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## **COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN ALABAMA, SECOND QUARTER 2008** **Montgomery County Records 5.5-Percent Wage Growth**

In the second quarter of 2008, the average weekly wage in Montgomery County increased 5.5 percent over the year, the largest advance among Alabama's six counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2007 annual average employment. Tuscaloosa 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 in Alabama at \$892 followed by Jefferson County at \$840. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that among Alabama's six large counties, four recorded wage growth above the national rate of 2.6 percent, two of which had wages near or above the national average of \$841. (See table 1.)

Among the six largest counties in Alabama, employment was highest in Jefferson County (362,300) and lowest in Shelby County (76,400). Madison and Mobile Counties recorded employment gains, while the nation experienced a 0.3-percent decline from June 2007 to June 2008. The remaining four large counties—Montgomery, Jefferson, Tuscaloosa, and Shelby—registered employment decreases during this period.

### **Large County Average Weekly Wages**

The average weekly wage in the counties of Madison (\$892, 75<sup>th</sup>) and Jefferson (\$840, 111<sup>th</sup>) placed in the top half of the national ranking among the 334 largest counties in the United States. As noted, the only large county in Alabama to exceed the \$841 national weekly wage was Madison County. At the other end of the wage spectrum, Alabama's four remaining large counties placed in the bottom half of the national rankings—Mobile (\$706, 264<sup>th</sup>), Tuscaloosa (\$724, 238<sup>th</sup>), Montgomery (\$734, 227<sup>th</sup>), and Shelby (\$776, 169<sup>th</sup>).

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 109 of the largest 334 U.S. counties. Nationally, New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,569. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,529, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,433), Arlington, Va. (\$1,376) and San Francisco (\$1,334).

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 three more were located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area

(Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk, Mass., which is located in the Boston metropolitan area.

Nationwide, 224 of the largest counties recorded an average weekly wage below the national average in the second quarter of 2008. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$535), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$538), Horry, S.C. (\$539), Webb, Texas (\$562), and Yakima, Wash. (\$580).

### **Wage Changes in Large Counties**

As noted, four counties in Alabama exceeded the national increase in wages of 2.6 percent in the second quarter of 2008, ranking in the upper half in wage growth among the nation's 334 largest counties. Montgomery County's 5.5-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State and 16<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation. This was followed by Tuscaloosa County's (4.3 percent, 41<sup>st</sup>), and Madison and Mobile Counties (each at 3.4 percent, 88<sup>th</sup>). The remaining two counties ranked in the bottom half with lower-than-average wage growth. Jefferson County's 1.9 percent wage gain ranked 218<sup>th</sup> and Shelby County, at 0.9 percent, placed 273<sup>rd</sup>.

Among the largest counties in the U. S., Rock Island County, Ill., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 10.5 percent from the second quarter of 2007. Weld, Colo., was second with 10.4-percent wage growth, followed by the counties of Utah, Utah (9.4 percent), Whatcom, Wash. (8.3 percent), and East Baton Rouge, La. (7.8 percent).

Twenty-six large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Among the five largest decreases in wages, Clayton, Ga., had the greatest decline (-43.7 percent), followed by the counties of Boone, Ky. (-10.0 percent), Trumbull, Ohio (-4.8 percent), Ventura, Calif. (-4.8 percent), and Queens, N.Y. (-4.3 percent).

### **State Average Weekly Wages**

The average weekly wage in Alabama grew 3.3 percent from the second quarter of 2007 to the second quarter of 2008, ranking 15<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The average weekly wage in Alabama, (\$720, 33<sup>rd</sup>), was \$121 or 14 percent below the national average, and lower than neighboring Georgia (\$787, 22<sup>nd</sup>), Florida (\$762, 26<sup>th</sup>), and Tennessee (\$745, 30<sup>th</sup>). Among neighboring states, only Mississippi (\$635, 49<sup>th</sup>) had average weekly wages lower than in Alabama.

Nationally, 8 of the 15 states in which the average weekly wage surpassed the U.S. average fell in a contiguous band along the East Coast stretching from New Hampshire to Virginia. The five highest average wages in the nation were in the District of Columbia (\$1,433), Massachusetts (\$1,044), New York (\$1,040), Connecticut (\$1,036), and New Jersey (\$1,004). Average weekly wages in this group were 19 percent or more above that for the nation. During this same period, two states had wages averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$606) and Montana (\$629). (See table 2.)

The District of Columbia recorded the fastest wage growth (5.9 percent) in the second quarter of 2008. Additionally, five states experienced wage growth above 5.0 percent from the second quarter of 2007—North Dakota (5.8 percent), Louisiana (5.5 percent), Wyoming (5.4 percent), Oklahoma (5.3 percent), and West Virginia (5.1 percent). At the other end of the scale, Delaware (-0.8 percent) and Georgia (-0.6 percent) were the only states to experience over-the-year declines in their weekly wages.

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 136.6 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 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 national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2007 *Employment and Wages Annual Bulletin* are now available online at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn07.htm>. These tables present final 2007 annual averages. The tables will also be included on the CD which accompanies the hardcopy version of the *Annual Bulletin*. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2007* is expected to be available for sale as a chartbook by the end of the first quarter of 2009 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 quarterly press release, *County Employment and Wages*, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/).

News releases on quarterly measures of gross job flows also are available upon request from the Division of Administrative Statistics and Labor Turnover (Business Employment Dynamics), telephone (202) 691-6467; (<http://www.bls.gov/bdm/>); (e-mail: [BDMInfo@bls.gov](mailto:BDMInfo@bls.gov)). 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 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 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 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 6 largest counties in Alabama, second quarter 2008 (2)**

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage [3]			
	June 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2007-08 [4]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [5]	Percent change, second quarter 2007-08 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]
United States [6]	136,631.8	-0.3	\$841	--	2.6	--
Alabama	1,955.4	-0.5	720	33	3.3	15
Jefferson, Ala.	362.3	-0.8	840	111	1.9	218
Madison, Ala.	183.4	2.5	892	75	3.4	88
Mobile, Ala.	177.0	1.4	706	264	3.4	88
Montgomery, Ala.	139.3	-1.2	734	227	5.5	16
Shelby, Ala.	76.4	-0.1	776	169	0.9	273
Tuscaloosa, Ala.	86.2	-0.6	724	238	4.3	41

[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.

[7] Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

**Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, second quarter 2008 (2)**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [3]			
	June 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent change
United States [4]	136,631.8	-0.3	\$841	-	2.6	-
Alabama	1,955.4	-0.5	720	33	3.3	15
Alaska	330.6	1.4	860	12	3.1	16
Arizona	2,543.9	-2.6	806	19	2.4	34
Arkansas	1,183.5	-0.2	661	46	3.4	11
California	15,760.3	-0.5	955	6	2.2	42
Colorado	2,346.3	0.8	858	13	3.1	16
Connecticut	1,722.3	0.5	1,036	4	0.3	49
Delaware	427.3	-0.9	862	10	-0.8	51
District of Columbia	691.4	1.2	1,433	1	5.9	1
Florida	7,620.1	-3.4	762	26	2.6	30
Georgia	4,059.7	-0.6	787	22	-0.6	50
Hawaii	623.9	-1.3	764	24	3.9	9
Idaho	671.9	-0.9	636	48	1.6	46
Illinois	5,930.0	-0.4	893	8	2.3	39
Indiana	2,906.5	-0.9	715	38	1.9	43
Iowa	1,521.2	0.1	683	42	2.9	23
Kansas	1,389.1	1.2	720	33	2.4	34
Kentucky	1,818.9	-0.5	718	35	2.6	30
Louisiana	1,900.3	1.2	750	29	5.5	3
Maine	620.3	0.1	676	44	2.7	28
Maryland	2,577.7	-0.3	920	7	2.8	26
Massachusetts	3,310.4	0.1	1,044	2	3.6	10
Michigan	4,163.3	-2.2	825	18	2.4	34
Minnesota	2,733.9	-0.5	849	14	1.8	45
Mississippi	1,139.1	0.1	635	49	4.4	7
Missouri	2,761.6	0.0	752	28	3.4	11
Montana	450.3	0.1	629	50	2.9	23
Nebraska	936.1	0.5	676	44	3.4	11
Nevada	1,271.8	-1.9	797	20	2.7	28
New Hampshire	641.9	-0.4	835	16	1.5	48
New Jersey	4,054.4	-0.4	1,004	5	1.6	46
New Mexico	837.2	0.6	715	38	4.2	8
New York	8,758.2	0.6	1,040	3	2.3	39
North Carolina	4,083.6	-0.1	735	31	2.4	34
North Dakota	356.4	2.5	654	47	5.8	2
Ohio	5,315.0	-1.3	757	27	2.3	39
Oklahoma	1,556.0	1.0	701	40	5.3	5
Oregon	1,747.4	-0.8	764	24	3.0	20
Pennsylvania	5,743.3	0.1	827	17	3.1	16
Rhode Island	481.6	-2.2	796	21	2.8	26
South Carolina	1,907.5	-0.6	681	43	2.4	34
South Dakota	409.0	1.2	606	51	2.9	23
Tennessee	2,752.7	-0.4	745	30	1.9	43
Texas	10,510.3	2.2	849	14	2.5	33
Utah	1,234.3	0.1	716	37	2.6	30
Vermont	305.6	-0.9	718	35	3.0	20
Virginia	3,720.4	-0.3	885	9	3.0	20
Washington	3,000.9	0.3	862	10	3.4	11
West Virginia	715.3	0.0	695	41	5.1	6
Wisconsin	2,836.8	-0.5	730	32	3.1	16
Wyoming	296.7	2.7	780	23	5.4	4
Puerto Rico	997.8	-2.0	475	[5]	3.5	[5]
Virgin Islands	45.9	-2.2	703	[5]	-0.6	[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.