FURNITURE INSIGHTS®

Smith Leonard PLLC's Industry Newsletter

September 2025

HIGHLIGHTS – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New orders were up 6% compared to the prior month of June 2025 (following the 9% decrease from May 2025). New orders were also up 13% in July 2025 compared to July 2024. Accordingly, year to date through July 2025, new orders are now down only 1% compared to 2024 (down 2% last month).

Shipments were down 2% compared to the prior month of June 2025. However, shipments were up 3% in July 2025 compared to July 2024. Year to date through July 2025, shipments remain down 1% compared to 2024 (same as last month).

July 2025 backlogs were down 4% compared to July 2024, but up 2% from June 2025.

Receivable levels were up 2% from June 2025, and flat with July 2024.

Inventories and employee/payroll levels are again materially in line with recent months and the prior year. However, the gradual decline in employees over the last 6 months, continues to imply companies are allowing some normal attrition to occur without rushing to find replacements.

Mark Laferriere

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONT.

National

Consumer Confidence

The Conference Board ***Consumer Confidence Index®*** declined by 3.6 points in September to 94.2 (1985=100), down from 97.8 in August.

The ***Present Situation Index***—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—fell by 7.0 points to 125.4.

The ***Expectations Index***—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—decreased by 1.3 points to 73.4. Expectations have been below the threshold of 80 that typically signals a recession ahead since February 2025.

"Consumer confidence weakened in September, declining to the lowest level since April 2025," said Stephanie Guichard, Senior Economist, Global Indicators at The Conference Board. "The present situation component registered its largest drop in a year. Consumers' assessment of business conditions was much less positive than in recent months, while their appraisal of current job availability fell for the ninth straight month to reach a new multiyear low. This is consistent with the decline in job openings. Expectations also weakened in September, but to a lesser extent. Consumers were a bit more pessimistic about future job availability and future business conditions but optimism about future income increased, mitigating the overall decline in the Expectations Index."

Purchasing plans for cars weakened in September, with buying intentions for both used and new cars declining. Meanwhile, purchasing plans for homes jumped to a 4-month high. Consumers' plans to buy big-ticket items were little changed overall.

Housing

Existing-home sales remained essentially the same in August, ticking down by 0.2% from July, according to the National Association of REALTORS® Existing-Home Sales Report. The Report provides the real estate ecosystem, including agents and home buyers and sellers, with data on the level of home sales, price, and inventory.

Month-over-month sales increased in the Midwest and West, and fell in the Northeast and South. Year-over-year, sales rose in the Midwest and South, and fell in the Northeast and West.

"Home sales have been sluggish over the past few years due to elevated mortgage rates and limited inventory," said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun. "However, mortgage rates are declining and more inventory is coming to the market, which should boost sales in the coming months."

Total Existing-Home Sales for August

- 0.2% decrease in total existing-home sales month-over-month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.0 million.
- 1.8% increase in sales year-over-year.

Single-Family-Homes Sales in August

- 0.3% decrease in sales to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.63 million, up 2.5% from August 2024.
- $427,800: Median home price in August, up 1.9% from last year.

Condominiums and Co-ops Sales in August

- No change month-over-month; sales remain at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 370,000 units, down 5.1% year-over-year.
- $366,800: Median price, up 0.6% from August 2024.

Mortgage Rates

- 6.59%: The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage in August, according to Freddie Mac, down from 6.72% in July and 6.50% one year ago.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONT.

Thoughts

More shifting of the landscape this month with the announcement of the Section 232 tariff on upholstered furniture imports, while we seemingly await additional announcements from the results of the 50-day investigation into other furniture categories including imported case goods. The timing of these announcements will again make for an interesting Fall High Point Furniture Market creating both challenges and opportunities for exhibitors.

Economic data was again mixed, though there are some positive trends with housing which will potentially accelerate with the long-awaited Fed interest rate cut in September and more cuts expected to come through the end of the year. Consumer confidence slipped again this month, which may be further impacted by the government shutdown and related activity, though presumably this will be short-lived.

As to our own stats program, it was good to see the year over year increases in both new orders and shipments this month which bring the July 2025 year-to-date results almost even with the prior year and provide a glimmer of hope for the remainder of the year and into 2026.

We look forward to seeing many of you here in High Point in a couple weeks. Safe travels.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONT.

National, Cont.

Housing, Cont.

Sales of new single-family houses in August 2025 were at a seasonally-adjusted annual rate of 800,000, according to estimates released jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is 20.5% above the July 2025 rate of 664,000, and is 15.4% above the August 2024 rate of 693,000.

Compared to August 2024 on a seasonally-adjusted basis, sales were up 15.4% overall with sales also up 21.0% in the South, up 40.9% in the Northeast, up 20.3% in the Midwest, but down 5.7% in the West.

Other

Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased at an annual rate of 3.8% in the second quarter of 2025 (April, May, and June), according to the third estimate released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. In the first quarter, real GDP decreased 0.6% (revised).

The increase in real GDP in the second quarter primarily reflected a decrease in imports, which are a subtraction in the calculation of GDP, and an increase in consumer spending. These movements were partly offset by decreases in investment and exports.

Compared to the first quarter, the upturn in real GDP in the second quarter primarily reflected a downturn in imports and an acceleration in consumer spending that were partly offset by a downturn in investment.

Real final sales to private domestic purchasers, the sum of consumer spending and gross private fixed investment, increased 2.9% in the second quarter, revised up 1.0 percentage point from the previous estimate.

HIGHLIGHTS – MONTHLY RESULTS

New Orders

According to our latest survey of residential furniture manufacturers and distributors, new orders were up 13% in July 2025 compared to July 2024. Approximately two-thirds of participants reported increases versus decreases in July 2025 compared to a year ago.

New orders were also up 6% compared to the prior month of June 2025.

Year to date through July 2025, new orders are now down only 1% compared to 2024 (down 2% last month).

Shipments and Backlogs

July 2025 shipments were up 3% compared to July 2024, but down 2% compared to June 2025. Shipments in July 2025 were up for approximately two-thirds of the participants compared to July 2024. Year to date through July 2025, shipments remain down 1% compared to 2024 (same as last month).

July 2025 backlogs were down 4% compared to July 2024, but up 2% from June 2025 as new orders outpaced shipments.

Receivables and Inventories

Receivable levels were up 2% from June 2025, and flat with July 2024, both materially in line with related shipment trends.

Inventories were down 2% compared to June 2025 and down 1% from July 2024, which are materially in line with prior periods and current operational levels.

Factory and Warehouse Employees and Payroll

The number of factory and warehouse employees were down 3% from July a year ago, but again relatively even with the prior month (down 1%).

Payroll expense was down 3% in July 2025 compared to June 2025, while up 4% compared to July 2024. However, year to date through July 2025, payroll expense was again up 1%.

ESTIMATED BUSINESS ACTIVITY (MILLIONS)

	2025		
	JUL	JUN	7 MOS
New Orders	2,170	2,051	14,721
Shipments	2,107	2,122	15,203
Backlog	2,450	2,403	
	2024		
	JUL	JUN	7 MOS
New Orders	1,920	2,096	14,949
Shipments	2,056	2,210	15,406
Backlog	2,552	2,626	

MONTHLY RESULTS – SEPTEMBER 2025

KEY MONTHLY INDICATORS (PERCENT CHANGE)

	Jul 2025 from Jun 2025	Jul 2025 from Jul 2024	7 Mos 2025 vs 7 Mos 2024
New Orders	6	13	-1
Shipments	-2	3	-1
Backlog	2	-4	
Payrolls	-3	4	1
Employees	-1	-3	
Receivables	2	–	
Inventories	-2	-1	

PERCENT INCREASE/DECREASE COMPARED TO PRIOR YEAR

	New Orders	Shipments	Backlog	Employment
2024				
July	-5	+6	-11	-4
August	-7	-10	-10	-5
September	-9	-7	-10	-5
October	–	-5	-8	-5
November	-9	-1	-10	-5
December	+1	-2	-8	-5
2025				
January	-3	+4	-5	-3
February	-5	-5	-6	-3
March	+1	+1	-6	-4
April	-9	-2	-10	-4
May	-1	-2	-10	-4
June	3	-4	-8	-4
July	13	3	-4	-3

A DEEPER DIVE – NATIONAL

Consumer Confidence

The Conference Board ***Consumer Confidence Index***® declined by 3.6 points in September to 94.2 (1985=100), down from 97.8 in August.

The ***Present Situation Index***—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—fell by 7.0 points to 125.4.

The ***Expectations Index***—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—decreased by 1.3 points to 73.4. Expectations have been below the threshold of 80 that typically signals a recession ahead since February 2025.

"Consumer confidence weakened in September, declining to the lowest level since April 2025," said Stephanie Guichard, Senior Economist, Global Indicators at The Conference Board. "The present situation component registered its largest drop in a year. Consumers' assessment of business conditions was much less positive than in recent months, while their appraisal of current job availability fell for the ninth straight month to reach a new multiyear low. This is consistent with the decline in job openings. Expectations also weakened in September, but to a lesser extent. Consumers were a bit more pessimistic about future job availability and future business conditions but optimism about future income increased, mitigating the overall decline in the Expectations Index."

Among demographic groups, confidence rose for consumers under 35 years old but declined for consumers over 35. The evolution of confidence by income group was mixed, with no clear pattern emerging. By income, confidence remained above its April low for all consumer cohorts besides households making between $25K and $35K and those making above $200K. By partisan affiliation, confidence improved slightly among both Republicans and Democrats but dropped substantially among Independents.

Guichard added: "Consumers' write-in responses showed that references to prices and inflation rose in September, regaining its top position as the main topic influencing consumers' views of the economy. References to tariffs declined this month, but remained elevated and continued to be associated with concerns about higher prices. Nonetheless, consumers' average 12-month inflation expectations inched down, to 5.8% in September from 6.1% in August. This is still notably above 5.0%, the level at the end of 2024."

Among consumers' write-in responses, there was a rise in mentions of jobs and employment to a level unseen since August 2024. The comments were mostly negative, especially when referring to the current situation; there were a few positive comments which mostly conveyed hopes that things would get better.

In September, consumers' outlook on stock prices improved slightly. The share of consumers expecting stock prices to increase over the next 12 months has been unchanged at 48.9% since August and July. Meanwhile, 27.6% of consumers expected stock prices to decrease over the next 12 months, down from 30.2% in August. The share of consumers expecting interest rates to rise ticked down to 51.9% from 52.1% in August; meanwhile, 25.6% consumers expected interest rates to decline, up from 23.6% in August.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Leading Economic Indicators

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the US declined by 0.5% in August 2025 to 98.4 (2016=100), after a small 0.1% increase in July (upwardly revised from an originally reported 0.1% decline). The LEI fell by 2.8% over the six months between February and August 2025, a faster rate of decline than its 0.9% contraction over the previous six-month period (August 2024 to February 2025).

"In August, the US LEI registered its largest monthly decline since April 2025, signaling more headwinds ahead," said Justyna Zabinska-La Monica, Senior Manager, Business Cycle Indicators, at The Conference Board. "Among its components, only stock prices and the Leading Credit Index supported the LEI in August and over the past six months. Meanwhile, the contribution of the yield spread turned slightly negative for the first time since April.

"Besides persistently weak manufacturing new orders and consumer expectation indicators, labor market developments also weighed on the Index with an increase in unemployment claims and a decline in average weekly hours in manufacturing. Overall, the LEI suggests that economic activity will continue to slow. A major driver of this slowdown has been higher tariffs, which already trimmed growth in H1 2025 and will continue to be a drag on GDP growth in the second half of this year and in H1 2026. The Conference Board, while not forecasting recession currently, expects GDP to grow by only 1.6% in 2025, a substantial slowdown from 2.8% in 2024."

The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index® (CEI) for the US rose by 0.2% in August 2025 to 115.0 (2016=100), following an increase of 0.1% in both June and July. Overall, the CEI rose by 0.6% between February and August 2025, down from 0.9% over the previous six months. The CEI's four component indicators—payroll employment, personal income less transfer payments, manufacturing and trade sales, and industrial production—are included among the data used to determine recessions in the US. All components of the coincident index improved only slightly in August, with payroll employment making a neutral contribution to the CEI.

The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index® (LAG) for the US inched up by 0.1% to 120.0 (2016=100) in August 2025, after being unchanged in both June and July 2025. The LAG grew by 0.7% in the six months between February and August 2025, over twice as high as the 0.3% increase over the previous six months.

A DEEPER DIVE – NATIONAL, CONT.

Consumer Confidence, Cont.

Consumers' views of their Family's Current and Future Financial Situation both weakened in September. Notably, consumers' views of their current financial situation recorded the largest one-month drop since we started to collect this data in July 2022. The share of consumers thinking that a recession is very likely over the next 12 months rose slightly in September, to the highest level since May. In addition, more consumers thought that the economy was already in recession.

Purchasing plans for cars weakened in September, with buying intentions for both used and new cars declining. Meanwhile, purchasing plans for homes jumped to a 4-month high. Consumers' plans to buy big-ticket items were little changed overall. However, there was a lot of variation across different types of appliances: intentions to purchase TVs and dryers saw the largest increase in September, refrigerators saw the largest declines. Electronics purchase intentions were mostly up, with smartphones leading the rise. Consumers' intentions to purchase more services ahead deteriorated. Almost all types of services registered a decline in buying intentions, especially travel-related services. Vacation intentions fell again to the lowest level since April, with intentions to travel abroad driving the decline.

Present Situation

Consumers' assessments of **current business conditions** deteriorated in September.

- 19.5% of consumers said business conditions were "good," down from 21.8% in August.
- 15.4% said business conditions were "bad," up from 14.6%.

Consumers' views of the **labor market** cooled further in September.

- 26.9% of consumers said jobs were "plentiful," down from 30.2% in August.
- 19.1% of consumers said jobs were "hard to get," unchanged from last month.

Expectations Six Months Hence

Consumers were a bit more pessimistic about future **business conditions** in September.

- 18.7% of consumers expected business conditions to improve, down from 20.2% in August.
- 22.3% expected business conditions to worsen, also down from 23.5%.

Consumers were more worried about the **labor market** outlook in September.

- 16.1% of consumers expected more jobs to be available, down from 17.9% in August.
- 25.6% anticipated fewer jobs, down slightly from 25.9%.

Consumers' outlook for their **income prospects** was slightly more positive in September.

- 17.6% of consumers expected their incomes to increase, down from 18.8% in August.
- 11.7% expected their income to decrease, down from 13.3%.

Assessment of Family Finances and Recession Risk

- Consumer assessments of their Family's Current Financial Situation weakened notably in September.
- Consumer assessments of their Family's Expected Financial Situation cooled slightly.
- Consumers' Perceived Likelihood of a US Recession over the Next 12 Months was stable in September, but more consumers thought a recession had already started.

Gross Domestic Product

Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased at an annual rate of 3.8% in the second quarter of 2025 (April, May, and June), according to the third estimate released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. In the first quarter, real GDP decreased 0.6% (revised).

The increase in real GDP in the second quarter primarily reflected a decrease in imports, which are a subtraction in the calculation of GDP, and an increase in consumer spending. These movements were partly offset by decreases in investment and exports.

Compared to the first quarter, the upturn in real GDP in the second quarter primarily reflected a downturn in imports and an acceleration in consumer spending that were partly offset by a downturn in investment.

Real final sales to private domestic purchasers, the sum of consumer spending and gross private fixed investment, increased 2.9% in the second quarter, revised up 1.0 percentage point from the previous estimate.

From an industry perspective, the increase in real GDP reflected increases of 10.2% in real value added for private goods-producing industries and 3.5% for private services-producing industries that were partly offset by a decrease of 3.2% in real value added for government.

Real gross output increased 1.2% in the second quarter, reflecting increases of 0.6% for private goods-producing industries and 1.7% for private services-producing industries that were partly offset by a decrease of 0.7% for government.

A DEEPER DIVE – NATIONAL, CONT.

Gross Domestic Product, Cont.

The price index for gross domestic purchases increased 2.0% in the second quarter, revised up 0.2 percentage point from the previous estimate. The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index increased 2.1%, revised up 0.1 percentage point. Excluding food and energy prices, the PCE price index increased 2.6%, also revised up 0.1 percentage point.

Profits from current production (corporate profits with inventory valuation and capital consumption adjustments) increased $6.8 billion in the second quarter, a downward revision of $58.7 billion.

A DEEPER DIVE – HOUSING

Existing-Home Sales

Existing-home sales remained essentially the same in August, ticking down by 0.2% from July, according to the National Association of REALTORS® Existing-Home Sales Report. The Report provides the real estate ecosystem, including agents and homebuyers and sellers, with data on the level of home sales, price, and inventory.

Month-over-month sales increased in the Midwest and West, and fell in the Northeast and South. Year-over-year, sales rose in the Midwest and South, and fell in the Northeast and West.

"Home sales have been sluggish over the past few years due to elevated mortgage rates and limited inventory," said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun. "However, mortgage rates are declining and more inventory is coming to the market, which should boost sales in the coming months."

"Record-high housing wealth and a record-high stock market will help current homeowners trade up and benefit the upper end of the market. However, sales of affordable homes are constrained by the lack of inventory," Yun added. "The Midwest was the best-performing region last month, primarily due to relatively affordable market conditions. The median home price in the Midwest is 22% below the national median price.

"Homebuyers are in the best position in more than five years to find the right home and negotiate for a better price. Current inventory is at its highest since May 2020, during the COVID lockdown."

National Snapshot

Total Existing-Home Sales for August

- 0.2% decrease in total existing-home sales month-over-month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.0 million.
- 1.8% increase in sales year-over-year.

Inventory in August

- 1.53 million units: Total housing inventory, down 1.3% from July and up 11.7% from August 2024 (1.37 million).
- 4.6-month supply of unsold inventory, no change from July and up from 4.2 months in August 2024.

Median Sales Price in August

- $422,600: Median existing-home price for all housing types, up 2.0% from one year ago ($414,200) – the 26th consecutive month of year-over-year price increases.

Single-Family-Homes Sales in August

- 0.3% decrease in sales to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.63 million, up 2.5% from August 2024.
- $427,800: Median home price in August, up 1.9% from last year.

Condominiums and Co-ops Sales in August

- No change month-over-month; sales remain at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 370,000 units, down 5.1% year-over-year.
- $366,800: Median price, up 0.6% from August 2024.

A DEEPER DIVE – HOUSING, CONT.

Regional Snapshot for Existing-Home Sales in August

Northeast

- 4.0% decrease in sales month-over-month to an annual rate of 480,000, down 2.0% year-over-year.
- $534,200: Median price, up 6.2% from August 2024.

Midwest

- 2.1% increase in sales month-over-month to an annual rate of 960,000, up 3.2% year-over-year.
- $330,500: Median price, up 4.5% from August 2024.

South

- 1.1% decrease in sales month-over-month to an annual rate of 1.83 million, up 3.4% year-over-year.
- $364,100: Median price, up 0.4% from August 2024.

West

- 1.4% increase in sales month-over-month to an annual rate of 730,000, down 1.4% year-over-year.
- $624,300: Median price, up 0.6% from August 2024.

REALTORS® Confidence Index for August

- 31 days: Median time on market for properties, up from 28 days last month and 26 days in August 2024.
- 28% of sales were first-time homebuyers, unchanged from July and up from 26% in August 2024.
- 28% of transactions were cash sales, down from 31% a month ago and up from 26% in August 2024.
- 21% of transactions were individual investors or second-home buyers, up slightly from 20% last month and 19% in August 2024.
- 2% of sales were distressed sales (foreclosures and short sales), unchanged from July and up slightly from 1% in August 2024.

Mortgage Rates

- 6.59%: The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage in August, according to Freddie Mac, down from 6.72% in July and 6.50% one year ago.

New Residential Sales

Sales of new single-family houses in August 2025 were at a seasonally-adjusted annual rate of 800,000, according to estimates released jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is 20.5% above the July 2025 rate of 664,000, and is 15.4% above the August 2024 rate of 693,000.

The median sales price of new houses sold in August 2025 was $413,500. This is 4.7% above the July 2025 price of $395,100, and is 1.9% above the August 2024 price of $405,800. The average sales price of new houses sold in August 2025 was $534,100. This is 11.7% above the July 2025 price of $478,200, and is 12.3% above the August 2024 price of $475,600.

The seasonally-adjusted estimate of new houses for sale at the end of August 2025 was 490,000. This is 1.4% below the July 2025 estimate of 497,000, and is 4.0% above the August 2024 estimate of 471,000.

This represents a supply of 7.4 months at the current sales rate. The months' supply is 17.8% below the July 2025 estimate of 9.0 months, and is 9.8% below the August 2024 estimate of 8.2 months.

Compared to August 2024 on a seasonally-adjusted basis, sales were up 15.4% overall with sales also up 21.0% in the South, up 40.9% in the Northeast, up 20.3% in the Midwest, but down 5.7% in the West.

A DEEPER DIVE – HOUSING, CONT.

Housing Starts

Privately-owned housing starts in August were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1,307,000. This is 8.5% below the revised July estimate of 1,429,000 and is 6.0% below the August 2024 rate of 1,391,000.

Single-family housing starts in August were at a rate of 890,000; this is 7.0% below the revised July figure of 957,000.

The August rate for units in buildings with five units or more was 403,000 (470,000 in July).

Single-family starts compared to August 2024, on a seasonally-adjusted basis, were down 11.7% in total, as well as down 11.7% in the South, down 4.3% in the Northeast, down 15.8% in the West, and down 12.9% in the Northeast.

Housing Completions

Privately-owned housing completions in August were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1,608,000. This is 8.4% above the revised July estimate of 1,483,000, but is 8.4% below the August 2024 rate of 1,755,000.

Single-family housing completions in August were at a rate of 1,090,000; this is 6.7% above the revised July rate of 1,022,000.

The August rate for units in buildings with five units or more was 503,000 (385,000 in July).

Single-family completions compared to August 2024, on a seasonally-adjusted basis, were up 5.6% in total, as well as up 4.1% in the South, up 9.8% in the Northeast, up 9.7% in the West, and up 3.1% in the Midwest.

A DEEPER DIVE – OTHER NATIONAL

Retail Sales

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for August 2025, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $732.0 billion, up 0.6% from the previous month, and up 5.0% from August 2024. Total sales for the June 2025 through August 2025 period were up 4.5% from the same period a year ago. The June 2025 to July 2025 percent change was revised from up 0.5% to up 0.6%.

Retail trade sales were up 0.6% from July 2025, and up 4.8% from last year. Nonstore retailers were up 10.1% from last year, while food service and drinking places were up 6.5% from August 2024.

Sales at furniture and home furnishings stores in August 2025 were down 0.3% compared to July 2025 on a seasonally-adjusted basis, but up 5.4% from August 2024. Year to date on a non-adjusted basis, sales were up 5.4% (5.7% last month).

Consumer Prices

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 0.4% on a seasonally adjusted basis in August, after rising 0.2% in July, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. Over the last 12 months, the all-items index increased 2.9% before seasonal adjustment.

The index for shelter rose 0.4% in August and was the largest factor in the all-items monthly increase. The food index increased 0.5% over the month as the food at home index rose 0.6% and the food away from home index increased 0.3%. The index for energy rose 0.7% in August as the index for gasoline increased 1.9% over the month.

The index for all-items less food and energy rose 0.3% in August, as it did in July. Indexes that increased over the month include airline fares, used cars and trucks, apparel, and new vehicles. The indexes for medical care, recreation, and communication were among the few major indexes that decreased in August.

The all-items index rose 2.9% for the 12 months ending August, after rising 2.7% over the 12 months ending July. The all-items less food and energy index rose 3.1% over the last 12 months. The energy index increased 0.2% for the 12 months ending August. The food index increased 3.2% over the last year.

Employment

Total nonfarm payroll employment changed little in August and has shown little change since April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported. The unemployment rate, at 4.3%, also changed little in August. A job gain in health care was partially offset by losses in federal government and in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction.

Both the unemployment rate, at 4.3%, and the number of unemployed people, at 7.4 million, changed little in August. These measures also changed little over the year.

A DEEPER DIVE – OTHER NATIONAL, CONT.

Durable Goods Orders and Factory Shipments

New orders for manufactured durable goods in July, down three of the last four months, decreased $8.6 billion or 2.8% to $303.2 billion, unchanged from the previously published decrease. This followed a 9.4% June decrease. Transportation equipment, also down three of the last four months, drove the decrease, $10.7 billion or 9.5% to $102.0 billion. New orders for manufactured nondurable goods increased $0.8 billion or 0.3% to $300.5 billion.

Shipments of manufactured durable goods in July, up eight consecutive months, increased $4.5 billion or 1.5% to $307.8 billion, up from the previously published 1.4% increase. This followed a 0.7% June increase. Transportation equipment, up seven of the last eight months, led the increase, $2.5 billion or 2.5% to $101.8 billion. Shipments of manufactured nondurable goods, up three consecutive months, increased $0.8 billion or 0.3% to $300.5 billion. This followed a 0.4% June increase. Petroleum and coal products, up two consecutive months, led the increase, $0.2 billion or 0.4% to $55.3 billion.

On a seasonally-adjusted basis, July shipments for furniture and related products were down 0.5% compared to the prior month, while new orders were down 0.3%. On a non-adjusted basis, year to date shipments for furniture and related products were up 0.7% compared to the prior year (same as last month), while year to date new orders were up 0.4% (up 0.6% last month).