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## **COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN SOUTH CAROLINA: THIRD QUARTER 2008**

Five of the six largest counties in South Carolina 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.) Horry County had the largest drop, down 3.8 percent, followed by Spartanburg and Richland, down 3.2 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that only one large county, Greenville, experienced over-the-year employment growth, up 0.8 percent over the year.

Nationally, employment decreased 0.8 percent during this 12-month period, as only 109 of the 334 large U.S. counties added jobs. Elkhart County, Ind., located about 100 miles east of Chicago, posted the largest percentage decline at 10.8 percent. Yakima, Wash., experienced the fastest growth at 3.2 percent.

Among the six largest counties in South Carolina, employment was highest in Greenville County (241,100) in September 2008. Two other counties, Richland and Charleston, had employment levels exceeding 200,000. All together, South Carolina's large counties accounted for 53.5 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 Spartanburg County rose 4.0 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to the third quarter of 2008, the largest increase among South Carolina's six large counties. Charleston County had the second-highest rate of growth at 3.1 percent. Richland County had the highest average weekly wage in the State among the 6 largest at \$749, followed by the counties of Spartanburg (\$734), Greenville (\$728), and Charleston (\$723). (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 40 counties in South Carolina 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

Four of South Carolina's six large counties recorded wage growth below the national increase of 2.8 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to the third quarter of 2008. (See table 1.) These four counties had wage gains in the 2.7- to 0.4-percent range. The two large counties in South Carolina with above-average wage growth—Spartanburg (4.0 percent) and Charleston (3.1 percent)—placed 57<sup>th</sup> and 123<sup>rd</sup> in the national ranking.

Nationwide, Rutherford, Tenn., within the Nashville metropolitan area, 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 in the nation and was the only county to experience a double-digit decline (14.6 percent). The next largest declines were recorded in Santa Clara, Calif. (-3.4 percent), Duval, Fla. (-3.4 percent), Gwinnett, Ga. (-3.1 percent), and Rock Island, Ill. (-2.6 percent).

## Large County Average Weekly Wages

Average weekly wages in all six of South Carolina's largest counties placed in the bottom half of the national ranking among the 334 largest counties in the United States in the third quarter of 2008. Richland County's wage, at \$749, placed 206<sup>th</sup> in the nationwide ranking. The two counties with the lowest average weekly wages, Lexington County (\$652, 316<sup>th</sup>) and Horry County (\$537, 334<sup>th</sup>), ranked among the 20 lowest in the United States.

Nationally, average weekly wages were higher than average in 108 of the largest 334 counties. New York, N.Y., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$1,552. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with a 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 County, 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 South Carolina's Smaller Counties

All 40 of South Carolina's counties with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$841. Dillon County reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties, averaging \$484 in the third quarter of 2008 and Aiken County recorded the highest at \$808. (See table 2.)

When all 46 counties in South Carolina were considered, all had wages below that for the nation. Two reported average weekly wages under \$500, 36 reported wages from \$501 to \$700, and 8 had wages from \$701 to \$900, though only 1 county, Aiken, exceeded \$800. (See chart 1.)

## 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 <http://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](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 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 Southeast Information Office in Atlanta 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.

### **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/](http://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 6 largest counties in South Carolina, 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	--
South Carolina	1,874.6	-1.5	--	683	43	2.9	24
Charleston, S.C.	212.6	-0.6	162	723	246	3.1	123
Greenville, S.C.	241.1	0.8	50	728	239	2.2	201
Horry, S.C.	116.9	-3.8	303	537	334	0.4	297
Lexington, S.C.	98.4	-0.6	162	652	316	2.2	201
Richland, S.C.	215.2	-1.1	200	749	206	2.7	161
Spartanburg, S.C.	119.2	-3.2	291	734	230	4.0	57

[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 counties in South Carolina, third quarter 2008 (2)**

Area	Employment September 2008	Average weekly wage (3)
United States (4)	135,173,818	\$841
South Carolina	1,874,633	683
Abbeville	6,266	540
Aiken	57,310	808
Allendale	3,062	717
Anderson	59,917	615
Bamberg	4,674	521
Barnwell	6,577	554
Beaufort	61,652	601
Berkeley	39,919	779
Calhoun	4,067	672
Charleston	212,635	723
Cherokee	19,691	610
Chester	9,259	646
Chesterfield	14,007	600
Clarendon	7,661	489
Colleton	10,752	528
Darlington	20,328	690
Dillon	8,976	484
Dorchester	30,643	588
Edgefield	5,775	566
Fairfield	5,485	731
Florence	62,056	633
Georgetown	24,594	602
Greenville	241,069	728
Greenwood	29,543	637
Hampton	5,155	604
Horry	116,911	537
Jasper	8,039	651
Kershaw	16,861	647
Lancaster	15,631	660
Laurens	17,877	594
Lee	3,839	561
Lexington	98,354	652
McCormick	1,907	536
Marion	8,222	523
Marlboro	7,415	630
Newberry	14,281	581
Oconee	22,530	699
Orangeburg	32,699	591
Pickens	37,631	608
Richland	215,227	749
Saluda	4,392	515
Spartanburg	119,162	734
Sumter	36,706	598
Union	6,930	576
Williamsburg	9,474	552
York	74,629	678

(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, counties in South Carolina, third quarter 2008**

