

Nonmetallic Mineral Products Industry Indexes

April 2019

This report analyzes and explains the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) monthly leading and coincident indexes for the nonmetallic mineral products industry. This industry had been classified as the stone, clay, glass, and concrete products industry (SIC 32) under the Standard Industrial Classification system, which was replaced by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS 327). This industry processes certain industrial minerals, minerals that are neither metals nor fuels, into useful products. More than 50 percent of the total value of these products is shipped to the highly cyclical construction industry. The indexes have been computed for each month back to 1948 and are available on the World Wide Web at: <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/imii/scghist.xls>

Analysis

The **nonmetallic mineral products industry leading index** increased to 270.4 in March from an upwardly revised 266.8 in February, and its 6-month smoothed growth rate increased to -1.2% in March from an upwardly revised -4.1% in February (table 1). The 6-month smoothed growth rate is a compound annual rate that measures the near-term trend. A growth rate above +1.0% is usually a signal of future growth in industry activity, while a growth rate below -1.0% usually points to a decrease in activity.¹ From September 2017 through August 2018, the leading index growth rate had been above the +1.0% growth rate threshold; September turned down but remained slightly positive. From October 2018 through March 2019 growth rates turned negative decreasing below the -1.0% growth rate threshold. The largest positive contribution to the nonmetallic mineral products industry leading index in March was the average weekly hours of nonmetallic mineral products [1.2] (table 2). There were two small negative contributions, the index of new private housing units authorized by permits [-0.1], and the spread between the U.S. 10-year Treasury Note and the federal funds rate [-0.1] (table 2).

¹The 6-month smoothed growth rate is a compound annual rate based on the ratio of the current month's index to its average level during the preceding 12 months.

The **nonmetallic mineral products industry coincident index**, which measures current industry activity, increased to 157.3 in March from an upwardly revised 155.7 in February, and its 6-month smoothed growth rate increased to 0.2% in March from an upwardly revised -1.7% in February (table 1). From September 2017 through October 2018, the coincident index growth rate had been above the +1.0% growth rate threshold; November turned down but remained slightly positive. December 2018 and January 2019 growth rates returned to above +1.0% threshold growth. The February growth rate turned negative, while the March growth rate turned slightly positive. The largest positive contribution to the nonmetallic mineral products industry coincident index in March was the total employee hours of nonmetallic mineral products [0.7] (table 2). There were no negative contributions to the coincident index in March.

Explanation

The USGS uses the same methodology for the nonmetallic mineral products indexes that it uses for the metal manufacturing indexes in the *Metal Industry Indicators*. This methodology consists of constructing and tracking, each month, two composite indexes of diverse economic indicators. The composite leading index for nonmetallic mineral products signals, several months in advance, major changes in current economic activity as measured by a composite coincident index. The construction of the leading and coincident indexes follows well-established procedures for the analysis of cyclical indicators that were developed at the National Bureau of Economic Research, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Center for International Business Cycle Research.

Coincident indicators

The indicators selected to represent current activity in the coincident index for the nonmetallic mineral products industry are industrial production, the value of shipments in 1982 dollars, and total employee hours worked. Previously, these indicators reflected activity in the stone, clay, glass, and concrete products industry (SIC 32). The source agencies for these data, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Census Bureau, and the Federal Reserve Board have completed their conversions to the NAICS. These indicators now reflect activity in the nonmetallic mineral products industry (NAICS 327). According to BLS, approxi-

mately 99% of the employment in NAICS 327 was classified in SIC 32.

Leading indicators

Leading indicators represent various economic activities that can point to near-term changes in industry activity. The following four indicators proved to be reliable at signaling major changes in economic activity in the nonmetallic mineral products industry: 1) average weekly hours worked in the nonmetallic mineral products industry, 2) an index of new private housing units authorized by building permits in the United States, 3) the Standard & Poor's stock price index for building products companies, and 4) the yield spread between the 10-year Treasury Note interest rate and the federal funds interest rate.

This report was produced at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) by the National Minerals Information Center. For more information about these indexes, contact Jeff Busse (703-648-4914), e-mail (jbusse@usgs.gov). Data provided by Jacob Fuhr and Annie Hwang.

The USGS also produces *Mineral Industry Surveys* (MIS) or *Minerals Yearbook* chapters for most industrial minerals important to the U.S. economy. These minerals include cement, clay and shale, crushed stone, dimension stone, and construction sand and gravel. Information on how to access these reports is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/>

Tables and charts follow.

Table 1.
The Nonmetallic Mineral Products Industry Indexes and Growth Rates

	Leading Index		Coincident Index	
	(1977 = 100)	Growth Rate	(1977 = 100)	Growth Rate
2018				
March	272.7	4.3	154.6	5.5r
April	274.9	5.2	156.9r	7.7r
May	275.7	5.0	157.0r	6.9r
June	273.7	2.8	156.5r	5.2r
July	274.1	2.6	156.9r	4.8r
August	275.1	2.8	157.5r	4.7r
September	272.6	0.2	155.6r	1.3r
October	270.1	-1.9	157.4	2.9r
November	268.8	-2.7	156.1r	0.7r
December	270.9	-1.3	160.2r	5.3r
2019				
January	271.2r	-1.1r	160.9r	5.5r
February	266.8r	-4.1r	155.7r	-1.7r
March	270.4	-1.2	157.3	0.2

r: Revised

Note: Growth rates are expressed as compound annual rates based on the ratio of the current month's index to the average index during the preceding 12 months.

Table 2.
The Contribution of Nonmetallic Mineral Products Index Component to the Percent Change in the Index from the Previous Month

Leading Index	February	March
1. Average weekly hours, nonmetallic mineral products (NAICS 327)	-2.6r	1.2
2. Index of new private housing units authorized by permits	-0.2	-0.1
3. S&P stock price index, building products companies	0.9	0.3
4. Spread between the U.S. 10-year Treasury Note and the federal funds rate	0.0	-0.1
Trend adjustment	0.1	0.1
Percent change (except for rounding differences)	-1.7r	1.4
Coincident Index		
1. Industrial production index, nonmetallic mineral products (NAICS 327)	-1.0r	0.2
2. Total employee hours, nonmetallic mineral products (NAICS 327)	-2.5r	0.7
3. Shipments of nonmetallic mineral products (NAICS 327)	0.1	NA
Trend adjustment	0.1	0.1
Percent change (except for rounding differences)	-3.3r	1.0

Sources: Leading: 1, Bureau of Labor Statistics; 2, U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Geological Survey; 3, Standard & Poor's; 4, Federal Reserve Board, Conference Board, and U.S. Geological Survey. Coincident: 1, Federal Reserve Board; 2, Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Geological Survey; 3, U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Geological Survey. All series are seasonally adjusted, except 3 of the leading index.

r: Revised NA: Not available

Chart 1.

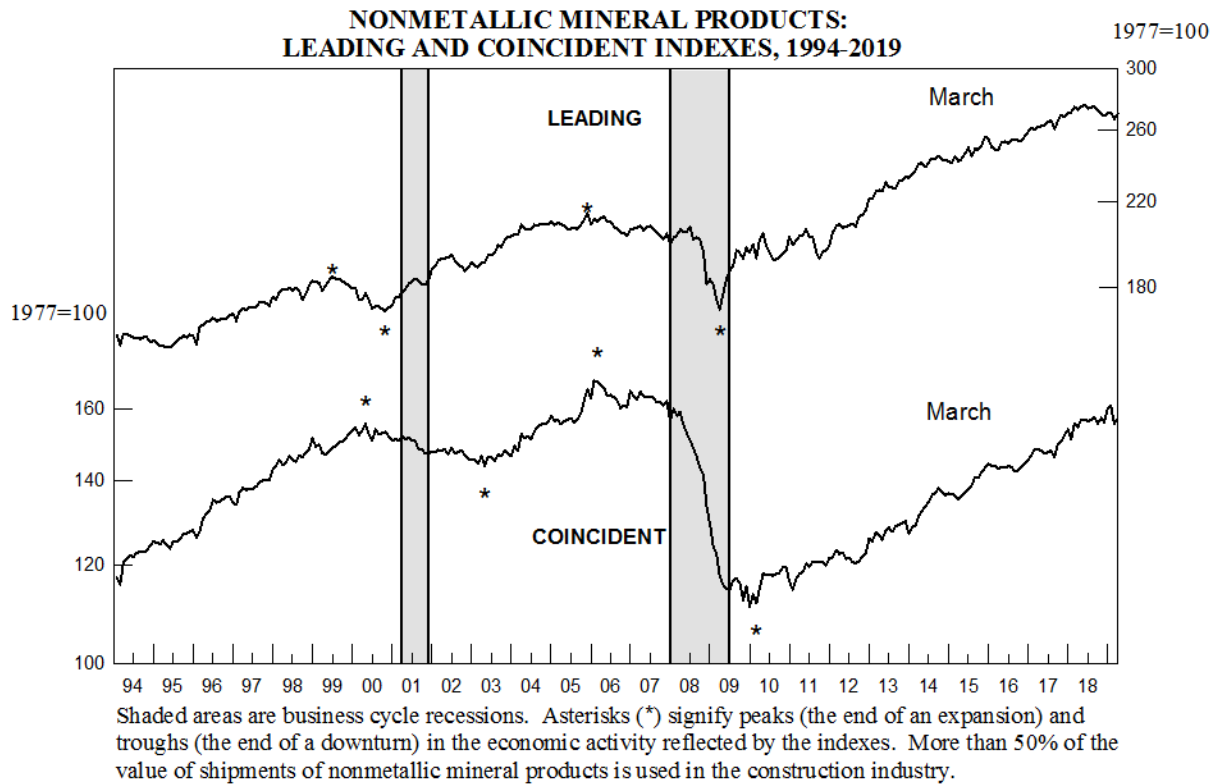


Chart 2.

