INSIGHTS

2.3%
Latest Unemployment Rate

Volume 9: Issue 11   December 2019

S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

Business Intelligence Department

At A Glance

View the S.C. Employment Situation Report

Economic Indicators
December 2019 - Seasonally Adjusted

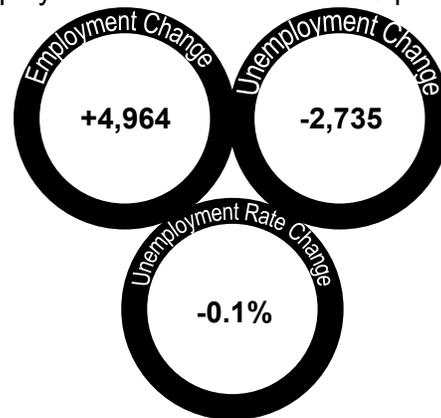|	U.S.	S.C.
Labor Force	164,556,000	2,384,934
Employed	158,803,000	2,329,639
Unemployed	5,753,000	55,295
Unemployed Rate	3.5%	2.3%

Employment growth continues; unemployment rate falls to 2.3 percent, another record low

The number of individuals working rose by 4,964 in December, establishing a new record of 2,329,639 people employed.
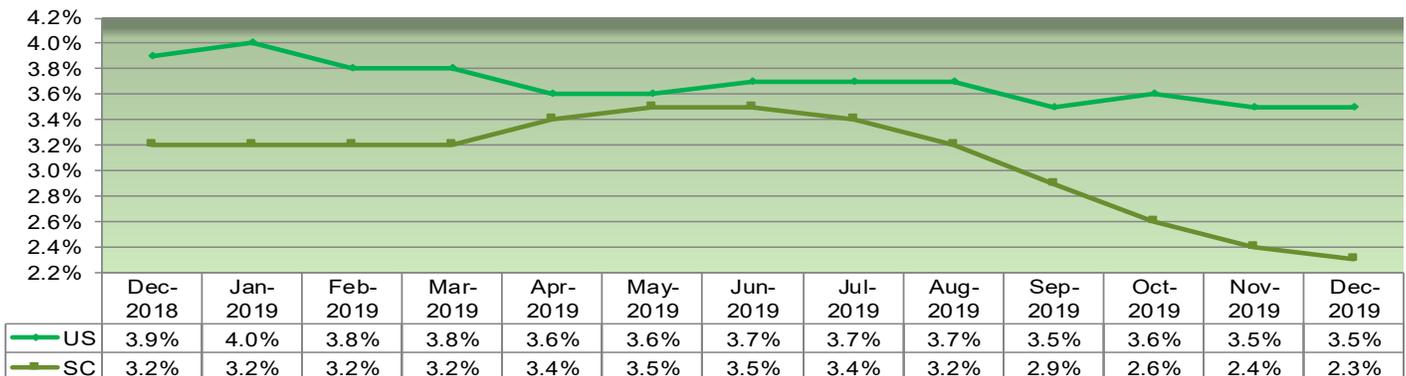
Unemployment fell over the month by 2,735 to 55,295 people. Additionally, the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined to 2.3 percent for the month, reaching the lowest ever recorded rate for the fourth consecutive month. The state's labor force grew by 2,229 to 2,384,934.

Since December of 2018, employment increased by 74,712 people. Likewise, the labor force rose by 54,763. The level of unemployed declined by 19,949 people.

Nationally, the unemployment rate remained at 3.5 percent in December.

Employment Change **+4,964**

Unemployment Change **-2,735**

Unemployment Rate Change **-0.1%**

South Carolina vs U.S. Unemployment Rate
December 2018 - December 2019

	Dec-2018	Jan-2019	Feb-2019	Mar-2019	Apr-2019	May-2019	Jun-2019	Jul-2019	Aug-2019	Sep-2019	Oct-2019	Nov-2019	Dec-2019
US	3.9%	4.0%	3.8%	3.8%	3.6%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%	3.5%	3.6%	3.5%	3.5%
SC	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.4%	3.5%	3.5%	3.4%	3.2%	2.9%	2.6%	2.4%	2.3%

South Carolina	**2.3**
Utah	2.3
Vermont	2.3
North Dakota	2.4
Colorado	2.5
Hawaii	2.6
New Hampshire	2.6
Virginia	2.6
Alabama	2.7
Iowa	2.7
Massachusetts	2.8
Idaho	2.9
Maine	2.9
Florida	3.0
Nebraska	3.1
Georgia	3.2
Indiana	3.2
Kansas	3.2
South Dakota	3.2
Minnesota	3.3
Missouri	3.3
Tennessee	3.3
Montana	3.4
Oklahoma	3.4
Wisconsin	3.4
Maryland	3.5
New Jersey	3.5
Rhode Island	3.5
Texas	3.5
United States	**3.5**
Arkansas	3.6
Connecticut	3.7
Illinois	3.7
North Carolina	3.7
Oregon	3.7
Wyoming	3.7
Nevada	3.8
California	3.9
Delaware	3.9
Michigan	3.9
New York	4.0
Ohio	4.2
Kentucky	4.3
Washington	4.3
Pennsylvania	4.5
Arizona	4.6
New Mexico	4.7
Louisiana	4.9
West Virginia	5.0
District of Columbia	5.3
Mississippi	5.7
Alaska	6.1

U.S. unemployment rate unchanged in December; S.C. rate reaches 2.3 percent, ranked lowest in nation
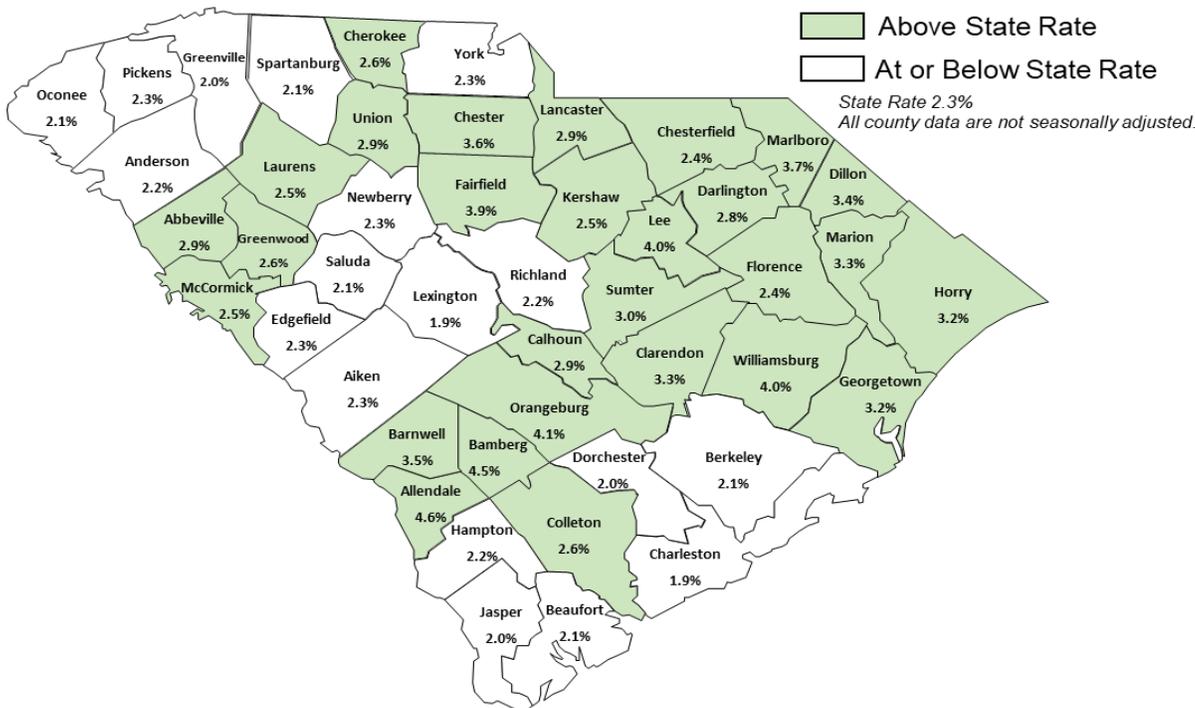
Unemployment rates were lower in December in 11 states, higher in four states and stable in 35 states and the District of Columbia. Eight states had jobless rate decreases from a year earlier, one state had an increase and 41 states and the District had little or no change. The national unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.5 percent, while South Carolina's unemployment rate dropped to 2.3 percent, ranking lowest, along with Utah and Vermont, of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Nonfarm payroll employment increased in three states in December 2019 and was essentially unchanged in 47 states and the District of Columbia. Twenty-six states had over-the-year increases in nonfarm payroll employment in December. The largest job gains occurred in Texas (+342,800), California (+310,300), and Florida (+212,000). The largest percentage gains occurred in Utah (+3.1 percent), Idaho (+2.9 percent), and Arizona (+2.8 percent).

December unemployment rates by county

County unemployment rate changes rose across the state as the not seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rate rose over the month. Rates ranged from a low of 1.9 percent in Charleston and Lexington counties to a high of 4.6 percent in Allendale County.

Legend:
- Above State Rate
- At or Below State Rate

State Rate 2.3%
All county data are not seasonally adjusted.

County rates shown on map: Cherokee 2.6%, York 2.3%, Greenville 2.0%, Spartanburg 2.1%, Pickens 2.3%, Oconee 2.1%, Union 2.9%, Chester 3.6%, Lancaster 2.9%, Chesterfield 2.4%, Marlboro 3.7%, Anderson 2.2%, Laurens 2.5%, Fairfield 3.9%, Kershaw 2.5%, Darlington 2.8%, Dillon 3.4%, Abbeville 2.9%, Newberry 2.3%, Lee 4.0%, Marion 3.3%, Greenwood 2.6%, Saluda 2.1%, Richland 2.2%, Florence 2.4%, McCormick 2.5%, Lexington 1.9%, Sumter 3.0%, Horry 3.2%, Edgefield 2.3%, Calhoun 2.9%, Clarendon 3.3%, Williamsburg 4.0%, Georgetown 3.2%, Aiken 2.3%, Orangeburg 4.1%, Barnwell 3.5%, Bamberg 4.5%, Dorchester 2.0%, Berkeley 2.1%, Allendale 4.6%, Hampton 2.2%, Colleton 2.6%, Charleston 1.9%, Jasper 2.0%, Beaufort 2.1%

December 2019

Highest County Unemployment Rates		Lowest County Unemployment Rates	
Allendale County	4.6%	Charleston County	1.9%
Bamberg County	4.5%	Lexington County	1.9%
Orangeburg County	4.1%	Dorchester County	2.0%
Lee County	4.0%	Greenville County	2.0%
Williamsburg County	4.0%	Jasper County	2.0%

December 2019

Economic Indicators
Average Hours & Earnings

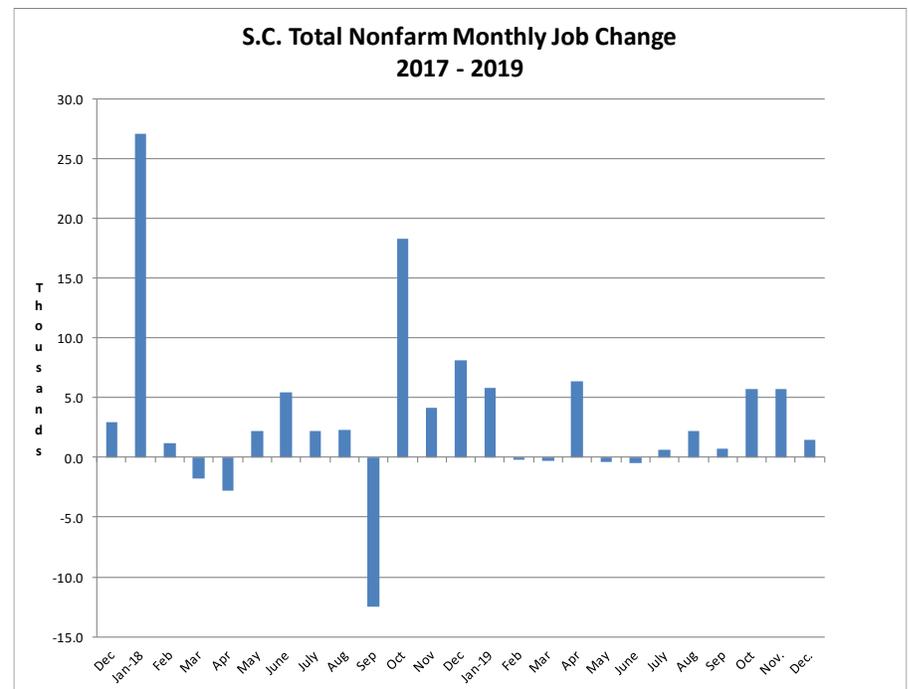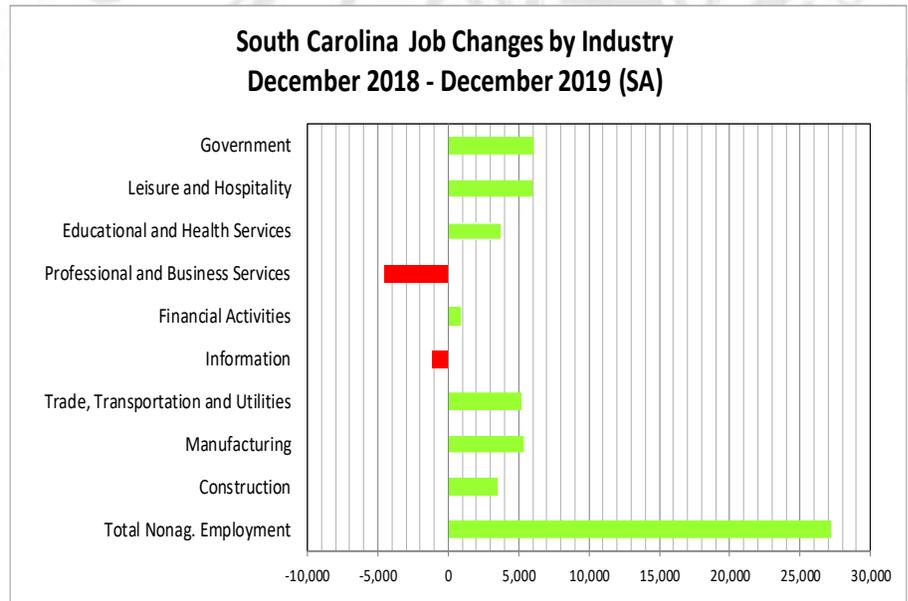| Manufacturing	United States (SA)	S.C. (Unadj.)
Avg Weekly Earnings	$1,140.08	$912.76
Avg Weekly Hours	40.5	43.3
Avg Hourly Wages	$28.15	$21.08

South Carolina nonfarm employment trends for December—seasonally adjusted

In December 2019, the Current Employment Survey of businesses in South Carolina marked an increase of +1,500 nonfarm payroll jobs over the month to a record high level of 2,193,700.

The industry reporting the most significant increase in employment was Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+2,400). Additional increases were Construction (+800); Government (+700) and Leisure and Hospitality (+600). There were no change in the Information and Financial Activities industries. Decreases were noticed also in Professional and Business Services (-1,000); Other Services (-800); Manufacturing (-600) and Education and Health Services (-600).

From December 2018 to December 2019, South Carolina's economy has added 27,200 seasonally adjusted, nonfarm jobs.

Industries with strong growth were Government (+6,100); Leisure and Hospitality (+6,000); Manufacturing (+5,400); Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+5,200); Education and Health Services (+3,800); Construction (+3,500); Other Services (+1,700) and Financial Activities (+900). Decreases were seen in the Professional and Business Services (-4,500); and Information (-1,100) industries.
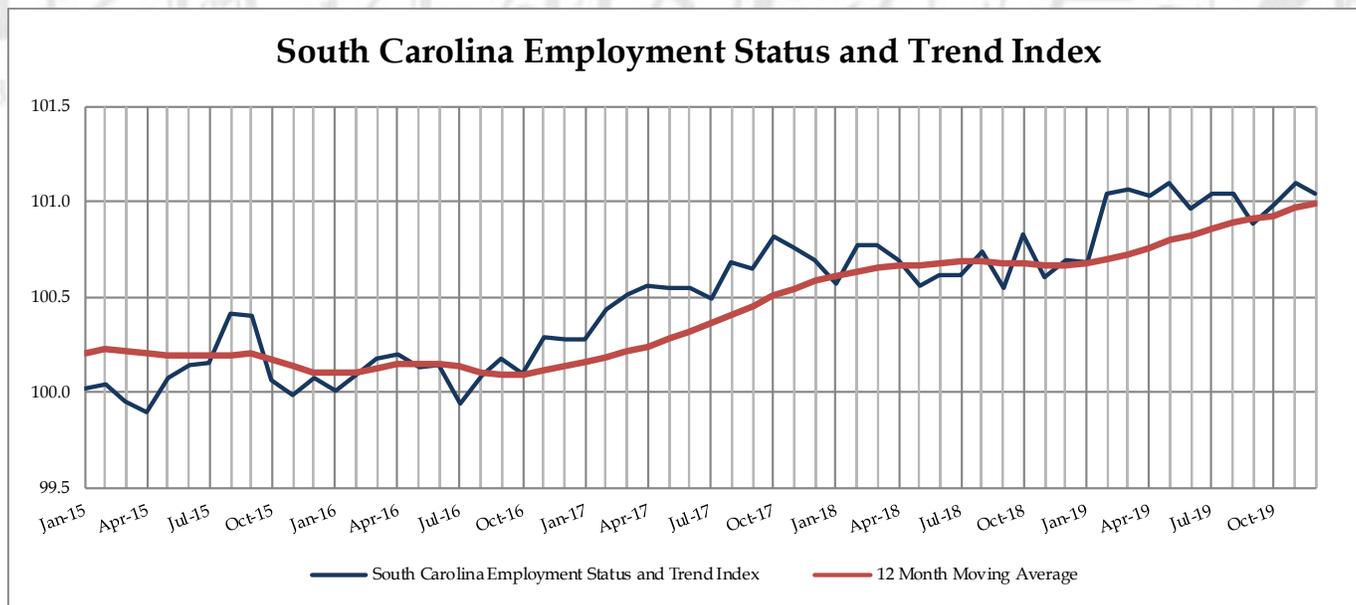
**South Carolina Job Changes by Industry
December 2018 - December 2019 (SA)**

**S.C. Total Nonfarm Monthly Job Change
2017 - 2019**

Economic Indicators (December 2019)

Top Job Growth by MSA (SA)

	Over Month % Change	Over Year % Change
Charleston MSA	0.56%	1.08%
Columbia MSA	0.27%	0.70%
Florence MSA	0.11%	0.76%
Greenville MSA	0.00%	0.77%

To see the monthly not seasonally adjusted data series, go to

www.SCWorkforceInfo.com

(Employment and Wage Data section)

Employment changes by county
October 2019 through December 2019

County	Employment			Net Change From	
	Dec 2019	Nov 2019	Oct 2019	Nov '19 - Dec '19	Oct '19 - Nov '19
Abbeville	10,049	10,081	10,026	-32	55
Aiken	73,420	73,470	73,875	-50	-405
Allendale	2,694	2,701	2,680	-7	21
Anderson	88,954	89,007	89,730	-53	-723
Bamberg	4,819	4,836	4,799	-17	37
Barnwell	8,267	8,300	8,266	-33	34
Beaufort	75,678	76,427	77,368	-749	-941
Berkeley	101,203	101,127	101,418	76	-291
Calhoun	6,534	6,521	6,534	13	-13
Charleston	207,060	206,405	206,701	655	-296
Cherokee	25,461	25,593	25,501	-132	92
Chester	13,235	13,260	13,355	-25	-95
Chesterfield	22,095	22,123	22,026	-28	97
Clarendon	12,457	12,464	12,391	-7	73
Colleton	16,762	16,747	16,643	15	104
Darlington	29,633	29,663	29,726	-30	-63
Dillon	12,594	12,628	12,554	-34	74
Dorchester	75,148	75,059	75,256	89	-197
Edgefield	10,459	10,430	10,467	29	-37
Fairfield	9,399	9,396	9,423	3	-27
Florence	65,266	65,288	65,394	-22	-106
Georgetown	25,604	25,714	25,675	-110	39
Greenville	247,793	248,003	250,053	-210	-2,050
Greenwood	31,040	31,183	31,033	-143	150
Hampton	8,252	8,296	8,290	-44	6
Horry	143,756	145,484	148,288	-1,728	-2,804
Jasper	12,268	12,291	12,383	-23	-92
Kershaw	28,556	28,552	28,634	4	-82
Lancaster	39,762	39,798	40,059	-36	-261
Laurens	29,556	29,534	29,750	22	-216
Lee	6,519	6,537	6,526	-18	11
Lexington	146,400	146,423	146,851	-23	-428
McCormick	3,427	3,432	3,417	-5	15
Marion	12,713	12,777	12,779	-64	-2
Marlboro	9,066	9,118	9,058	-52	60
Newberry	18,739	18,772	18,683	-33	89
Oconee	35,294	35,395	35,271	-101	124
Orangeburg	33,775	33,868	33,646	-93	222
Pickens	55,804	55,803	56,233	1	-430
Richland	194,516	194,912	195,683	-396	-771
Saluda	8,758	8,705	8,704	53	1
Spartanburg	149,490	149,537	150,298	-47	-761
Sumter	43,265	43,359	43,542	-94	-183
Union	11,581	11,578	11,630	3	-52
Williamsburg	12,142	12,188	12,122	-46	66
York	136,182	136,331	137,233	-149	-902

South Carolina Employment Status and Trend Index drops in December

South Carolina Employment Status and Trend Index

"With the Index remaining above its 12-month moving average in December, SCESTI indicates a positive direction for employment change over the next several months."

S.C. Employment Status and Trend Index (SCESTI), an aggregate of five labor-market indicators, fell to 101.04 in December from its revised November value of 101.10. The Index remained above its 12-month moving average, which climbed by three-hundredths of a point to 101.00 for the month.

Three of the five underlying labor-market components moved in a negative direction in December. The Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index decreased by three-tenths of a point from November's value of 126.8 to 126.5 in December. The Conference Board's Employment Trends Index dropped in December to 109.68 points from a November revised value of 110.51. Initial claims for Unemployment Insurance rose from a November average of 2,719 per week to a December average of 3,941 per week. The Conference Board's Help Wanted Online® data, which tracks the number of available job openings posted online, rose by 1,613 ads in December to 57,434 from 55,821 in November. The Bureau of Labor Statistic's S.C. Weekly Manufacturing Hours data showed production hours increasing to a preliminary 43.3 hours per week in December from its revised November level of 42.8.

SCESTI remained above its year-ago figure of 100.69 in December of 2018. With the Index remaining above its 12-month moving average in December, SCESTI indicates a positive direction for employment change over the next several months.

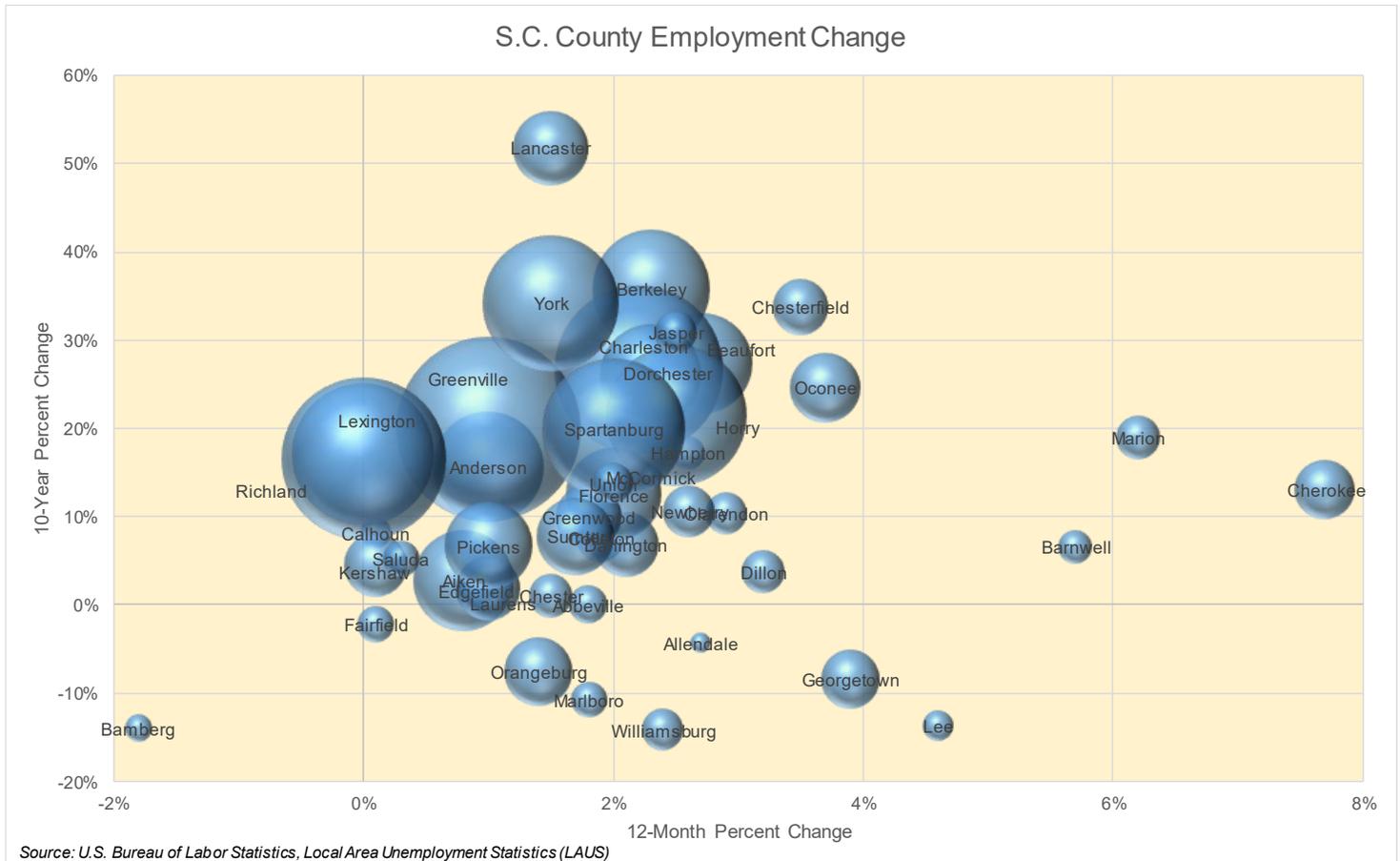| S.C. Online Job Advertisements	S.C. Avg. Weekly Manufacturing Hours	U.S. Consumer Confidence Index	U.S. Employment Trends Index	S.C. Initial Claims/ Unemployment Insurance

S.C. long-term and short-term employment change

Examination of employment information for a variety of South Carolina cities and counties reveals compelling results. The graphic below highlights the 10-year (2009-2018) percent change (y-axis) in employment along with 12-month (2017-2018) percent change (x-axis) for each county. The size of the bubble relates to the level of employment in 2018.
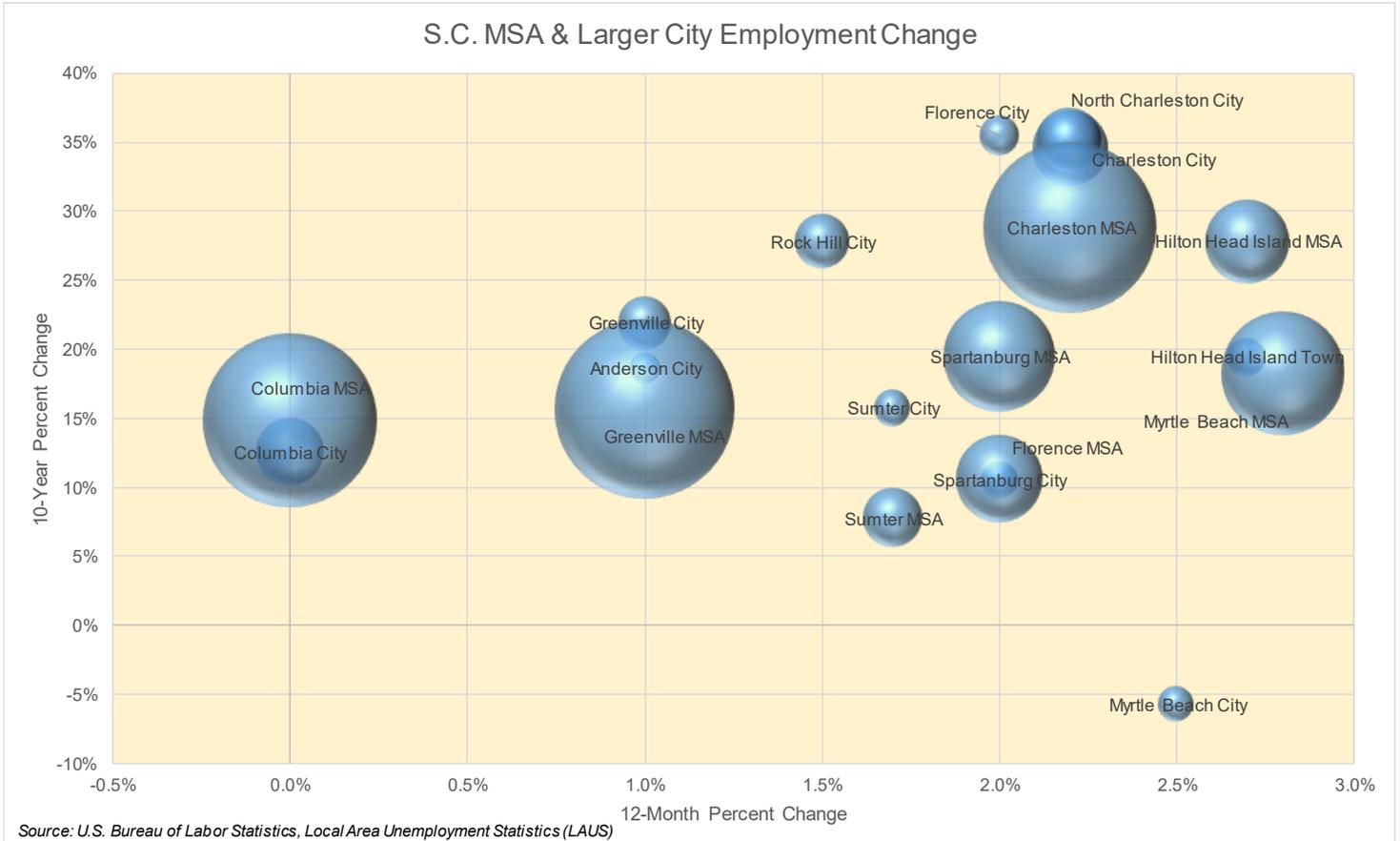

S.C. County Employment Change

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

Interestingly, for the most part, larger counties are growing the most over the long term along with suburban counties. Cherokee, Marion and Barnwell are setting the pace for recent growth, while Lancaster leads in long-term growth at 52 percent. Bamberg is the only county that has fallen in each of the two measures. The graphic illustrates that, generally, rural areas have not been as successful economically as the more urban counties of the state. Also, recent economic expansion in the state has affected all regions in a positive way as all but Bamberg County have grown the past year.

Midlands' area counties seem to have more limited growth than other metropolitan areas of the state. Upstate areas are larger and grow at a higher rate. The coastal counties grow the fastest as a group.

S.C. long-term and short-term employment change

The graphic below presents a similar figure as the previous one but for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and large cities.

S.C. MSA & Larger City Employment Change

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

This figure emphasizes the point made earlier that the Midlands (Columbia) area is growing slower than the Greenville area with the coast growing the fastest.