

News

United States
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of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEXES FOR ENERGY, FOOD AT HOME, AND SHELTER DALLAS-FORT WORTH, FEBRUARY 2009

Energy Prices Flat in February Ending Six Months of Decline

Energy prices in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area were unchanged during February, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that prior to February the energy index had experienced six consecutive months of decline. Costs for food at home rose 0.4 percent during the month, while the shelter index slipped 0.2 percent. These data are based on the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

Opposing movements in motor fuel prices and home energy costs left the total energy index unchanged in February. An 8.3-percent gain in the gasoline index marked the second consecutive month of increase and the largest monthly advance since May of last year. The average price for a gallon of gasoline in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area stood at \$1.801 in February 2009. In contrast, the index for household energy fell in February as prices for utility (piped) gas service dropped 16.6 percent and electricity charges fell 3.2 percent. Despite these monthly declines, household energy costs were still higher than a year ago. A 9.0-percent annual increase in electricity charges countered a 19.6-percent drop in natural gas costs placing the household energy index 4.9 percent above a year ago. However, combined with a 37.6-percent annual drop in gasoline prices, these movements left total energy costs 17.8 percent below a year ago.

The index for food at home rose 0.4 percent in February, matching the 0.4-percent increase in January. Over the month, increases were noted for eggs, frozen and freeze dried prepared foods, and snacks. These advances were partially offset by declines for beef and veal, selected fresh fruits, and lettuce. During the last year, grocery prices overall rose 5.1 percent. The food at home index (CPI-U, 1982-84=100) for Dallas-Fort Worth stood at 203.703 in February, meaning that a typical basket of grocery items priced at \$100.00 in 1982-84 cost area consumers \$203.70 last month.

Dallas-Fort Worth Energy, Food At Home, and Shelter CPIs – February 2009 (Continued)

The shelter index slipped 0.2 percent in February after increasing 0.3 percent in January. The indexes for renters' costs (rent of primary residence) and homeowners' costs (owners' equivalent rent of primary residence) both edged up 0.1 percent, but a larger decline in costs for shelter away from home (hotels and motels) drove the shelter index downward for the month. Over the year, renters' costs advanced 4.8 percent and homeowners' costs rose 4.3 percent. A slower annual increase in hotel and motel charges held overall shelter costs to a 3.7-percent gain.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Henderson, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, and Tarrant Counties. Local area CPI indexes are by-products of the national CPI program. Because each local area index is a small subset of the national index, the sample size is smaller and therefore subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar.

Next Release Date: The March 2009 Consumer Price Index for Dallas-Fort Worth for All Items will be released on April 15, 2009.