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County Employment and Wages in Nebraska Fourth Quarter 2007

The average weekly wage in Douglas County increased 5.5 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the fourth quarter of 2007, well above the national average of 4.2 percent. Wages in Lancaster County, the State's only other county with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2006 annual average employment, increased 3.2 percent over the year. Douglas County had the higher average weekly wage at \$860 compared to \$700 in Lancaster County. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Jay A. Mousa noted that wages in both Nebraska's large counties were below the \$898 national average in the fourth quarter of 2007.

Nationally, there were 328 large counties, of which 222 had average weekly wages below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2007. Douglas County's wage placed it 137th, in the second quartile of the national ranking. On the other hand, Douglas' faster-than-average wage growth ranked much higher—50th among the largest counties. Lancaster County's average weekly wage placed it 293rd, in the bottom quartile of the national rankings, and placed 198th in wage growth.

Employment in Douglas County rose 1.2 percent from December 2006 to December 2007, the 97th fastest gain among the 328 largest counties. Nationwide, employment grew at a slower pace over the year at 0.8 percent.

Wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties in Nebraska with employment below 75,000. Only one of these counties registered average weekly wages above that for the nation in the fourth quarter of 2007—Stanton (\$924). Arthur County reported the lowest wage level in the State at \$354. (See table 2.)

When all 93 counties in Nebraska were considered, slightly less than one-third (29) had wages below \$500. Thirty-eight counties reported weekly wages between \$500 and \$600. The remaining 26 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 106 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. New York, N.Y., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$1,862. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,700, followed by Fairfield, Conn. (\$1,575), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,546), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,529).

There were 222 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2007. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$555), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$562), Horry, S.C. (\$582), Webb, Texas (\$590), and Yakima, Wash. (\$596).

Over the year, the national average weekly wage rose by 4.2 percent. Among the largest counties, Pulaski County, Ark., led the nation in growth in average weekly wages, with an increase of 26.2 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006. Williamson, Texas, was second with growth 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).

Eight large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Among the five largest decreases in wages, Rockingham, N.H., had the greatest decline (-12.4 percent), followed by the counties of Trumbull, Ohio (-7.2 percent), Sedgwick, Kan. (-4.1 percent), Lake, Fla. (-3.9 percent), and Montgomery, Ohio (-2.4 percent).

State Average Weekly Wages

The average weekly wage in Nebraska was \$723 in the fourth quarter of 2007, \$175 below that for the nation. Ten states averaged lower weekly wages than Nebraska. The three states that ranked just below Nebraska were Oklahoma (\$721), South Carolina (\$716), and Arkansas (\$712). The five highest wage levels in the U.S. were in the District of Columbia (\$1,506), New York (\$1,152), Connecticut (\$1,149), Massachusetts (\$1,133), and New Jersey (\$1,092). (See table 3.)

Average weekly wages in Nebraska rose 5.2 percent over the year, ranking it 12th among the fifty states and the District of Columbia. Arkansas experienced a wage gain of 9.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007, higher than any other state. North Dakota was second with a 7.3-percent growth, followed by Wyoming at 7.1 percent. In fourth place was Nevada at 6.7 percent. New Hampshire was the only state to register an over-the-year decline, down 0.3 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 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 representation of QCEW data; the data tables themselves are published exclusively in electronic formats as PDF. 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 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 2 largest counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2007(2)

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	December 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2006-07(5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	137,027.3	0.8	\$898	--	4.2	--
Nebraska	925.2	1.3	723	41	5.2	12
Douglas, Neb.	323.0	1.2	860	137	5.5	50
Lancaster, Neb.	159.0	(7)	700	293	3.2	198

(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.

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

Area	Employment December 2007	Average Weekly Wages (3)	Area	Employment December 2007	Average Weekly Wages (3)
United States (4)	137,027,300	\$898	Howard	1,367	\$494
Nebraska -- Statewide	925,204	723	Jefferson	3,366	638
Adams	15,368	645	Johnson	1,825	547
Antelope	1,960	521	Kearney	2,060	538
Arthur	90	354	Keith	3,308	515
Banner	161	621	Keya	121	384
Blaine	134	464	Kimball	1,454	539
Boone	2,124	523	Knox	2,842	450
Box Butte	4,072	561	Lancaster	159,016	700
Boyd	521	411	Lincoln	14,907	565
Brown	1,280	496	Logan	193	486
Buffalo	25,953	637	Loup	103	429
Burt	1,861	527	Madison	21,100	616
Butler	2,530	518	McPherson	53	395
Cass	4,900	546	Merrick	2,102	546
Cedar	2,549	544	Morrill	1,473	586
Chase	1,587	528	Nance	898	507
Cherry	2,211	445	Nemaha	3,327	744
Cheyenne	5,999	689	Nuckolls	1,414	482
Clay	2,452	652	Otoe County	6,541	557
Colfax	4,612	602	Pawnee	782	499
Cuming	3,740	552	Perkins	958	556
Custer	3,864	543	Phelps	4,560	645
Dakota	11,218	659	Pierce	2,043	536
Dawes	3,691	455	Platte	18,929	668
Dawson	11,119	598	Polk	1,431	543
Deuel	524	473	Red Willow	5,168	555
Dixon	1,787	509	Richardson	2,452	483
Dodge	16,789	593	Rock	459	428
Douglas	323,040	860	Saline	6,880	648
Dundy	581	573	Sarpy	61,086	689
Fillmore	2,225	571	Saunders	4,721	551
Franklin	835	520	Scotts Bluff	17,262	611
Frontier	786	502	Seward	5,768	614
Furnas	1,809	539	Sheridan	1,773	445
Gage	9,766	542	Sherman	795	424
Garden	496	438	Sioux	143	420
Garfield	768	435	Stanton	1,325	924
Gosper	420	502	Thayer	2,299	635
Grant	237	602	Thomas	260	430
Greeley	636	446	Thurston	2,750	653
Hall	33,491	634	Valley	1,802	487
Hamilton	3,448	629	Washington	8,197	813
Harlan	865	476	Wayne	4,200	505
Hayes	176	465	Webster	979	457
Hitchcock	775	537	Wheeler	242	539
Holt	4,235	551	York	8,056	616
Hooker	365	366			

(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, 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.