

# News

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## County Employment and Wages in West Virginia: Third Quarter 2007

### Wages in Kanawha County rise 4.1 percent over the year

The average weekly wage in Kanawha County, West Virginia, was \$704 in the third quarter of 2007, 4.1 percent higher than one year earlier, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Wage growth in Kanawha County was similar to the national increase of 4.3 percent in the third quarter of 2007; however, the county's average weekly wage was \$114 below that for the nation. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that Kanawha County ranked 242<sup>nd</sup> highest in wage level and 117<sup>th</sup> fastest in wage growth among the 328 largest counties (those with 75,000 or more jobs) in the United States.

Employment in Kanawha County stood at 108,883 in September 2007—a 0.6-percent increase from September 2006. Employment growth in Kanawha County was slightly lower than the national rate of 0.9 percent during this same period.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 54 counties in West Virginia with employment below 75,000. Among this group, Clay County was the only county to register an average weekly wage above that for the nation. (See table A.)

### Large County Average Weekly Wages

The national average weekly wage in the third quarter of 2007 was \$818. Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 112 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,585. New York County, N.Y., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,544, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,376), Arlington, Va. (\$1,364), and San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,322).

Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco, all in California), 3 others were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), while 3 more were located in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area. (See table 1.)

There were 215 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the third quarter of 2007. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$518), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$529), Horry, S.C. (\$536), Webb, Texas (\$548), and Yakima, Wash. (\$568). The average weekly wage in the lowest-paid county, Cameron, was just under one-third the wage in the highest-paid county, Santa Clara.

From the third quarter of 2006 to the third quarter of 2007, the national average weekly wage rose by 4.3 percent. Among the largest counties, Clayton County, Ga., led the nation in growth in average weekly wages, with an increase of 23.9 percent from the third quarter of 2006. Muscogee, Ga., was second with growth of 12.1 percent, followed by the counties of Santa Clara, Calif. (11.8 percent), Rock Island, Ill. (11.5 percent), and Davidson, Tenn. (9.1 percent).

Ten large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. The five largest decreases in wages occurred in the counties of Trumbull, Ohio (-10.6 percent), Vanderburgh, Ind. (-6.1 percent), Genesee, Mich. (-4.0 percent), Saginaw, Mich. (-3.1 percent), and Montgomery, Ohio (-3.0 percent).

### **Wage Levels in West Virginia's Smaller Counties**

As mentioned, all but 1 of the 54 counties in West Virginia with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national level in the third quarter of 2007. Wirt County reported the lowest wage, \$362, and Clay County, the highest, \$1,086.

When all 55 counties in West Virginia were considered, 14, or approximately one-quarter, had wages at or below \$500, more than \$300 below the national average. Thirty-five counties, or nearly two-thirds, reported average weekly wages from \$501 to \$700 in the third quarter of 2007. Among the higher-paid counties in the State, Clay was the only one with wages above \$900, while five others had wages ranging from \$701 to \$900. Most of the higher-paying counties were located in the Charleston metropolitan area. Eleven of the 14 areas with wages of \$500 or less were not located in a metropolitan area. (See chart 1.)

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

Area	Employment September 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage <sup>3</sup>	Area	Employment September 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage <sup>3</sup>
United States <sup>4</sup>	136,246.9	\$818	Mercer	21.3	\$539
West Virginia	713.8	623	Mineral	7.4	534
Barbour	3.3	475	Mingo	8.2	729
Berkeley	30.2	654	Monongalia	50.6	658
Boone	8.3	784	Monroe	2.1	512
Braxton	4.2	488	Morgan	3.1	492
Brooke	8.4	595	Nicholas	8.9	525
Cabell	53.4	622	Ohio	29.1	570
Calhoun	1.4	490	Pendleton	1.7	502
Clay	2.1	1,086	Pleasants	3.3	691
Doddridge	1.2	435	Pocahontas	3.2	478
Fayette	13.3	509	Preston	7.6	529
Gilmer	2.1	557	Putnam	19.6	731
Grant	4.1	669	Raleigh	32.1	605
Greenbrier	14.0	542	Randolph	12.2	506
Hampshire	4.2	442	Ritchie	3.4	540
Hancock	11.8	542	Roane	3.3	467
Hardy	6.6	487	Summers	2.5	417
Harrison	33.1	627	Taylor	3.0	436
Jackson	8.8	609	Tucker	2.7	421
Jefferson	14.9	546	Tyler	2.3	634
Kanawha	108.8	704	Upshur	8.5	564
Lewis	6.1	514	Wayne	9.2	678
Lincoln	3.1	502	Webster	2.4	559
Logan	11.4	589	Wetzel	4.6	446
McDowell	5.5	570	Wirt	0.7	362
Marion	20.9	628	Wood	40.5	597
Marshall	10.3	703	Wyoming	5.3	618
Mason	6.8	666			

<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.

## **State Average Weekly Wages**

At the state level, the weekly wage in West Virginia averaged \$623, \$195 below the national average and fifth lowest in the nation. Eight of the 15 states in which the average weekly wage levels surpassed that for the nation fell in a contiguous band along the east coast stretching from Massachusetts to Virginia. The five highest wage levels in the United States were in the District of Columbia (\$1,376), Connecticut (\$1,021), New York (\$1,009), Massachusetts (\$1,002), and New Jersey (\$965). (See table 2.) Average weekly wages in this group were 18 percent or more above that for the nation. At the other end of the scale, three states had wage levels averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$598), Mississippi (\$607), and Montana (\$608).

Washington recorded the fastest wage growth among the states in the third quarter of 2007, at 6.7 percent, followed closely by Connecticut, at 6.6 percent. New York and North Dakota were next, with wage growth rates of 6.1 and 5.8 percent, respectively. Rhode Island was the only state to experience an over-the-year decline in wages, down 0.1 percent. The smallest wage gains among the states were registered in Delaware (1.2 percent), Indiana (2.2 percent), and Michigan (2.4 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 9.0 million employer reports cover 136.2 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 is available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm). In addition, 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/).

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).

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.

## 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 top 10 large counties ranked by average weekly wage, third quarter 2007<sup>2</sup>**

Area	Employment	Average weekly wage <sup>3</sup>			
	September 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level <sup>4</sup>	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07 <sup>5</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>4</sup>
United States <sup>6</sup>	136,246.9	\$818	-	4.3	-
Santa Clara, Calif.	902.3	1,585	1	11.8	3
New York, N.Y.	2350.3	1,544	2	8.7	6
Washington, D.C.	679.0	1,376	3	5.3	60
Arlington, Va.	154.5	1,364	4	3.6	168
San Mateo, Calif.	343.1	1,322	5	3.6	168
Suffolk, Mass.	587.0	1,299	6	7.7	13
Fairfield, Conn.	423.7	1,298	7	8.3	8
San Francisco, Calif.	563.4	1,286	8	3.4	188
Fairfax, Va.	584.9	1,243	9	5.3	60
Somerset, N.J.	174.1	1,210	10	5.8	40

<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 the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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

<sup>6</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 by state, third quarter 2007<sup>2</sup>**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>3</sup>			
	September 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States <sup>4</sup>	136,246.9	0.9	\$818	-	4.3	-
Alabama	1,959.0	1.1	707	32	3.7	37
Alaska	327.3	0.7	840	13	5.4	9
Arizona	2,644.9	0.5	783	20	4.1	25
Arkansas	1,184.5	0.3	629	46	4.1	25
California	15,755.0	0.7	932	6	4.5	18
Colorado	2,314.3	2.4	844	12	3.2	42
Connecticut	1,696.9	1.0	1,021	2	6.6	2
Delaware	425.2	0.1	860	10	1.2	50
District of Columbia	679.0	0.6	1,376	1	5.3	12
Florida	7,879.9	-0.9	741	26	4.1	25
Georgia	4,089.4	1.2	782	21	4.1	25
Hawaii	624.4	0.3	760	22	5.4	9
Idaho	675.5	2.2	634	45	3.4	41
Illinois	5,917.6	0.6	866	9	4.0	32
Indiana	2,937.4	0.5	702	34	2.2	49
Iowa	1,494.5	0.9	668	40	4.2	22
Kansas	1,368.7	1.7	680	38	2.7	46
Kentucky	1,814.3	1.0	676	39	3.0	44
Louisiana	1,880.8	2.7	716	31	4.5	18
Maine	615.3	0.7	660	44	3.9	35
Maryland	2,563.7	0.7	892	7	4.1	25
Massachusetts	3,261.0	1.0	1,002	4	5.5	5
Michigan	4,218.2	-1.4	808	16	2.4	48
Minnesota	2,713.3	0.9	822	15	4.6	16
Mississippi	1,142.2	0.6	607	50	3.8	36
Missouri	2,746.7	0.8	719	29	4.2	22
Montana	446.1	2.7	608	49	4.6	16
Nebraska	922.7	1.7	666	41	5.4	9
Nevada	1,286.4	-0.1	792	19	5.5	5
New Hampshire	637.2	0.3	799	18	3.2	42
New Jersey	3,985.2	0.1	965	5	3.7	37
New Mexico	830.4	0.8	682	37	4.1	25
New York	8,585.3	1.3	1,009	3	6.1	3
North Carolina	4,104.1	2.4	719	29	3.5	40
North Dakota	347.4	1.5	621	48	5.8	4
Ohio	5,331.9	-0.2	745	25	2.8	45
Oklahoma	1,548.2	1.8	666	41	5.5	5
Oregon	1,751.7	1.2	750	24	4.2	22
Pennsylvania	5,673.4	0.5	802	17	4.4	20
Rhode Island	486.1	-1.0	759	23	-0.1	51
South Carolina	1,904.7	1.7	664	43	3.6	39
South Dakota	397.5	2.0	598	51	4.7	15
Tennessee	2,774.4	0.5	728	28	4.3	21
Texas	10,304.9	2.9	825	14	5.0	13
Utah	1,231.6	3.6	696	36	5.5	5
Vermont	305.2	-0.2	699	35	4.0	32
Virginia	3,686.6	1.0	857	11	5.0	13
Washington	2,976.5	2.1	878	8	6.7	1
West Virginia	713.8	0.3	623	47	4.0	32
Wisconsin	2,802.3	-0.1	705	33	2.6	47
Wyoming	284.3	3.6	734	27	4.1	25
Puerto Rico	1,008.0	-1.1	453	(5)	2.5	(5)
Virgin Islands	45.0	0.7	682	(5)	-0.3	(5)

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

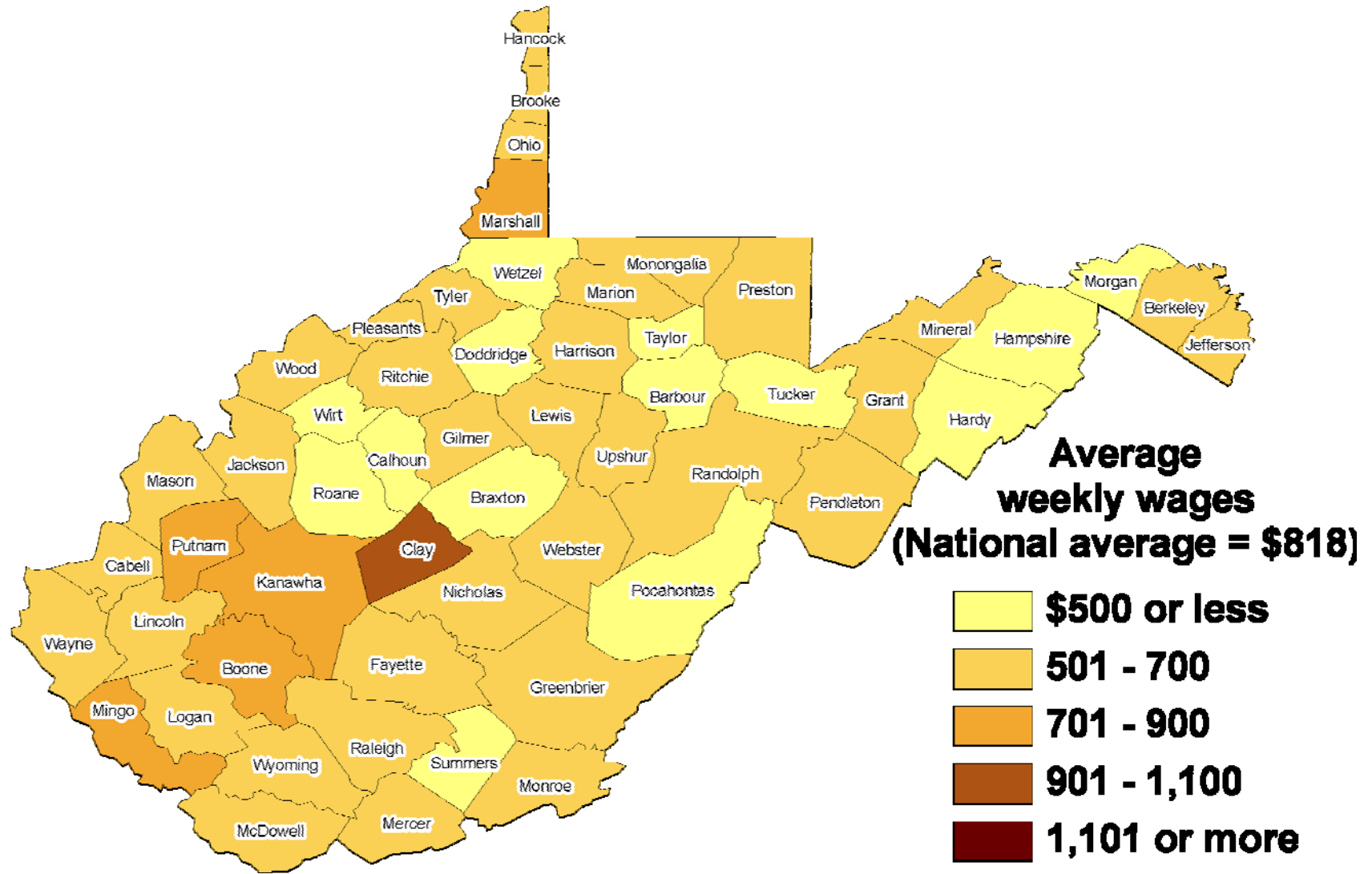
<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<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.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in West Virginia, third quarter 2007<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Data are preliminary.