

News from the Corner

Volume 4, Issue 1 March 2009

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Message from the Chairman



With 2008 being the best year in NESA's history, we begin 2009 in anticipation of even greater things. During 2008, NESA conducted 11 domestic and international missions, contacted over 3,000 companies, and met face-to-face with nearly 100 of these companies leading to many requests for information about our great region. NESA generated 62%

of the project leads that it pursued and worked on 82 different projects. NESA was also able to participate in the State Match Program and leverage nearly \$2 million for economic development programs throughout our region.

Making sure that companies looking to expand or relocate their facilities are aware of the NESA Region and know that we are open for business is the purpose of much of our efforts. When I attended the SEUS conference in Raleigh a few months ago, I was amazed at the number of Japanese business people who remembered me from my trip to Japan. It is crucial for us to make those contacts and build those relationships. Attracting foreign direct investment to this region is not easy; it requires a lot of effort and a lot of time. The NESA organization is able to facilitate this in a manner that none of our individual counties could alone.

NESA has only begun its aggressive pursuit of new jobs and investment for the people of this region. Now that we are fully online as an organization, we are building great momentum. I would like to thank all of our public and private sector supporters for helping build this momentum and allowing us to serve as an agent for change and prosperity in this region.



Senator J. Yancey McGill
Chairman, NESA Executive Committee

NESA Supporters

Private Sector:

Anonymous
 ArborOne
 AT&T
 BB&T
 Beach First National Bank
 Burroughs & Chapin Company
 Carolina First
 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:

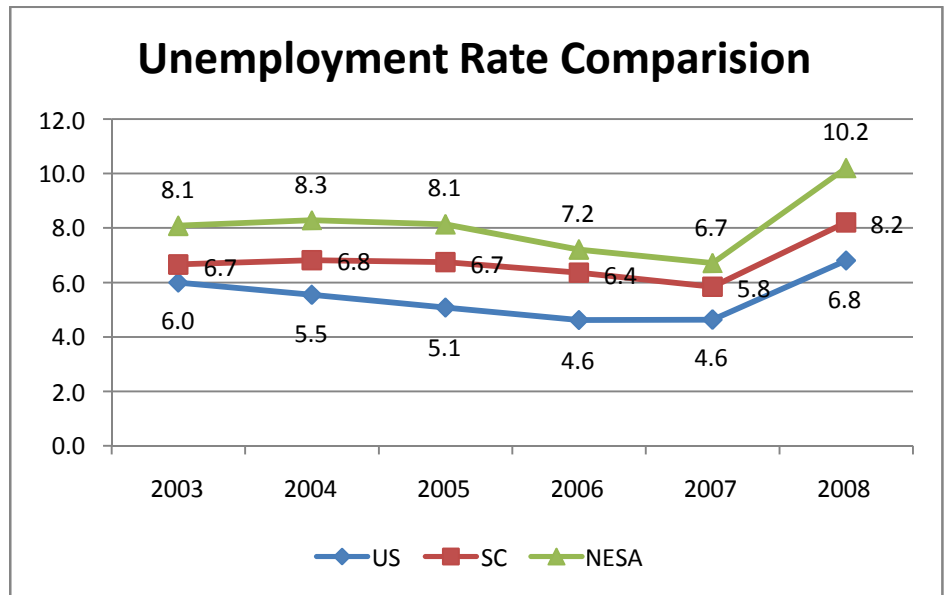
Chesterfield County
 Darlington County
 Dillon County
 Florence County
 Georgetown County
 Horry County
 Marion County
 Marlboro County
 Williamsburg County

I-73 Update

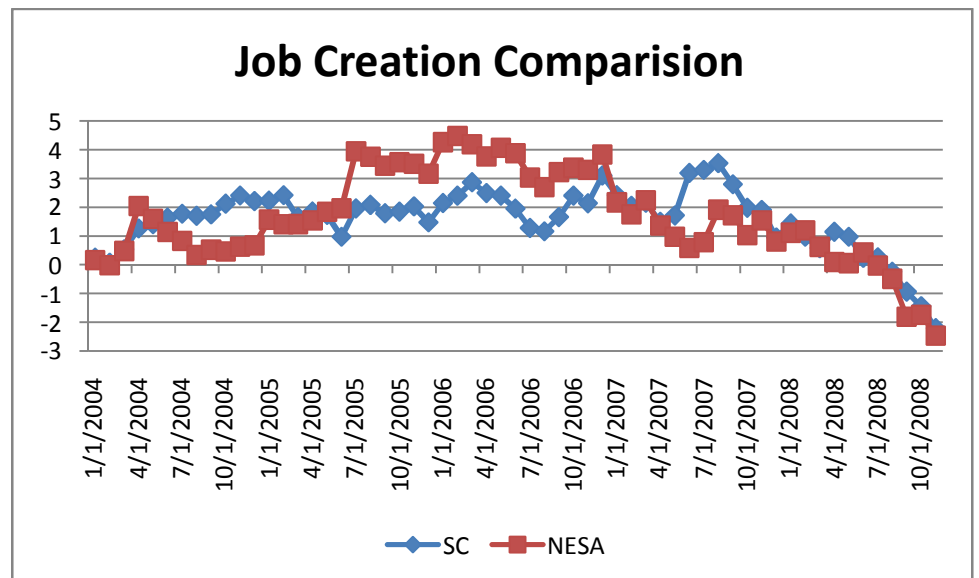


During the February 13 NESA Executive Committee Meeting held at Coastal Carolina University, the committee endorsed the naming of the I-95/I-73 interchange the “Interchange of Hope.” The committee also appropriated funds to be used to facilitate NESA’s efforts in moving the I-73 initiative forward on local, state and federal levels by unifying all of these efforts into a single plan.

2008 in Review - Region Statistics



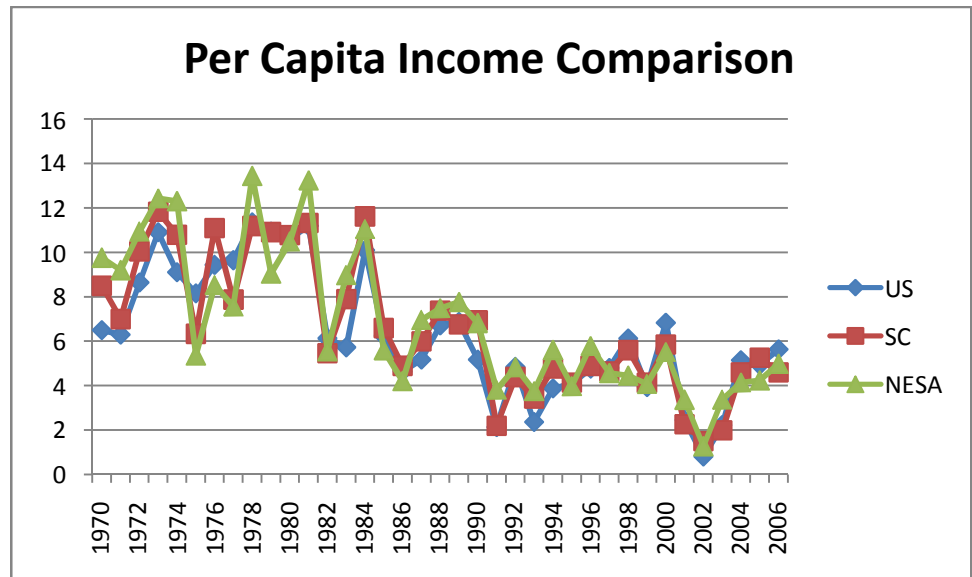
The gap between the unemployment rates in the NESA region and the state continued to shrink until the recent economic downturn. Over the past year however, the effect of the recession has had a greater impact on the labor market in the NESA region. From November 2007 to the present, the region’s unemployment rate has increased by 3.4 percentage points to 10.2%. The state’s unemployment rate has increased 2.4 percentage points over the same time period.



Mission Statement

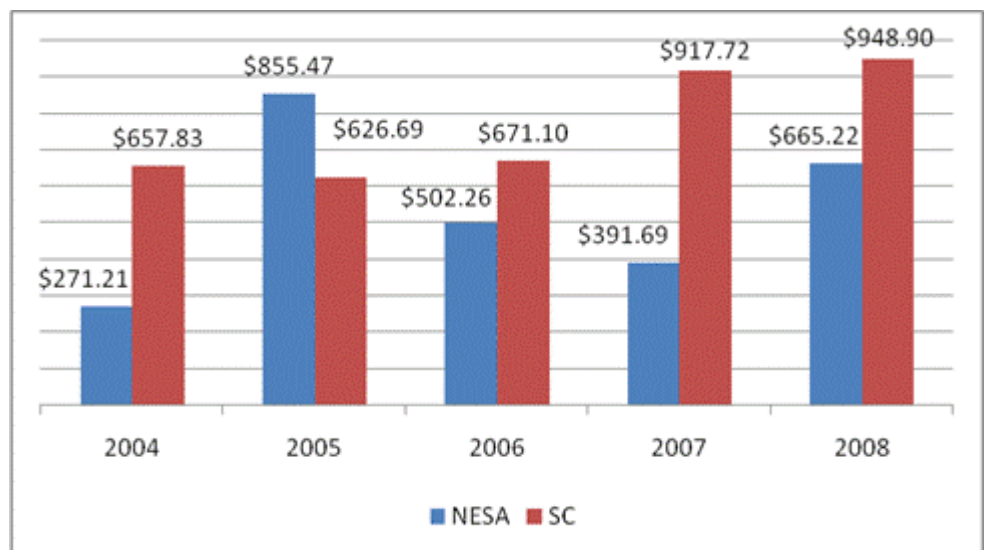
NESA will work with existing county and state economic development organizations to create new jobs and increase the per capita wage of the citizens of the North Eastern region of South Carolina at a rate faster than per capita growth rates for the state and the nation.

Until recently, the NESA region had not experienced a significant period of negative job growth since the recession in 2002. During that recession the area saw fifteen straight months of negative job growth. This November marked the fifth month of negative employment growth as regional employment continues to follow the downward state and national trends.



In 2006 per capita personal income in the NESA region grew at its fastest annual rate since 2000. The year also marked the third time in the past ten years that per capita income growth in the region outpaced the rest of the state.

Per Capita Capital Investment



*Charts/Commentary provided by Dr, Jonathan Munn, Francis Marion University

Upcoming/Recent Events

February 26 – Consultant and Broker Luncheon, High Cotton, Charleston

March 9 – Georgetown County Economic Development Board Presentation

March 10 – Local Developer's Monthly Meeting

March 11 – Marion County Progress Board Presentation

March 12 – Consultant and Broker Luncheon, Ruth's Chris, Charlotte

March 16 – Marlboro County Economic Development Board Presentation

March 17 – Chesterfield County Economic Development Board Presentation

March 23-27 – Southern Economic Development Conference, Dallas

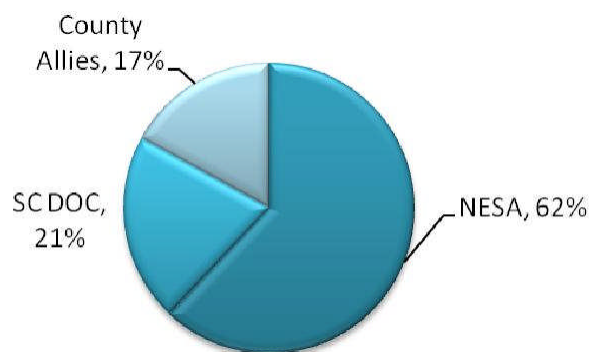
April 3 – NESAs Board Meeting, Darlington County

April 7 – Local Developer's Monthly Meeting

2008 Project Activity

NESA made direct company contact with over **3,000** companies. This contact led to nearly **100** face-to-face meetings and **88** requests for information from the organization.

NESA worked on **82 qualified leads** representing the potential for over **\$2.3 billion in new capital investment** and the creation of **11,240 jobs** for the region. As can be seen in the graph below, NESA was the source of most of 2008's project leads.



The region had **22 announcements** in 2008 that accounted for the creation of over **2,600 jobs** and **capital investment** of more than **\$253 million**.

2008 Online Statistics

In 2008, NESA continued to bolster its online marketing presence. Some of the activities pursued by NESA in this area are as follows:

- Gained a Google **first page listing** through Search Engine Optimization (SEO) efforts.
- Maintained a web-based database of **56 buildings** and **77 sites** within the region.
- Created an **interactive Google Earth mapping feature** for users of the NESA website.
- Increased marketing efforts by **more than doubling the frequency of e-blasts** that were sent to around **3,500** company and consultant contacts worldwide.

10 leads were generated by the website which had over **513,000 hits** and nearly **22,000 unique visitors**, with an **average visitor session** of **14:41**.

Business Development Missions

In the past four months, NESA has conducted business development missions to Canada, the Midwest, New York, Atlanta, and Chicago.

In Canada, Jeff McKay and Jim Moore had sixteen meetings over a five-day span in Toronto and Montreal. Meetings took place with companies in **advanced manufacturing, alternative energy, and distribution** that are all viewing South Carolina as a cost saving alternative that is closer to their customers and suppliers.

NESA

PO Box 100547
Florence, SC 29502
www.scbusinesscorner.com
(843) 661-4669

Jeff McKay

Executive Director
(843) 661-4669
jmckay@scbusinesscorner.com

Marianne Langley

Administrative Coordinator
(843) 661-4669
mlangley@scbusinesscorner.com

Ronald D. Carter, Jr.

Business Development Coordinator
(843) 661-1206
rcarter@scbusinesscorner.com

Anna Poston Johnson

Investor Relations/Marketing Director
(843) 661-1170
aposton@scbusinesscorner.com

Jim Moore

Business Development Director
(843) 661-1665
jmoore@scbusinesscorner.com

In addition to companies, they also met with consultants and law firms that advise U.S. and Canadian firm who conduct business across our shared border. NESA is currently tracking **five projects** uncovered from this trip and is continuing contact to build upon the new relationships established.

During the **Midwest** mission, Moore met with a **call center company** as well as **advanced manufacturing** and **alternative energy** firms in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. There were **three projects** uncovered during this mission that NESA is currently tracking.

In **New York**, Senator Yancey McGill, Mark Williams, and Jeff McKay met with several North American headquarters for foreign companies to bolster relationships and increase interest in the area.

In January, nearly twenty site location consultants and corporate real estate brokers in the **Atlanta** area attended a luncheon presentation held by NESA. NESA has been contacted by several meeting attendees for additional information on sites and buildings in the region and has been complemented on raising the NESA profile within the site selection community.

During February, Moore visited **Chicago** and met with two **Fortune 100 firms** that have South Carolina as a consideration as part of their strategic plan in the coming year as well as a consultant. Two more companies were uncovered during this trip which are currently considering the NESA Region for **metal working** and **assembly**. NESA also travelled to **Charleston** during February and hosted a luncheon presentation for site selectors and industrial real estate brokers. Six NESA counties were represented at this event.

In March, NESA travelled to **Charlotte** to host another regional luncheon presentation for around 12 site selectors and consultants in the Charlotte market. Six NESA counties were represented at this event. Moore also attended the **Southern Economic Development Council's Meet the Consultants** forum in Dallas March 23-26.

Marketing the Region

NESA exists to market the nine-county region for economic development opportunities through print materials, website marketing, e-blasts, regional consultant events, national medial placement, and *NESA Now*. Some of the ways NESA is engaged in marketing the region are:

- **E-blasts** sent out to **over 3,500** site selectors and consultants worldwide featuring one county each month. Most recently, Williamsburg, Florence, Horry, and Georgetown have been featured.
- Creating **targeted marketing pieces**. In December, a **call center** piece was created. Additional pieces highlighting **data centers, manufacturing, food processing, and plastics** are being created.
- A **detailed regional overview** was completed in December.
- **NESA Now** was created to inform those within the region and travelling through the region of the incredible opportunities to do business in this nine-county area of the state. Episode 1 aired on public access stations throughout the region and can be viewed online at www.scbusinesscorner.com. Episode 2 will be available online in the coming weeks.
- Creation of "The Outlook," a monthly publication containing detailed information of the current month's activities.