South Carolina
Economic Outlook

South Carolina Department of Commerce
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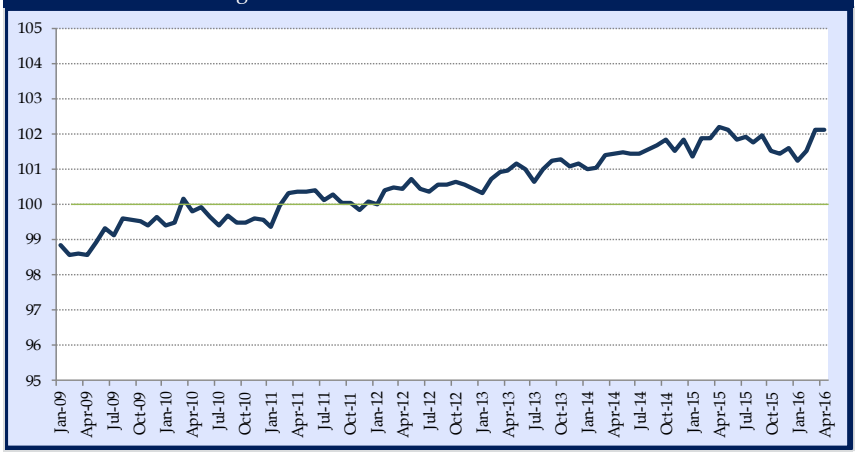
Division of Research | Volume 9 | Issue 5 | May 2016

April SCLI Reading: "More Growth Ahead"

The South Carolina Leading Index (SCLI) inched upward to 102.113 in April, primarily riding improvements in building permits. Although initial claims for unemployment insurance, up 3.6 percent from March, and the Dow Jones Composite Average, down 0.4 percent, had soft results, they did not pull the Index into negative territory. The close range stock market results better reflected the state's strong month, as the Bloomberg South Carolina Stock Index climbed 3.0 percent. The Conference Board's national Leading Economic Index increased 0.6 percent in April to reach 123.9.

- Brandon Wilkerson

South Carolina Leading Index



Source: South Carolina Department of Commerce

South Carolina Real Estate Thriving

Higher income and stronger employment appear to be carrying over to the residential real estate market. Closings were up 4.6 percent in April at 6,526, representing a 6.8 percent improvement from the same time last year. The median sales price showed a similar improvement, rising 2.9 percent from March and 4.8 percent from last year. Foreclosure activity was positive as well, falling 9.9 percent for April. Among the six largest metro areas, results were mixed, with the strongest gains going to Florence (closings up 11.9 percent, sales price up 7.7 percent) and Spartanburg (+5.7 percent and +4.4 percent). The other MSAs were largely flat month-over-month on both metrics. Construction employment figures also ticked upward, as shown on page 2.

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, examination, and dissemination of information to support that mission. The Research Division publishes reports and analyses for stakeholders statewide, and furnishes information for companies considering an investment in South Carolina. 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

+3% — **South Carolina Stock Index** rose 3.15 points in April, closing at 108.64 on the last trading day of the month.
Bloomberg

Employment

+0.8% — **Nonfarm Employment** increased by 16,100 net non-seasonally adjusted jobs from the prior month.
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+0.4% — **Labor Force** increased by 10,245 to 2,316,224, seasonally-adjusted, in April.
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+0.1% — **Unemployment Rate** increased to 5.8 percent, seasonally-adjusted, for April.
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

0% — **Manufacturing Weekly Hours** held steady at 42.2 hours in April.
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

+1.3% — **Available Online Job Postings** increased by 800 positions in April to a seasonally-adjusted 63,800 job postings.
The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index

Real Estate

+3% — **Single-Family Home Sales Price** increased by $5,050 to $175,000 in April.
South Carolina Association of Realtors

+1.2% — **Residential Building Permits** increased by 32 permits from the previous month to 2,783 issued in April.
U.S. Census Bureau

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South Carolina Employment

Non-Seasonally Adjusted Wage and Salary Employment

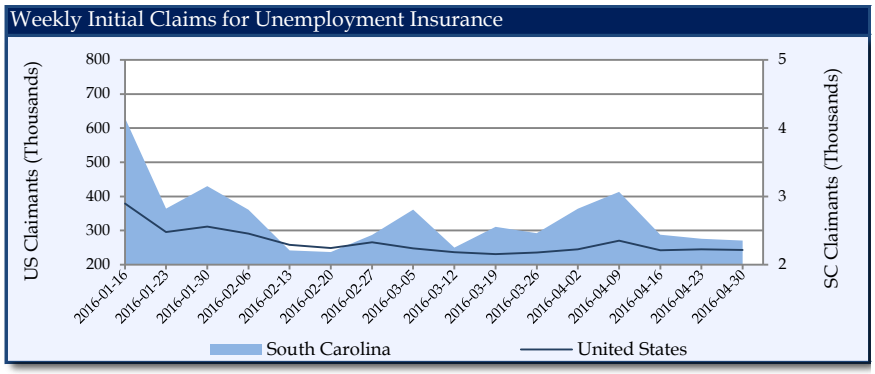
South Carolina's total non-seasonally adjusted, nonfarm employment grew by 16,100 net jobs to 2,050,700 in April, improving 0.8 percent since March, and 2.7 percent compared to one year ago. The Leisure and Hospitality sector, which added a net 8,700 jobs, led all other sectors in gains for the second straight month. Other sectors enjoying strong results were Professional and Business Services, with +3,800 jobs in April, Manufacturing (+1,700), and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+700). Construction picked up 300 net jobs for the month, but had an incredible gain versus last year of 6,800 net jobs (an 8.0 percent jump). No sector reported a year-over-year net loss of jobs.

Industry Sector	April 2016	Previous Month	Previous Year	% Change Month Ago	% Change Year Ago
Goods Producing	**335,000**	**333,000**	**323,700**	**0.60**	**3.49**
Natural Resources and Mining	4,100	4,100	3,900	0.00	5.13
Construction	91,900	91,600	85,100	0.33	7.99
Manufacturing	239,000	237,300	234,700	0.72	1.83
Service Providing	**1,715,700**	**1,701,600**	**1,673,100**	**0.83**	**2.55**
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	388,000	387,300	380,400	0.18	2.00
Information	26,500	26,400	26,500	0.38	0.00
Finance	98,700	96,900	96,600	1.86	2.17
Professional and Business Services	271,900	268,100	257,500	1.42	5.59
Educational and Health Services	242,800	242,700	234,000	0.04	3.76
Leisure and Hospitality	244,800	236,100	240,600	3.68	1.75
Other Services	74,400	76,000	73,700	-2.11	0.95
Total Private	**1,682,100**	**1,666,500**	**1,633,000**	**0.94**	**3.01**
Government	368,600	368,100	363,800	0.14	1.32
Total Nonfarm	**2,050,700**	**2,034,600**	**1,996,800**	**0.79**	**2.70**

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

Weekly Unemployment Claims

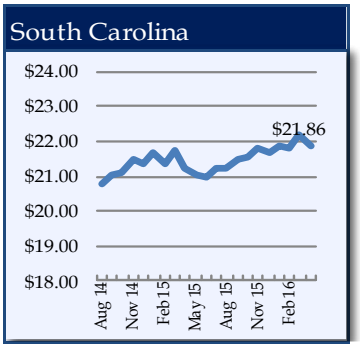
The number of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance in the state grew slightly in April. The average for the month was 2,611 weekly initial claims, a 3.7 percent increase month-over-month, but 14.7 percent lower than one year prior, and 17.6 percent lower than two years ago. The MSAs were split for the month, with Charleston, Florence, and Myrtle Beach reporting declines in claims, and Columbia, Greenville, and Spartanburg reporting higher overall claims.

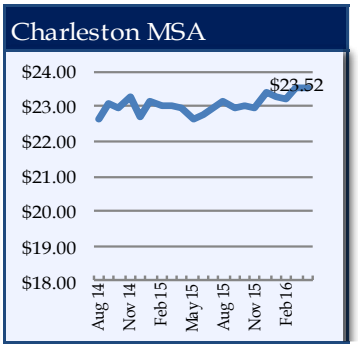


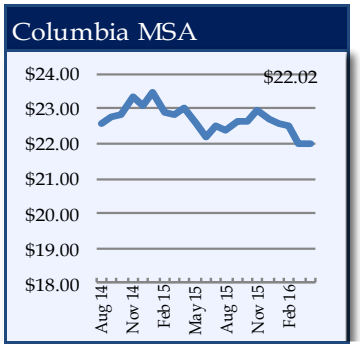
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

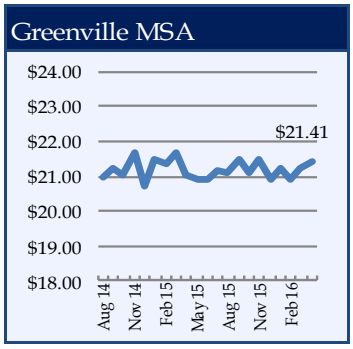
Average Hourly Earnings

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

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South Carolina Real Estate

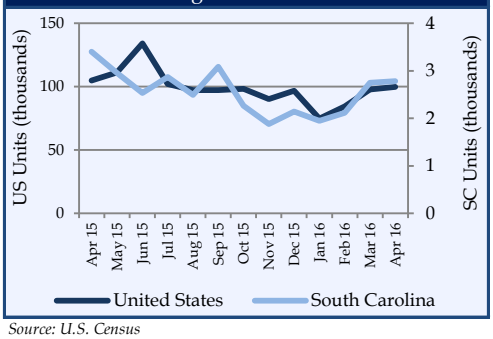
Last month, the number of building permits issued in South Carolina for new residential construction rose 1.1 percent to 2,783. This figure, however, was down 18.1 percent from April 2015. Valuation for the permits ramped up more steeply month-over-month, growing 3.0 percent. Total closings for the month rose 4.6 percent and median sales price rose 3.0 percent. Both metrics were also up compared to 2015. Foreclosures activity made a healthy downward move in April, falling 9.9 percent.

	Month	Current	Previous Year	% Change Year Ago	2016 YTD	2015 YTD	% Change YTD
Closings	April	6,526	6,112	6.8%	22,620	21,164	6.9%
Median Sales Price*	April	$175.0	$167.0	4.8%	$172.0	$163.6	5.1%
Foreclosures	April	2,228	2,349	-5.2%	9,093	8,589	5.9%
Residential Building Permits -Total	April	2,783	3,399	-18.1%	9,597	10,213	-6.0%
Residential Building Permits -Valuation*	April	$583,858	$625,647	-6.7%	$2,021,438	$2,024,293	-0.1%

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

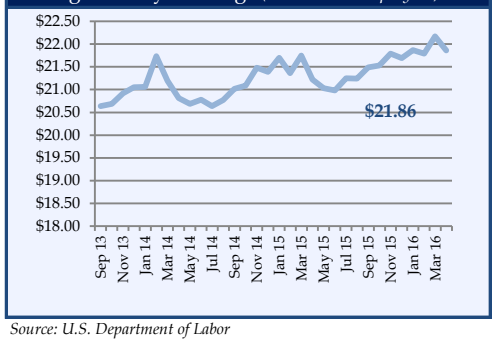
Business Activity

Residential Building Permits



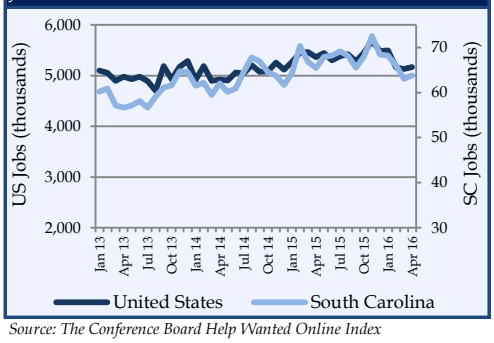
Source: U.S. Census

Average Hourly Earnings *(All Private Employees)*



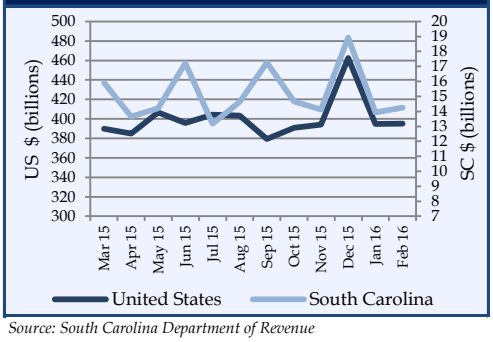
Source: U.S. Department of Labor

Jobs Available Online



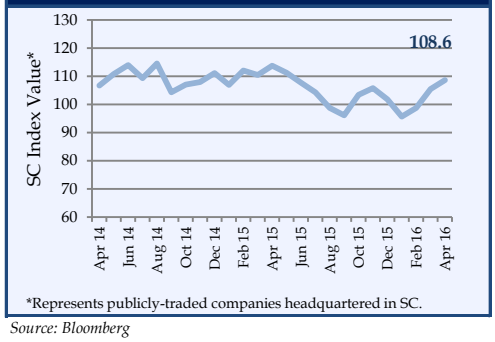
Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted Online Index

Retail Sales



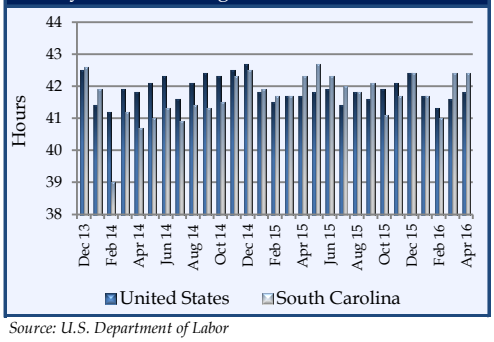
Source: South Carolina Department of Revenue

SC Stock Index



Source: Bloomberg

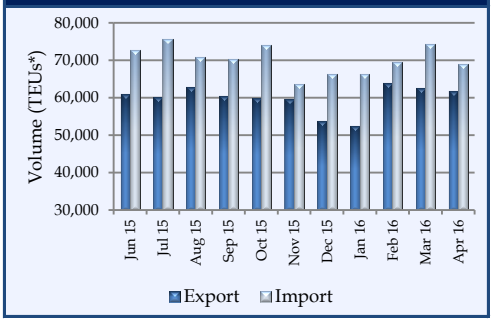
Weekly Manufacturing Hours Worked



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

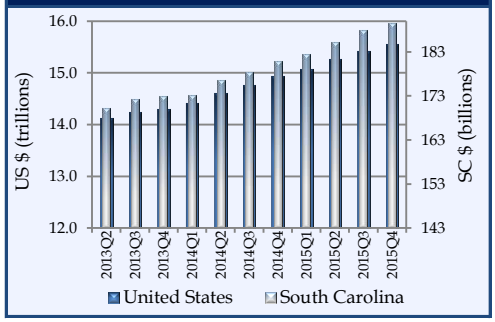
Income and Output

Port of Charleston



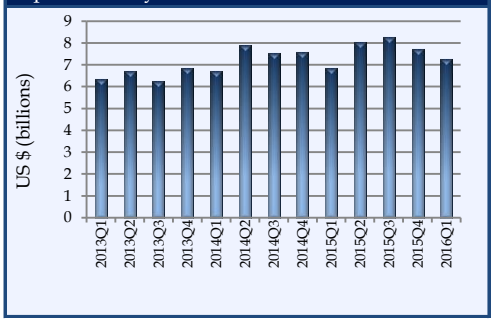
**Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units. Source: SC Ports Authority*

Personal Income



Source: U.S. Census

Export Activity



Source: Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Census

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South Carolina Regional Update

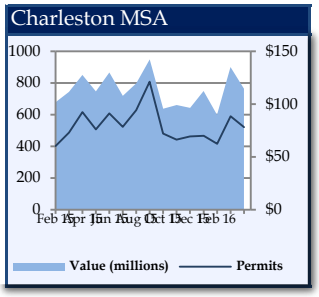
The South Carolina Regional Update provides a snapshot of the most recent economic figures for the six largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the state.

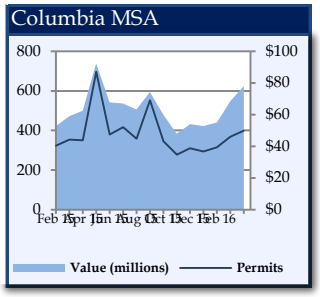
Home Sales

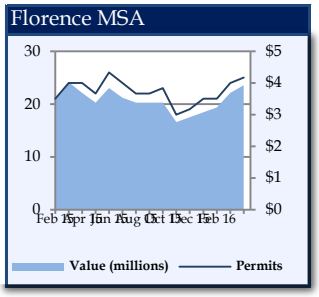
MSA	Indicator	Apr 15	Apr 16
Charleston	*Sales Volume*	1,388	1,469
	Median Price (000's)	$220	$240
Columbia	*Sales Volume*	932	1,005
	Median Price (000's)	$145	$155
Florence	*Sales Volume*	148	169
	Median Price (000's)	$134	$140
Greenville	*Sales Volume*	926	1,064
	Median Price (000's)	$165	$170
Myrtle Beach	*Sales Volume*	924	998
	Median Price (000's)	$155	$157
Spartanburg	*Sales Volume*	373	392
	Median Price (000's)	$135	$142
South Carolina	*Sales Volume*	**6,112**	**6,526**
	Median Price (000's)	**$167.0**	**$175.0**

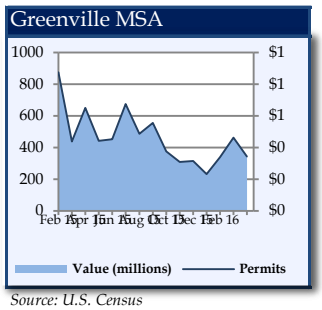
Source: S.C. Association of Realtors.

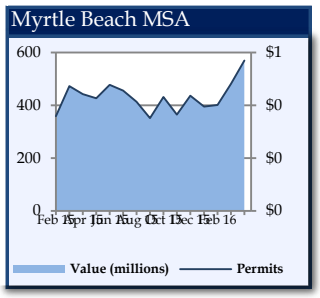
Building Permits

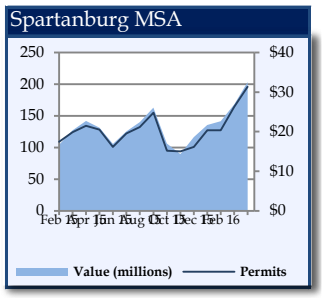












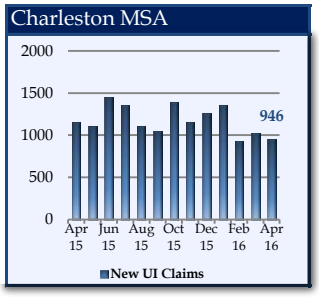
Source: U.S. Census

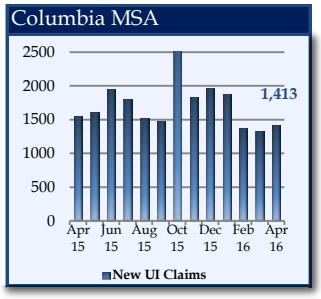
Employment

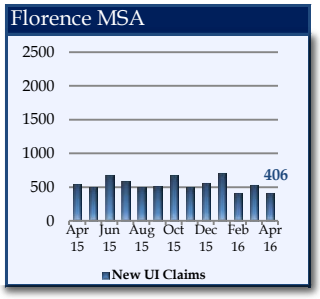
MSA	Indicator	Mar 16	Apr 16
Charleston	*Employment (000's)*	352.1	353.4
	Unemployment Rate	4.9	4.5
Columbia	*Employment (000's)*	385.5	384.9
	Unemployment Rate	5.2	4.8
Florence	*Employment (000's)*	91.2	90.9
	Unemployment Rate	6.4	5.9
Greenville	*Employment (000's)*	403.9	403.2
	Unemployment Rate	5.0	4.7
Myrtle Beach	*Employment (000's)*	174.1	179.1
	Unemployment Rate	6.7	5.8
Spartanburg	*Employment (000's)*	146.8	146.5
	Unemployment Rate	5.5	5.1
South Carolina	*Employment (000's)*	**2,174.7**	**2,181.9**
	Unemployment Rate	**5.7**	**5.8**

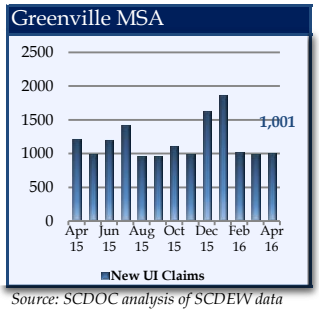
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (MSA figures not seasonally adjusted)

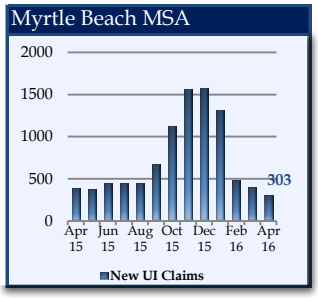
Unemployment Insurance Claims

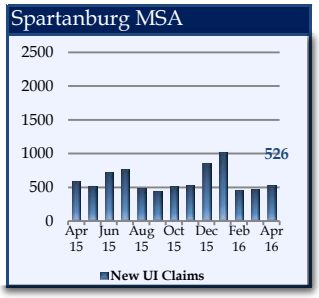






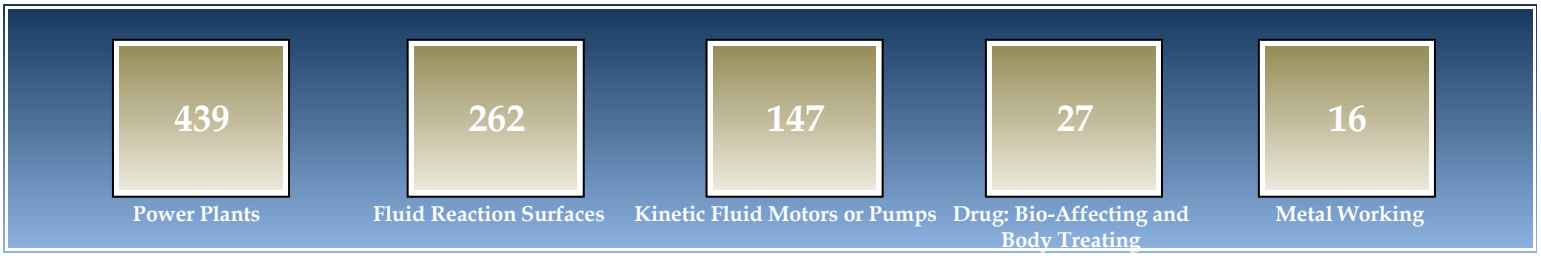






Source: SCDOC analysis of SCDEW data

Patents Issued in South Carolina by Top Five Technology Classes, 2015



Source: US Patent and Trademark Office, May 2016