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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN NEW MEXICO – FOURTH QUARTER 2011

New Mexico's only large county, Bernalillo, reported an employment decline of 0.8 percent from December 2010 to December 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (See table 1. Large counties are those with 2010 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that Bernalillo was among 46 of the 322 large U.S. counties that recorded an employment decline from December 2010.

Nationally, employment advanced 1.4 percent from December 2010 to December 2011 as 266 of the 322 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Kern County, Calif., recorded the highest percentage increase in the country, up 5.3 percent over the year. Benton, Wash., registered the largest percentage employment decline among large counties, down 3.4 percent.

Employment in Bernalillo County stood at 310,200 in December 2011, accounting for 39.6 percent of total employment in New Mexico. Nationwide, the largest 322 counties made up 70.7 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 131.3 million in December 2011, up 1.8 million from December 2010. These large counties had a net gain of 1.2 million jobs over the year, accounting for 68.8 percent of the overall U.S. employment increase.

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo County decreased 2.7 percent from the fourth quarter of 2010 to the fourth quarter of 2011. This percentage change ranked Bernalillo 232nd among the largest U.S. counties. Over the year, 282 of the 322 largest counties registered decreases in average weekly wages. Olmsted County, Minn., had the largest wage loss, down 21.3 percent from the fourth quarter of 2010. Douglas County, Colo., was second with a wage decrease of 8.6 percent, followed by the counties of Williamson, Tenn. (-6.7 percent), Durham, N.C. (-6.5 percent), and St. Clair, Ill. (-6.2 percent).

Nationally, the average weekly wage decreased 1.7 percent over the year to \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011, marking one of only five nationwide declines for average weekly wages in the history of the series which dates back to 1978; smaller bonus payments in the fourth quarter of 2011 contributed to the decrease in the national average weekly wage.

Among the large counties, only 36 experienced over-the-year wage increases. Tulsa, Okla., had the largest wage increase with a gain of 8.6 percent. Harford, Md., had the second largest increase in average weekly wages, up 5.8 percent from the fourth quarter 2010, followed by Lake, Ohio (4.9 percent), Snohomish, Wash. (3.0 percent), and Westmoreland, Pa. (2.9 percent).

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo stood at \$829 in the fourth quarter of 2011, placing it 213th in the ranking for average wages. More than two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (219) reported weekly wages below the national average of \$955. Horry County, S.C. reported the lowest wage (\$569), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$597) and Hidalgo (\$601). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than one-third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, New York.

Nationally, 103 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011. 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).

Average weekly wages in New Mexico's smaller counties

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 32 counties in New Mexico with employment levels below 75,000. All but two of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the \$955 national average. The exceptions were Los Alamos County (\$1,534) and Eddy County (\$965). Three additional counties reported wage levels above the state's largest county, Bernalillo, and within 10 percent of the national average: Lea (\$941), Santa Fe (\$880), and San Juan (\$859). Guadalupe County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state at \$526 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

When all 33 counties in New Mexico were considered, 13 had wages averaging \$599 or less. Thirteen additional counties averaged wages from \$600 to \$749 per week, four reported wages from \$750 to \$899, and three had wages exceeding \$900. (See chart 1.) The counties with above average wages were concentrated around the metropolitan areas of Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Farmington, Hobbs, Los Alamos, and Santa Fe.

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 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.

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 131.3 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 largest county in New Mexico, 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	--
New Mexico	784.3	-0.3	--	799	39	-2.2	39
Bernalillo, N.M.	310.2	-0.8	305	829	213	-2.7	232

(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) 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 New Mexico, 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	Luna	6,966	\$636
New Mexico	784,280	799	McKinley	21,071	636
Bernalillo	310,191	829	Mora	699	611
Catron	587	545	Otero	17,045	661
Chaves	21,288	644	Quay	2,569	535
Cibola	7,726	669	Rio Arriba	9,391	609
Colfax	4,856	601	Roosevelt	6,362	584
Curry	16,926	623	Sandoval	29,201	810
De Baca	483	543	San Juan	49,322	859
Doña Ana	69,702	688	San Miguel	7,978	566
Eddy	25,490	965	Santa Fe	61,052	880
Grant	9,653	679	Sierra	3,154	534
Guadalupe	1,281	526	Socorro	5,363	661
Harding	185	544	Taos	10,528	586
Hidalgo	1,627	719	Torrance	2,997	562
Lea	29,462	941	Union	1,265	580
Lincoln	6,393	551	Valencia	14,554	560
Los Alamos	16,636	1,534			

(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.

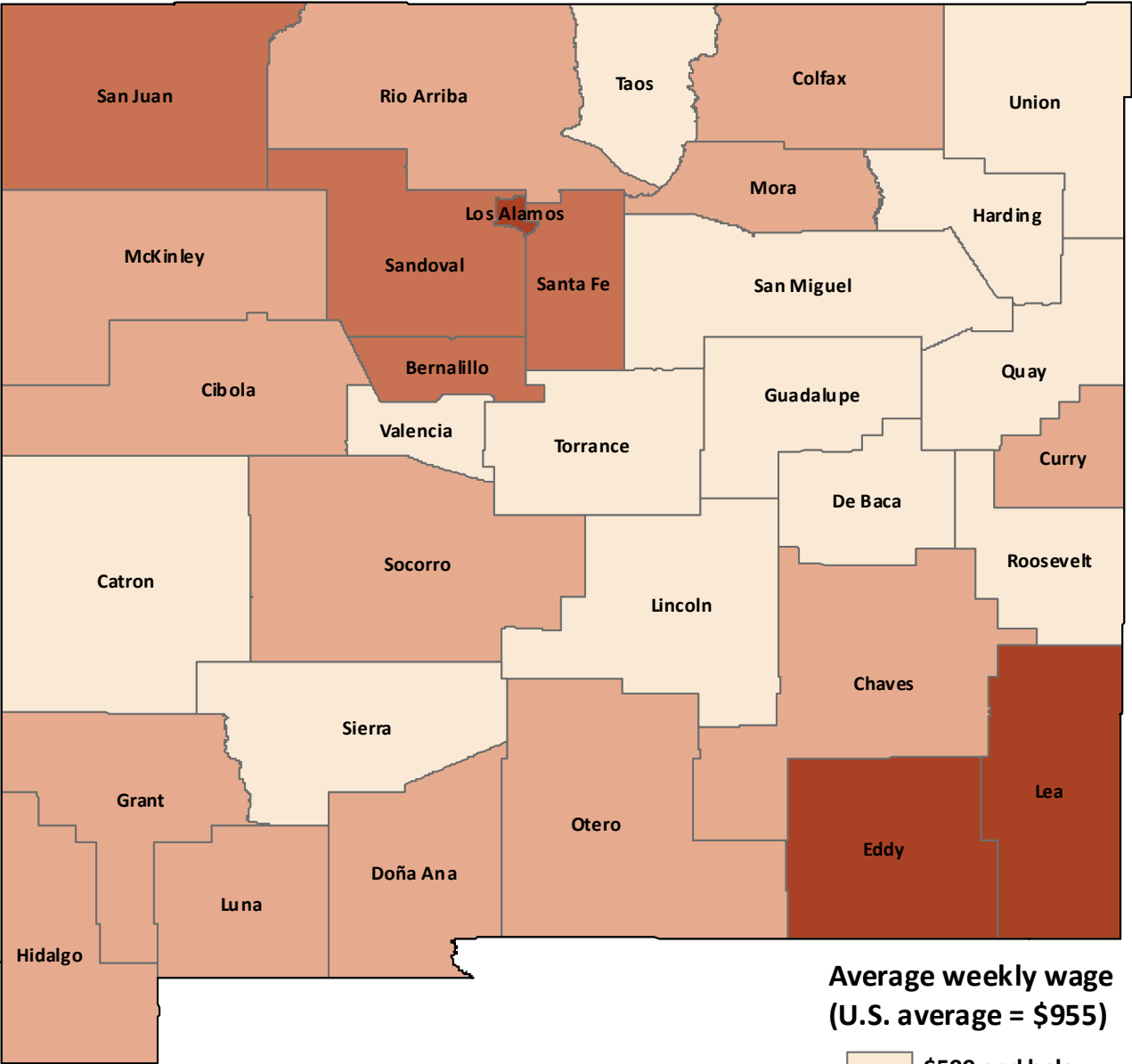
(2) Data are preliminary.

(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 by county in New Mexico, fourth quarter 2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics