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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN ARKANSAS: 4th QUARTER 2007
Pulaski County has fastest wage growth in the Nation

The average weekly wage in Pulaski County rose by 26.2 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the fourth quarter of 2007. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that Pulaski County led the nation in wage growth among the 328 largest counties in the United States, those with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment. In Arkansas' other two large counties, wage growth exceeded the national average of 4.2 percent in Benton (4.8 percent), but was below average in Washington (2.5 percent). Average weekly wage levels in these three Arkansas counties were just as diverse, ranging from \$986 in Pulaski to \$735 in Washington. (See table A.)

Employment in Pulaski County rose 1.2 percent from December 2006 to December 2007; this compared to 0.8-percent growth for the nation as a whole. The increase placed Pulaski in the top third (97th) of the national ranking of all 328 large counties. Benton County's employment edged up 0.1 percent during the period and ranked 189th. Employment in Washington County fell 0.6 percent, ranking it 250th nationwide. Employment in these three counties combined accounted for more than one-third of the statewide total. Arkansas employment rose 0.7 percent from December 2006, ranking it 26th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table A.)

Table A. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States, Arkansas, and the 3 largest counties in the State, fourth quarter 2007 (2)

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	December 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2006-07 (4)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (5)	Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)
United States (6)	137,027.3	0.8	\$898	--	4.2	--
Arkansas	1,187.6	0.7	712	44	9.2	1
Benton, Ark.	96.3	0.1	791	202	4.8	86
Pulaski, Ark.	253.6	1.2	986	61	26.2	1
Washington, Ark.	93.2	-0.6	735	265	2.5	245

(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) 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.

County Wage Changes

Pulaski County's 26.2-percent over-the-year wage gain was the largest in the nation in the fourth quarter of 2007, far surpassing the U.S. average of 4.2 percent. This increase in average weekly wages was due to gains in the information supersector. In Arkansas' other two large counties, Benton's 4.8-percent increase in wages, placed it among the top third in the nation at 86th among the 328 largest counties and Washington's 2.5-percent gain placed it in the bottom third at 245th.

Ranking second in wage growth nationwide behind Pulaski was Williamson County, Texas, with a gain of 16.5 percent, followed by the counties of Lake, Ill. (15.6 percent), Douglas, Colo. (12.6 percent) and Westmoreland, Pa. (9.8 percent). Of the 328 large counties, 8 experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages, with Rockingham, N.H., registering the greatest decline (-12.4 percent), followed by Trumbull, Ohio (-7.2 percent), Sedgwick, Kan. (-4.1 percent), and Lake, Fla. (-3.9 percent).

County Wage Levels

While two of the three large counties in Arkansas had wage increases above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2007, only one of the three registered a wage level above that for the nation. The weekly wage in Pulaski averaged \$986 per week, 10 percent above the \$898 national average, ranking the county 61st among the 328 largest nationwide. The wage level in Benton County averaged \$791 per week, 12 percent lower than the national average and ranked 202nd. Washington County's wage of \$735 was 18 percent below that for the nation and ranked 265th. (See table A.)

Among the 328 largest counties in the nation, New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,862. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,700, followed by Fairfield, Conn. (\$1,575), and Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,546). Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the country were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), three others were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Mateo, all in California), while three more were located in or around the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area (Arlington, Va., Fairfax, Va., and Washington, D.C.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

At the other end of the wage scale, the lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$555), followed by Hidalgo, Texas (\$562), Horry, S.C. (\$582), Webb, Texas (\$590), and Yakima, Wash. (\$596). The wage levels in each of the five lowest-ranked counties was less than one-third of the wage level reported for the highest-ranked county in the nation, New York.

State Average Weekly Wages

Fueled by the large gain in Pulaski County, average weekly wages in Arkansas rose 9.2 percent over the year, leading all other states and the District of Columbia. North Dakota (7.3 percent) and Wyoming (7.1 percent) were next, followed by Nevada (6.7 percent) and Oklahoma (6.2 percent). Eight states reported wage gains of less than 3.0 percent, but only New Hampshire registered a decline in average weekly wages from the fourth quarter of 2006 (-0.3 percent). (See table 1.)

Arkansas' average weekly wage was 21 percent below the national average of \$898 per week in the fourth quarter of 2007. At \$712, the State's average wage ranked 44th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Arkansas' wage level was above that in neighboring Mississippi (\$654, 50th), close to Oklahoma's (\$721, 42nd), but well below wages in other nearby states including Tennessee (\$813, 24th) and Louisiana (\$783, 29th).

Nationwide, average weekly wages exceeded \$1,000 in the District of Columbia (\$1,506), New York (\$1,152), Connecticut (\$1,149), Massachusetts (\$1,133), New Jersey (\$1,092) and California (\$1,035). Average weekly wages in this group were 15 percent or more above the national level. At the other end of the scale, three states reported wages less than 75 percent of the national average: Montana (\$659), Mississippi (\$654), and South Dakota (\$647).

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 9.1 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. 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 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. Also, 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 (QCEW) Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Dallas Information Office at 214-767-6970 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT. This release is available in text and PDF format on the Dallas BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/ro6/home.htm.

TECHNICAL NOTE

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 state's 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, fourth quarter 2007(2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	December 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2006-07	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	137,027.3	0.8	\$898	-	4.2	-
Alabama	1,971.0	1.2	762	33	3.3	39
Alaska	299.4	1.0	877	16	4.9	15
Arizona	2,693.3	-0.1	827	22	2.6	46
Arkansas	1,187.6	0.7	712	44	9.2	1
California	15,794.7	0.8	1,035	6	4.8	18
Colorado	2,329.9	2.0	927	9	5.7	7
Connecticut	1,717.8	0.7	1,149	3	4.5	26
Delaware	428.8	0.3	926	10	3.3	39
District of Columbia	681.6	0.7	1,506	1	5.8	6
Florida	8,024.3	-1.3	810	25	2.8	43
Georgia	4,111.5	0.6	835	21	2.8	43
Hawaii	637.2	0.7	793	28	4.1	29
Idaho	660.2	1.7	686	47	2.1	50
Illinois	5,933.0	0.6	975	8	5.1	13
Indiana	2,929.1	0.1	745	35	3.0	42
Iowa	1,498.5	0.7	732	39	4.9	15
Kansas	1,372.7	1.2	745	35	2.6	46
Kentucky	1,830.5	0.8	732	39	3.4	38
Louisiana	1,903.1	2.3	783	29	4.7	20
Maine	608.8	0.8	707	45	4.1	29
Maryland	2,580.1	0.4	986	7	4.7	20
Massachusetts	3,270.9	0.7	1,133	4	5.4	8
Michigan	4,194.9	-1.2	873	17	2.5	49
Minnesota	2,708.7	0.8	883	15	5.1	13
Mississippi	1,148.9	0.7	654	50	3.8	34
Missouri	2,746.2	0.3	780	30	5.3	11
Montana	440.4	2.1	659	49	5.4	8
Nebraska	925.2	1.3	723	41	5.2	12
Nevada	1,290.8	0.4	872	19	6.7	4
New Hampshire	638.8	0.3	914	12	-0.3	51
New Jersey	4,027.4	0.2	1,092	5	3.5	36
New Mexico	831.7	1.1	738	38	4.8	18
New York	8,762.7	1.4	1,152	2	4.2	27
North Carolina	4,127.7	1.5	777	31	3.5	36
North Dakota	347.7	2.0	690	46	7.3	2
Ohio	5,336.8	-0.2	795	27	2.8	43
Oklahoma	1,556.1	1.3	721	42	6.2	5
Oregon	1,740.5	0.9	798	26	4.6	22
Pennsylvania	5,712.8	0.5	873	17	4.2	27
Rhode Island	480.9	-1.5	838	20	2.6	46
South Carolina	1,904.0	1.0	716	43	4.1	29
South Dakota	393.5	1.7	647	51	5.4	8
Tennessee	2,790.3	0.9	813	24	4.0	33
Texas	10,460.8	3.0	911	13	4.6	22
Utah	1,241.8	2.8	758	34	4.6	22
Vermont	309.1	-0.2	743	37	4.9	15
Virginia	3,709.0	0.7	921	11	3.8	34
Washington	2,936.0	2.6	885	14	4.6	22
West Virginia	716.8	0.4	683	48	4.1	29
Wisconsin	2,803.9	0.3	769	32	3.1	41
Wyoming	279.6	3.0	815	23	7.1	3
Puerto Rico	1,055.2	-1.4	517	(5)	4.4	(5)
Virgin Islands	46.0	0.6	738	(5)	3.9	(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.