



SC Leading Index Surges in March

The South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) showed the strongest one month gain in three years, rising 0.39 points to 101.42. A SCLI value greater than 100 predicts economic growth over the next three to six months in South Carolina. After inclement weather in February shortened the average manufacturing workweek considerably, a strong rebound of 5.6 percent pushed the SCLI higher last month. In addition, a significant 14.1 percent decline in the number of initial claimants for Unemployment Insurance and rising valuations associated with permits for new residential construction helped the SCLI move forward. In March, the Conference Board's Leading Economic Index for the US overall increased 0.8 percent to 100.9.

-David Clayton

South Carolina Leading Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

SC Real Estate Market Steadily Improves

Year-to-date, the median sales price for a South Carolina home has climbed 3.7 percent from \$149,000 to \$154,500. And although the number of residential closings has remained essentially flat at 12,737 year-to-date, a 33.2 percent increase in the number of building permits for new residential construction will continue to drive real estate activity over the coming year. Meanwhile, foreclosure activity is down 13.1 percent compared to the same time a year ago. Employment in the Construction industry has also shown some improvement, as 3,500 jobs have been added 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

+0.5%

State Personal Income

increased to \$171.5 billion in the fourth quarter of 2013.

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

-4.1%

South Carolina Stock Index

lost 4.75 points in March, closing at 111.52 on the last trading day of the month.

Bloomberg

Employment

+1.4%

Nonfarm Employment

increased 26,000 non-seasonally adjusted jobs in March from the prior month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+0.1%

Labor Force

increased by 1,483 to 2,165,060, seasonally-adjusted, in March.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-0.2%

Unemployment Rate

fell by 0.2 percent to 5.5 percent for the month of March.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+5.6%

Manufacturing Weekly Hours

increased by 2.2 hours to 41.2 hours in March from 39.0 hours in February.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-4.3%

Available Online Job Postings

decreased by 2,700 positions in March to a seasonally-adjusted 59,500 job postings.

The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index

Real Estate

+2%

Single-Family Home Sales Price

increased by \$3,069 to \$156,000 in March.

South Carolina Association of Realtors

-9.9%

Residential Building Permits

decreased by 245 permits from the previous month to 2,241 permits issued in March.

U.S. Census Bureau



South Carolina Employment

Non-Seasonally Adjusted Wage and Salary Employment

Total non-seasonally adjusted, nonfarm employment increased 26,000 jobs, or 1.4 percent, in March over the previous month. Government employment growth accounted for 16.5 percent of the growth while private employment contributed the remaining 83.5 percent or 21,700 jobs. The Leisure and Hospitality sector

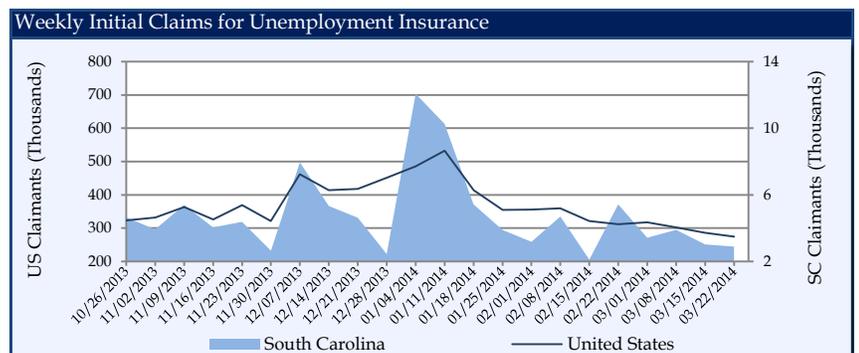
added 9,300 jobs last month and the Professional and Business Services sector gained 4,400 positions. Last month Construction added 2,100 jobs, accounting for 60 percent of the total 3,500 jobs this sector has added over the last year. During the last twelve months, private industry has added 39,600 jobs while total government employment has shed 200.

Industry Sector	March 2014	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
Goods Producing	314,600	311,600	306,100	0.96	2.78
Natural Resources and Mining	3,700	3,700	3,800	0.00	-2.63
Construction	82,100	80,000	78,600	2.63	4.45
Manufacturing	228,800	227,900	223,700	0.39	2.28
Service Providing	1,602,500	1,579,500	1,571,600	1.46	1.97
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	360,700	358,400	354,700	0.64	1.69
Information	26,200	26,200	26,400	0.00	-0.76
Finance	94,300	94,100	94,400	0.21	-0.11
Professional and Business Services	244,200	239,800	236,200	1.83	3.39
Educational and Health Services	223,600	221,900	217,600	0.77	2.76
Leisure and Hospitality	224,900	215,600	213,500	4.31	5.34
Other Services	70,700	69,900	70,700	1.14	0.00
Total Private	1,559,200	1,537,500	1,519,600	1.41	2.61
Government	357,900	353,600	358,100	1.22	-0.06
Total Nonfarm	1,917,100	1,891,100	1,877,700	1.37	2.10

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

Weekly Unemployment Claims

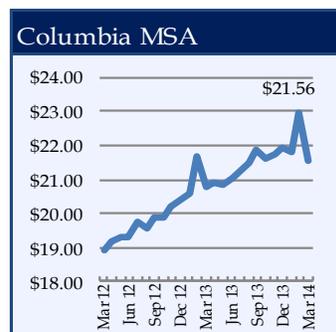
The weekly average number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance (UI) declined last month by 14 percent to 3,306 in South Carolina. This level of activity was 13 percent lower than March 2013 and 19 percent lower than March 2012. Myrtle Beach saw a 25 percent reduction in initial claims last month while other South Carolina metro areas had more modest changes. Charleston saw a 3.3 percent decline in UI claims last month while Columbia and Greenville saw increases of 4.9 and 6.4 percent, respectively.



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

The median sales price for a South Carolina home ticked up nearly 3 percent last month, compared to a year ago, while the number of residential real estate closings decreased 2.5 percent. Compared to March 2013, Charleston, Myrtle Beach and the Pee Dee regions all saw modest increases in home sales activity while Columbia, Greenville and Spartanburg had modest decreases of less

than 4 percent. The number of residential building permits issued last month in South Carolina was 9.9 percent lower than February but 18.6 percent higher than March 2013. Comparing the first quarters of 2014 and 2013, the Charleston, Greenville and Myrtle Beach areas are seeing the strongest building demand with permit levels 44, 32 and 92 percent higher, respectively.

	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2013 YTD	2012 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	March	5,076	5,206	-2.5%	12,737	12,776	-0.3%
Median Sales Price*	March	\$156.0	\$151.5	3.0%	\$154.5	\$149.0	3.7%
Foreclosures	March	2,681	3,144	-14.7%	7,390	8,501	-13.1%
Residential Building Permits -Total	March	2,241	1,890	18.6%	6,937	5,207	33.2%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	March	\$435,224	\$354,305	22.8%	\$1,207,204	\$982,260	22.9%

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

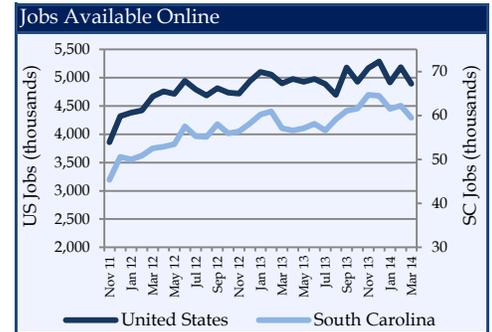
Business Activity



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

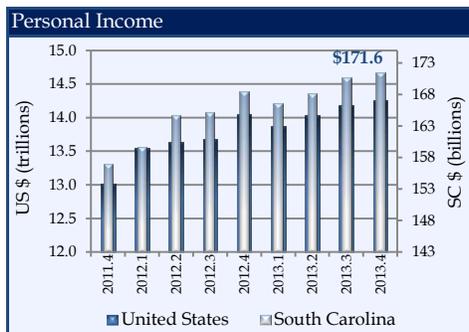


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

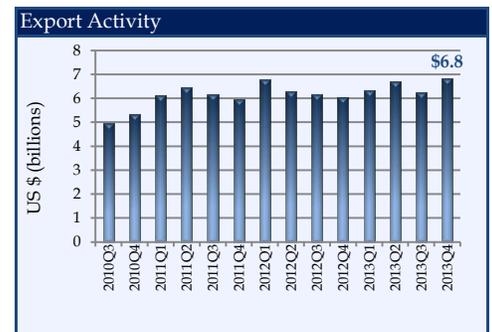
Income and Output



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



Source: U.S. Census



Source: Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census



South Carolina Regional Update

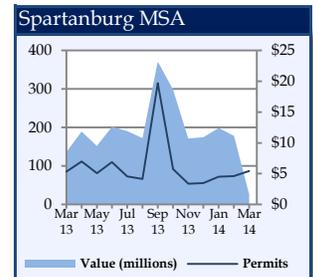
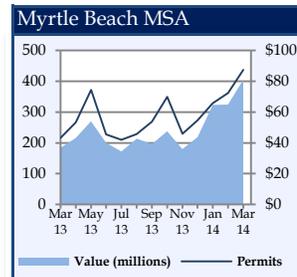
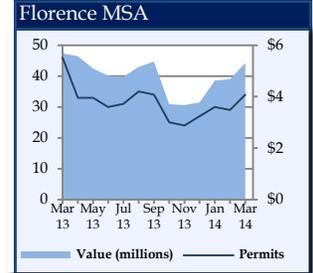
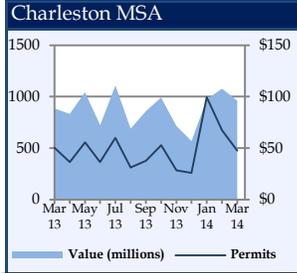
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state.

Home Sales

MSA	Indicator	Mar 13	Mar 14
Charleston	Sales Volume	1,069	1,094
	Median Price (000's)	\$201	\$220
Columbia	Sales Volume	755	726
	Median Price (000's)	\$144	\$144
Florence	Sales Volume	131	133
	Median Price (000's)	\$115	\$113
Greenville	Sales Volume	753	720
	Median Price (000's)	\$147	\$156
Myrtle Beach	Sales Volume	789	823
	Median Price (000's)	\$141	\$147
Spartanburg	Sales Volume	291	286
	Median Price (000's)	\$119	\$117
South Carolina	Sales Volume	5,206	5,076
	Median Price (000's)	\$151.5	\$156.0

Source: S.C. Association of Realtors

Building Permits



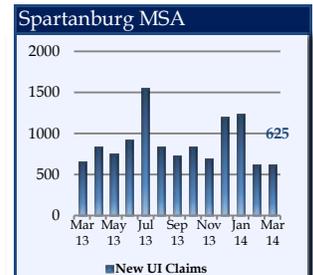
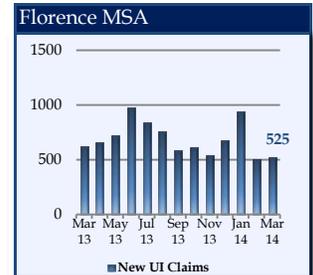
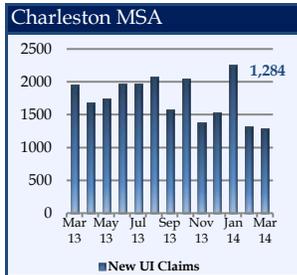
Source: U.S. Census

Employment

MSA	Indicator	Feb 14	Mar 14
Charleston	Employment (000's)	314.2	316.6
	Unemployment Rate	4.4	4.6
Columbia	Employment (000's)	351.3	353.4
	Unemployment Rate	4.7	4.9
Florence	Employment (000's)	85.7	86.1
	Unemployment Rate	6.2	6.3
Greenville	Employment (000's)	301.5	303.0
	Unemployment Rate	4.2	4.5
Myrtle Beach	Employment (000's)	112.9	116.8
	Unemployment Rate	7.2	6.5
Spartanburg	Employment (000's)	131.4	131.5
	Unemployment Rate	4.8	5.0
South Carolina	Employment (000's)	2,039.4	2,046.0
	Unemployment Rate	5.7	5.5

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

Unemployment Insurance Claims



Source: SCDOC analysis of SCDEW data

Concentration of Engineers in Workforce - Ranking of 200 Largest Metro Areas



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics OES, 2014