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## **County Employment and Wages in West Virginia – Third Quarter 2015**

Employment decreased 1.2 percent in West Virginia's only large county, Kanawha, from September 2014 to September 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with 2014 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that Kanawha County was one of the 24 large counties in the U.S. in which employment declined over the year. Nationally, employment increased 1.9 percent, as 312 of the 342 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Kanawha County ranked 330<sup>th</sup> in the nation for employment change. (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, Williamson, Tenn., recorded the largest percentage increase in employment with a gain of 6.5 percent over the year. Ector, Texas, registered the largest over-the-year employment decline among the largest U.S. counties, down 8.3 percent.

Employment in Kanawha County stood at 102,611 in September 2015, accounting for 14.6 percent of West Virginia's total employment. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.2 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 54 counties in West Virginia with employment levels below 75,000. Wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average of \$974 in the third quarter of 2015. (See [table 2](#).)

### **Large county wage changes**

The average weekly wage in Kanawha County increased 1.3 percent from the third quarter of 2014 to the third quarter of 2015. Kanawha County placed in the bottom fifth of the national ranking for wage growth (279<sup>th</sup>), with a wage increase one-half of the 2.6-percent national average.

Nationally, 319 of the 342 largest counties registered over-the-year wage increases. Rockland, N.Y., had the largest wage gain, up 24.9 percent from the third quarter of 2014. Lake, Ill., was second with a wage increase of 11.7 percent, followed by Onondaga, N.Y., at 6.5 percent and Washington, Ore., at 6.4 percent.

Among the large U.S. counties, 20 experienced over-the-year average weekly wage decreases. Midland, Texas, had the largest wage decrease with a loss of 6.7 percent. Ector, Texas, had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages, down 4.9 percent from the third quarter 2014, followed by Lafayette, La. (-3.2 percent); Stark, Ohio (-2.1 percent); and Gregg, Texas (-1.5 percent).

## Large county average weekly wages

Kanawha County reported average weekly wages of \$839, below the national average of \$974 for the third quarter 2015, and ranked 228<sup>th</sup> among the 342 largest U.S. counties.

Nationally, 100 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2015. Santa Clara, Calif., had the highest average weekly wage at \$2,090. San Mateo, Calif., was second (\$1,894), followed by New York, N.Y. (\$1,829).

Seventy one percent of the largest U.S. counties (242) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage (\$598), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$615) and Hidalgo (\$624). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than a third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif.

## Average weekly wages in West Virginia's smaller counties

When all 55 counties in West Virginia were considered, all had wages below the national average. Eight reported average weekly wages under \$600, 17 had wages from \$600 to \$699, 19 reported wages from \$700 to \$799, and 11 had wages of \$800 to \$899. No counties had wages of \$900 or above. (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](http://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 2014 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 2015 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2014* are now available online at <https://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn14.htm>. The 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2016.

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**The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2015 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 8, 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 9.6 million employer reports cover 140.4 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/](http://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 top 10 large counties ranked by average weekly wage and the largest county in West Virginia, third quarter 2015**

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	September 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2014-15 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level <sup>(3)</sup>	Percent change, third quarter 2014-15 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>
United States <sup>(4)</sup> .....	140,442.2	1.9	--	\$974	--	2.6	--
Santa Clara, Calif. ....	1,026.6	4.0	32	2,090	1	3.2	91
San Mateo, Calif. ....	387.8	5.0	10	1,894	2	3.4	77
New York, N.Y. ....	2,370.4	2.1	145	1,829	3	2.5	165
San Francisco, Calif. ....	684.1	5.2	8	1,712	4	1.4	274
Washington, D.C. ....	143.6	1.4	211	1,667	5	2.3	193
Arlington, Va. ....	171.3	3.0	95	1,587	6	1.5	265
Suffolk, Mass. ....	639.1	2.0	151	1,559	7	3.1	104
King, Wash. ....	1,292.1	3.4	66	1,463	8	1.0	300
Fairfax, Va. ....	589.0	2.0	151	1,462	9	1.2	286
Somerset, N.J. ....	182.4	1.2	221	1,447	10	4.3	30
Kanawha, W.Va. ....	102.6	-1.2	330	839	228	1.3	279

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 West Virginia, 3rd quarter 2015**

Area	Employment September 2015	Average Weekly Wage <sup>(1)</sup>
United States <sup>(2)</sup>	140,442,224	\$974
West Virginia	702,443	785
Barbour	3,389	648
Berkeley	32,345	748
Boone	5,897	848
Braxton	4,142	610
Brooke	8,349	742
Cabell	51,857	750
Calhoun	1,429	796
Clay	1,413	565
Doddridge	1,424	757
Fayette	11,438	653
Gilmer	2,203	760
Grant	3,440	715
Greenbrier	13,393	695
Hampshire	4,385	577
Hancock	10,026	660
Hardy	5,842	610
Harrison	35,302	871
Jackson	7,911	713
Jefferson	15,664	770
Kanawha	102,611	839
Lewis	6,819	830
Lincoln	2,595	653
Logan	10,106	733
McDowell	4,744	774
Marion	19,305	768
Marshall	10,693	899
Mason	5,740	747
Mercer	19,999	658
Mineral	7,860	753
Mingo	5,458	804
Monongalia	55,850	891
Monroe	1,979	691
Morgan	2,785	592
Nicholas	7,586	624
Ohio	29,198	773
Pendleton	1,582	568
Pleasants	2,944	877
Pocahontas	2,917	577
Preston	7,461	714
Putnam	20,453	858
Raleigh	32,425	726
Randolph	11,658	623
Ritchie	3,304	682
Roane	2,998	641
Summers	2,275	534
Taylor	3,332	698
Tucker	2,723	652
Tyler	2,354	823
Upshur	7,764	687
Wayne	8,755	796
Webster	1,982	673
Wetzel	4,725	578
Wirt	588	573
Wood	37,548	731

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in West Virginia, 3rd quarter 2015 - Continued**

Area	Employment September 2015	Average Weekly Wage <sup>(1)</sup>
Wyoming .....	4,924	833

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 2015**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	September 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States <sup>(2)</sup> .....	140,442.2	1.9	\$974	--	2.6	--
Alabama .....	1,893.6	1.2	830	34	1.8	40
Alaska .....	346.4	0.4	1,041	9	2.2	34
Arizona .....	2,613.9	2.9	889	24	1.5	42
Arkansas .....	1,193.4	1.9	756	48	2.6	22
California .....	16,474.4	3.0	1,134	5	3.4	6
Colorado .....	2,513.0	2.9	1,006	12	2.4	30
Connecticut .....	1,668.3	0.2	1,147	4	2.0	38
Delaware .....	436.3	2.1	963	15	0.3	48
District of Columbia .....	743.6	1.4	1,667	1	2.3	33
Florida .....	8,023.2	3.5	852	31	3.1	10
Georgia.....	4,171.1	2.8	916	22	2.8	19
Hawaii.....	635.4	1.4	896	23	3.1	10
Idaho .....	680.3	3.3	736	50	2.1	37
Illinois .....	5,888.6	1.3	1,020	10	3.9	3
Indiana.....	2,971.7	1.6	818	39	2.4	30
Iowa .....	1,535.9	0.4	823	38	3.0	14
Kansas .....	1,370.9	0.6	809	41	1.8	40
Kentucky.....	1,852.5	1.4	804	42	2.9	18
Louisiana .....	1,926.3	-0.2	858	30	0.7	47
Maine.....	609.7	0.7	779	46	3.3	7
Maryland.....	2,607.8	1.3	1,067	8	2.4	30
Massachusetts .....	3,446.9	1.4	1,197	2	3.0	14
Michigan .....	4,203.0	1.6	921	20	2.7	20
Minnesota.....	2,800.7	1.4	990	14	2.6	22
Mississippi.....	1,118.9	1.2	706	51	1.3	43
Missouri.....	2,737.9	1.9	846	32	2.2	34
Montana .....	457.9	1.9	759	47	3.7	4
Nebraska .....	964.0	1.4	811	40	4.2	2
Nevada .....	1,254.5	3.2	862	29	2.5	27
New Hampshire.....	642.8	1.5	952	18	2.7	20
New Jersey.....	3,933.9	1.4	1,116	6	2.6	22
New Mexico.....	809.2	0.6	798	43	1.3	43
New York .....	9,065.4	1.8	1,180	3	3.1	10
North Carolina .....	4,194.1	2.5	863	28	3.0	14
North Dakota .....	438.0	-3.8	956	17	-2.3	51
Ohio .....	5,282.7	1.2	878	25	1.9	39
Oklahoma.....	1,598.0	0.2	825	37	0.0	49
Oregon .....	1,812.8	3.0	924	19	4.4	1
Pennsylvania.....	5,722.1	0.8	961	16	2.5	27
Rhode Island .....	477.4	1.2	919	21	2.6	22
South Carolina.....	1,959.7	2.9	788	44	2.6	22
South Dakota.....	419.5	0.9	756	48	3.1	10
Tennessee.....	2,850.6	2.7	864	27	3.2	8
Texas .....	11,681.0	2.1	999	13	1.1	45
Utah .....	1,353.9	3.7	829	35	3.2	8
Vermont.....	308.2	0.5	829	35	3.0	14
Virginia.....	3,759.7	2.5	1,014	11	2.5	27
Washington.....	3,187.6	2.5	1,111	7	2.2	34
West Virginia .....	702.4	-1.1	785	45	0.9	46
Wisconsin.....	2,815.7	0.9	834	33	3.5	5
Wyoming .....	287.4	-1.5	866	26	-1.1	50
Puerto Rico.....	891.1	-0.7	512	(3)	1.4	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	36.8	-2.1	738	(3)	2.1	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

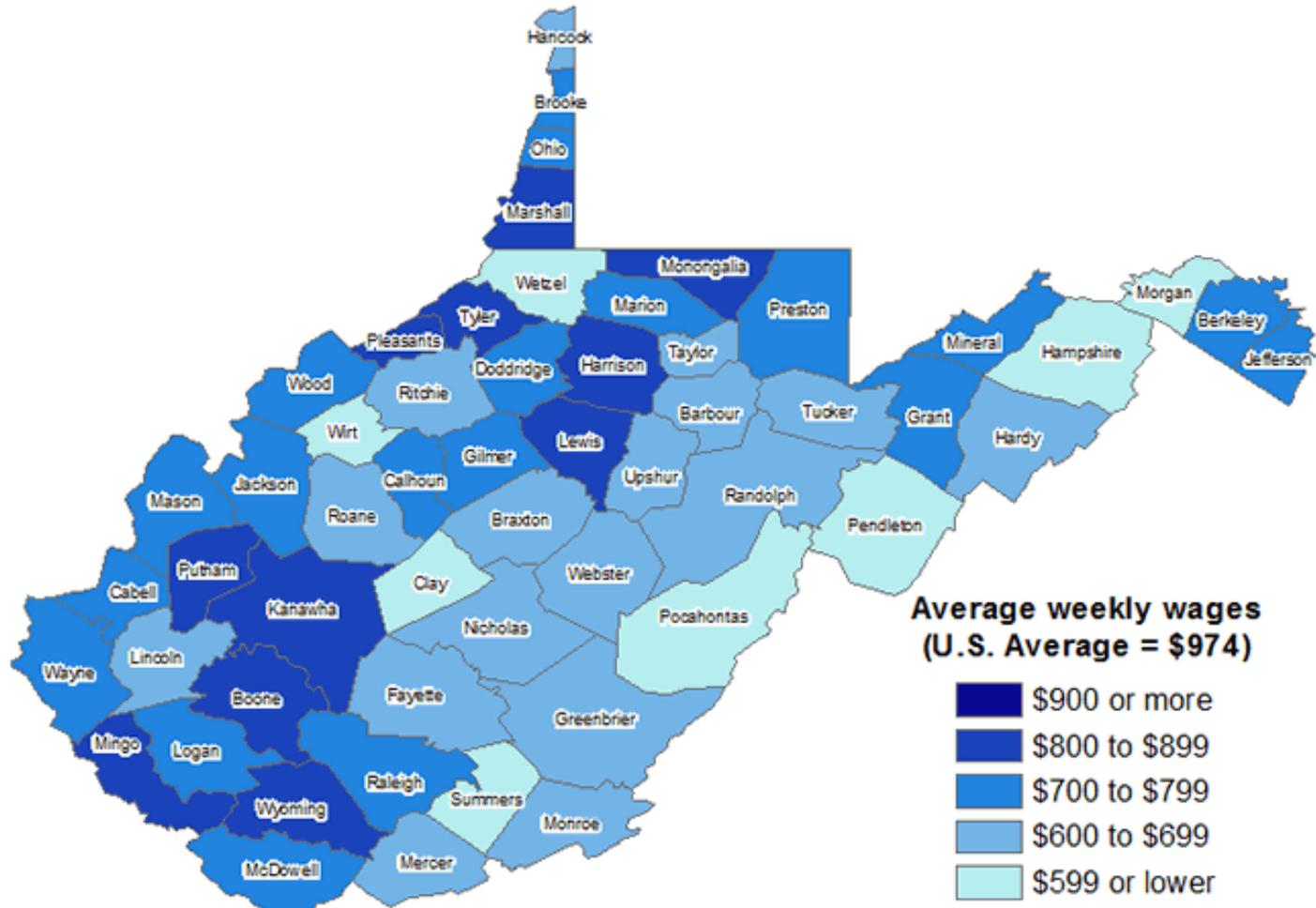
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 West Virginia, third quarter 2015**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
 Note: Data are preliminary