

# News

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## COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN WEST VIRGINIA: THIRD QUARTER 2008

### Kanawha County Wage Growth in the Top Tenth of Large Counties

Employment fell 0.5 percent in West Virginia's only large county, Kanawha, from September 2007 to September 2008 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2007 annual average employment.) Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that employment declined in more than half of the 334 largest U.S. counties from September 2007 to September 2008.

Nationally, employment decreased 0.8 percent over the 12 months ending September 2008. Elkhart County, Ind., posted the largest percentage decline, with a loss of 10.8 percent over the year. Lee, Fla., had the next largest percentage decline (-8.1 percent), followed by the counties of Collier, Fla. (-7.4 percent), Sarasota, Fla. (-7.1 percent), and Marion, Fla. (-6.4 percent). Yakima County, Wash., had the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment (3.2 percent).

Employment in Kanawha County stood at 108,500 in September 2008 and accounted for 15.1 percent of West Virginia's total employment. Nationwide, the largest 334 U.S. counties accounted for 71.2 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 135.2 million in September 2008. These 334 counties had a net job decline of 891,159 over the year, accounting for 84.4 percent of the overall U.S. employment decrease.

The average weekly wage in Kanawha County grew 4.8 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to the third quarter of 2008. This increase put Kanawha County in the top 10 percent of large counties for wage growth (33<sup>rd</sup> of 334). Over the year, the national average weekly wage rose by 2.8 percent. Among the largest counties, Rutherford, Tenn., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 17.3 percent from the third quarter of 2007. Yolo, Calif., was second with growth of 9.7 percent, followed by the counties of Madison, Ill. (9.2 percent), Suffolk, N.Y. (8.6 percent), and Calcasieu, La. (7.8 percent).

Despite Kanawha County being among the wage growth leaders, its average weekly wage of \$738 fell in the bottom third of the national ranking for average wages. Nationally, the average weekly wage in the third quarter of 2008 was \$841. There were 226 counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Horry, S.C. (\$537), followed by Cameron, Texas (\$538), Hidalgo, Texas (\$549), Webb, Texas (\$559), and Yakima, Wash. (\$580). Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 108 of the largest 334 U.S. counties. New York, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,552. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,530. (See table 1.)

## Average Weekly Wages in West Virginia's Smaller Counties

Only 1 of West Virginia's 54 counties with employment below 75,000 had an average weekly wage above the national average—Boone County at \$851. Wirt County, at \$385, had the lowest average weekly wage in the State. (See table 2.)

When all 55 counties in West Virginia were considered, 34, or approximately three-fifths, had wages averaging from \$501 to \$700. Wages were lower than \$501 in 11 counties. (See chart 1.) Boone, the only county with an above-average weekly wage, was a part of the Charleston, W.Va. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Putnam (\$774) and Kanawha (\$738) Counties, which had the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> highest average weekly wage, respectively, were also part of the Charleston MSA.

## Additional Statistics and other Information

QCEW data for states has been included in this release in table 3. For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit the QCEW Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/).

An annual bulletin, Employment and Wages, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2007 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 2008 version of the news release. Tables and additional content from the 2007 Employment and Wages Annual Bulletin are now available online at [www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn07.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn07.htm). These tables present final 2007 annual averages. The tables will also be included on the CD which accompanies the hardcopy version of the Annual Bulletin. Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2007 is expected to be available for sale as a chartbook by the end of the second quarter of 2009 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.

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 in Philadelphia at (215) 597-3282 from 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET.

## Technical Note

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 9.2 million employer reports cover 135.2 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/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/); however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

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 10 largest counties in the United States and Kanawha, W.Va., third quarter 2008(2)**

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	September 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2007-08 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)	Average Weekly Wage	Ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2007-08 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)
United States (6)	135,173.8	-0.8	--	\$841	--	2.8	--
New York, N.Y.	2,363.8	0.6	64	1,552	1	0.5	293
Santa Clara, Calif.	910.5	0.5	69	1,530	2	-3.4	326
Washington, D.C.	688.2	1.4	24	1,391	3	1.0	270
San Mateo, Calif.	343.8	0.1	101	1,374	4	3.5	82
San Francisco, Calif.	575.4	0.8	50	1,350	5	5.1	24
Arlington, Va.	156.2	0.8	50	1,348	6	-1.3	315
Suffolk, Mass.	591.8	0.4	76	1,321	7	2.2	201
Fairfield, Conn.	418.8	-0.5	153	1,310	8	0.5	293
Fairfax, Va.	587.0	0.3	84	1,295	9	4.2	46
Somerset, N.J.	172.9	-0.8	179	1,233	10	2.6	174
Kanawha, W.Va.	108.5	-0.5	153	738	222	4.8	33

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. These 334 U.S. counties comprise 71.2 percent of the total covered workers in the U.S.

(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. Covered(1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in West Virginia, third quarter 2008(2)**

Area	Employment September 2008	Average weekly wage (3) third quarter	Area	Employment September 2008	Average weekly wage (3) third quarter
United States (4)	135,173,818	\$841			
West Virginia	716,360	661	Mercer	21,705	\$571
Barbour	3,307	516	Mineral	7,679	571
Berkeley	29,771	691	Mingo	9,064	789
Boone	8,960	851	Monongalia	49,700	712
Braxton	4,204	527	Monroe	2,138	494
Brooke	8,100	656	Morgan	3,047	472
Cabell	53,209	663	Nicholas	8,767	577
Calhoun	1,477	524	Ohio	29,929	613
Clay	2,155	649	Pendleton	1,685	530
Doddridge	1,189	475	Pleasants	2,954	729
Fayette	13,351	568	Pocahontas	3,125	480
Gilmer	2,121	617	Preston	7,399	578
Grant	4,337	725	Putnam	21,334	774
Greenbrier	13,554	562	Raleigh	32,633	652
Hampshire	4,179	464	Randolph	12,072	526
Hancock	11,816	566	Ritchie	3,212	583
Hardy	6,180	494	Roane	3,259	527
Harrison	33,321	663	Summers	2,369	453
Jackson	8,748	634	Taylor	2,819	465
Jefferson	14,372	559	Tucker	2,515	434
Kanawha	108,521	738	Tyler	2,213	684
Lewis	6,394	580	Upshur	8,453	589
Lincoln	3,144	549	Wayne	9,202	725
Logan	12,207	653	Webster	2,386	601
McDowell	5,954	662	Wetzel	4,471	446
Marion	20,749	653	Wirt	761	385
Marshall	10,588	783	Wood	40,120	626
Mason	6,813	673	Wyoming	5,453	731

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. These 334 U.S. counties comprise 71.2 percent of the total covered 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.

**Table 3. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, third quarter 2008 (2)**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	September 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent
United States (4)	135,173.8	-0.8	\$841	-	2.8	-
Alabama	1,936.4	-1.2	730	32	3.3	17
Alaska	332.1	1.4	872	13	3.7	13
Arizona	2,570.1	-3.0	798	20	2.0	45
Arkansas	1,185.0	-0.1	649	47	3.0	22
California	15,527.1	-1.4	959	6	2.9	24
Colorado	2,322.7	0.4	877	11	3.8	12
Connecticut	1,692.5	-0.3	1,032	2	1.0	50
Delaware	420.6	-1.1	879	10	2.1	42
District of Columbia	688.2	1.4	1,391	1	1.0	50
Florida	7,546.4	-4.1	756	27	2.2	40
Georgia	4,018.6	-1.6	794	21	1.5	47
Hawaii	613.0	-2.1	774	24	1.8	46
Idaho	665.7	-1.4	643	48	1.3	49
Illinois	5,872.8	-0.7	891	9	2.9	24
Indiana	2,897.6	-1.4	718	35	2.3	37
Iowa	1,499.0	0.2	696	40	4.2	8
Kansas	1,368.9	0.0	711	38	4.6	6
Kentucky	1,795.3	-1.0	692	42	2.4	36
Louisiana	1,877.4	-0.2	756	27	5.6	4
Maine	610.8	-0.6	683	43	3.5	14
Maryland	2,543.4	-0.8	920	7	3.1	19
Massachusetts	3,265.7	0.0	1,025	4	2.3	37
Michigan	4,093.9	-3.0	820	18	1.5	47
Minnesota	2,699.6	-0.5	862	14	4.7	5
Mississippi	1,128.3	-1.3	631	49	4.0	11
Missouri	2,736.1	-0.4	739	31	2.8	29
Montana	446.4	0.1	628	50	3.1	19
Nebraska	925.7	0.2	694	41	4.2	8
Nevada	1,253.0	-2.7	809	19	2.1	42
New Hampshire	634.6	-0.5	822	16	2.8	29
New Jersey	3,952.9	-0.7	990	5	2.5	33
New Mexico	835.2	0.7	712	37	3.5	14
New York	8,633.8	0.5	1,030	3	2.2	40
North Carolina	4,064.2	-1.0	741	30	3.1	19
North Dakota	357.0	2.8	665	45	6.9	1
Ohio	5,251.1	-1.5	766	25	2.8	29
Oklahoma	1,562.8	1.2	698	39	4.5	7
Oregon	1,734.1	-1.0	766	25	2.1	42
Pennsylvania	5,679.0	0.0	822	16	2.5	33
Rhode Island	476.0	-2.0	778	23	2.5	33
South Carolina	1,874.6	-1.5	683	43	2.9	24
South Dakota	401.3	1.0	623	51	4.2	8
Tennessee	2,730.4	-1.5	745	29	2.8	29
Texas	10,438.3	1.4	850	15	2.9	24
Utah	1,229.3	-0.1	717	36	2.9	24
Vermont	304.2	-0.5	722	34	3.3	17
Virginia	3,676.1	-0.3	877	11	2.3	37
Washington	3,007.5	1.0	903	8	3.0	22
West Virginia	716.4	0.6	661	46	5.9	3
Wisconsin	2,788.7	-0.6	730	32	3.4	16
Wyoming	294.0	3.3	781	22	6.4	2
Puerto Rico	992.8	-1.6	477	(5)	5.5	(5)
Virgin Islands	44.9	-0.9	709	(5)	4.3	(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.

**Chart 1. Average weekly wages, counties in West Virginia, third quarter 2008**

