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County Employment and Wages in North Dakota — Third Quarter 2020

Employment fell 3.9 percent in North Dakota's only large county, Cass, from September 2019 to September 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 in September 2020, Cass County's employment level was 116,700. (See [table 1.](#))

National employment decreased 6.8 percent over the year, with 355 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 35.4 percent. Utah, UT, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment with a gain of 1.9 percent.

Cass County's employment accounted for 29.3 percent of total employment within the state in September 2020. Within the county's private industry, health care and social assistance accounted for the largest employment (21,116). Nationwide, the 357 largest counties made up 72.9 percent of total U.S. employment.

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 45 of the 52 smaller counties were below the national average in the third quarter of 2020. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

Cass County's 6.5-percent wage growth from the third quarter of 2019 to the third quarter of 2020 was lower than the national rate of 7.4 percent and ranked 221st nationally. Among the 357 largest counties in the United States, 350 had over-the-year wage increases. Nationally, the increases in average weekly wages largely reflect substantial employment loss among lower-paid industries. Employment declines occurring in some higher-paid industries also feature significant wage increases. San Mateo, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (+23.2 percent). Seven large counties had wage declines during the period. Ector, TX, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-11.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Cass County's \$1,058 average weekly wage was below the national average of \$1,173 and ranked 179th among the 357 large U.S. counties in the third quarter of 2020 (See [table 1.](#)) Among the largest U.S. counties, 96 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2020. San Mateo, CA, had the highest average weekly wage at \$2,922. Average weekly wages were at or below the national average in 261 counties. At \$697 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

Average weekly wages in North Dakota's smaller counties

Among the 52 smaller counties in North Dakota—those with employment below 75,000—seven counties reported average weekly wages above the national average of \$1,173. Oliver County (\$1,493) reported the highest average weekly wage among North Dakota's small counties, while Sheridan County (\$538) reported the lowest average weekly wage in the state.

When all 53 counties in North Dakota were considered, 12 reported average weekly wages of less than \$750, 12 registered wages from \$750 to \$849, 15 had wages from \$850 to \$949, and 14 had average weekly wages of \$950 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 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 fourth quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 19, 2021.

The County Employment and Wages full data update for fourth quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

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 largest county in North Dakota, third quarter 2020

Area	Establishments, third quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
		September 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2019–20 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Third quarter 2020	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, third quarter 2019–20 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	10,561.3	138,549.5	-6.8	--	\$1,173	--	7.4	--
North Dakota	32.5	398.2	-7.0	--	1,025	28	-0.3	50
Cass	7.7	116.7	-3.9	51	1,058	179	6.5	221

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 2020

Area	Employment September 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	138,549,503	\$1,173
North Dakota	398,210	1,025
Adams	857	830
Barnes	4,374	795
Benson	1,958	826
Billings	685	729
Bottineau	2,353	853
Bowman	1,446	818
Burke	634	1,058
Burleigh	54,657	1,039
Cass	116,747	1,058
Cavalier	1,338	858
Dickey	1,758	725
Divide	703	879
Dunn	1,819	1,228
Eddy	710	712
Emmons	997	728
Foster	1,569	878
Golden Valley	593	741
Grand Forks	37,608	932
Grant	561	704
Griggs	795	793
Hettinger	708	882
Kidder	788	792
LaMoure	1,317	724
Logan	600	606
McHenry	1,306	863
McIntosh	1,016	732
McKenzie	9,255	1,449
McLean	3,408	1,200
Mercer	4,086	1,309
Morton	11,728	921
Mountrail	5,090	1,200
Nelson	993	672
Oliver	701	1,493
Pembina	3,576	914
Pierce	1,605	794
Ramsey	5,566	819
Ransom	1,984	742
Renville	719	762
Richland	7,626	851
Rolette	4,062	815
Sargent	3,723	860
Sheridan	218	538
Sioux	1,490	944
Slope	128	1,058
Stark	17,289	1,105
Steele	546	1,003
Stutsman	10,560	891
Towner	738	785
Traill	3,488	890
Walsh	5,074	854
Ward	29,696	982
Wells	1,468	752
Williams	22,734	1,314

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 2020

State	Establishments, third quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
		September 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2019–20	Third quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	10,561.3	138,549.5	-6.8	\$1,173	--	7.4	--
Alabama	132.2	1,902.4	-4.5	978	33	6.4	27
Alaska	22.9	302.6	-10.7	1,165	14	5.4	42
Arizona	174.1	2,797.1	-4.2	1,091	22	7.3	17
Arkansas	93.6	1,180.1	-3.4	892	49	6.1	31
California	1,643.8	16,096.8	-9.2	1,466	4	12.0	1
Colorado	220.1	2,597.2	-5.6	1,235	9	5.6	38
Connecticut	125.4	1,555.6	-7.3	1,328	7	7.4	15
Delaware	34.9	428.8	-5.6	1,150	15	6.8	21
District of Columbia	43.3	713.7	-8.1	1,962	1	6.1	31
Florida	749.1	8,329.7	-5.8	1,029	27	8.0	11
Georgia	313.0	4,282.1	-5.2	1,084	23	5.8	35
Hawaii	46.5	507.5	-22.9	1,114	18	10.3	4
Idaho	70.7	763.7	-0.2	884	50	5.5	41
Illinois	385.9	5,558.5	-7.8	1,199	11	6.8	21
Indiana	172.4	2,941.8	-4.7	961	39	5.3	43
Iowa	105.1	1,475.0	-5.2	969	36	6.0	34
Kansas	89.2	1,325.4	-5.0	952	40	6.6	24
Kentucky	128.0	1,807.1	-5.5	935	43	5.8	35
Louisiana	139.5	1,734.6	-9.6	970	35	5.2	45
Maine	54.4	597.3	-5.9	966	37	9.0	9
Maryland	172.4	2,496.6	-7.6	1,277	8	9.5	7
Massachusetts	265.1	3,314.8	-9.4	1,488	2	9.7	6
Michigan	266.9	4,035.9	-7.9	1,096	20	7.5	14
Minnesota	183.1	2,703.3	-7.4	1,178	12	6.4	27
Mississippi	74.9	1,092.4	-4.0	810	51	5.6	38
Missouri	218.8	2,681.7	-5.1	995	32	5.6	38
Montana	53.0	466.9	-2.5	904	48	6.6	24
Nebraska	73.7	949.9	-3.8	964	38	6.4	27
Nevada	87.9	1,251.0	-11.6	1,048	24	7.8	13
New Hampshire	56.1	634.2	-5.2	1,171	13	8.9	10
New Jersey	289.3	3,778.4	-8.0	1,331	6	9.5	7
New Mexico	63.1	771.9	-8.6	944	41	5.1	46
New York	657.6	8,547.7	-10.8	1,446	5	10.0	5
North Carolina	301.4	4,308.2	-4.4	1,039	26	6.9	20
North Dakota	32.5	398.2	-7.0	1,025	28	-0.3	50
Ohio	305.7	5,136.8	-5.6	1,040	25	6.6	24
Oklahoma	112.4	1,538.5	-5.7	917	46	2.3	48
Oregon	164.6	1,837.3	-7.0	1,113	19	7.4	15
Pennsylvania	366.5	5,501.0	-7.6	1,139	17	7.0	19
Rhode Island	40.1	452.5	-8.0	1,092	21	10.4	3
South Carolina	146.6	2,022.9	-5.2	924	44	6.7	23
South Dakota	35.2	422.3	-2.6	918	45	7.2	18
Tennessee	173.6	2,918.1	-4.6	1,022	29	5.8	35
Texas	733.1	11,926.8	-5.5	1,150	15	3.8	47
Utah	114.3	1,518.2	-1.0	1,015	30	6.1	31
Vermont	26.4	283.9	-8.6	1,001	31	7.9	12
Virginia	285.7	3,737.0	-5.0	1,201	10	6.4	27
Washington	256.6	3,266.2	-6.3	1,482	3	11.0	2
West Virginia	51.7	649.1	-6.7	913	47	1.8	49
Wisconsin	181.2	2,746.6	-5.2	977	34	5.3	43
Wyoming	27.5	264.0	-6.8	939	42	-0.4	51
Puerto Rico	45.7	831.6	-5.3	547	(3)	3.4	(3)
Virgin Islands	3.4	33.9	-13.0	1,019	(3)	-0.5	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

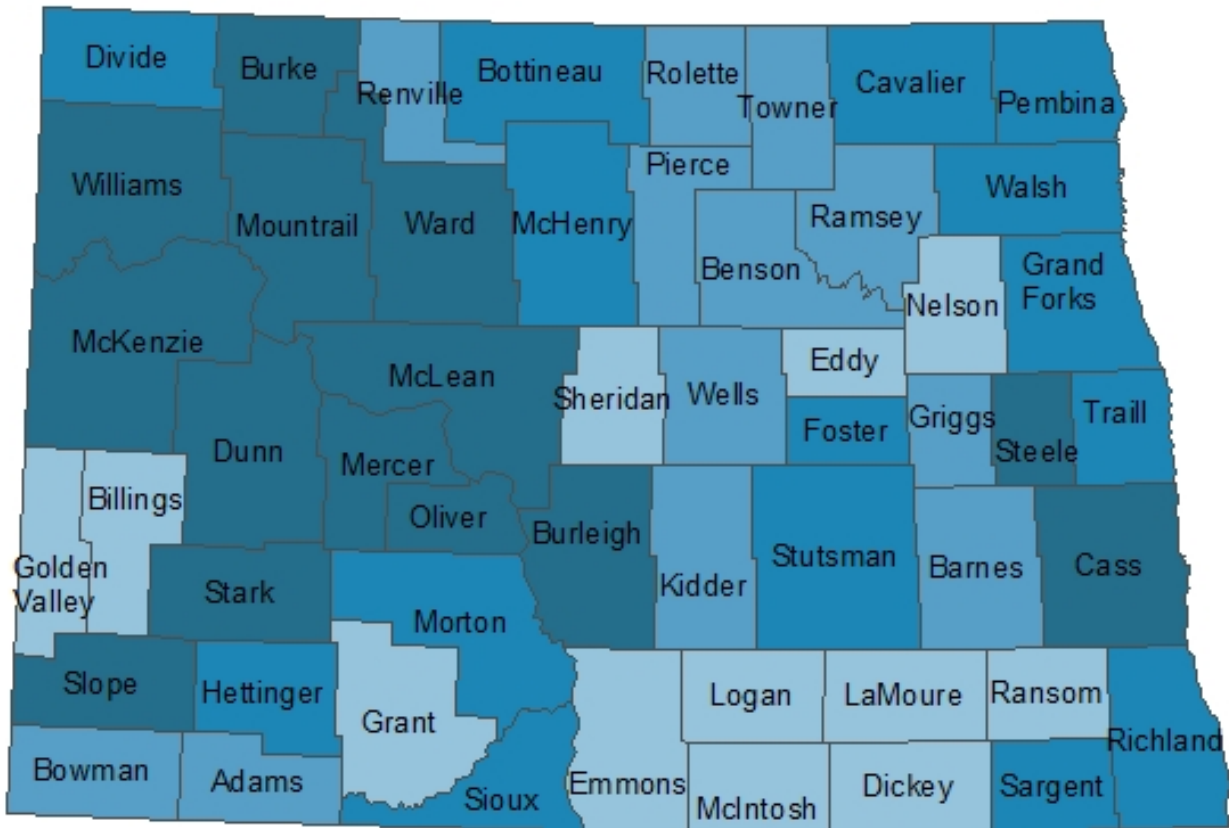
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Average weekly wages

(U.S. average = \$1,173)

- \$950 or higher
- \$850 - \$949
- \$750 - \$849
- \$749 or lower