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## **COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN TEXAS: THIRD QUARTER 2008** **Employment Growth Widespread Throughout State**

Twenty of the 24 largest counties in Texas reported increases 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.) Potter County led the State and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the country with a job gain of 3.1 percent, closely followed by Montgomery's 3.0 percent increase which ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that employment fell in only three of the large Texas counties: Cameron, Webb, and Jefferson. (Data for McLennan County did not meet disclosure requirements.)

In comparison, national employment decreased 0.8 percent during this 12-month period as 207 of the 334 large counties nationwide registered declines. Elkhart County, Ind., recorded the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment in the country, down 10.8 percent, while Yakima, Wash., experienced the fastest growth, up 3.2 percent.

Among the 24 largest counties in Texas, employment in September 2008 was highest in Harris County (2,047,200) with Dallas County a distant second (1,489,100). Three other counties, Tarrant, Bexar, and Travis, had employment levels exceeding 500,000. Together, the 24 largest Texas counties accounted for 78.6 percent of total employment within the State. Nationwide, the 334 largest counties made up 71.2 percent of total U.S. employment.

At \$1,050 per week, Harris County also had the highest average weekly wage among the 24 largest counties in the State, followed by Dallas at \$1,025. The fastest rate of increase in average weekly wages among Texas' large counties was in Montgomery where wages rose 5.5 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to the third quarter of 2008. (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 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 230 counties in Texas with employment below 75,000. Among the smaller counties, more than 90 percent (212) had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

### **Large County Wage Changes**

Twelve of Texas' 24 large counties recorded wage growth above the 2.8-percent national increase from the third quarter of 2007 to the third quarter of 2008. (See table 1.) Montgomery County's 5.5-percent wage gain was the highest in the State and placed 18<sup>th</sup> in the national ranking. Wages rose at a 4.2-percent pace in both Lubbock and Smith County, placing them 46<sup>th</sup> in the national ranking. These counties were closely followed by Cameron and McLennan where wages increased 4.1 percent (52<sup>nd</sup>). The slowest wage increase in the State's largest counties was shared by Brazoria and El Paso with a 0.8-percent gain (281<sup>st</sup>). No large county in Texas recorded an over-the-year decline.

Nationwide, Rutherford County, 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 State experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest decrease (-14.6 percent), followed by the counties of 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 wage levels in 4 of the 24 large Texas counties ranked in the top 20 percent of the 334 largest counties in the United States in the third quarter of 2008. These four highest-paid counties had wages well above the U.S. average of \$841 per week: Harris (\$1,050, 24<sup>th</sup>), Dallas (\$1,025, 32<sup>nd</sup>), Collin (\$997, 40<sup>th</sup>), and Travis (\$924, 62<sup>nd</sup>). Two additional Texas counties, Fort Bend and Tarrant, reported wages slightly above the national average and ranked in the top one-third nationwide.

Wages in the State's 18 remaining large counties were below that of the nation, although 4 of these (Brazoria, Galveston, Jefferson, and Williamson) were within 5 percent of the national average. In sharp contrast, four of the seven lowest-paying large counties in the United States were located in Texas -- all along the border with Mexico. These four counties included Cameron (\$538, 333<sup>rd</sup>), Hidalgo (\$549, 332<sup>nd</sup>), Webb (\$559, 331<sup>st</sup>), and El Paso (\$601, 328<sup>th</sup>).

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).

Of the large counties in the United States, 226, or about two-thirds, had an average weekly wage below that of the nation. The lowest wage in the third quarter of 2008 was reported in Horry, S.C. (\$537). Joining the Texas counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Webb among the bottom five was Yakima, Wash. (\$580). Wages in these five 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 Smaller Counties in Texas**

Eighteen of the 230 smaller counties in Texas – those with employment below 75,000 – reported average weekly wages at or above the national average of \$841. Five of these counties had wage levels that exceeded \$1,000 per week: Carson (\$1,340), King (\$1,300), Sutton (\$1,233), Roberts (\$1,107), and Crane (\$1,013). Kent County reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties averaging \$406 in the third quarter of 2008. (See table 2.)

When all 254 counties in Texas were considered, all but 24 had wages below the national average of \$841. Fifty-nine reported average weekly wages under \$550, 100 registered wages from \$550 to \$649, 47 had wages from \$650 to \$749, 24 had wages from \$750 to \$840, and 24 had wages of \$841 or more per week. (See chart 1.) The 24 counties with above-average wages were concentrated around the metropolitan areas of Austin, Amarillo, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and Midland. The lower-paid counties, those with wages under \$550, were generally located along the Texas-Mexico border as well as the agricultural areas of the Texas Panhandle.

### **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/](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 second 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 are also included on the CD which accompanies the hardcopy version of the Annual Bulletin. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2007* is available online as a chartbook or for sale 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 Dallas Information Office at 972-850-4800 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.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 9.1 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. 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 24 largest counties in Texas, 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	--
Texas	10,438.3	1.4	--	850	15	2.9	24
Bell, Texas	103.0	1.9	17	663	305	2.5	176
Bexar, Texas	729.1	1.2	30	734	230	2.1	211
Brazoria, Texas	86.0	0.1	101	800	146	0.8	281
Brazos, Texas	85.2	1.0	39	646	318	3.2	110
Cameron, Texas	122.4	-0.1	121	538	333	4.1	52
Collin, Texas	294.8	2.0	15	997	40	1.1	266
Dallas, Texas	1,489.1	0.5	69	1,025	32	2.4	183
Denton, Texas	168.8	1.4	24	738	222	3.1	123
El Paso, Texas	271.4	1.2	30	601	328	0.8	281
Fort Bend, Texas	128.9	2.5	6	865	85	2.1	211
Galveston, Texas	95.7	0.4	76	803	143	3.5	82
Harris, Texas	2,047.2	1.3	29	1,050	24	3.0	139
Hidalgo, Texas	214.8	1.2	30	549	332	3.8	66
Jefferson, Texas	123.3	-1.3	212	820	126	3.8	66
Lubbock, Texas	124.7	1.9	17	641	319	4.2	46
McLennan, Texas	103.2	[7]	-	685	287	4.1	52
Montgomery, Texas	125.8	3.0	3	785	163	5.5	18
Nueces, Texas	155.0	2.5	6	728	239	2.5	176
Potter, Texas	77.2	3.1	2	729	237	[7]	-
Smith, Texas	94.4	2.4	8	743	214	4.2	46
Tarrant, Texas	769.5	0.8	50	843	106	1.0	270
Travis, Texas	581.5	1.6	21	924	62	1.3	260
Webb, Texas	88.5	-0.4	145	559	331	2.0	221
Williamson, Texas	120.8	1.6	21	800	146	3.1	123

[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 Texas, third quarter 2008 (2)

Area	Employment September 2008	Average Weekly Wage (3)	Area	Employment September 2008	Average Weekly Wage (3)
United States (4)	135,173,818	\$841	Coryell County	15,832	\$622
Texas -- Statewide	10,438,312	850	Cottle County	495	565
Anderson County	18,004	692	Crane County	1,503	1,013
Andrews County	5,530	861	Crockett County	1,512	566
Angelina County	36,744	636	Crosby County	1,448	509
Aransas County	5,976	542	Culberson County	1,166	571
Archer County	2,213	609	Dallam County	3,757	630
Armstrong County	362	658	Dallas County	1,489,124	1,025
Atascosa County	9,561	617	Dawson County	4,366	570
Austin County	12,317	805	De Witt County	6,522	592
Bailey County	2,689	567	Deaf Smith County	7,035	581
Bandera County	2,991	483	Delta County	1,245	468
Bastrop County	14,000	619	Denton County	168,802	738
Baylor County	1,281	495	Dickens County	561	595
Bee County	8,203	583	Dimmit County	2,919	605
Bell County	103,022	663	Donley County	984	469
Bexar County	729,112	734	Duval County	3,207	676
Blanco County	2,646	646	Eastland County	6,978	598
Borden County	125	534	Ector County	63,219	841
Bosque County	3,722	577	Edwards County	453	561
Bowie County	43,607	668	El Paso County	271,364	601
Brazoria County	85,970	800	Ellis County	39,354	665
Brazos County	85,171	646	Erath County	15,243	516
Brewster County	4,659	529	Falls County	3,331	542
Briscoe County	341	440	Fannin County	6,884	622
Brooks County	2,691	605	Fayette County	8,883	652
Brown County	15,617	594	Fisher County	885	569
Burleson County	3,851	666	Floyd County	1,923	511
Burnet County	12,614	691	Foard County	353	408
Caldwell County	7,055	541	Fort Bend County	128,948	865
Calhoun County	9,552	974	Franklin County	3,021	622
Callahan County	2,353	648	Freestone County	6,104	705
Cameron County	122,350	538	Frio County	4,264	544
Camp County	4,318	559	Gaines County	5,068	673
Carson County	4,849	1,340	Galveston County	95,734	803
Cass County	7,803	582	Garza County	1,688	614
Castro County	2,491	534	Gillespie County	8,991	562
Chambers County	10,306	852	Glasscock County	349	531
Cherokee County	14,638	556	Goliad County	1,449	567
Childress County	2,438	529	Gonzales County	6,370	576
Clay County	1,998	563	Gray County	9,031	789
Cochran County	788	571	Grayson County	43,086	670
Coke County	832	482	Gregg County	74,727	733
Coleman County	2,354	509	Grimes County	6,971	790
Collin County	294,818	997	Guadalupe County	29,939	675
Collingsworth County	869	499	Hale County	14,345	550
Colorado County	6,824	616	Hall County	927	435
Comal County	38,951	634	Hamilton County	2,690	568
Comanche County	3,842	513	Hansford County	1,861	663
Concho County	892	520	Hardeman County	1,403	541
Cooke County	16,394	736	Hardin County	12,142	617

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, third quarter 2008(2)  
(continued)**

Area	Employment September 2008	Average Weekly Wage (3)
Harris County	2,047,191	\$1,050
Harrison County	23,549	719
Hartley County	1,505	549
Haskell County	2,094	612
Hays County	48,351	594
Hemphill County	2,581	877
Henderson County	16,164	553
Hidalgo County	214,834	549
Hill County	9,449	538
Hockley County	8,976	703
Hood County	13,228	623
Hopkins County	12,060	587
Houston County	6,250	682
Howard County	12,711	667
Hudspeth County	1,054	713
Hunt County	28,777	734
Hutchinson County	9,305	967
Irion County	561	799
Jack County	3,041	817
Jackson County	5,252	623
Jasper County	10,686	610
Jeff Davis County	938	551
Jefferson County	123,291	820
Jim Hogg County	1,949	526
Jim Wells County	18,238	752
Johnson County	40,976	672
Jones County	4,267	574
Karnes County	3,776	557
Kaufman County	26,078	617
Kendall County	10,559	736
Kenedy County	524	827
Kent County	295	406
Kerr County	17,774	646
Kimble County	1,540	470
King County	172	1,300
Kinney County	765	589
Kleberg County	13,158	572
Knox County	1,284	648
La Salle County	1,732	771
Lamar County	20,210	628
Lamb County	4,726	544
Lampasas County	4,863	542
Lavaca County	6,091	534
Lee County	5,547	668
Leon County	5,535	783
Liberty County	17,520	650
Limestone County	8,496	564
Lipscomb County	1,422	766
Live Oak County	2,897	625
Llano County	4,547	583
Loving County	91	669

Area	Employment September 2008	Average Weekly Wage (3)
Lubbock County	124,663	\$641
Lynn County	1,363	503
Madison County	3,828	525
Marion County	1,965	537
Martin County	1,257	678
Mason County	1,119	467
Matagorda County	11,117	719
Maverick County	15,723	500
McCulloch County	3,106	560
McLennan County	103,211	685
McMullen County	207	710
Medina County	8,280	516
Menard County	533	434
Midland County	69,884	979
Milam County	6,687	708
Mills County	1,411	487
Mitchell County	2,277	595
Montague County	5,337	610
Montgomery County	125,763	785
Moore County	10,115	644
Morris County	4,778	882
Motley County	383	443
Nacogdoches County	23,394	575
Navarro County	16,335	570
Newton County	1,886	514
Nolan County	6,402	605
Nueces County	154,957	728
Ochiltree County	4,741	786
Oldham County	701	529
Orange County	22,880	753
Palo Pinto County	8,581	671
Panola County	8,869	752
Parker County	26,615	664
Parmer County	5,069	565
Pecos County	4,517	617
Polk County	10,096	591
Potter County	77,177	729
Presidio County	2,034	573
Rains County	1,720	492
Randall County	28,461	593
Reagan County	2,132	891
Real County	704	417
Red River County	2,905	504
Reeves County	3,908	582
Refugio County	2,200	637
Roberts County	352	1,107
Robertson County	3,881	628
Rockwall County	20,335	644
Runnels County	2,970	561
Rusk County	14,598	780
Sabine County	2,205	827

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, third quarter 2008 (2) (continued)**

Area	Employment September 2008	Average Weekly Wage (3)	Area	Employment September 2008	Average Weekly Wage (3)
San Augustine County	1,615	\$531	Tyler County	4,115	\$550
San Jacinto County	2,126	540	Upshur County	6,592	566
San Patricio County	17,970	718	Upton County	1,485	790
San Saba County	1,749	493	Uvalde County	9,230	518
Schleicher County	834	618	Val Verde County	17,366	580
Scurry County	6,399	793	Van Zandt County	10,513	552
Shackelford County	1,115	668	Victoria County	39,330	700
Shelby County	8,306	545	Walker County	23,341	609
Sherman County	768	555	Waller County	13,298	764
Smith County	94,388	743	Ward County	3,955	858
Somervell County	5,067	979	Washington County	14,454	627
Starr County	13,345	470	Webb County	88,450	559
Stephens County	3,424	601	Wharton County	15,395	594
Sterling County	568	677	Wheeler County	2,571	698
Stonewall County	594	555	Wichita County	55,526	662
Sutton County	2,921	1,233	Wilbarger County	6,850	587
Swisher County	2,112	526	Willacy County	3,510	630
Tarrant County	769,472	843	Williamson County	120,848	800
Taylor County	59,136	626	Wilson County	6,501	500
Terrell County	258	600	Winkler County	2,593	934
Terry County	3,996	639	Wise County	20,728	805
Throckmorton County	475	567	Wood County	9,625	560
Titus County	17,098	604	Yoakum County	3,604	900
Tom Green County	45,037	612	Young County	7,160	675
Travis County	581,521	924	Zapata County	3,718	712
Trinity County	2,374	451	Zavala County	2,610	452

(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 Texas, third quarter 2008

