

South Carolina Economic Outlook



South Carolina
Department of Commerce

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Division of Research

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SC Leading Index Points to Continued Growth

Buoyed by a surge in building permits for new residential construction, the South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) gained 0.34 points in April to a value of 102.22. An SCLI value greater than 100 forecasts positive economic growth in the state over the coming three to six months. A 42.9 percent increase in building permit activity and a 1.7 percent increase in the average manufacturing workweek were the primary contributors to the improving SCLI last month. These gains offset a 15.1 percent increase in initial claimant activity for Unemployment Insurance. Last month, the Conference Board's national Leading Economic Index gained 0.7 percent.

- David Clayton

South Carolina Leading Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

Positive Indicators for SC Real Estate Market

April was a good month for the South Carolina residential real estate market, as all indicators pointed positive for the month. The number of residential real estate closings climbed up 1.2 percent to nearly \$167,000 while the number of closed real estate transactions also climbed 0.7 percent to 6,112. Year-over-year, these measures are also up 5.0 percent and 11.2 percent, respectively. With the building season in high swing, the number of residential building permits issued climbed 42.9 percent over the March level and is up 43.1 percent compared to a year ago. Construction employment also continued to rebound, adding 6,000 jobs over the last twelve months.

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 dclayton@SCcommerce.com.

KEY S.C. INDICATORS

Income

+1.1%

State Personal Income

increased to \$181.6 billion in the fourth quarter of 2014.

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

+3.0%

South Carolina Stock Index

gained 3.32 points in April, closing at 113.73 on the last trading day of the month.

Bloomberg

Employment

+1.2%

Nonfarm Employment

increased by 23,900 non-seasonally adjusted jobs in April from the prior month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+0.4%

Labor Force

increased by 9,875 to 2,256,118, seasonally-adjusted, in April.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

0%

Unemployment Rate

remained unchanged at 6.7 percent, seasonally-adjusted, for April.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+1.7%

Manufacturing Weekly Hours

increased by 0.7 hours to 42.4 hours in April from 41.7 hours in March.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-2.1%

Available Online Job Postings

decreased by 1,400 positions in April to a seasonally-adjusted 65,400 job postings.

The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index

Real Estate

+1.2%

Single-Family Home Sales Price

increased by \$1,995 to \$166,995 in April.

South Carolina Association of Realtors

+42.9%

Residential Building Permits

increased by 1,020 permits from the previous month to 3,399 permits issued in April.

U.S. Census Bureau



South Carolina Employment

Non-Seasonally Adjusted Wage and Salary Employment

Total non-seasonally adjusted, nonfarm employment increased by 23,900 from the previous month, a 1.21 percent gain for the month and 2.81 percent for the year. Last month, the Leisure and Hospitality (+8,400 jobs) and Professional and Business Services (+6,400 jobs) sectors saw the greatest employment increases.

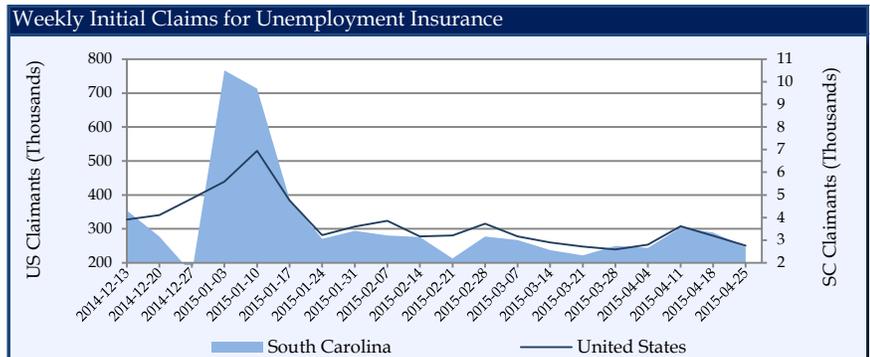
Year-over-year, the Service Providing sectors have added 45,100 jobs while the Goods Producing sectors have added 9,700 positions: 3,700 in Manufacturing and 6,000 in Construction. With seasonal employment picking up, the Leisure and Hospitality sector saw the largest percentage gain last month with a 3.64 percent increase.

Industry Sector	April 2015	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
Goods Producing	324,200	322,400	314,500	0.56	3.08
Natural Resources and Mining	3,800	3,900	3,800	-2.56	0.00
Construction	87,800	85,900	81,800	2.21	7.33
Manufacturing	232,600	232,600	228,900	0.00	1.62
Service Providing	1,681,800	1,659,700	1,636,700	1.33	2.76
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	381,100	377,000	369,400	1.09	3.17
Information	26,500	26,500	26,400	0.00	0.38
Finance	95,800	96,100	96,300	-0.31	-0.52
Professional and Business Services	266,100	259,700	253,700	2.46	4.89
Educational and Health Services	234,700	232,200	226,100	1.08	3.80
Leisure and Hospitality	239,200	230,800	232,800	3.64	2.75
Other Services	72,800	72,600	71,800	0.28	1.39
Total Private	1,640,400	1,617,300	1,591,000	1.43	3.10
Government	365,600	364,800	360,200	0.22	1.50
Total Nonfarm	2,006,000	1,982,100	1,951,200	1.21	2.81

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

Weekly Unemployment Claims

Following normal seasonal patterns, the number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance (UI) rose 15.1 percent in April to 3,062 average weekly claims. Last month's level was 3.4 percent lower than April 2014 weekly claims activity and 30.7 percent lower than two years ago. Myrtle Beach and Spartanburg metro areas saw significant declines in UI claimant activity last month while South Carolina's other metro areas saw modest increases in activity.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

Average Hourly Earnings

These charts present the average hourly earnings of all employees in private industry, based on a monthly national survey of businesses. The data are not seasonally adjusted.



Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics



South Carolina Real Estate

Up nearly 10 percent year-to-date, residential building permit surged 42.9 percent in April compared to March. South Carolina building activity is outpacing the nation, where building permit activity is up 13.7 percent compared to a year ago. The median home sales price in South Carolina has also gained 5.5 percent year to date and the number of residential real estate closings was up 16.8 percent year to date in April. Foreclosure activity in South Carolina continues to decline, down 12.2 percent year to date.

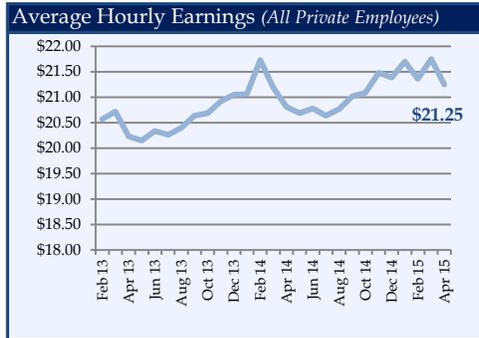
	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2015 YTD	2014 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	April	6,112	5,498	11.2%	21,164	18,118	16.8%
Median Sales Price*	April	\$167.0	\$159.0	5.0%	\$163.6	\$155.0	5.5%
Foreclosures	April	2,349	2,393	-1.8%	8,589	9,783	-12.2%
Residential Building Permits -Total	April	3,399	2,376	43.1%	10,213	9,313	9.7%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	April	\$625,647	\$452,363	38.3%	\$2,024,293	\$1,659,567	22.0%

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

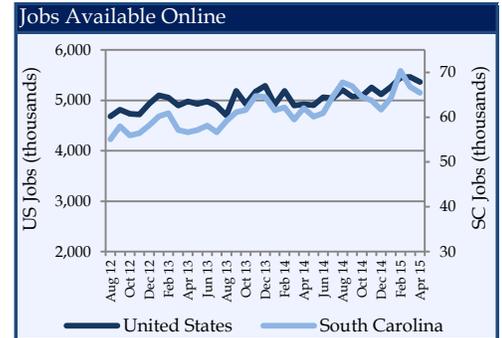
Business Activity



Source: U.S. Census



Source: U.S. Department of Labor



Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Revenue



*Represents publicly-traded companies headquartered in SC.
Source: Bloomberg

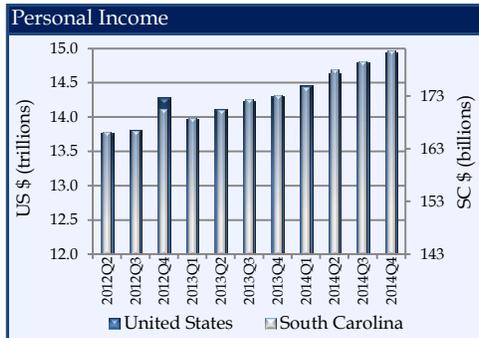


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

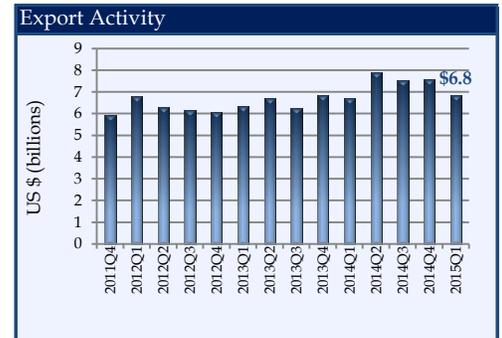
Income and Output



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



Source: U.S. Census



Source: Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census



South Carolina Regional Update

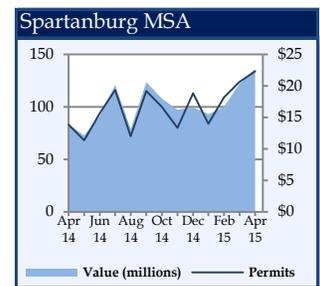
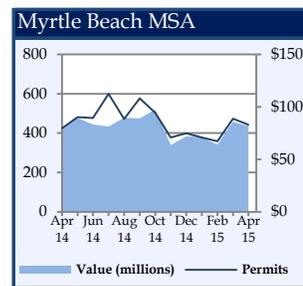
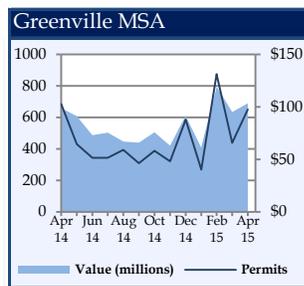
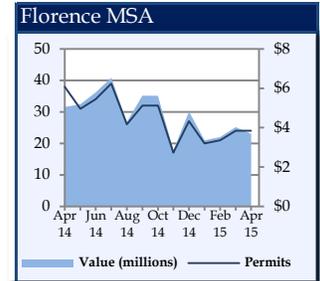
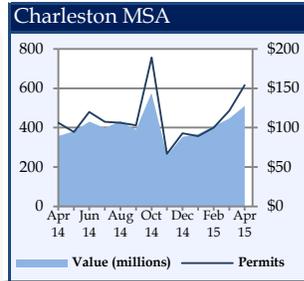
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state.

Home Sales

MSA	Indicator	Apr 14	Apr 15
Charleston	Sales Volume	1,168	1,388
	Median Price (000's)	\$215	\$220
Columbia	Sales Volume	778	932
	Median Price (000's)	\$145	\$145
Florence	Sales Volume	137	148
	Median Price (000's)	\$114	\$134
Greenville	Sales Volume	839	926
	Median Price (000's)	\$148	\$165
Myrtle Beach	Sales Volume	867	924
	Median Price (000's)	\$155	\$155
Spartanburg	Sales Volume	329	373
	Median Price (000's)	\$118	\$135
South Carolina	Sales Volume	5,498	6,112
	Median Price (000's)	\$159.0	\$167.0

Source: S.C. Association of Realtors

Building Permits



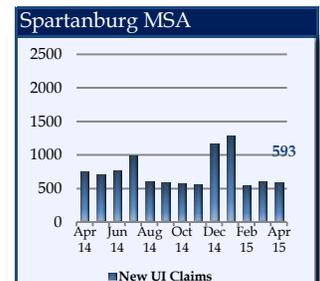
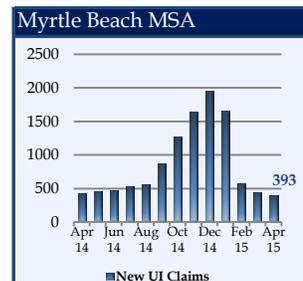
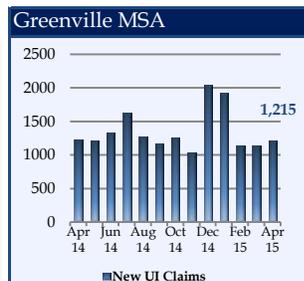
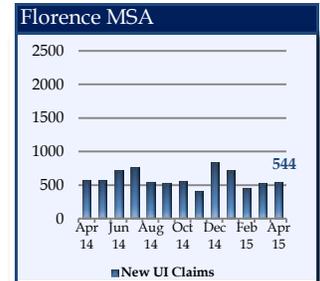
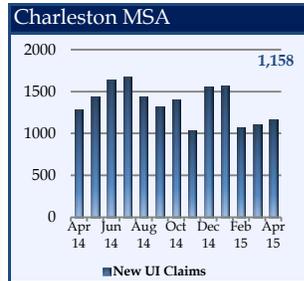
Source: U.S. Census

Employment

MSA	Indicator	Mar 15	Apr 15
Charleston	Employment (000's)	334.7	340.1
	Unemployment Rate	5.3	5.2
Columbia	Employment (000's)	367.3	368.2
	Unemployment Rate	5.6	5.6
Florence	Employment (000's)	87.7	87.5
	Unemployment Rate	7.1	7.1
Greenville	Employment (000's)	386.5	391.7
	Unemployment Rate	5.5	5.5
Myrtle Beach	Employment (000's)	166.1	172.8
	Unemployment Rate	7.4	6.7
Spartanburg	Employment (000's)	139.8	140.4
	Unemployment Rate	6.2	6.2
South Carolina	Employment (000's)	2,096.5	2,104.6
	Unemployment Rate	6.7	6.7

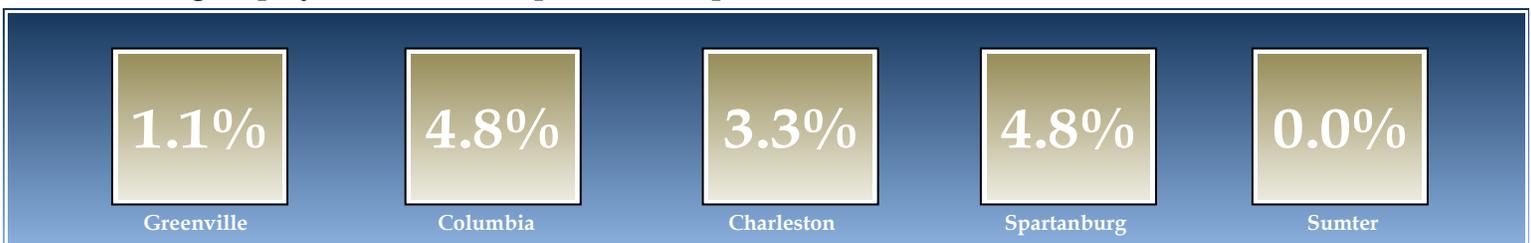
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (MSA figures not seasonally adjusted)

Unemployment Insurance Claims



Source: SCDOC analysis of SCDEW data

Manufacturing Employment Growth, April 2014 to April 2015



Source: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2015