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**FOR RELEASE:**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2008**

## **COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN GEORGIA: FOURTH QUARTER 2007**

The average weekly wage in Muscogee County increased 6.5 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007, the largest advance among Georgia's nine counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment. Chatham County's 3.7-percent wage growth was the second fastest in the State according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Fulton County had the highest average weekly wage level in Georgia at \$1,173 followed by Cobb County (\$927) and De Kalb County (\$916). Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that among the State's large counties, one recorded wage growth above the national rate of 4.2 percent, and 4 had wages above the national average of \$898. (See table 1.)

Among the nine largest counties in Georgia, employment was highest in Fulton County (771,500) and lowest in Bibb County (84,200). Only two large counties—Fulton and Cobb—recorded employment gains greater than the 0.8-percent national average from December 2006 to December 2007. Four of the State's large counties recorded a decline in employment, ranging from -0.2 percent in Gwinnett County to -0.9 percent in De Kalb County.

### **Large County Average Weekly Wages**

Four of Georgia's nine largest counties registered an average weekly wage higher than the national average and ranked among the top of half of the nation's 328 largest counties. Fulton County (\$1,173) recorded the highest average weekly wage in the State and placed 18<sup>th</sup> nationally, followed by Cobb (\$927, 86<sup>th</sup>) and De Kalb (\$916, 92<sup>nd</sup>). Gwinnett County (\$902, 102<sup>nd</sup>) was just \$4 above the national average. The remaining five large counties ranked below the national average and placed in the bottom half of the rankings—Clayton (\$779, 220<sup>th</sup>), Chatham (\$766, 232<sup>nd</sup>), Richmond (\$728, 275<sup>th</sup>), Muscogee (\$716, 281<sup>st</sup>), and Bibb (\$703, 289<sup>th</sup>).

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 106 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,862. Santa Clara, Calif., ranked second with an average weekly wage of \$1,700, followed by Fairfield, Conn. (\$1,575), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,546), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,529). Three of the top 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.); 3 were located in or around the San Francisco metropolitan area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco, all in California); and 3 were located in the Washington,

D.C. metropolitan area (Arlington, Va., Washington, D.C., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

Nationwide, 222 or 68 percent of the largest counties recorded an average weekly wage below the national level. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$555), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$562), Horry, S.C. (\$582), Webb, Texas (\$590), and Yakima, Wash. (\$596).

### **Wage Changes in Large Counties**

One county in Georgia exceeded the national increase in wages of 4.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007, ranking in the upper half in wage growth among the nation's 328 largest counties—Muscogee County (6.5-percent) was 26<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation and the largest increase in Georgia. This was followed by Chatham County (3.7 percent, 152<sup>nd</sup>) which also ranked in the top half in wage growth among the largest U.S. counties. The remaining seven counties ranked in the bottom half with lower-than-average wage growth, ranging from Fulton (2.8 percent, 226<sup>th</sup>) to Cobb (1.4 percent, 292<sup>nd</sup>).

Among the largest counties in the U.S., Pulaski, Ark., led the nation in average weekly wages with an increase of 26.2 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006. Williamson, Texas, was second with 16.5-percent wage growth, followed by the counties of Lake, Ill. (15.6 percent), Douglas, Colo. (12.6 percent), and Westmoreland, Pa. (9.8 percent).

Eight counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. The five largest decreases in wages occurred in the counties of Rockingham, N.H. (-12.4 percent), Trumbull, Ohio (-7.2 percent), Sedgwick, Kans. (-4.1 percent), Lake, Fl. (-3.9 percent), and Montgomery, Ohio (-2.4 percent).

### **State Average Weekly Wages**

The average weekly wage in Georgia grew 2.8 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the fourth quarter of 2007, ranking 43<sup>rd</sup> among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The average weekly wage in Georgia, (\$835, 21<sup>st</sup>), was 7.0 percent below the \$898 national average, but was higher than neighboring Tennessee (\$813, 24<sup>th</sup>), Florida (\$810, 25<sup>th</sup>), North Carolina (\$777, 31<sup>st</sup>), Alabama (\$762, 33<sup>rd</sup>), and South Carolina (\$716, 43<sup>rd</sup>). (See table 1.)

Across the country, the District of Columbia (\$1,506), New York (\$1,152), Connecticut (\$1,149), Massachusetts (\$1,133), and New Jersey (\$1,092) had the highest wage levels. At the other end of the scale, three states reported wages 28 percent or less of that for the nation: Montana (\$659), Mississippi (\$654), and South Dakota (\$647).

Arkansas led the United States in over-the-year wage growth with a gain of 9.2 percent. North Dakota was second with 7.3 percent wage growth, followed by Wyoming (7.1 percent), Nevada (6.7 percent), and Oklahoma (6.2 percent). New Hampshire was the only state to experience an over-the-year decline of 0.3 percent. (See table 2.)

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 9.1 million employer reports cover 133.8 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly

employment levels of those covered by UI programs; this result 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 [www.bls.gov/cew/](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 contains selected data produced by the Business Employment dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2007 version of this news release. This edition includes the data on a CD for enhanced access and usability with the printed booklet containing selected graphic representation of QCEW data; the data tables themselves will be published exclusively in electronic PDF formats at [www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.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 (QCEW) Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Southeast Information Office at 404-893-4222 from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. and 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. ET. This release is available on the Atlanta BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm).

### **TECHNICAL NOTE**

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons--some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

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. These potential differences result from the states' 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 9 largest counties in Georgia, fourth quarter 2007(2)

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	December 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2006-07(5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, fourth quarter 2006	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	137,027.3	0.8	\$898	--	4.2	--
Georgia	4,111.5	0.6	835	21	2.8	43
Bibb, Ga.	84.2	-0.3	703	289	1.7	283
Chatham, Ga.	137.3	0.0	766	232	3.7	152
Clayton, Ga.	115.2	0.6	779	220	2.5	245
Cobb, Ga.	323.0	0.9	927	86	1.4	292
De Kalb, Ga.	300.0	-0.9	916	92	2.1	268
Fulton, Ga.	771.5	1.1	1,173	18	2.8	226
Gwinnett, Ga.	326.6	-0.2	902	102	2.3	261
Muscogee, Ga.	97.0	-0.8	716	281	6.5	26
Richmond, Ga.	103.5	0.1	728	275	2.4	254

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

(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.

(7) Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

**Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2007(2)**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	December 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2006-07	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	137,027.3	0.8	\$898	-	4.2	-
Alabama	1,971.0	1.2	762	33	3.3	39
Alaska	299.4	1.0	877	16	4.9	15
Arizona	2,693.3	-0.1	827	22	2.6	46
Arkansas	1,187.6	0.7	712	44	9.2	1
California	15,794.7	0.8	1,035	6	4.8	18
Colorado	2,329.9	2.0	927	9	5.7	7
Connecticut	1,717.8	0.7	1,149	3	4.5	26
Delaware	428.8	0.3	926	10	3.3	39
District of Columbia	681.6	0.7	1,506	1	5.8	6
Florida	8,024.3	-1.3	810	25	2.8	43
Georgia	4,111.5	0.6	835	21	2.8	43
Hawaii	637.2	0.7	793	28	4.1	29
Idaho	660.2	1.7	686	47	2.1	50
Illinois	5,933.0	0.6	975	8	5.1	13
Indiana	2,929.1	0.1	745	35	3.0	42
Iowa	1,498.5	0.7	732	39	4.9	15
Kansas	1,372.7	1.2	745	35	2.6	46
Kentucky	1,830.5	0.8	732	39	3.4	38
Louisiana	1,903.1	2.3	783	29	4.7	20
Maine	608.8	0.8	707	45	4.1	29
Maryland	2,580.1	0.4	986	7	4.7	20
Massachusetts	3,270.9	0.7	1,133	4	5.4	8
Michigan	4,194.9	-1.2	873	17	2.5	49
Minnesota	2,708.7	0.8	883	15	5.1	13
Mississippi	1,148.9	0.7	654	50	3.8	34
Missouri	2,746.2	0.3	780	30	5.3	11
Montana	440.4	2.1	659	49	5.4	8
Nebraska	925.2	1.3	723	41	5.2	12
Nevada	1,290.8	0.4	872	19	6.7	4
New Hampshire	638.8	0.3	914	12	-0.3	51
New Jersey	4,027.4	0.2	1,092	5	3.5	36
New Mexico	831.7	1.1	738	38	4.8	18
New York	8,762.7	1.4	1,152	2	4.2	27
North Carolina	4,127.7	1.5	777	31	3.5	36
North Dakota	347.7	2.0	690	46	7.3	2
Ohio	5,336.8	-0.2	795	27	2.8	43
Oklahoma	1,556.1	1.3	721	42	6.2	5
Oregon	1,740.5	0.9	798	26	4.6	22
Pennsylvania	5,712.8	0.5	873	17	4.2	27
Rhode Island	480.9	-1.5	838	20	2.6	46
South Carolina	1,904.0	1.0	716	43	4.1	29
South Dakota	393.5	1.7	647	51	5.4	8
Tennessee	2,790.3	0.9	813	24	4.0	33
Texas	10,460.8	3.0	911	13	4.6	22
Utah	1,241.8	2.8	758	34	4.6	22
Vermont	309.1	-0.2	743	37	4.9	15
Virginia	3,709.0	0.7	921	11	3.8	34
Washington	2,936.0	2.6	885	14	4.6	22
West Virginia	716.8	0.4	683	48	4.1	29
Wisconsin	2,803.9	0.3	769	32	3.1	41
Wyoming	279.6	3.0	815	23	7.1	3
Puerto Rico	1,055.2	-1.4	517	(5)	4.4	(5)
Virgin Islands	46.0	0.6	738	(5)	3.9	(5)

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

(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.