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County Employment and Wages in California – Fourth Quarter 2013

Employment increased in all 26 large California counties from December 2012 to December 2013, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with 2012 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that Sonoma County had the largest increase, up 5.2 percent, followed by Placer at 4.7 percent. (See table 1.)

Nationally, employment advanced 1.8 percent from December 2012 to December 2013 as 292 of the 334 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Weld, Colo., recorded the largest percentage increase in the country, up 6.0 percent over the year. St. Clair, Ill., registered the largest percentage employment decline, down 3.1 percent.

Among the large counties in California, Los Angeles County had the highest employment, 4,176,800. Orange and San Diego were the only other counties with employment above one million. Nationwide, the 334 largest counties made up 71.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the fourth quarter of 2012 to the fourth quarter of 2013, Santa Cruz County recorded the fastest rate of increase in average weekly wages among the 26 large counties in California, registering a gain of 6.5 percent. (See table 1.) San Mateo County recorded the highest average weekly wage among these large counties at $2,724 per week. Nationally, the average weekly wage was unchanged from a year ago, remaining at $1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2013.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 32 counties in California with employment levels below 75,000. Wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average in December 2013. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Santa Cruz County's 6.5-percent rise in average weekly wages from the fourth quarter of 2012 to the fourth quarter of 2013 ranked first among the nation's 334 largest counties. (See table 1.) Advancing at a slower pace, but ranking within the top 20 nationwide, were Santa Clara (3.4 percent) and San Francisco (3.0 percent). Over-the-year wage increases in 11 other counties ranged from 2.9 to 0.4 percent, while wages were unchanged in 2 counties. In contrast, 10 counties reported wage decreases, with San Mateo (-15.8 percent) recording the largest decline, followed by Santa Barbara (-3.0 percent).

Nationally, 185 of the 334 largest counties registered over-the-year wage increases. As mentioned, Santa Cruz (6.5 percent) had the largest wage gain nationwide from the fourth quarter of 2012. Ada, Idaho, was second with a wage increase of 6.4 percent, followed by the counties of Washington, Ore. (5.9 percent), and Union, N.J. (5.2 percent).

Among the large U.S. counties, 140 experienced over-the-year wage decreases. Douglas, Colo., had the largest wage decrease with a loss of 29.7 percent. San Mateo's 15.8-percent wage decrease was the second-largest decline nationwide, followed by Virginia Beach City, Va. (-10.0 percent), McHenry, Ill. (-8.8 percent), and Shawnee, Kan. (-5.1 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Weekly wages in 12 of the state's 26 large counties were above the national average of $1,000 per week. In the fourth quarter of 2013, average weekly wages in San Mateo County ($2,724), Santa Clara, ($1,972), and San Francisco ($1,753) ranked within the top four nationally. In contrast, at $696 per week, wages in Tulare ranked 324th among the nation's 334 largest counties.

Nationally, 98 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average of $1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2013. As noted, San Mateo, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties. New York, N.Y., was second at $2,041, followed by Santa Clara, Calif.

Seventy percent of the largest U.S. counties (235) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry , S.C., reported the lowest wage ($587), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron ($598) and Hidalgo ($620). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than a quarter of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, San Mateo, Calif.

Average weekly wages in California's smaller counties

All 32 of California's smaller counties – those with employment below 75,000 – reported weekly wages below the national average of $1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2013. Among these counties, Alpine ($998), posted the highest weekly wages, followed by Placer and Ventura ($978 each). Mariposa reported the lowest average weekly wage in the state ($624). (See table 2.)

When all 58 counties in California were considered, 11 reported average weekly wages below $700, 16 reported wages from $700 to $799, 12 had wages from $800 to $899, 7 had wages from $900 to $999, and 12 averaged $1,000 or more per week. (See chart 1.) The six highest-paying counties were located in the San Francisco Bay 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 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 contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2013 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2012* are now available online at https://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn12.htm. The 2013 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2014.

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 (see Technical Note below) 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 26 largest counties in California, 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	--
California	15,650.3	2.8	--	1,175	6	-0.9	43
Alameda, Calif.	687.3	2.5	90	1,267	25	0.8	120
Contra Costa, Calif.	339.6	2.4	98	1,191	37	1.9	54
Fresno, Calif.	348.0	3.7	34	771	302	-1.0	253
Kern, Calif.	303.9	2.6	88	849	231	0.4	150
Los Angeles, Calif.	4,176.8	1.9	130	1,161	47	-1.9	302
Marin, Calif.	112.0	3.0	61	1,213	32	-0.7	238
Monterey, Calif.	155.6	1.9	130	828	250	2.1	43
Santa Barbara, Calif.	182.4	2.5	90	936	150	-3.0	321
Santa Clara, Calif.	965.7	4.1	24	1,972	3	3.4	17
Santa Cruz, Calif.	92.1	2.0	122	907	169	6.5	1
Solano, Calif.	127.4	2.0	122	1,015	88	2.9	22
Sonoma, Calif.	189.5	5.2	3	913	161	-0.7	238
Stanislaus, Calif.	165.7	2.4	98	801	278	1.1	95
Tulare, Calif.	145.7	3.5	42	696	324	0.0	186
Ventura, Calif.	314.0	1.2	188	978	115	-0.6	232
Yolo, Calif.	91.3	2.4	98	1,021	84	2.3	36

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: 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 California, fourth quarter 2013

Area	Employment December 2013	Average Weekly Wage (1)
United States (2)	136,129,407	$1,000
California	15,650,283	1,175
Alameda	687,327	1,267
Alpine	566	998
Amador	11,164	800
Butte	75,496	737
Calaveras	7,987	690
Colusa	8,066	770
Contra Costa	339,626	1,191
Del Norte	7,878	686
El Dorado	50,089	844
Fresno	347,958	771
Glenn	8,337	701
Humboldt	46,506	700
Imperial	63,916	677
Inyo	7,515	757
Kern	303,943	849
Kings	41,488	763
Lake	14,784	643
Lassen	10,251	832
Los Angeles	4,176,840	1,161
Madera	46,875	757
Marin	111,990	1,213
Mariposa	4,742	624
Mendocino	30,637	687
Merced	70,859	716
Modoc	2,454	668
Mono	6,748	687
Monterey	155,593	828
Napa	68,467	971
Nevada	29,161	808
Orange	1,463,052	1,114
Placer	139,626	978
Plumas	5,593	765
Riverside	613,241	773
Sacramento	610,706	1,069
San Benito	14,835	800
San Bernardino	653,236	824
San Diego	1,330,230	1,107
San Francisco	630,472	1,753
San Joaquin	212,033	815
San Luis Obispo	107,630	805
San Mateo	366,078	2,724
Santa Barbara	182,433	936
Santa Clara	965,742	1,972
Santa Cruz	92,068	907
Shasta	60,592	750
Sierra	556	714
Siskiyou	12,351	662
Solano	127,413	1,015
Sonoma	189,470	913
Stanislaus	165,723	801
Sutter	26,540	719
Tehama	15,862	719
Trinity	2,563	643
Tulare	145,655	696

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in California, fourth quarter 2013 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2013	Average Weekly Wage (1)
Tuolumne	16,135	753
Ventura	314,013	978
Yolo	91,343	1,021
Yuba	16,489	820
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.

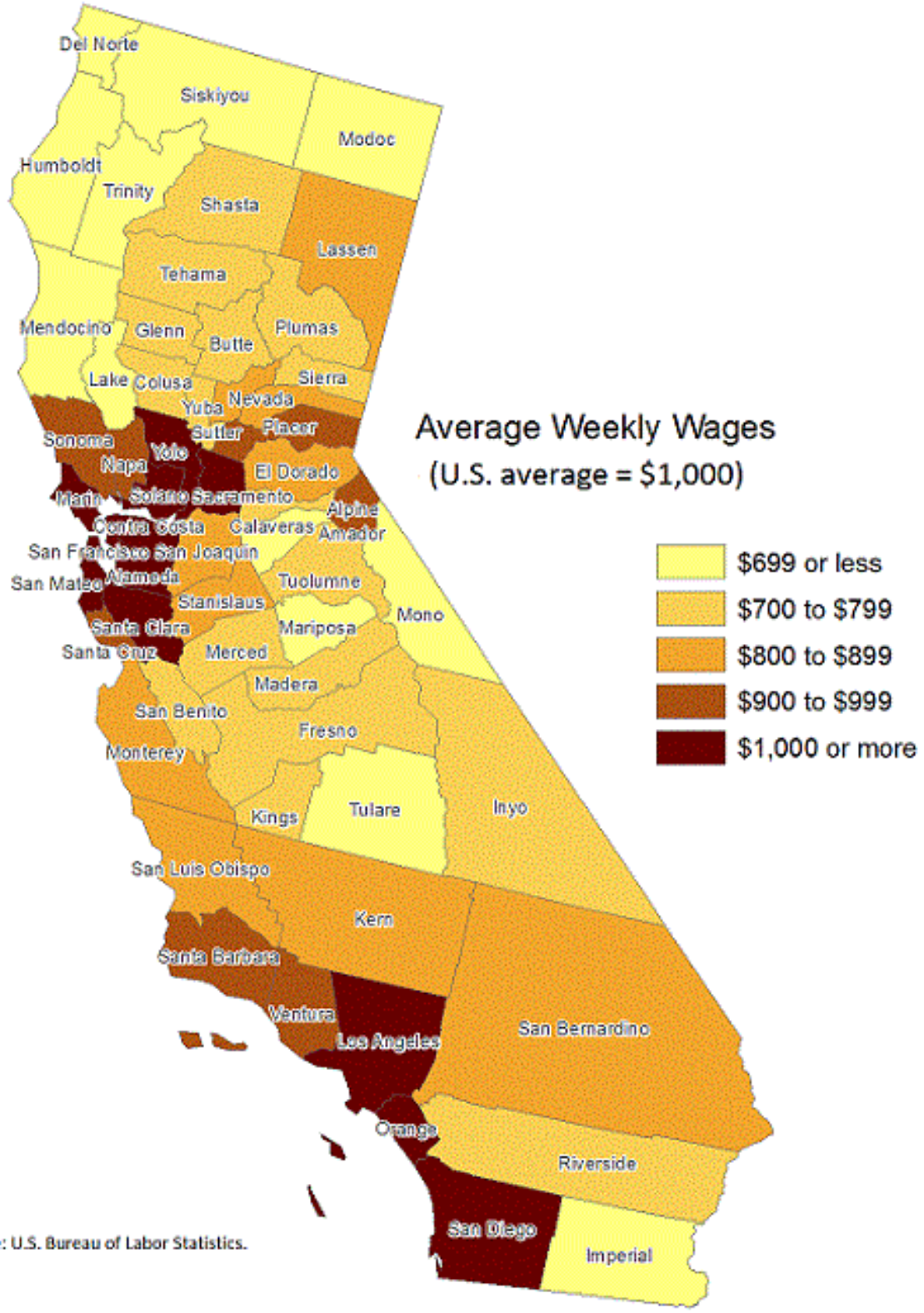
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2013

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.

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: 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 California, fourth quarter 2013



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.