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

For Release: Thursday, May 28, 2015 **15-1024-SAN**

WESTERN INFORMATION OFFICE: San Francisco, Calif.
Technical information: (415) 625-2270 BLSinfoSF@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/west
Media contact: (415) 625-2270

County Employment and Wages in Washington – Third Quarter 2014

Employment increased in all 10 of Washington's large counties from September 2013 to September 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2013 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that employment increases ranged from 5.0 percent in Clark County to 1.1 percent in Whatcom County.

Nationally, employment advanced 2.0 percent from September 2013 to September 2014 as 306 of the 339 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Weld, Colo., had the largest percentage increase over the year (8.8 percent). Atlantic, N.J., had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 4.0 percent.

Among the 10 largest counties in Washington, employment was highest in King County (1,252,800) in September 2014, while Benton County had the smallest employment level (82,700). Together, Washington's large counties accounted for 84.5 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 339 largest counties made up 71.8 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 137.7 million in September 2014.

Average weekly wages increased in all 10 of Washington's largest counties from the third quarter of 2013 to the third quarter of 2014. King County had the highest average weekly wage ($1,452) followed by Snohomish County ($1,019). Both counties exceeded the national average weekly wage of $949, which rose 2.9 percent over the year in the third quarter of 2014. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 29 counties in Washington with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2014. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

All 10 large counties in Washington recorded increases in average weekly wages in the third quarter of 2014. King County's 5.1-percent wage gain placed 16th among the nation's 339 large counties. Kitsap County's 3.3-percent wage increase (ranked 81st) also placed in the top 100 of the national rankings. Wage gains in three additional large counties—Yakima and Spokane (both up 3.1 percent, tied at 103rd), and Pierce (3.0 percent, 117th)--exceeded the national percentage increase of 2.9 percent in the third quarter of 2014. (See table 1.)

Nationally, 328 of the 339 largest counties registered over-the-year wage increases. Olmsted, Minn., had the largest wage gain, up 11.1 percent from the third quarter of 2013. San Francisco, Calif., was second with a wage increase of 8.6 percent, followed by Santa Clara, Calif. (7.4 percent), and San Mateo, Calif. and Brazoria, Texas (7.1 percent each).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 10 experienced over-the-year wage decreases. Collier, Fla., had the largest wage decrease with a loss of 3.9 percent. Dane, Wis., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages, down 2.2 percent from the third quarter 2013, followed by Williamson, Texas. (-0.8 percent), Hamilton, Ind. (-0.7 percent), and Shawnee, Kan. (-0.4 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in two of Washington's large counties placed in the top 100 of the national ranking. As noted, King County ($1,452, 8th) and Snohomish ($1,019, 72nd) exceeded the national average in the third quarter of 2014. Average wages for six of the largest counties fell within the middle third of the rankings. The two counties with the lowest average weekly wages in the state—Whatcom ($782, 268th) and Yakima ($658, 331st)—ranked within the bottom third of the United States.

Nationwide, average weekly wages were above the U.S. average ($949) in 99 of the 339 largest counties in the third quarter of 2014. Santa Clara, Calif., recorded the highest average weekly wage at $2,012, followed by San Mateo, Calif. ($1,824), New York, N.Y. ($1,733), San Francisco, Calif. ($1,685), and Washington, D.C. ($1,631).

There were 237 large counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2014. Horry County, S.C. ($580), reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas ($603), Hidalgo, Texas ($616), Marion, Fla. ($644), and Pasco, Fla. ($650).

Average weekly wages in Washington's smaller counties

All 29 counties in Washington with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $949. Among these counties, Cowlitz County had the highest average weekly wage at $845. Okanogan County reported the lowest weekly wage among all counties in the state, averaging $548 in the third quarter of 2014. (See table 2.)

When all 39 counties in Washington were considered, 2 had wages below $600. Fifteen counties had average weekly wages ranging from $600 to $699, 10 had wages from $700 to $799, 8 had wages from $800 to $899, and 4 had wages at or above $900. (See chart 1.)

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, which was published in September 2014, 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 https://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 September 2015.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2014 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 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 9.4 million employer reports cover 137.8 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 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 10 largest counties in Washington, third quarter 2014

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage [1]			
	September 2014 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2013-14 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2013-14 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	137,724.1	2.0	--	$949	--	2.9	--
Washington	3,112.8	3.2	--	1,087	6	3.9	4
Benton, Wash.	82.7	3.4	57	930	118	1.5	282
Clark, Wash.	143.0	5.0	12	890	160	2.8	129
King, Wash.	1,252.8	3.4	57	1,452	8	5.1	16
Kitsap, Wash.	83.1	3.0	77	904	139	3.3	81
Pierce, Wash.	282.3	2.8	86	870	172	3.0	117
Snohomish, Wash.	269.9	2.2	128	1,019	72	0.5	317
Spokane, Wash.	208.5	2.1	137	823	226	3.1	103
Thurston, Wash.	104.3	3.7	48	877	168	1.6	274
Whatcom, Wash.	83.5	1.1	212	782	268	2.2	206
Yakima, Wash.	119.2	3.1	73	658	331	3.1	103

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 Washington, third quarter 2014

Area	Employment September 2014	Average Weekly Wage [1]
United States [2]	137,724,117	$949
Washington	3,112,844	1,087
Adams	8,490	672
Asotin	5,919	636
Benton	82,655	930
Chelan	45,723	673
Clallam	22,546	675
Clark	142,950	890
Columbia	1,294	713
Cowlitz	38,253	845
Douglas	12,738	585
Ferry	1,754	752
Franklin	34,525	680
Garfield	768	815
Grant	43,193	669
Grays Harbor	21,999	726
Island	15,423	682
Jefferson	8,123	680
King	1,252,756	1,452
Kitsap	83,134	904
Kittitas	14,195	703
Klickitat	7,620	815
Lewis	23,656	731
Lincoln	2,968	665
Mason	13,900	704
Okanogan	21,390	548
Pacific	6,444	643
Pend Oreille	2,988	796
Pierce	282,262	870
San Juan	5,911	631
Skagit	49,710	789
Skamania	2,146	633
Snohomish	269,877	1,019
Spokane	208,456	823
Stevens	9,978	699
Thurston	104,346	877
Wahkiakum	723	649
Walla Walla	27,638	736
Whatcom	83,544	782
Whitman	17,793	831
Yakima	119,226	658

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

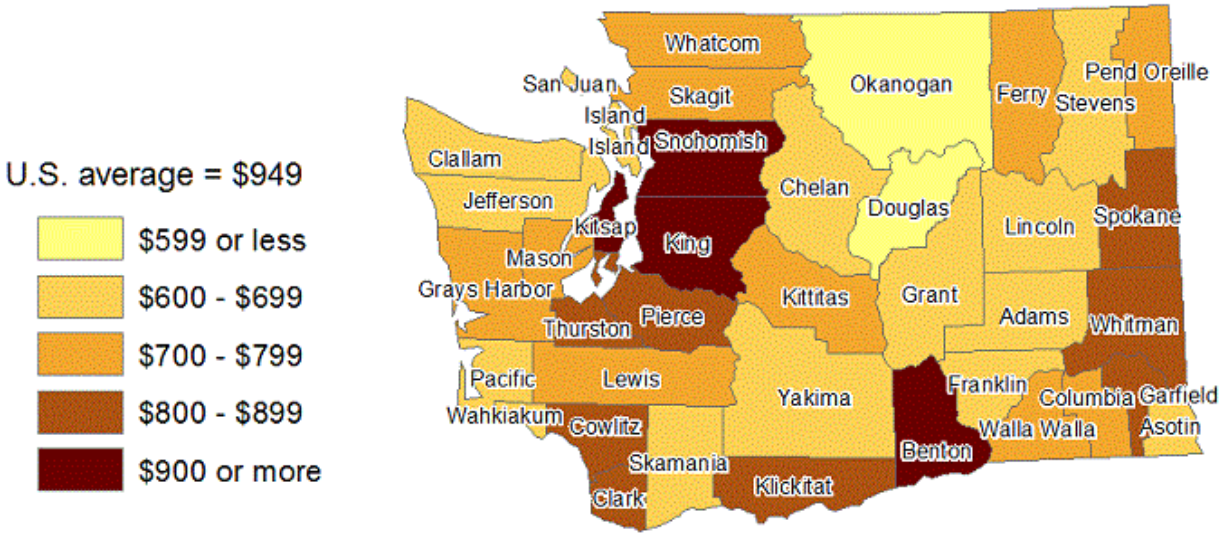
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2014

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2014 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2013-14	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2013-14	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	137,724.1	2.0	$949	--	2.9	--
Alabama	1,871.2	1.3	815	34	2.5	30
Alaska	344.7	-0.1	1,019	9	3.0	19
Arizona	2,539.6	1.8	876	24	2.0	40
Arkansas	1,170.9	1.3	737	47	1.8	44
California	16,013.4	3.1	1,095	5	3.7	7
Colorado	2,443.0	3.7	982	12	3.0	19
Connecticut	1,663.2	0.8	1,124	4	1.4	49
Delaware	426.1	1.9	961	16	2.2	37
District of Columbia	732.9	0.8	1,631	1	4.5	2
Florida	7,748.4	3.3	826	32	2.1	38
Georgia	4,059.0	3.4	891	21	2.8	23
Hawaii	625.1	0.9	870	25	3.9	4
Idaho	658.4	2.1	721	50	2.6	26
Illinois	5,807.4	1.2	982	12	2.5	30
Indiana	2,924.7	1.4	799	39	1.9	42
Iowa	1,528.8	1.1	800	38	3.6	10
Kansas	1,363.1	1.2	794	40	2.3	35
Kentucky	1,827.8	1.8	781	42	2.5	30
Louisiana	1,928.3	1.7	852	27	3.1	16
Maine	604.5	0.3	754	46	2.6	26
Maryland	2,574.5	1.1	1,042	8	3.1	16
Massachusetts	3,386.7	1.8	1,164	2	3.0	19
Michigan	4,141.0	1.7	896	19	2.4	33
Minnesota	2,757.9	1.1	965	15	2.9	22
Mississippi	1,105.0	0.5	697	51	1.3	50
Missouri	2,686.4	1.0	828	31	2.7	25
Montana	449.5	0.7	732	49	3.7	7
Nebraska	950.0	1.1	779	43	1.8	44
Nevada	1,215.8	4.0	840	28	0.5	51
New Hampshire	633.5	1.4	927	18	3.6	10
New Jersey	3,880.4	0.8	1,087	6	1.7	47
New Mexico	804.0	1.1	786	41	2.6	26
New York	8,902.1	2.0	1,145	3	3.2	15
North Carolina	4,085.5	1.9	839	29	2.8	23
North Dakota	455.9	4.3	977	14	6.1	1
Ohio	5,219.1	1.4	863	26	3.1	16
Oklahoma	1,592.3	1.0	826	32	3.6	10
Oregon	1,752.8	2.4	887	22	3.6	10
Pennsylvania	5,676.2	1.0	937	17	2.6	26
Rhode Island	471.8	1.4	895	20	1.8	44
South Carolina	1,902.7	2.4	768	45	2.4	33
South Dakota	415.8	1.7	733	48	3.7	7
Tennessee	2,775.5	2.4	837	30	2.1	38
Texas	11,433.6	3.1	988	11	3.8	6
Utah	1,304.7	3.1	803	37	1.5	48
Vermont	306.5	1.2	805	36	2.3	35
Virginia	3,667.9	0.6	989	10	2.0	40
Washington	3,112.8	3.2	1,087	6	3.9	4
West Virginia	709.3	-0.2	778	44	3.5	14
Wisconsin	2,783.1	1.1	808	35	1.9	42
Wyoming	291.3	1.7	877	23	4.4	3
Puerto Rico	896.7	-1.5	505	[3]	0.8	[3]
Virgin Islands	37.5	-1.0	720	[3]	2.0	[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. 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 county in Washington, third quarter 2014



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.