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Occupational Employment and Wages for Selected Mechanical Occupations in Alabama's Metropolitan Areas – May 2014

Among the 12 metropolitan areas in Alabama, 8 had annual wages that were significantly below the national average for automotive service technicians and mechanics. Ten areas had below-average wages for bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that for industrial machinery mechanics, five areas had below-average wages and four areas had above-average wages. This was the only one of the three selected occupations for which any of the metropolitan areas in Alabama had above-average wages. Nationwide, the average (mean) wage for automotive service technicians and mechanics was \$39,980; for bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists, \$45,160; and for industrial machinery mechanics, \$50,440. (See [table A](#). For comprehensive definitions of metropolitan areas in Alabama, please see [Technical Note](#).)

Table A. Average (mean) annual wages for selected mechanical occupations in the United States, Alabama, and metropolitan areas in Alabama, May 2014

| Area | Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics | Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists | Industrial Machinery Mechanics |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| United States..... | \$39,980 | \$45,160 | \$50,440 |
| Alabama | 37,140* | 39,770* | 49,460 |
| Anniston-Oxford | 37,000* | 32,530* | 49,240 |
| Auburn-Opelika | 40,010 | 44,580 | 42,400* |
| Birmingham-Hoover | 39,420 | 44,430 | 46,550* |
| Columbus | 34,720* | 34,710* | 51,070 |
| Decatur | 36,690* | 42,990* | 58,350* |
| Dothan | 36,560* | 38,960* | 37,870* |
| Florence-Muscle Shoals..... | 35,100* | 37,870* | 51,790 |
| Gadsden | 32,260* | 36,910* | 46,760* |
| Huntsville | 35,370* | 39,930* | 47,450* |
| Mobile | 41,820 | 38,990* | 55,170* |
| Montgomery | 41,550 | 40,630* | 53,890* |
| Tuscaloosa | 36,880* | 40,290* | 60,150* |

Note: An asterisk indicates that the mean annual wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

Of the 12 metropolitan areas located entirely or partially in the state, the Birmingham-Hoover area had the largest employment in the three selected mechanical occupations at 5,290. In each of the remaining metropolitan areas in Alabama, combined employment in the three selected occupations was less than 2,200. (See [table B](#).)

Table B. Employment of selected mechanical occupations in the United States, Alabama, and metropolitan areas in Alabama, May 2014

| Area | Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics | Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists | Industrial Machinery Mechanics |
|------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| United States | 633,390 | 243,080 | 313,880 |
| Alabama | 9,160 | 4,150 | 9,470 |
| Anniston-Oxford | 160 | 40 | 210 |
| Auburn-Opelika | 310 | 60 | 180 |
| Birmingham-Hoover | 2,520 | 1,200 | 1,570 |
| Columbus | 800 | 120 | 450 |
| Decatur | 250 | 130 | 590 |
| Dothan | 340 | 170 | 230 |
| Florence-Muscle Shoals | 220 | 90 | 310 |
| Gadsden | 190 | 50 | 220 |
| Huntsville | 850 | 170 | 620 |
| Mobile | 770 | 590 | 830 |
| Montgomery | 620 | 200 | 670 |
| Tuscaloosa | 390 | 150 | 760 |

Wages for automotive service technicians and mechanics in metropolitan areas in Alabama

Wages were significantly below the national average of \$39,980 for automotive service technicians and mechanics in 8 of the 12 areas in Alabama. Gadsden (\$32,260), Columbus (\$34,720), and Florence-Muscle Shoals (\$35,100) were among the lower-paying areas. Four areas had wages that were not measurably different from the U.S. average: Mobile (\$41,820), Montgomery (\$41,550), Auburn-Opelika (\$40,010), and Birmingham (\$39,420).

Wages for bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists in metropolitan areas in Alabama

Ten metropolitan areas had wages significantly lower than the national average of \$45,160 for bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists. Anniston-Oxford (\$32,530), Columbus (\$34,710), and Gadsden (\$36,910) were among the lower-paying areas. Bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists in Auburn-Opleika and Birmingham-Hoover earned wages that were not measurably different from the national average for this occupation.

Wages for industrial machinery mechanics in metropolitan areas in Alabama

Four metropolitan areas had average wages for industrial machinery mechanics that were significantly higher than the \$50,440 national average: Tuscaloosa (\$60,150), Decatur (\$58,350), Mobile (\$55,170), and Montgomery (\$53,890). Five localities had wages for industrial machinery mechanics that were measurably below the national average, including Dothan (\$37,870), Auburn-Opelika (\$42,400), and Birmingham-Hoover (\$46,550). Industrial machinery mechanics in the remaining three areas in Alabama earned wages that were not measurably different from the U.S. average.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Alabama Department of Labor.

Box Note

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2014 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, and November 2011. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 74.3 percent based on establishments and 70.5 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.1 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.

The May 2014 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

- **Anniston-Oxford, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes Calhoun County in Alabama.
- **Auburn-Opelika, Ala. MSA** includes Lee County in Alabama.
- **Birmingham-Hoover, Ala. MSA** includes Bibb, Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties in Alabama.
- **Columbus, Ga.-Ala. MSA** includes Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, and Muscogee Counties in Georgia, and Russell County in Alabama.

- **Decatur, Ala. MSA** includes Lawrence and Morgan Counties in Alabama.
- **Dothan, Ala. MSA** includes Geneva, Henry, and Houston Counties in Alabama.
- **Florence-Muscle Shoals, Ala. MSA** includes Colbert and Lauderdale Counties in Alabama.
- **Gadsden, Ala. MSA** includes Etowah County in Alabama.
- **Huntsville, Ala. MSA** includes Limestone and Madison Counties in Alabama.
- **Mobile, Ala. MSA** includes Mobile County in Alabama.
- **Montgomery, Ala. MSA** includes Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, and Montgomery Counties in Alabama.
- **Tuscaloosa, Ala. MSA** includes Greene, Hale, and Tuscaloosa Counties in Alabama.

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