NEWS RELEASE
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For Release: Thursday, September 24, 2015 15-1782-DAL

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Parish Employment and Wages in Louisiana – First Quarter 2015

Employment rose in 6 of the 7 largest parishes in Louisiana from March 2014 to March 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties/parishes are those with 2014 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that one Louisiana parish ranked among the top 10 nationwide for job growth. The 5.3-percent employment gain in Calcasieu Parish was the fastest in the state and ranked sixth in the country. (See table 1.)

Nationally, employment advanced 2.1 percent from March 2014 to March 2015 as 323 of the 342 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Utah County, Utah, recorded the largest percentage increase among the large counties in the U.S., up 6.7 percent over the year. Atlantic, N.J., registered the largest percentage employment decline, down 4.3 percent.

Among the seven largest parishes in Louisiana, employment was highest in East Baton Rouge (268,200) in March 2015, followed by Jefferson (194,500) and Orleans (189,400). Together, Louisiana's seven large parishes accounted for 56.2 percent of the state's total employment. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.3 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the first quarter of 2014 to the first quarter of 2015, East Baton Rouge recorded the fastest rate of increase in average weekly wages among the seven large parishes in Louisiana, registering a gain of 3.1 percent. (See table 1.) Orleans had the highest average wage among the largest parishes at $1,004 per week. Nationally, average weekly wages increased 2.1 percent over the year to $1,048.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 57 parishes in Louisiana with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in six of these smaller parishes were above the national average. (See table 2.)

Large parish wage changes

Three of Louisiana's seven large parishes recorded wage growth above the 2.1-percent national increase during the year ending in the first quarter of 2015. East Baton Rouge Parish's 3.1-percent rise in average weekly wages ranked 62nd among the nation's 342 largest counties. Wage growth in Orleans (3.0 percent) and St. Tammany (2.6 percent) also ranked in the top 100 nationwide. (See table 1.) In three other large parishes, weekly wages rose at a slower pace than the national average: Caddo (1.5 percent); Jefferson (1.3 percent); and Calcasieu (0.2 percent). In contrast, average weekly wages fell in Lafayette Parish, down 0.5 percent.

Nationally, 297 of the 342 largest counties registered over-the-year wage increases. Olmsted, Minn., experienced the largest wage gain in the nation, up 11.7 percent from the first quarter of 2014. Washington, Pa., had the second largest increase (10.7 percent), followed by Riverside, Calif. (10.1 percent).

Among the nation's 342 largest counties, 39 experienced over-the-year wage decreases. Snohomish, Wash., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages, with a loss of 4.8 percent. Chester, Pa., had the second largest wage decline (-4.0 percent), followed by Williamson, Texas (-3.1 percent).

Large parish average weekly wages

Weekly wages in all of the state's seven large parishes were below the national average of $1,048 in the first quarter of 2015. However, average weekly wages in three of these parishes were high enough to place in the top half of the national ranking. Orleans ($1,004) had the highest average weekly wage among the state's largest parishes and ranked 122nd in the country. Other parishes ranking in the top half nationally were Lafayette ($952, 152nd) and East Baton Rouge ($942, 155th). Average weekly wages in the four remaining large parishes placed in bottom half of the national ranking, ranging from $887 to $794.

In the first quarter of 2015, nearly three-fourths of the largest U.S. counties (248) reported wages below the national weekly average of $1,048. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage ($583), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron ($593) and Hidalgo ($607).

Among the nation's 342 largest counties, 93 registered weekly wages above the U.S. average. New York, N.Y., held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,847. Santa Clara, Calif., was second at $2,203, followed by Somerset, N.J. ($2,080), San Francisco, Calif. ($2,070), and San Mateo, Calif. ($2,066). Average wages in the highest-ranked county, New York, N.Y., were nearly five times the average wage in the lowest-ranked county, Horry, S.C. ($583).

Average weekly wages in Louisiana's smaller parishes

For smaller parishes in Louisiana – those with employment below 75,000 – 51 of 57 reported weekly wages below the national average ($1,048) in the first quarter of 2015. In the six remaining smaller parishes, wages not only exceeded the national average, but also were the highest in the state, ranging from $1,385 in St. James to $1,062 in West Feliciana. The parishes of Madison and West Carroll reported the lowest weekly wages in the state at $531 and $534, respectively. (See table 2.)

When all 64 parishes were considered, 5 reported average wages of $549 or less per week, 27 registered wages from $550 to $699, 11 had wages from $700 to $849, 10 had wages from $850 to $999, and 11 had wages of $1,000 or more. (See chart 1.) The higher-paying parishes were concentrated in the southern half of the state around the metropolitan areas of Baton Rouge, Houma, Lake Charles, and New Orleans. The lowest-paid parishes, those with weekly wages under $549, were generally located in the northeastern quadrant of the state.

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 2013 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 2014 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content

from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2013* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2013/home.htm. The 2014 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in late September 2015.

The County Employment and Wages release for second quarter 2015 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, December 17, 2015.

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 9.5 million employer reports cover 137.4 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 (see Technical Note below) 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 sensory impaired individuals 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 7 largest counties in Louisiana, first quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage [1]			
	March 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, first quarter 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	137,412.4	2.1	--	$1,048	--	2.1	--
Louisiana	1,927.1	1.0	--	885	28	2.0	21
Caddo, La.	115.3	0.7	282	794	288	1.5	195
Calcasieu, La.	91.6	5.3	6	858	224	0.2	292
East Baton Rouge, La.	268.2	2.2	150	942	155	3.1	62
Jefferson, La.	194.5	0.6	290	887	195	1.3	223
Lafayette, La.	139.7	-0.9	338	952	152	-0.5	314
Orleans, La.	189.4	2.7	112	1,004	122	3.0	67
St. Tammany, La.	84.1	3.5	58	871	212	2.6	96

(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 parishes in Louisiana, first quarter 2015

Area	Employment March 2015	Average Weekly Wage [1]
United States [2]	137,412,381	$1,048
Louisiana	1,927,114	885
Acadia	14,577	637
Allen	7,761	697
Ascension	43,581	1,040
Assumption	4,255	755
Avoyelles	10,799	580
Beauregard	8,672	761
Bienville	4,273	676
Bossier	43,778	691
Caddo	115,302	794
Calcasieu	91,582	858
Caldwell	2,487	571
Cameron	6,885	1,290
Catahoula	2,147	543
Claiborne	3,500	694
Concordia	5,606	594
De Soto	6,642	983
East Baton Rouge	268,185	942
East Carroll	1,761	578
East Feliciana	4,898	718
Evangeline	8,214	620
Franklin	4,753	536
Grant	3,273	741
Iberia	30,899	938
Iberville	15,004	1,232
Jackson	3,722	731
Jefferson	194,469	887
Jefferson Davis	8,462	691
La Salle	4,529	652
Lafayette	139,693	952
Lafourche	38,027	1,029
Lincoln	17,882	681
Livingston	25,482	637
Madison	3,289	531
Morehouse	6,811	559
Natchitoches	12,958	616
Orleans	189,444	1,004
Ouachita	70,642	725
Plaquemines	14,597	1,313
Pointe Coupee	5,081	630
Rapides	58,330	714
Red River	2,542	820
Richland	6,428	577
Sabine	5,505	622
St. Bernard	10,445	885
St. Charles	25,217	1,364
St. Helena	1,430	648
St. James	8,044	1,385
St. John the Baptist	14,598	1,005
St. Landry	24,018	653
St. Martin	13,014	788
St. Mary	26,060	991
St. Tammany	84,149	871
Tangipahoa	41,828	686
Tensas	986	609

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all parishes in Louisiana, first quarter 2015 - Continued

Area	Employment March 2015	Average Weekly Wage (1)
Terrebonne	57,398	1,005
Union	4,735	547
Vermilion	13,635	778
Vernon	13,579	648
Washington	10,278	658
Webster	12,170	696
West Baton Rouge	13,328	919
West Carroll	2,262	534
West Feliciana	5,775	1,062
Winn	4,870	651

(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: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

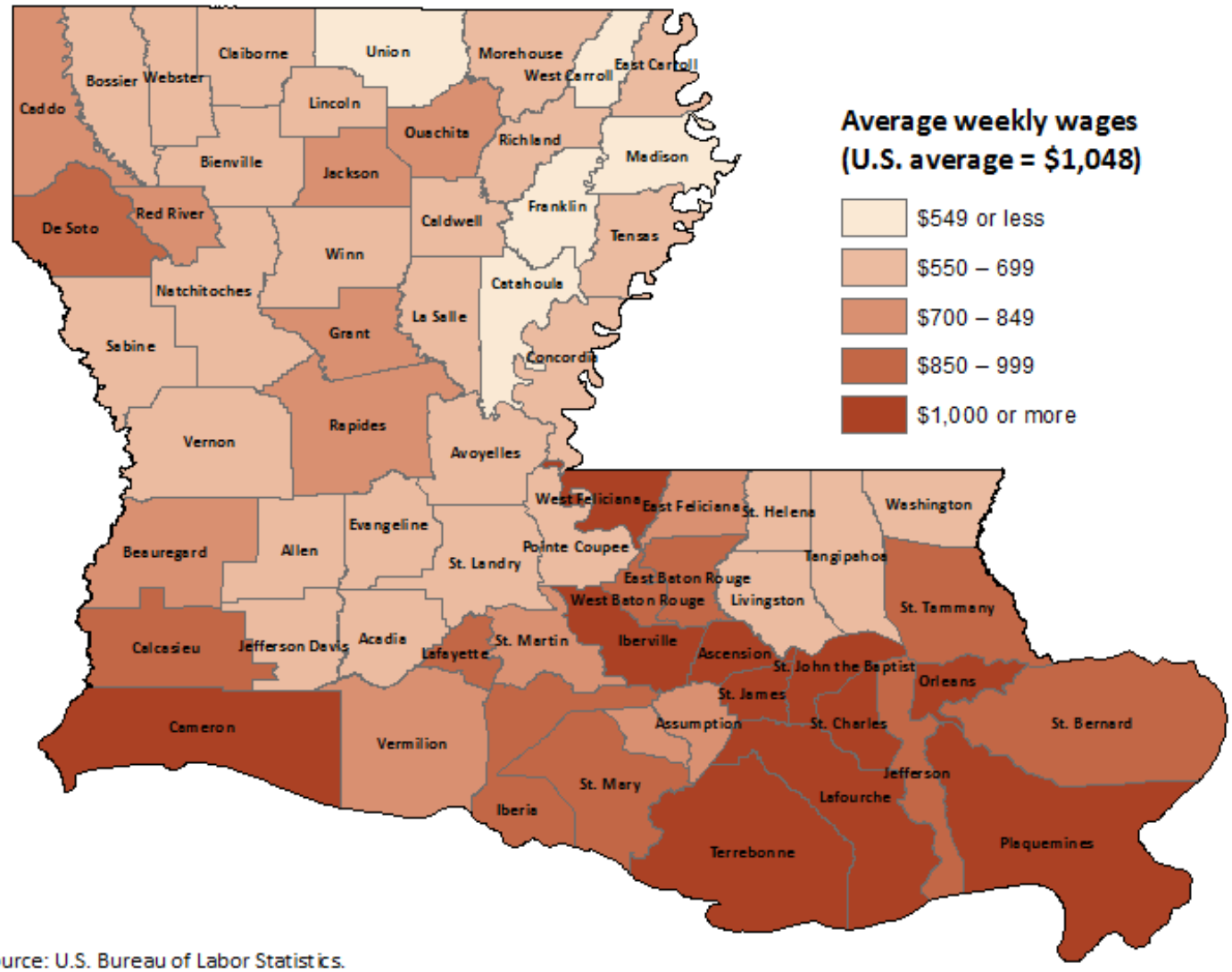
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	March 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	137,412.4	2.1	$1,048	--	2.1	--
Alabama	1,873.5	1.3	844	39	2.2	19
Alaska	322.2	1.0	1,051	15	2.6	10
Arizona	2,605.6	2.5	926	23	1.0	45
Arkansas	1,166.6	1.3	790	47	0.8	47
California	16,029.5	3.0	1,207	6	3.7	3
Colorado	2,458.0	3.7	1,071	13	2.4	16
Connecticut	1,640.5	0.8	1,382	3	1.5	35
Delaware	422.8	2.5	1,105	9	-0.5	51
District of Columbia	732.6	1.4	1,764	1	3.2	4
Florida	8,018.0	3.6	885	28	1.8	27
Georgia	4,107.0	3.5	989	18	1.7	31
Hawaii	633.7	1.3	881	31	2.8	9
Idaho	650.3	3.1	736	50	2.2	19
Illinois	5,724.6	1.2	1,130	7	2.4	16
Indiana	2,894.8	1.8	857	35	1.4	38
Iowa	1,504.3	1.3	848	37	2.9	7
Kansas	1,357.1	1.0	851	36	1.4	38
Kentucky	1,810.3	1.5	823	41	1.5	35
Louisiana	1,927.1	1.0	885	28	2.0	21
Maine	571.4	0.9	793	45	0.9	46
Maryland	2,540.8	1.2	1,113	8	2.5	12
Massachusetts	3,338.6	1.7	1,341	4	3.2	4
Michigan	4,079.5	1.8	969	21	1.9	24
Minnesota	2,709.2	1.8	1,079	12	4.3	1
Mississippi	1,102.3	0.6	711	51	0.7	48
Missouri	2,678.0	1.7	882	30	1.8	27
Montana	441.0	2.7	750	49	2.6	10
Nebraska	943.1	1.4	818	42	2.5	12
Nevada	1,227.7	3.7	865	34	-0.2	50
New Hampshire	623.5	1.5	982	20	1.2	43
New Jersey	3,834.6	1.4	1,288	5	1.9	24
New Mexico	798.7	1.4	805	43	1.5	35
New York	8,865.0	1.9	1,463	2	0.2	49
North Carolina	4,099.4	2.5	930	22	1.9	24
North Dakota	436.0	1.6	984	19	4.2	2
Ohio	5,144.5	1.4	922	24	1.4	38
Oklahoma	1,592.7	1.3	869	33	2.0	21
Oregon	1,748.7	3.5	919	25	2.9	7
Pennsylvania	5,606.9	0.9	1,031	16	2.4	16
Rhode Island	456.1	1.4	1,008	17	1.2	43
South Carolina	1,919.1	2.5	801	44	1.8	27
South Dakota	406.5	1.5	763	48	3.0	6
Tennessee	2,772.7	2.1	886	27	1.4	38
Texas	11,557.0	2.9	1,089	10	2.5	12
Utah	1,318.8	3.7	845	38	1.7	31
Vermont	303.9	0.9	824	40	2.0	21
Virginia	3,649.3	1.1	1,068	14	1.7	31
Washington	3,064.4	3.2	1,087	11	1.8	27
West Virginia	692.4	-0.3	792	46	1.4	38
Wisconsin	2,734.3	1.5	877	32	2.5	12
Wyoming	277.8	0.8	892	26	1.7	31
Puerto Rico	904.9	-1.1	524	[3]	1.0	[3]
Virgin Islands	38.5	0.0	738	[3]	-0.7	[3]

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

(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 parish in Louisiana, first quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.