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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN MINNESOTA: THIRD QUARTER 2008

Five of the seven largest counties in Minnesota reported declines in their employment levels from September 2007 to September 2008. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2007 annual average employment.) Anoka County had the largest drop, down 1.6 percent, followed by Dakota and Olmsted, down 1.2 and 1.0 percent, respectively. Regional Commissioner Jay A. Mousa noted that only Stearns and St. Louis Counties experienced employment growth, up 0.3 and 0.4 percent each over the year.

Nationally, employment fell 0.8 percent during this 12-month period, as 207 of the 334 large U.S. counties lost jobs. The largest over-the-year percentage decline in employment in the nation was recorded in Elkhart County, Ind. (-10.8 percent); Yakima County, Wash., experienced the fastest growth (3.2 percent).

Among the seven largest counties in Minnesota, employment was highest in Hennepin County (840,700), more than twice that of the next largest county of Ramsey (335,200) in September 2008. Two other counties, Dakota (175,100) and Anoka (114,800), had employment levels exceeding 100,000. Together, Minnesota's large counties accounted for 64.4 percent of total employment within the State. Nationwide, the 334 largest counties made up 71.2 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Hennepin County rose 5.4 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to the third quarter of 2008, the largest increase among Minnesota's seven large counties. Olmsted County had the second-highest rate of growth at 5.1 percent. Hennepin County also had the highest average weekly wage in the State among the largest counties at \$1,102, followed by Olmsted (\$949) and Ramsey (\$933). (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 2.8 percent over the year to \$841 in the third quarter of 2008.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 80 counties in Minnesota with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties for which data are available had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large County Wage Changes

Six of Minnesota's seven large counties recorded wage growth above the national increase of 2.8 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to the third quarter of 2008. (See

table 1.) Hennepin County's 5.4-percent wage gain was the highest in the State and placed 20th in the national ranking and Olmsted County's wage growth of 5.1 percent ranked 24th. While Anoka County recorded a wage gain of 0.3 percent, it placed near the bottom of the national ranking at 302nd.

Nationwide, Rutherford, Tenn., ranked first in average weekly wage growth, with an increase of 17.3 percent from the third quarter of 2007. Yolo, Calif., was second with growth of 9.7 percent, followed by the counties of Madison, Ill. (9.2 percent), Suffolk, N.Y. (8.6 percent), and Calcasieu, La. (7.8 percent).

Twenty-one large counties in the United States experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest decrease and was the only county to experience a double-digit decline (-14.6 percent). The next largest declines were recorded in Santa Clara, Calif. and Duval, Fla. (-3.4 percent each), Gwinnett, Ga. (-3.1 percent), and Rock Island, Ill. (-2.6 percent).

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Average weekly wages in three of Minnesota's seven large counties placed in the top third of the national ranking among the 334 largest counties in the United States in the third quarter of 2008. The three highest-paid large counties in the State—Hennepin, Olmsted, and Ramsey—were all above the U.S. average of \$841 and ranked 19th, 55th, and 59th nationwide, respectively. Two counties placed in the middle third of the national ranking, Dakota (\$801, 144th) and Anoka (\$769, 180th).

The average weekly wages in Minnesota's two remaining large counties placed in the bottom third of the national ranking, St. Louis (\$696, 278th) and Stearns (\$679, 292nd).

Nationally, average weekly wages were higher than average in 108 of the largest 334 counties. New York, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,552. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,530, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,391), San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,374), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,350).

Among the 226 counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2008, Horry, S.C. (\$537), reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$538), Hidalgo, Texas (\$549), Webb, Texas (\$559), and Yakima, Wash. (\$580). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than 40 percent of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, New York.

Average Weekly Wages in Minnesota's Smaller Counties

All of the counties in Minnesota with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$841. Among these smaller counties, Carver County had the highest average weekly wage at \$815. Lake of the Woods reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties, as well as the State, averaging \$476 in the third quarter of 2008. (See table 2.)

When all counties in Minnesota were considered, all but 3 had wages below the national average of \$841. Forty-eight reported average weekly wages under \$600, 28

reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 4 had wages from \$700 to \$799, 3 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 3 reported wages greater than \$900. All three of the counties with above-average wages were in the major metropolitan areas of Minneapolis-St. Paul and Rochester. Wage data for one county (Faribault) was not available.

Additional Statistics and other Information

QCEW data for states has been included in this release in table 3. For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit the QCEW Web site at www.bls.gov/cew.

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 news release. Tables and additional content from the 2007 Employment and Wages Annual Bulletin are now available online at 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 second 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.

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 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT.

Technical Note

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 9.2 million employer reports cover 135.2 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 and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

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 7 largest counties in Minnesota, third quarter 2008[2]

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [3]			
	September 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2007-08 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [5]	Percent change, third quarter 2007-08 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]
United States [6]	135,173.8	-0.8	--	\$841	--	2.8	--
Minnesota	2,699.6	-0.5	--	862	14	4.7	5
Anoka, Minn.	114.8	-1.6	233	769	180	0.3	302
Dakota, Minn.	175.1	-1.2	205	801	144	3.4	94
Hennepin, Minn.	840.7	-0.8	179	1,102	19	5.4	20
Olmsted, Minn.	90.6	-1.0	192	949	55	5.1	24
Ramsey, Minn.	335.2	-0.2	132	933	59	3.7	73
St. Louis, Minn.	98.3	0.4	76	696	278	3.9	62
Stearns, Minn.	83.0	0.3	84	679	292	3.2	110

[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.

Table 2. Covered(1) employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Minnesota third quarter 2008(2)

Area	Employment September 2008	Average weekly wages(3)	Area	Employment September 2008	Average weekly wages(3)
United States(4)	135,137,800	\$841	Marshall	2,313	\$594
Minnesota	2,699,642	862	Martin	9,640	696
Aitkin	4,261	537	McLeod	18,503	687
Anoka	114,826	769	Meeker	6,991	600
Becker	12,873	552	Mille Lacs	9,803	521
Beltrami	18,057	616	Morrison	11,659	556
Benton	16,144	641	Mower	16,446	642
Big Stone	1,967	523	Murray	2,864	509
Blue Earth	36,943	648	Nicollet	14,282	646
Brown	14,425	604	Nobles	10,388	584
Carlton	13,411	654	Norman	1,832	519
Carver	33,482	815	Olmsted	90,630	949
Cass	9,950	479	Otter Tail	22,398	561
Chippewa	5,804	568	Pennington	9,309	630
Chisago	14,315	654	Pine	8,360	492
Clay	18,192	571	Pipestone	4,862	523
Clearwater	2,668	548	Polk	12,653	556
Cook	2,909	512	Pope	3,883	574
Cottonwood	5,075	529	Ramsey	335,191	933
Crow	29,331	575	Red Lake	1,237	599
Dakota	175,051	801	Redwood	6,547	559
Dodge	5,476	700	Renville	6,237	552
Douglas	17,931	805	Rice	23,747	681
Faribault	5,599	n/a	Rock	3,127	550
Fillmore	6,220	497	Roseau	9,170	622
Freeborn	12,866	571	Scott	43,786	778
Goodhue	21,677	676	Sherburne	23,452	691
Grant	1,851	577	Sibley	4,271	572
Hennepin	840,725	1,102	St. Louis	98,298	696
Houston	5,048	495	Stearns	83,033	679
Hubbard	6,673	563	Steele	21,571	665
Isanti	10,941	628	Stevens	5,252	691
Itasca	15,841	656	Swift	3,842	559
Jackson	5,066	532	Todd	6,198	556
Kanabec	3,745	557	Traverse	1,124	495
Kandiyohi	23,015	596	Wabasha	7,289	564
Kittson	1,453	553	Wadena	6,105	576
Koochiching	5,260	678	Waseca	8,253	584
Lac Qui Parle	2,494	519	Washington	74,636	708
Lake	4,452	631	Watonwan	4,113	536
Lake of the Woods	1,424	476	Wilkin	2,028	568
Le Sueur	8,076	596	Winona	25,601	633
Lincoln	1,689	498	Wright	37,313	629
Lyon	15,096	632	Yellow Medicine	4,722	612
Mahnomen	2,022	530			

(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.

n/a—not available

Table 3. Covered [1] employment and wages by state, third quarter 2008[2]

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [3]			
	September 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent change
United States [4]	135,173.8	-0.8	\$841	-	2.8	-
Alabama	1,936.4	-1.2	730	32	3.3	17
Alaska	332.1	1.4	872	13	3.7	13
Arizona	2,570.1	-3.0	798	20	2.0	45
Arkansas	1,185.0	-0.1	649	47	3.0	22
California	15,527.1	-1.4	959	6	2.9	24
Colorado	2,322.7	0.4	877	11	3.8	12
Connecticut	1,692.5	-0.3	1,032	2	1.0	50
Delaware	420.6	-1.1	879	10	2.1	42
District of Columbia	688.2	1.4	1,391	1	1.0	50
Florida	7,546.4	-4.1	756	27	2.2	40
Georgia	4,018.6	-1.6	794	21	1.5	47
Hawaii	613.0	-2.1	774	24	1.8	46
Idaho	665.7	-1.4	643	48	1.3	49
Illinois	5,872.8	-0.7	891	9	2.9	24
Indiana	2,897.6	-1.4	718	35	2.3	37
Iowa	1,499.0	0.2	696	40	4.2	8
Kansas	1,368.9	0.0	711	38	4.6	6
Kentucky	1,795.3	-1.0	692	42	2.4	36
Louisiana	1,877.4	-0.2	756	27	5.6	4
Maine	610.8	-0.6	683	43	3.5	14
Maryland	2,543.4	-0.8	920	7	3.1	19
Massachusetts	3,265.7	0.0	1,025	4	2.3	37
Michigan	4,093.9	-3.0	820	18	1.5	47
Minnesota	2,699.6	-0.5	862	14	4.7	5
Mississippi	1,128.3	-1.3	631	49	4.0	11
Missouri	2,736.1	-0.4	739	31	2.8	29
Montana	446.4	0.1	628	50	3.1	19
Nebraska	925.7	0.2	694	41	4.2	8
Nevada	1,253.0	-2.7	809	19	2.1	42
New Hampshire	634.6	-0.5	822	16	2.8	29
New Jersey	3,952.9	-0.7	990	5	2.5	33
New Mexico	835.2	0.7	712	37	3.5	14
New York	8,633.8	0.5	1,030	3	2.2	40
North Carolina	4,064.2	-1.0	741	30	3.1	19
North Dakota	357.0	2.8	665	45	6.9	1
Ohio	5,251.1	-1.5	766	25	2.8	29
Oklahoma	1,562.8	1.2	698	39	4.5	7
Oregon	1,734.1	-1.0	766	25	2.1	42
Pennsylvania	5,679.0	0.0	822	16	2.5	33
Rhode Island	476.0	-2.0	778	23	2.5	33
South Carolina	1,874.6	-1.5	683	43	2.9	24
South Dakota	401.3	1.0	623	51	4.2	8
Tennessee	2,730.4	-1.5	745	29	2.8	29
Texas	10,438.3	1.4	850	15	2.9	24
Utah	1,229.3	-0.1	717	36	2.9	24
Vermont	304.2	-0.5	722	34	3.3	17
Virginia	3,676.1	-0.3	877	11	2.3	37
Washington	3,007.5	1.0	903	8	3.0	22
West Virginia	716.4	0.6	661	46	5.9	3
Wisconsin	2,788.7	-0.6	730	32	3.4	16
Wyoming	294.0	3.3	781	22	6.4	2
Puerto Rico	992.8	-1.6	477	[5]	5.5	[5]
Virgin Islands	44.9	-0.9	709	[5]	4.3	[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.