

News Release

Embargoed for release:
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time
April 28, 2011

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What is the Midwest Economy Index?

The index is a weighted average of 128 state and regional indicators encompassing the entirety of the five states in the Seventh Federal Reserve District (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin). The index measures growth in nonfarm business activity based on indicators of four broad sectors of the Midwest economy: 1) manufacturing, 2) construction and mining, 3) services, and 4) consumer spending.

Why are there two index values?

Over long periods, growth in Midwest economic activity has tended to coincide with growth in national economic activity. However, over shorter periods of time this has not always been the case. To highlight such differences, we construct two separate index values. The MEI captures both national and regional factors driving Midwest growth, and the relative MEI provides a picture of Midwest growth conditions relative to those of the nation.

What do the index numbers mean?

A zero value for the MEI indicates that the Midwest economy is expanding at its historical trend rate of growth; positive values indicate above-average growth; and negative values indicate below-average growth. A zero value for the relative MEI indicates that the Midwest economy is growing at a rate historically consistent with the growth of the national economy; positive values indicate above-average relative growth; and negative values indicate below-average relative growth.

The next MEI will be released:

May 31, 2011
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time

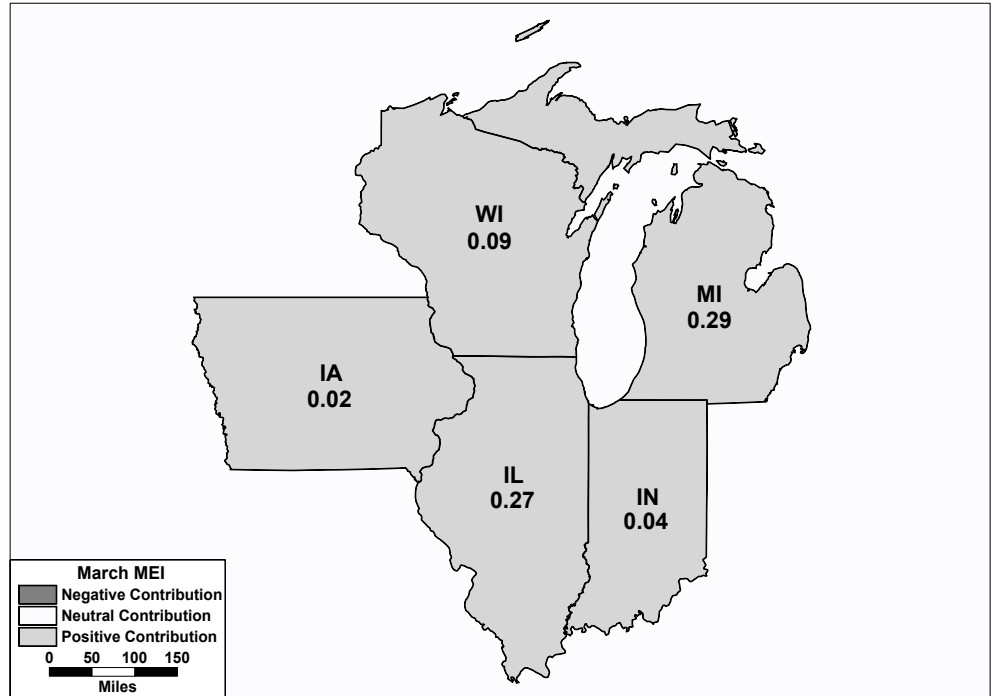
**FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
 OF CHICAGO**

Midwest Economy Index

Index shows robust Midwest economic growth in March

Led by gains in the manufacturing sector, the Midwest Economy Index (MEI) increased to +0.78 in March from +0.39 in February. March marked the highest level of the index since December 1999 and the sixth consecutive month that Midwest economic growth was above its historical trend. In addition, Midwest growth continued to outperform its historical deviation with respect to national growth, as the relative MEI increased to +0.62 in March from +0.26 in the previous month.

MEI and the Seventh Federal Reserve District States



Note: The map summarizes the most recent contribution to growth in Midwest economic activity from each of the five states that are in the Seventh Federal Reserve District (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin).

Sectoral and Geographic Contributions to the MEI and Relative MEI

March 2011

MEI

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	0.23	0.03	0.01	0.18	0.14	0.08	0.66
Construction	-0.04	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.09	-0.01	-0.21
Services	0.06	-0.01	0.01	0.08	0.01	0.00	0.15
Consumer	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.18
	0.27	0.04	0.02	0.29	0.09	0.07	0.78

Relative MEI

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Michigan	Wisconsin	Regional	
Manufacturing	0.30	0.02	0.01	0.17	0.17	-0.02	0.63
Construction	-0.03	0.01	-0.03	0.01	-0.11	-0.01	-0.14
Services	0.07	-0.08	0.01	0.11	-0.01	0.00	0.10
Consumer	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.03
	0.35	-0.06	0.00	0.31	0.05	-0.03	0.62

Notes: The table summarizes the most recent contribution to the MEI and relative MEI by sector and geography. The sectoral (rows) and geographic (columns) contributions may not sum to the index in each time period because of rounding. Manufacturing and construction and mining are composed of production and employment indicators. Services contains only employment indicators, while consumer spending contains employment, unemployment, per capita personal income, and home and retail sales indicators.

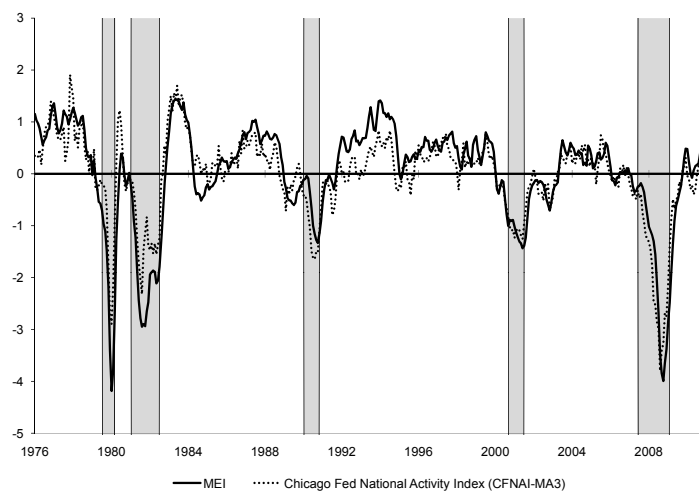
Manufacturing's contribution to the MEI improved to +0.66 in March from +0.46 in February. March's contribution was the manufacturing sector's largest to the index since March 1984. All five Seventh District states posted gains in manufacturing activity in March. Manufacturing's contribution to the relative MEI also increased, rising to +0.63 in March from +0.52 in the previous month.

The construction and mining sector's contribution to the MEI increased to -0.21 in March from -0.27 in February. Only Michigan saw a decrease in construction and mining activity in March. Construction and mining's contribution to the relative MEI also increased in March, rising to -0.14 from -0.21 in the previous month.

The service sector contributed +0.15 to the MEI in March, up from +0.02 in February. This sector's contribution to the index in March was its highest since April 2000. Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin made gains, while Indiana saw a slight decline. The sector's contribution to the relative MEI also improved, rising to +0.10 in March from -0.11 in the previous month.

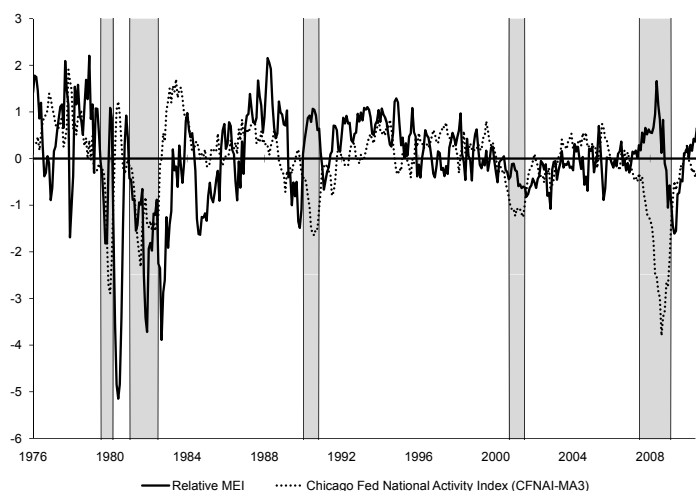
The contribution from consumer spending to the MEI was +0.18 in March, ticking up from +0.17 in February. March's contribution was regionally broad-based, and it marked the largest contribution from consumer spending since March 2006. However, consumer spending's contribution to the relative MEI edged lower to +0.03 in March from +0.05 in February.

MEI



Notes: Both the MEI and the CFNAI-MA3 have been standardized to have a zero mean and are expressed in standard deviation units. MEI values greater than zero indicate growth in Midwest economic activity above its historical trend, and CFNAI-MA3 values greater than zero indicate growth in national economic activity above its historical trend; negative values indicate the opposite. Shading indicates official periods of recession as identified by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Relative MEI



Notes: Both the relative MEI and the CFNAI-MA3 have been standardized to have a zero mean and are expressed in standard deviation units. The relative MEI is constructed from the standardized residuals from linear regressions of each of the 128 MEI indicators on the CFNAI-MA3. Relative MEI values greater than zero indicate that growth in Midwest economic activity is higher on average than would typically be suggested based on the CFNAI-MA3; negative values indicate the opposite. Shading indicates official periods of recession as identified by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

2011 MEI Release Dates

<i>Date of Release</i>	<i>Monthly Data for</i>
<i>May 31, 2011</i>	<i>April 2011</i>
<i>June 30, 2011</i>	<i>May 2011</i>
<i>July 29, 2011</i>	<i>June 2011</i>
<i>August 29, 2011</i>	<i>July 2011</i>
<i>September 29, 2011</i>	<i>August 2011</i>
<i>October 31, 2011</i>	<i>September 2011</i>
<i>November 30, 2011</i>	<i>October 2011</i>
<i>December 29, 2011</i>	<i>November 2011</i>

MEI historical data and background information are available at www.chicagofed.org/mei.