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OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN LAFAYETTE, MAY 2011

Workers in the Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$18.43 in May 2011, about 15 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly higher than their respective national averages in 1 of the 22 major occupational groups: production. Eighteen groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including computer and mathematical, legal, and business and financial operations.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2011

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Lafayette	United States	Lafayette	Percent difference ¹
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$18.43 *	-15
Management	4.8	3.7 *	51.64	44.60 *	-14
Business and financial operations	4.8	NA	33.05	25.62 *	-22
Computer and mathematical	2.7	0.8 *	37.85	25.50 *	-33
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.4 *	37.08	31.14 *	-16
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.8	32.44	30.06 *	-7
Community and social service	1.5	1.3 *	21.07	17.89 *	-15
Legal	0.8	0.9	47.30	36.08 *	-24
Education, training, and library	6.6	4.2 *	24.46	NA	NA
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.6 *	25.89	17.76 *	-31
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	6.4 *	34.97	29.77 *	-15
Healthcare support	3.1	3.6 *	13.16	10.85 *	-18
Protective service	2.5	1.7 *	20.54	17.20 *	-16
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	8.9	10.30	9.36 *	-9
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	2.2 *	12.29	10.72 *	-13
Personal care and service	2.8	2.6	11.84	9.62 *	-19
Sales and related	10.6	12.3 *	18.04	15.27 *	-15
Office and administrative support	16.7	16.2	16.40	14.53 *	-11
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.0 *	11.68	NA	NA
Construction and extraction	3.9	6.6 *	21.46	18.23 *	-15
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	6.7 *	20.86	19.24 *	-8
Production	6.5	6.3	16.45	18.04 *	10
Transportation and material moving	6.7	8.7 *	15.96	16.68	5

NA: estimate is not available.

* 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.

¹ A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Lafayette is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 7 of the 22 occupational groups, including installation, maintenance, and repair; construction and extraction; and transportation and material moving. Conversely, eight groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including education, training, and library; computer and mathematical; and management. (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. Lafayette had 9,520 jobs in construction and extraction, accounting for 6.6 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 3.9-percent share nationally. However, at \$18.23 per hour, the local average hourly wage for this occupational group was measurably below the national average of \$21.46.

With employment of 1,330, oil, gas, and mining service unit operators was the largest occupation within the construction and extraction group, followed by oil and gas roustabouts (1,200), and first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers (850). Interestingly, the Lafayette area had the third-highest number of oil, gas, and mining service unit operators in the entire country, behind only the Houston and Midland areas in Texas. Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers and oil and gas rotary drill operators, with mean hourly wages of \$28.78 and \$24.48, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were carpenters' helpers (\$10.78) and extraction workers' helpers (\$10.79). (Detailed occupational data for construction and extraction are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of all detailed occupations go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29180.htm.)

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 Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the construction and extraction group. For instance, oil, gas, and mining service unit operators were employed at 25.2 times the national rate in Lafayette, and oil and gas roustabouts, at 20.6 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, electricians had a location quotient of 1.0 in Lafayette, 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 Louisiana Workforce Commission. 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 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 Lafayette 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 the national estimates. 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 2011 survey was 77.3 percent based on establishments and 73.3 percent based on employment. May 2011 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2011, November 2010, May 2010, November 2009, May 2009, and November 2008. The sample in the Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,972 establishments with a response rate of 73 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, see www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2011 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.

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.

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 **Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes Lafayette and St. Martin Parishes in Louisiana.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2011

Occupation ¹	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ²	Location quotient ³	Hourly	Annual ⁴
Construction and extraction occupations	9,520	1.7	\$18.23	\$37,920
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	850	1.6	28.78	59,860
Carpenters	520	0.8	18.44	38,360
Cement masons and concrete finishers	160	1.0	14.27	29,690
Construction laborers	810	0.9	11.34	23,590
Paving, surfacing, and tamping equipment operators	50	0.8	13.99	29,110
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	750	2.0	17.66	36,730
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	110	1.3	14.90	30,980
Electricians	580	1.0	22.30	46,380
Painters, construction and maintenance	400	1.9	19.53	40,630
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	440	1.1	19.11	39,740
Roofers	40	0.4	15.36	31,940
Structural iron and steel workers	80	1.3	17.24	35,850
Helpers-carpenters	130	2.8	10.78	22,420
Helpers-electricians	190	2.5	12.20	25,370
Helpers-pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	120	2.1	11.38	23,670
Construction and building inspectors	50	0.5	23.23	48,320
Construction and related workers, all other*	40	0.8	14.49	30,140
Derrick operators, oil and gas	360	16.2	21.38	44,470
Rotary drill operators, oil and gas	350	14.3	24.48	50,930
Service unit operators, oil, gas, and mining	1,330	25.2	18.30	38,070
Mining machine operators, all other	70	20.6	20.87	43,420
Roustabouts, oil and gas	1,200	20.6	15.77	32,800
Helpers-extraction workers	140	5.3	10.79	22,430
Extraction workers, all other	[5]	[5]	15.53	32,310

¹ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Lafayette MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29180.htm.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Estimates not available.

* Occupation titles followed by an asterisk (*) have similar titles, but not necessarily the same content as 2010 SOC occupations.