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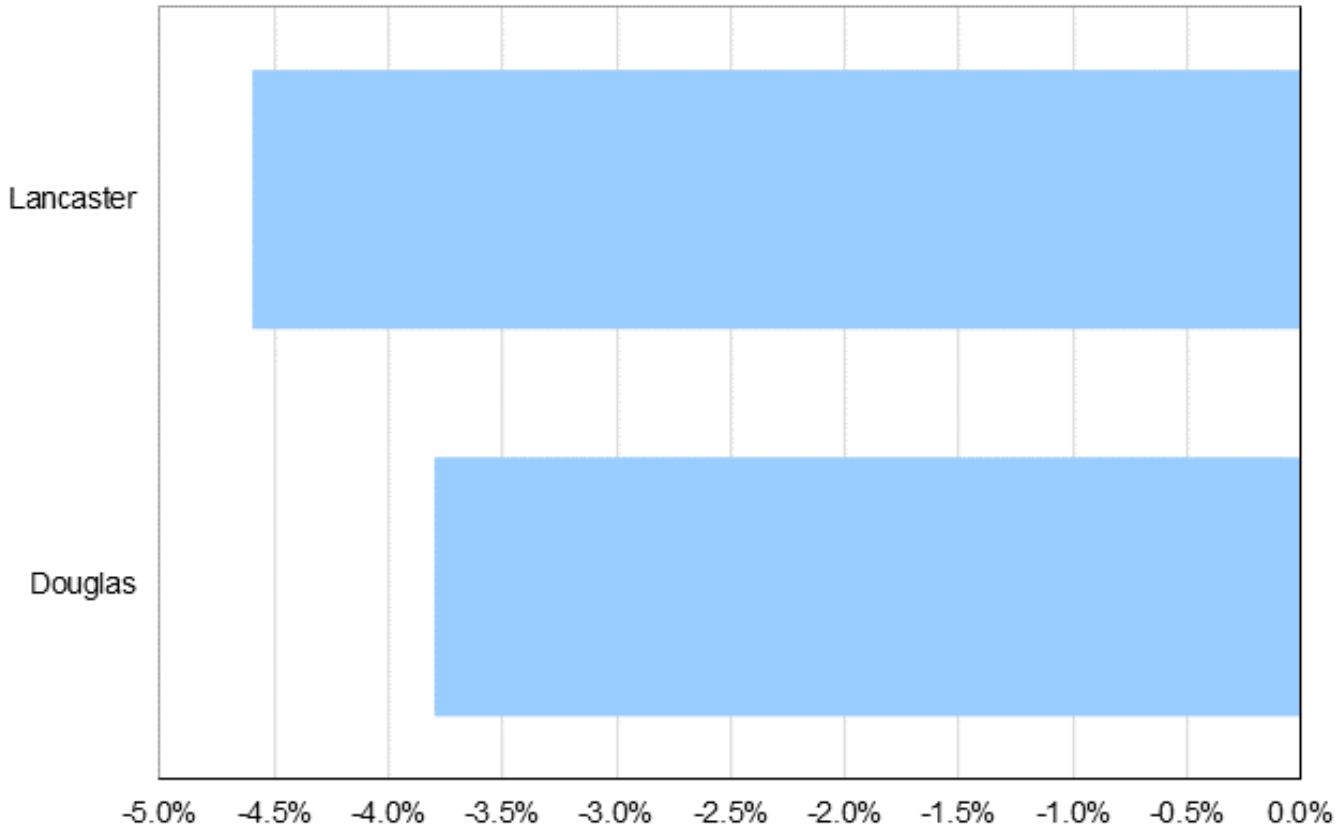
County Employment and Wages in Nebraska — Fourth Quarter 2020

Employment fell in the two largest counties in Nebraska from December 2019 to December 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2019.) Regional Commissioner Jason Palmer noted that Lancaster County and Douglas County had over-the-year decreases in employment of 4.6 percent and 3.8 percent, respectively. (See chart 1 and table 1.)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in covered employment among the largest counties in Nebraska, December 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

National employment decreased 6.1 percent over the year, with 352 of the 357 largest U.S. counties reporting declines. Maui + Kalawao, HI, had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 22.8 percent. Utah, UT, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment with a gain of 3.8 percent.

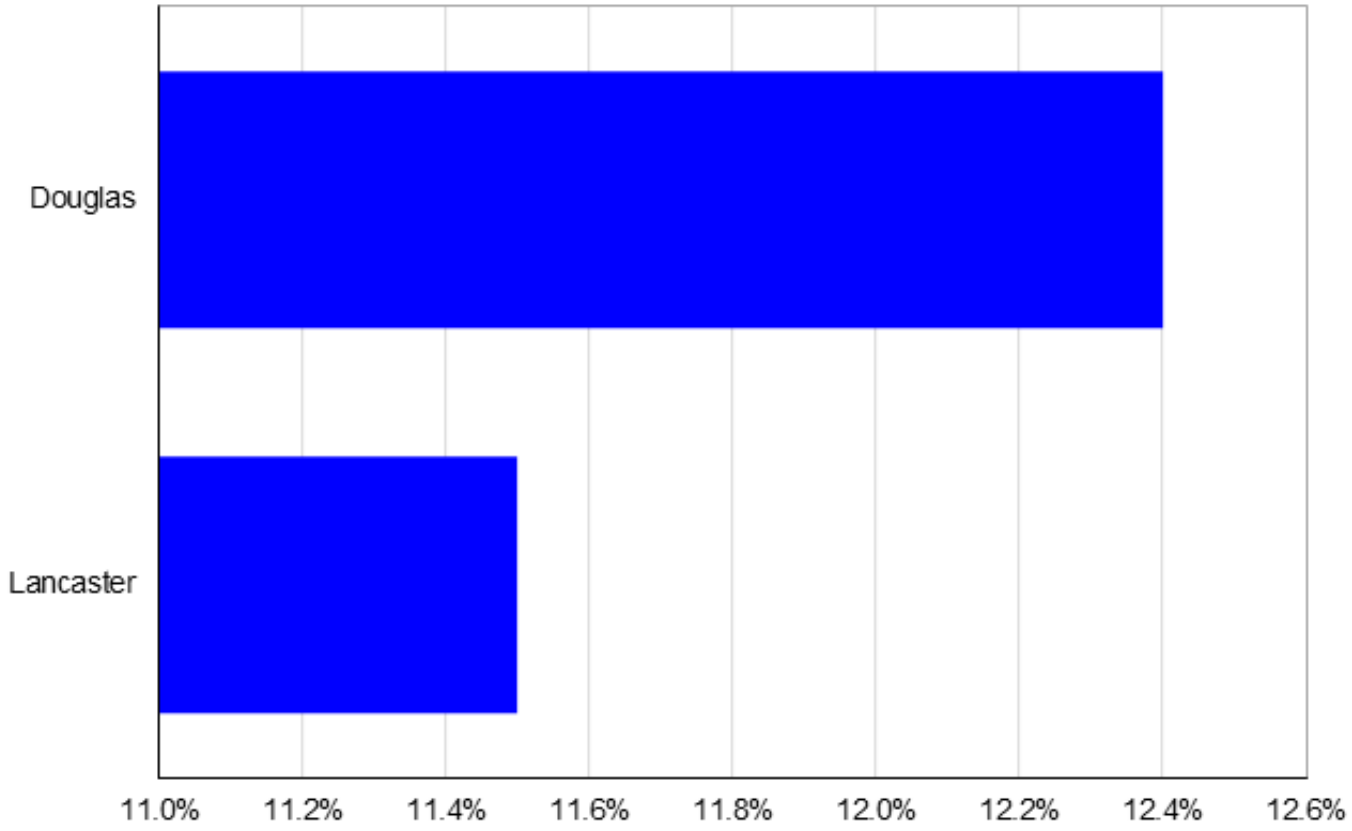
In Nebraska, employment was highest in Douglas County (332,800) in December 2020. Within Douglas County's private industry, health care and social assistance accounted for the largest employment. Together, the two largest Nebraska counties accounted for 51.8 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 357 largest counties made up 73.1 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties in Nebraska with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in 90 of the 91 smaller counties were below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2020. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Both of Nebraska's large counties reported average weekly wage gains that were below the national rate of 13.0 percent from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the fourth quarter of 2020. (See chart 2.) Wages increased 12.4 percent in Douglas County and 11.5 percent in Lancaster County.

Chart 2. Over-the-year percent change in covered average weekly wages among the largest counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the 357 largest counties in the United States, 356 had over-the-year wage increases. Nationally, across most industries, increases in average weekly wages reflect substantial employment declines combined with wage increases. The lowest paying industry, leisure and hospitality, had the largest employment loss, which

results in higher average weekly wages for the industry and the nation. San Francisco, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (+44.3 percent). Ector, TX, had the only over-the-year percentage decrease (-7.5 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Weekly wages in the two largest counties in Nebraska were below the national average of $1,339 in the fourth quarter of 2020. Douglas County had an average weekly wage of $1,226, ranking 152nd nationally. Lancaster County had an average weekly wage of $1,056, ranking 284th nationwide.

Among the largest U.S. counties, 89 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2020. Santa Clara, CA, had the highest average weekly wage at $3,690. Average weekly wages were below the national average in the remaining 268 counties. At $760 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

Average weekly wages in Nebraska's smaller counties

Among the 91 smaller counties in Nebraska—those with employment below 75,000—Stanton ($1,416) reported an average weekly wage above the national average of $1,339. Loup County ($559) reported the lowest average weekly wage in the state.

When all 93 counties in Nebraska were considered, 18 reported average weekly wages of less than $750, 25 registered wages from $750 to $849, 30 had wages from $850 to $949, and 20 had average weekly wages of $950 or higher. (See chart 3.)

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 2019 edition of this publication was published in September 2020. Tables and additional content from the 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2019/home.htm. The 2020 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2021.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 18, 2021. The County Employment and Wages full data update for first quarter 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.

QCEW Imputation Issue Caused by Pandemic-Related Challenges

In the spring of 2020, BLS modified its imputation process for QCEW to be more responsive to current economic conditions. While continuing work to improve this process, BLS made an unintended data processing error. This error affected data for the second, third, and fourth quarters of 2020. BLS has analyzed this issue and has determined that the impact on QCEW employment was negligible at the statewide level. In smaller areas and industries, revisions may be larger than usual. Wage data were not affected. Following the usual QCEW practice, these data will be revised and corrected with the full data update on September 1, 2021.

For more information on QCEW imputation methodology, see www.bls.gov/cew/additional-resources/imputation-methodology.htm.

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 individuals with sensory impairments 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 two largest counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2020

Area	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	10,675.8	140,881.3	-6.1	--	$1,339	--	13.0	--
Nebraska	72.5	962.7	-2.9	--	1,079	37	11.5	34
Douglas	19.1	332.8	-3.8	74	1,226	152	12.4	176
Lancaster	10.1	166.0	-4.6	107	1,056	284	11.5	219

Footnotes:
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
(2) Percent changes were computed from 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 2020

Area	Employment December 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	140,881,253	$1,339
Nebraska	962,733	1,079
Adams	15,212	913
Antelope	2,401	905
Arthur	93	600
Banner	125	760
Blaine	119	804
Boone	2,370	864
Box Butte	3,433	824
Boyd	569	687
Brown	1,214	778
Buffalo	26,529	920
Burt	1,799	811
Butler	2,470	977
Cass	5,632	888
Cedar	2,625	829
Chase	1,792	905
Cherry	2,183	709
Cheyenne	3,730	874
Clay	2,265	1,044
Colfax	5,104	1,085
Cuming	3,775	942
Custer	4,501	865
Dakota	12,131	1,127
Dawes	2,848	759
Dawson	11,486	929
Deuel	513	700
Dixon	1,739	902
Dodge	17,917	955
Douglas	332,813	1,226
Dundy	568	855
Fillmore	2,154	933
Franklin	714	815
Frontier	786	732
Furnas	1,844	859
Gage	8,446	868
Garden	480	717
Garfield	815	748
Gosper	464	889
Grant	291	652
Greeley	636	753
Hall	33,749	944
Hamilton	3,593	1,027
Harlan	818	740
Hayes	206	723
Hitchcock	694	802
Holt	4,227	857
Hooker	292	576
Howard	1,570	768
Jefferson	3,358	821
Johnson	1,466	883
Kearney	2,175	869
Keith	3,343	750
Keya Paha	140	672
Kimball	1,380	832
Knox	2,832	774

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2020 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
Lancaster	166,046	1,056
Lincoln	13,988	898
Logan	187	700
Loup	122	559
Madison	21,403	964
McPherson	66	725
Merrick	2,170	869
Morrill	1,501	879
Nance	971	767
Nemaha	2,992	1,157
Nuckolls	1,523	745
Otoe	6,127	907
Pawnee	738	878
Perkins	1,144	951
Phelps	4,631	984
Pierce	1,921	853
Platte	19,303	977
Polk	1,439	827
Red Willow	4,870	829
Richardson	2,389	759
Rock	488	815
Saline	6,697	976
Sarpy	72,829	1,074
Saunders	5,359	863
Scotts Bluff	15,860	881
Seward	5,737	979
Sheridan	1,667	756
Sherman	736	684
Sioux	166	754
Stanton	1,330	1,416
Thayer	2,292	964
Thomas	249	862
Thurston	3,214	1,062
Valley	1,802	830
Washington	7,660	1,118
Wayne	4,404	743
Webster	1,024	754
Wheeler	313	753
York	7,196	939

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 2020

State	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	10,675.8	140,881.3	-6.1	$1,339	--	13.0	--
Alabama	134.6	1,951.2	-2.9	1,096	35	11.4	36
Alaska	23.1	290.1	-6.4	1,260	17	10.6	44
Arizona	173.9	2,908.7	-3.3	1,214	22	14.6	9
Arkansas	94.6	1,194.8	-3.2	999	49	11.4	36
California	1,660.2	16,380.1	-8.3	1,724	3	18.5	1
Colorado	219.6	2,613.7	-5.7	1,378	10	12.3	25
Connecticut	126.8	1,578.4	-6.5	1,551	6	12.2	27
Delaware	35.1	432.9	-5.2	1,262	16	11.3	38
District of Columbia	43.8	713.0	-8.9	2,293	1	15.2	6
Florida	765.4	8,642.8	-5.0	1,180	24	13.1	17
Georgia	319.7	4,405.9	-4.0	1,208	23	10.9	42
Hawaii	47.3	561.1	-16.1	1,219	21	16.0	4
Idaho	71.8	763.5	0.8	1,034	47	12.8	21
Illinois	386.3	5,573.8	-7.8	1,378	10	13.0	18
Indiana	173.1	2,985.1	-4.0	1,076	39	11.2	39
Iowa	105.6	1,494.3	-4.3	1,099	34	11.6	32
Kansas	89.9	1,346.9	-4.5	1,070	40	11.5	34
Kentucky	130.4	1,839.6	-4.8	1,057	42	10.8	43
Louisiana	140.8	1,796.9	-7.0	1,078	38	8.6	48
Maine	55.4	594.3	-4.3	1,092	36	14.5	10
Maryland	174.5	2,546.1	-6.7	1,445	8	13.6	16
Massachusetts	266.7	3,365.8	-8.3	1,766	2	17.0	3
Michigan	265.3	3,998.2	-8.9	1,257	19	12.8	21
Minnesota	186.4	2,684.1	-7.9	1,322	13	12.3	25
Mississippi	76.1	1,119.1	-2.4	901	51	10.4	45
Missouri	221.5	2,724.4	-4.3	1,127	33	11.6	32
Montana	54.6	467.4	-1.4	1,035	45	12.7	23
Nebraska	72.5	962.7	-2.9	1,079	37	11.5	34
Nevada	90.2	1,283.1	-10.7	1,178	25	14.4	11
New Hampshire	57.1	637.3	-5.2	1,406	9	17.9	2
New Jersey	291.0	3,860.5	-7.2	1,517	7	13.9	15
New Mexico	64.8	767.1	-9.5	1,052	43	11.8	29
New York	662.4	8,693.4	-10.3	1,712	4	14.2	13
North Carolina	301.7	4,431.0	-2.7	1,152	29	11.2	39
North Dakota	32.6	394.4	-7.1	1,136	31	4.7	50
Ohio	307.3	5,199.9	-5.1	1,161	27	12.0	28
Oklahoma	113.6	1,569.1	-4.4	1,013	48	7.3	49
Oregon	167.3	1,824.3	-7.5	1,256	20	14.2	13
Pennsylvania	370.5	5,549.4	-7.4	1,287	15	12.6	24
Rhode Island	40.7	449.6	-8.3	1,259	18	14.7	7
South Carolina	149.2	2,074.4	-3.5	1,035	45	11.1	41
South Dakota	35.5	422.8	-1.9	1,048	44	14.4	11
Tennessee	176.2	3,002.5	-2.7	1,172	26	11.7	30
Texas	743.1	12,251.1	-4.3	1,294	14	9.0	47
Utah	117.9	1,557.8	0.6	1,154	28	12.9	20
Vermont	26.6	286.1	-8.9	1,133	32	14.7	7
Virginia	289.8	3,796.1	-4.7	1,360	12	13.0	18
Washington	259.7	3,219.7	-6.8	1,589	5	16.0	4
West Virginia	51.9	654.1	-5.3	997	50	10.3	46
Wisconsin	184.2	2,762.5	-4.8	1,140	30	11.7	30
Wyoming	27.7	260.2	-5.3	1,061	41	4.6	51
Puerto Rico	46.0	873.8	-4.0	621	[3]	8.0	[3]

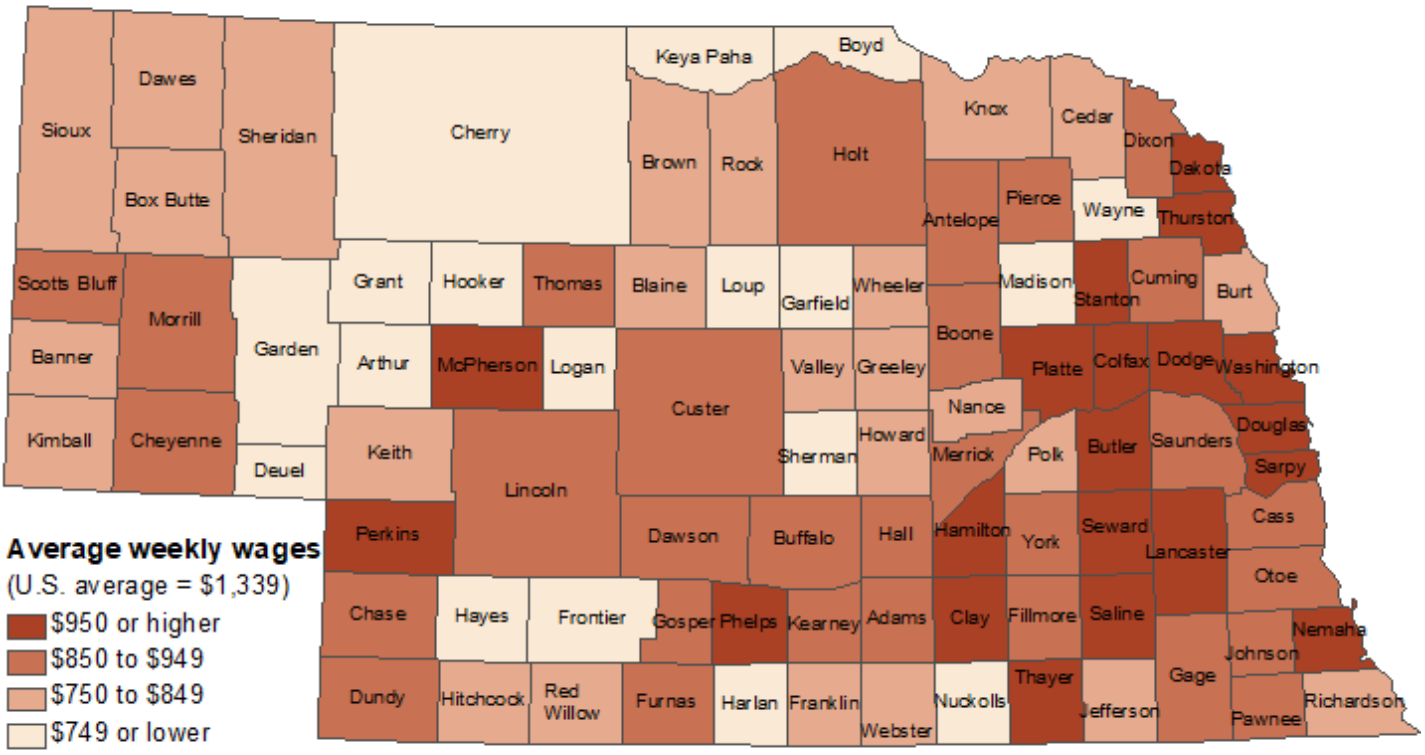
Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2020 - Continued

State	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
Virgin Islands	3.5	35.3	-11.5	1,057	[3]	-1.3	[3]

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 3. Average weekly wages by county in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.