

News

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BLS 08-02

FOR RELEASE:

Thursday, January 10, 2008

AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN IDAHO: FIRST QUARTER 2007

The average weekly wage in Ada County was \$768 in the first quarter of 2007, 5.6 percent higher than a year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationally, weekly wages averaged \$885, growing 5.1 percent over the year. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that Ada County had the 178th highest wage level in the nation among the 328 largest counties, those with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment.

County Wage Levels

Across the country, average weekly wages were higher than the nationwide average in 92 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,821. Fairfield, Conn. was second with an average wage of \$1,979, followed by Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,659), San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,639), and Somerset, N.J. (\$1,615).

There were 236 large counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the first quarter of 2007. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$502), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$516), Horry, S.C. (\$536), Webb, Texas (\$542), and Yakima, Wash.(\$569).

County Wage Changes

Ada County's average weekly wage growth was the 57th fastest rate among the largest counties in the United States, ranking it in the top 20 percent. As noted, wages in Ada County advanced 5.6 percent in the first quarter of 2007 compared to 5.1 percent for the nation.

Among the 328 largest counties, Trumbull, Ohio led the nation in wage growth with an increase of 22.3 percent from the first quarter of 2006. New York, N.Y. followed with a 16.7 percent gain, 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 wage growth, 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., and 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).

State Average Weekly Wages

At the state level, weekly wages in Idaho averaged \$636 in the first quarter of 2007, \$249 below that for the nation, ranking it 47th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 2.) Across the country, the five highest average wage levels 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 the national average. At the other end of the spectrum, six states, including Idaho, had wage levels averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: Montana (\$600), South Dakota (\$602), North Dakota (\$615), Mississippi (\$616), Idaho (\$636), and Arkansas (\$642). (See table 2.)

With average weekly wage growth of 4.6 percent from the first quarter of 2006, Idaho ranked 23rd among the 50 states and District of Columbia. New York experienced over-the-year wage growth of 11.8 percent, the highest in the nation. Wyoming was second at 9.3-percent growth, followed by Rhode Island, at 7.1 percent. No state experienced over-the-year declines. The slowest wage growth in the United States occurred across all regions: Oklahoma (1.3 percent), Delaware (2.1 percent), South Carolina and Vermont (both at 2.3 percent), and Oregon (2.7 percent).

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 is then 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 <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may 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. The 2006 edition of this bulletin will contain selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2007 version of this news release. As with the 2005 edition, this edition will include the data on a CD for enhanced access and usability with the printed booklet containing selected graphic representations of QCEW data; the data tables themselves will be published exclusively in electronic formats as PDFs. *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, telephone (866) 512-1800, outside Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is (202) 512-1800. The fax number is (202) 512-2104. On-line ordering information is available at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov/>. The 2005 bulletin is also available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn05.htm>.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>. 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 Western Information Office in San Francisco at (415) 625-2270 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 4:00 PT.

Changes to County Employment and Wages Data

Beginning with the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data presented in this release, the Bureau of Labor Statistics is introducing the 2007 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS 2007). The conversion to NAICS 2007 resulted in minor changes to the data and more accurately reflects the underlying business activities in selected industries. For further information on the NAICS 2007 revision and its effect on QCEW data, see the note on page 6 of the national release (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cewqtr.pdf>) and the U.S. Census Bureau Web site at <http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics07/index.html>.

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 (1) employment and wages in the United States and the largest county in Idaho, first quarter 2007 (2) from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

| 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 | -- |
| Idaho | 645.0 | 636 | 47 | 4.6 | 23 |
| Ada, Idaho | 209.6 | 768 | 178 | 5.6 | 57 |

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. These 328 U.S. counties comprise 71.1 percent of the total workers in the U.S.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(5) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, first quarter 2007 (2) from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

| 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) |

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. These 328 U.S. counties comprise 71.1 percent of the total workers in the U.S.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(5) Data not included in the national ranking.