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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN CALIFORNIA - FOURTH QUARTER 2011

Employment rose in 24 of the 26 large counties in California 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 Richard J. Holden noted that Kern County posted the largest employment increase, 5.3 percent, followed by San Francisco County at 3.3 percent.

Nationally, employment grew 1.4 percent during this 12-month period, as 266 of the 322 large U.S. counties gained jobs. Kern County's 5.3-percent employment gain was not only the largest in California, but in the nation as well. Benton, Wash., had the largest employment decrease in the United States, 3.4 percent.

Among the large counties in California, Los Angeles County had the highest number of employed, 3,953,700. Orange and San Diego were the only other counties with employment levels above 1,000,000. Together, the 26 large counties in California accounted for 92.7 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 322 large counties made up 70.7 percent of total employment, which stood at 131.1 million in December 2011.

Average weekly wages decreased in 24 of the 26 large California counties from the fourth quarter 2010 to the fourth quarter 2011. Santa Clara County recorded the largest decline, 5.7 percent, but still had the highest average weekly wage in the state at \$1,836. Nationally, the average weekly wage decreased 1.7 percent over the year to \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 32 counties in California with employment below 75,000. Average weekly wages in these counties ranged from \$921 in Napa to \$626 in Mariposa during the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

Large County Wage Changes

The vast majority of the large California counties experienced over-the-year wage declines from the fourth quarter of 2010 and all but 7 of the 24 had decreases that were greater than the national average. The remaining two counties, San Francisco and San Mateo, had wage gains of 0.8 and 0.1 percent, respectively, which ranked 24th and 36th highest nationally.

Nationwide, 282 large counties recorded decreases in average weekly wages over the year. Olmsted, Minn., had the largest wage loss among the largest U.S. counties (-21.3 percent) from the fourth quarter of 2010. The next largest declines were reported in Douglas, Colo. (-8.6 percent), Williamson, Tenn. (-6.7 percent), and Durham, N.C. (-6.5 percent).

Of the 322 largest U.S. counties, 36 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Tulsa, Okla., had the largest average weekly wage increase with a gain of 8.6 percent from the fourth quarter of 2010. Harford, Md., had the second largest increase in average weekly wages (5.8 percent) followed by Lake, Ohio (4.9 percent), Snohomish, Wash. (3.0 percent), and Westmoreland, Pa. (2.9 percent).

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Santa Clara County's \$1,836 weekly wage placed 2nd among the 322 largest counties in the nation during the fourth quarter of 2011. Santa Clara was followed by San Francisco (\$1,597, 5th), San Mateo (\$1,556, 8th), Alameda (\$1,212, 23rd), and Marin (\$1,181, 27th). All five counties are located in the San Francisco Bay area. At the other end of the wage spectrum, Tulare County's \$669 weekly wage ranked 319th.

Across the country, 103 large counties registered weekly wages at or 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, followed by the counties of Washington, D.C. (\$1,668), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,599), and San Francisco, Calif.

Slightly over two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (219) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage (\$569), followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$597), Hidalgo, Texas (\$601), Yakima, Wash. (\$648), and Lake, Fla. (\$649).

Average Weekly Wages in California's Smaller Counties

All 32 counties in California with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$955. (See table 2.)

When all 58 counties in California were considered, 10 counties, all with employment above 75,000, had an average weekly wage of \$1,000 or more. Six counties had average weekly wages from \$900 to \$999. Ten counties reported average weekly wages from \$800 to \$899, 18 had wages from \$700 to \$799, and 14 had wages below \$700.

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 <http://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 Online, 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 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.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 26 largest counties in California, 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	--
California	14,731.8	1.3	--	1,100	6	-2.7	47
Alameda, Calif.	641.2	1.6	97	1,212	23	-3.8	280
Contra Costa, Calif.	319.5	0.7	191	1,139	37	-2.9	240
Fresno, Calif.	329.2	0.6	205	751	287	-1.8	157
Kern, Calif.	285.2	5.3	1	826	226	-0.8	80
Los Angeles, Calif.	3,953.7	0.7	191	1,124	40	-3.2	258
Marin, Calif.	105.1	2.3	52	1,181	27	-1.1	105
Monterey, Calif.	147.5	2.1	70	799	252	-2.9	240
Orange, Calif.	1,390.2	0.6	205	1,080	52	-3.1	254
Placer, Calif.	128.0	2.1	70	935	120	-2.7	232
Riverside, Calif.	565.1	0.6	205	759	285	-1.6	137
Sacramento, Calif.	575.4	-0.2	283	1,042	60	-1.4	121
San Bernardino, Calif.	609.6	0.2	248	811	240	-1.6	137
San Diego, Calif.	1,264.2	1.0	156	1,041	61	-3.6	275
San Francisco, Calif.	572.3	3.3	20	1,597	5	0.8	24
San Joaquin, Calif.	200.0	0.9	172	799	252	-3.0	247
San Luis Obispo, Calif.	100.0	1.1	144	798	255	-2.0	176
San Mateo, Calif.	333.9	2.5	42	1,556	8	0.1	36
Santa Barbara, Calif.	173.6	2.5	42	894	150	-2.6	224
Santa Clara, Calif.	883.0	2.3	52	1,836	2	-5.7	313
Santa Cruz, Calif.	86.1	-0.9	306	860	179	-0.2	45
Solano, Calif.	120.7	0.5	222	925	128	-3.6	275
Sonoma, Calif.	177.9	0.6	205	895	149	-3.0	247
Stanislaus, Calif.	158.2	0.7	191	775	269	-2.1	185
Tulare, Calif.	140.4	0.9	172	669	315	-0.6	67
Ventura, Calif.	301.5	0.6	205	954	104	-3.1	254
Yolo, Calif.	87.7	0.8	179	922	130	-4.9	307

(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.

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

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in California, fourth quarter 2011 (2)

Area	Employment December 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)
United States (4)	131,254,162	\$955
California	14,731,774	1,100
Alameda	641,247	1,212
Alpine	869	901
Amador	11,024	741
Butte	70,057	723
Calaveras	7,452	683
Colusa	7,957	711
Contra Costa	319,530	1,139
Del Norte	7,963	681
El Dorado	47,682	809
Fresno	329,197	751
Glenn	7,980	706
Humboldt	45,361	684
Imperial	58,502	702
Inyo	7,392	763
Kern	285,164	826
Kings	40,402	751
Lake	13,270	683
Lassen	10,154	868
Los Angeles	3,953,706	1,124
Madera	45,534	729
Marin	105,121	1,181
Mariposa	4,982	626
Mendocino	28,745	699
Merced	68,481	687
Modoc	2,495	651
Mono	7,108	667
Monterey	147,466	799
Napa	63,102	921
Nevada	28,487	802
Orange	1,390,190	1,080
Placer	128,012	935
Plumas	5,476	750
Riverside	565,146	759
Sacramento	575,375	1,042
San Benito	12,715	774
San Bernardino	609,608	811
San Diego	1,264,226	1,041
San Francisco	572,265	1,597

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in California, fourth quarter 2011 (2)-cont.

San Joaquin	200,029	\$799
San Luis Obispo	99,968	798
San Mateo	333,940	1,556
Santa Barbara	173,627	894
Santa Clara	883,045	1,836
Santa Cruz	86,051	860
Shasta	58,988	748
Sierra	651	805
Siskiyou	12,273	658
Solano	120,711	925
Sonoma	177,921	895
Stanislaus	158,207	775
Sutter	25,596	696
Tehama	15,994	682
Trinity	2,448	683
Tulare	140,416	669
Tuolumne	15,880	762
Ventura	301,519	954
Yolo	87,733	922
Yuba	15,835	827

Footnotes

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and

(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

[SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#)

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.

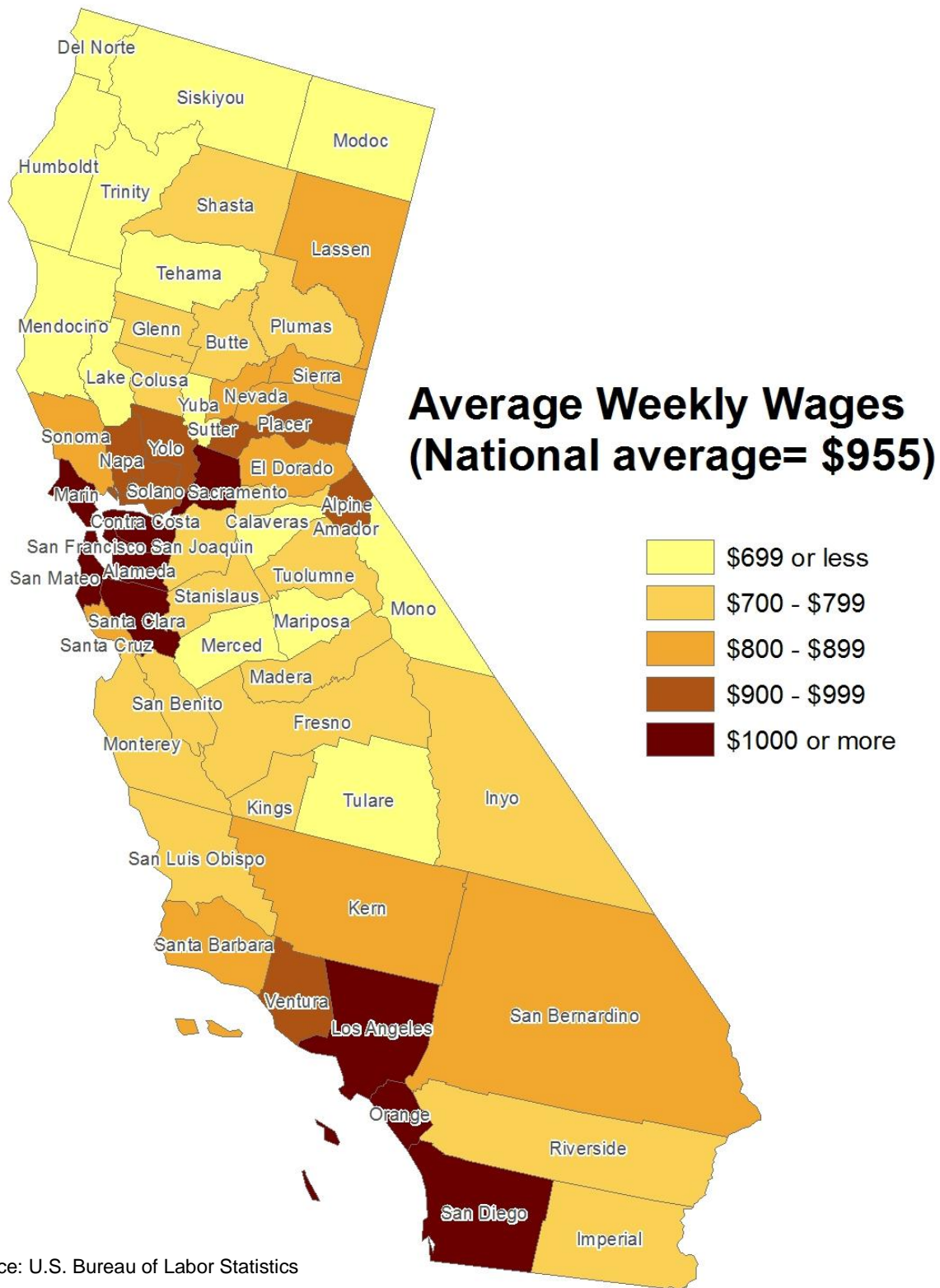
[2] Data are preliminary.

[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 California, fourth quarter 2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics