Higher average pay, fewer covered jobs.

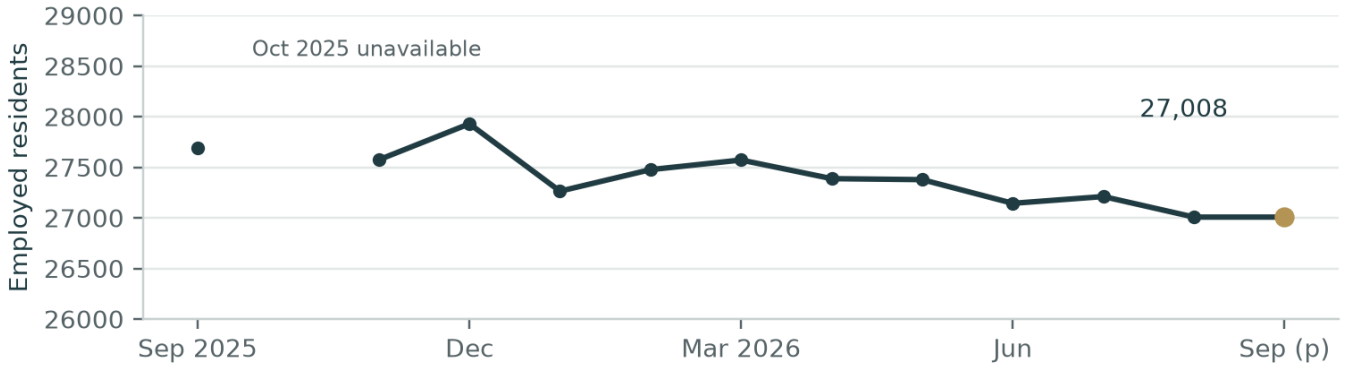
November 3, 2026 | Public-source economic context | Lauderdale County, Mississippi

Lauderdale County's first-quarter average weekly wage rose to **$990.00** in 2026, from **$922.00** a year earlier. Its covered workplace jobs in March declined by **133 (-0.43%)**. Higher average pay and fewer jobs can coexist. Neither measure, by itself, establishes stronger tenant demand or higher real estate values.

A later resident snapshot also needs context

September's unemployment rate was lower, but so was the number of employed residents. These are county resident estimates, not a count of jobs at Meridian workplaces.

Resident measure	September 2025	September 2026 (p)	Change
Unemployment rate	3.80%	3.50%	-0.30 percentage points
Employed residents	27,691	27,008	-683 (-2.47%)
Unemployed residents	1,080	973	-107
Civilian labor force	28,771	27,981	-790 (-2.75%)



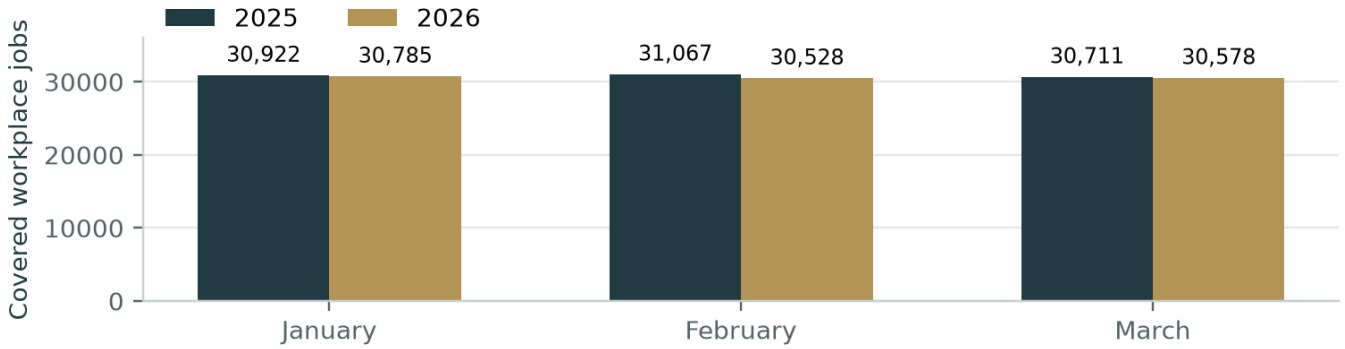
Source: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). Not seasonally adjusted. (p) = preliminary. October 2025 remains blank because BLS reports the observation unavailable following the 2025 lapse in appropriations; the line does not connect across the gap.

The rate is unemployed people divided by the labor force. Here, the labor force and both its employed and unemployed components fell. The estimates do not identify migration, retirement or other causes. A lower rate alone does not establish an expanding local customer base.

More reporting locations, fewer jobs.

Covered establishments increased from **1,860 to 1,897 (+1.99%)** in the first quarter, while March covered jobs fell from **30,711 to 30,578 (-0.43%)**. Establishments are reporting locations, not unique firms. Their increase does not establish that 37 new businesses opened or that more commercial floor area was occupied.

Measure and period	2025	2026 (p)	Change
Covered workplace jobs, March	30,711	30,578	-133 (-0.43%)
Private jobs within that total, March	25,396	25,251	-145 (-0.57%)
Average weekly wage, first quarter	$922.00	$990.00	+$68.00 (7.38%)
Covered establishments, first quarter	1,860	1,897	+37 (+1.99%)



Source: BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), all industries, total covered ownership. Private jobs are a subset; do not add them to the total. Current-year data are preliminary. First quarter 2026 was the latest available QCEW quarter as of November 3; its scheduled release was August 28.

Keep the measures and periods separate

LAUS counts employed residents once per person, including those who work outside the county. QCEW counts covered jobs at county workplaces, including jobs held by commuters. Even in the same March comparison, employed residents fell from **28,190 to 27,572 (-2.19%)**. Both employment measures were lower, but their different coverage and counting rules prevent subtracting them to measure commuting flows. March and September are separate snapshots, not a continuous county jobs series.

The **7.38%** increase in average weekly wage is nominal. It is not an inflation-adjusted increase or a raise for every worker. Workforce mix, hours and bonuses can affect the average. These data do not identify the cause of the wage change.

Connect the context to the property.

For lenders, owners and commercial real estate colleagues, the practical next step is to test the property's actual income and users. County averages can guide questions; they cannot supply the answers about an individual tenant, building or site.

Property category	Evidence that would help the decision
Retail and restaurant premises	Review supported tenant business indicators, the customer trade area, lease obligations and turnover. Higher county average wages do not measure spending at one location.
Office	Review occupancy, lease expirations, tenant credit and actual space needs. An all-industry county job total does not measure office employment or demand for a particular building.
Industrial and flex	Verify the operator's activity, committed expansions or contractions, building utility and competing space. Establishment counts do not measure industrial absorption.
Land	Check permitted uses, access, utilities, physical constraints, feasibility and comparable land evidence. County employment does not establish highest and best use or a land-price adjustment.

What this edition establishes

Lauderdale County had higher first-quarter average weekly pay, fewer March covered jobs and, later, fewer September employed residents despite a lower unemployment rate. The evidence supports careful property-specific investigation. It does not establish a rent, vacancy, absorption, commercial sale-price trend, capitalization rate or numerical appraisal adjustment.

Sources, calculations and limits

1. BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics: Lauderdale County series LAUCN280750000000003-006; September 2025 and September 2026 plus monthly employed-resident context. Definitions and method. September 2026 is preliminary.

2. QCEW first-quarter 2025 county CSV and first-quarter 2026 county CSV: area 28075, all industries, total covered and private ownership. Technical note; release calendar. Current-year data are preliminary. All public inputs were retrieved November 3, 2026.

Percentage change = 100 x (current / prior - 1). Changes use published data-slice levels, not an adjusted news-release growth series. Dollars and percentages display two decimals; source rates have one decimal and source wages whole dollars. The extra zeros add no precision. Full ratios, public rows, source hashes and the missing-month flag are retained in the accompanying data file.

Lauderdale County is the geography throughout, not Meridian's municipal boundary or a property trade area. This November public-source edition contains no MLS-derived or confidential assignment data. Its latest reference periods are September 2026 for resident labor and first quarter 2026 for workplace data; it is not an October or November property-market census.