

# News

United States  
Department  
of Labor



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PLS – 4359  
FOR RELEASE:  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2007

## AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN VIRGINIA: FIRST QUARTER 2007

### Henrico County recorded 16<sup>th</sup> fastest wage growth in the United States Arlington County ranked 7<sup>th</sup> highest in wages in the nation

In the first quarter of 2007, the average weekly wage in Henrico County increased by 7.7 percent over the year, the largest advance among Virginia's 12 counties with employment of 75,000 or more. Newport News City's 7.5-percent wage growth was the second fastest in the Commonwealth, followed by Norfolk City's 6.7-percent increase. Arlington County had the highest average weekly wage level in Virginia at \$1,447, followed by Fairfax County (\$1,371) and Alexandria City (\$1,136). Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that among Virginia's 12 large counties, only 3 recorded wage growth above the national rate of 5.1 percent, but 6 had wages above the national average of \$885. (See table 1.)

From a national perspective, Virginia's counties had some of the highest average weekly wages in the country. Arlington County ranked 7<sup>th</sup>; Fairfax County, 11<sup>th</sup>; and Alexandria City, 25<sup>th</sup> when wages were compared for all 328 large counties nationwide, placing them in the top 10 percent in the United States for wage levels. Counties in Virginia also registered some of the largest over-the-year wage gains in the nation in the first quarter of 2007. Henrico County's wage growth was 16<sup>th</sup> highest in the United States, and the cities of Newport News and Norfolk ranked 17<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, respectively. These three counties were among the top one-tenth of large counties nationwide in wage growth.

Wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 122 counties in Virginia with employment below 75,000. All but 6 (Goochland, Surry, King George, Fairfax City, Falls Church City, and Manassas City) of these 122 counties had average weekly wages below the national level. (See table 2.)

### County Wage Levels

Among Virginia's 12 large counties, 6 had average weekly wages exceeding \$1,000 in the first quarter of 2007—Arlington, Fairfax, Alexandria City, Loudoun, Richmond City, and Henrico. These six large counties, four of which are located in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. metropolitan area, were the only ones in Virginia to record wage levels greater than the nationwide average of \$885. Wages in these counties ranged from 14 percent higher than the national average in Henrico to 64 percent higher in Arlington.

At the other end of the wage spectrum, Chesapeake City and Virginia Beach City reported the lowest average weekly wage levels among the large counties in the Commonwealth, each at \$661. (See chart I.) These two counties, both of which are located in the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, Va.-N.C. metropolitan area, had wages in the bottom fifth of the national ranking, tied at 291<sup>st</sup>. Average weekly wages in the four remaining large areas (Prince William County, Newport News City, Chesterfield County, and Norfolk City) were all below the national level.

New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,821. Fairfield, Conn., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,979, followed by Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,659), San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,639), and Somerset, N.J. (\$1,615). Of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the United States, 4 were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., Somerset, N.J., and Hudson, N.J.),

3 others were located in or around the San Francisco area (San Francisco, Santa Clara, and San Mateo, all in California), and 2 more were located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (Arlington, Va., and Washington, D.C.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area. Cameron County, Texas (\$502) reported the lowest average weekly wage, followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$516), Horry, S.C. (\$536), Webb, Texas (\$542), and Yakima, Wash. (\$569).

### **County Wage Changes**

Of Virginia's 12 large counties, 3 recorded wage growth above the national increase of 5.1 percent from the first quarter of 2006 to the first quarter of 2007. As mentioned, Henrico County's 7.7-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the Commonwealth and 16<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation, followed by Newport News City's 7.5-percent gain (17<sup>th</sup>), and Norfolk City's 6.7-percent advance (29<sup>th</sup>). Two other counties—Virginia Beach City at 4.9 percent and Chesapeake City at 4.8 percent—had growth rates close to the national average. All five of these counties registered wage growth rates among the highest one-third of large counties in the United States.

Loudoun was the only county in the Commonwealth to have an over-the-year decline in wages in the first quarter of 2007, down 3.0 percent. Arlington County had the smallest gain, up 2.4 percent over the year, followed by Chesterfield County with 3.1-percent wage growth. All three of these counties ranked among the bottom one-third of large U.S. counties in wage growth.

Among the largest counties, Trumbull, Ohio, led the nation in growth in average weekly wages with an increase of 22.3 percent from the first quarter of 2006. New York, N.Y., was second with growth of 16.7 percent, followed by the counties of Cobb, Ga. (11.2 percent), Suffolk, Mass. (10.8 percent), and Clay, Mo. (9.7 percent). New York County experienced substantial over-the-year wage growth, which had a significant impact on national average weekly wage growth in the first quarter of 2007. Without New York County's over-the-year employment and wage gains, national average weekly wage growth would have been 4.2 percent, a 0.9-percentage point reduction.

Fourteen counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Bibb, Ga., along with Loudoun, Va., led the nation in declines (-3.0 percent each), followed by the counties of Orleans, La., and Norfolk, Mass. (-2.7 percent each), and Arapahoe, Colo., Sarasota, Fla., and Peoria, Ill. (-1.8 percent each).

### **Wage levels in Virginia's smaller counties**

As mentioned, all but 6 of the 122 counties in Virginia with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national level. Highland County reported the lowest wage level at \$414. The highest wage among Virginia's 122 small counties was Goochland County's \$1,568, followed by Surry County's \$1,258.

When all 134 counties in Virginia are considered, 20 had wages below \$500. Six counties had wages above \$1,100, while five others had wages ranging from \$901 to \$1,100. Most of the higher-paid counties were located in the Washington and Richmond metropolitan areas. Eighty, or three-fifths, of the counties in Virginia reported average weekly wages from \$501 to \$700 in the first quarter of 2007. (See chart 1.)

### **State Average Weekly Wages**

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Virginia was \$901, \$16 above the nationwide level, ranking 10<sup>th</sup> highest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 3.) Nationally, 8 of the 11 areas in which average weekly wage levels surpassed the U.S. average fell in a contiguous band along the east coast, stretching from Massachusetts to Virginia. The five highest average wages at the state level were in the District of Columbia (\$1,428), New York (\$1,397), Connecticut (\$1,263), Massachusetts (\$1,110), and New Jersey (\$1,097). Average weekly wages in this group were 24 percent or more above that for the nation. At the other end of the scale, seven states had wage levels 75 percent or less of national earnings: Montana (\$600), South Dakota (\$602), North Dakota (\$615), Mississippi (\$616), Idaho (\$636), Arkansas (\$642), and West Virginia (\$652).

New York experienced wage growth of 11.8 percent from the first quarter of 2006 to the first quarter of 2007, higher than that of any other state. Wyoming was second with 9.3-percent growth, followed by Rhode Island, averaging 7.1 percent. No state experienced over-the-year wage declines. Oklahoma posted the smallest growth, up 1.3 percent. Virginia's average wage growth of 4.4 percent was below the nation's 5.1-percent advance.

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.9 million employer reports cover 134.3 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number then is divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or States for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/); however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Note below) and will not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

### **Additional statistics and other information**

An annual bulletin, Employment and Wages, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2006 will be available for sale in early 2008 from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA, 15250 or by calling 1-866-512-1800. The 2005 bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn05.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn05.htm). Also, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/).

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Mid-Atlantic Information Office at 215-597-3282 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, [www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm).

### **TECHNICAL NOTE**

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

**Table 1. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages in the United States and the 12 largest counties in Virginia, first quarter 2007<sup>2</sup>**

Area	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, first quarter 2006-07 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	134,320.6	\$885	--	5.1	--
Virginia	3,644.6	901	10	4.4	27
Alexandria City, Va.	99.9	1,136	25	(7)	-
Arlington, Va.	150.5	1,447	7	2.4	255
Chesapeake City, Va.	99.6	661	291	4.8	101
Chesterfield, Va.	120.4	765	184	3.1	221
Fairfax, Va.	579.5	1,371	11	4.3	135
Henrico, Va.	178.5	1,008	49	7.7	16
Loudoun, Va.	126.5	1,081	37	-3.0	322
Newport News City, Va.	99.1	761	190	7.5	17
Norfolk City, Va.	143.4	826	137	6.7	29
Prince William, Va.	101.9	744	209	4.2	139
Richmond City, Va.	157.3	1,071	39	(7)	-
Virginia Beach City, Va.	174.9	661	291	4.9	88

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Ranking does not include San Juan, Puerto Rico.

<sup>5</sup> Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

<sup>6</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

<sup>7</sup> Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

**Table 2. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Virginia, first quarter 2007<sup>2</sup>**

Area	Employment March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
United States (4)	134,320.6	\$885
Virginia	3,644.6	901
Accomack	12.7	547
Albemarle	49.9	822
Alleghany	4.3	557
Amelia	3.1	549
Amherst	9.7	608
Appomattox	3.5	507
Arlington	150.5	1,447
Augusta	25.5	650
Bath	2.5	551
Bedford	15.0	581
Bland	1.9	718
Botetourt	10.6	642
Brunswick	4.9	540
Buchanan	7.9	716
Buckingham	3.2	551
Campbell	15.2	589
Caroline	5.4	612
Carroll	6.3	486
Charles City	1.7	620
Charlotte	2.9	484
Chesterfield	120.4	765
Clarke	4.3	645
Craig	0.6	479
Culpeper	15.4	657
Cumberland	1.4	491
Dickenson	3.5	639
Dinwiddie	8.8	656
Essex	4.3	514
Fairfax County	579.5	1,371
Fauquier	21.4	734
Floyd	2.9	458
Fluvanna	4.1	586
Franklin	15.5	514
Frederick	23.7	696
Giles	4.8	685
Gloucester	10.2	516
Goochland	10.5	1,568
Grayson	2.4	497
Greene	2.9	535

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

**Table 2. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Virginia, first quarter 2007<sup>2</sup> - continued**

Area	Employment March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
Greensville	4.6	586
Halifax	12.5	556
Hanover	43.9	679
Henrico	178.5	1,008
Henry	16.8	540
Highland	0.6	414
Isle of Wight	11.6	693
James City	25.2	594
King and Queen	1.0	594
King George	9.5	1,128
King William	3.8	720
Lancaster	4.7	545
Lee	5.6	537
Loudoun	126.5	1,081
Louisa	7.5	846
Lunenburg	2.9	493
Madison	3.2	527
Mathews	1.7	445
Mecklenburg	13.2	479
Middlesex	3.3	498
Montgomery	38.8	649
Nelson	3.5	497
New Kent	3.7	597
Northampton	5.0	545
Northumberland	2.8	513
Nottoway	6.2	532
Orange	9.3	582
Page	5.7	494
Patrick	5.1	462
Pittsylvania	12.1	527
Powhatan	6.4	625
Prince Edward	9.0	513
Prince George	11.1	819
Prince William	101.9	744
Pulaski	14.8	638
Rappahannock	1.6	812
Richmond County	2.8	594
Roanoke County	36.0	669
Rockbridge	6.8	509
Rockingham	29.3	631
Russell	7.8	559

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

**Table 2. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Virginia, first quarter 2007<sup>2</sup> - continued**

Area	Employment March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
Scott	4.9	502
Shenandoah	14.5	544
Smyth	13.2	556
Southampton	4.3	562
Spotsylvania	29.7	643
Stafford	34.3	801
Surry	2.1	1,258
Sussex	3.8	573
Tazewell	17.3	545
Warren	11.4	600
Washington	20.4	609
Westmoreland	3.4	478
Wise	14.4	595
Wythe	12.1	508
York	21.9	660
Alexandria City	99.9	1,136
Bedford City	3.8	569
Bristol City	12.7	567
Buena Vista City	2.6	487
Charlottesville City	35.9	794
Chesapeake City	99.6	661
Colonial Heights City	10.2	484
Covington City	4.4	749
Danville City	27.5	597
Emporia City	4.2	507
Fairfax City	21.7	1,060
Falls Church City	12.8	1,039
Franklin City	4.1	492
Fredericksburg City	26.7	651
Galax City	6.8	464
Hampton City	59.7	756
Harrisonburg City	31.0	615
Hopewell City	8.3	852
Lexington City	5.1	609
Lynchburg City	53.6	740
Manassas City	24.7	994
Manassas Park City	3.7	789
Martinsville City	13.3	493
Newport News City	99.1	761
Norfolk City	143.4	826
Norton City	4.2	657

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

**Table 2. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Virginia, first quarter 2007<sup>2</sup> - continued**

Area	Employment March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
Petersburg City	14.6	645
Poquoson City	2.0	508
Portsmouth City	43.4	772
Radford City	6.8	657
Richmond City	157.3	1,071
Roanoke City	70.7	685
Salem City	22.2	756
Staunton City	12.4	528
Suffolk City	25.3	679
Virginia Beach City	174.9	661
Waynesboro City	10.3	615
Williamsburg City	15.3	593
Winchester City	28.4	707

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.



**Table 3. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages by state, first quarter 2007<sup>2</sup>**

State	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	134,320.6	\$885	-	5.1	-
Alabama	1,953.7	716	35	3.5	39
Alaska	299.8	831	20	5.2	11
Arizona	2,667.2	803	21	4.7	18
Arkansas	1,179.9	642	46	3.2	42
California	15,569.4	988	6	3.9	34
Colorado	2,262.4	889	11	3.6	37
Connecticut	1,665.0	1,263	3	6.1	4
Delaware	416.6	986	7	2.1	50
District of Columbia	674.4	1,428	1	4.7	18
Florida	8,093.4	764	25	3.4	40
Georgia	4,065.1	837	17	4.9	14
Hawaii	626.4	748	27	4.2	30
Idaho	645.0	636	47	4.6	23
Illinois	5,795.7	956	8	4.6	23
Indiana	2,880.8	739	30	2.9	44
Iowa	1,457.6	686	39	3.6	37
Kansas	1,349.1	720	34	4.7	18
Kentucky	1,791.5	699	37	4.0	32
Louisiana	1,863.5	730	32	4.4	27
Maine	582.1	677	41	3.7	36
Maryland	2,527.0	939	9	4.6	23
Massachusetts	3,167.5	1,110	4	6.1	4
Michigan	4,130.2	851	15	4.0	32
Minnesota	2,629.6	873	12	5.2	11
Mississippi	1,127.3	616	48	3.2	42
Missouri	2,710.1	744	29	2.9	44
Montana	428.8	600	51	4.9	14
Nebraska	899.3	667	44	2.8	46
Nevada	1,282.3	802	22	4.8	16
New Hampshire	619.8	836	18	4.6	23
New Jersey	3,926.6	1,097	5	5.6	7
New Mexico	819.3	685	40	5.9	6
New York	8,441.3	1,397	2	11.8	1
North Carolina	4,034.3	779	24	4.7	18
North Dakota	334.5	615	49	4.8	16
Ohio	5,241.0	793	23	5.3	9
Oklahoma	1,534.3	676	43	1.3	51
Oregon	1,707.8	755	26	2.7	47
Pennsylvania	5,589.6	849	16	5.1	13
Rhode Island	472.2	834	19	7.1	3
South Carolina	1,885.9	677	41	2.3	48
South Dakota	381.9	602	50	3.4	40
Tennessee	2,732.5	738	31	4.7	18
Texas	10,143.0	872	13	5.6	7
Utah	1,203.9	696	38	5.3	9
Vermont	300.0	704	36	2.3	48
Virginia	3,644.6	901	10	4.4	27
Washington	2,869.9	868	14	4.3	29
West Virginia	700.3	652	45	4.2	30
Wisconsin	2,727.7	745	28	3.9	34
Wyoming	269.1	730	32	9.3	2
Puerto Rico	1,024.5	476	(5)	5.3	(5)
Virgin Islands	45.6	687	(5)	6.3	(5)

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

<sup>5</sup> Data not included in the national ranking.

