

U.S. MARKET:

Gross Domestic Product	<p>The U.S. GDP increased at an annual rate of 0.7% in the first quarter of 2017 according to the “advance” estimate released by the Bureau of Economic Analysis in late April. In the fourth quarter, real GDP increased 2.1%. The increase in real GDP in the first quarter reflected positive contributions from nonresidential fixed investment, exports, residential fixed investment, and personal consumption expenditures (PCE), that were offset by negative contributions from private inventory investment, state and local government spending, and federal government spending. The first-quarter advance estimate is based on source data that are incomplete or subject to further revision by the source agency. (Source: US BEA) The latest GDPNow model forecast for real GDP growth (seasonally adjusted annual rate) in the second quarter of 2017 is 3.6%. (Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta) <i>(The GDPNow forecast aggregates statistical model forecasts of 13 subcomponents that comprise GDP.)</i></p>
U.S. Trade Deficit	<p>The U.S. goods and services trade deficit decreased 0.23% in March 2017 to \$43.7 billion. Exports of goods decreased 1.6% to \$126.3 billion and imports of goods decreased 0.87% to \$191.8 billion. (Source: US DOC & Census Bureau)</p>
Unemployment Rate	<p>The unemployment rate in America decreased to 4.4% in April 2017, the lowest rate since May 2007. A preliminary 211,000 net new jobs were created in April 2017, exceeding the expectations of most economists. In April, leisure and hospitality created the most net new jobs, followed by health care and social activities, financial activities, and mining. The unemployment rate in Georgia was 5.1% in March 2017. (Source: US DOL)</p>
Workforce Participation Rate	<p>The workforce participation rate was 62.9 in April 2017, down 16basis points from the prior month. The all-time high level was 67.3 in January 2000. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) <i>(The Workforce Participation Rate measures the share of Americans at least 16 years old who are either employed or actively looking for work)</i></p>
Leading Economic Index	<p>The Leading Economic Index for the U.S. increased 0.32% in April 2017, ending at a reading of 126.9. According to The Conference Board, the recent upward trend in the LEI continues to point to a growing economy. While the majority of leading indicators have been contributing positively in recent months, there primary sources of weakness in the U.S. LEI are housing permits and average workweek in manufacturing . (Source: Conference Board) <i>(The LEI is a composite of 10 economic indicators that together create an analytic system designed to signal peaks and troughs in the business cycle. The LEI reveals patterns in economic data in a clearer and more convincing manner than any individual component alone.)</i></p>
Housing Starts	<p>In March, housing starts were an annualized 1,220,000 units, down 5.4% from the previous month and the lowest total in four months, but still solid compared to nearly all months since 2008. In the first quarter of 2017, total housing starts were up 8.1% over the first quarter of 2016. The index of pending home sales (sales that haven’t closed yet but contracts have been signed) was 111.4 in March 2017, down 0.8% from the previous month, but 0.8% higher from March 2016. According to the National Association of Realtors, sparse inventory levels caused a pullback in pending sales in March, but activity was still strong enough to be the third best month in the past year. (Source: U.S. DOC, National Association of Realtors)</p>
Personal Income	<p>Personal Income increased 0.24% to \$16.4 trillion in March. The increase in personal income in March primarily reflected increases in government social benefits to persons, nonfarm proprietors’ income, and compensation of employees. During Q4 2016, Personal Income in Georgia was estimated at \$433.8 billion, an increase of 1.0% from Q3. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis) <i>(Personal income is the income received by a person from all sources. It includes income from domestic sources as well as the rest of the world. It does not include realized or unrealized capital gains or losses).</i></p>
Retail Sales	<p>Advanced estimates of retail and food service sales in April 2017 were \$474.9 billion, an increase of 0.39% from the previous month, and up 4.75% from April 2016. Non-store retail sales were up 1.4% from the same month last year, and include internet-only sales outlets as well as other direct-to-customer channels. (Source: US Census)</p>
E-Commerce	<p>The estimate of U.S. retail e-commerce sales for the first quarter of 2017, adjusted for seasonal variation, was \$105.7 billion, an increase of 4.1% from the fourth quarter of 2016 and 14.7% higher than the first quarter of 2016. (Source: US Census)</p>
Consumer Confidence	<p>The Consumer Confidence Index decreased to 120.3 in April, down 3.68% from March. According to The Conference Board, consumers assessed current business conditions and, to a lesser extent, the labor market less favorably than in March. Looking ahead, consumers were somewhat less optimistic about the short-term outlook for business conditions, employment and income prospects. Despite April’s decline, according to this index consumers remain confident that the economy will continue to expand in the months ahead. (Source: The Conference Board) <i>(The consumer confidence index is based on a monthly survey of 5,000 U.S. household. It is designed to gauge the financial health, spending power, and confidence of the average U.S. consumer.)</i></p>
Consumer & Producer Price Index	<p>The consumer price index for all urban consumers was 244.1 in April, an increase of 0.16% from the previous month. Increases in indexes for shelter, energy, tobacco, and food all contributed to the monthly increase. The producer price index for final demand was 112.7 in April, an increase of 0.54% from the previous month. Almost two-thirds of the advance in the final demand index is attributable to prices for final demand services, which increased 0.4%. (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics)</p>

Industrial Production and Capacity Utilization

The Industrial Production Index was 105.1 in April 2017, **up 0.96%** from the previous month and **1.25% higher year-over-year**. Capacity utilization for the industrial sector **increased 0.7%** year-over-year to 76.7%. (Source: Federal Reserve) *(The industrial production and capacity utilization rates cover manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities. The industrial detail provided by these measures helps illuminate structural developments in the economy)*

Manufacturing & Trade Sales

Total combined sales and manufacturing shipments totaled nearly **\$1.36 trillion** in March 2017, **virtually unchanged from February 2017 and up 5.9% from March of the previous year**. (Source: US Census)

Manufacturing & Trade Inventory

Total value of inventory on-hand is estimated at **\$1.84 trillion** in March 2017, **up 0.22% from February 2017 and up 1.2% from March of the previous year**. (Source: US Census)

Purchasing Managers Index

The National PMI **decreased to 54.8%** in April 2017, a **decrease of 24 basis points** over the previous month and the largest decline since December 2016. New orders **decreased 70 basis point to 57.5%** and production **increased 10 basis points to 58.6%**. While there were declines in April, 16 out of the 18 manufacturing industries tracked by the ISM reported growth during the month, and the overall readings indicate that **manufacturing is still expanding but just at a slower pace**. (Source: Institute for Supply Management) *(The PMI combines data on new orders, inventory, production, supplier deliveries, and employment. A reading above 50 indicates that the manufacturing economy is generally expanding.)*

Purchasing Managers Index in Georgia

Georgia's PMI decreased 3 basis points month-over-month, to 72.1% in April 2017. New orders in Georgia **decreased to 85.7** and production **increased to 85.7** as well. **Georgia's PMI is now 173 basis points above the national PMI**. (Source: Kennesaw State University) *(The PMI combines data on new orders, inventory, production, supplier deliveries, and employment. A reading above 50 indicates that the manufacturing economy is generally expanding.)*

MULTIMODAL:

Dow Jones Transportation Index

Dow Jones Transportation Index **decreased 0.21%** in April 2017 ending at a reading of 9,097. *(A price-weighted average of 20 U.S. companies in the transportation industry, average of April 1st thru April 30th. The index includes railroads, airlines, trucking, marine transportation, delivery services and logistics companies.*

NASDAQ Transportation Index

NASDAQ Transportation Index **increased 3.43%** in April 2017, ending at a reading of 4,401. *(Averaged share weights of NASDAQ-listed companies classified as transportation companies, average of April 1st thru April 30th)*

DOT Freight Transportation Service Index

The USDOT's freight transportation services index was 124.0 in March 2017, a **decrease of 1.5%** from the previous month. The March decline in the Freight TSI was due to seasonally-adjusted volume decreases in trucking, rail carloads, rail intermodal, and water, while air freight and pipeline traffic grew. (Source: US DOT)

Cass Freight Index

The March shipments index **increased 0.47%** from the previous month to 1.080 and **increased 1.0%** year-over-year. The 1.0% YoY increase is a data point which suggests that the first positive indication back in October 2016 may have indeed been a change in trend. It now looks as if the October index, which broke a string of 20 months in negative territory, was one of the first indicators that a recovery in freight had begun in earnest. The March expenditures index **decreased 1.17%** from the previous month to 2.355, and **increased 3.1%** year-over-year. Although still below the levels achieved in March of 2013, 2014 and 2015, the March 2017 figure did exceed March 2016 and displayed a more traditional seasonal pattern. (Source: Cass Information Systems | Cassinfo.com) *(Based upon transportation dollars and shipments of Cass clients comprised of over 400 shipping companies)*

Import Volumes

In March 2017, the U.S. **imported \$191.8 billion** of cargo, **decreasing 0.88%** from February. The March imports from Mexico (\$28.1 billion) were **the highest on record**. (Source: US Census)

Export Volumes

In March 2017, the U.S. **exported \$126.3 billion** of cargo, **decreasing 1.56%** from February. The March exports to the European Union (\$25.7 billion) were the **highest on record**, and the March exports to South Korea (\$4.4 billion) were the **highest on record** as well. (Source: US Census)

Import & Export Price Index

U.S. import prices **increased 0.49%** in April 2017 and have not recorded a monthly decline since the index decreased 0.1% in November 2016. Higher fuel prices and nonfuel prices each contributed to the increase in April. U.S. export prices **increased 0.16%** in April, and have not recorded a monthly decline since the index fell 0.8% in August 2016. In April, rising prices for both agricultural and nonagricultural exports contributed to the overall increase in export prices. (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Shippers Conditions Index

The Shippers Conditions Index for February 2017 **increased to a reading of -2.8**, reflecting somewhat more moderate market conditions early in 2017. While February's reading is less negative than January (-3.6), FTR expects a tightening market late in the year with an increasingly declining Shippers Condition Index, reflecting an increase in freight demand as the U.S. economy grows. (Source: FTR Transportation Intelligence | ftrintel.com) *(Figures below zero indicate a less-than-ideal environment for shippers)*

Multimodal News Clips:

- Walmart reported earlier this month that its e-commerce sales rose 63% in the first quarter of its fiscal year. The increase follows last year's overhaul of its online marketplace and a series of acquisitions of e-commerce companies since then, most notably its \$3 billion purchase of Jet.com. Walmart.com now sells 50 million first and third party items, up from 10 million a year ago and 34 million a quarter ago. In addition to Jet.com, Walmart recently bought e-commerce companies ModCloth, ShoeBuy, and Moosejaw, although they said most of the most of the recent e-commerce growth was organic rather from those deals. (Source: Fortune.com)

RAIL:

U.S. Freight Rail Traffic

Originations of carloads in April 2017 totaled 1,023,300 a **decrease of 20.2%** from the previous month and an **increase of 8.3%** from April 2016. April was the **sixth straight year-over-year carload increase**. Making the year-over-year increase even more impressive, Easter Week, including Good Friday (which is a holiday for many railroads) is included in the April 2017 numbers but was not in the April 2016 numbers. (Source: AAR.org) *(Report includes rail car-loadings by 20 different major commodity categories as well as intermodal units)*

U.S. Intermodal Rail Traffic

Intermodal rail traffic totaled 1,052,001 units in April 2017, a **decrease of 18.9% from the previous month but 2.2% higher than April 2016**. In the first four months of 2017, U.S. intermodal volume was 4,439,681 units, **up 1.6%** over the first four months of 2016. (Source: AAR.org) *(Report includes rail car-loadings by 19 different major commodity categories as well as intermodal units)*

Intermodal Competitive Index

The Intermodal Competitive Index **increased to a reading of 6.98** in December 2016. FTR expects the ICI to improve in the coming months with a more robust rate environment. However, according to FTR, there may be more downside risks for intermodal as the year progresses, dependent upon trade policy changes that may be enacted. (Source: FTR Transportation Intelligence | ftrintel.com) *(Index includes factors like relative rates vs. truck, industry capacity vs. demand, fuel prices, and intermodal service levels. Figures above 0 indicate favorable conditions for intermodal to compete with truck)*

Railroad Fuel Price Index

The index of average railroad fuel prices in April 2017 was 332.0, **up 3.59%** from the previous month and **30.35% higher** year-over-year. (Source: AAR.org) *(Average monthly price for gallons purchased by freight railroads; Includes federal excise taxes, transportation, and handling expenses)*

Class 1 Railroad Employment

Railroad employment in March 2017 **increased 0.32% from the previous month**, to 149,323 employees total. Train and engine employees account for nearly all of the increase over the past two months. (Source: U.S. STB)

Short Line Rail Traffic

In March 2017, short line railroad shipments across North America **increased 12.6% from the previous month and increased 7.1% year-over-year**. A sampling of about 500 short line and regional railroads **loaded 368,080 railcars** and intermodal units during the month of March. (Source: Railinc Short Line and Regional Traffic Index)

Railroad News Clips:

- Genesee & Wyoming Inc. (G&W) has agreed to acquire Atlantic Western Transportation Inc., the parent of Heart of Georgia Railroad Inc. Subject to closing conditions and U.S. Surface Transportation Board approval, the acquisition is expected to be completed in the second quarter, G&W officials said in a press release. Founded in 1999, Heart of Georgia (HOG) operates on 219 miles across the state on a lease from the Georgia Department of Transportation. The short line connects with G&W's Georgia Southwestern Railroad in Americus and with G&W's Georgia Central Railway in Vidalia. It also connects with CSX in Cordele and with Norfolk Southern Railway in Americus and Helen, Georgia. HOG serves an inland intermodal terminal in Cordele, and provides direct rail service via the Georgia Central Railway to the Port of Savannah for auto, agricultural products and merchandise customers. G&W owns or leases 122 freight railroads worldwide. The company's eight North American regions serve 41 U.S. states and four Canadian provinces. After the HOG acquisition is finalized, G&W would own 116 regionals and short lines in North America. (Source: Progressive Railroading)

TRUCKING:

Truck Tonnage Index

The ATA's seasonally adjusted For-Hire Truck Tonnage Index **decreased by 2.47% to 134.0** in April 2017. Compared with April 2016, the index **decreased 1.8%**. According to the ATA, April's truck tonnage was likely affected by decreasing housing starts, as residential construction generates heavier truck freight. (Source: American Trucking Associations | Trucking.org)

Truckload Freight

The spot market for truckload-freight available for pick-up in April **decreased 463 basis points** compared to the previous month, and was **5 basis points lower** year-over-year. Truck capacity **decreased 240 basis points** for the month, and **decreased 84 basis points** year-over-year. (Source: DAT Trendlines | www.dat.com)

Trucking Conditions Index

The Trucking Conditions Index for March 2017 **decreased to a reading of 2.97** after an increase in February. According to FTR, the main reasons for the decrease include slightly weaker freight activity, reduced estimates of capacity tightness, and continued weaker-than-expected conditions for contract rates. FTR expects trucking conditions to stay in the moderate range until late this year when the Electronic Logging Device (ELD) mandate comes into effect. (Source: FTR Transportation Intelligence | ftrintel.com) *(Figures below zero indicate a less-than-ideal environment for trucking)*

Diesel Prices

As of May 22, 2017 the U.S. average diesel price was **\$2.53 per gallon**. The U.S. average diesel price was **\$0.18 higher** than the same week last year. The average price of diesel in the Southeastern Atlantic states was **\$2.47 per gallon, 2.37% less than the national average price**. (Source: U.S. DOE) *(Reflects the costs and profits of the entire production and distribution chain.)*

Trucking Employment

The trucking industry workforce **decreased by approximately 100 employees to 1,476,000 employees total** in April 2017. The trucking industry workforce **decreased 0.01%** over the previous month and **increased 0.99%** over April 2016. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Trucking Earnings and Hours

The average earnings of truck transportation employees were \$22.99/hour in March 2017, **up 0.35%** from the previous month. The average weekly hours totaled 40.8 in March, **unchanged** from the previous month. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

U.S. Truck & Trailer Orders (Class 8)

Preliminary data for heavy-duty Class 8 trucks net orders in North America were **23,600 units** in April 2017, meeting expectations with an **increase of 3.51%** from the previous month. According to FTR, fleets are expecting better freight conditions in the second half of the year, with current order activity reflecting those expectations. Final April 2017 net trailer orders came in at **19,946 units, down 2.49%** from the previous month but **up 26.2%** from April 2016. According to FTR, orders were less than production for the second straight month, which means backlogs are easing down. This is consistent with seasonal trends in a healthy, normal market. (Source: FTR Transportation Intelligence | ftrintel.com)

NAFTA Trade

Surface transport-related trade between the U.S. and its NAFTA partners, Canada and Mexico totaled \$86.5 billion in February 2017, **down 1.69%** from the previous month, and **up 2.95%** year-over-year. February marked the fourth straight month in which the year-over-year value of U.S. NAFTA freight increased from the same month of the previous year. (Source: US DOT)

Trucking News Clip

- Earlier this month, Uber officially launched Uber Freight, the company's new service that will match truckers with companies who need cargo shipped across the country. To use Uber Freight, vetted users download the app, search for a load, and tap to book it, which is followed by a rate confirmation within seconds. Uber Freight will focus on owner-operators and small fleets (less than 10 trucks) to move freight. According to Eric Berdinis, Uber Freight product manager, their initial focus for shipments will be on dry van and refrigerated truckloads, and plan to vet other freight opportunities like flatbed, LTL, and bulk in the future. (Source: Logistics Management)

AIR FREIGHT:

Air Cargo Traffic

Global air freight traffic in March 2017 **increased by 14% year-over-year, the fastest pace since October 2010**. Q1 of 2017 was a very strong quarter for annual FTK (freight tonne kilometers) growth, **increasing by 9.7% year-to-date**. (Source: IATA.org,) *(Global air freight covers international and domestic scheduled air traffic.)*

Atlanta Air Cargo Traffic

In March 2017, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport transported **60,160 metric tons** of cargo, a **15.5% increase** from the previous month and a **13.9% increase** year-over-year. (Source: HJAIA)

Air Freight Price Index

Airfreight rates increased in April, led by improvements on services from Asia to North America. The latest report from Drewry shows that average east-west airfreight prices increased by 7.9% year-over-year in April to reach \$2.86/kg. Typically, prices around this time of year are flat or even decrease in line with seasonal demand patters. However, the strong improvement in traffic being recorded by airlines appears to be reflected in airfreight pricing. (Source: Drewry, Air Cargo News) *(The Drewry East-West Air Freight Price Index is based on the average of rates (\$US per kg) for air freight services on 21 major East-West routes.)*

Jet Fuel Prices

As of May 12, 2017 the global average jet fuel price was \$59.60 per barrel; **down 9.8%** from the previous month, and **8.3% higher** year-over-year. (Source: IATA.org, platts.com) *(The weekly index and price data shows the global average price paid at the refinery for aviation jet fuel)*

Air Freight News Clips:

- Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson airport announced a focus on the airfreight market by investing US\$200 million in improvements including three new cargo facilities. The US airport is tops globally for passengers, but ranks 38th for international air freight. While metro Atlanta and the Southeastern U.S. is home to significant manufacturing, particularly in aerospace, companies have been trucking in international air cargo as far as Chicago, Miami and New York. (Source: Air Cargo Asia-Pacific)
- Cargolux and Emirates SkyCargo have entered into the first dedicated freighter and combo-carrier agreement of its kind, allowing the two carriers to use each other's capacity for routes and capabilities beyond their own fleets. The landmark deal will allow Emirates SkyCargo to now move oversized cargo, while Cargolux will gain access to Emirates' vast wide-body belly hold capacity on its passenger fleet and extensive global network. (Source: AirCargoWorld.com)

OCEAN FREIGHT:

Import Volumes by Ocean

In March 2017, the latest month for which after-the-fact numbers are available, U.S. container ports handled 1.53 million TEUs, a **6.9% increase** from February when many Asian factories paused operations for Lunar New Year, and **15.9% higher** from unusually low numbers in March 2016. According to NRF and Hackett Associates, imports at the nation's major retail container ports should see steady increases through the summer and into the fall as the economy continues to slowly grow. (Source: NRF/Hackett Associates)

Shanghai Containerized Freight Index

The May 19th SCFI comprehensive reading was **\$830.80 per FEU, up 2.55%** from last month. The **spot rate for shipments to the U.S. East Coast was \$2,298 per FEU, down 2.63%** from the previous month. (Source: Shanghai Shipping Exchange | www1.chineseshipping.com.cn/en, American Shipper) *(The Shanghai Containerized Freight Index is a weekly reported average export spot rate from Shanghai for 15 different trade lanes.)*

Baltic Dry Index

The Baltic Dry Index **decreased 14.4%** in April 2017, ending at 1,109. Analysts suggest that the decrease might indicate a lack of demand for commodities like iron ore and coal from the main consumer, China. An oversupply of vessels in the shipping industry may be another reason as well. (Source: www.bloomberg.com/quote/BDIY:IND, www.marketwatch.com) *(The Baltic Dry Index is an index that tracks and averages worldwide international shipping prices of various dry bulk cargoes.)*

TSA Bunker Surcharges

Between April 1 and June 30, 2017, the bunker fuel surcharge will total **\$324 per FEU** for shipments to the West coast ocean ports and **\$621 per FEU** for shipments to the East coast and Gulf ports. (Source: Transpacific Stabilization Agreement) *(The Transpacific Stabilization Agreement is a research and discussion forum of major ocean container shipping lines that carry cargo from Asia to ports in the U.S.)*

Port of Savannah

The Port of Savannah moved **333,006 TEUs** in March 2017, a **6.8% increase from the previous month and 11.7% higher year-over-year**. Across all ports, GPA's total tonnage **increased by 13%, marking the Authority's busiest April ever**. During the first four months of 2017, the GPA has moved 1.3 million TEUs, an **increase of 10.2%** compared to the same period in 2016. (Source: GPA)

Port of Brunswick

In April 2017, auto and machinery units moved through Savannah and Brunswick were **up 3.5%** (7,406) to reach 217,729 units total during the first four months of the year. (Source: GPA)

Ocean Freight Business News:

- On May 12, 2017, the Port of Savannah welcomed the COSCO Development, the largest containership to ever call on the U.S. East Coast as it handled 5,500 containers, a record for Georgia's ports. During the ship's 30 hours at dock, up to six cranes moved 10,000 TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent container Units) on and off the vessel, which translated into more than 50 percent of the vessel's entire volume for its maiden voyage to the U.S. East Coast. With a capacity of 13,092 twenty-foot equivalent container units, the Development measures 1,201 feet long and 158 feet wide. Port of Savannah crews working the COSCO Development were able to complete more than 220 container moves per hour during a period in which the GPA and International Longshoremen worked a total of nine vessels, moving more than 12,000 total containers, or 21,600 TEUs. GPA Executive Director Griff Lynch thanked the men and women of Georgia's ports, the International Longshoremen's Association and other vital members of the maritime community for their outstanding work that made the accomplishments possible. (Source: GPA)
- Hapag-Lloyd reported this month that it has completed its merger with UASC (United Arab Shipping Company), ten months after its original announcement. The business integration process will begin in mid-July and is expected to be completed by the end of the third quarter. Hapag-Lloyd will now have a fleet capacity of 1.6 million TEUs on 230 vessels, is the fifth-largest liner shipping company in the world, and expects to save \$435 million in synergies by 2019. (Source: SupplyChainDrive.com)

WAREHOUSING & DISTRIBUTION:

Industrial Vacancy

The **nationwide vacancy rate was 5.4%** at the end of the first quarter in 2017, **the lowest level in nearly 30 years**. It is down from 5.7% in Q4 2016 and 6.1% in Q1 2016. The industrial vacancy rate in Savannah, GA was 3.0% in Q1 of 2017, unchanged compared to Q4 2016. (Source: NGKF, Cushman & Wakefield)

Warehouse Rent Rates

In Q1 2017, the average asking rent across the U.S. was **\$6.12/SF, up 1.9%** from the prior quarter **and up 7.1%** from Q1 2016, the strongest year-over-year increase in the current cycle. The average asking rent in Atlanta was \$4.38/SF. (Source: NGKF)

Industrial Absorption

Net absorption in the US during Q1 2017 totaled 51.7 million square feet, **down 9.2%** from the previous quarter and **down 16.8%** from Q1 2016, but the 10th consecutive quarter above 50 million. Of the 50 industrial markets tracked by NGKF, 19 absorbed 1 million square feet or more in Q1, with **Atlanta leading the way with 6.7 million square feet of absorption**. (Source: NGKF) *(Absorption is the net change in occupied space between two points in time. Positive absorption means that previously unoccupied space is being occupied.)*

Warehouse Employment

The nationwide warehousing industry workforce **increased by 2,500 employees** to 948,700 employees total in April 2017. The warehouse industry workforce **increased 0.26%** from the previous month and **increased 4.79%** year-over-year. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Warehouse Earnings and Hours

The average earnings of warehousing & storage employees across the U.S. were \$19.41/hour in March 2017, **up 0.47%** from the previous month. The average weekly hours totaled 41.5 in March, **up 0.73%** from the previous month. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

W&D Business News:

- GE Healthcare has reduced the size of its repair cell stations at its repair operations warehouse by 40% due to a self-driving vehicle named OTTO. OTTO, which was designed for material transport in industrial environments, does not require fixed infrastructure (no beacons, magnetic tape or pre-defined laser paths). It provides obstacle detection and avoidance, and dynamically moves through facilities in the most efficient manner to reach the destination point. Parts are delivered on-demand and navigate from the pick-up point directly to the destination, always taking the fastest route. OTTO is also able to take on multiple jobs within the plant; the same vehicle can be used in different applications across the facility, from supplying parts to repair cells and moving finished goods to shipping zones. This multi-functional capability has led to a 66% increase in productive floor space. (Source: Material Handling & Logistics)
- Elixir Extrusions, a manufacturer of custom aluminum extrusions and fabricated parts, will expand its operations in Douglas-Coffee County. This expansion will create 100 new jobs and represents an investment of more than \$8 million into the facility. The new 70,000 square-foot facility will accommodate the integration of automated anodizing equipment. A subsequent production line will be installed, and will be one of the largest of its kind in the U.S. The company currently operates a 250,000-square-foot facility in Douglas-Coffee County which provides full-service, custom aluminum extrusions for a variety of applications. (Source: Georgia.org)

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