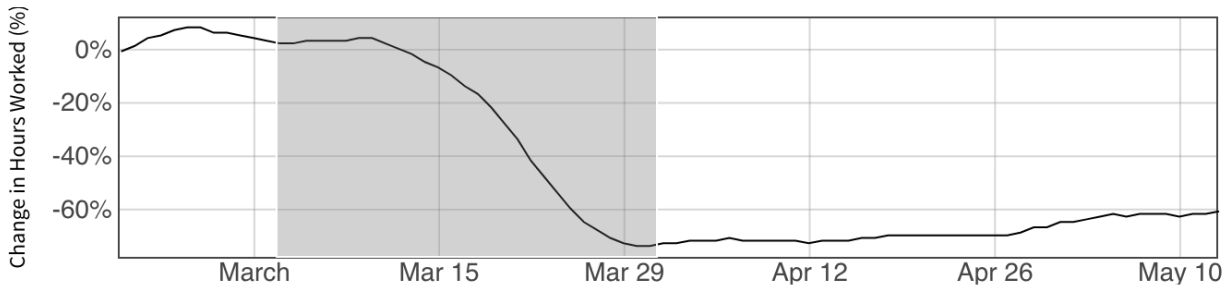
May 27, 2020

Minnesota started reopening last week. Here's what the data says.

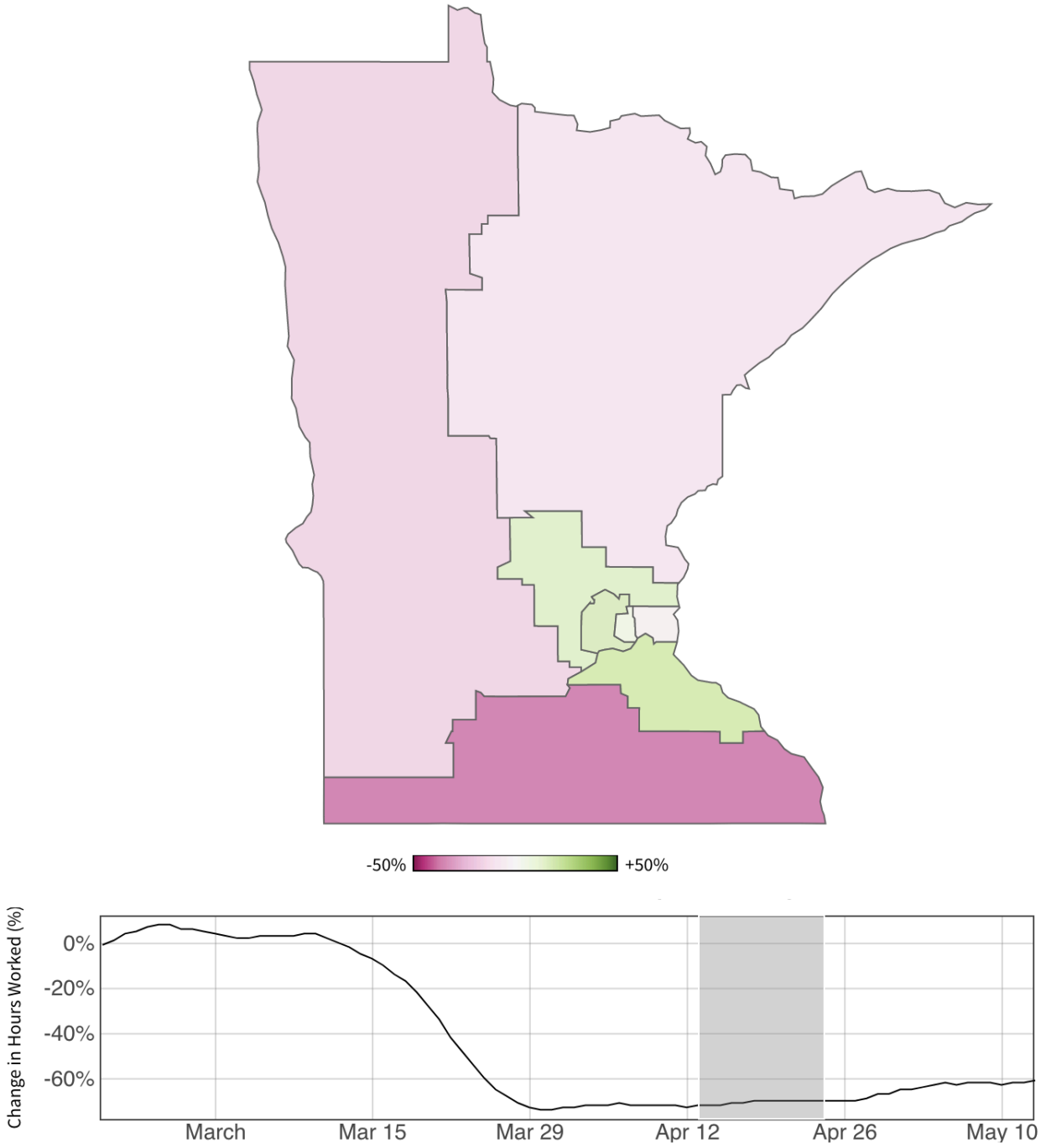
Minnesota's stay-at-home order expired on May 18th and businesses started reopening. It seemed inevitable that hospitality and retail would regain some level of momentum across the entire state, but surprisingly that didn't happen. Before we look at what happened during Minnesota's first week reopening, let's take a look at what's happened over the past 3 months.

By the end of March, COVID-19 had forced hospitality workplaces in Minnesota to reduce their operations by over 75% according to the Hourly Workforce Index. A staggering drop that sent most of us into our kitchens to prepare meals at home within two weeks' time.

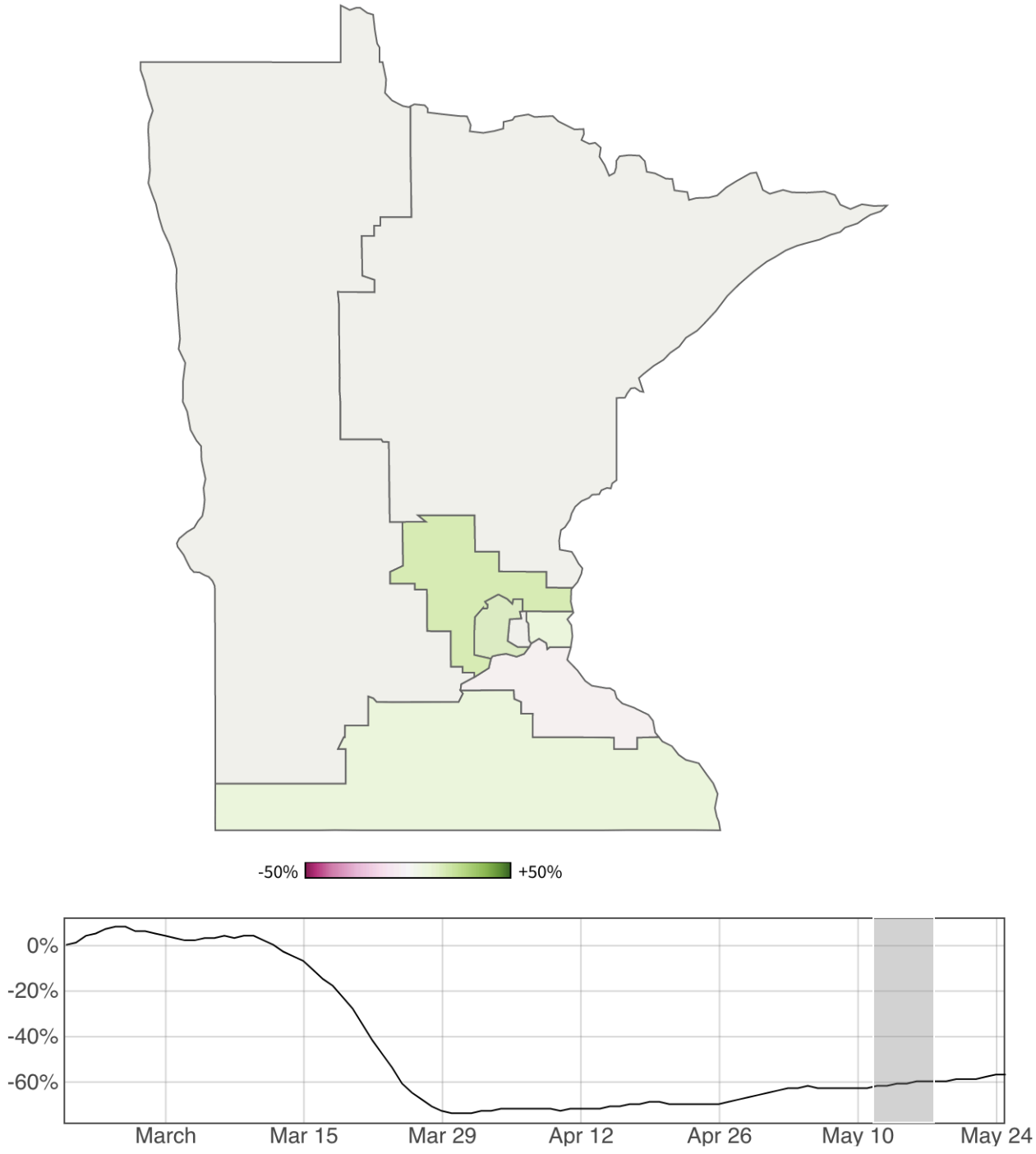


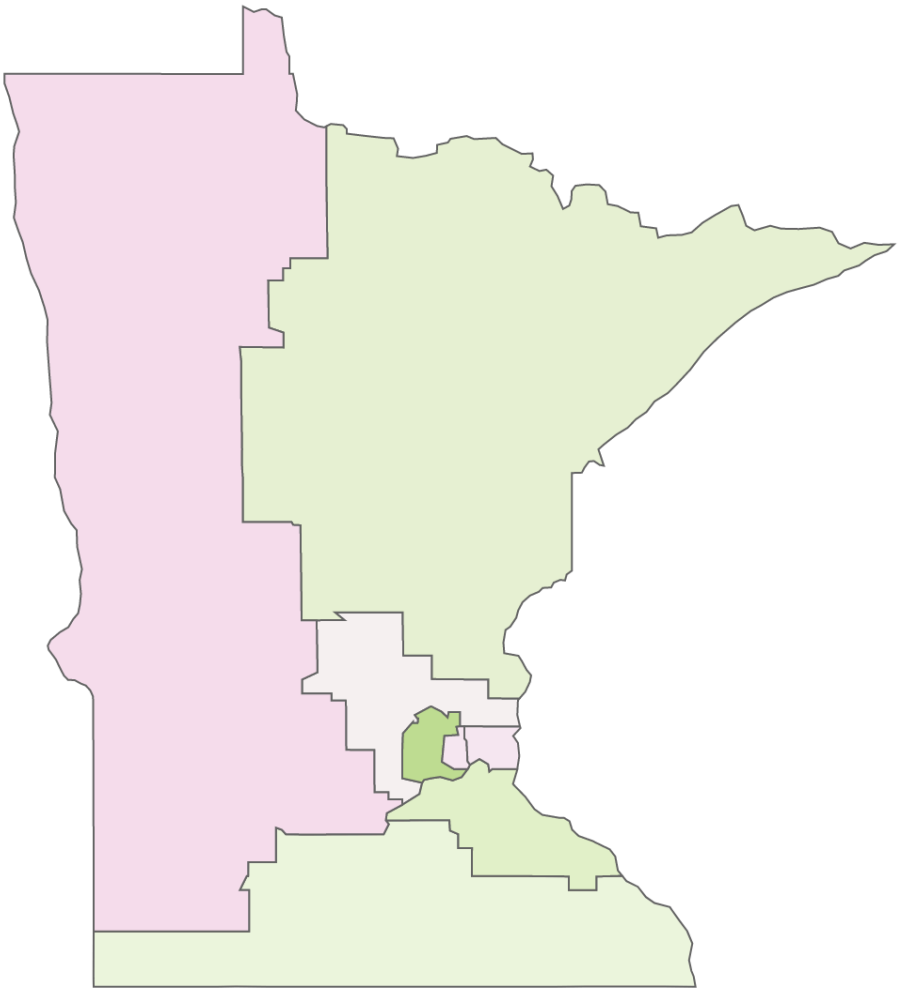
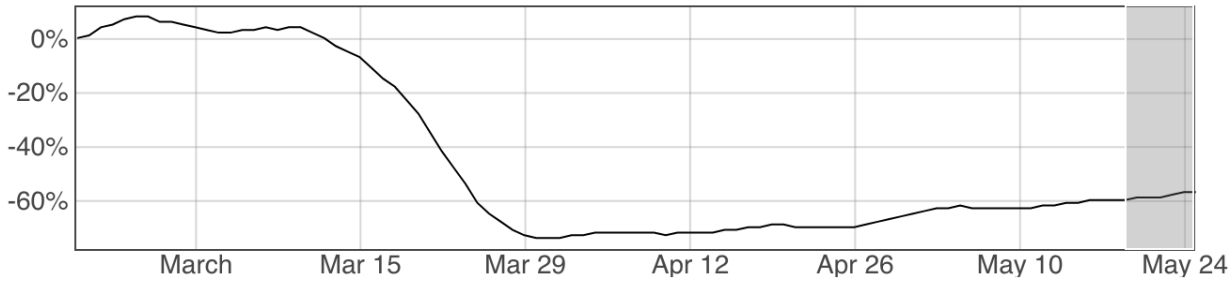
This lasted through most of April, but after Easter, Minnesotans grew tired of doing dishes as restaurants started to figure out how to adapt to the restrictions. Through the month of May hourly workers increased their hours by 15%, but overall continued to be down 60% annually.

In particular, the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area adjusted first with more than a 10% gain in hours worked at restaurant, retail, and hospitality businesses between April 12 and April 24.



Gains throughout the rest of the state started to emerge in the week leading up to the expiration of the stay-at-home order, and by May 17th hours worked had grown throughout most of Minnesota; —presumably as a result of workplaces preparing for reopening.



As of today, Minnesota has been partially reopened for one week, and the results show overall gains of 3% for the state, but results are mixed by district. For example, the greatest gains were in Hennepin county—home to Minneapolis—with a 20% improvement, but right across the river we see a decline of 7% in Ramsey county—home to St. Paul. Throughout the rest of the state,

we learn the next best results were half of Hennepin county with a10% gain in hours worked. Most surprisingly, we see a double-digit drop of 10% in hours worked in the west.