

News Release

Embargoed for release:
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time
March 29, 2013

Contact:
Laura LaBarbera
Media Relations
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
312-322-2387

What is the Midwest Economy Index?

The index is a weighted average of 129 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:
April 26, 2013
8:30 am Eastern Time
7:30 am Central Time

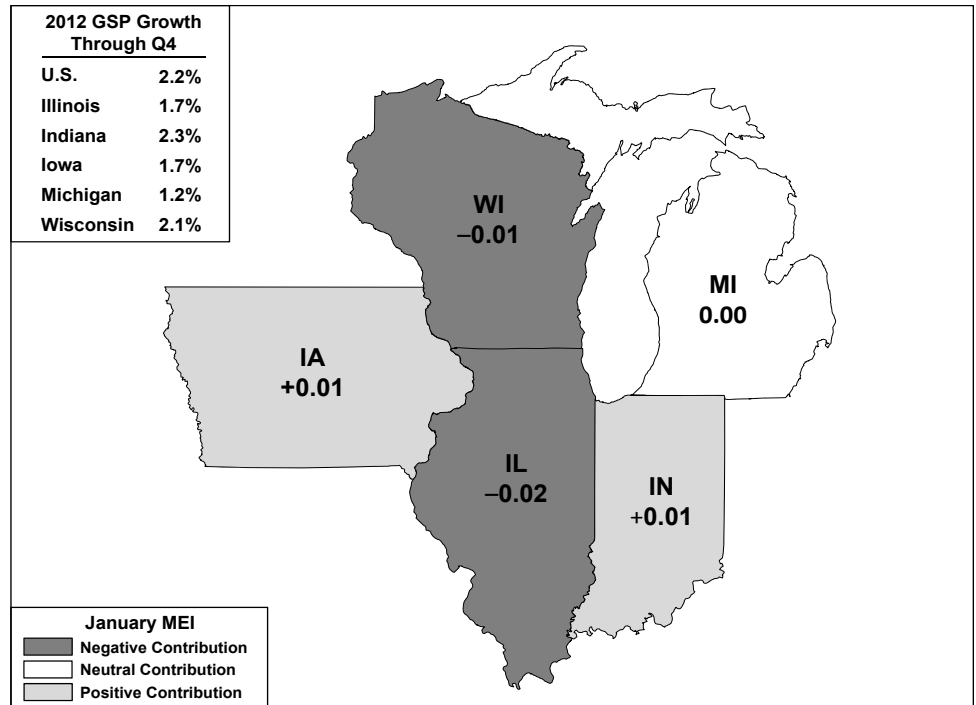
**FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
 OF CHICAGO**

Midwest Economy Index

Index shows Midwest economic growth improved in January

The Midwest Economy Index (MEI) increased to +0.04 in January from -0.10 in December, marking its first positive value since June 2012. The relative MEI, however, decreased to -0.24 in January from -0.18 in December, remaining negative for the second straight month. Estimates of annual growth in gross state product for the five Seventh District states were updated through the fourth quarter of 2012 in this release. The estimate for Indiana was higher than the national rate of growth, while the estimates for Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan were lower.

MEI, GSP Growth, and the Seventh Federal Reserve District States



Notes: The map's shading summarizes the most recent contribution to growth in Midwest economic activity from each of the five states in the Seventh Federal Reserve District (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin). The values displayed in the table within the map are the year-to-date forecasts of annual growth in real gross state product (GSP) using data through the fourth quarter of 2012. U.S. GSP growth indicates year-to-date annual real gross domestic product growth over the same period.

Sectoral and Geographic Contributions to the MEI and Relative MEI

January 2013

MEI

| | Illinois | Indiana | Iowa | Michigan | Wisconsin | Regional | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Manufacturing | -0.02 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.05 |
| Construction | -0.04 | -0.05 | 0.01 | -0.02 | 0.00 | -0.01 | -0.12 |
| Services | 0.04 | 0.05 | -0.01 | 0.00 | -0.01 | 0.00 | 0.07 |
| Consumer | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.04 |
| | -0.02 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 | -0.01 | 0.04 | 0.04 |

Relative MEI

| | Illinois | Indiana | Iowa | Michigan | Wisconsin | Regional | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Manufacturing | -0.08 | 0.01 | 0.06 | -0.03 | -0.05 | -0.02 | -0.11 |
| Construction | -0.03 | -0.07 | 0.01 | -0.02 | 0.01 | 0.00 | -0.10 |
| Services | 0.04 | 0.10 | -0.04 | -0.02 | -0.12 | 0.00 | -0.03 |
| Consumer | 0.01 | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | -0.05 | 0.04 | 0.03 | -0.07 | -0.16 | -0.02 | -0.24 |

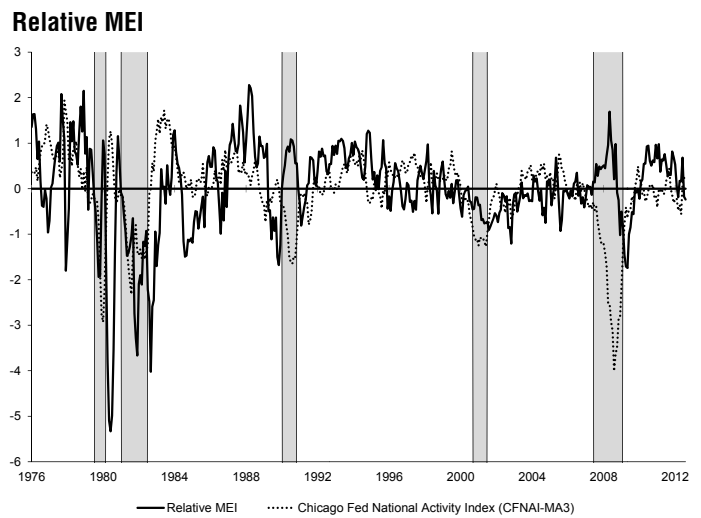
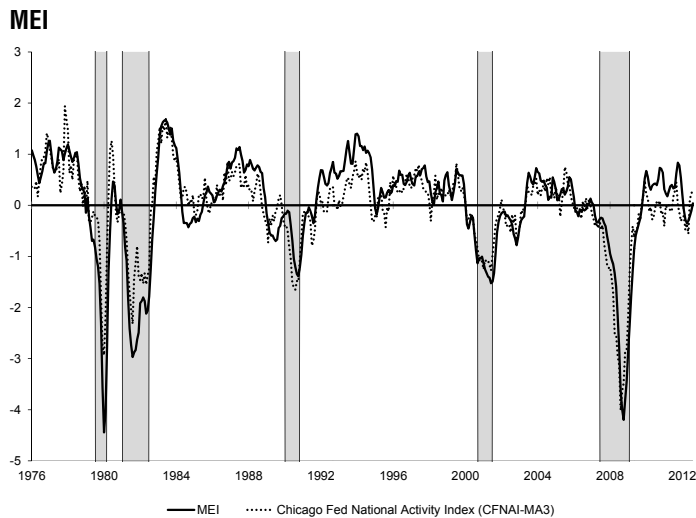
Notes: The table summarizes the most recent contribution to the MEI and relative MEI by sector and geography. The sectoral (rows) and geographic (columns) contributions may not sum to the index in each time period because of rounding. Manufacturing and construction and mining are composed of production 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 increased to +0.05 in January from -0.07 in December, registering its first positive contribution in five months. The pace of manufacturing activity increased in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, but decreased in Michigan and was unchanged in Indiana. Manufacturing's contribution to the relative MEI increased to -0.11 in January from -0.13 in December.

The construction and mining sector's contribution to the MEI ticked down to -0.12 in January from -0.11 in December. The pace of construction and mining activity decreased in Illinois and Indiana, but increased in Michigan and Wisconsin and was unchanged in Iowa. Construction and mining's contribution to the relative MEI decreased to -0.10 in January from -0.08 in December.

The service sector contributed +0.07 to the MEI in January, up from +0.03 in December. The pace of service sector activity was higher in Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin, but was lower in Iowa and steady in Illinois. The service sector's contribution to the relative MEI edged down to -0.03 in January from -0.01 in December.

The contribution from consumer spending indicators to the MEI ticked down to +0.04 in January from +0.05 in December. Consumer spending indicators were lower on balance in Iowa and Wisconsin, but were roughly unchanged in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. Consumer spending's contribution to the relative MEI was neutral in January, down from +0.04 in December.



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.

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 129 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.

2013 MEI Release Dates

| <i>Date of Release</i> | <i>Monthly Data for</i> | <i>GSP Growth Forecasts through</i> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| April 26, 2013 | February/March 2013 | |
| May 30, 2013 | April 2013 | |
| June 28, 2013 | May 2013 | 2013:Q1 |
| July 29, 2013 | June 2013 | |
| August 29, 2013 | July 2013 | |
| September 30, 2013 | August 2013 | 2013:Q2 |
| October 31, 2013 | September 2013 | |
| November 29, 2013 | October 2013 | |
| December 30, 2013 | November 2013 | 2013:Q3 |

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