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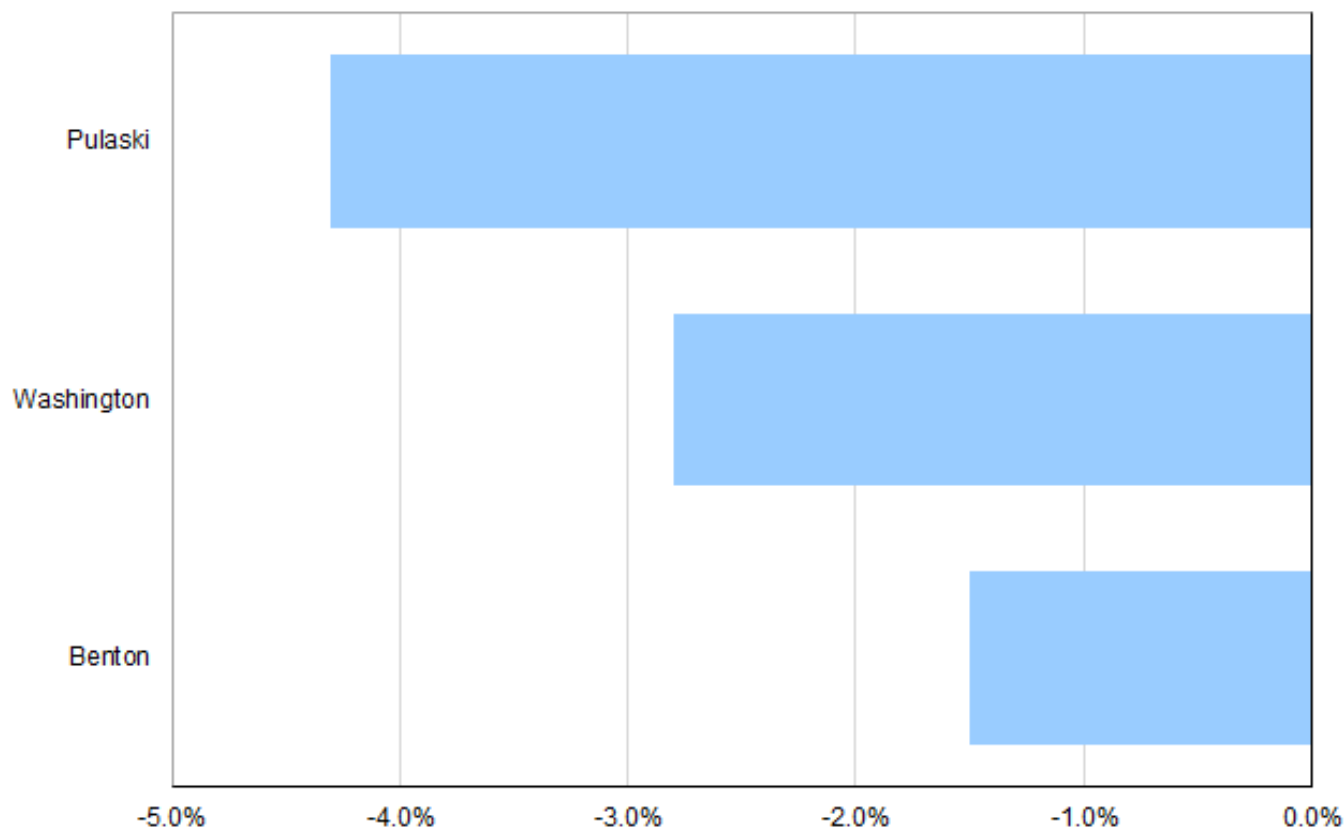
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County Employment and Wages in Arkansas – Fourth Quarter 2020

Employment fell in the three largest counties in Arkansas from December 2019 to December 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2019.) Regional Commissioner Michael Hirniak noted that Pulaski County (-4.3 percent) had the largest over-the-year decline in Arkansas employment. Pulaski's rate of job loss ranked 100th among the 357 large U.S. counties. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in covered employment among the largest counties in Arkansas, December 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

National employment decreased 6.1 percent over the year, with 352 of the 357 largest U.S. counties reporting declines. Maui + Kalawao, HI, had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 22.8 percent. Utah, UT, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment with a gain of 3.8 percent.

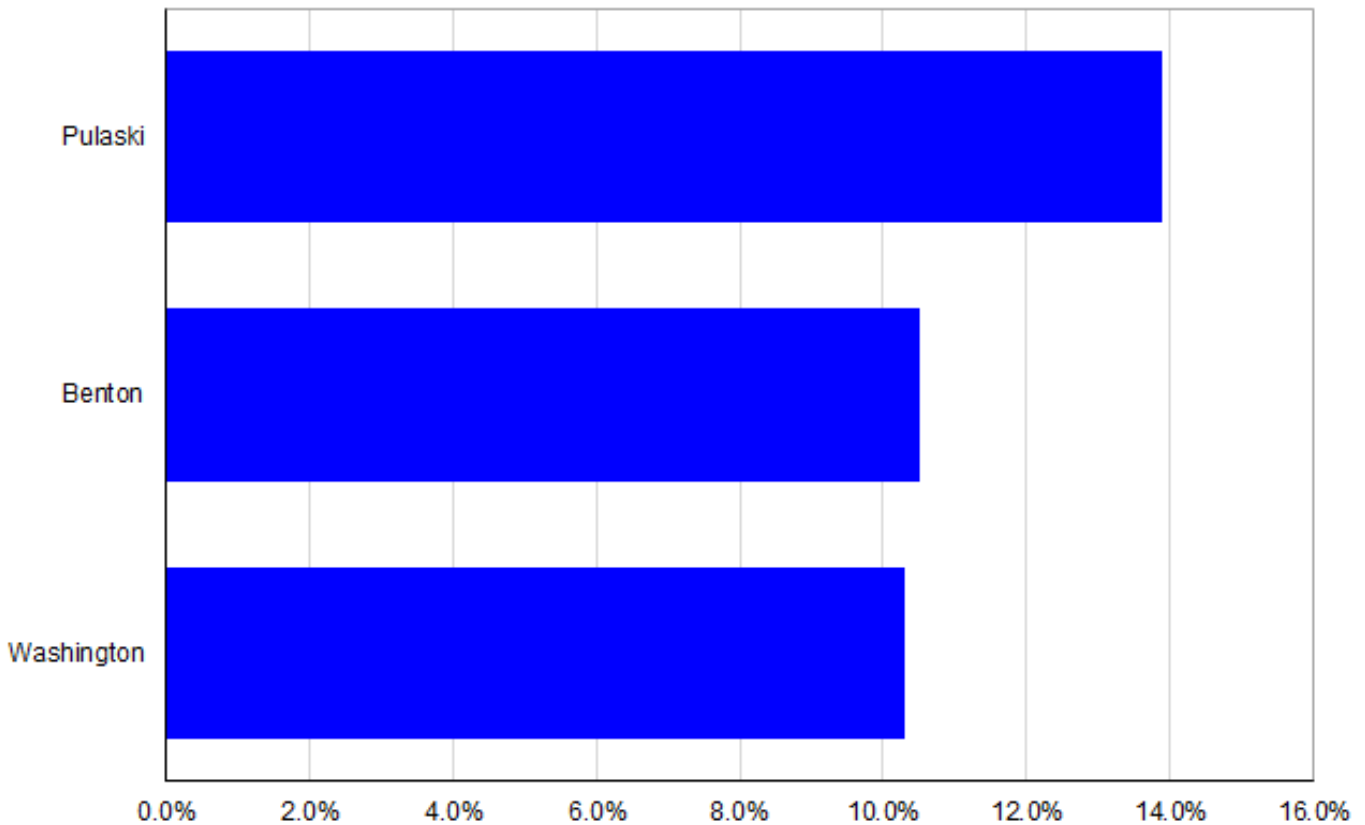
Among the three largest counties in Arkansas, employment was highest in Pulaski County (242,400) in December 2020. Within Pulaski County’s private industry, health care and social assistance accounted for the largest employment. Together, the three largest Arkansas counties accounted for 39.8 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 357 largest counties made up 73.1 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 72 counties in Arkansas with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in all of the smaller counties were below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2020. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

The three large Arkansas counties reported average weekly wage gains from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the fourth quarter of 2020. (See [chart 2.](#)) Pulaski County’s 13.9-percent rate of wage gain was above the national rate of 13.0 percent. Benton County and Washington County had gains of 10.5 percent and 10.3 percent, respectively.

Chart 2. Over-the-year percent change in covered average weekly wages among the largest counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the 357 largest counties in the United States, 356 had over-the-year wage increases. Nationally, across most industries, increases in average weekly wages reflect substantial employment declines combined with wage increases. The lowest paying industry, leisure and hospitality, had the largest employment loss, which results in higher average weekly wages for the industry and the nation. San Francisco, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (+44.3 percent). Ector, TX, had the only over-the-year percentage decrease (-7.5 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Weekly wages in the three largest counties in Arkansas were below the national average of \$1,339 in the fourth quarter of 2020. Benton County's average weekly wage of \$1,232 ranked 148th among the 357 large U.S. counties. Weekly wages in Pulaski County (\$1,149) and Washington County (\$1,121) ranked 208th and 229th, respectively.

Among the largest U.S. counties, 89 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2020. Santa Clara, CA, had the highest average weekly wage at \$3,690. Average weekly wages were below the national average in the remaining 268 counties. At \$760 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

Average weekly wages in Arkansas's smaller counties

Among the 72 smaller counties in Arkansas—those with employment below 75,000—Calhoun County had the highest wages (\$1,247), followed by Mississippi County (\$1,232). Five other small counties had average weekly wages greater than \$1,000. The lowest weekly wage was in Newton County (\$609).

When all 75 counties in Arkansas were considered, 6 reported average weekly wages of less than \$700, 46 registered wages from \$700 to \$849, 16 had wages from \$850 to \$999, and 7 had average weekly wages of \$1,000 or higher. (See [chart 3](#).) Higher-paying counties were generally located around the metropolitan areas of Blytheville, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Little Rock, Texarkana, and along the southern border of the state. The lowest-paying counties were primarily concentrated along or near the western and northern border 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 2019 edition of this publication was published in September 2020. Tables and additional content from the 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2019/home.htm. The 2020 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2021.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 18, 2021.

The County Employment and Wages full data update for first quarter 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.

QCEW Imputation Issue Caused by Pandemic-Related Challenges

In the spring of 2020, BLS modified its imputation process for QCEW to be more responsive to current economic conditions. While continuing work to improve this process, BLS made an unintended data processing error. This error affected data for the second, third, and fourth quarters of 2020. BLS has analyzed this issue and has determined that the impact on QCEW employment was negligible at the statewide level. In smaller areas and industries, revisions may be larger than usual. Wage data were not affected. Following the usual QCEW practice, these data will be revised and corrected with the full data update on September 1, 2021.

For more information on QCEW imputation methodology, see www.bls.gov/cew/additional-resources/imputation-methodology.htm.

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 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.

Information in this release will be made available to individuals with sensory impairments 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 three largest counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2020

Area	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	10,675.8	140,881.3	-6.1	--	\$1,339	--	13.0	--
Arkansas	94.6	1,194.8	-3.2	--	999	49	11.4	36
Benton	7.2	124.3	-1.5	18	1,232	148	10.5	266
Pulaski.....	14.6	242.4	-4.3	100	1,149	208	13.9	94
Washington.....	6.5	109.3	-2.8	49	1,121	229	10.3	279

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

(2) Percent changes were computed from 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 Arkansas, fourth quarter 2020

Area	Employment December 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	140,881,253	\$1,339
Arkansas	1,194,829	999
Arkansas	10,416	933
Ashley	5,698	876
Baxter	14,991	806
Benton	124,302	1,232
Boone	13,933	885
Bradley	3,659	802
Calhoun	3,503	1,247
Carroll	10,544	729
Chicot	2,801	782
Clark	8,559	823
Clay	3,113	723
Cleburne	6,192	773
Cleveland	988	782
Columbia	7,725	878
Conway	6,942	840
Craighead	52,036	920
Crawford	19,378	828
Crittenden	15,241	846
Cross	4,576	748
Dallas	2,696	768
Desha	4,460	828
Drew	6,287	802
Faulkner	40,792	894
Franklin	4,650	775
Fulton	2,075	728
Garland	36,031	835
Grant	4,074	936
Greene	14,916	874
Hempstead	7,488	822
Hot Spring	8,255	851
Howard	6,504	774
Independence	16,385	886
Izard	2,763	707
Jackson	5,163	799
Jefferson	26,670	927
Johnson	8,178	727
Lafayette	1,052	738
Lawrence	3,853	772
Lee	1,715	804
Lincoln	2,707	775
Little River	3,021	1,091
Logan	5,185	721
Lonoke	13,774	773
Madison	3,383	808
Marion	3,260	740
Miller	12,038	927
Mississippi	16,830	1,157
Monroe	1,940	739
Montgomery	1,131	628
Nevada	2,294	807
Newton	999	609
Ouachita	6,616	789
Perry	1,142	750

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2020 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
Phillips	5,106	747
Pike	2,604	773
Poinsett	5,152	879
Polk	5,665	721
Pope	24,395	897
Prairie	1,543	760
Pulaski	242,409	1,149
Randolph	5,938	748
Saline	25,583	805
Scott	3,027	693
Searcy	1,407	612
Sebastian	62,356	964
Sevier	4,792	739
Sharp	3,402	645
St. Francis	6,735	862
Stone	2,468	652
Union	16,322	1,021
Van Buren	3,342	751
Washington	109,299	1,121
White	24,019	837
Woodruff	1,800	830
Yell	6,499	731

(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, fourth quarter 2020

State	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	10,675.8	140,881.3	-6.1	\$1,339	--	13.0	--
Alabama	134.6	1,951.2	-2.9	1,096	35	11.4	36
Alaska.....	23.1	290.1	-6.4	1,260	17	10.6	44
Arizona	173.9	2,908.7	-3.3	1,214	22	14.6	9
Arkansas	94.6	1,194.8	-3.2	999	49	11.4	36
California	1,660.2	16,380.1	-8.3	1,724	3	18.5	1
Colorado.....	219.6	2,613.7	-5.7	1,378	10	12.3	25
Connecticut	126.8	1,578.4	-6.5	1,551	6	12.2	27
Delaware	35.1	432.9	-5.2	1,262	16	11.3	38
District of Columbia	43.8	713.0	-8.9	2,293	1	15.2	6
Florida	765.4	8,642.8	-5.0	1,180	24	13.1	17
Georgia.....	319.7	4,405.9	-4.0	1,208	23	10.9	42
Hawaii.....	47.3	561.1	-16.1	1,219	21	16.0	4
Idaho	71.8	763.5	0.8	1,034	47	12.8	21
Illinois	386.3	5,573.8	-7.8	1,378	10	13.0	18
Indiana.....	173.1	2,985.1	-4.0	1,076	39	11.2	39
Iowa.....	105.6	1,494.3	-4.3	1,099	34	11.6	32
Kansas	89.9	1,346.9	-4.5	1,070	40	11.5	34
Kentucky.....	130.4	1,839.6	-4.8	1,057	42	10.8	43
Louisiana	140.8	1,796.9	-7.0	1,078	38	8.6	48
Maine.....	55.4	594.3	-4.3	1,092	36	14.5	10
Maryland.....	174.5	2,546.1	-6.7	1,445	8	13.6	16
Massachusetts	266.7	3,365.8	-8.3	1,766	2	17.0	3
Michigan	265.3	3,998.2	-8.9	1,257	19	12.8	21
Minnesota	186.4	2,684.1	-7.9	1,322	13	12.3	25
Mississippi	76.1	1,119.1	-2.4	901	51	10.4	45
Missouri	221.5	2,724.4	-4.3	1,127	33	11.6	32
Montana	54.6	467.4	-1.4	1,035	45	12.7	23
Nebraska	72.5	962.7	-2.9	1,079	37	11.5	34
Nevada	90.2	1,283.1	-10.7	1,178	25	14.4	11
New Hampshire.....	57.1	637.3	-5.2	1,406	9	17.9	2
New Jersey.....	291.0	3,860.5	-7.2	1,517	7	13.9	15
New Mexico.....	64.8	767.1	-9.5	1,052	43	11.8	29
New York	662.4	8,693.4	-10.3	1,712	4	14.2	13
North Carolina	301.7	4,431.0	-2.7	1,152	29	11.2	39
North Dakota	32.6	394.4	-7.1	1,136	31	4.7	50
Ohio.....	307.3	5,199.9	-5.1	1,161	27	12.0	28
Oklahoma	113.6	1,569.1	-4.4	1,013	48	7.3	49
Oregon	167.3	1,824.3	-7.5	1,256	20	14.2	13
Pennsylvania	370.5	5,549.4	-7.4	1,287	15	12.6	24
Rhode Island	40.7	449.6	-8.3	1,259	18	14.7	7
South Carolina.....	149.2	2,074.4	-3.5	1,035	45	11.1	41
South Dakota.....	35.5	422.8	-1.9	1,048	44	14.4	11
Tennessee	176.2	3,002.5	-2.7	1,172	26	11.7	30
Texas	743.1	12,251.1	-4.3	1,294	14	9.0	47
Utah.....	117.9	1,557.8	0.6	1,154	28	12.9	20
Vermont.....	26.6	286.1	-8.9	1,133	32	14.7	7
Virginia.....	289.8	3,796.1	-4.7	1,360	12	13.0	18
Washington.....	259.7	3,219.7	-6.8	1,589	5	16.0	4
West Virginia	51.9	654.1	-5.3	997	50	10.3	46
Wisconsin	184.2	2,762.5	-4.8	1,140	30	11.7	30
Wyoming	27.7	260.2	-5.3	1,061	41	4.6	51
Puerto Rico.....	46.0	873.8	-4.0	621	(3)	8.0	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2020 - Continued

State	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
Virgin Islands.....	3.5	35.3	-11.5	1,057	(3)	-1.3	(3)

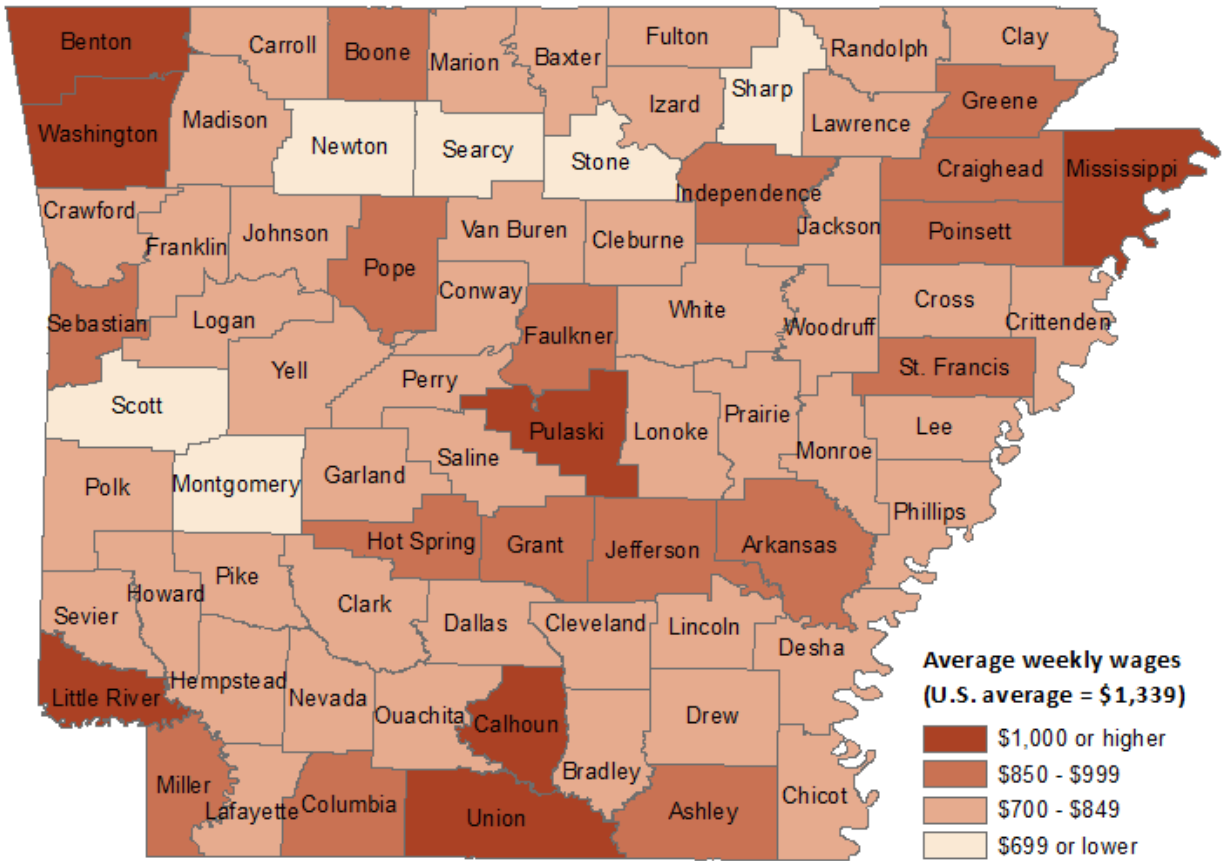
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 3. Average weekly wages by county in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.