

NEWS

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS



SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL OFFICE
61 FORSYTH STREET, SW, RM 7T50
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-3104
TELEPHONE: 404-893-4222

Media Contact: Karen Ransom
(404) 893-4220

Internet address: www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm

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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN KENTUCKY: FIRST QUARTER 2008

The average weekly wage in Boone County increased 2.2 percent from the first quarter of 2007 to the first quarter of 2008, the largest advance among Kentucky's 3 counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2007 annual average employment. Wages in the remaining two large counties, Fayette County and Jefferson County, increased by 0.8 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively. Jefferson County had the highest average weekly wage at \$849, compared to Fayette County (\$767) and Boone County (\$751). (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that wages in all three of Kentucky's large counties were below the \$905 national average in the first quarter of 2008.

Nationally, there were 334 large counties, of which 241 had average weekly wages below the U.S. average in the first quarter of 2008. Although Jefferson County's wage was lower than the national average, it placed in the top half of the national rankings at 131st. The average weekly wages for Fayette County (\$767, 204th) and Boone County (\$751, 220th) placed them in the bottom half of the national rankings.

Among the three largest counties in Kentucky, employment was highest in Jefferson County (426,600) and lowest in Boone County (74,400). Boone County recorded an employment gain of 2.2 percent from March 2007 to March 2008. Jefferson County's 0.8-percent employment growth was close to the 0.4-percent national average. Fayette County was the only large county in Kentucky to record a decline (-0.4 percent) in employment.

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 92 of the largest 334 U.S. counties. New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$2,805. Fairfield, Conn., ranked second with an average weekly wage of \$1,905, followed by Somerset, N.J. (\$1,765), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,708), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,639). Four of the top 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., Somerset, N.J., and Hudson, N.J.); 3 were located in or around the San Francisco metropolitan area (San Francisco, Santa Clara, and San Mateo, all in California); and 2 were located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Washington, D.C.

and Arlington, Va. Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

There were 241 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the first quarter of 2008. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$523), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$532), Horry, S.C. (\$534), Webb, Texas (\$554), and Yakima, Wash. (\$587).

Wage Changes in Large Counties

While none of Kentucky's large counties recorded wage growth above the national average of 2.4 percent in the first quarter of 2008, Boone County was close at 2.2 percent. As mentioned, Fayette County's wage growth was 0.8 percent, closely followed by Jefferson at 0.7 percent. All three of Kentucky's large counties ranked in the bottom half in wage growth among the nation's 334 counties.

Among the largest counties, Westmoreland, Pa., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 14.9 percent from the first quarter of 2007. Williamson, Texas, was second with 10.8-percent wage growth, followed by the counties of Somerset, N.J. (9.0 percent), San Luis Obispo, Calif. (8.3 percent), and Jefferson, Texas (7.9 percent).

Thirty-four counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. The five largest decreases in wages occurred in the counties of Trumbull, Ohio (-17.2 percent), Saginaw, Mich. (-4.4 percent), Rockingham, N.H. (-3.9 percent), Fairfield, Conn. (-3.8 percent), and Mecklenburg, N.C. (-3.4 percent).

State Average Weekly Wages

The average weekly wage in Kentucky grew 2.4 percent from the first quarter of 2007 to the first quarter of 2008, ranking it 34th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The average weekly wage in Kentucky, (\$714, 39th) was 21.0 percent below the \$905 national average, but was higher than neighboring West Virginia (\$679, 45th). Kentucky was lower than neighboring Illinois (\$980, 8th), Virginia (\$918, 11th), Ohio (\$798, 23rd), Missouri (\$768, 29th), Tennessee (\$761, 31st), and Indiana (\$757, 33rd). Twelve states had lower average weekly wages than Kentucky. The five highest wage levels in the U.S. were in the District of Columbia (\$1,488), New York (\$1,399), Connecticut (\$1,254), Massachusetts (\$1,143), and New Jersey (\$1,133).

Wyoming led the United States in over-the-year wage growth with a gain of 6.7 percent. North Dakota was second with 6.2 percent wage growth, followed by South Dakota (5.2 percent) and Louisiana (4.8 percent). Connecticut (-0.6 percent) was the only state to experience an over-the-year decline in their average weekly wage. (See table 2.)

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 134.8 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 the Business Employment dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2007 version of this news release. 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 will be published exclusively in electronic PDF formats at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.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 (QCEW) Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Southeast Information Office at 404-893-4222 from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. and 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. ET. This release is available on the Atlanta BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm.

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 3 largest counties in Kentucky, first quarter 2008(2)

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	March 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2007-08(5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, first quarter 2007-08 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	134,761.1	0.4	\$905	--	2.4	--
Kentucky	1,794.0	0.1	714	39	2.4	34
Boone, Ky.	74.4	2.2	751	220	2.2	199
Fayette, Ky.	174.3	-0.4	767	204	0.8	263
Jefferson, Ky.	426.6	0.3	849	131	0.7	267

(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 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, first quarter 2008(2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	March 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	34,761.1	0.4	\$905	-	2.4	-
Alabama	1,947.0	-0.2	740	34	3.2	27
Alaska	303.0	1.0	866	16	4.2	11
Arizona	2,639.7	-1.3	820	22	2.4	34
Arkansas	1,178.4	-0.1	667	46	4.1	12
California	15,561.5	0.1	1,008	6	2.1	41
Colorado	2,300.0	1.7	920	10	3.6	16
Connecticut	1,683.9	1.2	1,254	3	-0.6	51
Delaware	418.4	0.5	987	7	0.1	49
District of Columbia	680.8	1.1	1,488	1	4.3	9
Florida	7,918.6	-2.2	777	26	1.8	43
Georgia	4,060.9	0.1	847	20	1.3	44
Hawaii	628.1	0.2	773	28	3.5	19
Idaho	645.3	0.2	635	48	0.3	48
Illinois	5,796.1	0.1	980	8	2.6	33
Indiana	2,858.7	-0.7	757	33	2.4	34
Iowa	1,469.8	0.9	710	40	3.6	16
Kansas	1,363.2	1.0	737	35	2.4	34
Kentucky	1,794.0	0.1	714	39	2.4	34
Louisiana	1,887.3	1.3	765	30	4.8	4
Maine	584.1	0.5	701	42	3.5	19
Maryland	2,530.3	0.0	963	9	2.8	31
Massachusetts	3,203.1	0.9	1,143	4	3.3	23
Michigan	4,058.8	-1.8	857	18	0.9	47
Minnesota	2,644.8	0.6	908	12	4.0	13
Mississippi	1,138.2	0.8	634	49	3.3	23
Missouri	2,708.0	0.0	768	29	3.5	19
Montana	432.4	0.9	625	51	4.3	9
Nebraska	912.2	1.4	687	44	3.2	27
Nevada	1,266.3	-1.2	839	21	4.7	5
New Hampshire	621.2	0.3	863	17	3.4	22
New Jersey	3,939.9	0.5	1,133	5	3.3	23
New Mexico	823.8	0.6	717	38	4.7	5
New York	8,555.0	1.3	1,399	2	0.1	49
North Carolina	4,069.1	0.9	788	24	1.3	44
North Dakota	343.3	2.6	652	47	6.2	2
Ohio	5,189.1	-1.0	798	23	1.0	46
Oklahoma	1,560.0	1.6	707	41	4.7	5
Oregon	1,713.1	0.3	776	27	2.9	30
Pennsylvania	5,608.8	0.5	869	15	2.4	34
Rhode Island	464.8	-1.5	851	19	2.3	39
South Carolina	1,888.3	0.1	695	43	2.8	31
South Dakota	389.4	2.0	632	50	5.2	3
Tennessee	2,746.4	0.6	761	31	3.3	23
Texas	10,420.8	2.8	903	13	3.6	16
Utah	1,220.2	1.4	718	37	3.2	27
Vermont	300.8	-0.3	735	36	4.4	8
Virginia	3,653.5	0.2	918	11	2.0	42
Washington	2,928.6	2.1	899	14	3.7	15
West Virginia	700.3	0.3	679	45	4.0	13
Wisconsin	2,734.3	0.2	760	32	2.2	40
Wyoming	277.2	2.9	779	25	6.7	1
Puerto Rico	1,004.5	-1.6	489	(5)	2.7	(5)
Virgin Islands	46.5	1.1	708	(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.