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County Employment and Wages in North Dakota Third Quarter 2007

The average weekly wage in Cass County was \$688 in the third quarter of 2007, 6.2 percent higher than it was one year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Jay A. Mousa noted that Cass' average weekly wage was \$130 below the national level of \$818, but its wage growth was well above the nationwide increase of 4.3 percent. (See table 1.) Cass was the only large county in North Dakota—that is, it had 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment.

Nationally, there were 328 large counties of which 215 had average weekly wages below the U.S. average. Cass County's wage placed it 266th, in the bottom quartile of the national ranking. On the other hand, Cass' faster-than-average wage growth, ranked among the top 50 in the nation at 32nd.

Employment in Cass County rose 2.4 percent from September 2006 to September 2007, the 44th fastest gain in the nation among the 328 large counties. Overall, employment rose in 217 of the large counties from September a year ago and declined in 86 counties. Nationwide, employment grew at a slower pace over the year, 0.9 percent.

Wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 52 counties in North Dakota with employment below 75,000. Three of these counties registered average weekly wages above that for the nation in the third quarter of 2007—Slope, Oliver, and Mercer. Logan County reported the lowest wage level in the State. (See table 2.)

When all 53 counties in North Dakota were considered, slightly more than one-third (20) had wages below \$500. Twenty-two counties reported weekly wages between \$500 and \$600. The remaining 11 counties had weekly wages greater than \$600. (See table 2.)

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 112 of the 328 largest counties in the United States. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$1,585. New York County, N.Y., was second with an average wage of \$1,544, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,376), Arlington, Va. (\$1,364), and San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,322).

At the other end of the spectrum, Cameron County, Texas, reported the lowest average weekly wage (\$518) in the nation, followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$529), Horry, S.C. (\$536), Webb, Texas (\$548), and Yakima, Wash. (\$568).

Over the year, the national average weekly wage rose by 4.3 percent. Among the largest counties, Clayton County, Ga., led the nation in wage growth with an increase of 23.9 percent from the third quarter of 2006 to the third quarter of 2007. Muscogee, Ga., was second with 12.1-percent growth, 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).

State Average Weekly Wages

The average weekly wage in North Dakota was \$621 in the third quarter of 2007, \$197 below that for the nation. Only three states averaged lower weekly wages: Montana (\$608), Mississippi (\$607), and South Dakota (\$598). The five highest wage levels in the U.S. were in the District of Columbia (\$1,376), Connecticut (\$1,021), New York (\$1,009), Massachusetts (\$1,002), and New Jersey (\$965).

Average weekly wages in North Dakota rose 5.8 percent over the year, the fourth highest growth rate in the nation. Washington experienced a wage gain of 6.7 percent from the third quarter of 2006 to the third quarter of 2007, higher than any other state, and Connecticut was second with a 6.6-percent growth, followed by New York at 6.1 percent. In fifth place were Massachusetts, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Utah (5.5 percent, each). On the other hand, wages in Rhode Island changed little over the year (-0.1 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 128.9 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/; 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 version of this news release. As with the 2005 edition, this edition includes the data on a CD for enhanced access and usability. As a result, the printed booklet contains only selected graphic representation of QCEW data; the data tables themselves are published exclusively in electronic formats as PDF and fixed-width text files. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2006* is available for sale from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents. On-line ordering information is available at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov/>. The 2006 bulletin is available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.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 Midwest Information Office in Chicago at (312) 353-1880 from 8:00 a.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 in the United States and the largest county in North Dakota, 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 | -- |
| North Dakota | 347.4 | 1.5 | 621 | 48 | 5.8 | 4 |
| Cass, N.D. | 98.5 | 2.4 | 688 | 266 | 6.2 | 32 |

(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.

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

| Area | Employment September 2007 | Average Weekly Wage (3) | Area | Employment September 2007 | Average Weekly Wage (3) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| United States (4) | 136,246,900 | \$818 | Sargent | 2,508 | \$802 |
| North Dakota | 347,377 | 621 | Sheridan | 270 | 380 |
| Adams | 984 | 509 | Sioux | 1,515 | 632 |
| Barnes | 4,613 | 501 | Slope | 196 | 1,046 |
| Benson | 1,948 | 550 | Stark | 12,405 | 583 |
| Billings | 544 | 454 | Steele | 556 | 505 |
| Bottineau | 2,288 | 516 | Stutsman | 10,678 | 564 |
| Bowman | 1,459 | 548 | Towner | 869 | 459 |
| Burke | 605 | 591 | Traill | 3,202 | 512 |
| Burleigh | 49,327 | 643 | Walsh | 5,728 | 506 |
| Cass | 98,505 | 688 | Ward | 28,433 | 565 |
| Cavalier | 1,543 | 561 | Wells | 1,655 | 420 |
| Dickey | 2,098 | 493 | Williams | 11,210 | 767 |
| Divide | 600 | 464 | | | |
| Dunn | 910 | 471 | | | |
| Eddy | 723 | 448 | | | |
| Emmons | 1,114 | 440 | | | |
| Foster | 1,575 | 585 | | | |
| Golden Valley | 652 | 418 | | | |
| Grand Forks | 39,152 | 591 | | | |
| Grant | 603 | 435 | | | |
| Griggs | 991 | 452 | | | |
| Hettinger | 630 | 492 | | | |
| Kidder | 720 | 451 | | | |
| LaMoure | 1,283 | 462 | | | |
| Logan | 541 | 375 | | | |
| McHenry | 1,234 | 517 | | | |
| McIntosh | 1,165 | 411 | | | |
| McKenzie | 2,949 | 696 | | | |
| McLean | 3,013 | 670 | | | |
| Mercer | 5,111 | 869 | | | |
| Morton | 9,259 | 563 | | | |
| Mountrail | 2,249 | 549 | | | |
| Nelson | 1,022 | 422 | | | |
| Oliver | 751 | 945 | | | |
| Pembina | 4,069 | 583 | | | |
| Pierce | 1,825 | 456 | | | |
| Ramsey | 5,633 | 516 | | | |
| Ransom | 2,163 | 476 | | | |
| Renville | 843 | 522 | | | |
| Richland | 8,121 | 606 | | | |
| Rolette | 4,743 | 523 | | | |

(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, 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.