

# News

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**Bureau of Labor Statistics**

**Philadelphia, Pa. 19106**

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Web site: [www.bls.gov/ro3/](http://www.bls.gov/ro3/)

Information: Gerald Perrins  
(215) 597-3282

Media Contact: Sheila Watkins  
(215) 861-5600

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## **PHILADELPHIA AREA CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: JULY 2009**

### **Largest Over-the-Year Decline in Energy Prices since Inception of Index**

Philadelphia area prices for food at home, shelter, and energy all rose over the month, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that despite four consecutive one-month advances, energy prices dropped 24.2 percent from July 2008 to July 2009—the largest 12-month decrease since the inception of the index in December 1977. (See table 1.)

The food at home index increased 0.2 percent since June, led by higher prices for citrus fruits. Moderating the advance were lower prices for a number of items such as snacks and uncooked ground beef. Prices for food at home declined 1.5 percent over the last 12 months.

The Philadelphia area food at home index stood at 215.243 on the 1982-84 reference base, which means that grocery shoppers in the Philadelphia area would have had to spend \$21.52 last month for a market basket of food items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

Shelter prices increased 1.1 percent in July due in large part to higher prices for owners' equivalent rent of primary residence, which rose 1.0 percent over the month and 2.0 percent over the year. Prices for the other published component of the shelter index, rent of primary residence, were 0.5 percent higher since June and 1.3 percent higher since last July. The overall shelter index rose 1.3 percent over the last 12 months.

The Philadelphia area shelter index stood at 280.881 on the 1982-84 reference base, which means that local residents would have had to spend \$28.09 last month for various types of shelter that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

Energy prices rose for the fourth consecutive month, up 14.1 percent since March and 0.6 percent since June. The recent one-month advance was largely due to higher gasoline prices, which increased 1.0 percent since June but were 35.7 percent below their year-ago levels. Higher prices for electricity (0.4 percent) and propane, kerosene, and firewood also contributed to the recent rise in energy prices. Over the year, electricity prices advanced 0.5 percent. Utility (piped) gas service prices were unchanged since June, but fell 18.3 percent over the last 12 months.

The Philadelphia area energy index stood at 205.602 on the 1982-84 reference base, which means that energy users in the Philadelphia area would have had to spend \$20.56 last month for a group of energy items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

The Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties in New Jersey; New Castle County in Delaware; and Cecil County in Maryland.

**Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md. (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)**

| Expenditure category                                 | Indexes     |              |              | Percent change from- |             |              |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|
|  | May<br>2009 | June<br>2009 | July<br>2009 | July<br>2008         | May<br>2009 | June<br>2009 |
| All items  | -           | 223.810      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Food and beverages                                   | -           | 205.990      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Food   | -           | 205.572      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Food at home   | 214.613     | 214.757      | 215.243      | -1.5                 | 0.3         | 0.2          |
| Food away from home                                  | -           | 187.892      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Alcoholic beverages                                  | -           | 208.969      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Housing  | -           | 233.142      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Shelter  | 276.980     | 277.901      | 280.881      | 1.3                  | 1.4         | 1.1          |
| Rent of primary residence (1)                        | 257.634     | 257.720      | 258.974      | 1.3                  | 0.5         | 0.5          |
| Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2) | 282.574     | 283.604      | 286.334      | 2.0                  | 1.3         | 1.0          |
| Fuels and utilities                                  | -           | 210.597      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Household energy                                     | 184.214     | 190.778      | 191.251      | -12.6                | 3.8         | 0.2          |
| Gas (piped) and electricity (1)                      | 203.657     | 210.632      | 211.205      | -5.6                 | 3.7         | 0.3          |
| Electricity (1)                                      | 195.042     | 209.611      | 210.405      | 0.5                  | 7.9         | 0.4          |
| Utility (piped) gas service (1)                      | 220.707     | 208.014      | 208.004      | -18.3                | -5.8        | 0.0          |
| Household furnishings and operations                 | -           | 126.104      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Apparel  | -           | 97.004       | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Transportation                                       | -           | 185.695      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Private transportation                               | -           | 183.844      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Motor fuel   | 197.804     | 230.657      | 233.230      | -36.0                | 17.9        | 1.1          |
| Gasoline (all types)                                 | 194.948     | 227.985      | 230.363      | -35.7                | 18.2        | 1.0          |
| Gasoline, unleaded regular (3)                       | 194.332     | 228.274      | 230.623      | -36.3                | 18.7        | 1.0          |
| Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (3) (4)                  | 191.112     | 223.502      | 225.993      | -34.8                | 18.3        | 1.1          |
| Gasoline, unleaded premium (3)                       | 188.917     | 216.259      | 218.460      | -33.5                | 15.6        | 1.0          |
| Medical care   | -           | 426.589      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Recreation (5)                                       | -           | 122.619      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Education and communication (5)                      | -           | 127.960      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Other goods and services                             | -           | 410.245      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| <b>Commodity and service group</b>                   |             |              |              |                      |             |              |
| Commodities  | -           | 166.282      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Commodities less food and beverages                  | -           | 143.285      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Nondurables less food and beverages                  | -           | 172.976      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Durables   | -           | 110.189      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Services   | -           | 283.107      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| <b>Special aggregate indexes</b>                     |             |              |              |                      |             |              |
| All items less medical care                          | -           | 215.261      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| All items less shelter                               | -           | 206.869      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Commodities less food                                | -           | 145.691      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Nondurables  | -           | 190.418      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Nondurables less food                                | -           | 174.995      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Services less rent of shelter (2)                    | -           | 295.597      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Services less medical care services                  | -           | 271.534      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| Energy   | 188.147     | 204.359      | 205.602      | -24.2                | 9.3         | 0.6          |
| All items less energy                                | -           | 227.588      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |
| All items less food and energy                       | -           | 233.677      | -            | -                    | -           | -            |

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

2 Indexes on a December 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.