



## SC Leading Index Holds Steady for February

The South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) gained 0.02 points in February, closing the month with a value of 101.03, despite large swings in several key indicators that comprise the index. A decline in the average number of manufacturing hours worked in South Carolina, down 6.9 percent to 39.0 hours, was offset by a surge in residential building permit activity (+12.5 percent) and a significant decline in initial claims for Unemployment Insurance (-51.3 percent). Gains in the stock market also helped the SCLI in February. A SCLI value greater than 100 predicts economic growth over the next three to six months in South Carolina. In February, the Conference Board's Leading Economic Index for the US overall increased 0.5 percent to 99.8.

-David Clayton

South Carolina Leading Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

## SC Labor Market Continues Improvement

The last twelve months have seen dramatic improvement in the South Carolina labor market. Year-over-year, total non-farm employment has increased by 33,800 jobs or 1.82 percent. South Carolina's job growth over the last year places it among the top third of all states with the second fastest growing payroll employment in the Southeast, closely behind Florida. During the last 12 months, South Carolina has added 5,300 professional and business services jobs, 4,800 jobs to manufacturing payrolls, and 3,200 positions in the construction sector. Private sector job growth has driven all positive movement over the last year. Local, state and federal government employment has declined by 100 positions (0.03 percent) since February 2013.

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](mailto: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*

+0.4%

#### South Carolina Stock Index

gained 0.51 points in February, closing at 116.27 on the last trading day of the month.

*Bloomberg*

### Employment

+0.1%

#### Nonfarm Employment

increased 2,100 non-seasonally adjusted jobs in February from the prior month.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

-0.3%

#### Labor Force

decreased by 5,460 to 2,163,828, seasonally-adjusted, in February.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

-0.7%

#### Unemployment Rate

fell by 0.5 percent to 5.7 percent for the month of February.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

-6.9%

#### Manufacturing Weekly Hours

decreased by 2.9 hours to 39.0 hours in February from 41.9 hours in January.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

+1.1%

#### Available Online Job Postings

increased by 700 positions in February to a seasonally-adjusted 62,200 job postings.

*The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index*

### Real Estate

-1.2%

#### Single-Family Home Sales Price

decreased by \$1,812 to \$152,931 in February.

*South Carolina Association of Realtors*

+12.5%

#### Residential Building Permits

increased by 276 permits from the previous month to 2,486 permits issued in February.

*U.S. Census Bureau*



# South Carolina Employment

*Non-Seasonally Adjusted Wage and Salary Employment*

South Carolina saw an overall increase in employment of 0.11 percent in February. Goods-producing employment saw a slight decrease (-0.19 percent) from January, with the largest decrease (-0.50 percent) in the Construction industry. Year-over-year, the Construction and Manufacturing industries have

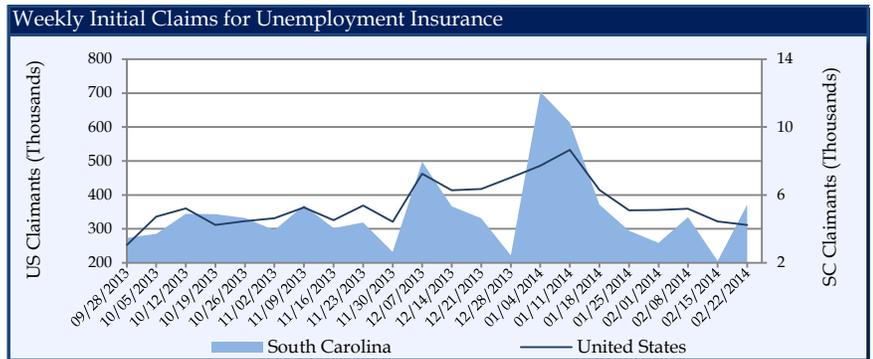
added 3,200 and 4,800 jobs, respectively. The Professional and Business Services sector had the largest gain last month (+3,600 jobs). As tourism season approaches, the Leisure and Hospitality sector expanded by 2,100 jobs. Wholesale trade (+600), Government (+300), and Finance (+200) all saw modest increases in employment in February.

Industry Sector	February 2014	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
<b>Goods Producing</b>	<b>311,400</b>	<b>312,000</b>	<b>303,500</b>	<b>-0.19</b>	<b>2.60</b>
Natural Resources and Mining	3,700	3,700	3,800	0.00	-2.63
Construction	80,100	80,500	76,900	-0.50	4.16
Manufacturing	227,600	227,800	222,800	-0.09	2.15
<b>Service Providing</b>	<b>1,579,700</b>	<b>1,577,000</b>	<b>1,553,800</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>1.67</b>
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	358,100	361,900	351,300	-1.05	1.94
Information	26,200	26,300	26,400	-0.38	-0.76
Finance	94,100	93,900	93,600	0.21	0.53
Professional and Business Services	240,100	236,500	234,800	1.52	2.26
Educational and Health Services	221,600	220,100	217,500	0.68	1.89
Leisure and Hospitality	215,900	213,800	206,800	0.98	4.40
Other Services	70,100	71,200	69,700	-1.54	0.57
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>1,537,500</b>	<b>1,535,700</b>	<b>1,503,600</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>2.25</b>
Government	353,600	353,300	353,700	0.08	-0.03
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>1,891,100</b>	<b>1,889,000</b>	<b>1,857,300</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>1.82</b>

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

## Weekly Unemployment Claims

After a high seasonal increase in claims for Unemployment Insurance (UI) in January, there was a significant 52.8 percent decrease in claimant activity in February. Myrtle Beach saw the greatest decrease in claims (65.5 percent) as seasonal employment began to return to the coast. Claims in the coastal regions were 19.1 percent lower than February a year ago, with Myrtle Beach showing a 22.4 percent decrease from February 2013 and Charleston a 12.2 percent decrease. South Carolina saw 3,174 claims filed in the first week of February, significantly lower than the 5,276 claims filed the same time last year.



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 number of residential building permits issued in South Carolina increased by 12.5 percent in February, while the number issued nationwide increased by 8.5 percent. Compared to February 2013, the valuation associated with all residential building permits issued in South Carolina was up 34.4 percent last month. Valuation for all February permits totals \$421.49 million statewide.

Year-over-year, foreclosures in South Carolina have decreased by 23.1 percent, residential sales closings have decreased by 2.9 percent, and median sales price has increased by 5.1 percent.

	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2013 YTD	2012 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	February	3,813	3,928	-2.9%	7,473	7,569	-1.3%
Median Sales Price*	February	\$152.9	\$145.5	5.1%	\$153.5	\$146.0	5.1%
Foreclosures	February	2,205	2,867	-23.1%	4,709	5,357	-12.1%
Residential Building Permits -Total	February	2,486	1,612	54.2%	4,696	3,317	41.6%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	February	\$421,485	\$313,571	34.4%	\$771,980	\$627,955	22.9%

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

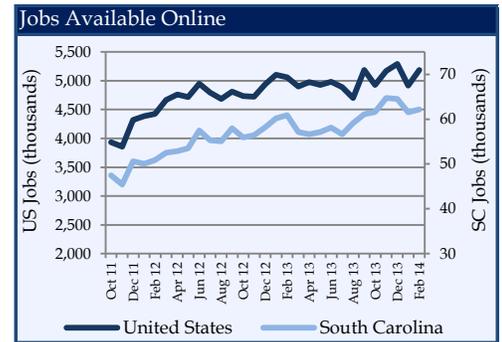
### Business Activity



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

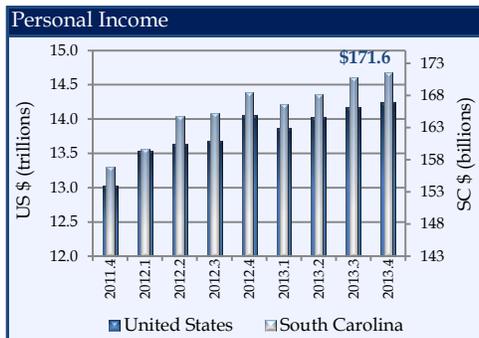


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

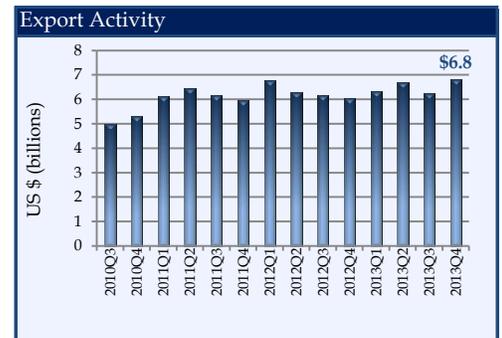
### Income and Output



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



Source: U.S. Census



Source: Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census



## South Carolina Regional Update

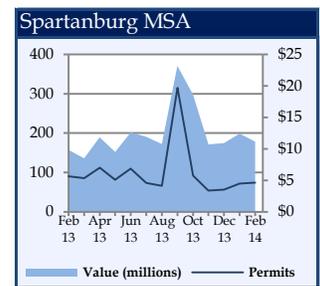
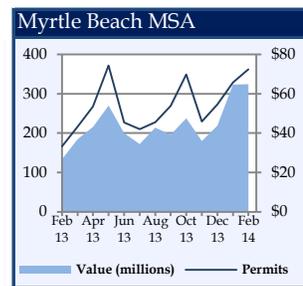
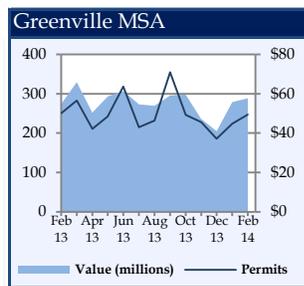
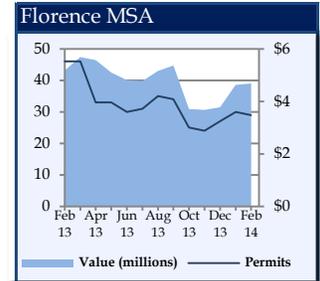
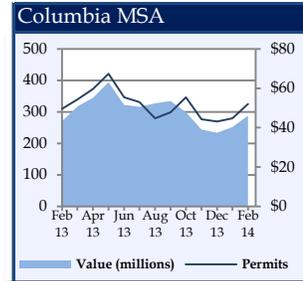
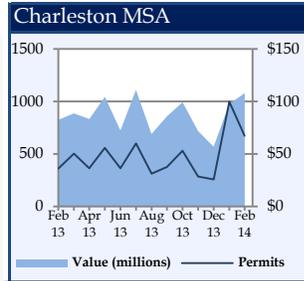
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state.

### Home Sales

MSA	Indicator	Feb 13	Feb 14
Charleston	Sales Volume	738	779
	Median Price (000's)	\$182	\$209
Columbia	Sales Volume	580	535
	Median Price (000's)	\$133	\$137
Florence	Sales Volume	120	103
	Median Price (000's)	\$117	\$97
Greenville	Sales Volume	542	581
	Median Price (000's)	\$143	\$152
Myrtle Beach	Sales Volume	680	627
	Median Price (000's)	\$141	\$140
Spartanburg	Sales Volume	216	221
	Median Price (000's)	\$118	\$112
South Carolina	Sales Volume	3,928	3,813
	Median Price (000's)	\$145.5	\$152.9

Source: S.C. Association of Realtors

### Building Permits



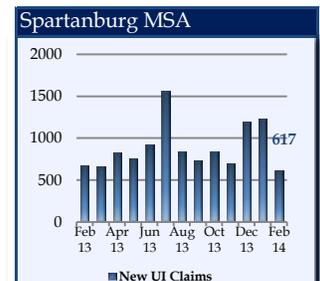
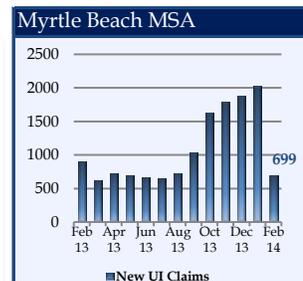
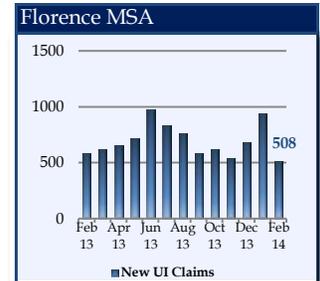
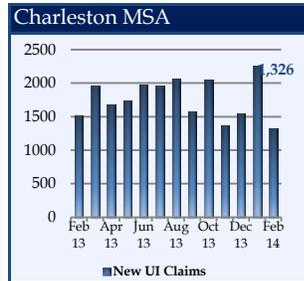
Source: U.S. Census

### Employment

MSA	Indicator	Jan 14	Feb 14
Charleston	Employment (000's)	311.3	314.0
	Unemployment Rate	5.5	4.5
Columbia	Employment (000's)	348.6	351.5
	Unemployment Rate	5.9	4.7
Florence	Employment (000's)	84.9	85.6
	Unemployment Rate	7.8	6.2
Greenville	Employment (000's)	298.1	301.5
	Unemployment Rate	5.4	4.3
Myrtle Beach	Employment (000's)	110.4	112.9
	Unemployment Rate	9.4	7.2
Spartanburg	Employment (000's)	129.6	131.3
	Unemployment Rate	6.2	4.9
South Carolina	Employment (000's)	2,031.0	2,039.5
	Unemployment Rate	6.4	5.7

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

### Unemployment Insurance Claims



Source: SCDOC analysis of SCDEW data

### Milken Institute's Best-Performing Cities - Ranking of 200 Large Metro Areas

#47	#122	#11	#128	#79
Greenville	Columbia	Charleston	Myrtle Beach	Spartanburg

Source: Milken Institute, December 2013