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## **COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN NEW MEXICO FOURTH QUARTER 2008**

Employment declined 2.0 percent in New Mexico's only large county, Bernalillo, from December 2007 to December 2008. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2007 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that 285 of the 334 largest U.S. counties experienced job losses from December 2007 to December 2008.

Nationally, employment decreased 2.3 percent over the 12 months ending December 2008. Elkhart County, Ind., recorded the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment in the country, down 17.8 percent. Lee County, Fla., had the next largest decline (-9.2 percent), followed by the counties of Sarasota, Fla. (-8.1 percent), Collier, Fla., (-8.0 percent), and Marion, Fla., Macomb, Mich., and Washoe, Nev. (-7.9 percent each). Employment rose in only 37 large U.S. counties during this period, led by 4 Texas counties: Montgomery (2.7 percent), Jefferson (2.5 percent), Lubbock (2.4 percent) and Fort Bend (2.2 percent).

Employment in Bernalillo County stood at 329,900 in December 2008, accounting for 40.2 percent of total New Mexico employment. Nationwide, the largest 334 counties made up 71.5 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 133.9 million in December 2008. These 334 counties had a net job loss of 2,467,500 over the year, accounting for 77.8 percent of the overall U.S. employment decrease.

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo County rose 3.0 percent from the fourth quarter of 2007 to the fourth quarter of 2008. This increase ranked Bernalillo 122<sup>nd</sup> for wage growth among the 334 largest U.S. counties. (See table 1.) Over the year, the national average weekly wage increased 2.2 percent. St. Louis City, Mo., ranked first in the country for wage growth, with an increase of 56.8 percent coming predominantly from the professional and business services and manufacturing supersectors. Clayton County, Ga., was second with a wage gain of 9.9 percent. These two top-ranked areas were followed by Calcasieu and East Baton Rouge, La., and Jefferson, Texas, areas still recovering from previous hurricane-related losses.

Wage growth was below the national average in 137 large counties in the United States, with 43 of these experiencing over-the-year declines. Pulaski, Ark., had the largest decrease in the nation and was the only county to experience a double-digit decline (-14.3 percent). Pulaski was followed by the counties of Lake, Ill. (-9.9 percent), Santa Clara, Calif. (-7.8 percent), Douglas, Colo. (-5.9 percent), and San Mateo, Calif. (-5.4 percent).

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo stood at \$812 in the fourth quarter of 2008, placing it 209<sup>th</sup> in the national ranking for average wages. Nationally, the average weekly wage in the fourth quarter of 2008 was \$918. More than two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (228) reported weekly wages below the national average. The lowest was in Hidalgo, Texas (\$574), followed by the counties of Horry, S.C. (\$581), Cameron, Texas (\$584), and Webb, Texas (\$600). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than one-third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, New York.

Nationally, average weekly wages were higher than average in 106 large counties in the fourth quarter of 2008. As mentioned, New York, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,856. Fairfield, Conn., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,596, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,570), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,568), and Santa Clara, Calif. (\$1,566).

### **Average Weekly Wages in New Mexico's Smaller Counties**

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 32 counties in New Mexico with employment levels below 75,000. Thirty of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average of \$918. The two exceptions were Los Alamos County, where wages averaged \$1,406 per week, more than 50 percent above the U.S. average, and Lea (\$948). Eddy County had the third-highest wage at \$911. Guadalupe County reported the lowest weekly wage in the State at \$461 in the fourth quarter of 2008. (See table 2.)

When all 33 counties in New Mexico were considered, 6 had wages averaging \$549 or less. Nineteen counties, or almost 60 percent, averaged from \$550 to \$699 per week, 5 reported wages from \$700 to \$849, and 3 had wages exceeding \$850. (See chart 1.)

### **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 are also included on the CD which accompanies the hardcopy version of the Annual Bulletin. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2007* is available online as a chartbook or for sale 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 Dallas Information Office at 972-850-4800 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT.

### **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 133.9 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 BLS 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 United States and the largest county in New Mexico, fourth quarter 2008 [2]**

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage [3]			
	December 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2007-08 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [5]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2007-08 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]
United States [6]	133,870.4	-2.3	--	\$918	--	2.2	--
New Mexico	821.2	-1.2	15	768	37	3.9	12
Bernalillo, N.M.	329.9	-2.0	145	812	209	3.0	122

[1] Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) & 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. Covered [1] employment and wages in the United States and all counties in New Mexico, fourth quarter 2008 [2]**

Area	Employment, December 2008	Average weekly wage [3]
United States [4]	133,870,395	\$918
New Mexico-Statewide	821,214	768
Bernalillo	329,891	812
Catron	626	523
Chaves	22,361	632
Cibola	8,691	626
Colfax	4,953	576
Curry	17,048	585
De Baca	490	580
Dona Ana	69,314	665
Eddy	23,831	911
Grant	9,464	659
Guadalupe	1,270	461
Harding	195	603
Hidalgo	1,763	705
Lea	29,917	948
Lincoln	6,920	539
Los Alamos	17,192	1,406
Luna	7,188	577
McKinley	21,879	587
Mora	881	580
Otero	17,796	608
Quay	2,866	501
Rio Arriba	11,308	572
Roosevelt	7,059	551
San Juan	52,440	834
San Miguel	8,650	574
Sandoval	29,422	744
Santa Fe	65,266	810
Sierra	3,297	520
Socorro	5,671	667
Taos	11,548	579
Torrance	3,224	581
Union	1,395	573
Valencia	15,459	545

[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, fourth quarter 2008 [2]**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [3]			
	December 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent change
United States [4]	133,870.4	-2.3	\$918	-	2.2	-
Alabama	1,909.8	-3.1	790	33	3.5	16
Alaska	303.9	1.6	927	14	5.7	4
Arizona	2,557.9	-5.1	848	23	2.7	25
Arkansas	1,168.2	-1.5	706	47	-1.0	50
California	15,288.5	-3.2	1,042	6	0.7	48
Colorado	2,295.8	-1.5	932	13	0.5	49
Connecticut	1,688.0	-1.7	1,164	3	1.2	44
Delaware	416.8	-3.0	943	10	1.9	36
District of Columbia	687.5	0.3	1,570	1	5.1	6
Florida	7,586.6	-5.3	824	26	1.6	39
Georgia	3,970.3	-3.5	853	21	2.3	33
Hawaii	614.7	-3.5	821	28	3.5	16
Idaho	634.1	-3.9	693	48	1.0	45
Illinois	5,795.8	-2.3	985	8	1.0	45
Indiana	2,831.3	-3.4	764	38	2.7	25
Iowa	1,483.7	-1.0	756	39	3.1	19
Kansas	1,370.2	-0.2	769	36	3.1	19
Kentucky	1,783.2	-2.6	754	41	3.0	21
Louisiana	1,907.5	0.1	829	25	5.9	3
Maine	595.3	-2.1	735	42	4.0	11
Maryland	2,531.8	-1.9	1,010	7	2.4	31
Massachusetts	3,239.6	-1.1	1,154	4	1.8	38
Michigan	3,993.3	-4.9	903	17	3.6	15
Minnesota	2,658.8	-1.9	907	16	2.6	27
Mississippi	1,117.2	-2.8	679	49	3.8	13
Missouri	2,700.9	-1.7	842	24	7.9	1
Montana	433.8	-1.5	678	50	2.9	23
Nebraska	923.1	-0.3	730	45	1.0	45
Nevada	1,206.5	-6.5	862	20	-1.1	51
New Hampshire	626.2	-2.0	936	11	2.2	34
New Jersey	3,927.7	-2.4	1,123	5	2.8	24
New Mexico	821.2	-1.2	768	37	3.9	12
New York	8,677.4	-1.0	1,169	2	1.4	40
North Carolina	4,003.8	-3.0	793	31	1.9	36
North Dakota	354.4	1.9	725	46	5.1	6
Ohio	5,167.5	-3.2	816	29	2.6	27
Oklahoma	1,559.8	0.0	755	40	4.9	8
Oregon	1,676.6	-3.7	808	30	1.3	43
Pennsylvania	5,645.8	-1.3	897	18	2.6	27
Rhode Island	464.3	-3.4	887	19	5.7	4
South Carolina	1,837.1	-3.5	731	44	2.1	35
South Dakota	395.2	0.4	663	51	2.5	30
Tennessee	2,695.7	-3.3	824	26	1.4	40
Texas	10,510.8	0.4	933	12	2.4	31
Utah	1,215.0	-2.1	770	35	1.4	40
Vermont	304.4	-1.7	774	34	4.3	9
Virginia	3,656.8	-1.3	953	9	3.3	18
Washington	2,885.0	-1.8	918	15	3.7	14
West Virginia	713.8	-0.1	735	42	7.1	2
Wisconsin	2,753.2	-1.9	793	31	3.0	21
Wyoming	284.5	1.5	850	22	4.3	9
Puerto Rico	1,028.5	-2.9	528	[5]	2.3	[5]
Virgin Islands	45.5	-1.4	731	[5]	-0.8	[5]

[1] Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) & 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 in New Mexico counties, fourth quarter 2008

