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BOSTON AREA CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: NOVEMBER 2009
Local Consumer Prices Unchanged in November; up 1.8 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Boston metropolitan area was unchanged for the two months ended November 2009, according to Denis M. McSweeney, Regional Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Increases were registered in four of the eight major categories, but these gains were offset by declining prices in the remaining components. For the year ended November 2009, the CPI-U for Boston rose 1.8 percent, following five consecutive annual declines. Core inflation, as measured by the all items less food and energy index, increased 2.5 percent.

For the two months ended November 2009, housing decreased 0.3 percent as an increase in fuels and utilities (12.5 percent) was more than offset by decreases in shelter (-1.8 percent) and household furnishings and operations (-0.3 percent). Transportation rose 1.1 percent as prices for gasoline increased 2.5 percent. Food and beverage prices edged down 0.1 percent as lower prices for groceries and alcoholic beverages more than offset an increase in restaurant prices. Apparel prices, which have decreased each November since 2005, were down 3.3 percent. Among the remaining categories, recreation increased 1.5 percent and medical care costs were up 0.2 percent. Other goods and services edged up 0.1 percent and education and communication declined 0.5 percent

For the year ended November 2009, overall prices in the Boston area rose 1.8 percent, with higher prices for transportation leading the way. The transportation index rose 7.2 percent, mainly attributable to higher gasoline prices, up 23.3 percent. Boston area motorists paid an average of \$2.677 per gallon in November, compared with \$2.186 at the same time last year. Higher prices for new and used vehicles also contributed to the increase in transportation. Medical care costs rose 4.5 percent over the year as both medical care services and commodities recorded higher prices. Other goods and services rose 7.1 percent, mainly due to a sharp increase in cigarette prices. Recreation was up 3.8 percent, and education and communication rose 2.2 percent. Moderating these increases were decreases in the remaining major categories. Housing decreased 0.2 percent, as a 12.3-percent decrease in fuels and utilities more than offset a 1.8-percent increase in shelter. Apparel prices also declined over the year, down 0.7 percent. Food and beverage prices edged down 0.1 percent, the first annual decrease recorded in that category since May 1992.

In November, the Boston CPI-U on the 1982-84 base was 236.589. By this gauge, the selected market basket of goods and services which cost area consumers an average of \$10.00 during the 1982-84 reference period would now cost more than double at \$23.66. The purchasing power of the dollar for the Boston area in 1982-84 dollars was 42.3 cents in November 2009. In November, the CPI-W (Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers), at 236.859, was up 0.5 percent since September 2009 and 2.2 percent over the year.

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). Select December food, shelter, and energy indexes for Boston will be released on Friday, January 15, 2010 at 8:30 AM. The January Consumer Price Index for all items for Boston will be released on Friday, February 19, 2010 at 8:30 AM.

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. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (617) 565-2072, Federal Relay Services: 1-800-877-8339

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—		
	Sep. 2009	Oct. 2009	Nov. 2009	Nov. 2008	Sep. 2009	Oct. 2009
Expenditure category						
All items	236.596	-	236.589	1.8	0.0	-
All items (1967=100)	687.672	-	687.651	-	-	-
Food and beverages	230.416	-	230.249	-1	-1	-
Food	230.075	-	229.940	-4	-1	-
Food at home	221.292	221.306	220.589	-2.2	-3	-0.3
Food away from home	245.134	-	245.748	1.9	.3	-
Alcoholic beverages	236.869	-	236.313	2.7	-2	-
Housing	234.272	-	233.604	-2	-3	-
Shelter	279.060	277.564	273.947	1.8	-1.8	-1.3
Rent of primary residence ¹	278.100	278.726	277.708	1.0	-1	-4
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{1 2 3}	292.285	293.004	293.132	3.3	.3	.0
Fuels and utilities	199.216	-	224.112	-12.3	12.5	-
Household energy	168.875	168.541	192.874	-14.0	14.2	14.4
Gas (piped) and electricity ¹	168.836	167.372	195.540	-16.5	15.8	16.8
Electricity ¹	193.860	191.645	185.751	-16.6	-4.2	-3.1
Utility (piped) gas service ¹	111.141	111.238	205.621	-16.3	85.0	84.8
Household furnishings and operations	124.848	-	124.493	-7	-3	-
Apparel	146.225	-	141.371	-7	-3.3	-
Transportation	176.261	-	178.254	7.2	1.1	-
Private transportation	175.836	-	177.516	7.9	1.0	-
Motor fuel	221.130	217.256	227.028	20.8	2.7	4.5
Gasoline (all types)	219.352	215.139	224.795	23.3	2.5	4.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular ⁴	217.792	213.582	223.394	25.1	2.6	4.6
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{4 5}	221.387	216.875	226.269	19.0	2.2	4.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium ⁴	216.073	212.365	220.810	16.6	2.2	4.0
Medical care	530.186	-	531.380	4.5	.2	-
Recreation ⁶	122.917	-	124.757	3.8	1.5	-
Education and communication ⁶	138.651	-	137.892	2.2	-5	-
Other goods and services	409.119	-	409.400	7.1	.1	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	236.596	-	236.589	1.8	.0	-
Commodities	180.287	-	180.603	2.8	.2	-
Commodities less food and beverages	153.492	-	154.030	4.9	.4	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	197.485	-	198.470	7.1	.5	-
Durables	110.444	-	110.598	1.9	.1	-
Services	287.123	-	286.788	1.2	-1	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	224.894	-	224.855	1.7	.0	-
All items less shelter	222.043	-	224.206	1.8	1.0	-
Commodities less food	156.793	-	157.295	4.8	.3	-
Nondurables	212.696	-	213.094	3.0	.2	-
Nondurables less food	199.005	-	199.874	6.7	.4	-
Services less rent of shelter ³	309.998	-	316.451	.4	2.1	-
Services less medical care services	269.961	-	269.431	1.1	-2	-
Energy	191.038	189.160	207.049	-3	8.4	9.5
All items less energy	244.598	-	242.931	2.0	-7	-
All items less food and energy	248.070	-	246.085	2.5	-8	-

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

² This index series will undergo a change in composition in January, 2010. The expenditure class will include weight from secondary residences, and will be re-titled Owners' equivalent rent of residences. The item stratum Owners' equivalent rent of primary residences, which prior to January, 2010 is identical to the EC, will be published as well.

³ Index is on a November 1982=100 base.

⁴ Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

⁵ Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

⁶ Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

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