The San Antonio Business-Cycle Index expanded at a 3.8 percent annualized rate in April, slightly slower than growth in March but above the 3.2 percent long-term growth rate. Continued strength in jobs and a declining unemployment rate continued to cause expansion in the index.

The San Antonio unemployment rate fell 0.3 percentage points to 3.9 percent in April, below the national and state rates of 4.4 and 5.0 percent, respectively. The labor force grew at a 3.0 percent annualized rate and has averaged a robust 2.8 percent so far this year.

Job growth in San Antonio increased at a moderate 1.9 percent annualized rate for the three months ending in April. Growth was mixed across industries, as the goods-producing sectors, particularly mining, continued to add jobs, but many service industries shed them. Information and other services, though both accounting for a small share of total employment, saw significant declines. Wholesale trade declined at a 6.4 percent rate, while retail slipped by 2 percent. Federal government job losses were the biggest drag on public-sector employment. Meanwhile, health care hiring remained at its strongest pace in years, adding nearly 4,000 jobs since February. Leisure and hospitality also picked up through additions in food services, while professional and business services rebounded.

NOTES: Data show seasonally adjusted and annualized percentage employment growth by industry supersector from February to April 2017. Numbers in parentheses represent share of total employment and may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Home affordability picked up in San Antonio in the first quarter of the year, as the percentage of homes sold that the median-income family could afford rose from 62 percent to 64.4 percent. Conversely, national affordability held steady at just above 60 percent. The median home price has leveled off at just above $200,000 since the end of last year, and permits for new home construction continue to trend upward.

Receipts from hotels and lodging places in San Antonio show a steady increase in activity since mid-2016. Year-over-year revenues from stays increased 5.1 percent in January. Fourth quarter 2016 data from CBRE Econometric Advisors show that the number of rooms sold increased 3.2 percent compared with the year prior, while average daily room rates increased 2 percent. Nevertheless, overall employment in accommodation services has been relatively flat since 2015 and declined moderately in fourth quarter 2016. With tight regional labor markets, finding qualified hotel workers continues to be a significant challenge.

Stock prices of San Antonio-based companies slipped by 1.6 percent from April 24 to May 19, contrasting with the S&P 500’s 0.3 percent rise over this time. Declines were concentrated in communications and retail firms. Energy firm performance was mixed, with refiners seeing stock price increases but midstream and production firms experiencing declines. Financial firms and machinery producers saw moderate gains.