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AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES IN THE MOUNTAIN STATES - 2002

Annual wages for the Mountain¹ region averaged \$33,302 in 2002, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). John D. Gordon, acting regional commissioner, noted that average wages in the Mountain region were lower than the nationwide average of \$36,764. Overall, regional wages increased by 1.4 percent from 2001, slightly lower than the 1.5 percent rate of increase for the United States.

Three of the eight states in the region – Colorado, Arizona, and Nevada – had average wage levels that ranked among the top half of all states. Of these, only Colorado exceeded the national average, with an annual average wage level of \$38,005. Among other states in the region, average wages ranged from \$34,036 in Arizona to \$26,001 in Montana, the lowest level regionally as well as nationally.

Within the region, wages grew fastest in Wyoming and Montana, increasing 3.3 percent and 3.2 percent respectively. Wages grew 2.6 percent in Nevada, 2.5 percent in New Mexico, 1.9 percent in Arizona, and 1.7 percent in Utah, putting these states above the national average for percentage growth in wages. In contrast, wages in Idaho grew 1.4 percent and Colorado's wage level grew just 0.1 percent, slowest in the region and above that of only three other states, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York. (See table 1.)

Wage differences among states reflect the varying composition of employment by occupation, industry, and hours of work, as well as other factors. Similarly, over-the-year wage changes may reflect shifts in these characteristics, as well as changes in the level of average wages. Annual average wage data are compiled from reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal Unemployment Insurance (UI) laws which cover 128.2 million full- and parttime workers nationwide. Average annual wages are computed by dividing total annual payrolls of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of those employees. (See Technical Note.)

¹ The Mountain states referenced in this release are Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. Together, these eight states constitute the Mountain region.

Wages in metropolitan areas

Twelve of the region's 25 metropolitan areas ranked in the top half for wages among 318 metropolitan areas nationally. Of these, Boulder-Longmont, Colorado, and Denver, Colorado had the highest average annual wage levels in 2002, at \$44,037 and \$42,133 respectively. (See table 2.) Boulder-Longmont and Denver were also the only metropolitan areas within the Mountain region with wages above the \$38,423 national average. With a 0.6 percent decrease in wages over the year, Boulder-Longmont moved from fourteenth highest among U.S. metro areas in 2001 to the fifteenth position in 2002. Denver also slipped one position, due to a 0.5 percent decline in wages, and ranked twenty-first in wages among the nation's metropolitan areas for 2002. The third highest wages in the region were in Phoenix-Mesa, Ariz., ranked sixtieth in the nation with average wages of \$36,045. Only three other metropolitan areas in the region ranked in the top one hundred for wages across the nation. These were Colorado Springs and Fort Collins-Loveland, both in Colorado, and Reno, Nevada. In contrast, average wage levels in twelve of the region's metropolitan areas were in the bottom one hundred. At \$23,429, Yuma, Ariz. had the lowest wages in the region and ranked 315 among the 318 metropolitan areas across the country. Great Falls, Mont. had the second lowest wages in the region at \$25,035, putting it at 310.

Most of the metropolitan areas in the region experienced faster wage growth than the 1.4 percent average increase for all metropolitan areas in the United States. The highest rate of wage growth in the Mountain region occurred in Santa Fe, N.M., with a gain of 5.2 percent. (See table 2.) In addition, Cheyenne, Wyo., Yuma, Ariz., and Missoula, Mont. all saw wages grow by more than 4.0 percent over the year, putting them in the top fifteen percent of the nation's metropolitan areas for growth in wages. Only five of the region's twenty-five metropolitan areas saw wages grow at a rate lower than the national average, with Boulder-Longmont and Denver the only areas in the region to experience declines over the year. Nationally, only fifty of the 318 metropolitan areas had increases at or below the nationwide average, with fourteen of these experiencing declines.

Wages in industries

In the Mountain region, overall private industry wages grew faster than the 1.1 percent national rate in all states but Colorado, Idaho, and Utah. Montana had the highest growth, at 2.9 percent, with annual average wages rising in every industry but mining. Colorado, on the other hand, experienced a 0.6 percent decline in private industry wages, with wages in the mining industry and in management of companies and enterprises experiencing the biggest drops, declining 13.9 percent and 8.2 percent respectively. Among the remaining Mountain region states the rate of growth in private industry wages ranged from 1.0 percent in Idaho and Utah to 2.4 percent in Wyoming. (See table 3.)

While no industry dominated wages across the region, average wage levels in both utilities and in management of companies and enterprises were among the top four in all states which published data for these industries. These two industries were the highest paying for the nation as a whole. In Nevada, management of companies and enterprises was the highest paying industry of any in the region, at \$105,853 for 2002, far exceeding the national average of \$69,277 for this industry. The utilities industry was the highest paying in Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, and Utah, with the highest average wages being \$83,403 in Utah.

On the other end of the spectrum, the accommodation and food services industry was the lowest paying in all of the region's states except Nevada. Idaho's average wages of \$10,301 in this industry were the lowest in the region.

Beginning in October 2002, *quarterly* data are available for selected Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages series. Data are available from the Kansas City Information office at 816-426-2481, or at http://data.bls.gov/labjava/outside.jsp?survey=en

TECHNICAL NOTE

Background

These data are the product of a federal-state cooperative program known as Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) in which State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) prepare summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by Unemployment Insurance legislation. The summaries are a by-product of the administration of state unemployment insurance (UI) programs that require most employers to pay quarterly taxes based on the employment and wages of workers covered by UI.

Coverage

Employment and wage data for workers covered by state UI laws and for federal civilian workers covered by the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) program are compiled from quarterly contribution reports submitted to the SESAs by employers. In addition to the quarterly contribution reports, employers who operate multiple establishments within a state complete a questionnaire, called the "Multiple Worksite Report," which provides detailed information on the location and industry of each of their establishments. Average annual pay data are derived from summaries of employment and wages submitted by states to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. These reports are based on place of employment rather than place of residence.

UI and UCFE coverage is broad and basically comparable from state to state. In 2002, UI and UCFE programs covered workers in 128.2 million jobs. Covered workers received \$4.713 trillion in pay, representing 94.3 percent of the wage and salary component of personal income and 45.1 percent of the gross domestic product.

Major exclusions from UI coverage include self-employed workers, most agricultural workers on small farms, all members of the Armed Forces, elected officials in most states, most employees of railroads, some domestic workers, most student workers at schools, and employees of certain small nonprofit organizations.

Concepts and methodology

Average annual wages was computed by dividing total annual wages of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. In addition to salaries, average annual wages data include bonuses, the cash value of meals and lodging when supplied, tips and other gratuities, and, in some states, employer contributions to certain deferred compensation plans such as 401(k) plans, and stock options. Monthly employment is based on the number of workers who worked during or received pay for the pay period including the 12th of the month. With few exceptions, all employees of covered firms are reported, including production and sales workers, corporation officials, executives, supervisory personnel, and clerical workers. Workers on paid vacations and part-time workers also are included.

Average annual wages are affected by the ratio of full-time to part-time workers as well as the number of individuals in high-paying and low-paying occupations. When comparing average annual wage levels between industries and/or states, these factors should be taken into consideration. Annual pay data only approximate annual earnings because an individual may not be employed by the same employer all year or may work for more than one employer. Also, year-to-year changes in average annual wages can result from a change in the proportion of employment in high- and low-wage jobs, as well as from changes in the level of average annual wages.

In order to insure the highest possible quality of data, SESAs verify with employers and update, if necessary, the industry, location, and ownership classification of all establishments on a 3-year cycle. Changes in establishment classification codes resulting from the verification process are introduced with the data reported for the first quarter of the year. Changes resulting from improved employer reporting also are introduced in the first quarter. For these reasons, some data, especially at more detailed industry levels, may not be strictly comparable with earlier years.

A few covered employers provided insufficient information on the nature of their businesses to enable the SESA to assign a specific NAICS code. The establishments of these employers therefore could not be classified by industry sector. The wages for these nonclassifiable establishments, along with data for the agricultural division, are not shown separately, but are included in the averages for state and national totals.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines metropolitan areas for use in federal statistical activities and updates these definitions as needed each summer—data in this release use criteria established in definitions issued June 30, 1999 (OMB Bulletin No. 99-04). The 318 metropolitan areas in the United States are a compilation of a set of areas classified as Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSAs) and Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSAs). Generally speaking, an MSA consists of one or more counties and meets specified size criteria—either it contains a city of at least 50,000 inhabitants, or it contains an urbanized area of at least 50,000 inhabitants, and has a total population of at least 100,000 (75,000 in New England). A CMSA is a metropolitan area that has a population of at least 1 million and has been divided into two or more PMSAs. The CMSA comprises the same geographic area as its constituent PMSAs which are loosely defined as free-standing areas that have a population of at least 100,000.

County definitions are assigned according to Federal Information Processing Standards Publications (FIPS PUBS) as issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, after approval by the Secretary of Commerce pursuant to Section 5131 of the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 and the Computer Security Act of 1987, Public Law 104-106. Areas shown as counties include areas designated as independent cities in some jurisdictions, and, in Alaska, those designated as census areas where counties have not been created.

Additional statistics and other information

Additional average annual wages data (or Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data) is available on the BLS Internet site at http://www.bls.gov/cew/home.htm. Beginning in October 2002, quarterly data are available for selected QCEW series. Data can be accessed in several ways, including *Selective Access*, which allows quick access to particular items, and the special request FTP service, which allows access to extensive collection of flat text files. The Kansas City Information Office can provide assistance accessing these files by calling (816) 426-2481.

This news release, along with other BLS statistics and information, is available via the Internet at the BLS World Wide Web site http://www.bls.gov/ro7/home.htm.

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages*, 2002 is available for sale from the BLS Publications Sales Center, P.O. Box 2145, Chicago, Illinois 60690, telephone 312-353-1880. The bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn02.htm.

News releases on quarterly measures of gross job flows also are available upon request from the Division of Administrative Statistics and Labor Turnover (Business Employment Dynamics), telephone 202-691-6467; (http://www.bls.gov/bdm/); (e-mail: BDMInfo@bls.gov).

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339. For personal assistance or further information on annual average pay data as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Kansas City Information Office at (816) 426-2481 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. central time.

Table 1. Average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 for all

covered workers¹ by Mountain States

,	Average an	Percent	
Area	2001	2002	change ²
			2001-2002
UNITED STATES ³	\$36,219	\$36,764	1.5
Mountain states	32,832	33,302	1.4
Arizona	33,411	34,036	1.9
Colorado	37,952	38,005	0.1
Idaho	27,768	28,163	1.4
Montana	25,195	26,001	3.2
Nevada	33,121	33,993	2.6
New Mexico	28,702	29,431	2.5
Utah	30,077	30,585	1.7
Wyoming	28,043	28,975	3.3

¹ Includes workers coverd by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Percent changes were computed from unrounded average annual wages data and may differ from those computed using data rounded to the nearest dollar.

³ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 for all covered workers¹ by metropolitan area

	Average and	Average annual wages ³		
Metropolitan area ²	2001	2002	Percent change, 2001-02	
Metropolitan areas ⁴	\$37,908	\$38,423	1.4	
Santa Fe, NM	30,671	32,269	5.2	
Cheyenne, WY	27,579	28,827	4.5	
Yuma, AZ	22,415	23,429	4.5	
Missoula, MT	26,181	27,249	4.1	
Las Cruces, NM	24,310	25,256	3.9	
Flagstaff, AZ-UT	25,890	26,846	3.7	
Greeley, CO	30,066	31,104	3.5	
Great Falls, MT	24,211	25,035	3.4	
Grand Junction, CO	27,426	28,331	3.3	
Las Vegas, NV-AZ	32,239	33,280	3.2	
Tucson, AZ	30,690	31,673	3.2	
Fort Collins-Loveland, CO	33,248	34,215	2.9	
Albuquerque, NM	31,667	32,475	2.6	
Pueblo, CO	27,097	27,763	2.5	
Billings, MT	27,889	28,553	2.4	
Pocatello, ID	24,621	25,219	2.4	
Casper, WY	28,264	28,886	2.2	
Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT	31,965	32,600	2.0	
Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	35,514	36,045	1.5	
Reno, NV	34,231	34,744	1.5	
Boise City, ID	31,624	31,955	1.0	
Colorado Springs, CO	34,391	34,681	0.8	
Provo-Orem, UT	28,266	28,416	0.5	
Denver, CO	42,351	42,133	-0.5	
Boulder-Longmont, CO	44,310	44,037	-0.6	

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Includes data for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSA) as defined by OMB Bulletin No. 99-04. See Technical Note.

³ Each year's total is based on the MSA definition for the specific year. Annual changes include differences resulting from changes in MSA definitions.

⁴ Totals do not include the six MSAs within Puerto Rico.

Table 3. Average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 by NAICS industry for all covered workers¹ by Mountain States

Mountain States	Average an	Average annual wages	
State and Industry	2001	2002	change
2	2001	2002	2001-02
United States ²			
Private			
Total ³	\$36,157	\$36,539	1.1
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	20,188		
Mining	59,686	-	
Construction	38,412	,	
Manufacturing	42,969		
Wholesale trade	48,791	49,241	
Retail trade	22,667	23,232	
Transportation and warehousing	36,189	36,823	
Utilities	65,561	67,374	
Information	57,288		
Finance and insurance	63,687	62,762	-1.5
Real estate and rental and leasing	32,871	33,924	3.2
Professional and technical services	58,755	58,672	-0.1
Management of companies and enterprises	68,965	69,277	0.5
Administrative and waste services	24,443	25,276	3.4
Educational services	32,066	33,163	3.4
Health care and social assistance	32,813	34,043	3.7
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	25,344	26,159	3.2
Accommodation and food services	13,674	13,946	2.0
Other services, except public administration	23,220	23,784	2.4
Government	36,549	37,935	3.8
Arizona			
Private			
Total ³	\$33,165	\$33,640	1.4
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	16,672	17,196	
Mining	47,487	46,972	-1.1
Construction	34,019	34,438	
Manufacturing	48,031	48,905	
Wholesale trade	48,712	-	
Retail trade	24,401	24,787	
Transportation and warehousing	35,535	36,198	
Utilities	64,567	67,004	
Information	43,429		
Finance and insurance	46,325	47,320	
Real estate and rental and leasing	30,639	31,973	
Professional and technical services	49,277	-	
Management of companies and enterprises	53,345	54,019	
Administrative and waste services	23,459		
Educational services	29,516	-	
Health care and social assistance	34,638	36,243	
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	28,593	-	
Accommodation and food services	13,543	13,907	
Other services, except public administration	23,441	23,761	1.4
Government	34,734	36,085	
Government	54,734	50,005	5.9
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Table 3. Average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 by NAICS industry for all covered workers¹ by Mountain States

	Average annual wages		Percent
State and Industry	2001	2002	change
Colorado	2001	2002	2001-02
Private			
Total ³	#20 21 4	#27 OOO	0.6
	\$38,214	\$37,988	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	22,346	22,684	
Mining	75,260	64,824	
Construction	38,940	39,219	
Manufacturing Wholesale trade	47,543 52,464	48,657	
Retail trade	52,464	52,230	
	23,846	24,190	
Transportation and warehousing	37,564	38,439	
Utilities	65,194	64,300	
Information	65,782	63,177	
Finance and insurance	55,658	55,074	
Real estate and rental and leasing	33,425	34,114	
Professional and technical services	61,366	60,803	
Management of companies and enterprises	76,805	70,502	
Administrative and waste services	26,617	27,660	
Educational services	29,531	29,162	
Health care and social assistance	34,037	35,572	
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	27,244	27,626	
Accommodation and food services	13,743	13,935	
Other services, except public administration Government	25,574 36,464	26,336 38,095	
		,	
Idaho			
Private			
Total ³	\$27,478	\$27,758	1.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	20,742	20,975	1.1
Mining	38,858	40,200	3.5
Construction	31,057	31,054	
Manufacturing	37,704	38,230	1.4
Wholesale trade	34,445	34,541	0.3
Retail trade	20,218	20,564	1.7
Transportation and warehousing	26,999	27,543	2.0
Utilities	47,938	68,343	42.6
Information	32,984	33,291	0.9
Finance and insurance	36,994	37,515	1.4
Real estate and rental and leasing	20,763	21,317	2.7
Professional and technical services	42,295	42,506	0.5
Management of companies and enterprises	59,032	56,360	-4.5
Administrative and waste services	17,936	18,460	
Educational services	27,399	28,654	
Health care and social assistance	27,530	28,291	2.8
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	17,887	18,802	5.1
Accommodation and food services	10,035	10,301	2.7
Other services, except public administration	19,567	19,830	
Government	29,062	29,940	3.0

Table 3. Average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 by NAICS industry for all covered workers¹ by Mountain States

Average annual wages		Percent	
State and Industry			change
	2001	2002	2001-02
Montana			
Private			
Total ³	\$24,122	\$24,813	2.
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	22,213	23,909	7.
Mining	52,801	52,744	-0.
Construction	30,537	30,643	0.
Manufacturing	32,833	33,436	1.
Wholesale trade	32,259	33,542	4
Retail trade	18,470	19,322	4
Transportation and warehousing	27,483	28,032	2
Utilities	53,080	56,250	6
Information	31,137	32,798	5
Finance and insurance	35,172	35,890	2
Real estate and rental and leasing	18,163	18,677	2
Professional and technical services	34,173	35,018	2
Management of companies and enterprises	35,545	36,277	2
Administrative and waste services	17,182	18,198	5
Educational services	18,415	18,894	2
Health care and social assistance	26,847	27,972	4
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	12,624	13,567	7
Accommodation and food services	10,179	10,439	2
Other services, except public administration	17,615	18,133	2
Government	29,462	30,741	4.
Nevada Private			
Total ³	\$32,197	\$33,035	2.
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	22,238	23,280	
Mining	58,887	62,331	5
Construction	39,760	40,794	
Manufacturing	39,700	39,159	
Wholesale trade	46,010	46,378	
Retail trade	25,201	25,637	
Transportation and warehousing	27,984	28,815	
Utilities	68,127	70,417	
Information	45,134	45,193	
Finance and insurance	45,845	47,014	
Real estate and rental and leasing	29,636	30,776	
Professional and technical services	52,755	54,231	
Management of companies and enterprises	88,542	105,853	
Administrative and waste services	23,530	23,944	
Educational services	28,204	23,944	
Health care and social assistance	38,103	39,335	
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	23,097	23,279	
Accommodation and food services			
	24,029 24,762	24,790	
Other services, except public administration	24,762	25,262 40,890	
Government	40,057	711 0111	′ 1

Table 3. Average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 by NAICS industry for all covered workers¹ by Mountain States

	Average an	Average annual wages	
State and Industry	_		change
	2001	2002	2001-02
New Mexico			
Private			
Total ³	\$27,683	\$28,187	1.8
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	15,476	16,190	4.6
Mining	46,825	47,689	1.8
Construction	30,158	30,032	-0.4
Manufacturing	38,196	37,791	-1.1
Wholesale trade	36,333	37,465	3.1
Retail trade	20,741	21,161	2.0
Transportation and warehousing	30,650	31,445	
Utilities	54,352	53,570	
Information	32,863	31,894	
Finance and insurance	35,597	37,497	
Real estate and rental and leasing	24,679	29,641	
Professional and technical services	49,134	50,918	
Management of companies and enterprises	41,265	43,106	
Administrative and waste services	22,478	23,102	
Educational services	23,602	24,703	
Health care and social assistance	28,496	29,492	
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	16,242	16,354	
Accommodation and food services	11,149	11,515	
Other services, except public administration	20,522	21,220	
Government	32,121	33,530	
Utah Private			
Total ³	\$29,702	\$30,011	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	21,113	20,936	
Mining	51,168	49,471	
Construction	30,428	30,757	
Manufacturing	36,312	36,919	
Wholesale trade	41,806	42,208	
Retail trade	20,211	20,600	
Transportation and warehousing	34,032	35,342	
Utilities	73,723	83,403	
Information	41,104	40,686	
Finance and insurance	39,864	41,153	
Real estate and rental and leasing	25,253	26,127	
Professional and technical services	46,612	45,910	
Management of companies and enterprises	48,913	46,085	
Administrative and waste services	19,910	20,602	
Educational services	32,082	32,862	
Health care and social assistance	28,784	29,552	
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	17,898	22,857	
Accommodation and food services	11,147	11,468	
Other services, except public administration Government	21,021	21,076	
	31,901	33,264	4.3

Table 3. Average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 by NAICS industry for all covered workers¹ by Mountain States

	Average an	Average annual wages	
State and Industry			change
	2001	2002	2001-02
Wyoming			
Private			
Total ³	\$27,630	\$28,293	2.4
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	22,245	22,215	
Mining	53,318	55,022	3.2
Construction	31,902		
Manufacturing	36,667		
Wholesale trade	36,745	36,976	0.6
Retail trade	18,718	19,306	3.1
Transportation and warehousing			
Utilities			
Information			
Finance and insurance	37,102	35,195	-5.1
Real estate and rental and leasing	22,422	24,344	8.6
Professional and technical services	33,615	36,491	8.6
Management of companies and enterprises	41,412	50,958	23.1
Administrative and waste services	19,963	19,449	-2.6
Educational services	19,953	26,001	30.3
Health care and social assistance	27,201	28,521	4.9
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	14,391	13,756	-4.4
Accommodation and food services	10,863	11,537	6.2
Other services, except public administration			
Government	29,362	31,131	6.0

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

³ Includes other industries, not shown separately.

⁻⁻ Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.