

From: SC Gov News <GovNews@gov.sc.gov>  
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**In Case You Missed It:**

## **South Carolina Jobless Rate Improving Rapidly**

From [The State](#)

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*SC Jobless Rate Improving Rapidly*  
*Jeff Wilkinson*  
*March 28, 2014*

“At the height of the Great Recession, LCI-Lineberger Construction of Lancaster had to lay off half of its roughly 50 employees. With few new road and curbing projects, its graders and pavers were sitting idle.

“Today, however, as the economy slowly improves, business at the nearly 20-year-old company is picking up as corporate executives, business owners and government officials feel more comfortable upgrading infrastructure and launching new projects. So LCI’s owner, Kim Lineberger, is building up her staff to meet the demand.

“‘We could hire 10 people today,’ she said. ‘Everybody was in survival mode (five years ago in the depths of the recession), but now confidence is growing. What I see is consistent increases (in contracts). It’s slow, but it’s growing.’

“As small firms like Lineberger’s start to rebound and large manufacturers make expansion announcements, South Carolina’s unemployment rate plummeted to 5.7 percent in February, its lowest level in six years and a full percentage point below the national rate, according to the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce.

“The drop from 6.4 percent in January is the largest month-over-month decrease since the government began keeping data nearly four decades ago. ...

“Still, those in South Carolina who are looking for work seem to be finding it, with the number of people working in the state rising by 8,434 people in February to a historic high of 2.04 million.

“‘It’s full speed ahead for South Carolina,’ said University of South Carolina economist Joseph Von Nessen. ‘It’s great news for the entire state. We’re doing very well.’

“The news comes the same day BMW announced a \$1 billion expansion of its luxury car manufacturing plant in the Upstate – a move that is expected to bring 800 more jobs to the state. ...

“‘(The recovery) is broad-based, but manufacturing continues to be a high generator,’ Von Nessen said, noting the BMW announcement and the planned expansion of the Boeing plant in North Charleston, which is

tripling the size of its campus and adding a second assembly line. 'Not only is this something we've seen over the past several years. But manufacturing as leading industry will continue going forward.'

"Gov. Nikki Haley has made job creation the No. 1 priority of her administration, led by big manufacturing plant announcements like BMW, Boeing, Continental Tire and Michelin. ...

"Von Nessen noted that South Carolina has rated in the top 10 states in the nation in job growth over the past year. 'We've been a leader.'

"February was the eighth month in a row the S.C. jobless rate declined and the third consecutive month that the Palmetto State's rate was below the national jobless rate, according to the report.

"South Carolina's unemployment dropped slightly to 6.4 percent in January from 6.6 percent the month before. The last time the rate was at 5.7 percent was April 2008; it climbed sharply, peaking at nearly 12 percent in December 2009. Since then, it has fallen slowly but fairly consistently.

"In February, the unemployment rate dropped in every county in the state. ...

"'South Carolina's economy continues to grow,' said Cheryl Stanton, executive director of the employment department. 'Businesses are confident and have hired more South Carolinians than ever before.' ...

"'This morning we are celebrating our unemployment rate dropping to 5.7 percent and the fact that more of our citizens are working than ever before,' Gov. Nikki Haley said in a press release. 'It's a great day in South Carolina.'"

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