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County Employment and Wages in New Mexico – Fourth Quarter 2015

New Mexico's only large county, Bernalillo, reported an employment increase of 1.2 percent from December 2014 to December 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with 2014 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that the rate of employment growth in Bernalillo County was below the national average. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, employment advanced 1.9 percent from December 2014 to December 2015 as 308 of the 342 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Williamson, Tenn., recorded the largest percentage increase in the country, up 6.8 percent over the year. Ector, Texas, registered the largest percentage employment decline among large counties, down 11.8 percent.

Employment in Bernalillo County stood at 322,800 in December 2015, accounting for 39.9 percent of total employment in New Mexico. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 141.9 million, up 2.7 million from December 2014.

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo County was \$904 in the fourth quarter of 2015, ranking it 247th among the 342 large U.S. counties. Seventy percent of the large U.S. counties (241) reported weekly wages below the national average of \$1,082. Cameron, Texas, reported the lowest 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 wages in the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif., were more than three times the average wage in the lowest-ranked county, Cameron, Texas (\$649).

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo County increased 3.6 percent from the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015. Bernalillo's percentage change ranked 260th among the largest U.S. counties. Nationally, average weekly wages increased 4.4 percent over the year, as 325 of the 342 largest counties registered 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 increase of 10.0 percent, followed by the counties of Lake, Ill. (9.8 percent) and Passaic, N.J. (9.4 percent).

Among the large U.S. counties, 10 experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Midland, Texas, experienced the largest percentage decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 11.5 percent. Within Midland, natural resources and mining had the largest impact on the county's average weekly wage decline with a decrease of 11.6 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).

Average weekly wages in New Mexico's smaller counties

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 32 counties in New Mexico with employment levels below 75,000. Two of these smaller counties had average weekly wages above the \$1,082 national average in the fourth quarter of 2015: Los Alamos (\$1,610) and Eddy (\$1,093). In addition to Los Alamos and Eddy, Lea (\$1,012) and Santa Fe (\$980) Counties had average weekly wages that were higher than those in the single large county, Bernalillo (\$904). Catron and Sierra Counties had the lowest average weekly wages in the state, at \$530 and \$564, respectively. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 33 counties in New Mexico were considered, 4 had weekly wages averaging \$599 or less, 15 averaged \$600 to \$699 per week, 6 reported wages from \$700 to \$799, and 8 had wages exceeding \$800. (See [chart 1](#).) The counties with the highest average wages were concentrated around the metropolitan areas of Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Farmington, Hobbs, Los Alamos, and Santa Fe.

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 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 news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2014* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn14.htm. The 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2016.

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 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 (see Technical Note below) 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.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the largest county in New Mexico, 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	--
New Mexico.....	808.9	-0.1	--	865	44	1.8	47
Bernalillo, N.M.	322.8	1.2	221	904	247	3.6	260

(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 New Mexico, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment December 2015	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
United States ⁽²⁾	141,924,459	\$1,082
New Mexico.....	808,940	865
Bernalillo.....	322,758	904
Catron.....	613	530
Chaves.....	21,885	691
Cibola.....	8,023	716
Colfax.....	4,633	632
Curry.....	17,353	702
De Baca.....	455	816
Dona Ana.....	71,414	730
Eddy.....	28,340	1,093
Grant.....	9,220	780
Guadalupe.....	1,532	605
Harding.....	158	655
Hidalgo.....	1,497	741
Lea.....	29,749	1,012
Lincoln.....	6,263	609
Los Alamos.....	15,545	1,610
Luna.....	7,279	664
McKinley.....	20,518	664
Mora.....	678	604
Otero.....	17,838	683
Quay.....	2,592	589
Rio Arriba.....	9,707	653
Roosevelt.....	6,030	648
Sandoval.....	29,402	821
San Juan.....	49,287	886
San Miguel.....	8,338	582
Santa Fe.....	61,429	980
Sierra.....	3,390	564
Socorro.....	5,326	723
Taos.....	10,794	618
Torrance.....	3,208	680
Union.....	1,399	659
Valencia.....	13,453	625

(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: Covered employment and wages 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.

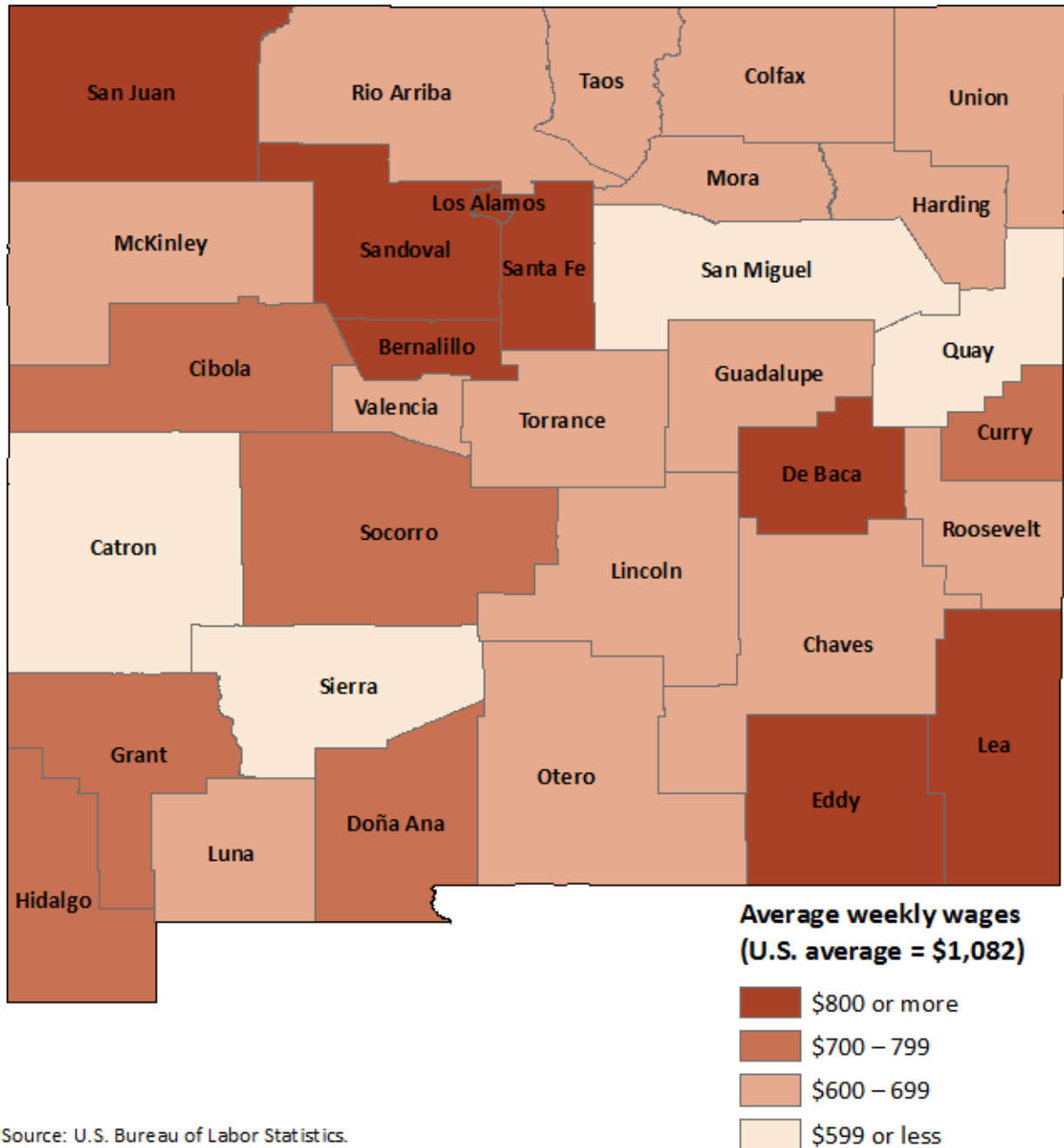
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 New Mexico, fourth quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.