

News

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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WEEKLY WAGES IN MISSOURI: THIRD QUARTER 2007

St. Louis County records faster-than-average wage growth and higher-than-average wages

In the third quarter of 2007, the average weekly wage in St. Louis County rose 6.3 percent over the year, the largest increase among the seven counties in Missouri with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment. St. Louis County's wage increase ranked in the top 30 among the 328 large counties in the nation according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that St. Louis County was the only large county to record wage growth above the national average of 4.3 percent and was one of three counties in the State that had an average weekly wage above the nationwide average of \$818. (The independent city of St. Louis has been designated a county by the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program.) (See table A.)

Among the seven largest counties in Missouri, employment was highest in St. Louis County (611,900) and lowest in Boone County (83,300) in September 2007. Two of Missouri's large counties—Clay and Greene—recorded employment gains of 3.0 percent from September 2006 to September 2007, more than three times the national average of 0.9 percent.

Table A. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 7 largest counties in Missouri, third quarter 2007(2)

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	September 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07 (5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	136,246.9	0.9	\$818	--	4.3	--
Missouri	2,746.7	0.8	719	29	4.2	22
Boone, Mo.	83.3	0.7	633	310	2.4	248
Clay, Mo.	91.2	3.0	779	146	3.5	177
Greene, Mo.	158.8	3.0	637	309	3.6	168
Jackson, Mo.	371.0	1.3	826	109	3.6	168
St. Charles, Mo.	124.7	0.9	694	257	2.4	248
St. Louis City, Mo.	234.2	-1.0	887	67	1.4	284
St. Louis, Mo.	611.9	0.5	873	77	6.3	27

(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.

Wage levels in the large counties

Three of Missouri's counties had average weekly wages that were higher than the national average and placed them in the upper one-third of the national ranking among the 328 largest counties nationwide—St. Louis City (\$887/67th), St. Louis County (\$873/77th), and Jackson County (\$826/109th). Clay County's average wage of \$779 ranked in the top half at 146th; however, its wage level was \$39 below the average for the nation. The three remaining large counties in the State ranked in the bottom one-fourth nationwide—St. Charles (\$694/257th), Greene (\$637/309th), and Boone (\$633/310th). Greene and Boone were among the 20 lowest-paying counties in the nation.

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 United States were located in 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 or around 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.

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).

At the state level, Missouri's average weekly wage of \$719 was 12.1 percent below the national average, ranking 29th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 1.) Among the 12 states in the Midwest¹ region, 4 had higher wage levels than did Missouri with Illinois' average wage of \$866 ranking 9th in the nation. Minnesota and Michigan had the next highest wages, ranking 15th and 16th with wages of \$822 and \$808, respectively. The only other state in the Midwest with an average wage above that of Missouri was Ohio—\$745 and 25th in the ranking. The four highest wage levels in the country were in the District of Columbia (\$1,376), Connecticut (\$1,021), New York (\$1,009) and Massachusetts (\$1,002). Average weekly wages in this group were more than 20 percent above the U.S. average. At the other end of the scale, three states had wage levels that were less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$598), Mississippi (\$607), and Montana (\$608).

Over-the-year wage changes in large counties

As mentioned, St. Louis County was the only one of Missouri's seven large counties to record wage growth greater than the national increase of 4.3 percent from the third quarter of 2006 to the third quarter of 2007. St. Louis County's 6.3-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State and ranked 27th in the nation among the 328 largest counties. Greene and Jackson Counties experienced the second-highest wage increases in the State, ranking 168th with growth of 3.6 percent each. Clay County followed closely ranking 177th at 3.5 percent. Average weekly wage increases in Boone and St. Charles Counties (2.4 percent each) and St. Louis City (1.4 percent) ranked in the bottom one-fourth nationwide at 248th and 284th, respectively.

¹ The Midwest is one of four geographic regions in the country. It is made up of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Among the 328 largest counties in the United States, Clayton County, Ga., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 23.9 percent from the third quarter of 2006 due to increases in wage disbursements in the trade, transportation, and utilities supersector. 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. Among the five largest decreases in wages, Trumbull, Ohio, had the greatest decline (-10.6 percent), followed by the counties of Vanderburgh, Ind. (-6.1 percent), Genesee, Mich. (-4.0 percent), Saginaw, Mich. (-3.1 percent), and Montgomery, Ohio (-3.0 percent).

At the state level, Missouri's wage growth of 4.2 percent in the third quarter of 2007 was similar to the national average, ranking 22nd among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Four states in the Midwest region had faster rates of wage growth than did Missouri with North Dakota's rate of 5.8 percent ranking 4th in the nation. Nebraska ranked 9th nationally with growth of 5.4 percent. South Dakota, with wage growth of 4.7 percent, and Minnesota, 4.6 percent, ranked 15th and 16th, respectively. Matching Missouri's rate of wage growth was the neighboring state of Iowa. Across the nation, Washington had the fastest wage growth (6.7 percent) and Rhode Island was the only state to record an over-the-year decline (-0.1 percent) in average weekly wages during the period.

Employment in large counties

Clay and Greene Counties had the fastest employment growth in the State at 3.0 percent from September 2006 to September 2007, ranking them 23rd among the 328 largest counties nationwide. Jackson County had the next largest increase at 1.3 percent, followed by St. Charles (0.9 percent), Boone (0.7 percent), and St. Louis County (0.5 percent). St. Louis City recorded a decline in employment (-1.0 percent) from September 2006 to September 2007.

Of the 328 largest counties in the United States, employment rose in 217 counties from September 2006 to September 2007. Orleans County, La., had the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment (8.6 percent). Fort Bend, Texas, had the next largest increase, 7.1 percent, followed by the counties of Williamson, Tenn. (5.8 percent), Wake, N.C. (5.2 percent), and Utah, Utah (5.0 percent). The large employment gains in Orleans County reflected significant recovery from the substantial job losses that occurred in 2005 and 2006, which were related to Hurricane Katrina.

Employment and wage levels in small counties

Employment and wages levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 108 small counties in Missouri, those with employment of less than 75,000 as measured by 2006 average annual employment. These counties accounted for 37.6 percent of statewide employment. Among the small counties, Jasper reported the highest job total in September 2007 with 59,200 employees, followed by Cole with 53,600, Buchanan with 48,500, and Jefferson with 48,400. Worth County had the distinction of having the fewest jobs—500. (See table 2.)

Platte County had the highest average weekly wage among Missouri's small counties at \$676 in the third quarter of 2007. Still, this was \$142 below the nationwide average. Worth County, with the smallest employment count, also had the lowest average weekly wage, \$359, which was \$459 below the U.S. average.

When all 115 counties in Missouri are considered, 4 counties reported average weekly wages above \$750. Two of these counties were located in the St. Louis metropolitan area, St. Louis City and St. Louis County, and two counties were in the Kansas City metropolitan area, Jackson and Clay Counties. Twelve counties posted average weekly wages in the \$600 to \$699 range. Nine counties—all with employment levels of less than 3,500—reported average weekly wages below \$400 in the third quarter of 2007.

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 every employer subject to unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 9.0 million employer reports cover 136.2 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; this 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 <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. The 2006 edition of this bulletin will contain selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2007 version of this news release. 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 representations of QCEW data; the data tables themselves will be published exclusively in electronic formats as PDFs. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2006* is 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 Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient BLS Web site location, <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 Kansas City Information Office at 816-285-7000 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT.

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.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, third quarter 2007(2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	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 (4)	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)

(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.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Missouri, third quarter 2007(2)

Area	Employment September 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
United States (4)	136,246.9	\$818
Missouri	2,746.7	719
Adair	10.9	487
Andrew	2.6	483
Atchison	1.8	430
Audrain	9.9	557
Barry	15.6	571
Barton	3.8	469
Bates	3.8	450
Benton	3.7	414
Bollinger	1.8	410
Boone	83.3	633
Buchanan	48.5	609
Butler	19.5	529
Caldwell	1.7	456
Callaway	14.8	604
Camden	19.1	493
Cape Girardeau	42.0	591
Carroll	2.8	478
Carter	1.7	361
Cass	23.2	550
Cedar	3.4	438
Chariton	1.8	475
Christian	16.2	496
Clark	1.5	397
Clay	91.2	779
Clinton	4.4	532
Cole	53.6	653
Cooper	6.3	535
Crawford	6.5	509
Dade	1.9	418
Dallas	3.3	399
Daviess	1.9	413
De Kalb	3.2	470
Dent	3.9	504
Douglas	2.2	465
Dunklin	10.1	461
Franklin	38.1	599
Gasconade	5.9	462
Gentry	2.1	444
Greene	158.8	637
Grundy	3.4	521
Harrison	2.8	400
Henry	7.9	527
Hickory	1.1	371
Holt	1.3	441
Howard	2.4	409
Howell	15.9	488

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Missouri, third quarter 2007(2)

Area	Employment September 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
Iron	4.2	568
Jackson	371.0	826
Jasper	59.2	601
Jefferson	48.4	566
Johnson	15.8	541
Knox	1.2	403
Laclede	14.2	498
Lafayette	9.3	466
Lawrence	9.1	502
Lewis	2.7	512
Lincoln	11.0	582
Linn	4.4	522
Livingston	6.1	511
Macon	4.8	509
Madison	3.3	443
Maries	1.4	460
Marion	12.9	557
McDonald	7.0	494
Mercer	1.8	536
Miller	7.5	484
Mississippi	4.1	454
Moniteau	4.0	457
Monroe	2.4	452
Montgomery	3.2	484
Morgan	4.3	415
New Madrid	8.1	630
Newton	19.8	566
Nodaway	9.0	542
Oregon	2.4	372
Osage	3.6	509
Ozark	1.7	369
Pemiscot	6.2	474
Perry	9.0	530
Pettis	20.1	528
Phelps	17.8	571
Pike	5.9	510
Platte	38.4	676
Polk	8.1	495
Pulaski	13.5	606
Putnam	1.1	430
Ralls	3.4	632
Randolph	10.5	504
Ray	4.3	509
Reynolds	1.7	409
Ripley	3.0	391
Saline	9.1	515
Schuyler	0.7	434
Scotland	1.3	440
Scott	14.4	511
Shannon	1.8	379

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Missouri, third quarter 2007(2)

Area	Employment September 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
Shelby	2.0	438
St. Charles	124.7	694
St. Clair	2.1	401
St. Francois	23.3	484
St. Louis	611.9	873
St. Louis City	234.2	887
Ste. Genevieve	6.1	614
Stoddard	11.1	468
Stone	7.1	446
Sullivan	2.3	574
Taney	29.9	471
Texas	6.1	449
Vernon	7.3	515
Warren	6.9	531
Washington	4.8	439
Wayne	2.6	407
Webster	6.8	476
Worth	0.5	359
Wright	4.3	438

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

(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.