

It's a good time to be a truck driver or bank teller

By John Pletz July 05, 2018

With unemployment **drifting below 4 percent**, some of the strongest wage growth is at the lower end of the job market.

Chicago is starting to perk up, although it lags the national average and continues to be the weakest among 10 of the largest cities in the country, following a pattern that dates back several months, **according to employment website Glassdoor**.

Median pay nationally rose 1.6 percent in June from a year ago, the best monthly gain this year. In Chicago, paychecks rose 1.5 percent, the same as Atlanta and just behind Boston's 1.6 percent. Pay is rising fastest in Philadelphia (2.7 percent), San Francisco (2.6 percent) and Seattle (2.4 percent).

The biggest raises went to bank tellers, truck drivers and warehouse workers, who are getting base pay between 7 percent and 8 percent higher than a year ago, according to Glassdoor. Restaurant cooks, baristas and bartenders also have seen large jumps in pay recently.

The pattern has been consistent for several months as it becomes harder for service employers at the bottom of the food chain to attract and retain workers when other companies are desperate for talent.

Pay for jobs such as truck drivers and warehouse workers **continues to get a lift from the rise in e-commerce**, as well as the tightening overall labor supply.

Some of the highest-paying jobs also are posting above-average increases, including pharmacists (up 3 percent, to \$128,311), software solutions architects (up 4 percent, to \$105,070) and tax managers (up 5 percent, to \$97,213).

Overall, Chicago wages have been inching back up from a low point in the first quarter, when paychecks were flat, while nationally, wages were rising about 1 percent. Wage gains in the Chicago metro area last year were mostly in the middle of the 10 large metros tracked by Glassdoor.

Pressure on wages in Chicago is unlikely to let up. The fourth of five annual increases in the minimum wage for workers in the city took effect July 1, taking the rate to \$12 an hour. It will climb to \$13 next year and then increase with inflation thereafter. Minimum wages in San Francisco and Seattle have reached \$15 an hour

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