



NEWS RELEASE



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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN NEBRASKA – FOURTH QUARTER 2011

The two largest counties in Nebraska reported employment gains from December 2010 to December 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2010 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Charlene Peiffer noted that employment rose 1.2 percent in Lancaster County and 0.1 percent in Douglas County, both lower than the national increase of 1.4 percent.

Among the two largest counties in Nebraska, employment was higher in Douglas (315,700) in December 2011. Lancaster County recorded an employment level of 156,200. Collectively, Nebraska's two large counties accounted for 51.8 percent of the state's employment. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Douglas County was \$858 in the fourth quarter of 2011, a decrease of 2.6 percent from the fourth quarter of 2010. Average weekly wages in Lancaster County were \$763, a 0.9-percent decrease from one year earlier. (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage fell 1.7 percent to \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties in Nebraska with employment below 75,000. All 91 smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average of \$955. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in Douglas County fell 2.6 percent, ranking it 224th among the nation's 322 largest counties. Lancaster County ranked 88th nationwide with a 0.9-percent decline in average weekly wages. (See table 1.)

Nationwide, 282 large counties experienced declines in average weekly wages. Olmsted, Minn., had the largest wage loss (-21.3 percent). Douglas, Colo., had the second largest decrease (-8.6 percent), followed by Williamson, Tenn. (-6.7 percent).

Among the 322 largest counties, 36 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2011. Tulsa, Okla., had the largest average weekly wage increase with a gain of 8.6 percent, followed by the counties of Harford, Md. (5.8 percent), Lake, Ohio (4.9 percent), Snohomish, Wash. (3.0 percent) and Westmoreland, Pa (2.9 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Douglas County's \$858 average weekly wage was below that of the nation, placing it near the middle of the national ranking at 182nd in the fourth quarter of 2011. Lancaster County ranked 278th in the nation with an average weekly wage of \$763.

Nationally, New York, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,889, followed by Santa Clara, Calif. (\$1,836), Washington, D.C. (\$1,668), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,599), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,597).

There were 219 large counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2011. Horry, S.C. (\$569), reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$597), Hidalgo, Texas (\$601), and Yakima, Wash. (\$648).

Average weekly wages in Nebraska's smaller counties

Among counties with employment below 75,000, Stanton (\$924) and Washington (\$922) had average weekly wages above those in the state's two largest counties. Stanton County also registered the highest average weekly wage of all 93 counties in the state. Arthur County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$375 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

As noted, none of the state's 93 counties reported wages above the national average of \$955. Nine counties reported average weekly wages under \$500, 27 reported wages from \$500 to \$599, 40 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 13 reported wages from \$700 to \$799, and 4 reported wages of \$800 or more. (See chart 1.)

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 the *Employment and Wages Annual 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.

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 covered 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.

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. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 2 largest counties in Nebraska, 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	National ranking by percent change (5)
United States (6)	131,254.2	1.4	--	\$955	--	-1.7	--
Nebraska	910.5	0.8	--	762	45	-1.3	21
Douglas, Neb.	315.7	0.1	256	858	182	-2.6	224
Lancaster, Neb.	156.2	1.2	130	763	278	-0.9	88

(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 Nebraska, 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			
Nebraska	910,466	762	Howard	1,423	\$554
Adams	14,551	680	Jefferson	3,362	607
Antelope	2,000	600	Johnson	1,641	631
Arthur	91	375	Kearney	2,243	622
Banner	169	674	Keith	3,135	578
Blaine	143	598	Keya Paha	134	440
Boone	2,314	622	Kimball	1,506	622
Box Butte	3,889	652	Knox	2,858	516
Boyd	591	460	Lancaster	156,188	763
Brown	1,215	562	Lincoln	14,486	661
Buffalo	25,830	682	Logan	206	559
Burt	1,798	615	Loup	111	409
Butler	2,570	625	Madison	20,812	678
Cass	4,795	658	McPherson	59	488
Cedar	2,652	674	Merrick	2,195	650
Chase	1,768	689	Morrill	1,466	675
Cherry	2,206	492	Nance	1,067	638
Cheyenne	5,643	755	Nemaha	3,251	856
Clay	2,505	774	Nuckolls	1,436	541
Colfax	4,845	672	Otoe	6,431	605
Cuming	3,744	720	Pawnee	835	615
Custer	4,017	643	Perkins	1,058	705
Dakota	11,814	688	Phelps	4,534	726
Dawes	3,268	557	Pierce	1,979	630
Dawson	10,927	634	Platte	18,884	731
Deuel	561	555	Polk	1,468	625
Dixon	1,856	573	Red Willow	5,240	635
Dodge	16,490	646	Richardson	2,423	535
Douglas	315,693	858	Rock	455	511
Dundy	623	648	Saline	6,808	706
Fillmore	2,252	653	Sarpy	60,855	754
Franklin	842	571	Saunders	4,676	605
Frontier	787	550	Scotts Bluff	17,005	664
Furnas	1,896	591	Seward	5,951	728
Gage	8,801	621	Sheridan	1,703	497
Garden	573	531	Sherman	801	500
Garfield	806	498	Sioux	164	517
Gosper	425	589	Stanton	1,429	924
Grant	263	522	Thayer	2,397	770
Greeley	638	529	Thomas	236	622
Hall	34,256	668	Thurston	2,860	752
Hamilton	3,105	741	Valley	1,723	570
Harlan	821	558	Washington	7,836	922
Hayes	216	540	Wayne	4,239	570
Hitchcock	708	613	Webster	1,006	534
Holt	4,429	604	Wheeler	311	582
Hooker	288	399	York	7,377	698

(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.

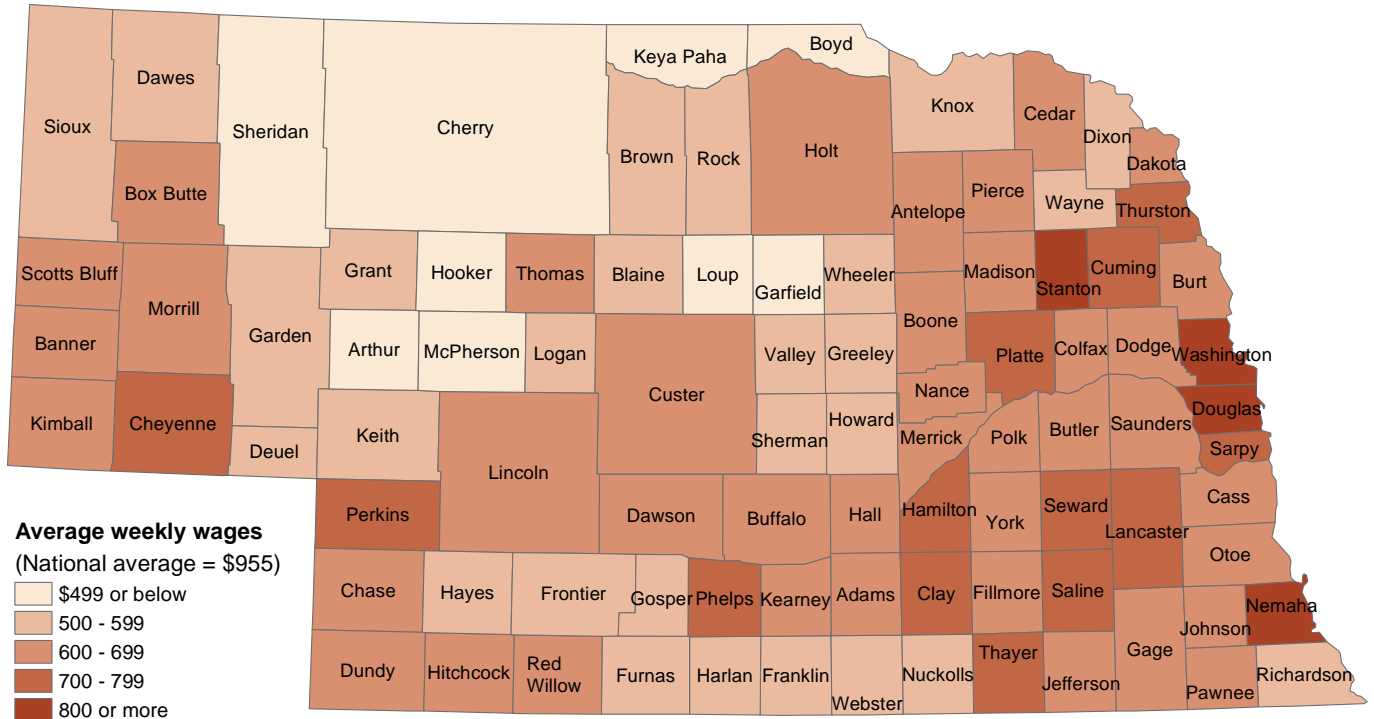
(2) Data are preliminary.

(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 Nebraska, fourth quarter 2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics