

South Carolina Economic Outlook



South Carolina
Department of Commerce

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Division of Research

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SC Economy Shines in March

The South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) rose more than half a point to 102.08 for March, buoyed by improvements in nearly all metrics -- some of which were dramatic, such as the 30.0 percent increase in building permits. Of the constituent metrics, only initial claims for unemployment insurance, up 4.5 percent from February, had worsened month-over-month. The Dow Jones Composite Average surged 7.5 percent and the Bloomberg South Carolina Stock Index had a similar hike, at 6.8 percent. The Conference Board's national Leading Economic Index climbed 0.2 percent in March to reach 123.4, forecasting growth.

- Brandon Wilkerson

South Carolina Leading Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

High Flying Results for SC Real Estate Market

South Carolina real estate indicators were booming in March. The number of homes sold rose a staggering 28.5 percent to 6,241. The median sales price rose both month-over-month and year-over-year, by 1.5 percent and 3.0 percent, respectively. Among the six largest metro areas, closings saw significant increases without exception, the strongest gains going to Spartanburg (41.1 percent), Greenville (38.4 percent), and Charleston (35.7 percent). Building activity mirrored or even surpassed these performances, with total permits up (as mentioned in the SCLI summary above) a remarkable 30.0 percent. Construction employment figures in the state also rose, both month-over-month and year-over-year.

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 bwilkerson@SCcommerce.com.

KEY S.C. INDICATORS

Income

+0.9%

State Personal Income

increased to \$189.5 billion in the fourth quarter of 2015.

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

+6.8%

South Carolina Stock Index

rose 6.75 points in March, closing at 105.49 on the last trading day of the month.

Bloomberg

Employment

+1.4%

Nonfarm Employment

increased by 27,800 net non-seasonally adjusted jobs from the prior month.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+0.8%

Labor Force

increased by 17,930 to 2,306,133, seasonally-adjusted, in March.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+0.2%

Unemployment Rate

increased to 5.7 percent, seasonally-adjusted, for March.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+2.9%

Manufacturing Weekly Hours

increased by 1.2 hours to 42.2 hours in March.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

-4.5%

Available Online Job Postings

decreased by 3,000 positions in March to a seasonally-adjusted 63,000 job postings.

The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index

Real Estate

+1.5%

Single-Family Home Sales Price

increased by \$2,450 to \$169,950 in March.

South Carolina Association of Realtors

+30%

Residential Building Permits

increased by 635 permits from the previous month to 2,751 issued in March.

U.S. Census Bureau



South Carolina Employment

Non-Seasonally Adjusted Wage and Salary Employment

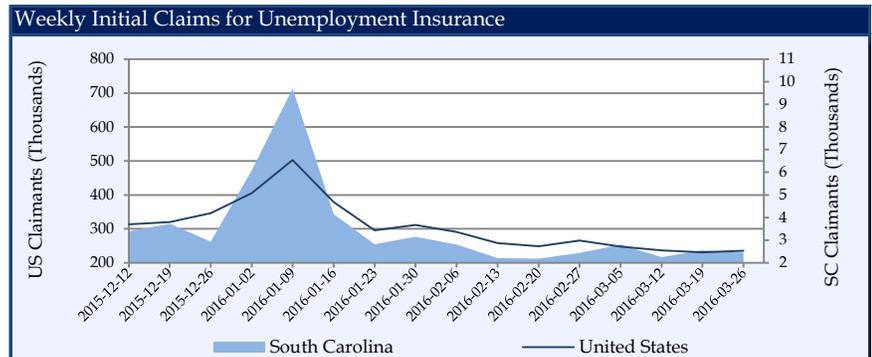
South Carolina's total non-seasonally adjusted, nonfarm employment grew by 27,800 net jobs to 2,035,000 in March, representing a 1.4 percent rise from February, and a 2.8 percent gain from one year ago. The Leisure and Hospitality sector, which added a net 9,100 jobs, led every other sector in monthly gains. Positive results reigned for March, as no sector reported a net loss month-over-month. Only a single sector, Information (+200 for March), had a year-over-year net loss, having shed 200 jobs since the same point in 2015. Other strong performances came from Professional and Business Services, with +6,000 jobs in March, and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+5,200). Construction added 800 net jobs for the month, and outpaced last year's results by 8.2 percent.

Industry Sector	March 2016	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
Goods Producing	333,400	331,400	323,500	0.60	3.06
Natural Resources and Mining	4,100	4,100	3,900	0.00	5.13
Construction	91,900	90,100	84,900	2.00	8.24
Manufacturing	237,400	237,200	234,700	0.08	1.15
Service Providing	1,701,600	1,675,800	1,655,600	1.54	2.78
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	387,800	382,600	376,600	1.36	2.97
Information	26,400	26,200	26,600	0.76	-0.75
Finance	96,600	96,500	95,700	0.10	0.94
Professional and Business Services	268,200	262,200	255,700	2.29	4.89
Educational and Health Services	242,200	240,600	233,100	0.67	3.90
Leisure and Hospitality	236,100	227,000	231,300	4.01	2.08
Other Services	76,000	74,300	73,600	2.29	3.26
Total Private	1,666,700	1,640,800	1,616,100	1.58	3.13
Government	368,300	366,400	363,000	0.52	1.46
Total Nonfarm	2,035,000	2,007,200	1,979,100	1.39	2.82

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

Weekly Unemployment Claims

The number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance in the state swelled somewhat from February. The average for March was 2,518 weekly initial claims, a 4.5 percent increase month-over-month, but 5.3 percent lower than one year prior, and 23.8 percent lower than two years ago. The Columbia, Greenville, and Myrtle Beach metro areas exhibited declines in UI claims, but were offset by the Charleston and Florence MSAs' higher overall claims. UI claims in the Spartanburg MSA were unchanged.



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

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 rose 30.0 percent. This figure was up 15.6 percent year-over-year. Valuation for the permits also climbed impressively, growing 28.0 percent from February and 10.2 percent from one year ago. Total closings for the month and median sales price made gains in March as well, compared both to February and the prior year. Foreclosures fell somewhat (-1.2 percent) from March 2015, but remained higher year-to-date versus 2015.

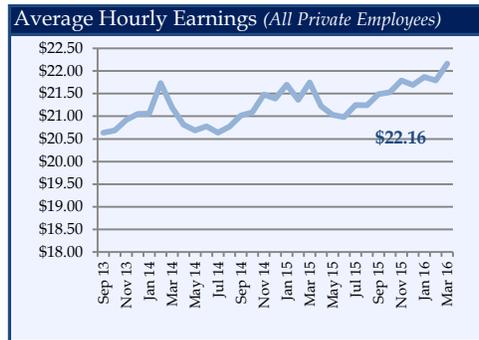
	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2016 YTD	2015 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	March	6,241	6,071	2.8%	15,234	14,819	2.8%
Median Sales Price*	March	\$170.0	\$165.0	3.0%	\$166.0	\$161.6	2.7%
Foreclosures	March	2,474	2,504	-1.2%	6,865	6,240	10.0%
Residential Building Permits -Total	March	2,751	2,379	15.6%	6,814	6,814	0.0%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	March	\$567,109	\$514,669	10.2%	\$1,437,580	\$1,398,646	2.8%

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

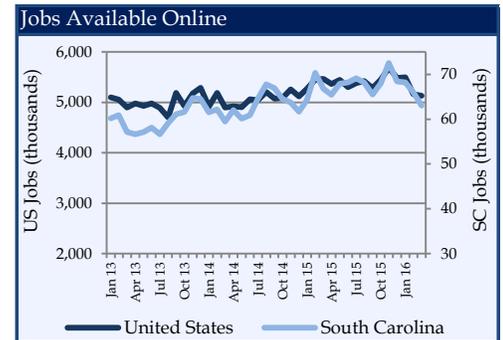
Business Activity



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

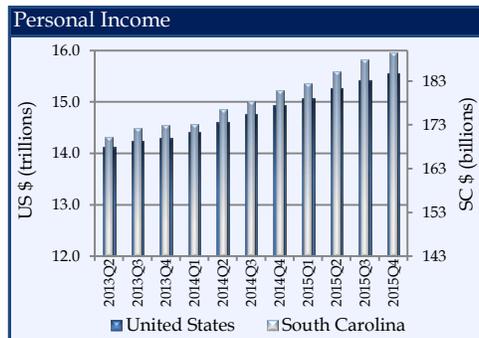


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

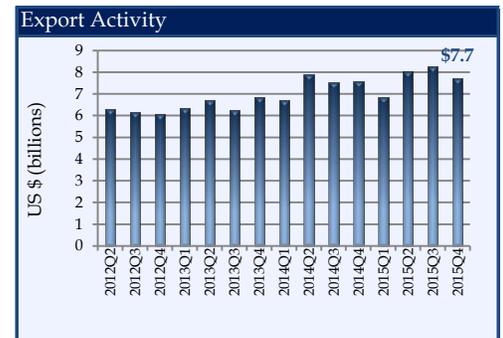
Income and Output



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



Source: U.S. Census



Source: Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census



South Carolina Regional Update

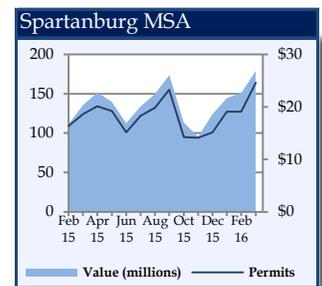
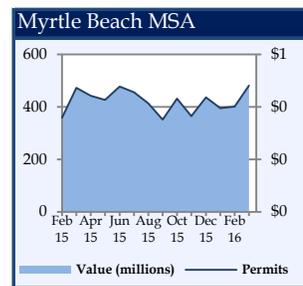
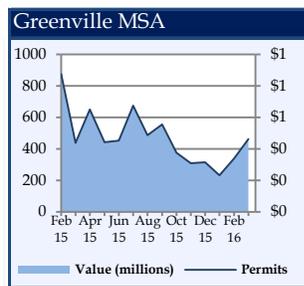
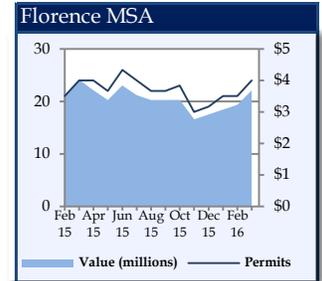
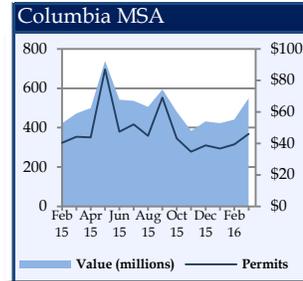
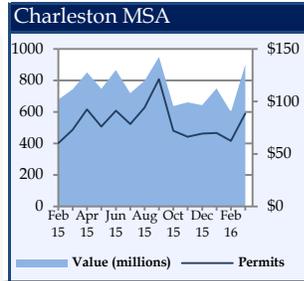
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state.

Home Sales

MSA	Indicator	Mar 15	Mar 16
Charleston	Sales Volume	1,442	1,478
	Median Price (000's)	\$220	\$233
Columbia	Sales Volume	875	972
	Median Price (000's)	\$148	\$155
Florence	Sales Volume	178	151
	Median Price (000's)	\$125	\$130
Greenville	Sales Volume	1,022	1,067
	Median Price (000's)	\$163	\$171
Myrtle Beach	Sales Volume	1,031	1,001
	Median Price (000's)	\$157	\$162
Spartanburg	Sales Volume	376	371
	Median Price (000's)	\$131	\$136
South Carolina	Sales Volume	6,071	6,241
	Median Price (000's)	\$165.0	\$170.0

Source: S.C. Association of Realtors.

Building Permits



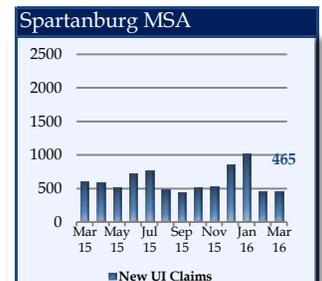
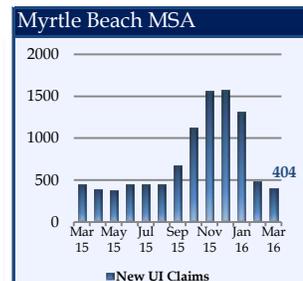
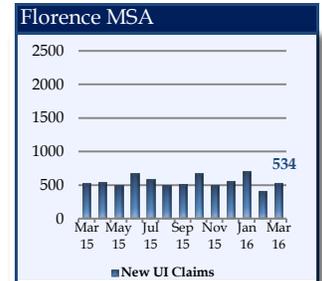
Source: U.S. Census

Employment

MSA	Indicator	Feb 16	Mar 16
Charleston	Employment (000's)	348.3	352.0
	Unemployment Rate	4.8	4.9
Columbia	Employment (000's)	381.7	386.6
	Unemployment Rate	5.1	5.2
Florence	Employment (000's)	89.9	91.2
	Unemployment Rate	6.5	6.4
Greenville	Employment (000's)	400.3	404.3
	Unemployment Rate	4.9	5.0
Myrtle Beach	Employment (000's)	167.8	173.5
	Unemployment Rate	7.5	6.7
Spartanburg	Employment (000's)	145.9	146.9
	Unemployment Rate	5.4	5.5
South Carolina	Employment (000's)	2,162.7	2,174.8
	Unemployment Rate	5.5	5.7

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

Unemployment Insurance Claims



Source: SCDOC analysis of SCDEW data

Manufacturing Employment Growth, March 2015 to March 2016



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 2016