

## ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

The Mississippi Leading Index climbed to an almost seven-year high in July, continuing its month-to-month up-and-down behavior that began in late 2013. As seen in Figure 1 below, the leading index rose to 104.7 in July and is 3.5 percent higher than one year ago.

For the fourth consecutive month, the value of the Mississippi Coincident Index increased in July as seen in Figure 2 below. The Index rose 0.3 percent for the month and is 2.4 percent higher than one year ago.

In its second estimate, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reported U.S. real GDP increased 4.17 percent in the second quarter, an increase over its initial estimate of 3.95 percent. BEA noted the second revision to GDP primarily resulted from a higher estimate of nonresidential fixed investment and a lower estimate of imports, which together more than offset a lower estimate of private inventory investment.

**The Else School of Management at  
Millsaps College and  
Mississippi Public Universities  
present**

**Economic Outlook Forum**

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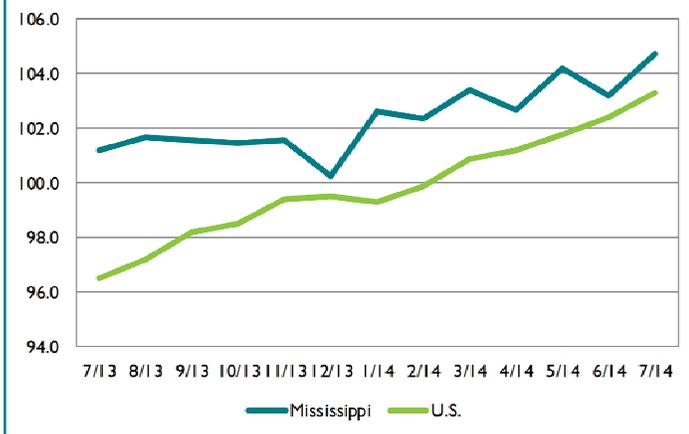
<p><b>Douglas P. Handler</b> Chief U.S. Economist and Head of North America Macroeconomics, IHS Global Insight</p>	<p><b>Darrin Webb</b> State Economist for Missis- sippi and Director, Univer- sity Research Center</p>
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Tuesday, September 16, 2014  
The Leggett Special Events Center  
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Doors open 7:45 a.m. • Program 8:30 a.m.

Reservations recommended  
RSVP at [elsersvp@millsaps.edu](mailto:elsersvp@millsaps.edu) or 601-974-1250

Figure 1. Leading indices



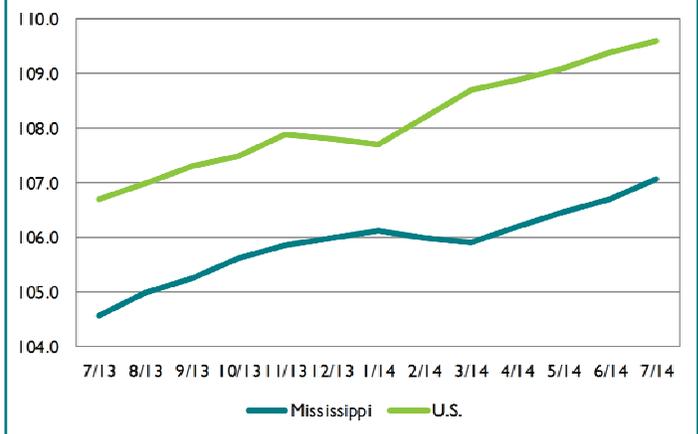
Sources: University Research Center and The Conference Board

**Notes:** The Mississippi Coincident Index is constructed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and re-indexed to 2004. The Index is based on changes in nonfarm employment, the unemployment rate, average manufacturing workweek length, and wage and salary disbursements. The Mississippi Leading Index is constructed by the Mississippi University Research Center. The U.S. Indices are from The Conference Board. All series are indexed to a base year of 2004.

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Figure 2. Coincident indices



Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and The Conference Board

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## MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

## MISSISSIPPI LEADING INDEX, JULY 2014

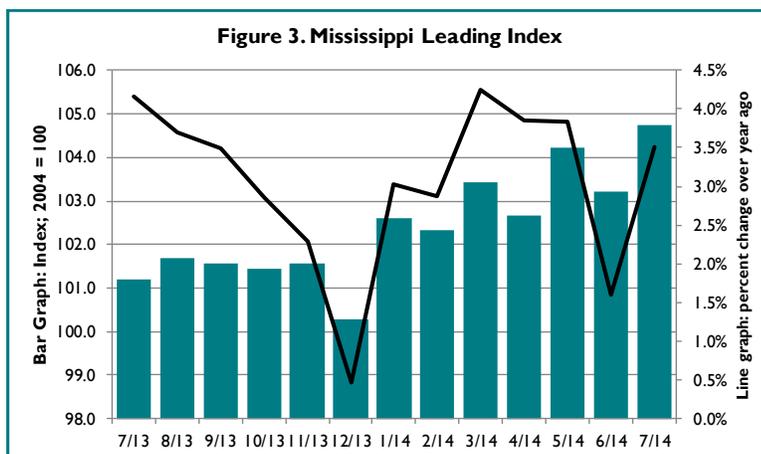
The **Mississippi Leading Index of Economic Indicators** climbed 1.5 percent in July as indicated in Figure 3. The value of the index rose to 104.7, the highest level since September 2007. The index was 3.5 percent higher in July compared to a year ago and is up 4.5 percent for the year.

Six of the eight components of the index contributed positively in July. Discussion of each component appears below in order of largest to smallest contribution.

As Figure 4 indicates, the **value of Mississippi residential building permits** (three-month moving average) surged in July, rising 17.5 percent. This value was 18.9 percent higher compared to one year ago and the highest monthly value in five years. Also climbing in July was the seasonally-adjusted number of units for which building permits were issued (three-month moving average) in Mississippi, which jumped 31.3 percent. The number of permits for new privately-owned housing units issued nationwide increased 8.6 percent in July. This number was 8.2 percent higher than in July 2013.

After spiking in June, both seasonally-adjusted **initial unemployment claims** and continued unemployment claims in Mississippi returned to levels observed in recent months in July. As indicated in Figure 5, total initial claims declined 13.0 percent, falling to approximately the same number as in May. This level was 18.4 percent below the value of July 2013. Similarly, seasonally-adjusted continued unemployment claims fell 16.7 percent in July as seen in Figure 15 on page 6. In addition, the July level of continued claims was 16.9 percent below that of one year ago. As indicated in Figure 16 on page 6, (and discussed on page 8) the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate in Mississippi climbed to 8.0 percent in July, a level last seen in November 2013.

For the second month in a row, the **Institute for Supply Management Index of U.S. Manufacturing Activity** increased as seen in Figure 6. The index rose 3.3 percent in August, reaching its highest level since March 2011. Of the eighteen industries included in the Index, seventeen reported growth in August. Customers' Inventories and Imports were the components with the largest increases in August. New orders also rose in August for the fourth consecutive month, as fourteen of eighteen



Source: University Research Center

industries reported increases. In fact, the New Orders component reached its highest level since April 2004.

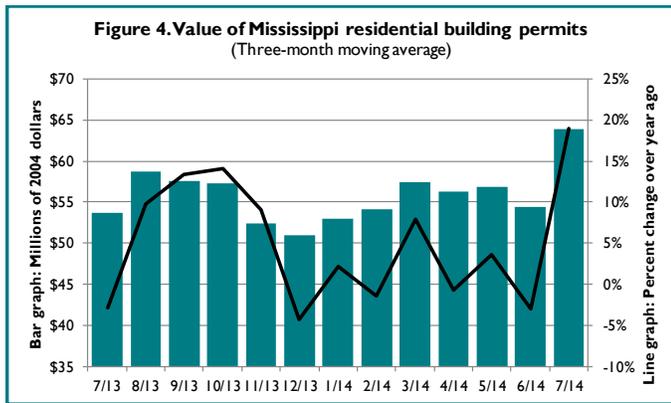
The **Mississippi Manufacturing Employment Intensity Index** rebounded in July as indicated in Figure 7, climbing 1.1 percent. The Index has increased in three of the last four months. Although the average hourly wage in manufacturing remained unchanged and average weekly earnings in manufacturing fell in July, employment in manufacturing in Mississippi increased by 1.0 percent for the month, resulting in the higher index value. The index stands 4.2 percent higher than in July 2013.

As Figure 8 indicates, the value of **Mississippi income tax withholdings** (three-month moving average) rose slightly in July. Withholdings increased 0.9 percent from the previous month and were 2.8 percent higher than one year ago. The average value for the last six months approximately equals the average value of the previous six months—despite declines in four of the last six months.

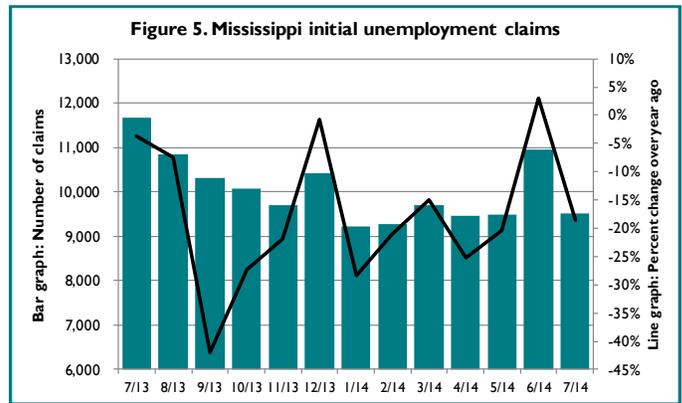
**U.S. retail sales** were essentially unchanged in July, rising 0.04 percent. Compared to one year ago, July retail sales were 3.8 percent higher, a lower year-over-year increase than in each of the last four months when sales grew more than 4.0 percent compared to the previous year. Nevertheless, sales have increased for six consecutive months as seen in Figure 9. However, sales were once again below expectations and weakness was widespread. Only the relatively small segment of miscellaneous store retailers increased substantially in July while general merchandise stores had the largest decline. For these lat-

(Continued on page 4)

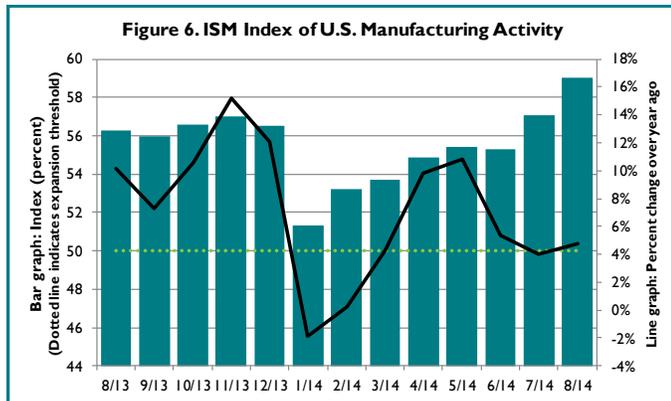
# COMPONENTS OF MISSISSIPPI LEADING INDEX, IN FIGURES



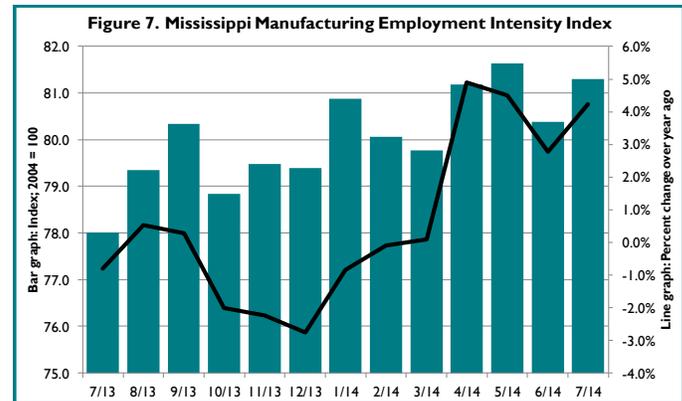
Source: Bureau of the Census; seasonally adjusted



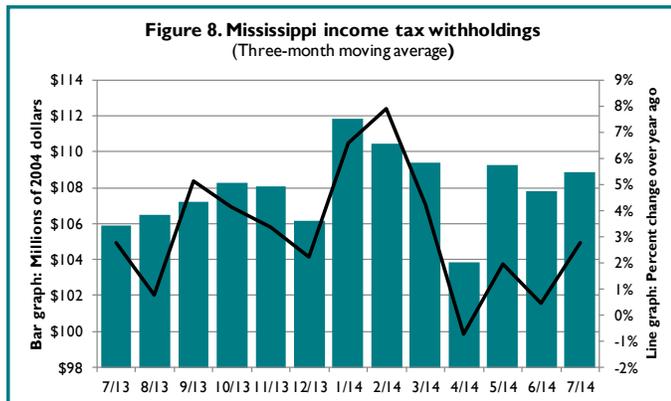
Source: U.S. Department of Labor; seasonally adjusted



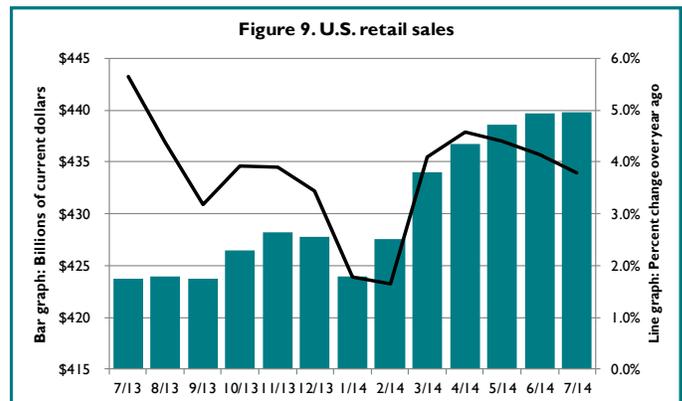
Source: Institute for Supply Management



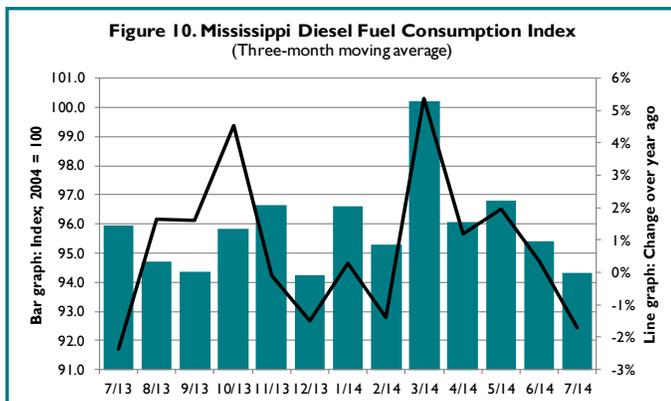
Source: URC using data from Bureau of Labor Statistics



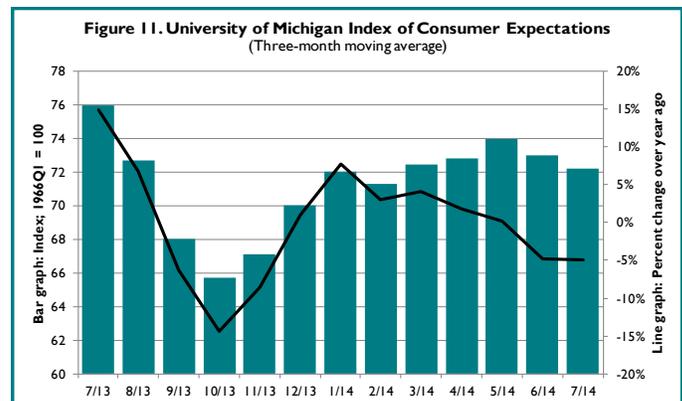
Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue; seasonally adjusted



Source: Bureau of the Census



Source: URC using data from Mississippi Department of Revenue; seasonally adjusted



Source: Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers

## MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

### MISSISSIPPI LEADING INDEX, JULY 2014 (CONTINUED)

ter establishments, department stores in particular were responsible for the decrease.

The **Mississippi Diesel Fuel Consumption Index** (three-month moving average) declined for the third time in the last four months in July, falling 1.2 percent. As Figure 10 indicates the value of the index reached its lowest level since December 2013 and stands 1.7 percent lower than one year ago. The average price of a gallon of diesel fuel in the Gulf Coast district (which includes Mississippi) fell 0.2 percent to \$3.782 per gallon in July, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. July marked the third consecutive month the average price declined.

This price was the lowest since January and is 0.3 percent below the price of July 2013.

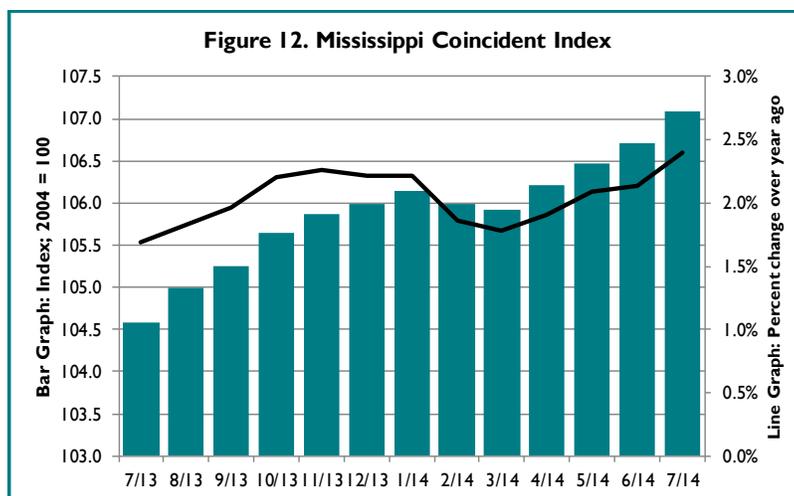
The **University of Michigan Index of Consumer Expectations** (three-month moving average) declined in July for a second consecutive month as seen in Figure 11. The value for July fell 1.1 percent from the previous month to its lowest level since February. Additionally, this level is 5.0 percent lower compared to one year ago. Consumers remain concerned about the future including unease about potential U.S. involvement in ongoing international conflicts. Inflation expectations also changed little from the previous month.

### MISSISSIPPI COINCIDENT INDEX, JULY 2014

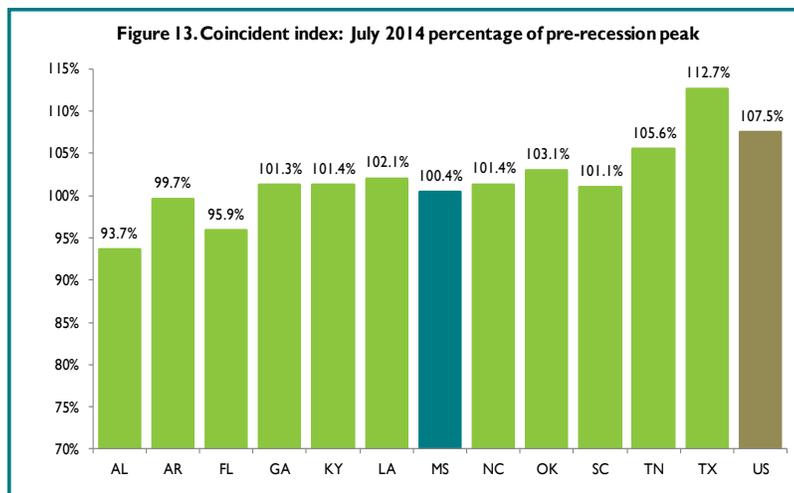
The **Mississippi Coincident Index of Economic Indicators** increased for the fourth consecutive month in July. As seen in Figure 12, the value of the index climbed 0.3 percent in July. This value is 2.4 percent higher than one year ago.

The value of the Mississippi Coincident Index increased to 100.4 percent of its pre-recession peak in July as Figure 13 indicates. As in June, only three of the twelve southeastern states were not fully recovered as measured by the index: Alabama, Arkansas, and Florida. The values of the indices for Alabama and Florida continue to lag well below their respective pre-recession peaks compared to the other southeastern states. The value of the coincident index for Arkansas was only slightly below 100 percent. Conversely, the value of the index for Texas in July was more than 12 percent above its pre-recession peak.

The values of the coincident indices increased in 48 states in July compared to three months prior. Mississippi was among the 39 states with indices that increased more than 0.5 percent. The state's index rose 0.82 percent relative to April, the largest such increase since November 2013. Indices for all states in the Southeast increased in July compared to three months prior. Nine states had indices that increased more than 0.5 percent, while the indices for Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina rose less than 0.5 percent.



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

## NATIONAL TRENDS

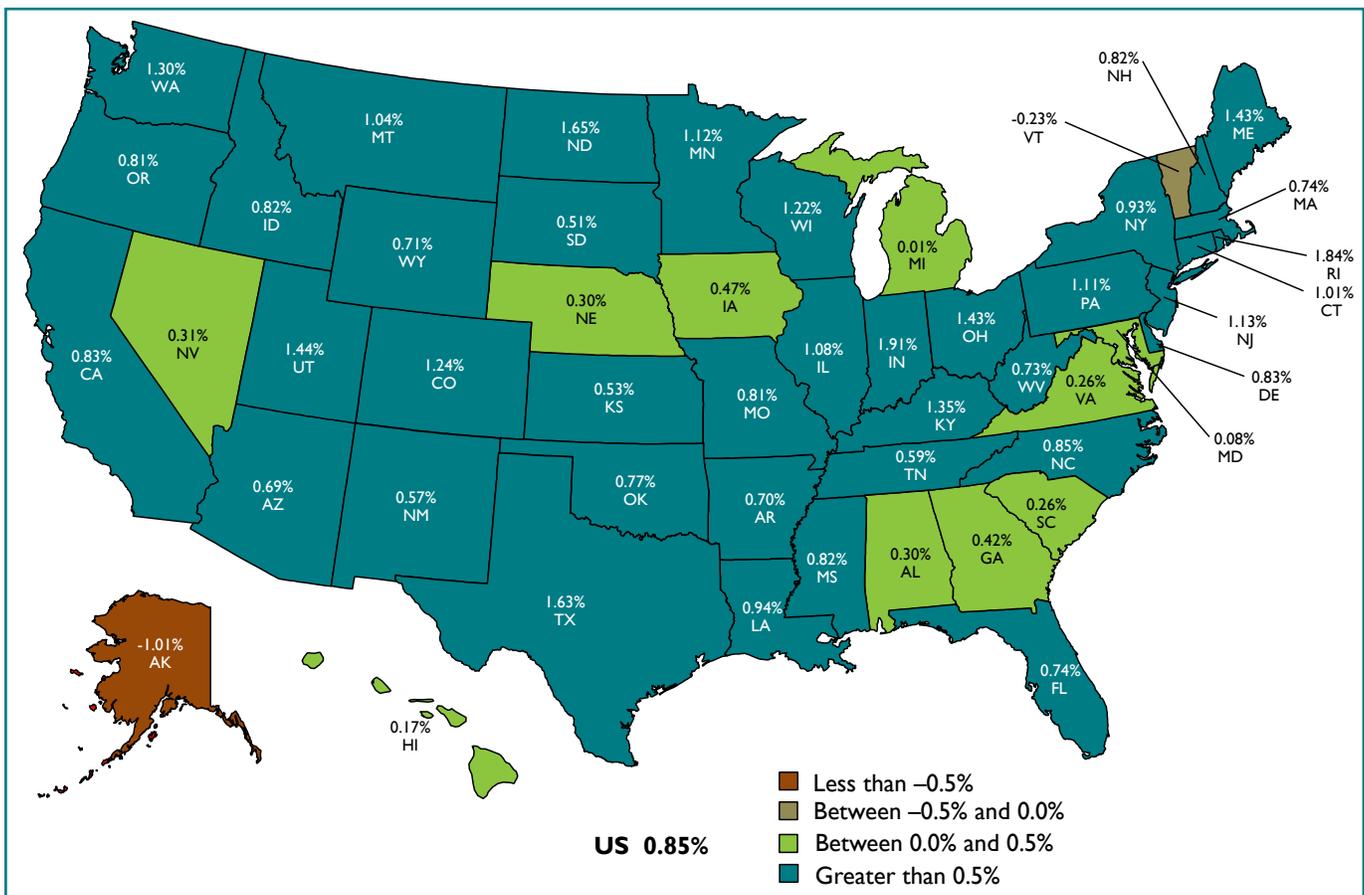
The U.S. Leading Economic Index (LEI) reported by The Conference Board increased for the sixth consecutive month in July. The LEI rose 0.9 percent for the month, the largest increase since March. Seven of the ten components of the LEI increased in July. The interest rate spread, building permits, and initial unemployment claims made the largest contributions. Over the past six months, the LEI has increased 4.0 percent compared to the 2.9 percent increase for the previous six months.

The Conference Board reported its U.S. Coincident Economic Index (CEI) rose 0.2 percent in July, also its sixth consecutive monthly increase. Revisions to the data indicated the CEI rose 0.3 percent in June and 0.2 percent in May. As in June, all components of the CEI contributed positively for the month and the component with the largest contribution was employees on nonagricultural payrolls. The index is up 1.8 percent over the last six months, about twice the rate of the previous six months.

The National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) Small Business Optimism Index recovered its loss from the previous month by rising 1.7 percent in July. The value of the Index reached 95.7, less than the May value but still the second-highest level in almost seven years. The Index component “Plans to Increase Employment” reached a post-recession high in July. Inventory levels remained rather low among small businesses, however, particularly compared to all firms.

During the Jackson Hole Economic Policy Symposium last month, Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen offered little new information regarding when an interest rate increase could occur. The Fed continues to be concerned about slack in U.S. labor markets and most observers believe an interest rate increase will not materialize before mid-2015. However, some economists remain concerned that if the Fed waits too long to raise interest rates, the central bank may fail to head off inflation and asset bubbles could result.

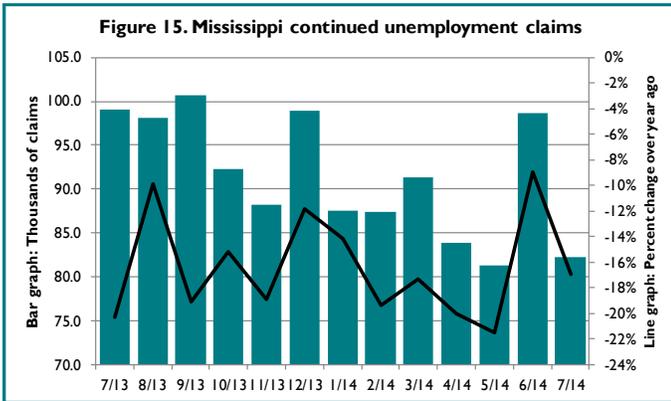
Figure 14. Three-month growth in the coincident index of economic indicators by state, July 2014



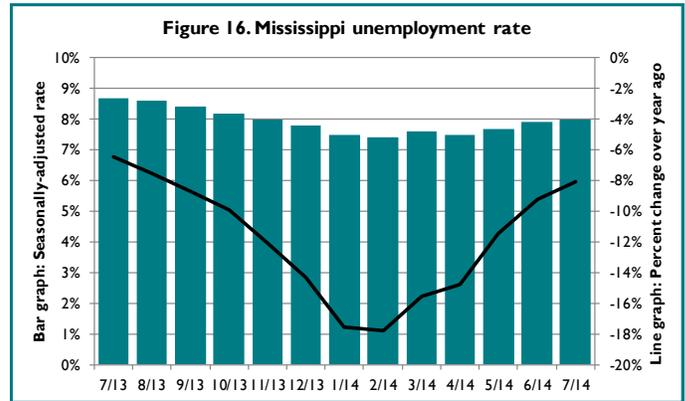
Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

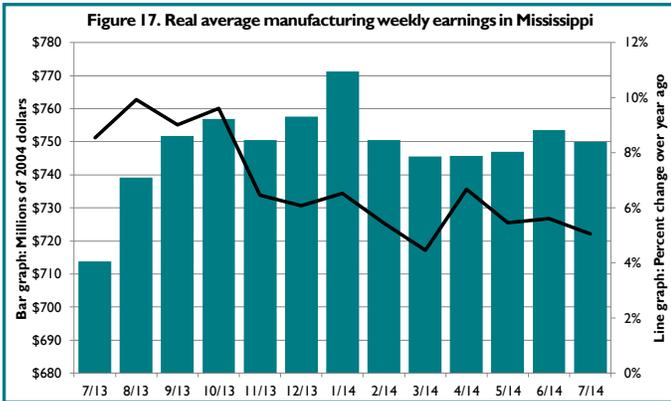
MISCELLANEOUS ECONOMIC INDICATORS, IN FIGURES



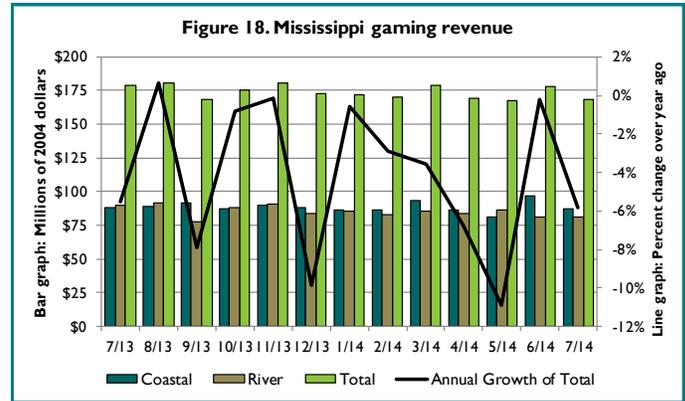
Source: U.S. Department of Labor; seasonally adjusted



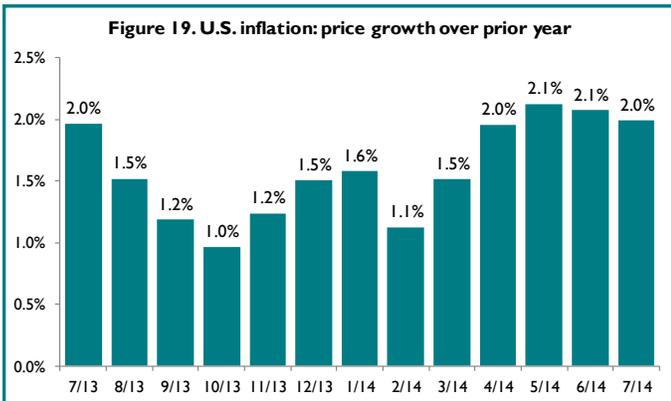
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; seasonally adjusted



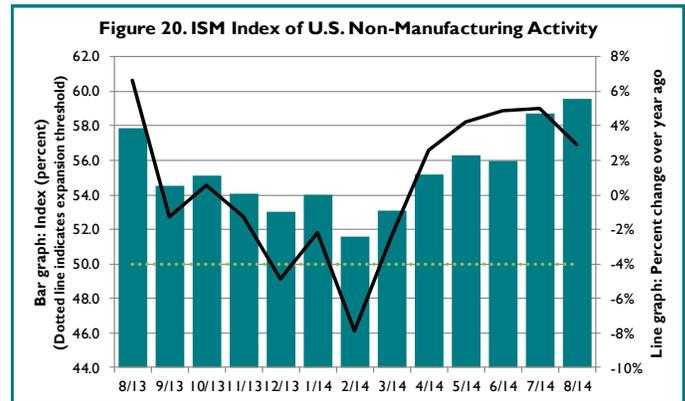
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; non-seasonally adjusted



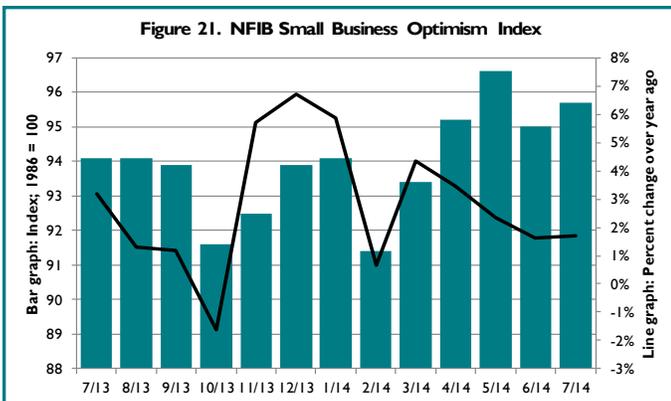
Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue; seasonally adjusted



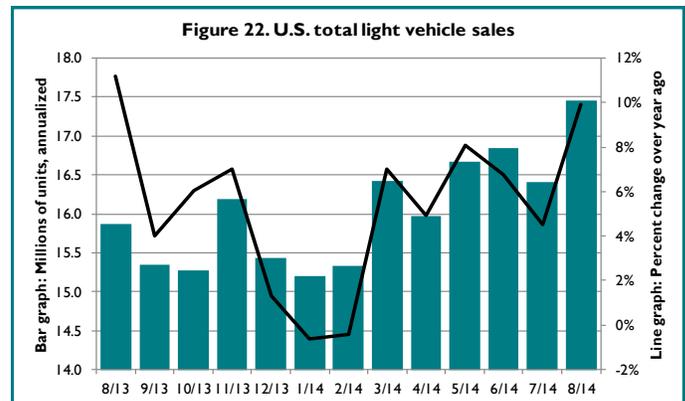
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Source: Institute for Supply Management



Source: National Federation of Independent Businesses



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis; seasonally adjusted at annual rates

TABLE I. SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Indicator	July 2014	June 2014	July 2013	Percent change from June 2014 July 2013		
<b>U.S. Leading Economic Index</b> 2004 = 100. Source: The Conference Board	103.3	102.4	96.5	+0.9%	+7.0%	Economic Indices
<b>U.S. Coincident Economic Index</b> 2004 = 100. Source: The Conference Board	109.6	109.4	106.7	+0.2%	+2.7%	
<b>Mississippi Leading Index</b> 2004 = 100. Source: University Research Center	104.7	103.2	101.2	+1.5%	+3.5%	
<b>Mississippi Coincident Index</b> 2004 = 100. Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia	107.1	106.7	104.6	+0.4%	+2.4%	
<b>Mississippi initial unemployment claims</b> Seasonally adjusted. Source: U.S. Department of Labor	9,520	10,946	11,671	-13.0%	-18.4%	Components of the Mississippi Leading Index
<b>Value of Mississippi residential building permits</b> Three-month moving average; seasonally adjusted; millions of 2004 dollars. Source: Bureau of the Census	63.9	54.4	53.7	+17.5%	+18.9%	
<b>Mississippi income tax withholdings</b> Three-month moving average; seasonally adjusted; millions of 2004 dollars. Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue	108.8	107.8	105.9	+0.9%	+2.8%	
<b>Mississippi Manufacturing Employment Intensity Index</b> 2004 = 100. Source: URC using data from Bureau of Labor Statistics	81.3	80.4	78.0	+1.1%	+4.2%	
<b>Mississippi Diesel Fuel Consumption Index</b> Three-month moving average; 2004 = 100. Source: URC using data from Mississippi Department of Revenue	94.3	95.4	95.9	-1.2%	-1.7%	
<b>University of Michigan Index of Consumer Expectations</b> Three-month moving average; index 1966Q1 = 100. Source: Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers	72.2	73.0	76.0	-1.1%	-5.0%	
<b>ISM Index of U.S. Manufacturing Activity</b> Advanced one month. Source: Institute For Supply Management	59.0	57.1	56.3	+3.3%	+4.8%	
<b>U.S. retail sales</b> Current dollars, in billions. Source: Bureau of the Census	439.8	439.6	423.7	0.0%	+3.8%	
<b>U.S. Consumer Price Index</b> 2004 = 100. Source: URC using data from Bureau of Labor Statistics	126.1	126.2	123.7	0.0%	+2.0%	
<b>Mississippi unemployment rate</b> Seasonally-adjusted. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics	8.0%	7.9%	8.7%	+1.3%	-8.0%	
<b>Mississippi continued unemployment claims</b> Seasonally adjusted. Source: U.S. Department of Labor	82,257	98,704	99,008	-16.7%	-16.9%	
<b>ISM Index of U.S. Non-Manufacturing Activity</b> Advanced one month. Source: Institute For Supply Management	59.6	58.7	57.9	+1.5%	+2.9%	Miscellaneous Indicators
<b>U.S. mortgage rates</b> Seasonally adjusted; 30-year conventional. Source: U.S. Federal Reserve	4.01%	4.11%	4.25%	-2.5%	-5.7%	
<b>Mississippi average hourly wage for manufacturing</b> Seasonally adjusted; 2004 dollars. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics	18.07	18.07	17.32	0.0%	+4.3%	
<b>Mississippi average weekly earnings for manufacturing</b> Seasonally adjusted; 2004 dollars. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics	749.91	753.57	713.85	-0.5%	+5.1%	
<b>NFIB Small Business Optimism Index</b> 1986 = 100. Source: National Federation of Independent Businesses	95.7	95.0	94.1	+0.7%	+1.7%	
<b>U.S. total light vehicle sales</b> Millions of units seasonally adjusted at annual rates. Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis	17.45	16.40	15.87	+6.4%	+9.9%	
<b>Gaming revenue</b>	168.3	177.9	178.7	-5.4%	-5.8%	
<b>Coastal counties</b>	87.3	96.9	88.6	-10.0%	-1.5%	
<b>River counties</b> Seasonally adjusted; millions of 2004 dollars. Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue	81.0	81.0	90.1	0.0%	-10.1%	

## MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

## MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Total nonfarm employment in Mississippi increased slightly in July, rising 0.12 percent according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The increase means 1,300 more individuals in the state were added to payrolls in July. However, BLS revised employment figures in Mississippi for June downward, with the result that still fewer people were employed in July than in May.

As Table 2 indicates, most sectors in Mississippi added jobs in July. The largest percentage change by industry occurred in Mining and Logging, which rose by 2.1 percent or 200 jobs. The largest absolute change by industry in July took place in Manufacturing, which added 1,400 jobs, an increase of 1.0 percent. Employment in Manufacturing in the state is up 3.5 percent compared to a year ago.

Other industries with substantial changes in July employment include Leisure and Hospitality, which shed 1,100 jobs. Construction lost 700 jobs in July, or 1.4 percent, the industry's third consecutive monthly decline. Employment in Construction in Mississippi is down 5.6 percent from July 2013. Government at all levels, after adding jobs the previous two months, lost 900 jobs in July. Employment in

the public sector in Mississippi remains 0.7 percent higher than one year ago, however.

So far in 2014, total nonfarm employment in Mississippi has shown little change, up by 0.1 percent or 1,200 jobs. Changes have not been widespread across sectors, however. While Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services, and Education and Health Care Services have experienced substantial gains, the Construction, Trade, and Arts and Entertainment industries each have incurred considerable job losses. A few more sectors have gained jobs than have lost jobs, resulting in the slight increase in employment in Mississippi to this point in the year.

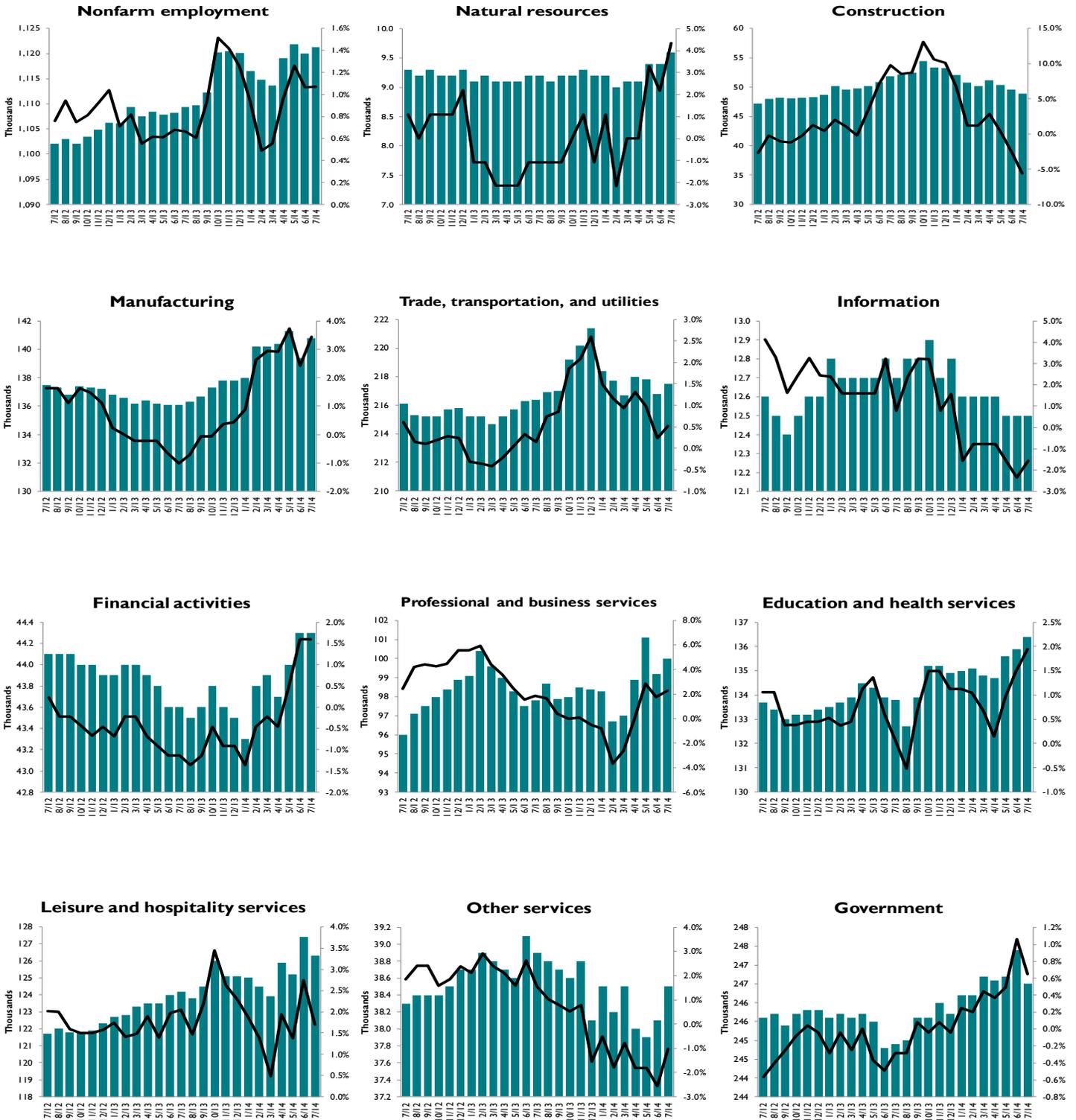
Most industries in Mississippi employed more workers in July compared to one year ago. However, most gains were relatively small and hiring across the state's economy as a whole clearly lacks momentum. A similar situation exists nationwide, but in Mississippi the situation is exacerbated due to the lower levels of human capital in the state's workforce. Until higher wages are observed in the national economy, employment growth in the state will likely remain relatively flat in the short term.

**Table 2. Change in Mississippi employment by industry, July 2014**

	Relative share of total <sup>a</sup>	July 2014	June 2014	July 2013	Change from June 2014		Change from July 2013	
					Level	Percent	Level	Percent
Total Nonfarm	100.0%	1,121,300	1,120,000	1,109,400	1,300	+0.12%	11,900	+1.1%
Mining and Logging	0.8%	9,600	9,400	9,200	200	+2.1%	400	+4.3%
Construction	4.6%	48,900	49,600	51,800	(700)	-1.4%	(2,900)	-5.6%
Manufacturing	12.4%	140,800	139,400	136,100	1,400	+1.0%	4,700	+3.5%
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	19.5%	217,500	216,800	216,400	700	+0.3%	1,100	+0.5%
Retail Trade	12.0%	132,700	132,900	133,600	(200)	-0.2%	(900)	-0.7%
Information	1.1%	12,500	12,500	12,700	-	0.0%	(200)	-1.6%
Financial Activities	3.9%	44,300	44,300	43,600	-	0.0%	700	+1.6%
Services	35.5%	401,200	400,600	394,700	600	+0.1%	6,500	+1.6%
Professional & Business Services	8.8%	100,000	99,200	97,800	800	+0.8%	2,200	+2.2%
Education & Health Services	12.1%	136,400	135,900	133,800	500	+0.4%	2,600	+1.9%
Leisure & Hospitality	11.2%	126,300	127,400	124,200	(1,100)	-0.9%	2,100	+1.7%
Other Services	3.4%	38,500	38,100	38,900	400	+1.0%	(400)	-1.0%
Government	22.0%	246,500	247,400	244,900	(900)	-0.4%	1,600	+0.7%

<sup>a</sup>Relative shares are for the most recent 12-month average. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

# MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT TRENDS BY SECTOR, IN FIGURES



Left axes: Bar graphs of employment levels Right axes: Line graphs of annual growth

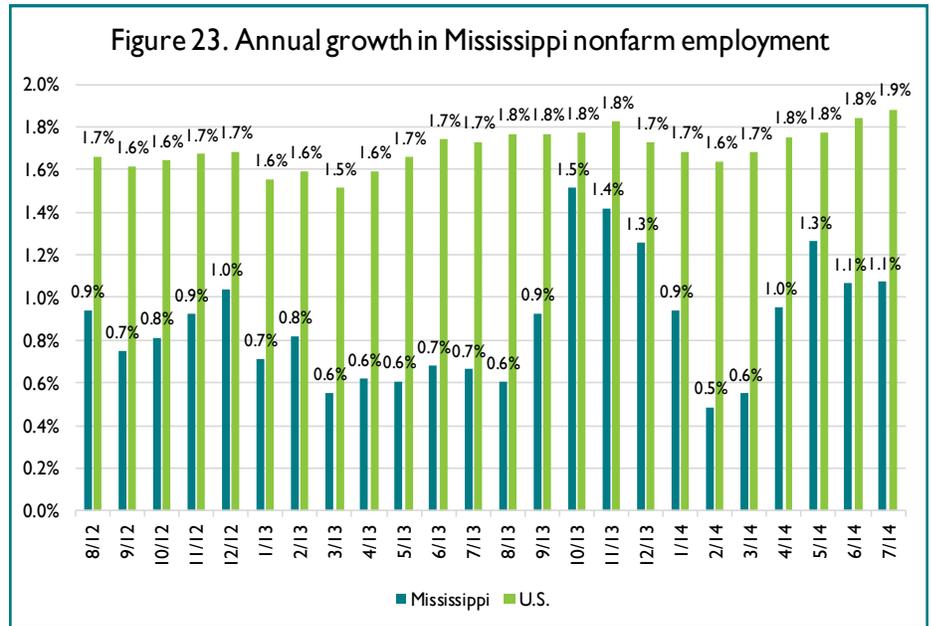
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (all figures)

MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN MISSISSIPPI

The rate of annual employment growth over time is another way to the look at the development of the labor market in a particular economy. The rate simply calculates the percent change in employment over the last twelve months. (The line graphs in each figure on page 9 depict this change by sector.) By compiling this data on a monthly basis over a period of years, important changes can be observed.

For example, Figure 23 depicts the rates of annual growth in total nonfarm employment for both the U.S. and Mississippi over the past two years. Perhaps most obvious in the figure is that over the last two years, the annual rate of employment growth in the U.S. economy has been almost double that in Mississippi. The average rate of employment growth in the U.S. over the last twenty-four months is 1.7 percent; for Mississippi, the rate is 0.9 percent. Second, while rates have trended up slightly over the last two years, the rates of growth in Mississippi have been more volatile than for the U.S. as a whole. The annual rate of employment growth in the U.S. has ranged from 1.5 to 1.9 percent



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

over the last two years. In contrast, in Mississippi the rate remained below 1.0 percent for 13 of 14 months until the last quarter of 2013 when it rose as high as 1.5 percent. Then in the first quarter of this year it declined as low as 0.5 percent, before rising to over 1.0 percent in the second quarter. The reason for the more volatile behavior of employment in Mississippi is that the state's economy is

not only obviously smaller than the U.S. economy, but it is not as broad-based. Thus, changes in one or two industries in Mississippi can result in larger impacts on total employment in the state.

More insight about the growth of employment in Mississippi can be gained by looking at the annual rates of growth in specific sectors. In Figure 24, the Leisure and Hospitality industry has shown some of the most consistent employment growth in the state over the last two years. The industry has averaged an annual growth rate of 1.8 percent, double the average for all nonfarm employment. However, this industry has also displayed some considerable volatility in recent



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN MISSISSIPPI (CONTINUED)

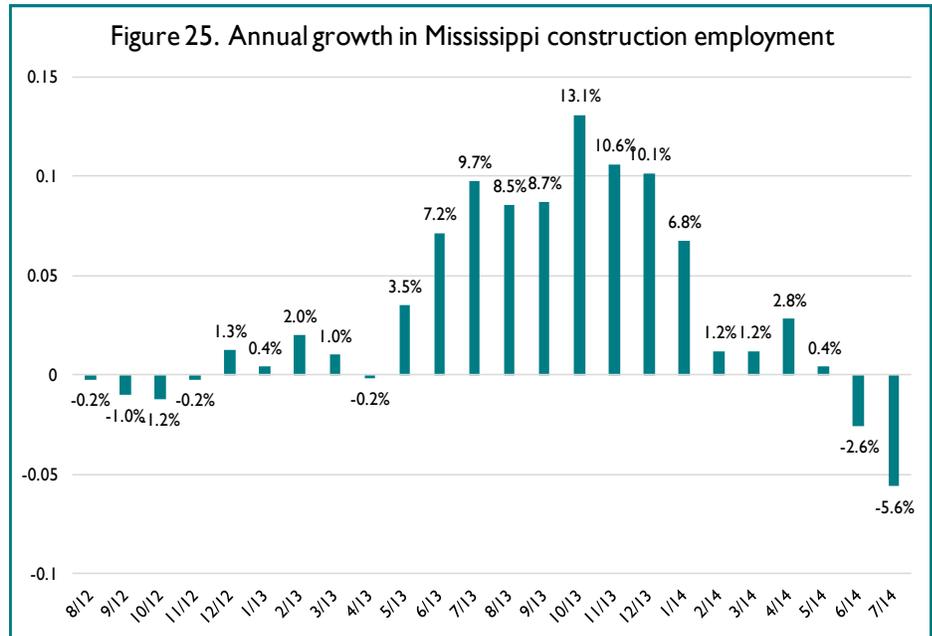
months, as growth rates have ranged from 0.5 to 3.4 percent.

Figure 25 indicates the Construction industry has averaged the highest annual rate of employment growth in Mississippi over the last two years: 3.2 percent. In fact, rates in the last quarter of 2013 exceeded 10 percent. However, this industry has experienced several months of negative annual rates, including the most recent month when the rate was -5.6 percent, the second consecutive month with a negative annual rate.

Another industry exhibiting considerable growth in recent months has been Manufacturing, as seen in Figure 26. Over the last two years the average annual employment growth rate in Manufacturing has equaled 1.0 percent, and in the last six months the rate has averaged 3.0 percent. However, the entire period examined includes a number of months during which rates were negative, which in fact was the majority of 2013.

Other industries have struggled to maintain positive growth rates in recent months. Figure 27 indicates that over the last two years, annual employment growth rates in the financial activities sector have been positive for only three months. In fact, the average annual employment growth rate per month in financial activities over the last two years has been -0.4 percent.

Government at all levels has been the largest employer in Mississippi for a number of years, and it, too, shed a considerable number of jobs as a result of the Great Recession. Budgets shrank as tax collections from multiple sources declined. As a result, the average annual employment growth rate for all of government in Mississippi over the last two years has been flat: 0.0 per-



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

cent. If not for the growth that has occurred in the last six months, this rate would also be negative. However, as Figure 28 indicates, governments are beginning to fill vacant positions as their financial situations have begun to show improvement. The 1.1 percent annual employment

## MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

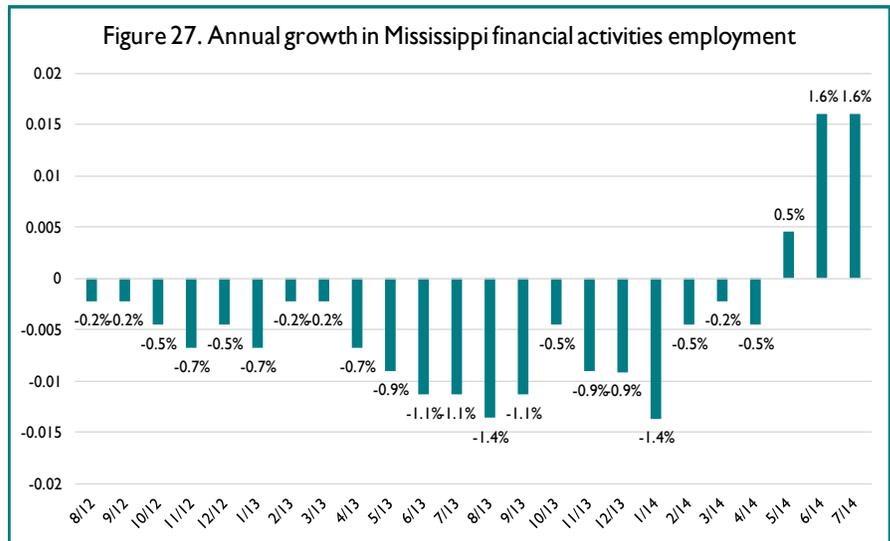
## ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN MISSISSIPPI (CONTINUED)

growth rate in June was the largest increase in employment in government in Mississippi in over two years.

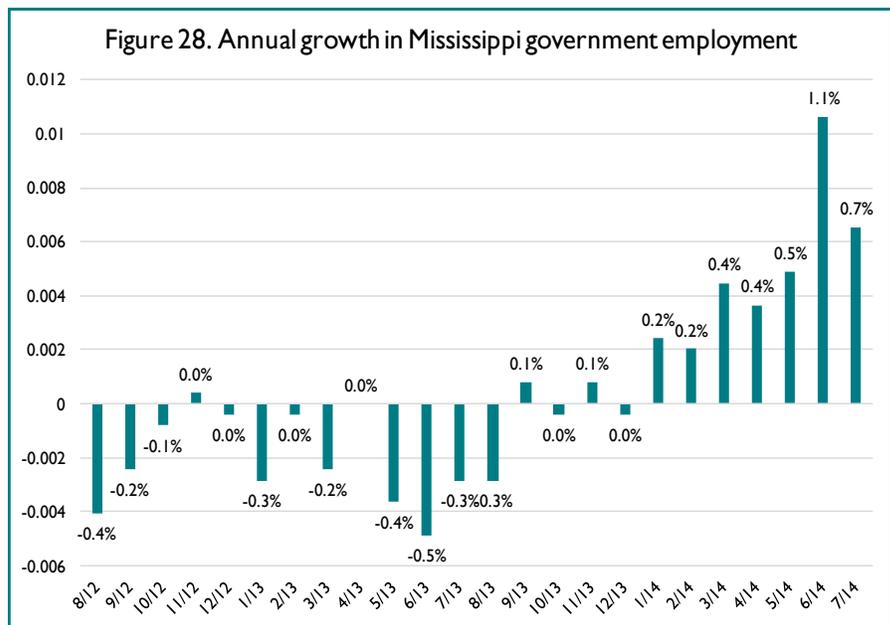
What does the information about annual rates of employment provide about the labor market in Mississippi? First, while total nonfarm employment in both the U.S. and Mississippi is growing, both are growing slowly, particularly by historical comparisons. Moreover, employment in Mississippi is growing more slowly than the U.S. as a whole and at a less consistent pace.

Secondly, employment growth in Mississippi has varied greatly across industries over the last two years. The effects of the Great Recession are still apparent in a number of sectors and some sectors are only now beginning to grow again. Still other sectors were experiencing positive annual growth rates, but in recent months these rates have turned negative. Leisure and Hospitality, as seen in Figure 25, is one of a few industries to consistently maintain positive annual growth rates over the last twenty-four months. Accommodation and Food Services is another such industry. Other industries, such as Construction, inherently will maintain uneven rates of growth.

Rates of employment growth across industries may eventually exhibit more uniformity as the effects of the Great Recession finally subside. However, one of the keys to a state economy that is not as severely impacted by cyclical declines in employment is having a variety of economic sectors and not over-relying on one or two industries. For example, historically, much of Mississippi's nonfarm workforce has been employed in relatively low-skill manufacturing jobs. Unfortunately, when a recession occurs, these positions are among the first to be eliminated. To be sure, almost no industry was spared in terms of employment by the Great Recession.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; seasonally-adjusted.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; seasonally-adjusted.

Going forward, however, if more of the state's labor force were to work in industries where employees are more difficult to replace—which would allow them to exert some degree of wage pressure—then Mississippi's economy would likely experience higher, more stable employment growth.