

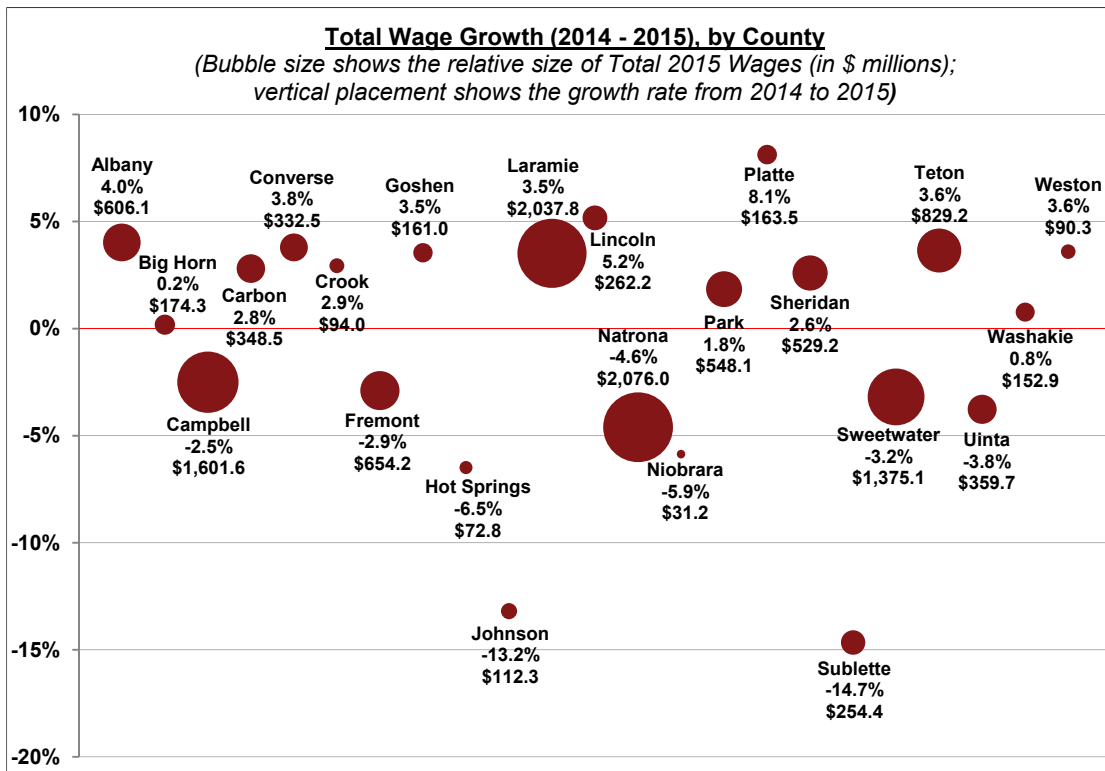
Community Builders, Inc. (CBI) is a Wyoming-based consulting firm that specializes in the development of businesses, organizations, and communities. Each monthly *CBI Focus* newsletter provides current economic data and analytical graphs for one of Wyoming's 23 counties (plus one covering the entire state). The *CBI Focus* newsletter archive, source notes, and data explanations are online at [www.consultCBI.com](http://www.consultCBI.com). CBI principal consultants are Bobbe Fitzhugh and Joe Coyne. Contact CBI at 873 Esterbrook Road, Douglas, WY 82633; email [Joe@consultCBI.com](mailto:Joe@consultCBI.com); or call (307) 359-1640. © 2016 Community Builders, Inc.



## Total Wages

CBI frequently uses two different measures of employment. The first employment measure is the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, which creates monthly *estimates* of the entire labor force and unemployment rate for workers residing in a particular county, using Census counts, population estimates, and Wyoming's unemployment insurance (UI) system.

The second measure, the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, tracks jobs by place of work. QCEW is a compilation of *actual* UI wage records filed by employers. Although QCEW data collection and reporting takes months to complete, and it only includes workers who have UI coverage, it compiles the actual number of employing units, employees, average weekly wages, and the total amount of wages paid in each county (not just an estimate).



Total wages data is relevant to anyone wanting to know how much income has been available in the local economy. Such earnings are a major component of per capita income calculations (which also include investments,

savings, employer-paid benefits, social security, and other types of income). The total wages in the chart above represent the total amount paid to all UI-covered employees in each county in Wyoming for all four quarters of 2015 (in \$ millions).

There are significant differences in the amount of total wages paid in Wyoming counties, as seen by the wide range of bubble sizes in the graph above. Campbell, Laramie, Natrona, and Sweetwater Counties each had more than \$1.3 billion in total wages during 2015. Collectively, those four counties represent 54.2% of the total wages paid statewide. In contrast, there are four counties whose total wages are less than \$100 million for all of 2015: Crook, Hot Springs, Niobrara, and Weston Counties.



Growth rates for 2015 total wages (compared to 2014) are also widely divergent across the state, ranging from -14.7% (Sublette County) to 8.1% (Platte County). Laramie County added the most total wages (\$69.3 million more). As a whole, Wyoming lost \$135.8 million in total wages, representing a negative growth rate of -1.0%. Total wages statewide dropped to less than \$7.1 billion dollars for calendar year 2015.

Fourth Quarter growth in total wages, comparing 4Q15 to 3Q15, was strong (5.1%), but not as strong as previous 4<sup>th</sup> quarters. Statewide, 4Q15 wages grew by \$164.8 million to more than \$3.4 billion. Weston County led all counties for quarterly growth on a percentage basis (15.4%), and Natrona County led all counties in adding the most actual wages (\$40.5 million), compared to total wages in 3Q15. Carbon County lost the most ground: \$13.3 million less total wages (-13.4%) in 4Q15 compared to 3Q15.



**Community Builders, Inc.** (CBI) can provide you with much deeper analysis of the topics presented in this newsletter, and many others as well. We have 60+ years of experience with community and economic development, providing business plans, feasibility studies, grant writing, strategic planning, project development, facilitation, and other services.

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