

News

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics
Two Pershing Square Building
2300 Main Street, Suite 1190
Kansas City, Missouri 64108



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

(816) 285-7000

Media Contact: Jacqueline Michael-Midkiff (816) 285-7001

WWW Access: <http://www.bls.gov/ro7>

FOR RELEASE:

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR THE WEST, MARCH 2009

The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today that the All Items Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the West increased a slight 0.1 percent in March 2009, following an increase of 0.5 percent in February. During the past 12 months, overall prices decreased 0.5 percent. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted this was the first over-the-year decrease for the CPI West Index since publication began in 1966. Additionally, the special aggregate index for energy decreased 0.8 percent for the month and fell 25.8 percent on an annual basis. Regional CPI area data are not seasonally adjusted.

Transportation prices decreased 0.2 percent in March and were 12.2 percent lower than a year ago. Gasoline prices decreased 0.7 percent for the month and declined 38.7 percent since March 2008. Prices for new and used motor vehicles were unchanged in the past month, yet declined 2.9 percent over the past 12 months.

The housing index, which comprises approximately 45 percent of the all items index, was up 0.1 percent in March and advanced 1.4 percent since last year. The index for shelter, the largest housing component, also inched up 0.1 percent for the month and was 1.5 percent higher than in March 2008. Prices for household fuels and utilities fell 0.2 percent in March, but increased 0.4 percent from a year ago. Electricity prices were up 0.8 percent for the month and advanced 5.0 percent over the year. Utility (piped) gas service costs decreased 3.4 percent since February 2009 and 13.0 percent since March 2008. Prices for household furnishings and operations increased 0.9 percent for the month and advanced 1.2 percent for the year.

The food and beverages index decreased 0.2 percent over the month, but increased 3.7 percent over the past 12 months. The food at home index, which measures grocery prices, was down 0.3 percent since February 2009 and the food away from home index edged down 0.1 percent. Over the year, prices for food at home and food away from home increased 3.8 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively. Prices for alcoholic beverages changed little in March, but increased 3.3 percent over the year.

Medical care prices were up 0.1 percent for the month and increased 3.4 percent for the year. In March, prices for medical care commodities went up 0.2 percent and prices for medical care services inched up 0.1 percent. Over the latest 12-month period, prices for medical care commodities and medical care services advanced 1.1 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively.

The apparel index rose 2.0 percent in March 2009. Apparel prices typically rise in March with the introduction of spring-summer merchandise. The index advanced 0.5 percent over the past 12 months.

Among the remaining major expenditure categories, prices for education and communication crept down 0.1 percent, but prices for other goods and services moved up 1.9 percent in March. Over the past year, the index for education and communication was 3.6 percent higher and the index for other goods and services increased 5.0 percent. Recreation prices were 0.1 percent higher in March and advanced 1.3 percent over the past year.

The All Items Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the West stands at 217.357 (1982-84=100). This means a market basket of goods and services that cost \$100.00 in 1982-84 would have cost \$217.36 in March 2009.

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

West (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	215.923	217.095	217.357	-0.5	0.7	0.1
All items (December 1977=100)	349.027	350.922	351.345	-	-	-
Food and beverages	224.365	223.707	223.231	3.7	-5	-2
Food	223.731	223.011	222.476	3.7	-6	-2
Food at home	229.317	227.255	226.476	3.8	-1.2	-3
Food away from home	215.622	216.574	216.345	3.6	.3	-1
Alcoholic beverages	230.711	230.808	231.050	3.3	.1	.1
Housing	229.030	229.162	229.441	1.4	.2	.1
Shelter	257.436	257.774	257.906	1.5	.2	.1
Rent of primary residence ¹	261.077	261.496	261.443	3.1	.1	.0
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{1 2}	271.368	271.574	271.540	2.5	.1	.0
Fuels and utilities	226.698	225.250	224.750	.4	-9	-2
Household energy	211.781	209.474	208.575	-1.1	-1.5	-4
Gas (piped) and electricity ¹	214.378	212.139	211.642	.0	-1.3	-2
Electricity ¹	222.601	222.671	224.496	5.0	.9	.8
Utility (piped) gas service ¹	211.605	202.831	195.929	-13.0	-7.4	-3.4
Household furnishings and operations	134.019	134.164	135.332	1.2	1.0	.9
Apparel	109.800	114.456	116.709	.5	6.3	2.0
Transportation	170.136	173.150	172.777	-12.2	1.6	-2
Private transportation	163.948	167.215	166.828	-12.9	1.8	-2
New and used motor vehicles ³	91.490	91.167	91.132	-2.9	-4	.0
New vehicles	132.948	132.359	132.536	-1.6	-3	.1
New cars and trucks ^{3 4}	92.435	92.024	92.150	-1.6	-3	.1
New cars ⁴	136.677	135.963	135.513	-1	-9	-3
Used cars and trucks	123.082	121.091	119.327	-11.4	-3.1	-1.5
Motor fuel	157.468	172.862	171.055	-39.0	8.6	-1.0
Gasoline (all types)	155.522	171.940	170.742	-38.7	9.8	-7
Gasoline, unleaded regular ⁴	153.590	170.185	169.102	-39.1	10.1	-6
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{4 5}	147.659	162.837	161.454	-38.0	9.3	-8
Gasoline, unleaded premium ⁴	153.065	167.861	166.671	-37.0	8.9	-7
Medical care	376.678	380.963	381.324	3.4	1.2	.1
Medical care commodities	304.075	305.260	305.849	1.1	.6	.2
Medical care services	398.656	404.083	404.348	4.2	1.4	.1
Professional services	295.570	297.434	297.498	2.7	.7	.0
Recreation ³	109.095	109.804	109.902	1.3	.7	.1
Education and communication ³	125.899	126.119	125.959	3.6	.0	-1
Other goods and services	353.601	354.849	361.439	5.0	2.2	1.9
Commodity and service group						
All items	215.923	217.095	217.357	-5	.7	.1
Commodities	163.360	164.965	165.229	-4.5	1.1	.2
Commodities less food and beverages	133.222	135.574	136.095	-8.8	2.2	.4
Nondurables less food and beverages	156.950	162.914	164.109	-13.7	4.6	.7
Nondurables less food, beverages, and apparel	190.705	197.632	198.148	-18.2	3.9	.3
Durables	109.372	108.983	108.989	-2.8	-4	.0
Services	264.481	265.171	265.423	2.2	.4	.1
Rent of shelter ²	273.852	274.206	274.344	1.5	.2	.1
Transportation services	248.187	249.448	250.291	3.2	.8	.3
Other services	297.410	298.825	299.407	3.7	.7	.2

See footnotes at end of table.

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

West (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
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	208.327	209.380	209.637	-0.8	0.6	0.1
All items less food	214.881	216.343	216.727	-1.2	.9	.2
All items less shelter	200.183	201.722	202.042	-1.6	.9	.2
Commodities less food	136.811	139.119	139.636	-8.3	2.1	.4
Nondurables	190.196	193.171	193.607	-5.2	1.8	.2
Nondurables less food	162.092	167.729	168.871	-12.5	4.2	.7
Nondurables less food and apparel	194.099	200.349	200.837	-16.2	3.5	.2
Services less rent of shelter ²	281.911	283.154	283.597	3.2	.6	.2
Services less medical care services	254.608	255.047	255.296	2.0	.3	.1
Energy	181.356	189.442	188.002	-25.8	3.7	-.8
All items less energy	220.550	221.172	221.574	1.8	.5	.2
All items less food and energy	220.672	221.523	222.084	1.5	.6	.3
Commodities less food and energy commodities	135.731	136.462	137.316	-.5	1.2	.6
Energy commodities	161.270	176.358	174.270	-38.6	8.1	-1.2
Services less energy services	268.350	269.228	269.528	2.3	.4	.1

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 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

⁴ Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

⁵ Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

- Data not available.

Regions defined as the four Census regions. West includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

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