

News

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Bureau of Labor Statistics

New York Office

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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN NEW JERSEY: THIRD QUARTER 2006 MORRIS COUNTY'S 4.5-PERCENT WAGE GROWTH LEADS STATE, SOMERSET COUNTY HAS HIGHEST WAGE

In the third quarter 2006, the average weekly wage in Morris County increased 4.5 percent over the year, the largest increase among New Jersey's 15 counties with 75,000 or more jobs (as measured by 2005 annual average employment), according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Michael L. Dolfman noted that Morris County's wage growth ranked 17th among the 325 largest counties in the nation, well above the 0.9-percent national average. Of the 15 largest counties in New Jersey, only 5 had over-the-year wage gains, and 10 had losses in the third quarter of 2006. Nationally, 112 of the 325 large counties experienced over-the-year wage declines.

Somerset's County's average weekly wage of \$1,165 was the highest in the State in the third quarter of 2006 and 10th highest in the nation among the largest counties. Twelve of New Jersey's large counties had an average weekly wage exceeding the national average of \$784.

Somerset County also had the highest percentage increase in employment over the year, up 1.5 percent in September 2006, matching the national average. Four other counties had job growth above 1.0 percent, but most large counties in New Jersey experienced little change in their job count. (See table 1.)

Wage and employment levels (but not comparable over-the year-changes) are also available for the six other counties in New Jersey, those with less than 75,000 in employment. Four of these six counties had a weekly wage below the national average. (See table 2.)

At the state level, the average weekly wage in New Jersey increased 0.3 percent to \$931 in the third quarter of 2006. While New Jersey's wage growth was below the U.S. average, the State's average weekly wage was about 19 percent higher than that for the nation. The average weekly wage in New Jersey ranked fifth highest nationwide behind wage levels in the District of Columbia (\$1,307), Connecticut (\$957), and Massachusetts and New York (both \$950) and ahead of California's (\$892). (See table 3.)



Round-the-clock recorded messages for the **Consumer Price Index** and a variety of other **Bureau of Labor Statistics** data are available by dialing the **New York Information Office's** main telephone number: **(212) 337-2400**. For recorded messages, press '2'. Fax-on-Demand service will be discontinued on April 27, 2007.

Over-the-year changes in wages

Four of New Jersey's large counties recorded over-the-year wage growth greater than the national increase of 0.9 percent in the third quarter of 2006, with Morris County ranking first in the State. Middlesex and Hudson Counties had wage growth of approximately 3 percent, and ranked among the top 40 nationally. Somerset and Bergen Counties recorded smaller increases—1.0 and 0.3 percent, respectively. Two-thirds of New Jersey's 15 largest counties, however, experienced an over-the-year decline in wages. In Passaic County the average weekly wage dropped 10.2 percent, the largest decline in the State as well as the nation. Two other counties, Camden and Essex, had wage losses exceeding 1.0 percent.

Among the largest counties in the nation, Kent, R.I., had the strongest wage growth, with an increase of 18.4 percent from the third quarter of 2005. Orleans, La., was second with growth of 16.2 percent, followed by the counties of Trumbull, Ohio (12.3 percent), and Jefferson, La., and Jefferson, Texas (10.5 percent each). The high average weekly wage growth rate for Orleans County was related to the disproportionate job losses in lower-paid industries due to the impact of Hurricane Katrina. As noted, Passaic, N.J., had the largest decrease, -10.2 percent, followed by the counties of Williamson, Texas (-5.7 percent), Fort Bend, Texas (-5.0 percent), Loudoun, Va. (-4.2 percent), and Ventura, Calif. (-4.0 percent).

Wage levels in the largest counties

Among the 15 largest counties in New Jersey, 12 had average weekly wages exceeding the \$784 nationwide average. Somerset and Morris Counties led the State with weekly wages averaging \$1,100 or more, ranking them in the top 11 nationally; both of these counties were located in the northern part of New Jersey. The lowest wages were found in Ocean and Atlantic Counties (\$669 and \$694, respectively) in the southern half of the State. Average weekly wages in Ocean and Atlantic ranked in the bottom third nationwide.

Of the 325 large counties in the nation, New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,421. Santa Clara, Calif., was a close second with an average weekly wage of \$1,414, followed by Arlington, Va. (\$1,323), Washington, D.C. (\$1,307), and San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,278). Four of the 11 counties with the highest wages were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y.; Fairfield, Conn.; and Somerset and Morris, both in N.J.), 3 others were located in and around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco in California), while 3 more were located in or around the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Arlington, Va.; Washington, D.C.; and Fairfax, Va.). The lowest average weekly wages were reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$493), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$514); Horry, S.C. (\$517); Webb, Texas (\$525); and Yakima, Wash. (\$537).

Wage levels in New Jersey's smaller counties

Wage and employment levels (but not comparable over-the-year-changes) are also available for the six counties in New Jersey with employment of less than 75,000. Four of these counties—Cape May, Cumberland, Sussex, and Warren—had wages below the national level. Cape May had the lowest wage averaging \$551 in the third quarter of 2006. The highest wage among the six was recorded in Hunterdon at \$956, followed by Salem at \$802.

When all 21 counties in New Jersey are considered, eight of the largest counties had higher wage levels than Hunterdon, but none of the largest had wages lower than Cape May. (See table 3.) Statewide, three counties had average weekly wages below \$700—Cape May, Atlantic, and Ocean and

all were located in the southern part of the State along the Atlantic coast; nine counties had wages above \$900 and were clustered in the northern half. (See chart 1.)

Employment

Among the 15 large counties in New Jersey, employment ranged from a high of 450,700 in Bergen to a low of 104,700 in Gloucester in September 2006. Five counties had employment growth of 1.0 percent or more over the year. After Somerset, Atlantic and Morris Counties followed closely, with rates of 1.4 and 1.3 percent, respectively. Jobs in Hudson County were down 0.8 percent.

Nationally, Jefferson County, La., had the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment, 22.4 percent. Employment gains in Jefferson County reflected significant recovery from substantial losses that occurred in September 2005 due to Hurricane Katrina. Snohomish, Wash., had the next largest increase, 8.2 percent, followed by the counties of Collin, Texas (7.2 percent), Harrison, Miss. (6.8 percent), and Montgomery, Texas (5.7 percent). The largest percentage decline in employment in the nation, -12.3 percent, was in Orleans County, La., which was also affected by Hurricane Katrina. Trumbull, Ohio, had the next largest employment decline (-4.5 percent), followed by the counties of Macomb, Mich. (-4.0 percent), Oakland, Mich. (-3.5 percent), and Rock Island, Ill. (-3.0 percent).

Average weekly 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 8.8 million employer reports cover 135.0 million full- and part-time jobs. The average weekly wage is compiled 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 the number of weeks in the 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. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2005* is now available for sale from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside of Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104. The bulletin is available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <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 United States and is available at <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 Covered Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the New York-New Jersey Information Office at (212) 337-2400 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET.

Hurricane Katrina

The employment and wages reported in this news release reflect the impact of Hurricane Katrina and ongoing labor market trends in certain counties. The effects of Hurricane Katrina, which hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, were first apparent in the September QCEW employment counts and in the wage totals for the third quarter of 2005. This catastrophic storm continued to affect monthly employment and quarterly wage totals in parts of Louisiana and Mississippi in the third quarter of 2006. For more information, see the QCEW section of the Katrina coverage on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/katrina/qcewquestions.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.

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New York Labor

Table 1. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and New Jersey and its 15 large counties, third quarter 2006²

Area	Employment		Average weekly wage ³			
	September 2006 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2005-06 ⁴	Third quarter 2006	National rank by level ⁵	Percent change, 2005-06 ⁴	National rank by percent change ⁵
United States ⁶	134,988.9	1.5	\$ 784	--	0.9	--
New Jersey.....	3,984.7	0.7	931	--	0.3	--
Atlantic.....	152.5	1.4	694	222	-.3	225
Bergen.....	450.7	0.6	969	29	.3	182
Burlington.....	202.0	0.4	843	73	-.6	249
Camden.....	213.3	1.1	794	102	-1.5	291
Essex.....	360.1	0.4	990	22	-1.1	277
Gloucester.....	104.7	0.2	714	194	-.4	234
Hudson.....	236.1	-0.8	1,061	13	2.9	36
Mercer.....	227.7	1.1	980	27	-.4	234
Middlesex.....	396.4	0.2	996	21	3.2	30
Monmouth.....	259.2	0.3	830	79	-.2	219
Morris.....	288.6	1.3	1,136	11	4.5	17
Ocean.....	152.4	0.3	669	259	-.1	212
Passaic.....	177.3	-0.2	835	75	-10.2	323
Somerset.....	173.1	1.5	1,165	10	1.0	127
Union.....	229.6	0.3	967	30	-.7	257

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

⁵ Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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

Table 2. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in New Jersey, third quarter, 2006²

Area	Employment September 2006 (thousands)	Average weekly wage ³
United States ⁴	134,988.9	\$ 784
New Jersey	3,984.7	931
Atlantic	152.5	694
Bergen	450.7	969
Burlington	202.0	843
Camden	213.3	794
Cape May	48.1	551
Cumberland	63.6	705
Essex	360.1	990
Gloucester	104.7	714
Hudson	236.1	1,061
Hunterdon	49.7	956
Mercer	227.7	980
Middlesex	396.4	996
Monmouth	259.2	830
Morris	288.6	1,136
Ocean	152.4	669
Passaic	177.3	835
Salem	23.5	802
Somerset	173.1	1,165
Sussex	42.3	702
Union	229.6	967
Warren	37.6	764

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.

Table 3. Covered¹ employment and wages by state and territory, third quarter 2006²

Area	Employment		Average weekly wage ³		
	September 2006 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National rank by level ⁴	Percent change, 2005-06	National rank by percent change ⁴
United States ⁵	134,988.9	\$784	-	0.9	-
Alabama	1,938.9	682	34	1.9	13
Alaska	324.8	798	13	.1	42
Arizona	2,629.0	753	20	1.1	21
Arkansas	1,183.9	603	46	.7	26
California	15,655.0	892	6	.6	31
Colorado	2,260.1	819	11	1.4	16
Connecticut	1,680.7	957	2	-.9	51
Delaware	424.6	850	8	3.4	6
District of Columbia	674.2	1,307	1	3.6	5
Florida	7,941.7	713	26	.7	26
Georgia	4,039.3	752	21	.5	34
Hawaii	621.2	722	24	1.1	21
Idaho	661.2	613	45	1.3	19
Illinois	5,883.6	831	9	.7	26
Indiana	2,922.7	687	31	-.3	49
Iowa	1,480.7	641	41	.0	44
Kansas	1,347.3	662	36	.6	31
Kentucky	1,795.1	656	38	.6	31
Louisiana	1,835.7	683	33	7.1	2
Maine	610.2	636	42	.8	25
Maryland	2,545.0	858	7	.5	34
Massachusetts	3,228.1	950	3	.3	37
Michigan	4,278.9	790	14	.3	37
Minnesota	2,685.1	784	16	-.6	50
Mississippi	1,134.3	585	49	2.1	11
Missouri	2,725.1	691	30	.0	44
Montana	434.4	581	50	3.0	8
Nebraska	906.9	633	43	.0	44
Nevada	1,287.6	751	22	.0	44
New Hampshire	634.9	774	17	.3	37
New Jersey	3,984.7	931	5	.3	37
New Mexico	826.1	654	39	4.0	3
New York	8,471.7	950	3	1.1	21
North Carolina	3,982.6	700	28	1.6	15
North Dakota	342.2	589	48	1.4	16
Ohio	5,350.9	725	23	.3	37
Oklahoma	1,517.6	633	43	3.3	7
Oregon	1,729.2	719	25	.7	26
Pennsylvania	5,644.8	768	18	.5	34
Rhode Island	490.8	763	19	3.7	4
South Carolina	1,866.0	642	40	1.1	21
South Dakota	389.6	571	51	.7	26
Tennessee	2,761.1	698	29	1.2	20
Texas	10,019.0	786	15	2.5	10
Utah	1,188.7	660	37	2.0	12

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Covered¹ employment and wages by state and territory, third quarter 2006²
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Area	Employment	Average weekly wage ³			
	September 2006 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National rank by level ⁴	Percent change, 2005-06	National rank by percent change ⁴
Vermont	305.8	672	35	1.4	16
Virginia	3,649.5	815	12	-.1	48
Washington	2,911.9	823	10	2.7	9
West Virginia	711.8	599	47	1.7	14
Wisconsin	2,800.8	687	31	.1	42
Wyoming	274.1	706	27	10.1	1
Puerto Rico	1,020.9	439	(6)	1.2	(6)
Virgin Islands	43.2	692	(6)	12.5	(6)

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

² Data are preliminary.

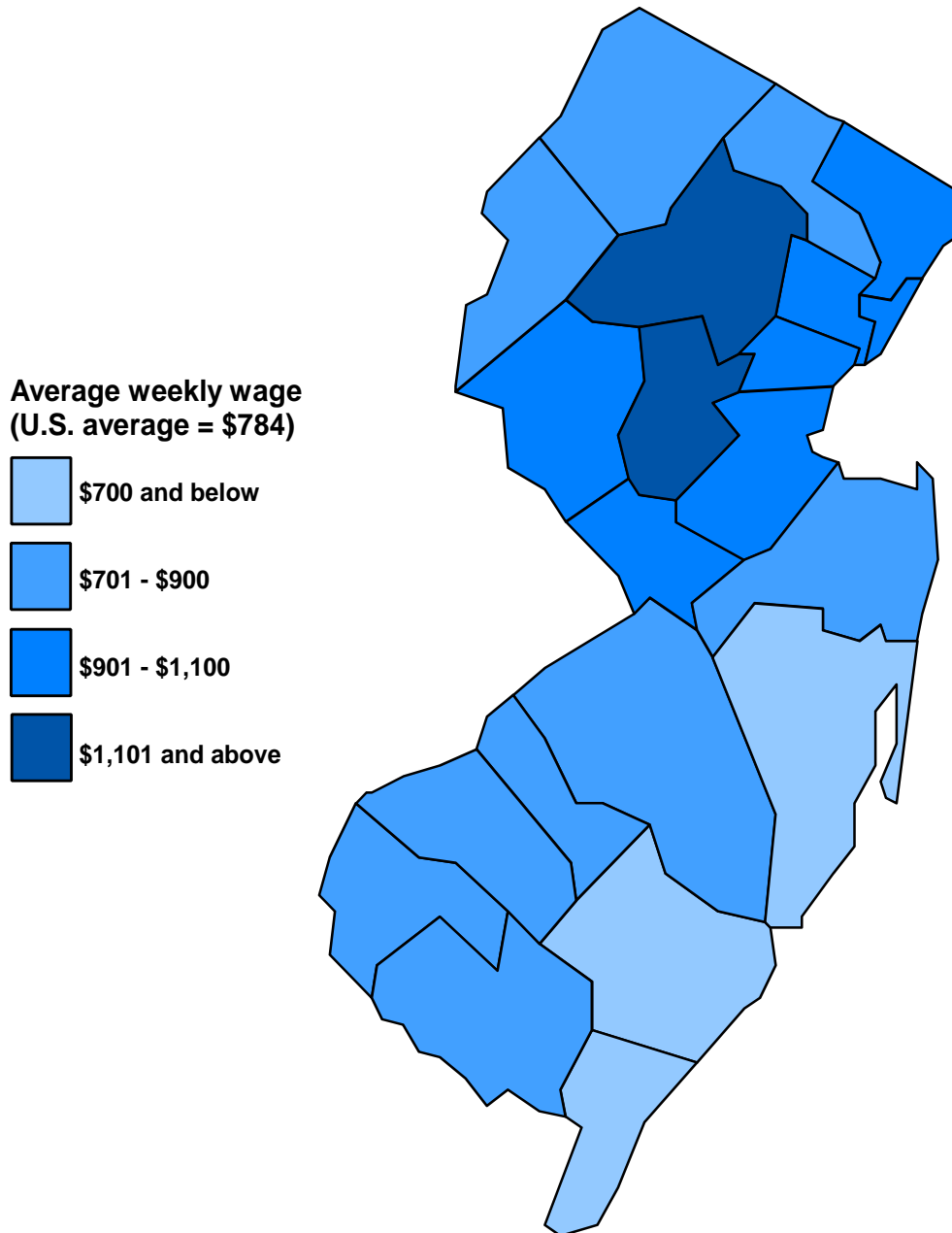
³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Ranking does not include Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁵ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁶ Data not included in the national ranking.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages, counties in New Jersey, third quarter 2006



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2007