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MOUNTAIN-PLAINS INFORMATION OFFICE: Kansas City, Mo.

Technical information: (816) 285-7000 BLSInfoKansasCity@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mountain-plains

Media contact: (816) 285-7000

## **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 148<sup>th</sup> in the national ranking, followed by Boulder (5.0 percent, 154<sup>th</sup>). Of the remaining large counties in Colorado, El Paso and Jefferson each had

wage growth of 3.9 percent and placed 237<sup>th</sup> in the national ranking. Douglas (3.0 percent, 289<sup>th</sup>), Denver (2.9 percent, 291<sup>st</sup>), Larimer (2.3 percent, 306<sup>th</sup>), Arapahoe (2.1 percent, 309<sup>th</sup>), and Weld (0.3 percent, 325<sup>th</sup>) 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 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup>, respectively, followed by the counties of Boulder (\$1,265, 44<sup>th</sup>) and Arapahoe (\$1,242, 48<sup>th</sup>). Jefferson's average weekly wage matched the national average (\$1,082, 101<sup>st</sup>). 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/](http://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/cewbultn14.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn14.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/](http://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 <sup>(1)</sup> |  |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
|                                    | December 2015 (thousands) | Percent change, December 2014-15 <sup>(2)</sup> | National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup> | Average weekly wage                | National ranking by level <sup>(3)</sup> | Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15 <sup>(2)</sup> | National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup> |
| United States <sup>(4)</sup> ..... | 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 <sup>(1)</sup> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| United States <sup>(2)</sup> | 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 <sup>(1)</sup> |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 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 <sup>(1)</sup> |                           |  |                                    |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
|                                    | 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 <sup>(2)</sup> ..... | 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:

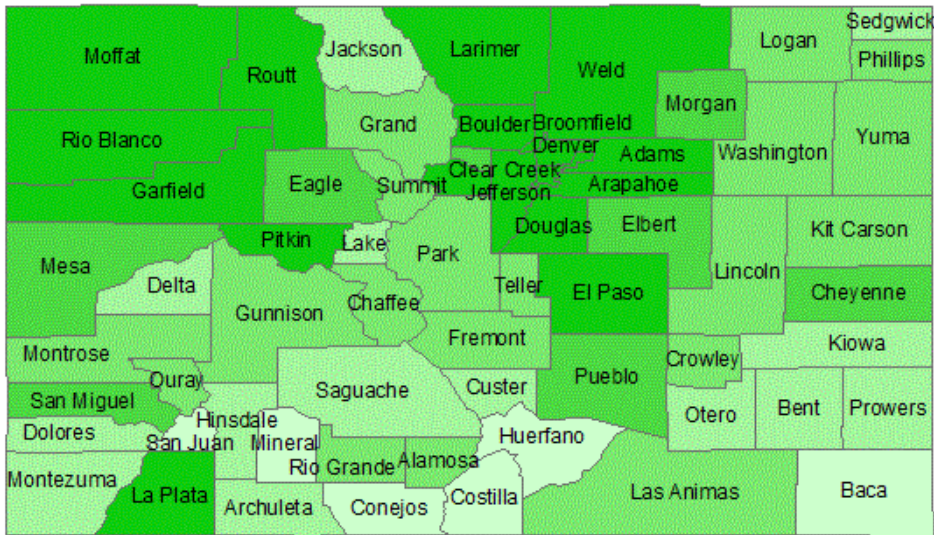
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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.