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County Employment and Wages in North Dakota — Third Quarter 2019

Employment increased 1.5 percent in North Dakota's only large county, Cass, from September 2018 to September 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2018.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that in September 2019, Cass County's employment totaled 121,500 and accounted for 28.4 percent of total employment within the state.

Nationally, employment increased 1.1 percent over the year with 283 of the 355 largest U.S. counties reporting increases. New Hanover, NC, had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 5.8 percent over the year. Bay, FL, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 5.9 percent.

The average weekly wage in Cass County was \$991 in the third quarter of 2019, an increase of 3.7 percent from the third quarter of 2018. Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 3.6 percent over the year to \$1,093 in the third quarter of 2019. (See [table 1.](#))

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 52 counties in North Dakota with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in 43 of these smaller counties were below the national average in September 2019. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

The 3.7-percent annual average weekly wage gain in Cass County ranked 151st among the nation's 355 -largest counties in the third quarter of 2019. Nationally, 350 of the 355 largest counties had over-the-year wage increases. Boulder, CO, had the largest percentage wage increase (+18.4 percent). The remaining five large counties registered wage declines during the period. Linn, IA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-2.6 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Cass County's \$991 average weekly wage placed in the middle third among the 355 largest U.S. counties, ranking 181st. Nationally, 98 large counties reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2019. Santa Clara, CA, had the highest average weekly wage at \$2,447.

Average weekly wages were below the national average in 257 large U.S. counties. At \$659 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

Average weekly wages in North Dakota's smaller counties

Among the 52 counties in North Dakota with employment below 75,000, 43 counties had average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,093. The nine small counties with weekly wages above the U.S. average were located in the western portion of the state. McKenzie County had the highest weekly wage at \$1,565, followed by Williams (\$1,549) and Oliver (\$1,532). Sheridan County had the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$511 in the third quarter of 2019.

When all 53 counties in North Dakota were considered, 11 reported average weekly wages of less than \$700, 14 registered wages from \$700 to \$799, 9 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 19 had average weekly wages of \$900 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 2018 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2019, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2019 version of this news release. Tables and additional content from the 2018 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2018/home.htm. The 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2020.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2019 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 20, 2020. The County Employment and Wages full data update for fourth quarter 2019 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 3, 2020.

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 2019

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	September 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2018-19 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, third quarter 2018-19 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	148,556.5	1.1	--	\$1,093	--	3.6	--
North Dakota	428.4	0.9	--	1,028	19	3.3	32
Cass	121.5	1.5	110	991	181	3.7	151

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 2019

Area	Employment September 2019	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	148,556,525	\$1,093
North Dakota	428,359	1,028
Adams	1,005	770
Barnes	4,553	747
Benson	2,023	791
Billings	730	721
Bottineau	2,476	849
Bowman	1,607	937
Burke	703	1,081
Burleigh	56,260	992
Cass	121,504	991
Cavalier	1,395	794
Dickey	1,819	718
Divide	756	983
Dunn	2,204	1,313
Eddy	766	635
Emmons	986	673
Foster	1,548	864
Golden Valley	611	685
Grand Forks	39,985	921
Grant	565	664
Griggs	833	693
Hettinger	704	851
Kidder	756	697
LaMoure	1,357	718
Logan	641	579
McHenry	1,320	937
McIntosh	1,046	694
McKenzie	12,661	1,565
McLean	3,454	1,132
Mercer	4,179	1,254
Morton	11,842	899
Mountrail	6,489	1,294
Nelson	999	650
Oliver	858	1,532
Pembina	3,677	896
Pierce	1,608	768
Ramsey	5,734	786
Ransom	2,060	679
Renville	759	727
Richland	7,832	789
Rolette	4,443	729
Sargent	3,631	832
Sheridan	244	511
Sioux	1,554	902
Slope	144	1,366
Stark	20,051	1,209
Steele	582	953
Stutsman	10,842	859
Towner	704	772
Traill	3,445	842
Walsh	5,135	801
Ward	32,000	994
Wells	1,448	708
Williams	30,581	1,549

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 2019

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	September 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2018-19	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2018-19	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	148,556.5	1.1	\$1,093	--	3.6	--
Alabama	1,989.5	1.1	919	36	3.8	18
Alaska	338.0	1.2	1,105	14	3.7	21
Arizona	2,913.4	2.6	1,018	22	4.5	4
Arkansas	1,222.8	0.0	841	49	3.8	18
California	17,713.1	1.4	1,309	5	3.8	18
Colorado	2,749.0	2.4	1,170	8	6.1	1
Connecticut	1,676.6	-0.3	1,236	6	2.3	50
Delaware	453.2	1.1	1,078	15	3.3	32
District of Columbia	776.4	0.6	1,851	1	2.5	49
Florida	8,838.2	1.7	955	29	3.4	27
Georgia	4,509.7	1.4	1,026	20	3.4	27
Hawaii	654.1	-0.3	1,012	23	3.9	15
Idaho	765.2	2.9	838	50	4.1	10
Illinois	6,023.1	0.0	1,125	10	3.6	23
Indiana	3,083.5	0.3	914	37	3.5	26
Iowa	1,556.9	0.1	914	37	3.0	39
Kansas	1,395.9	0.4	893	43	2.9	43
Kentucky	1,910.8	0.7	884	45	3.4	27
Louisiana	1,913.5	-0.3	923	35	2.6	47
Maine	632.6	0.9	887	44	4.2	7
Maryland	2,696.9	0.2	1,169	9	3.6	23
Massachusetts	3,642.5	0.9	1,359	2	4.2	7
Michigan	4,375.8	0.2	1,021	21	3.0	39
Minnesota	2,917.8	0.4	1,107	13	3.0	39
Mississippi	1,135.8	0.1	768	51	2.7	46
Missouri	2,826.5	0.6	942	31	3.9	15
Montana	478.9	1.2	848	48	3.9	15
Nebraska	984.7	0.3	908	39	4.0	13
Nevada	1,412.2	2.1	973	26	4.1	10
New Hampshire	667.9	0.8	1,075	16	3.4	27
New Jersey	4,104.0	0.9	1,217	7	3.0	39
New Mexico	842.1	1.7	899	40	5.1	2
New York	9,575.4	1.1	1,314	4	3.3	32
North Carolina	4,501.3	2.2	972	27	3.6	23
North Dakota	428.4	0.9	1,028	19	3.3	32
Ohio	5,443.3	0.3	976	25	3.1	37
Oklahoma	1,628.8	0.5	897	41	2.6	47
Oregon	1,970.7	1.4	1,037	18	3.2	35
Pennsylvania	5,947.9	0.8	1,064	17	3.2	35
Rhode Island	491.3	0.6	991	24	2.8	44
South Carolina	2,132.4	2.2	866	46	3.7	21
South Dakota	433.4	0.4	855	47	3.4	27
Tennessee	3,060.8	1.9	966	28	2.8	44
Texas	12,603.2	2.1	1,109	12	4.1	10
Utah	1,535.2	2.8	954	30	4.8	3
Vermont	311.0	0.0	927	34	4.3	5
Virginia	3,931.4	1.0	1,125	10	4.0	13
Washington	3,489.8	2.1	1,335	3	4.3	5
West Virginia	694.4	-1.8	897	41	0.3	51
Wisconsin	2,893.8	0.1	929	33	3.1	37
Wyoming	283.1	1.5	942	31	4.2	7
Puerto Rico	878.9	1.9	528	(3)	-0.8	(3)
Virgin Islands	37.8	9.6	1,012	(3)	12.8	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

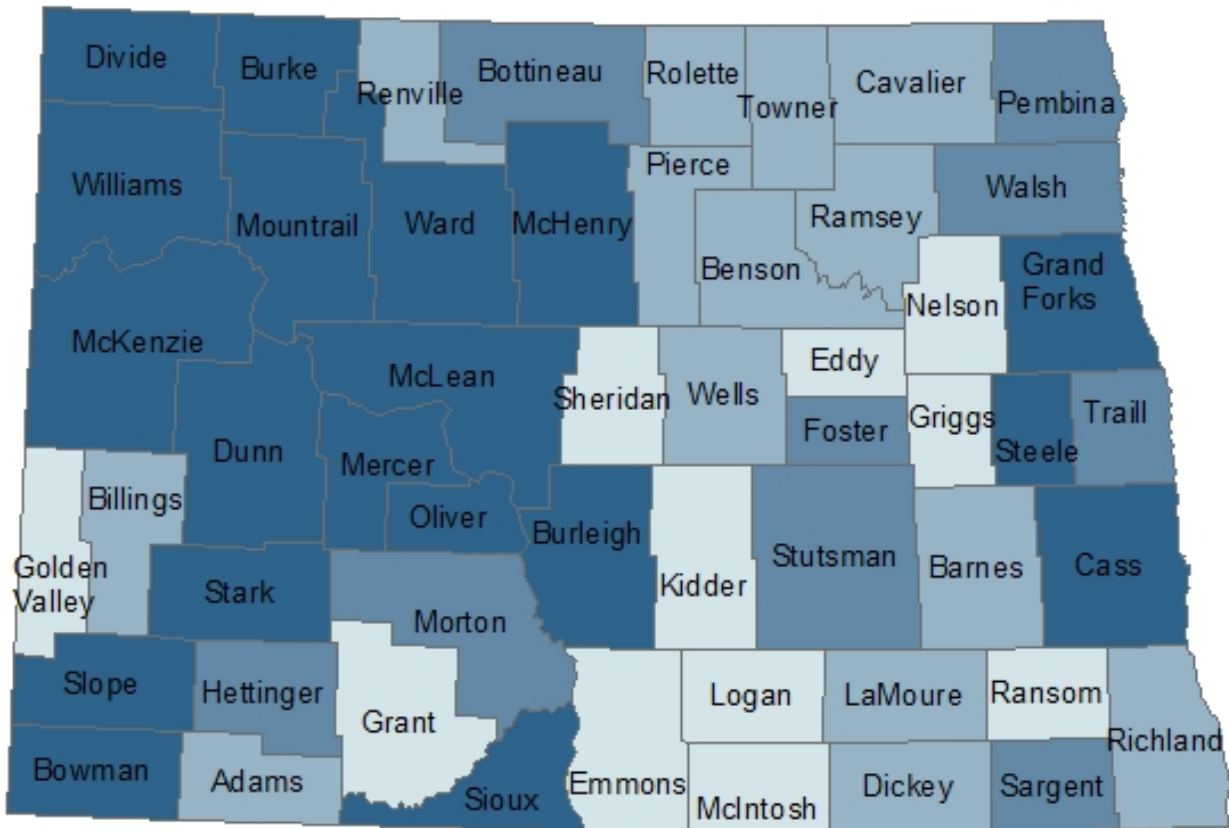
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 North Dakota, third quarter 2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Average weekly wages

(U.S. Average = \$1,093)

- \$900 or higher
- \$800 - \$899
- \$700 - \$799
- \$699 or lower