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MIDWEST INFORMATION OFFICE: Chicago, Ill.
Technical information: (312) 353-1880 BLSInfoChicago@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/midwest
Media contact: (312) 353-1138

County Employment and Wages in Minnesota — Third Quarter 2015

Employment increased in 7 of the 8 large counties in Minnesota from September 2014 to September 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.) Washington County had the largest increase, up 2.8 percent, followed by Hennepin (2.0 percent) and Olmsted (1.7 percent). Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that the rates of job growth in Washington and Hennepin Counties were above the national increase of 1.9 percent. (See table 1.)

Among the eight largest counties in Minnesota, employment was highest in Hennepin (888,500) in September 2015, followed by Ramsey (330,000). Two other counties—Dakota and Anoka—each had employment levels of more than 100,000. Collectively, Minnesota's eight large counties accounted for 67.0 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.2 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Stearns County rose 4.8 percent from the third quarter of 2014 to the third quarter of 2015, the largest increase among Minnesota's large counties. Hennepin County had the highest average weekly wage in the state at $1,198, followed by Olmsted ($1,113) and Ramsey ($1,073). (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 2.6 percent over the year to $974 in the third quarter of 2015.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 79 counties in Minnesota with employment below 75,000. Average weekly wages in all of the smaller counties were below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

All of the eight large counties in Minnesota had wage increases from the third quarter of 2014 to the third quarter of 2015. Five of these counties had wage increases that were greater than the national increase of 2.6 percent. (See table 1.) Stearns County's 4.8-percent wage gain ranked 13th among the 342 largest U.S. counties. Three other large counties ranked among the top 100 nationwide for wage growth: Washington (3.6 percent, 64th), Anoka (3.5 percent, 72nd), and Olmsted (3.4 percent, 77th).

Nationally, 319 of the 342 largest counties registered over-the-year wage increases. Rockland, N.Y., had the largest wage gain, up 24.9 percent from the third quarter of 2014. Lake, Ill., was second with a wage increase of 11.7 percent; followed by Onondaga, N.Y. (6.5 percent); Washington, Ore. (6.4 percent); and Marin, Calif., and Santa Cruz, Calif. (6.1 percent each).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 20 experienced over-the-year wage decreases. Midland, Texas, had the largest wage decrease with a loss of 6.7 percent. Ector, Texas, had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages, down 4.9 percent from the third quarter 2014; followed by Lafayette, La. (-3.2 percent); Stark, Ohio (-2.1 percent); and Gregg, Texas (-1.5 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 3 of Minnesota's 8 large counties were above the national average of $974 in the third quarter of 2015. As noted, Hennepin County ($1,198) had the highest average weekly wage in the state, ranking 26th among the 342 largest U.S. counties. Olmsted ($1,113) and Ramsey ($1,073) placed 49th and 57th, respectively. Washington ($810) reported the lowest average weekly wage among the state's largest counties and ranked 265th nationwide.

Nationwide, average weekly wages were above the U.S. average ($974) in 100 of the 342 largest counties in the third quarter of 2015. Santa Clara, Calif., recorded the highest average weekly wage at $2,090, followed by San Mateo, Calif. ($1,894); New York, N.Y. ($1,829); San Francisco, Calif. ($1,712); and Washington, D.C. ($1,667).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 242 had weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2015. Horry County, S.C. ($598), reported the lowest wage, followed by Cameron, Texas ($615); Hidalgo Texas ($624); Webb, Texas ($658); and Marion, Fla. ($658).

Average weekly wages in Minnesota's smaller counties

Among the 79 smaller counties in the state (those with employment below 75,000), Goodhue County had the highest average weekly wage at $934, followed by Carver County at $932. Cass County had the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties at $551. (See table 2.)

When all 87 counties in Minnesota were considered, 18 reported average weekly wages of $649 or less, 36 had wages from $650 to $749, 25 reported wages from $750 to $849, and 8 had wages of $850 or higher. (See chart 1.)

Additional statistics and other information

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

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2015 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 8, 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 9.6 million employer reports cover 140.4 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 8 largest counties in Minnesota, third quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	140,442.2	1.9	--	$974	--	2.6	--
Minnesota	2,800.7	1.4	--	990	14	2.6	22
Anoka, Minn.	119.3	0.7	266	968	102	3.5	72
Dakota, Minn.	184.0	0.3	301	944	121	2.8	138
Hennepin, Minn.	888.5	2.0	151	1,198	26	2.0	228
Olmsted, Minn.	94.2	1.7	186	1,113	49	3.4	77
Ramsey, Minn.	330.0	1.2	221	1,073	57	1.7	253
St. Louis, Minn.	97.7	-0.2	319	836	231	1.6	259
Stearns, Minn.	84.9	0.2	307	825	246	4.8	13
Washington, Minn.	79.4	2.8	104	810	265	3.6	64

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 Minnesota, third quarter 2015

Area	Employment September 2015	Average weekly wage [1]
United States [2]	140,442,224	$974
Minnesota	2,800,745	990
Aitkin	3,827	630
Anoka	119,252	968
Becker	14,120	702
Beltrami	19,357	738
Benton	17,100	746
Big Stone	1,811	688
Blue Earth	38,734	773
Brown	14,038	750
Carlton	13,583	760
Carver	37,459	932
Cass	10,446	551
Chippewa	5,602	661
Chisago	14,931	766
Clay	18,774	708
Clearwater	2,778	794
Cook	3,277	559
Cottonwood	4,806	655
Crow Wing	29,199	695
Dakota	184,010	944
Dodge	6,034	783
Douglas	18,456	754
Faribault	4,989	668
Fillmore	6,111	596
Freeborn	11,958	772
Goodhue	21,586	934
Grant	1,903	707
Hennepin	888,484	1,198
Houston	5,067	585
Hubbard	6,160	665
Isanti	10,981	722
Itasca	16,796	770
Jackson	5,552	683
Kanabec	3,675	706
Kandiyohi	23,220	687
Kittson	1,465	699
Koochiching	4,692	758
Lac qui Parle	2,258	626
Lake	4,386	800
Lake of the Woods	1,588	600
Le Sueur	9,215	734
Lincoln	1,691	615
Lyon	14,723	758
McLeod	17,661	798
Mahnomen	2,029	608
Marshall	2,344	743
Martin	8,565	757
Meeker	7,313	667
Mille Lacs	9,578	638
Morrison	10,822	644
Mower	16,469	841
Murray	3,162	605
Nicollet	14,532	755
Nobles	10,464	744
Norman	1,637	689
Olmsted	94,202	1,113

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Minnesota, third quarter 2015 - Continued

Area	Employment September 2015	Average weekly wage [1]
Otter Tail	22,680	691
Pennington	10,647	760
Pine	8,369	577
Pipestone	4,543	647
Polk	12,598	699
Pope	4,310	799
Ramsey	329,952	1,073
Red Lake	1,016	615
Redwood	6,421	643
Renville	5,889	719
Rice	24,063	814
Rock	3,588	655
Roseau	8,236	757
St. Louis	97,662	836
Scott	47,213	884
Sherburne	25,885	773
Sibley	3,976	684
Stearns	84,877	825
Steele	21,481	737
Stevens	5,538	795
Swift	3,527	667
Todd	6,017	657
Traverse	1,066	621
Wabasha	7,228	661
Wadena	5,947	713
Waseca	6,797	745
Washington	79,381	810
Watonwan	3,943	604
Wilkin	1,958	720
Winona	24,872	730
Wright	41,673	749
Yellow Medicine	3,949	688

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.

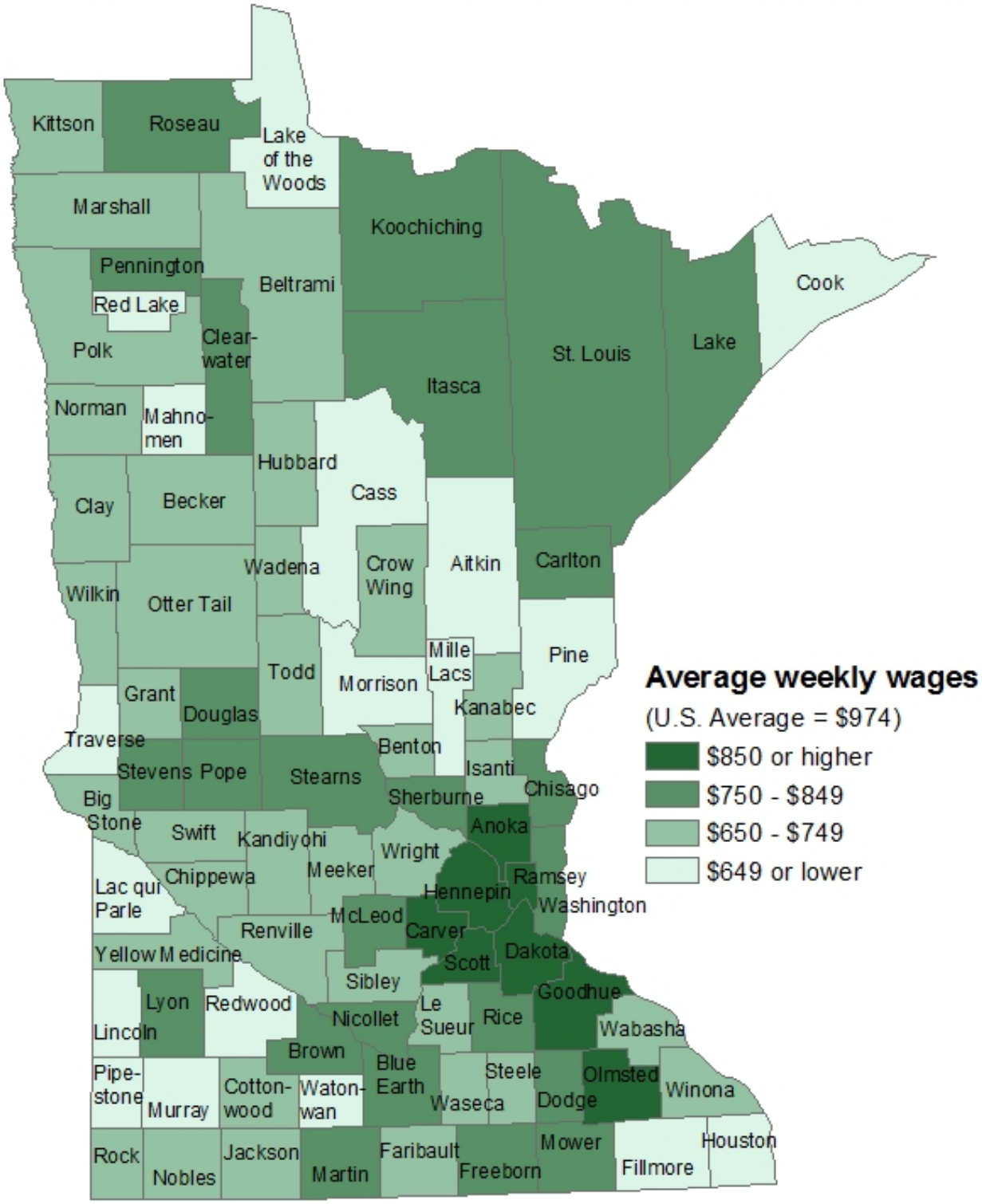
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	140,442.2	1.9	$974	--	2.6	--
Alabama	1,893.6	1.2	830	34	1.8	40
Alaska	346.4	0.4	1,041	9	2.2	34
Arizona	2,613.9	2.9	889	24	1.5	42
Arkansas	1,193.4	1.9	756	48	2.6	22
California	16,474.4	3.0	1,134	5	3.4	6
Colorado	2,513.0	2.9	1,006	12	2.4	30
Connecticut	1,668.3	0.2	1,147	4	2.0	38
Delaware	436.3	2.1	963	15	0.3	48
District of Columbia	743.6	1.4	1,667	1	2.3	33
Florida	8,023.2	3.5	852	31	3.1	10
Georgia	4,171.1	2.8	916	22	2.8	19
Hawaii	635.4	1.4	896	23	3.1	10
Idaho	680.3	3.3	736	50	2.1	37
Illinois	5,888.6	1.3	1,020	10	3.9	3
Indiana	2,971.7	1.6	818	39	2.4	30
Iowa	1,535.9	0.4	823	38	3.0	14
Kansas	1,370.9	0.6	809	41	1.8	40
Kentucky	1,852.5	1.4	804	42	2.9	18
Louisiana	1,926.3	-0.2	858	30	0.7	47
Maine	609.7	0.7	779	46	3.3	7
Maryland	2,607.8	1.3	1,067	8	2.4	30
Massachusetts	3,446.9	1.4	1,197	2	3.0	14
Michigan	4,203.0	1.6	921	20	2.7	20
Minnesota	2,800.7	1.4	990	14	2.6	22
Mississippi	1,118.9	1.2	706	51	1.3	43
Missouri	2,737.9	1.9	846	32	2.2	34
Montana	457.9	1.9	759	47	3.7	4
Nebraska	964.0	1.4	811	40	4.2	2
Nevada	1,254.5	3.2	862	29	2.5	27
New Hampshire	642.8	1.5	952	18	2.7	20
New Jersey	3,933.9	1.4	1,116	6	2.6	22
New Mexico	809.2	0.6	798	43	1.3	43
New York	9,065.4	1.8	1,180	3	3.1	10
North Carolina	4,194.1	2.5	863	28	3.0	14
North Dakota	438.0	-3.8	956	17	-2.3	51
Ohio	5,282.7	1.2	878	25	1.9	39
Oklahoma	1,598.0	0.2	825	37	0.0	49
Oregon	1,812.8	3.0	924	19	4.4	1
Pennsylvania	5,722.1	0.8	961	16	2.5	27
Rhode Island	477.4	1.2	919	21	2.6	22
South Carolina	1,959.7	2.9	788	44	2.6	22
South Dakota	419.5	0.9	756	48	3.1	10
Tennessee	2,850.6	2.7	864	27	3.2	8
Texas	11,681.0	2.1	999	13	1.1	45
Utah	1,353.9	3.7	829	35	3.2	8
Vermont	308.2	0.5	829	35	3.0	14
Virginia	3,759.7	2.5	1,014	11	2.5	27
Washington	3,187.6	2.5	1,111	7	2.2	34
West Virginia	702.4	-1.1	785	45	0.9	46
Wisconsin	2,815.7	0.9	834	33	3.5	5
Wyoming	287.4	-1.5	866	26	-1.1	50
Puerto Rico	891.1	-0.7	512	[3]	1.4	[3]
Virgin Islands	36.8	-2.1	738	[3]	2.1	[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 Minnesota, third quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.