

News

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics
PO Box 193766
San Francisco, CA 94119-3766



CONTACT:

Richard J. Holden (415) 625-2270

David Kong (415) 625-2284

Public Information Line (415) 625-2270

Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/ro9/ro9news.htm>

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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN OREGON FOURTH QUARTER 2007

The average weekly wage in Washington County increased 6.6 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the fourth quarter of 2007, the largest advance among Oregon's six large counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment. Multnomah County had the second largest wage growth in the State at 5.3 percent according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Washington County recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,007, followed by Multnomah County at \$915. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that these were the only large counties in the State that exhibited wage growth above the national rate of 4.2-percent and exceeded the \$898 national average weekly wage.

Among the six large counties in Oregon, Multnomah had the highest employment (458,100) and accounted for more than 26 percent of the State's workforce in December 2007. Jackson County (86,000) had the lowest employment. Three of the State's six large counties recorded employment growth greater than the national increase of 0.8 percent from December 2006 to December 2007.. In fact, two counties—Marion and Multnomah—had employment growth more than double the national increase. Two counties—Jackson and Washington—recorded employment declines.

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Washington (56th) and Multnomah (94th) Counties ranked in the top 100 among the 328 largest counties nationwide in average weekly wages. As mentioned, both counties exceeded the national average of \$898. Although Clackamas County's (\$816) wage was less than that for the nation, it fell in the middle of the ranking at 171st.

At the other end of the wage spectrum, Jackson (\$651/319th) reported the lowest average weekly wage in the State and tenth lowest in the nation, followed by Lane (\$693/297th) and Marion (\$694/295th). These three counties all fell in the bottom quartile of the nationwide ranking.

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 106 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,862. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,700, followed by Fairfield, Conn. (\$1,575), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,546), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,529).

Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco, all in California), 3 were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), and 3 more were located in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

There were 222 counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2007. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$555), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$562), Horry, S.C. (\$582), Webb, Texas (\$590) and Yakima, Wash. (\$596). The average weekly wage in the lowest-paid county, Cameron, was less than one-third the wage in the highest-paid county, New York.

Wage Changes in Large Counties

Two of Oregon's six large counties, Washington (6.6 percent/25th) and Multnomah (5.3 percent/59th), recorded wage growth above the U.S. average of 4.2 percent and placed in the top quartile of the national ranking. (See table 1.) Jackson County's 4.0 percent growth ranked 137th. The remaining three counties had wage growth that was less than that of the nation-- Marion (3.6 percent/164th), Lane (3.1 percent/207th), and Clackamas (2.9 percent/223rd).

Among the nation's largest counties, Pulaski County, Ark., led in average weekly wage growth, with an increase of 26.2 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006. Williamson County, Texas, was second with growth of 16.5 percent, followed by the counties of Lake, Ill. (15.6 percent), Douglas, Colo. (12.6 percent), and Westmoreland, Pa. (9.8 percent).

Nationally, eight large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. The largest decreases were recorded in the counties of Rockingham N.H. (-12.4 percent), Trumbull, Ohio (-7.2 percent), Sedgwick, Kan. (-4.1 percent) and Lake, Fla. (-3.9 percent).

State Average Weekly Wages

The weekly wage in Oregon averaged \$798 in the fourth quarter of 2007, \$100 below the national level, ranking 26th highest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The five highest wage levels in the nation were the District of Columbia (\$1,506), New York (\$1,152), Connecticut (\$1,149), Massachusetts (\$1,133), and New Jersey (\$1,092). (See table 2.) Average weekly wages in these states were 21 percent or more above that for the nation. The states with the lowest average wages were South Dakota (\$647), Mississippi (\$654), and Montana (\$659).

Oregon experienced wage growth of 4.6 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the fourth quarter of 2007, ranking 22nd in the nation. The five highest over-the-year wage gains were recorded by Arkansas (9.2 percent), North Dakota (7.3 percent), Wyoming (7.1 percent), Nevada (6.7 percent), and Oklahoma (6.2 percent). New Hampshire was the only state to experience an over-the-year decline in wages, down 0.3 percent. The smallest wage gains among the states were registered in Idaho (2.1 percent) and Michigan (2.5 percent).

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 9.1 million employer reports cover 137.0 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 (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2006 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2007 version of this news release. As with the 2005 edition, this edition includes the data on a CD for enhanced access and usability with the printed booklet containing selected graphic representation of QCEW data; the data tables themselves are published exclusively in electronic formats as PDF. The 2006 bulletin is available in a PDF on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm>.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm.

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 Western Information Office at 415-625-2270 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. PT.

TECHNICAL NOTE

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 6 largest counties in Oregon fourth quarter 2007(2)

| Area | Employment | | Average Weekly Wage (3) | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | December 2007 (thousands) | Percent change, December 2006-07(5) | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level (4) | Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07 (5) | National ranking by percent change (4) |
| United States (6) | 137,027.3 | 0.8 | \$898 | -- | 4.2 | -- |
| Oregon | 1,740.5 | 0.9 | 798 | 26 | 4.6 | 22 |
| Clackamas, Ore. | 152.5 | 1.4 | 816 | 171 | 2.9 | 223 |
| Jackson, Ore. | 86.0 | -0.6 | 651 | 319 | 4.0 | 137 |
| Lane, Ore. | 152.6 | 0.3 | 693 | 297 | 3.1 | 207 |
| Marion, Ore. | 139.1 | 1.8 | 694 | 295 | 3.6 | 164 |
| Multnomah, Ore. | 458.1 | 2.4 | 915 | 94 | 5.3 | 59 |
| Washington, Ore. | 253.2 | -0.2 | 1,007 | 56 | 6.6 | 25 |

(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) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(5) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(7) Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2007(2)

| State | Employment | | Average weekly wage (3) | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | December 2007 (thousand) | Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07(4) | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level | Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07(4) | National ranking by percent change |
| United States (4) | 137,027.3 | 0.8 | \$898 | - | 4.2 | - |
| Alabama | 1,971.0 | 1.2 | 762 | 33 | 3.3 | 39 |
| Alaska | 299.4 | 1.0 | 877 | 16 | 4.9 | 15 |
| Arizona | 2,693.3 | -0.1 | 827 | 22 | 2.6 | 46 |
| Arkansas | 1,187.6 | 0.7 | 712 | 44 | 9.2 | 1 |
| California | 15,794.7 | 0.8 | 1,035 | 6 | 4.8 | 18 |
| Colorado | 2,329.9 | 2.0 | 927 | 9 | 5.7 | 7 |
| Connecticut | 1,717.8 | 0.7 | 1,149 | 3 | 4.5 | 26 |
| Delaware | 428.8 | 0.3 | 926 | 10 | 3.3 | 39 |
| District of Columbia | 681.6 | 0.7 | 1,506 | 1 | 5.8 | 6 |
| Florida | 8,024.3 | -1.3 | 810 | 25 | 2.8 | 43 |
| Georgia | 4,111.5 | 0.6 | 835 | 21 | 2.8 | 43 |
| Hawaii | 637.2 | 0.7 | 793 | 28 | 4.1 | 29 |
| Idaho | 660.2 | 1.7 | 686 | 47 | 2.1 | 50 |
| Illinois | 5,933.0 | 0.6 | 975 | 8 | 5.1 | 13 |
| Indiana | 2,929.1 | 0.1 | 745 | 35 | 3.0 | 42 |
| Iowa | 1,498.5 | 0.7 | 732 | 39 | 4.9 | 15 |
| Kansas | 1,372.7 | 1.2 | 745 | 35 | 2.6 | 46 |
| Kentucky | 1,830.5 | 0.8 | 732 | 39 | 3.4 | 38 |
| Louisiana | 1,903.1 | 2.3 | 783 | 29 | 4.7 | 20 |
| Maine | 608.8 | 0.8 | 707 | 45 | 4.1 | 29 |
| Maryland | 2,580.1 | 0.4 | 986 | 7 | 4.7 | 20 |
| Massachusetts | 3,270.9 | 0.7 | 1,133 | 4 | 5.4 | 8 |
| Michigan | 4,194.9 | -1.2 | 873 | 17 | 2.5 | 49 |
| Minnesota | 2,708.7 | 0.8 | 883 | 15 | 5.1 | 13 |
| Mississippi | 1,148.9 | 0.7 | 654 | 50 | 3.8 | 34 |
| Missouri | 2,746.2 | 0.3 | 780 | 30 | 5.3 | 11 |
| Montana | 440.4 | 2.1 | 659 | 49 | 5.4 | 8 |
| Nebraska | 925.2 | 1.3 | 723 | 41 | 5.2 | 12 |
| Nevada | 1,290.8 | 0.4 | 872 | 19 | 6.7 | 4 |
| New Hampshire | 638.8 | 0.3 | 914 | 12 | -0.3 | 51 |
| New Jersey | 4,027.4 | 0.2 | 1,092 | 5 | 3.5 | 36 |
| New Mexico | 831.7 | 1.1 | 738 | 38 | 4.8 | 18 |
| New York | 8,762.7 | 1.4 | 1,152 | 2 | 4.2 | 27 |
| North Carolina | 4,127.7 | 1.5 | 777 | 31 | 3.5 | 36 |
| North Dakota | 347.7 | 2.0 | 690 | 46 | 7.3 | 2 |
| Ohio | 5,336.8 | -0.2 | 795 | 27 | 2.8 | 43 |
| Oklahoma | 1,556.1 | 1.3 | 721 | 42 | 6.2 | 5 |
| Oregon | 1,740.5 | 0.9 | 798 | 26 | 4.6 | 22 |
| Pennsylvania | 5,712.8 | 0.5 | 873 | 17 | 4.2 | 27 |
| Rhode Island | 480.9 | -1.5 | 838 | 20 | 2.6 | 46 |
| South Carolina | 1,904.0 | 1.0 | 716 | 43 | 4.1 | 29 |
| South Dakota | 393.5 | 1.7 | 647 | 51 | 5.4 | 8 |
| Tennessee | 2,790.3 | 0.9 | 813 | 24 | 4.0 | 33 |
| Texas | 10,460.8 | 3.0 | 911 | 13 | 4.6 | 22 |
| Utah | 1,241.8 | 2.8 | 758 | 34 | 4.6 | 22 |
| Vermont | 309.1 | -0.2 | 743 | 37 | 4.9 | 15 |
| Virginia | 3,709.0 | 0.7 | 921 | 11 | 3.8 | 34 |
| Washington | 2,936.0 | 2.6 | 885 | 14 | 4.6 | 22 |
| West Virginia | 716.8 | 0.4 | 683 | 48 | 4.1 | 29 |
| Wisconsin | 2,803.9 | 0.3 | 769 | 32 | 3.1 | 41 |
| Wyoming | 279.6 | 3.0 | 815 | 23 | 7.1 | 3 |
| Puerto Rico | 1,055.2 | -1.4 | 517 | (5) | 4.4 | (5) |
| Virgin Islands | 46.0 | 0.6 | 738 | (5) | 3.9 | (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.