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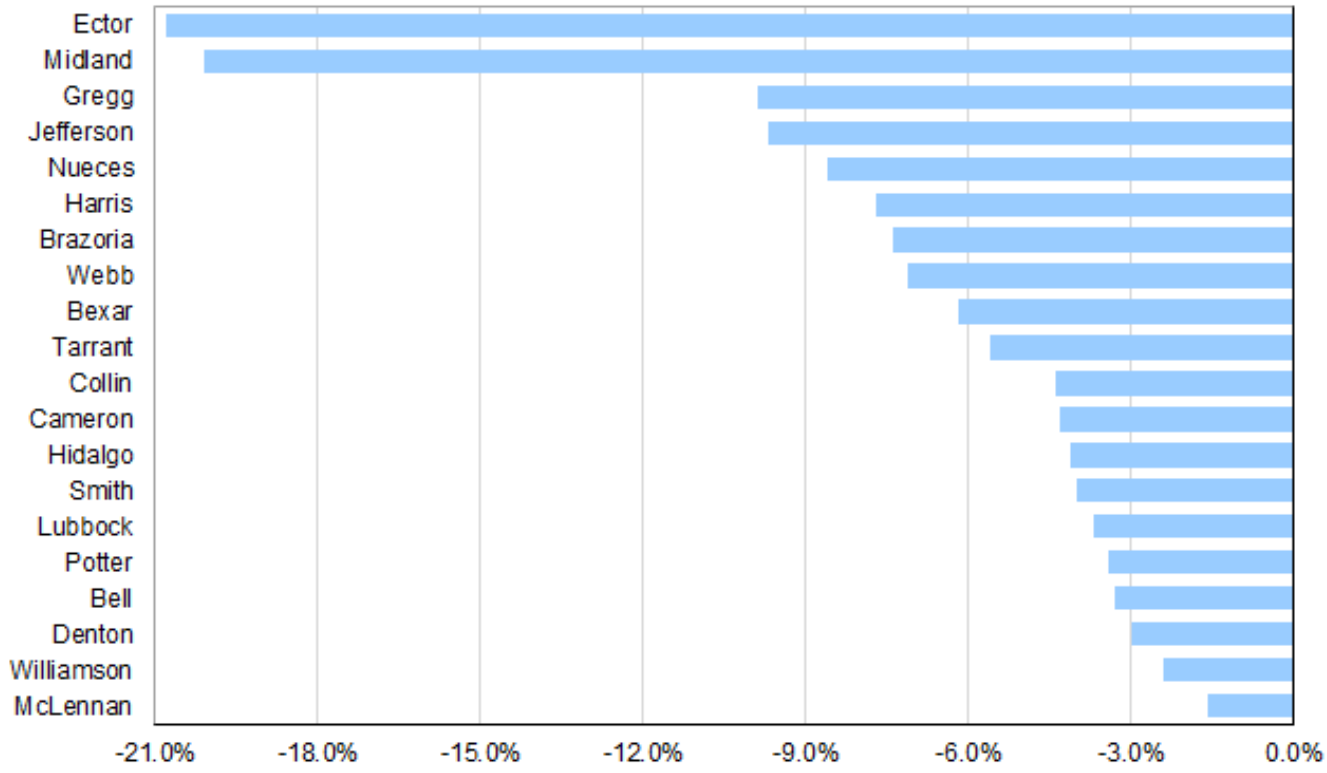
County Employment and Wages in Texas – Third Quarter 2020

Employment fell in the 27 largest counties in Texas from September 2019 to September 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 Ector County (-20.8 percent) and Midland County (-20.1 percent) had the largest over-the-year declines in Texas employment. The Ector and Midland rates of job loss ranked 355th and 353rd, respectively, among the 357 large U.S. counties. (See chart 1 and table 1.)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in covered employment among selected large counties in Texas, September 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

National employment decreased 6.8 percent over the year, with 355 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 35.4 percent. Utah, UT, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment with a gain of 1.9 percent.

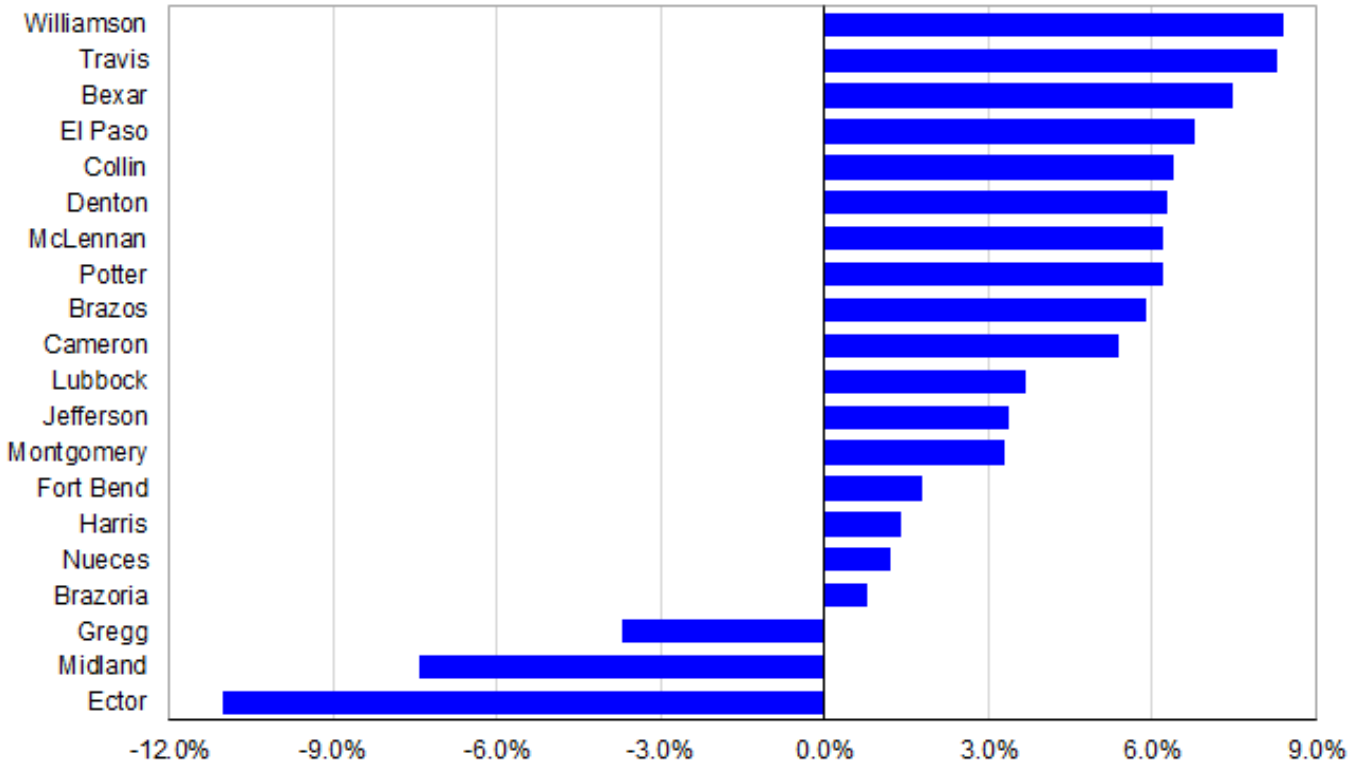
Among the 27 largest counties in Texas, employment was highest in Harris County (2,171,800) in September 2020, followed by Dallas County (1,653,800). Three other counties (Tarrant, Bexar, and Travis) had employment levels exceeding 700,000. Together, the 27 largest Texas counties accounted for 80.7 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 357 largest counties made up 72.9 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 227 counties in Texas with employment below 75,000 in 2019. Wage levels in 218 of the 227 smaller counties were below the national average in the third quarter of 2020. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Among the 27 large Texas counties, 24 reported average weekly wage gains from the third quarter 2019 to the third quarter 2020. (See chart 2.) Three counties had wage gains that were above the national rate of 7.4 percent. Williamson County had the largest gain (+8.4 percent), followed by Travis County (+8.3 percent), and Bexar County (+7.5 percent). Three large Texas counties had loses during the period: Ector (-11.0 percent), Midland (-7.4 percent), and Gregg (-3.7 percent). Over-the-year wage gains among the other 21 large Texas counties ranged from 6.8 percent to 0.8 percent.

Chart 2. Over-the-year percent change in covered average weekly wages among selected large counties in Texas, third quarter 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the 357 largest counties in the United States, 350 had over-the-year wage increases. Nationally, the increases in average weekly wages largely reflect substantial employment loss among lower-paid industries. Employment declines occurring in some higher-paid industries also feature significant wage increases. San Mateo, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (+23.2 percent). Seven large counties had wage declines during the period. Ector, TX, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-11.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Weekly wages in 6 of the 27 largest counties in Texas were above the national average of $1,173 in the third quarter of 2020. Average weekly wages in five of these counties ranked among the top 50 nationwide: Travis ($1,427, 28th), Collin and Midland (each at $1,358, 38th), Dallas ($1,355, 40th), and Harris ($1,336, 43rd). Rounding out the top six Texas counties was Williamson ($1,236, 76th.)

Texas also had a number of low-paying large counties. Three of the four lowest-paying large counties in the nation were located along the Texas-Mexico border: Cameron ($697, 357th), Hidalgo ($713, 356th), and Webb ($742, 354th). Other Texas counties with low national rankings included El Paso ($814, 348th), Brazos ($864, 339th), Gregg ($882, 329th), and Lubbock ($892, 325th).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 96 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the second quarter of 2020. San Mateo, CA, had the highest average weekly wage at $2,922. Average weekly wages were at or below the national average in 261 counties. At $697 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

Average weekly wages in smaller Texas counties

Among the 227 smaller counties in Texas—those with employment below 75,000—only Carson ($1,704) reported an average weekly wage above the national average of $1,173. Delta County ($519) reported the lowest average weekly wage in the state.

When all 254 counties in Texas were considered, all but 15 had wages below the national average. Eighteen counties reported average weekly wages under $700, 116 registered wages from $700 to $849, 75 had wages from $850 to $999, 27 had wages from $1,000 to $1,149, and 18 had wages of $1,150 or higher. (See chart 3.) The counties with the highest average weekly wages were concentrated around the larger metropolitan areas of Dallas, Houston, and Austin, as well as the smaller areas of Midland, Odessa, and Amarillo. Lower-paying counties tended to be located in the agricultural areas of central Texas, the Texas Panhandle, and along the Texas-Mexico border.

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 fourth quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 19, 2021.
The County Employment and Wages full data update for fourth quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

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 27 largest counties in Texas, third quarter 2020

Area	Establishments, third quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
		September 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2019–20 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Third quarter 2020	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2019–20 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	10,561.3	138,549.5	-6.8	--	$1,173	--	7.4	--
Texas	733.1	11,926.8	-5.5	--	1,150	15	3.8	47
Bell	5.9	117.5	-3.3	39	955	271	4.1	321
Bexar	43.8	824.8	-6.2	169	1,036	194	7.5	156
Brazoria	6.3	108.8	-7.4	217	1,100	151	0.8	348
Brazos	4.9	103.6	-4.8	84	864	339	5.9	254
Cameron	6.6	135.5	-4.3	68	697	357	5.4	276
Collin	29.0	423.0	-4.4	71	1,358	38	6.4	227
Dallas	80.6	1,653.8	-4.6	78	1,355	40	4.1	321
Denton	17.0	257.3	-3.0	35	1,026	203	6.3	233
Ector	4.2	65.2	-20.8	355	1,094	157	-11.0	357
El Paso	15.7	299.5	-5.0	94	814	348	6.8	202
Fort Bend	15.4	187.8	-4.7	82	995	233	1.8	345
Galveston	6.5	104.7	-5.2	105	1,010	219	5.0	294
Gregg	4.3	68.9	-9.9	320	882	329	-3.7	352
Harris	119.8	2,171.8	-7.7	226	1,336	43	1.4	346
Hidalgo	12.9	253.4	-4.1	58	713	356	4.2	316
Jefferson	5.8	111.2	-9.7	313	1,096	155	3.4	331
Lubbock	8.0	136.6	-3.7	48	892	325	3.7	327
McLennan	5.6	112.1	-1.6	8	947	280	6.2	240
Midland	6.2	87.5	-20.1	353	1,358	38	-7.4	356
Montgomery	12.9	184.5	-5.5	125	1,113	142	3.3	332
Nueces	8.4	149.4	-8.6	276	950	277	1.2	347
Potter	4.0	74.4	-3.4	43	944	286	6.2	240
Smith	6.5	101.0	-4.0	55	928	302	4.3	314
Tarrant	46.6	877.1	-5.6	127	1,116	136	4.3	314
Travis	45.6	745.6	-4.6	78	1,427	28	8.3	111
Webb	5.6	95.4	-7.1	208	742	354	3.9	324
Williamson	12.6	179.0	-2.4	21	1,236	76	8.4	103

(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 Texas, third quarter 2020

Area	Employment September 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	138,549,503	$1,173
Texas	11,926,833	1,150
Anderson	19,620	898
Andrews	6,759	1,262
Angelina	33,587	808
Aransas	5,292	779
Archer	1,578	756
Armstrong	414	751
Atascosa	12,119	904
Austin	10,573	959
Bailey	2,486	787
Bandera	3,292	736
Bastrop	18,457	819
Baylor	1,427	730
Bee	8,284	729
Bell	117,495	955
Bexar	824,842	1,036
Blanco	3,471	1,006
Borden	299	806
Bosque	3,720	833
Bowie	40,419	827
Brazoria	108,788	1,100
Brazos	103,645	864
Brewster	3,813	867
Briscoe	323	638
Brooks	2,490	844
Brown	14,760	754
Burleson	4,324	942
Burnet	14,845	880
Caldwell	8,707	779
Calhoun	12,717	1,422
Callahan	2,428	847
Cameron	135,498	697
Camp	3,736	798
Carson	5,171	1,704
Cass	7,510	759
Castro	2,537	756
Chambers	16,058	1,201
Cherokee	14,186	722
Childress	2,686	713
Clay	1,517	768
Cochran	667	798
Coke	656	897
Coleman	1,968	655
Collin	422,961	1,358
Collingsworth	764	812
Colorado	6,714	839
Comal	57,977	915
Comanche	3,871	734
Concho	881	833
Cooke	13,587	875
Coryell	15,270	846
Cottle	457	845
Crane	1,079	1,030
Crockett	1,320	822
Crosby	1,192	714

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment September 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
Culberson	1,295	1,132
Dallam	4,364	909
Dallas	1,653,775	1,355
Dawson	4,007	793
De Witt	7,093	823
Deaf Smith	7,836	885
Delta	1,015	519
Denton	257,341	1,026
Dickens	440	715
Dimmit	5,225	1,010
Donley	857	684
Duval	3,196	713
Eastland	6,462	875
Ector	65,166	1,094
Edwards	683	985
El Paso	299,513	814
Ellis	52,456	907
Erath	15,809	747
Falls	3,040	771
Fannin	8,012	790
Fayette	8,585	850
Fisher	789	859
Floyd	1,500	713
Foard	364	608
Fort Bend	187,797	995
Franklin	3,325	923
Freestone	4,393	803
Frio	6,554	919
Gaines	6,138	965
Galveston	104,691	1,010
Garza	1,637	786
Gillespie	10,493	805
Glasscock	568	951
Goliad	1,254	834
Gonzales	7,323	852
Gray	6,972	940
Grayson	46,616	881
Gregg	68,921	882
Grimes	6,868	989
Guadalupe	41,897	889
Hale	11,074	779
Hall	769	584
Hamilton	2,694	761
Hansford	1,932	863
Hardeman	1,274	747
Hardin	12,653	868
Harris	2,171,804	1,336
Harrison	21,995	939
Hartley	2,650	832
Haskell	1,915	732
Hays	71,489	856
Hemphill	1,648	999
Henderson	17,593	753
Hidalgo	253,447	713
Hill	9,692	847

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment September 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
Hockley	8,187	963
Hood	15,322	821
Hopkins	12,693	785
Houston	6,676	993
Howard	12,043	970
Hudspeth	1,441	1,155
Hunt	27,386	921
Hutchinson	7,698	1,159
Irion	800	1,017
Jack	2,348	971
Jackson	5,618	878
Jasper	9,033	797
Jeff Davis	803	780
Jefferson	111,232	1,096
Jim Hogg	1,584	776
Jim Wells	13,416	748
Johnson	48,566	925
Jones	3,019	770
Karnes	5,868	1,057
Kaufman	32,342	876
Kendall	16,453	1,015
Kenedy	354	1,298
Kent	279	746
Kerr	17,346	867
Kimble	1,212	690
King	161	830
Kinney	947	916
Kleberg	11,292	787
Knox	1,075	830
La Salle	2,675	1,071
Lamar	21,099	848
Lamb	3,973	833
Lampasas	4,590	732
Lavaca	5,247	800
Lee	6,696	990
Leon	4,700	998
Liberty	17,405	878
Limestone	7,447	820
Lipscomb	1,254	961
Live Oak	3,469	1,091
Llano	4,649	784
Loving	144	1,203
Lubbock	136,585	892
Lynn	1,446	937
Madison	4,129	799
Marion	1,973	658
Martin	1,990	1,016
Mason	999	687
Matagorda	9,989	1,021
Maverick	17,028	688
McCulloch	2,371	742
McLennan	112,140	947
McMullen	454	1,068
Medina	10,040	764
Menard	440	549

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment September 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
Midland	87,473	1,358
Milam	5,173	795
Mills	1,310	712
Mitchell	1,926	787
Montague	4,488	736
Montgomery	184,456	1,113
Moore	11,127	940
Morris	3,139	813
Motley	280	624
Nacogdoches	21,640	782
Navarro	16,204	786
Newton	1,230	774
Nolan	6,349	869
Nueces	149,412	950
Ochiltree	4,035	835
Oldham	935	883
Orange	21,155	1,064
Palo Pinto	7,923	864
Panola	7,222	855
Parker	33,227	910
Parmer	6,037	995
Pecos	5,695	922
Polk	11,519	824
Potter	74,383	944
Presidio	1,997	845
Rains	2,041	673
Randall	32,886	850
Reagan	1,712	1,252
Real	761	546
Red River	2,778	748
Reeves	5,973	1,165
Refugio	2,159	760
Roberts	263	906
Robertson	4,264	898
Rockwall	32,130	885
Runnels	2,783	754
Rusk	12,341	832
Sabine	2,508	751
San Augustine	1,693	823
San Jacinto	2,161	720
San Patricio	18,839	1,001
San Saba	1,441	714
Schleicher	657	951
Scurry	5,564	1,036
Shackelford	1,136	973
Shelby	8,398	797
Sherman	1,049	901
Smith	101,041	928
Somervell	3,256	1,145
Starr	14,340	626
Stephens	3,151	786
Sterling	489	834
Stonewall	481	776
Sutton	1,361	1,033
Swisher	1,803	727

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment September 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
Tarrant	877,059	1,116
Taylor	61,820	871
Terrell	281	886
Terry	3,220	773
Throckmorton	379	604
Titus	16,397	768
Tom Green	45,225	878
Travis	745,581	1,427
Trinity	2,243	694
Tyler	3,993	746
Upshur	7,139	768
Upton	1,796	1,380
Uvalde	9,389	740
Val Verde	17,797	743
Van Zandt	11,221	714
Victoria	35,264	885
Walker	24,508	835
Waller	21,042	863
Ward	4,429	1,084
Washington	15,165	815
Webb	95,391	742
Wharton	15,408	832
Wheeler	1,892	849
Wichita	51,299	816
Wilbarger	5,746	745
Willacy	3,630	785
Williamson	179,037	1,236
Wilson	8,497	794
Winkler	3,039	1,307
Wise	19,344	912
Wood	10,397	755
Yoakum	2,909	1,093
Young	6,386	819
Zapata	2,537	831
Zavala	2,212	778

(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.

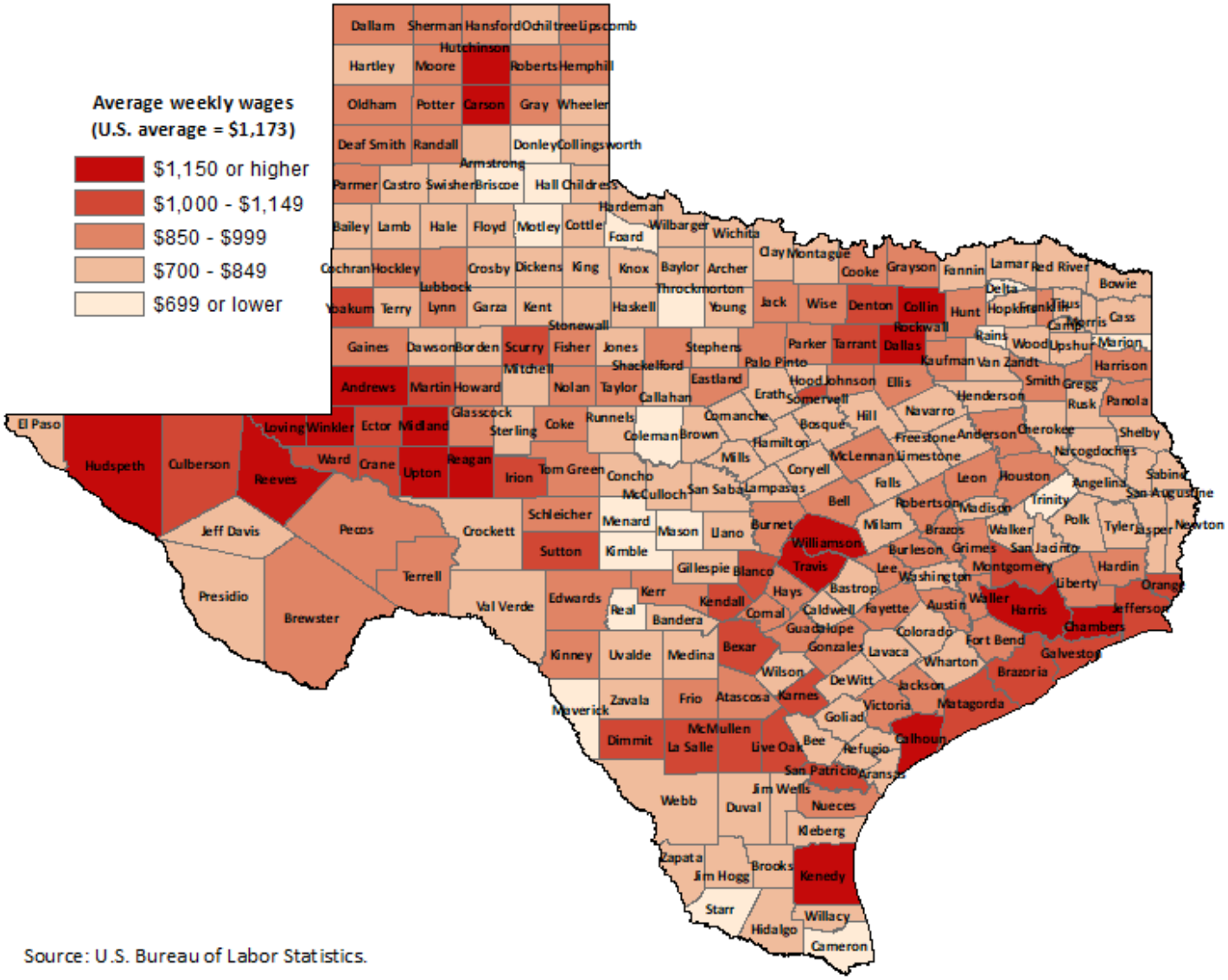
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2020

State	Establishments, third quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
		September 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2019–20	Third quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	10,561.3	138,549.5	-6.8	$1,173	--	7.4	--
Alabama	132.2	1,902.4	-4.5	978	33	6.4	27
Alaska	22.9	302.6	-10.7	1,165	14	5.4	42
Arizona	174.1	2,797.1	-4.2	1,091	22	7.3	17
Arkansas	93.6	1,180.1	-3.4	892	49	6.1	31
California	1,643.8	16,096.8	-9.2	1,466	4	12.0	1
Colorado	220.1	2,597.2	-5.6	1,235	9	5.6	38
Connecticut	125.4	1,555.6	-7.3	1,328	7	7.4	15
Delaware	34.9	428.8	-5.6	1,150	15	6.8	21
District of Columbia	43.3	713.7	-8.1	1,962	1	6.1	31
Florida	749.1	8,329.7	-5.8	1,029	27	8.0	11
Georgia	313.0	4,282.1	-5.2	1,084	23	5.8	35
Hawaii	46.5	507.5	-22.9	1,114	18	10.3	4
Idaho	70.7	763.7	-0.2	884	50	5.5	41
Illinois	385.9	5,558.5	-7.8	1,199	11	6.8	21
Indiana	172.4	2,941.8	-4.7	961	39	5.3	43
Iowa	105.1	1,475.0	-5.2	969	36	6.0	34
Kansas	89.2	1,325.4	-5.0	952	40	6.6	24
Kentucky	128.0	1,807.1	-5.5	935	43	5.8	35
Louisiana	139.5	1,734.6	-9.6	970	35	5.2	45
Maine	54.4	597.3	-5.9	966	37	9.0	9
Maryland	172.4	2,496.6	-7.6	1,277	8	9.5	7
Massachusetts	265.1	3,314.8	-9.4	1,488	2	9.7	6
Michigan	266.9	4,035.9	-7.9	1,096	20	7.5	14
Minnesota	183.1	2,703.3	-7.4	1,178	12	6.4	27
Mississippi	74.9	1,092.4	-4.0	810	51	5.6	38
Missouri	218.8	2,681.7	-5.1	995	32	5.6	38
Montana	53.0	466.9	-2.5	904	48	6.6	24
Nebraska	73.7	949.9	-3.8	964	38	6.4	27
Nevada	87.9	1,251.0	-11.6	1,048	24	7.8	13
New Hampshire	56.1	634.2	-5.2	1,171	13	8.9	10
New Jersey	289.3	3,778.4	-8.0	1,331	6	9.5	7
New Mexico	63.1	771.9	-8.6	944	41	5.1	46
New York	657.6	8,547.7	-10.8	1,446	5	10.0	5
North Carolina	301.4	4,308.2	-4.4	1,039	26	6.9	20
North Dakota	32.5	398.2	-7.0	1,025	28	-0.3	50
Ohio	305.7	5,136.8	-5.6	1,040	25	6.6	24
Oklahoma	112.4	1,538.5	-5.7	917	46	2.3	48
Oregon	164.6	1,837.3	-7.0	1,113	19	7.4	15
Pennsylvania	366.5	5,501.0	-7.6	1,139	17	7.0	19
Rhode Island	40.1	452.5	-8.0	1,092	21	10.4	3
South Carolina	146.6	2,022.9	-5.2	924	44	6.7	23
South Dakota	35.2	422.3	-2.6	918	45	7.2	18
Tennessee	173.6	2,918.1	-4.6	1,022	29	5.8	35
Texas	733.1	11,926.8	-5.5	1,150	15	3.8	47
Utah	114.3	1,518.2	-1.0	1,015	30	6.1	31
Vermont	26.4	283.9	-8.6	1,001	31	7.9	12
Virginia	285.7	3,737.0	-5.0	1,201	10	6.4	27
Washington	256.6	3,266.2	-6.3	1,482	3	11.0	2
West Virginia	51.7	649.1	-6.7	913	47	1.8	49
Wisconsin	181.2	2,746.6	-5.2	977	34	5.3	43
Wyoming	27.5	264.0	-6.8	939	42	-0.4	51
Puerto Rico	45.7	831.6	-5.3	547	[3]	3.4	[3]
Virgin Islands	3.4	33.9	-13.0	1,019	[3]	-0.5	[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 3. Average weekly wages by county in Texas, third quarter 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.