



NEWS RELEASE



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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN COLORADO – FOURTH QUARTER 2011 **Employment growth recorded in all of Colorado's large counties**

Employment rose in all nine large counties in Colorado from December 2010 to December 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2010 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that seven of these large counties reported employment growth exceeding the national average of 1.4 percent. Weld County led the state with a 4.3-percent gain and ranked 3rd among the 322 large counties in the nation. Also ranking in the top 100 counties nationwide were Arapahoe (3.3 percent, 20th), Douglas (2.9 percent, 30th), Boulder (2.6 percent, 38th), Larimer (2.5 percent, 42nd), Denver (2.2 percent, 63rd), and Jefferson (2.0 percent, 78th).

Nationally, employment increased in 266 of the 322 largest U.S. counties from December 2010 to December 2011. Kern, Calif., posted the largest percentage increase, with a gain of 5.3 percent over the year. Benton, Wash., experienced the largest over-the-year decrease in employment among the largest counties in the U.S. with a loss of 3.4 percent.

Among the nine largest counties in Colorado, employment was highest in Denver County (429,300) in December 2011. Three other counties—Arapahoe, El Paso, and Jefferson—had employment levels exceeding 200,000. Together, these nine large counties accounted for 79.0 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

Average weekly wages fell in all nine large counties in Colorado from the fourth quarter of 2010 to the fourth quarter of 2011. Wages in Douglas County were down 8.6 percent, the largest decrease among Colorado's large counties and well below the 1.7-percent decline for the nation. Denver County followed with a 4.8-percent loss in wages. Average weekly wages in the state's nine largest counties ranged from \$1,162 in Denver County to \$808 in Weld County. Wages in five of the large counties exceeded the national average of \$955. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000. Of these smaller counties, only Broomfield (\$1,207) and Rio Blanco (\$1,043) had average weekly wages above the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

All of Colorado's nine large counties recorded wage declines from the fourth quarter of 2010 to the fourth quarter of 2011, with four posting decreases below the national average of -1.7 percent. (See table 1.) As mentioned, Douglas County had the largest wage loss (-8.6 percent), placing 318th in the national ranking and Denver (-4.8 percent) ranked 305th. Also placing in the bottom half of the rankings was Jefferson County (-3.9 percent, 283rd). Larimer County's average weekly wage inched down 0.1 percent over the year, ranking it 38th. The counties of Boulder, Arapahoe, and Weld recorded decreases less than the national average and ranked in the top half nationwide.

Among the 322 largest counties, 282 had over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Olmsted, Minn., had the largest wage loss among the largest U.S. counties (-21.3 percent). In contrast, Tulsa, Okla., had the largest average weekly wage increase with a gain of 8.6 percent.

Large county average weekly wages

Five of the state's large counties had average weekly wages that were above the national average of \$955, placing them in the top 100 among the 322 largest counties in the United States in the fourth quarter of 2011. Denver County recorded the highest weekly wage at \$1,162 and ranked 30th followed by the counties of Boulder (\$1,114, 42nd), Arapahoe (\$1,108, 46th), Douglas (\$1,065, 56th), and Jefferson (\$976, 90th). The average weekly wages in Colorado's four other large counties ranged from \$808 to \$870.

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than average in 103 of the 322 largest U.S. counties. New York, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,889. Santa Clara, Calif., was second at \$1,836, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,668), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,599), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,597). Among the 219 large counties with an average weekly wage equal to or below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2011, Horry, S.C. (\$569) reported the lowest wage.

Average weekly wages in Colorado's smaller counties

Of the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000, only two counties—Broomfield (\$1,207) and Rio Blanco (\$1,043)—had average weekly wages above the national average of \$955. San Juan County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state with an average of \$445 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

When all 64 counties in Colorado were considered, 6 had wages above \$1,000. Five of these high-wage counties were concentrated in the vicinity of the major metropolitan areas of Denver and Boulder. (See chart 1.) Among the remaining Colorado counties, 2 had wages above \$900, 8 had wages from \$800 to \$899, 8 had wages from \$700 to \$799, 25 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, and 15 had wages under \$600. All but 4 of the counties with wages under \$600 were located in the southern portion of the state.

Additional statistics and other information

Quarterly 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 the QCEW Web site at 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 2010 edition of this publication, which was published in November 2011, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2011 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2010* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn10.htm. The 2011 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available later in 2012.

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 Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Mountain-Plains Information Office in Kansas City at (816) 285-7000.

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 9.2 million employer reports cover 131.1 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 Bureau's 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 9 largest counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2011 [2]

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage [3]			
	December 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2010-11 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [5]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2010-11 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]
United States [6]	131,254.2	1.4	--	\$955	--	-1.7	--
Colorado	2,250.1	2.1	--	975	13	-2.6	46
Adams, Colo.	156.3	1.2	130	860	179	-2.4	212
Arapahoe, Colo.	282.8	3.3	20	1,108	46	-1.4	121
Boulder, Colo.	158.8	2.6	38	1,114	42	-0.6	67
Denver, Colo.	429.3	2.2	63	1,162	30	-4.8	305
Douglas, Colo.	93.5	2.9	30	1,065	56	-8.6	318
El Paso, Colo.	236.5	1.0	156	870	165	-2.1	185
Jefferson, Colo.	208.0	2.0	78	976	90	-3.9	283
Larimer, Colo.	130.2	2.5	42	857	184	-0.1	38
Weld, Colo.	83.2	4.3	3	808	242	-1.5	126

[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 counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2011 [2]

Area	Employment December 2011	Average weekly wage [3]	Area	Employment December 2011	Average weekly wage [3]
United States [4]	131,254,162	\$955	Kiowa	509	\$597
Colorado	2,250,069	975	Kit Carson	2,967	610
Adams	156,268	860	Lake	2,048	651
Alamosa	7,598	623	La Plata	23,358	860
Arapahoe	282,785	1,108	Larimer	130,156	857
Archuleta	3,204	627	Las Animas	5,108	677
Baca	1,164	486	Lincoln	2,087	620
Bent	1,156	578	Logan	8,031	658
Boulder	158,757	1,114	Mesa	58,156	799
Broomfield	31,195	1,207	Mineral	511	539
Chaffee	6,215	622	Moffat	4,941	902
Cheyenne	774	744	Montezuma	8,774	633
Clear Creek	3,423	787	Montrose	13,238	693
Conejos	1,244	537	Morgan	12,279	709
Costilla	711	531	Otero	6,115	566
Crowley	1,150	666	Ouray	1,262	641
Custer	778	623	Park	2,092	624
Delta	8,429	667	Phillips	1,529	630
Denver	429,261	1,162	Pitkin	16,989	883
Dolores	411	531	Prowers	4,720	611
Douglas	93,486	1,065	Pueblo	56,866	726
Eagle	30,616	793	Rio Blanco	3,089	1,043
Elbert	2,959	688	Rio Grande	3,925	620
El Paso	236,480	870	Routt	14,176	811
Fremont	12,850	699	Saguache	1,470	602
Garfield	24,154	899	San Juan	249	445
Gilpin	5,297	722	San Miguel	5,028	706
Grand	7,057	577	Sedgwick	770	574
Gunnison	7,815	681	Summit	20,091	674
Hinsdale	238	480	Teller	6,625	636
Huerfano	1,687	548	Washington	1,149	593
Jackson	559	578	Weld	83,150	808
Jefferson	207,992	976	Yuma	3,925	679

[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.

Table 3. Covered [1] employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2011 [2]

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [3]			
	December 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2010-11	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2010-11	National ranking by percent change
United States [4]	131,254.2	1.4	\$955	--	-1.7	--
Alabama	1,828.3	0.2	832	31	-0.8	14
Alaska	311.3	1.6	982	11	-0.5	10
Arizona	2,458.4	1.7	882	21	-1.1	17
Arkansas	1,157.1	0.9	736	47	-1.2	19
California	14,731.8	1.3	1,100	6	-2.7	47
Colorado	2,250.1	2.1	975	13	-2.6	46
Connecticut	1,642.0	0.9	1,188	4	-3.1	49
Delaware	405.9	0.4	984	10	-1.6	26
District of Columbia	708.0	1.3	1,668	1	-1.2	19
Florida	7,364.1	1.4	847	29	-2.8	48
Georgia	3,826.9	1.0	885	20	-2.2	39
Hawaii	607.0	1.4	845	30	-1.5	23
Idaho	606.4	0.8	717	50	-2.2	39
Illinois	5,635.9	1.1	1,013	8	-2.1	35
Indiana	2,799.2	2.0	789	41	-1.9	32
Iowa	1,464.2	1.1	793	40	-0.8	14
Kansas	1,320.1	0.7	800	38	-1.5	23
Kentucky	1,770.2	1.3	786	42	-1.0	16
Louisiana	1,870.8	1.0	850	27	-1.7	28
Maine	580.9	0.4	755	46	-1.8	30
Maryland	2,516.4	1.1	1,058	7	-2.0	33
Massachusetts	3,230.8	1.3	1,192	3	-2.1	35
Michigan	3,911.8	2.4	933	18	-0.5	10
Minnesota	2,636.4	2.1	936	16	-3.9	51
Mississippi	1,083.8	0.3	699	51	-1.1	17
Missouri	2,617.0	0.8	825	32	-1.7	28
Montana	426.7	1.8	727	48	0.7	4
Nebraska	910.5	0.8	762	45	-1.3	21
Nevada	1,124.1	0.8	852	26	-3.2	50
New Hampshire	615.4	0.9	971	15	-0.7	13
New Jersey	3,811.6	0.6	1,138	5	-2.1	35
New Mexico	784.3	-0.3	799	39	-2.2	39
New York	8,618.4	1.4	1,197	2	-1.8	30
North Carolina	3,885.9	1.3	824	33	-2.0	33
North Dakota	397.0	7.6	871	23	7.7	1
Ohio	5,027.6	1.3	855	25	-1.3	21
Oklahoma	1,530.0	1.3	817	34	2.6	2
Oregon	1,629.8	1.2	850	27	-0.2	6
Pennsylvania	5,595.1	0.7	936	16	-1.6	26
Rhode Island	451.9	0.1	919	19	-2.1	35
South Carolina	1,796.1	1.3	763	44	-1.5	23
South Dakota	397.0	1.5	724	49	1.4	3
Tennessee	2,654.9	2.1	858	24	-2.3	42
Texas	10,607.9	2.4	973	14	-0.3	8
Utah	1,202.8	2.8	806	37	-2.5	45
Vermont	303.9	1.3	809	36	-0.5	10
Virginia	3,625.0	1.3	1,004	9	-2.4	43
Washington	2,843.6	1.4	979	12	-0.2	6
West Virginia	714.0	2.2	776	43	-0.3	8
Wisconsin	2,689.6	0.7	817	34	-2.4	43
Wyoming	276.9	2.3	876	22	0.6	5
Puerto Rico	960.9	0.1	552	[5]	-1.1	[5]
Virgin Islands	43.2	-4.0	772	[5]	-3.4	[5]

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

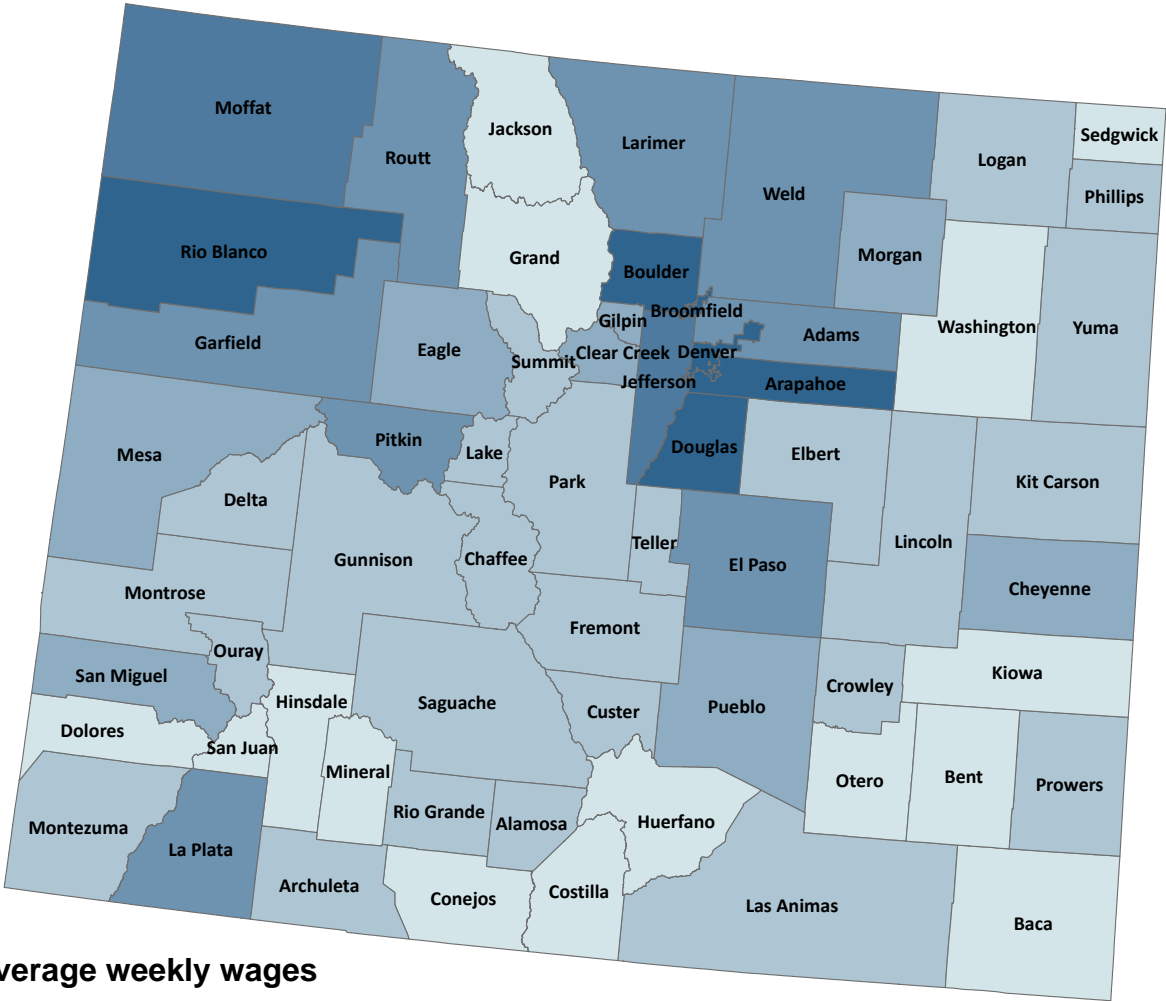
[2] Data are preliminary.

[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.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages for counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2011



Average weekly wages
(National average = \$955)

- Below \$600
- 600 - 699
- 700 - 799
- 800 - 899
- 900 - 999
- 1,000 or more