

INSIGHTS

Volume 5: Issue 2 March 2015

SC Department of Employment and Workforce

Business Intelligence Department

Economic Indicators

March 2015 - Seasonally Adjusted (SA)

	United States	SC
Labor Force	156,906,000	2,245,987
Employed	148,331,000	2,096,110
Unemployed	8,575,000	149,877
Unemployed Rate	5.5%	6.7%

Average Hours & Earnings

	United States (SA)	SC (Unadj.)
Manufacturing		
Avg. Weekly Earnings	\$1,025.77	\$790.02
Avg. Weekly Hours	40.9	41.8
Avg. Hourly Wage	\$ 25.08	\$ 18.90

Top Job Growth by MSA (SA)

	Over Month % Change	Over Year % Change
Charleston MSA	-0.21%	3.08%
Columbia MSA	-0.48%	1.72%
Florence MSA	-0.82%	0.95%
Sumter MSA	-1.04%	1.32%

Employment to Population Ratio (SA)

	2015	2014
U.S. Population Ratio	59.3%	59.0%
S.C. Population Ratio	55.2%	54.5%

Labor Force Participation Rate (SA)

	Mar	Feb	% Change
U.S. Participation Rate	62.7%	62.8%	-0.1%
S.C. Participation Rate	59.2%	59.0%	0.2%

United States Consumer Price Index

12-Month CPI	-0.1%
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HIGHLIGHTS

- New labor force record set
- Almost 6,000 increase in employment over the month
- Unemployment rates fall in ALL counties in March
- Tourism traffic helps increase employment along the coast

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Employment Estimate Rises – Unemployment Rate Flat

March's seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rate rose modestly to 6.7 percent from February's rate of 6.6 percent. The labor force, (those employed and those unemployed actively seeking work) set a new record of 2,245,987 people. Similarly, the number of employed people set a new record of approximately 2,096,100 people, increasing nearly 5,840 over the month.

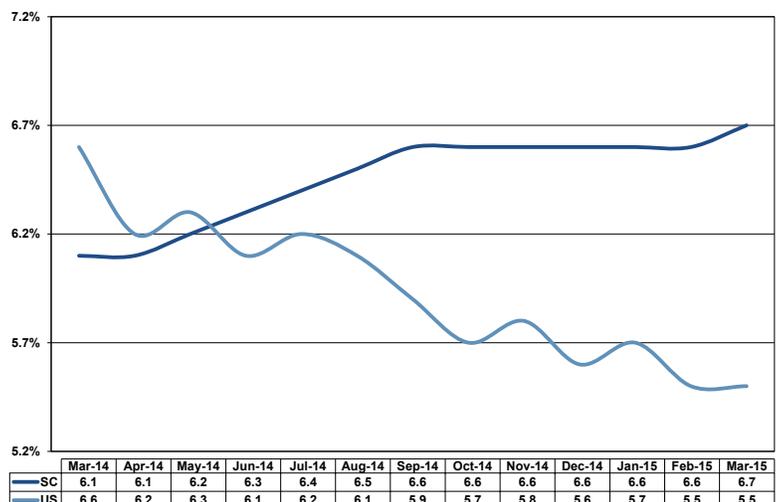
During March, the estimated number of unemployed increased by nearly 1,700 people to 149,880.

Over the year, approximately 56,130 people found work. The number of unemployed people increased by nearly 17,700, as the unemployment rate increased 0.6 percentage point. Approximately 73,840 people entered the labor force over the year.

Nationally, the March unemployment rate remained unchanged at 5.5 percent from February to March.

Employment levels continue to rise at a healthy pace, reflecting sustained growth in the state's economy. With spring's arrival, and a look toward summer, the number of people working is expected to increase further as tourists migrate to the state's great beaches and recreation areas.

Unemployment Rates in South Carolina and The United States
March 2014 – March 2015 Seasonally Adjusted



Insights is prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The current month's estimates are preliminary, while all previous data are subject to revision. All estimates are projected from a first quarter 2014 benchmark. To subscribe to *Insights*, please email bidcustomerservice@dew.sc.gov or to provide feedback please click on the [BID Customer Feedback Form](#).

State Unemployment Rates

District Of Columbia	7.7
Nevada	7.1
Mississippi	6.8
South Carolina	6.7
Louisiana	6.6
West Virginia	6.6
Alaska	6.5
California	6.5
New Jersey	6.5
Connecticut	6.4
Georgia	6.3
Rhode Island	6.3
Tennessee	6.3
Arizona	6.2
New Mexico	6.1
Illinois	6.0
Washington	5.9
Indiana	5.8
Alabama	5.7
Florida	5.7
New York	5.7
Arkansas	5.6
Michigan	5.6
Missouri	5.6
United States	5.5
Maryland	5.4
North Carolina	5.4
Oregon	5.4
Pennsylvania	5.3
Kentucky	5.1
Ohio	5.1
Maine	4.8
Massachusetts	4.8
Virginia	4.8
Delaware	4.6
Wisconsin	4.6
Colorado	4.2
Kansas	4.2
Texas	4.2
Hawaii	4.1
Montana	4.1
Wyoming	4.1
Iowa	4.0
New Hampshire	3.9
Oklahoma	3.9
Idaho	3.8
Vermont	3.8
Minnesota	3.7
South Dakota	3.5
Utah	3.4
North Dakota	3.1
Nebraska	2.6

South Carolina Ranked 4th Highest of 51 in March

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 23 states and the District of Columbia experienced decreases in their unemployment rates, 12 states had increases, and 15 states remained unchanged. In March, South Carolina ranked fourth highest out of 51. In the Southeast region, South Carolina's rate remained lower than Mississippi.

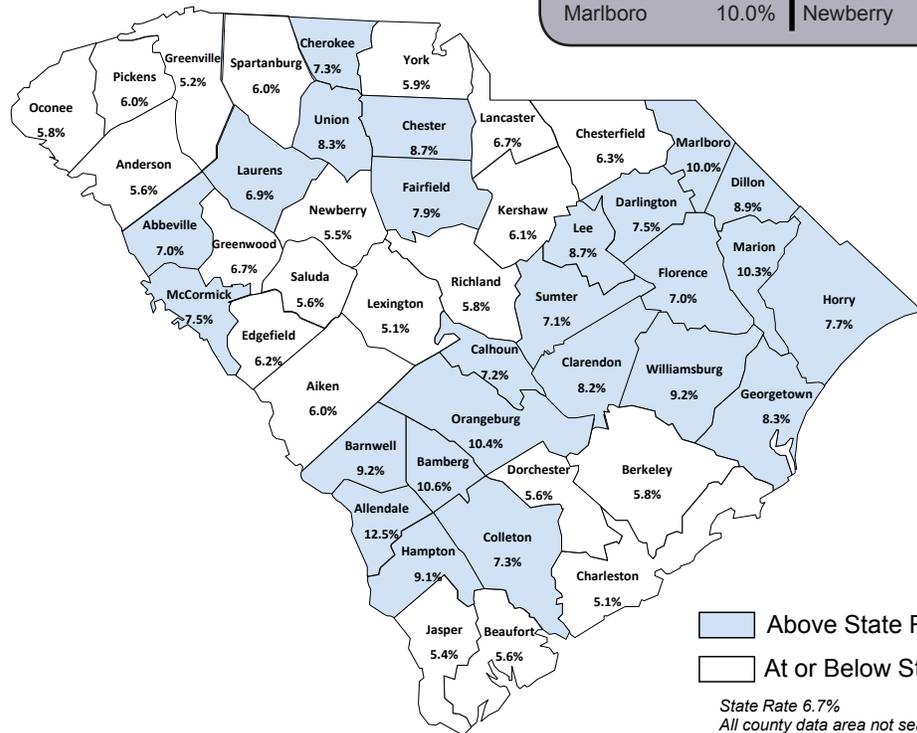
The most significant over-the-month acceleration in employment occurred in Delaware, Florida, Maine, New Hampshire, and South Dakota at 0.4 percent each. The largest reduction in employment was in Oklahoma at -0.8 percent, followed by Arkansas, North Dakota, and West Virginia at -0.6 percent each.

Over the year, nonfarm employment increased in 49 states and the District of Columbia, and decreased in West Virginia (-0.5 percent). The largest over-the-year uptrend occurred in Utah at 3.9 percent, followed by Florida at 3.7 percent, and Washington at 3.4 percent.

March Unemployment Rate by County

Not seasonally adjusted county unemployment rates declined across the state in all 46 counties. Rates ranged from 12.5 percent in Allendale County to 5.1 percent in Lexington and Charleston counties. Horry County experienced the largest growth with nearly 3,580 people gaining employment as the Grand Stand area began preparations for tourist season. Beaufort, Charleston, and Greenville counties noted solid gains as well, seeing increases in excess of 1,000 people finding work. Florence, Darlington, and Sumter counties saw modest declines in employment.

Highest County Unemployment Rate		Lowest County Unemployment Rate	
Allendale	12.5%	Charleston	5.1%
Bamberg	10.6%	Lexington	5.1%
Orangeburg	10.4%	Greenville	5.2%
Marion	10.3%	Jasper	5.4%
Marlboro	10.0%	Newberry	5.5%



Above State Rate
 At or Below State Rate

State Rate 6.7%
All county data area not seasonally adjusted.

Employment Changes by County January 2015 through March 2015

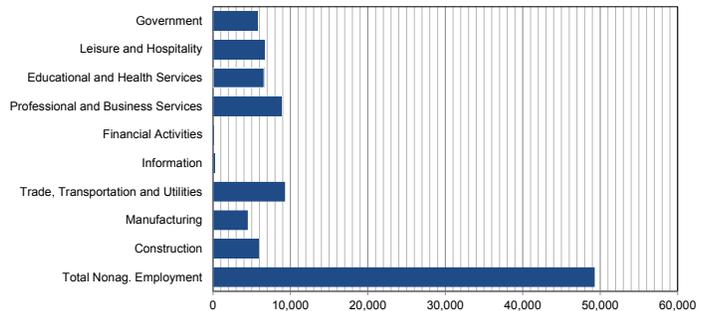
County	Employment			Net Change From	
	Mar 2015	Feb 2015	Jan 2015	Feb '15 - Mar '15	Jan '15 - Feb '15
Abbeville	9,903	9,792	9,709	111	83
Aiken	69,739	68,957	68,768	782	189
Allendale	2,600	2,555	2,609	45	-54
Anderson	82,233	81,841	81,187	392	654
Bamberg	5,035	4,959	5,008	76	-49
Barnwell	8,126	8,027	8,034	99	-7
Beaufort	65,841	64,486	64,109	1,355	377
Berkeley	85,620	85,282	83,943	338	1,339
Calhoun	6,449	6,408	6,382	41	26
Charleston	182,720	181,644	178,764	1,076	2,880
Cherokee	22,130	21,934	21,772	196	162
Chester	12,595	12,501	12,473	94	28
Chesterfield	20,133	19,887	19,914	246	-27
Clarendon	12,074	11,920	12,001	154	-81
Colleton	15,869	15,663	15,578	206	85
Darlington	27,532	27,557	27,564	-25	-7
Dillon	11,547	11,396	11,519	151	-123
Dorchester	66,353	66,066	65,053	287	1,013
Edgefield	10,035	9,890	9,936	145	-46
Fairfield	9,273	9,233	9,172	40	61
Florence	60,089	60,151	59,783	-62	368
Georgetown	23,558	23,143	23,131	415	12
Greenville	223,551	222,548	220,628	1,003	1,920
Greenwood	29,936	29,614	29,473	322	141
Hampton	7,824	7,682	7,783	142	-101
Horry	122,642	119,063	117,437	3,579	1,626
Jasper	10,859	10,584	10,516	275	68
Kershaw	26,505	26,389	26,198	116	191
Lancaster	32,636	32,379	32,241	257	138
Laurens	28,192	28,023	27,849	169	174
Lee	5,929	5,882	5,919	47	-37
Lexington	133,310	132,791	131,484	519	1,307
McCormick	3,333	3,290	3,268	43	22
Marion	11,611	11,454	11,444	157	10
Marlboro	9,026	8,916	8,903	110	13
Newberry	17,608	17,386	17,538	222	-152
Oconee	32,768	32,403	32,316	365	87
Orangeburg	34,355	33,916	33,893	439	23
Pickens	52,213	51,945	51,472	268	473
Richland	182,716	182,338	180,040	378	2,298
Saluda	8,209	8,110	8,252	99	-142
Spartanburg	129,063	128,675	127,585	388	1,090
Sumter	40,987	41,050	40,955	-63	95
Union	10,736	10,698	10,606	38	92
Williamsburg	11,894	11,767	11,795	127	-28
York	115,620	114,753	113,998	867	755

South Carolina Nonfarm Employment Trends for March - Seasonally Adjusted

In March 2015, seasonally adjusted total nonfarm payroll employment decreased 3,400 over the month, to reach the level of 1,984,800. The decrease in employment was primarily due to losses in Leisure and Hospitality and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities. Construction posted the largest gain in employment of 1,100.

During March, along with the increase in the Construction, there was growth in Education and Health Services (+700) and Government (+100). Industries reporting declines were Leisure and Hospitality (-2,400); Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (-1,500); Professional and Business Services (-700); Financial Activities (-500); Other Services and Manufacturing both declined (-200). Information remained flat.

**South Carolina Job Changes by Industry
March 2014 - March 2015 (SA)**

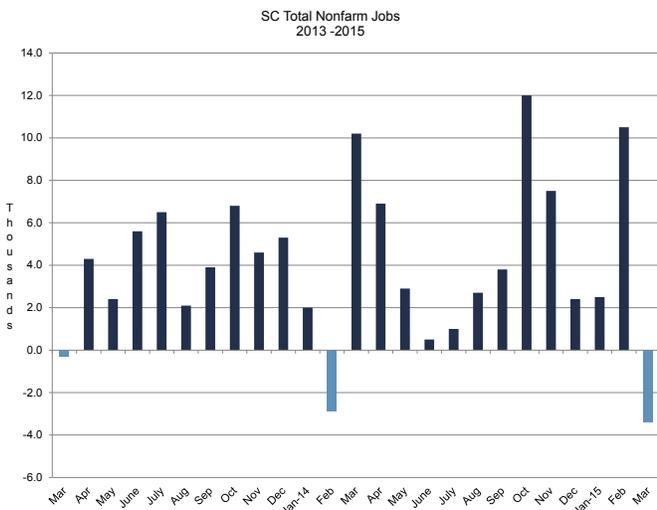


Over-the-year growth in nonfarm employment was 49,300 with Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+9,300) and Professional and Business Services (+8,900) reporting the largest gains. Essentially every industrial sector saw growth over-the-year: Leisure and Hospitality (+6,700); Education and Health Services (+6,600); Construction (+5,900); Government (+5,800); Manufacturing (+4,500); and Other Services (+1,200). Modest gains were seen in Information (+200) and Financial Activities (+100).

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) seasonally adjusted, total nonfarm payroll employment from February to March saw decreases in employment. The largest decrease was in Columbia with a loss of (-1,800) followed by decreases in Charleston (-700); Florence (-700); and Sumter (-400).

Every MSA saw seasonally adjusted, payroll employment growth compared to a year ago. The largest increase was in Charleston (+9,800), followed by upticks in Columbia (+6,400); Florence (+800); and Sumter (+500).

As a result of the new MSAs redefinition, there are only four South Carolina MSAs publishable under nonfarm, seasonally adjusted employment. MSAs are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and are the result of the latest published standards from Census Bureau data. (The standards for defining the areas are reviewed and revised once every 10 years prior to each decennial census). Therefore, with the release of the 2014 benchmark, Current Employment Statistics will incorporate the updates to area definitions based on the new standards from the 2010 Census. As a result of the new standards, breaks have been created in the time series for these areas. Due to the breaks in the time series, BLS will be unable to publish all of the redefined areas on a seasonally adjusted basis. The South Carolina areas based on the 2010 standards and Census Bureau data were defined in February 2013.



To see the monthly not seasonally adjusted data series, go to www.SCWorkforceInfo.com (Employment and Wage Data section)

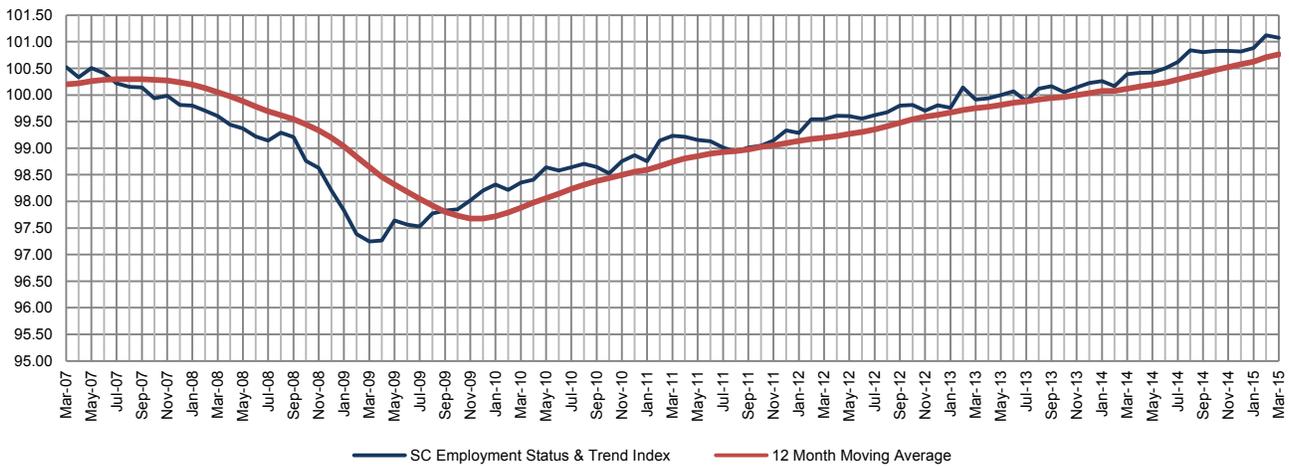
South Carolina Employment Status and Trend Index Slightly Lower

After jumping 0.24 percent in February, South Carolina Employment Status and Trend Index (SCESTI) took a breather, down 0.05 percentage point to end March at 101.07. The SC Unemployment Initial Claims topped the list of the index components that managed improvements, dropping 10.45 percent for the month. Also improved were the Conference Board’s US Consumer Confidence Index and Manufacturing Average Weekly Hours, climbing 2.53 and 0.24 percent respectively. On the other hand, the March’s Conference Board’s US Employment Trend Index and its SC Help Wanted Online Ads were both lower, by 0.09 percent and 4.98 percent.

Compared with 12 months ago, SCESTI was 0.68 percent higher. All the index components also made remarkable improvements for the same period. The Conference Board’s US Consumer Confidence Index was 20.74 percent higher than a year ago. Unemployment Insurance Initial Claims declined 18.35 percent. The Conference Board’s SC Help Wanted Online Ads advanced 12.27 percent. The conference Board’s US Employment Trend Index rose 5.66 percent and the Manufacturing Average Weekly Hours was 1.46 percent higher than March 2014.

Although lower for the month, SCESTI is still extremely close to its all-time high. The fact that March is the 43rd consecutive month (since August 2011) that SCESTI has been moving above its 12-month moving average. Indicating a strong upward trend is intact and the employment situation for the Palmetto State will keep improving.

South Carolina Employment Status and Trend Index



Occupation Spotlight: Technical Writers

OVERVIEW

Technical writers produce materials about a particular subject that requires direction, instruction or explanation. Equipment manuals, appendices, and operating or maintenance instructions are a few examples of documents that a technical writer may compose.

Compared with other traditional writers (such as creative writers or authors), technical writing is a relatively new occupation. It was formally recognized as an official job title during World War II due to a growing need for well-designed, written documents to assist people in using new technologies in medicine, military hardware, computers, and aerospace. The post-war economic boom, which saw numerous technological advances and opportunities for academic development, accelerated the growth of the occupation making it one of the most desired professions for many job seekers.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

A Bachelor's degree is usually required to get a job as a technical writer. Additional requirements may include prior work experience of at least five years and some short-term on-the-job training. Since the nature of a technical writer's work is mostly teaching or explaining certain processes in a particular subject, thorough understanding of the subject is also desirable.

EMPLOYMENT

Technical writers mostly work full-time in office environments. While the vocational areas they work in may vary, most technical writer positions are typically in the computer and engineering industries. According to BLS, the number of technical writer jobs in the United States was 48,210 in 2014, a number that was estimated to grow 15 percent by 2022. This is much greater than the growth rate of 10.8 percent projected for the average of all occupations. Results from the South Carolina 2012-2022 employment projections agree with these findings.

The table below shows the projected fastest-growing industries with opportunities for technical writers. These fields have a higher expected growth rate for the ten year period than the projected demand, on average, for technical writers in South Carolina.

Industry	Percent Change
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	30.8%
Administrative and Support Services	26.1%
Publishing Industries	25.0%
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	25.0%
Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	22.2%
Internet Service Providers, Web Search Portals, and Data Processing Services	22.2%
<i>All Industries (Average)</i>	17.1%

Source: South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

WAGES

According to the May 2014 Occupational Employment and Wages Estimates, the national average annual wage for technical writers was \$71,950. For South Carolina, technical writers earn an average annual salary of \$65,840, approximately 66.4 percent more than the average wage for all occupations (\$39,570). The following table lists the top 5 highest-paying industries for technical writers in South Carolina.

Industry	Average Wage
Specialized Design Services	\$85,700
Other Information Services	\$85,600
Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	\$83,870
Computer and Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing	\$82,810
Federal Executive Branch	\$79,500

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

CONCLUSION

Driven by the continuing expansion of scientific and technical products and the growth in web-based product support, the demand for technical writers will likely continue to increase.