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Occupational Employment and Wages in Grand Rapids-Wyoming, Mich. MSA – May 2013

Workers in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.49 in May 2013, about 8 percent below the nationwide average of \$22.33, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Charlene Peiffer noted that, after testing for statistical significance, no wages in the local area were significantly higher than their respective national averages in 22 major occupational groups. Fifteen groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including architecture and engineering; computer and mathematical; and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 3 of the 22 occupational groups: production; healthcare practitioners and technical; and architecture and engineering. Conversely, 10 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including education, training, and library; food preparation and serving related; and construction and extraction. (See [table A](#) and box note at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2013

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Grand Rapids	United States	Grand Rapids	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$22.33	\$20.49*	-8
Management	4.9	5.1	53.15	48.99*	-8
Business and financial operations	5.0	5.1	34.14	29.90*	-12
Computer and mathematical	2.8	2.4*	39.43	33.27*	-16
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.1*	38.51	31.18*	-19
Life, physical, and social science	0.9	0.5*	33.37	28.80*	-14
Community and social services	1.4	1.6	21.50	21.69	1
Legal	0.8	0.5*	47.89	42.67*	-11
Education, training, and library	6.3	4.8*	24.76	24.46	-1
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.2	26.72	20.60*	-23
Healthcare practitioner and technical	5.8	6.4*	35.93	31.82*	-11
Healthcare support	3.0	3.2	13.61	13.49	-1
Protective service	2.5	1.6*	20.92	19.81	-5
Food preparation and serving related	9.0	7.8*	10.38	9.86*	-5
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	3.0	12.51	11.74*	-6
Personal care and service	3.0	2.4*	11.88	11.56	-3
Sales and related	10.6	10.1	18.37	17.98	-2
Office and administrative support	16.2	15.4*	16.78	15.82*	-6
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1*	11.70	12.73	9

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2013 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Grand Rapids	United States	Grand Rapids	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Construction and extraction.....	3.8	2.8*	21.94	20.49*	-7
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.7	21.35	20.32*	-5
Production	6.6	13.4*	16.79	15.60*	-7
Transportation and material moving.....	6.8	7.0	16.28	15.39*	-5

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Grand Rapids is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Grand Rapids-Wyoming had 53,140 jobs in production, accounting for 13.4 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.6-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$15.60, measurably below the national wage of \$16.79.

With employment of 9,570, team assemblers was the largest occupation within the production group, followed by helpers--production workers (4,880) and first-line supervisors of production and operating workers (2,790). Among the higher paying jobs were stationary engineers and boiler operators and first-line supervisors of production and operating workers, with mean hourly wages of \$27.88 and \$27.56, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were laundry and dry-cleaning workers (\$10.23) and helpers--production workers (\$10.62). (Detailed occupational data for production are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/2013/may/oes_24340.htm).

Location quotients allow for the exploration of an area’s occupational make-up by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, food and tobacco roasting, baking, and drying machine operators and tenders were employed at 14.8 times the national rate in Grand Rapids, and tool and die makers, at 10.2 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators had a location quotient of 1.0 in Grand Rapids, indicating that this particular occupation’s local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Michigan Bureau of LMI & Strategic Initiatives.

OES wage and employment data for the 22 major occupational groups in the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Statistical Area were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages or employment shares above or below the national wage or share after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

Note: A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year for a 3-year period. May 2013 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected in May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, November 2011, May 2011, and November 2010. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 75.3 percent based on establishments and 71.6 percent based on employment. The sample in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area included 3,081 establishments with a response rate of 74 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.

The May 2013 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Grand Rapids-Wyoming, Mich. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Barry, Ionia, Kent, and Newaygo Counties.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/midwest. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/2013/may/methods_statement.pdf. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request – Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2013

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production Occupations	53,140	2.0	\$15.60	\$32,440
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	2,790	1.6	27.56	57,330
Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers	430	0.7	17.21	35,800
Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers	60	0.4	17.33	36,050
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	280	2.4	15.70	32,650
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	(5)	(5)	18.66	38,820
Fiberglass Laminators and Fabricators	70	1.3	14.30	29,740
Team Assemblers	9,570	3.0	13.55	28,190
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other	2,550	3.4	15.80	32,860
Bakers	560	1.1	12.33	25,650
Butchers and Meat Cutters	180	0.4	15.57	32,390
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	410	0.9	13.52	28,120
Food and Tobacco Roasting, Baking, and Drying Machine Operators and Tenders	830	14.8	18.10	37,640
Food Batchmakers	660	2.0	12.90	26,840
Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders	400	3.9	15.47	32,170
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	1,590	3.8	16.53	34,380
Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic	160	2.2	24.57	51,100
Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	350	1.6	16.59	34,520
Forging Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	60	0.9	12.91	26,860
Rolling Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	90	0.9	14.55	30,260
Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	2,470	4.4	13.46	28,010
Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	180	3.1	18.44	38,360
Grinding, Lapping, Polishing, and Buffing Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	270	1.3	13.54	28,160
Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	(5)	(5)	16.66	34,650
Milling and Planing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	70	1.0	18.98	39,480
Machinists	2,550	2.2	15.02	31,240
Metal-Refining Furnace Operators and Tenders	40	0.6	16.89	35,140
Pourers and Casters, Metal	60	1.9	14.99	31,170
Model Makers, Metal and Plastic	50	2.4	26.02	54,120
Foundry Mold and Coremakers	180	4.6	17.12	35,600
Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1,440	3.8	13.81	28,720
Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	600	2.2	16.83	35,000
Tool and Die Makers	2,390	10.2	23.36	48,580
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1,220	1.2	16.95	35,250
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	300	2.0	18.32	38,110
Heat Treating Equipment Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	160	2.5	17.37	36,120
Plating and Coating Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	350	3.2	13.17	27,390
Tool Grinders, Filers, and Sharpeners	70	2.0	21.50	44,730
Prepress Technicians and Workers	230	2.0	16.24	33,790
Printing Press Operators	620	1.3	16.16	33,610
Print Binding and Finishing Workers	220	1.4	13.50	28,090
Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	660	1.1	10.23	21,270

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2013 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Sewing Machine Operators	250	0.6	11.80	24,540
Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	70	1.6	12.47	25,940
Upholsterers	170	2.0	15.49	32,230
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	70	0.3	16.05	33,390
Furniture Finishers	60	1.5	15.06	31,320
Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	(5)	(5)	13.44	27,950
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing.....	460	2.3	12.86	26,750
Stationary Engineers and Boiler Operators.....	30	0.3	27.88	58,000
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators	320	1.0	21.74	45,230
Plant and System Operators, All Other	100	3.0	20.51	42,660
Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	40	0.3	16.73	34,790
Crushing, Grinding, and Polishing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	90	0.9	16.92	35,200
Grinding and Polishing Workers, Hand	320	3.5	12.94	26,900
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	460	1.3	15.92	33,120
Cutters and Trimmers, Hand	90	2.2	16.43	34,180
Cutting and Slicing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	130	0.7	15.03	31,270
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers ...	2,470	1.8	15.39	32,020
Jewelers and Precious Stone and Metal Workers.....	70	1.0	15.69	32,640
Dental Laboratory Technicians	110	1.0	18.80	39,110
Ophthalmic Laboratory Technicians	80	1.0	(5)	(5)
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders..	2,590	2.3	12.22	25,420
Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders.....	530	2.0	15.31	31,850
Painters, Transportation Equipment.....	(5)	(5)	17.31	36,000
Painting, Coating, and Decorating Workers	80	1.6	(5)	(5)
Photographic Process Workers and Processing Machine Operators	(5)	(5)	13.23	27,530
Adhesive Bonding Machine Operators and Tenders.....	100	1.7	15.79	32,830
Molders, Shapers, and Casters, Except Metal and Plastic.....	140	1.5	16.00	33,290
Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders ..	250	0.9	15.36	31,940
Helpers--Production Workers	4,880	3.8	10.62	22,080
Production Workers, All Other	1,310	2.1	15.21	31,640

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_24340.htm.

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimate not released.