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Forecast Calendar

March 23, 2012

United States

Economic Indicators—Schedule and Forecasts

March 26 – April 6, 2012

Sinai/Ellis/Hooper

f= DE forecast c=consensus a=advance s=second t=third r=revised

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Plosser Speech (7:00)
(Global Interdependence Center Conference, Paris)

Bernanke Speech (8:00)
(National Association for Business Economics 2012 Policy Conference, Arlington: "A View from the Federal Reserve")

Pending Home Sales (10:00)

Oct	6.6%	Jan	2.0%
Nov	4.6%	**Feb (f)**	**1.9%**
Dec	-1.9%	**Feb (c)**	**1.0%**

3-and 6-Month Bills (11:30)
$60.0 Billion

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ICSC/Goldman Sachs Chain Sales (7:45) (3/24)

Redbook Chain Sales (8:55)
(3/24)

S&P/Case-Shiller Index (9:00)
(20 City Index) (Y/Y)

Sep	-3.7%	Dec	-4.0%
Oct	-3.6%	**Jan (f)**	**-3.9%**
Nov	-3.9%	**Jan (f)**	**-3.8%**

Conference Board Consumer Confidence Survey (10:00)

Nov	55.2	Feb	70.8
Dec	64.8	**Mar (f)**	**69.1**
Jan	61.5	**Mar (c)**	**70.0**

Dudley Testimony (10:00)
(House Financial Services Committee: "Federal Reserve Aid to the Eurozone: Its Impact on the US and the Dollar")

4-Week Bill (11:30)
$40.0 Billion (f)

Rosengren Speech (12:35)
(NIESR, London)

Bernanke Lecture (12:45) (3/4)
(George Washington University: "The Federal Reserve and its Role in Today's Economy")

2 -Year Note (13:00)
$35.0 Billion

Fisher Speech (13:20)
(Dallas Fed Community Forum: "Fed Operations and Economic Update")

Duke Speech (15:45)
(National Inter Agency Community Reinvestment Conference, Seattle: "Building Sustainable Communities")

Bullard Speech (20:00)
(Tsinghua University, China: Monetary Policy)

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Durable Goods (8:30)

	Orders	Ex-Def.	Ships.
Jan	-3.7%	-4.3%	0.4%
Feb (f)	**2.5%**	**2.5%**	**0.8%**
Feb (c)	**3.0%**		

5 -Year Note (13:00)
$35.0 Billion

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Initial Claims (8:30)

3/10	353	**3/24 (f)**	**350**
3/17	348	**3/24 (c)**	**350**

Gross Domestic Product (8:30)
(Third)

	Real	Final Sales	Chain Prices
11:Q4 (s)	3.0%	1.1%	0.9%
11:Q4 (f)	**3.0%**	**1.1%**	**0.9%**
11:Q4 (c)	**3.0%**	**1.1%**	**0.9%**

Lockhart Speech (12:15)
(Commerce Club, Atlanta: "The European Crisis and How It Affects You")

Bernanke Lecture (12:45) (4/4)
(George Washington University: "The Federal Reserve and its Role in Today's Economy")

Plosser Speech (13:00)
(Rotary Club, Wilmington, DE: Economic Outlook)

7 -Year Note (13:00)
$29.0 Billion

Lacker Speech (18:45)
(University of North Carolina School of Law Center for Banking and Finance)

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Personal Income & Consumption (8:30)

	Income	Cons.	Core Prices
Jan	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Feb (f)	**0.4%**	**0.7%**	**0.1%**
Feb (c)	**0.4%**	**0.6%**	**0.1%**

Chicago Purchasing Managers' Survey (9:45)

	Total	Prices Paid
Feb	64.0	65.6
Mar (f)	**64.5**	**65.1**
Mar (c)	**63.0**	

U of M Cons Sentiment Index (9:55) (Final)

Dec	69.9	Mar (p)	74.3
Jan	75.0	**Mar(f)**	**74.0**
Feb	75.3	**Mar(c)**	**74.6**

U of M Inflation Expectations (9:55) (Final)

	1-Year	5-Year
Feb	3.3%	2.9%
Mar (p)	4.0%	3.0%
Mar (f)	**4.0%**	**3.0%**

Saturday:
Kocherlakota Speech (18:30)
(Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting, IL)

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Construction Expenditure (10:00)

Sep	1.1%	Dec	1.4%
Oct	0.3%	Jan	-0.1%
Nov	1.9%	**Feb (f)**	**0.3%**

ISM Manufacturing Survey (10:00)

	Total	Prices
Jan	54.1	55.5
Feb	52.4	61.5
Mar (f)	**55.7**	**59.9**

3-and 6-Month Bills (11:30)
$60.0 Billion (f)

Pianalto Speech (12:35)
(Economic Roundtable of Ohio Valley: "The Fed and The Economy: Striving for Stability")

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ICSC/Goldman Sachs Chain Sales (7:45) (3/31)

Redbook Chain Sales (8:55)
(3/31)

Manufacturers' (10:00)

	Orders	Ships.	Invs.
Dec	1.4%	0.8%	0.2%
Jan	-1.0%	0.9%	0.6%
Feb(f)	**1.5%**	**1.5%**	**0.5%**

4-Week Bill (11:30)
$40.0 Billion (f)

52-Week Bill (13:00)
$26.0 Billion (f)

FOMC Minutes (14:00)
(March 13 meeting)

Light Vehicle Sales
(Units, Millions, SAAR)

	Total	Domestic	Import
Jan	14.1	11.1	3.0
Feb	15.0	11.7	3.3
Mar (f)	**15.0**	**11.6**	**3.4**

Williams Speech (16:05)
(U of San Francisco Symposium: Simulated FOMC Meeting)

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ADP Employment Estimate (8:15)
(Mar)

ISM Non-Manufacturing

(10:00)	Total	Prices
Jan	56.8	63.5
Feb	57.3	68.4
Mar (f)	**58.1**	**64.7**

Williams Speech (11:00)
(San Francisco Planning and Urban Research: Economic Outlook)

5

Initial Claims (8:30)

3/10	353	**3/24 (f)**	**350**
3/17	348	**3/31 (f)**	**345**

Bullard Speech (9:10)
(Annual InvestMidwest Venture Capital Forum, St. Louis: "The US Economy and Monetary Policy")

Monthly Chain Store Sales
(Mar)

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Unemployment Rate (8:30)

Oct	8.9%	Jan	8.3%
Nov	8.7%	Feb	8.3%
Dec	8.5%	**Mar (f)**	**8.2%**

Employment Report (8:30)

	Payrolls (Thous.)	Weekly Hours	Hourly Earnings
Jan	284	34.5	0.1%
Feb	227	34.5	0.1%
Mar (f)	**187**	**34.5**	**0.2%**

Recent History-Latest Results

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NAHB Housing Market Index (10:00)

Oct	17	Jan	25
Nov	19	Feb	28
Dec	21	Mar	28

3-and 6-Month Bills (11:30)
$64.0 Billion

20

ICSC/Goldman Sachs Chain Sales (7:45) (3/17)

Housing Starts (8:30)
(Units, Thousands, SAAR)

	Starts	Permits
Dec	681	671
Jan	706	682
Feb	698	717

Redbook Chain Sales (8:55)
(3/17)

4-Week Bill (11:30)
$40.0 Billion

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Existing Home Sales (10:00)
(Units, Millions, SAAR)

Sep	4.280	Dec	4.380
Oct	4.320	Jan	4.630
Nov	4.400	Feb	4.590

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Initial Claims (8:30)

2/25	354	3/10	353
3/3	365	3/17	348

Leading Indicators (10:00)

Sep	-0.5%	Dec	0.5%
Oct	0.5%	Jan	0.2%
Nov	0.3%	Feb	0.7%

10 -Year TIPS (13:00)
$13.0 Billion

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New Home Sales (10:00)
(Units, Thousands, SAAR)

Sep	302	Dec	336
Oct	311	Jan	318
Nov	322	Feb	313

Indicator Highlights

United States

The S&P/Case-Shiller Index (Tue., Mar. 27, 9:00 a.m.) is a key gauge of house prices for both year-on-year changes and on a running basis. Home prices in this index have double dipped, but when will the corner be turned? The last report on Q4 Gross Domestic Product (Thurs., Mar. 29, 8:30 a.m.) may give some more clarity on the overall economy and the recovery. The final report typically does not change much. Personal Income & Consumption (Fri., Mar. 30, 8:30 a.m.) will provide a second-month reading of Q1 consumer spending, currently the largest source (over 70%) of real GDP. How goes the consumer, so goes the economy, making it a very significant indicator A new growth trend for consumption has emerged: much weaker than historically, but significantly better, perhaps about +2%to +2½% or so, than the last few years. Real disposable income to be watched especially now that jobs are improving. The Reuters/University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index (Fri., Mar. 30, 9:55 a.m.) will give a final look at consumer attitudes in March. Consumer sentiment has been rising sharply on better household financial conditions and an improved jobs climate, but now maybe threatened by rising gasoline prices.

The ISM Manufacturing Survey (Thurs., Apr. 2, 10:00 a.m.) is the definitive diffusion index relating to this dimension of the economy. The ISM Non-Manufacturing Survey (Tues., Apr. 4, 10:00 a.m.) is a high-frequency gauge for the important services sector, which accounts for about 60% to almost 85% of the economy, depending on the measure. Nonfarm Payroll Jobs and the Unemployment Rate (Fri., Apr. 6, 8:30 a.m.) are key data for a host of upcoming economic indicators, the overall economic prospect, and particularly the Fed. It is also a potential huge mover of financial markets. The Fed remains focused on the unemployment rate and getting to full employment. 8.3% is still way too high.

Indicator	Forecast	Consensus	Analysis
Pending Home Sales	+1.9%	+1.0%	Edges upward.
S&P/Case-Shiller Index	-3.9%	-3.8%	Very uncertain stability.
Conference Board Consumer Confidence Survey	69.1	70.0	Sentiment eroded by higher gasoline prices.
Durable Goods			
Orders	+2.5%	+3.0%	Commercial aircraft orders up again.
Ex-Defense	+2.5%		
Shipments	+0.8%		
Gross Domestic Product (Third)			
Real	+3.0%	+3.0%	Minimal revisions, if any, to components.
Final Sales	+1.1%	+1.1%	
Chain Prices	+0.9%	+0.9%	
Personal Income & Consumption			
Income	+0.4%	+0.4%	Relatively mild income gain, but strong auto purchases.
Consumption	+0.7%	+0.6%	
Core Prices	+0.1%	+0.1%	
Chicago Purchasing Managers' Survey			
Total	64.5	63.0	Upturn in activity likely. Prices continue upward movement.
Prices Paid	65.1		
U. of M. Consumer Sentiment Index (Final)	74.0	74.6	Gasoline price rise erodes sentiment further.
U. of M. Inflation Expectations (Final)			
1-Yr Ahead (Median)	4.0%		Short-term spike due to gasoline.
5-Yr Ahead (Median)	3.0%		
Construction Expenditure	+0.3%		Very mild increase
ISM Manufacturing Survey			
Total	55.7		Manufacturing activity moves upward with prices virtually stable.
Prices	59.9		
Manufacturers'			
Orders	+1.5%		Durable goods orders, particularly for aircraft, the main thing.
Shipments	+1.5%		
Inventories	+0.5%		
Light-Vehicle Sales (Units, SAAR)			
Total	15.0		Very steady–indicating consumer more and more at ease.
Domestic	11.6		
Import	3.4		
	Million		
ISM Non-Manufacturing Survey			
Total	58.1		Prices remain stable while activity advances.
Prices	64.7		
Unemployment Rate	8.2%		Another step down, but progress slowed.
Employment Report			
Payrolls	+187,000		Continued improvement, but very modest-particularly with respect to incomes.
Weekly Hours	34.5		
Hourly Earnings	+0.2%		

Assessment

Economy has firmed in a broad-based way, lifting up in Q4 and Q1 relative to a year ago on better consumption and capital spending. Worst may be over in state and local sector, but trade weakening on European recession. "Off-shore" risks to U.S. still from European recession and ongoing weaker growth in Asia. But, the look ahead to late this year and next is much better. Europe recession for Q4, Q1, and Q2 in-place; maybe longer, maybe deeper. Fed still likely to focus on unemployment being too high, but the possibility of another balance sheet easing move lessened on the improving labor market. Reacceleration of U.S. economy noticeable, but the central bank will be cautious given previous premature expectations of a better economy that did not materialize.

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