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County Employment and Wages in West Virginia – Third Quarter 2020

Employment declined in West Virginia's only large county from September 2019 to September 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2019.) Acting Regional Commissioner Frank Waligorski noted that Kanawha County had an over-the-year decrease in employment of 8.6 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

National employment decreased 6.8 percent over the year, with 355 of the 357 largest U.S. counties reporting declines. Maui + Kalawao, HI, had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 35.4 percent. Utah, UT, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment with a gain of 1.9 percent.

Employment in Kanawha County was at 88,700 in September 2020. Within Kanawha County's private industry, health care and social assistance accounted for the largest employment. Kanawha County accounted for 13.7 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 357 largest counties made up 72.9 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 54 counties in West Virginia with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in all of the smaller counties were below the national average in the third quarter of 2020. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

Kanawha County reported an average weekly wage gain of 2.9 percent from the third quarter of 2019 to the third quarter of 2020. This was below the national rate of 7.4 percent over the year.

Among the 357 largest counties in the United States, 350 had over-the-year wage increases. Nationally, the increases in average weekly wages largely reflect substantial employment loss among lower-paid industries. Employment declines occurring in some higher-paid industries also feature significant wage increases. San Mateo, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (+23.2 percent). Seven large counties had wage declines during the period. Ector, TX, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-11.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Weekly wages in Kanawha County were below the national average of \$1,173 in the third quarter of 2020, at \$981. Average weekly wages in the county ranked 246th nationwide.

Among the largest U.S. counties, 96 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2020. San Mateo, CA, had the highest average weekly wage at \$2,922. Average weekly wages were at or below the national average in 261 counties. At \$697 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

Average weekly wages in West Virginia's smaller counties

Among the 54 smaller counties in West Virginia—those with employment below 75,000—Marshall (\$1,093) and Monongalia (\$1,092) reported the highest average weekly wages in the state. Clay (\$550) and Pendleton (\$552) reported the lowest average weekly wages in West Virginia.

When all 55 counties in West Virginia were considered, 12 reported average weekly wages of less than \$700, 13 registered wages from \$700 to \$799, 20 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 10 had average weekly wages of \$900 or higher. (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 2019 edition of this publication was published in September 2020. Tables and additional content from the 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2019/home.htm. The 2020 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2021.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 19, 2021. The County Employment and Wages full data update for fourth quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

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 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 individuals with sensory impairments 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 West Virginia, third quarter 2020

Area	Establishments, third quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
		September 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2019–20 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Third quarter 2020	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, third quarter 2019–20 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	10,561.3	138,549.5	-6.8	--	\$1,173	--	7.4	--
West Virginia	51.7	649.1	-6.7	--	913	47	1.8	49
Kanawha	5.6	88.7	-8.6	276	981	246	2.9	338

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 West Virginia, 3rd quarter 2020

Area	Employment September 2020	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2)	138,549,503	\$1,173
West Virginia	649,094	913
Barbour	3,768	837
Berkeley	35,105	895
Boone	4,407	807
Braxton	3,566	684
Brooke	7,186	777
Cabell	49,054	907
Calhoun	1,064	876
Clay	1,221	550
Doddridge	1,513	850
Fayette	10,089	697
Gilmer	1,751	798
Grant	3,261	821
Greenbrier	12,300	764
Hampshire	3,793	651
Hancock	8,481	799
Hardy	5,555	712
Harrison	34,024	998
Jackson	8,102	986
Jefferson	14,737	954
Kanawha	88,678	981
Lewis	5,156	848
Lincoln	2,249	639
Logan	8,994	809
McDowell	3,880	866
Marion	16,552	843
Marshall	11,679	1,093
Mason	5,322	876
Mercer	17,591	778
Mineral	7,841	847
Mingo	4,176	813
Monongalia	54,100	1,092
Monroe	1,911	831
Morgan	2,867	650
Nicholas	7,042	766
Ohio	25,548	893
Pendleton	1,527	552
Pleasants	2,324	936
Pocahontas	2,776	651
Preston	7,111	801
Putnam	19,583	1,028
Raleigh	29,498	840
Randolph	10,598	751
Ritchie	2,989	772
Roane	2,753	780
Summers	2,080	628
Taylor	3,044	886
Tucker	2,462	723
Tyler	1,959	805
Upshur	6,980	765
Wayne	8,190	913
Webster	1,589	672
Wetzel	4,265	686
Wirt	575	627
Wood	32,830	862

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in West Virginia, 3rd quarter 2020 - Continued

Area	Employment September 2020	Average Weekly Wage(1)
Wyoming	4,013	747

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 2020

State	Establishments, third quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
		September 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2019–20	Third quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	10,561.3	138,549.5	-6.8	\$1,173	--	7.4	--
Alabama	132.2	1,902.4	-4.5	978	33	6.4	27
Alaska	22.9	302.6	-10.7	1,165	14	5.4	42
Arizona	174.1	2,797.1	-4.2	1,091	22	7.3	17
Arkansas	93.6	1,180.1	-3.4	892	49	6.1	31
California	1,643.8	16,096.8	-9.2	1,466	4	12.0	1
Colorado	220.1	2,597.2	-5.6	1,235	9	5.6	38
Connecticut	125.4	1,555.6	-7.3	1,328	7	7.4	15
Delaware	34.9	428.8	-5.6	1,150	15	6.8	21
District of Columbia	43.3	713.7	-8.1	1,962	1	6.1	31
Florida	749.1	8,329.7	-5.8	1,029	27	8.0	11
Georgia	313.0	4,282.1	-5.2	1,084	23	5.8	35
Hawaii	46.5	507.5	-22.9	1,114	18	10.3	4
Idaho	70.7	763.7	-0.2	884	50	5.5	41
Illinois	385.9	5,558.5	-7.8	1,199	11	6.8	21
Indiana	172.4	2,941.8	-4.7	961	39	5.3	43
Iowa	105.1	1,475.0	-5.2	969	36	6.0	34
Kansas	89.2	1,325.4	-5.0	952	40	6.6	24
Kentucky	128.0	1,807.1	-5.5	935	43	5.8	35
Louisiana	139.5	1,734.6	-9.6	970	35	5.2	45
Maine	54.4	597.3	-5.9	966	37	9.0	9
Maryland	172.4	2,496.6	-7.6	1,277	8	9.5	7
Massachusetts	265.1	3,314.8	-9.4	1,488	2	9.7	6
Michigan	266.9	4,035.9	-7.9	1,096	20	7.5	14
Minnesota	183.1	2,703.3	-7.4	1,178	12	6.4	27
Mississippi	74.9	1,092.4	-4.0	810	51	5.6	38
Missouri	218.8	2,681.7	-5.1	995	32	5.6	38
Montana	53.0	466.9	-2.5	904	48	6.6	24
Nebraska	73.7	949.9	-3.8	964	38	6.4	27
Nevada	87.9	1,251.0	-11.6	1,048	24	7.8	13
New Hampshire	56.1	634.2	-5.2	1,171	13	8.9	10
New Jersey	289.3	3,778.4	-8.0	1,331	6	9.5	7
New Mexico	63.1	771.9	-8.6	944	41	5.1	46
New York	657.6	8,547.7	-10.8	1,446	5	10.0	5
North Carolina	301.4	4,308.2	-4.4	1,039	26	6.9	20
North Dakota	32.5	398.2	-7.0	1,025	28	-0.3	50
Ohio	305.7	5,136.8	-5.6	1,040	25	6.6	24
Oklahoma	112.4	1,538.5	-5.7	917	46	2.3	48
Oregon	164.6	1,837.3	-7.0	1,113	19	7.4	15
Pennsylvania	366.5	5,501.0	-7.6	1,139	17	7.0	19
Rhode Island	40.1	452.5	-8.0	1,092	21	10.4	3
South Carolina	146.6	2,022.9	-5.2	924	44	6.7	23
South Dakota	35.2	422.3	-2.6	918	45	7.2	18
Tennessee	173.6	2,918.1	-4.6	1,022	29	5.8	35
Texas	733.1	11,926.8	-5.5	1,150	15	3.8	47
Utah	114.3	1,518.2	-1.0	1,015	30	6.1	31
Vermont	26.4	283.9	-8.6	1,001	31	7.9	12
Virginia	285.7	3,737.0	-5.0	1,201	10	6.4	27
Washington	256.6	3,266.2	-6.3	1,482	3	11.0	2
West Virginia	51.7	649.1	-6.7	913	47	1.8	49
Wisconsin	181.2	2,746.6	-5.2	977	34	5.3	43
Wyoming	27.5	264.0	-6.8	939	42	-0.4	51
Puerto Rico	45.7	831.6	-5.3	547	(3)	3.4	(3)
Virgin Islands	3.4	33.9	-13.0	1,019	(3)	-0.5	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

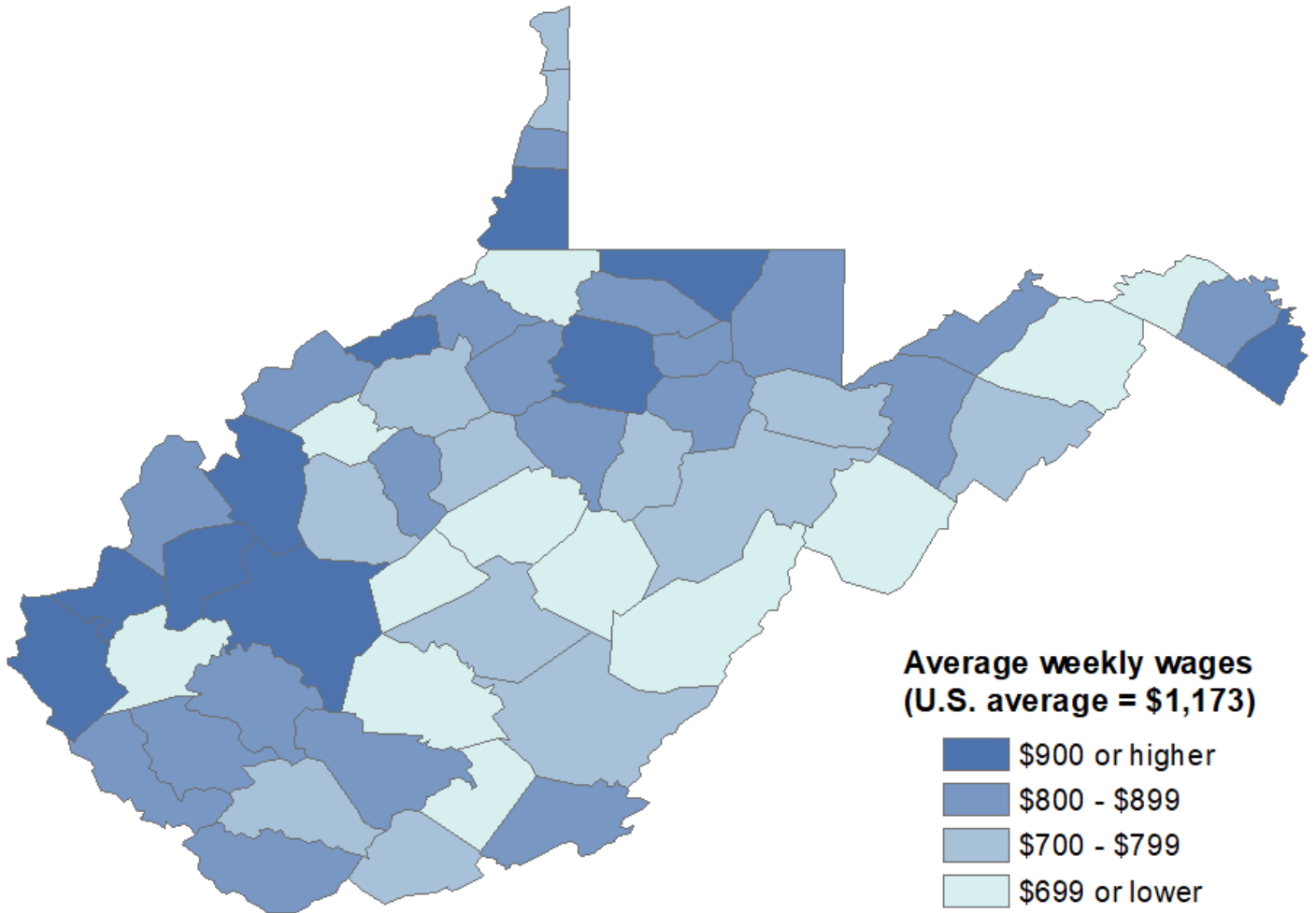
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 West Virginia, third quarter 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.