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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 2018

North Dakota's only large county, Cass, had an average weekly wage of $956 in the third quarter of 2018, a 2.4-percent gain over the year, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with 2017 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 3.3 percent over the year to $1,055 in the third quarter of 2018. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer 10 of the state's 52 smaller counties, those with employment below 75,000, had an average weekly wage that was above the national average. (See table 1.)

Employment in Cass County rose 1.1 percent from September 2017 to September 2018. Cass County's employment level of 119,700 accounted for 28.2 percent of total employment within the state. Nationally, employment rose 1.6 percent during this 12-month period, as 295 of the 349 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Nationwide, the 349 largest counties made up 73.0 percent of total U.S. employment.

Large county wage changes
Cass County (2.4 percent) was among the 336 largest U.S. counties to record an over-the-year increase in average weekly wages. Chatham, GA, had the largest increase, up 8.5 percent from the third quarter of 2017. King, WA, was second with a wage increase of 7.9 percent, followed by Santa Clara, CA, and Stanislaus, CA, at 7.8 percent each.

Among the largest U.S. counties, 11 experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Elkhart, IN, had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages (-4.2 percent), followed by Union, NJ (-3.7 percent); Providence, RI (-3.4 percent); and Forsyth, NC (-3.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages
Cass County's $956 average weekly wage placed in the bottom half among the 349 largest U.S. counties, ranking 178th. Nationwide, average weekly wages were above the U.S. average ($1,055) in 94 of the 349 largest counties in the third quarter of 2018. Santa Clara, CA, held the top position among the highest-paid large counties in the nation with an average weekly wage of $2,460. San Mateo, CA, was second at $2,363, followed by San Francisco, CA ($2,097); New York, NY ($1,997); and Washington, DC ($1,807).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 255 had weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2018. Cameron, TX, had the lowest weekly wage at $632, followed by Horry, SC ($635); Hidalgo, TX ($662); and Webb, TX ($698).

Average weekly wages in North Dakota's smaller counties
Forty-two of the 52 counties in North Dakota with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national average of $1,055. The 10 small counties with weekly wages above the U.S. average were located in the western portion of the state. Williams County had the highest weekly wage at $1,526, followed by McKenzie ($1,480) and Oliver ($1,439). Sheridan County had the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging $482 in the third quarter of 2018. (See table 2.)

When all 53 counties in North Dakota were considered, 5 had average weekly wages of $649 or lower, 14 had wages from $650 to $749, 14 had wages from $750 to $849, and 20 had wages of $850 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 2017 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2018, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2018 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2017* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn17.htm. The 2018 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2019.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2018 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 22, 2019. The County Employment and Wages full data update for fourth quarter 2018 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 5, 2019.

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 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 2018

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2018 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2017-18 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2017-18 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	146,824.1	1.6	--	$1,055	--	3.3	--
North Dakota	424.3	1.1	--	995	19	4.4	3
Cass, ND	119.7	1.1	168	956	178	2.4	232

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 2018

Area	Employment September 2018	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	146,824,093	$1,055
North Dakota	424,251	995
Adams	951	959
Barnes	4,575	738
Benson	1,941	746
Billings	681	751
Bottineau	2,470	817
Bowman	1,506	783
Burke	710	1,064
Burleigh	55,677	972
Cass	119,678	956
Cavalier	1,450	830
Dickey	1,809	704
Divide	830	989
Dunn	2,008	1,323
Eddy	774	614
Emmons	973	658
Foster	1,656	830
Golden Valley	661	664
Grand Forks	40,369	878
Grant	537	645
Griggs	850	680
Hettinger	730	856
Kidder	750	650
LaMoure	1,372	696
Logan	619	549
McHenry	1,389	845
McIntosh	1,065	658
McKenzie	11,115	1,480
McLean	3,523	1,128
Mercer	4,569	1,369
Morton	11,855	854
Mountrail	6,130	1,251
Nelson	1,011	642
Oliver	796	1,439
Pembina	3,668	879
Pierce	1,721	794
Ramsey	5,735	750
Ransom	2,058	684
Renville	741	739
Richland	8,007	787
Rolette	4,444	710
Sargent	3,486	845
Sheridan	238	482
Sioux	1,575	828
Slope	123	1,275
Stark	19,490	1,184
Steele	582	938
Stutsman	11,075	831
Towner	776	737
Traill	3,463	813
Walsh	5,388	766
Ward	32,164	968
Wells	1,498	656
Williams	30,079	1,526

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.

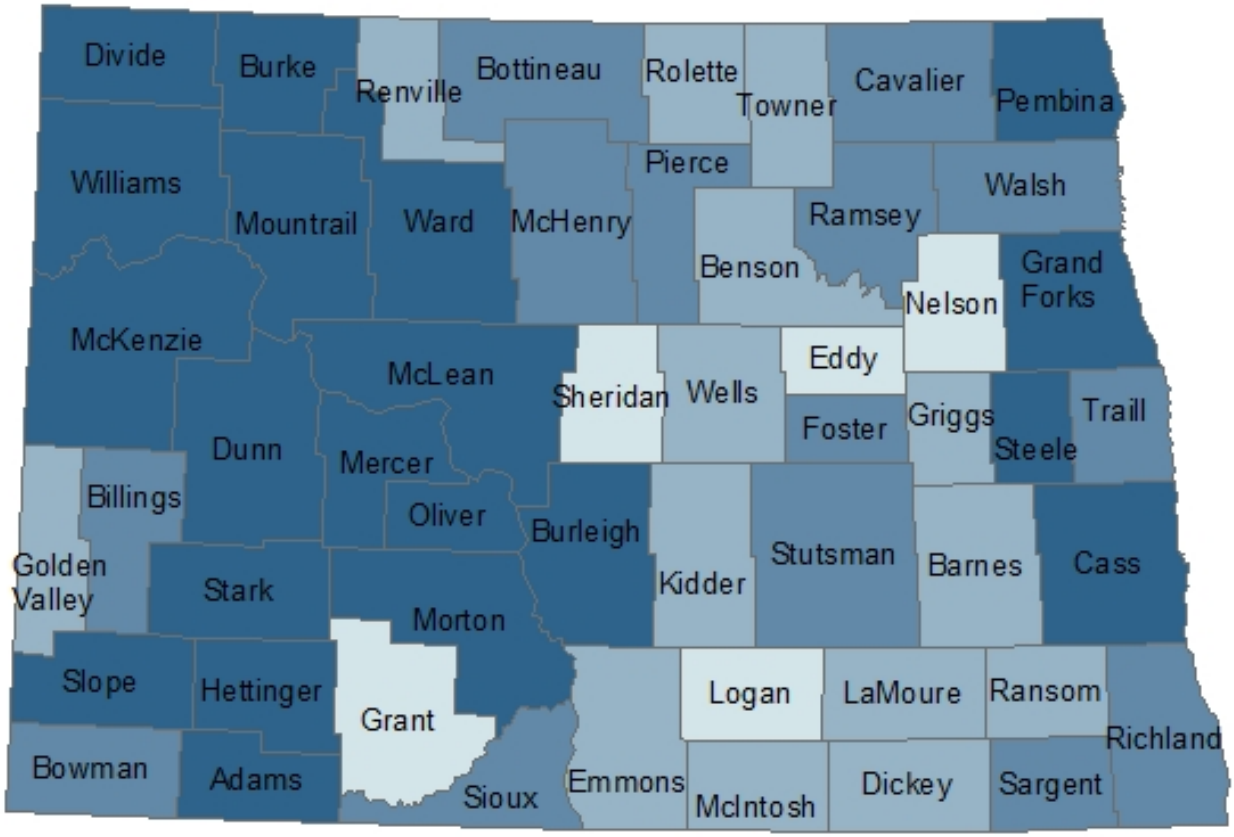
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2018

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2018 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2017-18	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2017-18	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	146,824.1	1.6	$1,055	--	3.3	--
Alabama	1,966.0	1.2	885	38	3.1	25
Alaska	334.0	-0.4	1,065	13	3.7	12
Arizona	2,838.6	2.8	974	23	2.9	31
Arkansas	1,222.1	0.7	811	49	2.9	31
California	17,457.5	1.8	1,260	5	3.8	9
Colorado	2,684.0	2.1	1,104	9	3.5	18
Connecticut	1,681.5	0.3	1,209	6	2.5	41
Delaware	447.8	0.6	1,046	15	2.4	42
District of Columbia	770.7	0.7	1,807	1	2.8	36
Florida	8,690.7	4.6	924	29	3.1	25
Georgia	4,448.8	2.3	993	20	3.3	21
Hawaii	654.7	0.0	975	22	2.4	42
Idaho	743.5	3.0	805	50	3.2	23
Illinois	6,029.2	0.8	1,087	10	3.0	28
Indiana	3,072.3	0.9	883	39	2.4	42
Iowa	1,555.0	0.6	887	37	3.7	12
Kansas	1,390.4	1.0	867	42	3.5	18
Kentucky	1,898.7	0.5	855	43	2.2	47
Louisiana	1,915.4	0.5	901	33	3.7	12
Maine	626.5	0.6	851	45	3.7	12
Maryland	2,683.9	0.7	1,130	8	2.4	42
Massachusetts	3,598.1	0.7	1,305	2	3.2	23
Michigan	4,366.5	0.8	991	21	2.8	36
Minnesota	2,904.3	0.8	1,074	12	4.2	5
Mississippi	1,133.7	0.2	754	51	3.4	20
Missouri	2,812.0	0.4	907	31	3.3	21
Montana	473.3	1.0	815	48	2.8	36
Nebraska	980.3	0.6	873	41	2.8	36
Nevada	1,382.9	3.4	936	28	2.4	42
New Hampshire	662.3	0.5	1,040	16	1.7	49
New Jersey	4,072.6	0.8	1,181	7	2.1	48
New Mexico	826.2	1.2	855	43	3.9	7
New York	9,467.5	1.4	1,272	4	4.2	5
North Carolina	4,398.0	1.1	938	26	3.8	9
North Dakota	424.3	1.1	995	19	4.4	3
Ohio	5,424.4	0.7	947	25	2.9	31
Oklahoma	1,616.8	1.2	874	40	3.6	16
Oregon	1,939.8	1.5	1,005	18	3.8	9
Pennsylvania	5,894.8	1.0	1,031	17	3.0	28
Rhode Island	489.4	1.0	963	24	-1.3	51
South Carolina	2,088.2	2.8	834	46	0.8	50
South Dakota	431.5	1.3	827	47	3.0	28
Tennessee	3,005.6	1.7	938	26	3.9	7
Texas	12,327.0	2.6	1,064	14	3.1	25
Utah	1,494.4	3.4	911	30	3.6	16
Vermont	310.9	0.0	892	36	2.6	40
Virginia	3,889.6	1.1	1,082	11	2.9	31
Washington	3,425.6	2.4	1,280	3	6.2	2
West Virginia	706.0	1.7	894	35	8.1	1
Wisconsin	2,888.9	0.7	901	33	2.9	31
Wyoming	278.2	0.6	905	32	4.3	4
Puerto Rico	862.5	0.2	534	[3]	5.3	[3]
Virgin Islands	33.4	-8.0	888	[3]	18.6	[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 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Average weekly wages
(U.S. Average = $1,055)
- $850 or higher
- $750 - $849
- $650 - $749
- $649 or lower