

# MISSISSIPPI'S BUSINESS

VOLUME 82, ISSUE 3 MARCH 2024

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

## ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

As seen in Figure 1 the value of the Mississippi Leading Index (MLI) rose 1.1 percent in January, the second consecutive monthly gain. Compared to one year earlier the value of the MLI was up 2.4 percent.

The value of the Mississippi Coincident Index for January is unavailable until April due to annual revisions by the Philadelphia Federal Reserve.

U.S. real gross domestic product (GDP) increased 3.2 percent at a seasonally-adjusted, annualized rate in the fourth quarter of 2023 according to the second estimate of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. This rate represents a decrease of 0.1 percentage point from the initial estimate. The decrease in the second

estimate resulted from a downward revision to private inventory investment that was partially offset by upward revisions to state and local government spending, consumer spending, residential fixed investment, nonresidential fixed investment, and exports. The change in U.S. real GDP for all of 2023 remained an increase of 2.5 percent.

The MLI rose again in January following another strong month from the University of Michigan Index of Consumer Expectations. However, gains in the components were not as widespread as in December. The Mississippi Manufacturing employment Intensity Index posted a solid gain in January primarily due to an increase in Manufacturing employment. The only other

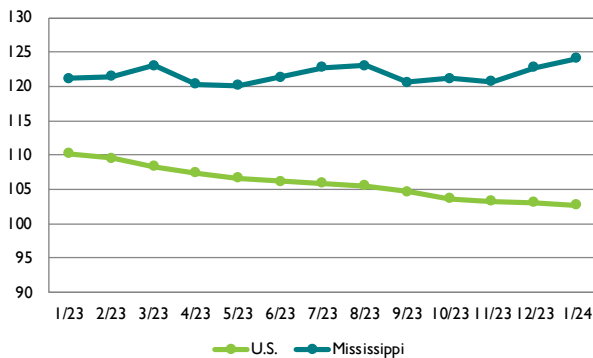
component that increased for the month was building permits. Initial unemployment claims rose for the fifth time in the last six months in January. However, total employment increased in January and following data revisions grew considerably more in 2023 than previously estimated. Nevertheless, data revisions indicate a large increase in employment occurred in February 2023, but little change in the nearly twelve months since. The current state of Mississippi's overall economy is similar to the labor market. The state has experienced a nearly complete recovery from the 2020 recession, and while another recession in the near future appears unlikely, the state's economy lacks momentum—much as it did in 2019 prior to the pandemic.

### Inside this issue:

Mississippi Leading Index, January 2024	2
National Trends	4
Miscellaneous Economic Indicators, in Figures	5
Mississippi Employment Trends	7
Labor Force Participation Rate in Mississippi by County in 2022	10

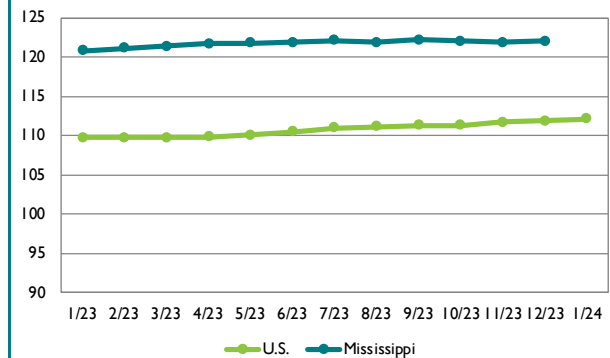
Corey Miller, State Economist  
 3825 Ridgewood Road  
 Jackson, MS 39211  
[cmiller@mississippi.edu](mailto:cmiller@mississippi.edu)  
[www.mississippi.edu/urc](http://www.mississippi.edu/urc)

Figure 1. Leading indices



Sources: University Research Center and The Conference Board

Figure 2. Coincident indices



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 2012. 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 2012.

## MISSISSIPPI LEADING INDEX, JANUARY 2024

The value of the **Mississippi Leading Index of Economic Indicators** (MLI) increased 1.1 percent in January as seen in Figure 3. The increases in December and January marked the first consecutive gains of more than 1.0 percent since July 2023. Compared to one year earlier the value of the MLI in January was 2.4 percent higher and over the last six months the value of the MLI rose 2.1 percent.

Only three of the seven components of the MLI increased in value in January, but another strong month from the University of Michigan Index of Consumer Expectations led to the overall gain. Each component is discussed below in order of largest to smallest contribution.

For the third consecutive month the value of the **University of Michigan Index of Consumer Expectations** (three-month moving average) increased in January. As seen in Figure 4 the value climbed 9.1 percent for the month. Compared to one year earlier the value in January was up 17.5 percent, the largest year-over-year increase since August 2023. The value of the Index moved higher again in January following the drop in inflation expectations the previous month. In the most recent survey short-term (one-year) inflation expectations increased slightly while long-term (five-year) inflation expectations were unchanged.

The value of the **Mississippi Manufacturing Employment Intensity Index** rose 2.5 percent in January, its first increase since October. As seen in Figure 5 the value for the month was 4.3 percent higher compared to one year earlier, the largest year-over-year increase since September 2022. Both Manufacturing employment in

the state and the average weekly hours of production employees in Mississippi increased in January.

The value of **Mississippi residential building permits** (three-month moving average) rose 2.1 percent in January as seen in Figure 6. For the month the value was 26.8 percent lower compared to one year earlier. The number of units in the state in January declined 0.3 percent. Compared to one year earlier the number of units in the state for the month was up 10.3 percent. The number of privately-owned housing units authorized by building permits in the U.S. was down 1.5 percent in January from the revised December rate. The number of units in the U.S. in January, in contrast, was 1.6 percent higher compared to one year earlier.

The number of seasonally-adjusted **initial unemployment claims** in Mississippi rose 1.1 percent in January as seen in Figure 7. The value for the month was 29.1 percent higher compared to one year earlier. The number of seasonally-adjusted continued unemployment claims in Mississippi decreased 10.0 percent in January as seen in Figure 1 on page 5. Continued claims fell to their lowest level since September. The number of continued unemployment claims in the state was 10.3 percent higher in January compared to one year earlier. As seen in Figure 15 on page 5, the unemployment rate for Mississippi in January was 3.2 percent, unchanged from the previous month following data revisions. Compared to one year earlier the rate was down 0.3 percentage point for the month.

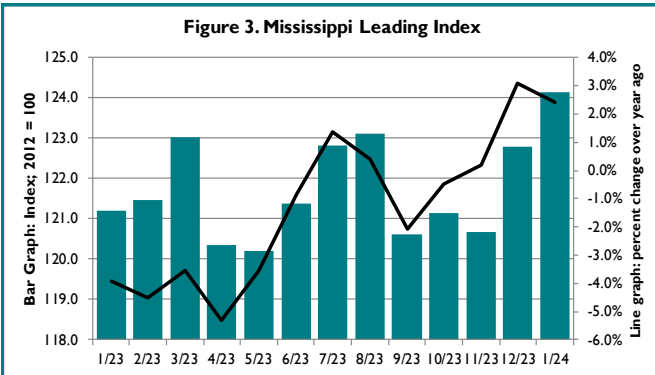
Figure 8 indicates the value of **Mississippi income tax withholdings** (three-month moving average) decreased 0.4 percent in January. Com-

pared to one year earlier the value of withholdings for the month was down 5.8 percent, the fourteenth consecutive month with a year-over-year decrease. The value of income tax withholdings in Mississippi declined 2.0 percent over the last six months.

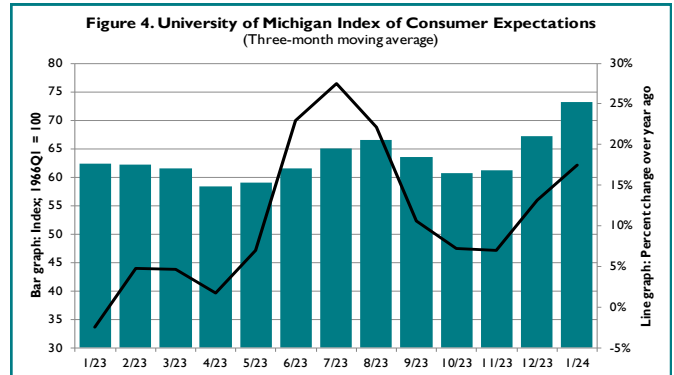
**U.S. retail sales** fell in value by 0.8 percent in January as Figure 9 indicates, the largest monthly decrease since March 2023. December and November sales were also revised lower. Sales excluding automobiles and gasoline were down 0.5 percent. Compared to one year earlier retail sales for the month were 0.6 percent higher. Declines were widespread in January and the largest decrease among all segments occurred in Building Materials. The largest increase among all segments occurred in Furniture and Home Furnishings; Food and Beverages and Food and Drinking Places were the only other segments that had increases.

In February the value of the **ISM Index of U.S. Manufacturing Activity** decreased for the first time since November. The value fell 2.6 percent as seen in Figure 10. The value for the month was up 0.2 percent compared to one year earlier. All of the components of the Index decreased in February except Supplier Deliveries, which rose above 50.0 for the first time since September 2022; it was also the only component of the Index in expansion territory in February. The prices paid index decreased slightly but remained elevated compared to most of 2023. Steel, plastic resins, and electrical components were among the commodities reported up in price in February.

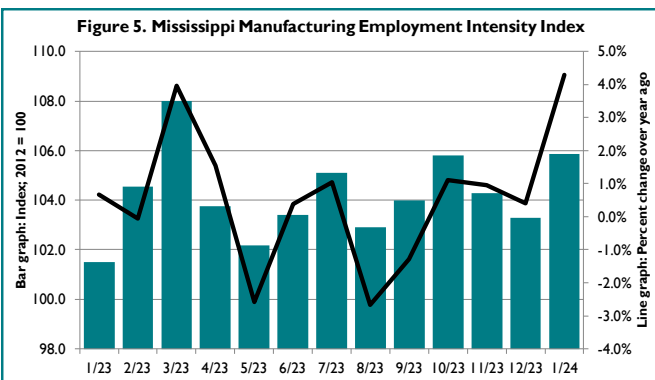
# MISSISSIPPI LEADING INDEX AND COMPONENTS, IN FIGURES



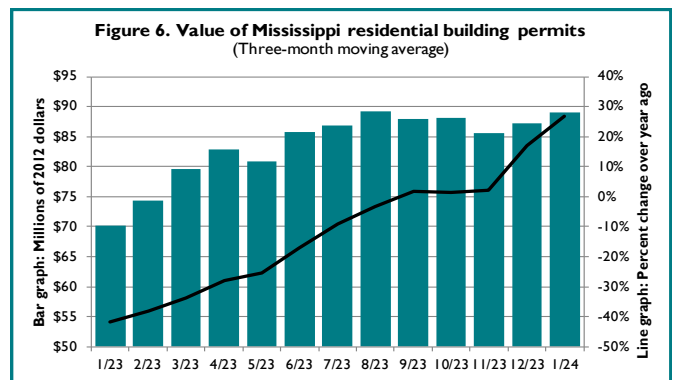
Source: University Research Center



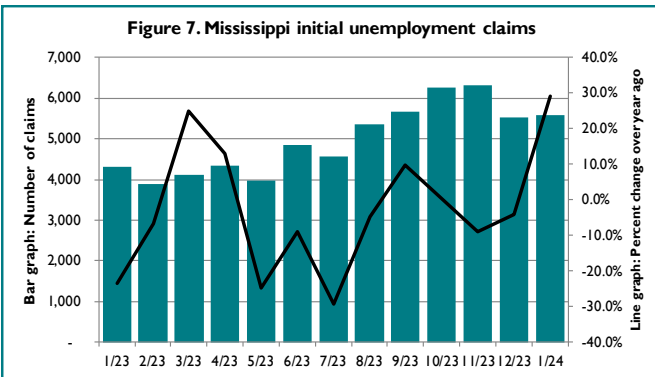
Source: Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers



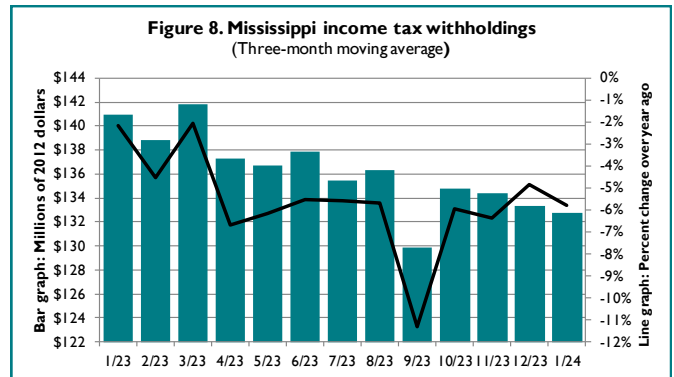
Source: URC using data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



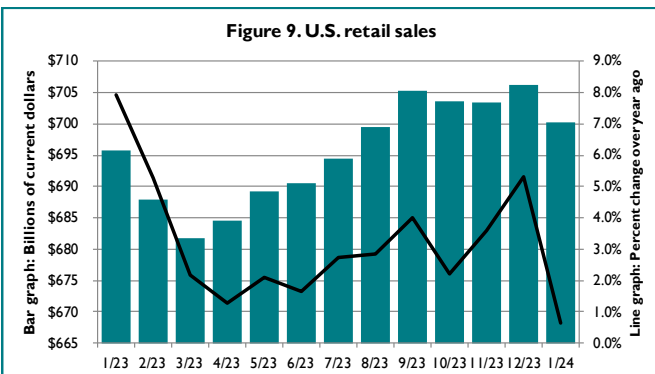
Source: URC using data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



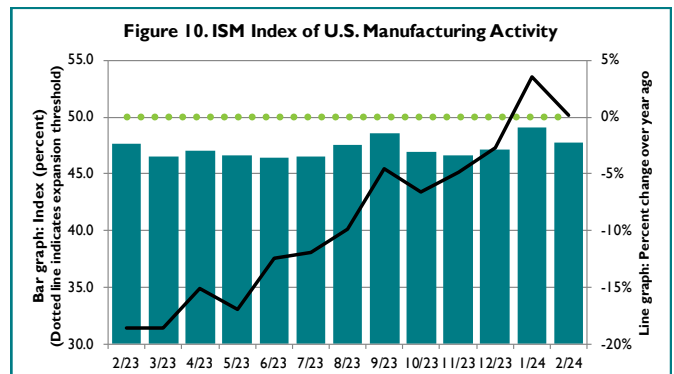
Source: U.S. Department of Labor; seasonally adjusted



Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue; seasonally adjusted



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



Source: Institute for Supply Management

## NATIONAL TRENDS

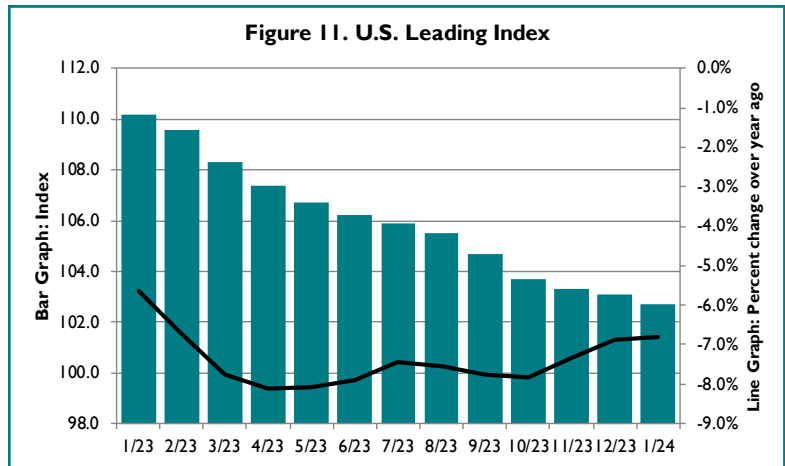
The value of the U.S. Leading Economic Index (LEI) fell for the twenty-second consecutive month in January. The Conference Board reported the value decreased 0.4 percent for the month. Compared to one year earlier the value was down 6.8 percent. Five of the ten components of the LEI made negative contributions for the month and two were unchanged. The largest negative contribution came from average weekly manufacturing hours, while the S&P 500® Index of Stock Prices made the largest positive contribution. Over the last six months the value of the LEI decreased 3.0 percent.

Figure 14 indicates the value of the U.S. Coincident Economic Index (CEI) rose 0.2 percent in January according to The Conference Board. Previous months' values were revised up slightly. The value of the CEI in January was up 2.2 percent compared to one year earlier. Three of the four components of the CEI made positive contributions for the month and the largest contribution came from employees on nonfarm payrolls. The value of the CEI increased 1.0 percent over the last six months.

The value of the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) Small Business Optimism Index sank 2.2 percent in January as seen in Figure 15, its largest monthly decrease since December 2022. Compared to one year earlier the value for the month was 0.4 percent lower. Only two components of the Index improved in January, "plans to increase inventories" and "current inventories." The "expect real sales higher" and "earnings trends" components both fell sharply for the month. The January survey indicated small businesses are concerned about declining sales and profit trends.

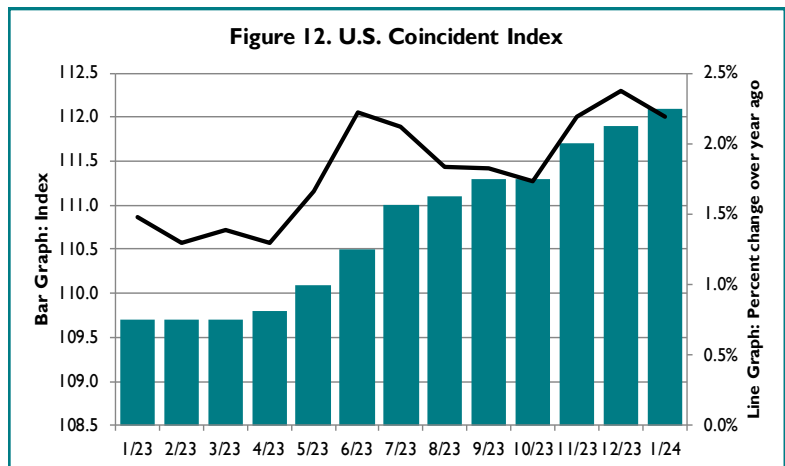
Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell told Congress earlier this month that interest rate reductions will not occur until the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) is confident inflation is moving "sustainably" toward the Federal Reserve's goal of a 2.0 percent annual rate. He also said, "We're not looking for better inflation readings than we've had. We're just looking for more of them." Most analysts continue to expect the first FOMC reduction in the federal funds rate target will be a 25 basis point cut in June.

Figure 11. U.S. Leading Index



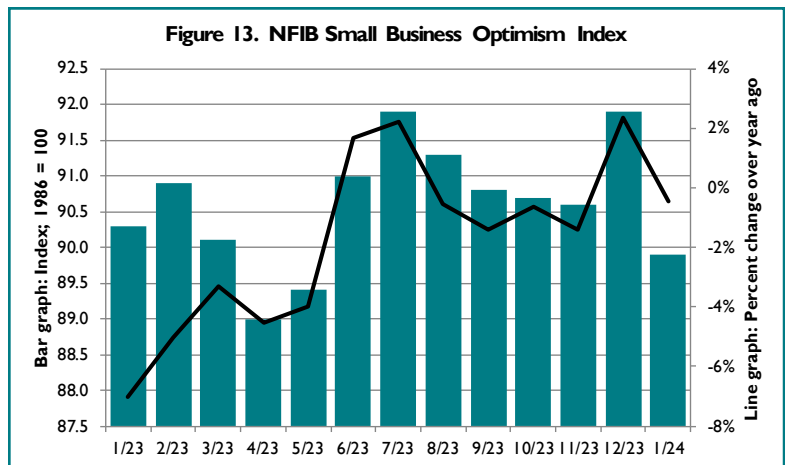
Source: The Conference Board

Figure 12. U.S. Coincident Index



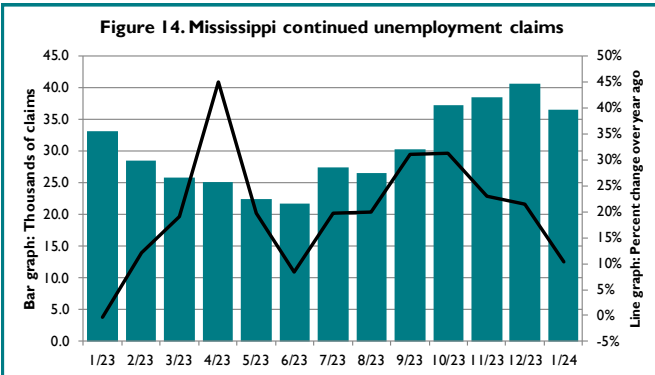
Source: The Conference Board

Figure 13. NFIB Small Business Optimism Index

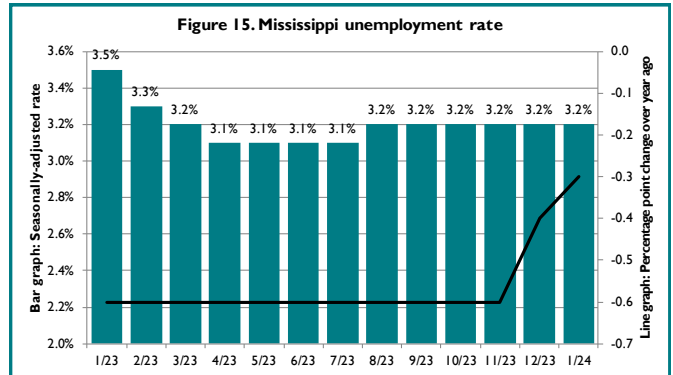


Source: National Federation of Independent Businesses

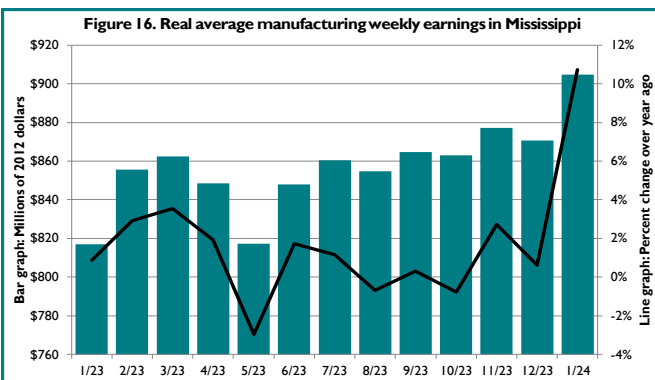
# MISCELLANEOUS ECONOMIC INDICATORS, IN FIGURES



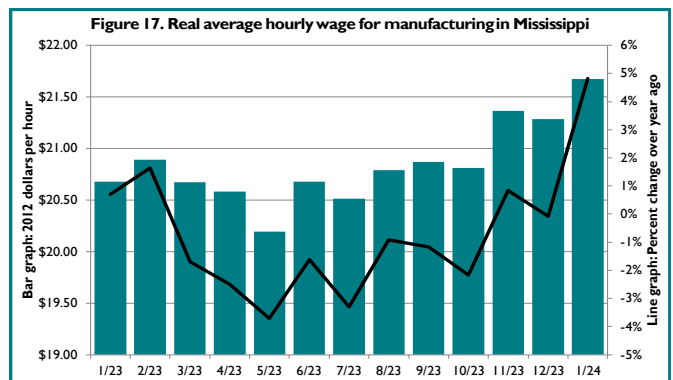
Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, URC (seasonal adjustment)



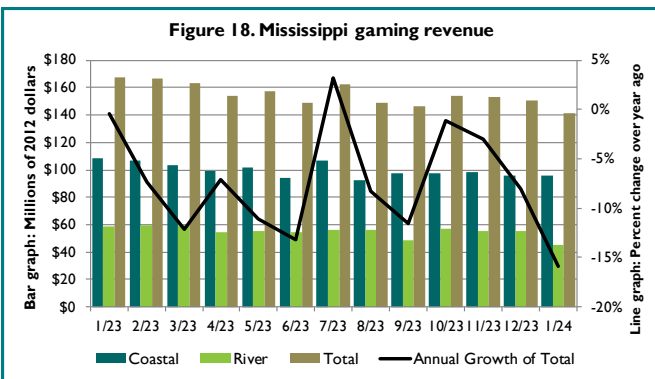
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



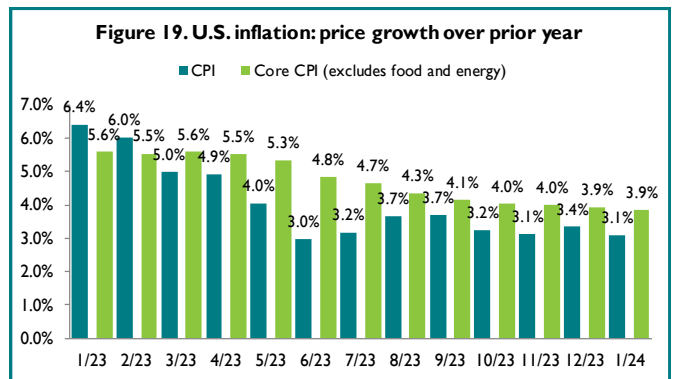
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, URC (seasonal adjustment)



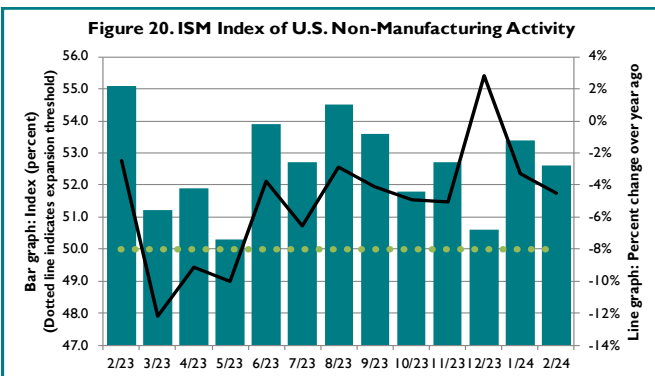
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, URC (seasonal adjustment)



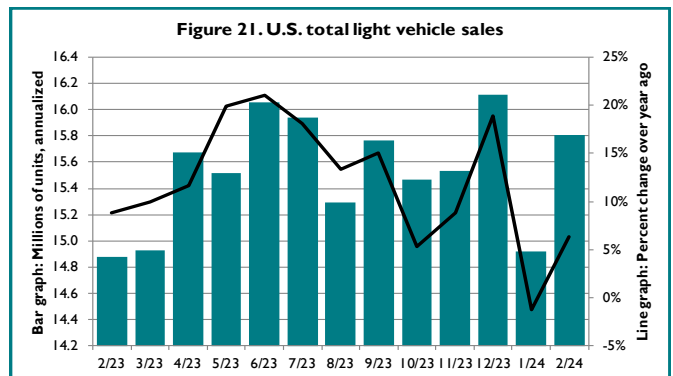
Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue, URC (seasonal adjustment)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Source: Institute for Supply Management



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

**TABLE I. SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

Indicator	January	December	January	Percent change from	
	2024	2023	2023	December 2023	January 2023
<b>U.S. Leading Economic Index</b> 2012 = 100. Source: The Conference Board	102.7	103.1	110.2	▼0.4%	▼6.8%
<b>U.S. Coincident Economic Index</b> 2012 = 100. Source: The Conference Board	112.1	111.9	109.7	▲0.2%	▲2.2%
<b>Mississippi Leading Index</b> 2012 = 100. Source: University Research Center	124.1	122.8	121.2	▲1.1%	▲2.4%
<b>Mississippi Coincident Index</b> 2012 = 100. Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia	NA	120.2	118.5	NA	NA
<b>Mississippi initial unemployment claims</b> Seasonally adjusted. Source: U.S. Department of Labor	5,580	5,518	4,322	▲1.1%	▲29.1%
<b>Value of Mississippi residential building permits</b> Three-month moving average; seasonally adjusted; millions of 2007 dollars. Source: Bureau of the Census	89.0	87.2	70.2	▲2.1%	▲26.8%
<b>Mississippi income tax withholdings</b> Three-month moving average; seasonally adjusted; millions of 2007 dollars. Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue	132.8	133.3	140.9	▼0.4%	▼5.8%
<b>Mississippi Manufacturing Employment Intensity Index</b> 2012 = 100. Source: URC using data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	105.9	103.3	101.5	▲2.5%	▲4.3%
<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	73.2	67.1	62.3	▲9.1%	▲17.5%
<b>ISM Index of U.S. Manufacturing Activity</b> Advanced one month. Source: Institute for Supply Management	47.8	49.1	47.7	▼2.6%	▲0.2%
<b>U.S. retail sales</b> Current dollars, in billions. Source: Bureau of the Census	700.3	706.2	695.8	▼0.8%	▲0.6%
<b>U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI)</b>	308.4	306.7	299.2	▲0.5%	▲3.1%
<b>U.S. Core CPI (excludes food and energy)</b> 1982-84 = 100. Source: URC using data from Bureau of Labor Statistics	313.6	311.9	302.0	▲0.6%	▲3.9%
<b>Mississippi unemployment rate</b> Percentage point change. Seasonally-adjusted. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	3.2%	3.2%	3.5%	◀▶0.0	▼0.3
<b>Mississippi continued unemployment claims</b> Seasonally adjusted. Source: U.S. Department of Labor	36,604	40,657	33,193	▼10.0%	▲10.3%
<b>ISM Index of U.S. Non-Manufacturing Activity</b> Advanced one month. Source: Institute for Supply Management	52.6	53.4	55.1	▼1.5%	▼4.5%
<b>U.S. mortgage rates</b> Percentage point change. Seasonally adjusted; 30-year conventional. Source: Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation	6.92%	7.17%	6.66%	▼0.25	▲0.25
<b>Mississippi average hourly wage for manufacturing</b> Seasonally adjusted; 2012 dollars. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	21.67	21.28	20.68	▲1.8%	▲4.8%
<b>Mississippi average weekly earnings for manufacturing</b> Seasonally adjusted; 2012 dollars. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	904.74	870.67	817.05	▲3.9%	▲10.7%
<b>NFIB Small Business Optimism Index</b> 1986 = 100. Source: National Federation of Independent Businesses	89.9	91.9	90.3	▼2.2%	▼0.4%
<b>U.S. total light vehicle sales</b> Millions of units seasonally adjusted at annual rates. Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	15.81	14.92	14.88	▲6.0%	▲6.3%
<b>Gaming revenue</b>	141.30	150.92	167.9	▼6.4%	▼15.8%
<b>Coastal counties</b>	95.85	95.70	108.7	▲0.2%	▼11.8%
<b>River counties</b> Seasonally adjusted; millions of 2012 dollars. Source: Mississippi Department of Revenue	45.45	55.23	59.2	▼17.7%	▼23.2%

Economic Indices

Components of the Mississippi Leading Index

Miscellaneous Indicators

## MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

In March the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) completed its annual benchmark revisions to regional and state employment data, and Mississippi employment experienced substantial upward revisions. BLS reported the state added 14,000 jobs in 2023, an increase of 1.2 percent. Mississippi added 3,900 jobs in January according to BLS as seen in Table 2, an increase of 0.3 percent. Employment in the state in January was higher by 4,100 jobs compared to one year earlier, a gain of 0.3 percent.

BLS reported total nonfarm employment increased in eight states in January and was essentially unchanged in forty-two states and the District of Columbia. New York added 59,300 jobs for the month, the most among all states, while employment rose 0.6 percent in both New York and Vermont, the largest percentage increases among all states.

Employment increased in twenty-seven states over the past twelve months as of January and was essentially unchanged in twenty-three states and the District of Columbia according to BLS. Texas added 263,900 jobs over the past twelve months, the largest increase among all states. Employment rose 3.8 percent in Nevada over the past twelve months, the largest percentage increase among all states.

The largest increase in employment among all sectors in Mississippi in January occurred in Manufacturing, which added 1,400 jobs, a 1.0 percent gain. Employment in the Mining and Logging sector rose 3.2 percent for the month, the largest percentage increase in employment among all sectors and a gain of 200 jobs. The largest decrease in employment among all sectors in the state in January occurred in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities and Other Services, as both sectors each lost

300 jobs. The largest percentage decrease in employment among all sectors in the state occurred in Information, where employment fell 1.0 percent. Employment in Accommodation and Food Services was unchanged in January.

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector added 5,200 jobs over the past twelve months as of January, the most among all sectors in the state and a 3.8 percent increase. Employment in the Arts and Entertainment sector rose 7.4 percent over the past twelve months, the largest percentage increase in employment among all sectors in the state and an addition of 700 jobs. The largest decrease in employment among all sectors in the state over the last twelve months occurred in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, which lost 3,500 jobs. The largest percentage decrease occurred in Information, where employment fell 5.9 percent over the last twelve months.

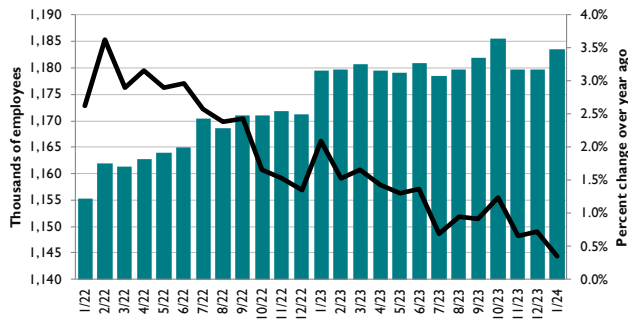
**Table 2. Change in Mississippi employment by industry, January 2024**

	Relative share of total <sup>a</sup>	January 2024	December 2023	January 2023	Change from December 2023		Change from January 2023	
					Level	Percent	Level	Percent
Total Nonfarm	100.0%	1,183,600	1,179,700	1,179,500	▲3,900	▲0.3%	▲4,100	▲0.3%
Mining and Logging	0.5%	6,400	6,200	6,200	▲200	▲3.2%	▲200	▲3.2%
Construction	4.1%	48,800	47,700	47,000	▲1,100	▲2.3%	▲1,800	▲3.8%
Manufacturing	12.3%	145,100	143,700	147,000	▲1,400	▲1.0%	▼1,900	▼1.3%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	21.0%	245,000	245,300	248,500	▼300	▼0.1%	▼3,500	▼1.4%
Retail Trade	11.8%	139,000	139,000	139,100	◀▶0	◀▶0.0%	▼100	▼0.1%
Information	0.8%	9,600	9,700	10,200	▼100	▼1.0%	▼600	▼5.9%
Financial Activities	3.8%	45,600	45,200	45,300	▲400	▲0.9%	▲300	▲0.7%
Services	37.4%	444,500	443,400	440,400	▲1,100	▲0.2%	▲4,100	▲0.9%
Professional & Business Services	9.9%	116,100	115,100	118,600	▲1,000	▲0.9%	▼2,500	▼2.1%
Educational Services	1.1%	13,800	13,600	12,900	▲200	▲1.5%	▲900	▲7.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	11.6%	140,500	140,400	135,300	▲100	▲0.1%	▲5,200	▲3.8%
Arts and Entertainment	0.8%	10,100	10,000	9,400	▲100	▲1.0%	▲700	▲7.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	10.6%	124,800	124,800	124,700	◀▶0	◀▶0.0%	▲100	▲0.1%
Other Services	3.3%	39,200	39,500	39,500	▼300	▼0.8%	▼300	▼0.8%
Government	20.1%	238,600	238,500	234,900	▲100	◀▶0.0%	▲3,700	▲1.6%

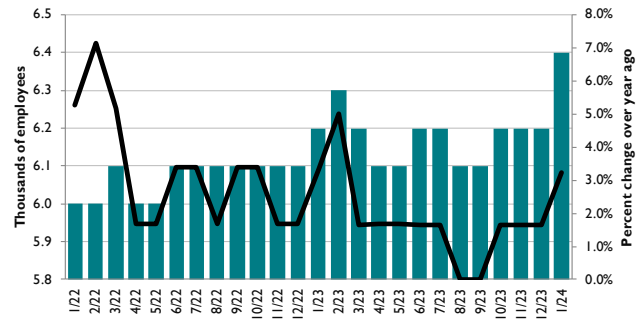
<sup>a</sup>Relative shares are for the most recent twelve-month average. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

# MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT TRENDS BY SECTOR, IN FIGURES

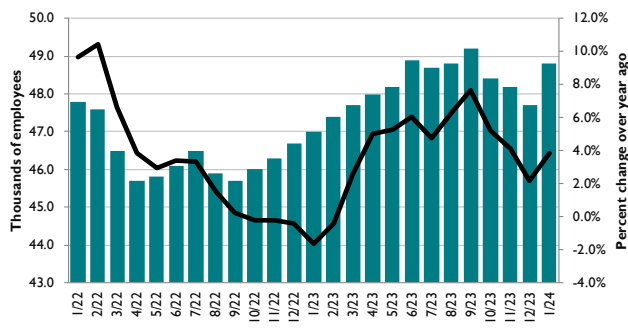
**Figure 22a. Nonfarm employment**



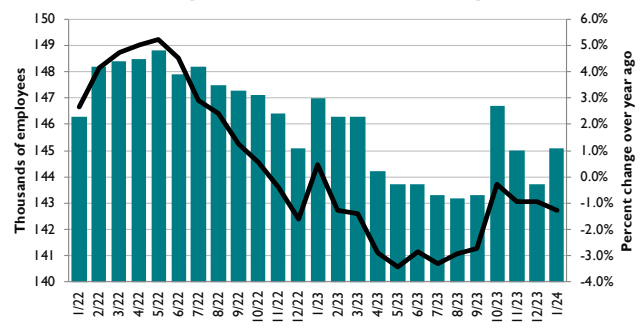
**Figure 22b. Mining and Logging**



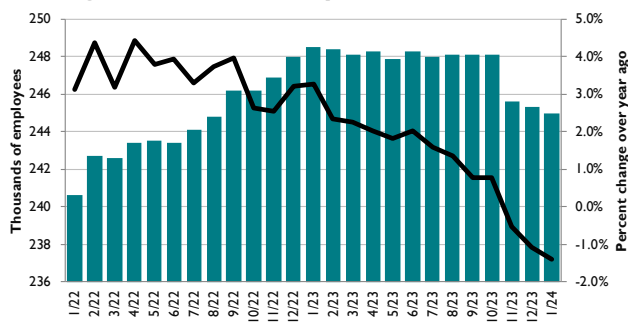
**Figure 22c. Construction**



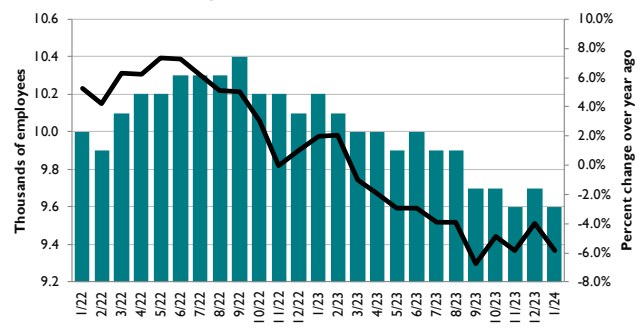
**Figure 22d. Manufacturing**



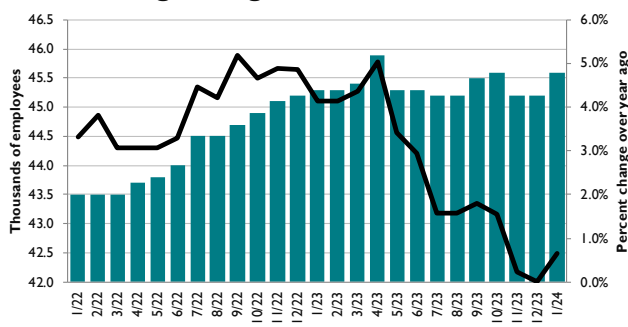
**Figure 22e. Trade, transportation, and utilities**



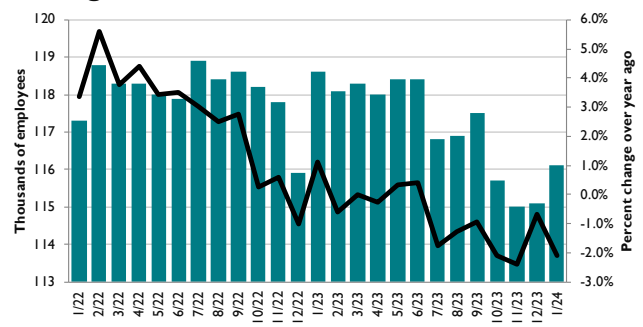
**Figure 22f. Information**



**Figure 22g. Financial activities**



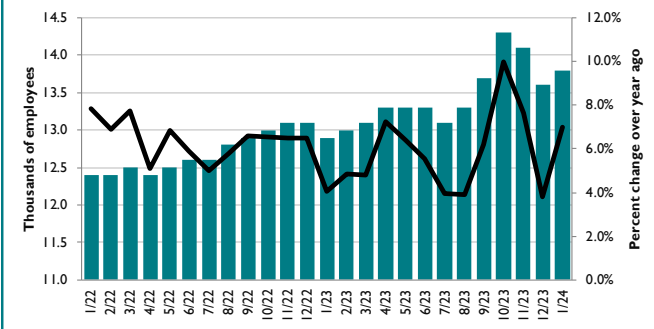
**Figure 22h. Professional and business services**



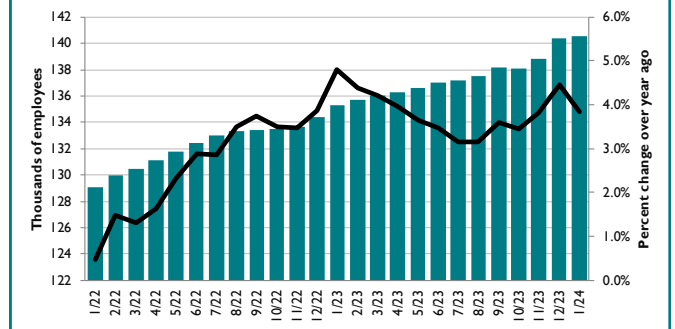


## MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYMENT TRENDS BY SECTOR, IN FIGURES (CONTINUED)

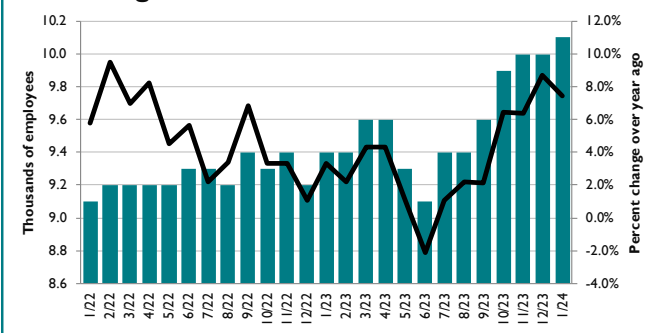
**Figure 22i. Educational services**



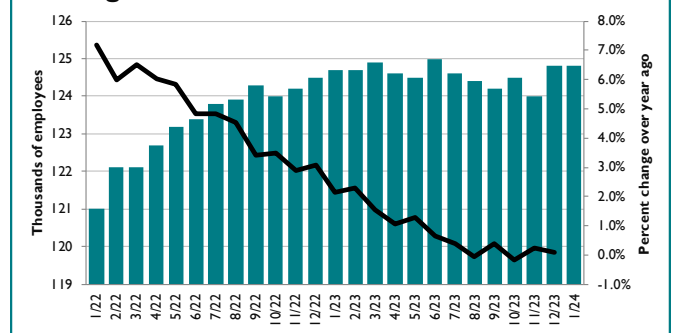
**Figure 22j. Health care and social assistance**



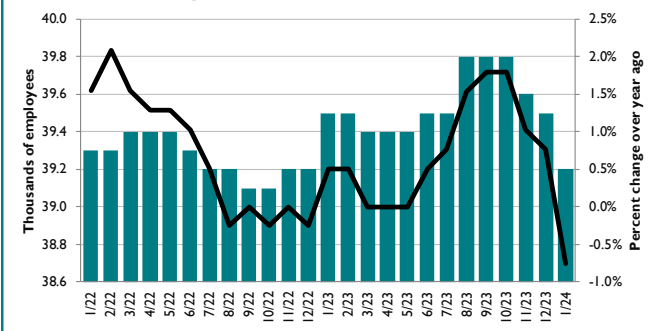
**Figure 22k. Arts and entertainment**



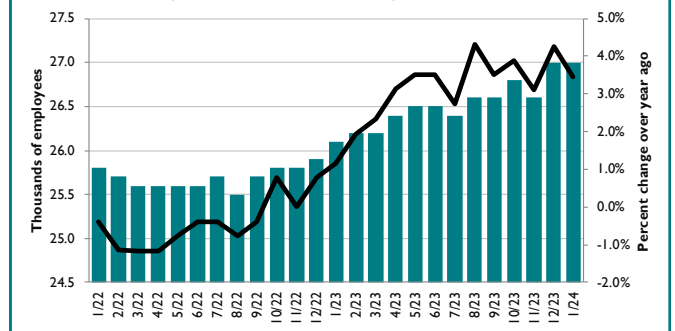
**Figure 22l. Accommodation and food services**



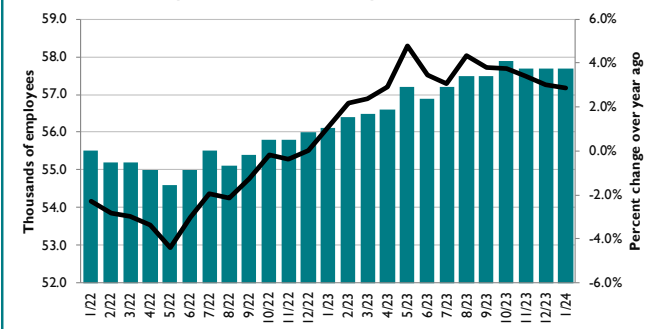
**Figure 22m. Other services**



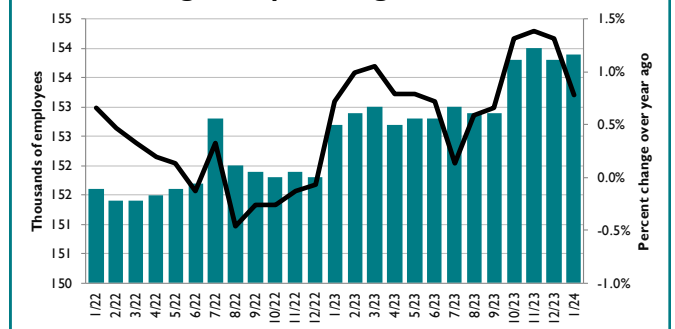
**Figure 22n. Federal government**



**Figure 22o. State government**



**Figure 22p. Local government**



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

