



ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

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A Publication of the University Research Center, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning

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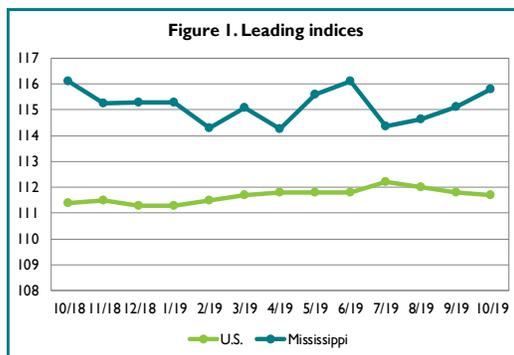
As seen in Figure 1 below the value of the Mississippi Leading Index (MLI) increased 0.6 percent in October. Compared to one year ago the value of the MLI for the month was down 0.3 percent.

The value of the Mississippi Coincident Index (MCI) did not change in October as seen in Figure 2 below. The value for the month was 1.3 percent higher compared to one year ago.

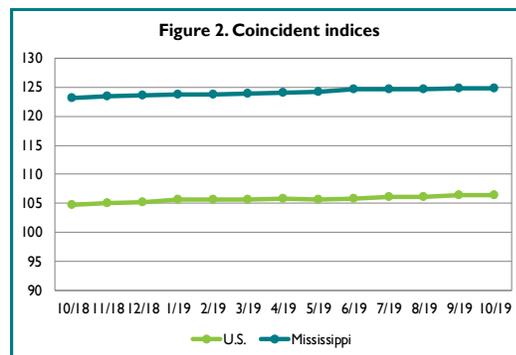
In its second estimate of U.S. real gross domestic product (GDP) in the third quarter of 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reported an increase of 2.1 percent. This estimate represents an improvement of 0.2 percentage point from BEA's initial estimate and resulted primarily from larger inventory investment than first reported. Although less than reported in the first estimate of

third quarter real GDP, the change in business investment remained negative.

The MLI climbed higher for a third consecutive month in October thanks to a relatively strong month for withholdings. National data for expectations and sales along with the fourth consecutive increase in building permits also helped push the MLI higher. Conversely, employment in the state has remained relatively flat since June and initial unemployment claims edged higher for the second consecutive month. Thus, Mississippi's economy continued to hold its own in October as it has in recent months while the U.S. economy has decelerated, particularly notable given the slowdown in the nation's manufacturing sector. Any resilience will likely be tested as 2020 begins and winter sets in, which has held back first quarter U.S. economic performance in recent years.



Sources: University Research Center and The Conference Board



Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia 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 work-week 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.

MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS**MISSISSIPPI LEADING INDEX, OCTOBER 2019**

The value of the **Mississippi Leading Index of Economic Indicators** (MLI) increased 0.6 percent in October as seen in Figure 3, its third consecutive monthly gain. Compared to one year ago the value of the MLI for the month was 0.3 percent lower. Over the last six months the value of the MLI rose 1.3 percent.

For the second consecutive month four of the seven components of the MLI made positive contributions in October. Mississippi income tax withholdings made the largest contribution, closely followed by the University of Michigan Index of Consumer Expectations. Each component is discussed below in order of largest to smallest contribution.

The value of **Mississippi income tax withholdings** (three-month moving average) increased 1.5 percent in October as seen in Figure 4, the largest monthly increase since May. The value of withholdings was up 2.3 percent for the month compared to one year ago, the largest year-over-year increase since August 2018 and only the fifth such increase in 2019. Over the last six months the value of income tax withholdings in Mississippi increased 1.0 percent.

The value of the **University of Michigan Index of Consumer Expectations** (three-month moving average) increased in October for the first time since June. As seen in Figure 5 the value rose 3.0 percent for the month, while compared to one year earlier the value of the Index was down 4.9 percent. Short-term (one-year) inflation expectations were unchanged in the most recent survey while long-term (five-year) inflation expectations increased.

As seen in Figure 6 the value of **U.S. retail sales** rose 0.3 percent in October, a small rebound from the previous month's decline. Sales were 3.1 percent higher in October compared to one year earlier. Gasoline stations experienced the largest increase in sales among all segments, closely followed by nonstore retailers. The largest decrease in sales among all categories occurred in clothing and accessories and the decline in furniture and home furnishings was nearly as large. Sales excluding automobiles and gasoline were up only 0.1 percent in October.

As Figure 7 indicates the value of **Mississippi residential building permits** (three-month moving average) increased 0.4 percent in October, its fourth consecutive monthly increase. The value for the month was up 10.7 percent compared to one year earlier, the largest year-

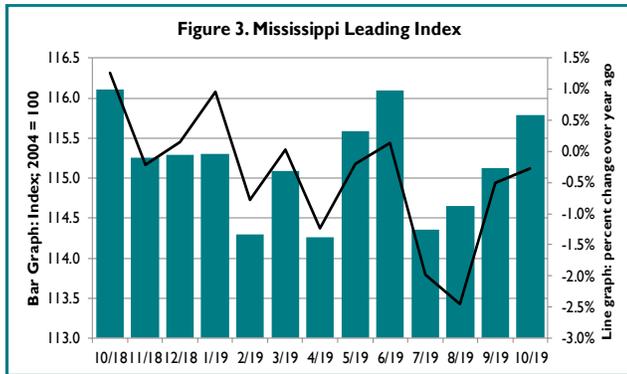
over-year increase since April 2017. Conversely, the number of units in the state fell 0.4 percent in October, its first decrease since June. The number of units in the state for the month compared to one year ago was up 6.2 percent. The number of privately-owned housing units authorized by building permits in the U.S. was up 5.0 percent in October from the revised September rate. The number of units in the U.S. in October was 14.1 percent higher compared to one year ago.

The value of the **Mississippi Manufacturing Employment Intensity Index** was little changed in October as seen in Figure 8, down almost 0.1 percent. For only the fourth time in 2019 the value compared to one year ago was up in October, an increase of 1.3 percent. A relatively small gain in manufacturing employment was slightly offset by a relatively small decline in the average weekly hours of production employees in the state in October.

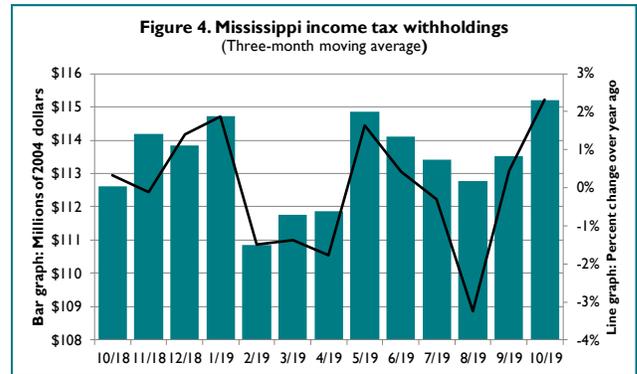
In November the value of the **ISM Index of U.S. Manufacturing Activity** fell 0.4 percent, its seventh decline in the last eight months. As seen in Figure 9 the value of the Index in November was 18.2 percent lower compared to one year ago. The largest decrease among all components was in the Inventories component; the New Orders and Employment components also declined. The Production and Supplier Deliveries components both rose and the latter was the only component of the Index in expansion territory in November. The value of the prices paid index increased for the month.

The number of seasonally-adjusted **initial unemployment claims** in Mississippi rose 2.3 percent in October as seen in Figure 10. The value for the month was 6.8 percent higher compared to one year ago. The value of seasonally-adjusted continued unemployment claims in Mississippi, on the other hand, gave back some of the previous month's gain as the number fell 10.2 percent in October as seen in Figure 16 on page 6, the largest monthly decrease since August 2018. The number of continued unemployment claims in Mississippi in October was 5.9 percent higher compared to one year ago. As seen in Figure 17 on page 6 the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate in Mississippi reached 5.5 percent in October, up 0.1 percentage point from September. The rate increased for the fourth consecutive month and reached its highest level since December 2016. In October the state's unemployment rate was up 0.8 percentage point compared to one year ago.

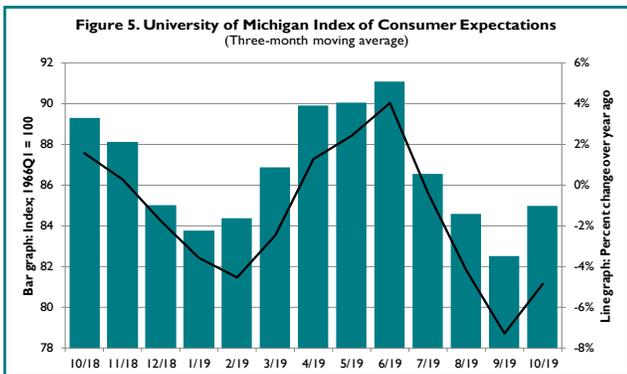
MISSISSIPPI LEADING INDEX AND COMPONENTS, IN FIGURES



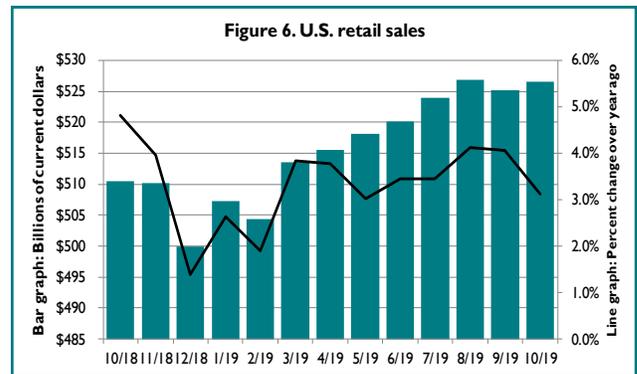
Source: University Research Center



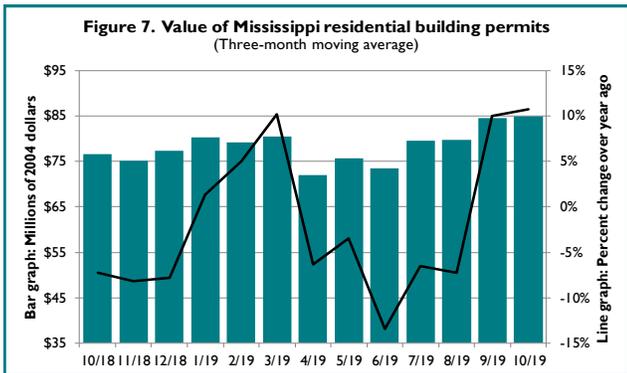
Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue; seasonally adjusted



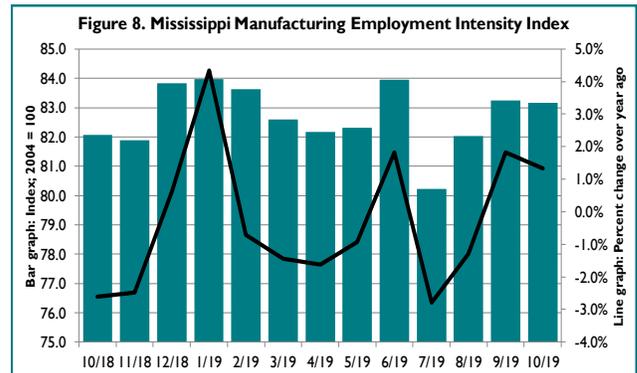
Source: Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers



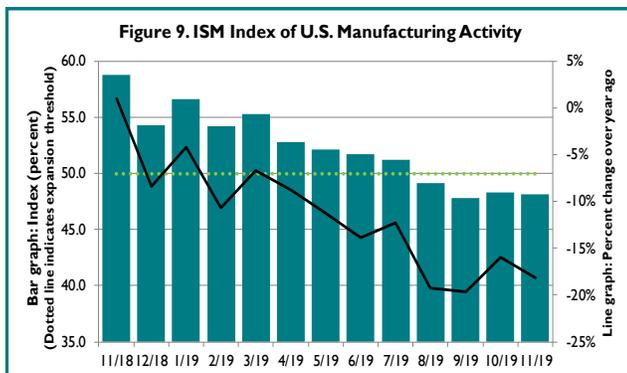
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census



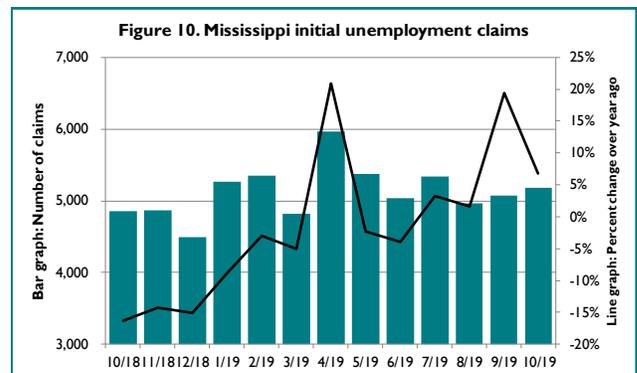
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; seasonally adjusted



Source: URC using data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Source: Institute for Supply Management



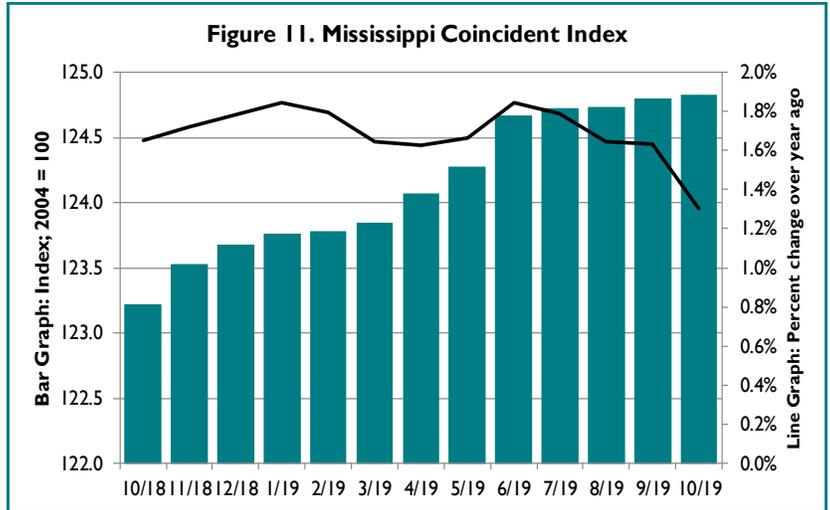
Source: U.S. Department of Labor; seasonally adjusted

MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

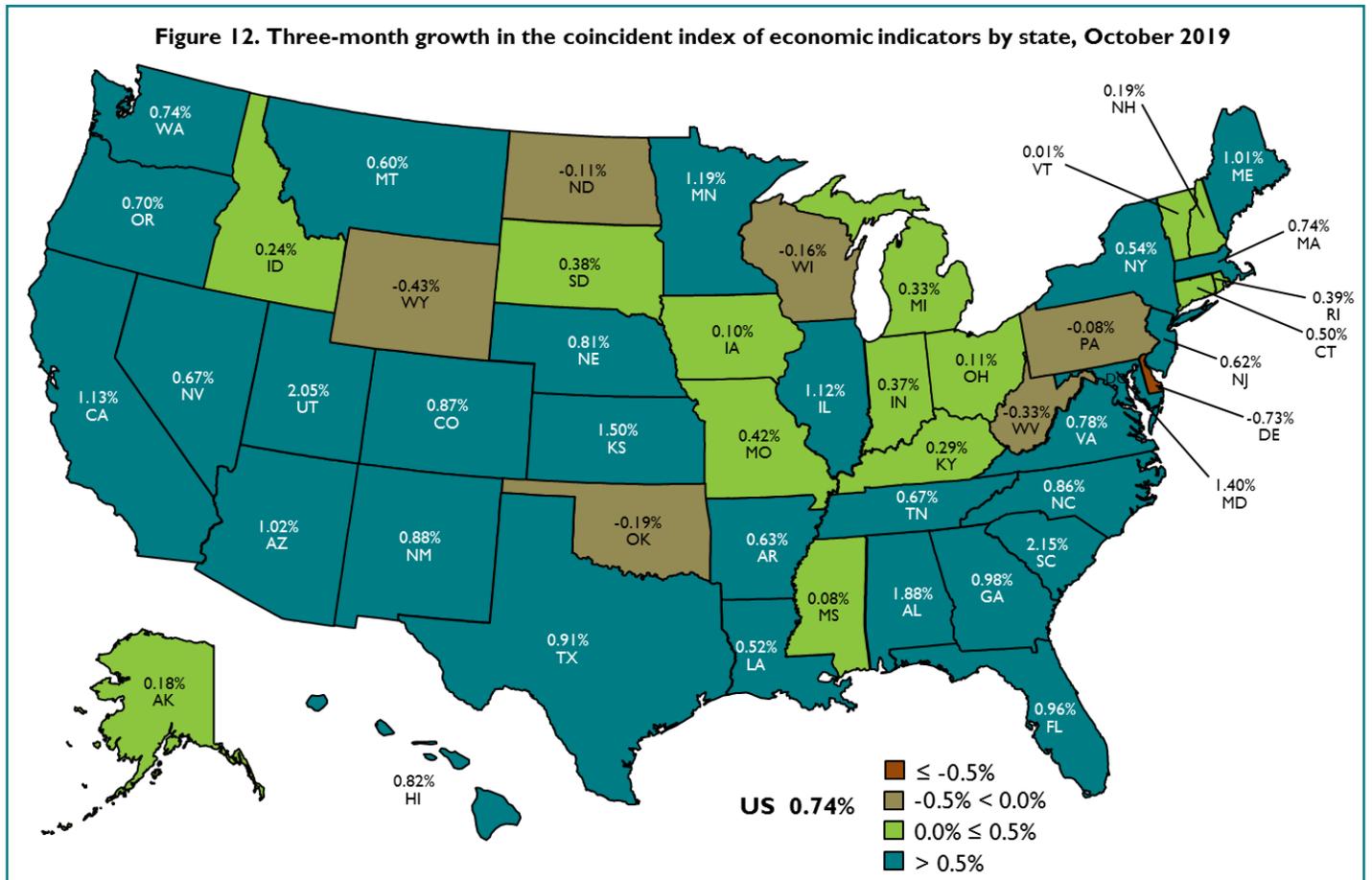
MISSISSIPPI COINCIDENT INDEX, OCTOBER 2019

In October the value of the **Mississippi Coincident Index of Economic Indicators (MCI)** did not change according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia as seen in Figure 11. The value of the MCI for the month was 1.3 percent higher compared to one year ago.

The values of the coincident indices were higher in forty-three states in October compared to three months prior as seen in Figure 12 below. In twenty-nine states the values of the coincident indices increased by more than 0.5 percent in October compared to July. Mississippi was one of fourteen states where the values of the coincident indices increased by less than 0.5 percent in October compared to three months prior. In six states the value of the coincident index decreased between 0.0 and 0.5 percent for the month, while Delaware was the only state where the value of the coincident index decreased more than 0.5 percent in October compared to July.



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

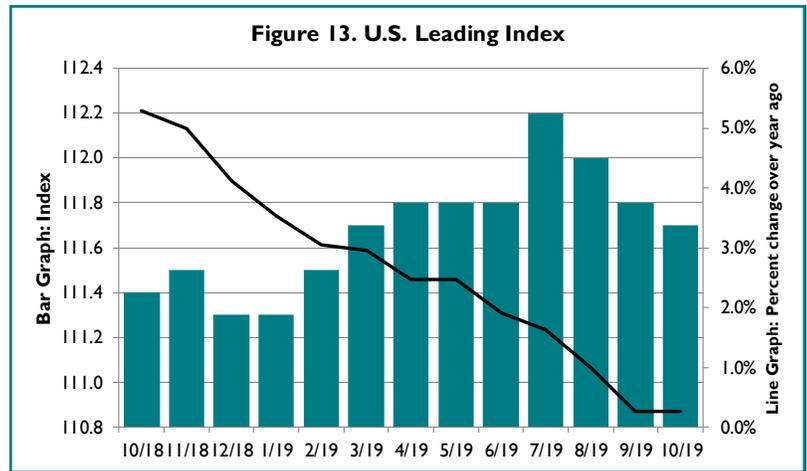
NATIONAL TRENDS

In October the value of the U.S. Leading Economic Index (LEI) declined for the third consecutive month. According to The Conference Board the value fell 0.1 percent for the month; compared to one year ago the value of the LEI was 0.3 percent higher in October as seen in Figure 13. Half of the ten components of the LEI contributed negatively and half contributed positively in October. The largest negative contribution came from the ISM New Orders Index, while the largest positive contribution came from building permits. Over the last six months the value of the LEI decreased 0.1 percent.

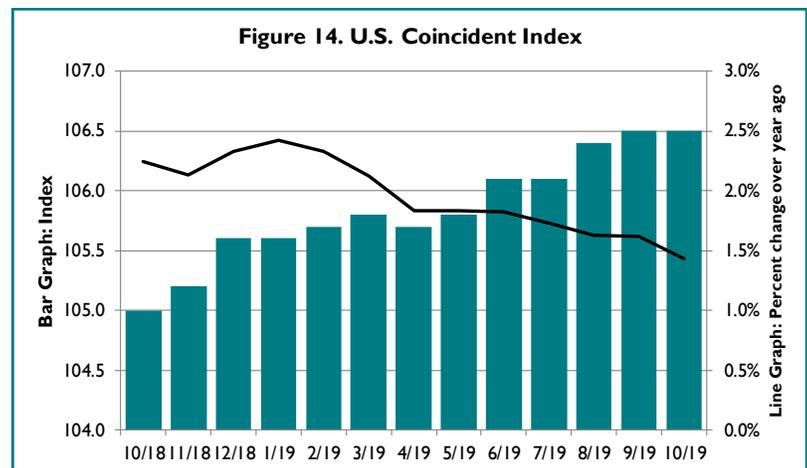
As seen in Figure 14 the value of the U.S. Coincident Economic Index (CEI) was unchanged in October according to The Conference Board. The September value was revised up to an increase of 0.1 percent. Compared to one year ago the value of the CEI was up 1.4 percent in October. Three of the four components of the CEI increased for the month, but these gains were offset by the negative contribution of industrial production. Over the last six months the value of the CEI rose 0.8 percent.

The value of the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) Small Business Optimism Index rose 0.6 percent in October as seen in Figure 15, its first increase since July. Compared to one year earlier the value of the Index remained 4.7 percent lower for the month. Most components of the Index increased slightly in October; only two components, “earnings trends” and “current job openings,” declined. Both the “plans to raise prices” measure and the “plans to raise compensation” rose to their highest levels since July and May, respectively.

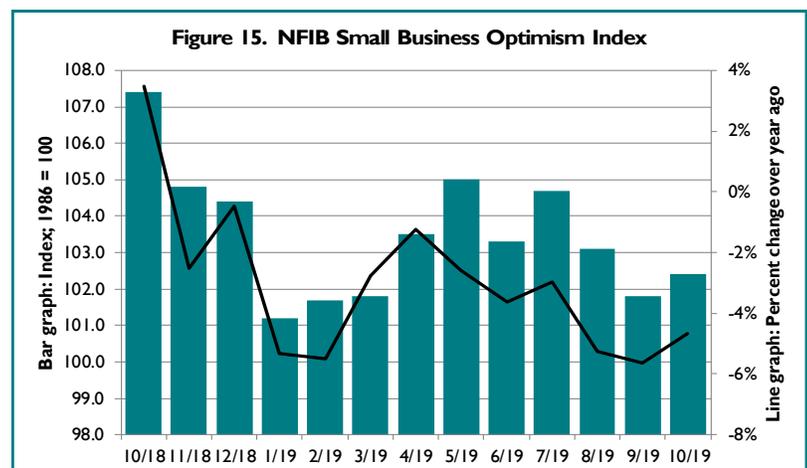
Most Fed observers doubt the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) will reduce the federal funds rate target by another 0.25 basis points at its December meeting, which would mark the fourth such cut of 2019. Fed officials previously indicated members were not inclined to reduce the federal funds rate target further, and the recent upward revision to third quarter U.S. real GDP by the Bureau of Economic Analysis from 1.9 percent to 2.1 percent likely further reduces the chances of an additional rate cut.



Source: The Conference Board



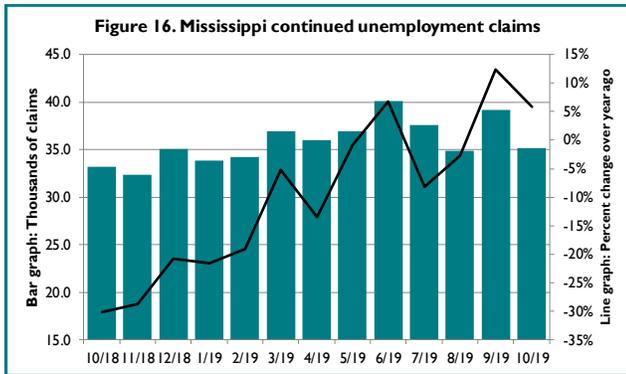
Source: The Conference Board



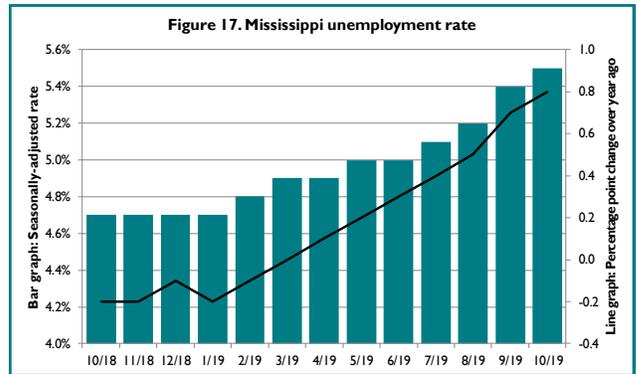
Source: National Federation of Independent Businesses

MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

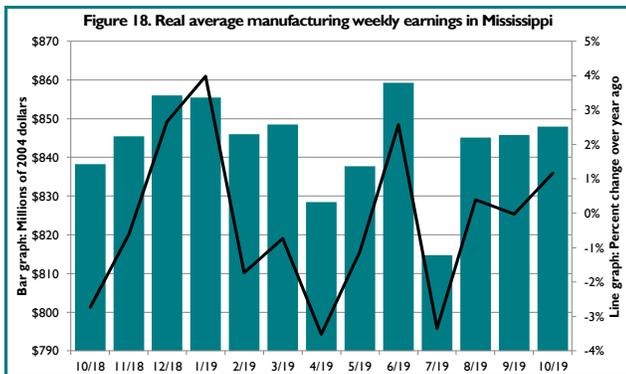
MISCELLANEOUS ECONOMIC INDICATORS, IN FIGURES



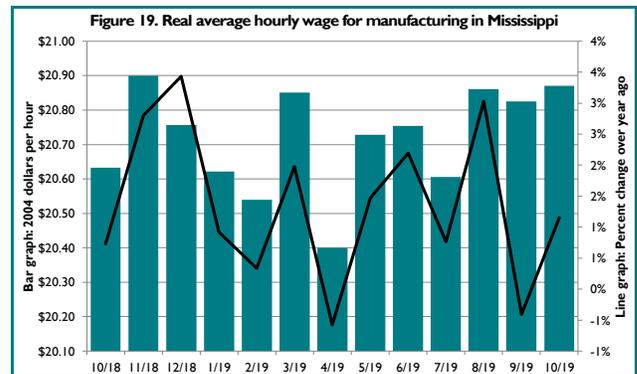
Source: U.S. Department of Labor; seasonally adjusted



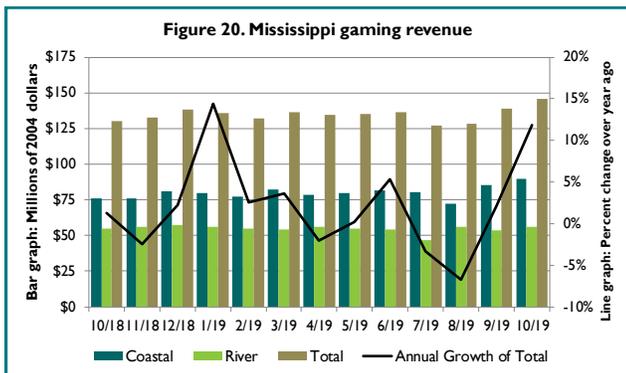
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; seasonally adjusted



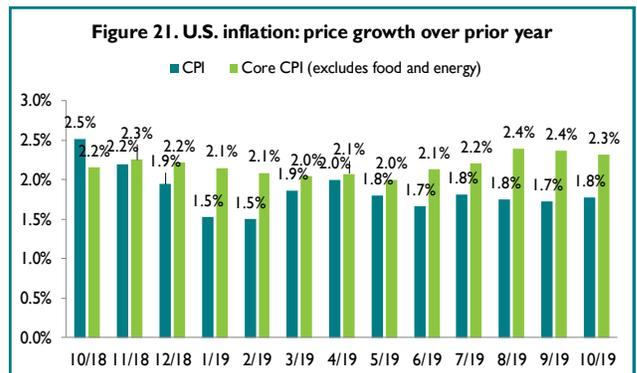
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; non-seasonally adjusted



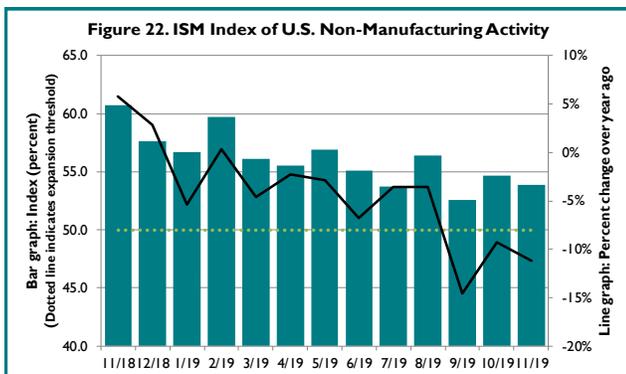
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; seasonally adjusted



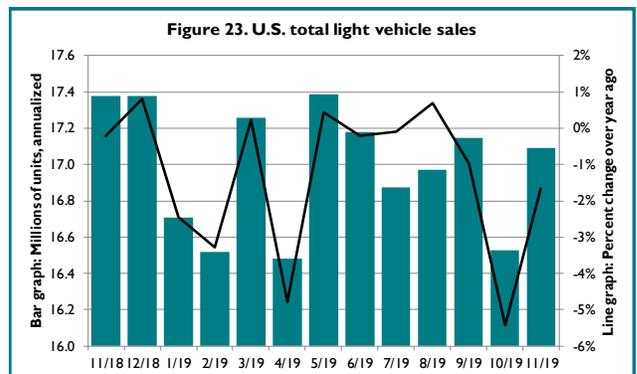
Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue; seasonally adjusted



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Source: Institute for Supply Management



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

TABLE I. SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS

| Indicator | October | September | October | Percent change from | | |
|--|---------|-----------|---------|---------------------|--------------|---|
| | 2019 | 2019 | 2018 | September 2019 | October 2018 | |
| U.S. Leading Economic Index 2004 = 100. Source: The Conference Board | 111.7 | 111.8 | 111.4 | ▼0.1% | ▲0.3% | Economic Indices |
| U.S. Coincident Economic Index 2004 = 100. Source: The Conference Board | 106.5 | 106.5 | 105.0 | ◀0.0% | ▲1.4% | |
| Mississippi Leading Index 2004 = 100. Source: University Research Center | 115.8 | 115.1 | 116.1 | ▲0.6% | ▼0.3% | |
| Mississippi Coincident Index 2004 = 100. Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia | 124.8 | 124.8 | 123.2 | ◀0.0% | ▲1.3% | |
| Mississippi initial unemployment claims Seasonally adjusted. Source: U.S. Department of Labor | 5,186 | 5,070 | 4,854 | ▲2.3% | ▲6.8% | Components of the Mississippi Leading Index |
| Value of Mississippi residential building permits Three-month moving average; seasonally adjusted; millions of 2004 dollars. Source: Bureau of the Census | 84.9 | 84.6 | 76.7 | ▲0.4% | ▲10.7% | |
| Mississippi income tax withholdings Three-month moving average; seasonally adjusted; millions of 2004 dollars. Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue | 115.2 | 113.5 | 112.6 | ▲1.5% | ▲2.3% | |
| Mississippi Manufacturing Employment Intensity Index 2004 = 100. Source: URC using data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics | 83.1 | 83.2 | 82.1 | ▼0.1% | ▲1.3% | |
| University of Michigan Index of Consumer Expectations Three-month moving average; index 1966Q1 = 100. Source: Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers | 85.0 | 82.5 | 89.3 | ▲3.0% | ▼4.9% | |
| ISM Index of U.S. Manufacturing Activity Advanced one month. Source: Institute for Supply Management | 48.1 | 48.3 | 58.8 | ▼0.4% | ▼18.2% | |
| U.S. retail sales Current dollars, in billions. Source: Bureau of the Census | 526.5 | 525.2 | 510.5 | ▲0.3% | ▲3.1% | |
| U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI) | 136.2 | 135.7 | 133.8 | ▲0.4% | ▲1.8% | |
| U.S. Core CPI (excludes food and energy) 2004 = 100. Source: URC using data from Bureau of Labor Statistics | 134.8 | 134.6 | 131.7 | ▲0.2% | ▲2.3% | |
| Mississippi unemployment rate Percentage point change. Seasonally-adjusted. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics | 5.5% | 5.4% | 4.7% | ▲0.1 | ▲0.8 | |
| Mississippi continued unemployment claims Seasonally adjusted. Source: U.S. Department of Labor | 35,158 | 39,161 | 33,212 | ▼10.2% | ▲5.9% | |
| ISM Index of U.S. Non-Manufacturing Activity Advanced one month. Source: Institute for Supply Management | 53.9 | 54.7 | 60.7 | ▼1.5% | ▼11.2% | Miscellaneous Indicators |
| U.S. mortgage rates Percentage point change. Seasonally adjusted; 30-year conventional. Source: Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation | 3.69% | 3.72% | 4.85% | ▼0.03 | ▼1.15 | |
| Mississippi average hourly wage for manufacturing Seasonally adjusted; 2004 dollars. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics | 20.87 | 20.82 | 20.07 | ▲0.2% | ▲4.0% | |
| Mississippi average weekly earnings for manufacturing Seasonally adjusted; 2004 dollars. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics | 847.94 | 845.74 | 838.23 | ▲0.3% | ▲1.2% | |
| NFIB Small Business Optimism Index 1986 = 100. Source: National Federation of Independent Businesses | 102.4 | 101.8 | 107.4 | ▲0.6% | ▼4.7% | |
| U.S. total light vehicle sales Millions of units seasonally adjusted at annual rates. Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis | 17.09 | 16.53 | 17.38 | ▲3.4% | ▼1.7% | |
| Gaming revenue | 145.8 | 139.2 | 130.4 | ▲4.8% | ▲11.8% | |
| Coastal counties | 89.9 | 85.7 | 75.8 | ▲5.0% | ▲18.5% | |
| River counties | 55.9 | 53.5 | 54.5 | ▲4.5% | ▲2.5% | |
| Seasonally adjusted; millions of 2004 dollars. Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue | | | | | | |

MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported total nonfarm employment in Mississippi added 300 jobs in October, essentially unchanged. Total employment in Mississippi was up 1.0 percent for the month compared to one year earlier as seen in Table 2.

Statistically significant increases in total nonfarm employment occurred in four states in October according to BLS: Texas, Maryland, Utah, and Nebraska. The largest increase occurred in Texas, which added 30,100 jobs. The largest percentage increase occurred in Nebraska, where employment rose 0.5 percent. The only statistically significant decrease in employment in October occurred in Michigan, which lost 21,800 jobs, a decrease of 0.5 percent. These lost jobs were primarily the result of the United Auto Workers strike against General Motors.

Employment was higher in twenty-seven states in October compared to one year earlier according to BLS. The largest gain occurred in California, which added 308,000 jobs, followed by Texas, which added 297,100 jobs. The largest percentage increase in employment in October compared to one year earlier was the 3.2 percent increase in Utah, followed by the 2.6 percent increase in Florida and the 2.5 percent increase in Arizona.

The largest increase in employment among all industries in Mississippi in October was the 700 jobs added in Manufacturing. The largest percentage gain in employment among all sectors was the 1.5 percent increase in Mining and Logging, an addition of 100 jobs. Professional and Business Services lost 800 jobs in October, the most among all sectors and its third consecutive monthly decline. The largest percentage decrease in employment among all sectors occurred in Financial Activities, which fell 1.3 percent in October.

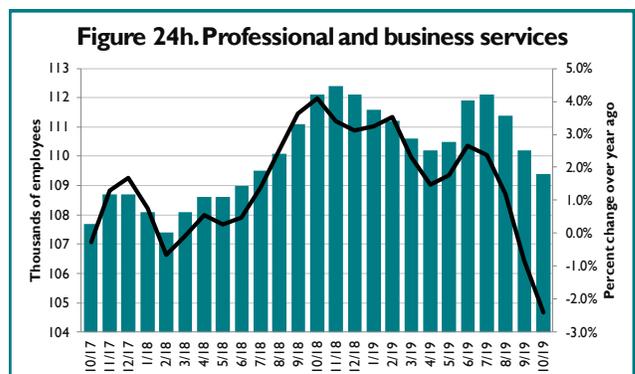
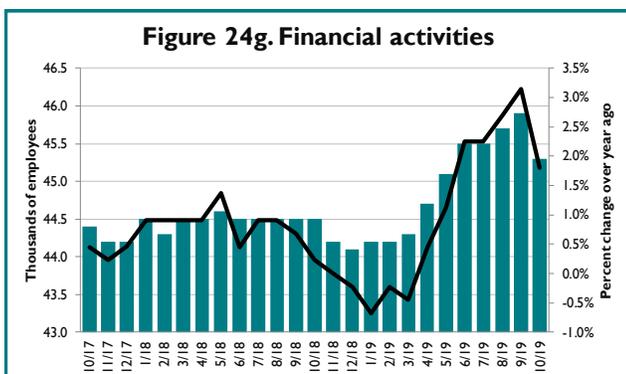
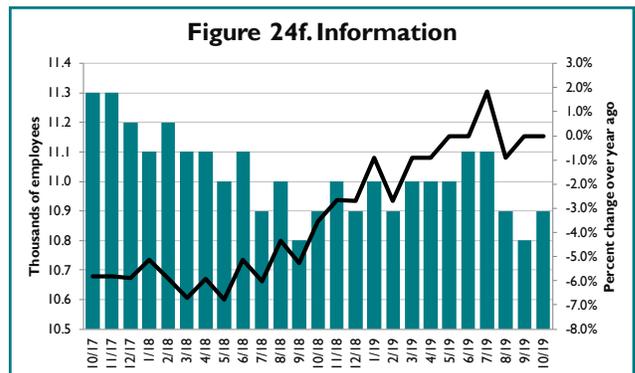
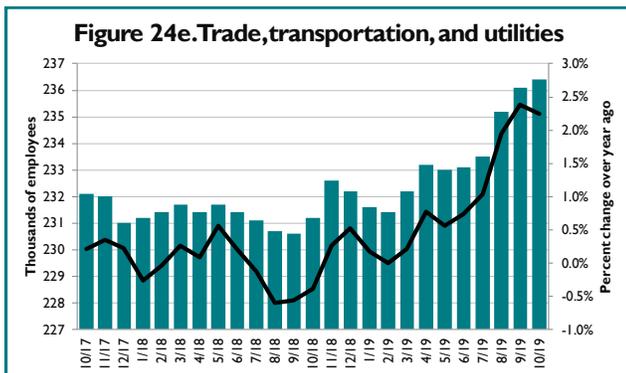
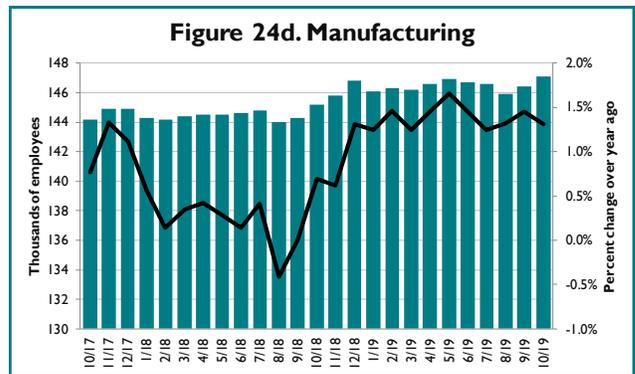
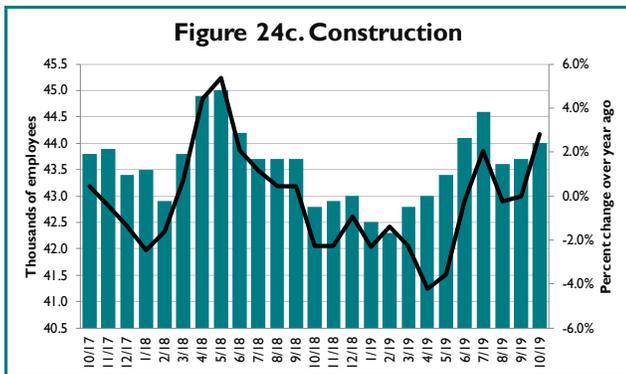
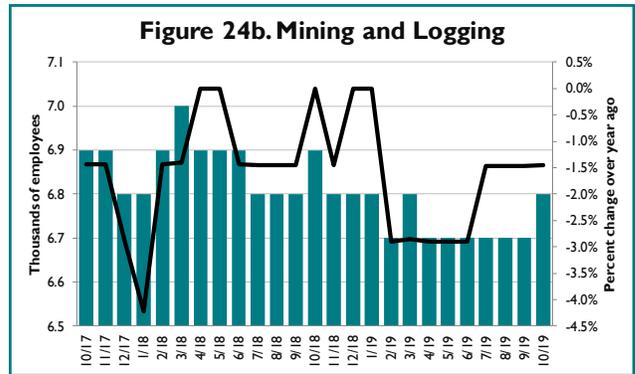
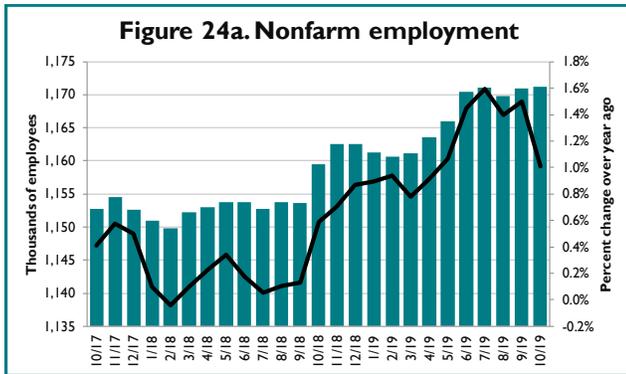
The largest increase in employment among all sectors in the state over the last twelve months occurred in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, which added 5,200 jobs. Arts and Entertainment experienced the largest percentage increase in employment compared to one year ago of 4.1 percent. The largest decrease in employment among all sectors in Mississippi over the last twelve months occurred in Professional and Business Services, which lost 2,700 jobs. The next largest decrease among all sectors occurred in Educational Services, which lost 800 jobs over the past twelve months. As of October the largest percentage decline in employment among all sectors compared to one year ago was in Educational Services, which was down 6.6 percent.

Table 2. Change in Mississippi employment by industry, October 2019

| | Relative share of total ^a | October 2019 | September 2019 | October 2018 | Change from September 2019 Level | Change from September 2019 Percent | Change from October 2018 Level | Change from October 2018 Percent |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Total Nonfarm | 100.0% | 1,171,200 | 1,170,900 | 1,159,500 | ▲300 | ▲0.0% | ▲11,700 | ▲1.0% |
| Mining and Logging | 0.6% | 6,800 | 6,700 | 6,900 | ▲100 | ▲1.5% | ▼100 | ▼1.4% |
| Construction | 3.7% | 44,000 | 43,700 | 42,800 | ▲300 | ▲0.7% | ▲1,200 | ▲2.8% |
| Manufacturing | 12.6% | 147,100 | 146,400 | 145,200 | ▲700 | ▲0.5% | ▲1,900 | ▲1.3% |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | 20.0% | 236,400 | 236,100 | 231,200 | ▲300 | ▲0.1% | ▲5,200 | ▲2.2% |
| Retail Trade | 11.9% | 140,200 | 139,900 | 137,900 | ▲300 | ▲0.2% | ▲2,300 | ▲1.7% |
| Information | 0.9% | 10,900 | 10,800 | 10,900 | ▲100 | ▲0.9% | ▲0 | ▲0.0% |
| Financial Activities | 3.9% | 45,300 | 45,900 | 44,500 | ▼600 | ▼1.3% | ▲800 | ▲1.8% |
| Services | 37.6% | 438,400 | 438,400 | 436,200 | ▲0 | ▲0.0% | ▲2,200 | ▲0.5% |
| Professional & Business Services | 9.5% | 109,400 | 110,200 | 112,100 | ▼800 | ▼0.7% | ▼2,700 | ▼2.4% |
| Educational Services | 1.0% | 11,400 | 11,500 | 12,200 | ▼100 | ▼0.9% | ▼800 | ▼6.6% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 11.5% | 135,300 | 134,800 | 133,700 | ▲500 | ▲0.4% | ▲1,600 | ▲1.2% |
| Arts and Entertainment | 0.8% | 10,100 | 10,200 | 9,700 | ▼100 | ▼1.0% | ▲400 | ▲4.1% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 11.1% | 130,400 | 130,200 | 126,500 | ▲200 | ▲0.2% | ▲3,900 | ▲3.1% |
| Other Services | 3.5% | 41,800 | 41,500 | 42,000 | ▲300 | ▲0.7% | ▼200 | ▼0.5% |
| Government | 20.8% | 242,300 | 242,900 | 241,800 | ▼600 | ▼0.2% | ▲500 | ▲0.2% |

^aRelative shares are for the most recent twelve-month average. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

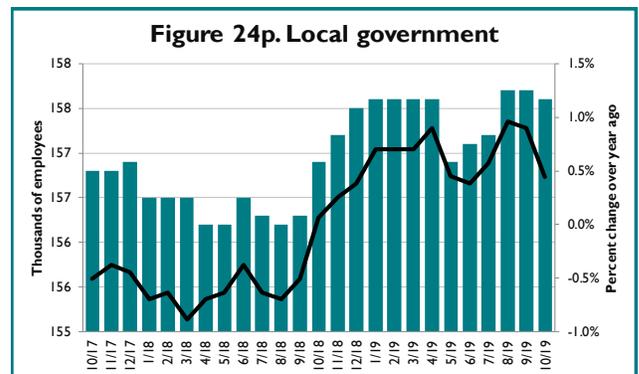
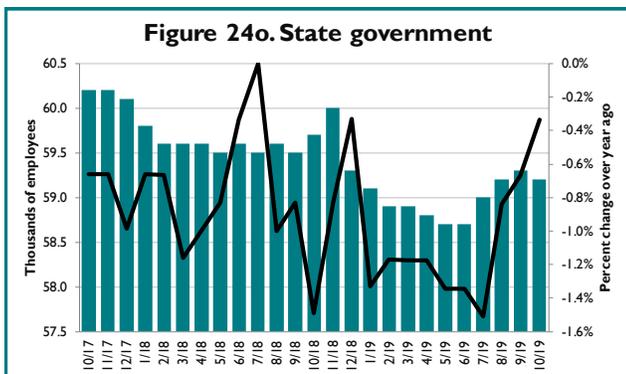
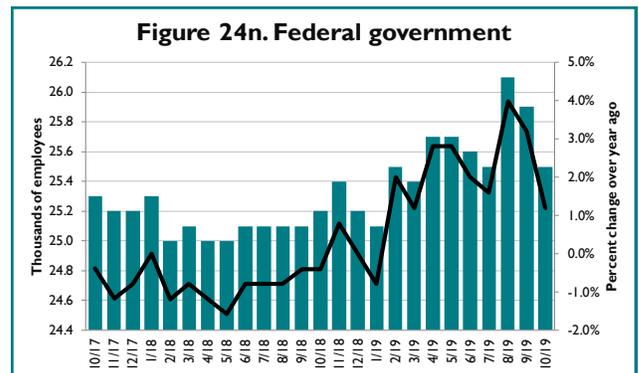
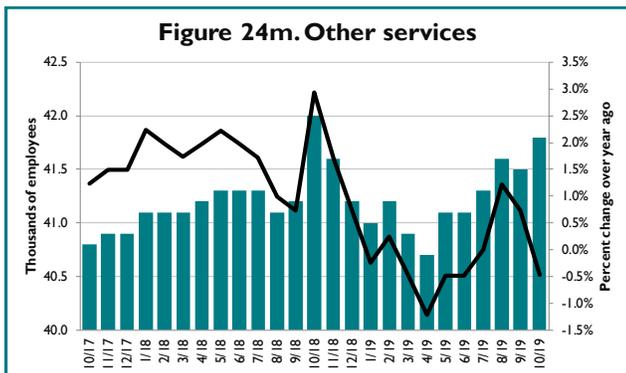
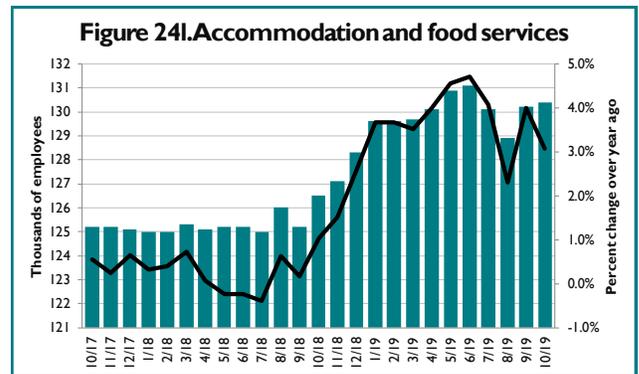
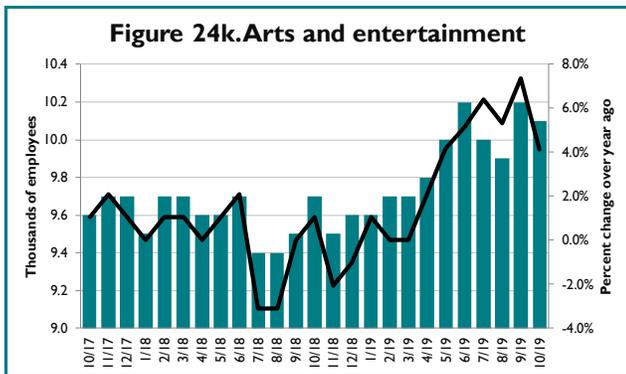
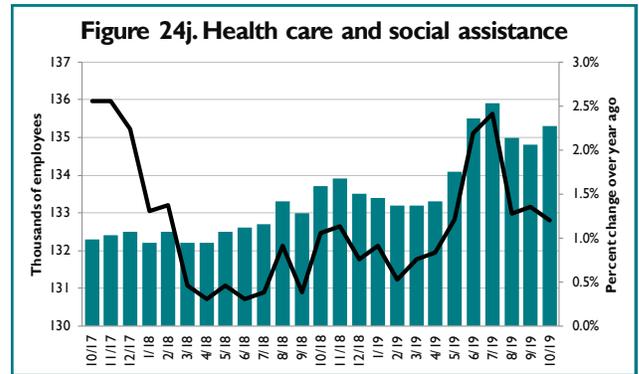
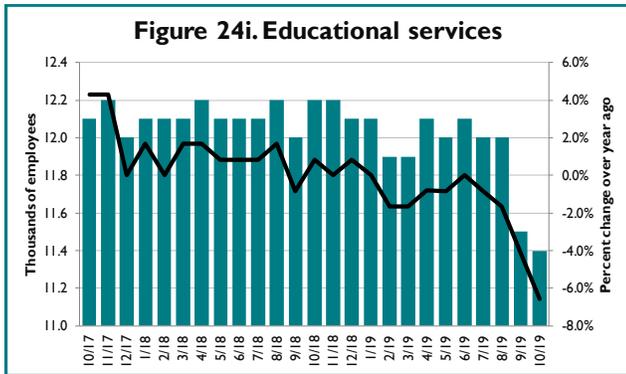
MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT TRENDS BY SECTOR, IN FIGURES



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (all figures); seasonally adjusted

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MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT TRENDS BY SECTOR, IN FIGURES (CONTINUED)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (all figures); seasonally adjusted

HOW MISSISSIPPI COMPARES TO SURROUNDING STATES

Many times when new economic data for states are released, Mississippi is compared to surrounding states. Rarely, however, are such data placed in context when such comparisons are made. This article attempts to present some of that context by providing data on how Mississippi differs or is similar to the bordering states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee.

Perhaps the most significant dimension to contrast Mississippi with surrounding states is demographics. Mississippi's population is smaller than each of the four states that border it. According to the U.S. Census, Tennessee's population of almost 6.8 million in 2018 was the largest among these states. Alabama was the next largest with a population of around 4.9 million in 2018 while the population of Louisiana was nearly as large at about 4.7 million. The population of Arkansas at just over 3.0 million in 2018 was only slightly more than that of Mississippi, which was slightly under 3.0 million. Notably, Mississippi's population surpassed Arkansas' population as recently as 2015; since 2016 the Arkansas population has annually topped Mississippi's population by increasingly larger margins. The reason is while the populations of surrounding states have grown at varying rates since 2010, Mississippi's population has remained relatively flat.

Racial characteristics across the populations of Mississippi and surrounding states are another notable difference. African-Americans were 38 percent of the population in Mississippi in 2018 according to the Census, the most among all U.S. states. The African-American

Table 3. Selected Demographic Variables

| | Alabama | Arkansas | Louisiana | Mississippi | Tennessee |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Population (2018) | 4.9 million | 3.0 million | 4.7 million | 3.0 million | 6.8 million |
| Percent White | 69.4 | 79.3 | 63.2 | 59.4 | 78.7 |
| Percent African-American | 27.2 | 16.2 | 33.1 | 38.0 | 17.8 |
| Median age (years) | 39.2 | 38.3 | 37.2 | 37.7 | 38.8 |
| Percent ages 15-44 years | 38.4 | 38.6 | 39.8 | 39.2 | 39.0 |
| Percent at least high school (2017) | 85.3 | 85.6 | 84.3 | 83.4 | 86.5 |
| Percent at least bachelor's degree (2017) | 24.5 | 22.0 | 23.4 | 21.3 | 26.1 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

population in Louisiana was the next highest among surrounding states at 33 percent, followed by Alabama at 27 percent. The shares of the African-American populations in Tennessee and Arkansas were less than half that in Mississippi at 18 percent and 16 percent, respectively. Louisiana had the largest number of African-American residents among Mississippi and surrounding states in 2018 at almost 1.6 million.

In terms of age the populations of Mississippi and surrounding states are relatively similar. In 2018 the median age in Mississippi was 37.7 years, in between the range of the lowest median age of 37.2 years in Louisiana and the highest median age of 39.2 years in Alabama. The share of the population that ranged from ages 15 to 44 years in 2018 was also very similar across these states. The smallest share of the population ages 15 to 44 years was the 38.4 percent in Alabama while the largest share was the 39.8 percent in Louisiana; Mississippi had the next largest share at 39.2 percent. Very little difference in the share of population by sex exists among these states, as in 2018 all five states had male populations of around 48 to 49 percent.

Educational attainment is an important comparison to make across Mississippi and the surrounding states. As of 2017 the Census reported 83.4 percent of Mississippi's population were at least high school graduates, lower than the rates among surrounding states. The lowest rate among border states was the 84.3 percent rate in Louisiana. The next highest rate was in Alabama at 85.3 percent, closely followed by Arkansas at 85.6 percent. The highest rate of high school educational attainment in 2017 was the 86.5 percent rate in Tennessee—over 3 percentage point higher than the rate in Mississippi and over 2 percentage point higher than the rate in Louisiana. A larger difference exists between the per-

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HOW MISSISSIPPI COMPARES TO SURROUNDING STATES, CONTINUED

centage of residents in Mississippi who have earned at least a bachelor's degree and that in surrounding states. In 2017 this share in Mississippi was 21.3 percent; the next smallest share was in Arkansas at 22.0 percent. Louisiana was next with a rate of 23.4 percent, followed by Alabama at a rate of 24.5 percent. Once again the highest rate of educational attainment among Mississippi and surrounding states was in Tennessee at 26.1 percent, almost 5 percentage point higher than in Mississippi and over 4 percentage point higher than in Alabama. Notably, rates for all five states were below the U.S. rates in 2017. The percentage of the U.S. population with at least a high school education was 87.3 percent while the percentage with at least a bachelor's degree was 30.9 percent. All of the demographic variables discussed above for the five states are summarized in Table 3.

Employment structure is another way to compare states. Table 4 below lists the percentage of total employment by sector in 2018 for Mississippi and surrounding states. One noticeable finding is Mississippi has a larger percentage of total employment in the Government sector (federal, state, and local combined) than the border states. This share is 2 percentage point higher than in Alabama and almost 7 percentage point higher than in Tennessee. Sparsely populated states and states where the private sector is less dominant tend to have higher shares of employment in Government;

Table 4. Share of Labor Force by Sector, 2018

| | Alabama | Arkansas | Louisiana | Mississippi | Tennessee |
|-----------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Mining and Logging | 0.5% | 0.5% | 1.8% | 0.6% | 0.1% |
| Construction | 4.4% | 4.0% | 7.6% | 3.8% | 4.1% |
| Manufacturing | 13.1% | 12.7% | 6.8% | 12.5% | 11.5% |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | 18.6% | 19.9% | 19.2% | 20.0% | 20.5% |
| Information | 1.0% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 1.0% | 1.5% |
| Financial Activities | 4.7% | 4.8% | 4.6% | 3.8% | 5.3% |
| Professional & Business Services | 11.9% | 11.6% | 10.7% | 9.5% | 13.6% |
| Educational Services | 1.5% | 1.2% | 2.4% | 1.1% | 2.0% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 10.5% | 14.0% | 13.6% | 11.5% | 12.3% |
| Arts and Entertainment | 1.0% | 0.9% | 1.5% | 0.8% | 1.3% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 9.1% | 8.5% | 10.4% | 10.9% | 9.8% |
| Other Services | 4.7% | 4.2% | 3.7% | 3.6% | 3.9% |
| Government | 18.9% | 16.8% | 16.5% | 20.9% | 14.2% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

for example, Alaska and Wyoming have the highest and second-highest percentage of employment in Government and also have the fewest and second-fewest number of people per square mile. Government had the largest share of total employment among all sectors in Mississippi in 2018, which was also the case in Alabama, as the state had a slightly larger share in Government than in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities. Among Mississippi and surrounding states only Tennessee had a smaller share of total employment in Government compared to the U.S. as a whole. Mississippi has somewhat smaller shares of employment in some service sectors than in bordering states, including Financial Activities and Professional and Business Services. Notably, Mississippi has a larger share of employment in Accommodation and Food Services than in surrounding states. In most other respects the allocation of employment in Mississippi is similar to the border states with the exception of Louisiana. Although less than 2.0 percent of total employment in the state was in the Mining and Logging sector, this level was more than three times the share in the other four states and the U.S. The share of employment in Construction was higher than the other states and twice that in Mississippi. The share of employment in the Manufacturing sector was well below the shares in the other states and was the only one of the five states with a smaller share of employment in Manufacturing than the U.S.

Other types of data could be used to compare Mississippi with surrounding states in addition to the demographic and employment data presented in this article. However, this information should provide context when different types of economic data are released for all states by the Bureau of Economic Analysis and other agencies and used to compare and contrast Mississippi's economy to those of surrounding states.