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MIDWEST INFORMATION OFFICE: Chicago, Ill.

Technical information: (312) 353-1880 BLSInfoChicago@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/midwest

Media contact: (312) 353-1138

County Employment and Wages in North Dakota — Third Quarter 2016

North Dakota's only large county, Cass, reported an average weekly wage of \$950 in the third quarter of 2016, 4.3 percent higher than one year ago, 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.) Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 5.4 percent over the year to \$1,027 in the third quarter of 2016. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that although Cass County's wages were below the U.S. average, eight of the state's smaller counties, those with employment below 75,000, reported wages above that for the nation. (See [table 1](#).)

Employment in Cass County increased 1.4 percent from September 2015 to September 2016. Cass County's employment level of 118,600 accounted for 28.0 percent of total employment within the state. Nationally, employment rose 1.7 percent during this 12-month period, as 307 of the 344 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. 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 52 smaller counties in North Dakota. Average weekly wages varied among these counties, with five having wages above \$1,300 and two with wages under \$560. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

Cass County's 4.3-percent wage growth from the third quarter of 2015 to the third quarter of 2016 ranked 269th nationally. (See [table 1](#).) Among the 344 largest U.S. counties, 339 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. 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. (10.4 percent); and Boone, Ky. and Elkhart, Ind. (10.3 percent each).

Among the largest U.S. counties, five 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. (-3.4 percent); Benton, Ark. (-2.0 percent); Lake, Ill. (-0.9 percent); and Midland, Texas (-0.3 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Cass County's \$950 average weekly wage placed in the upper half among the 344 largest U.S. counties, ranking 169th. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties in the nation with an average weekly wage of \$2,260. San Mateo, Calif., was second at \$2,098, followed by San Francisco,

Calif. (\$1,892); New York, N.Y. (\$1,879); and Washington, D.C. (\$1,728). Among the largest U.S. counties, Horry County, S.C. (\$632), had the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$636); Hidalgo, Texas (\$654); and Webb, Texas (\$680).

Average weekly wages in North Dakota's smaller counties

Forty-four of the 52 counties in North Dakota with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,027. Eight small counties had above-average wages, all located in the western portion of the state. The highest wage was in Oliver County at \$1,423, followed by Mercer (\$1,380) and Williams (\$1,357). Sheridan County had the lowest wage in the state, averaging \$500 in the third quarter of 2016. (See [table 2.](#))

When all 53 counties in North Dakota were considered, 8 had average weekly wages of \$649 or lower, 14 had wages from \$650 to \$749, 13 had wages from \$750 to \$849, and 18 had wages of \$850 or higher. (See [chart 1.](#))

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 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 <https://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 United States and the largest county in North Dakota, 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	--
North Dakota.....	423.2	-3.4	--	964	22	0.7	50
Cass, N.D.....	118.6	1.4	203	950	169	4.3	269

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 North Dakota, third quarter 2016

Area	Employment September 2016	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	142,940,452	\$1,027
North Dakota	423,156	964
Adams	982	733
Barnes	4,674	743
Benson	2,027	685
Billings	702	638
Bottineau	2,629	786
Bowman	1,630	797
Burke	681	898
Burleigh	57,820	956
Cass	118,551	950
Cavalier	1,489	781
Dickey	1,955	658
Divide	864	916
Dunn	2,082	1,309
Eddy	711	651
Emmons	1,020	626
Foster	1,648	784
Golden Valley	669	679
Grand Forks	42,921	930
Grant	534	675
Griggs	909	673
Hettinger	758	766
Kidder	742	658
LaMoure	1,457	675
Logan	623	558
McHenry	1,391	816
McIntosh	1,088	631
McKenzie	8,643	1,353
McLean	3,580	1,011
Mercer	5,488	1,380
Morton	11,331	858
Mountrail	5,690	1,217
Nelson	1,048	622
Oliver	1,102	1,423
Pembina	3,907	866
Pierce	1,733	730
Ramsey	6,636	895
Ransom	2,099	654
Renville	720	782
Richland	7,994	782
Rolette	4,599	706
Sargent	2,923	754
Sheridan	247	500
Sioux	1,628	823
Slope	142	1,098
Stark	18,403	1,095
Steele	609	823
Stutsman	11,694	806
Towner	889	612
Traill	3,395	791
Walsh	5,360	721
Ward	32,418	949
Wells	1,615	620
Williams	25,880	1,357

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.

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	\$1,027	--	5.4	--
Alabama	1,923.8	1.5	870	36	4.9	38
Alaska	337.4	-2.6	1,055	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	1,210	4	6.7	8
Colorado	2,576.5	2.6	1,062	10	5.6	23
Connecticut	1,674.2	0.3	1,204	5	5.0	34
Delaware	440.7	0.8	1,022	16	5.6	23
District of Columbia	759.2	1.7	1,728	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	1,062	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	1,124	8	5.3	30
Massachusetts	3,522.9	2.0	1,277	2	6.8	7
Michigan	4,292.2	2.1	976	19	5.9	18
Minnesota	2,849.5	1.6	1,053	13	6.4	11
Mississippi	1,126.9	0.7	739	51	4.7	39
Missouri	2,782.1	1.6	888	30	5.0	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	1,027	15	7.9	2
New Jersey.....	4,000.0	1.8	1,173	7	5.0	34
New Mexico	811.5	0.2	830	44	4.0	43
New York	9,216.6	1.6	1,222	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	1,013	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	7.0	4
Tennessee.....	2,918.8	2.5	912	27	5.4	27
Texas	11,830.7	1.3	1,042	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	1,063	9	5.0	34
Washington.....	3,278.9	3.0	1,188	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	0.0	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:

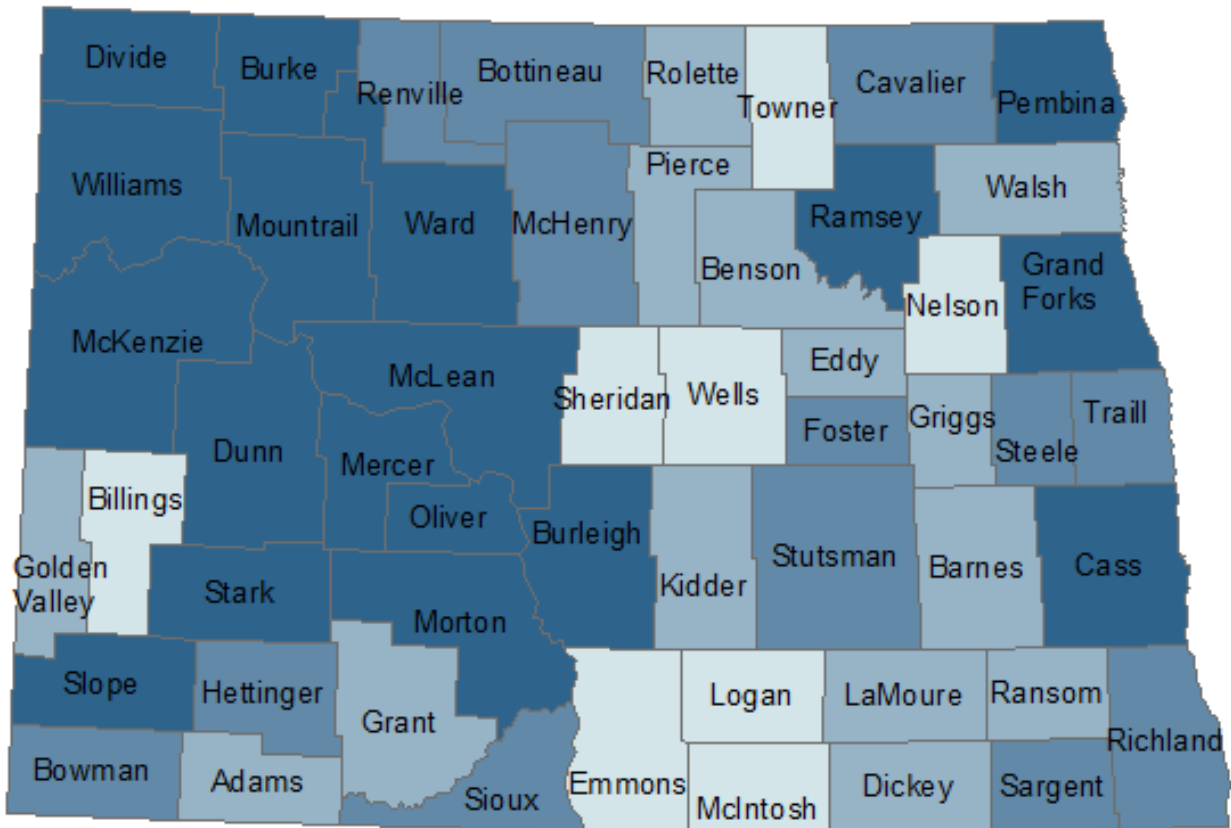
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 North Dakota, third quarter 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Average weekly wages

(U.S. Average = \$1,027)

- \$850 or higher
- \$750 - \$849
- \$650 - \$749
- \$649 or lower