



Data Digest: Alabama

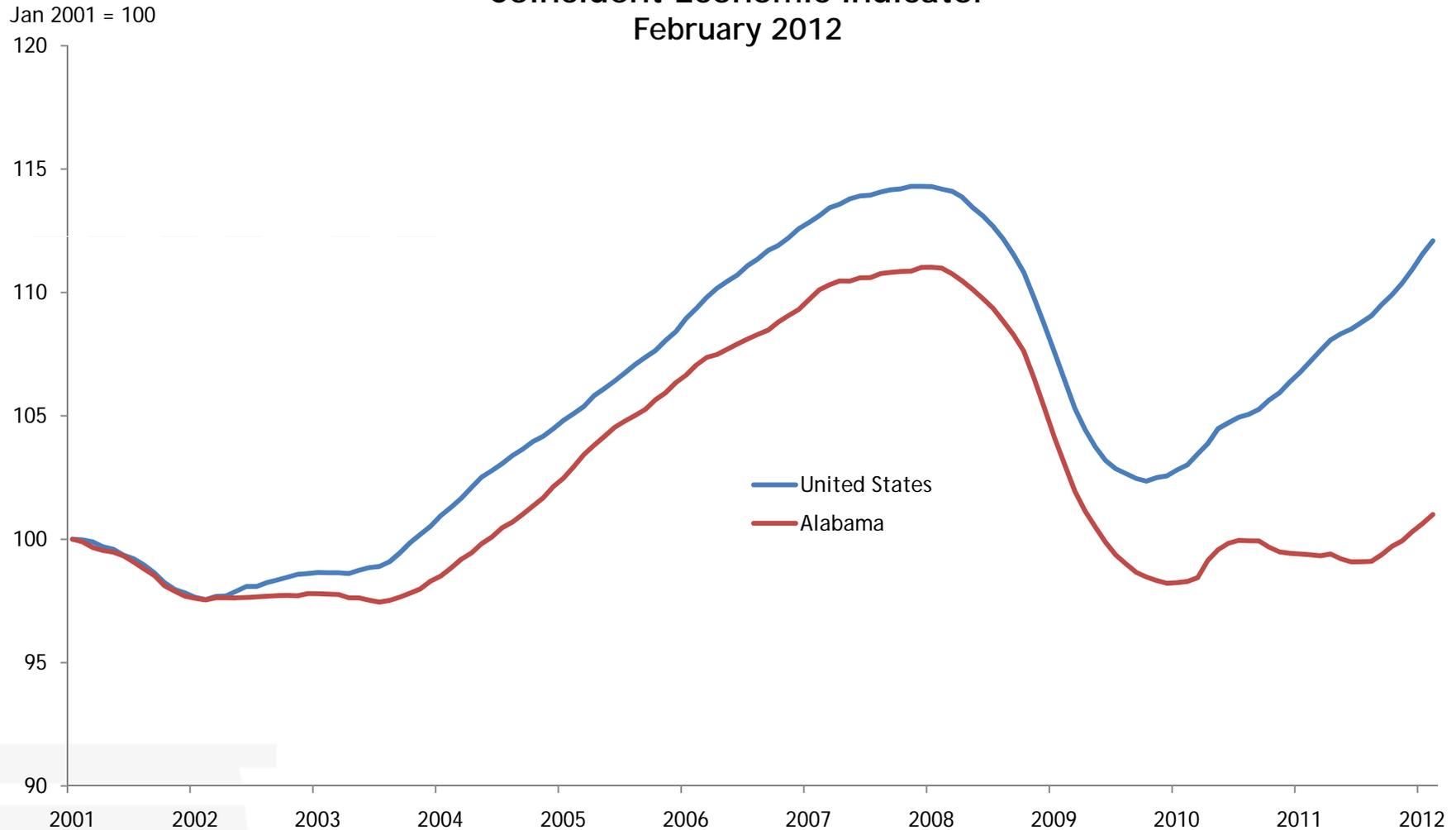
April 2012



A broad indicator of U.S. economic activity continued to improve steadily in February. Although the indicator for Alabama remains below the national level, it has been improving over the past several months and is at its highest level since April 2009.

[About the Coincident Economic Indicator](#)

Coincident Economic Indicator February 2012



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

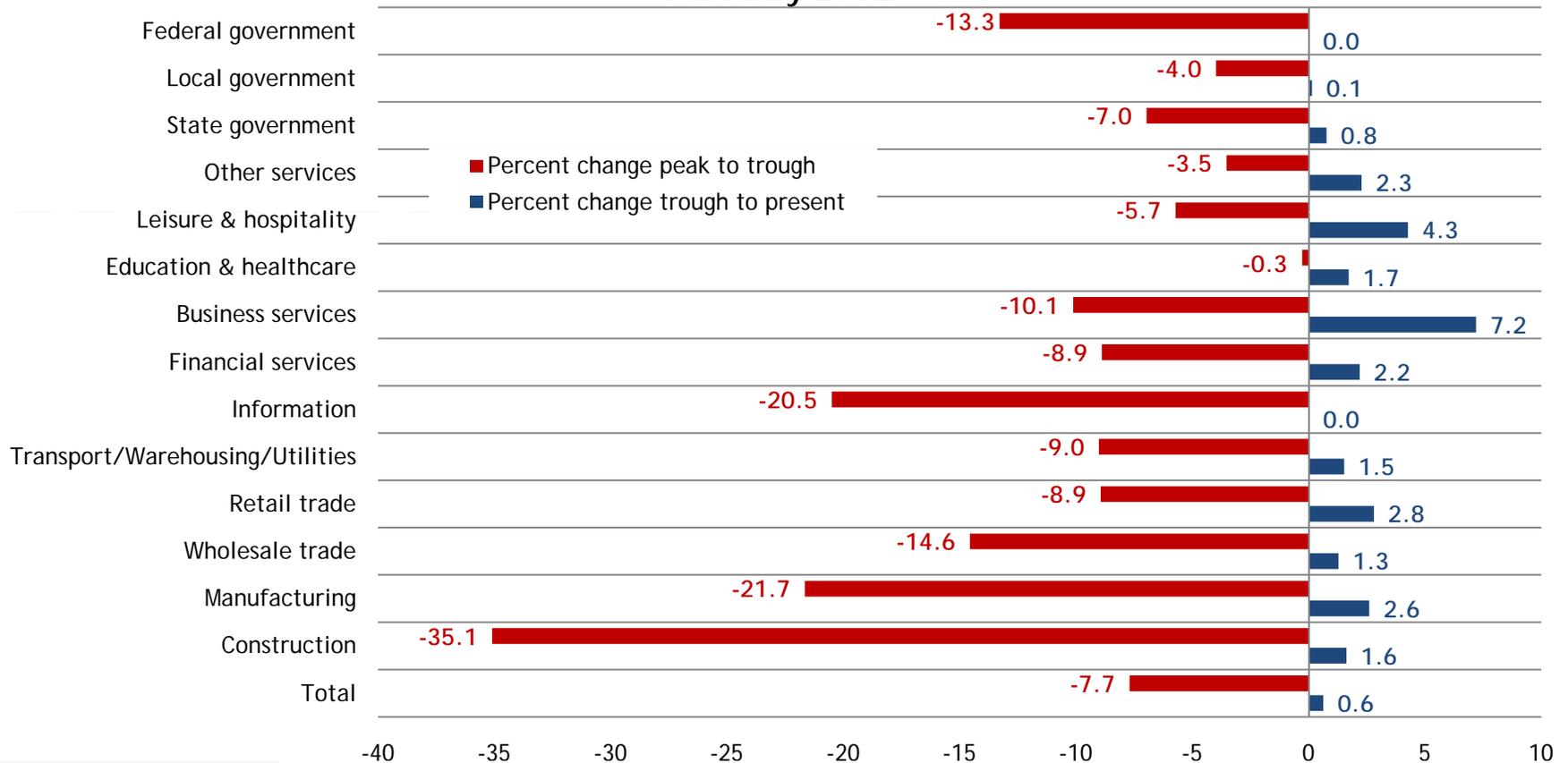
Total employment in Alabama has stabilized near recession lows and job gains remain modest.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Haver Analytics

All industries lost jobs during the downturn. The construction industry was the hardest hit, losing more than 35 percent of its jobs. Most sectors have seen job gains since their troughs, with business services experiencing the largest increase.

Employment Loss and Gain by Industry: Alabama February 2012



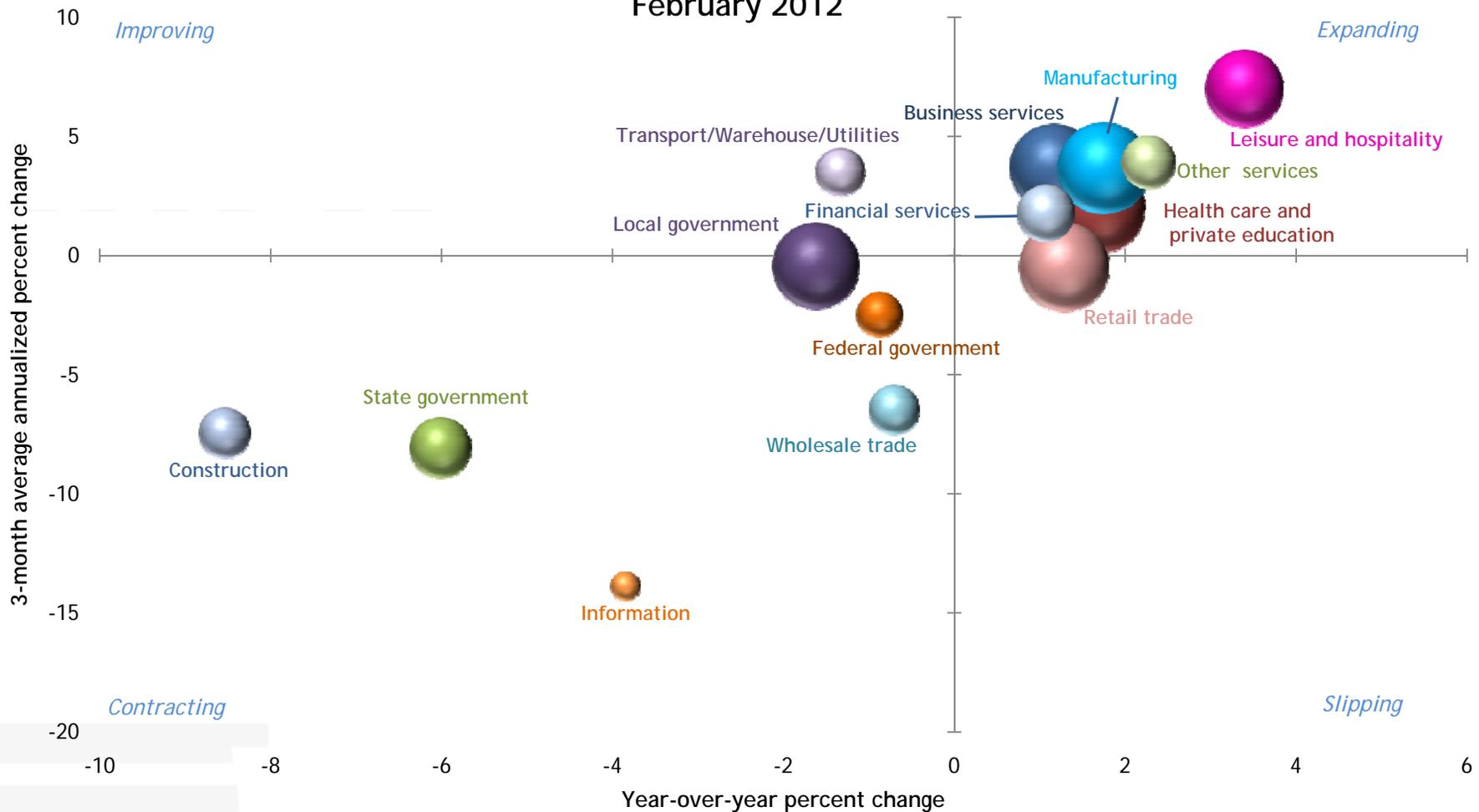
Note: A reading of 0.0 in the “trough to present” measure indicates that employment continues to decline in these industries. Likewise, a reading of 0.0 in the “peak to trough” measure indicates that employment continues to increase in these industries; in this instance “trough to present” is the percent change from January 2007 to present.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Haver Analytics, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Employment momentum in leisure and hospitality, business services, manufacturing, financial services, other services, and health care and private education expanded in February. Retail trade slipped and transportation/warehouse/utilities momentum improved. The remaining industries contracted.

[About Employment Momentum](#)

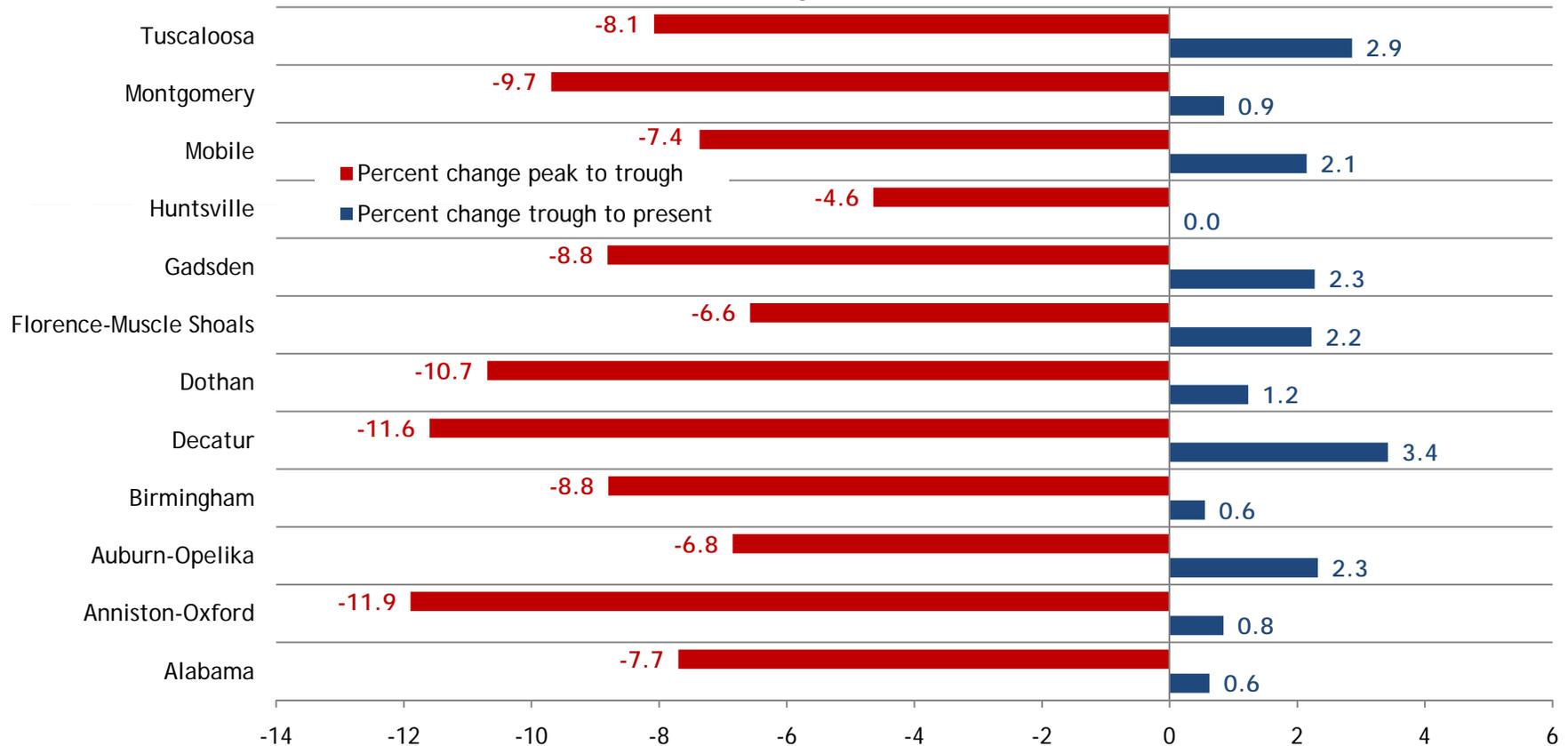
Employment Momentum by Industry: Alabama February 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Haver Analytics, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Job losses occurred throughout the state during the downturn; Dothan, Decatur, and Anniston-Oxford metro areas lost more than 10 percent of their jobs. All metro areas except Huntsville have regained jobs since their trough. Huntsville has not regained jobs since its trough.

Employment Loss and Gain by Metro Area: Alabama February 2012

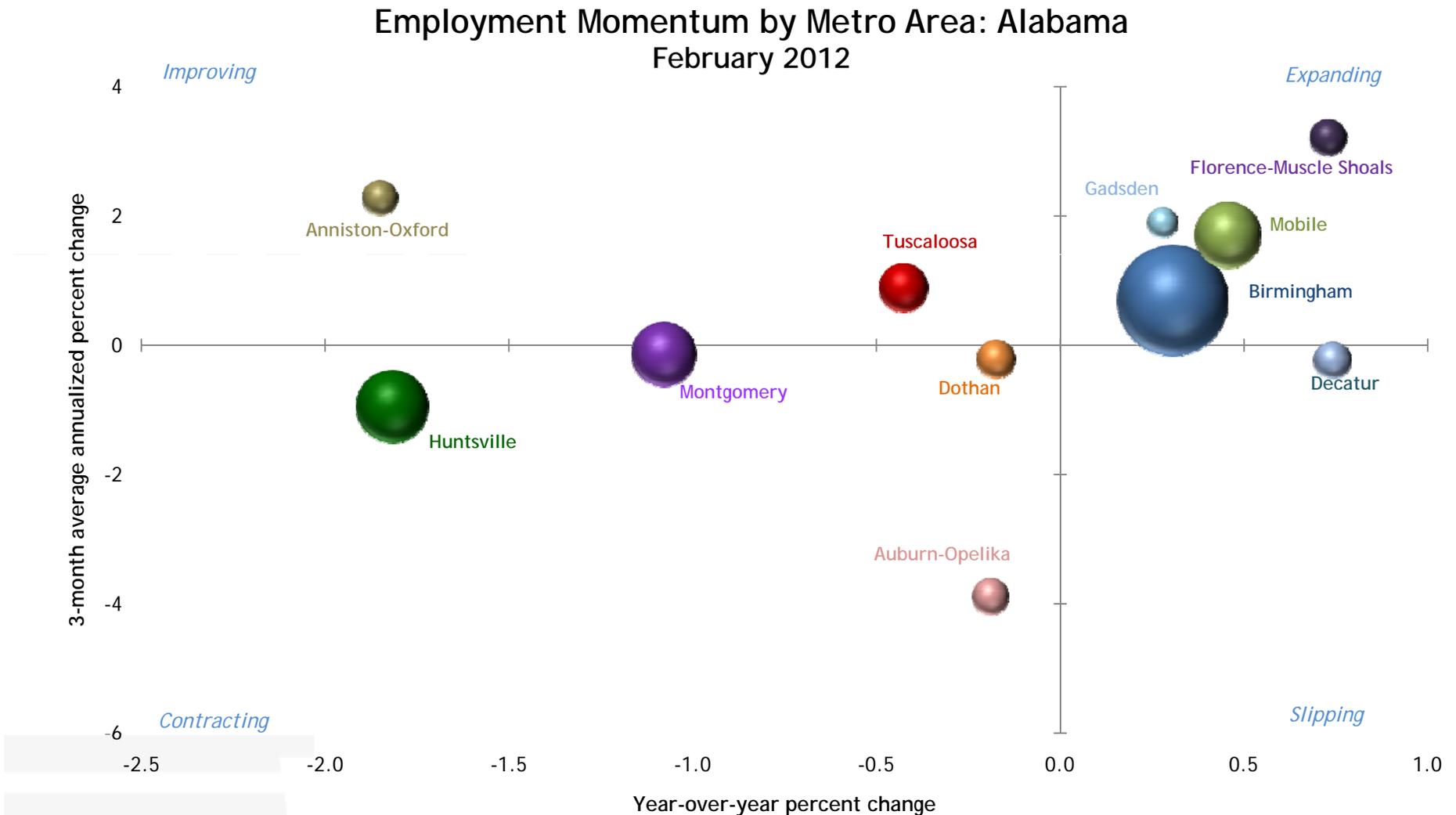


Note: A reading of 0.0 in the “trough to present” measure indicates that employment continues to decline in these metro areas. Likewise, a reading of 0.0 in the “peak to trough” measure indicates that employment continues to increase in these metro areas; in this instance “trough to present” is the percent change from January 2007 to present.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Haver Analytics, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

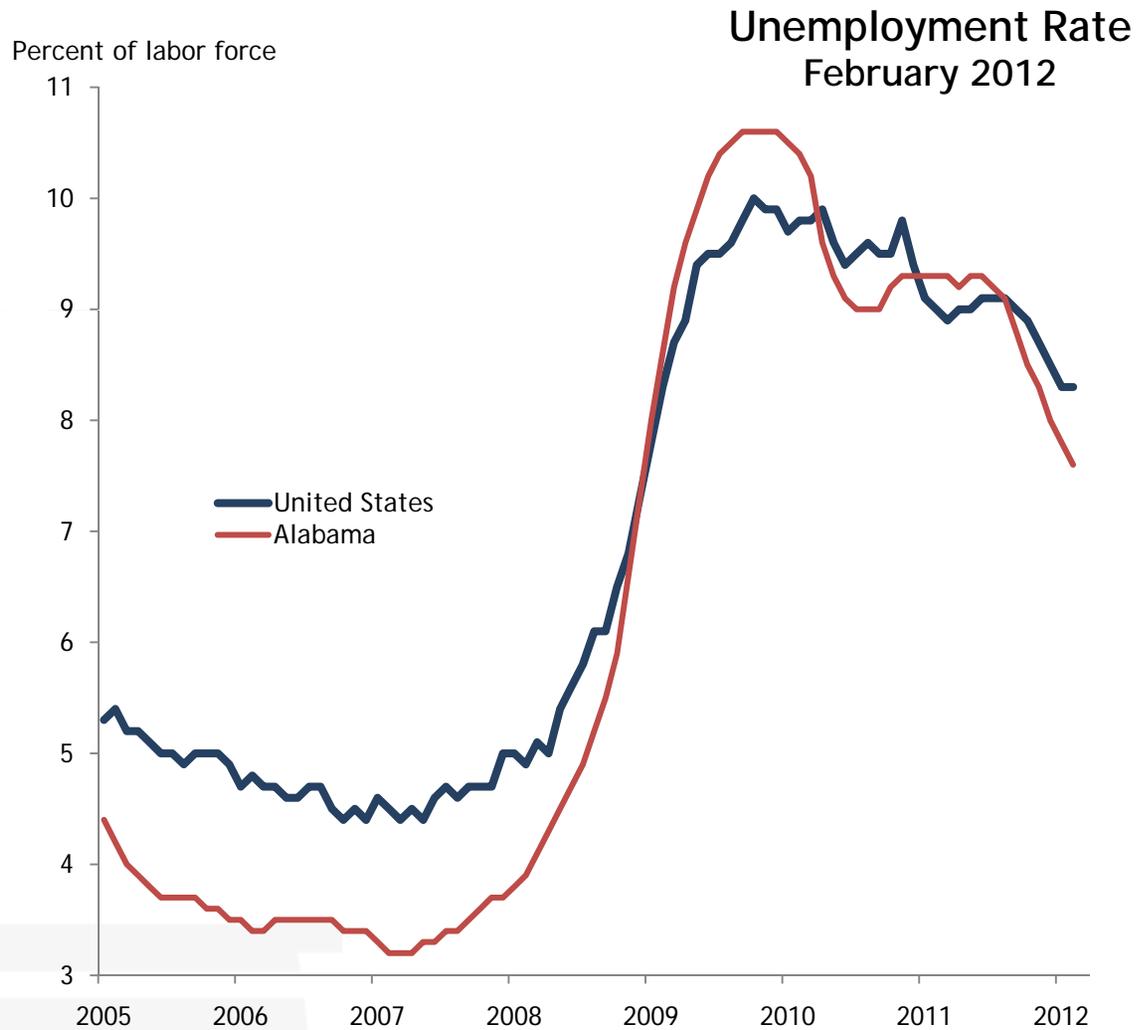
Employment momentum in Birmingham, Mobile, Gadsden, and Florence-Muscle Shoals expanded in February. Anniston-Oxford and Tuscaloosa experienced improved momentum; Decatur fell into the “slipping” quadrant. Momentum in Huntsville, Montgomery, Dothan, and Auburn-Opelika contracted.

[About Employment Momentum](#)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Haver Analytics, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

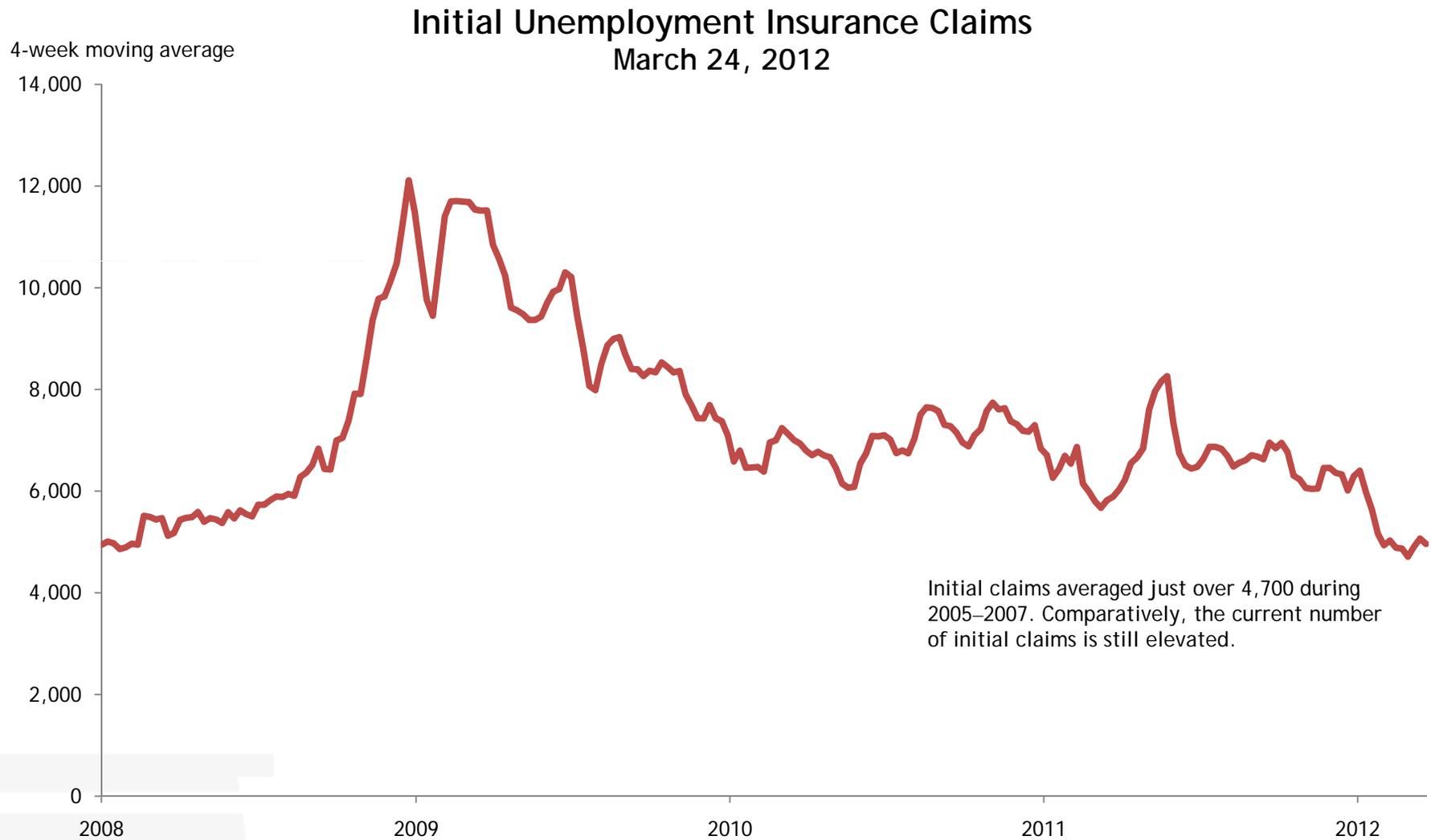
Until the recession, Alabama's unemployment rate was well below the overall U.S. rate. Alabama's rate fell during the last half of 2011 and is now below the U.S. rate again. Unemployment rates for the state and all metro areas are lower than year-ago rates.



Unemployment Rates			
	Current	Year Ago	Jan 2007
United States	8.3	9.0	4.6
Alabama	7.6	9.3	3.3
Anniston	8.3	9.6	3.5
Auburn-Opelika	6.4	7.9	3.5
Birmingham	7.2	9.0	3.3
Decatur	8.0	9.7	3.6
Dothan	7.4	9.0	3.3
Florence	7.8	9.3	4.2
Gadsden	7.9	9.8	4.1
Huntsville	6.9	7.9	3.0
Mobile	9.0	10.6	3.6
Montgomery	8.0	9.4	3.7
Tuscaloosa	7.3	8.7	3.2

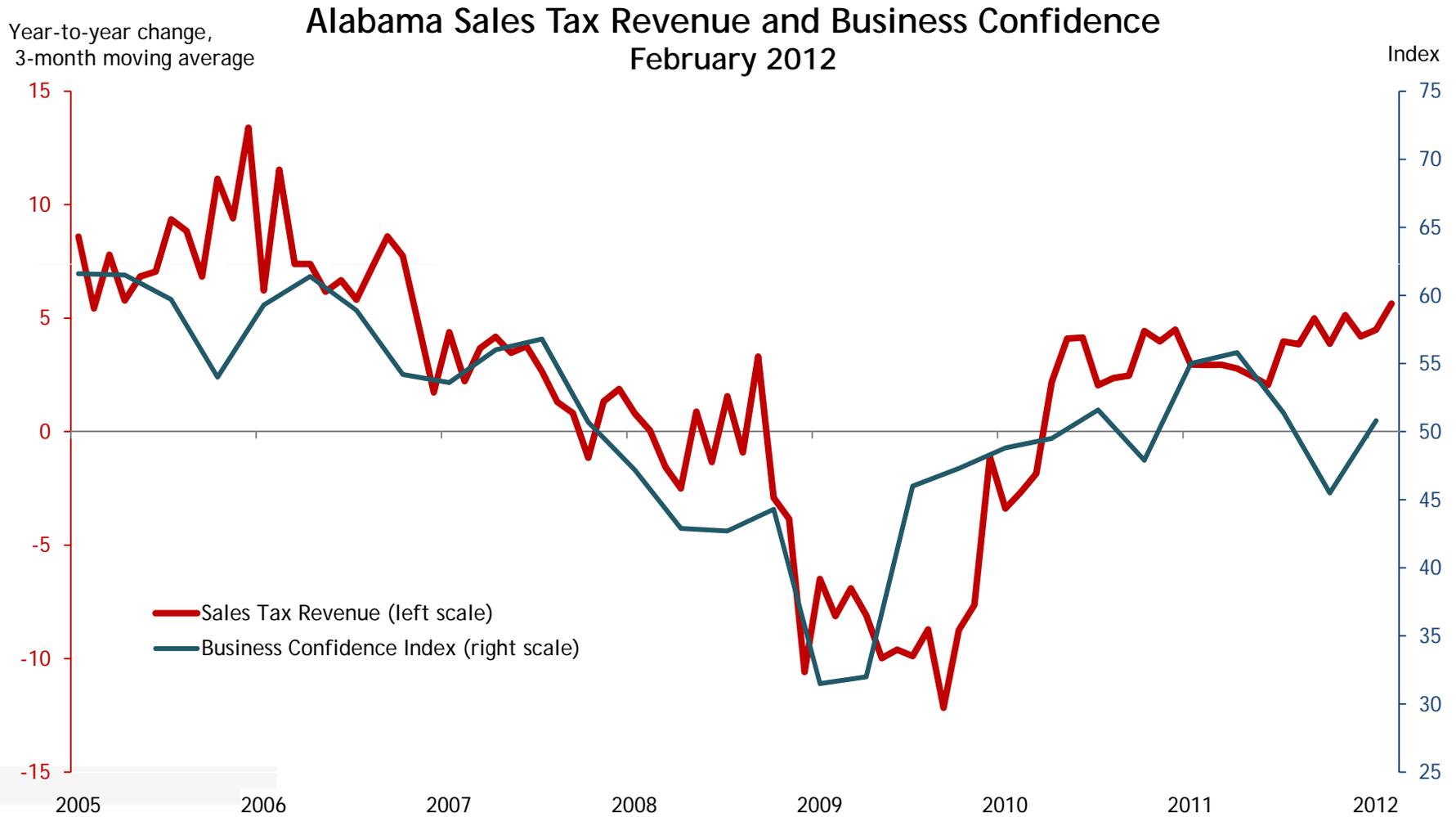
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Haver Analytics

Initial claims for unemployment insurance have declined following the spike after tornadoes hit several parts of the state in April 2011.



Source: U.S Department of Labor–Employment and Training Administration, Haver Analytics

Business confidence, as measured by the University of Alabama's survey, moved back into positive territory for the first quarter of 2012. Business confidence improved in the manufacturing, transportation, information, and utilities sectors. Sales tax revenue continues to experience positive year-over-year growth.

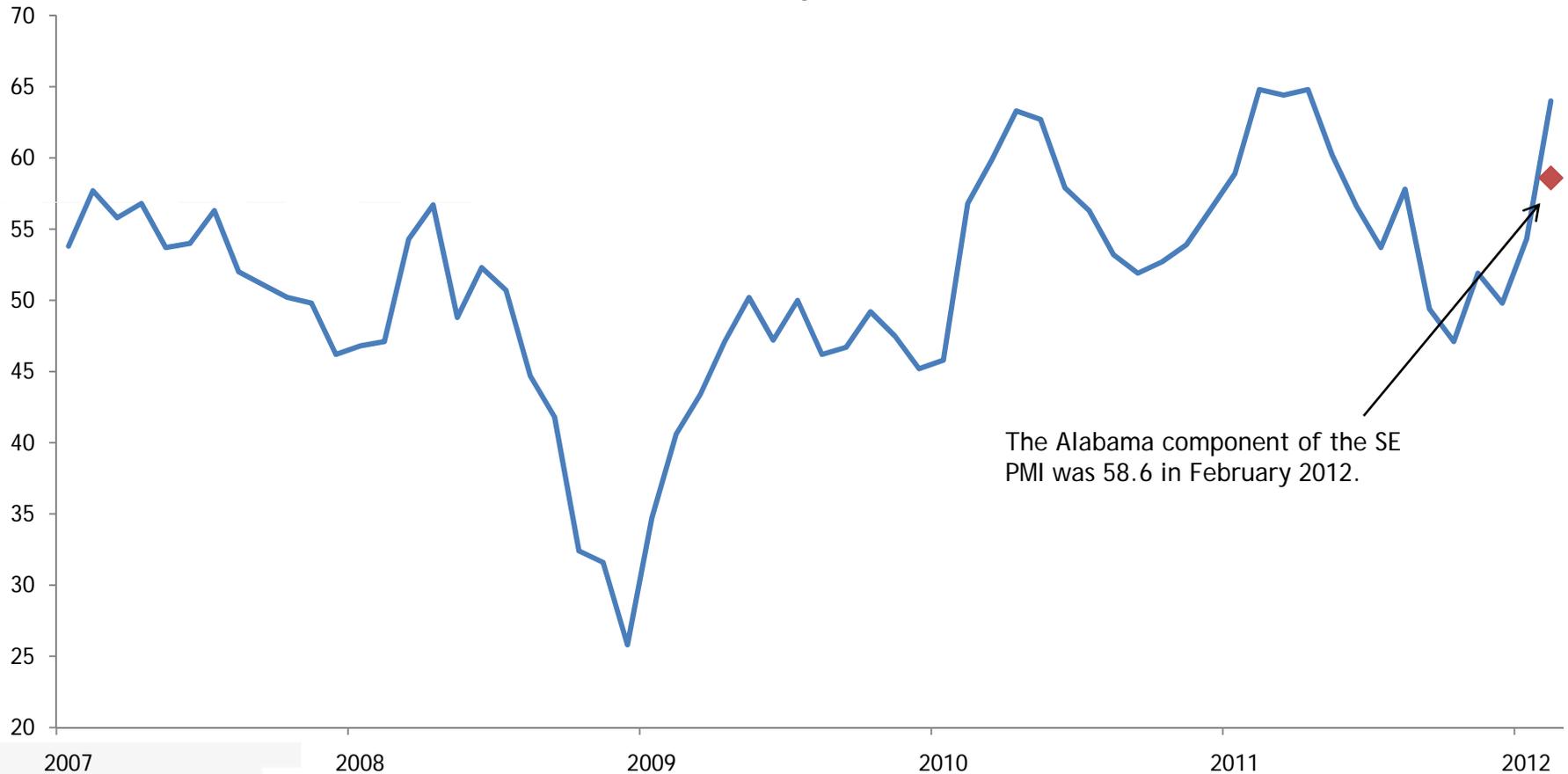


Note: Sales tax data are through February 2012; Business Confidence Index as of first quarter 2012.

Source: Alabama Department of Revenue, University of Alabama Center for Business and Economic Research, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Regional manufacturing activity accelerated in February, according to the Southeast Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) produced by Kennesaw State University. Alabama's component measure of 58.6 fell below the overall regional reading of 64, but remained in expansionary territory.

Southeast Purchasing Managers Index
February 2012



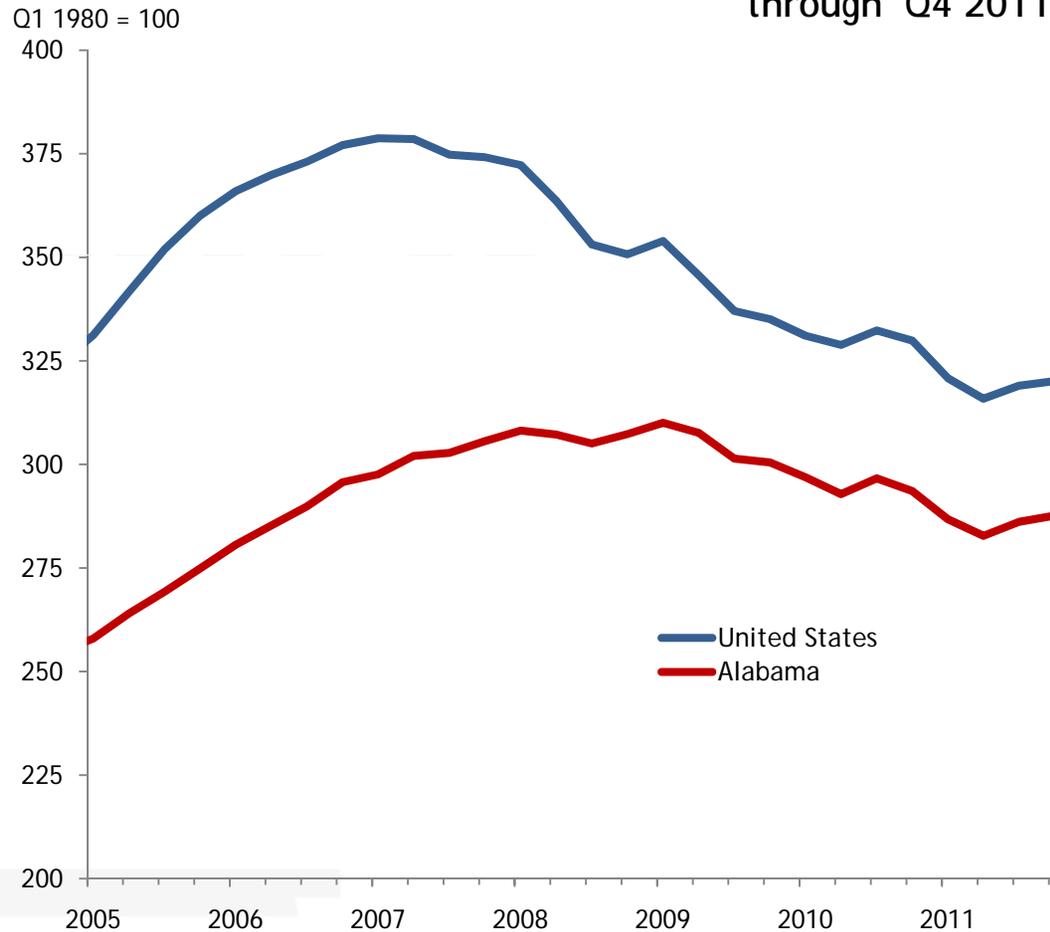
The Alabama component of the SE PMI was 58.6 in February 2012.

Note: 50+ = Expansion

Source: Kennesaw State University, Coles College of Business Econometric Center

Fourth quarter data indicated that home prices improved for both Alabama and the United States, marking the second consecutive quarter improvement.

Federal Housing Finance Agency Home Price Index through Q4 2011



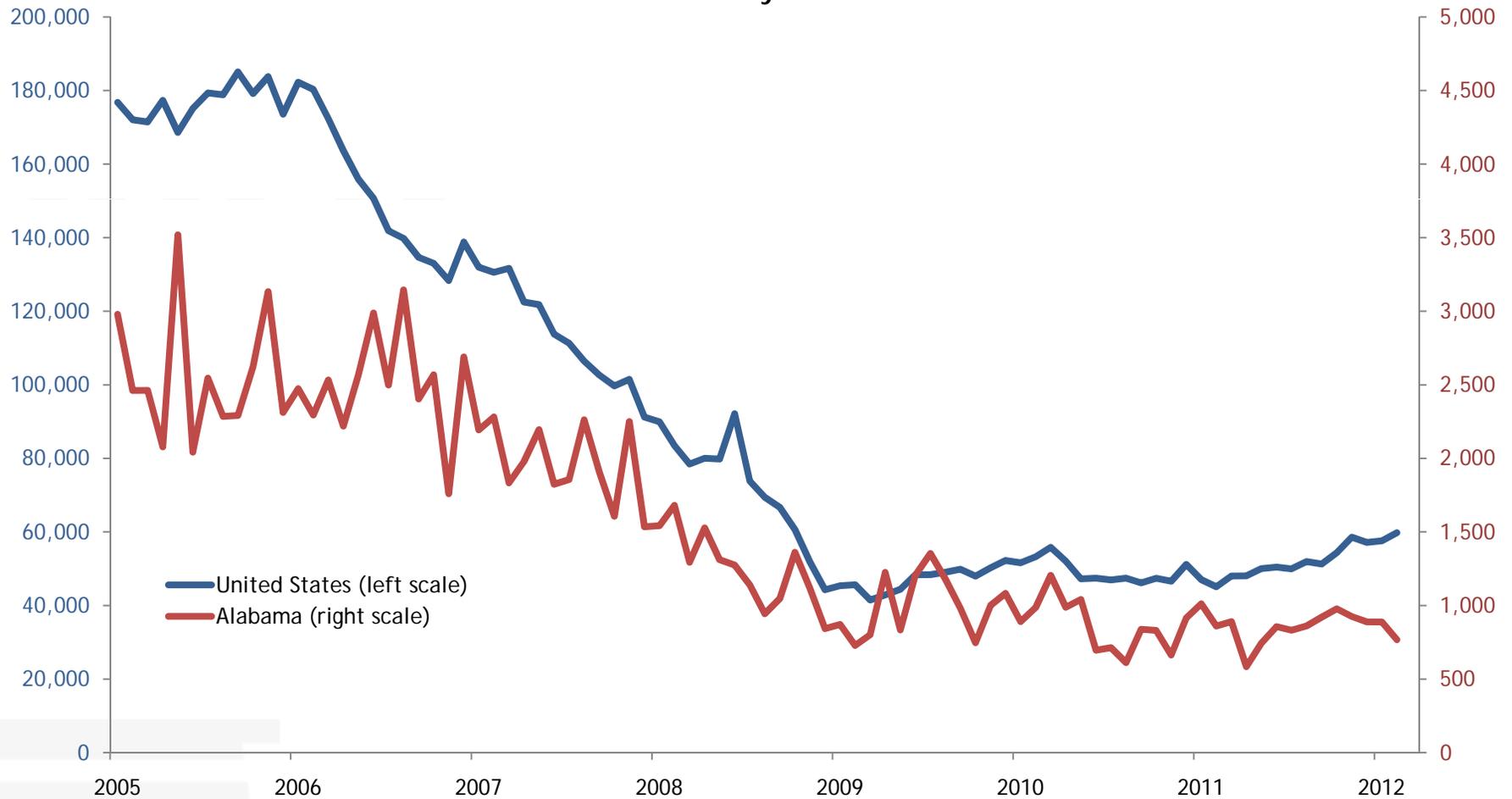
FHFA House Price Index: Q4 2011	1-yr % change	5-yr % change	10-yr % change
USA	-3.0	-15.1	24.3
Alabama	-2.0	-2.7	26.6
Anniston-Oxford	-2.4	-3.1	22.9
Auburn-Opelika	-3.0	-7.7	28.7
Birmingham	-2.0	-5.4	22.6
Decatur	-3.6	4.1	22.6
Dothan	-5.8	-4.5	24.3
Florence-Muscle Shoals	-1.1	5.9	28.1
Gadsden	0.6	1.3	29.0
Huntsville	-1.5	5.0	33.3
Mobile	-4.8	-7.9	25.5
Montgomery	-2.4	-5.3	19.3
Tuscaloosa	-2.0	0.5	27.6

Source: Federal Housing Finance Agency, Haver Analytics

Source: Federal Housing Finance Agency, Haver Analytics, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

New home construction has stabilized at very low levels. In Alabama, the number of new residential construction permits has fallen for the past four months.

New Residential Home Construction Permits
February 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Haver Analytics

For additional sources of information, see our Local Economic Analysis Research Network membership at www.frbatlanta.org/rein/learn/map/learn_members.cfm.