

News

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BLS 08-103

FOR RELEASE:

Thursday, December 18, 2008

AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN IDAHO: FIRST QUARTER 2008

The average weekly wage in Ada County was \$746 in the first quarter of 2008, 2.4 percent lower than it was one year earlier, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that the wage in Ada County was \$159 below the national average of \$905 which had increased at a 2.4-percent pace over-the-year. (See table 1.)

Ada was the only large county in Idaho—that is, it had 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2007 annual average employment. Ada County's average wage ranked in the bottom one-third at 229th among the 334 largest counties in the United States. With an over-the-year decline in wages from the first quarter of 2007, Ada was close to the bottom in the national ranking at 321st.

In March 2008, employment in Ada County totaled 209,200 and represented slightly more than 32 percent of the State's employment. From March 2007 to March 2008, employment in the county decreased 0.5 percent. Nationwide, employment grew 0.4 percent over the same period. Of the 334 largest counties, 146 had over-the-year percentage growth in employment above the national average in March 2008; 178 large counties experienced changes below the national average.

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Across the country, average weekly wages were higher than that for the nation in 92 of the largest 334 counties. New York County, N.Y., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,805. Fairfield, Conn., was second with an average wage of \$1,905, followed by Somerset, N.J. (\$1,765), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,708), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,639).

There were 241 large counties with an average weekly wage at or below the national average in the first quarter of 2008. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$523), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$532), Horry, S.C. (\$534), Webb County, Texas (\$554), Yakima, Wash. (\$587), and Pasco, Florida (\$594).

Large County Wage Changes

Westmoreland, Pa., led the nation in wage growth with an annual increase of 14.9 percent from the first quarter of 2007. Williamson, Texas, was second with a 10.8-percent gain, followed by Somerset, N.J. (9.0 percent), San Luis Obispo, Calif. (8.3 percent), and Jefferson, Texas (7.9 percent).

Thirty-four large counties, including Ada, experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Trumbull, Ohio, had the largest decrease (-17.2 percent), followed by the counties of Saginaw, Mich. (-4.4 percent), Rockingham, N.H. (-3.9 percent), Fairchild, Conn. (-3.8 percent), and Mecklenburg, N.C. (-3.4 percent).

Employment and Wages in Idaho's Smaller Counties

Employment and wages (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 43 small counties in Idaho, those with employment below 75,000. These counties accounted for close to 68 percent of statewide employment.

Among the small counties, Canyon reported the highest employment at 55,097, followed by Kootenai, 54,505. Camas County had the lowest employment—422. (See table 2.)

Butte County (\$1,372) had the highest average weekly wage in the State and surpassed the national average by \$467. The next highest wages among Idaho's smaller counties were recorded in Caribou County (\$826) and Clark County (\$740). Boise County reported the lowest average wage at \$355.

When all 44 counties in Idaho were considered, 13 had average weekly wages below \$500, 27 had wages between \$501 and \$699, and the remaining 4 had wages above \$700 in the first quarter of 2007.

State Average Weekly Wages

At the state level, Idaho had an average weekly wage of \$635 in the first quarter of 2008, \$270 below that for the nation, and ranked 48th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Only Montana (\$625), South Dakota (\$632), and Mississippi (\$634) had lower wage levels. (See table 3.) At the highest end of the wage scale were the District of Columbia (\$1,488), New York (\$1,399), and Connecticut (\$1,254).

With wage growth of 0.3 percent from the first quarter of 2007, Idaho ranked 48th among the 50 states and District of Columbia. The highest over-the-year percentage increase in wages for the first quarter of 2008 was in Wyoming (6.7 percent). The only state to record an over-the-year decrease in wages was Connecticut, where wages declined 0.6 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 summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.1 million employer reports cover 134.8 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. The 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/; 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 Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2007. As with the 2005 edition, 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 are published exclusively in electronic formats as PDF. The 2006 bulletin is available in a PDF on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm>.

QCEW-based news releases issued by BLS regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, 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 at 415-625-2270 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. PT.

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. However 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 2008 (2) from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	March 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2007-08(5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, first quarter 2007-08 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	134,761.1	0.4	\$905	--	2.4	--
Idaho	645.3	0.2	635	48	0.3	48
Ada, Idaho	209.2	-0.5	746	229	-2.4	321

(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 in the United States and all of the counties in Idaho, first quarter 2008(2)

Area	Employment (March 2008) (3)	Average Weekly Wage
United States (4)	134,761,100	\$905
Idaho	645,288	635
Ada	209,191	746
Adams	1,063	456
Bannock	33,086	571
Bear Lake	1,581	412
Benewah	3,457	596
Bingham	14,621	541
Blaine	13,679	690
Boise	1,784	355
Bonner	13,974	570
Bonneville	45,214	594
Boundary	3,363	537
Butte	8,312	1,372
Camas	422	530
Canyon	55,097	562
Caribou	3,196	826
Cassia	9,411	517
Clark	601	740
Clearwater	2,957	533
Custer	1,522	581
Elmore	6,936	512
Franklin	3,307	471
Fremont	2,678	498
Gem	3,246	492
Gooding	6,399	553
Idaho	4,398	519
Jefferson	5,913	452
Jerome	8,821	527
Kootenai	54,505	592
Latah	13,581	535
Lemhi	2,386	486
Lewis	1,408	433
Lincoln	1,365	535
Madison	13,208	462
Minidoka	6,689	501
Nez Perce	20,874	630
Oneida	1,007	423
Owyhee	2,866	470
Payette	6,394	534
Power	3,123	581
Shoshone	4,860	607
Teton	3,096	574
Twin Falls	34,053	523
Valley	4,088	566
Washington	2,863	475

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. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, first quarter 2008 (2) from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	March 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	134,761.1	0.4	\$905	-	2.4	-
Alabama	1,947.0	-0.2	740	34	3.2	27
Alaska	303.0	1.0	866	16	4.2	11
Arizona	2,639.7	-1.3	820	22	2.4	34
Arkansas	1,178.4	-0.1	667	46	4.1	12
California	15,561.5	0.1	1,008	6	2.1	41
Colorado	2,300.0	1.7	920	10	3.6	16
Connecticut	1,683.9	1.2	1,254	3	-0.6	51
Delaware	418.4	0.5	987	7	0.1	49
District of Columbia	680.8	1.1	1,488	1	4.3	9
Florida	7,918.6	-2.2	777	26	1.8	43
Georgia	4,060.9	0.1	847	20	1.3	44
Hawaii	628.1	0.2	773	28	3.5	19
Idaho	645.3	0.2	635	48	0.3	48
Illinois	5,796.1	0.1	980	8	2.6	33
Indiana	2,858.7	-0.7	757	33	2.4	34
Iowa	1,469.8	0.9	710	40	3.6	16
Kansas	1,363.2	1.0	737	35	2.4	34
Kentucky	1,794.0	0.1	714	39	2.4	34
Louisiana	1,887.3	1.3	765	30	4.8	4
Maine	584.1	0.5	701	42	3.5	19
Maryland	2,530.3	0.0	963	9	2.8	31
Massachusetts	3,203.1	0.9	1,143	4	3.3	23
Michigan	4,058.8	-1.8	857	18	0.9	47
Minnesota	2,644.8	0.6	908	12	4.0	13
Mississippi	1,138.2	0.8	634	49	3.3	23
Missouri	2,708.0	0.0	768	29	3.5	19
Montana	432.4	0.9	625	51	4.3	9
Nebraska	912.2	1.4	687	44	3.2	27
Nevada	1,266.3	-1.2	839	21	4.7	5
New Hampshire	621.2	0.3	863	17	3.4	22
New Jersey	3,939.9	0.5	1,133	5	3.3	23
New Mexico	823.8	0.6	717	38	4.7	5
New York	8,555.0	1.3	1,399	2	0.1	49
North Carolina	4,069.1	0.9	788	24	1.3	44
North Dakota	343.3	2.6	652	47	6.2	2
Ohio	5,189.1	-1.0	798	23	1.0	46
Oklahoma	1,560.0	1.6	707	41	4.7	5
Oregon	1,713.1	0.3	776	27	2.9	30
Pennsylvania	5,608.8	0.5	869	15	2.4	34
Rhode Island	464.8	-1.5	851	19	2.3	39
South Carolina	1,888.3	0.1	695	43	2.8	31
South Dakota	389.4	2.0	632	50	5.2	3
Tennessee	2,746.4	0.6	761	31	3.3	23
Texas	10,420.8	2.8	903	13	3.6	16
Utah	1,220.2	1.4	718	37	3.2	27
Vermont	300.8	-0.3	735	36	4.4	8
Virginia	3,653.5	0.2	918	11	2.0	42
Washington	2,928.6	2.1	899	14	3.7	15
West Virginia	700.3	0.3	679	45	4.0	13
Wisconsin	2,734.3	0.2	760	32	2.2	40
Wyoming	277.2	2.9	779	25	6.7	1
Puerto Rico	1,004.5	-1.6	489	(5)	2.7	(5)
Virgin Islands	46.5	1.1	708	(5)	3.4	(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.