NEWS RELEASE
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For Release: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 **16-325-SAN**

WESTERN INFORMATION OFFICE: San Francisco, Calif.
Technical information: (415) 625-2270 BLSinfoSF@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/west
Media contact: (415) 625-2270

County Employment and Wages in Alaska – Second Quarter 2015

Employment increased 0.4 percent in Alaska's only large county, Anchorage Borough, from June 2014 to June 2015, 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 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that in June 2015, Anchorage Borough's employment totaled 155,800 and accounted for 45.0 percent of total employment within the state.

Nationally, employment increased 2.0 percent from June 2014 to June 2015 as 319 of the 342 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Utah, Utah, had the largest percentage increase in employment over the year, up 7.5 percent. Ector, Texas, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 4.2 percent.

The average weekly wage in Anchorage Borough was $1,070 in the second quarter of 2015, an increase of 2.1 percent from the second quarter of 2014. Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 3.0 percent over the year to $968 in the second quarter of 2015. (See table 1.).

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 28 boroughs in Alaska with employment below 75,000. Average weekly wages in these counties ranged from $1,881 to $529 during the second quarter of 2015. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Anchorage Borough's 2.1-percent wage gain from the second quarter of 2014 to the second quarter 2015 placed 207th among the nation's 342 largest counties. (See table 1.) Nationally, 323 large counties registered over-the-year increases in average weekly wages in the second quarter of 2015. Ventura, Calif., ranked first with an increase of 15.2 percent. Santa Clara, Calif., ranked second with a gain of 11.3 percent, followed by the counties of Forsyth, N.C. (10.9 percent); Riverside, Calif. (8.7 percent); and San Francisco, Calif. (8.6 percent).

Among the 342 largest counties, 16 experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Olmstead, Minn., had the largest decrease (-5.2 percent). Ector, Texas, had the second-largest wage decline (-5.1 percent), followed by Midland, Texas (-3.2 percent) and Hillsborough, N.H. (-2.6 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Anchorage Borough's $1,070 average weekly wage placed in the top 20 percent in the nation, ranking 58th in the second quarter of 2015. Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average in 102 of the 342 largest counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,109. San Mateo, Calif., was second at $1,863, followed by New York, N.Y. ($1,842) and San Francisco, Calif. ($1,730).

Over two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (240) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the second quarter of 2015. The lowest weekly wage was reported in Horry, S.C. ($568), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron ($586), Hidalgo ($614), and Webb ($651). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than one-third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif. ($2,109).

Average weekly wages in Alaska's smaller counties

Alaska consists of 16 smaller boroughs, 11 census areas, and 1 municipality, each of which is considered a county level equivalent. Twenty-two of the 28 counties in Alaska with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $968. The exceptions were North Slope Borough ($1,881), Northwest Arctic Borough ($1,297), Southeast Fairbanks Census Area ($1,225), Aleutian West Census Area ($997),Fairbanks North Star Borough ($991) and Bristol Bay Borough ($970). The Wade Hampton Census Area reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties, averaging $529. (See table 2.)

When all 29 counties in Alaska were considered, 6 had wages below $700. Nine counties had average weekly wages ranging from $700 to $799, 3 had wages from $800 to $899, 7 had wages from $900 to $999 and 4 had wages above $1,000. (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 2014 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2015, 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/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2014/home.htm. The 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2016.

The County Employment and Wages release for third quarter 2015 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, March 9, 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 9.4 million employer reports cover 137.8 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 Alaska, second quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage [1]			
	June 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, second quarter 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	140,594.9	2.0	--	$968	--	3.0	--
Alaska	346.6	0.4	--	1,028	8	2.4	30
Anchorage Borough, Alaska	155.8	0.4	303	1,070	58	2.1	207

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.
(5) Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.
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 Alaska, 2nd quarter 2015

Area	Employment June 2015	Average Weekly Wage [1]
United States [2]	140,594,927	$968
Alaska	346,565	1,028
Aleutian East Borough	2,748	736
Aleutian West Census Area	3,496	997
Anchorage Borough	155,805	1,070
Bethel Census Area	7,645	771
Bristol Bay Borough	1,575	970
Denali Borough	3,747	753
Dillingham Census Area	3,454	784
Fairbanks North Star Borough	37,432	991
Haines Borough	1,036	636
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	958	637
Juneau Borough	18,381	963
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21,945	965
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	8,274	818
Kodiak Island Borough	6,446	850
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,026	697
Mantanuska-Susitna Borough	23,622	818
Nome Census Area	3,904	941
North Slope Borough	15,746	1,881
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,991	1,297
Petersburg Census Area	1,357	746
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	2,345	742
Sitka Borough	4,836	798
Skagway Municipality	1,492	678
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	2,714	1,225
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	5,791	967
Wade Hampton Census Area	2,339	529
Wrangell City and Borough	894	748
Yakutat Borough	334	694
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	2,223	713

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, second quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	June 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	140,594.9	2.0	$968	--	3.0	--
Alabama	1,899.3	1.3	819	37	1.6	41
Alaska	346.6	0.4	1,028	8	2.4	30
Arizona	2,549.9	2.5	904	21	1.8	39
Arkansas	1,184.6	1.7	762	47	2.1	35
California	16,338.9	2.8	1,131	5	5.5	1
Colorado	2,517.1	3.2	989	13	3.0	13
Connecticut	1,693.1	0.9	1,177	4	2.0	38
Delaware	439.1	2.2	991	12	1.5	42
District of Columbia	745.1	1.8	1,599	1	1.8	39
Florida	7,907.7	3.6	861	28	2.6	23
Georgia	4,167.8	3.4	903	22	2.4	30
Hawaii	635.9	1.6	876	24	3.8	6
Idaho	678.5	2.9	713	50	2.3	33
Illinois	5,925.5	1.5	1,015	10	2.6	23
Indiana	2,966.0	1.7	811	40	3.4	7
Iowa	1,561.2	0.9	802	43	2.8	18
Kansas	1,382.1	0.7	819	37	2.8	18
Kentucky	1,850.5	1.7	822	35	3.0	13
Louisiana	1,930.6	0.5	850	30	0.8	47
Maine	615.8	0.8	768	46	2.9	16
Maryland	2,631.3	1.4	1,046	7	2.6	23
Massachusetts	3,488.3	2.1	1,211	2	4.7	2
Michigan	4,225.0	1.5	916	20	2.1	35
Minnesota	2,826.3	1.5	977	15	3.2	8
Mississippi	1,114.7	1.1	709	51	0.6	48
Missouri	2,746.6	1.7	842	32	2.8	18
Montana	461.5	1.8	754	48	2.7	21
Nebraska	968.7	1.2	787	44	4.1	3
Nevada	1,248.1	3.2	855	29	2.6	23
New Hampshire	647.7	1.5	967	16	1.3	46
New Jersey	4,000.2	1.5	1,126	6	2.6	23
New Mexico	808.4	0.8	805	41	1.4	44
New York	9,136.9	1.9	1,180	3	3.1	9
North Carolina	4,185.6	2.6	850	30	3.9	4
North Dakota	445.0	-1.8	939	18	0.3	50
Ohio	5,308.1	1.4	865	26	2.4	30
Oklahoma	1,591.5	0.6	818	39	0.5	49
Oregon	1,810.4	3.4	899	23	3.0	13
Pennsylvania	5,763.9	0.8	958	17	2.7	21
Rhode Island	480.0	1.5	925	19	2.9	16
South Carolina	1,963.5	2.5	782	45	2.1	35
South Dakota	428.6	1.3	740	49	3.9	4
Tennessee	2,832.1	2.8	863	27	3.1	9
Texas	11,689.4	2.4	988	14	1.5	42
Utah	1,345.9	3.9	821	36	3.1	9
Vermont	309.3	0.6	831	34	2.2	34
Virginia	3,767.2	1.7	1,000	11	2.5	29
Washington	3,197.6	3.3	1,026	9	3.1	9
West Virginia	706.5	-0.8	803	42	1.4	44
Wisconsin	2,839.8	1.0	836	33	2.6	23
Wyoming	291.5	-1.5	869	25	-0.1	51
Puerto Rico	884.6	-1.4	513	[3]	2.0	[3]

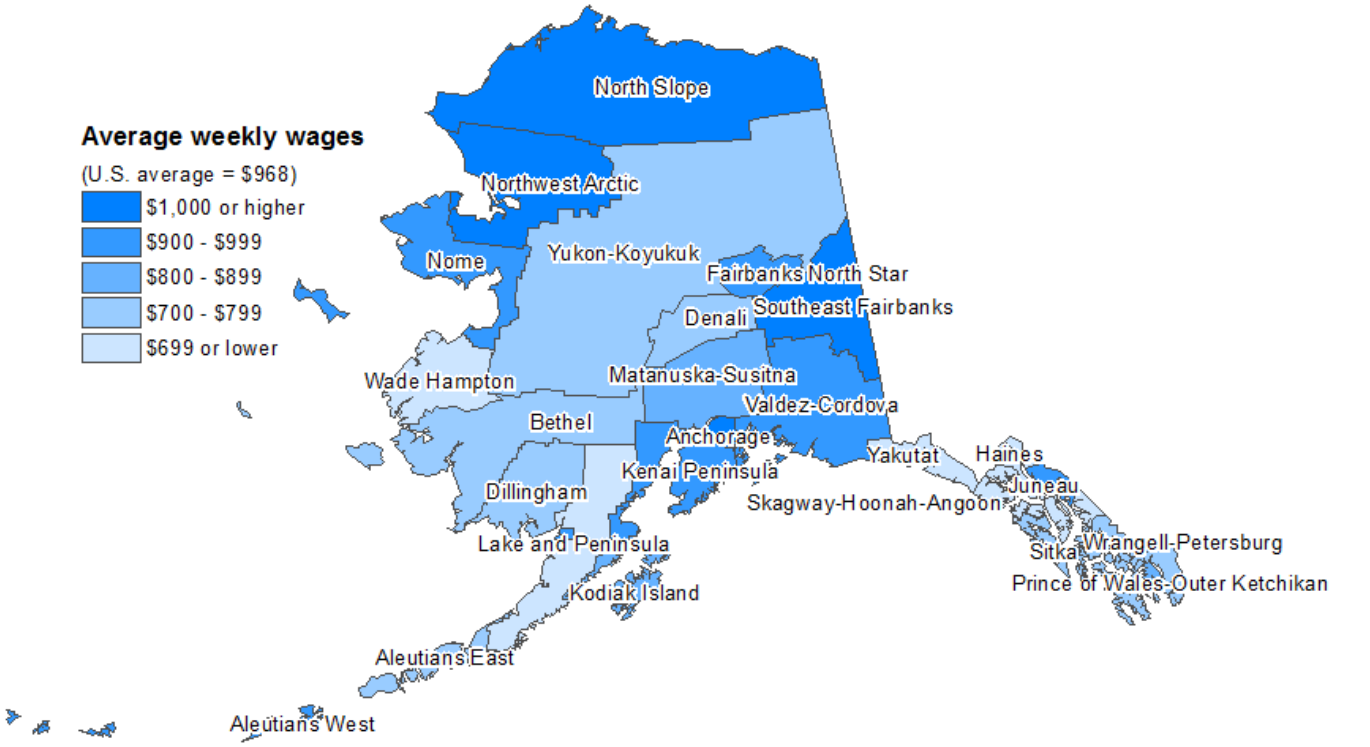
Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, second quarter 2015 - Continued

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	June 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
Virgin Islands	37.9	0.1	748	[3]	2.2	[3]

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 Alaska, second quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.