

Positive Outlook for South Carolina's Economy

The South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) value of 100.45 for April makes five consecutive months of improving economic outlook for the state. Although down slightly from the March SCLI of 100.52, the index continues to indicate improving economic conditions over the next three to six months. An 8.9 percent increase in the weekly average number of initial claimants for Unemployment Insurance, coupled with a weak month in building permit activity, brought the SCLI lower in April. These indicators were offset by an increase in the average manufacturing work week, which gained 1.7 percent or 0.7 hours last month. Meanwhile, The Conference Board's national Leading Economic Index declined 0.1 percent in April to 95.5.

-David Clayton

South Carolina Leading Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

Real Estate Activity Slows in April

The South Carolina real estate market lost ground in April. The number of residential building permits issued declined 10.4 percent and the number of residential home sales declined 5.1 percent last month. The median price of South Carolina homes sold last month increased 0.8 percent to \$146,000. The lower building permit activity was primarily due to fewer multi-family structures permitted, especially in the coastal metro areas. Charleston saw a 20 percent decline in the number of permits issued last month. Meanwhile, the number of foreclosure filings in South Carolina fell 12.5 percent last month on top of a 22.3 percent decline in March.

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. 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

+0.7%

State Personal Income

grew to \$159 billion in the fourth quarter of 2011. Total growth in 2011 was 4.7%.

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

-2.7%

South Carolina Stock Index

lost 2.35 points in April, closing at 86.14 on the last trading day of the month.

Bloomberg

Employment

+0.7%

Nonfarm Employment

increased 13,500 non-seasonally adjusted jobs in April from the prior month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-0.3%

Labor Force

decreased by 6,055 to 2,151,192, seasonally-adjusted, in April.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-0.1%

Unemployment Rate

fell to 8.8 percent for the month of April.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+1.7%

Manufacturing Weekly Hours

increased by 0.7 hours to 42.0 hours in April from the previous month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+0.8%

Available Online Job Postings

rose by 400 positions in April to a seasonally-adjusted 52,900 job postings.

The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index

Real Estate

+0.8%

Single-Family Home Sales Price

increased to \$146,000 in April.

South Carolina Association of Realtors

-10.4%

Residential Building Permits

decreased by 169 permits from the previous month.

U.S. Census Bureau

South Carolina Employment

Non-Seasonally Adjusted Wage and Salary Employment

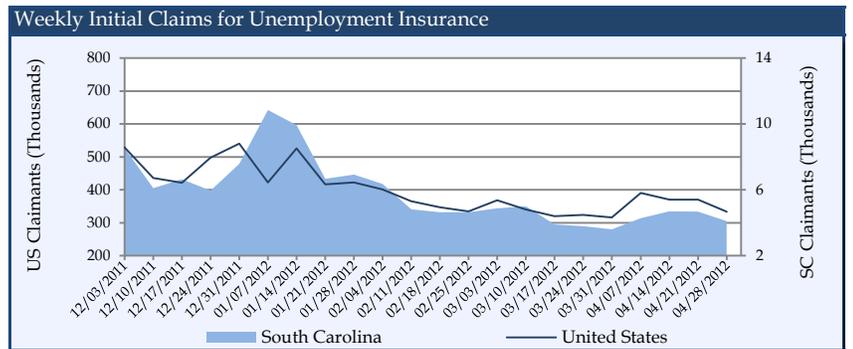
Non-seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment increased significantly from the previous month, gaining 13,500 jobs in April. A 14,000 job gain in the private sector offset a loss of 500 government jobs. Seasonal gains in the Leisure and Hospitality sector, which increased 7,300 jobs last month, and 3,400 additional jobs in the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sector were the largest drivers for the overall increase. Both of these sectors also grew by more than 4,000 jobs last month. Aside from Government, only the Information Services sector saw a decline last month, shedding 400 jobs in April.

Industry Sector	April 2012	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
Goods Producing	300,500	299,700	295,400	0.27	1.73
Natural Resources and Mining	3,800	3,800	3,900	0.00	-2.56
Construction	74,500	74,000	77,100	0.68	-3.37
Manufacturing	222,200	221,900	214,400	0.14	3.64
Service Providing	1,557,300	1,544,600	1,546,300	0.82	0.71
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	354,200	350,800	348,800	0.97	1.55
Information	26,200	26,600	25,700	-1.50	1.95
Finance	95,000	94,900	96,000	0.11	-1.04
Professional and Business Services	230,600	229,600	230,100	0.44	0.22
Educational and Health Services	220,000	218,700	217,400	0.59	1.20
Leisure and Hospitality	214,900	207,600	214,200	3.52	0.33
Other Services	69,900	69,400	68,800	0.72	1.60
Total Private	1,511,300	1,497,300	1,496,400	0.94	1.00
Government	346,500	347,000	345,300	-0.14	0.35
Total Nonfarm	1,857,800	1,844,300	1,841,700	0.73	0.87

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

Weekly Unemployment Claims

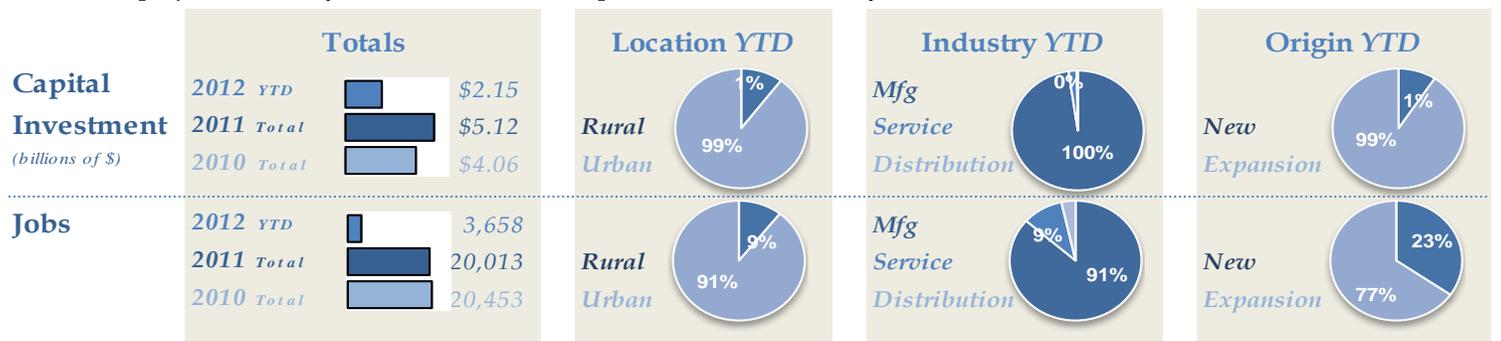
The weekly average number of initial claimants for Unemployment Insurance (UI) in South Carolina increased 8.9 percent in April, with every metro area in the state experiencing an increase except Spartanburg. Florence and Myrtle Beach both saw increases of slightly more than 10 percent, while Charleston and Columbia witnessed an 8.8 percent increase. Initial claimant activity in Greenville increased 3.8 percent during April. Although higher than the previous month, April's initial UI claimant activity was still approximately 12 percent lower than a year ago.



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.

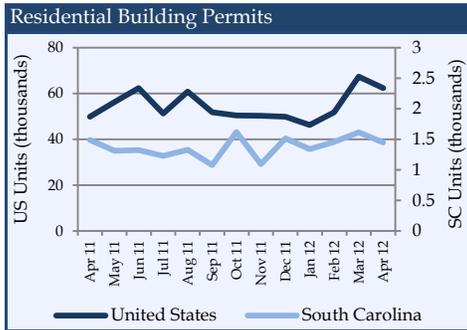
South Carolina Real Estate

The median South Carolina home sales price in April was \$146,000, 2.5 percent higher than this time last year and 0.8 percent higher than the value in March. The year-over-year comparison of the number of homes sold is also positive, as 4.4 percent more homes were sold in April, 2012 compared to April, 2011. Foreclosure activity is also down, with 2,970 filings made in April compared to 3,396 in March and 4,373 in February. Fewer foreclosure filings may point to improving conditions in the greater real estate market because these distressed properties tend to depress home prices.

	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2012 YTD	2011 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	April	4,181	4,006	4.4%	14,994	13,876	8.1%
Median Sales Price*	April	\$146.0	\$142.5	2.5%	\$144.5	\$140.6	2.8%
Foreclosures	April	2,970	3,119	-4.8%	14,025	11,732	19.5%
Residential Building Permits -Total	April	1,449	1,490	-2.8%	5,866	5,059	16.0%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	April	\$261,391	\$242,043	8.0%	\$1,058,927	\$831,124	27.4%

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

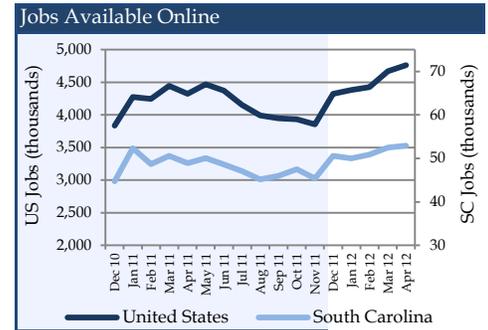
Business Activity



Source: U.S. Census



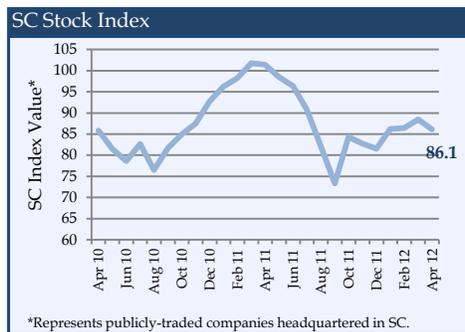
Source: U.S. Department of Labor



Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Revenue



Source: Bloomberg

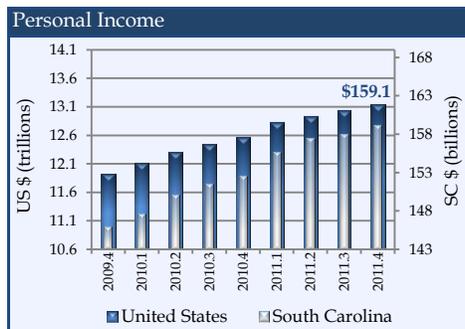


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

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

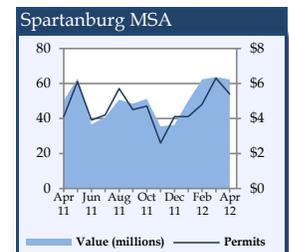
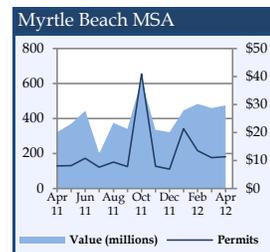
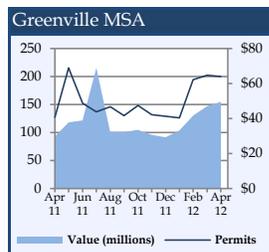
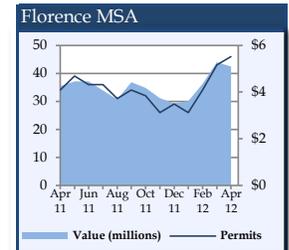
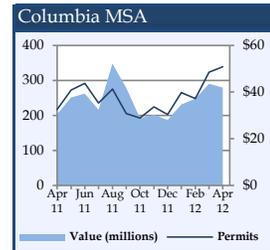
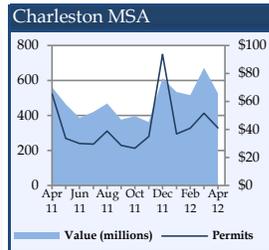
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state.

Home Sales

MSA	Indicator	Apr 11	Apr 12
Charleston	Sales Volume	812	829
	Median Price (000's)	\$177	\$183
Columbia	Sales Volume	536	628
	Median Price (000's)	\$140	\$140
Florence	Sales Volume	109	107
	Median Price (000's)	\$111	\$133
Greenville	Sales Volume	582	606
	Median Price (000's)	\$135	\$140
Myrtle Beach	Sales Volume	738	678
	Median Price (000's)	\$130	\$135
Spartanburg	Sales Volume	207	209
	Median Price (000's)	\$116	\$115
South Carolina	Sales Volume	4,006	4,181
	Median Price (000's)	\$142.5	\$146.0

Source: S.C. Association of Realtors

Building Permits



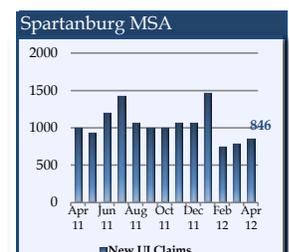
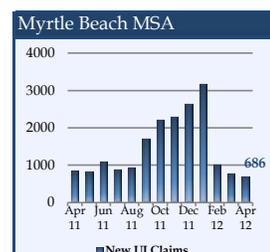
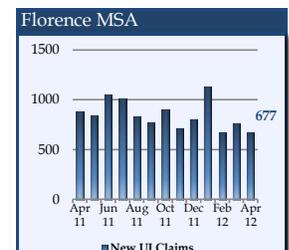
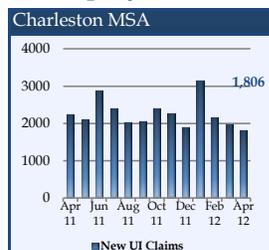
Source: U.S. Census

Employment

MSA	Indicator	Mar 12	Apr 12
Charleston	Employment (000's)	304.1	305.1
	Unemployment Rate	7.1	7.1
Columbia	Employment (000's)	342.0	341.8
	Unemployment Rate	7.5	7.5
Florence	Employment (000's)	85.3	85.7
	Unemployment Rate	9.5	9.4
Greenville	Employment (000's)	289.9	288.7
	Unemployment Rate	7.1	7.0
Myrtle Beach	Employment (000's)	113.4	116.0
	Unemployment Rate	10.3	9.5
Spartanburg	Employment (000's)	121.9	121.4
	Unemployment Rate	8.6	8.6
South Carolina	Employment (000's)	1,964.6	1,961.3
	Unemployment Rate	8.9	8.8

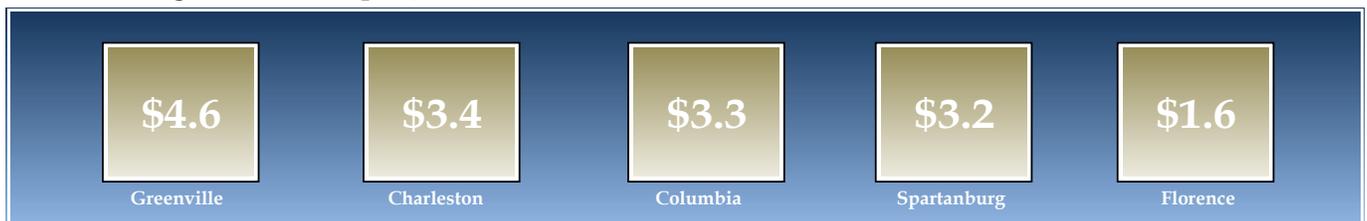
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (MSA figures not seasonally adjusted)

Unemployment Insurance Claims



Source: SCDOC analysis of SCDEW data

Manufacturing Economic Output (GDP), Billions of Dollars, 2010



Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, September 2011 (Reflects total manufacturing economic output for MSA)