**Standard 8-7:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the impact on South Carolina of significant events of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

**Enduring Understanding**

Changes that took place in the United States during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries revitalized the economy and challenged traditional society and politics in South Carolina. To understand the response of South Carolina to these challenges, the student will . . .

**8-7.1 Compare the social and economic impact of World War II and the Cold War on South Carolina with its impact on the rest of the United States, including the increases in the birth rate; the emergence of the consumer culture; the expanding suburbanization, highway construction, tourism and economic development; the continuing growth of military bases and nuclear power facilities; and the increases in educational opportunities.**

During World War II**,** South Carolina experienced significant economic growth. The war effort ended the Great Depression as South Carolinians enjoyed full employment. Many South Carolinians joined the armed forces. The expansion of military bases to meet training needs at Fort Jackson, Parris Island, the naval base at Charleston and the new air base at Columbia stimulated the local economy. However, segregation and discrimination continued to limit the opportunities of African Americans in South Carolina. President Roosevelt’s executive order opened jobs in wartime industries and led African Americans to move off South Carolina farms in search of better economic and social opportunities in the cities of the North and West. Once the war ended, economic prosperity continued in South Carolina as it did throughout the country. Demand for goods unavailable in wartime and the ability to pay for them because of wartime savings led to increased consumer spending.

Returning veterans used the GI Bill benefits to get an education or start new businesses, boosting the South Carolina economy in the process. As the soldiers returned home and the economy improved, there was a post-war baby boom. Pent-up consumer demand from the war years and the needs of growing families led to the development of the consumer culture and contributed to the growth of suburbs. Federal and state highway construction, the availability of the automobile and growing industry contributed to the continuation of the shift from rural to urban areas and now to the suburbs that continues to the present. Growing families, the desire to attract industry and Cold War competition with the USSR meant that states and local governments were called on to improve education. In South Carolina, the school year was extended to 9 months and the 12th grade added to high schools. A system of technical colleges was created that would attract economic investment to South Carolina as it supplied an educated and trained work force to meet industry specifications. As the result of court cases on civil rights, South Carolina invested more heavily in schools to preserve segregation (8-7.2). In the last 30 years South Carolina has worked to reform education through accountability in the Education Improvement Act (8-7.3).

In the post war period, South Carolina continued a tradition begun in the late 19th century of promoting Northern tourism to Southern climes. In the early 20th century, moneyed Northerners were attracted to such places as Aiken and Camden for temperate outdoor pastimes (horse racing and hunting) and bought up former plantations for hunting and relaxation. These large tracts of land were purposely left undeveloped providing the state with parcels that later became parks and preserves for research, recreation and tourism [such as Brookgreen Gardens and Huntington State Park]. The wide availability of the automobile and the expansion of highways accelerated the development of South Carolina’s tourist industry. Motels and fast food restaurants followed the building of highways and resort development gave Americans a place to go. The greater availability of air conditioning contributed to the growth of tourism during the hot summer months. Charleston and the South Carolina coast, especially Myrtle Beach, became popular vacation destinations. As the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boom generation age and retire they are looking for places to play golf and to enjoy their golden years. South Carolina’s mild climate and moderate housing costs compared to other areas of the country make it an attractive place to retire. Resorts such as Hilton Head Island answer this demand. The development of these sea islands, however, can threaten existing historic communities and thus gives South Carolina the opportunity to continue the tradition of actively preserving the cultural heritage of the region.

The Cold War impacted the economy of the United States and that of South Carolina. Military spending spawned industries that have provided jobs. The Savannah River Nuclear Plant was built to provide weapons grade plutonium for the United States nuclear arsenal. It continues to provide jobs and an economic boost to the region, despite the end of the Cold War. As a result of Cold War spending and the war on terrorism, military bases in South Carolina have continued to play an important part in the state’s economy. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Myrtle Beach Air Force base and the Charleston Naval Shipyard were closed. However, recent problems in the Middle East, including the first and second Gulf Wars in Iraq, have seen an increase on America’s dependence on training facilities and staging areas in South Carolina, such as Fort Jackson, Parris Island, Sumter Air Force Base and the port of Charleston.