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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN SOUTH CAROLINA: THIRD QUARTER 2007

In the third quarter of 2007, the average weekly wage in Charleston County increased 4.8 percent over the year, the largest advance among South Carolina's six counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment. Lexington County's 4.6-percent wage growth was the second fastest in the State according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Richland County had the highest average weekly wage level in South Carolina at \$724 followed by Spartanburg County at \$710. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that none of the counties in the State had wage levels exceeding the national average of \$818; however two of the largest counties had over the year wage growth exceeding the national increase of 4.3 percent. (See table 1.)

Among the six largest counties in South Carolina, employment was highest in Greenville County (238,200) and lowest in Lexington County (96,500). Charleston County recorded an employment gain of 3.8 percent from September 2006 to September 2007, more than four times the national average of 0.9 percent. In fact, all of the large counties in South Carolina had employment growth of 1.0 percent or more.

County Wage Levels

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 112 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. Richland County's wage level of \$724 was the highest of South Carolina's large counties; still, this wage was \$94 less than the national average, placing the county in the bottom half of the national ranking at 209th in the third quarter 2007. At the other end of the wage spectrum, Horry County (\$536) reported the lowest average weekly wage in South Carolina, followed by the counties of Lexington (\$640), Charleston (\$703), Greenville (\$707), and Spartanburg County (\$710). (See table 1.)

Among the 328 largest counties in the nation, Santa Clara, Calif., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,585. New York County, N.Y., ranked second with an average weekly wage of \$1,544, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,376); Arlington, Va. (\$1,364); and San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,322).

Three of the top 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.); 3 were located in or around the San Francisco metropolitan area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco, all in California); and 3 were located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (Arlington, Va., Washington, D.C., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

Nationwide, 215 or 65 percent of the largest counties recorded an average weekly wage below the national level. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$518), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$529), Horry, S.C.(536), and Webb, Texas (548).

County Wage Changes

Of South Carolina's six large counties, two recorded wage growth above the national increase of 4.3 percent from the third quarter of 2006 to the third quarter of 2007. As mentioned, Charleston County's 4.8-percent wage gain was the largest increase in South Carolina, placing it 79th highest in the nation, followed by Lexington County's 4.6 percent gain (91st). Four counties had lower-than-average wage growth—Horry County (3.7 percent), Greenville County (3.5 percent), Richland County (2.7), and Spartanburg County (2.3).

Within the largest counties in the U.S., Clayton County, Ga., led the nation in average weekly wages with an increase of 23.9 percent from the third quarter of 2006. Muscogee, Ga., was second with growth of 12.1 percent, followed by the counties of Santa Clara, Calif. (11.8 percent), Rock Island, Ill. (11.5), and Davidson, Tenn. (9.1). Overall, 101 of the largest counties had a growth rate that exceeded the national growth rate of 4.3 percent.

Ten counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. The five largest decreases in wages occurred in the counties of Trumbull, Ohio (-10.6 percent), Vanderburgh, Ind. (-6.1 percent), Genesee, Mich. (-4.0 percent), Saginaw, Mich. (-3.1 percent), and Montgomery, Ohio (-3.0 percent).

State Average Weekly Wages

At the state level, the average weekly wage in South Carolina grew 3.6 percent from the third quarter of 2006 to the third quarter of 2007, ranking 39th in growth among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The average weekly wage in South Carolina, (\$664, 43rd), was 19.0 percent below the \$818 national average. South Carolina's average weekly wage was lower than neighboring Georgia's (\$782, 21st) and North Carolina's (\$719, 29th). (See table 1.)

Across the country, the District of Columbia (\$1,376), Connecticut (\$1021), New York (\$1009), Massachusetts (\$1002), and New Jersey (\$965) had the highest wage levels. Average weekly wages in the top five were at least 18 percent above the national average. At the other end of the scale, three states reported wages 75 percent or less of that for the nation: Montana (\$608), Mississippi (\$607), and South Dakota (\$598).

Washington led the United States in over-the-year wage growth with a gain of 6.7 percent. Connecticut was a close second with 6.6 percent wage growth, followed by New York (6.1 percent), North Dakota (5.8 percent), and Oklahoma (5.5 percent). Rhode Island was the only state to experience an over-the-year decline of 0.1 percent. (See table 2.)

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 reports

submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 9.0 million employer reports cover 136.2 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; this 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 (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

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 the 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 representation of QCEW data; the data tables themselves are published exclusively in electronic formats as PDFs. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2006* is available for sale from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA, 15250 or by calling 1-866-512-1800. Also, the 2006 bulletin is available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm. In addition, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at www.bls.gov/cew.

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 data, as well as other Bureau data, contact the Southeast Information Office 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.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.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.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 6 largest counties in South Carolina, third quarter 2007(2)

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	September 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07 (5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	136,246.9	0.9	\$818	--	4.3	--
South Carolina	1,904.7	1.7	664	43	3.6	39
Charleston, S.C.	212.7	3.8	703	243	4.8	79
Greenville, S.C.	238.2	1.9	707	238	3.5	177
Horry, S.C.	119.3	1.0	536	326	3.7	149
Lexington, S.C.	96.5	2.2	640	308	4.6	91
Richland, S.C.	216.7	1.5	724	209	2.7	228
Spartanburg, S.C.	119.9	2.0	710	233	2.3	254

(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) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(5) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(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 by state, third quarter 2007(2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	September 2007 (thousands)	Percent change third quarter 2006-07	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change third quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	136,246.9	0.9	\$818	-	4.3	-
Alabama	1,959.0	1.1	707	32	3.7	37
Alaska	327.3	0.7	840	13	5.4	9
Arizona	2,644.9	0.5	783	20	4.1	25
Arkansas	1,184.5	0.3	629	46	4.1	25
California	15,755.0	0.7	932	6	4.5	18
Colorado	2,314.3	2.4	844	12	3.2	42
Connecticut	1,696.9	1.0	1,021	2	6.6	2
Delaware	425.2	0.1	860	10	1.2	50
District of Columbia	679.0	0.6	1,376	1	5.3	12
Florida	7,879.9	-0.9	741	26	4.1	25
Georgia	4,089.4	1.2	782	21	4.1	25
Hawaii	624.4	0.3	760	22	5.4	9
Idaho	675.5	2.2	634	45	3.4	41
Illinois	5,917.6	0.6	866	9	4.0	32
Indiana	2,937.4	0.5	702	34	2.2	49
Iowa	1,494.5	0.9	668	40	4.2	22
Kansas	1,368.7	1.7	680	38	2.7	46
Kentucky	1,814.3	1.0	676	39	3.0	44
Louisiana	1,880.8	2.7	716	31	4.5	18
Maine	615.3	0.7	660	44	3.9	35
Maryland	2,563.7	0.7	892	7	4.1	25
Massachusetts	3,261.0	1.0	1,002	4	5.5	5
Michigan	4,218.2	-1.4	808	16	2.4	48
Minnesota	2,713.3	0.9	822	15	4.6	16
Mississippi	1,142.2	0.6	607	50	3.8	36
Missouri	2,746.7	0.8	719	29	4.2	22
Montana	446.1	2.7	608	49	4.6	16
Nebraska	922.7	1.7	666	41	5.4	9
Nevada	1,286.4	-0.1	792	19	5.5	5
New Hampshire	637.2	0.3	799	18	3.2	42
New Jersey	3,985.2	0.1	965	5	3.7	37
New Mexico	830.4	0.8	682	37	4.1	25
New York	8,585.3	1.3	1,009	3	6.1	3
North Carolina	4,104.1	2.4	719	29	3.5	40
North Dakota	347.4	1.5	621	48	5.8	4
Ohio	5,331.9	-0.2	745	25	2.8	45
Oklahoma	1,548.2	1.8	666	41	5.5	5
Oregon	1,751.7	1.2	750	24	4.2	22
Pennsylvania	5,673.4	0.5	802	17	4.4	20
Rhode Island	486.1	-1.0	759	23	-0.1	51
South Carolina	1,904.7	1.7	664	43	3.6	39
South Dakota	397.5	2.0	598	51	4.7	15
Tennessee	2,774.4	0.5	728	28	4.3	21
Texas	10,304.9	2.9	825	14	5.0	13
Utah	1,231.6	3.6	696	36	5.5	5
Vermont	305.2	-0.2	699	35	4.0	32
Virginia	3,686.6	1.0	857	11	5.0	13
Washington	2,976.5	2.1	878	8	6.7	1
West Virginia	713.8	0.3	623	47	4.0	32
Wisconsin	2,802.3	-0.1	705	33	2.6	47
Wyoming	284.3	3.6	734	27	4.1	25
Puerto Rico	1,008.0	-1.1	453	(5)	2.5	(5)
Virgin Islands	45.0	0.7	682	(5)	-0.3	(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.