Rhode Island Current Conditions Index – March 2018

Leonard Lardaro
University of Rhode Island, llardaro@uri.edu

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The unthinkable has finally happened: Rhode Island’s Unemployment Rate has now risen relative to its value a year ago for two consecutive months! Does this presage the end of Western Civilization as we know it? Will the earth in Rhode Island abruptly open up and our state’s structures and its people fall helplessly into it? For those whose exclusive focus in gauging Rhode Island’s economy is the Unemployment Rate, these are very serious questions. For those among us who are intelligent enough to know that accurately gauging an economy’s progress requires a far more broadly based analysis, please keep reading.

Rhode Island ended the first quarter of 2018 on somewhat of a precautionary note. My characterization of our state’s economic performance last month as being “very promising” might have been premature. The key word, though, is “might.” We have clearly moved beyond the doldrums of 2016, where Rhode Island’s economy contracted for two of the four quarters that year. The Current Conditions Index readings throughout 2017 attest to this. However, what we might be seeing is an all-to-year. The Current Conditions Index readings throughout 2017 Is Island’s economy contracted for two of the four quarters that clearly moved beyond the doldrums of 2016, where Rhode performance last month as being “very promising” might have precautionary note. My characterization of our state’s economic Rhode Island ended the first quarter of 2018 on somewhat of a national economic soft patch (thus our FILO status). If that is the unemployment Rate has now risen relative to its value a year ago for two consecutive months! Does this presage the end of Western Civilization as we know it? Will the earth in Rhode Island abruptly open up and our state’s structures and its people fall helplessly into it? For those whose exclusive focus in gauging Rhode Island’s economy is the Unemployment Rate, these are very serious questions. For those among us who are intelligent enough to know that accurately gauging an economy’s progress requires a far more broadly based analysis, please keep reading.

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