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OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN MOBILE, MAY 2010

Workers in the Mobile Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$18.39 in May 2010, roughly 14 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.35, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 17 of 22 major occupational groups, including healthcare practitioners and technical, construction and extraction, and management.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including construction and extraction; installation, maintenance, and repair; and sales and related. Conversely, 10 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including education, training, and library; business and financial operations; and food preparation and serving related. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—construction and extraction—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Mobile had 11,720 jobs in construction and extraction, accounting for 7.0 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 4.0-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$16.92, roughly 20 percent below the national wage of \$21.09.

With employment of 1,400, electricians was the largest occupation within the construction and extraction group, followed by construction laborers (1,290) and first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers (1,190). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers and construction and building inspectors, with mean hourly wages of \$26.01 and \$22.11, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were carpenters' helpers (\$11.94) and highway maintenance workers (\$13.17). (Detailed occupational data for construction and extraction are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_33660.htm)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Mobile Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2010

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Average hourly wage	
	United States	Mobile	United States	Mobile
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.35	\$18.39 *
Management	4.7	4.1 *	50.69	46.58 *
Business and financial operations	4.8	3.2 *	32.54	28.74 *
Computer and mathematical	2.6	1.5 *	37.13	28.23 *
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.7	36.32	31.24 *
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.8	31.92	24.63 *
Community and social service	1.5	0.9 *	20.76	18.20 *
Legal	0.8	0.6 *	46.60	47.33
Education, training, and library	6.7	4.9 *	24.25	23.23
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.4	1.1 *	25.14	18.50 *
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.8	6.8 *	34.27	29.30 *
Healthcare support	3.1	3.4	12.94	10.71 *
Protective service	2.5	2.5	20.43	15.67 *
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	7.6 *	10.21	9.10 *
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.2	12.16	9.97 *
Personal care and service	2.7	2.1 *	11.82	10.70 *
Sales and related	10.6	11.8 *	17.69	14.90 *
Office and administrative support	16.9	16.9	16.09	13.94 *
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1 *	11.70	11.02
Construction and extraction	4.0	7.0 *	21.09	16.92 *
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	5.8 *	20.58	18.62 *
Production	6.5	6.5	16.24	16.64
Transportation and material moving	6.7	7.8 *	15.70	15.94

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See table 1.) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Mobile area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the construction and extraction group. For instance, boilermakers were employed at 4.7 times the national rate in Mobile, and electricians, at 2.1 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, construction laborers had a location quotient of 1.3 in Mobile, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations. The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and nearly 800 non-military detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas.

OES wage and employment data for the 22 major occupational groups in the Mobile Metropolitan Statistical Area were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages or employment shares above or below the national wage or share after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

NOTE: A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands also are surveyed, but their data are not included in this release. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 establishments in May and November of each year for a 3-year period. The nationwide response rate for the May 2010 survey was 78.2 percent based on establishments and 74.4 percent based on employment. May 2010 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2010, November 2009, May 2009, November 2008, May 2008, and November 2007. The sample in the Mobile Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,009 establishments with a response rate of 83 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2010 OES estimates mark the first set of estimates based in part on data collected using the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. Nearly all the occupations in this release are 2010 SOC occupations; however, some are not. The May 2012 OES data will reflect the full set of detailed occupations in the 2010 SOC. For a list of all occupations, including 2010 SOC occupations, and how data collected on two structures were combined, see the OES Frequently Asked Questions online at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm#Ques41.

Area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Mobile, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Mobile County.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm. If you have additional questions, contact the Southeast Economic Analysis and Information Unit at (404) 893-4222. 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.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Mobile Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2010

Occupation	Employment		Mean Wages	
	Level ⁽¹⁾	Location quotient ⁽²⁾	Hourly	Annual
Construction and extraction occupations	11,720	1.7	\$16.92	\$35,200
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	1,190	1.9	26.01	54,100
Boilermakers	120	4.7	14.78	30,750
Brickmasons and blockmasons	110	1.2	17.52	36,430
Carpenters	1,060	1.3	16.42	34,150
Tile and marble setters	60	1.3	15.74	32,740
Cement masons and concrete finishers	240	1.3	15.17	31,540
Construction laborers	1,290	1.3	11.37	23,640
Paving, surfacing, and tamping equipment operators	50	0.7	13.67	28,430
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	710	1.6	15.82	32,900
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	50	0.5	12.37	25,730
Electricians	1,400	2.1	20.71	43,070
Glaziers	40	0.7	15.88	33,040
Insulation workers, floor, ceiling, and wall	150	4.7	16.46	34,230
Insulation workers, mechanical	(3)	(3)	12.94	26,920
Painters, construction and maintenance	500	2.0	14.05	29,220
Pipelayers	220	3.8	13.46	28,000
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	1,230	2.6	18.48	38,430
Plasterers and stucco masons	(3)	(3)	18.16	37,780
Reinforcing iron and rebar workers	170	6.4	15.96	33,190
Roofers	160	1.3	14.14	29,400
Sheet metal workers	550	3.2	14.94	31,080
Structural iron and steel workers	260	3.4	19.63	40,830
Helpers--brickmasons, blockmasons, stonemasons, and tile and marble setters	120	2.9	10.62	22,090
Helpers--carpenters	170	2.8	11.94	24,830
Helpers--electricians	480	5.0	13.81	28,720
Helpers--painters, paperhangers, plasterers, and stucco masons	110	7.0	9.37	19,490
Helpers--pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	220	2.9	13.03	27,090
Construction and building inspectors	180	1.5	22.11	45,980
Hazardous materials removal workers	130	2.7	13.18	27,420
Highway maintenance workers	280	1.5	13.17	27,400

(1) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(2) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(3) Estimate not released.