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## OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN BOULDER – MAY 2009

Workers in the Boulder, Colo., Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$25.79 during May 2009, significantly higher than the nationwide average of \$20.90, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, 16 occupational groups had wages in the local area that were above their respective national averages, including computer and mathematical science; architecture and engineering; and life, physical, and social science. Wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in only one of the 22 major occupational groups – construction and extraction. (For a comprehensive definition of the Boulder, Colo., Metropolitan Statistical Area, please see Technical Note.)

**Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Boulder Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2009**

Major occupational group	Percent of total		Average hourly wage	
	United States	Boulder	United States	Boulder
All Occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$20.90	\$25.79 *
Management	4.7	4.7	49.47	55.22 *
Business and financial operations	4.6	5.6 *	31.68	37.29 *
Computer and mathematical	2.5	7.7 *	36.68	43.03 *
Architecture and engineering	1.8	4.9 *	35.38	42.12 *
Life, physical, and social science	1.0	3.2 *	31.57	39.24 *
Community and social services	1.4	1.5	20.55	19.87
Legal	0.8	0.6 *	46.07	44.42
Education, training, and library	6.5	6.8 *	23.81	24.56
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	2.4 *	24.87	24.37
Healthcare practitioner and technical	5.5	5.4	33.51	36.87 *
Healthcare support	3.0	2.1 *	12.84	15.26 *
Protective service	2.4	1.4 *	20.07	21.22
Food preparation and serving related	8.6	9.2 *	10.04	11.11 *
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	2.4 *	12.00	13.24 *
Personal care and service	2.6	2.4 *	11.87	14.01 *
Sales and related	10.5	10.2	17.32	20.63 *
Office and administrative support	17.1	15.5 *	15.86	17.17 *
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1 *	11.53	14.46 *
Construction and extraction	4.4	2.9 *	20.84	20.16 *
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	2.9 *	20.30	21.32 *
Production	6.8	4.5 *	16.01	17.11 *
Transportation and material moving	6.8	3.6 *	15.47	17.63 *

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

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 7 of the 22 occupational groups, including computer and mathematical science, business and financial operations, and architecture and engineering. Conversely, eleven groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including healthcare support and production occupations. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group, architecture and engineering, was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Boulder had 7,610 jobs in the architecture and engineering group accounting for 4.9 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the occupational group's 1.8-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for the architecture and engineering group locally was \$42.12, also significantly higher than the national wage of \$35.38.

With employment of 1,220, computer hardware engineers were the largest published occupation within the architecture and engineering group, followed by electronics engineers, excluding computer engineers (920), and mechanical engineers (820). Two occupations had hourly wages exceeding \$50.00, led by computer hardware engineers averaging \$56.08. At the lower end of the wage scale were architectural and civil drafters (\$23.13). (Detailed occupational data for the architecture and engineering group are presented in table B; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/2009/may/oes\\_14500.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/2009/may/oes_14500.htm). OES data are published annually for all metropolitan areas. The most recent data for all areas are available at [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrcma.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrcma.htm).)

**Table B. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, for architecture and engineering occupations, Boulder Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2009**

Occupation	Employment[1]	Mean wages		Median hourly
		Hourly	Annual[2]	
Architecture and engineering occupations	7,610	\$42.12	\$87,600	\$40.06
Architects, except landscape and naval	410	27.53	57,260	26.88
Landscape architects	50	29.00	60,330	27.33
Surveyors	60	24.97	51,930	23.69
Aerospace engineers	440	46.45	96,610	44.86
Chemical engineers	250	39.41	81,970	38.12
Civil engineers	300	38.78	80,670	37.68
Computer hardware engineers	1,220	56.08	116,640	56.20
Electrical engineers	370	41.96	87,270	40.20
Electronics engineers, except computer	920	46.71	97,160	47.08
Environmental engineers	[3]	42.37	88,140	40.10
Health and safety engineers, except mining safety engineers and inspectors	40	43.01	89,460	42.49
Industrial engineers	520	43.42	90,310	43.08
Materials engineers	150	43.80	91,100	41.85
Mechanical engineers	820	46.66	97,050	43.08
Mining and geological engineers, including mining safety engineers	[3]	45.24	94,090	46.06
Engineers, all other	320	51.91	107,960	54.93
Architectural and civil drafters	270	23.13	48,110	23.22
Mechanical drafters	[3]	27.94	58,110	28.12
Aerospace engineering and operations technicians	[3]	30.18	62,780	29.43
Civil engineering technicians	50	28.05	58,340	28.63
Electrical and electronic engineering technicians	430	28.84	59,980	27.72
Industrial engineering technicians	160	26.06	54,190	24.55
Mechanical engineering technicians	130	27.38	56,950	27.42
Engineering technicians, except drafters, all other	100	32.48	67,550	32.85
Surveying and mapping technicians	70	26.41	54,940	26.85

[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] Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

[3] Indicates that an employment estimate is not available.

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 Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and up to 801 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 Boulder 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 2009 survey was 78.2 percent based on establishments and 74.5 percent based on employment. The survey included establishments sampled in the May 2009, November 2008, May 2008, November 2007, May 2007, and November 2006 semiannual panels. The sample in the Boulder Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,835 establishments with a response rate of 77 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to [www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm).

### **Metropolitan area definition**

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, dated November 2007.

The Boulder Metropolitan Statistical Area consists of Boulder County in Colorado.

### **Additional information**

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/ro7/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ro7/home.htm). If you have additional questions, contact the Mountain-Plains Economic Analysis and Information Office at 816-285-7000. 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.