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County Employment and Wages in North Carolina - Fourth Quarter 2013

Eight of North Carolina's nine largest counties reported employment gains from December 2012 to December 2013, 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 2012 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that employment increases ranged from 3.7 percent in both Mecklenburg and Wake Counties to 1.1 percent in Guilford County. Employment declined 1.0 percent in Cumberland County over the 12-month period. (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, employment increased 1.8 percent over the year, as 292 of the 334 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Weld, Colo., posted the largest increase, with a gain of 6.0 percent over the year. St. Clair, Ill., experienced the largest over-the-year decrease in employment among the largest counties in the U.S. with a loss of 3.1 percent.

Among the largest counties in North Carolina, employment was highest in Mecklenburg (606,800) in December 2013. Two other counties—Wake and Guilford—had employment levels exceeding 250,000. Together, North Carolina's nine large counties accounted for 53.1 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 334 largest counties accounted for 71.7 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 136.1 million in December 2013.

Six of North Carolina's nine largest counties experienced an increase in their average weekly wages from the fourth quarter of 2012 to the fourth quarter of 2013. Average weekly wage increases in two counties exceeded 2.0 percent—Durham (3.6 percent) and Forsyth (2.2 percent). Durham County had the highest average weekly wage in the state at \$1,255, followed by the counties of Mecklenburg (\$1,098) and Wake (\$984). Nationally, the average weekly wage was unchanged over the year at \$1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2013. (See [table 1](#).)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties with employment levels below 75,000 in North Carolina. Average weekly wages in these counties ranged from \$1,018 to \$538. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages advanced in six of North Carolina's large counties from the fourth quarter of 2012 to the fourth quarter of 2013. At 3.6 percent, Durham's wage increase ranked 14th among the nation's 334 large counties. Two other counties placed in the top third of the rankings—Forsyth (2.2 percent, 41st) and New Hanover (1.1 percent, 95th). (See [table 1](#).)

Nationwide, 185 large counties experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Santa Cruz, Calif., had the largest wage gain (6.5 percent). Ada, Idaho, had the second largest increase (6.4 percent), followed by Washington, Ore. (5.9 percent).

Among the 334 largest U.S. counties, 140 had over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2013. Douglas, Colo., had the largest average weekly wage decline with a loss of 29.7 percent, followed by the counties of San Mateo, Calif. (-15.8 percent), Virginia Beach City, Va. (-10.0 percent), McHenry, Ill. (-8.8 percent) and Shawnee, Kan. (-5.1 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Durham and Mecklenburg Counties, with average weekly wages of \$1,255 and \$1,098, respectively, placed in the top third of the national ranking among the 334 largest U.S. counties in the fourth quarter of 2012. Wake (\$984), Forsyth (\$895), and Guilford (\$858) fell in the middle third of the national ranking and the state's remaining four large counties fell in the bottom third.

Nationally, San Mateo, Calif., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$2,724, followed by New York, N.Y. (\$2,041), Santa Clara, Calif. (\$1,972), San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,753), and Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,741).

There were 235 large counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2013. Horry, S.C. (\$587), reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$598), Hidalgo, Texas (\$620), Lake, Fla. (\$668), and Webb, Texas (\$670).

Average weekly wages in North Carolina's smaller counties

Among the 91 counties in North Carolina with employment below 75,000, only Orange County (\$1,018) had an average weekly wage above the national average of \$1,000. This was followed by the counties of Iredell (\$832) and Camden (\$809). Tyrrell County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$538 in the fourth quarter of 2013. (See [table 2.](#))

When all 100 counties in North Carolina were considered, 21 reported average weekly wages under \$600, 50 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 20 had wages from \$700 to \$799, and 9 had wages above \$800. (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 2012 edition of this publication, which was published in October 2013, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2012 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2012* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbuln12.htm. The 2013 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2014.

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.

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 9.3 million employer reports cover 136.1 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.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 9 largest counties in North Carolina, fourth quarter 2013

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2012-13 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2012-13 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	136,129.4	1.8	--	\$1,000	--	0.0	--
North Carolina	4,045.5	1.9	--	860	33	0.7	18
Buncombe, N.C.	118.8	1.6	156	758	310	0.7	128
Catawba, N.C.	81.7	1.6	156	731	318	0.8	120
Cumberland, N.C.....	118.0	-1.0	322	766	306	-0.8	245
Durham, N.C.	186.9	1.3	175	1,255	26	3.6	14
Forsyth, N.C.	178.2	2.7	81	895	181	2.2	41
Guilford, N.C.....	271.6	1.1	200	858	220	-0.1	195
Mecklenburg, N.C.....	606.8	3.7	34	1,098	58	-0.5	226
New Hanover, N.C.....	101.4	2.7	81	799	280	1.1	95
Wake, N.C.	485.0	3.7	34	984	113	0.5	141

(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: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in North Carolina, 4th quarter 2013

Area	Employment December 2013	Average Weekly Wage (1)
United States (2).....	136,129,407	\$1,000
North Carolina	4,045,526	860
Alamance	58,484	716
Alexander	8,941	595
Alleghany.....	3,194	549
Anson	7,669	613
Ashe	7,127	629
Avery	6,514	556
Beaufort.....	15,715	690
Bertie	6,265	565
Bladen	12,071	680
Brunswick	28,148	710
Buncombe	118,774	758
Burke	29,952	660
Cabarrus.....	67,132	716
Caldwell.....	23,068	645
Camden	1,475	809
Carteret	21,725	605
Caswell.....	3,145	572
Catawba	81,699	731
Chatham	14,277	663
Cherokee.....	7,631	589
Chowan	4,604	685
Clay	1,908	552
Cleveland	33,949	674
Columbus	16,289	631
Craven.....	37,653	775
Cumberland.....	118,015	766
Currituck	5,747	672
Dare.....	16,253	614
Davidson	41,536	677
Davie	10,494	661
Duplin	19,781	627
Durham.....	186,934	1,255
Edgecombe	18,344	652
Forsyth	178,213	895
Franklin.....	11,577	711
Gaston.....	68,231	727
Gates.....	1,428	610
Graham	2,092	619
Granville	20,065	763
Greene	4,034	590
Guilford.....	271,595	858
Halifax	16,103	624
Harnett.....	22,505	631
Haywood	16,701	650
Henderson.....	35,260	694
Hertford	9,254	674
Hoke	10,636	727
Hyde	2,004	546
Iredell.....	66,498	832
Jackson	12,456	609
Johnston.....	43,410	709
Jones.....	1,667	632
Lee	24,772	723

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in North Carolina, 4th quarter 2013 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2013	Average Weekly Wage (1)
Lenoir	28,216	661
Lincoln	21,076	675
McDowell	15,101	624
Macon	10,573	611
Madison	3,856	592
Martin	7,229	577
Mecklenburg	606,794	1,098
Mitchell	4,952	597
Montgomery	9,077	641
Moore	32,734	734
Nash	37,157	685
New Hanover	101,439	799
Northampton	5,494	599
Onslow	48,383	616
Orange	65,418	1,018
Pamlico	3,098	566
Pasquotank	15,544	677
Pender	9,937	636
Perquimans	1,969	590
Person	9,589	714
Pitt	73,893	803
Polk	5,117	568
Randolph	43,759	659
Richmond	13,427	633
Robeson	38,884	612
Rockingham	25,953	679
Rowan	44,418	773
Rutherford	18,267	628
Sampson	18,412	678
Scotland	11,807	646
Stanly	18,926	616
Stokes	6,798	578
Surry	27,574	614
Swain	8,479	660
Transylvania	8,272	626
Tyrrell	1,233	538
Union	56,720	766
Vance	14,537	630
Wake	485,018	984
Warren	3,434	595
Washington	3,654	766
Watauga	22,054	657
Wayne	42,936	660
Wilkes	20,948	632
Wilson	37,609	776
Yadkin	10,402	588
Yancey	3,791	570

(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 2013

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2012-13	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2012-13	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	136,129.4	1.8	\$1,000	--	0.0	--
Alabama	1,866.5	1.0	851	34	-0.5	39
Alaska	315.1	0.0	1,022	14	1.6	7
Arizona	2,571.0	2.4	906	23	-0.5	39
Arkansas	1,154.3	-0.5	771	47	0.4	22
California	15,650.3	2.8	1,175	6	-0.9	43
Colorado	2,383.9	3.1	1,023	13	-0.9	43
Connecticut	1,661.2	0.3	1,238	4	-1.3	49
Delaware	419.6	1.8	1,035	9	-0.6	41
District of Columbia	727.3	0.6	1,638	1	-3.9	51
Florida	7,739.5	2.7	883	29	0.2	27
Georgia.....	3,986.9	2.5	924	21	-0.1	32
Hawaii.....	632.9	1.7	871	30	0.3	25
Idaho	634.5	2.6	754	50	3.0	2
Illinois	5,758.9	1.0	1,060	8	0.2	27
Indiana.....	2,896.9	1.6	814	40	-0.2	35
Iowa	1,510.9	1.4	834	38	1.6	7
Kansas	1,359.5	1.6	832	39	-0.4	38
Kentucky.....	1,818.0	1.2	804	42	0.2	27
Louisiana	1,911.6	0.9	889	26	0.5	20
Maine.....	586.8	0.8	786	46	1.7	5
Maryland.....	2,555.1	0.4	1,076	7	-0.9	43
Massachusetts	3,332.9	1.5	1,258	3	0.8	17
Michigan	4,072.4	2.0	952	20	-0.2	35
Minnesota.....	2,720.6	1.7	988	16	0.3	25
Mississippi.....	1,108.1	1.1	729	51	1.3	11
Missouri.....	2,670.4	1.1	861	32	-0.2	35
Montana	440.0	1.3	760	48	0.4	22
Nebraska	944.3	1.4	796	43	-0.1	32
Nevada	1,180.5	3.0	884	28	0.7	18
New Hampshire.....	629.3	1.4	1,017	15	-0.8	42
New Jersey.....	3,887.5	1.2	1,186	5	1.1	14
New Mexico.....	796.2	-0.1	814	40	1.4	10
New York	8,888.6	1.7	1,266	2	-1.1	48
North Carolina	4,045.5	1.9	860	33	0.7	18
North Dakota	435.0	3.3	980	17	3.8	1
Ohio	5,175.4	1.4	887	27	0.0	30
Oklahoma	1,581.3	0.6	851	34	-0.1	32
Oregon	1,699.6	2.5	894	25	2.6	3
Pennsylvania.....	5,650.3	0.4	976	18	0.4	22
Rhode Island	462.7	1.4	960	19	1.5	9
South Carolina.....	1,875.8	2.3	793	44	1.0	15
South Dakota.....	407.1	1.3	759	49	1.3	11
Tennessee.....	2,758.3	1.8	895	24	-0.9	43
Texas	11,246.3	2.6	1,027	12	0.0	30
Utah	1,284.7	3.1	836	37	-0.9	43
Vermont.....	308.5	0.6	848	36	2.3	4
Virginia.....	3,670.0	0.1	1,028	11	-1.3	49
Washington.....	2,976.0	2.5	1,034	10	1.7	5
West Virginia	710.1	-0.6	792	45	0.5	20
Wisconsin.....	2,751.8	1.0	865	31	1.2	13
Wyoming	279.2	0.6	917	22	1.0	15
Puerto Rico.....	958.3	-2.3	551	(3)	0.2	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	38.5	-3.6	754	(3)	2.4	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

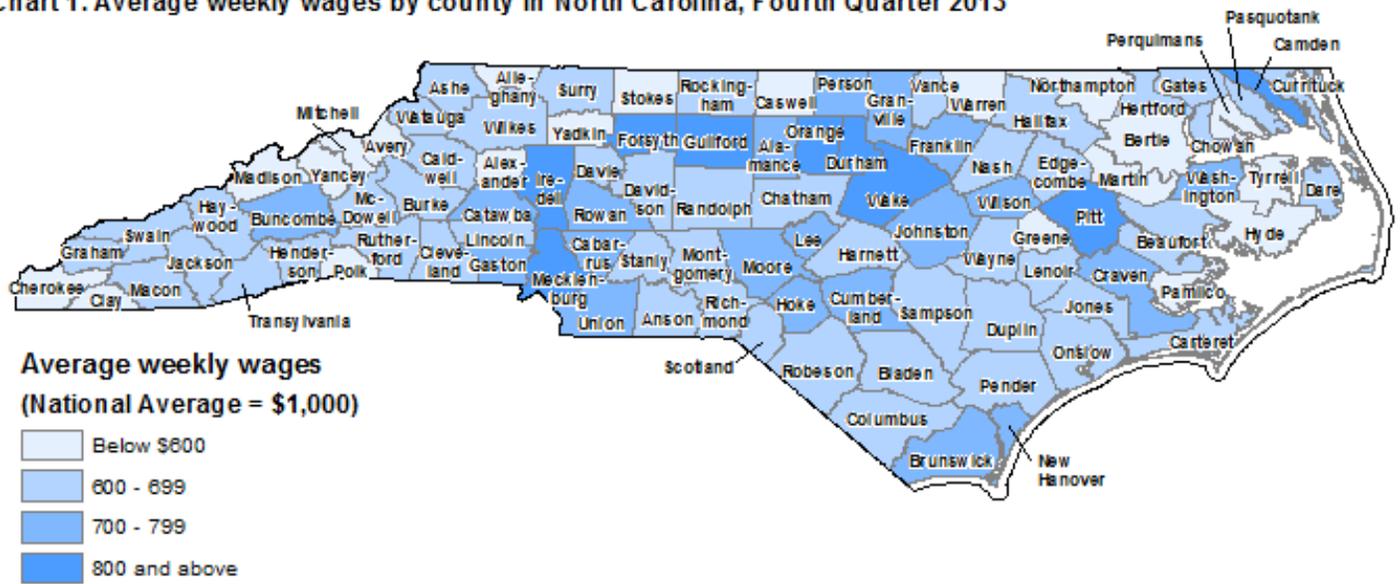
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in North Carolina, Fourth Quarter 2013



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.