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County Employment and Wages in Nebraska — Fourth Quarter 2016

The two largest counties in Nebraska reported employment gains from December 2015 to December 2016, 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 2015 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that employment rose 0.7 percent in Douglas County and 0.1 percent in Lancaster County. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, employment advanced 1.2 percent from December 2015 to December 2016 with 280 of the 344 largest U.S. counties registering increases. Williamson, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 5.1 percent over the year. Lafayette, La., registered the largest percentage employment decline among the large counties, down 5.1 percent.

Among the two largest counties in Nebraska, employment was higher in Douglas (340,700) in December 2016. Lancaster County recorded an employment level of 169,500. Collectively, Nebraska's two large counties accounted for 52.5 percent of the state's employment. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.8 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Douglas was \$986 in the fourth quarter of 2016, a decrease of 0.8 percent from the fourth quarter of 2015. (See [table 1.](#)) Average weekly wages in Lancaster were \$853, unchanged over the year. Nationally, the average weekly wage decreased 1.5 percent over the year, declining to \$1,067 in the fourth quarter of 2016. This is one of only eight declines in the history of the series, which dates back to 1978.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties in Nebraska with employment levels below 75,000. Two of these smaller counties had average weekly wages above the national average. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in Douglas County decreased 0.8 percent, ranking it 104th among the nation's 344 largest counties. Lancaster County's wages were unchanged over the year and ranked 49th nationwide. (See [table 1.](#))

Among the 344 large U.S. counties, 290 had over-the-year wage decreases. McLean, Ill., had the largest percentage decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 9.2 percent. Clay, Mo., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages, down 8.3 percent from the fourth quarter of 2015, followed by Lafayette, La. (-8.0 percent), and Douglas, Colo. (-6.8 percent).

Forty-eight large U.S. counties experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest wage gain, up 11.3 percent from the fourth quarter of 2015. Washington, Pa., was second with a wage gain of 4.9 percent, followed by the counties of Marin, Calif. (4.3 percent), and Elkhart, Ind. (4.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Douglas County's \$986 average weekly wage placed near the middle of the national ranking at 162nd in the fourth quarter of 2016. Lancaster County's average weekly wage of \$853 ranked 291st among the nation's largest counties.

Seventy-one percent of the large U.S. counties (243) reported average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,067. Cameron, Texas, reported the lowest weekly wage (\$640), followed by Hidalgo, Texas (\$648), and Horry, S.C. (\$654).

Nationally, 101 large counties registered average weekly wages at or above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2016. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,365. New York, N.Y., was second at \$2,212, followed by San Mateo, Calif., at \$2,098.

Average weekly wages in Nebraska's smaller counties

Among the counties with employment below 75,000, Nemaha (\$1,090), Stanton (\$1,076), and Washington (\$1,033) had average weekly wages above those of the state's two largest counties. Loup County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$420 in the fourth quarter of 2016. (See [table 2.](#))

When all 93 counties in the state were considered, 12 reported average weekly wages less than \$600, 30 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 34 reported wages from \$700 to \$799, and 17 had wages of \$800 or more. (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 *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2015* are now available online 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 first quarter 2017 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 6, 2017.

Upcoming Industry Changes to QCEW Data

Beginning with the release of first quarter 2017 data, the program will switch to the 2017 version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as the basis for the assignment and tabulation of economic data by industry. For more information on the change, please see the Federal

Register notice at www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/federal_register_notices/notices/fr08au16.pdf.

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 9.9 million employer reports cover 143.7 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 United States and the 2 largest counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	143,749.9	1.2	--	\$1,067	--	-1.5	--
Nebraska	972.4	0.0	--	876	40	-0.5	10
Douglas, Neb.....	340.7	0.7	223	986	162	-0.8	104
Lancaster, Neb.	169.5	0.1	268	853	291	0.0	49

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 Nebraska, fourth quarter 2016

Area	Employment December 2016	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	143,749,910	\$1,067
Nebraska	972,400	876
Adams	15,280	750
Antelope	2,046	694
Arthur	85	606
Banner	125	708
Blaine	133	683
Boone	2,352	699
Box Butte	3,772	694
Boyd	610	586
Brown	1,208	695
Buffalo	27,134	768
Burt	1,806	704
Butler	2,505	755
Cass	5,547	738
Cedar	2,648	710
Chase	1,833	730
Cherry	2,307	594
Cheyenne	5,342	919
Clay	2,424	830
Colfax	5,253	957
Cuming	3,698	819
Custer	4,538	729
Dakota	12,667	840
Dawes	3,298	616
Dawson	11,384	733
Deuel	578	619
Dixon	1,707	731
Dodge	17,248	754
Douglas	340,676	986
Dundy	571	745
Fillmore	2,229	779
Franklin	749	736
Frontier	807	690
Furnas	2,032	727
Gage	9,151	686
Garden	565	629
Garfield	796	583
Gosper	386	730
Grant	281	600
Greeley	600	629
Hall	34,625	772
Hamilton	3,572	879
Harlan	823	633
Hayes	215	631
Hitchcock	657	712
Holt	4,546	695
Hooker	258	486
Howard	1,426	634
Jefferson	3,286	670
Johnson	1,589	734
Kearney	2,172	718
Keith	3,306	661
Keya Paha	151	548
Kimball	1,356	737
Knox	2,998	621
Lancaster	169,450	853

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2016 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2016	Average weekly wage(1)
Lincoln	14,894	743
Logan	193	619
Loup	130	420
Madison	21,677	783
McPherson	83	585
Merrick	2,303	754
Morrill	1,516	706
Nance	1,054	691
Nemaha	3,055	1,090
Nuckolls	1,441	599
Otoe	6,132	716
Pawnee	861	652
Perkins	1,151	842
Phelps	4,789	828
Pierce	1,994	726
Platte	18,551	825
Polk	1,479	716
Red Willow	5,201	687
Richardson	2,508	632
Rock	475	635
Saline	7,235	803
Sarpy	70,627	877
Saunders	5,237	713
Scotts Bluff	16,917	756
Seward	6,074	789
Sheridan	1,753	590
Sherman	816	577
Sioux	164	661
Stanton	1,295	1,076
Thayer	2,400	753
Thomas	260	549
Thurston	2,977	849
Valley	1,793	654
Washington	7,912	1,033
Wayne	4,241	684
Webster	1,077	579
Wheeler	323	694
York	7,583	771

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, fourth quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	143,749.9	1.2	\$1,067	--	-1.5	--
Alabama	1,932.6	0.7	901	35	-1.3	21
Alaska	310.0	-1.9	1,038	17	-5.2	51
Arizona	2,760.1	2.1	945	25	-2.2	34
Arkansas	1,205.4	0.4	827	47	-1.4	22
California	16,923.3	1.9	1,271	5	-0.3	4
Colorado	2,588.6	2.0	1,086	12	-1.5	24
Connecticut	1,685.5	0.0	1,289	4	-3.4	46
Delaware	441.2	-0.1	1,055	15	-2.9	44
District of Columbia	760.9	0.5	1,763	1	0.6	2
Florida	8,538.9	2.7	942	27	-1.8	28
Georgia.....	4,349.3	2.4	993	20	-0.9	14
Hawaii.....	658.3	0.7	954	24	-0.3	4
Idaho	691.6	3.2	800	50	-0.4	8
Illinois	5,947.6	0.4	1,122	9	-2	31
Indiana.....	3,021.7	0.9	883	38	-0.9	14
Iowa	1,542.0	0.1	911	33	-1	16
Kansas	1,384.5	0.1	877	39	-2.2	34
Kentucky.....	1,894.2	0.6	874	41	-1.4	22
Louisiana	1,907.4	-1.6	914	32	-2.9	44
Maine.....	602.6	0.8	855	43	-2.1	33
Maryland.....	2,666.7	1.0	1,169	7	-0.4	8
Massachusetts	3,530.4	1.3	1,352	2	-2.4	39
Michigan	4,283.0	1.5	1,026	19	-1.6	25
Minnesota.....	2,839.7	1.2	1,062	14	-1.1	18
Mississippi.....	1,134.0	0.0	756	51	-1.8	28
Missouri	2,783.2	0.9	918	31	-1.7	27
Montana	456.5	0.7	822	48	0.5	3
Nebraska	972.4	0.0	876	40	-0.5	10
Nevada	1,307.8	2.7	924	29	-1.2	20
New Hampshire.....	656.9	1.3	1,092	10	-4.1	48
New Jersey.....	4,042.1	1.4	1,239	6	-1.9	30
New Mexico	811.4	0.0	844	45	-2.5	41
New York	9,332.5	1.2	1,342	3	-2.3	36
North Carolina	4,326.3	1.8	932	28	-0.7	13
North Dakota	414.4	-3.2	978	21	-4.2	49
Ohio	5,365.6	0.7	943	26	-2.3	36
Oklahoma	1,587.7	-1.2	864	42	-3.5	47
Oregon	1,860.7	2.4	970	22	-1	16
Pennsylvania	5,799.8	0.7	1,039	16	-2.3	36
Rhode Island	478.3	0.0	1,027	18	-1.6	25
South Carolina.....	2,024.3	1.8	855	43	-0.6	12
South Dakota.....	419.9	0.5	828	46	-0.5	10
Tennessee	2,947.5	1.8	970	22	-1.1	18
Texas	11,974.7	1.2	1,072	13	-2.5	41
Utah	1,415.1	2.9	910	34	-0.3	4
Vermont.....	312.6	0.1	897	36	-2.4	39
Virginia.....	3,831.6	0.6	1,091	11	-0.3	4
Washington.....	3,227.9	2.8	1,150	8	1.7	1
West Virginia	693.1	-1.6	809	49	-2.5	41
Wisconsin	2,842.4	0.5	924	29	-2	31
Wyoming	265.8	-3.9	894	37	-4.7	50
Puerto Rico.....	928.2	-0.3	555	(3)	-1.9	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	38.5	0.2	769	(3)	-1.8	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

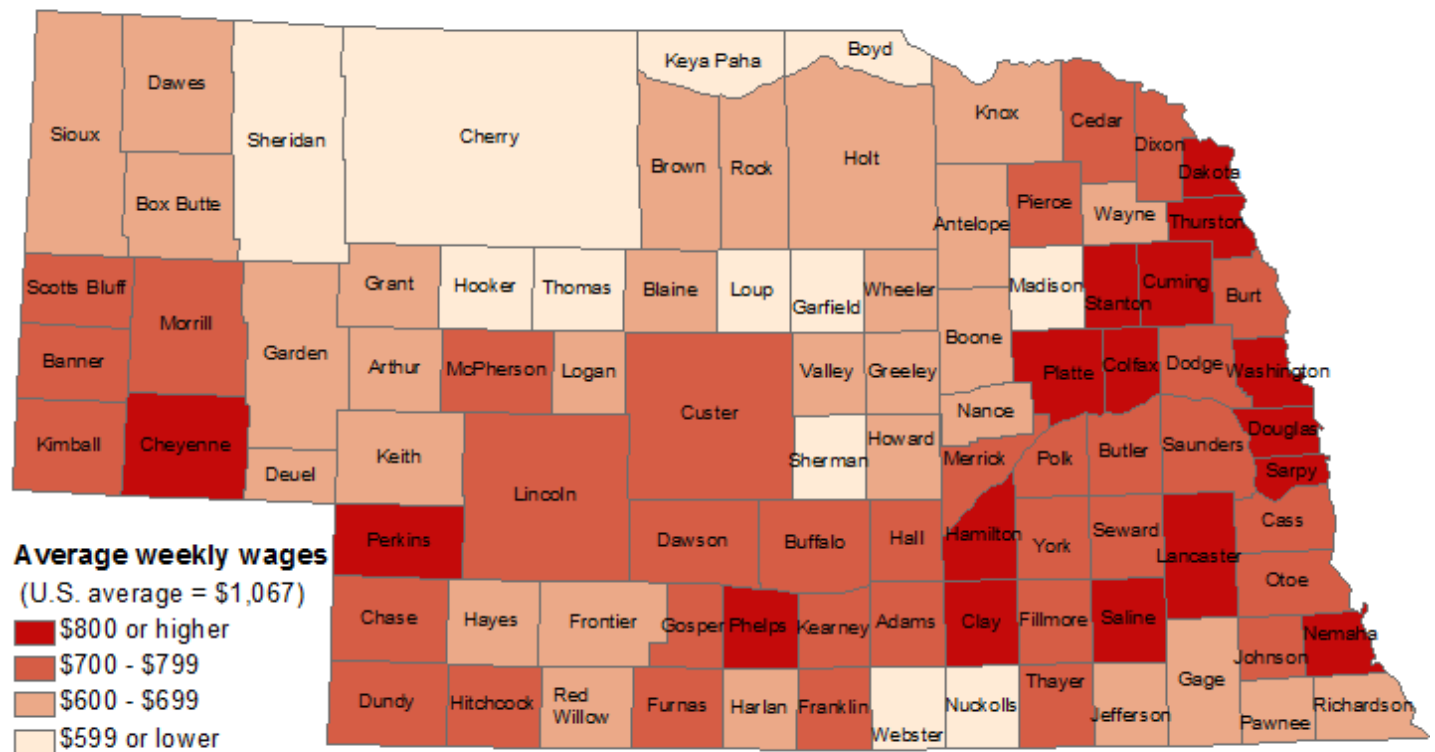
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 Nebraska, fourth quarter 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.