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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN OHIO: FIRST QUARTER 2006

The average weekly wage in Stark County increased 8.8 percent from the first quarter of 2005 to the first quarter of 2006, the largest advance among Ohio's 12 counties with employment of 75,000 or more. Mahoning County had the second-highest wage growth at 8.0 percent, followed by Franklin County at 7.9 percent. Hamilton County had the highest average weekly wage in the State at \$909, followed by Cuyahoga County at \$865. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Jay A. Mousa noted that while Stark and Mahoning Counties had the State's largest over-the-year wage increases, they still had the two lowest weekly wage levels among the 12 large counties.

Wage Levels

The two counties with the highest wage levels in Ohio, Hamilton and Cuyahoga, were also the only two counties in the State with wages above the national average of \$838. Wages in both of these counties placed them in the top one-fourth of the ranking among the nation's 325 largest counties—Hamilton at 61st and Cuyahoga at 81st.

The counties with the lowest wages in the State were Mahoning and Stark, averaging \$595 and \$644, respectively. Their wages placed them in the bottom one-fourth of the national ranking at 310th and 279th. Weekly wages in both Lake and Lorain Counties averaged \$690 (246th), placing them in the lowest quartile as well.

Across the country, average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 101 of the largest 325 U.S. counties. New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,223. Fairfield, Conn., was second with an average wage of \$1,836, followed by Santa Clara, Calif. (\$1,584), Somerset, N.J. (\$1,522), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,519).

There were 222 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the first quarter of 2006. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$477), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$490), Horry, S.C. (\$524), Webb, Texas (\$527), and Yakima, Wash. (\$550).

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Ohio was \$751, \$87 below the nationwide level; never-the-less, Ohio was close to the midpoint, ranking 23rd among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 2.) The five highest wage levels in the nation were in the District of Columbia (\$1,371), New York (\$1,193), Connecticut (\$1,191), Massachusetts (\$1,045), and New Jersey (\$1,037). Average weekly wages in this group were 20 percent or more above that for the nation. The five states with the

lowest weekly wages were: Montana (\$572), South Dakota (\$581), North Dakota (\$586), Mississippi (\$597), and Idaho (\$609). All of these states had wages more than 25 percent below the national average.

Over-the-Year Changes

While 11 of Ohio's 12 largest counties experienced wage growth, only one exceeded the national average gain of 8.1 percent. (See table 1.) As mentioned, Stark County's 8.8-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State, ranking 88th highest among the nation's 325 largest counties. The majority of Ohio's counties (seven) had wage growth in the 3.4- to 6.5-percent range.

The State's only county with a decrease in weekly wages from first quarter of 2005 was Trumbull, which experienced a 0.4-percent decline. Trumbull was one of only two counties in the country with an over-the-year decrease in wages. Cumberland, Pa., was the other county, with wages dropping 3.7 percent.

Among the largest counties in the U.S., Orleans, La., led the nation in wage growth with an increase of 33.3 percent over the year. McLean, Ill., was second with 20.5-percent growth, followed by the counties of Jefferson, La. (19.0 percent), Harrison, Miss. (18.0 percent), and Montgomery, Texas (17.0 percent). The high average weekly wage growth rates for Orleans, Harrison, and Jefferson Counties were related to the disproportionate job and pay losses in lower-paid industries due to the impact of Hurricane Katrina.

The lowest over-the-year increases in average weekly wages were in Clayton, Ga. (1.3 percent), Kalamazoo, Mich. (1.9 percent), and Benton, Ark. (2.2 percent).

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Ohio increased 6.5 percent ranking it close to the bottom in growth at 46th among the 50 states and District of Columbia. Three of the six states with the slowest wage growth in the United States were from the Midwest; joining Ohio were Michigan (4.7 percent) and Minnesota (5.8 percent). The highest over-the-year wage gain in the first quarter of 2006 was recorded by Louisiana (12.6 percent), followed by Oklahoma (11.9 percent).

The employment and 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 reports submitted by every employer subject to unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.8 million employer reports cover 132.6 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered under UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number 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 other such 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 <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, Employment and Wages, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2005 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the fourth quarter 2005 version of this news release. This edition will also be the first to include the data on a CD for enhanced access and usability. As a result of this change, the printed booklet will contain only selected graphic representations of QCEW data; the data tables themselves will be published exclusively in electronic formats as PDF and fixed-width text files. Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2005 will be available for sale in late 2006 from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside of Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104. Also, the 2005 bulletin will be available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn05.htm>.

News releases on quarterly measures of gross job flows also are available upon request from the Division of Administrative Statistics and Labor Turnover (Business Employment Dynamics), telephone 202-691-6467; <http://www.bls.gov/bdm/>; e-mail: BDMInfo@bls.gov.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

Hurricane Katrina

The measures of employment and wages reported in this news release reflect the impact of Hurricane Katrina and ongoing labor market trends. The effects of Hurricane Katrina, which hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, were first reflected in the September QCEW employment counts and the wage totals for the third quarter of 2005. The impact of this catastrophic storm in parts of Louisiana and Mississippi continue to be reflected in monthly employment and quarterly wage totals in the first quarter of 2006. For more information, see the QCEW section of the Katrina coverage on the BLS Web site (<http://www.bls.gov/katrina/qcewquestions.htm>).

TECHNICAL NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

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. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the 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.

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Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 12 largest counties in Ohio, first quarter 2006 (2)

Area	Employment	Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	March 2006 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, first quarter 2005-06 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	132,613.1	\$838	--	8.1	--
Ohio	5,267.2	751	23	6.5	46
Butler, Ohio	141.5	725	195	5.8	265
Cuyahoga, Ohio	745.0	865	81	6.5	227
Franklin, Ohio	675.5	837	104	7.9	136
Hamilton, Ohio	523.4	909	61	6.7	214
Lake, Ohio	98.9	690	246	3.4	312
Lorain, Ohio	100.1	690	246	5.5	278
Lucas, Ohio	224.2	749	168	6.1	255
Mahoning, Ohio	102.4	595	310	8.0	131
Montgomery, Ohio	275.0	758	157	4.4	301
Stark, Ohio	160.2	644	279	8.8	88
Summit, Ohio	268.6	756	160	6.5	227
Trumbull, Ohio	84.3	701	229	-0.4	322

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(5) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, first quarter 2006 (2)

State	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	March 2006 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2005-06	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	132,613.1	\$838	-	8.1	-
Alabama	1,923.6	690	33	7.6	29
Alaska	296.3	791	19	6.5	46
Arizona	2,613.3	767	21	10.2	3
Arkansas	1,171.6	621	46	7.1	40
California	15,422.5	952	7	9.2	8
Colorado	2,211.3	858	11	9.2	8
Connecticut	1,640.1	1,191	3	10.0	4
Delaware	415.0	965	6	9.8	5
District of Columbia	664.9	1,371	1	7.3	36
Florida	8,014.1	735	25	8.2	19
Georgia	3,989.2	799	18	7.7	25
Hawaii	615.1	719	28	7.5	31
Idaho	623.3	609	47	8.6	14
Illinois	5,733.7	913	8	7.7	25
Indiana	2,870.4	717	29	7.5	31
Iowa	1,445.7	662	38	7.5	31
Kansas	1,317.1	686	35	8.7	12
Kentucky	1,769.9	671	36	6.8	42
Louisiana	1,793.1	697	32	12.6	1
Maine	577.5	652	42	6.2	48
Maryland	2,511.2	897	9	7.9	23
Massachusetts	3,136.3	1,045	4	8.4	18
Michigan	4,207.8	816	15	4.7	51
Minnesota	2,633.0	827	13	5.8	49
Mississippi	1,112.1	597	48	9.3	6
Missouri	2,680.5	724	27	7.7	25
Montana	416.8	572	51	7.3	36
Nebraska	888.4	648	43	8.0	21
Nevada	1,260.0	764	22	6.7	44
New Hampshire	617.1	800	17	7.5	31
New Jersey	3,933.9	1,037	5	7.6	29
New Mexico	795.5	647	44	8.6	14
New York	8,329.2	1,193	2	8.8	11
North Carolina	3,905.5	744	24	7.8	24
North Dakota	328.8	586	49	6.9	41
Ohio	5,267.2	751	23	6.5	46
Oklahoma	1,505.6	660	40	11.9	2
Oregon	1,669.7	734	26	7.3	36
Pennsylvania	5,551.7	807	16	8.0	21
Rhode Island	468.2	777	20	5.6	50
South Carolina	1,834.1	661	39	8.2	19
South Dakota	373.2	581	50	6.6	45
Tennessee	2,717.7	705	31	6.8	42
Texas	9,850.2	824	14	8.6	14
Utah	1,147.2	660	40	8.9	10
Vermont	300.5	688	34	7.7	25
Virginia	3,613.3	862	10	8.6	14
Washington	2,784.0	833	12	8.7	12
West Virginia	697.7	625	45	7.2	39
Wisconsin	2,712.2	716	30	7.5	31
Wyoming	256.8	667	37	9.3	6
Puerto Rico	1,048.1	450	(5)	3.9	(5)
Virgin Islands	45.6	664	(5)	2.3	(5)

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(5) Data not included in the national ranking.