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Average Weekly Wages in Alabama: Second Quarter 2007 **Jefferson County records 5.2 percent wage growth**

In the second quarter of 2007, the average weekly wage in Jefferson County increased 5.2 percent over the year, the largest advance among Alabama's five counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment. Madison County's 4.3-percent wage growth was the second fastest in the State according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Madison County had the highest average weekly wage level in Alabama at \$864 followed by Jefferson County at \$823. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that among Alabama's five large counties, two recorded wage growth near or above the national rate of 4.6 percent, both of which had wages above the national average of \$820. (See table 1.)

County Wage Levels

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 110 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. Madison County ranked 85th and Jefferson County, 108th, placing them in the top third of the nationwide ranking for wage levels.

At the other end of the wage spectrum, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, and Mobile counties reported the lowest average weekly wage levels among Alabama's largest counties at \$698, \$697, and \$682, respectively. The wage levels for these three counties placed them in the bottom quartile of the national ranking.

Nationally, New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,540. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,504, followed by Clayton, Ga. (\$1,358), Washington, D.C. (\$1,357), and Arlington, Va. (\$1,352).

Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in or around the New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y.; Fairfield, Conn.; and Somerset, N.J.), while 3 others were located in or around the San Francisco metropolitan area (Santa Clara, Calif.; San Francisco, Calif.; and San Mateo, Calif.), and two more were located in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., and Arlington, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 were Clayton, Ga., and Suffolk, Mass., which were located in the Atlanta and Boston metropolitan areas, respectively.

There were 218 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the second quarter of 2007. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$515), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$518), Horry, S.C., and Webb, Texas (\$545 each), and Yakima, Wash. (\$555).

County Wage Changes

Two of Alabama's five large counties recorded wage growth near or above the national increase of 4.6 percent from the second quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007. Jefferson County's 5.2-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State and 78th highest in the nation, followed by Madison County's 4.3-percent gain (136th). Both of these counties registered wage growth rates among the top half of large counties in the United States.

Montgomery County recorded the smallest over-the-year increase in wages among Alabama's large counties in the second quarter of 2007, at 0.3 percent. Mobile and Tuscaloosa Counties followed with respective wage gains of 1.8 and 2.3 percent. All three of these counties ranked in the bottom quartile of the 328 large counties nationwide.

Among the largest counties in the U. S., Clayton County, Ga., led the nation in growth in average weekly wages, with an increase of 87.3 percent from the second quarter of 2006. Queens, N.Y., was second with growth of 12.7 percent, followed by the counties of Rockingham, N.H. (10.1 percent), Ventura, Calif. (9.2 percent), and Lake, Ill. (9.1 percent).

Six large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Among the five largest decreases in wages, Saginaw, Mich., had the greatest decline (-5.2 percent), followed by the counties of Orleans, La. (-2.9 percent), Lake, Fla. (-1.1 percent), Genesee, Mich. (-1.0 percent), and Lorain, Ohio (-0.9 percent).

State Average Weekly Wages

The average weekly wage in Alabama was \$697 in the second quarter of 2007, \$123 below that for the U.S. Nationally, 9 of the 16 states in which the average weekly wage levels surpassed the U.S. average fell in a contiguous band along the East Coast stretching from New Hampshire to Virginia. The five highest wage levels in the nation were in the District of Columbia (\$1,357), Connecticut (\$1,033), New York (\$1,020), Massachusetts (\$1,008), and New Jersey (\$989). Average weekly wages in this group were 20 percent or more above that for the nation. During this same period, three states had wage levels averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$590), Mississippi (\$609), and Montana (\$611). (See table 2.)

Average weekly wages in Alabama rose 3.6 percent over the year, placing the State in the bottom half of the national ranking in wage growth at 38th. Wyoming recorded the fastest wage growth (8.0 percent) among the states in the second quarter of 2007. Five other states experienced wage growth above 6.0 percent from the second quarter of 2006—Utah (6.6 percent), Georgia (6.5 percent), Connecticut (6.4 percent), and Montana and New Hampshire (6.3 percent each). At the other end of the scale, Delaware posted the smallest increase in wages, up 2.2 percent. No state experienced an over-the-year decline.

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 8.9 million employer reports cover 137.0 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 the 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 will include 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 will be published exclusively in electronic formats as PDFs. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2006* will be available for sale in early 2008 from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA, 15250 or by calling 1-866-512-1800. Also, the 2006 bulletin will be available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm>. In addition, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

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 data, as well as other Bureau data, contact the Southeast Information Office at 404-893-4222 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>.

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 5 largest counties in Alabama, second quarter 2007 (2)

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	June 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07 (5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	137,018.2	1.2	\$820	--	4.6	--
Alabama	1,965.4	1.1	697	38	3.6	38
Jefferson, Ala.	365.4	(7)	823	108	5.2	78
Madison, Ala.	178.3	3.8	864	85	4.3	136
Mobile, Ala.	174.1	1.6	682	268	1.8	291
Montgomery, Ala.	140.0	0.6	698	250	0.3	312
Tuscaloosa, Ala.	86.1	1.8	697	252	2.3	274

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 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 by state, second quarter 2007 (2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	June 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	137,018.2	1.2	\$820	-	4.6	-
Alabama	1,965.4	1.1	697	38	3.6	38
Alaska	325.8	-0.5	832	13	5.6	9
Arizona	2,612.4	1.2	786	20	4.4	23
Arkansas	1,186.5	0.3	639	46	4.2	28
California	15,832.5	0.8	935	6	5.4	11
Colorado	2,326.9	2.2	832	13	4.8	15
Connecticut	1,714.2	0.9	1,033	2	6.4	4
Delaware	430.2	0.0	870	9	2.2	51
District of Columbia	683.2	0.8	1,357	1	4.3	26
Florida	7,894.2	0.2	743	23	3.2	45
Georgia	4,091.5	1.4	792	19	6.5	3
Hawaii	631.2	1.4	736	27	4.2	28
Idaho	679.1	3.0	626	47	2.3	50
Illinois	5,956.3	0.8	874	8	4.4	23
Indiana	2,933.4	0.5	702	33	2.6	48
Iowa	1,518.6	0.9	664	42	3.9	35
Kansas	1,370.7	2.0	702	33	4.8	15
Kentucky	1,828.2	1.7	700	35	4.2	28
Louisiana	1,880.2	3.2	711	31	4.1	31
Maine	619.6	0.6	658	44	4.1	31
Maryland	2,584.9	0.7	899	7	5.3	12
Massachusetts	3,300.7	1.2	1,008	4	4.8	15
Michigan	4,252.9	-1.4	807	17	2.9	46
Minnesota	2,730.9	0.0	834	12	5.6	9
Mississippi	1,137.4	0.9	609	50	3.6	38
Missouri	2,764.6	0.8	727	29	3.4	43
Montana	449.8	1.7	611	49	6.3	5
Nebraska	930.9	1.6	654	45	3.5	42
Nevada	1,297.9	1.0	776	21	3.7	36
New Hampshire	643.7	0.7	823	16	6.3	5
New Jersey	4,066.7	0.4	989	5	4.3	26
New Mexico	833.3	1.1	686	39	5.2	13
New York	8,688.8	1.3	1,020	3	5.9	7
North Carolina	4,090.5	3.0	718	30	4.1	31
North Dakota	347.7	1.5	619	48	4.7	19
Ohio	5,384.6	-0.1	740	25	3.4	43
Oklahoma	1,538.5	1.6	665	40	4.1	31
Oregon	1,761.6	1.7	742	24	4.5	22
Pennsylvania	5,740.3	1.1	802	18	4.6	20
Rhode Island	492.9	0.3	774	22	2.5	49
South Carolina	1,917.4	3.0	665	40	2.9	46
South Dakota	404.3	2.1	590	51	4.8	15
Tennessee	2,768.7	0.7	729	28	3.6	38
Texas	10,296.1	3.4	827	15	5.9	7
Utah	1,233.7	4.4	698	36	6.6	2
Vermont	306.6	-0.5	698	36	5.0	14
Virginia	3,731.5	1.0	859	10	4.4	23
Washington	2,989.8	2.7	835	11	4.6	20
West Virginia	717.1	0.3	659	43	3.6	38
Wisconsin	2,845.8	0.4	709	32	3.7	36
Wyoming	288.3	3.3	739	26	8.0	1
Puerto Rico	1,020.7	-1.6	460	(5)	6.0	(5)
Virgin Islands	46.9	3.4	707	(5)	4.1	(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.