

Director's Message

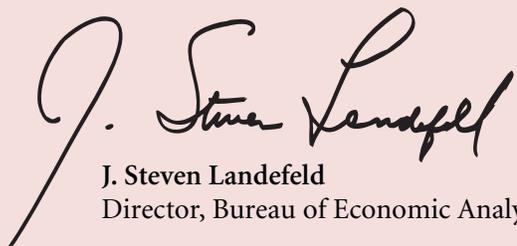
The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) has a long tradition of updating its statistics to better reflect the ever-changing economy. Today, economists have increasingly pointed to the importance of better measurement of the contribution of innovation to economic growth. Over time, BEA has updated its accounts to reflect the impact of innovative activity in important ways. For example, in the 1980s, we worked with IBM to develop quality-adjusted computer price indexes; in the 1990s, we capitalized spending on software; and in 2006, we launched a research and development satellite account. A *BEA Briefing* in this issue of the SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS discusses BEA's plans to address key areas of innovation and how our core accounts might be affected.

Also this month, we're pleased to launch a new *Regional Quarterly Report*. The goal of the new report is to provide a vehicle for discussing a wide range of regional economic issues on a regular basis. In this inaugural version, personal income statistics for the third quarter of 2008 and newly available county compensation statistics for 2007 are discussed.

This issue includes a discussion of the "final" estimates of gross domestic product for the third quarter of 2008 and balance of payments statistics for the third quarter of 2008.

It also includes our annual presentation of the current account from an ownership point of view. This supplemental presentation counts the sales to foreigners that U.S. companies make through their overseas subsidiaries as well as their sales to foreigners directly from parent companies located in the United States.

As always, we're interested in feedback from our users. Please contact us via the methods noted at www.bea.gov/contacts/search.htm.



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