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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN WISCONSIN: THIRD QUARTER 2008

Four of the seven largest counties in Wisconsin 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.) Waukesha County had the largest drop, down 1.2 percent, followed by Brown County at 1.0 percent. Regional Commissioner Jay A. Mousa noted that only one of the State's large counties, Winnebago, experienced employment growth, up 0.5 percent. Outagamie County reported no change 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 Wisconsin, employment was highest in Milwaukee County (498,300) in September 2008. Two other counties, Dane (304,100) and Waukesha (233,700) had employment levels of more than 200,000. Collectively, Wisconsin's seven large counties accounted for slightly more than half 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 Milwaukee and Brown Counties each rose 4.7 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to the third quarter of 2008, the largest increases among Wisconsin's seven large counties. Milwaukee County had the highest average weekly wage in the State at \$839, followed by the counties of Waukesha (\$836) and Dane (\$823). (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 65 counties in Wisconsin with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large County Wage Changes

Only two of Wisconsin'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.) As noted, Brown and Milwaukee Counties both experienced average weekly wage increases of 4.7 percent and tied for the 36th highest increase in the nation. Two counties, Racine and Waukesha, were close to the national average at 2.7 percent (161st) and 2.5 percent (176th), respectively. Conversely, Winnebago County's average wage

was unchanged over the year, ranking last among the large Wisconsin counties and 307th nationally.

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 Wisconsin's seven large counties placed in the top half of the national ranking among the 334 largest counties in the third quarter of 2008. As previously stated, Milwaukee County (\$839) had the highest average weekly wage in the State and ranked 110th. Waukesha and Dane Counties reported average weekly wages of \$836 and \$823, ranking 112th and 124th, respectively. The average weekly wages in Wisconsin's four other large counties placed in the bottom half of the national ranking, with Outagamie County (\$719) the lowest in the State and 252nd nationwide.

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 Wisconsin's Smaller Counties

All 65 counties in Wisconsin with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$841. Among these smaller counties, Wood County had the highest average weekly wage at \$807 and Florence County had the lowest at \$378. (See table 2.)

While none of the 72 counties in Wisconsin had wages higher than the national average, there were 4 counties with average wages above \$800—Wood, Dane, Waukesha, and Milwaukee. Elsewhere in the State, 7 counties had wages from \$700 to \$799, 23 had wages from \$600 to \$699, 32 had wages from \$500 to \$599, and 6 reported wages under \$500. The counties with the State's highest wages were concentrated in the vicinity of the major metropolitan areas of Milwaukee and Madison. The counties with the lowest average wages were located in the northern part of the State.

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 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 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 Wisconsin, 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	--
Wisconsin	2,788.7	-0.6	--	730	32	3.4	16
Brown, Wis.	148.7	-1.0	192	754	200	4.7	36
Dane, Wis.	304.1	[7]	-	823	124	[7]	-
Milwaukee, Wis.	498.3	-0.1	121	839	110	4.7	36
Outagamie, Wis.	104.2	0.0	110	719	252	1.6	250
Racine, Wis.	76.4	-0.7	174	756	198	2.7	161
Waukesha, Wis.	233.7	-1.2	205	836	112	2.5	176
Winnebago, Wis.	91.1	0.5	69	768	183	0.0	307

[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 in the United States and all of the counties in Wisconsin third quarter 2008(2)

Area	Employment September 2008	Average Weekly Wages(3)	Area	Employment September 2008	Average Weekly Wages(3)
United States(4)	135,173,800	\$841	Manitowoc	36,481	\$670
Wisconsin	2,788,655	730	Marathon	69,892	707
Adams	4,958	497	Marinette	19,361	617
Ashland	8,652	623	Marquette	3,942	481
Barron	21,449	541	Menominee	2,029	528
Bayfield	4,234	446	Milwaukee	498,274	839
Brown	148,705	754	Monroe	20,411	594
Buffalo	5,365	629	Oconto	9,412	513
Burnett	4,596	510	Oneida	17,547	560
Calumet	12,163	582	Outagamie	104,165	719
Chippewa	21,666	618	Ozaukee	39,026	718
Clark	10,265	564	Pepin	2,325	523
Columbia	21,264	612	Pierce	9,141	579
Crawford	8,179	504	Polk	15,265	583
Dane	304,091	823	Portage	33,381	631
Dodge	35,080	690	Price	6,444	565
Door	15,037	508	Racine	76,402	756
Douglas	15,651	606	Richland	6,384	575
Dunn	15,621	624	Rock	65,170	694
Eau Claire	55,561	656	Rusk	5,321	500
Florence	1,093	378	Sauk	37,416	574
Fond Du Lac	46,486	692	Sawyer	7,300	516
Forest	3,360	509	Shawano	13,055	522
Grant	16,954	544	Sheboygan	62,230	698
Green	15,022	573	St. Croix	29,559	607
Green Lake	7,213	572	Taylor	8,416	575
Iowa	10,686	595	Trempealeau	13,116	586
Iron	1,870	465	Vernon	8,589	534
Jackson	8,445	638	Vilas	8,597	462
Jefferson	34,933	622	Walworth	40,435	609
Juneau	9,231	613	Washburn	5,750	569
Kenosha	54,531	660	Washington	52,259	697
Kewaunee	7,818	709	Waukesha	233,727	836
La Crosse	66,503	660	Waupaca	20,770	587
Lafayette	3,612	533	Waushara	6,890	522
Langlade	8,116	525	Winnebago	91,072	768
Lincoln	11,341	620	Wood	44,007	807

(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, 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.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Wisconsin, third quarter 2008

