

SOUTHWEST INFORMATION OFFICE
Dallas, Texas

For release: Monday, April 9, 2012

12-587-DAL

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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN TEXAS – THIRD QUARTER 2011

Employment rose in 22 of the 23 largest counties in Texas from September 2010 to September 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2010 annual average employment; comparable data for Brazos County were unavailable.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that three Texas counties ranked in the top ten for job growth nationwide. Montgomery County's 4.8-percent gain led the state and tied for the 2nd fastest growth in the nation. Also sharing top-ten national rankings were the Texas counties of Webb (4.4 percent, tied for 5th) and Fort Bend (4.2 percent, tied for 8th). (See table 1.)

Employment nationwide advanced 1.6 percent from September 2010 as 271 of the 322 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Williamson, Tenn., recorded the fastest rate of employment growth in the country, up 5.4 percent, while Frederick, Md., registered the largest decline, down 2.6 percent.

Among the largest counties in Texas, employment was highest in Harris County (2,054,100) in September 2011, followed by Dallas County (1,448,700). Three other counties, Tarrant, Bexar, and Travis, had employment levels exceeding 500,000. Together, the 23 largest Texas counties accounted for 77.8 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.5 percent of total U.S. employment.

Williamson County, Texas, recorded the fastest growth in average weekly wages among the state's largest counties with a gain of 10.2 percent from the third quarter of 2010 to the third quarter of 2011. (See table 1.) Among large Texas counties, Harris had the highest average weekly wage in the third quarter 2011 at \$1,156 per week, followed by Dallas at \$1,102. Nationally, average weekly wages rose 5.3 percent over the year to \$916.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 231 counties in Texas with employment levels below 75,000. Among these smaller counties, 92 percent (212) had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Fifteen of Texas's 23 large counties recorded wage growth above the 5.3-percent national increase from the third quarter of 2010 to the third quarter of 2011. (See table 1.) Williamson County's 10.2-percent wage increase was the highest in the state and placed 4th in the national ranking. Five additional Texas counties registered wage growth ranking in the top 50 nationally: Brazos (8.3 percent, 16th); Galveston (7.7 percent, 27th); Brazoria (7.4 percent, 32nd); Nueces (6.8 percent, 48th); and Denton (6.7 percent, 50th). The slowest wage increase among the state's largest counties was in Bell County at 1.7 percent (309th). No large county in Texas recorded an over-the-year decline.

Among the 322 largest U.S. counties, 315 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Lake County, Ohio, had the largest increase in average weekly wages in the third quarter of 2011 with a gain of 17.1 percent. Within Lake, the manufacturing industry had the largest impact on the county's over-the-year increase in average weekly wages. Santa Clara, Calif. was second with wage growth of 11.7 percent, closely followed by Oklahoma, Okla. (11.5 percent). Clay, Mo., experienced the largest decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 2.3 percent over the year.

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 4 of the 23 large Texas counties were at least 10 percent above the national average of \$916 per week in the third quarter of 2011. Harris County led at \$1,156 per week and ranked 21st among the 322 large counties nationwide. Harris was followed by Dallas (\$1,102, 36th), Collin (\$1,038, 48th), and Travis (\$1,010, 60th). Four additional Texas counties – Williamson, Fort Bend, Jefferson, and Tarrant – reported average weekly wages slightly above the U.S. average.

Texas also had three of the five lowest-paying large counties in the United States, all located along the border with Mexico: Cameron (\$591, 321st), Hidalgo (\$602, 320th), and Webb (\$629, 318th). Other lower-ranking areas on the national large county list included El Paso, also situated along the border with Mexico (\$671, 312th), and two counties which are home to large universities, Lubbock (\$703, 305th) and Brazos (\$719, tied for 296th).

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average in 109 of the largest counties in the country. 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 Arlington, Va. (\$1,550), Washington, D.C. (\$1,527), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,457).

Of the largest counties in the United States, 212, or nearly two-thirds, reported average weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2011. The lowest wage was reported in Horry, S.C., at \$561 per week. Joining the Texas counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Webb among the bottom five was Yakima, Wash. (\$619). Wages in these five lowest-ranked counties were one-third or less of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif.

Average weekly wages in Texas' smaller counties

Nineteen of the 231 smaller counties in Texas – those with employment below 75,000 – reported average weekly wages equal to or above the national average of \$916. Three of these smaller counties had wages that not only exceeded \$1,000 per week, but also were the highest in the state: Carson (\$1,466), Sutton (\$1,198), and Kenedy (\$1,167). Real County registered the lowest weekly wage, averaging \$427 in the third quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

When all 254 counties in Texas were considered, all but 27 had wages below the national average. Fifty-seven reported average weekly wages under \$600, 83 registered wages from \$600 to \$699, 48 had wages from \$700 to \$799, 37 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 29 had wages of \$900 or more per week. (See chart 1.) The counties with above average wages were generally concentrated around the metropolitan areas of Austin, Amarillo, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Midland, and Odessa. The lower-paid counties, those with wages under \$550, were generally located in the agricultural areas of central Texas and the Texas Panhandle, as well as along the Texas-Mexico border.

Additional Statistics and Other Information

QCEW 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 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 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 news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2010* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn10.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 Southwest Information Office at 972-850-4800 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT.

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 23 largest counties in Texas, 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	--
Texas	10,480.4	2.7	--	931	14	6.2	4
Bell, Texas	107.4	1.8	109	758	265	1.7	309
Bexar, Texas	734.7	2.0	92	823	196	5.8	90
Brazoria, Texas	90.2	3.7	13	899	124	7.4	32
Brazos, Texas	86.1	(7)	--	719	296	8.3	16
Cameron, Texas	125.7	1.1	167	591	321	5.5	109
Collin, Texas	296.6	3.6	17	1,038	48	4.2	214
Dallas, Texas	1,448.7	2.7	54	1,102	36	6.4	59
Denton, Texas	179.5	2.9	42	814	204	6.7	50
El Paso, Texas	274.9	1.2	158	671	312	5.5	109
Fort Bend, Texas	137.1	4.2	8	926	100	5.1	139
Galveston, Texas	95.2	1.9	100	844	173	7.7	27
Harris, Texas	2,054.1	3.1	34	1,156	21	6.3	65
Hidalgo, Texas	222.3	2.1	83	602	320	4.5	192
Jefferson, Texas	123.6	3.6	17	919	105	5.0	147
Lubbock, Texas	123.8	1.0	177	703	305	5.9	86
McLennan, Texas	101.0	0.4	236	756	269	4.0	224
Montgomery, Texas	135.1	4.8	2	869	151	6.2	69
Nueces, Texas	153.4	0.8	204	797	232	6.8	48
Smith, Texas	92.1	0.4	236	788	236	2.9	280
Tarrant, Texas	766.3	3.1	34	917	107	3.6	249
Travis, Texas	583.3	3.3	26	1,010	60	5.4	118
Webb, Texas	89.2	4.4	5	629	318	5.5	109
Williamson, Texas	129.1	2.6	60	933	93	10.2	4

(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 Texas, third quarter 2011 (2)

Area	Employment September 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)	Area	Employment September 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)
United States (4)	130,524,677	\$916	Concho	863	\$610
Texas	10,480,400	931	Cooke	16,349	840
Anderson	18,063	792	Coryell	15,108	689
Andrews	5,996	1,021	Cottle	425	627
Angelina	35,296	700	Crane	1,556	1,086
Aransas	5,586	609	Crockett	1,449	669
Archer	1,942	633	Crosby	1,432	574
Armstrong	380	569	Culberson	1,107	550
Atascosa	9,980	711	Dallam	3,901	719
Austin	10,675	834	Dallas	1,448,712	1,102
Bailey	2,702	604	Dawson	4,333	656
Bandera	2,878	551	De Witt	7,001	654
Bastrop	13,781	666	Deaf Smith	7,318	680
Baylor	1,408	556	Delta	1,349	466
Bee	8,881	675	Denton	179,519	814
Bell	107,379	758	Dickens	459	621
Bexar	734,689	823	Dimmit	4,486	868
Blanco	2,599	723	Donley	1,047	496
Borden	178	509	Duval	3,237	775
Bosque	3,515	627	Eastland	7,384	744
Bowie	42,486	715	Ector	65,639	966
Brazoria	90,188	899	Edwards	376	627
Brazos	86,135	719	El Paso	274,889	671
Brewster	4,534	647	Ellis	39,011	729
Briscoe	352	483	Erath	15,167	576
Brooks	2,523	732	Falls	3,240	581
Brown	14,932	621	Fannin	6,523	670
Burleson	4,022	802	Fayette	8,654	701
Burnet	12,505	691	Fisher	841	599
Caldwell	7,439	637	Floyd	1,761	585
Calhoun	10,038	1,058	Foard	351	449
Callahan	2,065	614	Fort Bend	137,131	926
Cameron	125,665	591	Franklin	2,951	661
Camp	4,271	608	Freestone	5,891	753
Carson	4,898	1,466	Frio	5,134	633
Cass	7,529	649	Gaines	5,305	816
Castro	2,644	589	Galveston	95,233	844
Chambers	10,710	927	Garza	1,818	702
Cherokee	14,962	596	Gillespie	9,191	608
Childress	2,431	548	Glasscock	389	591
Clay	1,480	597	Goliad	1,487	627
Cochran	724	662	Gonzales	6,519	626
Coke	715	507	Gray	8,848	856
Coleman	2,194	533	Grayson	42,299	729
Collin	296,594	1,038	Gregg	76,742	841
Collingsworth	786	593	Grimes	7,861	819
Colorado	6,831	675	Guadalupe	29,988	723
Comal	41,807	690	Hale	14,435	635
Comanche	3,603	582	Hall	867	508

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, third quarter 2011 (2)
(continued)

Area	Employment September 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)	Area	Employment September 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)
Hamilton	2,642	\$590	Liberty	16,661	\$728
Hansford	1,989	738	Limestone	8,078	633
Hardeman	1,194	584	Lipscomb	1,266	652
Hardin	12,129	681	Live Oak	3,789	776
Harris	2,054,122	1,156	Llano	4,161	614
Harrison	23,539	862	Loving	53	608
Hartley	1,823	630	Lubbock	123,787	703
Haskell	2,039	599	Lynn	1,287	575
Hays	50,721	658	Madison	4,212	596
Hemphill	2,264	874	Marion	1,788	534
Henderson	16,000	612	Martin	1,463	735
Hidalgo	222,258	602	Mason	1,070	514
Hill	9,120	605	Matagorda	10,388	843
Hockley	9,254	832	Maverick	16,739	555
Hood	13,429	671	McCulloch	3,243	757
Hopkins	11,861	677	McLennan	101,038	756
Houston	6,337	757	McMullen	407	808
Howard	12,114	786	Medina	8,278	579
Hudspeth	1,158	903	Menard	447	453
Hunt	27,595	855	Midland	75,015	1,032
Hutchinson	8,750	940	Milam	5,554	756
Irion	546	811	Mills	1,342	537
Jack	2,795	881	Mitchell	2,400	773
Jackson	5,455	710	Montague	5,100	648
Jasper	10,358	684	Montgomery	135,097	869
Jeff Davis	947	584	Moore	10,354	726
Jefferson	123,582	919	Morris	4,431	957
Jim Hogg	2,020	695	Motley	349	485
Jim Wells	19,545	871	Nacogdoches	22,874	649
Johnson	41,228	738	Navarro	16,235	646
Jones	3,824	607	Newton	1,653	580
Karnes	3,722	677	Nolan	6,114	682
Kaufman	25,948	695	Nueces	153,364	797
Kendall	11,349	735	Ochiltree	4,827	840
Kenedy	402	1,167	Oldham	745	682
Kent	283	553	Orange	22,076	837
Kerr	16,747	685	Palo Pinto	8,460	755
Kimble	1,277	517	Panola	9,843	813
King	144	1,063	Parker	27,379	759
Kinney	795	707	Parmer	5,239	670
Kleberg	12,920	694	Pecos	6,183	853
Knox	1,263	790	Polk	10,602	659
La Salle	2,298	969	Potter	74,648	783
Lamar	19,227	704	Presidio	2,392	696
Lamb	4,294	627	Rains	1,580	544
Lampasas	4,620	582	Randall	29,156	620
Lavaca	5,891	617	Reagan	2,042	940
Lee	6,477	859	Real	687	427
Leon	5,419	810	Red River	2,618	550

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, third quarter 2011 (2) (continued)

Area	Employment September 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)	Area	Employment September 2011	Average Weekly Wage (3)
Reeves	3,960	\$667	Titus	15,851	\$654
Refugio	2,384	724	Tom Green	44,608	696
Roberts	232	590	Travis	583,311	1,010
Robertson	3,737	733	Trinity	2,264	573
Rockwall	21,463	693	Tyler	3,803	596
Runnels	2,858	596	Upshur	6,687	639
Rusk	13,405	816	Upton	1,523	895
Sabine	1,971	865	Uvalde	9,509	574
San Augustine	1,589	694	Val Verde	16,875	650
San Jacinto	2,118	593	Van Zandt	9,528	600
San Patricio	18,170	807	Victoria	37,529	774
San Saba	1,652	559	Walker	23,064	648
Schleicher	906	812	Waller	13,799	818
Scurry	6,953	871	Ward	4,003	974
Shackelford	1,310	907	Washington	14,633	715
Shelby	8,371	622	Webb	89,197	629
Sherman	916	632	Wharton	14,551	662
Smith	92,105	788	Wheeler	2,231	710
Somervell	3,891	972	Wichita	52,636	690
Starr	13,819	526	Wilbarger	6,599	624
Stephens	3,344	690	Willacy	3,699	607
Sterling	509	814	Williamson	129,139	933
Stonewall	555	632	Wilson	6,666	573
Sutton	2,325	1,198	Winkler	2,487	958
Swisher	1,989	577	Wise	20,420	860
Tarrant	766,344	917	Wood	9,067	623
Taylor	57,171	691	Yoakum	4,112	1,009
Terrell	366	756	Young	6,647	707
Terry	3,791	728	Zapata	4,361	919
Throckmorton	459	530	Zavala	2,836	488

(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.

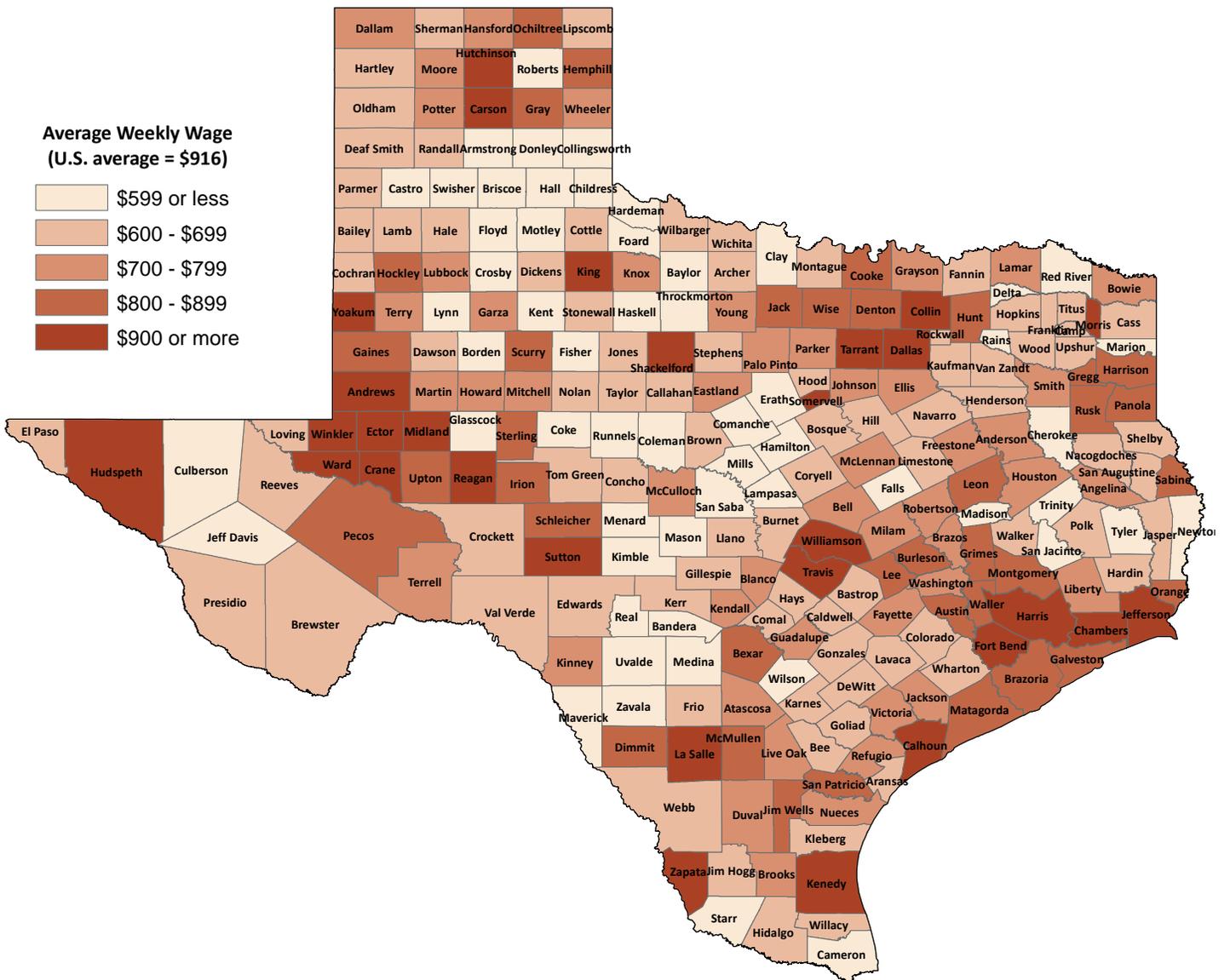
(2) Data are preliminary.

(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.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Texas, third quarter 2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics