

Employment rises rapidly in two Middle Tennessee counties, but wages lag

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Two Middle Tennessee counties are among the fastest job producers in the country, according to a recent report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Among the 322 largest counties in the nation, Williamson County ranked third highest with 4.3 percent growth and Rutherford County sixth (4.0 percent growth) for December 2010-2011. Kern County California grew fastest at 5.3 percent. The U.S. average growth rate was 1.4 percent. Other large counties in Tennessee also experienced employment gains, with all but Hamilton growing faster than the U.S. average (table).

Although employment gained, average weekly wages fell in the fourth quarter, with the largest declines in Williamson and Shelby. All but Hamilton and Knox experienced wage declines greater than the U.S. average.

County	Employment December 2011 (thousands)	Employment Growth Rate (year-to-year %)	Ranking for Employment Growth Rate	Average weekly wage fourth quarter 2011	Growth of Weekly Wage (year to year %)	Ranking for Wage Growth
Davidson	429.9	2.3	52	\$ 1,022	-2.9	240
Hamilton	185.2	1.1	144	\$ 861	-0.2	45
Knox	222.1	1.9	83	\$ 842	-0.7	77
Rutherford	100.3	4.0	6	\$ 841	-2.2	195
Shelby	475.9	1.8	89	\$ 968	-3.7	278
Williamson	95.1	4.3	3	\$ 1,050	-6.7	317
Tennessee	2,654.9	2.1		\$ 858	-2.3	
United States	131,254.2	1.4		\$ 955	-1.7	

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages for December 2011.

Includes workers covered by the state unemployment insurance program.