

News from the Corner

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(* denotes Executive Committee)

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Message from the Chairman



The first half of this year has been great for the region. There have been over 2,500 jobs and \$187.3 million of investment announced in the region since January of this year. I'd like to give you a brief look at some of the things that have been happening within the NESA region this year.

Through the NESA Foundation and the State Match Program, NESA is directly supporting our county membership through several new initiatives. These new programs will help us promote the region on the national stage and develop product for companies who are interested in locating here.

With a new record of more than 42,000 hits in June, our website continues to be a tremendous tool for getting the word out about our region. The continuous increase in website hits shows that people want to learn more about our area and they are coming to the site to learn what NESA is all about.

NESA also continues to take our message to companies and consultants on a one-on-one basis. NESA has planned and executed five successful mission trips this year and has many more planned for the future.

NESA has made great progress the first half of this year, and with the continued support of our investors and member counties, we will continue to see successes as our regional economy grows like never before.

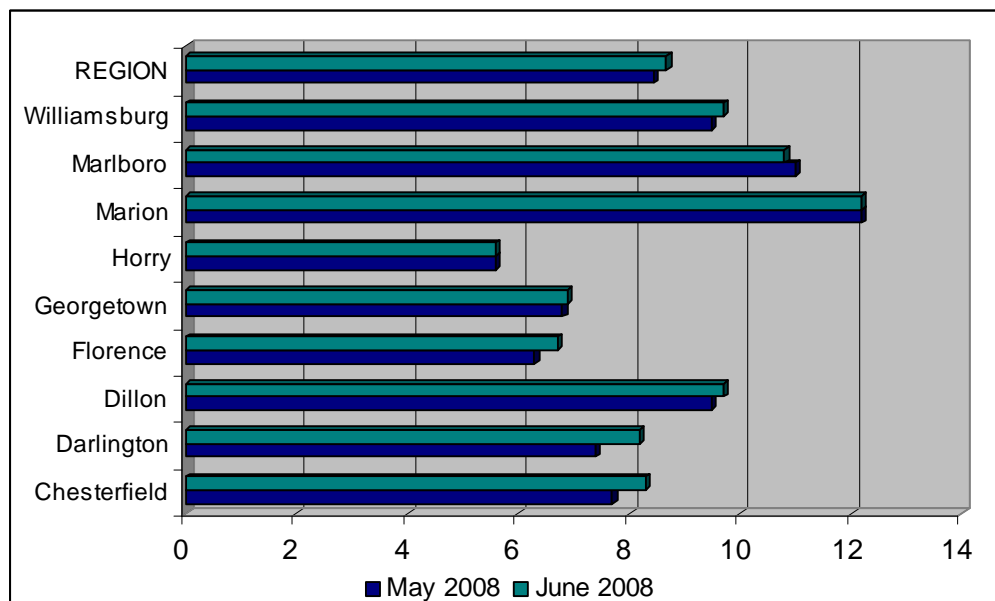
Senator J. Yancey McGill
Chairman, NESA Executive Committee

National Media Placement Program Underway

In June, NESA entered into a contract with Boyette Levy, an Atlanta-based firm that provides strategic advice and communications support, to assist with National Media Placement. The purpose of our work with Boyette Levy is to gain national exposure for the region and to develop our external marketing message. Del Boyette, who has over twenty years of economic development experience including consulting for KPMG and Deloitte, and Adam Levy, former Atlanta Bureau Chief for Bloomberg News and Wall Street research analyst, and several members of their team have toured the NESA region extensively and met with individuals from our Board and member counties as they begin to develop a national marketing message for the region. We look forward to successes through our partnership with the firm.

NESA Region Employment Grows

Employment in the NESA region from December 2007 to May 2008 grew by 9,753 jobs (+3.25%) while the state's employment fell by 5,271 (-0.26%). However, the unemployment rate in the NESA region rose slightly from 8.4% in May 2008 to 8.6% in June 2008 as can be seen in Chart 1 below. Chart 2 shows that NESA's unemployment trends seem to follow state and national patterns and our regional unemployment rate has fallen 1.8% since December 2004.



**Chart 1: NESA Region's Unemployment Change by County
May 2008 – June 2008**

Source: SC ESC

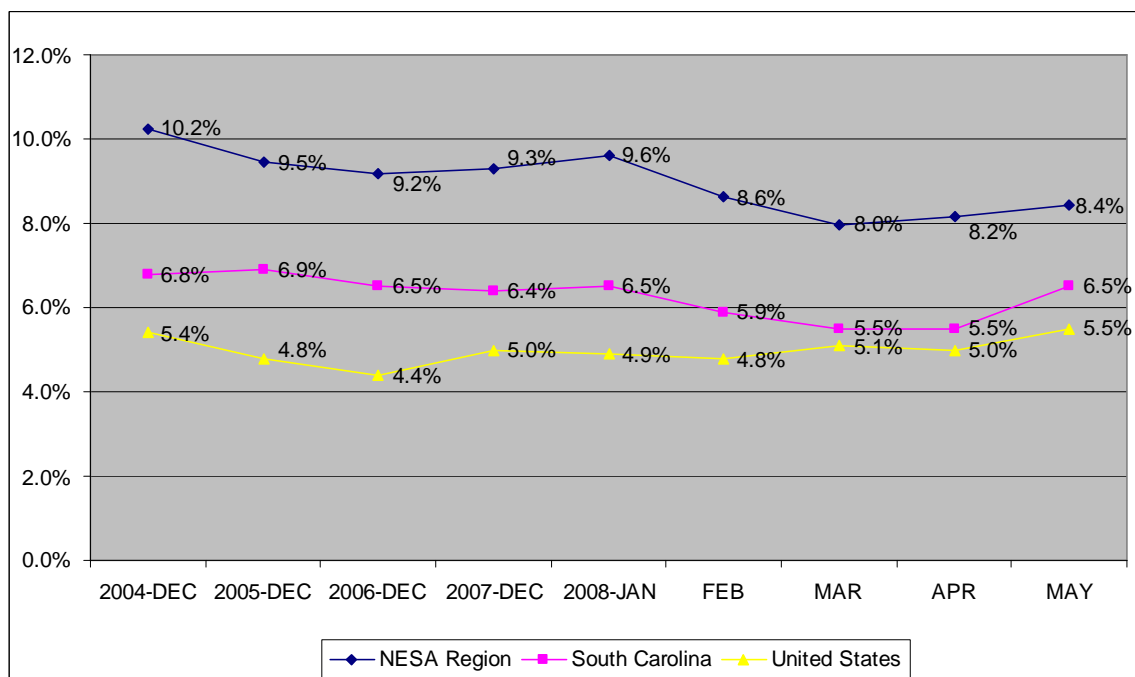


Chart 2: Unemployment Rate Changes at National, State, and Regional Levels

Source: SC ESC, BLS

NESA Supporters

Private Sector:

ArborOne
 AT&T
 BB&T
 Beach First National Bank
 Burroughs & Chapin Company
 Carolina First
 COMBO
 DuBard, Inc.
 Horry Electric Cooperative
 Horry Telephone Company
 Landmark Builders
 Marlboro Electric Cooperative
 Myrtle Beach Area Chamber
 Pee Dee Electric Cooperative
 Pepsi-Cola
 Progress Energy
 Santee Cooper
 Santee Electric Cooperative
 Sonoco
 Strand Capital
 Wachovia

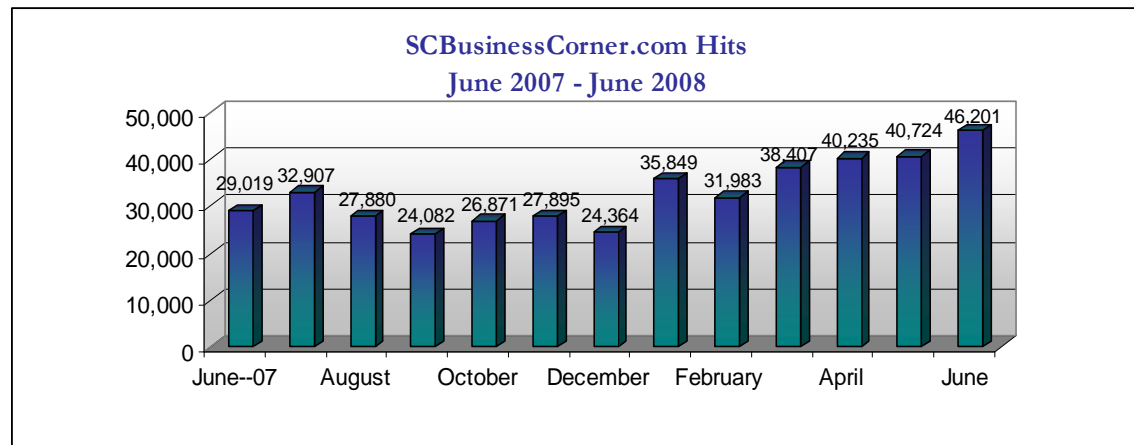
Public Sector:

Chesterfield County
 Darlington County
 Dillon County
 Florence County
 Georgetown County
 Horry County
 Marion County
 Marlboro County
 Williamsburg County

Upcoming Events

- August 21, 6:00 PM – Investor Event – The President’s House, Francis Marion University featuring Wachovia Chief Economist Mark Vitner

Website Audience Continues to Grow



As seen in the chart above, the web presence of SCBusinessCorner.com continues to increase. The NESAs website has reached a new **all-time high** in June 2008 with 46,201 hits, nearly 6,000 more than its previous all-time high of 40,724 set in May 2008. The website went from 29,019 hits in June 2007 to 46,201 hits this past June. From January 2008 to June 2008, the average visit time for the website is 10:24. Web updates and improvements continue to be made to enhance the quality of the NESAs website.

NESA TV and Radio Campaign Gears Up with *NESA NOW*

The inaugural episode of *NESA Now*, an informative segment about NESAs and the region it serves, is now airing on public access Channel 11. The purpose of this show is to inform both people within the region and those who may be traveling through the region about the business opportunities available here and the work NESAs does. In the future, plans are to broadcast the show on local cable channels and place them on a roll in hotels and airports. You can also view the show on the NESAs website, www.scbusinesscorner.com/news.asp#.

Both radio and television public service announcements have been recorded and are being sent to all stations within the region.

Investor Event

The NESAs Board will host a reception for investors at President and Mrs. Fred Carter’s home on Thursday, August 21 at 6:00 PM, followed by a presentation in Chapman Auditorium by Wachovia Chief Economist Mark Vitner. Mr. Vitner’s work has been in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *BusinessWeek*, and *USA Today* among others. He has also been a guest on CNBC, CNN, NPR, and the NewsHour with Jim Lehrer.

Mission Statement

NESA will work with existing county and state economic development organizations to create new jobs and increase the per capita wage of the citizens of the North Eastern region of South Carolina at a rate faster than per capita growth rates for the state and the nation.

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Regional Announcements

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBER COUNTIES FOR THEIR RECENT SUCCESSES!

Chesterfield – *American Prefabricated Drain*, which will manufacture Geo Composite Drains, has announced a \$2 million investment and the creation of 25 jobs over the next 5 years.

Florence – *Monster*, the leading global online career and recruitment service, has announced plans to open a state-of-art customer service facility in Florence creating 750 new jobs with a \$28 million investment.

H.J. Heinz Company announced plans to open a food processing facility in Pee Dee Commerce City Park to produce Weight Watchers Smart Ones and Boston Market frozen entrees. The company will initially create 350 new jobs.

Georgetown – *South Strand Contractors* announced plans to expand by building a new distribution facility which will create 20 new jobs with a \$1.5 million capital investment.

Horry – *Southeast Specialty Wire and Cable, LLC* has opened a manufacturing facility in Murrells Inlet creating 25 jobs with a \$800,000 capital investment over the next 5 years.

Concrete Designs, Inc. has announced plans to expand its pipe manufacturing facility in Surfside Beach with a \$6 million investment and the creation of 50 new jobs.

Metglas, Inc., which is a subsidiary of Hitachi Metals America, Ltd., has announced plans for a \$20 million expansion and the addition of 25 jobs.

Marion – *Carolina AAC, LLC* announced plans to build a manufacturing facility to produce Autoclaved Aerated Concrete for commercial and residential use with a \$17 million investment and the creation of 40 jobs.

Marlboro – *Defense Technologies Inc.* has received \$1.6 million in defense funding from the Defense Appropriations Bill and will begin operations as a research and development facility in Bennettsville with sights on future growth.

Williamsburg – *Performance Fabrics and Fibers, LLC* has expanded by adding a manufacturing facility and 42 employees.

Williamsburg Recycling, which will manufacture specialized organic compost and fertilizer, announced plans to invest \$2.5 million and create 30 new jobs.

News from the Corner is published quarterly by the North Eastern Strategic Alliance. Articles and data contained herein were adapted from information submitted by counties in the region. To submit content for this newsletter, please contact Marianne at MLangley@SCBusinessCorner.com or (843) 661-4669. Contents ©NESA, 2008.