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## EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS: FIRST QUARTER 2008 St. Thomas leads territory in employment growth, St. Croix has highest average wage

Employment in St. Thomas, the largest county in the Virgin Islands, stood at 24,100 in March 2008, after rising 3.1 percent over the year. Regional Commissioner Michael L. Dolfman noted that employment growth in this county exceeded the 1.1-percent increase reported for the Virgin Islands as a whole over the same time period. For the United States, employment increased by 0.4 percent from March 2007. (See chart A.)

In the first quarter of 2008, average weekly wages in St. Thomas decreased 2.5 percent over the year, while territory-wide, the average rose 3.4 percent. In the United States, wages advanced 2.4 percent from the first quarter 2007 to the first quarter 2008. (See chart B.)

Chart A. Employment growth in the United States, Virgin Islands, and St. Thomas, March 2007-March 2008

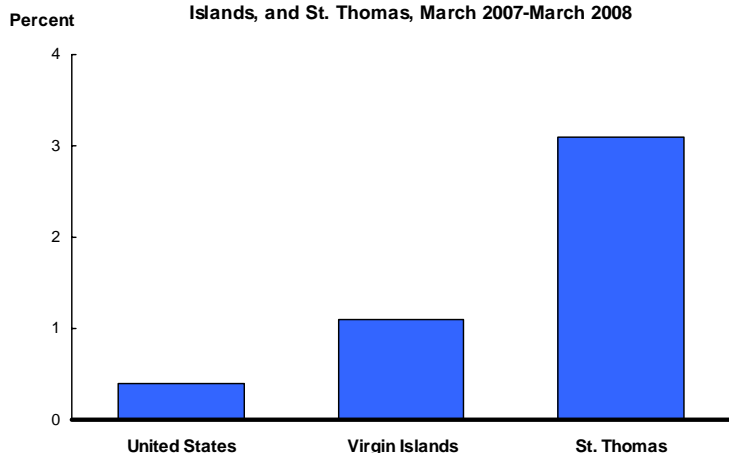
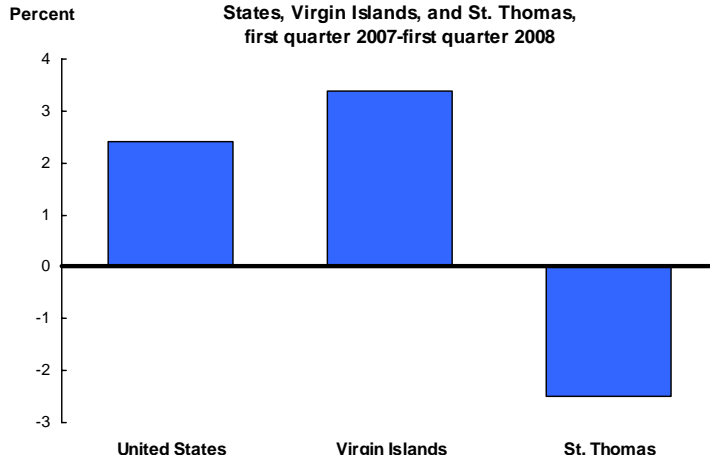


Chart B. Percent growth in average weekly wages, United States, Virgin Islands, and St. Thomas, first quarter 2007-first quarter 2008



In the first quarter of 2008, weekly wages averaged \$637 in St. Thomas, \$71 less than the territory-wide average of \$708. The wage level for the territory was almost \$200 lower, or 22 percent below, the U.S. average of \$905. Although lower than the national average, wages in the Virgin Islands well exceeded the \$489 weekly average in neighboring Puerto Rico.



Round-the-clock recorded messages for the **Consumer Price Index** and a variety of other **Bureau of Labor Statistics** data are available by dialing the **New York Information Office's** main telephone number: **(646) 264-3600**. For recorded messages, press '2'.

## **Employment**

In March 2008, employment in St. Thomas stood at 24,100, accounting for 52 percent of the territory's workforce. In the two other counties, workers on St. Croix numbered 19,800 and on St. John, 2,500. In neighboring Puerto Rico, San Juan employment totaled 284,100 in March 2008.

Over the year, employment in St. Thomas grew by 3.1 percent. Employment also increased in the largest counties of 33 states, with the fastest growth occurring in Cass, N.D. (3.8 percent). St. Thomas ranked third in employment growth among the largest counties in each of the states and territories. On the other hand, employment in San Juan, Puerto Rico, fell 2.4 percent from March 2007 to March 2008; Wayne, Mich., registered the steepest decline among the largest counties, down 3.1 percent.

## **Wage levels**

Among the three counties in the Virgin Islands, St. Croix recorded the highest average weekly wage, \$803, in the first quarter of 2008; even so, the wage was \$102 below that for the nation. Average weekly wages were much lower in St. John (\$652) and St. Thomas, (\$637).

Average weekly wages in the largest county in each of the states ranged from \$2,805 in New York, N.Y., to \$695 in Yellowstone, Mont. When the territories were also considered, the average wage in St. Thomas ranked second lowest among the largest counties. Only San Juan, Puerto Rico, with an average wage of \$593, ranked lower.

Over the year, average weekly wages in St. Thomas dropped by 2.5 percent. In 32 states, the largest county had an over-the-year percentage increase in wages that exceeded the national average of 2.4 percent in the first quarter of 2008; in 5 states, the average weekly wage in the largest county declined.

## **Additional statistics and other information**

For further information or personal assistance on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the New York-New Jersey Information Office at (646) 264-3600 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET. 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.

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 representations of QCEW data; the data tables themselves have been published exclusively in electronic formats as PDFs. The 2006 bulletin is available in a PDF on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm>.

## TECHNICAL NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

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. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and state published data may be due to the 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.

Average weekly 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 reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 9.1 million employer reports cover 134.8 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage is first compiled by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number, then, is divided by 13, the number of weeks in the quarter. It is to be noted 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 <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site because of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons.

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**Table 1. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages in the United States, the Virgin Islands, and St. Thomas, first quarter 2008<sup>2</sup>**

| Area                       | Employment                |   | Average weekly wage <sup>3</sup> |   |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
|                            | March 2008<br>(thousands) | Percent change,<br>March 2007-08 <sup>4</sup> | Average weekly wage              | Percent change,<br>2007-08 <sup>4</sup> |
| United States <sup>5</sup> | 134,761.1                 | 0.4   | \$905                            | 2.4                                     |
| Virgin Islands             | 46.5                      | 1.1   | 708                              | 3.4                                     |
| St. Thomas                 | 24.1                      | 3.1   | 637                              | -2.5                                    |

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

<sup>5</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

**Table 2. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages, the United States, the Virgin Islands and counties in the Virgin Islands, first quarter, 2008<sup>2</sup>**

| Area                       | Employment<br>March 2008<br>(thousands) | Average weekly wage <sup>3</sup> |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| United States <sup>4</sup> | 134,761.1                               | \$905                            |
| Virgin Islands             | 46.5                                    | 708                              |
| St. Croix                  | 19.8                                    | 803                              |
| St. John                   | 2.5                                     | 652                              |
| St. Thomas                 | 24.1                                    | 637                              |

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

**Table 3. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages by state and territory, first quarter 2008<sup>2</sup>**

| Area                       | Employment             |                     | Average weekly wage <sup>3</sup>       |                                       |   |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|
|                            | March 2008 (thousands) | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level <sup>4</sup> | Percent change, first quarter 2007-08 | National ranking by percent change <sup>4</sup> |
| United States <sup>5</sup> | 134,761.1              | \$905               | -                                      | 2.4                                   | -   |
| Alabama                    | 1,947.0                | 740                 | 34                                     | 3.2                                   | 27  |
| Alaska                     | 303.0                  | 866                 | 16                                     | 4.2                                   | 11  |
| Arizona                    | 2,639.7                | 820                 | 22                                     | 2.4                                   | 34  |
| Arkansas                   | 1,178.4                | 667                 | 46                                     | 4.1                                   | 12  |
| California                 | 15,561.5               | 1,008               | 6                                      | 2.1                                   | 41  |
| Colorado                   | 2,300.0                | 920                 | 10                                     | 3.6                                   | 16  |
| Connecticut                | 1,683.9                | 1,254               | 3                                      | -0.6                                  | 51  |
| Delaware                   | 418.4                  | 987                 | 7                                      | 0.1                                   | 49  |
| District of Columbia       | 680.8                  | 1,488               | 1                                      | 4.3                                   | 9   |
| Florida                    | 7,918.6                | 777                 | 26                                     | 1.8                                   | 43  |
| Georgia                    | 4,060.9                | 847                 | 20                                     | 1.3                                   | 44  |
| Hawaii                     | 628.1                  | 773                 | 28                                     | 3.5                                   | 19  |
| Idaho                      | 645.3                  | 635                 | 48                                     | 0.3                                   | 48  |
| Illinois                   | 5,796.1                | 980                 | 8                                      | 2.6                                   | 33  |
| Indiana                    | 2,858.7                | 757                 | 33                                     | 2.4                                   | 34  |
| Iowa                       | 1,469.8                | 710                 | 40                                     | 3.6                                   | 16  |
| Kansas                     | 1,363.2                | 737                 | 35                                     | 2.4                                   | 34  |
| Kentucky                   | 1,794.0                | 714                 | 39                                     | 2.4                                   | 34  |
| Louisiana                  | 1,887.3                | 765                 | 30                                     | 4.8                                   | 4   |
| Maine                      | 584.1                  | 701                 | 42                                     | 3.5                                   | 19  |
| Maryland                   | 2,530.3                | 963                 | 9                                      | 2.8                                   | 31  |
| Massachusetts              | 3,203.1                | 1,143               | 4                                      | 3.3                                   | 23  |
| Michigan                   | 4,058.8                | 857                 | 18                                     | 0.9                                   | 47  |
| Minnesota                  | 2,644.8                | 908                 | 12                                     | 4.0                                   | 13  |
| Mississippi                | 1,138.2                | 634                 | 49                                     | 3.3                                   | 23  |
| Missouri                   | 2,708.0                | 768                 | 29                                     | 3.5                                   | 19  |
| Montana                    | 432.4                  | 625                 | 51                                     | 4.3                                   | 9   |
| Nebraska                   | 912.2                  | 687                 | 44                                     | 3.2                                   | 27  |
| Nevada                     | 1,266.3                | 839                 | 21                                     | 4.7                                   | 5   |
| New Hampshire              | 621.2                  | 863                 | 17                                     | 3.4                                   | 22  |
| New Jersey                 | 3,939.9                | 1,133               | 5                                      | 3.3                                   | 23  |
| New Mexico                 | 823.8                  | 717                 | 38                                     | 4.7                                   | 5   |
| New York                   | 8,555.0                | 1,399               | 2                                      | 0.1                                   | 49  |
| North Carolina             | 4,069.1                | 788                 | 24                                     | 1.3                                   | 44  |
| North Dakota               | 343.3                  | 652                 | 47                                     | 6.2                                   | 2   |
| Ohio                       | 5,189.1                | 798                 | 23                                     | 1.0                                   | 46  |
| Oklahoma                   | 1,560.0                | 707                 | 41                                     | 4.7                                   | 5   |
| Oregon                     | 1,713.1                | 776                 | 27                                     | 2.9                                   | 30  |
| Pennsylvania               | 5,608.8                | 869                 | 15                                     | 2.4                                   | 34  |
| Rhode Island               | 464.8                  | 851                 | 19                                     | 2.3                                   | 39  |
| South Carolina             | 1,888.3                | 695                 | 43                                     | 2.8                                   | 31  |
| South Dakota               | 389.4                  | 632                 | 50                                     | 5.2                                   | 3   |
| Tennessee                  | 2,746.4                | 761                 | 31                                     | 3.3                                   | 23  |
| Texas                      | 10,420.8               | 903                 | 13                                     | 3.6                                   | 16  |

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 3. Covered<sup>1</sup> employment and wages by state and territory, first quarter 2008<sup>2</sup>--  
continued**

| Area           | Employment                   |                           | Average weekly wage <sup>3</sup>                |   |   |
|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|---|
|                | March<br>2008<br>(thousands) | Average<br>weekly<br>wage | National<br>ranking<br>by<br>level <sup>4</sup> | Percent<br>change,<br>first<br>quarter<br>2007-08 | National<br>ranking<br>by<br>percent<br>change <sup>4</sup> |
| Utah           | 1,220.2                      | \$718                     | 37  | 3.2   | 27  |
| Vermont        | 300.8                        | 735                       | 36  | 4.4   | 8   |
| Virginia       | 3,653.5                      | 918                       | 11  | 2.0   | 42  |
| Washington     | 2,928.6                      | 899                       | 14  | 3.7   | 15  |
| West Virginia  | 700.3                        | 679                       | 45  | 4.0   | 13  |
| Wisconsin      | 2,734.3                      | 760                       | 32  | 2.2   | 40  |
| Wyoming        | 277.2                        | 779                       | 25  | 6.7   | 1   |
| Puerto Rico    | 1,004.5                      | 489                       | (6)   | 2.7   | (6)   |
| Virgin Islands | 46.5                         | 708                       | (6)   | 3.4   | (6)   |

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

<sup>2</sup> Data are preliminary.

<sup>3</sup> Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

<sup>4</sup> Ranking does not include Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

<sup>5</sup> Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

<sup>6</sup> Data not included in the national ranking.