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

For Release: Wednesday, October 07, 2015 15-1846-ATL

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County Employment and Wages in Tennessee – First Quarter 2015

Employment rose in all of the six large counties in Tennessee from March 2014 to March 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 Janet S. Rankin noted that employment increases ranged from 5.2 percent in Williamson County to 1.3 percent in Shelby County. (See table 1.)

Nationally, employment advanced 2.1 percent from March 2014 to March 2015 as 323 of the 342 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Utah, Utah, recorded the largest percentage increase in the country, up 6.1 percent over the year. Atlantic, N.J., had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment among the largest counties in the U.S. with a loss of 4.3 percent.

Among the largest counties in Tennessee, employment was highest in Shelby (477,200) in March 2015. One other county, Davidson, had an employment level exceeding 400,000. Together, Tennessee's six large counties accounted for 56.4 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.3 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 137.4 million in March 2015.

Average weekly wages increased in five of Tennessee's six largest counties from the first quarter of 2014 to the first quarter of 2015. Williamson County recorded the largest wage increase at 6.9 percent. (See table 1.) Williamson County also had the highest average weekly wage in the state at $1,262, followed by the counties of Davidson ($1,085) and Shelby ($1,009). Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 2.1 percent over the year to $1,048 in the first quarter of 2015.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 89 counties with employment levels below 75,000 in Tennessee. Average weekly wages in these counties ranged from $1,089 to $467. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages rose in five of Tennessee's large counties from the first quarter of 2014 to the first quarter of 2015. Williamson's 6.9-percent wage increase ranked ninth among the nation's 342 large counties; Rutherford's 3.0-percent gain ranked 67th. (See table 1.) In contrast, Shelby County recorded a wage decrease of 0.7 percent.

Nationally, 297 of the 342 largest counties had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Olmsted, Minn., had the largest percentage wage increase among the largest U.S. counties (11.7 percent). Washington, Pa., was second with a wage increase of 10.7 percent, followed by the counties of Riverside, Calif. (10.1 percent); Lake, Ill. (9.2 percent); and Orange, Calif. (9.1 percent).

Of the 342 largest counties, 39 experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Snohomish, Wash., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages, with a loss of 4.8 percent. Chester, Pa., had the second largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages, followed by Williamson, Texas; Saginaw, Mich.; and Palm Beach, Fla.

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 3 of Tennessee's 6 largest counties placed in the top half of the national ranking among the 342 largest counties in the first quarter of 2015. Williamson and Davidson Counties had average weekly wages above the U.S. average of $1,048 and ranked in the top 100 nationwide at 40th and 76th, respectively. Shelby County with an average weekly wage of $1,009 ranked 117th. Average weekly wages in the remaining three large counties placed in the bottom half of the national ranking.

Nationwide, 93 large counties registered average weekly wage above the U.S. average in the first quarter of 2015. New York, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at $2,847, followed by Santa Clara, Calif., at $2,203. Rounding out the top five were Somerset, N.J. ($2,080), San Francisco, Calif. ($2,070), and San Mateo, Calif. ($2,066).

Seventy-three percent of the largest U.S. counties (248) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage ($583), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron and Hidalgo ($593 and $607); Lake, Fla. ($649); and Yakima, Wash. ($658).

Average weekly wages in Tennessee's smaller counties

Among the 89 counties in Tennessee with employment below 75,000, only Roane County ($1,089) had an average weekly wage above the national average of $1,048. Grundy County reported the lowest average weekly in the state, averaging $467 in the first quarter of 2015. (See table 2.)

When all 95 counties in Tennessee were considered, 33 reported average weekly wages under $600, 34 reported wages from $600 to $699, 14 had wages from $700 to $799, and 14 had wages at $800 or above. (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 2013 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 2014 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2013* are now available online at https://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn13.htm. The 2014 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2015.

The County Employment and Wages release for second quarter 2015 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, December 17, 2015.

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 9.5 million employer reports cover 137.4 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 6 largest counties in Tennessee, first quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage [1]			
	March 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, first quarter 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	137,412.4	2.1	--	$1,048	--	2.1	--
Tennessee	2,772.7	2.1	--	886	27	1.4	38
Davidson, Tenn.	444.7	2.9	97	1,085	76	2.6	96
Hamilton, Tenn.	189.2	2.3	142	880	205	2.0	142
Knox, Tenn.	228.0	2.6	119	858	224	2.5	108
Rutherford, Tenn.	113.6	2.6	119	861	220	3.0	67
Shelby, Tenn.	477.2	1.3	223	1,009	117	-0.7	318
Williamson, Tenn.	111.2	5.2	9	1,262	40	6.9	9

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 Tennessee, first quarter 2015

Area	Employment March 2015	Average Weekly Wage [1]
United States [2]	137,412,381	$1,048
Tennessee	2,772,654	886
Anderson	38,780	978
Bedford	18,384	672
Benton	3,961	567
Bledsoe	2,106	559
Blount	45,109	822
Bradley	40,383	721
Campbell	8,915	594
Cannon	2,037	550
Carroll	7,425	596
Carter	10,554	582
Cheatham	7,874	764
Chester	3,483	570
Claiborne	8,621	590
Clay	1,485	519
Cocke	7,394	592
Coffee	25,545	789
Crockett	3,573	682
Cumberland	16,898	590
Davidson	444,659	1,085
Decatur	3,510	625
De Kalb	5,097	631
Dickson	15,597	659
Dyer	15,367	677
Fayette	7,640	743
Fentress	4,662	547
Franklin	11,628	633
Gibson	13,377	620
Giles	9,892	676
Grainger	3,331	577
Greene	25,181	666
Grundy	2,102	467
Hamblen	29,866	685
Hamilton	189,180	880
Hancock	820	490
Hardeman	6,697	702
Hardin	7,781	714
Hawkins	12,164	692
Haywood	4,784	674
Henderson	8,266	628
Henry	11,078	638
Hickman	3,743	602
Houston	1,498	534
Humphreys	5,743	839
Jackson	1,454	596
Jefferson	12,798	668
Johnson	4,010	688
Knox	228,030	858
Lake	1,920	536
Lauderdale	6,206	622
Lawrence	10,094	585
Lewis	2,505	513
Lincoln	8,955	625
Loudon	14,041	733
McMinn	17,408	729
McNairy	5,638	559

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment March 2015	Average Weekly Wage [1]
Macon	4,511	561
Madison	55,811	739
Marion	6,991	653
Marshall	8,358	668
Maury	30,288	819
Meigs	1,926	607
Monroe	13,396	650
Montgomery	48,819	652
Moore	1,816	785
Morgan	3,029	620
Obion	9,582	651
Overton	4,285	642
Perry	1,940	507
Pickett	1,034	562
Polk	2,172	544
Putnam	33,834	665
Rhea	10,724	769
Roane	17,356	1,089
Robertson	21,298	678
Rutherford	113,554	861
Scott	5,297	559
Sequatchie	2,746	535
Sevier	40,902	510
Shelby	477,246	1,009
Smith	4,957	692
Stewart	2,509	899
Sullivan	67,285	923
Sumner	48,724	720
Tipton	10,902	623
Trousdale	1,472	567
Unicoi	4,788	844
Union	2,250	547
Van Buren	798	566
Warren	13,565	646
Washington	59,212	730
Wayne	3,830	587
Weakley	10,619	565
White	6,435	607
Williamson	111,205	1,262
Wilson	36,806	731

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

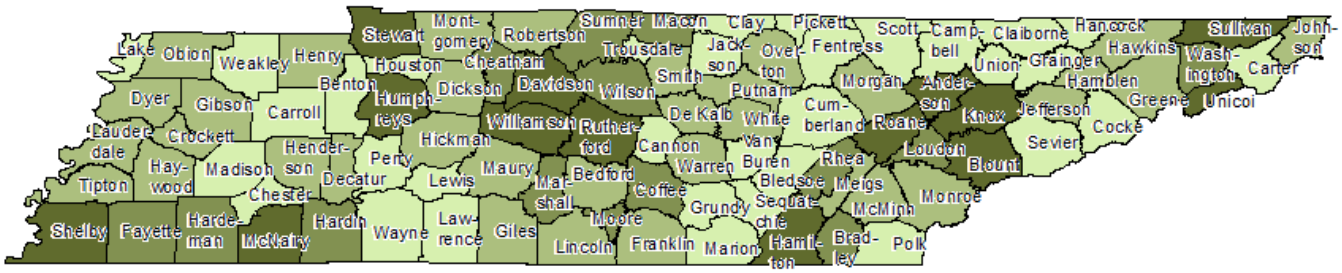
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	March 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	137,412.4	2.1	$1,048	--	2.1	--
Alabama	1,873.5	1.3	844	39	2.2	19
Alaska	322.2	1.0	1,051	15	2.6	10
Arizona	2,605.6	2.5	926	23	1.0	45
Arkansas	1,166.6	1.3	790	47	0.8	47
California	16,029.5	3.0	1,207	6	3.7	3
Colorado	2,458.0	3.7	1,071	13	2.4	16
Connecticut	1,640.5	0.8	1,382	3	1.5	35
Delaware	422.8	2.5	1,105	9	-0.5	51
District of Columbia	732.6	1.4	1,764	1	3.2	4
Florida	8,018.0	3.6	885	28	1.8	27
Georgia	4,107.0	3.5	989	18	1.7	31
Hawaii	633.7	1.3	881	31	2.8	9
Idaho	650.3	3.1	736	50	2.2	19
Illinois	5,724.6	1.2	1,130	7	2.4	16
Indiana	2,894.8	1.8	857	35	1.4	38
Iowa	1,504.3	1.3	848	37	2.9	7
Kansas	1,357.1	1.0	851	36	1.4	38
Kentucky	1,810.3	1.5	823	41	1.5	35
Louisiana	1,927.1	1.0	885	28	2.0	21
Maine	571.4	0.9	793	45	0.9	46
Maryland	2,540.8	1.2	1,113	8	2.5	12
Massachusetts	3,338.6	1.7	1,341	4	3.2	4
Michigan	4,079.5	1.8	969	21	1.9	24
Minnesota	2,709.2	1.8	1,079	12	4.3	1
Mississippi	1,102.3	0.6	711	51	0.7	48
Missouri	2,678.0	1.7	882	30	1.8	27
Montana	441.0	2.7	750	49	2.6	10
Nebraska	943.1	1.4	818	42	2.5	12
Nevada	1,227.7	3.7	865	34	-0.2	50
New Hampshire	623.5	1.5	982	20	1.2	43
New Jersey	3,834.6	1.4	1,288	5	1.9	24
New Mexico	798.7	1.4	805	43	1.5	35
New York	8,865.0	1.9	1,463	2	0.2	49
North Carolina	4,099.4	2.5	930	22	1.9	24
North Dakota	436.0	1.6	984	19	4.2	2
Ohio	5,144.5	1.4	922	24	1.4	38
Oklahoma	1,592.7	1.3	869	33	2.0	21
Oregon	1,748.7	3.5	919	25	2.9	7
Pennsylvania	5,606.9	0.9	1,031	16	2.4	16
Rhode Island	456.1	1.4	1,008	17	1.2	43
South Carolina	1,919.1	2.5	801	44	1.8	27
South Dakota	406.5	1.5	763	48	3.0	6
Tennessee	2,772.7	2.1	886	27	1.4	38
Texas	11,557.0	2.9	1,089	10	2.5	12
Utah	1,318.8	3.7	845	38	1.7	31
Vermont	303.9	0.9	824	40	2.0	21
Virginia	3,649.3	1.1	1,068	14	1.7	31
Washington	3,064.4	3.2	1,087	11	1.8	27
West Virginia	692.4	-0.3	792	46	1.4	38
Wisconsin	2,734.3	1.5	877	32	2.5	12
Wyoming	277.8	0.8	892	26	1.7	31
Puerto Rico	904.9	-1.1	524	[3]	1.0	[3]
Virgin Islands	38.5	0.0	738	[3]	-0.7	[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 in Tennessee, first quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.