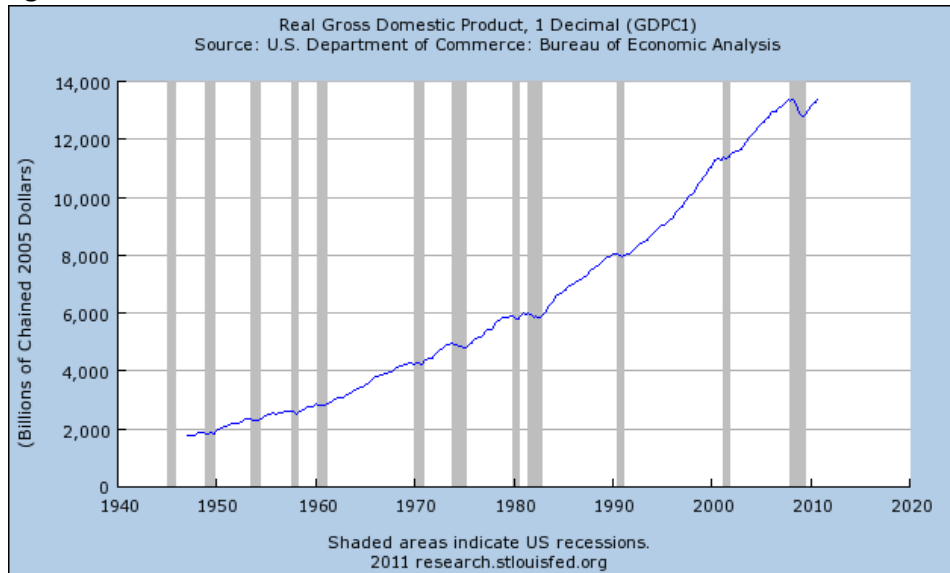


# Robeson County: Current Economic Picture

## The US Economy

According to the latest estimates released on March 25, 2011 by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) nation’s real output (i.e. output after controlling for changes in prices) grew at an annual rate of 3.1% during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010. The BEA revises its estimates as more data come in. In a previous estimate, nation’s output grew at an annual rate of 2.8% during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010. These estimates are based on more complete information. Figure 1 plots real GDP data starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 1947. Data values for the past five quarters are also reported in Table 1 below Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Real Gross Domestic Product**



**Table 1: US Real Gross Domestic Product**

Date	2009:Q4	2010:Q1	2010:Q2	2010:Q3	2010:Q4
Value	13019.0	13138.8	13194.9	13278.5	13380.7

Source: [www.bea.gov](http://www.bea.gov)

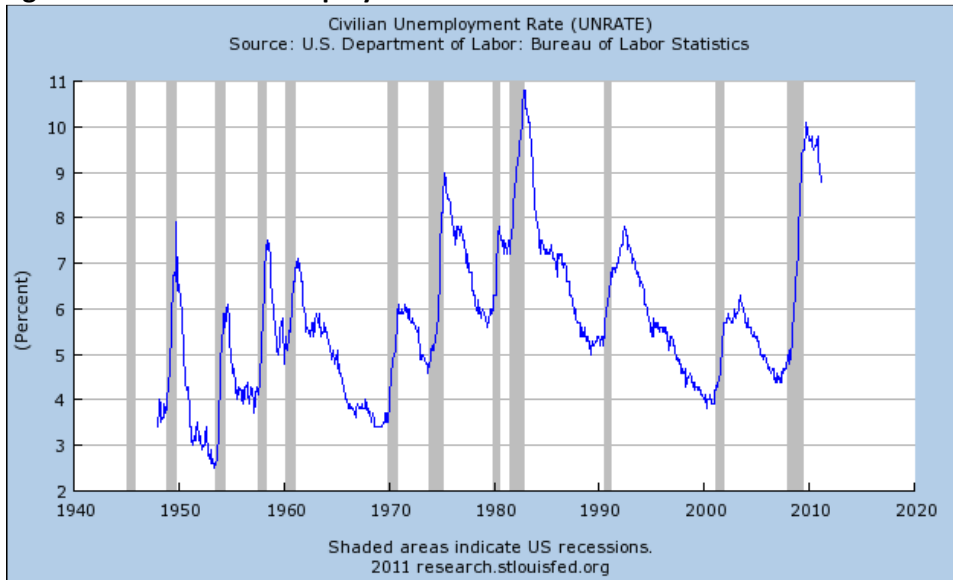
On April 1, 2011, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released data on employment conditions during March, 2011. According to the estimates, the unemployment rate dropped to 8.8% from 8.9% in February, 2011. Figure 2 plots these data. In Table 2, data for the past five months are provided below Figure 2.

According to the report, non-farm employment increased by 216,000 during March 2011. The report also indicated that, “Job gains occurred in professional and business services, health care, leisure and hospitality, and mining. Employment in manufacturing continued to trend up.”

Source: <http://bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>. Figure 3 plots the employment data.

Below Figure 3 you will also find data for the past five months in Table 3.

**Figure 2: US Civilian Unemployment Rate**

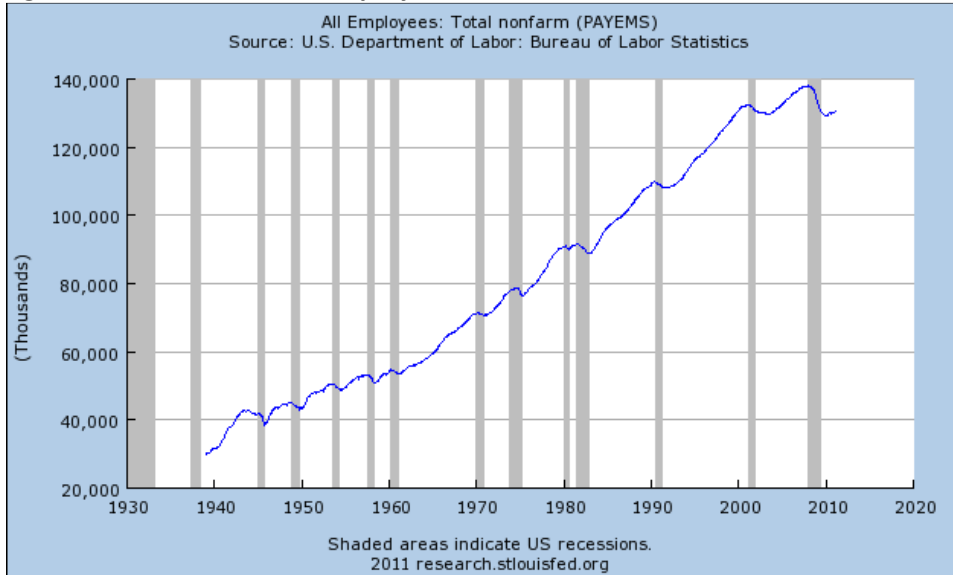


**Table 2: US Civilian Unemployment Rate**

Date	2010-11	2010-12	2011-01	2011-02	2011-03
Value	9.8	9.4	9.0	8.9	8.8

Source: www.bls.gov

**Figure 3: US All Non-Farm Employees**



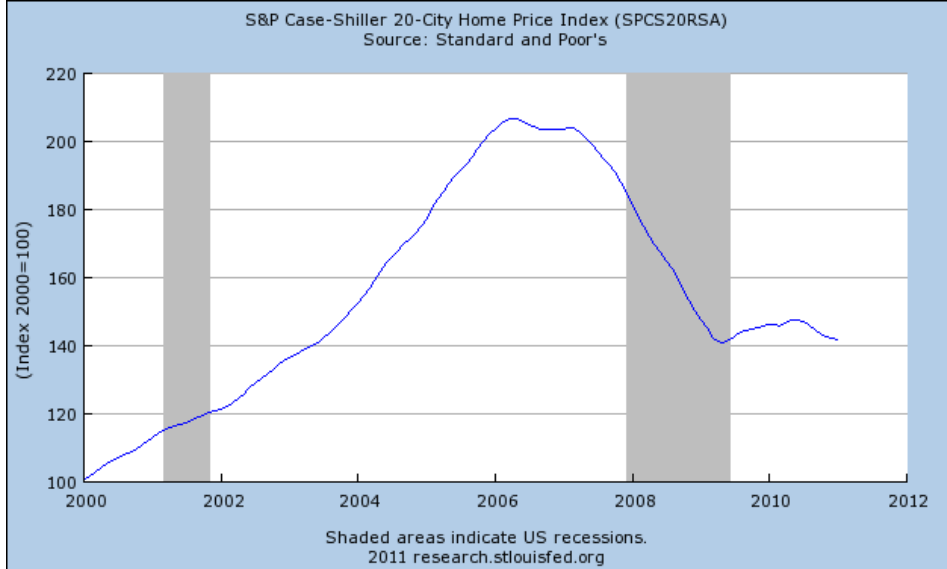
**Table 3: US All Non-Farm Employees**

Date	2010-11	2010-12	2011-01	2011-02	2011-03
Value	130108	130260	130328	130522	130738

Source: www.bls.gov

Housing sector continues to suffer. On March 29, 2011, the Case-Shiller 20-city housing price index showed that house prices continue to drop. Figure 4 plots these data. Below the figure, in Table 4, you will find the index values since September 2010.

**Figure 4: Case-Shiller 20-City House Price Index (2000 = 100)**



**Table 4: Case-Shiller 20-City House Price Index (2000 = 100)**

Date	2010-09	2010-10	2010-11	2010-12	2011-01
Value	144.94	143.55	142.77	142.21	141.90

Source: <http://www.standardandpoors.com/home/en/us>

While we are seeing improvements in GDP and overall employment and unemployment rates, *Consumer Confidence Index*, a measure of how consumers are *feeling*, indicates that consumers remain rather edgy. This index is prepared by the Consumer Confidence Board®, “a global, independent business membership and research association.” (<http://www.conference-board.org/about/index.cfm?id=1980>).

The latest numbers released on March 29, 2011, indicated a decline in the March 2011 index. According to the release, the index in March 2011 was 63.4, down from the February 2011 reading of 72.0. The index value is set 1985=100. (Source: <http://www.conference-board.org/data/consumerconfidence.cfm>)

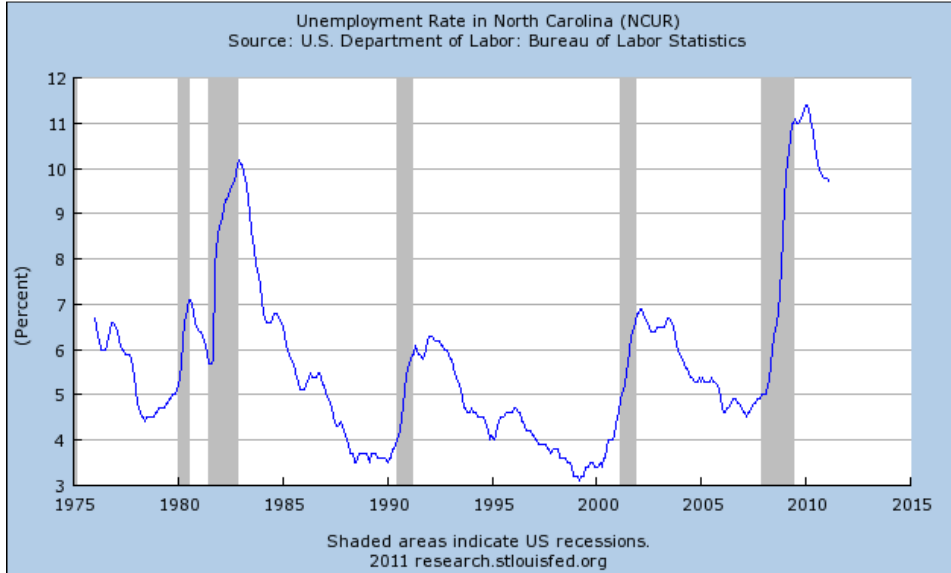
The Consumer Conference Board® also prepares other indices including the *Present Situation Index* and the *Expectations Index*. Interestingly, there was an improvement in the *Present Situation Index*. Its value increased from 33.8 in February 2011 to 36.9 in March 2011. The *Expectations Index* however registered a decline. Its value decreased to 81.1 from 97.5 from a month ago. (Source: <http://www.conference-board.org/data/consumerconfidence.cfm>)

For details about the variables measured in these indices please refer to the Board’s Website. The URL is <http://www.conference-board.org/>.

## North Carolina

Data show a similar trend in North Carolina. At the time of writing this document, the latest data available on unemployment rate were for February 2011. The unemployment rate in February 2011 was 9.7% in North Carolina. It declined from 9.8% in January 2011. Figure 5 plots these data. Below the figure, in Table 5, you will find data for the previous five months.

**Figure 5: North Carolina Unemployment Rate**



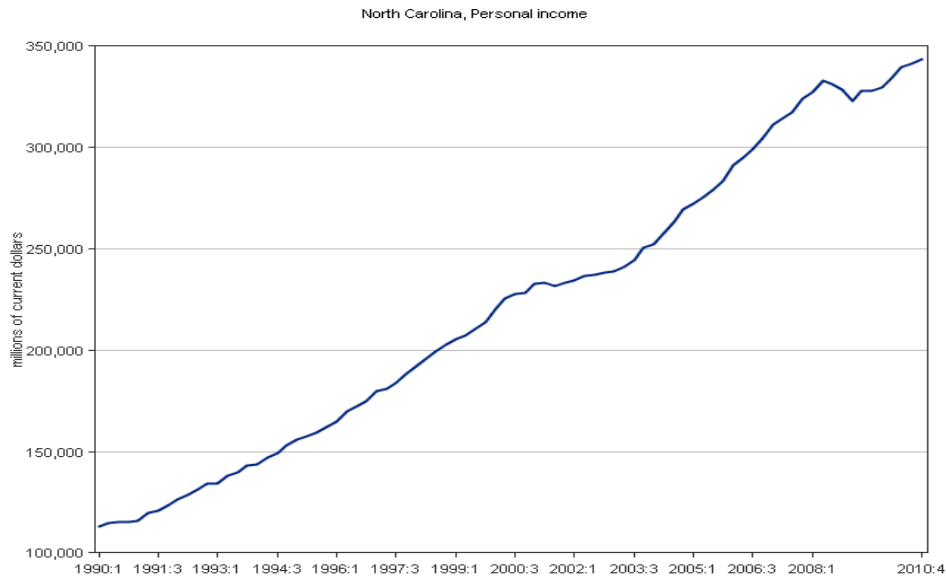
**Table 5: North Carolina Unemployment Rate**

Date	2010-10	2010-11	2010-12	2011-01	2011-02
Value	9.9	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.7

Source: [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

With regard to personal income, data also show a similar positive trend in North Carolina. Figure 6 plots data from the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 1990 to the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010. Table 6 below the figure presents data for the past five quarters.

**Figure 6: North Carolina Personal Income**



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

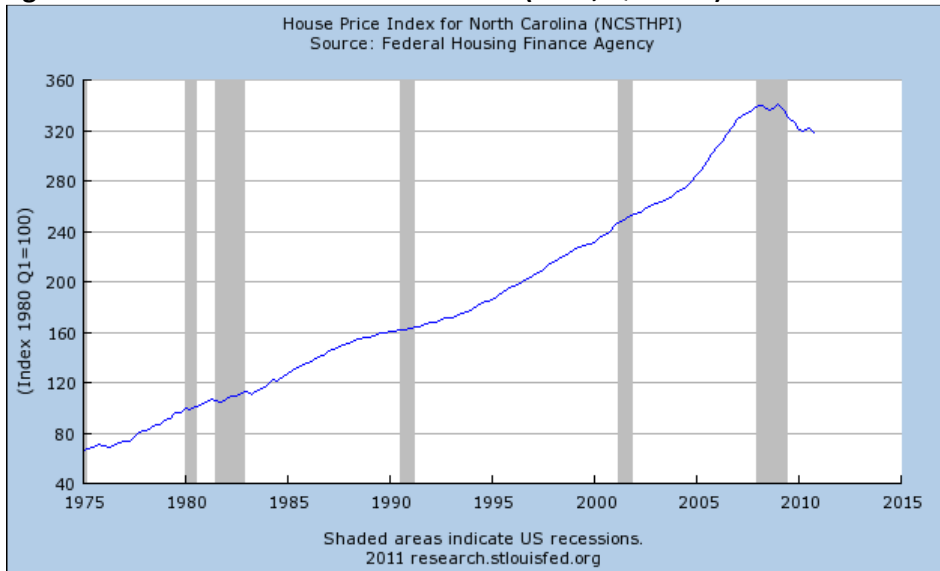
**Table 6: North Carolina Personal Income**

Period	North Carolina
2009:4	329,576
2010:1	334,923
2010:2	339,827
2010:3	341,097
2010:4	343,467

Source: [www.bea.gov](http://www.bea.gov)

As in the case of the US, housing industry in North Carolina continues to suffer. Figure 7 plots data for North Carolina, followed by data for the past five quarters in Table 7.

**Figure 7: North Carolina House Price Index (1980, Q1 = 100)**



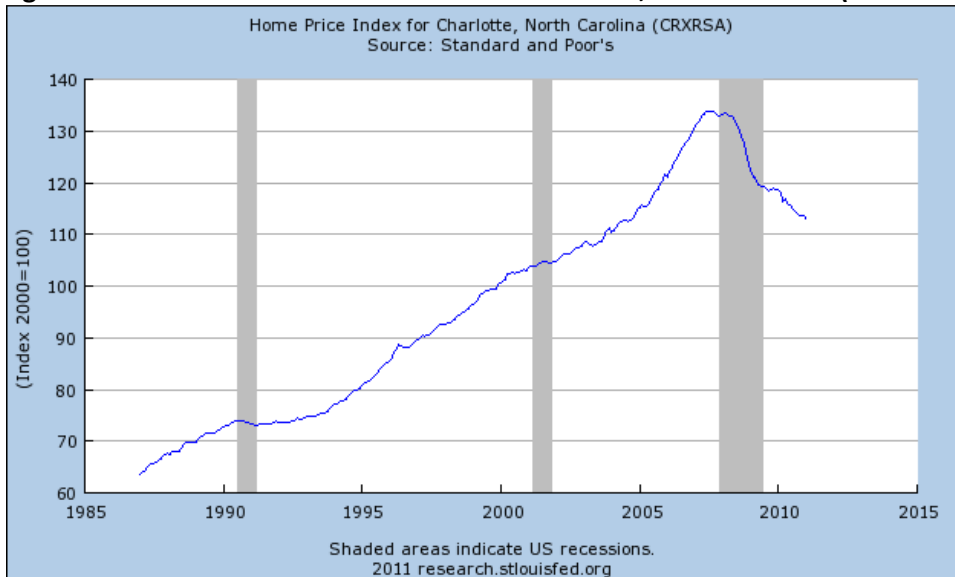
**Table 7: North Carolina House Price Index (1980, Q1 = 100)**

Date	2009:Q4	2010:Q1	2010:Q2	2010:Q3	2010:Q4
Value	326.30	320.74	319.91	321.26	318.64

Source: Federal Housing Finance Agency

We also present house price index data for Charlotte, North Carolina, in Figure 8. This figure is followed by Table 8 which provides data for the past five quarters.

**Figure 8: Case-Shiller Home Price Index for Charlotte, North Carolina (2000 = 100)**



**Table 8: Case-Shiller Home Price Index for Charlotte, North Carolina (2000 = 100)**

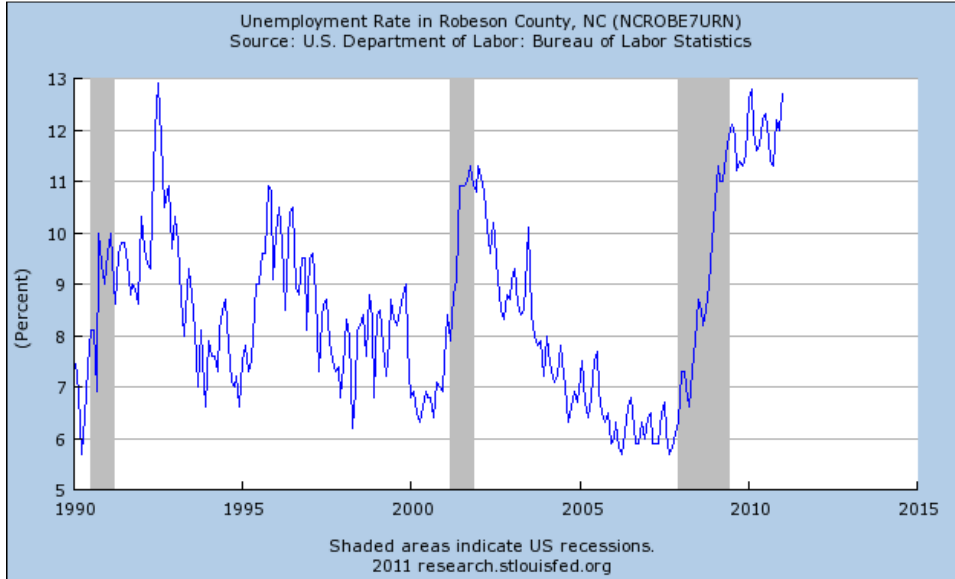
Date	2010-09	2010-10	2010-11	2010-12	2011-01
Value	114.08	113.70	113.69	113.73	112.99

Source: <http://www.standardandpoors.com/home/en/us>

## Robeson County

At the time of writing this document the latest unemployment data for Robeson County were available for January, 2011. The data show that the unemployment rate increased from 12% in December 2010 to 12.7% in January 2011. Figure 9 plots these data since 1990. Following this figure, Table 9 shows data for the past five months.

**Figure 9: Robeson County Unemployment Rate**



**Table 9: Robeson County Unemployment Rate**

Date	2010-09	2010-10	2010-11	2010-12	2011-01
Value	11.4	11.3	12.2	12.0	12.7

Source: [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

This document was prepared by:

Mohammad (Mitu) Ashraf, Ph.D.  
Professor of Economics  
Department of Economics, Finance, and Decision Sciences  
School of Business  
The University of North Carolina at Pembroke  
Email: [ashraf@uncp.edu](mailto:ashraf@uncp.edu)  
Web: [www.uncp.edu/home/ashraf](http://www.uncp.edu/home/ashraf)  
Phone: (910) 521-6464  
Fax: (910) 521-6750

**A Publication of the Office of Economic and Business Research  
School of Business  
The University of North Carolina at Pembroke**