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OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN LAKE CHARLES, MAY 2011

Workers in the Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$17.68 in May 2011, about 19 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 2 of the 22 major occupational groups, including production workers. Sixteen groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including sales and related, business and financial operations, and management.

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Lake Charles		United States	Lake Charles	Percent difference ¹
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%		\$21.74	\$17.68 *	-19
Management	4.8	4.2 *		51.64	40.11 *	-22
Business and financial operations	4.8	2.3 *		33.05	24.52 *	-26
Computer and mathematical	2.7	0.5 *		37.85	26.11 *	-31
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.8		37.08	37.42	1
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.8		32.44	28.73 *	-11
Community and social service	1.5	1.3 *		21.07	19.62 *	-7
Legal	0.8	0.5 *		47.30	39.49	-17
Education, training, and library	6.6	6.0 *		24.46	19.47 *	-20
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.5 *		25.89	17.14 *	-34
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	6.3 *		34.97	27.21 *	-22
Healthcare support	3.1	3.4		13.16	10.80 *	-18
Protective service	2.5	3.0 *		20.54	19.10	-7
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	9.4		10.30	9.45 *	-8
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.4		12.29	9.70 *	-21
Personal care and service	2.8	4.1 *		11.84	10.52 *	-11
Sales and related	10.6	10.7		18.04	13.13 *	-27
Office and administrative support	16.7	14.4 *		16.40	13.53 *	-18
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.0 *		11.68	16.36 *	40
Construction and extraction	3.9	6.8 *		21.46	17.63 *	-18
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	5.8 *		20.86	19.95 *	-4
Production	6.5	7.3		16.45	21.24 *	29
Transportation and material moving	6.7	7.5 *		15.96	15.14	-5

* 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 Lake Charles 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 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including construction and extraction; installation, maintenance, and repair; and transportation and material moving. Conversely, nine groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including business and financial operations; office and administrative support; and computer and mathematical. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Lake Charles had 6,320 jobs in production, accounting for 7.3 percent of local area employment compared to the 6.5-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this group locally was \$21.24, nearly 30 percent higher than the national wage of \$16.45.

With employment of 1,010, petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers was the largest occupation within the production group, followed by chemical plant and system operators (890) and welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers (600). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers and petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers, with mean hourly wages of \$32.72 and \$29.86, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were laundry and dry-cleaning workers (\$8.99) and production workers' helpers (\$12.88). (Detailed occupational data for the production group are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of all detailed occupations go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29340.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 Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers were employed at 36.2 times the national rate in Lake Charles, second only to Beaumont-Port Arthur, Texas, among all U.S. metropolitan areas. Local chemical plant and system operators were employed at 32.5 times the U.S. average, also the second highest location quotient in the country, behind Victoria, Texas. On the other hand, water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators had a location quotient of 1.1 in Lake Charles, 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 Lake Charles 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 Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,322 establishments with a response rate of 71 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 **Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana.

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

Occupation ¹	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ²	Location quotient ³	Hourly	Annual ⁴
Production occupations	6,320	1.1	\$21.24	\$44,180
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	470	1.3	32.72	68,060
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	110	2.2	19.57	40,700
Team assemblers	[5]	[5]	13.25	27,550
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	60	0.3	13.42	27,910
Bakers	130	1.3	11.11	23,110
Butchers and meat cutters	60	0.7	13.51	28,100
Machinists	380	1.5	19.68	40,940
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	600	2.8	21.66	45,050
Printing press operators	50	0.4	12.98	27,000
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	180	1.3	8.99	18,700
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	80	1.1	17.10	35,570
Chemical plant and system operators	890	32.5	22.14	46,050
Gas plant operators	80	9.8	27.90	58,030
Petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers	1,010	36.2	29.86	62,100
Plant and system operators, all other	[5]	[5]	22.76	47,340
Chemical equipment operators and tenders	220	6.7	23.53	48,950
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	380	1.3	19.54	40,640
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	70	0.3	10.06	20,920
Helpers-production workers	150	0.5	12.88	26,780
Production workers, all other*	[5]	[5]	17.46	36,320

¹ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Lake Charles MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29340.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.