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County Employment and Wages in West Virginia – Third Quarter 2017

Employment decreased 1.4 percent in West Virginia's only large county, Kanawha, from September 2016 to September 2017, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with 2016 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that Kanawha County was among the 60 large counties in the U.S. in which employment declined over the year.Nationally, employment increased 1.0 percent, as 283 of the 346 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Kanawha County ranked 333rd in the nation for employment change. (See table 1.)

Nationally, Midland, Texas, recorded the largest percentage increase in employment with a gain of 10.4 percent over the year. Collier, Fla., registered the largest over-the-year employment decline among the largest U.S. counties, down 5.2 percent.

Employment in Kanawha County stood at 99,955 in September 2017, accounting for 14.4 percent of West Virginia's total employment. Nationwide, the 346 largest counties made up 72.7 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 levels below 75,000. Wage levels in 53 of these smaller counties were below the national average of $1,021 in the third quarter of 2017—Marshall County had wages of $1,025. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

The average weekly wage in Kanawha County decreased 1.1 percent from the third quarter of 2016 to the third quarter of 2017. Kanawha County placed in the top half of the national ranking for wage change (168th). Kanawha's decrease in average weekly wages was larger than the 0.6-percent national average decline.

Nationally, 265 of the 346 largest counties registered over-the-year wage decreases. Mercer, N.J., had the largest wage decline, down 8.8 percent from the third quarter of 2016. Wyandotte, Kan., was second with a wage decrease of 6.0 percent, followed by Clark, Nev., at 5.3 percent and Somerset, N.J., at 5.0 percent.

Of the 346 largest counties, 71 experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage increase in average weekly wages (8.4 percent), followed by Union, N.J.; Elkhart, Ind.; Forsyth, N.C.; and Maui + Kalawao, Hawaii. Kanawha County reported average weekly wages of $880, below the national average of $1,021 for the third quarter 2017, and ranked 227th among the 346 largest U.S. counties.

Nationally, 96 large counties registered average weekly wages equal to or above the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2017. Santa Clara, Calif., had the highest average weekly wage at $2,320. San Mateo, Calif., was second ($2,123), followed by San Francisco, Calif. ($1,954).

Seventy-two percent of the largest U.S. counties (250) reported weekly wages below the national average. Cameron County, Texas, reported the lowest wage ($612), followed by the counties of Horry, S.C. ($633) and Hidalgo, Texas ($649). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than a third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif.

Average weekly wages in West Virginia's smaller counties

Most of the 54 counties in West Virginia with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national average of $1,021. Among these smaller counties, Marshall had the highest average weekly wage at $1,025 (the only one above the U.S. average), while Clay had the lowest at $559. (See table 2.)

When all 55 counties in West Virginia were considered, only Marshall had average weekly wages above the national average. Five reported average weekly wages under $600, 14 reported wages from $600 to $699, 22 reported wages from $700 to $799, 9 reported wages of $800 to $899, and 5 reported 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 2016 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 2017 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2016 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn16.htm. The 2017 edition of Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online will be available in September 2018.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2017 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 23, 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 9.7 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 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 top 10 U.S. large counties ranked by average weekly wage and the largest county in West Virginia, third quarter 2017

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	144,464.4	1.0	-	$1,021	-	-0.6	-
Santa Clara, Calif.	1,077.2	2.2	52	2,320	1	2.6	13
San Mateo, Calif.	400.2	1.3	114	2,123	2	1.1	32
San Francisco, Calif.	722.3	2.4	42	1,954	3	3.2	8
New York, N.Y.	2,451.9	1.1	145	1,889	4	0.5	52
Washington, D.C.	764.7	0.7	192	1,759	5	1.3	27
Suffolk, Mass.	675.0	0.9	167	1,691	6	1.7	17
Arlington, Va.	176.0	0.9	167	1,642	7	-0.4	103
King, Wash.	1,367.1	2.8	28	1,626	8	2.7	12
Fairfax, Va.	603.0	0.7	192	1,540	9	-0.6	121
Middlesex, Mass.	904.1	1.6	80	1,498	10	-3.7	330
Kanawha, W.Va.	100.0	-1.4	333	880	227	-1.1	168

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 2017

Area	Employment September 2017	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2)	144,464,425	$1,021
West Virginia	693,983	826
Barbour	3,343	685
Berkeley	34,153	757
Boone	4,854	812
Braxton	3,923	629
Brooke	7,902	722
Cabell	52,432	799
Calhoun	1,198	755
Clay	1,404	559
Doddridge	1,696	920
Fayette	11,057	654
Gilmer	1,997	721
Grant	3,332	764
Greenbrier	13,181	691
Hampshire	3,960	603
Hancock	9,562	720
Hardy	6,009	611
Harrison	36,495	910
Jackson	7,913	748
Jefferson	15,518	813
Kanawha	99,955	880
Lewis	5,999	788
Lincoln	2,516	683
Logan	9,722	797
McDowell	4,528	788
Marion	18,574	796
Marshall	10,715	1,025
Mason	5,518	810
Mercer	19,589	701
Mineral	7,933	747
Mingo	5,257	822
Monongalia	57,263	972
Monroe	1,988	742
Morgan	2,734	621
Nicholas	7,117	639
Ohio	28,217	816
Pendleton	1,453	560
Pleasants	2,717	860
Pocahontas	2,953	608
Preston	7,526	739
Putnam	20,131	924
Raleigh	31,248	762
Randolph	11,440	645
Ritchie	3,248	739
Roane	2,868	668
Summers	2,274	560
Taylor	3,288	765
Tucker	2,571	687
Tyler	2,107	879
Upshur	7,379	709
Wayne	8,500	758
Webster	1,773	648
Wetzel	4,551	590
Wirt	541	577
Wood	35,611	771

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 2017 - Continued

Area	Employment September 2017	Average Weekly Wage(1)
Wyoming	4,278	802

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.

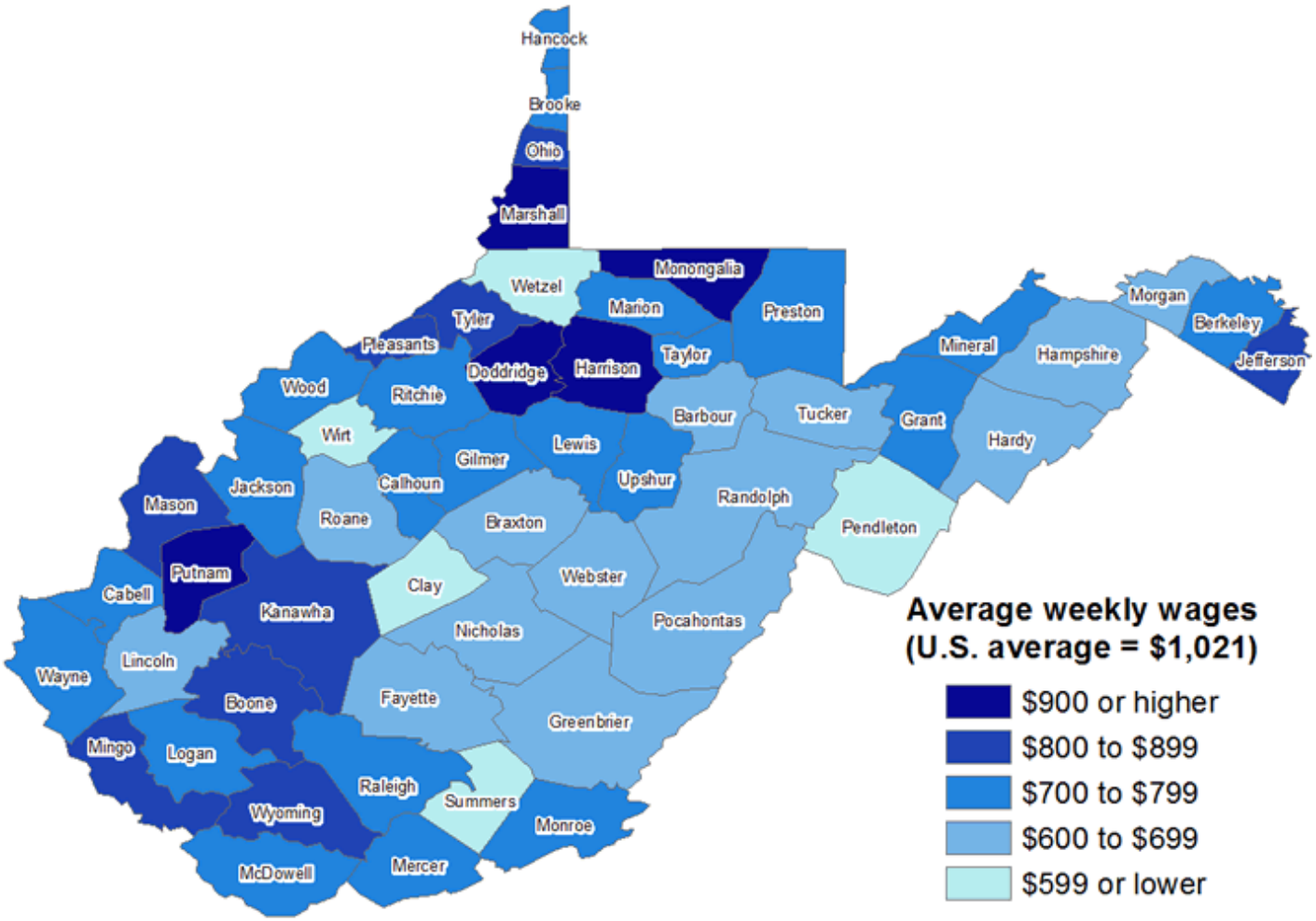
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2017

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	144,464.4	1.0	$1,021	--	-0.6	--
Alabama	1,941.1	0.8	859	37	-1.3	38
Alaska	335.4	-0.7	1,025	15	-2.8	50
Arizona	2,760.1	2.4	948	24	-0.2	10
Arkansas	1,213.0	0.6	788	49	-0.6	19
California	17,153.4	1.7	1,215	4	0.5	4
Colorado	2,625.9	1.9	1,067	9	0.5	4
Connecticut	1,676.3	0.1	1,179	6	-2.2	47
Delaware	443.0	0.4	1,026	14	0.4	6
District of Columbia	764.7	0.7	1,759	1	1.3	2
Florida	8,305.8	-0.2	896	29	-1.1	31
Georgia	4,343.5	1.3	961	21	-0.9	27
Hawaii	652.5	0.4	953	22	-0.3	13
Idaho	722.3	2.7	778	50	-0.5	16
Illinois	5,969.6	0.5	1,057	10	-0.3	13
Indiana	3,044.0	0.6	861	36	-0.6	19
Iowa	1,546.1	-0.2	855	38	-2.2	47
Kansas	1,376.4	-0.1	839	41	-2.1	46
Kentucky	1,890.4	0.5	837	42	-2.4	49
Louisiana	1,904.3	-0.1	869	33	-1.7	42
Maine	621.9	0.7	821	46	-0.5	16
Maryland	2,661.8	0.5	1,105	8	-1.7	42
Massachusetts	3,568.0	0.9	1,265	2	-0.9	27
Michigan	4,334.3	0.9	964	20	-1.1	31
Minnesota	2,883.0	1.1	1,030	13	-2.0	45
Mississippi	1,129.1	-0.1	729	51	-1.4	39
Missouri	2,805.8	0.9	878	31	-1.2	34
Montana	468.6	0.9	793	48	0.1	8
Nebraska	973.3	-0.2	850	39	-0.8	23
Nevada	1,337.7	2.9	914	26	-3.8	51
New Hampshire	659.1	0.6	1,022	16	-0.4	15
New Jersey	4,043.6	1.1	1,156	7	-1.5	41
New Mexico	816.0	0.3	823	45	-0.8	23
New York	9,329.8	1.2	1,219	3	-0.2	10
North Carolina	4,348.0	1.3	904	27	-0.7	21
North Dakota	419.2	-1.0	953	22	-1.2	34
Ohio	5,383.6	0.6	920	25	-0.8	23
Oklahoma	1,593.3	0.7	843	40	-1.2	34
Oregon	1,905.3	1.8	969	19	-0.1	9
Pennsylvania	5,836.5	1.0	1,002	17	-1.1	31
Rhode Island	484.5	0.8	973	18	-1.8	44
South Carolina	2,027.2	0.8	828	43	-0.5	16
South Dakota	426.2	0.4	803	47	-0.7	21
Tennessee	2,953.3	1.1	903	28	-1.2	34
Texas	12,008.9	1.4	1,032	12	-1.0	29
Utah	1,444.1	2.6	879	30	-0.2	10
Vermont	310.3	0.1	869	33	-1.4	39
Virginia	3,843.6	1.0	1,053	11	-0.8	23
Washington	3,343.4	2.0	1,208	5	1.7	1
West Virginia	694.0	0.2	826	44	1.1	3
Wisconsin	2,866.9	0.5	876	32	-1.0	29
Wyoming	276.2	0.3	868	35	0.3	7
Puerto Rico	862.8	-3.1	509	[3]	-2.7	[3]
Virgin Islands	36.9	-1.1	763	[3]	-1.9	[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 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.