



SC Leading Index Dips 0.15 Points in August

The South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) lost 0.15 points last month, ending with a value of 101.77. A steep drop in the stock market last month was the significant driver of the SCLI. The Dow Jones Composite Average gave up 6.1 percent in August while the Bloomberg South Carolina Stock Index slid 5.3 percent. A seasonal decrease in residential construction permitting, down 13.1 percent last month, and a slight decrease in the length of the average manufacturing workweek, down 0.5 percent, also brought the SCLI lower. A major reduction in initial claims for Unemployment Insurance, down 29.8 percent, countered the other indicators. Last month, the Conference Board's national Leading Economic Index gained 0.1 percent to reach a value of 123.7.

- David Clayton

South Carolina Leading Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

SC Real Estate Market Steadily Improves

Year-to-date, all real estate indicators are in solid positive territory. The number of homes sold in South Carolina is up 15.8 percent to 6,470 homes sold in August. Likewise, the median home sales price has gained 5.9 percent over the course of the year to \$174,900. Home sales activity has picked up the most in South Carolina's larger metro markets of Greenville, Columbia and Charleston. Foreclosure activity is down 5.7 percent year-to-date. Home builders in South Carolina are busier than they've been since the recession. The number of residential building permits issued in South Carolina over the last 12 months exceeded 30,000 for the first time since 2009. Construction employment has also improved this year, gaining 6,700 jobs over the last 12 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 \$184.3 billion in the second quarter of 2015.

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

-5.3%

South Carolina Stock Index

lost 5.49 points in August, closing at 98.8 on the last trading day of the month.

Bloomberg

Employment

+0.1%

Nonfarm Employment

increased by 1,600 non-seasonally adjusted jobs in August from the prior month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-0.2%

Labor Force

decreased by 5,139 to 2,249,028, seasonally-adjusted, in August.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-0.4%

Unemployment Rate

decreased 0.4 percent to 6.0 percent, seasonally-adjusted, for August.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-0.5%

Manufacturing Weekly Hours

decreased by 0.2 hours to 41.8 hours in August from 42.0 hours in July.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-1.4%

Available Online Job Postings

decreased by 1,000 positions in August to a seasonally-adjusted 68,100 job postings.

The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index

Real Estate

-2.8%

Single-Family Home Sales Price

decreased by \$5,100 to \$174,900 in August.

South Carolina Association of Realtors

-13.1%

Residential Building Permits

decreased by 375 permits from the previous month to 2,494 permits issued in August.

U.S. Census Bureau



South Carolina Employment

Non-Seasonally Adjusted Wage and Salary Employment

South Carolina's total non-seasonally adjusted, nonfarm employment grew by 1,600 jobs to a level of 2,005,100 in August. The job gains last month were primarily due to a return to the school year for teachers, accounting for the bulk of the 2,800 gain in Government employment. Manufacturing also added 1,200 jobs

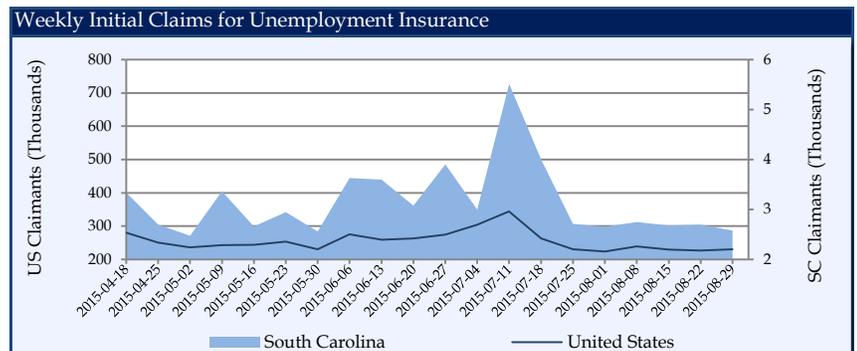
last month and Construction continues to gain momentum, adding 700 jobs last month and 6,700 year-over-year. With the tourism season winding down, Leisure and Hospitality shed 3,200 jobs in August, but is still solidly up 11,100 jobs or 4.65 percent compared to a year ago. Professional and Business Services is the biggest gainer over the last year, adding 13,300 jobs.

Industry Sector	August 2015	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
Goods Producing	325,100	323,200	316,700	0.59	2.65
Natural Resources and Mining	3,700	3,700	3,900	0.00	-5.13
Construction	89,800	89,100	83,100	0.79	8.06
Manufacturing	231,600	230,400	229,700	0.52	0.83
Service Providing	1,680,000	1,680,300	1,633,300	-0.02	2.86
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	386,300	387,200	374,800	-0.23	3.07
Information	26,600	27,200	26,400	-2.21	0.76
Finance	96,700	95,900	97,500	0.83	-0.82
Professional and Business Services	268,800	269,400	255,500	-0.22	5.21
Educational and Health Services	231,800	229,900	225,100	0.83	2.98
Leisure and Hospitality	249,900	253,100	238,800	-1.26	4.65
Other Services	72,200	72,700	72,100	-0.69	0.14
Total Private	1,657,400	1,658,600	1,606,900	-0.07	3.14
Government	347,700	344,900	343,100	0.81	1.34
Total Nonfarm	2,005,100	2,003,500	1,950,000	0.08	2.83

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

Weekly Unemployment Claims

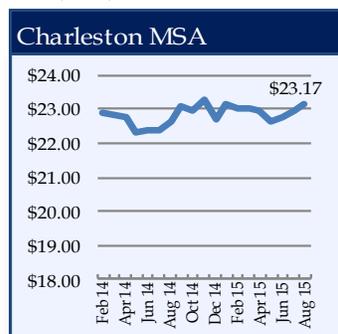
The number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance (UI) held fairly steady through the month of August between 2,500 and 2,800 per week. The average for the month was 2,671 weekly initial claims in South Carolina, which was 29.8 percent fewer than July and 22.3 percent fewer than August a year ago. Upstate South Carolina saw the greatest declines last month, with a 32.1 percent decrease in claimant activity in Greenville and a 36.5 percent decline in Spartanburg.



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

Last month, the number of building permits issued in South Carolina for new residential construction decreased 13.1 percent, but is up 16.2 percent year-to-date compared to 2014. The median home sales price is up 6.0 percent compared to August 2014 and the number of residential real estate closings has also improved, up 4.8 percent. Foreclosure activity ticked up 7 percent last month, but shows a declining trend with a 5.7 percent reduction year-to-date.

	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2015 YTD	2014 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	August	6,470	6,176	4.8%	49,294	42,560	15.8%
Median Sales Price*	August	\$174.9	\$165.0	6.0%	\$171.0	\$161.5	5.9%
Foreclosures	August	2,495	2,253	10.7%	17,830	18,910	-5.7%
Residential Building Permits -Total	August	2,494	2,151	15.9%	21,066	18,133	16.2%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	August	\$508,437	\$458,710	10.8%	\$4,156,020	\$3,514,770	18.2%

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

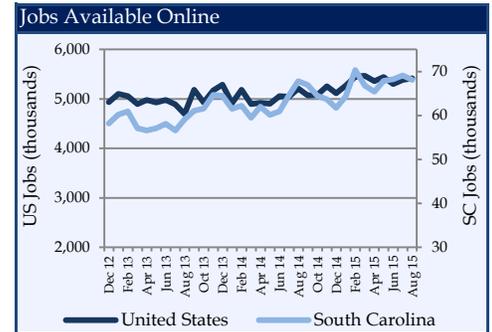
Business Activity



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

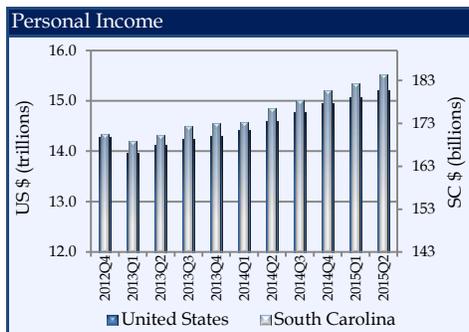


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

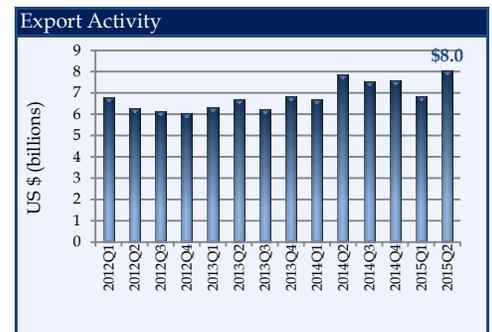
Income and Output



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



Source: U.S. Census



Source: Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census



South Carolina Regional Update

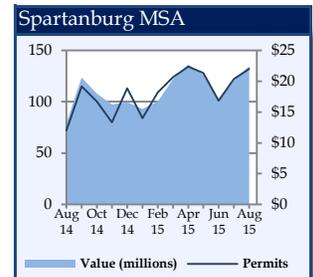
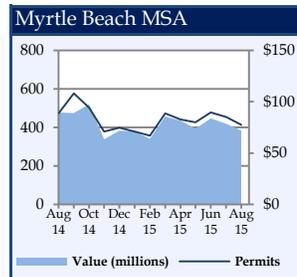
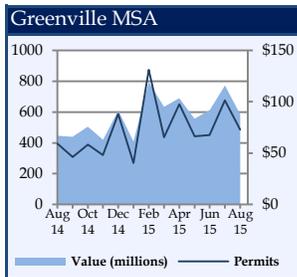
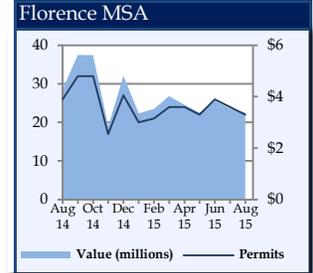
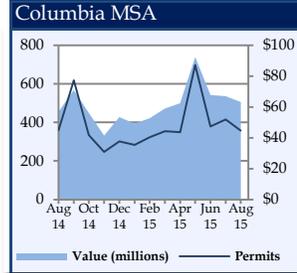
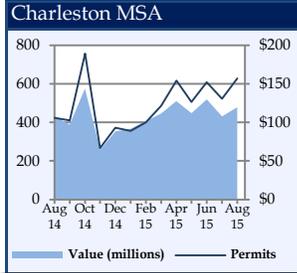
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state.

Home Sales

MSA	Indicator	Aug 14	Aug 15
Charleston	Sales Volume	1,361	1,383
	Median Price (000's)	\$215	\$219
Columbia	Sales Volume	954	1,086
	Median Price (000's)	\$150	\$155
Florence	Sales Volume	170	164
	Median Price (000's)	\$113	\$126
Greenville	Sales Volume	1,025	1,101
	Median Price (000's)	\$163	\$169
Myrtle Beach	Sales Volume	950	987
	Median Price (000's)	\$159	\$171
Spartanburg	Sales Volume	359	360
	Median Price (000's)	\$137	\$137
South Carolina	Sales Volume	6,176	6,470
	Median Price (000's)	\$165.0	\$174.9

Source: S.C. Association of Realtors

Building Permits



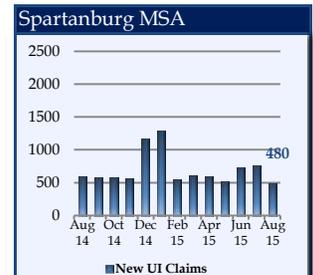
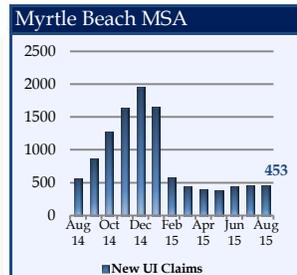
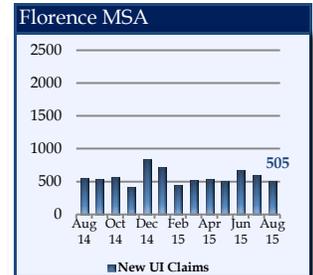
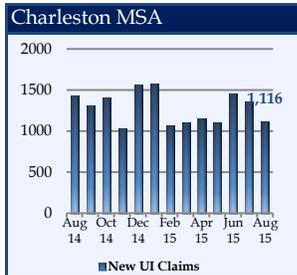
Source: U.S. Census

Employment

MSA	Indicator	Jul 15	Aug 15
Charleston	Employment (000's)	343.1	340.9
	Unemployment Rate	5.5	5.3
Columbia	Employment (000's)	371.7	370.9
	Unemployment Rate	6.0	5.8
Florence	Employment (000's)	87.4	87.4
	Unemployment Rate	7.5	7.1
Greenville	Employment (000's)	392.7	390.4
	Unemployment Rate	5.7	5.5
Myrtle Beach	Employment (000's)	182.9	180.5
	Unemployment Rate	6.5	6.4
Spartanburg	Employment (000's)	140.5	141.2
	Unemployment Rate	6.5	6.1
South Carolina	Employment (000's)	2,111.0	2,113.7
	Unemployment Rate	6.4	6.0

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

Unemployment Insurance Claims



Source: SCDOC analysis of SCDEW data

Increase in Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 2014

3.1%

Greenville

2.1%

Columbia

2.0%

Charleston

1.6%

Spartanburg

2.4%

Sumter

Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, September 2015