



## SC Leading Index Signals Growth

The South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) picked up more than a quarter point in February to end at 101.51. Though there was a marginal drop in manufacturing weekly hours, other key metrics improved. The Dow Jones Composite Average rose 2.1 percent and the Bloomberg South Carolina Stock Index enjoyed a 3.2 percent bump. Average initial claims for Unemployment Insurance fell dramatically, coming in at less than half of the number for January. The Conference Board's national Leading Economic Index increased 0.1 percent this month, changing direction after two consecutive months in decline.

- Brandon Wilkerson

South Carolina Leading Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

## SC Real Estate Market Shows Mixed Gains

Several major South Carolina real estate indicators were on the rise compared to last year. The number of homes sold rose 11.8 percent versus February 2015, reaching 4,857. Median sales price outpaced last year's result as well, by 6.7 percent. Among the MSAs, closings increased month-over-month across the board, with the strongest gains going to Myrtle Beach (20.8 percent), Greenville (15.6 percent), and Charleston (13.0 percent). Building activity was not as robust year-over-year, but did improve versus January, with total permits up 8.7 percent and valuations up 3.7 percent. The growth in construction employment, up both month-over-month and year-over-year, suggests an ongoingly resilient market.

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](mailto:bwilkerson@SCcommerce.com).

## KEY S.C. INDICATORS

### Income

+1.2%

#### State Personal Income

increased to \$187.5 billion in the third quarter of 2015.

*U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis*

+3.2%

#### South Carolina Stock Index

rose 3.02 points in February, closing at 98.74 on the last trading day of the month.

*Bloomberg*

### Employment

+0.6%

#### Nonfarm Employment

increased by 11,400 net non-seasonally adjusted jobs from the prior month.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

+0.6%

#### Labor Force

increased by 17,533 to 2,278,680, seasonally-adjusted, in February.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

+0%

#### Unemployment Rate

remained at 5.6 percent, seasonally-adjusted, for February.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

+1.7%

#### Manufacturing Weekly Hours

decreased by 0.7 hours to 41.0 hours in February.

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

-0.7%

#### Available Online Job Postings

decreased by 500 positions in February to a seasonally-adjusted 67,700 job postings.

*The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index*

### Real Estate

-1.5%

#### Single-Family Home Sales Price

decreased by \$2,500 to \$167,500 in February.

*South Carolina Association of Realtors*

+8.7%

#### Residential Building Permits

increased by 169 permits from the previous month to 2,116 issued in February.

*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 11,400 net jobs to 2,009,100 in February, representing a 0.6 percent rise from January, and a 2.5 percent gain from one year ago. The Leisure and Hospitality sector, which added a net 5,200 jobs, led every other sector in monthly gains. The

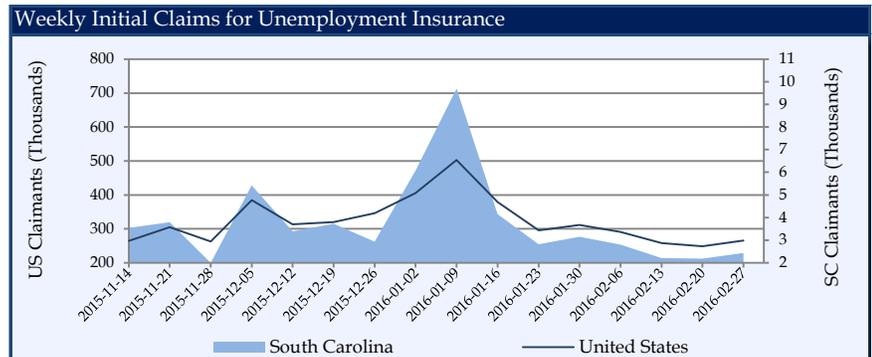
month's biggest losses came from the Professional and Business Services sector, which shed 4,300 jobs. Despite this setback, the sector outperformed its same month results from 2015 by +7,900 jobs. Manufacturing showed its vigor, with +1,100 jobs in February. Construction picked up 900 jobs on the month, but had a remarkable 8.1 percent gain year-over-year (+6,800). From the prior year, the state economy has added 48,900 net nonfarm jobs.

Industry Sector	February 2016	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
<b>Goods Producing</b>	<b>332,600</b>	<b>330,600</b>	<b>322,200</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>3.23</b>
Natural Resources and Mining	4,100	4,100	3,900	0.00	5.13
Construction	90,500	89,600	83,700	1.00	8.12
Manufacturing	238,000	236,900	234,600	0.46	1.45
<b>Service Providing</b>	<b>1,676,500</b>	<b>1,667,100</b>	<b>1,638,000</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>2.35</b>
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	383,000	382,000	373,300	0.26	2.60
Information	26,400	26,500	26,600	-0.38	-0.75
Finance	96,100	96,800	95,300	-0.72	0.84
Professional and Business Services	261,300	265,600	253,400	-1.62	3.12
Educational and Health Services	240,900	238,000	232,300	1.22	3.70
Leisure and Hospitality	228,500	223,300	222,500	2.33	2.70
Other Services	73,800	73,000	72,400	1.10	1.93
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>1,642,600</b>	<b>1,635,800</b>	<b>1,598,000</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>2.79</b>
Government	366,500	361,900	362,200	1.27	1.19
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>2,009,100</b>	<b>1,997,700</b>	<b>1,960,200</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>2.49</b>

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

### Weekly Unemployment Claims

The number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance showed marked improvement from January. The average for the month was 2,409 weekly initial claims in South Carolina, a 53.5 percent drop month-over-month, 17.6 percent lower than one year prior, and 37.4 percent lower than two years ago. Each of the six largest MSAs reported more than 26.0 percent fewer claimants in February. Myrtle Beach and Spartanburg had less than half as many claimants as in January.



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



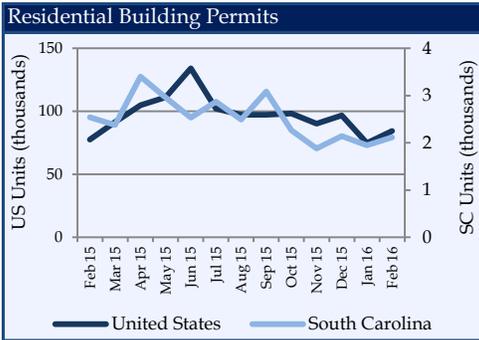
# South Carolina Real Estate

Last month, the number of building permits issued in South Carolina for new residential construction rose 8.7 percent. This number was down 16.6 percent year-over-year. Valuation for the permits also made gains from January, moving up 3.7 percent. As with total permits, however, valuation exhibited a slight 5.2 percent decrease compared to the same point in 2015. Foreclosure activity remained largely flat compared to January, but rose 14.0 percent from last year.

	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2015 YTD	2014 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	February	4,857	4,346	11.8%	9,379	8,387	11.8%
Median Sales Price*	February	\$167.5	\$157.0	6.7%	\$168.0	\$155.0	8.4%
Foreclosures	February	2,189	1,920	14.0%	4,391	3,736	17.5%
Residential Building Permits -Total	February	2,116	2,536	-16.6%	4,063	4,435	-8.4%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	February	\$443,112	\$467,445	-5.2%	\$870,471	\$883,977	-1.5%

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

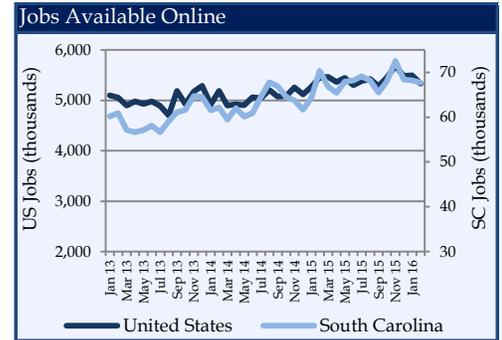
## Business Activity



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

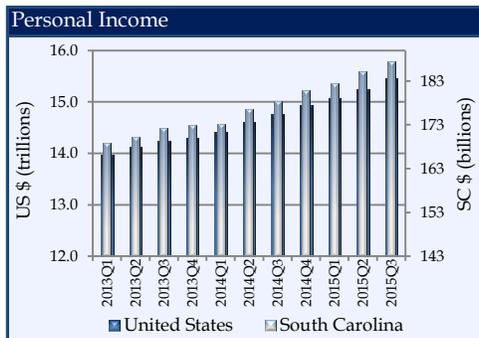


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

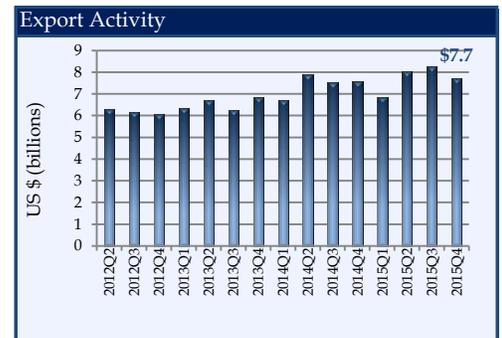
## Income and Output



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



Source: U.S. Census



Source: Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census



# South Carolina Regional Update

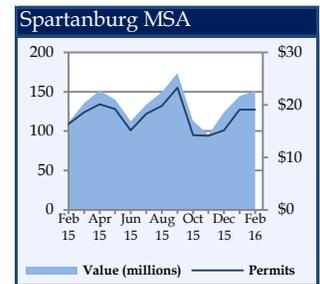
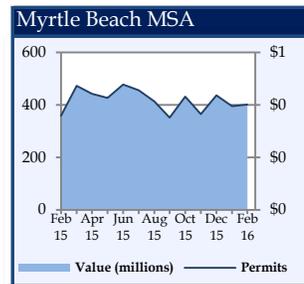
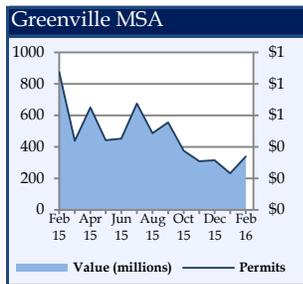
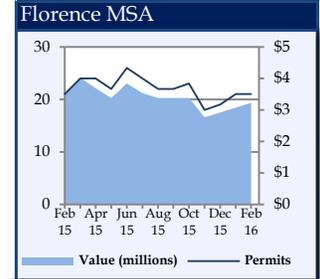
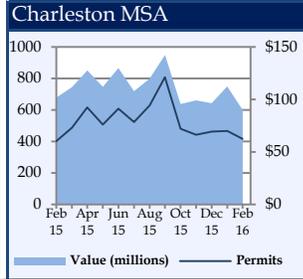
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state.

## Home Sales

MSA	Indicator	Feb 15	Feb 16
Charleston	Sales Volume	1,012	1,089
	Median Price (000's)	\$212	\$237
Columbia	Sales Volume	697	736
	Median Price (000's)	\$138	\$150
Florence	Sales Volume	112	128
	Median Price (000's)	\$125	\$126
Greenville	Sales Volume	698	771
	Median Price (000's)	\$160	\$165
Myrtle Beach	Sales Volume	731	791
	Median Price (000's)	\$158	\$155
Spartanburg	Sales Volume	264	263
	Median Price (000's)	\$135	\$127
South Carolina	Sales Volume	4,346	4,857
	Median Price (000's)	\$157.0	\$167.5

Source: S.C. Association of Realtors.

## Building Permits



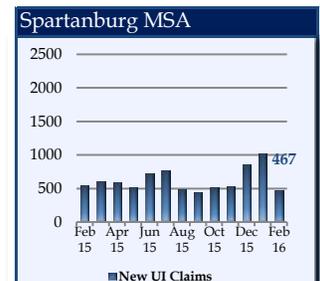
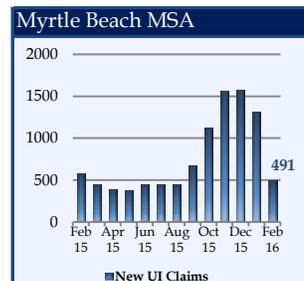
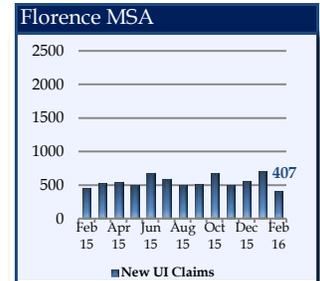
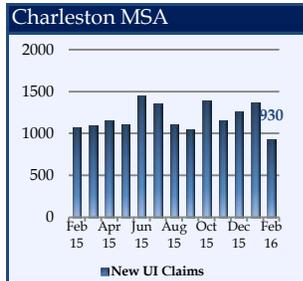
Source: U.S. Census

## Employment

MSA	Indicator	Jan 16	Feb 16
Charleston	Employment (000's)	346.1	349.3
	Unemployment Rate	4.8	4.8
Columbia	Employment (000's)	379.4	380.9
	Unemployment Rate	5.1	5.1
Florence	Employment (000's)	88.9	89.9
	Unemployment Rate	6.4	6.5
Greenville	Employment (000's)	396.3	399.7
	Unemployment Rate	4.9	4.9
Myrtle Beach	Employment (000's)	164.4	168.0
	Unemployment Rate	7.9	7.5
Spartanburg	Employment (000's)	144.6	145.7
	Unemployment Rate	5.3	5.4
South Carolina	Employment (000's)	2,150.5	2,163.1
	Unemployment Rate	5.5	5.5

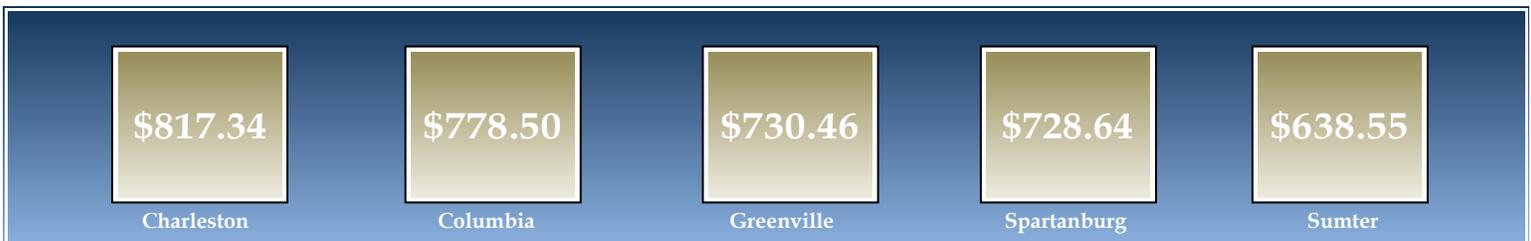
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (MSA figures not seasonally adjusted)

## Unemployment Insurance Claims



Source: SCDOD analysis of SCDEW data

## Average Weekly Earnings of All Employees in Private Industry, February 2016



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2016