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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN WASHINGTON - THIRD QUARTER 2011

Employment rose in 8 of the 10 large counties in Washington from September 2010 to September 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 Snohomish County posted the largest employment increase, 4.0 percent, followed by King County (2.8 percent) and Whatcom County (2.3 percent).

Nationally, employment grew 1.6 percent during this 12-month period, as 271 of the 322 large U.S. counties gained jobs. Williamson, Tenn., experienced the largest percentage increase in employment in the nation, up 5.4 percent. Frederick, Md., had the largest employment decrease, 2.6 percent.

Among the large counties in Washington, King County reported the largest employment (1,150,700). Pierce and Snohomish Counties both had employment levels above 200,000. Together, the 10 large counties in Washington accounted for 84.2 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.5 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 130.5 million in September 2011.

Average weekly wages increased over the year in all 10 large Washington counties. Kitsap County recorded the largest gain, 9.0 percent. King County had the highest average weekly wage in the state at \$1,323. Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 5.3 percent over the year to \$916 in the third quarter of 2011. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 29 counties in Washington with employment below 75,000. Average weekly wages in these counties ranged from \$776 to \$476 during the third quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

Large County Wage Changes

Kitsap County's 9.0-percent wage gain ranked 9th nationally and King County's 7.3-percent wage advance placed 36th. Of the 322 largest U.S. counties, 315 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Lake, Ohio, led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 17.1 percent from the third quarter of 2010. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with a gain of 11.7 percent, followed by the counties of Oklahoma, Okla. (11.5 percent), Williamson, Texas (10.2 percent), and Sacramento, Calif. (9.8 percent).

Nationwide, three large counties recorded decreases in average weekly wages over the year. Clay, Mo., had the largest decrease in wages with a decline of 2.3 percent from the third quarter of 2010. Smaller declines were reported in Alachua, Fla. (-0.8 percent) and Leon, Fla. (-0.1 percent).

Large County Average Weekly Wages

King County's \$1,323 weekly wage placed 12th among the 322 largest counties in the third quarter of 2011. Benton (\$991) and Snohomish (\$987) Counties placed 67th and 68th, respectively. Conversely, Yakima County's \$619 weekly wage ranked 319th and placed in the bottom tenth.

Nationwide, 109 large counties registered weekly wages at or above the U.S. average of \$916 in the third quarter of 2011. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,857. New York, N.Y., was second at \$1,647, followed by the counties of Arlington, Va. (\$1,550), Washington, D.C. (\$1,527), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,457).

Nearly two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (212) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage (\$561), followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$591), Hidalgo, Texas (\$602), Yakima, Wash. (\$619), and Webb, Texas (\$629).

Average Weekly Wages in Washington's Smaller Counties

All of the 29 counties in Washington with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$916. (See table 2.)

When all 39 counties in Washington were considered, 7 counties, all within the large county group, had an average weekly wage of \$800 or more. Ten counties had average weekly wages from \$700 to \$799. Eighteen counties reported average weekly wages from \$600 to \$699, and 4 had wages below \$600.

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.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the West Information Office in San Francisco at 415-625-2270.

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 9.1 million employer reports covered 130.5 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 ten large counties in Washington, third quarter 2011 (2)

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	September 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2010-11 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (5)	Percent change, third quarter 2010-11 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)
United States (6)	130,524.7	1.6	--	\$916	--	5.3	--
Washington	2,905.4	1.7	--	1,011	8	6.1	7
Benton, Wash.	82.9	1.1	167	991	67	2.9	280
Clark, Wash.	129.1	1.5	134	836	184	4.1	220
King, Wash.	1,150.7	2.8	48	1,323	12	7.3	36
Kitsap, Wash.	81.2	0.6	216	894	127	9.0	9
Pierce, Wash.	263.5	0.0	272	841	179	3.2	267
Snohomish, Wash.	250.7	4.0	11	987	68	5.3	125
Spokane, Wash.	199.4	0.7	212	782	246	6.3	65
Thurston, Wash.	96.4	0.1	268	849	168	4.7	177
Whatcom, Wash.	80.7	2.3	72	756	269	4.0	224
Yakima, Wash.	110.8	-0.4	296	619	319	3.3	262

(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 Washington, third quarter 2011 (2)

Area	Employment September 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)
United States (4)	130,524,677	\$916
Washington	2,905,380	1,011
Adams	7,943	623
Asotin	5,641	593
Benton	82,878	991
Chelan	42,933	624
Clallam	22,424	676
Clark	129,125	836
Columbia	1,280	714
Cowlitz	36,005	776
Douglas	11,640	547
Ferry	1,673	673
Franklin	32,729	648
Garfield	901	707
Grant	39,680	634
Grays Harbor	22,956	684
Island	14,735	675
Jefferson	7,981	645
King	1,150,678	1,323
Kitsap	81,158	894
Kittitas	14,074	638
Klickitat	7,665	754
Lewis	23,486	685
Lincoln	3,082	612
Mason	13,023	672
Okanogan	19,938	476
Pacific	5,925	606
Pend Oreille	3,018	743
Pierce	263,453	841
San Juan	5,681	594
Skagit	46,631	736
Skamania	2,295	619
Snohomish	250,669	987
Spokane	199,406	782
Stevens	9,829	647
Thurston	96,442	849
Wahkiakum	743	614
Walla Walla	27,303	700
Whatcom	80,696	756
Whitman	17,389	728
Yakima	110,799	619

Footnotes

(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.

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

Table 3. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, third quarter 2011 (2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	September 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2010-11	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2010-11	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	130,524.7	1.6	\$916	--	5.3	--
Alabama	1,823.2	0.5	803	33	3.7	48
Alaska	341.5	2.1	963	10	4.0	42
Arizona	2,391.6	2.1	860	21	4.9	27
Arkansas	1,151.0	0.4	715	47	4.5	36
California	14,686.3	1.5	1,051	6	6.8	3
Colorado	2,234.4	2.3	948	13	5.6	13
Connecticut	1,626.5	0.9	1,118	2	4.7	31
Delaware	406.1	0.2	949	12	5.4	19
District of Columbia	708.1	2.1	1,527	1	3.9	45
Florida	7,167.5	1.7	812	30	4.2	40
Georgia	3,799.6	1.3	867	20	5.3	20
Hawaii	593.6	1.2	836	23	4.0	42
Idaho	623.8	1.1	697	48	4.7	31
Illinois	5,629.1	1.6	958	11	4.6	35
Indiana	2,797.5	2.1	785	35	5.8	9
Iowa	1,466.9	1.6	760	42	5.6	13
Kansas	1,311.7	1.1	772	40	5.6	13
Kentucky	1,757.4	1.7	764	41	4.8	28
Louisiana	1,852.3	0.9	821	27	3.9	45
Maine	595.6	0.9	734	46	2.9	51
Maryland	2,497.6	1.1	1,023	7	5.9	8
Massachusetts	3,227.8	1.8	1,114	3	4.1	41
Michigan	3,920.5	2.4	876	18	4.4	37
Minnesota	2,642.8	2.5	916	15	4.8	28
Mississippi	1,081.3	0.1	681	51	4.4	37
Missouri	2,610.3	0.6	804	32	5.2	24
Montana	433.9	1.3	687	49	6.2	4
Nebraska	905.0	0.5	747	43	5.7	11
Nevada	1,122.0	1.3	845	22	3.8	47
New Hampshire	613.2	0.7	903	17	5.6	13
New Jersey	3,774.1	0.6	1,069	5	4.3	39
New Mexico	788.7	0.4	779	37	4.7	31
New York	8,511.6	1.7	1,099	4	4.0	42
North Carolina	3,863.6	1.3	809	31	5.3	20
North Dakota	390.8	6.7	820	28	12.9	1
Ohio	5,015.3	1.4	834	25	5.6	13
Oklahoma	1,518.5	1.8	785	35	8.3	2
Oregon	1,645.0	1.4	835	24	5.7	11
Pennsylvania	5,550.9	0.9	912	16	6.2	4
Rhode Island	456.8	0.3	871	19	5.3	20
South Carolina	1,789.9	1.4	746	44	4.8	28
South Dakota	398.9	1.3	684	50	3.6	49
Tennessee	2,631.4	2.1	819	29	5.3	20
Texas	10,480.4	2.7	931	14	6.2	4
Utah	1,192.9	2.9	779	37	5.1	25
Vermont	297.0	0.8	778	39	3.3	50
Virginia	3,602.5	1.6	974	9	4.7	31
Washington	2,905.4	1.7	1,011	8	6.1	7
West Virginia	710.8	1.6	742	45	5.8	9
Wisconsin	2,697.9	1.4	792	34	5.6	13
Wyoming	284.0	1.6	832	26	5.1	25
Puerto Rico	910.3	-0.2	506	(5)	1.2	(5)
Virgin Islands	42.7	-1.5	718	(5)	-5.2	(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.

Average Weekly Wages Third Quarter 2011

National Average = \$916
State Average = \$1,011

