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County Employment and Wages in Colorado – Fourth Quarter 2017

Employment rose in all nine large counties in Colorado from December 2016 to December 2017, 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 2016 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that all nine counties reported rates of job growth that exceeded the national average of 1.5 percent. Weld County (5.2 percent) and Adams County (5.1 percent) had the largest gains. Arapahoe County (1.8 percent) had the smallest over-the-year increase. (See table 1.)

Nationwide, 316 of the 346 largest U.S. counties registered increases over the 12-month period. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage increase, up 11.5 percent over the year. Shawnee, Kan., and Caddo, La., had the largest over-the-year percentage decreases in employment with losses of 1.8 percent each.

Among the nine largest counties in Colorado, employment was highest in Denver (514,200) in December 2017. Four other counties—Adams, Arapahoe, El Paso, and Jefferson—had employment levels exceeding 200,000. Together, the nine large counties accounted for 80.7 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 346 largest counties made up 73.0 percent of total U.S. employment.

Average weekly wages rose in all nine large counties in Colorado from the fourth quarter of 2016 to the fourth quarter of 2017. Douglas County had the largest over-the-year percentage gain (9.0 percent). Nationally, average weekly wages were up 3.9 percent. Average weekly wages in five of the large counties in Colorado exceeded the national average of $1,109. Denver had the highest average weekly wage among the state's largest counties at $1,334, followed by Douglas at $1,314. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000. Broomfield ($1,900) was the only small county that had an average weekly wage above the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Average weekly wages increased in all nine large counties in Colorado from the fourth quarter of 2016 to the fourth quarter of 2017, with three counties posting increases greater than the U.S. average gain of 3.9 percent. Douglas County had the largest rate of wage growth (9.0 percent), placing fourth in the national ranking. Weld (6.9 percent, 10th) and Adams (5.4 percent, 22nd) placed in the top 25 among the 346 largest U.S. counties. Over-the-year wage gains in Colorado's remaining six large counties were less than the national average, with El Paso (2.8 percent, 188th) and Jefferson (2.4 percent, 241st) placing in the bottom half of the national ranking.

Among the 346 largest U.S. counties, 339 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2017. San Mateo, Calif., and Ada, Idaho, had the largest percentage increases in average weekly wages among the largest U.S. counties (11.5 percent each). Seven of the 346 largest counties experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages with a decline of 6.7 percent.

Large county average weekly wages

Four of the state's large counties had average weekly wages that placed in the top 50 of the 346 largest U.S. counties in the fourth quarter of 2017. Average weekly wages in Denver ($1,334) and Douglas ($1,314) ranked 32nd and 37th, respectively, followed by the counties of Boulder ($1,277, 45th) and Arapahoe ($1,268, 47th). One additional large county, Jefferson ($1,112, 95th), had an average weekly wage above the national average of $1,109. The average weekly wages in Colorado's four other large counties ranged from $1,075 to $962.

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average of $1,109 in 95 of the 346 largest counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,576, followed by New York, N.Y. ($2,439), and San Mateo, Calif. ($2,341). Among the largest U.S. counties, more than two-thirds (251) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2017. The lowest weekly wages were in the Texas counties of Cameron ($652) and Hidalgo ($664), followed by Horry, S.C. ($674).

Average weekly wages in Colorado's smaller counties

Of the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000, only Broomfield ($1,900) had an average weekly wage above the national average. San Juan County had the lowest weekly wage in the state with an average of $535 in the fourth quarter of 2017. (See table 2.)

When all 64 counties in Colorado were considered, 8 reported average weekly wages of $649 or less, 32 reported wages from $650 to $799, 9 had wages from $800 to $949, 9 had wages from $950 to $1099, and 6 had wages of $1,100 or higher. All six of the highest-wage counties were located in the Denver and Boulder metropolitan areas. The counties with the lowest average weekly wages were located in southern half of the state. (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 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 2016 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 2017 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2016* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn16.htm. The 2017 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2018.

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.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2018 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 22, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. (ET).

QCEW Publication Acceleration and Conversion to Two Data Releases

The national QCEW publication process is accelerating for a more timely release. Beginning with the national fourth quarter 2017 release, QCEW data will be published in two parts. The current County Employment and Wages news release will be accelerated and published first. The full QCEW data release will occur two weeks later, accompanied by a data release notice.

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 10.0 million employer reports cover 145.9 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.

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.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 9 largest counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2017

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	145,921.1	1.5	--	$1,109	--	3.9	--
Colorado	2,653.3	2.5	--	1,133	10	4.3	9
Adams, Colo.	211.7	5.1	8	1,075	114	5.4	22
Arapahoe, Colo.	331.2	1.8	102	1,268	47	3.4	134
Boulder, Colo.	183.1	2.4	69	1,277	45	3.5	122
Denver, Colo.	514.2	2.6	56	1,334	32	3.7	107
Douglas, Colo.	123.6	2.9	38	1,314	37	9.0	4
El Paso, Colo.	274.4	2.5	62	967	207	2.8	188
Jefferson, Colo.	236.4	2.2	81	1,112	95	2.4	241
Larimer, Colo.	159.0	3.0	32	1,011	162	3.4	134
Weld, Colo.	106.8	5.2	6	962	210	6.9	10

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 Colorado, fourth quarter 2017

Area	Employment December 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	145,921,109	$1,109
Colorado	2,653,349	1,133
Adams	211,709	1,075
Alamosa	8,285	727
Arapahoe	331,245	1,268
Archuleta	4,082	678
Baca	1,073	594
Bent	1,082	680
Boulder	183,142	1,277
Broomfield	37,667	1,900
Chaffee	7,777	764
Cheyenne	695	828
Clear Creek	3,305	861
Conejos	1,444	593
Costilla	897	571
Crowley	1,132	767
Custer	808	708
Delta	8,485	668
Denver	514,214	1,334
Dolores	532	690
Douglas	123,575	1,314
Eagle	34,669	919
Elbert	3,549	846
El Paso	274,387	967
Fremont	13,486	772
Garfield	25,638	967
Gilpin	4,914	798
Grand	8,207	700
Gunnison	8,902	717
Hinsdale	253	637
Huerfano	1,723	640
Jackson	569	739
Jefferson	236,351	1,112
Kiowa	474	677
Kit Carson	2,796	725
Lake	2,437	715
La Plata	26,421	968
Larimer	159,049	1,011
Las Animas	4,921	728
Lincoln	2,254	739
Logan	8,069	756
Mesa	61,705	854
Mineral	573	563
Moffat	4,725	955
Montezuma	8,872	678
Montrose	15,090	765
Morgan	12,344	853
Otero	6,060	703
Ouray	1,640	769
Park	2,439	752
Phillips	1,629	754
Pitkin	18,038	1,067
Prowers	4,582	680
Pueblo	61,301	835
Rio Blanco	2,753	984
Rio Grande	3,973	730

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2017 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
Routt	16,116	849
Saguache	1,578	632
San Juan	270	535
San Miguel	5,868	841
Sedgwick	776	714
Summit	24,169	795
Teller	7,207	758
Washington	1,219	759
Weld	106,802	962
Yuma	3,914	765

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.

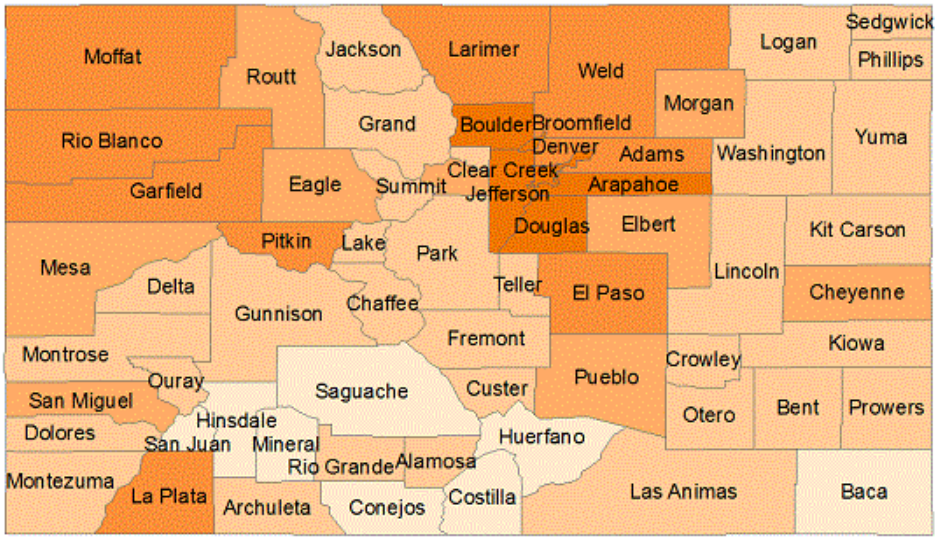
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2017

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	145,921.1	1.5	$1,109	--	3.9	--
Alabama	1,955.3	1.1	928	36	2.9	32
Alaska	306.7	-1.2	1,052	19	1.5	51
Arizona	2,834.7	2.6	978	25	3.5	12
Arkansas	1,217.2	1.0	848	48	2.5	42
California	17,293.0	2.1	1,346	4	5.7	4
Colorado	2,653.3	2.5	1,133	10	4.3	9
Connecticut	1,689.7	0.3	1,317	5	2.2	46
Delaware	444.9	0.6	1,081	15	2.6	40
District of Columbia	769.0	0.9	1,812	1	2.7	37
Florida	8,712.0	2.0	975	26	3.4	16
Georgia	4,425.0	1.8	1,027	20	3.4	16
Hawaii	664.5	0.8	984	24	3.1	26
Idaho	712.4	3.0	857	46	7.1	1
Illinois	6,001.1	0.8	1,151	9	2.6	40
Indiana	3,057.8	1.1	915	38	3.6	11
Iowa	1,549.7	0.4	938	32	3.0	28
Kansas	1,390.3	0.4	894	41	1.9	49
Kentucky	1,903.8	0.5	892	42	2.1	47
Louisiana	1,918.8	0.4	933	35	2.1	47
Maine	610.3	1.2	884	43	3.4	16
Maryland	2,683.6	0.5	1,207	8	3.3	22
Massachusetts	3,582.2	1.3	1,411	3	4.4	8
Michigan	4,321.8	0.9	1,062	17	3.4	16
Minnesota	2,875.7	1.3	1,100	14	3.4	16
Mississippi	1,140.6	0.5	774	51	2.4	45
Missouri	2,809.5	1.0	945	31	2.9	32
Montana	461.4	1.0	843	50	2.7	37
Nebraska	980.9	0.9	901	39	3.0	28
Nevada	1,351.9	3.5	955	29	3.2	25
New Hampshire	661.3	0.7	1,132	11	3.7	10
New Jersey	4,106.9	1.6	1,262	6	1.8	50
New Mexico	816.7	0.6	865	45	2.5	42
New York	9,465.3	1.4	1,428	2	6.4	2
North Carolina	4,388.6	1.5	964	28	3.3	22
North Dakota	416.1	0.4	1,010	22	3.3	22
Ohio	5,409.2	0.8	973	27	3.1	26
Oklahoma	1,607.8	1.2	895	40	3.5	12
Oregon	1,900.4	2.0	1,014	21	4.5	7
Pennsylvania	5,870.4	1.2	1,075	16	3.5	12
Rhode Island	483.6	1.1	1,056	18	2.7	37
South Carolina	2,058.8	1.6	879	44	2.8	35
South Dakota	423.8	0.9	856	47	3.4	16
Tennessee	2,984.8	1.3	1,000	23	3.0	28
Texas	12,207.8	2.0	1,109	13	3.5	12
Utah	1,465.5	3.6	936	33	2.9	32
Vermont	314.7	0.5	919	37	2.5	42
Virginia	3,884.2	1.3	1,121	12	2.8	35
Washington	3,305.0	2.4	1,217	7	5.8	3
West Virginia	693.1	0.1	847	49	4.7	5
Wisconsin	2,872.6	1.0	951	30	3.0	28
Wyoming	267.5	0.6	935	34	4.6	6
Puerto Rico	887.0	-4.4	570	[3]	2.5	[3]
Virgin Islands	34.3	-11.1	827	[3]	7.7	[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 Colorado, fourth quarter 2017



Average weekly wages

(U.S. average = $1,109)

- $1,100 or higher
- $950 - $1,099
- $800 - $949
- $650 - $799
- $649 or lower

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.