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County Employment and Wages in Arkansas – Fourth Quarter 2019

Employment rose in two of the three large Arkansas counties from December 2018 to December 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with 2018 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Acting Regional Commissioner Michael Hirniak noted Benton County's 3.0-percent rate of job growth ranked 20th and Washington County's 1.8-percent job gain ranked 86th among the 355 large counties nationwide. Pulaski County's employment fell 0.5 percent over the year, ranking 314th. (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, employment increased 1.2 percent over the year with 285 of the 355 largest U.S. counties reporting increases. Cleveland, OK, had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 5.8 percent over the year. Ector, TX, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 4.2 percent.

Among the three largest counties in Arkansas, employment was highest in Pulaski County (253,300) in December 2019. Benton and Washington Counties had employment levels of 125,500 and 111,600, respectively. Together, the three largest Arkansas counties accounted for 39.8 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 355 largest counties made up 73.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the fourth quarter of 2018 to the fourth quarter of 2019, Benton County had the largest percentage increase in average weekly wages among Arkansas's large counties, up 4.0 percent. (See [table 1](#).) Benton also recorded the highest average weekly wage among the state's large counties at \$1,113. Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 3.5 percent from a year ago to \$1,185 in the fourth quarter of 2019.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 72 counties in Arkansas with employment levels below 75,000. Wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average in December 2019. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

Average weekly wages in Benton County increased 4.0 percent, which ranked 109th among the 355 largest U.S. counties. Both Pulaski and Washington County had a 3.0-percent increase in average weekly wages, each ranking 203rd.

Nationally, 341 of the 355 largest counties had over-the-year wage increases. Santa Cruz, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (20.7 percent). The remaining 14 large counties had wage declines during the period. Linn, IA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-7.1 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wage levels in the state's three large counties were below the nationwide average (\$1,185) in the fourth quarter of 2019. Benton County's average weekly wage of \$1,113 ranked 139th among the 355 large U.S. counties. Weekly wages in Pulaski (\$1,010) and Washington Counties (\$1,009) ranked 219th and 220th, respectively.

Of the 355 large U.S. counties, 262 reported average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,185. Cameron, TX, reported the lowest weekly wage (\$701), followed by Hidalgo, TX (\$705) and Horry, SC (\$721).

Nationally, 93 large counties registered average weekly wages at or above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2019. Santa Clara, CA, held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,825. Santa Clara's average weekly wage was more than four times the average weekly wage in the lowest-ranked county, Cameron, TX (\$701).

Average weekly wages in Arkansas's smaller counties

All 72 of Arkansas's smaller counties – those with employment of less than 75,000 – reported weekly wages below the national average of \$1,185 in the fourth quarter of 2019. Among these smaller counties, two had average weekly wages greater than \$1,000: Calhoun (\$1,130) and Mississippi (\$1,090). The lowest weekly wage was in Searcy (\$546).

When all 75 counties in Arkansas were considered, 10 reported average weekly wages under \$650, 39 reported wages from \$650 to \$749, 14 had wages from \$750 to \$849, and 12 averaged \$850 or more per week. (See [chart 1](#).) 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 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 2018 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2019, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2019 version of this news release. Tables and additional content from the 2018 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2018/home.htm. The 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2020.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 19, 2020.

The County Employment and Wages full data update for first quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 2, 2020.

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 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 3 largest counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2019

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2018-19 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2018-19 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	149,857.1	1.2	--	\$1,185	--	3.5	--
Arkansas	1,232.9	0.5	--	898	50	3.2	27
Benton	125.5	3.0	20	1,113	139	4.0	109
Pulaski.....	253.3	-0.5	314	1,010	219	3.0	203
Washington.....	111.6	1.8	86	1,009	220	3.0	203

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 Arkansas, fourth quarter 2019

Area	Employment December 2019	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	149,857,130	\$1,185
Arkansas	1,232,878	898
Arkansas	10,571	865
Ashley	6,114	939
Baxter	14,958	736
Benton	125,453	1,113
Boone	14,426	783
Bradley	3,882	720
Calhoun	3,278	1,130
Carroll	10,872	639
Chicot	2,926	696
Clark	9,392	701
Clay	3,102	654
Cleburne	6,308	693
Cleveland	1,047	701
Columbia	8,334	801
Conway	6,719	799
Craighead	53,575	807
Crawford	19,879	743
Crittenden	16,435	755
Cross	4,821	678
Dallas	2,643	682
Desha	4,776	730
Drew	6,538	720
Faulkner	41,947	816
Franklin	4,832	715
Fulton	2,140	639
Garland	38,009	743
Grant	4,192	823
Greene	15,537	761
Hempstead	7,752	731
Hot Spring	8,331	737
Howard	6,581	672
Independence	16,589	929
Izard	3,067	642
Jackson	5,089	747
Jefferson	27,261	841
Johnson	8,555	673
Lafayette	1,125	648
Lawrence	3,988	676
Lee	1,855	725
Lincoln	2,775	686
Little River	3,431	989
Logan	5,030	655
Lonoke	13,659	730
Madison	3,467	731
Marion	3,845	668
Miller	13,548	814
Mississippi	18,018	1,090
Monroe	1,978	657
Montgomery	1,210	571
Nevada	2,474	753
Newton	1,030	571
Ouachita	6,788	726
Perry	1,132	690

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2019 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2019	Average weekly wage(1)
Phillips	5,278	689
Pike	2,621	671
Poinsett	5,236	782
Polk	5,910	656
Pope	26,396	893
Prairie	1,478	677
Pulaski	253,285	1,010
Randolph	5,986	655
Saline	25,206	742
Scott	3,126	628
Searcy	1,467	546
Sebastian	65,153	856
Sevier	4,906	674
Sharp	3,516	571
St. Francis	7,306	759
Stone	2,607	627
Union	17,233	947
Van Buren	3,406	703
Washington	111,619	1,009
White	24,322	770
Woodruff	1,727	725
Yell	6,566	655

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: 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 2019

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2018-19	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2018-19	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	149,857.1	1.2	\$1,185	--	3.5	--
Alabama	2,007.9	1.0	985	36	2.6	39
Alaska	309.9	0.6	1,139	16	3.2	27
Arizona	2,999.8	2.7	1,059	23	4.1	7
Arkansas	1,232.9	0.5	898	50	3.2	27
California	17,836.3	1.5	1,457	4	4.7	4
Colorado	2,772.6	2.2	1,227	9	4.0	8
Connecticut	1,687.4	-0.7	1,383	5	3.8	11
Delaware	455.3	0.8	1,136	17	2.6	39
District of Columbia	782.5	0.8	1,992	1	2.5	42
Florida	9,085.5	2.0	1,044	26	3.6	14
Georgia	4,576.1	1.7	1,090	21	3.6	14
Hawaii	665.1	-0.8	1,053	24	3.5	17
Idaho	756.9	3.1	918	46	3.1	32
Illinois	6,043.5	0.2	1,221	10	2.7	38
Indiana	3,106.0	0.6	969	38	3.0	34
Iowa	1,560.4	0.1	984	37	1.9	47
Kansas	1,410.7	0.6	959	40	3.5	17
Kentucky	1,928.3	0.8	955	41	3.2	27
Louisiana	1,927.7	-0.5	993	34	2.5	42
Maine	620.2	0.7	955	41	5.3	2
Maryland	2,728.1	0.9	1,271	8	3.5	17
Massachusetts	3,660.8	0.9	1,511	2	3.8	11
Michigan	4,385.3	0.4	1,115	18	3.4	22
Minnesota	2,912.8	0.4	1,177	14	3.2	27
Mississippi	1,145.0	0.0	818	51	3.2	27
Missouri	2,846.2	0.9	1,010	32	3.0	34
Montana	474.1	1.1	918	46	3.4	22
Nebraska	990.9	0.7	969	38	4.2	6
Nevada	1,435.5	2.7	1,030	29	2.4	45
New Hampshire	671.3	0.8	1,192	12	2.9	37
New Jersey	4,157.4	0.8	1,332	7	2.5	42
New Mexico	844.0	1.5	942	44	4.0	8
New York	9,691.0	0.8	1,499	3	3.7	13
North Carolina	4,546.9	1.9	1,036	28	2.4	45
North Dakota	424.6	0.5	1,085	22	2.6	39
Ohio	5,477.2	0.5	1,037	27	3.1	32
Oklahoma	1,639.4	0.3	945	43	1.4	49
Oregon	1,969.3	1.6	1,100	19	4.6	5
Pennsylvania	5,985.9	0.8	1,143	15	3.6	14
Rhode Island	489.8	0.6	1,099	20	1.1	50
South Carolina	2,144.8	1.2	931	45	4.0	8
South Dakota	430.7	0.6	916	48	3.5	17
Tennessee	3,085.4	1.6	1,047	25	1.6	48
Texas	12,793.0	2.0	1,187	13	3.4	22
Utah	1,547.8	2.5	1,022	30	5.0	3
Vermont	314.0	-0.4	987	35	3.5	17
Virginia	3,978.7	1.2	1,204	11	3.4	22
Washington	3,457.7	2.2	1,370	6	6.4	1
West Virginia	690.3	-2.0	904	49	-1.4	51
Wisconsin	2,898.0	0.2	1,022	30	3.3	26
Wyoming	276.3	1.4	1,007	33	3.0	34
Puerto Rico	910.7	1.5	575	(3)	-0.2	(3)
Virgin Islands	39.2	10.8	1,065	(3)	13.5	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

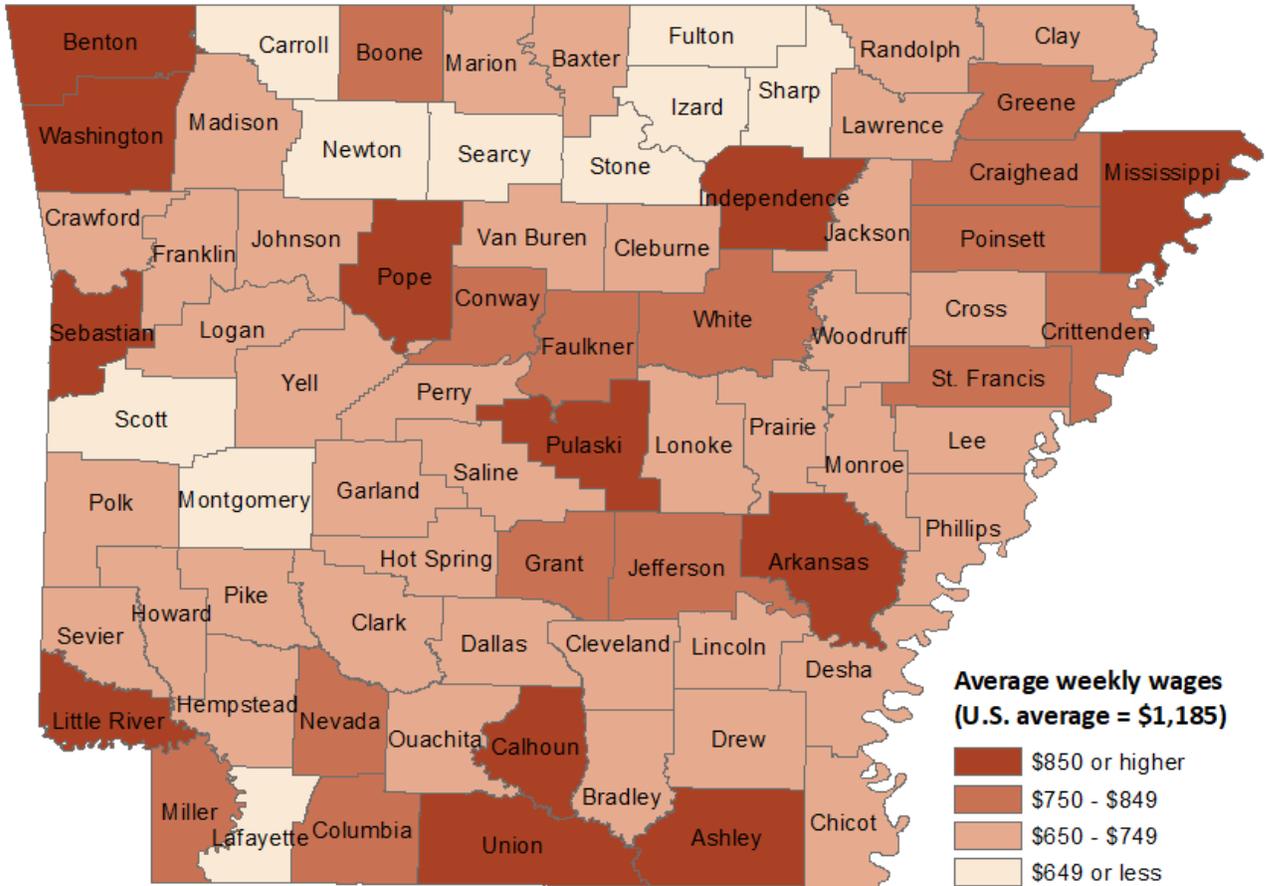
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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. Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.