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

For Release: Friday, September 29, 2017 **17-1352-PHI**

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County Employment and Wages in Pennsylvania – First Quarter 2017

All large counties in Pennsylvania had average weekly wage increases over the year

Employment rose in 13 of the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania from March 2016 to March 2017, 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 2016 annual average employment.) Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that Northampton County's 3.1-percent rate of employment growth was the fastest in Pennsylvania, followed by Philadelphia County with an employment increase of 2.2 percent. Five of Pennsylvania's large counties had employment declines with Erie having the largest decrease, down 1.0 percent. One county—Washington—had no change in employment from March 2016 to March 2017.

Nationally, employment increased 1.6 percent during this 12-month period, as 299 of the 346 large counties nationwide gained jobs. York County, S.C., had the largest percentage increase in employment, up 6.8 percent over the year. Kanawha County, W.Va., had the largest employment decrease with a loss of 2.7 percent.

Among the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, employment was highest in Allegheny County (685,000) in March 2017. One other county, Philadelphia, had employment above 600,000. Together, Pennsylvania's 19 large counties accounted for 77.1 percent of total employment within the commonwealth. Nationwide, the 346 largest counties made up 72.8 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Washington County increased 9.1 percent from the first quarter of 2016 to the first quarter of 2017—the largest wage increase among Pennsylvania's largest counties and ranked 30th nationwide. The remaining 18 large counties in Pennsylvania had wage increases ranging from 7.9 percent in Delaware to 2.7 percent in Northampton. (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 6.6 percent over the year to $1,111 in the first quarter of 2017.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000. Forty-seven of these smaller counties had weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Seven of Pennsylvania's 19 large counties had over-the-year wage increases greater than the national increase of 6.6 percent in the first quarter of 2017. Three of these counties had wage growth that ranked in the top 100 of the 346 large counties nationwide. Among the remaining 12 large counties in Pennsylvania, the smallest wage gain was in Northampton (2.7 percent) which ranked 338th, followed by Lackawanna (4.0 percent, ranked 315th).

Nationwide, 345 of the 346 large counties had increases in average weekly wages over the year. McLean, Ill., had the largest increase of 27.8 percent from the first quarter of 2016. Elkhart, Ind., had the second largest increase in average weekly wages (15.1 percent), followed by Midland, Texas (14.3 percent) and Benton, Ark., (14.2 percent). Peoria, Ill., had the only percentage decrease in average weekly wages (-1.1 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

The average weekly wage in one of Pennsylvania's large counties, Montgomery, ranked 25th in the nation, while Chester and Philadelphia also ranked in the top 50 nationwide. In addition to these counties, Delaware, Allegheny, and Washington also had wages above the U.S. average of $1,111.

Four large counties in the commonwealth had average weekly wages that placed in the bottom fourth of the national ranking—Erie, Lackawanna, Luzerne, and Westmoreland. Wages in these counties were nearly 25 percent below the national average for the first quarter of 2017.

Average weekly wages in Pennsylvania's smaller counties

Forty-seven of the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $1,111. The exception was Montour County with wages of $1,234. Perry had the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties, averaging $603 in the first quarter of 2017. (See table 2.)

When all 67 counties in Pennsylvania were considered, 60 had wages below the national average of $1,111. Seven reported wages below $700, 28 had wages from $701 to $800, 15 had wages from $801 to $900, 7 had wages from $901 to $1,000, and 10 had wages above $1,000. (See chart 1.) Four of the seven counties with wages above the national average of $1,111 were concentrated in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, and two were located in the Pittsburgh area.

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 is now available and 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 Online will be available in September 2018.

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 9.9 million employer reports cover 142.3 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: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2017

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	March 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, first quarter 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	142,309.2	1.6	--	$1,111	--	6.6	--
Pennsylvania	5,712.3	0.8	--	1,078	15	6.5	30
Allegheny, Pa.	685.0	0.8	237	1,203	63	7.2	109
Berks, Pa.	169.4	0.1	294	938	202	7.2	109
Bucks, Pa.	259.5	1.8	143	981	168	6.7	148
Butler, Pa.	83.7	-0.9	337	961	182	7.0	126
Chester, Pa.	246.4	1.1	209	1,408	31	6.2	189
Cumberland, Pa.	131.3	0.9	229	960	185	5.6	233
Dauphin, Pa.	177.9	0.1	294	1,060	123	5.8	215
Delaware, Pa.	220.0	1.2	201	1,220	60	7.9	63
Erie, Pa.	119.6	-1.0	338	799	318	4.3	302
Lackawanna, Pa.	96.4	-0.1	308	778	325	4.0	315
Lancaster, Pa.	233.3	1.2	201	881	258	6.5	163
Lehigh, Pa.	184.7	0.7	248	1,063	118	6.5	163
Luzerne, Pa.	141.8	-0.2	314	825	303	7.4	92
Montgomery, Pa.	484.8	1.0	218	1,449	25	5.7	228
Northampton, Pa.	113.0	3.1	43	917	214	2.7	338
Philadelphia, Pa.	667.1	2.2	107	1,274	49	5.8	215
Washington, Pa.	84.3	0.0	300	1,183	67	9.1	30
Westmoreland, Pa.	131.1	-0.6	331	841	291	5.9	210
York, Pa.	176.0	0.8	237	911	224	6.2	189

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 Pennsylvania, first quarter 2017

Area	Employment March 2017	Average weekly wage [1]
United States [2]	142,309,185	1111
Pennsylvania	5,712,254	1078
Adams	33,944	763
Allegheny	685,045	1203
Armstrong	16,084	748
Beaver	50,061	855
Bedford	15,145	657
Berks	169,405	938
Blair	57,807	751
Bradford	22,705	892
Bucks	259,544	981
Butler	83,684	961
Cambria	51,377	718
Cameron	1,913	765
Carbon	16,780	669
Centre	68,170	925
Chester	246,400	1408
Clarion	13,239	651
Clearfield	29,476	734
Clinton	12,703	805
Columbia	24,516	753
Crawford	29,736	753
Cumberland	131,266	960
Dauphin	177,915	1060
Delaware	219,971	1220
Elk	14,832	794
Erie	119,624	799
Fayette	38,287	718
Forest	1,948	862
Franklin	57,329	796
Fulton	4,841	886
Greene	12,829	1038
Huntingdon	12,329	716
Indiana	29,883	882
Jefferson	15,356	737
Juniata	6,497	667
Lackawanna	96,363	778
Lancaster	233,335	881
Lawrence	27,351	744
Lebanon	48,787	785
Lehigh	184,668	1063
Luzerne	141,761	825
Lycoming	50,471	796
Mckean	14,895	808
Mercer	46,180	777
Mifflin	15,292	721
Monroe	55,371	853
Montgomery	484,806	1449
Montour	15,741	1234
Northampton	112,954	917
Northumberland	27,112	804
Perry	7,788	603
Philadelphia	667,090	1274
Pike	10,655	632
Potter	5,201	789
Schuylkill	48,682	803

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment March 2017	Average weekly wage [1]
Snyder	16,391	704
Somerset	23,498	721
Sullivan	1,471	656
Susquehanna	8,868	758
Tioga	12,423	765
Union	17,451	830
Venango	17,733	707
Warren	14,363	768
Washington	84,310	1183
Wayne	14,098	722
Westmoreland	131,059	841
Wyoming	9,528	897
York	176,009	911
Footnotes:		

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.

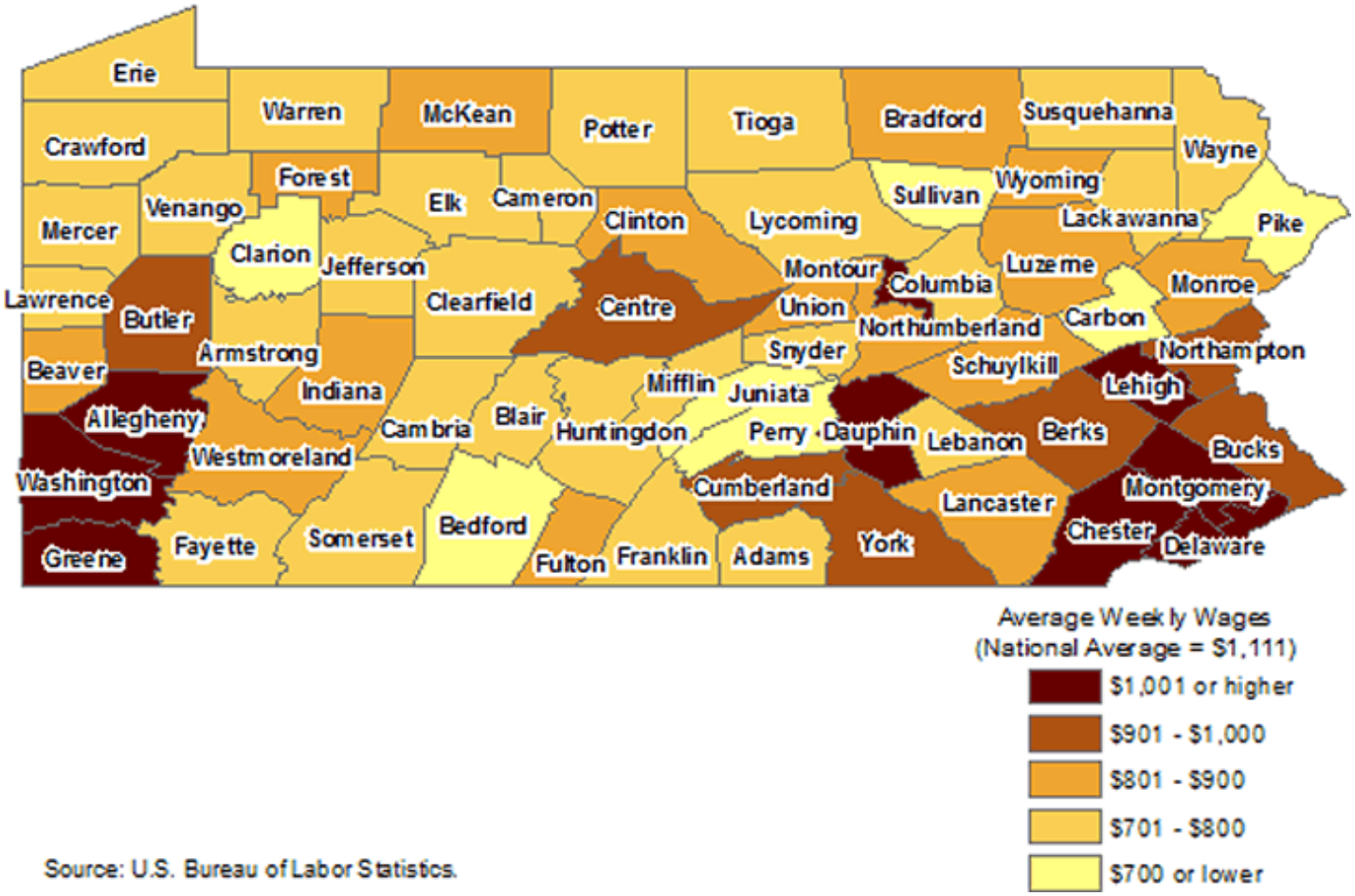
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2017

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	March 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	142,309.2	1.6	$1,111	--	6.6	--
Alabama	1,928.9	1.4	893	36	6.2	35
Alaska	312.8	-1.8	1,061	18	3.9	50
Arizona	2,743.0	2.4	991	21	8.1	4
Arkansas	1,199.9	0.7	859	45	8.5	3
California	16,831.4	2.3	1,295	6	7.6	7
Colorado	2,573.2	2.3	1,136	12	7.5	10
Connecticut	1,651.5	0.1	1,417	4	4.0	49
Delaware	433.2	0.8	1,185	9	10.7	1
District of Columbia	760.7	1.2	1,885	1	7.0	16
Florida	8,532.6	2.8	949	27	7.2	13
Georgia	4,317.1	2.7	1,068	17	6.1	37
Hawaii	653.6	0.9	954	25	6.8	22
Idaho	690.4	3.0	775	50	7.0	16
Illinois	5,842.0	0.5	1,195	8	6.3	34
Indiana	2,985.8	1.2	918	32	7.6	7
Iowa	1,518.3	0.0	899	35	6.5	30
Kansas	1,368.0	0.4	888	38	6.7	25
Kentucky	1,864.1	1.1	879	41	6.9	18
Louisiana	1,901.3	-0.5	906	33	5.5	43
Maine	586.7	1.0	860	44	7.2	13
Maryland	2,626.0	1.2	1,171	10	5.8	42
Massachusetts	3,464.0	1.1	1,428	3	7.7	6
Michigan	4,230.6	1.7	1,041	20	6.8	22
Minnesota	2,806.4	2.1	1,149	11	7.9	5
Mississippi	1,122.9	0.1	750	51	5.3	46
Missouri	2,767.0	1.4	930	31	5.9	38
Montana	451.5	1.4	800	49	6.5	30
Nebraska	960.7	0.4	868	42	6.4	33
Nevada	1,311.6	3.8	932	30	6.9	18
New Hampshire	643.2	1.2	1,070	16	7.3	11
New Jersey	3,955.1	1.5	1,333	5	5.0	47
New Mexico	803.3	0.2	838	46	5.9	38
New York	9,159.3	1.3	1,541	2	5.9	38
North Carolina	4,287.0	1.8	991	21	6.9	18
North Dakota	405.7	-1.0	953	26	5.0	47
Ohio	5,278.3	0.8	976	24	6.7	25
Oklahoma	1,563.9	-1.0	883	39	5.9	38
Oregon	1,855.0	2.5	984	23	5.4	45
Pennsylvania	5,712.3	0.8	1,078	15	6.5	30
Rhode Island	465.4	0.3	1,055	19	7.2	13
South Carolina	2,017.9	2.2	864	43	7.3	11
South Dakota	413.4	0.7	819	48	6.2	35
Tennessee	2,906.2	1.8	945	28	6.7	25
Texas	11,924.5	1.7	1,124	14	5.5	43
Utah	1,411.3	3.1	905	34	6.6	29
Vermont	305.6	0.2	889	37	6.7	25
Virginia	3,796.3	1.4	1,129	13	6.9	18
Washington	3,225.9	2.6	1,215	7	8.6	2
West Virginia	678.2	-0.8	837	47	7.6	7
Wisconsin	2,803.7	1.1	933	29	6.8	22
Wyoming	262.4	-2.3	880	40	3.3	51
Puerto Rico	887.7	-0.9	526	[3]	1.2	[3]
Virgin Islands	38.7	0.0	797	[3]	3.1	[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 Pennsylvania, first quarter 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.