



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Chicago, Ill. 60604

General Information: (312) 353-1880
Media Contact: Paul LaPorte
(312) 353-1138
www.bls.gov/ro5

FOR RELEASE:
7:30 A.M. CT
Wednesday, April 15, 2009

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX
CHICAGO-GARY-KENOSHA, IL-IN-WI CMSA
MARCH 2009**

The Chicago-Gary-Kenosha Consumer Price Index was unchanged in March, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics announced today. The Chicago area Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for March was 207.462 (1982-84=100). Over the past year, the Chicago area CPI-U was down 1.9 percent compared with a 4.5 percent gain for the 12-month period ending in March 2008.

Jay A. Mousa, regional commissioner for the Bureau in Chicago, said that offsetting price movement among major consumer expenditure categories resulted in no change in the overall items CPI-U from February to March. Increases were recorded in the components for transportation, apparel, medical care, education and communication, and other goods and services. These gains were offset by declines in the components for housing, food and beverages, and recreation.

The housing component declined 0.9 percent in March. The heavily-weighted shelter index fell 0.2 percent while the fuels and utilities index dropped 5.7 percent. Within the fuels and utilities category, utility (piped) gas, commonly known as natural gas, fell 14.3 percent and electricity fell 1.4 percent. Prices for household furnishings and operations fell 0.2 percent over the month. Since March 2008, the housing component in the Chicago area declined 2.4 percent with the shelter index falling 1.8 percent, the fuels and utilities index declining 9.1 percent, and the household

Table A. Percent Changes in the CPI-U, Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI
(not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure Category	Changes from preceding month							12 mo. ended Mar. '09
	2008				2009			
	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
All items	-0.2	-1.0	-2.0	-1.5	0.8	-0.1	.0	-1.9
Food & beverages	.1	.1	-.8	.2	2.1	-.9	-.4	3.7
Housing	-.7	-.9	-.1	-.6	.1	-.4	-.9	-2.4
Apparel	6.2	-.4	-1.3	-6.4	-1.7	3.6	6.9	2.2
Transportation	-2.0	-4.8	-11.1	-7.4	3.6	.0	.3	-14.0
Medical care	.6	2.6	.1	.0	-.5	.0	.7	2.9
Recreation	.0	-.1	-1.1	-.2	.1	.6	-.2	-1.1
Education & communication	1.1	.6	.0	.4	.2	-.2	.1	3.7
Other goods & services	.3	-.4	-.6	.3	.5	.3	3.5	5.4

furnishings and operations index increasing 1.0 percent. Within the fuels and utilities index, natural gas prices fell 33.1 percent since March 2008 and electricity prices rose 12.2 percent over the year.

The food and beverages component decreased 0.4 percent in March. Prices for grocery food items (food at home) declined 1.2 percent while the cost of dining out (food away from home) rose 0.3 percent. Alcoholic beverage prices were 0.5 percent higher. Compared with a year ago, food and beverage prices in the Chicago area were 3.7 percent higher with prices for food at home increasing 2.1 percent and prices for food away from home rising 6.0 percent.

The transportation component rose 0.3 percent in March primarily due to a 3.4 percent increase in gasoline prices. The latest increase in gasoline prices follows a 0.3 percent decline in February and a 13.6 percent increase in January. Over the year, pump prices in the Chicago area were down 37.9 percent. During the previous 12-month period, gasoline prices in the Chicago area rose 29.7 percent.

Apparel prices are typically higher in February and March as new spring merchandise replaces post-holiday sales items. This March was no exception with apparel prices increasing 6.9 percent, in-line with the 5.5 and 6.0 percent increases from February to March in 2007 and 2008, respectively. On an annual basis, apparel prices were up 2.2 percent. This increase marks a change from the previous two 12-month periods where apparel prices fell 5.1 percent (March 2007-08) and 2.4 percent (March 2006-07).

The other goods and services component rose 3.5 percent in March. Higher prices for tobacco and smoking products contributed to this increase. Over the year, this component was up 5.4 percent. During the previous 12-month period, the other goods and services component rose 2.2 percent.

The cost of medical care rose 0.7 percent over the month. For the year, the medical care component was up 2.9 percent. During the previous March-March period, medical care costs in the Chicago area rose 5.8 percent.

Recreation costs fell 0.2 percent during March. For the year, recreation costs were down 1.1 percent. This compares with a 4.7 percent increase during the prior year.

The education and communication component edged up 0.1 percent. For the year, education and communication prices were 3.7 percent higher. In the previous March-March period, this component rose 4.9 percent.

#

Scheduled release date for the April 2009 CPI:
Friday, May 15, 2009

CPI HOTLINE SERVICE PROVIDES LATEST INDEXES 24 HOURS A DAY

The all items CPI-U and CPI-W for the U.S. City Average, the Midwest region, and the Chicago area are available to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the Bureau's CPI Hotline service. This recorded message also provides percent changes from the prior period and from a year earlier, as well as the scheduled release date for the next CPI issuance. The Hotline number in Chicago is (312) 353-1880, menu option 2.

BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE CPI

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 87 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 32 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 50,000 housing units and approximately 23,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index. Prices of food, fuels, and a few other items are obtained every month in all 87 locations. Prices of most other commodities and services are collected every month in the three largest geographic areas and every other month in other areas. Prices of most goods and services are obtained by personal visits of the Bureau's trained representatives.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Separate indexes are also published by size of city, by region of the country, for cross-classifications of regions and population-size classes, and for 27 local areas. Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices among cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65.

For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch17_a.htm.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods

Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	Jan. 2009	Feb. 2009	Mar. 2009	Mar. 2008	Jan. 2009	Feb. 2009
Expenditure category						
All items	207.616	207.367	207.462	-1.9	-0.1	0.0
All items (1967=100)	620.270	619.527	619.811	-	-	-
Food and beverages	217.317	215.468	214.565	3.7	-1.3	-.4
Food	216.494	214.714	213.596	3.9	-1.3	-.5
Food at home	222.360	218.531	215.941	2.1	-2.9	-1.2
Food away from home	203.795	204.339	204.886	6.0	.5	.3
Alcoholic beverages	228.829	226.293	227.429	2.6	-.6	.5
Housing	215.760	214.973	213.128	-2.4	-1.2	-.9
Shelter	259.878	259.478	258.969	-1.8	-.3	-.2
Rent of primary residence ¹	268.067	268.116	267.297	1.6	-.3	-.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{1 2}	262.717	262.819	262.907	-.8	.1	.0
Fuels and utilities	189.575	186.001	175.394	-9.1	-7.5	-5.7
Household energy	170.499	168.676	156.874	-12.2	-8.0	-7.0
Gas (piped) and electricity ¹	174.263	172.437	160.296	-11.9	-8.0	-7.0
Electricity ¹	147.255	149.125	147.060	12.2	-.1	-1.4
Utility (piped) gas service ¹	200.382	192.614	165.047	-33.1	-17.6	-14.3
Household furnishings and operations	108.651	108.494	108.289	1.0	-.3	-.2
Apparel	87.276	90.413	96.677	2.2	10.8	6.9
Transportation	159.049	159.070	159.482	-14.0	.3	.3
Private transportation	155.289	155.427	155.990	-14.8	.5	.4
Motor fuel	171.709	171.116	176.679	-38.0	2.9	3.3
Gasoline (all types)	170.054	169.482	175.322	-37.9	3.1	3.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular ³	167.090	166.112	171.907	-38.5	2.9	3.5
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{3 4}	177.374	178.072	184.382	-37.2	4.0	3.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium ³	165.515	165.573	170.637	-36.1	3.1	3.1
Medical care	370.388	370.487	372.987	2.9	.7	.7
Recreation ⁵	110.985	111.664	111.467	-1.1	.4	-.2
Education and communication ⁵	135.596	135.376	135.535	3.7	.0	.1
Other goods and services	333.941	335.021	346.709	5.4	3.8	3.5
Commodity and service group						
All items	207.616	207.367	207.462	-1.9	-.1	.0
Commodities	157.636	157.545	159.039	-3.7	.9	.9
Commodities less food and beverages	126.159	126.870	129.413	-8.6	2.6	2.0
Nondurables less food and beverages	154.212	156.402	162.323	-10.4	5.3	3.8
Durables	98.630	97.958	97.330	-5.8	-1.3	-.6
Services	255.254	254.843	253.449	-.7	-.7	-.5
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	200.402	200.142	200.149	-2.2	-.1	.0
All items less shelter	190.163	189.967	190.276	-2.0	.1	.2
Commodities less food	130.239	130.816	133.298	-7.9	2.3	1.9
Nondurables	186.602	186.840	189.484	-3.1	1.5	1.4
Nondurables less food	159.813	161.612	167.128	-9.1	4.6	3.4
Services less rent of shelter ²	263.410	262.970	260.563	.6	-1.1	-.9
Services less medical care services	246.385	245.948	244.316	-1.1	-.8	-.7
Energy	168.040	166.745	162.160	-25.8	-3.5	-2.7
All items less energy	213.013	212.869	213.437	.6	.2	.3
All items less food and energy	213.047	213.230	214.138	-.1	.5	.4

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 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.