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Contact: Joe Jarvis 304.558.2660

The West Virginia worker earned an average of \$36,895 in 2009

The West Virginia worker earned an average of \$36,895 in 2009, according to statistics released by WorkForce West Virginia, a division of the West Virginia Department of Commerce. The average annual wage in the state rose by \$910, an increase of 2.5 percent from 2008. Average annual employment decreased to 691,921 from 709,575 in 2008, a decline of 17,654 or 2.5 percent. Only two major industries experienced employment growth over the year: Educational and health services (+2,637) and government (+2,117). The three industries with the highest declining employment were manufacturing (-5,812), trade, transportation, and utilities (-5,714), and construction (-4,948).

A survey of wages based on four-digit NAICS codes shows securities and commodity contracts brokerage firms paid the highest average annual wage among the state's industries with an average of \$103,000, followed by druggists' goods merchant wholesalers (\$87,605), power generation and supply (\$81,336), resin, rubber, and artificial fibers manufacturing (\$77,924), and basic chemical manufacturing (\$77,277).

Boone County continued to report the highest average annual wage at \$51,893, followed by Mingo (\$45,924), Putnam (\$43,097), Marshall (\$42,864), Wayne (\$41,862), Kanawha (\$40,547), Grant (\$40,494), Monongalia (\$39,522), Mason (\$39,507), and McDowell (\$39,344). Tucker County had the lowest annual average wage of \$23,776, followed by Wirt (\$24,176), Wetzel (\$25,854), Pocahontas (\$26,051), and Doddridge (\$26,315).

Only two counties experienced noticeable growth in average employment: Monongalia (+512) and Mineral (+179). West Virginia covered employers paid over \$25 billion in wages, a decrease of just over \$5.5 million or 0.2 percent from 2008.

Based on data that include all workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance programs, these statistics appear each year in the West Virginia Employment and Wages. Also included are data on average annual employment, average annual and weekly wages, and the number of employers by detailed industry for the state and each of its 55 counties. West Virginia Employment and Wages can be found online at www.workforcewv.org/lmi/WAGEDATA.HTM.