

S.C. Leading Index Ends 2011 Above 100

The South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) continues to fluctuate around the 100 mark, gaining 0.31 points from November. The current level of 100.18 indicates moderate economic growth over the next 3 to 6 months. Building permit activity, the valuation of those permits and the average weekly manufacturing hours worked all contributed to the rising index. The average weekly number of initial claimants for Unemployment Insurance remained relatively stable over the month at 6,568. The SCLI remained fairly flat over the course of the year, holding within 0.5 points of the 100 mark.

-David Clayton



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

SC Real Estate Market Rebounds in December

The number of housing units authorized for construction by building permits increased substantially in December, to more than 1,500 units. The December level is nearly 40 percent more than last month and 70 percent more than a year ago. Permits for apartment housing was a major driver for the December increase, with 136 permits issued for projects with 5 or more units in November compared to 608 in December. The most active metropolitan area for building permits continues to be Charleston, with 748 permits issued in December compared to 202 in Columbia, 129 in Greenville and 111 in Myrtle Beach. Filings for foreclosures increased dramatically in December, by more than 40 percent to 3,472 actions. The median home sales price in South Carolina inched up from \$147,600 to \$150,400.

The Research Division at the South Carolina Department of Commerce is a highly-skilled, multidisciplinary team of professionals dedicated to the economic development of South Carolina and the collection, analysis and dissemination of information to support that mission. Consisting of seven professionals with advanced degrees and expertise in economics, business, statistics and information sciences, the Research Division publishes reports and analyses for statewide constituents and proposals for companies considering South Carolina for investment. If you would like to receive Commerce's monthly Economic Outlook, e-mail EconomicOutlook@SCcommerce.com.

KEY S.C. INDICATORS

Income

+0%

State Personal Income

remained constant at \$157 billion in the third quarter of 2011.

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

-1.4%

South Carolina Stock Index

fell 1.14 points in December, closing at 81.6 on the last trading day of the month.

Bloomberg

Employment

-0.2%

Nonfarm Employment

decreased 3,800 non-seasonally adjusted jobs in December from the prior month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-0.1%

Labor Force

decreased by 5,221 to 2,139,112 in December from the previous month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-0.4%

Unemployment Rate

fell to 9.5 percent for the month of December.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+1%

Manufacturing Weekly Hours

increased 0.4 hours to 42.3 hours in December over the previous month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+1.1%

Available Online Job Postings

rose by 500 positions in December to a seasonally-adjusted 45,900 job postings.

The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index

Real Estate

+0.9%

Single-Family Home Sales Price

increased to \$150,366 in December.

South Carolina Association of Realtors

+38.8%

Residential Building Permits

increased by 425 permits over the previous month.

U.S. Census Bureau



South Carolina Employment

Non-Seasonally Adjusted Wage and Salary Employment

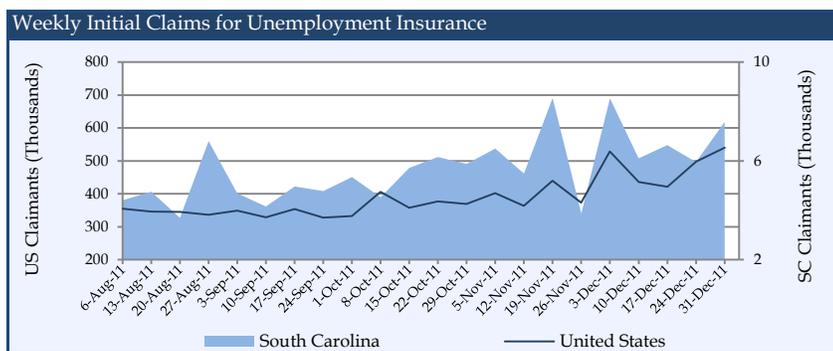
Non-seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment decreased from the previous month, with a small reduction of 3,800 jobs in December. Job growth occurred in the Goods Producing (+1,400) sector, but the strongest subsector was Manufacturing with 0.55 percent job growth over November and 5.53 percent over last year. The Construction subsector rose slightly with an additional 200 jobs a favorable sign for the real estate market. The biggest job losses were in Government (-2,800) and Leisure and Hospitality (-3,500).

Industry Sector	December 2011	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
Goods Producing	301,400	300,000	292,500	0.47	3.04
Natural Resources and Mining	4,100	4,100	4,000	0.00	2.50
Construction	76,100	75,900	78,900	0.26	-3.55
Manufacturing	221,200	220,000	209,600	0.55	5.53
Service Providing	1,533,300	1,538,500	1,524,400	-0.34	0.58
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	359,300	357,800	353,300	0.42	1.70
Information	26,000	26,000	25,500	0.00	1.96
Finance	97,200	97,500	97,500	-0.31	-0.31
Professional and Business Services	224,200	225,000	225,500	-0.36	-0.58
Educational and Health Services	218,800	219,200	216,300	-0.18	1.16
Leisure and Hospitality	204,500	208,000	197,800	-1.68	3.39
Other Services	69,000	67,900	68,000	1.62	1.47
Total Private	1,500,400	1,501,400	1,476,400	-0.07	1.63
Government	334,300	337,100	340,500	-0.83	-1.82
Total Nonfarm	1,834,700	1,838,500	1,816,900	-0.21	0.98

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Weekly Unemployment Claims

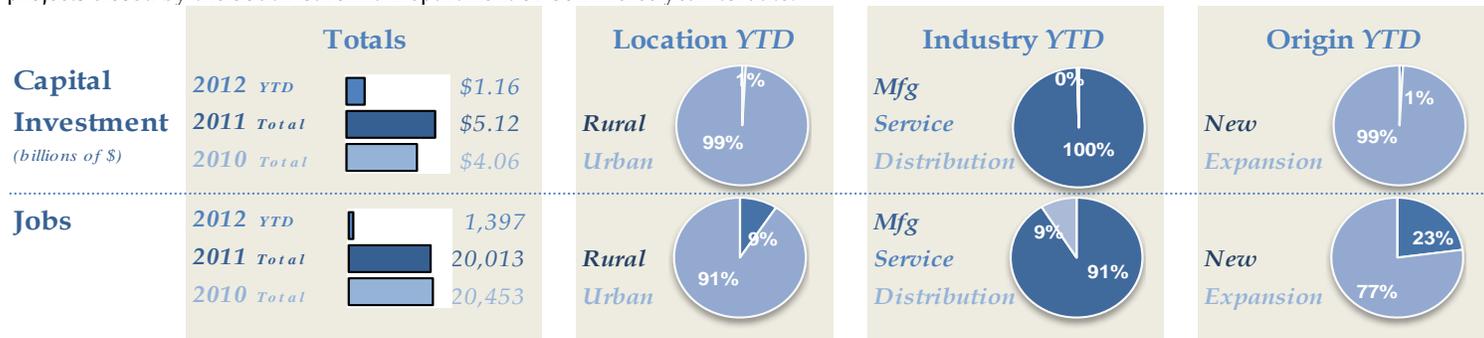
Initial weekly Unemployment Insurance claims stayed nearly level with a slight decrease of only 19 fewer claims in December than November. The weekly average of initial claims hovered around the 6,000 mark with a strong uptick in the last week of the year, where it rose to 7,576 claims. These were mostly due to the end of the holiday shopping season as well as the usual spike that happens at the end of each year.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

Capital Investment and Job Recruitment

Capital Investment and Job Recruitment provide statistics on industry recruitment efforts, detailing upcoming jobs and capital investment projects closed by the South Carolina Department of Commerce year-to-date.



Source: S.C. Department of Commerce Note: Not all closed projects have yet undergone announcement.



South Carolina Real Estate

The median home sales price rose slightly over the previous year to \$150,400 from \$150,000. The volume of residential building permits and the valuation of those permits both showed increases over last year. The Residential Valuation increased by a strong 37.2 percent, while permit totals showed the greatest growth with 71.6 percent, up by 634 permits. Foreclosures rose 15.2 percent with 458 more foreclosures than the previous December.

	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2011 YTD	2010 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	December	3,595	3,478	3.4%	46,762	47,034	-0.6%
Median Sales Price*	December	\$150.4	\$150.0	0.2%	\$148.5	\$150.0	-1.0%
Foreclosures	December	3,472	3,014	15.2%	37,829	41,180	-8.1%
Residential Building Permits -Total	December	1,520	886	71.6%	15,577	14,614	6.6%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	December	\$219,286	\$159,801	37.2%	\$2,661,307	\$2,497,849	6.5%

* Thousands of US dollars. Source: S.C. Association of Realtors, RealtyTrac, U.S. Census

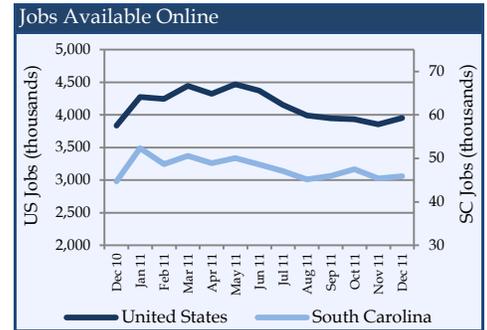
Business Activity



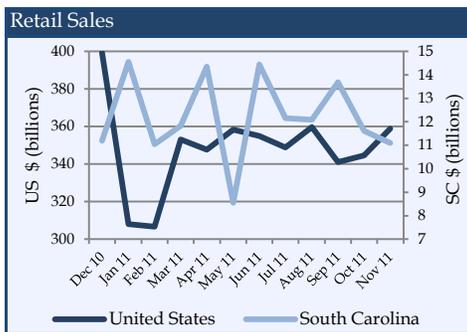
Source: U.S. Census



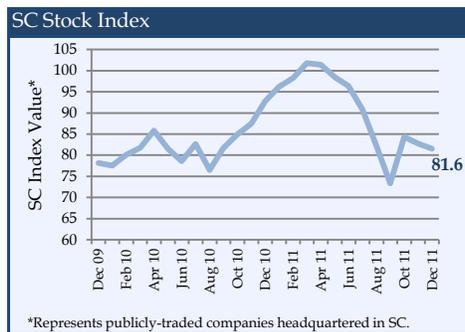
Source: U.S. Department of Labor



Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Revenue



Source: Bloomberg

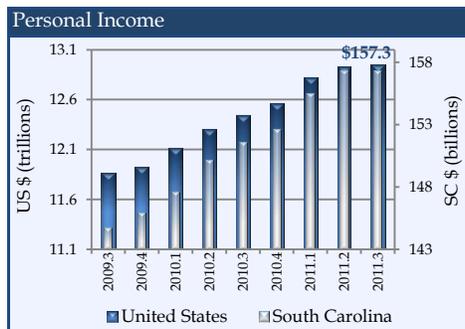


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

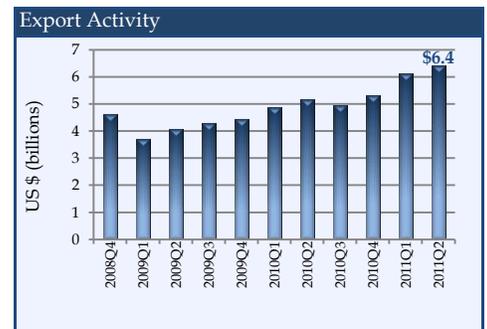
Income and Output



*Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units. Source: SC Ports Authority



Source: U.S. Census



Source: Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census



South Carolina Regional Update

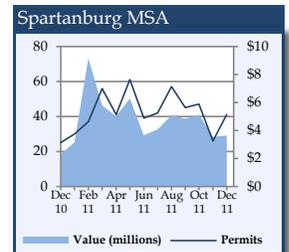
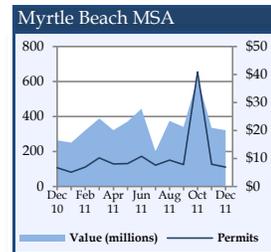
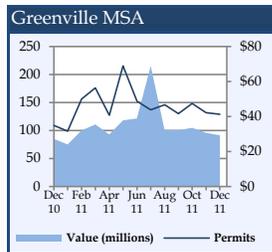
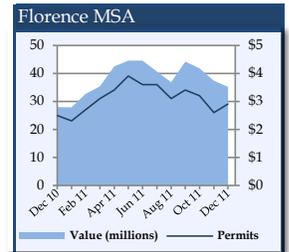
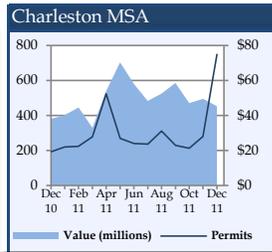
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state. The metropolitan areas highlighted below all experienced GDP growth greater than the nationwide metropolitan average in 2010.

Home Sales

MSA	Indicator	Dec 10	Dec 11
Charleston	Sales Volume	684	778
	Median Price (000's)	\$180	\$187
Columbia	Sales Volume	517	520
	Median Price (000's)	\$140	\$136
Florence	Sales Volume	99	99
	Median Price (000's)	\$125	\$124
Greenville	Sales Volume	491	500
	Median Price (000's)	\$129	\$135
Myrtle Beach	Sales Volume	622	540
	Median Price (000's)	\$143	\$138
Spartanburg	Sales Volume	191	171
	Median Price (000's)	\$94	\$119
South Carolina	Sales Volume	3,478	3,595
	Median Price (000's)	\$150.0	\$150.4

Source: S.C. Association of Realtors

Building Permits



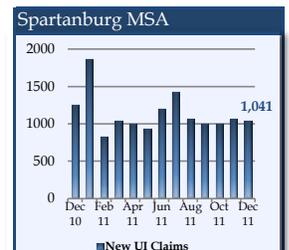
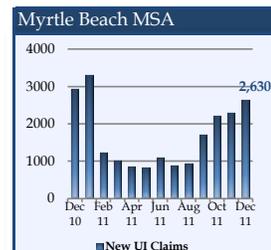
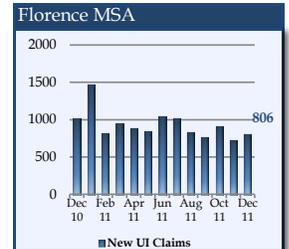
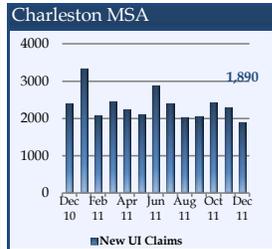
Source: U.S. Census

Employment

MSA	Indicator	Nov 11	Dec 11
Charleston	Employment (000's)	296.7	296.6
	Unemployment Rate	7.8	7.9
Columbia	Employment (000's)	342.3	339.1
	Unemployment Rate	7.9	8.0
Florence	Employment (000's)	85.1	84.4
	Unemployment Rate	9.9	10.2
Greenville	Employment (000's)	286.9	287.5
	Unemployment Rate	7.7	7.7
Myrtle Beach	Employment (000's)	117.1	113.3
	Unemployment Rate	10.3	11.6
Spartanburg	Employment (000's)	122.0	121.8
	Unemployment Rate	9.2	9.3
South Carolina	Employment (000's)	1,951.3	1,955.6
	Unemployment Rate	9.9	9.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (MSA figures not seasonally adjusted)

Unemployment Insurance Claims



Source: SCDOC analysis of SCDEW data

Manufacturing Growth Dec 2010 - Dec 2011 by SC MSAs



Source: BLS