

■ The nation's economy

Highest wage states in the East, lowest in South

BY STEPHEN OHLEMACHER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Americans have been migrating south and west for decades, but it appears they've been leaving some high-paying jobs behind. While there are many pockets of wealth in the South and West, the states with the highest wage earners line the East Coast, according to Census data released Tuesday. Oregon's average household income for 2003 was \$42,593, slightly below the national median. Washington County was the highest

at \$50,001 followed by Clackamas and Columbia counties.

The lowest three were Baker, Malheur and Wheeler counties with Wheeler the lowest at \$29,288.

Oregon's overall poverty rate of 12 percent fell about midway between the low in New Hampshire of 6.4 percent and the high in Mississippi of 18.3 percent.

Connecticut, with a median household income of \$56,409, supplanted New Jersey as the country's highest wage state in 2003, the most recent year available. New Jersey slid

to second, at \$56,356, followed by Maryland, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Mississippi had the lowest median income, at \$32,397. West Virginia, Arkansas, Louisiana and Montana rounded out the bottom five.

The median household income for the nation was \$43,318. That means half the nation's incomes were higher and half were lower.

The wage gap among counties was even more pronounced than the one for states.

Los Alamos County in New

Mexico, home of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, had the nation's highest median income, at \$93,089. It was followed by Douglas County in Colorado and Loudoun County in northern Virginia.

Buffalo County in South Dakota, home of the Crow Creek Indian Reservation, had the lowest, at \$17,003. It was followed by Owsley County in Kentucky and Ziebach County, also in South Dakota.

Most of the wealthiest counties were suburban, and nearly all the poorest ones were rural.

"This is a reflection of a poverty problem in non-metro areas," said Dean Jolliffe, an economist at the Department of Agriculture. "These are areas where there really isn't any economic development going on."

Jolliffe tracks "persistent poverty" counties, ones in which at least 20 percent of the population have lived below the poverty level for at least 30 years. There were 386 persistent poverty counties in 2000, and 340 were outside metropolitan areas.

None was in the Northeast. Most were in the South.

IN BRIEF

Kansas Subway owners say ad caused decrease in sales

TOPEKA, Kan. — Some owners of Subway restaurants in Topeka say they have lost customers after media reports of an advertisement at a Subway in Oregon that made fun of Kansas.

The sign, displayed sometime during the last year in the EMU Subway, touted a salmon sandwich offered in northern and northwest parts of the country. It said, "Another reason you're lucky not to live in Kansas."

Topeka residents Joe and Karen Davis saw the sign in Reedsport, Ore. in October and called The Topeka Capital-Journal last week after they did not receive any explanation or apology from the Subway corporation.

On Monday, Karen Davis said the couple still had not heard anything

from the national Subway corporation, but had talked to Jerry Desch, who operates 13 Subway franchises in Topeka and Holton as the owner of Victoria Sandwich Co.

Although the signs didn't appear in Kansas, Desch said Topeka Subway operators had lost customers over the promotion.

Desch said he contacted Subway's public relations department last week after seeing an article about the sign and is demanding an apology from the Subway corporation.

Although Subway headquarters had not explained who was responsible for the campaign, Desch said it likely was created by an advertising firm working with a regional Subway board. But the ads should have been approved by the corporation, he said.

Desch said the regional board, the advertising firm and the corporation all owe Kansas an apology.

—Emerald staff,
The Associated Press



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