

News

United
States
Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Boston, MA 02203

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USDL-09-066

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For release: Wednesday, March 18, 2009

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Consumer Price Index for Food and Energy Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT February 2009

Energy costs in the Boston metropolitan area rose slightly for the second consecutive month, up 1.4 percent in February 2009, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Before edging up 0.5 percent in January, energy prices in Boston fell 37.5 percent between the peak level in July and December 2008. The February increase was caused mainly by higher gasoline prices and was partially offset by lower prices for utility (piped) gas. Regional Commissioner Denis M. McSweeney noted that consumers in the Boston area faced energy prices in February 2009 that were 19.0 percent lower than those the year before.

Over the month, the index for gasoline (all types) rose 8.0 percent. The price of a gallon of gasoline in Boston increased 14 cents to \$1.907 in February. Despite the monthly increase, Boston area drivers have seen prices at the pump fall by 37.1 percent over the year.

In the other energy categories, the price of utility (piped) gas service declined 6.8 percent over the month and electricity prices were unchanged. Over the year, utility (piped) gas prices decreased 3.4 percent while electricity rose by 11.4 percent. In February, the Boston energy index on the 1982-84 base was 190.887, meaning that Boston area consumers would have to spend \$19.09 for selected energy items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

The cost of groceries, as measured by the food at home index, fell 0.7 percent over the month, after decreasing 0.5 percent in January. Lower prices for milk, fresh fish and seafood, and poultry contributed to the over-the-month decline in grocery prices. Over the year, grocery prices rose 5.1 percent.

NOTE: Local area CPI indexes are the by-products of the national CPI program. Since each local area index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is therefore subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than that for the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal factors. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility compared with the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. Additional information is available from the BLS Internet Web site at www.bls.gov/cpi or by calling the Boston Economic Analysis and Information office at 617-565-2327.

Free email subscription service! To receive the most recent monthly Consumer Price Indexes for the U.S. and Northeast, and bimonthly indexes for the Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT metropolitan area, please subscribe at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/list.htm> and select the notification titled [New England CPI Summary \(Boston\)](#). Boston Consumer Price Index for March will be released on Wednesday, April 15, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

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

Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	Dec. 2008	Jan. 2009	Feb. 2009	Feb. 2008	Dec. 2008	Jan. 2009
Expenditure category						
All items	-	230.806	-	-	-	-
All items (1967=100)	-	670.844	-	-	-	-
Food and beverages	-	230.448	-	-	-	-
Food	-	230.684	-	-	-	-
Food at home	226.234	225.159	223.590	5.1	-1.2	-0.7
Food away from home	-	241.449	-	-	-	-
Alcoholic beverages	-	229.769	-	-	-	-
Housing	-	234.523	-	-	-	-
Shelter	269.077	270.840	271.062	-1.9	.7	.1
Rent of primary residence ¹	276.433	277.200	277.978	2.7	.6	.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{1 2}	284.312	286.712	287.734	1.2	1.2	.4
Fuels and utilities	-	248.145	-	-	-	-
Household energy	218.115	217.131	213.066	-3.2	-2.3	-1.9
Gas (piped) and electricity ¹	234.121	236.575	230.905	5.9	-1.4	-2.4
Electricity ¹	222.613	226.354	226.354	11.4	1.7	.0
Utility (piped) gas service ¹	245.770	245.553	228.908	-3.4	-6.9	-6.8
Household furnishings and operations	-	126.132	-	-	-	-
Apparel	-	128.790	-	-	-	-
Transportation	-	159.758	-	-	-	-
Private transportation	-	157.982	-	-	-	-
Motor fuel	149.501	152.880	164.068	-36.4	9.7	7.3
Gasoline (all types)	144.285	148.275	160.153	-37.1	11.0	8.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular ³	141.282	145.962	157.831	-37.6	11.7	8.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{3 4}	150.504	151.883	164.229	-35.8	9.1	8.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium ³	150.057	151.928	162.740	-34.8	8.5	7.1
Medical care	-	516.913	-	-	-	-
Recreation ⁵	-	120.706	-	-	-	-
Education and communication ⁵	-	135.135	-	-	-	-
Other goods and services	-	385.640	-	-	-	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	-	230.806	-	-	-	-
Commodities	-	170.439	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food and beverages	-	139.195	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	-	169.526	-	-	-	-
Durables	-	107.771	-	-	-	-
Services	-	285.612	-	-	-	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	-	219.399	-	-	-	-
All items less shelter	-	217.200	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food	-	142.697	-	-	-	-
Nondurables	-	199.010	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food	-	172.703	-	-	-	-
Services less rent of shelter ²	-	318.213	-	-	-	-
Services less medical care services	-	268.688	-	-	-	-
Energy	187.358	188.282	190.887	-19.0	1.9	1.4
All items less energy	-	238.414	-	-	-	-
All items less food and energy	-	240.475	-	-	-	-

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.