



For Release: Monday, October 19, 2015

15-2046-PHI

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County Employment and Wages in Virginia – First Quarter 2015 **Average Wage Increase in Richmond City Ranked 29th in the Nation**

Nine of the 12 largest counties in Virginia registered employment increases from March 2014 to March 2015, 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 2014 annual average employment.) Henrico County had the fastest employment increase at 2.9 percent, followed by Chesterfield County at 1.8 percent. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that only Henrico's employment growth rate ranked in the upper half of the nation's 342 largest counties. Chesapeake, Newport News, and Norfolk Cities recorded the only employment declines among the states' largest counties.

Nationally, employment grew 2.1 percent during this 12-month period, as 323 of the 342 large counties nationwide gained jobs. Utah County, Utah, experienced the largest percentage increase in employment, up 6.7 percent over the year. Atlantic, N.J., had the largest employment decrease with a loss of 4.3 percent.

Among the 12 largest counties in Virginia, employment was highest in Fairfax (574,542) in March 2015. No other county in the Commonwealth had employment above 200,000. Together, Virginia's large counties accounted for 56.2 percent of total employment within the Commonwealth. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.3 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Richmond City, Va., rose 4.5 percent from the first quarter of 2014 to the first quarter of 2015, the fastest increase among Virginia's 12 largest counties. Newport News City had the second-fastest rate of wage growth at 4.3 percent. Arlington County had the highest average weekly wage among the largest counties in the Commonwealth at \$1,732, followed by Fairfax County (\$1,635) and Alexandria City (\$1,395). (See [table 1](#).) Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 2.1 percent over the year to \$1,048 in the first quarter of 2015.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 121 counties in Virginia with employment below 75,000. All but 6 (Goochland, Surry, King George, Manassas City, Falls Church City, and Rappahannock) of these 121 counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

From the first quarter of 2014 to the first quarter of 2015, 11 of the 12 large counties in Virginia recorded wage increases. Among the 4 counties with wage gains greater than the national increase of 2.1 percent, 2 ranked in the top 50 largest U.S. counties for wage change—Richmond City (4.5 percent, 29th) and Newport News City (4.3 percent, 34th). Seven other counties recorded over-the-year increases in average weekly wages ranging from 1.8 to 0.2 percent. Wages in Prince William County declined slightly, down 0.1 percent, and ranked 304th.

Of the 342 largest counties nationwide, 297 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Olmsted, Minn., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 11.7 percent from the first quarter of 2014. Washington, Pa., was second with a gain of 10.7 percent.

Nationwide, 39 large counties recorded decreases in average weekly wages over the year. Snohomish, Wash., had the largest decrease in wages with a decline of 4.8 percent from the first quarter of 2014. Chester, Pa., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages (-4.0 percent), followed by Williamson, Texas (-3.1 percent); Saginaw, Mich. (-2.4 percent); and Palm Beach, Fla. (-2.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Arlington County had the 10th highest average weekly wage among the 342 large U.S. counties. Fairfax County ranked 11th while Alexandria City (22nd) and Loudoun County (44th) also ranked in the top 50 nationwide. Additionally, Richmond City and Henrico County recorded average weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$1,048.

In Virginia Beach City and Chesapeake City, average weekly wages placed in the bottom fifth of the national ranking at 299th and 309th, respectively.

Average weekly wages in Virginia's smaller counties

All but 6 of the 121 counties in Virginia with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,048. Patrick County reported the lowest wage level at \$495. The highest wage among Virginia's 121 small counties was Goochland County (\$2,011), followed by Surry (\$1,487) and King George (\$1,485). (See [table 2](#).)

When all 133 counties in Virginia were considered, 121 had wages below the national average of \$1,048. Two counties—Patrick and Highland—reported average weekly wages below \$500, 66 reported wages from \$501 to \$700, 41 had wages from \$701 to \$900, 13 had wages from \$901 to \$1,100, and 11 had wages above \$1,101. (See [chart 1](#)).

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 <https://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 2013 edition of this publication, which is now available, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well data through the first quarter 2014 version of the national news release and the 2013 annual averages.

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 9.4 million employer reports cover 134.6 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 Bureau's 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 employment and wages in the United States and the 12 largest counties in Virginia, first quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾			
	March 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2014-15 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, first quarter 2014-15 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	137,412.4	2.1	--	\$1,048	--	2.1	--
Virginia.....	3,649.3	1.1	--	1,068	14	1.7	31
Alexandria City, Va.	94.5	1.2	234	1,395	22	1.5	195
Arlington, Va.	165.9	1.3	223	1,732	10	2.7	88
Chesapeake City, Va.	95.5	-0.8	337	765	309	0.9	256
Chesterfield, Va.	125.4	1.8	177	863	217	1.8	162
Fairfax, Va.	574.5	0.5	303	1,635	11	2.7	88
Henrico, Va.	181.7	2.9	97	1,061	88	0.3	290
Loudoun, Va.	146.9	0.9	260	1,246	44	0.2	292
Newport News City, Va.	97.0	-0.4	332	1,032	104	4.3	34
Norfolk City, Va.	133.1	-0.4	332	979	140	1.6	185
Prince William, Va.	121.2	1.7	186	862	218	-0.1	304
Richmond City, Va.	147.4	0.6	290	1,206	52	4.5	29
Virginia Beach City, Va.	169.4	1.7	186	780	299	1.7	175

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

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

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

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

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Virginia, 1st quarter 2015

Area	Employment March 2015	Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾
United States ⁽²⁾	137,412,381	\$1,048
Virginia	3,649,321	1,068
Accomack	12,224	669
Albemarle	50,371	1,009
Alleghany	3,786	648
Amelia	2,327	644
Amherst	8,545	605
Appomattox	3,032	517
Arlington	165,893	1,732
Augusta	25,848	746
Bath	2,302	653
Bedford	18,211	678
Bland	1,868	748
Botetourt	10,171	710
Brunswick	3,926	595
Buchanan	6,927	862
Buckingham	3,186	645
Campbell	16,350	842
Caroline	5,390	677
Carroll	6,158	534
Charles City	1,588	703
Charlotte	2,746	573
Chesterfield	125,426	863
Clarke	3,612	814
Craig	626	653
Culpeper	15,391	731
Cumberland	1,296	555
Dickenson	3,563	770
Dinwiddie	7,441	739
Essex	3,795	590
Fairfax County	574,542	1,635
Fauquier	20,704	874
Floyd	2,874	530
Fluvanna	4,315	691
Franklin	14,118	577
Frederick	28,343	799
Giles	4,479	748
Gloucester	9,153	585
Goochland	14,668	2,011
Grayson	2,450	578
Greene	3,463	615
Greensville	4,299	701
Halifax	12,084	637
Hanover	48,270	754
Henrico	181,708	1,061
Henry	14,992	599
Highland	509	498
Isle of Wight	10,573	946
James City	26,227	696
King and Queen	905	724
King George	10,578	1,485
King William	3,684	807
Lancaster	4,243	641
Lee	4,363	611
Loudoun	146,900	1,246
Louisa	9,296	955
Lunenburg	2,486	581

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Virginia, 1st quarter 2015 - Continued

Area	Employment March 2015	Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾
Madison	2,966	617
Mathews	1,428	502
Mecklenburg	11,436	584
Middlesex	2,999	601
Montgomery	40,968	756
Nelson	4,408	640
New Kent	3,961	641
Northampton	4,594	615
Northumberland	2,198	650
Nottoway	5,909	612
Orange	8,822	636
Page	5,053	561
Patrick	4,783	495
Pittsylvania	12,265	582
Powhatan	6,707	692
Prince Edward	8,432	622
Prince George	14,715	934
Prince William	121,187	862
Pulaski	14,046	721
Rappahannock	1,344	1,121
Richmond County	2,750	687
Roanoke County	37,240	738
Rockbridge	5,410	582
Rockingham	29,988	788
Russell	7,025	716
Scott	4,640	588
Shenandoah	13,727	629
Smyth	11,917	640
Southampton	3,579	598
Spotsylvania	33,290	694
Stafford	37,919	861
Surry	2,372	1,487
Sussex	3,614	678
Tazewell	15,364	620
Warren	11,852	687
Washington	19,860	675
Westmoreland	3,206	531
Wise	12,508	652
Wythe	11,376	590
York	21,068	710
Alexandria City	94,541	1,395
Bristol City	9,784	749
Buena Vista City	2,560	623
Charlottesville City	37,778	936
Chesapeake City	95,496	765
Colonial Heights City	10,741	556
Covington City	4,179	973
Danville City	25,676	641
Emporia City	3,167	531
Fairfax City	19,603	1,008
Falls Church City	11,327	1,177
Franklin City	4,359	590
Fredericksburg City	22,833	786
Galax City	6,225	552
Hampton City	53,321	863
Harrisonburg City	30,004	677

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Virginia, 1st quarter 2015 - Continued

Area	Employment March 2015	Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾
Hopewell City	8,043	953
Lexington City.....	4,765	730
Lynchburg City.....	51,106	783
Manassas City.....	22,496	1,183
Manassas Park City	2,879	847
Martinsville City	9,622	601
Newport News City.....	97,041	1,032
Norfolk City.....	133,080	979
Norton City	3,722	714
Petersburg City.....	12,878	725
Poquoson City	1,612	557
Portsmouth City.....	43,774	981
Radford City	5,770	823
Richmond City.....	147,419	1,206
Roanoke City.....	65,625	842
Salem City	20,292	914
Staunton City.....	11,160	619
Suffolk City	27,738	874
Virginia Beach City.....	169,423	780
Waynesboro City	9,649	673
Williamsburg City.....	12,637	709
Winchester City	24,380	813

Footnotes

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

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

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	March 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	137,412.4	2.1	\$1,048	--	2.1	--
Alabama	1,873.5	1.3	844	39	2.2	19
Alaska	322.2	1.0	1,051	15	2.6	10
Arizona	2,605.6	2.5	926	23	1.0	45
Arkansas	1,166.6	1.3	790	47	0.8	47
California	16,029.5	3.0	1,207	6	3.7	3
Colorado	2,458.0	3.7	1,071	13	2.4	16
Connecticut	1,640.5	0.8	1,382	3	1.5	35
Delaware	422.8	2.5	1,105	9	-0.5	51
District of Columbia	732.6	1.4	1,764	1	3.2	4
Florida	8,018.0	3.6	885	28	1.8	27
Georgia.....	4,107.0	3.5	989	18	1.7	31
Hawaii.....	633.7	1.3	881	31	2.8	9
Idaho	650.3	3.1	736	50	2.2	19
Illinois	5,724.6	1.2	1,130	7	2.4	16
Indiana.....	2,894.8	1.8	857	35	1.4	38
Iowa	1,504.3	1.3	848	37	2.9	7
Kansas	1,357.1	1.0	851	36	1.4	38
Kentucky.....	1,810.3	1.5	823	41	1.5	35
Louisiana	1,927.1	1.0	885	28	2.0	21
Maine.....	571.4	0.9	793	45	0.9	46
Maryland.....	2,540.8	1.2	1,113	8	2.5	12
Massachusetts	3,338.6	1.7	1,341	4	3.2	4
Michigan	4,079.5	1.8	969	21	1.9	24
Minnesota.....	2,709.2	1.8	1,079	12	4.3	1
Mississippi.....	1,102.3	0.6	711	51	0.7	48
Missouri.....	2,678.0	1.7	882	30	1.8	27
Montana	441.0	2.7	750	49	2.6	10
Nebraska	943.1	1.4	818	42	2.5	12
Nevada	1,227.7	3.7	865	34	-0.2	50
New Hampshire.....	623.5	1.5	982	20	1.2	43
New Jersey.....	3,834.6	1.4	1,288	5	1.9	24
New Mexico.....	798.7	1.4	805	43	1.5	35
New York	8,865.0	1.9	1,463	2	0.2	49
North Carolina	4,099.4	2.5	930	22	1.9	24
North Dakota	436.0	1.6	984	19	4.2	2
Ohio	5,144.5	1.4	922	24	1.4	38
Oklahoma	1,592.7	1.3	869	33	2.0	21
Oregon	1,748.7	3.5	919	25	2.9	7
Pennsylvania.....	5,606.9	0.9	1,031	16	2.4	16
Rhode Island	456.1	1.4	1,008	17	1.2	43
South Carolina.....	1,919.1	2.5	801	44	1.8	27
South Dakota.....	406.5	1.5	763	48	3.0	6
Tennessee.....	2,772.7	2.1	886	27	1.4	38
Texas	11,557.0	2.9	1,089	10	2.5	12
Utah	1,318.8	3.7	845	38	1.7	31
Vermont.....	303.9	0.9	824	40	2.0	21
Virginia.....	3,649.3	1.1	1,068	14	1.7	31
Washington.....	3,064.4	3.2	1,087	11	1.8	27
West Virginia	692.4	-0.3	792	46	1.4	38
Wisconsin.....	2,734.3	1.5	877	32	2.5	12
Wyoming	277.8	0.8	892	26	1.7	31
Puerto Rico.....	904.9	-1.1	524	(3)	1.0	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	38.5	0.0	738	(3)	-0.7	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

