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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR ATLANTA—FEBRUARY 2009

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Atlanta increased 1.1 percent over the two months ending in February to a level of 199.190 (1982-84=100), not seasonally adjusted, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that higher costs for apparel, transportation, and housing were partially offset by decreases in medical care and food and beverages. For the 12 months ending in February 2009, the CPI-U for Atlanta decreased 2.4 percent.

Over the two months, food costs declined 1.0 percent, while energy costs increased 5.7 percent. Excluding food and energy, the CPI-U for Atlanta rose 0.9 percent in the January-February pricing period. Since February 2008, food costs in the Atlanta area rose 2.8 percent while energy costs declined 17.3 percent. Excluding food and energy costs, the CPI-U for Atlanta declined 1.0 percent over the year.

Table A. Percent changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for Atlanta by expenditure category (not seasonally adjusted).

Expenditure category	Percentage change	
	Over 12 months since February 2008	Over 2 months since December 2008
All items	-2.4	1.1
Food and beverages	2.8	-0.9
Housing	0.1	0.5
Apparel	-2.4	17.7
Transportation	-14.5	2.6
Medical care	-1.0	-2.9
Recreation 1/	-6.2	1.9
Education and communication 1/	2.7	-0.1
Other goods and services	-5.7	1.0

1/ Index on a December 1997=100 base.

Among the major index groups, apparel costs increased 17.7 percent over the two months. Since February 2008, apparel costs decreased 2.4 percent.

The transportation index increased 2.6 percent during the January-February pricing period, as motor fuel prices rose 8.8 percent. Over the year, transportation costs decreased 14.5 percent, dominated by a 38.1-percent decline in motor fuel costs.

The housing index increased 0.5 percent in the January-February pricing period. The index for fuels and utilities increased 3.0 percent over the two months, as costs for utility (piped) gas service increased 10.3 percent and electricity costs rose 0.4 percent. Costs for household furnishings and operations increased 1.1 percent in the two-month pricing period. The shelter index, which measures changes in the cost for rent of primary residence, lodging away from home, owners' equivalent rent of primary residence, and tenants' and household insurance, was unchanged over the two months. Housing costs were little changed over the year, inching up 0.1 percent, as lower shelter costs (-1.5 percent) were offset by higher costs for fuels and utilities (7.6 percent) and household furnishings and operations (2.4 percent).

The index for recreation increased 1.9 percent over the two months. Since last year, recreation costs have declined 6.2 percent; the seventh consecutive annual decrease.

During the January-February pricing period, the other goods and services index (which includes tobacco and smoking products, personal care products and services, and miscellaneous personal goods) rose 1.0 percent. The other goods and services index decreased 5.7 percent over the year.

The remaining three indexes declined over the 2 month pricing period. Over the two months, medical care declined 2.9 percent, decreasing 1.0 percent over the year.

The index for food and beverages in the Atlanta area decreased 0.9 percent in the January-February pricing period. Over the two months, costs for food at home and food away from home both fell 1.0 percent. The index measuring alcoholic beverages increased 0.8 percent over the same period. Since February 2008, the food and beverages index rose 2.8 percent. Over the year, costs for food at home and costs for food away from home increased 2.9 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively. The alcoholic beverages index rose 1.7 percent over the year.

Over the two months, the education and communication index inched down 0.1 percent. Over the year, the education and communication index rose 2.7 percent.

Consumer Price Index for the South and Miami-Fort Lauderdale

Consumer price indexes are published for the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area and the South (which includes the Atlanta and Miami-Fort Lauderdale areas). For the two months ending in February, consumer prices increased 0.9 percent in the South and 1.0 percent in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area. Over the past 12 months, the all items index for the South inched up 0.1 percent, while the Miami-Fort Lauderdale index increased 0.7 percent.

Technical Notes

The Consumer Price Index for Atlanta is published bi-monthly. Prior to 1998, Atlanta data were available for only the first and second halves of the year and as an annual average. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has updated the consumption expenditure weights in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) to the 2003-04 period. The updated expenditure weights for this index replace the 2001-2002 weights that were introduced with the January 2004 CPI release. As originally announced by BLS in December 1998, CPI expenditure weights will continue to be updated at two-year intervals.

The CPI program has completed its conversion to Computer Assisted Data Collection (CADC). Due to the efficiencies gained from conversion to CADC, BLS has extended data collection to cover the entire month, beginning with data for January 2004. CPI data collection is scheduled in terms of business days – weekdays excluding holidays. Formerly, data collection covered three pricing periods, each comprising six business days in most months and five days in November and December. Consequently, the last day of scheduled data collection was usually the 18th business day of the month. This allowed time during the end of the month for the mailing of paper schedules back to the Washington Office and the data entry of the information on these schedules. Starting in January 2004, the three pricing periods now have variable lengths, between six and eight business days long. The third pricing period normally will end on the last business day of the month.

Local area CPI indexes are by-products of the national CPI program. Because each local index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is, therefore, subject to substantially more sampling and measurement error than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. The Bureau of Labor Statistics strongly urges users to consider adopting the national average CPI for use in escalator clauses.

We encourage users interested in learning more about changes to the CPI to contact the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Information on the Consumer Price Index and other surveys are available on our web site at www.bls.gov. Current and historical BLS data are also posted on our Internet page at www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm. If you have additional questions, you can contact the Atlanta information office directly by dialing (404) 893-4222. Information from the Consumer Price Index program is available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200, Federal Relay Services: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers and Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, Atlanta, Georgia, (1982-84=100), not seasonally adjusted

Item and group	All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)			Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)		
	Index	Percent change from		Index	Percent change from	
	Feb. 2009	Feb. 2008	Dec. 2008	Feb. 2009	Feb. 2008	Dec. 2008
All items	199.190	-2.4	1.1	197.528	-2.9	1.1
All items (1967 = 100)	600.696	-	-	597.253	-	-
Food and beverages	219.964	2.8	-0.9	217.220	2.9	-0.6
Food	228.822	2.8	-1.0	224.140	3.0	-0.7
Food at home	222.143	2.9	-1.0	214.188	2.8	-1.1
Food away from home	240.261	2.7	-1.0	241.419	3.2	-0.4
Alcoholic beverages	140.868	1.7	0.8	140.227	1.7	1.3
Housing	201.067	0.1	0.5	198.392	-0.1	0.6
Shelter	215.155	-1.5	0.0	208.868	-1.7	0.0
Rent of primary residence (1)	217.491	-2.3	0.6	217.491	-2.3	0.6
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2)	211.786	-1.9	-0.4	197.138	-1.9	-0.4
Fuels and utilities	247.851	7.6	3.0	245.368	7.7	2.9
Household energy	225.348	6.9	3.7	221.822	6.9	3.6
Gas (piped) and electricity (1)	225.197	7.3	3.8	222.092	7.3	3.7
Electricity (1)	180.287	6.2	0.4	180.285	6.2	0.4
Utility (piped) gas service (1)	306.666	9.3	10.3	306.668	9.3	10.3
Household furnishings and operations	130.637	2.4	1.1	136.694	1.6	1.6
Apparel	124.942	-2.4	17.7	127.088	-4.3	16.9
Transportation	156.916	-14.5	2.6	153.372	-17.1	2.4
Private transportation	155.832	-15.3	3.3	151.069	-17.8	2.9
Motor fuel	163.648	-38.1	8.8	163.582	-38.1	8.9
Gasoline (all types)	161.463	-38.4	11.0	161.466	-38.4	11.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular (3)	156.954	-39.7	12.0	156.949	-39.7	12.0
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (3) (4)	199.723	-36.7	9.1	199.723	-36.7	9.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium (3)	171.814	-34.0	8.2	171.806	-34.0	8.2
Medical care	318.289	-1.0	-2.9	313.804	-0.8	-2.8
Recreation (5)	108.451	-6.2	1.9	104.635	-4.7	1.2
Education and communication (5)	115.255	2.7	-0.1	112.782	2.7	0.0
Other goods and services	292.216	-5.7	1.0	330.370	-1.7	1.2
Commodities	160.054	-6.0	2.8	163.633	-7.6	2.7
Services	237.510	-0.3	0.2	235.830	-0.2	0.3
All items less shelter	195.594	-3.0	1.8	197.233	-3.7	1.9
All items less medical care	192.047	-2.5	1.3	191.051	-3.0	1.3
Energy	178.232	-17.3	5.7	178.537	-17.3	5.7
All items less energy	201.768	-0.5	0.7	199.584	-0.7	0.6
All items less food and energy	197.944	-1.0	0.9	195.685	-1.3	0.8

Footnotes

(1) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(2) Index is on a November 1982=100 base.

(3) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(4) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

(5) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.