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**OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN  
MOUNT VERNON-ANACORTES, MAY 2011**

Workers in the Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.59 in May 2011, about 5 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly higher than their respective national averages in 10 of the 22 major occupational groups, including protective service, production, and construction and extraction. Eight groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including legal; life, physical, and social science; and management.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including sales and related, production, and construction and extraction. Conversely, six groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including computer and mathematical, management, and business and financial operations. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Mount Vernon	United States	Mount Vernon	Percent difference <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total, all occupations</b>	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$20.59 *	-5
Management	4.8	3.1 *	51.64	45.13 *	-13
Business and financial operations	4.8	3.2 *	33.05	30.61 *	-7
Computer and mathematical	2.7	0.8 *	37.85	33.31 *	-12
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.8	37.08	39.00	5
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	1.3 *	32.44	25.69 *	-21
Community and social service	1.5	1.9	21.07	20.06	-5
Legal	0.8	0.5 *	47.30	29.14 *	-38
Education, training, and library	6.6	6.8	24.46	21.92 *	-10
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.7 *	25.89	20.90 *	-19
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	6.0	34.97	36.08	3
Healthcare support	3.1	3.6	13.16	15.42 *	17
Protective service	2.5	1.6 *	20.54	24.06 *	17
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	9.9	10.30	11.94 *	16
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.6	12.29	13.63 *	11
Personal care and service	2.8	2.7	11.84	12.54	6
Sales and related	10.6	12.4 *	18.04	16.21 *	-10
Office and administrative support	16.7	15.8	16.40	17.00 *	4
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	1.0 *	11.68	14.87 *	27
Construction and extraction	3.9	4.9 *	21.46	24.29 *	13
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.8 *	20.86	21.98 *	5
Production	6.5	7.6 *	16.45	19.74 *	20
Transportation and material moving	6.7	6.2	15.96	17.45 *	9

\* 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.

<sup>1</sup> A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Mount Vernon is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Mount Vernon-Anacortes had 3,140 jobs in production, accounting for 7.6 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.5-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$19.74, measurably above the national wage of \$16.45.

With employment of 400, meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers was the largest occupation within the production group, followed by first-line supervisors of production and operating workers (240) and packaging and filling machine operators and tenders (140). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers, and water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators, with mean hourly wages of \$29.06 and \$27.04, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were packaging and filling machine operators and tenders (\$11.11) and sewing machine operators (\$11.68). (Detailed occupational data for production are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_34580.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_34580.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 Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, fiberglass laminators and fabricators were employed at 16.8 times the national rate in Mount Vernon, and meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers, at 7.4 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers had a location quotient of 1.0 in Mount Vernon, 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 Washington Employment Security Department. 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 Mount Vernon 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 Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area included 903 establishments with a response rate of 78 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to [www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm](http://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](http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm#Ques41).

### 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 **Mount Vernon-Anacortes, Wash. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Skagit County.

### Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/ro9/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ro9/home.htm). If you have additional questions, contact the San Francisco Economic Analysis and Information Unit at (415) 625-2270. 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. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2011**

Occupation <sup>[1]</sup>	Employment		Mean Wages	
	Level <sup>[2]</sup>	Location quotient <sup>[3]</sup>	Hourly	Annual <sup>[4]</sup>
Production occupations	3,140	1.2	\$19.74	\$41,070
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	240	1.3	29.06	60,450
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	40	1.6	22.06	45,870
Fiberglass laminators and fabricators	100	16.8	15.47	32,180
Team assemblers	130	0.4	13.95	29,010
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	110	1.3	20.65	42,940
Bakers	70	1.5	14.31	29,760
Butchers and meat cutters	60	1.4	18.04	37,530
Meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers	400	7.4	12.00	24,950
Computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic	70	1.7	18.08	37,610
Machinists	100	0.8	25.01	52,020
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	100	1.0	20.47	42,570
Sewing machine operators	40	1.0	11.68	24,300
Cabinetmakers and bench carpenters	50	1.7	18.96	39,440
Sawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, wood	80	6.5	19.82	41,220
Woodworking machine setters, operators, and tenders, except sawing	60	3.1	17.02	35,410
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	80	2.2	27.04	56,250
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	40	1.0	12.81	26,640
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	100	0.7	18.62	38,740
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	140	1.2	11.11	23,110
Coating, painting, and spraying machine setters, operators, and tenders	40	1.6	17.00	35,360
Photographic process workers and processing machine operators	*[5]	*[5]	12.90	26,830
Helpers--production workers	80	0.6	14.66	30,490
Production workers, all other	40	0.5	19.63	40,830

[1] For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Mount Vernon-Anacortes, see [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_34580.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_34580.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] Estimate not released.