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MIDWEST INFORMATION OFFICE: Chicago, Ill.
Technical information: (312) 353-1880 BLSInfoChicago@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/midwest
Media contact: (312) 353-1138

County Employment and Wages in North Dakota — Third Quarter 2015

North Dakota's only large county, Cass, reported an average weekly wage of $910 in the third quarter of 2015, 1.3 percent higher than one year ago, 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 preliminary annual averages of employment.) Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 2.6 percent over the year to $974 in the third quarter of 2015. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that although Cass County's wages were below the U.S. average, nine of the state's smaller counties, those with employment below 75,000, reported wages above that for the nation. (See table 1.)

Employment in Cass County increased 0.8 percent from September 2014 to September 2015. Cass County's employment level of 116,900 accounted for 26.7 percent of total employment within the state. Nationally, employment rose 1.9 percent during this 12-month period, as 312 of the 342 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. 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 52 smaller counties in North Dakota. Average weekly wages varied widely across the state, with four having wages above $1,300 and two reporting wages under $550. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Cass County's 1.3-percent wage growth from the third quarter of 2014 to the third quarter of 2015 ranked 279th nationally. (See table 1.) Among the 342 largest U.S. counties, 319 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. 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. (6.5 percent); Washington, Ore. (6.4 percent); and the counties of Marin and Santa Cruz, Calif. (6.1 percent each).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 20 experienced over-the-year 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

Cass County's $910 average wage placed in the upper half among the 342 largest U.S. counties, ranking 165th. Nationally, Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of $2,090. San Mateo, Calif., was second at $1,894, followed by New York, N.Y. ($1,829); San

Francisco, Calif. ($1,712); and Washington, D.C. ($1,667). Among the largest U.S. counties, Horry County, S.C. ($598), reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas ($615); Hidalgo, Texas ($624); Webb Texas ($658); and Marion, Fla. ($658).

Average weekly wages in North Dakota's smaller counties

Forty-three of the 52 counties in North Dakota with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $974. Nine small counties had above-average wages, all located in the western portion of the state. The highest wage was reported in McKenzie County at $1,439, followed by Williams ($1,435) and Oliver ($1,358). Sheridan County reported the lowest wage in the state, averaging $486 in the third quarter of 2015. (See table 2.)

When all 53 counties in North Dakota were considered, 10 reported average weekly wages of $649 or lower, 17 had wages from $650 to $749, 11 reported wages from $750 to $849, and 15 reported wages of $850 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 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/; 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 largest county in North Dakota, third quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	140,442.2	1.9	--	$974	--	2.6	--
North Dakota	438.0	-3.8	--	956	17	-2.3	51
Cass, N.D.	116.9	0.8	252	910	165	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 North Dakota, third quarter 2015

Area	Employment September 2015	Average weekly wage [1]
United States [2]	140,442,224	$974
North Dakota	438,042	956
Adams	961	716
Barnes	4,899	700
Benson	2,079	699
Billings	760	657
Bottineau	2,730	792
Bowman	1,739	855
Burke	798	1,012
Burleigh	58,707	947
Cass	116,912	910
Cavalier	1,477	774
Dickey	2,040	650
Divide	969	957
Dunn	2,686	1,265
Eddy	783	611
Emmons	977	633
Foster	1,648	748
Golden Valley	693	682
Grand Forks	41,291	834
Grant	625	646
Griggs	945	653
Hettinger	740	744
Kidder	746	716
LaMoure	1,432	688
Logan	654	549
McHenry	1,302	787
McIntosh	1,081	607
McKenzie	10,425	1,439
McLean	3,644	956
Mercer	5,308	1,323
Morton	11,337	818
Mountrail	6,692	1,275
Nelson	1,052	607
Oliver	856	1,358
Pembina	3,944	836
Pierce	1,729	740
Ramsey	5,850	746
Ransom	2,137	629
Renville	758	830
Richland	8,054	738
Rolette	4,623	710
Sargent	2,928	726
Sheridan	253	486
Sioux	1,610	800
Slope	145	999
Stark	21,624	1,128
Steele	635	849
Stutsman	11,502	775
Towner	826	602
Traill	3,467	751
Walsh	5,546	705
Ward	35,001	944
Wells	1,636	617
Williams	34,321	1,435

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

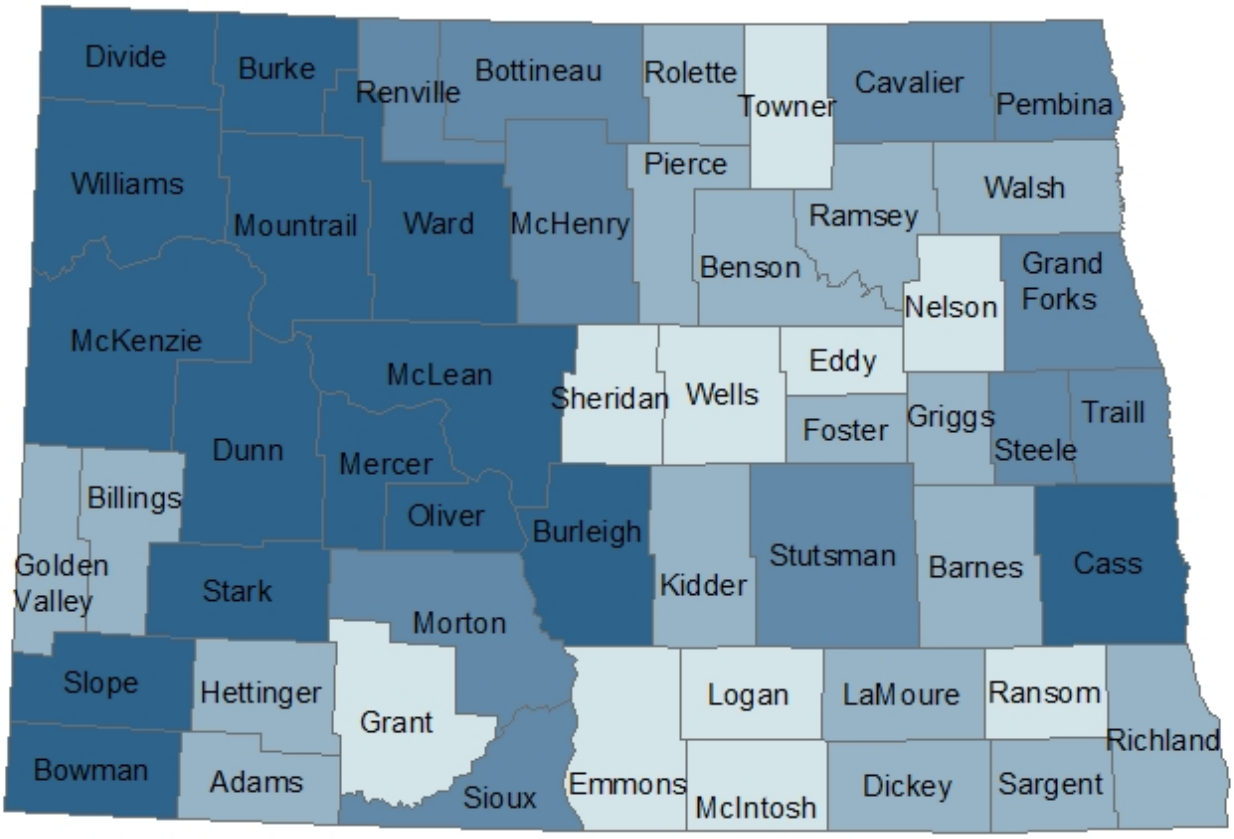
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	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 [2]	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 North Dakota, third quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Average weekly wages

(U.S. Average = $974)

- $850 or higher
- $750 - $849
- $650 - $749
- $649 or lower