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County Employment and Wages in West Virginia – Third Quarter 2016

Employment decreased 1.3 percent in West Virginia's only large county, Kanawha, from September 2015 to September 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with 2015 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that Kanawha County was among the 33 large counties in the U.S. in which employment declined over the year. Nationally, employment increased 1.7 percent, as 307 of the 344 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Kanawha County ranked 334th in the nation for employment change. (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, York, S.C., recorded the largest percentage increase in employment with a gain of 6.0 percent over the year. Midland, Texas, registered the largest over-the-year employment decline among the largest U.S. counties, down 5.8 percent.

Employment in Kanawha County stood at 101,538 in September 2016, accounting for 14.7 percent of West Virginia's total employment. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 54 counties in West Virginia with employment levels below 75,000. Wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average of \$1,027 in the third quarter of 2016. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

The average weekly wage in Kanawha County increased 6.5 percent from the third quarter of 2015 to the third quarter of 2016. Kanawha County placed in the top third of the national ranking for wage growth (90th), with a wage increase higher than the 5.4-percent national average.

Nationally, 339 of the 344 largest counties registered over-the-year wage increases. Clark, Nev., had the largest wage gain, up 12.2 percent from the third quarter of 2015. Manatee, Fla., was second with a wage increase of 10.7 percent, followed by Hillsborough, N.H., at 10.4 percent and Elkhart, Ind., at 10.3 percent.

Of the 344 largest counties, 5 experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Rockland, N.Y., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages (-14.9 percent), followed by Lafayette, La.; Benton, Ark.; Lake, Ill.; and Midland, Texas. Kanawha County reported average weekly wages of \$890, below the national average of \$1,027 for the third quarter 2016, and ranked 224th among the 344 largest U.S. counties.

Nationally, 103 large counties registered average weekly wages equal to or above the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2016. Santa Clara, Calif., had the highest average weekly wage at \$2,260. San Mateo, Calif., was second (\$2,098), followed by San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,892).

Seventy percent of the largest U.S. counties (241) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage (\$632), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$636) and Hidalgo (\$654). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than a third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif.

Large county average weekly wages

Kanawha County reported average weekly wages of \$839, below the national average of \$974 for the third quarter 2015, and ranked 228th among the 342 largest U.S. counties.

Nationally, 100 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2015. Santa Clara, Calif., had the highest average weekly wage at \$2,090. San Mateo, Calif., was second (\$1,894), followed by New York, N.Y. (\$1,829).

Seventy one percent of the largest U.S. counties (242) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage (\$598), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$615) and Hidalgo (\$624). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than a third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif.

Average weekly wages in West Virginia's smaller counties

All 54 counties in West Virginia with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,027. Among these smaller counties, Marshall had the highest average weekly wage at \$975, while Summers had the lowest at \$561. (See [table 2.](#))

When all 55 counties in West Virginia were considered, all had average weekly wages below the national average. Five reported average weekly wages under \$600, 14 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 22 reported wages from \$700 to \$799, 10 reported wages of \$800 to \$899, and 4 reported wages of \$900 or higher. (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 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 2015 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 2016 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2015/home.htm. The 2016 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2017.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 7, 2017.

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 9.8 million employer reports cover 142.9 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.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the top 10 U.S. large counties ranked by average weekly wage and the largest county in West Virginia, third quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	September 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, third quarter 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	142,940.5	1.7	-	\$1,027	-	5.4	-
Santa Clara, Calif.	1,052.5	2.7	87	2,260	1	9.0	15
San Mateo, Calif.	395.3	2.7	87	2,098	2	8.9	16
San Francisco, Calif.	709.5	3.1	58	1,892	3	8.6	20
New York, N.Y.	2,411.9	1.6	183	1,879	4	2.6	323
Washington, D.C.	759.2	1.7	177	1,728	5	3.8	292
Suffolk, Mass.	665.9	3.6	40	1,660	6	6.1	125
Arlington, Va.	173.0	1.3	216	1,648	7	3.8	292
King, Wash.	1,331.3	3.3	51	1,582	8	8.1	24
Middlesex, Mass.	889.4	1.6	183	1,555	9	9.8	8
Fairfax, Va.	598.1	1.7	177	1,546	10	5.6	168
Kanawha, W.Va.	101.5	-1.3	334	890	224	6.5	90

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 West Virginia, third quarter 2016

Area	Employment September 2016	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2)	142,940,452	\$1,027
West Virginia	691,532	816
Barbour	3,368	679
Berkeley	33,015	781
Boone	4,753	789
Braxton	3,991	633
Brooke	8,134	732
Cabell	51,959	810
Calhoun	1,279	893
Clay	1,468	582
Doddridge	1,484	850
Fayette	11,139	653
Gilmer	2,008	741
Grant	3,471	791
Greenbrier	13,313	676
Hampshire	4,087	589
Hancock	9,897	703
Hardy	6,016	650
Harrison	35,503	906
Jackson	7,899	749
Jefferson	16,074	800
Kanawha	101,538	890
Lewis	6,220	778
Lincoln	2,639	716
Logan	9,782	771
McDowell	4,224	720
Marion	18,342	785
Marshall	10,189	975
Mason	5,575	799
Mercer	19,971	679
Mineral	7,888	753
Mingo	4,587	784
Monongalia	56,174	952
Monroe	2,006	738
Morgan	2,738	618
Nicholas	6,857	651
Ohio	29,036	800
Pendleton	1,505	576
Pleasants	2,864	875
Pocahontas	3,004	618
Preston	7,419	737
Putnam	20,810	933
Raleigh	31,109	755
Randolph	11,828	634
Ritchie	3,428	724
Roane	3,025	631
Summers	2,300	561
Taylor	3,356	738
Tucker	2,677	683
Tyler	2,344	896
Upshur	7,563	706
Wayne	8,263	804
Webster	1,790	647
Wetzel	4,593	600
Wirt	579	570
Wood	36,621	755

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in West Virginia, third quarter 2016 - Continued

Area	Employment September 2016	Average Weekly Wage(1)
Wyoming	4,380	806

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, third quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	September 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	142,940.5	1.7	1027	--	5.4	--
Alabama	1,923.8	1.5	870	36	4.9	38
Alaska	337.4	-2.6	1055	12	1.2	49
Arizona	2,695.5	3.1	950	24	6.9	5
Arkansas	1,205.4	1.0	794	48	5.2	32
California	16,871.1	2.4	1210	4	6.7	8
Colorado	2,576.5	2.6	1062	10	5.6	23
Connecticut	1,674.2	0.3	1204	5	5	34
Delaware	440.7	0.8	1022	16	5.6	23
District of Columbia	759.2	1.7	1728	1	3.8	45
Florida	8,320.2	3.7	905	29	6.2	14
Georgia	4,290.4	2.9	969	21	5.9	18
Hawaii	648.4	1.8	956	23	6.7	8
Idaho	703.7	3.5	782	50	6.3	12
Illinois	5,933.6	0.6	1062	10	4.4	40
Indiana	3,025.9	1.8	866	37	5.9	18
Iowa	1,548.6	0.8	873	35	6.2	14
Kansas	1,377.2	0.5	857	39	5.9	18
Kentucky	1,880.2	1.5	857	39	6.5	10
Louisiana	1,908.8	-0.9	883	32	2.9	48
Maine	616.2	0.9	825	45	5.9	18
Maryland	2,648.1	1.4	1124	8	5.3	30
Massachusetts	3,522.9	2.0	1277	2	6.8	7
Michigan	4,292.2	2.1	976	19	5.9	18
Minnesota	2,849.5	1.6	1053	13	6.4	11
Mississippi	1,126.9	0.7	739	51	4.7	39
Missouri	2,782.1	1.6	888	30	5	34
Montana	464.5	1.5	792	49	4.3	41
Nebraska	973.9	0.9	857	39	5.5	26
Nevada	1,300.7	3.8	949	25	10.1	1
New Hampshire	655.0	1.8	1027	15	7.9	2
New Jersey	4,000.0	1.8	1173	7	5	34
New Mexico	811.5	0.2	830	44	4	43
New York	9,216.6	1.6	1222	3	3.5	46
North Carolina	4,290.3	2.3	909	28	5.3	30
North Dakota	423.2	-3.4	964	22	0.7	50
Ohio	5,347.3	1.1	924	26	5.4	27
Oklahoma	1,578.7	-1.3	854	42	3.5	46
Oregon	1,866.5	2.6	970	20	5.2	32
Pennsylvania	5,776.7	1.0	1013	17	5.4	27
Rhode Island	481.1	0.8	990	18	7.6	3
South Carolina	2,008.6	2.5	832	43	5.6	23
South Dakota	424.2	1.1	809	47	7	4
Tennessee	2,918.8	2.5	912	27	5.4	27
Texas	11,830.7	1.3	1042	14	4.3	41
Utah	1,407.4	3.8	881	33	6.3	12
Vermont	309.9	0.5	880	34	6.2	14
Virginia	3,801.0	1.0	1063	9	5	34
Washington	3,278.9	3.0	1188	6	6.9	5
West Virginia	691.5	-1.6	816	46	3.9	44
Wisconsin	2,850.1	1.0	885	31	6.2	14
Wyoming	274.8	-4.7	865	38	0	51
Puerto Rico	888.2	-0.4	524	(3)	2.3	(3)
Virgin Islands	37.4	1.4	778	(3)	5.9	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

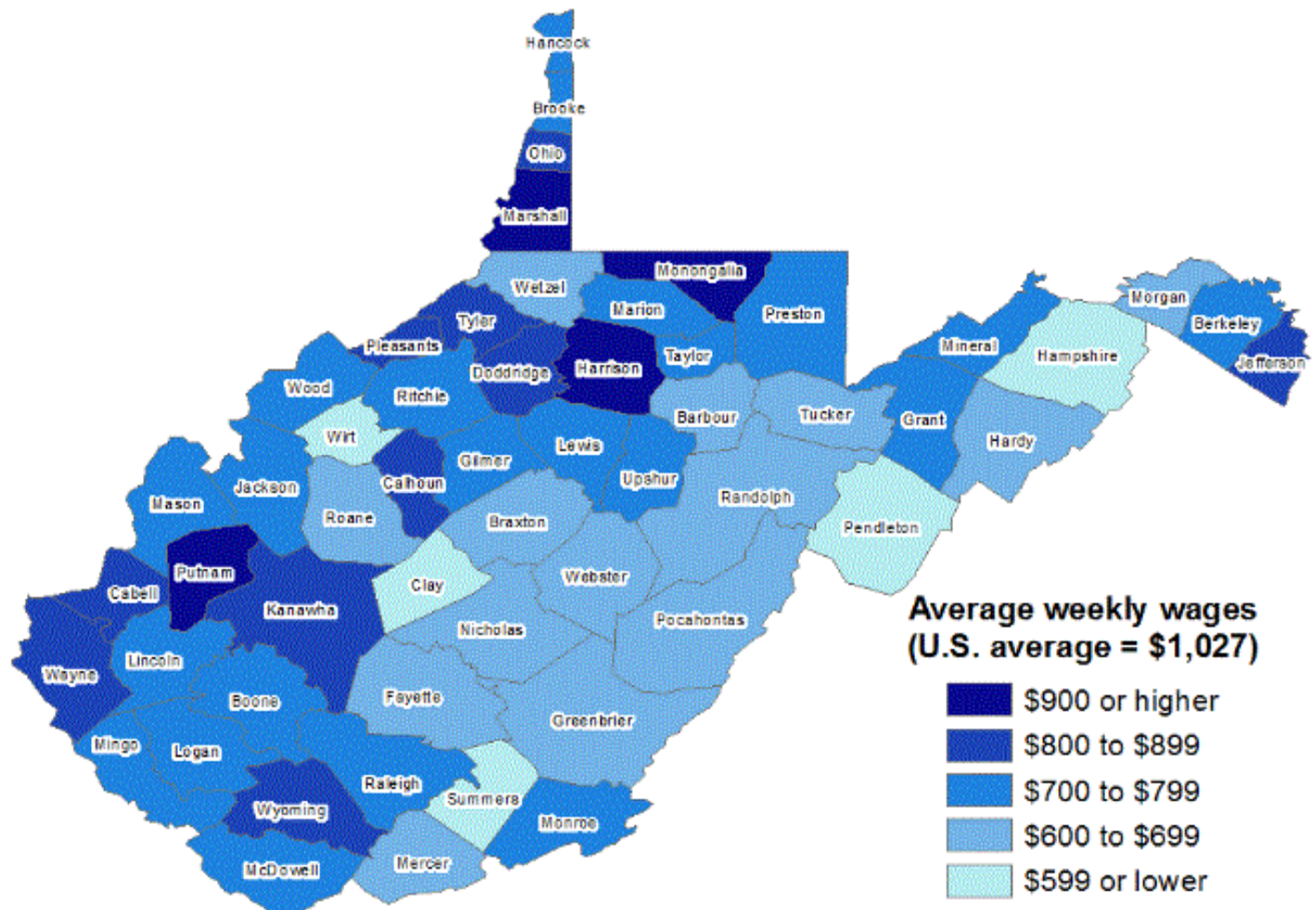
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

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

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

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

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in West Virginia, third quarter 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.