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Parish Employment and Wages in Louisiana – First Quarter 2016

Employment rose in 4 of the 7 largest parishes in Louisiana from March 2015 to March 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties/parishes are those with 2015 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that the rate of job growth in Calcasieu Parish (2.8 percent) exceeded the U.S. average. (See table 1.)

Nationally, employment advanced 2.0 percent from March 2015 to March 2016 as 318 of the 344 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Williamson, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase, up 7.9 percent over the year. Midland, Texas, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment, down 9.0 percent. Within Midland, natural resources and mining had the largest decrease in employment.

Among the seven largest parishes in Louisiana, employment was highest in East Baton Rouge (269,800) in March 2016, followed by Orleans (193,100) and Jefferson (191,900). Together, Louisiana's seven large parishes accounted for 56.7 percent of the state's total employment. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.6 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the first quarter of 2015 to the first quarter of 2016, Calcasieu was the only large parish in the state to record an increase in average weekly wages, with a gain of 3.6 percent. (See table 1.) Orleans had the highest average wage among the largest parishes at $981 per week. Nationally, average weekly wages fell 0.5 percent over the year to $1,043.

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

Average weekly wages fell in 6 of the 7 large Louisiana parishes from the first quarter of 2015 to the first quarter of 2016. As noted, Calcasieu was the only large Louisiana parish with an over-the-year wage gain, up 3.6 percent. This increase ranked 10th among the nation's 344 large counties. In contrast, average weekly wages decreased 10.3 percent in Lafayette, ranking the parish 341st. Wages fell at a slower pace in the other large parishes, though the declines were greater than the U.S. average: Jefferson (-1.0 percent), East Baton Rouge (-1.5 percent), Caddo and Orleans (-2.0 percent each), and St. Tammany (-3.0 percent).

Nationally, 167 of the 344 largest counties registered over-the-year wage decreases. McLean, Ill., had the largest percentage wage decrease among the large U.S. counties, down 13.3 percent from the first quarter of 2015. Washington, Pa., had the second largest decrease (-12.0 percent), followed by Lafayette, La. (-10.3 percent).

Among the nation's 344 largest counties, 164 experienced over-the-year wage increases. Clayton, Ga., had the largest percentage increase in average weekly wages with a gain of 15.5 percent. King, Wash., had the second largest wage increase (5.1 percent), followed by San Mateo, Calif. (4.8 percent).

Large parish average weekly wages

Weekly wages in all of the state's seven large parishes were below the national average of $1,043 in the first quarter of 2016. However, average weekly wages in two of these parishes placed in the top half of the national ranking. Orleans ($981) had the highest average weekly wage among the state's large parishes and ranked 136th in the country, followed by East Baton Rouge ($930, 161st). Average weekly wages in the five remaining large parishes ranged from $889 to $776 and placed in bottom half of the national ranking.

In the first quarter of 2016, nearly three-fourths of the largest U.S. counties (253) reported wages below the national weekly average of $1,043. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage ($587), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron ($592), Hidalgo ($614), and Webb ($650).

Among the nation's 344 largest counties, 91 registered weekly wages above the U.S. average. New York, N.Y., held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,783. Santa Clara, Calif., was second at $2,210, followed by San Mateo, Calif. ($2,195), San Francisco, Calif. ($2,054), and Somerset, N.J. ($2,022). Average wages in the highest-ranked county, New York, N.Y., were more than four times the average wage in the lowest-ranked county, Horry, S.C. ($587).

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 ($1,043) in the first quarter of 2016. In the six remaining smaller parishes, wages not only exceeded the national average, but were also the highest in the state, ranging from $1,480 in Cameron to $1,063 in St. John the Baptist. Madison and Franklin Parishes had the lowest weekly wages in the state at $535 and $536, respectively. (See table 2.)

When all 64 parishes were considered, 6 reported average weekly wages of $549 or less, 27 registered wages from $550 to $699, 12 had wages from $700 to $849, 12 had wages from $850 to $999, and 7 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, 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 2015 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 2016 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2015* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn15.htm.

The County Employment and Wages release for second quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, December 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 140.1 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 parishes in Louisiana, first quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	March 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2015-16 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, first quarter 2015-16 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	140,070.8	2.0	--	$1,043	--	-0.5	--
Louisiana	1,910.5	-0.8	--	860	32	-2.6	47
Caddo, La.	114.3	-1.0	330	776	302	-2.0	270
Calcasieu, La.	94.2	2.8	99	889	195	3.6	10
East Baton Rouge, La.	269.8	1.0	263	930	161	-1.5	247
Jefferson, La.	191.9	-1.2	332	875	205	-1.0	222
Lafayette, La.	132.1	-5.5	342	857	220	-10.3	341
Orleans, La.	193.1	1.8	192	981	136	-2.0	270
St. Tammany, La.	87.1	2.0	168	852	227	-3.0	301

(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 2016

Area	Employment March 2016	Average weekly wage [1]
United States [2]	140,070,814	$1,043
Louisiana	1,910,487	860
Acadia	14,341	610
Allen	7,713	710
Ascension	44,357	1,035
Assumption	3,864	718
Avoyelles	10,584	546
Beauregard	8,490	717
Bienville	4,272	661
Bossier	43,695	679
Caddo	114,274	776
Calcasieu	94,210	889
Caldwell	2,343	597
Cameron	6,935	1,480
Catahoula	1,905	544
Claiborne	3,424	673
Concordia	5,418	608
De Soto	6,610	941
East Baton Rouge	269,761	930
East Carroll	1,833	543
East Feliciana	4,889	701
Evangeline	8,020	615
Franklin	4,579	536
Grant	3,418	712
Iberia	27,971	845
Iberville	15,040	1,255
Jackson	3,624	664
Jefferson	191,855	875
Jefferson Davis	8,328	654
La Salle	4,328	673
Lafayette	132,140	857
Lafourche	35,304	912
Lincoln	18,650	664
Livingston	26,816	644
Madison	3,310	535
Morehouse	6,753	553
Natchitoches	13,387	606
Orleans	193,117	981
Ouachita	72,043	720
Plaquemines	13,649	1,266
Pointe Coupee	4,988	619
Rapides	58,240	722
Red River	2,443	686
Richland	6,371	585
Sabine	5,451	605
St. Bernard	10,240	791
St. Charles	27,161	1,366
St. Helena	1,466	674
St. James	7,909	1,398
St. John the Baptist	14,474	1,063
St. Landry	23,982	640
St. Martin	12,000	722
St. Mary	23,137	928
St. Tammany	87,055	852
Tangipahoa	41,706	632
Tensas	979	578

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all parishes in Louisiana, first quarter 2016 - Continued

Area	Employment March 2016	Average weekly wage (1)
Terrebonne	52,068	937
Union	4,828	542
Vermilion	13,082	707
Vernon	13,620	675
Washington	10,645	649
Webster	11,743	659
West Baton Rouge	13,281	916
West Carroll	2,298	612
West Feliciana	5,231	946
Winn	4,800	640

(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.

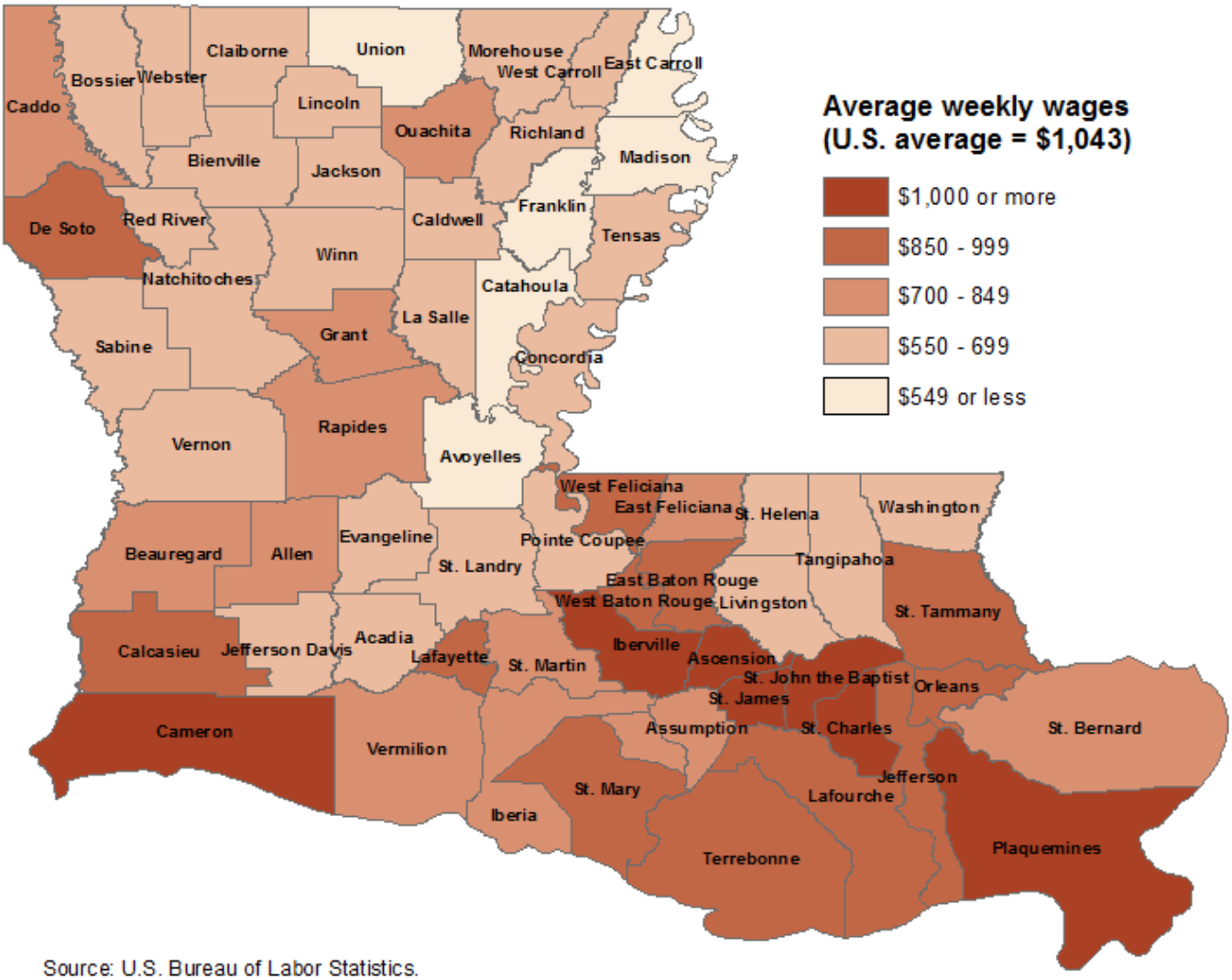
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	March 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	140,070.8	2.0	$1,043	--	-0.5	--
Alabama	1,902.6	1.6	842	37	-0.2	22
Alaska	317.6	-1.4	1,028	15	-2.0	43
Arizona	2,679.8	2.8	918	23	-0.8	30
Arkansas	1,191.1	2.1	793	45	0.5	13
California	16,455.5	2.6	1,206	6	0.0	20
Colorado	2,514.6	2.4	1,057	13	-1.3	36
Connecticut	1,650.6	0.6	1,362	3	-1.4	38
Delaware	429.7	1.5	1,072	10	-3.0	48
District of Columbia	749.6	2.0	1,766	1	0.4	14
Florida	8,301.8	3.5	887	27	0.2	18
Georgia	4,215.1	3.0	1,008	17	1.9	2
Hawaii	645.1	1.4	896	26	1.7	3
Idaho	670.4	3.5	725	50	-1.5	39
Illinois	5,800.6	1.2	1,126	7	-0.5	28
Indiana	2,949.5	1.9	853	33	-0.5	28
Iowa	1,518.2	0.9	844	36	-0.4	27
Kansas	1,362.3	0.4	833	38	-2.0	43
Kentucky	1,843.9	1.9	823	41	0.1	19
Louisiana	1,910.5	-0.8	860	32	-2.6	47
Maine	580.5	1.8	804	44	1.1	8
Maryland	2,591.7	1.9	1,103	9	-0.8	30
Massachusetts	3,414.8	2.1	1,327	4	-1.0	33
Michigan	4,163.7	2.1	976	20	0.7	11
Minnesota	2,750.1	1.5	1,065	12	-1.2	34
Mississippi	1,121.0	1.7	713	51	0.4	14
Missouri	2,729.5	1.9	879	29	-0.3	25
Montana	447.8	1.8	751	49	0.3	16
Nebraska	956.6	1.4	817	42	0.0	20
Nevada	1,264.1	3.0	875	30	1.2	5
New Hampshire	635.1	1.9	998	18	1.6	4
New Jersey	3,909.7	2.4	1,268	5	-1.7	41
New Mexico	800.4	0.0	792	46	-1.6	40
New York	9,042.2	2.0	1,456	2	-0.3	25
North Carolina	4,220.3	3.0	928	22	-0.2	22
North Dakota	409.4	-6.2	908	25	-7.6	51
Ohio	5,236.2	1.8	913	24	-0.8	30
Oklahoma	1,578.6	-0.9	833	38	-4.1	49
Oregon	1,808.2	3.2	929	21	1.2	5
Pennsylvania	5,662.2	1.1	1,012	16	-1.9	42
Rhode Island	464.6	1.9	985	19	-2.2	46
South Carolina	1,974.6	2.7	806	43	0.8	10
South Dakota	410.5	0.9	771	48	1.2	5
Tennessee	2,859.2	3.3	887	27	0.3	16
Texas	11,638.7	0.7	1,066	11	-2.1	45
Utah	1,369.2	3.8	849	35	0.6	12
Vermont	304.6	0.1	832	40	1.0	9
Virginia	3,748.1	2.6	1,057	13	-1.2	34
Washington	3,147.7	3.1	1,121	8	3.0	1
West Virginia	683.9	-1.2	782	47	-1.3	36
Wisconsin	2,771.4	1.3	875	30	-0.2	22
Wyoming	267.9	-3.7	850	34	-4.7	50
Puerto Rico	895.2	-1.2	520	[3]	-0.4	[3]
Virgin Islands	38.6	0.4	769	[3]	2.9	[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 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.