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County Employment and Wages in Colorado – Fourth Quarter 2015

Employment rose in eight of the nine large counties in Colorado from December 2014 to December 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2014 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that all eight counties reported employment growth exceeding the national average of 1.9 percent. Larimer County had the largest increase at 3.7 percent. Weld was the only large county with an employment decline, down 3.1 percent, from December 2014 to December 2015.

Nationally, employment increased in 308 of the 342 largest U.S. counties from December 2014 to December 2015. Williamson, Tenn., posted the largest percentage increase with a gain of 6.8 percent over the year. Ector, Texas, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment among the largest counties in the U.S. with a loss of 11.8 percent.

Among the nine largest counties in Colorado, employment was highest in Denver (485,300) in December 2015. Three other counties—Arapahoe, El Paso, and Jefferson—had employment levels exceeding 200,000. Together, the nine large counties accounted for 80.3 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment.

Average weekly wages increased in all nine large counties in Colorado from the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015. Wages in Adams County experienced the largest rate of growth (5.1 percent), followed by Boulder (5.0 percent). Nationally, average weekly wages increased 4.4 percent. Average weekly wages in four of the large counties exceeded the national average of \$1,082. Denver had the highest average weekly among the largest counties in the state at \$1,292, followed by Douglas (\$1,291), Boulder (\$1,265), and Arapahoe (\$1,242). (See [table 1](#).)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000. Of these smaller counties, only Broomfield (\$1,483) and Pitkin (\$1,144) had average weekly wages above the national average. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

All nine large counties in Colorado recorded wage gains from the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015, with two counties posting increases greater than the U.S. average of 4.4 percent. (See [table 1](#).) As mentioned, Adams had the largest wage increase (5.1 percent), placing 148th in the national ranking, followed by Boulder (5.0 percent, 154th). Of the remaining large counties in Colorado, El Paso and Jefferson each had

wage growth of 3.9 percent and placed 237th in the national ranking. Douglas (3.0 percent, 289th), Denver (2.9 percent, 291st), Larimer (2.3 percent, 306th), Arapahoe (2.1 percent, 309th), and Weld (0.3 percent, 325th) placed in the bottom quartile of the national ranking.

Among the 342 largest counties in the U.S., 325 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2015. Wyandotte, Kan., ranked first in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 10.4 percent. Ten of the 342 largest counties experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 11.5 percent.

Large county average weekly wages

Four of the state's large counties had average weekly wages that were above the national average of \$1,082, placing them in the top 50 among the 342 largest counties in the United States in the fourth quarter of 2015. Denver (\$1,292) and Douglas (\$1,291) ranked 34th and 35th, respectively, followed by the counties of Boulder (\$1,265, 44th) and Arapahoe (\$1,242, 48th). Jefferson's average weekly wage matched the national average (\$1,082, 101st). The average weekly wages in Colorado's four other large counties ranged from \$928 to \$1,036.

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average of \$1,082 in 100 of the 342 largest counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,335, followed by New York, N.Y. (\$2,235), and San Mateo, Calif. (\$2,095). Among the 241 large counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2015, Cameron, Texas (\$649) reported the lowest wage.

Average weekly wages in Colorado's smaller counties

Of the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000, only Broomfield (\$1,483) and Pitkin (\$1,144) had average weekly wages above the national average of \$1,082. Mineral County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state with an average of \$541 in the fourth quarter of 2015. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 64 counties in Colorado were considered, 6 reported average weekly wages of \$599 or less, 14 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 19 had wages from \$700 to \$799, 8 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 17 had wages of \$900 or higher. Seven of the high-wage counties were concentrated in the vicinity of the major metropolitan areas of Denver and Boulder. (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 2014 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 2015 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2014 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2014/home.htm. The 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2016.

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.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 7, 2016.

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 9.7 million employer reports cover 141.9 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.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 9 largest counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2014-15 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	141,924.5	1.9	--	\$1,082	--	4.4	--
Colorado	2,537.5	2.5	--	1,103	11	3.3	40
Adams, Colo.	195.0	2.8	108	1,036	134	5.1	148
Arapahoe, Colo.	321.8	2.8	108	1,242	48	2.1	309
Boulder, Colo.	175.1	2.5	130	1,265	44	5.0	154
Denver, Colo.	485.3	3.2	77	1,292	34	2.9	291
Douglas, Colo.	115.3	3.2	77	1,291	35	3.0	289
El Paso, Colo.	261.5	3.2	77	952	200	3.9	237
Jefferson, Colo.	232.8	3.0	93	1,082	101	3.9	237
Larimer, Colo.	149.9	3.7	46	986	173	2.3	306
Weld, Colo.	100.2	-3.1	333	928	227	0.3	325

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 Colorado, 4th quarter 2015

Area	Employment December 2015	Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾
United States ⁽²⁾	141,924,459	\$1.082
Colorado	2,537,491	1,103
Adams	195,015	1,036
Alamosa	7,942	731
Arapahoe	321,755	1,242
Archuleta	3,831	682
Baca	1,092	554
Bent	1,195	654
Boulder	175,110	1,265
Broomfield	36,771	1,483
Chaffee	7,265	725
Cheyenne	658	829
Clear Creek	3,268	954
Conejos	1,357	560
Costilla	799	553
Crowley	1,076	771
Custer	866	654
Delta	8,157	669
Denver	485,317	1,292
Dolores	497	687
Douglas	115,290	1,291
Eagle	33,956	899
Elbert	3,379	808
El Paso	261,546	952
Fremont	13,165	752
Garfield	26,018	951
Gilpin	4,958	826
Grand	7,861	707
Gunnison	8,412	706
Hinsdale	239	613
Huerfano	1,663	570
Jackson	495	686
Jefferson	232,786	1,082
Kiowa	428	633
Kit Carson	3,009	717
Lake	2,322	659
La Plata	25,379	975
Larimer	149,916	986
Las Animas	4,786	722
Lincoln	2,140	724
Logan	8,357	732
Mesa	60,152	843
Mineral	607	541
Moffat	4,773	902
Montezuma	8,738	694
Montrose	14,250	763
Morgan	11,982	825
Otero	5,927	675
Ouray	1,587	751
Park	2,259	730
Phillips	1,629	724
Pitkin	17,771	1,144
Prowers	4,480	671
Pueblo	59,532	817
Rio Blanco	2,805	1,036
Rio Grande	3,699	717
Routt	15,196	903

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Colorado, 4th quarter 2015 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2015	Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾
Saguache	1,539	642
San Juan	263	552
San Miguel	5,622	831
Sedgwick	825	646
Summit	23,407	790
Teller.....	6,873	759
Washington.....	1,243	710
Weld	100,154	928
Yuma	3,913	777

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 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	141,924.5	1.9	\$1,082	--	4.4	--
Alabama	1,916.2	1.4	912	37	3.4	37
Alaska	315.9	-0.5	1,095	13	2.9	43
Arizona	2,701.8	2.6	967	24	4.4	28
Arkansas	1,201.4	1.7	838	46	3.8	35
California	16,593.8	3.1	1,274	5	5.4	10
Colorado	2,537.5	2.5	1,103	11	3.3	40
Connecticut	1,685.1	0.3	1,334	4	4.3	29
Delaware	441.2	1.8	1,086	15	3.4	37
District of Columbia	754.2	2.2	1,756	1	3.4	37
Florida	8,308.1	3.7	958	26	5.2	16
Georgia.....	4,249.4	2.9	1,001	21	4.5	27
Hawaii.....	653.0	2.2	957	27	5.4	10
Idaho	670.1	3.4	803	50	2.6	45
Illinois	5,931.2	1.4	1,146	8	5.1	18
Indiana.....	2,996.3	1.7	891	40	5.3	14
Iowa	1,539.0	0.7	920	34	5.7	3
Kansas	1,382.1	0.4	898	38	5.0	20
Kentucky.....	1,881.3	1.6	885	41	5.9	1
Louisiana	1,937.4	-1.0	940	29	1.8	47
Maine.....	596.9	0.7	873	43	5.7	3
Maryland.....	2,636.7	1.7	1,175	7	5.6	5
Massachusetts	3,479.1	1.6	1,385	2	5.4	10
Michigan	4,218.9	1.5	1,043	18	5.9	1
Minnesota.....	2,805.8	1.5	1,073	16	4.8	22
Mississippi.....	1,133.8	1.3	770	51	3.1	41
Missouri	2,759.6	1.8	933	33	4.6	25
Montana	453.2	2.5	818	49	3.0	42
Nebraska	971.8	1.4	880	42	5.1	18
Nevada	1,272.2	3.5	935	32	4.0	31
New Hampshire.....	648.6	1.7	1,139	9	5.4	10
New Jersey.....	3,988.4	1.7	1,262	6	4.0	31
New Mexico	808.9	-0.1	865	44	1.8	47
New York	9,227.6	1.7	1,372	3	3.9	34
North Carolina	4,247.1	2.5	939	30	5.5	8
North Dakota	428.1	-5.9	1,021	20	-2.8	51
Ohio	5,328.8	1.2	964	25	4.6	25
Oklahoma	1,605.0	-0.7	896	39	2.3	46
Oregon	1,814.8	3.3	979	23	5.5	8
Pennsylvania	5,759.7	0.7	1,063	17	4.9	21
Rhode Island	478.1	1.5	1,043	18	4.0	31
South Carolina.....	1,987.1	2.8	860	45	5.3	14
South Dakota.....	417.7	1.2	832	47	5.2	16
Tennessee	2,898.1	2.8	980	22	5.6	5
Texas	11,832.1	1.4	1,099	12	2.7	44
Utah	1,375.6	3.8	913	36	4.7	23
Vermont.....	312.1	0.3	919	35	4.1	30
Virginia.....	3,806.2	3.0	1,094	14	3.5	36
Washington.....	3,137.2	2.3	1,132	10	4.7	23
West Virginia	703.7	-1.3	829	48	1.3	49
Wisconsin	2,820.5	1.1	944	28	5.6	5
Wyoming	276.0	-2.9	937	31	-1.7	50
Puerto Rico.....	929.9	-1.6	565	(3)	1.6	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	38.4	-0.3	787	(3)	4.7	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

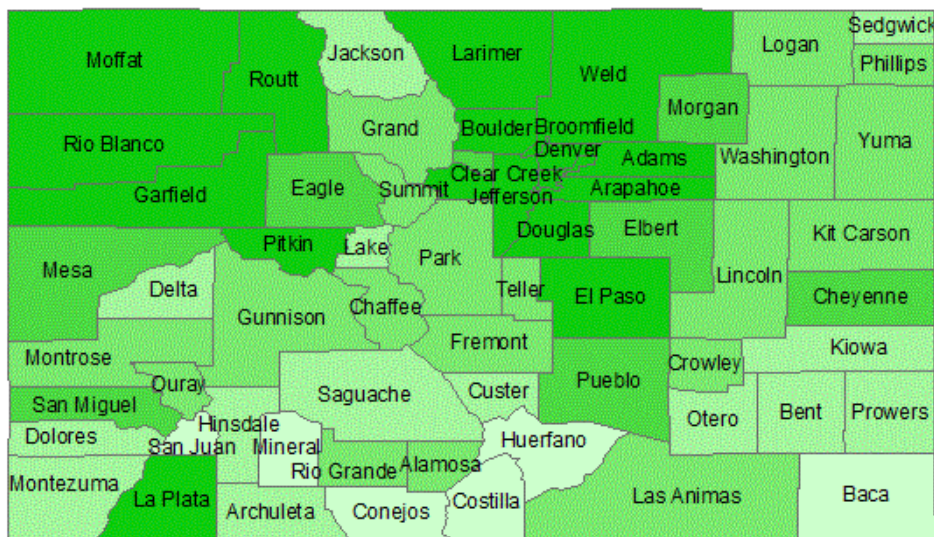
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 Colorado, fourth quarter 2015



Average weekly wages

(U.S. average = \$1,082)

■ \$900 or higher

■ \$800 - \$899

■ \$700 - \$799

■ \$600 - \$699

■ \$599 or lower

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.