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County Employment and Wages in Illinois — Fourth Quarter 2015

Nine of Illinois' 13 large counties reported employment increases from December 2014 to December 2015, 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 2014 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that Will County had the largest increase in employment at 2.2 percent, followed by Cook County's 1.9-percent growth. Two counties experienced employment declines – Sangamon (-1.6 percent) and Champaign (-0.1 percent). (See table 1.)

Nationally, employment advanced 1.9 percent from December 2014 to December 2015 with 308 of the 342 largest U.S. counties registering increases. Williamson, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 6.8 percent over the year. Ector, Texas, had the largest percentage employment decline among the large counties, down 11.8 percent.

Among the 13 largest counties in Illinois, employment was highest in Cook County (2,575,700) in December 2015. Two other large counties, Du Page (612,200) and Lake (333,500), had employment levels of more than 300,000. Collectively, Illinois' 13 large counties accounted for 80.6 percent of the state's employment with Cook County alone accounting for 43.4 percent. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015, all 13 large counties in the state had wage increases. Lake County recorded the fastest rate of increase in average weekly wages, with a gain of 9.8 percent. (See table 1.) Lake County also had the highest average weekly wage in the state at $1,450, followed by Cook ($1,267) and Du Page ($1,257) Counties. Nationally, the average weekly wage was $1,082, up 4.4 percent from a year ago.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 89 counties in Illinois with employment levels below 75,000. Eighty-six of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in all of the 13 large counties in Illinois increased from the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015. Lake's 9.8-percent wage gain ranked third among the 342 largest U.S. counties. Over-the-year wage increases in four other large counties in the state also ranked in the top third nationwide: Du Page (6.6 percent, 43rd), McHenry (6.5 percent, 53rd), Kane (6.4 percent, 61st), and Peoria (5.9 percent, 88th). (See table 1.)

Among the 342 large U.S. counties, 325 had over-the-year wage increases. Wyandotte, Kan., had the largest wage gain, up 10.4 percent from the fourth quarter of 2014. Sonoma, Calif., was second with a wage gain of 10.0 percent, followed by the counties of Lake, Ill. (9.8 percent) and Passaic, N.J. (9.4 percent).

Ten large U.S. counties experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 11.5 percent. Ector, Texas, had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages, down 8.0 percent from the fourth quarter of 2014, followed by Lafayette, La. (-4.3 percent) and Gregg, Texas (-3.2 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 3 of Illinois' 13 large counties were above the national average of $1,082 in the fourth quarter of 2015 and ranked in the top 50 nationwide: Lake ($1,450, 14th), Cook ($1,267, 42nd), and Du Page ($1,257, 47th). St. Clair ($838) reported the lowest average weekly wage among the state's large counties and ranked 307th nationwide.

Seventy percent of the large U.S. counties (241) reported average weekly wages below the national average of $1,082. Cameron, Texas, reported the lowest weekly wage ($649), followed by Horry, S.C. ($653) and Hidalgo, Texas ($661).

Nationally, 100 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2015. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,335. New York, N.Y., was second at $2,235, followed by San Mateo, Calif., at $2,095. Average weekly wages in the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif., were more than three times the average weekly wage in the lowest-ranked county, Cameron, Texas ($649).

Average weekly wages in Illinois' smaller counties

Eight-six of the 89 counties in Illinois with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $1,082. The exceptions were Rock Island ($1,296), Grundy ($1,109), and Tazewell ($1,087). Calhoun County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging $526 in the fourth quarter of 2015. (See table 2.)

When the 102 counties in Illinois were considered, all but 6 had wages below the national average of $1,082. Twenty-three counties reported average weekly wages less than $700, 36 reported wages from $700 to $799, 22 had wages from $800 to $899, and 21 had wages of $900 or more. (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 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.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 7, 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 9.7 million employer reports cover 141.9 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 13 largest counties in Illinois, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	141,924.5	1.9	--	$1,082	--	4.4	--
Illinois	5,931.2	1.4	--	1,146	8	5.1	18
Champaign, Ill.	90.0	-0.1	312	901	253	4.0	230
Cook, Ill.	2,575.7	1.9	171	1,267	42	4.4	208
DuPage, Ill.	612.2	0.4	294	1,257	47	6.6	43
Kane, Ill.	209.5	0.8	264	968	189	6.4	61
Lake, Ill.	333.5	0.9	254	1,450	14	9.8	3
Madison, Ill.	98.4	0.0	309	876	280	3.4	266
McHenry, Ill.	97.0	1.2	221	904	247	6.5	53
McLean, Ill.	84.6	0.0	309	1,010	156	4.1	225
Peoria, Ill.	102.2	1.1	235	1,012	155	5.9	88
Sangamon, Ill.	128.6	-1.6	331	1,063	116	4.3	212
St. Clair, Ill.	94.1	0.4	294	838	307	5.1	148
Will, Ill.	225.8	2.2	144	943	210	5.1	148
Winnebago, Ill.	129.3	0.9	254	898	257	3.1	284

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 Illinois, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment December 2015	Average weekly wage [1]
United States [2]	141,924,459	$1,082
Illinois	5,931,191	1,146
Adams	32,786	833
Alexander	1,208	718
Bond	4,758	755
Boone	17,346	1,005
Brown	3,987	1,006
Bureau	10,988	784
Calhoun	757	526
Carroll	4,308	663
Cass	5,682	731
Champaign	89,977	901
Christian	10,342	731
Clark	4,824	721
Clay	5,295	701
Clinton	12,455	754
Coles	23,376	764
Cook	2,575,697	1,267
Crawford	7,802	903
Cumberland	2,611	692
De Kalb	37,382	843
De Witt	5,382	859
Douglas	7,313	761
Du Page	612,165	1,257
Edgar	7,200	800
Edwards	2,360	785
Effingham	20,666	756
Fayette	5,325	678
Ford	4,493	800
Franklin	8,074	657
Fulton	8,343	651
Gallatin	1,021	720
Greene	2,338	590
Grundy	18,906	1,109
Hamilton	1,854	765
Hancock	3,898	662
Hardin	722	659
Henderson	1,117	577
Henry	14,129	742
Iroquois	8,151	646
Jackson	25,378	815
Jasper	2,067	777
Jefferson	19,081	848
Jersey	4,689	678
Jo Daviess	7,362	716
Johnson	2,326	870
Kane	209,482	968
Kankakee	44,343	822
Kendall	27,534	783
Knox	19,229	678
La Salle	43,890	864
Lake	333,527	1,450
Lawrence	4,536	822
Lee	13,188	843
Livingston	14,031	876
Logan	9,089	788
Macon	49,978	932

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Illinois, fourth quarter 2015 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2015	Average weekly wage [1]
Macoupin	9,964	722
Madison	98,448	876
Marion	13,093	751
Marshall	2,978	740
Mason	3,139	715
Massac	3,484	957
McDonough	11,450	741
McHenry	96,962	904
McLean	84,601	1,010
Menard	1,938	603
Mercer	3,105	645
Monroe	7,911	714
Montgomery	8,491	758
Morgan	14,598	760
Moultrie	4,853	740
Ogle	15,865	906
Peoria	102,248	1,012
Perry	4,927	729
Piatt	3,261	704
Pike	4,193	636
Pope	568	610
Pulaski	1,385	811
Putnam	1,719	877
Randolph	12,787	807
Richland	6,005	696
Rock Island	72,850	1,296
Saline	7,908	752
Sangamon	128,573	1,063
Schuyler	1,813	912
Scott	1,074	688
Shelby	4,652	622
St. Clair	94,137	838
Stark	1,354	732
Stephenson	16,820	835
Tazewell	56,176	1,087
Union	4,871	668
Vermilion	27,866	812
Wabash	3,174	752
Warren	6,286	678
Washington	6,251	905
Wayne	4,244	630
White	4,287	734
Whiteside	20,890	715
Will	225,779	943
Williamson	27,525	784
Winnebago	129,270	898
Woodford	10,754	855

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.

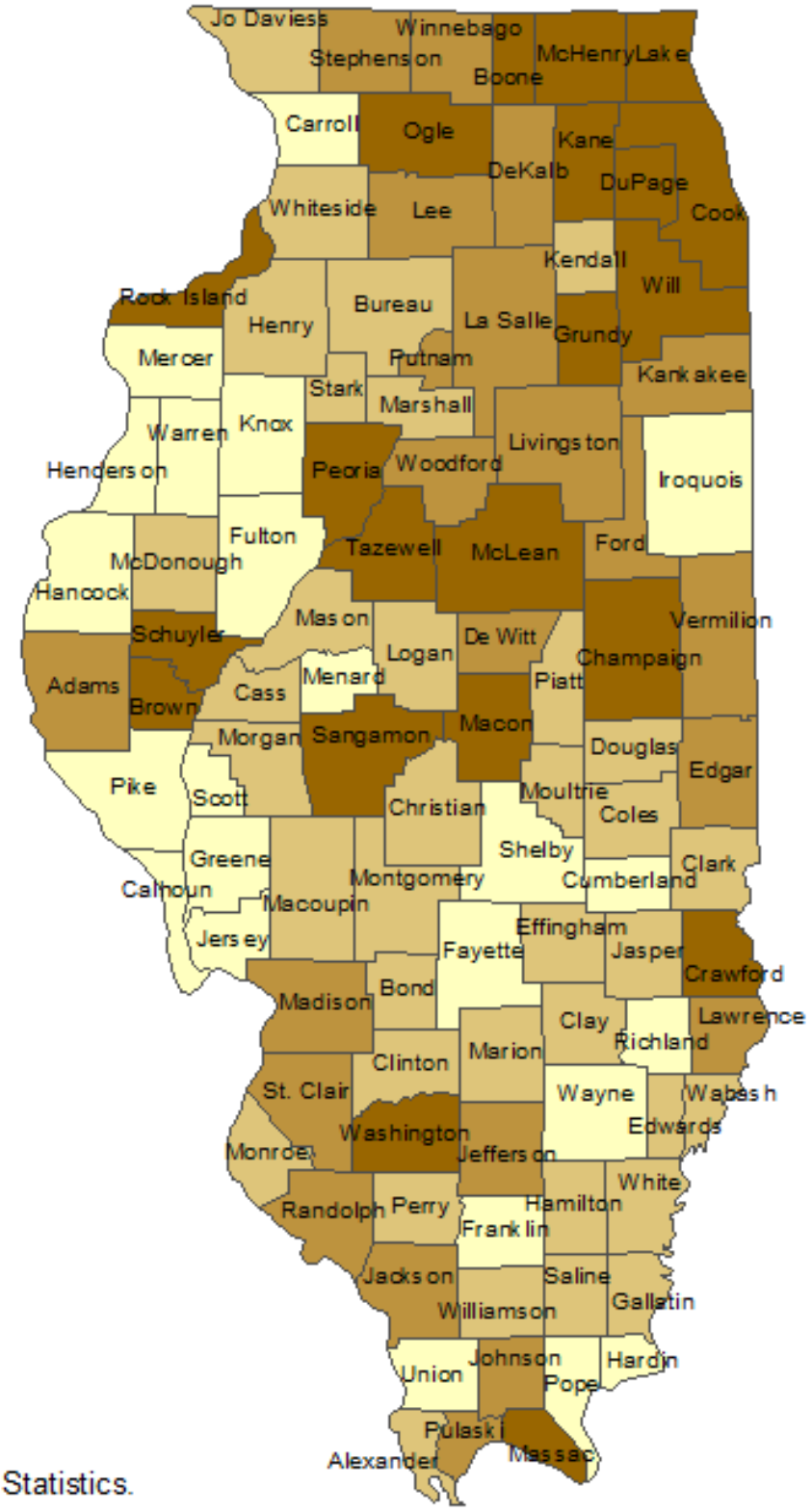
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	141,924.5	1.9	$1,082	--	4.4	--
Alabama	1,916.2	1.4	912	37	3.4	37
Alaska	315.9	-0.5	1,095	13	2.9	43
Arizona	2,701.8	2.6	967	24	4.4	28
Arkansas	1,201.4	1.7	838	46	3.8	35
California	16,593.8	3.1	1,274	5	5.4	10
Colorado	2,537.5	2.5	1,103	11	3.3	40
Connecticut	1,685.1	0.3	1,334	4	4.3	29
Delaware	441.2	1.8	1,086	15	3.4	37
District of Columbia	754.2	2.2	1,756	1	3.4	37
Florida	8,308.1	3.7	958	26	5.2	16
Georgia	4,249.4	2.9	1,001	21	4.5	27
Hawaii	653.0	2.2	957	27	5.4	10
Idaho	670.1	3.4	803	50	2.6	45
Illinois	5,931.2	1.4	1,146	8	5.1	18
Indiana	2,996.3	1.7	891	40	5.3	14
Iowa	1,539.0	0.7	920	34	5.7	3
Kansas	1,382.1	0.4	898	38	5.0	20
Kentucky	1,881.3	1.6	885	41	5.9	1
Louisiana	1,937.4	-1.0	940	29	1.8	47
Maine	596.9	0.7	873	43	5.7	3
Maryland	2,636.7	1.7	1,175	7	5.6	5
Massachusetts	3,479.1	1.6	1,385	2	5.4	10
Michigan	4,218.9	1.5	1,043	18	5.9	1
Minnesota	2,805.8	1.5	1,073	16	4.8	22
Mississippi	1,133.8	1.3	770	51	3.1	41
Missouri	2,759.6	1.8	933	33	4.6	25
Montana	453.2	2.5	818	49	3.0	42
Nebraska	971.8	1.4	880	42	5.1	18
Nevada	1,272.2	3.5	935	32	4.0	31
New Hampshire	648.6	1.7	1,139	9	5.4	10
New Jersey	3,988.4	1.7	1,262	6	4.0	31
New Mexico	808.9	-0.1	865	44	1.8	47
New York	9,227.6	1.7	1,372	3	3.9	34
North Carolina	4,247.1	2.5	939	30	5.5	8
North Dakota	428.1	-5.9	1,021	20	-2.8	51
Ohio	5,328.8	1.2	964	25	4.6	25
Oklahoma	1,605.0	-0.7	896	39	2.3	46
Oregon	1,814.8	3.3	979	23	5.5	8
Pennsylvania	5,759.7	0.7	1,063	17	4.9	21
Rhode Island	478.1	1.5	1,043	18	4.0	31
South Carolina	1,987.1	2.8	860	45	5.3	14
South Dakota	417.7	1.2	832	47	5.2	16
Tennessee	2,898.1	2.8	980	22	5.6	5
Texas	11,832.1	1.4	1,099	12	2.7	44
Utah	1,375.6	3.8	913	36	4.7	23
Vermont	312.1	0.3	919	35	4.1	30
Virginia	3,806.2	3.0	1,094	14	3.5	36
Washington	3,137.2	2.3	1,132	10	4.7	23
West Virginia	703.7	-1.3	829	48	1.3	49
Wisconsin	2,820.5	1.1	944	28	5.6	5
Wyoming	276.0	-2.9	937	31	-1.7	50
Puerto Rico	929.9	-1.6	565	[3]	1.6	[3]
Virgin Islands	38.4	-0.3	787	[3]	4.7	[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 Illinois, fourth quarter 2015



Average weekly wages

(U.S. average = $1,082)

- $900 or higher
- $800 - $899
- $700 - $799
- $699 or lower

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.