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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN TEXAS – THIRD QUARTER 2016

Employment rose in 19 of the 26 largest counties in Texas from September 2015 to September 2016, 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 2015 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that two Texas counties ranked among the top 20 nationwide for job growth. The employment gains in Galveston and Williamson Counties, at 4.1 percent each, were the fastest in the state and ranked 18th nationwide. In contrast, employment fell in five of the state's largest counties. (See table 1.)

Nationwide, employment advanced 1.7 percent from September 2015 to September 2016 as 307 of the 344 largest U.S. counties registered increases. York, S.C., recorded the fastest employment gain in the country, up 6.0 percent. Midland, Texas, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 5.8 percent; employment in Midland's trade, transportation, and utilities sector recorded the largest numerical decrease among the county sectors with a loss of 1,504 jobs (-8.2 percent).

Among the largest counties in Texas, employment was highest in Harris County (2,262,300) in September 2016, followed by Dallas County (1,662,800). Three other counties, Tarrant, Bexar, and Travis, had employment levels exceeding 700,000. Together, the 26 largest Texas counties accounted for 80.7 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the third quarter of 2015 to the third quarter of 2016, average weekly wages nationwide increased 5.4 percent to \$1,027. Among large counties in Texas, McLennan registered the largest increase in average weekly wages with a gain of 7.7 percent, while wages in Midland County fell, down 0.3 percent. (See table 1.) In the third quarter of 2016, Harris had the highest average weekly wage among the state's largest counties at \$1,267 and Cameron had the lowest at \$636.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 228 counties in Texas with employment levels below 75,000 in 2015. Among these smaller counties, 212 had average weekly wages below the national average in September 2016. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Ten of Texas's 26 large counties recorded wage growth equal to or above the 5.4-percent national increase from the third quarter of 2015 to the third quarter of 2016. McLennan County's 7.7-percent wage increase was the highest in the state and placed 33rd nationally, followed by Dallas, Denton, and Williamson (6.8 percent each, 68th), and Tarrant (6.6 percent, 87th). (See table 1.) Fifteen large Texas counties had over-the-year wage increases that were below the national average, and Midland County registered a decrease in average weekly wages, down 0.3 percent.

Nationally, 339 of the 344 largest counties had over-the-year wage increases. Clark, Nev., experienced the largest wage gain in the nation, up 12.2 percent. Manatee, Fla., had the second largest increase (10.7 percent), followed by Hillsborough, N.H. (10.4 percent); four other large U.S. counties had increases above 10.0 percent.

Nationwide, five of the largest counties registered wage declines during the period. Rockland, N.Y., experienced the largest decrease in average weekly wages with a loss of 14.9 percent over the year. Lafayette, La., had the second largest wage decline (-3.4 percent), followed by Benton, Ark. (-2.0 percent), Lake, Ill. (-0.9 percent), and Midland, Texas (-0.3 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 5 of the 26 large Texas counties were more than 14 percent above the national average of \$1,027 in the third quarter of 2016. Harris County led at \$1,267 per week and ranked 23rd among the 344 large counties nationwide. Harris was followed by Dallas (\$1,239, 30th), Collin (\$1,191, 40th), Midland (\$1,176, 43rd), and Travis (\$1,174, 45th). Three additional Texas counties reported average weekly wages above the national average: Jefferson (\$1,061, 81st), Brazoria (\$1,045, 87th), and Tarrant (\$1,029, 101st).

Texas had a number of low-paying large counties. Three of the four lowest-paying large counties in the United States were located along the border with Mexico: Cameron (\$636, 343rd), Hidalgo (\$654, 342nd), and Webb (\$680, 341st). Other Texas counties with low national rankings included El Paso (\$728, 333rd), Brazos (\$772, 327th), and Lubbock (\$811, 306th).

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average in 102 of the largest counties in the country. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,260. San Mateo, Calif., was second at \$2,098, followed by San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,892), New York, N.Y. (\$1,879), and Washington, D.C. (\$1,728).

Among the largest U.S. counties, more than two-thirds (241) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2016. The lowest wage was reported in Horry, S.C., at \$632 per week, followed by the Texas counties of Cameron and Hidalgo. Wages in these three lowest-ranked counties were less than 30 percent of the average weekly wage in the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif.

Average weekly wages in smaller Texas counties

Sixteen of the 228 smaller Texas counties – those with employment below 75,000 – reported average weekly wages above the national average of \$1,027. Two of these smaller counties had wages that were also the highest in the state: Carson (\$1,631) and Irion (\$1,333). Delta County registered the lowest weekly wage, averaging \$413 in the third quarter of 2016. (See table 2.)

When all 254 counties in Texas were considered, all but 24 had wages below the national average. Thirty-six counties reported average weekly wages under \$650, 79 registered wages from \$650 to \$749, 70 had wages from \$750 to \$849, 33 had wages from \$850 to \$949, and 36 had wages of \$950 or higher. (See chart 1.) The counties with the highest average weekly wages were located around the larger metropolitan areas of Dallas, Houston, and Austin, as well as the smaller areas of Midland, Odessa, and Amarillo. Lower-paying counties were concentrated in the agricultural areas of central Texas, the Texas Panhandle, and along the Texas-Mexico border.

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 2015 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 2016 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn15.htm.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 7, 2017.

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 9.8 million employer reports cover 142.9 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 (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: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 26 largest counties in Texas, third quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2015-16 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2015-16 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	142,940.5	1.7	--	\$1,027	--	5.4	--
Texas	11,830.7	1.3	--	1,042	14	4.3	41
Bell, Texas	116.3	0.0	308	868	252	5.7	160
Bexar, Texas	846.6	2.4	112	914	200	4.6	247
Brazoria, Texas	106.1	1.9	153	1,045	87	5.3	198
Brazos, Texas	101.3	0.8	257	772	327	5.8	152
Cameron, Texas	138.4	2.2	125	636	343	4.3	269
Collin, Texas	381.5	3.8	29	1,191	40	5.9	139
Dallas, Texas	1,662.8	3.1	58	1,239	30	6.8	68
Denton, Texas	228.8	3.4	46	954	164	6.8	68
El Paso, Texas	299.3	2.4	112	728	333	4.4	262
Fort Bend, Texas	174.2	2.1	131	951	166	0.3	339
Galveston, Texas	108.0	4.1	18	896	219	5.4	187
Gregg, Texas	74.0	-3.4	342	858	265	1.2	335
Harris, Texas	2,262.3	-0.9	329	1,267	23	2.1	327
Hidalgo, Texas	248.5	1.8	164	654	342	4.8	233
Jefferson, Texas	122.3	-0.2	315	1,061	81	5.7	160
Lubbock, Texas	137.0	1.4	203	811	306	4.0	286
McLennan, Texas	111.4	2.6	96	850	272	7.7	33
Midland, Texas	83.0	-5.8	344	1,176	43	-0.3	340
Montgomery, Texas	168.4	1.0	238	1,007	116	4.1	279
Nueces, Texas	161.6	-0.5	321	893	221	4.1	279
Potter, Texas	78.9	0.0	308	831	288	3.1	315
Smith, Texas	102.6	1.3	216	849	273	5.3	198
Tarrant, Texas	860.4	2.4	112	1,029	101	6.6	87
Travis, Texas	710.0	2.9	74	1,174	45	5.1	211
Webb, Texas	99.1	2.2	125	680	341	2.9	318
Williamson, Texas	158.7	4.1	18	1,009	114	6.8	68

[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 Texas, third quarter 2016

Area	Employment September 2016	Average weekly wage [1]	Area	Employment September 2016	Average weekly wage [1]
United States[2]	142,940,452	\$1,027	Concho	808	\$771
Texas	11,830,679	1,042	Cooke	14,242	850
Anderson	20,713	822	Coryell	16,427	760
Andrews	6,712	1,084	Cottle	500	695
Angelina	35,376	757	Crane	1,341	1,020
Aransas	6,247	728	Crockett	1,500	678
Archer	1,684	662	Crosby	1,442	624
Armstrong	369	670	Culberson	1,283	786
Atascosa	11,855	856	Dallam	4,438	823
Austin	10,257	842	Dallas	1,662,753	1,239
Bailey	2,474	769	Dawson	4,263	717
Bandera	3,164	650	De Witt	7,052	775
Bastrop	17,115	714	Deaf Smith	7,547	764
Baylor	1,225	659	Delta	1,271	413
Bee	8,974	719	Denton	228,763	954
Bell	116,265	868	Dickens	436	679
Bexar	846,607	914	Dimmit	5,127	918
Blanco	3,018	846	Donley	943	646
Borden	243	625	Duval	3,169	740
Bosque	3,720	672	Eastland	6,645	805
Bowie	41,949	760	Ector	66,895	1,022
Brazoria	106,070	1,045	Edwards	382	631
Brazos	101,266	772	El Paso	299,326	728
Brewster	3,858	728	Ellis	48,804	810
Briscoe	293	558	Erath	16,145	652
Brooks	2,347	763	Falls	3,156	687
Brown	15,907	690	Fannin	7,512	749
Burleson	3,842	761	Fayette	9,074	736
Burnet	13,828	788	Fisher	898	742
Caldwell	8,393	703	Floyd	1,659	641
Calhoun	11,148	1,228	Foard	336	552
Callahan	2,103	688	Fort Bend	174,153	951
Cameron	138,352	636	Franklin	2,922	741
Camp	3,796	737	Freestone	4,914	828
Carson	4,727	1,631	Frio	6,016	879
Cass	7,359	714	Gaines	6,097	865
Castro	2,615	687	Galveston	108,016	896
Chambers	13,514	1,128	Garza	1,829	728
Cherokee	14,639	692	Gillespie	10,337	699
Childress	2,569	710	Glasscock	568	743
Clay	1,293	630	Goliad	1,257	654
Cochran	669	709	Gonzales	7,117	754
Coke	705	623	Gray	7,709	879
Coleman	2,096	576	Grayson	45,112	800
Collin	381,483	1,191	Gregg	73,964	858
Collingsworth	834	761	Grimes	6,980	857
Colorado	6,788	739	Guadalupe	39,019	791
Comal	51,813	805	Hale	11,997	665
Comanche	3,641	615	Hall	748	555

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, third quarter 2016 (continued)

Area	Employment September 2016	Average weekly wage [1]	Area	Employment September 2016	Average weekly wage [1]
Hamilton	2,472	\$666	Live Oak	3,619	\$965
Hansford	2,169	909	Llano	4,620	685
Hardeman	1,188	661	Loving	68	732
Hardin	12,949	769	Lubbock	137,026	811
Harris	2,262,256	1,267	Lynn	1,401	758
Harrison	23,095	907	Madison	4,701	695
Hartley	2,484	749	Marion	1,916	601
Haskell	1,643	639	Martin	1,929	914
Hays	63,611	774	Mason	1,056	578
Hemphill	2,066	1,084	Matagorda	10,793	947
Henderson	16,731	650	Maverick	17,441	631
Hidalgo	248,512	654	McCulloch	2,799	691
Hill	9,658	765	McLennan	111,442	850
Hockley	9,342	880	McMullen	550	1,038
Hood	15,487	790	Medina	9,278	667
Hopkins	12,790	725	Menard	407	494
Houston	7,077	861	Midland	82,958	1,176
Howard	12,280	880	Milam	5,850	811
Hudspeth	1,223	1,191	Mills	1,270	609
Hunt	28,985	1,010	Mitchell	2,053	776
Hutchinson	8,805	1,135	Montague	4,614	707
Irion	1,028	1,333	Montgomery	168,384	1,007
Jack	3,051	907	Moore	11,189	888
Jackson	5,655	807	Morris	3,552	751
Jasper	10,052	739	Motley	336	488
Jeff Davis	973	628	Nacogdoches	22,619	706
Jefferson	122,260	1,061	Navarro	16,462	692
Jim Hogg	1,668	769	Newton	1,329	618
Jim Wells	15,462	753	Nolan	5,944	791
Johnson	45,059	799	Nueces	161,637	893
Jones	2,996	706	Ochiltree	4,310	895
Karnes	5,558	954	Oldham	1,060	928
Kaufman	30,491	772	Orange	22,297	958
Kendall	14,803	925	Palo Pinto	8,424	786
Kenedy	429	1,001	Panola	8,163	853
Kent	261	849	Parker	31,283	822
Kerr	17,535	810	Parmer	5,769	788
Kimble	1,288	614	Pecos	5,647	821
King	93	667	Polk	10,997	728
Kinney	784	884	Potter	78,901	831
Kleberg	12,045	701	Presidio	2,240	747
Knox	1,147	803	Rains	1,751	607
La Salle	2,956	1,169	Randall	29,751	775
Lamar	21,182	815	Reagan	1,666	1,029
Lamb	3,827	719	Real	690	497
Lampasas	4,463	639	Red River	2,596	604
Lavaca	5,513	705	Reeves	4,471	808
Lee	6,761	941	Refugio	2,218	766
Leon	4,944	915	Roberts	249	771
Liberty	16,501	773	Robertson	3,973	832
Limestone	7,401	761	Rockwall	28,377	790
Lipscomb	1,246	745	Runnels	2,818	655

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, third quarter 2016 (continued)

Area	Employment September 2016	Average weekly wage [1]	Area	Employment September 2016	Average weekly wage [1]
Rusk	13,220	\$856	Trinity	2,364	\$661
Sabine	2,204	690	Tyler	3,844	678
San Augustine	1,597	735	Upshur	6,652	682
San Jacinto	2,046	647	Upton	1,504	1,087
San Patricio	18,567	849	Uvalde	10,079	639
San Saba	1,863	715	Val Verde	17,387	712
Schleicher	737	797	Van Zandt	10,742	645
Scurry	6,872	913	Victoria	39,239	849
Shackelford	1,256	832	Walker	24,892	750
Shelby	8,185	716	Waller	16,001	858
Sherman	1,028	785	Ward	4,344	992
Smith	102,586	849	Washington	14,675	744
Somervell	3,755	1,107	Webb	99,111	680
Starr	15,140	587	Wharton	15,464	719
Stephens	3,127	678	Wheeler	2,002	702
Sterling	560	749	Wichita	52,780	753
Stonewall	503	680	Wilbarger	5,933	685
Sutton	1,865	1,086	Willacy	3,524	649
Swisher	1,937	642	Williamson	158,701	1,009
Tarrant	860,449	1,029	Wilson	7,637	689
Taylor	60,461	770	Winkler	2,364	1,035
Terrell	297	828	Wise	19,199	823
Terry	3,919	787	Wood	9,807	689
Throckmorton	491	631	Yoakum	3,714	1,039
Titus	15,688	713	Young	6,817	750
Tom Green	46,427	773	Zapata	3,050	870
Travis	710,047	1,174	Zavala	2,526	614

[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, third quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	142,940.5	1.7	\$1,027	--	5.4	--
Alabama	1,923.8	1.5	870	36	4.9	38
Alaska	337.4	-2.6	1,055	12	1.2	49
Arizona	2,695.5	3.1	950	24	6.9	5
Arkansas	1,205.4	1.0	794	48	5.2	32
California	16,871.1	2.4	1,210	4	6.7	8
Colorado	2,576.5	2.6	1,062	10	5.6	23
Connecticut	1,674.2	0.3	1,204	5	5.0	34
Delaware	440.7	0.8	1,022	16	5.6	23
District of Columbia	759.2	1.7	1,728	1	3.8	45
Florida	8,320.2	3.7	905	29	6.2	14
Georgia	4,290.4	2.9	969	21	5.9	18
Hawaii	648.4	1.8	956	23	6.7	8
Idaho	703.7	3.5	782	50	6.3	12
Illinois	5,933.6	0.6	1,062	10	4.4	40
Indiana	3,025.9	1.8	866	37	5.9	18
Iowa	1,548.6	0.8	873	35	6.2	14
Kansas	1,377.2	0.5	857	39	5.9	18
Kentucky	1,880.2	1.5	857	39	6.5	10
Louisiana	1,908.8	-0.9	883	32	2.9	48
Maine	616.2	0.9	825	45	5.9	18
Maryland	2,648.1	1.4	1,124	8	5.3	30
Massachusetts	3,522.9	2.0	1,277	2	6.8	7
Michigan	4,292.2	2.1	976	19	5.9	18
Minnesota	2,849.5	1.6	1,053	13	6.4	11
Mississippi	1,126.9	0.7	739	51	4.7	39
Missouri	2,782.1	1.6	888	30	5.0	34
Montana	464.5	1.5	792	49	4.3	41
Nebraska	973.9	0.9	857	39	5.5	26
Nevada	1,300.7	3.8	949	25	10.1	1
New Hampshire	655.0	1.8	1,027	15	7.9	2
New Jersey	4,000.0	1.8	1,173	7	5.0	34
New Mexico	811.5	0.2	830	44	4.0	43
New York	9,216.6	1.6	1,222	3	3.5	46
North Carolina	4,290.3	2.3	909	28	5.3	30
North Dakota	423.2	-3.4	964	22	0.7	50
Ohio	5,347.3	1.1	924	26	5.4	27
Oklahoma	1,578.7	-1.3	854	42	3.5	46
Oregon	1,866.5	2.6	970	20	5.2	32
Pennsylvania	5,776.7	1.0	1,013	17	5.4	27
Rhode Island	481.1	0.8	990	18	7.6	3
South Carolina	2,008.6	2.5	832	43	5.6	23
South Dakota	424.2	1.1	809	47	7.0	4
Tennessee	2,918.8	2.5	912	27	5.4	27
Texas	11,830.7	1.3	1,042	14	4.3	41
Utah	1,407.4	3.8	881	33	6.3	12
Vermont	309.9	0.5	880	34	6.2	14
Virginia	3,801.0	1.0	1,063	9	5.0	34
Washington	3,278.9	3.0	1,188	6	6.9	5
West Virginia	691.5	-1.6	816	46	3.9	44
Wisconsin	2,850.1	1.0	885	31	6.2	14
Wyoming	274.8	-4.7	865	38	0.0	51
Puerto Rico	888.2	-0.4	524	[3]	2.3	[3]
Virgin Islands	37.4	1.4	778	[3]	5.9	[3]

[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 Texas, third quarter 2016

