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PARISH EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN LOUISIANA—FIRST QUARTER 2011

Employment rose in each of the six largest parishes in Louisiana from March 2010 to March 2011 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties/parishes are those with 2010 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that Lafayette Parish had the largest employment increase, up 2.3 percent, followed by Orleans (1.2 percent). Employment increased at a slower pace in the four remaining large parishes of Caddo, Jefferson, Calcasieu, and East Baton Rouge, with rates ranging from 0.5 to 0.1 percent. (See table 1.)

Employment nationwide advanced 1.3 percent during the 12-month period as 256 of the 322 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Elkhart County, Ind., recorded the fastest increase, with a gain of 6.2 percent, while Sacramento, Calif., experienced the largest decline in employment, down 1.6 percent.

Among the six largest parishes in Louisiana, employment was highest in East Baton Rouge (254,200) in March 2011, followed by Jefferson (192,100) and Orleans (173,100). Together, Louisiana's six large parishes accounted for 51.8 percent of the State's total employment. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the first quarter of 2010 to the first quarter of 2011, Caddo Parish recorded the fastest rate of increase in average weekly wages among Louisiana's six large parishes, registering a gain of 6.8 percent. (See table 1.) Orleans had the highest wage level among the largest parishes at \$983 per week. Nationally, average weekly wages rose 5.2 percent to \$935 in the first quarter 2011.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 58 parishes in Louisiana with employment below 75,000. In all but five of these smaller parishes, wage levels were below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Caddo's 6.8-percent rise in average weekly wages was above the national average of 5.2 percent, ranking 38th among the nation's largest counties. (See table 1.) Although wage gains among the five remaining large parishes were below the national average, Calcasieu (4.8 percent, 105th) and Lafayette (4.7 percent, 111th) ranked near the top one-third of the nation's large counties for wage increases. Wage gains ranked in the bottom one-half for Jefferson (3.6 percent, 188th), Orleans (3.0 percent, 236th), and East Baton Rouge (2.8 percent, 248th).

Over the year, the national average weekly wage rose 5.2 percent with 315 of the 322 largest counties registering gains. Peoria, Ill., experienced the largest increase in the nation, up 18.9 percent. Santa Clara, Calif., had the second largest overall increase (12.4 percent), followed by the counties of Macomb, Mich. (12.0 percent), Clayton, Ga. (11.9 percent) and Wayne, Mich. (11.3 percent).

Among the nation's 322 largest counties, 3 experienced over-the-year wage decreases. Williamson, Texas, had the largest wage decline with a loss of 3.8 percent over the year. Trade, transportation, and utilities contributed significantly to Williamson's overall average weekly wage loss. Hudson, N.J., had the second largest overall decline among the counties (-1.5 percent), followed by Durham, N.C. (-0.5 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Orleans' average weekly wage of \$983 was above the national average (\$935) in the first quarter of 2011, leading among the State's largest parishes and ranked 70th in the country. At about 90 percent of the national average, the next highest wage was in Lafayette (\$847, 146th), followed by East Baton Rouge and Jefferson (\$831 each, 158th); all ranked in the top half of the largest U.S. counties. Average weekly wages in Calcasieu (\$768, 223rd) and Caddo (\$736, 260th) were in the bottom one-third of the national ranking.

Nationwide, 94 large counties registered weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$935 in the first quarter of 2011. New York, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,634. Fairfield, Conn., was second at \$1,888, followed by the counties of Somerset, N.J. (\$1,867), Santa Clara, Calif. (\$1,863), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,723). Among these top-paying counties, Santa Clara also ranked second in terms of over-the-year increase in average weekly wages.

More than two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (228) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C. reported the lowest wage (\$534), followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$546), Hidalgo, Texas (\$556), Lake, Fla. (\$586), and Webb, Texas (\$590). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than one-fourth of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, New York.

Average weekly wages in Louisiana's smaller parishes

For smaller parishes in Louisiana – those with employment below 75,000 – 53 of 58 reported weekly wages below the national average (\$935) in the first quarter of 2011. In the five remaining smaller parishes, wages not only exceeded \$1,000 per week, but also were the highest in the State: St. James (\$1,179), St. Charles (\$1,174), Iberville (\$1,155), Plaquemines (\$1,153), and West Feliciana (\$1,002). Madison reported the lowest weekly wage in the State at \$484 in the first quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

When all 64 parishes in Louisiana were considered, all but 6 had wages below the national average. Ten parishes reported average wages under \$550 per week, 21 registered wages from \$550 to \$649, 12 had wages from \$650 to \$749, 12 had wages from \$750 to \$899, and 9 had wages of \$900 or more. (See chart 1.) The higher-paying parishes were concentrated in the southern half of the State around the metropolitan areas of Baton Rouge, Houma, Lafayette, Lake Charles, and New Orleans. The lower-paid parishes – those with weekly wages under \$550, were generally located in the northeastern quadrant of the State extending from Alexandria in the south to Monroe in the north.

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in table 3. For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit www.bls.gov/cew.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2009 edition of this publication, which was published in March 2011, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2010 version of this news release. This web-only publication has replaced the print version of the annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages Annual Averages*. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online, 2009* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn09.htm. The 2010 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available later in 2011. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: (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 Southwest Information Office at 972-850-4800.

Industry Changes to Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Data

Beginning with the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data presented in this release, the Bureau of Labor Statistics is introducing the 2012 version of the North American Industry Classification System as the basis for the assignment and tabulation of economic data by industry. For more information on the impact of the change, please see www.bls.gov/cew/naics2012.htm.

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 covered 127.9 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 BLS 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 parishes in Louisiana, first quarter 2011 (2)

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	March 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2010-11 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (5)	Percent change, first quarter 2010-11 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)
United States (6)	127,851.0	1.3	--	\$935	--	5.2	--
Louisiana	1,841.3	0.9	--	798	27	4.5	22
Caddo, La.	120.4	0.5	206	736	260	6.8	38
Calcasieu, La.	82.2	0.2	242	768	223	4.8	105
East Baton Rouge, La.	254.2	0.1	249	831	158	2.8	248
Jefferson, La.	192.1	0.4	216	831	158	3.6	188
Lafayette, La.	132.0	2.3	49	847	146	4.7	111
Orleans, La.	173.1	1.2	139	983	70	3.0	236

(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.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all parishes in Louisiana, first quarter 2011 (2)

Area	Employment March 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)	Area	Employment March 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)
United States (4)	127,850,997	\$935	Livingston	21,942	\$606
Louisiana	1,841,282	798	Madison	3,334	484
Acadia	15,114	598	Morehouse	6,730	525
Allen	8,266	583	Natchitoches	13,517	567
Ascension	36,384	884	Orleans	173,078	983
Assumption	4,417	828	Ouachita	68,891	669
Avoyelles	10,979	516	Plaquemines	14,574	1,153
Beauregard	8,185	715	Pointe Coupee	5,374	672
Bienville	4,142	643	Rapides	58,491	673
Bossier	44,317	654	Red River	2,640	719
Caddo	120,390	736	Richland	6,404	521
Calcasieu	82,208	768	Sabine	5,506	544
Caldwell	2,501	517	St. Bernard	11,074	874
Cameron	2,582	934	St. Charles	23,858	1,174
Catahoula	2,458	494	St. Helena	1,397	594
Claiborne	4,105	650	St. James	7,561	1,179
Concordia	5,838	554	St. John the Baptist	15,118	910
De Soto	6,781	820	St. Landry	24,035	599
East Baton Rouge	254,224	831	St. Martin	11,704	634
East Carroll	1,869	556	St. Mary	26,294	913
East Feliciana	4,881	616	St. Tammany	76,504	735
Evangeline	8,259	595	Tangipahoa	41,063	641
Franklin	4,979	485	Tensas	1,178	609
Grant	3,235	629	Terrebonne	52,695	848
Iberia	30,982	820	Union	4,909	494
Iberville	13,809	1,155	Vermilion	13,216	731
Jackson	3,594	652	Vernon	15,001	625
Jefferson	192,113	831	Washington	10,070	629
Jefferson Davis	8,388	623	Webster	12,859	686
La Salle	4,473	626	West Baton Rouge	11,420	812
Lafayette	131,960	847	West Carroll	2,316	503
Lafourche	35,771	888	West Feliciana	5,200	1,002
Lincoln	17,663	639	Winn	5,167	561

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE).

(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, first quarter 2011 (2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	March 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2010-11	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2010-11	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	127,851.0	1.3	\$935	--	5.2	--
Alabama	1,808.5	0.3	766	34	4.2	30
Alaska	310.1	2.0	912	15	3.8	36
Arizona	2,392.1	0.7	837	21	4.9	17
Arkansas	1,133.5	0.3	715	47	6.1	6
California	14,413.8	1.2	1,066	6	6.2	5
Colorado	2,179.8	1.3	952	11	4.4	27
Connecticut	1,589.2	1.4	1,282	3	6.3	4
Delaware	396.0	2.1	1,026	7	5.7	11
District of Columbia	702.3	2.5	1,540	1	2.4	51
Florida	7,235.9	1.2	794	28	3.8	36
Georgia	3,771.0	1.4	885	17	5.7	11
Hawaii	593.8	1.2	790	30	3.1	47
Idaho	590.3	-0.1	659	48	4.1	31
Illinois	5,472.4	1.2	1,003	9	6.0	7
Indiana	2,717.1	1.9	772	33	4.5	22
Iowa	1,419.3	0.6	738	40	4.5	22
Kansas	1,293.3	0.6	748	36	4.0	33
Kentucky	1,715.6	1.5	737	42	3.7	40
Louisiana	1,841.3	0.9	798	27	4.5	22
Maine	558.6	0.1	723	43	4.8	18
Maryland	2,452.1	1.3	1,010	8	3.6	41
Massachusetts	3,116.5	1.2	1,159	5	5.8	10
Michigan	3,757.7	2.2	872	19	7.1	2
Minnesota	2,530.7	1.4	935	14	6.0	7
Mississippi	1,074.8	0.6	650	51	3.2	46
Missouri	2,562.3	0.3	786	31	3.0	49
Montana	412.2	0.4	656	50	3.6	41
Nebraska	886.2	0.7	721	46	3.9	35
Nevada	1,102.6	0.4	802	26	3.0	49
New Hampshire	596.3	1.1	876	18	5.2	15
New Jersey	3,701.1	0.0	1,160	4	3.5	43
New Mexico	776.5	-0.1	738	40	3.1	47
New York	8,336.5	1.2	1,368	2	6.7	3
North Carolina	3,809.6	1.6	825	22	4.3	29
North Dakota	364.5	5.0	748	36	9.5	1
Ohio	4,870.6	1.4	819	23	4.6	19
Oklahoma	1,491.5	1.0	739	39	5.3	13
Oregon	1,590.3	1.3	812	24	4.6	19
Pennsylvania	5,459.3	1.5	896	16	4.6	19
Rhode Island	438.1	0.1	863	20	3.4	44
South Carolina	1,767.2	1.4	722	45	4.5	22
South Dakota	382.3	1.3	659	48	4.1	31
Tennessee	2,575.9	1.7	793	29	3.8	36
Texas	10,324.3	2.2	946	13	5.9	9
Utah	1,156.9	2.0	753	35	3.4	44
Vermont	291.9	0.9	741	38	3.8	36
Virginia	3,539.9	1.5	968	10	4.0	33
Washington	2,785.3	1.2	947	12	5.2	15
West Virginia	689.3	1.0	723	43	4.5	22
Wisconsin	2,609.5	1.6	779	32	5.3	13
Wyoming	265.2	1.0	808	25	4.4	27
Puerto Rico	923.0	-2.6	500	(5)	0.8	(5)
Virgin Islands	45.1	0.4	738	(5)	1.0	(5)

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) & 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.

