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County Employment and Wages in Michigan — Fourth Quarter 2015

Nine of the 10 large counties in Michigan had employment increases from December 2014 to December 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 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 Kent County had the largest increase, up 3.4 percent, followed by Ottawa, up 3.1 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, registered the largest percentage employment decline among the large counties, down 11.8 percent.

Among the 10 largest counties in Michigan, employment was highest in Oakland County (719,300) and Wayne County (709,000) in December 2015. Two other counties, Kent (382,100) and Macomb (319,500) had employment levels of more than 300,000. Collectively, Michigan's 10 large counties accounted for 69.8 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Genesee and Macomb Counties rose 8.4 percent each from the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015, the largest increase among Michigan's large counties. Oakland County had the highest average weekly wage in the state at $1,222, followed by Wayne County at $1,209. (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 4.4 percent over the year to $1,082 in the fourth quarter of 2015.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 73 counties in Michigan with employment levels below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

With the exception of Ottawa County (3.7 percent), all of Michigan's large counties had over-the-year wage gains greater than the national increase of 4.4 percent. As noted, Genesee and Macomb Counties had the state's largest average weekly wage increases, up 8.4 percent each, and ranked 13th among the nation's 342 largest counties. Three other large counties ranked among the top 30 nationwide for wage growth: Wayne (8.1 percent, 16th), Saginaw (7.5 percent, 18th), and Kalamazoo (7.0 percent, 30th). (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

As noted, Oakland County ($1,222) had the highest average weekly wage in the state and ranked 54th among the 342 largest U.S. counties. Wayne ($1,209, 55th), Washtenaw ($1,116, 81st), and Macomb ($1,097, 88th) Counties also reported average weekly wages above the national average of $1,082. Two other counties—Ingham ($1,028) and Kalamazoo ($1,000)—had average weekly wages that placed in the top-half of the national ranking. Saginaw ($877) reported the lowest average weekly wage among the state's large counties and ranked 278th 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 Michigan's smaller counties

All 73 counties in Michigan with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national average of $1,082. Among these smaller counties, Midland had the highest average weekly wage at $1,077, while Keweenaw had the lowest at $498. (See table 2.)

When the 83 counties in Michigan were considered, all but 4 had wages below the national average. Fourteen reported average weekly wages less than $700, 31 reported wages from $700 to $799, 22 had wages from $800 to $899, and 16 had wages of $900 or more. (See chart 1.)

Additional statistics and other information

Quarterly 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 the QCEW Web site at 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) 877-8342.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 10 largest counties in Michigan, 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	--
Michigan	4,218.9	1.5	--	1,043	18	5.9	1
Genesee, Mich.	134.6	-0.1	312	918	239	8.4	13
Ingham, Mich.	149.0	1.0	246	1,028	143	6.6	43
Kalamazoo, Mich.	116.2	0.6	281	1,000	164	7.0	30
Kent, Mich.	382.1	3.4	63	963	191	4.9	161
Macomb, Mich.	319.5	1.4	208	1,097	88	8.4	13
Oakland, Mich.	719.3	1.8	183	1,222	54	4.8	172
Ottawa, Mich.	120.3	3.1	87	950	206	3.7	254
Saginaw, Mich.	85.8	1.0	246	877	278	7.5	18
Washtenaw, Mich.	208.5	1.9	171	1,116	81	4.6	189
Wayne, Mich.	709.0	0.4	294	1,209	55	8.1	16

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 Michigan, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment December 2015	Average weekly wage [1]
United States [2]	141,924,459	$1,082
Michigan	4,218,938	1,043
Alcona	1,624	722
Alger	2,296	811
Allegan	37,263	952
Alpena	11,357	751
Antrim	4,777	652
Arenac	4,504	665
Baraga	2,921	772
Barry	12,128	791
Bay	34,828	863
Benzie	3,835	662
Berrien	60,522	897
Branch	12,770	800
Calhoun	57,246	981
Cass	8,771	783
Charlevoix	9,870	864
Cheboygan	5,642	655
Chippewa	12,406	733
Clare	6,429	775
Clinton	16,227	848
Crawford	3,727	818
Delta	13,482	770
Dickinson	13,617	878
Eaton	41,238	965
Emmet	17,214	809
Genesee	134,584	918
Gladwin	3,961	722
Gogebic	5,384	747
Grand Traverse	48,803	895
Gratiot	13,125	841
Hillsdale	12,852	863
Houghton	11,335	816
Huron	10,844	773
Ingham	149,046	1,028
Ionia	20,650	659
Iosco	7,319	727
Iron	3,792	753
Isabella	29,551	747
Jackson	56,851	935
Kalamazoo	116,154	1,000
Kalkaska	3,779	980
Kent	382,096	963
Keweenaw	311	498
Lake	1,542	680
Lapeer	20,619	781
Leelanau	5,820	761
Lenawee	26,939	823
Livingston	57,033	862
Luce	1,818	748
Mackinac	3,041	703
Macomb	319,472	1,097
Manistee	6,748	762
Marquette	26,848	813
Mason	10,259	742
Mecosta	13,816	791
Menominee	7,313	700

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment December 2015	Average weekly wage [1]
Midland	37,211	1,077
Missaukee	3,434	653
Monroe	41,253	955
Montcalm	15,612	797
Montmorency	1,921	681
Muskegon	61,272	855
Newaygo	11,924	781
Oakland	719,290	1,222
Oceana	6,316	697
Ogemaw	5,858	649
Ontonagon	1,277	621
Osceola	5,910	875
Oscoda	1,549	624
Otsego	9,757	788
Ottawa	120,349	950
Presque Isle	2,920	768
Roscommon	5,099	611
Saginaw	85,768	877
St. Clair	44,607	867
St. Joseph	24,085	792
Sanilac	10,880	717
Schoolcraft	2,584	764
Shiawassee	16,471	734
Tuscola	11,277	809
Van Buren	20,408	805
Washtenaw	208,452	1,116
Wayne	708,982	1,209
Wexford	12,939	774

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.

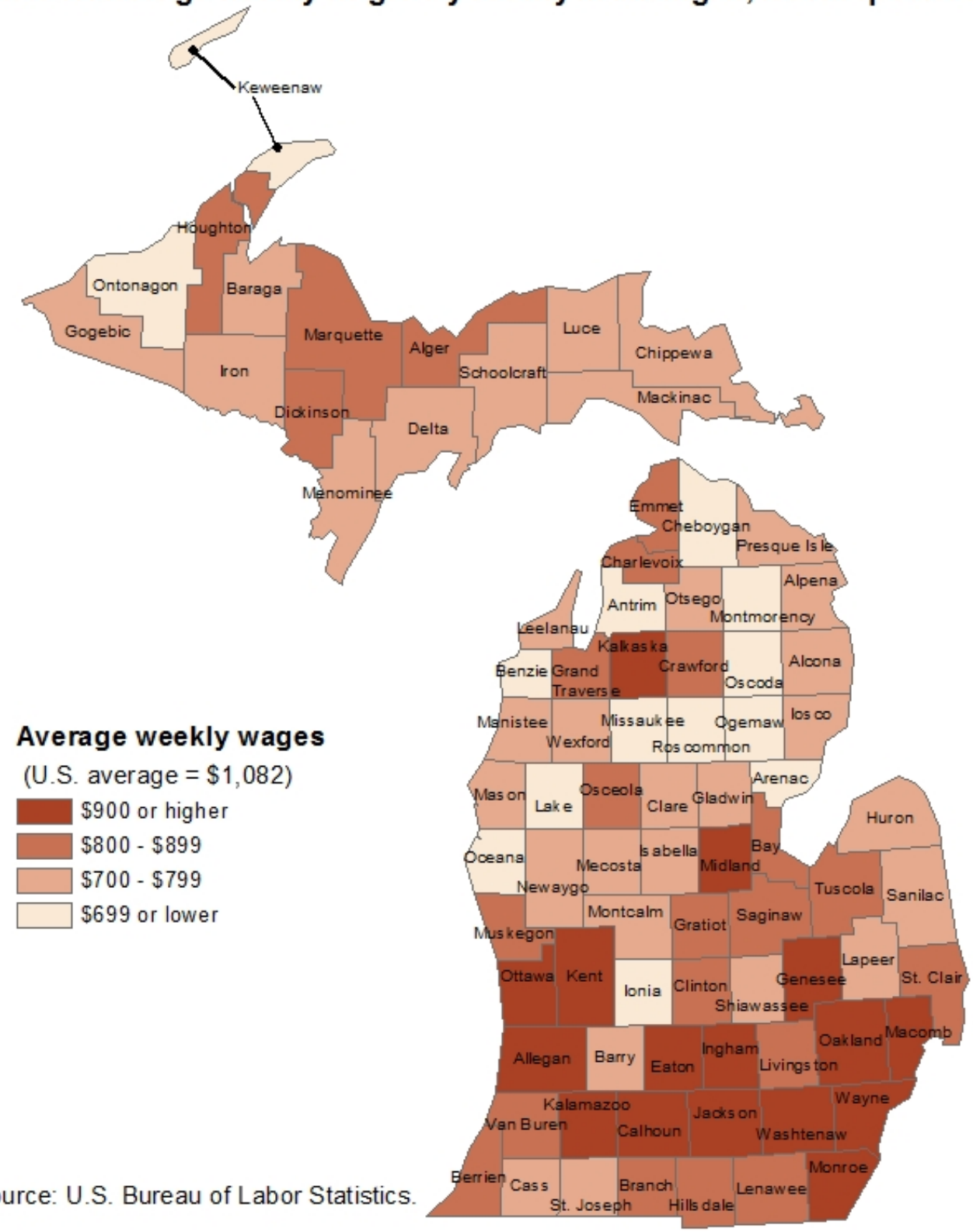
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2015

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 Michigan, fourth quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.