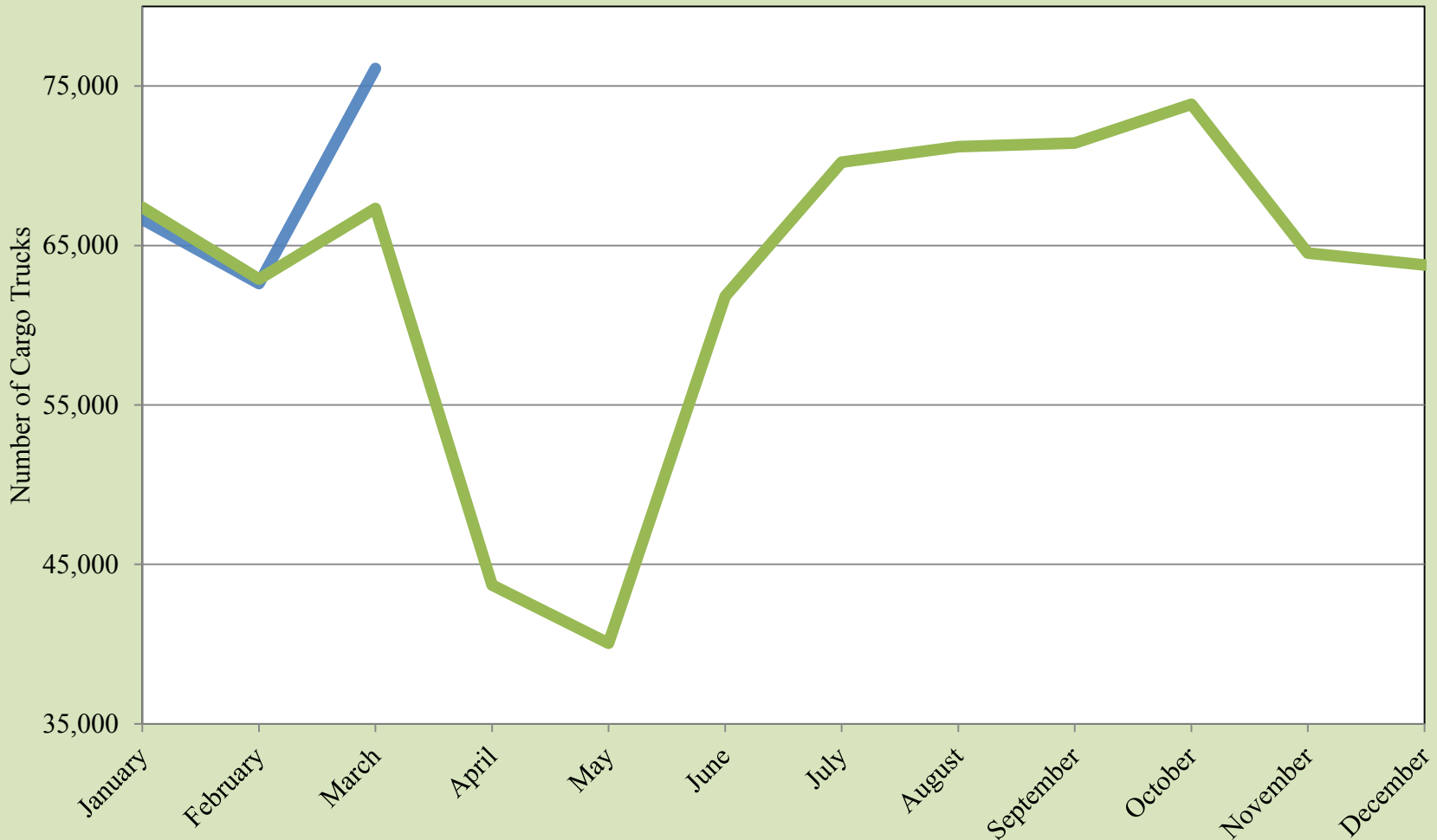
# Pedestrian International Bridge Crossings to El Paso



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics and U.S. Customs and Border Protection

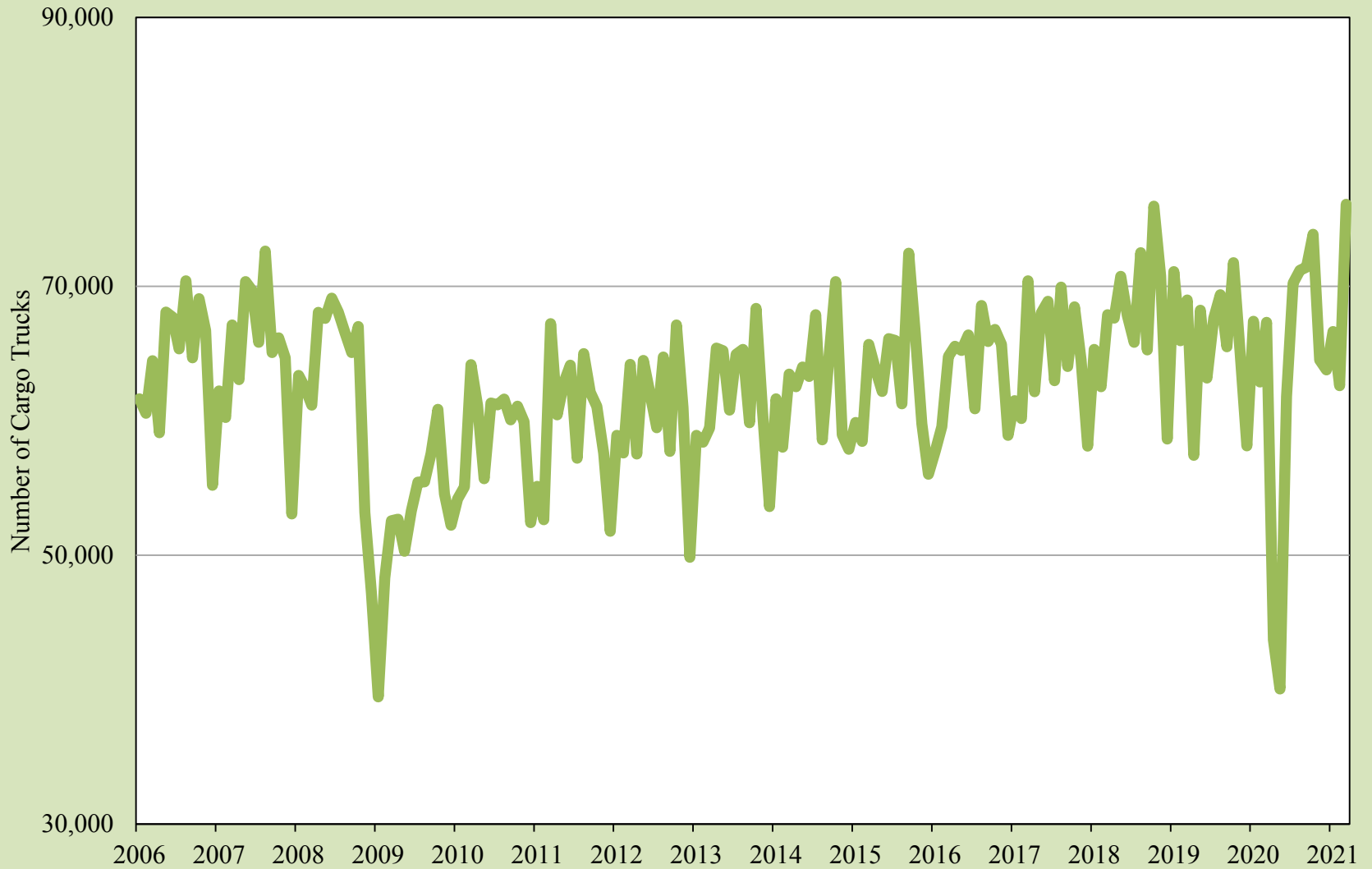
## Cargo Truck International Bridge Crossings to El Paso

2020 2021



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics and U.S. Customs and Border Protection

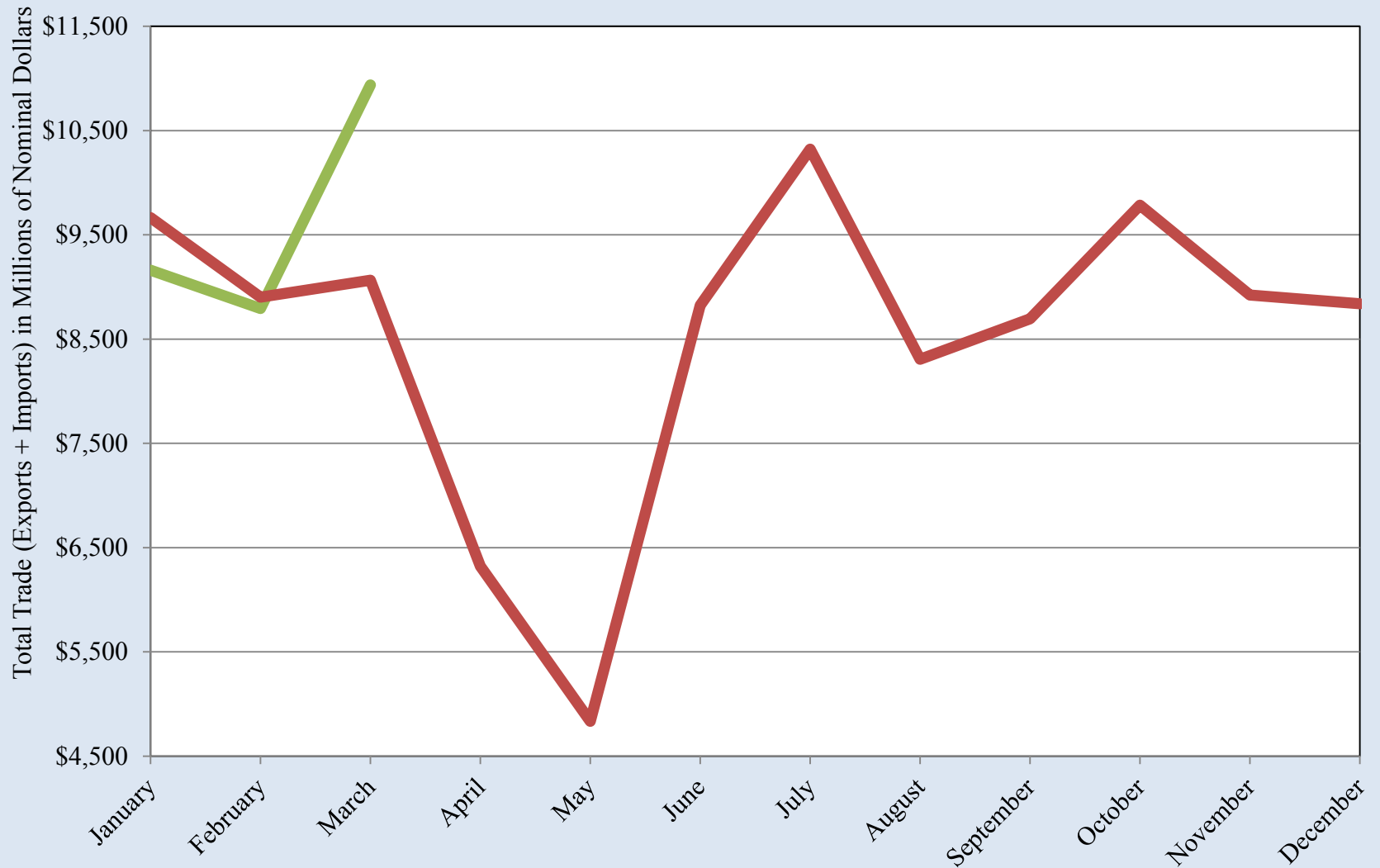
## Cargo Truck International Bridge Crossings to El Paso



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics and U.S. Customs and Border Protection

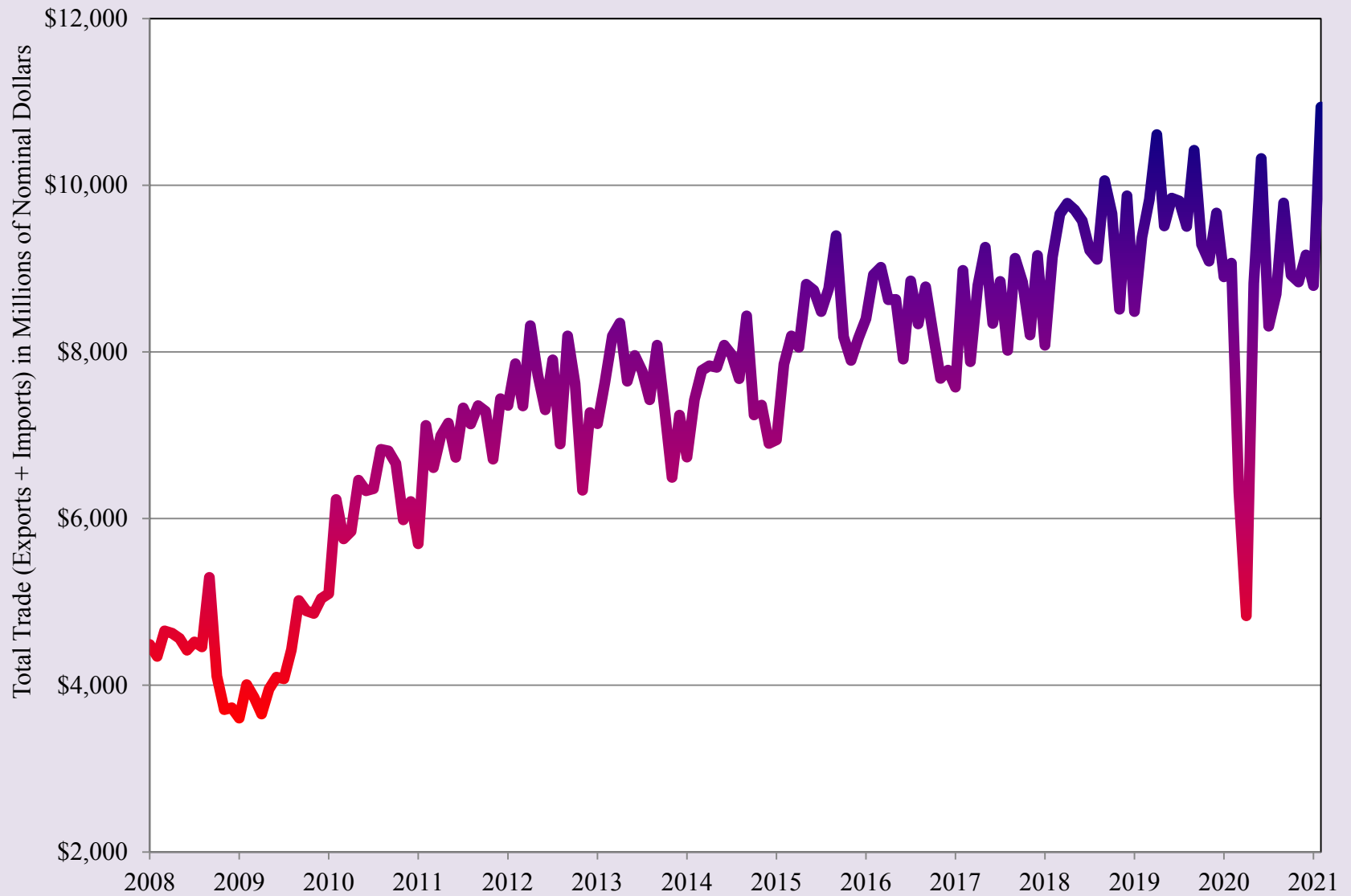
## Total Trade through the El Paso Customs District

2020 2021



Source: U.S. International Trade Commission

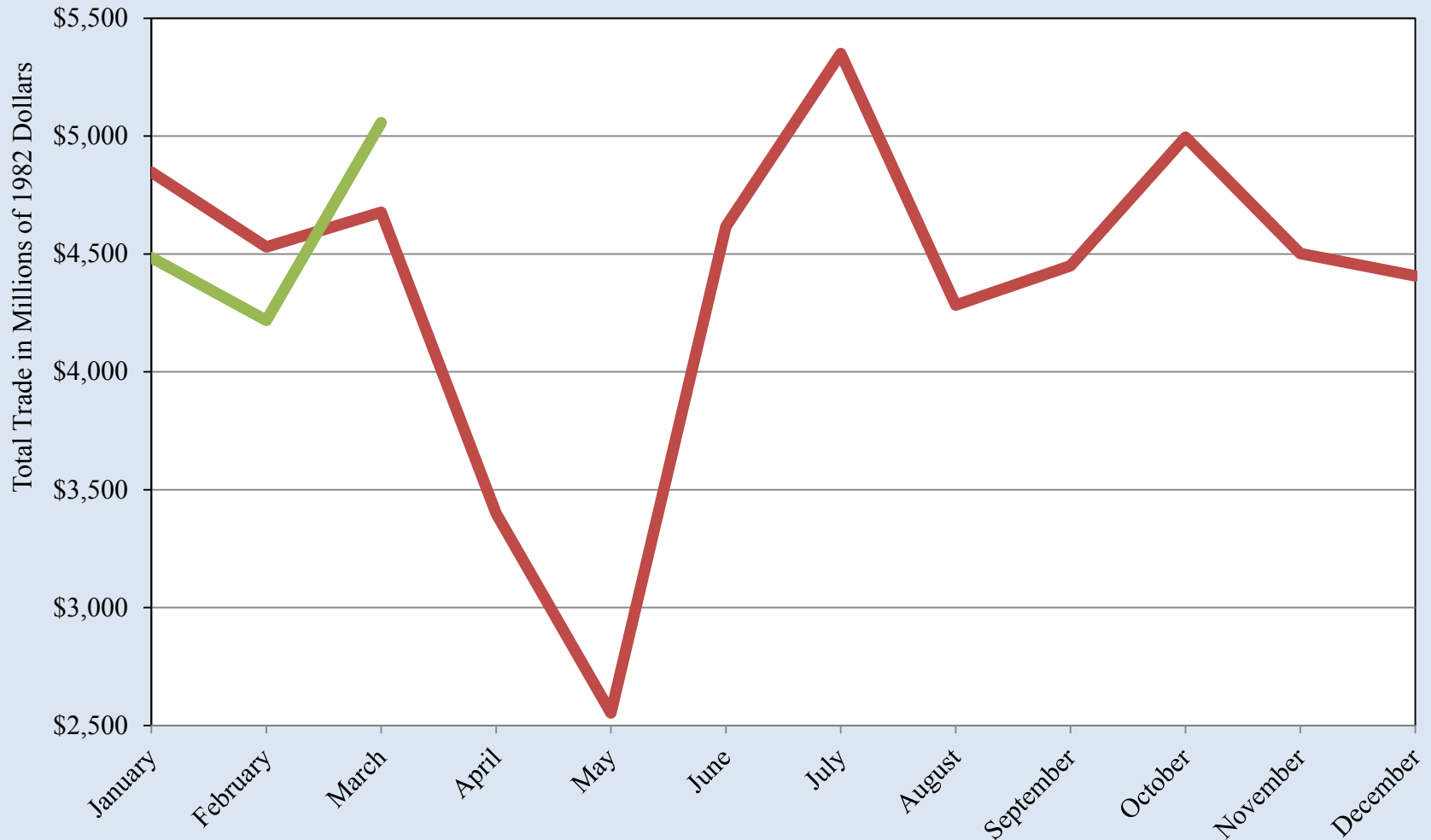
## Total Trade through the El Paso Customs District



Source: U.S. International Trade Commission

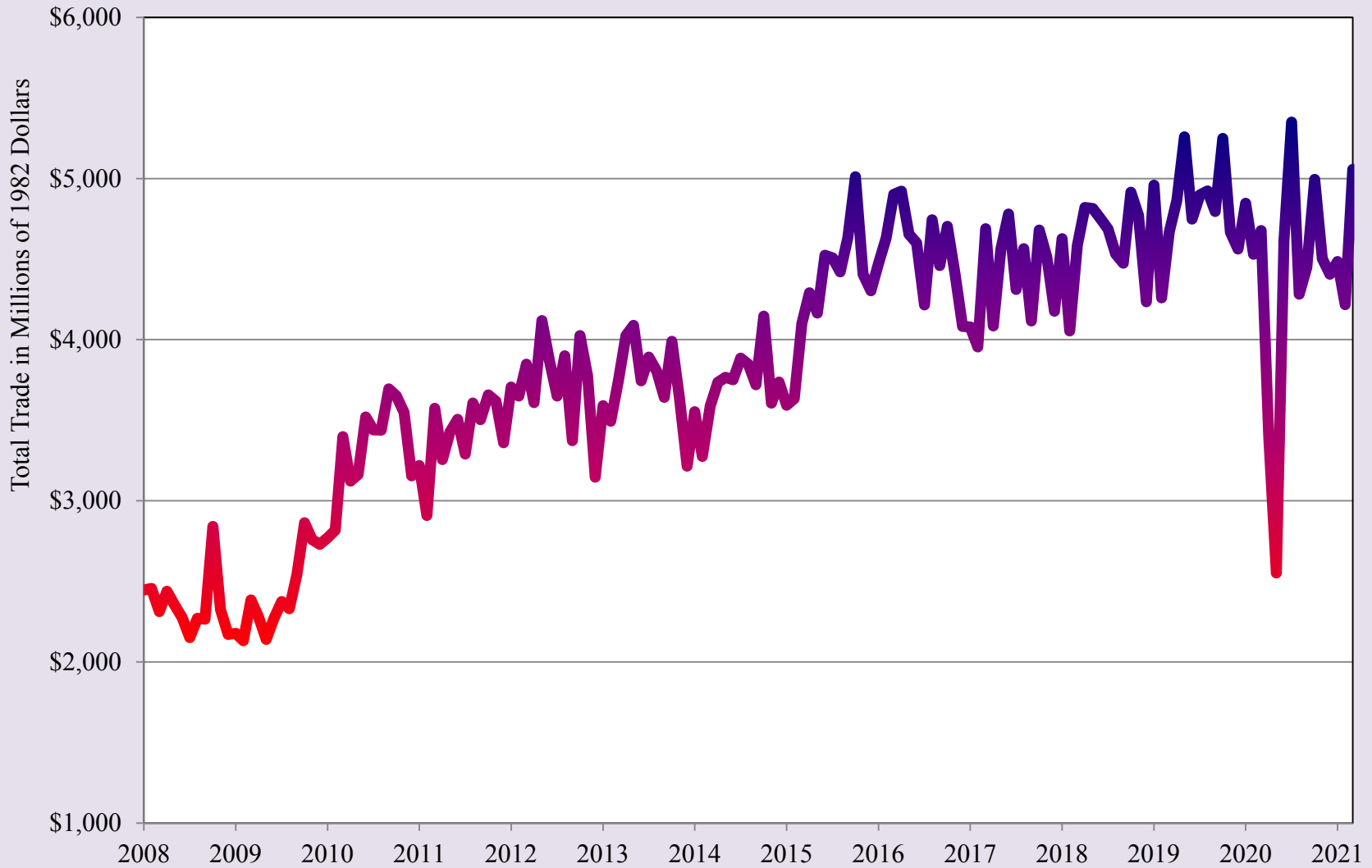
## Real Total Trade through the El Paso Customs District

— 2020 — 2021



Source: U.S. International Trade Commission and Bureau of Labor Statistics

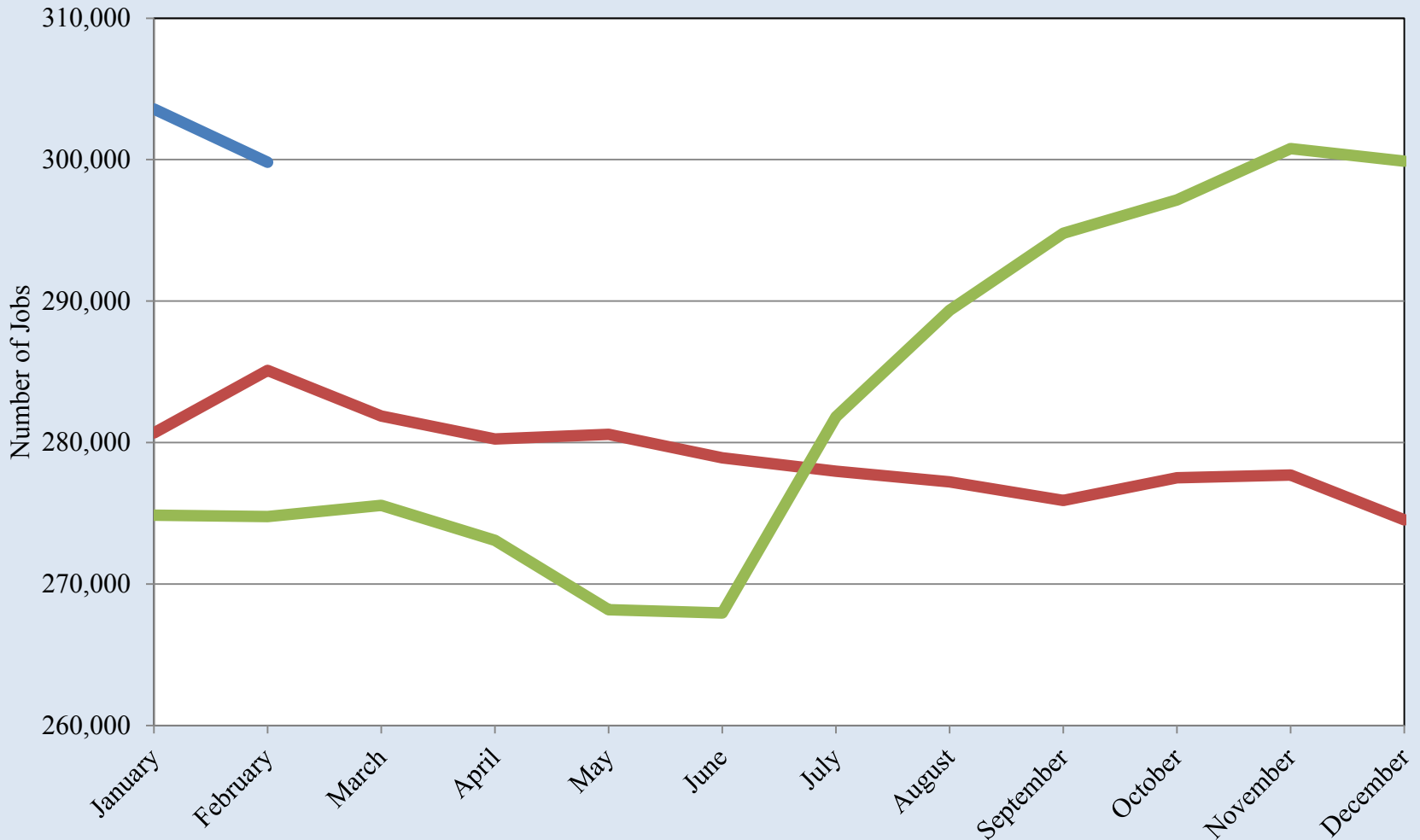
## Real Total Trade through the El Paso Customs District



Source: U.S. International Trade Commission and Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Export-Oriented Manufacturing Employment in Ciudad Juárez

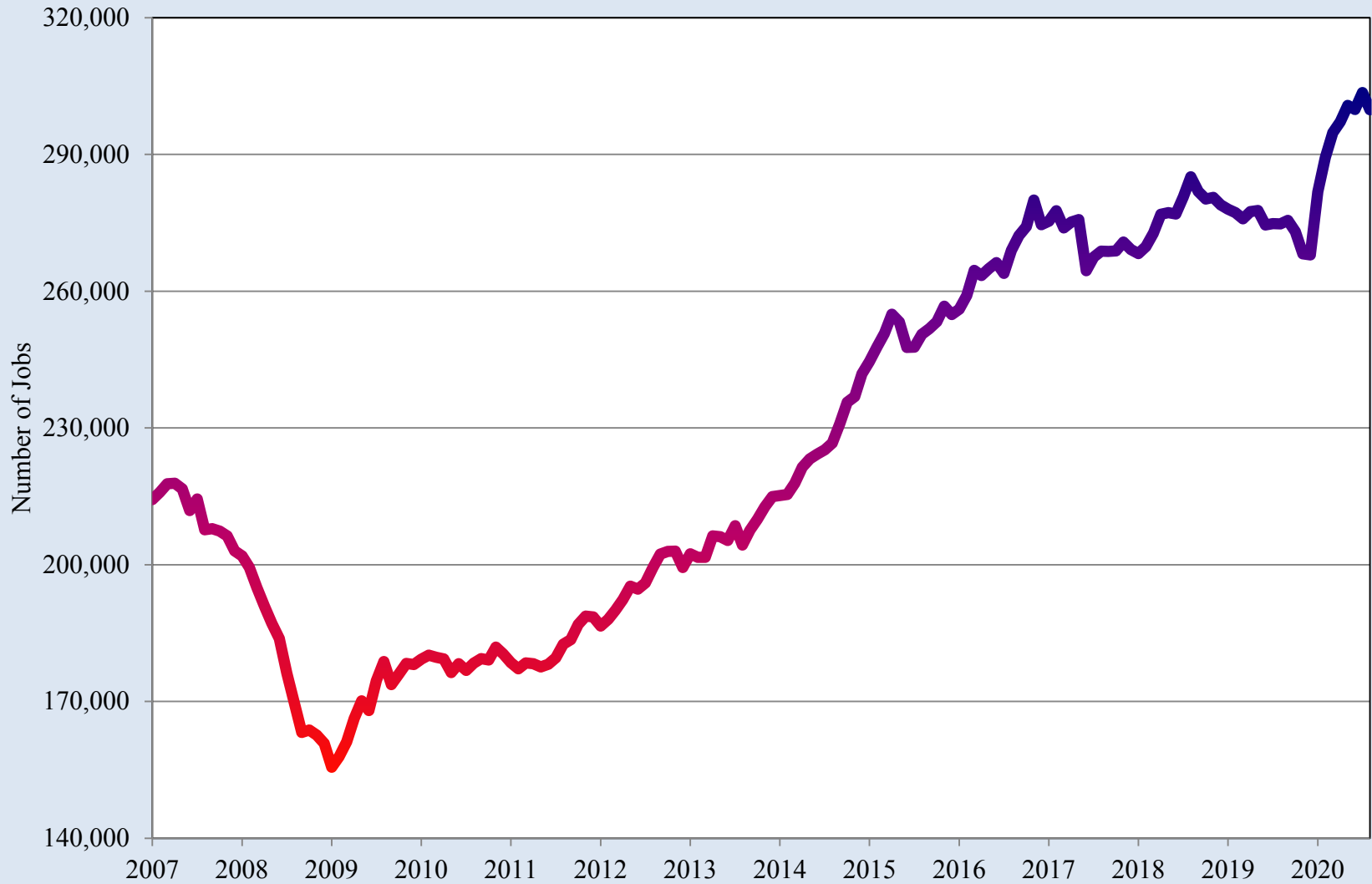
2019 2020 2021



Source: INEGI



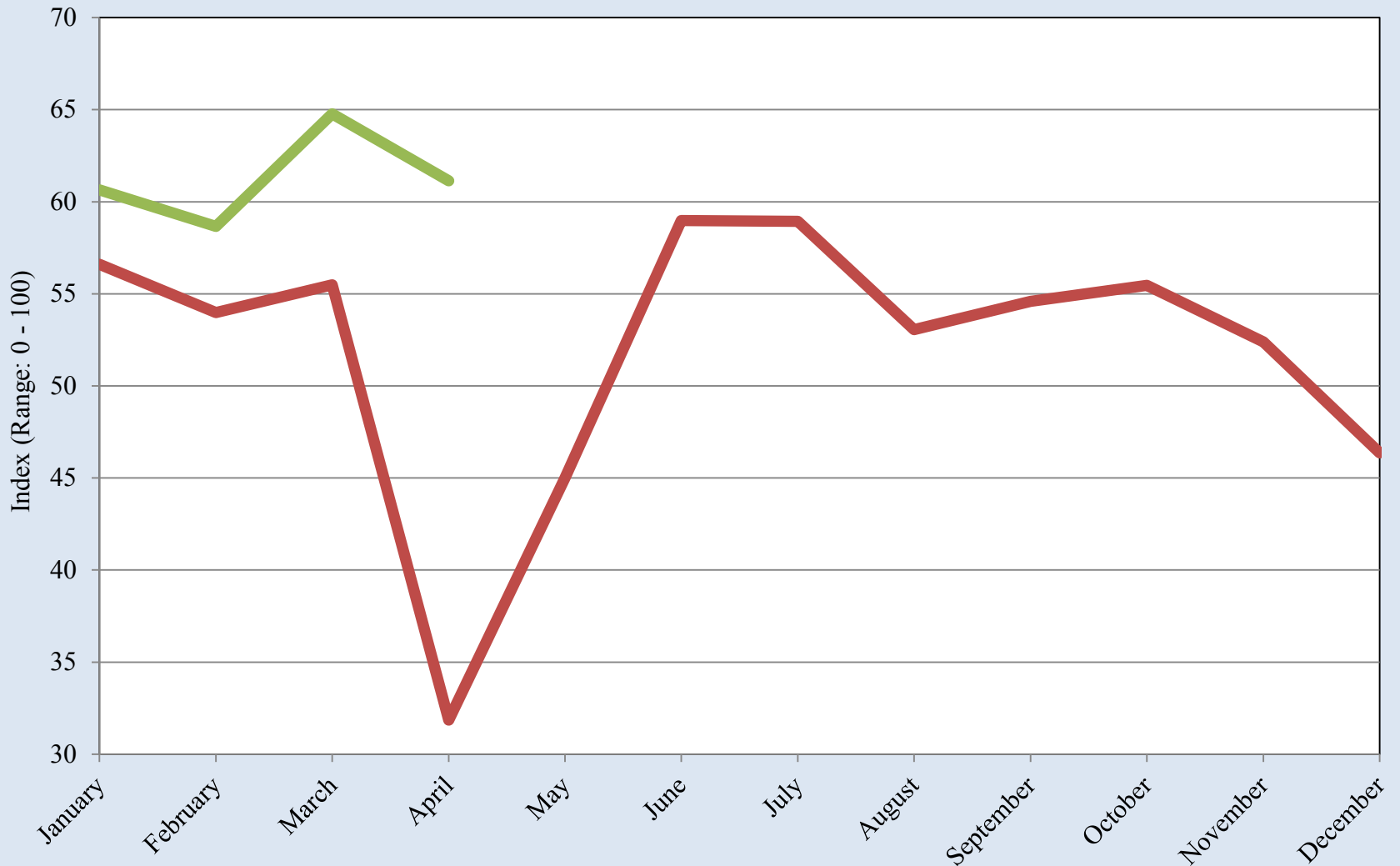
## Export-Oriented Manufacturing Employment in Ciudad Juárez



Source: INEGI

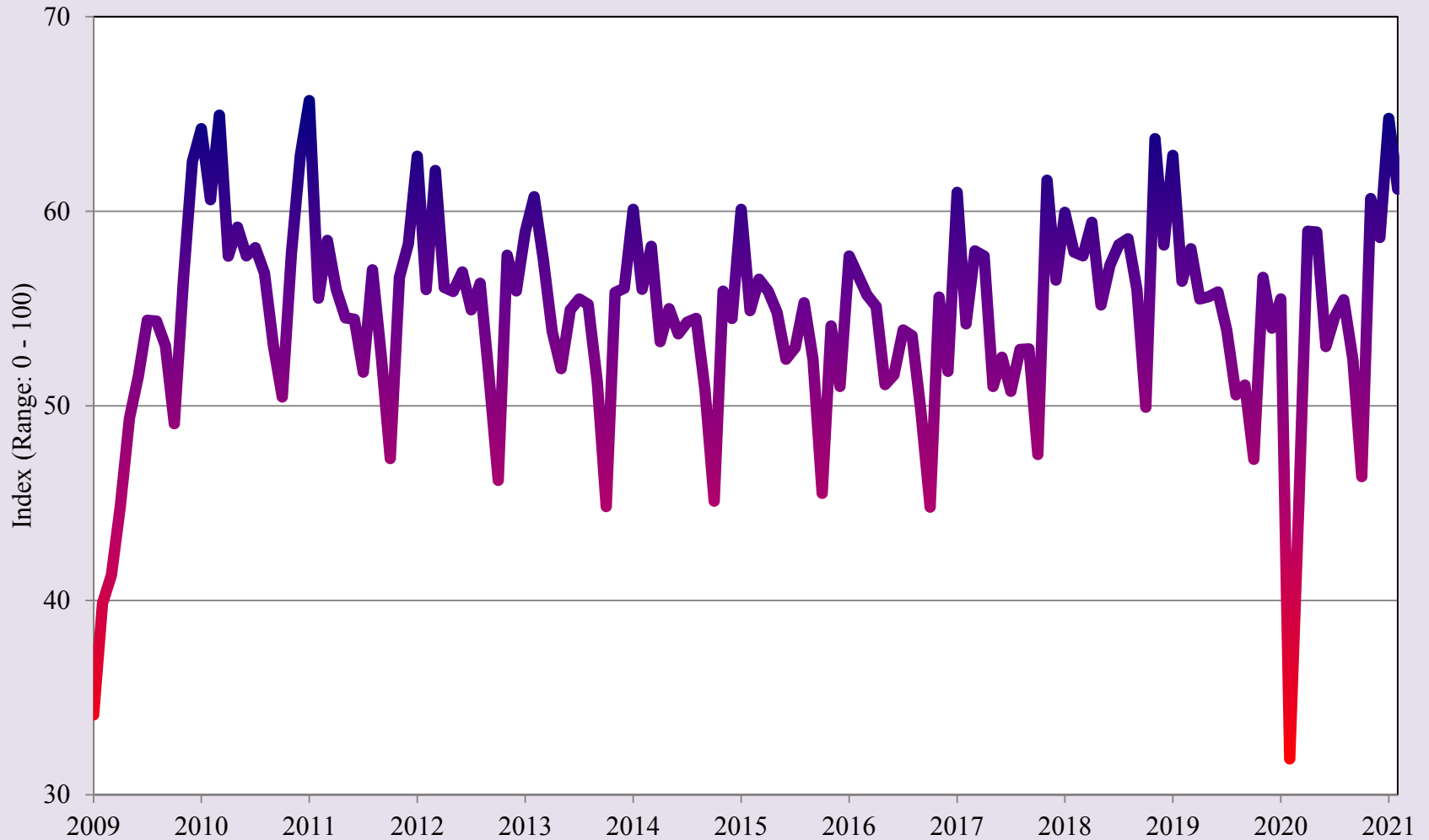
# Northern Mexico Manufacturing Orders Index

2020 2021



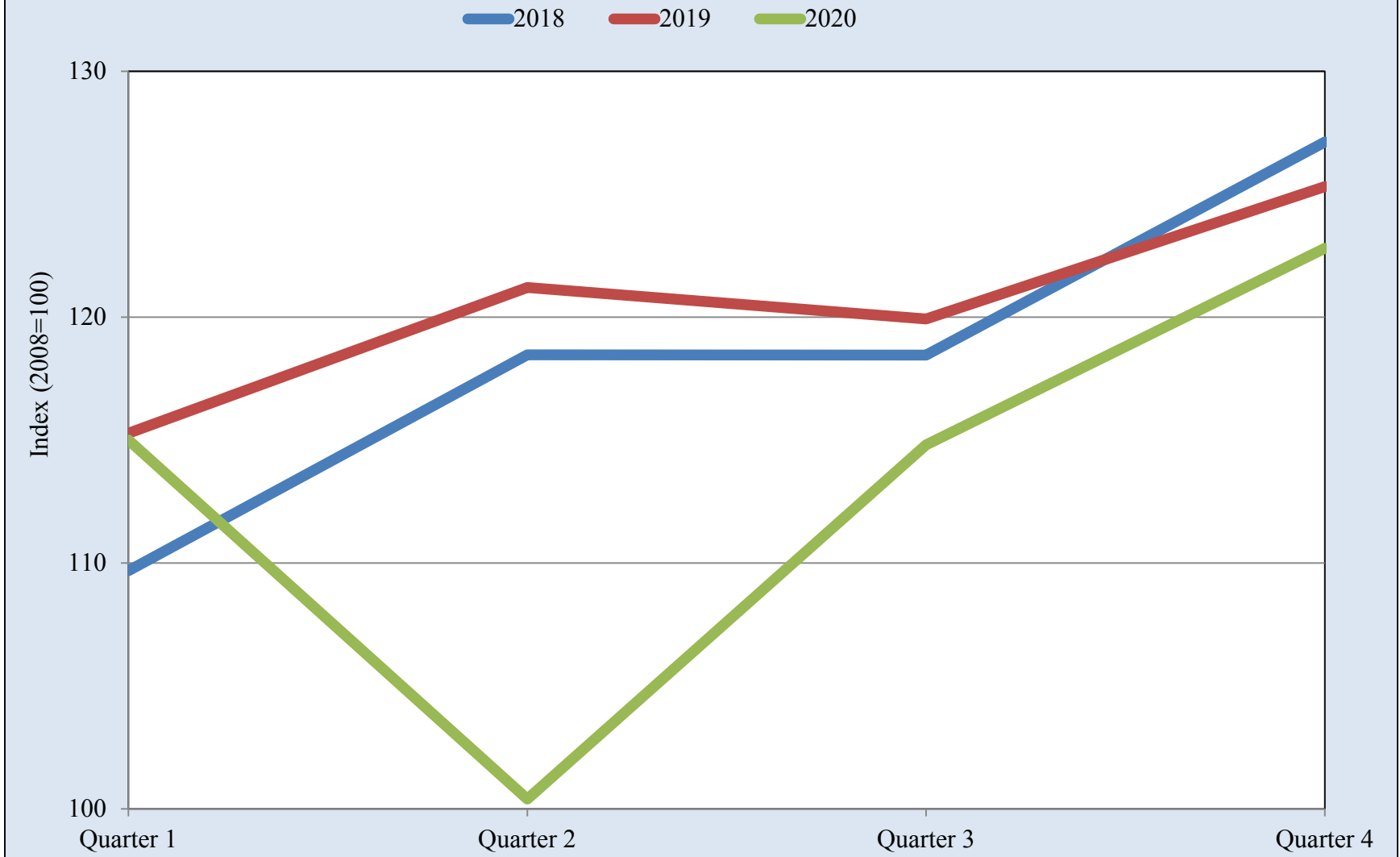
Source: Banco de México

## Northern Mexico Manufacturing Orders Index



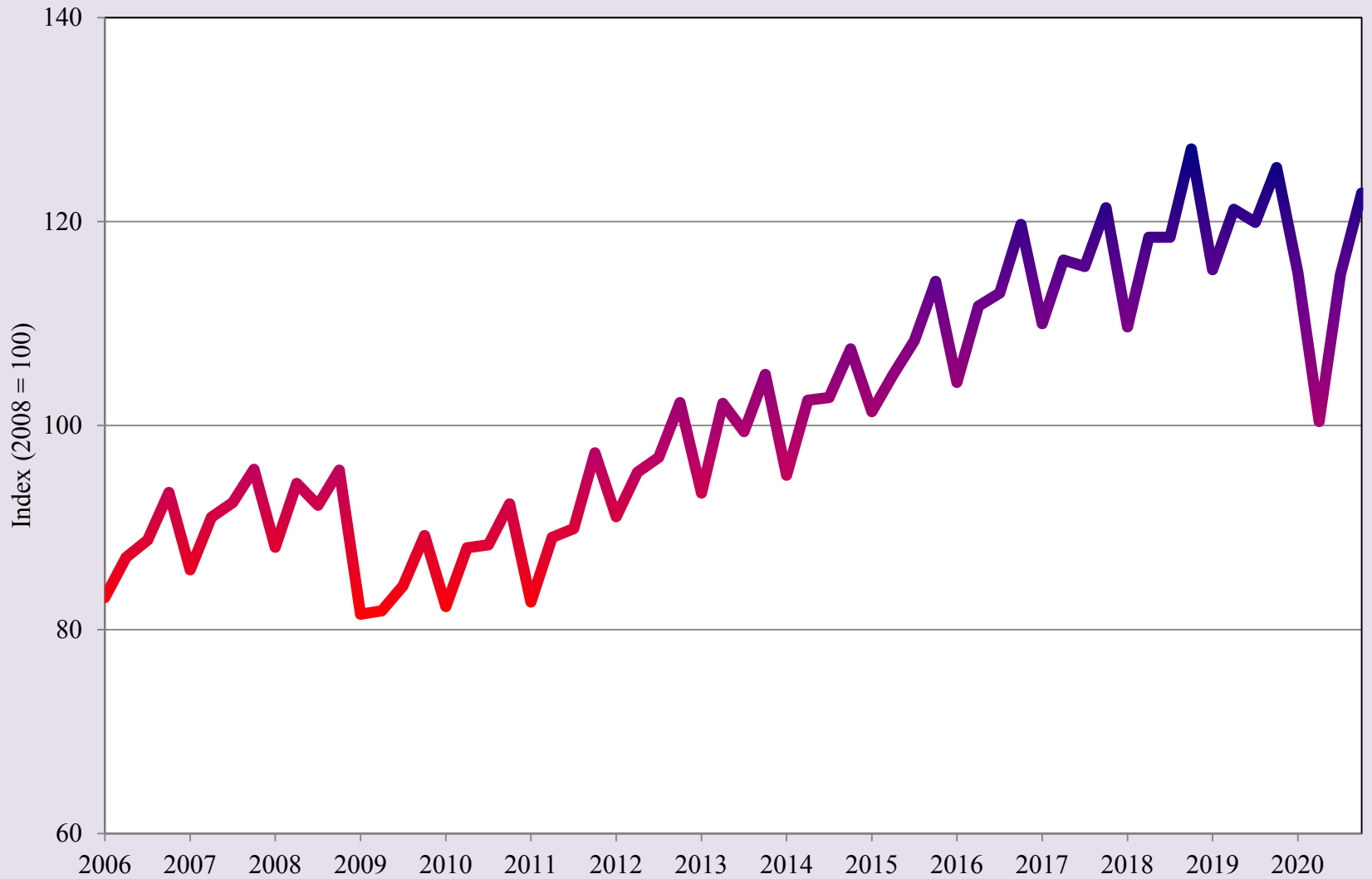
Source: Banco de México

## Quarterly Indicator of Economic Activity for the State of Chihuahua



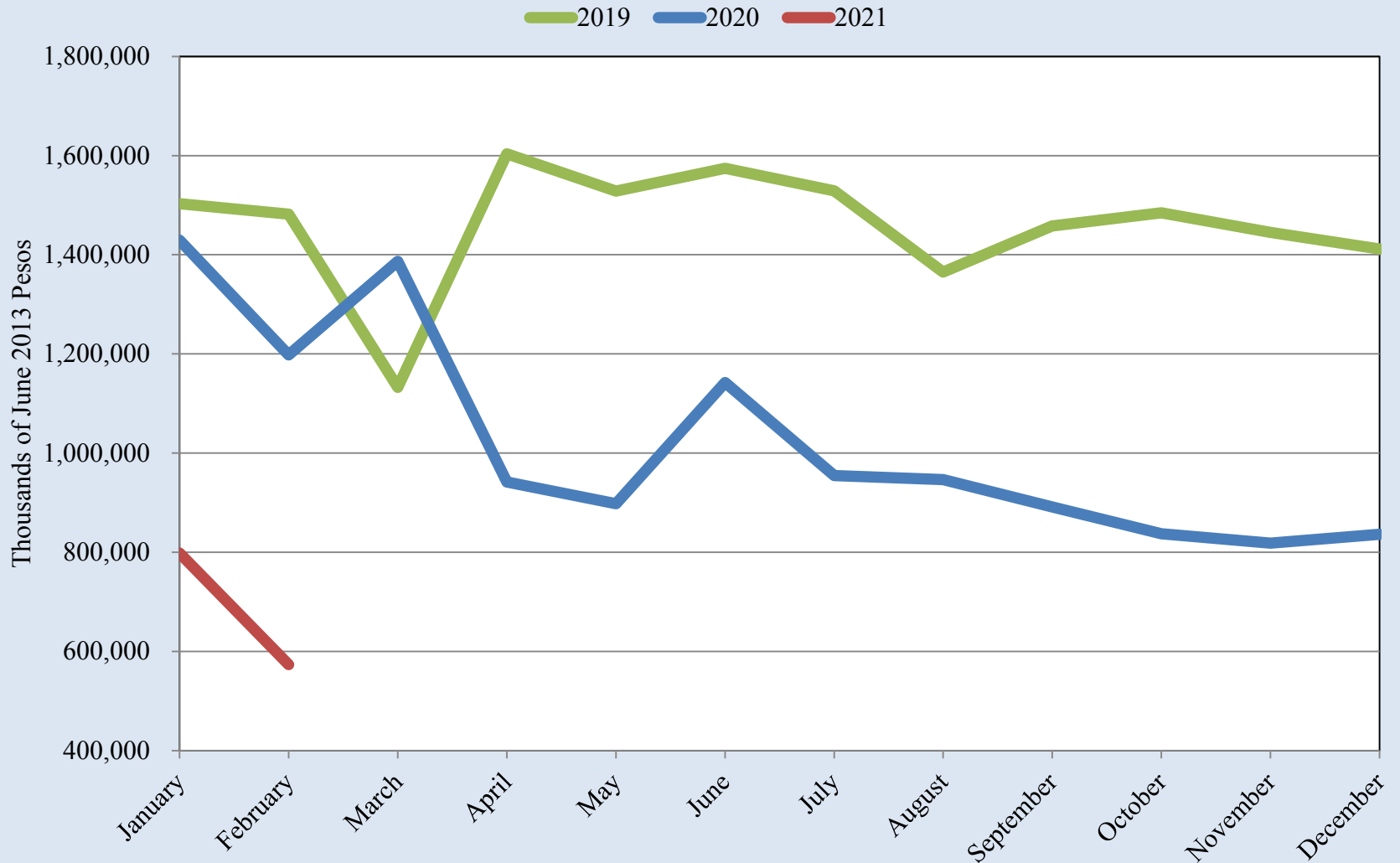
Source: INEGI

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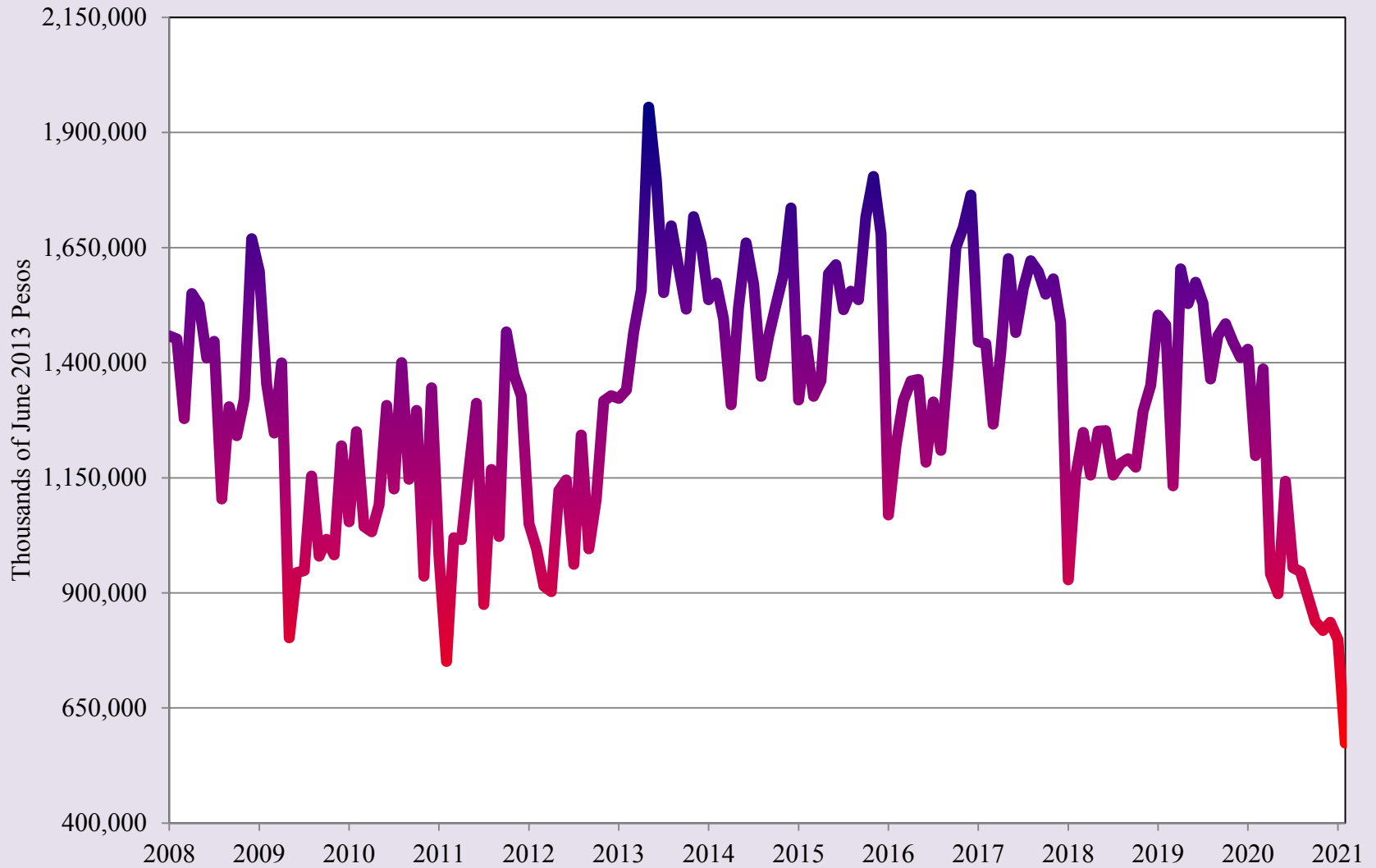
Source: INEGI

## Total Value of Construction in the State of Chihuahua



Source: INEGI

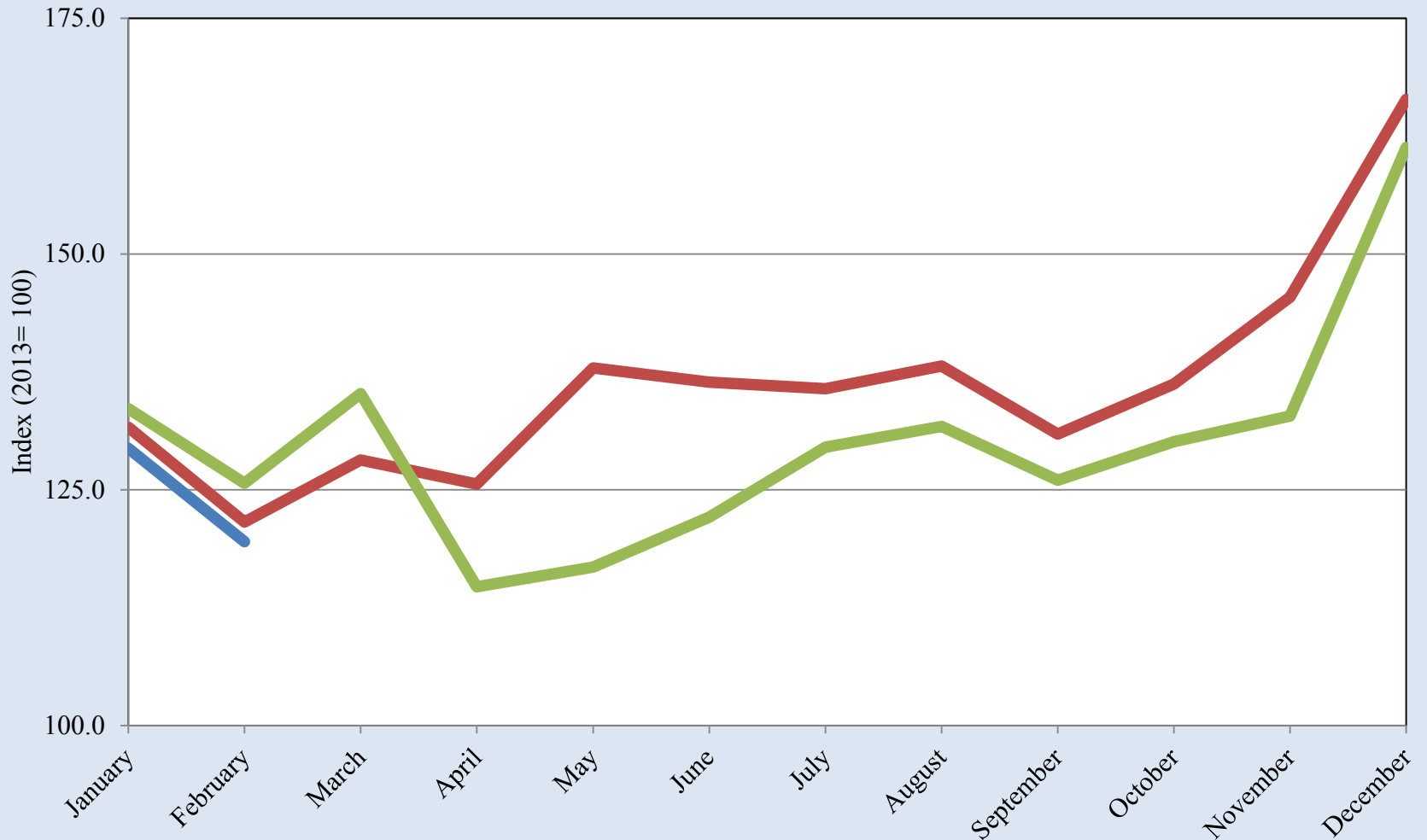
## Total Value of Construction in the State of Chihuahua



Source: INEGI

## Real Retail Activity Index for the State of Chihuahua

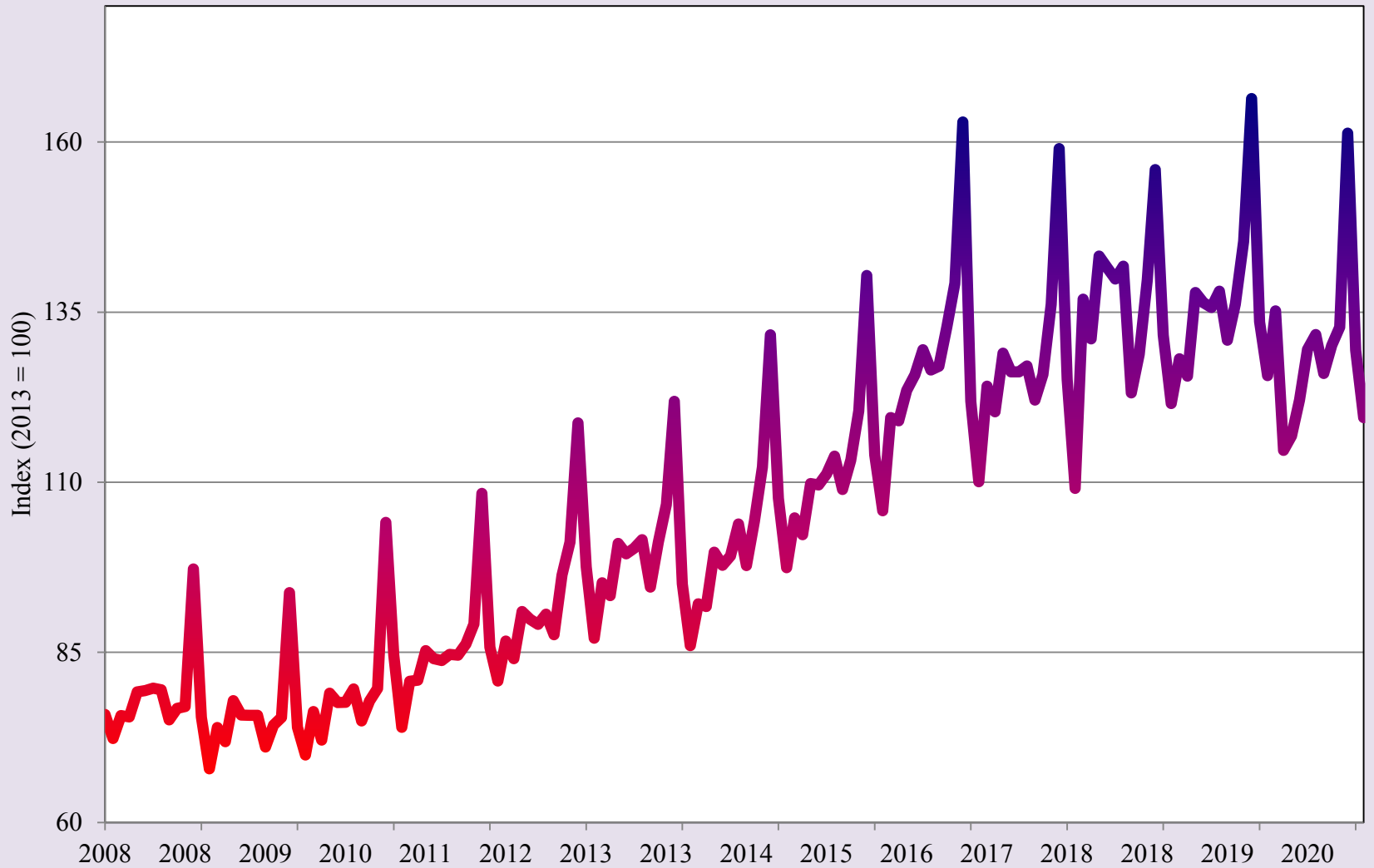
— 2019 — 2020 — 2021



Source: INEGI



## Real Retail Activity Index for the State of Chihuahua



Source: INEGI



# BORDERPLEX BUSINESS BAROMETER

## University of Texas at El Paso

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***Borderplex Business Barometer*** is a monthly publication of the Border Region Modeling Project (BRMP), a research unit within the Department of Economics & Finance at the College of Business Administration of The University of Texas at El Paso. BRMP information is available at: <https://www.utep.edu/business/border-region-modeling-project/index.html>. For additional information, contact the Border Region Modeling Project - CBA 236, UTEP Department of Economics & Finance, 500 West University Avenue, El Paso, TX 79968-0543, USA, (915) 747-7775.